Out of Many, One:
Epigram Anthologies in pre-modern Arabic Literature

فَنّ ٱلجَامِيعِ فِي تَرْتِيبِ ٱلمَقَاطِيعِ



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For Geert Jan and Thomas

‘The effort to find counterparts must employ some criteria, whether formal, ideological, or functional. And there are certain things about which we should not deceive ourselves. Relative likeness is not identity [...]. On the other hand, were literatures identical, there would be nothing to compare.

‘The most serious deception of all is to think that relativism allows us to privilege western phenomena over others. There is all too little danger that Sanskrit poems or *nō* will be taken as forms that require us to depreciate western equivalents. Quite the opposite. There is instead a hegemonic presumption that western practice provides the norm for which we must dig and dig to find some counterpart in another literature, something that will be certain to differ enough as to prove the point that it is inferior.’

(Earl Miner, *Comparative Poetics*, p. 225)

‘*sapientiam sapientum perdam*’

Paul (1 Corinthians 1:19; cf. Isaiah 29:14)

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Abstract

This is the study of a previously neglected genre in pre-modern Arabic literature: the (poetic) epigram anthology. The epigram anthology was pioneered by a handful of poets in 14th-century Syria, but the genre was soon taken up by anthologists across the pre-modern Middle East and soon became one of the most popular types of Arabic poetry up until the modern period. This study is divided into two parts. Part One deals with critical issues in literary history and comparative literature, while Part Two is made up of three encapsulated studies on specific aspects of the social and literary (structural and textual) composition of the texts. In Part One, the epistemological background of the terms *epigram* and *anthology* is surveyed and their suitability for application to pre-modern Arabic literature is evaluated. Part One also includes a comprehensive history of the *maqāṭīʿ* (sing. *maqṭūʿ*, also *maqṭūʿah*) genre in Arabic as well as a detailed explication of this style of poetry, its anthological context, its generic status in the Arabic literary tradition, and its relation to the wider world-literary category of epigram. The three chapters of Part Two are devoted to the social network of anthologists and poets, the structure and composition of the anthologies themselves, and the way in which anthologists used a technique, which is called 'variation' in this study, to link the cited poetic material into an organic whole respectively. NB: This is a literary-historical study informed by the discipline of comparative literature; it is not primarily a philolological, biographical, or codicological investigation. The literary material presented here is what has been deemed most relevant for the purposes of the larger generic discussion at the centre of this literary-historical study. An annotated bibliography of unpublished sources is provided in an appendix in order to help the reader navigate the tricky present status of many Mamluk and Ottoman era sources.

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Note to readers

The transliteration system used for Arabic is, for all intents and purposes, the style set out by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; with the exception of (1) *-ah* for non-construct *tāʾ marbūṭah* and (2) the representation of the elision of the definite article, which occurs before a Sun Letter. I transliterate poetry as it should be read (e.g. I lengthen short vowels that should be read long for the metre, etc.). In transliterating prose, I write nouns and adjectives in pausal form unless case effects an orthographic change (e.g. accusative *tanwīn*). Out of respect for other sources whose transliteration systems differ from my own, I keep to their system when quoting from them. I write Persian according to the *IJMES* system and Ottoman per the scholarly system, which takes the post-language reform Turkish alphabet as its starting point. For modern names written in non-Roman characters, the most prevalent version is used, especially if it has been possible to determine how that person prefers to spell their own name (e.g., El-Said Badawi rather than as-Saʿīd Badawī). The reader should take note of a common naming convention in Arabic studies: the abbreviations 'b.' and 'bt.' stand for '*ibn*' ['son of'] and '*bint*' ['daughter of'] respectively. Where it is not too cumbersome, I give dates in both the Western and Islamic calendars. I write the Hegirae date before the Common (*scil.* Christian) Era date. Reference to any other calendrical systems is made explicit. I have attempted to translate all non-English material included in this study and, unless otherwise specified, all translations are my own. The titles of pre-modern Arabic works are translated upon first citation and in the annotated bibliography of unpublished sources, not in the bibliography. Pre-modern persons have been identified by name, death date, and often with titles of their works and citations of these when published; it is not the object of this study to provide biographies for each of these, especially when they are marginal to the discussion here and can be located in modern reference works or classical biographical dictionaries.

Abbreviations

Books

EAL	*Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*
EI²	*Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*
EI³	*Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition*
EIran	*Encyclopaedia Iranica*
GAL	*Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*
GAP	*Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*
GAS	*Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*
WKAS	*Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*

Periodicals

AS/EA	*Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*
BEO	*Bulletin d'Études Orientales*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle East Studies*
JAL	*Journal of Arabic Literature*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
MEL	*Middle Eastern Literatures*
MSR	*Mamlūk Studies Review*
QSA	*Quaderni di Studi Arabi*
RSO	*Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
SI	*Studia Islamica*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

Chapter One

Introduction

In 2005 as I was just embarking on my induction into the world of pre-modern Arabic culture under Michael Cooperson's able supervision, Thomas Bauer wrote that

> [...] the state of the art of Mamluk literature is, in a word, deplorable. There is no comprehensive and reliable overview of the literature as a whole, many crucial texts still remain unedited, and monographs on Mamluk poets or the most important genres of Mamluk literature are lacking almost altogether, and so it is not easy even today to determine who were the most important literati or even which books were the most characteristic, influential, and important. What we see is an enormous contrast between a flourishing literary culture on the one hand and a remarkable dearth of scholarly enterprises dealing with that culture on the other.[1]

This gloomy diagnosis, far from discouraging me, has been at the forefront of my mind since 2008 when I began work on this project. The inadequacy of the present state of scholarship on Arabic cultural production in the period from 1200–1800 has stoked my motivation throughout this undertaking.[2] My initial revisionist enthusiasms were,

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1. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches', *MSR*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2005, pp. 105–32, p. 105.

2. The issue of what to call this period has become rather controversial of late. Even those inclined to think these sorts of onomastic issues irrelevant must admit that the periodisation of Arabic literary and cultural history is one of the most important entry points for non-specialists and students and that the responsibility not to distort that history is paramount. For an eloquent and impassioned excoriation of the connotations inherent in the once-preferred revisionist description, 'post-classical,' see Th.

however, soon superseded by delight and fascination in the variety, quality, volume, and sheer creativity of the poetry collections that form the corpus of this research project. I had believed instinctively ever since reading Hilary Kilpatrick's book on *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (*The Book of Songs*) that she was right to stress the multidimensionality of Arabic anthologies, their depth, and their worth as literary texts. Her claim that

> [...] the major *belles-lettres* compilations of the fourth/tenth century were not intended to be understood on one level only, but instead offered an exciting variety of interpretations to readers who cared to relate anecdotes and quotations of poetry to each other in various ways. [And that] [t]hey were, and are, faithful expressions of the spirit of *adab*, that elusive term embracing at the same time behaviour, literary culture and learning.[3]

Bauer's review of the most recent volume in The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature series, R. Allen and D. S. Richards (eds), *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 (Th. Bauer, 'In Search of "Post-Classical Literature"', *MSR*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2007, pp. 137–67). See also H. Kilpatrick's review of the same work in *MEL*, vol. 12, no. 1, April 2009, pp. 71–80; as well as the introduction to ʿUmar Mūsā Bāshā, *al-Adab al-ʿarabī fī al-ʿaṣr al-mamlūkī wa-l-ʿaṣr al-ʿuthmānī*, 2 vols, Damascus: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kitāb, 1990, vol. 1; G. J. van Gelder, 'A Muslim Encomium on Wine: *The Racecourse of the Bay* (*Ḥalbat al-kumayt*) by al-Nawāǧī (d. 859/1455) as a post-classical Arabic work', *Arabica*, vol. 42, no. 2, June 1995, pp. 222–34. Scholars with limited exposure to popular and academic discourse in the contemporary Arab world are often unaware of the continued use of the common earlier name for this period: the 'Age of Decline'; indeed there is little evidence that this view has become marginalised. Interested readers can find a helpful summary of such views in the introduction to Elias Muhanna, 'Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*', unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2012.

3. Hilary Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs: compilation and the author's craft in Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī's* Kitāb al-Aghānī, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, p. 278. See also a review of this work by Antonella Ghersetti in which she writes that 'En abordant le *Kitāb al-aġānī* comme un ouvrage de littérature, plutôt que comme une source d'informations historiques, musicales, etc., l'A[uteur] vise à contribuer aux recherches concernant ce chef-d'oeuvre et les *belles-lettres* du monde arabe médiéval en même temps.' ['By considering *Kitāb al-Aghānī* as a work of literature, and not merely a historical, musicological, etc. source, the author makes a contribution to this masterpiece as well as to mediaeval Arabic literature.'] (in *QSA*, vol. 20–21, 2002–2003, pp. 254–56, p. 255). Kilpatrick is no stranger to this line of research, of course, and has published several short studies on related phenomena: see e.g. H. Kilpatrick, 'A genre in classical Arabic literature: the *adab* encyclopedia' in Robert Hillenbrand (ed.), *Proceedings of the 10th Conference of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants: Edinburgh, 9–16*

struck me as both valid and obvious, though mainstream scholarship's failure to recognise this important principle only fed a sense of urgency fomented by a long legacy of scholarly indifference. I also felt that Kilpatrick's insight would naturally apply to other forms of anthologies, including poetry collections. Thus while Bauer's research has been concentrated primarily in the realm of literary history, Kilpatrick's focus has been to redeem the process of 'compilation' as an authorial method, to win it a conceptual purchase in scholarship.[4] This study is aimed at supplementing and furthering both these projects: it enriches our inadequate understanding of Arabic literary production after the tenth century and models a way of appreciating compilatory, or anthological, texts as original works of art. Very few specialists—and even fewer laypeople—have ever heard of, let alone read, the (poetic) epigram anthologies that are the subject of this study, though they were among the most popular and well known works of Arabic literature for some six centuries.[5] This is due to a variety of factors (including the material inaccessibility of many of the texts) but it bears mentioning that for the majority of potential readers these anthologies are also, in a way, theoretically inaccessible. Poetry collections, be they solo- or multi-authored, are not something students or scholars are presently trained to understand as literary works in the same way they are individual poems, prose narratives, etc.

September, 1980, Edinburgh: [UEAI], 1982, pp. 34–42; and *idem*, 'The Abridgment in Medieval Arabic *Belles-Lettres*: a guide to reception, a pointer to boundaries', in R. Bauer and D. Fokkema (eds), *Proceedings of the XIIth congress of the International Comparative Literature Association. Actes du XIIe Congrès de l'Association internationale de littérature comparée.* 5 vols. Munich: iudicium Verlag, 1990, vol. 3: *Space and Boundaries in Literature (cont.) / Espace et Frontières dans la littérature (suite)*, pp. 433-38. I would also mention the work of Adel Suleyman Gamal who has written on 'The Basis of Selection in the "Ḥamāsa" Collections', *JAL*, vol. 7, 1976, pp. 28–44 and *idem*, 'The Organizational Principles in Ibn Sallām's *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shuʿarāʾ*: A Reconsideration' in J. R. Smart (ed.) *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature*, Richmond: Curzon, 1996, pp. 186–209.

4. See also As'ad Khairallah, 'Collective Composition and the Collector's Art. Observations on the Dîwân of Maǧnûn Lailâ' in *La Signification du bas moyen âge dans l'histoire et la culture du monde musulman: actes du 8me Congrès de l'Union européenne des arabisants et islamisants*, Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1978, pp. 117–25.

5. For the sake of readability, detailed information about the most inaccessible of these collections has been provided in the Annotated Bibliography of Unpublished Sources below.

Desperately few anthologies in any language have been queried from a literary critical perspective—Anne Ferry's masterful work is a notable exception—although the work of Kathryn Gutzwiller, Neil Fraistat, and others has also helped to move the issue forward.[6] Criticism of contemporary anthologies, while stimulating for the student interested in concomitant questions, are tied in with issues of publishing, the canon, secondary and tertiary schooling, diversity, etc., that tend to stray far from the matters with which scholars of pre-modern literature are able to concern themselves.[7]

On a very basic level, anthologies can be ordinary collections of material from a variety of sources or authors assembled in one text, often for pedagogical purposes. Likewise, anthologies can be organised thematically and their content chosen to represent particular styles and qualities; these sorts of anthologies could serve as gifts for patrons and products for the market and would also have met autodidactic and pedagogical needs. For most literary scholars, this conception of the anthology is satisfactory and indeed, for almost all scholars of Arabic literature, anthologies have served primarily as repositories of and quarries for poetic and prosaic material. Like many pre-modern literary forms, the origins of the anthological genre in Arabic are obscure. It is assumed that the first Arabic anthologies were produced as pedagogical materials as well as in the forms of genealogical and historical collections, but soon after this initial phase a wide range of anthologies of verse and prose begin to appear. Bilal Orfali has recently published a comprehensive overview of early Arabic poetry anthologies that covers the development of the form in great detail.[8] The early history of the

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6. A. Ferry, *Tradition and the Individual Poem: an inquiry into anthologies,* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001. N. Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book: interpreting collections of Romantic poetry*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985, and *idem* (ed.), *Poems in their Place: the intertextuality of poetic collections*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986. K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands: Hellenistic epigrams in context*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998, and several articles.

7. See e.g. Barbara Mujica, 'Teaching Literature: Canon, Controversy, and the Literary Anthology', *Hispania*, vol. 80, no. 2, May 1997, pp. 203–15; and Paul Lauter, 'Taking Anthologies Seriously', *MELUS*, vol. 29, no. 3/4: Pedagogy, Canon, Context: Toward a Redefinition of Ethnic American Literary Studies, Autumn–Winter 2004, pp. 19–39.

8. Bilal Orfali, 'A Sketch Map of Arabic Poetry Anthologies up to the Fall of Baghdad', *JAL*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 29–59.

Arabic anthology is not immediately relevant to the study of Mamluk- and Ottoman-era epigram anthologies pursued here, but reference will be made (especially in Chapter Three) to salient features that typify the Arabic anthological tradition.

One of the most important of these features is the noteworthy proclivity of Arabic anthologists to include the poetry of their contemporaries and near-contemporaries. Abū Manṣūr ath-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038)—who is incidentally the subject of most of the scholarship on Arabic anthologies—was a prolific litterateur and his famous anthology *Yatīmat ad-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr* (*The Era's Precious Pearl: On the Qualities of our Contemporaries*) inaugurated a new form taken up by his followers and others: the geographically organised, biographical dictionary-cum-anthology.[9] He refers to this tendency to include contemporary or slightly more marginal poets in his explanation of why he set out to write the anthology:[10]

وقد سبق مؤلّفو الكتب إلى ترتيب المتقدّمين من الشعراء والمتأخّرين وذكر طبقاتهم ودرجاتهم وتدوين كلماتهم والانتخاب من قصائدهم ومقطوعاتهم فكم من كتاب فاخر عملوه وعقد باهر نظموه لا يشينه الآن إلّا نبو العين عن إخلاق جِدّته وبلا بردته ومجّ السمع لمردّداته وملالة القلب من مكرّراته وبَقِيَتْ محاسن أهل العصر التي معها رواء الحداثة ولذّة الجِدّة وحلاوة قرب العهد وازدياد الجودة على كثرة النقد غير محصورة بكتاب يضمّ نشرها وينظم شذرها ويشدّ أزرها ولا مجموعة في مصنّف يقيّد شواردها ويخلّد فوائدها [. . .]

> Previous writers organised poets into the ancients and the moderns and arranged them according to their ranks and degrees and recorded their

9. The most recent study of this important anthology is Bilal Orfali, 'The Art of the Anthology: al-Thaʿālibī and his Yatīmat al-dahr', unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2009. Everett K. Rowson informs us that 'The *Yatīmat al-dahr* has always been an extremely popular work, and has been preserved in a great number of manuscripts. Brockelmann lists some twenty of them (*GAL* I, [p.] 284, *GAL* S I, [p.] 499), to which Pertsch [in *Die orientalischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha*] adds fifteen more.' (Introduction to E. K. Rowson and S. A. Bonebakker, *A computerized listing of biographical data from the* Yatīmat al-dahr *by al-Thaʿālibī*, Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique and Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1980, p. 12). Rowson (supervised by Bonebakker) also studied al-Bākharzī's *Dumyat al-qaṣr*, a successor to ath-Thaʿālibī's *Yatimah*, in a follow-up study entitled *Notes on Two Poetic Anthologies:* Taʿālibī's Tatimma and Bāḫarzī's Dumya, Malibu, CA: Undena, 1984. (Prof. Rowson was very kind to provide me with a photocopy of this rare and valuable study).

10. ath-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat aṣ-Ṣāwī, vol. 1, pp. 3–4.

> words and selected their odes and short poems. Oh, how many great books and expensive necklaces they have made[!], which are now only marred by the eye as it shrinks from their outdated style and worn-out mantle, and the ear as repetition causes it to reject it and the heart wearies of reiteration. Yet the people of today, their good things remain, with their modern images and pleasing style and the sweetness of their proximity to the present day and the upturn in quality—in spite of the abundance of criticism— and it is not limited to a single book, which gathers its spread, strings its pearls, and binds its string, and there is no collection in a book (*muṣannaf*, i.e. a thematically-ordered work) that can record all the famous (lit. stray[11]) verses and render its maxims eternal [...].

If we choose to take the anthologist's explanation at face value, the anthology was intended—it would seem—to fill a gap in literary history: that of the history of contemporary poetry. Ath-Thaʿālibī saw his project as a continuation of an established, and cooperative, generic tradition. The striking, and perhaps most abiding, quality of ath-Thaʿālibī's great anthology is its contemporary focus and it is this contemporary focus that marks out the genre in later periods.

If I were to say the names Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366), Ibn Makānis (d. 794/1392), Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1424), Ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 592/1196), they may sound unfamiliar and, by extension, unimpressive. Certainly when compared with the canonical heroes of our literary histories—Imruʾ al-Qays (d. c. 550 A. D.), Jarīr (d. 110/728–9), Abū Tammām (d. 231–32/845–46), Abū Nuwās (d. 198–200/813–815), al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965), et al.—they may strike the reader as decidedly second-rate. Why then would anthologists, who wrote for a semi-commercial market, produce so many anthologies in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, which drew on the works of these relatively

11. For this meaning, see Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français*, Nouvelle edition, 2 vols, Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve, 1960, s.r. '*sh-r-d*' (with thanks to Geert Jan van Gelder for bringing this to my attention).

unknown poets?[12] Why did they not go for the safe bet of recycling the 'greatest hits' of canonical poets? Thomas Bauer has suggested that this was because their 'readers wanted to be "up to date"'.[13] Bauer has the distinction of being the first scholar to draw attention to the flourishing of literary anthologies in the Mamluk period and, what is more, to the fact that they drew primarily on contemporary literature rather than recycle the canonical past.[14] The Mamluk period was, according to Bauer, 'the golden age of the anthology' and he argues that these texts operated as a form of literary currency.[15] He attributes what he calls the 'significant amount of intertextuality', which I presume includes the common practice of producing variations on a theme, to

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12. Th. Bauer says of an-Nawājī (d. 859/1455) that 'he earned his living as a copyist and compiled many of his anthologies purposely to meet the demand of the book market' (*EI3*, s.v. 'Anthologies: in Arabic literature: Post-Mongol' [Thomas Bauer]; for a more detailed description of this anthologist's professional and literary life, see *idem*, 'al-Nawājī' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography: 1350–1850*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009, pp. 321–31). Some other anthologies (e.g. Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Marsh 73) were apparently written for patrons, but the demand of the scholarly class was the strongest factor in the literary marketplace of the period. Thomas Bauer has referred to this transformation from a court-centred literary culture to a more democratic sphere as the *Verbürgerlichung* of Mamluk literature (see Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication' in Stephan Conermann (ed.), *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus?. Mamluk Studies—State of the Art,* Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2013, pp. 23–56).

13. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches', p. 122.

14. For example, speaking of two major anthologists of the 14th and 15th centuries, Bauer writes, 'In den Epigrammsammlungen aṣ-Ṣafadīs und an-Nawāǧīs dominieren ganz und gar Dichter der Ayyubiden- und Mamlūkenzeit' ['In the epigram collections of aṣ-Ṣafadī and an-Nawājī, poets of the Ayyubid- and Mamluk-eras dominate entirely'.] Th. Bauer, 'Literarische Anthologien der Mamlūkenzeit' in S. Conermann and A. Pistor-Hatam (eds), *Die Mamlūken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann, 1942–1999*, Hamburg, 2003, pp. 71–122, p. 91. On the canon of classical Arabic literature, see Geert Jan van Gelder's new entry in the *EI*[3] (s.v. 'Canon and canonisation in classical Arabic literature'), as well as his article: *idem*, 'The Classical Arabic Canon of Polite (and Impolite) Literature' in G. J. Dorleijn and H. L. J. Vanstiphout (eds), *Cultural Repertoires: Structure, Function and Dynamics*, Leuven: Peeters, 2003, pp. 45–57.

15. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches', p. 122, contra von Grunebaum (quoted in Th. Bauer, 'Literarische Anthologien', p. 71n) and others: e.g. Muḥsin Ghayyāḍ: '*wa-laʿall al-qarn ath-thālith* [*al-hijrī*] [...] *kān haqq*^{an} *ʿaṣr al-ikhtiyārāt ash-shiʿriyyah wa-l-ḥamāsāt*' [Translation: 'The third century hegirae can perhaps rightly be considered the age of poetic anthologies and *Ḥamāsah* collections'] (from the introduction to Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *al-Manthūr wa-l-manẓūm: al-qaṣāʾid al-mufradāt allatī lā mathal [sic] lahā*, ed. Muḥsin Ghayyāḍ, Beirut and Paris: Turāth ʿUwaydat, 1977, p. 28). Bauer lists some ninety anthologies in his article 'Literarische Anthologien der Mamlūkenzeit' (pp. 111–22), to which Antonella Ghersetti has also added (see A. Ghersetti, 'An Unpublished Anthology of the Mamluk Period on Generosity and Generous Men', *MSR*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2009, pp. 107–20).

the self-referential and self-conscious style of these anthologies, which were produced, Bauer says, in part, so that 'an adīb could prove his literary taste, as well as his knowledge and mastery of texts and traditions, and could prove himself worthy of joining the ranks of its masters.'[16] Chapters Three, Four, and Five below expand on this observation.

The Mamluk period saw a torrent of cultural activity, which we are only now beginning to appreciate. The past fifteen years have seen a wave of revisionist scholarship, some of it the product of straight-forward and unprejudiced re-examination and some of it the product of new insights and sophisticated methodologies.[17] The subsequent Ottoman period (i.e. roughly the 16th–19th centuries) of Arab history has not yet enjoyed such sustained attention, but there is progress being made on this front as well.[18] The bulk of this scholarly activity has been concentrated on political, economic, military, religious, and social issues, though the importance of Mamluk-era culture and literature is now gaining attention for its singular contributions. Everett K. Rowson, taking as his starting point the 'superficial' similarities between Greek literature in the 'Alexandrian Age' and Arabic literature in the Mamluk period—and the clichés said about both (i.e. that their literary output 'smells too much of the lamp')—has pointed to the paramount importance of issues like the canon, erudition, and intertextuality in both periods.[19] More recently, Thomas Bauer has explored the varied and innovative

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16. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches', p. 122; cf. the section entitled 'Wenn Bücher Kinder kriegen' in *idem*, 'Literarische Anthologien der Mamlūkenzeit', pp. 94–8.

17. This activity has been centred around the journal *Mamlūk Studies Review*, founded by Bruce Craig in 1997, which has provided a forum for a wide, though still relatively marginal, network of aficionados.

18. See e.g. Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: a cultural history of Cairo's middle class, sixteenth to eighteenth century*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003; Dana Sajdi (ed.), *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: leisure and lifestyle in the eighteenth century*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2007; Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: an environmental history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011; James Grehan, *Everyday Life and Consumer Culture in 18th-century Damascus*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2007; Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, and others.

19. E. K. Rowson, 'An Alexandrian Age in Fourteenth-Century Damascus: Twin Commentaries on Two Celebrated Arabic Epistles', *MSR*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2003, pp. 96–110. Of course, the figure of Greek Alexandria has often been used to describe 'decadent' periods in the literary history of non-European cultures: e.g. 'The similarities, however, between the Alexandrians, the Flavians, and the lesser masters of Kāvya are

uses of intertextuality and communication in the period.[20] Knowledge of the literary canon as well as erudition more broadly were clearly among the highest priorities in a Mamluk-era author's literary training.[21] Aṣ-Ṣafadī's collection of literary correspondence, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ bayn al-bādī wa-l-murājiʿ* (Tunes of Cooing Doves, between the Initiator and Responder [in Literary Correspondence][22]), is but one source among many that gives us some insight into the preoccupations of the literary milieu at the time. In a famous example, aṣ-Ṣafadī and Ibn Nubātah exchanged poems in which the second hemistichs are taken from famous poems by Imruʾ al-Qays and al-Mutanabbī; elsewhere aṣ-Ṣafadī compares Ibn Nubātah to the poets of the high Abbasid period to praise him.[23] Nevertheless, this preoccupation with—and indeed reverence for—earlier periods of Arabic literary history has been seen as evidence of intellectual stagnation and decline, while a culture of artistic experimentation—new literary genres, sophisticated rhetorical experiments, and an expanded thematic sensibility that stretched to encompass the peculiar as well as the quotidian—has been viewed as decadent. This study will show just how erroneous, and ungenerous, such interpretations have been.

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as interesting as they are natural. Encyclopaedic learning is common to all three [...]. The subject-matter is, on the whole, sacrificed to the form; threadbare legends, descriptions of scenery, and commonplace reflections are crowded in without regard to appropriateness [...]. Point, antithesis, and metaphor became essential [...].' (A. Berriedale Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1928, p. 348).

20. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication'.

21. See, e.g. the story related by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī about a young Ibn Nubātah encountering a literary anthology (either Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* or Ibn Bassām's *Dhakhīrah*) and becoming enraptured by it (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *ad-Durar al-kāminah*, 6 vols, ed. Fritz Krenkow and Sharaf ad-Dīn Aḥmad, Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif, 1929–31, vol. 5, p. 486).

22. Title as translated by E. K. Rowson in Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 341.

23. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ bayn al-bādī wa-l-murājiʿ*, 2 vols, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Sālim, Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Kitāb, 2005, vol. 2, pp. 316–17. See also on the two sets of *taḍmīn* (i.e. quotation, pastiche) poems, Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication'. Margaret Larkin is also preparing to publish her research on Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's *muʿāraḍah* of a poem by al-Mutanabbī; I had the opportunity of hearing her present her preliminary findings in Chicago in April 2012. On various re-renderings of Imruʾ al-Qays' most famous poem, see Zoltán Szombathy, 'Stop and Laugh over the Deserted Camping-Ground: Some Odd Uses of Imruʾ al-Qays's Ode' in Miklós Maróth (ed.), *Problems in Arabic Literature*, Piliscsaba: The Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2004, pp. 151–67.

It is in a revisionist's interest—after having first identified a topic worthy of reconsideration—to try to understand the reasons behind the presumably erroneous status quo. This is not merely a stratagem for devising one's counter-attack, rather it is the process by which a revisionist confronts the theoretical obstacles that—in combination with grander political factors—have contributed to the state of affairs one believes is in desperate need of revision. Revision, then, is not as simple as clearing up a misunderstanding. Nor is it simply a contemptuous litany of everything one's predecessors got wrong. It can only function as a conscious dismantling of the matrix of factors that, in the revisionist's eyes, have engendered historical misapprehensions. The most famous examples of revisionism in scholarship are those that upend sacred cows or pierce through the wobbly and baseless edifices of scholarly accretion. Yet most revisionism is a decidedly more tentative exercise. The majority of revisionist scholarship cannot simply take an ill-considered consensus as its foil because no such consensus exists. In fact, one of the primary motivations for the revisionist is to argue against what seems like a conspiracy of silence. For this kind of revisionism, determining what are the purported theoretical obstacles, cultural prejudices, and other sundry hindrances that bear responsibility for the neglect is an altogether more pressing concern. Much scholarly neglect is the result of a methodological void. We struggle to discuss phenomena we cannot categorise, let alone understand, so in cases like this, revisionism often takes the form of literary history. This is more than an exercise in empiricism, however. Revisionist literary history seeks a profound realignment of perspective and offers new methodological and analytical tools where they are most needed. Pre-modern Arabic literature is clearly a prime candidate for such a re-analysis and poetic collections seem an excellent place to start.

Though they were clearly among the most popular literary texts of their day, collections of short poems by one author or many have never received any significant scholarly attention. They are, at best, regarded as light and frivolous diversions and, at worst, seen as evidence of moral as well as intellectual turpitude. That these collections often treat subjects like pretty boys and girls, wine, flowers, luxury items, etc. has

not helped to dispel these suspicions. That the poems and anthologies were composed by authors who barely ever appear in our literary histories—though they were among the most prominent litterateurs and scholars of their day—only reinforces the prejudice that these are marginal and trivial texts. Many of these poetic collections are also made up of the work of many hands and this is another feature with which literary scholarship has struggled. Scholars and readers have routinely failed to recognise the agency of the anthologist and his or her role in the composition of a putatively multi-authored text. Nevertheless, these poetic collections—which I have chosen somewhat polemically to call epigram anthologies—perfectly illustrate the unappreciated potential of a more broad-minded literary analysis. In my model, the anthologist is a curator—an erudite and sensitive author—who, in responding to their audience's particular demands, weaves together a harmonious literary tapestry punctuated by distinct patterns and transitions. The poems the anthologist chooses to deploy—whether they are the work of one poet or of many—are reinvented in their new context and are used to form a greater whole. Today in our post-Romantic hangover, the act of compilation, like the epigram and other forms of light verse, is often disparaged, but the history of Arabic literature evinces no such bias. To the contrary, the luminaries of Arabic literature—the poetic geniuses, in naive, mainstream parlance—engaged in such disreputable acts as anthologising and composing poems that were occasional, panegyric, epigrammatic, and light. I can think of no better way of demonstrating the unacknowledged value of a whole range of literature than to take one of its most notorious symbols—collections of brief, light verse—and give it a fair hearing.

PART ONE

Arabic Poetry, Greek Terminology

Chapter Two

How do you say 'epigram' in Arabic?

> 'EPIGRAM, properly speaking, anything that is inscribed. Nothing could be more hopeless, however, than an attempt to discover or devise a definition wide enough to include the vast multitude of little poems which at one time or other have been honoured with the title of epigram, and precise enough to exclude all others. Without taking account of its evident misapplications, we find that the name has been given—first, in strict accordance with its Greek etymology, to any actual inscription on monument, statue or building; secondly, to verses never intended for such a purpose, but assuming for artistic reasons the epigraphical form; thirdly, to verses expressing with something of the terseness of an inscription a striking or beautiful thought; and fourthly, by unwarrantable restriction, to a little poem ending in a "point," especially of the satirical kind.'[1]

This inquiry is, for all intents and purposes, a literary-historical investigation of the pre-modern Arabic poetic tradition, but alongside this I hope to offer a theoretical and methodological model for the comparison of literary genres—including transculturally and anachronistically—with specific reference to the epigram.[2] In this chapter, I sketch the origins and permutations of the term epigram and focus on the salient features of the genre in its anthological Greek formulation to demonstrate its commensurability with an Arabic poetic genre that was developed in the Mamluk period. I argue that in the case of Arabic literature, an over-reliance on meta-literary (theoretical and rhetorical) texts and a narrow research scope that has often been limited exclusively to the pre-Islamic, early Islamic, and 'classical' (or 'Golden Age') periods of Arabic literary history—i.e. up to the mid-11th century, according to some, and certainly by 1258 A.D. at

1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, 1911, s.v. 'EPIGRAM'.

2. This study is inspired in part by Earl Miner's *Comparative Poetics: an intercultural essay on theories of literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

the very latest—have obscured the existence of important literary phenomena, which have been treated erratically—or more often simply been ignored—by modern scholarship.

Begging the Question

The seemingly simple question that introduces this chapter lies at the heart of this entire study. The question can be answered *per se* and impatient readers should know that a clear, if not entirely unequivocal, answer is forthcoming, but there is a great deal more to be learnt from this query than a equivalent term in Arabic. This question—discrete though it may appear—contains epistemological, historical, and political subtexts that need to be unpacked in the course of giving an answer. The question—it must be said—presupposes a range of values that constrain the nature of any proffered answer just as it reflects the historical conditions that frame the examination and its inception. The question is, for example, asked in English, the reigning hegemonic language of the world-system and the globalised academy; note, too, that the question poses a query about Arabic, and as such presumes a lack of dialectal and regional specificity, against an undifferentiated, ahistorical backdrop. We also cannot ignore the fact that such a question also presupposes the inevitability of a direct and universal transcultural equivalence, which would not generally be posited if the unequal dyad were inverted; how many non-Arabists have ever wondered, 'What's the English for *maqāmah*?' Nor can we overlook the fact that the question highlights a term that is clearly already a Greek importation into modern European languages and thus evokes the much mythologised cradle of 'Western' civilisation-trope, which has exercised a significant political valence since the Renaissance.[3] The question is, by no means,

3. Consider Richard Serrano's snappy summation: '[...] according to the dominant Hellenophile paradigm, Greek culture is absorbed by Rome a couple of centuries before Christ and Athens promptly, magically and retrospectively (especially in eighteenth-century Germany) becomes the source of all Western culture [...]' (R. Serrano, *Neither a Borrower: Forging Traditions in French, Chinese and Arabic Poetry*, Oxford: Legenda, 2002, p. 103). On this key constituent of modernity, see S. L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996. NB: it was this same cultural environment that gave rise to 'the modern debate on genre' (D. Duff (ed.), *Modern Genre Theory*, Harlow: Longman, 2000, p. 3).

clumsy or impolitic; it is hardly even remarkable in the flow of quotidian academic speech, and yet it is not innocent. Many readers would reject the question categorically: they would assert that it is meaningless either because it presumes a dubious commensurability, or because the term *epigram* has itself become so nebulous of late that it hardly has anything to do with its classical antecedent, or else because—as some maintain—literary genres and forms may not be juxtaposed except in cases in which the borrowing by one culture or the influence of another can be demonstrated explicitly. I argue, in what follows, that the question is indeed valid and moreover that understanding the epistemological context in which it is raised can be as instructive as any answer.

This question, and questions of this nature, require scholars and readers to be constantly aware of the dialectical process that frames a given question. We are concerned, in this a 'knowledge enterprise', by empiricism, results, sound interpretation, and the historical record. Yet an awareness of the historical and political context of inquiry does not mean that scholarship will abandon historically contingent and ideologically motivated concerns. Surely, there can be no confusing this point: understanding ideological motivations has nothing to do with escaping them. My goal here is to accentuate context, not to negate content. This empirical exercise—the query that set it off and the interpretation that has led to its results—is predicated on parallax, or the ability to contain two simultaneously disparate and irreconcilable perspectives. We shall return to the significance of this approach and its analytical consequences in the discussion of genre below, but, for the time being, the reader is asked only to periodically remind herself that the question being answered is both crucial and absurd.

Section One

Epigrams in the world

I. From Epigraph to Epigram

CXCII STRATO
Long hair, abundant artificial curls
Give me no pleasure: they belong on girls.
No, give me boys all sweaty from the gym,
Glistening with oil on every limb.
I like sex unembellished, scenting in
Glamour a whiff of something feminine.[4]

In line with scholarly consensus at present, it can be fairly assumed for the purposes of this study that the pre-modern Arabic poetic tradition was not at all influenced by actual Greek poetry despite the wide-ranging translation movement and the overwhelming importance of rhetorical texts like Aristotle's *Poetics*.[5] The reader therefore has every right to wonder why the following discussion of the pre-modern Arabic epigram is poised to go on a geographical and historical world-tour of sorts. The reason behind this is, quite simply, that this study views literary genre from the standpoint of the constructionist. This means that it is seen as both inappropriate and unsatisfactory

4. Translated by Daryl Hine in *Puerilities: Erotic Epigrams of* The Greek Anthology, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 91.

5. To complicate matters further, note, too, that the paramount intermediary in the transmission from Greek into Arabic, Syriac, boasts almost no tradition of secular poetry to speak of. (cf. J. Tannous, 'Syria Between Byzantium and Islam', unpublished doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 2010, vol. 1, p. 209: '[...] the Syrians held on to some secular Greek genres—most notably philosophy and medicine, but they also continued to write history, had an interest in science, and even dabbled in Homer and studied rhetoric—but they did not hold on to other genres—say, epigrams, imperial panegyric and certain kinds of literature.') The best resource on the subject of Hellenistic influence is still Iḥsān ʿAbbās, *Malāmiḥ Yūnāniyyah fī al-adab al-ʿArabī*, 2nd ed., Beirut: al-Muʾassasah al-ʿArabiyyah li-d-Dirāsāt wa-n-Nashr, 1993; see also, *inter alia*, G. Fowden, *Quṣayr ʿAmra: art and the Umayyad elite in late antique Syria,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004; D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: the Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early ʿAbbāsid society (2nd–4th/8th–10th centuries)*, London: Routledge, 1998; F. Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, (an English translation of *idem*, *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam* by E. and J. Marmorstein), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975; *EAL*, s.v. 'Greek Literature' [O. Leaman]; the introduction to J. Tkatsch, *Die arabische Übersetzung der Poetik des Aristoteles und die Grundlage der Kritik des griechischen Texts,* 2 vols, Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1928, vol. 1, pp. 3–219; and U. Vagelpohl, *Aristotle's* Rhetoric *in the East: the Syriac and Arabic translation and commentary tradition*, Leiden: Brill, 2008.

that we should employ terminology derived from specific cultural milieux without examining these terms and their applicability to other—alien—cultural contexts. However despite this methodological pose, there is still great value in the exercise of comparative literature and that is why this study is unwilling to reject the term *epigram*, or *anthology* for that matter, as being culturally incongruous. Likewise even when discussing the pre-modern Arabic tradition, it is justifiable to use imperfect, alien terms such as *epigram* and *anthology* to describe a wide range of literary phenomena because these terms can be readily modified to better fit individual cultural contexts and in so doing provide both specialists and non-specialists a common base upon which to ground their discussions. It should also be said that for those charged with representing non-Western, pre-modern literary traditions in the Western academy these terms play an inarguably significant role in domesticating the exotic literatures one hopes to present to an academic audience and the wider public, who are more comfortable with the predominant Western tradition. Nevertheless, as the following survey of the term epigram will show, it is not merely in the cross-cultural instance that the literary terms one so frequently uses need to be defined and scrutinised. The truth of the matter is that epigram—like its handmaiden, the anthology—is a flexible literary category, which over its long history has stretched to contain a multitude of characteristics only some of which are applicable to the analogous form in the Arabic poetic tradition.

The term epigram can mean anything from '[...] a short verse inscription or label on vases, cups, votive gifts, funeral steles, herms, etc.' to '[a] form of writing which makes a satiric or aphoristic observation with wit, extreme condensation, and, above all, brevity.'[6] Of course, the way in which the term is used here in this study is to

6. The first of these definitions is taken from *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram. I. Greek. A. Beginnings' [E. Degani]. Cf. from P. Bing and J. S. Bruss' 'Introduction to the Study of Hellenistic Epigram': 'This term [sc. epigram], in its most basic sense, signifies no more than "inscription", a text engraved upon an object. But already from its earliest attestations (in Herodotus and Thucydides), the word was used preeminently of one epigraphic subset, the verse-inscription—short poems, most often engraved on tombstones, religious offerings, or honorific monuments.' (in P. Bing and J. S. Bruss (eds), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigrams: Down to Philip*, Leiden: Brill, 2007, p. 1.

describe a form of poetry, which is generally how it is used by scholars of pre-modern literary traditions, but the latter example from *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* is illustrative. It is a clear example of the term epigram's transformation from its etymologically formalistic origins to something based rather more on a generic foundation; as this same definition goes on to say: 'tone defines it [i.e., epigram] better than form.'[7] What is most interesting for a comparative study of the pre-modern epigram is that this genre anxiety, that is to say the very visible encroachment of generic features on to an originally neutral formalistic pattern, is present already in the ancient Greek tradition that gave rise to the term.

The relevance of etymological meaning to literary terminology is dubious. It is generally unproductive to focus on the etymological dimensions of literary terms when there are plenty of examples of the genre in action, so to speak, as these are clearly bound to be more illustrative of a genre's characteristics than any abstracted conjecture based on mere etymology or literary theory. And yet etymology can be illustrative when it is contrasted with examples of the genre itself as it can provide an insight into why a culture might have adopted a specific term to describe a literary form or genre, or in the case of ancient Greece where the term is said to have been

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cf. Marco Schöller's comments: 'Especially in the realm of Arabic poetry, whose material is scattered over a wide range of the most diverse literary sources, there is a huge number of verses which were composed to be written upon lamps, tiles and carpets, saddles, swords and arches, cups, rings and seals, sticks and even nosebags. As said before, those verses need not actually be inscribed on objects—although this could be done, in particular on swords, seals or signet rings—, but the actual practice of engraving something on objects of the sorts mentioned also offered a seductive pretext for poetic creativity. There are no formal criteria to differentiate between "common" or "regular" verses and such rhymed "inscriptions", but their status is chiefly determined by the accompanying paratext, e.g. when verses were preceded by a line saying "The following was written on a lamp", or "He composed the following inscription on a sword".' (W. Diem and M. Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam: Studies in Arabic Epitaph*s, 3 vols, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004, [*vol.*] *II: Epitaphs in Context* by M. Schöller, pp. 315–16.)

The second definition comes from A. Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (eds), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. 'Epigram' [Frederic Will]. The latest edition of this encyclopedia (4th ed., 2012) came out too late to be consulted for this study.

7. A. Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (eds), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. 'Epigram' [F. Will].

used originally for a literary form that was wholly congruent with the etymon, why the culture chose to preserve the etymon by transforming it into a newly abstracted—that is, metaphoric—terminological description. As a prelude, then, to our study of the epigram genre in Arabic literary history, I propose to trace the outlines of the epigram in the history of world literature with a specific focus on how cultures determined the generic features of the form.

In Western literary discourse, the term epigram—as we have seen—derives from the ancient Greek literary tradition, and although a diachronic approach to an ostensibly non-syncretic phenomenon would seem methodologically suspect, the best defence against a Eurocentric analysis is to demonstrate, first and foremost, that the European epigram tradition is by no means a harmonious monolith, rather it is itself a kind of calque made up of historical accommodations and borrowings. This starting point also possesses the advantage of exposing the many contours of meaning and historical accretions that accompany the term epigram, which—along with the term anthology—forms the conceptual core of this study. Before beginning, though, it deserves to be repeated that this overall study is not an attempt to identify an Arabic equivalent of a literary universal, nor to suggest that the best way to understand Arabic epigram anthologies is through the prism of Greek epigram collections—such an argument would rightly be dismissed as baseless and quixotic. To the contrary, this study seeks (1) to acknowledge the undeniable weight of Greek, Latin, and other western European literary heritages upon contemporary scholarship in the west, as well as throughout the rest of the world, including in the Middle East, (2) to determine the ways in which this cultural background has influenced scholarly judgments, and (3) to pioneer a more critical engagement with the literary and scholarly legacies of European and non-European literary heritages. At the same time, I demonstrate that the pre-modern Arabic literary tradition produced a genre of poetry and poetry collections that can be profitably analogised to epigrams and epigram anthologies as they are found, diverse and manifold, in the wider global constellation of literary genres.

The study of comparative literature has depended upon an admittedly Eurocentric conception of certain limited and reified literary genres for which more and more remote parallels from outside the north Atlantic homeland of the field have been adduced over the course of the discipline's history. In cases where a clear and relatively unambiguous chain–or spectrum—of influence can be traced (e.g. the novel, genre fiction, the sonnet, etc.), the delimiting of a given genre is less fraught. In fact, non-European antecedents are welcome, e.g. *The Tale of Genji* (Japan, 11th century), for while they may predate the canonical examples of a genre, they inhabit a trivial and marginal space outside the mainstream of the genre's historical development and serve only as a footnote in the account of the European exemplar.[8] For most world literary categories, however, there is no evidence of influence, nor is there any expectation of it. In this case, a form of literary syncretism is practiced, in which traits are taken from one culture and another to form a composite definition that is intended to account for the features of a wide variety of literary traditions, but which ultimately fails to provide a satisfying distillation of any. Unfortunately, this literary syncretism often suffers itself from a tendency toward reductive reification to which historical nuance and cultural diversity fall victim. In the case of the epigram genre, what literary syncretism exists is a contemporary phenomenon that has regrettably overlooked features of pre-modern, non-European literary traditions in order to accommodate a dominant, Eurocentric system of literary classification. In his very useful trilingual dictionary of literary terms prepared to help Arab students learn western literary

8. One need look only at the *Wikipedia* entry 'Novel' <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel>, which includes a disclamatory section entitled 'Antecedents around the world', listing a variety of Sanskrit, Japanese, Arabic (!), and Chinese 'works of extended fictional prose'. These—with the exception of the truly remarkable *Tale of Genji*—are explained away, with the ever important refrain: 'the early European novelists were unaware of most of these works' repeated throughout the section in varying formulations. It seems that these acknowledged and trivial antecedents actually reinforce the conception of Europe as the engine of modernity: they testify to the existence of a universal human impulse—storytelling as the barbaric, pre-history of the novel— that could only be brought out and developed by European genius.

theory, the Egyptian scholar Magdi Wahba (1925–91) suggested the following Arabic equivalents for the concept of 'epigram':

a). '*al-ʿibārah al-manqūshah*' ['inscribed phrase'];

b.) '*al-maqṭūʿ al-lādhiʿ*' ['cutting excerpt'];

c.) '*al-ḥikmah as-sākhirah*' ['sarcastic aphorism']; and

d.) '*al-mulḥah adh-dhakiyyah*' ['clever witticism'].[9]

Let us grant that these equivalences are accurate insofar as they are translations of a contemporary Western conceptualisation of the genre. What is certainly more interesting and more relevant than their accuracy, though, is the absolute lack of any conceptual space for extra-European contributions.

While Wahba cites a few excerpted lines of invective poetry, he does not attempt to connect the epigram form to anything in the Arabic tradition. It is safe to assume that for Wahba—educated at Cairo University, the Sorbonne, and Oxford—the epigram is an exclusively Western phenomenon, that its origins and variations are to be sought in the classical and vernacular European literary traditions, and that the absence of a pre-modern Arabic equivalent can be taken as a matter of course. To the best of the author's knowledge, no modern discussion of the pre-modern Arabic epigram genre identified in this study exists. There are a number of epigrammatic forms in modern Arabic poetry and they are clearly linked to a pre-modern tradition, but neither in practice nor in scholarship do we find a particular awareness of the epigram genre form presented here as being new or distinct from other concise forms of poetry in the Arabic tradition. What important contributions that have been made by Arab scholars to date have mainly come in the form of textual editions of important epigram anthologies that form the basis of this study. This is not to say that Wahba was unaware of non-European epigram parallels—one cannot know—but more significantly, to argue that Eurocentrism paired with a shoddy understanding of the pre-modern Arabic literary tradition have simply confirmed a cultural incommensurability posited *a priori* in the hegemonic ideology of the west with its exclusive rights to modern inno-

9. M. Wahba, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms (English-French-Arabic)*, s.v. 'Epigram'.

vation in the world-system of knowledge. Wahba's definition exemplifies a tendency to disregard the original contributions of non-European linguistic traditions like Arabic in the formation of a world-literary canon in which European literature is cast as the standard against which all other literary traditions, past and present, are to be calibrated. The point being made here is not that Arabic cannot have enriched the pantheon of world literary genres—that this historical function is, for Arabic like other non-European traditions, an impossibility—but rather that any, even hypothetical, contribution must already be of marginal value. It may seem, therefore, counter-intuitive that the process of rescuing an important genre in pre-modern Arabic literary history from the twin threats of scholarly indifference and Eurocentrism would reconfirm the relevance of a term borrowed from the Greek, and yet there is every reason to believe that this inquiry can not only recover an important strand in the history of pre-modern Arabic literature, but that it can also go a long way toward enhancing the study of the epigram genre in world literature.

Definitions of the term epigram given in contemporary reference works like *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, *Oxford English Dictionary*,[10] *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*,[11] *Wikipedia*,[12] *Encyclopædia Britannica*,[13] and others[14] reflect a common

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10. The definition begins '1. An inscription, usually in verse.' but is soon fleshed out: '2. a. A short poem ending in a witty or ingenious turn of thought, to which the rest of the composition is intended to lead up. b. loosely used for a laudatory poem. 3. a. A pointed or antithetical saying. b. Epigrammatic expression.' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'epigram, *n.*)'

11. 'A short poem with a witty turn of thought; or a witty condensed expression in prose.' (Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, s.v. 'epigram').

12. 'An epigram is a brief, interesting, usually memorable and sometimes surprising or satirical statement.' (*Wikipedia.org*, s.v. 'Epigram', as of 30 January 2012).

13. 'epigram, originally an inscription suitable for carving on a monument, but since the time of the Greek Anthology applied to any brief and pithy verse, particulary if astringent and purporting to point a moral. By extension the term is also applied to any striking sentence in a novel, play, poem, or conversation that appears to express a succinct truth, usually in the form of a generalization.' (*Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, s.v. 'epigram').

14. '[A] short poem with a witty ending' (F. Abate (ed.), *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*, s.v. 'epigram, *n.*').

'1: a concise poem dealing pointedly and often satirically with a single thought or event and often ending with an ingenious turn of thought[.] 2: a terse, sage, or witty and often paradoxical saying [...]' (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. 'epigram').

process in terminology by which a once narrow and well defined term used to describe a specific kind becomes extrapolated and widened until its specific characteristics dissolve into a nebulous nexus of adjectives, which can be applied to a wide variety of cases with little consideration for the original, or typical, core that once gave rise to the term. This process is natural and widespread, and of course entirely harmless, but if it is the case that—over the course of time and without any accusation of conspiracy—a term loses its specific technical meaning, it is appropriate to recall that specific technical meaning, the history of how it originated, and how it is being used or modified in order to serve the purposes of the present discussion.[15]

The term epigram in English derives from the Greek term *epigramma* (*ἐπίγραμμα*), by way of Latin (*epigramma*) and its Romance legatees (i.e., the French *épigramme*).[16] Its etymological meaning is rooted in the preposition-verb combination, 'upon' + 'to write' (*epi+graphein* or *ἐπί* + *γράφειν*), hence its first-order meaning (or

15. T. K. Whipple tackled exactly the same issue in his study of English epigrams published nearly a century ago now: 'The very word *epigram* is unfortunately not free from ambiguity. At the present time, it is most often used to indicate a *bon mot*, a pointed saying which pleases by some ingenious turn of thought or expression [...]. This usage, however, in spite of its popularity, is of very recent origin [...].' In Whipple's study, as in mine, epigram is meant exclusively as 'a kind of poem', and yet as he rightly points out: 'Even with this limitation the meaning of *epigram* is still insufficiently definite.' He explains that this ambiguity is as old as the term itself: 'The source of this obscurity is to be found in the early history of the *genre*.' In his discussion of English poetry, Whipple adheres to the meaning of the term as understood in the English tradition—that is a poem with a 'point'—but he explains the fundamental difficulty that lies beyond this first impediment: 'For our purposes, then, the meaning of the English word can be established without great difficulty. When, however, we turn from defining the word and attempt to describe the thing, we find ourselves in fresh difficulties.' For Whipple, the problem is that the treatises on epigrams have mistakenly fixated on 'one species of epigram, namely, the satiric epigram as practiced by Martial.' This fixation, though, is not only unrepresentative, but as Whipple puts it, 'unfortunate.' In his view, '[...] the essence of the epigram is to be found not in its spirit or subject-matter but in its form.' I should caution here that Whipple's use of the term form here is not strictly formalistic, and were it not for the particularity of the Arabic poetic tradition, form could encapsulate the same nexus of features that I have preferred to call genre below. (T. K. Whipple, *Martial and the English Epigram. From Sir Thomas Wyatt to Ben Jonson,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1925, pp. 281–82).

16. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'epigram, *n.*'

denotation): 'A verse inscription'.[17] Indeed, epigrams were a very ancient and tangible feature of the Greek literary landscape:

> The epigram was a part of Greek literature throughout its entire history (the oldest documents coincide with the first examples of alphabetic script) and originally consisted of a short verse inscription or label on vases, cups, votive gifts, funeral steles, herms, etc.[18]

This concrete, etymological dimension was not simply one aspect of the form among others; it was the dominant reflected meaning of the term in the Hellenistic period and played a key role in the development of the form and its place in the literary pantheon.[19] The epigram form was eventually transformed in the Hellenistic period into the epigram genre, but awareness of its narrow etymological and historical origins persisted, especially in the genre's semantic field.[20] By the Hellenistic period, though, the circumstances of the epigram had changed radically:

> The Hellenistic poets turned the epigram into a substantially new form with an altogether different function. What originally began as an inscription now becomes essentially literary: the occasion increasingly becomes fictitious as is obvious, above all, in the epitymbia (funeral

17. M. C. Howatson (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 3rd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, s.v. 'epigram'.

18. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram I. Greek' [Enzo Degani]. On Ancient Greek epigram, see M. Baumbach, et al. (eds), *Archaic and Classical Greek Epigram*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, especially the editors' introduction: 'Archaic and classical Greek epigram: an introduction' (pp. 1–20) in that volume.

19. On the magnitude of this key cultural resonance, see, for example, Peter Bing's 'The Un-Read Muse? Inscribed Epigram and its Readers in Antiquity' in M. A. Harder, et al. (eds), *Hellenistic Epigrams*, Leuven: Peeters, 2002, pp. 39–66, which incidentally highlights another—wholly separate—point of commonality between Greek and Arabic poetry: scenes of readers confronting poetic inscriptions (e.g. the story of the Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd's visit to *Dayr Hind* discussed in A. Talib, 'Topoi and Topography in the histories of al-Ḥīra' in Philip Wood (ed.), *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 123–47, p. 141f).

20. Calling the epigram a form here is not over-determining it: 'The metre of the epigram was the epic hexameter, sporadically in combination with a dactylic pentameter, an iambic trimeter, or in rare exceptions appearing in yet other combinations.' (*Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram I. Greek' [E. Degani]).

inscriptions) to personalities who had died centuries earlier.[21]

Kathryn J. Gutzwiller, whose *Poetic Garlands: Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* is a groundbreaking analysis of the Hellenistic epigram, its historical context, cultural associations, and place in the literary canon, has discussed the epigram's transformation from minor (inscribed) form to the engine of poetic creativity in the Hellenistic period.[22] As she explains, 'It was the writtenness of the epigram, as its essential feature, that for centuries confined it to the ranks of the minor arts, to the category of the decorative and the trivial'.[23] This prejudice against written forms of knowledge and culture in favour of oral transmission will be familiar to students of early Islamic culture and it has been discussed at length by many scholars, chief among them Gregor Schoeler.[24] The epigram had to break free of its instrumental, epigraphic function in order to enter the realm of culture proper: 'As long as the epigram was confined to its monument, it was excluded from the arena of oral discourse where poetry could obtain rank and status by performance, and reperformance, before a collective audience.'[25] However Greek epigram—like all good memes—survived parasitically, according to Gutzwiller, its leap off the monument and on to the respectability of the page facilitated by simultaneous developments in elegiac and sympotic poetry, as well as by the

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21. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram I. Greek' [E. Degani].

22. 'Only at the beginning of the Hellenistic age did epigrams emerge as fully literary forms; in fact, they became a favorite of those on the cutting edge of literary development.' (K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, p. 3).

23. K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, p. 2.

24. 'During this period literary works of higher rank obtained written form only for mnemonic purposes, to be preserved for the oral performance' (ibid., p. 2). cf. G. Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: from the aural to the read* (trans. and ed. S. M. Toorawa), an English edition of Schoeler's *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l'islam*, and other articles; see also ibid., *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam* (trans. U. Vagelpohl, ed. J. E. Montgomery, Abingdon and New York, NY: 2006), a collection of several of his most seminal articles translated into English.

25. K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, p. 3. One of the most interesting aspects of the inscription to codex transition in the history of the epigram genre is the rise of female epigrammatists in the Hellenistic period. Inscribed epigrams were, as Gutzwiller puts it, 'unmarked and so gendered male' but '[b]y publishing epigrams under their own names and often with content that reflected the interests of their gender, women epigrammatists made an important contribution to the new literary character of epigram [...].' (K. J. Gutzwiller, 'Gender and Inscribed Epigram: Herennia Procula and the Thespian Eros', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*. Vol. 134, 2004, pp. 383–418, p. 383).

spread of books, specifically poetry collections.[26] As with all revolutions, the pre-history of a given phenomenon is an indivisible (if necessarily subordinate) element in its new dominant configuration: epigram never had to shed its denotative meaning in the process of becoming a genre because 'The illusion of inscription maintained in many literary epigrams may also have boosted the genre's appeal to this bookish age, concerned with the visual as well as the more strictly literary aspects of the written word.'[27] What was once denotation became muted connotation and this process by which terms lose their generic specificity has only intensified over time. Thus already in the Greek tradition by the Hellenistic period (4th century B.C.), when we speak of *epigram*, we are in fact speaking of a literary form, which exists already at one remove: epigram′ or epigram$_{book}$ and not the same undifferentiated, persistent phenomenon.[28] This fact may be historically extraneous, but it is in this generic interstice that we find the audacity required to repurpose the term, even enhance it.

It is clear then that the epigraphic origin story—or pre-history—of the epigram is simultaneously irrelevant to and immanent in the eventual fate of the epigram in literary history.[29] It is marginalised in the construction of the genre in the Greek tradition itself, and yet it persists both there and transculturally in the etymon, where it has often illogically overshadowed more germane literary features (cf. Wahba's first-order definition above). Yet the fact remains that the reason the term epigram has entered the common parlance of literary scholarship and exercised such a profound influence in the history of Greek, Latin, and vernacular European literatures is precisely because

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26. K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, pp. 4–5. The term 'meme' originates with Richard Dawkins, of course, who in his seminal *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) coined the term to speak about easily transmissible cultural elements, akin to genes.

27. K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, p. 4.

28. cf. P. Bing, 'Between Literature and the Monuments', esp. pp. 29–40. NB: in this chapter I use subscript notation to highlight the distinction between the contexts in which epigrams appear: either as epigraphs (epigram$_{inscription}$) or in codices (epigram$_{book}$). The prime symbol (Epigram′) is used in mathematics to signify a derivative function and is thus apt.

29. cf. in S. Hornblower, et al. (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. 'Epigram' [G. A. Highet and J. W. Duff]: 'Throughout 1,000 years of development the poetic epigram never wholly lost its original meaning'.

it was rescued from the ignominy of monumental adornment and brought into the literary mainstream in the Hellenistic period. As Gutzwiller puts it, 'Epigram is in some ways the most characteristic of Hellenistic poetic forms. Because of its inherited brevity and conciseness, its necessary concern with the personal and the particular, it conformed well to the Callimachean aesthetic preference for the miniature, the intricate, and the fragmented.'[30] Yet this momentary popularity alone was not enough to secure the epigram's place in posterity, either in the Greek tradition or elsewhere. The epigram's success is indubitably owed to its place in poetry collections that were recorded in book form beginning in the fourth century B.C.[31] It cannot be put any more concisely than in Alan Cameron's formulation: 'The epigram was in fact destined by its very nature to be *anthologized*.'[32] Gutzwiller explains that even when epigrams were not immediately composed as written texts, they were always composed with written preservation in mind: 'Even if Hellenistic poets sometimes composed for the stone and sometimes recited their epigrams to friends at social gatherings, they were nevertheless self-consciously aware that their epigrams would ultimately reside with other poetry in a written context.'[33] This is a point of great import for the Greek context, owing to connotations of the genre's anti-literary epigraphic origins preserved defiantly in the term itself, but it is not altogether insignificant in the Islamicate context

30. K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, pp. 3–4.

31. Peter Bing and Jon Steffen Bruss note, too, that 'Collections of short elegy, such as that attributed to Theognis, containing poems that were often abbreviated or excerpted, likely became available at about the same time as collections of inscribed epigram, by the fourth century B.C.' ('Introduction to the Study of the Hellenistic Epigram' in P. Bing and J. S. Bruss (eds), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigrams*, p. 11). This, they explain, had a great influence on the epigram genre and eventually 'The confluence of sympotic and erotic elegy and traditional types of verse-inscription enlarged the thematic scope of literary epigram. Thus by the third century B.C. the meaning of the term itself expanded so as to comprise any brief, mainly elegiac poem, whether of the conventional epigraphic kind, or erotic-sympotic.' (p. 12). I should mention here briefly that Gutzwiller (*Poetic Garlands*, p. 4n) and Alan Cameron, following Richard Reitzenstein, disagree about the primacy of writing vs. performance as concerns the early Hellenistic epigram. Cameron argues that 'The principal forum for the epigram in the early third century [...] was the symposium.' (A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 78).

32. A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology,* p. 4.

33. K. J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, pp. 5–6.

either. It has been a commonly held, though untested and uncritical, view among scholars of Islamicate literary traditions that epigrams were often sub-literary, occasional pieces, which hold more interest for their place in social interactions than for any literary value they may incidentally possess.[34] Peter Bing and Jon Steffen Bruss have remarked that this attitude toward epigram composition can be reductive and uncritical, and their note of caution is equally good advice for scholars of Islamicate literatures:

> No doubt, some epigrams were recited at symposia; some may even have been composed and performed over wine in the course of the party. Yet it is striking that, of the many sources that describe poetic performance at Hellenistic symposia, not one ever mentions the recital of epigram—apart, that is, from the scenes envisioned in the epigrams themselves. We must therefore take care not to confuse a poem's description of an occasion with the actual circumstances of its composition/reception.[35]

Gutzwiller's view on this question is clear: 'The advent of literary epigrams [...] seems directly tied to the invention of the poetry book as a literary form'.[36] For her part,

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34. e.g. 'It is important too to remember the social context of the poems. They tended to be public entities, even when apparently about intimate matters. There are many stories about poets finding a place at court by being able to come up, in public, with an impromptu line of verse, or complete poem, at an apposite moment.' (Dick Davis, *Borrowed Ware: Medieval Persian Epigrams*, London: Anvil Press, 1996, p. 22). Davis remarks later that '[...] many of the short poems of Anvari and Sa'di translated here read like off-the-cuff occasional pieces which were then thought witty enough to preserve.' (p. 23).

35. Peter Bing and Jon Steffen Bruss, 'Introduction to the Study of the Hellenistic Epigram', pp. 13–4. I should also point out that Ewen Bowie has treated this proposed generic evolution at length in the same volume: 'A prominent feature of archaic and classical Greek *symposia* was the singing of songs in elegiac meter, songs that often mentioned and sometimes debated the conventions of their sympotic location of performance and that occasionally declared, bewailed or reflected upon sexual desire, [eros]. In the poems of the earliest generation of Hellenistic epigrammatists, Asclepiades, Callimachus, Hedylus and Posidippus, erotic and, rather less, sympotic themes are also prominent. Are the poems of the third-century poets lineal and (as it were) Darwinian descendants of elegy as sung between the seventh and fifth centuries (as, for example, Reitzenstein argued), or are they the result of a conscious decision to create a new genre?' (E. Bowie, 'From Archaic Elegy to Hellenistic Sympotic Epigram?' in P. Bing and J. S. Bruss (eds), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigrams,* pp. 95–112, p. 95).

36. K. J. Gutzwiller, 'The Literariness of the Milan Papyrus or "What Difference a Book?"' in Kathryn J. Gutzwiller (ed.), *The New Posidippus: a Hellenistic poetry book*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp.

Gutzwiller's project is to reconstruct the original form of these early epigram collections and to demonstrate that epigrams encountered in an epigram collection are experienced differently than those read in inscriptions or heard at symposia.[37] As Gutzwiller puts it, 'The literariness of the Hellenistic epigram depends, then, not upon some "bookish" element in form, style, or theme (though some poems do seem unlikely candidates for inscription), but upon the context in which the poem is found.'[38] The epigram's success, its place in the constellation of literary genres, and its evolution from verse inscription to book poetry has attracted a great deal of attention from classicists, but even more significant for us here is the process by which the epigram genre ascended to the plane of transcultural literary phenomena.

The canon of the Western epigram is composed of two strands: the Hellenistic epigram tradition studied by Gutzwiller, et al., and the Latin epigram tradition, whose most famous practitioners were Martial and Catullus. The tradition of the Greek epigram was adopted in Rome, where many Greek epigrammatists actually lived and worked,[39] and it is interesting that this origin, too, was linked to the form's epigraphic origins: 'Since the 2nd half of the 3rd cent[ury] bc, the custom of inscriptional funeral epigrams [was] adopted from Greece first by upper class families like the Scipio clan

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287–319, p. 287.

37. In her discussion of the Milan Papyrus (known also as the 'New Posidippus'), Gutzwiller makes it clear how the generic status of literary material determines, in part, the way it is read and analysed: 'The question that arises, then, is whether the Milan papyrus is representative of this intermediate stage, a mechanical gathering of epigrams by one or more poets, or whether it was intended to be read as a literary object composed of multiple individual parts, that is, as a poetry book. The answer is important because it affects fundamentally the privileges we may choose to grant ourselves in reading these poems, whether we should read them in terms of some earlier, original purpose, as inscriptions or symposium chatter and therefore discrete entities in which the historical reality of the subject-matter is of primary import, or whether we are dealing with an aesthetically organized collection that is more than the sum of its parts, where meaning resides as much in the interrelationship of the epigrams as in individual poems.' (ibid., p. 288).

38. *idem*, *Poetic Garlands*, p. 7.

39. cf. S. Hornblower, et al. (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. 'Epigram. (3) Graeco-Roman' [G. A. Highet and J. W. Duff] and James Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy to the year 1800*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1935, p. 10.

[...]'.[40] With Catullus (1st century b.c.), it is not clear that he himself thought of his short poems as epigrams, but the tradition appears to have used that term to describe them.[41] And yet despite his important influence, Catullus' work stands outside the trend of both Hellenistic love epigram and the later style of satiric epigram developed by the all-important Martial (1st century A.D.).[42] It is Martial who developed the style of satiric epigram that would define the Latin art and overtake the Hellenistic epigram in historical influence. Against the benign indifference of mainstream Latin literature, Martial cultivated the epigram as a high verbal art and established the resilient satiric, pointed epigram format.[43] The importance of Martial in the canon of the Western epigram and especially in post-classical and even contemporary understandings of the genre cannot be underestimated: 'The practice of Martial established the form for the Western Middle Ages. Brevity and point were everything.'[44]

40. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram. II. Latin. B. History' [M. Lausberg].

41. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram. II. Latin. B. History' [M. Lausberg].

42. 'Catullus' work differs from Hellenistic epigram poetry [...] in its serious presentation of love.' (*Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram. II. Latin. B. History' [M. Lausberg]).

43. 'Martial aims at elevating the literary status of the genre by imposing high demands on quality, in contrast to the common perception that regarded the epigram as a playful side activity for amateurs. Aside from the mocking epigrams most often noticed in literary reception, most other types of epigrams (except for love epigrams) are represented as well. In his supreme utilization of the Latin and Greek traditions, Martial led epigram poetry to a high point in which keen pointedness is connected to a rich and lively description of detail.' (*Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Epigram. II. Latin. B. History' [M. Lausberg]).

44. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 55. cf. the definition given in David Mikics, *A New Handbook of Literary Terms*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 106: 'The epigram is, by definition, compact, pungent, and insightful [...].'

II. The 'Modern' Epigram

> The modern epigram bears the stamp of Martial and Catullus, and has become a brief, pointed, witty remark, instead of the vaguer but richer form which the Greeks filled with such manifold and delicate emotion.[45]

James Hutton has argued that '[i]n Greek and Latin literature a sharp distinction is at times hard to draw between elegy in general and a species of it, the epigram', and while this may be true on an individual basis, Kathryn Gutzwiller has convincingly argued that this is frequently the result of decontextualisation.[46] Epigrams depend—not simply generically, but ontologically—on their anthological contexts. The ambiguous generic status of the epigram is often blamed on a literary-critical gap and it is clear that as a minor verse form, the epigram has often been ignored: 'The ancients have left no extended theory of the epigram. [...] If all periods are taken together, the Greek epigram does not admit of definition, in the sense in which tragedy and the epic poem do. Its only *differentia* is brevity.'[47] Strangely, Hutton seems to think that the essential qualities of a genre are those that persist longest—even if they are not original—but he does nevertheless capture the essence of the epigram as seen retrospectively from the vantage of modern European literatures:

> Point, in the rhetorical sense, is relatively rare in the Greek epigram of the best periods; its place is taken in the Alexandrian epigram by what we should call 'conceits.' Point, however, is not long separable from brevity, and the proper form of the epigram came naturally to be thought of as not only brief but pointed. Point, again—such was human nature in the Roman period—inevitably tended to be satirical. The epigram reached its full development as a brief, pointed, and mainly satirical poem. It reached this stage, at which it rested, long after the Greek spirit had passed its zenith. The epigram, in its ultimate form, was

45. S. Hornblower, et al. (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. 'Epigram' [G. A. Highet and J. W. Duff].

46. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 15.

47. ibid., p. 55.

best written by a Roman.[48]

This conclusion may appear facetious, at first, but returning to the contemporary definitions of epigram cited above, it is altogether striking just what an impact Martial and the satiric style had on early-modern and modern European understandings of the epigram genre.

Of course, the fate of the epigram genre once it was adopted into the canon of European literature—during the climax of that canon's formative period—diverged from its more generically ambiguous classical past. The modern European epigram genre was inspired by *The Greek Anthology*, a didactic collection of Hellenistic epigrams, as well as the distilled style of Martial's epigrams, and its emergence was fuelled by a fervent and committed project to reclaim the classical past. This was the model that would eventually become the standard to which all other world literary phenomena are now appended. The modern European epigram was filtered—and, in fact, re-filtered—through the Latin legacy of Italy, first in the Roman period and subsequently in the mediaeval Latin tradition. While the history of the Latin epigram in Italy is ancient (as early as the 3rd century B.C.), and while the influence of the Hellenistic model persisted at least until the 4th century A.D., by the 15th century, however, 'the general run of Latin epigrams then written savor more of Martial than of the Anthology.'[49] In the 15th century, Greek immigrants brought with them to Italy the Byzantine recension of Hellenistic Greek epigrams compiled by Maximus Planudes in 1301 and this was subsequently printed for the first time in 1494 in Florence by Janus Lascaris (d. 1535).[50] The arrival of this text, which we now know as the *Greek Anthology*, came at a propitious time for the development of the vernacular epigram in Italian and French. As James Hutton explains, 'The [Greek] Anthology was not known in Italy till after 1460', but '[f]or neo-Latin writers the liveliest interest in the Anthology falls within a period extending from 1475 to 1550 [...] this was about the time when the

48. ibid., p. 55.

49. ibid., p. 43.

50. See the detailed discussion in Chapter Three below.

vernacular writers began to make common use of themes from the epigrams.'[51] Here again the process of generic development is not simply the story of inheritance and application, but a multifaceted process of accommodation, inspiration, and approximation.

> The Italians and French had several small verse-forms, more or less "lyrical" in character, well-accepted in the vernacular tradition—*strambotti, rispetti, dizains, madrigali, ballati,* and above all the sonnet. These were often in many respects the equivalents of the Greek epigram. Writers of these forms in the Renaissance became conscious of the similarity, and their consciousness led to formal modification as well as to substantial borrowing.[52]

One need only compare this process to the analogous process by which, in the Hellenistic period, scholars went through the record of archaic poetry to discover 'epigrams' that had been—up until that point—content merely to be epigrammatic: 'The definition of epigram [...] was made to include short poems by great poets of the past: the works of Archilochus, Sappho, Anacreon, and others were combed for "epigrams", and forged epigrams were attributed to Aeschylus, Plato, and other notabilities.'[53]

In 1538 in France, Clément Marot (1496–1544) 'undertook to modify the old *dizains* [ten-liners] and the like by importing into them the substance and movement of Martial and the neo-Latin epigram' and, according to Hutton, 'His *Épigrammes* [...] are the first in any modern language really to deserve the name.'[54] And yet, as Hutton explains, despite this primogeniture, Marot's epigrams '[...] represented the form still not quite disengaged from the mediaeval small-forms [...]' and '[...] save that Marot

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51. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, pp. 35; 42. On the tradition of neo-Latin epigrams, see Susanna de Beer, et al. (eds), *The Neo-Latin Epigram. A Learned and Witty Genre*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009.

52. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 56. See also *idem*, 'Ronsard and the Greek Anthology'.

53. S. Hornblower, et al. (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. 'Epigram. (2) Hellenistic' [G. A. Highet and J. W. Duff]

54. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 58.

calls his verses epigrams (which is important), they advance only a little on the way to the classical epigram [...]'.[55] This development in nomenclature is important, but if we are interested in identifying common generic traits there are earlier examples of epigrammatic poetry—*avant la lettre*—that we must account for:

> Je suis François, dont ce me poise,
> Né en Paris emprès Ponthoise.
> Or, d'une corde d'une toise,
> Saura mon col, que mon cul poise.
> (François Villon, 1431–c. 1463)[56]

In Italy, on the other hand, the break with vernacular tradition in the interest of idealised tradition was more radical: 'In Italy the vernacular epigram came into existence just following the bloom of the Latin epigram under Leo X [aka Giovanni de Medici, r. 1513–1521], and found its models preferably among the Latin epigrammatists of that age. It appears not to have grown out of a modification of the *strambotti* or *rispetti*, but was an immediate imitation of Latin and Greek form.'[57] Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556), whose epigrams—'completed before 1546'—were 'the first [...] in Italian to be widely known, and influential', 'modeled himself directly on the Greek and Latin

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55. ibid., p. 58. The first epigram collection in English so called by name was Robert Crowley's *One and thyrtye Epigrammes* (1550), though John Heywood's *An hundred Epigrammes* published in the same year was 'the first [collection] of true epigrams published with that title, and [...] [was] long popular, especially at the close of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, and [was] not without effect in determining the English conception of the epigram.' (T. K. Whipple, *Martial and the English Epigram*, p. 305).

56. *The Complete Works of François Villon,* trans. Anthony Bonner, New York, NY: Bantam, 1960: 'I am Françoys, which is no pleasure, / Born in Paris near Pontoise; / And soon my neck, by a rope measure, / Will learn how much my bottom weighs.' Quoted with the original in Raymond Oliver, *Poems Without Names: The English Lyric, 1200–1500*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1970, p. 130.

57. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 58. Interestingly, Thomas Wyatt (1503–42) attempted his own brand of syncretism in this respect, '[adapting] [...] Italian lyrics in the form of English epigrams' but '[i]n this work he had no followers [...]' and moreover, '[i]t is not improbable that Wyatt himself had no conscious intention of writing epigrams as such; he may have purposed merely to introduce the *strambotto* into English verse.' (T. K. Whipple, *Martial and the English Epigram*, p. 312).

writers without reference to mediaeval forms.'[58] Crucially, these collections were written against the backdrop of a stream of theoretical activity diagnosing and reifying the epigram genre; the first such attempt in literary history.

Marot's *Épigrammes* were mostly modified *dizains*—as we have seen—but this is perhaps to be expected in light of the proposed equivalence between sonnet and epigram that prevailed in this period.[59] Hutton explains that the '[...] the equivalence of the sonnet and the ancient epigram is constantly asserted' and the first example of this assertion that he is aware of comes from 'the *Art Poétique* of Sebillet, published in 1548: "Sonnet n'est autre chose que le parfait épigramme de l'italien comme le dizain du françois."'[60] This is a form of the same tendency toward literary syncretism I have mentioned above, but the general trend in epigram theory in the Renaissance was certainly rather more of the reifying, didactic bent. 'The first elaborate theory of the epigram was the work of Robortello (1548) [who] [s]o far as possible [treated] the epigram [genre] on principles drawn from the *Poetics* of Aristotle.'[61] He first concludes that, 'The epigram is a species from a larger form of poetry' but that while it may '[lean] more to the materials of comedy', '[the epigrammatist ought to concentrate on] propriety of language (Catullus and Martial are the models), *suavitas* [the quality of being pleasant and agreeable to (a) the senses and (b) the mind[62]] (this resides in 'things' as 'running streams,' 'kisses,' 'green trees'), a proper use of apostrophe, and finally 'sharp sayings' [...].'[63] This advice was directed toward neo-Latin poets, but in the

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58. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 59.

59. Interestingly, this same equivalence did not carry over into the English tradition: 'In England, however, the sonnet and the epigram came to be regarded as antithetical by the last decade of the sixteenth century [...]'. (A. C. Hamilton (ed.), *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, London: Routledge, 1990, s.v. 'epigram' [Robert V. Young]). Rosalie Colie has proposed to call the epigram and sonnet 'countergenres', that is they are 'twinned and yet opposite' (R. L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind: genre-theory in the Renaissance*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1973, p. 67).

60. Translation: '[The] Sonnet is nothing other than the perfect Italian epigram [and is thus] like the French *dizain*'. Quoted in J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 56.

61. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, pp. 60–1.

62. Charlton Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879 [1958], s.v. '*suāvĭtas*'.

63. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, pp. 61–2.

same year, the first theory of the vernacular epigram was propounded by Thomas Sebillet (1512–89):

> Sebillet appears to be the first to give a theory of a vernacular epigram (1548); he draws it from the practice of Marot. The French epigram should not exceed twelve lines; eight- and ten-syllable lines are best, but Alexandrines [AT: lines of twelve syllables] are permissible. The epigram is to be as 'fluid' as possible, and the last two lines must be pointed (*aigus*).[64]

Susanna de Beer makes the important point that '[...] wit and point are not the same, even though they often go together.'[65] She stresses that '[...] pointedness is not in itself witty or humorous. [...] The *pointe* itself may be perceived as witty only if the pointed closure is surprising [...] or if it finishes a poem of which the content is ambiguous.'[66] And again, especially in the neo-Latin tradition it is Martial, who devoted such attention to point (or closure) who is the stylistic lodestar.[67]

This same tension between the neo-Latin and vernacular epigram persisted in the work of Antonio Minturno (1500–74), who actually modified his theory depending on the literary tradition.[68] Yet despite these cultural accommodations, his description of the genre—'strongly colored', as Hutton explains, by his study of *The Greek Anthology*—emphasises brevity over wit: '"Whatever can be elegantly, acutely, and briefly expressed, whether concerning persons or things, and whether in praise or

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64. ibid., p. 62. Hutton then explains that 'He [Sebillet] asserts that the French epigram is founded on the Latin.' (p. 62).

65. Susanna de Beer, 'The *Pointierung* of Giannantonio Campano's Epigrams: Theory and Practice' in Susanna de Beer, et al. (eds), *The Neo-Latin Epigram*, pp. 137–63, p. 143.

66. ibid., p. 144.

67. ibid., pp. 143–47.

68. '*De Poeta* was intended for modern Latin poets. For the vernacular poet, Minturno in 1563 issued an Italian form of his work. Certain changes had, of course, to be made, but often the Italian *Poetica* is simply a translation of the De Poeta; the theory of the epigram remains almost the same. The comparison of sonnet and epigram [...] is of course peculiar to the Italian form of Minturno's work. As to verse [rather than the elegiac distich prescribed in the Latin version], the eleven-syllable line is recommended in the Italian epigram, either simple or alternating with seven-syllable lines, rimed or unrimed.' (J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 63).

blame, the serious as well as the jocose, comes within its limits.'"[69] The most influential theoretician of the modern European epigram, though, was Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), who was almost exclusively interested in the 'pointed' Latin epigrams of Martial and Catullus.[70] While other theorists were 'more concerned with defining vague entities and invented categories than with describing kinds actually practiced', Scaliger 'reflects remarkable progress towards useful genre criticism, giving detailed descriptions of kinds, based on rhetorical *dispositio*.'[71] In his *Poetics* (*Poetices,* published posthumously in 1561), he defines the epigram as: '"Epigramma igitur est poema breve cum simplici cuiuspiam rei, vel personae, vel facti indicatione, aut ex propositis aliquid deducens."'[72] That is to say: 'Epigram is, therefore, a short poem that indicates some simple matter, person, or deed, or [else] deduces something from an [earlier] proposition'.[73] Scaliger is better known for his division of the epigram into 'tastes', but this has rightly been called 'superficial'.[74] What is key in Scaliger, beyond the emphasis placed on point, is the idea of 'composite' epigrams that expand on the 'proposition' as it is first presented.[75] This same idea is taken up by later theorists, including Lessing, and it bears consideration for its relevance to the particularities of the Arabic epigram tradition. Scaliger's analysis, Hutton tells us, 'caught the attention of the world north of the

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69. From Antonio Minturno, *Antonii Sebastiani Minturni De poeta, ad Hectorem Pignatellum Vinonensium ducem, libri sex,* Venice, 1559, quoted in J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, pp. 62–3.

70. '[Scaliger's] interest, however, is almost wholly Latin, and, while he pays his respects to the Greek epigrams, he is mainly thinking of only two styles—that of Catullus and that of Martial.' (J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, pp. 64–5).

71. Alastair Fowler, 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After', *New Literary History*, vol. 34, no. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 185–200, p. 186.

72. Quoted in J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 64.

73. With thanks to Mark Bainbridge for help with the Latin.

74. 'Scaliger, in the third book of his *Poetics*, gives a fivefold division, which displays a certain ingenuity in the nomenclature but is very superficial: the first class takes its name from *mel*, or honey, and consists of adulatory specimens; the second from *fel*, or gall; the third from *acetum*, or vinegar; and the fourth from *sal*, or salt; while the fifth is styled the condensed, or multiplex.' (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition, 1911, s.v. 'EPIGRAM'). For more genre metaphors at the time, see R. L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind* and the list given in A. Fowler, 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After', p. 191.

75. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 64.

Alps, and the attention of the Jesuit schoolmasters'[76] and this pedagogic tradition was instrumental in spreading the gospel of the neo-classical epigram throughout western Europe.[77] As Alastair Fowler explains this allowed for a revolution in how genre was encountered and discussed: 'This new grasp of genre was obviously arrived at through humanistic education, which encouraged closer study of the best ancient authors.'[78] Here the process of canonization actively sought out marginal and discounted forms in order to standardise them in accordance with idealised classical practice: 'The epigram, for example, was of course a common medieval form, but it now came to be practiced with a distinctive precision.'[79]

Antonio Possevino (1533–1611), a Jesuit pedagogue, provided a lucid analysis of epigrammatic discourse in his *Tractatio de Poësi et Pictura* (published in 1595 in Lyons). Possevino '[...] [recognised] two main parts in an epigram—*expositio* and *clausula* or *conclusio* [...].' Thus presaging Lessing, and he also divided epigrams 'into three kinds—narrative, dramatic, and mixed (as the poet himself speaks, less imaginary persons speak, or both).'[80] This idea of the composite epigram—nascent in Scaliger, and mature in Possevino—is conceptualised in the analysis proposed by Gotthold Lessing (1729–81) with reference, crucially, to the pre-history of the epigram, or epigram$_{\text{inscription}}$, which we considered above. In the modern period, as the epigram was re-introduced to Latin Europe, combining twin strands from the neo-Latin tradition drawing on Martial and the erotic-sympotic Hellenistic epigrams collected in the Byzantine *Greek Anthology*, '[...] it encountered a goodly number of small forms already established, which satisfied the desire of brevity and neatness and took up many of the impulses that were

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76. ibid., pp. 64–5.

