THE CAMEL-SECTION OF THE PANEGYRICAL ODE

When comparing Arabic odes from different periods, the reader is sure to notice a certain discrepancy with regard to the main parts of the qasida: erotic prologue (nasib), camel-theme (wasf al-jamal and/or rahi'il), panegyrical (madih). 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 nasib and madih 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 qasida. 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.

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 qasida. 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, 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. It is sufficient to refer to the article qasida 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 "Stämmesqaside" and "Hofqaside", which I have used elsewhere. To some extent they correspond to the terms "primary qasida" and "secondary qasida" proposed by M. M. Badawi in a recent paper (From Primary to Secondary Qasidas. 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.


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 taqlid of modern scholarship can only be explained, in my opinion, by the essentially static conception of Arabic poetry as conventional or even "identical" 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 qasida, the panegyrical ode, as it is the only Pre-Islamic genre, apart from the marthiya (elegy), still existing in his own time. It is also common knowledge that his characterization of the nasib as consisting of the campside-motif and the lamentation for the lost beloved does not exhaust all possible motifs employed by poets. In addition, new interest in Ibn Qutayba's version of the qasida 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 namdih (patron) and influencing him, has been duly emphasized in recent research. 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 qasida 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.

früharabischen Dichtung. Wien 1937, WZKM Beiheft 3, p. 193ff.,) and R. Blachère correctly stated that the camel-section had disappeared in the later Abbassid period (Un poète arabe du IVe siècle de l'Hégire (Xe siècle de J.-C.): Abou i-Taysib al-Motanabbi, Paris 1935, p. 47).

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

I am aware of the fact that Ibn Qutayba uses the term nasib 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 nasib.

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...".

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 qasida 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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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-Akhtal (d. about 92/710), Jarir (d. 110/728) and al-Farazdaq (d. 110/728 or 112/730), and the Abbasid poets Abû Tammâm (d. 231/845), al-Buḫturi (d. 284/897) and al-Mutanabbi (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. Finally I should like to point out that I am concerned with the history of the genre, and not with individual poems, and that the analysis is directed towards the surface-structure of the *qasīda* only. 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 present stage of knowledge it seems reasonable to suppose that at first independent 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 indications in the early texts as to the development of the *qasīda* 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 introduced, as most themes of *fakhr*, by the *wa-rubba* (many a...) or the particle *gad* 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. In view of later development it seems important to me to distinguish between these two motifs at the outset of the analysis. I shall refer to them from now on as *wasf* (description) and *rahīl* (desert-journey). Their general characteristics are as follows:

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11 Cf. for example Ahlwardt, Imra‘alqais No. IV, v. 18ff.
1. The *wasf* is a lengthy elaborate part of the *qasida* 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 *wasf* is essentially a theme of the *mufakhara*, it transcends the function of self-praise. It is one of the principal poetic themes of the *jahiliyya*, more deeply rooted in beduин society perhaps, than any other motif.\(^\text{13}\)

2. The *rahil* is comparatively short, about 2-4 verses, and by no means as frequent as the *wasf*. 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\(^\text{14}\) of the Pre-Islamic period has many features in common with other types of the *qasida*. *Nasib* and camel-section, whether followed by a *madih*, a *mufakhara* or a combination of *fakhr* and *hijā*\(^\text{2}\) (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 *wasf* as described above. The camel-theme is rarely introduced by the *war-rubba*, i.e. in the manner of the *mufakhara*. As a rule, the transition from *nasib* to *wasf* 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\(_2\).\(^\text{15}\)

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):

\[
\text{fa-salli l-hamma ʿanka bi-dhāti lauthin...}
\]

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 “Preisqaside”.

\(^{15}\) Cf. Jacobi, *l.c.*, pp. 49-53, where the term “Verbindungsmotiv” is used.
In other versions of transition A₁ the poet refers to the deserted campside
(Ahlwardt, Nābigha No. V, v. 7):

fa-ṣaddi āmmā tarā idh lā rtiyā'a lahū
wa-nmi l-quitūdā 'alā ṣayrānātīn wjudī

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 wasf 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 A₂ 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 madiḥ. 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 ac-
tually 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 ablughanā bi-mithli l-fahli nājiyatin...
Shall there carry me to her a fleet camel, good as a stallion...

