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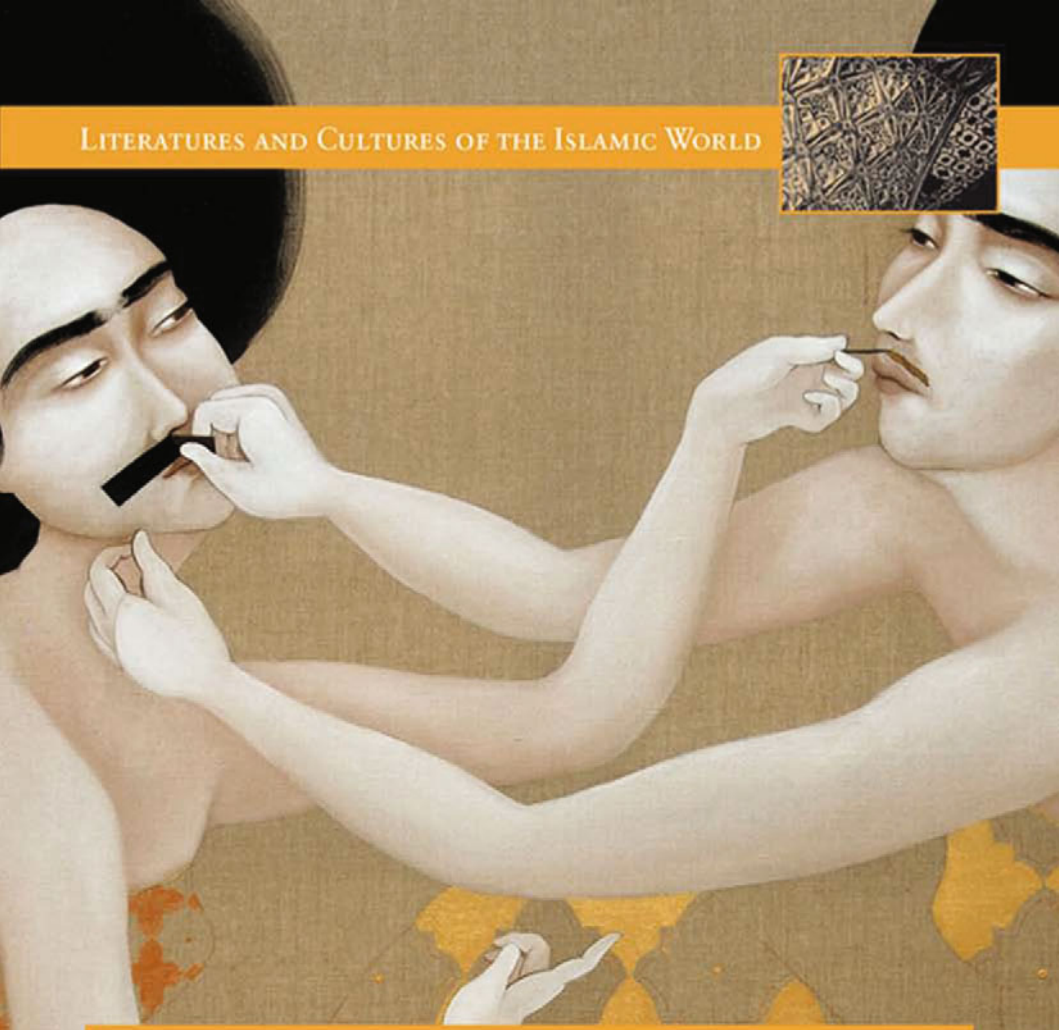

# The Poetics of the Obscene in Premodern Arabic Poetry

## *Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Sukhf*

Sinan Antoon

## Literatures and Cultures of the Islamic World

Edited by Hamid Dabashi

**Hamid Dabashi** is Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. Hamid chaired the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures from 2000 to 2005 and was a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. His most recent books include *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire*; *Makhmalbaf at Large: The Making of a Rebel Filmmaker*; *Iran: A People Interrupted*; and an edited volume, *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema*.

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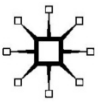

THE POETICS OF THE OBSCENE IN PREMODERN ARABIC POETRY


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*For Iraqis, everywhere*
*A shard from their cultural history*

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# Contents

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# Note from the Editor

The Islamic world is home to a vast body of literary production in multiple languages over the last 1,400 years. To be sure, long before the advent of Islam, multiple sites of significant literary and cultural productions existed from India to Iran to the Fertile Crescent to North Africa. After the advent of Islam in the mid-seventh century CE, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish authors in particular produced some of the most glorious manifestations of world literature. From prose to poetry, modern to medieval, elitist to popular, oral to literary, this body of literature is in much need of a wide range of renewed scholarly investigation and lucid presentation.

The purpose of this series is to take advantage of the most recent advances in literary studies, textual hermeneutics, critical theory, feminism, postcolonialism, and comparative literature to bring the spectrum of literatures and cultures of the Islamic world to a wider audience and appreciation. Usually the study of these literatures and cultures is divided between classical and modern periods. A central objective of this series is to cross over this artificial and inapplicable bifurcation and abandon the anxiety of periodization altogether. Much of what we understand today from this rich body of literary and cultural production is still under the influence of old-fashioned orientalism or post–World War II area studies perspectives. Our hope is to bring together a body of scholarship that connects the vast arena of literary and cultural production in the Islamic world without the prejudices of outmoded perspectives. Toward this end, we are committed to pathbreaking strategies of reading that collectively renew our awareness of the literary cosmopolitanism and cultural criticism in which these works of creative imagination were conceived in the first place.

Hamid Dabashi

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# Acknowledgments

This book is based on a doctoral dissertation defended at Harvard University back in 2006. Having Wolfhart Heinrichs as a mentor and a *doctorvater* is a treasure for any student of Arabic poetry. He will always have my deepest gratitude for sharing his encyclopedic knowledge of all things Arabic and for his critical comments and suggestions.

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I have been fortunate enough, since 1993, to have a second home wherever the Haddads are. Asmahan Haddad, a unique human being, is the epitome of maternal love and generosity. Thanks also to Elie Haddad, Carole Haddad, and Khalid Namez for their love.

Mary Antoon called me "*sakhīf*" so many times when I was a kid not knowing that I was trying to master a genre. She will be horrified and embarrassed by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry, but will still take pride in the book's author. Thanks to my brother Basil Antoon and his family for their constant support and love. My mother, Linda Antoon, would have smiled, but, alas, she is no longer here.

Ibtisam Azem reads everything I write with passion. Her love and support sustains my being and her presence makes life worth living.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| *Abū Nuwās* | *Dīwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hāniʾ*, ed. Ewald Wagner, vol. 5, (Wiesbaden and Beirut, 2003). |
| *Dīwān* | *Al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḥajjāj: His Life and Verse Together with a Critical Edition of the Final Part of His Dīwān*, vol. 2, ed. Hashem Manna (London: School of African and Oriental Studies, 1986). |
| *Durrat al-Tāj* | *Durrat al-tāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj,* al-Asṭurlābī, *Durrat al-tāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj,* ed. ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir (Beirut: Dār al-Jamal, 2009). |
| *EAL* | *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). |
| *EI*2 | *Encyclopaedia of Islam.* Second Edition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960–). |
| *GAS* | Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: 1967–). |
| *GAL* | Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937–1949). |
| *JAL* | *The Journal of Arabic Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970–). |
| *Muʿjam al-buldān* | Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.). |
| *Nūniyyāt* | Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Der Dīwān des Ibn al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ: Teilausgabe Der Reimbuchstabe nūn*, ed. Abdelghafur A. A. El-Aswad (Giessen, 1977). |
| *Talṭīf* | Ibn Nubāta, *Talṭīf al-mizāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.* ed. Najm ʿAbdullāh Muṣṭafā (Sūsa: Dār al-Maʿārif lil-Ṭibāʿa wal-Nashr, 2001). |
| *Yāqūt* | Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Irshād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb* (*Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*), ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993). |

*Yatīma* al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr*, ed. Mufīd Muḥammad Qamīḥa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1983).

*Wafayāt* Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1994).

# Introduction

Many of the great poets of the Arabic tradition have not received sufficient critical and scholarly attention. While this is partly due to logistical and practical hurdles, ideological factors involving a particular view of the cultural past are also at play. Classical Arabic poetry holds immense symbolic capital in Arab collective memory. Poetry, after all, is "the archive of the Arabs." It attains an added significance as an alibi for a variety of discourses, foreign and indigenous, sympathetic and not so sympathetic, about the cultural and civilizational past and how it should be remembered to serve the present, or mobilized as a prism to justify it.

Not unlike all grand narratives of history, narratives of literary and cultural history too should be subject to critical revisions whereby omissions are highlighted, examined, and remedied. Forced absences and silences are accounted for and, hopefully, a once great figure or unique text is no more exiled in near oblivion.

It is within this context that this book was conceived. Its focus is the premodern Arab poet Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (330–391/941–1001)[1] and *sukhf*,[2] the mode of poetry he established and popularized in the fourth/tenth century.

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was by all premodern accounts, and some modern ones too, a unique poet who changed the trajectory of premodern Arabic poetry, or at least influenced it in a significant way. He enjoyed tremendous success and popularity with the ruling elite of the time, among whom he found many a generous patron. He was also well-respected and admired by most of his contemporaries, poets and critics, as well as by those of later periods. He was emulated and excerpted in anthologies and compendia. Manuscripts of his collected poems sold very well. Numerous selections of his poetry were compiled and, long after his death, his verses would still be committed to memory and copied time and again. His fame and name were proverbial. There were, of course, a few detractors

who objected to the extreme vulgarity, obscenity, and irreverence of his poetry, which defied all conventions as never before. But those detractors were too few to belittle his status and were eclipsed by admirers of all sorts whose valued opinions helped secure Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's position in the premodern canon.

It is in the modern period that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his *sukhf* have almost "disappeared." He makes very few appearances and on very rare occasions, but only to be condemned and discredited for his extreme obscenity and scatology. Or he is mentioned, *en passant*, to exemplify the decadence of the Būyid age (320–454/932–1062) and the "morally-challenged" society that tolerated and celebrated him and his poetry.

What made Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his *sukhf* so successful, accepted, and popular in premodern times, yet virtually unknown nowadays? This book will attempt to answer this and other related questions.

Chapter 1 ("Genealogies") traces the genealogy of *sukhf* and of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in the Arabic tradition. It starts out with a review of the extant premodern literature in order to reconstruct the literary persona and status of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in the canon and the ways in which his contemporaries, peers, critics, and poets of later periods evaluated and responded to him. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's appearance in the various compendia, anthologies, and selections made by other poets are surveyed, as well as his influence on later periods. This is followed by an exploration into the lexical spectrum of the term *sukhf* and its evolution into a term representing this specific mode of poetry. Its intricate relationship and overlap with its sister mode *mujūn* is also addressed, as well as its overlap with other categories such as *hazl* (jest). Potential suggestions for an English equivalent are offered with the most appropriate one being "obscene and scatological parody." This is followed by a review of the extant literature on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in the modern period and the available edited material. While certainly unique in his own right, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* was also the culmination of a parodic and ribald trend whose roots preceded his time. Thus, the chapter ends with an examination of three poets whose poetry may be considered tributaries to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*.

Chapter 2 focuses on the parodic function of *sukhf* and how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, a master parodist, launched a systematic parody of the entire tradition and declared his intentions in his poetry. Chief among his many targets were a few of the tradition's icons, the *muʿallaqāt*. A close reading of a parody of the *muʿallaqa* of ʿAmr b. Kulthūm shows how the model poem is appropriated, its meanings and values inverted to serve an entirely different function, and how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj establishes himself as the ultimate antihero.

Chapter 3 examines *sukhf*'s interaction with(in) one of the most important and enduring forms of the Arabic tradition, the panegyric *qaṣīda* (polythematic ode). The chapter analyzes six representative panegyric poems by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj to demonstrate how he employed a number of different strategies to incorporate a seemingly incongruous theme—scatology—into a form whose function was to reproduce political legitimacy.

Chapter 4 approaches *sukhf* as an independent mode. In order to do so, the porous boundaries between *mujūn* and *sukhf*, which are briefly touched upon in chapter 1, are further scrutinized here. Abū Nuwās's clear influence on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf* is addressed by examining the major tropes that the latter appropriated and developed. This is followed by a reading of seven representative *sukhf* poems.

Chapter 5 attempts to situate Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf* within the sociopolitical context of the Būyid period. Moving beyond the usual reductive statements about the function of *sukhf* and scatology as shocking vulgarity, the chapter avails recent works on the function of scatology in literature to suggest a more complex interaction between this type of poetry and its material surroundings. The chapter concludes with a few remarks on the still resilient taboo on scatology and the assumptions behind it.

A *complete* edition of all of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry is not available to date. I have relied on the following partial editions: Hashem Manna's edition of the final section of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *dīwān* (collected poems), which includes all the poems ending in rhymes *mīm* to *yā'*,[3] and Abdelghafur El-Aswad's partial edition, which includes all of the poems ending in the rhyme *nūn*.[4] I have also relied on two premodern anthologies: Ibn Nubāta's *Talṭīf al-mizāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*[5] (Livening the Mood with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's Poetry), and al-Asṭurlābī's *Durrat al-tāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*[6] (The Crown's Pearl from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's Poetry).

The poems and excerpts translated and discussed in the book are provided in appendix A.

Before plunging into Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's world, a few disclaimers are in order. Considering his fame, popularity, and importance, there is relatively little biographical material on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.[7] A brief core of information and anecdotes is repeated in the standard biographical dictionaries. One such biographical dictionary combines all of the extant material into one long entry and its translation is included as appendix B. Appendix C is a translation of an excerpt from al-Tīfāshī's *Nuzhat al-albāb* (The Promenade of the Hearts), which is an amusing and typically Ḥajjājian anecdote involving a scatological mishap narrated by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj himself. The significance of this excerpt is further proof of Ibn

al-Ḥajjāj's canonical status and his transformation into a topos in classical Arabic literature.

While Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is synonymous with *sukhf*, he did compose a great deal in other modes as well. The focus of this book, however, is *sukhf* and thus it will not address Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's "traditional" poetry. The latter, however, is indeed worthy of scholarly attention—a closer look will debunk what some modern scholars have called "conventional" and "mediocre" poems.

# CHAPTER 1

# Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *Sukhf*: Genealogies

I saw that the fruits of poets' thoughts are [like] offspring, akin to each other, and like nations, their poems are scattered upon the earth. Except for the poems of the unique littérateur Abū ʿAbdullāh Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, for they are a strange nation that spreads on its own and a wondrous offspring . . . no one's mind was able to master their likeness.

—Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī (686–768/1287–1366)[1]

If I die, by God, you will not see
anyone who can rival me in my style

The people of poetry have all concurred
that those who write are not my equals[2]

[I]

I am the one and only in my style
It is impossible that there be another[3]

[II]

. . .
Were it not for me, *sukhf* would never
have been read, nor ever written in a book[4]

[III]

. . .
[I am] A man who claims prophethood in *sukhf*
Who dares to doubt prophets?[5]

[IV]

Such is my poetry, its leaves
are spread and turned over again

There is not a noble man on earth
without a book of them

He acknowledged that I am the prophet
of *sukhf* and he is merely a poet[6]

[V]

Poets, especially premodern Arab poets, were never at a loss when it came to literary boast and self-aggrandizement. So much so that that itself is a common topos. However, only few leave a mark on their age. Even fewer are those whose poetry outlives them and remains influential in later ages. One is reminded of al-Mutanabbī's (303–354/915–965) oft-quoted line:

I am the one whose eloquence the blind could see
and whose words forced the deaf to hear[7]

[VI]

Hyperbole aside, al-Mutanabbī's fame and influence are truly proverbial both in the realm of scholarship as well as in contemporary Arab culture (both literary and popular). For he had secured his permanent spot in the canon and the cultural archive of the Arabs. The same cannot be said of his contemporary, erstwhile enemy and ultimate "other," Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (330–391/941–1001).[8] The latter's boasts about literary immortality and about pioneering a new mode of poetry (hence the repeated boast of being the prophet of *sukhf*)[9] rang true in his time and for centuries after his death, but seem to have almost expired in the modern period. Canons, as well as the cultural archives to which they belong, are, of course, not fixed entities. They reflect and are shaped by dominant ideologies and sociohistorical contexts and forces.[10] Many a poet is often consigned to oblivion and "disappeared" under layers of amnesia into a dark and distant corner of the archive. While the number of premodern Arab poets who eagerly await, and are deserving of, scholarly attention is not negligible, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf* represent one of the most serious cases of cultural amnesia and academic neglect. Matters were not so a millennium ago.

## Premodern Views: The Lightheartedness of the Age

When Ibn al-Ḥajjāj died in *Jumādā al-Thāniya* (*al-ākhira*) 391 AH, May of 1001 CE,[11] his friend, the famous poet and *naqīb* of the Ṭālibids,

al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (359–406/970–1015) composed a moving elegy, some of whose lines are as follows:

I cried over you for the extraordinary famous verses
Their words perfumed with [elegant] meanings
. . .
Never did I think that death
could blunt the edges of that tongue
. . .
Be gone just like tender youth [did]
when it let you down the day you met the women

Let the age cry for you
For you were its lightheartedness[12]

[VII]

Beyond the social conventions that occasion the composition of such elegies and the literary conventions that predetermine, to a large extent, their content, this one bears an added significance. That a highly respected religious figure and major poet such as al-Raḍī would accord Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his poetry such honor underscores the positive approach and appreciative attitude toward Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf* in his own time, one that contrasts sharply with the negative and neo-Victorian manner in which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's legacy was largely dealt with in the modern period.

Another contemporary, the great essayist and master of *adab* Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (315–411/927–1023) wrote the following in his *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ walmuʾ ānasa* (The Book of Enjoyment and Conviviality):

> As for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj . . . he is of a frivolous style, far from seriousness, exquisite in jest (*hazl*). Reason has neither share nor counterpart in his poetry. But his wording is sound and his speech flowing. His qualities are far removed, in their dignity, from his harmful habits. He and Ibn Sukkara share this obsession [with *sukhf*]. When he composes in seriousness (*jidd*), he squats like a dog and when he composes in jest (*hazl*), he is like a snake.[13]

Considering al-Tawḥīdī's legendary bitterness, jealousy, and cantankerousness, this is a very generous evaluation. He does sound deceptively conservative in his characterization of *sukhf* in this passage, but his own works abound with numerous obscene and scatological anecdotes and excerpts of poetry that would fall under the *sukhf* category. One need only leaf through *al-Baṣāʾir wal-dhakhāʾir* (Insights and Treasures) for example,

or *Mathālib al-wazīrayn* (The Faults of the Two Viziers) to find some of the most obscene passages ever written in Arabic letters.[14] Moreover, *al-Risāla al-baghdādiyya* (The Baghdad Epistle), previously thought to have been penned by Abū ʿl-Muṭahhar al-Azdī, but recently attributed to al-Tawḥīdī,[15] is the *sukhf* prose text par excellence.[16] Its narrator and main character Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Baghdādī appears to have been modeled after Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's persona. The latter's poetry is excerpted therein as well. I emphasize persona because the sources tell us that unlike the extreme obscenity and shocking all-out irreverence of his poetry, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was nothing like that in his social conduct and "private" life as far as we know. In *al-Imtāʿ wal-muʾānasa*,[17] al-Tawḥīdī preserved an intriguing and telling account of the first encounter between Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and the vizier, patron, and famous *adīb* Ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. 360/970), one of the great figures of the Būyid age[18] and a recipient of many of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's panegyrics:

> by God I am amazed by you. As for my liking of you, it is not recent. For I used to comb your *dīwān* and yearn to meet you and say: What kind of man says these words? [He must be] the most reckless, frivolous and obsessed of all . . . You are indeed one of the miracles of God's creatures and the marvels of his worshippers. By God none will believe that you are the very same man who composed your *dīwān* and that it is yours with all this contradiction which exists between your poetry and the seriousness of your person.[19]

This speaks volumes about Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's fame and the respect he enjoyed, but also the "buzz" that he had created among the cultural elite. In another standard work and the major anthology of the second half of the fourth/tenth century, al-Thaʿālibī's (350–429/961–1038) *Yatīmat al-dahr* (The Solitaire of the Age), Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his poetry are accorded ample space and a glowing preface:

> Although he, in most of his poetry, does not hide under the veil of reason and bases most of his sayings on *sukhf,* he is one of the magicians of poetry and the marvels of the age. All those insightful in literature and knowledgeable in poetry agree that he is unique and unprecedented in the style for which he has become famed. No one has competed with his way, nor has anyone in command of the meanings which are found in his style been seen, with the smoothness and sweetness of his words . . . even if they express frivolity [*sakhāfa*] and are tainted with the speech of beggars and street gangs. Were it not that the seriousness of *adab* is serious and its jest is jest, as Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī said, I would have guarded this book of mine from much speech of one who extends the hand of *mujūn* and twists

> the ear of the sacred [*ḥaram*] with it. And he opens the sack of *sukhf* and smacks the neck of reason with it . . . he has composed panegyrics to kings, princes, ministers and his *dīwān* travels faster than a proverb and quicker than a shadow across the horizons.[20]

Al-Thaʿālibī makes extensive use of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry in his other works as well, especially *Thimār al-qulūb* ( The Fruit of Hearts).[21] Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Al-Jurjānī, in *Kināyāt al-udabāʾ wa ishārāt al-bulaghāʾ* (The Metonymies of the Literati and the Allusions of the Eloquent) also adduces many examples from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.[22] That Ibn al-Ḥajjāj had massive institutional success during his lifetime is well-known and attested by the numerous panegyrics he composed for the Būyid elite as well as by various extant accounts.[23] What further distinguishes him, however, is that he was equally famous among his peers, the critics, and even the "masses" of later times as we shall see later. In addition to the unique and original character of his poetry and its comic content, this was probably due to the relative simplicity of some of his diction and his deliberate use of vulgar street language.[24] A *ḥisba* (market inspection) manual composed in the eighth/fourteenth century (three centuries after Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's death)[25] instructs teachers to prohibit boys from reading or memorizing any of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poems (or those of Ṣarīʿ al-Dilāʾ (d. 412/921)[26] for his *dīwān* is "of no value") and to be beaten if they are found doing so:

> He [the teacher] must forbid boys from memorizing anything of the poetry of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and reading it and he must beat them for that. The same goes for the *dīwān* of Ṣarīʿ al-Dilāʾ, for it is no good and he should chastise them for that.[27]

This, undoubtedly, illustrates Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's lasting popularity and fame. In an ironic twist of history, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was himself the erstwhile *muḥtasib* (market inspector) of Baghdad for three years during the reign of Muʿizz al-Dawla (945–967).[28]

Another measure of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's importance and lasting influence is the number of selections of his poetry that were made by other poets. *Al-Nazīf min al-sakhīf* (That which is Purged of *Sakhīf* )[29] was made by the aforementioned al-Raḍī, but is, alas, not extant.[30] This manuscript would have helped to shed much needed light on what was considered non-*sukhf* by one of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's contemporaries.

Al-Badīʿ al-Asṭurlābī (d. 534/1139–1140) made his own selection based on poetic motifs (*aghrāḍ*) and divided into 141 chapters under

the title *Durrat al-tāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj* (The Crown's Jewel from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's Verse).[31] Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī (d. 768/1366) composed *Talṭīf al-mizāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj* (Livening the Mood with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's Poetry).[32] Abū 'l-Qāsim Ibn Ḥalabāt composed *Mulaḥ min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj* (Fine Selections from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's Poetry).[33] Finally, Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī (767–837/1366–1434) composed *Laṭāʾif al-talṭīf* (Selections from Livening the Mood).[34]

Writing more than three centuries following Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's death, al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) echoes al-Thaʿālibī in *al-Wāfī bil-wafayāt*:

> In his style he was unique in his time and the *imām* of poetry in its [various] modes (*kāna farda zamānihi fī bābihi wa-imāma al-shiʿri fī aḍrābihi*) . . . the first to open that door was Abū Nuwās and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj came with plenty more afterwards. He was prolific and distinguished . . . I regard him as one who can [rightly] be called a poet, because he mastered panegyric, invective, love, description, adab and all types of poetry, but in *mujūn* he is an *imām*, and all who composed it after him were merely his servants [*lākinnahu fī'l-mujūni imām wakullu man atā baʿdahu bishayʾin min dhālika fa-huwa lahu ghulām*].[35]

Of these emulators, or servants, to use al-Ṣafadī's term, Ibn al-Habbāriyya (d. 509/1115–1116) was the most famous to come after Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.[36] The shadow plays of Ibn Dāniyāl (d. 1311) were probably influenced, at least indirectly, by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*.[37]

In his manual on *muwashshaḥāt*, the strophic poetic form that originated in al-Andalus, Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk[38] (550–608/1155–1211) stated that the *kharja* (the parting final line of the poem) must be "Ḥajjājian in its *sukhf* and Quzmānian[39] in its use of colloquial Arabic, scorching hot, and well-done and spicy."

In *Sharḥ al-kāfiya al-badīʿiyya*,[40] Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (677–750/1278–), who himself dabbled in shades of *mujūn* and *sukhf* (although he does not employ these terms explicitly),[41] uses a few of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's lines as examples of rhetorical devices.[42]

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's proverbial status has him later appearing, for example, in *Nuzhat al-albāb* (The Promenade of Hearts) to narrate, at length, a very humorous scatological anecdote about himself.[43] In *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshā* (The Nightblind's Morn in the Craft of Composition) by al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), Ibn al-Ḥajjāj appears under the heading (Those who were [so] unique in their time as to become exemplary [proverbial]) (*man kāna fardan fī zamānihi biḥaythu yuḍrabu bihi 'l-mathalu fī amthālihi*): "*Abū Nuwās fī 'l-mujūn wal-khalāʿa wa Ibn al-Ḥajjaj fī*

*sukhf al-alfāẓ*" (Abū Nuwās in ribaldry and debauchery and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in the frivolity/obscenity of words).[44] I shall return later to this important distribution of *mujūn*/*sukhf* between Abū Nuwās and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and to the latter's debt to the former.

There were, of course, those whom Ibn al-Ḥajjāj did not impress at all. In the famous *al-ʿUmda* (The Pillar) as part of a discussion of poets who refrained from responding to invective from those they deemed inferior (*bāb man raghiba min al-shuʿarāʾ ʿan mulāḥāt ghayr al-akfāʾ*), Ibn Rashīq (390–463/1000–1071) includes, as one of a few examples, al-Mutanabbī's non-response to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's invectives

> And so did al-Mutanabbī when he was plagued with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Baghdādī's foolishness [*ḥamāqāt*]; he did not respond out of contempt and disdain. For had he responded [to him] he would not have been where he is in his haughtiness, because he [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj] is not his counterpart, nor is he of his class.[45]

## What Is *Sukhf*?

Be it as a signifier or a poetic mode, *sukhf* is not easy to pin down.[46] Not unlike many other literary terms, its semantic boundaries are porous and shifting. The term was not used uniformly, nor did it even have the same referential field within one type of discourse or usage. There is, to start with, much overlap with *mujūn* (again both as a literary term, but also a social attitude) and, to a lesser extent *hazl*. Montgomery points out that "the medieval Arab literati appear not to have used *sukhf* as a designation of a poetic genre, preferring *mudjūn*." Rowson maintains that "*sukhf* is distinguished from it [*mujūn*] in referring less to hedonistic behavior offensive to the prudish than to gross language and comportment upsetting to the squeamish."[47] Van Gelder provides the following synonyms for *mujūn*: shamelessness, indecent poetry (sex, alcohol, scatology); for *sukhf*: foolishness, obscene, or nonsensical poetry.[48] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj himself couples *sukhf* with *mujūn* and *hazl* in referring to his own poetry (see later). This instability is part and parcel of the slippage of language itself as a system and is not uncommon when dealing with literary terminology[49] (a central strand of *sukhf* itself, as will be illustrated later, is an incessant breaching and violation of boundaries of all sorts). Moreover, premodern Arabic literary criticism and terminology present their own added difficulties in this respect.[50] Not being a major or "official" mode, *sukhf* was bound to receive very little critical attention. One might add that *sukhf*'s intricacy and complexity as, ultimately, a dialogue, even if a dissonant one, with

the entire tradition, renders it even more challenging than other terms for classificatory or taxonomic purposes. Nevertheless, an exploration of its genealogy or polygenesis is sine qua non, especially since it becomes linked to, and almost synonymous with, Ibn al- Ḥajjāj and his poetry, during and after the fourth/tenth century when it begins to influence the trajectory of Arabic poetry. It is with, and after, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj that *sukhf* is more often than not linked specifically to obscenity and scatology. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj punctuates many of his poems with references to "my *sukhf*":

The demons of poetry
kneel before mine when it comes to *sukhf*[51]

[VIII]

O Minister, [hear] a plea from your servant
who has become an exemplar in *sukhf*

[IX]

The same line appears elsewhere in a slightly different version:

O Sir, [hear] a plea from a poet
whose style of poetry is not fake[52]

[X]

When I compose *sukhf* I am Imruʾ al-Qays[53]
even though my father is not Ḥujr

I bring many a poem that has
made my style of *sukhf* odd

Had I wanted to write serious poetry
It would not be difficult for me

But then I would merely be like
all those who write poetry in our age

Were it not for me, *sukhf* would never
have been written down or read
. . .
And to him who faults me for my *sukhf* I say:
You most foolish of all people![54]

[XI]

Has it ever happened that when you were amazed by my poetry
Its *sukhf* did not make you laugh?

[XII]

*Sukhf* is a must in my poetry
If we are to unwind and let go

Can there be a house with no privy
and can a sane man live in it?[55]

[XIII]

At other times, however, he refers to his poetry as *mujūn* or *hazl*:

If my poetry were to be serious you would see
the night stars flowing therein
But its jest is a ribaldry
to make my ends meet[56]

[XIV]

ʿAḍud al-Dawla's (324–963/372–983) scribe wrote a poem to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj asking him to tone down his *sukhf*, and his response was:

[Do you blame me] for the *sukhf* and *mujūn* in my poetry
or the wine, singing and slave girls?[57]

[XV]

And in a panegyric[58] to Ibn al-ʿAmīd (d. 366/977) he wrote:

Did you not see the Prophet at Badr
fighting with Ḥassān's poetry?[59]

Ḥassān with Jarīr and al-Akhṭal[60]
would not even be close to [being] my servants

If they were present with me so that I may fight them with my *sukhf*
Their muses would pray to mine

[XVI]

And elsewhere:

O you who fault my
blatant admission of debauchery

And a foolishness which soils
my style of composition

It is with *sukhf*'s precious commodities
that my market flourishes amongst people[61]

[XVII]

While most of these "punctuations" and references to *sukhf* were practical responses to literary slander, they can and should be read as "authorial statements" to use Fowler's term;[62] a branding or conscious poetic labeling of sorts. There is also sufficient evidence to prove that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's impact anchors *sukhf* and links it more specifically to what he himself does in his poetry and thus stabilizes its meaning as obscenity and scatology.[63]

In the standard lexicons, *sukhf* is mostly related antithetically to the realm of the intellect and, thus, *sakhīf* is "shallow-minded," "foolish," "frivolous," or "silly."[64] These could be functioning as euphemisms for "obscene," which is the primary realm in which *sukhf* operates. It is not always easy to discern clearly which is meant. An important definition for our purposes is the one offered by Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008) in his *rasāʾil* about the *sakhīf* being "one who is heedless about the consequences to him of what he does" . . . a definition similar to that offered of *mādjin* by Ibn Manẓūr."[65]

In *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, al-ʿAskarī writes the following in commenting on the misuse of diction and the use of *gharīb* words by some poets: "*dalla ʿalā sakhāfati ʿaqlih*" ([it] indicates his shallow-mindedness).[66] But he also uses the verb *sakhufa* to describe meaning (*maʿnā*): "*wa lā khayra fī mā ujīda lafẓuhu idhā sakhufa maʿnāh*" (There is no good in having sound wording, but frivolous meaning).[67] In the section dealing with *hijāʾ* (invective) in *Dīwān al-maʿānī*,[68] obscene lines by Ibn al-Rūmī (221–283/836–896) are described as "*sakhīfa*."[69] The designation is used again in commenting on lines also by Ibn al-Rūmī describing a singing-girl (*qayna*):

> So stinky, she is like a [clove of] garlic
> although her color is that of a citron
>
> Her anus is like a [piece of] coal
> on which a frivolous man sprinkled his snow[70]
>
> [XVIII]

He adds: ". . . and they are obscene verses, most of which I have left out due to their obscenity (*wa-hiya abyāt sakhīfa taraktu aktharahā lisukhfih*).[71] Al-ʿAskarī justifies his inclusion of such obscenities as follows:

> Were it not for my intention to collect the choicest motifs I would have left out these outrageous utterances in poetry and prose, but if scholars were to refrain from quoting obscene poetry, they would lose many

benefits and advantages like [the ones in] the poetry of al-Farazdaq, Jarīr, al-Baʿīth, al-Akhṭal and others. Were it not acceptable to mention genitalia explicitly [*al-furūj bitaṣrīḥ asmāʾihā*], then the lexicographers doing so would have been wrong and that is impossible.[72]

*Mujūn* and *sukhf* were allotted some space in anthologies and adab works. The eighteenth night of al-Tawḥīdī's *al-Imtāʿ wal-muʾānasa* is devoted to *mujūn* as its opening section informs us:

He [Ibn Saʿdān] once said: come let us make this night of ours one of *mujūn* and indulge in much jest [*naʾkhudhu min al-hazli binaṣībin wāfir*], for seriousness has tired us, beaten our energies and filled us with sadness. Give us what you have.[73]

The overlap with both *sukhf* and *hazl* is evident. *Hazl* is invoked in the previous excerpt and most of the *akhbār* (narratives) and excerpts of poetry included in this chapter can justly be categorized as *sukhf* material. They range from anecdotes about cross-dressers (*mukhannathūn*) to anal intercourse, sodomy, scatology, *kudya* (begging), and Ramaḍān bashing. Here are a few examples:

A man asked Ruʾba [Ibn al-ʿAjjāj] (d. 145/762): do you place a *hamza* on *khurʾ* [shit]? He said: [yes] with your finger, you son of a wicked one.[74]

"al-Shaʿbī[75] was asked: Is it permissible to pray in a church? He said: Yes, and [permissible] to shit [there] too."[76]

"Naḍla [?] said: I entered a public water stop in al-Karkh and I performed the ablutions. When I came out its attendant latched on to me and said: Give us something, so I farted and said: Let me go, for I have annulled my ablutions. He laughed and let me go."[77]

The following is an example of *kudya* (begging poetry) where in lieu of the traditional ruins of encampments, the poets address pots, and rather than the usual reunion with the beloved, he desires a meal:

Salute the immovable pots!
Even if they be too mute to speak

And [salute] their large bowls when they
come to you brimful of food

My heart goes out to vinegar-stewed meat
That heals hearts from their malady[78]

[XIX]

Another *kudya* excerpt by Abū Firʿawn [al-Sāsī], a famous *kudya* poet,[79] is also included. In this one, the misery of the poet (or his persona) is expressed by resorting to scatology:

> For some time now lice have made a pact with my beard
> I am so emaciated my fart is weakened
>
> My testicles feed on my trousers
> God damn my kind of life[80]
>
> [XX]

The importance of these examples for our purposes is that such themes were the threads that *sukhf* weaves together in various combinations. We have a parody of classical motifs (in the *kudya* excerpt), mockery of religion and religious practices, and sexual and scatological themes. The chapter in *al-Imtāʿ* ends with a nod of approval by the vizier Ibn Saʿdān, who tells his interlocutor al-Tawḥīdī: give preference to this style over others [*qaddim hādhā l-fanna ʿalā ghayrih*].

Almost a century later, we find *mujūn* and *sukhf* coupled in the title of the sixteenth chapter of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ* (The Apt Quotables of the Literati).[81] Some of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's lines are included. Al-Ābī's (d. 421/1030) *Nathr al-durr* (Scattering Pearls)[82] has *mujūn*/*sukhf* sections as well.

In his *al-Wasāṭa bayna al-Mutanabbī wa khuṣūmih* (The Mediation between Al-Mutanabbī and His Opponents), al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī[83] (d. 391/1001) exemplifies one other use of *sukhf* as a negative term for bad or weak wording or wording that is incongruous with the topic or theme it is meant to convey. This is a corollary to his advice to poets earlier in this work to

> spread the wording according to motifs/topics, so that your love poetry must not be like your boast, nor your praise like your threatening [*waʿīd*] . . . nor your jest like your seriousness . . . describing warfare and weapons is not like describing a boon session or wine. Each of the two has a path to which it is more appropriate and a way which the other does not share.[84]

This, in a way, serves as a perfect, albeit reversed, definition of one central dimension of *sukhf*. For it is precisely what al-Jurjānī is advising poets not to do that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj revels in doing time and again. Namely, injecting "disorder into the [literary] system" to use Kilito's phrase, by intentionally confusing registers and dictions so that it becomes difficult to distinguish between modes. There are subsections of examples in *al-Wasāṭa* where Abū

Nuwās, Abū Tammām, and al-Mutanabbī are all shown to have misused the appropriate diction or wording. *Sukhf* is mostly attributed to *alfāẓ* (words or wording) and seems to mean "frivolous" or "shallow" and is not related to obscenity or scatology.[85] Thus, the various shades of meanings of *sukhf* and its adjectival forms seem to be apt designations for what Ibn al-Ḥajjāj does in and with his poetry. In addition to the obvious "obscene" and "scatological," we have "unreasonable," "silly," "heedless," "frivolous," and "shallow-minded." All of these are interrelated, for explicit mention of scatological and very obscene matters is universally foolish and reckless, but so is using inappropriate wording, jumbling and mixing high and low diction, and violating literary and social conventions and expectations. While accurately describing *sukhf* and its effects, perhaps one can suggest that exteriorizing *sukhf* to the realm of the "frivolous" was a strategy on the part of some critics to deem it unworthy in order to not have to deal with it at length. While more often applied to *alfāẓ* (words and wording), at times the designation is used for *maʿānī* (meanings, topics, or motifs). It is interesting to note the tendency to couple *mujūn* with Abū Nuwās and *sukhf* with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (as both al-Ṣafadī and al-Qalqashandī did for example). This is reflective of a difference in degree in terms of the use of obscene and scatological themes and diction, with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj going to the extreme, whereas Abū Nuwās toyed with them without obsessing as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj did. Abū Nuwās was ultimately mainstreamed by modern critics and successive Arab publishers who excised much of his extremely obscene poetry, at least until very recently[86] and tried to project and attach a repentance of sorts to his biography. To sum up, *sukhf* is obscene and scatological parody that also encompasses frivolous, intentionally irrational, and blasphemous elements.

### *Hazl*

In addition to its frequent mention in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry, *hazl* (jest) is an important literary category under which *sukhf* is at times subsumed and with which it often overlaps. Like *sukhf*, *hazl* is

> not easily defined . . . it is not identical with "humour" "joking," or "the comical," nor with "nonsense," "folly" or "playfulness," even though there is considerable overlap with all these. *Hazl* is a concept with fuzzy edges, and any attempt to define it is doomed to fail.[87]

Often coupled with *jidd* (seriousness) to form a topos, the concept has roots in the tradition and even appears in the Qurʾān, but was

established and perfected in *adab* early on by al-Jāḥiẓ (160–255/776–868).[88] He expounds on it in his *Risāla fī ʿl-jidd wal-hazl and al-Tarbīʿ wal-tadwīr*. Some detractors notwithstanding, the predominant consensus was that "a judicious mixture" of both was desirable in *adab*.[89] There seems to have been a general tendency favoring minimum overlap between, and confusion of, *jidd* and *hazl* and that, ideally, they should be juxtaposed and neatly separated.[90] While largely adhered to in *adab*, these prescriptions are often violated and blurred "in the lighter forms of poetry and especially in invective or satirical poetry."[91] Even al-Jāḥiẓ himself condemned combining low subjects with high diction and stressed that "silly (*sakhīf*) words are fitting for silly thoughts," but he flouted this rule in his own writings.[92] Al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī's warning against mixing modes was already mentioned earlier. At the outset of his *al-Baṣāʾir wal-dhakhāʾir* (Insights and Treasures), al-Tawḥīdī highlights the importance of *hazl* and warns against discarding it altogether: Beware not to refrain from listening to these things that are full of *hazl* and *sukhf*, for if you were to reject them entirely, your understanding would be lacking.[93]

Al-Taftāzānī's (d. 791–797/1389–1395) definition of *hazl* as "something employed in a sense contrary to convention (*an yurād bi-l-shayʾ mā lam yūḍaʿ lahu*)"[94] is the most interesting for our purposes. This is, by and large, what Ibn al-Ḥajjāj does to literary conventions, motifs, and diction by redeploying them for entirely different and novel ends. The parasitical function of *hazl* here seems to be very close and almost identical to parody. *Jidd* and *hazl* are not addressed seriously and extensively until Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī (608–84/1211–1285).[95] His views on this issue are aptly summarized by van Gelder.[96] The most important points are his general division of styles into *jidd* and *hazl* with the latter linked, of course, to *mujūn* and *sukhf* (*wa ammā ṭarīqat al-hazl faʾinnahā madhhab fī ʿl-kalām taṣdur al-aqāwīl fīh ʿan mujūn wa sukhf binizāʿ al-himmah wal-hawā ilā dhālik*)[97] and his recognition of *hazl*'s parasitical relationship to and effects on *jidd*. Particularly significant is the topic of diction where the characteristics are a "low style, employing the vocabulary of vagabonds, wanton people, those of humble occupations, women and children."[98] While cautioning against using words in modes that are inappropriate for them, he makes an exception for *sukhf* and *hazl* and mentions Ibn al-Ḥajjāj as an example:

> When it occurs in the poetry of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his kind, those who specialize in jesting and bawdiness, it is approvable and praiseworthy in relation to its style.[99]

Van Gelder concludes that al-Qarṭājannī's tolerant view must have been derived from Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī (422–466/1031–1074) who had a similarly positive view of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj:

> Abū ʿAbdullāh Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, although his poetry contains many words not fitting in a serious context, used them in a filthy context; therefore they are good, not ugly.[100]

A passage referenced in van Gelder, but not quoted or translated, is the following:

> The poetry of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj has been faulted for its inclusion of obscene motifs and it is not so for me. For composition in an obscene motif is like composing in a beautiful (*jamīl*) motif. What is required in each of them is the soundness of the motif and that of the wording. The fact that the motif (*maʿnā*) is, in and of itself, obscene or beautiful has no bearing on composition.[101]

Thus, this premodern critic who lived more than a millennium ago reminds us, like many premodern critics before him, that irrespective of the content, what matters in evaluating poetry is craftsmanship.[102]

## Modern Views

A few exceptions notwithstanding, modern critics have been neither as generous nor as sober as most of their premodern predecessors in dealing with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf*. In reviewing al-Tawḥīdī's *al-Risāla al-baghdādiyya* whose narrator, as already mentioned, was probably modeled after Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetic persona, Margoliouth questioned the worth of such content for scholarly attention. This Pavlovian reaction was to be repeated by most of the scholars, Arabs and non-Arabs alike, who even bothered to mention Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

Adam Mez, however, stands out as the first, and one of the very few, to recognize Ibn al-Ḥajjāj as a major poet and accord him his rightful place among his contemporaries and in the canon as a unique parodist. He quotes excerpts from al-Thaʿālibī's *Yatīma* and translates some of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's verses observing:

> Like one freed from some unwelcome restraint, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj rejoices in and boasts of his license . . . but his filth never worried his contemporaries . . . He calls everything by its right name . . . his *diwan* brings together a whole heap of expressions from the colloquial language of the Baghdad

> of the 4th/10th century. For him the traditional poetic model exists only to be parodied . . . and through the mist of filth shine here and there the stars of the night which manifestly made his contemporaries regard this utterer of obscenities as a poet of great distinction.[103]
>
> Thus in the fourth/tenth century Sanaubari [*sic*] and Mutanabbī, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's and ar-Riḍā [*sic*] stand side by side—each at the very height of his own sphere, gazing from one high, at the unfolding centuries of Arabic literature.[104]

Indeed, we have seen how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* was to become a trend in the centuries following his death. This is confirmed by ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir in his comprehensive study of Arabic poetry in the Saljūq period (429–590/1038–1194).[105] *In addition to his more famous disciple Ibn al-Habbāriyya, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj had significant influence on al-Bāriʿ (443–524/1041–1130)*,[106] *Murajjā*,[107] *Ibn al-Qaṭṭān*[108] (477–548/1085–1163), and Shayṭān al-ʿIrāq (sixth/twelfth century).[109] Al-Ṭāhir included a paragraph on *sukhf* in this book:

> The most salient features of *sukhf* are mentioning all manner of sexual and scatological matters that are unacceptable in general morals and also toying with the sacred and religions. Laughter is one of its objectives. This frivolity of topics is coupled with a frivolity in style, for it intentionally uses lowliness [*rakāka*] which brings it closer to the vulgar language of daily life. It also makes intentional use of all types of vocabulary including non-poetic, colloquial and even foreign, at times. This *sukhf* had precedents in the pre-Būyid periods, but there is almost a consensus that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is the leader of this school, if not its originator.[110]

As a prelude to this work, which was the culmination of his graduate studies at the Sorbonne, al-Ṭāhir edited al-Asṭurlābī's *Durrat al-tāj min shʿir Ibn al- Ḥajjāj*.[111]

Al-Ṭāhir's positive and nuanced view of *sukhf* is obvious, but returning to work in Iraq in the 1950s, he probably knew that the stakes would be too high for his career if he were to associate his name with this risky topic. Moreover, he feared that even if he published this work it might be censored and face obstacles in distribution in most Arab countries. A number of publishers accepted and promised to publish *Durrat al-tāj*, but later reneged.[112] In Chapter Six titled "*al-Sukhf wal-hijāʾ wal-ghazal bil-mudhakkar wal-khamr*" (*sukhf*, invective, male to male love poems and wine poems), al-Ṭāhir wrote, "while we now have enough examples of this *sukhf* poetry to devote a separate chapter to them, we do not dare study them, but prefer to point to them without mentioning any examples."[113]

Of the same generation as al-Ṭāhir but of a very different approach is Shawqī Ḍayf, whose attitude is typical of the great majority of Arab scholars when dealing with the cultural past, especially if the subject of sex is involved. A disfigured understanding of the Arab-Islamic past produced a desire to cleanse and purify the cultural past from all that is deemed unproductive and unedifying. In his history of Arabic literature,[114] he attributes the appearance of *mujūn* to the social decadence caused by foreign (Persian) influence and devotes two pages to a stern condemnation of both Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Ibn Sukkara. While he acknowledges their talent and importance, he is at a loss as to why they composed in the *sukhf* style:

> This libertinism caused there to appear poems whose composers were not embarrassed to mention genitalia . . . and we are amazed today that that would be taken as a way of jest and entertainment for people, as if they had no other means to entertain themselves . . . This poetry was chock-full of *sukhf* and this *sukhf* was not due to mentioning wine, but also descriptions of debauchery and the unabashed mention of sins. Those who were behind this were Ibn Sukkara and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in the fourth century.[115]

C. E. Bosworth ends up reaching the same conclusion on similarly nonliterary, but rather moral, grounds ("pornography" is grossly inaccurate in categorizing Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry):

> It is in the Islamic world of the 3rd/9th century that a definite interest in low life and in the vulgar, even criminal, elements of the population appears. The new trend was undoubtedly related to the progress of urbanization and sophistication of life in this period . . . The reverse of these qualities was now exemplified in *sukhf*, scurrilousness and shamelessness, and *mujūn*, levity and scoffing, which begin to intrude into the themes of Arabic literature. In the field of poetry, this development is particularly associated with Waliba b. al-Ḥubāb (d. 170/786–7) and his pupil Abū Nuwās (d. 198–813) . . . and reaches its peak in such a figure as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.[116]
>
> The supreme pornographer of the ṣāhib's age and arch-exponent of *sukhf*, scurrilousness and shamelessness in literature, and *mujūn*, levity and scoffing, was the notorious Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥusain b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 391/1001). There had always been a vein of earthiness and obscenity in Arabic literature from the earliest of known times. The Bedouin poets of Jāhiliyya and the Umayyad period used scabrous enough language in their satires against rival poets and tribes, as the *Naqāʾiḍ* [of] Jarīr and Farazdaq amply demonstrate, but this coarseness seems of a piece with the harsh life of the desert environment, untempered by any of the refinements of

> civilized life. As such it does not grate intolerably, but seems the natural corollary of a way of existence that was often nasty, brutish and short. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, on the other hand, used the language of the dregs of urban society, the Baghdad slums, and he appears to us as a pure pornographer, delighting in his filth and his ability to shock; his poems are acres of dreary obscenity, eulogies of unnatural vice, unredeemed by what would appear to us as stylishness or wit.
>
> He boasts outright of his impudence and scatology as being positive virtues and as embodying a salutary reaction against the bland and coarseless sentimentality of other poets.[117]

What is interesting about Bosworth's take is that he recognizes that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* was a "culmination" of a trend already discernible in earlier periods and that it is responding to certain fossilized forms and topics, but he nevertheless fails to appreciate the importance of parody and deems Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's obscenity "unnatural." Of al-Thaʿālibī's oft-quoted line about Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's popularity and the rewards his poetry brought him, Bosworth says that "this seems to be regrettably true."[118]

Abdelfattah Kilito, in *al-Maqāmāt: al-sard wal-ansāq al-thaqāfiyya* (The *Maqāmāt*: Narration and Cultural Patterns) was the first scholar to publicly lament the absence of any studies dealing with *hazl*, especially in poetry, and to call for remedying this state of affairs. "The ancients were less strict than us," he says of the scholars and critics of Arabic literature writing today.[119] He observes that the current cultural climate in the Arabic-speaking world has no use for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's irreverence and lightheartedness:

> If Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is forgotten, it is because his poems do not reproduce that image of Arab culture desired today. No textbook, on the other hand, can afford to ignore the likes of Abū Firās [al-Ḥamdānī](320–357/932–968) and al-Mutanabbī, who glorify war and represent a reverent image of the past.[120]

Kilito praises Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's masterful manipulation and parody of the tradition to "contradict or change its meaning . . . what distinguishes him, first and foremost, is irreverence and unexpected reactions . . . He calmly injects disorder into the heart of the literary system. Tradition is indeed reflected in his verses, but it appears disfigured, deconstructed, barely discernible."[121] Elsewhere, Kilito stresses that studying Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and other *hazl* poets "would shed much light not only on *hazl* itself, but also on *jidd* and transform our view of classical literature."[122]

The Egyptian scholar Abdelghafur El-Aswad wrote a thesis at the University of Giessen in 1977, providing a partial edition of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poems ending in the rhyme-letter *nūn* and a concise introduction about the meager extant biographical information.[123]

The first and only lengthy study of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry was completed in 1986 and submitted to SOAS at the University of London by Hashim Manna.[124] The unpublished thesis falls into two parts, the first of which is a study of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's "life and verse." The second (which occupies volumes two and three) is a critical edition of the last part of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *dīwān* (6,116 lines from *mīm* to *yāʾ*). The latter part of Manna is a most important and welcome contribution to the field (if it can be called so). It provides, for the first time, a large number of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poems, especially the longer panegyrics, and thus enables future scholars to closely examine his techniques. While informative in certain parts, Manna's own study leaves much to be desired. The first chapter, "Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's life and times," dwells on the sociopolitical atmosphere of the Būyid period, a topic already saturated by many studies. It does, however, collect the surprisingly few details we have about Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's life. The main thrust of the remainder of the thesis is to demonstrate that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj far from being only a poet who engaged in "pornographic" themes, as Manna calls them, was able to compose in all of the genres. Manna, in effect, restates the case already made by the premodern critics and chooses examples to show Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's mastery of rhetorical devices. It is understandable that Manna would want to show that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was fluent and comfortable in other modes. However, while not Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's only style, *sukhf* was his great achievement and masterpiece; however, Manna does not focus sufficiently on it and tiptoes around the topic. The choice of terminology and unconscious acceptance of the "pornographic" label causes him to miss the parodic dimension at the heart of *sukhf*, leading him, at times, to miss the jokes in the poems. Finally, while the molecular approach has its benefits, there is no discussion whatsoever of the unique manipulation of the structure of the traditional *qaṣīda* by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and how he was able, for example, to integrate *sukhf* into *madīḥ*.

