THE CAMEL-SECTION OF THE PANEGYRICAL ODE[1]

When comparing Arabic odes from different periods, the reader is sure to notice a certain discrepancy with regard to the main parts of the *qaṣīda*: erotic prologue (*nasīb*), camel-theme (*waṣf al-jamal* and/or *raḥīl*), panegyric (*madīḥ*). I mean the fact that the first and last section remain almost unchanged as structural units of the ode, whereas the second part, the camel-theme, changes radically from Pre-Islamic to Abbasid times. That is to say, although *nasīb* and *madīḥ* present many aspects of internal change and development, and even more so, I believe, than has been recognized up to now, they continue to form substantial elements of the genre. The camel-section, on the other hand, once the nucleus of tribal *fakhr* and a weighty, elaborate part of the panegyrical ode, first changes in function, then gradually dwindles away, and finally disappears. From a diachronistic point of view it is, therefore, the most interesting part of the *qaṣīda*. By examining the process of change in its successive phases, it should be possible to obtain a clearer notion of an important development in Arabic literary history, i.e. the transformation of the Pre-Islamic tribal ode into the courtly ode of medieval Islam.[2]

It is to be hoped that the proposed study will shed some light on another issue as well, the validity of Ibn Qutayba's description of the *qaṣīda*.[3] I am hardly exaggerating, if I say that his famous passage has dominated western research from the time, when it was first translated and commented upon by Th. Nöldeke in 1864,[4] up to the present day. There is no general survey, handbook or article on Arabic poetry without quoting it, alluding to it, or at least implicitly accepting Ibn Qutayba's authority as to the basic characteristics of the genre. Statements by previous scholars tending to reduce the applicability of the text have been more or less disregarded.[5] It is sufficient to refer to the article *qaṣīda* in the

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[1] I wish to thank Prof. M. Mangold of the University of Saarbrücken for correcting the English manuscript.

[2] The terms "tribal ode" and "courtly ode" are equivalent to the German words "Stammesqaṣide" and "Hofqaṣide", which I have used elsewhere. To some extent they correspond to the terms "primary *qaṣīda*" and "secondary *qaṣīda*" proposed by M. M. Badawi in a recent paper (From Primary to Secondary Qaṣīdas. *JAL* XI 1980, pp. 1-31), but there is an important point of difference. For Badawi makes a distinction between odes from different periods, while I try to distinguish between two definite forms.

[3] Ibn Qotaiba, *Liber poesis et poetarum*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Lugduni Batavorum 1904, p. 14f.

[4] *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der alten Araber*, Hannover 1864 (Reprint Hildesheim 1967), p. 18ff.

[5] About half a century ago G. E. von Grunebaum pointed out that Ibn Qutayba's description does not fit most of the Pre-Islamic odes (Die Wirklichkeitweite der

New Edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam by G. Lecomte, which is a faithful reproduction of the traditional view. The surprising *taqlīd* of modern scholarship can only be explained, in my opinion, by the essentially static conception of Arabic poetry as conventional or even "identical"[6] throughout the centuries. As a consequence, it had seemed superfluous to ask from which historical period Ibn Qutayba took his model, and whether it was ever followed as a norm.

In recent years, however, a few modifications in the understanding of the text are to be observed. It is generally recognized today that Ibn Qutayba described one particular type of *qaṣīda*, the panegyrical ode, as it is the only Pre-Islamic genre, apart from the *marthiyya* (elegy), still existing in his own time. It is also common knowledge that his characterization of the *nasīb* as consisting of the campside-motif and the lamentation for the lost beloved does not exhaust all possible motifs employed by poets.[7] In addition, new interest in Ibn Qutayba's version of the *qaṣīda* has been aroused by modern structuralistic methods and theories. His merit of representing the poem as a functional unit, in which each section is determined and motivated by the poet's object of pleasing the *mamdūḥ* (patron) and influencing him, has been duly emphasized in recent research.[8] To my mind this interpretation is an important step towards a just appreciation of Ibn Qutayba's discernment, and I shall use it as an argument in the present paper. For I am convinced that our understanding of the passage in question is still deficient and has to be reconsidered in the light of further investigations of poetic texts. My own attempt in this direction is concerned with one part of the *qaṣīda* only, and based on a mere selection of texts. Inspite of these limitations I hope to provide some evidence in favour of the following theses: The description of Ibn Qutayba does not fit any Pre-Islamic ode. It can only be applied to one of several types developed by Umayyad poets. At Ibn Qutayba's lifetime this type of panegyrical ode had been virtually abandoned.

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fr[ü]harabischen Dichtung. Wien 1937, *WZKM* Beiheft 3, p. 193ff.), and R. Blach[è]re correctly stated that the camel-section had disappeared in the later Abbasid period (*Un poète arabe du IVe siècle de l'Hégire (Xe siècle de J.-C.): Abou ṭ-Ṭayyib al-Motanabbī*, Paris 1935, p. 47).

[6] This view has been explicitly stated by E. García-Gómez (Convencionalismo e insinseridad en la poesía árabe. *Al-Andalus* V 1940, pp. 31-43, cf. p. 37f.).

[7] I am aware of the fact that Ibn Qutayba uses the term *nasīb* for the poet's lamentation only, and not for the erotic prologue as a whole. But I cannot see that there is anything gained by changing a well established terminology, all the more so, as Arabic theorists are by no means unanimous in applying the term *nasīb*.

[8] K. Abu Deeb, Towards a Structural Analysis of Pre-Islamic Poetry. *IJMES* VI 1975, pp. 148-184. Cf. pp. 148 and 179.—J. E. Bencheikh, *Poétique arabe. Essai sur les voies d'une création*, Paris 1975, pp. 116-119.—Abu Deeb's assertion that Ibn Qutayba's passage is purely descriptive, cannot be upheld, however. There is ample evidence for his intention to provide poets with a norm they should follow.

As I shall return to the relevant parts of his description in the course of the analysis, it will be convenient for the reader to refer to his text. After mentioning the campside-motif and explaining its meaning and origin, Ibn Qutayba says: "...Then to this he linked the erotic prelude, and bewailed the violence of his love and the anguish of separation from his mistress and the extremity of his passion and desire, so as to win the hearts of his hearers... Now, when the poet had assured himself of an attentive hearing, he followed up his advantage and set forth his claim: thus he went on to complain of fatigue and want of sleep and travelling by night and of the noonday heat, and how his camel had been reduced to leanness. And when after representing all this discomfort and danger of his journey, he knew that he had fully justified his hope and expectation of receiving his due meed from the person to whom the poem was addressed, he entered upon the panegyric...".[9]

Before engaging in the analysis, a few preliminary remarks as to procedure and material are required. Arabic poetry at all periods has had a strong conservative tendency. Tradition and innovation continue to exist side by side, and there are always poets who try to revive an obsolete form, if only to show their poetical skill. For that reason it is impossible to state with certainty whether a traditional motif, technique or genre has been entirely abandoned, without making a thorough examination of all available texts. But there are two questions which can be answered with some confidence, I believe. By a synchronistic analysis of representative selections of poetry it can be established whether a certain form is predominant or rare, and by relating the results of several synchronistic surveys with each other, it is possible to ascertain what course the process of change is going to take. From such a study it will become evident, moreover, that poetic development is not only determined by external factors and the ingenuity of individual poets, but also by esthetic rules inherent in the form.

