INTRODUCTION

Early Islamic Poetry and Poetics

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Classical Arabic poetry, as I use the term here, covers the period beginning with the earliest traceable Arabic poems, dating as far back as ca. 500 CE to the consolidation of the High ʿAbbāsid court poetry, in the mid- to late fourth/tenth century. Its foundations lie in the rich oral tradition of pre-Islamic tribal and court poetry, above all as presented in the preeminent Arabic poetic form, the polythematic *qaṣīda*, or ode. This poetry expressed and preserved the values of the warrior aristocracy most majestically in its full tripartite form, consisting of *nasīb* (erotic or elegiac prelude), *raḥīl* (desert journey) and *gharaḍ* (the 'goal' of the *qaṣīda*, most often: *madīḥ*, praise of a ruler; *fakhr*, personal and tribal boast; *hijāʾ*, satire or invective; or, with somewhat varying structure, *rithāʾ*, elegy for the fallen warrior), but also in variants and in *qiṭaʿ* (fragments). Transmitted through traditional channels of poetic practitioners into the Islamic period, the *qaṣīda* established itself as the dominant poetic genre of the Islamic court. The Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid eras witnessed not only the establishment of the *qaṣīda* as the political and courtly Islamic genre *par excellence*, but also the emergence of monothematic derivative and minor genres: the *khamrīya* (wine poem), the *ṭardīya* (hunt poem), the *zuhdīya* (ascetic poem), but, above all, the *ghazal* (love lyric). Further developments distinctive of the ʿAbbāsid period were the *zahrīya* (flower and related garden and meadow poems), and self-standing descriptive poems gathered under the rubric of *waṣf* (description).[1]

[1] By 'Classical' in this volume I refer to Arabic poetry beginning in the pre-Islamic period (ca. 500–622 CE), and including the Islamic period (1 H/622 CE–41/661), the Umayyad period (41/661–132/750), and the first part of the ʿAbbāsid era, from 132/750 through the fourth/tenth century. I term the third–fourth/ninth–tenth centuries the High ʿAbbāsid period. The periodization of Arabic poetry and its terminology are subject to some variation. Many of the authors referred to in this volume use somewhat different terminology, including 'Medieval' for what I have termed Classical or ʿAbbāsid. I have limited coverage to the 'high' tradition of *qaṣīd* poetry to the exclusion of the traditionally lesser valued *rajaz* verse, especially of the Umayyad period, and other popular, often strophic, verse forms. Descriptive surveys of the various Arabic poetic genres and their development are available, for example, in the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A.F.L. Beeston *et al.* (Cambridge, UK, 1983); and *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: ʿAbbāsid Belles Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany *et al.* (Cambridge, UK, 1990); and Renate Jacobi, 'Dichtung' in Helmut Gätje, ed., *Grundriß der arabischen Philologie, Band 2: Literaturwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1987) 7–63; Roger Allen, *The Arabic Literary Heritage: The Development of its Genres and Criticism* (Cambridge, UK, 1998). A comprehensive study of compositional and stylistic techniques that reviews scholarship on both the Arabic and Persian traditions is Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls* (Surrey, 2003). A major bibliographical resource for

Of all these forms, the *qaṣīda* and the *ghazal* were destined to be the most productive, influential, and long-lasting of the Arabic, then more broadly Middle Eastern and Islamic, literary forms. The *ghazal*, which we perhaps think of more as a Persian poetic form, seems to have separated itself off from the *nasīb* section of the *qaṣīda* into a distinctive literary genre in the Umayyad period. The *qaṣīda*, however formative and formidable its Jāhilī exponents, assumed its most generative later form in the bipartite *nasīb-madīḥ* panegyric ode of the high ʿAbbāsid period. In the late and post-classical periods, both the *qasīda* and the *ghazal* became dramatically productive literary forms in virtually all of the Islamicate literatures, notably Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Swahili, whether in their classical form, or transmuted into the mystical verse of the Ṣūfīs or the devotional praise poetry to the Prophet (*madīḥ nabawī*) that flourished in the post-classical period. Within the Arabic tradition, they set the stage for the late classical poetic flowering of al-Andalus.