77. The *Poetica Institutiones* of Jacobus Pontanus or Spanmüller, for example, (published in Ingolstadt, Germany in 1594) '[...] was produced as a Jesuit schoolbook, and for many years widely employed in their colleges; numerous editions were issued in various parts of Europe.' (James Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 65). For a discussion of the development of the epigram in Martial's native Spain, see J. P. Sullivan, *Martial, the Unexpected Classic: a literary and historical study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 273–79.

78. A. Fowler, 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After', p. 186.

79. ibid., p. 186.

80. J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy,* p. 66.

expressed in Greek and Latin through the epigrammatic form.'[81] These native vernacular traditions were not displaced, but rather were incorporated into the reified, classical ideal of the epigram: 'the smaller vernacular forms, *rispetti*, *strambotti*, and the like, that most nearly resembled the epigram, were largely assimilated to it; and it becomes for the most part a matter of indifference whether a late writer calls his verses epigrams or madrigals.'[82] This process of adoption caused an element of genre anxiety and necessitated a renewed attempt at reification and legitimisation. Lessing, recounting the mythic history of the epigram, developed an ingenious analysis of the epigram that linked its modern style to its ancient origins:

> 'Lessing's idea, in order to solve the problem of the definition of epigram [...] was to force on the epigram form a bipartite structure. The epigram is a poem which, as though it were a genuine inscription, excites and holds our attention and curiosity about a particular subject (*Vorwurf, Erwartung*) and then proceeds to satisfy that curiosity (*Aufschluss*).'[83]

Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) would disagree with this diagnosis, '[arguing] that the basic epigram was simply exposition',[84] but Lessing had 'isolated [...] the one predominant element that Martial had made his own [...], the element of the pointed and witty conclusion' and this became 'the technical paradigm'.[85] Lessing is not unique

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81. ibid., pp. 64–5.

82. ibid., pp. 64–5.

83. J. P. Sullivan, *Martial, the Unexpected Classic*, p. 298. See Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 'Zerstreute Anmerkungen über das Epigramm' in *Gotthold Ephraim Lessings Sammtliche Schriften , 1. Theil*, Berlin: In der Vossischen Buchhandlung, 1771.

84. J. P. Sullivan, *Martial, the Unexpected Classic*, p. 298. See Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Anmerkungen über die Anthologie der Griechen, besonders über das griechische Epigramm' in J. G. Herder, *Zerstreute Blätter*, 2. Ausgabe, Gotha: bei Carl William Ettinfer, 1791–98. James Hutton notes that 'The amatory epigrams [...] are not part of the Anthology most often translated or directly imitated, at any rate down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. One observes that Meleager of Gadara, who to-day in the minds of many stands as the typical amatory epigrammatist, was hardly distinguished as a personality before the end of the eighteenth century.' (J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, p. 75).

85. J. P. Sullivan, *Martial, the Unexpected Classic*, p. 298. cf. the contemporary description offered by Whipple: 'The form or structure of the epigram is necessarily conditioned by its purpose: to lead up to a "point of wit" at the close. Consequently almost all epigrams fall into two parts, the preliminary exposition and the conclusion. The former must not only give the occasion of the epigram and convey

in his anachronistic syncretism, but his is perhaps the most ingenious deployment of it. The modern European epigram is a calque, as we have seen, but moreover, it is a highly anxious calque.[86] The vernacular traditions of Europe were aware of the epigram's etymological burden and its varying manifestations, but they were not prepared to concede incommensurability with the achievements of classical civilisation. They repurposed, accommodated, and adopted features of Greek and Latin epigram and of their own epigrammatic traditions to produce a literary equivalent that would satisfy the ambitions of their renaissance project.[87]

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the necessary information, but must also set the tone, so that the point shall not fail of its effect. The briefer the exposition, within limits, the more effective the epigram; so terseness is the quality most sought after. So likewise with the conclusion: it should come with maximum of surprise, and as nearly as possible in an instantaneous flash.' (T. K. Whipple, *Martial and the English Epigram*, pp. 281–82). See also on Martial's influence, S. de Beer, 'The *Pointierung* of Giannantonio Campano's Epigrams', pp. 143–47.

86. What else are we to make of 'the founder of the English epigram' '[Ben] Jonson's boast that he had broken with the previous tradition of the English epigram and returned to "the old way and the true"' which, T. K. Whipple assures us, he learnt from Martial? (T. K. Whipple, *Martial and the English Epigram*, p. 406).

87. This was not simply the concern of romance languages either. The German poet Martin Opitz (1597–1639), who was '[b]y common consent [...] the spokesman of orthodox literary opinion of his time and country [...] made it his life work to show that Germany could have all the literary genres possible in other languages. There is something less than complete literary independence in this very endeavor. [...] Again we have the typical advance from Italy through the Romantic countries to England and thence indirectly to Germany, this time by way of Holland.' (Lawrence Marsden Price, *English Literature in Germany*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1953, pp. 7–8).

III. Epigram Goes Global

> Japanese, Chinese, and Af[rican] trad[ition]s exhibit their own versions of e[pigram], though the term is hard to translate into any non-Western lang[uage].[88]

On 4 June 1902, Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1935)—the British-born Professor of Japanese at Tokyo Imperial University—presented a paper entitled 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetic Epigram' to the Asiatic Society of Japan.[89] Chamberlain began his article by explaining that 'All Japanese poems are short, as measured by European standards. But there exists an ultra-short variety consisting of only seventeen syllables all told.' The form Chamberlain was alluding to, the *haiku*, is well known in the West today.[90] It is a poem of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables respectively. To put that into some comparative perspective, a single line of Arabic poetry can range from eight syllables (e.g. in the *Rajaz* metre, and even more rarely just four) to thirty syllables (e.g. in *Kāmil*). The issue of poetic concision and normative length weighed heavily on Chamberlain as he sought to explain the particular nature of Japanese poetry to a Western audience; this much is clear from his language and manner of argument. Chamberlain explained that the *haiku*'s extreme concision had not hindered it in any way, rather that '[t]he poets of Japan [...] produced thousands of these microscopic compositions, which enjoy a great popularity, have been printed, reprinted, commentated, quoted, copied, in fact have had a remarkable literary success.'[91] All the same, the brevity inherent in the *haiku* form means, Chamberlain suggests, that these poems '[...] must evidently differ considerably from our ordinary notions of poetry, there being no room in so narrow a space for most of what we commonly look for in verse.'[92] Never-

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88. A. Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (eds), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. 'Epigram' [F. Will]. It is clear from the entry that 'epigram' as a literary category is used to mean pithy and satiric, not necessarily verse, forms.

89. See in Hiroaki Sato (trans.), *Japanese Women Poets: an anthology* Armonk, NY; London: M. E. Sharpe, 2008, p. xxxviii.

90. Basil Hall Chamberlain, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram', in B. H. Chamberlain, *Japanese Poetry*, London: John Murray, 1911, pp. 145–209, p. 145. This article first appeared in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. 30, pt. 2, 1902.

91. ibid., p. 145.

92. ibid., pp. 145–46. The advent of Twitter and micro-blogging has brought the issue of relative orthographic concision to the fore once again (See, *inter alia*, 'Twtr. Which tongues work best for

theless, Chamberlain felt it helpful to apply the term epigram to this Japanese form as a means of domesticating it, of associating it with a familiar literary category in the West to facilitate acquaintance:[93]

> Their native name is *Hokku* (also *Haiku* and *Haikai*), which in default of a better equivalent, I venture to translate by 'Epigram,' using that term, not in the modern sense of a pointed saying,—*un bon mot de deux rimes orné*, as Boileau has it,—but in its earlier acceptation, as denoting any little piece of verse that expresses a delicate or ingenious thought.[94]

The succinctness and delicacy of *haiku* is something that makes Chamberlain quite uncomfortable in his role as cultural go-between, and there is no doubt that he obviously believed it made his job that much more difficult. The *haiku*, he pleads,

> [...] is the tiniest of vignettes, a sketch in barest outline, the suggestion, not the description, of a scene or circumstance. It is a little dab of colour thrown upon a canvas one inch square where the spectator is left to guess at the picture as best he may. Often it reminds us less of an actual picture than of the title or legend attached to a picture.[95]

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microblogs?' *The Economist*, 31 March 2012).

93. We find the exact same tendency in scholarship on other non-European literary traditions in the period during which Chamberlain was writing (i.e. Paul Elmer More, *A Century of Indian Epigrams. Chiefly from the Sanskrit of Bhartrihari*, London and New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1899, p. 8: 'Under [Bhartrihari's] name we have a little book of epigrams called the Çataka-trayam, or Century-triad, in which he unfolds in somewhat broken sequence his experience of life.' and A. Berriedale Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 208; 348). On concise poetry in Sanskrit, see S. N. Dasgupta, et al. (eds), *A History of Sanskrit Literature, Classical Period,* Calcutta: University of Calcutta [Press], 1947–, pp. 364–418 See also similar issues discussed in Ming Xie, *Ezra Pound and the Appropriation of Chinese Poetry*, New York, NY: Garland, 1999, esp. pp. 6–13; 60–2 on the epigram-paradigm as applied to pre-modern Chinese poetry.

94. B. H. Chamberlain, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram', p. 145. The term *Hokku* refers to the first part (a unit of seventeen syllables) of the *tanka*, a 31-syllable poem. *Haikai* refers to the concise independent poems that make up *Renga* anthologies, and *Haiku* is a combination of the two. (See ibid., p. 158; 164). The Boileau here is Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636–1711), who in his didactic poem *L'Art poétique*, defined the epigram as: 'L'Épigramme, plus libre en son tour plus borné, / N'est souvent qu'un bon mot de deux rimes orné.' Elsewhere, Chamberlain does concede, however, that the term *haikai* cannot always be translated as epigram and that context is determinant of meaning (B. H. Chamberlain, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram', p. 178).

95. ibid., pp. 149–50.

Elsewhere he explains that the *haiku* presents '[n]o assertion [...] for the logical intellect [...]'[96] and refers to the form as 'Lilliputian versicles, or semi-versicles'[97] and 'not pearls, but only tiny beads'.[98] Several of Chamberlain's evident anxieties present interesting corollaries to features in scholarship on Arabic literature discussed below, as well as touch on wider patterns in discussions of concise or epigrammatic poetry.

Chamberlain cannot resist, for example, the pull of the epigram's etymological denotation, nor can he help but find Japanese *haiku* fragmentary.[99] Chamberlain identifies what he calls the 'permanently distinctive characteristics' of the *haiku*, or Japanese epigram:

1. '[...] it is quite free in its choice whether of subject or of diction'[100]
2. '[...] it is essentially fragmentary, the fact that it is part only of a complete stanza, and that it is consequently not expected to do more than adumbrate the thought in the writer's mind, having never been lost sight of.'[101]

This second point—that the *haiku* is inevitably 'fragmentary'—is derived ultimately from that same Eurocentric discomfort toward concise poetry that Chamberlain acknowledges at the very beginning of his article. As is also true in the case of epigrammatic poetry in Arabic, this discomfort is given a veneer of empirical legitimacy by means of an origin story (akin to the constant references to epigram's etymon). In the Japanese literary tradition, the *tanka*, '[...] a poetic form of 31 syllables in 5 lines: 5, 7, 5, 7, 7' was '[t]he première form of Japanese court poetry.'[102] The *tanka* can be divided into two 'semi-independent' hemistichs—one of seventeen, the other of fourteen syllables—of which the first, the 'upper' or 'initial' hemistich, eventually became the *haiku*

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96. ibid., p. 148.

97. ibid., p. 202.

98. ibid., p. 206.

99. On *haiku* and inscribed verse, see ibid., p. 153; 190.

100. ibid., p. 164. Elsewhere he remarks that '[t]he washing, the yearly house-cleaning, Christmas (or rather December) bills, even chilblains (!), come under the epigrammatist's ken. In fact, nothing is too trivial or too vulgar for him.' (ibid., p. 152).

101. ibid., p. 164.

102. Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961, p. 511.

form.[103] This origin story—in concert with the *haiku*'s unfamiliar discursive mode—leads Chamberlain to conclude that the *haiku* is thus inherently fragmentary.[104] In truth, though, this conclusion results from Chamberlain's view of the intrinsic nature of the Japanese, not from disinterested literary analysis. There is an intellectually sincere argument to be made that, perhaps, Chamberlain's views on Japanese people, their cultural habits, and their cognitive modes were ultimately born out of a good-faith analysis of their concise, lyric-affective, epigrammatic poetry, or at least that the order of events in this case cannot be deduced. One is inclined to think, however, that the logic of essentialism works the other way around.[105]

For Chamberlain, the defective and fragmentary *haiku* is a reflection of deeper structures in the Japanese mind. Presaging our discussion of trends in Arabic literary scholarship to come, Chamberlain opines that

> The difference between the two cases [AT: i.e. the *haiku* and Tennyson's 'half-stanzas']—and doubtless it is a vital difference—lies in this, that the Japanese production is isolated, fragmentary, whereas the European forms part of a grand organic whole. On the one side, 'In Memoriam' and whole 'Palaces of Art;' on the other, a litter of single bricks, half-bricks in fact. The investigator of Japanese literature, for all that his task is so arduous, has not the satisfaction to be rewarded by the unearthing of any sublime or epoch-making monuments. He must take sundry small finds, and be thankful.[106]

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103. B. H. Chamberlain, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram', p. 158.

104. He also criticises the *Renga* 'linked-verse' anthologies for the same sin (ibid., p. 162).

105. After all, this is the same person who wrote that '[t]he current impression that the Japanese are a nation of imitators is in the main correct. As they copy us to-day, so did they copy the Chinese and Coreans a millennium and a half ago. [...] [The] one original product of the Japanese mind is the native poetry.' (B. H. Chamberlain, *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese*, London: Trübner & co., 1880 [repr. London: Routledge, 2000], pp. 1–2). See also his opinions on Ancient Japanese poetry (*idem*, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram', pp. 153–54) and Japanese cultural progress under Chinese and Indian influences (ibid., pp. 154–55).

106. ibid., p. 207.

For Chamberlain, Western superiority operates at a structural level. The Japanese language is, compared to English, '[...] incomparably inferior as a vehicle for poetry [...].'[107] Yet even more illuminating is Chamberlain's contention that the East is fundamentally orientated in such a way as to preclude 'genius':

> The prominence given to this doctrine [AT: i.e. 'the doctrine of the essential goodness of human nature' in Confucian thought] leads to an extravagantly high opinion of the value of education; for a mind essentially good will of course require but right training to attain to something very like perfection. [...] Our Western saying that *Poeta nascitur, non fit* [AT: Poets are born, not made] springs from an entirely different mental soil. In China and Japan it is held that every one can become a painter, every one can become a poet, just as every one can learn to read and write and to behave himself. To a certain extent this is true. What renders it doubly true in the Far-East is the absence of real genius,—as we Westerns understand genius,—so that the interval between different degrees of merit is less than with us. In this manner, racial disposition, strengthened by a congenial doctrine and its attendant practice, accounts for the enormous number of persons in these Eastern countries who can paint, poetise, and so on, after a quite respectable fashion. Mediocrity does not displease here, which is fortunate, seeing that the highest excellence is wanting.[108]

The *haiku*—what Chamberlain calls the Japanese epigram—is to his mind perfectly suited to a culture of mediocrity. The reason the Japanese have foregone longer poetic forms in favour of the epigrammatic *haiku* has everything to do with their intrinsic nature, cognitive limitations, and national philosophy:

> [...] [T]he classical or semi-classical poets of Japan, for over a thousand years past, have confined themselves to pieces of 31 syllables [AT: the

107. ibid., p. 192.
108. ibid., p. 194.

> *tanka*] or of 17 [AT: the *haiku*], whereas even our sonnet, which we look on as a trifle, has 140, and our system of stanzas strung together enables us to continue indefinitely till the whole of a complex train of thought has been brought before the mind. But it may well be that, even had Europe been available as a model, no such sustained style would have had much chance of permanently establishing itself in Japan. When an artist—when whole generations of artists have produced one sort of thing, it must always remain extremely doubtful whether, after all, they could have produced another. The tendency to ultra-brevity is too persistent a characteristic of Japanese esthetics to be accidental in any given case.[109]

Thus the overall impression one gets is that Chamberlain chose to describe a concise form of Japanese poetry as epigram not only to domesticate it for a Western audience, but to deride it as well. Concise poetry is, for Chamberlain, an attested, but marginal, phenomenon in the Western literary tradition, and while the term epigram serves its comparative function in introducing the reader to the Japanese *haiku*—by no means as familiar to the average educated English-speaker then as it is today—it is clear that, for Chamberlain, the epigram itself—the term and all that it represents—is somehow sub-poetic. It is not quite poetry, but rather incipient, mediocre, defective poetry; certainly not the stuff of genius. And its prominence in the Japanese literary canon is symbolic of a deep-rooted cultural primitivism:

> The interest of such an enquiry as that here undertaken lies in the fact that [...] the epigram is the most thoroughly popular, therefore national, characteristic. By the investigator of the Japanese mind it can be studied almost as the subject-matter of a natural science can be studied, and it yields as its result a picture of the national character. We see this character at work while it is, so to say, at play:—we see it ingenious,

109. ibid., p. 206.

> witty, good-natured, much addicted to punning and to tomfoolery; we see it fanciful but not imaginative, clever but not profound; we see it joking on the gravest subjects; we see it taking life easily and trifles seriously; we see its minute observation of detail, its endless patience in accumulating materials, together with its incapacity for building with them; we see its knack for hinting rather than describing,—a knack which, when it becomes self-conscious, degenerates into a trick and is often carried past the limit of obscurity, not to say absurdity [...]. We see that comparative weakness of the feeling for colour which characterizes Japanese art reappearing here as a want of feeling for rhyme and rhythm and stanzaic arrangement, for all, in fact, that goes to make up the colour of verse.[110]

Chamberlain's views—on race, as well as Japanese culture—have not gone unchallenged, of course, and they have clearly been long since abandoned. As early as 1934, Harold Gould Henderson opposed the translation of *haiku* as epigram in the introduction to his anthology of Japanese poetry in translation. Henderson argued that because *haiku* is '[...] intended to express and to evoke emotion' the translation of *haiku* as epigram '[...] is quite misleading.'[111] Henderson's objection was, no doubt, based on a thematic reservation as he seems to argue that epigram is rather a description of satiric poetry.[112] Asatarō Miyamori objects to the translation on similar grounds:

> Some British and American writers call the *haiku* 'the Japanese epigram,' on the ground that in length it resembles the shortest European poems—the Greek, the Roman and modern epigrams. But this epithet is

110. B. H. Chamberlain, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram', p. 208.

111. Harold Gould Henderson, *The Bamboo Broom*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1934, pp. 5–6.

112. A view promoted by *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* and others, but cf. the dissenting review: '[...] despite Mr. Henderson's objections the term "epigram" [...] seems really as good an English equivalent for *haiku* as any [...]' (H. Parlett, review of H. G. Henderson, *The Bamboo Broom* in *JRAS*, no. 2, 1935, pp. 416–17, p. 416).

> quite inappropriate, inasmuch as, on the average, the *haiku* is much shorter than the epigrams, which sometimes run to twenty or thirty lines, and are quite different in content, in subject matter, from the other. The epigrams, for the most part, treat of human affairs and aim chiefly at humour, cynicism and satire. On the other hand, the *haiku* treat principally of Nature—natural beauties and natural phenomena and always make some reference to the season; and humour is considered bad taste in *haiku*.'[113]

Most Japanologists since Chamberlain, however, have been more interested in the structure and meaning of concise poetic forms than in their commensurability with the nebulous literary category of epigram. Kōji Kawamoto, for example, inverts Chamberlain's logic and takes the popularity and prevalence of *haiku* as evidence for its literary efficiency: '[...] the validity and vitality of *haiku* as a meaningful poetic genre is amply demonstrated by the fact that countless *haiku* have been composed and enjoyed for the past several hundred years in Japan.'[114] Kawamoto makes the crucial point that '[t]he fact that [*haiku*] can [...] be employed to stunning effect strongly suggests that the *haiku*'s characteristic means of transmitting significance and the method for reading *haiku* were established early and preserved within the tradition of Japanese literature and culture.'[115] But in his zeal for demonstrating the poeticity of the *haiku* form, and its suitability—its sufficient value—for hermeneutic reading, the *sine qua non* of literariness, Kawamoto dogmatically rejects the relevance of 'extended context' (i.e. 'headnotes and other prefatory writings'), which, while clearly extraneous to the text, remain legitimate subjects for literary, as well as readerly, inquiry.[116] Robert Brower and

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113. Asatarō Miyamori (trans.), *Classic Haiku: an anthology of poems by Basho and his followers*, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002, p. 12. See also Kōji Kawamoto, *The Poetics of Japanese Verse: Imagery, Structure, Meter*, trans. S. Collington, K. Collings, and G. Heldt, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2000, p. 46.

114. Kōji Kawamoto, *The Poetics of Japanese Verse*, p. 45.

115. ibid., p. 48.

116. ibid., pp. 48–9.

Earl Miner, writing about the 31-syllable *tanka*, take the form's succinctness as a given and emphasise the form's achievement in context rather than trying to draw parallels to elements in the Western tradition: 'That five short lines could be considered the unit of poetry for centuries is a fact that leaves a Westerner almost breathless with amazement.'[117] Moreover, they do not feel the burden of hermeticism so acutely and are thus able to emphasise aspects of Japanese poetry in which Western poetic traditions could be considered deficient:

> The Tanka also has quasi-poetic dimensions unknown to Western poetry by virtue of its social and conventional contexts. A Japanese reader who learns from a headnote that such-and-such a poem was composed when a certain person bade farewell to a friend who took a trip in the autumn immediately sees in this image or that phrase a far greater wealth of situation, circumstance, and tone than any Westerner does in his poetry.[118]

Developments in scholarship on the *haiku* (and the *tanka*) since Chamberlain have not resulted merely from later generations of scholars' more enlightened attitudes toward race. They are born out of more accurate historical understanding, sensitive and hermeneutic reading, respect for non-European literary traditions, and an appreciation for context. Chamberlain's attitudes toward Japanese poetry—his views on its fragmentation, deficiency, and molecularity—will all be echoed in the course of the survey of scholarship on Arabic poetry presented below. Nor is his use of the term epigram to describe *haiku* the least bit compelling, especially as he immediately rejects the context of *Renga* anthologies. Chamberlain is, therefore, a salutary example of the

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117. R. H. Brower and E. Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, p. 436. 'Is not a tanka so short that degree becomes almost a matter of kind; that we must look upon it as an inferior species of poetry? Our answer is that it is not inferior in the sense of quality within the limited dimensions. For these poems are undoubtedly executed with a skill, a virtuosity, and a perfectionism that no Western poet we know of has expended on his lines. Moreover the strength and the background of tradition and the use of such techniques as allusive variation truly do enlarge the dimensions of the poem, if not its length.' (ibid., p. 437).

118. ibid., p. 437.

perils of seeking out and arbitrarily designating versions of Western literary categories in world literature.

Section Two

Arabic Epigrams

I. 'Hegemonic Presumptions' and the Study of Arabic Poetry[119]

Having surveyed various permutations of the epigram in world literature, let us now turn to the pre-modern Arabic poetic tradition that is the subject of this study. It will be shown in this section that a genre of epigram did exist in the Arabic tradition, but it is equally important that the very question of the Arabic epigram's place in scholarship be understood as a parable of trends in the history of the study of Arabic literature in the modern era.[120] Two trends in particular, one foundational and the other incidental, have had the greatest bearing on the inquiry being pursued here, and by explicating these complex epistemic phenomena, a certain amount of light can be shed on scholarly attitudes toward the term epigram, while also helping to detail aspects of the agenda of Arabic literary scholarship as a whole. This accords with the broader goal that the original research presented here not only serve to expand and enrich our current understanding of pre-modern Arabic literature, but that it will help us understand how patterns of misunderstanding and neglect have developed within the discipline over time.

The study of Arabic literature in the modern era—in the West as well as in the regions whence this literature came—is altogether inseparable from the study of the Classics and their place in the post-renaissance university.[121] And beyond the walls of

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119. The phrase 'hegemonic presumption' is drawn from E. Miner, *Comparative Poetics*.

120. Much of the controversial fervour surrounding Said's thesis of Orientalism from supporters as well as detractors has played itself out on a wide, and generalist, stage (Among these, see especially e.g. Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, London: Routledge, 1994) and no proper 'archaeology of knowledge', with the necessary focus, restraint, and specialisation expected of archaeological work, has been produced to date. The Warburg Institute's new Centre for the History of Arabic Studies in Europe is a source for optimism. See also Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

121. 'Die arabischen Fachausdrücke werden oft recht willkürlich (z.B. *qaṣīda idyllium*) mit solchen der antiken Poetik gleichgesetzt' ['The terminology of Arabic studies was often arbitrarily and directly juxtaposed (e.g. *qaṣīda idyllium*) to the terminology of Classical poetry'] (Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1955, p. 132; cited in

academe, scholars have shown that in early-modern and modern Europe's self-conception, Arabo-Islamic civilisation is linked to the classical Greek (and to a lesser extent, Roman) civilisations as an intermediary stage between antiquity and enlightenment; a moral lesson juxtaposed with the folly of the 'Dark Ages' and its anti-enlightenment excesses. As Thomas Bauer has argued, the dismissal of Islamicate civilisational achievements after the renaissance (regardless of whether it is seen to have begun in the 12th or 14th century) is precisely—and merely—the reflection of Europe's instrumentalist conception of Islamic civilisation.[122] So much of today's Islamophobia is itself based on an atavistic caricature of axiomatically ante- and anti-enlightenment Islamic societies.[123] Similarly in western Europe and North America, Arabic literature was studied—up until two generations ago—mainly by scholars who had been steeped in the study of the Classics. The expansion of 'Late Antiquity' as a field of study, and institutional settings like the Institute of Medieval Studies at the University of Leeds, where Arabic and Hebrew are taught along with Greek and Latin as '[...] the languages read or spoken internationally in medieval Europe [...]'[124] have begun to reverse this trend. It should be noted, however, that the tendency to see Islamic civilisation through the lens of the Greek is not simply the result of a few individuals' pedagogical background; nor has it abated much despite the barbarian makeup of the last three generations of scholars in the post-colonial (that is, post-World War II) era. One might even characterise as neo-classicist my adherence to Hellenistic terms like epigram and anthology, but again, as explained above, the immediate goal of this study is to draw a distinction between an uncritical, paradigmatic perspective that claims to hold true for a range of

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Jaroslav Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', in Malcolm H. Kerr (ed.). *Islamic Studies: a tradition and its problems*, Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1980, pp. 103–123, p. 108).

122. Th. Bauer, 'In Search of "Post-Classical Literature": A Review Article', pp. 141–42: 'Terms like "Islamic Middle Ages" and "Arabic postclassical literature" are not as harmless as they seem, but inevitably carry a strong political connotation. According to the Hegelian teleological worldview that is behind them, Islamic culture has to fulfil one single important task, that is, to bring classical thinking (here: science and philosophy of antiquity) to the West during the "dark" Middle Ages.'

123. See, *inter alia*, David Pryce-Jones, *The Closed Circle: An interpretation of the Arabs*, Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 1989, repr. 2009.

124. <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/study>

disparate phenomena, and—what can be argued is—a precise and thorough comparative study of a specific phenomenon and its paradigmatic commensurability.[125] One need not deny that earlier uses of the term epigram in scholarship have been systematic—they do, of course, fit one of the range of definitions of the term detailed above—but they have been, for all intents and purposes, uncritical. In most cases, scholars have simply neglected to explain what it is they understand epigram to be—either assuming erroneously that a consensus definition exists—or at other times, they have prematurely canonised a series of thematic assumptions (invective, epideictic, ekphrastic etc.), and not infrequently, they have simply been desperate to avoid saying a poem is 'short'.[126] Interestingly, the term epigram (scil. epigram$_{\text{inscription}}$) has not generally been used to describe Arabic verse inscriptions despite the Hellenistic associations of the term.[127] This study, in contrast, intends to recover the history of an important

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125. Works like Wolfhart Heinrichs, *Arabische Dichtung und griechische Poetik*, whence Part One of this study derives its punning title, are clearly examples of the latter category and not the former. Gustave von Grunebaum's 'Greek Form Elements in the *Arabian Nights*' (*JAOS*, vol. 62, 1942, pp. 277–92) and 'Greece in the *Arabian Nights*' (in *idem*, *Medieval Islam*, 2nd ed., pp. 294–319) on the other hand, are examples of the former.

126. e.g. 'These [i.e. *qiṭaʿ*] are often short compositions on lighter themes, mostly wine, or love, or epigrams.' (Huda J. Fakhreddine, 'Defining Metapoesis in the ʿAbbāsid Age', p. 225).

127. There has not been much work done on Arabic verse inscriptions, but Werner Diem and Marco Schöller's *The Living and the Dead in Islam: Studies in Arabic Epitaphs* is a superlative achievement. Diem and Schöller present both the epigraphic and literary evidence for Arabic epitaphs and it is here that the gap between practice and theory viz. verse inscriptions seems quite large. Diem reproduces the verses found as actual epitaphs from Kairouan and other towns in modern Tunisia, but notes that verse-epitaphs are generally quite rare (W. Diem and M. Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam*, [vol.] I: *Epitaphs as Texts* by W. Diem, pp. 559–74). Meanwhile, Schöller demonstrates that among the wide variety of epitaphs culled from literary sources there are many in verse (Schöller lists some 237 in his catalogue, pp. 338–573). 'The statistical evaluation of the catalogue yields another fact of great importance, namely that roughly two thirds of epitaphs quoted in literary sources only report the poetry.' (W. Diem and M. Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam,* [vol.] II: *Epitaphs in Context* by M. Schöller, p. 323). Throughout his discussion of epitaphs in verse, Marco Schöller avoids the term epigram—deliberately perhaps—preferring the term 'epitaph-poetry' (W. Diem and M. Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam*, [*vol.*] *II: Epitaphs in Context* by M. Schöller, pp. 326–27). See also Werner Diem, 'The Role of Poetry in Arabic Funerary Inscriptions'; Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae*, vol. 1, pp. 10–3 and vol. 2, p. 92 (where it is said that '[...] epitaphs in a poetic form [...] became very popular in the second half of the Ottoman period [...]'); Carmen Barceló, *La escritura árabe en el país valenciano. Inscripciones monumentales*, pp. 201–04 (publication information given in the bibliography below; see also other such studies cited in Geert Jan van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, vo*l. 26, 1995, pp. 101–40, p. 106n). A search

poetic genre in Arabic, as well as update uncritical and decontextualised scholarly conceptions of epigram, by demonstrating the commensurability of the Arabic *collected* epigram with the Hellenistic archetype and other like phenomena in pre-modern world literatures. As we shall see, the mainstream conception of epigram among Arabists over the past century has been—in line with the early modern and modern European cultural perspectives discussed above—decidedly more Latinate.

For example, in the *EI*^{2}—generally regarded as the standard reference work for students of pre-modern Islamicate civilisations—the entry 'Epigram' (first published in 1963) redirects the reader to the entry 'Hi<u>dj</u>ā'' [invective], clearly channeling the paradigm of satiric epigram epitomised in the work of Martial.[128] This is true elsewhere in scholarship on pre-modern Arabic literature, as well, where the term epigram is mostly used to describe satiric or invective poetry (*hijāʾ*).[129] When the term epigram has been

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for *shiʿr* in the Online version of L. Kalus and F. Soudan (eds), *Thesaurus d'Épigraphie Islamique*, 10th edition, October 2011 gives sixty-seven hits, but some of these are false matches and many do not give the text of the poems. Prof. Bernard O'Kane led a project to document and preserve monumental inscriptions in Cairo for more than a decade and when I asked him about the prevalence of poetry in the not yet released digital database of some 3,250 inscriptions, which he has compiled, he said it is very meagre indeed. This is rather unlike the impression one gets from pre-modern literary sources, e.g. al-Iṣbahānī (or Pseudo-Iṣbahānī), *Adab al-ghurabāʾ* (ed. Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Munajjid, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1972; translated into English by Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh as *The Book of Strangers: Mediaeval Arabic Graffiti on the Theme of Nostalgia*, Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2000). Poetry featured frequently in ornamental inscriptions, see e.g. the famous decscriptions in al-Washshā's (d. 936) *Muwashshā* (or *aẓ-Ẓarf wa-ẓ-ẓurafāʾ*; several eds). Jewish funerary epigrams, on the other hand, abound in Graeco-Roman Egypt, see William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. xx–xxiv; cf. also Arie Schippers, *Arabic Tradition & Hebrew Innovation*, p. 297. On the nature and artistry of Arabic inscriptions contemporary with the texts discussed here, more generally, see Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001.

128. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Epigram'. The entry to which 'Epigram' redirects is 'Hi<u>dj</u>ā'', which Charles Pellat defined as an 'Arabic term often translated by "satire", but more precisely denoting a curse, an invective diatribe or insult in verse, an insulting poem, then an epigram, and finally a satire in prose or verse.' (*EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Hi<u>dj</u>ā'') In the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (1913–36), the entry on 'Hi<u>dj</u>ā'' begins: '(A[rabic]), satire, epigram [...] (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition, s.v. 'Hi<u>dj</u>ā'').

129. Satiric epigram: see in *EI*^{2}, s.vv. 'Hidjāʾ [scil. i. in Arabic]' [Ch. Pellat]; 'Ba<u>shsh</u>ār b. Burd' [R. Blachère]; 'Ibn al-Rūmī' [S. Boustany]; 'al-Ḥamdawī' [A. Arazi]; 'Muḥammad b. Yasīr al-Riyāshī' [Ch. Pellat]; 'al-Farazdaḳ' [R. Blachère]; 'Abū 'l-Asad al-Ḥimmānī'; 'Abū Saʿd al-Ma<u>kh</u>zūmī'; 'Abū Nukhayla' [Ch. Pellat]; Ibn Muʿa<u>dhdh</u>al [Ch. Pellat]; 'Abū <u>Sh</u>urāʿa' [Ch. Pellat]; 'Mūsā <u>Sh</u>ahawātin' [Ch. Pellat]; 'Ibn Lankak' [Ch. Pellat]; 'ʿAmr b. Kul<u>th</u>ūm' [R. Blachère]; 'Dīk al-<u>Dj</u>inn' [A. Schaade & Ch. Pellat]; 'al-Ḥakam b.

applied to pre-modern Islamicate literatures other than Arabic (i.e. Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu) the concept has often been linked—erroneously—to a misconception of the Arabic *qiṭʿah* form and with hardly any concern for the genre of anthologised epigram detailed here.[130] Nevertheless there are some key nodes that break the pattern and these are illustrative of the phenomenon I am presenting here. In entries on 'The Moderns',[131] descriptive poetry,[132] and literary figures and forms,[133] a few scholars of Arabic literature deviate from the Martial-inspired satiric epigram archetype and it will come therefore as no surprise that these scholars, principally Geert Jan van Gelder and Gregor Schoeler, loom large in the following discussion.[134] However

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Muḥammad b. Ḳandar al-Māzinī' [Ch. Pellat]; 'Ibn Bassām' [Ch. Pellat]; 'Ibn Thawāba' [S. Boustany]; 'Ḥammād ʿAdjrad' [Ch. Pellat]; Ibn Sharaf al-Ḳayrawānī' [Ch. Pellat]; 'al-Uḳayshir' [A. Arazi]; 'Ḳayna' [Ch. Pellat]; 'Midrār (Banū) or Midrārids' [Ch. Pellat]; 'Ibn Rushd' [R. Arnaldez]; 'Isḥāḳ b. Ḥunayn b. Isḥāḳ al-ʿIbādī' [G. Strohmaier]; 'Sukayna bt. al-Ḥusayn' [A. Arazi].

See also P. A. Mackay, 'Patronage and Power in 6th/12th century Baghdad. The Life of the Vizier ʿAḍud al-Dīn Ibn al-Muẓaffar', *SI*, vol. 34, 1971, pp. 27–56, p. 53; R. Blachère, 'Un jardin secret: la poésie arabe', *SI*, vol. 9, 1958, pp. 5–12, p. 11; D. S. Margoliouth, 'On Ibn al-Muʿallim, the Poet of Wāsiṭ', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete*, vol. 26, 1912, pp. 334–44, pp. 335 and 338; Ignaz Goldziher, 'Der Dîwân des Ġarwal b. Aus Al-Ḥuṭejʾa', p. 520; Gustave Rat's translation of al-Ibshīhī's *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf*: 'De l'epigramme et de ses assauts [mordants]' (*Al-Mostaṭraf*, Paris: E. Leroux, 1899–1902, vol. 1, ch. 43).

130. See e.g., in the case of Hebrew, Peter Cole, *The Dream of the Poem*, pp. 532–33:

> Epigrams are extremely common in both Arabic and Hebrew medieval literature, and they need to be distinguished within the more general category of the *qiṭʿa*, or short poem. As in classical Greek, Latin, and English literature, the Hebrew epigram is characterized by brevity, wit, and its point, or strong sense of closure. In the Arabic tradition, longer qasidas were often 'ransacked' by anthologists for epigrammatic lines that could stand on their own, and this anthology contains several of these 'detached' epigrams [...]. Epigrams ranged widely in theme, but gnomic, satirical, elegiac, and erotic epigrams abound.

See also N. Roth, '"Deal Gently with the Young Man"', p. 44; A. Schippers, 'Arabic Influence in the Poetry of Todros Abulafia', p. 18; W. van Bekkum, *The Secular Poetry of Elʿazar ben Yaʿaqov ha-Bavli*, Leiden: Brill, 2007, p. 17.

131. *EI*², s.v. 'Muḥdathūn' [G. J. H. van Gelder].

132. e. g. *EI*², s.vv. 'Shamʿa' [G. J. H. van Gelder]; 'al-Maʾmūnī' [J. C. Bürgel]; 'al-Ṣanawbarī' [G. Schoeler]; 'Zahriyyāt 1. in Arabic' [G. Schoeler].

133. *EI*², s.vv. 'Tashbīh' [G. J. H. van Gelder]; 'Ḳiṭʿa 1. in Arabic poetry' [G. Schoeler]. cf. also *EI*², s.v. 'ʿArabiyya. Arabic Language and Literature. (III) Third to Fifth Centuries (ii) Poetry' [H. A. R. Gibb], though it is not exactly clear to me what Gibb means here by 'epigram'.

134. cf. also *EI*², s.vv. 'al-Ṣafadī' [F. Rosenthal]: Franz Rosenthal, incidentally, was the very model of a

before outlining these dissenting uses of the term epigram in literary scholarship, I believe it would be salutary at this point to address the other, 'incidental' factor that has affected the study of pre-modern Arabic poetry in order to demonstrate the influence that this controversy has had on the study of 'concise' poetry in Arabic.

Atomic Fallout

> Generally speaking, the atomized structure characteristic of Persian classical poetry fostered the use of an epigrammatic style.[135]

From almost the very beginning, Orientalists found the structure of classical Islamicate poetry confusing and incoherent.[136] As Walter Leaf, writing about Persian poetry in 1898, put it: 'We have learnt from our Greek masters to seek the unity of a poem in the thought or mood developed in it. Whether sensuous or intellectual, the unity is internal and essential. To a Persian poet this is not so [...]'.[137] Note once more how the 'Greek masters'—i.e. the Classical heritage—is, for Leaf, the touchstone, the natural *locus comparationis* for 'Eastern art'. Similarly in 1934 in the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, A. S. Tritton asserted that:

> Arab poetry is essentially atomic; a string of isolated statements which might be accumulated but could not be combined. Sustained narrative

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'classically' trained Arabist, and perhaps it was this training that influenced him in his use of the term 'epigram' to describe the poetry I am calling epigram in this study; 'al-Warrāḳ' [G. J. H. van Gelder]; 'Musāwir b. Sawwār al-Warrāḳ' [G. J. H. van Gelder].

135. *EIran*, s.v. 'Epigram' [J. T. P. de Bruijn].

136. A J. Arberry found an example of this sentiment already in the mid-18th century among Willam Jones' circle: 'The theory of Ḥāfiẓ' incoherency was probably first advanced by Count Reviczki, Jones's Polish friend, in a letter to his young colleague in orientalism, dated London, 7th March, 1768: "Ghazelam اگـــر آن تـــرک non verti Latino carmine ob versuum incohærentiam."' (A. J. Arberry, '"Orient Pearls at Random Strung"', *BSOAS*, vol. 11, no. 4, February 1946, pp. 699–712, p. 703). Jaroslav Stetkevych distinguishes between this 'scholarly' attitude and the more tolerant—and indeed exuberant—approach evinced earlier by Europeans such as Goethe (see below). The atomic paradigm was also applied to other Islamicate poetries (e.g. Ottoman, Urdu, etc.); see Frances W. Pritchett, 'Orient Pearls Unsung: The Quest for Unity in the Ghazal', *Edebiyat*, n.s. vol. 4, 1993, pp. 119–35. See also G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, Leiden: Brill, 1982.

137. Walter Leaf, *Versions from Hafiz. An essay in Persian metre*. London: Grant Richards, 1898, p. 5 (quoted in A. J. Arberry, '"Orient Pearls at Random Strung"', pp. 703–4).

> and speculation are both alien to it. It is descriptive but the description is a thumbnail sketch; it is thoughtful but the result is aphoristic. The poet looks on the world through a microscope. Minute peculiarities of places and animals catch his attention and makes his poetry versified geology and anatomy; untranslatable and dull. Forceful speech is his aim and the result is—to Western minds—often grotesque or even repulsive.[138]

These outdated and thoroughly discredited opinions may seem quaint and irrelevant today, but they continue to command our attention for two crucial reasons. First, this controversy—over the perceived incoherence of pre-modern Arabic and Islamicate poetries—is the founding myth of the modern study of Arabic poetry, and though it may appear to be long since discredited, its echoes continue to reverberate through putatively unrelated debates in the field. Second, these kinds of rash generalisations were deployed for more pernicious aims than mere literary criticism: the purported fragmentation of Islamicate poetry was a metonym for the 'eastern mind':[139]

> In the Persian ode we find a succession of couplets, often startling in their independence, in their giddy transitions from grave to gay, from thought to mood. To the Persian each couplet is a whole in itself, a *nukta*, or "point", sufficiently beautiful if it be adequately expressed, and

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138. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition, s.v. 'Shiʿr' [A. S. Tritton]; quoted in Michael Sells, 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West', p. 308.

139. Jaroslav Stetkevych has traced the process by which the perspective of singularity proposed by Wilhelm Ahlwardt becomes a site of civilisational bifurcation: 'Only a few years later, Theodor Nöldeke will repeat Ahlwardt's critical dictum [i.e. '[...] the Arabs have understanding for the singular [*das Einzelne*] only, by reason of which their poetry is, according to our conception, never a self-contained whole'] almost literally, for by that time the issue had become apparently quite dogmatic. It was up to Nöldeke, however, to give the notion of the *Einzelne* the significant comparativist slant of "otherness": "The Oriental has always but the single verse in sight, the single image rendered complete whereas we look always at the whole" (T. Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der alten Araber* [Hannover, 1864], p. 5).' (J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', p. 112 and 112n; the quotation from Ahlwardt is translated by Stetkevych from W. Ahlwardt, *Über Poesie und Poetik der Araber*, pp. 68–9). See also the discussion in Raymond P. Scheindlin, *Form and Structure in the poetry of al-Muʿtamid Ibn ʿAbbād*, Leiden: Brill, 1974, pp. 1–7.

> not of necessity owing anything or adding anything to that which comes before or after. It is from the common metre and common rhyme alone that the ode gains a formal unity. As Eastern poets are never tired of telling us, the making of an ode is the threading of pearls upon a string; the couplet is the pearl, round and smooth and perfect in itself, the metre is but the thread which binds them all together.
>
> Not, of course, that the ode is of necessity thus discursive and, to our minds, incoherent. Nature provides that even the poet carried outside himself shall often at least preserve a coherent mood, shall be dominated for awhile by one strong thought; only it is not to the East, as it is to most of us, a condition of perfect work that this should be the case.
>
> [...] The lyric poetry of Persia is indeed a reflexion of the minds of those who sang it—sensual, mystic, recalling the voluptuous dreams of Hashish, the flashes of intuition wherein the Godhead reveals himself in momentary blinding visions to the ecstatic drunk with wine, be it of Heaven or of Earth.[140]

Regarding this last bit, A. J. Arberry's comment is sufficient reply: 'Of course, this is all highflown nonsense.'[141] This long entrenched view—which considered Islamicate poems to be fragmentary collections of individual verses (erroneously referred to as 'couplets' in the quotation above)—came to be known as atomism or molecularity:[142]

> For more than a century of European scholarly commerce with Arabic poetry, the *Leitmotiv* of that commerce had never really changed: the

140. W. Leaf, *Versions from Hafiz*, pp. 5–6, (quoted partially A. J. Arberry, '"Orient Pearls at Random Strung"', p. 704).

141. A. J. Arberry, '"Orient Pearls at Random Strung"', p. 704.

142. On the first uses of the epithets atomic and molecularity in connection with Arabic poetry, see G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, p. 14n. Basil Hall Chamberlain also referred to Japanese *haiku* as '[...] molecules of description, fancy or morality [...]' (B. H. Chamberlain, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram', p. 207).

> nature of Arabic poetry was deterministically and dogmatically assumed to exhaust itself in its brick and mortar, in its most basic morphology. It remained quite within the philological mentality of the "perfect text" to search for the nature of something as fragile as the structure of the Arabic poem in its smallest morphological components—in *das Einzelne*. What had once been the Euphrates-like fluidity and the openness of form of Goethe's "*etwas Quodlibetartiges*" is now about to be harnessed into a theory of the nature of Arabic poetry which, together with a more comprehensive anthropological theory of the Arab mind, will result in the seductive and conveniently scientific formulation of "atomism".[143]

For decades, scholars of Islamicate poetry accepted this view—atomism or molecularity—as a matter of course and often attempted to inure readers to it:

> The reader unaccustomed to this kind of poetry will have noted a rather disconcerting feature it displays. Each verse forms a closed unit, only slightly interconnected with the others. [...] external incongruity would seem to be a real rule in classic Persian poetry. We are in the presence of a bunch of motifs only lightly tied together.
>
> Now, is this lyrical style so monotonous and invariable, as many have said? We think it is not [...].[144]

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143. J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics' in M. H. Kerr (ed.), *Islamic Studies: a tradition and its problems*, Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1980, pp. 103–23, p. 113. NB: J. Stetkevych also points out that the same charge of atomism was used to describe aspects of the composition of the Hebrew Bible (ibid., p. 113n). The Bible—or rather Biblical scholarship—has had the last laugh, though, through its pioneering afterlife in the study of genre theory (see Hans Robert Jauß, 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature'). The motif of atomism was in the 19th-century air, of course: John Dalton (1766–1844) proposed his atomic theory of the elements at the beginning of the century and the notion is prominent throughout intellectual thought of the era (e.g. in Marx's economic model, see *Das Kapital*, chs 1 and 2).

144. Alessandro Bausani, 'The development of form in Persian lyrics', *East and West*, n. s. vol. 9, no. 3, Sep. 1958, pp. 145–53, p. 149. cf. 'An Arabic (or Persian) ḳaṣīda is a very artificial composition; the same rhyme has to run through the whole of the verses, however long the poem may be. [...] The result is that we cannot expect much beautiful poetry [...] the description of the desert and its animals and terrors may have a certain charm at first, but when the description recur in endless poems expressed in the

As Julie Scott Meisami has explained, however, the entire dichotomous paradigm—atomic vs. organic, incoherent vs. coherent—is itself specious:

> The molecular theory is less an aesthetic than a value judgment behind which lies the assumption of the innate superiority of Western culture and literature, defined through a process of selecting certain features as primary or fundamental, hence normative, and applying these as criteria for all literature. The result is the creation of two mutually opposed literary entities, one "Western", one "Oriental", an opposition which constitutes an important part of the paradigm of cultural identity produced by Orientalist scholarship.[145]

As early as A. J. Arberry's article (published in 1943), we can see a clear shift in scholarly opinion against this 'hegemonic presumption' following the Second World War,[146] but nevertheless these essentialising views persisted well into the 20th century:

> Convention backed by what might be called the atomizing outlook of the Arab on people and things prevented for the most part the drawing of fully individualized portraits in poetical form. The Arab's attention was caught by the detail, which he would render with inimitable poignancy; but the totality of man, unless patternized, more often than not escaped while the poet skillfully vaunted bravery, generosity, decency, sportliness, and initiative of his hero.[147]

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same manner, only with different words, the monotony becomes nauseous.' (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition, s.v. 'Ḳasīda' [F. Krenkow]). Geert Jan van Gelder drew my attention to the fact that in the 2nd edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* published decades later, Gérard Lecomte (1926–97), who had taken on the responsibility of revising and updating Krenkow's entry, echoed many of these—by then, outdated—prejudices: 'The Arabic ḳaṣīda is a very conventional piece of verse, with one rhyme, whatever its length, and in a uniform metre. Consequently, the charm and originality of certain of the themes employed cannot prevent boredom and monotony from reigning over these never-ending poems.' (*EI*², s.v. 'Ḳaṣīda' [G. Lecomte]).

145. J. S. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, p. 2.

146. See A. J. Arberry, '"Orient Pearls at Random Strung"', pp. 706–9.

147. Gustave von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam*, 2nd ed., p. 266.

For later generations of scholars—especially after World War II as European colonialism gave way to American hegemony—and Oriental Studies departments were transformed into Near Eastern (or Middle East) Studies, the study of Arabic and other Islamicate poetry, and specifically the issue of its unity, became a proxy for civilisational debates on 'eastern mentalities'.[148] Moreover, it was exactly as atomism was becoming discredited and linked to the larger Orientalist *Weltanschauung*—as detailed in Edward Said's seminal analysis published in 1978—that structuralism came to dominate literary studies.[149] It should come as no surprise, therefore, that for many revisionist scholars in the post-colonial era, structuralism offered a means of disproving the bigoted dogma and making pre-modern Islamicate poetic traditions whole again (e.g. 'Evidently a correct appreciation of the Arabic poetic experience has implications for a general evaluation of the Arab mentality, and revision of the established opinion about poetry might necessitate a rethinking of the general cultural problem.')[150]

In the 1980s two scholars associated with the University of Chicago, Jaroslav Stetkevych and Michael Sells, independently traced the history of this important evolution in scholarship with great erudition and lucidity.[151] Sells' description of Orientalist misconceptions of the *qaṣīdah* and their uncritical acceptance and application in scholarship gives some idea of the impatience—if not, disbelief—of later generations of scholars:

A stereotype was created of the *qaṣīda* and the *qaṣīda* was labeled

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148. See also Suzanne Stetkevych's discussion of trends in Arabic literary scholarship in her introduction to S. P. Stetkevych (ed.), *Early Islamic Poetry and Poetics*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

149. e.g. 'For a century the dominant image of the *qaṣīda* has oscillated between the barbarism hypothesis [...] and the atomism and objective description hypotheses, the Arabs as imaginationless, versifying geologists, endlessly enumerating, to no apparent purpose, monotonous strings of unrelated descriptive data. This double-image reaffirms in the field of Arabic poetry a mechanism of Orientalism as presented by Edward Said, but not explicitly applied by him to Western studies of Arabic literature: the splitting of the subject culture into passionate savages on the one hand and strings of data and dead facts on the other.' (M. Sells, 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West', p. 323).

150. From the introduction to Raymond P. Scheindlin, *Form and Structure*, p. 6.

151. The articles are: J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics' and M. Sells', 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West: self-reflective stereotype and critical encounter', *al-ʿArabiyya*, vol. 20, nos 1–2, 1987, pp. 307–57.

> stereotyped. Literary judgments were made without criteria and the *qaṣīda* was labeled arbitrary. Themes like the wine song were taken out of poetic context and trivialized, and the *qaṣīda* ethos was labeled trivial. Despite a mass of data, no coherent understanding of the *qaṣīda* was achieved and the *qaṣīda* was labeled atomistic.[152]

In the seven years that separated the publication of these articles, Jaroslav Stetkevych's plea for a re-evaluation of the *qaṣīda* on its own terms had been answered by able scholars—including Jaroslav and Suzanne Stetkevych—and by the time Sells came to write his article, the unitarians had clearly won the argument.[153]

Over the past forty years, numerous structuralist studies of Islamicate poetry have been written and most of these have greatly improved our understanding of the nature and function of poetry in pre-modern Islamicate cultures, even in the face of occasional resistance from proponents of philology—an orientation that has persisted in Arabic literary scholarship though reports of its demise are legion.[154] It is not that

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152. M. Sells', 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West', p. 323. Unfortunately, Sells does not provide any evidence for his claim that 'Th[e] [AT: Orientalists'] self-reflective rhetoric of devaluation exploits the tendency of some Islamic and Arabic governments, institutions, and scholars to downplay (at least in the most public ideology) the poetic heritage.' (M. Sells', 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West', p. 324); I cannot say I have ever encountered any evidence of this tendency, but perhaps the attitudes of 'Islamic and Arab governments, institutions, and scholars' vis-à-vis 'the poetic heritage' have changed (and drastically at that) in the intervening twenty-five years.

153. Sells could identify four 'interconnected' groups of scholars 'who [had] taken the classical Arabic poetic tradition seriously': '(A) the structuralist interpretations of Bateson, Haydar, and Abu Deeb; (B) the work of J[aroslav] Stetkevych and several of his students and former students, what may be called the "Chicago school"; (C) studies of the oral-performative nature of early Arabic poetry, notably those of James Monroe and Michael Zwettler; and (D) the work of Suzanne Stetkevych, related to the Chicago school, but now developed into a comprehensive understanding that deserves separate treatment.' (M. Sells, 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West', p. 324).

154. e.g. K. Abu Deeb, 'Towards a Structural Analysis of Pre-Islamic Poetry', *IJMES*, vol. 6, 1975, pp. 148–84, *idem*, 'Towards a Structural Analysis of Pre-Islamic Poetry (II), the Eros vision', *Edebiyat*, vol. 1, 1976, pp. 3–69, and *idem*, 'Studies in Arabic Literary Criticism: the concept of organic unity', *Edebiyat*, vol. 2, 1977, pp. 57–89; A. Hamori, *On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974, esp. ch. 4; *idem*, *The Composition of Mutanabbī's Panegyrics to Sayf al-Dawla*, Leiden: Brill, 1992; R. P. Scheindlin, *Form and Structure in the poetry of al-Muʿtamid Ibn ʿAbbād*; J. E. Montgomery, 'Dichotomy in *Jāhilī* Poetry', *JAL*, vol. 17, 1986, pp. 1–20; S. Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry*; Th. Bauer, *Altarabische Dichtkunst: eine Untersuchung ihrer Struktur und Entwicklung am Beispiel der Onagerepisode*, Wiesbaden:

these structuralist studies are perforce concerned with the issue of poetic unity, nor that structuralism as a method would not have come to dominate the study of Islamicate literatures in the second half of the twentieth century were it not for the atomism controversy. There is, however, a clear link between the introduction of structuralist methods in the study of Islamicate poetries and the older issue of atomism. I simply hope to point to an underlying dynamic in the field, which all later methodological developments must conform to and confront as they are adopted into scholarly practice. The controversy over atomism has not been determinant, by any means, but it has persisted. Nor has the anti-atomic backlash abated even in the present day, though generally speaking, the field has moved away from structuralism, like other fields,

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Harrassowitz, 1992; S. P. Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: pre-Islamic poetry and the poetics of ritual*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993; D. Riedel, 'The sum of the parts: A pre-Islamic *qaṣīda* by Bišr b. Abī Ḫāzim al-Asadī', *Der Islam*, vol. 79, 2002, pp. 274–315; J. S. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*. See also R. Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011, pp. xiii–xviii, 3–4, 222–23; and J. T. Monroe, *Structural Coherence and Organic Unity in the Poetry of Ibn Quzman*. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming [unseen]. See also M. Sells, 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West'.

But cf. M. C. Bateson, *Structural Continuity in Poetry: A Linguistic Study of Five Pre-Islamic Arabic Odes* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970) one of the first structuralist studies, which was panned by Suzanne Stetkevych: '[Bateson's] "impressionistic thematic analyses" are nothing more than a summary of the poem at the most superficial level; there is nothing analytical about them. In brief, Bateson's work cannot be considered a scholarly contribution to the understanding of pre-Islamic poetry.' (S. P. Stetkevych, 'Structuralist Interpretations of Pre-Islamic Poetry: Critique and New Directions', *JNES*, vol. 42, no. 2, April 1983, pp. 85–107, p. 86).

There is, perhaps, an underlying conflict between structuralist and literary-historical approaches, at least according to Hans Robert Jauß:

> [...] [E]ven the literary "structuralism" now fashionable [...] still remains quite dependent on the basically classicist aesthetics of representation with its schematizations of "reflection" [Wiederspiegelung] and "typification." By interpreting the findings of linguistic and literary structuralism as archaic anthropological constants disguised in literary myths—which it not infrequently manages only with the help of an obvious allegorization of the text—it reduces on the one hand historical existence to the structures of an original social nature, on the other hand literature to this nature's mythic or symbolic expression. But with this viewpoint, it is precisely the eminently social, i.e., socially *formative* function of literature that is missed. (H. R. Jauß, 'Literature History as a Challenge', in *idem*, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, pp. 39–40; German original: *idem*, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*, pp. 199–200).

Nevertheless there is no reason why structuralism cannot supplement a primarily literary-historical investigation (the analysis presented here) or vice versa.

toward a more historicist orientation.[155] In 2004, for example, a scholar of classical Arabic poetry saw fit to describe the overarching contribution of her research in light of the atomic controversy: 'I believe that my major contribution to the scholarly study of the *qaṣīdah* is to strengthen this sense of artistic integrity.'[156] It is this background, this scholarly context, that—although it is strictly speaking incidental to the investigation of epigrammatic poetry—has informed debates on the topic from almost the very beginning. The purported lack of 'artistic integrity' in Arabic poetry—and the decades-long campaign to discredit its stalwart proponents—forms an active and determinant disciplinary legacy that scholars have not yet taken full account of. Even superficially innocent remarks must be qualified and the extent to which such remarks are indeed innocent is a question of material importance. When, for example, Geert Jan van Gelder notes that '[...] longer poems are often composed, as it were, of a series of epigrams, be they single lines or short passages. Most Arabic poems are either epigrams or epigrammatic',[157] he hastens to add—albeit in a footnote—that the above statement '[...] does not necessarily imply a lack of unity or coherence [...]', as if prophylactically, in order to stave off the inevitable charge of atomism. Epigram (and epigrammatic poetry) are thus dragged into a heated, and often absurd, debate, exemplifying Wilhelm Stekel's dictum that '[i]f a taboo exists concerning certain objects, everything associated to the object also becomes taboo.'[158] The taboo of 'incoherence'

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155. The latest salvo in the atomic wars came in 2011 with the publication of Raymond Farrin's *Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry*, on which see below.

A few examples of this historicist trend in scholarship are: Susanne Enderwitz, *Liebe als Beruf. Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf und das Ġazal*, Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995; Beatrice Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry: Ibn al-Rūmī and the patron's redemption*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003; Samer M. Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages: poetry, public performance, and the presentation of the past*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010; Marlé Hammond, *Beyond Elegy: classical Arabic women's poetry in context*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; Jocelyn Sharlet, *Patronage and Poetry in the Islamic World: social mobility and status in the medieval Middle East and Central Asia*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2010.

156. Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, *Description in classical Arabic poetry: waṣf, ekphrasis, and interarts theory*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, p. 2.

157. G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 101.

158. W. Stekel, 'Criminal Impulses' in *Compulsion and Doubt*, trans. Emil Gutheil, London: Peter Nevill, 1950, p 157; as cited in Henry Bond, *Lacan at the Scene*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009, p. 135n (i.e. p. 220, note 14).

(in other words, atomism) is a sympathetic and historically relevant preoccupation in Arabic literary studies, but it is a taboo and thus may pollute analysis. The heated pitch and acute sensitivity of the debates surrounding issues of atomism, incoherence, etc. may seem misplaced and overblown in retrospect, but consider briefly the language Winston Churchill used to describe *Mein Kampf*: 'Here was the new Koran of faith and war: turgid, verbose, shapeless, but pregnant with its message.'[159]

Fragmented Logic

> [...] [T]he *qaṣīda*-versus-the *qiṭʿa* theory imposed itself as being the easiest answer available to a complex question, hindering the development of any further genre—or thematic—criticism.[160]

The debate over atomism fixated on the form and nature of the *qaṣīdah*, its compositional logic, and the way in which it ought to be read. Proponents of the atomic position found pre-modern Arabic (and other Islamicate) poetry disjointed, staccato, and incoherent. Their opponents, however, exposed underlying semantic, formalistic, ritual, etc. patterns in these putatively molecular poems, thereby demonstrating unmistakable artistic and organic unities. Although the unitarians have clearly won the day and the atomic thesis has rightly been discredited, it is nevertheless also true—as Julie Scott Meisami explains—that:

> [...] the concept of 'organic unity' that has long haunted discussions of Arabic poetics—[is] a concept born in a certain historical and literary context (the Romantic confrontation with neo-classical aesthetics) which is neither objectifiable nor demonstrable, and should be consigned to the rubbish-heap of terms which once served a polemic purpose but are of little practical use.[161]

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159. W. Churchill, *The Second World War. Volume I: The Gathering Storm*, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1948 [repr. 1986], p. 50.

160. J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', p. 116.

161. J. S. Meisami, 'Arabic Poetics Revisited', *JAOS*, vol. 112, no. 2, 1992, pp. 254–68, p. 256. James Montgomery has also expressed a similar sentiment (J. E. Montgomery, 'On the Unity and Disunity of the *Qaṣīdah*', *JAL*, vol. 24, no. 3, Nov. 1993, pp. 271–77, p. 272). Nearly twenty years later, Meisami's perceptive

What remains now is, rather, to understand the ways in which the initial paradigm of molecularity and fragmentation—as well as the project to dismantle it—have affected our conception of Arabic literary history. As Jaroslav Stetkevych has shrewdly argued, many of our scholarly misconceptions can be traced back to mishandled evidence taken from the tradition itself: '[...] it rather appears that every misconception and every static compartmentalization of literary-critical theoretical formulations and ideas were precisely due to an excessively naïve receptivity to whatever Arabic literary theory was then available and accessible.'[162] I share this view and my primary interest lies in delineating generic contours and conventions through an examination of poetic evidence, rather than through theoretical expositions, which in any case do not exist for my subject.[163] It is also true that theoretical discussions provide a false sense of

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point has gone unheeded by Raymond Farrin, who—with the best of intentions—seeks to universalise the concept:

> The first exposition of the concept [of organic unity] occurs in Plato's *Phaedrus*. [...] I would add [however] that it is reckless to assume that this aesthetic principle originated with Western civilization, even if Greek philosophers in the fourth century BCE were the first to put it in writing, as far as we know. More than two thousand years before them, the ancient Egyptians surely had the principle in mind when they built the pyramids. One would be hard-pressed to find in another work of art or or architecture a more perfect expression of unity. [...] And though roughly two and a half million blocks were used to construct the Great Pyramid of Cheops, for example, we could not add to the finished pyramid a block without its being superfluous; likewise, if we took away a single one, the whole structure would be incomplete. It would seem, rather, that the aesthetic principle of structural integrity arises from a basic human desire to create order out of chaos, to assemble a whole from scattered parts. (R. Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert*, pp. xiv–xv).

One can, of course, accept Farrin's fundamental point, while at the same time preferring Meisami's argument. That a presumptive universal and innate human predilection for organic unity—or symmetry, verdure, smiling children, etc.—should be taken *prima facie* as essential to any and all interpretiatons of Arabic poetry strikes me as overly reductive.

162. J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', p. 117.

163. I disagree however with J. Stetkevych's New-Critic-esque rejection of a consideration of the evidence of a poem's reception; evidence that is axiomatically peripheral:

> The critical misconceptions and superficialities [...] were all present in the Arabic theoretical-philological ideas which had accumulated in the encyclopedic compendia, critical or anecdotal anthologies of poetry, rhetorical manuals and philological commentaries. Orientalist philologist-theorists did not invent anything—or very little. (J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', p. 116).

certainty. While I acknowledge that they naturally reflect more than simply one critic's ideosyncratic view of the generic landscape, they simply do not possess the same epistemic weight as an—admittedly subjective—investigation of literary material in context. They may also lead us to enshrine deceptive or unhelpful paradigms in literary scholarship as is undoubtedly true of the case we will now consider: the *qaṣīdah-qiṭʿah* dichotomy. To these pitfalls, one should also add the etymological fallacy, examples of which we have already considered.[164] Let us turn now to what scholars have claimed is the fundamental bifurcation of forms in pre-modern Arabic poetry: the *qaṣīdah* and the *qiṭʿah*.[165]

> [However] [w]hen those pathfinders like William Jones and the poets and translators of the Romantic era approached Arabic poetry, they practically did not need a specifically Arabic key to help them decode the Arabic aesthetic writ. They were reading Arabic poetry within the vibrant energy field of their own national poetries.
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> (ibid., p. 118).

While I acknowledge the peril, indeed the absurdity, of elevating theoretical-rhetorical discussions over poetic evidence itself, it is not constructive to believe that the cultural background against which a poem appears is somehow less relevant, or subsidiary, or even separable, from the poem itself. Contexts of performance (the sites in which a poem is produced, transmitted, received, etc.), as well as contexts of preservation (the sites in which a poem is reproduced, introduced, codified—or indeed canonised—, countered, mimicked, mocked, explicated, 'mined', etc.), are all legitimate sources of knowledge about that poem, its historicity, and indeed its genericity: 'The historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees. For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing horizon-of-experience of a continuity in which the perpetual inversion occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production that surpasses them.' (Hans Robert Jauß 'Literature History as a Challenge', in *idem*, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 19; German original: *idem*, 'Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft', in *idem*, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*, p. 169).

164. See Andrzej Zaborski's perceptive article 'Etymology, Etymological Fallacy, and the Pitfalls of Literal Translation of some Arabic and Islamic Terms' in R. Arnzen and J. Thielmann (eds), *Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea. Studies on the sources, contents and influences of Islamic civilization and Arabic philosophy and science. Dedicated to Gerhard Endress on his sixty-fifth birthday,* Leuven: Peeters, 2004, pp. 143–47. The etymological fallacy (or bias) is, I would argue, a manifestation of what Alison Gopnik has called 'the drive for causal understanding' (See A. Gopnik 'Explanation as orgasm and the drive for causal understanding: the evolution, function and phenomenology of the theory-formation system' in Frank Keil and Robert Wilson (eds), *Explanation and Cognition*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000, pp. 299–323).

165. Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī's discussion of *al-qiṭaʿ wa-ṭ-ṭiwāl*, while interesting, was not considered relevant for the following discussion (see Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-ʿUmdah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, vol. 1,

The earliest Arabic poetry excluding *rajaz* (i.e. *qarīḍ* poetry) is said to be divided either into the *qaṣīdah* or the *qiṭʿah* form. The *qaṣīdah*—for all the pre-modern and modern critical attention paid to it—cannot be said to reflect very strict formal requirements beyond rhyme and metre, though in modern scholarship it is fundamentally reckoned to be a polythematic poem.[166] This definition is not the same as that used by pre-modern litterateurs themselves, but it has become very well entrenched indeed: 'The term *qaṣīda* is used in indigenous Arabic literature theory and critique differently, namely, in a broader sense than in Arabic literature studies in the West. [...] Western Arabists [...] normally designate as *qaṣīda* only the polythematic long poem generally beginning with *nasīb* and having the same meter and rhyme [....].'[167] Its counterpart—in both pre-modern Arab and contemporary Western definitions—is the *qiṭʿah*. This form, while equally as ancient and prevalent as the *qaṣīdah*, has been treated—by scholars and theorists, if not by poets—for more than a millennium as the *qaṣīdah*'s lesser antithesis; this is, of course, but one aspect of the marginalisation of Arabic light verse more generally.[168] As the *qiṭʿah* is reckoned as nothing more than the contrary of whatever a *qaṣīdah* is said to be, it is usually defined as short or monothematic or both.[169] Like the *qaṣīdah*, however, the *qiṭʿah* is also—formalistically speaking—at some liberty with regards to this vague prescription.[170] As Geert Jan van Gelder has explained:

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pp. 186–89; ed. an-Nayfar, et al., vol. 1, pp. 308–12).

166. By 'very strict formal requirements', I mean to contrast the loose formal restrictions of the *qaṣīdah* with more regimented forms like the sonnet, rondeau, etc. See Renate Jacobi. 'The Origins of the Qaṣīda Form' in Sperl and Shackle (eds) *Qasida Poetry*, vol. 1, pp. 21–34.

167. Gregor Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry', *QSA*, n.s. vols 5–6, 2010–11, pp. 1–48, pp. 39–40; on this point, see ibid., pp. 39–43. See also Ali Hussein, 'Classical and Modern Approaches in Dividing the Old Arabic Poem', *JAL*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2004, pp. 297–328.

168. See also Geert Jan van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 106.

169. e.g. 'a short monothematic poem or fragment of a poem, in contrast to the long (often polythematic) poem, the *ḳaṣīda*' (*EI*², s.v. 'Ḳiṭʿa' [G. Schoeler]).

170. '[...] [T]he Arabs, aware of the fact that not every poem could be called a *qaṣīda*, distinguished the *qiṭʿa* from the *qaṣīda* purely in terms of length. The result was a number of opinions as to the minimal *qaṣīda*, rather arbitrarily given as twenty, sixteen or fifteen, ten or seven, or even three lines. Nowhere is an explanation or a justification of the number given.' (Geert Jan van Gelder, 'Brevity: The long and the short of it in classical Arabic literary theory', p. 79).

> The word *qiṭʿa*, literally "piece, fragment", became the customary term for any shortish poem that was not properly a *qaṣīda*, which was unfortunate, firstly since it suggests that a *qiṭʿa* is always a piece of an originally larger entity, and secondly because it yokes together a term that often—at least in modern studies—refers to a definite structure (*qaṣīda*) and a term that merely denotes the absence of this same structure, as if a *qiṭʿa* could not have a structure of its own. The term *qiṭʿa* is used for both "a short poem" and "a poem with only one theme", even though some *qiṭʿa*s have more than one theme and some long poems have only one.[171]

Before plunging too deeply into the issue of the *qiṭʿah* and its place in the history of Arabic poetry, we should pause briefly to dismiss the sly whisper of etymology that surrounds the term *qiṭʿah*, as van Gelder has warned. The term *qiṭʿah*—though we know nothing of its origins—is associated with the root *q-ṭ-ʿ* (cutting, breaking, cutting across) whence it is derived, and this etymological association continues to obscure attempts at empirical, contextual investigation.[172] Just as the etymological association with inscription has affected Hellenistic and Classicist understandings of epigram, so the cutting, extraction, and fragmentation implicit in the term *qiṭʿah* has distracted from the analysis of concise poetry and its ontological status in the Arabic tradition. An over-reliance on one theoretical paradigm—drawn primarily from the theoretical discussion of the *qaṣīdah* in Ibn Qutaybah's (d. 276/889) *Kitāb ash-Shiʿr wa-sh-shuʿarāʾ* (*The Book of Poetry and Poets*)—has led to a dynamic in which, according to literary schol-

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171. *idem*, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 105.

172. Even when the form is recognised as wholly independent of the *qaṣīdah*, the spectre of fragmentation continues to stalk it, e.g.: '[...] *qiṭʿah*s, which are poetry fragments without direct links to the *qaṣīdah* [...]' (Arie Schippers, *Arabic Tradition & Hebrew Innovation*, p. 214). Geert Jan van Gelder has suggested that '[t]he negative connotations of the term *qiṭʿa* may be partly responsible for the neglect of the early Arabic shorter poem and epigram in Arabic studies, in which the *qaṣīda* is, understandably but excessively, favoured to the point of ignoring the *qiṭʿa*.' (G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 106). Cf. the Chinese genre of concise poetry, the *Chüeh-chü,* meaning 'broken-off lines' (Hans H. Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976, p. 212).

arship, the *qaṣīdah* is the one and only Arabic poetic archetype, and all other poetic types (excluding the strophic) are subsidiary to it.[173]

A particularly egregious example of this sort of deracinated theorising is found in an important handbook on Arabic literature:

> All pre-Islamic *rajaz* belonged to the class of the *qiṭʿah*, the short piece, consisting of seven or ten lines at most. Some short pieces, written in the non-*rajaz* metres, occurring for example in such celebrated anthologies as the *Ḥamāsah*, are in fact selected from longer poems. We do not really possess true examples of short pieces originally composed as such, for selection can always be assumed in these cases.[174]

This passage is made up of a series of errors and misconceptions that have impeded the study of non-*qaṣīdah* poetry, though they have already been sufficiently debunked.[175] Firstly *rajaz* and *qarīḍ* poetry form two distinct traditions and the application of the

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173. e.g. in her review of Geert Jan van Gelder's *Beyond the Line*, Suzanne Stetkevych writes: 'The Peroration offers some interesting remarks on the "mode of existence" of the Arabic poem that lead in turn to the question of the "integrity" of the poem that appears once as a full *qaṣīda* in the poet's *dīwān*, again as a fragment in an anthology such as the *Ḥamāsa*, and whose individual verses appear scattered among literary critical works. I think that the author has perhaps underestimated the power and pervasiveness of the *qaṣīda*-form in determining Arabic poetic perception and sensibility: it is precisely the "given" framework of the *qaṣīda* that allows for the multiformity and dismemberment of the poem.' (S. P. Stetkevych, review of G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, *JNES*, vol. 47, no. 1, January 1988, pp. 63–4, p. 64).

Curiously, while discussing the dangers of an over-reliance on theoretical discussions, Jaroslav Stetkevych criticises Theodor Nöldeke for not having appreciated Ibn Qutaybah's model of the tripartite *qaṣīdah* (J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', p. 118). Although it has become near canonical in modern scholarship, the systematic division of the *qaṣīdah* form into three sections (*nasīb*, *raḥīl*, and *gharaḍ*) is not supported by the bulk of literary evidence; see e.g. R. Jacobi, *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣīde*; J. S. Meisami, 'The Uses of the *Qaṣīda*: Thematic and Structural Patterns in a poem of Bashshār', *JAL*, vol. 16, 1985, pp. 40–60; J. E. Montgomery, 'Of models and amanuenses: the remarks on the *Qaṣīda* in Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-Shiʿr wa-l-shuʿarā*'' in R. Hoyland and P. Kennedy (eds), *Islamic Reflections, Arabic Musings: Studies in Honour of Professor Alan Jones*, Cambridge: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004, pp. 1–47; Nefeli Papoutsakis, *Desert Travel as Form of Boasting: A Study of Ḏū r-Rumma's Poetry*. Cf. Renate Jacobi, '2.2 Die altarabische Dichtung (6.–7. Jahrhundert) 2.2.2.1 Gattungen und Formen' in *GAP*, vol. 2, pp. 23–6.

174. Abdulla El Tayib, 'Pre-Islamic Poetry' in A. F. L. Beeston, et al. (eds), *Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad Period*, pp. 27–109, pp. 37–8.

175. e.g. Alan Jones, *Early Arabic Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 7.

term *qiṭʿah* to non-*qarīḍ* poetry is inapt.[176] Secondly, as Alan Jones has explained, '[...] it is nonsense to deny the existence of the *qiṭʿa* as a class' and he provides examples of such poems in the first volume of his anthology of *Early Arabic Poetry*.[177] Geert Jan van Gelder has shown that there is good reason to believe that many of the poems in Abū Tammām's anthology *al-Ḥamāsah* [*Valour*] are indeed whole poems. These brief poems display *kharm* (dropping the first syllable in metres such as *Ṭawīl*, etc.), a phenomenon that occurs virtually always in the first line of a poem, thus indicating that these poems are not likely to be extracts.[178] Moreover, even if many early *qiṭaʿ* (sing. *qiṭʿah*) were in fact excerpted from longer poems—and here again we must be sensitive to the reflex of determinant etymology—it is highly peculiar that we should consider these independent excerpts as somehow sub-poetic. This attitude borders on the fetishistic. If in a given context—often anthological—a poem is whole both in its mien and its meaning, what—other than a kind of partitive, or originalist, fetishism—would possess someone to deny its independent existence? And if, once established, this fetishistic

176. 'Schon früh war man sich der Sonderstellung des Rağaz bewußt. Man betrachtet ihn nicht als „Poesie" im vollen Sinne. Nur das, was in den großen Metren Ṭawīl, Basīṭ, Kāmil, Wāfir usw. gedichtet ist, gilt als eigentliche Poesie, als *šiʿr, qarīḍ, qaṣīd.*' ['The special status of Rajaz was known from very early on. It was not considered to be "poetry" in the full sense of the word. Only [verse] composed in the major metres (*ṭawīl, basīṭ, kāmil, wāfir*, etc.) was counted as poetry, as *shiʿr, qarīḍ, qaṣīd.*'] (Manfred Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Rağazpoesie. Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966, p. 1). *Pace* Alfred Bloch's schematisation (see Alfred Bloch, 'Qaṣīda', p. 116, and further Gregor Schoeler, 'Alfred Blochs Studie über die Gattungen der altarabischen Dichtung').

177. Alan Jones, *Early Arabic Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 7.

178. Geert Jan van Gelder demonstrates this prosodically in his article on encomiastic and elegiac epigrams: '*Kharm* is the technical term for the elision, compared with the regular form, of the first (short) syllable of a metrical foot, particularly in the metre *ṭawīl* or *mutaqārib*. It is discussed in some detail in many works on prosody, where it is repeatedly pointed out that it only occurs in the first hemistich of a line. However, to my knowledge no ancient prosodist has ever pointed out that *kharm* is virtually never found except in the first line of poem or fragment.' ('Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 108). This prosodical feature turns up in 'nearly a quarter (33 out of 134) of all poems in *ṭawīl* metre' included in the first chapter of Abū Tammām's *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah* and thus van Gelder believes that 'the findings in the *Ḥamāsa* strongly suggest that a large proportion of the "fragments" collected by Abū Tammām were in fact complete short poems and not excerpted from longer ones [...]' (ibid., p. 109). See also *idem*, *Sound and Sense in Classical Arabic Poetry*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012, p. 41n62.

attitude is validated and canonised how can it not adversely affect the study of concise poetry as an art in and of itself?[179]

Renate Jacobi, in her definition of the *qiṭʿah* form also attempts to link it to the issue of monothematic structure and characterises the form as being equivalent to the last segment of a *qaṣīdah*.[180] Alan Jones avoids this latter prejudice, preferring rather to characterise the *qaṣīdah* as a composite of *qiṭaʿ*: 'It seems likely that the *qiṭʿa* was the original form of composition and that the *qaṣīda* was developed from it, perhaps by putting together in one poem two or three *qiṭʿa*s of differing thematic content or by developing the thematic treatment so that a poem had at least two quite distinct sections.'[181] Jones, at least, has the grace to acknowledge that 'evidence to support these suggestions is slim', though he never explains why—this being the case—he feels compelled to make them.[182] He, too, bases his definition around the modern structural axis though he chooses to emphasise the nebulosity of the term:

> Perhaps the furthest we can go is to define a *qiṭʿa* as an 'occasional piece' of not more than twenty lines and without the *qaṣīda*'s distinctive thematic development. We cannot be more precise than that. It is a relatively amorphous form, and its definition must accordingly remain loose and vague.[183]

Compared to the case for the Arabic epigram advanced below, the *qiṭʿah* is a far more ambiguous, if not wholly paradoxical, poetic form.

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179. I offer an in-depth analysis of this critical issue in the history of the Arabic poetical tradition in my article 'The Many Lives of Arabic Verse', *JAL*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2013, pp. 257–92. cf. also G. J. van Gelder, 'Al-Mutanabbī's Encumbering Trifles', and G. Schoeler, 'Alfred Blochs Studie über die Gattungen der altarabischen Dichtung', p. 738f. and 738n.

180. R. Jacobi, '2.2 Die altarabische Dichtung (6.–7. Jahrhundert) 2.2.2.1 Gattungen und Formen' in *GAP*, II, p. 24: '[...] *qiṭʿa* (Bruchstück), einem kurzen Gedicht mit einheitlicher Thematik, das nach seinem Inhalt und den Einleitungs- und Schlußformeln dem letzten Teil der Qaṣīde gleicht' ['[...] *qiṭʿah* (fragment), a short monothematic poem that resembles the last section of a polythematic ode (*qaṣīdah*) with respect to its content and opening and concluding formulas'].

181. A. Jones, *Early Arabic Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 7.

182. ibid., vol. 1, p. 7. See also in Geert Jan van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 105n12.

183. A. Jones, *Early Arabic Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 7.

I would argue, therefore, that it is not in the least bit coincidental that later generic developments in Arabic poetry have been analysed based not on formalistic criteria but on thematic orientation; this is true both of the pre-modern Arabic literary critics as well as modern scholarship.[184] Indeed Alfred Bloch's schematic division of forms is itself organised chiefly by theme although formal criteria do play a part.[185] One of the most disheartening aspects of this scholarly debate and its facile conclusions is its echo in scholarship on related literary traditions. Are Arabists not responsible in large part for the ludicrous conclusions drawn by Edward G. Browne (1862–1926), the most influential Persianist outside Iran:

> The *fard* ('unit' or hemistich) and the *qiṭʿa* ('fragment'), as well as the *bayt* (or couplet, consisting of two hemistichs), have also no right to be reckoned as separate verse-forms, since the first and last are the elements of which every poem consists, and the 'fragment' is merely a piece of a *qaṣída*, though it may be that no more of the *qaṣída* was ever written [...].[186]

It is also true that the current state of our understanding of the *qaṣīdah-qiṭʿah* dichotomy is still fairly primitive. Indigenous definitions based on length are highly

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184. Consider, for example, the formalistic division adopted by Ewald Wagner in the chapter 'Die neuen Gattungen der Epoche von 670 bis 725 n. Chr.' in E. Wagner, *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung. Band II: Die arabische Dichtung in islamischer Zeit*, pp. 31–87. See also, Rina Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 78: '*Waṣf* poems, whose emergence in the Arabic poetic tradition is generally connected with the development of each section of the long *qaṣīda* into independent pieces (*qiṭaʿ*), became a full-fledged poetic genre in the tenth century.'