For the purpose of the present analysis, the history of the *qaṣīda* may be divided into four periods: a) Pre-Islamic, b) early Islamic, c) Umayyad, d) Abbasid. With regard to the first two periods, I have examined all relevant texts in order to establish the main types of the ode, but I have not made a complete inventory and statistical evaluation, as to my mind these early texts do not provide a reliable basis for such a procedure. Even if we are inclined to accept most of the early material as authentic, the possibility of forgery, interpolation and false attribution of verses cannot be excluded in the individual case. As for the two last periods, a dif-

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[9] The translation is quoted from R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*. Cambridge ²1930, p. 77f.

ferent method has been adopted. I have chosen three poets respectively who by common assent, both medieval and modern, are the most distinguished panegyrists of their time. These are the Umayyad court-poets al-Akhṭal (d. about 92/710), Jarīr (d. 110/728) and al-Farazdaq (d. 110/728 or 112/730), and the Abbasid poets Abū Tammām (d. 231/845), al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897) and al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965). Their panegyrical odes, a total of 144 and 593 poems, will be analysed both from a qualitative and a quantitative point of view.

Evidence with regard to the Pre-Islamic period is not new. I am relying mainly on a previous study, to which the reader is referred for more detailed information.[10] Finally I should like to point out that I am con-cerned with the history of the genre, and not with individual poems, and that the analysis is directed towards the surface-structure of the *qaṣīda* on-ly. As is well known, a theme or motif may acquire a special function in one particular poem, or it may function differently at different semantic levels. Problems of this kind will be excluded from the present study.

a) *Pre-Islamic period*

We do not know at what time the polythematic poem was created, and which factors determined selection and sequence of themes. At our pres-ent stage of knowledge it seems reasonable to suppose that at first in-dependent genres were united by the same metre and rhyme, and that gradually the ode became more closely structured, forming in the end a new genre with definite characteristics of its own. There are some indica-tions in the early texts as to the development of the *qaṣīda* and its thematic units. Thus whatever the function of the camel-section may be as part of the panegyrical ode, it certainly belonged originally to the poet's self-praise, where the description of his camel and the perilous desert-journey hold a prominent place. The camel-theme as part of the *mufākhara* is in-troduced, as most themes of *fakhr*, by the *wa-rubba* (many a...) or the par-ticle *qad* followed by imperfect tense (and often I...). It further appears that the poet's pride in his camel and his display of courage in crossing the desert form two separate motifs although they are closely related and often linked together in such a way that the travel-theme is introducing the description of the camel.[11] In view of later development it seems im-portant to me to distinguish between these two motifs at the outset of the analysis. I shall refer to them from now on as *waṣf* (description) and *raḥīl* (desert-journey). Their general characteristics are as follows:[12]

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[10] *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣide*, Wiesbaden 1971.

[11] Cf. for example Ahlwardt, Imraᵓalqais No. IV, v. 18ff.

[12] Cf. Jacobi, *l.c.*, pp. 53-61.

1. The *waṣf* is a lengthy elaborate part of the *qaṣīda* extending as a rule over 10-30 verses. It consists of descriptive passages and short narrative units introduced as comparisons. The poet describes the body of the camel, sometimes in great detail, and praises its swiftness, strength and endurance of hardships. Reference to the desert-journey is never absent, of course, but the implication is always the excellence of the poet's mount. The narrative units or episodes, by which the camel is compared to an antelope, a wild ass, an ostrich or, very rarely, to an eagle, usually develop into lively scenes of desert-life, representing the wild animal in its typical actions and surroundings. Although the *waṣf* is essentially a theme of the *mufākhara*, it transcends the function of self-praise. It is one of the principal poetic themes of the *jāhiliyya*, more deeply rooted in beduin society perhaps, than any other motif.[13]

2. The *raḥīl* is comparatively short, about 2-4 verses, and by no means as frequent as the *waṣf*. The desert-journey is referred to so as to stress the poet's courage in lonely, fearful spots, where he is in constant danger of losing his way. The destination of the journey is not mentioned, nor any itinerary given.

The panegyrical ode[14] of the Pre-Islamic period has many features in common with other types of the *qaṣīda*. *Nasīb* and camel-section, whether followed by a *madīḥ*, a *mufākhara* or a combination of *fakhr* and *hijāʾ* (satire), are composed on similar lines on the whole, and with the same variety of motifs, but certain preferences are to be observed. The camel-section usually forms an important part of the ode and corresponds to the *waṣf* as described above. The camel-theme is rarely introduced by the *wa-rubba*, i.e. in the manner of the *mufākhara*. As a rule, the transition from *nasīb* to *waṣf* is effected by two motifs relating to the erotic theme. Both are highly formulaic and will be referred to as transition A_1 and A_2.[15] Transition A_1 consists of an allusion to the poet's sorrow and longing in general, or to the campside-motif in particular. In both versions the poet resolves to forget his grief, and to seek comfort in the beauty and excellence of his mount. If the transition is unspecified, the formula *daʿhā* (leave her!) or *daʿdhā* (leave this!) is often used, or some exhortation to the same effect, as in the following hemistich (*Muf.* No. LXXVI, v. 19):

> *fa-salli l-hamma ʿanka bi-dhāti lauthin...*
> So then bring forgetfulness of care to thee with a strong she-camel...

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[13] This aspect has been studied by A. Hamori, The poet as Hero, in: *On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature*, Princeton N.J. 1974, pp. 3-30.

[14] Cf. Jacobi, *l.c.*, pp. 88-100 and 104-105. I have referred to this type as "Preisqaṣide".

[15] Cf. Jacobi, *l.c.*, pp. 49-53, where the term "Verbindungsmotiv" is used.

In other versions of transition A_1 the poet refers to the deserted campside (Ahlwardt, Nābigha No. V, v. 7):

> *fa-ʿaddi ʿammā tarā idh lā rtijāʿa lahū*
> > *wa-nmi l-qutūda ʿalā ʿayrānatin ujudī*
>
> Turn away from that which you see, for (the past) does not return, and put the saddle-trees on a she-camel with strong back, like a wild ass.

The wording implies that *nasīb* and *waṣf* form one continuous narrative. The poet on his desert-journey discovers an abandoned campside. He stops there, remembers his lost beloved, and finally resolves to continue his journey.

Transition A_2 is rarely used in the panegyrical ode. It is an allusion to the motif of separation, which is less frequent than the campside-motif before a *madīḥ*. The poet either reflects on the bitterness of separation and on the fact that the tribe of his beloved is camping far away, or he is actually watching her litter disappear in the distance. He then expresses the wish to be carried to her by his strong she-camel (*Muf.* No. CXI, v. 3):

> *hal ablughanhā bi-mithli l-faḥli nājiyatin...*
> Shall there carry me to her a fleet camel, good as a stallion...

