

TRIBALISM . AND POLITICAL CHANGE AS  
REFLECTED IN THE POETRY OF THE  
EARLY Umayyad Period

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the composition  
of this thesis is entirely my own  
work.

*Marzouk Ibn Sunitan Ibn Tenbak*

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my beloved father who died shortly before its completion.

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**TRANSLITERATION**

The method of transliteration adopted by the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh has been followed in this thesis.

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## ABSTRACT

First part: In the first few pages of the first chapter an attempt is made to summarise the succession to the caliphate from the death of the Prophet until the reign of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya, with a brief discussion of the procedure which was adopted in each case to ensure the succession of the caliphs. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a study of the situation in the Islamic state after the death of Yazīd and the reaction of the people to this. Particular attention is paid to the connection between the way in which Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya forced his son upon the people and the problems which afflicted the country as a consequence of this act.

The second chapter deals with the genealogy of the tribes, since the blood bond was considered by the Arabs to be the soundest relationship, on which to base their social organisations. In this chapter all tribes which played a significant role in this period are described and their supposed relationship to one another is indicated.

The third chapter is an attempt to define the early Arab settlement in Syria and al-Jazīra and classify the Arab inhabitants of each town and province in order to explain the backgrounds of the tribal conflicts over territory.



The last chapter of this part is a discussion of the tribal conflicts, particularly in Syria where the main confrontation between the contenders for power took place.

The second part is divided into four chapters. The first deals with the role of political poetry. In this chapter an attempt is made to define when real political poetry started. A distinction is also drawn between political and tribal martial poetry. The role which the poets played in their society is examined both in the pre-Islamic period and that of Islam, in the light of the circumstances of both periods. Attention is paid to the gradual development of society and its influence on the political poetry, particularly in the Umayyad period.

The second chapter is concerned with the contribution of poets to social and political problems which developed in the Umayyad period. The views of each rival contender for power are examined insofar as they are revealed in verse, as are the various opinions and the backgrounds of each group.

The third chapter is devoted to the tribal competition for power in the early Umayyad period. The different approaches which each tribe adopted to achieve their goal are pointed out, as are the ways in which they reacted after they had been forced to accept the Umayyads. Yemen,

Taghlib and Qays in Syria were involved in this competition and an extensive selection of verses are quoted to support our argument.

The final chapter deals with the policies of the Umayyads after <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik had established himself and was recognised as the universal Caliph. First we have examined the reaction of his former supporters, Yemen, as it appears in their poetry. After this we have tried to assess the poets' role as defenders of their community against governmental policy, on the one hand, or on the other as supporters of the Umayyads and upholders of their policies. In this chapter we study the ways in which poets criticised corrupt leaders, governors, and caliphs, drew attention to their misbehaviour and neglect of their responsibilities, and accused them of exploiting their position in order to achieve purely personal interests.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Ā'ishaQiyam Jadīda li-ash-Shi'r al-  
Arabī al-Qadīm wa-al-Hadīth,  
by Ā'isha Abd ar-Rahmān.Abū Basīr al-Ashāal-Kitāb al-Munīr fī Shi'r Abī  
Basīr ed. Geyner.Abū MūsāAbū Mūsā al-Ash'ari,  
by Muhammad Dawla.Abū TammāmNaqā'id Jarīr wa-al-Akhtal,  
by Abū Tammām.Adab al-Mu'tazilaAdab al-Mu'tazila ilā Nihāyat  
al-Qarn ar-Rābi al-Hijrī,  
by Abd al-Hakīm Bulbu.AdnānNasab Adnān wa Qahtān,  
by al-Mubarrid.AghānīKitāb al-Aghānī,  
by Abū al-Faraj al-Asfahānī.

Akhbāral-Akhbār at-Tiwāl,  
by ad-Daynawarī.al-Akhtalal-Akhtal Shā<sup>c</sup>ir Banī Umayya,  
by Ghāzī as-Sayyid.al-Hajjājal-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf ath-Thaqafī  
by Ihsān al-<sup>c</sup>Amd.<sup>c</sup>ĀmilīA<sup>c</sup>yān ash-Shī<sup>c</sup>a,  
by Muhsin al-<sup>c</sup>Āmilī.AnsābAnsāb al-Ashrāf,  
by al-Balādhurī.<sup>c</sup>Asabiyyaal-<sup>c</sup>Asabiyya al-Qabaliyya wa  
Atharuhā fī ash-Shi<sup>c</sup>r al-Umawī,  
by Ihsān an-Nuss.AyyāmAyyām al-<sup>c</sup>Arab fī al-Jāhiliyya,  
by al-Bajawī.BakrīMu<sup>c</sup>jam Mā Ista<sup>c</sup>jam min Asmā' al-  
Buldān wa-al-Mawādi<sup>c</sup>,  
by al-Bakrī.BasraShi<sup>c</sup>r al-Basra fī al-<sup>c</sup>Asr al-  
Umawī, by <sup>c</sup>Awn ash-Sharīf Qāsim.

- Bayān al-Bayān wa-at-Tabyīn,  
by al-Jāhiz.
- Bukhārī Sahīh al-Bukhārī,
- Buhturī al-Hamāsa, by al-Buhturī.
- Buldān Kitāb Mu<sup>c</sup>jam al-Buldān,  
by Yāqūt al-Hamawī.
- Dimashq Tārīkh Dimashq,  
by Ibn <sup>c</sup>Asākir.
- Dayf Tārīkh al-Adab al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī
- E. I. Encyclopedia of Islam.
- El-Gindi Martial Poetry Among the Arabs  
in the Jāhiliyya.
- Farazdaq Dīwān al-Farazdaq.
- Fāriq Umayyad Poetry : Its Political  
and Social Background,  
by K.A. Fāriq.
- Fiqh Fusūl fī Fiqh al-Lugha,  
by Ramadān <sup>c</sup>Abd at-Tawwāb.



Firaq

al-Firaq al-Islāmiyya fī  
ash-Shi<sup>c</sup>r al-Umawī,  
 by an-Nu<sup>c</sup>mān al-Qādī.

Futūh

Futūh al-Buldān,  
 by al-Balādhurī.

Hamāsa

Kitāb al-Hamāsa,  
 by Abū Tammām.

Hāshimiyyāt

al-Hāshimiyyāt,  
 by al-Kumayt b. Zayd al-Asadī.

Hassān

Dīwān Hassān b. Thābit  
 ed. <sup>c</sup>Arafāt.

Hawfī

al-Adab as-Siyāsī fī al-<sup>c</sup>Asr  
al-Umawī, by Ahmad al-Hawfī.

<sup>c</sup>Ibar

Kitāb al-<sup>c</sup>Ibar wa Dīwān al-  
Mubtada' wa al-Khabar fī Ayyām  
al-<sup>c</sup>Arab wa al-<sup>c</sup>Ajam wa al-Barbar  
wa-man <sup>c</sup>Āsarahum min Dhawī as-  
Sultān al-Akbar, by Ibn Khaldūn.

Ibn <sup>c</sup>Asākir

Kitāb at-Tārīkh al-Kabīr,  
 by Ibn <sup>c</sup>Asākir.

Ibn HazmJamharat Ansāb al-<sup>c</sup>Arab,  
by Ibn Hazm.Ibn Kathīral-Bidāya wa-an-Nihāya,  
by Ibn Kathīr.Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>dat-Tabaqat al-Kubrā,  
by Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d.Ibn ash-ShajariHamāsāt ibn ash-ShajariImāmaal-Imāma wa-as-Siyāsa  
by Ibn Qutayba.Inbāhal-Inbāh <sup>c</sup>alā Qabā'il ar-Ruwāt,  
by Ibn <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Barr.IrshādIrshād al-Arīb ilā Ma<sup>c</sup>rifat  
al-Adīb, by Yāqūt al-Hamawī.<sup>c</sup>Iqdal-<sup>c</sup>Iqd al-Farīd,  
by Ibn <sup>c</sup>Abd Rabbih.JazīraSifat Jazīrat al-<sup>c</sup>Arab  
by al-Hamdānī.KalbīJamharat an-Nasab,  
by Ibn al-Kalbī.

- Kāmil al-Kāmil fī-at-Tārīkh,  
by Ibn al-Athīr.
- Khawārij Shi<sup>c</sup>r al-Khawārij,  
by Ihsān<sup>c</sup> Abbās.
- Kuthayyir Dīwān Kuthayyir
- Lisān Lisān al-<sup>c</sup>Arab,  
by Ibn Manzūr.
- Majma<sup>c</sup> Majallat al-Majma<sup>c</sup> al-<sup>c</sup>Ilmī  
al<sup>c</sup> Arabī.
- Margoliouth Muhammad and the Rise of Islam,  
D.S. Margoliouth.
- Masādir Masādir ash-Shi<sup>c</sup>r al-Jāhili  
wa Qīmatuhā at-Tārīkhiyya,  
by Nāsir ad-Dīn al-Asad.
- Mathal Majma<sup>c</sup> al-Amthāl,  
by al-Maydānī.
- Milal al-Milal wa an-Nihal,  
by ash-Shahrastānī.



MuḥabbarKitāb al-Muḥabbar,  
by Ibn Ḥabīb.MPSMuhammad Prophet and Statesman,  
by W.M. Watt.MukhtasarMukhtasar Kitāb al-Buldān,  
by Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamdānī.Mu<sup>c</sup>jamMu<sup>c</sup>jam ash-Shu<sup>c</sup>arā',  
by al-Marzubānī.MurūjMurūj adh-Dhahab wa-Ma<sup>c</sup>ādin al-  
Jawhar, by al-Mas<sup>c</sup>ūdī.Naqā'idNaqā'id Jarīr wa al-Farazdaq,  
by Abū<sup>c</sup> Ubayda.NashwānMuntakhab fī Akhbār al-Yaman,  
by Nashwān al-Himyarī.NicholsonA Literary History of the Arabs,  
by Nicholson.NihāyatNihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab,  
by an-Nuwayrī.

ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>īDīwān ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī an-NumayrīRawdar-Rawd al-Anīf fī Sharh  
as-Sīra an-Nabawiyya li-Ibn  
Hishām, by as-Suhaylī.as-Sa<sup>c</sup>ālīkash-Shu<sup>c</sup>arā' as-sa<sup>c</sup>ālīk fī al-  
<sup>c</sup>Asr al-Umawī, by <sup>c</sup>Atwān.Sabā'ikSabā'ik adh-Dhahab fī Ma<sup>c</sup>rifat  
Qabā'il al-<sup>c</sup>Arab, by al-Suwaydī.Islamic HistoryIslamic History, A New Interpre-  
tation, by M.A. Shaban.ShāyibTārīkh ash-Shi<sup>c</sup>r as-Siyāsī ilā  
Muntasaf al-Qarn ath-Thānī  
by Ahmad ash-Shāyib.Shi<sup>c</sup>rKitāb ash-Shi<sup>c</sup>r wa-ash-Shu<sup>c</sup>arā',  
by Ibn Qutayba.SiffīnWaq<sup>c</sup>at Siffīn,  
by Nasr b. Muzāhim.SīraSīrat an-Nabī,  
by Ibn Hishām.SmithKinship and Marriage in Early  
Arabia, W.R. Smith.

- Subh Subh al-A<sup>C</sup>shā,  
by al-Qalashandī.
- Sulūk Kitāb as-Sulūk li-Ma<sup>C</sup>rifat Duwal  
al-Mulūk, by al-Maqrīzī.
- Syed A Short History of the Saracens.
- Tabaqāt Tabaqāt Fuhul ash-Shu<sup>C</sup>arā'  
by Ibn Sallām.
- Tabarī Tārīkh ar-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk,  
by at-Tabarī.
- at-Tibrīzī Commentary on Kitāb Ash<sup>C</sup>ar  
al-Hamāsa by Abū Tammam.
- <sup>C</sup>Umda al-<sup>C</sup>Umda fī Mahāsin ash-Shi<sup>C</sup>r  
wa-Adabih wa Naqdiḥ,  
by Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī.
- Wafayāt Wafayāt al-A<sup>C</sup>yān wa Anbā' Abnā'  
az-Zamān, by Ibn Khallikān.
- Yāqūt Mu<sup>C</sup>jam al-Buldān,  
by Yāqūt al-Hamawī.

## INTRODUCTION

During the first two decades of the expansion of Islam, the Arab tribes left their ancient dwelling places, and a considerable number of them went to Iraq and Syria with the conquering troops. There they made these new lands their permanent home. At first most of the tribesmen who came along with the conquerors were genuinely converted to Islam and were keen to serve its cause, and practised self-denial in order to establish Islamic principles. They were able to establish a strong state which shortly became multi-national and contained many religions. In the process of time these sincere believers, who devoted their efforts to the interests of Islam, became outnumbered by others whose main concern was to exploit their status as Arabs to gain power and wealth.

Consequently, a conflict between these two groups became inevitable, since the new generation were beginning to realise their strength and were becoming dissatisfied with the policies adopted by the Qurayshi Caliphs. In the meantime the Quraysh showed a lack of agreement amongst themselves, and the unity of state was gravely threatened.

The present study proposes to pursue the



development of this troubled period, taking as its starting point the death of Yazīd in 63 AH and ending with the undisputed recognition of <sup>c</sup>Abd al Malik as Caliph in 73 AH, and choosing as its subject the political poetry which was produced during this period.

This ten year period was a critical one in the history of the Islamic state, since the Muslims became leaderless when Yazīd passed away without an acceptable successor, and hostility between the rivals from within the Quraysh on one side, and between the Quraysh and the tribesmen on the other side reached its peak.

This situation provided the people with two possible options: the selection of a leader based on the principle of Shūrā which Ibn az-Zubayr called for, or the re-establishment of the monarchical system which Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya had created and enforced, with the support of the Yemeni tribes of Syria.

In response to this new situation, there was a strong revival of tribalism whose outcome was that the tribes divided themselves into two huge Confederations, Qaḥṭān and <sup>c</sup>Adnān, which were ostensibly organised as unified tribes but in reality were something more like political parties.

In the warfare which ensued the rival contenders for power mobilised themselves to fight their enemies in

every possible way. The poetry of the period had a significant role to play, since it was exploited by the ambitious leaders in order to support their position.

The poets themselves were involved in this warfare and produced a considerable number of poems. We will attempt in this thesis to explain the role which poetry played and its contribution to the political problem, bearing in mind that as far as we know there is no previous work which has been devoted to the study of social and political problems as they appeared in poetry during this very important period.

The present study aims to draw attention to the important new function of political poetry which took shape during this critical period in which poetry served as propaganda for and against the contenders for power. The political poets adopted specific approaches in their attempts to influence the reactions of the masses to the policies which were applied by the governments. In addition, they describe the hardships undergone by the Islamic community as a result of the anarchy of this period.

Although there have been many works written about Umayyad literature by modern and ancient scholars there still remain many undiscussed topics. The works which exist have been concerned either with the whole period which lasted for almost one hundred years, or have chosen

the literature of certain groups such as the Khawārij, Shī<sup>C</sup>ites, Umayyads, etc.

Most of these studies have concentrated on a longer period and have not selected a specific subject. However, on the subject of political poetry there is one modern book which deals with the history of political poetry from the pre-Islamic period to the middle of the second century AH, Tārīkh as-Shi<sup>C</sup>r as-Siyāsī ilā Muntasaf al-Qarn ath-Thānī, by Ahmad ash-Shāyib, which appeared in 1945.

The author states that his work is a general historical study and claims that it is the first attempt of its kind in the field of Arabic literature. The part of this book which is devoted to the Umayyads deals mainly with the four famous parties, Khawārij, Shī<sup>C</sup>ites, Zubayrites and Umayyads. As the author's intention is to pursue the gradual development of the political poetry of these parties for one century, he is forced to limit his treatment of the subject and to give a general outline of the opinions of these groups as they were mentioned in their poetry. He pays no attention to the major basic problems which created such parties, but deals mainly with the poems as they exist explaining in a factual manner the ideas which they contain. Although the role of tribalism, the development of society, and the corruption of leaders which this period provided have



not attracted his attention, he does provide his readers with a substantial historical commentary on these poems.

The other work written on Umayyad political literature is Adab as-Siyāsa fī al-<sup>c</sup>Asr al-Umawī by Ahmad al-Hawfī (1974). He does not choose one type of literature as does ash-Shāyib but tries to cover the whole field of Umayyad literature, both poetry and prose. It is a comprehensive study which deals with Khawārij, Shī<sup>c</sup>ites, Zubayrites and Umayyads, and adds two new parties, Mu<sup>c</sup>tazila and Murji'a. His attention is occupied however by the four major parties and their output of poetry, prose, speeches and rasā'il which they exchanged among one another. In the latter part of his book in which he turns to an analysis of the factors which created these parties, he does consider the question of tribal influence, but he devotes no more than fifteen pages to discussing this phenomenon.

Although the author does not pay much attention to the development of society and fails to examine the role of the tribes and their contribution under the Umayyads, he succeeds in providing an exhaustive study which covers a wide period of time and adds invaluable information regarding his chosen subject. Though these works (and others which have not been mentioned here) have added more information to our knowledge, there is still a need for studies which will concentrate on shorter periods of time and select



specific topics in order to fill the gaps left by such general studies. The aim of this thesis has been to select a small part of the Umayyad poetry and to limit its range to a short period of time. Wider studies dealing with longer periods of time or with more general topics may have been attracted by more outstanding poets, parties and tribes, and may therefore have been distracted from dealing with the basic problems of society as reflected in the poetry.

It is our aim in the following pages to examine many lines composed by poets who were scattered throughout the country, whether they were famous or not. It is also to examine the relationship between the government and the people, and to examine the masses' reactions to government policies. This thesis intends to investigate tribal backgrounds and tribal involvement in the contest for power, and to investigate political parties and religious groups during a limited period. It pays much attention to the poet's reaction against the misuse of power by those who were in charge.

As regards new themes created by the political poetry, a separate chapter has been devoted to this, which discusses it in the light of precisely the development of Umayyad society.

In conclusion we should like to observe that no analysis of literary theory can pretend to be

comprehensive, and certainly a thesis of this size must restrict itself to a certain point of view which is of particular interest. Within these limitations it is hoped that the present study will make a useful contribution to our knowledge of the poetry of the period.

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION  
TO THE CALIPHATE

## Chapter 1

# THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION TO THE CALIPHATE

Before examining this troubled period of Umayyad history, it will be necessary to survey some of the preceding events in which can be traced the causes of the anarchy which was to manifest itself after the death of Yazīd I (64 AH).

It is generally accepted that the Prophet appointed no successor, nor did he establish a procedure for the election of future leaders of the community.<sup>1</sup> This lack of direction was to create a sense of political crisis beginning with the death of the Prophet and lasting for about fifty years. The issue was partially resolved with the accession of Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiyā who abolished the chaotic process of election to the caliphate and decided to institute a system of dynastic accession, a regime which was popularly titled mulk <sup>c</sup>adūd<sup>2</sup> rather than caliphate.

There is no need to describe at length the

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1. Muhammad, Prophet and statesman, 228. Muhammad and the rise of Islam, 470.

See also, Tabarī, II, 2141.

2. Sulūk, I, 13.

process of appointment which placed the Rāshidūn caliphs at the head of the community, the details of which can be easily found in all major reference works, but it would be of some service to survey each of these successions within the context of the tribal rivalries among the Muslims, and to note the principles underlying each accession. However, there was a single common basis to the first four caliphal appointments, and that was that it should not be inherited.<sup>1</sup> This convention was part of the pre-Islamic Arab tradition of tribal leadership.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRST CALIPH

With the death of the Prophet, the Muslim community was faced with a serious political crisis. The Ansār gathered in the house of their leader, Sa<sup>c</sup>d Ibn <sup>c</sup>Ubāda, and proceeded to make arrangements for the choice of caliph without consulting the Quraysh Muhājirūn. When the latter group realised this, they reproached the Ansār for usurping their right to elect one of their own number as a caliph.<sup>3</sup> The Ansār conceded the right to them for two reasons: firstly it was suggested that authority to lead the

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1. Ṭabarī, IV, 2138.

2. Short history of the Saracens, 21.

3. Kāmil, II, 242.



community would best be exercised by a member of the Prophet's own tribe, as no other would be accepted by all the Muslim community.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the Ansār were themselves divided into two tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj, who had been warring among themselves up to the time of the Prophet's flight to Medina, and as a result they lacked the solidarity to oppose the Qurayshī demands.<sup>2</sup>

Their leader withdrew and exiled himself in Syria. The Qurayshīs too showed little agreement among themselves in the choice of a leader, so they resorted to a pragmatic decision to appoint Abū Bakr, lest the community remain leaderless, and consequently collapse. The process of pragmatic election was termed Falta by <sup>C</sup>Umar Ibn al-Khattāb; the term signifies an impromptu decision to avoid disagreement and quarrelling.<sup>3</sup>

## THE SECOND CALIPH

The election of the second caliph was to prove a far smoother transition, as Abū Bakr made provisions for the succession before his death.<sup>4</sup> The process was essentially consultative, with Abū Bakr recommending <sup>C</sup>Umar as a

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1. Kāmil, II, 248.

2. Tabarī, II, 64.

3. Kāmil, II, 247; Tabarī, III, 1822.

4. Tabarī, III, 2138; Ibar, II, 86; Kāmil, II, 327.

successor to the prominent members of the community, of whom none objected, and then presenting him to the people as their future caliph.

Umar was a natural choice, for not only did he enjoy the respect of the Muslims, but he had also been prominent in advising the caliph throughout his short period of office 11-12 AH and was a successful general on the battlefield during this critical period of expansion into Syria and Iraq. Umar had been instrumental in formulating this policy of conquest<sup>1</sup> and it was natural that he should succeed Abū Bakr in order to implement it.

#### THE THIRD CALIPH

After the assassination attempt Umar, grievously ill, set about making arrangements for the succession to the caliphate. He appointed six men to form a Council, one of whom should be elected caliph. At the end of the three days which Umar had defined as the maximum period for discussion before the election of a new caliph, two candidates - Alī and Uthmān - were favoured by the general consensus of the people and the Council.

Uthmān was accepted as caliph only after he

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1. Ibar, II, 83; Tabarī, II, 2141.

agreed to certain conditions, namely to assure the community of a continuity in the policies of his predecessors, Abū Bakr and <sup>C</sup>Umar. It was precisely because no such assurance could be obtained from <sup>C</sup>Alī that the election had favoured <sup>C</sup>Uthmān.

<sup>C</sup>Uthmān belonged to an aristocratic family, the Umayyads, whose members had taken a leading role in the opposition to the Prophet. Consequently, the members of this family opposed Islam from its inception up to the time of the conquest of Mecca, with the sole exception of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān who was among the Prophet's first companions. As they came late to Islam they did not qualify for the leadership in the same way as the Companions of the Prophet. When their kinsman came to power with the election of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, they were given an opportunity to recover their former dominant position in Arab society.

However, they benefited little from <sup>C</sup>Uthmān's caliphate for the first six years, during which period the policy established by Abū Bakr and <sup>C</sup>Umar was closely followed, as indeed he had agreed as a condition of his election. During the last six years of his reign, he attempted to continue to fulfil his election promises but was unable to resist the influence of his family and slowly began to demonstrate partiality to his own clan.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibar, II, 144.



Meanwhile the amsār (new cities) were quickly growing and had by this time become larger than Medina itself. However, the policies adopted by <sup>c</sup>Uthmān toward these towns remained essentially the same as those of his predecessors and did not meet the demands of the huge communities. Moreover, <sup>c</sup>Uthmān did not seem to possess the strength of purpose shown by the first two caliphs and as a result lost the respect and loyalty of the majority of the inhabitants of the amsār. At the same time the five councillors who had elected him openly declared that <sup>c</sup>Uthmān had violated the terms and conditions by which he was elected to the caliphate,<sup>1</sup> and they therefore withdrew their support for his actions. In consequence the inhabitants of the amsār marched on Medina and killed the caliph.

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FOURTH CALIPH

The savage way which <sup>c</sup>Uthmān was killed was universally denounced, for it was felt that the action was unprecedented even in the period preceding Islam, and that no leader should be put to death by his followers if his mistakes were unintentional.

While the Medinans welcomed his deposition,

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1. Ibar, II, 143f.

they had not envisaged his death, so that when the Egyptians, Basrans and Kufans set seige to the caliph's house, they were happy to let things take their course,<sup>1</sup> hardly expecting the outcome to be bloody.

The shock of this murder created a dangerous situation for the community, both for the rebels and the inhabitants of Medina.<sup>2</sup> Left leaderless, the Muslims appointed <sup>c</sup>Alī, requesting him to become the fourth caliph of Islam. He at first refused, but later bowed to the pressure exerted upon him to assume the leadership of the community.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE CAREER OF MU<sup>c</sup>ĀWIYA

Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya began his career in the Muslim army as the flag bearer with the troops which were sent to Syria in the conquest, under the leadership of his eldest brother Yazīd.<sup>4</sup> Their father Abū Sufyān, was the former leader of the Quraysh who had previously opposed the Prophet. Because of this former opposition it was generally understood that Abū Sufyān and his family were less qualified

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1. Tabarī, IV, 465.

2. Ibar, V, 151.

3. Ibar, V, 150f.

4. Futūh, I, 150.

to lead than the early converts to Islam, and indeed Abū Sufyān refers to this understanding when he addressed his son, Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiyā, on the latter's appointment to a subgovernorship in Syria:<sup>1</sup>

"Those group of emigrants (Muhājirūn) raced us and we lost. Their success in the race gave them high rank. We could not, therefore, be their equal, and they became leaders and we became followers. They gave you this significant position using their authority and you should therefore obey them."

He foresaw and encouraged the ambitions of his son and advised him to take his time and to await his opportunity:

"You are running to a distant goal which now you cannot see, but you will nevertheless reach it."<sup>2</sup> This advice represents a confident assertion by a father who saw in his son not only a great ability but also the will to exploit his family position to gain power in the administration of the community. Under the guidance of his eldest brother he received training as a commander of a small unit with which he advanced into the Byzantine border lands and there conquered some areas while his brother became governor of Damascus.<sup>3</sup> After five years,

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1. Ansāb, V, 10.

2. Iqd, V, 126.

3. Futūh, I, 192.



Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya was appointed governor of Damascus and remained in this post until <sup>c</sup>Uthmān's accession to the caliphate.<sup>1</sup>

The new caliph added the Syrian regions around Damascus to his jurisdiction in the first two years of his caliphate.<sup>2</sup> We should see this increase in Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya's power not only as the support of the caliph for his family, but also as a genuine recognition of his qualities of leadership and administration.

#### MU<sup>c</sup>ĀWĪYA'S CHALLENGE TO <sup>c</sup>ALĪ'S CALIPHATE

Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya seems to have been destined for leadership and was involved in public affairs and administration from his arrival in Syria up to the crisis which led to <sup>c</sup>Uthmān's death.

He had dealt with Syrian affairs for almost twenty years,<sup>3</sup> during which period he had built up a reputation as one who considered the interests of the Syrians as separate from those of the rest of Islamic territories, so that they consequently gave him complete support. He adopted a distinctive policy which may be summed up in the following principles: firstly, he did not accept any challenge on questions of administrative

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1. Tabarī, IV, 289, Ibn Kathīr, VII, 105.

2. Ibn Kathīr, VII, 171, Akhbār, I, 140.

3. Akhbār, I, 140.

policy and consequently he exiled Abū Dharr when the latter accused Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya of governing contrary to pure Islamic policy.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, security and stability in Syria were of prime consideration. Thus, when the caliph ordered that some notable Iraqis who were opposed to the policies of Medina and their governors should be settled in Syria, Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya disregarded the wishes of the caliph and sent them back to Iraq lest their discontent spread to the people of Syria.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, when discontent with <sup>c</sup>Uthmān's policies developed into open revolt, Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya took no action to help the caliph, his kinsman. When the rebels besieged his house in Medina he allowed events to take their course without intervening.<sup>3</sup> He probably decided not to commit himself to any action, having assessed all the possible outcomes of his intervention. He very likely concluded that the aged and weak caliph would not remain in office much longer whatever the outcome. He thus decided to remain in Syria and be neutral.

However, as soon as the news of <sup>c</sup>Uthmān's death reached him, he acknowledged his responsibility for avenging <sup>c</sup>Uthmān and refused to give the oath of allegiance

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1. Ṭabarī, IV, 282.

2. Ibn Kathīr, VII, 181.

3. Ānsāb, IV; 78.



to the new caliph, <sup>C</sup>Alī. But while the new caliph was preparing to take action against Mu<sup>C-</sup>āwīya, the Medinans quarrelled among themselves and, as a result, Az-Zubayr, Talḥa and <sup>C</sup>Ā'isha, the widow of the Prophet, revolted against <sup>C</sup>Alī and fled to Baṣra.<sup>1</sup>

It would have been natural for Mu<sup>C-</sup>āwīya to assist them if he had been truly intent on exacting revenge for his kinsman's death, for here he had allies in a struggle against the caliph. However, he did not take this opportunity. It is suggested in the histories of this period that Mu<sup>C-</sup>āwīya felt that he could keep Syria apart from the impending civil war so as to emerge from the conflict in a strong position to challenge the victorious party.<sup>2</sup> In this we can see a policy of opportunism rather than tribal loyalty.

The outcome of the Medinan's rebellion, the battle of the Camel, encouraged him to continue his fight and also encouraged him to take a firm stand. Thus the caliph and Mu<sup>C-</sup>āwīya failed to find a compromise way of peace and as a consequence they became involved in a prolonged conflict.

In the first armed conflict, Mu<sup>C-</sup>āwīya was almost defeated on the battlefield but tried various means

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1. Ibn Sa<sup>C</sup>d, VIII, 65.

2. Ṭabarī, IV, 573.

to save his army. Thus he offered peace negotiations, and while these were dragged out he managed to spoil the solidarity of the opposing army.

His success in this attempt made him stronger, even outside Syria, while the caliph's power contracted rapidly during the last two years of his reign. Eventually, when the caliph was assassinated, it took him six months to re-unite the whole Muslim state under his rule, using force rather than peaceful methods.<sup>1</sup>

Thus several methods of succession had been employed from the death of the Prophet until Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya took over in 41 AH. No specific criteria were used for determining the succession except the capability of the person and general consent of the Medinans, particularly during the appointment of the first three caliphs, with the general convention that the caliph should be one of the prominent companions of the Prophet and a member of the Qurayshite tribe.

Nevertheless, there was at least one group found in this time among the Muslim community who were fighting for the principle that other Arabs and Muslims should be entitled to the caliphate. These were the Khawārij.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Iqd, IV, 168.

2. Milal, II, 116. See also Adab al-Mu<sup>C</sup>tazila, 26.

## THE PERIOD OF ANARCHY

Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya's reign began formally when al-Hasan b. <sup>C</sup>Alī renounced his claim to the caliphate in 41 AH and Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya took office as caliph. Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya's time had passed peacefully in general; the country was quite calm as a whole. That calmness was the lull which comes before the storm. All ambitions were waiting for an open chance after Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya's death (60 AH).<sup>1</sup> According to the accord which had been made between Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya and al-Hasan, Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya was to leave the succession to the caliphate open and the people would choose his successor.<sup>2</sup> Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya did not fulfil this condition and announced his intention to name a certain person as his successor during his life; worse than this, he later on named his son Yazīd as Crown Prince.<sup>3</sup> Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya had good reasons for this decision, for if he were to leave the post of caliph without a specific successor, it might cause great trouble for the country. In order to achieve this aim, he did not at first name a specific person, in order to prepare the people's minds for such a change. All the people were satisfied with this idea, but were not in every case prepared to accept a successor from his own house. The

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1. Bayān, I, 159.

2. Nihāyat al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, XX, 231.

3. Bayān, I, 158.



announcement of Yazīd as his successor came as a great disappointment to those who yearned for power, and those who were looking for a new political system. More important is the fact that it meant genuine changes in the constitutional system, and thus his decision did not pass easily<sup>1</sup> and the reaction to it was very violent among Quraysh and among the Arab leaders wherever they were. Even some of the Umayyad family did not agree with him in this political innovation. For instance, the son of the caliph <sup>C</sup>Uthmān argued strongly against Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya about this decision and reminded him that his son was an incapable man.<sup>2</sup> Marwān b. al-Hakam, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Āmir and Sa<sup>C</sup>īd b. al-<sup>C</sup>Ās did the same. To cover up his personal wishes he ordered the poet of Tamīm, Miskīn ad-Dārimī, to compose a poem encouraging the caliph to go ahead with his plan, and to recommend Yazīd as the successor of his father. The poet had been told to recite the poem only when he had made sure that the three men were present at the meeting.<sup>3</sup> Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya brought all the noble Arabs and their leaders to an assembly in his court, in order to discover their immediate reaction. Miskīn started to recite his poem as follows:<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ansāb, IV, 103 ff.

2. Ansāb, V, 118.

3. Aghānī, XX, 175.

4. Aghānī, XX, 176.

*Toward you, O Commander of the Faithful, I have ridden (1)  
my camel which disturbs the sand grouse by night while  
they are sleeping.*

*Would that I knew what Ibn <sup>C</sup>Amir would say and Marwān,  
or what Sa<sup>C</sup>id would say.*

*O, sons of the Caliphs of God, go slowly, for the Merciful  
One will bestow it to whom He wishes.*

*When the western pulpit is vacated by its lord, the  
Commander of the Faithful is Yazīd.*

Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya then persuaded the Umayyad family, most of the leaders of the Arab tribes and some governors to show their support. Some reports relate that the famous governor of Kūfa, al-Mughīra b. Shu<sup>C</sup>ba, was the first person to call openly for the nomination of Yazīd. He is said to have done this in order to dissuade Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya from dismissing him from his post.<sup>1</sup> Other leaders who were less enthusiastic about this arrangement kept silent, since otherwise they might have lost their own posts. One of these was al-Ahnaf b. Qays, who headed his tribe's delegation to Damascus. On the above mentioned occasion he said nothing until Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya asked him directly for his opinion, when he expressed his rejection in a polite way.<sup>2</sup> It would, perhaps, have pleased Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya at that time if all leaders had taken the same position as al-Ahnaf, for

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1. Aghānī, XX, 176.

2. Nihāyat al-Arab, II, 355; al-Kāmil, I, 48; al-<sup>C</sup>Iqd, IV, 108.



he found it very difficult to obtain approval of his plan. The delegations in Damascus came to a deadlock. The Medinans, on the other hand, refused categorically to accept the proposal. Since Muslims everywhere tended to look to Medina for guidance this represented a severe setback for Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya. Only the Syrian tribes, the Yemenis in particular, gave full support to Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya's wishes.<sup>1</sup> The way in which Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya behaved in order to achieve his aim was gentle at first and he used subtle persuasion to obtain their agreement.<sup>2</sup> This treatment prevented the opposition parties from finding active support among the tribes in order to challenge the government as long as Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya was alive. Therefore no serious rebellion took place. Many men who had demonstrated great capability for the office of Amīr al-Mu<sup>'</sup>minīn and to whom most people looked for guidance, rejected Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya's plan. These men, such as al-Husayn b. <sup>C</sup>Alī, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Umar and <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr, were at the head of determined opposition to such a change in the system in terms of the caliphate.<sup>3</sup> Those who were not satisfied with such a change and were not in good positions to challenge Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya, kept their own

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1. Bayān, I, 158.

2. Tabarī, V, 303.

3. Ansāb, IV, 123.

counsel for the moment and waited to see what the outcome would be, while secretly encouraging one or another of the other potential claimants. Later, when Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya was becoming more determined, he decided to force the Medinan leaders to declare themselves.<sup>1</sup> To this end he asserted in the mosque at Mecca that they were to give up resistance and to agree with him on taking the bay<sup>C</sup>a on behalf of his son. These leaders were present at the time, and Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya's soldiers were, according to Ibn Qutayba, under orders to kill them without hesitation if they showed disagreement.<sup>2</sup>

The manner in which Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya chose to put his son over the people caused great danger for Yazīd, and created an unstable period after his death. When this took place some tribal leaders from the Quraysh and other important families established themselves in various regions of the state in positions of virtual independence, giving allegiance to a number of rival claimants to the caliphate.<sup>3</sup> It was impossible to keep the people calm in such circumstances without a wise caliph like Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya to keep control of the country with his political skills. He had expected that greater difficulties would face his

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1. Nihāyat al-Arāb, XX, 359.

2. Imāma, I, 163; see also Iqd, V, 134.

3. Tabarī, V, 504.

successor; indeed he warned him about certain men, such as al-Husayn and <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr. His expectation was fully justified. As soon as the news of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya's death reached Medina, a political crisis broke when al-Husayn and Ibn az-Zubayr refused to pay homage to his successor and fled to Mecca.<sup>1</sup> Both of them led rebellions against the new caliph.<sup>2</sup> The majority of people in the various regions were not satisfied with Yazīd, with the exception of the Syrians. Yazīd had no choice but to use the loyal Syrian army to deal with the opposition in Hījāz,<sup>3</sup> and ordered his governor in Baṣra to take over Kūfa in order to end their support and to prevent al-Husayn from entering the town.<sup>4</sup> As a result Yazīd, shortly after his accession, became responsible for two political disasters. The first one was the murder of al-Husayn and his family, which horrified all shades of opinion and was denounced in the strongest possible terms. Political leaders made it into a tool to gain the Muslims' sympathy against the Umayyad family.<sup>5</sup> To rouse violent hostility against the Umayyads, they dwelt on the savage battle between al-Husayn with a few friends, women and

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1. Tabarī, V, 341.

2. Akhbār, 243; Tabarī, V, 382.

3. Akhbār, 264; Tabarī, V, 494.

4. Akhbār, 251.

5. Tabarī, V, 475.



children, and the army of the Umayyads, who did not accept any compromises and were determined to kill him. The second is the battle of Ḥarra, outside Medina. This battle was a consequence of the first one. As soon as the news of al-Ḥusayn's murder reached Medina, the inhabitants declared the deposition of Yazīd. As a result Yazīd sent his army to Medina to bring it back under his control. The army killed many pious contemporaries of the Prophet; furthermore, the commander was ordered to pillage the city for three days, which the army did.<sup>1</sup> Then it marched to Mecca to do the same.<sup>2</sup> We can scarcely imagine what would have happened had Yazīd remained caliph long after these actions; in fact his death occurred while his army was still besieging Mecca, although his death did not end the civil war but enlarged it because the hostility between the Umayyad monarchy and the majority of the people throughout the country had reached a crucial point. At the same time no agreement had been reached among the various factions to name an alternative candidate for the caliphate.

The second civil war was unavoidable; no neutral position had been taken by any Arab tribe or group in that time, even if they had had bad experiences during

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1. Ṭabarī, V, 484.

2. Akhbār, 267; Ṭabarī, V, 496.

the first civil war after the death of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān, which ultimately ended in favour of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya after five years of war. The second war was worse than the first one, and gave rise to more complicated problems.

The question of the caliphate was limited to the two rival branches of Quraysh, represented by <sup>C</sup>Alī and Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya in the first war. The most important question in the second war was that of who was entitled to the office of Amīr al-Mu'minīn.<sup>1</sup> Several houses among the Arabs had a burning desire for power, both among Quraysh and other tribes. From Quraysh Ibn az-Zubayr proclaimed himself caliph and took Mecca as the centre of his rule in Hijāz; Marwān b. al-Ḥakam did the same in Syria, as did ad-Daḥḥāk b. Qays al-Fihri also for a short time, according to some narratives. Abū Tammām quotes the following two couplets by a Yemeni poet -  
Abū Thumla al-Kalbī:<sup>2</sup>

*I call you to witness that I am heedful and obedient (2)  
to Marwān and that I am disobedient and opposed to  
ad-Daḥḥāk.*

*Two leaders, one rightly guided, and another calling  
people to error, a liar.*

From other tribes came such leaders as Ḥassān b. Bahdal al-Kalbī, who led the Jordanian tribes

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1. Islamic History, 93.

2. Abū Tammām, 1; Ṭabarī, V, 535; Ansāb, V, 139.



and showed an ambition to become caliph for forty days before he stepped down on certain conditions in favour of Marwān.<sup>1</sup> Those conditions were that Kalb should have the same privileges which they had enjoyed during the reign of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and his son; Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya had agreed to pay two thousand men of Kalb two thousand dirhams each as an annual salary, and if the man died his son or his cousin was entitled to have this money instead of him; also, Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya should consult with them if there were any problems and they would have the final decision.<sup>2</sup> They were very proud of this and their poets celebrated the fact in the following lines<sup>2</sup> by Ḥassan b. Bahdal:

*Even if the caliph himself is not of us, he does not  
get it (the caliphate) without our being present.* (3)

Another line is as follows, by a Yemeni poet:

*We stepped down in your favour (the Banū Marwān)  
from the throne of kingship after you had been  
in error and were not able (to achieve) a throne.* (4)

The generally reliable historian Ṭabarī does not state that Ḥassān proclaimed himself caliph, but reports that he had enough power to enforce the dismissal of the Crown Prince and the appointment of another without argument.<sup>4</sup> This is sufficient to show us the power of

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1. Ibn <sup>C</sup>Asākir, IV, 146; Abū Tamam, 7; Ansāb, V, 135.  
2. Murūj, III, 86; Ibn <sup>C</sup>Asākir, IV, 140.  
3. Ansāb, V, 135; Ibn <sup>C</sup>Asākir, IV, 146.  
4. Ṭabarī, V, 610.

the leader of Yemen and there is no doubt that it was only as a result of his intervention that the Umayyad family were able to rise again and to challenge the other chiefs. Ultimately he handed the power to Marwān with the price that he kept real authority.<sup>1</sup> Consequently Qays began to take action against Kalb to protect their own interests. Obviously Hassān, in order to ensure a secure future, had to make compromises with the leaders of other Yemeni tribesmen in order to find an agreed way to conduct the war in the name of a generally recognised caliph. Eventually all the Yemenis, including Ghassān, as-Saksak, Tayyi', al-Qayn and others, co-operated completely on mutually acceptable terms, so that all Yemeni tribesmen in Syria joined Marwān.<sup>2</sup>

Marwān formed his first army from these tribes and mentioned them in the following poem composed by himself.<sup>3</sup>

*When I saw that the matter was a thing to be taken by force (5)  
I organised Ghassān and Kalb.  
And the victorious men of as-Saksak and Tayyi' eager for  
warfare.  
And Qayn, marching weighed down by armour, and Tanūkh  
lofty and hard.  
They will take the kingship only by force; if Qays were  
to offer any compromise, it would not be acceptable to  
them.*

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1. Murūj, III, 86.

2. Ṭabarī, V, 537; Abū Tammām, 16.

3. Ṭabarī, V, 537. Abū Tammām, 16.

Another caliph was proclaimed at the same time in the centre of the Arabian Peninsula, where the Khawārij set up their own state and nominated one of their number, Najda b. <sup>C</sup>Āmir al-Hanafī, as caliph.<sup>1</sup> They overran the east coast of Arabia and the hinterland of Basra and even extended their authority to neighbouring areas of Persia. The Khawārij were perhaps the only group among the Arabs who had specific aims and a clear manifesto which had gradually developed since they had parted company with <sup>C</sup>Alī on the question of arbitration.

The main points of their programme of this period may be summarised as follows:

1. Rejection of the special position<sup>2</sup> of Quraysh.
2. The restoration of the authority of Islam.
3. The belief that the caliphate should go to the best Muslim, whether Arab or not.<sup>3</sup>
4. Strict adherence to the Qur'ān and practices of the Prophet and the first two caliphs.

Their strictness and their refusal to compromise were, however, so extreme that comparatively few people followed them.

Those who were not sufficiently powerful to claim the caliphate contented themselves with taking over

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1. Tabarī, V, 566.

2. Tabarī, VI, 287.

3. ash-Shāyib, 203.



certain provinces while declaring official loyalty to one of the two prominent rivals, Marwān and Ibn az-Zubayr.<sup>1</sup> In some cases the people selected their own governor on behalf of whichever man they supported as caliph<sup>2</sup> and asked him to send his approval.

The lack of guidance after the unforeseen death of Yazīd I (64 AH) and the general instability made the Syrians unsure of the direction which they should take. When the office of Caliph was left vacant, most of the Syrian army were fighting in Hijāz and their absence from Syria caused a volatile situation. Some ambitious tribal leaders took over certain districts in order to bargain for advantages<sup>3</sup> before making a final decision on which candidate to support for the caliphate. This happened not only in Syria but also in Basra, Kūfa and Khurāsān.

In Syria it was clear that the rule of the Umayyads had restricted the position of Qays greatly, since Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya had not given annual payment to non-Yemenis<sup>4</sup> in order to keep the proportion of Qaysites in the population of Syria less than that of the Yemenis. Consequently the attitude of Qays was clear even before the crisis.

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1. For example Zufar b. al-Hārith, in Qarqīsiyā, Nātil b. Qays in Palestine and Hassān b. Bahdal in Jordan.
  2. Tabarī, V, 527. Khbār, 270.
  3. Tabarī, V, 531.
  4. Aghānī, XVIII, 70.

Nevertheless they did not take any action before Yazīd's death even though, according to Abū Tammān, they refused to agree to Yazīd as successor to his father because of the Yemenis' influence upon him.<sup>1</sup> But serious action was taken soon after the news of Yazīd's death reached them. They went over to Ibn az-Zubayr in order to overthrow the Yemenis and the power of the Umayyads. Thus Qays undertook to establish the authority of Ibn az-Zubayr throughout Syria.<sup>2</sup> They nearly succeeded in carrying all the regions with them especially when the governor of Aleppo, An-Nu<sup>c</sup>mān b. Bashīr joined them and the leader of Judhām, Nātil b. Qays, declared his support for Ibn az-Zubayr and established himself as governor of Palestine.

The governor of Damascus, ad-Dahhāk, remained uncommitted and waited to see which party it would be more advantageous to join.

Eventually he came under pressure from Qays<sup>3</sup> and announced his support for Ibn az-Zubayr.

The only tribes who were still loyal to the Umayyads were those of Jordan. Their leader, Hassān al-Kalbī, rejected calls to unite under the rule of

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1. Abū Tammān, 1.

2. Aghānī, XVII, 111.

3. Aghānī, XVII, 111.



Ibn az-Zubayr or anybody else unless he was from the Umayyad family,<sup>1</sup> and stated that in his opinion Ibn az-Zubayr was not a fit person to be Caliph.<sup>2</sup>

It would have been a serious matter for Kalb in particular and Yemen in general, if the next Caliph were to be Ibn az-Zubayr, for the latter had never forgiven the Yemen of Syria for their past support of the Umayyad family. Meantime the leaders of Yemen knew his attitude towards them.

Hassān tried to establish Yemen's solidarity against Qays and their candidate, and to do so he reminded his followers of what had recently happened because of Ibn az-Zubayr, in order to resurrect their hostility, and described him as a hypocrite (munāfiq).<sup>3</sup>

When Hassān had made sure that the Yemen of Syria agreed with him, he set up a new movement and arranged to fight their enemies, sending a messenger to the Governor of Damascus to urge him to unite with him to help the Umayyad family. According to Ṭabarī and Balādhurī ad-Dahhāk was in secret agreement with Qays in favour of Ibn az-Zubayr, but Hassān's ideas had their effect on him and therefore he agreed with Hassān also and fixed a specific place, al-Jābiya, to meet the Yemenīs in the hope

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1. Aghānī, XVII, 111.

2. Ṭabarī, V, 537.

3. Ṭabarī, V, 545.

of solving the problem, even though that was contrary to his agreement with Qays. As he left Damascus for the meeting, the Qaysī leader Ma<sup>c</sup>n ibn al-Akhnas and his tribe stopped this attempt and persuaded him to camp in Marj Rāhit.

They alleged that Kalb had already decided to appoint Hassān's sister's son, Khālid, as caliph,<sup>1</sup> which they totally rejected. Thereupon Qays and ad-Dahhāk made public their secret arrangement whereby they had already accepted Ibn az-Zubayr, and undertook to fight any others who did not agree. As a result Hassān was forced to abandon his favoured candidate, Khālid Ibn Yazīd, and decided to support Marwān as rival to Ibn az-Zubayr in order to conciliate the Yemenī tribes who were uneasy about the youth of Khālid. It may be noted that ad-Dahhāk, who ultimately led Qays in the battle of Marj Rāhit, did not decide to lend his open support to Ibn az-Zubayr until the last moment because of the ambiguous situation. In consequence Qays suffered from a lack of decisive leadership while Kalb joined with other Yemenī tribes to prepare themselves to conduct a long-term war.

#### IRAQ

Some sources mention that after the battle of Karbalā', in

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1. Aghānī, XVII, 111.

which al-Husayn and his family were killed, Yazīd and <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād the governor of Iraq were not on good terms.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the governor learned of the death of Yazīd he called the people together at the great mosque in Basra to tell them that the Caliph had died, and to try to ensure their allegiance to him as governor of Basra until a new Caliph had been universally recognised.

Initially the inhabitants accepted his suggestion and paid homage to him as temporary governor. After touching hands with him they left, rubbing their hands on the wall saying, "Does the son of Marjāna think that we would entrust him with our affairs at a time of disunity as we did at a time of unity?"<sup>2</sup> When he saw signs of revolt against him, he escaped to Syria and placed himself under the protection of Azd, before his enemies could capture him. The Basran poet, Yazīd b. Mufarrigh, an enemy of the governor, composed defamatory poems revealing his malicious pleasure in the mishaps of <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh, of which the following lines are an example:

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1. Tabarī, V, 506.

2. Tabarī, V, 505.



On the day when you opened your sword at a distance, (6)  
you did the wrong thing; all of your actions go  
wrong.<sup>1</sup>

You nearly died when you heard the voice of the Jackal,<sup>2</sup>  
who would ever die in fright at the voice of a wild  
animal?

I think that if the sons of Harb united against you, you  
would become worthless rubbish.<sup>3</sup>

Another lampoon by the same poet is the following:

It is pleasing to my eye that he (<sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh) neglected (7)  
his mother when she called on him for help and he turned  
his back side upon her in flight.

He said, "take yourself to the people and become a slave as  
you were before, or die if death is preferable."

He fled away while her tears washed over her collar, as  
though he did not exist; and fate is changeable for men.

O <sup>C</sup>Ubayd, son of slave, be patient; the one who will face  
difficulties is one who is prepared and experienced.

If you were a nobleman or observed your responsibilities  
you would care for Hind<sup>4</sup> when Hind was being dragged away.

But your fearful heart could not help you nor an origin  
which is linked to the sons of Maysān.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The Arabs did not use the word "open" when speaking of swords, but one of the words meaning "unsheathe", e.g. intadā. However when <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh was terrified by the voice of a jackal he used this word mistakenly, and it was taken as a symbol of Cowardice.
  2. When he escaped to Syria after the Basrans dismissed him, he travelled by night for fear that his enemies would kill him. Hearing the voice of a jackal he said to his guards, "these are people coming to kill me".
  3. Abū Tammām, 8.
  4. His wife.
  5. Abū Tammām, 9.



The vacancy in the governorship caused great trouble to the people. The question was who should take over the city; in this situation the Azd and Bakr united against Tamīm, while Tamīm were joined by the Persian community in Basra, thus producing a balance of power.<sup>1</sup> Azd took further steps and marched to the city centre where the great mosque and the house of the governor were, to establish their authority over the city. The leader of Azd, Mas<sup>c</sup>ūd, stationed himself at the pulpit to receive the homage of the people without the consent of Tamīm. Tamīm denounced this action and categorically refused to obey them.

The narratives describe Tamīm's position as having been moderate at first until Azd and their allies killed some innocent people and set fire to some houses of Tamīm. This led to serious fighting and Mas<sup>c</sup>ūd was murdered by an unknown person, and others were killed. After a few days of warfare Azd and Tamīm came to an agreement that they should elect somebody who would lead all of them.<sup>2</sup>

They elected <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Abd-Allāh b. <sup>c</sup>Āmir, a Qurayshite, as governor over them; one month later he was succeeded by <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. al-Hārith who

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1. Tabarī, V, 516.

2. Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d, VII, 101.

lasted only two months in office. These men were selected from the Quraysh on the understanding that Quraysh was the compromise tribe. Next came <sup>C</sup>Umar b. <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh b. Ma<sup>C</sup>mar as a representative of <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr when the people of Basra decided to support him, but he held office for only one month, being replaced by al-Hārith b. <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Abī Rabī<sup>C</sup>a, these two also being from Quraysh.

The situation was deteriorating rapidly as a result of a series of rash attempts to seize power and the poets felt free to express their views without fear of authority. Thus they supported their tribes and composed large numbers of poems which reflect this atmosphere.

In particular, the Tamīmī poets showed pride and boastfulness in recording their important role in these events. One of them, al-Hārith b. Badr, says

*We dismissed and appointed while Bakr b. Wā'il fooled (B)  
around seeking for someone to make an alliance with.  
Not one man of Bakr passed a single night until morning  
without knowing humiliation.<sup>1</sup>*

Another anonymous poet of Tamīm was fighting and recited this couplet to encourage his tribesmen in battle:

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1. Tabarī, V, 516.

O Sons of Tamīm it will be mentioned, if Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd is (9)  
successful in it, it will be famous.  
So hold firmly to the side of the Maqsūra.<sup>1</sup>

Ghatafān b. Unayf was fighting and repeating the following lines of Rajaz to describe the critical position of the Bakrī leader Ibn Musmi<sup>C</sup>,

Ibn Mismā<sup>C</sup> was besieged, he wished that houses were be- (10)  
tween us and him till we set fire all around him.

The fate of Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd and the escape of his partner Ushaym b. Shaqīq, the leader of Rabi<sup>C</sup>a, was an occasion for the Tamīm poets to celebrate their victory over Azd and their partners even after events had settled down. Al-Farazdaq took part in these political affairs and composed a vainglorious poem as follows:

If Ushaym had not escaped our spears and had missed the (11)  
door when our fires blazed up.  
He would have accompanied Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd and (Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd) would have  
accompanied him (in being killed) and his intestines  
and liver would have fallen apart.<sup>2</sup>

Eventually the war ended because of the wisdom of Tamīm's leader al-Ahnaf b. Qays, who took the first step and offered peace negotiations to hold out hope for everyone in Basra and reminded them all of their duties as citizens of Basra not as tribesmen.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ṭabarī, V, 520.

2. Ṭabarī, V, 520.

3. Bayān, II, 282.



The problem was settled on condition that Tamīm should pay ten blood prices for Mas<sup>c</sup>ūd's murder and the usual amount for each person killed from Azd and Rabī<sup>c</sup>a, while the murders of members of Tamīm were overlooked.

## KŪFA

The second major city in Iraq was Kūfa, which was under the rule of Ziyād and of his son <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh after him. Nevertheless the two cities had different attitudes. Basra had anti-Shī<sup>c</sup>ite tendencies while Kūfa supported the right of <sup>c</sup>Alī's sons to the Caliphate.

Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya knew well how strong the Shī<sup>c</sup>ite party was in Kūfa, so he added it to the strong rule of Ziyād. Moreover, Ziyād's familiarity with the prominent Shī<sup>c</sup>ite leaders served him as they regarded him as a friend, and his friendship with most of them during the period when he had served <sup>c</sup>Alī made him fully acquainted with those who dealt with political affairs among the Kūfāns.<sup>1</sup> He himself was one of those who were against Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya's regime before the latter adopted him as his half-brother.

Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya's main aim in adding Kūfa to the regions under Ziyād's control was his hope that Ziyād

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1. Ansāb, IV, 215.



could exploit the hostility between Kūfa and Basra in such a way that Iraq could be controlled by the Damascus government without involving the use of the Syrian army. This coincided with Ziyād's desire to expand his governorship<sup>1</sup>; thus he had to strengthen his authority over Kūfa by whatever possible means to prevent any sort of agitation. On the one hand, he successfully did this, but on the other his strict control of the city caused great dissatisfaction among the inhabitants. As a result of this harsh treatment the numbers of the opposition increased rapidly,<sup>2</sup> and it was the only city which recorded a single attempt to overthrow Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya's regime among all the regions throughout the twenty year reign of Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya. From the time when Hījr b. <sup>c</sup>Adī al-Kindī, leader of Kinda, led an unsuccessful revolt against the government, Ziyād paid more attention to the new movement, dividing his time between the two cities and spending six months in Kūfa and the other six months in Basra watching every move made by the populace.<sup>3</sup> All seemed calm and no further action was taken. Later on Ziyād was succeeded by his son <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh; the latter followed his father's policy, but dealing much more strictly with the two cities of Iraq until the death of the second Umayyad Caliph.

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1. Tabarī, V, 288.

2. Tabarī, V, 236.

3. Ansāb, IV, 213.

When the people of Basra at first accepted <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh as a temporary governor, he turned to Kūfa hoping that the Kūfans might accept him as their neighbours had. This was an unfortunate move, because the Kūfans replied, "No, we do not accept the son of Sumayya any more",<sup>1</sup> and then insulted him in the great mosque where all the people could hear. The representative of <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh ordered the speakers to be imprisoned but their tribes defended them. . Ultimately they overthrew <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh and his representative and chose their own governor and wrote to <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, telling him their position and expressing their wishes to join him. The Kūfans' rejection encouraged the people of Basra to renounce their allegiance to <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh.

#### KHURĀSĀN

The changeable political situation was reflected throughout the whole Islamic state. Even the frontier was adversely influenced by the tribal conflict in Syria and Iraq. One of the important tribal battles occurred in the east of the state, where the outlying group of the main Arab tribes, Qays, Yemen and Rabī<sup>C</sup>a were found. The problems of the centre were transmitted to them.

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1. Tabarī, V, 525.

Originally, they all came to Khurāsān as conquerors in the earliest times of the conquest and settled down there permanently. Up to the time of Yazīd Khurāsān was always allocated to the governor of Basra or later of Iraq as a whole as a part of his domain. Occasionally the governor of Iraq sent huge numbers of tribesmen from Iraq to settle there whenever numbers in Basra or Kūfa became excessive. For instance, Balādhurī<sup>1</sup> mentions that Ziyād b. Abīhi once sent fifty thousand people selected from the two cities, Basra and Kūfa; twenty five thousand from each. Probably the reasons behind this expedition were not only to reduce the population and to reinforce the frontiers but to deport agitators from Iraq far from their previous homes as an indirect exile.

#### KHURĀSĀN UNDER SALM'S RULE

In the year 61 AH Khurāsān was granted to Salm b. Ziyād by his cousin Yazīd as an independent province. Salm had no links with any of the powerful tribes in Khurāsān so he was backed by the government of Damascus to strengthen his authority. He went to Iraq and brought six thousand men as reinforcements.<sup>2</sup> In spite of this he tried to act as a

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1. Futūh, I, 577.

2. Tabarī, V, 422.



peacekeeper rather than a strict governor and to avoid any action that might disturb the security of the region. He managed to harmonise the wishes of the Arabs in this area, but only as long as the state remained united. Tribal competition was well known and particularly strong in Khurāsān.

Salm himself was clearly aware of what was going on between the tribes and because of this he unsuccessfully attempted to suppress the news of the Caliph's death, in the hope that Syria might emerge from this crisis before the community became split into many groups and parties.

It became impossible to hide the news longer when the poet Ibn <sup>c</sup>Urrāda composed a poem which broadcast the news to everybody, and which was even recited in the presence of Salm;

*O King, who closed his door, great matters have occurred.* (12)

*O Sons of Umayya, indeed the end of your power is a body  
in Hawwārīn which will reside there for ever.*

*His death came suddenly at night when a glass and wine-skin  
with a bleeding nose were near his pillow.<sup>1</sup>*

Salm then released the news and did his best to persuade the Arabs of Khurāsān to unite under his leadership, just as his brother had done in Iraq. Unfortunately for him, they accepted him for only two months more.<sup>2</sup> It should

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1. Tabarī, V, 545. The poet is here alluding to the manner in which Yazīd himself died (of a haemorrhage).

2. Tabarī, V, 545.



be noted that Salm was not like his brother <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh. He gained a good reputation, according to Tabarī, during his time in this area; he enjoyed a term of peace and tried to create a good atmosphere between the Arab tribes. The local people of these regions were satisfied with his policy in general, although that did not save his post, and faced with bitter challenges, he had no alternative but to leave. His departure left a vacancy although he named al-Muhallab to succeed him. This appointment was disregarded by Qays and Rabī<sup>c</sup>a.

While Salm was on his way to Syria, the leader of Rabī<sup>c</sup>a, Sulaymān b. Murthid, forced him to appoint him sub-governor of certain districts of Khurāsān. Salm had washed his hands of Khurāsān, so he did not mind giving these invalid appointments.

The most prominent man in Khurāsān as a whole was <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. Khāzim, leader of Qays who met Salm also on his return journey when Salm told him what he had done. Ibn Khāzim blamed him for dividing Khurāsān between Bakr and Yemen and asked Salm not only to invest him as a third governor but also for one hundred thousand dirhams to finance his attempt to counteract the two nominations in order to spread the power of Qays throughout Khurāsān.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Tabarī, V, 546.

It took him only two years to unite all Khurāsān as an independent region under Qaysī domination, and to move over to the side of Ibn az-Zubayr.

Qays were salvaged by the success of their leader in Khurāsān after they were badly defeated in Syria, and took steps to purge that province of the other rival tribes. Thus Yemen were driven away without conflict because of their weakness at that time while the real conflict occurred between the two Nizārīte branches, Mudar and Rabī<sup>c</sup>a.

The chief of Tamīm, Hilāl ad-Dabbī, tried to prevent the war between the branches of Nizār and to act as a go-between, but his failure to conciliate them made Ibn Khāzim accuse Rabī<sup>c</sup>a, saying "Rabī<sup>c</sup>a are still angry with God because he sent his messenger from Mudar".<sup>1</sup>

#### THE REVIVAL OF TRIBALISM

The war broke out in Khurāsān between Qays and Rabī<sup>c</sup>a at the same time that Rabī<sup>c</sup>a and Qays of Jazīra were struggling together against Kalb. It is strange to find Bakr b. Wā'il fighting Qays in Khurāsān while Taghlib b. Wā'il fought with Qays against Yemen in Syria. To explain this phenomenon, it may be necessary to investigate the background of the two branches of Wā'il, Taghlib and Bakr. They had been at war among themselves before Islam and still kept their hostility even after they came under

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1. Tabarī, V, 548.

Muslim rule. Al-Akhtal, the poet of Taghlib, recorded this hostility in the following lines:

*If you ask me whether I have conciliated Bakr (I will tell you that) rancour prevents me from doing so, not long genealogies.* (13)

*And long days (of battle) between us and them in which the iron bit the craniums.*

*They are two brothers who are roasted by fire; the cloak of death between them is new (i.e. they fight every day).<sup>1</sup>*

Thus in spite of their former enmity these two tribal groups realised the importance of their solidarity, and kept together in order to win privileges and to protect their existence. In fact, during this period of disorder we see a strong revival of tribalism, although in a new form which resulted from the political pressures of the period.

The Ansāb states that when the delegation of Taghlib came down to Basra to see the chief of Rabī<sup>c</sup>a in Basra, Mālik b. Misma<sup>c</sup>, and complained to him that Qays had subdued them because Ibn az-Zubayr backed Qays, his answer was,

"Go back and fight Qays to protect your wives and your children. If the Sultān helps them with one horseman I will help you with two. If the Sultān sends one man to them, I will sent two to you. The Sultān has found distraction from you and them in his own troubles."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Tabaqāt, I, 467.

2. Ansāb, V, 318.



This statement may be taken as demonstrating that tribal unity was still regarded as paramount and that the tribes were anxious to revive their position, and to use the opportunity provided by the anarchical situation to strengthen their power as much as they could.

In the end, the victory of Qays in Khurāsān gave them ten years of self-rule with effective power, while the matter of the Caliphate was not yet solved.

#### THE RISE OF MARWĀN B. AL-HAKAM

We now turn to the narratives contained in the major sources which describe the appearance of Marwān as a rival of Ibn az-Zubayr in Syria. Many different versions of these events are given which often contradict one another. As a result, a great deal of care must be taken in order to establish a clear picture of the rise to power of Marwān b. al-Hakam. The problem is made worse as these accounts are not given in chronological order but are mixed up. However, all the primary sources agree that Ibn az-Zubayr suddenly emerged as a strong contender for the Caliphate almost everywhere and that all the regions of the whole state seemed to be gathering under his power, even Syria. They mention no disagreement on accepting his leadership except in the district of Jordan.<sup>1</sup> At first, no definite

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1. Ansāb, V, 128. Tabarī, V, 532.



position in Syria was taken after Yazīd's death, due to the unexpected nature of this event and the fact that the people of Syria had not prepared for any kind of change even though Ibn az-Zubayr had already challenged Yazīd.<sup>1</sup> As a result of this lack of preparation, as soon as Hassān b. Bahdal announced his rejection of Ibn az-Zubayr the Umayyad family rallied round him and made a joint decision that they should stand together and establish mutual assistance for their common advantage.<sup>2</sup> Al-Balādhurī describes the situation in the following words,

"When Yazīd died, Ibn az-Zubayr was quite sure nobody remained to challenge him as an equal rival. Thus he approved of ad-Dahhāk b. Qays al-Fihri remaining in office as governor of Damascus, sent an-Nu<sup>c</sup>mān b. Bashīr to Hims and allocated Palestine to Nātil b. Qays al-Judhamī."<sup>3</sup>

Al-Balādhurī gives several different accounts of Marwān's rise as a serious contender in Syria as do Tabarī and Abū Tammām.<sup>4</sup> Certain of these narratives assert that <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh Ibn Ziyād was the person who drew Marwān's attention to the possibility of his claiming the right to lead the Umayyad family and reported that when <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh

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1. Abū Tammām, 6.

2. Tabarī, 537.

3. Ansāb, V, 127.

4. Abū Tammām, 13.

arrived in Syria he found Marwān preparing to go to see Ibn az-Zubayr to ask for the safety of the Umayyad family and to pay the oath of allegiance to him.<sup>1</sup> Ubayd Allāh advised him to abandon this plan and encouraged him to claim the right for himself instead. While the governor of Damascus had no clear direction at this moment he seems to have supported Ibn az-Zubayr in secret while his open position tended toward the Banū Umayya.

Hassān b. Bahdal was the sole leader among the Syrians who openly supported the cause of the Umayyads without hesitation,<sup>2</sup> and denounced the attempt of Ibn az-Zubayr to take the office of Amir Al-Mu'minīn on the grounds that he was unfit for the Caliphate. Tabarī agrees with al-Balādhurī that ad-Dahhāk invited the people to join Ibn az-Zubayr and that because of this Hassān sent a messenger to him inviting him to support the Umayyads and asking him to manifest his real will in public.<sup>3</sup> If he really supported the Umayyads he should read out a message which Hassān had sent him from the pulpit of the great mosque of Damascus where all the people would hear. Because of Hassān's suspicions he gave his messenger another copy of it and told him that if ad-Dahhāk did not read it

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1. Tabarī, V, 530.

2. Ansāb, V, 128.

3. Ansāb, V, 133.

out, the messenger should read his copy out in the mosque. Ad-Dahhāk ignored the message but the messenger of Hassān read out his copy, as a result of which there was a bitter clash between the supporters of Ibn az-Zubayr and those who supported Hassān's ideas.

The sources record three names of those who supported Hassān, two of whom were Yemeni and one from the Umayyad<sup>1</sup> family. However, no-one from Qays is mentioned as having supported the Umayyads. Ultimately the indecision of ad-Dahhāk compounded the problem, even if this indecision was due to the wide gap which had appeared between the two major tribes of Syria and the impossibility of bridging it.

#### THE SELECTION OF MARWĀN

As mentioned above, Hassān b. Bahdal was the only one who held a clear position in favour of the Umayyads among all the leaders of Syria. He utterly refused to abandon them and wanted to continue the office in the house of Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya. He picked his sister's son Khālīd b. Yazīd as his candidate and marched with his tribes to al-Jābiya to meet ad-Dahhāk and the people of Damascus according to the arrangement

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1. Yazīd b. Abī Unays and Sufyān b. al-Abrad, prominent chiefs of Yemen, and al-Wālid b. <sup>c</sup>Utba b. Abī Sufyān, a cousin of Yazīd b. Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya. Ansāb, V, 133.



which had been made. But when Hassān failed to bring over ad-Dahhāk to his side, he held a meeting with all the important Yemeni chiefs in order to discuss the future of Yemen.<sup>1</sup> All camped at al-Jābiya to discuss the matter of Yemen's future, according to Abū Tammān. However, the first meeting was in Damascus between the leaders of the people, to choose the right person as a Caliph even if he was from outside the Umayyad family.<sup>2</sup> They mentioned several names such as Ibn <sup>C</sup>Umar, Ibn az-Zubayr and Khālid b. Yazīd from which one was to be selected for the office of the caliphate.

No attention was given at that meeting to Marwān. Furthermore, we are told that all the Yemenis supported Khālid during the Damascus assembly. If we accept the two lists and examine the names provided in

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1. The leaders of Yemen who attended this meeting were: Mālik b. Hubayra as-Sakūnī, al-Ḥuṣayn b. Numayr, Rūḥ b. Zinbā<sup>C</sup> al-Judhamī, Zāmil b. <sup>C</sup>Amr āl-<sup>C</sup>Udhri, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Mas<sup>C</sup>ada al-Fizārī, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Idāh al-Ash<sup>C</sup>arī, Abū Kabsha b. Yasār as-Saksakī. This list is according to Ansāb, V, 128.
  2. Abū Tammām lists the names of those who attended the Damascus conference as follows: Mālik b. Hubayra as-Sakūnī, Sa<sup>C</sup>īd b. Hamzā al-Hamdānī, Zāmil b. <sup>C</sup>Amr, Rūḥ b. Zinbā<sup>C</sup> al-Judhamī, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>C</sup>Amīr al-Hamdāni, Junāda b. Umayya al-Azdī, Sharḥabīl b. Dhī al-Kilā<sup>C</sup> al-Himyarī, Abū Rāshid b. Kurayb b. as-Sabāḥ, Hassān b. Bahdal al-Kalbī. (Abū Tammām, 13.)



both, we will find all the names given by Abū Tammām are Yemenī, and all the names on al-Balādhurī's list are Yemeni also, except for <sup>c</sup>Abd-Allāh b. Mas<sup>c</sup>ada al-Fizārī who is the only one mentioned from Qays. Thus Qays was almost excluded from these negotiations and was represented neither in the meeting of Damascus nor in that of al-Jābiya.

The matter was now left to Yemen alone to select a suitable candidate. Their object was to come together to find the best way to resist the influence of Ibn az-Zubayr and his new allies upon Syria and to keep the Yemeni interest out of danger. The main question is why they passed over Khālid in favour of Marwān after Qays and ad-Dahhāk had broken with them openly, while they had been so keen to have him at the Damascus conference. To answer this question it will be necessary to consider the following points.

(i) The Yemenis were united in the view that only the Umayyad house could assure them of their privileges and indeed strengthen their position, at least throughout the Syrian region. The only matter of dispute concerned the most suitable person to be chosen from among the Umayyad family. The other Yemeni leaders were unwilling to be subject to the pressure of Hassān and his Kalbī tribesmen, therefore they opposed the Kalbī choice of Khālid.<sup>1</sup> They

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1. Ansāb, V, 134. Tabarī, V, 534.

justified their refusal on the grounds of his age and because they needed a leader who would be an equal rival to Ibn az-Zubayr.

(ii) This new and serious challenge made them more determined to find a capable man who could deal with the problems which would face them. They were unwilling to face others who were under the leadership of a skilled and mature man, such as Ibn az-Zubayr, while they would have to meet them with a child at their head.<sup>1</sup> Before they came to a final decision, they went to inspect both Khālid and Marwān. Marwān was found preparing himself for whatever might happen, while Khālid was found to be sleeping and completely unconcerned, according to Balādhūri.<sup>2</sup> Marwān was thus a compromise candidate for all the Yemenis and one who had gained good experience since the time of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān in dealing with various problems.

(iii) The background of the Syrian people caused them to be in full sympathy with the relatives of <sup>C</sup>Uthmān. The group known as the Nāsibiyya<sup>3</sup> supported <sup>C</sup>Uthmān's cause and respected his relatives and thus favoured Marwān who was his first cousin and thus more closely related to him than Khālid. Moreover, he had headed a department of

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1. Tabarī, V, 532. Abū Tammām, 16.

2. Ansāb, V, 129.

3. See Majma<sup>C</sup>, XXXVIII, 672, for a full description of their position.

<sup>c</sup>Uthman's administration and been a close adviser to him. Marwān had fought against <sup>c</sup>Alī in the battle of the Camel and on these grounds Rūh b. Zinbā<sup>c</sup> recommended him for the office of Caliph,<sup>1</sup> while moreover all the elders of the Umayyad clan seemed to be satisfied with his selection.

(iv) Marwān accepted all the chief's demands; for instance, Hassān asked him to accept the privileges of the Kalbīs which had been granted by Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya and his son Yazīd,<sup>2</sup> of which he assured him without exception.

Al-Husayn b. Numayr asked Marwān to grant Kinda - his tribe - the area of al-Balqā', which he gave him.

Marwān seems to have been compliant to all the demands of the tribes as much as possible, in order to strengthen his authority over them. They even asked who his successor would be and all accepted Khālid b. Yazīd as Marwān's successor.<sup>3</sup> Marwān agreed with their wishes because he had no power to refuse them yet.

Marwān never intended to fulfil all their demands, but agreed with them in order to have their allegiance reasoning that he could do what he liked as soon as he had been chosen. The first breach of these promises was to name his two sons as his only successors, one after the

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1. Tabarī, V, 536. Ansāb, V, 134.

2. Murūj, III, 86.

3. Ansāb, V, 144.



other, a mere three months after his reign began. His pretext for repudiating the agreement was that only two or three leaders had been consulted on the matter, and with the aid of Hassān he attempted to prevent knowledge of the earlier agreement from circulating among the people.

(v) The objection of Qays to the Yemenite superiority in Syria was extreme. Although they respected the existing power of the Caliph when he was still alive, as soon as Yazīd had gone Qays felt free and seized the opportunity to give their allegiance to anyone who might offer them more power. In the view of Qays that man was Ibn az-Zubayr, and thus they moved to his side and strove to establish his domination over Syria. This specific movement toward Hijāz supremacy increased the fears of the Yemenites, who were apprehensive that the strict Islamic views of Ibn az-Zubayr would mean that they would lose their power.

Ibn az-Zubayr himself was not acceptable to Yemen in any case as he had never forgiven them for the invasion of Mecca and Medina just a few months previous and for killing many prominent people indiscriminately. He had never forgiven them for supporting the Sufyānī house in order to spread their domination over other Arab tribes. The Yemeni leaders knew how difficult their task would be, but on the other hand they knew that Ibn az-Zubayr's reaction would be harsh towards them, and that no doubt

Qays would replace them in control of Syria which would mean the repression of Yemen. Moreover, the Yemenis had an incentive to keep their prestige in Syria, for most Yemeni tribes had been settled in Syria since long before Islam, while the Qays tribes had just come with the conquests or after. In other words, Qays were not originally Syrian inhabitants and it was natural that the Yemen of Syria should take a hard line against the other tribe's ambitions in their own territory and should seek for the best way to safeguard their interests in order to keep themselves masters of these areas as long as they could. Eventually they managed to achieve this for some time to come.

#### MARJ RĀHIT

Ad-Dahhāk wrote to Hassān and the Umayyads asking them to come with their followers to al-Jābiya while he would come from Damascus to meet them there with his followers in order to select a member of the Umayyad family as Caliph. The Qaysī tribes had paid their homage to ad-Dahhāk in the name of Ibn az-Zubayr as Caliph. When ad-Dahhāk went out of Damascus to meet the Yemeni and Umayyad leaders, they reminded him that he had taken their homage for <sup>c</sup>Abd Allah b. az-Zubayr and that they were already bound by the bay<sup>c</sup>a,

and alleged that Hassān intended to impose his sister's son upon them.<sup>1</sup> Under Qaysī pressure he abandoned the proposed meeting and went with them to Marj Rāhit. Abū Tammām lists the names of those leaders of Qays who fought against the Umayyads and the Yemenīs as follows: Thawr b. Ma<sup>C</sup>n as-Sulamī, Hammām b. Qubaysa an-Numayrī, Ziyād b. <sup>C</sup>Āmir al-Ashja<sup>C</sup>ī, Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya al-<sup>C</sup>Uqaylī, Bishr b. Yazīd al-Murri, Thābit b. Khuwaylid al-Bajalī and others.<sup>2</sup> The Yemenis became so keen to make a final decision on the question that they finally settled on Marwān, paid their homage to him and urged him to march to the camp of Qays in Marj Rāhit, where the final decisive battle took place. As a result of this battle ad-Dahhāk and chiefs of Qays were killed. Al-Balādhurī gives the approximate number of those who were slain from Qays as about eighty, each one of them receiving the sharaf al-<sup>C</sup>atā' (highest salary).<sup>3</sup>

Among them was Thawr b. Ma<sup>C</sup>n who stopped ad-Dahhāk from meeting Kalb and Hammām b. Qubaysa, a distinguished warrior of Qays who was elegized by a poet of Qays in the following line:

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1. Aghānī, XVII, 111.
  2. Abū Tammām, 15.
  3. Ansāb, V, 130.



*Oh, what a cutting off of noses of Qays there was after (14)  
the death of Hammām, the ardent protector of their  
repute.<sup>1</sup>*

Those Qaysīs who managed to escape went to Qarqīsiyā in Jazīra under the leadership of Zufar b. al-Hārith. Zufar removed its governor without difficulty and the majority of Qays throughout Syria rallied to him to prepare themselves for further bitter warfare. The battle of Marj Rāhit ensured that basic control remained in Yemeni hands and that Qays were pushed out of power. Qays did not however accept defeat and continued to be extremely hostile to Yemen, as is revealed in an exchange of poems, Qays threatening the Yemenis and their allies with a day of revenge, and remaining confident that they could achieve a great victory after their initial defeat. Political poems were composed by both sides. The defeated sought to regain their honour in revenge, eulogized their dead and praised them as brave men who preferred to die on the battlefield than to escape to safety, and promised them that they would never forget them until they had avenged their blood whenever this might be. They also tried to stir up the sentiments of their allies to encourage them to take part.

Zufar b. al-Hārith, the leader of Qays, composed the first poem which indicated his future policies. Another prominent leader and poet is <sup>c</sup>Umayr b. al-Hubāb,

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1. Ansāb, V, 136 by Ibn Muqbal.

who remained on the side of Marwān for some time with a group of Qaysī tribesmen who gave their support to Marwān in order to find the best way to strike at their enemies from within.

As soon as he found an opportunity he did not hesitate to leave the Yemeni army on the battlefield when it faced a critical position before the Kūfan troops.

Umayr conspired with the Kūfan commander that he would withdraw his unit from the battlefield if they began fighting with the Yemeni troops. He carried out this plan, shouting to the Yemeni army when he left with his force, "Oh, today is revenge for the day of Marj Rāhit",<sup>1</sup> in order to disconcert them in front of their enemies. The battle of weapons was accompanied by a battle of poems.

The Yemeni poets stood face to face with the Qaysi poets. Their victory gave them high morale and they rejoiced in their position of importance. They were ready to defend themselves, stressing their previous victory at Marj Rāhit and reminding their enemies that they could do the same again, and composing poems in answer to those of Qays.

The following pages will give specimens of these poems which are imbued with the deep and sincere belief of

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1. Ayyām, 453.

the poets in the cause of their tribes, so that they limit their personal concern to produce an abundance of tribal poetry.

When Zufar, the leader of the Qays, left the battlefield of Marj Rāhit he felt very sad, not only because of his defeat but also for his friends who had fallen in the battle. Even in such an atmosphere he did not surrender or give up hope, but encouraged himself to take serious steps to avenge the dead of Qays, and did his utmost to rebuild his tribe's power. In the following ode, which was composed just after the battle of Marj Rāhit,<sup>1</sup> he reveals his uncompromising and self-confident attitude and his determination to continue the struggle,

*Show me my weapon, O excellent one, for I see that war  
continues to extend.* (15)

*I was told that Marwān would spill my blood or cut off  
my tongue.*

*Pasturage may grow on soil made fertile by animals  
droppings, but the rancours of souls will remain  
for ever.*

*Shall I hope for peace after the son of <sup>C</sup>Amr, the son of  
Ma<sup>C</sup>n - who went one after the other - and the death of  
Hammām?*

*Hence no conciliation will be accepted until our horsemen  
carry the spears and my women take reprisal from the  
women of Kalb.*

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1. Tabarī, V, 541.



The reply soon came from the poet of Kalb, Jawwās al-Kalbī, who adopted a similar vocabulary and emphasized his tribe's ability to win the next battle as they had done before, and refuted the Qays claim;

*Be my life the battle of Rāhit caused a long-lived illness  
to Zufar. (16)*

*This was resident between the two sides of his ribs and in  
his bowels and the doctor was utterly unable to treat it.  
You are weeping over the slain of Sulaym, <sup>C</sup>Āmir and Dhubyān  
with good excuse and encourage the weepers to weep.*

*First of all he called for his weapons, then he stop-  
ped, because he saw our long swords and our sharp spears.<sup>1</sup>*

The Umayyad family made their contribution to these events, as they had to sustain their allies Kalb against their enemies. This contribution came in the form of a judgment from the Umayyad court when Marwān's brother <sup>C</sup>Abd ar-Rahmān b. al-Hakam gave his verdict on the two tribes of Qays and Kalb, praising Kalb as warriors and horsemen and condemning Qays as cowards and dishonest people. This insult comes in the following poetic form;<sup>2</sup>

*Kalb will go under the protection of their spears while (17)  
the killed of Rāhit will be left buried as they are.  
May God cover with shame Qays of <sup>C</sup>Aylān for they neglected  
the frontiers of the Muslims and withdrew from them.  
Boast of Qays in time of ease but do not be their brother if  
the sword is unsheathed.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Abū Tammām, 26.

2. Tabarī, V, 544.

It should be pointed out, however, that not all the tribesmen and their poets were satisfied with the state of hostility or willing to live in such unstable conditions, but the way to stop it was not easy to find. Because of the impossibility of finding anyone who could create a time of peace, some poets felt sad and expressed their feeling about this dilemma, which the people were not able to escape from in any way.

The following lines of al-Hārith b. <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. al-Hashraj are an excellent description of how the trouble was dispersed and covered all the country and how impossible it was for any one to avoid it.

*I spend the night observing the stars with my head resting (18)  
on my arm, when they set off moving from the beginning of  
their course.*

*Because of a fitna (insurrection) which covered everything,  
and has become general and universal to the people of  
prayer.*

*As those who are in Khurāsān, Iraq and in Syria, its  
distraction has grieved them all.*

*People are in darkness on its account, pitch-black with  
confused clamour.*

*The foolish man who is reproved for ignorance has become  
equal to the wise man.<sup>1</sup>*

These lines summarise the emotions of the common people and their feelings about this trouble.

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1. Hawfī, 208.

The war lasted for ten years after Marj Rāhit and was accompanied by a war of political poetry. The general political situation at the time was one of a prolonged miserable condition of anarchy. In the meantime the balance of power was swinging between <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and his rival <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr. This climate gave the tribes a chance to feel free from the pressure exerted upon them by the two rivals even though the tribes acclaimed one or other of the two Qurayshites as their Caliph. In fact neither of the contenders had real power over his supporters, in particular, <sup>C</sup>Abd-Allāh b. az-Zubayr who was supported by Qays as their Caliph. Qays simply acclaimed him in order to legitimize their actions, and in order to launch a war against other tribes. The most important factor for the survival of Qays throughout ten years of war was the areas which they occupied, Jazīra and Khurāsān. Jazīra lay in the border region between Syria and northern Iraq, while Khurāsān stretched from the north-eastern border of Iraq which meant that the supply lines between the Qays of Jazīra and those of Khurāsān were quite secure and they had no need to align themselves with other tribes or government, and were thus able to gain self-rule while the matter of the Caliphate was still unsettled.

Ultimately, <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik became the one Caliph of the whole Muslim community after his rival was slain.



By this time Qays had consolidated their influence and power in Jazīra and Khurāsān while Yemen dominated Syria.

This is the broad background to the tribal competition which led to the appearance of a core of political poetry among the Syrian tribes in their conflict for and against Marwān and his first successor <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik in the first ten years of his reign. It is impossible, however, to study the problem of the Syrian tribes in isolation from the huge problem which created the same climate of anarchy elsewhere. Moreover, the Arab tribes of Syria were closely linked with their fellow tribesmen in other regions such as Iraq, Khurāsān etc. Every tribe remained faithful to its sons, wherever they were, against their enemies, and some poets who took sides on Syrian problems had never lived in Syria. It has thus been necessary to summarise the general problem in various provinces of the Muslim state.

Chapter 2

T H E   T R I B A L   G E N E A L O G Y

## Chapter 2

### T H E   T R I B A L   G E N E A L O G Y

The basic problem which faced the Arab tribes in the Umayyad period sprang from their belief that they had various relationships uniting them at different levels which proved very difficult to integrate into an overall genealogical scheme. In pre-Islamic times the tribe formed a local group held together by the belief that each member of the group was descended from a common ancestor<sup>1</sup> and this relationship created obligations, social duties and rights which each member was obliged to observe properly.

Before the Arab tribes embraced Islam they were scattered throughout the Arabian peninsula, Syria and Iraq. The tribal system in those days consisted of a multitude of local groups held together internally by a traditional unity against other groups and their members. Before the introduction of Islam there were no large coalitions between tribal groups such as occurred in the Umayyad Period, as will be seen later in this chapter.

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1. Lisān, S.V. Qabala. Sabā'ik, 8.



## ARAB TRIBAL ORGANIZATION

It is necessary to give a brief explanation of the tribal organization just before the dawn of Islam in order to follow the gradual change in the tribal system.

A survey of the tribal names which were well known at the time of the prophetic mission, and played an important role in these days gives the following names: Juhayna, Tamīm, Ḥanīfa' Azd and so on,<sup>1</sup> but gives no indication of the large combinations such as Qahtān, Adnān, Nizār, Rabī'a, Qays and Yemen, which were dominant in the Umayyad period.<sup>2</sup> It is a fact that the small groupings which shaped Arabia in pre-Islamic times were more appropriate to the economic and agricultural environment at the time and to the hard Bedouin way of life.

The life-style was hard because they had no kind of stability or regularity as regards resources to soften their difficult position but depended on the nature of their desert. If it provided them with frequent rainy seasons they would get the necessities of life but, if not, then their life style would be affected accordingly. Thus it might be possible to classify the Bedouin way of life into two dissimilar types:

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1. Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d, I, 504.

2. Sīra, II, 362.

- i. Nomads who often wandered throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the edge of the 'Fertile Crescent' and followed the rainfall wherever it occurred with their hardy camels.
- ii. Villagers who were mainly settled in scattered oases and valley deltas and engaged in agriculture. To a large extent we find that the tribes later known as <sup>C</sup>Adnānites are nomadic while those known as Yemenites are primarily concerned with cultivation, although of course there are exceptions to this.

Both types felt that the danger of intimidation from outside was great unless they mobilised themselves to meet any sort of external intimidation. Therefore, each group prepared to stand up for itself and its own members and to help them in every quarrel which might be started against them by others.<sup>1</sup> This kind of life certainly did not support a close organization but this is not to say that there was no such thing as confederations of several groups; but confederations were comparatively unstable and did not last very long. In the process of time single tribal groups containing several branches broke up into two or

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1. For more details about inter-Arab conflict in pre-Islamic period, see El-Gindi, Ph.D., London University, 1952.

more tribes independent of each other and took their names from their own father, sometimes neglecting the grandfather's name. Bakr and Taghlib were sons of Wā'il. Nevertheless they became totally separate tribes, although they remained aware of their brotherhood.

For the tribe, a confederation is not merely desirable but is necessary. If a tribe is not able to defend itself and has to align itself with others, this denotes weakness and loss of status.<sup>1</sup> A tribe which could stand by itself and sought no help from outside became proud of its position and took the name jamra (firebrand). Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd Rabbih provides us with several categories of tribes such as jamra, rahā, jumjuma and uthfiyya. These tribes became known as possessing status and power to other tribes who had never achieved such renown. Also, according to Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd Rabbih, the use of the term jamra means that the tribe believe that they are descended from one ancestor and take his name, this indicating that they feel strong enough to defend themselves without needing to align themselves with others.

There were just four tribes which gained the title of jamra among the total Arab population in the pre-Islamic period, but within a few years of the start of the Umayyad Period three of them were extinguished leaving only Numayr in possession of this title.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Tabarī, V, 517.

2. The others were: Banū al-Hārith b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b, Banū Dabba and Banū <sup>C</sup>Abs b. Baghīd. Iqd, III, 286.



Another strong unit was the rahā which took its name from the millstone which moves in a circle around its axis. To quote Ibn <sup>c</sup>Abd Rabbih, 'They were called rahā because they gained an independent homestead (dār) and wells when no tribe had such a thing like them, and roamed within their area as does the millstone on its pivot.'<sup>1</sup>

The two organizations rahā and jamra were the strongest tribal bodies in the pre-Islamic period. There were six tribes which were known as rahā; one of them was Kalb b. Wabra.<sup>2</sup>

Finally the jumjuma was a section of a tribe which had become completely independent of its grandfather's name and neglected him, while the uthfiyya<sup>3</sup> is a branch of a tribe which was strong enough to lead an independent life without need of help from its stock, such as Sulaym, Hawāzin, Ghatafān and Muḥārib of Qays <sup>c</sup>Aylān.

A further sort of combination uniting more than one tribe together was the hilf. Tribe and hilf were similar in theory. Each consisted of a body of people who had particular duties and rights in common with members of his tribe or hilf. But the tribal relation is stronger

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1. <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 284.

2. The others were: Tamīm, Asad, Bakr, Abd al-Qays and Tayyi  
Ibn Hazm, II, 487.

3. Ibn Hazm, II, 486.

than the relation of ḥilf: the tribe considered itself descended from a single father at least theoretically, and their relation was based therefore on the blood-bond; while the term ḥilf was derived from the verb halafa "to swear", and was basically an agreement between two or more tribes which concluded the ḥilf in order to achieve some advantages.

There were many ahlāf in the tribal system. Some of these ahlāf took a tribal form and lasted for a very long time while some others only lasted for a short period; this depended on the purpose and the motives. When a ḥilf was to be formed, the powerful tribes did not want to align themselves with others while the less powerful did. Al-Bakrī says: "When the tribes see what is going on among themselves the inferior tribe joins the superior one and the tribe of fewer members unites with the larger one."<sup>1</sup> The ahlāf were a common feature of the time when the Prophet announced his mission, and he attended one of the most remarkable of them and praised it after his successful mission. This was the Hilf al-Fudūl.<sup>2</sup> Another remarkable one was the Hilf Tanūkh which became the name of a tribe. Another one is Hilf al-Rabāb which took on the

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1. Bakrī, I, 53. <sup>c</sup>Iqd, IV, 116.

2. Sīra, I, 82.

same meaning. After the Prophet went to Medina he made a new sort of hilm when he himself fraternised with his followers and encouraged them to fraternise among themselves.

Although Islam accepted this tribal system there was a great movement to create a nation involving both the tribal system and ahlāf which would not destroy their former organization nor dissolve them,<sup>1</sup> but would keep them as the backbone of the Islamic State. Thus the nature of the tribe did not change. For instance, Abū Bakr ordered his commander <sup>c</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>c</sup>As, when he sent him with the Muslim expedition to conquer Syria, to keep each tribe in separate quarters within the army.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the first re-organization - as far as can be established from the sources - of the concept of the tribe happened when <sup>c</sup>Umar b. al-Khattāb agreed with Jarīr al-Bajalī, a prominent companion of the prophet, to re-unite his tribe Bajīla under his leadership. Bajīla had been divided into several branches, each one of which associated with other Arab tribes before Islam, and had had no connection since then, until <sup>c</sup>Umar's time when Jarīr found it possible to re-unite them again. This deed was greatly admired and Jarīr became the hero of Bajīla.

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1. <sup>c</sup>Umar described the Arab bedouin as the material of Islam, see Lisan, S.V. Madd.

2. Dimashq, 446.



As mentioned above, the primary link between the members of the tribes is the blood bond, and they were fond of naming their members after their ancestors. Each member knew precisely what his relationship was to his ancestor. In fact, this simple relationship worked well as long as they remained in their small groupings which were mutually hostile to one another before they embraced Islam. After they were converted to Islam and began to stream out of the Peninsula the scale changed and the small groupings which used to exist before Islam were no longer valid social units, and so were replaced by larger combinations in order to meet the requirements of the new situation. To do so it was vital to create a relationship among the tribes, even if in an abstract way. Arab genealogists took advantage of the fact that the genealogies were transmitted orally. Thus they could create an acceptable theory of ansāb, i.e., genealogies. Therefore, they exploited the fact that many genealogies were obscure to suit their own purposes. The genealogists rearranged their knowledge dividing all the Arab tribes into two great races, Qaḥṭān and <sup>c</sup>Adnān, and all the tribes were linked to one or other in different levels of relationship, whether it had a basis in historical fact or not.

The present study is not concerned with the political and historical consequences of the theories of the

genealogists which were regarded by tribes as the truth and whose results they had to bear, except in so far as they supply the background against which the tribal poetry of the period can be studied as literature. In particular the accuracy of the genealogies is irrelevant to our purpose, and here we may quote the words of Nicholson:

'such criticism, however, does not affect the value of the genealogical documents regarded as an index of the popular mind. From this point of view legend is often superior to fact, and it must be our aim to set forth what the Arabs believed rather than to examine whether or not they were justified in believing it.'<sup>1</sup>

#### INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF THE ARAB TRIBES

A general convention among the Arab genealogists is that all Arab tribes were divided into two major parties, <sup>c</sup>Adnān and Qaḥṭān.<sup>2</sup> Qaḥṭān or simply Yemen meant those who came from South Arabia or who originally came from this direction,<sup>3</sup> while <sup>c</sup>Adnān meant the northern Arabian people.<sup>4</sup> At first the historians and genealogists agreed on the whole that the two parties included all Arab tribes,<sup>5</sup> but a sharp

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1. Nicholson, p.xx.

2. Inbāh, 58, Subh, 7. <sup>c</sup>Adnān wa-Qaḥṭān, 18. Ibn Ḥazm, II, 329.

3. <sup>c</sup>Iqd, II, 278.

4. Bakrī I, 5.

5. Ibn Ḥazm, I, 8.

controversy occurred when they came to classify the existing tribes into the framework of <sup>C</sup>Adnān and Qaḥṭān.<sup>1</sup> The historians point out that the two races are not equally pure as to their Arab origins.<sup>2</sup> Qaḥṭān is the pure one, while <sup>C</sup>Adnān is not genuine Arab. According to the Arabs' theory <sup>C</sup>Adnān descended from Ishmael<sup>3</sup> whose father brought his mother to Mecca and adopted the Arabic language and married an Arabian woman whose sons generated <sup>C</sup>Adnānites.<sup>4</sup> For this reason Qaḥṭān were also known as "al-<sup>C</sup>Arab al-<sup>C</sup>Āriba" while <sup>C</sup>Adnān were known as "al-<sup>C</sup>Arab al-Musta<sup>C</sup>riba" (the Arabised Arabs).<sup>5</sup> However, since the Arabs were not aware of the descent of <sup>C</sup>Adnān from Ishmael until the Islamic period we may assume that this particular distinction was not made during the Jāhiliyya. Such an assumption should call into question whether the Arabs in pre-Islamic times were aware of these differences although this appears quite clearly later in the Ansāb works.

However the two-fold division was known before Islam to some extent. Ḥassān b. Thābit referred to the two names Qaḥṭān and Ma<sup>C</sup>add in one poem as different types of Arabs.<sup>6</sup> Some historians mentioned Qaḥṭān and <sup>C</sup>Adnān as

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1. See Nashwān, 87.

2. Inbāh, 57.

3. Tabaqāt, I, 9. Inbāh, 46.

4. Ibn Hazm, I, 7.

5. Ibn Hazm, II, 464, 486.

6. Dīwān, 455.



being the two sole eponyms of Arabs but did not identify those who belonged to each one of the two progenitors.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite clear that the division into two groups between those who descended from one or another progenitor was never explicit before the Umayyad period when the tribes' interests reached a crucial point because of disputes about their traditional privileges. At this time they left their previous lands to settle in the new Islamic state<sup>2</sup> and began to live closely together. Some tribes settled in the cities; others in camps (ajnad).<sup>3</sup> This sort of concentration must have forced them to look back to their ancestry in order to find suitable bonds in order to rally certain tribes against others.<sup>4</sup>

### <sup>c</sup>ADNĀN

According to the genealogists <sup>c</sup>Adnān had two sons, Ma<sup>c</sup>add and <sup>c</sup>Akk,<sup>5</sup> and Ma<sup>c</sup>add had one son, Nizār.<sup>6</sup> From Nizār came most of the <sup>c</sup>Adnānite tribes.<sup>7</sup> <sup>c</sup>Adnānites, Ma<sup>c</sup>addites and Nizārītes became synonyms of the numerous tribes who

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1. Inbāh, 48.

2. Tabarī, V, 516.

3. Buldān, 324 ff.

4. Smith, 6.

5. Iqd, III, 286. Ibn Hāzm, I, 10.

6. Ibn Hāzm, I, 9. Bakrī, I, 53.

7. Iqd, III, 286.

were descended from Ismā<sup>c</sup>īl. The poet Bashīr b. Abī Khāzim referred to these tribes as follows:

*We settled in the land after our forebears went there  
although the people of Nizār avoided this land.*<sup>1</sup> (19)

In relatively recent times an inscription has been discovered which mentions the name of Nizār as tribes with kings who lived in ancient times.<sup>2</sup>

### SONS OF NIZĀR

Almost all historians agree that Nizār had four sons, Mudar, Rabī<sup>c</sup>a, <sup>c</sup>Iyād and Anmār.<sup>3</sup> There was no disagreement about the former three but the disagreement is about whether Anmār b. Nizār had sons or not. Some said that Anmār had no son while some maintain that Anmār b. Nizār got angry with his brothers and went to Yemen, aligned himself with Azd<sup>4</sup> and adopted their father's name. If this version is accepted, the tribe of Anmār are not Yemen.

### Mudar

The offspring of Mudar grew up and generated the most powerful tribes of <sup>c</sup>Adnān, who at the dawn of Islam dominated

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1. <sup>c</sup>Asabiyya, 41.

2. Fiqh, 40.

3. <sup>c</sup>Iqd III, 286; Ibn Hazm, I, 10; Inbāh, 64; Ṭabarī, II, 268.

4. Inbah, 82; Ibn Hazm, LII, 387.

north Arabia. With the process of time they divided into two parties: Khindif and Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylan.<sup>1</sup> The Mudarites traced their lines back to two individual bodies: Ilyās and Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylan An-Nās.<sup>2</sup>

### Khindif

Ilyās married Laylā, daughter of Hilwān of Qudā<sup>C</sup>a whose laqab was Khindif.<sup>3</sup> She gave him three sons: Tābikha, Madraka, and Qam<sup>C</sup>a. Her nickname was given to her son's descendants. Among the prominent tribes of Khindif were the following: Kināna b. Khuzayma, Hudhayl b. Madraka Dabba b. <sup>C</sup>Adī Ibn Tābikha, Muzayna, Asad b. Khuzayma and ar-Rabāb, a coalition of four branches of Khindif which consisted of <sup>C</sup>Adī, Tamīm, Thawr and <sup>C</sup>Ukl.

### Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylān An-Nās

The second major branch of Mudar was Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylān An-Nās who contained the following tribes: Fahm, <sup>C</sup>Adwān, Sulaym, Hawāzin, Ghatafān, Bāhila and Ghanī.<sup>4</sup> Each tribes of these contained several branches; for instance Hawāzin contained three independent tribes, Thaqīf, <sup>C</sup>Amir Ibn Sa<sup>C</sup>sa<sup>C</sup>a

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1. <sup>C</sup>Iqd, III, 288; Kalbī, 42.

2. <sup>C</sup>Iqd, III, 387; Inbāh, 80.

3. <sup>C</sup>Iqd, III, 287.

4. Ibn Hazm, I, 243.



and Jusham.<sup>1</sup> From one of these three tribes <sup>c</sup>Āmir, came Banū Numayr, Banū Hilāl, Kilāb, and Ka<sup>c</sup>b;<sup>2</sup> while <sup>c</sup>Abs, Dhubyān and Ashja<sup>c</sup> came from Ghatafān.<sup>3</sup>

### Rabī<sup>c</sup>a

The overwhelming majority of <sup>c</sup>Adānite tribes belonged to one of two groups: Rabī<sup>c</sup>a and Mudar. Rabī<sup>c</sup>a and Mudar are brothers and sons of Nizār.<sup>4</sup> Occasionally Rabī<sup>c</sup>a is described as a cousin of Mudar thus implying that the former tribe is junior to the latter.<sup>5</sup> Rabī<sup>c</sup>a had two sons, Asad and Dubay<sup>c</sup>a.<sup>6</sup> As was the normal process each had several sons who in the course of time became independent tribes. In the early Islamic period there were many tribes which were attributed to Asad b. Rabī<sup>c</sup>a, such as <sup>c</sup>Anaza, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qays, Wā'il b. Qāsiṭ and Anmār b. Qāsiṭ. From Wā'il b. Qāsiṭ descended Bakr, Taghlib, and <sup>c</sup>Anz. In turn, Bakr broke up into several major tribes such as Yashkur, Qays b. Tha<sup>c</sup>laba and An-Nimr b. Qāsiṭ.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibn Hazm, I, 266; <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 302; <sup>c</sup>Adnān wa-Qahtān, 13.

2. Ibn Hazm, II, 280.

3. <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 299.

4. Ibn Hazm, I, 10.

5. <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 288

6. Ibn Hazm, II, 299; <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 304.

7. Ibn Hazm, II, 293; <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 308.

## QAHTĀNITES

The Southern tribes were held to descend from Qahtān, the main sub-divisions of which are Ḥimyar and Kahlān. Ibn Ḥazm says that all Yemen trace their lines back to the individual progenitor Qahtān.<sup>1</sup> Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih specifies this more precisely saying that Saba' b. Yashjub b. Yaʿrub b. Qahtān is the sole father of the Qahtānites.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the Yemenite tribes came under the common name of Saba' and attributed themselves to him except for two main subdivisions, Ḥimyar and Kahlān, whose descendents took their fathers' names as a nisba and neglected their grandfather's name Saba'.

### Ḥimyar

The majority of Ḥimyarites traced their lines back to Mālik and al-Ḥumaysaʿ.<sup>3</sup> From al-Ḥumaysaʿ descended the following: Yahshub, al-Imlūk, ʿAyman, Dhu Ruʿayn, Jadan, Ḥaydūr, ʿUhāda and Dhū Asbah.<sup>4</sup>

### Mālik

Mālik is the grandfather of the Qudāʿa tribe which was given the following genealogy: Qudāʿa b. Mālik b. ʿAmr b.

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1. Ibn Ḥazm, II, 329. Inbāh, 58

2. Iʿqd, III, 318.

3. Iʿqd, III, 318.

4. Ibn Ḥazm, 433.

Murra b. Zayd b. Mālik b. Ḥimyar.<sup>1</sup> Qudā<sup>c</sup>a contained the following famous tribes who in Islamic times played a significant role in Syria at the Umayyad period: Balī, Bahrā', Mahra, Nahd, Juhayna, Sa<sup>c</sup>d Hudhaym, Sulayh, Jurm, Tanūkh; Kalb Wabra, An-Namir b. Wabra, <sup>c</sup>Udhra and Asad b. Wabra.<sup>2</sup> These tribes were important and occupied wide territories even before they embraced Islam. Certain sources said that the name of Qudā<sup>c</sup>a was mentioned in Ptolemy's books in ancient times.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of Islam they still dominated the border area with the Byzantine State.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, its branches occupied the territory which stretched from the Syrian border to the northern borders of Medina. Thus they were able to achieve maximum benefit from the spread of Islam and took advantage of their geographical distribution<sup>5</sup> during the Umayyad monarchy. When it became necessary to align themselves with one of the two major confederations, they linked themselves with Yemen. The assumption that they were descended from Yemen annoyed the <sup>c</sup>Adnānites greatly and they did not accept this assumption. Consequently a sharp

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1. <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 321; Ibn Ḥazm, II, 440.

2. <sup>c</sup>Iqd, III, 322. Ibn Ḥazm, II, 440.

3. Ibn Ḥazm, I, 8.

4. Jazīra, 369.

5. Bakrī, I, 281.



controversy occurred among the genealogists about Qudā<sup>C</sup>a's pedigree. The <sup>C</sup>Adnānites claimed kinship with Qudā<sup>C</sup>a while Qudā<sup>C</sup>a asserted their claim to belong to the Yemeni ranks through descent from Himyar.<sup>1</sup>

The origin and development of this dispute seems to be quite logical, being a reflection of the historical fact that under the Umayyads there was great hostility between Qays, a branch of Nizār, and Kalb, a branch of Qudā<sup>C</sup>a. This hostility was subsequently explained as simply a local form of a feud between Yemen and Ma<sup>C</sup>add. However, the primary sources<sup>2</sup> show us that the genealogists themselves are at variance as to Qudā<sup>C</sup>a.

Some maintain them to be a son of Ma<sup>C</sup>add and of Nizār<sup>3</sup> while others claim them to be Himyarites.<sup>4</sup> The evidence on each side consists of verses in which Qudā<sup>C</sup>a is referred to as Ma<sup>C</sup>addites or Himyarites respectively.<sup>5</sup> Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr is quoted in the Inbāh as saying that Qudā<sup>C</sup>a kept its attribution as Ma<sup>C</sup>addite and was always known as such until they united with Yemen in the time of Ibn az-Zubayr and the sons of Marwān<sup>6</sup> when the feud between

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1. Inbāh, 60.

2. Bakrī, I, 17.51. Smith, 8.

3. Smith, 17.

4. Subh, I, 315.

5. Rawd, I, 118, Smith, 8.

6. Inbāh, 61.

Kalb and Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylān arose in Syria. Then the Kalb inclined to the Yemen and claimed kinship with Himyar. Nashwān al-Himyarī traces the origin of the dispute over the ancestry of Qudā<sup>C</sup>a further back into the reign of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and his son Yazīd, accusing Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and his son of bribing some leaders of Qudā<sup>C</sup>a to deny their Yemeni connection and inviting them to join the <sup>C</sup>Adnānites. But the common people of Qudā<sup>C</sup>a protested against their leaders and went to Damascus and demonstrated their rejection of this connection, swarming around the great Mosque while their poets recited couplets which gave a basis to their claim to be Yemen.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE DISPUTE ABOUT QUDĀ<sup>C</sup>A'S DESCENT

Whenever this argument came into the open, it is quite clear that its origins go back to Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya's reign while it reached its peak in Ibn az-Zubayr's time. However, Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya did not allow this sort of dispute to get out of hand or disturb the security of his country. He kept control over all arguments in order to avoid any conflict between the tribes. In contrast, Ibn az-Zubayr's reign was a suitable occasion for these disputes to manifest themselves openly. In fact, Qudā<sup>C</sup>a was a powerful tribe even before Islam.

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1. Nashwān, 87.

Kalb, which was a section of this confederation, attracted the Caliph <sup>C</sup>Uthmān and his cousin Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya who both attempted to create a good relationship with Kalb by marriage-kinship. Kalb with its Qudā<sup>C</sup>a brother-tribes dominated the border area with the Byzantine State before the diffusion of Islam. By associating themselves with the Islamic movement they did not lose their dignity. The Umayyads knew that the Kalbites' significant role would help them whenever they needed it. Thus the Umayyads were eager to link themselves with Kalb by any means in order to take advantage of this tribe's strong support. One possible means of doing this was to fabricate the genealogy of some tribes.

It is known that systematic genealogy comes late in Islam. In this quite early period the whole system of pedigrees was still in a state of flux,<sup>1</sup> and Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and his son Yazīd did not miss this opportunity to drag the most powerful tribes to their side by claiming them to be Ma<sup>C</sup>addites.

The purpose was to weigh the balance of numbers in favour of Nizār over the Yemen in Syria because the Yemen were beginning to threaten to drive the Nizārites out of Syria.<sup>2</sup> In support of this view Ibn <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Barr quotes

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1. Smith, 9.

2. Aghāni, XX, 171.



Muhammad b. Sallām al-Basrī who compares Yemen and Nizār, and estimates which will be the stronger regarding its population: 'It is up to Qudā<sup>c</sup>a; if they tend to Yemen, the Yemen will be the stronger one; but if they tend to Nizār, it will be Nizār.'<sup>1</sup> Eventually the quarrel about Qudā<sup>c</sup>a was settled and the problem was settled in favour of Yemen. The case of Qudā<sup>c</sup>a indicates that it was still possible at that time to make radical changes in the tribal organization. Even such a famous grouping as Qudā<sup>c</sup>a could be transferred from one side to another.

What happened in the case of Qudā<sup>c</sup>a could easily have happened in the case of a less important tribe, but the difference is that these less important tribes could transfer themselves smoothly to the more famous tribes and their movement was unlikely to be noticed. Al-Hamdānī indicates that this was a regular practice:

'this was a common practice among the bedouin tribes. If the tribe's name coincided with a famous tribe's name, they adopted the name of the famous tribe and called themselves by it.'<sup>2</sup>

### Kahlān

Kahlān was the other main division of Yemen. From Kahlān derived two main divisions, Mālik b. Zayd b. Kahlān, and

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1. Inbāh, 63.

2. Jazīra, I, 180.

<sup>c</sup>Urayb b. Zayd b. Kahlān.<sup>1</sup> From Mālik descended Hamdān, Azd, Bajīla and Khath<sup>c</sup>am.<sup>2</sup> At the dawn of Islam many branches of the above tribes, above all Azd, had already settled in Syria and the North West of the Arabian Peninsula. In consequence of the diffusion of Islam many other tribes, or at least a large part of them, went with the conquering troops to Syria,<sup>3</sup> and settled permanently, taking advantage of their tribal kinships with those who had preceded them in the area.

### Azd

Azd was one of the most important sections of Kahlān and more than twenty-seven sub-divisions were attributed to it.<sup>4</sup> One of these sections was Ghassān which had emigrated to Syria<sup>5</sup> and built up the first Arab Kingdom there.<sup>6</sup> Others were Banū Bāriq, Banū al-Hinw, Banū Luhb, Banū Ghāmid, Banū Daws, Banū Salamān, Banū Rāsib.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibn Hazm, II, 331.

2. <sup>c</sup>Adnān wa Qahtān, 20.

3. Tabarī, III, 462.

4. Inbāh, 106.

5. Inbāh, 107.

6. Ibn Hazm, II, 362.

7. Ibn Hazm, II, 473.

## Kinda

Kinda was the other major South Arabian tribe, the descent of which is given as Kinda b. <sup>°</sup>Ufayr b. <sup>°</sup>Udayy b. al-Hārith b. Murra b. Udad b. Zayd b. Yashjub b. <sup>°</sup>Urayb b. Zayd b. Kahlān.<sup>1</sup> Among the branches of Kinda were as-Sakāsik and as-Sakūn<sup>2</sup> both of whom eventually settled in Syria and played a significant role after the death of Yazīd until the last days of the Umayyad monarchs. This therefore is the basic background of the inter-relationships of the tribal organization.