Both in transition A₁ and A₂ the camel-section is introduced and
motivated by an allusion to the erotic theme. Sometimes nasīb and wasf
seem to represent a narrative with two successive stages, but the in-
ference 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
called transition B.¹⁶ Although there are a few variations, it is also for-
malic 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 tahlighnā an-Nu‘māna...
This (she-camel) will carry me to an-Nu‘mān...

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

a-fa-lā tu‘addiḥā ilā malikin l-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 A₁
(vv. 6-7) implies continuation of the poet’s journey. As transition B states
his destination, we receive the impression that nasīb, wasf and madiḥ form

¹⁶ Cf. Jacobi, l.c., pp. 61-65.
a narrative sequence, interrupted by descriptive passages. The same interpretation is possible with regard to Nabhiga’s ode (No. V). His diwan, 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 ra’aytu d-dāra qafran
   wa-khālafā bālu ahlī d-dāri bāli
9. nahadtu ilā ’udhāsfīratn šamūtin
   mudhakkaratin tajīlū ‘anī l-kalālī
10. fidā’un li-mra’īn sārat ilayhi
    bi-tīdhārati rabbīhā ʾammī 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, nasib and madih.17 There is also one early qaṣīda containing a short rahīl to the patron inserted into the madih, in addition to the wasf. The ode is dedicated to al-Ḥārith, King of Ghassān, and was composed by ʿAlqama after the battle of Ḥalîma 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 Mufaddaliyyaț,18 verse 11 contains transition A1, 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 rahīl is added, emphasizing the exertions of the poet in reaching the King (vv. 17-22). The rahīl to the mamduḥ 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.

17 In the diwâns of Nabhiga 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 Mufaddaliyyaț transition A1 is followed by the destination, i.e. transition B, which does not make sense (No. CXIX, pp. 11-12).
The panegyrical ode of the *jähiliyya* 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 *madiḥ* by means of the narrative. The camel-theme consists of the *wasf al-jamal*, composed without any reference to the *madiḥ*. 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 *rafil* to the *mamduh* and the fact that each section of the poem has its own weight. It is impossible to explain the tribal *nasīb*, *wasf* and *madiḥ* as the functional unit visualized by Ibn Qutayba. The unity of the Pre-Islamic *qasida* 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-mukhadramūn*, 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 *qasīda* was slowly emerging, as evidenced by the *diwāns* 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.
A’shā Maimūn (d. 7/629 or 8/630) and al-Huṭai’a (d. about 40/661). Literary history placed the latter in a line with Ka‘b ibn Zuhair and Zuhair himself,20 but he also seems indebted to al-A‘shā,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 diwāns contain twenty panegyrical odes by al-A‘shā and eight odes by al-Huṭai’a. 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-A‘shā 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 rahīl before the wasf. To some extent his preference of wa-rubba to transition A1 or A2 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 wasf. In two of his odes the camel-section is inserted into a sequence of faḵr, and does not form a separate section between nasīb and madiḥ (No. XXIX, vv. 10-15, No. XXXIII, vv. 25-27). Both poems are relevant to the study of al-A‘shā’s style and technique, but they do not contribute to the history of the genre, and have been excluded from the analysis. Despite al-A‘shā’s peculiarities, five poems from his diwān can be classified as tribal odes, whereas four odes by al-Huṭai’a, 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 wasf and additional rahīl to the patron,
2. the new ode with rahīl instead of wasf.

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

20 Cf. Goldziher’s introduction to his diwān, p. 4f.
22 Al-A‘shā Nos. XIII, XXXII, XXXIX, LV, LXXIX, and al-Huṭai’a Nos. VII, XVI, LXXVII, LXXXIX.
rahīl begins within the *wasf*, and is skillfully led to its destination without a visible break. There is a well-known motif of the tribal *wasf*, consisting of the camel’s complaint of fatigue. It is used as transition B by a contemporary of al-Α’ṣhā (Muf. No. XLIII v. 8):

\[
\text{lammā tashakkat ilayyā l-ayna qultu lahā}
\]
\[
lā tastarihīna mā lām alqā Masʿūdā
\]

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-Α’ṣhā into an elaborate transition from *wasf* to *madīh*. After describing his she-camel (No. I, vv. 18-32), the poet continues (v. 33): \(wa-tārīḥā tashkū ilayyā...\) (And you see her complain to me...). The following two verses contain the causes for the complaint, then al-Α’ṣhā addresses her directly:

36. \(lā tashakkay ilayyā min alami n-nis-\)
\(i wa-lā min ḥafan wa-lā min kalālī\)