Aside from Manna, there is no study focusing on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj or *sukhf*, except for a short article by Julie Scott Meisami titled "Arabic Mujūn Poetry: The Literary Dimension."[125] Meisami laments the gross neglect suffered by *mujūn* and its treatment as light entertainment by most scholars and calls for approaching it from literary perspectives rather than sociohistorical ones that end up short-shrifting the literary

games involved. She then notes the importance of the antiheroic persona of the *mujūn* poet and how that leads to *mujūn* being a counter-genre that inverts literary conventions.[126] The article concludes with a partial reading of a *madīḥ* (panegyric) Ibn al-Ḥajjāj composed for Bahāʾ al-Dawla (379–403/989–1012) and shows how it parodies and vulgarizes traditional literary conventions. While an important contribution and a reminder of how grossly under-researched parody is in the field of Arabic literature, what is a bit disappointing, but perhaps unsurprising, is that Meisami chooses to gloss over the scatological section in the poem. Moreover, one cannot but object to her disdain for the suggestion that sociopolitical forces might have had any influence on poetic production, in the case of *mujūn/sukhf*. It is true that viewing cultural production as entirely conditioned by sociopolitical forces is faulty, but so is viewing it as a literary game immune from these very forces. Perhaps the most productive approach is to view poetic production, like all cultural production, as an interface of sorts, reflecting, simultaneously, its own internal evolution but also being constantly influenced by social and political institutions. Muṣṭafā al-Tawātī provides a more nuanced approach to the sociology of cultural production in the Būyid period.[127] Al-Tawātī adopts a Gramscian approach to cultural production and is keen on exploring the socioeconomic milieu of the period and the class conditions of "intellectuals." His survey examines the various ways in which the makers of culture responded to the political climate of the day. While this is certainly much more promising than most previous approaches, it nevertheless ends up, at times, falling into the old trap. The prevalence of *sukhf*, for example, and of its use of colloquial and vulgar expressions is attributed to a general cultural decline, not only in socioeconomic conditions but in taste as well, caused by the fact that the Būyids were themselves of modest origins. While the few pages he devotes to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf* are a refreshing departure from the usual moral verdicts, he, alas, ends up misreading *sukhf* and underestimating its complexity as parody. Its excesses and approach end up being comparable to "pornographic film."[128]

## *Hijāʾ* (Invective)

There is no doubt the *hijāʾ* mode is one of the main tributaries of *sukhf*.[129] However, the few who have alluded to *hijāʾ*'s influence have only mentioned the coarse and obscene language and grotesque imagery that is redeployed in *sukhf*. While true, there is more to it. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Ibn Sukkara traded first-rate invectives, which drew comparisons to the *naqāʾiḍ* (flytings) of Jarīr (ca. 33–111/653–729) and al-Farazdaq

(ca. 20–110/640–728).[130] However, the most important precedent set by *hijāʾ*, especially from the *muḥdathūn* (modern poets) period, is probably the incongruous combination of *nasīb* and *hijāʾ* and the abrupt transitions within one poem from the former to the latter.[131] The cohabitation of these two modes in particular provided a model for someone like Ibn al-Ḥajjāj to try even more daring and jarring combinations of *aghrāḍ* (motifs), as this study will show. So much so that in many of his panegyrics, the typical diction and topoi of *hijāʾ* spill over entirely into the *nasīb*. Moreover, one of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's most important innovations is reshuffling the grotesque imagery of a *hijāʾ*'s victim(s) or subject(s) and applying it instead to the figure of the beloved in the *nasīb* section of many of his poems. Yet another innovative shift was exploiting this same repertoire in the *raḥīl* section of his panegyrics whereby the symbolic arrival at the feet of the *mamdūḥ* (patron) comes not after the poetic persona's arduous journey through a barren valley, but rather after encountering a hyperbolically disfigured and grotesque female body. This innovation earned him an appearance as one of the most unique poets in *barāʿat al-takhallus*; moving seamlessly from the opening motif to the poem's telos.[132] Aside from the longer panegyrics and *sukhf* poems, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's extant poetry boasts a large number of well-crafted invectives, the most famous of which are the ones he composed against Ibn Sukkara and al-Mutanabbī.[133] As stated earlier, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj mined the established repertoire of *hijāʾ* and the influence of its masters Jarīr and al-Farazdaq is easily discernible in his poetry. Another direct influence is that of Ibn al-Rūmī's own style of *hijāʾ* with its microscopic focus on and relish in exposing physical defects.[134]

## Phallegy: Abū Ḥukayma's *Rithāʾ al-matāʿ*

The extant poetry of Abū Ḥukayma (Rāshid b. Isḥāq b. Rāshid al-Kātib, d. 239–240/854)[135] represents a significant phase in the development of parodic modes and, thus, of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's putative literary genealogy. His *dīwān* is indeed "the link we were missing between the *mujūn* of Abū Nuwās and the *sukhf* of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj."[136] One quickly recognizes a number of parallels and important strategies from which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj later benefited, as well as tropes he further developed in his own poetry.[137]

Although not a major poet, Abū Ḥukayma's poetry is excerpted in many an anthology and has secured him his rightful place in the standard biographical dictionaries.[138] His claim to fame in the tradition is for devoting his entire career and oeuvre as a poet (he was, as his name informs us, a *kātib* and this is reflected in his frequent use of metaphors related to writing and manuscripts)[139] to "elegizing his cock," or rather its

lost virility (*rathā matāʿahu bimā lam yajiʾ aḥadun bimithlih)* [he elegized his cock in such a way none other had]. *So much so that* in al-Thaʿālibī's *Thimār al-qulūb*, his cock is proverbial "because of how much he praised its past and dispraised its aftermath, describing its weakness, limpness and failure . . . he spent his poetry on that."[140] Ibn al-Muʿtazz includes an anecdote that shows Abū Ḥukayma's consciousness and sense of ownership of this mode,[141] like Ibn al-Ḥajjāj with *sukhf*. When Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir recited a phallegy[142] of his own to Abū Ḥukayma,[143] the latter is said to have responded as follows:

> By God, I have no counterpart in this style, and I have distinguished myself in it amongst all people. I hereby pledge to God and he shall hold me accountable if I ever compose anything in this style again.[144]

In referring to impotence we are, of course, speaking of the poetic persona, but there is a tendency among premodern critics and even contemporary scholars to conflate the poetic persona with the poet himself. There is no consensus in the sources over whether Abū Ḥukayma's phallegies were merely a clever move to establish a new mode, or indeed a reflection of actual impotence. There is no way to ascertain this beyond doubt, but it is of no bearing on the poetry itself. However, it is worth pointing out as this is almost a recurring "default" attitude toward other poets who write in similar modes (the "clinical" approach to Abū Nuwās and also Ibn al-Ḥajjāj being a case in point; i.e, seeing the poetry as a symptom of the poet's personal life and producing studies that attempt to subject Abu Nuwās to psychology (al-Nuwayhī) and Pellat's suggestion that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj had a split personality, being at once a family man, yet capable of writing such obscene poetry).[145]

Some of the sources suggest that Abū Ḥukayma resorted to this mode to counter an accusation of *liwāṭ* (homosexuality). Al-Aʿrajī points out that this alone "cannot explain why he would compose forty poems and that one or two would have sufficed. It is rather that *mujūn* was part of the zeitgeist."[146] Moreover, the stiff competition dictated by the presence of such major poets such as Abū Tammām (189–232/805–845) and al-Buḥturī (206–284/821–897) precluded finding a profitable market by following the *jidd* style. These factors and Abū Ḥukayma's desire to produce something utterly different and even bizarre *ighrāb* (use of rare and uncommon words or style) must have led him to come up, so to speak, with his *ayriyyāt*.

Abū Ḥukayma did compose a few poems in *jidd* (serious) modes (three "proper" elegies for the vizier al-Faḍl b. Marwān (d. 250/864) and for a

servant, one poem on old age, three *dhamm* (dispraise) poems on Egypt, and an invective on his servant).[147]

The ʿAbbāsid age, especially its initial phases, was one of specialization par excellence and it witnessed the rise and development of various minor modes.[148] There were, to be sure, already many variations on *rithāʾ* in which the elegized was a nonhuman entity.[149] However, the great majority of these were composed in the *jidd* mode and were not meant to be parodies of *rithāʾ* proper.[150] What interests us here are parodies of *rithāʾ* with sexual and scatological overtones that are of relevance to *sukhf*.

Abū Ḥukayma's particular way of parodying *rithāʾ* introduced an important subversion by personifying the phallus and making it both the subject and object of the *marthiya*.[151] This move, in and of itself, opened the way for potential fusion of hitherto uncommon groupings of motifs and also produced a number of other "inverted" tropes that were highly productive for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*. This serves as a perfect example of "topics and motifs wrenched out of context to supply material for a new type of poetry."[152]

First, it combined for the first time two traditionally incongruous topics (*mujūn* and *rithāʾ*) in a single context (and also *madīḥ* in one instance discussed in the following).[153] This meant appropriating the diction and repertoire of *rithāʾ* for sexual themes and turning its serious and sombre tone and function into a comical one by making it a topic for *mujūn*:

1. O ye cock, many a tear of mine
shed over you can be seen trickling down

2. I bemoaned you while you were still alive
and penned elegies like strung pearls
...

3. When people remember their dead
I remember you sad and frowning

4. I rise up with the wailing women
striking my cheeks and tearing my garments over you[154]

5. Recounting your good days
Crying over your bygone life

6. I see you hiding from time submissively
Subdued like one who's been oppressed

7. No spot left in you for a pleasure seeker
to be lucky in

8. You've been crushed after me, but has there ever been
a cock that wasn't crushed?

9. Where are your good stances?
Have they been swept away by a fateful event?[155]

[XXI]

The *rithāʾ* repertoire is almost perfect for this type of parody. So much so that in most of the poems, one or two lines of explicit mention of the "*ayr*" (cock) are sufficient to shift the entire tone and produce a subtle extended allusion (*kināya*) and many puns. In the quoted example, line 1 starts with a very comical direct address to the *ayr* (in lieu of the elegized human), which sets the parody in motion. The stock metaphor of poetry as strung pearls in line 2 is probably also an allusion to the image of "ejaculation." Lines 3 and 4 are typical, except for the fact that a male would never join the public display of mourning and wailing, nor the striking of the cheeks, usually reserved for women. The use of "*qumtu*" (I rise up) and later "*mawāqifuka*" (your stances) highlights the "dead" cock.

The diction and entire repertoire of the fallen warrior and battle imagery fits perfectly for the impotent cock as we shall see later. The discourse of warfare, being phallocentric and penetrative, allows for extensive punning: *wāqiʿa*, battle; *wāqaʿa*, to copulate with; *ḥiṣn*, fortress; *muḥṣanāt*: chaste women; *manīʿi*, fortified; *tamannuʿ*, rejection in erotic parlance; *iqbāl wa-ʾidbār*, charging forth and retreating; *dubr* (back) *ṭaʿn*, stabbing and so on.

## Phallus as *Ṭalal*

The *ṭalal* (Trace) motif is handled in a novel way in Abū Ḥukayma's poetry. The poetic persona has no desire to cry over the *aṭlāl* of olden times, because he has experienced the ravages of fate and time in a much more personal and immediate way that is visible in his own body. Hence, some of Abū Ḥukayma's phallegies start with an anti-*aṭlāl* (in the Nuwāsian sense) or anti-*nasīb* motif, but instead of turning to a bacchic scene as in the *khamriyya* (wine poem) or to a *raḥīl* (journey) (which is out of the question for an ex-hero or antihero) as in the other types and variations of *qaṣīda*, there is a parody of the *ubi sunt* imbued with the *rithāʾ* mode.

Here is one example:

1. Cry not for the departing caravans leaving in the evening or early morning
And do not keep asking the departing women: whereto?

2. Halt not at abodes where no human is left
. . .

3. Let your eye cry for an unstirring cock instead
One whose main [body] is arched, parts loose

4. He loves beautiful women so its parts loosen
As if it is a piece of leather touched by rain

5. The beautiful woman gets up angry
Having neither desire nor wish fulfilled

6. Salmā kept moving it for a desire [she had]
But it was neither of harm nor benefit

7. When it bent/became crooked, she said as she squeezed it:
Why is this bow without a string?

8. Then she started to wail for its paralysis
Just as one wails for those whom the graves hide

9. She did not forgive it its sleep and neglect of her
Never! Such a crime is unforgivable

10. When it crouches on its testicle it is like
An old man whose every part bespeaks old age

11. Diminishing, almost invisible to the eye
When yesterday it was huge and not inconspicuous[156]

[XXII]

The first two lines are typical anti-*aṭlāl*/*nasīb*, but line 3 triggers the parody which will invite other motifs as well. Instead of the Nuwāsian "*wa-'shrab*" (drink!), for example, we have "*wa-l-tabki*" (cry!) typically employed in the *rithā'*, but over a "dead" cock in this instance. Line 6 introduces Salmā (one of the stock names often used in the tradition) who, at first, seems to resemble the teasing beloved (reminiscent of the dialogues of Ḥijāzī *ghazal*). "*Taghmizuhū*" can be read both as "winking," but also "squeezing." The next line will reinforce the second meaning. Upon discovering the limpness, she assumes the persona of the wailing woman of *rithā'*.

Like the *ṭalal* itself, the cock, too, is a victim of fate and the ravages of time. It is often likened to a *shaykh* (old man) or an effaced script. The *ṭalal* simile often comes toward the end of the poem, either ending it or preceding a line of *ḥikma* (wisdom):

I cry over you, not over a trace
at al-Ruqmatāni or Dhū Salam[157]

[XXIII]

Invisible to the eye [so much so] that I compare it
to the script of an effaced book

Like a camp's trace whose features are effaced
Wear and tear have left nothing of it[158]

[XXIV]

The following is another poem where an anti-*aṭlāl* section precedes the phallegy:

1. The tribe's loss should not make you feel lonesome, if they leave
Let them go, for each lost one you will find another

2. Cry not over a trace at Dhī Salam
Let not your boredom remind you of your youth days

3. Do not halt among traces of encampments inquiring
For traces will never answer

4. Let your eye, instead, cry over an unstirring cock
Neither aroused by touching, nor by kisses
. . .

5. Nothing left of it but worn-out skin folds
Like traces effaced by bygone times

. . .
6. They turned his fortunes around after they had been straight
And the fortunes of kingdoms might turn
. . .

7. Recount his deeds of yesteryear and cry
For that is your worry and not saddles (she camels) and camels![159]

[XXV]

There is a pun in the last line: *manāqibahu* means "virtues, memorable and generous actions," but is also a plural of *naqb* and *nuqba*: "hole, perforation, or road between two mountains." Taking into consideration the martial diction appropriated for sexual allusions, the meaning is clearer: the orifices conquered by the cock in its heyday.

In addition to adopting Abū Ḥukayma's impotence motif and using it extensively, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj added another unique twist to the parody of *aṭlāl*. Instead of the phallus, the *ṭalal* is the anus of the parodied beloved and it is the poet's cock, rather than his eyes, that sheds the tears:

Peace be upon you O ʿĀtika's two farting places
Rest assured that you are the reason for [my] misfortune

My cock cries tears for you, startled
Its testicles lacerated and bloodied from them [farting places][160]

[XXVI]

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj extends Abū Ḥukayma's motifs and takes them to their (il)logical ends, if one may use such a term. Two of the salient motifs fused together by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj are the "cock as warrior" and "woman's body as arduous terrain"; they come together in many of his poems. In the excerpt above, for example, the cock is wounded because of its skirmishes and the afflictions and misfortunes caused by ʿĀtika's grotesque body.

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's style will be discussed at length in the following chapters, but suffice it to say here that, in general, the motifs used by Abū Ḥukayma are often expanded and made much more complex, irreverent, and extreme, especially in terms of their scatological content. In Abū Ḥukayma's poems there are scant references in one or two lines at the most and they revolve mainly around describing the cock as having only retained its urinary function after losing the sexual. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, on the other hand, dwells on scatological matters.

The following are excerpts from Abū Ḥukayma:

You were a fucking spear
[But] now you have become a pissing down spout[161]

[XXVII]

It sleeps when its dream comes true
[But] is erect in the bathroom when none is there but me[162]

[XXVIII]

You are perplexed when thrown into battle
[But] erect and never soft in the bathroom

You combine limpness and softness
As if you were a wrung rag

Were it not for pissing I wouldn't shelter you
and would hasten to rid the earth of a eunuch[163]

[XXIX]

By contrast, the following is an example from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj:

1. She said, as my cock, with its waistwrapper loose,
was like a shroudless dead man:

2. There you go struggling, old man,
to get this decrepit cripple to rise up

3. Never! Leave it, perhaps you can piss with it
like the billy-goats piss on the dung heaps

4. I said: how long can a man of sixty go on fucking?
And how long will the water of intercourse trickle from my body?

5. Even the waters of the Euphrates would vanish
If, for six years, they were bled into a jug

6. [It was] an excuse I needed, out of humiliation
I could have done without it, were it not for that uncircumcised woman[164]

[XXX]

The cock as a shroudless dead man in the second line is a direct appropriation from Abū Ḥukayma. So is the mild scatological tidbit in the third line. This excerpt brings us to another traditional motif that is parodied in *sukhf* and that is traditional *ghazal* dialogues. These conversations hark back to the classical amorous and erotic conversations preserved in the tradition such as, for example, the one in the *muʿallaqa* of Imruʾ al-Qays (6th century) or those that punctuate the poetry of ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa (23–93/644–712). In *sukhf*, however, all is topsy-turvy. Even if the female beloved is young and desirable as she traditionally is, the poetic persona is impotent and/or a very old man. The poetic persona invokes the topos of time and decay. In lines 4–6, he replies to the woman's ridicule by saying that even the Euphrates would eventually dry if it were to be milked for 60 years. The other topos employed is that of a *shaykh* and his old wife who are incapable of having intercourse:

1. Sulaymā says: Why is your cock invisible?
Did a bird fly off your testicles with it?

2. Or has the hand of death pierced its body
and it became one of those made to disappear in the cemeteries?

3. I said to her: My cock is still in its place,
But is limp and thin
. . .

4. Has your eye ever seen before me and it
a man whose cock disappears yet he remains present?

5. As if he never came to aid when war buckles down
and warriors would chase away with spearheads?

6. And his spear never pierced through shielded ones
to be sharpened in their sides, while it is bareheaded?

7. If you were amazed that he is weak after [being so] potent
Many a warrior was overtaken by calamities

8. When a defect appeared in him you heap scorn
as if you never saw him plentiful?

9. Days may obliterate the standing of the young man
and vigorous branches may dwindle away[165]

[XXXI]

The question posed by the beloved, Sulaymā, in the first line is a hilarious *tajāhul al-ʿārif* (feigned ignorance). Again, after introducing the parodic context, the second line is typical of *rithāʾ*. In the third line, the poet speaks explicitly telling the woman that his cock is still there, but admits his impotence. The remainder continues using the typical diction of *rithāʾ*, but the allusion is obvious. Martial imagery is employed to lament a once potent and penetrating warrior, who is no longer so. The poet reminds the woman of the days of glory and ends with a gnomic line about the vagaries of time.

1. I am an old man and my wife is a hag
She tries to seduce me into what cannot be

2. She wants me to fuck her every day
and that, for the likes of me, is difficult

3. If it passes her by she is angered and, away she turns
like a recalcitrant woman

4. She said: Your dick has become smaller since we've aged
I said: it is rather that the measure is bigger[166]

[XXXII]

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj will always takes things a step or two further and have the dialogues be, for example, between the cock and the anus:

1. An anus passed by my cock
as if it were night prayer and the road empty

2. And said to it: Until when will you keep despising me
and shamefully exposing my thoughts?

3. How long will you choose to fuck the pussy over me?
To hate me and turn away from me?

4. Don't you see that I have the shape of the full moon
and the pussy is the opposite of the crescent?

5. Look at my waistband!
How can one compare the ravines to the hills and highlands?

6. So my cock bent its head for a long time
Thinking of an answer to this question[167]

[XXXIII]

The frivolous tone of *mujūn* and *sukhf* allows for a higher degree of blasphemous statements. Abū Ḥukayma has a famous poem parodying the *ḥajj* (annual pilgrimage)[168] but more relevant to our discussion here is his constant depiction of the cock as a minaret, or a signal tower:

How often did you glisten like a fire atop a tower
So that all eyes look up to it?[169]

[XXXIV]

And:

I knew you at a time when you
stood like a minaret

People saw you as if
made of steel and stone[170]

[XXXV]

Elsewhere, the impotent cock is likened to a pious man who has taken a vow:

As if he's sworn by God
never to rise for a male or female[171]

[XXXVI]

And in another poem, in remembering the past exploits of the elegized cock, the poet compares its previous heroic deeds to those of the rightly guided caliphs Abū Bakr (r. 10–12/632–634) and ʿUmar (12–23/634–644), who ruled after Muḥammad's death:

And how many fortified forts did you penetrate?
Ones not even conquered by Abū Bakr or ʿUmar?[172]

[XXXVII]

Again, with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj things are always taken a few steps further. The excerpt below is one of numerous examples that can be found in his poetry. Note the fusion of (anal) sexual intercourse with prayer. Although *ṣalāt* (prayer) is not explicitly mentioned, it is inferred from the context and from the use of the verb "*aqāma*" (to hold [prayer]). What adds to the debauchery of this excerpt is that this type of prayer is not an official prayer, but one that the more pious believers pray and without an *adhān* (call for prayer). This is probably intended by Ibn al- Ḥajjāj's as it accentuates the blasphemous atmosphere:

My cock calls for the forenoon prayer inside her ass
and prays at noon

The winds of her tail-bone storm northward
Is there a wind more tender than the north wind?[173]

[XXXVIII]

The following poem by Abū Ḥukayma is one where many of the inversions/subversions later adopted and expanded by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj can be found:

1. [A woman] of lethal gazes and magic looks
[Of] an appearance that fell short due to a bad reputation

2. She hunts hearts with her eyes and with her words
takes prisoner any man she approaches

3. Some are deceived by [the sweetness of] her words
Others carried away on ships of deception

4. Like a green colocynth whose color pleases you
But whose taste and trace are reprehensible

5. Her face's beauty compelled me to marry her
I had no knowledge of the signs under the garments

6. When I hoped for the good life alone with her
and said to myself: Good tidings! You have won your prize!

7. I saw the wall of Gog and Magog around her/it
and a valley which evil filled with thorns and stones

8. He who crosses her passes by a narrow strait
as if tiptoeing on the edges of knives and needles

9. Onto a great expanse to which [even] the sea
with its vehement waves would seem small

10. Terrifying and of many mischievous afflictions
If I enter her I will be endangered

11. Many, before me, have visited her
No eye can see them, no trace have they left

12. If eyes were to see [inside her] they would
see wonders, unheard and unseen

13. I turned and fled away chastising her
She is one of whom fear and caution is worthy

14. Just as those in war would run away from the catapult
when onlookers scream: [beware] the stones!

15. And my cock is wounded as if its head
has cuts inflicted by the Turks and the Khazars

16. If the hands of young women complain of its limpness
It will complain to them of what she caused and apologize

17. Let no man of ardent love after me fall for her
For there is a sign, in me and in her, for those willing to learn[174]

[XXXIX]

The first hemistich is traditional (the femme fatale of *ghazal* whose lethal gazes overpower men), but the second is unusual and gives us a foreshadowing of what might follow later in the poem *azrā bihi sūʾu mukhtabar* (fell short due to a bad reputation). Lines 2–3 continue in the serious mode, but line 4, again, gives a second hint of the parodic shift that is about to come (this is probably a teasing of sorts, since it was expected on the part of the audience that sooner or later Abū Ḥukayma would turn to the *mujūn*). In this poem, the phallegical statement (the impotent cock) is delayed until the very end. The woman described, like the poem itself, is of a deceptive exterior. In the next line (5), again, the face (exterior) is contrasted to what lies under the garments. Line 6 marks the climax (*abshirī*, good tidings; *ẓafar*, prize) before switching to full-fledged parody. The much-awaited joy of *wiṣāl* (union) by marriage leads not to anticipated joys and beauty. For under the garments there is a calamity of Qurʾānic proportions, because the Gog and Magog are about to storm the scene.

They are hordes of people mentioned in the Qur'ān, as well as in the Bible (Ezekiel 38:2). Alexander the Great is believed to have built a barrier between two mountains to hold them back. They will burst through

this barrier at the end of time to take part in an eschatological battle.[175] The woman has no smooth skin, but shrubs and thorns and a path leading to a grotesquely loose vagina.[176] The obvious inversion here is of the traditional young, supple, and virginal woman.

The climax of this section is *al-ḥajar al-ḥajar*. The impotent cock, usually introduced early on, is left till the very end and followed with a parody of a gnomic line. This section, which later became a hallmark of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*, is probably adopted from and influenced by the classical *raḥīl* (journey) section.

Abū Ḥukayma was emulated by contemporaries and later poets, but none managed to surpass him in his style. As mentioned earlier, he represents an important parodic juncture in premodern Arabic poetry and especially in parodic subgenres. He was successful in reorienting the diction and topoi of traditional *rithāʾ* and deploying them in a new function and context. Moreover, he represents one of the most important links between Abū Nuwās and his *mujūn*, and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*.

## Abū ʾl-ʿIbar al-Hāshimī

The number of poets who composed and engaged in what falls under *sukhf* is admittedly large. A comprehensive literary and cultural history of *mujūn* and *sukhf* is sorely missing, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter.[177] However, not many of those *mujūn* poets shared, as far as we know, the parallels that Abū ʾl-ʿIbar[178] (ca. 175–250/791–864 or 865) shares with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Although very little of his poetry has survived,[179] a few illuminating *akhbār* about his career and style have, and they yield important precedents for our purposes. Let us first examine a few biographical excerpts. In *al-Aghānī*, which devotes a separate entry to him, we read that Abū ʾl-ʿIbar was

> born five years after al-Rashīd became caliph and survived until the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil . . . He is said to have abandoned *jidd* in al-Mutawakkil's time and turned to *ḥumq* (foolishness) and became famous for it (*taraka al-jidda wa ʿadala ilā al-ḥumqi wal-shuhra bihi*) From it, he gained scores more than what any contemporary poet made from *jidd* . . . He made much wealth during the reign of al-Mutawakkil and composed praiseworthy poems to him, writing *madīḥ* [to him] and *waṣf* [description] poems about his palace, his bird cage and the pool, poems with much absurdity (*muḥāl*) and excessive in lowliness. There is no sense in mentioning them here as they are very famous amongst people.[180]

In *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, Ibn al-Muʿtazz adduces the following evaluation:

> He was the most lettered of people "*ādab al-nās*," but when he saw that folly and *hazl* were more profitable for the people of his time, he resorted to them and abandoned "*ʿaql*," becoming a master in foolishness (*faṣāra fī al-raqāʿati raʾsan*).[181]

This *jidd* to *hazl* conversion became a topos in its own right and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, too, never tires of justifying his conversion in marketability terms. Not many poets, however, were able to distinguish themselves in both realms of *jidd* and *hazl*. From the earlier excerpts and the ones to follow, it seems that Abū ʾl-ʿIbar did. I doubt that his conversion is simply attributable to his inability to compete in *jidd*. That gesture, on the part of authors, is more of a rationalization of *mujūn* and *sukhf*. Ibn al-Muʿtazz does say that he was *ādab al-nās* before converting. In addition to this *takhaṣṣuṣ* (specialization) and the conscious career move to *ḥumq* (foolishness), what is common to both Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Abū ʾl-ʿIbar is that both injected *hazl* into traditional modes, *madīḥ* (panegyric) specifically.

While we do not posses examples from Abū ʾl-ʿIbar, we read in *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ* that "he used to write panegyrics to caliphs and invectives against kings [using] this feebleness/lowliness (*rakāka*)."[182] This last sentence is extremely important as it proves that Abū ʾl-ʿIbar was already using *sukhf* (*rakāka*) in *madīḥ*—something done by Abū Ḥukayma and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Knowing the type of *rakāka* Abū ʾl-ʿIbar was interested in, we can assume that it was of the scatological or the almost surreal type to use contemporary, albeit anachronistic, terminology.[183] Perhaps a glimpse into Abū ʾl-ʿIbar's style can be gleaned from the following narrative in *al-Aghānī*. When Abū l-ʿAynāʾ (d. 283/869) misquoted a few lines of his, Abū ʾl-ʿIbar responded as follows:

> The catamite lied and [by doing that] ate two and one quarter weights of my shit, for he has erred and offended [me] by not quoting me correctly:
>
> Love has laid eggs in my heart
> Woe unto me if they hatch!
>
> What good will my love be
> If i don't sweep the drain
>
> And if the bald one [penis] does not
> throw his two saddle bags [testicles] on the hearth[184]
>
> [XL]

Both the scatological and the irrational strands of *sukhf* are present in these three lines (as well as the quotation that prefaces them). Abū 'l-ʿIbar's status as a master with followers and students of his style is evident in the anecdotes about his *sukhf* sessions, such as this one from Ṭabaqāt al-Shuʿarā':

> I betook myself one day to Abū 'l-ʿIbar and upon reaching him I saw him sitting on [top of] a ladder with a sewage-pipe (*bālūʿa*) full of hot water. There was a fur garment on his head, and he was surrounded by a group of people to whom he was dictating. The consultations amongst the group commenced, so I sat to listen. One of them said to him: O Abū 'l-ʿIbar, why is the Tigris wider than the Euphrates and cotton whiter than truffles? Upon which he said: Because sheep have no beaks and the peacock's tail is four hand spans. Another said: Why does the perfume-seller sell wool and the nick-nack seller sell milk? He said: Because it rains in winter and the sieve cannot hold water. Another said: Why is every eunuch beardless and why is the water never cold in June? He said: because the ship inclines and the donkey strikes with his hinds.[185]

A slightly different version of this narrative is quoted in *al-Aghānī*:

> Abū 'l-ʿIbar was sitting at an assembly in Samarra where the libertines (*mujjān*) had gathered to write down what he dictated. He was sitting on a ladder and there was a sewage pipe between his hands with water and black mud in it. The duct was shut. He had a long reed (*qaṣaba*) in his hands, a boot atop his head and wore two caps on his feet. The one to which he was dictating was inside the well. There were three men around him banging on pots until there was great noise and not much could be heard . . . Then he would start dictating to them and if anyone present laughed, they got up and poured water on his head from the well if he was of humble background. If he was honorable, they would sprinkle water on him from the tube. Then he would be locked up in the privy until the assembly disbanded and he was not allowed to leave unless he paid a fine of two *dirhams*.[186]

It is obvious that Abū 'l-ʿIbar's buffoonery had become a much-sought after art to be taught and learned (we read elsewhere that Abū 'l-ʿIbar himself used to go to a *hazl* master who taught him and others the secrets of the trade).[187] This spectacle in itself must also be read as a parody-in-performance of those sessions devoted to *jidd* and *ʿaql* where serious knowledge was transmitted. Aside from the content and the scatological setting (proximity to the privy), the rest is identical. The noise and the banging is an inversion of the quietness and attentiveness of serious sessions. This cacophony and transgression of all norms and conventions seems to have been practiced continuously by Abū 'l-ʿIbar. I would like

to suggest that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj enacted a similar transgression, but limited it to textual realms. The master clown that Abū 'l-ʿIbar was in his surreal settings and absurd utterings[188] metamorphoses into the poetic persona of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

Is there sufficient justification to consider Abū 'l-ʿIbar's legacy part of *sukhf* even though other terms such as *ḥumq* (foolishness), *raqāʿa* (stupidity/foolishness/impaired judgement), and *rakāka* (incorrectness, shallowness, weakness in expression) are the ones used to describe what Abū 'l-ʿIbar did and composed? Terminology is not always as efficient as one might wish. Moreover, *sukhf* and its antecedents are parodic by nature and usually confuse registers and categories rather purposefully. There seems to be a common denominator, however, among *sukhf*, *mujūn*, *ḥumq*, *raqāʿa*, and *rakāka* in denoting opposition, in varying degrees, to the rational and normative, both socially and textually. Whenever sociocultural (including linguistic) and literary conventions are violated, these terms are invoked to describe the violation. Moreover, as adjectives, they are usually used to describe intellect, judgment. There is considerable overlap, as mentioned earlier, especially between *mujūn* and *sukhf*.

The importance of these strands for our purposes is that they can be considered tributaries to what later came to be known predominantly as *sukhf*. There are two other points of commonality that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Abū 'l-ʿIbar share and these are the studied and deliberate inclusion of vulgar and colloquial registers into poetry and the desire to effect confusion into accepted norms. When asked about the sources of his *muḥāl* (absurdities) Abū 'l-ʿIbar said:

> I wake up early and sit on the bridge with paper and pen and write all that I hear from the speech of those who come and go, the boatmen and the watercarriers, until I fill both sides of the paper. Then I cut it in half and paste it the other way and get speech that is unparalleled in its folly.[189]

In commenting on this passage, Kilito writes: "all this leads to a text where there is a collision of themes and one that doesn't belong to a known literary genre and has no harmony in its parts."[190] This is precisely how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* has been described in its inclusion of various previously incongruous registers and in its deliberate fusion of modes and attempt at shocking and confusing his audience. Al-Ṣafadī, in his entry on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, has a strikingly similar anecdote about how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj used to collect some of the material for his poetry:[191]

> What aided me in my style is that my father had sold plots [of land] [*mustaghallāt*] connected to his houses. The people who bought them

> divided them and built lodges in which they housed beggars, the lowest of the lowly strangers, handicapped beggars, every rascal and homeless from *al-khuld* and loud and foulmouthed ones. I used to hear their men and women, especially in summer nights, cursing back and forth on the roofs. I had a blank paper and a box with writing utensils and I used to write down what I heard. When I encountered what I did not understand, I wrote it down the way I heard it and the next day would summon the person from which I heard it. I knew their speech, because they were my neighbors. So I used to ask him about the explanation and would write it. I remained [like] the Aṣmaʿī of that area for a time.[192]

In addition to Abū ʾl-ʿIbar, Ibn al-Nadīm includes a number of minor and little-known poets who were famous for their *hazl* and clownish personae. The titles of some of the books attributed to them are illuminating. Ibn al-Shāh al-Ṭāhirī, for example, is said to have written *Kitāb fakhr al-mushṭ ʿalā al-mirʾāt* (The Book of the Glory of the Comb over the Mirror), *Kitāb ḥarb al-jubn wal-zaytūn* (The Book of War between Cheese and Olives), and *Kitāb ḥarb al-laḥm wal-samak* (The Book of War between Meat and Fish).[193] Of these poets, al-Kutunjī is placed in the same category of importance as Abū ʾl-ʿIbar and is said to have been his successor after the latter's death.[194]

This excursion into Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's likely literary ancestors would be incomplete without mentioning a contemporary of Abū ʾl-ʿIbar and a master of *sukhf* or proto-*sukhf* in his own right, Abū ʾl-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī.

## Abū ʾl-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī: Parodying the Masters

Abū ʾl-ʿAnbas Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Ṣaymarī[195] was the court companion of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–247/847–861) and al-Muʿtamid (r. 256–279/870–892). He was also a calligrapher, astrologer, and perhaps judge (*qāḍī*) of al-Ṣaymara. He, too, is said to have converted to *hazl* and *sukhf* in search of more profit. Ibn al-Nadīm lists 40 books attributed to him, none of which is extant.[196] A quick look at some of the titles gives a hint as to Abū ʾl-ʿAnbas's persona and orientation: *Kitāb ṭiwāl al-liḥā* (The Book of the Longbearded), *Kitāb masāwiʾ al-ʿawāmm wa akhbār al-sifla wal-aghtām* (The Book of the Defects of the Commoners and Anecdotes about the Hooligans and the Lowly), *Kitāb al-jawābāt al-muskita* (The Book of Silencing Replies), *Kitāb al-khaḍkhaḍa fī jald ʿumayra* (The Book on Masturbation), *Kitāb munāẓaratihi lil-Buḥturī* (The Book of His Debate with al-Buḥturī), *Kitāb istighāthat al-jamal ilā rabbih* (The Camel's Plea to Its God), *Kitāb faḍl al-surm ʿalā al-fam* (The Book of the Superiority of the Anus over the Mouth).

An amusing anecdote involving him and Abū ʻl-ʿIbar has been preserved. In it, he tries to convince Abū ʻl-ʿIbar to abandon *sukhf*:

> I said to Abū ʻl-ʿIbar when we were at al-Mutawakkil's house: Woe unto you! What compels you to [utter] all this *sukhf* with which you have filled the earth with your poetry and speeches when you are an elegant man of letters [who has] good poetry. He said: You cuckold! Do you want me to be out of demand [so] you can profit? Moreover, you have the gall to speak [thus] when you [yourself] abandoned knowledge and composed in *raqāʿa* thirty books and then some? I would like you to tell me if seriousness (*ʿaql*) was profitable would you have been favored over al-Buḥturī when he said of the caliph yesterday:
>
> What a mouth you show when you smile!
> What a glance with which you have your way!
>
> And when you came out and said:
>
> In which shit are you mired
> With which palm do you slap yourself?
>
> You stuck your head in the womb
> and discovered that you will be defeated
>
> You were rewarded, while he was deprived. You were looked favorably upon, while he was shunned. May a cock fuck your mother's pussy and that of every serious one. So I left him.[197]

The three lines by Abū ʻl-ʿAnbas preserved here (as well as the list of the names of unfortunately non-extant works) suggest that he was already a specialist in this type of parody, which would later be perfected by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, and was able to perform it on the spot.

Regardless of the degree of exaggeration that can infect such anecdotes, there is enough evidence to suggest that both Abū ʻl-ʿIbar and Abū ʻl-ʿAnbas present us with a "type" that had developed in the cultural/literary sphere, one whose material and mode Ibn al-Ḥajjāj would adopt, develop, and perfect. It is important to add here that Abū ʻl-ʿAnbas's persona became a character in one of al-Hamadhānī's *maqāmāt: al-maqāma al-ṣaymariyya*.[198] As mentioned previously, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, too, provided the model for the ultimate *sakhīf*[99] and antihero immortalized in al-Tawḥīdī's *al-Risāla al-Baghdādiyya*.

What Abū ʻl-ʿAnbas did to al-Buḥturī's *madīḥ*,[200] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj would apply to the entire tradition in an almost systematic way. Like Abū ʻl-ʿIbar's sessions, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* was an art to be studied, emulated, and perpetuated. And just as Abū ʻl-ʿAnbas stood and subjected

al-Buḥturī's poem to parody, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj would subject the entire tradition to it,[201] starting with its pillars, the *muʿallaqāt* (Arabian Odes).

This chapter has illustrated that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was firmly anchored within the premodern Arabic tradition and that his status among his contemporaries and among critics and poets of later periods was unique. He appears in the major compendia and in numerous anthologies. While premodern critics were able to accord him the respect his poetry demanded, modern scholars have neglected to do so. This chapter also explored the semantic spectrum of *sukhf* and its overlap with other related terms and tributaries, such as *mujūn*, *hazl*, and *hijāʾ*. While certainly unique, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his *sukhf* were a culmination of tributaries and precedents in the tradition of Arabic poetry. The personae and style of Abu Ḥukayma, Abu 'l-ʿIbar and Abū 'l-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī make them potential precursors to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and what became his *sukhf*.

# CHAPTER 2

# Parodying the Tradition

The dialectical relationship between any poet and the tradition to which he belongs, and is writing within, predetermines, to a large extent, the style of his poetic production. The particular mode of this relationship will be reflected in the topoi, themes, and modes he writes in, or against. In the case of parody, it is the latter, that is, writing against the tradition. The parodist's target texts (hypotexts)[1] are usually the tradition's icons and its most famous and revered texts. In the Arabic tradition, aside from the Qurʾān, the pre-Islamic *muʿallaqāt* (seven pre-Islamic odes) have always had that unparalleled iconic status as cultural and linguistic yardsticks, encapsulating not only the language's aesthetic perfection, but also the cultural values and ethos of an entire era—some of which reinject themselves, under various guises, into the collective cultural unconscious.

As a master parodist, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was bound to be tempted by the desire and the challenge of parodying the *muʿallaqāt*. While he was not the first to do so, his parodies are truly unique. Before considering them, however, it is important first to identify other parodic references to the tradition's various icons in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry in order to illustrate his stance vis-à-vis the tradition and what I consider to be his accentuated self-consciousness as a parodist. This will also further demonstrate that *sukhf* was a studied and calculated style. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the carnivalesque atmosphere that defines Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* poetry has tempted some to attribute it, and the obscenity and scatology it exhibits and of which it makes extensive use, to some rabid and uncontrolled psychological impulse or obsession. No matter how grotesque and seemingly irrational, *sukhf* has a method of its own, like any other "serious" mode. Furthermore, to excel in parody, one still had to be a

master of his craft, and perhaps more so than if writing in "traditional" modes.

Parody can generally be defined as the "conscious ironic or sardonic evocation of another artistic model."[2] While some (Bakhtin) have suggested that all imitation is parodic in a way and can be categorized as either ironic or non-ironic, the general consensus is still that "parody does more than merely reiterate other texts; its textual or contextual difference from the original is reinforced by a generally ironic and mocking tone."[3] The key binarism here is "original"/ "copy" or "hypotext"/"hypertext." Parody involves appropriating the narrative, context, style, persona, or diction of an original text (or parts of it) and redeploying it in such a way as to serve different, and often opposite and inverted purposes.

The frivolous tone and comic nature of parody might make it seem facile, but, in fact, it is "difficult to accomplish well [since] . . . [t]here has to be a subtle balance between close resemblance to the 'original' and a deliberate distortion of its principle characteristics."[4] It is also important for our purposes to approach parody not only as a single and tightly definable genre or practice, but "as a range of cultural practices which are all more or less parodic."[5]

In modern standard Arabic both *bārūdiyā* and *muḥākāt tahakkumiyya* (mocking imitation) are used to indicate parody. In premodern Arabic there are a number of related terms to be mentioned, namely *taḍmīn* and *muʿāraḍa*. Again, these do not convey exactly what is generally understood by parody. The definition of *Taḍmīn* (incorporation) is general and seems to be inclusive of both ironic and non-ironic allusions and inclusions.[6] It is, however, a technique usually involving single lines. Another related term whose definition is important for our purposes is *talmīḥ* (allusion).[7] *Muʿāraḍa* (opposition) or counter-poem, on the other hand, involves writing a poem in the same rhyme and meter of the original, but with a contrary point of view or the desire to outdo the original.[8] Thus, parody will naturally feature a great deal of *taḍmīn* and it is under this heading that we find much of the relevant parodic verses from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.[9]

## Soiling the Tradition

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry is peppered with numerous parodic gestures to the tradition, all of which are of a scatological tint. While many other poets had started to make references to their predecessors and contemporaries (starting in the Umayyad, but especially in the ʿAbbāsid era) as a literary boast or challenge, or to situate themselves in a cultural genealogy,

none have been as transgressive as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Our poet never wastes an opportunity to subject the tradition and its icons to his scatology and have it, literally, spill over onto some of its main figures. Here are some examples of his explicit lines:

Listen to the words of a poet!
who utters obscenities whenever he speaks

If he pisses a peewee [like a bird]
in poetry, he makes a sprinkle/splatter

You see the beard of whomever
is behind him speckled[10]

[XLI]

Elsewhere, he boasts that his poetry now farts on the pre-Islamic *ṣuʿlūk* (brigand) poets Taʾabbaṭa Sharran and al-Shanfarā (sixth century CE):

Now [my poetry] farts on Taʾabbaṭa
Sharran and al-Shanfarā[11]

[XLII]

It is obvious from these examples that, having discovered his niche, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj cultivated and relished the persona of the enfant terrible of the poetry of his era. Al-Thaʿālibī has alluded to this.[12] There is a celebratory mood of irreverence toward authority in many of his poems:

A youngster whose knowledge toys
with the grand masters

[Who has] A thought that slaps al-Farazdaq in poetry
and a grammar that fucks al-Kisāʾī's mother[13]

But I have become more unrecognizable amongst my people
Than a full moon on winter nights[14]

[XLIII]

While *hijāʾ* against grammarians was already an established trend,[15] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj 's poetry abounds with severe *hijāʾ* of grammarians and of other poets:

If Sībawayhi were to fault me, I would say
(May) al-Kisāʾī's shit [fall] on al-Farrāʾ's beard[16]

[XLIV]

. . .
If Thaʿlab were to fault my poetry[17]
or fault my lightheartedness

I would shit in the *afʿaltu* chapter
of *al-Faṣīḥ*

[XLV]

. . .
Do you not know that
in my absence and presence

I fuck Jarīr's mother[18]
with my panegyrics to you[19]

[XLVI]

. . .
A hand that, in praising you, brings forth brides
out of the pen and scrolls

So hear them from my own mouth- sweeter and more desirable
than [ones] composed in Ramal and Hazaj[20]

With motifs whose incense is perfume to you
And whose farts are in al-Zajjāj's beard[21]

In the long-line meters they shaved Jarīr's beard
and in al-Rajaz that of al-ʿAjjāj[22]

[XLVII]

. . .
With meters that fuck
al-Khālīl's mother

and grammar with which I fart
on al-Mubarrad's mustache[23]

[XLVIII]

. . .
Had Bashshār composed half a verse of it
He would have made Ḥammād ʿAjrad shit[24]

[XLIX]

. . .
Such panegyrics that if Zuhayr were to compete with me
I would smack Harim's head with a sandal[25]

[L]

Al-Mutanabbī, who was a contemporary and an enemy, was the target of a few *hijāʾ* poems composed by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.[26] Unlike al-Mutanabbī, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj claimed to be a different kind of prophet:

[I am] a man who claims prophethood in *sukhf*
and who dare doubt prophethood?

I bring forth miracles to which I call
So answer all ye ribald ones!

[LI]

## Parodying the *Muʿallaqa* of Imruʾ al-Qays

The *muʿallaqa* of Imruʾ al-Qays is "widely considered the finest"[27] and "arguably the most widely quoted, plagiarized, imitated, parodied poem in Arabic."[28] In *Maʿāhid al-tanṣīṣ*, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. Aḥmad al-ʿAbbāsī (d. 963/1556) notes that poets have toyed with parodying (*wa-qad talāʿaba al-shuʿarāʾ fī taḍmīn hādhihi al-qaṣīda*) Imruʾ al-Qays' poem a great deal and includes excerpts from some of them.[29] It is beyond the scope of this chapter to list all of these imitations and parodies. However, two excerpts from Ibn al-Muʿtazz are noteworthy as they could have influenced Ibn al-Ḥajjāj:

By God, sit my two companions, and let us have a morning drink
and do not [say:] halt, to weep for the memory of a beloved and an abode

And O God, let no rain fall, nor life sprout
at Siqṭ al-Liwā between al-Dakhūl and Ḥawmal

Pour not one drop of rain on Imruʾ al-Qays' Miqrāt
and throw stones, in stead, at its inhabitants[30]

[LII]

This is a typical anti-*aṭlāl* stance à la Abū Nuwās, but with Ibn al-Muʿtazz's stamp of gentle lightheartedness. There is another excerpt in which Ibn al-Muʿtazz uses the first two words from Imruʾ al-Qays' *muʿallaqa*:

He replaced water with dark spears
and vipers and serpents

So I was left with the ground as my bed
and my guts singing: halt let us weep[31]

[LIII]

This last hemistich might have been the kernel that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj appropriated and expanded upon in his own parody of the *muʿallaqa,* as we shall see later. Due to extensive damage to the manuscript, only fragments of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's parodies of Imruʾ al-Qays's *muʿallaqa* have survived. Nevertheless, there is plenty in them that will shed light on his style. The first fragment includes six verses and is a *rāʾiyya* (poem rhyming in *rāʾ*).[32]

1. Halt! Ye two. Let t us weep for the memory of Abū Naṣr's mother's pussy
By the rim of the twisted shit between the intestines and the [hole] anus[33]
[LIV]

The poem to which this fragment belongs was probably a *hijāʾ* against the Abū Naṣr mentioned in the *maṭlaʿ* (opening verse). I am basing this on the premise that when Ibn al-Ḥajjāj parodies the *aṭlāl* opening in his *madīḥ* or *sukhf* poems (shorter poems where the *sukhf* mode is the only one), it is usually the name of a slave girl or one of the stock female names of the *aṭlāl* and never a man unless it is a *hijāʾ*. The hypotext line from Imruʾ al-Qays is:

Halt! Ye two. Let us weep for the memory of a beloved and an abode
By the rim of the twisted sands between al-Dakhūl and Ḥawmal
[LV]

If one were to encapsulate much of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's strategy in his *sukhf* into one concept it would be corporealization. The line above illustrates that well. The external world of *aṭlāl* and *nasīb* is transferred to the lower part of the human body. As simple a shift as that may seem, it is most productive, especially at the hands of a master. Thus, orifices become the abodes and abandoned encampments that bring forth tears. The *maṭlaʿ* of the hypotext is ripe for this kind of translocation, especially the second hemistich where the vocabulary lends itself so well. The *ṭalal*, then, is Abū Naṣr's mother's anus. Placing her orifice in the pseudo-mythical distant past will allow the poet to indulge and extend the grotesque description in the second line:

2. And the piss river bed, whose trace is not yet effaced
By what the whittling weaved on the hair[34]
[LVI]

[hypotext (2): Then Tūḍiḥ, then al-Miqrāt, whose traces are not yet effaced/ By the two winds weaving from south and north][35]

Instead of enumerating the various abodes and place names, the poet follows the gastrointestinal and urinary tracts and traces. Lines 3–6 of the fragment do not seem to target any specific line in the *muʿallaqa* of Imruʾ al-Qays except for the last one (line 6) (rather indirectly):

3.Abodes whose visible ruins used to be revealed by plucking
So hairy, [now] they have become like the shrubs of the edge

4. As if they were not [once] a playground for cock tips
Nor did they become a shelter for night-traveling cocks

5. An old hag, effaced are the signs of dwelling in her fucking place
Has there ever been a dwelling where time's vagaries did not sink ?

6. My cock, straight up to its ear[lobe]s, in her hole[36]
Her anus' goatee all the way up my own ass[37]

[LVII]

This is obviously meant to exaggerate the hairiness of the woman. Instead of the *ʿaraṣāt* where antelopes used to play once, the orifice is remembered in a bygone era as a place whose courtyard was a playground and a shelter for cocks at night. Line 5 states directly that the referent is an old hag, but the second hemistich parodies the gnomic lines about the vagaries of time. Line 6 is slightly reminiscent, albeit indirectly, of the image of Imruʾ al-Qays's beloved tending to her newborn with her upper half, with the lower remaining clasped to Imruʾ al-Qays's body in line 17 of the *muʿallaqa*:

When he cried from behind, she turned toward him
With her upper half, but the other, beneath me, not budging

[LVIII]

A longer, extant fragment is another invective directed at a person for failing to fulfill a promise of presenting Ibn al-Ḥajjāj with a garment (*qamīṣ*). Alas, neither the man's name nor the exact context survives. The fragment opens with a description of the garment (the first six lines):

1. A garment mended by al-Fatḥ the day he entered[38]
al-Karkh (west side) of Samarra with al-Mutawakkil[39]

2. A garment whose trace, unlike al-Miqrāt, is not yet effaced
By the two winds weaving from south and north
[hypotext (2): Then Tūḍiḥ then al-Miqrāt, whose traces are not yet effaced/ By the two winds weaving from south and north]

3. Decay stripped it off an impoverished man, after he'd
fulfilled a need with it, by wearing it as an undergarment
[hypotext (26): I came when she had stripped off her garments to sleep/
before the curtain, except for an undergarment]

4. Not like one who walked wearing it drawing
On his cock the train of an embroidered gown
[hypotext (28): I led her forth walking as she trailed/ over our tracks the
train of her gown of figured silk]

5. But it flew like a dust carried by the east wind
at Siqṭ al-Liwā between al-Dakhūl and Ḥawmal
[hypotext (1): By the rim of the twisted sands between al-Dakhūl and
Ḥawmal]

6. It/He says to its sleeves as he catches his saliva
Halt! ye two, let us weep for the memory of a beloved and an abode
[LIX]

In ridiculing both the garment he never received and the person who had promised to bestow it on him, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj represents it as hyperbolically old and ragged. Not only is its point of origin placed in a bygone era, that of the caliph al- Mutawakkil, but even back then, it is represented as having already become old and mended by its fictitious owner, al-Fatḥ. Line 2 introduces the hypotext and its context into the background and creates the parodic distance and dissonance. The garment is as ancient as the traces of al-Miqrāt, the famous toponym from Imruʾ al-Qays's *muʿallaqa*, or even more ancient, since its trace is entirely effaced! Line 3 further augments the sense of raggedness; so old and ragged was the garment that even an impoverished man, who had been wearing it as an undergarment, had to let go of it since decay had completely overcome it. This line clearly refers us back to line 26 of the *muʿallaqa* where Imruʾ al-Qays describes the garments, or lack thereof, of his beloved in their nocturnal trysts.[40] In line 4, the garment is taken back further in time as it was even worn by the woman in the *muʿallaqa*. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, however, adds one of his signature twists by inserting "*ayrihī*" (his cock) instead of "*ithrinā*" (behind us) in line 28 of the *muʿallaqa*. Instead of leaving tracks on the sand, the ragged garment, being of rough edges, stirs a dust. The subject in line 6 is not entirely clear. It could be the aforementioned al-Fatḥ, the impoverished man in line 3, or even the garment itself addressing its sleeves. The latter is more befitting with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's sarcasm and thus the garment itself asks the sleeves to halt and cry over the days when they were worn by someone. But perhaps there are lines missing as well.

7. A man with a thin white beard
whose sides shone like a polished mirror
[hypotext (31): Slender-waisted, white and not flabby/ Her collarbone shone like a polished mirror]

8. I have carried its baggage [the beard's] in my ass for a while now
and what a wonder in its loaded baggage
[hypotext (11): And the day when I hocked my mount for the virgins/ And what a sight in its loaded baggage]

9. Like a garment, when I put it on, from behind, it blocks my anus
with a bushy tail, reaching almost to the ground, not with a short spine
[hypotext (61): huge-ribbed, when you look at it, it blocks the gap between his legs/ With a bushy tail, reaching almost to the ground, not with a short spine]

10. A chin the likes of which I have never seen
whenever it leaps to my anus, it tears my bottom sideways

11. He said to it [his anus]: loosen up and crap[41]
Don't keep me away from your twice-to-be-tasted fruit
[hypotext (15): I said to her: keep going and loosen the reins/ Don't keep me away from your twice-to-be-tasted fruit]

12. O beard of the foolish, impudent old man
If you pass by my anus or are at its gate, do come in!
13. To a wide ground whose riders cross

a stony, sandy long-winding hollow
[hypotext (29): Then when we had crossed the enclosure on our way/ to a sandy hollow surrounded by long-winding dunes]

14. The biggest beards enter its gate at night
just as the thorn-carrying donkeys enter the Muḥawwal gate[42]

15. To a garden whose scent does not give the nose
"the east breeze when it bears the scent of cloves"

[LX]

[hypotext (8): When they arose there wafted from them musk as redolent/ as the east breeze when it bears the scent of cloves]

Lines 7–15 describe the beard of the man who was supposed to give the poet the garment. The second hemistichs of lines 7–9 (as well as 11, 13, and 15) are identical to the hypotext, but the meaning is, of course, radically transformed by the first hemistich in each case. In line 7, line 31 of the *muʿallaqa*, which describes the fair skin and breastbones of the lover, is transformed to describe the old man's beard whereby

"*ʿawāriḍuhā*" (sides) replaces "*tarāʾibuhā*" (breast-bones) in the second hemistich. Considering the *sukhf/hijāʾ* mode, the saffron-colored beard is a foreshadowing allusion to the beard being covered with excrement and urine as a result of excessive "ass-kissing." Line 8 confirms that the beard in question is portrayed as being stuck in the poet's anus (*liḥyatuka fiʾstī*). Nothing is more antithetical to the young women (*ʿadhārā*) of the famous Dārat Juljul, in line 11 of the hypotext, than a prickly beard. In line 9 the beard is likened to a garment again (note the repetition of "*thawb*," the main subject of the poem). Ibn al-Ḥajjāj also appropriates line 61 from the horse section of the *muʿallaqa*. The target of the *hijāʾ* becomes the man (or the saddle) and his hyperbolically long beard, like the horse's tail, which blocks the poet's anus. Line 10 accentuates the roughness of the man's beard and his lowliness as he is portrayed as having an incessant desire to insert his face into the poet's anus. It is possible that he is likened to a camel since the verb *nazā* is used for a solid-hoofed or cloven-hoofed animal leaping unto the female.[43] Whereas in line 15 of the hypotext, Imruʾ al-Qays urges ʿUnayza to slacken the reins (*arkhī zimāmahū*) of her camel and to ride on, line 11 has the man addressing the anus ("ist" is feminine) and "*arkhī*" here obviously means to loosen up in the sense of letting go of excrement as the sentence "*qaddama khāʾahā*" makes clear by turning it into "*ikhray*." Line 12 addresses the man's beard again inviting it to go into his anus. Line 13 employs line 26 from the *muʿallaqa* as hypotext, but the destination here is not a secluded spot for the two lovers, but rather the interior of the poet's rectum.

16. Did you not see that in slapping every hypocrite
I have sought support from the sandal market
[hypotext (6): Surely my cure is tears poured forth/ Is there a place for weeping at a worn-out place?]

17. I guarantee ill for whoever wrongs me
and he who makes a hasty promise

18. I did not follow Mālik's example in treachery,
but rather a faithfulness like that of al-Samawʾal

[LXI]

Having consigned his enemy to the recesses of his anus into "a garden whose breeze carries nothing of the scent of cloves," the poet delivers a justification, of sorts, in lines 16–18. The poem itself is a slap on the neck (*ṣafʿa*) to punish the hypocrite who reneged on his promise. "Muʿawwalī" appears in line 6 of the *muʿallaqa*: "*fahal ʿinda rasmin dārisin*

*min muʿawwalī*"? In the *muʿallaqa*, the poet states that the cure for his sorrows is to cry profusely and asks, rhetorically, if there are effaced traces to visit them. Our poet, however, is not disappointed by a departing beloved but by a hypocrite who failed to fulfill his promise. Thus, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj says that he can rely on the sandal market whenever the need arises to punish. Line 17, especially the second hemistich, explains retroactively the context of the poem when the poet warns that those who wrong him shall not escape unscathed. It was the "*waʿdin muʿajjalī*" (hasty promise) that caused him to write this poem. There is a faint echo of line 23 from the *muʿallaqa* of Imruʾ al-Qays where he boasts of taking his pleasures from young ones "unhurried." While there is no way to know for sure, line 18 could very well be the last line of the entire poem as it summarizes the narrative of treachery and loyalty. The editor suggests that the Mālik referred to here is Mālik b. Musmiʿ b. Shaybān (d. 73/692) who reneged on the *bayʿa* of ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr.[44] The pre-Islamic poet al-Samawʾal b. ʿĀdiyāʾ, the overlord of Taymāʾ, was of proverbial loyalty and is befitting of the context as he is the one to whom Imruʾ al-Qays is said to have entrusted his property and armor before his purported trip to the Byzantine court.[45]

Like all highly successful parodies, this one retains a close resemblance to the hypotext (by leaving many of its parts intact or redeploying them), yet it manages to produce radically different meanings by introducing an entirely new context to the hypotext, one whose values and mood is diametrically opposed to the original.