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1. Inbāh, 114.

2. Ibn Hazm, II, 429.



Chapter 3

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE  
ARAB TRIBES IN SYRIA

### Chapter 3

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARAB TRIBES IN SYRIA

Although the geographers paid little attention to the tribal distribution outside Arabia we have a few sources which give us some information about Syrian villages, towns, and cities and label their inhabitants as Yemenites or Mudarites. One of these authors is al-Ya<sup>c</sup>qūbī in his Kitāb al-Buldān. al-Ya<sup>c</sup>qūbī (Ahmad b. Abī Ya<sup>c</sup>qūb b. Wādih al-Kātib) a third century geographer and historical author, wrote several books, for instance at-Tārīkh al-Kabīr, at-Tārīkh as-Saghīr, Kitāb al Buldān, and others.<sup>1</sup> Although several biographical works mention his name and list his books<sup>2</sup> little is known of the life of the author. Yāqūt fixed his death at 234 AH according to the narrative of Abū <sup>c</sup>Umar Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al Kindī, while al <sup>c</sup>Āmilī<sup>3</sup> records him as alive in 292 AH, citing Kitāb Jayb al<sup>c</sup>Arūs which quotes al Ya<sup>c</sup>qūbī's report of some events which

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1. Irshād, II, 150.

2. See al-<sup>c</sup>Āmilī, XI, 331.

3. al-<sup>c</sup>Āmilī, XI, 335.

happened in that year. In any case he lived in the third century. His book al-Buldān was the first Arabic book devoted to geographical subjects.<sup>1</sup> Despite our scant knowledge of the life of the author, he gives us much information about his book al-Buldān in the introduction where he defines his approach as follows.

'Since my early youth I was interested in these subjects because I was travelling without interruption, and during these tours, I was very keen to collect whatever information was available about each part of every country, asking local people about their own country, its people, its agriculture and even local clothes. I met a lot of people during the pilgrimage seasons and elsewhere, until I collected a lot of information. All this information was written down immediately. It took me many years to finish this book. I mentioned the names of each country and its provinces, its cities, its villages and those who dominated these regions from the Arab tribes."<sup>2</sup>

He took Baghdād as a central point and divided the country into four divisions, East, West, South and North. Syria was included in the northern division, and as he claims, he gives precise information, naming the Syrian villages and cities and classifying their inhabitants by tribe. He has provided invaluable material which describes each settlement

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1. al-<sup>c</sup>Āmilī, XI, 335.

2. Introduction to Kitāb al-Buldān, 1.



in Syria, and takes a neutral position as being a non-tribesman himself. Another who mentioned the tribes and their territories in Syria and al-Jazīra was al-Hamdānī, although his book is mainly devoted to describing the provinces of the Arabian peninsula and naming each area of it with reference to its people. He expands his work, however, to include the border area between Syria and Iraq. A third author who indirectly provides us with important information regarding the tribes who came to be in Syria and al-Jazīra is al-Balādhurī, in his book Futūh al-Buldān. These books and others which will be referred to in the following pages are of help in giving such information. At first Syria was divided into four districts, each one called jund<sup>1</sup> (camp), although these were not equal in size and population.

#### JUND HIMS

The most northern of these ajnād and the closest to the Byzantine borders was that of Hims. Its main town was Hims itself followed by Hamāt whose inhabitants were Yemen,<sup>2</sup> most of them belonging to the tribes of Bahrā'<sup>3</sup> and Tanūkh.

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1. Buldān, 324.

2. Buldān, 324. Yāqūt II, 330.

3. Buldān, 324.

Hims, the capital of this region, was shared between various branches of Yemen, such as Tayyi', Kinda, Himyar, Hamdān, Kalb<sup>1</sup> and other minorities from different tribes of Yemen. The town of at-Timma in the region of Hims was occupied by Kalb which also, according to al-Ya<sup>c</sup>qūbī, was settled in Tadmur (Palmyra).<sup>2</sup> Likewise the village of Sūrān along with Tallamans was occupied by Iyād.<sup>3</sup> Tanūkh were found at Ma<sup>c</sup>arrat an-Nū<sup>c</sup>mān<sup>4</sup> while al-Bāra and Fāmiyā were inhabited by Bahrā' and <sup>c</sup>Udhra.<sup>5</sup> Shayzar is mentioned as being settled by Kinda,<sup>6</sup> while the other main settlement of Kinda was al-Umaym, which they shared with minorities from different parts of Yemen. On the coast there was the major town of al-Lādhiqiyya whose people came from Yemeni tribes such as Sulayḥ, Hamdān, Yaḥsub and others.<sup>7</sup> Hamdān, Qays and Iyād were settled in the neighbouring town of Jabla.<sup>8</sup> The third town on the coast was Tartūs whose inhabitants belonged to Kinda.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Buldān, 324.

2. Buldān, 324. Jazīra, 275.

3. Buldān, 324.

4. Buldān, 324.

5. Buldān, 324.

6. Buldān, 324.

7. Buldān, 325.

8. Buldan, 325.

9. Buldān, 325.

## JUND DIMASHQ

This area was a former settlement of Ghassān.<sup>1</sup> The last ruler of this tribe was Jabala b. al-Ayham<sup>2</sup> who was alive at the time of Islam and accepted it for a while. Afterwards he renounced Islam and fled with a huge number of his followers to Byzantium.<sup>3</sup> The governor, Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya, retained Damascus as capital of this region until he proclaimed himself a caliph. After that it became the capital of the Islamic Caliphate. Its inhabitants were Yemen, Qays and the Umayyad family.<sup>4</sup> Outside Damascus was al-Ghūṭa whose settlers were a mixture of Ghassān, Qays and Rabī<sup>c</sup>a.<sup>5</sup> The region of Hawrān, with its capital Buṣrā, mainly belonged to Qays except the town of as-Suwaydā, which was settled by Kalb.<sup>6</sup> Al Buthayna with its capital Adhru<sup>c</sup>āt was shared between Qays and Yemen.<sup>7</sup> Al-Balqā' is mentioned as being occupied by Qays.<sup>8</sup> Bāniyās was also occupied by Qays with a few Yemenis<sup>9</sup> while Kalb were settled

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1. Dimashq, 458.

2. Rawd, I, 162. Subh, I. 319. Dimashq, 473.

3. Ibn Hazm, II, 372.

4. Buldān, 326.

5. Buldān, 326.

6. Buldān, 326.

7. Buldān, 326.

8. Buldān, 326.

9. Buldān, 326.



at Jabal Sunayr with a small number of Rabī<sup>c</sup>a.<sup>1</sup> Other towns or areas such as Jabal al-Jalīl, Saydā and Ba<sup>c</sup>labakk were settled by many different branches of tribes, both Qays and Yemen.<sup>2</sup>

#### JUND AL-URDUNN

Al-Ya<sup>c</sup>qūbī gives less detail about the settlers of this province. Nevertheless, he indicates the main cities and their people. When he mentions Tabariyya he says that the majority of the residents of this town are from al-Ash<sup>c</sup>arūn, a branch of Yemen. The other important towns, Baysān, Jarash, Fiḥl and <sup>c</sup>Akkā were a mixture of different tribes of Arab and non-Arab.<sup>3</sup> Naṣr b. Māzāhim maintains that at the battle of Siffīn the leader of the Urdunnī troops was Abū <sup>c</sup>Amr as-Sulamī, which would indicate that the Qaysites must have been a majority in Urdunn at that time.<sup>4</sup>

#### JUND FILASTĪN

Filastīn had a majority of Yemeni tribes according to al-Ya<sup>c</sup>qūbī. Its main towns contained many races from the

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1. Buldān, 326.

2. Buldān, 327.

3. Buldān, 327.

4. Siffīn, 233.

Arabs and from non-Arabs.<sup>1</sup> For instance he said the people of Nābulus were a mixture<sup>2</sup> while Bayt Jibrīn is mentioned as being settled by Judhām alone.<sup>3</sup> The author ends his description of this region by saying that the Jund of Filastīn consisted of various Arab tribes and naming some of them as Lakhm, Judhām, <sup>C</sup>Āmila, Kinda, Qays and Kināna.<sup>4</sup> This tribal mixture corresponds with the information given by Ibn Muzāhim, which characterises Filastīn and Urdunn as Yemen.<sup>5</sup>

Another prominent work concerned mainly with tribal settlements was Sifat Jazīrat al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, by al-Hamdānī (al-Hasan b. Ya<sup>C</sup>qūb, 280 AH - 344 AH) a famous Arabian author who devoted his intensive work to the south of Arabia.<sup>6</sup> He was described as the best expert on South Arabia in many subjects, such as geography, geology and archaeology, and wrote his famous books on these subjects; for instance in al-Iklīl he shows a remarkable interest in the science of archaeology, and for the first time writes down inscriptions in the Musnad with Arabic equivalents, and records some spots where the Musnad existed. Moreover in

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1. Buldān, 329.

2. Buldān, 329.

3. Buldān, 329.

4. Buldān, 329.

5. Siffīn, 234.

6. For more details see the introduction to Jazīrat al-<sup>C</sup>Arab by a modern scholar, Hamad al-Jāsir. He gives a broad discussion about al-Hamdānī and gives many details of his life and his reliability.

al-Iklīl invaluable information may be obtained about ancient Arabian culture. His second book, Sifat Jazīrat al-<sup>C</sup>Arab, is regarded as the most authentic source in Arabic on Arabia, particularly the south where the author spent his life. In this book al-Hamdānī's approach was very clear. He aimed to describe the entire territory of each tribe and to identify their previous villages and settlements before they spread out from Arabia. Therefore al-Hamdānī gives precise descriptions of the distribution of tribes not only in towns and villages as al-Ya<sup>C</sup>qūbī did but also outlining the specific areas between the towns and villages where certain tribes settled. For instance, when he mentioned the tribes of Lakhm he traces each site where they were found, pointing out that Lakhm settled in different places although the majority settled between ar-Ramla and Egypt. Further Lakhmites were found in Urdunn, Hawrān, al-Buthayna and Nawā.<sup>1</sup> Al-Maghār was also one of the Lakhmite settlements. Thus their territory stretched from ad-Dārūm to al-Jifār.<sup>2</sup> The area which surrounded ar-Ramla as far as Nablus was also theirs.<sup>3</sup> A further site belonging to them was the strip which extended from outside Tabūk to Zughrub.<sup>4</sup> The final location of the

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1. Jazīra, 271.

2. Jazīra, 272.

3. Jazīra, 273.

4. Jazīra, 273.

Lakhm was between the Dead Sea and the confluence of the Yarmūk and the Jordan.<sup>1</sup>

#### JUDHĀM

Judhām were mainly resident in Filastīn and in the south of Urdunn.<sup>2</sup> Their lands stretched from Tabūk in the south to <sup>c</sup>Adhruh in the north. Part of this tribe settled in Tabariyya and extended as far as <sup>c</sup>Akkā.<sup>3</sup> This section of Yemen had been predominant in this area for a long time before Islam,<sup>4</sup> together with other branches of Yemen.<sup>5</sup>

#### <sup>c</sup>ĀMILA

<sup>c</sup>Āmila is also a section of Yemen which had settled in Syria many years before Islam. The land of this tribe was in the high ground overlooking <sup>c</sup>Akkā (Acre) and Tabariyya (Tiberias), while others were settled by the Sea.<sup>6</sup> Some of them were mentioned as being in the mountains of Galilee.<sup>7</sup> <sup>c</sup>Āmila in common with other sections of Yemen were scattered

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1. Jazīra, 273.
  2. Jazīra, 272.
  3. Jazīra, 272.
  4. Dimashq, 556.
  5. Buldān, 379.
  6. Jazīra, 272.
  7. Buldān, 328.



throughout Syria, and on the expansion of Islam they remained loyal to the Byzantines and helped them resist the Muslim advance.<sup>1</sup> Later however, they joined the Muslim forces.

#### KALB

This was a huge section of Qudā<sup>c</sup> which later aligned itself with Yemen in Syria. The headquarters of this tribe was Dūmat al Jandal.<sup>2</sup> The location of this town had a strategic advantage. Its position was on the edge of the Arabian desert on the south and on the north it overlooked the Syrian borders. This site gave its inhabitants free movement in two directions, one to the north and the north-west, the other to the east and the north-east. Thus Kalb were able to occupy a large area in Syria and Mesopotamia.<sup>3</sup> The area from Hawrān up to the Euphrates belonged to them.<sup>4</sup> In Syria, the towns of Tadmur (Palmyra) Salamiyya, al-<sup>c</sup>Asimiyya and Hims are mentioned amongst their settlements.<sup>5</sup> In addition they had Hamāt, Shayzar, Kafrtāb and the area from these towns down to as-Samāwa.<sup>6</sup> They also resided on

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1. Dimashq, 531.

2. Bakrī, I, 50.

3. Jazīra, 250.

4. Jazīra, 250.

5. Jazīra, 250.

6. Jazīra, 250.

the upper west bank of the Euphrates and stretched down as far as Samāwa.<sup>1</sup> Part of Kalb were settled in Banāt Qayn. Eventually they grouped round Salamiyya<sup>2</sup> in the plain which was later called after them - Biqā<sup>c</sup> Kalb.<sup>3</sup> The less important branches of Yemen in Syria were collected in different towns, such as Hamdān, Madhhij, Bilhārith and others; for example the town of Filja contained those named above along with others.<sup>4</sup> Hamdān were also found at Jabla<sup>5</sup> with other Qaysites and in the Jund of Urdunn,<sup>6</sup> while Bahrā' took over Hamāt<sup>7</sup> itself and its district and shared Hims with Himyarites.<sup>8</sup>

#### GHASSĀN

A tribe which dominated Syria before Islam,<sup>9</sup> they traced their ancestry to the great group of al-Azd<sup>10</sup> who migrated from south Arabia,<sup>11</sup> wandered in the peninsula and finally

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1. Bakrī, I, 280. Buldān, 325.
  2. Siffīn, 234. Dimashq, 451.
  3. Yāqūt, I, 699.
  4. Buldān, 342. Majma<sup>c</sup>, III, 32. Jazīra, 274.
  5. Buldān, 326.
  6. Siffīn, 234.
  7. Jazīra, 274. Buldān, 324.
  8. Jazīra, 274.
  9. See - EI - SV Ghassān.
  10. Ibn Hazm, 1, 331. Inbāh, 106.
  11. Ibn Hazm, 1, 362.

settled in Syria. The leadership of Syrian tribes was left to them until the conquest of Islam.<sup>1</sup> At that time, they served in the army of Byzantium. They were led by Jabala b. al-Ayham at the decisive battle of al-Yarmūk<sup>2</sup> but the victorious Muslim army swept them away and some of them went over to Byzantium,<sup>3</sup> while others were assimilated in the new Arab Muslim Community. Their land stretched from the mountains of <sup>C</sup>Āmila as far as Damascus<sup>4</sup> which used to be their capital. The town of Īliyā (Jerusalem) belonged to them<sup>5</sup> and also the oasis of al-Ghūṭa together with al-<sup>C</sup>Arandal.<sup>6</sup> In addition they are mentioned in the province of Urdunn.<sup>7</sup>

#### KINDA

This was the famous branch of Yemen which played a significant role in Syria from the time of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya.<sup>8</sup> Among their locations was Hims which they shared with other

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1. Dimashq, 531. Inbāh, 110.
  2. Dimashq, 413.
  3. Ibn Hazm, II, 372.
  4. Jazīra, 274.
  5. Jazīra, 331.
  6. Buldān, 326ff. Jazīra, 331.
  7. Siffīn, 234.
  8. Tabarī, V, 278.

tribes.<sup>1</sup> They were later awarded the district of al-Balqā' by Marwān b. al-Hakam in recognition of their contribution to restoring him to the throne.<sup>2</sup> al-Ya<sup>c</sup>qūbī includes among their territory Antartūs and the city of Shayzar.<sup>3</sup>

#### QAYS

The arrival of Mudar in the north and the north west came late compared with that of Yemen in Syria. This was particularly the case with Qays <sup>c</sup>Aylān who clung to the high land (<sup>c</sup>Āliya) of Hijāz till they were brought out of their ancient dwelling places by the victory of the great Muslim campaigns and conquests which began with the rise of the Caliphate.<sup>4</sup> Within a few years,<sup>5</sup> a part of them were settled throughout Syria, at al-Balqā',<sup>6</sup> Adhru<sup>c</sup>āt and in the province of Damascus.<sup>7</sup> Another settlement of Qays was in al-Jawlān and its capital Bāniyās.<sup>8</sup> The rich oasis of al-Ghūṭa and the town of Jabla are also mentioned as

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1. Buldān, 324. Aghānī, VII, 50.
  2. Ṭabarī, V, 544. Ansāb VI, 149.
  3. Buldān, 324ff.
  4. EI - S.V. Kais<sup>c</sup>Ailān.
  5. Abū Tammām, 12.
  6. Buldān, 327.
  7. Siffīn, 234. Buldān, 326.
  8. Buldān, 326.



being settled by them.<sup>1</sup> Hawrān with its capital Busrā was a further settlement of Qays.<sup>2</sup> Other groups are mentioned as being found in Filastīn<sup>3</sup> and the province of Urdunn.<sup>4</sup> A number of them settled in the region of Hims.<sup>5</sup>

#### QAYS IN AL-JAZĪRA

Even if Qays were represented in these regions, they were still a minority in comparison with Yemen.<sup>6</sup> The majority of Qays occupied a part of al-Jazīra, at quite an early period.<sup>7</sup> Later the Caliph <sup>C</sup>Uthmān ordered his governor Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya to distribute al-Māzihīn and al-Mudaybir to them and the area became well known as Diyār Mudar.<sup>8</sup> From this time Qays came to regard al-Jazīra as their headquarters with its important town of Qarqīsiyā.<sup>9</sup> Another important settlement of Qays in al-Jazīra was Qinnasrīn.<sup>10</sup> A number

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1. Buldān, 326.
  2. Buldān, 332. Am.
  3. Buldān, 329.
  4. Siffīn, 254.
  5. Siffīn, 254.
  6. Amthāl, I, 394.
  7. Futūh, 237.
  8. Futūh, 245.
  9. Yāqūt, IV, 65.
  10. Siffīn, 234-

of them settled in the area of Mosul.<sup>1</sup> The town of ar-Ruhā was located in the section of Banū Sulaym along with the town of Shi<sup>c</sup>r, while Banū Kilāb dwelt at Manbij with Taghlib.<sup>2</sup>

#### TAGHLIB

Unlike Qays, Taghlib had established themselves in al-Jazīra for very many years before Islam. As Islam progressed Khālid b. al-Walīd on his way from Iraq to Syria met a huge number of Taghlib at al-Musaybiḥ and al-Hasīd.<sup>3</sup> Yāqūt defines this area as lying between Syria and Kūfa in al-Jazīra.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, Taghlib in the Umayyad period occupied a territory which consisted of central Mesopotamia between Qarqīsiyā, Sinjār, Niṣībīn and Mosul to the north, a kind of peninsula formed by the rivers Khābūr, Tigris and Euphrates.<sup>5</sup> They were also settled on the lower course of the Khābūr while its upper regions were allotted to Qays.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the area which stretched from Qarqīsiyā to Birq<sup>c</sup>īd was also theirs<sup>7</sup> and a number of them lived on the right bank of the Euphrates.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Dimashq, 535. Mukhtasar, 128

2. Jazīra, 275.

3. Futūh, 150.

4. Yāqūt, II, 280.

5. Jazīra, 275. E. I. - S. V. Taghlib.

6. Jazīra, 275.

7. Jazīra, 276.

8. Jazīra, 275. E. I. S. V. Taghlib.

Chapter 4

TRIBAL CONFLICT

## Chapter 4

### T R I B A L   C O N F L I C T

As a result of the civil war which established Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya as caliph the respect in which the caliphate was held was greatly reduced. Despite this Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya managed to establish peace and security over a reign of twenty-five years. This calm however could not last long after his lifetime, because of the very circumstances which brought him to power. On the one hand, his reign was universally accepted, not according to any regular procedure, but as a compromise in order to end a chaotic situation.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, his reign was regarded as a purely transitional period, after which the community as a whole was to have the right to decide. This was formally laid down in the accord between Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya and al-Hasan which was concluded in 41 AH.<sup>2</sup> As a result, both tribal leaders and senior Qurayshite opposition leaders built up their internal power in order to be ready for the right moment of

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1. Ansāb, IV, 98; Tabarī, V, 160-352; Iqd, IV, 168.

2. See al-Balādhurī, III, 42, for the text of the accord.



challenge.<sup>1</sup> Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya foresaw the forthcoming problems,<sup>2</sup> and therefore attempted to do his best to create an element of power around him, so that he would have the necessary support when it was required. He focussed his attention on the most powerful tribe of Syria, Kalb, and became closer to them,<sup>3</sup> so that a good relationship between Umayyads and Kalb in Syria was built up. In any case, Yemen in Syria admired the capability of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and were totally devoted to his cause.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the combination of Mudar to which Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya himself belonged, were more naturally drawn to Iraq. Moreover, Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya appeared unwilling to accept any Mudarites in Syria during the early period of conquest.<sup>5</sup> In general, since the two main directions of the Arab conquerors were Syria and Iraq, Yemen preferred to go to Syria<sup>6</sup> while Mudar went to Iraq.

The major combination of Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylān, who were practically an independent group at this period, still remained settled in the high land of Hijāz until the time of the conquest. At this point for the first time elements

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1. Ansāb, IV, 55f; Ṭabarī, V, 303, 307.

2. Ansāb, IV, 123; Ṭabarī, V, 322.

3. Ansāb, IV, 127.

4. This is illustrated by the comment of Sa<sup>C</sup>sa<sup>C</sup>a b. Sawhān see Ansāb, IV, 98.

5. Aghānī, XX, 171.

6. Futūh, II, 353.

of this tribe went out of Arabia with the Syrian expedition.<sup>1</sup> They then split off from the main body of the Syrian army and went to al-Jazīra.<sup>2</sup>

During the fifteen years before the arrival of the Muslim army, Jazīra was divided between the two great empires, Sāsānian and Byzantine. It became weakened by conflict between these empires<sup>3</sup> and there does not appear to have been strong military presence there.<sup>4</sup>

In such circumstances al-Jazīra could be treated as part of the conquered territories of Byzantium and the Sāsānians. There was no need to deploy an army there. The fact was that Qays had nothing to do with the purpose of conquest, but was more concerned with the rivalry between the Arab tribes at this time. To support this suggestion it is necessary to look at the previous location of the tribes a few years before the rise of Islam. We find that Yemen had been in Syria for very many years<sup>5</sup> and their obvious course of action in these circumstances was to accept Islam, thereby automatically becoming Arab Muslim subjects and gaining the right to benefit in the same measure

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1. Futūh, I, 237

2. Futūh, I, 237.

3. Islamic history, 82.

4. Futūh, I, 242.

5. Dimashq, 556.

as the conquerors themselves.<sup>1</sup> Khindif and Rabī<sup>c</sup>a also established themselves firmly in Iraq and had the same privileges while Qays still had no luck in occupying an independent territory. For this reason the contingent of Qays which went with the Muslim conquerors of Syria exploited the weak situation of al-Jazīra and went there to conquer it, establishing an original right as conquerors of this area, in order to legitimize this right over the whole of al-Jazīra. Both Abū<sup>c</sup> Ubayda, the leader of the Syrian army, and the caliph<sup>c</sup> Umar recognised the Qaysites' right and confirmed them as masters of al-Jazīra.<sup>2</sup> Al-Jazīra was, therefore, set up as an independent region and remained so until the reign of<sup>c</sup> Uthmān who annexed it to the jurisdiction of the governor of Syria, Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya.<sup>3</sup> Although the primary sources do not quote the reaction of Qays to this change, it is most certain that the tribes were not against Qurayshite leadership at this time. The annexation of al-Jazīra to Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya's area of control came as a response to the growing problems which had occurred in the neighbouring region of Iraq,<sup>4</sup> and was intended to prevent unrest from spreading,<sup>5</sup> particularly to Syria which was

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1. Dimashq, 556.

2. Mukhtasar, 128.

3. Futūh, 245.

4. Ansāb, IV, 43.

5. Ansāb, IV, 46.

still calm and satisfied with his policy. This annexation would also enlarge the area of stability under the control of an able man. On the other hand, it brought about a new confrontation between the two ambitious tribes. From this time until the death of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya, (60 AH) the competition between Yemen and Qays was intense. Each party worked hard to increase its influence upon the Umayyad court, but the balance was always weighted in favour of Yemen by the Umayyads<sup>1</sup> and this preference annoyed Qays and pushed them into opposition to Yemen and the Umayyads.<sup>2</sup>

However, until the death of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwīya there was no great risk of revolt against the strictly maintained power of the caliph. Therefore, Qays kept temporarily calm.<sup>3</sup> After his death the situation became more unfavourable for Qays, as his successor had been brought up among Kalb and thus Qays were naturally against him.<sup>4</sup> The Qaysites' initial reaction was taciturn, waiting until the time was ripe for a challenge. However, all the provinces became restless and dissatisfied. In these circumstances, Qays was in no hurry to mount a challenge, even if they had

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1. Aghānī, XX, 171.

2. Abū Tammām, 1.

3. Abū Tammām, 1; Ansāb, V, 132; Hamāsa, 319.

4. Abū Tammām, 15; Hamāsa, 319.



demonstrated their discontent, because they were quite sure that the remaining leaders in Hijāz - Qays' original territory - would revolt against the new caliph and his supporters, and this would enable them to strike at Yemen at the proper time with more chance of success. Unfortunately for them the caliph and his supporters overcame the rebellion in Hijāz (63 AH) and its inhabitants were either killed or harshly treated,<sup>1</sup> most of them being from Qaysite clans.<sup>2</sup> Amid these tempestuous events, the caliph passed away and a state of chaos set in. The whole state became leaderless and no one could exert control over the tribes.

In such circumstances both Qays and Yemen indulged their wish to support a suitable candidate who would accept their political viewpoint and would accede to their demands. This situation became clear in the course of the negotiations between the Yemenite tribes and Marwān,<sup>3</sup> when the former put several demands to Marwān whose acceptance they insisted upon before they paid homage to him. One of these conditions was that he must agree that Yemen should be the sole body entitled to take final decisions in any political problems.<sup>4</sup> Another condition which was merely

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1. Tabarī, V, 496.

2. Tabarī, V, 492.

3. Tabarī, V, 544; Ansāb, V, 149; Murūj, III, 86.

4. Murūj, III, 86.

a question of protocol was that the Yemenites should be treated at court as high ranking people and that no one should be permitted to enter the court before the Yemeni representatives.<sup>1</sup> There were further economic demands.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, because of the defeat of Qays the sources have not provided us with adequate information as to the nature of the conditions which they required in order to join Ibn az-Zubayr, although it seems certain that Ibn az-Zubayr was absolutely against the superiority of Yemen and this itself would satisfy Qays.<sup>3</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Qays were defeated at Marj Rāhit (64 AH) and lost much while Yemen initially succeeded and gained some power. In fact, however, neither had Yemen completely succeeded nor were Qays completely defeated. Yemen had partly succeeded, but Qays still had the power to strike at its enemies again.

Qays now had to change its policy and adopted new tactics in order to be able to regain as much power as they could during this period of anarchy.<sup>4</sup> Their tactics were based on the old tribal fighting system whereby

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1. Murūj, III, 86.

2. These demands have been discussed above; see Ch.1, p. 48.

3. As an example of Ibn az-Zubayr's opposition to Yemenite domination we may quote his refusal to make an agreement with al-Huṣayn b. Numayr. See Tabarī, V, 502.

4. Tabarī, V, 541.

instead of direct concentrated war against the whole enemy in an outright offensive in a particular battlefield, they launched a series of small-scale attacks against groups of Yemenites who were still living in al-Jazīra and the desert of Samāwa.<sup>1</sup> Their long-term aim was to take these areas from Yemen and to establish themselves there instead. Conflicts of this sort went on without interruption for more than ten years, during which period no universally acceptable caliph had been recognised. In the course of this conflict Zufar b. al-Hārith al-Kilābī, the leader of Qays, took shelter in Qarqīsiyā in the middle of the Qaysite territory in al-Jazīra and proclaimed his support for <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr (64-73 AH).<sup>2</sup> By this action he involved Qays in total war against Yemen who supported the cause of the Umayyads. When he committed himself to this rigid position against Yemen and their chosen candidate Marwān,<sup>3</sup> <sup>c</sup>Umayr b. al-Hubāb as-Sulamī, who had once served Marwān, sided with his kinsman, and under his leadership Qays successfully drove Yemen from the rest of al-Jazīra and forced them to migrate to an area where the Qays could not reach them without crossing the cities of Syria.<sup>4</sup> During this conflict the most celebrated battles occurred

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1. Ansāb, V, 314; Aghānī, XXIII, 180.

2. Abū Tammām, 6; Ansāb, V, 141.

3. Aghānī, XIX, 132; Ansāb, V, 299.

4. Aghānī, XIII, 190.

in al-Jazīra, for instance those that took place on the days of al-Ghuwayr, al-Hubayl, Kabba and Duhmān.<sup>1</sup> In these battles <sup>C</sup>Umayr seems to have been acting as a commander for Zufar b. al-Hārith al-Kilābī, the self-appointed governor of al-Jazīra and the chief of the confederation of Qays.<sup>2</sup> After <sup>C</sup>Umayr was slain, Zufar had to lead the Qaysite warriors to achieve absolute domination over al-Jazīra, on such successful days as Hawbar, al-Muṣaybiḥ, al-Faras and the decisive day of al-Iklīl.<sup>3</sup> The last important battle between Yemen and Qays was the battle of Banāt Qayn.<sup>4</sup> This battle occurred as a reprisal for a treacherous act which was committed against Qays by the Kalbite leader, Humayd b. Bahdal,<sup>5</sup> when he forged a letter of appointment pretending that he was authorised to collect the zakāt from a certain branch of Qays, Banū Fizāra, who were still not involved in the conflicts between the Yemen and Qays of al-Jazīra<sup>6</sup> because they were living far from the battlefields in the north of Arabia.<sup>7</sup> Humayd went there and when he reached them he

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1. Aghānī, XIII, 184 ff.

2. Al-Muḥabbar, 255.

3. Aghānī, XIII, 183.

4. Ansāb, V, 303; Aghānī, XXIII, 199; Bakrī, I, 280.

5. Ansāb, V, 308; Aghānī, XIX, 147; Bakrī, I, 280.

6. Ansāb, V, 310; Aghānī, XIX, 147.

7. Jazīra, 272; see also Bakrī, II, 442.



asked them to gather in his headquarters. He then attacked the innocent Fizārites and killed most of them in cold blood,<sup>1</sup> in revenge for what the Qays of al-Jazīra had done to his kinsmen. This happened just before <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik conquered Iraq.

Very shortly thereafter <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik was recognised in al-Jazīra and Iraq. However, Qays went to him complaining about what Humayd had done to them,<sup>2</sup> asking the caliph to punish him and his followers.<sup>3</sup> <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik responded apathetically, saying that it had occurred at a time of fitna (internal disorder), and this fitna was as bad as the Jāhiliyya (pre-Islamic period).<sup>4</sup> The implication of this was that reprisal for it was forbidden, just as reprisal for the Jāhiliyya was forbidden in Islam. His reply was a great disappointment for Qays, and as a result they raided Kalb in Banāt Qayn,<sup>5</sup> killing those who fell into their hands. Unfortunately for Qays, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik by this time was fully recognised as a caliph, and the government abandoned its neutral position and intervened to maintain the law and to establish a general

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1. Aghānī, XIX, 147; Bakrī, 280

2. Ansāb, V, 310.

3. Ansāb, V, 310.

4. Ansāb, V, 310; Aghānī, XIX, 148.

5. Ansāb, V, 310; Bakrī, I, 280.

security.<sup>1</sup> The agitators of Qays were sent to Damascus to face trial.<sup>2</sup> After acrimonious proceedings at the caliph's court, two of the Qays' chiefs who had led the raid against Kalb were executed.<sup>3</sup> When <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik passed the sentences against them they both insulted him openly and accused him of covering up his partiality under legal procedure.<sup>4</sup> This execution concluded a term of ten years of consecutive battles and open war between the tribes, not only in al-Jazīra but in all of the provinces, but the poetry continued to reflect the happenings of these days up to the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty.

During these battles, Yemen were badly defeated and pushed out of al-Jazīra. Yemen had one day of victory, the result of which was to help the Umayyad regime to stand again politically on its own feet and to be capable of presenting a strong claim for power. On the other hand, Yemen suffered many damaging defeats at the hands of Qays in retaliation for Marj Rāhit. Indeed, although Yemen were victorious in one decisive battle, Qays won several small consecutive battles later. Inevitably, the poets of both

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1. Ansāb, V, 311; Aghānī, XIX, 149; Bakrī, I, 280.

2. Ansāb, V, 311; Aghānī, XIX, 150.

3. These chiefs were Sa<sup>c</sup>īd b. <sup>c</sup>Uyayna and Ḥalḥala b. Ḥiṣn.

4. Ansāb, V, 312; Aghānī, XIX, 150.

contenders exchanged defamatory poems, emphasising their own victories and excusing their defeats. It appears that if these war-torn days were the result of the battle of Marj Rāhit, Qays always insisted that their acts were to be seen as revenge for it. In fact the motives for this continuing savage war went beyond tribal conflicts. It is true that the collapse of Qays in Marj Rāhit was a nightmarish memory for them and they no doubt felt strongly the need to avenge it. Nevertheless, the reality of the continuing clash between the two tribes arose from more significant causes than a mere question of revenge.

First of all it resulted from the ambitious competition between the rivals who were concerned for their respective position in a future which neither could see clearly. Thus each side was eager to achieve as strong a position as they could within this period in order to ensure for themselves respect and privilege. Secondly, in the absence of an authorised government, each side felt obliged to safeguard their own security from the intimidation of others. Thirdly, the most important reason for the critical period through which the whole country was passing was the problem of deciding who would be in real charge of power in the caliphate when the crisis was over; whether Yemen would be as they used to be under Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya and his successor, or whether Qays, who were so keen to

replace the Yemenites or at least to change the political system of inheritance which Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya forced upon the people instead of the constitutional procedure, would succeed in achieving their ambition. The unpopular caliph unexpectedly passed away before he could arrange who would be his successor.<sup>1</sup> The dissatisfied groups were quick to seize this opportunity of freedom. At first the lack of guidance caused confusion, and they did not know where to turn. The Qays of al-Jazīra and Syria were the first group who stood clearly against the Umayyads.<sup>2</sup> As soon as Ibn az-Zubayr declared himself they quickly acclaimed him without hesitation, and the other major tribe in al-Jazīra, Taghlib, aligned themselves with Qays,<sup>3</sup> either on the one hand because of the obscurity of the situation, or on the other because both Qays and Taghlib were sons of Nizār.<sup>4</sup> However, most of the population of

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1. Since this present study is mainly concerned with political poetry and its role in early Umayyad society, our aim is simply to give the reader a historical background, and it is not intended to go into detail from a historical point of view. For this reason we have disregarded some narratives which say that Yazīd appointed his son Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya as his successor. Ṭabarī, V, 502.

2. Hamāsa, 319; Aghānī, XIX, 139; Abū Tammām, 15.

3. Aghānī, XIX, 142.

4. Iqd, III, 286.



Taghlib were still Christian,<sup>1</sup> and thus they were less important than the Muslim tribes in political questions.<sup>2</sup> Whatever their reasons, Taghlib took part in the war between Yemen and Qays, helping Qays and aligning themselves under the leadership of <sup>c</sup>Umayr b. al-Hubāb.<sup>3</sup> With the passage of time the picture of the future became clear; the next caliph would be one of the two Qurayshite contenders; <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān in Syria or <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr in Hijāz, both of whom had a clear political image.<sup>4</sup> <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik and his Syrian followers were more moderate and showed less consideration of Islamic principles.<sup>5</sup> They were more anxious to gain power by any means. The other possible candidate, <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, also had a clear policy and began operating in a rigid way showing quite fundamentalist attitudes<sup>6</sup> and behaving like <sup>c</sup>Umar b. al-Khattāb in a manner which made some poets satirise him and mock his imitation.<sup>7</sup> Whether he was sincerely intending to improve declining standards or merely pretending to do so, it would not satisfy a Christian community who had suffered for the sake of their

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1. Aghānī, XXIII, 20.

2. Tabarī, V, 125.

3. Aghānī, XIX, 142; Ansāb, V, 318 ff.

4. Ansāb, V, 305.

5. Bayān, I, 144.

6. Tabarī, V, 502.

7. Ansāb, V, 190.

religion. Indeed Taghlib had been in a delicate situation since the time of <sup>C</sup>Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who only managed to solve their very special case by doubling the zakāt over them.<sup>1</sup> This problem persisted up to the time of the caliph <sup>C</sup>Alī, who according to some narratives also threatened to eliminate Taghlib because they had breached the treaty with <sup>C</sup>Umar.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and his son's attitude towards them was more subtle, and as a result they felt more safe and satisfied with Umayyad policy, since it was the best for those who were less enthusiastic about the early Islamic principles to support such a family.<sup>3</sup> This was particularly the case with Taghlib who did not submit themselves to control without conditions. Even the Taghlibī Muslims always appreciated those who were less fanatical; for instance there were at least two prominent poets of Taghlib who sincerely supported Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and his son's cause,<sup>4</sup> even against <sup>C</sup>Alī during the rebellion of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya against him.<sup>5</sup> Later Taghlibī poets once more defended Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya and Yazīd against the most sacred companions of the Prophet, the Ansār, whereas no Muslim poet could defame such a community.<sup>6</sup> In any case,

1. Futūh, I, 250.

2. Futūh, I, 252.

3. Ansāb, V, 122.

4. One of them was a Muslim poet, Ka<sup>C</sup>b b. Ju<sup>C</sup>ayl.

5. Siffīn, 63.

6. Aghānī, XV, 83.

an assessment had been made in a deliberate way to find out which party could best safeguard the existence of Taghlib. In the light of both candidates' platforms, their eventual conclusion was that only the Umayyad family could provide any hope for them. The solidarity of al-Jazīra's inhabitants finally came to an end<sup>1</sup> when Taghlib requested Zufar b. al-Hārith al-Kilābī to order some branches of Qays out of a particular area of al-Jazīra which was to be settled only by Taghlib.<sup>2</sup> In addition they tried to make a reasonable excuse for their defection. They alleged that Qays had mistreated them,<sup>3</sup> and that there could be no reconciliation unless their demands were met. Qays, of course, refused to evacuate this area, and consequently friction broke out between Taghlib and Qays.<sup>4</sup> The warriors of Qays who were still chasing Kalb out of al-Jazīra found their hands full nearer home, and open war began between Taghlib and Qays after the failure of negotiations. According to al-Aghānī, war broke out because Taghlib refused to pay tributes to Umayr b. Hubāb who was appointed as a collector of zakāt by Ibn az-Zubayr.<sup>5</sup> In the light of this narrative the motive would have been purely based on a

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1. Ansāb, V, 313; Aghānī, XXIII, 199.

2. Aghānī, XXIII, 200.

3. Ansāb, V, 315.

4. Ansāb, V, 315.

5. Aghānī, XXIII, 201.

difference of political views, since the zakāt had to be paid only to the accepted ruler. Furthermore, the Ansāb explains this as being because Taghlib were on the side of Marwān.<sup>1</sup> Thus <sup>C</sup>Umayr turned his raids against his former helpers, and the outcome was several brutal battles such as that of Māksīn<sup>2</sup> where Taghlib suffered a considerable defeat. Other encounters followed. In the battle of ath-Tharthār,<sup>3</sup> Taghlib were supported by some men from Rabī<sup>C</sup>a of Iraq in order to avenge those who were killed at Māksīn,<sup>4</sup> and they managed to defeat Qays. More than thirteen battles occurred, in most of which Qays defeated Taghlib except for the day of al-Hashshāk<sup>5</sup> when Taghlib mobilised its men and chose to die or obtain victory. The resistance lasted several days and eventually <sup>C</sup>Umayr was slain,<sup>6</sup> when part of his tribesmen had to withdraw from the battlefield in order to defend the western border of al-Jazīra against a threat from <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik. His death was a great occasion for Taghlib. Their poets always sang of it and mentioned it on every occasion as if nobody had been killed except him.<sup>7</sup> Two celebrated battles formed a sequel to this day.

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1. Ansāb, V, 314.

2. Ansāb, V, 316; Aghānī, XXIII, 201; Abū Tammām, 230.

3. Ansāb, IV, 1176; Bakrī, IV, 1176.

4. Aghānī, XII, 203 f.

5. Ansāb, V, 323; Aghānī, XII, 195.

6. Ansāb, V, 325; Aghānī, XII, 195.

7. Abū Tammām, 40.



One was immediately thereafter at al-Kuḥayl<sup>1</sup> when Zufar b. al-Hārith led Qays in a bitter onslaught, trying to physically exterminate Taghlib. The other day came later in response to a couplet which was recited by the great poet of Taghlib, al-Akḥṭal, at the court of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik in the presence of the leader of Qays, al-Jahhāf as-Sulamī. He departed immediately and surprised Taghlib at al-Bishr<sup>2</sup> where he killed those who fell into his hands. The political motive running through these events was reported in each line of the poems which were exchanged. These will be discussed in the following chapters.

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1. Ansāb, V, 326; Bakrī, I, 338.

2. Ansāb, V, 326; Bakrī, I, 338; Aghānī, XII, 195.

Chapter 5

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL  
POETRY IN ARAB SOCIETY  
TO THE TIME OF <sup>c</sup> ABD AL-MALIK

## Chapter 5

# THE ROLE OF POLITICAL POETRY IN ARAB SOCIETY TO THE TIME OF <sup>C</sup>A D B A L - M A L I K

### POETRY IN THE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

The importance of poetry as an effective weapon in any conflict among the Arabs was not something that was first discovered during the Umayyad period. It had been well-known for many years before the coming of Islam, as pointed out by Ibn Rashīq.<sup>1</sup> Virtually every tribe had its own poet or poets who would defend its honour and attack its opponents. A number of works list the tribes and their poets and give us some idea of the large number of tribal poets in the Jāhiliyya period.<sup>2</sup> Al-A<sup>C</sup>shā illustrates clearly the poet's role in the following line addressed to his tribe:

*I defend your honour and lend you a tongue which is as (20)  
sharp and keen as the scissors of al-Khafājī.<sup>3</sup>*

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1. Al-<sup>C</sup>Umda, 65.

2. See for example Ibn Qutayba, K. ash-Shi<sup>C</sup>r wa sh-Shu<sup>C</sup>arā', al-Marzubānī, Mu<sup>C</sup>jam ash-Shu<sup>C</sup>arā' and Ibn Sallām, Tabaqāt Fuhūl ash-Shu<sup>C</sup>arā', passim.

3. Quoted by al Asad, Masādir ash-Shi<sup>C</sup>r al-Jāhilī, 110.

Of course, al-A<sup>C</sup>shā knew his role and was simply reminding his fellow tribesmen of its importance. Thus in pre-Islamic times many tribal poets devoted their poems to tribal matters, praising their fellow tribesmen, and giving a vivid picture of the heroes of their tribes on the battlefield or praising those who showed outstanding generosity.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, they were always ready to denigrate their enemies' reputations and to deflate their pride while boasting of their own proud deeds.<sup>2</sup>

Before the flight of the Prophet to Medina the largest organisational structure of Arabia was the tribal system and the poet's affiliations were entirely restricted to the tribes. As long as continual struggle was the normal pattern of this early period of Arabian life,<sup>3</sup> the role of the poet was limited to the specific area of the tribe's interests. The poet's mind was fully occupied by the defence of the interests of the tribe to which he belonged. He had little concern for the broad life of the world, apart from this daily life which was shaped by the challenges from his primary enemies, who in most cases were another neighbouring tribe.<sup>4</sup> Consequently poetry was little

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1. Shi<sup>C</sup>r, I, 151.

2. Shi<sup>C</sup>r, II, 640.

3. Ayyām, for instance see Ayyām al-<sup>C</sup>Arab in pre-Islamic time.

4. See El-Gindi, 12.



concerned with politics, since the political ideas of this society scarcely existed above the level of the individual tribe. Nevertheless, some modern studies<sup>1</sup> have suggested that the Jāhiliyya poetry must have had a political dimension. This suggestion is based on the belief that the tribe and the state are comparable,<sup>2</sup> and that the tribal unit is capable of having a real function of state. In fact, however, the natural manner of existence of the tribe had little in common with the systematic methods which create a state. In particular, we would point out that the basis of the tribe is a belief in common ancestry, whether true or not, and that it is not based on any fixed territory. The common interest of the tribesmen is one of mutual support, and the functions and method of choosing the tribal leader also make the tribe very different from the state. For these reasons we do not believe that the word "political" can accurately be applied to the structural features of the tribe.

The modern studies to which we refer draw on the large body of poems which were composed during this period of tribal warfare and consider them as political in subject matter.<sup>3</sup> This analysis seems anachronistic and one might

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1. For example, see Shāyib, 39.

2. Shāyib, 35.

3. Shāyib, 45.

suggest that martial poems of this kind which were exchanged between tribal warriors cannot constitute an early stage of that systematic political poetry which was found later in the Umayyad period.<sup>1</sup>

When the challenge to the caliphate took place in this period, it was not between one tribe and another, but between politicians who were eager to rule a huge country under a common system of law. When the Islamic empire was well established and came to contain many tribal groups which had not existed in the Jāhiliyya, various political views took shape. This resulted in a high standard and a skilful use of poetry<sup>2</sup> a fact which reflects an authentic theory of politics. Whatever or whoever the poet supported, whether tribe, dynasty or religious leader, his mind was more open and he took a less limited attitude, being aware of the remarkable changes in society and considering his attitude to each event carefully. From this time onwards, poetry became widely used as an instrument of politics.<sup>3</sup>

To poets themselves the world became wider than it had been. They had to learn to cope effectively with a

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1. For example, see the argument about the right of the Umayyads to the caliphate and the right of <sup>C</sup>Alī's sons to it in the following works: Dīwān al Akhtal, Dīwān Kuthayyir al-Hashimiyyāt etc.

2. Ansāb, V, 325.

3. This can be seen from the verses quoted by Mas<sup>C</sup>ūdī which are discussed below on pp.223ff. of this thesis. See also Murūj, III, 244.

new world which brought a momentous change into their lives, given that in the Jāhiliyya, the only world with which the tribal poet was really concerned with, was his own small group or tribe. This early stage of Arabic poetry which embodied aggressive attitudes and was the product of an isolated life did not encourage the poet to look beyond his local problems and did not provide him with the ideological framework within which political awareness could develop. From the appearance of Islam onwards, however, they had to deal with wider matters and had to fight to define their beliefs and ideals.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PARTISAN POETRY

Since Arabia during the Jāhiliyya period was organised according to the tribal system, we cannot maintain that this kind of offensive and aggressive poetry represents a political phenomenon without distorting the straightforward meaning of the poems or straining the meaning of the term "political". To be more accurate we can say that there were two kinds of poetry. The first of these was what we may call "partisan poetry" of the kind which preceded Islam, composed by a poet who was obliged to defend his tribal interests and to perform his duties

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1. Tabaqāt, I, 216.

towards his own tribe, and who limited himself within this framework, believing in no ideals except those which served his tribe's cause and seeking no reward from outside. The only power which he recognised was his tribe's power, and his major motives were to raise his tribesmen's morale and to receive their respect in return. <sup>C</sup>Āmir

b. at-Tufayl illustrates this in the following lines:

*Even if I was the son of the chief of <sup>C</sup>Āmir, and its famous leader on every occasion of war.* (21)

*<sup>C</sup>Āmir did not make me its chief because of my inheritance; God forbid that I should be proud because of my mother or father.*

*But (I became its master) because I defend its dependants, prevent any harm coming to them, and shoot at those who would shoot at them with a squadron.<sup>1</sup>*

Moreover, in most cases the poets remained on the side of their small groups forever. They never defected under any circumstances unless they were rejected by their tribes and were declared "khalī<sup>C</sup>". Even when the poet was absolutely against their policy he would still feel obliged to support them. Durayd b. aṣ-Sīma demonstrates this clearly in the following line:

*I am one of Ghuzayya, if they stray I shall stray, if they are right I am right.<sup>2</sup>* (22)

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1. Shi<sup>C</sup>r, I, 343.

2. Tabarī, V, 77.



Durayd makes it clear that the poet did not lead an independent life. His position was linked to that of his tribe and if he could not persuade them he would accept their decision even if it was wrong. Another line which illustrates the social duties of the Jāhiliyya poet is the following

*They do not ask their kinsman for evidence when he cries  
for help in time of distress.*<sup>1</sup> (23)

The themes of help and defence had strong effects on the poetry of this period, since these were an essential part of its social structure. The people of the time respected those who were ready to rush to help and to respond to any caller whoever he was, as the following line by Waddāk b. Thumayl al-Māzinī indicates:

*If asked for help, they would never question the asker,  
no matter for which battle it might be sought nor from  
which direction the request came.*<sup>2</sup> (24)

In Islam this cohesion became reduced, and the poet recognised his own status and moved freely within a larger society, as a result of which it was not necessary for the poet to identify himself completely with the tribe. Thus it does not seem appropriate to consider the atmosphere of the

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1. Qurayz b. Unayf al-<sup>c</sup>Anbarī, in Dīwān al-Hamāsa  
(Commentary of al-Tibrīzī) 1, 29.

2. Hamāsa, I, 130

Jāhiliyya as containing even elementary political consciousness or to regard its poetry as in any sense political, since no state had been created and no parties existed. Affiliation in the Jāhiliyya was largely linked to tribalism. Thus the poems which might be claimed to embody political views should be considered as tribal partisan poetry.

#### THE BEGINNING OF POLITICAL POETRY

The second type of poetry, which may be properly described as political, started when the old society had been thrown into turmoil by the new ideology of Islam which required a complete change. It did not only require to be believed or rejected but also demanded fundamental changes in society and re-examination of old traditions, customs and relationships. Although the tribal body still existed the tribal power was diminished and the tribe became unable to offer total protection to its poets. The poet became responsible for what he said and had to bear the consequences of his mistakes. Under the law he would now be prosecuted, and thus he had to observe the law. His tribe would no longer protect him. For example, al-Huṭay'a was sentenced to prison when he attacked the prominent leader az-Zibriqān b. Badr,<sup>1</sup> and Dābi' al-Burjumī

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1. Aghānī, II, 150.

died in prison having attacked the Ansār for political reasons, and his powerful tribe of Tamīm were unable to help him. Likewise the poets were not compelled to attach themselves to their tribes as was the case before Islam. A new social order had been created since the time that the Prophet wrote the Treaty of Medina after his arrival in Medina.<sup>1</sup> This treaty contained elements of an Islamic constitution, creating law and laying down that social relationships must be based on faith alone.<sup>2</sup> Consequently the law was applied according to Islamic principles and a systematic state was created to replace the tribal system. Thus the dominance of the tribe was weakened and the loyalties of the poets were divided. The poet still had tribal duties and responsibilities, within the new framework of the state, but he also had duties as a member of a larger society which was headed by a government, whether or not this government satisfied him, and he had to bear his responsibilities as an individual.

In these circumstances there began the real political poetry which dealt with existing problems.<sup>3</sup> The poets took different attitudes according to their own political groupings.<sup>4</sup> On some occasions the poets had to

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1. Sīra, I, 301.

2. al-Bukhārī, VI, 398.

3. Tabaqāt, I, 217.

4. Aghānī, XII, 32.

change their tactics several times<sup>1</sup> within a few years depending on the policy of the party which they supported and they had to reflect not their own personal attitude as they had previously been used to doing but to become more professional, acting on behalf of their favoured party, tribe and leaders.<sup>2</sup> The position of the poet was similar to the position of a spokesman. Now he could give publicity to political ideas and positions in his poetry and could thus support the policies of those whom he wished. Equally he now on the other hand denounced rival policies, employing his forceful arguments to argue for his own party's right to rule the country, and emphasising that they were acting according to Islamic law and that all their actions were thus supported by the law.<sup>3</sup>

A great deal of poetry of this kind was devoted to caliphs, rulers and governors. The same sort of poetry is also addressed to the leaders of parties, praising them in the same terms as are applied to the former group. Apart from this the priority was given to the poet's personal interest. When poetry became a professional matter the poet became an opportunist.<sup>4</sup> His loyalty

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1. Tabarī, VI, 376, Ansāb, V, 286.

2. Siffīn, 64.

3. Examples of poets who often changed their positions are al-Kumayt, Kuthayyir and <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh b. Qays ar-Ruqayyāt.

4. Ash-Shu<sup>C</sup>arā' I, 548.



became easily hired, and he would support the one who could offer him most. In most cases this led to flattery rather than sincerity, especially during the Umayyad period.<sup>1</sup> As a result, as soon as power was transferred to the other side the political poets revised their position and assessed the new rulers in order to decide which attitude they should take to them. They often did not take rigid positions but considered their personal interests, as described in the following lines of <sup>C</sup>Imrān

b. Hittān:

*If some Jews or Christians were sent to lead them (25)  
They would say 'We accept them as long as they pay us  
a regular salary and provide us with corn of Kaskarā.'*<sup>2</sup>

Thus the leaders had good reasons to keep poets beside them, since they would provide them with effective propaganda which might serve to increase their popularity, while the poets in return would receive valuable gifts and gain high prestige in society.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See for example Ihsān <sup>C</sup>Abbas, intro. to Dīwān Kuthayyir, 39, where Kuthayyir's relationship with the caliph <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik is discussed.
  2. Yāqūt S.V. Kaskarā.
  3. Al-Akhtal, Shā<sup>C</sup>ir Banī Umayya, 100.

## THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE EARLY ISLAMIC STATE AND THE POLYTHEISTS

The close involvement of poetry with political controversy came immediately after the creation of the Islamic state after the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, when he took decisive political and military action against his primary enemies, Quraysh, and had to fight them in every sense. He was fully aware of the power of poetry as a political tool and he was keen to find poets to support him.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as the Prophet left Mecca the Quraysh became extremely concerned about the danger they anticipated from the new movement, particularly when they became aware that the Prophet and his followers had gone to Medina.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the Medinans who were converted to Islam seem to have been most ardent in defending the newcomers, in accordance with a previous agreement between them.<sup>3</sup> In this agreement reference was made to physical protection. But from the time of their establishment in Medina, the solidarity of the Muslim community went far beyond any previous agreement. The Ansār became very enthusiastic in their desire to serve God and His Messenger.

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1. Ṭabaqāt, I, 217.

2. Ṭabarī, II, 365.

3. Ṭabarī, II, 362.

This positive attitude encouraged the Prophet to establish an integrated state within a relatively short period. Soon war broke out between Medina and Mecca, and Meccan poets rushed to support their people and attack the Muslims.<sup>1</sup> This poetical controversy had features which distinguished it from anything that had been known previously since this war was being waged neither in tribal self-defence nor in the hope of gaining booty. The poets on both sides must have been fully aware of the fundamental differences of this war compared to other wars of which they had had experience.<sup>2</sup> They knew that it was a matter of ideology. Tribal relations had nothing to do with this conflict and the bond of blood became of no account.<sup>3</sup> Consequently the whole of Arabia was divided into two camps, the faithful and the polytheists. At this point poetry gradually changed its course and found its way to the core of the problems of the new society which were now for the first time political in nature. The clear participation of poetry in politics started with the war between the Muslims of Medina and the polytheists of Mecca.<sup>4</sup> The Prophet recognised the importance of poetry in this conflict when

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1. Tabaqāt, I, 217. See also Martial Poetry in Mecca and Medina 274 by A.S. al-Jarbū<sup>c</sup>.