37. \(lā tashakkay ilayyā wa-nṭajīʾi l-Αs-
\(\)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 rahīl separated from the *wasf*. In other odes the poet states his destination at the end of the *wasf*, and adds an account of the hardships and dangers of the journey. The following example is of special interest because al-Α’ṣhā begins the camel-theme with a short rahīl in the style of the *mufakhara*, and ends up with a second rahīl, as it were, emphasizing his exertions in reaching the *mamdīh*. At the end of the *wasf* (No. VIII, vv. 25-37) the poet says, referring to his she-camel:

38. \(taʿummu Salāmata Dhā Fāʾišin
\(\)huwa l-yauma hammun li-miʿādīhā\)

39. \(wa-kam dāna baytika min saṣṣafīn
\(\)wa-dakdāki ramlīn wa-aʿqādīhā\)

40. \(wa-yahmāʾa bi-l-laylī ḡaṭīḥā l-falā-
\(\)ti yuʿmisunī sautu fayyādīhā\)

41. \(wa-wadʿi siqāʾin wa-iḥqābīhī
\(\)wa-ḥallī ḥulūsīn wa-īghmādīhā\)

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 diwān of al-
Ḥuṭaiʿa, 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
mamdūḥ:

17. wa-laylin takhaṣṣaytu ahwālahū
   ilā ʿUmarin aṭajīhi thinālā
18. tawaytu mahāniha makhsiiyyatan
   ilayka li-tukdhiba ʿannī l-maqālā
19. bi-mithli l-ḥanīyi barāhā l-kalā-
   lu yanziʿna ʿalān wa-yarkūḥna ʿālā
20. ilā malikin ʿādilin ʿīkūmuḥū...

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
raḥīl described above forms a new theme, entirely separated from the
first. The technique of blending rahīl and mādīḥ, 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-Ḥuṭaiʿa’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
muḥākhara, thereby subtly changing its function. A total of eight poems by
al-Aʿshā and two poems by al-Ḥuṭaiʿa 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,

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 rahiil forms one syntactical unit (No. XII):

30. wa-baydāʾa yalʿabu fiḥā s-sarā-
   bu lā yahtādī l-qaumu fiḥā masīrā
31. qaṭaʿtu idhā samīʿa s-sāmiʿū-
   na li-l-jundūbi l-jauni fiḥā sārīrā
32. bi-nājiyyatin ka-ṭārāni th-thamīl
   tuwaffī s-surā baʿda aynin ʿasīrā
33. jumāliyyatin taghtali bi-r-ridāf
   idhā kadhīhaba l-āthimātu l-hajīrā
34. ilā malikin ka-hilāli s-samā-
   ʿī adhkā waṣaʿan wa-majdān 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 noontide 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 rahiil, the poet retained some elements of the tribal wasf (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 rahiil. 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-sāʾili ayna yammamat
   fa-inna lahā fī āḥī Yathribā maʿsidā

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 rahiil with some features of wasf, similar to the verses quoted above. Then al-Aʿshā concludes:

12. fa-alaytu lā arḥī lahā min kalālatin
    wa-lā min ḥafān ḥattā tazīrā Muḥammadā
12. And I swear, I shall not pity her for weariness, nor for soreness of the hoof, till she visits Muhammad.
In these verses, as in a similar passage by al-Ḥuṭai'ā (No. LXXIII vv. 5-10), the camel-section is declared explicitly as a journey to the māmdūḥ, but there are still some relics of the former wasf. A total of five poems by al-ʿAʾšā and one poem by al-Ḥuṭai'ā deserve the term of ‘‘new ode’’, although in varying degrees.24

As a result of the preceding surveys the history of the qāšīda 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 māḥī by the travel-theme. Perhaps it was invented by al-Ḥuṭai'ā, for there is one ode of this pattern in his diwān (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 māḥī introduced by a rāḥīl is of frequent occurrence in Umayyad poetry, especially in the diwān of al-Farazdaq, whose connection with al-Ḥuṭai'ā has already been pointed out.

The last and more complicated solution is the tripartite ode with rāḥīl instead of wasf. According to our texts it was developed by degrees only. Of the two versions observed in the diwāns of al-ʿAʾšā and al-Ḥuṭai'ā, the first type with a rāḥīl added to the wasf did not appeal to later poets. The last 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 wasf which did not contribute to their object of praising the patron.