185. See Alfred Bloch, 'Qaṣīda'; Gregor Schoeler, 'Alfred Blochs Studie über die Gattungen der altarabischen Dichtung'; and *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Ḳiṭʿa' [G. Schoeler].

186. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 2, p. 23. Note, too, the adoption of this conventional paradigm into Turkish scholarship: 'Eski Arap şairlerinden intikal eden bazı kısa manzumeler arasında uzun şiirlerden kalmış parçalar kadar kıta şeklinde söylenmiş kısa şiirler de vardır. Daha sonraki dönemlerde aşka dair konularla dinî, felsefî konuların işlendiği kıtaların çıkış noktası bu şiirler olmuştur' ['Among some shorter poems (*manzumeler*) transmitted from the ancient Arab poets, there are fragments of longer poems as well as short poems composed in the form of the *kıta* [*qiṭʿah*]. These poems are the origins of the later *qiṭaʿ* that treated themes related to love as well as religious and philosophical themes.'] (*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. 'Kıta'), but cf. *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. 'Kıt'a' and Atilla Özkırımlı, *Türk Edebiyati Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. 'kıta'. I thank Laurent Mignon for his help with this translation.

variable and the polythematic-vs.-monothematic opposition is not borne out by the evidence. Some scholars have argued that the *qiṭʿah* form and its evolution are linked to the burgeoning of sung verse, though in reality, this is generally used as yet another opportunity to denigrate the literary merit of the *qiṭʿah*, always compared disfavourably to the *qaṣīdah*:

> The two areas in which dramatic changes took place in the *qiṭʿah* in early Islamic and Umayyad times were love poetry (*ghazal*) and the wine-poem (*khamriyyah*), no doubt in large part thanks to the spectacular development of singing during the same period [...]. Poems were now composed specifically in order to be sung, with the result that their vocabulary had to be considerably simplified to accommodate their musical setting and to enable foreign girls not well versed in the Arabic language to perform them, and for the same reasons there was a preference for shorter metrical forms such as *ramal*, *khafīf*, *sarīʿ* and *mutaqārib*.[187]

This explanation is highly suspect for the simple fact that the poems we can definitively identify as song lyrics are much shorter than the main bulk of *qiṭaʿ*; note, too, the trace of faint sexism and xenophobia. In fact, they better resemble the epigram form we will discuss below:

> [...] the average length of the short poem cannot have been affected by the structure of songs, since these would have suggested the development of much shorter forms dealing with perhaps one isolated motif. To find a musician setting a whole poem, even of no more than ten lines, is extremely rare: normally he chooses just two or three.[188]

Unlike in the case of the *qiṭʿah* form, the argument for musical and Andalusian influence in the development of the Arabic epigram form (see discussion below) seems

187. M. M. Badawi, 'ʿAbbasid Poetry and its Antecedents', p. 152.

188. O. Wright, 'Music and Verse', p. 449. Wright does agree, though, that the exigencies of song may have influenced the trend toward shorter poetic metres for sung verse.

quite promising, though it has received almost no scholarly attention. This is yet another reason why a radical shift in scholarly perspectives and priorities is so urgent.

If any more evidence were needed to demonstrate the validity of the thesis that foundational controversies surrounding atomism and fragmentation have influenced, and continue to influence, research on pre-modern Arabic poetry and scholarly acceptance of such research, Geert Jan van Gelder's monograph *Beyond the Line: Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem* (published in 1982) is an ideal test case. Van Gelder—a mild, if affable, contrarian by disposition—clearly set out to deflate the issue of poetic unity, which was already by then becoming a scholarly sacred cow.[189] On the one hand, his project was a noble one: he felt that the work of some of his favourite thinkers, pre-modern Arabic literary critics, was being set aside, misinterpreted, and sacrificed unfairly on the altar of organic unity—which for him was not the *sine qua non* of literary quality that so many people insisted it was.[190] Van Gelder accepted the unitarian conclusions of structuralist studies, and shrewdly turned his attention toward the literary-critical sources themselves to see what attitudes he could discern about poetic unity.

> In the presentation of statements and interpretations in the preceding chapters I have steered a comfortable, although unspectacular, middle course: trying to strike a balance between those who have maintained that Arabic literary theory has almost nothing to say except on the single line, and those who, in their enthusiasm for unity in poems, have

189. In his review, Andras Hamori calls *Beyond the Line* '[...] a vigorously polemical work [...]' though he acknowleges that 'On the matter of unity, van Gelder's evaluation of the evidence is scrupulous and his distinctions are just.' (A. Hamori, review of G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, *JAOS*, vol. 104, no. 2, April–June 1984, pp. 385–87, p. 385). James Montgomery writes that '[van Gelder's] cautious, and rather negative, appraisal of the "cult" of "organic unity" in modern research, especially Western [...] can now, with hindsight, be understood as a protest against the excessive application to Arabic verse of what might be termed "trendy" theories of literary appreciation, were it not for the fact that by the time they had been imported into the field of Middle Eastern Studies they had been discarded as obsolete elsewhere. Indeed [*Beyond the Line*] is, in its entirety, such a protest.' (J. Montgomery, 'On the Unity and Disunity of the *Qaṣīdah*', p. 271).

190. See in G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, p. 203.

> misinterpreted a number of passages by Arab critics that seem to support their ideals. To be sure, I have concentrated on those passages that do in fact discuss units larger than the single line, or seem to do so. In this sense my presentation is, of course, not representative of Arabic criticism and theory in general. No one will deny that the Arabs were preoccupied with single lines and short passages to such an extent that the concept of 'the poem' seems of minor importance.[191]

It will come as no surprise perhaps that neither his method nor his conclusions swayed the unitarians. They had already become entirely invested in the hermeneutic analysis of individual poems, and the opinions of pre-modern Arab critics were, for them, tainted owing to previous deployment in atomistic arguments.[192] Van Gelder's larger—and crucially perceptive—point about the multifarious nature of Arabic poetry—the

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191. G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, p. 194. One can see however that van Gelder's analysis was bound to be read in light of the pattern of atomist Orientalist scholarship as described by J. Stetkevych some years prior:

> [...] Ahlwardt's *das Einzelne* had its origin in the Arabic critical notion of the "sufficient poetic statement" (*al-maʿnā al-mufīd*) and the equally traditionally Arabic formal insistence on a stratification of the poem into clearly distinguishable thematic and structural layers. From these morphological working elements Orientalist criticism proceeded to derive its cultural-anthropological generalisation of the paratactic, compartmentalized, atomistic nature of Arabic poetry. An encompassing framework of delineation of meaning, or a larger metaphor, was neither visualized nor suspected. Under such conditions, in the eyes of the European philologically limited critic there was no poem at all—or there was one only because a historically credible Arabic philological source had so declared. (J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', p. 116).

192. See, e.g. J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', p. 116. Another argument employed by some unitarians against the reference to pre-modern Arab literary critics is that their criticism is not wholly applicable to literary evidence itself: 'Without taking the fundamental distinction between pre-Modern and Modern literary «criticism» into account, it is the case that some students of Arabic poetry have attempted to apply the principles of Medieval rhetoric and poetics (which were never designed to highlight the differences between one poem and another in the first place), to individual Arabic poems. As a result, they have come up with some bizarre theories.' (James T. Monroe, '«Its *Maṭlaʿ* and *Ḫarja* are Twofold in Function»', p. 16.) cf. also Julie Scott Meisami, 'Unsquaring the Circle: Rereading a Poem by al-Muʿtamid ibn ʿAbbād', p. 294n. cf. Earl Miner, 'On the Genesis and Development of Literary Systems' Parts I and II.

freedom and scope of poetic ontology itself[193]—was disregarded as so much antiquated atomism.[194] Writing in the *JNES*, Suzanne Stetkevych commented that '[v]an Gelder's well-researched volume strikes the student of classical Arabic literary criticism as somewhat strange, in that it takes as its main issue what was for that particular tradition a non-issue: the coherence and unity of the poem.'[195] It took the *JAL* eleven years to review what James Montgomery eventually called, in a review published in that journal in 1993, 'so significant, and in many ways so seminal, a work as *Beyond the Line* [...]'.[196] Montgomery is, however, full of praise for the work and it is clear that in the intervening years, as he puts it, '[...] the wider enthusiasms of the Seventies have largely [...] been tempered and it is to be hoped that the study of Classical Arabic Poetry is leaving its adolescence behind.'[197] The only aspect of van Gelder's argument that Montgomery takes issue with is his '[...] equation of creation and reception, the blurring of poet and critic [...];' in other words, an overreliance on critical, rather than poetic, evidence.[198] This again is a recurring theme in Arabic literary scholarship, which seems immune to important conceptual breakthroughs like, for example, Hans Robert Jauß' Reception Theory.[199] The essays collected in *Studies in Medieval Arabic and*

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193. 'Of many [Arabic] poems we do not know whether they are a fragment, or a shortened version, or a "complete" version of the work as originally conceived by the poet. But even when we are certain that we know the whole poem, that is, the longest known version, recited or written by the poet in that very form, or accepted as such by common consent, then its occurrence as a whole, whether on paper or recited, in the experience of poet, hearer or reader, is the exception rather than the rule.' (G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, pp. 194–95). I have attempted to rehabilitate van Gelder's core insight in my article 'The Many Lives of Arabic Verse'.

194. e.g. In a review of Stefan Sperl's *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry*, J. C. Bürgel writes, 'Right from the beginning [Sperl] rejects the atomistic standpoint of Lewicki, even though van Gelder's *Beyond the Line* seemed to confirm it more or less and at any rate warned against giving too much attention to the unity or integrity of the individual poem.' (J. C. Bürgel, review of S. Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry*, *JSS*, vol. 39, no. 2, Autumn 1994, pp. 367–72, p. 367).

195. Suzanne Stetkevych, review of G. J. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, p. 63. See also Ewald's Wagner review in *ZDMG*, vol. 135, 1985, pp. 116–17; and Roger Allen's in *Edebiyât*, n.s. vol. 1, no. 2, 1989, pp. 155–56.

196. J. E. Montgomery, 'On the Unity and Disunity of the *Qaṣīdah*', p. 271.

197. J. E. Montgomery, 'On the Unity and Disunity of the *Qaṣīdah*', p. 273.

198. ibid., p. 274.

199. See, e.g. H. R. Jauß, 'Literary History as a Challenge' in H. R. Jauß, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*,

Hebrew Poetics, edited by Sasson Somekh (*Israel Oriental Studies*, vol. 11), many of which were written in dialogue with van Gelder's *Beyond the Line*, also focus primarily on theoretical and critical texts—or, at least, take issues in criticism as their starting point.[200]

Interestingly, however, the most censorious response to van Gelder's thesis came some twenty years after its publication. Raymond Farrin—first in a doctoral thesis written at Berkeley and eventually in the book that thesis would become—casts van Gelder as an atomic irredentist (or 'the latest prominent proponent of the atomism thesis').[201] His characterisation of van Gelder's analysis seems somewhat amplified for polemical purposes:

> [...] van Gelder would have us refrain from rigorously demanding unity in classical Arabic poetry. [...] [H]e sets out to demonstrate that classical Arabic critics were not at all concerned with structural cohesion in poems. On the basis of many passages from treatises, commentaries, and so on, cited to support his fundamental contention that, almost to a man, critics of poetry restricted their focus to the individual line and did not bother with what lay beyond it, he draws a conclusion that poets themselves were not aware of the desirability of overall unity and so did not think to compose poems that cohere (that throwing lines together might be a slapdash way of composition, we are left to deduce, never occurred to the composers).[202]

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p. 19.

200. Sasson Somekh (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Poetics*, Ser. Israel Oriental Studies, vol. 11, Leiden: Brill, 1991.

201. R. Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert*, p. xiv. Farrin's doctoral thesis, which he titled 'Reading Beyond the Line: Organic Unity in Classical Arabic Poetry', was completed in 2006. His book *Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry*, which his supervisor Prof. James Monroe called a 'groundbreaking study' (James T. Monroe, '«Its *Maṭlaʿ* and *Ḫarja* are Twofold in Function»', p. 17) was published in 2011, though earlier versions of certain chapters had been published as articles.

202. R. Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert*, p. xv.

In response to this characterisation, van Gelder simply reiterated that he had, in fact, '[...] argued [...] no such thing, but [that he had] apparently angered a number of Arabists by merely providing a counterweight against the excesses of seeking unity at all costs, and by arguing that Arabic poems can also be (and are) enjoyed without paying much attention to the overall structure.'[203] This scholarly spat is merely the latest episode of a controversy that is as old as the study of Arabic literature in the modern era itself.

Although the debate over atomism (or molecularity) has—for almost all concerned—been settled, we can see that it continues to stalk the field of pre-modern Arabic literature, for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, the issue continues to perform well as a polemical trope, and on the other, it has—as I hope to have demonstrated—clearly had an important influence on the development of modern scholarship on Arabic and other Islamicate literatures. It has amplified the ambiguity of the *qiṭʿah* form and played into etymological connotations of fragmentation. It has also set the agenda for much literary scholarship, and it has—as in the case of van Gelder's *Beyond the Line*—made the study of epigrammatic poetry, as well as unity-agnostic scholarship suspect in the academy. Again there are sound, historically grounded reasons for this skepticism, but understanding the scholarly background is essential if we hope to move forward with the study of concise poetry and light verse in Arabic more generally.

While the *qiṭʿah* form is not the subject of this study, the history of its reception is useful in demonstrating that our grasp of Arabic literary history is still fairly tentative when it comes to questions of genre and form and that significant debates over the correct methodological approach to such inquiries have not yet been settled. The case of the *qaṣīdah-qiṭʿah* dichotomy raises a series of issues—e.g. scholars' preference for paradigmatic theoretical discussions at the expense of contextual literary evidence, highly nebulous formalistic criteria taken from the Arabic tradition itself, the height-

203. G. J. van Gelder, review of R. Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert*, *Speculum*, vol. 87, no. 4, 2012, pp. 1190–91 at 1190.

ened significance of theme in establishing generic patterns, etc.—that also feature in the history of scholarship on the Arabic epigram discussed below. That these scholarly circumstances repeat speaks to profound truths about both the pre-modern Arabic poetic and literary-theoretical traditions, as well as the scholarly habits of mind that have developed in our field. As a consequence, the method developed for the investigation pursued below may also be expected to provide insights into the nature of some of the well worn, though still simmering, questions described above.

Epigrams in Literary Scholarship

Setting aside the most common use of the term epigram among scholars—as a synonym for satiric or invective poetry (*hijāʾ*)—the existence of epigrammatic poetry in Arabic has hardly gone unnoticed by Arabists. Where this study differs from previous scholarship is that in detailing the existence of an Arabic epigram genre—along the lines of the Hellenistic model—I have extrapolated from generic evidence found in the Arabic literary tradition itself and focused methodically on the context of this genre, its production, and its presentation. I have also—in order to avoid my predecessors' missteps—adopted a critically informed, comparative, and systematic approach to the concept of genre and to the epigram as a particular manifestation of such. Nevertheless, a survey of prior uses of the term epigram in Arabic literary scholarship is still an important step toward understanding how the specific genre of epigram I am presenting here differs from earlier phenomena in the literary tradition. Generally speaking, most research into the history of pre-modern Arabic poetry has concentrated on the first six centuries of the tradition (i.e. 450–1050), and relatively little work has been done on the poetry produced in the following quasi-millenium. This survey will, therefore, continue to treat both scholarly and literary antecedents to the generic inquiry I am pursuing here.

By and large, scholars who have used the term epigram in the context of Islamicate poetry have ignored or devalued the context in which those epigrammatic poems

are found.[204] In addition, there are certain scholars who have tried to delimit use of the term epigram on thematic grounds, though with fairly nebulous formalistic restrictions.[205] No previous attempt, however, has proceeded to a definition of the Arabic epigram through a historicist examination (i.e. a combination of hermeneutic, contextual, reception, etc. analyses) of literary evidence. Even the most successful efforts have tended to treat the whole—putatively undifferentiated—range of concise (or epigrammatic) poetry in Arabic and have often accepted the *qaṣīdah-qiṭʿah* dichotomy uncritically. The reasons for this are understandable—and have been explicated above—but they have all too often led to erroneous conclusions on the one hand and reductive tabulation on the other.

After epigram as invective poetry (*hijāʾ*), one of the most pronounced trends in scholarship has been to apply the terms epigram and epigrammatic to ekphrastic poetry (*waṣf*).[206] In an article on Arabic nature poetry, Gustave von Grunebaum characterised these concise, ekphrastic poems as '"poetical" snapshot[s]', i.e. 'a small group of verses, usually between two and seven, purporting to capture some fleeting view, some momentary impression. [...] It has become perfectly legitimate for a poet to cultivate the epigrammatic sketch for its own sake, with no view to making it fit into the framework of a more comprehensive form.'[207] Von Grunebaum's articles were also translated into German and Arabic and have had a profound impact on scholarship worldwide (e.g. in the work of J. Christoph Bürgel—see below).[208] When speaking of Ibn ar-Rūmī (d.

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204. e.g. '[...] from numerous anthologies and *dīwāns* one may cull an enormous quantity of pieces of *madīḥ* or *rithāʾ* that answer to the description of the epigram.' (G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 101).

205. G. J. van Gelder's article 'Pointed and Well-Rounded' is a response to precisely this trend.

206. cf. Jaroslav Stetkevych's comments about the deceptive tendency to characterise Arabic poetry as primarily descriptive (J. Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', pp. 114–15).

207. G. von Grunebaum, 'The Response to Nature in Arabic Poetry', p. 148. On Arabic nature poetry more generally, see G. Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, in which the author traces the history of nature poetry in Arabic and argues that nature poetry properly acquires its genre-consciousness in the work of aṣ-Ṣanawbarī (d. 334/945).

208. See also in G. Schoeler, 'Die Einteilung der Dichtung bei den Arabern', p. 23. The Arabic translation of a selection of von Grunebaum's articles: *Dirāsāt fī al-adab al-ʿArabī* (translated by Iḥsān ʿAbbās et al., Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1959) has been highly influential in 20th century Arab

283/896), though, von Grunebaum does actually use the term epigram; he is not alone in this. Gregor Schoeler—in one of the few self-aware usages of that term in Arabic literary scholarship—has argued that epigram is an apt description of Ibn ar-Rūmī's 'reflective poetry'.[209] Schoeler should be applauded for his even-handed approach to the question—and indeed, simply, for explaining his reasoning, a rarity among Arabists—though his apparent disregard for the context in which these 'epigrams' are presented (that is, produced, read, received, etc.) is jarring. Schoeler even mentions the Greek 'literary book epigram', juxtaposing it with the oft-mentioned etymon: $\text{epigram}_{\text{inscription}}$, but this does not lead him to consider the contextual parameters of the epigrams he analyses.[210] This narrow scope of analysis is not consistent with Schoeler's significant work on Arabic poetic genres, in which he—as a rule—sets great store by the organisational parameters of poetry collections, though there, too, he does not take the 'radical of presentation' (to borrow a term from Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*) into account.[211] There is an innocent explanation for this oversight, however: we do not currently have a reliable contextual model for concise poetry in the period.

A few scholars have sought to explain the emergence of concise poetry in the early Abbasid period in terms of its utility as a social function.[212] Beatrice Gruendler, for example, has linked the rise of epigrammatic collections of poetic motifs (*maʿānī*, sing. *maʿnā*) like Abū al-Hilāl al-ʿAskarī's (d. after 400/1010) *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* (*Book of Literary Motifs*) to the attested deployment of these poetic motifs—and their versatility—in

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scholarship. Though I have read it in the past, I have not been able to refer to it yet concerning this issue. Von Grunebaum himself translated a selection of his articles into German (see G. E. von Grunebaum, *Kritik und Dichtkunst*, pp. 28–51).

209. G. Schoeler, 'On Ibn ar-Rūmī's Reflective Poetry', p. 31. Also published in a German version in W. Heinrichs and G. Schoeler (eds), *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65. Geburtstag, Band 2: Studien zur arabische Dichtung*, Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994, pp. 318–36. See also R. McKinney, 'Ibn al-Rūmī's Contribution to the "Nautical *Raḥīl*" Tradition', '. *JAL*, vol. 29, no. 3–4, 1998, pp. 95–135, p. 96n; and G. J. van Gelder, 'The Terrified Traveller. Ibn al-Rūmī's Anti-*Raḥīl*', p. 47.

210. G. Schoeler, 'On Ibn ar-Rūmī's Reflective Poetry', p. 30.

211. See e.g. G. Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry'.

212. e.g. Beatrice Gruendler, 'Motif vs. Genre: Reflections on the *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* of Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī'; Jocelyn Sharlet, 'The Thought that Counts', pp. 238–40; Alma Giese, *Waṣf bei Kušāǧim*, pp. 122–26.

conversation, especially in the context of elite literary salons (*majālis*, sing. *majlis*).[213] Linking this corpus of wide-ranging and multitudinous 'thematically defined motif collections', which clearly became very popular from as early as the 9th century, to a specific social function is an important step and puts the appropriate emphasis on poetry's role in social interaction: in conversation, polite company, and court entertainments. This is not entirely new, though, and is related to earlier proposals regarding the professional and didactic interpretations of such texts (i.e. as composition aids, epistolary handbooks, etc.) Significantly, however, Gruendler argues that '[...] the short format of poetic passages suited the interactive role of the motif [AT: *maʿnā*] in conversational practice.'[214] This is intuitively true; one cannot imagine how tedious and stentorian recitals would make for a very lively gathering. *Qaṣāʾid* were always performed, of course, but contexts varied. Sermons and soliloquies have their place in society, as do gossip, harangue, and pillow-talk. There is also good historical evidence for the social—and not exclusively literary—exchange of epigrammatic poetry. Thomas Bauer and Jocelyn Sharlet have, in addition to Beatrice Gruendler, emphasised this interactive aspect of short poetry: its efficacy in social exchange.[215] It should be noted, however, that when it comes to the epigram collections themselves this dialogic dimension is never emphasised. One could argue that authors who title their anthologies with punning reference to 'companionship' (*uns*), 'gatherings' (*majālis*), 'sessions' (*muḥāḍarāt*), etc. are in principle embedding a conversational conceit, but though that may be the case, the dominant method of conveyance for these collections appears to be private, individual, and readerly. The role of poetic motifs (*maʿānī*) in conversation—as well as the conversational conceit inherent in poetic anthologies themselves—is an accurate description of an attested and observable historical phenomenon; what must

213. B. Gruendler, 'Motif vs. Genre', pp. 76–83. On literary salons more generally, see S. M. Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*. On *maʿānī*-collections, see J. Sadan, 'Maidens' Hair and Starry Skies'.

214. B. Gruendler, 'Motif vs. Genre', p. 83. See also similar sentiments expressed by Dick Davis (cited in note 34 above).

215. See Th. Bauer, '"*Ayna hādhā min al-Mutanabbī!*" – Towards an Aesthetics of Mamluk Literature', forthcoming, and J. Sharlet, 'The Thought that Counts', esp. pp. 239–40 where she discusses Habermas.

be avoided, however, is to collapse this historical phenomenon into a sterile and reductive sociological or anthropological explanation, which merely reinforces our prejudices against concise poetry and Arabic light verse more broadly.[216]

Several scholars have applied the term epigram to poems combining concision and 'light' themes as a kind of shorthand.[217] J. Christoph Bürgel, drawing on von Grunebaum's description of Arabic Nature poetry, explicitly links Abū Ṭālib al-Maʾmūnī's (d. 383/993) ekphrastic epigrams to the Hellenistic archetype: 'Ganz ähnliches findet sich in der nachklassischen arabischen Poesie. Auch hier gibt es lobende und schmähende Epigramme auf Dichter, Sekretäre usw., Widmungen [...], und das Gegenstück dazu: Bittgesuche, Erinnerungen an gegebene Versprechen und Dank, Glückwunschepigramme u. a. [...]'.[218] There is no reason to suggest that al-Maʾmūnī's poetic output—or even that of Khālib b. Yazīd al-Kātib (d. c. 269/883) and others—do not qualify as epigrams.[219] Rather, I am arguing that without a comparative and critical generic (or formalistic) rubric this appellation and others like it are entirely non-functional. They usually privilege trite and inexact literary categories borrowed heedlessly

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216. We are not, or are not yet, able to say of Arabic poetry what is commonly accepted in the history of classical Chinese poetry, for example, though certain parallels are evident: 'As a rule, the development of a Chinese poetic genre consisted of a long process of imitating, assimilating, and eventually transforming an oral tradition into a purely literary one by the literati. This steady movement from orality to literacy was marked by the gradual disappearance of oral performance, the allegorical appropriation of folk themes, the abandonment of simple language or elegant diction, and the excessive use of allusion. [...] Interestingly, an obsessive pursuit of textuality (diction) and intertextuality (allusions) often marks the last great glory of a thoroughly "literatified" (*wenren hua*) genre and heralds the rapid ascendancy of a new genre of oral folk origin.' (Zong-Qi Cai, 'Introduction: Major Aspects of Chinese Poetry' in Zong-Qi Cai (ed.), *How to Read Chinese Poetry: a guided anthology*, p. 6). For a particularly facetious interpretation of the trend toward epigrammatic poetry in the Mamluk period see Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Majīd Lāshīn's introduction to aṣ-Ṣafadī's *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim*.

217. See e.g. Julia Bray, 'Third and fourth-century bleeding Poetry', p. 82.

218. J. Christoph Bürgel, *Die ekphrastischen Epigramme des Abū Ṭālib al-Maʾmūnī*, p. 223n. ['Something very similar can be found in post-classical Arabic poetry. Here, too, one finds laudatory and defamatory epigrams about poets, scribes, etc. Dedicatory poems [...] as well as the opposite of these: supplicatory poems, poetic reminders of promises, poems of thanks, epigrams of well wishes, among other things.'] Significantly, aṣ-Ṣafadī doesn't mention *maqāṭīʿ* in connection with al-Maʾmūnī (aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 18, pp. 420–22).

219. See Albert Arazi, *Amour divin et amour profane dans l'Islam médiéval.*

from the Western literary pantheon, ignoring any explicit or implicit generic identifications found in native criticism. They reify abstraction, ignore context, and dehistoricise the literary traditions under study.

Generally speaking, few Arabists have privileged the formalist dimensions of epigrammatic poetry over thematic readings.[220] Jamel Eddine Bencheikh's *Poétique arabe: essai sur les voies d'une création* is a rare example. Bencheikh makes the crucial point—which we must emphasise in our discussions of the nature of Arabic poetic forms and genres—that the Arabic tradition eschewed strict formal requirements, beyond monorhyme and metre, except for a few specific verse forms (the *muwashshaḥ, dūbayt*, etc.[221]) and that theoretical discussions of poetic form are not where we should look for insight: '[...] [I]l n'existe pas de compositions dites à forme fixe ou limitée : pas de règles fixant le nombre de vers ou des strophes, codifiant l'agencement des rimes ; pas de dessin précis dont la géométrie contraignante enserrerait impérativement le discours. Les éléments de théorie sont ici rares, imprécis et de toutes façons tardifs.'[222] Instead Bencheikh looks at the poetic evidence itself and, distinguishing among themes, reveals important information about the formal dimensions of Arabic poetry in the Abbasid period. Bencheikh demonstrates that among three exemplary practicioners of three key poetic genres: ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf (d. c. 188/803) composing love poetry, Abū Nuwās (d. c. 198/813) composing bacchic poetry, and Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah (d. 210/825 or 211/826) composing ascetic poetry, the average length of Arabic poems is far shorter than our *qaṣīdah*-orientated presumptions would lead us to believe.[223] Only

220. See e.g. Jaroslav Stetkevych, 'The Discreet Pleasures of the Courtly Hunt. Abū Nuwās and the ʿAbbāsid Ṭardiyyah', p. 152 and note; *idem*, 'The *Ṭardiyyahs* of Ibn al-Muʿtazz: Breakthrough into Lyricism', p. 220.

221. See *inter alia* Martin Hartmann, *Das arabische Strophengedicht. I[:] das Muwaššaḥ*. NB: Hartmann insists that these 'forms' ('Versarten') are in fact genres ('Gedichtgattungen') (p. 209).

222. Jamal Eddine Bencheikh, *Poétique arabe*, pp. 97–8. ['There are no set [poetic] forms; no rules to specify the number of verses or strophes, or determine the rhyme scheme. There is no specific pattern within whose restrictive architecture the discussion must necessarily be contained. Issues of theory are generally infrequent, ambiguous, and moreover belated.']

223. ibid., pp. 98–109.

thirty of the 589 love poems attributed to ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf exceed fifteen lines.[224] Likewise only approximately a seventh of Abū Nuwās' and Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah's production in their core genres of bacchic and ascetic poetry, respectively, exceeds fourteen or fifteen lines in length.[225] Nor is the tendency toward brevity exclusive to these genres: 'Cette prédilection pour le poème court se retrouve d'ailleurs dans les genres plus conventionnels: panégyrique, thrène, satire.'[226] Technically speaking as these poems are monothematic and relatively short, they would be considered *qiṭaʿ* (sing. *qiṭʿah*), though again the efficacy of the *qaṣīdah-qiṭʿah* dichotomy here is hardly helpful.[227] While this observable development in literary history is in itself highly significant—and clearly of great interest for the pre-history of the Arabic epigram genre, which will be introduced below—Bencheikh's larger point is also essential for an understanding of the value and validity of epigrammatic poetry in any language: '[...] l'espace-poème est determiné par le choix d'un genre et du langage qui lui est spéci-

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224. ibid., p. 99: 'Sur 589 pièces attribuées à Ibn al-Aḥnaf, 30 seulement, soit à peu près le vingtième, ont plus de 15 vers [...].'

225. 'Il apparaît que [AT: chez Abū Nuwās] le poème bachique (*ḫamriyya*) exige aussi la brièveté: 41 pièces seulement sur 299, soit un peu moins du septième, ont plus de 14 vers [...]' ['It seems that [AT: Abu Nuwas'] Bacchic poetry (*khamriyyah*) also calls for brevity: only forty-one poems out of two-hundred and ninety-nine, a little less than one-seventh, are more than fourteen verses long'] (ibid., p. 100). 'Sur 454 *zuhdiyya*-s, qui sont l'essentiel de sa production [AT: c'est-à-dire, la production de Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah], 63, soit le septième, dépassent 15 vers [...].' ['Out of four-hundred and fifty-four poems on asceticism, which is the core of his [i.e. Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah's] oeuvre, [only] sixty-three, that is a seventh, are more than fifteen lines long'] (ibid., p. 103). NB: '[...] soit 52 pièces, sur 63, comptant moins de 30 vers.' ['Of [the] sixty-three, fifty-two of the poems are less than thirty lines long'] (ibid., p. 103). The so-called neoclassicist poets Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī of the following generation do not match this pattern, but Abū Tammām's *ghazal* output is markedly concise (see ibid., p. 108, and also Th. Bauer, 'Abū Tammām's Contribution to ʿAbbāsid *Ġazal* Poetry').

226. Jamal Eddine Bencheikh, *Poétique arabe*, p. 100. ['This tendency toward brevity is also found in other more conventional poetic genres: panegyric, elegy, satire.']

227. cf. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 1, p. 472: 'As regards verse-forms, it is the *qaṣīda*, or elegy [sic], alone which occupies a prominent place in both [*scil.* Arabic and Persian] languages, and which (chiefly, as it would appear, from the influence of the great Arab poet al-Mutanabbí, A.D. 906–965) attained so great a development in Persia under the Ghaznawí and succeeding dynasties [AT: i.e. from the 11th century on] [...]. But at the period of which we are now speaking such long and elaborate monorhymes appear to have enjoyed little favour in Persia; and even the *ghazal*, or ode [sic], seems to have been less popular in these early days than the *qiṭʿa*, or fragment, and the *rubáʿí*, *dú-baytí*, or quatrain [sic].'

fique.' ['The dimensions of a poem are determined by the choice of genre and register inherent to it'].[228]

In a seminal article published in 1995, Geert Jan van Gelder set out to correct scholarly misconceptions about the thematic limitations of concise poetry in Arabic.[229] Van Gelder demonstrates that from the earliest period of poetic production—the pre-Islamic period—there existed concise poetry in Arabic, and that these poems could also be on panegyric and elegiac themes.[230] Elegiac epigrams are less common than other thematic varieties even in the Mamluk period, but they certainly did exist.[231] Van Gelder also makes a crucial point about literary history, noting that '[t]he epigram is characteristic of the *muḥdath* poets.'[232] Van Gelder—the thesis of *Beyond the Line* and the backlash to it clearly weighing heavily on him—spends a portion of his article discussing the 'ontology' of the epigram, and defending the proposition that '[Arabic poems] [live] on, in different shapes, in quotations through the ages [...] and become poems in their own right.'[233] This radical and relativist (or perhaps, pragmatic) conception of poetic ontology is not matched, however, by van Gelder's perfunctory use of the term epigram.

Van Gelder begins his article with an oracular statement that is much more difficult to parse than even the most abstruse discussions of polyvalence in critical theory: 'There is no Arabic word for "epigram". The reason for this lack is perhaps,

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228. Jamal Eddine Bencheikh, *Poétique arabe*, p. 103.

229. van Gelder was responding chiefly to Renate Jacobi, who in her entry on 'Abbasidische Dichtung' in *GAP*, vol. 2, wrote—under the heading 'Die kurzen Gattungen'—'Neben preisqaṣīde [AT: i.e. *madāʾiḥ*] und Trauerlied [AT: i.e. *rithāʾ*], den zeremoniellen Formen der Hofdichtung, bildet sich in der experimentellen Phase ein System von Gattungen heraus [...].' ['In addition to praise poems [AT: i.e. *madāʾiḥ*] and elegies [AT: i.e. *rithāʾ*], a system of poetic forms (Gattungen) was created from the ceremonial forms of court poetry in the experimental phase [...]'] (p. 46). See in G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 103 and 103n.

230. G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 105.

231. See A. Talib, 'The Many Lives of Arabic Verse.'

232. G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 105. See also editor's introduction to aṣ-Ṣafadī's *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Majīd Lāshīn, pp. 29–30.

233. G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 102. See also *idem*, 'Al-Mutanabbī's Encumbering Trifles'; and *idem*, 'Some Brave Attempts at Generic Classification', p. 19, § 3.2.

rather than the absence of epigrams in Arabic literature, their ubiquity.'[234] One may well understand how a poem can exist in a variety of forms as an independent artistic entity—with or without reference to an original hypotext—but it is altogether unreasonable to expect that 1. Arabic ought to have a word for 'epigram' and that the 'absence' of such a word can justly be reckoned a 'lack' and 2. that Arabic epigrams can be nominally 'absent', but materially 'ubiquitous' at one and the same time.[235] Van Gelder explains that, for him, the 'two basic characteristics of the epigram'—derived he does not explain whence—are concision and point.[236] And while this may accord with accepted definitions in the history of that term—and it does, I warrant, describe a particular genre of Arabic verse—van Gelder's expectations of literary history cannot help but provoke discomfort. Eventually, van Gelder concedes that what he has in mind by epigram is the *qiṭʿah*, broadly speaking, though he draws the upper limit of length at ten lines; this is, by his own admission, 'rather [arbitrary].'[237] Van Gelder's article is successful in demonstrating the wide variety and long history of Arabic concise poetry and rescuing it from inaccurate thematic pigeon-holing, but the suggestion that literary categories are homologous—decontextualised universals whose archetype is inevitably Western—and that terminology can be expected to correspond conclusively across literary traditions, is yet another example of the uncritical, and incongruous, application of literary paradigms—devised *a priori*—to the case of Arabic poetry. Similarly, consider the example of the *EI*[3]. The newest edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* has adopted a system of English headwords for abstract nouns, rather than the system

234. *idem*, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 101.

235. Van Gelder seems to be channeling Lacan here (cf. 'Il n'y a pas *La* femme'). See also in *EAL*, s.v. 'epigram' [G. J. van Gelder]: 'There is no Arabic term for "epigram", even though the epigram is ubiquitous in classical Arabic poetry, and much Arabic poetry may be said to be profoundly epigrammatic in character.'

236. *idem*, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', pp. 101; 106.

237. ibid., p. 106n. The editor of aṣ-Ṣafadī's epigram-collection *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim wa-l-ʿarf an-nāsim* comments on the predominance of short pieces ('*qiṭaʿ*') in the collection and remarks that only four of the poems are *qaṣāʾid*, by which he means poems longer than seven lines. This arbitary terminology is not only obfuscatory, it is clearly paranoid. NB: in an article published in 2004, van Gelder uses the term epigram to describe three poems by the Mamluk historian Ibn Iyās in a sense concordant with my own usage here (G. J. van Gelder, 'Poetry in Historiography: Some Observations', pp. 12–3).

of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, etc. headwords familiar from the first and second editions of the *EI*.[238] This change is not in itself objectionable, neither as a matter of principle or nostalgia, but it does bring to the fore a fascinating epistemological problem that runs all through this study. Now, in the most canonical repository of orientalist knowledge, *nadīm* becomes 'Boon companion',[239] *naskh* becomes 'Abrogation',[240] *wakālah* becomes 'Attorney',[241] and categories like 'Agnosticism'[242] and 'didactic poetry'[243] are suggested as admittedly anachronistic themes under which pre-modern phenomena and modes of thought can be subsumed.[244]

Certain previous scholarly approaches to discerning Arabic poetic genres can be thought of in much the same way. In a series of studies over the past few decades scholars such as Wolfhart Heinrichs, Bo Utas, Stefan Sperl, Geert Jan van Gelder, and—*primus inter pares*—Gregor Schoeler have set out to taxonomise Islamicate poetic production, based primarily on indigenous literary-critical models.[245] Van Gelder, for example, writes, '[...] I intend to show how the Arabs themselves have classified their

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238. See in *EI*^{3}, 'Preface' where the change is described and discussed, though only briefly.

239. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Nadīm' [J. Sadan]; *EI*^{3}, s.v. 'Boon companion' [S. Ali].

240. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Naskh' [J. Burton]; *EI*^{3}, s.v. 'Abrogation' [A. Rippin].

241. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Wakāla' [M. Y. Izzi Dien]; *EI*^{3}, s.v. 'Attorney' [C. W. Mallat].

242. *EI*^{3}, s.v. 'Agnosticism' [F. Griffel]: 'Within the Islamic tradition there is almost no evidence of thinkers who upheld even the moderate form of agnosticism.'

243. *EI*^{3}, s.v. 'didactic poetry, Arabic' [G. J. H. van Gelder]: 'Arabic didactic poetry, taken in a broad sense, intends to instil morals or impart information. By this definition much of Arabic poetry is didactic [...]. In the terminology of the traditional Arabic classification of poetic genres or modes, this kind of verse was called *ḥikma* ("wisdom"). [...] There is no clear boundary between *ḥikma* and *zuhd* (asceticism, renunciation) [...].'

244. cf. Paul de Man's contention that '[r]hetoric radically suspends logic and opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration'. (Paul de Man, 'Semiology and Rhetoric', *Diacritics*, vol. 3, no. 3, Autumn 1973, pp. 27–33, p. 30).

245. e.g. Wolfhart Heinrichs, *Arabische Dichtung und griechische Poetik*; *idem*, '"Manierismus" in der arabischen Literatur'; *idem*, 'Literary Theory: the problem of its efficiency'; Bo Utas, '"Genres" in Persian Literature, 900–1900'; Stefan Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry*; Geert Jan van Gelder, 'Some Brave Attempts at Generic Classification'; *idem*, 'Dubious Genres: on some poems by Abū Nuwās'; *idem*, 'Genres in Collision'; Gregor Schoeler, 'Die Einteilung der Dichtung bei den Arabern' (1972); *idem*, 'Die Einteilung der Dichtung bei den Arabern', (1973); *idem*, *arabische Naturdichtung*, esp. p. 1–9; *idem*, *Einige Grundprobleme der autochthonen und aristotelischen arabischen Literaturtheorie*; and—most recently—*idem*, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry' (with addenda in second part). See also *idem*, 'Alfred Blochs Studie über die Gattungen der altarabischen Dichtung'.

own texts [...]' and proceeds to do this '[...] by giving a survey of the ways of generic classification in classical Arabic literature, in its explicit forms, in more or less theoretical discussions, and its more implicit and practical forms, as in the ways various types of poems and prose texts are arranged in thematically ordered anthologies.'[246] His conclusion, however, is profoundly unsatisfying: 'To read Arabic literature correctly', van Gelder argues, 'there is no need to have a well-defined generic system at one's disposal.'[247] Rather he says,

> What is essential is to have read many different texts, in order to get an intuitive idea of the various kinds of literature; one should know which characteristics of texts belong together in a specific period—these characteristics include intratextual matters such as language level, register, prosody, stylistics and thematic features, as well as extratextual matters like the situational context of a text; also intertextual characteristics which include quotation, allusion and dependence on other texts or kinds, and finally metatextual matters: a knowledge of generic and typological terminology, which in Arabic (as in any self-respecting literature) is extensive, diffuse and far from systematical.[248]

Reconciling the two preceding statements is clearly not a task for the faint-hearted. If a 'well-defined generic system' would not suffice to describe—or enable the reader to understand—a 'self-respecting' literary tradition like Arabic, why look for one in the first place? And if 'well-defined generic system[s]' are thus reckoned superfluous and inexact, in what ways do they differ from the multi-level, intuitive familiarity van Gelder is prescribing? If one wants to claim that what readers need is to acquire an intuitive grasp of kind, period, register, form, context, allusion, and typology—to inculcate within themselves a deep understanding of literary history—can we really expect them not to seek and not to discern generic patterns along the way? It may be true, as

246. G. J. van Gelder, 'Some Brave Attempts at Generic Classification', p. 16.

247. ibid., p. 25.

248. ibid., p. 25.

van Gelder seems to be saying, that one does not necessarily need to begin from a 'well-defined generic system', but I sincerely doubt whether a reader could make significant progress toward a deep appreciaton of literary history without some familiarity with implicit and explicit systems of the organisation, identification, production, and reception of literary material.

In a series of studies on the topic of poetic genre—culminating in 2012 with the publication of a revised, English version of his first scholarly article, 'Die Einteilung der Dichtung bei den Arabern'—Gregor Schoeler has attempted to adapt the category of genre to the case of Arabic poetry by distinguishing between formal and thematic genres.[249] Schoeler argues that while theoreticians generally sought to typify poetry thematically—rather than classify it—the editors of poets' collected works (*dīwān*, pl. *dawāwīn*) found themselves, for reasons of pragmatism, organising the collected poetry generically.[250] Nevertheless, even this generic organisation is orientated primarily around theme, especially as there is very little rigidity in the division of forms. In the most recent version of his article published in 2012, Schoeler does mention Thomas Bauer's work on the epigram collection of Badr ad-Dīn ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 779/1377) in a footnote and even uses the term 'epigram' in connection with it, but he excludes it from his study and actually limits himself almost exclusively to evidence from the pre-Mongol period, with the notable exception of Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's *Dīwān*.[251]

To return to the question of equivalence and commensurability, we may ask ourselves if this attempt to differentiate thematic genres differs substantively from an attempt to supplement a perceived lack in the diversity of poetic forms? We understand that the *qaṣīdah-qiṭʿah* dichotomy is fairly crude, and that it fails to capture a

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249. e.g. G. Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry', p. 9. See also—vitally on this issue—František W. Galan, 'Literary System and Systemic Change: The Prague School of Literary History, 1928–48', esp. p. 279.

250. G. Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry', pp. 26–7. Yet it is worth noting that one theoretician, Ibn Wahb, did in fact outline such a generic classification (ibid., p. 16).

251. See Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"'. G. Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry', p. 25n; on Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's *Dīwān*, see ibid., pp. 36–9.

series of developments in Arabic literary history, and we know, too, that the indigenous tradition does not provide much in the way of formalistic demarcations. Similarly in the case of genre, the indigenous tradition is rather hands-off and most distinctions are made thematically across the two forms, though the number of forms multiplies in later periods. Scholars like van Gelder and Schoeler have been very explicit about their interests: they are concerned primarily with the development and nuances of indigenous critical and editorial attitudes toward poetic categories. And yet this eminently defensible effort seems to be imbued with a comparativism that is neither hinted at nor critically developed. The project does not lack for empiricism or philological sensitivity, but rather seems hindered by a reluctance to engage more narrowly with the poetic material itself as well as to interrogate inherited categories, which may need to be calibrated or even discarded. And if this is indeed the case, it should come as no surprise, therefore, that both scholars—Schoeler (on genre) and van Gelder (on epigrams)—have continued to tweak, refine, and re-adjust their ideas in a variety of formats for decades.[252] Their views have been enriched with further examples as more texts have become available, but their models have not changed much since they were first proposed. With this in mind, let us consider one last example of this trend from the *EI*[3]'s new regime of translated headwords, Geert Jan van Gelder's entry 'Epigram 1. Classical Arabic'.[253] Here under the influence of Thomas Bauer, and perhaps even myself, van Gelder begins his entry with the sentence: 'The nearest Arabic equivalent

252. Van Gelder is a great fan of the word 'epigram' (and 'epigrammatical') and has probably used it more than any other Arabist in history. See e.g. G. J. van Gelder, 'Dubious Genres', pp. 269–70; *idem*, 'Mirror for princes or vizor for viziers: the twelfth-century Arabic popular encyclopedia *Mufīd al-ʿulūm* and its relationship with the anonymous Persian *Baḥr al-fawāʾid*', *BSOAS*, vol. 64, no. 3, 2001, pp. 313–38, p. 327; *idem*, 'Mixtures of Jest and Earnest [...] Part I', p. 101; *idem*, 'Mixtures of Jest and Earnest [...] Part II', p. 179; *idem*, 'The Terrified Traveller. Ibn al-Rūmī's Anti-*Raḥīl*', p. 47; *idem*, 'Poetry in Historiography' in Ramzi Baalbaki et al. (eds), *Poetry and History*, p. 65; pp. 68–70; *idem*, review of an-Nawājī, *Kitāb ash-Shifāʾ fī badīʿ al-iktifāʾ*, *MSR*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2007, p. 234. See also *EI*[3], s.vv. 'Apology', 'Canon and Canonisation, in classical Arabic literature' [Geert Jan van Gelder] and also *EAL*, s.v. 'Epigram' [G. J. H. van Gelder].

253. *EI*[3], s.v. 'Epigram 1. Classical Arabic' [Geert Jan van Gelder]. See also *EI*[3], s.v. 'al-Bilbaysī' [Joseph Sadan]. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kātib was said to be 'a master of pithy epigram' in the *EI*[2], but there is no mention of his poetry in the new entry in the *EI*[3] (see *EI*[2], s.v. 'ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā b. Saʿd' [H. A. R. Gibb]; , *EI*[3], s.v. 'ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kātib' [Wadād al-Qāḍī]).

of "epigram," a short poem with a witty turn of thought, is *maqṭūʿ* or *maqṭūʿa* (lit. "fragment," pl. *maqāṭīʿ*) [...].'[254] There is no question that van Gelder's thinking on the subject has evolved somewhat—and one may assume that this most recent iteration is, in the main, a more accurate depiction of the literary historical situation than any that has come before it—but other aspects of the entry demonstrate that van Gelder has not so much rethought his position as updated it. Here again, van Gelder emphasises the witty epigram to the exclusion of other modes, but at the same time reduces the matter to simply a question of length: '[...] much Arabic poetry is epigrammatic, and innumerable short passages or single lines can stand alone and have been quoted and transmitted independently.'[255] In this same vein, displaying his continued reliance on the paradigm of the Martial-inspired, pointed epigram, van Gelder writes that '[t]erms such as *qiṭʿa* are also used regularly for any short poem, including those that have no "point," punch-line, clever conceit, or witty turn and thus cannot be called epigrams in the strictest sense.'[256] It is not at all clear who it is who uses the term *qiṭʿah* in such a way as to distinguish it from epigram (presumably, *maqāṭīʿ*), but even leaving that issue aside, it is clear that for van Gelder when it comes to epigram, point trumps everything. This is partly a question of personal preference—after all there is no such thing as epigram *per se*—and as Ludwig Wittgenstein has said, 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language.'[257] That being said, in the course of this study, it will be argued that the anthology is a far more helpful context for understanding the epigram genre, and more representative of its wider literary prevalence than the Martial-inspired paradigm as adopted by early-modern Europe. More salutary than anything else, however, is the evidence we have for the epigram (*maqāṭīʿ*) genre from Arabic literary history itself.

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254. *EI*[3], s.v. 'Epigram 1. Classical Arabic' [Geert Jan van Gelder].

255. ibid.

256. ibid.

257. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophische Untersuchungen. Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte, rev. 4th ed. by P. M. S. Hacker and J. Schulte, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, p. 25e: 'Die Bedeutung eines Wortes ist sein Gebrauch in der Sprache.' (p. 25).

II. Evidence for the Arabic Epigram[258]

Let us return to the ostensibly simple question that began this chapter: *How do you say 'epigram' in Arabic?* By now, the reader may justifiably be worried that the promised answer will not be forthcoming, especially in light of van Gelder's decisive-sounding claim that '[t]here is no Arabic word for "epigram."'[259] After the discussion above, the reader will understand that, in a way, van Gelder was right all along: axiomatically speaking, how can there be a word for a culturally specific literary genre in another culture when those cultures have not enjoyed any discernible literary exchange? Historically, pre-modern Arabic culture did not encounter—as best we can tell—Greek and Latin epigrams nor later European pastiches of the same and thus there is no pre-modern Arabic word for what is usually called the 'epigram'. Yet on the other hand, van Gelder's claim that '[t]here is no Arabic word for "epigram"' borders on the absurd; it would not even be fair to call it a *non sequitur* because the proposition that precedes it implicitly—the inquiry whence this pseudo-empirical finding is derived—is itself incoherent. However, this argument need not antagonise scholars who seek to promote—insofar as possible—a system of literary terminology comprehensible across the academy; especially as this would serve both to integrate the history of pre-modern Arabic and other Islamicate literatures fully and equally into the study of world literature as well as to expand the dimensions of comparative literature as a discipline. The question posed here—how do you say 'epigram' in Arabic—is, therefore, 'no doubt partly foolish and partly irrelevant, but the impulse to raise [it] is serious.'[260]

When one claims that the pre-modern Arabic tradition did, in fact, possess an epigram genre, one does not intend to suggest that pre-modern Arabs developed a term to describe Hellenistic or Latin epigrams or that they were even aware of these phenomena. Rather this study puts forward two parallel literary-historical arguments,

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258. Thomas Bauer once began to write an article on the genre of Mamluk epigrams and very kindly shared his incipient article with me. I can only hope that my ideosyncratic approach to the subject will spur him to finish it.

259. G. J. van Gelder, 'Pointed and Well-Rounded', p. 101.

260. Paraphrasing R. H. Brower and E. Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, p. 435.

while also attempting to draw attention to an uncritical reflex in scholarship. Were scholarship simply ignorant of fact—of the literary record, this uncritical reflex would not merit such concentrated attention. What is troubling is that this uncritical reflex actively hinders attempts to investigate and develop our understanding of Arabic literary history. The first line of argument developed below holds that it can be demonstrated, with a certain amount of contextualisation, that a cognate epigram form existed in the pre-modern Arabic tradition, that it was a distinct genre with coherent formal and thematic foundations, and that it is almost entirely unknown in the scholarly record. The second argument suggests that any use of the term epigram in this context is qualified owing to specific historical and cultural factors discussed previously. It goes without saying, therefore, that this use of the term epigram is contingent on a nuanced and specific understanding of the generic term—as outlined above—and that it highlights contextual parallels so as to argue for an allomorphic genre of Arabic epigram. These narrow and specific allomorphic parallels fall under the auspices of the wider generic definition of epigram, with critical and historical sensitivity to the context of pre-modern Islamicate literatures. Earlier attempts subscribed uncritically to a historically particular understanding of the genre and overlooked key features of context—specifically the anthological—that give the Arabic epigram its ontological frame. They ignored the pivotal issue of innovation within the classical Arabic poetic tradition, as well. Inevitably, they arrived at specious conclusions. Balancing these important epistemological concerns with literary-historical evidence, then, the question remains: How do you say 'epigram' in Arabic?

Why, *maqṭūʿ*, of course! Occasionally one also finds the feminine *maqṭūʿah*, but more common than either variant of the singular noun is the plural: *maqāṭīʿ*.[261] The

261. See also in Hans Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, s.v. '*maqṭūʿ* pl. *maqāṭīʿ*'; but cf. s.v. '*dhahabī*': '*āyah dhahabiyyah* | golden word, maxim, epigram'. Pre-modern Arabic dictionaries (e.g. *Lisān al-ʿArab*, *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*) do not provide much insight into the nature of the term *maqāṭīʿ* precisely because the term took on its technical connotation of a brief poem so late. The word is used as a technical term in other fields as well: music, *sajʿ*, *ḥadīth*, prosody, etc. See also Li Guo, 'Reading *Adab* in historical light', p. 392.

reader will immediately notice that the term *maqāṭīʿ* shares the same triliteral root as the term *qiṭʿah* (or *muqaṭṭaʿah*) discussed at length above. We have already had occasion to mention the pernicious, anti-empirical tendency to explain phenomena by way of their etymology, and while it is always tempting, it would be equally deceptive in this instance. There is no evidence, at all, that the *maqāṭīʿ* genre is derived from the earlier *qiṭʿah*, though they are obviously linked in that they are both examples of relatively concise poetry in Arabic. Strictly speaking while *dūbayt, mawāliyā,* and two-line epigrams can technically appear indistinguishable on the page (the four hemistichs of the *mawāliyā* are usually written as four lines) and moreover the rhyme scheme of the *dūbayt* (AAxA) and *mawāliyā* (AAAA) otherwise distinguish them from epigrams, which are monorhymed (xAxA) and are flexible in the matter of *taṣrīʿ* (rhyming the first and second hemistichs).[262] The *dūbayt*, like the more famous Persian *rubāʿī*, is written in its own particular metre, as well.[263] It is—like the *muwashshaḥ*, etc.—one of the few instances of a strictly formalistic poetic genre in the Arabic tradition.[264] That the Arabic epigram (pl. *maqāṭīʿ*) was not a prosodically or formalistically determined genre like those mentioned above is a speculative proposition, but there is evidence to suggest it. In his biographical notice on the poet Sharaf ad-Dīn b. Rayyān (d. 769–70/1367–9), aṣ-Ṣafadī mentions a range of formal genres that Ibn Rayyān excelled at:

> وتولّع بالنظم إلى أن أجاد فيه ونظم في سائر أنواعه من أوزان العرب والموشح والزجل والبُلَّيْق والمواليا والدوبيت[265]

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262. cf. Brockelmann's confusion as discussed in Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"', p. 17, § 1.

263. On the *dūbayt*, see *EI*[2] s.v. 'Rubāʿī (pl. Rubāʿiyyāt). 3. In Arabic' [W. Stoetzer] and *idem*, 'Sur les quatrains arabes nommés "*dubāyt*"', *QSA*, vol. 5–6, 1987–88, pp. 718–25. See also related to this T. Seidensticker, 'An Arabic Origin of the Persian *Rubāʿī*', *MEL*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2011, pp. 155–69 and *EI*[3], s.v. '*dūbayt*. a. in Arabic' [Adam Talib].

264. Discussing the organisation of Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's (d. 1350) *Dīwān*, Gregor Schoeler comments that '[...] as regards the arrangement of the stanzaic poems and the other, new, formal genres, al-Ḥillī did not set up special chapters for them in his Dīwān, rather, he mixed them with the 'old', non-stanzaic poems. This means that a thematic chapter might include the following formal genres: *qaṣīda*, *qiṭʿa*, *muwaššaḥ*, *musammaṭ* (including its special form, the *muḫammas*), *dūbayt*.' (G. Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry', p. 39).

265. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 12, p. 369; see also al-ʿAsqalānī, *ad-Durar al-kāminah*, vol. 2, pp. 55–6. This

> He was an avid and accomplished poet and he composed poetry in all its various forms, including the metres of the Arabs [i.e. the Khalilian metres], *muwashshaḥ*, *zajal*, *bullayq*, *mawāliyā*, and *dūbayt*.

Above we saw that Gregor Schoeler previously underlined the fact that in mediaeval Arabic literary criticism, the *qaṣīdah* is primarily a formal distinction—not a thematic one as in our current understanding.[266] Nevertheless, the formal strictures of the *qaṣīdah* are not at all comparable to the common formal poetic genres we find in western European literary traditions. The *dūbayt*, on the other hand, is indeed formally restricted, and thematically unrestrained. Yet the *qaṣīdah* is itself a genre, although its formal strictures are looser and its thematic dimensions can vary; the same is true of epigram (*maqāṭīᶜ*, sing. *maqṭūᶜ*) as will be shown below.

The pre-history of the term *maqāṭīᶜ* is still an unsettled question and we can only engage with the term once it comes fully into view in the 14th century, the onset of the Arabic epigram's genre-consciousness.[267] There are earlier uses of the term *maqāṭīᶜ*

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poet has not attracted much attention in scholarship, but see Adam Talib, 'Caricature and obscenity in *mujūn* poetry and African-American women's hip hop' in A. Talib, M. Hammond, and A. Schippers (eds), *The Rude, the Bad and the Bawdy. Essays in Honour of Professor Geert Jan van Gelder*, Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2014, pp. 285–307.

266. '[...] [A]ccording to the native scholars, *qaṣīda* is something akin to a formal genre.' (G. Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry', p. 40.)

267. One of the only extant descriptions of epigram composition comes from Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470)'s *al-Manhal aṣ-ṣāfī* in which he recounts a description by [Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd ar-Raḥīm] Ibn al-Furāt (735–807/1334–1405), who had received permission (*ijāzah*) from aṣ-Ṣafadī to transmit the latter's poetry. Ibn al-Furāt explains that he observed aṣ-Ṣafadī taking old poetic themes and composing new 'couplets' (i.e. two-line epigrams) based on these: '[...] *lākin raʾaytu min naẓmihi bi-khaṭṭihi ᶜindamā yuᶜāriḍ baᶜḍ man taqaddamahu min mujīdī ash-shuᶜarāʾ fī maᶜnā min al-maᶜānī al-laṭīfah fa-yaʾkhudh dhālika al-maᶜnā aw an-nuktah fa-yanẓimuhā fī baytayn wa-yujīd fīhimā bi-ḥasab al-ḥāl thumma yanẓim ayḍ*[an] *fī dhālika al-maᶜnā bi-ᶜaynihi baytayn ukhar* [sic] *thumma baytayn thumma baytayn wa-lā yazāl yanẓim fī dhālika al-maᶜnā wa-huwa yaqūl: "wa-qultu ana" ilā an yamallahu an-naẓar wa-tasʾamahu an-nafs wa-yamujjahu as-samᶜ fa-law taraka dhālika wa-taḥarrā fī qarīḍihi la-kāna min ash-shuᶜarāʾ al-mujīdīn li-mā yaẓhar lī min quwwat shiᶜrihi wa-ḥusn ikhtirāᶜihi.*' ['But I have seen in his own poetry, in his own hand, that when he emulates one of his talented poetic predecessors, he takes a motif or a point and composes two lines on it, which are quite good all things considered, but then he composes another two lines on the exact same topic, and then another two lines and then another, and he carries on like that on the same topic, saying "And this is what I composed" until the [reader's] eye grows bored, his soul weary, and his eyes replused. If only he'd given up that [habit of his] and selected only the best of what he'd composed, he'd have been one of the

(and also *maqṭūʿ*)—notably in ʿAlī b. Ẓāfir al-Azdī's *Badāʾiʿ al-badāʾih* (*Excellent Improvisations*) and Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ az-zamān* (*The Passing of the Notables and the Sons of the Age*)—but these represent the very earliest stage of the systematic use of this term to denote a particular poetic form.

Al-Azdī (d. 613/1216 or 623/1226) writes, in a report that would later be repeated by al-Maqqarī, for example (see further in the Corpus below) that the vizier Abū Bakr b. Milḥ 'improvised several epigrams'.[268] Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) wrote his biographical dictionary in Cairo between 1256–60 and 1271–74; shortly before the births of Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (b. 677/1278), Ibn Nubātah (b. 686/1287), aṣ-Ṣafadī (b. 696/1297), et al.[269] Ibn Khallikān is also a noteworthy example in that he roamed relatively far and wide in his lifetime: from Irbil (N. Iraq) to Aleppo and Damascus to Mosul and eventually to Cairo, where he began composing his *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*. It is not clear, therefore, where he would have first encountered the term—or begun to think of epigrammatic poetry in this distinct way—and though his schooling took place primarily in Syria, he did not enjoy the connection to Hama that so many of the early epigrammatists shared. Ibn Khallikān's use of the term *maqāṭīʿ* is highly illuminating, however, in that he often refers to other anthological and biographical texts where 'epigrams' (*maqāṭīʿ*) by certain poets are cited. In his entry on Ibrāhīm al-Ghazzī (d. 524/1129), for example, (see entry 1. b. in the list below), Ibn Khallikān describes some of al-Ghazzī's poetry as *maqāṭīʿ* but the term is never used in ʿImād ad-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 597/1201) earlier biographical dictionary of poets, *Kharīdat al-qaṣr wa-jarīdat al-ʿaṣr* (*The Palace's Unbored Pearl: A Catalogue of [Our] Age*). Similarly in his entry on Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr b. ʿAskar al-Mawṣilī (d. 610/1213) (see entry 1. a. in the list below), Ibn Khallikān remarks that Sharaf ad-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt Ibn al-Mustawfī (d. 637/1239),

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great poets for I did detect a strength and inventiveness to his poetry'] (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal aṣ-ṣāfī*, vol. 5, p. 257). (Cited also in Everett Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 356, but attributed to Ibn Taghrībirdī himself).

268. al-Azdī, ʿAlī b. Ẓāfir, *Badāʾiʿ al-badāʾih*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣriyyah, 1970, p. 373: '*fa-ṣanaʿa al-wazīr fīhimā ʿiddat maqāṭīʿ badīhᵃᵐ*' (with thanks to Geert Jan van Gelder for this reference).

269. *EI*², s.v. 'Ibn Khallikān' [J. W. Fück].

the author of a history of Ibn Khallikān's hometown, cited numerous epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ ʿadīdah*) by Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr in his history, and yet in the edition of Ibn al-Mustawfī's text the term *maqāṭīʿ* is never used in connection with this poet.[270] It is clear that Ibn Khallikān—even while deferring to the authority of earlier historical sources—was characterising a certain type of poetry in a novel way, such that these earlier historians of poetry may not have recognised his meaning. Aṣ-Ṣafadī, a great biographer as well as an epigrammatist, was to do much the same in the following century.

At the same time, however, Ibn Khallikān's variable use of the term *maqāṭīʿ* in his biographical dictionary gives the impression that the term had not yet been fully codified as a specific literary type at the time he was writing. He does certainly use the term *maqāṭīʿ* to describe what we might call epigrams in the majority of instances (see item 1 in the list below), but this use is not systematic through and through. In the course of a biographical entry on al-Muʿtamid Ibn ʿAbbād (d. 487/1095), the last of the ʿAbbādid rulers of Seville, Ibn Khallikān remarks that the poet Ibn al-Labbānah (d. 507/1113) wrote several epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*) and long odes (*qaṣāʾid muṭawwalāt*) on the fall of the dynasty after his patron al-Muʿtamid was deposed in 484/1091:[271]

> وله في البكاء على أيامهم وانتثار نظامهم عدّة مقاطيع وقصائد مطولات يشتمل عليها جزء لطيف صدر عنه في صورة تأليف وهيئة تصنيف سماه «نظم السلوك في وعظ الملوك»[272]
>
> He [Ibn Labbānah] has several epigrams and long odes lamenting their bygone rule and the fall of their dynasty, which he collected into a slim volume entitled *Pearls on Strings, a Warning for Kings*.

What is perhaps most interesting about this example—besides the use of the term *maqāṭīʿ* (epigrammatic poems) in contrast to long odes (*qaṣāʾid muṭawwalāt*)—is that certain manuscript copies of Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt* substitute the variant *maqṭūʿāt* for

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270. Though it is clearly erroneous, I note in passing that de Slane understood the term as 'extracts' (see in his translation of the biographical dictionary: Ibn Khallikān, *Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary*, trans. Baron MacGuckin de Slane, vol. 1, p. 16).

271. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 5, p. 34; also vol. 5, p. 23. See also *EI*², s.vv. 'al-Muʿtamid Ibn ʿAbbād' [E. Lévi-Provençal; R. P. Scheindlin] and 'Ibn al-Labbāna' [F. de la Granja].

272. This work appears not to have survived.

maqāṭīʿ here.[273] Elsewhere in his *Wafāyāt*, it appears that Ibn Khallikān occasionally uses the term *maqāṭīʿ* to describe something wholly different from epigrams or concise poems. For example in his entry on al-Manāzī al-Kātib (Aḥmad b. Yūsuf, d. 437/1045), Ibn Khallikān writes that 'people have in their possession some *maqāṭīʿ* [portions of his poetry] but his *Dīwān* is very rare indeed':[274]

ويوجد له بأيدي الناس مقاطيع وأما ديوانه فعزيز الوجود

It is possible to interpret this comment as 'people have in their possession *epigrams* by him, but his *Dīwān* is very rare indeed' rather than 'people have in their possession some portions (*maqāṭīʿ*) of his collected work', but I would submit that the second interpretation is more plausible. Similarly Ibn Khallikān notes that the poet Ibn ʿUnayn (d. 630/1233; see also item 1. l. in the list below) was not concerned with collecting his poetry and that is why he never compiled a *Dīwān*.[275] It is for this reason, Ibn Khallikān explains, that some people have in their possession 'portions' (*maqāṭīʿ*) of his poetry, but no complete *Dīwān*, and that an abridged *Dīwān* of his poetry that was later compiled by others is neither complete nor wholly authentic:

> ولم يكن له [اي: ابن عنين] غرض في جمع شعره فلذلك لم يدوّنه فهو يوجد مقاطيع في أيدي الناس وقد جمع له بعض أهل دمشق ديواناً صغيراً لا يبلغ عُشر ما له من النظم ومع هذا ففيه أشياء ليست له
>
> He [AT: i.e. Ibn ʿUnayn] had no purpose in collecting his poetry so for that reason he did not record it all. Portions (*maqāṭīʿ*) [of it] are scattered among various people and one Damascene did in fact compile a small *Dīwān* [of his poetry], but it contains no more than a tenth of what he

273. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 5, p. 34n. These four MSS are not particularly old, nor do they seem to belong to one stemmatic branch. They were copied in 739/1339 (MS *qāf*; on this MS, see ibid., vol. 4, p. *jīm*), c. 9th–10th/15th–16th century (MS *bāʾ-rāʾ*; on this MS, see ibid., vol. 4, pp. *jīm–dāl*), 1155/1742 (MS *rāʾ*; on this MS, see ibid., vol. 2, p. 7), and 830/1426 (MS *nūn*; on this MS, see ibid., vol. 3, p. 6). The last of these, MS *nūn*—the editor Iḥsān ʿAbbās surmises—may be based on the author's partial draft of 659/1260.

274. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 1, p. 144.

275. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 5, p. 17.

wrote and includes works not by him.[276]

Here again it seems likely that the word *maqāṭīʿ* is intended to mean portions of the whole of a poet's poetic output rather than epigrammatic poems.[277] It is also likely that in Ibn Khallikān's period the strict concision typical of nearly all 14th- and post-14th-century epigram poetry (see discussion below) had not yet become the genre's most dominant characteristic.[278] It bears reiterating that these examples run counter to the meaning denoted by the majority of instances of the term *maqāṭīʿ* in Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary and in the many epigram texts that followed.[279] Already in the 13th century with Ibn Khallikān, the primary meaning of *maqāṭīʿ* is epigrammatic poems. Over the next century, this meaning was systematised—though never explicitly—and it soon acquired the terminological meaning of epigram as we will see. For a wide-ranging historical survey of the generic term and its application, see the list appended to this chapter (Corpus).

As no literary-critical discussion of *maqāṭīʿ* has been turned up yet, we must limit ourselves primarily to literary evidence in context . This is not in itself a reason to be disheartened, though, as a surfeit of evidence exists from the post-Abbasid period that *maqāṭīʿ* and occasionally other cognate forms of the word denoted a poetic genre

276. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 5, p. 17. Khalīl Mardam Bek produced a modern edition of Ibn ʿUnayn's *Dīwān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.).

277. The term *maqṭūʿ* also appears to have been used in this sense (Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 6, p. 188), but cf. ibid., vol. 6, p. 204 where it seems another meaning is intended.

278. See, e.g. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 6, p. 206, where a five-line poem is cited as an example of one of the epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*). See also ibid., vol. 6, p. 204.

279. Certain instances of the term *maqāṭīʿ* in the *Wafāyāt* are to all intents and purposes prohibitively ambiguous (e.g. vol. 6, p. 125)

unto itself.[280] The most sensible thing to do would be to consider a few illustrative examples.

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280. Huda Fakhreddine uses the term *maqṭūʿah* interchangeably with *qiṭʿah* when referring to poetry from the Abbasid period (See H. J. Fakhreddine, 'Defining Metapoesis in the ʿAbbāsid Age', p. 225; *idem*, 'From Modernists to *Muḥdathūn*: Metapoesis in Arabic', unpublished doctoral thesis, p. 80). The same is true of Khalid Sindawi (See K. Sindawi, 'Visit to the Tomb of Al-Husayn b. ʿAlī in Shiite Poetry: first to fifth centuries AH (8th–11th centuries CE), *JAL*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2006, pp. 230–58, p. 257n). See also Sabry Hafez, 'The Transformation of the Qasida Form in Modern Arabic Poetry' in Sperl and Shackle (eds) *Qasida Poetry*, vol. 1, p. 104; Yosef Tobi, *Proximity and Distance*, pp. 37, 123, 210, 213. Generally speaking, it is the term *muqaṭṭaʿah* that is reckoned to be synonymous with *qiṭʿah* (See e.g. in G. Schoeler, 'The Genres of Classical Arabic Poetry', pp. 4; 39. Interestingly, the word *maqṭūʿah* is used commonly in this sense in Andalusian literature (see, e.g. *Dīwān Muḥammad b. Hāniʾ al-Andalusī*, p. 7). On an arbitary, but interesting, use of the term epigram for an Arabic poem with Hebrew translation from al-Andalus, see Luis M. Girón Negrón, 'Fortune ibéro-médiévale d'une epigramme arabe'. In al-Muḥibbī's *Khulāsat al-athar*, the term is used at one point to denote the stanzas of a *zajal* poem (vol. 1, p. 108, penultimate line).

The term (*maqāṭīʿ*) is also used in the context of music (see e. g. in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*). Dwight Reynolds has also kindly shared with me an intriguing example of an epigram ('*maqṭūʿah*') included in a North African songbook (briefly mentioned in D. Reynolds, 'Lost Virgins Found: The Arabic Songbook Genre and an Early North African Exemplar', *QSA*, n.s. vol. 7, 2012, pp. 69–105, pp. 89–90), which I hope he and I will be able to explore further. In an-Nawājī's *ash-Shifāʾ fī badīʿ al-iktifāʾ*, he quotes an epigram by Kushājim (p. 121; see also in Kushājim, *Dīwān Kushājim*, ed. Maḥfūẓ, p. 405, no. 395, with variation; and *idem*, *Dīwān Kushājim*, ed. Ṭarād, p. 250, with minor variation):

yaqūlūna tub wa-l-kaʾsu fī kaffi ʾaghyadin / wa-ṣawtu l-mathānī wa-l-mathālithi ʿālī

fa-qultu lahum law kuntu ʾaḍmartu tawbatan / wa-ʿāyantu hādhā fī l-manāmi badā lī

They tell me to repent, but a long-necked one is holding the goblet
and the sounds of the second and third strings of the lute ring out.
So I tell them: 'Even if I were to set my mind to repentance,
if this vision were to come to me in a dream, it would appear [real] to me.'

In a musical context, the words *mathānī* and *mathālith* mean the second and third strings of the lute, respectively and they have been translated thus above. There may be some reason to suspect that Kushājim is also alluding, punningly, to the lyrics of the songs being two and three-line poems.

Likewise in Yosef Tobi, *Between Hebrew and Arabic Poetry*, p. 5: 'Also the *maqṭūʿāt*, short poems without multiplicity of divisions but with a single theme, describe the hedonistic social and cultural reality in the patron's court, a state of 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die'—*carpe diem*: (a) The wine poems (*khamriyyāt*) describe the banquet held in the palace, inside or in the surrounding garden; (b) the poems of passion (*ghazaliyyāt*) sing the praises of the desired young girl (the 'gazelle'), lovely in her outward physical qualities, and details her deception and her disregard for and evasion of those who desire her; this is the servant girl, who performs as singer and dancer, and is an object for illicit sex (*qayna*, pl.: *qiyan*); sometimes the character of the girl is replaced by the character of a desired handsome young man (the 'fawn'), the wine-server; (c) poems of nature (*waṣf*, or more precisely *rawḍiyyāt*, *nawriyyāt*, or *wardiyyāt*).' Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Majīd Lāshīn, the editor of aṣ-Ṣafadī's *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim* also uses the term *maqṭūʿāt* rather than the more common *maqāṭīʿ* (Editor's introduction in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Majīd Lāshīn, p. 28).

Stylistic & Rhetorical Characteristics

Arabic epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*) display all the *badīʿ* characteristics familiar from other contemporary forms of poetry in the period, especially *tawriyah*. The following poem, for example, heads a micro-epigram collection contained in a chapter on beautiful male and female youths from an anonymous Ottoman-era anthology.[281] Several epigram collections on beautiful male youths begin with poems on youths named Muḥammad, followed by the first four caliphs and other important religious personalities from Islamic history (e.g. Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, et al.).[282] This is intended to provoke more than a wicked frisson; the entire conceit of the poem depends on homonymy.

مؤلّفه في محمّد:[283] [من الطويل]

[١] نَـبـيُّ جَـمـالٍ لـلـمُـحِـبّـيـنَ مُـرْسَـلٌ وآيـــتُـــهُ ذاكَ ٱلـــعِـــذارُ ٱلـــمُـــزَرَّدُ
[٢] يَـضِـلُّ بِـلَـيْـلِ ٱلـشَـعْـرِ عُـشـاقُ حُـسْـنِـهِ ويَـهْـديـهِـمُ صُـبْـحُ ٱلـجَـبـيـنِ ويُـرْشِـدُ
[٣] وكـم مُـعْـجِـزٍ أبـدى لـنـا حُـسـنُ وَجْـهِـهِ ولا عَـجَـبٌ ذو ٱلـمُـعْـجِـزاتِ مـحـمّـدُ

معجز || في الأصل المخطوط: «معجزة» وهكذا يكسر الوزن.

The author on Muḥammad:

Prophet of beauty, to the adorers heaven-sent;
His sign those rings of beard's first growth like chain-mail.
Those enamoured of his beauty go astray in his hair's night
But the morning of his brow surely guides them back to right.
So many miracles are revealed in the beauty of that face

281. These verses appear on f. 63b of Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Huntington 508. It is not entirely clear to which chapter they belong as there is no demarcation of chapter six in the text. They can be assumed however to belong either to chapter five ('*al-qism al-khāmis: ar-Rawḍ al-fattān fī al-jawārī wa-l-ghilmān*') or chapter six ('*al-qism as-sādis: Anwār al-aqāḥ fī awṣāf al-milāḥ*'). I have edited these verses with the kind help of Geert Jan van Gelder.

282. See, for example, in A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', *Arabica*, vol. 59, no.6, 2012, pp. 599–649.

283. This poem is by the author of the anthology *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ*, whose identity has not been preserved.

It's no surprise that the miraculous one is Muḥammad.

This poem is a unit; that much is clear. No matter how resilient the etymologically influenced distortion wrought by the root *q-ṭ-ᶜ* ('cutting', 'fragmentation') has been, this poem is clearly intended to be read as a unit, and was inevitably read as such in practice. It is an epigram but it is not satirical in the slightest. It is highly committed to its conceit like much of Arabic love poetry.[284] Surely the feature that makes the poem's unitary cohesion most apparent, and anchors its epigrammatic quality, is the 'point' that comes in the poem's very last word.

The name-epigram, which is normally introduced with the heading *fī* [*fulān*] was a very popular subgenre and forms the core of a great many epigram anthologies.[285] The mode of the name-epigram can vary widely from riddling, erotic, bawdy, invective, etc. but the general structural outline of this kind of poem adheres to a well established operation that can be seen across the different subgenres of epigram. The epigram begins with a proposition—here it is the figure of 'the prophet of beauty' ('*nabī al-jamāl*')—and we should note the affinity with Scaliger's paradigm discussed above. This proposition—or premise—is further developed using features of the erotic mode and allusion. The prophet of beauty is 'sent' (*mursal*) to the adorers (*al-muḥibbūn*) in parodic emulation of the Prophet of Islam's own mission to the Muslims (*al-muslimūn*): 'thou art truly among the Envoys' ('*innaka la-min al-mursalīn*').[286] The prophet of beauty's 'sign' (*āyah*, pl. *āyāt*) is his incipient beard, a key erotic topos, which is thus elevated to a manifestation of divine will. Signs in the Quran (*āyāt*) include the natural manifestations of God's glory—as well as the historical parables of disbelief and impiety that Islam intends to repair—so the beloved's beard becomes a site of both divine majesty and pious devotion.[287] Even more significantly, though, for the youth's characterisation as a 'prophet of beauty' is the role of the 'sign' ('*āyah*') in authenti-

284. See Benedikt Reinert, 'Der Concetto-Stil in den islamischen Literatur'.

285. See, *inter alia*, Jurgen W. Weil, *Mädchennamen-verrätselt. Hundert Rätsel-Epigramme aus dem adab-Werk Alf ǧāriya wa-ǧāriya (7./13. Jh.)*; A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaᶜālibī's *Book of Youths*', etc.

286. Quran 36:3. The translation comes from A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, p. 144.

287. See *EI*[3], s.v. 'Āya' [Andrew Rippin].

cating the prophetic message.[288] The second line further develops the combination of erotic mode and prophetic theme, and even addresses—subtly and with tongue in cheek—the impious dialectical territory that is being traversed here. The epigram acknowledges that those who love the prophet of beauty are indeed led astray (*'yaḍill'*) by his tenebrous locks (another sign of his beauty), and even seems to evoke God's own acknowledged ambivalence toward those who cannot find their way toward belief:

إِنَّ اللَّـهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الحَقُّ مِن رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّـهُ بِهَـٰذَا مَثَلًا ۘ يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيراً وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيراً وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِين

God is not ashamed to strike a similitude
even of a gnat, or aught above it.
As for the believers, they know it is the truth
from their Lord; but as for unbelievers,
they say, 'What did God desire by this
for a similitude?' Thereby He leads
many astray, and thereby He guides
many; and thereby He leads none astray
save the ungodly[289]

But as the tone of the erotic mode rarely ventures beyond gentle condemnation, the second hemistich quickly redeems both the wayward lover and the wicked beauty who led him astray. Though the prophet of beauty may occasionally get his lovers into trouble at nighttime, his splendid brow will lead them back to the true path by morning. In preparation for the pointed ending that the majority of epigrams conclude

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288. 'An understanding of signs recited in the scripture as that which brings a person to faith, then, becomes centrally tied to the text of the Qurʾān itself, as manifested in the application of the word *āya* to the verses of scripture, which are in themselves "signs" for people to understand. The "signs" in this sense stand as proof of the status of Muḥammad as a prophet, by establishing the truth of his message (as compared to the role of miracles, which establish the authority of the prophet).' *EI*[3], s.v. 'Āya' [Andrew Rippin].

289. Quran 2:26. The translation comes from A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1, p. 32.

with, the poet even shifts from third to first person (*lanā*), personalising the effect of the prophet of beauty's miraculous presence. Here the concluding point rests on the beloved's name (Muḥammad), which is of course also an adjective meaning "praiseworthy". By this point in the poem, the beloved's name is a foregone conclusion, which has already been presaged—explicitly by the heading and tacitly by the rhyme—yet the denouement is essential nonetheless. The point of the point is not to surprise the reader—the ubiquity of headings in epigram collections makes this clear—but rather the logic of the *premise-exposition-resolution* (or *Vorwurf* and *Aufschluss*) operation lies in the reader's observing the author's technique and style as he or she negotiates the stations of the epigram. The pitch of the operation builds steadily and it is the punchline, the epigram's concluding point, that explodes the accumulating pressure, resolving the dialectic tension between signifier (a beloved named Muḥammad) and signified (the cultural, religious, historical, and affective nexus surrounding the figure of the Prophet).

This basic operation gives the epigram its general structure—as opposed to a purely formalistic quality like the number of verses—and it is therefore one of the epigram's key generic features. Readers became accustomed to this operational structure and it informed their expectations, tastes, and broader understanding of the genre's place in the tradition. This operational logic: *premise-exposition-resolution* is also analogous to other poetic structures in the Arabic poetic tradition, especially among pithier (or epigrammatic) poetic forms. Thomas Bauer has identified a composite structure in Abū Tammam's relatively concise erotic (*ghazal*) poems. Bauer argues that—because '[m]ore than half of [Abū Tammām's] *ġazal* poems measure exactly four lines'—'the four liner, already common yet not outstandingly represented in Abū Nuwās, starts to become a distinct formal type of *ġazal* poem with Abū Tammām.'[290] Similarly, Bauer argues, Abū Tammām adopted and refined the compositional structure

290. Th. Bauer, 'Abū Tammām's Contribution to ʿAbbāsid *Ġazal* Poetry', p. 19. See also the poetry of Khālid b. Yazīd al-Kātib (in A. Arazi (ed.), *Amour divin*) and Th. Bauer, 'Dignity at Stake: *Mujūn* epigrams by Ibn Nubāta (686–768/1287–1366) and his contemporaries' in A. Talib, M. Hammond, and A. Schippers (eds), *The Rude, the Bad and the Bawdy. Essays in Honour of Professor Geert Jan van Gelder*, pp. 164–92.

of '2 + 2'—that is to say two pairs of associated couplets—which was also the 'predominant form in the four liners of Abū Nuwās'. Yet in Abū Nuwās' poems, these building blocks were '[o]ften [...] semantically only loosely connected, if at all' and '[i]n some of [Abu Nuwās'] four liners, there is no discernable [sic] structure whatsoever.'[291] In Abū Tammām's quatrains, however, the poet manages to '[transform] this rather monotonous structure into a pattern which reveals a clear development.'[292] In addition to this composite structure, Bauer identifies what he calls a 'frame structure' in Abū Tammām's erotic (*ghazal*) quatrains:

> [...] [T]he opening line gives a pregnant resumé of the main theme, which is then expressed in more detail in lines 2–3. One can often compare this relation between line 1 on the one hand and lines 2–3 on the other to the musical structure of exposition and development. Line 4 is then consequently the recapitulation, which refers back to the opening theme. [...] [H]ere the structure, which one may call the 'frame-structure,' is clearly discernable [sic]: the opening and closing lines form a kind of 'frame,' into which the two middle lines are embedded. About one third of all *ġazal* four liners of Abū Tammām follow this structure, which is comparatively rarely encountered in the *dīwān* of Abū Nuwās, where it often seems to come about purely accidentally.[293]

These model structures: composite (2+2) and frame (Exposition-Development-Recapitulation), are clearly analogous to the basic operational structure of the epigram outlined above (Premise-Exposition-Resolution), but they are sufficiently dissimilar to demonstrate that something unique—and innovative—is taking place within the *maqṭūʿ* genre.