2. Tabaqāt, I, 248.

3. Rawd, IV, 240.

4. Tabaqāt, I, 223.

the poets of Quraysh began to attack him and his faith severely.<sup>1</sup> As a result he asked the Ansār to defend the Islamic faith in poetry as well as with weapons. His request was expressed indirectly in the following words:

"Why do those who have been defending God's faith and His messenger with weapons not defend them with the tongue?"<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately for them the Medinans already had a firmly established and renowned poetic tradition,<sup>3</sup> and had several poets who had converted to Islam. These poets proved to be much more effective than the poets of Quraysh.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Prophet examined each one of his partisans and asked them how to produce poems.<sup>5</sup> He also consulted them on the difficult problem of how to insult the Meccans without insulting the whole tribe of Quraysh, since he himself was one of them. When he had made sure that the Medinans would do the best they could, he allowed them to start, and encouraged them greatly and rewarded them for

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1. Aghānī, XVI, 138.

2. Aghānī, IV, 142.

3. Tabaqāt, I, 216; Aghānī, IV, 141. This point is discussed at length by A.S. al-Jarbū<sup>c</sup>, who remarks "the people of Medina were noted for this kind of literary criticism".  
Martial poetry in Mecca and Medina in the late pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods.

4. Tabaqāt, I, 219.

5. Tabaqāt, I, 225.



their success.<sup>1</sup> First of all he called the most sincere poet <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa and asked him how he could produce poems and <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh explained. Then he ordered him to attack the enemy. According to Ibn Sallām and his authority Madraka b. <sup>C</sup>Imāra, <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh was quoted as saying, "I was passing by the mosque of the Prophet while he and some of his Companions were gathered there, and they hastily called me. I recognised that the Prophet wanted me and I rushed to them and greeted them. The Prophet told me to come before him and asked me, 'How can you produce poetry?' First I reflected then I spoke."<sup>2</sup> <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh said he ordered him to attack polytheism. His contribution was not adequate and Muḥammad asked another poet, Ka<sup>C</sup>b b. Mālik, to help his fellow poet <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh. He also did his best and made some progress which satisfied the Prophet, and he praised Ka<sup>C</sup>b for his great contribution. One couplet in particular attracted him and pleased him, so he told the poet that God would reward him for efforts saying, "Do you think that God will forget to reward you for your line."

*Sakhīna*<sup>3</sup> claimed that it would defeat its Lord (i.e. God). (26)

*Surely the fighter against the victorious will be defeated.*<sup>4</sup>

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1. See for example the introduction to Diwān Hassān.

2. Tabaqāt, I, 225.

3. Sakhīna is a nickname of Quraysh.

4. Tabaqāt, I, 222.

The Prophet appreciated the value of poetry in serving the Islamic cause, and realised that it would be a great help if some famous poets could participate in such political battles. In the meantime there was still another famous Medinan poet, Hassān b. Thābit, who had not taken part yet: Ibn Sallām records that "when the Prophet arrived in Medina the poets of Quraysh attacked him. He asked <sup>c</sup>Abd 'Allāh b. Rawāha to reply to them. When it became apparent that his efforts had proved inadequate he ordered Ka<sup>c</sup>b b. Mālik to defend the Islamic state and Ka<sup>c</sup>b did his best but still needed an offensive attack against the poets of Mecca. He later had to ask Hassān to provide a reply to them."<sup>1</sup>

Hassān was a veteran poet with excellent experience. It is not clear in fact why the Prophet originally passed him over and asked those who were less able for help. Some sources would have us believe that Hassān was not sincerely converted to Islam at first. They probably base this belief on the fact that Hassān was among those who were responsible for spreading a rumour against the Prophet's wife and was punished for his part in it. Walid Arafat also observes that "he was also accused of allowing talk unfavourable to Islam to take place in front of his house, so the Prophet ultimately found it necessary to send

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1. Tabaqāt, I, 217.

someone to break up such a gathering, and considered such activities hostile to Islam and chided Hassān for his part in it."<sup>1</sup>

Even if such an interpretation is accepted, it is unlikely that this would have prevented Hassān from taking part in defending his people against those who attacked them. Since he had openly accepted Islam and became one of its subjects he would have felt obliged to take part well before he involved himself in such offences. Moreover, these offences did not occur at once but happened at different times after his conversion to Islam.<sup>2</sup> A more likely interpretation would perhaps be to suggest that Hassān was a self-confident poet and was working as a professional before Islam. He did not want to offer his services free of charge. He may also have realised that a time would come when his contribution would be indispensable. The Prophet was probably aware of this attitude and tried to ignore him as much as possible. Whatever the reason might have been, the Prophet later on furnished him with remarkable gifts.<sup>3</sup> Thus Hassān took on his

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1. Introduction to Dīwān Hassān, 4.

2. Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d, VIII, 41.

3. For instance when he received the two Coptic girls he gave one to Hassān; another valuable gift was a piece of land which was given to Hassān on the Prophet's order. See introduction to Dīwān Hassān, 5.

responsibility to defend Islam. Furthermore he was told to consult Abū Bakr in order to obtain fundamental information about prominent adversaries in order to harm the cause of the enemy as much as possible.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover the Prophet occasionally instructed the poets to produce a specifically worded warning when it was necessary to urge certain leaders to take clear positions. For instance Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d reports that the leader of Muzayna went to Medina to see the Prophet and promised to support him but when he went back his tribe did not approve. The Prophet asked his poet to compose a specific poem which would disclose the real position of the leader and urge him to keep his promise, at the same time containing an implied warning. When the leader received it he advised his tribe to approve his decision and told them that the poet of the Prophet mentioned their name particularly.<sup>2</sup>

A few years later political poetry had reached an advanced stage and was no longer an exchange of poems as it was initially but had developed sophisticated techniques.<sup>3</sup> To make this quite clear it might be useful to quote Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d's report that it was usual practice for

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1. Aghānī, IV, 143.

2. Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d, I 291.

3. Firaq, 385.



the tribal delegations to come to Medina seeking absolutely clear ideas about Islam. In particular he mentions the delegates of Tamīm who came to Medina accompanied by their poet and their orator to challenge their counterparts of Medina. The Prophet accepted this challenge and called upon his orator to engage in dispute with their orator. Then he ordered Hassān to reply to their poet. Accordingly the Tamīm confessed their defeat and recognised Islam.<sup>1</sup> The progress of political poetry in the early period of Islam provided more supporters regardless of the tribal bond.

Another case which may show us the need for the poet's help is that of Ka<sup>c</sup>b b. Zuhayr who was opposed to Islam and insulted the Prophet because his brother had joined Muhammad. Ka<sup>c</sup>b got angry and accused him of leading his brother astray.<sup>2</sup> The Prophet immediately ordered him to be killed by anyone who could capture him.<sup>3</sup> Eventually Ka<sup>c</sup>b found it necessary to become a Muslim, in order to save his life, and went to Medina to see the Prophet and to announce that he was willing to join Islam too. The Medinans were pleased to have such a poet among them so he was accepted. On his way to Medina he composed a famous

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1. Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d, I, 194; Aghānī, IV, 155.

2. Aghānī, XVII, 42.

3. Aghānī, XVII, 42.

poem which was known as al-Burda in which he praised the Prophet and his Companions and displayed his remorse for his former attitude. The Medinans were delighted to hear of his repentance and the Prophet gave him his gown as a reward for his poem. Later the poem was named after it al-Burda.

#### THE POETRY OF THE OPPOSITION

On the other hand the Quraysh appreciated the role of poetry too, and tried to find some poets among their people.

Al-Aghānī reports<sup>1</sup> that Ṣafwān persuaded Abū ʿAzza to help the Quraysh against Muḥammad, and promised him to look after his children after his death, saying to the poet, "You are a poet so go with us and help us by your tongue and I promise you if you die I will look after your daughters as long as I live."

The discussion so far has shown how important poetry was for both rival groups and the power which it gained among the community. Poetry adapted itself to serve the cause of politics as the new atmosphere of controversy changed its course from tribal partisanship to taking on the new role of defending beliefs and ideas.

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1. Aghānī, XV, 139.

## THE CONQUESTS AND THE DECLINE OF POLITICAL POETRY

After the departure of the Prophet a chaotic situation developed in Arabia. Most of the tribes renounced Islam, revolted against the successor to the Prophet and denied the central authority of Medina, wishing to resume their independent life. The poets took part in these events, supporting their tribes. The most famous couplets which refer to this issue were composed by al-Huṭay'a and are mentioned in every book dealing with politics:

*We obeyed the messenger of God as long as he was among us. (27)*

*Oh, what kind of a religion is Abū Bakr's?  
Can he bequeath it to Abū Bakr after his death? By  
God this would be disastrous.<sup>1</sup>*

The authority of Medina however was firmly restored and the Arabs had to submit to the caliph.

## THE PERIOD OF DECLINE

The Arabs soon left their peninsula to fight non-Arab nations who could not understand the Arabic language let alone its poetry. Therefore, the influence of poetry became less important. Despite this the poets continued to produce fascinating poems describing battles with their enemies, and their deep feeling is revealed in verses like the following by <sup>c</sup>Urwa b. Zayd al-Khayl:

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1. Tabarī, III, 246.

I have fought steadfastly against the people of (28)  
Qādisiyya, wearing a mark of recognition, and  
one like me stands firm even if my opponent (in  
single combat) does not stand firm,  
I attack them with the spear until they scatter, and  
smite with the sword until they retreat.  
I thank my Lord who guides me to his religion, and I  
shall struggle for the sake of God and thank him  
as long as I live.<sup>1</sup>

The poets did not reason with their enemies  
because of the lack of suitable means of communication.  
Instead the poets of this transitional period became subject-  
ive, describing the hardships of war and the reasons behind  
their involvement in it, and describing difficult journeys  
out of their own country in verses like the following by  
Qays b. al-Makshūh:

I urged the horses galloping on from San<sup>cā'</sup>, each carrying (29)  
a well armed ardent warrior like a lion.  
To Wādī al-Qurā and the encampments of the tribe of Kalb  
and to al-Yarmūk and then the Syrian land.  
As soon as we moved the Byzantines away from it we  
redirected the slender ones (horses) as thin as  
scissors.<sup>2</sup>  
After a month we arrived at al-Qādisiyya with backs marked  
and bleeding.  
The army of Kosroe, there we fought together with the  
sons of noble Persian satraps.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Shāyib, 159.

2. This translation rendered by Dr. Inad Ismail, except  
the third line.

3. Futūh, 364.



As the Arabs became involved in war with other nations, they dwelt frequently upon the hardships which they faced, and how they eventually overcame their problems. They explain their motive for involving themselves in these difficulties which they have undertaken, and ask God to help them, as in the following lines:

*The band of Nakh<sup>c</sup> greeted you on my behalf, men with* (30)

*handsome faces who believed in Muhammad.*

*They confronted Kisrā, smiting his soldiers with very sharp-edged swords.*

*When the caller repeated his cry they stood their ground firmly, exposed to death.<sup>1</sup>*

The poetic theme of this transitional period between the Jāhiliyya and Umayyad periods is that the author always describes the Muslims' glorious deeds and encourages the warriors to fight to achieve victory. They are always proud of the successful result as the following lines by Aws b. Bujayr show:

*I wish that Abū Bakr could have seen our swords while* (31)  
*these were grazing on arms and necks.*

*Do you not see that God, other than whom there is no God, is laying the whip of punishment upon the infidels?<sup>2</sup>*

They would remind their leaders of their significant contribution in confronting the enemy and would

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1. Tabarī, III, 582.

2. Dayf, II, 54.

display their boastful attitude in verses like the following by Bishr b. Rabī<sup>c</sup>a:

*Remember, may God guide you, the striking of our swords* (32)

*at the gate of Qudays when manoeuvre was impossible.*

*On this evening some people wished that they could  
borrow the two wings of a bird to fly away.*

*As soon as we finished with fighting one regiment we  
rushed to another which was like a mountain on  
the move.<sup>1</sup>*

The warriors gained booty both in the Jāhiliyya and in Islam, but the difference was that in the Jāhiliyya the conception of war was merely that of gaining booty or taking revenge. In contrast war in Islam was considered a matter of faith since one of the duties of Muslims was to preach Islam and spread the religion of God. As a result we find no differing opinions among the Arabs during the first stage of the conquests. Attention was paid only to achieving absolute domination over the newly conquered lands. Moreover the war was waged between Arabs and non-Arabs, which resulted in the lessening of the importance and influence of political poetry at the time of the conquests. It seems that the development of political poems was halted and went into a state of abeyance.

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1. Aghānī, XV, 189.

## THE RESUMPTION OF POLITICAL POETRY

The decline of political poetry did not last very long. As soon as trouble broke out in the second half of the reign of the third caliph, political poems resumed their course, criticising the governors and the caliph and accusing them of having abused their authority. The political poetry became stronger and stronger and assumed a significant role throughout the state. First the poets started to oppose the central authority of Medina and condemned the misuse of power<sup>1</sup> and protested strongly against the extravagant use of public revenue, as in the following lines addressed to <sup>C</sup>Uthmān:

*You invited the accursed one<sup>2</sup> and brought him close to  
you in disregard of the practice of those who went  
before.* (33)

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1. Dayf, II, 210.

2. His uncle al-Hakam b. Abī al-<sup>C</sup>Ās who accepted Islam after the conquest of Mecca but remained unfaithful to the Prophet. He used to mock him and copy his walk, and accordingly the Prophet banished him to at-Tā'if. After the death of the Prophet, <sup>C</sup>Uthmān asked Abū Bakr to allow his uncle to return to Medina, but the latter refused. When <sup>C</sup>Umar succeeded Abū Bakr, <sup>C</sup>Uthmān asked him also to permit his uncle to return to Medina but <sup>C</sup>Umar in his turn rejected this request. When <sup>C</sup>Uthmān took over he brought al-Hakam together with his sons, breaching the orders of the Prophet and his first two successors. Al-Hakam was to become the progenitor of the Marwānid line of caliphs.

And gave Marwān the fifth of the people's booty unjustly  
and restricted the use of common grazing land.  
You also gave the public revenue which al-Ash<sup>c</sup>arī brought  
to you as a booty to whosoever you wanted.  
[You are unlike] both your trusty predecessors who made  
clear the right way and marked it with stone.  
They did not take one dirham secretly nor did they spend  
one dirham on their own desires.<sup>1</sup>

The most remarkable advance in the development of political poetry took place when the rebellions succeeded in removing the caliph by force, and civil war broke out among the community particularly among rivals contending for power from within Quraysh, as a result of which the whole country was divided.

The rival groups had different views and different approaches.<sup>2</sup> The poets took advantage of this quarrel to support whichever group they thought would have the greatest chance of acceding to power, as a result of which they themselves hoped to benefit.<sup>3</sup>

As is well-known the main issue in the confrontation was the caliphate and who was most eligible to succeed to it. The argument was chiefly concerned with merit, which led to open discussion as to who had the most

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1. Ansāb, V, 38.

2. Firaq, 650.

3. Abū Tammām, 157.



right or who would be most suitable for the people. There was no agreement on a single person and they reached a deadlock. Each group consequently had to support the candidate who suited them. They wanted a ruler who possessed piety, generosity, justice, capability and so on, and had fully the right by law to be caliph. Poetry had a role to play in this issue, and the poets adopted specific terms of argument in order to deal with this sensitive matter. All these above virtues were dwelt on by the poets in order to persuade the masses to support one leader or another. The poets covered up the truth where necessary and tried to make a convincing case for supporting one leader or another. For example, a poet who supported the Umayyads accused the successful candidate of conspiring with the rebels against the former caliph in order to replace him in power, thus implying that his succession was invalid.

*You assassinated him (the caliph) in order to replace  
him, as the satraps of Persia assassinated Kisra<sup>1</sup>  
(Chosroes).* (34)

In fact the caliph was not treacherously assassinated but openly killed, his killers coming from outside Medina and separating him from the rest of the people. Nevertheless, the poet emphasised the idea of assassination in order to

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1. Aghānī, V, 110. <sup>c</sup>Abd ar-Rahmān b. al-Hakam.

gain the sympathy of the people. Moreover, it was the people who killed <sup>C</sup>Uthmān who chose <sup>C</sup>Alī to replace him, not the Banū Hāshim as implied by the poet.

Another example which was used to undermine the people's opinions may be seen in the following lines by a poet<sup>1</sup> who supported the elected caliph. He exploits the presence of the Prophet's widow, <sup>C</sup>Ā'isha, on the battlefield with the rebels at the Battle of the Camel while their own wives were hidden in Medina in a safe refuge.

*You carefully protected your wives and led your mother;<sup>2</sup> (35)*  
*this is unfair treatment.*

*She was ordered to trail her skirts indoors, but she went rapidly to the wild deserts.<sup>3</sup>*

The implication of this is that the rebels were unfaithful to the commands of Islam.

Another example of the influence of poetry and its contribution in society as a whole is contained in a narrative which Abū al-Faraj ascribes to <sup>C</sup>Ubayda b. Hilāl, a prominent leader of the Khawārij. He was fighting the Umayyad troops and when they arranged a ceasefire he asked some of them to join him for a conversation, and then asked them what they would like him to recite for them, Qur'ān or

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1. Jāriya b. Qudāma, as-Sa<sup>C</sup>dī; Ṭabarī, IV, 460.

2. The prophet's wives were regarded as the mothers of the faithful and were ordered to be kept in Medina.

3. Ṭabarī, IV, 460.

poetry. They always preferred poetry and he would recite poems until they were satisfied.<sup>1</sup> Although Abū al-Faraj does not mention which kind of poetry he recited it seems obvious that in such circumstances he would recite the poetry which would serve the purposes of his beliefs and which would support their political implications with the aim of persuading them to join the Khawārij. It is noteworthy that even an extreme sect such as the Khawārij recognised the significant role of poetry and indeed were famous for their expertise in the subject. Because of its simplicity it could reach the feelings of the people and was the easiest way of making contact with the masses. The most outstanding arguments, however, which confirm the role of poetry as a vital political instrument were conducted by the poets during the conflict between <sup>C</sup>Alī and Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya.

It may be sufficient to select two poems as specimens of the poetry which was exchanged between the caliph and the leader of the opposition while the peace negotiations were in progress. They always attached to the end of their correspondence poems in which they summarised their views. According to the reports of Nasr b. Muzāhim in his book Waq<sup>C</sup>at Siffīn there were two official poets, one in each party, each of whom was responsible for providing

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1. Aghānī, VI, 142.

political retorts in accordance with his party's opinions. One was Ka<sup>C</sup>b b. Ju<sup>C</sup>ayl, the poet of Syria, and the other was an-Najāshī, the poet of Iraq. These poems demonstrate how both poets presented their arguments and managed to deal with this very complex situation.

First Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya sent a letter to <sup>C</sup>Alī protesting against his adoption of the title of caliph without securing general agreement, and attached to his letter a poem by Ka<sup>C</sup>b which contained the general ideas of the Syrians and explained their view of the problems as follows:

*I perceive that Syria hates the rule of Iraq, and the  
people of Iraq hate Syrians.* (36)

*Each one hates the other, and regards this hatred as a  
religion.<sup>1</sup>*

These lines seem to imply that the primary aim of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya at this stage was simply to establish the autonomy of Syria. He would not perhaps wish to make his position quite clear at this stage but the poem successfully manages to imply the views of the Syrians, which were that if the caliph would accept this autonomy they would agree to accept him as a caliph. The poem bases the Syrians' demands on the ground of the difficulty of harmonising two regional peoples who hated one another. The poet goes on to make this clear in the following lines:

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1. Siffin, 63.



They say that <sup>c</sup>Alī is their Imām, we say that (37)  
we accept the son of Hind [as our leader].

Each are pleased with what they have, and they regard  
what is in their hand as fat even though it may be  
meagre.<sup>1</sup>

The poet deliberately goes further and criticises the  
caliph for his partiality:

There is no censure against <sup>c</sup>Alī except that he (38)  
gathers criminals to him.

And today prefers guilty people and has removed the  
penalty of capital punishment (qisās) from murderers.<sup>2</sup>

Eventually he concludes his poem with ironic lines alleging  
that the caliph does not sincerely want to apply the Islamic  
law against criminals:

When he is asked he raises doubt, and makes the answer (39)  
obscure to the questioners.

He expresses neither satisfaction nor anger and he  
neither forbids nor enjoins.

It (the murder)<sup>3</sup> neither grieves him nor makes him  
happy, but he must have (one of the two emotions)  
after that.<sup>4</sup>

When <sup>c</sup>Alī received the poem he handed it to his poet and  
ordered him to reply. The poet of <sup>c</sup>Alī took the poem  
line by line and refuted it, adding that <sup>c</sup>Alī alone was  
qualified for the caliphate.

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1. Siffīn, 63.

2. Siffīn, 63.

3. The poet here refers to death of <sup>c</sup>Uthmān.

4. Siffīn, 63.

O Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya, abandon impossible things; God has  
already brought about that which you fear. (40)

<sup>c</sup>Alī marched to you accompanied by the people of  
al-Hijāz and the people of Iraq. What are  
you going to do?

They who defeated the mobs of az-Zubayr, Talha and  
the assembly of those who break their promise.

They swore that they would make Syria a present of  
refractory war.

Which will make the forelock prematurely grey and  
pregnant women miscarry.

Even if you dislike the kingship of Iraq we are  
pleased with that which you dislike.

Are you not ashamed that you have compared <sup>c</sup>Alī and  
his supporters to the son of Hind?

<sup>c</sup>Alī is the first of men after the Prophet and the  
close kinsman of the Prophet in this world.

And his son-in-law; who is equal to him on a day which  
make generations grey (with fear).<sup>1</sup>

These two poems demonstrate that poetry had  
by this time become an instrument for prosecuting political  
arguments and could express a certain point of view which  
could attract supporters throughout the state. As a result  
the leaders had to mobilise as many poets as possible to  
increase their influence over the people. For their part,  
the poets came from the grassroots of their society and  
knew well the language which the masses would understand,  
and were careful to draw an acceptable picture of the

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1. Siffin, 65.

leaders whom they supported. They always described whomever they supported as one who would satisfy the people and in the same way they attempted to take away every virtue from the opposition leaders. For instance an-Nābigha al-Ja<sup>c</sup>dī, one of the supporters of <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, described him as follows:

*When you assumed command of us you reminded us of  
as-Siddīq, <sup>c</sup>Uthmān and al-Fārūq, and the poorest  
were satisfied.*<sup>1</sup> (41)

An opposing poet gave a different portrait of the same man saying:

*You tell us that one mouthful would satisfy you and  
that your stomach was one span or less.  
But when you get hold of something you gnaw at it  
as the fire gnaws the wood of the lote-tree (sidr).*<sup>2</sup> (42)

Poems of this sort travelled everywhere and were taken as true, and the leaders were frightened of the poems which were composed against them, since they reduced their popularity. To the same extent they were delighted to have poems supporting them which would enhance their reputation. It was not possible for all people to be close to the leaders to know them well, and therefore the impression which the poetry conveyed affected the mind of masses who would support one leader or another according

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1. Aghānī, V, 25.

2. Murūj, III, 75.

to his good reputation. The effectiveness of this weapon made the leaders most anxious to have many poets beside them.

## THE TRIBAL POETS

The tribes made up the backbone of the population. They were involved in politics since they were gathered under the supreme authority of the state. As was mentioned in previous chapters, the tribes under the Umayyad caliphate consisted of large confederations of tribes such as Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylān, Rabī<sup>C</sup>a, Muḍar, Khindif, Yemen, Qaḥṭān and so on. These above names were political organisations within the concept of the tribal system and also needed to find support from poets. Thus for instance such a distinguished leader as an-Nu<sup>C</sup>mān b. Bashīr showed awareness of the role of poets in this period when he introduced a Yemeni poet, A<sup>C</sup>shā Hamdān to the Yemen of Syria, saying to them "this is the poet of Yemen and its voice", and asking them to give him financial support.<sup>1</sup> Certain poets devoted their energies to safeguarding their tribe's honour and to presenting their tribe's opinions. For example, when the Yemeni contingent was deployed by sea and their rivals, Qays, were deployed by land, Yemen inspired their poet to protect against this discrimination. The poet

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1. Aghānī, XVI, 7.



composed a poem which urged his people to disobey this unjust order saying:

*O, people who have gathered at Acre are you people  
or camels.* (43)

*Are Qays left securely at home while we are riding  
the stormy sea?*<sup>1</sup>

The poem soon reached the court and the caliph withdrew his orders and expressed his apologies to them, saying that he did not intend to cause trouble to them but had made this arrangement because he knew of their loyalty to him, while Qays were disloyal. Certain poets considered themselves defenders of tribal interests. Al-Farazdaq always mentions in his poems that he is a poet of Tamīm and its ambassador to the Umayyad court.<sup>2</sup> Al-Akhtal was one of the most resolute tribal poets who never compromised with Taghlib's adversaries. His presence at the Umayyad court was considered to serve his tribe's advantage.<sup>3</sup> The third famous poet who was concerned with politics and sincerely served his tribe's cause was ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī. Ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī gave his readers a vivid picture of Bedouin life, describing the miserable situations of his tribe, the Banū Numayr, a part of Qays, and the reason for their involvement with the movement of Ibn az-Zubayr. His poems were

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1. Aghānī, XX, 172.

2. Naqā'id, I, 366.

3. Aghānī, XII, 200.

abundant in criticism and he condemned the misbehaviour of the zakāt collectors. He frequently paid visits to Damascus complaining about the harsh treatment given to his tribe, describing the poverty of the Bedouin at the time and telling the court that they were Arabs who regarded giving alms as a divine command from God which they had to pay, but that those who were sent to collect it were harsh, untrustworthy people, who compelled the poor to pay illegal zakāt by harsh methods.<sup>1</sup> He concluded the explanation of his grievance by saying that if the caliph did not prevent this kind of harassment they might find another alternative. The caliph eventually acceded to his demand and promised to reform the situation.

#### THE FUNCTION OF POETS IN THE EARLY Umayyad Period

When Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya eventually took over, the poets received advantage commensurate with their contribution. He was fully aware of the role which they could play, and was anxious to make sure that they were satisfied with his policies in order to ensure their support. He showed extreme tolerance toward the poets,<sup>2</sup> and listened even to their criticism.<sup>3</sup> For example, the poet most opposed to

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1. Dīwān, ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī, 229. Poem No. 58.

2. An-Naqā'id, I, 608

3. Ansāb, IV, 97.

him was an-Nābigha al-Ja<sup>C</sup>dī. The governor of Medina confiscated his properties, and an-Nābigha went to Damascus to complain about this unfair treatment, threatening that he could take revenge, as these lines demonstrate:

*If you take my fortune and my family away on a false accusation, I am a veteran used to fighting.* (44)

*I will be patient in the face of whatever unpleasant thing happens to me except injustice; if injustice is done to me I will get angry (i.e. I will fight).<sup>1</sup>*

Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya consulted the governor as to whether or not he could return his properties. The governor advised him not to do so. Then Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya told him that he was not paying sufficient attention to poets who could produce poems which could spread rapidly among the people and could cause harm to the caliph's reputation. Another example of the power of political poetry was seen when the caliph proposed to name his son as a successor to the caliphate. He found it very difficult to approach the people directly, and so had to ask the poets to deal with this difficult political problem. They successfully managed to present a plausible justification.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Aghānī, V, 27.

2. See chapter 1, 15.

The golden age, however, of political poetry was the reign of <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik, who officially recognised poets and gave them status as an intellectual group,<sup>1</sup> awarding some of them the title of Shā<sup>C</sup>ir Amīr al-Mu<sup>C</sup>minīn. Moreover, if some poets showed extraordinary qualities outside Syria, the governor of this region would have to persuade the poet to go to see the caliph and to praise him.<sup>2</sup>

Even his opponents who no doubt hated Umayyad sovereignty had access to the caliph's court, bringing their panegyric poems which were written in apparent support of the Umayyad cause. They had to pay visits to Damascus regularly, to be received there. Their poems which supported the caliph were then released in order to be spread throughout the country.

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1. Ibn al-Kalbī, 155.

2. Dīwān Kuthayyir, Intro, p.38.



Chapter 6

T H E   S O C I A L   P R O B L E M S

## Chapter 6

### T H E   S O C I A L   P R O B L E M S

When the Medinans accepted the leadership of Quraysh after the death of the Prophet, the latter became a ruling tribe. The tribes throughout the Arabian peninsula revolted against this leadership, but the authority of the Quraysh was firmly established, and those who led the revolt were regarded as unreliable people, who were not competent to lead. Consequently, certain prominent leaders of tribes were not given opportunities to lead,<sup>1</sup> and many of the civil and military leaders came to be Qurayshites.

The governors were Qurayshites while the tribesmen became subjects and soldiers. However, as long as rulers and the subjects were engaged in war with the Persian and Byzantine empires, both were absorbed in establishing themselves in the newly-conquered lands. A period of twenty five years of consecutive conquests ensued in which the Quraysh strengthened their superiority over the other Arab tribes. In addition to this the only possible way to unite the various tribal confederations in practice was for them to be led by the Quraysh.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Tabarī, III, 489,

2. There are many examples of irreconcilable tribal differences compelling the Arabs to choose leaders from Quraysh; see for example the events related in Tabarī, IV, 321 and Al-Fitna, 188.

The next generation grew up in a quite different atmosphere. On one hand those belonging to Quraysh were brought up in relative prosperity, since their fathers had accumulated magnificent fortunes and gained high positions. The social attitudes of the Quraysh became full of pride and they considered themselves superior to the tribes. On the other hand, the wealth and superiority of the Quraysh were resented by the new generation of other tribes who did not enjoy such privileges. They believed that it was their fathers who were the original conquerors of the new land whose income went into the hands of the Quraysh to uphold their way of life.<sup>1</sup> The result of this situation was that the more intellectually aware members of the tribes envied the rich status enjoyed by the Quraysh. They, in turn, tried to arouse the interests of their fellow tribesmen in order to instigate seditious activities against the beneficiaries. In time the people began to assert their right to a fair and reasonable share of power and wealth; this led to an open challenge which resulted in disunity within the state. <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. al-Hurr blamed the Quraysh for this trouble which shattered state unity, and urged the young tribesmen to fight against their arrogance.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See for example the dispute between Sa<sup>c</sup>īd b. al-<sup>c</sup>As and the Kūfans, Tabarī, IV, 323.
  2. Tabarī, VI, 128.

It should be pointed out that the main issue which affected the stability and security of the Arabs at this period was in fact the differing opinion about the caliphate and who should be eligible for it. Nevertheless, the gap which was created between the wealthy upper classes and the rulers on one side, and between the tribes on the other, contributed much in prolonging this period of dissent. Challengers for power arose among the Quraysh themselves, and the tribes made good use of this disorder and tried to turn it to their own advantage by helping one Qurayshi leader against another.

However some sincere Muslims tried to enlighten people about the reality of this struggle, saying that it was irresponsible behaviour in which Quraysh was indulging in order to gain the leadership for one or another of their factions. Abū Mūsā al-Ash<sup>c</sup>arī addressed the people of Kūfa in an impassioned speech before they went to fight for one or other of the Qurayshite leaders involved in the fighting which led to the Battle of the Camel. He tried to persuade them not to take part, and to make them realise that Quraysh were fighting for their own interests, not for the interests of Islam as a whole.

"Sheathe your swords, shorten your spears, let go your arrows, cut your bowstrings and stay home. Leave Quraysh - since they have insisted on leaving



Medina and ignoring the 'ulamā' about the leadership - to sort out their own problems, and to bridge their own gaps. If they do so, it will be better for them, and if they refuse to, it is themselves whom they harm. It is their own cooking oil which they pour on to their skins. Accept my advice as sincere, and do not think that I am trying to deceive you. Obey me, and your faith and your worldly good will be safe, and those who are responsible for this discord will suffer in its heat."<sup>1</sup>

With the process of time, discontent spread rapidly, particularly in Iraq. The caliph attempted to deport the most outspoken people to Syria, hoping that his governor there could silence them. When the governor received them almost all of their criticism was directed against the Quraysh, and mainly concerned with certain crucial points, such as where the revenue should go.<sup>2</sup> This issue remained completely unsolved and it created problems for both the Quraysh and the tribes. Later on, when Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiyā established himself firmly in power over the people, he applied the policies which the Quraysh had argued for, namely that they as rulers were entitled to take the state revenues and spend them in the furtherance of their policies.

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1. Quoted by M. Dawla, Abū Mūsā al-Ash<sup>c</sup>arī, 204.

2. Tabarī, IV, 323; Al-<sup>c</sup>Asabiyya, 268.

Al-Balādhurī records him arguing with Sa<sup>c</sup>sa<sup>c</sup> b. Sawhān, saying "the land is owned by God, and I am his caliph, so that whatever I take I have the right to take it, and whatever I leave to the people is because of my courtesy." Sa<sup>c</sup>sa<sup>c</sup> told him that he was mistaken. He and the people were equal, the difference between them only being that he could support his claim by force since he was the caliph.<sup>1</sup>

The tribes felt that they had to resist this absolute authority of the Quraysh rulers in order to ensure their continued existence as social units. This seems to have been a factor in the repeated uprisings of the period, which were largely used by ambitious leaders of tribes who were able to turn the discontent to the advantage of their own cause, using various battle-cries in order to attract the insurgents' attention.<sup>2</sup> At the same time hostility among the Quraysh themselves was rapidly growing and contributed greatly to the increase in state disunity. The tribal leaders took advantage of this disunity and asserted their rights to certain regions. This encouraged others to follow in the same path, so that a large part of the state was in effect dominated by local tribal rulers.

The revolt of al-Mukhtār is an example of this, for he admitted to followers that he thought that he had as

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1. Ansāb, IV, 17.

2. Akhbār, 307.

much right to power as other Arab leaders such as <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, Najda, Mus<sup>C</sup>ab and Ibn Khāzim, who had successfully occupied parts of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Another factor which affected the minds of the people was their longing for a return to the justice which, they believed, the first two successors of the Prophet had instituted during their terms of office. They compared this rule of justice with the corruption and oppression with which they felt themselves to be surrounded, and longed for a ruler who could rule like Abū Bakr and <sup>C</sup>Umar.

An-Nābigha puts this attitude well in the following lines:

*O grave of the Prophet and his two companions, what great (45)  
help would you offer us if you could hear our cry for  
help?*

*O, may God bless you, but not bless our leaders.<sup>2</sup>*

The ruler's reply to those who had accused them of deviating from the lines of the Orthodox Caliphs is that the people were not aware of the realities of the situation and they did not recognise the changes which had taken place in society.<sup>3</sup> Although this argument clearly had a great deal

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1. Tabarī, V, 572, Akhbār, 307.

2. Aghānī, V, 26.

3. Bayān, I, 144.

of justification, many people were dissatisfied by the actual changes which had come about, and regarded claims of this sort as mere excuses. The rulers no doubt misused their power and the public income, did not consider the rights of the people or raise men to high rank unless they were one of their own supporters or relatives, and they did not pay money to those who were entitled to have it.<sup>1</sup> Instead they used state funds in their own interests, that is, to pay their supporters, relatives and certain prominent leaders or families in order to keep them silent. Accordingly, the amounts paid varied, depending on which confederation was in with the Umayyads, and members of these tribes had access to the top ranks. Worse than this, the regime used money and property to hire the loyalty of opportunists.<sup>2</sup>

Since the relationships between the Quraysh and their supporters were built upon material consideration, the ultimate survival of their dynasty remained dependent

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1. See poem No 63, Naqā'id, II, 608.

2. Thus Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya had to buy the loyalty of the leaders of Baṣra for one hundred thousand dirhams each. When he paid al-Ḥutāt al-Mujāshī<sup>c</sup>ī less than this sum on grounds that he was a loyal supporter of the Umayyads whose allegiance did not need to be bought, the latter insisted on his loyalty being rewarded also, see Ansāb, IV, 76.



on such payments at all times, since those who offered their support because of money would withdraw it if they were not paid.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, those whose rights were taken from them because of their political position would not accept deprivation forever, and would tend to support any revolutionary leader who appeared. This is the situation which dominated the Umayyad period, creating parties and tribal competition and casting problems over the entire Umayyad period.

At this point I would prefer to summarise the basic aims of each party before entering upon a discussion of tribal rivalries under the caliphal system and specific caliphs.

#### THE KHAWĀRIJ

During <sup>c</sup>Alī's rule, after the battle of Siffīn, a huge number of his troops, including the same zealots who had forced arbitration upon him, now cast him off because he had accepted this arbitration. The real reason why this party appeared so suddenly is not clear, particularly as we know that they forced <sup>c</sup>Alī to accept arbitration in the first place. Most of the Khawārij, however, were from the biggest tribe of Tamīm. The role of the Quraysh was very irksome to them. They were tired of having a new governor from the Quraysh every year who forced them to fight other

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1. An example of this is the way in which the tribal leaders in Iraq threatened to withdraw their support from Mukhtār if he would not pay them in cash down. See Tabarī, VI, 68.

Quraysh leaders. Eventually, only the Quraysh had authority while the tribes regarded themselves as soldiers. The lines below are a simple example which illustrate the hostility between the Quraysh and the tribes:

*Every year we have a new ruler from the Quraysh whether  
he is a new one or a former adviser.* (46)

*We have a fire to burn us so we are frightened, but  
they (Quraysh) do not have one so they are not  
afraid.*<sup>1</sup>

The tribesmen must have wondered why they should kill one another in order to keep the Quraysh in a position of power. In the following lines, an anonymous poet bewails the young men who lost their lives for the sake of the Quraysh:

*O eye, cry with a stream of tears for the choice youth  
of the Arabs.* (47)

*Nothing harmed them except, on the day of death, the question,  
which one of the two Qurayshite governors was victorious?*<sup>2</sup>

The Khawārij party came into existence to reject the authority of the Quraysh and to reassert the authority of the Arabs and Muslims. Indeed, in theory, the Quraysh could not be superior to other Arabs or Muslims, since authentic Islam does not discriminate between Muslims, who all have the same rights. The Khawārij took the main

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1. Aghānī, V, 133.

2. Basra, 151.

pillars of Islam and acted in accordance with their understanding of them, holding to the verse of the Qur'ān which says:

"The noblest of you in the sight of God is the best in conduct."<sup>1</sup>

Tradition states that there is no preference for Arabs over non-Arabs, except the preference of piety.<sup>2</sup> The poetry of the Khawārij reflects and emphasises their views. Thus the following lines illustrate their belief that the only valid relationship is that of faith:

*Whoever belongs to this religion will gain my sympathy, (48)*  
*and I will give him a share of my inheritance.*  
*My God knows that I prefer them to my relatives, even*  
*my paternal and maternal uncles, in order to*  
*please Him.*<sup>3</sup>

The poetry of the Khawārij abounds in complaints of lack of justice, lack of righteous leadership and lack of sympathy. Thus <sup>c</sup>Imrān b. Ḥittān complains about the absence of these virtues in his society as follows:

*How long shall we not see justice done in order to (49)*  
*make our lives easier, or support for the righteous?*<sup>4</sup>

The same poet says elsewhere:

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1. Sūra, XLIX, verse, XIII.
  2. al-Jāmi<sup>c</sup> li-Ahkām al-Qurān, XIII, 342.
  3. Khawārij, 10.
  4. Khawārij, 26.

*I was your neighbour for one year in which no one  
could frighten me neither people nor jinn.* (50)

*Until you intend to do good to me, then fear of  
son of Marwān will overtake me as it has  
overtaken other people.*

*If I were to ask forgiveness one day of a tyrant,  
you would be at the head secretly and  
publicly.<sup>1</sup>*

Another line by the same poet is:

*They drove me out of the country and said "There  
is no justice for you from the government".<sup>2</sup>* (51)

<sup>c</sup>Amr b. Dhukayna says:

*We sold out our souls for the religion of God, in  
order to gain the greatest honour with him.* (52)

*We forbid the governors from acting immoderately with  
the sharp-edged sword - this act will be sufficient  
to hinder and forbid them.<sup>3</sup>*

The fear of reprisals and oppression by the government also runs through the poetry of the Khawārij. They regarded the Umayyads as an illegal regime who would deal harshly with them if they were captured, so that they had either to flee or to hide their activities, at least while they were in Iraq. Mirdās b. Udayya, a prominent leader of the Khawārij, reveals his feelings in these lines:

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1. Aghānī, XVIII, 53.

2. Aghānī, XVIII, 58.

3. Khawārij, 69.



*The rulers assert injustice and show consensus in  
oppressing the righteous people in treachery and  
disbelief.* (53)

*O, my God, for your sake - if you would like to  
change this situation - (we will bear) whatever  
the sons of Sakhr do to us.*

*Although the land is vast they have narrowed it; they have  
left us terrified of them and unable to settle down.<sup>1</sup>*

The Khawārij did not believe in the importance of descent and did not regard themselves as divided between Arabs and non-Arabs. Since they were Muslims, <sup>C</sup>Isā b. <sup>C</sup>Ātik al-Khattī claimed Islam as his family, refusing to name his actual lineage:

*My father is Islam and I have no father except it,  
even if others are proud of their attribution to  
Bakr and Tamīm.* (54)

*Both support those who claim alliance to them in  
order to link them to a noble descent.*

*There is no nobility even if they have pure descent,  
but the pious man is he who is noble.<sup>2</sup>*

This rejection of tribal connections sprang from the sincere belief that descent had nothing to do with capability or piety, on which the Khawārij based their beliefs.

The outcome of their belief led them to the conclusion that the leadership of the Muslims was not restricted to any one tribe or family. This served the

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1. Khawārij, 15.

2. Khawārij, 13.

purposes of the Khawārij, in that it meant that the Quraysh had no right to rule the people on the grounds that they belonged to the tribe of the Prophet, as the following line indicates:<sup>1</sup>

*If you say that you are the clan and family of the Prophet, then Christians are the clan of Jesus, son of Mary.*<sup>2</sup> (55)

<sup>c</sup>Imrān b. Ḥittān extended this idea and composed a satirical poem referring to two famous leaders of his time, each of whom tried to enlarge the number of his followers, even asking strangers to join their groups. When they asked the poet whether he belonged to one ancestor or another his reply was a poem which denounced these pre-Islamic values and announced his relation to Islam, not to ancestors:

*I dwell with people whom God will keep together, who yield nothing but glory when they are squeezed.* (56)

*From Azd, the Azd are excellent people, Yemenis who are closely related when people relate their lineage.*

*And I came to feel secure among them, not like those who came to me and asked whether I was from Rabī<sup>c</sup>a, Mudar.*

*Or from Qahtān, such nonsense as that which Rūh and his friend Zufar asked.*

*Both would be glad (if I declared) kinship which would make me close to him, although they have a large number of followers.*

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1. Khawārij, 13.

2. Shāyib, 277.

*We are the sons of Islam and God is one; the dearest  
of the slaves of God, to God, is the one who is  
thankful.*<sup>1</sup>

In their rejection of the principle of descent or family when choosing a ruler, they maintained that it was up to the people to choose the ruler - even a slave had that right.<sup>2</sup> In this respect the Khawārij had the same opinion as the Prophet and his orthodox caliphs. For instance, Abū Bakr was selected by the majority of Medinans and the selection of <sup>C</sup>Umar and <sup>C</sup>Uthmān was ratified by them. Moreover, the prophet appointed his slave Usāma to lead a Muslim troop while Abū Bakr and <sup>C</sup>Umar were under his leadership. When <sup>C</sup>Umar was asked to recommend somebody to succeed him he said that if Sālim, the slave of Abū Hudhayfa were still alive he would have named him. The poetry of the Khawārij is poetry which is devoted to their faith. Regardless of the temptations of life they remained sincere and idealistic and never deflected from their political theory which was located at the extremist end of the spectrum.

"They hated all those who restricted the caliphate to a particular house or tribe or even race .... In short, they hated everyone who was impious according to their own erratic notions of piety or who wrongfully exercised power .... They fought with

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1. Aghānī, XVIII, 55.

2. Tabarī, VI, 287. Milal, II, 116.

utmost bravery, and died on the battlefield, chanting thrilling Rajaz verses, or stole away to a safer land where they hoped to find a society after their own heart ... The world or its ties or pleasures had no attraction for them. This apathy made them very reckless in their dealings and acts.

They were mostly, and especially in their early careers, members of the tribe, Tamīm, which had been traditionally famous for its poets and orators .... The poetry which they composed is, on the one hand, unsophisticated and naturally graceful, and on the other, intensely vigorous and impressive ....

They composed poetry, rather, it flowed from their lips usually on military occasions, when they attacked an enemy or courted death or fell into captivity. The feelings to which their poet gives expression at such times are his desire for fighting, his passion for death, his indifference towards life, his longing for martyrdom, his hankering after paradise."<sup>1</sup>

The outcome of such a hardline position was that the Khawārij remained unacceptable to society, as they did not wish to compromise with others. Ultimately they disappeared as an important force before the downfall of the Umayyad monarchy, although pockets of them survive to the present day.

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1. K.A. Fariq, "Umayyad poetry, its political and social backgrounds", Islamic Culture, XXIX, 1955.



## THE SHI<sup>C</sup>ITE PARTY

In discussing the Shi<sup>C</sup>ites, we are not here concerned with the few contemporaries of the Prophet who believed in the priority of <sup>C</sup>Alī as a successor to Muhammad, since the term Shi<sup>C</sup>ite in its fully developed sense cannot really be applied to them.

The Shi<sup>C</sup>ites as a theological and political party originate from the time when the Khawārij criticised <sup>C</sup>Alī's decision to consent to arbitration in the battle of Siffīn. The Khawārij told their colleagues among <sup>C</sup>Alī's troops that he had made a mistake when he accepted arbitration, but these colleagues argued in favour of his decision. The main demand of the Khawārij later on was to be free of the leadership of <sup>C</sup>Alī. His more devoted followers, however, rejected this, and offered their own explanation of the circumstances, employing many arguments in order to persuade others to sympathise with <sup>C</sup>Alī. The outcome of this was that the Iraqis were divided over this issue into two political groups: those for <sup>C</sup>Alī's policy and those against it.

<sup>C</sup>Alī was shortly afterwards assassinated and all now came under the rule of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya, who forced both rival groups to accept his authority. The defeat of the people of Iraq, however, by Syrian troops, gave Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya the upper hand over them, and his rule was regarded to some extent as a repression of the people of Iraq.

The Iraqis believed that the caliph and his governors treated them as defeated enemies. This belief was reinforced by the policy of the Umayyads, which was designed to serve the interests of a ruling class. It is possible to regard Umayyad policy as primarily aimed at ensuring stability and security in society, but the Iraqis considered these changes as a kind of tyranny which was symbolic of absolute authority.<sup>1</sup> Worse than this, the governors of the region pressed the application of these changes by whatever means possible, which resulted in the people resisting their authoritarian behaviour in order to safeguard their own interests. In particular, the people of Kūfa were the main losers, since Kūfa had been the temporary capital of the previous caliph. They did not fully submit to the new regime and did not consent to its policies. When the Kūfans' ill feeling reached the stage of open revolt, the governors suppressed them, in the belief that firm treatment was the best way of dealing with them.<sup>2</sup> This was accompanied by an economic recession following on the civil war in which the revenue was inadequate to meet the needs of a huge population, many of whom were idle.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hajjāj

2. Ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>d, VI, 218.

3. Kāmil, IV, 309, Hajjāj, 213.

Fighting had ceased, as had conquest, which led to the strengthening of the two main parties, the Khawārij and the Shi<sup>c</sup>ites.

The Khawārij openly revolted against the Umayyad regime and fought against them. The Shi<sup>c</sup>ites appeared quite moderate in comparison, although both groups disagreed with the Umayyad regime. They also disagreed among themselves about the right person for office. The Khawārij believed in the right of all members of the Muslim community to be eligible as candidates for office,<sup>1</sup> while the Shi<sup>c</sup>ites restricted the right of office to the Ahl al-Bayt. The basic beliefs of the Shi<sup>c</sup>ite party were that the caliphate is a divine office and it is not up to the people to form a government but that this is the right of the Prophet's family,<sup>2</sup> who are his successors. Thus they were supporters of the right of <sup>c</sup>Alī's descendants to be the sole eligible caliphs. Their problem was that they had no concrete evidence which their opponents would accept as convincing in support of such claims, nor did they have the power to impose their demands on their opponents. Thus, they had to attempt to convince people by logical argument. They took the mistakes of the Umayyads and the

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1. Tabarī, VI, 287.

2. Shāyib, 224.

tyrannical behaviour of the governors as examples in order to win the support of the majority of the people. Although they managed to present an acceptable theory, the masses remained obedient to the government, which was able to put down the rival groups.<sup>1</sup> The Shi<sup>C</sup>ites suffered for their stand against the regime, and so they went underground and formed an opposition to the Umayyads dedicated to the Ahl al-Bayt. Their political poetry was entirely devoted to explaining the rights of <sup>C</sup>Alī's offspring to be the lawful rulers and to praising those who were giving up their lives in order to resist injustice and the oppression of rulers. Indeed, the Shi<sup>C</sup>ite poets, in particular al-Kumayt, were the first to modify poetry in order to expound a political theory in accordance with their point of view with any kind of systematic argumentation.<sup>2</sup> For instance, they stressed the idea of wasīyya,<sup>3</sup> or wilāya, claiming that the prophet had introduced <sup>C</sup>Alī to the people as his successor.<sup>4</sup> Thus al-Kumayt says:

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1. Aghānī, XXI, 384. Thus al-Farazdaq is said to have advised al-Husayn that the hearts of the Iraqis were with him, but that their swords were with the Umayyads.
  2. Such as Hāshimiyyāt.
  3. Aghānī, VII, 239.
  4. Aghānī, VII, 254.



*And on the day of the spreading trees, of Ghadīr*

(57)

*Khumm, he (the Prophet) made it clear that succession was (CAlī's) if he (the Prophet) were obeyed.*

*But men were sold it (the caliphate, amongst themselves) and I have never seen such an invaluable thing being sold.<sup>1</sup>*

They also exploited the argument of the Quraysh, which said that the Quraysh were the tribe of the Prophet, thus having the full right to claim his inheritance.<sup>2</sup>

The Shi<sup>C</sup>ite poets in general agreed to this idea, the implication of which was that the Quraysh based their right to the caliphate on their relation to the Prophet. They took this argument one stage further however by pointing out that it was logical that his family should be the most eligible among all the Quraysh.<sup>3</sup> If this condition was not fulfilled, they would reject the Quraysh's right to the caliphate. A few lines bearing on dispute are quoted on the following pages. They succeeded to some extent in giving a picture of the rule of justice, which they felt ought to prevail in a now oppressed community, and depicted the ideal rule of the just caliph who would apply justice instead of oppressive methods.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Hāshimiyyāt, 152.

2. Shi<sup>C</sup>r, II, 586.

3. Hāshimiyyāt, 46.

4. Murūj, III, 79.

Their polemics centred on two fundamental issues; the right of the Ahl al-Bayt as heirs of the Prophet, and the usurpation by the Umayyads of the caliphate and the harsh treatment which they meted out to their opponents.<sup>1</sup> The poetry of this party gives much attention to these issues and compares the existing rulers with the Hāshimiyya (even though the latter were not in power). This poetry took ʿAlī's reign as an example for guidance since, according to them, he had displayed absolute justice.

The poets' activities were mainly directed towards persuading the people to rise up against incompetent government, while at the same time they were keen to avenge the unlawfully killed family of the Prophet.<sup>2</sup> The poetry which supported these values had considerable political repercussions throughout the country. Shiʿite poets were largely successful in presenting their arguments, especially when they achieved consensus with the Quraysh, at least among the Qurayshite opposition - Umayyad, Zubayrite and Ahl al-Bayt - who believed that the caliphate must be reserved for the Quraysh because they were the tribe of the Prophet.

The Shiʿite poets took this point of view and developed it in order to convince people that the Quraysh

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1. Ihsān ʿAbbās introduction to Dīwān Kuthayyir, 27; Hawfī, 195.

2. Hawfī, 192.

were entitled to rule because they were relatives of the Prophet, with the added point that those who were closely related to the Prophet must have priority to the caliphate. This logical argument had its effects and thus a considerable number of people came to believe in the right of the Ahl al-Bayt.

It may be useful to quote al-Kumayt in order to find how the poetry of this period managed to represent this issue and how the poets, in particular Shi<sup>c</sup>ite poets, modified poetry to make it a polemical tool to the advantage of their own interests and party.

The Shi<sup>c</sup>ite poets broke with the traditional methods of their contemporaries who still began their poems in the traditional manner of the Qasīda, that is, describing at̄lāl, long journeys, and mentioning their amorous experiences. Thus, al-Kumayt begins one of his poems with the following prelude:

*I became overjoyed but not with desire for white ladies,       (58)*  
*nor was it amusement of mine, for is it possible*  
*for a grey man to enjoy entertainment?*  
*I have no interest in camp-sites or the*  
*remains of dwellings and no dyed finger would attract*  
*me.<sup>1</sup>*

His well-known contemporary, al-Farazdaq, when he heard these lines, said to al-Kumayt, "We and those who preceded us are

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1. Hāshimīyyāt, 27

not interested in anything more than these things which you dislike."<sup>1</sup> Al-Kumayt continued to deny all the traditional procedures of Qasīd, and instead adopted a sectarian belief and an affiliation and loyalty to his party. Thus, he would declare his support for the righteous leaders and would defend them in poems, as the following lines, addressed to the Umayyads, illustrate:

*With your seal their demands were compulsorily accepted.* (59)

*I have never seen such compulsion as this.*

He continues:

*It is by your right that the Quraysh became our leaders,* (60)

*and we have to accept the single member of them,*

*followed by two more.*

*They say "we inherited it from our father and mother".*

*But neither their father nor their mother bequeathed this to them.*

*They claim foolishly that they have binding necessary superiority over other people, but the right of the Hāshimīs is more binding.*

*They say that [the Prophet] has no inheritance; but if he had no inheritance Bakīl and Arhab would have a share in [rule].*

*And <sup>C</sup>Akk, Lakhm, as-Sakūn, Himyar, Kinda and the two groups Bakr and Taghlib.*

*And Yahābir would snatch two parts of it and <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Qays would have a considerable part too.*

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1. Aghānī, XVI, 349.



And it would be moved from Khindif to another; Qays  
would be kindled by it and would be set on fire.  
And the Ansār would not have been humiliated concerning  
it, and would not have been absent when others were  
absent.

If others but them are not entitled to have it, then  
closer relatives have more right to it.

Otherwise, make some other claim, and you will recognise  
the manes of our slender (horses) bearing us swiftly  
forward.

Why then does one squadron after another visit az-Zubayr  
and Nāfi<sup>C</sup> with attacks?<sup>1</sup>

Why do Shabīb and Qa<sup>C</sup>nab perish on our spears in an  
attempt to claim it and take it away from you?<sup>2</sup>

These few lines are typical of Shi<sup>C</sup>ite polemical poetry,  
which is made detailed in order to make people aware of  
the true position regarding the caliphate, and to publicise  
those who had the right to rule but were unable to exercise  
their right.

The Shi<sup>C</sup>ite poets went on warring against those  
who blindly supported the Umayyads. Their supporters,  
they claimed, had been deceived, and were working and dying  
for no reason, while the Umayyads were unjust rulers who did  
not even care for their supporters. Such people are  
addressed by al-Kumayt in these words:

*O, you who are kindling a fire whose light is for somebody (61)  
else, and O you who are collecting firewood in the rope  
of someone else.*<sup>3</sup>

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1. Two of the leaders of the Khawārij.