The present volume on Poetry and Poetics attempts to present those scholarly works that have come to stimulate and define our current understanding and appreciation of classical Arabic poetry. Building on the foundational works of earlier generations of scholarship, the last 35 years have seen the field of classical Arabic poetry branch out in a variety of critical and methodological directions. This introductory essay is intended to survey, rather than critique, this generation of work, to give some idea of the major trends, and to anticipate the directions of future work.[2]

The 1970s witnessed the beginning of several formative trends in the development of the field of classical Arabic poetry. One was a shift away from traditional Orientalist or Near Eastern studies—based on a largely textual approach to a wide range of humanistic fields—religion, history, philosophy, literature—toward a more disciplinary focus. At the same time, the 1970s through 1980s was a period of self-consciousness and self-examination concerning the relationship between Western scholarship and Arabic literature. Initiated with Jaroslav Stetkevych's 1969 essay, 'Arabism and Arabic Literature: Self-View of a Profession', it reached its highpoint in the responses to the 1978 publication of Edward Said's landmark, *Orientalism*, the full cultural and political implications of which are beyond the scope of the present essay.[3] This reorientation resulted

pre-1970s scholarship is Fuat Sezgin. *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Band II: Poesie bis ca. 430 H.* (Leiden, 1975).

[2] Given the limited space allotted to this introduction, I cannot hope to include all the relevant scholarship nor cover all the significant issues. I have chosen what seem to me to be important and original essays that are representative of what I consider to be the major trends and developments in the field of classical Arabic poetry over the last 35 years with the aim of giving a coherent, rather than all-inclusive, overview. I hope the bibliography will help compensate for omissions in this essay. For further readings and bibliography, see the references in note 1.

[3] Jaroslav Stetkevych, 'Arabism and Arabic Literature: Self-View of a Profession', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 27 (1969): 145–56; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978). For reevaluations of

in the attempt to engage classical Arabic literary scholarship more fully in the Western literary and humanistic tradition and, concomitantly, a tendency to follow current Western trends. Above all, it meant that Arabic literary studies had to rise to the challenge of presenting classical Arabic poetry to a new, and potentially much broader, literary and critical audience. As these new directions were by no means followed by all scholars, it might be tempting to divide recent studies of classical Arabic poetry into conservative and progressive schools. I have, nevertheless, found it more fruitful to look at a continuum along which valuable and influential critical work of varying types has been produced.

Poetry I: Form and Function of the *Qaṣīda*: Ritual, Ceremonial, and Performance Dimensions

Three major developments occurred in the 1970s. First was the recognition and appreciation of the orality of the pre-Islamic poetic tradition. Although it had been generally known and accepted that Jāhilī poetry was orally preserved and passed down by transmitters (*ruwāt*), and that the process of collection and setting down in writing (*tadwīn*) did not take place until the second and third Islamic centuries, there was no appreciation of what this meant in terms of process of composition, poetic form, authorship and, above all, authenticity. D.H. Margoliouth's and Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's controversial claims that the Jāhilī tradition was nothing but a massive fabrication dating from the early Islamic centuries had neither been accepted nor entirely effectively refuted. Against this background, James T. Monroe's 1972 study, 'Oral Composition in pre-Islamic Poetry' (Chapter 1), presents the systematic application of Milman Parry and Albert Lord's theory of oral-formulaic composition principles, to demonstrate both the orality and authenticity (as understood in orality theory) of the pre-Islamic corpus. Particularly important is Monroe's comparison of the percentage of formulae in pre-Islamic (about one third) as opposed to poets dating to the 'modern', ʿAbbāsid and neo-classical periods (less than one tenth). Michael Zwetter's 1978 monograph, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry*, while addressing more broadly issues of transmission and commentary, also presents the Lord-Parry theory as it applies to pre-Islamic poetry.[4] Although other scholars have not repeated these formulaic analyses of texts, the new understanding of the notions of authenticity, stability

traditional Orientalist approaches and attitudes toward classical Arabic poetry, see Edward Said, 'Islam, the Philological Vocation, and French Culture', pp. 53–72 and Jaroslav Stetkevych, 'Arabic Poetry and Assorted Poetics', pp. 103–24 in Malcolm H. Kerr, ed. *Islamic Studies: A Tradition and Its Problems*. Seventh Giorgio Levi Della Vida Biennial Conference 1979 (Malibu, CA, 1980); and Michael Sells, 'The *Qaṣīda* and the West: Self-Reflective Stereotype and Critical Encounter', *Al-ʿArabiyya* 20 (1987): 307–24.