This process is by no means unique to name-epigrams, though of course the parameters of exposition and resolution will inevitably depend on the nature of the

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291. Th. Bauer, 'Abū Tammām's Contribution to ʿAbbāsid *Ġazal* Poetry', p. 19.

292. ibid., p. 19.

293. ibid., p. 20.

premise (or proposition). Some epigrams, like the following, are wholly humorous, so the operation depends entirely on achieving the desired comic effect.[294] This example of comic epigram below, a poem on 'Nighttime assignations', is pithy and narrow even for an epigram. It is in the *Kāmil* metre, but a short dimetrical (two-footed) variety of it, with a maximum of twenty syllables per line (ten syllables per hemistich), thus equivalent to four lines of iambic pentameter.[295]

في الزيارة في الليل: [من الكامل]

[١] زارَ ٱلحبيبُ بلَيْلةٍ ووُشاتُهُ لَمْ يَشْعُرُ

[٢] فَضَمَمْتُهُ وَلَثَمْتُهُ وَفَعَلْتُ ما لا يُذْكَرُ

On nighttime assignations:

At night my beloved came to me;
while those who bad-mouth him were oblivious,
I took him in my arms and kissed his lips
and then did that thing that cannot be mentioned.

The premise (set-up) is simple and is laid out in the first hemistich, while the second hemistich adds coincidental detail relevant to the setting (colour). The beloved comes to the lover at nighttime when the coast is clear, and in the two hemistichs of the second line we get the exposition and punch-line. Naturally as one would expect, when the beloved arrives under cover of night, the lover embraces him and kisses him, thus

294. I generally prefer the terminology of jokes—premise and punchline—to the terminology of logic—proposition and point (scil. conclusion)—used in other discussions of epigram, but that is not to suggest that all epigrams are intended to be humorous or satiric. To the contrary, see A. Talib, 'The Many Lives of Arabic Verse' in which I discuss the function of elegiac epigrams. Cf. on a related poetic form, the Persian *rubāʿī*: Michael Craig Hillman, 'The Persian Rubāʿī: Common Sense in Analysis', pp. 99–100: '[...] the *rubāʿī* [...] usually, by virtue of its brevity, meter, and rhyme scheme, culminates in a "punch" line [...], which drives home a point, completes a verbal irony or paradox, or sums up a moral lesson.'; L. P. Elwell-Sutton, 'The Omar Khayyam Puzzle', p. 172: 'Being so brief, the *rubāʾī* [sic] lends itself particularly to the expression of pithy, epigrammatic thoughts; and indeed one striking characteristic of all of them is the final, "punch" line summing up the moral of the whole [...]'.

295. The poem is given anonymously in *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ*, Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Huntington 508, f. 99b.

again the humorous epigram depends not on any sort of narrative surprise but voyeurism as with the preceding example of the name-epigram. The audience knows to expect something in the final hemistich of the final line of the epigram, and—as with all jokes—the punch-line is actually anticipated well in advance. The joke is not funny because the lover and beloved meet in secret to make love, but because the narrator becomes so disingenuously coquettish right when the story comes to its climax, as it were. The punchline is a sudden reversal of narrative tone from a rather humdrum and straightforward erotic narrative to an instance of arch modesty at what is precisely the most immodest moment in the action. The humour lies in the depiction of the act, not the act itself.

In ekphrastic epigrams, the same operation (premise-exposition-resolution) is transposed on to the structure of an extended simile or metaphor, often ending with a phantasmagoric comparison (the point). Ekphrastic epigrams were a very popular subgenre of epigram. They are related to a long tradition of ekphrastic (*waṣf*) poetry in Arabic and to the important subject of rhetorical tropes, similes (*tashbīhāt*), and motifs (*maʿānī*) that spawned many volumes.[296] Ekphrastic epigrams also provided yet another opportunity for poets to integrate the subjects of urban life and luxury into their art. The subject matter may appear somewhat peculiar at first to contemporary readers, but the ekphrastic epigram was once an extremely prominent genre in Western literature.[297] The following epigram, 'On a roast chicken', comes from the same anthology as those above in the chapter devoted to the necessary elements of a successful party: 'Chapter Eight. Satisfaction Guaranteed: Everything a Party Needs' (*al-qism ath-thāmin bulūgh al-munā fīmā yaḥtājuhu majlis al-hanāʾ*).[298]

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296. The most recent work on Arabic ekphrastic poetry is Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi's *Description in classical Arabic poetry*.

297. cf. Giambattista Marino (1569–1625), *La galeria del cavalier Marino: distinta in pitture, & sculture*, Milan: Appresso Gio. Battista Bidelli, 1620; Graham Zanker, 'New Light on the Literary Category of "Ekphrastic Epigram" in Antiquity: The New Posidippus (Col. X 7-XI 19 p. Mil. vogl. VIII 309)', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, vol. 143, 2003, pp. 59–62; Christopher Chinn, 'Statius Silv. 4.6 and the Epigrammatic Origins of Ekphrasis', *The Classical Journal*, vol. 100, no. 3, February–March 2005, pp. 247–63.

298. *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ*, Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Huntington 508, f. 104b.

في دجاجة مشوية: **[من السريع]**

[١] دَجـاجـةٌ صـفـراءُ مِـن شَـيِّـهـا حـمـراءُ كـالـوردِ مِـن ٱلـوَهْـجِ
[٢] كـأنَّـهـا والـجَـمْـرُ مِـن تَـحْـتِـهـا أُتْـرُجَّـةٌ مِـن فـوقَ نـارَنْـجِ

On a roast chicken:

A chicken that's golden from roasting
and red like a rose from the flame.
With the coals glowing beneath it
it looks like a citron atop a bitter orange.

The structure of this epigram is altogether similar to that of the other epigrams we have considered. The premise of the epigram (a roast chicken) is laid out in the first hemistich of the first line, with additional descriptive elements presented in the first and second hemistichs of the first line. The second hemistich of the second line (specifying the chicken's position over the glowing coals) is the exposition of the initial premise, and the punchline is the result of an over-the-top, phantasmagoric comparison of the chicken roasting over coals to a citron stuck on top of an orange. The linguistic structure of the poem itself even contributes to the added tension of the anticipated resolution. The parallel constructions in the first hemistichs of both lines: '*min shayyihā*' and '*min taḥtihā*' further augments the caesural tendency in a line of Arabic poetry (*bayt*) to separate into two equal halves (sing. *miṣrāʿ*), giving the poem a structural rhythm that can be represented as:[299]

1. element → 2. complement

3. element′ → 4. complement′

This element-complement repetition is, of course, broken in the final pairing by the introduction of a phantasmagoric comparison. This rhetorical style is similar to analo-

299. On the use of parallelism in Chinese poetry, see H. H. Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady*, pp. 144–85.

gous poetic trends in Western literature like the Marinistic and metaphysical schools, etc. and can be found elsewhere in pre-modern Arabic poetry. Clearly the punch-line here lies in the unconventional comparison that arises within the expected simile and the resolution is, in a sense, an anti-climax. Many Arabic rhetoricians of the earlier period were highly critical of overwrought-ness (*takalluf*), though the value of simile (*tashbīh*) and creative aetiology (*ḥusn at-taʿlīl*) was never diminished.[300] Clearly, the aversion toward phantasmagoria was abandoned in the later period, or rather the aversion toward it felt by some critics—always a minority within the literary community—was marginalised further and further as various so-called 'decadent' rhetorical features were taken up and elevated by later authors.[301] The ekphrastic epigram clearly derives its 'punch' from this rhetorical curve-ball, but—as I have mentioned before—the phantasmagoric point of ekphrastic epigrams like this one is something of an anti-climax. The clearest example of how the epigram derives its pointedness, its total resolution, from the climax of mounting poetic tension—what Lessing called the *Aufschluss* to the *Vorwurf*—can be found in riddling epigrams.

Riddling (*alghāz*, sing. *lughz*) epigrams—like their analogue the chronogram (*taʾrīkh*)—are among the best evidence we have that epigram collections circulated primarily as written, rather than oral, texts.[302] They also exemplify the epigram's crescendo rhythm, although in fact in the case of a riddling epigram or chronogram the resolution technically only comes after the poem proper has finished. Consider the following punning riddle on a youth called 'Oppressor'.[303]

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300. See, *inter alia*, Mansour Ajami, *The neckveins of winter*.

301. On this topic, see W. Heinrichs, 'Literary Theory', *idem*, 'Manierismus in der arabischen Literatur'; S. Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry*; B. Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry*, ch. 13 (pp. 219–26).

302. See also Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, *Courtly Riddles: Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry*. On chronograms, see Th. Bauer, 'Vom Sinn der Zeit: aus der Geschichte des arabischen Chronogramms' and also in Pierre Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*. cf. Maria Eva Subtelny, 'A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period', p. 19.

303. This poem is cited in Ibn ash-Sharīf Daftarkhʷān's *Kitāb Alf ghulām wa-ghulām*, Escorial MS árabe 461, f. 92a.

وقال في غلام اسمه ظالم: [من الخفيف]

[١] وَبـــديـــعٍ فـــي حـــســـنِـــهِ مـــا لَـــهُ مِـــنْ مُـــمـــاثِـــلِ
[٢] صَـــبُّـــهُ لَـــيـــسَ يَـــرْعَـــوِي فـــيـــهِ مِـــنْ عَـــذْلِ عـــاذِلِ
[٣] كـــيـــفَ أرجـــو إنـــصـــافَـــهُ وٱســـمُـــهُ ضِـــدُّ عـــادِلِ

On a boy called Oppressor:

A gorgeous one
who has no match.
His ardent lover won't mend his ways
despite the blamer's blame.
How can I beg him to be fair,
When [even] his name is the opposite of 'Just'?!

This poem—as the heading itself tells us—describes a beautiful youth called 'Oppressor' (*ẓālim*). Just as with the poem 'On Muḥammad' discussed above, the premise (or conceit) of the poem provides an opportunity for the poet to explore a range of semantic meanings associated with a particular cultural nexus. In this sense, the poem is situated within the lyric-erotic tradition and the riddling device is a further supplement to its affective project. In fact, the rhetorically complex, paronomastic riddling mode of the poem is hinted at in the very first line. The young man—who is perhaps meant to be a slave, or an Arab Bedouin, as the name is not altogether common—at the centre of the poem is said to be 'an original beauty' (*badīʿ fī ḥusnih*) and the adjective in this expression (*badīʿ*) is also the term used to describe a wide range of rhetorical devices or 'figures of speech'.[304] The youth is also—in the second hemistich of the same line—said to be 'without peer' (*mā lahu min mumāthil*) and the word for peer (or 'match', as in the translation above) is itself also a rhetorical term used to describe a specific type of homographic paronomasia.[305] It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the

304. See *EI*[3], s.v. 'Badīʿ' [Geert Jan van Gelder].
305. See *EI*[2], s.v. 'Tadjnīs' [W. P. Heinrichs].

poem's conclusion depends on a semantic nexus, in this case the major cultural dichotomy: *ẓulm* and *ʿadl*.[306] Most beloveds in Arabic poetry are cruel, but here the cruelty is yoked humorously to the beloved's tyrannous character. The punchline lies in the fact that the beloved in this poem is such a caricature of the conventionally hard-hearted beloved that even his name (Oppressor) reflects his brutal character.[307] The key to the riddling mode is that the punch-line is dependent on the reader, who deduces it—to use Scaliger's word—once the poem is done.

Epigrams Exchanged

Epigrams should not be seen only as individual poems, which can be reduced to a particular form or style, for they form a genre, within which their loosely defined formalistic, stylistic, and structural features combine with other crucial contextual features to establish a new—ontic and epistemic—literary category. The identification of this literary category and the recovery of its ontic and epistemic status is the primary focus of this chapter. Setting aside the more complicated issue of ontology for a moment, one of the ways by which the epistemic parameter of a genre can be identified is by understanding the genre's contextual circumstances and the ways in which society interacted with them. For the tradition of Arabic epigrams, the prime context is, of course, anthological, but another important and necessarily interactive context in which epigram featured prominently was in correspondence.[308] It is not enough simply to show that epigrams were identified by a specific literary term (*maqāṭīʿ*), or that these poems were already in the pre-modern period classified as sharing an acknowledged, but unarticulated, affinity, determined on formalistic, stylistic, or contextual grounds (or some combination of the same). Nor is it enough to demonstrate that poems of this type can often be shown to have proceeded structurally and

306. 'Frequently [*ẓulm*] is [...] used as the antonym to *ʿadl*, *inṣāf* and *ḳisṭ* [...]' (*EI*², s.v. 'Ẓulm' [R. Badry]).

307. The name of the beloved here may also refer to the practice of ironic slave names (Camphor, Oppressor, etc.). There is no evidence in the poem itself to suggest that the beloved depicted here was a slave, but it can be assumed.

308. See also B. Gruendler, 'Motif vs. Genre'.

thematically according to an operation composed of premise (*Vorwurf*), exposition, and resolution (*Aufschluss*). No, it is far more convincing—not to say instructive—to expose the context of their production and performance and to outline the many dimensions of their generic status in all its complexity. Therefore, let us now turn from the Arabic epigram *qua* epigram to the epigram *in situ*, for it is context that matters most.[309]

In *Khulāṣat al-athar fī aʿyān al-qarn al-ḥādī ʿashar* (*The Choicest Traces: the Great Ones of the 11th-century*), a biographical dictionary of 11th/17th-century notables, the author Muḥammad al-Amīn b. Faḍl Allāh al-Muḥibbī (1061–1111/1651–1699) relates the story—narrated by Shaykh al-Islām Ismāʿīl an-Nābulusī—of a handsome boy of Aleppo and the epigrams he inspired.[310] These epigrams all end in the phrase 'Beauty lies beneath the turban of the *anṣārī*' (*'wa-l-ḥusnu taḥta ʿimāmati l-anṣārī*)', a humorous allusion (imperfect *taḍmīn*) to a line by the early Islamic poet al-Akhṭal (d. c. 92/710).[311] Al-Akhṭal, a Christian Arab and a favourite of the Umayyad court, composed two famous invective (*hijāʾ*) poems against the supporters of the Prophet (the *anṣār*) at the behest of the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd b. Muʿāwiyah (r. 60–4/680–83).[312] One of these poems ends in a cutting line that includes the hemistich these epigrams would allude to some nine centuries hence:[313]

dhahabat Qurayshu bi-l-makārimi wa-l-ʿulā
wa-l-luʾmu taḥta ʿamāʾimi l-anṣārī

309. 'What this rapid survey shows is that the gap between theory and practice in the Greek and Roman discourse on genre is pronounced. In particular, it shows that the "implied theory" instantiated in ancient poetry is far more sophisticated than the explicit theory developed by philosophers and literary critics [...] It is, however, the explicitly theoretical tradition, exclusively I would say, that has played a role in our modern histories of genre theory. There is no point in deploring this situation, which is now a historical fact. [...] The most important point I can make in closing is to urge that the implicit theory of genre embedded within Greek and Roman literature come to play a significant role in any future attempt to assess the history of discourse about genre.' (Joseph Farrell, 'Classical Genre in Theory and Practice', *New Literary History*, vol. 34, no. 3, Summer 2003, pp. 383–408, pp. 402–3).

310. See *EI*², s.v. 'al-Muḥibbī. 3. Muḥammad al-Amīn' [C. Brockelmann].

311. Geert Jan van Gelder drew my attention to this citation.

312. See *EI*³, s.v. 'al-Akhṭal' [Tilman Seidensticker].

313. See, *inter alia*, in Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā as-Saqqā, vol. 16, p. 36. See also Ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl ash-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Shākir, p. 397; Ibn Qutaybah, *ash-Shiʿr wa-sh-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Shākir, p. 484.

Quraysh have gone and taken with them [all] virtue and distinction.
Now only baseness [remains], beneath the turbans of the *anṣār*.

There is a slight difference, however, in the way the quotation is used in these later poems. In al-Akhṭal's poem, the turbans are plural as are the Supporters of the Prophet, but in the later poems it is the turban of the descendant himself. The slight morphological modification would not be heard in recitation, however, as at the end of the line of verse the *-iyyi* ending must be pronounced *-ī*. Here is al-Muḥibbī's account of the epigram exchange, followed by a translation:[314]

نشأ بحلب غلام بديع الجمال من أقارب شيخ الاسلام المرحوم الشيخ زين الدين عمر العرضي والغلام شريف أنصاري فنظم فيه أدباء حلب مقاطيع كثيرة في آخر كل مقطوع منها «والحسن تحت عمامة الانصاري» ثمّ أرسلوا الى دمشق يطلبون من أدبائها مقاطيع على نمط ما نظموه فنظم أدباء الشام مقاطيع كثيرة وأرسلوها اليهم منها

[١] [من الكامل]

[١] سألوا عَنِ ٱلحُسنِ ٱلبديعِ تَجاهُلاً والحقُّ لا يَخْفَى عَلَى ٱلابصارِ
[٢] فأجبتُ ما هذا ٱلتَّجاهُلُ والعَمَى والحسنُ تحتَ عِمامةِ ٱلانصاري

[٢] ومن ذلك قولي فيه [من الكامل]

[١] قالوا هَلِ ٱجْتَمَعَتْ صِفاتُ ٱلحسنِ في أحدٍ ولم تُحْجَبْ عَنِ ٱلابصارِ
[٢] قُلْتُ ٱلملاحةُ والجمالُ بأسْرِهِ والحسنُ تَحْتَ عِمامةِ ٱلانصاري

[٣] ومن ذلك قولي فيه أيضاً [من الكامل]

[١] ما حُلْتُ عَنْ حَلَبٍ وكُنْتُ مُهاجِراً للحُسنِ حيثُ ٱلسَّعدُ مِنْ أنصاري
[٢] فالسَّعدُ لاحَ بِوجهِ أنصاريها والحُسنُ تَحْتَ عِمامةِ ٱلانصاري

There was a very handsome adolescent boy in Aleppo who was a relative

314. al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar*, vol. 1, p. 105, in the entry on Abū Bakr b. Manṣūr al-ʿUmarī ad-Dimashqī (d. 1048/1638).

of the late *shaykh al-islām* Zayn ad-Dīn ʿUmar al-ʿUrḍī and was himself a descendant (*sharīf*) of both the Prophet and one of the Prophet's early supporters (*anṣārī*).[315] The literati of Aleppo composed many epigrams, all ending [in the phrase] 'Beauty lies beneath the turban of the *anṣārī* (*wa-l-ḥusnu taḥta ʿimāmati l-anṣārī*)'.[316] They then wrote to the literati of Damascus asking them to compose epigrams in the style of what they had composed so the literati of Damascus composed many epigrams as well and sent them to them. One of these was:

[Poem 1]

They asked about wondrous beauty, feigning ignorance
although the truth hides not from any who would see
So I replied: 'what's all this feigned ignorance and blindness
for «beauty lies beneath the turban of the *anṣārī*».'

and in this vein, I wrote:

[Poem 2]

They asked: 'Is it true that all the signs of beauty could be
present in a single person and they not be hidden from view?'
and I answered: 'Delicacy and beauty, the whole lot,
for «beauty lies beneath the turban of the *anṣārī*».'

and in this vein, I also wrote:

[Poem 3]

May I never fail to reach Aleppo when I'm out in search (*muhājir*) of beauty for
good luck (*saʿd*) is on my side (*anṣārī*).[317]

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315. See, EI^2, s.v. 'al-Anṣār' [W. Montgomery Watt].

316. cf. Adriana Valencia and Shamma Boyarin, '*"Ke adame filiolo alieno":* Three *Muwaššaḥāt* with the same *Kharja*', in Raymond P. Scheindlin (ed.), *Wine, Women and Death*, pp. 75–86.

317. The use of the word *muhājir* has particular resonance here as the Prophet's migration to Medinah from Mecca (the *hijrah*) is a key event in the formation of the earliest Muslim religious community.

There, good omen (*saʿd*) shines in the face of the descendants of the *anṣār* in the city

for «beauty lies beneath the turban of the *anṣārī*».

This story provides further evidence for a distinct and acknowledged epigram genre in Arabic, but that is the least of its accomplishments. Far more crucial is its depiction of the broad literary public's awareness of that genre, its role in social life, and its strong—though by no means exclusive—association with lyric themes. Biographical accounts from the period emphasise the importance of correspondence between the educated urban population and here the prominent role of epigrams in correspondence is made clear. Consider the following example from aṣ-Ṣafadī's (d. 764/1363) epistolary collection *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ bayn al-bādī wa-l-murājiʿ*.[318] Here aṣ-Ṣafadī relates an epigrammatic exchange he had with Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) over doves, which was probably inspired by a poem by Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. c. 750/1350), which ends:[319]

wa-shadat fī d-dawḥi ṣādiḥatun

bi-ḍurūbi l-sajʿi wa-l-mulaḥī

kullamā nāḥat ʿalā shajanin

khiltuhā ghannat ʿalā qadaḥī

From within the great big tree, she sang a high note

on the last foot of a line of verse, cooing [or: rhymed prose] bon mots

Whenever she cooed, her emotion swelling up,

I had the feeling she were singing for my cup

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318. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ*, ed. Sālim, vol. 2, pp. 441–46; ed. Ṣāliḥ, vol. 2, pp. 261–64; also with significant discrepancies in the autograph manuscript (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS Wetzstein II 150 [=Ahlwardt 8631], ff. 180b–82a. I have not had the opportunity to re-edit these in light of the MS, but hope to for future publication. Here I have compared the two editions by Sālim and Ṣāliḥ and given the rejected variants in the textual notes immediately below the text of the poem. cf. other reports of epigram-correspondence such as in al-Murādī, *Silk ad-durar*, vol. 1, p. 31, as well as non-epistolary circulation such as in Ibn Ḥajar, *Anbāʾ al-ghumr*, vol. 3, p. 145.

319. See in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 18, p. 486.

This is the text of the epigram exchange, followed by a translation:

ولمّا وقف على مقاطيع لي نظمتها في الحمامة وهي

[١] قولي: [من الخفيف]

ربّ ورقاءَ في ٱلديباجي تُنادي إلفَها في غُصونِها ٱلميّادهْ
فتُثيرُ ٱلهوى بلحنٍ عجيبٍ يشهَدُ ٱلسمعُ أنَّها عوَّادهْ
كُلَّما رَجَّعَتْ تَوَجَّعْتُ حَزْناً فكأنَّما في وَجْدِنا نَتَبادهْ

تنادي | في «سالم»: تناجي. فكأنّما | في «صالح»: فكأنّا.

[٢] وقولي أيضا: [من الوافر]

ورُبَّ حمامةٍ في ٱلدَّوْحِ باتَتْ تُجيدُ ٱلنَّوْحَ فَنّاً بَعْدَ فَنِّ
أُقاسِمُها ٱلهوى مهما ٱجتَمَعْنا فَمِنْها ٱلنَّوْحُ والعَبَراتُ مِنّي

[٣] وقولي أيضاً: [من الوافر]

ولَيْلَةَ نادَمَتْنِي ذاتُ طَوْقٍ تَميلُ بِها ٱلأراكةُ في ٱلتَّثَنِّي
فَتَصْدَحُ كُلَّما أمْسَكْتُ كأسي لَقَدْ باتَتْ عَلَى قَدَحي تُغَنِّي

[٤] وقولي أيضاً: [من الوافر]

مُطَوَّقَةٌ عَلَى غُصُنٍ مُخَضَّبَةٌ مِنَ ٱلفَرَحِ
لَها سَجْعٌ تُكَرِّرُهُ غَدا في ٱللَّهْوِ مُقْتَرَحِي
إذا أمْسَكْتُ كأسيَ في يَدي غَنَّتْ عَلَى قَدَحي

[٥] وقولي أيضاً: [من الخفيف]

لا تَقيسوا إلى ٱلحمامةِ حَزْناً إنَّ فَضلي تدري بِهِ ٱلعُشَّاقُ
أنا أُمْلِي ٱلغَرامَ عن ظَهرِ قلبٍ وَهْيَ تُملي وحَوْلَها ٱلأوراقُ

[٦] وقولي أيضاً: [من الكامل]

لا تَحْسَبي يا وُرْقُ أنَّكِ في ٱلهَوَى مِثلي فلَيْسَ يفوزُ إلّا مَنْ صَدَقْ
أمليتُ مِنْ قلبي ٱلغرامَ وأنتِ ما تُمليـنَ حَرفاً إنْ خَرَجْتِ عَنِ ٱلوَرَقْ

يفوز | في «صالح»: يفوق.

[٧] وقولي أيضاً: [من الوافر]

مُطَوَّقَةٌ عَلَى غُصْنٍ نَضيرٍ تَهيْجُ ليَ ٱلصَّبابةَ والهُياما
إذا ناحَتْ بَكَيْتُ وإنْ تَغَنَّتْ طَرِبْتُ لَقَدْ تَقارَضْنا ٱلغَراما

[٨] وقولي أيضاً: [من الوافر]

أَرَى وَرْقاءَ ذاتَ شَجاً وشَجْوٍ لَها هَتْفٌ غَدا سَبَباً لِهَتْكي
تقولُ أما خُلِقنا يا مُعَنَّى سِوَى أنّي أنوحُ وأنتَ تَبكي

[٩] وقولي أيضاً: [من الطويل]

أقولُ لِورْقاءِ ٱلحِمَى لا تَشَبَّهي بِوَجْدي فإنَّ ٱلفَرْقَ للنَّاسِ قدْ بانا
تَغَنَّيْتِ بينَ ٱلبانِ في ٱلدَّوْحِ فَرْحَةً ونُحْتُ أنا حَزْناً عَلَى غُصُنٍ بانا

كتب هو [اي ابن نباتة] إليّ مقاطيع نظمها نظير ذلك وهي قوله:

[١][320] [من البسيط]

ما لي نَديمٌ سِوَى وَرْقاءَ ساجِعةٍ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُغْتَبَقي فيكُمْ ومُصْطَبَحي
إذا أدارَ ٱلكارُ ٱلوَصْلِ لي قَدَحاً مِنْ أحْمَرِ ٱلدَّمْعِ غَنَّتْني عَلَى قَدَحي

[٢] وقوله: [من المنسرح]

ما لي نديمٌ سِوَى ٱلحَمائمِ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ والبُكا مِنَ ٱلتَّرَحِ
إذا أدارَ ٱلكارُكُمْ قَدَحاً مِنْ دَمْعِ عَيْنيَ غَنَّتْ عَلَى قَدَحي

320. Also recorded in al-Ghuzūlī, *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr*, vol. 1, p. 71.

[٣] وقوله: [من الكامل]

وحَـديـقـةٍ واصَـلْـتُ جِـلْـوَتَـهـا ... مـا بـيـنَ مُـغْـتَـبَـقٍ ومُـصْـطَـبَـحـي
فـإذا أَخَـذْتُ بِـظِـلِّـهـا قَـدَحـاً ... غَـنَّـتْ حَـمـائـمُـهـا عَـلَـى قَـدَحـي

[٤] وقوله: [من الرمل]

رُبَّ دَوْحٍ بـاكَـرَتْـهُ عَـزْمَـتـي ... ونَـديـمـي بَـعْـدَ أحْـبـابـي أذْكـارُ
فـإذا أَعْـمَـلْـتُ فـيـهِ قَـدَحـاً ... شَـبَّـبَ الـوَصْـفُ وغَـنَّـانـي الـهَـزارُ

[٥] وقوله: [من الكامل]

أَحْـسِـنْ بِـوادي الـجَـنـكِ تَـشْـدو وُرْقُـهُ ... فـي دَفِّ أشْـجـارٍ تَـمـيـلُ بِـعِـطْـفِـهـا
فـإذا تَـنـاوَلَ كـأْسَـهُ مُـتَـنَـزِّهٌ ... غَـنَّـتْ عـلـيـه بِـجَـنْـكِـهـا وبِـدُفِّـهـا

متنزّه | في «سالم»: منتزّه.

[٦] وقوله: [من البسيط]

وُرْقُ الـحَـمـامِ عَـلَـى أقـداحِ قَـهْـوَتِـنـا ... قَـدْ صُـوِّرَتْ فـاسْـتَـفَـزَّتْـنـا مِـنَ الـفَـرَحِ
إذا سَـرَتْ أَرَيْـحِـيَّـاتُ الـمُـدامِ بِـنـا ... كـادَتْ حَـقـيـقـاً تُـغَـنِّـيـنـا عَـلَـى الـقَـدَحِ

When he [Ibn Nubātah] came across [some] epigrams I'd composed on a dove, including:

[Poem 1]

In the dark of night, a dove calls
to her close friend on the swaying boughs.
Stirring feelings of love with a wondrous song,
and all ears swear she must be a lutist.
Every time she makes a trilling sound, I feel the pain of sadness
as if—in our love—we vie in extemporisation.

and also:

[Poem 2]

A dove in a great, big tree that excels
in cooing in one way after the other.
I share love with her whenever we meet;
hers is the wailing and mine are the tears.

and also:

[Poem 3]

A night when I was kept company by a collared dove,
the branches of the toothbrush-tree bent and brought her near
Everytime I reached for my wineglasss she cried out,
and spent [the evening] singing for my cup.[321]

and also:

[Poem 4]

A collared dove on a branch,
henna'd for a wedding feast.[322]
She has a coo she repeats again and again,
which I improvise upon in our amusements.
And whenever I take my goblet in hand,
she begins to sing for my cup.

and also:

[Poem 5]

Don't compare [my] sadness to the dove;
all the lovers know I'm pre-eminent.

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321. The tense used in this poem (four hemistichs) may confuse some readers. The first hemistich is in the past tense. Hemistichs two and three should be read as a *ḥāl*-clause and hemistich four resumes the initial past tense.

322. The henna in this case is likely a reference to the dove's reddish-brown colouration.

I dictate (*umlī*) love from mere memory, while the dove
dictates as the folios [or: leaves] surround her.

and also:

[Poem 6]

O grey doves, don't think you're like me
when it comes to love, for only the honest shall prosper.
I write about love from the heart, but you wouldn't
be able to fill a page [lit. a letter] if you ever left the foliage.

and also:

[Poem 7]

A collared-dove on a blossoming branch
she makes me swoon and incites me.
When she cries, I weep, and when she sings,
I'm impassioned. In love, we improvise poems for each other.[323]

and also:

[Poem 8]

I spy a dove who grieves and who mourns,
and her call has become the reason for my disgrace.
She says, 'Have we not been created,[324] O tormented one,
for me to wail and for you to weep?'

and also:

[Poem 9]

'Don't make similes out of my ardour', I tell the dove
of the sanctuary (*al-ḥimā*) 'for the difference is clear to all (*bānā*).

323. For the game of literary improvisation '*taqāruḍ*', see Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français*, s.r. '*q-r-ḍ*' (with thanks to Geert Jan van Gelder for this reference).

324. This could also be read as *khaluqnā* ('we are suited for').

'You sing euphorically from the lofty Ben-tree (*al-bān*) while
I wail for one [slender like] a branch who has left me (*bānā*).'

He [Ibn Nubātah] sent me some epigrams he'd written in response and among them were:

[Poem 1]

I have no boon-companion but for a cooing dove when, thinking of you,
I take a nightcap and a morning-draught.
If the recollection of unison were to pass me a glass,
of bloodshot tears, the doves would sing [perched] on my cup.

and also:

[Poem 2]

My only companions are the doves
now that you've left, and tears I spill from sorrow.
If the memory of you were to pass me a glass,
of my eyes' tears, the doves would sing [perched] on my cup.

and also:

[Poem 3]

A garden which I persisted in until it was unveiled [to me],
between my evening draught and my morning draught.
And when I took refreshment under its shade,
the doves all sang [perched] on my cup.

and also:

[Poem 4]

How many a branching tree did I greet steadfastly early in the morning
after my boon-companion and my loved ones had become a memory.
Then if I stopped for [under it] for a drink, ekphrasis flirted [or:

composed love poetry for me], and the nightingales sang for me.

and also:

[Poem 5]

How excellent that valley of harps: its doves sing sweetly
on the sides (*daff*) of trees, which lean to the side (*ʿiṭf*).[325]
And if a relaxed one should take his cup in hand
they sing for him with their cymbals and tambourines.

and also:

[Poem 6]

The doves on our wine goblets were
pictured [on our cups] and they provoked in us exultation.
As the joys of the wine swept us away,
the doves nearly became [real] and sang![326]

325. Compare the epigram by Ibn Nubātah recorded in al-Ghuzūlī, *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr*, vol. 1, pp. 71–2. The instruments *jank* and *daff* are often mentioned together (compare, Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, p. 333, l. 4).

326. The Arabic reads *ḥaqīq*^{an} (meaning, 'worthy, deserving'; 'fit, competent, entitled to' always with *bi-*). I have chosen to translate this as 'real', however, as the context seems to necessitate such a reading. The word *ḥaqīq* here may be read as analogous to the common words *ḥaqīqah*, *ḥaqq*, or *ḥaqq*^{an}.

This poetic exchange demonstrates the ways in which the scholarly class interacted culturally in the post-court era, and the place of poetry and belles-lettres in their social relationships. It also provides evidence for the epigram's (*maqṭūʿ*) acknowledged status as a distinct literary form with its own operational logic—its own grammar, as it were—and an awareness of the specific contexts in which it was most commonly found. Though the foregoing examples have all been clear indications of the existence and status of an Arabic epigram form, the epigram's habitat—the context it is generically associated with—is the anthology and it is in this context that the epigram is most clearly identifiable as a unique literary kind. Thus while the epigram in isolation, or the epigram in literary correspondence, is clearly a specific type of poetry, it is the epigram collection—the anthology—that gave rise—both historically and conceptually speaking—to the epigram genre. It is only in concert with others of its kind that the epigram emerges as an architext—as a larger, malleable literary category—that can be identified in different contexts outside the anthological context in which it is first introduced. This is, perhaps, a function of the history of pre-modern Arabic poetry, and it is not altogether unlikely that pre-modern Arabs suffered from a form of the 'fragmented logic' described above, though to a far lesser degree. The apposition of epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*) in a specific anthological context was key to the formation of the epigram genre's genre-consciousness and it was this—the epigram's firm rooting in the anthology as part of an aggregate—that, paradoxically, gave the individual epigram, or epigrammatic micro-set, the freedom to roam widely and to infiltrate every conceivable form of Arabic literary writing.

III. The Collected Epigram

While previous attempts at classification like those proffered by van Gelder, Bürgel, Schoeler, et al. have drawn important comparisons between Arabic epigrammatic poetry and the Hellenistic archetype—and indeed even the application of the term epigram to Arabic invective verse à la Martial has some value as a comparison—these schematic attempts have ignored the paramount issue of context. No previous scholarly analysis has made the crucial generic connection between the epigram and the anthology. Of course, epigrams can exist outside of anthologies; indeed in the examples provided above we see epigrams cropping up either as decontextualised individual poems or within epistolary exchanges. It would be reductive to assert that epigram is quintessentially only what is collected with other epigrams in a codex ($epigram_{book}$); a claim that can easily be disproved.[327] No, there is no dispute: epigrams exist everywhere outside of anthologies. Nevertheless this does not mean that their context is not an indivisible constituent factor in both their generic ontology and literary expression. The epigram is mobile and malleable and it was deployed by Arabic authors in a dizzying variety of textual genres, and yet its primary habitat is the epigram anthology. There is no need to be overly prescriptive on this point—or to pretend that it may not appear to be arbitrary at first glance—it is merely that the anthology, or epigram collection, is the place in which the Arabic epigram is revealed as a genre. Appreciating this versatility and the epigram's generic context is key to understanding its achievement and popularity.

Epigrammatic poetry—like all forms of Arabic light verse—was, as even the most cursory examination demonstrates, an extremely popular and prevalent literary art form throughout the pre-modern period, although it receives relatively little attention in scholarship. We struggle to appreciate epigrammatic poetry because we

327. It is not certain, but it is likely that the 'couplet' found among the trove of documents recovered from Quseir in Egypt is akin to the type of poem examined here, though without a contextual analysis there is very little we can conclude. (See Li Guo, *Commerce, Culture, and Community in a Red Sea Port in the thirteenth century*, p. 314, Text No. 84).

struggle to understand it and its context. Most scholarly discussions of pre-modern Arabic poetry focus on individual poems, or individual poets, etc. and they rarely address the substantive question of a poem's textual context, although ample attention is now being given to the historical context of a panegyric poem's composition and performance, for example.[328] Nevertheless it is unwise to attempt to understand the meaning of an epigram of two or three or four lines without appreciating the context in which it is presented—whether anthological, epistolary, etc.—and no less unwise to attempt to identify its generic qualities in the same way. This crucial factor, which has so far been absent from all previous discussions of Arabic epigrams is the epigram's *Sitz im Leben,* and it is the point to which we now turn our attention.

Let us consider, for example, a short epigram anthology by one the most famous anthologists in the Arabic tradition, Abū Manṣūr ath-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038).[329] His anthology, *Aḥsan mā samiʿtu* (*The Best I Ever Heard*), is an apparent abridgement of a larger collection entitled *Aḥāsin al-maḥāsin* (*The Best of the Best*), which is a compilation of prose and poetry.[330] The poems in the anthology *Aḥsan mā samiʿtu* are divided into twenty-two thematic chapters:

1. On God (*fī al-ilāhiyyāt*)
2. On the Prophet (*fī an-nabawiyyāt*)
3. On rulers (*fī al-mulūkiyyāt*)
4. On friends (*fī al-ikhwāniyyāt*)
5. On good comportment (*fī al-adabiyyāt*)
6. On wine (*fī al-khamriyyāt*)

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328. See e.g. B. Gruendler, '*Qaṣīda*. Its Reconstruction in Performance' in B. Gruendler (with M. Cooperson) (ed.), *Classical Arabic Humanities in their Own Terms*, Leiden: Brill, 2008, pp. 325–89, pp. 353–55; 371–73, and *idem, Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry*, S. P. Stetkevych, *Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy*, S. M. Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages*, Robert C. McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason: Ibn al-Rūmī and his Poetics in Context*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, and others.

329. The latest work on ath-Thaʿālibī's literary output is Bilal Orfali, 'The Art of the Anthology'.

330. Ath-Thaʿālibī, *Aḥsan mā samiʿtu*, ed. Muḥammad Sāḍiq ʿAnbar, Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Maḥmūdiyyah, n.d. [1925]. On the supposed abridgment, see Bilal Orfali, 'The Works of Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (350–429/961–1039)', *JAL*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2009, pp. 273–318, pp. 281–82; 305.

7. On spring and its signs (*fī ar-rabīʿ wa-āthārihi*)
8. On summer, autumn, and winter (*fī aṣ-ṣayf wa-l-kharīf wa-sh-shitāʾ*)
9. On celestial figures (*fī al-āthār al-ʿulwiyyah*)
10. On this world and fate (*fī ad-dunyā wa-d-dahr*)
11. On places and buildings (*fī al-amkinah wa-l-abniyah*)
12. On food (*fī aṭ-ṭaʿāmiyyāt*)
13. On women and courting (*fī an-nisāʾ wa-t-tashbīb*)
14. On love poetry for [male] youths (*fī al-ghazal* [*al-mudhakkar*][331])
15. On youth and going gray (*fī ash-shabāb wa-sh-shayb*)
16. Poems on virtues and panegyrics (*fī makārim al-akhlāq wa-fī al-madāʾiḥ*)
17. Poems of thanks, apology, supplication, asking for permission, etc. (*fī ash-shukr wa-l-ʿudhr wa-l-istimāḥah wa-l-istibāḥah wa-mā yajrī majrāhā*)
18. Poems on character faults and invective poems (*fī masāwiʾ al-akhlāq wa-l-ahājī*)
19. On illness, visiting the sick, and affiliated concerns (*fī al-amrāḍ wa-l-ʿiyādāt wa-mā yanḍāf ilayhā*)
20. On congratulations and exchanging gifts (*fī at-tahānī wa-t-tahādī*)
21. Poems of mourning and consolation (*fī al-marāthī wa-t-taʿāzī*)
22. Varied pieces in varied order (*fī funūn min al-aḥāsin mukhtalifat at-tartīb*)

When the poems are broken down in terms of length, the epigrammatic nature of the anthology becomes clear:

Total number of poems	535	
Total number of lines	1208	As a percentage of the total
Average length	2.26	
One-line poems	50	9.35%

331. The modifier '*al-mudhakkar*' is missing from the list of chapters in the introduction to the work, but is there in the chapter heading. Whether this reflects the state of the MS (or *editio princeps*) or is an oversight by the editor is unclear.

Two line poems	373	69.72%
Three-line poems	75	14.02%
Four-line poems	27	5.05%
Poems of five or more lines	10	1.87%
Poems of four lines or fewer	525	98.13%

Thus while ath-Thaʿālibī does not himself ever use the term *maqāṭīʿ* in any of his epigrammatic collections, we see that his anthological style—like that of his near contemporary as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ (d. 362/972–3)—was an influential predecessor of the epigram anthology genre that developed in the 13th–14th centuries.[332] Nor is it a coincidence that the epigram's status as a genre emerged alongside the production of epigram anthologies. The anthological context is the Arabic epigram's generic frame and so it comes as no surprise that it was within the context of epigram collections that the Arabic epigram was first generically codified, albeit never explicitly.[333]

In his examination of the genesis of Hellenistic epigram anthologies, Lorenzo Argentieri has distinguished three phases of epigram collection: 'Sintetizzando con una formula generale, possiamo dire che le raccolte epigrammatiche si dividono in tre tipi: la *silloge*, in cui si compila senza creare; il *libellus*, in cui si crea senza compilare; l'*anthologia*, in cui si compila per creare.'[334] While we cannot adopt this model wholesale for the case of epigram collections in Arabic, I believe this division can be a useful guide to the permutations of the genre. From very early on (i.e. the 9th century), epigrammatic poetry was gathered in rhetorical works (e.g. Ibn Abī ʿAwn's (d. 322/933) *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt* (*The Book of Comparisons*), Ibn al-Muʿtazz's (d. 296/908) *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*

332. See A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*'.

333. Alastair Fowler has identified 'Aggregation' as one of the processes by which genres are transformed (Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 171ff).

334. Lorenzo Argentieri, 'Epigramma e Libro', p. 2. ['To come up with a general formula, we can say that epigram collections are divisible into three types: the sylloge, in which [there is] compilation without creation; the booklet (libellus), in which [there is] creation without compilation; and the anthology, in which there is creation through compilation.'] On the composition of Hellenistic poetry books, see—in addition to the sources mentioned above—Peter Bing, *The Scroll and the Marble* and Kathryn J. Gutzwiller, 'Anyte's Epigram Book'.

(*The Book of Innovative [Style]*), the Brothers Khālidiyyān's *Kitāb al-Ashbāh wa-n-naẓāʾir* (*The Like and the Analogous*), etc.) and biographical collections (e.g. Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt ash-shuʿarāʾ* (*Biographical Dictionary of Poets*), and later ath-Thaʿālibī's *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, etc.) as parerga; that is in sylloges included within a larger work. In the history of Arabic epigram anthologies—*avant la lettre*—however, it was the multi-authored anthology ('anthologia') that preceded the solo 'booklet' ('libellus').

In works like *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb wa-l-mashmūm wa-l-mashrūb* (*Who Loves, Who is Loved, What is Smelled, and What is Drunk*) by as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *ash-Shihāb fī ash-shayb wa-sh-shabāb* (*The Shooting Star: on Youth and Gray Hair*) by ash-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 466/1044), *Aḥsan mā samiʿtu* by ath-Thaʿālibī, etc., the epigrammatic poetry also poetic extracts) of a great many poets—almost always including the anthologist himself—was collected in polythematic anthologies. These anthologies were primarily collections of epigrammatic poetry—not *qaṣāʾid* (sing. *qaṣīdah*)—though they precede the identification of a separate genre of epigrams (i.e., *maqāṭīʿ*) in the 14th century. In as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾs anthology, he uses the term *muqaṭṭaʿāt*, and while the difference—in epistemic terms—between earlier uses of terms like *qiṭaʿ* and *muqaṭṭaʿāt* and the emergence of a distinctive genre of *maqāṭīʿ* is salient and has been discussed above at length, there is no need to exaggerate the divergence here.[335] Even in the 14th century, Badr ad-

335. The term *muqaṭṭaʿāt* is also found in the printed edition of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* as well as in al-Khafājī, *Rayḥānat al-alibbāʾ wa-zahrat al-ḥayāh ad-dunyā*, vol. 2, p. 91; Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, vol 3; as-Sarī ar-Raffā, *al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb*, vol. 1, p. 5. See also e.g. in Ibn Jumayʿ, *at-Taṣrīḥ bi-l-maknūn fī tanqīḥ al-Qānūn* (Bodleian Library MS Marsh 390, f. 4a; Princeton University Library MS Garrett Collection 556H, f. 3a): '[...] *lam akun waqaftu lahu qaṭṭ ʿalā shayʾ siwā muqaṭṭaʿāt min ashʿār mansūbah ilayhi anshadahā qawm min ahl al-mashriq wa-hiya min aḥsan ash-shiʿr*' ['I never came across anything by him except for some *muqaṭṭaʿāt* of poetry attributed to him, which were recited by people from the Arab East, and they were most excellent indeed'].

In the autograph MS of Hindūshāh b. Sanjar al-Jayrānī's *Mawārid al-ādāb* (*The Wellsprings of the Literary Arts*), we find the remark: '*wa-rubbamā ūridu qiṭʿatan wa-l-gharaḍ minhu bayt aw baytān*' ['At times I quote a *qiṭʿah*, meaning here one or two verses'] (British Library MS ADD 23978, f. 4b, ll. 1–2).

There are also some numerical descriptive terms for poem length: *mathānī*, *mathālith* (see e.g. Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's anthology *Dīwān al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī fī al-maʿālī wa-l-maʿānī* and an-Nawājī, *Marātiʿ al-Ghizlān fī waṣf al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān*, MS Topkapı (Istanbul) MS 722, f. 2a, l.5; Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 343 *adab Taymūr*, f. 2b, l. 10); see also Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, p. 332, l. 13; *muʿashsharāt* (see e. g. al-Murādī, *Silk ad-durar*, vol. 1, p. 73; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat an-nabīh*, vol. 2, p. 270), as well as Ibn

Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb and other anthologists occasionally used the term *muqaṭṭaʿāt* to refer to poetry that their contemporaries were beginning to call *maqāṭīʿ*.[336] These all belong on a spectrum of epigrammatic poetry in Arabic even though I prefer to reserve the term 'epigram' for the *maqāṭīʿ* genre owing to its form, modal and thematic ambit, anthological context, and—especially—its genre-consciousness (as reflected in the list of examples appended to this chapter).[337] The reasoning behind this decision is not capricious—

Nubātah's collection (subsumed in his *Dīwān*) *as-Sabʿ as-sayyārah*. See also the anthology *al-Muqtaṭaf min azāhir al-ṭuraf* by Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī (ed. Sayyid Ḥanafī Ḥasanayn, Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Kitāb, 1983) with chapters on single lines (*al-abyāt al-mufradah*), two-liners (*al-abyāt al-muzdawajah*), three-liners (*al-abyāt al-muthallathah*) and so up to twelve-liners (*al-abyāt al-ithnā ʿashariyyah*) (with thanks to Geert Jan van Gelder for the preceding reference) and the 12th/18th-century anthology of ten-line poems called *al-Muʿashsharāt* by ʿAbd al-Ghanī an-Nābulusī (Ẓāhiriyyah Library (Damascus) MS 4393 described in ʿAzzah Ḥasan, *Fihris Makhṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub aẓ-Ẓāhiriyyah*. *ash-Shiʿr*, Damascus: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī, 1384/1964, pp. 378–79) and Abū Zayd ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Ghazzāzī al-Andalusī's collection titled *al-Qaṣāʾid al-ʿashrīniyyah fī an-naṣāʾiḥ ad-dīniyyah wa-l-ḥikam adh-dhahabiyyah* (University of Ibadan (Nigeria) MS [unseen]; see entry in aṭ-Ṭayyib ʿAbd ar-Raḥīm Muḥammad, *al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyyah fī Nijīriyā al-Ittiḥādiyyah*, edited and abridged by Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Jumʿah, Kuwait: Manshūrāt Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyyah, 1406/1985, p. 68). On the other hand, *mukhammas*, for example, does not mean a five-line poem, rather it is a form of emulation in which a poet adds a fifth line to a pre-existing poem divided into quatrains.

I have also seen numerical terms used in Ottoman Turkish poetry: in the *Dīvān* of Muṣṭafā Kamāl Ummī [Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Turk. d. 51, ff. 115b–116b] there is a series of a few epigrammatic poems at the end of the *dīwān*. These are presented under headings like *murabbaʿ*, *musaddas*, and *muthamman*, with the poems being of four, six, and eight hemistichs respectively. These poems are written two hemistichs to a line in the MS (as are *dūbayt* and *rubāʿī* poems usually). The poems also rhyme in a *dūbayt* or *rubāʿī* style (i.e. the first hemistich, and all subsequent even numbered hemistichs rhyme, while the odd numbered hemistichs do not, thus: A-A-X-A-Y-A-Z-A, etc.)

336. Ibn Ḥabīb—in his history *Tadhkirat an-nabīh*—records that when Ibn Nubātah came to Aleppo in the year 730/1329–30, Ibn Ḥabīb shared with him his *muqaṭṭaʿāt* (presumably his epigram collection, *ash-Shudhūr*) and then he gives the text of Ibn Nubātah's reaction (i.e. *taqrīẓ*, commendation), in which Ibn Nubātah uses the term *maqāṭīʿ* (Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat an-nabīh*, vol. 2, pp. 203–4. See also ibid., vol. 3, p. 139; Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!'"; and the list appended below, item no. 15). Elsewhere in his obituary for Ibn Nubātah, Ibn Ḥabīb writes, '*wa-akhrasa al-mawāṣīl bi-maqāṭīʿihi*' ['He made the flutes (also connected things) (*mawāṣīl*) silent with his disconnected things (*maqāṭīʿ*: i.e. epigrams)'] (*Tadhkirat an-nabīh*, vol. 3, p. 305; item 15 in the appended list). He also uses this term in his obituary for Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (see item 16 in the list appended below). See also, *inter alia*, al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, vol. 1, p. 206.

337. I am persuaded by Jacques Derrida's penetrative argument that generic normativity is very much a conceit: 'As soon as the word "genre" is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not far behind: "Do," "Do not" says "genre," the word "genre," the figure, the voice, or the law of genre. [...] If a

nor is it in any way meant to be obfuscatory—rather it has everything to do with the history of Arabic epigram collections and their development. As Ellen Rosand has explained in connection with the emergence of opera's genre-consciousness in 17th-century Venice:

> It was not until the middle of the seventeenth century, then, after more than a decade of vigorous operatic activity—more than thirty operas by some twenty librettists and ten composers, in five theaters—that Venetian librettists began to designate their works *dramma per musica* with any consistency [...]. Although it may seem like a matter of mere semantics, the terminological consensus thus reflected on the title pages of printed librettos actually represented a significant step in the history of the art. It was one of many indications that opera had aesthetically come of age, that it had achieved the status of a genre in its own right.[338]

The period of the Arabic epigram anthology proper begins in the 14th century with the publication of four solo-authored epigram collections. For the first time, these collections were identified as generic collections (see in the appended list, nos 2–12; 14–18). The first of these epigram collections was written by Jamāl ad-Dīn Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) around 1320.[339] *Al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī* (*Ibn Nubātah's Sweet Drops*) is a collection of more than two-hundred epigrams arranged into five thematic chapters.[340] This

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genre is what it is, or if it is supposed to be what it is destined to be by virtue of its *telos*, then "genres are not to be mixed"; one should not mix genres, one owes it to oneself not to get mixed up in mixing genres. Or more rigorously: genres should not intermix. And if it should happen that they do intermix, by accident or through transgression, by mistake or through a lapse, then this should confirm, since, after all, we are speaking of "mixing," the essential purity of their identity. This purity belongs to the typical axiom: it is a law of the law of genre, whether or not the law is, as one feels justified in saying, "natural."' (Jacques Derrida, 'The Law of Genre', trans. Avital Ronell, pp. 56–7.

338. E. Rosand, *Opera in seventeenth-century Venice. The Creation of a Genre*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007 [first published 1991], pp. 35–6.

339. Th. Bauer, 'Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī (686–768/1287–1366): Life and Works. Part I: The Life of Ibn Nubātah', *MSR*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1–35, p. 4.

340. This work has never been published—rumors of an edition by ʿUmar Mūsā Bāshā appear unfounded—but Thomas Bauer, the leading expert on Ibn Nubātah, is preparing an edition, which he

collection was followed some years later (c. 1326) by the epigram collection, known as *ash-Shudhūr* (*The Particles of Gold*), by a young litterateur named Badr ad-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 779/1377), who would go on to achieve lasting fame as a historian.[341] This collection of nearly four-hundred epigrams is divided into seven thematic chapters. The young Ibn Ḥabīb, who was only 17 or 18 when he wrote his collection, solicited two commendations (*taqārīẓ*) for his epigram collection from the leading poets of his day, Ibn Nubātah and Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. c. 750/1350), who authored the third of the four pioneering 14th-century epigram collections.[342] Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's *Dīwān al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī fī al-maʿālī wa-l-maʿānī* (*The Collection of Two-liners and Three-liners on Virtues and Literary Motifs*) is—as the title suggests—a collection of two- and three-line epigrams, written sometime between 1331 and 1341.[343] Al-Ḥillī divided his epigram collection 'quite precisely into twenty [thematic] chapters'.[344] Thomas Bauer points out that even in these collections the issue of length is somewhat flexible, though this flexibility is of a different order to that in previous periods:

> Während sich Ibn Ḥabīb und al-Ḥillī streng an die Zwei- und Dreizeiligkeit halten, erlaubt sich Ibn Nubāta sechs Vierzeiler und gar einen Sechszeiler. Bei allen überweigt jedoch der Zweizeiler deutlich, der bei al-Ḥillī ca. 80%, bei Ibn Nubāta 85% (229 Zweizeiler, 35 Dreizeiler,

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kindly shared with me. I have relied on this edition and four MSS for this study (See further in the Annotated Bibliography below).

341. See Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"'. The collection was completed before 730/1329, when Ibn Nubātah visited Aleppo (ibid., p. 18). Interestingly Ibn Ḥabīb describes his poems as *muqaṭṭaʿāt* (see Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat an-nabīh*, vol. 2, pp. 203; 216; 307), but cf. items 14 and 15 in the appended list.

342. These commendations have been edited in Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"'

343. Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"', p. 19. The text has been published in a poor and bowdlerised edition by editor Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Ḥimṣī (Damascus: Dār Saʿd ad-Dīn, 1998), based on Damascus Ẓāhiriyyah MS 3361. For the purposes of this study, however, I have used Paris Bibliothèque Nationale MS 3341. (See further in the Annotated Bibliography below).

344. Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"', p. 19: '[...] [A]l-Ḥillī seinen Epigrammdīwān sehr minutiös in zwanzig Kapitel einteilt (ähnlich wie seinen „großen" Dīwān) [...].' ['[...] al-Ḥillī organised his epigram anthology very precisely into twenty chapters (just like his larger *Dīwān*) [...]'].

> sieben sonstige), bei Ibn Ḥabīb gar 97% (360 Zweizeiler, zehn Dreizeiler) beträgt.[345]

Much of the preceding historical overview is taken from Thomas Bauer's excellent article '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"' but for some reason Bauer failed to include the fourth member of this 14th-century epigram quadrumvirate, Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363). Depending upon one's reckoning, Aṣ-Ṣafadī wrote a few or several epigram anthologies during his exceptionally prolific career. The two that he composed entirely of his own epigrams and which survive are his *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim wa-l-ʿarf an-nāsim* (*The Smiling Garden and the Wafting Fragrance*) and his *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ* (*Pure Beauty: On One Hundred Handsome Lads*).[346] Aṣ-Ṣafadī's *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ*, written between 1337 and 1338, is a collection of his own epigrams on a hundred types of male youth described according to their professions, trades, clothing, ethnicities, bodily defects, names, etc.[347] It follows in the tradition of ath-Thaʿālibī's lost *Kitāb al-ghilmān* and the work of Ibn ash-Sharīf Daftarkʷān (d. 655/1257), and parallels texts by Ibn al-Wardī, an-Nawājī, Taqī ad-Dīn al-Badrī, et al., and has been linked thematically to the *shahr-angīz* or *şehrengiz* tradition in Persian and Turkish literatures.[348] Aṣ-Ṣafadī's much larger and thematically diverse collection *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim wa-l-ʿarf an-nāsim* was written at some undetermined point in his career. The collection is made up of 444 poems divided over forty-six thematic chapters and

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345. Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"', p. 19. ['Whereas Ibn Ḥabīb and [Ṣafī ad-Dīn] al-Ḥillī strictly limited themselves to two-liners and three-liners only, Ibn Nubāta[h] allowed himself [to include] six four-liners and even one six-liner. Two-liners clearly predominate among all three of them, however: amounting to approximately 80% in al-Ḥillī's [anthology], 85% in Ibn Nubāta[h]'s [anthology] (229 two-liners, 35 three-liners, and seven others), and 97% in Ibn Ḥabīb's [anthology] (360 two-liners and ten three-liners).']

346. See e.g. in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal aṣ-ṣāfī*, vol. 5, p. 243; the other epigram collection mentioned there, *al-Mathānī wa-l-mathālith*, has not survived. See also aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ*, ed. Sālim, vol. 2, p. 170n, and *idem*, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 2, p. 365.

347. Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 348; see also the editor's introduction to aṣ-Ṣafadī's *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ*.

348. See A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', esp. pp. 605 and 614. Aṣ-Ṣafadī accused Ibn al-Wardī of plagiarising his collection (see Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 351).

while these poems are primarily epigrammatic, a few of them exceed the common upper-limit of four lines. In addition to these stand-alone collections of his own epigrams, aṣ-Ṣafadī included epigram anthologies as parerga in several of his literary treatises. In literary anthologies on subjects like birthmarks (*Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl*; *Revealing the Situation about Describing Beauty Marks*[349]), crescent moons (*Rashf az-zulāl fī waṣf al-hilāl*; *A Sip of Pure Water: Describing the Crescent Moon*), tears (*Ladhdhat as-samᶜ fī waṣf ad-damᶜ*[350]; *Pleasing the Ears by Describing the Tears*) etc., aṣ-Ṣafadī often appended collections of epigrams by a large number of poets.

These 14th-century solo-authored epigram collections were—like Argentieri's 'booklets' ('*libelli*')—arranged according to theme, just as epigram anthologies would come to be: 'Come già detto per i *libelli*, l'organizzazione avveniva per *temi* e non per *generi*.'[351] The initial sally of self-authored epigram anthologies was followed by a flood of multi-authored epigram anthologies, which were both mono- and poly-thematically arranged. Here again, the pattern Argentieri established for Hellenistic epigram collections mirrors the development of the Arabic genre: 'Con l'*anthologia* si compie un significativo passo in avanti con l'inclusione di molti autori; ma si tratta pur sempre di epigrammi.'[352] Setting aside forerunners like those mostly—though not entirely—epigrammatic anthologies by as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, et al., mentioned above, following the solo-authored epigram collections by Ibn Nubātah, Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī, Ibn Ḥabīb, and aṣ-Ṣafadī, the Arabic literary landscape was soon inundated with multi-authored epigram collections on a variety of topics. These occasionally appeared as part of a variety of longer texts (e.g. in al-Ibshīhī's *Mustaṭraf*, as-Suyūṭī's *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍarah* (*Excellent Conversation*), an-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab* (*'The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of*

349.Title as translated by E. K. Rowson in Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 342.

350. This text is also known as *Tashnīf as-samᶜ bi-insikāb ad-damᶜ* and it was under this title that it was printed in 1903 (see bibliography).

351. L. Argentieri, 'Epigramma e Libro', p. 17. ['As has already been said about booklets (libelli), the arrangement was made on the basis of themes, not genres.']

352. ibid., p. 19. ['The anthology [represents] a major step forward due to the inclusion of many authors, but it is still [made up] exclusively of epigrams.']

Erudition'),[353] al-Ghuzulī's *Maṭāliᶜ al-budūr* (*The Rising-Places of the Full Moons*), Ibn Iyās' *an-Nujūm az-zāhirah* (*The Shining Stars*),[354] etc.), but they were presented just as often as independent epigram anthologies in a variety of typical poetic modes: erotic, ekphrastic, satiric, riddling, etc. These collections—and, of course, the thematic and modal diversity of the epigram genre—allowed anthologists to demonstrate their curatorial skills in designing entertaining and edifying poetic collections. Alan Cameron has explained the logic of Hellenistic epigram collections in a similar way: 'Fifty or even a hundred epigrams will have made a very slim book, and too many by the same writer on the same sort of themes, however excellent in themselves, might become monotonous. The epigram was in fact destined by its very nature to be anthologized.'[355] The structure and composition of these anthologies and some of the ways in which their contents were strung together are discussed at length in Chapters Five and Six below. These collections also provided an apposite forum for the projection of a wide and contemporary literary community in the period during which—for the first time in the history of Arabic literature—the court was no longer the centre of poetic performance and poetry circulated primarily as a written artform (see Chapter Four below).

One of the most conspicuous examples of the Arabic epigram's existence—and its generic status—comes from the noted *ḥadīth*-scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), who divided his collection of poems (*Dīwān*) into seven thematic sections.[356] These seven sections are clearly determined generically—though some could be

353. This is Elias Muhanna's translation of the title of this work (see his forthcoming abridged translation of this text). On an embedded epigram collection in this most voluminous work, see chapter six below.

354. See e.g. in vol. 1, pt. 1.

355. Alan Cameron, *The Greek Anthology*, p. 4.

356. See *EI*[2], s.v. 'Ibn Ḥad̲jar al-Asḳalānī' [F. Rosenthal] for Ibn Ḥajar's biography and scholarly legacy, and on his poetry, see Thomas Bauer, 'Ibn Ḥajar and the Arabic *ghazal* of the Mamluk Age'. See also as-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-d-durar fī tarjamat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar*, esp. vol. 2, pp. 849–57 on his poetry. On heptadic division, see also Beatrice Gruendler, 'Ibn Abī Ḥajalah' in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 120.

grouped together formalistically—and Ibn Ḥajar even uses the term 'kind' (*nawᶜ*) to refer to these poetic types, which I class as genres.[357] The seven sections are as follows:

Chapter One: Poems for the Prophet (*nabawiyyāt*)

Chapter Two: Poems for kings (*mulūkiyyāt*)

Chapter Three: Poems for peers (*ikhwāniyyāt*)

Chapter Four: Erotic poems (*ghazaliyyāt*)

Chapter Five: Varied themes (*al-aghrāḍ al-mukhtalifah*)

Chapter Six: *Muwashshaḥāt*

Chapter Seven: Epigrams (*maqāṭīᶜ*)

Keeping with the motif of seven throughout the collection, each chapter but the last is made up of seven odes (*qaṣāʾid*) while the last chapter, the Epigram chapter, is made up of seventy epigrams, ten epigrams standing for one ode (*qaṣīdah*). Note, too, that only one of the seven chapters is organised on purely formalistic grounds (to wit, the chapter of *Muwashshaḥāt*), while in other chapters it is clear that the taxonomic logic is, in fact, thematic-generic. There is an element of form here—Ibn Ḥajar's epigram collection is notably stringent, containing only two-liners—but epigram length can vary somewhat and metre is never prescribed. In Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's epigram collection, the poems are all two or three lines in length as stipulated in the title: *Dīwān al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī fī al-maᶜālī wa-l-maᶜānī*. In the introduction to his collection *Kitāb Alf ghulām wa-ghulām* (*One Thousand and One Young Men*), Ibn ash-Sharīf Daftarkʷān (d. 655/1257) states that all the poems—he does not use the term *maqāṭīᶜ*—are three lines long.[358] Consider also the following information on poem length in a sample of epigram collections from the 14th–18th centuries:

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357. Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī, *Dīwān*, ed. Abū al-Faḍl, p. 1; *idem*, *Dīwān as-Sabᶜ as-sayyārah an-nayyirāt*, ed. Ayyūb, p. 78; *idem*, *Uns al-ḥujar fī abyāt Ibn Ḥajar*, ed. Abū ᶜAmr, p. 47: '*fa-katabtu fī hādhihi al-awrāq sabᶜat anwāᶜ min kull nawᶜ sabᶜat ashyāʾ illā al-akhīr minhu*' ['In these pages, I have composed in seven genres and in each genre [I have composed] seven items except in the last of these'].

358. Escorial MS árabe 461, f. 1b, last line (all but illegible).

1. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim wa-l-ʿarf an-nāsim:*[359]

Two-liners	349 (698 lines)	66% of total[360]
Three-liners	44 (132)	12%
Four-liners	36 (144)	14%
Five-liners	9 (45)	4%
Six-liners	2 (12)	1%
Seven-liners	2 (14)	1%
Eight-liner	1 (8)	0.75%
Ten-liner	1 (10)	0.9%

2. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl:*[361]

One-liners	4 (4 lines)	0.5% of total
Two-liners	320 (640)	80%
Three-liners	38 (114)	14.25%
Four-liners	8 (32)	4%
Five-liners	2 (10)	1.25%

3. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ:*[362]

Two-liners	210 (420 lines)	98% of total[363]
Three-liner	1 (3)	0.7%
Four-liner	1 (4)	0.9%

359. This breakdown is provided by the editor, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Majīd Lāshīn (aṣ-Ṣafadī, *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim*, p. 29).

360. The total does not quite add up to 100%—it is actually 99.65%—due to rounding.

361. This breakdown is based on the edition by al-ʿUqayl; see my review of this and two other editions in *MSR*, vol. 16, 2012, pp. 168–71.

362. This breakdown is based on the edition by Aḥmad Fawzī al-Hayb.

363. The total does not quite add up to 100%—it is actually 99.6%—due to rounding.

4. Ibn Nubātah, *al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī*:[364]

Two-liners	230 (460 lines)	78% of total
Three-liners	35 (105)	18%
Four-liners	5 (20)	3%
Six-liner	1 (6)	1%

5. Badr ad-Dīn b. Ḥabīb's epigram anthology (*ash-Shudhūr*):[365]

One-liner	1 (1 line)	0.1% of total[366]
Two-liners	360 (720)	96%
Three-liners	10 (30)	4%

6. an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl* (Surfaces of Beauty Marked with Descriptions of Beauty-Marks):[367]

One-liner	1 (1 line)	0.2% of total[368]
Two-liners	187 (374)	86%
Three-liners	10 (30)	7%
Four-liners	7 (28)	6%

364. This breakdown is based on Th. Bauer's edition in progress (on this edition, see below in the Annotated Bibliography).

365. This breakdown is based on Paris MS 3362, ff. 160b–204a.

366. The total does not quite add up to 100%—it is actually 100.1%—due to rounding.

367. This breakdown is based on the edition by Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī.

368. The total does not quite add up to 100%—it is actually 99.2%—due to rounding.

7. Pseudo-Thaʿālibī, *fī asmāʾ al-ghilmān al-ḥisān* ['On the names of handsome young men'] (c. 17th/18th-century):[369]

Two-liners	59 (118 lines)	84% of total
Three-liners	6 (18)	13%
Four-liner	1 (4)	3%

This statistical survey gives a bird's-eye view of the length of epigrammatic poetry and its distribution in the collections under examination. Further, it allows us to perceive a marked literary trend whose concatenation and terminological reification over a few centuries led to the advent of a new—and newly recognised—genre in Arabic poetry. For this—the epigram genre—the anthology is more than midwife; it is rather that first context in which the epigram found meaning as a literary type apart from its similars. The taxonomic ramifications that result automatically from the logic of collecting are unambiguous. These can be best seen when juxtaposed with other poetic forms and genres.

Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥijāzī al-Khazrajī (790/1388–875/1471), one of the literary lights of the 15th century (for more on this author, see Chapter Four below), wrote two brief, but important, collections of amatory epigrams, *Jannat al-wildān fī al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān* (*The Paradise of Youths: On Handsome Young Men*[370]) and *Kunnas al-jawārī fī al-ḥisān min al-jawārī* (*The Withdrawing Celestial Bodies: On Pretty Young Women*[371]), as well as a larger prosimetric anthology, *Rawḍ al-ādāb* (*The Garden of Literary Arts*), completed in 826/1423.[372] The latter anthology is divided, in the first instance,

369. Edited in A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', pp. 619–49.

370. The first phrase in the title, '*Jannat al-wildān*' ('*The Paradise of Youths*'), is an allusion to Quran 56:17 : '*yaṭūfu ʿalayhim wildānun mukhalladūn*' ('immortal youths going round about them', trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, p. 254).

371. The first phrase in the title, '*Kunnas al-jawārī*' ('*The Withdrawing Celestial Bodies*'), is an allusion to Quran 81:16: '*al-Jawāri l-kunnas*' ('the runners, the sinkers', trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, p. 326).

372. On the author, see Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān fī aʿyān al-aʿyān*, no. 42, pp. 63–77; *idem*, *Kitāb Ḥusn al-muḥāḍarah fī akhbār Miṣr wa-l-Qāhirah,* vol. 1, p. 275. On this rich, and still unpublished

into five parts based on form, and then further sub-divided along formalistic and thematic lines.

Part One: Long poems	الباب الأوّل في المطوّلات
Part Two: Zajal and Muwashshaḥ poetry	الباب الثاني في الازجال والموشّحات
Part Three: Epigrams	الباب الثالث في المقاطيع
Part Four: Prose pieces	الباب الرابع في النثريات
Part Five: Stories	الباب الخامس في الحكايات

The epigram collection (part three of the larger anthology) is further sub-divided into ten chapters, demonstrating the genre's accepted thematic promiscuity, and highlighting an ambivalent attitude toward strict formalistic classification criteria in the tradition. The themes in the epigram collection are greatly varied—far more than the narrow and paradigmatic definition of satiric epigram would admit—and range from the ekphrastic, satiric, erotic, and bacchic-cum-sympotic to the less commonly represented panegyric, riddling, obscene, invective, and elegiac.[373]

anthology, see in the Annotated Bibliography below.

373. Chapter headings are given, *inter alia*, in British Library MS 19489 [=Rieu 1105], f. 52b; 54a; 69a; 81b; 88b [scil. 87b]; 92a [scil. 91a]; 100b [scil. 99b]; 107a[scil. 106a]; 116b [scil. 115b]; 118b [scil. 117b]; 122a [scil. 121a]; and 123a [scil. 122a].

Chapter One: Panegyric	**الفصل الأوّل في المديح**
Chapter Two: On pretty male youths, with two sub-sections	
الفصل الثاني في الحسان من الغلمان وهو على قسمين	
Section One: On love and descriptions of beauty	
القسم الأوّل في الغزل ووصف المحاسن	
Section Two: On professions, trades, crafts, features, and names	
القسم الثاني في الوظائف والصنائع والحرف والأوصاف والاسماء	
Chapter Three: On pretty young women, with two sub-sections	
الفصل الثالث في الحسان من الجواري وهو على قسمين	
Section one: On love and descriptions of beauty	
القسم الأوّل في النسيب ووصف المحاسن	
Section two: On professions, trades, crafts, features, and names	
القسم الثاني في الوظائف والصنائع والحرف والأوصاف والاسماء	
Chapter Four: On love, tears, spectres, weeping, and long and short nights	
الفصل الرابع في الغزل المطلق والدمع والخيال والعبرة وطول الليل وقصره	
Chapter Five: On wine and cup-bearers, and everything related	
الفصل الخامس في الخمر والسقاة وما يناسب هذا الباب	
Chapter Six: On gardens, water, water-wheels, flowers, fruit, and everything related	
الفصل السادس في الرياض والمياه والنواعير والزهور والفواكه وما يناسب ذلك	
Chapter Seven: Riddles	**الفصل السابع في الألغاز**
Chapter Eight: Libertine epigrams	**الفصل الثامن في المجون**
Chapter Nine: Invective epigrams	**الفصل التاسع في الأهاجي**
Chapter Ten: Elegiac epigrams	**الفصل العاشر في المراثي**

Here, as in the collected poems of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, epigrams are first classified based on a loose formalistic criterion: length, which despite being a vague and subjective measure is clearly correlated across the tradition (see the tables summarising poem-length distribution in a sample of epigram anthologies above). Within this loose grouping, epigrams are then sub-divided along thematic lines, with the clear distinction that epigram (*maqṭūʿ*) is categorically different from other strict and acknowledged forms like the *muwashshaḥ*, etc. The Arabic epigram—not unlike the *qaṣīdah* and the *qiṭʿah*—acknowledges no strict formal requirements regarding its structure (like those applied to the strophic *muwashshaḥ* and *zajal*, or Persian *ghazal* and Ottoman *gazel*, etc.) nor any specific metrical strictures (like for *dūbayt*, *urjūzah*, and the like) It is clearly identified as a specific type of poetry—in Ibn Ḥajar's words, a *nawʿ*—but it is only by viewing it in its primary literary context that it becomes clear that the Arabic epigram is also no less than a genre.

Section Three

Epigrams in Parallax

Stephen pointed to a basket which a butcher's boy had slung inverted on his head.

—Look at that basket, he said.

[...]

In order to see that basket, said Stephen, your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be appprehended. [...] You see it as one whole. You apprehend its wholeness.

[...]

Then, said Stephen, you pass from point to point, led by its formal lines; you apprehend it as balanced part against part within its limits; you feel the rhythm of its structure. In other words, the synthesis of immediate perception is followed by the analysis of apprehension. Having first felt that it is *one* thing you feel now that it is a *thing*. You apprehend it as complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious.

[...]

When you have apprehended that basket as one thing and have then analysed it according to its form and apprehended it as a thing you make the only synthesis which is logically and esthetically permissible. You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing.[374]

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Genres are thus entities that can be described from two different viewpoints, that of empirical observation and that of abstract analysis.[375]

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Parallax. I never exactly understood. There's a priest. Could ask him. Par it's Greek: parallel, parallax. Met him pikehoses she called it till I told her about the transmigration. O rocks!

Mr Bloom smiled [...] She's right after all. Only big words for ordinary things on account of the sound.[376]

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374. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. J. P. Riquelme, New York, London: W. W. Norton & co., 2007, pp. 186–87.

375. Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trans. Catherine Porter, p. 17; French original: *idem*, *Les genres du discours*, p. 49: 'Les genres sont donc des unités qu'on peut décrire de deux points de vue différents, celui de l'observation empirique et celui de l'analyse abstraite.'

376. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, [1960 reset ed.], London: Penguin Classics, 2000, p. 194.

Conventional histories of pre-modern Arabic poetry have been reluctant to recognise—or else have simply failed to delineate—the genre of Arabic epigram. Even more frustratingly, however, they have confined themselves almost exclusively to evidence from the early period of Arabic literary history, and when, on rare occasions, they have ventured into later periods, they have subsumed that literary evidence to a historically undifferentiated and uncritical paradigm. They have also overlooked the epigram's implicit generic status, although it emerged unmistakably in the 14th century. Nonetheless, one positive thing about the circumstances of Arabic literary history is that so many epigram collections have survived in their original format. Thus the contours of a specific and widespread genre are clear for researchers to see. Arabists do not need to try to piece together their original composition; a project that is, in contrast, one of Kathryn Gutzwiller's chief goals in writing the history of Hellenistic epigram collections. The epigram form itself is not especially remarkable; after all no didactic or explicit definition of its formal or thematic dimensions has been uncovered and pre-modern Arabic verse brims with oodles of two-liners, three-liners, four-liners, etc. from throughout its long history. The epigram is transformed, however, from among its formalistically similar peers by a process of contextualisation and generic recognition. It is the anthology (i.e. the epigram collection) and, to a lesser extent, taxonomic classification (i.e. the use of the term *maqāṭīʿ* and its variants) that recasts epigrammatic poetry as epigram. This process reflects the very nature of genre itself and it is in no way paradoxical to say that the category of epigram is, by its nature, deictic. The genre's contextual dependency is a historical fact just as its generic recognition, inception, and growth are themselves attestable historical facts. Attempts to recover the archaeological legacy of a genre depend entirely on context—on the genre *in situ,* as it were—and for Arabic, unlike the Hellenistic tradition, we are fortunate that most of the collected epigram material has survived in a recognisable state. Despite this material advantage, however, Gutzwiller's interpretation of literary preservation holds true for the Arabic evidence as well as the Hellenistic Greek:

> When an author or editor transfers an epigram from its site of

> inscription to a papyrus roll, it is signaled by a cultural convention that a more literary form of interpretation is now expected of the reader. The poem is no longer an 'epigram' in the original sense of an inscription but a representation of such an 'epigram.' The monument adorned by the epigram is no longer visually present, but like the banqueting hall as the site of the sympotic epigram, must now be reconstructed in the reader's imagination.[377]

The particular epigraphic context Gutzwiller is describing is not exactly the same as the conceptual dynamic behind the Arabic epigram, of course, but it is certainly analogous. We, students of the Arabic tradition, are plagued by similar problems of etymology, conceit, and context. For Classicists, the term epigram confuses with its air of inscription, while for the Arabist it is the implied extraction and fragmentation associated with the term *maqāṭīʿ* (as well as *qiṭʿah*) that induces a profound uncertainty regarding the ontological status of Arabic epigrammatic poetry. We must, like Classicists, keep etymological interference at bay, although it inheres within the term itself, and reiterate—for ourselves as well as for our audience—that any etymological valence—indeed any such extra-poetic, didactic conceptualisation—must always remain peripheral to a discernible pattern of being. This conscious vigilance, this insistence on maintaining a simultaneous etymological and ontological awareness is akin, I would argue, to the idea of parallax as put forward by Slavoj Žižek, among others.[378]

> The standard definition of parallax is: the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight. The philosophical twist to be added, of course, is that the observed difference is not simply 'subjective,' due to the fact that the same object

377. Kathryn J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, p. 7.

378. Žižek draws the concept of parallax from Kojin Karatani's *Transcritique: on Kant and Marx*, trans. Sabu Kohso, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003 (see his review in *New Left Review*, vol. 25, January–February 2004, pp. 121–34).

> which exists 'out there' is seen from two different stances, or points of view. It is rather that, as Hegel would have put it, subject and object are inherently 'mediated,' so that an 'epistemological' shift in the subject's point of view always reflects an 'ontological' shift in the object itself.[379]

Thus while we allow that perception is itself noetic, even under the influence of parallax, an awareness of our perception and its constant displacement requires us to reason discursively; it is dianoetic. Therefore an epigram is not an epigram until we name it, or recognise it, as such in an epiphanic moment. This is not simply due to the fact that this study has relied on an originally Greek term in a discussion Arabic literary history: one need think only of Gutzwiller's insight that epigram$_{book}$ served at first as a representation of the putative antecedent, epigram$_{inscription}$. Here we must fall back on what Roman Jakobson called the metalingual function of language. This analysis has not posited such a thing as a world literary category known as epigram *a priori* and then proceeded to trawl the archive of pre-modern Arabic poetry looking for an equivalent. Rather in this case—just as in Julia Kristeva's model of intertextuality—one semiotic system (e.g. epigram, anthology, etc.) is transposed on to another, 'demand[ing] a new articulation of the thetic—of enunciative and denotative positionality.' This realisation, in turn, compels us to recognise that '[i]f one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), then one understands that its "place" of enunciation and its denoted

379. Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, p. 17.

"object" are never single, complete, and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated.'[380] Our analytical perspective is itself a conceit.[381]

Despite the long history of Arabic epigrammatic poetry, it has never been clearly defined and terms like *qiṭʿah* and *maqāṭīʿ* bear etymological connotations, which in the light of the atomism controversy, strike the researcher as unnerving. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the term epigram itself—in its original Hellenistic formulation and all subsequent European and global re-formulations from Martial to the present day—is an unstable and uncertain term that has been used, often idiosyncratically, to

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380. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller, pp. 59–60. In the original: 'Le terme d'*inter-textualité* désigne cette transposition d'un (ou de plusieurs) système(s) de signes en un autre; mais puisque ce terme a été souvent entendu dans le sens banal de «critique des sources» d'un texte, nous lui préférons celui de *transposition*, qui a l'avantage de préciser que le passage d'un système signifiant à un autre exige une nouvelle articulation du thétique—de la positionnalité énonciative et dénotative. Si on admet que toute pratique signifiante est un champ de transpositions de divers systèmes signifiants (une inter-textualité), on comprend que son «lieu» d'énonciation et son «objet» dénoté ne sont jamais uniques, pleins et identiques à eux-mêmes, mais toujours pluriels, éclatés, susceptibles de modèles tabulaires. La polysémie apparaît donc aussi comme le résultat d'une polyvalence sémiotique, d'une appartenance à divers systèmes sémiotiques.' (Julia Kristeva, *La Révolution du langage poétique*, pp. 59–60).