2. Hāshimiyyāt, 37.

3. Hāshimiyyāt, 54.

The other major part of the poetry of the Shi<sup>C</sup>ites was spent in chiding people who did not repent and had deviated from the right path. They always insisted that people who were not helping them had been misled and were mistaken. <sup>C</sup>Awf b. <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh al-Azdī addressed the Umma as follows:

*O, nation, which has been misguided and lost in error, (62)*  
*repent and please the highest One.*

*And say to him (al-Mukhtār) when he calls you to follow  
the right path, and even before he calls you, say to  
him, "Here we are at your service".<sup>1</sup>*

They demonstrated a cheerful attitude when they made some progress in their attempts to recover power, although later they suffered many failures; thus, al-Mukhtār made some progress in his revolt against Ibn az-Zubayr under the banner of revenge for al-Husayn. His action caused rejoicing among the poets who urged the people to help him. <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Hammām as-Sulūlī celebrated this occasion saying:

*He is calling for revenge for al-Husayn. (63)*

*His pleas were answered by Hamdānite regiments  
who came after midnight.*

*The guidance returned well to its place with good  
outcome.<sup>2</sup>*

The Shi<sup>C</sup>ite poets sometimes desperately wanted to take the law into their own hands and manifested their desire to

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1. Firaq, 377.

2. Firaq, 352: Tabarī, VI, 36.

eliminate the Marwānites, against whom they felt great vengeance and bitter hostility, as these lines illustrate:

*With it we will take our anger out on them when we  
meet each other and we will kill every obstinate  
tyrant. (64)*

*We will fix our tall spears in the sons of al-Hakam,  
and with them will make them like a harvest.*

*We will do to you the same as you did to us in  
retaliation, or we will do much more to you.*

*We will leave your dead bodies in Syria scattered  
between the dead and the outcast.<sup>1</sup>*

The other matter which the poets insisted on making visible to everybody was the abuse of public revenue. They realised the sensitivity of such an issue since every single person was an interested party, and planned to change the loyalty of the people by accusing the existing regime of misusing public revenue. In general, the poetry of this period described the poverty of the masses while the upper classes were accumulating fortunes. In particular, the Shi<sup>c</sup>ite poets were interested in raising the misuse of power and ill-treatment of society in order to rouse the anger of the people against the rulers. Several poems begin with rhetorical questions, like the following:

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1. Firaq, 356.

*. Are you and we People of the Book? If it is so, (65)  
are we correctly and justly acting in  
accordance with the Book?*

*How can it be so when we are different, two  
separate classes, you fat and we emaciated?  
While the hillsides of the land are green and  
abundant, we have a drooping hump which has  
been emaciated by drought.<sup>1</sup>*

The poem goes on to make a comparison between a shepherd who is looking after his flock of sheep and the caliph who is supposed to be looking after his subjects:

*If a flock of sheep with their lambs were treated the (66)  
same as we are treated the shepherd would never  
walk to look after the lambs.*

*We are sharpened as thin as a divining arrow  
whose back has been weakened by one who is not  
skilful.<sup>2</sup>*

The Shi<sup>C</sup>ite poetry made a great contribution to political affairs and to the formation of a religious and political party. In this way it played its part in the eventual downfall of the Umayyad dynasty.

#### THE POLITICAL POETRY OF THE RIVAL CONTENDERS FOR POWER

The acceptance of Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya as sole caliph was not accepted as a final fact. He assumed the caliphate by force

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1. Hāshimiyyāt, 117.

2. Hāshimiyyāt, 119.



rather than by the consent of the people, and this resulted in problems concerning the succession, which were compounded by the fact that he named his son as successor during his life-time. This arrangement could never be acceptable to the mass of the Arabs who were still dreaming of greater justice and the appearance of a universally acceptable leader who could gain the support of all the people. In the meantime, candidates from the senior members of Quraysh came forward who would obviously have some claim to consideration in terms of their capability and standing in Quraysh. Even those who had taken quite a moderate stance, or had taken little interest in the competition for the caliphate, were taken by surprise when Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiyā decided to nominate his son as successor. Mu<sup>c</sup>āiyā contended, with good reason, that the stability of the state depended on a smooth transference of power after his death. The people, however, were shocked by this nomination and received the news as a joke. <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. Hammām as-Sulūlī said jeeringly on this occasion:

*If you nominate Ramla or Hind we will accept her as* (67)

*Amīrat al-Mu'minūn.*

*We will accept all your sons, and even their fat  
uncle if you wish.*

*If one Kisrā dies another Kisrā will rise up.*

*We can count three - one after another.<sup>1</sup>*

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1. Ansāb, IV, 50.

In the face of such an offensive, the Umayyads did not remain idle but prepared to defend themselves against these discontented poets by encouraging other poets to write in their support. In this they had the advantage of being able to recruit poets at whatever price they demanded, as well as being able to count on their own devoted supporters. Thus the poets who appeared to support them may be classified into several categories:

- a. Those sincere supporters who believed in the right of the Umayyads to rule and whose interests coincided with those of the Umayyads.
- b. The poets who had no political interests or idealistic beliefs, but depended on the rich rewards which the Umayyads would give them.
- c. The poets who had an affiliation to a party or tribe but found it wiser to support the Umayyads bearing in mind the advantages which would be acquired.

All these tendencies are well represented in the political themes at this time.

#### THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF UmayyAD RULE

After their first collapse the Umayyads rose again after the battle of Marj Rāhit. After a short period of confusion during which no one was sure of his following, Yemen agreed to side with the Umayyads, thus strengthening their power.

The pro-Umayyad poets devoted a considerable part of their poetry to emphasising the competence of the Umayyads to assume the role of the caliphate in view of their outstanding ability. Thus al-Bu<sup>c</sup>ayth says:

*When we see that the leadership is turned upside down, (68)  
and the leaders about to become followers.*

*We wait patiently for the judgement of God; until we  
can establish it we will never agree to a non-  
Umayyad leader.<sup>1</sup>*

They maintained that God had approved the right of the Umayyads to lead them because they were pious, sincere and just. They deliberately framed their poems to demonstrate the qualifications which the office of caliphate required, as in the following lines for example:

*God thinks you the most entitled of all people to the (69)  
pulpit of the caliphate, and that is that.*

*I see that you have filled the land with justice and  
brightness while it has been in absolute darkness.*

*I see that injustice since you arose has been cut  
off by the edges of a sharp sword.<sup>2</sup>*

Since Islam and its values were essential ingredients of the dispute, the poets were instructed to characterise the caliph as a protector of Islam and faithful to its values.

Ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī says:

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1. Ansāb, V, 284.

2. Naqā'id, II, 1014.

*Umayya became the protectors of Islam and the* (70)  
*shepherds of the best values, whose faith*  
*did not go astray.*<sup>1</sup>

They were described even in this quite early period as kings and descendants of kings, thus implying that they were well trained and had inherited great experience in dealing with the affairs of the people. Al-Qutāmī addressed the Umayyads as follows:

*They are kings and the sons of kings who have taken* (71)  
*(the caliphate) and who are veteran politicians.*<sup>2</sup>

The propaganda of the poets no doubt affected the public mind, particularly when skilful poets presented a logical argument and created a pleasing picture of the Umayyad caliphs. This picture was presented not in abstract terms, but by trying to support the caliph's claims in terms such as those which the caliph had suggested - generosity, bravery, compassion, justice, honesty, morality, right conduct and so on. These virtues can be seen enumerated in a few lines delivered by al-A'shā ash-Shaybānī when he addressed the Umayyad court:

*All the Quraysh acknowledge the right of the sons of* (72)  
*Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Ās to the caliphate.*  
*The most just and the best entitled to speak in*  
*council.*

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1. *Dīwān*, ar-Rā<sup>C</sup>ī, 71. For the word qabīd in the Arabic text see *Lisān* SV qbd.

2. *Diwān*, 30.



*They will protect what they have given and help  
people in need.*

*They have more right to the caliphate in good  
times and bad.<sup>1</sup>*

The Umayyads remained a powerful dynasty for almost a century, and it is important to consider carefully the poetry which was produced in their favour. The motivation of the poets who composed political poetry supporting the Umayyads was more than mere emotional feeling, and the poets must have had in mind many other considerations which influenced them in the way in which they supported the regime, even though they may not have sincerely believed in it. Abū al-<sup>c</sup>Abbās says:

*O, sons of Umayya, I see none like you, even though. (73)*

*your opponents are numerous.*

*God gave you, despite the anger of some exalted groups.*

*Ampleness and forbearance, and when others challenge  
you the challenge harms them.<sup>2</sup>*

In addition, the caliph was described as a universally acceptable person who had a powerful reputation, and as having excellent morals.

A poem which was addressed to him was carefully designed and precise vocabulary was chosen which was appropriate to the laudatory poetry written within the

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1. Tabarī, VI, 422.

2. Firaq, 486.

limitations of the Islamic faith. The caliph is praised as commiserating with his subjects, although this commiseration does not prevent him from applying the law and keeping to its guidance. His actions are attributed to his faithful following of Islam, as the following lines by <sup>c</sup>Alī b. al-Ghudays al-Ghanawī illustrate:

*We found him hated by his enemies: but loved and praised (74)  
by his subjects.*

*He gives them generously what he has and forgives them,  
except for the religious offences of the Hudūd.*

*He is a trustee and a believer, whose commands and  
their results are always rightly-guided.*

*He is a just leader, not a tyrant, as though there  
were among us al-Siddīq or the martyr <sup>c</sup>Umar.<sup>1</sup>*

They emphasised that the caliph's succession was decreed by the will of God who had ordained his right to rule over the people, and that what the Almighty had created would not change. Jarīr makes use of this idea in his many poems which are addressed to the court of the caliph, as for example in the following lines:

*God invested you with the caliphate and gave you guidance, (75)  
and His orders will not alter.*

*You rise above other people when secret discussion troubles  
them, a lengthy matter which causes people difficulty.*

*Honours and the caliphate have been gained by  
those worthy of them, and kingship is wide and your  
bounty is generous.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Abū Tammām, 2

2. Abū Tammām, 183.

They also introduced the subject of the hereditary transmission of the caliphate, and did not hesitate to praise a son of the caliph as an heir to the throne whose great forebears had bequeathed it. The following lines are an example of this:

*Your two fathers - father and grandfather - possessed (76)  
the caliphate despite anger and obedience.*

*Your two fathers had it - then your brother became  
the third one, and on your brow is a shining  
light of kingship.<sup>1</sup>*

The poets did not compose political poems hastily, and most poems dealing with political matters show signs of great care and deliberation. According to Ibn Qutayba the caliph did not merely listen to the words of the poets but examined their poems in order to check that they were conveying his message accurately.<sup>2</sup> The poets, aware of this, trained themselves in order to meet with maximum success, choosing from several issues that which would be closest to the caliph's requirements at the time.<sup>3</sup> They searched for suitable ideas for subject matter and selected one from the many available. We may observe this in the following anecdote of Abū al-Faraj concerning <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik.

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1. Tabarī, VI, 546.

2. Shi<sup>c</sup>r, I, 490.

3. Aghānī, XX, 272. Tabaqāt, II, 541.

Kuthayyir described him as a victorious caliph who was able to subdue his rivals and take them by force. This was a description which the Arabs admired, and the caliph was glad of their respect, until another poet, al-Akhtal was presented at court and told the caliph that Kuthayyir had been wrong in his poem. Al-Akhtal attempted to convince the caliph that he had an absolute right to the caliphate, even though he had taken power by force, and accordingly he described the caliph in different terms in a poem of his own. He did not describe the caliph as an usurper of the caliphate nor as having taken it by force, as Kuthayyir had done. The caliphate was the caliph's right which he had inherited from his grandfathers and was entitled to by law. Thus, one line of Kuthayyir says:

*They did not give the caliphate readily on good terms,* (77)  
*but he took it by the edge of the Mashrafī sword.<sup>1</sup>*

On the other hand, al-Akhtal says:

*They made their commencement with the sacred month* (78)  
*and became the owners of kingship which is not*  
*uncommon nor usurped.<sup>2</sup>*

One problem which always dogged Umayyads was that their adversaries accused them of imposing an unjust and partial regime. Their partisans among the poets tried to refute

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1. Aghānī, VIII, 287. CĀ'isha, 103.

2. Aghānī, VIII, 287.



this accusation and to establish that they were just to everybody. The following lines by Kuthayyir illustrate this:

*There is no one from the east to the west of the country, from the <sup>C</sup>Arabs to the non-<sup>C</sup>Arabs, who will complain, or will say that you are the caliph who has cheated them by taking one dirham or one dīnār illegally.<sup>1</sup>* (79)

Indeed, the Umayyads managed to display considerable ability in handling their subjects and it is difficult not to give recognition to their determined defence of the unity of their state, which is all the more admirable in view of the great problems facing them in such a loosely organised society. Ibn Arṭa characterises them thus:

*They were lords who administered the state and administered excellently so that the next generation experienced great luxury. When they directed themselves to their duty they acted freely, while the ignorant and incompetent person would not be able to do so.<sup>2</sup>* (80)

#### THE POETICAL CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE SUPPORTERS OF IBN AZ-ZUBAYR AND OF MARWĀN

The most important contest for the caliphate lasted for ten years and was engaged in by <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik b. Marwān,

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1. Aghānī, VIII, 148. Dīwān Kuthayyir, 336.

2. Aghānī, II, 215.

who was supported by the Yemenis of Syria, and <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr who was in general supported by other Arabs and in particular by the coalition of the Qays in al-Jazīra and Syria. In fact, <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr emerged as if he was the sole candidate for the caliphate, as a result of the fact that the tribes were not willing to be docile followers of the Syrians and their Umayyad leadership. Furthermore, since the tribes were powerful and almost independent, none of their own leaders could exercise power over the others, and they were obliged to turn to someone like Ibn al-Zubayr for leadership. In addition, the Iraqis refused to accept the Syrian domination which had been exercised at their expense over the past twenty five years. These factors did not create an atmosphere of mutual co-operation, nor did they make for any compromise between the two major provinces, Syria and Iraq.

As mentioned above, there was no specific person who could unite the tribes, except <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr who had already proclaimed himself caliph in Mecca. Soon Qays announced their support for him while the Yemenis had to find someone from the Umayyad family to oppose the Hijāzīs as they had successfully done under Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya's leadership thirty years before.

The Yemenis feared that Ibn az-Zubayr and his Qaysite alliance would not forgive them for their support of

Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya and his son, and indeed, Ibn as-Zubayr gave no concessions when Yemen approached him in order to sound him out on his policies.<sup>1</sup>

Other tribes preferred to accept Ibn az-Zubayr, but the only point on which they were agreed was a dislike of the Umayyads and their Yemeni allies.

Thus two candidates from the Quraysh emerged initially: one was Marwān b. al-Hakam in Syria and the other <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr in Mecca. They entered into a fierce competition with one another which endured until the death of Ibn az-Zubayr ten years later in 73 AH.

This period increased the amount of political poetry between the various tribes, parties and rivals. The eventual defeat of Ibn az-Zubayr weighed the scales in favour of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik, but it might be suggested that a considerable part of the poetry which was composed to support the cause of Ibn az-Zubayr has been lost. Some parts of the poetry which have survived help us to form certain ideas about the political poetry of the period and its form. In particular, we find poems produced by the pro-Umayyad poets, who compared the Umayyads and the Zubayrites in a number of ways, for example in their generosity, justice, ability, capability, and their capacity to gain the support of the people. Another type of pro-

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1. Tabarī, V, 502.

Umayyad poetry, which forms a large proportion of this literature, is that which urged the Umayyads to march to fight Ibn az-Zubayr in order to secure their possession of the caliphate. This poetry enlightened its audience about the position of Ibn az-Zubayr and how strong this was, and also mentioned the policies which he pursued. However, the Umayyads tried to suppress poems of this type when they finally crushed their opponents. Nevertheless, what has reached us today and been handed down by reliable sources seems to give us enough evidence to reach a conclusion about the poetry of this period. The main feature of this short period of anarchy was that the people had two main contenders to choose from, each one claiming the title of caliph, and they divided their loyalty between them, having in mind the advantages which could be gained from supporting one or the other.

#### PRO-UMAYYAD POETRY

To turn first to the poetry produced by those who supported the Umayyads, for whatever reasons, we find that A<sup>C</sup>shā Rabi<sup>C</sup>a for example encourages <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik to march to fight Ibn az-Zubayr. The poet describes Ibn az-Zubayr as being ineligible for the caliphate since only Umayyads were entitled to it. Thus, for example, he says:



*The sons of az-Zubayr are in respect of the Caliphate  
like a she-camel who has been mated prematurely and  
become barren,*

(81)

*Or like weak pack-camels which have been over-loaded so  
that their load is lost.*

*Rise up to meet them, and do not be heedless of them,  
how long will you neglect those who are misled?*

*The caliphate is in you, not in them; you are still  
their support and their protector.*

*They have become like a closed lock in respect of  
good fortune, so arouse your fortune and open  
its locks.<sup>1</sup>*

These lines refer to Ibn az-Zubayr's financial policies, as a result of which expenditure was made on a regular basis and large sums of money were not lavished on poets. Because of this they insulted him when he tried to redirect the public income in order to make a fair distribution of his revenues.

This financial reform of Ibn az-Zubayr diminished the privileges which the influential classes enjoyed, in particular some tribal leaders and some poets who had been the main beneficiaries of this unequal system of distribution of wealth. Under the policy of Ibn az-Zubayr, the poets and leaders were to receive a fixed payment, whereas under the Umayyad policy there was no regulation to define how much they should be paid, and a tribal chief or a poet might be

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1. Firaq, 486.

given an amount of money whereas the tribesmen as a whole would not.

Such beneficiaries naturally rejected a policy such as that of Ibn az-Zubayr, being anxious to preserve their privileges and to defend their interests. They did not argue as to whether this reform was just or not, but directed their efforts to attempting to show that Ibn az-Zubayr was not the right person to be caliph. The poet al-Hārith al-<sup>c</sup>Atakī regarded <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr as a usurper of the caliphate when he proclaimed himself ruler in Iraq, and warned him that prominent leaders of the region would not accept his leadership. Finally he advised him to abdicate before he was deposed. His advice can be seen in the following lines:

*O son of az-Zubayr, give the caliphate back to its people, before you are deposed.* (82)

*I fear Ziyād of Iraq and the sons of Masma<sup>c1</sup> on your account.*

*Do not feel secure against treachery from al-Hārith, for there is a man whose poison is deadly.*

*I mention only the noble clans who have glory and lofty lineage.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Ansāb, V, 202.

2. These people were the distinguished leaders of the tribes of al-Basra; Ziyād b. <sup>c</sup>Āmir al-<sup>c</sup>Atakī leader of Azd al-Basra and Malik b. Mīsmā<sup>c</sup> leader of Rabī<sup>c</sup>a of al-Basra, and al-Hārith b. Qays al-Jihdimi.

The sarcastic advice contained in these lines contains an implied threat to Ibn az-Zubayr. The poet deliberately reminds the noble families of Iraq of their outstanding position and urges them to revolt against Ibn az-Zubayr in order to regain their past glories. His ultimate aim is to divide the people of Iraq so that the Umayyads' position would be strengthened.

Other effective political poetry which dealt with this crisis in the affairs of the caliphate was that which was directed by pro-Umayyad poets against the main enemy of the Umayyads, Ibn az-Zubayr himself. The poets were enthusiastic for battle and produced poems which encouraged the caliph to march on Mecca and to put an end to the Zubayrite regime. They were probably fearful of the further success of Ibn az-Zubayr, and hoped to see the decisive battle taking place. Jawwās al-Kalbī was opposed to the cautious policy of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik, and asked him to hurry on his way towards Mecca:

*O, Umayya, the breasts of the caliphate will never* (83)

*flow with milk for anybody except you.*

*Take your caliphate firmly in hand, do not allow*

*the apostates to milk its accumulated milk.*

*March to the sacred town and gird up your loins,*

*do not compromise and leave someone else*

*master of it.*

*Do not leave hypocrites in the town, unless you*

*humiliate them by the sword.<sup>1</sup>*

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1. Ansāb, V, 376.

These partisan poets were keen to record the progress of the Umayyads against their rivals step by step. They gave exaggerated descriptions in order to create propaganda, and, in addition to this, they insisted that the Umayyads were helped by the approval of God and that they ruled according to His command. This subject, namely the approval of God, is widespread throughout the poetry which was addressed to the Umayyad court. It perhaps was intended as a justification for the methods by which they had forced people to accept their leadership. The opposition had accused the Umayyads of breaching Islamic procedures of consultation, and the pro-Umayyad poets had to counteract this. The following lines by an Ansārī are an illustration of this:

*God has given you the highest position although the* (84)  
*apostates attempted to prevent it from going to you.*  
*But God insisted on leading it to you until*  
*the people placed its necklace upon your neck.<sup>1</sup>*

When the power of Ibn az-Zubayr began to decline after the death of Mus<sup>c</sup>ab it was a great occasion for the poets who rejoiced and boasted of the prowess of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik. They attributed the decisive victory which he had gained over his enemy to his capability and his ability to defeat

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1. Ansāb, V, 131.



whoever dared to oppose him, and ridiculed the incompetence of his rivals. Even those poets who had once supported Ibn az-Zubayr's cause did not hesitate to redirect their support to the Damascus court and to write panegyrics praising the caliph and denouncing his enemies. <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr al-Asadī came forward to <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik and asked for his permission to recite the following poem:

*Ibn az-Zubayr retreated backward while Umayya advanced, (85)  
until they gained the main towns.*

*You are come as the seventh arrow in the competition  
in the front of the Quraysh, like a horse shaking  
its mane.*

*You will not cease to reach every goal first, escaping  
every mistake towards glory.<sup>1</sup>*

Being so flexible the poets did not find it difficult to adjust their political position according to the circumstances in which they found themselves. They found it quite easy to build up relations with a new caliph, since this did not require more than the composition of one poem in which the poet would admit his previous errors in opposing the caliph, and by praising him in every way possible. Simultaneously he would condemn the rivals of the caliph and show great enthusiasm in his support of his new master.

To satisfy the caliph, many poets had to assert that people who once opposed him had been forced to do so

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1. Firaq, 491.

against their will and were now glad to see the enemy gone and to see the caliph victorious. The caliph did not necessarily take this seriously, but he was glad to accept any support to establish his position. This poetry had a great effect in upholding the caliph's position whether or not this was the poet's intention, and the caliph accepted what the poets said even though he must have felt that their words may not have been entirely sincere.<sup>1</sup> After <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik's final decisive victory over his rival, he took a more moderate stance toward his former opponents. He expressed good will in order to reconcile his differences with them and to forget the past. The poets were the foremost recipients of his forgiveness, and he showed himself keen to hear their words of repentance and their promises to reform. Sulaymān b. Sallām al-Hanafī describes the defeat of Ibn az-Zubayr as the result of the people's prayers to God to rescue them from unjust government and to replace it with the sons of al-Hakam:

*We prayed to a Listener, and He answered our prayers,* (86)

*and He is not deaf when the slave calls on him.*

*He relieved us from the sons of al-<sup>C</sup>Awwām when they acted unjustly, and replaced them by a just ruler from the sons of al-Hakam.*

*O Ibn az-Zubayr, (yours is) a madness for which there is no cure but the sword which cures from madness.*

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1. Ihsān <sup>C</sup>Abbās, introduction to Dīwān Kuthayyir, 38.

*Seeking rule, though its beginnings are beyond him,  
until he violated the House of God and the Haram.  
He seized the revenues of the Two Towns and used  
them for himself and did not fear the retribution  
of the Compassionate, the Lord of Retribution.*<sup>1</sup>

With the defeat of Ibn az-Zubayr, <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik had attained a significant military achievement and greatly strengthened his position. The failure of the Qurayshite challenger removed <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik's worries and his other opponents were also unsuccessful. The idea of a non-Qurayshite candidate did not attract many supporters and thus their chances of success were minimal. The potential risks that would confront the caliph now came from other members of the Umayyad family who might be prepared to contest the right to the succession. The court had welcomed the collaboration of the poets and encouraged them to expand the idea that the Umayyads had outstanding ability among the Quraysh. Now, however, the danger did not come from outside but started within the house of the Umayyads, among such groups as the Sufyānites whose father was the founder of the Umayyad caliphate,<sup>2</sup> or other prominent members of the Umayyad house who were yearning to have a significant share of authority as a reward for their services during the times

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1. Ansāb, V, 378.

2. Kāmil, I, 347.

of difficulty. It seems likely that <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik hinted to these poets, when they came to address the court with their laudatory poems, to exclude the other Umayyads and to restrict themselves to his own family group, the Banū Abī al-<sup>C</sup>Ās. There were many examples tending to support this view which may be obtained from the poetry which was composed subsequently. For instance, an-Nābigha ash-Shaybānī recited the following poem at court.

*You have removed the family of Zubayr from us, and  
had they been the rulers they would not have been  
fit.* (87)

*The sons of Abū al-<sup>C</sup>Ās are glorious, handsome, noble  
and generous people.*

*They are the best of Quraysh and the most superior of  
them, in times of both seriousness and pleasure.*

*O, as for Quraysh, you are its inheritors: you hold  
back their aggressiveness when it overflows.<sup>1</sup>*

#### ANTI-UMAYYAD POETRY OF THE PERIOD OF THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY

The Umayyads were successfully reinstated after a long struggle. However, their accession did not eliminate their adversaries. As a result of the Umayyads' victory, the poets of their opponents had to take a hard line against them, and became even more opposed to the viewpoint of the

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1. Firaq, 492.



pro-Umayyad poets. The latter regarded the Umayyad victory as a great triumph and praised them as brave statesmen who would save the state and its people. The former had a very different interpretation of this success and endeavoured to diminish the Umayyads' pride by claiming that their achievement was an example of dictatorship which would enable them to exercise even greater tyranny over the people. They maintained again and again that their succession was illegal as long as they exerted power over the people without their consent. In retaliation the Umayyad poets began to fight back in their poetry, while the opposition poets in turn launched a counter-attack against those who deliberately sought to change Islamic constitutional practices. <sup>c</sup>Alī b. al-Ghudayr al-Ghanawī put his point of view in a poem saying that if he had to admit defeat today, the coming days would bring victory. He warned that the people would not accept the sovereignty of a caliph who had imposed his authority by force. The poet insisted that the people had been compelled against their will and that they would wait to seize their freedom in the future:

*After today there will be many long days and after the  
abatement of your disorder there will be many  
disorders.* (88)

*Each dirty trick is waiting to be avenged one day,  
and on that day its consequences will descend  
upon its wretched author.*

*He is a caliph of the nation whom we have been  
compelled to accept, who acts overbearingly  
and contemptuously to those who submit.<sup>1</sup>*

As these lines show, the poetry of the adversaries of the Umayyads make a logical connection between the tyrannical manner in which the caliph demonstrated his power and the way he had assumed power. They allege that because he came to power by the edge of the sword and because he was not elected, he would not hesitate in suppressing the people, unless they fought to regain their freedom.

The opposition poets have much to say about the way in which the Umayyads came to power. They imply that they are not the rightful rulers and that the true caliph would be chosen by the people. Sometimes they hint that the right which the Umayyads had assumed was not theirs, but the right of the sons of Hāshim, which the Umayyads were not able to deny. The following lines exemplify these views:

*I ignore many things which will be reported to you  
in the future. (89)*

*I pay lip-service to the sons of <sup>c</sup>Abd-Shams, and strive  
to conceal what I sincerely believe in.*

*You are far removed from the right to occupy this office,  
and the right man is Hāshim.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Aghānī, XIX, 151.

2. Firaq, 363.

In this period the will to fight against what was regarded as oppression by governors or the caliph was still strong among the Arabs. The Arabs had enough power to retaliate if they felt that their interests or their dignity were at risk. It is clear that the Arabs did not completely submit themselves to the rule of the caliph even though he assumed undeniable authority. The following lines by Shurayk al-Hārithī are an illustration of the power of the tribes and their reaction to the caliph's authority:

(90)

*O, son of Hind do not be rude to us even though  
you have achieved your ultimate ambition.  
Even if unfortunately you have become our leader,  
we will not accept humiliation.  
Even if you come from the pinnacle of the Umayyads,  
I come from the sons of <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Madān.<sup>1</sup>*

Banū <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Madān were former kings of Najrān in the pre-Islamic period.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ansāb, IV, 97.

2. They were descended from al-Hārith b. Ka<sup>C</sup>b. In Islam they remained a distinguished family and gained a good reputation. Hassān b. Thābit praised them in the following lines; "O, those who have been given a tremendous body and power of oratory. We used to say if we saw such a man that he was like the sons of <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Madān." Dīwān Hassān, 270. Majma<sup>C</sup>, XXXVIII, 1957 401.

## THE PRO-ZUBAYRITE POETRY

<sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr was one of a group of four sons of senior leaders of the Quraysh<sup>1</sup> who had a reputation as the youngest generation of the Prophet's Companions and as descendants of the great contemporaries of Muhammad, who had served Islam and had given outstanding service during the expansion of Islam.

When Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiyā announced that he intended to nominate his successor, people expected one of these four, who were the most eligible. When he passed the four over in favour of his own son, the people did not accept his decision without protest. Ibn az-Zubayr had demonstrated a desire for power since his youth. Although his priority within the four was perhaps not the highest, his personal capability put him at their head. Nevertheless, during al-Husayn's bid for power Ibn az-Zubayr kept quiet, and

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1. Al-Husayn b. <sup>c</sup>Alī, <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>c</sup>Umar and <sup>c</sup>Abd ar-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr. These four men were the most distinguished among the Quraysh. Three of them were the sons of orthodox caliphs, while the father of <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr was a cousin of the Prophet by his aunt and his mother was a daughter of the first caliph Abū Bakr. These four men had grown up in Medina and were highly educated in the Islamic religion. All of them gained the support of the majority of the people as candidates for the caliphate, since they demonstrated good capability for such office.



encouraged him in his venture.<sup>1</sup> In the turmoil of events which started with the reign of Yazīd, Ibn az-Zubayr emerged as a potential claimant to the caliphate by using his powers of oratory. He found it easy to persuade people to accept his point of view, particularly about their right to be consulted in the choice of a caliph by means of shūrā, which he promised to institute if he got their support. By putting forward this programme he gained remarkable credibility and on the death of Yazīd was able to make a serious bid for power.

It seems that at first Ibn az-Zubayr's promised reforms attracted a good deal of agreement and support, which is reflected in the poetry of the time. An-Nābigha al-Ja<sup>c</sup>dī welcomed his proclamation as caliph in Mecca, comparing him with the orthodox caliphs:

*You reminded us of as-Siddīq when you came to rule us, (91)  
and <sup>c</sup>Uthmān and al-Fārūq, and the poor man was  
satisfied.*

*You made people equal in justice and they became  
equal, and the dark night became morning.<sup>2</sup>*

Although <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr remained in Mecca his great support came from Iraq and al-Jazīra, largely because of the bitter competition between Iraq and Syria on one hand and

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1. Akhbār, I, 244.

2. Firaq, 505.

between Qays and Yemen in the Jazīra on the other. The partisan poets had to work hard in defending <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr's cause and discrediting the Marwānites who attempted to disparage him. In al-Jazīra the Qaysite poets challenged the Umayyad poets and alleged that the Umayyads were inferior to <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, as for example in the following lines:

*Are you seeking to go as far as Ibn az-Zubayr?* (92)

*You will never achieve it as long as a traveller  
goes on the pilgrimage for the sake of God.*

*You are taking upon yourself something which you  
will never attain as long as the nights and  
stars remain.*

*O sons of Marwān, slow down, you are not his  
(az-Zubayr's) equal when the squadrons meet  
on the day of battle.*

*When brave warriors meet each other you are like  
foxes, but in times of peace you are like lions  
of ash-Sharā in the presence of beautiful maidens.<sup>1</sup>*

Zufar b. al-Hārith al-Kilābī, the author of the above lines, was the leader of the Qays of al-Jazīra and an ardent advocate of Zubayrite interests in Syria. He chose to regard the Marwānites as unimportant, claiming that the real challenge was from Yemen and its leader Ibn Bahdal. In this way he tried to make Marwān seem ridiculous, since he did not regard the Yemenis as serious contenders for power.

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1. Ansāb, V, 198.

The following lines illustrate this: . . .

*By God, will Bahdal and Ibn Bahdal survive while  
Ibn az-Zubayr will be killed?* (93)

*You are liars, by the house of God; you will not  
kill him and the brilliant day (of victory) has  
not come yet,  
and the gleam of Mashrafī swords falling upon you  
like the rising sun has not come about yet.*<sup>1</sup>

A great amount of panegyric poetry which was full of propaganda was addressed to Ibn az-Zubayr's brother and the governor of Iraq, Mus<sup>C</sup>ab. Mus<sup>C</sup>ab attempted to vie with the Umayyads in hiring poets' assistance and gave them considerable rewards for their work. Consequently, he was the subject of a good deal of political poetry which provided a counterblast to the political propaganda of the Umayyad poets. <sup>C</sup>Ubayd Allāh b. Qays ar-Ruqayyāt devoted his poetry to furthering the cause of the Zubayrites, and he served them sincerely until their downfall. The following lines are an example of his poetry on Mus<sup>C</sup>ab:

*Mus<sup>C</sup>ab is a shooting star sent by God which has  
removed the darkness.* (94)

*His rule is a rule of strength in which there is  
no tyranny or arrogance.*<sup>2</sup>

Another poet demonstrated a boastful attitude as a supporter of Mus<sup>C</sup>ab, and condemned those who conspired

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1. Ansāb, V, 303.

2. Dayf, 296.

against him with <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik, as the following lines by Mu<sup>C</sup>mar b. Abī Ma<sup>C</sup>mar indicate:

*In that morning when Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab asked for my help,  
my answer was, "welcome, here I am".* (95)

*I am not a man of two faces, one for Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab, and  
a sickly face for the son of Marwān when he  
renounces his faith.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>C</sup>Amr b. Yazīd an-Nakhā<sup>C</sup>ī speaks regretfully in his poetry of the generosity of Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab:

*As you see, generosity has been buried since the  
death of Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab and our trust was guarded by  
a wolf.* (96)

*Granted that we are people whose sins caught  
up with them; do Thaḡīf not have sins?<sup>2</sup>*

The final verses which may be quoted as an example of the gratitude of poets toward Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab were composed by an anonymous poet from Banū Asad who also paid his tribute to Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab posthumously. He described Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab's departure as the sad loss of a great man:

*I swear that death is always attracted by  
wise young man whose hands are wide open.* (97)

*If Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab has met his fate, he is a strong man and  
is not fearful.<sup>3</sup>*

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1. Ibn Kathīr, VIII, 342.

2. Ansāb, V, 281.

3. Aghānī, XIX, 64.



## ANTI-ZUBAYRITE POETRY

The final suppression of Ibn az-Zubayr came as a sad contrast to his bright beginning, and those discontented poets who had disliked him, even though they may have been opposed to the Umayyads, started to blame him for his final defeat and revealed their attitude towards him more openly.

Such poets seem to have been unanimous in criticising Ibn az-Zubayr in respect of two major issues. Firstly, when he went to Mecca during Yazīd's reign he announced that he was protected by the sacred mosque. Secondly, when he proclaimed his own caliphate, he stated that he did not do so in order to gain wealth, and continually repeated that a little would be enough to satisfy him. His aim, was rather to bring back justice and to improve the state of an ill-treated society. According to this poetry, he achieved little, but violated the sanctity of the holy mosque.

The poets set out to explain who was and was not entitled to the protection of the sacred place and sought to show that Ibn az-Zubayr's claim to the protection of the holy mosque was invalid, since respect for the sacred place had not prevented him from killing innocent people himself.

Fighting in Mecca was forbidden and all its inhabitants were supposed to be safe, and it was for this reason that Ibn az-Zubayr had gone to Mecca before

announcing his claim to the caliphate. Naturally, the Umayyads attacked him, thus violating the sanctity of Mecca. The poets who supported the Umayyads had to find a plausible way of justifying this action, and so they turned events round by claiming that it was not the Umayyad attackers who had violated the sanctity of Mecca but Ibn az-Zubayr who had revolted against the government and had taken refuge in the holy place; later on, when he was forced to defend himself, the poets denounced this action also. The following lines by Abū Harra are an example of this type of polemical poetry:

(98)

*O traveller (to Mecca) if you come across him,  
inform the chief of the Banū al-<sup>C</sup>Awwām -  
if the one you mean is to be named;  
You tell whoever you meet that you are seeking the  
protection of the Haram, but at the same time you are  
doing a great deal of killing between the well of  
Zamzam and the corner (of the Black Stone).<sup>1</sup>*

Though Ibn az-Zubayr was forced to order executions and other legal penalties in order to safeguard himself, poets opposed to him were not prepared to consider the reasons behind such actions. Instead, they seized upon them as being in contradiction with what he had said about the sacred places and their protection, and condemned him strongly. For instance, on one occasion Ibn az-Zubayr

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1. Murūj, III, 75.

captured a spy sent by the Umayyads in Mecca and executed him. This single event was taken up by his adversaries and was constantly mentioned, and indeed over-used, in order to smear Ibn az-Zubayr's reputation. The bombardment of the Ka<sup>c</sup>ba by Umayyad troops, on the other hand, was scarcely mentioned. The following lines, which were composed by an independent poet, Ayyūb b. Si<sup>c</sup>na an-Nakh<sup>c</sup>ī, make an ironical comparison between the pro- and anti-Zubayrite poets. The pro-Umayyads were angry about the demolition of their leader's house, but had kept quiet when the Umayyad troops had destroyed the house of God, since no-one was brave enough to denounce this action:

*You are crying for the house of Asmā' which has  
been destroyed, because it was illegally built. (99)*  
*But you did not cry for the house of God, when the  
Umayyad troops marched to it, and their soldiers  
demolished it.<sup>1</sup>*

The misdeeds of the Umayyads were covered up by the poets, while the actions of Ibn az-Zubayr were exaggerated, as in the following lines of <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. Zabīr:

*O, you who claimed the protection of Mecca, how much  
blood have you spilt without just cause? (100)*  
*Does one of your hands take refuge and is protected  
by the sacred place, while the other hand kills  
those who dwell in the Haram?<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Ansāb, V, 241.

2. Aghānī, XIV, 236.

Ibn az-Zubayr had to face three bitter opponents - the supporters of the Umayyads, the Khawārij and the Shi<sup>C</sup>ites. None of these parties took a moderate position, so that for instance Kuthayyir the Shi<sup>C</sup>ite poet made his own contribution to the controversy because the Hāshimites had been suppressed by Ibn az-Zubayr when their leader, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya, refused to pay homage to him. In retaliation the poet described him as a liar who did not really seek a secure place of refuge. The poet asserts that the one who is most respectful of the sacred place is the leader of the Hāshimīyya, who was detained in the prison of <sup>C</sup>Ārim:

*You tell whoever you meet that you are seeking secure (101)  
 refuge, truly the one who is seeking secure refuge  
 is the one who is wronged in the prison of <sup>C</sup>Ārim.  
 Whoever sees this noble man in the Khayf of Minā  
 will realise that he is not an oppressive person.<sup>1</sup>*

The greatest criticism which was levelled against Ibn az-Zubayr was based on the claim that he had promised a fair distribution of public income before proclaiming himself caliph, but had not fulfilled these promises. The poets accused him of being gluttonous and revealed much about his avarice, which seems unlikely to be mere propaganda, since his brother Muṣ<sup>C</sup>ab had gained the respect of the poets, who admired his generosity even after his death.

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1. Murūj, III, 75.



The facts in reality are, however, debatable. The poetry frequently accuses Ibn az-Zubayr of greed, etc., and compares his character with the generosity of the Umayyads, but it must be remembered that these poets put the worst possible construction on his behaviour. Nevertheless, it may be said that Ibn az-Zubayr's behaviour was a significant factor in his defeat and the poets spread his reputation for meanness throughout the Islamic state. The poets satirised his piety, but this piety did not prevent him from accumulating for himself the meagre assets of the poor. In connection with this, Abū Harra composed the following lines:

*He continuously recites the chapter of al-A<sup>c</sup>rāf (102)  
till my heart becomes as soft as silk.*

*If your stomach were one span in size (as you say)  
you would be sated, and have a great surplus for  
the poor.<sup>1</sup>*

Other poets went further and cursed Quraysh should they consent to Ibn az-Zubayr's caliphate because of his tightfisted attitude, as in the following line by a poet of Qudā<sup>c</sup>a:

*May Quraysh become non-existent for me if they (103)  
recognise your leadership because of your  
tightfistedness and lack of generosity.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Murūj, III, 75.

2. Ansāb, V, 198.

Many other lines can be found in the sources which repeat similar ideas regarding Ibn az-Zubayr's character. Before concluding this chapter it may be worth quoting three lines from a famous political poem which was widely quoted by political leaders. This provided great support for Marwān's candidature, and he inspired al-Ḥuṣayn b. Numayr to recite it when he presented his nomination to the committee of selection. At the same time it reduced the chances of Ibn az-Zubayr when it was released, at least in the region of Syria. The poet was Fuḍāla b. Shurayk, who went to Mecca to see Ibn az-Zubayr when the latter proclaimed himself caliph. He wanted a grant from the new claimant, but the latter ignored his request. The poet angrily left Mecca for Syria and composed this poem, comparing the two rivals and heavily supporting the Umayyads while denouncing the attempts of Ibn az-Zubayr to gain power. In it he says:

*You gained command and became avaricious when  
you gained newly-acquired rule.* (104)

*I perceive that requests have become difficult  
for the father of Khubayb when there is no  
Umayyad in the country.*

*He grudges even a she-camel and seeks kingship;  
that is impossible and wrong.<sup>1</sup>*

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1. Aghānī, XII, 70. See also Abū Tammām, 14.

Chapter 7

THE COMPETITION BETWEEN  
THE TRIBES IN SYRIA

## Chapter 7

# THE COMPETITION BETWEEN THE TRIBES IN SYRIA

The tribes realised that their existence was dependent on their unity and their political standing, since both would help them to gain respect among themselves and among other tribes and men of influence. Accordingly they had to fight for these things in order to safeguard their interests under whatever regime was in power. Basic tribal policy pursued two means of achieving these purposes. One was to demonstrate their power and their ability to defend their interests and to strengthen their position. The other was to make the caliph realise that they were important to his cause and could help him establish his authority over others.

To meet these aims the poets had to emphasise three different points in their poetry. Firstly, they would remind the caliph of what they had done for him in order to establish his authority over the other Arabs who opposed him, since without their help he would not have been able to rule. This was particularly the case with Yemen as regards the Marwānids. Secondly, the poets were



very boastful and proud of their tribal deeds, which they often mentioned and described, enumerating their successful battles against other tribes. This was particularly the case of the Qays poets vis-à-vis Yemen, particularly when both tribal groups were forced to accept <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik as caliph. The third theme which dominates the political poetry of this period is one of complaint against rival tribal groups. If a tribe had happened once to support the caliph, its poets reproachfully remind him of this favour, and also remind him of what their opponents have done against him.

Reproaching the caliph in this way was the Yemeni poets' approach. Indeed they mention their favours to the Umayyads repeatedly and insist on reminding them of their tribes' earlier help, even taking this back to the time when Islam had begun in Mecca, and the Ansār, originally from Yemen, agreed to help the Prophet and his Muslim companions. Thus we find the following lines of at-Tirimmāh:

*The Azd of Iraq and Madhhiḡ advanced toward death  
united by their great progenitor.* (105)

*Qahtān struck off the head of each well-armed man  
in order to defend their vision when they could  
not see.*

*By our support the prophet Muḡammad was given victory,  
and by our support the minbar in Damascus is firmly  
established.<sup>1</sup>*

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1. Tabarī, VI, 521.

When the civil war between the Umayyads and Ibn az-Zubayr broke out, the tribes throughout the state were divided. The Yemen of Syria was the instrument of Marwān's victory, and thus the Umayyads were indebted to Yemen's support for their existence. Once Yemen had managed to achieve a decisive victory they emphasised the fact that they had made every conceivable effort for the sake of the caliph. They assumed that the caliph must be much obliged and would appreciate their participation, and insisted that they were the only tribe who had run the risk of supporting Marwān during his troubled times and that they were responsible for his accession to power. Moreover, his son <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik was assisted by them when he had to restore the power of the Umayyad caliphate in his turn, so that thereafter Yemen stressed that without their support <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik might not have regained the caliphate. The poets of Yemen were even more insistent on proclaiming their merits once the entire state had accepted <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik's leadership, and showed themselves prepared to exert pressure upon him in order to detach him from other tribes and to prevent him from achieving a reconciliation with their enemies Qays. Thus the Yemeni poet <sup>C</sup>Adī b. ar-Riqā<sup>C</sup> al-<sup>C</sup>Āmilī, who had close relations with the Umayyad court, composed a poem mentioning the great support which Yemen had offered to <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik, and

ascribed the final defeat of Ibn az-Zubayr to his tribe's efforts:

*By my life our horses marched to meet Mus<sup>C</sup>ab at the edge (106)  
of the Tigris.*

*They [our horsemen] brandished [spears] with long shafts  
and straight heads and hafts.*

*If the hypocrite of Iraq is rebuked and does not  
respond.*

*We shall march upon him on an occasion on which  
we shall miss few absentees.*

*We shall be led by a glorious man who has a noble  
nature and position.*

*He has been assisted by us and we have been given  
victory by him, the one who is aided by God  
cannot be defeated.<sup>1</sup>*

During this period Yemen remained a strong component of <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik's power. They had supported Marwān previously and had always kept in mind the fact that this support would serve their interests. In times of peace they continued to fight their primary enemy, Qays, and tried to exclude them from positions of power by their influence at court. Thus the poets of Yemen always reminded the caliph of the previous disloyalty of Qays, lest the Qays might effect some sort of reconciliation with the court.

The lines below were produced by a Yemeni poet of <sup>C</sup>Udhra, who draws a comparison between the two rivals, Yemen and Qays, and assesses their respective contributions to the caliphate:

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1. Ansāb, V, 342. See also Firaq, 489.

Ask the sons of Marwān, the people who call upon God, the (107)  
clan of the Prophet and the leaders of the pilgrimage.  
About us and the Qays, on the morning of the  
battle of the Marj, when we fought skilfully and  
bloodily  
[and were able to] guide the bent spear accurately,  
When Ad-Dahhāk missed his hope.<sup>1</sup>

However, once a single caliph had been universally recognised, he tended to deal with all his subjects on an equal basis. He began to negotiate among the militant tribes and groupings in order to free himself from the atmosphere of hostility which pervaded the whole state. This was regarded with concern by Yemen, who had taken all the risks in supporting the Banū Marwān initially when they had no other support, and naturally expected to have a position superior to that of the other tribes, particularly Qays. However Qays constituted a considerable proportion of the population in Syria and al-Jazīra, and no-one could ignore their importance. <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik was aware of this, and once he had suppressed disorder within his realms, he moved toward compromise with Qays. His policies annoyed Yemen, who fought hard in order to stop any sort of rapprochement between the caliph and Qays. When they failed to stop this, their poets protested against his policy and composed reproachful poems reminding

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1. Aghānī, XIX, 142.



him of the favours which their tribes had performed for the caliph. Thus Abū al-Khattār addressed the court in the following lines, blaming the Umayyads for not showing gratitude to Yemen and laying emphasis on the fact that they were the only people who had come forward to help:

*The sons of Marwān allowed the Qays to shed  
our blood, but if you do injustice to  
us, God will be just.* (108)

*It seems as though you were not present at  
Marj Rāhit, and do not know who was  
superior to others there.*

*We warded off the thrusts of spears from you  
with our chests, when you had no horses  
or men but us.<sup>1</sup>*

#### THE POETRY OF TRIBAL INCITEMENT

The period of struggle between Yemen and Qays had its influence on the poetry. As a result of the prolonged struggle, the balance of power swayed from side to side and each battle was followed by many poems which described its outcome and expressed tribal feelings. If the tribe had triumphed, these poems cheerfully celebrated the occasion, while if they had been defeated they threatened revenge. Thus, there was a revival of tribal feeling which was now much stronger than it had been before.

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1. Ansāb, V, 142.

Boasting of tribal deeds became a permanent feature; the ruthless acts of the tribes against their opponents were glorified and the tribesmen were encouraged in their warlike propensities in order to gain revenge. The poets urged their kinsmen to act firmly and not to compromise with their enemies, but rather to seek a definite victory over their adversaries.

Hind al-Jilāhiyya, for example, expresses the importance for tribal warriors of taking revenge for those killed. Addressing her people, she tells them that they must either avenge those killed or be regarded as slaves of Qays:

*Will someone take revenge for those who were* (109)

*killed by <sup>C</sup>Umayr b. al-Hubāb?*

*Would anyone among the tribes of <sup>C</sup>Amir,*

*<sup>C</sup>Abd Wudd and Janāb denounce such action?*

*If you do not avenge those whom they killed,*

*be slaves of the Banū Kilāb.*

*After the death of the sons of al-Jilāh and*

*those whom you left beside Kawkab covered*

*by sand.*

*Will life be sweet to an avenger among you?*

*There is no life for the injured people!<sup>1</sup>*

Another poet from the Yemen chides his kinsmen and blames them for their defeat, saying that it will be a shame and a disgrace for them if they do not fight Qays until they obtain victory:

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1. Aghānī, XXIII, 187.

O, <sup>C</sup>Udhra b. Sa<sup>C</sup>d, Fizāra constantly boast of  
the day when Ibn Harj [was killed]

(110)

If you do not avenge your brother, be [like]  
slave-girls who must look for someone whom  
they can hire [to protect them].

Eat dates from the valley for you are of little  
use when hard times come.

Do not be angry at what I say to you, for I  
repudiated what people were saying [about  
your humiliation].

Qudā<sup>C</sup>a was covered by shame because of it and  
every Qudā<sup>C</sup>i is humiliated by it.

Be hard, for hardness will cleanse you, as  
clothes are cleaned of their dirt. [?]

Wage war on all of Dhubyān;

Only those who are able to do so discriminate  
in blood-vengeance.<sup>1</sup>

Because the war between Yemen and Qays lasted so long,  
their fortunes were varied, with first one side and then  
the other being successful. As a result the tribal poets  
were careful to record the successful battles of their  
tribes. In this tribal confrontation Yemen gained some  
victories and managed to defeat Qays on several battle-  
fields. The poets responded to this victory and proudly  
celebrated their tribes' deeds. Their leader, Humayd b.  
Baḥdal, became a hero of this struggle. Thus Sinān b.  
Jābir says:

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1. al-Buhturī, 29.

The news has spread far and wide that b. Bahdal  
has avenged Kalb, and that they are delighted.  
He has taught Qays a lesson of humiliation, and  
they were not the men to withdraw unless  
they were humbled.

(111)

He marched from Rāhit and Tadmur (Palmyra) with  
short-haired thoroughbred horses, and he did  
not care about his mature and swift-moving  
horses, which he did not spare.

Most of the victims of Humayd b. Bahdal remained  
unburied, and few were buried.

Many a Qaysī woman was divorced by our spears,  
turning around like a gazelle which has lost  
its young.<sup>1</sup>

Another Yemeni poet, 'Uwayj at-Tā'ī, commemorates the  
success of his tribe's leader and mentions the fact that  
the caliph had to intervene in order to stop the fighting  
between Yemen and Qays, claiming that only this intervention  
saved Qays from Yemen:

All the people have been informed of the defeat  
inflicted by Ibn Bahdal, and another which he  
will inflict upon them if he is spared.

(112)

They (Yemen) led the descendants of al-Wajīh and  
Lāhiq<sup>2</sup> for a month from the countryside without  
their being exhausted.

If not for the Commander of the Faithful, Qudā'a<sup>3</sup>  
would be the lords and Qays the slaves.

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1. Aghānī, XIX, 145.

2. Names of two famous thoroughbred horses. See Ibn al-Kalbī,  
Ansāb al-Khayl fī al-Jāhiliyya wa al-Islām wa Akhbāruha, 22.

3. Tabarī, V, 544.



The battle of Rāhit, in which Yemen scored a decisive victory and killed many of Qays' horsemen, earned the Yemenis a great reputation, which they repeatedly invoked during the ensuing ten years of tribal conflict. With the end of the conflict, however, a strong and united government emerged. Although the Umayyads owed much to Yemen, who had assisted them in their early struggles to maintain their position, when the struggle with their opponents was over <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik showed willingness to compromise with Qays.

Yemen tried to dissuade the court from reconciliation with Qays, laying much emphasis on the past hatred and hostility between the two rival groups. In the poetry which was composed for this purpose, of which the following lines of <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-Mikhlāt al-Kalbī are an example, much stress is still laid upon the battle of Marj Rāhit:

*I remember one day when you could see flags flying,* (113)  
*like hovering birds turning around and landing.*

*Four days passed since the day of fighting and*  
*another four and the ground is still soaked with*  
*the blood of the people.*

*We wounded Ziyād in his buttocks while he was*  
*running away, and Thuwār was killed by the*  
*sharp spears.*

*A swift and steady horse saved Hubaysh after the*  
*fingers of his right hand had been cut off.*

<sup>C</sup>Amr b. Muhriz witnessed the two rows of combat, and  
the Marj became narrow for him, although it was wide.<sup>1</sup>

Jawwās b. al-Qu<sup>C</sup>ṭal al-Kalbī likewise made  
his contribution to this controversy, confidently  
proclaiming his tribe's ability to defeat Qays again if  
necessary:

*They (Yemen) killed most of Qays, Sulaym and the  
tribes of Janāb.* (114)

*They killed the Banū Badr and <sup>C</sup>Abs, and your  
cheekbones have been made to touch the dust.*

*You remember revenge, but revenge will not be  
taken until you are taken to the last judgment.*

*If the tribes of Janāb<sup>2</sup> and <sup>C</sup>Awf march against  
you they will fill up the lofty mountains.*

*You have been at war with us and you have  
encountered a war which chokes you when you  
try to drink.<sup>3</sup>*

In conclusion therefore we can say that the  
Yemeni poets repeatedly boast of the glorious deeds of their  
tribes, their power and their strength, in order to show  
their enemies that they are able to defend their position.  
This boastful attitude would tend to encourage their  
kinsmen to carry on their tribal responsibilities.

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1. Aghānī, XIX, 141.

2. Two different tribes called Janāb are mentioned in this  
poem. The first is a branch of Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylān, while the  
second is a Yemeni tribe. See Ibn Hazm, 456.