24 Al-ʿAʾšā Nos. V, XII, XVII, XXXV, LXVIII, and al-Ḥuṭai'ā 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 *jāhilīyya*. 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 *mādīḥ* present many unusual combinations of motifs, which deserve special study as they seem to be limited to the *Umayyad* era. The tribal *qāṣīda* is not yet abandoned altogether, but considerably reduced in application. Only al-Akhtal, the most conservative of the three court-poets, still uses the tribal *waṣf* with elaborate scenes of desert-life, whereas Jarir and al-Farazdaq prefer the new ode with certain variations. In their poetry the development of the genre initiated by al-

Aṣhā and al-Ḥuṭai'a 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 *qāṣīda* with two sections, *nasīb* and *mādīḥ*, 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 *mādīḥ* 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.

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<th>III</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>11 (42%)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarir</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
<td>21 (52,5%)</td>
<td>15 (37,5%)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Farazdaq</td>
<td>39 (50%)</td>
<td>13 (17%)</td>
<td>26 (33%)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46 (32%)</td>
<td>46 (32%)</td>
<td>52 (36%)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 This is particularly striking in *rajāz* poetry, where a humorous attitude towards convention is to be observed. Cf. M. Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Raḥāspoesie*, Wiesbaden 1966, p. 37.
The high percentage of type II, the ode with nasib and madiḥ, is at variance with R. Blachère's assertion that the tripartite ode or qasida "régulière" described by Ibn Qutayba was established as a norm at the Umayyad period.26 In the poetry of al-Akhtal and Jarir 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 madiḥ. 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 nasib and madiḥ, which was often reduced to a mere introduction to the panegyric. In addition, it was a legitimate procedure for poets to omit the nasib.

On the whole, the diwāns 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 nasib seems understandable. But there is another, and perhaps more plausible explanation. Al-Farazdaq often introduces his madiḥ 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-Akhtal and Jarir respectively, may have been invented by al-Ḥuṭai'ā (cf. p. 14), whose rāwi al-Farazdaq is alleged to have been. Thus in his preference of the ode without nasib he could have been influenced by his elder colleague. We should further notice that the rahil is sometimes found within the madiḥ of the bipartite ode.27 All these details indicate to my mind that the Umayyad rahil 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 qasida is usually composed without any link between nasib and madiḥ. 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 qasida, various contrasting features are to be observed. There are two traditional versions, both limited almost exclusively to the diwān of al-Akhtal, who is more faithful to tribal conven-

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tions than his colleagues. At the same time he is strongly influenced by al-\textsuperscript{A}\textsuperscript{ṣ}hā 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 excluded from the analysis on the same grounds as the two odes with similar pattern by al-\textsuperscript{A}\textsuperscript{ṣ}hā (cf. p. 10). Al-Akhtal composed a few odes in the style described below, but the majority of his panegyrics either correspond to the tribal ode, or to the new ode of the early Islamic period, containing a rahīl 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-Akhtal "conservative", 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 Jarir and al-Farazdaq usually either contain a short rahīl of 2-3 verses in length, or a detailed description of the poet's journey to the mamdūh, 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.\footnote{There is one exception, a tribal ode with added rahīl by Jarir (pp. 472-477).} Unlike the tribal waṣf, the Umayyad rahīl does not give the impression of an independent 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 addresses him directly (īlayka/iīlaykum...). Sometimes he swears to visit the mamdūh, 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" (rikābūnā), 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 emphasize the length of his way. In some odes the rahīl is entirely blended with the madih 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 rahīl thus described. The first example constitutes what I would call a "descriptive" rahīl, a form characteristic of Jarir. The ode is dedicated to Yazīd ibn ʿAbdalmalik (pp. 385-391):
18. lammā rtaḥalnā wā-nahwā sh-Shāmi nyyātnū
qālat fūṣādatu bādhī nyyātun qadḥafū
19. kallaṣṭu ṣaḥḥiya ahwālān ʿalā thiqātīn
li-llāḥi darruhumū rakān wā-mā kalīfu
20. sāru ilayka mina s-Sahbā wā-diynahūmū
Fayḥānu fa-l-Haznu fa-ṣ-Sammānu fa-l-Wakafū
21. yuzjūnā nahwakā aṭṭāhan mukhadamaṭan
qad massaḥā n-nakbu wā-l-ānqābū wā-l-ṣajafū
22. ṣi sayri shahraynī mā yatū thiмātulahā
ḥattā tushaddā ilā aqrāḍīhā s-sūnufū

When we departed heading for Syria, (my daughter) Juʿāda said:
“This will be a long journey.”