381. Frederic Jameson, reviewing Žižek's *The Parallax View*, in the *London Review of Books* (vol. 28, no. 17, 7 September 2006, pp. 7–8), argues that '[c]learly, the parallax position is an anti-philosophical one, for it not only eludes philosophical systemisation, but takes as its central thesis the latter's impossibility. What we have here is theory, rather than philosophy: and its elaboration is itself parallaxical. It knows no master code [...] and no definitive formulation; but must be rearticulated in the local terms of all the figurations into which it can be extrapolated [...]'. Jameson makes the point that 'I would only want to wonder whether there are not more complex forms of the parallax situation which posit more than two alternatives (on the order of subject and object), but which rather confront us with multiple, yet equally indispensable codes.' One can well accept this point both philosophically as well as practically. Similarly, his final—and fundamental—caveat seems rather to underscore Žižek's argument than nullify it:

> Yet theory was always itself 'grounded' on a fundamental (and insoluble) dilemma: namely, that the provisional terms in which it does its work inevitably over time get 'thematised' (to use Paul de Man's expression); they get reified (and even commodified, if I may say so), and eventually turn into systems in their own right. The self-consuming movement of the theoretical process gets slowed down and arrested, its provisional words turn into names and thence into concepts, the anti-philosophy becomes a philosophy in its own right. My occasional fear is, then, that by theorising and conceptualising the impossibilities designated by the parallax view, Žižek may turn out to have produced a new concept and a new theory after all, simply by naming what it is probably better not to call the unnameable.

describe a variety of poetic and prosaic texts. In some ways, it is a floating signifier. Thus, of course, Arabic *maqāṭīʿ* are epigrams only insofar as they are presented as such, for neither they nor epigram as a general category exist ontologically except through description, or epistemological observation.[382] Arabic epigram is a historical genre—not a metaphysical one, like drama, epic, lyric, etc.—and accords with the provisional definition set out by David Fishelov, who defines genre as

> [...] *a combination of prototypical, representative members, and a flexible set of constitutive rules that apply to some levels of literary texts, to some individual writers, usually to more than one literary period, and to more than one language and culture*.[383]

The identification of genre—whether in the course of hermeneutic, literary-historical, or world comparative analyses—is of course nothing more than the imposition of a subjective, epistemological logic on to an illusory, putative ontology. That is not to say, however, that it is, therefore, illegitimate or ill-advised. To the contrary, as Thomas Pavel has argued:

> Genre is a crucial interpretive tool because it is a crucial artistic tool in the first place. Literary texts are neither natural phenomena subject to scientific dissection, nor miracles performed by gods and thus worthy of worship, but fruits of human talent and labor. To understand them, we need to appreciate the efforts that went into their production. Genre helps us figure out the nature of a literary work because the person who wrote it and the culture for which that person labored used genre as a guideline for literary creation.[384]

Genre is irreplaceable as an analytical tool—Pavel argues—because it is always present at the point of literary creation. Nevertheless, we must not accept prescriptive defini-

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382. See Thomas O. Beebee's *The Ideology of Genre: a comparative study of generic instability* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

383. D. Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, p. 8 [italics original].

384. ibid., p. 202.

tions of genre, no matter who has produced them, and we must be skeptical of even our own interpretive rubrics:

> [...] [N]o general principle, be it dogmatic, nominalist, or skeptical, can replace detailed attention to the interplay between abstract categories and the originality of their instantiation. With all their instability, generic notions are irreplaceable.[385]

Pavel believes that it is most appropriate to view genre as a form of 'good habits of the trade', though his conception of genre does not seem to make room for the 'historicization of genre poetics' advocated by Hans Robert Jauß.[386] Jauß argued that 'The theory of literary genres is at the point of seeking a path between the Scylla of nominalist skepticism that allows for only aposteriori classifications, and the Charybdis of regression into timeless typologies, a path along which the historicization of genre poetics and of the concept of form are upheld.'[387]

Jauß—drawing on Kant's insight that '[...] the modality of a judgment of taste cannot be the "necessary consequence of an objective law," but rather can be called "merely exemplary", because it necessarily "demands the consent of all to one judgment [...]"'—argued that '[...] the category of the exemplary does away with the schema of rule-and-instance and makes possible a processlike determination of the concept of genre in the aesthetic realm.'[388] For Jauß, this 'processlike determination' is crucial for escaping the twin perils of 'nominalist skepticism' and 'timeless typologies': 'Such a determination no longer applies the generality of literary genres normatively (*ante*

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385. T. Pavel, 'Literary Genres as Norms and Good Habits', *New Literary History*, vol. 34, no. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 201–10, p. 202.

386. ibid., p. 210.

387. H. R. Jauß, 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature, in H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 78; *idem*, 'Theorie der Gattungen und Literatur des Mittelalters', p. 109: 'Die Theorie der literarischen Gattungen ist dabei, sich zwischen der Scylla der nominalistischen, nur Klassifikationen a posteriori zulassenden Skepsis und der Charybdis des Rückzugs in zeitlose Typologien einen Weg zu suchen, der dort wieder einsetzen kann, wo die Historisierung der Gattungspoetik und des Formbegriffs innehielt.'

388. H. R. Jauß, 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature', p. 80; *idem*, 'Theorie der Gattungen und Literatur des Mittelalters', p. 111.

rem) or in a classificatory manner (*post rem*), but rather historically (*in re*), that is, in a "continuity in which each earlier event furthers and supplements itself through the later one" [...]."[389] Jauß' perceptive argument is especially useful for understanding the relationship between the Arabic epigram (*maqāṭīʿ*) and the wider, and older, category of *qiṭʿah* poetry.[390] It is clear that the history of the *maqāṭīʿ* genre will be as relevant for the still ambiguous history of the *qiṭʿah* form as the survey of the latter presented above has been for the determination of the former.

Keeping with the Kantian flavour, Slavoj Žižek's views on parallax are a useful model for understanding the concept of literary genre, or rather the epistemological background to a concept like literary genre. Žižek borrows Kant's notion of the transcendental illusion to demonstrate how critical the generally unremarked upon condition of parallax is to human reasoning.

[...] [P]utting two incompatible phenomena on the same level, is strictly

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389. H. R. Jauß, 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature', p. 80; *idem*, 'Theorie der Gattungen und Literatur des Mittelalters', p. 111.

390. 'The last step in a theory of literary genres can proceed from the fact that a literary genre exists for itself alone as little as does an individual work of art. This fact is less self-evident than it may at first appear, if one retains an image of how genres commonly appear in literary histories; they are seen as a sequence of generic developments, closed within themselves, that for the most part are held together only through the outer framework of some general characteristics of the period. But the basic principle of a historicization of the concept of form demands not only that one relinquish the substantialist notion of a constant number of unchangeable essential characteristics for the individual genres. It also demands that one dismantle the correlative notion of a sequence of literary genres closed within themselves, encapsulated from one another, and inquire into the reciprocal relations that make up the literary system of a given historical moment.' (H. R. Jauß, 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature', p. 105. [H. R. Jauß, 'Theorie der Gattungen und Literatur des Mittelalters', p. 134: 'Der letzte Schritt einer Theorie der literarischen Gattungen kann von der Feststellung ausgehen, daß eine literarische Gattung so wenig wie ein einzelnes Kunstwerk für sich allein existiert. Diese Feststellung ist weniger selbstverständlich als es zunächst scheinen mag, wenn man sich vor Augen hält, wie Gattungen gemeinhin in Literaturgeschichten erscheinen, nämlich als ein Nebeneinander in sich abgeschlossener Gattungsentwicklungen, die zumeist nur durch den äußeren Rahmen einer allgemeinen Charakteristik der Epoche zusammengehalten werden. Der Grundsatz einer Historisierung des Formbegriffs erfordert aber nicht allein, für die einzelne Gattung dis substantialistische Vorstellung einer konstanten Zahl unveränderlicher Wesensmerkmale aufzugeben. Er erfordert auch, die korrelate Vorstellung eines Nebeneinanders von in sich abgeschlossenen und gegeneinander abgekapselten literarischen Gattungen abzubauen und nach wechselseitigen Beziehungen zu fragen, die das System der Literatur im gegebenen historischen Augenblick ausmachen.']

> analogous to what Kant called 'transcendental illusion,' the illusion of being able to use the same language for phenomena which are mutually untranslatable and can be grasped only in a kind of parallax view, constantly shifting perspective between two points between which no synthesis or mediation is possible. Thus there is no rapport between the two levels, no shared space—although they are closely connected, even identical in a way, they are, as it were, on the opposed sides of a Moebius strip.[391]

Genre is thus in a way itself precisely this kind of 'transcendental illusion', though it is undoubtedly a very useful device for the purposes of literary history and classification.[392] And as it can only exist through a dynamic and dialectical examination it is, therefore, incumbent upon us to detail the parallactic relationship by which we come to discern generic parameters.[393] Epigram is—continuing with the Kantian idiom—a

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391. Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, p. 4.

392. Rosalie Colie has eloquently discussed the fuzzy pre-modern background to these reified debates: 'I am saying, I think, that in this long period, the Renaissance, the literary theory that underlies all other is *not* really expressed in its rich and varied criticism: namely, that a literary kind stands for a kind of subject, a kind of content, literary and intellectual; and also that some references to a subject or content may be taken as metaphors for a whole kind. I am not now talking about a rigid system of genres—which, really, never existed in practice and barely even in theory—by which each subject defined separately commands its and only its assigned form. [...] I am talking rather about a body of almost unexpressed assumptions, many of them versions of classical theory or practice, which took for granted certain basic rules of expression. A language of kind, made up, like the Greek and Roman pantheons, of different categories of kind—a language full of idioms. But as in language, it is the idioms which we must learn in order not to be caught out.

'[...] I am trying to express something of the *social* force and function of the kinds, as abbreviations for a "set" on the world, as definitions of manageable boundaries, some large, some small, in which material can be treated and considered. Social too in the sense that, these sets and boundaries understood, a great deal need *not* be said about them [...]. Since whatever generic definitions a writer or a culture espouses, examples willy-nilly accumulate in generic categories, the kinds can easily be seen as tiny subcultures with their own habits, habitats, and structures of ideas as well as their own forms.' (R. L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind*, pp. 114–16.)

393. From the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (s.v. 'Kant's Critique of Metaphysics, [Michelle Grier]): 'Kant identifies transcendental illusion with the propensity to "take a subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts...for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves"'; and cf. M. Grier, *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

phenomenon, not a noumenon. Not even the Greek ur-epigram can be said ever to have been a noumenon, as we have seen, for it was already from the onset of its explicit identification at a remove; it was epigram$_{book}$: an acknowledged derivative of epigram$_{inscription}$. Peter Bing and Jon Steffen Bruss have remarked that:

> Even today the aesthetic experience of aficionados, students, and scholars of Greek epigram, literary and inscribed alike, bears striking resemblance to that of the earliest readers of epigram-collections in all but the rarest situations: whether originally designed for the book or not, epigrams come to us prearranged in published collections. The physical context of both literary and inscribed epigram is divorced from its 'original' setting (fictive or real), and readers are automatically implicated in an elaborate *Ergänzungsspiel*, aided by the technical, archeological, epigraphical, and text-critical tools supplied by editors.[394]

It is not simply that the contexts between these forms differed; that the epigraphic epigram existed only in monumental inscriptions while the literary epigram circulated, either through performance or on papyrus. That is clearly one—the concrete—side of the dialectic, but against this, one has only to consider the votive and funereal conceit in literary epigrams to see that the literary epigram was already generically predicated on its putative antecedent. This is a phenomenological process in which the identifcation of a specific literary kind depends upon an awareness of its specific context and the larger context on which it draws.[395] As Yury Tynyanov has explained:

> It is impossible to conceive of genre as a static system for the reason that genre-consciousness itself arises as a result of a confrontation with a traditonal genre (i.e. as a result of a sense that the traditional genre has been supplanted, even partially, by a 'new' one occupying its place). The point is that the new phenomenon *supplants* the old one, occupies its place, and, without being a 'development' of the old, is at the same

394. P. Bing and J. S. Bruss, 'Introduction to the Study of the Hellenistic Epigram', p. 17.

395. cf. Geoffrey H. Hartman, 'Toward Literary History' in G. H. Hartman, *Beyond Formalism*.

time its substitute.[396]

Thus the epigram on papyrus or in a collection is made an epigram both by the epigrams around it as well as the epigram-conceit under whose auspices it it is written and read.[397]

Many scholars get quite exercised about whether or not a particular short poem in Arabic is derived or extracted from a longer poem. For them it is the first instantiation of a poem that deserves special ontic status and all other manifestations are but subsidiary anamneses of the original poem.[398] It would be trite to say that this attitude distorts the reality of the literary historical picture, in fact, it does far worse: it renders context—whether textual, historical, performance, etc.—irrelevant. In this analysis of the Arabic epigram, however, context trumps all. Kathryn Gutzwiller has explained that context often supercedes formalistic factors: 'Epigram became virtually indistinguishable from shorter elegy or extracts from longer elegy not only because both were now performed but also because both were now encountered by readers in books.'[399] This is precisely the dialectic of genre at work. Here epigram is not simply recognisable as an independent, autonomous entity (e.g. 'Ding an sich'), but as a phenomenon whose identification depends on parallactic examination. In the case of the Arabic epigram, it is true that poems that look and sound quite similar to soi-disant *maqāṭīʿ* existed for centuries; moreover, it is also true that some of these poems were re-cast as *maqāṭīʿ* long after the fact, being stripped of their original historical context in the process. And yet this did not matter to Arabic anthologists or their readers. The anthologists who transformed older poems into epigrams by collecting them into anthologies alongside other epigrams were not altering the poems themselves, they were simply re-assigning them. For them, the term epigram is—like Heidegger's hammer—a tool, ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*), and it is this crucial fact of perspective that

396. Y. Tynyanov, 'The Literary Fact', trans. Ann Shukman in David Duff (ed.), *Modern Genre Theory*, pp. 29–49, p. 32.

397. On the family resemblance analogy, see David Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, pp. 53–83.

398. On this topic, see James Montgomery's *The Vagaries of the Qasidah*.

399. Kathryn J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands*, p. 5.

may best explain the absence of any theoretical discussion of the *maqāṭīʿ* form.[400] The anthologists were not too obtuse to theorise, they were too adept to need to. A poem that once existed in a particular context could simply be repurposed to perform the assignment of being an epigram, even though it may have been written in its original form before any such concept ever existed. The conception of the Arabic epigram that is being put forward here is the epigram as a synthetic proposition. Previous scholarly investigations of the subject have been uniformly analytic, and at times uncritical. They have applied *a priori* Eurocentric definitions of a particularly narrow and anachronistic flavor to a historically and culturally independent context in which any potential commensurability is predicated on an unequal and unilateral relationship. John Frow has explained that:

> An epistemological relativism of this kind is the very opposite of that 'scientific' detachment which results from the certainties of discursive mastery; on the contrary, it should make possible a process of political judgment of the knowledge effects produced, and therefore an avoidance of both a sterile historical cataloguing and an obliteration of the dynamics of textual activity in a sociologistic reduction.[401]

This study does not argue for narrow contextualism but rather for the study of epigram within its particular discursive system. At the same time, this study has presented evidence of a self-classified *maqāṭīʿ* genre in the pre-modern Arabic tradition and detailed its formalistic, contextual, and literary contours *a posteriori*.[402] This is the

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400. Abdelfattah Kilito has engaged the problem of genre and generic association in the Arabic literary tradition quite profitably and while I am convinced by his argument, I would argue that Kilito generally elides the distinction between *genre* and *mode*. That mode is a highly relevant factor in the production and reception of genres in pre-modern Arabic literature is clear—and Kilito's work is highly effectual in bringing this out—but it is separate from the generic argument being explored here (See, for example, A. Kilito, *The Author and His Doubles*, trans. Michael Cooperson, esp. pp. 60–66). cf. the approach to mode and genre in Claudio Guillén's *Literature as System: essays toward the theory of literary history* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).

401. John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*, p. 124.

402. Though the parameters of this study have been determined by the evidential circumstances of the Arabic literary tradition, I believe this effort follows the spirit of the project outlined by Hans Robert

foremost contribution of this study, which also attempts to survey historical understandings of the world-literary genre known as epigram, to ascertain the determinants of this genre, to link its ontological orientation to the context of anthologies, and to demonstrate the parallels between this originally Hellenistic paradigm and a hitherto neglected phenomenon in Arabic literary history.[403]

Jauß, who famously argued for a reception-oriented approach to literary history: 'Denn Qualität und Rang eines literarischen Werks ergeben sich weder aus seinen biographischen oder historischen Entstehungsbedingungen noch allein aus seiner Stelle im Folgeverhältnis der Gattungsentwicklung, sondern aus den schwerer faßbaren Kriterien von Wirkung, Rezeption und Nachruhm.' (H. R. Jauß, 'Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft' in H. R. Jauß, *Literatur als Provokation*, p. 147).

403. This resemblance I find particularly cheering in light of the long history of disreputable commentary on the divergence of Hellenistic and Semitic 'races' or cultures (See, for example, the discussion in Geoffrey H. Hartman, 'Toward Literary History' in G. H. Hartman, *Beyond Formalism*, p. 382ff).

Section Four

Corpus of Further Evidence

1. Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ az-zamān*:

a. biographical notice on Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr b. ʿAskar al-Mawṣilī (d. 610/1213) whose son Ibn Khallikān met in Aleppo:[404]

«ذكره ابو البركات ابن المستوفي [...] وأورد له مقاطيع عديدة»[405]

'Abū al-Barakāt ibn al-Mustawfī mentioned him [...] and cited numerous epigrams by him'

b. biographical notice on Ibrāhīm al-Ghazzī (d. 524/1129) [also cited in Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 1089/1679), *Shadharāt adh-dhahab*, vol. 4, pp. 67–8], citing Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176) from his *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* in a biographical notice on Ibrāhīm al-Ghazzī (d. 524/1129):[406]

«[...] وانتشر شعره هناك وذكر له عدّة مقاطيع من الشعر»

'[...] his poetry spread throughout that area and several epigrams by him were recorded'

c. biographical notice on Ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 345/956 [or 315/927[407]]):[408]

«وذكره أبو منصور الثعالبي في كتاب «اليتيمة» وذكر له مقاطيع»

'Abū Manṣūr ath-Thaʿālibī mentioned him and epigrams by him in his book *Yatīmat ad-dahr*'

d. biographical notice on Usāmah b. Munqidh (d. 584/1188):[409]

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404. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 1, p. 38.

405. NB: In the edition of Ibn al-Mustawfī's *Tārīkh Irbil* (ed. aṣ-Ṣaqqār, Baghdad, 1980), Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr is not given an entry of his own, but is mentioned in the entry on his son Ismāʿīl; the word *maqāṭīʿ* is not used here.

406. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 1, p. 58. NB: Ibn ʿAsākir does not use the term *maqāṭīʿ* in his entry on Ibrāhīm [b. ʿUthmān b. Muḥammad] al-Ghazzī in *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* (vol. 7, pp. 51–4).

407. See in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 2, p. 211.

408. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 1, p. 129.

409. ibid., p. 196.

«وأورد له مقاطيع من شعره»

'and he cited some epigrams by him'

e. biographical notice on al-Asʿad b. Mammātī (d. 606/1209):

«وله ديوان شعر رأيته بخطّ ولده ونقلت منه مقاطيع»[410]

'He has a collection (*dīwān*) of poetry, which I saw in his son's handwriting, and I copied out some epigrams from it'

«وذكره العماد الاصبهاني في كتاب «الخريدة» وأورد له عدّة مقاطيع»[411]

'ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣbahānī mentioned him in his book *Kharīdat al-qaṣr* and cited several epigrams by him'

f. biographical notice on aṭ-Ṭughrāʾī (d. c. 515/1121):[412]

«وذكره ابو المعالي الحظيري في كتاب «زينة الدهر» وذكر له مقاطيع»

'Abū al-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī mentioned him in his book *Zīnat ad-dahr* and cited epigrams by him'

g. biographical notice on Abū al-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī (d. 568/1172) (see also item f above):[413]

«وقد ذكره العماد الكاتب في «الخريدة» وأنشد له عدّة مقاطيع»

'ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣbihānī mentioned him in his book *Kharīdat al-qaṣr* and cited several epigrams by him'

h. biographical notice on an-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar [Ibn Shirshīr] (d. 293/906):[414]

«وقد استشهد كشاجم بشعره في كتاب «المصايد والمطارد» في مواضع منها قصائد ومنها طرديات على أسلوب أبي نواس ومنها مقاطيع»

'His poetry (including long odes, hunting poems in the style of Abū

410. ibid., p. 210.
411. ibid., p. 211.
412. ibid., p. 189.
413. ibid., vol. 2, p. 366; see also item f above, and ibid., vol. 4, p. 450.
414. ibid., vol. 3, p. 91.

Nuwās, and epigrams) is cited in Kushājim's collection *al-Maṣāyid wa-l-maṭārid*'

i. biographical notice on Fityān ash-Shāghūrī (d. 615/1218):[415]

«وله ديوان شعر فيه مقاطيع حسان»

'He has a collection of poetry (*dīwān shiʿr*), which includes lovely epigrams'

j. biographical notice on Ibn al-Khall (d. 552–3/1157–1159):[416]

«ذكره العماد الاصبهاني في كتاب «الخريدة» وأثنى عليه وأورد له مقاطيع شعر ودوبيت»

'ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣbihānī mentioned him in his book *Kharīdat al-qaṣr*, where he praises him and cites epigrams and *dūbayt* poems by him'

k. in the biographical notice on al-Mubarrad (d. 286/900), an invective poem by Yaḥyā b. al-Mubārak al-Yazīdī (d. 202/817–18) is cited:[417]

«فهجاه في عدّة مقاطيع هذا المقطوع من جملتها»

'He ridiculed him in several epigrams, and the [following] epigram is one of them:'

l. upon mention of the poet Ibn an-Nābulusī (d. 619/1222):[418]

«ولابن عنين فيه عدّة مقاطيع هجو»[419]

'Ibn ʿUnayn wrote several invective epigrams about him'

m. biographical notice on al-Mihyār ad-Daylamī (d. 428/1037):[420]

«وذكره ابو الحسن الباخرزي - المقدَّم ذكره - في كتاب «دمية القصر» فقال في حقّه [. . .] ثمّ عقب هذا الكلام بذكر مقاطيع من شعره وأبيات من جملة قصائده»

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415. ibid., vol. 4, p. 24; see also in the same entry (ibid., vol. 4, p. 26): 'He also has another small *Dīwān,* which I saw in Damascus, that only includes *dūbayt* [...]'.

416. ibid., vol. 4, p. 228.

417. ibid., p. 322.

418. ibid., vol. 5, p. 266.

419. On Ibn ʿUnayn (d. 630/1233), see ibid., vol. 5, pp. 14–9, no. 684.

420. ibid., vol. 5, p. 360.

'Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bākharzī (see above) mentioned him in his book *Dumyat al-qaṣr* and said about him [...]. He followed this by citing epigrams by him and verses from his long odes'

n. in the biographical notice on Ibn Shaddād (d. 632/1235), story about Ismāʿīl b. Ḥamdawayhi al-Ḥamdawī (3rd/9th c.) and the proverbial *ṭaylasān Ibn Ḥarb*:[421]

«وهو أن أحمد بن حرب ابن أخي يزيد المهلّبي أعطى أبا علي إسماعيل بن إبراهيم بن حمدويه البصري الحمدوي الشاعر الأديب طيلساناً خليعاً فعمل في الحمدوي مقاطيع عديدة ظريفة سارت عنه وتناقلتها الرواة»

'[The story is] that Aḥmad b. Ḥarb, the nephew of Yazīd al-Muhallabī made Abū ʿAlī Ismāʿīl b. Ḥamdawayhi al-Baṣrī al-Ḥamdawī, the poet and litterateur, the gift of a shawl for which the latter composed pleasant epigrams, which became well known and passed between narrators'

and *passim*[422]

2. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), from a letter to Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) asking him to grant an *ijāzah* to relate his works:[423]

«[...] وإثبات ما يحسن إيراده في هذه الإجازة من المقاطيع الرائقة والأبيات اللائقة [...]»

'and setting down in this certificate (*ijāzah*) which of the fine epigrams and fitting verses he may cite'

3. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), exchange with Ibn Nubātah (discussed above):[424]

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421. ibid., vol. 7, p. 95.

422. ibid., vol. 1, p. 142; vol. 2, p. 112; p. 131n; vol. 3, p. 279 [on ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jurjānī, author of *al-Wasāṭah*]; p. 291; p. 314 [on ash-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā]; p. 339; vol. 4, p. 376; p. 397 on [Ibn Ẓafar, who died in Hama c. 565/1170]; p. 414 [on Ibn Sukkarah (d. 514/1120)]; p. 430 [on Ibn aṣ-Ṣāʾigh]; p. 450; vol. 5, p. 13; p. 41; p. 94; p. 97 [on aṣ-Ṣūlī]; p. 111; p. 248; p. 283; p. 348; p. 376 [on al-Khubzʾarruzī]; vol. 6, p. 51 [on al-Badīʿ al-Asṭrulābī]; p. 70; p. 79 (and see also vol. 3, p. 373); p. 155; vol. 6, p. 249 (see also vol. 7, p. 235); vol. 7, p. 219, p. 226.

423. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ*, ed. Sālim, vol. 2, p. 319; also in the autograph manuscript (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS Wetzstein II 150 [=Ahlwardt 8631], f. 128a. Aṣ-Ṣafadī tells us that the letter was written at the beginning of Shaʿbān 729 (i.e. at the end of May 1329). See also in Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal aṣ-ṣāfī*, vol. 5, p. 246.

424. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ*, ed. Sālim, vol. 2, p. 441; 443; also in the autograph manuscript (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS Wetzstein II 150 [=Ahlwardt 8631], ff. 180b, 181b.

«ولما وقف [اي ابن نباتة] على مقاطيع لي [...]»

'When he came across [some] epigrams I'd composed'

«كتب هو [اي ابن نباتة] إليّ مقاطيع نظمها نظير ذلك»

'He [Ibn Nubātah] sent me some epigrams he'd written in response'

4. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ:*[425]

«فأحببت أن أجمع ممّا اتّفق لي نظمه في وصف مائة غلام [...] بشرط أنني لم أقنع في كلّ مقطوع من ذلك بالوزن والقافية»

'I wanted to collect poems I'd composed describing one hundred young males [...] except that I wasn't content with using the same metre and rhyme for every epigram'

5. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl*:

«من كلّ مقطوع ألذّ من نغمة»[426]

'From every epigram, which is more pleasing than a melody (*naghmah*)'

«النتيجة [:] وهي تشتمل على ما جاء في ذلك للشعراء من المقاطيع العجيبة [...]»[427]

'The collection comprises interesting epigrams, which poets wrote on the topic'

6. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *al-Hawl al-muʿjib fī al-qawl bi-l-mūjib:*[428]

«وقد أحببت أن أضع فيه [...] من الأشعار الرائقة والمقاطيع اللائقة»

'I wanted to include in it [...] excellent poems and fitting epigrams'

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425. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ*, ed. al-Hayb, p. 31; also in Princeton MS Garrett Yahuda 935, f. 62b.

426. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl*, ed. al-ʿUqayl, p. 119; see also the editor's footnote suggesting—erroneously—that aṣ-Ṣafadī compiled a collection of *muqaṭṭaʿāt* (sic), which, he asserts, are poetic pieces of seven verses or fewer.

427. ibid., p. 195.

428. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Hawl al-muʿjib*, p. 60.

7. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366):[429]

«وكان القاضي شهاب الدين ابن فضل الله [العمري] قد دخل به الى الديوان بدمشق في اوايل سنة ثلث واربعين وسبعماية وكان اقام مدّةً يتردد الى الديوان ويَكتب ولم يُكتب له توقيعٌ فكان يتقاضى القاضي شهاب الدين في ذلك كل قليلٍ بمقاطيع مطبوعة وابيات فيها المحاسن مجموعة من ذلك قوله»

> 'The judge Shihāb ad-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh [al-ʿUmarī] brought Ibn Nubātah into the chancery (*dīwān*) of Damascus in early 743 and Ibn Nubātah spent some time going back and forth to the chancery to write, but he was not given an apostille.[430] He would petition the judge Shihāb ad-Dīn for this quite often with brilliant epigrams and verses imbued with excellence, including the following'

8. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. c. 750/1350):[431]

«[. . .] وأجاد القصائد المطوّلة والمقاطيع [. . .]»

'[...] he excelled at long odes and epigrams [...]'

9. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Mujīr ad-Dīn b. Tamīm (d. 684/1285):[432]

«إلّا أنّه لا يجيد إلّا في المقاطيع فأمّا إذا طال نفسه ونظم القصائد انحطّ نظمه ولم يرتفع [. . .]»

> 'but he only ever excelled at epigrams for when he carried on and composed long odes, his poetry slumped and didn't rise up'

10. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Abū Manṣūr ath-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038):[433]

«وهي [اي يتيمة الدهر] أحسن تصانيفه. وقد اشتهرت كثيراً، ولابن قلاقس فيها عدّة مقاطيع [. . .]»

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429. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 1, p. 330.

430. See Beatrice Gruendler, 'Tawqīʿ (Apostille): Verbal economy in verdicts of tort redress' in L. Behzadi & V. Behmardi (eds), *The Weaving of Words: Approaches to Classical Arabic Literature*, Beirut-Wiesbaden: Ergon, 2009, pp. 101–29 (with thanks to Geert Jan van Gelder for this reference).

431. ibid., vol. 18, p. 482. See also in al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, vol. 2, p. 335: '[...] *ajāda al-qaṣāʾid al-muṭawwalah wa-l-maqāṭīʿ* [...]' ['He excelled in composing long odes and epigrams'].

432. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 5, p. 228.

433. ibid., vol. 19, p. 194.

'it [i.e. *Yatīmat ad-dahr*] is his best book. It became very famous and Ibn Qalāqis [(d. 567/1172)] wrote several epigrams about it'

11. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Saʿd ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥyī ad-Dīn b. al-ʿArabī (d. 656/1258):[434]

«وكان شاعراً مجيداً أجاد المقاطيع التي نظمها في الغلمان وأوصافهم [...]»

'he was a talented poet who excelled at epigrams, which he composed about young men and descriptions of them'

12. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Ibn ash-Sharīf Daftarkh^{w}ān (d. 655/1257):[435]

«وله شعر كثير مقاطيع وغيرها»

'he wrote a great deal of poetry, epigrams and otherwise'

13. aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Ibrāhīm al-Miʿmār (d. 750/1350):

«أما في المقاطيع الشعرية فإنّه يقعد به / عنها مراعاة الإعراب وتصريف الأفعال ولكنّه قليل الخطأ [...]»[436]

'yet when it comes to his poetic epigrams, he ignores case endings and the morphology of verbs, although [normally] he rarely makes errors'

«فمن مقاطيعه اللائقة قوله [...]»[437]

'The following is one of his apt epigrams [...]'

14. Muḥammad b. Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363), biographical notice on Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Shāwar b. an-Naqīb (d. 687/1288):[438]

«وله ديوان مقاطيع في مجلّدين وشعره جيد عذب منسجم فيه التورية الرائقة اللائقة المتمكّنة [...] ومقاطيعه جيدة الى الغاية»

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434. ibid., vol. 1, p. 186.

435. ibid., vol. 21, p. 466.

436. ibid., vol. 6, pp. 173–74. Al-Miʿmār merits an entry in aṣ-Ṣafadī's *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr wa-aʿwān an-naṣr*, but there is no mention of *maqāṭīʿ* there. (cf. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr wa-aʿwān an-naṣr*, vol. 1, p. 38.)

437. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 6, p. 174.

438. al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, vol. 1, p. 324.

'He has a collection of epigrams in two volumes. His poetry is good, sweet, harmonious, and it displays lovely, apt, masterful double entendres [...] His epigrams are most excellent'

15. Ibn Abī Ḥajalah at-Tilimsānī (d. 776/1375), *Dīwān aṣ-Ṣabābah* (*The Collection of Passionate Love*):

a. from the introduction:[439]

«أما بعد فإنّ كتابنا هذا كما قيل:

[من الطويل]

[١] كتابٌ حوى أخبار من قتل الهوى وسارَ بهم بالحبّ في كلّ مذهبِ
[٢] مقاطيعه مثل المواصيل لم تزلْ يُشَبَّبُ فيه بالرَّبابِ وزينبِ»

'This book of ours is as it is said:

A Book that includes tales of those killed by passion

and takes them in every direction with love.

Its epigrams (or: disconnected things) like flutes (or: connected things) never cease

to court Rabāb[440] *and Zaynab*'

b. chapter (*bāb*) twenty-seven is titled:[441]

«الباب السابع والعشرون[:] في ذكر طرف يسير من المقاطيع الفائقة والأغزال الرائقة ممّا اشتمل على ورد الخدود ورمان النهود وغير ذلك ممّا هنالك»

'Chapter Twenty-Seven: A decent section on superior epigrams and lovely love-poems, which take in the roses of the cheeks, pomegranates

439. Ibn Abī Ḥajalah at-Tilimsānī, *Dīwān aṣ-Ṣabābah*, pp. 13–14. The author also composed a work entitled *Mawāṣīl al-maqāṭiʿ*, but neither it nor any description of its contents has survived.

440. Rabāb is the name of a woman, but also punningly the name of an instrument, the rebec.

441. ibid., p. 21; p. 267. cf. Umberto Rizzitano translates this chapter heading: '*Capitolo XXVII* [...]. Citazione di un piccolo gruppo di frammenti poetici stupendi, e di squisti componimenti erotici contenenti (descrizioni) su guance di rose e seni di melagrano e simili.' (U. Rizzitano, 'Il *Dīwān aṣ-ṣabābah* dello scrittore magrebino Ibn Abī Ḥaǵalah', p. 70).

of the chest, and other [topics] included there'

16. Ibn Abī Ḥajalah at-Tilimsānī (d. 776/1375), *Sukkardān al-ʿushshāq wa-manārat al-asmāʿ wa-l-āmāq* (*The Sugar-Pot of Lovers and the Lighthouse for Eyes and Ears*):[442]

«من هنا ذكر ما قيل وما ورد من المقاطيع والأشعار فيما يذكر في وصف الكتب واقتنائها»

'now mention will be made of what epigrams and poems have been composed describing books and the purchasing of them'

17. In the colophon of the only extant copy of Badr ad-Dīn b. Ḥabīb's (d. 779/1377) epigram anthology:[443]

«تمّت المقاطيع المتهكّمة بالمواصيل ⋆ وانتظمت الشذور الجميلة المشتملة على الجمل والتفصيل [...]»

'the epigrams [or: disconnected things], which mock flutes [or: connected things], are now complete * and the lovely fragments which include the bigger picture and the details have been strung together'

18. Badr ad-Dīn b. Ḥabīb (d. 779/1377), obituary for Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366):[444]

«وأخرس المواصيل بمقاطيعه»

'He made the flutes [or: connected things] (*mawāṣīl*) silent with his epigrams [or: disconnected things] (*maqāṭīʿ*)']

19. Badr ad-Dīn b. Ḥabīb (d. 779/1377), obituary for Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. c. 750/1350):[445]

«[...] ثمّ قرأت عليه جميع المثالث والمثاني في المعالي والمعاني وهو كتاب من مقاطيع شعره يشتمل على عشرين باباً في أنواع مختلفة»

'[...] then I read all of his *al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī fī al-maʿālī wa-l-maʿānī*, an epigram collection comprising twenty chapters on different subjects'

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442. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS Arabe 3405, f. 97b.

443. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 3362, f. 204a; see also Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"'.

444. Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat an-nabīh*, vol. 3, p. 305.

445. Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat an-nabīh*, vol. 3, p. 139.

20. Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366), *taqrīẓ* for Badr ad-Dīn Ibn Ḥabīb's (d. 779/1377) epigram anthology:[446]

«[...] وأطربت مقاطيعها المشبّبة فلم أدر أهي مقاطيع أم مواصيل [...]»

'[...] its erotic epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*) stirred the heart so I didn't know whether they were disconnected (*maqāṭīʿ*) or connected (*mawāṣīl*)

21. Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366), preface to *al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī:*[447]

«فإنيّ كنتُ قدّمتُ [...] نبذةً من قصائد شعري المطوّلة * وعَرَضتُها على نقد خواطره المتطوّلة ⋆ فقامَتْ نبذةٌ من المقاطيع تمدّ لحظها ⋆ وتطلُب حظّها»

'I had put out [...] a small selection of my long odes * which I presented to have its protracted ideas tested * and then a selection of my epigrams raised its head * and asked for its turn'

22. Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366), *Zahr al-manthūr* (*The Gillyflower's Blossoms = The Blossoms of Prose*[448]):[449]

«وقد نظم المملوك هذه المقاطع [هكذا] التي هي عن الفايد كاسمها والابيات التي ما تساوي الوقوف على رسمها»

'and the slave composed these epigrams, which are like the title of a benefit in name [?] and like verses that aren't worth stopping to look at their traces [lit. writing]'

23. Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366), *Dīwān:*

«[...] المقاطيع والموشّحات والأزجال [...]»[450]

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446. Cited in Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"', p. 47, l. 8, edited from Paris MS 3362, f. 204b–205a; see also in Ibn Ḥabib, *Tadhkirat an-nabīh*, vol. 2, p. 203.

447. Th. Bauer ed (in progress). p. 1; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS Sprenger 1196, f. 29b; Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 2234, f. 159a. In addition, on the title page of Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 2234 [copied in 732/1332] it reads: '*Kitāb al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī min maqāṭīʿ ash-shaykh al-imām al-ʿālim al-fāḍil Jamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Nubātah* [...]' (f. 158b).

448. Title as translated by Thomas Bauer in Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 184.

449. Chester Beatty Library (Dublin) MS 5161, f. 9a. Cf. the language of item 26 below.

450. Nuruosmaniye Library (Istanbul) MS 3802, f. 322a, from a verse of *zajal*: The MS is rather

'[...] epigrams, *muwashshaḥāt*, *zajal* poems [...]'

«وقال في المقاطيع [. . .]»[451]

'And from his epigrams[:]'

24. Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī (d. 781/1379), *Dīwān*:

«[. . .] اذا أنشد قصايده ⋆ ومقاطيعه الباردة»[452]

'If he recited his long odes * and his banal epigrams'

«ولم أقتصر على هذه المطوّلات إلّا أنّه لم يظهر لي عند غيرها طائل فلذلك خرجت من بيوتها إلى كلّ مقطوع داخل»[453]

'I didn't confine myself to these long [poems] but they didn't appear to me to be long compared to others and then I went from their verses to all the transpiercing epigrams'

«تمّ ما انتخبته من ديوان الشيخ برهان الدين القيراطي بحمد الله وعفوه ولم أترك شيئاً من الغزل بل استوعبت مقاطيع وبعض المنثور»[454]

'This is the end of what I selected from the oeuvre (*dīwān*) of ash-Shaykh Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī, I praise God and ask his forgiveness[.] I didn't neglect to include any of his love poetry, rather I included the epigrams and even some prose'

25. Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434), Preface (*khuṭbah*) to his collection of Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī's poetry, *Taḥrīr al-Qīrāṭī* (*The Redaction of al-Qīrāṭī's [Dīwān]*):[455]

«واخترت من المقاطيع المطربة ما يغني عن المواصيل»

'I selected out of his moving epigrams [or: disconnected things] those

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damaged here and fairly illegible but these three forms can be read and are clearly listed together in a set.

451. Nuruosmaniye Library (Istanbul) MS 3802, f. 89b.

452. Fatih Kütüphanesi (Istanbul) MS 3861, f. 3a.

453. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS Wetzstein I 45, f. 20a.

454. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin MS Wetzstein II 196, f. 79b.

455. Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, p. 493.

which obviate the need for any flutes [or: connected things]'

26. ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn al-Ghuzūlī (d. 815/1412), *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr fī manāzil as-surūr* (*The Rising-Places of Full Moons in the Setting-Places of Joy*), writing about Badr ad-Dīn ad-Damāmīnī (d. 827/1424):[456]

«فأخبرنا أنّه في زمن الصبا جمع مقاطيع من الخمريات وسماها مقاطع الشرب [...]»

'We are told that when he was a young man, he collected his epigrams on wine and named them *The Drinkers' Portions*'

27. Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434), *Kitāb Kashf al-lithām ʿan wajh at-tawriyah wa-l-istikhdām (Removing the Veil From the Face of the Rhetorical Figures* Tawriyah *and* Istikhdām[457]*)*:[458]

«[...] وأورد فيه [اي صلاح الدين الصفدي في كتابه فضّ الختام عن التورية والاستخدام] نبذة من مقاطيعه ليس لها بالمراد وصله فإنّه ذكر انواع التورية ⋆ وما جسر أنْ يلحق مفرداً من المقاطيع بتلك الجملة»

'[...] in [his book *Faḍḍ al-khitām ʿan at-tawriyah wa-l-istikhdām*] [Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣafadī] cited a small selection of his epigrams [or: disconnected things], which were never intended to be connected because he cited the types of double entendre (*tawriya*) * so it wouldn't do to include one of these epigrams to this group'

28. Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434), *Taqrīẓ* (commendation) on Ibn aṣ-Ṣāʾigh's *al-Labābah fī muʿāraḍat «Dīwān aṣ-Ṣabābah»* (*The Keen Mind in imitation of* The Collection of Passionate Love):[459]

«وأوصل الشمل بمقاطيع لو أدركها ابن سناء الملك [المتوفي سنة ٦٠٨ هـ / ١٢١١ م] رجع عن [«]مقطعات النيل[»] [...]»

456. ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn al-Ghuzūlī, *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr*, vol. 1, p. 185.

457. Title as translated by D. Stewart in Devin Stewart, 'Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 138.

458. Leiden MS 237, f. 2b. See also f. 2b, f. 3a.

459. Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, ed. R. Veselý, p. 407.

'and he completed the collection with epigrams, which if Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk [d. 608/1211] had known about them, he would've retracted his *Nile Coves*'

29. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), biographical notice on Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366):[460]

«وله تصانيف رائقة منها القطر النباتي اقتصر فيه على مقاطيع شعره»

'he wrote lovely books, including *al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī*, in which he limited himself exclusively to epigrams'

30. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), *Dīwān* (See discussion above p. 131):[461]

«[القسم السابع:] المقاطيع»

'Chapter Seven: Epigrams'

31. an-Nawājī (d. 859/1455), *Ḥalbat al-kumayt* (*The Racecourse of the Bay*[462]):[463]

«[...] أن أجمع له من مقاطيع الشرب نبذة رفيعة البزّ رقيقة الحاشية»

'[...] to collect for him a fine and elegant selection of epigrams on wine'

32. an-Nawājī (d. 859/1455), *Marāti*ʿ *al-ghizlān fī waṣf al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān* (*The Pastures of Gazelles: Describing Handsome Young Men*):[464]

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460. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *ad-Durar al-kāminah*, vol. 5, p. 487. Ibn Ḥajar mentions Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* in his bibliography (published as *al-Muʿjam al-mufahras aw tajrīd asānīd al-kutub al-mash'hūrah wa-l-ajzāʾ al-manthūrah*, ed. Muḥammad Shakkūr Amrīr al-Mayādīnī, Beirut: Muʾassasat ar-Risālah, 1418/1998, p. 418, no. 1942), but he does not mention Ibn Nubātah's epigram anthology, nor that of any other poet, among the few poetry books he lists.

461. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Dīwān*, MS Mingana 1394, f. 1b ; ed. Abū al-Faḍl, p. 1; idem, *Dīwān as-Sabʿ as-sayyārah an-nayyirāt*, ed. Ayyūb, p. 78; idem, *Uns al-ḥujar fī abyāt Ibn Ḥajar*, ed. Abū ʿAmr, p. 333. See also the notes of the copyist of the Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 811 *shiʿr Taymūr* cited in the editor's introduction to *Dīwān as-Sabʿ as-sayyārah an-nayyirāt*, pp. 59–60.

462. This is Geert Jan van Gelder's translation of the title. See G. J. van Gelder, 'A Muslim Encomium on Wine'.

463. al-Nawājī, *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, p. 2.

464. Princeton Library MS Garrett Yahuda 4249 [available online], f. 1b; Princeton MS Garrett Yahuda 615, f. 2b; Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 583 *Adab*, f. 1b; Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 343 *adab Taymūr*, f. 2b; Topkapi MS 722, f. 1b.

«فقد سألني بعض الاخوان أن أجمع له نبذة في الحسان من الغلمان تزهو بجواهر لفظها الفريد على درر النحور وتُزْري عقائد معانيها البديعة بربات الخدور فامتثلت أمره العالي وانتقيت له من عقود اللآلي مقاطيع أطيب في السماع من المواصيل وأعذب في رياض الأدب إذا سالت من [«]مقطّعات النيل[»]»

> 'I was asked by one of our friends to put together a selection on handsome young men, the gems of whose matchless language would outshine the pearls of the décolletage and the chains of its inventive meanings would shame the elegant ladies in their apartments[.] So I obeyed his lofty wish and selected, from the pearl necklaces, epigrams [or: disconnected things] that are sweeter (*aṭyab*) to the ear than flutes [or: connected things] and sweeter (*aʿdhab*) in the course of literature than the *Nile Coves* if they were to flow'

33. From the title page of Escorial MS árabe 340, a copy of an-Nawājī's (d. 859/1455) anthology *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl:*[465]

«صحائف الحسنات للعلامة النواجي غفر الله له ما سلف ومحا عنه ما اقترف وهو الذي أبدع في تحصيله أحسن إبداع وأودع صفحاته من محاسن المقاطيع أحسن إبداع [. . .]»

> '*Surfaces of Beauty* by the great scholar an-Nawājī, may God forgive him for all that has come before and wipe out any [sin] he has committed. He [i.e. an-Nawājī] excelled in making the excellent collection and ordered the pages of outstanding epigrams in an outstanding order'

34. an-Nawājī (d. 859/1455), *Kitāb ash-Shifāʾ fī badīʿ al-iktifāʾ* (*The Cure: Excellence in Truncation*):

«ثمّ خرجت من عنده ونظمت في ذلك اليوم عدّة مقاطيع من هذا النوع»[466]

> 'then I left him and that very day I wrote several epigrams in that style'

«ورأيت مقطوعاً للشهاب الحجازي قريباً من ذلك»[467]

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465. an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, ed. ʿAbd al-Hādī, p. 49; see also reproduction in plate on p. 46.

466. an-Nawājī, *Kitāb ash-Shifāʾ fī badīʿ al-iktifāʾ*, p. 182.

467. ibid., p. 183.

'I once saw an epigram by ash-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī [AT: see immediately below] that was similar to this one'

35. Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥijāzī al-Khazrajī (d. 875/1471), *Jannat al-wildān fī al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān*:[468]

«فقد سألني بعض الأصحاب اللطفاء والأصدقاء الظرفاء أن أجمع شيئاً من الأشعار [...] مقيّداً في ذلك أن تكون من المقاطيع في الحسان من الغلمان حسبما يطلبه أبناء الزمان [...]»

'One of my kind and refined friends asked me to put together a collection of poetry [...] with the condition that the poems be epigrams on handsome young men, which is what people today are demanding'

36. Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥijāzī al-Khazrajī (d. 875/1471), *Rawḍ al-ādāb*:[469]

«الفصل الثالث في المقاطيع وفيه عشرة فصول»

'Part Three: Epigrams, in ten chapters'

37. *Taqārīẓ* (commendations) on *Ghurrat aṣ-ṣabāḥ fī waṣf al-wujūh aṣ-ṣibāḥ* (*The Flash of Dawn: Beautiful Faces Described*) by Taqī ad-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh ad-Dimashqī al-Badrī (d. 894/1489):

a. *Taqrīẓ* of Sarī ad-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt ʿAbd al-Birr b. Shiḥnah (d. 921/1515):[470]

«أودعه من المقاطيع ما لو سمعه زاهد [..] لطرب [وأنشده]»

'he included therein epigrams, which if a pious ascetic heard them, his heart would be moved and he'd recite them out loud'

b. *Taqrīẓ* of Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥijāzī al-Khazrajī (d. 875/1471):[471]

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468. al-Ḥijāzī al-Khazrajī, *Jannat al-wildān*, ed. ʿAkkāwī, pp. 49–50; see also p. 50n1 for the editor's—specious—gloss on the use of the term *maqṭūʿ* here. This portion of the text is missing from the Copenhagen MS.

469. British Library MS 19489, f. 52b; see also British Library MS Or. 3843 and MS ADD 9562.

470. British Library MS ADD 23445, f. 2b.

471. ibid., f. 5a. See also Franz Rosenthal, 'Male and Female'.

«فلقد أطربت هذه المقاطيع ما لا تطربه المواصيل»

'these epigrams [or: disconnected things] moved [me in ways] that flutes [or: connected things] have not'

38. as-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), *aḍ-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn at-tāsiʿ* (*The Shining Light: the People of the Ninth Century*):

a. biographical notice on Khalīl b. Muḥammad al-Aqfahsī (d. 820/1417):[472]

«جاد شعره في الغربة وطارح شيخنا [اي: ابن حجر العسقلاني] مراراً بعدّة مقاطيع [...]»

'he composed outstanding poetry on being away from home and he often exchanged epigrams with our teacher [i.e. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī]'

b. biographical notice on Shams ad-Dīn an-Nawājī (see nos 31–34 above):[473]

«وامتنع شيخنا [اي: ابن حجر العسقلاني] من الجواب قيل لكون المصنّف [اي: النواجي] أورد له فيه [اي: في كتابه «حلبة الكميت»] مقطوعاً»

'our teacher [i.e. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī] did not respond and people say it is because the author [i.e. an-Nawājī] included an epigram by the former in his book *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*'

c. biographical notice on ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl az-Zamzamī (d. 885/1481):[474]

«ومن تآليفه في الأدب [...] ديوان يشتمل على مقاطيع جيدة»

'his literary works include [...] a collection (*dīwān*) of first-rate epigrams'

d. biographical notice on Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Barakah az-Zabīdī (d. c. 811/1408):[475]

«[...] ثمّ تعانى بالنظم فمهر فيه وله في ذلك مقاطيع مخترعة»

'[...] then he took up poetry and excelled in it, and he has some brilliant

472. as-Sakhāwī, *aḍ-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn at-tāsiʿ*, vol. 3, p. 203.
473. ibid., vol. 7, p. 230;
474. ibid., vol. 5, p. 291.
475. ibid., vol. 6, p. 251.

epigrams [to that effect]'

e. biographical notice on Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Qawī (d. 859/1455):[476]

«ولقيته بمكّة فكتبت عنه من نظمه عدّة مقاطيع [...]»

'I found it in Mecca so I copied out from it several epigrams by him'

f. biographical notice on Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470):[477]

«وقد صنف [...] حلية الصفات في الأسماء والصناعات مشتمل على مقاطيع وتاريخ وادبيات رتبه على حروف المعجم»[478]

'he composed [...] *Ḥilyat aṣ-Ṣifāt fī al-asmāʾ wa-ṣ-ṣināʿāt*, which is made up of epigrams, history, literary materials, and is organised alphabetically'

and *passim*.[479]

39. Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470), biographical notice on Shihāb ad-Dīn b. Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349):[480]

«ونظم كثيراً من القصائد والأراجيز والمقاطيع ودوبيت، وأنشأ كثيراً من التقاليد والمناشير والتواقيع [...]»

'he composed a great many long odes, *rajaz* poems, epigrams, and *dūbayt* poems, and he wrote a great many apostilles, proclamations, and appointments'

40. Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470), biographical notice on aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 1363):[481]

476. ibid., vol. 10, p. 250.

477. ibid., vol. 10, pp. 308–7.

478. This text has been preserved—apparently uniquely—in a Musée Asiatique (St. Petersburg) MS (MS C 37, 167 ff., copied in 860/1456), but the library declined my request for a copy of the manuscript (personal communication, 15 May 2013). I am still trying to find another way of gaining access to the text. Prof. Maurice Pomerantz of NYU has seen the MS and informs me that it is a handsomely written autograph. He too was unable to secure a copy from the Institute (Personal Communication, 23 June 2014). See A. B. Khalidov, *Arabskie rukopisi instituta vostokovedeniia : kratkiĭ katalog*, 2 vols, Moscow, 1986, vol 1, p. 396, no. 8962; see also Brockelmann, *GAL* S II, p. 40.

479. as-Sakhāwī, *aḍ-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn at-tāsiʿ*, vol. 11, p. 40.

480. Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal aṣ-ṣāfī*, vol. 2, p. 264.

481. ibid., vol. 5, p. 243.

«وله [. . .] الروض الباسم والعرف الناسم، مقاطيع ونظم؛ والمثاني والمثالث، مقاطيع ونظم ايضاً»

'he also wrote [...] *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim wa-l-ʿarf an-nāsim*, epigrams and poems, and *al-Mathānī wa-l-mathālith*, [which is also] epigrams and poems'

41. Ibn al-Jiʿān (d. 882/1477), *Masāyil ad-dumūʿ ʿalā mā tafarraqa min al-majmūʿ* (*The Tracks of Tears: Once Gathered, Now Separated*):[482]

«الباب الثاني[:] في المقاطيع التي تفيض الدموع فيضاً [. . .]»

'Chapter Two: Epigrams which cause tears to pour out copiously'

42. Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *Raṣf al-laʾāl fī waṣf al-hilāl* (*Inlaid Pearl: Descriptions of the Crescent Moon*):[483]

«فإنّي عند مطالعتي لتذكرة الإمام صلاح الدين خليل بن ايبك الصفدي رأيته أورد فيها عدّة مقاطيع من نظمه في وصف الهلال فجردتها في هذا الجزء وضممت اليه عدّة مقاطيع»

'When I took a look at al-Imām Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak aṣ-Ṣafadī's *Tadhkirah* [Commonplace-Book], I saw that he'd included in it several of his own epigrams describing the crescent moon so I excerpted these in this portion and added several other epigrams to them'

43. Muḥammad b. Qānṣawh b. Ṣādiq (d. 911/1505), *Marātiʿ al-albāb fī marābiʿ al-ādāb* (*The Pastures of Hearts in The Meadows of Literary Arts*):[484]

«فهذا مجموع جمعته وانا شابّ مشتغل بعلوم الآداب [. . .] وسميّته مراتع الالباب في مرابع الآداب وقد رتّبته على اشعار مطوّلات على حروف الهجا ومقاطيع مثلها ومخمّسات وموشّحات وازجال ونثريات من مقامات ومفاخرات وحكايات ووقائع ونوادر ورحلة الإمام الشافعي»

'this is a collection that I put together when I was a young man, busy with my literary training [...] and I named it *The Pastures of Hearts in the*

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482. British Library MS 7591 [=Rieu 638], ff. 21b–22a; unfortunately the chapter itself is missing from the MS.

483. Jalāl al-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, *Raṣf al-laʾāl fī waṣf al-hilāl* in *at-Tuḥfah al-badīʿah wa-ṭ-ṭurfah ash-shahiyyah* (Constantinople: Maṭbaʿat al-Jawāʾib 1302/1884), p. 66.

484. British Library MS ADD 9677 [=Rieu 770]; quoted in Charles Rieu, *Catalogus*, no. 770, p. 346.

> *Meadows of Literary Arts* and I arranged it into long odes ordered alphabetically, then epigrams, then *mukhammasāt*, then *muwashshaḥāt*, then *zajal* poems, then prose pieces, including *maqāmāt*, boastings, stories, events, funny anecdotes, and the travels of al-Imām ash-Shāfiʿī'

44. Māmayah Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allah ar-Rūmī (d. 985/1577), *Rawḍat al-mushtāq wa-bahjat al-ʿushshāq* (*The Garden of the Yearner and the Joy of Lovers*):[485]

«هذا ديوان قيّم الشام وفارس الميدان في النظام ماميه الرومي...وهو يشتمل على قصايد واشعار وموال ودوبيت ومقاطيع وجزل ومدايح وهجا الخ»

> 'This collection of poetry (*dīwān*) is governor of the Levant and the knight of the battlefield in the poetry of Māmiyah ar-Rūmī [...] and it is made up of long odes, poems, *mawāliyā*, *dūbayt* poems, epigrams, *jazal* [scil. *zajal*], praise poems, invective poems, etc.'

45. Anon., *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ* (*The Servant of The Refined and The Companion of The Graceful*) (c. 16th/17th century):[486]

«ومقاطيع أحسن من «مقطّعات النيل»»[487]

> 'epigrams better than the *Nile Coves*'

46. ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣāliḥī al-Ḥarīrī, *ad-Durr al-maṣūn fī niẓām as-sabʿ funūn* (*The Well Guarded Pearl: Composing the Seven [Poetic] Forms*):[488]

«الباب الرابع من المقاطيع في الطيّ والنشر»[489]

> 'Chapter Four: Epigrams [exhibiting] *versus rapportati* (*aṭ-ṭayy wa-n-*

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485. John Rylands Library, Manchester, MS 478, f. 1a; quoted in A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, Manchester: The Manchester University Press, 1934, p. 800.

486. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Huntington 508, f. 3a.

487. cf. similar language in the preface to Ibn Ḥabīb's epigram anthology (Th. Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"', p. 17). cf. also on the Nile in Mamluk literature, Thomas Bauer, 'Das Nīlzaġal des Ibrāhīm al-Miʿmār'; and Stephan Conermann's review of as-Suyūṭī's *Kawkab ar-rawḍah fī tārīkh al-Nīl wa-jazīrat ar-Rawḍah*, ed. Muḥammad ash-Shishtāwī, in *MSR*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2007, pp. 206–9.

488. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Marsh 73.

489. Bodleian MS Marsh 73, f. 61b; this folio is nearly illegible.

nashr)'

47. al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1632), *Nafḥ aṭ-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus ar-raṭīb* (*The Sweet Scent of Andalusia's Supple Bough*):

«[. . .] فجعلت في ذلك عدّة مقاطيع [. . .]»[490]

'[...] so I wrote several epigrams on that'

«فجلس المعتمد يوماً على تلك البركة والماء يجري من ذلك الفيل وقد أُوقدت شمعتان من جانبيه والوزير أبو بكر ابن الملح عنده فصنع الوزير فيهما عدّة مقاطيع بديهاً [. . .]»[491]

'al-Muʿtamid sat beside this lake one day as the water ran out of that elephant and two candles had been lit on either side of it. The chancellor Abū Bakr b. al-Milḥ was there and he improvised several epigrams'

48. ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʿUmar al-Baghdādī (d. 1093/1682), *Khizānat al-adab wa-lubb lubāb Lisān al-ʿArab* (*The Storehouse of Literature and the Core of the Arabic Language*):[492]

«وعندي في هذا المعنى مقاطيع جيّدة لولا خشية السأم لسردتها»

'I wrote [some] good epigrams on this motif and were it not for weariness, I would have related them here'

49. al-Murādī (d. 1206/1791), *Silk ad-durar fī aʿyān al-qarn ath-thānī ʿashar* (*Stringing Pearls: On the Notables of the Twelfth Century*):

a. biographical notice on Abū al-Futūḥ ad-Dabbāgh al-Mīqātī (d. 1174/1760):[493]

«وكان شعره رائقاً نضيراً وله مقاطيع وموشّحات وغير ذلك»

'his poetry was excellent and fresh, and he wrote epigrams and *muwashshaḥāt* among other things'

b. biographical notice on Ibrāhīm al-Murādī (d. 1142/1730):

490. al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ aṭ-ṭīb*, ed. ʿAbbās, vol. 2, p. 467.

491. ibid., vol. 4, p. 263. See also in al-Azdī, *Badāʾiʿ*, p. 373 (mentioned above).

492. al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, ed. Hārūn, vol. 5, p. 256.

493. al-Murādī, *Silk ad-durar*, vol. 3, p. 224.

«وفي ذلك مقاطيع شعرية صدرت من أدباء [...]»[494]

'there are poetic epigrams by litterateurs on this topic'

«وفي ذلك غير ما ذكرنا من المقاطيع [...]»[495]

'on this topic there are epigrams that we didn't mention'

50. Muḥammad Kamāl ad-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1214/1799), biographical entry on Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Imām ad-Dīn al-Kanjī (d. 1153/1740) in the biography of his teacher ʿAbd al-Ghanī an-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731):[496]

«وله [اي: الكنجي] مؤلّفات كثيرة معظمها في الأدب فمنها رسالة سماها برضوان المحبوب ومفرح القلوب جمع فيها تضامين لأفاضل ذلك العصر في ماء حبّ الآس وعرضها على الاستاذ [اي: النابلسي] فكتب له بخطّه جملة من المقاطيع الشعرية [...]»

> 'He [i.e. al-Kanjī] [wrote] many books, most of which fall under [the category of] literature. Among these are an epistle by the title *Pleasing the Beloved and Delighting Hearts* in which he collected the quotations (*taḍāmīn*) of his contemporaries on the juice of the myrtle fruit. When he showed this to the Teacher [i.e. al-Nābulusī], he wrote a set of poetic epigrams in his own hand for him'

51. Shihāb ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar (d. 1274/1857), *Safīnat al-mulk wa-nafīsat al-fulk* (*The Ship/Safīnah of Sovereignty and the Gem of the Ark*), a song collection, chapter (*mijdāf*) two is titled:[497]

«المجداف الثاني فيما يعذب ايراده من المقاطيع الرائقة»

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494. ibid., p. 32.

495. ibid., p. 36.

496. *al-Wird al-unsī wa-l-wārid al-qudsī fī tarjamat al-ʿārif ʿAbd al-Ghanī an-Nābulusī*, ed. Samer Akkach in *idem*, *Intimate Invocations. Al-Ghazzī's Biography of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641–1731)*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, p. 163 (Arabic). See also al-Murādī, *Silk ad-durar*, vol. 1, p. 31. [NB: Strictly speaking, one would expect '*qudusī*' for the *sajʿ* rhyme with the final element 'al-Nābulusī' but just as today one would more likely have pronounced the name 'al-Nābulsī'].

497. Shihāb ad-Dīn b. ʿUmar, *Safīnat al-mulk,* p. 4; p. 363. See further in D. Reynolds, 'Lost Virgins Found', p. 75n.

'Chapter Two: excellent epigrams that are easily cited'

52. Aḥmad Taymūr Bāshā (1871–1930), *al-Ḥubb wa-l-jamāl ʿind al-ʿArab* (*Love and Beauty among the Arabs*), collected notes published posthumously, from the introduction:[498]

«فهذا مجموع يشتمل على فصول تحوي مقاطيع رائقة وقصائد فائقة من كلّ لفظ بديع ومعان كأنّها زهر الربيع..»

'this collection [is organized into] chapters and includes excellent epigrams, superior odes, in innovative expressions and literary motifs that resemble the flowers of spring'

498. Aḥmad Taymūr Bāshā, *al-Ḥubb wa-l-jamāl ʿind al-ʿArab*, Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-shurakāhu, 1391/1971, p. 3.

Chapter Three

Thorny Bouquets

> Like other common terms, anthology is commonly taken for granted, so that we are unlikely to ask what makes an anthology, in what conceptual and practical ways is it different from other collections of poetry.[1]

The sustained development of literary anthologies and their proliferation throughout the Arabophone world—not to mention the sister anthological traditions in Persian and Ottoman Turkish—show that anthologies found a receptive audience from the very beginning. This study has already alluded to the theoretical problems that an analysis of anthologies as an independent literary genre provokes regardless of a literary critic's linguistic or temporal orientation, but for students of pre-modern Middle Eastern literatures, the term anthology (like the terms encyclopaedia, compendium, epigram, etc.) and the multiform literary texts it is intended to describe nearly hobble the project of inquiry into these texts before it has even started.[2] The term anthology originally described a particular collection of Greek poetry, and later came to describe a very diverse genre of Latin literary collections; many other cultures have adopted this term with alacrity, but use of this Greek calque necessitates a cross-cultural comparison of pre-modern literary genres and trends.

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1. Anne Ferry, *Tradition and the Individual Poem*, p. 1.

2. On mediaeval Arabic encyclopaedism, see E. Muhanna, 'Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period'. See also Dagmar Riedel, 'Searching for the Islamic "episteme": The Status of Historical Information in Medieval Middle-Eastern Anthological Writing', unpublished doctoral thesis, 2004. Riedel is preparing to publish her thesis as a book under the title: *'Seeking Knowledge as far as China': Iranian Encyclopaedias in the Islamic World, 1100–1900* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming) [unseen].

It is obvious that pre-modern Arabic literary culture—along with Greek and other pre-modern literary traditions—saw the production of anthological works, in the case of Arabic a great many works indeed: prosaic, poetic, and prosimetrical compilations, but it is axiomatic that by using a term like anthology, one seeks to differentiate a given text from other varieties of multi-authored texts.[3] The Greek word *ἀνθολογία* (*anthología*) (known in Latin as *anthologica*, or *florilegium*) means 'a collection of poems or other short writings chosen from various authors, usually as favourite pieces exhibiting the best of their kind.'[4] The Greek term is derived etymologically from 'flower-picking' (*anthos*: flower + *legein*: to gather).[5] Enzo Degani points out, however,

3. On prosimetric texts in Arabic, see the contributions of W. Heinrichs (pp. 249–75) and D. Reynolds (pp. 277–94), as well as those of J. S. Meisami (pp. 295–319) and K. Reichl (pp. 321–48) on Persian and Turkish literatures respectively, in the 'crosscultural' volume, Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl (eds), *Prosimetrum: crosscultural perspectives on narrative in prose and verse*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997. Geert Jan van Gelder has remarked that the use of this term has become something of a 'recent fashion' in the field of classical Arabic literature and that properly speaking '[...] [not every] work that contains both poetry and prose should be called prosimetric: in that case virtually all Arabic prose works, including dictionaries, works of literary criticism, grammars, biographical encyclopedias, anthologies, histories, *maqāmas*, and *The Thousand and One Nights* would all qualify as "prosimetric" and the term become meaningless.' 'The term', van Gelder suggests, '[...] should be restricted to genres where prose and poetry are somehow on a more equal footing, in a regularized fashion.' (G. J. van Gelder, 'Poetry in Historiography: The Case of al-Fakhrī by Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā' in Ramzi Baalbaki, et al. (eds), *Poetry and History. The Value of Poetry in Reconstructing Arab History*, pp. 61–73, p. 73.)

4. C. Baldick. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, s.v. 'Anthology'. See also *Brill's New Pauly,* s.vv. 'Anthology A. Definition – H. Reception' [Enzo Dagani]; 'Anthology, I. Latin Literature' and 'Florilegium' [Jürgen Paul Schwindt]. See also C. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary,* s.v. 'Anthŏlŏgĭca: anthology, a work consisting of choice thoughts, proverbs, poems, etc.'

5. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon. A New (9th) Edition,* vol. 1, p. 140. This original meaning is retained in traditional English definitions of the term (e.g. from the 2nd ed. 1989 of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: '1. A collection of the flowers of verse, i.e. small choice poems, esp. epigrams, by various authors; originally applied to the Greek collections so called.') A more up-to-date definition is '1. a collection of literary passages or works, esp. poems, by various authors. 2. any printed collection of literary pieces, songs, works of art, etc.' from the *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, 1979, p. 60. For comparison, one should also note here de Bruijn's comment on modern Persian terminology: 'The modern *gulčīn-i adabī* is a neologism coined after the metaphor implied in the original Greek word' (*EI²*, s.v. 'Muk̲h̲tārāt 2. In Persian Literature' [J. T. P. de Bruijn]). Geert Jan van Gelder has drawn my attention to floral parallels in the titles of many Arabic anthologies (e.g. Ibn Dāwūd's *az-Zahrah*, al-Ḥuṣrī's *Zahr al-ādāb*, Ibn Maʿṣūm's *Anwār ar-rabīʿ*, etc. See also Shihāb ad-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī's *Rawḍ al-ādāb* discussed in the preceding chapter) and has also helpfully pointed out that the Dutch word for anthology *bloemlezing* is a neologism on the same flowery pattern. Aṣ-Ṣafadī, in the preface to his epigram anthology *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim*, comments that he collected the epigrams from 'the gardens of his verse' ('*ḥadāʾiq naẓmī*') and that

that 'This antonomasia generally designate[d] the great collection preserved from antiquity of Greek epigrams, i.e. the Anthologia Palatina[...]'.[6] This supremely important collection of Greek epigrams, discovered in the Bibliotheca Palatina in Heidelberg 'at the end of the 16th century', had an important impact, not only on classical Greek literary history, but on the history of European literature as well.[7] The Greek and Latin traditions rather than providing posterity with many anthologies—as is the case with Arabic—left a legacy of a few key anthologies, some of which were in fact made up of smaller poetic collections (both solo- and multi-authored). The classical tradition did not apply the term anthology to anything other than poetry collections, but in later usage the term has expanded to include a wide range of texts, including the Bible.[8] The so-called Greek Anthology was itself first introduced to wider Europe through Ianos Laskaris' (Janus Lascaris) edition, printed in Florence in 1494.[9] This collection was in fact a recension produced by one Maximos Planudes in 1301: the *Anthologia Planudea*. This anthology—a product of Byzantine Constantinople, not Athens or Alexandria—was the major source of Hellenistic poetry in Renaissance Europe until the *Anthologia Palatina* came to light at the end of the 16th century. The latter was not printed until the early 19th century, but it is 'To this MS and its scholia [that] we owe almost our entire knowledge of Greek epigram from Meleager to Agathias.'[10] These Byzantine-era anthologies were themselves based on earlier Hellenistic collections that had been assembled into one 'massive collection' by Constantine Cephalas around the year 900,

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he collected them together (*'jamaʿtuhā'*) as if he had not heard the proverb: a single jasmine's not the same as a bunch ('«*al-yāsamīnu lā yusāwī jamʿahu*»') (aṣ-Ṣafadī, *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim*, p. 4).

6. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Anthology, A. Definition' [Enzo Dagani]; see also 'Anthology B. Anthologia Palatina' [*idem*].

7. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Anthology B. Anthologia Palatina' [Enzo Dagani]. See also Margret Drabble (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to English Literature,* 5th ed., p. 32.

8. 'In the hist[ory] of Western lit[erature] the most influential a[nthology] is unquestionably the Bible, a heterogeneous collection of Jewish (Heb[rew]) and Christian (Gr[eek]) texts written over more than a millenium.' (A. Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan, *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. 'Anthology' [T. V. F. Brogan and R. A. Swanson]).

9. *Brill's New Pauly*. s. v. 'Anthologia Graeca.' [Manfred Landfester]. The autograph MS of the anthology was 'presented to the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice by Cardinal Bessarion in 1468' (ibid.).

10. *Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World,* s.v. 'Anthology'.

also in Constantinople.[11] Kathryn Gutzwiller's *Poetic Garlands* deals specifically with these Hellenistic collections, often known as 'garlands' (sing. στέφανος), which gave rise to the anthology's floral motif. The *Anthologia Latina* (or *Latin Anthology*), on the other hand, is 'a modern invention gradually created in print [...].'[12] Few notable anthologies were produced in Europe in the mediaeval period, but the genre took off in the Renaissance, especially following the emergence of the aforementioned Byzantine collections of Hellenistic poetry.[13] In contrast to the Arabic tradition, however, the production of anthologies in Antiquity, the Byzantine Empire, and mediaeval and Renaissance Europe was constrained and languid. Yet despite this proliferation, Arabic anthologies have not received anything close to proportionate critical attention from scholars. This study seeks to contribute to a burgeoning analysis of the role of anthologies in the literary sphere in pre-modern Islamicate cultures as well as in the wider world.[14]

Arabic Poetry Collections

At times, the Arabic tradition provides a refreshingly clear categorisation; one that is more direct and transparent than the literary terms we are accustomed to using in

11. *Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World,* s.v. 'Anthology'; *Oxford Classical Dictionary,* s.v. 'Anthology'. Notably this anthology has already been compared to one pre-modern Islamicate poetry collection: In *Persia and the Victorians*, Marzieh Gail, citing R. A. Nicholson (*Tales of Mystic Meaning*, p. xii) writes that 'The collection attributed to Omar Khayyam resembles the Greek Anthology in being the work of various more or less eminent hands, known and unknown, early and late. The extent of Omar's share in it is very uncertain [...].' (p. 154).

12. *Oxford Classical Dictionary,* s.v. 'Anthologia Latina'. cf. the *Appendix Vergiliana*.

13. A. Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (eds), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. 'Anthology' [T. V. F. Brogan and R. A. Swanson].

14. There are many important studies in this nascent field, chief among them A. Ferry, *Tradition and the Individual Poem*. See also N. Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book*, and *idem* (ed.), *Poems in their Place*; R. D. Altick, *The English Common Reader*, B. M. Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: cultural mediation in early modern anthologies*, S. Lerer, 'Medieval English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology'. See also, in connection to this, A. Fowler, 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After', p. 187. In the Classics, the work of K. Gutzwiller (*Poetic Garlands*) and Peter Bing (*The Scroll and the Marble*) looms large. For pre-modern Islamicate literatures, H. Kilpatrick's *Making the Great Book of Songs* is pre-eminent. See also, related to this, J. P. Decter, 'A Gathering for our time: *The Dream of the Poem* as an anthology'.

English. The terms *ikhtiyār* or *mukhtārāt* (Arabic for 'selection' or 'chosen items') are an accurate and unadorned description of the very basic action an anthologist performs.[15] These terms (derived from the root *kh-y-r*) are related to the word *khayr* ('the best') and thus—like the English 'choice'—suggest that the material has been singled out for its quality. Other Arabic words for anthology include *majmūʿah* ('collection', 'compilation') and *muntakhab* ('selection').[16] An anthologist chooses from a larger body of literature and arranges what she has chosen in order to form an anthology. Similarly there are degrees of choosing: the anthologist can choose an entire poem or can choose a few verses from a single poem, and to most people, these two processes of selection seem very different. The category of a larger body of literature is also itself rather nebulous: an anthologist is—depending on the particular constraints of her literary culture—free to define the larger body of literature as it suits her. A contemporary anthologist of British or American literature might include selected items from newspapers, magazines, blogs, a radio script, graffiti, etc. and though some may quibble over the selection, we would all admit that it is as much the anthologist's right to choose what she chooses *from* as it is to choose what she *chooses*. Then again, if an anthologist were to call her anthology *An Anthology of British Poetry* and include therein ostensibly prosaic snippets from press releases or advertising copy, we would recognise that she was making a droll point.

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15. These terms are also used to mean selections from the work of a single poet. Hilary Kilpatrick notes that the terms for anthology do not usually themselves make it into the titles of these works (*EAL*, s.v. 'anthologies, medieval' [H. Kilpatrick]). In her entry on Abū Tammām in the *EI*[3], Beatrice Gruendler helpfully lists titles of anthologies by Abū Tammām, which reflect the dominance of the *ikhtiyār* term: *Ikhtiyār ash-shuʿarāʾ al-fuḥūl* [or *Fuḥūl ash-shuʿarāʾ*] (extant), *al-Ikhtiyār min ashʿār al-qabāʾil*, *al-Ikhtiyār al-qabāʾilī al-aṣghar*, *Ikhtiyār mujarrad min ashʿār al-muḥdathīn*, and *Ikhtiyār al-muqaṭṭaʿāt* (all lost) (*EI*[3], s.v. "Abū Tammām"; this list is also given in F. Klein-Franke, 'The Ḥamāsa of Abū Tammām', Part I, p. 20, where it is attributed to al-Āmidī from his *Muwāzanah*). Daniel Nicolae has brought it to my attention that in the case of medical compendia, *kunnāsh* is a fairly common term (see e.g. al-Kashkarī's *Kunnāsh fī aṭ-ṭibb*) although it is only rarely used to describe literary collections (cf. e.g. Royal Danish Library (Copenhagen) MSS: Cod. Arab. 243, a scan of which is available on the website of the Royal Danish Library <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/339/eng//>; Cod. Arab. 245; and Cod. Arab. 274: *Kunnāsh mujtamaʿ ʿalā ʿajāʾib wa-gharāʾib*. These MSS are described in I. Perho, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts*, vol. 2, pp. 952–53; vol. 2, pp. 960–61; vol. 3, pp. 967–68, respectively).

16. See a related discussion in D. Reynolds, 'Lost Virgins Founds', pp. 74–5.

The pre-modern Arabic tradition—unlike modern scholars of the same—did not get caught up in categorising what it was doing as it anthologised. Arabophone anthologists chose from varying bodies of literature (narrative forms: including histories, romances, epics, fables, etc., epistolary forms, wisdom literature, and, of course, poetic forms and a wide range of others), which they determined to a certain extent *ad hoc.*[17] Contrary to form, they were often—though not always—silent about their attitudes concerning this choosing-process. Aṣ-Ṣafadī was a rare exception, although relative to the number of anthologies he wrote his few ruminations on the anthologising process appear quite sporadic.[18] In his anthology *al-Kashf wa-t-tanbīh ʿalā al-waṣf wa-t-tashbīh*, a large collection centred around ekphrasis and similes, aṣ-Ṣafadī explains why and how he compiled the work and how it is connected to the well known genre of *tashbīhāt* collections (this genre is discussed at length below):[19]

وقد أحببت أن أجمع من التشبيه ما وقع لمن علمته من الشعراء و تبيّن له أنه تبوّأ غرف البلاغة ولم ينبذ بالعراء فإنّه ما خلا شاعرٌ ولا كاتبٌ من تشبيه ولكن أين من نقول فيه بلسان المغاربة «آش بيه» وكلّ ديوان ففيه منه حاصل ساقه القلم باقياً [. . .]

فاخترتُ من التشبيهات التي جمعها ابن أبي عون والحاتمي وابن ظافر والثعالبي في

17. The term *adab* is famously somewhat ambiguous and can often appear all-encompassing in a way in which modern readers occasionally find discomfiting. Seeger A. Bonebakker has treated this issue in his seminal article '*Adab* and the concept of Belles-Lettres' where he remarks upon the discrepancies between the use of the term *adab* to mean 'a specialized notion of literary and linguistic scholarship' and the use of the term to describe 'the literary scholarship of a cultivated man': 'Such a definition [i.e., the latter] still raises difficulties, but it usefully restricts the field by providing both formal and conceptual criteria, and the dual emphasis on literature and general culture would enable Ibn Qutaybah's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* to be included in the genre, as well as all more or less systematically arranged anthologies and monographs that emphasize the principle of drawing on literary quotations of aesthetic merit to illustrate their thesis.' (p. 30).

18. See, in addition to the citation below, aṣ-Ṣafadī's prefatory remarks in *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ*, pp. 28–9 (discussed in A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', p. 614) as well as in the preface to his *Kitāb al-Ghayth al-musajjam fī sharḥ Lāmiyyat al-ʿajam*. Al-Marzūqī (d. 421/1030), although he was a critic and not an anthologist himself, did comment, however obliquely, on the anthologising process in his commentary on Abū Tammām's anthology, *al-Ḥamāsah*: 'It is known that every man's nature—when he is in the position of making a choice—pulls him toward what he enjoys and diverts him from what he dislikes' ('*wa-maʿlūm an ṭabʿ kull imriʾ—idhā malaka zimām al-ikhtiyār—yajdhibuhu ilā mā yastalidhdhuhu wa-yahwāhu wa-yaṣrifuhu ʿammā yanfir minhu wa-lā yarḍāhu*', Al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*, p. 4).

19. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Kashf wa-t-tanbīh ʿalā al-waṣf wa-t-tashbīh*, pp. 52–3.

شعار الندماء والوطواط الكتبي في مباهج الفكر وما في رَوْح الروح وما في مجاميع الفضلاء [...] هذا إلى ما أثبتّه من الزيادات التي لم يذكروها والتشبيهات التي لو عرفوا مظانّها لم ينكروها والتقطتها من الدواوين والمجاميع

I wanted to make a collection of similes by poets of my acquaintance who—it is plain to see—have entered the chambers of eloquence and not cast [their verses] into a wasteland. There is not a poet or a writer who hasn't tried his hand at crafting similes; but where's the one about whom we can say, like they do in Maghribī Arabic, 'Check him out!'[20] for in every *Dīwān*, [one finds] a product (*ḥāṣil*), which the pen has caused to remain[21] (*bāqī*) [] [...]

So I chose from the similes that had been collected by Ibn Abī ʿAwn,[22] al-Ḥātimī,[23] Ibn Ẓāfir,[24] ath-Thaʿālibī in *Shiʿār an-nudamāʾ*,[25] and al-Waṭwāṭ in *Mabāhij al-fikar*[26] and from *Rawḥ ar-rūḥ*[27] and the content of the collections' of the esteemed [...] And to this I added further examples, which they did not include and which they—had they seen their signs of quality—would not have left out. I picked these out from

20. *āsh bīh*: (literally) 'what about him/it?'.

21. '*bāqī*' also means 'remainder' as in mathematics, while '*ḥāṣil*' means 'product'.

22. Ibn Abī ʿAwn (d. 322/933). Aṣ-Ṣafadī is presumably referring to his *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt* (ed. ʿAbdul Muʿīd Khān, London: Luzac, 1950); see discussion below.

23. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥātimī (d. 388/998). Aṣ-Ṣafadī may be referring to al-Ḥātimī's anthology *Ḥilyat al-Muḥāḍarah* (ed. Hilāl Nājī, Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1978). Al-Ḥātimī also wrote a famous takedown of al-Mutanabbī called *ar-Risālah al-Mūḍiḥah* (ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm, Beirut: Dār Ṣādir; Dār Beirut, 1965; see also Seeger A. Bonebakker, *Materials for the History of Arabic Rhetoric*, Naples: Istituto orientale, 1975), though this is a less likely candidate.

24. ʿAlī b. Ẓāfir al-Azdī (d. 613/1216 or 623/1226), author of *Gharāʾib at-tanbīhāt ʿalā ʿajāʾib at-tashbīhāt* (eds Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām and Muṣṭafā aṣ-Ṣāwī al-Juwaynī, Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1971).

25. No information about this text survives. It is not mentioned, for example, in Bilal Orfali, 'The Works of Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī'.

26. This text is known both as *Manāhij al-fikar wa-mabāhij al-ʿibar* and *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-ʿibar*: see Jamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Waṭwāṭ al-Kutubī, *Manāhij al-fikar wa-mabāhij al-ʿibar*, 2 vols, ed. Fuat Sezgin and Mazin Amawi, Frankfurt: Institut für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften, 1990 (fascimile edition).

27. See in Bilal Orfali, 'The Works of Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī', p. 306, no. 57.

dawāwīn [sing. *dīwān*] and anthologies [*majāmīʿ*, sing. *majmūʿah*].

This explanation gives us some idea of aṣ-Ṣafadī's working method as well as the range of earlier texts available to him. An author's sources tell us a great deal about the present state of knowledge when a work was being written, and indeed Quellenforschungen have become a familar model in Arabic literary scholarship, but beyond this, when an author enumerates his influences and predecessors, he is in a way writing himself into a generic tradition; *taqārīẓ* (commendations, sing. *taqrīẓ*) and *ijāzāt* (diplomas, sing. *ijāzah*) operate in much the same way. Al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022) was another exceptional anthologist who broached the subject directly, if curtly. In the introduction to his anthology *Nūr aṭ-ṭarf wa-nawr aẓ-ẓarf* (*The Light of the Twinkling Eye and the Flower of Refinement*), he writes that the ability to anthologize ('*ikhtiyār*') is 'the stamp of one's intellect and the sign of one's quality' ('*mīsam al-ʿaql wa-maʿlam al-faḍl*').[28] However Arabic anthologists were in the main less reflective about their attitudes toward compilation as an art, although even a superficial reckoning of the number and variety of literary anthologies belies the great cultural value attributed to this activity. And yet while explicit evidence for this cultural valuation is considerably harder to come by, there are at least a few interesting cases in which anthological composition is recognized as an authorial technique.