Both in transition A_1 and A_2 the camel-section is introduced and motivated by an allusion to the erotic theme. Sometimes *nasīb* and *waṣf* seem to represent a narrative with two successive stages, but the inference is not always clear.

At the end of the camel-section the poet states the destination of his journey by giving the name or rank of his patron. This motif will be caHed transition B.[16] Although there are a few variations, it is also formulaic in character. In Nābigha's ode already quoted, the poet alludes to the camel mentioned in the preceding passage (No. V, v. 20):

> *fa-tilka tublighunī an-Nuʿmāna...*
> This (she-camel) will carry me to an-Nuʿmān...

A variation of the same motif is provided by the following verse from an ode by al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥilliza (*Muf.* No. XXV, v. 9):

> *a-fa-lā tuʿaddīhā ilā malikin / shahmi l-muqādati mājidi n-nafsī*
> Wilt thou not then direct her course to a King of good judgement in the shepherding of his people, glorious of soul?

The erotic prologue of this ode contains the campside-motif, transition A_1 (vv. 6-7) implies continuation of the poet's journey. As transition B states his destination, we receive the impression that *nasīb*, *waṣf* and *madīḥ* form

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[16] Cf. Jacobi, *l.c.*, pp. 61-65.

a narrative sequence, interrupted by descriptive passages. The same interpretation is possible with regard to Nābigha's ode (No. V). His *dīwān*, moreover, contains a short passage in which all three phases of the narrative sequence are referred to in the shortest possible way (Ahlwardt, No. XIX):

> 8. *fa-lammā an raʾaytu d-dāra qafran*
>   *wa-khālafa bālu ahli d-dāri bālī*
> 9. *nahaḍtu ilā ʿudhāfiratin ṣamūtin*
>   *mudhakkaratin tajillu ʿani l-kalālī*
> 10. *fidāʾun li-mriʾin sārat ilayhī*
>   *bi-ʿidhrati rabbihā ʿammī wa-khālī*

> 8. But when I saw the campside deserted, and the wishes of its inhabitants had crossed my own wishes,
> 9. I turned to a strong, silent she-camel, like a stallion, never showing fatigue.
> 10. My paternal and maternal uncles shall be the ransom of the man to whom she is travelling with the apology of her master.

The treatment of the camel-theme in this passage suggests a later poet, but that would not disprove the point I am trying to make, namely, that the panegyrical ode was sometimes envisaged as a narrative sequence, or in more general terms, that the techniques of structuring the poem in the Pre-Islamic period were largely those of the narrative. However, this tradition was not continued by later poets. The development of the genre took a different turn, leading to a gradual loss of its narrative and, to some extent, also its descriptive features.

We further observe that panegyrical odes consist sometimes of two sections only, *nasīb* and *madīḥ*.[17] There is also one early *qaṣīda* containing a short *raḥīl* to the patron inserted into the *madīḥ*, in addition to the *waṣf*. The ode is dedicated to al-Ḥārith, King of Ghassān, and was composed by ʿAlqama after the battle of Ḥalīma in 554 A.D. (Ahlwardt No. II = *Muf.* No. CXIX). In Ahlwardt's edition, where the sequence of verses seems to me more reliable than in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*,[18] verse 11 contains transition A_1, followed by three verses describing the poet's camel. Verse 15 states the destination (*ilā l-Ḥārithi...*), corresponding to transition B, and after two verses of praise a *raḥīl* is added, emphasizing the exertions of the poet in reaching the King (vv. 17-22). The *raḥīl* to the *mamdūḥ* and its blending with the praise are unusual at this early period. The technique may have been invented by ʿAlqama, but as it is a common feature of the Umayyad ode, I should prefer to regard it as a later interpolation.

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[17] In the *dīwāns* of Nābigha adh-Dhubyānī and Zuhair the ode with two sections is even more frequent than the tripartite form, cf. Jacobi, *l.c.*, p. 104.

[18] In the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* transition A_1 is followed by the destination, i.e. transition B, which does not make sense (No. CXIX, pp. 11-12).

The panegyrical ode of the *jāhiliyya* or "tribal ode", as I shall call it from now on, if it is tripartite in structure, contains an extensive camel-section, mostly linked to the *nasīb* and to the following *madīḥ* by means of the narrative. The camel-theme consists of the *waṣf al-jamal*, composed without any reference to the *madīḥ*. It is evident from this characterization that the tribal ode does not fit Ibn Qutayba's description. The two main reasons are the absence of the *raḥīl* to the *mamdūḥ* and the fact that each section of the poem has its own weight. It is impossible to explain the tribal *nasīb, waṣf* and *madīḥ* as the functional unit visualized by Ibn Qutayba. The unity of the Pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* is achieved by different means. I hope that these arguments will be still more convincing after we shall have discussed the Umayyad ode.

b) *Early Islamic period*

The term "early Islamic" is somewhat misleading, I am afraid, for it is used to denote the two generations of poets known in Arabic tradition as *al-mukhaḍramūn*, i.e. the older and younger contemporaries of the Prophet. According to current opinion, the grouping of these poets was motivated by religious reasons, and is not justified from a literary point of view. Even if the first assumption were true, the second would not follow necessarily, and may be modified by future research. At the present stage of our knowledge it seems premature to draw a definite line, but there are several indications to show that some of the poetry composed during the first half of the 7th century has certain features of its own, such as a growing display of individuality in composition and style, and in the treatment of conventional themes and formulas. This is what one would expect, moreover, for it is inconceivable that the external factors which helped to prepare the advent of Islam, should not have exercised some influence on contemporary poets as well. We are used to explaining many changes in Umayyad poetry as an effect of Islam and the ensuing social upheaval, but I am convinced that at least some of them can be traced back to an earlier period, and have to be understood as a development parallel to the rise of Islam.[19] The panegyrical ode seems to be a case in question.

During the first decades of the 7th century the tribal ode was still frequently used by professional poets, but there is an obvious tendency to omit the camel-theme. Ḥassān ibn Thābit (d. about 40/661) for instance, the main panegyrist of Muḥammad, composed his panegyrics without a camel-section. In addition, a new type of *qaṣīda* was slowly emerging, as evidenced by the *dīwān*s of two leading poets of successive generations: al-

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[19] I have assembled some evidence in support of this view in a forthcoming article on Arabic poetry, to be published in: Grundriß der arabischen Philologie, Vol. II, ed. H. Gätje.

Aʿshā Maimūn (d. 7/629 or 8/630) and al-Ḥuṭaiʾa (d. about 40/661). Literary history placed the latter in a line with Kaʿb ibn Zuhair and Zuhair himself,[20] but he also seems indebted to al-Aʿshā,[21] who certainly was one of the most original and innovating spirits of his time. Their poems present similar aspects of composition and will be used as a basis of the following survey.