Al-ʿAbbāsī reproduces an excerpt from a poem by Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Jazzār (d. 679/1280) that parodies both the *muʿallaqa* and another famous poem by Imruʾ al-Qays (*alā ʿim ṣabāḥan ayyuhā ʿṭ-ṭalalu ʿl-bālī*). It seems like an imitation of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj:

Halt, ye two, and let us weep for the memory of a garment and trouser (undergarment),
and a wool garment of mine whose traces are effaced

I am not one to weep for Asmāʾ when she moves away
but I am weeping for the loss of my worn out clothing

If Imruʿ al-Qays, son of Ḥujr, were to see what
I suffer in the way of cares and distress

He would never have made his way to ʿUnayzaʾs litter
Nor would he have been anything but distracted from her love[46]

[LXII]

One is left to wonder what parodies might have been written by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's fierce competitor and enemy Ibn Sukkara (d. 385/995). The latter's *dīwān*, said to contain over 30,000 verses,[47] is, alas, not extant. However, there is one telling verse where he combines some of the very strategies used by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. It is about old age and impotence in which the poet speaks of his beloved slave girl Khamra, to and about whom he composed much of his poetry:[48]

I used to love Khamra before aging
She loved me so much she would fart out of love for me

Until her pussy was effaced and my cock stiffened
Now she is like: "halt ye two let us weep" and I'm like: "wake up girl!"[49]
[LXIII]

Much parody is encapsulated in these two lines. The first line establishes the gap between the past and present and reads, at first, like a traditional line, but toward the end of the second hemistich "*taḍriṭu min ḥubbī*" triggers the *sukhf* mode. The second line parodies the *aṭlāl* motif by superimposing it on sexual organs. Its second hemistich is a condensation of a double *taḍmīn*. The two opening lines of the *muʿallaqa* of Imruʾ al-Qays and ʿAmr b. Kulthūm are parodied and used here to accentuate the sense of old age, impotence, and antiheroism. The slave girl Khamra addresses the poet and his cock imploring it to stand up and weep, but it is an allusion to ejaculation as well. It is worth noting in this respect that two of the numerous synonyms for *ayr* are "*al-dammāʿ*" and "*al-bakkāʾ*" (the teary-eyed and the crying one, respectively).[50]

The comic effect in the manner "*alā ḥubbī*" is used here in what is termed "transcontextualization," an essential feature of parody. Both the speaker and the addressee are radically different and so is the new context of the original utterances. The old hag replaces the wine maiden and the impotent old man has replaced the young boasting hero.

## *Yamsakhu laysa yaslakhu*: Disfiguring ʿAmr b. Kulthūm's *muʿallaqa*

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's parody of the *muʿallaqa* of ʿAmr b. Kultūm (sixth century) has survived intact.[51] To highlight its comic effect and intricate artifice, it is important to briefly revisit the original context and mood of the hypotext—the *muʿallaqa* itself.[52] The poem is said to have been recited before ʿAmr b. Hind, the king of Ḥīra who was mediating between the tribes of Bakr and Taghlib. The poem is one of the greatest *fakhr* (boast)

poems in the Arabic tradition. Nicholson's remarks on it, while a bit judgmental by today's standards, are succinct:

> The work of a man who united in himself the ideal qualities of manhood as these were understood by a race which has never failed to value, even too highly, the display of self-reliant action and decisive energy . . . [with] a vivid impression of conscious and exultant strength.[53]

Indeed the *muʿallaqa* exudes that *Jāhilī fakhr* (boast) like no other and this is precisely why it is ripe for parody by an ultimate antihero such as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, especially in an era where poets were no longer the verbal projection of their tribe's honor and glory and many were court jesters. The particular context of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's imprisonment and his desire to regain his estate make it a most useful hypotext. Equally important, however, is that the hyperbole and haughty heroic spirit make it fertile material for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*, which will turn it upside down. The following contextual information prefaces the poem in *Talṭīf al-mizāj*:

> (And he has [a poem he composed] after his two nephews were imprisoned and [their property] confiscated, and Abū ʿAbdullāh [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj] and his two sons were imprisoned because of them. They were set free by Abu al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Yūsuf, so Ibn al-Ḥajjāj wrote [the poem] to his brother Abū al-Faḍl. The caluminator who had taken his nephew to prison was known as "The Dead Man's Fart" and his name was Zaṭīnā. So he [Ibn al-al-Ḥajjāj] said:
>
> 1. Ha girl! Up with your sandal and slap us
> and greet us with it in the early dawn
>
> [hypotext (1): Ha girl! Up with your goblet and give us our morning draught/ Do not keep the wines of Andarīnā]
>
> [LXIV]

Perhaps the most productive and logical way to read and appreciate this parody is to contrast the heroic and antiheroic models represented in the hypotext and hypertext. For no poem encapsulates and enacts the Jāhilī ethos more than ʿAmr b. Kulthūm's *muʿallaqa*. This, together with the epistolatory function it contains, provided perfect material for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj to perform his typical antiheroism and to thank the person who set him free. The mock-heroic mood is encapsulated in the opening line where *naʿl* (sandal) replaces *ṣaḥn* (cup) and the imperative *iṣfaʿīnā* replaces *aṣbiḥīnā*, which is used in the *ʿajuz*. To the literate listener/reader, *alā hubbī* conjures up the context and mood of the hypotext. But

the addressee is not the cupbearer, but a torturer. The pronoun *nā*, so powerful in echoing the tribal ethos, is dislocated here to speak for the incarcerated antiheroes (Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his sons and nephews) whose early morning starts with a slap, rather than a drink. What adds to the comic effect is the humiliation of being slapped by a woman and not even a man.

2. Hurry up to us and seize your time
Lest you later be regretful

In line 2, the putative woman is implored to slap even more.[54]

3. Truly today and tomorrow and the day after
are subject to a destiny you know naught of

[hypotext: identical]

While in the Jāhiliyya *dahr* (time) was the ultimate arbiter in all matters of life and death, in the tumult of the Būyid era this line acquires another meaning that refers to the arbitrary nature of military rule and sociopolitical upheavals, rather than fate.

4. Flip it over [as you hit] us every day
with its grip, left and right

5. So thin-waisted [the *naʿl*] that if mentioned, even at a distance, we are misty-eyed and if present, we are blinded

The seemingly and originally Bacchic address in line 4 acquires a comic effect by dint of the new context. The implicit referent is still the *naʿl*. The first word in line 5 "*mukhaṣṣaratun*" (thin-waisted) is traditionally used for a woman to describe a *kashḥ* (waist). The word used for describing the wine in the *muʿallaqa* is "*mushaʿshaʿatun*" (diluted with water) The mere mention of the thin-waisted one causes the poet to blear and squint, not because of what the word suggests in terms of feminine beauty as one might think, but in anticipation of the heavy blows to the head, which are to be delivered by the sandal; hence he says that "if present, we are blinded."

6. It persecutes the rough one on his neck,
when he tastes it, making him soft and loose
[hypotext (3): It leads him who has want away from his desires
When he tastes it, until he becomes softened]

7. You see that when it passes the narrow back of his neck
he is willing to part company with his head
[hypotext (4):You see that when it passes by the miserly avaricious one
He humiliates his money for it]

8. Glistening, it loves a big solid head
and the palm of the hand plump and generous

9. If the cautious one is overpowered [by it]
you see marks on the back of his neck

10. [so] hard if you flip it over, it creaks
as it pounds the neck and forehead of the one trying to flip it over

[hypotext (51): identical]

11. If it is put on headtops
You would see people's skins blackened

[hypotext (71): If it is put away from the warriors one day
You would see the people's skin blackened]

12. Cupping glasses are worn out by them O departing woman
and my fierce assault on ye, O my two nieces!

13. And their cousin and his two sons among them
and their plague is Zaṭīnā, death's fart

14. Did you not know that we ended up
all fettered in prison?
[hypotext (66): They returned with plunder and captives
We returned with shackled kings]

15. Throngs of Ibn Sābūr's men came,
and herded us all to prison

16. And when we entered the prison at night,
we saw what terrifies the onlookers

17. Beards like Egyptian cloth when shaken
and since we became loose/diarrhetic, we shat

18. So pained [from constipation], I was pregnant and kept it in my anus
and carried the newborn to the hair under their lower lip

19. A newborn, when my water broke,
I deposited it there moist and heavy

20. And whenever I became pregnant I would give birth
To either a soft or a thick one, on the hairs between their lower lip and chin[55]

21. From under me the midwives would carry off girls
and boys simmering in my stomach

The remainder of the section describes the effects of the *naʿl*. While in the hypotext the wine causes the passionate one to mellow (*yalīnā*), Ibn al-Ḥajjāj uses the same verb, but giving it a scatological twist to mean that his bowel movement becomes smooth (line 6), the results of which will be clear further down in the poem.[56] Line 7 describes the intensity of the blows, which are so heavy that their recipient is willing to let go of his own neck. In the hypotext the effect of the wine was to transform the miser into a generous man willing to part company with his property. Line 8 describes the *naʿl* further saying that it likes solid heads and plump and generous palms. Line 9 describes the marks the *naʿl* leaves on one's neck and back. The editor reads "*al-janūb*" as the wind and "*kazza*" as the intensification of the wind. I am inclined to read "*al-janūb*" as one who walks or stays close to the wall (cautious) and "*kuẓẓa*" in the passive to mean "overpowered." The general thrust of this section is to bring home the severity of the *naʿl*. Thus, it makes more sense to read this line as: Even the cautious one (who stays close to the wall [in general or while being struck]), will have marks left on his neck and back. The first word in line 10 "*ʿashawzanatun*" (stubborn/hard camel) is used twice in the hypotext in lines 50–51. In the hypertext, line 51 is reproduced unchanged as it fits perfectly for the *naʿl*. The next line appropriates line 71 from the hypotext, which describes the coats of mail that are so heavy they leave rust on the skin when worn for long periods. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj changes two words only: "*hāmāt*" (head tops) for "*abṭāl*" (heroes) and "*ʿalā*" (on) for "*ʿan*" (off). The *hā* in the following line still refers to the shoe; so deep are its marks that the cuppings (used to heal them) are worn out. Just as in the hypotext, Ibn al-Hajjāj here, in line 12, addresses the departing woman (*ẓaʿīnā*) and feminizes his sons and nephews to further accentuate the comic antiheroism. He is, however, also informing the recipient of the poem as to the identity of the persons who took them to prison, hence the mention of Zaṭīna in line 13. Lines 14–15 continue in that vein and mention another person, Ibn Sābūr. The section comprising lines 16–21 describes the conditions in the prison and this is where Ibn al-Ḥajjāj avails himself of the opportunity to unleash scatology to the fullest. Line 16 introduces the series of terrifying sights in prison. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj compares constipation to pregnancy and carries this to lines 18–21 where, after having diarrhea, his excrement is carried away like newborn boys and girls being carried off by midwives. There is nothing more antiheroic, in this context, than acquiring the most unmanly of functions: giving birth (to excrement no less). The section, whose obvious effect is comical, is probably influenced by *kudya* poetry in which the challenge for the poet is to excel in debasing himself

in order to acquire material rewards. The more miserable and humiliating the conditions in prison, the more symbolic capital and gratitude is bestowed on the act of freeing Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his relatives.

22. Were it not for the will of the highest of people
and one best to safeguard our faith and world

23. We would have remained under al-Lālakā'īs yoke,
the prison master, for perpetuity

Lines 24–38 (almost half the poem) represent the plea for amnesty and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's attempts to have his confiscated property returned, which is the practical reason for composing the poem.

24. Now then, master, know for sure
May I be your ransom to God

25. That I have been forced to things
That will please the malicious gloaters

26. And that Baṭāṭiyā was and has become
a mote in the eyes of the envious[57]

27. And has been added, Good riddance,
to the properties of the rebels and renegades

28. My deed I have rewritten with a *shīn*[58]
that farts on me and brings forth ills

29. And I have lots to say of my sons today
Too much for a proud one who represses his anger

30. My eyes can see none to support me
other than you, and as my aid in my affairs

31. Protect me from the ugly wolves
and be Baṭāṭiyā's formidable fortress!

32. And say to your brother, O my master,
that which the rhymes will please the hearers

33. A vizier I have not faulted
And may I not live if there were

34. By the grace of him who showed us through you
our utmost wishes and spread pleasure through you

35. By the grace of him who killed off injustice away from us
and who revived clear justice through you

36. By him who graced you with gifts
surpassing any and all description

37. By him, his daughter and the good, pure
people of the Prophet's household

38. Protect us from the enemies' gloating
and the efforts of slanderers and those harboring enmity

39. And do not issue a command for them against us
nor a decree in our matter without justice

Line 24 starts of in an epistolatory manner with "*waʾammā baʿdu*." The poet narrates his woes and the injustice that has befallen him. Those who have confiscated Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's estate are depicted as rogue elements (line 27). But even here, the poet injects scatology. He says that he has changed the deed (*rasm*) to his property to a trace (*rashm*) as it is useless and it farts on him! The poet and his sons have been humiliated, but he must show restraint. The next section is praise of the recipient's valor and a plea to intercede with his brother. Then there is a reference to the *ahl al-bayt* (The family of the Prophet) to remind the addressee of the common bond of Shīʿism they share and a final appeal for justice:

40. O master Abū al-Faḍl, listen to it
For its meanings have combined styles/types

41. And accept them, for they are like brides from abodes
married off to you both virgins and non-virgins

42. If you recite them you will see a frivolous
old man scattering precious jewels

43. And who with rhymes disfigures, not only alters
Ha girl! Up with your cup and serve us our morning drink

The last section (four lines) is a signature or dedication of sorts on Ibn al- Ḥajjāj's part. He asks the recipient to consider both the poem and its style and boasts of the meanings encapsulated in it (line 40). In line 41 the meanings are likened to both virgins and deflowered women. While this is not an uncommon trope, perhaps it is a conscious statement on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's part, as we find it elsewhere in his work, of the singularity of some of the motifs he composes. If you were to recite these verses, he tells the recipient, you would see the frivolous old man scattering precious jewels (42). The last line is extremely important with respect to self-consciousness, for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj states clearly that he is "*yamsakhu*"

and not "*yaslakhu*" *alā hubbī*. The use of these two terms, which are of a literary nature, merits a pause. According to Lane, "*salakha* is the substitution . . . for original words synonymous therewith," whereas "what falls short of that is termed *maskh*." *Maskh* also denotes corruption in writing "by changing the diacritical points and altering the meaning."[59] Thus, it is not exorbitant at all to read this last line as a literary *fakhr* (boast) of sorts where Ibn al-Hajjāj boasts of how he has disfigured (*yamsakhu*) "*alā hubbī*" and radically altered its meanings to serve different purposes, which is the business of excellent parody.

The reading of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's parody of the *muʿallaqa* shows his mastery of the tradition and his striking ability to deploy his parody and *sukhf* to any model text and invert its meaning and function to serve his own immediate purposes. The *muʿallaqa* of ʿAmr b. Kulthūm, a pean to heroism, makes a perfect target for parody, especially for an antiheroic figure such as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. Being at the mercy of military rulers, he must use his verbal skills not to incite those around him to wage battle but to ward off violence and injustice. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj assumes the antiheroic position and inverts the essential values of the *muʿallaqa*, but in doing so, performs a literary boast.

If the *muʿallaqāt* are the most revered accomplishments of the pre-Islamic Arabic poetic tradition, the *qaṣīda*, and the panegyric *qaṣīda* in particular (*madīḥ*), was its most enduring and popular. What changes did Ibn al-Ḥajjāj introduce to the panegyric *qaṣīda* and how did *sukhf* interact with and influence it? These are the questions that the next chapter will attempt to answer.

# CHAPTER 3

# *Sukhf* in Panegyric Poetry

The polythematic panegyric ode was the privileged form of poetic expression in premodern classical Arabic poetry (and in Arabo-Islamic cultures at large). Its

> function . . . as an encoder and transmitter of the ideology of Islamic hegemony and as one of the insignia of legitimate (Arabo-) Islamic political authority is a decisive factor in [its] . . . preeminence.[1]

In addition to being the primary cultural commodity in maintaining political hegemony and enhancing and reproducing sociopolitical status, it also tended to be a relatively privileged topic of interest for premodern critics. While poets were more valued if they were able to compose (well) in various modes, *madīḥ* (panegyric) poetry was certainly one of the primary fields where they exhibited their talent and vied for prominence, let alone material rewards. This does not mean that those who did not compose exquisite panegyrics did not make it to the pantheon, but it was an unofficial prerequisite from which only a few could afford to exempt themselves.[2]

The "plasticity" of the form and its "combinatory potential' to use Stetkevych's *and* Sperl's words respectively,[3] allowed individual poets to introduce variations on the basic "structure" and to add the distinctive mark of their own style to the genre. This is certainly true of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, who was the first to introduce *sukhf* into the panegyric *qaṣida*.[4] It would seem unimaginable at first that scatology—the extreme type for which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj became notorious—could be smoothly incorporated into, and employed in, a genre whose main thrust is the glorification of rulers and notables and their moral superiority. But it is a testament both

to the adaptability of the genre itself and the mastery and ingenuousness of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj that he was able not only to integrate his *sukhf* into his panegyrics, but also to be quite successful at it. The focus of this chapter, then, is to explore how *sukhf* interacts with (and within) *madīḥ* and how it functions in the panegyric ode, and to identify the strategies employed by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj to fulfill its telos.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the tributaries and tendencies that were incorporated into what became *sukhf* were already present in the repertoire in general and in the history of *madīḥ* itself. Extensive *hijāʾ* had already been employed in panegyric *qaṣīdas* in the Umayyad period and afterward.[5] *Kudya* (begging) was not a totally uncommon theme in the panegyrics of the ʿAbbāsid period and it boasted throngs of poets who were known as *kudya* poets.[6] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's innovation was to redeploy certain aspects of these two modes in hitherto unexplored ways and with unprecedented vigor.

Before dealing with representative samples from Ibn al-Hajjāj's *madīḥ*, a few remarks about the assumptions that guide this reading are in order. Thankfully, we are past the days when the Arabic ode was considered a hodgepodge with no discernible structure beyond the single line. The theoretical terrain on which current readings operate is much firmer.[7] The *madīḥ* poems of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj validate, more or less, the general paradigm suggested by Sperl:

> The panegyric *qaṣīda* is, therefore, a formal testimony to the legitimacy of political authority. In its movement from chaos to order, from affliction to deliverance, from isolation to integration, the glory of the social order is proclaimed. Society and its values, present in the person of the ruler, are recreated triumphantly by the replay of symbolic events and the utterance of liturgical formulae of praise. Therein lies the significance of the structure of the panegyric.[8]

The term "structure" might suggest a rigid and unchanging set of relationships. I will, therefore, use the term "economy" of the text to better describe the network of relationships and modes whose final outcome (both meaning and effect) remains the same, although produced by varying means, and to allow for more "play" and fluidity in its constituent elements, especially since "play" assumes added significance with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

The teleology described in the excerpt above is produced through the interaction between a set of antithetical relationships that govern the textual economy of the panegyric *qaṣīda*. The realm of *aṭlāl/nasīb* and the

beloved is one of affliction, chaos, sterility, temporality of matter, and decay. It is where fate rules over the poet and his surroundings. The antithesis to this is the realm of the *madīḥ*, state and ruler (or their representatives), where power and order overcome chaos and where moral attributes and virtue bestow life and fertility (as opposed to decaying beauty).[9]

A close reading of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *madīḥ* poems shows that this economy is operative in them as well, but not without Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's masterful and unique manipulation of conventions and his signature style. To account fully for the varieties of *madīḥ* in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj would require a separate project.[10] However, the following readings of representative samples do illustrate the most salient strategies employed by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and will shed light on his distinctive take on *madīḥ*.

## A *madīḥ* to ʿAḍud al-Dawla

(And he said [on the occasion] of ʿAḍud al-Dawla's[11] return from al-Nahrawān)

1. My two companions do not hasten my stop
before an effaced abode at Darb al-Mulaqqab!

2. At the ass of a fatty with an old hole
whose saggy clitoris is as old as my father's hoary testicles

3. Long-legged, her crap falls down
like the baked clay of a protruding wall

4. As if the branches of hemorrhoids in her anus
are bunches of unripe dates becoming ripe

5. Her pubic hair like a velvet garment
the lice on its nap like big-tailed locusts

6. Of the sawdust coming off the cock tips she has a [whole] plank
Were it to be made into a crucifix, it would spiral around[12]

7. And remains of a black clitoris [like] dry dates
on her labia like a chopped up spleen

8. My two companions, pass me by her for she
is Umm Jundub when the winds of her ass blow

9. Do you not see that whenever I come at night
I find her/it smelling good even when she has not scented herself

10. I used to write love poetry for her ass
and I have not done so in a while

11. I have been too busy receiving [the sulṭān] in my poetry
to speak of Laylā and then Zaynab

12. I saddled my horse who is like a brother to me
A peer who grew up as and when I did

13. A red-black horse to whom I am indebted. I knew him
young like my son. He knew me while I was still a boy

14. He took me in the morning, retreating
of hunger, marching like one who is cautious, terrified

15. Toward a king who, since his absence, my bed
at night complains [to night] of my stirring and turning

16. I spend the night conversing with the stars
Whenever one disappears, my eye takes on another

17. Our Lord has returned, so return O my eye
to a good, sweet and joyous sleep

18. Father to lion cubs who, in the uproar of battle, is away
From arid land, in a reedbed of entangled spears

19. His spearheads are [so] dyed with the enemy's blood
He has little care for dying fingers with henna

20. In choosing him, God protected humans
with one most protective and beloved

21. For their ruler has become a caring father
and they were, before him, fatherless nothings

22. Before him my wishes were like a fist full of
wind in the beak of a phoenix

23. My master sheltered me when I was hounded, took me back after
being homeless and gave me drink with his own hands

24. He made my ancestor al-Ḥajjāj and his progeny famous
Just as al-Ḥajjāj did with Ibn al-Muhallab[13]

25. I say as I see him seated
under the raised tent like the morning sun:

26. My God, prolong his life [so he can aid] my weakness and take
my family, children, their mother and my father as ransom [for his life]

27. For you know of my loyalty to him
which I hide and show due to the soundness of my doctrine

[LXV]

1–10 *nasīb*
11– transition
13–15 pseudo-*raḥīl*/horse description
15–17 sleepless lover/poet
15–27 *madīḥ*

The occasion of this poem was ʿAḍud al-Dawla's[14] return from al-Nahrawān.[15] The opening line is typical. The poet beseeches his two imaginary companions not to hasten the act of making him stop. Knowing Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's penchant for inversion and line 2, this functions as yet another novel variation on the *aṭlāl* topos. Knowing what sort of trace is in store, he is not in a rush to stop. While I have not been able to locate Darb al-Mulaqqab, it was most likely an actual quarter in Baghdad, especially that it comes in the first "serious" line designed to anchor the poem in a deceptively serious and realistic mode, before the anticipated shift to *sukhf*. The line also harks back to the opening of a famous poem by Imruʾ al-Qays with the same *qāfiya* (rhyme) and *baḥr* (meter) (*al-Ṭawīl*):

My two companions, let me pass by Umm Jundub!
So that I may fulfill the needs of a tortured heart[16]

[LXVI]

There are, as we shall see later, other references and appropriations from this poem. The shift to the *sukhf* mode occurs in line 2 as we realize that the *manzil* (campsite) in question and the locus of remembrance is, of course, not an actual one, but the aged anus of an old woman. This parodic *nasīb* begins by cataloguing the lower orifices of the hyperbolically old woman. The association of the woman's clitoris with the testicles of the poet's father is meant to indicate hyperbolic old age. To further highlight the woman's grotesque body, she is described as long-legged, which causes shit to fall far off from her body and is likened to a disintegrating wall of clay bricks.[17] A *jināS* (paronomasia) between *bawāsīr* (hemorrhoids) and *busr* (green unripe dates) is used in line 4 to describe the hemorrhoids in the anus as bunches of unripe dates. This image can be read as an inversion, of sorts, of a line from the aforementioned poem by Imruʾ al-Qays where the garments of the departing women (*ẓaʿn*) are described as follows:

[They sat] wearing garments made in Antioch atop an ornamented red cover [of the *hawdaj*]
Like dates falling off a palm tree or [like] the orchards of Yathrib[18]

[LXVII]

It is also important to note that one of the essential strategies of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is to deliberately associate scatological themes with references to, and themes of, food and eating.[19] To further underscore the hyperbolically old age and decrepit state of the woman, line 5, building on the subverted image from Imruʾ al-Qays, represents the woman's pubis as an old garment infested with lice. Lines 6 and 7 follow suit to highlight the inordinate number of men who have penetrated her and the bloodied remains of her labia (like a chopped up spleen). Unlike the typical women of the *nasīb*, this one has been around (in both senses of the word) for some time.

Having sufficiently described her, the poet repeats his address to the two imaginary companions to let him pass by her anus. Here we have a more direct reference to the famous figure of Umm Jundub (Imruʾ al-Qays's wife). Keeping the sophisticated and literate audience in mind and the performative aspect of the poem, this probably served to anchor the parodic effect and reiterate the relationship between the two poems (and, thus, the gap between the two women described therein).

Line 9 is appropriated from the same poem by Imruʾ al-Qays as well (line 3 in the *bāʾiyya*), but the meaning is, of course, totally inverted as the *hā* here refers to *ist* (ass) and not Umm Jundub. Lines 10 and 11 conclude the *nasīb* section and function as a transition to the short semi-*raḥīl* (journey) and horse description, before moving on to the *madīḥ*. In line 11, the poet mentions that he has no time to speak of Laylā or Zaynab (stock names from the *nasīb* repertoire) as he is busy preparing for the reception (*talaqqī*), which is the explicit subject of the panegyric.

In lines 12–13, the poet describes mounting his horse to go receive the *mamdūḥ* (the recipient, or subject, of the panegyric). However, here too, parody is in full motion. The "camaraderie" and intimacy of the poet with his horse is exaggerated so that the horse (the *raḥīl*, we must remember, almost disappears or is very brief in the ʿAbbāsid period) is as old as the poet himself, having been bred with him "like a brother." This raises the stakes for the anticipated reward by exaggerating the poet's supposed poverty. In line 14, the reversal that *sukhf* performs within the poetic tradition is crystallized in a very humorous way; the horse is so old and hungry that, to meet the *mamdūḥ*, it retreats (*qahqarā*). Such exaggeration of the poet's poverty is a hallmark of *kudya* poetry. It could also be an expression of the fear the *mamdūḥ* strikes. Lines 15–17 employ the motif of the sleepless lover/poet who shepherds the stars. In line 17, the return of the *mamdūḥ* (standing in for the beloved here) readjusts the temporal imbalance and heals the poet's insomnia. Lines 18 and 19 touch

on the *mamdūḥ*'s bravery and strength. He is a lion, but has been away in a different reedbed: one of spears. So fierce and lethal is he that his spears are dyed with his enemies' blood. The latter takes the place of henna (*nasīb*-related vocabulary and theme). Lines 20–21 confirm divine justice and wisdom and establishes the *mamdūḥ* as the caring and loving father figure. Line 22 highlights his ability to grant wishes that were previously unattainable and unimaginable, nay impossible. Before him, the poet's hopes were "like a fist full of wind in the beak of a legendary bird," which is a double impossibility. In line 23, the poet contrasts the *mamdūḥ* to the notoriously brutal governor of Iraq al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī. By being so kind and merciful (the previous line), the *mamdūḥ* makes al-Ḥajjāj even more infamous, just as al-Ḥajjāj made Ibn al-Muhallab infamous by imprisoning him.[20] This is obviously meant to highlight the supposed justice of the ruler as opposed to the bloody reign of the Umayyad al-Ḥajjāj, whose proverbial terror continues to live in contemporary Iraqi and Arab culture to this day.

The poem concludes with a *duʿāʾ* (supplication) to prolong the *mamdūḥ*'s life and a hint to justice and political legitimacy expressed by the poet's ability to declare his loyalty. Like the Būyids, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was a Shīʿī and now that the rulers are themselves Shīʿīs, there is no need for dissimulation (*taqiyya*). The grotesque and hyperbolically old woman described early on in the poem augments the poetic persona's misery and misfortune and, combined with the *kudya* motif, deepens the projected need for the *mamdūḥ*'s bounty. His generosity and magnanimity, traditionally associated with cosmic harmony and natural phenomena, will be the perfect antidote to a poet afflicted with a beloved's body (or memory thereof) so grotesquely wrecked by time and one whose sole property is an old and weakened horse. While the beloved's body as described in the poem is beyond regeneration, the realm and the polity, whenever and no matter how out of joint, can be restored and the poet's emaciation and poverty can also be overturned. The poem, despite the parodic and scatological tropes in the beginning, fulfills the fundamental objective of the panegyric: naturalizing political hierarchy and singing the praises of the political status quo.

### *Mīmiyya*

1. Cutting off bonds after ass-fucking[21]
is, for me, tasteless scrawniness

2. Woe unto you, many a night has passed
that gladdened you, but in which my misery was intensified

3. You shat and I, being so kind and loving,
took it in my sleeve

4. You oppress so much with no mercy,
and turn away [from me] so often without a fault [on my part]

5. I swear by God I knew her
in the days when she was still my lot

6. If her anus is hardened (if she's constipated)
she calls out [my name] and becomes lax

7. Today she is heedless
unattended, shitting without my knowledge

8. Some say to me: We knew her yesterday
farting from a hard and skinny ass

9. And today her anus is surrounded with
fat [that is] like folded cotton

10. I said to them: That is because her anus
now only dines on meat

11. It swallows the raw sausages of testicles[22]
with an anus that digests well

12. When weakened, the base of her anus
at night flows inadvertently like a river

13. I said to my cock as it was at her anus' door:
Ask for God's guidance, rise up and say "in the name of God"

14. Attiring yourself in between two coats of mail, if you do it,
one of fat, the other muzzle (laxative)

15. Like the full moon rise to her clitoris
O you neck of the bass string

16. How can I deny, by artful means, a love
which my heart reveals upon my body?

17. How can I be close to her heart
when my poverty is my talisman against my lady

18. They said: Go down and enrich yourself on a Friday
I said: From whom O cousins?

19. They said: To him whose hand is a cloud
that will water you with the first rain of spring

20. To the gallant and sought-after king
So I said: that was my intent

21. To the lord whose money
Descends liberally according to my judgment

22. My masters, read this fraction of my poetry which
makes people, except those present, deaf and does not blind!

23. Read it as if it were a lesson for it is, in my opinion,
more useful than the *Mukhtaṣar* of al-Jarmī

24. Then, say to the emir whose ambition
is higher than the Pleiades

25. The Būyids are all stars
and you are the full moon among them

26. O son of sharpened Indian swords
Son of the edges of spears

27. The bread of my daily allowance did not please me
Because it is dry and meatless[23]

28. And medicine has said that bread
with salt is more lethal than poison

29. God is in the soul of a man who comes down
to you with great riches

30. With a panegyric that leaves, in Wāsiṭ
the beard of him who hates you in my anus

[LXVIII]

This poem starts off in the *sukhf* mode with a parody of the *nasīb*. The *ṣarm* (separation, cutting off bonds) is not one that has come after traditional erotic encounters, but a direct reference to anal sex (The paronomasia between *ṣarm* and *surm* (anus). If we are to accept the suggestion that the *maṭlaʿ*, at times, encapsulates the general thrust of the *qaṣīda*, this is a good case in point. The tasteless leanness (*ghathāthatun bilā ṭaʿmi*) in the second hemistich introduces the food theme whose deliberate juxtaposing to (and confusion with) sexual and scatological themes will be skeletal to the narrative of the poem. This link between of *surm* (anus) and *ṭaʿm* (taste) will resurface later. Line 2 is typical of serious *nasīb* where the lover's misery is contrasted to and sadistically enjoyed by the beloved, but line 3 introduces the scatological element and informs us that the gladness of the beloved and the poet's misery are not typical at all. The remembrance here is of nights where the woman was constipated and only the mention of the poet's name would allow her to shit. Now, after separation (line 7), she is on her own, shitting

as she pleases and is lax in both senses. In lines 8–9, the poet mentions how the imaginary *ʿudhdhāl* (censurers) inform him that the woman has gained considerable weight. This is meant to augment the symbolic misery of the poetic persona as he will harp on his own poverty and inability to feed the beloved. But feeding here is meant on two levels (*surm*/*ṭaʿm*). The cotton metaphor in line 9 shows how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj usually benefits from his tenure as *muḥtasib* (market inspector) and incorporates much imagery and terminology from the market. The layers of fat here can be read as fat accumulating around her anus, but another source is suggested. Lines 10 and 11 continue the conflation of the scatological with the culinary and digestive (*surm* and *ṭaʿm*). The anus is metonymically associated with the mouth and anal sex is expressed as dining on sausages. *ʿUṣbān* is a type of food made by stuffing rice and meat into animal intestines.[24] Line 12 revisits the woman's proclivity to diarrhea. In line 13, the poet addresses his cock, as it is about to enter the woman's anus, using intentionally incongruous pious expressions. Phonetically, "*istakhir*" (seek God's guidance) hits two birds with a stone. Ist-, means anus, and the remainder of the word shares two sounds with the root kh-r-ʾ (shit). Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is fond of such allusions. The image in line 14, once again, deepens the conflation of the culinary with the scatological. The woman's buttocks are portrayed as being made of fat and muzzle. The full moon (*badr al-timm*) is usually used for the face of the beloved, but here it is the poet's cock.

Line 16 shifts back to the serious mode and 17 fuses *kudya* as the poet mentions poverty as the reason that keeps his beloved away from him. This prepares for the transition to the *madīḥ*. In the next two lines (18–19) he is advised to seek the generosity of the *mamdūḥ*. Lines 19–21 include typical motifs of the *madīḥ* with the *mamūdḥ*'s hands like pouring clouds (generosity). Lines 22–23 feature a not so serious poetic boast where the poet likens the informative knowledge of his poetry to the famous *Mukhtaṣar of al-Jarmī*.[25] The remainder is not atypical; the Būyids, the ruling dynasty, are compared to stars and the *mamdūḥ* is the full moon. It is important here to note that *qamaru al-timm* forms a parallel of sorts with *badr al-timm* in line 15 (describing the poet's cock). Insinuating such parallels to highlight the *mamdūḥ*'s sexual prowess is not out of the ordinary, but produced here in an unusual manner. A *kudya* motif is inserted again in lines 27–29 as the poet complains of his meager and bitter daily allowance. The poet's daily bread is dry and lethal. The "tastelessness" of the opening line is reiterated here. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj ends with a scatological *hijā* threatening to have the beard of the *mamdūḥ*'s enemies up his own anus. The poet establishes his miserable state in the

*aṭlāl/nasīb* section. His beloved has abandoned him and while previously emaciated, she is now enjoying abundant food in more than one way and her constipation has turned into diarrhea. To exaggerate the poet's poverty, even his beloved's anus seems to be enjoying better meals than his dry bread, which is made from bad flour!

The trajectory of this poem moves away from a world (Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's familiar world) where orifices are in disarray and their functions are confused, toward one where ordered hierarchy and the laws of nature still reign and at the heart of which sits the *mamdūḥ*. The poet is seeking refuge in the *mamduḥ*-centered world and escaping a state of topsy-turviness.

### *Good Times: Nūniyya*

He also said [this],[26] when he was taken up to accompany ʿIzz al-Dawla[27] and Ibn Baqiyya[28] as they were going to Mosul and Abū ʿl-Faḍl Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Nawbakhtī was accompanying him. When they reached al-Baradān, they went up to drink in one of the orchards. Night came and there was great rain in which they drowned [were soaked], so they took refuge in a monastery where there was an abode of an old peasant woman. They went inside with her and started to drink until they were intoxicated. They slept and awoke and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj composed this poem and recited it before ʿIzz al-Dawla and Ibn Baqiyya while they were at Awānā before they departed:

1. May God safeguard the time
I was in Awānā

2. A guest of people, purchasing praise
with that which is dear and not so dear[29]

3. With people there who
are seduced by life

4. When they go in the early morning empty-bellied
and return full in the evening

5. When they go as men in the early morning
and return as wine caskets in the evening

6. In orchards which when entered
It was as if we had entered paradise

7. O Abū Ṭāhir, you who
beautified and adorned dominion!

8. I fear my time not
once I find Zumānā

9. Nor do I think of cold
when I visit Yamān

10. With them I am safe
from my poverty and hardship

11. I have cooled my heart
by journeying up to al-Baradān

12. With wine that confounded
both my mind and tongue

13. So that when I wished to speak
I needed an interpreter

14. A hamlet with wine,
prostitutes and singers

15. A truthful friend accompanying me
and none else with us

16. O Abū al-Faḍl do tell
of my story and how it was!

17. How we both spent the night
at the monastery at the bottom of the hamlet

18. With an old woman like my mother
My God guard and protect her!

19. Who protects the monastery and herds
its goats and sheep

20. I said [to her] when she came
walking like a crab

21. Hey you, enough! come
get us [some] food and bread![30]

22. Remember how she said
as she slept next to us:

23. If I sleep, fuck me in my ass
But if I wake up, I won't let you!

24. I said: in the ass if you
sleep? She said: O yes!

25. Then I leapt onto her
after she had been asleep for a while

26. She felt me and said:
[It's alright] no one can see us

27. The boat has been pushed away in my ass
What is happening?

28. Stick the oar in or else
you are a useless navigator

29. O Abū al-Faḍl, we agree [on certain things]
and disagree in what we love

30. You are infatuated with yellow shit
that looks like saffron

31. Whereas I, fearing the hole,
saw death eye to eye

32. We are both pasturing in shit and piss
May God shave our beards!

33. O my Lord, one whom we see not
but who, in the unknown, sees us

34. Safeguard ʿIzz al-Dawlah, the lord
from Time ['s vicissitudes]

35. Through him, O God
always grant us our wishes

36. Keep one in whose generosity
copious water, even in poverty, enriches us

37. Keep one who fed us pure bread
and revived us[31]

38. One without whom we
would have had to eat our own shit

[LXIX]

| | |
|---|---|
| 1–7 | bacchic |
| 7–11 | (minor) *madīḥ* to Ibn Baqiyya |
| 12–14 | description of al-Baradān |
| 15 | the boon companion |
| 18–21 | transition to narrative/dialogue with the woman |
| 22–32 | *sukhf* |
| 33–37 | main *madīḥ* |
| 38 | *sukhf* finale |

This *madīḥ* is interesting as another sample of a slightly different redeployment of motifs and topics, but, of course, to the same end. The paronomasia in the opening line (here it is a *jināS lafẓī*) is important in

bestowing formal unity and coherence (and there is extensive *jināS* in this poem—see later).

It crystallizes the event around which the narrative of the poem is constructed (a time in Awānā). The first section of the poem following the *maṭlaʿ* (lines 2–7) introduces the bacchic motif in describing the leisurely time spent in Awānā.

There is paronomasia in line 3 (*yuftanūna/iftitānā*) and a *ṭibāq* (antithesis) in line 4 (*yaghdūna/yarūḥūna and khimāṣan/biṭānā*). Although I am wary of speculating too much with regard to authorial intentions, it would not be too exorbitant to suggest that a certain motion of "filling" can be detected here (lines 4 and 5). This being a *madīḥ*, the objective, of course, is a handsome reward. Lines 7–10 address Ibn Baqiyya (himself originally from Awānā) who was the recipient of a few *madīḥs* by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and who, together with ʿIzz al-Dawla, forms the primary audience of the poem. The paronomasia in line 8 (*zamānī/zumānā*) acknowledges his generosity by referring to his agent and servant. Both Zumānā and Yamān, we are told, were in charge of distributing Ibn Baqiyya's gifts (*khilaʿ*).[32] He is portrayed as a protector from the vicissitudes of time. The bacchic motif continues in line 11 with a mention of al-Baradān, the site to which the poet goes seeking pleasure. In line 12, the wine is depicted as being so strong as to cause the poet's mind and heart to babble, and he is in need of an interpreter to express himself. This is foreshadowing of later events, and the trope will be revisited a few lines later with the use of Aramaic. Line 14 describes al-Baradān in typical *khamriyya* (wine song) fashion as a place chock-full of pleasures. Line 15 introduces the *nadīm* (boon companion) (Abū 'l-Faḍl) and 16 implores him to retell a story about their stay there. All is ordinary until we get to line 18. "*Maʿ ʿajūzin*" triggers the shift to *sukhf*. "'Ajūz" (old woman) is one of the epithets of wine in the *khamriyyāt*, but what follows shows us that something else is at play. "*Mithli ummī*" (like my mother) shifts the atmosphere from saturnalia to the supposedly familial and familiar realm of "mother." Line 19 further establishes the woman's credentials as a simple and motherly woman tending to the monastery and its environs. The poet asks her to prepare some food and bread (21). Line 22 prepares for the full shift to *sukhf* (in line 23) as the poet asks his friend if he remembers what the woman said as she prepared to sleep next to them! Hitherto deceptively simple, she asks him nonchalantly to put his cock in her ass after she sleeps. She warns him, however, that if she woke up, then she would stop him. When she does wake up, she justifies her acceptance by saying "no one can see us." In line 27, the comical situation is further developed when the old woman becomes more demanding, urging the

poet to do it right. The clownish atmosphere intensifies as he appears clumsy and inefficient in carrying out anal intercourse and being incapable of navigating his way. The boon companion is addressed again in line 29 and his preference for anal intercourse is mentioned (30) in contrast to the poet who fears the enormity of the anus. Line 32 has both men "pasturing in shit and piss." This scatological abyss makes a perfect point for the move to the realm of the main *mamdūḥ*, ʿIzz al-Dawla. Lines 33–37 are an extended *duʿāʾ* (supplication) where the usual strategies are used. God is asked to protect him from the vicissitudes of time. It is important to note the contrast between drowning in rain (mixed with excrement) at Awānā before the arrival of ʿIzz al-Dawla, and then drowning in the rain of his generosity and being fed meat (and not just bread as the case is at the old woman's place). Line 38, bearing Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's signature, delivers an unusual combination of scatology and praise. Were it not for the *mamdūḥ*, he says, both the poet and his boon companion would have had to eat their own shit. Thus, ʿIzz al-Dawla is the savior from a world of cacophony (the use of Aramaic), disorder, and utter filth.

### *Shameless Poetry*

1. I ransom with my own soul him whom I do not name[33]
I hide and veil my infatuation with him

2. I hide him in between my ribs out of fear
[but] my tears reveal him among my slanderers

3. A gazelle who poured me wine from his own hands
mixed with nectar from his mouth

4. He possesses beauty unchallenged
[Even] by Joseph, nor contested

5. The full moon is his protégé
and the sun on a dark day is his slave girl

6. The arāk tree branch is his servant
in the suppleness of his curvatures as he sways

7. Against me in that which harms him
and damages both my heart and himself

8. He denies me his vessel, but if he were to ask
for the apple of my right eye, I would give it to him

9. I reproach him so much [that] I have lost patience
My chest is overburdened because of how kindly I treat him

10. His beautiful face is kind to me while
his oppression harms me in love

11. Whenever I seek to reciprocate
his persistence in his transgression

12. His beauties, all of a sudden
come asking forgiveness for his shortcomings

13. Before the son of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, our master
I ransom him from the vicissitudes [of time]

14. A brave man who always fulfills his promise
and whose merits [make him] rise above the morning star

15. How will he not reach the heavens in augustness
despite every one who shows him enmity?

16. He whose father is ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz
feeding him glory from the time he was in his cradle

17. A brave man, every one who hopes to attain something from him
can reach the utmost he had hoped for

18. He protects the frightened one seeking protection
and amply enriches he who asks

19. A man whom generosity, while he protects it, prevents
blame from wandering in his environs

20. If some deny the flock, he gives it away
and where there are those who give it, he protects it

21. Generosity has overwhelmed the lands through him
His beneficence comes in the morning and goes at night

22. None in the east compete with him
None in the west are his equal

23. A man—my praise for him has been bought
for twice that which his good deeds had drawn

24. Praise in which my song for you soars
with everyone who, enchanted with it, recites it

25. The bird of poetry is not let down
neither by his forefeathers or the underfeathers

26. O you whose enemies' beards before him
have been shaved in the privy's dregs

27. The feast [*mihrajān*] gift is ready
and a servant gives gifts to his masters

28. A servant who saw that anyone who strives
to be near the heart of him to whom he is loyal

29. Gives him a gift according to his power
which comes to him according to his measure

30. So he came to give, as a gift, the poetry
whose topics encompassed the limits of shit

31. The toilets overflow with its contents
and privies are in its rhymes

32. A poetry- O sons of Ṭāhir- I would not
dedicate to others at the Mihrajān

33. Poetry in which I fuck the mother of anyone who challenges you
with every cock I describe in it

[LXX]

1–2 *nasīb*, typical description of the beloved
3 cupbearer/beloved
4–6 physical beauty
7–12 ungenerous and oppressive beloved
13 *mamdūḥ*
14 nature/light
17 fulfills hopes/promises
19–22 generosity
23–25, 27–29 poem as gift
26 *hijāʾ*, of enemies
30–33 poetic boast, *hijāʾ* of enemies, *sukhf* as *madīḥ*

The first two-third of this poem is typical by general standards. But atypical of most *madīḥ* poems by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in that the *nasīb* is *sukhf*-less. It starts out with an extended *nasīb* describing the unnamable beloved who is hidden in the poet's heart together with his ardent love. But the poet's tears divulge his secretive love among others. Line 3 introduces the beloved as the typical cupbearer who serves wine together with his sweet saliva. Line 4 tells of his uncontested and unparalleled beauty (just as the *mamdūḥ* will be in his generosity and power). Lines 7–11 speak of the beloved's ungenerosity and how hurtful and oppressive s/he is. No matter how impatient the poet might become after successive rejections, the beloved's beauties always seek and secure forgiveness. The beloved's generosity is in his beautiful looks, but not in his actions as he continuously rejects and denies. Line 13 marks the shift to the realm of *madīḥ* as it is the locus where the beauties of the beloved come seeking

forgiveness (and thus this is where the poet is to be rewarded for his affliction).

The poet turns to a description of the *mamdūḥ* and his venerable genealogy. In contrast to the beloved, he always fulfills promises and grants wishes. The typical *madīḥ* associations with nature and light are also invoked. The *mamdūḥ* too is unparalleled in his own attributes (especially generosity), but, unlike the beloved, whose beauty surpasses even that of the proverbial Joseph, he is faultless and reliable. The poet then moves on to boast of his own poetry and its uniqueness. Lines 24–25 speak of how far-reaching the poet's panegyrics travel, which is probably an actual reference to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's established fame by then and not mere hyperbole. Line 26 features a glimpse of *hijāʾ*, but the poet seems as if to restrain himself, and where we would usually expect an extended scatological *hijāʾ* of the *mamdūḥ*'s enemies he reverts to the theme of the appropriateness of the gift in lines 27–29. This teasing, of sorts, is not uncommon in Ibn al-Hajjāj's poetry and probably bespeaks how he used to toy with the audience's expectations of the particular point at which the *sukhf* would (re)appear in the poem. Line 30 returns to the *sukhf* theme and boasts of the poetry he has come to give as a gift and its hybrid nature. Here Ibn al-Ḥajjāj signs off with his unique style. After stressing how uniquely filthy and foul his poetry is or can be (one of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's favorite tropes[34]) its filth is linked to the *madīḥ* by purloining it away to the enemies of the sons of Ṭāhir. All the cocks described in his poetry will be used to fuck them.

What interests us here is that this poem represents another way in which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj deploys *sukhf* in his panegyrics. The *nasīb* is *sukhf*-less, which probably heightens the audience's expectations that it is bound to appear later in the poem. While the poet does not dwell on extended scatological descriptions, he refers to the nature and reputation of his poetry and offers it to the *mamdūḥ* as if he is submitting the hybrid and notorious mode to his patrons.

### *Rāʾiyya*

Composed[35] for Ibn Saʿdān[36] after having been late for a month due to an ailment that befell him:

1. O ye tiny, plucked anus,
wake up perhaps you have not been scraped or did not crap violently!

2. Many a shit of yours is like a hard rock
Even a vigorous young man with an axe, would never break it

3. [There is] a hungry one in the piss swamp under you
White of countenance, glistening like the lamp of the newborn

4. A cunt which, whenever I attempt to block [its bank] with the tip of a cock another, more flowing and steep one, opens

5. For there comes the hero of his time as long as he lives, skillful
If a nostril is shut, another flows open[37]

6. It/he has a course of whose expanse and distance
even a well-fed and trained horse would tire

7. Visited when night's curtains are down
by someone [who is] big-headed and of rough testicles

8. A bald [one] who never had a hair grow
on its head, beard sides shaved, one-eyed

9. He has but one eye whose tears, whenever shed
over a lax anus, flow[38]

10. "What flows from the eye is not its tears
but a soul that melts and trickles"

11. Fucking is to my liking whenever
a womb becomes chubby or a shitting hole opens its mouth

12. And another [one] from which I keep my cock away and indeed she
is indeed a watering hole for fucking to which I go down and, if I wish,
come up

13. If guests descend upon the anus of my tied mount
Alone I am with no anus or cunt to visit

14. Peace be upon that bladder and the kidneys
and their early rainy white clouds of fucking

15. Abodes of fornication from whose courtyards now
—by your life—no one brings news of the fuckers' cock tips

16. There were days when testicles went about
when fucking grazed and cocks gazed

17. I made my cock stand up amid its traces
[It was] madly surprised, grieved, and perplexed

18. It recited to me when it saw its one eye
so full of tears in the love encampments that it could not make out (see)

19. I stood looking at the abode, so full of love
as if I were standing behind a glass

20. By my soul and my kin; hidden [in my heart is] a poem
If I were to express it, my tongue would not do justice

21. And many a hairy woman walking along and her leg
stumbling over the rope from the hair in her anus

22. I fucked her with my cock night after night
Neither did she get her fill, nor did I bore

23. I say, after she pissed in the bed and sprinkled it
and had she shat, it would have been splattered:

24. You see that which causes fear, so you fear it
[as for] that which is unseen and against which God protects, it is more

25. May he who asks something of you, Abū ʿAbdillāh, rejoice
For your generosity is one whose favors are unadulterated!

26. Generosity that vies with pouring rain
and might that vies with the lion when it's in its den

27. The soaring eagle is too weak to reach his wishes
Even the flying Jaʿfar cannot climb to him[39]

28. If viziers gather in your assembly
and you come, they all scatter and stumble

29. And pray to their master bowing and prostrating
Led by Ibn Hārūn and al-Muṭahhar[40]

30. The public call to prayer, when its time is at hand,
[asking] That you, in the eyes of God, [be] greater and more supreme
[than all]

31. Many a scandalous man alighted, whom you surprised
and he was confronted with a man of humongous arms

32. A man who drags the train of his garment atop glory's head
On the day of battle you see his sleeves rolled up

33. When he desires to trick his enemy
He considers before coming upon him, whence he will come out

34. With a heart that has two eyes, one disregards passion
and another gazes at consequences

35. Here, my lord, take it, for its essence is like gold
Solid and unchanging despite the passage of time

36. Long-lasting whose mention remains forever
The most beneficial of what remains is long-lasting praise

37. Such is my poetry of which pages
in God's lands are folded and unfolded

38. So that no glorious or generous man on the face of earth
does not have a book of it

39. Many a panegyric for Ibn Shahrām are[41]
hidden and never appear,

40. Hidden by their shyness toward their reciters,
Whereas my poetry, never hiding, is barefaced and shameless

[LXXI]

Not unlike many of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *madīḥ* poems, this one begins with the poet addressing an orifice (the anus). Instead of being abandoned or hyperbolically old as orifices usually are in the world of *sukhf*, it is dysfunctional by being constipated. Even when it is functioning, there is a flaw in its excrement being as hard as stone (1–2). Line 3 moves down (it becomes obvious from the description that the poet's vantage point is from behind the female being described, and thus the vagina is below the anus) to a detailed description of the vagina (the piss swamp) mixed with the usual scatological themes. The description continues in line 4, and the cock is introduced here as well. The hyperbolically large vagina is represented as a river/swamp with multiple banks. Line 5 introduces the cock-as-horse trope and 6 returns to the vagina whose expanse tires even the most tested and well-fed of horses (read: cocks). Line 7 will begin the extended description of the cock using an intertextual reference from Imruʾ al-Qays's famous night description (*arkhā sudūlahu*). The cock has rough testicles and a big and bald head with a single eye that cries profusely (ejaculation). Line 10 is appropriated from Bashshār b. Burd (d. 167/714),[42] but transformed from the original context of tears shed for tender love to the sexual context of ejaculation in this section in the poem. The poet asserts his proclivity for sex and just as the cock is personified in the previous lines, both female orifices are personified here as well. Another woman is introduced in line 12 (*waʾukhrā*), but the following line interrupts the expectation of another description of the woman by suggesting that when others (guests) are using her, the poet is forced to be alone. *Rabīṭatī* (bound horse or mount) is often used by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj to refer to women in sexual intercourse. This continues the horse and mount connotations already employed throughout. Having the woman's anus be the locus of visitors (multiple partners) accentuates the carnivalesque atmosphere.

This line serves also as a transition to a parody of *aṭlāl* (14–20). The poet greets the abandoned bladder and kidneys where testicles used to wander and cocks gaze. It is, as usual in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's world, the cock and not the poet that is shedding the tears over the abandoned sites. Line 21 has yet another woman, but unlike the previous this one is one with whom the poet's sexual union is consummated on a regular basis. However, there is always another turn of events. In line 23 she urinates in bed, but the poet is still thankful that she did not shit. Line 24 would be a typical gnomic line in any other poem, but in this context, it acquires a very comic effect. The unknown, which the poet is content not to have to witness, is nothing but excrement.