I forced my companions into terrible dangers, trusting them. How
excellent they were, and how bravely they bore it!

They travelled towards you from as-Sabhā, and ahead of them were
Fayḥān, al-Hazn, as-Samān and al-Wakaf,29

gently leading on towards you worn-out camels, with throngs around
their legs, suffering from soreness of the hoof, from mange and
emaciation,
during a journey of two months, which rendered them lean in the
belly,30 so that their breast-strapst had to be fastened anew.

The description is continued over two more verses. The second example
will give an idea of the “rhetorical” rāḥil 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 tūlāqīhī sālīman
kafākī lladhi tikakhshina mīn kullī jānībī
2. abūhu Abū Mūsā khalīlu Muḥammadin
wā-kaffāhu ghyathun mustahillu l-ahlādībī
3. ilayka rahlaltī l-ʿansa ḥattā anakhtūhā
ilayka wā-qad a'yāt ʿalā kullī dhāhībī
4. wā-qad khabāṭa rāḥīlī ʿalayhā maṭiyāṭī
ilayka wā-lam taʿlaq qulūsī bi-sāhībī
5. fa-qultu lahā zūrī Bilālan fa-innāhū
ilayhi nṭahā fā-tihī bī kullu rāğhībī

1. Verily, Bilāl, if you reach him safely, will protect you from everything
you are fearing.
2. His father is Abū Mūṣā, 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!”

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. 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 wasf are eliminated, and the raḥīl is entirely determined by the panegyrical function. Thus from forming part of the musḥākhara 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 wasf 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 nasī librose 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 his 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. 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


rah"il was abandoned altogether, on the other hand it tended to be reduced to a mere formula of introduction to the *madih*.

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* Blachère expressed the view that Pre-Islamic odes had been stylized or adjusted in the course of transmission according to the norm of the *qasida* "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 *qasida* 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-Buhtūrî and al-Mutanabbi 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 *madih*. 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 *qasida* extends over more than sixty verses. 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 *madih*, even if it is limited to one hemistich.

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<td>Abū Tammām</td>
<td>30 (24%)</td>
<td>58 (46%)</td>
<td>38 (30%)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Buhtūrī</td>
<td>46 (12%)</td>
<td>251 (69%)</td>
<td>68 (19%)</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mutanabbi</td>
<td>28 (27%)</td>
<td>60 (59%)</td>
<td>14 (14%)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>104 (18%)</td>
<td>369 (62%)</td>
<td>120 (20%)</td>
<td>593</td>
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</table>

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-Buḥtūrī, and al-Mutanabbi is about two generations younger than the latter. From the figures of the table it appears that the use of the rahīl 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 rahīl less frequently than either of them, but more often than al-Buḥtūrī, 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 rahīl of 5-10 verses is still rather frequent, whereas the Abbasid rahīl 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-Buḥtūrī and al-Mutanabbi 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-Buḥtūrī, 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 rahīl 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 regarded 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-Mutanabbi's parody on the traditional rahīl 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-Mutanabbi's Sayfīyyat, 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-Mutanabbi 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-muhdathūn) of the 8th century, like Bashshār ibn Burd, Muslim ibn al-Walid 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 panegyrist 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, wasf al-jamal, mādīḥ), 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 qasīda, 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-mukhadramūn, a decisive change in function of the camel-section seems to have taken place, as evidenced by the poetry of al-Aṣḥā Maimūn and al-Ḥuṭai'ā. 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 māmdūḥ. In the early rāhil elements of the former wasf 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 mādīḥ 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 rāhil, emphasizing the poet's exertions in reaching his patron. The Umayyad rāhil is entirely determined by the panegyrical function. All motifs of the tribal wasf al-jamal which do not contribute to the poet's object of influencing the māmdūḥ, are eliminated. Sometimes the travel-theme is inserted into the mādīḥ or blended with the

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 qasida, which is composed either without a travel-
theme, or with a short rahîl of 2-3 verses introducing the madi:h. In addition,
it seems to be a legitimate alternative for panegyrist to omit the
nasîb.

In the courtly ode of the Abbasid era, the rahîl 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
qasida 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 jâhilîyya 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.

University of Saarbrücken

RENATE JACOBI

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