The two *dīwān*s contain twenty panegyrical odes by al-Aʿshā and eight odes by al-Ḥuṭaiʾa. Classification is not always easy, as some poems do not conform to a definite pattern. These variations may be due to individual style or a singular purpose in one particular poem, but the possibility of lacunae or other defects in the text cannot be excluded. It is a characteristic of al-Aʿshā to treat the camel-theme in the manner of the *mufākhara*. He nearly always introduces it by *wa-rubba*, and sometimes places a short, unspecified *raḥīl* before the *waṣf*. To some extent his preference of *wa-rubba* to transition A_1 or A_2 is accounted for by his habit of adding a drinking-scene to the *nasīb*, so that the traditional formulas cannot be used, but it also suggests a tendency to dissolve the narrative sequence of *nasīb* and *waṣf*. In two of his odes the camel-section is inserted into a sequence of *fakhr*, and does not form a separate section between *nasīb* and *madīḥ* (No. XXIX, vv. 10-15, No. XXXIII, vv. 25-27). Both poems are relevant to the study of al-Aʿshā's style and technique, but they do not contribute to the history of the genre, and have been excluded from the analysis. Despite al-Aʿshā's peculiarities, five poems from his *dīwān* can be classified as tribal odes, whereas four odes by al-Ḥuṭaiʾa, who is more conventional in his composition on the whole, belong to this category.[22] In addition, both poets composed a number of poems with significant variations presenting two different patterns:

1. the tribal ode with *waṣf* and additional *raḥīl* to the patron,
2. the new ode with *raḥīl* instead of *waṣf*.

1. The first type can be regarded as an intermediate form between the tribal ode and the new ode. The *waṣf* is composed in the usual way, but appears slightly shortened. At the end a *raḥīl* of approximately 3-5 verses is added, emphasizing the exertions and hardships endured by the poet on his way to the *mamdūḥ*. Both in the *dīwān* of al-Aʿshā and al-Ḥuṭaiʾa we observe several techniques of developing the travel-theme, which are partly to be explained as an elaboration of transition B. Sometimes the

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[20] Cf. Goldziher's introduction to his dīwān, p. 4f.
[21] Cf. G. Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung. Die Zahriyāt, Rabīʿiyāt und Rauḍiyāt von ihren Anfängen bis aṣ-Ṣanaubarī*, Beirut, 1974, p. 28.
[22] Al-Aʿshā Nos. XIII, XXXII, XXXIX, LV, LXXIX, and al-Ḥuṭaiʾa Nos. VII, XVI, LXXVII, LXXXIX.

raḥīl begins within the *waṣf*, and is skillfully led to its destination without a visible break. There is a well-known motif of the tribal *waṣf*, consisting of the camel's complaint of fatigue. It is used as transition B by a contemporary of al-Aʿshā (*Muf.* No. XLIII v. 8):

> *lammā tashakkat ilayyā l-ayna qultu lahā*
> > *lā tastarīḥīna mā lam alqā Masʿūdā*

> When she complained of sore travel, this my word in reply: "Thou shalt not rest till I come to see the face of Masʿūd."

The motif is developed by al-Aʿshā into an elaborate transition from *waṣf* to *madīḥ*. After describing his she-camel (No. I, vv. 18-32), the poet continues (v. 33): *wa-tarāhā tashkū ilayyā...* (And you see her complain to me...). The following two verses contain the causes for the complaint, then al-Aʿshā addresses her directly:

> 36. *lā tashakkay ilayyā min alami n-nis-*
> > *ʿi wa-lā min ḥafan wa-lā min kalālī*
> 37. *lā tashakkay ilayyā wa-ntajiʿī l-As-*
> > *wada ahla n-nadā wa-ahla l-faʿālī*

> 36. Do not complain to me of pain caused by the breast-strap, nor of a sore hoof, nor of weariness!
> 37. Do not complain to me, but make for al-Aswad, a liberal man of noble deeds!

In this passage transition B has been enlarged from one verse to five verses (vv. 33-37), but it does not form a *raḥīl* separated from the *waṣf*. In other odes the poet states his destination at the end of the *waṣf*, and adds an account of the hardships and dangers of the journey. The following example is of special interest because al-Aʿshā begins the camel-theme with a short *raḥīl* in the style of the *mufākhara*, and ends up with a second *raḥīl*, as it were, emphasizing his exertions in reaching the *mamdūḥ*. At the end of the *waṣf* (No. VIII, vv. 25-37) the poet says, referring to his she-camel:

> 38. *taʾummu Salāmata Dhā Fāʾishin*
> > *huwa l-yauma hammun li-miʿādihā*
> 39. *wa-kam dūna baytika min ṣafṣafin*
> > *wa-dakdāki ramlin wa-aʿqādihā*
> 40. *wa-yaḥmāʾa bi-l-layli ghaṭshā l-falā-*
> > *ti yuʾnisunī ṣautu fayyādihā*
> 41. *wa-waḍʿi siqāʾin wa-iḥqābihī*
> > *wa-ḥalli ḥulūsin wa-ighmādihā*

> 38. She is bound for Salāma Dhū Fāʾish, he is the aim today of her appointed journey.
> 39. How many plains and rugged or sandy grounds are lying before your abode,

40. and deserts, dark and trackless by night, where the cries of owls keep
me company,
41. and how many times I had to take down the water-skin and fasten it
again behind me, and to lift the saddle-cloth and put it back again!

In this ode the traditional *wasf* and the *rahīl* to the patron form two
separate themes, as evidenced by the unspecified *rahīl* introducing the
camel-section.

There is another variation of the travel-theme in the *dīwān* of al-
Hutai'a, starting with *wa-rubba* after a short passage containing the *wasf*
(No. X, vv. 9-16). It is obvious from the context that *wa-rubba* does not
express habitual action here, but length of the poet's journey to the
mamdūh:

17. *wa-laylin takhattaytu ahwālahū*
      ilā ʿUmarin artajīhi thimālā
18. *tawaytu mahāmiha makhshiyyatan*
      ilayka li-tukdhiba ʿannī l-maqālā
19. *bi-mithli l-haniyyi barāhā l-kalā-*
      lu yanziʿna ālan wa-yarkudna ālā
20. *ilā malikin ʿādilin hukmuhū...*

17. And many are the nights whose terrors I defied on my way towards
ʿUmar, to seek his assistance!
18. I traversed fearful deserts on my way towards you, so that you might
defend me against calumnies,
19. on a she-camel like a bow, worn out by weary travelling; sometimes
they (i.e. our camels) slowed down because of the sun-mist, some-
times they pressed on,
20. bound for a King, righteous in his judgement...