At this point in the poem, the poet has catalogued various orifices and crowded the scene with dysfunction culminating with urination. One could imagine the laughter and amazement mixed with disgust and thoughts of "enough already!" on the part of the audience. This would be precisely the perfect moment to move on to and deliver the *madīḥ*. There is obviously an intentional link here between the sprinkling of urine from the woman in line 23 and the stock theme of the *mamdūḥ*'s rain of generosity. It is in the *mamdūḥ*'s world where all this *sukhf* will be finally cleansed. Hence in line 25, his rain is "unadulterated." What follows is, more or less, a traditional *madīḥ* section where the *mamdūḥ*'s courage and magnanimity are extolled. A few parallels must be pointed out: the equivalence between the stumbling of the *mamdūḥ*'s viziers and the stumbling woman in the *nasīb/aṭlāl* and also the prowess of the phallus in the *aṭlāl/nasīb* and that of the *mamdūḥ*. While the poet is unable to control his urges and physical desires, the *mamdūḥ* overlooks and disregards passion as he has loftier goals in mind (34). While the poet is concerned with women and fleeting base desires and is obsessed with orifices, the *mamdūḥ* soars higher than eagles and even Jaʿfar al-Ṭayyār (27) and atop glory itself (32). Line 35 begins the poetic *fakhr* (boast) and the metapoetic statement, where the uniqueness of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry and of those who are its recipients is celebrated. Unlike other more ephemeral panegyrics (line 39) Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's are penetrative and outspoken, eclipsing all others, like the *mamdūḥ* who vies with the lion and is bold enough to challenge it even in its den where it is most fierce. The poet here establishes a parallel between the power of his poetry in its own playing field and the *mamdūḥ*'s power in the political and martial realm. Thus, only unique and immortal poetry is befitting a unique and immortal figure and the panegyric is perfectly wedded to the *mamdūḥ*.

### *A* **Sukhf-***Less Madīḥ (or* **Sukhf** *as a Trace)*

1. My two companions, morning's face has appeared[43]
and none of us three is not sober

2. So get you to the wine and make sure
the day's opening be only with wine

3. With red [wine] that throws, when it approaches,
the night's darkness unto the morning's flame

4. It adds beauty to beautiful faces
and hides the ugliness of ugly ones

5. Its aroma makes perfume dispensable
like the nocturnal passage of the east wind over chamomiles

6. Just as the esteemed vizier is redolent
with the scents of my thanks and praises

7. O you who took away the decay that came upon me
and replaced it with goodness

8. And who clipped the feathers off time's wings
and put its forefeathers in my wing

9. And sheltered my outcast hope with
a face on which the signs of success [are visible]

10. They vied with you, but [your] firm shoulders,
facing the winds, were never shaken

11. Many a crazed head there is
Straightened today after being boastful

12. If poetry from a panegyrist is incomprehensible (difficult)
I bring you the clear and eloquent [panegyrics]

13. And this poem is like a bride
being girdled with fine meanings

14. Not a whiff of passing farts
and not a mustard seed's weight of shit

15. If it were made into an engagement
it would have adorned marriage contracts

16. I sent amber in it in the winter
And pure camphor in the summer

17. It has not wiped the water of testicles
Nor did it chew rub its chin with ass ointment[44]

18. The *sukhf* of my poetry is a must
For a house must a privy have

[LXXII]

| | |
|---|---|
| 1– | boon companions |
| 2 | urge to drink |
| 3–5 | description of wine |
| 6– | transition to *madīḥ* |
| 7–11 | description of *mamdūḥ* |
| 12– | poetic *fakhr* |
| 13–14 | signature/deceptive de-*sukhf* |
| 15–18 | metapoetic |

By capitalizing on his notoriety, which raised expectations of *sukhf* appearing in most of his poetry, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj plays on those expectations in a very witty manner and in a variety of ways, delivering, at times, rejoinders to his detractors. At others, however, he seems to be experimenting with the various ways in which *sukhf* can be juggled around in the poem.

The poem at hand has no *aṭlāl/nasīb* section. It starts in a tender bacchic mode where the two boon companions are urged to drink on as they wake up and start the day on a drunken note (1–2). This is followed by a typical description of the wine itself, celebrating its visual and sensual, almost magical, attributes.[45] For those accustomed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's style, the sense-pleasing and gratifying characteristics of the wine are potentially introduced and set up only to be later counterbalanced or eclipsed by their opposites from his extensive repertoire of *sukhf*. Smell and taste are obviously central to scatology. *Sukhf* will eventually appear in this example too, but this time in a slightly different manner, as we shall see. Celebrating the wine's aroma, which makes perfume dispensable, is the point at which the poet makes the transition to the *madīḥ*. The dialectical relationship between chamomile and scent is made analogous to the relationship between the poet's praise and the status of the *mamdūḥ* (6). This would raise the question as to how will the poet navigate this poetic narrative after having made scent so central to the poem. In other words, how can it fulfill its function when it has already linked the *mamdūḥ* to scent positively and also to the poem itself? Before providing the answer or solution, the *madīḥ* section takes its traditional course for now. The *mamdūḥ* is praised for having clipped away all corruption and decay

from the poet and straightened him, so to speak (7). Lines 10–11 contend with the *mamdūḥ*'s enemies and their unsurprising failure and pacification. In line 12, the poet assures the *mamdūḥ* that he will compose and dedicate the clearest and most eloquent of panegyrics to him, if and when others cannot. In line 13 the panegyric is compared to a bride adorned with fine themes and meanings and is being groomed for its rightful recipient, the *mamdūḥ*. The final section of the poem (14–18) is a metapoetic statement describing the uniqueness of the poem itself even by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's standards. For the poet proceeds to enumerate what he has excluded from it (which he usually doesn't). The irony, of course, is that by enumerating what he did not include, he is, in a way, including it. Not a mustard seed's weight of shit and not even a passing fart are to be found in this poem (14). The scent trope is revisited as the poet slyly states that he has put amber (usually Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's favorite signifier to describe shit) and camphor in it. Unlike most of his notorious poems, this one has not soiled itself with the water of testicles (semen). The last line, one of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's most famous ones, reiterates the centrality of *sukhf* to his poetry.[46] After having tried to cleanse his poem of its usual *sukhf*, just like a bride is beautified and cleaned for her groom, he seems to be restating the case for *sukhf*. Just as it is inconceivable to have a house without a privy, so it is inconceivable for *sukhf* not to figure, one way or another, in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry.

One might ask how the economy of this panegyric produces Sperl's suggested teleology of the *madīḥ*? The answer is that it does that as well, but not in a straightforward manner. While there is no *aṭlāl/nasīb* section to speak of, the bacchic mode allows the poet to link the *mamdūḥ*'s positive attributes (via wine) to those of natural beauty and saturnalia early on. His moral and political powers are extolled. Moreover, it is the *mamdūḥ* who has, with his generosity and magnanimity, compelled the poet to cleanse his poem and to rid it of its usual dirt (just as the former clips the wings of time). The negation of *sukhf* is in honor of the *mamdūh* and in respect of him. What is noteworthy is how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj still toys with this notion and manages to conclude with *sukhf*. But here it is not scattered all over, but repressed and restricted to a small section of the poem, almost like a privy is within a house. It can be hidden, but not done away with.

Retrospectively and with the privileged vantage point of more than a thousand years, it might seem deceptively simple how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj managed to incorporate *sukhf* into the *madīḥ*. It was, however, a stroke of genius and its prerequisites were a unique mastery of the entire tradition, as well as attentiveness to the potential for such an innovation and, equally important, a certain willingness to challenge conventions.

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's clownish persona and his scatological parody took the *aṭlāl*/*nasīb* sections in the madīḥ to their extreme limits so that the body is portrayed as a site of utter physical dysfunction and decay. Making for comic relief was, to be sure, one function of this, but it also provided a sharper contrast between the poet's carnivalesque realm where nature is out of control in so many ways, and the world of the *mamdūḥ* where natural and political equilibrium is restored. The plasticity of the form allowed for a high ceiling and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj could go to unprecedented extremes in scatological motifs as long as he eventually supplied the *mamdūḥ* with the obligatory praise and kept the madīḥ section, more or less, intact and classical. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj does link, at times, the scatological themes with the *mamdūḥ*. The symbolic rain of generosity, at times, follows the trope of the urinating beloved, as was shown in one of the poems. The *mamdūḥ*'s realm or presence is where and when the poet is cleansed and saved from the ungodly bodies he encounters and from their fluids. The examples also illustrate how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was capable of juggling *sukhf* easily and redeploying it in various ways and combinations. While it tends to appear as a parody of the *nasīb*, it is often incorporated as part of a *hijāʾ* section directed at the *mamdūḥ*'s enemies. Having become notorious for his *sukhf* and aware of its impact, Ibn al-Hajjāj would, at times, capitalize on this fact for the sake of variety (by explicitly noting the absence of *sukhf* from this or that poem) and to respond to those who criticized him by justifying the necessity for *sukhf*.

One must also note that the Būyid era was one of political tumult and volatility, with extreme socioeconomic disparities. Perhaps the extreme *sukhf* of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj can also be read as a reflection, in the cultural realm, of those material realities.[47] Parody and scatology are intimately related to anxieties about borders and hierarchies and thus the subjugation of *sukhf* within *madīḥ* and its submission to the symbols of power served as a reproduction of political allegiance. The literary disorder Ibn al-Ḥajjāj enacts in his poems is still subject to the overarching political power. This new hybrid mode of poetry, too, was submitted to the political elite. *Sukhf* also must have served the function of court jester in a way. Another function, perhaps, is that it (*sukhf*) provided the elite a glimpse into the world of the lower classes, their discourses and laughable misery, and allowed for a reinforcement of the real and imagined boundaries separating the two realms of the public and the private.

The telos of the *madīḥ* was to legitimize the political order and its symbols and representatives and thus, not unlike much cultural products of many a time and place, reaffirm the existing hierarchy of power and values.

Sperl has noted that "[a] remarkable feature of classical Arabic panegyric poems is that they do not only contain eulogy."[48] Equally remarkable, to my mind, however, is that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was very successful in integrating scatological parody into the *madīḥ*. This, too, has entirely escaped the attention of scholars.

Far from being merely an obscene parodist, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was immensely successful as a panegyrist. This chapter examined how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj manipulated the structure of the panegyric *qaṣīda* and was able to deploy his *sukhf* in various ways. The representative samples discussed show a unique style of panegyric that managed to incorporate scatological parody into a usually serious and elevated mode. Moreover, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj makes *sukhf* itself a topos within his poems.

While it was successfully employed in panegyric odes, *sukhf* also became an independent genre at Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's hands and this is what the following chapter will explore.

# CHAPTER 4

# *Sukhf* as *Sukhf*: Abū Nuwās, *Mujūn,* and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj

> [In] Abū Nuwās' text . . . the controversial and parodic tone remains partial and intermittent . . . Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, on the other hand, makes the *sukhf* tone the norm in his poems and rarely adopts an entirely serious tone.
>
> —Abdelfattah Kilito, *Al-Makāmmāt*[1]

> Ibn al-Ḥajjāj resorts to tradition to negate and change its meaning.
>
> —Abdelfattah Kilito, *Al-Makāmmāt*[2]

While premodern Arab critics did not use the label "*sukhf*" to categorize poems and preferred *mujūn* instead,[3] there is no doubt that *sukhf* qualifies as an independent mode. In addition to being incorporated and seamlessly woven into various *qaṣīdas*, there are numerous poems composed by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj that should be approached and read as independent *sukhf* poems. As noted and illustrated in previous chapters, much of what *sukhf* is about is the deliberate confusion and conflation of modes and poetic registers in general and parodying them, yet there is a certain direct debt to *mujūn*; the mode with which it is often coupled and from which it branched off. So where does *mujūn* end and where does *sukhf* begin and is it possible to answer this question?[4] While the boundaries separating the two are not always clear or easily detectible, there are, for sure, areas to which only *sukhf* extends, especially, but not only, in extreme scatological references.[5] Moreover, there are standard *mujūn* topoi, themes and sub-themes that are elaborated, taken to their maximum potential, and inverted in and into *sukhf*, particularly in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry. Another intimately related issue that will be addressed in this chapter is the debt to Abū Nuwās (140–198/755–813), whose name and persona are synonymous with *mujūn* in both popular and literary culture. The Nuwāsian influence on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was briefly alluded to in chapter 1, particularly via Abū Ḥukayma.[6]

This chapter will establish and delineate more direct links between Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Abū Nuwās with references to specific strategies and themes the former inherited, appropriated, and developed. In addition, this chapter will read representative *sukhf* poems where all of the aforementioned points are exemplified and discussed.

## The Body; Disfigured

The body is the most generative trope for *mujūn* and *sukhf*—be it in its celebration as an object of desire and an instrument to defy and flout socioreligous and literary conventions, or as an ideal to be parodied, ridiculed, and even disfigured (in *sukhf*). Thus, it will be used here as an organizing principle to trace the relationship between Abū Nuwās and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and, the two being synonymous with *mujūn* and *sukhf* respectively, the interrelatedness of the two modes themselves.

## Major Topoi

### *Phallic Tears*

One of the most productive topoi consistently employed by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is "the crying phallus," which assumes the position of the classical Arab poet and cries over grotesquely old orifices, in lieu of abodes/encampments. This anthropomorphization of the phallus, as well as other orifices, exploited so well for parodying *rithāʾ* by Abū Ḥukayma in his *ayriyyāt*, as shown in chapter one,[7] can be traced back to Abū Nuwās:

I said to my prick when I saw it
Its eyes tearful in sorrow[8]

[LXXIII]

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj adopted this topos and added a variation on Abū Nuwās's anti-*aṭlāl* stance to introduce the phallus as crying poet.[9]

### *Orifice as House/Abode*

While Abū Nuwās does not seem to have ever addressed orifices explicitly as *aṭlāl*, he did, however, allude to the anus as a house in one of his *qiṭaʿ* (occasional pieces), which brings us to the second important and related topos also found in his *dīwān*. The following example will illustrate:

A house too tight [even] for a shoelace
[there is] rough terrain and basalt plain in it

And one with an eye who sees what
he craves while hidden

If the house asks it for rain
It responds with a downpour[10]

[LXXIV]

These few lines contain the nuclei of many of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's favorite topoi. The tiny house, too narrow for even a shoelace to enter, is an obvious allusion to the tightness of the anus (most probably of a boy). When it calls forth for rain from the anthropomorphized phallus (the one-eyed is a common epithet), the latter responds profusely (ejaculation). The hot anus, as a topic/theme, was also adopted by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, who depicts it, although predominantly in describing a female body, in many poems as a clay oven (*tannūr*). This will be discussed below under "the meat market." This grafting of spatial imagery onto bodies (and body parts) and relationships between them was extended by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj into longer sections with obsessively exhaustive descriptions and detailed cataloging, as we shall see later. In independent *sukhf* poems, female genitals are mostly described as grotesquely gigantic houses. While the Nuwāsian trope of tightness continues in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, it is its inversion (looseness) and redeployment in describing female orifices as hyperbolically large that is much more common. Here are a few samples:

I found her [to be] an old cat
with no tightness or dryness

With a pussy within which the postmen
despite their long destinations, have much to travel[11]

[LXXV]

. . .
When she came with her pudendum cleaned
I came to plant carrots at the door of her anus[12]

[LXXVI]

. . .
The house of her anus has a wide, rectangular courtyard
where air freely roams through its many rooms

If they spread out in its entrance, the builder would need
a thousand bricks upon narrowing it

It has rooms, to which our pricks climb
on many stairs, with no ceiling windows[13]

[LXXVII]

And in a longer section:

Cocks take refuge [in it]
But with their tips and testicles

When I turned to her
At night seeking her hospitality

I alighted in the room of an anus
Sweat breaking out of its structure/walls

Swollen [in the sinews]/boiling, I have never seen an abode
of an anus like it

The winds breeze gently
on the beards through its peepholes/apertures[14]

[LXXVIII]

The essential strategy in the examples above is to graft spacial imagery onto the female body to highlight its grotesque size and/or decrepit status. Having spent his early years in an urban setting and having also had extensive dealings with, and exposure to, matters relating to market regulations and technical problems as a *muḥtasib* (market inspector), Ibn al-Ḥajjāj probably availed himself of this added knowledge of the terminology and transposed it to poetry.

The looseness and hyperbolically large orifices, especially the vagina, which become central themes in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*, are traceable to another Nuwāsian topos, of which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj made extensive use, that is, of representing intercourse with women as riding the sea.

### *Woman ('s Vagina) as Sea*

The dispraise (or disparagement) of women and the fear of their anatomy was part and parcel of Abū Nuwās's preference for, and valorization of, young men (or *murd*, beardless boys, more specifically). One of the most important sections in Abū Nuwās's dīwān, for our purposes, is entitled "*mujūn Abī Nuwās fī maqābiḥ al-nisāʾ wa-mamādiḥ al-murdān*" (Abū Nuwās's ribaldry in [describing] the defects of women and praiseworthiness of boys) where poems related to this theme are included.[15] Of particular note is a *mukhammasah fī dhamm al-tazawwuj* (A Mukhammasah in Dispraise of Marriage).[16] In his book on Abū Nuwās, Kennedy notes:

> The figurative imagery of the sea was often employed by Abū Nuwās to express, and to exaggerate for effect, a fear of feminine sexuality. The sexual

anatomy of women posed a physical threat as menacing as the turbulent deep and his preference for men was, or came with time to be, articulated as a form of salvation.[17]

The following is an excerpt from Abū Nuwās (which Kennedy cites):

When we came together I found myself amid a deep sea,
O people, and I drowned therein

I cried out loud: Young man, help me! and he came to me
as my foot slipped and I was knee-deep in water

Had I not cried out to the young man and had he
not saved me with the rope, I would have ended at the bottom

I would have died soon after and thought
that I would remain there until doomsday

So I swore never to ride the sea like a marauder
and would only travel on backs[18]

I am amazed by those who fornicate when there are beardless boys[19]
And when coolness has tasted extreme heat

[LXXIX]

Elsewhere in his *dīwān*, we also read:

I do not ride the sea, in fear of death,
For the sea has dangers and waves[20]

[LXXX]

While the negative and phobic attitude is predominant, there are a few instances where Abū Nuwas turns the tables around and endows the (sea of) women with positivity:[21]

Puffier than a bowl and more aglow than a fire
Drier than sand and leaner than butter[22]

The sea has become my affair
and the sea is more desirous and pleasurable[23]

[LXXXI]

As discussed in chapter 1, Abū Ḥukayma capitalized on this topos in one of his famous poems.[24] Many of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poems feature an elaboration on this particular topos as we shall see later. While not necessarily related to the poet's (or poetic persona's) actual desire and

preference for boys, it still bespeaks the anxiety toward female anatomy (a common topos in premodern literature at large).[25] If Abū Nuwās is saved from drowning by a boy in the example above, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, in contrast, is already drowning or drowned and lost and revels in reporting in detailed descriptions what he encounters and finds in his adventures as we shall read later in this chapter. It is possible, as well, to consider this Nuwāsian topos the inspiration for another related one extensively used by our poet: the vagina as a river with a broken levy (*bathq*).[26] Not unlike his general attitude, Ibn al-Hajjāj's redeployment of this topos is more on the side of hyperbole and the grotesque than genuine or seemingly genuine anxiety born out of material experience. Not unlike Abū Nuwās in the positive (sounding) excerpt above, there is one poem where Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is celebratory of his diving into the vagina![27]

### *The Meat Market: Sex as Hunt, Sexual Prey as Food*

The incessant confusion and conflation of the diction and imagery of food and eating with that of sexual intercourse in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj has its seeds in Abū Nuwās's legacy. The two most important examples are the themes of the salivating and hungry phallus:

I have a scoundrel of a prick
I don't know what is its [proper] punishment

Whenever it sees a beautiful face
it starts to salivate[28]

[LXXXII]

Representing sexual escapades as conquests became a hallmark of Abū Nuwās's *mujūn*. While it was predominantly a parody of *fakhr* and an occasion to invert martial imagery and diction, we also find an interesting *qiṭʿa* by Abū Nuwās where *mujūn* is injected into the *ṭardiyyah* (hunting poem) mode:

We have a prey here, close at hand,
at Bāb al-Karkh where the sweet ones gather

We hunt without a hawk or falcon when we set out
And without calling out for the dogs

With a hairless falcon,
so quick when sent to hunt

The young gazelles come when they see it
Quick and obedient, without dragging

We eat our prey: uncooked *kabāb*
without salt. O what *kabāb*![29]

[LXXXIV]

The site of this type of hunt is not the wilderness but rather urban space itself (Bāb al-Karkh)[30] and the hunter can do without the accompanying animals. The hairless falcon is obviously an allusion to the penis. The most interesting line for our purposes is the last one where the sexual prey is represented as uncooked *kabāb*. Abū Nuwās seals it with an *iltifāt* (a change in the addressee) addressing the *kabāb* directly.

In the *ṭardiyya* (hunting poem) excerpt, the approach is still playful enough and borders on the vulgar and direct, but without indulging in it completely. The latter is Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's domain and he adds many varieties to this basic topos of sexual intercourse as eating.

In the following excerpt Ibn al-Ḥajjāj addresses a woman, and instead of *kabāb* the penis is represented as sausages (*naqāniq*):

If you feel suffer hunger
Here! Eat these sausages![31]

[LXXXV]

There are also numerous examples of *vagina dentata*, but not threatening or dangerous:

The jaws of her pussy
have not gargled with semen[32]

[LXXXVI]

One of the examples where the *kabāb* image is converted by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in a unique way is the following:

The taste of my prick in it is sweeter than
bananas drowned in rose water

Its heat in the winter, when snow falls,
is akin to the heat of August in the summer

Its fire burns the prick every day
Even the neighbors start to smell the *kabāb*[33]

[LXXXVII]

The conflation of eating/taste with sexual intercourse is obvious in the first line where the taste of the prick is sweeter for the vagina than a banana dipped in rose water.[34] This is followed by the motif of the

burning orifice. Here a series of *ṭibāq* (antithesis) serve to illustrate and sharpen the contrast. Its heat, even in the cold snowy winter days, is like the simmering of August. The final line exemplifies Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's unique ability to generate new converted and elaborated images. So hot is the hole (like a hot oven) that upon penetration, the neighbors smell the *kabāb*.[35]

And:

When cooked, her ass has meat, which, if made into *kabāb*
shrinks because it is goat meat[36]

[LXXXVIII]

And:

She came to me, her inside boiling,
more than a pot of raisins

So I boiled my eggs in her anus
and grilled my sausages in her cunt[37]

[LXXXIX]

. . .
A prick more beautiful than a spoon on top of which
there is wet almond cake at night[38]

[XC]

And from a *hijāʾ* by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj:

Husband of one in whose anus there are eighty pricks
from the remains of the pricks of Lot's people

and who has an anus which daily feeds on
sausages or roasted prick meat[39]

[XCI]

### *Ḥarb al-mujūn: Make Love not War!*

This important theme or set of related topoi was briefly addressed in chapter 1 in the section on Abū Ḥukayma. One of the essential tropes of *mujūn*, in its parody of *fakhr* and its related socio-symbolic themes and values, is the renunciation of battle and war, and a celebration and call for a different type of conquest; erotic and bacchic.[40] This was also accompanied by the appropriation of martial diction and imagery and applying them to erotic and bacchic themes. This is, for obvious reasons,

intertwined with the topoi discussed earlier. Here are a few examples from Abū Nuwās:

More desirable, to me, than riding horses
is riding young women between tents[41]

[XCII]

. . .
With young men who see being killed
in ecstasy a sacrifice[42]

[XCIII]

. . .
May abundant rain fall on a war I salute
in a paradise whose streams flow

Its roses and narcissuses are our swords
and our curses are the words of its singer[43]
. . .
Our commander is an effeminate songstress
whom we greet with fresh jasmine[44]

[XCIV]

. . .
I stabbed him and he bent and I said
with my spear in his back's eye[45]

[XCV]

If Abū Nuwas predominantly used this set of topoi to describe victorious sexual conquests, Abū Ḥukayma, and later Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, as we saw in chapter 1, inverted it to describe sexual conquest as defeat and impotence. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, in particular, would extend the topos of the wounded phallus and employ it for the female body much more extensively than Abū Ḥukayma.

### *Grotesque/Hyperbolically Disproportionate Sexual Organs*

Many of the examples in previous chapters as well as the ones to be discussed below feature the hyperbolically large vagina as a topos used by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj to distort and invert the typical ideal images of perfect bodies in traditional poetry. The possible genealogy of this topos also leads back to the master of *mujūn* himself, but not in a direct way. In one of

his short *qiṭaʿ*, Abū Nuwās engages in what can be termed sexual *fakhr*, describing his own erection as follows:

I said to my prick when it refused to sleep:
What is with you, you have risen eternally!

It was so erect that I thought it went higher than the Pole Star
or it wants to sit alongside one of Ursa major

Or it has a date with Gemini
You see it tagging along if it travels

One half in Tihāma, the other Najd-bound[46]

[XCVI]

Tiḥama is the area of coastal plains in the Arabian Peninsula along the Red Sea and Najd is the plateau at its center. This exaggeration and hyperbolic image, which grafts virility onto nature and space, was extremely productive for both Abū Ḥukayma and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. The former converted the topos to lament the absence or decline of such a state. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, however, employed the same hyperbole, but to describe the vagina (and the anus). We have already seen examples earlier, but here are a few more:

She has an ass like a hill that has fatigued me
as I climb up and down[47]

[XCVII]

. . .
When his wife farts in Bakkār Street
the walls of Ṣāliḥ Street are shaken[48]

[XCVIII]

. . .
With two labia [the distance] between them
equals that between ʿAsqalān and Tangier[49]

[XCIX]

There is one hint in Abū Nuwās when he describes a woman's step as being so gigantic it could take her from Sheba to China.[50] Another potential precedent for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj can be located in some of Abū Nuwās's *hijāʾ* lines against the poetess ʿInān where the aforementioned confusion of the culinary with the sexual, as well as the topos of the hyperbolically large vagina, are employed:

ʿInān of al-Naṭṭāf is a slave girl
whose cunt has become a fucking field[51]

[C]

And:

ʿInān opened her pussy
then cried out: who wants to fuck?

Then showed a slit
like the ʿAtīk desert[52]

Where there are heath cocks, ducks[53]
hens and cocks[54]

[CI]

And in a *hijāʾ* against another slave girl:

She swallows the prick with her ass' slit
As a group of men would [devour] a bundle of herbs[55]

[CII]

The obvious end here is to disparage ʿInān by referring to the inordinate number of men who have had sex with her. Her vagina is represented as a vast desert, open to all. It is very possible that these lines served as a starting point for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, who would adopt this topos but exaggerate it even further, so that there is, for example, an abundance of people waiting at the gates of this or that orifice:

The prick labors to reach her
The door to her anus is overcrowded

It is never devoid of those seated
around it, and others standing[56]

[CIII]

## Parodying Parody

While many if not most of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's topoi are variations, extensions, and conversions of Nuwāsian ones, as we have just seen, some of Abū Nuwās's own topoi were themselves subjected to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's parody and scatology as well. This brings us to salient examples from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's work where *sukhf* clearly distinguishes itself from *mujūn* and turns it against itself as it does so well with other modes. This is primarily done by injecting scatology, but also by implanting dysfunction into the hedonistic quest that marks *mujūn* or aborting it. A perfect crystallization of all of this is to say that in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's hands, the bacchic backfires.

### *Parodying or Scatologizing* Mujūn

If the *khamriyya* and related (*mujūn*) themes were perfected by Abū Nuwas, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj always found an unexpected target for his scatological parody in the canon, even in "established" parody itself. Shunning and rejecting social (and religious) conventions and celebrating wine is perhaps the defining characteristic of the Nuwāsian spirit and persona. In the following poem Ibn al-Ḥajjāj adopts and performs all of that, but adds a distinctive twist of *sukhf* at the end. It seems that the poem might have been occasioned by an actual event according to this paragraph in *Durrat al-Tāj* that precedes it:

> He [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj] was drunk and had not prayed the noon prayer and it was time for the afternoon prayer [*ʿaṣr*]. Those who were with him urged him to pray. It was a bad year with much disease and they warned him not to overdrink.[57]

1. Drink as you pour me the wine
by the jug and kill me with drunkenness

2. Refrain from the mention of disease and death
Do not mention it to a soul!

3. He who chooses to die may die and he who chooses
to be cured of afflictions shall so be

4. Drinking will not shorten my life nor will
abandoning drinking lengthen it

5. People who saw me so intoxicated
that I'm wasted among them, say:

6. Make up the noon prayer, even if just one prostration
People are already praying the afternoon!

7. I said: how great is what you said!
I should get up and make up the noon prayers!

8. Get up? with whose knees?
and if I rise who will recite?

9. They said: then do not get drunk, for we don't see
an excuse for a sane man in getting drunk

10. By God, sirs, were it not for drunkenness
I would never taste cooked wine nor wine

11. They said: this drunkenness what is its punishment?
I said: the punishment is that I have to shit

[CIV]

The poem starts with the bacchic gesture of the poet (conventionally) urging his cupbearer to drink and serve him until he dies of intoxication. Lines 2–4 feature some of the traditional topoi expected in this mode: a demand to refrain from mentioning death and the poet's indifference to the existential or moral consequences of drinking. Having been so "wasted," the censurers urge the poet to get up and pray the noon prayers. To this, the poet responds by sarcastically repeating their advice, but he asks rhetorically: with whose knees now that I am almost asleep? In line 9, the typical "*lawm*" (reproach) is adduced on the part of the censurers. The poet answers again by placing drinking at the top of his hierarchy of desires. The censurers then ask about the punishment, *ḥadd*, for this overdrinking. As in many of his *sukhf* and *sukhf*-dominated poems, the poet reserves it for the punch line where he adds the scatological twist to the typical bacchic poem by saying that shitting is the punishment

A similar theme is found in another excerpt, but here it is urine and not excrement that marks the telos of intoxication:

> The punishment of drunkenness is that when drunk
> I unknowingly piss in my bed
>
> You see my sheets every two days
> Whitened and perfumed at the washer's[58]
>
> [CV]

Abū Nuwās was the hedonist persona par excellence when it came to bacchism, but the telos in his poetic vision and desire is primarily to disrupt the mind and its functions, rather than the body. One of the few examples that would come close to a disruption of the body and its functions is an instance where he asks for more wine so that he would lose his ability to "distinguish between the [sound of the] rooster and the donkey." This could also be read as a desire for an eternal night where no rooster will ever declare the arrival of the morning!:

> Pour me until you see me
> mistaking the donkey for a rooster[59]
>
> [CVI]

Or:

> Pour me until you see me
> unable to get up[60]
>
> [CVII]

### *Toying with Christian Symbols and Spaces*

Another *mujūn*-related topos linked to bacchic themes was the tendency to toy with Christian symbols and terminology. This was primarily conditioned by the material surroundings of those seeking wine since Christians and Jews were the owners of the vineyards and the monasteries were a favorite station for the *mujjān* (libertines) in their quest for wine. "Monasteries (and perhaps by implication churches) in both the eastern and western medieval traditions were frequently scenes of debauchery and wanton behavior."[61] Related to this as well was the topos of the Christian beloved (boy), a theme Abū Nuwās excelled in as well.[62] The potential for irreverent, if not blasphemous, statements and implications in this context is obvious, where the poet often expresses the willingness to embrace Christian beliefs and symbols to attain the love of the Christian boy.

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj does not seem to have used the topos of the Christian boy in his extant poetry, but he did appropriate the motif of Christian spaces and rituals for his *sukhf* in many of his poems, especially in the bacchic section of longer ones, but also in independent *sukhf* poems:

Pour it for me as the Catholicus rises
up to pray and farts on the metropolitan

And the priest steps up to serve me
the pork and wafers

Carry me If I am drunk to the altar
on a group of crucifixes[63]

[CVIII]

The twists added by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj to the Nuwāsian scene are the scatological (line 1), the pork (line 2), and the "un-Islamic" desire to be carried to the altar on a bed of crucifixes. With Abū Nuwās, it is mostly invoking Christian symbols and terms to attract the attention of his beloved. In contrast, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj seems to be solely and entirely interested in poking fun. Here is another example:

Or a church that is destitute
for the Muslims have crushed my crucifixes

They raided me at night and looted
my wafer together with hungry Christians

They smeared the door to my altar with shit
on which the metropolitan's mustache slips[64]

[CIX]

Here Ibn al-Ḥajjāj assumes the narrative voice of the clownish priest and the scene is highly carnivalesque. The Muslims have broken all the crucifixes and, together with the Christians, have raided it to steal the wafers (*kudya* motif). The last line takes the Nuwāsian topos, through scatology, where it has never been. The altar that the archbishop usually kisses is smeared with excrement. If the telos in Abū Nuwās's poems of this category was sexual union with the boy, in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj it is pure inversion and soiling of rituals to produce laughter and a grotesque atmosphere.

Having said all of this, it is always important to keep in mind that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, as he himself exclaimed often, was capable of composing in any mode without *sukhf* and could do so very well. Here is a beautiful example of a *sukhf* less *khamriyya* that is often quoted for its beauty and tenderness:[65]

O my two companions, wake up from a daze
which finds fault in the mind of the sensible and elegant

This galaxy and its stars are like
a river flowing through a garden of narcissus

I see the east wind has made its way in the dark with its breeze
Why is wine-drinking not making its way to me?

Up and pour me a Rūmī wine
whose cask is untouched since Caesar's time

It adds, when its power rules
the death of minds to the life of souls

[CX]

The poet is comfortably anchored in the Nuwāsian mode. The *qiṭʿa* starts out with the appeal to the two boon companions to wake up. The harmonious configuration of the stars flowing in a garden of narcissus. In line 3, he expresses his desire to drink more and be poured that transcendent wine which can revive the soul as it kills the mind.

There are also examples where the parody of *mujūn/khamriyya* is explicit. In the following example, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj alternates between a typical bacchic line, and a *sukhf* line. This particular example (addressed to an unnamed person) illustrates the differences between *mujūn* and *sukhf*. The *kudya* aspect is at work here as well since the objective of the *qiṭʿa* is to secure a reward and the poverty of the poetic persona is exaggerated:

Invite your boon companions for they are a bunch
Like the flowers of the orchard

Sit in the orchard in a garden
that is bewildering even to the eyes of Riḍwān

[Whereas] I have a one-eyed companion with bad breath
who often screams in my face and makes me shit

For I look out over the wall
at the shit of the neighbors' children[66]

[CXI]

The premise here is the contrast between the traditional ambience of *mujūn* luxury enjoyed by the addressee and its antithetical state in which the poet pretends to find himself. The first line starts off with the motif of the drinking posse of companions who are like flowers. In contrast to them, the poet's boon companion suffers from a disfigured body (one-eyed) and such bad breath that he causes the poet to shit whenever he screams at him (another inversion of the soft-spoken boon companion). The third line moves on to the physical surroundings of the *mujūn* setting, enhancing the bucolic and sense-pleasing atmosphere and open space. The inversion comes in the line that follows where all the poet can see is the neighbor's house and his children's excrement. The tone and ambience is comical, clownish, and disruptive. This is very common in poems where Ibn al-Hajjāj is requesting a gift of wine, garments, a turban, etc., a great example of *sukhf* and *mujūn* coexisting in one text.

### *Whining about Ramaḍān*[67]

Another important topos in the *mujūn* repertoire was what I shall term "whining about Ramaḍān." That Ramaḍān would become a subject of satire and derision on the part of the ribald is not a surprise at all. Perhaps Abū Nuwās sums the collective sentiment very well:

O month, for how long will you remain?
We yearn [for it] and are bored by you!

If a month could be killed,
we would have killed you![68]

[CXII]

This topos, too, would be subjected to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* and be expressed more in scatological terms related to the body's internal functions rather than a disenchantment and impatience with religious and social constraints:

A month which persists with those who
are angered by its length and knocks their teeth out

For piss has dried up because of its heat
in my belly and shit is worm-shaped[69]

[CXIII]

## *Sukhf* in *Qiṭaʿ* (Fragments)

Before addressing *sukhf* poems it is important to note that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj applied the *sukhf* mode to everything he could think of. It was not only panegyrics and *sukhf* poems but even the various *qiṭaʿ* so often composed for a variety of occasions and functions. The following examples will provide an idea:

### *Asking for Dye*[70]

[He said upon requesting hair dye [*khiḍāb*] from two friends]

1. Hurry up you two with the dye!
Patch up the [striped] garment of my youth!

2. Blacken my beard
with some dog shit

3. Perhaps my prick will find a market
amongst the whores' anuses

4. Help me get to a girl
who would satisfy the tip of my cock

5. She never passed me by
without my dick salivating

[CXIV]

While one finds hundreds, if not thousands, of such short pieces to fulfill a certain social function, many with humorous content, it is only Ibn al-Ḥajjāj who managed to incorporate *sukhf* into them to such an extent. Line 1 starts off in a very serious and traditional tone. The two addressees are asked to help the poet patch up the garment of his youth (now striped because of hoariness). Line 2 slides to *sukhf* as the two are urged to blacken the poet's beard with dog shit. The poet exploits the topic to delve into unabashed mention of body parts. His quest for a semblance of youth is so that his penis may perish among anuses, or be able to sleep with a young girl (line 4) who causes the poet's penis to salivate whenever she appears. The last line is a variation on a topos from Abū Nuwās.[71]

It is both the exceptionally clownish and distinctly grotesque poetic persona adopted by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj that makes this otherwise mundane

topic so unique. This display of mastery and difference ensures a handsome reward and the fulfillment of the objective.

### *A Note about Wine*[72]

[He had agreed with Abū al-Qāsim b. Ḥamīd to drink, so the latter carried the drink and wrote:]

[This is] pure date wine
which bestows good health on whoever drinks it

I [hereby] send it willingly like a bride to a poet
who never got stuck on a verse

[CXV]

It seems that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was struck with diarrhea, so he wrote back the following:

My sire, you did well when your poetry
brought the healing and healthy [wine]

But I am in such a state
all shit, convincing and sufficient

Do you not see what befell me today
because of my scoundrel rough anus?

It has written a line on my tailbone:
"All this is [addressed] to the lord/power of shit"

[CXVI]

Here, too, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj uses his ailment to inject scatology into his response. As usual, the first line sounds serious and typical, but the second slips into the scatological mode and the poet informs of his ailment. The dysfunctional body is the topic of the last two lines when the poet admits that he is under the dominion of the scatological. The fusion and conflation of drinking with excrement, one of the poet's favorite tropes, is at work here. The *ṣāfiyah*, referring to pure wine in the friend's message, is turned into pure shit in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's response.

### *Sukhf and Bureaucracy*

[He said upon requesting from Abū l-Qāsim al-Muṭahhar that he be allowed to become the guarantor for the revenue of a village][73]

1. O Sirs! I come to you to guarantee
the treasury's revenue in a hamlet—

2. A hamlet whose letters are jumbled
so that it becomes "shit" with no doubt or dispute

3. I wish I knew you had a fart
to make me the guarantor of this village?

[CXVII]

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's success as a poet and his network of relationships with the notables of his time allowed him a certain level of access and he owned and managed a number of estates. In the example above, he uses *sukhf* (a highly unusual mode for this purpose) in a very typical bureaucratic genre. It seems that he had encountered some obstacles in securing the guarantorship of this relatively insignificant village. The first line is not atypical. The scatological mode is introduced in the second line, but in a less direct manner, by replacing one letter with another (difficult to render in English): *Qaryah* (village) is turned into *kharyah* (shit). In the third and last line Ibn al-Ḥajjāj gives what is expected of him. Here, the act of issuing the approving for his request is made equivalent in its simplicity to issuing a fart.

## *Sukhf* Poems

Having already discussed the most salient topoi and textual strategies Ibn al-Ḥajjāj inherited from Abū Nuwās and those he converted and inverted for the purposes of *sukhf*, we may now turn to independent poems to illustrate how *sukhf* is injected into *mujūn* and how the topoi enumerated above come into play in various combinations.

### *A Ramaḍān Gift*[74]

[He said [in] requesting from Abū 'l-Faraj Muḥammad ʿAlī b. al-ʿAbbās b. Fasānjas al-Khāzin a turban and a garment during Ramaḍān:][75]

1. Thin-bellied and slender
Acceptable, with a face of beauteous qualities

2. His two rings shake on the sides
of a neck, polished like a sword's back

3. When it [his face] appeared, it made me his slave
A face which debunked all that I had known

4. Who will assist me against one who is emboldened?
Unrestrained in killing me and killing people?

5. He is neither swollen or fat
Nor of thin stature or emaciated

6. If the elephant were to reach half his anus
only its tail would be visible

7. The grains of his ass's flour are
like small unsifted grain

8. At his front there is a handle
as wide as an unsifted grain

9. If he were to pass by al-Ṣūlī in his grave
the echo would scream back from al-Ṣūlī's anus

10. I knew him when he was neither cheap
nor given to, or targeted, for fucking

11. So splendid by selling his shit
like dew, weighed in measures

12. When he came to me I was startled by his condition
afraid that he would benefit from my bribe

13. I kept rubbing him with watermelons
as he went on putting off and making excuses

14. Until we fucked just as I had desired
Sorry, let us not get into gossip!

15. He was horrified by me and I made him forget
the cock tips of the Daylamites and Jīlites

16. I was only displeased by a yellowness
more hidden than kohl is on the application stick

17. And many a [man] is a weak anus
Afflicted and with a pressed tailbone

18. I took out my cock which, because of his shit
was like the watery yogurt of *Ṭafshīl*

19. Or the tip of a toothstick, upon it
Abū al-Faḍl b. Bahlūl's saliva

20. Then the fast came and I abandoned
my course of error and parted company with my wrongs

21. Secluding myself at night at the mosque
exalting and glorifying God time and again

22. I wonder who will fart in my prayer beads
in my stead, and who will crap in my wipecloth?[76]

23. Oh Sir, may you live ever safely!
in a life not unsettled

24. The wine jar between us has fallen
I am not responsible for the jar

25. It is not good that I despair
Of your gift/rain, O my master

26. Grace my head with a headscarf
whose pin is unhinged[77]

27. Or a turban and far be it
that you would be content with giving me only that

[CXVIII]

The poem opens with a stock figure of the male beloved of *mujūn*. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj sets up the traditional figure, adding the building blocks one by one. We are given the beautiful body with its well-proportioned parts and a face whose appearance causes the poet to lose his mind. Line 4 continues the traditional topoi with the poet crying out for help to be saved from a beloved intent on killing him by not giving in. Using "*ʿadhīrī*" for "my aid, my assistant" is potentially a hint of what is soon to follow, as it shares the same root (*ʿ-dh-r*) and thus suggestive of, "*ʿadhiratun*" (dung or excrement). Indeed, the next line (5), while still sustaining the theme of a well-proportioned body, uses a somewhat strange adjective "*laysa bimanfūkhin*" (not blown up, or swollen), which is a subtle transition in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's terms to what will follow. In line 6, the poet dismantles the set of images and blows up the figure of the male beloved to grotesque proportions by saying that his anus is so huge that it can take an elephant. This is an inversion of the typical image of the hard-to-get and tight-assed boy that is the ideal of *mudhakkarāt*. Lines 7–8 describe both the anus and the penis using food-related diction and imagery with the penis being hyperbolically tiny. The misleading beauty at the outset is now shown to be hiding a disfigured body. Line 9 takes a jab at al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/946).[78] Lines 10–15 will narrate, in a comic tone of course, what caused this boy to change from a typical ideal to a frequent and favorite target for sex. The poet manages to have sexual intercourse with the boy and makes him forget the pricks of the Jīlīs and Daylamites (the soldiers used to bolster power during the Būyid era).[79] It is important to note that complaints of the transgressions of the soldiers and their expropriation of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's properties run as a common theme through a number of his poems. Thus,

in addition to being used rhetorically to represent the excessive sex the boy has had, it is also possible to read this section as augmenting the *kudya* mode that is part of this poem. It is typical and a prerequisite to illustrate and exaggerate the lack and misery of the poet, material and otherwise, in order to justify the need for the reward. The poetic persona's beloved here has been monopolized by others and the poet is only able to have his way with him after many others already have done so. There is potential equivalence and parallelism between the object of sexual desire and the desired reward, as if the poet is stressing that he is only asking what all others have already attained. Another scatological hint is injected in line 16 where the poet refers to the yellowness (on his penis) after penetrating the boy. Line 17 moves on to another boy, but this one, too, is afflicted with a weak anus (prone to diarrhea).

Lines 18–19 feature the typical *sukhf* topos of fusing food imagery with sex with line 19 also functioning as a *hijāʾ* jab at one of the addressee's enemies whose *miswāk* (tooth-stick) is linked to the poet's penis after anal intercourse. The food/sex topos leads to the mention of fasting in lines 20–21 where the poet claims to have renounced all of his errors, because Ramaḍān is at hand. But after two very serious lines, the poem slips back into the scatological mode in line 22 when the poet wonders rhetorically as to who will fart in his prayer beads or shit in his wipe-cloth. The allusion, of course, is to his erstwhile male beloved and to their sexual intercourse. This also sets the stage for the telos of the poem, which is requesting a gift. The last section of the poem (23–27) ends with the poet praising the addressee and asking, explicitly (typical of the *kudya* mode) for a headdress or a handkerchief.[80] The poet hopes that he will not despair of the addressee's generosity.[81] This is a good example of how a *sukhf* poem manages to wander back and forth between various registers and topoi and use scatology to parody them.

### *At the al-Karkh Market*[82]

1. O my blamer, stop blaming me!
For I am busy

2. I was at the al-Karkh market
At Yaḥyā al-Mawṣilī's shop.

3. Extremely hungover
My prick like a ship's mast

4. Al-Karkh Street, as is well-known,
is the house of corruption

5. There was a narrow alley
An old hag picking her head for lice

6. Surrounded by firm-breasted women
with jewelry adorned

7. They said as they saw me:
What is this man's business?

8. What is he doing in our neighborhood?
Get up and ask, mother!

9. I said: I am horny
She did didn't like that

10. And came over saying to me
and slowly pointing

11. You want lawful fucking
with two witnesses and a guardian?

12. I said: No! Why, she said?
I said: because I'm in a hurry

13. She said: come inside our door
This is my house

14. And she had a slave girl enter
like a black-eyed gazelle

15. She bid us farewell and left
with a froggy face

16. I got up, my prick bulging
like a camel's hump

17. Seeking a spot in her
not so often used

18. She said: You want my bottom?
I don't do it like that!

19. Call for my pimpstress[83]
She will get [you] another one instead

20. I shouted: O Umm ʿAlī!
Daughter of Yaḥyā al-Jabalī![84]

21. This one is tiring me
Get me another!

22. She sent a girl
[hot] like a burning torch

23. Coquettish and enchanting
Experienced in her work

24. I said: I fuck up the ass
She said: Go for it!

25. What should I fear Sir?
My muscles won't be scratched

26. And I kept fucking her
The way a champ fucks

27. She said about my fucking her:
Is this dick of yours Muʿtazilite?

28. I said: Yes. She said: Is this how
the people of *jadal* [the rationalists] fuck?

29. I wish I had one of them
like Ḥusayn al-Juʿalī[85]

[CXIX]

The first line in this *sukhf* poem is "safe" and has nothing atypical. It is, however, typical of many of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's deceptive beginnings. For the uninitiated in *sukhf*, one would expect the forlorn lover to describe the misery caused by the aloof or now distant beloved and to justify his continued love. In the second line, however, the poetic narrative slides into a more mundane atmosphere, by mentioning the market and specifying the shop. It is almost an indication, not necessarily conscious, that the real, not the ideal, is the locus. Line 3 brings us firmly within the horizon of expectations for *sukhf*; a hangover coupled with an erection, and the poet is passing through a neighborhood known for its debauchery, as he himself tells us. Not surprisingly, the old woman topos, one of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's favorites, is introduced. Here she is a madam. This is where Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is unique even within the *mujūn* realm, for the grotesque and the dysfunctional is always injected (the lice in her head). The young and beautiful women surrounding their mother urge her to see what the strange man wants. Upon informing the mother that the poet is horny, she asks if he wants lawful sex "with two witnesses and a guardian." He answers in the negative and his reason is not that it is illicit but that he is in a hurry. He is then invited to enter the house. The first prostitute brought to the poet refuses to have anal intercourse. Line 20, in which the poet calls on the madam, injects a *hijāʾ* by relating the old woman, a madam, to Yaḥyā al-Jabalī. The latter is not a famous figure, but perhaps an allusion to the famous name to come later in the poem. The second prostitute agrees to anal intercourse and is mightily

pleased. At this point the poet pokes fun at the Muʿtazilites by having the prostitute wonder if the poet's penis is one and if all Muʿtazilites fuck like him.[86] Upon his answering positively, the prostitute yearns for one particular Muʿtazilite, Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Baṣri (d. 369/979). The latter was one of the chief Muʿtazilites of the Būyid age.[87] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was a Shīʿi and time and again would stress his pride in that. The age witnessed theological rivalries and tensions among the various factions. Hence, the last section of the poem is intended as a comical jab at the Muʿtazilites. The poem, by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's standards, is relatively lighthearted and free of the usual scatological references.

### *Role-Playing*[88]

1. My lady and my girl, how have you become?
She said: I am like thick shit

2. I kept fucking until
my anus was left with no top or bottom

3. My food, every now and then,
is the sausages of testicles at night

4. My girl, but perhaps you would smear
the tip of my prick with your dung

5. For I am alone and do not be fooled
neither by my calmness nor by my looks

6. [I am] a Muḥammadan in my prayers
and fasting, but a Zoroastrian in fucking

[CXX]

As mentioned before, flouting religious prohibitions is a central thread in the *mujūn* and *sukhf* ethos. Incest was a productive trope in this respect as it was deemed particularly un-Islamic and harking back to Zoroastrian and Persian practices.[89] It is the crux of this short poem by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *bintī* (my daughter) is repeated three times (line 1 and twice in 4). The premise is a dialogue between a father and his daughter. In line 1, a seemingly innocent question occupies the first hemistich, but the second triggers the scatological mode. In line 2, the girl speaks of the excessive intercourse that has turned her anus upside down. In line 3, the *ʿuṣbān* topos fusing food and sex is employed.

The caring father figure gently enquires if the girl would "smear his prick with her excrement," which is an allusion to anal sex. He comforts her in the next line not to be afraid or be fooled by his exterior looks.

The last line seals the poem as the poet informs her that while a Muslim in rituals, he follows Zoroastrianism in his sexual practices, that is, has sex with his daughters, which is forbidden in Islam.[90] There is potential play on the idea of *taqiyya* (religious dissimulation to avoid persecution) here. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was a Shīʿī living in an era where the ruling elite were Shīʿīs too, but the majority of the population was Sunnī. This adds to the degree of irreverence displayed in this poem. But what is comic is that the poet is not concealing a belief in Shīʿism (no longer to be hidden), but in incest.

If the last example features premature sex with a relatively younger woman, a more typical and favorite theme for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was grotesquely and hyperbolically old women as in the following poem.

### *A Wedding Surprise*[91]

[He was in Wāsiṭ[92] and complained to a neighbor with whom he used to spend time and who had strange attire and a long whitish beard. He asked him to find him a wife and so he did. When he [the man] brought the wife to him, she turned out to be an unattractive old hag with bad breath and she mispronounced all the letters. He wrote [the following] back to a friend during the wedding night responding to his inquiry about it]

1. O you who ask about my bride and state
O my misfortune, you have revived my sorrow!

2. My friends and brethren, I give you advice,
seeking no price for my advice to you

3. Get up, let us pledge that you and I
never ever do something that is lawful!

4. Fornicate and sodomize for right is in the hands
of him who, if he desires, would fuck whomever he wishes

5. Fornicate and sodomize and fuck your own mothers
For you have not seen what I have

6. I asked an old man to find me a bride
He had a long beard and elegant and fine attire

7. He brought me an old woman with ships up her ass
and a deep sea carrying those ships

8. Safe from defects, no pregnancy or offspring
because she uses enemas in her anus

9. She pisses from a skinny one's emaciated slit
Her clitoris is so fat it pops open onto it

10. Leaky and so wet its aperture is visible
Like a mush of barley and wheat, soft and stale

11. Its lips froth and foam if they separate
like the jaw of a hemiplegic drinking yogurt

12. The curtains over the scars of her anus have become
black because she uses smoke so often

13. When she smiles she spews in my nose
dog shit kneaded with a monkey's piss

14. She speaks through her nose (with a twang) and lisps, her appearance
and speech never pleased an eye or an ear

15. When I twisted my neck as I was fucking her
turning away from her with a much-tested nose

16. She said chastising me: O Thir!
Why do you turn away from me as if I had eaten thit?[93]

[CXXI]

This poem features a different redeployment of *sukhf*. We mentioned above the importance of Abū Nuwās's poem on a wedding night gone awry as an important topos appropriated by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. This poem is an example of that topos adopted but combined with other Nuwāsian topoi and subjected to *sukhf*. The poem starts with the premise of the narrative preceding it: reporting on a woman the poet had married. In lines 2–5, another Nuwāsian topos is used: enjoining fellow libertines to persist in ribaldry and debauchery. This occupies a section in Abū Nuwās's *dīwān* entitled "*fī waṣāyāh li-ahl al-khalāʿa*" (On his recommendations to the debauched).[94] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is echoing and fulfilling Abū Nuwās's will:[95]

Go down and call out in ribaldry
O people, come to fucking!

[CXXII]

In calling on his friends to "fuck their mothers," Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is repeating a Nuwāsian topos:[96]

Fuck the children of this world and do not exempt your brother
Not even an honored guest if he comes

And the neighbor and don't forget your father
and the shameful cousin as well!

[CXXIII]

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was asked by a friend who was very promiscuous to give him some advice on marriage. The poet's response harks back, in a way, to Abū Nuwās's lines above:

Beware of decency beware!
Beware of corrupting your way!

You are fine O Abū Jaʿfar
as long as your prick is hard and you fuck a lot

So fuck even if it be your mother and strike even if it be
your father if he faults you for doing it[97]

[CXXIV]

In line 6 the poet returns to the narrative of the poem and mentions an old seemingly respectable man whom he had asked to find a bride for him. The woman-as-sea topos is used in line 7, but Ibn al-Ḥajjāj adds "ships." The ironic *dhamm biṣīghat al-madḥ* (dispraise in the form of praise) comes in the next line where the woman is said to have no defects except for the enemas she uses in her anus. Lines 9–12 describe her orifices in typical *sukhf* vocabulary as defective and grotesquely disproportionate with food topoi used again to describe the vagina in lines 10–12. Line 13 moves on to her face and in a hilarious but grotesque image her bad breath is compared to "dog shit mixed with a monkey's urine." The theme of defects and dysfunction continues in line 14. The woman's speech is doubly defective and she is unpleasant to any of the senses (sight, hearing).

The height of the ironic situation is that, despite all of this, the narrator continues to have intercourse with her, turning his neck away to be able to continue. In the last line we hear the woman's voice and her lisp is preserved, adding to the comic atmosphere.

A marked difference between *mujūn* and *sukhf* is discernible in the topos of the *althagh* (one with a lisp). Abū Nuwās uses it to add to the charm of his hedonistic conquest, as in the following example:[98]

I said to him: what is your name sir?
He said: I am called ʿAbbāth (ʿAbbās)
I took on his lisp
and said: take the glath and the vethel (glass and vessel)

[CXXV]

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, on the other hand, uses it in an antithetical manner to illustrate the objectionable physical condition of the woman, thus inverting the topos.