28. al-Ḥuṣrī, *Nūr aṭ-ṭarf wa-nawr aẓ-ẓarf*, p. 103.

جَمْع

‘Collecting’

Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 1377), the epigrammatist, was the author of a very popular anthology *Kitāb Nasīm aṣ-Ṣabā* (*The Breeze of the East Wind*), a collection of poetry and wisdom literature arranged over thirty thematic chapters. In Chapter Two (*fī ash-shams wa-l-qamar*: ‘On the Sun and the Moon’), Ibn Ḥabīb presents a litany of lunar attributes in rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) and then quotes an unattributed poem that includes many of these same comparisons. This poem—and especially its concluding line—may give us some insight into the attitude of later litterateurs toward a process I would describe as curating (i.e. composing by collecting):[29]

[من الكامل]

[١] وتَرَى ٱلهِلالَ يَلوحُ في أُفُقِ ٱلسَّما يَبدو كَقَوْسٍ بالمُنَى يَرْميني

[٢] أو شَبْهِ فَخٍّ أو كَدُمْلُجِ غادةٍ وكَجانِبِ ٱلمِرآةِ والعُرجونِ

[٣] وجَبينِ حِبٍّ بالعِمامَةِ قَدْ زَها وكَوَجْهِ خَوْدٍ بالنِقابِ مَصونِ

[٤] وَكَنابِ فيلٍ أو قُلامةِ أَنْمُلٍ وكَزَوْرَقٍ وكَحاجِبٍ مَقْرونِ

[٥] أو كالسِّوارِ أُزيلَ مِنْهُ ٱلبعضُ أو قَرَبوسِ سَرْجٍ مُذْهَبٍ أو نونِ

[٦] وكَشافةِ ٱلكأسِ ٱلمُخَبَّأِ بَعْضُهُ ضِمْنَ ٱلشِّفاهِ ومِنْجَلٍ مَسْنونِ

29. Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, *Kitāb Nasīm aṣ-ṣabā*, p. 24. Many of these comparisons have precedents in the history of Arabic literature—and while they are not immediately relevant for the discussion below—a selection of these are provided here for interested readers. I owe Geert Jan van Gelder a debt of thanks for these identifications: *qaws* (see in al-Azdī, *Gharāʾib at-tashbīhāt*, p. 14); *shibh fakhkh* (ibid., p. 12); *dumluj* (Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt*, p. 12); *mirʾāh* (al-Azdī, *Gharāʾib at-tashbīhāt*, p. 12); *al-ʿurjūn* (ibid., p. 15); *jabīn* (ibid., p. 14); *nāb al-fīl* (Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt*, p. 12); *qulāmah* (ibid., pp. 12; 13); *zawraq* (ibid., p. 12); *ḥājib maqrūn* (al-Azdī, *Gharāʾib at-tashbīhāt*, p. 14); *siwār* (ibid., p. 13); *nūn* (Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt*, p. 13; al-Azdī, *Gharāʾib at-tashbīhāt*, p. 15); *ka-shāfati l-kaʾs* (ibid., p. 16); *minjal* (ibid., p. 14); *jām* (ibid., p. 16).

[٧] هـو مِـنْـجَـلُ ٱلأَعْـمـارِ لـلـحَـصْـدِ ٱلَّـذي يُـفـنـي أُولـي ٱلـتَّـزيـيـنِ والـتَّـحـسـيـنِ

[٨] وإذا مَـضَـى سَـبْـعٌ تَـراهُ كـأَنَّـهُ نِـصْـفٌ لِـتَـعْـويـذٍ بَـدا لِـعُـيـونِ

[٩] وإذا تَـكـامَـلَ صـارَ جـامـاً صـافـيـاً وكَـأَنَّـهُ مِـنْ لـؤلـؤٍ مَـكـنـونِ

[١٠] أو غـادةٌ قَـدْ أَسْـفَـرَتْ عَـنْ وَجْـهِـهـا غَـنِـيَـتْ عَـنِ ٱلـتَّـحْـسـيـنِ والـتَّـزيـيـنِ

[١١] هٰـذا هـو ٱلـمَـشْـهـورُ فـي تَـشْـبـيـهِـهِ قِـدْمـاً وذٰلِـكَ جَـمْـعُـهُ يَـكـفـيـنـي

You see how the crescent moon appears on the horizon
like an archer's bow targeting me with desire;
Or rather like half of a net or a young maid's bracelet
or better yet like a mirror-sliver or a palm-tree's bough;
or else like a be-turbaned beloved's gleaming brow,
or a girl's face protected behind a veil;
or like an elephant's tusk or the paring of a fingernail,
or else it's like a boat or a pair of joined eyebrows;
Or like a bracelet that's missing [a few links],
or like a saddle's pommel or like the letter *nūn* [ن];
Or like the rim of a goblet, partly hidden[30]
behind drinking lips, or like a sharpened sickle—
That life-lopping sickle that's used in the harvest to
obliterate the prettied and the pretty.
And seven days later, [the moon] looks to you like
half of a lucky charm that you can clearly see.
Then when it is full, it becomes a pure silver cup
made as if from a well hidden pearl;
Or else a maid who's drawn back her veil,
one who needs no embellishment, no making up.
These are the famous similes that were crafted

30. The printed edition reads: *ka-sha'fat al-ka's*, but Geert Jan van Gelder suggests that *shāfah* (or *shāffah*: 'rim, edge') is a better reading (see also Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, s.v. '*shāffah*').

in times gone by and just to collect them is enough for me.

The last line of this poem is somewhat ambiguous and I would not claim it as a smoking-gun for an anthological frame of mind, but it may nevertheless reflect a conscious embrace of the anthological method. It is clear that the poet is summarising the previous litany by acknowledging that these comparisons have perhaps become shop-worn by now and that they may strike the pre-modern reader (to say nothing of the jaded post-romantic reader) as hackneyed. And yet *saying* a thing and *meaning* it are two different things. One would not expect a poet or an anthologist who recycles clichés to draw attention to this fact, and that Ibn Ḥabīb has done so should impel us to rethink our initial impression of the litany.

Ibn Ḥabīb's audience did not groan when they heard the moon compared to a girl's face—or else, one naturally assumes, the poets would have given the habit up in the 8th century. Rather the audience must have appreciated the poet's skill in innovating and recasting comparisons, or in surprising them, or expressing the familiar more eloquently, or linking a comparison and its complements in a larger thematic structure, etc.[31] How then should we interpret the second half of this last verse: is it that the poet is emphasising the longevity of these tropes and that this is what merits approval, or is he claiming that these tropes are the most well known and that he is not interested in pursuing more recherché comparisons? These interpetations are, to my mind, somewhat unlikely, for there is a certain ambiguity in the word *jamᶜ* here.[32] The question is whether the poet means to say that he finds all these comparisons suffi-

31. See also Daniel Javitch's comments on the alien aesthetics of pre-19th-century literary composition: 'Given that inventiveness in this system of composition stemmed from the capacity to modify the already told, it becomes understandable why an author's ability to vary would be highly valued. But even if we can understand the need for such skill at *variatio*, our predilection for Romantic originality prevents us from enjoying rhetorical variation as early modern readers did. In particular, we do not share their fondness for repetition of the same action, varied in what may seem to us too subtle, because largely stylistic, ways.' (Daniel Javitch, 'The Poetics of *Variatio* in *Orlando Furioso*', p. 1).

32. Ambiguity is no cause for alarm and in fact it is a hallmark of pre-modern Islamicate culture: see Th. Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams*.

cient when taken together (scil. *jamᶜ* for *jamīᶜᵃⁿ*) or is he alluding to the value of anthologising (*jamᶜ*, 'collecting') over innovating? If we embrace this second possibility, what we have is a recognition of the place of collecting—anthologising—in the literary sphere. Assembling tropes in a single poem in one's own wording is, of course, different from assembling verses and poems by others, but the anthological method is not exclusively limited to this latter model. If that were the case, one would have to draw a specious distinction between auto-anthologies (or *libelli*) and allo-anthologies (or *anthologiae*), which would only continue to feed our anachronistic, post-romantic bias about originality and authorship, while misrepresenting the attitudes of pre-modern Arab litterateurs and their audience. The anthological method is rather a compositional method; a bundle of authorial strategies dependent upon implicit principles, attitudes, techniques, and goals. To read the last line of the poem as a statist disavowal of an original literary impulse would be reductive, just as it would be vulgar and inaccurate to characterise the poet's adroit recycling of classic tropes as derivative. The poet's achievement depends chiefly upon his ability to rephrase eloquently, but his added-value—his greater achievement—depends upon his ability to collect and curate these eloquent rephrasings in order to create a new whole.[33] I expect many Arabic anthologists felt the same as al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022), who in the introduction to his anthology *Zahr al-ādāb wa-thimār al-albāb* (*The Flower of Literary Arts and the Fruit of Hearts* (lit. *Minds*)) wrote that the thing he was most proud of in his book was his excellent selection because a man's ability to pick out the very best is a reflection of his intellect.[34]

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33. Geert Jan van Gelder has spoken of the notion of *insijām* in similar terms (G. J. van Gelder, 'Poetry for Easy Listening: *Insijām* and Related Concepts in Ibn Ḥijjah's *Khizānat al-Adab*', *MSR*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2003, pp. 31–48) and see also in a *taqrīẓ* on al-Badrī's *Ghurrat aṣ-ṣabāḥ*, f. 4a, l. 1: *'ḥusn insijāmih*'.

34. '[...] *wa-laysa lī fī taʾlīfihi min al-iftikhār akthar min ḥusn al-ikhtiyār wa-khtiyār al-marʾ qiṭᶜah min ᶜaqlih tadull ᶜalā takhallufihi aw faḍlih* [...]' ['The thing I am most proud of in writing this is the quality of my curation (*ikhtiyār*), for a man's curation (*ikhtiyār*) is part of his intellect and it indicates whether he is inadequate or excellent.'] (al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb wa-thimār al-albāb*, ed. Zakī Mubārak, vol. 1, p. 3). See also a similar sentiment expressed in *idem*, *Nūr aṭ-ṭarf wa-nawr aẓ-ẓarf*, pp. 101–5. Geert Jan van Gelder informed me that this motto first appears in al-Jāḥiẓ's *al-Bayān wa-t-tabyīn* where it is attributed to Yūnus b. Ḥabīb (al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-t-tabyīn*, ed. ᶜAbd as-Salām Hārūn, vol. 1, p. 77). See also in ar-

Although it strikes many modern readers as strange, there is no shortage of evidence to demonstrate that pre-modern poets, readers, anthologists, and critics were all aware of what some people continue to deride as the hackneyed tropes of classical Arabic poetry: the stock comparisons, modes, totems, etc. Poets, critics, and anthologists documented, parodied, celebrated, repurposed, and recast these tropes constantly over more than a millennium and every literary sophisticate was expected to have a comprehensive knowledge of these tropes, as well as their trajectory in literary history. With this paramount contextual circumstance in mind, Ibn Ḥabīb's perspective can be read as combining his interest in literary history with his regard for the anthological method of composition. Likewise other such collections, including several of the anthological types we will survey below, operate on both anthological and literary historical planes. In his treatise-cum-epigram-anthology on birthmarks, aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 1363) presents a great deal of pseudo-scientific, historical, and theological information in the two introductory sections (sing. *muqaddimah*).[35] In the first of these introductory sections (*al-muqaddimah al-ūlā*, the first premise), he presents a lexicographical discussion of *khāl* and *shāmah* (both 'mole') with attestations from poetry, Quran, prophetic sayings, and other literary sources. In the second introductory section (*al-muqaddimah ath-thāniyah*, the second premise), he discusses medical opinions about the nature of naevi, the reasons for their appearance, and interpretations of their position on the body, in line with divinatory techniques (*ʿilm al-firāsah*).[36] Aṣ-Ṣafadī even includes a list of famous personalities that were known to have had moles. What is most interesting for our present discussion is that in the second introductory section, aṣ-Ṣafadī gives the reader a précis of the poetic comparisons suitable for the topic of naevi:[37]

وقد اختلف الشعراء في تشبيه الخال وانا أذكر الآن ما يجوز من التشبيه الواقع في ذلك

Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ* (Būlāq: Jamīʿat al-Maʿārif, 1287/1870, vol. 1, p. 55): '*ikhtiyār ar-rajul ash-shiʿr qiṭʿah min ʿaqlih*' ['Curating (*ikhtiyār*) poetry is part of one's intellect'].

35. On the birthmark-motif in poetry, see further in Chapter Six below. On the (syllogistic) structure of aṣ-Ṣafadī's anthologies, see Ibn Nubātah's brief comment recorded in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ*, ed. Sālim, vol. 2, p. 322.

36. See *EI*², s.v. 'Firāsa' [T. Fahd].

37. aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl*, ed. al-ʿUqayl, pp. 171–73.

بحسب الإمكان فأقول يجوز أن يُشبّه بنقطةٍ لنون الحاجب وفيه تسامح وبنقطةٍ لخاء الخدّ وبنقطةٍ سَقَطَتْ من قلمٍ كَتَبَ نون الحاجب وبنقطةِ غاليةٍ على تفّاحةٍ وبنقطةٍ انحدَرَتْ من كحل الجفون وبكوكبٍ كَسَفَ وبقطعةِ عنبر في مجمرٍ أو ندٍّ أو مسكٍ أو بأثرِ شرارة وَقَعَتْ في ثوبِ أطلسَ أحمرَ وبفحمةٍ من نارٍ وبجنانٍ يَحْرُسُ حديقةَ وردٍ وبنكتةِ الشقيق وبملكٍ من الزنج في حلّةٍ حمراءَ وبراهبٍ يتعبّد وببلبلٍ في سياجِ العذار وبحَبّةٍ لفخّ العذار وبحَبّةِ القلب وقد وَقَعَتْ بنارِ الخدّ وبالحجر الأسود في كعبةِ الوجه الحسن وببلالٍ يؤذّن في صبحِ الغُرّة وبكرةٍ تلقّفها صَوْلجانُ العذار وبختامِ مسكٍ لمدام الريق وبذبابةٍ وَقَعَتْ على شهدِ الريق وبمجرمٍ في النار وبهنديٍّ تعبّد بإلقاء نفسه في النار.

Poets have compared birthmarks in various ways, and here I will mention what types of comparisons are appropriate to the extent possible. I say that it can be compared to:

1. the dot of the *nūn* [ن] of the eyebrows (poetic licence here);
2. the dot of the *khāʾ* [خ] of the cheek (*khadd*);
3. a drop [of ink] that has fallen from a pen writing the *nūn* [ن] of the eyebrows;
4. a spot of *ghāliyah* perfume on an apple;
5. a drop that has fallen from eyeliner [drawn] on the eyelids;
6. an eclipsed planet;
7. a piece of ambergris in a censer;
8. [a piece of] *nadd* incense;
9. [a piece of] musk;
10. a spot burnt by a spark on a red satin garment;
11. a burning coal;
12. a gardener protecting a rose garden;
13. the spot of an anemone;
14. a king of the blacks (*zanj*) dressed in red;
15. a monk in prayer;
16. a nightingale in the snares of [the beloved's] incipient beard;

17. bait in the trap of [the beloved's] incipient beard;
18. the kernel of the heart (*ḥabbat al-qalb*) fallen into the fire of [the beloved's] cheek;
19. the black stone of the *Kaʿbah* of a beautiful face;
20. Bilāl reciting the call to prayer at dawn;[38]
21. a ball caught in the polo stick of [the beloved's] incipient beard;
22. a seal of musk on the wine of [the beloved's] saliva;
23. a fly alighting on the nectar of [the beloved's] saliva;
24. a transgressor in the fire;
25. a Hindu being pious by throwing himself into the fire.

These similes are well represented in the poetry anthology that makes up the latter half of aṣ-Ṣafadī's text. Aṣ-Ṣafadī refers to this collection of epigrams as *an-natījah* (the conclusion) and there presents 372 poems arranged alphabetically by rhyme letter. Notably, aṣ-Ṣafadī tends to include poems of his own at the end of many of the rhyme-letter sections.[39] While aṣ-Ṣafadī chose to organise his collection of naevi-epigrams by rhyme letter and not theme, his list of similes testifies to the fact that the repeated use of specific metaphors and figures was regarded as a matter of course and that both poets and anthologists recognised that there was a further stage of composition beyond the crafting of comparisons. For poets, this meant that—in addition to attempting to create new comparisons—they were principally concerned with re-casting well known comparisons in innovative ways. For anthologists, this meant that they could create new works of literary compilation by arranging examples of these poetic comparisons in *tashbīhāt*-collections, for example, as well as in other sorts of anthologies. One strategy in this process of compilation, which I call variation, is explicated in Chapter Six below.

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38. The Prophet's *muʾadhdhin*, see *EI*[2], s.v. 'Bilāl b. Rabāḥ' [W. ʿArafat]. That Bilāl was a black slave from Ethiopia is relevant for the imagery here.

39. See in al-ʿUqayl's introduction: '*wa-qad iltazama aṣ-Ṣafadī an yakhtim ākhir akthar al-qawāfī bi-shayʾ min naẓmihi* [...]' ['aṣ-Ṣafadī made sure to conclude most of the chapters organized by rhyme-letter with compositions of his own [...] '] (aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl*, ed. al-ʿUqayl, p. 69).

‘Tesserated’ (or Tessellated) Anthologies

> [The post-*Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* collections] are not just collections of poems; each of them has its own structural axis, around which the material is organized. It is either the historical perspective represented by the *ṭabaqāt* arrangement (al-Jumaḥī) or the arrangement according to poetic genres (*aghrāḍ*), with or without the additional subdivision according to poetic motifs (*maʿānī*) (al-Qurashī, Abū Tammām, and al-Buḥturī).[40]

Suzanne Stetkevych has argued that ‘[i]n his *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah* Abū Tammām [(d. 231/846)] realized a degree of influence and popularity unequalled by any other anthology of classical Arabic poetry.’[41] It was, as Stetkevych says, ‘[t]he first anthology to be constructed *ʿalā al-ʾabwāb* (by chapters according to topic or theme).’[42] Decades earlier, the British orientalist Charles Lyall (1845–1920) wrote comparing Abū Tammām’s ‘brilliant anthology’ with those of al-Mufaḍḍal and al-Aṣmaʿī, ‘[in *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*] the pieces are selected gems, pruned of all weak and unessential verses, and perhaps here and there adapted by the compiler [...]’.[43] Suzanne Stetkevych has offered a beautiful contrast of the two styles of citation and the number of pieces cited in *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (‘like galleries exhibiting a variety of paintings by various artists’) with Abū Tammām’s *al-Ḥamāsah* (‘rather like a mosaic of tiny tesserae of poetic fragments that are barely distinguishable from one another in the overall pictorial texture’).[44]

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40. D. Frolov, *Classical Arabic Verse: history and theory of* ʿarūḍ, p. 222.

41. S. P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the poetics of the ʿAbbāsid age*, p. 239. On this very well known anthology, see in ibid., Part Three, as well as Felix Klein-Franke, ‘The Ḥamāsa of Abū Tammām’, Parts One and Two; see also Sezgin, *GAS*, Vol. 2, pp. 66–72, and al-Asad, *Maṣādir ash-shiʿr al-jāhilī*, pp. 582–91, esp. pp. 582–84. It is important to note that Abū Tammām’s *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah* is regarded as one of the foundational texts of the mediaeval Islamicate cultural tradition in the paradigm developed by Western scholarship: it was published for the European scholarly community in the first half of the 19th century by Freytag along with a Latin translation as *Hamasae Carmina cum Tebrisii scholiis integris primum edidit, indicibus instruxit, versione latina et commentario illustravit*, and an edition of the text was also produced by Kabīr al-Dīn Aḥmad in Calcutta in 1856. Another edition of the text along with al-Tibrīzī’s commentary was printed at Būlāq in 1296/1878–79. The text was also translated into German by Rückert in 1846. On the poet-anthologist himself, see *EI*[3], s.v. ‘Abū Tammām’ [Beatrice Gruendler].

42. S. P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the poetics of the ʿAbbāsid age*, p. 239.

43. Lyall writing in the introduction to his translation of *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (*The Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, ed. and trans. C. Lyall, vol. 2, p. xxvi).

44. S. P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsid Age*, p. 257. This distinction between

Poetry anthologies, which—like Abū Tammām's *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*—present 'a mosaic of fragments' are often organised by *maʿnā* (in this sense, 'theme' or 'motif').[45] al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897), a poet of the generation following Abū Tammām, compiled an anthology of his own also known as *al-Ḥamāsah*, but the anthologies are radically different as regards their structure.[46] Where Abū Tammām presented poems under a rubric of ten 'generic'[47] headings, al-Buḥturī divided his anthology 'in[to] 174 very subtle graded chapters'.[48] This latter anthology, which '[had] never been regarded with the same esteem by Arab philologists as that of his older contemporary Abû Tammâm [...]',[49]

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the two collections is not new: see, for example, the following from at-Tibrīzī's introduction to his *Sharḥ al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (vol. 1, p. 1):

> سألتني أدام الله توفيقك أن أشرح لك القصائد المفضّليات بعد فراغي من شرح كتاب الحماسة لاتّفاق الناس على أنّه ليس فيما أُختير من المقصّدات أحسن ممّا اختاره المفضّل بن محمّد الضبّي كما أنّه ليس في المقطّعات أحسن من اختيار أبي تمّام حبيب بن أوس الطائي في الحماسة
>
> You asked me—may God prolong your success—to explicate the poems of the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* to you once I was through writing my commentary on *Kitāb al-Ḥamāsah* because everyone agrees that there is no selection of *muqaṣṣadāt* (odes) better than the selection made by al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad al-Ḍabbī, just as everyone agrees that there is no selection of *muqaṭṭaʿāt* better than the selection made by Abū Tammām b. Aws al-Ṭāʾī in his *Ḥamāsah*.

45. S. P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsid Age*, p. 257.

46. al-Buḥturī, *al-Ḥamāsah*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ḥuwar and Aḥmad Muḥammad ʿUbayd, Abu Dhabi: al-Majmaʿ ath-Thaqāfī, 1428/2007. See also *EI*[2], s.v. 'al-Buḥturī' [C. Pellat]; *EAL* 1:161–62 [J. S. Meisami]. The title or category *Ḥamāsah* came to represent a sub-genre of poetry anthologies in its own right (see *EI*[2], s.v. 'Ḥamasa i. Arabic literature' [C. Pellat]).

47. Echoing the distinction made by Pellat (*EI*[2], s.v. 'al-Buḥturī' [C. Pellat]).

48. *EI*[2], s.v. 'Ḥamasa i. Arabic literature' [C. Pellat].

49. From C. Snouck Hurgronje's preface to the facsimile edition of the Leiden MS of al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsah*, p. v. Like *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* and *al-Ḥamāsah*, al-Buḥturī's poetry anthology was one of the first texts incorporated into western scholarship on Arabic literature. A facsimile edition was printed in 1909 and already in 1863 [published in 1864] Theodor Nöldeke gave a brief introduction to the work and an edition and translation of two of the chapters (nos 171 and 172) in his *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der alten Araber* (pp. 183–99)*:* 'Die Ḥamâsa Albuḥturî's (cod. Lugd. 889) steht zwar ihrem Vorbilde, der Ḥamâsa Abû Tammâm's, an Bedeutung der in sie aufgenommenen poetischen Stücke im Allgemeinen sehr nach, hat aber doch auch ihre eigenthümlichen Vorzüge. Die Eintheilung in sehr viele Kapitel, deren jedes einen ganz bestimmten Gegenstand behandelt (z. B. 'was die Dichter zum Lobe des Alters sagen', 'was sie zum Tadel des Alters sagen' u.s.w.), macht es uns möglich, über sehr verschiedene Dinge eine Reihe ähnlicher, sich gegenseitig erläuternder Dichterstellen benutzen zu können, die wir sonst schwer zusammenfänden.' ['Although al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsah* (cod. Lugd. 889) follows its predecessor, Abū

includes chapters on martial themes,[50] sentimental themes,[51] *memento mori* themes,[52] six chapters on grey hair and aging,[53] etc. The work is not only tessellated in its divisional arrangment, but also within its individual chapters, which are composed of short pieces that, in their brevity, appear fragmentary. For example, Chapter Ninety-Four on 'What has been said about the vicissitudes of time, how it elevates some and brings others low' (*'fīmā qīla fī taqallub ad-dahr bi-ahlihi wa-rafʿihi qawmᵃⁿ wa-khafḍihi ākharīn'*) is made up of three quatrains, one tercet, one couplet, and one one-liner.[54] It is the very nature of this poetic collocation that focuses the reader's attention on the interaction between theme or motif—prescribed in the chapter heading—and an individual poet's manipulation of tropes, diction, metaphor, etc. Also because the pieces are grouped together without intervening critical commentary, the reader also has the sensation of being immersed in a session of poetic riffing and reinterpretation that—at

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Tammām's *Ḥamāsah*, closely in the importance of the poetic pieces recorded in it, it also has its own particular merits. The division into a great many chapters, which each deal with a distinct subject (e. g. "What poets have to say in praise of growing old", "What poets have to say against growing old", etc.), makes it possible for us to access a wide range of various, similar poetic citations, which help explain one another, which would have otherwise been very difficult for us to amass.'] (p. 183).

50. e.g., 'What has been said about killing' (*'mā qīla fī al-qatl'*), 'What has been said about going out to meet the enemy in the desert' (*'mā qīla fī al-iṣḥār li-l-aʿdāʾ'*), 'What has been said about feigning toward one's enemies' (*'mā qīla fī mujāmalat al-aʿdāʾ'*), 'What has been said about the glory of death in battle' (*'mā qīla fī istiṭābat al-mawt ʿinda al-ḥarb'*), 'What has been said to excuse fleeing' (*'mā qīla fī al-iʿtidhār min al-firār'*), etc.

51. e.g., 'What has been said about fraternising with generous people and praising them and promoting affection and devotion with the magnanimous' (*'mā qīla fī muwākhāt al-kirām wa-ḥamdihā wa-īthār ahl al-faḍl bi-l-murūʾah wa-ṣ-ṣilah'*), 'What has been said about one whose affection is suspect and whose friendship is unreliable' (*'mā qīla fī-man tuttahamu mawaddatuhu wa-lā yūthaqu bi-ikhāʾihi'*), 'What has been said about true devotion and putting the interests of one you're fond of before your own' (*'mā qīla fī ikhlāṣ al-wadd li-man wadidta wa-tark ar-riḍā lahum mā lā tarḍā bihi li-nafsaka'*), 'What has been said about going back on your word' (*'mā qīla fī ikhlāf al-waʿd'*), etc.

52. e.g., 'What has been said about the vicissitudes of fate and its wiping out whole nations' (*'mā qīla fī ghalabat az-zamān wa-ifnāʾihi al-umam'*), 'What has been said about growing weary of life and the boredom of a long life' (*'mā qīla fī at-tabarrum bi-l-ḥayāh wa-l-malālah min ṭūl al-ʿumr'*), 'What has been said about schadenfreude and warnings about its consequences' (*'fīmā qīla fī ash-shamātah wa-taḥdhīr ʿāqibatihā'*), etc.

53. e.g., 'What has been said about youth and old age' (*'fīmā qīla fī ash-shabāb wa-sh-shayb'*), 'What has been said by way of apology for going grey' (*'fīmā qīla fī al-iʿtidhār min ash-shayb'*), etc.

54. al-Buḥturī, *al-Ḥamāsah*, ed. Ḥuwar and ʿUbayd, pp. 313–15.

a very basic level—channels an implicit narrative of literary history and outlines the boundaries of a canon. As Lorenzo Argentieri has said about a related genre, the Hellenistic epigram collection:

> In earlier centuries allusion between authors and models had remained implicit, and it lay with the well-read reader to grasp and appreciate the reference; now this relationship was physically visible on the page, and this juxtaposition allowed the reader better to compare and appraise. Thus poem vied with poem, and the youngest was the anthologist himself. As editor-poet, he was a new figure, not just collecting other people's epigrams, but adding his own and thus competing with his masters.[55]

Similarly in another thematically organised, if less comprehensive, poetry anthology composed in the tenth century, we see how Arabic anthologists devised the arrangement of brief poems along narrow thematic lines to achieve this same immersive effect of reiterated trope.

In as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ's (d. 362/972–3) epicurean themed poetry anthology, *al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb wa-l-mashmūm wa-l-mashrūb*, we find many of the features that would come to typify the epigram anthology genre in the period from the 14th to 19th century.[56] The title of this poetry anthology foregrounds its thematic focus and—of course—its quadripartite division: within each of these four broad categories, as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ further subdivides the collection of primarily ekphrastic poetry (*waṣf*) into chapters on hair, temples, *ʿidhār* (incipient beards), birthmarks, cheeks, etc. (in the

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55. L. Argentieri, 'Meleager and Philip as Epigram Collectors', p. 149.

56. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'al-Sarī al-Raffāʾ' [W. Heinrichs]; See also on as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ's poetry J. Sharlet, 'Inside and Outside the Pleasure Scene in Poetry about Locations by al-Sarī al-Raffāʾ al-Mawṣilī', *JAL*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2009, pp. 133–69; and *idem*, 'The Thought that Counts in Gift Exchange Poetry by Kushājim, al-Ṣanawbarī, and al-Sarī al-Raffāʾ', *MEL*, vol. 14, no. 3, December 2011, pp. 235–70. The anthology has been edited by Miṣbāḥ al-Ghalāwanjī [vols. 1–3] and Mājid Ḥasan adh-Dhahabī [vol. 4], who took over after al-Ghalāwanjī's death. See also Joseph Sadan, 'Maidens' Hair and Starry Skies[:] Imagery system and *maʿānī* guides; the practical side of Arabic poetics as demonstrated in two manuscripts' in which he discusses this anthology. J. Sadan's important demonstration of how poems are arranged within sections on the same trope or motif is a key influence on the analysis elaborated in Chapter Six below.

volume on the beloved, *kitāb al-maḥbūb*);[57] on spring, lightning, clouds and rain, torrents and streams, water flowing through green fields, etc. (in the volume on the aromatic, *kitāb al-mashmūm*); and on the names of wine, drinking paraphernalia, grapevines, how wine is poured from jugs, and on jugs, the redness of wine, its limpidity, its scent, etc. (in the volume on the potable, *kitāb al-mashrūb*); *kitāb al-muḥibb*—the volume on the trials lovers face—is not subdivided. This anthology is discussed as part of a set of naevi anthologies in the chapter on variation below (Chapter Six), but I mention it here as it is a relatively early example in the history of Arabic epigram collections and an important text in the tradition of Arabic ekphrastic (*waṣf*) poetry.

Another form of tessellated anthology—alongside *Ḥamāsah* collections and ekphrastic collections—is the *maʿānī* collection (or treatise).[58] Among these texts, Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī's (d. 400/1010) *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* is an exemplar of the genre.[59] It includes poetic citations organised by *gharaḍ* (*al-bāb al-awwal: madīḥ, iftikhār, tahānī*; *al-bāb ath-thānī*: further panegyric, *al-bāb ath-thālith: muʿātabāt, hijāʾ, iʿtidhār*), followed by poetic citations on a diverse range of topics, including equine descriptions (*al-bāb ar-rābiʿ*),

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57. *ʿidhār*: this term refers to incipient beard growth and is often used synecdochally in poetry to refer to the impropriety—or imminent impropriety—of male-male attraction, affection, or sexual activity. The paradox in poetry is that although it is the normative assumption that the beginning of beard growth, an indication of advanced puberty and adolescence, should signify the end (or if not, then the perversion) of a male-male attraction or relationship, it is almost always a *topos* of beauty as well. It is a common subject in epigram collections, see most notably an-Nawājī's *Khalʿ al-ʿidhār fī waṣf al-ʿidhār*.

58. This category is distinct from sections in other works that operate like brief *maʿānī* collections (e.g. the section in ash-Shābushtī's *Kitāb ad-Diyārāt* (ed. Kūrkīs ʿAwwād, pp. 248–50) which Hilary Kilpatrick says '[...] could have been taken from a book of *maʿānī*, poetic themes and motifs, with its quotations of verses by four different poets, Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās, Abū Nuwās, Sulaymān ibn Muḥammad al-Umawī, and Abū al-Baṣīr, on setting out on the pilgrimage and then changing their minds, preferring to spend the time drinking at a monastery and then to rejoin the pilgrims on their way home.' (H. Kilpatrick, 'Monasteries through Muslim eyes: the *Diyārāt* books', p. 34). Other examples of this include passages in Muḥammad and Saʿīd b. Hāshim al-Khālidī, *Kitāb al-Ashbāh wa-n-naẓāʾir min ashʿār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-jāhiliyyah wa-l-mukhaḍramīn*.

59. *EI*[3], s.v. 'al-ʿAskarī, Abū Hilāl' [Beatrice Gruendler]. Gruendler cites a new critical edition of this text prepared by Aḥmad Salīm Ghānim: Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2003 [unseen]. See also the edition by Aḥmad Ḥasan Basaj (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1994) and an earlier edition (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1352/1933).

fire, the colours of food, and wine (*al-bāb al-khāmis*), stars, night, morning, the sun, and the day (*al-bāb as-sādis*), clouds, rain, lightning, thunder, snow, and bitter cold ('*aḍ-ḍarīb*'), gardens, lights, fruit, and the breeze (*al-bāb as-sābiʿ*), etc. These collections were decidedly more critical or rhetorically minded than other varieties of literary anthologies, insofar as they served an informational or didactic purpose, but they generally mirror the style of tessellated anthologies in terms of their composition.

Two later poetry anthologies organised around *maʿānī* give an idea of how this format shifted direction in later periods. Three centuries after al-ʿAskarī, Zayn ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (d. 696/1297) produced a *maʿānī*-anthology entitled *Maghānī al-maʿānī* (*The Abodes of Literary Motifs*).[60] This Mamluk-era collection differs from al-ʿAskarī's ur-text in its scope, but the major difference between these works is the anthologist's selection criteria. While ar-Rāzī does not stray very far from the (traditional) poetic tropes identified in al-ʿAskarī's collection—he includes, for example, chapters on *ghazal* and descriptions of the natural world, bacchic verse, seriousness, complaint, and making light, praiseworthy attributes, blame, apology, congratulation and encomium, invective—ar-Rāzī declares that his aim is to collect 'novel and peculiar comparisons' ('*al-maʿānī al-mubtakarah wa-l-gharībah*').[61] The editor of ar-Rāzī's anthology, Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, remarks that ar-Rāzī 'collected most of his samples from the poetry of the "moderns", North Africans, Egyptians, and Syrians, and you will rarely come across an old poet among them for most of the poets lived shortly before he did or were his contemporaries.'[62] Thus while the thematic scope of ar-Rāzī's anthology does not differ from that of earlier *kutub al-maʿānī*, its particular focus on contemporary poetry reflects a salient feature of many Mamluk and Ottoman era anthologies. Another model Mamluk literary product also took the form of a *maʿānī*-collection: when Ṣafī ad-

60. Zayn ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr ar-Rāzī, *Maghānī al-maʿānī*, ed. Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, Alexandria: Munshaʾat al-Maʿārif, 1987.

61. See in the author's introduction and the individual chapter headings (ibid., pp. 34–5).

62. '[...] *jamaʿa muʿẓam amthilatihi min shiʿr al-muḥdathīn wa-l-maghāribah wa-l-miṣriyyīn wa-sh-shawām, wa-qalīlᵃⁿ mā taʿthur baynahum ʿalā shāʾir qadīm. wa-akthar hāʾulāʾ ash-shuʿarāʾ mimman sabaqa ʿasṛahu bi-qalīl, wa-kathīr minhum mimman ʿāṣarūhu*' (ibid., p. 32).

Dīn al-Ḥillī produced an anthology organised by *maʿnā*, he arranged his collection around the typical axis of themes, but rather than select canonical examples à la ʿAskarī or contemporary examples à la Rāzī, he chose to draw on his own poetry, thus creating a thematically organised *dīwān,* which Wolfhart Heinrichs called an auto-anthology.[63] This sort of text differs from the Abbasid-era *dīwān* model in that rather than attempt to collect all of a poet's poetry, these selective *dawāwīn* (sing. *dīwān*) offer a segment of the poet's *oeuvre*, often delineated by theme. Selective *dawāwīn*—in the form of auto-anthologies (e.g. Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's *al-ʿĀṭil al-ḥālī*, Ibn Nubātah's *Muntakhab al-hadiyyah*, etc. in addition to the auto-epigram anthologies mentioned in the preceding chapter), as well as in recensions (e.g. Ibn Nubātah's recension of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry: *Talṭīf al-mizāj,* Ibn Ḥijjah's recension of al-Qīrāṭī's poetry: *Taḥrīr al-Qīrāṭī*, etc.)—became perhaps the most widespread and popular form of solo-authored poetic collection in the Mamluk period and beyond.[64]

Another variety of tessellated anthology, and a close relative of *maʿānī* collections, is the *tashbīhāt* collection, mentioned briefly above. *Tashbīhāt* texts—collections of similes on many different themes—are, by any reasonable measure, a form of poetry anthology.[65] They include only very brief quotations, often excerpts of larger poems, and are arranged thematically. The entire corpus of citations forms a rhetorical set as it was chosen for the presence of simile or comparison. The *muḥdathūn* poets are very well represented in Ibn Abī ʿAwn's (d. 322/933) *Kitab at-Tashbīhāt*.[66] The editor ʿAbdul Muʿīd Khān tells us that the text draws on the work of 'four hundred and seventy-six

63. See W. Heinrichs, 'Der Teil und das Ganze: die Auto-Anthologie Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillīs'.

64. See Thomas Bauer's category of 'Die Werkanthologie': examples of which include Ibn Nubātah's auto-epigram-anthology *al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī*, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's *as-Sabʿah as-sayyārah an-nayyirāt*, al-Nawājī's *al-Maṭāliʿ ash-shamsiyyah fī al-madāʾiḥ an-nabawiyyah*, etc. (Th. Bauer, 'Literarische Anthologien der Mamlūkenzeit', pp. 78–9).

65. See *EI*², s.v. 'Tashbīh' [G. J. van Gelder]. Aṣ-Ṣafadī mentions that Ibn Nubātah asked to borrow his copy of Ibn Ẓāfir's *tashbīhāt*-work: *Gharāʾib at-tanbīhāt ʿalā ʿajāʾib at-tashbīhāt* (see aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ*, ed. Sālim, vol. 2, pp. 395–97.)

66. For a discussion of Ibn Abī ʿAwn's biography, see the editor's introduction in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *The Kitāb al-tashbīhāt of Ibn Abī ʿAun*, ed. M. ʿAbdul Muʿīd Ḵẖān, pp. xix–xxi, as well as *EI*², s.v. 'Ibn Abī ʿAwn' [M. ʿAbdul Muʿīd Ḵẖān].

poets,' and among them, he has identified 'forty-five well-known poets of the Jāhiliya and the early days of Islām, forty of the Umayyad period and about fifty of ʿAbbāsid times.'[67] Ibn Abī ʿAwn's work is a critical text as well; a large proportion of the anthologist's sparse commentary is devoted to remarking on the relative merit of a particular citation. Ibn Abī ʿAwn explains the reason behind the work in his introduction:

> وأنا أُثبت لك في هذا الكتاب أبياتاً من التشبيه مختارةً وأتخلّل المعاني المختلفة والتشبيهات المتداولة إلى الأبيات الطريفة النادرة وأقتصر على جملةٍ يكون لك فيها حظّ ومتعة وتأدّب ورياضة وأتجنّب الإطالة التي يتلقّاها الملالة وأُتبع ذلك بكتاب في الأمثال وكتاب في الاستعارة [...][68]

> In this book, I record verses of similes for you that I have selected and I mix the various themes and up-to-date similes with pleasant and exceptional verses[.] I limit myself to a collection that will serve you well and amuse, edify, and invigorate you and I stay away from verbosity, which is met with boredom, and I will follow this book up with a book on proverbs and book on metaphors [...].

It is clear from the introduction that Ibn Abī ʿAwn saw his work as part of a trilogy on different rhetorical features in poetry, but what concerns us is the fact that in organising his soi-disant *ikhtiyār*, Ibn Abī ʿAwn chose to structure it as an anthology organised by theme (*maʿnā)*. This technique of anthological organization, characterised by the citation of a great many pieces of poetry—in this case of very short length—with very little commentary by the anthologist, is, as we have seen, a common enough feature of the Arabic literary landscape, but that it is an acceptable format for a text as schematic as a *tashbīhāt* (or *maʿānī*) collection testifies to its adaptability.[69]

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67. Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *The Kitāb al-tashbīhāt of Ibn Abī ʿAun*, p. xv.

68. ibid., p. 2.

69. What prose one finds in the text is confined to the anthologist's brief evaluative remarks on the poems—as I have mentioned—and bits of *akhbār*; here, the historical background of certain poems (examples of prose passages, see e.g. pp. 26–7; 312–18).

One notes, however, that *tashbīhāt* texts demand resources different from those demanded by poetic commentaries (*shurūḥ*), or collections (*dawāwīn*), or even the anthologies, which we previously mentioned (e.g., *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, *al-Ḥamāsah*, etc.). They do not attempt to explicate difficult verses, or gather together the work of a single poet, or gather samples of the work of many poets. They are rhetorical texts, focused on a specific rhetorical feature, and they would have appealed to a readership with some understanding of poetry. They represent, therefore, a second stage in the collection of poetry. We do not know why the Arabic literary tradition embraced poetry anthologies so early and with such enthusiasm, but that it did so is undeniable. These *tashbīhāt* texts exemplify a further stage of anthologising: sometimes presenting a few verses, or just one, in an array of finely proportioned motifs centred around one rhetorical technique. These texts go beyond anthologising as collecting. They are not primed to preserve—or even to present—a cultural heritage, if that is the motivation we choose to impute to the first wave of Arabic anthologies like *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, etc. A cursory survey of the topical arrangement of these texts makes clear how ill-suited they would be as repositories.

Among the ninety-one chapters in Ibn Abī ʿAwn's *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt* and the sixty-six chapters in Ibn al-Kattānī's (d. 420/1029) collection, we find similes for the astronomic, atmospheric, climatic, horticultural, zoological and ornithological, riverain, botanic, alimentary, alcoholic, equine, bellicose, numismatic, sartorial, morbid, not to mention similes on musical instruments, crucifixion, implements for writing and war, miserliness and generosity, facial hair and hair styles, and a host of other topics.[70] These topics are not as surprising as such a list may make them seem; they represent many of the usual domains in the Arabic poetic constellation to which specialists have long grown accustomed. Nevertheless, what is remarkable about lists like this and the similarly wide range of topics addressed in other anthologies is that

70. On Abū ʿAbd Allah Muḥammad b. al-Kattānī aṭ-Ṭabīb the author of *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt min ashʿār ahl al-Andalus*, see *EAL* vol. 1, pp. 341–42 and also Iḥsān ʿAbbās' introduction to his edition (pp. 7–12) for what biographical information exists. See also G. Schoeler, 'Ibn al-Kattānī's *Kitāb at-Tashbīhāt* und das Problem des „Hispanismus" der andalusisch-arabischen Dichtung'.

they outline the contours of contemporary literary taste. One could argue that the diversity of topics and themes testifies to the sophistication of these anthologies and that they inhabit a stage beyond mere documentation (i.e. in the sense of *tadwīn*), lecture notes, or student cribs, but moreover this variety of subjects is a response to literary demand. It seems that these anthologies were meant to present the constellation of acceptable—as well as fashionable—poetic subjects. In this way, these collections serve a normative and canon-prescribing function. Collation—or, less melodiously, anthologising—is an act of literary filtration and thus the production of these anthologies was a normative and pedagogic act.

Tashbīhāt texts—as well as the other varieties of tessellated poetic collections we have discussed—were created, it would seem, to fulfil an appetite for varied poetic expression. These texts—like other literary anthologies—are centred around a specific image of literary history; an image of tradition, progression, and variegation in the expression of common literary themes and motifs. These collections are culled texts, which present the best (or most outstanding, or most remarkable, or worst) of a set, and it is in the *tashbīhāt* texts that we detect perhaps most explicitly the interest of readers and anthologists in the presentation of poetry along a literary historical axis. Rather than focusing on individual poems sequentially, as in the case of a commentary or the work of an individual poet, which were usually arranged alphabetically by rhyme-letter, *tashbīhāt* and other *maʿānī* collections gather a variety of brief citations based around a particular rhetorical feature and collate them under narrow subject headings. Of course, the authors of *tashbīhāt* texts could have narrowed their scope and chosen not to present their citations anthologically, in which case they would have written something more along the lines of *badīʿ* treatises, but their use of what has been called an anthological method in this study demonstrates how natural a mode of composition it had become.[71]

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71. A good counter-example is Ibn Aydamir's (d. 710/1310) *ad-Durr al-farīd wa-bayt al-qaṣīd*, '[an] anthology of single verses and short fragments [...]' organised alphabetically by first word (G. J. van Gelder, 'Arabic Poetics and Stylistics according to the Introduction of *al-Durr al-Farīd* by Muḥammad Ibn Aydamir (d. 710/1310)', *ZDMG*, vol. 146, 1996, pp. 381–414 at p. 381). This lengthy collection is preserved

uniquely in an autograph MS and has been published in a facsimile edition (ed. Fuat Sezgin, et al., 7 vols, Frankfurt: Institut für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften, 1988–97).

PART TWO

Arabic Epigram Anthologies

Chapter Four

Constellations

The epigram anthology genre did not develop in a vacuum and its perpetuation in Arabic literary culture for several centuries depended fundamentally on the social network, which produced and consumed these poetry collections with such gusto. It is a fact, however lamentable, that the identities of the consumers, as well as many of the minor producers (poets, copyists, et al.), have been lost to us. This makes it all the more critical that we establish a solid understanding of who the epigram anthologists who composed and contributed to these collections were. This is essential not only for the empirical aims of literary history; it is an indivisible component of the context of these works. Scholars who have worked on Hellenistic epigram collections have been able to situate the famous texts they study within a specific cultural frame:

> In the Hellenistic age great libraries sprang up accompanied by an unprecedented spread of poetry books, and a new literary culture emerged in the great *metropoleis* of the Hellenistic kingdoms, generating new products, attitudes and approaches, though always with reference to the Greek past. The intensive study of contemporary and past authors was a typical feature of the age, and every serious author was conscious of having to face a public as well read as himself—or at least he supposed it to be. In addition to the specialized audience of the royal courts, there was a larger public of studious readers who influenced the character of literary production, as papyri have shown.

> The *G*[*reek*] *A*[*nthology*] itself is an example of the dynamics which grew from the diffusion of a culture of reading. The interaction of authors and readers evolved into a 'communication' across the times, a dialogue in which authors and readers played different parts: poets enact themselves as readers and let their own reading experiences be reflected by their epigrams; collectors arrange epigrams for other readers; moreover, the genre of literary commentary develops, reflecting an interest in, and work on, the literary *oeuvre* of other authors.[1]

A similar climate of literary activity existed in Arabic culture from at least as early as the *tadwīn* movement, but the Mamluk period (and perhaps the Ottoman period, though this remains to be explored) saw an energetic renewal of such activity that greatly overshadows earlier efforts. Nita Krevans sees Hellenistic anthologies as a manifestation of a specific form of non-hierarchical, experimental, and archivally minded literary culture:

> The anthology is [...] a quintessentially Hellenistic form, a textual analogy to the ultimate Hellenistic collection—the great library at Alexandria. While there are earlier precedents for these works, the dominance of the anthology in Hellenistic culture is new and significant.[...] [P]apryus finds bear witness to a wide range of literary and sub-literary anthologies—excerpts from drama, gnomic treasuries, themed collections of verse. Many of these compilations appear to be the work of ordinary readers assembling a group of favorite selections; they offer compelling evidence for a general fascination with collecting and excerpting far beyond the precincts of the Museum in Alexandria.[2]

The cultural insights that such anthologies can offer us are many and it seems clear to me these texts themselves cannot be understood without a deep appreciation for the cultural

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1.D. Meyer, 'The Act of Reading and the Act of Writing in Hellenistic Epigram', p. 187.

2.N. Krevans, 'The Arrangement of Epigrams in Collections', pp. 131–32.

context that produced them. Unfortunately the study of Mamluk and Ottoman era Arabic culture is not yet sufficiently articulated for us to link these texts to wider cultural activity except in the most hesitant of terms. For this reason, it is vital that a brief prospography of key epigrammatists and anthologists be sketched here in the hopes of better demonstrating the extent to which these litterateurs participated in vibrant, interconnected, and indeed proud and ebullient literary networks.

By arbitrarily isolating one generic type—the epigram anthology—one runs the risk of distorting a complex tapestry of literary interactions over time, but taken in concert with other strictly delimited analyses the exaggerated picture that results from this study and others like it can help us better understand the dynamics and contours of cultural exchange in the Mamluk period. Certainly the turn toward cultural history in literary studies—New Historicism, approximately—has been put to great effect by scholars of Abbasid era literature, but this would not have been possible without the diligent work of cultural and social historians of the period (e.g., *inter alia*, Joseph van Ess' monumental *Theologie und Gesellschaft*). Similarly this study of epigram anthologies depends entirely on the pioneering work of scholars of the post-*Orientalism* generation, chiefly Thomas Bauer, Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī, Everett K. Rowson, Geert Jan van Gelder, Margaret Larkin, Khaled el-Rouayheb, et al., but the social and cultural history of the Mamluk period and of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire is still very poorly understood.[3] As the project to reappraise post-Abbasid era Arabic literature now enters its second decade, one of the most pressing challenges that remains is to detail the ways in which Mamluk litterateurs (*udabāʾ*) forged a literary community. We know that they met in person, that they travelled, that they often worked together in the imperial administration (e.g. as secretaries, judges, etc.), that they taught in mosques and academies (*madāris*, sing. *madrasah*), that they exchanged letters and books, that they published their works and also authorised peers to transmit them, that they commented on, emulated, anthologized, and parodied the works of their

3. ʿAbd al-Hādī's major contribution has come as an editor (see Works Cited, under an-Nawājī).

contemporaries, etc., but by merely recounting the sheer multitude of literary and professional occupations that Mamluk authors engaged in, we run the risk of caricaturing the social background of literary production in the period. Mamluk litterateurs were not a class of Confucian civil servants, nor were they courtiers like so many poets in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish literary history. Before we can truly grasp the scale of the literary community in the period—which was vast both in the number of participants as well as in their geographical distribution—we must begin to distinguish between its constituents and understand the ways in which these disparate social actors contributed to a diffuse, and somewhat democratic, cultural sphere.

Clusters

The existence, popularity, and longevity of epigram anthologies in the history of premodern Arabic literature can be amply demonstrated. The reader may quite reasonably take issue with the contention that these works did indeed deliberately typify a generic tradition—or with the use of the terms *epigram* and *anthology*—but these issues notwithstanding, the sheer number of Arabic epigram anthologies and their variety make them a key feature of the literary landscape in the post-Abbasid era. In addition, they provoke several compelling questions for the study of Arabic cultural history. The anthologists who wrote—that is to say, curated—these works did so by stitching together dozens, and often hundreds, of epigrams (or *maqāṭīʿ*) in an aesthetically sophisticated arrangement designed to engage and edify their readers. These anthologists occasionally auto-anthologized, but multi-authored epigram anthologies are generally more common. Arabic epigrammatic poetry is markedly ecumenical and encompasses the entire pantheon of poetic subjects and modes, though erotic, lyric, and ekphrastic themes predominate. Thematic and stylistic proclivities thus helped to shape the anthologists' *selection biases*, as it were, but this alone does not account for their conspicuous partiality toward contemporary and near-contemporary poets at the expense of their pre-Islamic, Umayyad, and Abbasid era counterparts.

This bias for contemporary literature was especially expedient as courts, the erstwhile poles of Arabic literary conglomerates, diminished in importance to the point of irrelevance during the Mamluk period. Literary salons (*majālis*, sing. *majlis*) were undoubtedly important, but the history of their role in literary culture is only beginning to be written.[4] Nonetheless what we do know is that, across the board, in epigram anthologies, there is a significant preference for contemporary poetry; this characteristic leads to the first of our clusters.

Within the leaves of Mamluk and Ottoman era epigram anthologies, there exists a discernible cluster of poets. Alongside Ibn Nubātah (d. 1366), aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 1363), Ibrāhīm al-Miʿmār (d. 1348), and others, we find a whole range of poets whose literary output has been almost completely obscured by time and scholarly neglect. The recurrence of these same names over a range of epigram anthologies—and the stylistic, thematic, and modal resemblances in their poetry, necessarily engendered by the nature of the anthological process though they may be—give the impression of a poetic school. This cluster is by no means uniform; it varies from anthology to anthology, and naturally its composition differs over time, but we do find an extended pantheon of epigrammatists, as it were, in Mamluk and Ottoman era anthologies. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether these poets were materially linked in any way other than in poetry collections *ex post facto*. Many of these epigrammatists knew one another and had collegial relationships (e.g. ash-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī and Taqī ad-Dīn al-Badrī)—while others had more hostile relationships (e.g. an-Nawājī and Ibn Ḥijjah). Still the disparity between the poets' life-spans and their locations makes any sort of formal group delineation impossible. While it is fair to assume that almost every educated Arab in the pre-modern period could and did compose poetry—even if only for his *and* her edification—it is, by no means, certain that the mass of poets composed epigrams. And yet the cluster of poets we find cited in epigram anthologies is itself too disparate to betoken a poetic school. In his *taqrīẓ* (commendation) on Shams ad-Dīn an-Nawājī's (d.

4. The most recent contribution to the history of the literary *majlis* is Samer A. Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*.

1455) bacchic anthology *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 1434) lists nearly forty poets who are cited in the anthology and says that were it not for fear of testing the reader's patience, he would have listed them all.[5] Nevertheless, there is no attempt to group these poets into a cohesive 'school'. Commendations (*taqārīẓ*) can be very useful, however, as sources for the study of how the poetic canon was perceived, and indeed formed, but they are perhaps too general to enable us to discern poetic schools. Thus rather than first concentrating on those poets cited in epigram anthologies, let us examine the poets who were themselves anthologists to see whether a cluster can be refined into relief.

Generally speaking, scholarship on pre-modern Arabic literature has avoided recognizing 'literary schools' in all but a few exceptional circumstances. These groupings are almost always based on positivistic and indigenous categories (e.g. chronological: pre-Islamic, *mukhaḍram*, Umayyad, Abbasid, etc.; thematic: *ṣuʿlūk*, *ʿudhrī*, *ṣūfī*, etc.; stylistic: *muḥdathūn*, 'neo-classical', 'vernacular', etc.; geographical: poets based around al-Ḥīrah, the Umayyad court, the Abbasid court, Islamic Spain, the Hamdanid court, etc.; ethnic: 'the crows', *shuʿūbī*, etc.).[6] There have not been any concerted efforts to apply a material-semiotic method of sociological analysis to the study of Arabic literature, though studies like those by Kristina Richardson and Dror Ze'evi have begun to blaze a trail for future scholarship.[7] There are several reasons for this—some of which are historically well entrenched (e.g. the continued dominance of philological approaches in the study of Arabic literature) and others of which are on the wane (e.g. the decline paradigm)—and while none of this will come as any surprise to specialists, there is a significant contributing factor that has often been overlooked and must be addressed in order to facilitate further scholarly

5. Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, ed. Veselý, p. 411. This was obviously written before the two fell out.

6. James E. Montgomery's 'The Deserted Encampment in ancient Arabic poetry: a nexus of topical comparisons' (*JSS*, vol. 40, no. 2, Autumn 1995, pp. 283–316) is a notable exception.

7. K. Richardson, *Difference and Disability in the Medieval Islamic World: Blighted Bodies*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012; Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: changing sexual discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500–1900*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

progress. To put it plainly, we do not yet understand the way in which literary communities were formed and maintained away from courts, nor do we understand the function of what we think of as literature proper (poetry, belles-lettres, etc.) within these wide-ranging, diffuse, and generally amateur networks of educated social actors. No one article or book can hope to provide a comprehensive answer to this essential inquiry but we can begin to sketch rough outlines that together will contribute to giving an overall picture of the cultural network dynamics in the period.

Returning to the topic of epigram anthologies, let us consider the micro-cluster of litterateurs who each authored epigram auto-anthologies in the first half of the fourteenth century (see the history of this detailed in Chapter Two above). Sometime around 1320, Ibn Nubātah (d. 1366) put together a thematically diverse collection of more than two-hundred of his epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*), which he titled, *al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī*. He was followed by Badr ad-Dīn ibn Ḥabīb (d. 1377) of Aleppo, who published a collection of his own epigrams (*muqaṭṭaʿāt*; also *maqāṭīʿ*)—entitled *ash-Shudhūr*—around 1326 while still a teenager. Ibn Ḥabīb solicited two commendations (*taqārīẓ*, sing. *taqrīẓ*) for his work from the two leading poets of his day, the aforementioned Ibn Nubātah and Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. c. 750/1350) when they visited Aleppo. Some years later (i.e. between 1331–41), Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī published his own epigram collection *Dīwān al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī fī al-maʿālī wa-l-maʿānī*, made up exclusively—as the title suggests—of two- and three-line poems, as was the case with, too, with Ibn Ḥabīb's collection. Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 1363), whose diverse and voluminous literary output is second only to that of Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyuṭī (d. 1505) in the Mamluk period, published his epigram collections, *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim wa-l-ʿarf an-nāsim* and *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ,* in the same period; another work, *al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī*, which may have been an epigram anthology or something else entirely (or which may be a misattribution) has not survived.[8] Aṣ-Ṣafadī, uniquely of the four, produced several multi-authored

8. *Al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ* was written as late as 1337–38, but the date of the writing of *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim* is not known (see Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 348; see also the editor's introduction to *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ*).

epigram anthologies as well, which he embedded as parerga in larger works like *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl*, *Ṣarf al-ʿayn fī ṣarf al-ʿayn ʿan waṣf al-ʿayn* (*Spending Money to Avert the [Evil] Eye from Descriptions of the Eye*), *Rashf az-zulāl fī waṣf al-hilāl*, *al-Kashf wa-t-tanbīh ʿala al-waṣf wa-t-tashbīh* (*Laying Bare and Making Aware: on Ekphrasis and Simile*), etc. These poets all knew one another: they met in Damascus, Cairo, Aleppo, and Hama, they corresponded, and they had countless mutual acquaintances. Thomas Bauer has described Ibn Nubātah and Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī's relationship thus: 'The two knew each other, had met several times, and held each other in great esteem.'[9] Only one of these epigram anthologies was dedicated to a patron; al-Ḥillī dedicated his *Dīwān al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī* to al-Malik al-Afḍal (r. 1332–41), the ruler of Hama and a patron, like his father, al-Malik al-Muʾayyad (r. 1320–31), of Ibn Nubātah's as well. These anthologies were designed to circulate widely in the literary community and to be read. It is logical to assume, as well, that these four epigram anthologies were written with reference to one another and their putative predecessors. In the introduction to his collection, *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ*, aṣ-Ṣafadī mentions two of his anthologist predecessors by name. The doctrine of influence and intertextuality has, for all intents and purposes, become an axiom in cultural studies, but can it be demonstrated in this case? Moreover, can this epiphenomenon be linked to the series of epigram anthologies that followed it as well as to the cluster of epigrammatists affiliated with the genre? In other words, is there evidence here for a poetic constellation?

The concept of the constellation, or constellation-research (*Konstellationsforschung*), was pioneered by Dieter Heinrich in his work on the history of German Idealism, and while it may seem ambitious to borrow a method from the study of modern European intellectual history, our present understanding of Arabic poetic schools could use some innovative stimulation. Martin Mulsow defines the logic of constellation-research thus:

Une constellation philosophique peut être définie comme un ensemble

9. Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah', in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 192.

> dense de personnes, idées, théories, problèmes ou documents en interaction les uns avec les autres; dans ce cas, seule l'analyse de cet ensemble, et non celle de ses composantes isolées, rend possible la compréhension des effets philosophiques et du devenir philosophique de ces personnes, idées et théories.[10]

It would be difficult to apply such an approach to earlier periods in pre-modern Islamic history, but the Mamluk period—despite its marginalisation in scholarship—is well poised to accommodate comprehensive inquiries in intellectual history. Phenomena like the emergence and—implicit—canonisation of literary genres may be better understood as the products of networks (or constellations) of actors rather than that of individual geniuses. As I mentioned above, scholarship in Arabic literature has already begun to move away from narrow, biographical research, but by and large research into the history of Arabic literary genres has endeavored to catalogue significant individual contributions and overlooked any potential insights to be gleaned from the study of collaborative or intertextual networks.[11] That being said, multi-authored epigram anthologies themselves each embody intertextual poetic networks so they necessarily bring the issue of constellations and constellational thinking to the fore.

Literary genres are not dreamt up, *sui generis*, by individuals working in hermetic conditions; nor are individual literary works. One of the most significant reasons for the neglect of the Arabic epigram anthology in scholarship is the inability to distinguish these works from the larger category of anthologies, which they partially resemble. I have demonstrated elsewhere that these texts are distinct on certain key generic grounds: style,

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10. Martin Mulsow, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une constellation philosophique? Propositions pour une analyse des réseaux intellectuels', trans. Isabelle Kalinowski, *Annales*, vol. 64, no. 1, janvier–février, 2009, pp. 81–109, p. 82. ['A philosophical constellation can be defined as a dense collection of people, ideas, theories, problems, or documents, which interact with one another. In such circumstances, only an examination of the entire collection, not merely its individual components, makes it possible [for us] to understand the effects and afterlife of these people, ideas, and theories in philosophy.']

11. cf. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication'.

mode, thematic range, context, self-identification, recognition, intertextuality, etc., but they are also—it must not be forgotten—distinct by virtue of the particular network of writers who contributed to their production. Anthologies only appear as an undifferentiated, and undistinguished, conglomeration when examined from a distance. Genre presents itself not in the contemplation of an aggregate, but in the patterned construction of individual texts. In the case of epigram collections, the network of anthologists and the cluster of poets cited, contribute to a generic pattern. Any attempt to identify a constellation of epigram-anthologists must proceed, by way of extrapolation, from a survey of the fragmentary, if verifiable, historical evidence to a logical, posited narrative sketch that accords with a wider variety of evidential indications.

The Syrian city of Hama was clearly an important setting for the creation of epigram anthologies. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn ash-Sharīf Daftarkh^{w}ān (d. 655/1257), the author of two epigram collections, *Kitāb Alf ghulām wa-ghulām* and *Kitāb Alf Jāriyah wa-Jāriyah*, lived and died there less than a century before Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī and Ibn Nubātah came there to ply their literary trade.[12] It was there—we can safely assume—that Ibn Nubātah wrote his epigram collection, *al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī*, after having made the acquaintance of Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī and it is likely that this collection was influenced by literary activities at the court in Hama.[13] This work, in turn, directly influenced the epigram anthologies of Badr ad-Dīn b. Ḥabīb and Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī, who both 'wrote *taqrīẓ*-epigrams on it' along with Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣafadī. We know, too, that in 1329 aṣ-Ṣafadī solicited and was granted an *ijāzah* for this anthology and other works by Ibn Nubātah.[14] It is likely that Ibn Nubātah's anthology and epigrammatic style would have also influenced the work of his interlocutors: Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (d. 1375), Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī (d. 1399),

12. See aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 21, pp. 466–70.

13. Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah', in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 192–93.

14. Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah', in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 193; 186. Bauer takes it for granted that '[...] al-Ḥillī [...] was incited [...] by *al-Qaṭr al-nubātī* to assemble a collection of his own epigrams.' (ibid., p. 193).

and Shihāb ad-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allah (d. 1349), all of whom wrote epigrams themselves. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī tells us that al-Qīrāṭī:[15]

> [...] مهر في الآداب وقال الشعر ففاق أهل زمانه وسلك طريق الشيخ جمال الدين ابن نباتة وتلمّذ له وراسله.
>
> He excelled in the literary arts and composed poetry with which he outdid the people of his day. He followed the path of Ibn Nubātah and was a student of his and a correspondent.

The relationship between aṣ-Ṣafadī and Ibn Nubātah, which started off amicably and ended acrimoniously, was highly significant and had a profound impact on the poetic culture of the fourteenth century.[16] Their respective professional relationships with Shihāb ad-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allah and others, were also extremely important as they provided them both with a livelihood; though this came later in life for Ibn Nubātah than for aṣ-Ṣafadī. For his part, Shihāb ad-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allah (d. 1349) was perhaps the most important literary 'node' of the fourteenth century. He had relations with all four of the original epigram-anthologists. One can easily surmise that Ibn Nubātah and aṣ-Ṣafadī (and co.)'s '[...] regular late afternoon meetings in the Umayyad Mosque [in Damascus where] [they exchanged] verses and other literary pleasantries [...]' was the epicenter around which literary culture in Syria (if not, the whole of the Mamluk empire) revolved.[17] Konrad Hirschler has described the sessions where the public '[read] by listening' (or audited: *samāʿ*) Ibn ʿAsākir's monumental *Tārikh Dimashq* thus:

> For wide sections of the city's population participation in these aural reading sessions became a crucial mode of cultural practice: reading communities

15. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *ad-Durar al-kāminah*, 1:31, no. 77.

16. See Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 349–50.

17. On the need to re-balance the division of attention between Egypt and Syria, see Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: a social and cultural history of reading practices*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, p. 4.

> met regularly, often for as long as a decade, in order to go through the entire work; individual reading sessions attracted up to eighty participants; many reading sessions took place in the central "public" space of the city, the Umayyad Mosque; and in total over 1,000 people participated in the readings.[18]

Hirschler rightly notes that this text, which '[...] straddles two genres, those of history and *ḥadīth* [...]', was well suited to mass gatherings or aural reading. It is not clear whether highly intricate, wordplay-dependent poetry could be enjoyed in such a manner. Riddles and chronograms, one assumes, were best appreciated while reading from a text. Nevertheless while historical texts and poetic texts were likely addressed to different audiences in different ways, it is an important indication of how wide the literary public was at the time. Alan Cameron, writing about Hellenistic epigrammatists, claims that:

> [...] [A]s late as the age of Tacitus and Pliny no one wrote poetry direct for distribution in book form. The Roman evidence makes it clear that a formal recitation was an essential preliminary to the launching of a new book, and the primary method of distribution was presentation to friends. A published book was thus an extension of the poet's performance rather than something entirely different. It was aimed at essentially the same audience and arose out of the same social circumstances. In effect poets continued to write for people they knew, not strangers.[19]

It is not clear to what extent this holds true for Arabic poetry in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. It is certainly the case that oral performance was important and that public literary gatherings were a common feature of the cultural landscape, but there is ample evidence to suggest that works had been circulating in book form already for some centuries in the Arabic tradition. The question of the audience's identity is also quite diffi-

18. Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word*, p. 32.

19. Alan Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics,* p. 78.

cult to answer. The materials that survive (e.g. letters, *taqārīẓ*, biographical notices, etc.) suggest that poets wrote for their own literary community, but this is almost certainly a distorted picture. While they clearly had their peers in mind, the work of poets and litterateurs ventured more widely than their narrow circles and this was especially the case in later periods. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done on these questions and any suppositions remain tentative.

Aṣ-Ṣafadī wrote at least one of his epigram collections, *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ*, more than a decade after Ibn Nubātah and Ibn Ḥabīb, in the same period as Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī. He was more interested than his peers in grounding the nascent epigram anthology in a lineage.[20] His work as a biographer clearly facilitated, perhaps even engendered, this impulse. If Ibn Nubātah was the first 'conscious' epigram-anthologist, and also putatively the person who made the term *maqāṭīʿ* famous, aṣ-Ṣafadī played a paramount role in establishing the trajectory of the epigram anthology and naming its predecessors.[21] This seems to have been a conscious effort to ground poetic innovation in a respectable legacy; of determining a historical legacy retrospectively.[22] In biographical entries on poets of previous generations (including from the Buyid and Ayyubid periods), aṣ-Ṣafadī—apparently anachronistically—applies the term *maqāṭīʿ* to their work (e.g. in entries on ath-Thaʿālibī (d. 1038), Saʿd ad-Dīn b. Muḥyī ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1258), Ibn Tamīm (d. 1285), Ibrāhīm al-Miʿmār (d. 1348), etc. in his *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafāyāt*). Interestingly aṣ-Ṣafadī does not connect Ibn Nabīh (d. 1222) to the epigram tradition in his biographical dictionary,

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20.e.g. In the introduction to his collection *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ*, aṣ-Ṣafadī names ath-Thaʿālibī (d. 1038) and ash-Sharīf Daftarkhʷān (d. 1257) as predecessors.

21. Ibn Nubātah was also an active 'canon-former'; see his *Matlaʿ al-fawāʾid wa-majmaʿ al-farāʾid*, and discussion in Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah', in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 189. Similarly the converse—deliberately avoiding citations of a poet whose absence is clearly conspicuous—is also a reflection of an ideological bent in canon-formation (e.g. that aṣ-Ṣafadī deliberately excluded Ibn Nubātah from his work on the rhetorical figures *tawriyah* and *istikhdām*). See Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 350.

22. See also Muḥammad b. Shākir al-Kutubī's (d. 1363) entry on Ibn an-Naqīb (d. 1288) (al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, vol. 1, p. 324).

but Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī draws a link between Ibn Nabīh and Ibn Ḥabīb's poetic style in his *taqrīẓ* (commendation) on the latter's epigram collection.[23]

Ibn Nubātah and aṣ-Ṣafadī were also both great *Dīwān* editors. They each chose to associate themselves with their predecessors by editing collections of poets they admired (e.g. Ibn Nubātah with Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and aṣ-Ṣafadī with as-Sirāj al-Warrāq, Abū Tammām, al-Buḥturī, al-Mutanabbī, al-Maʿarrī, al-Ḥaẓīrī, al-Jazzār, al-ʿAzāzī, Ibn Tamīm, et al.); this is, of course, yet another dimension of canon-formation. In the following generation, Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī would do the same for Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī while Ibn Nubātah's student al-Bashtakī (d. 1427) took it upon himself to edit Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān*, though the results of this were regrettable.

There were also thematic connections among the work the litterateurs pursued. We have discussed the erotic epigram collections by ath-Thaʿālibī (lost) and Ibn ash-Sharīf Daftarkhʷān and these were followed by a great many more, though certain litterateurs had it in them to be thematically territorial.[24] Aṣ-Ṣafadī accused Ibn al-Wardī (d. 1349), the author of two erotic poetry anthologies on male and female youths of plagiarism.[25] Composing separate erotic epigram anthologies on female concubines (*jawārī*) as well as male youths was a notable generic phenomenon (e.g. the collections by ash-Sharīf Daftarkhʷān, Ibn al-Wardī, ash-Shihab al-Ḥijāzī al-Khazrajī) second only to the very widely practiced phenomenon of erotic epigram collections on male youths (e.g. ath-Thaʿālibī's lost *Kitāb al-Ghilmān*, an-Nawājī's *Marātiʿ al-ghizlān*, al-Badrī's *Ghurrat aṣ-ṣabāḥ*, etc.).[26]

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23. See aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vol. 21, pp. 431–51.

24. On these collections, see Franz Rosenthal's pioneering article, 'Male and Female: Described and Compared' in J. W. Wright Jr. and E. K. Rowson (eds), *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 24–54.

25. Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 350–51. These texts are apparently preserved in aṣ-Ṣafadī's personal record book, the vast, unpublished *Tadhkirah*.

26. The latter two have not yet been published. The first appears not to have survived (on this text and the confusion around its misattribution, see A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*').

In the generation immediately following the original four epigram anthologists, poets and anthologists, including Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (d. 1434) and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 1449), adopted the term *maqāṭīʿ* with alacrity and associated themselves with the previous generation, as well as the previous generation's putative predecessors. Ibn Ḥijjah, of course, was a native of Hama, where Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī and Ibn Nubātah had achieved such fame fifty years before.[27] There may have been a direct link between him and these poets through his teachers Shams ad-Dīn al-Hītī and ʿIzz ad-Dīn al-Mawṣilī (d. 789/1387), though there is no evidence to that effect at present. One of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's students was Shams ad-Dīn an-Nawājī (d. 1455), a Cairene and perhaps the most prolific and successful epigram anthologist in Arabic literature.[28] An-Nawājī appears to have cited Ibn Nubātah and aṣ-Ṣafadī more than any others poets except for himself.[29] An-Nawājī was friends with Badr ad-Dīn ad-Damāmīnī (d. 1424), himself an epigrammatist. Ad-Damāmīnī shared his epigrams with ʿAlā ad-Dīn al-Ghuzūlī (d. 1411–12), who included these and other epigrams in his anthology *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr fī manāzil as-surūr*, in the introduction to which he claims to have surpassed Ibn Nubātah.[30] An-Nawājī also kept up a poetic correspondence with ash-Shihāb as-Suʿūdī (d. 1466) who himself composed epigrams on male youths.[31] An-Nawājī also taught the biographer as-Sakhāwī (d. 1497) and Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 1470) both of whom used the term *maqāṭīʿ* in their famous biographical and historical works. The latter is also said to have put together an epigram anthology himself.[32] As-Sakhāwī, an-Nawājī's student and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's biographer, also corresponded with Abū at-Tuqā Taqī

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27. Devin Stewart, 'Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī' in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart, *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 139.

28.On the spat between Ibn Ḥajar and an-Nawājī, see as-Sakhāwī, *al-Jawāhir wa-d-durar fī tarjamat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar*, vol. 3, pp. 992–94.

29. Aṣ-Ṣafadī and Ibn Nubātah dominate an-Nawājī's collection of birthmark-verses, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl*.

30. See Michael Cooperson, 'ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ghuzūlī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 111; Cooperson seems to have missed the reference to Ibn Nubātah's *Suq ar-raqīq* (on which see, in the same volume, Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah', p. 199).

31. See in as-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān*, ed. Philip K. Hitti, pp. 36–7.

32. See above in Corpus (p. 175, entry no. 38f).

ad-Dīn al-Badrī, author of the epigram collection *Ghurrat aṣ-ṣabāḥ fī waṣf al-wujūh aṣ-ṣibāḥ* and al-Badrī, for his part, cited Ibn Sūdūn, the author of the experimental anthology *Nuzhat an-nufūs wa-muḍḥik al-ʿabūs*, in his book on hashish and wine: *Rāḥat al-arwāḥ fī al-ḥashīsh wa-r-rāḥ*.[33]

These connections (personal, professional, and literary) do not mean, of course, that these epigrammatists and anthologists thought of themselves as a school, nor does it mean that only those poets who were known to the anthologists personally were cited in Mamluk and Ottoman era epigram anthologies. No such claim has been made. There is, however, sufficient evidence to believe that these poets operated within a specific and delimited poetic network. That they exchanged views and literary works with one another in person and on paper and that they actively solicited the affirmation of their peers. They were also very keen to link themselves to their literary forerunners, not out of meekness or self-effacement, but rather out of a sense of pride and self-worth. This preliminary sketch in concert with the work of many others will, I hope, contribute to give us a richer and more comprehensive understanding of literary and cultural networks in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods and will help us begin to fill great lacunae in our knowledge of Arabic cultural and intellectual history in the pre-modern period.

33. See Franz Rosenthal, *The Herb: hashish versus medieval Muslim society*, Leiden: Brill, 1971, pp. 13–14.

Chapter Five

Structure and Composition

In an article on literary anthologies from the Mamluk period and in his contribution to the revised *EI*[3] entry on 'Anthologies', Thomas Bauer has offered a typology of Mamluk and Ottoman anthologies. He lists four main types of literary anthology in the period:[1]

a) 'anthologies in which the anthologist selects parts from his own work or from the work of others, either poetry or prose or both' ('die Werkanthologie');
b) 'anthologies that are dedicated to a certain theme or a stylistic device or a specific form of poetry or prose' ('die thematische Anthologie');
c) 'anthologies in the form of a commentary' ('die Kommentaranthologie');
d) 'those that are a kind of melange, in which interesting texts are collected without any underlying principle of order' ('die Melange').

'Anthologies in the form of a commentary' ('Kommentaranthologie') fall outside the scope of this study, which is focused exclusively on poetry collections (corresponding to types a, b, and d), some of which in their ecumenicalism fall into the category of a melange. By limiting the focus to poetry collections, this study seeks to relate better the phenomenon of Mamluk and early Ottoman collections to the canonical tradition of the earliest poetry anthologies as well as partially avoid the epistemological controversy surrounding 'literature' (scil. *adab*) as a category in mediaeval Arabic letters.

1. Adapted from *EI*[3], s.v. 'Anthologies: in Arabic literature: Post-Mongol' [Th. Bauer] and *idem*, 'Literarische Anthologien der Mamlūkenzeit', pp. 73–9.

Setting aside the complicated issue of the *Muʿallaqāt*, we can say that Arabic poetic anthologies begin with *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* and *al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, anthologies of one-hundred and twenty-six and ninety-three medium-length poems with an average length of twenty-one lines and sixteen lines respectively, without any commentary or introduction—or at least no commentary or introduction has survived.[2] These anthologies also lack any apparent organisation. Less than a century after these anthologies named for their grammarian compilers, comes the first poet-authored anthology in the Arabic tradition: Abū Tammām's (d. 231/845 or 232/846) *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*. This poetic anthology is the first to be divided into chapters and the pieces are much shorter than those included in the earlier anthologies. Felix Klein-Franke, in his two-part article on *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*, says:

> The poetic fragments in the Ḥamāsa are short and pregnant. They could comfortably be quoted in literary society because the anthology contains verses suitable for any occasion. It is therefore to be understood that the popularity of the Ḥamāsa far exceeded that of the anthology of al-Mufaḍḍal.[3]

This fundamental difference between the two earliest extant Arabic poetry anthologies has profoundly influenced our basic understanding of the genre, although it is hardly acknowledged just how woefully weak our understanding of the role, nature, and popularity of these earliest anthologies is. Whether these anthologies were didactic or edificatory, experienced individually or communally, read aloud or to one's self, truly innovative or merely codifications of long practice, popular or pointy-headed, we know not. It would therefore be salutary to admit the lacunae in our understanding of literary history while also recognising the role these two ur-anthologies have played in establishing—for modern scholars, as well as perhaps for the pre-modern Arabic tradition itself—a putative dichotomy of

2. These figures are based on al-Mufaḍḍal aḍ-Ḍabbī, *The Mufaḍḍalīyāt : an anthology of ancient Arabian odes*, edited by Charles Lyall, vol. 1 and al-Aṣmaʿī, *al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, edited by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and ʿAbd as-Salām Hārūn.

3. F. Klein-Franke, 'The Ḥamāsa of Abū Tammām: Part II', *JAL*, vol. 3, 1972, pp. 142–78, p. 155. See also *idem*, 'The Ḥamāsa of Abū Tammām: Part I', *JAL*, vol. 2, 1971, pp. 13–36.

anthological origins. Even the most cursory survey of the history of Arabic poetry collections would show that it was the latter paradigm—shorter citations thematically organised—that won out.

Abū Tammām's *al-Ḥamāsah* includes 882 items drawn from the work of 285 identified poets, 301 pieces remaining anonymous.[4] Of the 285 identified poets whose work is included in *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*, ninety are pre-Islamic, forty-eight mukhaḍram, and one-hundred and forty-seven Islamic.[5] Felix Klein-Franke remarks that 'The majority of the Islamic poets in the Ḥamāsa belonged to the Umayyad and the early Abbasid eras. Amongst them, however, some contemporary poets are represented [...]' and that 'Famous poets appear only exceptionally in the Ḥamāsa. Of Labīd, for example, we find only two verses, of Ǧarīr three verses, of Ḥassān b. Thābit also three verses. Imraʾulqais, al-Aḫṭal, al-Ḥuṭaiʾa and other famous poets are not represented by even a single verse.'[6] Similarly, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* is said to have been concerned with the work of *muqillūn* poets (poets whose poetic output was small).[7] These figures suggest that—from the very beginning—Arabic poetry anthologists preferred to draw on the work of more obscure poets rather than the most famous. In the introduction to the volume on 'matchless *qaṣāʾid*' from his ninth-century anthology, *Kitāb al-Manthūr wa-l-manẓūm*, Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893) explains why he chose not to include the poems we call the *Muʿallaqāt* in his anthology:[8]

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4. These figures are taken from *EI*^{3}, s.v. 'Abū Tammām' [B. Gruendler].

5. F. Klein-Franke, 'The Ḥamāsa of Abū Tammām: Part II', (n. 18) p. 153.

6. ibid., p. 153.

7. See *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt' [R. Jacobi].

8. Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *al-Qaṣāʾid al-mufradāt allatī lā mathal* [sic] *lahā* [part of volume 12 of *Kitāb al-Manthūr wa-l-manẓūm*], ed. Muḥsin Ghayyāḍ, Beirut, Paris, 1977, p. 37. On this text's problematic title, see G. J. van Gelder, 'A Cotton Shirt: an "unparalleled" poem by Ibn Abī Karīma (early 9th century)' in *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65. Geburtstag. Band 2: Studien zur arabischen Dichtung*, eds W. Heinrichs and G. Schoeler, Beirut, 1994, p. 283n. Two of the three extant volumes of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr's *Kitāb al-Manthūr wa-l-manẓūm* have been edited: see, in addition to the volume cited here, vol. XI: *Kitāb Balāghāt an-nisāʾ*, ed. Aḥmad al-Alfī, Cairo, 1908. Also on the man and his times, see S. Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr and Arabic writerly culture: a ninth-century bookman in Baghdad*, New York, 2005.

ولو لا شهرة هذه القصائد وكثرتها على أفواه الرواة وأسماع الناس وأنّه أوّل ما يتعلّمه الصبيان في الكُتّاب لَذكرناها وذكرنا ما به فضلت

> Were it not for the fame of these poems and their frequent recurrence on the tongues [lit. 'mouths'] of transmitters and in people's ears, and were they not the first thing young boys learn at the *kuttāb* [i.e. the first stage of formal schooling[9]], we would have quoted them here and related what is good about them.

If this is, perhaps, evidence of a basic anthological principle in the Arabic tradition: a preference for poems that are not well known rather than the canon's 'greatest hits', then is this tendency of Mamluk and Ottoman era anthologists so pronounced as to be remarkable? One important difference we can point to in later anthologies is the heavy emphasis on contemporary poetry; a preference so strong that the poetry of earlier generations was crowded out. Consider, for example, the distribution of poets cited in two exemplary anthologies: aṣ-Ṣafadī's *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl* and the anonymous 16th–17th-century collection of epigrams on male youths erroneously thought to be ath-Thaʿālibī's lost *Kitāb al-Ghilmān*.