The preceding *wasf* (vv. 9-16) is introduced by transition A₂, expressing
the poet's intention to visit his beloved. It is evident, therefore, that the
rahīl described above forms a new theme, entirely separated from the
first. The technique of blending *rahīl* and *madīh*, and the repetition of *ilā*
emphasizing the destination, will become a favourite device of Umayyad
poetry, especially in the odes of al-Farazdaq, who was al-Hutai'a's *rāwī*
according to some authorities. The three passages cited above represent
different forms of composition, of which the two first examples probably
developed in the same way. The poet took transition B of the tribal ode as
his starting point, inserting elements of the traditional *rahīl* of the
mufākhara, thereby subtly changing its function. A total of eight poems by
al-Aʿshā and two poems by al-Hutai'a come under this category.[23]

2. In the second type, the "new ode", the *wasf* as a separate section of
the poem has disappeared, and the *rahīl* to the patron occupies its place,

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[23] Al-Aʿshā Nos. I, II, III, IV, VIII, XI, XXI, XXVIII and al-Hutai'a Nos. X, XIII.

that is to say, the camel-section, from beginning to end, is motivated as a journey to the *mamdūḥ*. However, the means by which the new function of the camel-theme is expressed, are still rather inconspicuous. In the following verses al-Aʿshā begins the travel-theme with *wa-rubba* denoting length and duration of the journey. The *raḥīl* forms one syntactical unit (No. XII):

30. *wa-baydāʾa yalʿabu fīhā s-sarā-*
           bu lā yahtadī l-qaumu fīhā masīrā
31. *qaṭaʿtu idhā samiʿa s-sāmiʿū-*
           na li-l-jundubi l-jauni fīhā ṣarīrā
32. *bi-nājiyatin ka-atāni th-thamīl*
           tuwaffī s-surā baʿda aynin ʿasīrā
33. *jumāliyyatin taghtalī bi-r-ridāf*
           idhā kadhdhaba l-āthimātu l-hajīrā
34. *ilā malikin ka-hilāli s-samā-*
           ʾi adhkā wafāʾan wa-majdan wa-khīrā

30. Many deserts, where the sun-mist is playing, and travellers are in danger of losing their way,
31. I traversed, when you hear the dark locusts creaking,
32. on a fleet she-camel, like a rock standing in shallow water, sprightly raising her tail after the night's fatigue,
33. strong as a male, speeding away with two riders, when other camels are going slow in the noonday heat,
34. bound for a King, like the crescent moon, eminent in faithfulness, fame and liberality.

Although the whole passage is to be regarded as a *raḥīl*, the poet retained some elements of the tribal *waṣf* (vv. 32-33). We further notice that the function of the travel-theme is not emphasized, but is to be derived from the syntactical structure of the passage only. There are two more odes by al-Aʿshā composed with a similar technique (Nos. XXXV, LXVIII), but we also find the destination stated at the beginning of the *raḥīl*. In an ode dedicated to the Prophet the poet mentions his habit of taking long journeys, and assumes his being asked where he is going (No. XVII vv. 6-7). In answering he refers to his she-camel:

8. *a-lā ayyuhā dhā s-sāʾilī ayna yammamat*
           fa-inna lahā fī ahli Yathriba mauʿidā

8. Oh you, who are asking me where she is bound: "She has an appointment with the people of Yathrib."

The following three verses constitute a *raḥīl* with some features of *waṣf*, similar to the verses quoted above. Then al-Aʿshā concludes:

12. *fa-alaiytu lā arthī lahā min kalālatin*
           wa-lā min ḥafan ḥattā tazūra Muḥammadā

12. And I swear, I shall not pity her for weariness, nor for soreness of the hoof, till she visits Muḥammad.

In these verses, as in a similar passage by al-Ḥuṭaiʾa (No. LXXIII vv. 5-10), the camel-section is declared explicitly as a journey to the *mamdūḥ*, but there are still some relics of the former *waṣf*. A total of five poems by al-Aʿshā and one poem by al-Ḥuṭaiʾa deserve the term of "new ode", although in varying degrees.[24]

As a result of the preceding surveys the history of the *qaṣīda* can be outlined in the following way. During the 6th century the tribal ode had developed into a coherent form, mainly narrative and descriptive in character, which constituted a perfect medium of expression according to the needs and standards of beduin society. Towards the end of the century the panegyrical function became gradually more important to professional poets, who consequently began, whether consciously or intuitively, to adapt the ode to their requirements. The task could not have been altogether easy, for it implied decomposition, as it were, of a perfect form. Several solutions were tried out, some of them of permanent value. One way of changing the traditional form, which had been realized by Nābigha and Zuhair already, was to omit the camel-section. As we shall see presently, this was the most promising answer to the problem, but it took some time until the bipartite ode was established as a norm. Another solution of a more transitory kind consisted in omitting the *nasīb*, and in introducing the *madīḥ* by the travel-theme. Perhaps it was invented by al-Ḥuṭaiʾa, for there is one ode of this pattern in his *dīwān* (No. XL). As it is an isolated instance, we should be inclined to judge the ode incomplete, but in view of later development it looks like the beginning of a new tradition. For the *madīḥ* introduced by a *raḥīl* is of frequent occurrence in Umayyad poetry, especially in the *dīwān* of al-Farazdaq, whose connection with al-Ḥuṭaiʾa has already been pointed out.

The last and more complicated solution is the tripartite ode with *raḥīl* instead of *waṣf*. According to our texts it was developed by degrees only. Of the two versions observed in the *dīwāns* of al-Aʿshā and al-Ḥuṭaiʾa, the first type with a *raḥīl* added to the *waṣf* did not appeal to later poets. The lasting achievement of this period is the second type, the new ode, although it still needed perfection. In this form the narrative structure of the tribal ode with its close connection between *nasīb* and camel-theme is abandoned, and a different way of structuring the poem seems to be prepared in its first stage: the unity of function as envisaged by Ibn Qutayba. All Umayyad poets had to do, was to touch it up by emphasizing certain aspects, and by eliminating those elements of the tribal *waṣf* which did not contribute to their object of praising the patron.

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[24] Al-Aʿshā Nos. V, XII, XVII, XXXV, LXVIII, and al-Ḥuṭaiʾa No. LXXIII.

c) *Umayyad period*

For many reasons the first century of Islam was a crucial stage in Arabic literary history. In Umayyad poetry the stability of function and structure resulting from oral tradition had disappeared. At the same time, the formal regularity effected by the norms of literary periods had not yet been achieved. Professional poets accepted convention and adhered to it to some extent, but they also felt free to experiment, and they were able to treat traditional motifs and genres with a detachment unknown to tribal poets of the *jāhiliyya*.[25] As a consequence, a great variety of forms are to be observed, some of them soon rejected, others remaining part of a new literary convention. The diversity of trends and modes of composition, conservative or innovative, are reflected in the panegyrical ode. *Nasīb* and *madīḥ* present many unusual combinations of motifs, which deserve special study as they seem to be limited to the Umayyad era. The tribal *qaṣīda* is not yet abandoned altogether, but considerably reduced in application. Only al-Akhṭal, the most conservative of the three court-poets, still uses the tribal *waṣf* with elaborate scenes of desert-life, whereas Jarīr and al-Farazdaq prefer the new ode with certain variations. In their poetry the development of the genre initiated by al-Aʿshā and al-Ḥuṭaiʾa is continued, that is to say, the panegyrical function is asserting itself more and more in the structure of the ode.