3. Aghānī, XIX, 142.

## TAGHLIB

The tribal wars in this period mainly took place between three tribes, Qays, Yemen and Taghlib. The former two were the strongest. Initially Taghlib aligned themselves with Qays, but their poets remained silent while the Qaysī poets produced poetry continuously. They showed no enthusiasm to align themselves with Qays, but were forced to do so as they were unable to stand by themselves in such a disordered period. Taghlib probably foresaw the ultimate result of this tribal fighting and realised that it would not be to their advantage. Qays already claimed the ownership of al-Jazīra, most of whose inhabitants were from Taghlib. The interests of both tribes were contradictory; Taghlib believed in their right to ownership of the lands as they were the original inhabitants, while Qays had a different opinion. Both rivals were thus aware that good relations between them could not last very long. The inevitable break took place as soon as Taghlib found a new alliance which would be able to protect them. Consequently, a political poetry began to appear along with the warfare which now broke out and was to last for a longer period than the fighting between Yemen and Qays. The poets of each side exchanged many poems dealing with the political positions of the two tribes while the outstanding poets of Taghlib managed to establish close relations with the Umayyad

court. This relationship strengthened the tribe's political position and allowed them to publicise their point of view. The following pages will give some typical examples of the political poetry of such poets in which the tribal cause is often put before the cause of the state and the community. Thus <sup>C</sup>Amr b. al-Ahtam at-Taghlibī says:

*When Shu<sup>C</sup>ayth led us, what a reception did we offer  
them (Qays)!* (115)

*We drove the horses and flags till we finished the  
Hawāzin.*

*We did not spare the runaway and did not leave any  
revenge for al-Jushamī unfulfilled.<sup>1</sup>*

The same poet composed another poem describing several attacks which Taghlib had launched against Qays. He found relief in revealing his bitter feelings, and encouraged his tribesmen to fight back:

*There is no dispute between Qays and myself other than  
the stabbing of kidneys and the chopping off of  
necks.* (116)

*We requited those of Qushayr and Hilāl, and  
eliminated the tribe of Ibn al-Hubāb.*

*We settled our debts with <sup>C</sup>Uqayl and quenched our  
thirst on Kilāb.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Ansāb, V, 315.

2. Mu<sup>C</sup>jam, 70.



Taghlib greatly helped the Umayyads during the fighting since they stood against Qays, who supported Ibn az-Zubayr. When <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik ultimately won the struggle his supporters gained an honourable position. The tribes were forced to unite under his rule, but nevertheless <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik did not forget the past. He was perhaps forced to show a neutral attitude as a caliph but in fact he wished to see his former enemies being humiliated. Al-Akhtal took on this task of humiliation and attacked Qays and their leaders even in the presence of the caliph.<sup>1</sup> In this he was acting as a tribal poet representing their cause at court. As a result, the leader of Qays, al-Jahhāf, became angry and left the Umayyad court intending to attack Taghlib and to assure Taghlib and the Umayyads that Qays would not accept humiliation under any circumstances.

Most of the poetry which extols Taghlib was composed by two outstanding poets, al-Akhtal and al-Qutāmī. Al-Qutāmī remained a purely tribal poet while al-Akhtal lined himself up with the Umayyad court and became the official poet of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik.<sup>2</sup> However he very often commences his panegyric poems addressed to the court by mentioning what Taghlib had done to Qays because of Qays'

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1. Dayf, 262.

2. Aghānī, VIII, 287.

opposition to <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik. Al-Akhtal emphasised the importance of his tribe's support for the Banū Marwān and celebrated the victory of Marj Rāhit, from which Qays had fled. His tribe did not take part in this conflict but he celebrated this along with other victories which his tribe had gained over Qays. In his verses al-Akhtal emphasised that Taghlib were fighting for <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik, as in the lines below:

*O, commander of the believers, you gained victory by  
us when the good news was reported to you in  
al-Ghūta.* (117)

*They (Taghlib) showed you the head of the son of  
al-Hubāb, whose nostrils bore the traces of the  
sword.*<sup>1</sup>

Tribal advocacy is uppermost in the poetry of al-Akhtal. He reproaches the leader of Qays, Zufar, for escaping from the battle where Qays were killed, intending to shame him and his tribe:

*O, Zufar, son of Laylā, by your father's life you  
have been saved by the luck of the Banū Ma<sup>C</sup>āz.  
And your running without turning towards us, as  
though you were clinging to the wing of a falcon.*<sup>2</sup> (118)

A point which has to be noted in this poetry is that al-Akhtal was always delighted by the results of the civil war, which had brought <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik to office while Qays and their

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1. Abū Tammām, 161.

2. Ansāb, V, 324.

leaders had lost the war. He even admits the defeats which Qays had inflicted on Taghlib, which he regards as unimportant since Taghlib eventually won:

*I have cured my soul at the expense of the nobles  
of Qays, and there will be no retaliation against  
you on behalf of Qays.* (119)

*They made us taste their spears and they tasted  
(our spears).*

*And what do you think our outcome and theirs is?*

*By the life of your father, the reports tell us  
Zufar, that you were saved by flight.<sup>1</sup>*

The poetry of Taghlib, particularly that of al-Akhtal which deals with the conflict with Qays, dwells on the defeat of the latter. The following is a good example of this:

*Who will send my messenger to Qays, [to ask:]* (120)

*how do you find the taste of quarrelling?*

*The son of al-Hubāb has met his fate, and*

*he has no need of soothsayer or sorcerer.*

*His head arrived in the settlement of <sup>C</sup>Akk*

*while his body remained in Jabā Birāq.*

*We filled up the area of ath-Tharthār with*

*their bodies and prepared for Umayma to*

*leave.<sup>2</sup>*

It is notable throughout the poems of al-Akhtal that he does not segregate the interests of his tribe from those of the Umayyads, but rather he assimilates Taghlib's interests to those of the Umayyads. A modern scholar concludes that

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1. Abū Tammām, 128.

2. Ansāb, V, 326.

the tribal and political interests of Taghlib coincided with those of the Umayyads,<sup>1</sup> and that therefore al-Akhtal's panegyric poems were composed in accordance with his tribal views, as in the following lines:

*All of you sons of <sup>C</sup>Aylān are angry with us but  
which of our enemies have we not attacked at  
night despite their dislike of us?* (121)

*Because of your error the two days of Rāhit  
were destruction for some people, and became  
a disaster [for you].*

*You vie in glory with those who are entitled  
to it, O Banū Muhārib and O throng of the  
Banū al-<sup>C</sup>Ullān - enough of you!*

*They are kings and rulers who have power; if  
somebody causes them mischief, they will  
cause mischief in defence of [the caliphate].<sup>2</sup>*

Al-A<sup>C</sup>shā at-Taghlibī also made his contribution to this controversy, but purely as a tribal poet. He did not bring political arguments into his poetry, and restricted himself to mentioning his tribe's deeds. He gives vivid pictures of the conflict, describing the way one tribe raided another and giving vivid pictures of the actual combat. The following lines are a good example of his style:

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1. Al-Akhtal Shā<sup>C</sup>ir Bani Umayya, 100; Abū Tammām, 97.

2. Abu Tammām, 97.



*They were steadfast against us and we were steadfast (122)  
against them, and both tribes moved in  
correspondence.*

*If they retreated we pursued them and if  
they stood to fight we went down on our knees  
[in order to fight].*

*They (Qays) left the battlefield to us when they  
could not endure the pangs of death, and chose  
to flee.*

*They left there, <sup>c</sup>Umayr lying down with his legs  
drawn up, dead of a slashing blow.<sup>1</sup>*

## QAYS

The third party in the conflict among the tribes of this period were Qays. They started to challenge Yemen in order to obtain a share of power, being envious of them for the high position which they had attained under Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiyā and his son.

Qays were determined to reduce Yemen's pre-eminence in Syria, and accordingly endeavoured to deprive the Umayyad family of power and to replace it by another family which might be more even-handed in its attitude to the tribes.

Yemen in their turn felt that they had a dangerous rival in Qays, and that their position would be at risk unless they managed to restore the authority of the Umayyads. Accordingly they broke with the majority of the Arab

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1. Abū Basīr al-<sup>c</sup>Asha, 289.

tribesmen who had accepted Ibn az-Zubayr, in order to protect themselves against the potential threat from Qays. As long as these two powerful tribes were competing for power it was impossible to avoid a conflict which inevitably resulted in a series of battles. As usual, the poets were called on to safeguard their tribe's interests and to report their deeds. They mentioned their tribal successes and exaggerated their own victories and the defeat of their opponents, at the same time emphasising their ability to avenge earlier defeats. This was especially so among the poets of Qays, who always spoke of their feats in battle as being revenge for Marj Rāhit. A good example of this is the famous poem of Zufar, the leader of Qays, in which he announced that he and his tribe would not compromise with Yemen until the men of Qays who were killed in Marj Rāhit were avenged.<sup>1</sup>

Within a short time Qays had launched successful attacks on Yemen and inflicted several defeats on them. The poets of Qays celebrated each of these occasions with a number of poems in which they express their pride in what they had done to their enemies. The following lines by <sup>c</sup>Umayr b. al-Hubāb are an example of this:

*We paid them back for the day of Marj Rāhit with a* (123)  
*day [which was like] the eclipse of the sun, black*  
*and shadowy.*

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1. For a discussion of this poem see Ch.1, 54.

*The bones of as-Saksakī will remain in front of  
the bridge as long as the nights follow one  
another.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>c</sup>Umayr b. al-Hubāb as-Sulamī took command of the fighting against Yemen and led his warriors in person in a decisive battle against their enemy. He himself was a poet and when he scored a victory over his adversaries he revealed his relief in such lines as the following:

*I have slaked my thirst (for vengeance) upon  
Qudā<sup>c</sup>a by force, and another famous day is  
waiting for them.* (124)

*We have paid them back for the day of Marj Rāhit  
with a famous day, and they have met a baleful  
morning and have been killed.*

*None remaining but those who fled from our swords  
and those who were killed in the wheeling and  
the conflict.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>c</sup>Umayr b. al-Hubāb was able to beat Yemen several times, thus gaining the full support of his fellow-tribesmen. Yemen were led by a member of Bahdal's family, Humayd b. Bahdal, who also achieved some successes against Qays, not only in al-Jazīra where the bulk of the fighting took place but also in the tribal homeland of Qays to the north-east of Medina. As a result the poets of Qays reacted very

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1. Ansāb, V, 268.

2. Aghānī, XXIII, 197.

strongly against him and expressed their desire to see him defeated. For example <sup>C</sup>Uwayf says in the following lines:

*May God grant that I meet Humayd b. Bahdal in a place where he has made himself known with markings on the upper part of his body. So that I may engage him in combat and try between us Surayjī swords which will test themselves upon people's heads.*<sup>1</sup> (125)

Once Qays were successful in driving Yemen out of the Samāwa region their poets began to celebrate their successes in a number of poems which above all express satisfaction at the humbling of the victors of Marj Rāhit, as in the following line of <sup>C</sup>Aqayl b. <sup>C</sup>Ullafa:

*It is pleasing to the eyes that the clan of Ibn Bahdal were humiliated as a reprisal for his previous [mistakes].*<sup>2</sup> (126)

During the course of this fighting the Qaysī poets played their full part in maintaining their tribesmen's morale and in encouraging them to continue fighting. Every Yemeni defeat was reported and the victors were named one by one. Yemen, it was claimed, would be unable to regain power and the Qaysī poets expressed eagerness to take on those Yemeni tribes who had not so far become involved in the fighting. Thus ar-Rā<sup>C</sup>ī says:

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1. Aghānī, XIX, 147.

2. Aghānī, XXIII, 198.



When we trample down <sup>C</sup>Ulaym with a raid they will  
become like <sup>C</sup>Ūs, or more humbled and humiliated  
than them.

(127)

We left in the settlement of al-Jilāh many  
severed arms and thrown down heads.

We have cut off the nose of (i.e. humiliated)  
Kalb and we have not left to Bahrā' anything  
for which they can be celebrated among men.

We have killed one thousand bold men from Qudā<sup>C</sup>a  
at-Tadmur, but it does not take our anger away.<sup>1</sup>

This confrontation between Yemen and Qays was not only tribal and political but economical also. Kalb occupied the desert of Samāwa which was located on the route between the Qays of al-Jazīra and the Qays of Arabia. Moreover, since the majority of tribes were still Bedouin, as-Samāwa was regarded as a very desirable economic asset. It was an area which contained rich pasturage and supported numerous flocks of camels and sheep. Both tribal groups were determined to establish their sovereignty firmly in this area, and it was a frequent battlefield between them. As a result of the Qaysī offensive, Kalb had to leave as-Samāwa and emigrated to Syria to join other branches of Yemen and to create a front to stop the advance of Qays. When Qays drove Yemen out of Samāwa their poets celebrated this occasion proudly. The leader of Qays, Zufar b. al-Hārith,

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1. Aghānī, XXIII, 198.

declared his future intentions toward the desert of Samāwa as follows:

*O, Kalb it has been a hard time for you, and you* (128)  
*have received direct punishment from me.*  
*Samāwa no longer belongs to you, so go away to*  
*the land of olives and the sons of Bahdal.*  
*Go to the land of <sup>C</sup>Akk and the coast area; it*  
*is a land where pregnant camels will lose*  
*weight and become lean.<sup>1</sup>*

Eventually Qays accomplished the task of driving Yemen from as-Samāwa and al-Jazīra. The poets of Qays made the best possible use of this event in spreading their tribal propaganda, and, for example, <sup>C</sup>Umayr b. al-Ḥubāb, who was commander-in-chief of the coalition of Qays, utters the following warnings:

*Warn the sons of al-Qayn of a thrust which will* (129)  
*stick tight in the body and will satisfy the*  
*crippled hyenas' offspring.*  
*I will continue twisting and weaving and*  
*alternating the camel's saddle with the horse's.*  
*Until they take refuge from me in the creviced hills*  
*shall I requite them one day for the day of Marj*  
*[Rāhit].*  
*The day of Dihmān and the day of Harj?<sup>2</sup>*

A great deal of the poetry which was composed to celebrate the defeat of Yemen, which resulted in their

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1. Aghānī, XIX, 144.

2. Aghānī, XXIII, 191.

emigration from this region, was addressed to the leader of Kalb, Humayd b. Bahdal, who was held responsible for this retreat of Yemen. The poets of Qays deliberately set out to disparage him and to wound him psychologically. In particular they produced satirical poetry about his escape, as in the following lines of <sup>C</sup>Umayr:

*We left the host of Kalb divided between those who  
fled in fear of death and those lying down dead.  
When we met one another at <sup>C</sup>Aqid [Humayd] b. Bahdal  
escaped us, [riding] on a swift horse.  
I swear that if I meet him I will smite him in the  
head with a white, sharp, clean-cutting sword.<sup>1</sup>* (130)

The survival of the pre-Islamic tribal conception among the poets of this period is particularly noticeable. They assumed that they would not ask the government to enforce the law, because this was the sign of a weak position. Instead, they would take the law in their own hands. This was the attitude of Qays, when some groups of Yemen complained to the caliph about what Qays had done to them. The poets of Qays insulted Yemen for this approach and compared them unfavourably with themselves, boasting that they did not need to approach the caliph in order to exact their revenge from other tribes. This sentiment may be illustrated by the following lines of Zufar:

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1. Aghānī, XXIII, 194.

*O, sons of <sup>C</sup>Abd Wudd, we will not demand our revenge (131)  
on others from the ruler if war breaks out.*

*But our fire is kindled by white Indian swords;  
if the fire of our enemies is extinguished ours  
is not.*

*The horsemen of the Qays devastated you; you did  
not have either numbers or descendants, even if  
the stones are counted.*

*Curse them if you are unable to obtain your revenge,  
for cursing may relieve the wronged.<sup>1</sup>*

Qays insisted on fighting even after the caliph interfered, and did not listen to the mediators. Their poets denounced this mediation in such verses as the following by <sup>C</sup>Uwayf al-Qawāfī:

*O one who forbids Fizāra after they have begun (132)  
quickly to march to battle, you are dreaming.  
Every noble man refuses to delay taking revenge, and  
he cannot sleep, even if you are sleeping.  
Stand firm [O Fizāra]; whoever survives will not  
be disgraced thereafter, and whoever is killed will  
not be reproached.<sup>2</sup>*

This action gave Fizāra a good reputation among the tribes and they were highly respected for their insistence in fighting their adversaries. Al-Qattāl al-Kilābi celebrated this occasion and praised the warriors of Qays for their bravery and their attitude toward Yemen:

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1. Aghānī, XXIII, 197.

2. Aghānī, XIX, 136.



*May God bless a noble group of Fizāra in the morning and evening, who were dwelling in Sabā. They obtained in <sup>C</sup>Abd Wudd their bloodshed on the morning of Banāt Qayn while the horses were galloping.*

(133)

*The men who were coming to avenge their murdered were like lions on their saddlecloths while the horses were charging.<sup>1</sup>*

This fighting took place between Qays on one side and Yemen and the Umayyads on the other. There was no moderate attitude taken toward Qays, since they were the enemy of both the Umayyads and Yemen. However, after a ceasefire had been achieved following the death of Mus<sup>C</sup>ab, <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik made every effort to conciliate Qays in order to reduce the tension between the two tribes and to strengthen the stability of his realm. Some senior Umayyad leaders disagreed with this policy, believing that Yemen should be given priority as a reward for their support of the Umayyads. The most outspoken supporter of this idea was Khālīd b. Yazīd, who was linked closely with Yemen; Qays were well aware of his opinions, and their poets had to fight Khalīd because of his attitude. They assured the Umayyads and their allies that Qays were able to protect themselves. Zufar contacted Khālīd directly and challenged him over his opinions. Confidently he stressed the power of Qays and at the same time he derided Khālīd and accused him of

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1. Yāqūt, I, 738.

being unable to defend his rights since he had lost his position as heir to the caliphate. Qays' poems taunted him with having been passed over by Yemen as a candidate for the caliphate on the grounds of incompetence, as in the following lines of Zufar:

*O, father of Hāshim you are neither a forbearing  
man in whom people would place their hopes, nor  
a proud and patient one when you show hostility.  
Qays will protect me from oppression and from the  
long spears, and the white swords which are  
sharpened and polished will protect me too.  
Do you still respect yourself after the speech of  
Sa<sup>C</sup>id which resulted in the caliphate being taken  
from you?<sup>1</sup>* (134)

Thus even after the open warfare between Qays and Yemen was over, Qays continued to maintain a very independent and self-confident attitude, and their tribal poets still endeavoured to protect tribal causes and political interests.

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1. Ansāb, V, 306.

Chapter 8

NEW THEMES CREATED BY  
THE POLITICAL POETRY

## Chapter 8

### NEW THEMES CREATED BY THE POLITICAL POETRY

The previous chapters have dealt with general themes expressed in written political poetry during the period of disorder which lasted for almost ten years and in which society was racked by turmoil. Consequently the people were divided into several groups, each having its own opinions regarding the policy of the caliphate, the governors and the leaders of tribes and parties.

The poets for their part were discontented with these events and composed a considerable quantity of poems which revealed many of their views about the way which the Islamic state had developed and about the present disordered situation. Umayyad policies dissatisfied a considerable number of people throughout the area, and the poets emerged as the defenders of their community and opponents of the regime's policies in order to safeguard the people's interests. They criticised governors, leaders and even the caliph for their misuse of power.

They felt obliged to fight corruption in society and made these feelings explicit by emphasising the mistakes



and mismanagement of the government, while in general they described the whole of society and its behaviour, whether good or bad.

Because this study is mainly concerned with the specific subject of political poetry, verses have been chosen which were composed to serve political aims, while the rest of this poetry has not been considered here.

From a political point of view the confrontation between the tribal poets and the Umayyads was inevitable, since the Umayyads were able to apply their policies by force while the people did not have enough power to challenge the government successfully. The only viable option which remained in the hands of the people was in their poetry, which the government could not control.

Indeed, the poets of this period provided their audience with valuable information about social and political developments. They were interested in the problems which affected the community as a whole and commented on its situation, which was often bad. The poets who were discontented with the government's policies took a hard line, and this was reflected in their poems since these policies had begun to affect many aspects of daily life. They mobilised their poetic talents to defend the rights of the people, and employed themselves in serving their community's cause. Their poetry expressed the masses'

attitude towards the suppression to which they had been subjected. They became deeply concerned in what was going on in their country, and their poetry became more objective and developed in such a way as to reflect the condition of society and to become a condemnation of the widespread corruption. They criticised the regime for its inability to improve the way of life of its subjects and the upper classes for their unjust behaviour, and urged the people to observe their duty toward the community and not to help the oppressive leaders who were only concerned with what they could gain as a result of their oppression. This poetry served also to enlighten the masses to the fact that they had made a serious error in supporting these rival groups and it argued that the people must not help selfish leaders.

In brief, the poets were fully aware of their role in society, and intended to produce poems which would affect the masses' minds. Poetry had its ways of influencing people's attitude towards their rights and encouraged them to resist the misbehaviour of opportunists and others.

This poetry was written to describe actual facts and to expose the real attitudes of the rulers and their beneficiaries who were trying to present their advantages as being in the common interests of society.

Some poets, however, would bestow their favours on the caliph and would then blame him if he did not reward them for their help.

Such a case is that of Yemen, who had initially supported <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik and now felt themselves slighted when he was recognised and began to show a moderate attitude toward those who once opposed him. Yemen began to reproach the caliph, reminding him of their previous support, in an attempt to prevent him from compromising with their enemies, and even threatened to withdraw future support.

The following line of <sup>C</sup>Amr b. Makhlāt al-Kalbī is typical of this tendency:

*We brought the caliphate back to Marwān after  
all mail was going to the Zubayrites.*<sup>1</sup> (135)

The same poet took the idea of reproachfulness further, and blamed the Marwānites for not appreciating his tribe's support. He made it clear to the caliph that he was not the rightful ruler, but had only gained the caliphate because of Yemeni support:

*At Jīrūn*<sup>2</sup> *we drove out from the minbar of kingship  
its rightful occupants, when you were unable to  
gain it.* (136)

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1. Ansāb, V, 148.

2. The quarter of Damascus where the first conflict took place between the supporters of Marwān and those of Ibn al-Zubayr.

*There were many days of sincere effort, all of which  
you are well aware; we supported you  
particularly on the day of Marj, where we  
scored a great success.*

*Even though you do not acknowledge our past  
support and treat us with haughtiness after  
your [previous] favour.*

*How many princes were there before Marwān and  
his son? We removed the covering of death  
from them and they saw [again].<sup>1</sup>*

The Yemeni poets always present themselves as ardent supporters of the Umayyads, but in fact they are more concerned with boasting of their own victories and reinforcing the importance of their position. Al-Wāzi<sup>c</sup>  
b. Thu<sup>c</sup>āla al-Kalbī composed the following lines which are a typical example of the proud Yemeni attitude:

*Have you forgotten what I did on the day of Rāhit  
when the Marj was confined for you, wide though  
it was. (137)*

*When the driver of death (i.e. war) advanced, urging  
on and girding up his loins, with trusty horses  
who did not fear the terrors of war.*

*Mounted by heroes, chiefs of Qudā<sup>c</sup>a, praiseworthy  
of character and nature.*

*If war becomes pregnant their swords will milk it,  
and long arms whose knuckles will not give way;  
Who believe that facing death is their due, when  
the deceiver avoids facing fate.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Mu<sup>c</sup>jam, 68.

2. Ansāb, V, 146.



Jawwās al-Kalbī made this point equally strongly, praising his own tribal grouping and emphasising that it was they who forced the other tribes to accept Marwān's authority, when he addressed Zufar b. al-Hārith, the leader of Qays, emphasising his tribe's ability to win the next battle as they had done before, and refuting Qays' claim that they were seeking revenge for their defeat in Marj-Rāhit. He goes even further and claims that Yemen had been strong enough to decide who would be the caliph, and still have the power to ensure their own existence unaided:

*I am forbidden to acquiesce in oppression by  
a people who relieved Marwān from being  
strangled.* (138)

*Know that I will abandon my friend if he desires  
separation.*

*And if the leaders do not accept my honest and  
sincere advice concerning matters unknown  
to them I shall not argue with them.<sup>1</sup>*

The poets of this period repeatedly mention the strength and achievements of their tribe. If the tribe is in a strong position, they threaten the caliph with revolt unless he agrees to give more concessions to them. If they are in a weaker position, however, their poems are more polite, and they remind him of their tribe's help in order to gain his sympathy, as Ayman b. Khuraym does in the following lines:

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1. Ansāb, V, 143.

Tell the commander of the believers there is  
a message from the brave men and helpers  
who reprove him.

(139)

You promised them much if they supported you,  
may God guide you even though you did not fulfil  
your promise.

But for my tribe's support and their thrusting and  
fighting in al-Marj.

Ashtar of Madhhij would have come inflexibly upon  
you with an army full of rancour and hatred  
against you.<sup>1</sup>

As the conflict between the two prominent families of  
Quraysh - the Umayyads and the Hāshimites - was a  
permanent feature of political life at the time, the poets  
were able to support one of them and threaten the other with  
its rivalry. Since the Umayyads had come to power the  
poets had threatened them with the succession of the sons  
of Hāshim who were more eligible for the caliphate. Thus  
al-Farazdaq says, addressing the Umayyads:

*If not for the sons of Hāssān the sword of your  
might, the kingship would have returned to  
the family of Hāshim.*

(140)

But Marwān refused to accept that for which he  
would be reviled at the Pilgrimage.<sup>2</sup>

The most offensive poem launched against the Umayyads and  
denouncing their action toward the Yemen was produced by

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1. Siffīn, 17.

2. Ansāb, V, 136.

the Yemeni poet Abū al-Khattār al-Kalbī, who revealed a bitter feeling against them and expressed regret for the help which his tribe had given to the Umayyads. He attacks the ingratitude of the Umayyads who, once they had managed to impose peace within their realms, feel secure enough to ignore their old allies. The poet concludes by saying that if war breaks out in future the Yemenis will not support the Umayyads again. Such a poem was likely to affect tribal loyalty toward the Umayyads and to lower the reputation of the caliph among the tribesmen who already had suffered what they considered injustice under the Umayyads. The poet expresses his feelings in a harsh and uncompromising manner:

*We warded off the heat of the spears from you  
with our chests, and you had no horsemen or  
foot-soldiers but us.* (141)

*But when you saw that the blaze of war had died  
down, and drinking and eating became pleasant  
to you.*

*You pretended to forget our efforts and our  
hardships, and your heart became full of  
ignorance because of your evil oppression.*

*So do not be too hasty if war breaks out again and  
the shoe causes the foot to slip off the path.<sup>1</sup>*

Taghlib had also made a contribution to keeping the Umayyads in power during this period of disorder. They expected a

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1. Ibn ash-Shajarī, 4.

reward from the caliph for their support, feeling that the Umayyads would deal with the tribes on the basis of justice, particularly as regards their enemy Qays. The caliph's generous treatment of Qays was taken by Taghlib as ingratitude for their past service to the Umayyads. Thus their poets felt that they had something to reproach the Umayyads for, and they were inspired to remind the court of what they had done. Al-Akhtal, who was on close terms with the Umayyads and had established good relations with <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik, does not attempt to conceal the existence of his tribal loyalty. He reproachfully reminds the Umayyads of what he has done to support them and enumerates the enemies whom he had defeated:

*O sons of Umayya, I fought for your cause, the  
cause of those whose fathers gave shelter and  
support (to the Prophet).* (142)

*[And I fought] Qays <sup>C</sup>Aylān until they came hastily,  
and compulsorily paid homage to you after they  
were vanquished.*

*You, the commander of the believers were reinforced  
by us, when the good news was reported to you in  
al-Ghūta.<sup>1</sup>*

His fellow tribesman, A<sup>C</sup>shā Taghlib, has a different approach. He neither reasons with the Umayyads nor reminds them of his tribe's help, but gives a list of the events in which his tribe took the side of the Umayyads and stood

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1. Ansāb, V, 325.



behind them to enforce their rights until the Umayyads managed to establish their authority with Taghlib's support. The angry poet goes on to discuss his tribe's future policy, and states that they will not help the Umayyads in the future since they have not benefited from their previous service.

The fear of rebellion was always hanging over the Umayyads, and the poet threatens that if such a thing takes place they will side with the rebels to defeat the Umayyads:

*O sons of Marwān, will your previous mistakes fall (143)  
upon you before the Day of Judgement?  
Are we forgotten by you when you are not overcome  
by disaster, and called when the red spearheads  
are brandished?  
We brought you the love of the two regions of Iraq,  
where there had been many different views and chaos  
had prevailed.  
Even if you are ungrateful for [our help] of which you  
are aware, there have been so many times in which you  
have been given victory by the forces of our swords.  
I swear that if protracted war becomes pregnant and the  
time comes for people to become fierce and haughty.  
We will be against you, not for you, if you stumble at  
the first blow and the matter is decided.  
How many times did we protect you from misfortune, yet  
you were not grateful and were neither faithful nor  
thankful.  
Did we not deal with Qays for you, though Qays are terrible,  
a multitude with eyes bulging with anger and with twisted  
eyebrows.*

*We killed Mus<sup>c</sup>ab at Māk̄sīn, as you know, when war had  
bared its teeth.<sup>1</sup>*

Malik b. ar-Rayb accuses the government of responsibility for all the problems facing the people, casting blame upon the caliphs who are being deceitful, and on the opportunists who give their loyalties according to the political situation at the time. They show courtesy and gratitude to the tribes only if they are in desperate need of their support, but are ungrateful if they feel strong enough:

*We are those to whom, if you are frightened of  
misfortune, you say, 'We are from you', in order  
to protect yourselves. (144)*

*Until, when you get out of the darkness, you become  
like Jārm<sup>2</sup> and have neither bonds nor relations  
with us.<sup>3</sup>*

The poets always speak of their past support for the Umayyads, mentioning not only their efforts to uphold the caliph's position within the state but also the fact that they had supplied him with a considerable amount of booty taken from external enemies, thus implying that the prosperity and luxury which he enjoyed were provided by their spears. They brought to his attention the hardships which they had undergone in order to supply the rest of the country with adequate financial aid and security, as in these lines by al-Hajjāj, a poet of Qays:

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1. Abū Basīr al-A<sup>c</sup>shā, 290

2. The name of a tribe; used proverbially of one with whom one has no connection.

3. as-Sa<sup>c</sup>ālīk, 73.

*O, Sulaymān, how many camps have been captured for  
you by our spears, while the saddled horses  
carried us away?*

(145)

*And how many strongholds have been conquered by  
us and how many plains and difficult mountains?*

*We invaded many towns which no people before us  
tried to invade, leading our horses one month  
after another.<sup>1</sup>*

## THE POETRY OF PEACE

In the midst of the warlike climate which pervaded the entire state, there was also a voice for peace. Some poets refused to become instruments of war, and devoted their poetry to the cause of peace, denouncing the prevailing mood of aggressiveness. They condemned the use of war to obtain positions of power or to achieve political aims, being aware that the internecine fighting was caused by the irresponsibility of the Qurayshite leaders who were fighting one another for the sake of personal gains, and were, to some extent, deceiving the people in the hope of inducing them to prefer one leader to another.

These poets felt obliged to express their views regarding the internal Qurayshī politics which were leading the people astray, and the Quraysh in general became the targets of the peace-loving poets. These poets accused them of engaging in dirty business, and being concerned only with

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1. Tabarī, VI, 521.

their own interests. They saw their task as being to enlighten the people so that they should realise what their duties were and not be foolish enough to support such selfish leaders who were seeking power by any means.

The lines which will be quoted below were written in a deliberate way since the poets must have had in mind the delicate situation with which they were dealing. For this reason their poems were presented in the form of advice and admonition addressed to the people as a whole. Apparently they intended to rebuke the Quraysh indirectly, since they suggest that as the leadership was left to members of Quraysh, the poets and the tribes should have nothing to do with their battles since the ultimate beneficiaries would be members of the Quraysh.

They also raised the valid legal objection that fighting among the believers was forbidden and warned the people not to break Islamic law in order to help the leaders of the Quraysh.

The most outspoken was a prominent Syrian poet, Ayman b. Khuraym, who had his own interpretation regarding war and peace. He explained his position when they asked him to fight, and said that he would observe the law which forbade fighting among Muslims:

*I am not going to kill a man who observes his prayers (146)  
in order to help another leader from the Quraysh.*



*The leader would require power and the sin would  
be upon me. God protect me from folly and  
irresponsibility.*

*Shall I kill a believer and live myself?  
Such a life will not benefit me.<sup>1</sup>*

The poet seems to take his position not simply to explain why he himself will not take part in civil war, but to be fighting to make people fully aware of their errors in helping trouble-makers and to prevent them from taking the misleading path to which their leaders were pushing them:

*Disorder entails clear chaos, so do not rush toward  
it and you will be moderate. (147)*

*If [the Quraysh] offer you a salary go to them, but  
if they invite you to fight, abandon them.*

*The ignorant people are those who fuel war; -  
they are firewood, so leave it to blaze by itself.<sup>2</sup>*

This new attitude was no doubt influenced by Islam, and those poets who developed such ideas saw it as their duty to save their society from these bitter conflicts which would do it much harm. They denounced tribalism and warlike attitudes, and although they realized that they could not stop war between the rivals, they tried to diminish its consequences by convincing people that war

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1. Akhbār, 194.

2. As-Shi<sup>c</sup>r, I, 548.

was an evil. Those who insisted on fighting within the Islamic society should not be helped by the masses who would get nothing out of this war. The people would be killed while the leaders would accumulate money for themselves. The final advice of Ayman b. Khuraym is to abandon war and to leave the trouble-makers alone:

*Shall I kill in a quarrel between <sup>C</sup>Amr and his (148)  
opponent <sup>C</sup>Abd al-<sup>C</sup>Azīz?*

*Are we to be killed without good reason, while  
those who accumulate money remain behind us?  
[If this is so] I swear that I have neither been  
given mature judgement nor security.*

*I will abandon both of them and draw aside as  
the son of Kawz<sup>1</sup> did.<sup>2</sup>*

Another poet, <sup>C</sup>Alī b. al-Ghudayr, composed a famous poem on this topic in which he expresses disapproval of this war. He concludes that the arguments of the Quraysh were really excuses in order to fight for the leadership. The poet urges the people not to involve themselves in a bloody struggle whose outcome would be one in which the members of Quraysh would in any case assume leadership, and says that it is wiser to let the contenders decide amongst themselves:

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1. One of the poet's friends who abandoned war with him;  
Aghānī, XX, 271.
  2. Aghānī, XX, 272.

*Fighting among themselves is Quraysh's own business,  
as they are struggling amongst themselves until  
their leader emerges.*

(149)

*They have divided this fighting into two parts -  
those who will be killed and those who will continue  
to be oppressed.*

*Keep away from this war until you have decided to fight  
together or to make peace together.*

*Sheath your Indian swords until it is clear against  
which enemy your sword should be unsheathed.*

*Leave the Quraysh to fight among themselves, its  
leadership is for them and they will be responsible  
for what they have committed, good or bad.*

*If they are wise enough, they will be able to deal with  
it, and if not, only their own wounds will bleed.*

*For Quraysh will destroy those who obey them in  
competition for this world, which will soon come  
to an end.<sup>1</sup>*

These poets reveal the grievances and sorrows of the people who were tired of the Qurayshī leadership and their political ambitions. Weariness is common in the poetry which deals with the war, and poets express their remorse at having supported Qurayshī contenders for power in the hope that the people as a whole will not support them any more.

This poetry draws attention to the sufferings of society and the common people and attempts to reduce Quraysh's influence upon them. The poets repeat the logical

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1. Abū Tammām, 23.

argument that if the people were to get nothing out of helping one leader against another, it would be pointless to support either. The following anonymous line is a good example of this point of view:

*We obeyed Quraysh being deluded in our judgement, (150)*  
*and supporting the people of Hijāz is a*  
*hardship.<sup>1</sup>*

Abū Harra rebukes his fellow-men for their indecisive attitude to the warring leaders, and asks them what they would gain if one or the other leader succeeded. The poet's conclusion was that the followers' status would not change if one leader or another managed to impose his authority upon them. Therefore, they should wait until they could see who was the winner in order to obey him:

*What will it harm us, and what shall we lose, if one (151)*  
*or another seizes the mastery of the country?*  
*We are your brothers if misfortune comes to dwell*  
*in your houses, but you do not acknowledge a*  
*relationship for any other purpose.<sup>2</sup>*

#### CRITICISM OF CORRUPTION

A society which has to live in turmoil, civil war and political instability will inevitably experience much dissatisfaction, particularly with the dishonesty and

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1. *Tabarī*, IV, 524.

2. *Ansāb*, V, 188.



corruption to which such a situation is likely to lead. This was clearly the case in the early Umayyad period, and it created many difficulties which affected the stability of society and normal life, as is only too clear from the poetry. Because of the constant struggle and the state of disorder which was apparent in this period, caliphs, tribal and political leaders and many governors lost sight of the aim of promoting justice and the rule of Islam. Instead, if they gained a post of authority over the people they promptly used it to acquire personal wealth. The desire for money was itself a result of political instability, since money was the only form of insurance for a future which nobody could foresee, and to judge by the political poetry it seems that the accumulation of money was a common preoccupation among leading men, governors and caliphs. The majority of the population suffered from this, and the poets devoted a considerable part of their poems to criticism of this greedy attitude and accusing the upper class of abusing their position in order to make wealth illegally. The caliphs themselves were blamed for these social problems as they had allowed their governors and leading men to fall into corruption. They had given them absolute authority and had failed to inspect their manner of government. The ordinary people

wanted a fair distribution of their country's revenue, but were unable to achieve this, while the intellectuals who had failed to get anything valuable envied those who had managed to achieve maximum benefit. Therefore they accused the upper class of corruption, oppression and the acquisition of illegal wealth.

Thus we find the poets complaining to the caliphs about the ill-treatment which the ordinary people suffered, and drawing attention to specific cases of corruption which could not be denied by those implicated. Cases are mentioned of people who had no source of income other than their annual salary, who suddenly became extremely wealthy. The poetry assumes that the wealth which they had gained had been taken illegally, and that they had imposed unlawful taxes in order to enlarge their financial resources with the result that natural resources were exhausted and were not available for society's needs.

The situation gradually deteriorated and it seemed that no movement of reform could succeed unless the masses could enforce their rights upon the leaders or could manage to overthrow the regime, and indeed several attempts were made to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty. More often, however, the poets acted as a peaceful means for expressing the discontent of the mass of the people, and criticised the rulers for their apparent inability to create a just

society. The political poetry which dealt with these problems emphasised the responsibility of the government for the widespread practice of corruption.

The caliph had not fulfilled his duty to protect society from the rapacity of governors and tribal leaders, and thus the caliph does not escape the poets' criticism any more than the former. Despite the savageness of the criticism expressed in the poetry, it has to be said that there is little evidence of individual caliphs changing their ways or of punishing their subordinates, at least because of the poetry. The main function of the poets seems to have been to act as a safety valve in a situation which armed rebellion seemed powerless to change. This function of the poetry in expressing the discontent of the people is well illustrated in the following anonymous line:

*We return when they return and raid when they raid: (152)*  
*why then do they have an abundance (of wealth)*  
*while we have none?<sup>1</sup>*

As well as their failure to share out booty in an equitable manner the caliphs were blamed for the rapacity with which they taxed the countryside. According to <sup>c</sup>Uqayba al-Asadī the government was incapable of conducting a policy which would improve the cultivation of land, but instead they added more and more taxes which the poor people had to pay despite their terrible situation:

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1. Futūh, 542.

*You have devoured our land and stripped it bare, (153)  
and there is nothing remaining, either planted  
in the ground or harvested.*

*Suppose this is a nation which has perished by  
being led astray; then Yazīd is its  
leader and the father of Yazīd.<sup>1</sup>*

When the Umayyad dynasty seemed on the point of collapse after the death of Yazīd, the rival candidates for the caliphate found it necessary to promise to introduce reforms and to improve the people's living standards in order to gain support. The poets were prepared to support these stated policies, and when the candidate succeeded they assisted him, but if he failed to fulfil his promises or did not make fundamental changes they would insult him. For instance Ibn az-Zubayr promised an equal share for his followers and told them that if they supported him he would be as good as <sup>C</sup>Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Ironically, when he succeeded, he imitated <sup>C</sup>Umar by dressing the same as him, but not, according to the poets, in any other way.

The poet Abū Harra upbraids him in the following words:

*We have not seen you following the policy of al-Fārūq, (154)  
except in his way of dressing and in his way of carrying  
an old whip.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Ansāb, IV, 45.

2. Ansāb, V, 190.



Ibn az-Zubayr's policies produced less satisfactory results than he had intended, thus arousing the poet's dissatisfaction. He was a good speaker and used to exhort his people not to be concerned about gaining money and fortune. Ironically he himself was a miser and therefore the poets insulted him, as in the following lines of Abū at-Tufayl:

*O be thankful for the remarkable and wondrous times* (155)  
*which make us laugh and others which make us cry.*  
*And the changes which the days produce, Ibn*  
*az-Zubayr, cause us to ignore the world.*<sup>1</sup>

The caliph appointed governors and administrators to assist him in governing the various regions, giving them a great degree of authority in order to deal properly with their responsibilities. The main concern of the caliph was limited to keeping stability and security in the country, while the governors applied local policies under the guidance of the caliph's instructions which were not inflexible. Consequently most of the governors exploited this flexibility, becoming unscrupulous<sup>2</sup> and acting autocratically. This attitude failed to gain them the people's support, and the poets accused them of being overly concerned with their own interests, and with not paying attention to the public interest. The governors, however, used the name of the

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1. Aghānī, XVI, 118.

2. Al-Hajjāj, 296.

caliph and his authority to collect taxes and to justify their demands upon the people. Thus for example they would increase taxation for some, but suspend annual payment for others,<sup>1</sup> they would refuse to increase the salaries of local troops, and they would impose extra zakāt.<sup>2</sup>

The poets used their poetic talents to the full to describe this unlawful behaviour, attributing it to the corruption of those in power,<sup>3</sup> and appealing to the caliph to redress the people's grievances. In other cases they addressed their poems to the governors, denouncing their attitude toward those under their command and blaming them for their failure to create a harmonious atmosphere between the people and the government. Such governors, according to them, were making an outward show of efficiency but were in reality practising self-interest, as in the following lines of <sup>C</sup>Abd Allāh b. Hammām as-Sulūlī on al-Nu<sup>C</sup>mān b. Bashīr, the governor of Kūfa in 59 AH who had refused to pay the increase in the atā' ordered by Mu<sup>C</sup>āwiya:

*O, Nu<sup>C</sup>mān do not withhold our increase, fear God  
regarding us and observe the book which you  
recite.* (156)

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1. Kāmil, IV, 309.

2. Aghānī, XVI, 6.

3. Dayf, 209.

4. Ṭabarī, V, 32.

*Do not be skilful in opening the door of evil for us, and in locking the door of kindness.*

*You have gained significant authority, do not allow somebody to gain the reputation of generosity while you have that of miserliness.*

*You are a man of sweet and eloquent oratory, so why are you not sweet about our increase?*

*Before you, we were governed by governors who were concerned with improving our ways, while they did not improve theirs.*

*Although they dispraised our life they drained it frequently until we had not even one single leather bucketful of it.*

*If they spoke they said the best, but the good speech was contradicted by bad practice.<sup>1</sup>*

An-Nābigha draws a contrast between the attitude of the caliph who was responsible for appointing the governors, and the attitude of these same governors in Iraq, as the caliph was honest and trusting while his governors were not. The following lines refer to Abū Mūsā al-Ash<sup>C</sup>arī, governor of Basra who had originally been appointed by U<sup>C</sup>thmān:

*The son of Affān was trusted but he did not send  
a trusted and concerned man. (157)*

*O grave of the prophet and his two companions, what  
great help would you offer us if you could hear our  
cry for help?*

*O may God bless you, but not bless our leaders.*

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1. Ansāb, IV, 12.

2. Aghānī, V, 26.

When the Umayyad troops killed Mus<sup>c</sup>ab and re-established their authority in Iraq, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik transferred al-Hajjāj from Hijāz to Iraq. His harsh treatment of the Iraqis made the poets remember their former governor Mus<sup>c</sup>ab with regret, and they composed remorseful poems describing their misery under Umayyad rule.

<sup>c</sup>Amr b. Yazīd an-Nahdī speaks of his people's suffering under al-Hajjāj in the following lines:

*As you see generosity has been buried since the death of Mus<sup>c</sup>ab, and trust is guarded by the wolf.* (158)

*Granted that we are people whose mistakes have destroyed them - does not Thaqīf have sins and mistakes?<sup>1</sup>*

There is an abundance of poetry from this period which blames governors for abusing their powers. Despite the fact that this is a new theme in Arabic poetry, the poets show skill and expertise in handling this genre in the hope of defending the people against this sort of abuse by words rather than deeds. The political poets emphasise that the misuse of power is a mistake whose consequences will fall upon both the governors and the caliph, tending ultimately to undermine the reputation of the caliph. Thus they address many of their poems to the court, explaining their grievances and their rejection of such oppressive

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1. Ansāb, V, 281.



behaviour, as in these lines by <sup>c</sup>Amr b. Ahmar al-Bāhilī:

*We are but people of flocks: beyond them we have  
neither cultivated land nor valuables.* (159)

*[A people] to whom the country has become wearisome,  
and of whom it has become wearied, who have been  
burned up by the oppression of tax-gatherers and  
whose water and trees have been destroyed.*

*If you do not rescue them, their settlements will  
become a desolation in which the humar will lay  
their eggs.<sup>1</sup>*

This poetry which expresses so many complaints against the Umayyad governors is largely composed by those who had previously resisted Syrian domination by force of arms. Their harsh treatment by these governors<sup>2</sup> and the heavy taxes of which they complain<sup>3</sup> were perhaps the price which they had to pay for this, or it may simply be that they continued to hate the superiority of Syria, and regarded the governor's actions as being automatically against their interests. Whatever the real facts were, many poems were written which were devoted to a description of the harsh treatment which the governors imposed upon the people. The poets cried for help and complained to the caliph, as in these lines of <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh az-Zabīr:

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1. as-Sa<sup>c</sup>ālīk, 38.

2. See for example, Short History, 102.

3. Diwān ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī, 230. See also Dayf, II, 210.

Report to Mu<sup>C-</sup>awiya son of Harb that the countryside (160)  
has been ruined, so that it does not exist.  
And our mountains have been ruined and destroyed,  
and have been left useless for their cattle-dealer.  
Could you rescue what we still have, and relieve  
your subjects from corruption?  
Your trustee does not fear God and does not  
intend to reform your nation's situation.  
Whenever you say 'He has lessened his caprices',  
he persists in his error and adds to it.<sup>1</sup>

At this period Qays were the main opponents of Syrian domination. They sided with Ibn az-Zubayr until he was defeated, and finally <sup>C</sup>Abd al-Malik had to compromise with them when they accepted his rule. One of their political leaders was ar-Rā<sup>C</sup>ī an-Numayrī who was himself a poet and paid several visits to Damascus in order to persuade the caliph to forgive his tribe for their past support of Ibn az-Zubayr. His poems were polite and diplomatic, praising the caliph greatly, and ascribing the injustice which had been done to his people to the misbehaviour of the collectors of zakāt who did not obey the orders of the caliph. At the same time he insisted that he himself did not have any association with those who had opposed the Umayyads. Eventually his embassy was successful in persuading the caliph to exempt his tribe from paying tax for a number of years and to order that their zakāt should

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1. Ansāb, IV, 20.

be distributed among their poor. Although he produced two long poems devoted to this subject, we will quote just a few verses from many which mention these social problems and describe the oppression of the governors who forced people to pay extra zakāt:

*Our fortunes were unable to meet the demands of* (161)  
*those whom you ordered to be just to us, and*  
*they left us nothing and were not just.*

*We paid zakāt, but their spokesman was not*  
*satisfied until it was doubled many times.*

*The poor man whose milch-camel was just enough for*  
*his family's needs was left without anything.*

*The man of property was reduced to difficulties and*  
*the wealthy ones were left with little wealth*  
*to see them through hard times.<sup>1</sup>*

Ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī declares that they are Muslims who regard zakāt as a divine command, and have no objections to paying it, but they refuse to be cheated by corrupt zakāt collectors. He concludes his poems of grievance by warning the court that he and his tribe will renounce their support of the Umayyads unless the caliph intervenes to save them:

*O custodian of God's command, we are orthodox people* (162)  
*who say their prayers in the morning and evening.*

*Arabs who believe that God has the revealed right of*  
*zakāt to our wealth.*

*So remove from us injustice which has starved our sons,*  
*and rescue our bodies which have been devoured (by*  
*the governors).*

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1. Aghānī, XXIII, 361.

For those who were ordered by you to be just,  
never obeyed the slightest part of your commands.  
Yahyā arrived and imposed an [illegal] contract  
which was regarded as a heavy load by the Muslims.  
They took forcibly and unjustly the pregnant she-  
camel instead of the yearling, and entered it as  
an afil (a camel aged less than a year) for the  
amīr.  
I have left my people weighing up their alternatives;  
will they support you or will they delay for a  
while.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that the governors of the Umayyads created a wide gap between them and the people. They seem to have little in common with those they were sent to rule, this at least being the implication of the poetry which was produced by the poets who protest against corruption. The poets describe these corrupt officials as being hateful and harmful to the people, and blame them for the lack of justice and the lack of reform. Some poets go even further and charge them with violating Islamic principles:

*Those whom you sent throughout the country disregarded (163)  
your instructions and committed breaches of the  
sacred law.*

*Wolves established themselves on the pulpits of our  
land, and they all inflicted injustice and acted  
oppressively.*

*You wanted a just man to be responsible, but it is  
impossible to find a God-fearing Muslim.<sup>2</sup>*

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1. Diwān ar-Rā<sup>c</sup>ī, 229-242.

2. Bayān, III, 550. See as-Sa<sup>c</sup>ālik, 41.



Ka<sup>c</sup>b b. Ma<sup>c</sup>dān al-Ashqarī also expresses his views on the corruption which has been thrown over his society by the injustice of the governors. He implies that the caliph lacks wisdom in allowing his subjects to be harassed by the governors. He goes so far as to ask the caliph not merely to dismiss the corrupt governors, but to execute them:

*You look after what is close to you, but the  
governors of your territory in the provinces  
are wolves.* (164)

*They will not respond to what you ask them to do  
until some necks are chopped off by swords.<sup>1</sup>*

The poets did not merely complain to the caliph, but also tried in every possible way to make the governors themselves aware of their errors. Abū al-Aswad the famous grammarian composed a humorous poem addressed to his friend Hāritha b. Badr when the latter was appointed sub-governor of a certain area of Iraq. In it he ironically advises the new governor not to be stupid and to do the same as the other governors normally do:

*O Hāritha b. Badr, as you have got a governorship  
be a rat, betray and steal.* (165)

*Do not despise anything that you can get your hands  
on, since your portion of the property of Iraq is  
Surraq.*

*Vie with Tamīm in wealth, for wealth has a tongue by  
means of which the wealthy man is powerful and eloquent.*

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1. Bayān, III, 550.

*If people invite you they expect you to eat. So eat,  
Hāritha, or go hungry; you are not a fool.*<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the uneven distribution of public revenue, and the vast sums of money which the caliph was able to bestow on his favourites, a small minority among a huge population were extremely wealthy, for example tribal leaders, high financial officials, governors, courtiers and favoured poets. Their excessive wealth led them to extravagant expenditure, and involved them in a life of luxury. These extraordinary expenses did not pass unnoticed by the poets and the poor who were living without reasonable maintenance. The poor underwent much hardship in order to improve their income and their bad conditions, but often found that their money went towards upholding the position of the upper class. Thus we find the poet Anas b. Zunaym<sup>2</sup> making a strong protest against Muṣ<sup>c</sup>ab, taking the expenditure occasioned by his marriage as an example of the disparity between the wealthy and the majority. The governor, he says, was able to pay one million dirhams as a dowry for his wife while the leaders of his forces were starving and had nothing to eat.

He directs his poem to the caliph, warning him of the consequences of his negligence, and comparing his policies with those of <sup>c</sup>Umar:

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1. Aghānī, XXIII, 475.

2. A Basran poet who has a close relationship with the governor of Basra, <sup>c</sup>Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād. Aghānī, XXIII, 425.

Convey a message to the Commander of the Faithful  
from a sincere adviser who does not seek to  
deceive;

(166)

A dowry for a girl is one thousand times one  
thousand while the leaders of the troops spend  
the night without food.

If I told this to Abū Hafs and could tell him what  
I have told you, he would be frightened.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of this description of the prevalence of corruption in society it would perhaps be useful to quote one poem in its entirety which is devoted to the description of the corruption of the authorities. It gives a long list of those governors, leaders and zakāt collectors who have exploited their position to make illegal wealth. The poet, <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. Hammām al-Sulūlī, discusses the subject in detail and gives the names of those involved and their backgrounds before their appointments. Then he compares the dramatic change in the lives of these people when they gained official posts with their previous lives when they had been poor. He ascribes this change to their misuse of authority and their corruption.

O Ibn az-Zubayr, Commander of the Faithful, has it  
not been reported to you what the governors did  
with their governorship?

(167)

They sold the produce of the earth to the merchants  
and divided up the main body of the kharāj greedily  
as though it were booty.

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1. Aghānī, III, 357.

Then they brought before you a feeble lying old man;<sup>1</sup>  
do not take any notice of what this old liar says.  
Grasp Zayd<sup>2</sup> in your hands if you can catch him, and  
avenge the widows on the Ball of the Dung-Beetle.<sup>3</sup>  
We have been afflicted by a lizard from the Banū Khalaf,  
who regards treachery as being (as easy as) drinking  
water and honey.  
Take al-<sup>c</sup>Uṣayfīr<sup>4</sup> and pluck the feathers of his wings  
until he feels the weight of future retribution.  
The trust of <sup>c</sup>Attāb<sup>5</sup> is not sound; people do not speak  
obliquely of it but there is an abundance of reports.  
Qays of Kinda<sup>6</sup> had a long term of leadership in a choice  
part of the land between the plain and the mountain.  
Seize Hujayr<sup>7</sup> and force him to render an account, and  
whoever you pardon do not pardon the Banū Qufal.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Murshid b. Sharahīl who was responsible for the sale of produce on behalf of the Bayt al-Māl, and was suspected of appropriating part of the income for himself.
  2. Zayd, treasurer of the Bayt al-Māl.
  3. Duhrūjat al-Ju<sup>c</sup>al, nickname of <sup>c</sup>Āmir b. Mas<sup>c</sup>ūd b. Khalaf, governor of Kūfa 64 AH. Tabarī, V, 529.
  4. <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>c</sup>Uṣayfīr, governor of al-Madā'in. Later on he was dismissed by al-Hajjāj, Tabarī, VI, 228.
  5. Governor of Asbahān and a distinguished figure of Kūfa who assumed many important posts. Tabarī, VI, 126.
  6. Qays b. Yazīd b. Sharahīl al-Kindī.
  7. Governor of Az-Zuwābī.
  8. The sons of Qufal were zakāt collectors for the tribe of Bakr.



What makes me suspect them is their elevation to khābīs<sup>1</sup> after living on sinhāt<sup>2</sup> and onions.

It is not fair to equate a man who is governing a peaceful area with one who is fighting in Dustubi,<sup>3</sup> without regular payment.

The former one is supplied with the kharāj of the land and takes his ease, scorning the singing of the singing-girl in her shift.

Al-Wālibī<sup>4</sup> who was appointed by Mihrān;<sup>5</sup> Mihrān has gone in disgrace while al-Wālibī remains.

And here is Ibn Abī<sup>c</sup> Ushsh<sup>6</sup> and his friend<sup>7</sup> before al-Sabī<sup>c</sup><sup>8</sup> who races his horse in a leisurely fashion.

Do not allow the Bayt al-Māl to be plundered by every blue-eyed made-up Hamdānī.

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1. A confection of dates, cream and starch.
  2. Dry fish with onions are a kind of food eaten by the poor. Lisān S.V. Sinhāt.
  3. An area in the region of Hamadhān on the east border of Iraq; Bakrī, II, 551.
  4. Sa<sup>c</sup>īd b. Harmala b. al-Kāhil al-Wālibī.
  5. Mihrān was a mawlā of Ziyād.
  6. Governor of Daynawar.
  7. The friend is <sup>c</sup>Abd ar-Rahmān b. Sa<sup>c</sup>īd b. Qays al-Hamdānī, governor of al-Mawsil. Tabarī, VI, 34.
  8. A quarter of Kūfa, see Lisān, S.V. Saba<sup>c</sup>.