### *Diving*

1. O my masters,[99]
nothing has enslaved my belief
like the fat pussy

2. My mind vanishes when I see it
and my madness overcomes me

3. And I desire to dive in it
from my heel to my forehead

4. Whenever I lift my head up
I find people who urge me to dive

5. I disappear for a month
Eyes do not see me and people inquire about me

6. Until a month thereafter
my wailing indicates my location

7. May I be its ransom, it is like a bride when presented
In a set of roses and jasmine

8. Its solid forehead is made of iron
and its loose mouth of dough

9. The best for my prick to acquire
is solidity lined with softness on the inside

[CXXVI]

The central generative topos of this short *sukhf* poem is the hyperbolically large vagina. Instead of the typical lover whose madness stems from the delicate beauty (usually of the upper part), the fat vagina is the object and source of obsession here. The mere sight of it causes the poet to lose his mind (even his doctrine) (1–2) and desire to jump into the sea-like vagina from head to toe. This starts out sounding like a positive variation on Abū Nuwās's dispraise of the vagina in some of his poems for being insufficiently tight. Here, however, at least initially, it seems that the vastness of the vagina is being celebrated. But the opposite is implied. The topos of the sea is carried on as the poet's emergence resembles that of divers at mid-sea. In line 7, another typical personification, that of the vagina as a bride, is introduced. In line 8, it resembles a face and a series of *ṭibāqs* (antitheses) follow (*ḥadīd/ʿajīn, ṣalāba/līn*) (iron/dough, solidity/leanness).

### *Gossip*

[He said after passing a group of people with his singer [and] after which they rebuked him][100]

1.We passed the fornicators and they are trackers
every plague exists in them

2. So they made her, and me, the wretched one,
a tale to tell among them

3. They were perplexed when they saw us
as if we were an elephant and a giraffe

4. Then their sense became clear and they said:
That's Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Jawāfa!

5. To my ill fate, when we got together
at night, like wine mixing with water

6. I found her an old cat
no tightness or dryness

7. With a pussy within which the postmen,
despite their long destinations, have much to travel

8. With thick and very ugly
white hair on its sides

9. Were there a preacher along with its beard,
I would have appointed him to the al-Rūṣāfa mosque

10. Her husband's beard says to me in the
bathhouse with understanding and insight:

11. Why have you plucked all your hair? I said: so that
my anus is clean when it meets you

[CXXVII]

The poetic persona passes by a group of people who rebuke him for the singer accompanying him. Like those who sniff and follow every trail (or tale in this case), Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his companion become their main topic. The incongruity or conspicuousness of their being together is expressed by coupling the elephant with a giraffe (3). Line 4 marks the recognition of their identity. The following section narrates their nocturnal union. As is the case in *sukhf* poems, there is an unpleasant surprise and a series of inversions. The woman is not a youngish beautiful lady, but an old hag whose body shows the signs of time (6).

Line 7 features the aforementioned topos of the hyperbolically large vagina, which is vast enough for postmen to run within. Line 8 describes the singer's pubic hair as hoary, ugly, and thick. The next line strikes a blasphemous note when the poet wishes that this beard-like pubic hair had a preacher, he would appoint him one of Baghdad's major mosques! The beard motif allows the poet to make the transition to the final *hijāʾ* section

where the singer's husband is told to kiss the poet's ass, which seems to be Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's most favorite *hijāʾ* jab, as variations of it abound in his poetry. It is not obvious if the poem is intended as a jab against the gossip or is merely an occasion to display the clownish *sukhf* persona.

### *Precious Sukhf*

1. White like the moon[101]
Her saliva is more delicious than nectar

2. The weight of fat on her fleshy anus
is moistened with parched barley

3. When I rode on her ass
alone on a pilgrimage with no companion

4. On the side of a tailbone
[so much ] flesh on it that it covered my stickiness

5. I said: descend where there are veins
For I will alight where there are slits

6. But I looked down from her pussy
onto a deep valley

7. And I saw her anus' chamber
sideways in that strait

8. [And saw] the thorns of Lote trees
I was about to return halfway

9. I entered the prayer niche of her anus
and was bleary-eyed by the smell of saffron incense

10. I caught sight of the venus shell of her pussy
Red like the agate stone

11. All this and my penis still in her ass
gently and smoothly working its way

12. Sweaty after I had oiled it
and egged its bald head on with my saliva

13. The hole-maker mending her sphincter
after it had been worn out with holes

14. And there is a wound under
the spot where the arteries meet

15. Where my testicles walk
stuffing it with aged butter

16. [There is] a roughness on the mouth of her farting place
softened with cough ointment

17. O you who fault me for
openly admitting my debauchery

18. And a foolishness which has soiled
my path in composing my poems

19. It is with the precious goods of *sukhf*
that my market flourishes among people

20. Did you not know when you are
gladdened by my elegant and delighting looks

21. That the privy is hanging
between my pedicel and my collar?

[CXXVIII]

The first line starts with a conventional topos of the beloved with ideal physical characteristics. Line 2, however, descends from the face to the fleshy anus where fat mixes with parched barley. Here we have the fusion of food with sex organs. In line 3 the poet embarks on his sexual journey, where all conventions and expectations will be inverted and a grotesquely hyperbolic body will be catalogued. As he takes stock of the journey ahead, the beloved's anus looms like a chamber (7), but the road to it is treacherous and thorny (8). All of this is, of course, a total inversion of the delicate and tender body and skin found in conventional poetry. In lines 9–10, the poet goes further and his entry to her anus is described in religious terms with the usual scatological tropes (the saffron incense is an allusion to smells of excrement). Lines 11–14 shift to a description of the penis. The conflation and confusion of orifices is employed in line 16. The final section of the poem 17–21 is a *fakhr*-like moment in which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, as he often does, responds to his critics. *Sukhf* here is justified and defended as the poet's means to an end and a way to maintain a certain lifestyle. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj takes pride in his specialty and in the scatology he has mastered and monopolized. The privy, which symbolizes it, is hanging like a medal and it provides the elegance and luxury he enjoys (20–21). It is almost as if the detractors are asked to examine the relationship among the parts and to go beyond the deceptive surface.

This last statement brings us to a crucial point related to a better understanding of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*. Having traced its evolution as a mode and examined how it interacted within the poetic tradition, what remains now is to consider the sociopolitical function it served in its extratextual context.

# CHAPTER 5

# *Sukhf,* Scatology, and Society

*ʿaqluhum sakhīf wa-lisānuhum qabīḥ*
Their mind is frivolous and their speech is ugly
—Al-Muqaddasī (on peasants)[1]

The rest of mankind were described as mere scum, a marshy brook of lower animals who knew nothing save food and sleep.
—Ibn al-Faqīh (third/ninth century)[2]

Having located *sukhf* within the Arabic literary tradition, traced its genesis, and examined how it interacted with, and was articulated within, the tradition and its most popular forms, what remains is to situate it within the cultural and political context of the Būyid age. Our definition of *sukhf* has thus far been concerned with its primary aspect of "scatological parody." The last three chapters have discussed how parody and scatology are intertwined and how they function within representative poems from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's work. Both parody and scatology are universal genres with established traditions, but while the former has been "tolerated" and increasingly accepted as a serious field of study, the latter still faces staunch resistance among the great majority of scholars. Only recently has scatology and related subjects started to receive serious attention as legitimate and acceptable subjects of inquiry.[3]

This chapter will focus on the cultural and sociopolitical function of scatology in *sukhf* and its potential extratextual impact or function(s) in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's time. As mentioned in chapter 1, statements about, and evaluations of, Ibn al-Ḥajjaj's *sukhf,* in the modern period, have been predominantly laconic or dismissive. Even when not so, *sukhf* is reduced to a mere fascination with filth and/or an attempt to induce maximum shock by employing scatology. This typical reaction has its own ideological

reasons and is worthy of exploration as well since it bespeaks certain anxieties and aesthetic judgments that harbor their own assumptions.

Scatology is a cross-cultural phenomenon[4] and many poets and writers, some even canonical, have made extensive use of it (Aristophanes, Catullus, Dante, Rabelais, John Wilmot [the Earl of Rochester], and Swift, to name but a few of the most famous and well-regarded). While certainly inducing laughter and shock for the great majority of readers and eliciting expressions of disgust, some critics have argued that the extensive use of scatology (especially by Rabelais and Swift) has more serious and complex implications that extend to sociopolitical structures and boundaries of, and anxieties about, power and authority. Moreover, the equally universal reaction of utter disgust upon reading or encountering scatology, while perceived to be merely "natural," is itself also a cultural topos. While it finds its alibi in scatology, it is a culturally coded and performative act that reinforces boundaries and reproduces demarcations and categories. One is not suggesting here that scatological statements and representations should necessarily be celebrated or cheered, but that they be taken seriously if the texts and contexts in which they operate are to be illuminated.

A non-Pavlovian and holistic approach to scatology and the reactions and responses it engenders will also shed light on the reasons for the neglect suffered by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf* in the modern period. Logistical factors related to the limited availability of, and access to, manuscripts are certainly valid and partly to blame, but there is much more to the story. It is rather the lingering taboo on scatology that is still potent even in Western scholarly circles. Persels and Granim point to a

> curious lacuna: the relative academic neglect of copious and ubiquitous scatological rhetoric of Early Modern Europe, here broadly defined as the representations of the process and product of the body's waste products (feces, urine, flatus, phlegm, vomitus). Our most educated forebears, different from ourselves, did not disdain it—if such proof may be found in the mere proliferation of examples—and, further, employed in all manner of works, not just in the crude jokes of comic ephemera.[5]

This is definitely applicable to the status of scatology in Arabic literature. Kilito has expressed a similar sentiment about the moderns being more conservative than their ancestors.[6] Persels and Granim point out that sexuality, too, used to be a victim of this scholarly silence or shyness, but is, thankfully, no more so. "Scatology, however, arguably an even more universal function than sexuality, still retains the power to make us blush, to provoke shame and embarrassment."[7]

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, some of the aforementioned non-Arab poets and writers who employed scatology and were infamous for it suffered a response/reaction not dissimilar to that which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's did, particularly in the modern period. Rabelais, for example, was highly regarded by his peers and contemporaries and emulated, but suffered neglect in later periods.[8]

Total neglect, glossing over the scatological texts or excerpts,[9] or ascribing the use of scatology to a psychological or pathological defect in the writer, or to his inability to reconcile himself with bodily functions, rather than reading it as a trope for much more serious concerns in his society, are the typical strategies employed by those forced to mention the scatologues.[10]

One must add that a simplified version of this approach (scatology as a symptom) is what many often resort to when addressing *sukhf* and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Sukhf* is seen as merely symptomatic of the excess, decadence, and, for some, the moral decline of the Būyid age. This, however, is only half, or even less, of the truth and demands further elaboration.

## Poetry as Interface

Before addressing the sociopolitical context of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's time, it is important to state the primary assumption guiding this reading, particularly as it relates to the weight assigned to the poetic text on the one hand, and to its immediate context on the other. *Sukhf*, or any literary genre for that matter, can neither be understood as purely or mostly textual development or a 'literary game,' as some would want us to believe—one that is divorced from its sociopolitical culture and the material reality surrounding it, nor can it be approached as a pure symptom of the latter. Perhaps a more productive and nuanced approach is one through which poetry—premodern Arabic poetry in this context—is considered an interface. On the one hand, it is, for sure, conditioned by the tradition and its internal evolution and the particular literary mode or modes within which it is articulated and to some of whose demands it must adhere, no matter how transgressive or innovative it seeks to be. On the other hand, being a cultural commodity that is used to sustain and reflect a society's image (or an elite's image) back to itself and is consumed by it in order to reproduce the power structure, it is always in constant dialogue with this material reality and is influenced by its institutions. While this might seem self-evident, it warrants mention in this respect, as most scholars have tended to assign a disproportionate weight to one of these two poles, mostly the contextual, rather than the textual, in dealing with *sukhf*.[11]

## The Būyid Age (320–454/932–1062): Efflorescence, Excess, and Extremes

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's (330–391/941–1001) formative years and those of his fame and fortune coincided with the early and middle periods of the Būyid age.[12] He was about ten years old when the Būyids entered Baghdad, and he lived to witness their hegemony and to become part and parcel of the cultural elite. As we have seen in previous chapters, he was patronized by some of the most powerful men of the day and composed numerous poems for them. Moreover, he benefited financially from the system by acquiring estates through tax farming and by being appointed the *muḥtasib* (market inspector) of Baghdad. There is a consensus that this age was one of unique cultural vibrancy and efflorescence.[13] In addition to the accumulated cultural contributions and maturation achieved in previous periods, the diffusion and decentralization of power led to a proliferation of courts and patrons and, thus, to increased cultural traffic, productivity, and vigorous competition. The existence of the highly cultured and refined trio of viziers, al-Muhallabī, al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād, and Ibn al-ʿAmīd, as patrons and men of letters enriched the atmosphere even more and is emblematic of the spirit of the age. That the Būyid emirs were of non-Arab stock and of non-"aristocratic" roots compelled them to be more aggressive in patronizing culture. Being of modest origins, their prestige was to be "borrowed from the aura of learning."[14]

Kraemer stresses the spirit of individualism and self-awareness that marked the age. It was characterized by

> a powerful assertion of individualism [and] a burst of personal expression in the domains of literary creativity and political action . . .[15] and [a] sharp demarcation of oneself from others and a profound recognition of one's individuality.[16]
>
> The individual rose to prominence . . . The intensely competitive atmosphere . . . promoted the development of the individual personality and boasted a strong sense of self-awareness. This was an achieving society and a time of rapid upward mobility.[17]

All of this, combined with opportunities for the talented and the go-getters, contributed to the "emergence of an affluent and influential middle class."[18] This, however, was by and large in reference to the elite. Kraemer's "middle class" or what was termed *awsāṭ*, should not be understood as a wide sector of the population. This was the view from, or near, the top of the socioeconomic pyramid. At the bottom, the world looked and was experienced, as it usually is, in a drastically different manner.

The paradox, not uncommon in other historical periods, is that this celebrated cultural vibrancy was accompanied, for the most part, by economic decline and much social and political tumult and occasional chaos.[19] Increased taxation, the hegemony and encroachments of military elements, and the introduction and institutionalization of military fiefs (*iqṭāʿ*) depleted and drained the resources of the land.[20] A few brief periods of reconstruction notwithstanding, the dams and irrigation system in Iraq suffered much destruction and neglect and reached catastrophic lows.[21] This translated into a chronically insecure and underfed population "whose two companions were fear and famine."[22] Massive and numerous price increases and famines were much more frequent than before, with the poor forced to eat grasshoppers during one such calamity.[23] Not surprisingly, these conditions contributed to social upheaval and unrest. Riots and conflagrations punctuate the timeline, with entire quarters being plundered. To cite one example, "[t]he conflagration of 362/972 reduced 300 shops and thirty-three mosques to ashes and destroyed 17,000 lives."[24] It was "a society falling apart at the seams."[25]

These terrible conditions, while directly afflicting the lower strata, were detrimental, in varying degrees, to other groups as well. The experience of these cumbersome material conditions found expression in the literature and culture of the age and explains the preponderance of *kudya* (begging) poetry.[26] In contrast to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *kudya* poets were not as privileged financially, and al-Tawātī contends that many of them were actually "organically" linked to the more marginalized sectors of society.[27] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj performed his neediness, but he, too, experienced some difficulties and had some of his estates confiscated or occupied by soldiers and had to plead, but never without sarcasm, ridicule, and ribaldry. As mentioned in chapter 2, he was also briefly imprisoned together with his nephews.

These dire and calamitous times engendered serious and somber complaint and reflection; but their opposites as well. There was a spirit of mockery and "contempt for all that was venerable."[28] It is at the heart of this chaotic urban milieu that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj found his niche and made his mark in establishing and popularizing *sukhf*. Before expounding on this, it is important to discuss briefly the gulf between the *khāṣṣa* and the *ʿāmma* (or *khawāṣṣ* and *ʿawāmm*) and its implications.[29]

The cleavage that had existed before between the elite (*khāṣṣa*) and the masses (*ʿāmma*) was even more pronounced and extreme in this period. While demarcations of social divisions and borders cannot be as clear-cut as one would want them to be, there are general categories that are sufficient for our purposes.

Ibn al-Faqīh's division of mankind into four primary categories "... the ruler, the vizier, the high-placed ones, and the *awsāṭ*" was quoted earlier in this chapter.[30] Of course, the category of the *awsāṭ*, not unlike the middle class in contemporary times, admits more fluidity, especially that this was a time of upward mobility according to Kraemer. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his ilk would probably be best categorized within the *awsāṭ*. Al-Tawātī stresses the intermediary role men of letters played between the military and political elite on the one hand and the rest of society on the other. This is consonant with our suggestion earlier to view cultural production as an interface. Not all of the members of the *awsāṭ* would necessary enjoy equal footing and privileges, of course. Some, such as al-Tawḥīdī and al-Ṣābī, would have tough times. Others, such as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, prospered. But even Ibn al-Ḥajjāj could not always count on stability or take things for granted. There are many sections in poems or short *qiṭaʿ* where he complains of encroachments or disputes with officials and soldiers. This was a time when the encroachments of military elements were quite frequent. *Awsāṭ* or not, the likes of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj never considered themselves *ʿāmma*.

The *ʿāmma/khāṣṣa* categories represented the two ends of an all-encompassing hierarchy based primarily on economic factors, but the latter implied a host of other differentiations that extended to morality, intellectual capacity, and even hygiene. For those at the top, or closer to it (such as those engaged in cultural production), the *ʿāmma* represented the ultimate other.[31] It was a fluid category into which all sorts of negative representations and values could be attributed. It was, for sure, always defined negatively in terms of opposition to the *khāṣṣa* and those closer to them. One could argue about the placement of certain individuals and their status in the upper categories, but the *ʿāmma* were those who did not belong to any of the four categories mentioned above and who formed the multitudes.[32] The cultural elite themselves contributed to this view and reinforced it, in earlier epochs as well as in this one, with works purporting to describe the *ʿāmma* from a critical perspective and to collect anecdotes and observations about them. Thus, the *ʿāmma* became also a theme in *adab*,

> providing a mix of fascination, entertainment, as well as disgust!
>
> [A]ll possible sins were fathered on to the *ʿāmma*. It was ignorant, without any morality, unrespecting of religious obligations, and let itself be easily manipulated by the *khāṣṣa* whose plaything it was.[33]

Al-Jāḥiẓ composed a *Risāla fī waṣf al-ʿawāmm* (Epistle on the Commoners) and one of the works attributed to Abū ʿl-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī

is *Masāwiʾ al-ʿaw āmm wa akhbār al-sifla wa-l-aghtām* (The Defects of the Commoners and Anecdotes about the Hooligans and the Lowly).[34] A number of other negative terms were used to describe the *ʿāmma*, such as *ghawghāʾ* (vile), *awbāsh* (riff-raff), *sifla* (lowly), *aghtām* (barbarians). The *ʿāmma* were obviously linked with, and marked by, a host of negative connotations and representations, such as filth, ignorance, debasement, etc.[35]

The manner in which the *ʿāmma* were perceived and imagined is important in the context of *sukhf*, because Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is often remembered, if not faulted and condemned, for contaminating his poetry with the speech, mannerisms (or lack thereof), and expressions of the *ʿāmma*. He introduced the aesthetics of the lower classes, or forced them, into the literature of the elite in a scope and volume previously unknown in Arabic poetry.[36]

In addition to the pleasurable and innovative violation of literary and cultural convention on the part of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj as he found his niche, the incorporation of the vulgar language and mannerisms of the *ʿāmma* into poetry through *sukhf* might have served a number of interrelated functions. One of the primary functions of poetry, and of adab in general, was entertainment for the elite. It was, after all, partly commissioned by them and composed primarily for their immediate consumption. *Sukhf* allowed the elite to listen to, take a peek, and mock the inability of these nameless characters, who were presumed to be and represent the *ʿāmma*, to restrain and refine their expression and control their bodies, which are always represented as grotesque and uncontrollable. This laughter was accompanied by the disgust scatology spontaneously engenders. This disgust, however, was sociopolitically productive, as it reinforces the distance and boundary between the elite and the filth and unrestraint of the masses. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's "wallowing in filth," for which he and other scatologues are condemned, was, on one level, a performance that allowed his audience to symbolically cleanse themselves of unwanted nearness implied in expressions of disgust. Needless to say, this reinforcing of boundaries justified and legitimized, unconsciously, the way the world was configured and naturalized socioeconomic and other inequities by linking them to nature and the body. The grotesque and inferior bodies of the lower strata of society were exposed and ridiculed, and their imperfections were catalogued and displayed. But the bodies of the elite were to remain hidden, or not subject to the gaze. If they were, it would be an aesthetically pleasing representation that adheres to the conventions of tradition where the effects of time have no power (non-*sukhf*).

The disgust *sukhf* engendered also sustained the necessary denial of anatomical sameness. "Disgust ranks people in a cosmic ordering . . . [and]

creates and is witness to a claim of moral (and social) inequality."[37] This does not mean that lines or excerpts of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* were not popular among the *ʿāmma*. We know that they were, and this should come as no surprise, nor does it contradict what is being suggested here. For it must have been also fascinating and enjoyable for the vulgar masses to hear their own expressions, curses, and sense of humor in the poetry of the elite.[38]

It is worth noting, as well, that scatology and disfigured bodies, or what Bakhtin calls "grotesque realism" were essential elements in *hijāʾ* where the objective was to degrade, humiliate, and mark the subject (or group) as morally inferior, as well as to defame and make him/them the butt of jokes. Thus, one of the primary effects of scatology in *hijāʾ* was to reinforce boundaries and categorize others (enemies) as belonging to a lower order. In *sukhf*, the diction and repertoire of *hijāʾ* is appropriated and reoriented. At times named individuals (as in *hijāʾ*), at others nameless types, are denigrated, ridiculed, and humiliated. We have seen how in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *madīḥ*, this disfiguring and degradation of and in other bodies is contrasted to the perfection of the *mamdūḥ*, who stands above the fray and is the savior and the locus of positivity amid this grotesque realism.

This brings us to another related point. Because the body is often read as a metaphor for the world, there are also suggestions that scatology functions as a strategy to link the individual body with the social and political body.[39] Thus, the dysfunctional grotesque bodies with hyperbolically enlarged parts and obfuscated orifices in Ibn all-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* could be operating as metaphors for the social and political body that is itself dysfunctional. This period, as mentioned time and again, was one of decline and much insecurity and strife.

This is not divorced at all from other readings of Arabic poetry. The grotesque and dysfunctional, usually female, bodies in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* are, as we have suggested earlier, a parody of the conventional ideal bodies of the *nasīb* and *ghazal*. The woman in traditional *nasīb* was an icon crystallizing the poet's relationship to time and mortality. She stood for a lost world and a period obliterated by Time and triggered the poet's confrontation with his immediate material reality that he had to surmount. That was during the heroic era when the poet served a different function altogether. By Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's time, and even before, especially with and because of Abū Nuwās, the heroic model, a few exceptions notwithstanding, had become a rarity. The values and models of olden times were the object of ridicule, especially for poets whose temperament and style tended more toward parody and irreverence. All that was part and parcel of the tradition was to be parodied.

Rather than simply saying that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was "obsessed" with the body, one might suggest that viewing the world, or much of it, through the body, and a dysfunctional and disgusting body, is expressive of a world that is utterly dysfunctional, or a society that was falling apart at the seams. I am not suggesting that this was premeditated by the poet himself, but rather conditioned by his sociopolitical surroundings.

One must add though that although the grotesque body in *sukhf* is at times a male body, it is mostly female. That the female body is objectified and stands for other notions and constructs is, alas, not unique to Arabic poetry. The trope of woman as earth, nation (or nation-state nowadays) is even still current in modern literature. As some of the *sukhf* poems in the previous chapter show, the disproportionate and dysfunctional body was often represented in terms related to architectural space (houses and chambers) or topography (dams and rivers). This brings us to one important aspect of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* and how it might relate to urban space.

In some sense, *sukhf* can also be read as urban poetry. This can be seen in the unexpected shifts from one register to the other and the sudden appearance of unexpected and surprisingly different bodies, which do not correspond to idealized representations. The cacophony and occasional foreign words mixed with vulgar curses. People misbehaving and unabashedly uttering offensive words, but disappearing into an alley here or a house there. Dirt being unnecessarily hurled this or that way. Offers, compromises, rejections, and disputes. A man stands in the middle of it all describing the entire scene aloud to the public, but cursing everything and everyone, before pissing in the street. Expressions of disgust and disbelief by some, but a roaring laugh in the background. All of this represents a seemingly chaotic, crowded, and meaningless world to the untrained eye, but a complex one whose rhythm can be deciphered and logic be mapped to the patient eye. This could very well represent both an imagined moment in fourth/tenth century Baghdad and the atmosphere of a typical *sukhf* poem by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

There are, to be sure, numerous ways to parody a tradition and upset its hierarchy. The body is a most potent tool in this regard, as exemplified in the poetry of Abū Nuwās. When scatology is combined with parody, the volume and the vigor with which literary and social conventions are violated is maximized. Scatology in particular, more often than not, ends up, unconsciously if not consciously, violating other boundaries and hierarchies and manifesting anxieties about order and its human-made configurations. It performs transgression and obfuscates boundaries as it degrades the exalted, perhaps revealing how artificial and imaginary

most boundaries are and that what is protected when they are policed is not necessarily what is officially declared or commonly believed.

Critics of culture and literature should not fall into the trap of posing as policemen along these, or any borders for that matter. But they often do. That most premodern critics were more tolerant of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his ilk than the great majority of modern and contemporary ones is telling of the change in the way scatology and the body are perceived. While bequeathing many positive notions, the Enlightenment's valorization of the mind over the body and the deification of the former and the more rigid redistribution of values with all that is negative being linked to the lower stratum of the body would spell trouble for scatology. The ideal body of the modern and productive subject/individual in a civilized society would be more akin to a machine. Its desires and functions would be regulated to serve a productive and ordered life within carefully constructed institutions. What is wasteful and unproductive, no matter how natural, is to be disposed of in an orderly manner as well. Discussing it or its representations would certainly not fall within the realm of serious knowledge or inquiry, nor be taken seriously. It would, however, survive in popular culture and underground writings and expressions. This general prescribed sentiment would produce the desire on the part of "good modern citizens," literary scholars in this context, to silence scatology and dismiss it whenever possible, or neglect it completely. In doing so almost ritualistically, they pose as cleansing masters.

The Arab scholars who bothered to mention Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf* only to dismiss it and cleanse the cultural past were following in the footsteps of their Western counterparts who had done the very same with their great scatologues. It is a sad instance of cultural amnesia when a culture that celebrated the body in a relatively healthy manner and had a high ceiling for the most frivolous and the irreverent would become its own enemy. If Ibn al-Ḥajjāj were alive today, he would not be allowed to make public the kind of poetry he wrote more than a millennium ago, or live as long as he did.

# Conclusion

This book sets out to reinscribe Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *sukhf* into the literary history of premodern Arabic poetry by according the subject the seriousness with which premodern Arab critics and poets approached it (and very few modern ones too).

Far from being an obsession with filth and scatology, when considered and placed within its proper literary and cultural context, *sukhf* appears as a complex but very logical development in premodern Arabic poetry. Not unlike other rich traditions, the Arabic tradition too was bound to produce parodic tendencies. These were further energized by, and fused with, later developments, such as the changing function(s) of poetry itself and of the status of poets, and the emergence of various new genres. The wealth of material, of models to be parodied and inverted, and earlier scatological tendencies in *hijāʾ* (invective poetry) as well as earlier types of parody, were all there before Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's time. The potential existed and there was the great Abū Nuwās, who had already parodied the central motifs of classical poetry, violated a host of sociocultural conventions and pioneered *mujūn*. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, however, aided by great talent and mastery of the tradition, as well as unique vigor, was able to tap into a confluence of all of the above during an age that was exceptionally hospitable to experimentation and creativity. His own metapoetic statements in his poems prove that he realized the niche he had found.

The nucleus of his style, the generative germ of *sukhf*, was the deliberate and studied obfuscation and crisscrossing of boundaries of all sorts and the toppling of hierarchies: literary, linguistic, and sociocultural. The latter was achieved through an unprecedented reliance on scatology as a device, making him notorious for it, but still admired and emulated. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was like a precocious child who found himself free to roam inside the museum of poetic tradition. He misbehaved and was disorderly: smearing, cursing, and ridiculing everything. But only someone

who had understood and mastered that order could violate it so well. His success, with the political elite and the critics, was significant. He earned his rightful place in the archive of premodern Arabic poetry and appeared, with or without his poetry, in the major tomes.

Reintegrating Ibn al-Ḥajjāj into the study of premodern Arabic poetry and its history is essential if we are to gain a more holistic view of the range and scope of that poetry in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's period, but in later ones as well. Many of the poets of later centuries were emulating him and responding to him. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry is also very illuminating for the cultural and social history of the Būyid period. It sheds ample light on the intricate political and cultural configurations of that tumultuous age, as well as the cultural and linguistic registers of the time.

Further inquiry into Ibn al-Ḥajjāj as a phenomenon, and into the manner in which he has been crossed out of cultural history, will tell us a great deal about the politics of cultural amnesia. The past is a cultural and political battlefield. It is perhaps useful to highlight figures such as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj whose mere existence is confounding to those entrenched on both sides of the imaginary "civilizational divide" as they continue to misread the past.

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry and persona, while firmly anchored in the Arabic tradition and in their historical context, provide important material for future comparative studies of parody and scatology. There are numerous parallels to be drawn between Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Rabelais, for example. In fact, the comment I usually received upon disclosing the subject of my book, from non-Arabists and some Arabists too, was "Ah! He was the Rabelais of his age." In an ideal world, Rabelais would be called the "Ibn al-Ḥajjāj of his age."

*Sukhf* is, thus, also part of a "universal" tradition and, whereas Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's counterparts in other cultures were subject to the modern taboo on scatological literature, they have been emerging from the silence and darkness as should Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

# Appendix A: Arabic Texts

I

إنْ مـــــــــــتُ والله لاتـــــــــــروا أحـــــــداً
بـــــــــعـــــــدي فـــــــي مذهبي يدانـــــــيني
للشـــــــــــــعر قـــــــومٌ أقـــــرّوا ســـــــــائرهم
كتّابهم فـــــــــيه لا يـــــــــــوازونـــــــــي

II

إنّنـــــــــي فـــــــــي مـذهـــــبي واحـــــــــــدٌ
يعـــــــــــجز أن يـــــــكون لـــــــي ثانـــــــــي

III

والســـــــــخفُ لولاي لـــــــم يـــــــــكن أبـــــداً
يكـــــــتـــــــبُ فـــــــي دفـــــــترٍ ولا يُـــــــقرا

IV

رجـــــلٌ يدّعـــــــــي النـــــــبوّة في السّـــــــــخ
فِ ومـــــــــن ذا يـــــــــــشكّ فـــــي الأ نبيـــــــاءِ

V

كـــــــذلك شـــــعري لا تـــــــــزالُ صحائفـــــي
بـــــه فـــي بلاد اللـــــــــه تطـــــــــوى وتنشـــــرُ
فلـــــيس عـــــلى ظهـــــر البســـــــيطة ســـــيّدٌ
كـــــريمٌ وإلا عـــــــنـــــــده مـــــــنه دفـــــترُ
وأقـــــــــرّ لـــــــي أنّـــــي نبـــــــي السـخ
فِ فـــــيـــــــها وأنّه شـــــــــاعـــــــرُ

VI

أنـــــــا الـــــذي نـــظر الأعمـى إلـــــى أدبـــي
وأســـمـعـتْ كلـمـاتـي مـن بـــه صـمـــمُ

VII

بـــكيـــتكَ للـــــــشّـــرّد الســـائـــــــــــــرا
تِ تـــعـــبـــقُ ألـــفاظـــــــها بـــــالمعانـــي
ومـــــــا كنـــــتُ أحـــــــسبُ أنّ المنـــــــونَ
تفـــــلُّ مضـــــــــارب ذاك اللـــــــــسانِ
فـــــــــزلْ كزيـــــــال الشـــــــباب الرطيـبِ
خانـــــــــك يـــــــوم لقـــــاء الغوانـــي
ليبْـــــــكِ الزمـــــــانُ طويـــــــلاً عليـــكَ
فقـــــــد كنـــــتَ خـــــفّة روح الزمـــــانِ

VIII

والشـــــــــعرُ مـــــــع هـــذا شـــــــياطـــــينهُ
تســـــــــجدُ فـــــــــي الســـــخفِ لشـــيطاني

IX

أيـــــــهذا الـــــــوزيـــــرُ دعـــوة عبـــــــــــدٍ
لـــــــك أضحى فـــــي مـــــذهب السـخف قـــــدوة

X

ألا أيـــــها الأســـــتاذ دعـــــــــــوة شـــــاعـــرٍ
طريـــــــقـــــتهُ فـــي الشـــعـــــر لا تتبـــــهرجُ

XI

ويـــــــــحكَ إنّـــــــي إذا ســـــــخفتُ امرؤ القيـــ
سِ وإن لـــم يـــــكن أبـــــــــــي حُـــــجـــــرا
أتـــــي بشـــــفْعٍ مـــــن القـــصائـــد قـــدْ
تـــــركـــنَ فـــــيَ السـخفِ مذهـبي وتـــــــرا
ومـــــــذهبُ الـــجدِّ لـــو همـــــمـــــتُ بـــــه
مـــــــــا كان لا مشـــــــكلاً ولا وعـــــرا
لكنّـــــــــني فيه مـــــــثل ســـــــائر مـــــن
يـــــــقـــــول مـــن أهـــل دهـــــرنا شـــــعرا
والســـــخف لولاي لـــــم يـــــــكن أبـــــداً
يـــــكتـــــبُ فـــــي دفتـــــرٍ ولا يُقـــــرا
وعائـــــبٍ لـــــي بالســـــخف قـــــلـــتُ لـــــهُ
يـــــــا أحـــــمـــــق الناسِ كلّـــهم طـــــرّا

XII

تـــــرى أمـــــــــا أعـــــجبكم قـــــطُّ لـــــي
شـــــعرُ ولا أضـــــــحكـــــكم سُخـــفـــي

XIII

وشـــــــعري ســـــــخفُهُ لا بـــــــــدّ منـــهُ
إذا طـــــبـــــنا وزال الاحـــــــتشـــــــامُ
وهـــــل دارُ تكـــونُ بـــــلا كنـــــيـــــفٍ
يلذُّ لـــعـــــــــاقل فيـــها المـــقـــامُ

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لـــــو جـــدّ شـــعري رأيـــــتَ فـــيـــهِ
كواكـــب اللـــيـــــلِ كيـــــف تســـــري
وإنّمـــــا هـــــــزلـــــهُ مجـــــــونُ
يمـــشي بـه في المـــــعـــــاشِ أمـــــري

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أعـــــنِ الســـــخف والمـــــجونِ بشـــــعري
أم عـــــن الخمـــــر والغـــــنا والقيـــــانِ

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أمـــــا رأيـــتَ النـــــبيّ قاتـــــل فـــــي
وقـــعـــةِ بـــــدرٍ بشـــــعر حسّـــــانِ
وكـــان حسّـــانُ مـــــع جـــريرٍ مـــــع الـــــ
أخـــطلِ لا يشـــــبهـــون غلـــمـــانـــي

لو شـــــاهـــــدوني حـــــتى أســـــاخفهـــــم
صلّـــــت شـــــيـــــاطيـــــنهم لشيطانـــــي

XVII

يـــــــــا مـــــن يـــعـــيـــبُ عـــلـــيّ إقْـ
راري المـــــصـــــرّح بـــــالفـــــســـــوقِ
وبـــــــلادةٍ قـــــــد قـــــــذّرت
فـــــــي نـــــظمِ أشـــــعاري طـــــريقـي
بـبضـائـــــع الســـــخـــــفِ الثميـ
ـنِ يقـــــومُ بيـــــن النـــــاسِ ســـــوقـــــي

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كـــــأنّها مـــــن نـــتـــنـــها ثـــــومـــــة
لـــــكنّـــــها فـــــي الـــــلـــــون أتـــــرجّة

. . .

كـــــأنّمـــــا فـــــقـــــحـــــتها فـــــحمة
فـــــــتّ عـــــلـــــيـــــها عابثٌ ثلجـــــــه

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حـــيّ الـــقـــدورَ الـــــراســـــيـــــا
تِ وإن صـــــمـــــمْنَ عـــــن الكـــــلامِ
وقـــــصاعـــــهـــــم إذا أتـــــيـــــنـــك
طـــــافـــــحـــــاتٍ بـــــالـــــطعـــــامِ
لهفـــــي علـــــى سكبـــــاجـــــة
تشـــــــفي القلـــوب من الســـــقـــــامِ

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وحالـــــــف القمـــــــلُ زمـــــاناً لحيتـــي
وضعـــفت مـــن الهـــــزالِ ضـــرطـــتي
وصـــــــار تبّاني كفـــــاف خصيتـــي
أيـــــر حمـــــارٍ فـــي حـــر امٍّ عيـــشـــتي

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١. ألا أيها الأيـــــر كـــــم لـــي علـــــيكَ
مـــن عـــبـــراتٍ تـــــرى تـــنـــســجـــمْ
٢. بكـــيـــتكَ حـــيّاً وحـــبّـــرتُ فـــيـــك
مـــــراثـــــي كـــالـــلؤلـؤ المنتظـــــم
٣. إذا ذكـــــر الـــنـــاس مـــــوتاهـــم
ذكـــــرتـــــك ذكـــــر حـــــزيـــــنٍ وجِـــم
٤. وقمـــــتُ علـــــيكَ مـــــع النائحـــــا
تِ ألـــــطـــــم خـــــدي وألـــــتـــــدم
٥. أعـــــــدّد أيـــــامـــــك الصـــــالحـــاتِ
وأبـــــكـــي علـــــى عيـــــشك المنصـــــرم
٦. رأيـــــتك لـــلـــدهـــــر مســـــتخذيـــاً

عليك استكانة من قد ظُلِمْ
٧. ولم يبق فيك لذي لذّة
من الناس موضع حظ عُلِم
٨. تحطّمتَ بعدي وأيّ الأيور
على قدم الدهر لم ينْحطِم؟
٩. وأين من مواقف الصالحات
أأودى بها صرف دهرٍ مُلِم؟

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١. لا تبكِ للركبِ إن راحوا وإن بكروا
ولا تسائل عن الأظعان ما الخبرُ
٢. ولا تقف بديارٍ لا أنيس بها
. . .
٣. ولتبكِ عينك أيراً لا حراكَ به
مقوّس المتن في أوصاله خورُ
٤. يهوى الغواني فتسترخي مفاصلهُ
كأنّه جلدة قد مسّها المطرُ
٥. تقومُ من عنده الحسناء مغضبة
لم يقض منها لبانات ولا وطرُ
٦. باتت تحرّكهُ سلمى لحاجتها
وباتَ ما عندهُ نفعٌ ولا ضررُ
٧. إذا تعقّف قالت وهي تغمزه:
ما هذه القوسُ لم يشددْ لها وترُ
٨. قامت تنوحُ عليه من زمانته
كما يناحُ على من وارت الحفرُ
٩. لم تغتفر نومه عنها وغفلته
هيهاتِ ذلك ذنبٌ ليس يغتفرُ
١٠. كأنّه وهو مُقْعٍ فوق خصيته
شيخُ تبيّن في أعطافه الكبرُ
١١. يقلّ في العين حتّى ما يرى صغرا
وكان بالأمس ضخماً ما به صغَرُ

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أبكي عليكَ ولا أبكي على طللٍ
بالرقمتانِ ولا رَبْعٍ بذي سَلَمِ

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يخفى عن العين حتّى ما أشبهه
إلّا بخطّ كتابٍ دارسِ الأثرِ
كأنّهُ طللُ أقوت معالمه
لم يبْقِ منه البلى شيئاً ولم يذرِ

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١. لا يوحشنّكَ فقدُ الحيّ أن رحلوا
دعْهُم لكلّ فقيدٍ منهم بدلُ
٢. ولا تُبَكّ على رسمٍ بذي سلم
ولا يذكرك أيام الصبا مللُ
٣. ولا تقف بين أطلالٍ تسائلها
فلن يردّ جواب السائل الطللُ
٤. ولتبكّ عينك أيراً لا حراك به
لا اللمسُ ينشّطهُ يوماً ولا القبلُ
٥. لم تبق إلا جلود منه باليةٌ
مثل الرسوم محتها الأعصرُ الأولُ
٦. غيّرنَ دولتهُ بعد استقامتها
وقد تغيّرُ عن حالاتها الدولُ
٧. فاذكر مناقبهُ بالأمس وابكِ لها
فذاك همّك ليس الرحل والجملُ

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أمحلّتي مفساة عاتكة اسلما
ولتعلما أنّ البليّة منكما
يبكيكما أيري بدمعٍ راعهُ
قرح الخصى منها فقد صارت دما

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قد كنتَ حربةَ نيكٍ
فصرتَ ميزابَ بولِ

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ينامُ إذا أصاب منام صدقٍ
وينعظُ في الخلاءِ وليس غيري

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تحيّرُ في الكريهة حين تلقى
وتنعظُ ما تفتّرُ في الخلاءِ
جمعت رخاوة في لين مسٍ
كأنّك خرقة عصرت بماءِ
فلولا البول ما أويت عندي
وعجّلت الجبوب من الخصاء

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١. قالت وأيري المحلول ميزرهُ
كأنّه مييت بلا كفنِ:
٢. يا شيخُ هوذا تروم مجتهداً
نهوض هذا المقفّع الزمنِ
٣. هيهاتِ دعه عسى تبولُ به

بـــــول تـــــيوس المـــــعزى علـــــى الدْمـــــنِ
٤. قلتُ: بنَ ســـــتّين كـــــم ينـــــيك وكـــــم
ينثر مـــــاء الجـــــماع مـــــن بـــــدنِ
٥. والمـــــاءُ مـــــاء الفـــــرات لـــــو نزفوا
ســـــتّ ســـــنين بالـــــكوز مـــــنهُ فـــــني
٦. عـــــذر افـــــتقرتُ إلـــــيه مـــــن خـــــجلي
وكـــــنتُ لـــــولا البـــــظراء عـــــنهُ غـــــني

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١. تقـــــولُ ســـــليمى: مـــــا لإيركَ لا يُـــــرى
أطـــــار به مـــــن فـــــوق خـــــصييك طـــــائرُ؟
٢. أم اخـــترمت كـــــفّ المنـــــيّة شـــــخصـــــهُ
فأ صـــبح ممّـــــن غيّـــــبـــــتهُ المـــــقابـــــرُ؟
٣. فقلتُ لهـــــا: أيـــــري مقيـــــمٌ مكانـــــهُ
ولكـــــنّه رخـــــو المفـــــاصـــــل ضامـــــرُ

. . .

٤. فـــــهل أبصرت عيـــــناكِ قبلي وقبـــــلـــــه
فـــــتى غـــــاب عنـــــهُ أيـــــره وهـــــو حاضـــــرُ؟

. . .

٥. كأن لم يجـــد نـــــجداً إذا الحـــــربُ شمّـــــرت
وذبّـــــت بأطـــــرافِ الرمـــــاحِ العـــــساكـــــرُ
٦. ولم يمـــــض بيـــــن الدارعـــــينَ ســـــنانـــــهُ
ويســـــتنُّ في أعراضـــــهـــــم وهـــــو حاســـــرُ
٧. فـــــإن تعـــــجبي من ضـــــعفه بـــــعد قوّتـــــه
فـــــكـــــم مـــــحربٍ دارت عـــــليـــــه الدوائـــــرُ
٨. أحين استبـــــانَ النقـــــصُ فيـــــه ازدريـــــتـــــهِ
كأنـــــك لـــــم تلقـــــي بـــــه وهـــــو وافـــــرُ
٩. فقد تخلـــــقُ الأ يّـــــامُ ديبـــــاجـــــة الفـــــتى
وتبلى علـــــى الدهـــــر الغصـــــون النـــــواضـــــرُ

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١. أنـــــا شيـــــخٌ وإمـــــرأتـــــي عـــــجوزُ
تراودنـــي علـى مـــــــــــا لا يجـــــــــــوزُ
٢. تريدُ أنيكها في كـــــــــلّ يـــــــــومٍ
وذلك عنـــــد أمثالـــــــــي عزيـــــــــزُ
٣. إذا هو فاتها غضـــــــــبت وصـــــــــدّت
كما تتغضّب المـــــــــرة النشـــــــــوزُ
٤. وقالت: دقّ أيـــــــــركَ مُـــــــــذْ كـــــــــبرنا
فقلـــــــتُ لها: بل اتّســـــــع القفيـــــــزُ

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١. وسرمُ مـرّ مجتـــــــــــازاً بأيـــــــــــري
كما صـــلّى العشـــــــــا والدربُ خالـــــــــي
٢. فقال لـــــــــهُ: إلى كـــــــــم تزدرينـــــــــي
وتكشفُ بالقـــــبيحِ إلـــــــــيّ بالـــــــــي؟
٣. وكم تختارُ وصـــــــل الكـــــــسّ دونـــــــي
وتكـــــــــرهني فتعرض عـــــــن وصالـــــــي؟
٤. ألم تر أن شـــــــكل البـــــــدر شكـــــــلي
وأنّ الـــكـــــــسّ معـــــــكوس الهـــــــلال؟
٥. تأمّل تكّتـــــي فوقي وأيـــــــن الـــــــوهـ
ادُ مـــــــن الروابـــــــي والتـــــــلالِ
٦. فنـــكّس رأســـــــهُ أيـــــــري طويـــــــلاً
يفـــــكّرُ في الجـــواب علـــــــى الســـــــؤالِ

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طالمـــــــــا قمـــــــتَ كالمنارة تهتـــــــزُّ
قيـــــــــاماً تسمو إليـــــــه العيـــــــونُ

XXXV

فلعـــــــــهدي بـــــــــك دهـــــــراً
قائمـــــــــاً مثـــــــل المنـــــــارة
ما يـــــــــــــراك النـــــــــاسّ إلّا
مـــــن حديـــــــــــدٍ أو حجـــــــارة

XXXVI

كـــــــأنّه حـــــــالفٌ بالله مجتهـــــــداً
ألّا يـــقـــــــومَ على أنـــــــثى ولا ذكـــــــر

XXXVII

وكم حصـــــون منيعـــــــــة تقحّمتهـــــــــا
لم يفتتحْها أبـــــــو بـــــــكرٍ ولا عـــــــمر

XXXVIII

يؤذّن فـــــي اســـــــــتها أيـــــــــري أذانَ
الضـــــــحى ويقيم وقـــــــت الـــــــزوالِ
وتعصفُ ريـــح عصـــــــــعصها شمـــــــالاً
وهل ريح أرقُّ مـــــــــن الشمـــــــالِ

XXXIX

١. وفاتكة الألحـــاظ ساحـــــــرة النظـــــــرْ
لهـــا منظرٌ أزرى بـــــه ســـــوء مختبـــــرْ
٢. تصـــــيد بعينيـــها القلـــــوب وتســـــتبي
بمنطقها من حـــــاولته مـــــن البشـــــرْ
٣. فمـــــن بين مخدوعٍ بطـــــرف لسانـــــها
ومن بين محمولٍ على مـــــــركب الغـــــــررْ

٤. كحنظلة خضـــــــــراء يرضـــــيكَ لونـــــــــها
على أنّـــــها مذمومة الطعـــــــــم والخبـــــــــر
٥. دعاني إلى تزويجـــــها حســـــــن وجـــــــهها
ولم أدر ما تحـــت الثيابِ مـــــــن العبـــــــرْ
٦. فلما رجوتُ العيش فـــي خلـــــــوتي بـــــــها
وقلتُ: ابشري يـــا نفسُ قـــــــد فزتِ بالظفـــــــرْ
٧. إذا ردمُ ياجوج وماجـــــــــوج حولهـــــــــا
ووادٍ حشاهُ الشـــرّ بالشـــــــوك والحجـــــــرْ
٨. يمرّ بها المجتازُ فـــــــي ضـــــــيق مســـــــلكٍ
على مثـــل أطـــــراف السكاكـــــين والإبـــــــرْ
٩. إلى لجّة يستصغـــــــر البـــــحر عندهـــــــا
إذا جاش في آذيّـــــــه البحـــــــر أو زخـــــــرْ
١٠. كثيـــرة أعـــــراض البـــــــلاء مخيفـــــــة
أراني إذا لجـــــــجتُ فيها علـــــــى خطـــــــرْ
١١. تورّدها قبـــــلي أنـــــاس فأصبحـــــــــوا
وما منـــــــهم عـيُن تحـــــــسُّ ولا أثـــــــرْ
١٢. فلـــــو مكّنتْ منها العـــــيونُ لأ بصـــــــرت
أعاجيبَ لـــــم تمرَرْ بسمـــــــــعٍ ولا بصـــــــرْ
١٣. تولّيتُ منـــــها هاربـــــــــاً وزجرتهـــــــــا
ومـــــن مثلها يُستشعرُ الخـــــــوفُ والحـــــــذرْ
١٤. كما فرّ أهل الحـــرب مـــــــن منجنيقهـــــــا
إذا صاحـت النظّـــــارة: الحجـــــــر الحجـــــــرْ
١٥. وأيـــــــري مجروحٌ كـــــــأن برأســـــــه
كلوماً أصابتهُ مـــــــن التـــــــرك والخـــــــزرْ
١٦. إذا أنكرت أيـــــدي الغوانـــــــي فتـــــــورهُ
شكا ما به منـــــــها إليهـــــــنّ واعتـــــــذرْ
١٧. فلا يغترر بعـــدي بهـــــــا ذو صبابـــــــة
فـــــفيّ وفيها عـــــــــبرة لمن اعتبـــــــرْ

XL

باض الحـــــــبّ فـــــــي قلبـــــــي
فيـــــــا ويلـــــــي إذا فـــــــرّخ
وهـــــــل ينفعنـــــي حبّـــــــي
إذا لـــــم أكنـــــس البربـــــخ
وإن لـــــم يضـــــع الأصلـــــع
خرجيـــــه علـــــى المطبـــــخ

XLI

فاستمـــــــع قـــــــول شاعـــــــرٍ
كلّمـــــــا قـــــــال أفحشـــــــا

فإذا بـــــالَ بولـــــــــة الـــــــــــــــــط
طيرِ فـــــــــي الشـــــــــعر رشـــــــــــــشا
فتـــــــرى ذقـــــــــن مـــــــــن يلـــــــــيـ
ـهِ وقـــــــد صـــــــــــار أبرشـــــــــــــا

XLII

صـــــــــار يفســـــو على تـــــــــــأبـــــــــــّ
ـطَ شـــــــــــرّاً والشـــــــــــنفـــــــــرى

XLIII

حدثُ السنّ لـــــم يـــــــــــزل يتلهّـــــــــــى
علمـــــــــــهُ بالـ شـــــــــايخ الكـــــــــبراءِ
خاطـــــــرُ يصفع الفـــــــــــرزدق بالشعـــــــــر
ونحـــــــوُ ينـــــــــــــيكُ أمّ الكسائـــــــــي
غير أنّـــــي أصبحت أضيع فـــــــي القـــــــوم
مـــــــن البدر فـــــــــي ليالـــــــي الشتـــــــاءِ

XLIV

لـــــــو عابنـــــي سيبويه قلـــــــــتُ لـــــــــه:
خـــــــرا الكسائـــــي في لحـــــــية الفـــــــــرّا

XLV

إن عـــــــــــــابَ ثعلـــــــبُ شعـــــــــري
أو عـــــــــــاب خـــــــــفّة روحـــــــــي
خـــــــريتُ فـــــــــي بـــــــاب أفعلـــــــتُ
مـــــــــن كتـــــــــــابِ الفصيـــــــح

XLVI

ألســـــــــــــتَ تعلـــــــمُ أنّـــــــــي
فـــــــــي غيبتـــــــــــي وحضـــــــــوري
مـــــــــــا زلتُ فيـــــــــــك بمدحـــــــــي
أنيـــــــــــــكُ أمّ جـــــــــريـــــــــرِ

XLVII

ويـــــــد تخـــــرجُ العـــــرائس في مـــــــــدْ
حـــــــكَ بـــيـــــــــن الأقـــــــــلامِ والأدراجِ
فاستـــمعها منّـــــــي ألـــــــــذّ وأشهـــــــى
مـــــــن ســـماع الأرمـــــــــال والأهـــــــزاجِ
بمـــــــــعانٍ بخـــــــورها لك طيـــــــبٌ
وفســـــاها فـــــــي لحيـــــــة الزجّـــــــاجِ
حلقت فـــــي الطـــــــويلِ ذقـــــــــن جريـــــرٍ
والأراجـــــــيز لحـــــــــية العجّـــــــاجِ

XLVIII

بـــعـــــــــروضٍ ينـــــــــيـــــــــكُ أمّ
الخليـــــــــل بـــــــــن أحمـــــــــدْ

وبنحوٍ أفسو به
في سبال المبرّدْ

XLIX

لو قال بشّارُ نصفَ بيتٍ
منها لخرّى حمّاد عجرد

L

مدحُ لو انّ زهيراً فيه نافسني
صفعتُ بالنّعل في يافوخه هرما

LI

رجلٌ يدّعي النبوّة في السخف
ومن ذا يشكّ في الأ نبياءِ؟
جاء بالمعجزات يدعو إليها
فأجيبوا يا معشر السخفاء

LII

خليليّ بالله اقعدا نصطبح ولا
"قفا نبك من ذكرى حبيبٍ ومنزلِ"
ويا ربّي لا تنبت ولا تسقط الحيا
"بسقط اللوى بين الدخول فحوملِ"
ولا تسق مقراة امرئ القيس طرّاً
من المزنِ وارجم ساكنيها بجندلِ

LIII

وعوّض الماء بسمر القنا
وبالأفاعي والثعابين
فبتُّ والأرض فراشي وقدْ
غنّى قفا نبكِ مصاريني

LIV

قفا نبكِ من ذكرى حر ام أبي نصرِ
بسقط الخرا بين المصيرة فالجحْر

LV

قفا نبكِ من ذكرى حبيبٍ ومنزلِ
بسقط اللوى بين الدخول فحوملِ

LVI

٢. فمجرى مسيل البول لم يعفُ رسمُها
لما نسجتّهُ الطنطكاتُ على الشعرِ

LVII

٣. منازلُ كان النتفُ يجلو طلولها
فأضحت كآجامِ الطراف من الشعر
٤. كأن لم يكن للفيشِ فيهنّ ملعبٌ
ولم تمس مأوى للأ يورِ التي تسري

٥. عجـــوزٌ عفـــــتْ آياتُ ربـــــــع مناكـــــــها
وفـــــــي أيّ ربـــــــعٍ لم تغُرْ نُـوَبُ الدهـــــــرِ
٦. ففي جحـــــرها أيـــــري وعنفقة اســـــتها
إلى شحمـــــــتيْ أذنيه بالطـــــولِ في جحـــــري

LVIII

إذا مـــا بكى مـــــن خلفها انصـــــرفت لـــــــهُ
بشـــــــقّ وتحتي شقّـــــــها لم يحـــــــوّلِ

LIX

١. قميصُ رفـــــاهُ الفتـــحُ يـــــوم دخولـــــه
إلى كـــــــرخ سامـــــــرّا مع المتـــــــوكّلِ
٢. قميصُ ولا المـقراةُ لـم يعـــــــفُ رسمـــــها
لما نسجتها مـــن جنـــــــوبٍ وشمـــــــألِ
٣. نضته البلى عن مدقع بعد مـــــــا قضـــــــى
بـــــــه وطراً مـــــــن لبسة المتفضّـــــــلِ
٤. ولا من مشتْ فيـــــــه تجـــــــرّ وراءهـــــــا
على أيـــــــــره أذيال مـــــــرطٍ مرحّـــــــلِ
٥. ولكن غبـــــــاراً طـــار تحملهُ الصّـــــــبا
"بســـقط اللوى بين الدخـــــول فحومـــــــلِ"
٦. يقولُ لكـــــــمّيهِ ويجمـــــــعُ ريقـــــــه
"قفا نـــــبك من ذكرى حبيـــــبٍ ومنـــــــزلِ"