[4] Michael Zwettler, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implications* (Columbus, Ohio, 1978).

vs. variation of the text, authorship, composition, and transmission, and the differences between 'oral' and 'written' poetry that Monroe and Zwettler established form the foundation for most later scholarship in pre-Islamic poetry.[5]

A further development grounded in Monroe's work (among it his work on Andalusian poetry), is his proposal, within the context of his discussion of the oral-formulaic nature of pre-Islamic poetry, that the prevalence of 'ring composition' noted in other oral traditions should suggest its applicability to pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. He proposes such an A-B-C–C'-B'-A' pattern in the motival structure of the *nasīb-raḥīl* complex of the *Muʿallaqa* of Labīd and in the *nasīb* of the *Muʿallaqa* of Imruʾ al-Qays.[6]

This last point brings us to a second major development of the 1970s: the influence of Structuralist theories of poetic form. The Structuralists' attempt to define an overarching poetic structure through identifying the binary oppositions within the poem was crucial in moving Arabic literary studies away from the 'atomistic' approach, which claimed that the relationship of lines in a *qaṣīda* was like 'orient pearls at random strung'—that is that there really was no poetic structure. Up until this time, even scholars who did not explicitly address the issue of poetic form limited their discussions largely to rhetorical figures, or to images of a few lines, or to connecting devices between the parts of the poem. Furthermore, attempts to understand classical Arabic poetry were largely channeled through the classical Arab critics, whose rhetorical focus did not address modern issues of structure, formal unity, and so on.[7] Added to this was a widespread anxiety that the polythematic *qaṣīda* did not exhibit 'organic unity' in the Coleridgean sense, and might therefore not measure up to Western aesthetic standards. Whatever the limitations of Structuralism, the studies of the *Muʿallaqa*s of Labīd and Imruʾ al-Qays published by Kamal Abu-Deeb and Adnan Haydar in the mid- to late 1970s must be given their due for turning the direction of classical Arabic poetic studies from its narrow focus on constituent elements, and its constraint by the concerns of the classical Arab critics, to a broader focus on the structure of the Arabic poem, and the meaning and variations of that structure.[8] Furthermore, Structuralist studies demonstrated that Coleridgean

[5] See, for example, Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca, NY, 1993); James E. Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the* Qaṣīdah*: The Tradition and Practice of Early Arabic Poetry* (Warminster, UK, 1997); Ḥassan al-Bannā ʿIzz al-Dīn, *Al-Shiʿrīya wa-l-Thaqāfa: Mafhūm al-Waʿy al-Kitābī wa-Malāmiḥih fī l-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī al-Qadīm* (Casablanca, 2003); dealing more broadly with the phenomenon is Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam* (London, 2006).

[6] Monroe, 'Oral Compostition', 43, note 2. (Chapter 1)

[7] For this approach, see G.J.H. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line: Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem* (Leiden, 1982).

[8] Abu-Deeb, Kamal, 'Towards a Structural Analysis of Pre-Islamic Poetry', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6 (1975): 148–84; and 'Towards a Structural Analysis of Pre-Islamic Poetry (II): the Eros Vision', *Edebiyât* 1 (1976): 3–69; Haydar, Adnan, *'The Muʿallaqa of Imruʾ al-Qays*: Its Structure and Meaning', Parts 1 & 2 *Edebiyât* 2 (1977): 227–61 and 3(1978): 51–82.

'organic unity' was not a necessary or universal measure of coherent poetic structure.