And the Dārimī<sup>1</sup> surrounded by flowered silk, in a reception room which he has exchanged for pasturing camels.

And Munqidh b. Ṭarīf<sup>2</sup> of the Banū Asad, I am told that their governor left them carrying a heavy load of money.

Although Khunays<sup>3</sup> of Ju<sup>c</sup>fa spent the night reciting sūras of the Qur'ān this did not prevent him from benefiting himself.

And two other governors who have gained something; if you make gentle enquiries about them, you will discover something;

Muhammad b. <sup>c</sup>Umayr<sup>4</sup> and the one<sup>5</sup> against whom Bakr lied when they were scared and frightened.

And Furāt,<sup>6</sup> even if he is said to be a God-fearing man is not that fearful, cautious man when he can get something.

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1. Labīd b. <sup>c</sup>Uṭarid a prominent leader of Kūfa, Ṭabarī, V, 270.
  2. Munqidh were a branch of Asad settled on the lower courses of the Euphrates; their governor Nu<sup>c</sup>aym b. Dajāja became very rich. Ansāb, V, 193.
  3. His name is Zuhur b. Qays, governor of Jūkhā, a distinguished leader of Kūfa and one of those who revolted against al-Mukhtār; Ṭabarī, VI, 18.
  4. Governor of Ādharbayjān, 66 AH; Ṭabarī, VI, 34.
  5. The other one is Yazīd b. Ruwaym, a leading figure of Kūfa and one of those who wrote to al-Husayn b. <sup>c</sup>Alī asking him to come to Kūfa; Ṭabarī, V, 353.
  6. A leading figure of Kūfa; Ṭabarī, VI, 51.

*Al-Hārithī<sup>1</sup> would agree to share his fortune with you,  
if you promised to pardon him for his previous  
corruption.*

*And summon the Aqārī<sup>C</sup> and smite them with a disaster,  
and load Mas<sup>C</sup>ūd's treachery on a camel (because it  
is so heavy).*

*They came to us on foot without mounts, and soon they  
became the owners of horses and camels.*

*They will not obey you until whips strike their skulls  
and they have ropes on their feet.*

*If whips bite their shoulders they will show their  
accumulation of fortune and expensive clothes.<sup>2</sup>*

#### DESCRIPTIONS OF POETS' ESCAPE FROM THE OPPRESSION OF THE AUTHORITIES

Another new subject which was only really created in the political poetry of this period was the description of the escape of poets who were wanted by the government as a result of their rejection of governmental policies. This generally came about because poets who did not have access to illegal wealth denounced the governor's policies and the authority of caliphs who had legitimised corruption while they and their society remained poor. The poets found themselves undertaking a difficult task in defending the rights of their people and the rights of their community.

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1. As-Sarīb.Waqqās, governor of Nahāwand.

2. Ansāb, V, 194.

The governor's reaction was to punish the offending poets severely, and most of them had to flee their home towns or hide themselves when the authorities sought for them. As a result they produced a number of poems which describe their feelings and emotions in face of difficulties and dangers which might affect their lives. They describe the fears which afflicted them even when they ran away to a deserted area, since they thought that each hill behind which they hid themselves might contain a man awaiting their arrival. <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. al-Hajjāj describes his burdensome life when he had escaped from <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Malik as follows:

*It seems to me that God's earth, wide though it is, (168)*  
*is small as a hunter's net for a frightened fugitive.*  
*It makes him think that every pass through which he*  
*goes throws a murderer in his direction.<sup>1</sup>*

Mālik b. ar-Rayb was one of many poets who opposed the policy of the Umayyads. Unfortunately for him he was subjected to much harsh treatment and had to flee in order to save his life. He explains why he had to escape, and gives a very logical analysis of the methods of the government of his day, explaining in which ways they are wrong. The government, he says, have exercised their rights over the people and have asked them to observe

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1. Aghānī, XIII, 163.



their duties while, on the other hand, the government itself had recognised no duties towards its subjects:

*Is it right that the government is obeyed in what  
is due to it, but refuses to carry out its  
duties?* (169)

*If I place the sand between it and me, and a desert  
plain comes between Yabrīn (and you)  
Help yourselves, sons of Marwān. Seek my worthless  
fortune, for there is nothing desirable in it for  
the one who desires it.*<sup>1</sup>

The same poet composed other lines stating that the obedience of the people to the sons of Marwān was conditional on their treating them in a just way; if they did so, they would accept their leadership, but if not, the people would find a vast area in which to escape the authority of the Umayyads:

*O sons of Marwān, if you treat us justly we will come  
close to you, if not, know that we will go away.  
The earth is vast for those who do not want to live  
in a country of humiliation, and every country  
which offers a refuge is a homeland.*<sup>2</sup> (170)

It seems that the governors of the Umayyads were determined to outwit their opponents and threatened them with severe punishment if they captured them. So the

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1. Aghānī, XXII, 309.

2. Shi<sup>c</sup>r al-Basra, 176.

wanted poets went to where the governors could not reach them. In towns security was strict, and so offenders tried to avoid living in towns. Instead they went to the desert, preferring it to the towns, as Huyayy b. Hazzāl at-Tamīmī says:

*Neither is Kūfa my mother nor is Basra my father, (171)  
nor am I deterred from travelling by laziness.  
In life there are pleasures, and in death there  
is rest, and in the earth there is a remote  
refuge from Ziyād and a possible place to live.<sup>1</sup>*

The poets did not disguise their fear of the all-powerful governors who exercised absolute authority and did not compromise in any way with those in disagreement with them. Indeed the poets frequently described their fear, and seem to have found that the best way to escape severe punishment was to hide themselves. Even al-Farazdaq, who sometimes denounced the governors in an attempt to defend his people and their rights was subjected to many unpleasant experiences, and had to exile himself to Hijāz until the death of Ziyād. He describes his difficulties in many poems of which we may quote a few examples:

*Ziyād invited me to accept his payment, but I will (172)  
never come to see him, as long as a man of noble  
lineage has abundance.*

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1. Ansāb, IV, 201.

*When I became afraid that their payment might be  
black chains or dark red fetters.*

*I fled to a slender she-camel, whose flesh had  
been wasted away by travelling during the  
night and crossing desolate country.*

*Directed toward the desert by one who pays no  
heed to the rank or excuses of the son of  
Abū Sufyān.<sup>2</sup>*

Another example is the following:

*Approach the sons of the Umayyads and ask for their  
protection and seek a secure promise from them  
concerning what worries you.* (173)

*I escape to you, from you and Ziyād, and I do not  
think my blood can be lawfully shed by either  
of you.*

*If someone wishes to kill me because my poetry  
discredits him, I will leave nothing unsaid  
against those who are seeking revenge.<sup>2</sup>*

The poet was later imprisoned by Mālik b. al-Mundhir, a governor of Basra in the time of Hishām.<sup>3</sup> In a poem dating from this period al-Farazdaq speaks of his fears for the future and blames himself for his own negligent attitude towards this weak governor who had managed to seize him so easily. He had managed to escape Ziyād's punishment and feels that he could have managed to escape Mālik too, if not for his own apathy.

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1. Ansāb, IV, 197.

2. Ansāb, IV, 197; Diwān, II, 70.

3. Aghānī, XXI, 353.

*If I had feared that Mālik would take me by surprise, (174)*  
*I would have flown on a mount with abundant*  
*plumage, whose feathers were not short,*  
*As I flew from the two towns of Ziyād while his*  
*teeth tried to bite me.<sup>1</sup>*

Eventually the poet had to admit that if the governors or the caliph wanted somebody they could make life difficult for him, even if he had a powerful tribe:

*If you get angry with someone, he will have many (175)*  
*sleepless nights, even if he comes from a powerful*  
*tribe.<sup>2</sup>*

Another distinguished political leader and poet who suffered from the authorities was <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. al-Hurr, who revolted against tyranny and spent his life either in prison or hiding in the countryside. He was active against the government and led many successful raids at the head of his followers, as a result of which he was a wanted man. In the following lines he describes the misery of life, which he compares to a prison:

*I said to him, "Be patient, <sup>c</sup>Atiyya, it is a prison (176)*  
*until God decides when we shall be released".*  
*I see that my fate consists of two kinds of days,*  
*a day when I am pursued and outcast and a day*  
*when I am crowned among kings.<sup>3</sup>*

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1. Ansāb, IV, 199; Dīwān, II, 11.

2. Ansāb, IV, 199; Dīwān, II, 216.

3. Tabarī, VI, 136.



## THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH BETWEEN QURAYSH AND THE TRIBESMEN

Quraysh were regarded as a ruling tribe among the Arabs, and the caliph and most of the governors, leaders and distinguished people came from their ranks. Accordingly the poets examined the relationship between Quraysh and their followers as far as material wealth was concerned, and accused the leaders of not observing their responsibility as leaders but of taking advantage of their position in order to accumulate money. The main accusation levelled by the poets against Quraysh was that they were not sincere as leaders and would not make great sacrifices for the sake of their people and their country. They described Quraysh as opportunists who exploited their position to increase their income, and used their country's manpower in order to provide them with an abundant fortune in order to maintain their luxurious life while the people who worked so hard remained poor. Although the tribesmen were willing to fight in order to provide the rulers with an adequate fortune, they did not share with Quraysh on an equitable basis.

The poetry of this period reveals many complaints against Quraysh and demonstrates the anger of the people who were sent to fight on the frontiers while Quraysh enjoyed an extravagant life and their people lived in miserable

conditions. The envy and dissatisfaction of the people is shown in the following lines of <sup>C</sup>Amr b. Ma<sup>C</sup>dī Karib:

*If we were killed and nobody cried for us, Quraysh (177)  
would say that was our fate.*

*We are given equality in piercing with spears but  
not when money is distributed.<sup>1</sup>*

Abū al-Aswad protested against the Umayyads who put the lives of young people in danger and urged them to go to fight in order to supply Quraysh with tremendous booty. In the meantime the soldiers got little benefit out of their fighting and only risked their lives. He expresses his emotions about this injustice done as follows:

*The Umayyads painted our hand in blood but they (178)  
excluded us from their fortune.<sup>2</sup>*

The same view is held by <sup>C</sup>Amr b. Ma<sup>C</sup>mar, a prominent tribal leader who was totally disillusioned when his work was not appreciated by Quraysh. He launched many successful raids and gained considerable booty but instead of distributing it among his followers, he was ordered by the caliph to bring it to Damascus. There the booty was given as a present to the senior members of Quraysh. Naturally <sup>C</sup>Amr reacted bitterly to this and expressed his feelings in the following lines:

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1. Aghānī, XV, 189.

2. Wafayāt, I, 302.

*The Quraysh divided my booty among themselves  
in Damascus while my companions were  
excluded, and this is not justice.*

(179)

*If the Shaykh of Damascus had seized his own  
money [well and good]; my mind is not  
dominated by wealth.<sup>1</sup>*

The poets questioned their presence on the frontiers and why they, with their tribes, were leaving their homes in order to gain booty which did not go into their own hands. The money was taken to the Umayyads and their senior leaders who never involved themselves in the difficult task of gaining booty, while the soldiers were left with little pay to keep them going. Who, the poets asked, was the main beneficiary - tribesmen who only went to fight in the hope of gaining a little booty, or those who remained prosperous and had someone to work for them, supplying all their needs. The following line, by an Azdī poet, is an indication of this attitude:

*We are fighting to defend the palaces of Darābjird  
in order to raise money for al-Mughīra and  
ar-Ruqād.<sup>2</sup>*

(180)

Sometimes the Umayyads did not have enough volunteers to join the army and had to resort to conscription, sometimes sending men out of their home regions and replacing

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1. Mu<sup>c</sup>jam, 66.

2. Tabarī, VI, 301.

them by troops from elsewhere. The poets who were conscripted urged their colleagues to revolt against this oppression and described the terrible situation in which they found themselves, given that they had no desire to fight. In this way they hoped to arouse the troops' sympathy and to make them aware that it was not to their advantage to fight without good reason. Abū Jilda al-Yashkurī says in the following lines:

(181)

*What a regret and what a sorrow together! What  
grief for the heart in what we have experienced!  
We neglected both our religion and the world, and  
gave up our wives and our sons.  
We are not people of religion to be patient in  
the face of catastrophe.  
Neither are we people of the world to defend our  
fortune even if we do not fight for the sake of  
religion.  
We left our homes for the commoners of <sup>C</sup>Akk, the  
Anbāt al-Qurā and the Ash<sup>C</sup>arīs.<sup>1</sup>*

Al-Kumayt al-Asadī has his own interpretation regarding the Umayyads' apathetic attitude toward their subjects. According to him the Umayyads regarded their people as a flock of sheep whose shepherd has certain objectives in his care of them. These are that his sheep will provide him with their produce, for instance, wool to wear, meat to eat and milk to drink. He is

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1. Tabarī, VI, 368.



concerned about these material functions and therefore needs to look after the sheep properly. According to the poet the Umayyads regarded their people in the same way. Thus, the poet described the Umayyad caliph as the shepherd:

*His purposes in this regard are the same as those* (182)  
*of the owner of a flock of sheep bleating in*  
*the night -*

*Shearing the woolly ones, selecting the fat*  
*ones [to eat]; and he shouts and the lambs*  
*follow him.<sup>1</sup>*

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1. Firaq, 383.

## CONCLUSION

We have seen in the previous chapters of this study which deal with the most critical period (64-73 AH) in the history of the Umayyads that tribal, religious and party tendencies were demonstrated clearly during this time. The various factions took advantage of the disagreement among the people regarding the succession to the Caliphate in order to attempt to gain power. It was for this reason that at the beginning of this study, we discussed whether or not there were any rules to determine the procedure of succession to the Caliphate, from the death of the Prophet until the reign of Mu<sup>c</sup>āwiya, the founder of the Umayyad monarchy.

Despite the general understanding that the Caliph should be one of the prominent Companions of the Prophet, and from the Quraysh, because the people accepted their leadership, the Arabs did not completely agree with such a monopoly of the Caliphate. We have seen that during the Rāshidūn period there were no specific criteria followed in determining the procedure of the Caliph's succession except that it was not restricted to a certain family.

Later on, however, Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya managed to assume leadership by force rather than by the general consent of the people. His reign passed peacefully and smoothly due to the very particular circumstances which brought him to office. Indeed, his leadership was pragmatically accepted by the majority of people in order to avoid more bloodshed within the community. Thus his earlier success encouraged him to take the further step of trying to establish his son after him. This attempt partly succeeded in creating a monarchical system instead of the Shūrā. But his decision had as a consequence serious trouble whose result was that the whole country became involved in another civil war after his death, when the people turned against his successor. Indeed, Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya did not miscalculate the situation which would face his successor but determined to impose his wishes by force, the method which he himself had used to gain the Caliphate. This determination led the outstanding leaders to review their attitudes toward the Umayyads and they prepared themselves to challenge the new monarch. Consequently, the reign of Yazīd ignites the spark of revolution against the Umayyad monarchy.

It may seem that it was the lack of agreement among the people as to who was entitled to office that started the disorder, but in reality it arose from the contradictions of tribal interests. Each group supported

the one who could offer them most. They had to carefully consider their future when this war would be over. We have indicated the furious atmosphere which made the tribes so anxious to mobilize their people, and which made them keen to rally as much support as they could to their side. This resulted in the creation of the major Arab confederations of Qaḥṭān and <sup>c</sup>Adnān, who dominated the whole period of the Umayyads and contributed much to political and social problems.

We have examined the system of tribal groupings before Islam and that which was created in the Umayyad period. We have found that the pre-Islamic groupings were inadequate to meet the demands of the new situation so that larger unions became necessary. Thus they had to mobilise their support and to create the two groups of Qaḥṭān and <sup>c</sup>Adnān which were the main forces of the Umayyad period. The various tribes had to link themselves to one of these two combinations, and to accept that they had blood bonds with whichever grouping they chose.

Our study has also led us to suggest that there was a strong link between tribal confrontations and the places in which the tribes settled, since most of the tribes came with the conquerors, and had to settle in camps (ajnād). Later on these camps became their permanent settlements. When war broke out amongst them their distribution within these camps



and their vicinities created more difficulties, increased their hostility and prolonged the civil war.

Within this internal confrontation, poetry is regarded as a great vehicle of propaganda. Thus we have pursued the development of this kind of poetry and have thrown more light on the role of the poets in both the pre-Islamic period and that of Islam.

In the pre-Islamic period poets were entirely restricted to their tribes, they did not lead an independent life, and their minds were fully occupied by the defence of tribal interests. Their world was the tribes to which they belonged, while in Islam this cohesion was weakened and the poets had to deal with many aspects of life. Their world became wider than it had been and they had to work effectively with a new world which brought a momentous change into their lives.

From a political point of view we notice that there is a distinction between the poetry which preceded Islam and that which started within the Islamic movement. The former was completely devoted to the tribal cause, and the poets themselves were completely linked to their tribes, recognising no power except their tribes. In the Islamic period on the other hand, the whole society had been thrown into turmoil by the new ideology and the poets came to realise the differences in values between the two periods.

In Islam a social order had been created and the State had been established in power over their tribes. The attitude of the poets had been changed and they had to cope with a new way of life and to define their position according to their political views. Thus they abandoned their former narrow position and became involved in a larger society. They now dealt with many different considerations. At first when the Arabs converted to Islam and began to stream out of their peninsula the poets were elevated to serve Islam, putting the national cause before tribal tendencies and directing their poems to serve national demands. But this was a short and transitional period which did not establish a definitive set of ideas. Later on, when the nation was divided, the poets emerged very strongly, taking a leading role in the controversies of the time and contributing much to political life, having in mind the outcome of each step which they took.

Indeed, many poems were composed to praise the Caliph, his governors and the outstanding leaders of tribes or parties. But it is also true to say that in the poetry which was composed in this period some poets shouldered their responsibility of defending their society, criticising the government's misbehaviour and expressing their disagreement with their tyrannical methods.

We have emphasised the new attitude which was demonstrated by many poets of this time against the government, for instance criticism of corruption, harsh treatment of opponents, misuse of power and so on which was not known before the Umayyad period. The poetry itself realistically describes the manner of the leaders and the policies which they applied, and it faithfully records their conflicts amongst themselves in order to gain power.

Finally, with this poetry we reach an advanced stage of awareness of the rights of the people and of the government. Thus we find that some of the poets realised that it would be to the advantage of the people and rulers if they both could observe their duties toward each other.

﴿ 1 ﴾

تَبِيرُ الْقَطَا لَيْلًا وَهِنَّ هَجُودُ  
وَمَرَّانُ أُمٌّ مَاذَا يَقُولُ سَعِيدُ  
يَبُوتُهَا الرَّحْمَنُ حَيْثُ يَرِيئُ  
فَإِنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَزِيدُ

إِلَيْكَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحَلَتْهَا  
أَلَا لَيْتَ شِعْرِي مَا يَقُولُ ابْنُ عَامِرٍ  
بَنِي خُلَفَاءِ اللَّهِ مَهَلًا فَإِنَّمَا  
إِذَا الْمَنِيرُ الْغُرَبِيِّ خَلَاهُ رَيْثُهُ

﴿ 2 ﴾

مُطِيعٌ وَلِلضَّحَاكِ عَاصٍ مُجَانِبُ  
وَأَخْرَجَ يَدْعُو لِلضَّلَالَةِ كَكَاذِبُ

وَأَشْهَدُكُمْ أَنِّي لِعَمْرٍوَانٍ سَامِعٌ  
إِمَامَانٍ أَمَا مِنْهُمَا فَعَلَى الْهُدَى

﴿ 3 ﴾

فَمَا نَالَهَا إِلَّا وَنَحْنُ شَهِيدُ

إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَّا الْخَلِيفَةُ نَفْسُهُ

﴿ 4 ﴾

ضَلَلْتُمْ وَمَا أَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُونَ مِنْبِرًا

نَزَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَنْ مِنْبَرِ الْمَلِكِ بَعْدَ مَا

﴿ 5 ﴾

يَسْرَتُ غَسَانًا لَهُمْ وَكَلْبًا  
وَطَيْئًا تَأْبَاهُ إِلَّا ضَرْبًا  
وَمِنْ تَلْوِخٍ مَشْخَرًا صَعْبًا

لَمَّا رَأَيْتَ الْأَمْرَ نَهَبًا  
وَالسَّكْسَكِيِّينَ رَجَالًا غَلْبًا  
وَالْقَيْنَ تَمْشِي فِي الْحَدِيدِ نَكْبًا



وَإِنْ دَنْتَ قَيْسَ نَقْلٍ لَا قَرِيْبًا

لَا يَأْخُذُونَ الْعَلَّكَ إِلَّا غَضَبًا

﴿ 6 ﴾

أَضَعْتَ وَكُلَّ أَمْرِكَ لِلضِّيَاعِ  
وَمَنْ ذَا مَاتَ مِنْ صَوْتِ السَّبَاعِ  
عَلَيْكَ فَصِرْتَ مِنْ سَقَطِ الْمَتَاعِ

وَبَوْمَ فَتَجَّتْ سَيْفِكَ مِنْ بَعِيْدِ  
وَكِدَّتْ تَمُوتُ أَنْ صَاحَ ابْنُ أَوْيَا  
رَأَيْتَكَ إِذْ تَحَالَفَ آلَ حَرْبِ

﴿ 7 ﴾

دَعْتَهُ فَوَلَا هَا اسْتَهْ وَهُوَ يَهْرَبُ  
كَمَا كُنْتَ أَوْ مَوْتِي فَالْمَوْتُ أَقْرَبُ  
كَأَنَّ لَمْ يَكُنْ وَالذَّهْرُ بِالْمَرْءِ قَلْبُ  
يَلَاقِي الْأُمُورَ الْمُسْتَعِدَّ الْمَجْرَبُ  
عَطَفْتَ عَلَى هِنْدٍ وَهِنْدٌ تَسْحَبُ  
وَعَرِقَ لَكُمْ فِي آلِ مَيْسَانَ يَضْرِبُ

أَقْرَبُ بَعِيْبِي أَنَّهُ عَقَّ أَمْنَهُ  
وَقَالَ عَلَيْكَ النَّاسُ كَوْنِي سَبِيْبَةً  
فَوَلِي وَمَاءَ الْعَيْنِ يَغْسِلُ جَيْبَهَا  
فَصَبْرًا عَمِيْدُ بْنُ الْعَمِيْدِ فَأَيْمَانَا  
فَلَوْ كُنْتُ حُرًّا أَوْ حَفِظْتُ وَصِيْبَةً  
وَلَكِنْ أَبِي قَلْبًا أُطِيْرَتْ بِنَاتُهُ

﴿ 8 ﴾

تَجْرُ خَصَاهَا تَبْتَغِي مِنْ تَحَالِفِ  
فِيصْبِحُ إِلَّا وَهُوَ لِلذَّلِّ عَارِفُ

عَزَلْنَا وَأَمْرَنَا وَبَكَرُ ابْنِ وَائِيْلِ  
وَمَا بَاتَ بَكْرِي مِنْ الدَّهْرِ لَيْلَةَ

يَا لَ تَعَمَّ أَنهَا مَذْكُورَةٌ      يَا فَاتِ مَسْعُودٍ بِهَا مَشْهُورَةٌ  
فَاسْتَمْسِكُوا بِجَانِبِ الْمَقْصُورَةِ

## 10

وَأَصْبَحَ ابْنُ مِسْعَرٍ مَحْصُورًا      يَبْغِي قُصُورًا دُونَهُ وَدُورًا  
حَتَّى شَبَّهْنَا حَوْلَهُ السَّعِيرًا

## 11

لَوْ أَنَّ أَشِيمَ لَمْ يَسْبِقْ أَسْتِنَا      وَأَخْطَأَ الْبَابَ إِذْ نِيرَانَا تَقْدُ  
إِذْنٌ لِّصَاحِبِ مَسْعُودٍ وَصَاحِبِهِ      وَقَدْ تَهَاوَفْتَ الْأَعْجَاجَ وَالْكَبْدُ

## 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلِكُ الْمَهْلِقُ بَابَهُ      حَدَّثَتْ أُمُورَ شَأْنِهِنَّ عَظِيمَ  
أَبْنِي أُمِيَّةٍ إِنْ آخِرَ مَلِكِكُمْ      جَسَدٌ بِحَوَارِينَ ثُمَّ مَقِيمَ  
طَرَقَتْ مَنِيَّتُهُ وَعَدَدٌ وَسَادُهُ      كُوبٌ وَزِقٌ رَاغِبٌ مَرْتَمِيمُ

## 13

إِذَا مَا قَلْتِ قَدْ صَالِحَتْ بِكَرًا      أَبِي الْأَضْغَانَ لَا النَّسَبَ الْبَعِيدَ  
وَأَيَّامٌ لَنَا وَلَهُمْ طُـوَالٌ      يَعْضُ النَّهَامَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَدِيدَ  
هَذَا أَخْوَانٌ بِصَطْلِيَانِ نَارًا      رِدَاءُ الْعَوْتِ بَيْنَهُمَا جَدِيدَ

بعد المذبذب عن أحسابها الحامي

يا جدع الف قيس بعد همام

أني الحرب لا تزداد إلا تعادبا  
مقيد دمي أو قاطع من لسايا  
وتبقى حزازات النفوس كما هيكا  
ومقتل همام أمني الأمانيا  
وتثار من سوان كلب نسايا

أرني سلاحي لا أبالك إنسي  
أتاني عن مروان بالغيب أنكه  
فقد بنيت المرعى على ومن الثرى  
أبعد ابن عمرو وابن معن تتابعا  
فلا صلح حتى تتحط الخيل بالقنا

على زفر داء من الداء باقيا  
وبين الحشا أعياء الطيب العداويا  
وذبيان معذورا وتبكي البواكيا  
سيوف جناب والطوال المذاكيا

لعمري لقد أبقت وقية راهيط  
مقيما ثوى بين الضلوع محلته  
تبكي على قتل سليم وطامر  
دعا بسلاح ثم أحجم إذ رأى

وتترك قتل راهيط ما أجنبت  
أضاعت ثغور المسلمين وولت  
أخاها إذا ما المشرفية سلبت

ستذهب كلب قد حمتها رماحها  
لحا الله قيسا قيس عيلان إنها  
فياها بقيس بالرخاء ولا تكفن

إِذَا اسْتَقَلَّتْ تَجْرِي أَوَائِلَهَا  
 قَدْ عَمَّ أَهْلَ الصَّلَاةِ شَاظِلَهَا  
 بِالشَّامِ كُلِّ شَجَاهٍ شَاظِلَهَا  
 دَهْمَاءَ مُلْتَجَةِ غِيَاظِلَهَا  
 سِوَاهُ فِيهَا وَعَاطِلَهَا

أَبَيْتَ أَرَعَى النُّجُومَ مَرْتَفِقَهَا  
 مِنْ فِتْنَةٍ أَصْبَحَتْ مَجَلِّسَهَا  
 مِنْ بَحْرَاسَانَ وَالْعِرَاقِ وَمَنْ  
 فَالنَّاسُ مِنْهَا فِي لَوْنٍ مَظْلَمَةٍ  
 يَمْسِي السَّفِيهِ الَّذِي يَعْنِفُ بِالْجَهْلِ

بِأَرْضٍ قَدْ تَحَامَتَهَا نِزَارُ

مَضَى أَسْلَافُنَا حَتَّى نَزَلْنَا

لِسَانًا كَمَقْرَاضِ الْخَفَاجِيِّ مَلْحِبًا

وَأَدْفَعُ عَنْ أَعْرَاضِكُمْ وَأَعْبُرُكُمْ

وَسَيِّدِهَا الْمَشْهُورِ فِي كُلِّ مَرْكَبِ  
 أَبِي اللَّهِ أَنْ أَسْعُو بِأُمَّ وَلَا أَبِ  
 إِذَاهَا وَأَرْمِي مِنْ رَمَاهَا بِمَقْبَبِ

وَإِنِّي وَإِنْ كُنْتُ ابْنَ فَارِسٍ عَامِرِ  
 فَمَا سَوَدَّتْ بِي عَامِرٌ عَن وَرَثَتِي  
 وَلَكِنِّي أَحْمِي حِمَاها وَأَتَّقِي

غَوِيَتْ وَإِنْ تَرَشَدَ غَزِيَةٌ أَرَشَدُ

وَمَا أَنَا إِلَّا مِنْ غَزِيَةٍ إِنْ غَوَتْ



لِلنَّائِبَاتِ عَلَى مَا قَالَ بَرهَانَا

لَا يَسْأَلُونَ أَخَاهُمْ حِينَ يَنْدُبُهُمْ

لَا يَأْتِي حَرْبَ أُمِّ بَأْيٍ مَكَانٍ

إِذَا اسْتَجَدُّوا لَمْ يَسْأَلُوا مِنْ دَعَاهُمْ

يَقُودُهُمْ أَوْ بَعْضُ مَنْ قَدْ تَنَصَّرَا  
وَأَجْرِيَتْ هَذَا الْفَرَضِ مِنْ بَرَكْسُورِي

وَلَوْ بَعِثْتُ بَعْضَ الْيَهُودِ عَلَيْهِمْ  
لَقَالُوا رَضِينَا أَنْ أَقْمَتَ عَطَانَا

وَلِيُغْلِبَنَّ مَغَالِبَ الْغُلَابِ

زَعَمْتُ أَنْ سَتُغْلِبُ رَبَّهُنَّ سَخِينَةَ

فِيَا عَجِبَا مَا بَالَ دِينَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ  
فَتِكَ لَعَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَاصِعَةَ الظَّهْرِ

أَطَعْنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا كَانَ بَيْنَنَا  
أَيُورِثُهَا بَكْرًا إِذَا مَاتَ بَعْدَ هـ

وَمِثْلِي إِذَا لَمْ يَصْبِرِ الْقَيْنُ يَصْبِرِ  
وَضَارِبَتُهُمْ بِالسَّيْفِ حَتَّى تَكْرُكُوا  
فَلِلَّهِ أَسْعَى مَا حَبِيبٌ وَأَشْكُرُ

صَبِرْتُ لِأَهْلِ الْقَادِسِيَّةِ مَعْلَمًا  
فَطَاعَتُهُمْ بِالرِّمْحِ حَتَّى تَفْرُقُوا  
حَدَّثْتُ إِلَهِي إِذْ هَدَانِي لِذِينِهِ

بِكَلِّ مَدَجِّ كَاللِّبْثِ حَامٍ  
إِلَى الْبِرْمُوكِ فَالْبَلَدِ الشَّامِ  
عَطَفْنَا هَا ضَوَامِ كَالجِرَامِ  
مَسُومَةَ دَوَاهِرِهَا دَوَامِي  
وَأَبْنَاءَ الْعِرَازِيَّةِ الْكِرَامِ

جَلَبْتُ الْخَيْلَ مِنْ صَعَاءَ تَرْدِي  
إِلَى وَاوِي الْقَرَى قَدِ يَارِ كَلِّبِ  
فَلَمَّا أَنْ زَوَيْنَا الرُّومَ عَهَا  
فَأَبْنَا الْقَادِسِيَّةَ بَعْدَ شَهْرِ  
فَنَاهَضْنَا هُنَاكَ جَمُوعَ كَسْرِي

حِسَانِ الْوَجُوهِ آمَنُوا بِمُحَمَّدِ  
بِكَلِّ رَقِيقِ الشَّفَرَتَيْنِ مَهْدِ  
مِنَ الْعَمُوتِ تَسْوَدُ الْغِيَاظِ مُجْرَدِ

وَحَيْتِكَ عَلَيَّ عَصَبَةَ لُخَعِيَّةِ  
أَقَامُوا لِكَسْرِي يَضْرِبُونَ جَنُودَهُ  
إِذَا ثَوَّبَ الدَّاعِي أَنَاخُوا بِكَلِّبِ

وَمَا تَخْتَلِي مِنْ أُنْزَعِ رِقَابِ  
يَصْبُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ سَوَطُ عَذَابِ

وَلَيْتَ أَبَا بَكْرٍ يَرَى مِنْ سَيُوفِنَا  
أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا رَبَّ غَيْرَهُ

بِبَابِ قَدَيْسٍ وَالْمَكْرِ عَسِيرِ  
يَعَارُ جَنَاحِي طَائِرِ فَيْطِيرِ  
دَلَفْنَا لِأُخْرَى كَالجِبَالِ تَسِيرِ

تَذَكَّرْ هَذَاكَ اللَّهَ وَقَعَ سَيُوفِنَا  
عَشِيَّةً وَدِ الْقَوْمِ لَوْ أَنَّ بَعْضَهُمَا  
إِذَا مَا فَرغْنَا مِنْ قِرَاعِ كَتَبِيَّةِ

خِلَافًا لِسِنَةِ مَنْ قَدْ مَضَى  
 دِ ظَلَمًا لَهُمْ وَحَمِيَّتِ الْحِمَى  
 مِنْ الْفِيءِ أَنْهَبْتَهُ مِنْ تَسْرِي  
 مَنَارِ الطَّرِيقِ عَلَيْهِ الصَّوَى  
 وَلَمْ يَصْرِفَا دِرْهَمًا فِي هَوَى

دَعْوَتِ اللَّعِينِ فَأَدْبَيْتَهُ  
 وَأَعْطَيْتُ مِرْوَانَ خُمْسَ الْعِبَا  
 وَمَالِ أَتَاكَ بِهِ الْأَشْعَرِي  
 فَأَمَّا الْأَمِينَانِ إِذْ بَيْنَا  
 فَلَمْ يَأْخُذَا دِرْهَمًا غِيْلَةً

كَمَا غَدَرْتَ يَوْمًا بِكِسْرِي مَوَازِينَهُ

وَدَبَّوْهُ كَيْ يَكُونُوا مَكَانَهُ

هَذَا لِعَمْرِي قَلَّةُ الْإِنْصَافِ  
 فَهَوَتْ تَشَقُّ الْبَيْدِ بِالْإِجْصَافِ

صَنِمْتُمْ حَالَتِكُمْ وَقَدْ تَمَّ أَمْكُمُ  
 أُمِرْتُ بِجَرِّ ذِيُولِهَا فِي بَيْتِهَا

وَأَهْلُ الْعِرَاقِ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ  
 يَرَى أَنْ مَا كَانَ مِنْ ذَاكَ دِينَا

أَرَى الشَّامَ تَكْرَهُ مَلِكَ الْعِرَاقِ  
 وَكُلُّ لِصَاحِبِهِ مَبْغِضُ

فَقَلْنَا رَضِينَا ابْنَ هِنْدٍ رَضِينَا  
 يَرَى غَثًا مَا فِي يَدَيْهِ سَعِينَا

وَقَالُوا عَلِيًّا إِمَامًا لِنَا  
 وَكُلُّ بِسَرِّ رُبَا عِنْدَهُ

عَقَالَ سَوَى ضَمَمِ الْمَحْدِثِينَ  
وَرَفَعَ الْقِصَاصِ عَنِ الْقَاطِنِينَ

وَمَا فِي عِيٍّ لِمَسْتَعْتَبٍ  
وَتَفْضِيلِهِ الْيَوْمَ أَهْلَ الذُّنُوبِ

وَعَمَى الْجَوَابِ عَلَى السَّائِلِينَ  
وَلَا فِي النَّهْأَةِ وَلَا الْأَمْرِينَ  
وَلَا بَدَّ مِنْ بَعْضِ ذَا أَنْ يَكُونَا

إِذَا سِيلَ عَنْهُ حِدَا شَبْهَةً  
فَلَيْسَ بِرَاضٍ وَلَا سَاخِطٌ  
وَلَيْسَ بِسَاءٍ وَلَا سَكْرَهُ

فَقَدْ حَقَّقَ اللَّهُ مَا تَحْذَرُونَ  
وَأَهْلَ الْعِرَاقِ فَمَا تَصْنَعُونَ  
وَطَلْحَةَ وَالْمَعْشَرَ الْكَاثِينَ  
لِتَهْدِي إِلَى الشَّامِ حَرْبًا زَبُونَ  
وَتَطْقِي الْحَوَامِلَ مِنْهَا الْجَنِينَا  
فَقَدْ رَضِيَ الْقَوْمَ مَا تَكْرَهُونَا  
نَظِيرَ ابْنِ هِنْدٍ أَلَّا تَسْتَحْوُونَ  
وَصَنُو الرَّسُولِ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَا  
إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ يَشِيبُ الْقُرُونَا

دَعْنِ يَا مَعَاوِيَ مَا لَنْ يَكُونَا  
أَتَاكُمْ عِيٌّ بِأَهْلِ الْحَجَبِ بَازٍ  
هُمْ هَزَمُوا الْجَمْعَ جَمْعَ الزَّبِيرِ  
وَقَالُوا يَمِينًا عَلَى حِلْفَانَةٍ  
تَشِيبُ النَّوَاصِي قَبْلَ الْمَشِيبِ  
فَإِنْ تَكْرَهُوا الْمَلِكَ مَلِكَ الْعِرَاقِ  
جَعَلْتُمْ عِبَادًا وَأَشْيَاءَ عَاهٍ  
إِلَى أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بَعْدَ الرَّسُولِ  
وَصَهْرِ الرَّسُولِ وَمَنْ مِثْلَهُ



وعثمان والفاروق فارتاح معهم

حكيت لنا الصديق لما وليتنا

وبطنك شبراً أو أقل من الشبر  
كما قضت نار الغضب حطب السدر

تخبرنا أن سوف تكفيك قبضة  
وأنت إذا ما نلت شيئاً قضتته

بعكا أناس أنتم أم أبا عـ  
وتركب ظهر البحر والبحر زاخر

ألا أيها القوم الذين تجمعوا  
أترك قيس أمين بدارهم

فإني لحراب الرجال مجرب  
سوى الظلم إني إن ظلمت سأغضب

فإن تأخذوا أهلي ومالي بظنة  
صبور على ما يكره المرء كله

ألا يا غوثنا لو تسمعونا  
ولا صلى على الأماة فينا

فيا قبر النبي وصاحبيه  
ألا صلى إلهكم عليكم

أَمِيرٌ مَحْدُوثٌ أَوْ مَسْتَشَارٌ  
وَلَيْسَ لَهُمْ فَلَا يَخْشُونَ نَارَ

يَلِينَا مِنْ قَرِيشٍ كُلِّ عَامٍ  
لَنَا نَارٌ تَحْرَقُنَا فَخَشَى

عَلَى فِتْيَةٍ مِنْ خِيَارِ الْعَرَبِ  
سِ أَيِّ أَمِيرِي قَرِيشٍ ظَلَبَ ؟

أَيَا عَيْنٍ فَأَبِي بَدِيعٍ سَرِبَ  
وَمَا ضَرَّهُمْ غَيْرَ حِينَ النَّفْسِ

وَدِّي وَشَارِكْتَهُ فِي تَالِدِ الْمَالِ  
إِلَّا لِيُوجِهَكَ دُونَ لَعْمٍ وَالْخَالِ

مَنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ هَذَا الدِّينِ كَلْبَنَ لَهُ  
اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَنِّي لَا أَحِبُّهُمْ

وَلَا نَرَى إِدْعَاءَ الْحَقِّ أَعْوَانَا

حَتَّى مَتَى لَا نَرَى عَدْلًا نَعِيشُ بِهِ

فِيهِ رَوَائِعٌ مِنْ إِنْسٍ وَلَا جَانٍ  
مَا أَدْرَكَ النَّاسَ مِنْ خَوْفِ ابْنِ مِرْوَانَ  
كُنْتُ الْمَقْدَمُ فِي سَرِّي وَإِعْلَانِي

قَدْ كُنْتُ جَارَكَ حَوْلًا لَا يَرُوعُنِي  
حَتَّى أَرَدْتَ بِي الْحُسْنَى فَأَدْرَكَنِي  
لَوْ كُنْتُ مُسْتَغْفِرًا يَوْمًا لِطَاغِيَةِ

مَالِكِ النِّصْفِ مِنْ بَنِي حُكَّامٍ

طَبْرُونِي مِنَ الْبِلَادِ وَقَالُوا

إِنَّا شَرِينَا بِدِينِ اللَّهِ أَنْفُسَنَا  
نَبْغِي بِذَلِكَ إِلَيْهِ أَكْبَرُ الْجَاهِ  
لَتَهِيَ الْوَلَاةُ بِحَدِّ السَّيْفِ عَنْ سَرْفِ  
كَفَى بِذَلِكَ لَهُمْ مِنْ زَاجِرٍ نَاهِ

وَقَدْ أَظْهَرَ الْجَوْرَ الْوَلَاةَ وَأَجْمَعُوا  
عَلَى ظَلْمِ أَهْلِ الْحَقِّ بِالْغَدْرِ وَالْكَفْرِ  
وَفِيكَ إِلَهِي إِنْ أَرَدْتَ مَغْسِيرٌ  
لِكُلِّ الَّذِي يَأْتِي إِلَيْنَا بِنُوحٍ صَخْرٍ  
فَقَدْ ضَيَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا عَلَيْنَا بِرَحْبِهَا  
وَقَدْ تَرَكُونَا لَا نَقْرُءُ مِنَ الذُّعْرِ

أَبِي الْإِسْلَامِ لَا أَبْلِي سِوَاهُ  
إِذَا فَخَرُوا بِبِكْرٍ أَوْ تَمِيمٍ  
كُلِّي الْحَبِيبِينَ يَنْصُرُ مَدِينَتَهُ  
لِيَلْحِقَهُ بِذِي الْحَسْبِ الصِّمِيمِ  
وَمَا حَسِبَ وَلَوْ كَرُمْتَ عُرُوقُ  
وَلَكِنَّ التَّقِيَّ هُوَ الْكَرِيمُ

فَإِنَّ قَلْبَهُ رَهْطُ النَّبِيِّ وَأَهْلُهُ  
فَإِنَّ النَّصَارَى رَهْطُ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ

نَزَلَتْ بِقَوْمٍ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ شَطَهُمْ  
وَلَيْسَ لَهُمْ عَوْدٌ سِوَى الْمَجْدِ يَعْتَصِرُ  
مِنَ الْإِزْدِ إِنْ الْإِزْدُ أَكْرَمُ مَعْشَرٍ  
يَعَانِيَةٌ قَرَّبُوا إِذَا انْتَسَبَ الْبَشَرُ  
وَأَصْبَحَتْ فِيهِمْ أَمَانًا لَا كَمَعْشَرٍ  
أَتَوْنِي فَقَالُوا مِنْ رِبِيعَةٍ أَوْ مَضَرٍ؟

أَوَ الْحَيِّ قَحْطَانٍ وَطِكْ سَفَاهَةٌ  
وَمَا مِنْهُمَا إِلَّا يَسْرٌ بِنِسْبَةٍ  
فَنَحْنُ بَنُو الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ

كَمَا قَالَ لِي رُوحٌ وَمُصَاحِبُهُ زَفَرٌ  
تَقَرَّنِي مِنْهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ ذَا نَفْسٍ  
وَأَوْلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُكْرٍ

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وَيَوْمَ الدَّوْحِ دَوْحٌ غَدِيرٌ خُفْمٌ  
وَلَكِنَّ الرِّجَالَ تَبَايَعُوهُمْ

أَبَانَ لَهُ الْوِلَايَةَ لَوْ أُطِيعَا  
فَلَمْ أَرِ مِثْلَهَا خَطَرًا مَبِيعَا

﴿ 58 ﴾

طَرِبْتُ وَمَا شَوْقًا إِلَى الْبَيْضِ أَطْرِبُ  
وَلَمْ يَلْهِنِي دَارٌ وَلَا رَسْمٌ مَنَزَلُ

وَلَا لَعِبًا مَنَى أذْوَ الشَّيْبِ يَلْعَبُ  
وَلَمْ يَطْرِبْنِي بَنَانٌ مَخْضَبُ

﴿ 59 ﴾

بِخَاتِمِكُمْ غَضَبًا تَجُوزُ أُمُورُهُمْ

فَلَمْ أَرِ غَضَبًا مِثْلَهُ يَتَغَضَبُ

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بِحَقِّكُمْ أَمْسَتْ قَرِيشٌ تَقُودُ نَسَا  
وَقَالُوا وَرِثْنَاهَا أَبَانًا وَأَمْنَا  
يُرُونَ لَهُمْ فَضْلًا عَلَى النَّاسِ وَاجِبًا  
يَقُولُونَ لَمْ يَهْرُثْ وَلَوْلَا تَرَاثُنَا

وَبِالْفِذِّ مِنْهَا وَالرَّدِيفِينَ نَرْكَبُ  
وَمَا وَرِثْتَهُمْ ذَاكَ أُمَّ وَلَا أَبُ  
سِفَاهًا وَحَقُّ الْهَاشِمِيِّينَ أَوْجِبُ  
لَقَدْ شَرِكْتُ فِيهِ بِكَيْلٍ وَأَرْحَبُ



وَعَكَ وَلِخْمٍ وَالسُّكُونِ وَحَمِيرٍ  
وَلَا تَتَشَلَّتْ عَضُوبِينَ مِنْهُ يَحَابِرُ  
وَلَا تَتَقَلَّتْ مِنْ خَنْدَقِي فِي سِوَاهُمْ  
وَمَا كَانَتْ إِلَّا نَصَارُ فِيهَا أَذِلَّةٌ  
فَإِنْ هِيَ لَمْ تَصْلُحْ لِحَيِّ سِوَاهُمْ  
وَالَا فَقُولُوا غَيْرَهَا تَتَعَرَّفُوا  
عَلَامٌ إِذَا زَارَ الزَّبِيرَ وَنَافِعَا  
وَشَاطَ عَلَى أَرْمَاحِنَا بِأَدْعَائِهَا

وَكِنْدَةَ وَالْحَيَانَ بِكَرْوَتِغْلِي سَبَّ  
وَكَانَ لِعَبْدِ الْقَيْسِ عَضُوبٌ مُسَوَّرَبٌ  
وَلَا قَتَدَتْ حَتَّ قَيْسٍ بِهَا ثُمَّ أَثْقَبُوا  
وَلَا غَيْبَا عَنْهَا إِذِ النَّاسُ غَيْبٌ  
فَإِنَّ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى أَحَقُّ وَأَقْرَبُ  
لِوَأَصِيهَا تَرْدِي بِنَا وَهِيَ شُزْبٌ  
بِغَارَاتِنَا بَعْدَ الْمَقَابِ مَقْبَبٌ  
وَتَحْوِيلِهَا عَنْكُمْ شَبِيبٌ وَقَعْنَسَبٌ

﴿ 61 ﴾

فِيَا مَوْقِدَا نَارَا لِغَيْرِكَ ضَوْوَاهَا

وَبَا حَاطِبَا فِي حَبَلِ غَيْرِكَ تَحْطَبُ

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فِيَا أُمَّة تَاهَتْ وَضَاعَتْ ضَلَالَةً  
وَقُولُوا لَهُ إِذْ قَامَ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْهُدَى

أَنْبِيَا وَأَرْضُوا الْوَاحِدِ الْمُتَعَالِيْنَا  
وَقَبْلَ الدُّعَا لَبِيكَ لَبِيكَ دَاعِيْنَا

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دَعَا بِالنَّارَاتِ الْحَسِينِ فَأَقْبَلَتْ  
وَأَبَّ الْهُدَى حَقًّا إِلَى مُسْتَقَرِّهِ

كَتَابِ مِنْ هُدَانٍ بَعْدَ هَزِيمِ  
بِخَيْرِ إِيَابِ أَبِيهِ وَرَجْعِ نَوْعِ

وَنَقْتَلُ كُلَّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ  
وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ بِهَا مِثْلَ الْحَصِيدِ  
قِصَاصًا أَوْ نَزِيدًا عَلَى الْمَزِيدِ  
وَشَتَّىٰ مِنْ قَتِيلٍ أَوْ طُرِيدٍ

بِهَا نُسْفِي النَّفُوسَ إِذَا التَّقِينَا  
وَنُحْكِمُ فِي بَنِي الْحَكَمِ الْعَوَالِي  
نَجَازِيكُمْ بِمَا أُولَيْتُمُونَا  
وَنَتْرَكُكُمْ بِأَرْضِ الشَّامِ صَرَعِي

عَلَى الْحَقِّ قَاضِي بِالْكِتَابِ وَنَعْدِلُ  
فَرِيقَانِ شَتَّىٰ تَسْعُنُونَ وَنَهْزِلُ  
سَنَامَ أُمَّالَتِهِ الْخَطَائِطُ أَمِيلُ

أَأَهْلَ كِتَابٍ نَحْنُ فِيهِ وَأَنْتُمْ  
فَكَيْفَ وَمِنْ أَتَىٰ وَإِذْ نَحْنُ خَلْفَةٌ  
لَنَا وَتِلَاعُ الْأَرْضِ حَوْمَرِيَّةٌ

وَلِيْنَا بِهِ مَا دَعَا الْمُتَرَخِّلُ  
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ لَا شَارٍ وَلَا مُتَبِّلُ

وَلَوْ وَلِيَ الْهَوَجِ الثَّوَائِحِ بِالَّذِي  
بُرِينَا كَبْرِي الْقَدْحِ أَوْ مِنْ مُتَبِّهِ

نَبَايِعُهَا أَمِيرَةٌ مَوْمِنِيْنَا  
وَإِنْ شِئْتُمْ فَعَمَّهُمُ الْبَطِينَا  
نَعْدُ ثَلَاثَةٌ مَتَا سَقِينَا

فَإِنْ تَأْتُوا بِرِمْلَةٍ أَوْ بِهِنِيْنَا  
وَكُلُّ بَنِيكَ نَرْضَاهُمْ جَمِيعَا  
إِذَا مَا مَاتَ كِسْرَىٰ قَامَ كِسْرَىٰ

وَهُمَّ الْهُوَادِي أَنْ تَكُونَ تَوَالِيكَا  
وَلَمْ نَرْضَ إِلَّا مِنْ أُمِيَّةٍ وَالْيَسَا

وَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَا الْأَمْرَ نَكْسًا صَدُورُهُ  
صَبْرًا لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يُقِيمَهُ

بِأَعْوَادِ الْخِلَافَةِ وَالسَّنَنِ سَلَامٌ  
وَضَوْءًا وَهِيَ مُسْبَلَةٌ ظَلَامٌ  
عَرَاهُ بِشَفْرَتِي ذِكْرٌ حَسَا

رَأَىكَ اللَّهُ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ طُنْرًا  
رَأَيْتُكَ قَدْ مَلَأْتَ الْأَرْضَ عَدْلًا  
رَأَيْتُ الظُّلْمَ لَمَّا قَمَتِ جُنْدَتُ

وَالْقَبِيضِ رِعَاةٍ دِينَهَا الرِّشْدُ

أُمِّتِ أُمِيَّةٌ لِلْإِسْلَامِ حَائِطُةٌ

وَالْأَخْذِينَ بِهِ وَالسَّاسَةَ الْأُولَى

هَمُّ الطُّوكِ وَأَبْنَاءُ الطُّوكِ هُمُّ

لِبَنِي أَبِي الْعَاصِ إِلَى مَكَارِهِ  
عِنْدَ الْمَشُورَةِ بِالْإِشْكَارَةِ  
وَالنَّافِعِينَ ذَوِي الضَّرَارَةِ  
عِنْدَ الْحَلَاوَةِ وَالْمَرَارَةِ

عَرَفْتُ قَرِيشَ كُلِّهَا  
لَا بَرَّهَا وَأَحَقُّهَا  
الْمُنَافِعِينَ لَهَا وَلَسُوا  
وَهُمْ أَحَقُّهُمْ بِهَا

شبهها إذا ما التفت الشيع  
 من ذاك أنف معاشر رفعا  
 أهل الحلوم فضرها النزع

أبني أمية لا أرى لكم  
 الله أعطاكم وإن رغبتم  
 سعة وأحلاما إذا نزعتم

حبيبا في رعيته حميدا  
 ويغفر ذنبهم إلا الحدا  
 فيوجد غبه إلا رشيدا  
 به الصديق أو عمر الشهيد

وجدناه بنغيضا في الأعادي  
 وجود لهم بما ملكت يدا  
 أمينا مؤمنا لم يقض أمرا  
 إماما لا يجوز أن فينا

والله ليس لما قضى تبديلا  
 أمر تضيق به الصدور جليلا  
 فالملك أفصح والعطاء جزيل

الله طوقك الخلافة والهدى  
 تعلو الرجال إذا النجى أضجهم  
 ولي المكارم والخلافة أهلها

من بين سخطة ساخط أو طائع  
 وعلى جبينك نور ملك ساطع

حاز الخلافة والداك كلامها  
 أبواك ثم أخوك أصبح ثالثا



فَمَا تَرَكُوهَا عَنُودَةً مَسُودَةً  
وَلَكِنْ بَحْدِ الْعَشْرِفِيِّ اسْتَقَالَهَا

أَهْلُوا مِنَ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ فَأَصْبَحُوا  
مَوَالِيَّ مَلِكٍ لَا طَرِيفَ وَلَا غَضَبِ

فَمَا بَيْنَ شَرْقِ الْأَرْضِ وَالْغَرْبِ كُلِّهَا  
يَقُولُ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ظَلَمْتَنِي  
مَنَادٍ يُنَادِي مِنَ فَصِيحٍ وَأَعْجَمِ  
بِأَخْذِ لِدِينَارٍ وَلَا أَخْذِ دَرَاهِمِ

عَطَارِفَةٌ سَاسُوا الْبِلَادَ فَأَحْسَنُوا  
إِذَا انصَرَفُوا لِلْحَقِّ يَوْمًا تَصَرَفُوا  
سِيَاسَتَهَا حَتَّى أَذْرَتْ لِمُرْدِفِ  
إِذَا الْجَاهِلِ الْحِرَانَ لَمْ يَتَصَرَفِ

أَلِ الزَّبِيرِ مِنَ الْخِلَافَةِ كَالْتَبِيِّ  
أَوْ كَالضَّعَافِ مِنَ الْحَمُولَةِ حَمَلَتْ  
قَوْمًا إِلَيْهِمْ لَا تَنَامُوا عَنْهُمْ  
إِنَّ الْخِلَافَةَ فِيكُمْ لَا فِيهِمْ  
عَجَلَ النَّجَاحِ بِحِطِّهَا فَأَحَالَهَا  
مَالًا تَطِيقُ فَضِيعَتِ أَحْمَالَهَا  
كَمْ لِلْغَوَاةِ أَطْلَمَتْ أُمَّهَالَهَا  
مَا زِلْتُمْ أَرْكَانَهَا وَثَعَالَهَا  
فَانْهَضْ بِعَيْنِكَ فَافْتَحْ أَقْوَالَهَا  
أَسُوا عَلَى الْخَيْرَاتِ قَلًا مَغْلَقًا

فَرَدَّ الْخِلَافَةَ يَا ابْنَ الزُّبَيْرِ  
 أَخَافُ عَلَيْكَ زِيَادَ الْعِيسِرِ  
 وَلَا تَأْمَنُ الْمَكْرَمِينَ حَكَارِثِ  
 ذَكَرْتُ لَكَ الْمَعْشَرَ الْأَكْرَمِينَ  
 إِلَى أَهْلِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ تَخْلَعِ  
 وَأَخْشَى عَلَيْكَ بَنِي مُسَمِرِ  
 فَتَمَّ أَمْرُهُ سَعَهُ يَنْقَعِ  
 ذَوِي الْمَجْدِ وَالْحَسْبُ الْأَرْفَعِ