LX

٧. وذي لحـــــــية بيضاء غيـــــر مفاضـــــــةٍ
"عوارضـــها مصقولـــــــة كالسجنجـــــــلِ"
٨. تحمّلتُ في استـــي رحلـــــها منذُ مـــــــدّةٍ
"فيـــــا عجبي لرحلهـــــا المتحمّـــــلِ"
٩. كثوبٍ إذا استدبـــــرتهُ ســـــدّ مبعـــــري
بضافٍ فويـــق الأرض ليـــس بأعـــــزلِ
١٠. فلم أر ذقناً مثلـــه قـــــطّ ما نـــــزا
على استـــي إلا شقّ بالعـــــرض أسفلـــــي
١١. وقال لـــها: أرخي وقـــــدّم خاءهـــــا
"ولا تبعدينا مـــــن جـــــناكِ المعلّـــــلِ"
١٢. فيـــا لحية الشيخ الخـــــليع المغفّـــــلِ
إذا اجتزتِ باستي أو علـــــى الباب فادخلـــــي
١٣. إلى ساحة قـــــوراء يجتازُ ركبـــــها
على بطن خبتٍ ذي قفـــــافٍ عقنقـــــلِ
١٤. كبارُ اللحى بالليـــل تدخـــــل بابـــــها
دخـــــول حمير الشـــوك باب المحـــــوّلِ
١٥. إلى روضةٍ لـــــم يهـــــدِ للأنف ريحـــــها

"نسيم الصبا جاءت بريّا القرنفلِ"

LXI

١٦. ألم ترني في صفع كلّ منافقٍ
جعلتُ على سوق النعال معوّلي
١٧. وإنّي ضمنتُ الشرّ عنّي لمن جنى
عليّ ومن يعد بوعدٍ مؤجّلِ
١٨. ولم أتّبعْ في الغدر سنّة مالكٍ
ولكن وفاء من وفاء السمؤألِ

LXII

قفا نبكِ من ذكرى قميصٍ وسروالِ
ودرّاعة لي قد عفا رسمها البالي
وما أنا من يبكي لأسماء إن نأتْ
ولكنّني أبكي على فقد أسمالي
لو أنّ امرأ القيس بنَ حجرٍ رأى الذي
أكابدهُ من فرط همّ وبلبالِ
لما مال نحو الخدرِ خدرَ عنيزةٍ
ولا بات إلا وهو عن حبّها سالِ

LXIII

وقد كنتُ قبل الشيب أعشق خمرة
وتفرطُ في عشقي وتضرطُ من حبّي
إلى أن عفا حرها ودبّب منعظي
وصارت "قفا نبكي" وصرتُ "ألا هبّي"

LXIV

١. ألا هبّي بنعلكِ فاصفعينا
ومن قبل الغداة بها اصبحينا
٢. إلينا بادري فأخذ وقتٍ
لعلّك بعده قد تندمينا
٣. فإن غداً وإنّ اليوم رهنُ
وبعد غدٍ بما لا تعلمينا
٤. أديريها علينا كلّ يومٍ
بمقبضها شمالاَ أو يمينا
٥. مخصّرة إذا ذُكِرت عمِشْنا
على بعدٍ وإن حضرتْ عمينا
٦. تجورُ بذي الخشونةِ في قفاهُ
إذا ما ذاقها حتّى يلينا
٧. ترى اللحظ القذال إذا أُمِرّتْ
عليه لرأسهِ فيها مهينا
٨. ملمّعة تحبّ الرأس صُلباً

كـــبيراً والنـــــدى عبـــــلاً سمينـــــا
٩. إذا كـــــــرّ الجنـــــوبُ بأخـــــدعيه
رأيتَ علـــــى المتونِ لـــــهُ غضونـــــا
١٠. عشَـــــوْزنةٌ إذا انقلـــبتْ أرنّـــــتْ
تدقُ قفـــــا المثقّـــــفِ والجبينـــــا
١١. إذا وضـــــعتْ على الهامـــــاتِ يومـــــاً
رأيتَ لهـــا جلـــــود القـــــومِ جونـــــا
١٢. بها تشقى المحاجـــــمُ يا ظعينـــــا
وصولي فيـــــكِ يا بِنْتـــــي أخينـــــا
١٣. فابنةُ عمّهـــــم وابنـــــاهُ منهـــــم
وآفتهم فســـــا المـــــوت زطينـــــا
١٤. ألّا تعلمـــــي أنّـــــا حصلنـــــا
جميعاً فـــــي الحبـــــوسِ مصفّدينـــــا؟
١٥. أتتنـــــا لا بـــــن سابـــــورٍ جمـــــوعُ
فساقتنـــــا إليـــــه أجمعينـــــا
١٦. فلمّا أن دخلنـــــا الحـــــبس ليـــــلاً
رأينا مـــــا يـــــروّع الناظرينـــــا
١٧. لحى مثل القباطـــــي حـــــين هُـــــزّت
وإذْ رقّـــــت طبائعنـــــا خرينـــــا
١٨. حبلتُ من الأذى فحمـــــلتُ في اســـــتي الن
نتوجَ إلـــــى عنافقهـــــم جنينـــــا
١٩. جنـيناً حـــين أعجلنـــــي مخاضـــــي
هنـــــاك وضعتهُ رطبـــــاً رزينـــــا
٢٠. وكنتُ إذا حبلـــــتُ ولـــــدتُ إمّـــــا
رقيقـــــاً في العنافـــــق أو ثخينـــــا
٢١. وشالتني القوابـــــلُ عـــــن بنـــــاتٍ
تجيشُ بهـــــنّ بطنـــــي أو بنينـــــا
٢٢. ولولا أمـــــر أعلى النـــــاس أمـــــرُ
وأسلمهم لنـــــا دنيـــــا ودينـــــا
٢٣. حصلنا تحـــت حكـــــم اللالكائـــــي
عريف الحبـــــس فيـــــه مخلّدينـــــا
٢٤. وأمّا بعد يـــا أستـــــاذُ فاعلـــــمْ
فداك اللهُ بـــــي علمـــــاً يقينـــــا
٢٥. بأنّـــــي قد دُفِعْتُ إلـــــى أمـــــورٍ
تقـــــرّ بها عيـــــون الشامتينـــــا
٢٦. وأنّ بطاطيـــــا كانـــــت فباتـــــت
قـــــذاة في عيـــــون الحاسدينـــــا
٢٧. وقـــد لحقـــــت أراح اللهُ منهـــــا

بأمـــــــــلاكِ العـــصـــــــــاة المارقينـــــــــــا
٢٨. ورسمـــــــــي صغتُهُ بالشـــــــين يفســـــــــــو
علـــــــيّ ويخرج الـــــــــــداء الدفينـــــــــــا
٢٩. وأولادي حديثـــــي اليـــــــــوم عنهـــــــــــم
يطولُ علـــــــى الكـــــــــرام الكابتينـــــــــــا
٣٠. ولســـــــتُ أرى بعينـــــــــي لي ظهيـــــــــراً
سـواكَ ولا علـــــــى أمـــــــــري مُعينـــــــــا
٣١. فذُدْ طلْـــــس الذئاب الشـــــــوهِ عنّـــــــي
وكُنْ لبطاطيـــــا حصنـــــــــاً حصينـــــــــا
٣٢. وقُـــــــل لأخـــيك يا مـــــــولاي قـــــــولًا
تسرّ بـــــــه القوافـــــــــي السامعينـــــــــا
٣٣. وزيرُ لم يكـــــن لـــي قـــــطّ ذنـــــــبٌ
إليـه ولـــــــن أعيـــــــش لأن يكونـــــــــا
٣٤. بـــــنعمة مـــــن أرانا فيـــــك أقصـــــــى
المـــــراد ومـــن أقـــــرّ بـــــك العيونـــــــا
٣٥. بنعمة مـــن أمـــــات الجـــــور عنّـــــــا
ومن أحـــــيا بـــــك الحـــــقّ المبينـــــــا
٣٦. بنعمة مـــن حبـــــاك بكـــــلّ فضـــــلٍ
يزيـــــــد علـــــى صفـــــات الواصفينـــــــا
٣٧. بـــــه وبنتـــــه وبـــــأهـــــل بيـــــت
النـبـــــيّ الطيّبين الطـــــاهـــــرينـــــــا
٣٨. أجـــــرنا مـــــن شماتـــــات الأعـــــادي
ومن سعـــــي الوشـــــاة الكاشحيـــــــنا
٣٩. ولا تطلـــق لهـــــم أمـــــراً علينـــــــا
ولا حكـــــماً بغيـــــر الحـــــقّ فينـــــــا
٤٠. أسيّدنا أبـــــا الفـــــضل استمعهـــــــا
فقد جـــــــمعتْ معانيـــــــها فنونـــــــــا
٤١. وخـــــذها كالعـرائس مـــــن مغـــــانٍ
زُففْنَ إليـــــكَ أبكـــــاراً وعونـــــــا
٤٢. إذا أنشدتهـــــنّ رأيـــــتَ شيخـــــاً
سخيـــــفاً ينثرُ الـــــدرّ الثمينـــــــا
٤٣. ويمسخ ليـــس يسلـــــخُ بالقوافـــــي
"ألا هـــــبّي بصحـــــنك فاصبحينـــــا"

LXV

١. خليلـيّ لا تستعجـــــلان الوقـــــوفَ بـــــي
علـــى منزلٍ أقـــــوى بـــــدربِ الملقّـــــبِ
٢. على است عجوز السُرم ورهـــــاء بظرهـــــا الـ
معرقـــــب من أقـــــران بيـــض خصى أبـــــي

٣. بعيدة مهـــــــوى النجو ينـــــــهرّ جعسهـــــــا
كما انـهـــــــرّ لبن الحائـــــــط المتعرقـــــــبِ
٤. كأنّ عناقيـــــــد البواسير فـــــــي استـــــــها
شماريخُ بُـــــــسْرِ النخلـــــــة المترطّـــــــبِ
٥. لها شعرة مـــــــثل القطيفـــــــة قمـــــــلهـــــــا
على خملهـــــــا مثل الجـــــــراد المذنّـــــــبِ
٦. لها من نجـــــــارات الفياشـــــــل نقنـــــــقٌ
إذا صـــــــلبت دارت علـــــــيه بلـــــــولـــــــبِ
٧. وفضلةُ بظـــــــرٍ أســـــــود متحشّـــــــفٍ
على شفرها مـــــــثل الطحـــــــال المكـــــــبّبِ
٨. خليـــــــليّ مرّا بـــــــي عليهـــــــا فإنّهـــــــا
إذا نسمـــــــت ريح استـــــــها أمّ جنـــــــدبِ
٩. ألـــــــم تريانـي كلّمـــــــا جئتُ طارقـــــــاً
وجدتُ بهـــــــا طيبـــــــاً وإنّ لـــــــم تطيّـــــــبِ
١٠. وقد كنتُ في شعـــــــري أشبّـــــــب باستهـــــــا
فمـــــــنذُ زمـــــــانٍ باستها لـــــــم أشبّـــــــبِ
١١. شُغِلـــــــتُ بشـــــــعري بالتلقّي فلـــــــم أقـــــــمْ
لأ خرج مـــــــن ليلـــــــى إلى ذكـــــــر زينـــــــبِ
١٢. وأسرجـــــــتُ برذونـــــــي الـــــــذي هو لـــــــي أخٌ
وتربُ علـــــــى خلقـــــــي نشـــــــا ومعـــــــي ربـــــــي
١٣. كمـــــــيتٌ له حـــــــقّ علـــــــيّ عرفتـــــــهُ
طريّاً كمـــــــا ابني وهـــــــو يعرفنـــــــي صبـــــــي
١٤. غدا بـــــــي يمشـــــــي القهقـــــــرى متضائـــــــلاً
من الجـــــــوع مشْـــــــيَ الخائـــــــفِ المترقّـــــــبِ
١٥. إلى ملكٍ مـذْ غـــــــاب أمســـــــت مضـــــــاجعـــــــي
إلى اللـــــــيل تشـــــــكو نبْوتـــــــي وتقلّبـــــــي
١٦. وبـــــــتُّ سمـــــــيراً للكـــــــواكـــــــبِ كلّمـــــــا
مضـــــــى كوكبٌ وكّلتُ عينـــــــي بكوكـــــــبِ
١٧. وقـد عـاد مـــــــولانا فيـــــــا عيني ارجعـــــــي
إلى ممتـــــــعٍ حلوٍ مـــــــن النـــــــوم طيّـــــــبِ
١٨. أبو أشـــــــبلٍ تحـــــــت الوغـــــــى متغـــــــرّب
مـــــن الوحش في غـــــابِ القنـــــا المتأشّـــــبِ
١٩. أسـنّتهُ مخضوبـــــــةٌ مـــــــن دم العـــــــدى
قلـــــــيل الولـــــــوع بالبـــــــنان المخضّـــــــبِ
٢٠. رعـى الـــــلهُ أهـل الأرض لمّـــــا استنابـــــهُ
بأكـــــــرم مســـــــترع عليهـــــــم محبّـــــــبِ
٢١. فقد صار مولاهم أبـــــــاً مشفـــــــقاً لهـــــــم
وكانـــــــوا ولا بـيـــــض التـــــراب بـــــلا أبِ

٢٢. وكـان رجائـــي قبلـــــهُ مـــــثل قبضـــــة
من الريـــــح في منـــــقار عنقـــــاء مغـــــربِ
٢٣. فمولاي آوانـــــي طريـــــداً وردّنـــــي
شريـــــداً وخلّى مـــــن أياديـــــهِ مشربـــــي
٢٤. ونـــــوّه بالحجّـــــاج جـــــدّي ونسلـــــه
كـــــما نـوّه الحجّـــــاجُ بابـــــن المهـــــلّبِ
٢٥. أقولُ وقـــــد أبصرتـــــهُ وهـــــو جالـــــسٌ
كشمس الضحى تحـــــت الشـــــراع المطنّـــــبِ:
٢٦. إلهـــــي عمّـــــرهُ لضعفـــــي وافْـــــدهِ
بأهـــــلـــــي وأولادي وأمّـــــهـــــم وبـــــي
٢٧. فأنتَ عليـــــمٌ فـــي مـــــوالاته التـــــي
أسرُّ وأبديهـــــا لصـــــحّة مذهبـــــي

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خـــــليليّ مـــــرّا بـــــي علـــــى أمّ جنـــــدبِ
لـنـقضـــــي حـــــاجـــــاتِ الفـــــؤادِ المعـــــذّبِ

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عـــــلونَ بأنـــــطاكيـــــةٍ فـــــوق عقمـــــةٍ
كجرمـــــةِ نخـــــلٍ أو كجنّـــــة يـــــثـــــربِ

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١. الصـــــرمُ بعـــــد النيكِ فـــــي الســـــرمِ
غثاثـــــةٌ عنـــــدي بـــــلا طعـــــمِ
٢. ويحك كـــــم مـــــن ليلـــــة قـــــد مـــــضـــــت
ســـــرّتك واشتـــــدّ بهـــــا غمّـــــي
٣. خـــــرّيـــــت فيهـــــا فتـــــناولتـــــهُ
مـــــن شدّة الحـــــنّة فـــــي كُمّـــــي
٤. فكـــــم تجـــــورينَ بـــــلا رحـــــمـــــةٍ
وكـــــم تصـــــدّينَ بـــــلا جُـــــرمِ
٥. أقســـــم الله لـــــعهـــــدي بهـــــا
أيـــــام كانـــــت بعـــــدُ فـــــي قسمـــــي
٦. وهـــــي اذا اســـتحجر طبْـــــعُ استهـــــا
دعـــــت فـــــحلّت طبعـــــها باسمـــــي
٧. فاليـــوم قد صـــــارت علـــــى وجههـــــا
مهمـــــلة تخـــــرا بـــــلا علمـــــي
٨. يقول لـــــي بعضـــــهـــــم: عهدنـــــا
أمـــــس بـــــها تضرط عـــــن عظـــــمِ
٩. فـــــاليوم قـــــد صار حـــــوال استهـــــا
ضـــــرائب القطـــــن مـــــن الشحـــــمِ
١٠. قلـــــتُ لهـــــم: هـــــذا لأن استهـــــا

لا تتعشّى بسوى اللحمِ
١١. تبلغُ عصبان الخصى نيّةً
بفقحة جيّدة الهضمِ
١٢. رهص استها وهو ضعيف القوى
ينهر بالليل من الوهمِ
١٣. قلتُ لأ يري فوقَ باب استها:
إستختر الله وقم سمّي
١٤. مظاهراً ما بين درعين إنْ
عزمتَ من دهنٍ ومن خطمِ
١٥. كالبدر بدر التمّ فابرز إليّ
نواتها يا عنق البمِ
١٦. كيف احتيالي في جحودي هوى
نمّ به قلبي على جسمي
١٧.وكيف لي بالقرب من قلبها
والفقر مع ستّي طلّسمي
١٨. قالوا: انحدر تستغن في جمعةٍ
قلتُ: إلى من يا بني عمّي؟
١٩. قالوا: إلى من يده مزنةٌ
تسقيك ماء المطر الوسمي
٢٠. إلى الهمام الملك المرتجى
فقلتُ: هذا كان في عزمي
٢١. إلى الفتى القرم الذي مالهُ
ينزل في الجود على حكمي
٢٢. يا سادتي اقروا جزء شعري الذي
يصمّ حاشاكم ولا يعمي
٢٣. اقروه درساً فهو عندي لكم
أنفعُ من مختصر الجرمي
٢٤. ثمّتَ قولوا للأمير الذي
همّتهُ تعلو على النجمِ
٢٥. بنو بويهٍ كلّهم أنجمٌ
وأنت فيهم قمر التمِّ
٢٦. يا بن سيوف الهند مشحوذةً
ويا ابن أطراف القنا الصُمِّ
٢٧. جرايتي ما سرّني خبزها
لأنّه جافّ بلا لحمِ
٢٨. والخبزُ قال الطبّ فيه أنّه
أقتلُ بالملح من السمِّ
٢٩. والله في نفس فتى جاءكم

منحـــدراً فـــــــي الطـــــــــمّ والـــــــــرمِّ
٣٠. بمـدحةٍ تجـــــــعل فـــــــي واســـــــط
لحية مـــــــن يشـــناك فـــــــي سرمـــــــي

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١. حـــــــفـــــظ الـــــــلهُ أوانـــــــا
أنـــــــا فيـــــــه بـــــــأوانـــــــا
٢. ضـــــيفُ قـــــــومٍ يشـــــتري الحـــــمْ
دَ بمـــا عَـــــزّ وهـــــانـــــــــــا
٣. مـــــــــع أنـــــاسٍ ثـــــــــمّ يُفْتـــــ
نون فـــــــي العـــــيش افتتانـــــــا
٤. حـــــــين يغـــــــدونَ خماصـــــــاً
ويـــــــروحـــــــون بطانـــــــا
٥. حيـن يغـــــــــدون رجـــــــالاً
ويـــروحـــــون دنـــــــانـــــــا
٦. فـــــي البســـــاتين دخـــــلنـــــا
مُذْ دخلنـــــاهـــــا الجنـــــانـــــا
٧. يـــــا أبـــــا طاهر يـــــا مـــــن
جـــمّـــــل المـــلـــك وزانـــــا
٨. لســـــتُ أخـــشى مـــــن زمانـــــي
بعدمـــــــا ألـــــقى زمـــــانـــــا
٩. لا ولا أفْـــــكـــــرُ فـــي البـــــرْ
دِ إذا زرتُ يـــــــمـــــانـــــا
١٠. بهـــما أخـــــذتُ مـــــن فـــــقـ
ـري ومـــن عُســـــري أمـــــانـــــا
١١. ولـــــقـــــد بـــــرّدتُ قلبـــــي
إذ صعـــــــدتُ البـــــردانـــــا
١٢. بمُـــدامٍ بـــــلبـــــلـــت مِنـ
نيَ عـــــقـــــلاً ولســـــانـــــا
١٣. فـــــإذا أنـــــا تكـــــلّمْـ
تُ أردتُ تـــــرجمـــــانـــــا
١٤. قريـــــةٌ تجـــــمعُ خمـــــراً
وقحـــابـــاً وقيـــــانـــــا
١٥. ومـــــعي صاحـــــبُ صـــــدقٍ
لم يكـــــن معـــنا ســـــوانـــــا
١٦. يـــــا أبا الفضـــــل فحـــــدّث
بحديثـــــي كيـــــف كـــــانـــــا
١٧. كيـــــف بتنا أسفـــــل القـــــرْ
ية فـــــــي الديـــــر كلانـــــا

١٨. مـــــــع عجـــــــوز مثـــــــل أمّـــــــي
حـاطهـــــــا اللهُ وصـــــــانـــــــا
١٩. تحفـــــظُ الديـــــــر وتـــــــرعـــــى
ماعـــــــزاً فيـــــه وضـــــــانـــــــا
٢٠. قلـــــــــتُ لّما أقبلـــــــتْ فـــــــي الْ
مشـــــــي تحكـــــــي السرطـــــــانـــــــا:
٢١. هـو يـــــا كفـــــى تعـــــالـــــيْ
أطلبـــــــي أفّـــــــاً ونـــــــانـــــــا
٢٢. وتـــــــذكّر كيـــــــف قالـــــــت
حيـــــث نامـــــت بحـــــذانـــــا:
٢٣. أف كـــــغـــــطّا كنمـــــانـــــا
كيـــــران من صـــــبّانـــــا
٢٤. قلـــــــتُ: في السـرمِ إذا نِـــــمْ
تُ، فـــــقـــــالـــــت: لقبانـــــا
٢٥. ثمّ أكـــــــلـــــــبْتُ عليهـــــا
بعـــــدما غـــــطّـــــت زمـــــانـــــا
٢٦. فأحـــــسّت بـــــي وقـــــالـــــت:
ليـــــس مخلـــــوقٌ يـــــرانـــــا
٢٧. نطـــح الـــزورق فـــي استـــي
مـا بيانـــــا مـــــا بيـــــانـــــا
٢٨. نـــــبّـــــش المـــــردي وإلّا
أنـــــت مـــــلاحُ ســـــمانـــــا
٢٩. يا أبـــــا الفضـــل اتّفـــقـــنـــا
واختلفنـــــا فـــــي هـــــوانـــــا
٣٠. أنـــت مغـــــرى بالخـــــرا الأصـْ
فر يحكـــــي الزعفـــــرانـــــا
٣١. وأنا من فـــــزع الجـــــحْ
رِ أرى المـــــوتَ عيـــــانـــــا
٣٢. في الخـــرا والبـــــول نرعـــــى
حلـــــق اللهُ لحـــــانـــــا
٣٣. ربِّ يـــــا مـــــن لا نـــــراهُ
وهْوَ فـــــي الغيـــــبِ يرانـــــا
٣٤. أعْـــــطِ عزّ الـــــدولة القـــــرْ
مَ مـــــن الدهـــــرِ الأ مانـــــا
٣٥. أعطنـــــا يـــــا ربّ فيـــــه
أبـــــد الدهـــــرِ مُنـــــانـــــا
٣٦. إبقِ من فـــــي جـــــوده الغـــــمْ
رُ من الفـــــقـــــر غنـــــانـــــا

٣٧. إبقِ مـــــــن أطعمـــــــنا الخُـــــــبْ
زَ النقـــــــيّ وحيـــــــانـــــــا
٣٨. والـــــــذي لـــــــولاه كـــــــنّا
نتغـــــــذّى بـــــــخرانـــــــا

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١. أفـــــدي بنفسي مـــــن لا أسمّيـــــهِ
واســـــترُ وجـــــدي بـــــه وأخفيـــــهِ
٢. أســـــترهُ بين أضلعـــــي شـــــفقاً
والدمـــــعُ بين الوشـــــاة يبديـــــهِ
٣. ظبيٌ ســـــقاني المدامَ من يـــــدهِ
ممزوجةً بالرحـــــيق مـــــن فيـــــهِ
٤. قد مـــــلك الحســـــنَ لا ينافســـــهُ
يوســـــفُ فيـــــه ولا يماريـــــهِ
٥. والبـــــدرُ فـــــي التمّ مـــــن صنائعـــــهِ
والشمسُ فـــــي الدجـــــنِ مـــــن جواريـــــهِ
٦. والغصـــــنُ غصـــــنُ الأَراكِ يخدمـــــهُ
بلـــــين عطفيـــــهِ فـــــي تثنّيـــــهِ
٧. مخالفـــــاً لي فيمـــــا يضـــــرّ بـــــهِ
منّي ويـــؤذي قـــلبـــي ويـــؤذيـــهِ
٨. يمنـــــعُ ماعـــــونهُ ويســـــألنـــــي
ســـــواد عيني اليـــــمنى فأعطيـــــهِ
٩. قد عيـــــلَ صبري مـــــمّا أعاتبـــــهُ
وضـــــاقَ صدري مـــــمّا أداريـــــهِ
١٠. يحســـــنُ بي وجهـــــهُ الجميل كمـــــا
يسئ بي فـــــي الهـــــوى تجنّيـــــهِ
١١. وكلّمـــــا رمـــــتُ أن أقابلـــــهُ
علـــــى تماديه فـــــي تعدّيـــــهِ
١٢. جـــــاءت علـــــى غفلة محاسنـــــهُ
تسألنـــــي الصفحَ عـــــن مساويـــــهِ
١٣. عنـــــد ابن عبد العزيـــــز سيّدنـــــا
أنا من الحـــــادثـــــاتِ أفديـــــهِ
١٤. فتىً على كـــــوكب الصبـــــاح بـــــه
يوفي وقـــــد شـــــرقت معاليـــــه
١٥. وكيف لا يبلـــــغ السمـــــاء عُـــــلا
بالرغـــــم مـــــن كلّ مـــــن يعاديـــــهِ
١٦. مـــــن كان عبـــــد العـــــزيز والـــــدهُ
بالمجـــــدِ فـــــي مهـــــده يغذّيـــــهِ
١٧. فتىً لكـــــلّ ممّـــــن يؤمـــــلّـــــهُ

بلـــــوغ أقصـــــى مـــــدى يمنّيـــــهِ
١٨. الخائـــــف المســـــتجير يؤمّنـــــهُ
والســـــائـــــل المســـــتميح يغنيـــــهِ
١٩. فتـــــى أبى الجودُ وهـــــو يحرســـــهُ
أن يسرح الـــــذمُّ فـــــي نواحيـــــهِ
٢٠. من منـــع السـرِبَ فـــهو يبذلـــهُ
أو بذل السـرب فـــهو يحميـــهِ
٢١. فضـــلٌ مـبيُّن عـــمّ البلاد بـــهِ
رائـــح إنـــعامـــهُ وغاديـــهِ
٢٢. فليس فـي الشـرق مـن ينافسـهُ
وليس فـــي الغـــربِ مـــن يساويـــهِ
٢٣. فتى مديحـــي قـــد اشتـــرتهُ لـــهُ
بضـــعف مـــا استلمـــتهُ أياديـــهِ
٢٤. مدحٌ يطيـــرُ النشـــيدُ فيـــك بـــهِ
مع كـــلّ مغـــرى بالشـــعر يرويـــهِ
٢٥. وطائـــر الشعـــر لا قـــوادمـــهُ
تـــخونـــهُ لا ولا خـــوافيـــهِ
٢٦. يا من بثقـل الكنـــيفِ قـــد حُلِقـــتْ
بين يديـــهِ لحـــى أعـــاديـــهِ
٢٧. هديّـــة المهرجـــان حاضـــرةٌ
والعبـــدُ يهـــدي إلـــى مواليـــهِ
٢٨. عبـــدٌ رأى أنّ كـــلّ مجتهـــدٍ
في القـــربِ من قـــلبِ من يواليـــهِ
٢٩. يهـــدي إليه بحسب طـــاقتـــه الْ
لتي علـــى قـــدره تواتيـــهِ
٣٠. فجاء يهـدي الشـعر الـذي اشتملـت
علـــى حـــدود الخـــرا معانيـــهِ
٣١. فالكنْفُ مـــن حشـــوه مطفّـــحةٌ
والمـستراحـــاتُ فـــي قوافيـــهِ
٣٢. شعرٌ بنـــي طاهـــر لغيركـــم
ما كنـــتُ في المهرجـــان أهديـــهِ
٣٣. شعرُ أنـــيكُ امّ مـــن ينافسكـــم
بكـــلّ أيـــرٍ وصفتُـــهُ فيـــهِ

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١. ألا أيّـهـا السـرمُ النتيـفُ المقنفـرُ
أفقْ ربّمـا لـم تنْـجَ أو تتزحّـرُ
٢. وكـم لك من جعـسٍ ولا الفهـر كسـرهُ
نبا عنهُ بالفـأس الغـلا مُ الحـزوّرُ

٣. ودونـــــــــك في مستنقعِ البـــــــول أدقـــــــعُ
أغرّ كمصبـــــــــاح الوليـــــــــد يزهـــــــــرُ
٤. حرُ كلّما أبهمـــــتُ بالفـــــيش بثـــــــقهُ
جرى خلـــــــــفهُ بثقُ أحـــــــــنّ وأغـــــــزرُ
٥. فذاك قريع الدهـــــر ما عـــــــاش حُـــــــوّلاً
إذا سُدّ منـــه منـــــــخرُ جاش منـــــــخـــــرُ
٦. له حلبةٌ يشكـــــــو مـــــــداها وبعدهـــــــا
إذا ما جـــرى فيـــــها الجـــــوادُ المضمّـــــــرُ
٧. يلمّ بـــــــــه والليـــــــل مرخٍ ســـــــدولـــــهُ
مـــن الحيّ فـــــظّ الخصيتـــــــين قنـــــــوّرُ
٨. وأصلع لـــم تنبـــــت لـــــــه قـــــطّ شعـــــرةٌ
على الرأس محلـــــــوق العذاريـــــــن أعـــــــورُ
٩. لـــــه فردُ عينٍ دمعـــــــها كلّمـــــــا نـــــزا
علـــــــى فقحـــــــة منهلـــــة يتحـــــــدّرُ
١٠. ‘‘وليس الذي يجـــري من العيـــــن مـــــاؤها
ولكنّـــــــها نفـــــسُ تـــــذوبُ فتقطـــــرُ’’
١١. وإنّـــي لمحبـــوبٌ لي النيـــــكُ كلّمـــــــا
تكلثـــــــم رحـــــمُ أو تشـــــدّق مبعـــــرُ
١٢. وأخـــرى أصادي الأيـــــر عنـــــها وإنّـــــها
لمـــــــوردُ نـــــيكٍ إنْ أردتُ ومصـــــــدرُ
١٣. إذا نزل الأضيـــافُ باســـت ربيـــــطتـــــي
خلـــــوتُ فـــلا ســـــرمُ يـــــزارُ ولا حـــــرُ
١٤. ســـــلامُ علـــــى تلك المثانـــــة والكلـــــى
وباكـــــرها مزنٌ مـــــن البـــــاه ممـــــطرُ
١٥. ربوعُ زنا أمســـت وما فـــــــي عراصـــــها
لعمركَ مـــن فيـــش الزنـــــاة مخبـــــرُ
١٦. وقـــد كان فيهـــــا للخصـــــى متنـــــزّهٌ
وللنـــــيكِ مرتـــادٌ وللأيـــــرِ منظـــــرُ
١٧. وقفتُ بأيـــــري وهو بيـــــن طلولـــــها
مروعُ جنـــــانٍ والـــــــهُ متحيّـــــرُ
١٨. فأنشدنـــي لما رأى فـــــرد عينـــــهِ
من الدمع في ربـع الهـــوى ليـــــس تبصـــــرُ
١٩. وقفتُ كأنّـــي مـــــن وراء زجـــــاجـــــة
إلى الدار من فـــرط الصبابـــــــة أنظـــــرُ
٢٠. بنفسي وأهلي في الحجاب قصـــــيـــــدةٌ
لساني إذا عبّـــــرتُ عنهـــــا مقصّـــــرُ
٢١. وزبّاء تمشي في الطريـــــق ورجـــــلهـــــا
بليف رشـــــا شعـــــر استها تتعثّـــــرُ

٢٢. وصلتُ بأيري نيكـــــها كـــــل ليلـــــــــةٍ
فـــلا هـــــي تستكفـــــي ولا أنـــــا أضجـــــرُ
٢٣. أقول: وبالت فـــــي الفـــــراش فرشّشـــــت
ولو خريت فيـــــــه لكانـــــــت تشطّـــــــرُ
٢٤. ترى الشيء مـــــمّا يتّقـــــى فتخافـــــــه
وما لا يرى ممّـــــا يقـــــي الـــــلهُ أكثـــــرُ
٢٥. هنيـــئاً أبـــي عبـــــد الإلـــــه لمعتـــــــفٍ
نـــــداكَ نـــــــدى معروفـــــه لا يكـــــدّرُ
٢٦. سماحُ يبـــاري الغيـــث والغيـــث مســـــبلٌ
وبأسٌ يبـــــاري الليـــث والليـــــثُ مخـــــدرُ
٢٧. وعزّ عقـــــــابُ الجـــــوّ دون مرامـــــــه
ولا يرتقيـــــــه ذو الجناحـــــين جعفـــــرُ
٢٨. إذا وزراء ضـــــــمّهـــــم لك مجلـــــسٌ
وأقبلـــــتَ ماجـــــوا كلّهـــــم وتـــــعـــــثّروا
٢٩. وصـــلـــوا لمولاهـــــم ركـــــوعـــــاً وسجّـــــداً
يـــــؤم ابنُ هـــــارونَ بهـــــم والمطـــــهّـــــرُ
٣٠. صلاة أذان القـــــوم عنـــــد وجوبهـــــا
بأنّـــــــك عنـــــد الله أعـــــلى وأكبـــــرُ
٣١. وكم مـــــن ملـــــمّ فادح قـــــد بدهتـــــهُ
فناهضهُ عبـــــــلُ الدراعـــــين قسْـــــورُ
٣٢. فتى فـــوق رأس المجـــدِ يسحـــبُ ذيلـــهُ
ويـــــوم الوغى تلقـــــاهُ وهـــــو مشمّـــــرُ
٣٣. إذا رام يومـــــــاً غرّة مـــــن عـــــدوّهِ
تأمّـــل قبـــــل الوردِ مـــــن أين يصـــــدرُ
٣٤. بقلبٍ لهُ عينـــان عيـــــنٌ عن الهـــــوى
تغضّ وعـــــينٌ في العواقـــــب تبصـــــرُ
٣٥. أمولاي خذها فهـــي كالتبـــر ذِكْرهـــا
سليـــــمٌ على الأ يّـــام لا يتغـــــيّرُ
٣٦. معمّرة يبقـــــى على الدهـــــر كنهـــــها
وأنفـــعُ مـــا يبقـــــى المديـــــحُ المعمّـــــرُ
٣٧. كذلك شعـــــري لا تـــــزالُ صحائـــــفُ
بـــه في بـــــلاد الله تطـــــوى وتنشـــــرُ
٣٨. فليس علـــــى وجـــــه البسيطـــة ماجـــــدٌ
كريمٌ وإلا عنـــــده منـــــه دفتـــــرُ
٣٩. وكم مِدَح عنـــد ابن شـــــهرام أصبـــــحت
قصائدها مســـــــتورة ليـــــس تظـــــهرُ
٤٠. يخدّرهـــا استحياؤهـــــا من رواتـــــها
وشعري وقـــــاحُ الوجـــــه لا يتخـــــدّرُ

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١. خـليليّ قـــــــد لاح وجـــــهُ الصبـــــــاحِ
وما فـــي ثلا ثتنـــــا غيـــــــر صاحـــــــي
٢. فقـــــومـــا إلى الـــــراح لا تجعـــــلا افْ
تتاحكمـــــــا اليـــــــوم إلّا بـــــــراحِ
٣. بحمـــــــراء تلقـــــــى إذا أقبلـــــــت
ظـلام الدجـــــى بســـــناء الصبـــــاحِ
٤. يزيدُها الحـــسن فـــي الأ وجـــــه الـ
حـــسان وتســـــترُ قبـــــح القبـــــاحِ
٥. ويغني عـــن الطيـــب ريّـــاً لهـــــا
كمســـــرى الصـــبا فـــوق زهـــر الأقاحي
٦. كمـــا عبـــقت بمعـــالي الوزيـــر
روائـــح شكـــري لـــه وامتـــداحـــي
٧. أيـــا مـــن أزال اعتـــراض الفســـا
دِ عنّـــي وأبـــدلـــه بالصـــلاحِ
٨. و من قـــصّ ريـــش جنـــاح الزمـــانِ
فـــردّ قوادمـــهُ فـــي جنـــاحـــي
٩. وآوى رجـــائـــي ذاك الطـــريـــد
بوجـــهٍ عليـــه دليـــلُ النجـــاحِ
١٠. وقـــد زاحمـــوكَ فمـــا زحزحـــتْ
مـــناكب رضـــوى بمـــرّ الريـــاحِ
١١. فكم ثـــمّ مـــن رأس ذي لـــوثـــةٍ
قد اعتـــدل اليـــوم بعـــد الطمـــاحِ
١٢. إذا استعـــجم الشـــعرُ مـــن مـــادحٍ
أتـــيتـــك بالمعربـــات الفصـــاحِ
١٣. وهـذي القصيـــدةُ مثـــل العـــروسِ
موشّـــحـــة بالمعانـــي المـــلاحِ
١٤. فلا نفحـــةٌ مـــن فســـا عـــارضٍ
ولا وزن خردلـــة مـــن سُـــلا حِ
١٥. فلـــو أنّهـــا جعـــلت خطبـــة
لكانـــت تحلّـــى عقـــود النكـــاحِ
١٦. بعثتُ بـــها عنـــبراً فـــي الشتـــاءِ
وفي الصـــيف كافـــور خرط الريـــاحِ
١٧. فما مسحـــت خفْشَلنْـــج الخصـــى
ولا حنّكـــت بلعـــوق الفقـــاحِ
١٨. وشعـــري لا بدّ مـــن سخفـــه
ولا بـــدّ للـــدارِ مـــن مستـــراحِ

LXXIII

قلـــــتُ لأ يـــــــري حـــــين أبصـــــــــرتهُ
تدمـــــــــع عينـــــــاهُ مـــــــن الحـــــــزنِ

LXXIV

وبيتٍ ضـــــــاق عـــــــن شـــــســـــــــع
وفيـــــــــــــه الحـــــــــزنُ واللـــــــوبُ
وذي عيـــنٍ يـــــــرى مـــــــــا يـــــــــشـ
ـتهيـــــــــه وهـــــــو محـــــــجـــــوبُ
إذا استـــــــمطـــــــره البـــــــيـــــتُ
أتـــــاهُ منـــــــــه شـــــــــؤبـــــــوبُ

LXXV

وجـــــدتها هـــــــــــرة عجـــــــــــوزاً
معدومـــــــــة الضـــــيق والنشـــــافـــــــة
ذات حـــــــــرٍ للســـــعـــــــاة فيـــــــه
مـــــع بعـــــد غاياتـــــهـــــم مسافـــــــة

LXXVI

لمّا أتتني وقـــــــد أزكـــــــت شكارتهـــــــا
أقبلتُ أغرسُ في بـــــاب استـــــــها جـــــــزرة

LXXVII

لدار استـــها صحـــــــنٌ فسيـــــــحٌ مربّـــــــعٌ
يجـــــولُ الهـــــوا فيـــــه كثير المرافـــــقِ
إذا افترشـــوا دهلـــــيزه احتـــــاج بعدمـــــا
يضيّقـــــهُ البنّـــــا إلى ألـــــف طابـــــقِ
لهُ غـــــرفٌ ترقـــــى إليهـــــا أيـــــورنا
علـــــى درُج شـــتّى بغـــــير ممـــــارقِ

LXXVIII

تـــــــــأوي الأ يـــــــــورُ ولكـــــــن
بفيـــــــشهـــــا وخصـــــاهـــــــا
لّمـــا عدلـــــــتُ إلـــيـــــهـــــا
بالليـــــل أرجـــــو قِـــــراهـــــا
نزلـــــتُ فـــــي غرفـــــة اســـــتٍ
ينـــــــــــزو النثيـــــــثُ بناهـــــا
قـــــــــوراء لـــــــــــم أر داراً
للإســـــت فـــــي معنـــــاهـــــا
تجـــــري الريـــــاحُ رخـــــاء
علـى اللـــــحى مـــــن كواهـــــا

LXXIX

فلمّا تواصلنـــــا توسّـــــطـــــتُ لجّـــــة
غرقتُ بـــها يا قـــوم من لجـــج البحـــرِ
فصـحتُ: أعنّي يـــــا غـــلام فجاءنـــــي

وقد زلقتْ رجلـــي وزلقـــــتُ فـــــي الغمْـــــرِ
فلـــــولا صياحـــــي بالغـــــلام وأنّـــــهُ
تداركني بالحبـــــلِ صـــــرتُ إلـــــى القعـــــر
وعوجـــلتُ فيـــــهِ بالمـــــاتِ وخلتنـــــي
سألبثُ فيـــــه طول دهري إلى الحـــــشـــــرِ
فنَاليـــــتُ ألّا أركب البحـــــر غازيـــــاً
حـياتـــي ولا سافـــــرتُ إلا علـــى الظـــــهرِ
عجبتُ لمـــــن يزنـي وفـــي النـــاس أمـــــردُ
وقـــــد ذاق طعـــــم البرد شـــــدّة الحـــــرّ

LXXX

لا أركـــب البحـــــر حـــــذار الـــــردى
للبـــــحـــــرِ أحـــــوالُ وأمـــــواجُ

LXXXI

فأنْفَخُ مـن قعْـــــبٍ وأوهجُ مـــــن لـــــظىً
وأنْشفُ من رملٍ وألـــينُ مـــــن زبْـــــدِ
فالبحرُ أصبـــــح مـــــن شأنـــــي
والبـــــحرُ أشهـــــى وأطيـــــب

LXXXII

إنّ لـــــي أيـــــراً خبـــــيثـــــاً
لســـــتُ أدري مـــــا عـــــقابـــــه
كلّـــمـــــا أبصـــــر وجـــــهاً
حســـــناً ســـــال لـــــعابـــــه

LXXXIV

لنـــــا متقنّـــــص دان قريـــــب
بباب الكـــــرخ مجتمـــــع الطيـــــابِ
بلا بازٍ نصيـــــدُ إذا خـــــرجنـــــا
ولا صـــقـــــر ولا طـــــلب الكـــــلابِ
بصقرٍ غيـــــر ذي ريـــــشٍ تـــــراهُ
سريعاً حيـــن يرســـل فـــي الطـــــلابِ
فتأتينـــــا الظبـــــاءُ إذا رأتـــــهُ
سراعـــــاً طائعـــــينَ بـــلا جـــــذابِ
فنأكل صيدنـــــا نيّـــــاً كبـــــابـــــاً
بلا ملحٍ فيـــا لـــك مـــن كـــبـــابِ

LXXXV

إن كنـــــتِ تشـــــكـــــين الخـــــوا
فتناولـــــي هـــــذا النـــــقانـــــق

LXXXVI

وكسّـــــهـــــا أشـــــداقـــــهُ
لـــــم تتـــمـــــضـــمـــــض بالمنـــــي

LXXXVII

طعمُ زبّـــــي فيه ألـــــذّ مـــــن المـــــوزِ
إذا غرّقـــــوه فـــــي الجـــــلّابِ
حرّهُ فـــــي الشتا إذا وقـــع الثـــلـــجُ
قريبٌ في الصـــــيفِ مـــــن حـــــرّ آبِ
يحـــــرقُ الزبّ نـــــاره كـــــلّ يـــــومٍ
فيشـــــمّ الجيـــــرانُ ريـــــح الكبـــــابِ

LXXXVIII

لاســـــتها فـــــي الطبيـــــخ لـــــحم إذا
طُبـهِجَ كـــــزّ لأنّـــــه لحـــــم نعجـــــة

LXXXIX

جـــــاءت إلـــــيّ وجوفـــــها
يغلـــــي ولا قـــــدر الزبيـــــبِ
فسلقْـــــتُ بيضي فـــــي اســـــتها
وشويتُ فـــــي حـــــرِها عصيبـــــي

XC

أيـــــرُ ولا ملـــــعقـــــةٌ فـــــوقـــــها
بالليـــــلِ لوزينجـــــةٌ رطبـــــة

XCI

زوجُ من فـــــي استها ثمانـــــون أيـــــراً
مـــــن بقايا أيـــــورِ أمـــــة لـــــوطِ
ولها اســـــتُ غـــــذاؤها كـــــلّ يـــــومٍ
مـــــن عصـــــيبٍ أو لحـــــم زبّ سميـــــطِ

XCII

وأشهى مـــــن ركوب الخيـــــل عنـــــدي
ركـــــوب خرائـــــد بـــــين الخيـــــامِ

XCIII

بفتـــــيةٍ يـــــرون القتـــــل
فـــــي اللذّات قـــــربانـــــا

XCIV

سقْيـــــاً لحربٍ أنـــــا أحيّـــــيـــــها
في جنّـــــة قـــــد جـــــرتْ سواقيهـــــا
سيوفنـــــا وردهـــــا ونرجسهـــــا
وشتـــــمنا اللفظ مـــــن مغنّيهـــــا

. . .

قائدنـــــا قينـــــة مخنّثـــــةٌ
بياســـــمينٍ غـــــضّ نحيّيهـــــا

XCV

طاعنْتُـــــهُ فانثنـــــى فقلـــــتُ لـــــهُ

والرمحُ منّـــي في العـــين مـــن كفـــلهِ

XCVI

قلـــتُ لأيـــري إذ أبـــى أن يرقـــدا
ما لك قـــد قمـــتَ قياماً سرمـــدا؟
أنعـــظ حتّى قلـــتُ جـــاز الفرقـــدا
أو يبتغـــي عنـــد بن نعـــش مقـــعدا
أو وعـــد الجـــوزاء ثـــمّ موعـــدا
تراهُ فـــي الركـــب إذا أصعـــدا
نصـفاً تهامـــياً ونصـــفاً منـــجدا

XCVII

ولها اســـتُ كالتلّ قـــد أتعبتنـــي
بنزولي مـــن فوقهـــا وصعـــودي

XCVIII

إذا ضرطـــت فـــي دربِ بـــكّار عرسُـــهُ
تزلزلت الحيطـــانُ فـــي درب صالـــح

XCIX

ذات شفـــرين بيـــن هـــذا وهـــذا
مثـل مـــا بين عسقـــلان وطنجـــة

C

إن عنـــان النطّـــاف جاريـــةٌ
قـد صار حـــرها للأيـــر ميدانـــا

CI

فتـــحت حـــرها عنـــان
ثمّ نـــادت: مـــن ينيـــك؟
ثـــمّ أبـــدت عـــن مشـــقّ
مثـــل صـــحراء العتيـــك
فيـــه درّاجٌ وبـــطٌّ
ودجـــاجٌ وديـــوك

CII

تبتلـــع الأيـــر بشـــقّ استهـــا
مثـــل ابتلاع النـوبـــة الباقـــة

CIII

يتعـبُ الأيرُ فـــي الوصـــول إليـــها
إنّ بـــاب استها كثيـــرُ الزحـــامِ
ليس يخلو باب اســـتها مـــن قعـــودٍ
حوله فـــي فراشـــها وقيـــامِ

CIV

١. اشرب كما تسقـــيني الخـــمـــرا
بالرطـــل واقتلني بـــها سكـــرا

٢. دع ذكـــــــــــــرك الإعـــــلال والمـــــــــوت لا
تجر لـــــــــه مـــــــــــع أحـــــــــدٍ ذكـــــــــرى
٣. يموتُ مـــــــن شـــــــاء ومـــــــــن شـــــــاء أن
يبـــــــرى مـــــــــن العلّـــــــــة فليبـــــــــرا
٤. الشـــــــــــربُ لا ينقـــــــص عمـــــــــري ولا
يطيل ترك الشـــــــــرب لـــــــــي عمـــــــــرا
٥. يقـــــــــولُ قومُ أبصرونـــــــــي وقـــــــــد
تلفـــــتُ مـــــــا بينهـــــــــم سكـــــــــرا:
٦. قمْ فالحـــــــــق الظـــــــــهر ولو ركعـــــــــة
فالناس قـــــــد صلّوا بـــــــنا العصـــــــــرا
٧. فقلتُ: مـــــــا أحســـــــن مـــــــا قلتـــــم
أقـــــــومُ حـــــــــتى ألـــــــــحق الظهـــــــرا
٨. أقـــــومُ والركبـــــةُ مـــــن عنـــــد مـــــن
نعـــــــم وإن قمـــــــــتُ فمـــــــن يقـــــــرا
٩. قالوا: فـــــــلا تســـــــكر فلســـــــنا نـــــــرى
لعاقـــــــــلٍ فـــــــي السكـــــــر عـــــــذرا
١٠. والله لـــــــو لا الســـــــكر يـــــــا سادتـــــي
مـــــــا ذقـــــــتُ مطبوخـــــــاً ولا خمـــــــرا
١١. قالوا: فـــــهذا السكـــــــر مـــــــا حـــــــدّه؟
فقلـــــــتُ: حـــــدّ السكـــــــــر أن أخـــــــرا

CV

وحـــــــدّ السكـــــــــر أنّي فـــــــي فراشـــــــي
أبـــــــــولُ إذا سكـــــــــرتُ ولســـــــــتُ أدري
ففرشـــــــي كـــــــلّ يـــــــومين تراهـــــــــا
وقـــــــد شـــــــرّسهـــــــــا المطـــــــرّي

CVI

اســـــــــقنـــــــــي حتّـــــــى ترانـــــــي
أحســـــــــبُ الـــــــديـــــــك حمـــــــارا

CVII

اسقنـــــــي حتّـــــــــى تـــــــرانـــــــي
لا أرجّـــــــى لـــــــــقـــــــياميـــــــي

CVIII

اسقنيـــــها والجاثـــــاليـــــــقُ إذا قـــــــا
مَ يصلّـــــــي فســـــــا علـــــى المطـــــرانِ
وتـــــــقدّم أن ينقّلنـــــــــي القـــــسّ
بلحـــــــم الخنـــــزيـــــرِ والبرشـــــانِ
واحمـــــــلوني إذا سكرتُ إلـــــى المـــــذبـَ
حِ في عصـــــــبةٍ مـــــن الصلبـــــانِ

CIX:

أو بيعةٍ أصبحت معطّلةً
قد كسّر المسلمون صلباني
وكبسونني بالليل وانتهبوا
هم والنصارى الجياع برشاني
ولطّخوا باب مذبحي بخرا
يزلقُ فيه سبالُ مطرانِ

CX

يا صاحبيّ استيقظا من غفلةٍ
تزري على عقل اللبيب الأكيسِ
هذي المجرّة والنجومُ كأنّها
نهرٌ تدفّق في حديقة نرجسِ
وأرى الصبا قد غلّست بنسيمها
فعلامَ شربُ الراح غير مغلّسي
قومي اسقياني قهوة روميّة
من عهد قيصر دنّها لم يمسسِ
منها تضيف إذا تسلّط حكمها
موت العقول على حياة النفوسِ

CXI

وادع ندامك فهم عصبةٌ
كأنّهم زهرة بستانِ
ولي نديمُ أعور أبخرُ
كم صاحَ في وجهي فخرّاني
واجلس على البستانِ في جنةٍ
تحارُ فيها عين رضوانِ
فإنّني أشرف من حائطي
على خرا صبيانِ جيراني

CXII

ألا يا شهر كم تبقى
غرضنا وما للناكا
ولو أمكن أن يقتـ
ـلَ شهرُ لقتلناكا

CXIII

شهرٌ أراهُ يلجّ مع
يغتاظُ من طوله ويدرد
فالبول قد جفّ من حممَاهُ
في الجوفِ والجعسُ قد تدوّد

CXIV

أدركاني بالخضابِ

وارقعـــــــــــا بـــــــــــرد شبابـــــــــــي
ســـــــــــوّدا ذقـــــــنـــــــي بشـــــــيءٍ
مـن خـــــــــرا بعـــــــــض الكـــــــــلابِ
فـــــــــــعسى أن ينفـــــــــق أيـــــــــري
بيـــــــن أســـــــــرام القـــــــــحـــــــــابِ
مكّنانـــــــــي مـــــــــن فتـــــــــاة
فيـــــــشتي منـــــــها لـــــــما بـــــــي
ما مـــــــضـــــــت بـــــــي قـــــــطّ إلّا
سالَ مـــــــن أيـــــــري لعـــــــابـــــــي

CXV

مـــــــدامـــــــة تمـــــــريّة صافيـــــــة
تلبـــــسُ مـــــــن يشربهـــــــا العافيـــــــة
زففتـــــها طوعـــــــاً إلـــــــى شاعـــــــرٍ
مـــــا وقفـــــت قـــــطّ له قافـــــيـــــةً

CXVI

مـــــولاي قـــــد أحـــــسنتَ لّما أتـــــى
شـــــعرك بالعافيـــــة الشافيـــــة
لكنّنـــــي فـــــي صـــــورة للخـــــرا
جمـــــلتها مقـــــنعة كافيـــــة
أما ترى اليـــــوم وما حـــــلّ بـــــي
فيه مـــــن اســـــتي النذلـــــة الجافيـــــة
قد كتبتْ ســـــطراً علـــــى عصعصـــــي
هذي لسلطـــــان الخرا صافيـــــة

CXVII

يا سادتي قـــــد جـــــئتكـــــم ضامنـــــاً
لحقّ بيـــــت المـــــال فـــــي قريـــــة
في قريـــــة قـــــد قلبـــــت قافـــــهـــــا
خـــــاءً بـــــلا شـــــكّ ولا مريـــــة
يا لـــــيت شـــــعري فيـــــكم ضرطـــــة
تضـــــمّنوني هـــــذه القـــــريـــــة

CXVIII

١. وأهيـــــــف القامـــــــةِ مجـــــــدول
حلـــــو معانـــــــي الوجـــــــه مقبـــــــولِ
٢. يهتـــــزّ قرطـــــــه علـــــــى صفحتـــــــيْ
جيدٍ كمـــــــتن السيـــــف مـــــصقـــــولِ
٣. لّما بـــــدا حصّـــــل رقّـــــي لـــــهُ
وجـــــهُ نفـــــى عنّـــــي تحصيلـــــي
٤. فـــمن عذيـــــري مـــــن مـــدلّ علـــــى