Before discussing the Umayyad ode in detail, I shall give a statistical survey of the main types of panegyrical poetry. The principal contrast exists between the *qaṣīda* with two sections, *nasīb* and *madīḥ*, and the tripartite ode, whether containing *waṣf* or *raḥīl*. Thus the difference between the "tribal ode" and the "new ode" will not appear in the table below, but will be discussed later in the analysis. In order to complete the evidence, the ode with *madīḥ* only, sometimes introduced by the travel-theme, will also be considered. I have counted only poems exceeding ten verses in length, so as to exclude mere improvisation.

(I = madīḥ, II = nasīb/madīḥ, III = nasīb/raḥīl or waṣf/madīḥ)

	I	II	III	Total
Al-Akhṭal	3 (12%)	12 (46%)	11 (42%)	26
Jarīr	4 (10%)	21 (52,5%)	15 (37,5%)	40
Al-Farazdaq	39 (50%)	13 (17%)	26 (33%)	78
	46 (32%)	46 (32%)	52 (36%)	144

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[25] This is particularly striking in *rajaz* poetry, where a humorous attitude towards convention is to be observed. Cf. M. Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Raǧazpoesie*, Wiesbaden 1966, p. 37.

The high percentage of type II, the ode with *nasīb* and *madīḥ*, is at variance with R. Blachère's assertion that the tripartite ode or *qaṣīda* "*régulière*" described by Ibn Qutayba was established as a norm at the Umayyad period.[26] In the poetry of al-Akhṭal and Jarīr the bipartite ode is the most frequent form. As regards al-Farazdaq, the evidence of the table gives a wrong impression, for the camel-section in his odes, as well as in a few poems by his rivals, is often extremely short, forming no more than 2-3 verses of introduction to the *madīḥ*. If we considered as tripartite only those odes which contain a camel-theme of more than three verses in length, the relation of the two categories would be altered to 57 (40%) type II : 41 (28%) type III. We are therefore justified to conclude that the Umayyad ode was composed, as a rule, with two sections, or with a camel-theme inserted between *nasīb* and *madīḥ*, which was often reduced to a mere introduction to the panegyric. In addition, it was a legitimate procedure for poets to omit the *nasīb*.

On the whole, the *dīwān*s of the three court-poets appear rather homogeneous, except for al-Farazdaq's obvious preference of type I. To some extent this may be due to the fact that he composed a great number of short panegyrics (10-20 verses), where omission of the *nasīb* seems understandable. But there is another, and perhaps more plausible explanation. Al-Farazdaq often introduces his *madīḥ* by the travel-theme, or inserts it after some verses of praise. This technique, which is also found in two odes of type I by al-Akhṭal and Jarīr respectively, may have been invented by al-Ḥuṭaiʾa (cf. p. 14), whose *rāwī* al-Farazdaq is alleged to have been. Thus in his preference of the ode without *nasīb* he could have been influenced by his elder colleague. We should further notice that the *raḥīl* is sometimes found within the *madīḥ* of the bipartite ode.[27] All these details indicate to my mind that the Umayyad *raḥīl* had ceased to form an independent theme, but was regarded as part of the panegyric. Finally, I should like to point out that the bipartite *qaṣīda* is usually composed without any link between *nasīb* and *madīḥ*. We rarely observe a line or formula of transition between the two sections, contrary to the habit of Pre-Islamic poets like Nābigha or Zuhair, who at least in some of their bipartite odes took great pains to connect the two themes. Together with other factors this would suggest that the means of structuring the poem have changed.

As regards the tripartite *qaṣīda*, various contrasting features are to be observed. There are two traditional versions, both limited almost exclusively to the *dīwān* of al-Akhṭal, who is more faithful to tribal conven-

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[26] *Histoire de la littérature arabe*, Paris 1953-1966, III, p. 560.
[27] Cf. for example Jarīr pp. 116-119, v. 19ff.

tions than his colleagues. At the same time he is strongly influenced by al-
A'shā in several respects. Thus in one of his odes the camel-theme is
placed within a sequence of *fakhr* (pp. 112-120); the poem has been ex-
cluded from the analysis on the same grounds as the two odes with similar
pattern by al-A'shā (cf. p. 10). Al-Akhṭal composed a few odes in the
style described below, but the majority of his panegyrics either corres-
pond to the tribal ode, or to the new ode of the early Islamic period, con-
taining a *raḥīl* introduced by *wa-rubba* and ending with transition B. Both
versions are still mainly narrative and descriptive in character, testifying
to the conservative spirit of their author. In calling al-Akhṭal "conser-
vative", I do not mean to say that his poetry is altogether Pre-Islamic or
early Islamic in style. There are many features to indicate his belonging
to a later age. However, in comparison with his two rivals he contributed
little to the development of the genre.

The panegyrical odes composed by Jarīr and al-Farazdaq usually
either contain a short *raḥīl* of 2-3 verses in length, or a detailed descrip-
tion of the poet's journey to the *mamdūḥ*, extending up to ten verses. In
both versions there is rarely any connection with the *nasīb*. In a few
poems *wa-rubba* is used at the beginning of the travel-theme, but
references to the excellence of the poet's camel are scarce.[28] Unlike the
tribal *waṣf*, the Umayyad *raḥīl* does not give the impression of an in-
dependent theme, but appears to form one of the motifs of the panegyric.
Its general characteristics are as follows: from beginning to end the poet
leaves no doubt about the destination of his journey. As a rule, he states
the name, rank or abode of his patron in the introductory verse, or he ad-
dresses him directly (*ilayka/ilaykum...*). Sometimes he swears to visit the
mamdūḥ, however far he may reside. The destination is mostly repeated at
the end, and sometimes also within the account of the desert-journey.
The change in function of the camel-theme is further evidenced by the
poet's frequently referring to camels or "our mounts" (*rikābunā*), instead
of his own camel. In describing the camel(s) he concentrates entirely on
the traces of weariness and hardships endured by them. With regard to
the desert-journey the poet not only dwells on the dangers and exertions
he took upon himself, but also sometimes gives an itinerary, so as to em-
phasize the length of his way. In some odes the *raḥīl* is entirely blended
with the *madīḥ* or inserted after 1-2 verses of praise. This is a favourite
technique of al-Farazdaq.

The following two passages may serve as an illustration of the
Umayyad *raḥīl* thus described. The first example constitutes what I
would call a "descriptive" *raḥīl*, a form characteristic of Jarīr. The ode is
dedicated to Yazīd ibn 'Abdalmalik (pp. 385-391):

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[28] There is one exception, a tribal ode with added *raḥīl* by Jarīr (pp. 472-477).