One critical response to this development was my 1983 essay, 'Structuralist Interpretations of pre-Islamic Poetry' (Chapter 2), which takes Abu-Deeb's and Haydar's studies as a starting point, to propose, in light of the recent revival of van Gennep's theories of the rites of passage, that the tripartite rite of passage pattern might make a more effective tool for understanding the tripartite *qaṣīda* than the binary opposition of the Structuralists. Above all, after the many casual references to the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*'s ritual function in tribal society, which were never quite specified, the van Gennepian model provided a form to match those functions, and a suggestion of what those ritual functions might be. Thus the three thematic sections of the *qaṣīdah*—the *nasīb* (abandoned campsite, tribal departure); the *raḥīl* (desert crossing); and the final *fakhr* (tribal boast) or *madīḥ* (praise of patron)—are interpreted as analogous to the Separation, Liminality, and Reaggregation phases of the rites of passage. As a corollary to this, variant poetic forms take on a structural logic as deviations of a ritual pattern.[9]

Also ultimately grounded in the Structuralist studies is Stefan Sperl's 1977 essay, 'Islamic Kingship and ʿAbbāsid Panegyric' (Chapter 3). In it he interprets the dominant court panegyric form of the ʿAbbāsid period onward, the bipartite *nasīb-madīḥ* structure, in what he terms *strophe* and *antistrophe*, the sort of draught-fertility imagery of ancient kingship—quite like Haydar's *lack/lack-liquidation* structure for the pre-Islamic ode.[10] The lost mistress of the *nasīb* embodies the failure of the poet and the polity, whereas the caliph, like his ancient Mesopotamian antecedents, embodies the prosperity and fertility of the realm. His introduction of concepts of cosmic power, divine appointment, and sacerdotal kingship into the study of classical *madīḥ* (praise poetry) were formative for further studies of this genre.

Although Structuralism in its purest form had a limited role to play in interpreting classical Arabic poetry, it turned the direction of literary studies toward engaging the full text of the *qaṣīda* as a coherent poetic structure and statement, and in so doing paved the way for further studies that, in violation of strict Structuralist dictates, introduced scholarship on ancient Near Eastern myth and ritual, sacrificial and seasonal fertility patterns, to the interpretation of classical Arabic poetry.

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[9] For example, the Ṣaʿālīk, or brigand poets, of pre-Islamic Arabia come to be interpreted in light of Douglas and Turner's formulations of the 'permanent liminal entity', and their formally truncated *raḥīl*-dominated poems understood as a rite of passage *manqué*. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, 'The Ṣuʿlūk and his Poem: A Paradigm of Passage Manqué', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984): 661–78; and S. Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*.

[10] Sperl expands this approach within a more extensive stylistic framework in Stefan Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry: A Structuralist Analysis of Selected Texts (3rd Century AH/9th Century AD–5th Century AH/11th Century AD)* (Cambridge, U.K., 1989).

A third development with roots that can be traced to the 1970s is the introduction of a socio-historical dimension into the interpretation of the Arabic poem. Quite at odds with the Structuralist dictate of limiting discussion and analysis to the text alone, this trend allowed for the interpretation of Arabic poems in light of their socio-historical function—not merely as background or introductory material, but as key to understanding the purpose and meaning—and ultimately the structure—of them poem. Jamel Eddine Bencheikh's 1977 essay, 'The Poetic Coterie of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil' (Chapter 4) does not attempt to analyze any poetic texts, but describes how caliphal politics, pleasure, and whim shaped the competitive court atmosphere in which poets performed and presented their wares. He stresses likewise the extent to which the socio-cultural system of the Arab-Islamic court favored stability and repetition over individuality and novelty. If he seems, in light of more recent studies that recognize the emergent and unpredictable as well as the reiterative aspects of ritual, to have underestimated the extent to which master court poets manipulate poetic form and language to negotiate court politics, and the extent to which the classical forms perpetuate a system of values, he nevertheless provides a sense of the cultural and literary *mise-en-scène* of classical Arabic, especially ʿAbbāsid, court poetry. So, too, his 1975 essay, 'Les Musiciens et la poésie', provides a foundation for understanding the relation of music and poetry in the early ʿAbbāsid era.[11]

Related to this development, my 1979 essay, 'The ʿAbbāsid Poet Interprets History', examines selected poems by Abū Tammām in their political and historical context to demonstrate how the court poet uses the panegyric *qaṣīda* to transmute contemporary politico-military events into perduring myths of Arab-Islamic dominion thereby to buttress the legitimacy of the ruler. The use of the court *qaṣīda* to incorporate current events into mythic expression of teleological history, which I have termed 'Islamic manifest destiny', and to negotiate and substantiate legitimate rule is further developed in my 1991 book, *Abū Tammām*, and my 2002 book, *Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy.*[12]