قتلي وقتل النـاسِ مـدلـولِ
٥. ليس بمنفوخٍ سمينٍ ولا
منحف القامةً مهزولِ
٦. لو بلغ الفيل بنصف استه
ما بان إلا ذنب الفيلِ
٧. كأن تحبيب طحين استه
دقيقُ دخنٍ غير منخولِ
٨. هذا وفي مقدمهِ مقبضُ
بعرض دخنٍ غير منخولِ
٩. لو مرّ بالصولي في قبره
صاح الصدى من شرج الصولي
١٠. عرفتهُ غير رخيص ولا
مستهدف للنيكِ مبذولِ
١١. يبيعُ مثل الندى من عزّه
خراهُ وزناً بالمثاقيلِ
١٢. لّما أتاني هالني أمرهُ
وخفتُ أن يرزق برطيلي
١٣. فلم أزل أدهنه بالرقّي
ما بين تسويفٍ وتعطيلِ
١٤. حتّى تنايكنا كما أشتهي
عفواً بلا قال ولا قيلِ
١٥. فهاله أمري وأنسيتهُ
فياشل الديلمِ والجيلِ
١٦. هذا ولم أنكر سوى صفرةٍ
أخفى من الكحل على الميلِ
١٧. وربّ ذي سرمٍ ضعيف القوى
ملكّك العصعص معلولِ
١٨. أخرجتُ أيري وهو من سلحهِ
كأنّه دكشاب تقشيلِ
١٩. أو رأس مسواكٍ على رأسه
ريق أبي الفضل بن بهلولِ
٢٠. ثمّ أتى الصومُ فأقلعتُ عن
غيّي وفارقتُ أباطيلي
٢١. معتكفاً بالليل في مسجدي
أكثر تسبيحي وتهليلي
٢٢. فمن ترى يضرط في سبحتي
عنّي ويخري جوف مندیلي
٢٣. يا أيّها الأستاذ عش سالماً

فـــــــي ظلّ عـــــــيشٍ غيـــــــر منقـــــــولِ
٢٤. الدنّ فيمـــــــا بـــــــيننا ســـــــاقـــــــطٌ
فلســـــــــــتُ للـــــــــدنّ بمســـــــــؤولِ
٢٥. وليس مـــــــــــــن جدواك يا ســـــــيّدي
يحســـــــــنُ أن يـــــــبـــــــطل تأميلـــــــي
٢٦. فـــــامنُن علـــــى رأســـــــي بكوفـــــيّة
ســـــــرباشـــــها ليـــــس بموصـــــولِ
٢٧. أو فبمنديـــــــلٍ وحـــــــاشـــــــاكَ أن
تـــــــقنع لـــــــي منك بمنديـــــــلِ

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١. يـــــــــا عـــــــاذلـــــــي دع عذلـــــــي
فـــــإنّنـــــــي فـــــــي شغـــــــلِ
٢. كنـــــــــتُ بســـــــوق الكـــــــرخِ فـــي
دكّـــــــان يحـــــــيى الموصلـــــــي
٣. وبـــــــــي خُمـــــــار مفـــــــرط
وفيشـــــــــتي كـــــــالدّقـــــــلِ
٤. وشـــــــارع الكـــــــرخ كمـــــــا
يُعـــــــــرفُ بيـــــــت الدغـــــــلِ
٥. إذا زقـــــــاقٌ ضـــــــيّـــــــقٌ
فيـــــــه عجـــــــوزٌ تفـــــــتلـــــــي
٦. وحـــــــولـــــــها نواهـــــــداً
مـــــزيّنـــــات بالـــــحلـــــي
٧. فقـــــــــلنَ إذ أبصرننـــــي:
ما شـــــــأن هـــــــذا الرجـــــــلِ؟
٨. وما لـــــــهُ فـــــــي دربنـــــــا؟
يا أمّـــــــنا قومـــــــي اسألـــــــي
٩. فقلـــــــــتُ إنّـــــــي شبـــــــقٌ
فـــــــأنكـــــــرت ذاك لـــــــي
١٠. وأقبلـــــت تـــــقولُ لـــــي
مشيـــــــرةً فـــــي مهـــــلِ:
١١. تـــــريـــــدُ نيكـــــاً جائـــــزاً
بشاهـــــديـــــنِ وولـــــي؟
١٢. فقلـــــتُ: لا قـــالـــت: وَلِـــمْ؟
قلـــــتُ: لفـــــرطِ العجـــــلِ
١٣. فقالـــــت: ادخـــــل بابـــــنا
فـــــإنّ هـــــذا منزلـــــي
١٤. وأدخلـــــتْ جاريـــــةً

مثـــــــــــل الغـــــــــــزال الأ كحـــــــــــــــلِ
١٥. وودّعـــــــــــتنـــــــــــا ومضـــــــــــــت
عنّـــــــــــا بوجـــــــــــهٍ عدمـــــــــــــلِ
١٦. قمـــــــتُ وايـــــــري قـــــــد بـــــــــدا
مثـــــــــل سنـــــــــــام الجمـــــــــــلِ
١٧. أريـــــــد مـــــــــنها موضعـــــــــاً
لـــــــم يـــــــــكُ بالمـ ستعمـــــــــــلِ
١٨. قـــــالت: تـــــــريد أسفلـــــــــي؟
مـــــــا مـــــثل هـــــذا عملـــــــــي
١٩. أرســـــــــل إلـــــــى قـــوّادتـــــــي
تجـــــــي بـــــأخـــــــرى بدلـــــــي
٢٠. فصـــــــــحتُ: يـــــــا أمّ علـــــــــي
يا بنـــــــــت يحيـــــــى الجبلـــــــي
٢١. قـــــــــد أتعبتنـــــــــي هـــــــذه
ففـــــــــي سواهـــــــــا فاعملـــــــي
٢٢. فـــــــأرسلـــــــــت جاريـــــــــــة
مثـــــــــل حـريـــــــــق المشعـــــــــلِ
٢٣. غـــنّاجـــــــــة فـــــــتّانـــــــــة
بصـــــــيرة بـــــــالعـــــــــمـــــــــلِ
٢٤. فقـــــــلتُ: نيْكـــــــــي داخـــــــــل الْ
جـــــــحرِ فقالـــــــــت: افـــــــعـــــــلِ
٢٥. من أيـــــــشِ أخشـــــــى سيّـــــــدي
لا يتـــــــــخدّش عضـــــــــلـــــــي
٢٦. فلـــــــــم أزل أنيكـــــــهـــــــا
نـيـــــــك غـــــــــلامٍ بطـــــــــــلِ
٢٧. تقول فـــي نيكـــــــــي لهـــــــــا:
أيـــــــــرك ذا معـــــــــتزلـــــــــي؟
٢٨. قلتُ: نعـــــــم، قالـــــــت: كـــــــذا
ينـــــــيكُ أهـــــــل الجـــــــــدلِ
٢٩. يا ليـــــــتَ لي منهـــــــم فتـــــــى
مثـــــــل حســـــــين الجعلـــــــي

CXX

١. ستّـــي وبنتـــــي أنا كيـــــــف أصبحـــــــتِ؟
قـــــــــالت: مثل الخـــــــرا البتّـــــــي
٢. ما زال بـــــي النـــــــيكُ إلى أن بقـــــــي
سرمـــــــــي بلا فـــــــوق ولا تحـــــــتِ
٣. وصار أكلـــــي من عصيـــــــب الخصـــــى
في الليل مـــن وقـــــتٍ إلـــــى وقـــــــتِ

٤. بنتي ولكـــــــــن ربّمـــــــا مرّغـــــــــــتْ
فيشلتـــي فـــــــي روثـــــــــها بنتـــــــــي
٥. لأ ننـــي وحـــــدي فـــــلا تغتـــــري
لا بـــــوقـــــــاري لا ولا سمتـــــــــي
٦. محمـــــــديٌّ فـــي صـــــــلاتي وفـــــي
صومي وفـــــــي النـــــــيكِ زرادشتـــــي

## CXXI

١. يا من يسائل عـــن عـرسي كـــــيف أنـــــا
يا شؤم بختاه قـــــد هيّجتَ لـــــي شجنـــــا
٢. يا أصدقائـــي وإخوانـــــــي نصحتكـــــمُ
وما أرى بنصـــــحي منكـــــم ثمنـــــــا
٣. قوموا أعاهـــــــدكم أنّـــــي وأنّكـــــم
لا ندخل الدهر فـــــي شيء يحـــــلّ لنـــــا
٤. ازنوا ولوطوا فـــــإنّ الحـــــقّ في يد مـــــن
إذا اشتهى لا ط مـــــع مـــــن يشتهي وزنـــــا
٥. ازنـــوا ولوطـــــوا ونيكـــــوا أمّهاتكـــــم
فإنّكم ما لقيتـــــم مـــــا لقـــــيتُ أنـــــا
٦. إنّـــــي خطبتُ إلـــــى شيخٍ رأيت لـــــه
ذقناً طويـــلاً وزيّـــاً مونقـــــاً حســـــنا
٧. فجائني بعـــــجوزٍ في استـــــها سفـــــنٌ
ولجٌّ بحرٍ عميـــــقٍ يحمـــــلُ السفـــــنا
٨. مأمونة العـيب لا حمـــــلٌ ولا ولـــــدٌ
لأنّها في اســـــتها تستعـــــمل الحقـــــنا
٩. تبول من شقٍّ مـــــهزول بـــــه عجـــــفٌ
وقد تفـــــقّا علـــــيه بظرها سمـــــنا
١٠. نزٌّ يرى مـــن نداهُ أصـــــلُ خوخـــــتهِ
مثل الســـــويْقِ قد استرخـــــى وقد عفـــــنا
١١. يرغي ويزبدُ شفـــــراها إذا اختلفـــــا
كأنّه شـــــدق مفلـــــوج حسى لبـــــنا
١٢. أمست سطـــــوح مخاصي بأب عصعصهـــــا
سوداً لكثرة مـــــا تستطعـــــمُ الدخُـــــنا
١٣. هـذا وتنفثُ في أنفـــــي إذا ابتسمـــــت
عن جعسٍ كلـــــبٍ ببولِ القردِ قـــــد عُجنـــــا
١٤. خنّاءُ لثغـــاءُ ما ســـــرّت بمنظرهـــــا
ولفظها قـــــطّ لا عينـــــاً ولا أذنـــــا
١٥. لما لويـــــتُ وقد ضاجعـــــتها عنقـــــي
أفرّ منـــــها بأنفٍ طالمـــــا امتُحِنـــــا
١٦. قالـــت تعاتبني: يا ثيّـــــدي فلـــــم

أغضيت عنّـــي كأنّي قـــد أكلتُ خنـــا؟

CXXII

وانـــزل فنـــادٍ مـــجانـــةً
يا قـــومُ حيّ علـــى النكـــاح

CXXIII

نِـــك بني الدنـــيا ولا تعفِ أخاكـــا
لا ولا ضـــيفاً كريمـــاً إن أتاكـــا
واعفج الجـــار ولا تنسـى أباكـــا
وابـــن عـــمّ الســـوء أيضـــاً فكـــذاكا

CXXIV

إيّـــاكَ والعفّـــة إياكـــا
إيّـــاكَ أن تفـــسدَ معناكـــا
أنـــت بخير يا أبـــا جعفـــر
ما دُمـــتَ صلب الأيـــر نيّاكـــا
فنِكْ ولـــو أمّكَ واصـــفع ولـــو
أبـــاكَ إن لامـــكَ في ذاكـــا

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قلـــتُ: ما اسمك يـــا سيّـــدي
فقال لـــي: اثمّـــى بعبّـــاثِ
فـــصرت مـــن لثغته ألثغـــاً
فقلتُ: خـــذ بالكـــاثِ والطـــاثِ

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١. يا ســـادتي ما اســـترقّ ديني
شيء كمـــثل الحـــر السمـــين
٢. لمـــا أراهُ يـــزولُ عقـــلي
عنّـــي وينتابنـــي جنوني
٣. وأشتهـــي أن أغـــوص فيـــه
مـــن مشط رجلـــي إلى جبيني
٤. وكلّـــما شـــلتُ مـــنهُ رأسي
رُزقـــتُ قومـــاً يغوّصوني
٥. أغيـــبُ شهراً فـــلا تراني الـ
عيـــونُ والنـــاسُ يطلبوني
٦. حـــتى إذا كان بعـــد شـــهرٍ
دلّ علـــى موضـــعي أنيني
٧. فـــديتهُ كالـــعروسِ يُجلـــى
فـــي دســـتِ وردٍ وياسمـــين
٨. جبينـــهُ الصلـــبُ من حـــديدٍ
وشـــدقهُ الرخو مـــن عجـــين

٩. وخيـــر مـــا يقـــتنيهِ أيـــري
صـــــلابةُ بُـــطّـنت بلـــين

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١. جـــزنا بهـــم والزنـــاة قافـــة
فيـــهم علـــى الناس كـــلّ آفـــة
٢. فـــصيّروهـــا وصيّرونـــي الـ
مـــسكين ما بينـــهم خرافـــة
٣. تـــحيّروا حيـــن أبصرونـــا
كـــأنّنا الفـــيل والزرافـــة
٤. ثـــمّ صـــفا حدسهم وقالـــوا:
هـــذا ابن حـــجّاج معْ جوافـــة
٥. حتّـــى لشؤمـــي إذا اختلطـــنا
بالليـــل كالمـــاء والسلافـــة
٦. وجـــدتها هـــرّة عـــجوزاً
معـــدومة الضـــيق والنشافـــة
٧. ذات حـــرٍ للسعـــاة فـــيه
مـــع بُعْد غايـــاتهم مسافـــة
٨. ألحـــى علـــى عارضيه شيبـــاً
فـــي غاية القبـــح والكثافـــة
٩. لو كـــان مـــع ذقنه خـــطيباً
ولّيـــتهُ جـــامع الرصـــافة
١٠. يـــقولُ لـــي ذقنُ زوجها فـــي الـ
حـــمّام بالفـــهم والحصافـــة:
١١. لِمْ قـــد تنوّرتَ؟ قلـــتُ: حتّـــى
يلـــقاكَ سرمـــي علـــى نظافـــة

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١. بـــيضـــاءُ مـــثل البـــدرِ ريـــ
قـــتـــها ألـــذُّ مـــن الرحيـــقِ
٢. عـــبءُ الشـــحومِ عـــلى استها الـــر
رهـــش يـــلـــتُّ مـــع السـويـــقِ
٣. لـــمّا ركـــبتُ علـــى اســـتـــها
وحـــدي أحـــجُّ بـــلا رفيـــقِ
٤. فـــي شـــق مـــحمـــل عصـــعـــصٍ
لـــحـــم علـــيه غـــشـــا دبـــيـــقي
٥. قـــلتُ انزلي فـــي ذاتِ عـــرْ
ق فمنزلـــي ذات الشقـــوقِ
٦. لكنّنـــي أشـــرفتُ مـــن
حـــرها علـــى واد عميـــقِ

٧. ورأيـــــتُ حـــــــــــــجرة ســـــــــــــرمها
بالعـــــــــــرض فـــــــــــي ذاك المضـــــــــــيقِ
٨. شـــــــــــوكُ أمّ غيـــــــــــلا ن فكـــــــــــدْ
تُ أعـــــــــــود من نصـــــــــــف الطريـــــــــــقِ
٩. ودخلـــــــــــتُ محـــــــــــراب اســـــــــــتها
فعـــــــــــمشتُ مـــــــــــن ريح الخلـــــــــــوقِ
١٠. ولـــــــــــحتُ ودعـــــــــــة كسّـــــــــــها
حـــــــــــمراء كالفـــــــــــصّ العقيـــــــــــقِ
١١. هذا وأيـــــــــــري فـــــــــــي اســـــــــــتها
بـــــــــــاللطف والعمـــــــــــل الرقيـــــــــــقِ
١٢. عـــــرقانُ قـــــــــــد مـــــــــــرّختهُ
وطلـــــــــــيتُ صـــــــــــلعتهُ بريقـــــــــــي
١٣. يرفـــــــــــو مصـــــــــــرّتها الخـــــــــــريقُ
وقـــــــــــد تداعـــــــــــت بالخـــــــــــروقِ
١٤. وهناك جـــــــرحُ تحـــــــــــت مـــــــــــجـ
مـــــــــــع شـــــــــــرياناتِ العـــــــــــروقِ
١٥. تمشـــــــــــي خصاي بحـــــــــــيله
يحشـــــــــــوه بالســـــــــــمنِ العتـــــــــــيقِ
١٦. وخشـــــــونةٍ فـــــــي حـــــــلقِ مـــــــف
ســـــــاها تـــليّـــنُ بالـــــــلـــــــعـــــــوقِ
١٧. يـــــا مـــــن يـــعـــيـــــــبُ عـــــلـــــيّ إقْـ
راري المـــــصـــــرّح بـــــالفـــــســـــوقِ
١٨. وبـــــــلا دةٍ قـــــــــــد قـــــــــــذّرت
فـــــــــــي نـــــــــــظمِ أشـــــــعاري طـــــريقـــي
١٩. بـبضـائـــــع الســـــخـــــفِ الشميـــــــــــ
نِ يقـــــــومُ بيـــــن النـــــــاسِ ســـــــوقـــــــي
٢٠. أومـــــــا عـــــلمـــــت وقـــــد ســـــــرِرْ
تَ بمـــــنـــــظري البـــــهـــــجِ الأ نـــــيـــــقِ
٢١. أنّ الـــــكنـــــــيفَ مـــــعلّـــــــــــقُ
مـــــــا بـــــــينَ بـــــايـــــكتـــي وزيـــــقي

***

# Appendix B

Excerpts from the entry on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in *Aʿyān al-shīʿa*:[1]

> He died on Tuesday, the 27th of *Jumādā al-Thāniya* [May 24] and it was said [that his death was] when seven days had remained of [that month] in the year 391 [1001 CE] in al-Nīl. His coffin was carried to Baghdad and he was buried at the feet of the Kāẓimayn. He had requested that the following be written on his tomb: "And their dog stretching its paws on the threshold."[2]

* * *

> Al-Nīlī refers to al-Nīl- a village on the Euphrates between Baghdad and al-Kūfa. The origin of this [name] is that there used to be a river dug there by [the governor of Iraq] al-Ḥajjāj (40–95/661–714) [b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī] in that place and which used to take water from the Euphrates. He [al-Ḥajjāj] named it after the Nile of Egypt. Both the village and the river are ruins today. He [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj] used to live in al-Nīl and then lived in Baghdad in a quarter called Sūq Yaḥyā. It seems that he used to return to his original birthplace in al-Nīl and that is why he died there. Yāqūt [al-Ḥamawī] said: Sūq Yaḥyā in Baghdad is on the eastern side and it refers to Yaḥyā b. Khālid al-Barmakī. It was given to him as a fief by [Harūn] al-Rashīd and then it was neglected [destroyed] when the Saljūqs came to Baghdad [447/1055]. It is the quarter of the poet Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and he has mentioned it in many of his poems such as his saying:
>
> My two companion, sever my halter, loosen my waist-wrap
> and strip me of my cord!
>
> [And take me] to my old home in Sūq Yaḥyā
> For my heart will never forget its love
> And tell the clouds: if the southern winds pass you by
> and you return after loosening your spouts
>
> Then pour down on an abode of goodness
> until it takes its fill of pure water

[Pour down] on those traces- O if I could only
smell the soil of their effaced features[3]

* * *

What the *ʿulamāʾ* said of him:

Al-Shaykh al-Bahāʾī said in *Tawḍīḥ al-maqāṣid*: On the 27th of *Jumādā al-thāniya*, the esteemed adīb al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad known as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj died. He was one of the greatest poets and he was, may God have mercy on him, of the Imāmate creed and rigid in his Shīʿism. Ibn Shahrāshūb mentioned him in *Maʿālim al-ʿulamāʾ fī shuʿarāʾ ahl al-bayt al-mujāhirīn* and said: Ibn al-Ḥajjāj Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, the Baghdādī scribe and market inspector; he studied with Ibn al-Rūmi (221–283/836–896). He was from Persia. In *Amal al-Āmil*; . . . was an esteemed man of letters and poet and Ibn Shahrāshūb considered him one of the Shīʿī poets in *Maʿālim al-ʿulamāʾ*. He has a very sizable collection of poems in many volumes. He was an Imāmite and it appears from his poetry that he was a descendant of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī. This negates [the suggestion] that he is from Persia, but perhaps he was born there or he was a Thaqafī by allegiance as some did that to protect themselves as we read in some of the anecdotes.

* * *

Perhaps the verses which led al-Shaykh al-Bahāʾī to believe that he was one of al-Ḥajjāj al-Thaqafī's descendants are the ones excerpted by [al-Thaʿālibī] the author of *al- Yatīma* where he says:

I am the son of Ḥajjāj and to him my father
Belongs and my hearts belongs to the Banū ʿUkbarā
In love, my body never lacks emaciation, nor my eye a tear
Droplets like the pebbles of ʿUkbarā and the censors like the date seeds of al-Baṣra

Perhaps attributing harshness to himself is due to the fact that his father shares al-Ḥajjāj al-Thaqafī's name and not that he is [actually] descended from him and God knows best.

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (359–406/970–1015) took sufficient interest in Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and this shows his recognition of his [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's] esteem and his elegance. He was so interested that he collected all that was devoid of *sukhf* and *mujūn* from his *dīwān* and called it *al-Ḥasan min shiʿr al-Ḥusayn* (The Fine of al-Ḥusayn's Poetry) He elegized him after his death. The author of *al-Yatīma* [al-Thaʿālibī] dedicated a special chapter to him and said: The seventh chapter is where we mention the praiseworthy aspects

of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his peculiarities; Although he, in most of his poetry, does not hide under the veil of reason and bases most of his sayings on *sukhf*, yet he is one of the magicians of poetry and the marvels of the age. All those insightful in literature and knowledgeable in poetry agree that he is unique and unprecedented in the style for which he has become famed. No one has competed with his way, nor has anyone in command of the meanings which are found in his style been seen, with the smoothness and sweetness of his words . . . even if they express frivolity and are tainted with the speech of beggars and street gangs. Were it not that the seriousness of adab is serious and its jest is jest, as Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī said, I would have guarded this book of mine from much of the speech of the people of *mujūn*. However, despite its defects, the respected, esteemed and lettered ones would amuse themselves with the fruits of his poetry and find it good. The reserved ones used to tolerate its extreme obscenity and foul language. Some of them were extreme in their liking of those anecdotes of his which caused laughter and enjoyment. He composed panegyrics to kings, princes, viziers and chiefs and none of those poems were devoid of jest and obscenity. His words were acceptable amongst them and the dowry of his speech was high. He was successful in securing generous gifts.

His requests for estates and other rewards were fulfilled and that had him living in affluence. Throughout his life he was in control of the the viziers of the day and the chiefs of the time just as a boy would his family. He lived comfortably in their protection.

* * *

In *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* [of *Yāqūt*]:

They said he was of the stature of Imruʾ al-Qays and that none like the two ever existed. Even though most of his poetry is *mujūn* and *sukhf*. The people of *adab* have agreed that he invented a style in debauchery and *mujūn* which no one before him had used and no one after had rivaled. He was capable of expressing the meanings he desired which were extremely ribald together with a purity and simplicity of wordings. Nevertheless, he has in the serious style good poems, but they are few. His poetry comes in ten volumes, much of which is jest mixed with the expressions of beggars, rascals and vagabonds. Despite its defects, the people of *adab* would listen to it, amuse themselves with its fruits. They would deem his thoughts fine and, because they were as light as light can be, did not find them heavy at all. I do not say as Abū Manṣūr [al-Thaʿālibī] did: were it not for Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Mahdī's saying that the seriousness of adab is serious and the jest is jest I would have guarded this book of mine from *mujūn* such as this and a speech that is hurtful . . . He composed panegyrics for kings, princes, viziers and chiefs and despite the esteem of their status, his poetry for them was not devoid of jest and licentiousness. Nevertheless, they did not consider that to be an affront. He was accepted and listened to with a

precious dowry and price [for his poems]. He was in control of the senior men and chiefs with his unabashedness. He was never prevented from meeting princes or viziers despite his obscenities. They used to welcome him with smiling faces and generosity and reward his offenses with goods and gifts. Suffice it to say that here is a man who describes himself saying: a man who claims prophethood in *sukhf.*

* * *

## [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in Dreams][4]

In *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*: Sayyid Bahāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Najafī al-Ḥusaynī, in his book entitled *al-Durr al-naḍīd fī taʿāzī al-imām al-shahīd* Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn Ḥasan b. ʿAbdillāh b, Ḥasan al-Taghlibī said that the two good shaykhs ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Zarzūr al-Sūrwārī and Muḥammad b. Qārūn al-Sībī used to ridicule Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry and forbid its recital. They used to chastise those who read his *dīwān* because of all the *sukhf*, profanities and unabashed invective contained in it. They kept doing that for some time. One day Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Qārūn visited [the shrine of] Imām al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon him. He saw in his dream that he was as if in the vicinity of the honorable shrine and Fāṭima, God's prayers be upon her, the Imāms ʿAlī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon them all were there. ʿAlī b. al-Zarzūr was seated not far from them. He saw himself standing before them and he turned around and saw Abū ʿAbdullāh Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, well-dressed, passing through the courtyard of the shrine. He said: I said to ʿAlī b. al-Zarzūr, why do you not look at Ibn al-Ḥajjāj? I said: leave me alone, for I do not like him. Fāṭima al-Zahrāʾ said: he who does not like him is not one of us. The same was expressed by one of the Imāms, peace be upon them, but I could not tell who amongst them said it. I woke up surprised and terrified because of what I had committed against Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and then I forgot this dream as if I had never seen it. I went again to the area around the tomb and there I saw a group of followers circling and reciting Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poems and ʿAlī b. al-Zarzūr was among them. When I saw him I remembered the dream and said to a friend who was with me: Shall I amuse you with a wondrous matter? He said: go ahead. I narrated the dream to him and we followed the crowd. I went up to Ibn al-Zarzūr and greeted him and said: You used to chastise those who recite Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry, so why are you now listening to those who recite it? He said: let me tell you what I saw [in a dream] about him. He narrated the [same] dream I myself saw and not a single letter missing. My friend listened in amazement. I said: I saw what you saw and God aided me so that I told that to my friend before listening to your words. Praise be to God who verified my dream and yours and guarded us from misfortune

in this matter of love for the family [of the Prophet]. He said: then I met with Shaykh Muḥamnmad b. Qārūn in the shrine and he told me this story and pointed out the places where he saw the Imāms and al-Zahrāʾ, peace be upon them.

The author of *al-Riyāḍ* said: this is in accordance with what happened to him during his life with al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā.[5] When the *sulṭān* Masʿūd b. Buwayh built the wall of the shrine in Najaf, he entered the shrine and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj stood before him and recited his poem in which he says:

O master of the white dome over Najaf
He who visits your tomb and seeks healing is healed

When he reached the [section in which there is] invective and *mujūn* with Ibn Sukkara al-Hāshimī who had composed invectives against the family of Muḥammad, peace be upon them, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā forbade him from finishing. That night, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj saw in his dream the commander of the faithful, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, telling him: Do not be upset, for we have sent al-Murtaḍā to apologize to you. Do not go out to receive him! That night, al-Murtaḍā saw [in a dream] the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the Imāms, peace be upon them, and they did not come towards him. This was the cause of grave concern for him, so he said to them: I am your slave, son and follower. What have I done to deserve this? They said: by offending our poet Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, go to him and apologize! He went and knocked at his door. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj said to him: O Master, he who sent you commanded me not to come out to receive you. He [al-Murtaḍā] went in and apologized to him. He took him to the Sulṭān and they told him this. He [the *Ṣulṭān*] commanded him [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj] to recite the poem and so he did and was rewarded and commended.

## [Premodern Censorship]

It was said that when al-Mustanṣir billāh (r. 623–640/1226–1242) built al-Mustanṣiriyya in Baghdad he decreed that Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *diwān* be taken out of its library because of all the *sukhf* in it. It so happened that the chief (*naqīb*), Quṭb al-Dīn Ibn al-Aqsāsī, fell prey to the illness that [eventually] killed him. He was the boon companion of al-Mustanṣir and the caliph visited him to inquire about his condition. He said: O commander of the faithful, I am certain that I will not survive this illness. Would you purchase me from death with whatever is possible? The caliph said: Were it possible we would not have spared any precious [belonging] for your sake. The *naqīb* quoted Ibn al-Ḥajjāj by saying:

It is death, no bribe can deflect it away once it heads towards you
Nor can its hours be bought with money

This verse is from a poem in which he elegized Abū ʿl-Fatḥ Ibn al-ʿAmīd. Al-Mustanṣir was so impressed with it and decreed that his poetry be returned to the library.

* * *

We will include most of what we have found of his poetry scattered in books, which was collected in *Yatīma*, because his *dīwān* is lost as were many precious books of Arabic. We will divide his poetry according to functions avoiding what is at odds with propriety and manners. May God be our aid in success.

# Appendix C

Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, the Baghdādī poet, said:

> One of the chiefs (*ruʾasāʾ*) of Baghdad invited me to his house to drink. It was at the outset of our acquaintance. He had many [kinds] of food, including a well-made *qamḥiyya*,[1] of which I had a great deal. Then the drinks arrived and when I drank a few cups, my stomach started to twist and I needed to go to the privy. But I was embarrassed to go so early when I had not known the man so well. I reclined, hoping that someone would go before me, but no one did. Then the singing started and whenever the singer ceased, the man, and the group of literati and high-placed ones who were in attendance, would converse with me. I had no choice but to reciprocate and indulge them in what they were saying. Meanwhile, the singers were singing and I could only listen and hear while I suffered pain and misery. God, may he be exalted, did not ordain that any of those in attendance should go to the privy. They were all spared.
>
> When much time had passed and the pain became severe, I felt Autumn winds in my guts and striking swords on my sides and took leave. The host and those in attendance were outraged and swore that I would not. They turned towards me with big cups and that made it all the more difficult. When I saw death before me, I said [to myself]: This can only be solved with trickery. I waited a bit until one of the singers sang a verse. I feigned ecstasy and pleasure and drank many cups. Then I pretended that I was intoxicated and threw myself to the ground. They spoke to me, but I did not respond and they had no doubt that I was intoxicated, so they left me. I remained in that state for short time and then rose up and feigned embarrassment for seeming intoxicated before them. I rose up to leave and they enticed me to sit down, but I did not stop and left as if I was totally drunk. I rode my mount and the host had a torch-bearer [walk] ahead of me. When they shut the door and went back in, I felt as if I had been revived from a grave. I hurried the mount searching for a spot to alight and do what I had to do. I came upon an open spot where I knew there was a house inhabited by prostitutes. I got off and went to a wall. The torchbearer remained with my mount on the other side. I loosened my pants, squatted down, and did it and I relieved myself a bit.

As I was in that state, a bucket filled with water and attached to a rope came down from a window in the wall under which I was. I was amazed at this magnificent elegance on the part of the people in that place. I put my hand in the bucket and took a handful and cleansed myself. I rubbed it with my left hand once and then again. All of a sudden the bucket was back halfway up to the window. I was surprised and perplexed, not knowing what to do as my hands and my thighs were smeared and I was in a terrible condition. I heard the laughter from the window and had no doubt that they knew who I was because of the torch. My only resort was my underpants. I wiped my hands on the wall and then on the underpants and wiped in between my thighs. The underpants were as foul as can ever be. I folded them and inserted them up my sleeve and rode back to my house. I had stayed up so late and suffered so much pain earlier that night that I threw the underpants at the foot of the bed and climbed on top.

I had a wife and mother who, because of her modesty and my debauchery, had suffered [with me]. When she saw me take the underpants out of my pocket, she became suspicious and had no doubt that I had done something on my way back. She took them as I was sleeping and unfolded them under the lantern light and saw the way they were. She was sure I had had my way with a beardless boy and [that is why] my underpants were smeared. She came to bed and then took my garments without my knowing and tore them. She tore the garment I had on me and straddled my chest and started to wipe my cheeks, beard and mustache with the shit from the underpants saying: this accursed beard and stinky mustache are more worthy of shit than underpants. I woke up and tried to talk to her, but whenever I opened my mouth to speak she would put the underpants in my mouth and rub my mouth with its shit saying: Eat it! It's better for you. She was screaming and lost her mind. She would say: Are you done with ungratefulness and false promises so that you would resort to this abomination? You bring boys' shit in your underpants and you expect me to wash it in my home!? I knew I had to excuse her and said [to myself]: One can only be patient in regard to this. I was patient until she finished doing what she desired, in deeds and words. Then she sat aside crying, striking her head and tearing at her hair and clothes. I got up and said: Fear God and know that everything I have told you since the day we saw each other has been true. I am an unjust tyrant, but of this calamity, by God I am innocent.

I told her what had taken place and said: Send your slave so that he may see for himself the trace of my hands on the wall and the spot where I sat thereunder. I swore [that I was telling the truth] until she was satisfied. She believed me and regretted what she had done. She heated some water and brought me a comb and some perfume. I got up to wash my beard and put incense and perfume. I kept doing that until sunrise. The night was all spent in shit!

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Dates will be provided in the Hijrī calendar, followed by the Gregorian.
2. It is a complex term and none of the one-word English terms do it justice. I have, thus, opted to leave it as is for now. The history of the term, its evolution, and its connotations are discussed in chapter 1.
3. *Dīwān: Al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḥajjāj: His Life and Verse Together with a Critical Edition of the Final Part of His Dīwān*, 3 vols., ed. Hashem Manna (London: School of African and Oriental Studies, 1986). The first volume is a critical study and will henceforth be referred to as Manna, vol. 1. The *Dīwān* occupies volumes 2 and 3 and will be referred to as *Dīwān*.
4. *Der Dīwān des Ibn al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ: Teilausgabe der Reimbuchstabe nun*, ed. Abdelghafur A. A. El-Aswad (Giessen, 1977); henceforth, *Nūniyyāt*.
5. Ibn Nubāta, *Talṭīf al-mizāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, ed. Najm ʿAbdalla Muṣṭafā (Sūsa: Dār al- Maʿārif lil-Ṭibāʿa wal-Nashr, 2001).
6. al-Asṭurlābī, *Durrat al-tāj min shiʿr Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, ed. ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir (Beirut: Dār al-Jamal, 2009).
7. There are, of course, numerous references in his poems to events and persons, but using poetry itself as a reliable source for biographical information is a hazardous approach and will not be adopted in this book.

## 1 Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and *Sukhf*: Genealogies

1. *Talṭīf*, p. 49.
2. Ibid., p. 229.
3. *Dīwān*, p. 52.
4. *Talṭīf*, p. 135.
5. Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr: fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr*, ed. Mufīd Muḥammad Qamīḥa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1983), vol. 3, p. 37.
6. *Dīwān*, p. 129.
7. *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Mutanabbī: waḍaʿahu ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Barqūqī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1986), vol. 4, p. 83.
8. *GAL*, S1, p. 130, *GAS*, II, pp. 592–594. See "Ibn al-Ḥadjdjāj" in *EI*$^2$; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Irshād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās

(Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993), vol. 3, pp. 1040–1049. For more on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's life and a discussion of all extant biographical texts (comparatively and surprisingly meager), see *Talṭīf,* pp. 13–23, *Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, der Dīwān des Ibn al-Haggāg: Teilausgabe Der Reimbuchstabe nūn*, ed. Abdelghafur A. A. El-Aswad (Giessen, 1977), pp. 1–11; Manna, vol. 1, pp. 59–78. While not discounting or dismissing relevant contextual information from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's life when reading his poems, this study is concerned with his craftsmanship as a poet and will not use biographical tidbits to read poetry.

9. *Sukhf*'s meaning(s) will be discussed later. Any one-word term in English will not do justice to the Arabic. The most practical rendering (and one that is central to the purposes of this study) is "obscene and scatological parody."
10. See "canon" in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 166–167; and *Key Concepts in Cultural Theory*, eds. Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 51–52.
11. *Tārīkh al-Ṣābī*, eds. Amedroz and Margoliouth (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, n.d.), vol. 8, pp. 71–75.
12. *Diwān al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 441–442. On their friendship, see also, Ḥasan Maḥmūd Abū ʿUlaywī, *al-Sharīf al-Raḍī: Dirāsa fī ʿaṣrihi waʾadabihi* (Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī: A Study of His Era and Literature) (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-wafāʾ, 1986), p. 170. See also *Tārīkh al-Ṣābī*, p. 72.
13. See Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtāʿ wal-muʾānasa*, eds. Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad al-Zayn (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʾaṣriyya, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 137.
14. See, for example, al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Baṣāʾir wal-dhakhāʾir*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Kaylānī (Damascus: Maktabat Aṭlas, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 28, 59, a scatological/incest anecdote involving al-Farazdaq. On the necessity of not turning away from *hazl* and *sukhf*, p. 60. On Abū Hishām al-Rifāʿī who used to love a fat black slave girl and used to suck her tongue, smell her armpits and sniff her winds [farts] out of love," p. 108. On "a land owner in Samarra who was in love with a slave girl and he used to have her lie on her back, lift her legs and would pour a whole jug of wine inside her and then would put his lips on her vulva and drink. He used to also ask her to urinate when she was menstruating," p. 108. Al-Tawḥīdī adds: "This, may God aid you, is indeed a curious ailment." On the same page there is another anecdote about Baghdad's postmaster who used to "find excrement tasty and would have it on a plate and take some with his finger, rub it on his mustache and used to say: The perfume sellers have lied. By God you are better than Yemenite ambergris. A *kātib* who was in love with a Jewish woman and used to suck her clitoris and insert his finger in her anus and take it out. Then he would put what comes out on his tongue and say: this wine is tastier than apples." "A hairy woman married a bald man who saw her looking at him and thinking. When he asked her what about, she said: Would it that your bald head was on my pussy and my pubic hair was on your bald head so that I can stop plucking," p. 386. On "a man who said, after farting

in public and feeling embarrassed: It's God's will," p. 387. On *jidd* and *hazl*, p. 536. See, also Abū Hayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Mathālib al-wazīrayn*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Kaylānī (Beirut and Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1998), pp. 69–71, 94, 120–122 (where a few of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's lines are reproduced), 132, 137–138, 168, 205, 256, and 290–291. It is noteworthy that when a controversy erupted in Egypt over the republication of Ḥaydar Ḥaydar's *Walīma li aʿshāb al-baḥr* (Seaweed Banquet), which has some blasphemous and obscene passages, its author, in an interview on one of the Arabic-language satellite channels, read passages from al-Tawḥīdī to prove that the Arab tradition has always been relatively permissive and that the Islamists and censors are ignorant of it.

15. Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Risāla al-baghdādiyya*, ed. ʿAbbūd al-Shāljī (Köln: Dār al-Jamal, 1997). See al-Shāljī's introduction, pp. 5–12. On al-Tawḥīdī's authorship, see pp. 9–11. It is interesting to note that al-Shāljī, too, joins the chorus and assures us that he was "about to strip the work of those words and phrases, most of which are from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *sukhf*-filled and dirt-filled poetry . . . but my esteemed colleagues opined that it is necessary to publish all the extant works we possess without excision in order to preserve tradition and as a commitment to scholarly loyalty. So I succumbed to their opinion, albeit grudgingly, and produced *al-Risāla* to readers of Arabic books with all of its faults (*bi-ʿujarihā wa-bujarihā*), p. 11.
16. Both Shmuel Moreh and Michael Cooperson are doubtful of al-Tawḥīdī's authorship of *al-Risāla*. See Shmuel Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arabic World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp. 94–95; Michael Cooperson, "Baghdad in Rhetoric and Narrative," in *al-Muqarnaṣ* 13, p. 112, footnote 18. However, numerous and sizable chunks in *al-Risāla* are identical to excerpts found in al-Tawḥīdī's other works, especially *al-Baṣāʾir wal-dhakhāʾir*, and seem to have been reused by al-Tawḥīdī. Al-Shāljī points to some of them in the introduction and notes. This and the similarity in style are sufficient grounds for al-Shāljī's attribution of *al-Risāla* to al-Tawḥīdī and I am inclined to agree. See previous footnote.
17. al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtāʿ wal-muʾānasa*, vol. 1, pp. 137–139.
18. See *Yatīma*, vol. 3, pp. 183–224 and Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*: *The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Period* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1992), pp. 241–259. Chapter 5 touches briefly on the cultural efflorescence of the Būyid age.
19. For a different translation of the entire anecdote, see Manna, pp. 69–70.
20. *Yatīma,* vol. 3, pp. 35–36; italics added.
21. Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī ʻl-muḍāf wal-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū ʻl-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1985), pp. 39, 57, 83, 143, 145, 171, 245, 329, 350, 426, 488, 491–492, 610, 647, 649.
22. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt al-udabāʾ wa ishārāt al-bulaghāʾ*, ed. Maḥmūd Shākir al-Qaṭṭān (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Kitāb, 2003), pp. 74–97, 118, 121, 174, 341, 343, and 382.
23. Al-Ṣābī writes that his dīwān was in circulation and in demand: "*shiʿruhu mudawwanun maṭlūbun fī ʻl-bilād*," *Tārīkh al-Ṣābī*, p. 72.

24. See the section on the use of colloquial and foreign languages in the poetry of the fourth century in Johann Fück, *al-ʿArabiyya: dirāsāt fī ʿl-lugha wal-lahajāt wal-asālīb*, tr. and ed. Ramaḍān ʿAbd al-Tawwāb (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1980), pp. 189–197. Examples from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's extensive use of Persian and Baghdādī expressions are included. The original German is *Arabiya:Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach- und Stilgeschichte* (Berlin, 1950).
25. Ibn al-ʾUkhuwwa, *Maʿālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*, eds. Muḥammad Maḥmūd Shaʿbān and Ṣiddīq Aḥmad ʿĪsā al-Muṭīʿī (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Kitāb, 1976), see chapter 46: "*fī al-ḥisba ʿalā muʾaddibī al-ṣibyān*," pp. 260–262. The chapter deals with the prerequisites of being a teacher, and the types of punishment and perfect shape and size of the cane used to punish little boys when they are disobedient. For more on the history and function of the *muḥtasib* (market inspector) in general, see Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islam* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
26. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Baghdādī. See *Wafayāt*, vol. 3, pp. 384–385.
27. Ibn al-ʾUkhuwwa, ibid.
28. See appendix A in this book. There are numerous references to this in his poetry as well. See, for example, *Talṭīf*, pp. 75–76, 104, 125, 137–138, and 191.
29. Sometimes the title is *al-Ḥasan min al-Ḥusayn* (The Fine [Poetry] of al-Ḥusayn). See Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-shīʿa* (Shīʿī Notables), ed. Hasan al-Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf, 1983), vol. 5, p. 428.
30. There is a poem in which Ibn al-Ḥajjāj thanks al-Raḍī for the selection. See Manna, p. 81. Al-Ṣābī mentions al-Raḍī's selection "*qiṭʿa kabīra fī ghāyat al-ḥusn wal-jawda wal-ṣanʿa wal-riqqa*…" See *Tārīkh al-Ṣābī*, p. 72. See, also, *Wafayāt*, vol. 1, p. 169.
31. This manuscript is extant and was edited by ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir in 1951 as part of his graduate work at the Sorbonne for a doctorate. It was recently published. See al-Asṭurlābī, *Durrat al-tāj min shiʿir Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, ed. ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir (Beirut: Dār al-Jamal, 2009).
32. For more on Ibn Nubāta, see ʿUmar Mūsā Bāshā, *Ibn Nubāta al-Miṣrī* (Cairo: Dār al-maʿārif, 1992).
33. Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyya, Damascus, Ms.# 5861. Ibn Ḥalabāt does not appear in any of the standard biographical dictionaries. Manna suggests that perhaps the person in question is Ibn Jalabāt, one of the poets of *Yatīma*. See Manna, p. 83, and *Yatīma*, vol. 3, pp. 116–119, where some of Ibn Jalabāt's poems are reproduced, but no biographical information is given.
34. Gotha, Ms. # 2235.
35. al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bil-wafayā*, ed. Ramaḍān ʿAbd al-Tawwāb (Wiesbaden, 1979), vol. 12. pp. 331–337.
36. See "Ibn al-Habbāriyya" in *EI*$^2$, where Pellat resorts to pseudo-psychology to explain "sukhf": "like his model [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj]…presents a curious example

of split personality, for he can on occasion compose respectable poems and, what is more, set himself up as the preacher of a high moral standard." See al-Ṭāhir, pp. 124–145. See, also, *Shiʿr Ibn al-Habbāriyya*, ed. Muḥammad Fāʿiz Sankarī Ṭarābīshī (Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 1997). I thank Everett Rowson for this reference.

37. *Al-Risāla al-baghdādiyya*, one of the works that probably influenced Ibn Dāniyāl, has a Ḥajjājian narrator and includes numerous lines from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj himself. On the influence of *al-Risāla* and other genres on Ibn Dāniyāl's shadow plays, see Moreh, *Live Theatre*, pp. 87–122.
38. Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk, *Dār al-ṭirāz fī ʿamal al-muwashshaḥāt*, ed. Jawdat al-Rikābī (Damascus: n.p., 1949), p. 31.
39. In reference to the Andalusian poet Ibn Quzmān (d. 555/1160). See "Ibn Quzmān" in *EAL* and "Ibn Quzmān" in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. Maria Rosa Menocal et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 292–306, and "The muwashshaḥ" in ibid.
40. Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, *al-Natāʾij al-ilāhiyya fī sharḥ al-kāfiya al-badīʿiyya*, ed. Nasīb Nashāwī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1992).
41. Not surprisingly, modern editors join the "cleansing ritual" and the chapter on "*hazl*"(jest) and "*iḥmāḍ*" is excised "due to its obscenity (*fuḥsh*)." See Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, *Dīwān al-mathālith walmathānī fī al-maʿālī wal-maʿānī*, ed. Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Ḥimṣī (Damascus: Dār Saʿd al-Dīn lil-Ṭibāʿa wal-nashr, 1998), pp. 7, 101.
42. al-Ḥillī, *Sharḥ al-kāfiya al-badīʿiyya*, pp. 96, 218, 321, but especially 271–272, where he says of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj that "he links words with each other in wondrous ways" (*faʾinna lahu fī rabṭi l-kalām baʿḍihi bibaʿḍin ashyāʾa ʿajībatan*).
43. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, *Nuzhat al-Albāb fī mā lā yūjad fī kitāb*, ed. Jamāl Jumʿa (London and Cyprus: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1992), pp. 117–120. The excerpt is translated in appendix B in this book.
44. al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshā* (Cairo: n.p., 1913), vol. 1, p. 545.
45. Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-ʿUmda fī naqd al-shiʿr wa tamḥīṣih*, ed. ʿAfīf Nāyif Ḥātūm (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2003), p. 95.
46. See James E. Montgomery, "sukhf" in *EI*$^2$ and E. K. Rowson, "sukhf" in *EAL*.
47. Ibid.
48. See his "Some Brave Attempts at Generic Classification in Premodern Arabic Literature," in *Aspects of Genre and Type in Pre-Modern Literary Cultures*, eds. Bert Roest and Herman Vanstiphout (Gronigen: Styx Publications, 1999), pp. 15–31.
49. See Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 147. "Genres . . . change everywhere, combine, regroup, or form what seems to be new alignments altogether. This upsets the system-builder in us" (p. 45). "The instability of labeling and the confusion of the terms that we consequently

inherit in our criticism have tempted some to reduce our terminology to a system."

50. See Wolfhart Heinrichs, "Literary Theory: The Problem of Its Efficiency," in *Arabic Poetry: Theory and Development*, ed. G. E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: Third Giorgio Levi della Vida biennial conference, 1973), pp. 19–65; Iḥsān ʿAbbās, *Tārīkh al-naqd al-adabī ʿind al-ʿarab* (Amman: Dār al-Shurūq, 1993); van Gelder, "Some Brave Attempts," pp. 15–16.
51. *Nuūniyyāt*, p. 37.
52. *Yatīma*, vol. 3, p. 39, in *Talṭīf*, it is "*fī ʿs-sukhfi*" (style of *sukhf*).
53. Imruʿ al-Qays b. Ḥujr, the sixth century, pre-Islamic poet and one of the poets of the *muʿallaqāt*. He is an iconic figure in Arabic poetry. See R. Jacobi, "Imruʿ al-Qays" in *EAL*.
54. *Talṭīf*, p. 135.
55. Ibid., p. 221, *Yatīma,* vol. 3, p. 34.
56. *Yatīma,* vol. 3, p. 33.
57. *Durrat al-Tāj*, p. 310, *Dīwān*, p. 230.
58. *Nūniyyāt*, p. 195.
59. Ḥassān ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī (d. 40/661) converted to Islam and wrote invectives against unbelievers and was praised and encouraged by the Prophet Muḥammad. See van Gelder, *"Ḥassān ibn Thābit"* in *EAL*.
60. Jarīr (ca. 33–11/653–729) and al-Akhṭal (ca. 20–92/640–710) were major poets of the Umayyad period who exchanged infamous invectives.
61. *Dīwān*, p. 389.
62. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 52.
63. Montgomery, "sukhf" in *EI*$^2$.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid. It is not difficult to see how this, too, would be apt to describe Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's heedlessness of literary conventions and disregarding the boundaries of the acceptable more than those who came before him.
66. Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, eds. Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Quds, 1974).
67. Ibid., p. 75
68. Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, eds. Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Quds, 1974).
69. Ibid., p. 182
70. Ibid., p. 205.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., p. 209.
73. al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtāʿ wal-muʾānasa*, vol. 2, p. 50.
74. Ibid., p. 57.
75. Probably the Kūfan *mufassir* (Qurʾān interpreter) and student of Ibn Masʿūd, Abu ʿAmr ʿĀmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Shaʿbī al-Ḥimyarī al-Kūfī (20–109/641–729). See *Wafayāt*, vol. 3, pp. 12–16.
76. al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtāʿ wal-muʾānasa*, p. 58.
77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p. 51.
79. See Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1976), pp. 375–378.
80. al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtāʿ wal-muʾānasa*, p. 53. A literal translation of the line would be: May a donkey's dick [be] in the pussy of my life's mother.
81. al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ wa-muḥāwarāt al-shuʿarāʾ wal-bulaghāʾ* (Apt Quotables of the Literati and Conversations of Poets and Eloquent Men) (Beirut: n.d.). For a comprehensive list of subchapters and headings, see Stephanie Bowie Thomas, *The Concept of Muḥāḍara in the Adab Anthology with Special Reference to al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī's Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ* (Unpublished Thesis, Harvard University, 2000), p. 243.
82. Abū Saʿd Manṣūr b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, eds. Muḥammad ʿAlī Qurna and ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Kitāb, 1981). See, in particular, "*Bāb ākhar min al-jawābāt al-muskita wa huwa mā yajrī majrā al-hazl*" (another chapter of silencing answers, which س considered *hazl*), vol. 2, pp. 198–212; "*nawādir Abī ʿl-ʿAynāʾ*," vol. 3, pp. 195–231; "*nawādir Muzabbid*," pp. 232–246, "*nawādir al-Jummāz*," p. 252; "*kalām al-shuṭṭār*," pp. 295–306; "*al-ʿiyy wa-mukātabāt al-ḥamqā*," pp. 307–316.
83. al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī, *al-Wasāṭa bayna ʿl-Mutanabbī wa khussūmih*, eds. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm and ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajawī (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Ḥalabī wa-Shurakāh, 1966).
84. Ibid., p. 24; van Gelder alludes to al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī's approach: see *The Bad and the Ugly: Attitudes towards Invective Poetry (Hijāʾ) in Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), p. 81. See Abū Nuwās, *al-Nuṣūṣ al-muḥarrama*, ed. Jamāl Jumʿa (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1998) and especially the editor's preface "*faqīh al-ḥurumāt*," pp. 21–30.
85. See, for example, the sections on Abū Nuwās, p. 59, Abū Tammām, p. 68, and al-Mutanabbī, pp. 82–95. On al-Mutanabbī, he says: *wa-qad jamaʿa fī hādhihi ʿl-abyāt wa-fī ghayrihā al-barda walghath ātha wal-wakhāma faʾabʿada ʾl-istiʿāra wa-ʿawwaṣa ʿl-lafẓ waʿaqqada ʾl-kalām wa-asāʾa ʿl-tartīb wabālagha fī ʾltakalluf wa-zāda ʿalā ʿl-taʿammuq ḥattā kharaja ilā al-sukhf fī baʿḍ wa-ilā al-iḥāla fī baʿḍ* (p. 86). He is also criticized for overusing "*dhā*" "f*ahuwa kamā tarāh sakhāfatan wa-ḍaʿfan*," p. 97.
86. See Abū Nuwās, *al-Nuṣūṣ al-muḥarrama*, ed. Jamāl Jumʿa (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1998) and especially the editor's preface "faqīh al-ḥurumāt," pp. 21–30. For a critical survey of how modern Arab scholars and intellectuals dealt with the legacy of Abū Nuwās, see Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 76–89.
87. Geert Jan van Gelder, "Mixtures of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature," *JAL*, 23, pp. 86–87. See also Charles Pellat, "Al-Djidd wa'l-Hazl" in *EI*$^2$, Ulrich Marzolph, "hazl" in *EAL*; Yūsuf Sadān, *al-Adab al-ʿArabī al-hāzil wa nawādir al-thuqalāʾ* (Tel Aviv: Jāmiʿat Tall Abīb, 1983); Anīs Frayḥa, *al-Fukāha ʿinda ʿl-ʿarab* (Beirut: Maktabat Raʾs Bayrūt, 1962). van Gelder, "Mixtures," p. 84.

88. van Gelder, "Mixtures," p. 83.
89. Ibid., p. 84.
90. van Gelder, contra Sadan, believes that it is impossible to strike a balance or equilibrium between *jidd* and *hazl*: "*hazl* often plays the part of a parasite on *jidd*, by employing and exploiting it and turning it into itself." Ibid., p. 85.
91. Ibid., p. 94.
92. Ibid., p. 103. I am using his translation of the quotation from *al-Bayān wal-tabyīn*.
93. al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-Baṣā'ir*, vol. 1, p. 55.
94. Cited in van Gelder, "Mixtures," p. 87.
95. Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājanni, *Minhāj al-bulaghā' wa-sirāj al-udabā'*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb Ibn al-Khūja (Tunis, 1966).
96. van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, pp. 101–110.
97. al-Qarṭājanni, *Minhāj al-bulaghā'*, p. 327.
98. van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, p. 102; al-Qarṭājanni, *Minhāj al-bulaghā'*, p. 331.
99. van Gelder's translation, in *The Bad and the Ugly*, p. 110; al-Qarṭājanni, *Minhāj al-bulaghā'*, p. 332.
100. van Gelder's translation, in *The Bad and the Ugly*, p. 110. See Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa*, ed. ʿAbd al-Mutaʿāl al-Ṣaʿīdī (Cairo, 1969), pp. 161–162.
101. Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa*, p. 276.
102. Qudāma b. Jaʿfar (d. 337/948) had stressed, long before, that poetry is a craft and that all meanings/motifs, regardless of their content, are legitimate material for the poet to employ. See Qudāma b. Jaʿfar, *Kitāb Naqd al-shiʿr*, ed. S. A. Bonebakker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1956), pp. 3–5.
103. Adam Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam* (Die Renaissance des Islams), trs. Salahuddin Khuda Bukhsh and D. S. Margoliouth (London: Luzac & Co., 1937), p. 270. See also pp. 104, 268–274, 341, and 365.
104. Ibid., p. 274.
105. See ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir, *al-Shiʿr al-ʿarabī fi'l-ʿirāq wa bilād al-ʿajam fi'l-ʿaṣr al-saljūqī* (Arabic Poetry in Iraq and Iran in the Saljuq Period) (Beirut: Dār al-Rā'id, 1958, 2 vols.), vol. 2, p. 100.
106. Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Dabbās al-Baghdādī was a friend of Ibn al-Habbāriyya. See *Wafayāt*, vol. 2, pp. 181–184. Al-Ṣafadī excerpts some of his poetry and mentions that he will leave out the inappropriate *sukhf* parts. See also al-Ṭāhir, *al-Shiʿr al-ʿarabī*, pp. 217–219.
107. al-Ṣārim Murajjā al-Baṭā'iḥī. Very little of his poetry or biographical information survives. See al-Ṭāhir, *al-Shiʿr al-ʿarabī*, pp. 262–263.
108. Abū 'l-Qāsim Hibatullāh Ibn al-Qaṭṭān. See *Wafayāt*, vol. 6, pp. 53–61, and al-Ṭāhir, *al-Ṣārim Murajjā al-Baṭā'iḥī*, pp. 233–235.
109. Anūshirwān al-Baghdādī al-Ḍarīr. He used a great many colloquial Baghdādī and Kurdish words in his poetry. See al-Ṭāhir, *al-Ṣārim Murajjā al-Baṭā'iḥī*, p. 269.
110. Ibid., p. 99.