18. *lammā rtaḥalnā wa-naḥwa sh-Shāmi nīyatunā*
          qālat Juʿādatu hādhī nīyatun qadhafū
19. *kallaftu ṣaḥbiya ahwālan ʿalā thiqatin*
          li-llāhi darruhumū rakban wa-mā kalifū
20. *sāru ilayka mina s-Sahbā wa-dūnahumū*
          Fayḥānu fa-l-Ḥaznu fa-ṣ-Ṣammānu fa-l-Wakafū
21. *yuzjūna naḥwaka aṭlāḥan mukhaddamatan*
          qad massahā n-nakbu wa-l-anqābu wa-l-ʿajafū
22. *fī sayri shahrayni mā yaṭwī thamāʾilahā*
          ḥattā tushadda ilā aghrāḍihā s-sunufū

18. When we departed heading for Syria, (my daughter) Juʿāda said: "This will be a long journey."
19. I forced my companions into terrible dangers, trusting them. How excellent they were, and how bravely they bore it!
20. They travelled towards you from as-Sahbā, and ahead of them were Fayḥān, al-Ḥazn, aṣ-Ṣamān and al-Wakaf,[29]
21. gently leading on towards you worn-out camels, with throngs around their legs, suffering from soreness of the hoof, from mange and emaciation,
22. during a journey of two months, which rendered them lean in the belly[30], so that their breast-straps had to be fastened anew.

The description is continued over two more verses. The second example will give an idea of the "rhetorical" *raḥīl* favoured by al-Farazdaq. It belongs to an ode without *nasīb*, dedicated to Bilāl ibn Abī Burda. The poet is addressing his she-camel (pp. 70-71):

1. *inna Bilālan in tulāqīhi sāliman*
          kafāki lladhī takhshīna min kulli jānibī
2. *abūhu Abū Mūsā khalīlu Muḥammadin*
          wa-kaffāhu ghaythun mustahillu l-ahāḍibī
3. *ilayka raḥaltu l-ʿansa ḥattā anakhtuhā*
          ilayka wa-qad aʿyat ʿalā kulli dhāhibī
4. *wa-qad khabaṭa raḥlī ʿalayhā maṭīyatī*
          ilayka wa-lam taʿlaq qulūṣi bi-ṣāḥibī
5. *fa-qultu lahā zūrī Bilālan fa-innahū*
          ilayhi ntahā faʾtīhi bī kullu rāghibī

1. Verily, Bilāl, if you reach him safely, will protect you from everything you are fearing.
2. His father is Abū Mūsā, Muḥammad's friend,
   and his palms are as showers of rain, pouring down incessantly.
3. Towards you I rode a strong camel till I made her kneel down,
   towards you, and she was unable to turn in any other direction.
4. My mount had beaten the ground while my saddle was upon her,
   towards you, and she was travelling without companions.
5. I said to her: "Visit Bilāl, for whoever is in need, with him he takes refuge, so carry me to him!"

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[29] The verse is explained by U. Thilo, *Die Ortsnamen in der altarabischen Poesie*. Wiesbaden 1958, p. 89.
[30] The term *thamīla* lit. means "contents of the belly".

The blending of *raḥīl* and *madīḥ* in this passage, and the use of anaphora for emphasis (*ilayka*) is typical of al-Farazdaq's style.[31] Both examples resemble to some extent the *raḥīl* of the early Islamic period, but there is also a certain development. In the Umayyad ode all remnants of the tribal *waṣf* are eliminated, and the *raḥīl* is entirely determined by the panegyrical function. Thus from forming part of the *mufākhara* at the earliest stage of Arabic poetry known to us, the camel-section has become a motif of the *madīḥ*.

With this final touch added by Umayyad court-poets, the transformation of the tribal ode into the courtly ode is complete. There is also no doubt that this is the form described by Ibn Qutayba. His characterization quoted above (p. 4) fits exactly the Umayyad *raḥīl* in its descriptive version, and it is evident, moreover, that tribal *waṣf* and Umayyad *raḥīl* form two different themes in content and function. Another argument supporting our identification can be derived from an examination of Ibn Qutayba's description of the *nasīb* whose relevant parts I have quoted. According to him, the poet dwells on his sorrow and longing, on the "extremity of his passion and desire", so as to soften the hearts of his audience, and to make his patron well-disposed towards him. This is an adequate rendering of the Umayyad *nasīb*, which is influenced by contemporary *ghazal* poetry, but it hardly fits the erotic prologue of the *jāhiliyya*. For the Pre-Islamic poet is not yet able to reflect upon his feelings and to describe them at length. His mind is directed towards the external world. In talking about his passion and sorrow, he mainly dwells on its manifestations, tears and sleeplessness by night, and after stating his feelings he soon turns to the material objects of his surroundings. Introspection and adequate treatment of emotion in poetry are achievements of later periods. For this reason, the erotic prologue of the Umayyad era is more in accordance with Ibn Qutayba's vision of the ode than the Pre-Islamic *nasīb*.

Thus Blachère is perfectly right in assuming that the Umayyad ode served later theorists as a model, although he is proved wrong in that the tripartite *qaṣīda* was adopted as a norm at this time.[32] The opposite is true, I believe. The tripartite ode, i.e. the ode with three independent sections, is a characteristic of the *jāhiliyya*. When at the beginning of the 7th century the camel-section changed in function, the process of replacing the tripartite *qaṣīda* by the ode with two sections had already begun. At the Umayyad period the bipartite ode was about to become a norm, as evidenced by two forms of composition. On the one hand the

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[31] Cf. also the odes pp. 99-101, vv. 1-7 and pp. 782-786, vv. 33-37.
[32] L.c. III, p. 560.

raḥīl was abandoned altogether, on the other hand it tended to be reduced to a mere formula of introduction to the *madīḥ*.

From the preceding analysis an indirect argument in favour of the authenticity of Pre-Islamic poetry can be derived. Elsewhere in his *Histoire de la littérature arabe*[33] Blachère expressed the view that Pre-Islamic odes had been stylized or adjusted in the course of transmission according to the norm of the *qaṣīda* "*régulière*" of Ibn Qutayba. We can state with certainty that his assumption is unfounded in general, if not in each individual case. As has been established, the Pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* or tribal ode constitutes a different type of poem, a previous stage of development, from which the Umayyad ode has gradually emerged. If this is true, the Pre-Islamic ode must be authentic as a form.

d) *Abbasid period*

The panegyrical ode of the Abbasid era is doubtless one of the highlights in medieval Arabic poetry. With regard to the camel-section, however, it is nothing more than an epilogue. There is sufficient evidence in the poetry of Abū Tammām, al-Buḥturī and al-Mutanabbī to indicate that the development of the ode continues on the lines observed in the preceding period. As to its general features, the Abbasid ode is more regular in structure than the Umayyad ode, and also more formal and portentous in style. It is often extremely long, due to a tendency to elaborate the *madīḥ*. As a rule, the *nasīb* forms a quarter or a third of the poem, but it rarely exceeds fifteen verses in length, even if the *qaṣīda* extends over more than sixty verses.[34] If we compare the frequency of the different types to that of the Umayyad period, significant changes are to be observed. In assembling the statistical evidence, the same procedure has been adopted as in the last chapter, that is to say, only poems exceeding ten verses in length have been considered. Under the category III I have counted all poems containing an allusion to the travel-theme before the *madīḥ*, even if it is limited to one hemistich.