These two avenues, the formal analysis of poetic structure and the socio-cultural contextualization of the poem, have lead to a rich development in the study of the *qaṣīda* as a vehicle for politico-cultural expression. For example, Julie Scott Meisami's 1985 essay, 'The Uses of the *Qaṣīda*' (Chapter 5), combines Sperl's *strophe-antistrophe* model with the chiastic structure of ring composition, as

[11] Jamel Eddine Bencheikh, 'Les musiciens et la poésie: les écoles d'Isḥaq al-Mawṣilī (m. 225 H.) et d'Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Mahdī (m. 224 H.)', *Arabica* 22 (1975): 114–52.

[12] See Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, 'The ʿAbbāsid Poet Interprets History: Three Qaṣīdahs by Abū Tammām', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 10 (1979): 49–65; Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsid Age* (Leiden, 1991); Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy: Myth, Gender, and Ceremony in the Classical Arabic Ode* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2002).

proposed by Monroe, to argue for the coherent and compelling construction of the panegyric ode, in this case by the early ʿAbbāsid poet Bashshār ibn Burd, both at the rhetorical and structural levels, which, in turn, is geared to its moral, aesthetic, and political functions.

A further step in the contextualization of the *qaṣīda* in its socio-cultural setting is the interpretation of the poet-patron relationship in terms of ritual exchange. Following Marcel Mauss's formulation concerning the use of gift exchange to establish social as well as economic relations, and to negotiate and compete for rank and status, my two essays, 1994, 'Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Redemption' and 1996, 'Abbasid Panegyric and the Poetics of Political Allegiance', proposed that the exchange of poem for prize between poet and patron is the enactment of and paradigm for the relation between subjects and ruler, and the panegyric *qaṣīda* itself as an expression of allegiance and legitimacy; conversely, the *hijāʾ* then conveys illegitimacy and constitutes, in a performative sense, the abrogation of allegiance.[13]

Building on these trajectories as well is the work of Beatrice Gruendler in her several works on the ʿAbbāsid court poetry, represented here by her 2000 essay, 'ʿAbbāsid Praise Poetry in Light of Dramatic Discourse and Speech Act Theory' (Chapter 6). As in her 1996 study, 'Ibn al-Rūmī's Ethics of Patronage', and more extensively in her 2003 book, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry*, she has systematically introduced performance and performative theories into her analysis of how the master poet manipulates the politics and poetics of the poet-patron relationship. In structural terms, she has proposed for panegyrics such as those of Ibn al-Rūmī that conclude with the poet's metapoetic statements, whose theme she defines as the patronage relationship, to add to Sperl's strophe-antistrophe paradigm a third element, which she terms 'metastrophe'. Within this context she proposes that the panegyric ode presents the mutual duties and rights of benefactor and protégé in what amounts to a formulation of an 'ethics of patronage'.[14]

Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry is likewise the subject of Robert C. McKinney's 2004 book, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason*, in which he incorporates the theoretical approaches of the past generation of Arabic poetry scholarship—historicist, ritual-structural, and poet-patron relations—in a magisterial interpretation of what he terms 'the micropoetics of the macro-*qaṣīda*' of the poet's 282-line *qaṣīda*

[13] Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, 'Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Redemption: *Mufaḍḍalīyah 119* of ʿAlqamah and *Bānat Suʿād* of Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr' in *eadem*, ed. *Reorientations: Arabic and Persian Poetry* (Indianapolis & Bloomington, 1994) 1–57; Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, 'ʿAbbāsid Panegyric and the Poetics of Political Allegiance: Two Poems of al-Mutanabbī on Kāfūr' in Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, eds. *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1996) 1:35–63; 2:92–105.

[14] Beatrice Gruendler, 'Ibn al-Rūmī's Ethics of Patronage', *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 3 (1996): 104–60; Beatrice Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry: Ibn al-Rūmī and the Patron's Redemption* (London & New York, 2003).

commemorating his patron Ibn Makhlad's quashing of the black slave Zanj rebellion.