إِنَّ الْخِلَافَةَ يَا أَمِيَّةَ لَمْ تَكُنْ  
 فَخَذُوا خِلَافَتَكُمْ بِأَمْرٍ حَازِمِ  
 سَبَرُوا إِلَى الْبَلَدِ الْحَرَامِ وَشَمَّرُوا  
 لَا تَتْرُكُنْ مَنَافِقِينَ بِبَلَدِ  
 أَبَدًا تَدْرُ لغيرِكُمْ ثَرِيَا هَا  
 لَا يَحْلِبُنَّ الْمَلْحِدُونَ صَرَاهَا  
 لَا تَصْلِحُوا وَسِوَاكُمْ مَوْلَاهَا  
 إِلَّا أَمَلْتُمْ بِالسِّبْوَفِ طَلَاهَا

اللَّهُ أَعْطَاكَ الَّتِي لَا فَوْقَهَا  
 عَنكَ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا سَوْقَهَا  
 وَقَدْ أَرَادَ الْمَلْحِدُونَ عَوْقَهَا  
 إِلَيْكَ حَتَّى قَدَّوْكَ طَوْقَهَا

مَشَى ابْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ الْقَهْقَرِي فَتَقَدَّمَتْ  
 وَجِئْتَ الْمَعْلَى يَا بَنَ مِرْوَانَ سَابِقًا  
 فَلَا زِلْتَ سَبَاقًا إِلَى كُلِّ غَايِكَةٍ  
 أَمِيَّةَ حَتَّى أَحْرَزُوا الْقَصَبَاتِ  
 أَمَامَ قَرِيشٍ تَنْفُضُ الْعَسَدَاتِ  
 إِلَى الْمَجْدِ نَجَاءً مِنَ الْغَمَرَاتِ

وَمَا بِهِ حِينَ يَدْعُو الْعَبْدَ مِنْ صَمٍ  
 وَاسْتَخْلَفَ اللَّهُ عَدْلًا مِنْ بَنِي الْحَكَمِ  
 إِلَّا سَرِيحِيَّةً تَشْفِي مِنَ اللَّعْمِ  
 حَتَّى أَحَلَّ بِرِكْنِ الْبَيْتِ وَالْحَرَمِ  
 وَلَمْ يَخْفِ بِقَعَةِ الرَّحْمَنِ ذِي النَّقَمِ

إِنَّا دَعَوْنَا سَمِيعًا فَاسْتَجَابَ لَنَا  
 أَرَا حَنَا مِنْ بَنِي الْعَوَامِ إِذْ قَسَطُوا  
 يَا ابْنَ الزَّبِيرِ جُنُونَ لَا شِفَاءَ لِنَسَمِ  
 رَامَ الْأُمُورِ فَأَعَيْتَهُ مَطَالِعَهُ  
 وَقَالَ أُعْطِيَةَ الْمَصْرِينَ يَأْكُلُهَُا

هُمُ الْمَالِكِينَ مَا صَلَحُوا  
 غَرَّ عِطَاقُ بِالْخَيْرِ قَدْ نَفَحُوا  
 فِي الْجِدِّ جِدٌّ وَإِنْ هُمْ مَرْحُوا  
 تَكْفٍ عَنْ غَرِبِهَا إِذَا طَفَحُوا

أَرْحَتْنَا آلَ الزَّبِيرِ وَلَوْ كَانُوا  
 آلَ أَبِي الْعَاصِ آلَ مَأْثُورَةٍ  
 خَيْرَ قُرَيْشٍ وَهُمْ أَفَاضِلُهَُا  
 أَمَا قُرَيْشٌ فَانْتَ وَارِثُهَُا

وَبَعْدَ خُمُودِ فِتْنَتِكُمْ فَتَنُونَ  
 تَحُلُّ بِهِ لِصَاحِبِهِ الدُّيُونُ  
 تَخْمَطُ وَاسْتَخْفَ بِعَيْنِ يَدِ يَسْنُ

فَبَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ أَيَّامٍ طِيَّالٍ  
 وَكُلُّ صَنِيعَةٍ رَصْدٌ لِيَوْمِ  
 خَلِيفَةِ أُمَّةٍ قَسْرَتِ عَيْتِهِ

سَتُرْقَى بِهَا يَوْمًا إِلَيْكَ السَّلَالِمُ

وَأَنْتَى لَا غَضِي عَنْ أُمُورٍ كَثِيرَةٍ

أَصَابِعِ فِيهَا عَبْدٌ شَمْسٍ وَإِنِّي  
فَمَا أَنْتَ وَالْأَمْرُ الَّذِي لَسْتَ أَهْلَهُ

لِطَبِّكَ الَّتِي فِي النَّفْسِ مِنْهَا أَكَاتِيمٌ  
وَلَكِنْ وَلِيَّ الْحَقِّ وَالْأَمْرُ هَاشِمٌ

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فَلَا تَبْسُطِ لِسَانَكَ يَا ابْنَ هِنْدٍ  
فَإِنَّ تَكُ لِلشَّفَاءِ لَنَا أَمِيرًا  
وَإِنْ تَكُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ فِي ذُرَاهِمِ

عَيْنَا أَنْ بَلَغْتَ مَدَى الْأَمَانِ  
فَإِنَّا لَا نَقْرُؤُكَ الْهَكُونَ  
فَإِنِّي مِنْ بَنِي عَبْدِ الْمُكَدَّانِ

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حَكَيْتَ لَنَا الصِّدِّيقَ لِمَا وَلَيْتَنَا  
وَسَوَّيْتَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي الْعَدْلِ فَاسْتَوُوا

وَعَثْمَانَ وَالْفَارُوقَ فَارْتَاحَ مَعْدُومِ  
فَعَادَ صَبَاحًا حَالِكِ اللَّيْلِ مَظْلَمِ

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أَتَطْلُبُ شَأْوَ ابْنِ الزَّبِيرِ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ  
تَكَلَّفْتَ أَمْرًا لَمْ تَكُنْ لِعَتَاكَ  
فَمَهْلًا بَنِي مُرْوَانَ لَسْتُمْ بِذَادَةٍ  
إِذَا التَّقْتِ الْإِبْطَالُ كُنْتُمْ ثَعَالِبًا

لِتَدْرِكَهُ مَا حَجَّ لِلَّهِ رَاكِبٌ  
طَوَالَ اللَّيَالِي أَوْ طَوَالَ الْكَوَاكِبِ  
إِذَا مَا التَّقْتِ يَوْمَ اللَّقَاءِ الْكُتَائِبِ  
وَأَسَدُ الشَّرَى فِي السَّلْمِ عِنْدَ الْكَوَاعِبِ



أَفِي اللَّهِ أَمَا بَحْدَلٍ وَأَبْنُ بَحْدَلٍ  
 كَذَبْتُمْ وَبَيْتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَقْتُلُونَهُ  
 وَلَمَّا يَكُنْ لِلْمَشْرِقِ فِيكُمْ  
 فِيحْيَا وَأَمَا ابْنُ الزَّبِيرِ فَيَقْتُلُ  
 وَلَمَّا يَكُنْ يَوْمَ أَغْرَ مُحَجَّلُ  
 شَعَاعُ كَقَرْنِ الشَّمْسِ حِينَ تَرَجُلُ

إِنَّمَا مُصْعَبٌ شِهَابٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ  
 مَلِكُهُ مَلِكٌ قُوَّةٌ لَيْسَ فِيهِ  
 شَهٌ تَجَلَّتْ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ الظُّلُمَاءُ  
 جَبْرُوتٌ وَلَا بِهِ كِبَرِيَاءُ

غَدَاةٌ دَعَايَ مُصْعَبٍ فَأَجَبْتَهُ  
 وَلَمْ أَكْ ذَا وَجْهَيْنِ وَجْهٍ لِمُصْعَبٍ  
 وَقَلْتُ لَهُ أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا وَمَرْحَبًا  
 مَرِيضٌ وَوَجْهٌ لِابْنِ مَرْوَانَ إِذْ صَبَا

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْجُودَ إِذَا مَاتَ مُصْعَبٌ  
 فَهَبْنَا أَنَا أَوْ بَقَيْنَا ذُو بِنَا  
 دَفَنَاهُ وَاسْتَرَعَى الْأَمَانَةَ ذَنْبٌ  
 أَمَا لِثَقِيفٍ حُوبَةٌ وَذَنْبٌ

لَعَمْرُكَ إِنْ الْعَوْتَ مِنَّا لَعَوْلُوعٌ  
 فَإِنَّ يَكُ أَمْسَى مُصْعَبٌ نَالَ حَفْصَهُ  
 بِكَلِّ فَتَى رَحْبِ الذَّرَاعِ أَرِيْبُ  
 لَقَدْ كَانَ صُلْبَ الْعُودِ غَيْرَ هَيُوبِ

كَبِيرِ بَنِي الْعَوَامِ إِنْ قِيلَ مِنْ تَعْنِي  
وَتَكْثُرُ قِتْلًا بَيْنَ زَمَمِ وَالرُّكْنِ

فِيَارَاكِبًا إِمَّا عَرَضْتَ فَبَلِّغَنَّ  
تُخَبِّرُ مَنْ لَا قَبْتَ أَنْكَ عَائِدِ

مَسَاكِنَهَا كَانَتْ طَوْلًا وَشِدًّا هَا  
أُمِيَّةٌ حَتَّى هَدَمَتْهُ جُنُودُ هَا

بَكَيْتَ عَلَيَّ دَارِ لِسَاءِ هَدَمْتِ  
وَلَمْ تَهَكِ بَيْتَ اللَّهِ إِذْ دَلَفْتَ لِسَهُ

مِنْ دَمٍ أَمْرَقَتْهُ مِنْ غَسِيرِ دَمٍ  
وَيَدُ تَقْتُلُ مِنْ حَلِّ الْحَكْرِ مِ

أَيْهَا الْعَائِدِ فِي مَكَّةَ كَكَمِ  
أَيْدِ عَائِدَةَ مَعْصَمَةَ

بَلِ الْعَائِدِ الْمَظْلُومِ فِي سِجْنِ عَارِمِ  
مَنْ النَّاسِ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ ظَالِمِ

تُخَبِّرُ مَنْ لَا قَبْتَ أَنْكَ عَائِدِ  
وَمَنْ يَرِ هَذَا الشَّيْخِ بِالْخَبْفِ مِنْ مَنِي

حَتَّى فَوَادِي مِثْلِ الْخَزْفِ فِي اللَّيْنِ  
أَفْضَلْتُ فَضْلًا كَثِيرًا لِلْمَسَاكِينِ

مَا زَالَ فِي سُورَةِ الْأَعْرَافِ يَقْرَأُ هَا  
لَوْ كَانَ بَطْنُكَ شَبْرًا قَدْ شَبِعَتْ وَقْدُ

عَدِمْتُ قَرِيبًا أَنْ رَضُوا بِكَ سَيِّدًا  
وَأَنْتَ بَخِيلُ الْكَفَّ غَيْرِ جَوَادٍ

وَلَيْتَ إِمَارَةً فَبَخِلْتَ لِمَنْ  
أَرَى الْحَاجَاتِ عِنْدَ أَبِي خَيْسَبٍ  
يَضُنُّ بِنَاقَةٍ وَيُرُومُ مَلِكًا  
وَلَيْتَهُمْ بِطُكِّ مَسْفُودٍ  
تَكْدُنُ وَلَا أُمِيَّةً بِالْبِرِّ لَادٍ  
مُحَالٌ ذَلِكَ غَيْرُ السِّدَادِ

وَتَقَدَّمَتْ أَزْدُ الْعِرَاقِ وَمَذْجِجٌ  
قَحْطَانٌ تَضْرِبُ رَأْسَ كُلِّ مَذْجِجٍ  
فَبِعِزَّتِنَا نَصِرُ النَّبِيَّ مُحَمَّدًا  
لِلْمَوْتِ يَجْمَعُهَا أَبُوهُمَا الْكَابِرُ  
تَحْيِي بِصَائِرِهِمْ إِذَا لَا تَبْصِرُ  
وَبِنَا تَثَبَّتْ فِي دِمَشْقِ الْعَنْبَرِ

لِعَمْرِي لَقَدْ أَصْحَرَتْ خَيْلُنَا  
يَهْزُونَ كُلَّ طَوِيلِ الْقَنَا  
إِذَا مَا مَنَافِقُ أَهْلِ الْعِيسَاءِ  
دَلَفْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَدَى مَوْقِفِ  
فَقَدْ مَنَّا وَأَضْحَجَ وَجْهَهُ  
أَعْيُنَ بِنَا وَنَصْرِنَا بِيهِ  
بِأَكْنَافِ دِجْلَةَ لِلْمَعْصِيْبِ  
وَمَعْتَدِلِ النَّصْلِ وَالشُّعْلِبِ  
قِي عَوْتِ ثَمْتٍ لَمْ يَعْتَبِ  
قَلِيلِ التَّفَقُّدِ لِلْغَيْبِ  
كَرِيمِ الضَّرَائِبِ وَالْمَنْصِيْبِ  
وَمَنْ يَنْصُرِ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَغْلِبِ

سَائِلِ بَنِي مُرْوَانَ أَهْلَ الْعَجَجِ      رَهْطِ النَّبِيِّ وَوَلَاةَ الْحَجَجِ  
عَنْ وَعَنْ قَيْسِ غَدَاةِ الْمَرْجِ      إِذْ يَثْقُونَ ثَقَا بِنِجِ  
تَسْدِيدِ أَطْرَافِ الْقَنَا الْمُعْجُوجِ      إِذْ أَخْلَفَ الضَّحَاكَ مَا يُرْجِي

أَقَادَتْ بَنُو مُرْوَانَ قَيْسًا دِمَاسًا      وَفِي اللَّهِ إِنْ لَمْ تَعْدِلُوا حَكْمًا عَدَلُ  
كَأَنْكُمْ لَمْ تَشْهَدُوا مَرْجَ رَاهِيَطِ      وَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا مِنْ ثَمَّ كَانَ لَهُ الْفَضْلُ  
وَقَيْنَاكُمْ وَرَدَ الْقَنَا فِي نُحُورِنَا      وَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ خَيْلٌ سَوَانَا وَلَا رَجُلُ

أَلَا هَلْ ثَائِرٌ بِدِمَاسٍ قَوْمِ      أَصَابَهُمْ عَمِيرُ بْنُ الْحَبَابِ  
وَهَلْ فِي عَامِرٍ يَوْمًا بَكِيرِ      وَحَيِّي عَجْدٌ وَدَّ أَوْجِنَابِ  
فَإِنْ لَمْ تَتَّأْرُوا مِنْ قَدِّ أَصَابُوا      فَكُونُوا أَعْدَاءَ ابْنِي كِلَابِ  
أَبْعَدَ بَنِي الْجِلَاحِ وَمَنْ تَرَكْتُمْ      بِجَانِبِ كَوْكَبٍ تَحْتَ التُّرَابِ  
تَطِيبُ لِفَائِرٍ مِنْكُمْ حِكَاةً      أَلَا لَا عَيْشَ لِلْحَيِّ الْمُصَابِ

أَعْذَرَ ابْنَ سَعْدٍ لَا يَزَالُ عَلَيْكُمْ      بِيَوْمِ ابْنِ حَرْجٍ مِنْ فِزَارَةِ فَاخِرِ  
فَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ لَمْ تَتَّأْرُوا بِأَخِيكُمْ      فَكُونُوا إِمَاءً تَبْتَغِي مَنْ تَوَاجِرِ



كلوا عجوة الوادي فإن غناكم  
ولا تغضبوا مما أقول فإنمسا  
لقد جللت منما قضاة خزينة  
فغشا فإن الغشم يرحض عنكم  
وعوايها ذبيان طرا فإنمسا

قليل إذا ما كان يوم قماطير  
أنفت لكم مما تقول المعاشير  
فكل قضاي بها متصاغير  
كما رحضت عنها أذى الثوب ظاهر  
يخصص بالآ وتار من هو ققادر

(111)

لقد طار في الأفق أن ابن بحدل  
وعرف قيسا للهوان ولم تكن  
سا بالمعناق الجرد من أرض راهط  
لقد تركت قتل حميد بن بحدل  
وقيسية قد طلقها رما حنا

حميد أشفى كلبا فقرت عيونها  
لتنزع إلا عند أمر يهينها  
وتد مرتزى بنزلها لا يصونها  
كثيرا ضواحيها قليلا ذفينها  
تلقت كالصيداء أودى جينها

(112)

لقد علم الأقوام وقع ابن بحدل  
يقودون أولاد الوجيه ولا حيق  
فلولا أمير المؤمنين لا صحبت

وأخرى عليهم أن بقي سيعيدها  
من الريف شهرا مايني من يقودها  
قضاة أربابا وقيس عبيدها

حَوَائِمِ طَيْرٍ مُسْتَدِيرٍ وَوَأَقْرِعُ  
 وَبِالْعَرَجِ بَاقٍ مِنْ دَمِ الْقَوْمِ نَاقِعُ  
 وَثَوْرٌ أَصَابَتْهُ الرِّمَاحُ الْقَوَاطِعُ  
 وَقَدْ جَذَّ مِنْ يَمِينِي يَدِيهِ الْأَصَابِعُ  
 فَضَاقَ عَلَيْهِ الْعَرَجُ وَالْعَرَجُ وَأَسْعُ

وَيَوْمَ تَرَى الرَّاياتِ فِيهِ كَأَنَّهَا  
 مَضَى أَرْبَعُ بَعْدَ اللَّقَاءِ وَأَرْبَعُ  
 طَعْنَا زِيَادًا فِي أَسْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَدْبِرُ  
 وَنَجَى حَيْشًا طَهَبَ ذَوْ مَلَالِكَةَ  
 وَقَدْ شَهِدَ الصَّفِينِ عَمْرُوبُ مَحْرَبُ

سَلِيمًا وَالْقَبَائِلِ مِنْ جَنَابِ  
 وَالصِّقِ حَرٌّ وَجَهَكَ بِالتُّرَابِ  
 ذُحُولِكَ أَوْ تَسَاقَ إِلَى الْحِسَابِ  
 وَعَوَفٍ أَشْحَنُوا شَمَّ الْهَضَابِ  
 تَغْصُكُ حِينَ تَشْرَبُ بِالشَّرَابِ

هُمْ قَطُّوا بِرَاهِطِ جَلِّ قَيْسِ  
 وَهُمْ قَطُّوا بَنِي بَدْرِ وَعَمْرُوبِ  
 تَذَكَّرْتَ الذُّحُولَ فَلَنْ تَقْضَى  
 إِذَا سَارَتْ قَبَائِلُ مِنْ جَنَابِ  
 وَقَدْ حَارَبْتَنَا فَوَجَدْتَ حَرْبًا

قَرِينَا هُمْ وَأَيُّ قَرِينِي قَرِينَا  
 قَضِينَا مِنْ هَوَازِنِ مَا قَضِينَا  
 وَمَا غَادَرْنَا لِلْجَشْمِيِّ دِينَا

وَإِنَّا يَوْمَ سَارَ بِنَا شَعِينَا  
 نَصَمْنَا الْخَيْلَ وَالرَّاياتِ حَكْتِي  
 وَمَا أَبْقَيْنَ مِنْ قَيْسِي شَرِينَا

غَيْرُ طَعْنِ الْكَلْبِ وَضَرْبِ الرَّقَابِ  
وَأَبْرْنَا قَبِيلَةَ ابْنِ الْحَبَابِ  
وَشَفِينَا غَلِيلَنَا مِنْ كِلَابِ

لَيْسَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ قَيْسِ عَتِيبِ  
إِذْ جَزِينَا قَشِيرَهُمْ وَهِي لَالَا  
فَاقْتَضِينَا ذُنُوبَنَا مِنْ عَقِيلِ

لَمَّا أَتَاكَ بِبَطْنِ الْغَوَاطِ الْخَبْرُ  
أَضْحَى وَالسَّيْفِ فِي خَيْشُومِهِ أَشْرُ

وَقَدْ نَصَرْتَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِنَا  
يَعْرِفُونَكَ رَأْسَ ابْنِ الْحَبَابِ وَقَدْ

لَقَدْ نَجَاكَ جَدُّ بَنِي مَعَاذِ  
كَأَنَّكَ مَسَكُ بَجْنَاحِ بَكَاذِ

لَعَمْرُ أَبِيكَ يَا زُفَرَ بْنَ لَيْلَى  
وَرَكُضِكَ غَيْرَ مَنْقَلِبِ الْيُنَا

وَذَلِكَ عَنكَ مِنْ قَيْسِ جَبَاذِ  
فَكَيْفَ رَأَيْتَنَا صِرْنَا وَصَاوَا  
لَقَدْ نَجَاكَ يَا زُفَرَ الْفِيَرَارِ

شَفِيتَ النَّفْسَ مِنْ أَشْرَافِ قَيْسِ  
أَذَاقُونَا أَسْنَتَهُمْ وَذَاقُوا  
لَعَمْرُ أَبِيكَ وَالْأَنْبَاءُ تَتَمَسَّى

فَكَيْفَ وَجَدْتُمْ طَعْمَ الشَّقَاقِ

أَلَا مَنْ مَبْلَغِ قَيْسٍ رَسُولَا

بَدَقِيَ ابْنَ الْحَبَابِ لِهَ حَمِيًّا  
فَأَضْحَى رَأْسَهُ بِبِلَادِ عَيْكَ  
مَلَأْنَا جَانِبَ الثَّرَاثِيرِ مِنْهُمْ

كَفْتَهُ كُلَّ حَازِبِيَّةٍ وَرَاقٍ  
وَسَاثِرٍ خَلَقَهُ بِجَبَا بِرَاقٍ  
وَجَهْزْنَا أَمِيعَةَ لَانِطِ مَلَاقٍ

(121)

عَبْتُمْ عَيْنَنَا أَلْ عَمَلَانَ كَلِكُمْ  
وَقَدْ كَانَ يَوْمًا رَاهِطٍ مِنْ ضَلَالِكُمْ  
تَسَامُونَ أَهْلَ الْحَقِّ يَا ابْنِيَّ مُحَارِبٍ  
مَلُوكٍ وَحُكَّامٍ وَأَصْحَابِ قَسْوَةٍ

وَأَيُّ عَدُوٍّ لَمْ نَهْتَهُ عَلَى عَتَبٍ  
فَنَاءٍ لَا قَوَامٍ وَخَطْبًا مِنْ الْخَطْبِ  
وَرَكِبَ بَنِي الْعَجْلَانَ حَسْبَكَ مِنْ رَكِبٍ  
إِذَا شَوْغِبُوا كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا ذَوِي شَغْبٍ

(122)

صَابِرُونَ فَصَبْرُنَا لَهُنَّ  
فَإِذَا وَلُوا لِحَقْنَا بِهِنَّ  
تَرَكُوا الْقَاعَ لَنَا إِذْ كَرِهْنَا  
غَادَرُوا فِيهَا عَمِيرًا مَسْنَدًا

وَكَلَّا الْحَبِيبِينَ يَجْرِي بِنَسَبٍ  
وَإِذَا قَامُوا جَثُونًا لِلرُّكْبِ  
غَمْرَاتِ الْعَوْتِ وَاخْتَارُوا الْهَرَبِ  
شَائِلِ الرَّجُلِ قَتِيلًا قَدْ شَجِبِ

(123)

جَزَبْنَا هُمْ بِبِوَمِ الْعَرَجِ يَوْمًا  
فَلَمْ يَبْفِكَ أَعْظَمَ سَكْسَكِي

كَسُوفِ الشَّمْسِ أَسْوَدًا ظِلَالٍ  
أَمَامَ الْجِسْرِ مَا اخْتَفَى اللَّيَالِي



فَظَلَّ لَهَا يَوْمَ أُغْرٍ مَحْجَلٌ  
فَلَاقُوا صَبَاحًا ذَا وَبَالٍ وَقَتَلُوا  
وَالَا قَتِيلٌ فِي مَكْرٍ مَجْدَلٌ

شَفِيتَ الْغُلِيلَ مِنْ قَضَاعَةِ عَنُوءِ  
جَزِينَاهُمْ بِالْعَرَجِ يَوْمًا مَشْهُرًا  
فَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا هَارِبٌ مِنْ سَيْوفِنَا

بِعِزَّةٍ فِيهَا إِلَى النِّصْفِ مُعَلَّمَا  
سَرِيحِيَّةٌ يَعْجَمُنُ فِي الْهَامِ مَعْجَمَا

مَا اللَّهُ أَنْ أَلْقَى حَمِيدَ بْنَ بَحْدَلٍ  
لَكَيْمًا نَعَاطِيهِ وَنَبَلُو بَيْنَنَا

أُزْبِقُوا هَوَانًا بِالَّذِي كَانَ قَدَمَا

أَقْرَّ الْعُيُونَ أَنْ رَهْطَاهُنَّ بَحْدَلٍ

يَكُونُوا كَعُوصٍ أَوْ أَذَلٍ وَأَضْرَعَا  
سَوَاعِدَ مَلَقَاةٍ وَهَامًا مَصْرَعَا  
لِبَهْرَاءٍ فِي ذِكْرِ مَنْ النَّاسُ سَمِعَا  
بِتْدَمِ أَلْفَا مِنْ قَضَاعَةِ أَقْرَعَا

مَتَى نَفْتَرِشْ يَوْمًا عَطِيمًا بِنَفَارَةٍ  
وَحَيَّ الْجَلَّاحِ قَدْ تَرَكْنَا بِدَارِهِمْ  
وَنَحْنُ جَدَعْنَا أَنْفَ كَلْبٍ فَلَمْ نَدْعُ  
قَتَلْنَا لَوْ أَنَّ الْقَتْلَ يَشْفِي صُدُورَنَا

وَأَصَابَكُمْ مِنِّي عَذَابٌ مَرَسَلٌ  
بِعَنَابِ الزَّيْتُونِ وَأَبْنِي بَحْدَلٍ

يَا كَلْبٌ قَدْ كَلَبَ الزَّمَانَ طَيْكُمُ  
إِنَّ السَّوَاوَةَ لَا سَوَاوَةَ فَالْحَقِّي

وَبَارِضِ عَكَ وَالسَّوَّاحِلِ إِنَّهَا

أَرْضُ تَذُوبٍ بِهَا اللَّفَّاحُ وَتَهْزُلُ

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بَشَرِ بَنِي الْقَيْنِ بِطَعْنِ شَرَجِي  
مَا زَالَ إِمْرَارِي لَهُمْ وَنَسَجِي  
حَتَّى اتَّقُونِي بِالظُّهُورِ الْفَلَجِ

يُشْبِعُ أَوْلَادَ الضَّبَاعِ الْعُرْجِ  
وَعَقَبَتِي لِلْكُورِ بَعْدَ السَّنْجِ  
هَلْ أَجْزَيْنَ يَوْمًا بِيَوْمِ الْمَرْجِ

وَيَوْمِ دَهْمَانَ وَيَوْمِ هَرْجِ

﴿ 130 ﴾

وَكَلْبِ تَرْكُنَا جَمْعَهُمْ بَيْنَ هَارِبِ  
وَأَفْلَعْنَا لِمَا التَّقِينَا بِعَاقِبِ  
وَأَقْسِمُ لَوْلَا قَيْتُهُ لَعَلَّوْتُهُ

حَذَارِ الْعَنَائِيَا أَوْ قَتِيلِ مَجْدَلِ  
عَلَى سَاحِجِ عِنْدِ الْجِرَاءِ ابْنِ بَحْدَلِ  
بِأَبْيَضِ قَطَاعِ الضَّرْبِيَّةِ مَفْصِلِ

﴿ 131 ﴾

بَنِي عَبْدِ وَدَّةٍ لَا نَطَالِبُ تَارِنَا  
وَلَكِنْ بِيضِ الْهَنْدِ تَسْعُرُ نَارِنَا  
أَبَادُ تَكْمُ فَرَسَانَ قَيْسٍ فَمَا لَكُمْ  
فَسَبُّوهُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ لَمْ تَطَالِبُوا

مِنَ النَّاسِ بِالسَّلْطَانِ إِنْ شَبَتِ الْحَرْبُ  
إِذَا مَا خَبَتِ نَارُ الْأَعَارِي قَمَا تَخْبِرُ  
عَدِيدُ إِذَا عَدَّ الْحَصَا لَا وَلَا عَقْبُ  
بِثَارِكُمْ قَدْ يَنْفَعُ الطَّالِبِ السَّكْبُ

أَجَدتِ بِسِيرِ إِنْما أَنْتِ حَالِـمٌ  
 وَيَنْعِ مِنْهُ النُّومُ إِذْ أَنْتِ نَائِـمٌ  
 وَمَنْ يَخْتَرِمُ لا تَتَّبِعُهُ اللُّواثِمُ

أَلا أَيُّها النَّاهِي فَزَارَةَ بَعْدَ مَا  
 أَبَى كُلُّ حُرٍّ أَنْ يَبِيتَ بَوْتِـرِهِ  
 قَهْوًا وَقَهًّا مَنْ يَحْيَى لا يَخْزِ بَعْدَ هَـا

بِسَبَبِ كِرَامٍ، حَيْثُ أَسْوَأُ وَأَصْبَحُوا  
 غَدَاةَ بَنَاتِ القَيْنِ وَالخَيْلِ جَلِـحِ  
 أَسْوَدٌ عَلَى أَلْبَادِهَا فَهِيَ تَعْلُـحُ

سَقَى اللّهُ حَيًّا مِنْ فَزَارَةَ دَارِهِمْ  
 هُوَ أَدْرَكُوا فِي عِبْدٍ دِمَاءَهُمْ  
 كَأَنَّ الرِّجَالَ الطَّالِبِينَ تَرَاتُهُمْ

وَلَسْتُ أَبِيًّا صَابِرًا حِينَ تَجْهَلُ  
 وَتَعْلَعَلِي بِيضِ تَحَدٍ وَتَصْقَلُ  
 تَزَالُ بِهَا عَنْكَ الخِلَافَةُ تَجْذُلُ

أَبَا هَاشِمٍ لَسْتُ الحَلِيمِ فَتَرْتَجِسِي  
 سَتَمَعْنِي قَيْسٍ مِنَ الضَّمِيمِ وَالقَنَّاسَا  
 أَبْعَدُ سَعِيدٍ يَوْمَ قَامَ بِخَطْبِـةٍ

جَرَى لِلزَّبِيرِيِّينَ كُلِّ بَرِيـدٍ

رَدَدْنَا لِعَمْرَوَانَ الخِلَافَةَ بَعْدَ مَا

يُجِيرُونَ إِذْ لا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ مَنبَرًا

ضَرَبْنَا لَكُمْ عَنْ مَنبَرِ المَلِكِ أَهْلَهُ

وَأَيَّامِ صِدْقِ كُلِّهَا قَدْ عَطَمْنَاهُمْ  
فَإِنْ تَنَكَّرُوا نَعْمًا مَضَتْ مِنْ بَلَائِنَا  
فَكَمْ مِنْ أَمِيرٍ قَبْلَ مِرْوَانَ وَابْنَيْهِ

نَصَرْنَا وَيَوْمَ الْمَرْجِ نَصَرْنَا مَوْزِرًا  
وَإِنْ تَمْنَحُونَا بَعْدَ لَيْلِنِ تَكْتَبِرًا  
كَشَفْنَا غِطَاءَ الْمَوْتِ عَنْهُ فَأَبْصَرَ

﴿ 137 ﴾

أَتَسَى الَّذِي أَسَدَيْتَهُ يَوْمَ رَاهِطٍ  
وَأَقْبَلَ حَادِي الْمَوْتِ يَحْدُو مَشْمِرًا  
طَيْبَهَا قُرُومٍ مِنْ قِضَاعَةِ سِنَادَةٍ  
إِذَا لَقِيتُ حَرْبَ مَرْتَهَا سِيوفَهُمْ  
يُرُونَ وَرُودَ الْمَوْتِ حَقًّا عَلَيْهِمْ

وَقَدْ ضَاقَ عَنْكَ الْمَرْجُ وَالْمَرْجُ وَاسِعٌ  
بِفِرْسَانِ صِدْقٍ لَمْ تَرَعَهَا الرِّوَالِيعُ  
لَهُمْ شَيْمٌ مَحْمُودَةٌ وَدَسَائِيعُ  
وَأَيْدٍ طَوَالَ لَمْ تَخْنَهَا الْأَشَاجِعُ  
إِذَا حَادَ عَنْ وَرْدِ الطَّيَا الْمُخَادِعُ

﴿ 138 ﴾

أَبَى لِي أَنْ أَقْرَ الضِّيمِ قَسُومٍ  
وَإِنِّي فَاطِمٌ لَذُو أَنْصِرَافٍ  
فَلَا تَقْبَلِ الْأُمْرَاءَ عَدْلِي

هُمْ رَاخُو الْمِرْوَانَ الْخِنَاقَا  
إِذَا مَا صَاحِبِي رَامَ الْفِرَاقَا  
وَلِصْحِي الْغَيْبُ لَا أَهْبُ الشَّقَا

﴿ 139 ﴾

أَبْلَغَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِسَالَةَ  
مَنْبَتَهُمْ أَنْ أَثْرُوكَ مَثُوبَةَ  
لَوْلَا مَقَامُ عَشِيرَتِي وَطِعَانُهُمْ  
لَا تَاكَ أَشْتَرُ مَذْجٍ لَا يَنْتَشِي

مِنْ عَاتِبِينَ مَسَاعِرِ أَنْجَادٍ  
فَرَشَدَتْ إِذْ لَمْ تُوْفِ بِالْمِعَادِ  
وَجَلَانَهُمْ بِالْمَرْجِ أَيْ جِلَادِ  
بِالْجَيْشِ ذَا حَنْقٍ عَلَيْكَ وَأَدِ



لَعَادَ نِصَابُ الطُّكِّ فِي آلِ هَاشِمٍ	وَلَوْلَا بَنُو حَسَّانَ أَسْيَافُ عِزِّكُمْ
يَسِبُّ أَبُو الْعَاصِي بِهَا فِي الْعَوَاسِمِ	وَلَكِنَّ أُمَّ بِنِي مُرَوَّانَ أَنْ يَقْبَلَ السَّبِيَّ

وَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ خَيْلٌ سِوَانَا وَلَا رَجُلٌ	وَقَبِينَاكُمْ حَرَّ الْقَنَا بِنَحْوِ رِيَا
وَطَابَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا الْمَشَارِبُ وَالْأَكْلُ	فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتُمْ وَاقْدَ الْحَرْبِ قَدْ خَبَا
وَخَاطَرَكُمْ مِنْ سُوءِ بَغْيِكُمْ جَهْلٌ	تَنَاسَيْتُمْ مَسْعَاتِنَا وَبَلَاءَنَا
وَزَلَّتْ عَنِ الْعَوَاطَا بِالْقَدَمِ النَّعْلُ	فَلَا تَعْجَلُوا إِنْ دَارَتْ الْحَرْبُ دَوْرَةً

أَبْنَاءُ قَوْمٍ هُمْ أَوْوَاهُمْ نَصَرُوا	بَنِي أُمِيَّةٍ قَدْ نَاضَلْتُمْ وَنَكَمْتُمْ
فَبَايَعُوا لَكَ قَسْرًا بَعْدَ مَا قَهَرُوا	وَقَيْسَ عِيْلَانَ حَتَّى أَقْبَلُوا رِقْصَانًا
لَمَّا أَتَاكَ بِيْطْنُ الْغُوْطَةِ الْخَبْرُ	فَقَدْ نَصَرْتَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِيْكَ

قَرُوضِكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ الْحَشْرُ	أَلَا يَا بَنِي مُرَوَّانَ هَلْ تُوْفِيْتُمْ
وَنَدَعَا إِذَا مَا هَزَمَ الْأَسْلُ الْحَفْرُ	أَنْ نَسِيَ إِذَا مَا لَمْ تَتْلِكُمْ كَرِيهَةً
تَشَاخَصَتْ الْأَهْوَاءُ وَاخْتَلَفَ النَّجْرُ	أَلَحْنَا لَكُمْ حَبَّ الْعِرَاقِينَ بَعْدَ مَا
أَتِيحَ لَكُمْ قَسْرًا بِأَسْيَافِنَا النَّصْرُ	فَإِنْ تَكْفَرُوا مَا قَدْ عَطَمْتُمْ فَطَالَمَا

فَأَقْسِمُ إِنَّ حَرْبُ عَوَانٍ تَلْقَحَتْ  
لَنَحْنُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا لَكُمْ إِنْ عَثَرْتُمْ  
وَكَمْ قَدْ دَفَعْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ مَلَمَّةٍ  
أَلَمْ نَكْفِكُمْ قَيْسًا وَقَيْسَ مَهْدِيَّةً  
وَنَحْنُ قَتَلْنَا مَصْعَبًا قَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ

وَحَانَ مِنَ النَّاسِ التَّمَرُ وَالْخَطَرُ  
مِنِ الصَّرْعَةِ الْأُولَى إِذَا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ  
وَلَكِنْ أُبَيِّتُمْ لَا وِفَاءَ وَلَا شُكْرَ  
وَبَرِيَّةٍ قَلْبًا حَوَّاجِبَهَا صَعْرُ  
بِمَسْكِنِ يَوْمِ الْحَرْبِ أَنْيَابَهَا حَصْرُ

﴿144﴾

نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ إِذَا خِفْتُمْ مَجَلَّةً  
حَتَّى إِذَا الْفَرَجَتْ عَنْكُمْ دَجَنَّتْهَا

قَتَمْنَا لَنَا إِيْنَا مِنْكُمْ لِيَتَعَصَّبُوا  
صَرْتُمْ كَجَرَمٍ فَلَا آلَ وَلَا رَحِيمٍ

﴿145﴾

سَلِيمَانَ كَمْ مِنْ عَسْكَرٍ قَدْ حَوَتْ لَكُمْ  
وَكَمْ مِنْ حُصُونٍ قَدْ أَبْحَنَّا مَنِيْعَةً  
وَمِنْ بَلَدَةٍ لَمْ يَغْزَهَا النَّاسُ قَبْلَنَا

أَسِنْتَنَا وَالْمَقْرِبَاتِ بِنَا تَجْرِي  
وَمِنْ بَلَدٍ سَهْلٍ وَمِنْ جَبَلٍ وَعُرٍ  
غَزَوْنَا نَقُودَ الْخَيْلِ شَهْرًا إِلَى شَهْرٍ

﴿146﴾

وَلَسْتُ بِقَاتِلٍ رَجُلًا يَصْلِي  
لَهُ سُلْطَانُهُ وَعَطِيٌّ وَزِي  
أَقْتُلُ مُسْلِمًا وَأُعِيشُ حَيْثَمَا

عَلَى سُلْطَانٍ آخَرَ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ  
مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ مِنْ سَفْهِ وَطَيْشٍ  
فَلَيْسَ بِنَا فَعِي مَا عِشْتَ عَيْشِي

فرويد الميط منها تعتدل  
 وإذا كان قتال فاعتزل  
 حطب النار فدعها تشتعل

إِنَّ لِلْفِتْنَةِ مِطًا بَيْنَنَا  
 فَإِذَا كَانَ عَطَاءٌ فَأْتِهِمْ  
 إِنَّمَا يَشْعُلُهَا جَهَا لَهَا

وبين خصيمه عبد العزيز  
 ويبقى بعدنا أهل الكنوز  
 ولا وفقت للحريز الحريز  
 ومعتزل كما اعتزل ابن كوز

أَقْتُلْ فِي حِجَاكِ بَيْنَ عَمْرٍو  
 أَلْقُلْ ضَلَّةً فِي غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ  
 لَعَمْرُ أَبِيكَ مَا أَوْتَيْتِ رَشْدِي  
 فَإِنِّي تَارِكٌ لَهَا جَمِيعًا

إذا اختصمت حتى يقوم إمامها  
 وخطه حسي لا تزال تسامها  
 معاً حربها إن حاربت أو سلامها  
 على أي أعداء يرسل حسامها  
 لها وطيها برها وأثامها  
 وإن عجزت لم يدم إلا كلامها  
 تنافس دنيا قد أحم انصامها

فشان قريش بالخصومة بينها  
 هم أخذوها بين حنف معجل  
 فضعوا جناحكم على مرجحهم  
 وشبموا سيوف الهند حتى تبينوا  
 وخلصوا قريشا تقتل إن ملكها  
 فإن وسعت أحلامها وسعت لها  
 فإن قريشا مهلك من أطاعها

ونصرتنا أهل الحجاز عشاء

أطعنا قريشا ضلة من حلومنا

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أي الطوك على ما حولنا غلبنا

ماذا طينا وماذا كان يرزومنا

ولا ترون لنا في غيرها سبنا

إخوانكم إن بلاه حل ساحتكم

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فأنس لهم وفر ولسنا أولي وفر

نوموب إذا أبوا ونغزوا إذا غزوا

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فهل من قائم أو من حصيد  
يزيد يسوسها وأبويزيد

أكلتم أرضنا فجردتموها  
فهبها أمة هلكت ضياعا

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غير الإزار وغير الدرة الخلق

لم نر من سيرة الفاروق عندكم

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منها خطوب أعا جيب وتبكيننا  
يا ابن الزبير عن الدنيا تسليننا

لله در الليالي كيف تضحكننا  
ومثل ما تحدث الأيام من غير



زبادتنا نعمان لا تحسبنا  
 فلا تك باب الشر تحسن فتحه  
 وقد بليت سلطانا عظيما فلا تكن  
 وأنت امرؤ حلو اللسان بليغه  
 وقبلك ما كانت علينا أئمة  
 يذمون ديانا وهم يرضعونها  
 إذا نطقوا بالقول قالوا فأحسنوا

تق الله فينا والكتاب الذي تلو  
 عينا وباب الخير أنت له قفل  
 لغيرك جمات الندى ولك البخل  
 فما باله عند الزيادة لا يحلو  
 يهملهم تقويمنا وهم عصا  
 أفأوبق حتى مالنا منهم سجيل  
 ولكن حسن القول خالفه الفعل

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فإن بك ابن غان أميننا  
 أيا قبر النبي وصاحبيه  
 ألا صلى إلهكم عليكم

فلم يبعث بك البر الاميننا  
 ألا يا غوثنا لو تسمعوننا  
 ولا صلى على الأمراء فينا

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ألم تر أن الجود إذ مات مصعب  
 فهبنا أناسا أو بقتنا ذنوبنا

دفناه واسترعى الأمانة ذئب  
 أما لتثيف حوبة وذئب

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إن نحن إلا أناس أهل سائمة  
 ملو البلاد وملتهم وأحرقهم  
 إن لم تداركهم تصبح منا زلهم

ما أن لنا دونها حرث ولا غرد  
 ظلم السعاة وباد الماء والشجر  
 قفرا تبيض على أرجائها الجمرد

فقد خرب السواد فلا سوادا  
 فقد تركت لجالبها جمادا  
 وترفع عن رعيتك الفسادا  
 ولا ينوي لا متكم سادا  
 تعادي في ضالتيه وزادا

ألا أبلغ معاوية بن حـرـب  
 وأن جبالنا خربت وبادت  
 فهل لك أن تدارك ما لدينا  
 فإن أمينكم لا الله يخشى  
 إذا ما قلت أقصر عن هواه

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 حتى تضاعف أضعافا لها عدد  
 وفق العيال فلم يترك له سبد  
 على التلائم من أموالهم عقد

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 نعطي الزكاة فما يرضى خطيبهم  
 أما الفقير الذي كانت حلوتـه  
 واختل ذو الطال والمشرون قد بقيت

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 حق الزكاة منلا تنزيلا  
 عنا وأنقذ شلونا الماكولا  
 لم يفعلوا مما أمرت فتيلا  
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 ظلما ويكتب للأمر أفيلا  
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 وأتاهم يحي فشد عليهم  
 أخذوا المخاض من الفصيل غلبة  
 وتركت قومي يقسمون أمورهم

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ بَعَثْتُ فِي أَقْطَارِهِمْ  
طَلَسُ الثِّيَابِ عَلَى مَنَابِرِ أَرْضِنَا  
وَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ يَلِيَ الْأَمَانَةَ مِنْهُمْ

نَبَذُوا كِتَابَكَ وَاسْتَحْلَ الْمُحَرَّمِ  
كُلَّ يَجُورٍ وَكُلَّهُمْ يَتَظَلَّمُ  
عَدْلٍ وَهَيْهَاتَ التَّقِيُّ الْمُسْلِمِ

إِنْ كُنْتَ تَحْفَظُ مَا يَلِيكَ فَإِنَّمَا  
لَنْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّذِي تَدْعُو لَكَ

عَمَّا أَرْضِكَ بِالْبِلَادِ ذِي كُنَابِ  
حَتَّى تَجْلِدَ بِالسُّيُوفِ رِقَابِ

أَحَارِ بْنِ بَدْرِ قَدْ وَلِيَتْ أَمَارَةَ  
وَلَا تَحْقِرَنَّ يَا أَحَارِ شَيْئًا نَصَبِيهِ  
وَكَابِرُ تَعَمًّا بِالْغِنَى إِنْ لِلْغِنَى  
إِذَا مَا دَعَاكَ النَّاسُ عَدُّوكَ أَكْبَلًا

فَكُنْ جَرْدًا فِيهَا تَخُونُ وَتَسْرِقُ  
فَحَظُّكَ مِنْ مَلِكِ الْعِرَاقِينَ سُرْقُ  
لِسَانًا بِهِ يَسْطُو الْغِنَى وَيَنْطِيقُ  
فَكُلُّ حَارٍ أَوْجَعُ لَسْتِ مِنْ يَحْمَقُ

أَبْلَغُ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِسَالَتُهُ  
بِضْعِ الْفَتَاةِ بِالْفِ أَلْفِ كَامِلِ  
لَوْلَا بِي حَفْصِ أَقُولُ مَقَالَتِي

مَنْ نَاصِحٌ لَكَ لَا يَرِيدُ خِدَاعًا  
وَتَبَيَّتْ قَادَاتُ الْجِيُوشِ جِاعًا  
وَأَبَتْ مَا أَبَتْكُمْ لَا رِثَاعًا



يَا بَنَ الزُّبَيْرِ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْكَمِ  
 بَاعُوا التَّجَارَ طَعَامَ الْأَرْضِ وَاقْتَسَمُوا  
 وَقَدْ مَوَّأَ لَكَ شَيْخًا كَاذِبًا خَسِيفًا  
 أَشَدَّ يَدَيْكَ بِزَيْدٍ إِنْ ظَفَرْتَ بِهِ  
 إِنَّا مَنِينَا بِضَبِّ مَنْ بَنَى خَلِيفًا  
 خَذَ الْعَصِيفِيرَ وَانْتَفَرِشَ نَاهِضِيهِ  
 وَمَا أَمَانَةٌ عَنَابٍ بِسَالِمِيَّةٍ  
 وَقَبَسَ كِنْدَةَ قَدْ طَالَتْ إِمَارَتُهُ  
 وَخَذَ جَحِيرًا فَاتَّبَعَهُ مَحَاسِبَةٌ  
 مَارَابِنِي مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا ارْتَفَاعُهُمْ  
 وَمَا غَلَامٌ عَلَى أَرْضِ مُسَالِمِيَّةٍ  
 يُجِبِي إِلَيْهِ خِرَاجَ الْأَرْضِ مَتَكْنِيًّا  
 وَالْوَالِيُّ الَّذِي مَهْرَانُ أَمْنَرُهُ  
 وَذُو نِكَ ابْنُ أَبِي عَشٍّ وَصَاحِبِيهِمْ  
 لَا تَجْعَلَنَّ بَيْتَ الْمَالِ مَأْكَلَةً  
 وَالِدِ أَرْمِيَّ يَطِيفُ الْبَهْرَمَانَ بِهِمْ  
 وَمَنْقَدُ بْنُ طَرِيفٍ مِنْ بَنِي أَسَدٍ  
 وَمَا أُخْيِسُ جَعْفِيٌّ بِمَالِعِيهِمْ  
 أَوْ آخِرَانِ مِنَ الْعَمَالِ عِنْدَ هُمَا

يَبْلُغُكَ مَا فَعَلَ الْعَمَالُ بِالْعَمَلِ  
 صَلَبَ الْخِرَاجِ شِحَاخًا قِسْعَةَ النَّفْلِ  
 مَهْمَا يَقُلُ لَكَ شَيْخٌ كَاذِبٌ يَقُولُ  
 وَأَشْفَى الْأَرَامِلِ مِنْ دُخْرُوجَةِ الْجَعْلِ  
 يَرَى الْخِيَانَةَ شَرِبَ الْمَاءَ بِالْعَسَلِ  
 حَتَّى يَلُوهُ بِشَرِّ بَعْدِ مَقْتَبِلِ  
 لَا غَمَزَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنْ جَمَّةُ السُّبُلِ  
 بِسِرَّةِ الْأَرْضِ بَيْنَ السَّهْلِ وَالْجَبَلِ  
 وَمَنْ عَذَرَتْ فَلَا تَعْذِرْ بَنِي قَهْلِ  
 إِلَى الْخَبِيصِ عَنِ الصَّنْعَةِ وَالْبَصْلِ  
 كَمَنْ غَزَى دَسْتَبِيٍّ غَيْرِ مُجْتَعِلِ  
 مَسْتَهْزِئًا بِغِيَاءِ الْقَيْدَةِ الْفَضْلِ  
 فَزَالَ مَهْرَانٌ مَذْمُومًا وَلَمْ يَكْزَلِ  
 قَبْلَ السَّبِيحِ فَقَدْ أُجْرِيَ عَلَى مَهْلِ  
 لِكُلِّ أَرْزَقٍ مِنْ هُدَانٍ مَكْتَحِلِ  
 فِي شَارِبٍ بَدَّلَتْ مِنْ رِيَّةِ الْإِبِلِ  
 نَبِثَتْ عَاطِمُهُمْ قَدْ رَاحَ ذَا ثَقْلِ  
 مِنَ الْمَتَاعِ قِيَامَ اللَّيْلِ بِالطُّوْلِ  
 بَعْضُ الْعِنَالَةِ إِنْ تَرَفَّقَ بِهَا تَكْلِ



مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَمِيرٍ وَالَّذِي كَذَبَتْ  
وَمَا فَرَاتُ وَإِنْ قِيلَ امْنَرُوعُ  
وَالْحَارِثِيُّ سِيرَضِي أَنْ تَقَاسِمَهُ  
دَعِ الْأَقَارِعَ فَاقْرَعِهِمْ بِدَاهِيَّةٍ  
كَانُوا أَتُونَا رَجَالًا لَا رِكَابَ لَهُمْ  
لَنْ يَعْتَبُوكَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلُ هَامَهُمْ  
إِنَّ السَّيَاطِ إِذَا عَضَتْ غَوَارِيَهُمْ

عَلَيْهِ بَكَرُ غَدَاةِ الرَّوْعِ وَالْوَهْلِ  
إِنْ نَالَ شَيْثًا بِذَاكَ الْخَائِفِ الْوَجْلِ  
إِذَا تَجَاوَزَتْ عَنْ أَعْلَالِهِ الْأُولِ  
وَاحْمِلْ خِيَانَةَ مَسْعُودٍ عَلَى جَمَلٍ  
فَأَصْبَحُوا الْيَوْمَ أَهْلَ الْخَيْلِ وَالْإِبِلِ  
ضَرَبَ السَّيَاطِ وَشَدَّ بَعْدَ فِي الْحَجْلِ  
أَبْدًا وَذَخَائِرٍ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمِنْ حُلَلِ

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رَأَيْتُ بِلَادَ اللّهِ وَهِيَ عَرِيضَةٌ  
تُوَدِّي إِلَيْهِ أَنْ كُلَّ ثِيَابَةٍ

عَلَى الْخَائِفِ الْمَطْرُودِ كَفَّةَ حَابِلِ  
تِيَمَمَهَا تَرْمِي إِلَيْهِ بِقَاتِلِ

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أَحَقُّ عَلَى السَّلْطَانِ أَمَا الَّذِي لَهُ  
إِذَا مَا جَعَلْتَ الرَّمْلَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُ  
فَشَأْنُكُمْ يَا آلَ مِرْوَانَ فَاطْلُبُوا

فِيَعْطَى وَأَمَا مَا عَلَيْهِ فَيَمْنَعُ  
وَأَعْرَضَ سَهْبٍ بَيْنَ يَبْرِينَ بَلْقَعُ  
سَقَاطِي فَمَا فِيهِ لِبَاغِيهِ مَطْمَعُ

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فَإِنْ تَنَصَّفْنَا آلَ مِرْوَانَ نَقْتَرِبُ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ عَنْ دَارِ الْعَذْلَةِ مَذْهَبُ

إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَّا فَأَذْنُوا بِبِعَادِ  
وَكُلِّ بِلَادٍ أُوطِنْتَ كِبِيلَادِ

ولا أنا يثيني عن الرحلة الكسل  
وفي الأرض منأى عن زياد ومحتمل

فلا كوفة أمي ولا بصرة أبي  
وفي العيش لذات وفي الموت راحة

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سرى الليل واستعراضها البلد القرا  
إلى ابن أبي سفيان جاها ولا عذرا

دعني زياد للعطاء ولم أكن  
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نعت إلى حرف أضربنيها  
يوهم بها العومة من لا يرى له

وخذ منهم لما يخشى حبالا  
ولم أحسب دمي لكما حبالا  
فلم أترك لمنتصر مقلالا

عليك بني أمة فاستجرهم  
إليك فررت منك ومن زياد  
فإن يك بالهجاء يراد قطبي

لطرت بواف ريشه غير حاذف  
لتصرف لي أنيابه بالمثالب

لو كنت أخشى مالكا أن يروعني  
كما طرت عن مصري زياد وإنه

فَأَنْكَ مِنْ تَغْضَبِ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَمْرِي  
وَإِنْ كَانَ ذَا رَهْطٍ بَيْتٍ غَيْرِ نَائِمٍ

أَقُولُ لَهُ صَبْرًا عَطِي فَإِنَّمَا  
أَرَى الدَّهْرَ لِي يَوْمِينَ يَوْمًا مَطْرَدًا  
هُوَ السَّجْنُ حَتَّى يَجْعَلَ اللهُ مَخْرَجًا  
شَرِيدًا وَيَوْمَافِي الْعُلُوكِ مَتَّوَجًا

إِذَا قَطْنَا وَلَا يَبْكِي لَنَا أَحَدٌ  
نَعْطَى السُّوِيَةَ مِنْ طَعْنٍ لَهُ نَفْسٌ  
قَالَتْ قَرِيْشُ لَا تَلِكِ الْفَقَادِ يَنْزُرُ  
وَلَا سُوِيَةَ إِذْ تَعْطَى الدُّنَا نَسِيرُ

صَبَغْتَ أُمِيَةَ بِالْمَاءِ أَكْفَنًا  
وَطَوْتَ أُمِيَةَ دُونَ دُنَا نِيَاهَا

تَهَادَى قَرِيْشُ فِي دِمَشْقٍ لَطِيْمَتِي  
فَإِنْ يَمْسِكُ الشَّيْخُ الدَّمَشْقِيَّ مَالَهُ  
وَيَتْرَكَ أَصْحَابِي وَمَا ذَاكَ بِالْعَدْلِ  
فَلَسْتُ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا بِمُسْتَحْكِمِ الْعَقْلِ

نَقَاتِلْ عَنْ قُصُورِ دِرَابْجُورِ  
وَنَجِبِي لِلْمَغِيرَةِ وَالرَّقَادِ

ويا حر الفؤاد لعالقينا  
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 فمنعها وإن لم نرج ديننا  
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 وما كنا أناسا أهل دنيا  
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لعة في الثائجات جنح الظلام  
 عة وانعق ودعدا بالبهام

رأيه فيهم كراي ذوي الثف  
 جز ذي الصوف وانتقاء لذي المعذ





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