111. Al-Asṭurlābī, *Durrat al-Tāj min shʿir Ibn al-Ḥajjāj*, ed. ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir (Beirut: Dār al-Jamal, 2009).
112. Jalīl al-ʿAṭiyya, one of al-Ṭāhir's students mentions that the owner of the prestigious al-Ādāb publishing house in Beirut, the Lebanese novelist and intellectual Suhayl Idrīs, had promised al-Ṭāhir to publish the work, but reneged. See *Durrat al-Tāj*, p. 308.
113. al-Ṭāhir, al-Ṣārim Murajjā al-Baṭāʾiḥī, p. 413.
114. *Tārīkh al-adab al-ʿarabī: fī ʿaṣr al-duwal; wal-ʾimārāt: al-jazīra al-ʿarabiyya-al-ʿirāq-ʾīrān* (A History of Arabic Literature: The Age of States and Statelets: The Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Iran) (Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, 1980), pp. 399–405.
115. Ibid.
116. C. E. Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld: The Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature*, vol. 1 (Leiden: 1976), p. 30.
117. Ibid., p. 64.
118. Ibid., p. 27.
119. Abdelfattah Kilito, *al-Maqāmāt: al-sard wal-ansāq al-thaqāfiyya*, tr. ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Sharqāwī (Casablanca: Dār Tūbqāl, 2001), p. 41.
120. Ibid., pp. 41–42.
121. Ibid., p. 27.
122. Ibid., p. 45.
123. *der Dīwān des Ibn al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ: Teilausgabe Der Reimbuchstabe nūn*, ed. Abdelghafur A. A. El-Aswad (Giessen, 1977). El-Aswad too, according to Wolfhart Heinrichs, encountered obstacles upon returning to Egypt and had to make the case that working on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj constitutes a scholarly endeavor.
124. The University of London, Thesis # DX198987.
125. See her "Arabic Mujūn Poetry: The Literary Dimension," in *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Representation of Women in Arabic Literature*, ed. Fredrick de Jong (Utrecht, 1993), pp. 8–30. The parts relating to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in this article were later incorporated into her *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Oriental Pearls* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 168–172.
126. Meisami, "Arabic Mujūn Poetry," p. 19.
127. Muṣṭafā al-Tawātī, *al-Muthaqqafūn wal-sulṭa fī 'l-ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya: al-dawla al-buwayhiyya namūdhajan* (Intellectuals and Power in Islamic Civilization: The Example of the Būyid State), 2 vols. (Tunis: Jāmiʿat Tūnis, 1999). See, in particular, "*tayyār al-kudya wal-sukhf*," vol. 2, pp. 184–204.
128. Ibid., pp. 228–230.
129. See E. K. Rowson's "sukhf" in *EAL*. For a comprehensive study of the history and development of *hijāʾ*, see Īliyyā Ḥāwī, *Fann al-hijāʾ wa-taṭawwuruhu ʿinda 'l-ʿarab* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1970); for a discussion of attitudes to the mode, van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*.
130. See *Yatīma*, p. 3. "It used to be said in Baghdad that an era that brought Ibn Sukkara and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is indeed generous. I compare them to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq in their era."

131. See Geert Jan van Gelder, "Genres in Collision: Nasīb and Hijāʾ," *JAL* 23, pp. 15–16.
132. See Ibn Abī al-Iṣbaʿ, *Taḥrīr al-taḥbīr: fī ṣināʿat al-shiʿr wal-nathr wa-bayān iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, ed. Ḥifnī Muḥammad Sharaf (Cairo, n.d.), p. 437: "And if you were to get to Ibn Ḥajjāj in this respect, you would then reach what is inconceivable (*mā lā tudrikuhu al-albāb*)."
133. For an example of a *hijaʾ* against al-Mutanabbī, see *Talṭīf*, pp. 64–65, 171, and against Ibn Sukkara, pp. 177, 215, 260–262.
134. Ḥāwī, *al-Hijāʾ ʿinda al-ʿarab*, pp. 489–490.
135. *Dīwān Abī Ḥukayma: Rāshid b. Isḥāq al-Kātib fī'l-ayriyyāt*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Aʿrajī (Cologne: Dār al-Jamal, 1997). On his life and the extant dīwān, see pp. 12–19. See also Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, pp. 389–390; *Yāqūt*, vol. 3, pp. 1298–1299; *GAS*, II, pp. 577–578 (where he is "Abū Ḥakīma").
136. See the editor's preface in *al-Ayriyyāt*, p. 11.
137. Ideally, Abū Nuwās's direct influence on both Abū Ḥukayma and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj could be addressed here, but for practical and organizational reasons, it will be discussed in chapter 4.
138. See, for example, Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Cairo: Dār al-Mafiārif, 1976), pp. 389–390; *GAL*, S1, p. 123.
139. *al-Ayriyyāt*, pp. 26, 30, 59, 71.
140. al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī 'l-muḍāf wal-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū 'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1985), p. 225.
141. This is what Fowler terms "authorial statement."
142. "Phallegy" is my attempt at fusing "phallus" and "elegy" to reflect the fusion of *rithāʾ* (elegy) and *mujūn*.
143. *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, p. 416. The lines are: *ayrī ʿalayya maʿa 'z-zamā/ni fa-man adhummu wa-man alūmu/ash-shaʾnu fī ayrī yuqaw/wamu lil-qiyāmi fa-lā yaqūmu*. [Even] my cock is, like Time, against me/Who shall I slander and blame /It is my cock's problem, it is [called to] rise, but it does not.
144. Ibid.
145. See "Ibn al-Hadjdjādj" in *EI*[2]; Philip Kennedy, *The Wine Song in Classical Arabic Poetry: Abū Nuwās and the Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 14.
146. *al-Ayriyyāt*, pp. 16–17.
147. Ibid., pp. 140, 145, 154.
148. Meisami, "Structure and Meaning," p. 30.
149. See ʿAbdullāh ʿAbdulraḥīm al-Sūdānī, *Rithāʾ ghayr al-insān fī 'l-shiʿr al-ʿabbāsī* (Elegies of Non-Humans in the Poetry of the ʿAbbāsid Period) (Abu Dhabi: al-Mujammaʿ al-Thaqāfī, 1999). We have extant *qiṭaʿ* (pieces) from earlier periods in which poets elegize animals and there are references to poets who elegized their hands (ʿAbdullāh b. Sabra al-Harshī) and eyes (al-Mughīra b. Shuʿba al-Thaqafī, ʿAmr b. Aḥmad b. ʿAmarrad al-Bāhilī). See al-Sūdānī, pp. 123–124. The *marāthī al-mudun* (elegies of cities) is another established type (al-Khuraymī on Baghdad and Ibn al-Rūmī on al-Baṣra to mention a few).

Of the *hazl* types of *rithāʾ* there is al-Qāsim b. Yūsuf b. Ṣabīḥ al-Kātib who specialized in *rithāʾ al-bahāʾim* (animal elegies) and "devoted most of his poetry to the ewe of Saʿīd, the garment of Ibn Ḥarb (ibid, p. 172). For more on his poems of *shakwā* against fleas, bugs, ants, mice, snakes, and birds, see Ḥusayn Ṣabīḥ al-ʿAllāq, *al-Shuʿarāʾ al-kuttāb fī ʿl-ʿirāq: fī ʿl-qarn al-thālith al-hijrī* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-tarbiya, 1975), p. 128. The famous *marthiya* of Ibn al-ʿAllāf to his cat is considered by some an allegorical *rithāʾ* of Ibn al-Muʿtazz after he was killed (p. 176). Kushājim composed *marāthī* for various animals and objects such as a horse, a peacock, a turtledove, a lute, handkerchief, and a jug. Ibn al-Muʿtazz composed a serious elegy on a book eaten by termites. See J. Christoph Bürgel, "Von Büchern und Termiten," in *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65, Geburtstag*, eds. Wolfhart Heinrichs and Gregor Schoeler (Beirut and Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 337–349.

150. With the exception of some animal elegies, especially the *birdhawniyyāt* in al-Thaʿālibī's *Yatīma*, vol. 3, pp. 253–268 (*birdhawn* being a horse of mixed breed, as opposed to *faras*). See also *al-filiyyāt* (Elephant Poems) in *Yatīma*, pp. 269–277.
151. The personification of the phallus is a topos borrowed from Abū Nuwās. See chapter 4.
152. Meisami, "Arabic Mujūn Poetry," p. 35.
153. This last bit of information tells us that the poem was recited for a member of the elite and is another indication of Abū Ḥukayma's institutional success.
154. Men never participated in the wailing ritual, but this is obviously meant to add to the clownish and anti-heroic persona of the poet.
155. *al-Ayriyyāt*, pp. 28–29.
156. Ibid., pp. 52–53 (72–74 in 2003 edn.).
157. Ibid., p. 27.
158. Ibid., p. 59 (79 in new edn.).
159. Ibid., p. 62 (83–86 in new edn.).
160. *Dīwān*, pp. 5–6. This *qaṣīda* is a parody of a *mīmiyya* by al-Buḥturī whose first lines are: *amaḥallatay Salmā bikāẓimata slamā/wataʿallamā anna l-jawā mā hijtumā* (Peace be upon you, o Salmā's places in Kāẓima). The third line is: *abkīkumā damʿan wa-law annī fialā/qadri ʿl-jawā abkī bakaytukumā damā*. (I cry tears over you, but if I were to cry as much as my pain, I would have cried blood). See *Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, ed. Muḥammad al-Tūnjī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-fiArabī, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 1045–1046.
161. *al-Ayriyyāt*, p. 81.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid., p. 92.
164. *Dīwān*, p. 320.
165. *al-Ayriyyāt*, pp. 50–51 (70–71 in new edn.)
166. Ibid., pp. 80–81.
167. *Talṭīf*, pp. 206–208.
168. See *al-Ayriyyāt*, pp. 127–128. The narrative of this short poem states that upon hearing that it was time to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, the poet seems to be

fulfilling his own stone-throwing ceremony (as is done at Minā), but he throws apples at some slave girls over the wall of a palace.

169. Ibid., p. 30.
170. Ibid., p. 42.
171. Ibid., p. 60.
172. Ibid., p. 55.
173. *Talṭīf*, p. 206.
174. *al-Ayriyyāt*, pp. 100–102 (124–126 in new edn.)
175. See *"Yādjūdj wa mādjūdj"* in *EI*$^2$.
176. For more on this topos, see chapter 4.
177. One is echoing Kilito's plea for the need to write a history of *hazl*. See Kilito, p. 45.
178. See *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, pp. 342–343, *al-Aghānī*, vol. 27, pp. 9360–9370; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Yūsuf ʿAli Ṭawīl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1996), pp. 245–246; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt al-udabāʾ wa-ishārāt al-bulaghā*, ed. Maḥmūd Shākir al-Qaṭṭān (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Kitāb, 2003), pp. 110, 412–413; Abdilfattah Kilito, *al-Ḥikāya wal-taʾwīl:dirāsāt fī ʿl-sard al-ʿarabī* (Casablanca: Tūbqāl, 1999), pp. 46–57; "Abū ʿl-ʿIbar wal-samaka" (Abū ʿlʿIbar and the Fish); Franz Rosenthal, *Humor in Early Islam* (Philadelphia: University Press, 1956), p. 12.
179. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions a number of books attributed to Abū ʿl-ʿIbar: *al-Rasaʾil* (The Epistles), *Jāmiʿ al-ḥamāqāt wa-ḥāwī al-raqāʿāt* (The Compendium of Foolish and Reckless Acts), and three other books that included his poems and anecdotes. See *al-Fihrist*, p. 246.
180. *al-Aghānī*, vol. 27, p. 9361.
181. *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, p. 342.
182. Ibid., p. 343; italics added.
183. Applied to acts or statements, *rakāka* can mean feebleness or lowliness. The adjective *rakīk* is also used for speech and is antithetical to *jazl* (pure and lucid style) (Lane). The term is also used to denote changes from quiescent to movant and vice versa (*taskīn al-mutaḥarrik aw an yuḥarrak al-s ākin*). For the latter, see Tahānawī, *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn wal-ʿulūm* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1996). Abū ʿl-ʿIbar's actions and poems, as we shall see below, combined variations of all of the above, especially the intentional disregard of linguistic and stylistic conventions, let alone social ones. He is said to have changed his name by adding a letter to it every year. See *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, p. 342.
184. These lines are attributed to Abū Nuwās as well. See Wagner, *Dīwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hāniʾ*, p. 293.
185. *Ṭabaqāt*, pp. 342–343.
186. *al-Aghānī*, pp. 9363–9364. For more, see Moreh, *Live Theatre*, pp. 34, 37.
187. "*fa-kāna yaqūlu: awwalu mā turīdūna qalbu l-ashyāʾi, fakunnā naqūlu idhā aṣbaḥa: kayfa amsayt? wa idhā amsā kayfa aṣbaḥta wa-idhā qāla: taʿāl, nataʾakhkharu ilā khalfin wa-kānat lahu arzāq*." He used to say: First you have to turn matters upside down. If he came in the morning, we would say: how

goes your evening? And if he came in the evening, "how is your morning?" If he said: come, we walked back and he [made his] livelihood [from this], Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn, *Fī adab al-ḥamqā walmutaḥāmiqīn* (Damascus: Dār al-Ḥaṣād, 2001), p. 58.

188. From *al-Aghānī*: "I saw Abū ʿl-ʿIbar standing in one of the reed beds (*ājām*) of Samarra with a cross-bow in his left hand and a falcon in his right hand and on his head a piece of a lung [attached] to a rope ending in a lasso. He was naked, his pubic hair twirled and attached [by a thread] to a hook which he had thrown into the water for the fish and he had grape-syrup (*dūshāb*) smeared on his lips. So I said to him: may God ruin your house (damn you!) what is this? He said: I am hunting with all my limbs you cuckold! If a bird passes by, I aim at it with the crossbow. If it falls nearby I send the falcon. If someone comes to take the lung that's on my head, they'll fall into the lasso [*wahaq*]. With the grape-syrup I catch flies and then put them on the hook. The fish comes after it and are hooked. The hook ['s thread] is attached to my cock, so if a fish passes by I feel it and I take it out," p. 9366. This anecdote appears in al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, vol. vii, p. 279. For more on this passage and on Abū al-ʿIbar, see Geert Jan van Gelder, "Fools and Rogues in Discourse and Disguise," in *Sensibilities of the Islamic Mediterranean*, ed. Robin Ostle (London and New York: I. B. Taurus, 2008), pp. 27–28. I thank Geert Jan van Gelder for these references.
189. Ibid., p. 9365.
190. Kilito, *al-Ḥikāya wal-taʾwīl*, p. 56.
191. al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bil-wafayāt*, ed. Ramaḍān ʿAbd al-Tawwāb (Wiesbaden, 1979), vol. 12, pp. 331–337.
192. Ibid., pp. 333–334.
193. *al-Fihrist*, p. 281.
194. Ibid. Al-Aṣmaʿī (122–213/740–828) was a very famous philologist and lexicographer. In addition to his collection of pre-Islamic poetry, *al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, he was interested in various fields, such as dialect usage and classified wordlists. See "al-Aṣmaʿī" in *EAL*. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's use of al- Aṣmaʿī highlights his own early interest in mastering the linguistic register of various groups, especially the lowly. This, together with his own work as *muḥtasib*, provided him with access to unique material to use in his poetry.
195. *al-Fihrist*, pp. 244–245, "Abū al-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī" in *EI*$^2$ *Supplement*, and in *EAL*. For a comprehensive account of all the works attributed to al-Ṣaymarī, as well as treatments by various sources, see Muḥammad Bāqir ʿAlwān, "Abū ʿl-ʿAnbas Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Ṣaymarī," *al-Abḥāth* 26, pp. 35–50. See also Bosworth, *Medieval Islamic Underworld*, pp. 30–32; Rosenthal, *Humor in Early Islam*, p. 14.
196. *al-Fihrsit*, pp. 244–245.
197. See al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, p. 171. For the entire poem, see *Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, ed. Muḥammad al-Tūnjī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 1044–1045. See also, *al-Aghanī*, vol. 24, pp. 8219–8225.
198. *Maqāmāt Abī ʿl-Faḍl Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh al-Miṣrī (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kāthūlīkiyya, 1920), pp. 215–230.

199. The adjective derived from the root s-kh-f.
200. al-Buḥturī was known for his hubris and his annoying manner of recital and for pressing his audience to praise his poems after reciting them. See, al-Qayrawānī, *Zahr al-ādāb*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1987). "Why are you not amazed? Is what you hear not good?" (p. 14).
201. Kilito, *al-Ḥikāya wal-taʾwīl*, p. 30.

## 2 Parodying the Tradition

1. I will adopt "hypotext" and "hypertext," the terms coined by Gérard Genette, to refer to the target text and its parody, respectively. See Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trs. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). It is important to stress that while at times the resemblance between the two terms is strong, there are others when it is faint, or merely a matter of using the mold, style, or idea.
2. See "parody" in *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, ed. J. A. Cuddon (Penguin, 1982); *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. Irena R. Makorsky (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), pp. 603–605.
3. Ibid., p. 603.
4. Ibid., p. 604.
5. Simon Denith, *Parody* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 12.
6. See "taḍmīn" in *EI*[2] and "Allusion and Intertextuality" in *EAL*.
7. According to Tahānawī, *talmīḥ* is "reference in the meaning of speech to an anecdote, poem, or a proverb, but without mentioning it." See *Kashshāf*, p. 506.
8. See "muʿāraḍa" in *EI*[2].
9. See, for example, chapter 49 in *Durrat al-tāj*, "*fī taḍmīn al-shiʿr*," pp. 893–895.
10. *Talṭīf*, pp. 154–155.
11. Ibid., p. 59.
12. *Yatima*, vol. 3, p. 36. "Throughout his life, he [Ibn al-Ḥajjāj] held sway over the viziers of that time and the chiefs of that era, like a child who held sway over his parents."
13. al-Farazdaq (20–110/640–728) the Umayyad *hijāʾ* poet. Al-Kisāʾī: ʿAlī b. Ḥamzah (d. 180/796), the Kūfan grammarian.
14. *Yatīma*, vol. 3, p. 37.
15. See, for example, Ibn al-Rūmī's *hijāʾ* of Niftawayh and al-Akhfash al-Aṣghar in Īliyyā Ḥāwī, *Fann al-hijāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1970), pp. 569–571. For more on Ibn al-Rumī, see Robert McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason: Ibn al-Rumi and His Poetics in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
16. *Talṭīf*, p. 135. Sībawayhi (second/eighth), the father of Arabic grammar and author of *Kitāb Sībawayhi*. See *"Sībawayhi"* in *EAL*.

17. Thaʿlab: Abū ʾl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā (200–291/815–904). Major Kūfan grammarian. *Al- Faṣīḥ* is one of his most popular and influential books. Also known for his *Qawāʿid al-shiʿr*. See *Wafayāt*, vol. 1, pp. 102–104.
18. *Yatīma*, vol. 3, p. 37.
19. Ibid, p. 38. Jarīr ibn ʿAṭiyya (33–111/653–729): the great *hijāʾ* poet of the Umayyad period.
20. *Yatīma*, vol. 3, p. 38. *Ramal* and *hazaj* are lighter meters, and, in general, more conducive to lighthearted themes, especially in contrast to the more sombre *al-Ṭawīl*, which the poet mentions below. Thus, it is a statement, of sorts, to celebrate his own more lighthearted style.
21. Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), a famous grammarian who composed numerous (112) works on grammar and a student of the aforementioned Thaʿlab. See *Wafayāt*, vol. 1, pp. 49–50.
22. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ruʾba al-ʿAjjāj (d. 90–715). Early Umayyad poet famed for his exclusive use of *rajaz*. See "al-ʿAjjāj" in *EAL*.
23. *Durra*, p. 375. Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (100–75/718–791) the famous grammarian and lexicographer and author of *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*. Al-Mubarrad (210–285/815–899), grammarian and philologist from the school of Baṣra, author of *al-Kāmil*.
24. *Talṭīf*, p. 123. Bashshār ibn Burd (95–167/714–784) spanned both the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid periods. He was famous for invectives exchanged with Ḥammād ʿAjrad (d. 168–784), one of the famous *mujjān* (libertines) of al-Kūfa.
25. *Dīwān*, p. 265. Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā (d. 609) Jāhilī poet and author of one of the *muʿallaqāt*. Harim ibn Sinān is the chief of the tribe of Murra who is praised in Zuhayr's *muʿallaqa*. See James E. Montgomery, "Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā" in *EAL*; Arberry, p. 108 and Lyall, p. 53.
26. *Talṭīf*, pp. 64–65, 171.
27. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 241. See, in particular, Ch. 7: " Regicide and Retribution: The Muʿallaqa of Imruʾ al-Qays," pp. 241–286.
28. See Julie Scott Meisami, "Imruʾ al-Qays Praises the Prophet," in *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Literature*, eds. Issa J. Boullata and Terri DeYoung (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1997), pp. 223–247.
29. See ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. Aḥmad al-ʿAbbāsī, *Maʿāhid al-tanṣīṣ ʿalā shawāhid al-talkhīṣ*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyiddīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1947), vol. 4, p. 157. Examples of parodies are found on pp. 157–161. In addition to the well-known *muʿāraḍāt* of poets such as Ibn al-Muʿtazz, ʿAlī b. al-Jahm, and Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī, there are parodies by Abū Manṣūr al-ʿAbdūnī, al-Ṣafadī, Ibn Nubāta, and Ibn Makānis. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj is not mentioned.
30. See *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 196–197. Ibn al-Muʿtazz has a few lines on the destruction of Sāmarrāʾ where he appropriates Imruʾ al-Qays's *muʿallaqa*. See *Dīwān shiʿr Ibn al-Muʿtazz*, vol. 2, p. 185.
31. *Dīwān shiʿr Ibn al-Muʿtazz*, vol. 3, p. 355.

32. *Talṭīf*, p. 126. I am using Lyall's edition of al-Tibrīzī, *Commentary on Ten Ancient Arabic Poems*, ed. Charles James Lyall (New Jersey: Gregg Press Incorporated, 1965) and al-Zawzanī, *Sharḥ almuʿallaq āt al-sabʿ* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1990). The translation is based mainly on A. J. Arberry, *The Seven Odes: The First Chapter in Arabic Literature* (London and New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957); Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals Speak*, pp. 249–257, and *Early Arabic Poetry: Vol II: Select Odes*, edition, translation, and commentary by Alan Jones (Oxford: Ithaca Press, 1996), pp. 42–86.
33. "Juḥr" can either mean the anus itself (which survives in the Baghdādī dialect), but also a "hole" in the ground.
34. "*ṭaṇṭakāt*" is perplexing. The editor suggests that it could be the tanta used by a carpenter to whittle wood (which would work since the idea is to exaggerate the roughness of the hair), or *dandakāne* (Persian) "the pointed part of a key." See *Talṭīf*, p. 363.
35. Henceforth, the number in parentheses refers to the line number in the original (hypotext).
36. *Juḥr* here means vulva and *udhnayhi* probably refers to the labia. The image is a bit complicated. Judging from Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's general style, hyperbolically thick or long pubic and anal hair is what he is describing. The narrator is describing his vaginal penetration of the woman in the missionary position. Her anal hair is so long that it penetrates his own anus. Any other reading would render the position impossible.
37. *ʿAnfaqa* are the hairs between the lower lip and the chin. (Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* and *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*), but Ibn al-Ḥajjāj frequently uses this word for pubic hair.
38. al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān was al-Mutawakkil's vizier. See following note.
39. Abū ʿl-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn Muhammad al-Mutawakkil was one of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs who ruled from 232/846 to 247/861. His reign witnessed the persecution of Shiʿīs and the destruction of their shrines. Since Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his patrons were Shīʿīs, this might explain why al-Mutawakkil would be a convenient subject for *sukhf*. See H. Kennedy "al-Mutawakkil" in *EI*$^2$.
40. I am using al-Tibrīzī's rendering of *al-mutafaḍḍil* to read the same word as used by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (one who remains in one garment to work or sleep).
41. *Qaddama khāʾahā*: he placed the letter *khāʾ* before the *rā*. The meaning is transformed from "loosen" to "crap" in the imperative. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj does this often in his poems (switching letters around to produce scatological connotations).
42. Al-Muḥawwal is the name of a hamlet (*bulayda*) near Baghdad, but the reference seems to be to Bāb Muḥawwal: "A large quarter . . . next to al-Karkh, but it used to be part of it." See *Muʿjam al-buld ān*, vol. 5, p. 66.
43. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, n-z-w.
44. *Talṭīf*, p. 495.
45. See Arberry, *Seven Odes*, p. 31; Stetkevych, *Mute Immortals Speak*.
46. *Maʿāhid al-tanṣīṣ*, pp. 160–161. See, also, *Dīwān al-Jazzār: Abū l-Ḥusayn Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm*, ed. Muḥammad Zaghlūl Salām (Alexandria: Munshaʾat al-maʿārif, n.d), pp. 69–70.

47. *Yatīma*, p. 17.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. See al-Nafzāwī, *al-Rawḍ al-ʿāṭir fī nuzhat al-khāṭir*, ed. Jamāl Jumʿa (London: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1990), ch. 8 "Fī asmāʾ uyūr al-rijāl" (The Names of Men's Penises), pp. 93–104. See in particular the explanation on p. 100: "It is called "*al-dammāʿ*" because its tears are many. If it rises it cries and if it sees a beautiful face it cries."
51. *Talṭīf*, pp. 256–258. See James E. Montgomery, "ʿAmr b. Kulthūm" in *EAL*.
52. For a summary and a discussion of the various narratives, as well as a translation of the *muʿallaqa* itself, see Arberry, *Seven Odes*, pp. 185–203. See also Reynold Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 109–113.
53. Nicholson, *Literary History*, p. 109. Montgomery points out that the poem became legendary in Umayyad times and it is so powerful that it has generated false narratives about the poet derived from the poem itself, but that are probably fictional. It is "frantic to the point of demagoguery."
54. See the section on Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *ṣafʿ* poetry in *Yatīma*, vol. 3, pp. 95–96. See, also, the first chapter in al-Tīfāshī's *Nuzhat al-albāb fī mā lā yūjad fī kitāb*, ed. Jamāl Jumʿa (London: Riad El- Rayyes, 1992), pp. 53–61. The chapter is entitled "*fī al-ṣafʿ wamā fih min al-fawāʾid wal-nafʿ*" (On Slapping and Its Usefulness). The author divides it into two types "*ṣafʿ al-ṭarab and ṣafʿ al-adab*." What is relevant to our purposes is the latter, which is intended as a form of punishment. See, in particular, pp. 58–60.
55. What the poet is saying is that whenever he would shit, he would deposit it into their mouths (the guards?).
56. Perhaps line 30 helped Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in this respect: *wa-naḥnu idhā ʿimādu ʿl-ḥayyi kharratʿalā ʾla ḥfāẓi namnaʿu man yalīnā*. The meaning here (I am using Arberry's translation) is: When the tent poles of the tribe are fallen/ upon the furniture, we defend our neighbor. "*Yalīnā*" has another meaning, "to loosen" one's bowels. The latter is used by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj here in that sense.
57. Baṭāṭiyā is not in *Muʿjam al-buldān*, but is mentioned in connection to some of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poems, including this one, as an estate that belonged to him. It must have been close to al-Dujayl as *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* mentions that Baṭāṭiyā is "a river branching off from al-Dujayl."
58. It has become a *rashm*: a trace. It is no more in his possession.
59. See "s-l-kh" in Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*.

## 3 *Sukhf* in Panegyric Poetry

1. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy: Myth, Gender, and Ceremony in the Classical Arabic Ode* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 81. See also Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 144.

2. The great al-Maʿarrī (d. 973/1057), for example, is one of those few who shunned *madīḥ*, but whose exceptional talent and scope ensured his status. See my essay "al-Maʿarrī" in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography: 925–1350*, eds. Terri DeYoung and Mary St. Germain (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), pp. 228–234.
3. Stetkevych, *Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy*, p. 281, and Stefan Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry: A Structural Analysis of Selected Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 3.
4. There are references to Abū ʿl-ʿIbar using obscenities in his *madīḥ*, but alas none of those poems are extant. See Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn, *Adab al-kudya fī al-ʿaṣr al-ʿabbāsī: dirāsa fī adab al-sha ḥḥādhīn wal-mutasawwilīn* (Literature of Begging in the ʿAbbāsid Age), (Damascus: Dār al-ḥaṣād, 1995), pp. 112–117.
5. Meisami, *Structure*, pp. 155–156. Also, van Gelder's "Genres in Collision: Nasīb and Hijāʾ," *JAL* 21, pp. 14–25.
6. See chapter 1.
7. For more, see Meisami, *Structure*, pp. 144–189.
8. Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry*, p. 26.
9. This is the gist of Sperl's paradigm. For more, see ibid., pp. 18–27.
10. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj composed a number of traditional panegyrics with no hint of *sukhf* in them. See, for example, *Dīwān*, pp. 104–105.
11. In *Talṭīf*, pp. 78–80.
12. This line is very obscure. According to the editor, *nujārāt* (sawdust) is an allusion to semen, and thus frequency of intercourse. So it would read as follows: She has so much sawdust (has so much semen), that if she would collect it all, a crucifix could be made of it.
13. Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqāfī (40–95/661–714) was the notorious and exceptionally brutal Umayyad governor of Iraq. Yazīd Ibn al-Muhallab (35–102/672–720) was governor of Khurāsān in the early eighth century and came into conflict with al-Ḥajjāj. The caliph al-Walīd (48–96/668–715) jailed him, but he escaped and sought the protection of Sulaymān (54–99/674–717). When the latter became caliph (86–96/705–715), Ibn al-Muhallab was appointed governor of Iraq and persecuted al-Ḥajjāj's followers.
14. Abū Shujāʿ Fanā Khusraw, *amīr al-ʾumarāʾ* and one of the greatest figures of the Būyid dynasty (d. 372/983). He consolidated Būyid power and secured special privileges from Caliph al-Ṭāʾiʿ (r. 363–381/974–991) such as a second title "Tāj al-milla" (The Crown of the Community), the introduction of his name after the caliph's in the *khuṭba*, and the beating of drums at the entrance of his palace at prayer times. See H. Bowen "ʿAḍud al-Dawla" in *EI*[2].
15. For the poem, see *Talṭīf*, pp. 78–79. On al-Nahrawān (and also Nihrawān), see *Muʿjam al-buldān*, vol. 5, pp. 324–326.
16. Ahlwardt, p. 116. For the purported context of the poem and the famous dispute with ʿAlqamah, see pp. 220–221. See, also, James Montgomery, "'Alqamah's Contest with Imruʾ al-Qays: What Happens When a Poet Is

Umpired by His Wife," *Arabica* 44: 144–149. ʿAlqama's response poem is on pp. 33–35.

17. The expression is derived from "*baʿīdatu mahwā ʻl-qurṭ*" (long-necked). This is an excellent example of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's inversion of the body's hierarchy.
18. Ahlwardt, ibid.
19. See next chapter.
20. See editor's note in *Talṭīf*, p. 357.
21. *Talṭīf*, pp. 218–219. The *dīwān* does not mention explicitly who the recipient of this panegyric is.
22. The stuffed *ʿuṣbān* of testicles, i.e. cocks.
23. *Khubz jirāya*: bread made of inferior flour (Lane).
24. *Talṭīf*, p. 479.
25. The grammarian Ṣāliḥ b. Isḥāq al-Jarmī (d. 225/840) who composed *al-Mukhtaṣar fī al-naḥw*.
26. *Dīwān*, pp. 119–121.
27. Bakhtiyār (331–344/943–978), Būyid prince, heir apparent, and successor of Muʿizz al-Dawla (d. 356/967). See "Bakhtiyār" in *EI*$^2$.
28. Abū Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad Ibn Baqiyya (314–367/926–978 was the vizier of ʿIzz al-Dawla. He was originally from a peasant family from Awānā in upper Iraq. ʿIzz al-Dawla later had him blinded and arrested. When ʿAḍud al-Dawla (937–983) occupied Baghdad in (367/977), he had Ibn Baqiyya trampled by his elephants and crucified. See "Ibn Baqiyya" in *EI*$^2$.
29. Dear and not so dear: everything.
30. For lines 21 and 23, most of which are in Aramaic, I am relying on the Arabic translation provided in the original manuscript. Line 23 does not fit the meter as it stands now.
31. The editor has "*wa-ʻl-ḥayawānā*" (and animal [flesh]), but it does not fit the meter. I have put "*wa-ḥayānā*" (and he revived us).
32. *Dīwān*, p. 120. Ibn Baqiyya was known to have been "adroit in placing gifts."
33. *Dīwān*, pp. 235–236.
34. Elsewhere, he says of his poetry: Poetry overflowing the privy/from the sides of my mind and thought/ Its breeze has stenchy topics/ as if I'd spoken it with my anus. See *Yatīma*, p. 37, *Talṭīf*, p. 138.
35. *Talṭīf*, pp. 128–130.
36. Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥusayn Ibn Aḥmad (d. 374/984–985), Būyid official, vizier, and patron of many scholars and poets, including Ibn al-Ḥajjāj. See "Ibn Saʿdān" in *EI*$^2$.
37. The hero here is, of course, the penis.
38. The verb *nazā* is used to describe how a male animal leaps upon a female. The image of the crying bald one is, obviously, an allusion to a penis and ejaculation.
39. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 8/629), Muḥammad's cousin and ʿAlī's brother. He was one of the earliest converts to Islam. He died at the battle of Muʾta. Al-Ṭayyār (the flying one) is an epithet that was added to his name because of a *ḥadīth* in

which Muḥammad is reported to have said: I entered paradise and saw Jaʿfar flying with the angels and his wings soaked in blood." See editor's note, *Talṭīf*, p. 401.

40. Ibn Hārūn al-Kātib was one of the grand secretaries of the Būyids who worked for Ibn Muqla and Muʿizz al-Dawla (d. 356/966). Abū ʿl-Qāsim al-Muṭahhar (d. 369/979) was ʿAḍud al-Dawla's vizier.
41. Abū Isḥāq Ibn Shahrām was in charge of collecting the panegyrics composed for Ibn Saʿdān. See *Talṭīf*, p. 402.
42. See *Dīwān Bashshār*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ʿĀshūr (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat lajnat al-taʾlīf wal-tarjama wal-nashr, 1966), v. 4, p. 48.
43. *Talṭīf*, p. 108.
44. Lane: *laʿūq*, linctus, a syrupy or sticky preparation containing medicaments exerting local action on the mucous membrane of the throat. Thus, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj means to be saying "cough syrup for anal purposes."
45. The poet employs plenty of *jinās* and *ṭibāq* (antithesis). (Line 3: night's darkness/morning's flame; Line 4: beauty/beautiful faces/ugliness/ugly; Line 7: decay/goodness; Line 12: incomprehensible/clear and eloquent; Line 16: winter/summer).
46. *Yatīma*, vol. 3, p. 39.
47. For more on the impact of the politics of the age on literary production, see chapter 5.
48. Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry*, p. 9.

## 4 *Sukhf* as *Sukhf*: Abū Nuwās, *Mujūn*, and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj

1. Abdelfattah Kilito, *al-Maqāmāt: al-sard wal-ansāq al-thaqāfiyya*, tr. ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Sharqāwī (Casablanca: Dār Tūbqāl, 2001), p. 31.
2. Ibid., p. 26.
3. See "sukhf" in *EI*$^2$.
4. This was briefly addressed in chapter 1.
5. To quote Rowson, "Although often paired with *mujūn . . . sukhf* is distinguished from it in referring less to hedonistic behavior offensive to the prudish than to gross language and comportment upsetting to the squeamish." See "sukhf" in *EAL*.
6. See the section on Abū Ḥukayma in chapter 1.
7. A related topos is that of the phallus as fallen hero or victorious warrior. See chapter 1 and below.
8. *Abū Nuwās*, p. 54. See also p. 353.
9. See, for example, chapter 1. An equally important and productive trope in the same vein is "the salivating phallus." It will be discussed later in the chapter.
10. *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 2–3.
11. *Talṭīf*, p. 174, also in *Durrat al-Tāj*, p. 388.
12. *Durrat al-Tāj*, p. 381.

13. Ibid., pp. 402–403.
14. *Dīwān*, p. 245.
15. Philip F. Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas: A Genius of Poetry* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), pp. 16 and 47, and *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 524–530.
16. Ibid.
17. Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas*, p. 47.
18. Kennedy translates this section of the poem as follows: "When we got together I found myself in the middle of a large sea . . . I cried out to a young man, 'Save me!' And he came to my aid, my foot having slipped into deep waters . . . If he had not thrown me a rope, I would have fallen to the bottom of this sea. After this I swore never again in my life to ride the sea like some marauder; I would travel only upon the backsides [of men]." See ibid., p. 47.
19. *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 101–102.
20. *Abū Nuwās*, p. 100.
21. See the short chapter in *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 104–107 where there is a poem in praise of women.
22. Ibid., p. 107.
23. Ibid., p. 113.
24. See the section on Abū Ḥukayma in chapter 1.
25. Ibid.
26. It is important to remember that during Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's lifetime and the few decades preceding it, the irrigation system in Iraq had declined and there were many broken levies and floods that survived, as events, in the collective memory of the inhabitants. See ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh al-ʿirāq al-iqtiṣādī fī al-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī* (Beirut: Markaz dirāsāt al-waḥda al-ʿarabiyya, 1999), p. 62 on the destruction of dams.
27. See "Diving," below.
28. *Abū Nuwās*, p. 9.
29. Ibid., p. 8.
30. There is no reference to Bāb al-Karkh in Yaqut's *Muʿjam al-buldān*, but is probably the quarter in Baghdad named after the market, which in turn was named after the gate it faced. See "Karkhu Baghdād," in *Yāqūt*, vol. 4, pp. 448–449.
31. *Durrat al-Tāj*, p. 385.
32. Ibid, p. 314.
33. *Talṭīf*, p. 71.
34. For more on the links between eating and sex, see the chapter entitled "Alimentary Metaphors" in Geert Jan van Gelder, *God's Banquet: Food in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 109–118.
35. According to Najm ʿAbdallah Muṣṭafā, the editor of *Talṭīf*, who was a student of the eminent Iraqi critic ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir (who edited *Durrat al-Tāj*), the latter recited this line to Régis Blachère, his advisor at the Sorbonne in the 1950s, who exclaimed: c'est la poésie! See *Talṭīf*, p. 350.
36. Ibid., p. 105.

37. Ibid., p. 68.
38. *Durrat al-Taj*, p. 228.
39. Ibid., p. 400.
40. Abū Nuwās, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-muḥarrama*, ed. Jamāl Jumʿa (Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1998), pp. 115–118.
41. Ibid., p. 96.
42. Ibid., p. 159.
43. Ibid., p. 232.
44. Ibid., pp. 162–163.
45. Ibid., p. 42.
46. *Abū Nuwās*, p. 18.
47. *Talṭīf*, p. 124.
48. Ibid, p. 112.
49. Ibid., p. 105.
50. *Dīwān*, p. 83.
51. Abū Nuwās, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-Muḥarrama,* p. 44.
52. ʿAtīk was a spot in the Arabian Peninsula. See *Yāqūt*, vol. 4, p. 84.
53. *Darrāj* is a hedge-hog, but *durrāj* is "the heath cock; a black and white spotted bird familiar to Iraq": Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Libraire du Liban, 1980). Since the rest are birds, it is safer to read it "*durrāj*."
54. Ibid., p. 45.
55. Abū Nuwās, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-Muḥarrama*, p. 44.
56. *Talṭīf*, p. 226.
57. *Talṭīf*, pp. 133–136, and *Yatīma*, vol. 3, p. 40. Also in *Durrat al-Tāj*, pp. 338–339, with the contextual paragraph.
58. *Durrat al-Ṭāj*, p. 363.
59. Ibid., p. 345.
60. Ibid., p. 232.
61. See James Montgomery, "For the Love of a Christian Boy," *JAL* 27: 115–124.
62. Ibid., and Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas*, pp. 54–56. There are also poems in which Abū Nuwās writes of Zoroastrian boys. See, for example, Abū Nuwās, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-Muḥarrama*, pp. 143–146. For sample poems of love for Christian boys, see Abū Nuwās, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-Muḥarrama*, pp. 146–154. *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 139–163.
63. *Nūniyyāt*, pp. 350–351.
64. Ibid., p. 330.
65. *Talṭīf*, p. 151 and Shawqī Ḍayf, *Tārīkh al-adab al-ʿarabī: ʿaṣr al-duwal wal-ʾimārāt: al-jazīra al-ʿarabiyya-al-ʿirāq-ʾīrān* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1980), pp. 404–405.
66. *Nūniyyāt*, p. 355.
67. For more on this theme, see Geert Jan van Gelder, "Poets Against Ramadan" *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, N.S. 5–6.
68. Abū Nuwās, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-Muḥarrama*, pp. 193–194. See the section entitled "fī ijtiwāʾ shahr Ramaḍān" (In expressing hatred of the month of Ramaḍān) which includes 12 poems on this theme in *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 217–224.

69. *Durrat al-Tāj*, "*al-shakwā min ṣawm shahr ramaḍān*" (Complaining about fasting the month of Ramadan), pp. 501–504. Also in *Yatīma*, p.41.
70. *Talṭīf*, pp. 77–78.
71. See the section on the salivating phallus earlier in this chapter.
72. *Dīwān*, p. 254, *Yatīma*, p. 36.
73. *Dīwān*, p. 254.
74. *Talṭīf*, pp. 209–210.
75. Ibn Fasānjas [*sic*, read Fasānajis] was one of the ruthless officials of the Būyid establishment. He was exiled to Sāmarrāʾ later in his life. See *Talṭīf*, p. 489.
76. *Mindīl*, is that which is used to wipe and clean, especially after ablutions. See *Lisān al-ʿarab* (n-d-l). The reference here is to the poet not having sexual intercourse with his beloved and is thus wondering rhetorically: who, in his stead, will be using his wipe-cloth after intercourse?
77. *Sirpāsh*, in Persian, is "pin."
78. *Yāqūt*, vol. 6, pp. 2677–2678.
79. The period was particularly tumultuous and witnessed frequent clashes between the Jīlīs and Daylamites. See Muṣṭafā al-Tawātī, *Al-Muthaqqafūn wal-sulṭa fī ʿl-ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya: al-dawla albuwayhiyya numūdhajan* (Tunis: Jāmiʿat Tūnis, 19990, 2 vols; vol. 1, pp. 26–333.
80. As mentioned previously, *mindīl* can be read as "handkerchief" or "wipecloth," but it can also mean a turban. See editor's note in *Talṭīf*, p. 490.
81. One might argue that this could be categorized as a *kudya* poem since that seems to be its main objective. It is important, however, to remember that *sukhf* relies on the deliberate confusion and conflation of modes and registers to such an extent that categorization itself is jammed. Moreover, scatological parody is the primary generative mode in this poem and thus it qualifies as a *sukhf* poem according to the criteria established in chapter 1. See, also, Kilito, *Al-Maqāmāt*, pp. 26–28.
82. *Talṭīf*, pp. 216–217.
83. "Pimpstress," which is very apt for *qawwāda*, was suggested by Wolfhart Heinrichs.
84. I could not locate this person. Perhaps it is an allusion to al-Juʿalī who will come up later.
85. Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Baṣrī al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī (nicknamed *Juʿal* "the dung beetle") (d. 369/979), a famous Muʿtazilit theologiane. See *Talṭīf*, p. 496. We have seen how Ibn al-Ḥajjāj mocks various figures, such as poets, grammarians, and critics, by involving them in his scatology and parody. Here the target is the Muʿtazilites.
86. There are many lines where Ibn al-Ḥajjāj boasts of his Shīʿī penis. See, for example, "*wa-bāta ayrī rāfiḍiyya ʿl-khuṣā*" (My penis remained with Shīʿī testicles) in *Talṭīf*, p. 91.
87. According to *Yāqūt*, al-Karkh, the setting of the poem, was a purely Shīʿi quarter. On the composition of its inhabitants, he writes "There are no Sunnīs whatsoever." See *Muʿjam al-buldān*, vol. 4, p. 448. See, also, al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-iqtiṣādī fī al-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī* (The Economic History of Iraq

in the Fourth Hijrī Century) (Beirut: Markaz dirāsāt al-waḥda al-ʿarabiyya, 1999), pp. 73–75.
88. *Talṭīf*, p. 96.
89. See Geert Jan van Gelder, *Close Relationships: Incest and Breeding in Classical Arabic Literature* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 36–62.
90. Ibid., pp 109–112.
91. *Nūniyyāt*, pp. 167–168.
92. A city in southern Iraq built by the notorious al-Ḥajjāj. See *Muʿjam al-buldān*, vol. 5, pp. 348–351.
93. What is intended in the Arabic by *khanā* is *kharā* (shit).
94. *Abū Nuwās*, p. 199.
95. Ibid., p. 204.
96. Ibid., p. 209.
97. *Yatīma*, p. 83.
98. *Abū Nuwās*, pp. 301–302.
99. *Durrat al-Tāj*, pp. 403–404.
100. *Talṭīf*, p. 174, *Durrat al-Tāj*, pp. 400–401.
101. *Durrat al-Tāj*, pp. 401–402.

## 5 *Sukhf*, Scatology, and Society

1. Quoted in ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh al-ʿirāq al-iqtiṣādī fī al-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī* (Beirut: Markaz dirāsāt al-waḥda al-ʿarabiyya, 1999), p. 69.
2. Adam Mez, Adam, *The Renaissance of Islam* (Die Renaissance des Islams), trs. Salahuddin Khuda Bukhsh and D. S. Margoliouth (London: Luzac & Co., 1937), pp. 147–148.
3. Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*, tr. Helen Iswolsky (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1968) was and remains a pioneering work in this regard. Other notable works include Jae Num Lee, *Swift and Scatological Satire* (University of Mexico Press, 1971) and, more recently, *Fecal Matter in Early Modern Literature and Art: Studies in Scatology*, eds. Jeff Richards and Russel Granim (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004). For theoretical exploration into the archeology of modern perceptions of excrement, see Dominique Laporte, *History of Shit*, trs. Nadia Benabid and Rodolphe el-Khory (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000). For the history and politics of responses to scatology, see William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1998) and Winfried Menninghaus, *Disgust: Theory and History of a Strong Sensation*, trs. Howard Eiland and Joel Golb (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003).
4. In discussing the universal themes in Rabelais, Bakhtin writes: "This boundless ocean of grotesque bodily imagery within time and space extends to all languages, all literatures": Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 319.
5. See the introduction in Richards and Granim, *Fecal Matters*, titled "Scatology, the Last Taboo," pp. xiii—xxi.
6. See chapter 1; ibid, p. 184.

7. Richards and Granim, *Fecal Matter*, p. ix.
8. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp. 59–60.
9. On Dante scholars avoiding scatology in Inferno 18, see Zygmunt G. Baranski's "Scatology and Obscenity in Dante," in eds. Teodolinda Barolini and H. Wayne Storey, *Dante for the New Millenium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), pp. 259–273. "Dante scholars, good bourgeois that they are, have normally taken considerable care to avoid the mix of sex and excrement that is Inferno 18 . . . the only canto of the 100 making up the Commedia that has never inspired a critical reading . . . when obliged to be confronted, the attitude is one of disdain, embarrassment and discomfort" (p. 263).
10. Aldous Huxley, for example, attributed Swift's scatology to "a hatred of bowels [that] was at the essence of his misanthropy." Mark Twain remarked that "Swift drags poetry not only through the mud, but into the filth; he roils in it like a raging madman, he enthrones himself in it, and bespatters all passerby." One of Swift's biographers suggested that he was "unable to be reconciled with human effluvia." See *Swift and Scatological Satire*, p. 7. For almost identical reactions to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, see chapter 1.
11. See chapter 1.
12. The Būyid era is usually divided into three periods: The early period (945–977), the Empire (977–1012) and the decline (1012–1055). See Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Period* (Leiden, NY: E. J. Brill, 1992), p. 37.
13. See Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam*; Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, pp. 52–60, Muṣṭafā al-Tawātī, *al-Muthaqafuūn wal-sulṭa fī 'l-ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya: al-dawla al-buwayhiyya namūdhajan*, 2 vols. (Tunis: Jāmiʿat Tūnis, 1999). For a broad social history, see Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001[2nd ed.]). For a survey of the economic history of the Būyid period, see ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh al-ʿirāq al-iqtiṣādī fiʿl-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī* (The Economic History of Iraq in the Fourth Century of Hijra) (Beirut: Markaz dirāsāt al-waḥda al-ʿarabiyya, 1999). On the various institutions of the period, see John Donohue, *The Buwayhid Dynasty in Iraq: Shaping Institutions for the Future* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 2003).
14. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. 28, and al-Tawātī, *al-Muthaqqafuūn wal-sulṭa fī 'l-ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya*, pp. 25, 48. This is not unique to the Būyids and became a constant in other non-Arab military ruling elites, such as the Mamlūks, under whose rule literature, art, and architecture would also flourish. Al-Tawātī describes the Būyids as the first dynasty of non-Arab and also non-aristocratic background to rule in the center of the Islamic empire.
15. al-Tawātī, *al-Muthaqqafuūn wal-sulṭa fī 'l-ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya*, p. 7.
16. Ibid., p. 12.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. vii.

20. al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh al-ʿirāq al-iqtiṣādī fī al-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī*, pp. 85–87.
21. Ibid., p. 62.
22. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. 21.
23. al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh al-ʿirāq al-iqtiṣādī fī al-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī*, p. 296.
24. Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam*, p. 7.
25. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. 52.
26. The last section of al-Tawātī's second volume is dedicated to the various literary trends in response to the general atmosphere of the Būyid age. See pp. 147–339, particularly "*Tayyār al-kudya wal-sukhf*" (The *Kudya* and *Sukhf* Trend), pp. 184–204.
27. Ibid., p. 184.
28. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, p. 184.
29. See "*al-khāṣṣa wa'l-ʿāmma*." in *EI*$^2$. For a general overview of the conditions of the *ʿāmma* of Baghdad in this period, see Fahmī Saʿd, *al-ʿĀmma fī Baghdād fī al-qarnayn al-thālith wal-rābiʿ lilhijra: dirāsa fī al-tārīkh al-ijtimāʿī* (The Masses of Baghdad in the Third and Fourth Centuries A.H.: A Study in Social History) (Beirut: Dār al-Muntakhab al-ʿArabī, 1993). On the various definitions of the term *ʿāmma*, see pp. 138–140, and al-Tawātī, *al-Muthaqqafuūn wal-sulṭa fī 'l-ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya*, pp. 29–34. On economic and social upheavals, see Saʿd, *al-ʿĀmma fī Baghdād fī al-qarnayn*, pp. 307–324; and al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh al-ʿirāq al-iqtiṣādī fī al-qarn al-rābiʿ al-hijrī*, pp. 295–296.
30. Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam*, p. 148.
31. [I]t would require an unusual amount of modesty for authors to place themselves in the *ʿāmma* when they talk of the two great classes. See "al-ʿāmma wa'l-khāṣṣa," *EI*$^2$.
32. There is a risk of overgeneralizing here, but what is important is the sense that a certain group has of those considered much lower in status and in learning. One must also distinguish between urban and rural social groups, the *ʿāmma* included.
33. "al-ʿāmma wa'l-khāṣṣa" in *EI*$^2$.
34. Ibid.
35. This is similar to the images of peasants (and foreign "others" for that matter such as the Saracens) in many premodern European representations. See Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford University Press, 1999). Freedman writes that "Medieval Europeans of the upper classes, like their modern descendants regarded rural life as appealingly simple and admirably productive but above all as a strange tableau populated with alien beings of lower order" (p. 1). He also notes "the proliferation of images of peasants as base, filthy, and stupid" (p. 133). "The peasant is surrounded by excrement and dirt symbols of unpleasant natural productivity and of the uncontrollable body. In common with other examples of polymorphous body, the obsessive scatology may indicate not just the hostile regard of the superior orders but some element of the carnivalesque culture of the lower classes themselves" (p. 153). "The peasant is a laughable, reverse moral typification of bad manners and gross customs" (p. 173).

36. I am not suggesting that he was the first. Chapter 1 addressed precedents and predecessors. Abū Dulaf (fourth–tenth century) achieved a similar feat in his own poetry. See Bosworth, pp. 80–96. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, however, stands out in terms of scope, degree, and impact.
37. Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, pp. 2, 35. Miller adds elsewhere that together with other emotions, disgust "work[s] to hierarchize our political order: in some setting they do the work of maintaining hierarchy; in other settings they constitute righteously presented claims for superiority" (p. 9).
38. The closest analogue in contemporary popular culture is the infamous daytime talk show The Jerry Springer Show, where participants from poor and working-class background appear on the show to disclose and discuss a host of unusual physical and psychological problems, desires and dysfunctions. The studio audience usually reacts with a mixture of disbelief, disgust, and laughter. See, for example, Maria Elizabeth Grabe, "Maintaining the Moral Order: A Functional of The Jerry Springer Show," *Critical Issues in Mass Communicatio*,19, 3 (2002): pp. 311–328.
39. "The proper functioning of the body has direct bearing on the proper functioning of the body politic." See Jeffrey C. Persels, "Straitened in the Bowels, or Concerning the Rabelaisian Trope of Defecation," *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 31 (1996): 101–112.

## Appendix B

1. Al-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-shīʿa* (The Shīʿī Notables), ed. Ḥasan al-Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-taʿāruf, 1983), vol. 5, pp. 427–431.
2. *Qurʾān* 18:16 (Sūrat al-Kahf) "Wa-kalbuhum bāsiṭun dhirāʿayhi biʾl-waṣīd." I am using Arberry's translation. See *The Koran Interpreted*, tr. A. J. Arberry (New York: Touchstone, 1996).
3. The first two lines appear in a panegyric to Ibn al-ʿAmīd. See *Talṭīf*, p. 207. The excerpt above is also in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* in the entry "Sūq Yaḥyā," vol. 3, p. 284.
4. The titles in brackets are added.
5. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (355–436/967–1044), the elder brother of al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. He was from a prominent Shīʿī family claiming descent from the Imāms. Al-Murtaḍā was an accomplished poet, scholar, and author of the *Kitāb al-amālī*. See Carl Brockelmann, "al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā" in *EI*$^2$.

## Appendix C

An excerpt from Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, *Nuzhat al-albāb fī mā lā yūjad fī kitāb* (The Sojourn of the Heart in What Is Not in a Book), ed. Jamāl Jumʿa (London: Riad El-Rayyes, 1992), pp. 117–120.

1. A dessert made with peeled and boiled wheat and sugar, and mixed with rosewater. Al-Tīfāshī, *Nuzhat al-albāb fī mā lā yūjad fī kitāb* p. 117.

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