9. See *EI*², s.v. 'Kuttāb' [J. M. Landau].

aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl*[10]

death date	number of poets cited
1st/7th century	1
2nd/8th century	0
3rd/9th century	1
4th/10th century	2
5th/11th century	7
6th/12th century	21
7th/13th century	58
8th/14th century	18

Pseudo-Thaʿālibī, *Kitāb al-Ghilmān* (late 16th–17th c.)[11]

death date	percent of total verses
3rd/9th century	3%
4th/10th century	8%
5th/11th century	0%
6th/12th century	4%
7th/13th century	18%
8th/14th century	28%
9th/15th century	12.5%
10th/16th century	18%
11th/17th century	2%

10. Based on aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl*, al-ʿUqayl ed.

11. Based on A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', p. 610.

Both these anthologies demonstrate a marked emphasis on the poetry of later poets, especially those contemporary to the anthologists. This widely shared tendency is a key feature of epigram anthologies and it evinces not only a preference for contemporary poetry, but the instrumental role of anthologies—epigrammatic and otherwise—in the distribution of new poetry across a wide geographical area as well as between elite and non-elite classes in the post-court era. However while this salient aspect of anthological composition is easy to understand—and has indeed already been remarked upon by Thomas Bauer—it will remain difficult to draw conclusions about the genre until more work has been done to analyse individual texts and sets of texts in order to arrive at a broader perspective on the techniques of anthologists in different periods.

One of the most interesting aspects of *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah* for Arabic literary history is that it inspired a great many copycats and its style entirely radicalised the field of Arabic poetic anthologies. Al-Buḥturī, who followed in Abū Tammām's footsteps, included 1454 poems distributed over one-hundred and seventy-four chapters in his own *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*. Abū Tammām's *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah* was followed by several other *Ḥamāsah* collections—inspiring a whole thematic sub-genre, in fact—in addition to a wide range of poetry anthologies. A model had clearly been established: most anthologies after the ninth century tended to include a great variety of relatively short pieces and anthologists exercised editorial and poetic prerogatives (i.e. changing lines of verse to suit their topic, extracting pertinent lines from longer poems, and including many of their own creations). Nevertheless, if the paedagogical phase of anthologies appears to pass so quickly into the booming age of Abbasid poetry and *adab* collections, to what extent do these new post-*Ḥamāsah* poetry anthologies figure as literary creations in their own right and what is their relationship to the hypothesis that has been proposed concerning the link between scholarship and literature in the creation of a pre-Islamic heritage during the Abbasid period?[12]

12. On Abbasid literary culture and its relation to the canon, see Rina Drory, 'The Abbasid Construction of the Jahiliya: Cultural Authority in the Making', *SI*, 83, 1996, pp. 33–49.

Al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt was made either for philological or philological-cum-paedagogical reasons as was its successor volume *al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*; likewise many later anthologies, such as the *tashbīhāt* collections, were made with an eye toward edification as well as literary instruction. Renate Jacobi has said of *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* that 'attempts to detect any internal or external principle of arrangement are in vain.'[13] Could Arabic anthologies exhibit the same atomic tendency that Arabic poetry has been controversially said to exhibit?[14] Perhaps not, but it is significant that it is not until Abū Tammām's *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah* that an Arabic poetry collection demonstrates a clear system of arrangement.[15] Here, for the first time in Arabic literary history, a poetic anthology was arranged thematically and while the purpose of *al-Ḥamāsah* is purportedly less practical (i.e. didactic) than that of *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* and *al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, one cannot deny that the anthology is an entirely new, independent literary creation. The same can perhaps be said of many other Arabic anthologies that demonstrate structure and unity (e.g. ath-Thaʿālibī's *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, ash-Shimshāṭī's *Kitāb al-Anwār wa-maḥāsin al-ashʿār* (*The Book of Flowers and Lovely Poems*), etc.), but there are several interesting exceptions. How would we characterise Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī's *Kitāb az-Zahrah*, for example?[16] The anthology offers a somewhat puzzling thematic arrangement (viz. the first fifty chapters are occupied with aspects of love and the latter fifty chapters deal with various and sundry topics). Wim Raven, who has studied *Kitāb az-Zahrah*, has given us a detailed overview of its structure: among the topics covered in the

13. *EI*², s.v. 'al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt' [R. Jacobi]. Jacobi does note that Willem Stoetzer has claimed that al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt is 'basically a collection of *qarīḍ*,' [i.e. non-*rajaz* poetry] (W. F. G. J. Stoetzer, *Theory and Practice in Arabic Metrics*, Leiden, 1989, p. 78.) though that hardly serves as a very discriminating organizing principle. NB: Stoetzer's analysis is part of his investigation into the relative prestige of different groupings of metres and thus his main concern is the history of Arabic metrics not literary style, genre, or history.

14. On this controversial touchstone, see chapter two above.

15. See Part III of Suzanne Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the poetics of the ʿAbbāsid age* and—on the last of these themes—G. J. van Gelder, 'Against women, and Other Pleasantries: The Last Chapter of Abū Tammām's "*Ḥamāsa*"', *JAL*, vol. 16, 1985, pp. 61–72. Cf. *idem*, *The Bad and the Ugly: attitudes towards invective poetry (Hijāʾ) in classical Arabic literature*, pp. 53–4.

16. W. Raven, 'Ibn Dâwûd al-Iṣbahânî and his Kitâb al-Zahra', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leiden, 1989.

latter half of the anthology, there are chapters on 'Islamic *madîḥ*', under which category Raven groups three chapters of praise poems for God, the Prophet, and the Prophet's family;[17] elegies; poems 'centred around the *memento mori* motif';[18] poems by Caliphs; 'invective poetry';[19] 'self-praise';[20] 'descriptive poetry';[21] etc. The unifying theme of love is simply given over and various new themes are introduced. Does this aberrant structural division somehow disqualify *Kitāb az-Zahrah* from being an original literary work, an anthology? Certainly, as Raven points out, for many years in the minds of many scholars, *Kitāb az-Zahrah*—or rather the first half of *Kitāb az-Zahrah*—was a compendium on love, and the unclassifiable second half was ignored. If a text can be amputated and its remaining half still stand alone as an organic whole, does that mean it is not completely whole when its two halves are combined? Among Mamluk and Ottoman era anthologies, there are many which demonstrate clearly defined structures and—if we accept Bauer's premise that they were designed primarily to edify—have defined purposes as well. The conundrum posed by many of these texts is less generic than it is canonical. By citing the work of contemporary poets, often to the absolute, or near absolute, exclusion of earlier poets, they challenge our understanding of the poetic canon. Nor is this merely a challenge to our knowledge of the canon and Arabic literary history; this proclivity should inform our understanding of the genre's fundamental characteristics.

The layout and content of these late anthologies explain aspects of the literary culture in which they were created, and in addition they may also highlight idiosyncrasies in the tradition of early anthologies. *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ* (*The Servant of The Refined and The Companion of The Graceful*), an early Ottoman (c. end of 16th century) poetry collection, presents poems from over five hundred years of Arabic literary history, but it

17. ibid., p. 160.
18. ibid., pp. 170–71.
19. ibid., pp. 179–84.
20. ibid., pp. 184–88.
21. ibid., pp. 189–93.

does not include the work of any poet who lived earlier than the eleventh century.[22] The only canonical name mentioned is that of Abū Nuwās (d. 198–200/813–15) and that is only in the context of a few humorous stories. None of the canonical pre-Ayyubid poets, who figure so largely in standard literary histories—mediaeval and modern, western and Arab—are cited. Mention has been made of a similar proclivity in some early anthologies. Nevertheless in the absence of definitive evidence one might ask why this is the case. Such a question suggests a few necessary conditions. We must either believe that:

1) anthologists had poor taste or
2) their audience had poor taste or
3) the canonical poets were so well known that it would be redundant to cite from their works.

Another proposition holds that our entire conception of the Arabic poetic canon is flawed, and while there may be some glimmer of truth in that, could we possibly be so misinformed as to have erroneously included poets like al-Mutanabbī, Abū Nuwās, Abū Tammām, Bashshār b. Burd (d. 167–68/784–85), Labīd (d. 40/660–1), al-Farazdaq (d. 110/728 or 112/730), ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿah (d. 93/712 or 103/721), or Abū ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (d. 449/1058) in our canonical histories? Certainly, some combination of the above propositions must be true, and although it seems most likely that anthologists wrote for an audience who knew the canonical pre-Islamic, early Islamic, and Abbasid poets well and were hungry for news of relatively contemporary poetry, this scenario is built on an underlying contradiction. We envision a reading public satiated with knowledge of earlier poetry in all its varieties (e.g. pre-Islamic, *ʿudhrī*, Sufi, ascetic, Umayyad and Abbasid court panegyric, *muḥdath*, *madīḥ nabawī*, etc.), who nevertheless are so deprived of contemporary, or near contemporary, poetry that they have to seek it in anthologies in codex form. This apparent contradiction is not, of course, necessarily paradoxical, but it does highlight the inadequacy of our current paradigm of paedagogical vs. edificatory anthologies. Similarly this demand for contempo-

22. Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Huntington 508.

rary literature raises fundamental questions about the nature of literary transmission (including didactic and auto-didactic education practices) and the ways in which literary arts were consumed. No solution to this quandary is available at present, but perhaps the problem lies in our poor understanding of the transmission and consumption of literary culture. That anthologists preferred, as early as the ninth century, to forego the inclusion of canonical poems in favour of poems that were less well known may point to one of the most striking differences between our internalised expectations of anthologies and the reality of the genre as developed by and for the pre-modern Arabic tradition. Today, in European languages as well as Arabic, many anthologies purport to give a survey of the best that has ever been written; their function, therefore, is apparently to give a primary literary education rather than expand upon a shared body of rudimentary—let alone deep—literary knowledge. They serve rather more as 'literature's greatest hits' than 'what's new in the world of literature.'[23] This was probably not the case in pre-modern Arabic literary culture, however.

23. e.g. the series of books I used to see on the shelf at Dār ash-Shurūq in downtown Cairo, *Arwaʿ mā qīla fī...* on a range of topics including smiles (*fī al-ibtisāmah*), friendship (*fī al-ikhwāniyyāt*), praise (*fī al-madīḥ*), etc. (Series edited by Imīl Nāṣif and published by Dār al-Jīl in Beirut).

The Structure of
كتاب خديم الظرفاء ونديم اللطفاء

Kitāb Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ
(Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Huntington 508)

I. *Nashr al-azhār fī madḥ al-mukhtār*

a. *madāʾiḥ nabawiyyah* (eulogies for the Prophet)

12 poems by poets such as Ibn Nubātah, aṣ-Ṣarṣarī aḍ-Ḍarīr, al-Qarqashandī, ad-Damāmīnī, Ibn Sūdūn with an average length of 31.5 lines

II. *ar-Rawḍ al-anīq fī at-taghazzul ar-raqīq*

a. *Ghazal*

46 poems by poets such as Ibn Nubātah, Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk, Ibn Maṭrūḥ, aṣ-Ṣafadī, al-Māridānī, ash-Shābb aẓ-Ẓarīf, ad-Damāmīnī, Ibn an-Nabīh, Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī, Ibn al-Kharrāṭ, an-Nawājī with an average length of 12.6 lines

III. *al-ʿArf al-khuzāmī fī aṭ-ṭarīq al-gharāmī*

a. *Ghazal*

13 poems by poets such as al-Luʾluʾ ad-Dimashqī, Bahāʾ ad-Dīn Zuhayr, Ibn Sayyid an-Nās, Ibn al-Wakīl, at-Tallaʿfarī with an average length of 9.5 lines

IV. *al-Bazz ar-rafīʿ fī shawāhid al-badīʿ*

a. Prose section on stylistics.

A total of 114 poems and extracts, exemplifying rhetorical features by poets like Ibn Nubātah, al-Ḥammāmī, Ibn Khaṭīb Dāriyyā, Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, Ibn Makānis, aṣ-Ṣafadī, ʿIzz ad-Dīn al-Mawṣilī, Ibn Sukkarah, Ibn al-Wardī, Ibn Qirqimās with an average length of 2.5 lines

V. *ar-Rawḍ al-fattān fī al-jawārī wa-l-ghilmān*

a. Poems on female and male youths and a few brief stories

VI. *Anwār al-aqāḥ fī awṣāf al-milāḥ*

[included with chapter five; heading not marked in the text]

VII. *aṛ-Ṭirāz al-bāhī fī ar-rawḍ az-zāhī*

a. Poems on garden accoutrements (e.g. springs, waterwheels, flowers, fragrant plants, fruit, trees, nuts, vegetables, etc.) and one story

101 poems with an average length of 3.4 lines; the great majority of these are cited anonymously

VIII. *Bulūgh al-munā fīmā yaḥtājuhu majlis al-hanāʾ*

a. Poems and prose pieces on the elements of *majālis* (gatherings) and drinking parties

IX. *Nasīm al-Ḥijāz fī at-taṣḥīf wa-l-alghāz*

a. Examples of *taṣḥīf* and riddle-poems with ciphers

Also includes 11 poems with an average length of 48 lines

X. *ad-Durr al-maṣūn fī as-sabʿ funūn wa-l-hazl wa-l-mujūn*

a. Includes sections on the seven (canonical) 'non-canonical' forms and examples

XI. The introduction lists two further chapters, but neither of these is marked off in the text. The remainder of the anthology is taken up with a few short *adab* stories, including some poetry quoted therein.

In the case of the anthology detailed above, we can see that this anthology—primarily a poetry collection—was designed to entertain an audience of presumably educated readers. Nonetheless, the chapters containing poems in praise of the Prophet and a discussion of stylistics demonstrate just how versatile the category of entertainment—which naturally encompasses light verse (primarily ekphrastic and erotic, but also including ciphers and riddles), the bulk of the collection—could be. This entertainment was surely of the edifying variety, but it cannot be extended so far in that direction as to qualify as didactic. Even pseudo-scientific treatises—like those which comprise the first halves of aṣ-Ṣafadī's (d. 764/1363) treatises-cum-poetry anthologies about various natural topics, viz. moles (*Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl*), crescent moons (*Rashf az-zulāl fī waṣf al-hilāl*), eyes (*Ṣarf al-ʿayn ʿan ṣarf al-ʿayn fī waṣf al-ʿayn*), etc.—can be said to be edifying though they would hardly serve as textbooks.

Anthologies were also often sources of non-canonical forms of poetry as well as poetry by non-canonical poets.[1] *Ad-Durr al-maṣūn fī niẓām as-sabʿ funūn*, an anthology on the *sabʿ funūn* from the sixteenth century, presents the work of relatively contemporaneous non-canonical poets writing in non-canonical forms of poetry.[2] Along with famous poets from the period like Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. c. 750/1350), Ibn Nubātah, Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, aṣ-Ṣafadī, ash-Shābb aẓ-Ẓarīf (d. 688/1289), and an-Nawājī (d. 859/1455), we come across poets like al-Māridānī, Ibn Abī al-Wafāʾ, Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī (d. 781/1379), and Ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349). Similarly in *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ*, we find cited poets such as Badr ad-Dīn ad-Damāmīnī (d. 827/1424), Ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 649/1251), Ibn al-Bārizī, Ibn an-Nabīh (d. 619/1287), Ibn al-Kharrāṭ, Ibn Sayyid an-Nās (d. 734/1334), Ibn al-Wakīl (d. 716/1317), etc. Of course these are just two anthologies preserved in the Bodleian Library; Thomas Bauer

1. Earlier examples include Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī, *al-ʿĀṭil al-ḥālī wa-l-murakhkhaṣ al-ghālī*; al-Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf*; and Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk, *Dār aṭ-ṭirāz*.

2. Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Marsh 73. The 'seven forms' (*al-funūn as-sabʿah* or *as-sabʿ funūn*) are a set of poetic forms, many of which are strophic, in non Khalilian-metres. See Hermann Gies, *Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis sieben neuerer arabischer Versarten*, Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1879.

has identified some ninety anthologies produced over roughly two-hundred years during the Mamluk period, so it is not hard to imagine just how much these anthologies stand to tell us about Arabic literary history during the period previously known as 'the Age of Decline.'[3] One of the chief problems we face when attempting to investigate Arabic literary history, however, is that while anthologies are an important source of literary texts, they are also our best hope of understanding trends in readership and canon-formation. We can look to works of criticism and stylistics, and indeed much of our understanding of Arabic literary aesthetics derives from these texts, but anthologies are a subtler—and potentially more reliable, less idiosyncratic—form of criticism. They are not as prescriptive as critical texts and moreover they may indeed reflect the literary tastes of non-scholarly classes. This is an especial strength of anthologies written and read in the later period when books were more affordable and people more literate.[4] Unfortunately the difficulty we face in determining how the canon was formed by anthologists and critics results from a particularly trying paradox: what has not been preserved in anthologies—what we can axiomatically call non-canonical literature—has often not been preserved in any form at all. Similarly, the work of less illustrious poets from every period of pre-modern Arabic literary history is often preserved in anthologies rather than in individual poetic *dawāwīn* (sing. *dīwān*), so anthologies have the potential to present us with a more varied picture of the literary landscape than that provided by the works of criticism.[5]

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3. One uses the word 'previously' with some optimism when countless examples demonstrate the continued currency of this term; see *inter alia* the UNESCO-sponsored digital library of Arabic texts Majaliss <http://rabat.unesco.org/majaliss/> where the period 1260–1796 is titled '*ʿaṣr at-tadahwur*'.

4. See N. Hanna, *In Praise of Books* and K. Hirschler, *The Written Word*, *pace* Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the eve of modernity: Aleppo in the eighteenth century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989).

5. Perhaps owing to his unique familiarity with the corpus of Mamluk era anthologies, and the wider pantheon of Mamluk litterateurs, Th. Bauer has occasionally overlooked aspects of these texts that are noteworthy, despite their ubiquity. In his review of A. Vrolijk's edition of Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhat an-nufūs wa-muḍḥik al-ʿabūs* (see n. 13 supra), for example, Bauer notes that '[...] it is absolutely unremarkable that, as Vrolijk states (p. 52), "classical" authors are not represented in it. In fact, the vast majority of Mamluk anthologies focus on material from Ayyubid and Mamluk times.' (*MSR*, vol. 7, 2003, pp. 267–72, p. 271). That, as Bauer points out, this predominance features in 'the vast majority' of these anthologies in fact underlines the

On the whole, what is perhaps most interesting about these later anthologies is the manner in which contemporary, or quasi-contemporary, poetry was presented: self-contained codices, composed by literary-minded anthologists with their own ideas about which poets were worth quoting, which having been artistically curated could achieve a unique reading experience as pastiches. Some of these late anthologies covered a range of topics in a variety of poetic themes and even included some non-canonical poetic forms, while other anthologies focused on a single theme or subject and inundated the reader with a wealth of verse citations (see, for example, the collections discussed in the next chapter). The majority of these thematically narrow anthologies tended also to refer to one another and thus collectively carved out an anthological sphere that eventually became one of the most important literary arenas in the post-court era. A great deal of work remains to be done on the subject of both early and late anthologies—on aspects generic, structural, and canonical—as well as, more generally, on the array of compilatory works across all scholarly disciplines in the pre-modern Islamicate languages. Nevertheless the conceptual problems posed by these anthologies are also inherent in the earlier poetry anthologies with which scholars are more familiar.[6] In fact, were it not for the historical circumstance that many more of the early anthologies have been edited and published—and that there are far fewer of them to begin with—we could almost say that the earlier anthologies pose a greater mystery—from a generic and literary-historical point of view—than the later anthologies. These later anthologies reflect the demands of a literate audience and testify to the vibrancy and enduring relevance of poetry in the pre-modern Arabophone world. In addition, they remind us that the literary-historical periodisation we have internalised and

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significance of this preference rather than diminishes it. Bauer is quite right to stress this point, but by emphasising just how mainstream Mamluk poets were (i.e. they were not seen as secondary or post-classical) he underplays the notable circumstances of these poets' crowding out their predecessors in later Arabic anthologies.

6. For literary scholars, further research into the anthological genre must address the relationship of poetry anthologies to what has been called the *adab* encyclopaedia (on which, see H. Kilpatrick, 'A genre in classical Arabic literature: the *adab* encyclopedia').

proselytised is inadequate and anachronistic. These texts are key to understanding what post-Abbasid, non-court-centred literary culture was like, but by turning our focus to these later texts, we should by no means think that how, why, and for whom earlier anthologies were written are questions for which we currently have satisfactory answers. The first question we can ask, and have done to a limited extent, is who the poets being quoted are. The more challenging—and hopefully more profitable—line of inquiry that remains to be pursued is: how are they quoted and how do anthologists use these quotations to create new texts? The next chapter will address this question.

Chapter Six

Variation in Naevi Collections

In this chapter, we will consider the practice of variation in the composition of three epigram collections centered around the topic of naevi (birthmarks or moles), a common theme in pre-modern Arabic erotic poetry.[1] Like other bodily features, birthmarks (*khāl*, pl. *khīlān*; also *shāmah*, pl. *shāmāt*) represent a topos of erotic poetry as well as an opportunity for amplifying a mark of beauty through allusion, simile, and metaphor to create a poetic statement.[2] The trope seems to have emerged in the early Abbasid period and soon became ubiquitous.[3] What is most significant about these poetry collections for the purpose of

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1. This theme is common in Arabic's sister literary traditions Persian and Ottoman as well. Perhaps the most famous line of poetry on this topic is by Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1390): '*Agar ān turk-i shīrāzī bih dast ārad dil-i mā rā / bih khāl-i hindūyash bakhsham Samarqand-u Bukhārā-rā*' (Ghazal 3: *Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Sāyah, Tehran: Nashr-i Kārnāmah, 1374/1995, p. 83); translated by Gertrude Bell as 'Oh Turkish maid of Shiraz ! in thy hand / If thou'lt take my heart, for the mole on thy cheek / I would barter Bokhara and Samarkand.' (*Poems from the Divan of Hafiz*, London: William Heinemann, 1928, p. 90). Not to mention the poem by the Ottoman Sultan Selim II (r. 974–82/1566–74) that begins:

khālin īleh zulfin el bir īlmish
dilleri dāmīleh nakhjīr īlmish
Hand in hand thy mole hath plotted with thy hair;
Many a heart have they entangled in their snare.

(The poem is given in E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, ed. Browne, vol. 6, p. 165 and Gibb's translation is found in ibid., vol. 3, pp. 168–69). See also the poem by Fuḍūlī in ibid., vol. 3, p. 95; Turkish text, ibid., vol. 6, pp. 136–37.

2. See *EI*², s.v. 'Shāma' [T. Fahd]. The English euphemisms 'beauty mark' and 'beauty spot' and the French 'grains de beauté' can be seen as examples of this same tendency. For a list of works on this topic see Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Hādī's helpful list in the preface to an-Nawājī's *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl*, pp. 26–30. Thomas Bauer gives an overview of this theme in Abbasid erotic poetry in his *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, pp. 248–54.

3. 'Die frühesten Beispiele [...] stammen aus frühabbasidischer Zeit' ('The earliest examples [...] come from the early Abbasid period') (Th. Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, p. 248).

literary history is that they demonstrate the extent to which Mamluk authors were building on their rich knowledge of the Arabic literary tradition and repurposing common motifs as threads to bind together texts with an entirely novel approach. Alexander Sens has discussed how this allusive technique functioned in the context of Hellenistic epigram collections:

> [...] a poet's reuse of a particular passage activates the reader's awareness of an entire tradition, thus locating the alluding text in a continuous literary line while treating the target as a poetic ancestor. In this sense, allusion in Hellenistic epigram often functions dialectically. On the one hand, the evocation of a specific model creates meaning in its new context; on the other, it implicitly comments on the model itself. All of this is complicated in the case of epigrams by the fact that these poems were compiled in poetry-books, including both *libelli* composed and organized by a single author and anthologies of multiple poets' work, to which, as in Meleager's *Garland*, an editor might juxtapose his own compositions. In the first case, the grouping of poems by type or theme could provide a conspicuous generic template against which readers evaluate the interrelationships among individual poems. But it is in the case of an anthology like Meleager's *Garland*, in which the epigrammatist places his own compositions alongside the work of his predecessors, that the impulse to establish and comment on one's epigrammatic pedigree is most vivid: in juxtaposing his own compositions with epigrams on which they are based, the poet lays before the reader his own literary genealogy.[4]

Sens' analysis chimes with that offered here and suggests that this operation, this radicalization of convention through convention, indicates a thriving literary culture wherein an

4. A. Sens, 'One Thing Leads (Back) to Another: Allusion and the Invention of Tradition in Hellenistic Epigrams' in P. Bing and J. S. Bruss (eds), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram*, pp. 371–90, p. 375.

appetite for variety and virtuosity was engendered among readers and an attendant aptitude and erudition was demanded of litterateurs, who appear to have met the demand. This same trend is mirrored in anthologies on similar subjects such as tears and incipient beard growth.[5] Thomas Bauer has explained this trend more globally vis-à-vis Mamluk society: 'Eager to find pleasure in literature, to improve their literary knowledge, and to gain social prestige as cognoscenti of literature and the subtleties of the Arabic language, this bourgeois public engendered a broad demand for literary works, especially in the form of anthologies'.[6] Collections of naevi verses, like other poetic anthologies, were part of a wider cultural trend in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods toward encyclopaedism, but they are independent artistic works, as well, which exhibit a high degree of aesthetic and formal coherence.[7] Elsewhere in this study, epigram collections have been situated in the context of Mamluk and early Ottoman literary culture, so this chapter will focus instead on the literary construction of these texts. In the following analysis, one specific compositional dimension in a few collections of naevi verses will be drawn out so as to demonstrate that variation (cf. the maxim *varietas delectat*) in arrangement is an important facet of the aesthetic foundation of epigram collections.[8] These collections of epigrams on a common theme unfold like a sonata, through a process analogous to exposition and recapitulation—what is referred to here as variation—and though this process was not remarked upon by contemporary sources, and has thus far escaped the notice of scholars, its deployment,

5. See lists of these anthologies in the preface to Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī's edition of an-Nawājī's *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl*, pp. 25–6.

6. *EI3*, s.v. 'Anthologies. A. Arabic Literature. 2. Post-Mongol Period' [Thomas Bauer].

7. On Mamluk encyclopaedism, see E. Muhanna, 'Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period', ch. 1.

8. On the topic of variation (*varietas*, but also *variatio*) more broadly, see Sean Gallagher, 'Models of Varietas: studies in style and attribution in the motets of Johannes Regis and his contemporaries', ch. 2; and Andreas Rhoby and Elisabeth Schiffer (eds), *Imitatio, Aemulatio, Variatio: Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur (Wien, 22.–25. Oktober 2008)*, Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010; see also Kathryn Gutzwiller, 'The Poetics of Editing in Meleager's *Garland*'.

function, and clear utility make its prominence in certain epigram anthologies a point of significant import.[9]

One chapter of an-Nuwayrī's (d. 733/1333) voluminous encyclopaedia *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* is devoted to naevi description.[10] This chapter is divided into two sections with reference to grammatical gender: one 'in the masculine' (*ʿalā lafẓ at-tadhkīr*) and the other 'in the feminine' (*ʿalā lafẓ at-taʾnīth*).[11] The reader should also note the brevity of the sixteen poems as they are cited in this chapter: none is longer than four lines. This is further evidence of the tendency to anthologize epigrammatic poems. Following the example set by Joseph Sadan in his article 'Maidens' Hair and Starry Skies', the descriptions used in the sequence of poems in an-Nuwayrī's chapter will be highlighted to demonstrate for the reader the wide variety of images commonly associated with the naevi *maʿnā* (figure, metaphor).[12] Highlighting these figures makes it clearer to see how anthologists employed a sophisticated, if unacknowledged, technique of variation to enhance the arrangements of poems on a given theme.

The anonymous author of the first poem compares the mole on the beloved's right arm to the black spot of the heart and says it is like coal-black jet set in a delicate pearl.

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9. Contemporaries did discuss anthological techniques—obliquely—(see chapter 3 above) and they also discussed the importance of variation in the composition of *qaṣāʾid* (sing. *qaṣīdah*) (see e.g. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, vol. 3, pp. 373–74). Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner have discussed a process they call integration (made up of two 'integrating techniques': progressions and associations) in connection with Japanese poetry collections, which is clearly analogous to the process of variation I describe here (see R. H. Brower and E. Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, pp. 436–38; pp. 319–29; pp. 403–13).

10. On this massive encyclopaedia, see E. Muhanna 'Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period'.

11. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, pp. 80–82, 83.

12. Joseph Sadan, 'Maidens' Hair and Starry Skies. Imagery system and *maʿānī* guides; the practical side of Arabic poetics as demonstrated in two manuscripts' in Sasson Somekh (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Poetics*, Ser. Israel Oriental Studies, vol. 11, Leiden: Brill, 1991, pp. 57–88.

[من السريع]

فـــي ٱلـــسَّـــاعِـــدِ ٱلأَيْـــمَـــنِ خـــالٌ لَـــهُ مِـثْـلُ ٱلـسُّـوَيْـداءِ عَـلَـى ٱلـقَـلْـبِ
كـــأَنَّـــهُ مِـــنْ سَـــبَـــجٍ فـــاحِـــمٍ مُـــرَكَّـــبٍ مِـــنْ لـــؤلـــؤٍ رَطْـــبِ

fī s-sāʿidi l-aymani khālun lahū
mithlu s-suwaydāʾi ʿalā l-qalbī
kaʾannahū min sabajin fāḥimin
murakkabin min luʾluʾin raṭbī

On his right arm there's a birthmark,
like the black spot of the heart
It's as if it were made of coal-black jet
and set in (*murakkabin min*)[13] a lustrous (*raṭb*) pearl.[14]

The second poem by Ibn Munīr aṭ-Ṭarābulusī (d. 548/1153) speaks of a natural beauty who requires no ornaments (*ʿāṭil*), who appears and instantly attracts the ornaments of [the assembly's] gaze.

[من المنسرح]

لاحَ لـــنـــا عـــاطِـــلاً فَـــصـــيـــغَ لَـــهُ مـــنـــاطِـــقٌ مـــن مـــراشِـــقِ ٱلـــمُـــقَـــلِ
حـــيـــاةُ روحـــي وفـــي لـــواحِـــظِـــهِ حَـــثْـــفِـــيَ بَـــيْـــنَ ٱلـــنَّـــشـــاطِ والـــكَـــسَـــلِ
مـــا خـــالُـــهُ مِـــنْ فـــتـــيـــتَ عـــنـــبـــرِ صُـــدْ (م) غَـــيْـــهِ ولا قَـــطْـــرِ صِـــبْـــغَـــةِ ٱلـــكَـــحَـــلِ
لـــكـــنْ سُـــويْـــداءُ قـــلْـــبِ عـــاشِـــقِـــهِ طَـــفَـــتْ عـــلـــى نـــارِ وَرْدَةِ ٱلـــخَـــجَـــلِ

lāḥa lanā ʿāṭilan fa-ṣīgha lahū
manāṭiqun min marāshiqi l-muqalī

13. This phrase '*murakkab min*' ought to mean 'composed of', but in context it clearly means 'set in', 'placed in'. The poetic syntax is somewhat clumsy, but it is not necessary to substitute '*fī*' for '*min*' here, although it would make the line read more smoothly.

14. For this meaning, see Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, s. r. '*r-ṭ-b*'.

ḥayātu rūḥī wa-fī lawāḥiẓihī
ḥatfiya bayna n-nashāṭi wa-l-kasalī
mā khāluhū min fatīta ʿanbari ṣud-
ghayhi wa-lā qaṭri ṣibghati l-kaḥalī
lākin suwaydāʾu qalbi ʿāshiqihī
ṭafat ʿalā nāri wardati l-khajalī

A natural [i. e. unornamented] beauty appeared to us and attracted
the belts of the arrows of the eyes.[15]
I'd give my soul for him, though with his glances
he toys with my life, both when stirring and when idle.
His mole is not a crumb of ambergris from his tem-
-ple, nor a speck of his eyeliner.
Rather it is the black spot of the heart of one who loves him,
floating above the flame of the (blushing) rose on his cheek.

His mole is not, the poet says, crumbs of the ambergris of his temples nor a drop of his eyeliner ('*ṣibghat al-kaḥal*'), rather it is the black spot of the heart of the one who loves him floating over the fire of his blushing cheek.[16] Ibn Munīr is also the author of the third poem in which he reprises a simile from the previous poem. Here he addresses his audience, 'Do not take the mole on his cheek (N.B.: the paronomasia, *lā takhālū khālahu*) for a dried drop of his eyeliner (*min ṣibghi jafnin*). It is an ember from the fire of my heart, which sunk into [his cheek], was extinguished, and rests there.'[17]

[من الرمل]

15. This is the literal translation of this verse. It may be understood to mean: the gazes of all present shot toward him [when he appeared] and wrapped around his waist like a belt.

16. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 80. This is also the source for the poem as it appears in the *Dīwān* (Ibn Munīr aṭ-Ṭarābulusī, *Dīwān*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd as-Salām Tadmurī, Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1986, p. 132).

17. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2. p. 81; see also Ibn Munīr, *Dīwān*, ed. Tadmurī, p. 83.

أَنْـكَـرَتْ مُـقْـلَـتُـهُ سَـفْـكَ دمـي وعَـلَـى وَجْـنَـتِـهُ فـاْعْـتَـرَفَـتْ
لا تَـخـالـوا خـالَـهُ فـي خـدِّهِ قَـطْـرَةً مـن صِـبْـغِ جَـفـنٍ نَـطَـفَـتْ
تـلـك مـن نـارِ فـؤادي جَـذوَةٌ فـيـه سـاخَـتْ واْنـطَـفَـتْ ثـمّ طَـفَـتْ

ankarat muqlatuhū safka damī
wa-ʿalā wajnatahū fa-ʿtarafat
lā takhālū khālahū fī khaddihī
qaṭratan min ṣibghi jafnin naṭafat
tilka min nāri fuʾādī jadhwatun
fīhi sākhat wa-nṭafat thumma ṭafat

His eye denied spilling my blood,
but it rose up on his cheek, so it confessed.
Do not take the mole on his cheek
for a dried drop of his eyeliner
It is an ember from the fire of my heart
which sunk into [his cheek], was extinguished, and rose to the surface.

The next poem is connected to this last poem by use of the same apostrophic injunction; it begins, 'Do not take the mole on his cheek / for a drop of musk that melted from his forelock.'[18] And as in the poem before it, the last line—the punchline, as it were—gives a more meaningful, and metaphorical, explanation for the presence of this feature of beauty: 'That is my heart, it has been robbed of its kernel (*dhāka qalbī sulibat ḥabbatuhū*) / which has settled on his cheek as a mole (*fa-'stawat khālan ʿalā wajnatihī*).'

[من الرمل]

18. ibid., vol. 2, p. 81.

لا تَـــخـــالُ ٱلـــخـــالَ يـــعـــلـــو خَـــدَّهُ نَـــقْـــطَ مِـــســـكٍ ذابَ مـــن طُـــرَّتِـــهِ
ذاك قـــلـــبـــي سُـــلِـــبَـــتْ حَـــبَّـــتُـــهُ فـــٱسْـــتَـــوَتْ خـــالاً عـــلـــى وَجْـــنَـــتِـــهِ

lā takhālu l-khāla yaʿlū khaddahū
naqṭa miskin dhāba min ṭurratihī
dhāka qalbī sulibat ḥabbatuhū
fa-stawat khālan ʿalā wajnatihī
Do not take the mole on his cheek
for a drop of musk that melted from his forelock.
That is my heart, it has been robbed of its kernel
which has settled on his cheek as a mole.

Here there is a pun on the phrase '*ḥabbat al-qalb*', which can mean both the 'heart's beloved' and the 'grain of the heart', but there is also a further pun because '*ḥabbat al-qalb*' is also known as '*suwaydāʾ al-qalb*' ('the innermost part—the kernel—of the heart'). Read literally, however, '*suwaydāʾ al-qalb*' is the 'little-black-thing of the heart' and is thus a reference to the figure of the birthmark: the little black thing stripped from the lover's heart, which has settled on the beloved's cheek.

The next poem in this sequence is by the same Ibn Munīr aṭ-Ṭarābulusī and though the grain allusion (*ḥabbah* as grain weight) is not made explicit, the figure of weight and scales makes clear the relationship between this poem and the one that came before it.[19]

[من البسيط]

19. ibid., vol. 2, p. 81. See also Ibn Munīr aṭ-Ṭarābulusī, *Dīwān*, p. 132. The *ḥabbah* is equivalent to the avoirdupois grain, equivalent to one-sixtieth of a dirham, or dram, i.e. 64.799 milligrams. On coins, money-changing, and weights see *EI*², s.vv. 'Dīnār' [G. C. Miles], 'Ṣarf (a.)' [A. Zysow], and 'Makāyil. 1. in the Arabic, Persian and Turkish lands' [E. Ashtor]. Cf. the epigram by Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī (d. 1379) given in Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt adh-dhahab*, vol. 6, p. 270.

كـــأنّ خَـــدَّيْـــهِ ديـــنـــارانِ قـــد وُزِنـــا وحَـــرَّرَ ٱلـــصَّـــيْـــرَفـــيُّ ٱلـــوَزْنَ وٱحـــتـــاطـــا
فَـــخَـــفَّ إحـــداهـــمـــا عـــن وَزْنِ صـــاحِـــبِـــهِ فـــحَـــطَّ فـــوقَ ٱلَّـــذي قَـــدْ خَـــفَّ قـــيـــراطـــا

ka-anna khaddayhi dīnārāni qad wuzinā
wa-ḥarrara ṣ-ṣayrafiyyu l-wazna wa-ḥtāṭā
fa-khaffa iḥdāhumā ʿan wazni ṣāḥibihī
fa-ḥaṭṭa fawqa l-ladhī qad khaffa qīrāṭā
As though his cheeks were two gold coins being weighed,
when the money-changer carefully balanced the scales,
one was lighter than the other,
so he added a carat to balance them out.[20]

The poet compares the beloved's cheeks to two gold coins (*dīnār*) being weighed on a scale [to certify their value]. The money-changer (*ṣayrafī*) carefully balances the scale, but because one cheek weighs less than the other the money-changer has to add a carat (*qīrāṭ*)—the mole itself—to the cheek that weighs less so that they balance out. The next poem in the sequence departs from the speck motif to introduce a simile with political significance.[21]

[من الكامل]

أضْـحَـى لِـيـوسُـفَ فـي ٱلـجَـمـالِ خـلـيـفـةً يـخـشـاهُ كـلُّ ٱلـعـالَـمِـيـنَ إذا بَـدا
عَـرِّجْ مَـعِـي وٱنْـظُـرْ إلَـيْـهِ لِـكَـيْ تَـرَى فـي خَـدِّهِ عَـلَـمَ ٱلـخِـلافَـةِ أسـوَدا

aḍḥā li-Yūsufa fī l-jamāli khalīfatan
yakhshāhu kullu l-ʿālamīna idhā badā
ʿarrij maʿī wa-nẓur ilayhi li-kay tarā
fī khaddihī ʿalama l-khilāfati aswadā

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20. *'Qīrāṭ'* originally meant the 'grain of the carob-tree', which like many birthmarks is dark brown.
21. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 81.

A successor to Joseph in beauty has appeared
and when he appears all living beings shudder.
Stop with me and look at him so that you may see
the black flag of the caliphate on his cheek.

The anonymous poem announces that 'a successor (*khalīfah*, also caliph) to Joseph in beauty has appeared.' The reader will recall that the figure of Joseph became a by-word for beauty in the Arabic tradition. This successor to Joseph's beauty, the beloved of the poem, is nevertheless more daunting than the prophet who is depicted in the Bible and Quran: 'When he appears both worlds shudder' (l. 1). In the second line of the poem, the beloved is compared to the caliphs. The poet says to his companion, 'Stop with me and look at him so that you may see / the black flag of the caliphate (*ʿalam al-khilāfah*) on his cheek.' This comparison between the mole and the caliph's [black] flag is the simile that underpins the entire poem, and also links the idea of religious and political succession to aesthetic succession.[22] The beloved is so beautiful that he is reckoned to be in the line of succession from Joseph, but the introduction of the figure of the caliph introduces a whole layer of complexity to this brief poem—this epigram—that is worth unpacking. Two significant layers of meaning were added to the institution of the caliphate during and after the Abbasid revolution. The Abbasids overthrew the Umayyad dynasty in a revolution that was, theoretically, motivated by a strong desire among the Abbasids, their supporters, and their Alid comrades-in-arms to rectify the succession of the caliphate, which had become a hereditary dynasty of the Umayyads. The Umayyads, unlike the family of al-ʿAbbās, were not Hashemites (*banū Hāshim*) and this was used to great effect to bolster support for the Abbasids within proto-Shiite communities.[23] Succession (*khilāfah*) is thus not merely dynastic succession, but also

22. cf. *EI*², s.v. 'ʿAlam' [J. David-Weill].

23. The history of the Abbasid revolution is a very vexed issue and much has been written on the subject. The discussion here is limited to the popular conception of this revolution and the ethos of the Abbasid caliphate as represented in pre-modern Arabic culture and should not therefore be confused with history. For historical and historiographical discussions of this most significant event in early Islamic history, see *EI*³, s.v. 'ʿAbbāsid Revolution' [Elton L. Daniel]; *EI*², s.v. 'ʿAbbāsids' [B. Lewis].

familial succession from the Prophet, and it is this complex metaphor that is correlated to the idea of the beloved inheriting his beauty from Joseph. Similarly, the Abbasids were known for having constructed an awe-inspiring, fearsome image of the caliph and his martial strength. The black standard of the Abbasid armies and the caliph's black robes became synonymous with incontestable, terrifying power. The black standard was an emblem of the Abbasid uprising and the subsequent caliphal dynasty, but already in the Abbasid context the symbol was drawn from another common eschatological motif. In the *ḥadīth* literature, the Prophet Muḥammad explains the signs of the apocalypse thus:

> When we were with the Prophet, young men from Banū Hāshim [the Prophet's kin] entered and when the Prophet saw them his eyes filled with tears and his colour turned. [...] so I [ʿAbd Allāh, the narrator] said, 'We still see something in your face that we fear.' and [the Prophet] said, 'We are the people of a house for whom God has chosen the afterlife over this life, and after me, the people of my house will face trials, expulsion, and persecution. Until a people come from the East with *black banners* [emphasis mine, Ar.: *rāyāt sūd*] and they will ask for charity and will not be given it and so they will fight and will be made victorious and then they will be given what they had asked for, but they will not accept it until they bring it to a man from the people of my house and they will fill it with justice as they had filled it up with injustice, and let him among you who realises this, go to them, even if it [means] crawling on ice (*ḥabw*^{an} *ʿalā ath-thalj*).[24]

Against this historical background, we can see that the poet's comparison of the mole on the beloved's cheek to the black caliphal standard and its awesome cultural resonance is a light-hearted way of elevating the description of the beloved beyond the trope that he is Joseph's successor in beauty. The beloved is Joseph's successor (*khalīfah*), but he is also

24. *Sunan Ibn Mājah* in *Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth ash-sharīf*, no. 4082, p. 2725; also in *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (ed. ʿAbd al-Bāqī), no. 4082, vol. 2, p. 1366.

linked to the figure of the tremendous, awe-inspiring emperor-caliph (lit. successor). The mark of his beauty (the mole on his cheek) is, for the one who is infatuated with him, as terrifying as the black standard of the caliph's armies.

The epigram that follows on from this one is linked to the caliphal motif by an expression contained in its last line—the line that usually carries the most weight and serves as a climax in these epigrams, the line that gives them their point. With the image of the fearsome caliph still fresh in the reader's mind, she then encounters a poem that at first does not seem to be correlated with the one immediately preceding it. Yet it is in the last line of this poem that we find a reference to the same cultural nexus of the caliphal mystique that links these two epigrams in a series. The paradoxical expression that concludes the poem is made doubly poignant when read against the historical background of another system of caliphal imagery:[25]

[من السريع]

كَمْ قُلْتُ لِلنَّفْسِ إِلَيْهِ ٱذْهَبِي فَحُبُّهُ ٱلْمَشْهورُ مِنْ مَذْهَبِي
مُهَفْهَفُ ٱلْقَدِّ لَهُ شامَةٌ مِنْ عَنْبَرٍ في خَدِّهِ ٱلْمُذْهَبِ
آيَسَنِي ٱلتَّوْبَةَ مِنْ حُبِّهِ طُلوعُهُ شَمْساً مِنَ ٱلْمَغْرِبِ

kam qultu li-n-nafsi ilayhi –dh'habī
fa-ḥubbuhu l-mash'hūru min madh'habī
muhafhafu l-qaddi lahū shāmatun
min ʿanbarin fī khaddihi l-mudh'habī
āyasanī t-tawbata min ḥubbihī
ṭulūʿuhū shamsan mina l-maghribī

I've often told my soul, 'Go after him!
Loving him is the path (doctrine) I'm known for.'

25. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 81.

Slender bodied, with a spot
of ambergris on his gilded cheek.
I was made to despair of repentance from his love
when he rose as a sun in the west.

Once again, in this poem the mole on the beloved's cheek is compared to ambergris thus connecting this poem to the naevi motif shared with other poems in this chapter. Yet we should not overlook the image that ends the poem: a sun rising in the west. Those familiar with the traditional lore associated with the Fatimid dynasty will have noticed the connection between this poem and the 'caliphal' poem that precedes it. Bearing in mind the caliphal imagery employed in the preceding poem, it is easy to see that this concluding image refers to the Ismaili belief that the Fatimid al-Mahdī bi-l-llāh rose like a sun in the west in accordance with the prophetic *ḥadīth*.[26]

The image of the sun rising in the west is one of the signs of the apocalypse and is well known from the *ḥadīth* literature.[27] In the Sunni *ḥadīth*-collection of Ibn Mājah (d. 273/886), there is a chapter 'On the rising of the sun in the West' in the section on 'Trials and tribulations' (*fitan*).[28] Here Ibn Mājah relates three reports (*aḥādīth*, sing. *ḥadīth*) relating to this apocalyptic sign. The Prophet is recorded as saying 'The hour [i.e., the end of time] will not come until the sun rises in the West' and 'The first sign of the resurrection (*khurūjan*) is the rising of the sun in the West'. Another harbinger of the end times, of course, is the reappearance of al-Mahdī.[29] Line two of this poem is also connected to another piece of Fatimid lore: the man with the birthmark (*ṣāḥib ash-shāmah*). One of the most famous and successful of the Fatimid commanders was al-Ḥusayn b. Zakarōye, the son

26. See, *inter alia*, W. Ivanov, *Ismaili Tradition concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, London: [Oxford University Press on behalf of the] Islamic Research Association, 1942, p. 238.

27. See, *inter alia*, Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāyat al-Bidāyah wa-n-nihāyah*, vol. 1, pp. 195–204. On Islamic eschatological traditions, see *EI²*, s.v. 'al-Sāʿa. 2. In eschatology.' [U. Rubin].

28. *Sunan Ibn Mājah* in *Mawsūʿat al-ḥadīth ash-sharīf*, no. 4070, p. 2722.

29. See *EI²*, s.v. 'al-Mahdī' [W. Madelung].

of a Fatimid *dāʿī*.[30] He had a birthmark on his face, which he claimed was a heavenly sign (*āyah*), and for this reason was known as *ṣāḥib ash-shāmah*.[31] Line two would not necessarily put one in mind of him, but the Fatimid imagery in line three makes the allusion clear and demonstrates the extent to which these epigrams drew on a wide body of shared cultural knowledge. This interpretation of two poems of a total of five lines may seem overlong, but by demonstrating that these poems deal with more than just the topos of naevi and eroticism, and that anthologists arranged these poems in their collections conscientiously—if subtly—we can begin to understand how these epigram anthologies operated as literary texts, rather than as neutral collections of poetry.

The next poem in the sequence builds on the sun motif in the one preceding it. In this poem, the poet describes a slender youth in whose [dark] hair and [gleaming] brow people arrive at both darkness (*ẓulmah*) and light (*ḍiyāʾ*).[32] 'Don't be surprised', he says ending the poem, 'by the mole on his cheek / for every anemone has its black spot'.

[من الكامل]

وَمُهَفْهَفٍ مِنْ شَعْرِهِ وَجَبِينِهِ يَغدو ٱلوَرَى في ظُلْمَةٍ وضِياءِ
لا تُنْكِروا ٱلخالَ ٱلَّذي في خَدِّهِ كلُّ ٱلشقيقِ بِنُقْطَةٍ سَوْداءِ

wa-muhafhafin min shaʿrihī wa-jabīnihī
yaghdū l-warā fī ẓulmatin wa-ḍiyāʾī
lā tunkirū l-khāla l-ladhī fī khaddihī
kullu sh-shaqīqi bi-nuqṭatin sawdāʾī
A slender one in whose hair and brow
mankind arrives at darkness and light.
Don't be surprised by the mole on his cheek,

30. See Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi. The Rise of the Fatimids*. trans. Michael Bonner, Leiden: Brill, 1996, pp. 79–88.

31. ibid., p. 79.

32. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 81.

for every anemone has its black spot.

In the next poem, this black spot is morphed into a burnt spot:[33] 'When my eye saw the fire of his cheek / my heart rushed toward it like a moth [to a flame][34] // that was burnt by [the fire] and thus became a mole / Just look at the trace of smoke around the edges (*al-ḥawāshī*)'. The last image, the edges (*al-ḥawāshī*) of the burn can also be read as a reference to the beloved's incipient beard.

[من الوافر]

لـهـيـبُ ٱلـخَـدِّ حـيـنَ رأتْـهُ عَـيْـنـي هَـوَى قـلـبـي عَـلَـيْـهِ كـالـفَـراشِ
فـأحْـرَقَـهُ فـصـارَ عـلَـيْـهِ خـالاً وهـا أثَـرُ ٱلـدُّخـانِ عـلـى ٱلـحـواشـي

lahību l-khaddi ḥīna raʾat'hu ʿaynī
hawā qalbī ʿalayhī ka-l-farāshī
fa-aḥraqahū fa-ṣāra ʿalayhi khālan
wa-hā atharu d-dukhāni ʿalā l-ḥawāshī
When my eye saw the fire of his cheek
my heart rushed toward it like a moth [to a flame]
that was burnt by [the fire] and thus became a mole.
Just look at the trace of smoke around the edges.

In the next poem, the simile foregoes the image of fire, but retains the image of flight, as with the moth in the preceding poem.[35]

[من البسيط]

33. ibid., vol. 2, p. 82.

34. cf. M. M. Abaḥsain, 'The Supra-Symbolic Moth in Arabic Religious Poetry from the Late Ottoman Period', *JAL*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1993, pp. 21–7; this poem is translated on p. 21.

35. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 82.

بَـدا عـلـى خَـدِّهِ خـالٌ يُـزيِّـنُـهُ فـزادَنـي شَـغَـفـاً مِـنْـهُ إلـى شَـغَـفـي
كـأنَّ حَـبَّـةَ قـلـبـي عِـنْـدَ رؤيَـتِـهِ طـارتْ فـقـلـتُ لـهـا فـي ٱلـخَـدِّ مـنْـهُ قِـفـي

badā ʿalā khaddihī khālun yuzayyinuhū
fa-zādanī shaghafan minhū ilā shaghafī
ka-anna ḥabbata qalbī ʿinda ruʾyatihī
ṭārat fa-qultu lahā fī l-khaddi minhu qifī

A mole appeared upon his cheek, adorning him,
and my passion for it added to my [existing] passion.
As though, when it saw it [or: him], the beloved [or: grain] of my heart,
flew up, and so I told it to stop on his cheek.

The poet says that a mole appeared upon the beloved's cheek, adorning him [or the cheek], and this increased the lover-narrator's existing passion. The mole, he says, 'is as though it were the beloved [also 'a grain'] of my heart, which flew up when it saw him [or: it], and so I told it to stop on his cheek'. The figure of the heart leads to the next poem, which is all about the interaction between heart, mole, and eye.[36]

[من المجتث]

خِـيـلانُ خَـدِّكَ رَدَّتْ صَـحـيـحَ قَـلْـبـي مَـريـضـا
فـي ٱلـعَـيْـنِ سـودٌ ولـكـنْ مـا زِلْـنَ فـي ٱلـقَـلْـبِ بِـيـضـا

khīlānu khaddika raddat / ṣaḥīḥa qalbī marīḍā
fī l-ʿayni sūdun wa-lākin / mā zilna fī l-qalbi bīḍā

The birthmarks on your cheek returned
My healthy heart diseased.
To the eye they're black, but,

36. ibid., vol. 2, p. 82.

in my heart, they're forever white.

Thus the beloved [or: grain] of the heart motif in the previous poem has here been altered to create the image of the lover's sickened heart. This sickened heart then provides the occasion for the punchline of the poem in which the rational eye, which recognises the birthmarks as harmful to the lover, is juxtaposed with the passionate heart, which still retains affection for the thing that has caused it pain. What had been expressed through chromatic synecdoche—white for good, black for bad—becomes explicit in the poem that follows.[37] In this poem, the poet says the beloved's cheek is a mirror of all good things and that its beauty makes all facial features [or qualities, more generally] beautiful.[38] 'Why then', he asks in the concluding line, 'do I see stars upon it / which are shy even though they are shooting stars (*nayyirāt)*?' Here again it is the concluding image, the shooting star, that provides the link between this poem and the next. The next poem is interesting not only because of the way it is linked to the poem preceding it, but for the system of metaphors it puts forth.[39]

[من السريع]

حَـجَّـتْ إِلَـى وَجْـهِـكَ أَبْـصـارُنـا طـائِـفَـةً يـا كَـعْـبَـةَ ٱلـحُـسْـنِ
تَـمْـسَـحُ خـالاً مِـنْـكَ فـي وَجْـنَـةٍ كـالـحَـجَـرِ ٱلأسـوَدِ فـي ٱلـرُّكْـنِ

ḥajjat ilā wajhika abṣārunā / ṭāʾifatan yā kaʿbata l-ḥusnī
tamsaḥu khālan minka fī wajnatin / ka-l-ḥajari l-aswadi fī r-ruknī

Our gaze makes pilgrimage to your face,
O Kaʿbah of beauty, and circumambulates,
Rubbing the birthmark on your cheek

37. On the significance of colours, see fn. 79 below.
38. ibid., vol. 2, p. 82.
39. ibid., vol. 2, p. 82.

as if it were the black stone in the corner.[40]

It can be shown that this poem is connected to the one before it by elucidating the poem's system of imagery. The admirers' eyes are likened to pilgrims making the pilgrimage to Mecca, and like these same pilgrims the eyes are said to be circumambulating. Yet rather than say that their gaze is circumambulating the Kaʿbah by use of a direct object, the poet employs apostrophe ('O Kaʿbah of beauty') to draw maximum attention to the beloved, who is, of course, the idol around which the eyes perform *ṭawāf* (ritual circumambulation).[41] Additionally, the admirers are said to brush against the birthmark on the beloved's cheek with their glances just as human pilgrims rub their hands against the black stone embedded in one corner of the actual Kaʿbah.[42] This tactile gaze seeks the beloved out with all the intensity of a once-in-a-lifetime religious experience. That pilgrims often also kissed the stone only increases the delicacy of the comparison between this religious talisman and the beloved's adorned cheek.[43] The reader familiar with the tropes associated with the naevi topos could probably foresee the reference to the black stone, and would certainly have understood the allusion to the shooting stars of the preceding line; in the Islamic tradition one of the popular explanations for the provenance of the black stone (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*) was that it was something akin to a meteorite.[44] The traditional account of the history of the black stone is as follows: when Ibrāhīm (Abraham) was building the Kaʿbah with his son Ismāʿīl (Ishmael) after the aborted sacrifice, the angel Jibrīl (Gabriel) brought

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40. See Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, p. 73 (cited in Abaḥsain, 'The Supra-Symbolic Moth', p. 22n). For a further example of the use of beauty-mark as a description of a pleasing architectural feature, see Gülrü Necipoglu, 'The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest: ʿAbd al-Malik's grand narrative and Sultan Süleyman's glosses', *Muqarnas*, vol. 25, 2008, pp. 17–105, p. 30 (with thanks to Stefan Tarnowski for the reference).

41. See *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Ṭawāf' [F. Buhl].

42. See *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān*, s.v. 'Kaʿba' [G. R. Hawting]; *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Kaʿba' [A. J. Wensinck, rev. J. Jomier]. cf. the concept of the 'Gaze', its permutations (from Lacan, Foucault, Mulvey, etc.), and debates surrounding it (e.g. Edward Snow, 'Theorizing the Male Gaze: Some Problems', *Representations*, vol. 25, Winter 1989, pp. 30–41).

43. On kissing, touching, and prostrating toward the black stone, see al-Azraqī, *Kitāb Akhbār Makkah*, pp. 233–35.

44. See al-Azraqī, *Kitāb Akhbār Makkah*, pp. 218–224, 225–233.

them the black stone, which had been stored in Abū Qubays, 'the sacred mountain [...] overlooking the Great Mosque [i.e., the site of the Kaʿbah] in Mecca', for safekeeping during the flood. Ibrāhīm and his son then built the stone into a corner (*rukn*) of the Kaʿbah structure.[45]

The next poem in the sequence is linked to the poem preceding it but one, thereby creating a retrospective thematic loop that sets the three poems off as a subset. Let us examine how this sequence progresses. The three-line poem by al-Asʿad b. Balīṭah (d. 440/1048) begins by comparing the effect of the beloved's beauty to the intoxicating effects of wine: 'Drunk after seeing him though I don't know / if it was because of his good looks or the wine?'.[46] In the last line of the poem, the naevi topos is taken up and here it is said that the birthmarks on the beloved's cheek are like 'hours of separation on a night of coming together (*wiṣāl*)'. This theme of union, or coming together (*wiṣāl*), which is often a metaphor for sex (also spiritual union), serves as the punning core of the first line of the next poem, the first of two naevi poems on a female beloved:[47]

[من البسيط]

[١] فَـدَيْـتُ زائِـرَةً فـي ٱلـعِـيـدِ واصِـلَـةً لِـمُـسْـتَـهـامٍ بِـهـا لِـلـوَصْـلِ مُـنْـتَـظِـرِ
[٢] فَـلَـمْ يَـزَلْ خَـدُّهـا رُكْـنـاً ألـوذُ بِـهِ والـخـالُ فـي صَـحْـنِـهِ يُـغْـنـي عَـنِ ٱلـحَـجَـرِ

fadaytu zāʾiratan fī l-ʿīdi wāṣilatan
li-mustahāmin bi-hā li-l-waṣli muntaẓirī

1. I'd give my life for a visitor, come on the feast day to see
An adorer who longs for her arrival [or: union with her, or: sex]

45. *EI*², s.v. 'Abū Ḳubays' [U. Rubin]; cf., ibid., s.v. 'Kaʿba' [A. J. Wensinck, rev. J. Jomier].

46. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 82.

47. Poem by Kushājim (d. circa 350/961), an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 83. See also in Kushājim, *Dīwān*, ed. Maḥfūẓ, pp. 235–36.

The second line of the poem reintroduces the pilgrimage motif of the last poem but one; a motif foreshadowed by the use of the word visitor (*zāʾirah*) in the first line.

fa-lam yazal khadduhā ruknan alūdhu bihī
wa-l-khālu fī ṣaḥnihī yughnī ʿani l-ḥajarī

2. Her cheek remains the corner where I take refuge
And the birthmark on its surface obviates the need for any stone!

This last line makes several direct allusions to the *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) ritual that demonstrate the extent to which through manipulation of situational terminology (*tarjīḥ*) Arab poets were able to eroticize otherwise non-erotic references. When we take account of all the *ḥajj* allusions, the reading of the line changes dramatically:

> Her cheek is the corner *of the Kaʿbah* (*rukn*) where I take refuge / and the birthmark *in the courtyard* [i.e. *of the mosque*] (*ṣaḥn*) obviates the need for *the Black Stone* (*al-ḥajar*).

The final poem in the sequence of naevi poems in this chapter of an-Nuwayrī's encyclopaedia is similarly linked to the one preceding it both by grammatical femininity as well as a common semantic cluster. Where the previous two poems were linked by words sharing the root *w-ṣ-l*, this final poem is linked to the one immediately preceding by the root *n-ẓ-r*. Where the lover of the previous poem was waiting (*muntaẓir*), hopeful for union with the beloved (*waṣl*), in this poem, the same root is used to generate two words having to do with sight: *nāẓir* (looker) and *manẓar* (view; sight).

[من الطويل]

[١] وَمَحْجوبَةٍ في ٱلخِدْرِ عَنْ كُلِّ ناظِرٍ وَلَوْ بَرَزَتْ ما ضَلَّ باللَيْلِ مَنْ يَسْري
[٢] بِخالٍ بِذاكَ ٱلخَدِّ أحْسَنَ مَنظَراً مِنَ ٱلنُّقْطَةِ ٱلسَّوْداءِ في وَضَحِ ٱلبَدْرِ

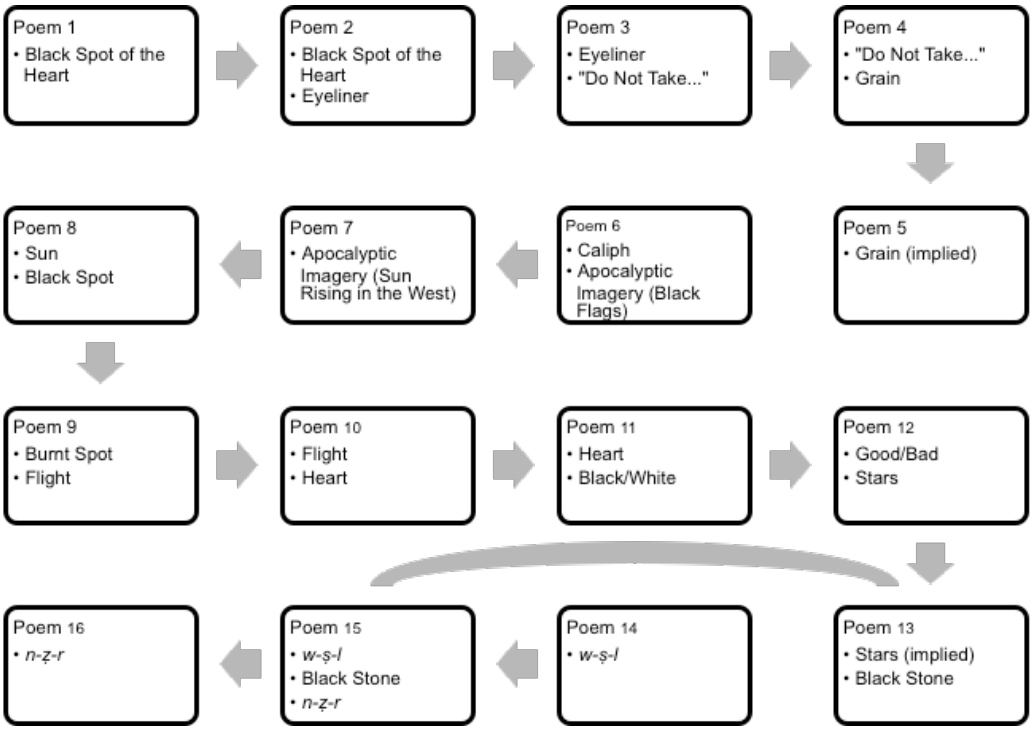
wa-maḥjūbatin fī l-khidri ʿan kulli nāẓirin
wa-law barazat mā ḍalla bi-l-layli man yasrī

bi-khālin bi-dhāka l-khaddi aḥsana manẓaran
mina n-nuqṭati s-sawdāʾi fī waḍaḥi l-badrī[48]

Protected from a peeper's gaze, this woman in the women's quarters;
If she were to appear, no night-traveller would go astray,
With a birthmark that is a more beautiful sight than even
the black spot on the brightness of the full moon.

This poem takes up common tropes: the beloved's plenilune face illuminates the darkness and the mole on her cheek is compared to the spot on the moon's surface, some of which we have seen employed in other poems in this chapter. What is most interesting about this poem and the entire sequence of naevi poems in this chapter is the way in which the author—the anthologist—strings these poems together. They are not merely poems on a common topic.

48. an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 2, p. 83. The poem is by al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf (d. c. 192/808); see also in as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb*, vol. 1, p. 59, (discussed below) and in the poet's *Dīwān* (ed. Karam Bustānī, Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965, p. 161) where these lines—which here make an epigram—are presented as vss 3 and 5 of a six-line poem.



This diagram represents the variation underlining a series of transitions in an-Nuwayrī's short chapter on naevi verses

Of course, these poems are indeed poems on the common topic of naevi or else they would not have been included in this chapter at all, but the virtuosity implicit in an-Nuwayrī's anthology is the way in which he (or an unidentified original anthologist) orchestrates his collection so that the poems follow on from one another in a sequence that takes the reader from one poem to the next.[49] In an article investigating '[...] what relations a practiced medieval reader noticed between parts of a text', Andras Hamori ponders a difficult question that we may never be able to answer with any certainty: 'The modern reader is more or less trained to react to such patterns in a text, but the rhetoric books do not tell us

49. In the introduction to Book Two of his anthology *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb wa-l-mashmūm wa-l-mashrūb*, as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ says: that this book is arranged of short poems (*muqaṭṭaʿāt ash-shiʿr*) about the state of lovers [...] interwoven [*mutadākhilan baʿḍuhā fī baʿḍ*]. He adds that he did not divide this book into chapters because the object of this section is selection (or choice: *al-mukhtār*) and that dividing things into chapters requires one to include material of lesser quality so as to bulk up the size. (as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb*, vol. 2, p. 3).

whether the medieval reader observed them.'[50] One cannot know whether the mediaeval reader detected the patterns of arrangement in an-Nuwayrī's chapter—a mini-anthology—which I have sketched here in detail; Hamori is right that the sources are silent about this. One could even propose that an-Nuwayrī did not himself realise that he was creating a structured, interthematic arrangement of poems in his chapter on naevi descriptions. But because this technique is employed by other authors, as we will see below, and because it stands to reason that 'practiced medieval reader[s]' were infinitely more sensitive to and aware of patterns of arrangement and intertextuality, It is unlikely that this is a case of arrangement by accident, or coincidence. Whether every reader detected this pattern is a matter for debate, but it is clearly discernible with only a modicum of concentrated attention and it is doubtful that it went unnoticed by the audience of its day. The question is not whether mediaeval readers were sufficiently aware of, or properly trained to look for, patterns in poetic arrangements. The question is—having posited, as an axiom of anthological reading, that these collections were not simply collected, but that they were chosen with discretion, arranged with a literary eye, and presented to a literate and sensitive audience—whether any reader could overlook so obvious a pattern?

In as-Sarī ar-Raffā''s (d. c. 972) *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb wa-l-mashmūm wa-l-mashrūb*, the anthologist includes a chapter on naevi in the first book of four, the 'Book of the Beloved' (*kitāb al-maḥbūb*). Though three of the poems in this chapter (nos 2, 8, and 9) are included in an-Nuwayrī's chapter of some three and a half centuries later, we cannot detect the same degree of orchestrated arrangement in as-Sarī ar-Raffā''s collection of eleven naevi poems. This should not be taken to mean, however, that as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ compiled his collection without any artistic vision or that he did not find occasion to employ variation in his arrangement. The anthologist presents eleven epigrammatic poems—note that as in an-Nuwayrī none of the poems is longer than four lines—on the naevi motif detailing variations in descriptive (ekphrastic) representations (*waṣf*) of this

50. A. Hamori, 'Some Schemes of Reading in al-Marzūqī, al-Iskāfī and Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī', p. 20.

hallmark of beauty. The first four poems in this chapter are not arranged by means of the same technique used by an-Nuwayrī, but they do form a set. The set is made up of two poems of one line (poems 1 and 3) alternating with two poems of three and two lines describing women with birthmarks. The one-line poems, the first alternating subset, both hinge on the image of the beloved's ivory white cheek:

[Poem 1][51]

khālin ka-nuqṭati zājī
ʿalā ṣafīḥati ʿājī
A birthmark like a speck (*nuqṭah*) of copperas (*zāj*)
on a sheet of ivory.[52]

[Poem 3][53]

ka-ʾannahū nuqṭatun bi-miskin
lāʾiḥatun fī bayāḍi ʿājī
A birthmark as though it were a speck (*nuqṭah*) of musk
shining against the whiteness of ivory.

These poems are very similar in their imagery, with the substitution of a speck of musk for a speck of copperas in the second of the subset. The figure of the speck is recapitulated in the poem that comes between these two one-liners. The second poem in the chapter by as-

51. Poem by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥman al-Kūfī (as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb,* vol. 1, p. 59).

52. Copperas is also known as green vitriol or iron sulphate. '1. A name given from early times to the protosulphates of copper, iron, and zinc (distinguished as blue, green, and white copperas respectively) [...], used in dyeing, tanning, and making ink.' *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'copperas'. See also Martin Levey, *Mediaeval Arabic Bookmaking and its relation to early chemistry and pharmacology*, ser. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. vol. 52, pt. 4, Philadelphia, PA: September 1962, p. 16n. See also in Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* where he explains that *az-zāj al-ʿIrāqī* (Iraqi *zāj*) and *zāj al-asākifah* (cobblers' [?] *zāj*) mean 'yellow vitriol' or colcothar (Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, s.r. '*z-w-j*'.

53. Poem by ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥīm al-Ḥārithī (as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb,* vol. 1, p. 60). On this poet see Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt ash-Shuʿarāʾ,* ed. A. Eghbal, pp. 130–32; ibid., ed. ʿAbd as-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, pp. 276–80.

Sarī ar-Raffāʾ is an extended version of the last poem from an-Nuwayrī's chapter discussed above. The reader will recall that in this poem the birthmark on the beloved's cheek is said to be prettier than the sight of the black spot on [the surface of] the moon; the word for 'spot' in this intercalary poem is the same as that translated as 'speck' (*nuqṭah*), in the poems on either side of it (Poems 1 and 3). The last poem in this set of four, in turn, skips the imagery of the poem that immediately precedes it (Poem 3) to revive the celestial motif from Poem 2:

[من الطويل]

خَرَجْنَ خُروجَ ٱلأَنْجُمِ ٱلزُّهْرِ فٱلتقى عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْهُنَّ ٱلملاحَةُ وٱلشِّكْلُ
وَخالٌ كَخالِ ٱلبَدْرِ في وَجْهِ مِثْلِهِ لَقِينا ٱلمُنَى فيهِ فَحاجَزَنا ٱلبَذْلُ

kharajna khurūja l-anjumi z-zuhri fa-ltaqā
ʿalayhinna minhunna l-malāḥatu wa-sh-shiklū
wa-khālun ka-khāli l-badri fī wajhi mithlihī
laqīnā l-munā fīhī fa-ḥājazanā l-badhlū[54]

[The women] set out like shining stars, from which
they took their beauty and their coquetry.
A birthmark (like that of the full moon) on a face like it was
where we found what we desired so we refrained from making gifts. (?)[55]

Here, as in Poem 2 above, the beloved's birthmark is likened to a spot on the moon's surface; here the poet says figuratively 'the birthmark of the full moon' (*ka-khāl al-badr*). But this poem also expands this celestial motif by comparing the group of beautiful women to brightly shining stars. The reader is asked to remember this pattern of alternating

54. Poem by Muslim b. al-Walīd (d. 208/823) (as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb,* vol. 1, pp. 60–1). In as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ's anthology, the 2nd hemistich of the 2nd line begins '*laqītu*', but I have adopted the reading of the poet's *Dīwān* and other sources as cited in the textual apparatus.

55. The concluding phrase '*fa-ḥājazanā l-badhlu*' is highly unclear; the translation offered here is a guess.

subsets—specks of contrasting colour on sheets of expensive material and lunar simile—because as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ will return to it again at the end of his chapter on naevi descriptions.

The next two poems in this chapter (Poems 5 and 6) are about male youths whereas Poems 2 and 4 (discussed above) are about females. The similarities with the imagery that has come before is apparent. In Poem 5, the beloved is described almost as if he were a doll whose beauty is literally handcrafted.[56]

[من الكامل]

فـــــي خَـــــدِّهِ خـــــالٌ كـــــأنَّ (م) أنـــامِـــلاً صَـــبَـــغَـــتْـــهُ عَـــمْـــدا
خَـــنِـــثٌ كـــأنَّ ٱلـــلـــه ألـــ (م) بَـــسَـــهُ قُـــشـــورَ ٱلـــدُّرِّ جِـــلْـــدا
وَتَـــرَى عَـــلَـــى وَجَـــنـــاتِـــهِ فـــي أيِّ حـــيـــنٍ جِـــئـــتَ وَرْدا

fī khaddihi khālun ka-an-
na anāmilan ṣabaghat'hu ʿamdā
khanithun ka-anna l-lāhu al-
-basahū qushūra d-durri jildā
wa-tarā ʿalā wajanātihī
fī ayyi ḥīnin jiʾta wardā
On his cheek there is a mole, [which looks] as
though some fingers painted it there deliberately.
An effeminate one, it's as though God gave
him a coat of pearl for skin.
And on his cheek, you'll see
no matter when you come, a rose.

The birthmark on his cheek is as though it had been painted there intentionally and his skin is so soft it is as if God has 'given him a coat of pearl for skin' ('*albasahū qushūra d-durri*

56. Poem by Dīk al-Jinn (d. 235 or 236/849–51) (as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb,* vol. 1, p. 61).

jildā'). The last line of the poem links it implicitly with the poem that follows, which in turn associates it with Poem 2 above: 'And on his cheeks you'll see / no matter when you come, a rose'. Keeping this rosy-cheeked boy in the front of our minds, let us consider the proposed connection with the poem that follows. The next poem (Poem 6) is also on a youth; one 'cutely coquettish with nice eyes; / a marvel like his creator' with two jet-black temple curls over his cheeks.[57]

[من الوافر]

مَـــلـــيـــحُ ٱلـــدَّلِّ والـــحَـــدَقَـــهْ بـــديـــعٌ وٱلَّـــذي خَـــلَـــقَـــهْ
لَـــهُ صُـــدْغـــانِ مـــن سَـــبَـــجٍ عَـــلَـــى خَـــدَّيْـــهِ كـــالـــحَـــلَـــقَـــهْ
وخـــالٌ فـــوقَ وَجْـــنَـــتِـــهِ يُـــقَـــطِّـــعُ قَـــلْـــبَ مَـــنْ عَـــشِـــقَـــهْ
أُلاحِـــظُـــهُ فـــأُدمـــيـــهِ فـــأَتْـــرُكُ لَـــحـــظَـــهُ شَـــفَـــقَـــهْ

malīḥu d-dalli wa-l-ḥadaqah
badīʿun wa-l-ladhī khalaqah
lahū ṣudghāni min sabajin
ʿalā khaddayhi ka-l-ḥalaqah
wa-khālun fawqa wajnatihī
yuqaṭṭiʿu qalba man ʿashiqah
ulāḥiẓuhū fa-udmīhī
fa-atruku laḥẓahū shafaqah

A pretty flirt with pretty glances
he is a wonder—I swear by the One who created him!
He has two temple-curls of jet
which lie on his temples (lit. cheeks) like hoops
and a mole on his cheek, which
cuts the heart of one who loves him.

57. Poem by Kushājim (d. circa 350/961) (as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb,* vol. 1, pp. 61–62).

My glances cause him to bleed
so I put off looking at him out of pity.

In the third line of this four-line poem, the poet describes the beloved's birthmark as 'cutting the heart of one who loves him' and it is this image of 'cutting' that links the two poems. In the second line of Poem 2 (omitted from an-Nuwayrī's version of the poem) the beloved's birthmark is said to be cutting as well: 'The beauty of the birthmark on her cheek cuts my heart; / if she were to unveil it, it would [positively] resound with magic (*tanaghghama bi-s-siḥrī*).' Thus we can see how common metaphors serve to connect poems in these sequences, yet just as common metaphors and figures are repeated in these sequences, they are also implied. These implied figures also serve to connect poems in a sequence. Let us return to the rose on the youth's cheek; this is a common enough image in erotic poetry.[58] But the rose on the beloved's cheek is not always a mere rose; it can also be a freshly plucked rose, as in the following hemistich: 'His cheeks like roses freshly cut' (*'wa-khudūduhū ka-l-wardi ḥīna qaṭaʿtuhū'*).[59] And we can see the same imagery in the following line from a poem, which appears elsewhere in as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ's anthology:

lahū wardun ʿalā l-waǰna
-ti mamnūʿun mina l-qaṭfī[60]
He's got a rose on his cheek
That's forbidden to pluck.

The connection between roses and cutting is not made explicit but it certainly does seem plausible that there is an allusion to an imaginal correlation that both these poems conjure

58. It crops up several times in the chapter following on from the chapter on [descriptions of] birthmarks in as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ's anthology, the chapter on cheeks (*fī al-khudūd*); see vol. 1, p. 66, Poems 94 and 95; vol. 1, p. 68, Poem 98; vol. 1, p. 70, Poem 102 and 103; vol. 1, pp. 70–1, Poem 104; vol. 1, p. 73, Poem 108 and 110; vol. 1, p. 74, Poem 111; and vol. 1, pp. 74–5, Poem 113. See also further examples in the chapter after this one, 'on [descriptions of] cheeks (*waǰanāt*)'.

59. This line is from a poem by the unknown author of *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ*, a 17th-century anthology preserved in the Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Huntington 508, f. 40a.

60. Poem by Khālid al-Kātib (d. c. 269/883) (as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muḥibb wa-l-maḥbūb,* vol. 1, p. 81, Poem 127). See also in the supplement (*dhayl*) in A. Arazi (ed.), *Amour divin*, p. 258, Poem 49.

up. The figure of cutting plants may also tie into the idea of the *ḥimā* or sanctuary and its injunctions. In any case whether or not the cutting birthmark reminds the reader of cut roses, the arrangement of these two poems can be explained more simply: they are both on male youths, whereas Poems 2 and 4, which are grouped together, are both on women.

The next two poems (Poems 7 and 8) both compare parts of the beloved's body to precious materials. In Poem 7, the beloved's curls are made of jet, his [or her] brow is made of pearl, the birthmark on his [or her] cheek is a 'flower of musk on moist earth'. In poem 8, it is the birthmark that is compared to jet, after having been said to resemble the black spot of the heart, set in a cheek of pearl. The final three poems (Poems 9, 10, and 11) form a series and seem again to be linked—like the other groupings we have considered—by shared imagery or paronomasia. Poem 9 is also included in an-Nuwayrī's text; it is the poem about the female visitor which draws upon pilgrimage imagery (see above). As we have seen, this poem includes a comparison of the beloved's birthmark to the black stone (*ḥajar*) of the Kaʿbah. The root *ḥ-j-r* appears to link this poem with the first line of the next poem (Poem 10) in the sequence:

[من الطويل]

أَغَنَّ رَبِيبُ ٱلرَّبْرَبِ ٱلغِيدِ وٱلمَهَا بِمُقْلَةِ وَحْشِيِّ ٱلمَحَاجِرِ أَدْعَجِ
لَهُ وَجَنَاتٌ نُكْتَةُ ٱلخَالِ وُسْطَهَا كَنُقْطَةِ زاجٍ في صَفِيحَةِ زِبْرِجِ

aghannu rabību r-rabrabi l-ghīdi wa-l-mahā
bi-muqlati waḥshiyyi l-maḥājiri adʿajī

One from the gazelle flock: gentle-voiced, supple-necked and well raised,
alongside a wild cow with the big, black eyes of one feral.

And if it is *ḥajar* (the stone) in the preceding poem that leads to *maḥājir* (eyes) in the next, it is then the second and final verse of this poem that introduces us to the concluding movement of the chapter:

lahu wajanātun nuktatu l-khāli wasṭahā
ka-nuqṭati zājin fī ṣafīḥati zibrijī

Upon his cheeks, the birthmark speck in the middle
is like a spot of copperas on a sheet of gold

The reader will recall the way this chapter began: with an alternating series of poems on specks of contrasting colour on surfaces of expensive material and poems involving lunar similes. Thus we see that this—the final line of the penultimate poem—recalls the movement that began the chapter. Even readers who do not know Arabic can appreciate the paronomasia in the pair *nuktah* (speck) and *nuqṭah* (spot) in this line and how it recalls the word that featured prominently in Poems 1 and 3: *nuqṭah*. Technically, this feature of Arabic rhetoric is known as '*al-jinās al-muḍāriʿ*' or, in Pierre Cachia's translation, 'Variant Paronomasia' in which the 'matching terms' differ by one letter, which represents a phoneme from the same area of articulation, or one proximate to it, as the phoneme it replaces in the first matching term (i.e. in our example, *kāf* and *qāf* both represent velar sounds).[61] Likewise, the surface (i.e., the beloved's cheek), which in Poem 1 was 'a sheet of ivory' (*ṣafīḥat ʿāj*) is here 'a sheet of gold' (*ṣafīḥat zibrij*) and as in Poem 3 the birthmark is likened to 'a speck of copperas' (*zāj*). These similarities and final-syllable ʤ-sounds make the connection between the end of the chapter and its beginning unmistakable. And if it were not already sufficiently clear, this poem is followed by a one-liner, the last poem of the chapter, which—mirroring the alternating sets at the beginning of the chapter—includes a lunar simile, along with a whole host of velar plosives:

[من البسيط]

يـا حُـسْـنَ خـالٍ بِـخَـدٍّ قَـدْ كَـلِـفْـتُ بِـهِ كـأَنَّـهُ كَـوْكَـبٌ قَـدْ لُـزَّ بـالـقَـمَـرِ

61. See Pierre Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, no. 42. Strictly speaking, the *kāf* is postpalatal and the *qāf* is uvulovelar; see further *EI*², s.vv. 'ḳāf' and 'kāf' [both by H. Fleisch].

yā ḥusna khālin bi-khaddin qad kaliftu bihī

ka-ʾannahū kawkabun qad luzza bi-l-qamarī

O beauteous mole on a cheek I've fallen in love with;

it's as though a star has been stuck on to the moon.

This moon image—following on from the verse about a speck on a sheet of gold, which rhymes in *j*—brings the reader back to the beginning, giving this chapter of naevi verses a certain symmetry.