Along somewhat different lines, in his 1993 book, *Zephyrs of Najd*, Jaroslav Stetkevych introduces a comparative literary and interarts approach to enrich our understanding of the tripartite *qaṣīda* form and, within it, the role of the elegiac *nasīb*, which is the main topic of the book. Beginning with Ibn Qutaybah's well known classical description of the tripartite panegyric ode, J. Stetkevych first interprets the *qaṣīda* as rhetorical and epideictic strategy. There follows an exploration of the *qaṣīda* form, not merely as a sequence of themes, but as a sequence of moods; this he achieves through his comparison of the tripartite *qaṣīda* with the sonata-form of classical Western music. Finally he introduces Western literary analogues to the ternary archetype of the *qaṣīda* to introduce literary counterparts to the van Gennepian rites of passage.[15]

Other recent work is developing these trends further. For example, Dana al-Sajdi, in her 2008 essay, 'Revisiting Layla al-Akhyaliya's Trespass' (Chapter 7), demonstrates, through a gender-based reading of Laylā al-Akhyalīya's panegyric *qaṣīda* to the Umayyad Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, how the poetess ingeniously realigns traditional identifications of the male persona of the tripartite ode to appropriate for a female voice the traditionally, indeed exclusively, male role of court panegyrist. Raymond Farrin in his 2003 essay, 'The Poetics of Persuasion', follows James Monroe in employing ring composition for the analysis, here of the full structure, of a poem by Abū Tammām, while at the same time exploring the ostracized poet's subtle manipulation of the tripartite panegyric form to negotiate his reinstatement in the patron's good graces.[16] In his 2004 essay, 'Praise for Murder?', Samer Mahdy Ali brings a wealth of recent scholarship involving ritual, performance, and court patronage to interpret al-Buḥturī's two celebrated and controversial poems: his *rithāʾ* to the murdered Caliph al-Mutawakkil and his *madīḥ* to his son-murderer-successor, al-Mustanṣir, in terms of the tripartite poem as a rite of passage, a transfer of allegiance, and rite of restoration of divinely appointed authority.[17]

In sum, perhaps the most important critical result of this gradually evolving focus on the structure and function of the poem has been a dramatic revision of our appreciation of the dominant poetic form of Islamic court poetry, the panegyric *qaṣīda*. Long disparaged as nothing but sycophantic flattery in exchange for material gain, studies of its ritual structure, mythical dimensions, ceremonial function, and socio-historical context have revealed its complex

[15] Jaroslav Stetkevych, *The Zephyrs of Najd: The Poetics of Nostalgia in the Classical Arabic* Nasīb (Chicago, 1993) 1–49.

[16] Raymond K. Farrin, 'The Poetics of Persuasion: Abū Tammām's Panegyric to Ibn Abī Duʾād', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 34 (2003): 221–51.

[17] Samer M. Ali, 'Praise for Murder? Two Odes by al-Buḥturī Surrounding an Abbasid Patricide' in Beatrice Gruendler and Louise Marlow, eds., *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on Their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times* (Wiesbaden, 2004) 1–38.

literary, aesthetic, religious, political, moral, and economic roles as a multifaceted means of expression and negotiation.

Appearing about midway in this course of development, both as a response to recent developments and as an impetus to future work, is the 1996 two-volume collection of studies and translations edited by Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, *Qaṣīda Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*.[18] Based on papers presented at a 1993 conference in London, the volumes trace the origins and development of the *qaṣīda* from its roots in pre-Islamic Arabia to its linguistic and geographic spread throughout the Islamic world.

Poetry II: The *Ghazal* and the Lesser Genres

On the whole the *ghazal* has received less critical attention within Arabic poetic studies than the *qaṣīda*. A large part of this may be that the Arabic *ghazal*, like the other lesser genres now under discussion, is a monothematic lyric that is far more accessible to Western literary sensibilities and therefore presents less of a critical and interpretative challenge than the polythematic panegyric *qaṣīda*. On the other hand, whereas recent studies of the *qaṣīda*, as presented above, have provided us with a much clearer understanding of the crucial role in Arab and further Islamic court culture, I do not think that modern scholarship has yet achieved a comparable understanding of the dynamics of the *ghazal*. Just how and why did this little step-child of the *qaṣīda* in the classical Arabic period transform into the mystical Ṣūfī *ghazal* of the later Arabic tradition and, further, develop into a major mystical and political, as well as lyrical, genre in the other Islamicate literatures, notably Persian and Ottoman? Although these transformations took place later than the period covered in the present volume, it seems that, with literary historical hindsight, their roots should be detectable. Nevertheless, substantial work has been done in the emergence, variation, and stylistic developments of the *ghazal* and related lyrical forms.