	I	II	III	Total
Abū Tammām	30 (24%)	58 (46%)	38 (30%)	126
Al-Buḥturī	46 (12%)	251 (69%)	68 (19%)	365
Al-Mutanabbī	28 (27%)	60 (59%)	14 (14%)	102
	104 (18%)	369 (62%)	120 (20%)	593

[33] L.c. I, p. 184.
[34] The formal characteristics of the Abbasid ode are discussed in detail by Bencheikh, l.c., cf. the relevant chapters.

The three court-poets are not of the same generation. Abū Tammām was
the teacher of al-Buḥturī, and al-Mutanabbī is about two generations
younger than the latter. From the figures of the table it appears that the
use of the *raḥīl* was receding in the course of time. If we prolong this line
of development into the past, the downward movement will be even more
evident. Abū Tammām, who is closest to his Umayyad colleagues in
time, uses the *raḥīl* less frequently than either of them, but more often
than al-Buḥturī, in terms of percentage. The continuous reduction of the
travel-theme is also striking, if we regard its comparative length. In the
Umayyad period a *raḥīl* of 5-10 verses is still rather frequent, whereas the
Abbasid *raḥīl* only in a few cases extends over five verses as a maximum.
The average length in the odes by Abū Tammām is 2-3 verses, in the
poetry of al-Buḥturī and al-Mutanabbī 1-2 verses, and sometimes not
more than a hemistich. Thus it can be safely stated that the bipartite ode
was the norm of Abbasid times. In other words, Ibn Qutayba, who
belonged to the generation of al-Buḥturī, described a form that had been
virtually abandoned by contemporary poets.

It is a peculiarity of the Abbasid ode to contain a description of a horse
or a *raḥīl* involving horses in place of the camel-theme. The first variation
is motivated by the poet's request for a horse, the second may be regard-
ed as an attempt to adapt the conventional form to modern conditions.
However, both these versions are exceedingly rare. In this connection
mention should be made of al-Mutanabbī's parody on the traditional
raḥīl by describing a journey on foot (pp. 8-11, vv. 11-14). The ode has
been counted under the heading III. It further appears from the table
that the *madīḥ* without *nasīb* is comparatively more frequent than in the
Umayyad period. The tradition of introducing it by the travel-theme is
not continued, however. All three poets use type I on important occasions
and for panegyrics dedicated to persons of high rank. Thus most of al-
Mutanabbī's *Sayfiyyāt*, his famous odes on Sayf ad-Daula of Aleppo, are
composed without *nasīb*. In this respect, as in other features of his poetry,
he is fully in agreement with the major trends of his time. The often
repeated assertion that al-Mutanabbī did not conform to the norms of
Arabic poetry, seems to me, therefore, unfounded. It is true that his
poetry presents many original traits, as evidenced by his parody on the
travel-theme. However, in structuring his odes he simply continued and
promoted a development which had already begun, if we want to be
exact, during the lifetime of the Prophet.

The three poets studied in this chapter are generally known as "neo-
classicists", on the grounds that they tried to revive "classical", i.e. Pre-
Islamic forms. Compared with some of the "moderns" (*al-muḥdathūn*) of
the 8th century, like Bashshār ibn Burd, Muslim ibn al-Walīd or Abū

Nuwās, they certainly appear more conservative, and less inclined to go in for experiments. The 9th century is a period of restoration. The main object of professional panegyrists seems to have been to create suitable forms of praising the sovereign and his high officials. In doing this they used the Umayyad ode as a starting point, shaping it according to their professional requirements and to the esthetic taste of their time. The term "neo-classicists", which suggests imitation of archaic models and a backward movement on the whole, is, therefore, misleading and should be replaced by a more adequate expression.[35]

Summary

The present analysis is limited in scope and material, and has to be complemented and confirmed by further studies. With these restrictions in mind, the development of the panegyrical ode can be sketched as follows:

In the Pre-Islamic period the ode is composed, as a rule, with three sections of independent weight (*nasīb, waṣf al-jamal, madīḥ*), linked together by the techniques of the narrative. The camel-section is in no way specified from the panegyrical point of view. As in other types of the *qaṣīda*, it constitutes an expression of tribal life and society. I have referred to this form as "tribal ode".

In the first half of the 7th century A.D., i.e. during the two generations of poets known as *al-mukhaḍramūn*, a decisive change in function of the camel-section seems to have taken place, as evidenced by the poetry of al-Aʿshā Maimūn and al-Ḥuṭaiʾa. Parallel to the tribal ode a new form is gradually emerging, in which the description of the poet's camel is substituted by an account of his desert-journey to the *mamdūḥ*. In the early *raḥīl* elements of the former *waṣf al-jamal* are retained. This is the first stage in the transformation of the "tribal ode" into the "courtly ode" of later periods. At the same time the bipartite ode, consisting of *nasīb* and *madīḥ* only, begins to replace the tripartite form.

At the Umayyad period the tribal ode is about to disappear, although still used by conservative poets. In its place we frequently observe the new ode with an elaborate *raḥīl*, emphasizing the poet's exertions in reaching his patron. The Umayyad *raḥīl* is entirely determined by the panegyrical function. All motifs of the tribal *waṣf al-jamal* which do not contribute to the poet's object of influencing the *mamdūḥ*, are eliminated. Sometimes the travel-theme is inserted into the *madīḥ* or blended with the

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[35] The term "école formaliste" proposed by Bencheikh (l.c. pp. 260ff.), who criticized the concept of "neo-classicists" for similar reasons, seems to me worth considering.

poet's praise. Thus the camel-theme has ceased to form an independent section of the ode, but is to be regarded as part of the panegyric. The tripartite ode does not constitute a norm, however. It has been super-seded by the bipartite *qaṣīda*, which is composed either without a travel-theme, or with a short *raḥīl* of 2-3 verses introducing the *madīḥ*. In addi-tion, it seems to be a legitimate alternative for panegyrists to omit the *nasīb*.

In the courtly ode of the Abbasid era, the *raḥīl* is further reduced, both in frequency of application and in length. Although it is still fairly often used as a formula of introduction to the panegyric, we are justified to state that the bipartite ode constitutes the norm of Abbasid court-poetry.

It has been further established that Ibn Qutayba's description of the *qaṣīda* does not fit the tribal ode, but is to be identified with the panegyrical ode of the Umayyad period. In his own lifetime this form had virtually disappeared.

From the *jāhiliyya* up to the 10th century A.D., the development of the ode can be traced in its successive stages as forming one continuous line, despite a few deviations. No one generation of poets merely imitated another. Each generation contributed some subtle changes regarding content and structure of the genre. During this process the ode lost its narrative and, to some extent, also its descriptive features, and became mainly rhetorical in style and entirely urban in character, that is to say, the narrative unity of the tribal ode was replaced by the unity of function.

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