صحائف الحسنات في وصف الخال

Surfaces of Beauty Marked with Descriptions of Beauty-Marks

Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad an-Nawājī (d. 859/1455), the author of a great many anthological texts, including epigram anthologies on youths (*Marātiʿ al-ghizlān fī waṣf al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān*; *The Pastures of Gazelles: Describing Handsome Young Men*) and incipient beards (*Khalʿ al-ʿidhār fī waṣf al-ʿidhār*; *Throwing Off Restraint in Describing Cheek-Down*), also wrote an epigram anthology on naevi: *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl*.[62] Aṣ-Ṣafadī, who lived a century earlier, dealt with the topic in his naevi encyclopaedia-cum-anthology, *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl*, as well as in *ar-Rawḍ al-bāsim wa-l-ʿarf an-nāsim*, an anthology of his own epigrams.[63] Unlike aṣ-Ṣafadī, who devoted the first half of his text to a discussion of birthmarks in medical, pseudo-scientific, historical, and theological literatures, an-Nawājī's anthology is purely a collection of poetry. This outward structural characteristic is the most arresting aspect of the text at first glance. The reader is plunged into the anthology after a brief introduction in which an-Nawājī says that he collected this distillation (*nubdhah*) of naevi descriptions and filled it with the priciest pearls, which decorate these pearl necklaces (i.e. verses), but otherwise gives no prefatory explanation of how he expects the poetry anthology to be read.[64] Aṣ-Ṣafadī's text, on the other hand, is composed of a preface (*istiftāḥ*) and two introductory sections (sing. *muqaddimah*) in addition to the alphabetically organized anthology of poetry (*natījah*) that forms its second half. An-Nawājī was either not concerned with the general significance of naevi, or—what is more likely—he may have thought that aṣ-Ṣafadī's text obviated the need for a more broad introduction to naevi in a variety of disciplines. An-Nawājī's *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, a book on wine which includes a great

62. An-Nawājī also included a chapter on 'boys with moles' in his anthology *Marātiʿ al-ghizlān fī waṣf al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān*.

63. See my review of three editions of aṣ-Ṣafadī's *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl* (*MSR*, vol. 16, 2012, pp. 168–71).

64. 'Pearl Necklaces': possible an allusion to another of an-Nawājī's anthologies, a collection of *muwashshaḥāt* entitled *ʿUqūd al-Laʾāl fī al-muwashshaḥāt wa-l-azjāl*. See editions by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf ash-Shihābī (Baghdad, 1982) and Samir Haykal (in his unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1983, 'The Eastern Muwashshaḥ and zajal: a first study including edition of the *ʿUqūd al-laʾālī* of al-Nawājī').

deal of poetry but also a great deal of information on wine more generally, demonstrates that an-Nawājī was not above covering a topic comprehensively when he felt it necessary.[65]

In the introduction to his wine anthology *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, an-Nawājī explains, in rhyming prose, the method of and reasons behind its composition. It is, like his naevi anthology, explicitly a collection of epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*): 'The one whose command is obeyed * and to whom a refusal cannot be made * asked me to gather for him an extract of fine cloth (*nubdhah rafīʿat al-bazz*) with the thinnest hems [or: margins] (*raqīqat al-ḥāshiyah*) from epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*) on drinking * and to pick from the gardens of *adab* a flower from "clusters nigh to gather"'.[66] He explains, though, that in doing this he is also seeking to improve literary education among his contemporaries:

> The lightning of the wine-poems (*khamriyyāt*) of Abū Nuwās and those who followed him has gone out and no longer shows from the direction of al-Ghawr (*jānib al-ghawr*) * and today the cups of it in this collection say to the people of this age (*ahl al-ʿaṣr*) 'Cheers! (*hanīʾan*) It's our turn now!' * so here I am adorning with earrings the ears of litterateurs to wander after (*yahīmū*) the choice wine of this descriptive [motif] drunkenly.[67]

Unlike his organizationally understated naevi anthology, in his bacchic anthology, an-Nawājī includes chapters on 'the names of wine', 'the beginnings of wine and the first to make it [from pressed grape juice]', 'the nature, benefits, and particular qualities of wine', 'the use of wine according to physicians (*al-ḥukamāʾ*)', etc. It may have been that an-Nawājī felt his contemporaries to be as ignorant about cultural and historical discussions of wine as they were about the tradition of wine-poetry, or it may have been that an-Nawājī was hoping to produce an oenological encyclopaedia along the lines of ar-Raqīq al-Qayrawānī's

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65. See G. J. van Gelder, 'A Muslim Encomium on Wine'.

66. an-Nawājī, *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, p. 2. 'Clusters nigh to gather': Quran 69:23 ('*quṭūfuhā dāniyah*') as translated by A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, p. 298.

67. an-Nawājī, *Ḥalbat al-Kumayt*, p. 3; note the allusion to Quran 26:225: '*a-lam tara ʾannahum fī kulli wādin yahīmūn*' ('hast thou not seen how they wander in every valley', trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, p. 75).

11th-century work, *Quṭb as-surūr*.[68] In any case in his naevi anthology, an-Nawājī does not suggest—either explicitly in his introduction or implicitly in terms of the content he chooses to include—that this same audience required, or much wanted, an introduction to birthmarks. The presumed better familiarity with naevi, as opposed to wine, may be owed to aṣ-Ṣafadī's anthology, which came out in the preceding century. And yet, although an-Nawājī does not mention aṣ-Ṣafadī's anthology it is likely that he wrote his own anthology as a response. That is not to say, however, that '[t]he book is a remake of [aṣ-Ṣafadī's anthology]' or 'an "update"', as Thomas Bauer has written.[69] The collection is centred around a traditional theme, of course, but it is wholly innovative in its arrangement and orientation and aṣ-Ṣafadī's alphabetically organised appendix of epigrams is nowhere near as finely crafted as an-Nawājī's sensitive and varied progression. Certainly the presence of a great many (twenty-four) poems by aṣ-Ṣafadī in an-Nawājī's anthology indicates his familiarity with the text. I have also been able to identify one-hundred and seventeen poems (i.e. more than half the poems in an-Nawājī's anthology, equalling approximately thirty percent of aṣ-Ṣafadī's) that are common to both aṣ-Ṣafadī and an-Nawājī's anthologies.

Like aṣ-Ṣafadī's anthology, an-Nawājī's *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl* is composed of epigrammatic poems. In fact, none of the poems included in an-Nawājī's anthology are longer than four lines.

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68. Sārah al-Barbūshī bin Yaḥyā has recently produced a new critical edition of this text (Baghdad, Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Jamal, 2010).

69. Th. Bauer, 'al-Nawājī', in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 328. The editors of both these works mention other works of this type, but where ʿAbd al-Hādī simply lists the books on birthmarks, al-ʿUqayl says an-Nawājī plagiarised (*saraqa*) from aṣ-Ṣafadī's text (p. 51).

Total number of poems	205	
Total number of lines	433	
Average length	2.11	
		As a percentage of the total
One-line poems	1	0.49%
Two line poems	187	91.22%
Three-line poems	10	4.88%
Four-line poems	7	3.41%
Poems of four lines or fewer	205	100%

From a literary-historical perspective it is interesting to note that an-Nawājī shared aṣ-Ṣafadī's predilection for citing the verse of contemporary or near-contemporary poets to the exclusion of what modern scholarship thinks of as the canonical poets of the pre-Islamic, Umayyad, and Abbasid periods. The editor of an-Nawājī's anthology and the leading an-Nawājī expert, Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī, was able to identify one-hundred and ninety-eight of the two-hundred and five total poems, and was able to attribute these to ninety-five poets in all. Of these poets, only four died in the 9th and 10th centuries, eight in the 11th century, and fifteen in the 12th century. The majority (sixty-nine poets) died in the 13th (forty-three poets), 14th (twenty), and 15th centuries (six). The anthologist himself is included among the poets who died in the 15th century since he also followed aṣ-Ṣafadī's practice of quoting his own poetry, amounting to eight poems in the anthology. That more than seventy percent of the identified poets included in the anthology died in the 13th and 14th centuries is evidence that an-Nawājī, like aṣ-Ṣafadī and other Mamluk anthologists, was interested in presenting the work of his contemporaries

and near-contemporaries to the audience. That this practice accords with audience demands can be assumed.

Variation

If, based on the discussion above, we posit that an-Nawājī composed his naevi anthology with reference to aṣ-Ṣafadī's earlier anthology, an-Nawājī's anthology can be considered a rich example of the virtuosity potential in anthological arrangement. Building on aṣ-Ṣafadī's alphabetically arranged anthology, an-Nawājī chose to organise his epigrams in movements that lead into one another without the use of chapter headings, as was common in many anthologies. Nevertheless, the anthologist's careful arrangement and use of variation can clearly be discerned.

Following an introduction in which an-Nawājī refers playfully to the concept of *ḥasanāt* (good deeds)—a word which appears in the work's title—the anthology begins with a series of seven epigrams on naevi, which all incorporate the *ḥasanāt* motif.[70] This series incorporates a doubled set of punning synonyms: *ḥasanah* (pl. *ḥasanāt*) means not only virtues, as well as beautiful features; it is also another word for birthmarks. *Ḥasanah* is in fact an epithet of naevi (as mentioned above).[71]

[من الخفيف]

يا شَقيقَ ٱلشَّقيقِ بالوَجَناتِ وَقَسيمَ ٱلبُدورِ بالقَسَماتِ
وَنَظيرَ ٱلقَضيبِ وَهْوَ نَضيرٌ لَكَ خالٌ مِنْ أَحْسَنِ ٱلحَسَناتِ

yā shaqīqa sh-shaqīqi bi-l-wajanātī
wa-qasīma l-budūri bi-l-qasamātī

70. an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥā'if al-ḥasanāt*, p. 50: 'And God makes white our good deeds on the day of reckoning (*yawm al-ḥisāb*) and exceeds what the pen has written in the mother of all books (*umm al-kitāb*)'.

71. See *ḥasanah* as a metaphor for *khāl* in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl*, ʿUqayl ed., pp. 141–42; cf. also this usage in modern Egyptian Arabic (M. Hinds and El-Said Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, s.r. '*ḥ-s-n*').

wa-naẓīra l-qaḍībi wa-hwa naḍīrun
laka khālun min aḥsani l-ḥasanātī[72]

O brother (*shaqīq*) of the anemone (*shaqīq*) in cheek
and partner (*qasīm*) of the full moons in face (*qasamāt*[73])
and equal (*naẓīr*) of the fresh (*naḍīr*) branch
you've a birthmark that's the best of all marks of beauty (*ḥasanāt*).

In my translation of this opening poem, I have attempted to highlight the instances of internal wordplay in the poem; an important feature of Mamluk poetic style generally. The concluding note of this poem, *ḥasanāt* (marks of beauty) a pun on the use of *ḥasanāt* above in an-Nawājī's introduction, is elaborated in the second poem in the sequence:[74]

[من الخفيف]

إنْ أساءَ ٱلحَبيبُ قامت بِعُذْر[ي] وَجْنَةٌ مِنْهُ فَوْقَهُ شاماتُ
يا لَها وَجنَةٌ أُقابِلُ مِنْها حَسَناتٍ تُمْحَى بِها سَيِّئاتُ

in asāʾa l-ḥabību qāmat bi-ʿudhrin
wajnatun minhu fawqahā shāmātū
yā lahā wajnatun uqābilu minhā
ḥasanātin tumḥā bi-hā sayyiʾātū

When the beloved acts meanly, a cheek
with birthmarks upon it, makes things right.
Oh what a face, which compensates me with
beautiful features (*ḥasanāt*) that wipe away all faults (*sayyiʾāt*).

72. This poem is by Sayf ad-Dīn ʿAlī b. Qizil al-Mushidd (d. 656/1258) (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 51). It is included in aṣ-Ṣafadī's anthology as well [poem no. 30].

73. lit. facial features.

74. The poem is by Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 51).

Here again the birthmark is a feature of the beloved's beauty, but the concept of *ḥasanāt* is taken up again and while it means 'beautiful features' here as in the previous poem, it is also explicitly evoked with allusion to its other meanings: good deeds and birthmarks. The beloved's beauty is said to possess the power to erase even his own bad deeds. This same motif is repeated in the next poem in the sequence. This poem, as the heading makes explicit, is made up of verses taken from a longer poem ('*min qaṣīd*') and it is related in two sets of two verses as reproduced below:

[من الرمل]

بِـــأبـــي شـــامـــاتُ خَـــدٍّ قَـــدْ أطـــالَـــتْ حَـــسَـــراتـــي
كُـــلَّـــمـــا ســـاءَ فِـــعـــالاً قُـــلْـــتُ إنَّ ٱلـــحَـــسَـــنـــاتِ

منها:

أعْـــشَـــقُ ٱلـــشَّـــامـــاتِ مِـــنْـــهُ وَهْـــيَ أســـبـــابُ مَـــمـــاتـــي
وَلِـــســـوءِ ٱلـــحَـــظِّ صـــارَتْ حَـــسَـــنـــاتـــي سَـــيِّـــئـــاتـــي

bi-ʾabī shāmātu khaddin
qad aṭālat ḥasarātī
kullamā sāʾa fiʿālan
qultu inna l-ḥasanātī

minhā [:]

aʿshaqu sh-shāmāti minhū
wa-hya asbābu mamātī
wa-li-sūʾi l-ḥaẓẓi ṣārat
ḥasanātī sayyiʾātī[75]

I'd trade my father for those birthmarks on that cheek

75. Poem by Burhān ad-Dīn al-Qīrāṭī (d. 781/1379) (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 52). ʿAbd al-Hādī, who has examined the manuscript of al-Qīrāṭī's *Dīwān* recension (*Maṭlaʿ an-nayyirayn*, Aḥmad Thālith (Istanbul) MS) shows that these two sets of two verses are presented as a four-line poem (with variants in reading), but that the order of the last set of two verses is inverted in the *Dīwān*.

though my sorrows they've increased!
Every time he does a bad thing,
I say, 'Good deeds...'[76]

And also from this poem:

I love his birthmarks
though they're killing me,
And it's my bad luck that
my good deeds are become bad.

The play on the meanings of *ḥasanāt* (good deeds and beautiful features) gets taken up again in the next poem in this sequence:

[من الطويل]

حَبيبٌ تُسِرُّ ٱلنَّاسَ رؤيَةُ وَجْهِهِ إذا جالَ طَرْفُ ٱلطَّرْفِ في وَجَناتِهِ
وَيَزْدادُ بالخيلانِ فَرْطَ مَلاحَةٍ وَمَنْ زادَ زادَ ٱللهُ في حَسَناتِهِ

ḥabībun tusirru n-nāsa ruʾyatu wajhihī
idhā jāla ṭarfu ṭ-ṭarfi fī wajanātihī
wa-yazdādu bi-l-khīlāni farṭa malāḥatin
wa-man zāda zāda -llāhu fī ḥasanātihī[77]

A beloved the sight of whose face pleases all

76. As ʿAbd al-Hādī explains (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 52n) this is an allusion to Quran 11:114, '*inna l-ḥasanāti yudhʾhibna s-sayʾāt*' ('surely the good deeds will drive away the evil deeds', trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1, pp. 252–53). This is an example, as ʿAbd al-Hādī says, of the rhetorical technique of *iktifāʾ* around which an-Nawājī wrote an entire anthology (*ash-Shifāʾ fī badīʿ al-iktifāʾ*). cf. Pierre Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, no. 84, who calls this 'truncation'. This poem is also cited in an-Nawājī, *ash-Shifāʾ fī badīʿ al-iktifāʾ*, ed. Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī, p. 162. Geert Jan van Gelder (who has reviewed ʿAbd al-Hādī's edition in *MSR*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2007, pp. 233–35) kindly brought this citation to my attention.

77. Poem by aṣ-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 53); no. 31 in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl* (ʿUqayl ed., p. 207) with some variation. Compare the anonymous verse recorded in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 11, p. 169: '*fa-in zāda zāda -llāhu fī ḥasanātihī / mathāqīla yamḥū -llāhu ʿanhu bihā wizrā*'.

when the glance of the eye wanders over his cheeks.
His birthmarks add to his copious beauty and
whoever gives abundantly (*zāda*) God will add to (*zāda*) his good deeds.

This sequence of naevi poems playing with the topic of *ḥasanāt* continues for three more poems, at which point the seventh poem, the last on *ḥasanāt*, introduces the next sequence of poems, which are on the subject of chess. The seventh poem and the eighth poem appear to be very different: they are in different metres, with different rhyme letters, and one is on *ḥasanāt* while the other introduces a new topic, chess; a seemingly abrupt shift. An-Nawājī, though, cleverly links these two sequences through the imagery of kissing, an action that is highlighted in both these poems.

Poem 7:

[من المنسرح]

طَـلَـبْـتُ تَـقْـبـيـلَ مَـنْ أُحِـبُّ وَقَـدْ أَنـكَـرْتُ فـي ٱلـخَـدِّ نُـقْـطَـةً حَـسَـنَـهْ
فَـرَقَّ لـي قَـلْـبُـهُ وَقـالَ إذا لَـثَـمْـتَ خَـدّ[ي] لا تُـنْـكِـرِ ٱلـحَـسَـنَـه

ṭalabtu taqbīla man uḥibbu wa-qad
ankartu fī l-khaddi nuqṭatan ḥasanah
fa-raqqa lī qalbuhū wa-qāla idhā
lathamta khaddin lā tunkiri l-ḥasanah[78]

I asked to kiss the one I love, although I'd
been taken aback (*ankartu*) by the birthmark (*nuqṭah ḥasanah*) on his cheek
His heart took pity on me and he said, 'If you kiss my cheek,
then you mustn't deny (*tunkir*) my favours (*ḥasanah*) henceforth.'

Poem 8:

78. Poem by Abū Bakr b. Ḥijjah [al-Hamawī] (d. 837/1434) (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 54).

[من السريع]

لَعِبْتُ بالشَطْرَنْجِ مَعْ ساحِرِ ٱلـ ـألحاظِ ألمْمَى أهيْفِ ٱلقَدِّ
وَكانَ دَسْتي فيهِ مَنْصوبَةً عَلَيْهِ فيما رُمْتُ مِنْ قَصْدِ
سَعَيْتُ كالرُّخِّ إلَى غايَةٍ وَرُحْتُ كالفِرْزانِ مِنْ وَجْدي
وَقُمْتُ كالمَجْنونِ مِنْ خَمْرَةٍ أُقَبِّلُ ٱلشّاماتِ في ٱلخَدِّ

laʿibtu bi-sh-shaṭranji maʿ sāḥiri l-
-alḥāẓi almā ahyafi l-qaddī
wa-kāna dastī fīhi manṣūbatan
ʿalayhi fīmā rumtu min qaṣdī
saʿaytu ka-r-rukhkhi ilā ghāyatin
wa-ruḥtu ka-l-firzāni min wajdī
wa-qumtu ka-l-majnūni min khamratin
uqabbilu sh-shāmāti fī l-khaddī

I played chess with one whose glances
are enchanting, red-lipped, slender.
My pieces were all set up against him
as I went after what I sought.
I went forward like a rook toward my goal [or: to the very end]
but, in my ardour, I moved like the queen.[79]
And then as if the wine had made me mad, I began
to kiss the birthmarks (*shāmāt*) on his cheek.

79. Geert Jan van Gelder helpfully explained that—unlike in modern chess—in pre-modern Arab chess the queen (properly, the counsellor, or *firzān*) was not in fact the most powerful piece, but was limited to moves of one field diagonally per turn and that the rook (*rukhkh*) was indeed the most powerful piece. The major work on this subject remains Reinhard Wieber, *Das Schachspiel in der arabischen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Walldorf-Hessen: Verlag für Orientkunde, 1972.

Note, too, the audible pun here in the last line of the poem on birthmarks (*shāmāt*) and checkmate (*shāh-māt*).

This technique of transitioning between thematic movements by use of linking epigrams on disparate themes, which we have seen in other anthologies, is frequently deployed in an-Nawājī's naevi anthology. Between three epigram sequences on separation (*hajr*, nos. 18–20), dark night (*dujā*, nos. 20–21), and likening a birthmark to Bilāl (nos. 21–26), an-Nawājī uses this same technique of using a combinatory epigram to move from one movement to the next. Thus poem 20 integrates the two motifs of departure and dark night:

[من السريع]

كـــأنَّـــمـــا تَـــحْـــتَ دُجَـــى شَـــعْـــرِهِ بَـــدْرٌ تَـــبَـــدَّى فـــي ٱلـــلَّـــيـــالـــي ٱلـــطِّـــوالْ
كـــأنَّـــمـــا ٱلـــخـــالُ عَـــلـــى خَـــدِّهِ ســـاعَـــاتُ هَـــجْـــرٍ فـــي نَـــهـــارِ ٱلـــوِصـــالْ

ka-ʾannamā taḥta dujā shaʿrihī
badrun tabaddā fī l-layālī ṭ-ṭiwāl
ka-ʾannamā l-khālu ʿalā khaddihī
sāʿatu hajrin fī nahāri l-wiṣāl[80]

[His face] as if beneath his hair's night,
a full moon appearing on long nights.
As if the birthmark on his cheek,
were the hours of being left behind on day of coming together.

The next poem, Poem 21, integrates the preceding theme of dark night with the theme of the sequence to come, likening the birthmark to Bilāl reciting the call to prayer at dawn:[81]

80. No author is named in the anthology, but the editor found this poem in the *Dīwān* of Ibn al-Muʿtazz as transmitted by aṣ-Ṣūlī (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 61 and note).

81. cf. the list of acceptable similes given in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl* (al-ʿUqayl ed., p. 173): 'Bilāl calling [worshippers to] prayer in the morning').

[من السريع]

كَـــأَنَّـــمَـــا تَـــحْـــتَ دُجَـــى شَـــعْـــرِهِ بَـــدْرٌ تَـــبَـــدَّى فـــي ٱلـــلَّـــيـــالـــي ٱلـــطِّـــوالْ
أَسْـــفَـــرَ ضَـــوْءُ ٱلـــصُـــبْـــحِ مِـــنْ وَجْـــهِـــهِ فَـــقـــامَ خـــالُ ٱلـــخَـــدِّ فـــيـــهِ بِـــلالْ

ka-ʾannamā taḥta dujā shaʿrihī
badrun tabaddā fī l-layālī ṭ-ṭiwāl
asfara ḍawʾu ṣ-ṣubḥi min wajhihī
fa-qāma khālu l-khaddi fīhi bilāl[82]

As if below his hair's night,
A full moon appeared on long nights.
The light of the morning broke in his face
so the birthmark on his cheek rose up like Bilāl.

Whereas the long night was negative, a common trope in descriptions of longing and heart-sickness, Bilāl b. Rabāḥ, a black African freed slave and an early follower of the Prophet who is known as the 'first muezzin', is a harbinger of the long-awaited dawn. Blackness is transformed from the sign of suffering to the sign of deliverance. This poem then leads into a sequence of six poems (nos 21–26) all of which incorporate the Bilāl simile. Not every poem in the anthology falls into thematic sequences, which I have been calling movements. Poem 12, for example, comes in the middle of the chess movement though it is has nothing to do with chess. It appears that an-Nawājī placed it there because it rhymes in *–ātū* like the poem before it and in fact both poems end with the word *shāmāt*, as is perhaps to be expected from an anthology of naevi verses. This same technique of grouping poems by rhyme letter occurs elsewhere in the anthology, but it is not as common as arrangement by theme. And yet there are some instances where the order of the poems does not seem to flow smoothly and I struggle to see any parallels. Poems 27 and 28 for example share a

82. Poem by Maḥmūd ad-Dimashqī (an-Nawājī, *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt*, p. 62).

rhyme in *–ām* and Poem 28 kicks off a long sequence of poems (Poems 28–38) punning on *khitām* (seal, ring), but, coming at the end of the sequence on Bilāl-likening, Poem 27 seems a non sequitur.

Other sequences in this anthology further demonstrate this compositional strategy. The long sequence of pilgrimage-themed epigrams (nos 159–65) come after a series of poems (nos 156–159) that are joined by two corollary images of the night and blackness. Poem 156, the first in this sequence, describes the beloved's face as a moon and every lover's heart as one of its stations. This nocturnal image leads to the next poem (no. 157), which plays on two verbs meaning 'to become' (*ghadā*: 'to become [in the day/day]' and *amsā*: 'to become [in the evening/evening]') that carry connotations of temporal progress. The last line of this poem introduces the corollary to the night: blackness, but here it is the blackness of the lover's skin rather than the dark of night that is being discussed: 'I may be black, but my character's all white (*in kuntu aswada innī abyaḍu sh-shiyami*)'. This image leads to the next poem in the sequence (no. 158) where the nighttime image is reintroduced and associated with the chromatic imagery introduced in the preceding poem. In this poem, the beloved's hair is like a pitch-black night (*dujā*) for the lover and thus he says to his beloved, 'You've shown me a moonlit night (*fa-ʾaraytanī fī l-ḥāli laylan muqmirā*)'. The next line of this poem expands on the chromatic imagery suggested in the two poems previous:

وجَعَلْتَ حَظّي مِثْلَ خالِكَ أسوداً فأذَقْتَني مَوْتاً كَخَدِّكَ أحْمَرا

wa-jaʿalta ḥaẓẓī mithla khālika ʾaswadan
fa-ʾadhaqtanī mawtan ka-khaddika ʾaḥmarā

You've made my luck as black as your birthmark
and you've given me a taste of a death as red as your cheek.[83]

83. Here the colours serve to link—literally—superficial descriptions (black birthmark, red cheek) with symbolically weighted metaphors: 'black' luck is bad luck and a 'red' death is a violent one. Compare contemporary Egyptian Arabic: '*yomak iswid*' ('damn you') and '*yomak abyaḍ*' ('Have a good day'), '*ya-nhār iswid*'

The poem that follows this one (no. 159) begins a long sequence of pilgrimage poems and the connection between these movements, as can perhaps be predicted, is based around the Kaʿbah's black stone. This interchanging night-black sequence is thus linked to a pilgrimage movement of seven poems by use of a single, stock simile; one so common that it undoubtedly suggested itself to the reader as early as the first hemistich of the second line—in the phrase 'The firmest bond is in his temple locks' ('*fa-l-ʿurwatu l-wuthqā bi-ʾaṣdāghihī*'), an allusion to Quran 2:256.[84]

Elsewhere in the anthology, colour serves to link different thematic sequences. The sequences nos 170–72 and 175–80 are linked by two intermediary passages, poem nos 172–73, where the colour black again acts as a bridge between different sets of imagery and Poem nos 173–74 where the black spot of the heart bridges the colour black and the coming sequence of currency and weights. Poems 170–72 take hair as their topic and Poems 175–80 are concerned with weights and currency. Poem 170 is constructed around a pun where the word for birthmark (*khāl*) is punned with the word for devoid (*khālin*) and the beauty of the beloved male subject's face is said to be due to his birthmark as well as its lack of facial hair. The following poem (no. 171) reprises the same image and relies on the same paronomasia. The last poem in this hair sequence (no. 172) deviates from this pun on birthmarks and absence [of facial hair], and instead describes the beloved's face and hair as being, for his lovers, like the day and the night. The second line of the poem does not follow from this image, but reiterates a favourite naevi simile that we have already seen: The birthmark on the beloved's cheek is like the black spot of an anemone. The colour black then features in the following poem (no. 173), in which the beloved's birthmark is said to resemble the black of the eye, a traditional feature of beauty, or the [black] spot of the heart ('*lahū khālun ḥakā*

('God damn it') and its euphemistic equivalent '*ya-nhār abyaḍ*' ('gosh darn it').

84. '*Lā ikrāha fī d-dīni qad tabayyana r-rushdu min al-ghayy fa-man yakfur bi-ṭ-ṭāghūti wa-yuʾmin bi-l-lāhi fa-qad istamsaka bi-l-ʿurwati l-wuthqā lā infiṣāma lahā wa-llāhu samīʿun ʿalīm*' ('No compulsion is there in religion. / Rectitude has become clear from error. / So whosoever disbelieves in idols / and believes in God, has laid hold of / the most firm handle, unbreaking; God is / All-hearing, All-knowing.', trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1, p. 65)

*ḥusnan wa-lawnan / sawāda l-ʿayni ʾaw ḥabba l-qulūbi*ʾ). Poem 174 follows on this image of the birthmark as the spot of the heart: 'It was as if when I saw him, the spot of my heart / flew up. So I told it, to land on his cheek.' Poem 175 begins a sequence of poems on currency and weights and it is the word *ḥabb* that serves to link it with what has come before. Poem nos 175–77 are all based on the twin images of the gold coin, also a weight, (*dīnār*) and the black spot of the heart or grain (*ḥabbah*), which as we have seen, is also the smallest unit of weight. This punning imagery comes in the last lines of these two-line poems, which are translated below:

Poem 175

The gold coin of the cheek is perfect, so why
  did you throw a spot from my heart on to it?

Poem 176:

On the gold coin of every [long-necked one's] cheek
  spots from people's hearts have been distributed.

Poem 177:

He's got two birthmarks on the gold coin of [his] cheek
  and hearts are sold to him for two bits (lit. two spots, *ḥabbatayn*).

In Poem 178, the spot of the heart (*ḥabbah*) becomes the negligible weight of a 'grain' (*ḥabbah*):

By my life, appearing on his red cheeks
  A birthmark's like the condition of love.
As if beauty has loved him since forever and dotted him
  with a gold coin and a little extra (*bi-dīnārin wa-ḥabbah*).[85]

85. '*Dīnār wa-ḥabbah*' can also be understood as a precise amount because *ḥabbah* means 1/60th of a dirham in addition to meaning 'grain, small amount'.

This imagery of weights and currency is carried into the next poem in the sequence (Poem 179), which is linked to the poem that follows it in this weight-and-currency movement, by means of the notion of profit (*r-b-ḥ*). In Poem 179, *ḥabbah* again refers to the birthmark, but it is clearly associated with the synonym having to do with weight and currency. In the second line of the poem the beloved is given a long and involved epithet: '*yā man idhā bāʿati l-abṣāru ʾaswadahā / bi-ḥabbatin fawqa khaddayhi fa-qad rabiḥat*', which means 'He [who's so beautiful that] if eyes were to sell their black pupils in exchange for the speck on his cheek, they'd still make a profit.' The next poem (no. 180) again uses unlikely profit as a means of demonstrating the value of the beloved's beauty. There are many elements of the preceding themes strewn heavily throughout the two lines of this poem so it is worth quoting it in full:

[من البسيط]

يـا حَـبَّـذا ٱلـخـالُ إكْـسـيـراً عَـلَـى ذَهَـبٍ مـا مِـثْـلُـهُ بِـسُـوَيْـدا مُـهْـجَـةٍ غـالـي
وَلا بـأَسْـوَدِ عَـيْـنٍ رُبَّـمـا رَبِـحَـتْ بِـلَـمْـحَـةِ ٱلـطَّـرْفِ قِـنْـطـاراً بِـمِـثْـقـالِ

yā ḥabbadhā l-khālu iksīran ʿalā dhahabin
mā mithluhū bi-suwaydā muhjatin ghālī
wa-lā bi-aswadi ʿaynin rubbamā rabiḥat
bi-lamḥati ṭ-ṭarfi qinṭāran bi-mithqālī

What a lovely birthmark, [it's] like of alchemist's elixir on gold;
No heart's black spot is as dear as it.
Nor any blackness of the eye which may gain by the
slightest glance (or: in the blink of an eye) a *qinṭār* for the cost of a *mithqāl*.[86]

86. *Qinṭār* and *mithqāl* are both weights. Simply put, a *qinṭār* is a weight of tens of kilograms, technically equivalent to 100 *raṭl*, whereas a *mithqāl* is a few grams. For detailed information about these and other weights, see *EI*[2], s.v. '*Makāyīl*' [E. Ashtor].

In this poem, several of the connecting words from the previous thematic passages crop up. In the first hemistich, '*ḥabbadhā*', an expression meaning 'How lovely, how good' alludes to the words *ḥabbah*, spot or grain, and *dhahab* (gold) matches the gold coins (*danānīr*, sing. *dīnār*), which featured in previous poems. In the second hemistich of the first line, '*suwaydā muhjatin*' is analogous to the familiar black spot of the heart (*suwaydāʾ al-qalb*). In the second line, the eyes are again involved in a financial transaction as in the poem immediately before. Here the beloved's birthmark is again said to be more valuable than eyes, which, in this instance, would just by giving the slightest glance get a *qinṭār*'s worth for a measly *mithqāl*'s effort. The very adept eyes carry over into the next poem (no. 181) where they are said to have 'gathered [in themselves] all the arts of bewitching hearts ([...] *jammaʿat / jufūnuhu l-marḍā funūna l-futūnī*).' The poem that follows next (no. 182) seems only linked by use of the same metre, but itself begins another sequence (nos 182–84); this time punning on *nuqṭah* (spot). The use of interconnected movements throughout the anthology demonstrates that the anthologist was consciously arranging his collection of epigrams and also that he intended them to be read in sequences. Both the internal variation in these sequences and the ways in which they were linked to one another would have entertained the reader and with its diversity and fluctuation contributed to the unified texture of the anthology. The following is a sketch of these movements throughout the entire work:

Poems	Primary linking element	Transition element	Overarching movements
1–7		*ḥasanāt*	
7–8	Kissing		
8–14		Chess	Chess
11–12	rhyming in *–ātū*		Chess
14–15	Cheek (*khadd*)		
15–16		*ʿalāmah*	
16–17	*shāmah*		
17–18	Sight		
18–20		Departure	
19–20		Arrival	
20	Departure-Arrival-Night		
20–21		Night	
21	Night-Bilāl		
21–26		Bilāl	
26–27	*ʿ-j-b*		
27		mouth	
27–29	rhyming in *-ām*		
28–38		*khitām*	
38	*khitām*-mouth		Face
38–40		mouth	Face
40–41	*Munsariḥ* metre		

41–42		Turk	
43		Cheek	Face
44–46		Nose	Face
46	Nose-Fire		
46–62		Fire	
47		Eyelid	Face
47–48		*istijārah*	
62–63	*aʿshār*		
63–77		Writing	
76–77	Writing-Garden		
76–88		Garden	
78–80, 86		Birds	
88–90	rhyming in *-qī*		
89–93		Neck	Face
93–94	*nuqṭah*		writing
94		Writing, flower	writing
94–96		Cheek	Face
95–96	Cheek-Neck		Face
95–98		Mobile naevi	
97–99		Religious	
99–100	*zawāyā*		
100–102		Cheek, quotation (*taḍmīn*)	Face

103–104		Brow	Face
105	Brow-level		
106–110		Geometric	
111		Polo	
111–112	*dāliyyah*, phantasmagoric comparison		
112–137		Ambergris, Musk	
117		Writing	
119		Yūsuf	
120, 122		Fire	
120–121		*nashr*	
122		Fire	
123		Astrology, Fire	
132–133		Blood	
134-137	Musk-Family		
134–152		Family[87]	
153–154		Fragrance (ambergris, musk, wood), hair, *lāmiyyah*	
154–156	Anthropomorphism (*khāl* is dominant)		
156–158			Night

87. On the word *khāl* in familial puns, see G. J. van Gelder, *Close Relationships,* pp. 137–38.

157		black/white	Night
158		black/red	Night
158–159	black		
159–165		Pilgrimage	
165–166	implied *tawriyah* (*ṣaḥn* = courtyard of the mosque, but also tray)		
166–167		*ṣaḥn*	
168–169		power of naevi	
170-171		hairless	
172	Hair-black		
172–173		black	
173	Black-*ḥabbah*		weights
173–175, 179		*ḥabbah*	weights
175-178	*ḥabbah*-Gold coin (*dīnār*)		weights
179-180	profit	black of the pupil, weights	weights; eyes
180–181	*muhjah*, metal		
181–182	*Sarīᶜ* metre	magnets of the eyes	eyes
182–184	*nuqṭah*		
185		*khitām*, eyes	eyes
186–187	hunting		eyes

188–189		*maṭbūᶜ*	
190–196		Celestial, eyes	eyes
192, 194–196	celestial, eyes, black		eyes
197–198		Black, eyes	eyes
198–199	rhyming in *–ālā*		
199		Fire, Musk	
199–200, 201, 203, 205		‘Don’t assume…’	
200		*ṣafḥah*	
199–202		*insān*	
202		polo	
203–205		*sawād*	

This sequencing based on movements should not be taken to mean that these themes do not coincide. Indeed there is a great deal of overlap within these sequences and it is not uncommon to find a theme from one sequence repeated in a poem within a different thematic sequence. The table shown above is not meant to serve as a thematic index—that would look far more complex—but to show how an-Nawājī arranged the poems in his poetry anthology so that they proceed through a progression of thematic movements; a process I have called variation. This thematic progression is not unconventional in its similes and metaphors, in fact they are common to the tradition of Arabic erotic poetry and many of them are to be found in aṣ-Ṣafadī's distillation of acceptable naevi tropes.[88] What is notable about this thematic progression–and the similar style of arrangement we find in the anthologies composed by an-Nuwayrī and as-Sarī ar-Raffāʾ–is that the anthologists fashion a structured, literary order out of this well known body of images and tropes. All of these anthologies can be said to be literary—even a more pragmatically organised anthology like aṣ-Ṣafadī's naevi collection is primarily concerned with edification and poetic expression—but this style of arrangement is the clearest evidence that beyond simply treating literary topics and presenting a literary discussion for an audience of litterateurs certain epigram anthologies were clearly meant to be read as works of literature *per se*. The anthologist can demonstrate his erudition through selection and commentary, the ordinary rubric by which anthologies are judged, but the field of arrangement opens the anthology up to a greater range of appreciative reaction. In selecting and arranging an anthology of epigrams on a narrowly defined poetic subject, the anthologist weaves together an entirely different reading experience from one in which the poems are arranged more explicitly, whether alphabetically or in distinct thematic divisions. An-Nawājī's naevi anthology is presented to the reader without a thorough introduction or even the thematic chapter divisions that are characteristic of many other epigram anthologies, but it is in its subtle, inexplicit progression through thematic and rhetorical move-

88. See in aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Kashf al-ḥāl*, ed. al-ʿUqayl, pp 171–73.

ments based on a type of variation, which relies on overlapping transitions, that its literary construction and conscious arrangement becomes perceptible. This process of arrangement, along with others, helps to augment meaning and contribute to what we might call the 'macropoetics' or 'contextural poetics' of the Arabic epigram anthology.[89]

89. These two terms are borrowed from the work of Joseph R. Allen, 'Macropoetic Structures: The Chinese Solution', *Comparative Literature*, vol. 45, no. 4, Autumn 1993, pp. 305-329 and Neil Fraistat, *Poems in their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections*, respectively.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The primary goal of this study has been to document an important—and previously unacknowledged—genre in the history of pre-modern Arabic literature, to identify its social and aesthetic motivations, and to describe the networks of production and consumption that sustained it. This in itself is no small undertaking given the unsatisfactory state of current scholarship on Mamluk- and Ottoman-era Arabic culture. Thomas Bauer, whose pioneering research inspired this study, wrote in 2005 that

> What we need most urgently given the present state of our knowledge are preliminary studies of as many of these [AT: Mamluk-era] anthologies as possible. They should determine the contents of the book, the plan of the author, its main sources, and give a first judgement of the supposed target group of the author. To exploit the enormous wealth of Mamluk anthologies, dozens of studies are needed to determine the character of all of these books, in order to give a comprehensive idea of the literary market in Mamluk times, to establish the literary canon of the Mamluk period, and to find out which of these books deserve to be edited.[1]

In its present state, this study does not adhere faithfully to Bauer's instructions, but it does follow the spirit of his dictum. Certain chapters and sections in the above study do fulfil the criteria of Bauer's proposed investigative project and Chapter Six represents the most concentrated and sustained literary analysis of a Mamluk anthology to date.[2] Chapters Three, Four, Five, and Six will be combined with further research on specific Mamluk and

1. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches', p. 124.

2. Likewise A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*' follows Bauer's prescription almost to the letter.

Ottoman era anthologies to produce a book-length study of poetry anthologies in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. This proposed book will address many of the priorities Bauer so rightly emphasised in 2005. However, over the course of my research into this popular genre in pre-modern Arabic literature, I found it no less urgent to investigate simultaneously the cultural and semantic parameters surrounding this research question. The results of this investigation are presented in Chapter Two (which will be developed into an independent monograph) alongside a brief for the Arabic epigram; a poetic form which attains its generic context through and within the anthology. This study proposes that it is this symbiosis of form and context that gave rise to a wholly new genre in Arabic literature from the Mamluk period on: the epigram anthology.

The categories of epigram and anthology are by no means new to Arabic literary scholarship, or indeed to scholarship on other pre-modern, non-European literary traditions. Most developed literary traditions feature varying forms of compilatory literature and it is natural that certain poems in a poetic tradition should appear epigrammatic (that is, brief). For historical reasons detailed above, the Greek terms *epigram* and *anthology* came to describe specific literary models under which other commensurable literary phenomena could be subsumed. This manifestation of European cultural hegemony is by no means a thing of the past and its impact on Arabic literary scholarship has been profound. Likewise, the claim that pre-modern Arabic, Persian, Ottoman, Urdu, etc. poems eschew unity—that they demonstrate a fundamental atomism or molecularity—as well as the consequent decades-long revisionist project to discredit these allegations has left its mark on the types of questions pursued by contemporary scholarship. These substantial and entrenched historical factors are present in any discussion of Arabic epigram anthologies as well as a range of other phenomena in pre-modern Islamicate cultural history. The study of pre-modern Islamicate cultures has now reached a point in its development, which requires us to confront the legacy of scholarship and the unacknowledged taboos around which research has taken shape. The reader is no doubt cognizant of the fact that this study could

have been reconfigured if it had been written in Arabic; if, for example, the term *maqāṭīʿ* had been used exclusively (as the pre-modern authors studied here did) and no attention been paid to the term epigram, whether when used by Arabists in the past or in the study of comparative and world literature. Nevertheless, the circumstance of writing in English is not the only reason this methodological constraint was eschewed.

Here again the question is one of parallax: does the essence of the Arabic epigram precede its existence or vice-versa? There can be no doubt, of course, that the existence of *maqāṭīʿ*, which has been documented here, clearly precedes the definition of these poems as 'epigrams' by some seven hundred years. None of the authors whose works have been analysed in this study would have understood the terms 'epigram' or 'anthology' upon first hearing them and it is anyone's guess whether they would have drawn the same parallels had they known about the Hellenistic literary tradition or others. By describing these *maqāṭīʿ*—in their shape, content, style, and (perhaps most importantly of all) their anthological context—as epigrams, this study does not purport to have, by some magic, looked into their core and found a universal literary quintessence that can be identified as epigram.

The use of the terms 'epigram' and 'anthology', and indeed 'epigram anthology'—a universalising encapsulation of culturally specific phenomena—is not intended to be deterministic. It is simply one way of describing a literary historical reality. It happens also to be a highly plausible, illustrative, and apposite model for understanding this complex and unfamiliar genre. To the extent that this comparison helps draw attention to a once popular and now neglected Arabic literary genre and emphasises the relationship between this genre of poetry and its anthological context, it is hoped that this choice of terminology will not be construed to perpetuate the same hegemonic paradigm, which this study seeks to destabilise.

Although the primary objective of this study has been to present and analyse a significant trend in Arabic literary history, a broader reappraisal of Arabic literary history

will depend on a new self-aware scholarly ethics. In the same article cited above, Thomas Bauer referred to the presence of a specific ideological legacy in scholarship and its impact on the study of Mamluk culture:

> Colonial delusions have thus far prevented a proper appreciation of this culture. It is high time now to critically investigate and question these prejudices and erroneous assumptions and to open up new ways to a better understanding of the fascinating world of Mamluk literature.[3]

Chapter Two is an attempt to 'critically investigate and question these prejudices and erroneous assumptions', these 'colonial delusions', while the whole of the study is devoted to 'opening up new ways to better understanding the fascinating world of Mamluk [and Ottoman] literature'. Building on the work of Anne Ferry, Kathryn Gutzwiller, and Hilary Kilpatrick, this study seeks to show that anthologies can be and often are original works of creative composition, and that compilation was a recognised and esteemed method of composition in Arabic literary culture. It has also demonstrated that Arabic anthologists used a variety of techniques such as variation and the citation of new and contemporary poetry to stimulate their readers and that anthologies were a prestigious element at the centre of literary activity in the post-court phase of Arabic literary culture. Let us hope that these texts and their authors soon regain the attention and esteem they so clearly deserve.

3. Th. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches', p. 130.

Annotated Bibliography of Unpublished Sources

The reader will by now have realised that a combination of several factors have contributed to the neglect of Arabic literature produced after the waning of the Abbasid dynasty. The clearest—or rather, the most demonstrable—of these contributing factors is the limited availability of source materials from the period; though this may of course be considered a symptom of the neglect. The following is a detailed overview of the unpublished sources used to prepare this study (including those sources for which no critical edition exists), in the hopes that this, too, will eventually facilitate further research into post-Abbasid era Arabic literature. This is not an exhaustive list of all relevant texts, rather only those cited in and consulted for the present study. The sources discussed here are presented in rough chronological order, though they are also cross-listed in the bibliography proper, where they are organized alphabetically by author. The author has surveyed manuscript catalogues from a great many libraries (including Russian, Indian, Iranian, African, etc.) though they may not all be mentioned here if nothing of interest was found therein.

13th century

1. Ibn ash-Sharīf Daftarkhʷān al-Ḥusaynī al-Mūsawī aṭ-Ṭūsī, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad (4 Ṣafar 579–655/1183–1257)

   See *GAL* I p. 352; (the remarks on *GAL* I p. 286 are erroneous; see A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', *Arabica*, vol. 59, no. 6, 2012, pp. 599–649); aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 21, pp. 466–70.

   a. *Kitāb Alf ghulām wa-ghulām* (*One Thousand and One Young Men*) [epigram anthology]

This text has not yet been published and survives uniquely in an Escorial MS, which I have used for the purposes of this study.

i. Escorial MS árabe 461, 126 ff., n.d.

See H. Derenbourg, *Les manuscrits arabes de l'Escurial,* Paris, 1884 [repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976], pp. 303–4.

b. *Kitāb Alf jāriyah wa-jāriyah* (*One Thousand and One Young Women*) [epigram anthology], written before 654/1256.

This text has not yet been published and survives uniquely in a Vienna MS, which I have used for the purposes of this study.

i. Vienna MS 387, 255 ff. This MS includes a *samāʿah* certificate for one Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Qurashī, who heard the book from the author himself; the series of lectures ended on 2 Muḥarram 654 (January 1256).

See G. Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der kaiserlich-königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, 3 vols, Vienna: kaiserliche-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1865, vol. 1 pp. 362–62, no. 387.

14th century

1. Hindūshāh b. Sanjar al-Jayrānī (c. 1308).

See *GAL* II p. 192, S II 256.

a. *Mawārid al-ādāb* (*The Wellsprings of the Literary Arts*), written c. 707/1308

This anthology of poetry (divided into ten chapters, *mawārid*) has not yet been printed. For the purposes of this study, I have relied on an autograph MS kept in the British Library.

i. British Library MS ADD 23978, 153 ff., autograph, copied in 707/1308 in Tabriz.

See C. Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in museo britannico asservantur. Pars secunda, codices Arabicos amplectens*, London: Impensis Curatorum Musei Britannici 1846, pp. 653–54, no. 1420. See also *GAL* II, p. 192, S II, p. 256.

2. Ṣafī ad-Dīn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Sarāyā al-Ḥillī (5 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 677–c. 750/1278–1350)

See *GAL* II pp. 159–60, S II pp. 199–200; aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, vol. 18, pp. 481–512; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, vol. 2, p. 335. Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadkhirat an-nabīh*, vol. 2, p. 216; vol. 3, p. 138; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *an-Nujūm az-zāhirah*, vol. 10, pp. 238–39; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ az-zuhūr*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 526–27.

a. *Dīwān al-Mathālith wa-l-mathānī fī al-maʿālī wa-l-maʿānī* (*The Collection of Two-liners and Three-liners on Virtues and Literary Motifs*) [epigram anthology], written between 1331–1341.

No critical edition of this anthology exists. A poor (and expurgated) edition of the text was published in Damascus in 1998. For the purposes of this study, I have relied on a significant Paris MS written during the poet's lifetime, which the editor of the Damascus edition failed to consult. The anthology was dedicated to al-Ḥillī's patron in Hama, al-Malik al-Afḍal (r. 1332–41), and this informs the conjectured dating of the work.

i. Paris MS 3341, ff. 1a–52b. The MS includes an *ijāzah* for one of the author's students in the author's own hand and is dated 743/1342.

See baron de Slane (William MacGuckin), *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1893–95, p. 584, no. 3341.

ii. Edition by Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Ḥimṣī, Damascus: Dār Saʿd ad-Dīn, 1419/1998. Al-Ḥimṣī based his edition on Ẓāhiriyyah Library (Damascus) MS 3361, 43 ff., copied in 1002/1593.

3. aṣ-Ṣafadī, Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak (696–764/1297–1363)

See, *inter alia*, Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 341–57.

a. *al-Ḥusn aṣ-ṣarīḥ fī miʾat malīḥ* (*Pure Beauty: On One Hundred Handsome Lads*) [epigram anthology], written c. 1337.

A collection of 205 epigrams on one-hundred male youths (with two MSS including an addendum of seven epigrams). The text was published for the first time by Aḥmad Fawzī al-Hayb (ed.) in 2003.

i. Edition by Aḥmad Fawzī al-Hayb, Damascus: Dār Saʿd ad-Dīn, 1424/2003. Al-Hayb based his edition on four MSS: (1) Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 5120 *ādāb*, 35 ff., copied in 738/1337, autograph; (2) Ẓāhiriyyah Library (Damascus) MS 5657, copied in 1321/1903 [the editor believes this MS was copied from the 'autograph']; (3) Aya Sofya (Istanbul) MS 3177, n.d.; and (4) British Library MS Or. 3776_1 (see item iii below).

See also Fuʾād Sayyid, *Fihrist al-makhṭūṭāt al-muṣawwarah*, Cairo: Dār ar-Riyāḍ li-ṭ-Ṭabʿ wa-n-Nashr, 1954, vol. 1, p. 444.

ii. Princeton MS Garrett Yahuda 935, ff. 59b–83b, copied in 773/1371 in Malatya. Al-Hayb did not use this MS to prepare his edition.

See Rudolf Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda section) in the Garrett Collection, Princeton University Library*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 363, no. 4245.

iii. British Library MS Or. 3776_1, ff. 1a–25b, copied in 1079/1668.

See Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the British Museum*, London: Longmans, 1894, p. 702, no. 1112.

b. *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ bayn al-bādī wa-l-murājiʿ* (*Tunes of Cooing Doves, between the Initiator and Responder [in Literary Correspondence]*[1]) [collection of correspondence], written c. 1353.

'[...] collection of a lifetime of [aṣ-Ṣafadī's] literary correspondence [...]'.[2] There are two printed editions of this work. I have relied on Sālim's 2005 edition (item i below) as well as an autograph MS of volume three preserved in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (item ii below).

i. Edition by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Sālim, 2 vols, Cairo: al-Hayʾah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Kitāb, 2005. Sālim based his edition on five MSS, and while he does describe a great many MSS copies of the text in his in-

1. Title as translated by E. K. Rowson in Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 341.

2. Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 355.

troduction he only uses one of the four oldest MSS he was able to identify: Aḥmad ath-Thālith (Istanbul) MS 2501, copied in 8th century A.H.

ii. Edition by Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, 2 vols, Damascus: Dār al-Bashāʾir, 2004. Ṣāliḥ's edition is based on four MSS, including (a) Reïsu 'l-kuttab (Istanbul) MS 626, copied in Muḥarram 993/January 1585 by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ar-Rujayḥī al-Ḥanbalī ash-Shaybānī; (b) Kılıç Ali (Istanbul) MS 794, 229 ff., n.d. but before 1013/1604, an incomplete and faulty text, which includes entries and lines of poetry not present in other copies; (c) Escorial MS 326, 178 ff., originally belonged to the library of the Moroccan King Mawlāy Zīdān (d. 1627); (d) Aḥqāf Library (Tarīm, Yemen) MS no number, 244 ff., n.d.

iii. Berlin MS Wetzstein II 150 [= Ahlwardt 8631], 244 ff., autograph, c. 1363.

See W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, p. 572, no. 8631.

c. *Kashf al-ḥāl fī waṣf al-khāl* (*Revealing the Situation about Describing Beauty Marks*[3]) [epigram anthology parergon]

Three editions of this text have been published since 1999, though only one is critical and of requisite quality. I have relied on this edition (by al-ʿUqayl) and Copenhagen MS Cod. Arab. 294, which the editor did not use to prepare his edition. In early 2011, an older manuscript—the oldest known to me (dated to 847/1444)—turned up at a Christie's auction. Despite repeated inquiries to the auction house, neither Dr Kristina Richardson (who first brought the existence of the MS to my attention) nor I have been able to ascertain where it ended up.

i. Royal Library (Copenhagen) MS Cod. Arab. 294, 58 ff., n.d., purchased in Cairo by Frederik Christian von Haven in 1763, available online at <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/254/>.

3. Translated by E. Rowson in Everett K. Rowson, 'al-Ṣafadī' in Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 342.

See Irmeli Perho, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts: Codices Arabici and Codices Arabici Additamenta, Book Three*, Copenhagen, 2007, 1142–43.

ii. Edited by ʿAbd ar-Raḥman b. Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-ʿUqayl, Beirut: ad-Dār al-ʿArabiyyah li-l-Mawsūʿāt, 1426/2005. The editor based his edition on Royal Library (Copenhagen) MS Cod. Arab. 293 [copied in 996/1587; unseen], as well as three other MSS [Dār al-Kutub (Cairo), MS 221 *adab Taymūr*; Ẓāhiriyyah Library (Damascus), MS 6927, 25 ff., n. d.; and Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), MS 3973. All unseen].

See my review of this (and two other editions) in *MSR*, vol. 16, 2012, pp. 168–71.

4. Ibn Nubātah, Abū Bakr Jamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (Rabīʿ al-Awwal 686–8 Ṣafar 768/1287–1366)

See Th. Bauer, 'Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī (686–768/1287–1366): Life and Works. Part I: The Life of Ibn Nubātah', *MSR*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1–35; *idem*, 'Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī (686–768/1287–1366): Life and Works. Part II: The *Dīwān* of Ibn Nubātah', *MSR*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2008, pp. 25–69; *idem,* 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah' in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 184–202.

a. *al-Qaṭr an-Nubātī* (*Ibn Nubātah's Sweet Drops*) [epigram anthology], written c. 1320. Thomas Bauer is currently preparing an edition of this text based on the surviving MSS. For this study, I have relied primarily on Bauer's edition-in-progress as well as on the Berlin, Paris, Florence, and Alexandria MSS upon which his edition is based.

See aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Alḥān as-sawājiʿ*, ed. Sālim, vol. 2, pp. 325–26; Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 1351; see also Th. Bauer, 'Dignity at Stake' and A. Talib, 'The Many Lives of Arabic Verse'.

i. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 2234, ff. 159a–200b, copied in 732/1332.

See baron de Slane (William MacGuckin), *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1893–95, p. 392, no. 2234.

ii. Alexandria MS *Adab* 131, 37 ff., copied on 25 Jumādā al-Ākhir[ah] 764/1363.

iii. Berlin MS Sprenger 1196 (= Ahlwardt 8400), ff. 29b–41b, copied c. 1100/1688. This MS is contained in what Thomas Bauer has ascertained is actually a vol-

ume of aṣ-Ṣafadī's massive *Tadhkirah* (notebook).[4] The attribution on the title page ('*Tadkhirat an-Nawājī*') is erroneous.

See W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, p. 383, no. 8400.

iv. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (Florence) MS Orientali 286, 108 ff.

b. *Dīwān*

The history of Ibn Nubātah's *Dīwān* (and its various recensions) is too long to recount here. See Th. Bauer, 'Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī (686–768/1287–1366): Life and Works. Part II: The *Dīwān* of Ibn Nubātah', *MSR*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2008, pp. 25–69.

i. Nuruosmaniye Library (Istanbul) MS 3802, 322 ff., date illegible, but before c. 1755.

See *Defter-i Kütüpkhāne-i Nur-i Osmaniye*, Istanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1303/1886, p. 216, no. 3802.

c. *Zahr al-manthūr* (*The Gillyflower's Blossoms = The Blossoms of Prose*[5]) [epistolary collection], written in 730/1330

'[...] [A]n ample collection of excerpts—of 224 letters, all together—ranging from two or three lines to several pages in length.'[6]

See Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 961.

i. Chester Beatty Library (Dublin) MS 5161, 105 ff., n.d. (c. 8th/14th century).

See Arthur J. Arberry, *The Chester Beatty Library. A Handlist of the Arabic Manuscripts.* 8 vols, Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & co., ltd., 1964, vol. 7, p. 53, no. 5161.

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4. See Th. Bauer, 'The Dawādār's Hunting Party: A Mamluk *muzdawija ṭardiyya*, probably by Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Faḍl Allāh' in A. Vrolijk and J. P. Hogendijk (eds), *O Ye Gentlemen: Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in Honour of Remke Kruk*, Leiden: Brill, 2007, pp. 291–312. This past May at the International Conference on Mamluk Literature hosted by the University of Chicago's Middle East Documentation Center (MEDOC) and the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies under the auspices of the *Mamlūk Studies Review*, Frédéric Bauden presented his new research on aṣ-Ṣafadī's voluminous *Tadhkirah*, which I expect will be published in due course.

5. Title as translated by Thomas Bauer in Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 184.

6. Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 194.

d. *Sūq ar-raqīq* (*The Slave Market = The Market of Elegance*[7]) [poetry anthology], written c. 1350s

In this anthology, Ibn Nubātah presented a collection of amatory preludes (sing. *nasīb*) from his long odes (sing. *qaṣīdah*) alongside epigrammatic erotic poems (sing. *ghazal*).[8] It has not yet been published, but an autograph MS of the text survives in the Escorial Library, which I have been able to use for the purposes of this study.

See Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 1009.

i. Escorial MS árabe 449, 114 ff., autograph., n.d. (14th century).

See Hartwig Derenbourg, *Les manuscrits arabes de l'Escurial,* Paris, 1884 [repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976], p. 297.

5. Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, Badr ad-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. ʿUmar (Shaʿbān 710–11 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 779/1311–1377)

See *GAL* II pp. 36–7, S II p. 35; aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī,* vol. 12, pp. 195–98; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Anbāʾ al-ghumr,* vol. 1, pp. 162–63; *idem*, *ad-Durar al-kāminah*, vol. 2, pp. 29–30; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt adh-dhahab*, vol. 6, p. 262.

a. *ash-Shudhūr* (*The Particles of Gold*) [epigram anthology], written c. 1326.

This text has not yet been published and survives in only one MS copy: Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 3362.

See Thomas Bauer, '„Was kann aus dem Jungen noch werden!"'. See also Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 1030.

i. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 3362. The text of the epigram anthology is preserved in ff. 160b–204a. The MS contains a copy of Ibn Ḥabīb's *Nasīm aṣ-ṣabā* (published numerous times, but no critical edition exists), *taqārīẓ* (commendations) on this work, and poems by Ibn Nubātah in praise of al-Malik al-Muʾayyad (perhaps *Muntakhab al-hadiyyah fī al-madāʾiḥ al-Muʾayyadiyyah*) in

7. Title as translated by Thomas Bauer in Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 184.

8. ibid., pp. 199–200.

addition to Ibn Ḥabīb's epigram collection and two commendations on this work by Ibn Nubātah and Ṣafī ad-Dīn al-Ḥillī. The MS was copied in 805/1403.

See baron de Slane (William MacGuckin), *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1893–95, p. 587, no. 3362.

6. Ibn Abī Ḥajalah at-Tilimsānī (725–776/1325–1375)

See Beatrice Gruendler, 'Ibn Abī Ḥajalah' in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 118–26.

a. *Sukkardān al-ʿushshāq wa-manārat al-asmāʿ wa-l-āmāq* (*The Sugar-Pot of Lovers and the Lighthouse for Eyes and Ears*), written 1356

Although there is no critical edition of this very popular anthology, the text has been printed before—in the margin around Bahāʾ ad-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī's *Kitāb al-Mikhlāt* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Adabiyyah, 1317/1899). Nonetheless for the purposes of this study, I have relied on the Paris MS (see below).

See Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 994.

i. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS Arabe 3405, 250 ff., 18th c.

See baron de Slane (William MacGuckin), *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1893–95, p. 593, no. 3405.

7. al-Qīrāṭī, Burhān ad-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad (Ṣafar 726– Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 781/1326–1379)

See Brockelmann, *GAL* II p. 14, S II p. 7; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *ad-Durar al-kāminah*, vol. 1, p. 31, no. 77; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt adh-dhahab*, vol. 6, pp. 269–70.

a. *Dīwān*

i. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 3209, 101 ff., copied c. 18th century.

See baron de Slane (William MacGuckin), *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1893–95, p. 564, no. 3209.

b. *Kitāb Maṭlaʿ an-nayyirayn* (*The Rising-Place of the Sun and Moon*) [*Dīwān* recension]

i. Fatih Kütüphanesi (Istanbul) MS 3861, 211 ff., copied in 6 Jumādā al-Ākhirah 772/1371.

See *Defter-i Fatih Kütüphanesi*, Istanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, n. d., p. 221, no. 3861.

ii. Berlin MS Wetzstein II 196 (=Ahlwardt 7868), 85 ff., copied in 868/1464.

See W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, p. 81, no. 7868.

c. *Taḥrīr al-Qīrāṭī* (*The Redaction of al-Qīrāṭī's [Dīwān]*) (compiled by Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (see below) in c. 1409).

See Devin Stewart, 'Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī', p. 140.

i. Berlin MS Wetzstein I 45 (=Ahlwardt 7869), 56 ff., copied c. 1100/1688.

See W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, pp. 81–2, no. 7869.

15th century

1. Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, Abū Bakr Taqī ad-Dīn b. ʿAlī (767–Shaʿbān 837/1366–1434)

See, *inter alia*, Devin Stewart, 'Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī' in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 137–47.

a. *Kitāb Kashf al-lithām ʿan at-tawriyah wa-l-istikhdām* (*Removing the Veil From the Face of the Rhetorical Figures* Tawriyah *and* Istikhdām[9])

Rhetorical treatise-cum-anthology. This text was printed in Beirut in 1894–95, *editio princeps*), but I have relied on a Leiden MS of the text (see below) for the purposes of this study.

i. Leiden MS Or. 442 (2), ff. 68–160, copied in 1035/1625.

See M. J. de Goeje, *Catalogus codicum orientalium bibliothecae academiae Lugduno-Batavae, volumen quintum*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1873, pp. 155–56, no. 2542; M. J. de Goeje and M. Th. Houtsma, *Catalogus codicum arabicorum bibliothecae academiae Lugduno-Batavae, editio secunda, volumen primum*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1888, p. 176, no. 327; P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the library of the University of Leiden and other collections in the Netherlands*, Leiden: University Library, 1957 , p. 153.

2. an-Nawājī, Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan (788–859/1386–1455)

9. Title as translated by D. Stewart in Devin Stewart, 'Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī' in J. Lowry and D. Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 138.

See, *inter alia*, Th. Bauer, 'al-Nawājī' in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, pp. 321–31; and also anon., *Muʾallafāt Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan an-Nawājī ash-Shāfiʿī*, ed. Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī.

a. *Ṣaḥāʾif al-ḥasanāt fī waṣf al-khāl* (*Surfaces of Beauty Marked with Descriptions of Beauty-Marks*) [epigram anthology] (see chapter 6 above).

This epigram anthology based around the figure of moles (naevi), a traditional hallmark of beauty, has been published in a critical edition by Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī.

i. Edition by Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī, Amman: Dār al-Yanābīʿ, 2000.

See also anon., *Muʾallafāt Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan an-Nawājī ash-Shāfiʿī*, ed. Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī, pp. 89–91; Th. Bauer, 'al-Nawājī', p. 328.

b. *Khalʿ al-ʿidhār fī waṣf al-ʿidhār* (*Throwing Off Restraint in Describing Cheek-Down*) [epigram anthology]

This anthology has not yet been published. For this study, I have relied on the following four MSS. This once highly popular anthology survives in at least eleven manuscripts.

See anon., *Muʾallafāt Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan an-Nawājī ash-Shāfiʿī*, ed. Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī, pp. 78–80; Th. Bauer, 'al-Nawājī', pp. 328–29; Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 1, pp. 721–22.

i. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 3401, ff. 1b–47a, 16th c. This MS also contains two other anthologies by an-Nawājī, as well as an anthology by ath-Thaʿālibī.

See baron de Slane (William MacGuckin), *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1893–95, p. 592, no. 3401.

ii. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Munich) MS Cod. arab. 598, 40 ff., n. d.

See Joseph Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in Muenchen*, Munich: In Commission der Palm'schen Hofbuchhandlung, 1866, pp. 259–60, no. 598 [where—following Ḥājjī Khalīfah—the text is erroneously attributed to aṣ-Ṣafadī].

iii. Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 226 *adab Taymūr*, Microfilm 27991, 36 ff., copied in 1303/1886.

iv. Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 646 *adab Taymūr*, Microfilm 27906, 49 ff., copied in 1305/1888.

c. *Marāti*ʿ *al-ghizlān fī waṣf al-ghilmān al-ḥisān* (*The Pastures of Gazelles: Describing Handsome Young Men*) [epigram anthology], written 828/1425.

This anthology, though once hugely popular, has not yet been published. It survives in at least twenty-four manuscripts. For this study, I have relied on the following five MSS (listed in order of importance).

See anon., *Muʾallafāt Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan an-Nawājī ash-Shāfi*ʿ*ī*, ed. Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī, pp. 97–100; Th. Bauer, 'al-Nawājī', p. 329; See Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, pp. 1650–651.

i. Princeton MS Garrett 14L, 190 ff., copied in 889/1484 [available online].

Digital reproduction available online through Princeton Digital Library of Islamic Manuscripts <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/ms35t868t>. See also Philip K. Hitti, et al., *Descriptive Catalog of the Garrett collection of Arabic manuscripts in the Princeton University Library*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1938, pp. 39–40, no. 101.

ii. Princeton MS Garrett Yahuda 615, 165 ff., copied c. 9th/15th century.

See Rudolf Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda section) in the Garrett Collection, Princeton University Library*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 363, no. 4249_1.

iii. Topkapı (Istanbul) MS 722, 135 ff., copied in 1114/1703.

See Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Arapça Yazmalar Kataloğu,* 4 vols, Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1969, vol. 4, p. 337, no. 8598.

iv. Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 583 *adab*, Microfilm 18287, 54 ff., n.d.

v. Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 343 *adab Taymūr*, Microfilm 27904, n.d.

3. Badr ad-Dīn Muḥammad al-Minhājī (no biographical information available)

a. *Basṭ al-aʿdhār ʿan ḥubb al-ʿidhār* (*Explaining Excuses for Adoring Cheek-Down*) [epigram anthology]

See Ismāʿīl Pāshā, *Īḍāḥ al-maknūn*, vol. 1, p. 182.

This anthology of verses on beard-down has not yet been published. It survives uniquely in an Escorial MS.

i. Escorial MS árabe 448, 122 ff., copied in 850/1446, apparent autograph.

See Hartwig Derenbourg, *Les manuscrits arabes de l'Escurial,* Paris, 1884 [repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976], pp. 296–97.

4. Shihāb ad-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (Shaʿbān 790–Ramaḍān 875/1388–1471)

See Brockelmann, *GAL* II p. 171, S II pp. 11–2; as-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān*, ed. P. Hitti, pp. 63–77, no. 42.

a. *Rawḍ al-ādāb* (*The Garden of Literary Arts*) [anthology], written 826/1422.

See Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 1, p. 916; Gustav Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der kaiserlich-königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, 3 vols, Vienna: K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1865, vol. 1, pp. 380–81, no. 400; P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the library of the University of Leiden and other collections in the Netherlands*, Leiden: University Library, 1957, p. 286; M. Th. Houtsma, *Catalogue d'une collection de manuscrits arabes et turcs appartenant à la maison E. J. Brill à Leide*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1886, pp. 15–16, no. 81; Otto Rescher, 'Arabische Handschriften des Top Kapú Seraj [Privatbibliothek S. M. des Sultans]', *RSO*, vol. IV, 1911–12, pp. 695–733, p. 696 [on Topkapı MS 2293]. Yūsuf Sarkīs mentions an edition printed in Bombay in 1898, but I have not been able to locate this (*Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt al-ʿArabiyyah wa-l-muʿarrabah*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Sarkīs, 1928, p. 1151). An autograph recension of the author's *dīwān* is preserved in the Escorial library (MS árabe 475) [unseen].

i. British Library MS ADD 9562, 247 ff., copied in Shawwāl 986/1578.

See Charles Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in museo britannico asservantur. Pars secunda, codices Arabicos amplectens. Supplementum*, London: Impensis Curatorum Musei Britannici 1871, pp. 505–7, no. 1104

ii. British Library MS 19489, 184 ff., copied c. 15th–16th century.

See Charles Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in museo britannico asservantur. Pars secunda, codices Arabicos amplectens. Supplementum,* London: Impensis Curatorum Musei Britannici 1871, p. 507, no. 1105

iii. British Library MS Or. 3843, 206 ff., c. 15th-century copy.

See Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London: British Museum, 1894, pp. 704–5, no. 1119.

b. *Jannat al-wildān fī al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān* (*The Paradise of Youths: On Handsome Young Men*[10]) [epigram anthology]

This is an anthology of epigrams on male youths by the poet-anthologist himself. The text has been printed twice, but neither edition is critical. For this study, I have relied primarily on the Copenhagen MS. (See also Franz Rosenthal, 'Male and Female: Described and Compared'; Kristina Richardson, *Difference and Disability in the Medieval Islamic World: Blighted Bodies*, Chapter Three).

i. Royal Library (Copenhagen) MS Cod. Arab. 220_3, ff. 26a–36b, n. d. [purchased in Cairo in 1762].

See Irmeli Perho, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts: Codices Arabici and Codices Arabici Additamenta, Book Three*, Copenhagen, 2007, p. 840.

ii. *Editio princeps*: printed in ash-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, *Thalāth rasā'il. al-Ūlā Jannat al-wildān fī al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān, ath-thāniyah al-Kunnas al-jawārī fī al-ḥisān min al-jawārī, ath-thālithah Qalā'id an-nuḥūr min jawāhir al-buḥūr*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat as-Saʿādah, 1326/1908. Edited by Muḥammad Amīn al-Kutubī based on an unidentified Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS. [unseen].

iii. Edition by Riḥāb ʿAkkāwī, printed as: *al-Kunnas al-jawārī fī al-ḥisān min al-jawārī (wa bi-dhaylihi Jannat al-wildān fī al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān)*, Beirut: Dār al-Ḥarf al-ʿArabī, 1998. This edition was not based on any MS, but rather on the 1908 Cairo *editio princeps* (see item ii above).

c. *al-Kunnas al-jawārī fī al-ḥisān min al-jawārī* (*The Withdrawing Celestial Bodies: On Pretty Young Women*[11]) [epigram anthology]

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10. The first phrase in the title, '*Jannat al-wildān*' ('*The Paradise of Youths*'), is an allusion to Quran 56:17 : '*yaṭūfu ʿalayhim wildānun mukhalladūn*' ('immortal youths going round about them', trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, p. 254).

11. The first phrase in the title, '*Kunnas al-jawārī*' ('*The Withdrawing Celestial Bodies*'), is an allusion to Quran

This is an anthology of epigrams on female youths by the poet-anthologist himself. The text has been printed twice, but neither edition is critical. For this study, I have relied primarily on the Copenhagen MS. (For further information on this text and its editions, see directly above).

See Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 1520.

i. Royal Library (Copenhagen) MS Cod. Arab. 220_4, ff. 36b–42b, n. d., [purchased in Cairo in 1762].

See Irmeli Perho, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts: Codices Arabici and Codices Arabici Additamenta, Book Three*, Copenhagen, 2007, pp. 840–41.

ii. *Editio princeps*: printed in ash-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, *Thalāth rasāʾil,* Cairo, 1908 [see item b. ii above for further information].

iii. Edition by Riḥāb ʿAkkāwī, printed as: *al-Kunnas al-jawārī* [...]. This edition was not based on any MS, but rather on the 1908 Cairo *editio princeps*. (see also item b. ii and iii above for further information).

5. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (Shaʿbān 773–Dhū al-Ḥijjah 852/1372–1449)

a. *Dīwān* [incl. epigram chapter]

Ibn Ḥajar included a chapter of epigrams (*maqāṭīʿ*) in his *Dīwān*. I have consulted a few printed editions of the *dīwān* and one MS copied from the author's autograph which none of the editors used to prepare their editions. Ibn Ḥajar himself made a selection of his poems titled *as-Sabʿ as-sayyārah an-nayyirāt*.[12]

i. Selly Oak Colleges (Birmingham) MS Mingana 1394, copied c. 19th century from autograph MS dated 838/1434.

See H. L. Gottschalk, *Islamic Arabic Manuscripts*, vol. 4 of *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, Birmingham: Selly Oak Colleges Library, 1948, p. 34, no. 160.

81:16: '*al-Jawāri l-kunnas*' ('the runners, the sinkers', trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 2, p. 326).

12. cf. The collection Ibn Nubātah made of his own seven-line poems late in life titled *as-Sabʿah as-sayyārah* (Th. Bauer, 'Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Nubātah', in Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (eds), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350–1850*, p. 199).

ii. *Dīwān*, edited by as-Sayyid Abū al-Faḍl, Hyderabad: 1962. [Based on four MSS, incl. Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 811 *shiʿr Taymūr*, Osmania University (Hyderabad) MS, n.d., and an unidentifed Berlin MS].[13]

See ʿIṣām Muḥammad ash-Shanīṭī, *al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyyah fī al-Hind. Taqrīr ʿan al-makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyyah fī khams mudun Hindiyyah tammat ziyāratuhā fī shahr Ibrīl / Māyū 1984*, Kuwait: Manshūrāt Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyyah, 1405/1985, p. 22.

iii. *Dīwān as-Sabʿ as-sayyārah an-nayyirāt* [*The Collection of the Seven Shooting Stars*], edited by Muḥammad Yūsuf Ayyūb, Jeddah: Nādī Abhā al-Adabī, 1992. [Based on seven MSS of *as-Sabʿ as-sayyārah an-nayyirāt*, and two MSS of the *Dīwān* (Escorial MS árabe 444 and a Berlin MS—presumably the same as that used by Abū al-Faḍl). The seven *as-Sabʿ as-sayyārah* MSS are (1 and 2) Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 811 *shiʿr Taymūr* and MS 121 *ādāb*; (3 and 4) Ẓāhiriyyah (Damascus) MS 5796 and MS 3974; (5) Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) MS 3219; (6) unidentified Berlin MS; and (7) Köprülü (Istanbul) MS 1282.]

iv. *Uns al-ḥujar fī abyāt Ibn Ḥajar* [*A Sitting-Room Companion: poems by Ibn Ḥajar*], edited with commentary by Shihāb ad-Dīn Abū ʿAmr, Beirut: Dār ar-Rayyān li-t-Turāth, 1988. [Based on three MSS: (1) Dār al-Kutub (Cairo) MS 811 *shiʿr Taymūr*; (2) Köprülü (Istanbul) MS 1282; and (3) Escorial MS árabe 444].

6. Al-Badrī, Abū at-Tuqā Taqī ad-Dīn Abū Bakr b. ʿAbdallāh (Rabīʿ al-Awwal 847–Jumādā [I or II] 894/1443–1489)

See *GAL* II p. 132, S II p. 163; as-Sakhāwī, *aḍ-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, vol. 11, p. 41; Franz Rosenthal, *The Herb*, pp. 13–15.

a. *Ghurrat aṣ-ṣabāḥ fī waṣf al-wujūh aṣ-ṣibāḥ* (*The Flash of Dawn: Beautiful Faces Described*), written 865/1460

13. The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin possesses more than one MS (incl. fragments) of Ibn Ḥajar's *Dīwān* (see W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, pp. 96–7, nos 7901–3).

This anthology has not yet been published. It survives uniquely in a British Library MS, which I have used for the purposes of this study.

See Franz Rosenthal, 'Male and Female: Described and Compared'; Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 1198.

i. British Library MS ADD 23445, 212 ff., copied in 875/1471.

See Charles Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in museo britannico asservantur. Pars secunda, codices Arabicos amplectens*, London: Impensis Curatorum Musei Britannici 1846, pp. 654–55, no. 1423.

7. Ibn al-Jiʿān al-Batlūnī, ʿAlam ad-Dīn Shākir b. ʿAbd al-Ghanī (790–14 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 882/1388–1477)

See Brockelmann, *GAL* II p. 19, S II p. 13; as-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-ʿiqyān*, ed. P. Hitti, p. 118, no. 89.

a. *Masāyil ad-dumūʿ ʿalā mā tafarraqa min al-majmūʿ* (*The Tracks of Tears: Once Gathered, Now Separated*)

Poetry anthology.

i. British Library MS Add. 7591 *Rich.*, 187 ff., the anthology begins on f. 20, copied before 1124/1712.

See Charles Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in museo britannico asservantur. Pars secunda, codices Arabicos amplectens*, London: Impensis Curatorum Musei Britannici 1846, p. 301, no. 638.

16th century

1. Muḥammad b. Qānṣawh b. Ṣādiq (d. 911/1505)

See Brockelmann, *GAL* II p. 271, S II pp. 381–82.

a. *Marātiʿ al-albāb fī marābiʿ al-ādāb* (*The Pastures of Hearts in The Meadows of Literary Arts*), written in 898/1492.

An anthology of poetry and prose.

i. British Library MS ADD 9677, 204 ff., copied in 1162/1749.

See Charles Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in museo britannico asservantur. Pars secunda, codices Arabicos amplectens*, London: Impensis Curatorum Musei Britannici 1846, pp. 346–47, no. 770.

2. ʿAlā ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣāliḥī al-Ḥarīrī (unknown)

a. *ad-Durr al-maṣūn fī niẓām as-sabʿ funūn* (*The Well Guarded Pearl: Composing the Seven [Poetic] Forms*) (probably 16th century)

Anthology of *sabʿ funūn* poems.

This manuscript is not dated. It was a *khizānah* manuscript and many Mamluk-era poets are cited in it. In addition, the title of the work puts one in mind of the better known anthology by Muḥammad b. Iyās al-Ḥanafī, *ad-Durr al-maknūn fī sabʿat funūn*, which was written—according to Hājjī Khalīfah, in 912/1506 (vol. 1, p. 732). On this latter text, see Hermann Gies, *Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis sieben neuerer arabischer Versarten*, and Brockelmann, *GAL* vol. 2, p. 303; *GAL* Supplement, vol. 2, p. 414.

i. Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Marsh 73, 91 ff., n.d.

See Joh. Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium catalogi partis secundæ volumen secundum Arabicos*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1787, no. 1295; and also Alexander Nicoll, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium catalogi partis secundae volumen primum Arabicos complectens*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1821, p. 618, no. 1294.

17th century

1. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Wafāʾ al-Maʿrūfī al-Khalwatī al-Ḥamawī (d. 1016/1607)

See Brockelmann, *GAL* II p. 302; 341.

a. no title: '*Hādhā muntakhab min kalām Abī al-Faḍl wa-ghayrihi ḥarrarahu li-nafsihi al-faqīr Muḥammad b. Abī al-Wafāʾ* [...]' (f. 33a) ['This is a selection of the writings of Abū al-Faḍl and others chosen by poor Muḥammad b. Abī al-Wafāʾ for his own use'].

Little is known about the circumstances behind the composition of this short anthology of didactic (or mnemonic) epigrams. It has never been published, but an autograph MS survives in Berlin and it is upon this that I have relied for the purposes of this study.

i. Berlin MS Petermann I 600 (= Ahlwardt 8205), ff. 33a–41b, autograph written in 992/1584.

See W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, p. 242, no. 8205.

2. Anon.

a. *Khadīm aẓ-ẓurafāʾ wa-nadīm al-luṭafāʾ* (*The Servant of The Refined and The Companion of The Graceful*), written before 1028/1618.

This anthology has not yet been edited and survives uniquely in a Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS; a similarly titled Berlin MS appears to be a different text altogether.

Ḥājjī Khalīfah, vol. 2, p. 1198.

i. Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Huntington 508

The MS is not dated, but I have concluded that this anthology was written toward the end of the 16th century. There is an MS by the same name in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: MS Wetzstein II 8 (=Ahlwardt 8448), but it is not the same text. There are interesting similarities (e.g. verbatim passages in the introductions to both works), but the Oxford MS is a poetry anthology and the Berlin MS is, as Ahlwardt says, a collection of entertaining stories. See Joh. Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium catalogi partis secundæ volumen secundum Arabicos*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1787, no. 1262; and also Alexander Nicoll, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium catalogi partis secundae volumen primum Arabicos complectens*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1821, p. 616, no. 1262.

3. Anon. [‘Pseudo-Thaʿālibī’]

a. ‘*fī asmāʾ al-ghilmān al-ḥisān*’ [‘On the names of handsome young men’], late 16th–17th century

For nearly a century, this text was mistakenly believed to be ath-Thaʿālibī’s lost *Kitāb al-Ghilmān* although the majority of the poems contained within it were written in the 13th–16th centuries. I have published the text of the brief anthology in a critical edition based on the sole surviving MS, along with a discussion of its contents and attribution and it is this edition upon which I have relied here.

i. Edited by Adam Talib in 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', *Arabica*, vol. 59, no. 6, 2012, pp. 599–649 (edition begins p. 619). The edition is based on the sole surviving MS: Berlin MS Wetzstein II 1786, ff. 63b–67b (= Ahlwardt 8334).

See A. Talib, 'Pseudo-Ṯaʿālibī's *Book of Youths*', *Arabica*, vol. 59, no. 6, 2012, pp. 599–649; W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, pp. 321–22, no. 8334.

4. ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Khaṭīb (d. 1005/1596)

See Brockelmann, *GAL* II p. 378, S II p. 509.

a. *ʿIqd al-farāʾid fī-mā nuẓima min al-fawāʾid* (*The Necklace of Precious Pearls: Versified Pearls of Wisdom [lit. versified useful lessons]*), written in 1005/1596

This anthology of didactic epigrams and proverbs (similar to a commonplace book or almanac) has not yet been published. For the purposes of this study, I have relied on the Berlin MS (see item i below), though I have also examined an additional MS of the text in Cambridge:

Cambridge MS Or. 57, 74 ff., copied in 1009/1600. See in Edward G. Browne, *A Supplementary Hand-List of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts in the libraries of the University and Colleges of Cambridge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922, pp. 142–43, no. 869.

i. Berlin MS Or. Petermann II 73 (= Ahlwardt 8423), copied in 1082/1671.

See W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königliche Bibliotheken zu Berlin. Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, Berlin, 1887–99, vol. 7, p. 404, no. 8423. See also Brockelmann, *GAL* II, p. 378, S II, p. 509.

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