A key question regarding the *ghazal* is the relation, both historical and poetic, of this free-standing love-lyric to the *nasīb*, the amorous prelude to the polythematic *qaṣīda*, which it so closely resembles. Renate Jacobi has tackled this issue, and with it the issue of the change in sensibilities and aesthetics between the pre-Islamic and Umayyad periods in her 1985 essay, 'Time and Reality in *Nasīb* and *Ghazal*' (Chapter 8). Although her assessments of Jāhilī versus Islamic perceptions of reality and, in line with traditional Orientalists, of Jāhilī poetry as largely objective description of nature should be revised in light of more recent scholarship, the distinction she demonstrates between *nasīb* and *ghazal*

[18] Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, eds., *Qaṣīda Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa. Vol. 1: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings. Vol. 2: Eulogy's Bounty, Meaning's Abundance: An Anthology* (Leiden, 1996).

is crucial to our understanding of Arabic poetic genres. Comparing the motifs and rhetorical structures of an ʿUdhrī, that is, chaste, Bedouin, *ghazal* to their counterparts in Jāhilī *nasīb* passages she has revealed the crucial thematic, structural, and therefore socio-psychological, differences between the *nasīb* of the polythematic *qaṣīda*, which serves as a psychological point of departure for the socially or tribally determined trajectory toward social integration, participation and responsibility, as opposed to the self-contained *ghazal*, in which the poet quite explicitly refuses to move psychologically or poetically beyond his love obsession.

Further pursuing the major issues addressed in Jacobi's essay and a substantive contribution to the scholarship of the Arabic *ghazal* is Thomas Bauer's 1998 book, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, which examines historically and thematically the *mentalité* that formed the Arabic love poem, and its mode of literary expression. His work further pursues the history of 'mentalités', not merely from the pre-Islamic *nasīb* to Umayyad *ghazal*, but also the subsequent developments in the relationship between society and the individual in the ʿAbbāsid period and its expression through stylistic developments in the *ghazal*.[19] More recently, a major project on the *ghazal*, following the model of Sperl and Shackle's collection of essays tracing the origins, development and spread of the *qaṣīda*, has appeared. Edited by Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth, *Ghazal as World Literature I: Transformations of a Literary Genre* (2005) contains studies on the development and varieties of *ghazal* in classical Arabic literature, including its *mudhakkar* and *muʾannath* types; its mystical transformations; responses to the *ghazal* in modern Arabic literature; its transposition to Urdu and Hebrew literatures; Persian and Ottoman *ghazal*; and finally Goethe's attempts to appropriate the *ghazal* form.[20]

Another free-standing genre is the *khamrīya*, or wine poem, that appears to have emerged in the early ʿAbbāsid period from the wine descriptions and bacchic passages of the pre-Islamic polythematic *qaṣīda* and to have taken form most famously in the hands of Abū Nuwās. A comprehensive study of the wine poem and its relation to the classical Arabic poetic tradition has been provided by Philip Kennedy in his 1997 book, *The Wine Song*.[21] A further development is Yaseen Noorani's 2004 essay, 'Heterotopia and the Wine Poem' (Chapter 9), which examines the ironic and parodic aspects of the *khamrīya* as a 'transgressive' literary form that reveals in its apparent inversion of societal values the underside of 'normative selfhood'. This allows us to perceive the *khamrīya* and other

[19] Thomas Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts: Eine literatur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Gazal* (Wiesbaden, 1998).

[20] Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth, eds., *Ghazal as World Literature I: Transformations of a Literary Genre* (Beirut, 2005).

[21] Philip Kennedy, *The Wine Song in Classical Poetry: Abū Nuwās and the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Oxford, 1997).