

THE SEVEN ODES

SOME NOTES ON THE COMPILATION OF THE *Mu'allaqāt*

The meaning of the word *mu'allaqāt* by which the Seven Jāhili Odes were entitled by some transmitters and commentators has been discussed at length by scholars and several suggestions have been put forward for the interpretation of the word¹. The story that the Odes were suspended in the Ka'ba has been rejected by the majority of the scholars, but they have almost unanimously agreed, although with some reservations, that "the man responsible in the first instance for selecting the seven poems and making them into a separate anthology was a certain Ḥammād, called al-Rāwiya (the Transmitter)"². This statement is indeed based on reports of early authorities who describe the literary activity of Ḥammād under Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik and Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik³ and record the tradition told on the authority

¹ T. NÖLDEKE: *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Poesie der alten Araber*, Hannover 1864, XVII-XXIII; R. A. NICHOLSON: *A Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge 1956, 101-103; C. BERNHEIMER: *L'Arabia Antica e la sua poesia*, Napoli 1960, 85-86; *Bulletin des Études Arabes*, Alger 1946, 152-158; CH. PELLAT: *Langue et Littérature Arabes*, Paris 1952, 68; H. A. R. GIBB: *Arabic Literature*, Oxford 1963, 22-24; CH. J. LYALL: *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry*, London 1930, XLIV; Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad: *Maṣādir al-shi'r al-jāhili*, Cairo 1962, 169-171; 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn in his *Introduction* to al-Anbārī's *Sharḥu l-qasā'idī l-sab'i l-ḥiwālī*, Cairo 1963, 11-13; J. M. 'Abd al-Jalīl: *Brève Histoire de la Littérature Arabe*, Paris 1946, 37; Sibā'ī Bayyūmī: *Tārīkh al-adab al-'arabī*, Cairo, n.d., I, 153-155; Aḥmad Muḥ. al-Ḥaufī: *Al-ḥayāt al-'arabiyya min al-shi'r al-jāhili*, Cairo 1962, 200-212; 'Umar Farrūkh: *Tārīkh al-adab al-'arabī*, Beirut 1965, 75; Naḥīb Muḥ. al-Bahbīti: *Tārīkh al-shi'r al-'arabī*, Cairo 1961, 194-195; Shaūqī Dayf: *Tārīkh al-adab al-'arabī, al-'asr al-jāhili*, Cairo 1965, 140-141; Ḥannā al-Fākhūrī: *Tārīkh al-adab al-'arabī*, Beirut 1960, 65-66; R. BLACHÈRE: *Histoire de la Littérature Arabe*, Paris 1952, I, 143-147; G. WIET: *Introduction à la Littérature Arabe*, Paris 1966, 29-31; F. GABRIELI: *La Letteratura Araba*, Firenze 1967, 24, 34-44; A. J. ARBERRY: *The Seven Odes*, London 1957, 16-24, 232, 244-254.

² A. J. ARBERRY, *op. cit.*, 16.

³ Yāqūt: *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd Rifā'ī, Cairo 1938, X, 258-266; Ibn Khallikān: *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd Rifā'ī, Cairo 1936, V,

of al-Nahhās (d. 337 H) ¹ according to which Ḥammād collected (*jama'a*) the Seven Long Odes ². Al-Jumaḥī (d. 231 H) states that Ḥammād was the first who collected the poems of the Arabs and recorded the stories of these poems (*wa-kāna awwala man jama'a ash'āra l-'arabi wa-sāqa ahādīthahā Ḥammādun al-rāwiyatu*). He adds, however, that he was not trustworthy (*wa-kāna ghayra ma'uthūqin bihi*) ³.

The records about the collection of the Seven Long Odes ⁴ by Ḥammād al-Rāwiya are contradicted by an account of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī (d. 1093 H), that 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86 H) "discarded the poems of four of them and established in their place four (other poets)" (*wa-qad ṭaraha 'Abdu l-Maliki bnu Marwāna shi'ra arba'atin minhum wa-atbata makānahum arba'atan*) ⁵. If this report were true there must have existed a collection of the Seven Odes in the times of 'Abd al-Malik. This fact was pointed out by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad, who quotes as well a saying of Mu'āwiya, reported by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī ⁶ that "the *qaṣīda* of 'Amr b. Kulthūm and the *qaṣīda* of al-Ḥārith b. Ḥilliza are among the pridedworthy creations

119-129; al-Iṣāmī: *Simṭ al-nujūm al-'awālī*, Cairo 1380 H, III, 216-217; *al-Aghānī*, index; al-Marzubānī: *Nūr al-qabas*, ed. R. Sellheim, Wiesbaden 1964, index; Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī: *Marātīb al-naḥwīyyīn*, ed. Muḥ. Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo 1955, 72-73; Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī: *al-Tanbīh 'alā ḥudūth al-taṣhīf*, ed. Muḥ. Ḥasan Āl Yāsīn, Baghdad 1967, 38, 125, 186; al-'Askarī: *Sharḥ mā yaqa'u fīhi l-taṣhīf*, ed. 'Abd al-'Aziz Aḥmad, Cairo 1963, 141-143.

¹ See on him Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, IV, 224-230; Ibn Khallikān, *op. cit.*, I, 209-211; al-Qifṭī: *Inbāh al-ruwāh*, ed. Muḥ. Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo 1950, I, 101-104 (and see the references of the editor).

² Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, X, 266; Ibn Khallikān, *op. cit.*, V, 120; J. W. Fück, *E.I.* ² s.v. Ḥammād al-Rāwiya.

³ Muḥ. b. Sallām al-Jumaḥī: *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥ. Shākir, Cairo 1952, 40-41; al-Marzubānī, *op. cit.*, 185.

⁴ The early sources mention the Seven Odes as *al-sab'u l-mashhūrāt* (M. SCHLÖSSINGER: *Ibn Kaisān's Commentar zur Mo'allaqa des 'Amr ibn Kulthūm nach einer Berliner Handschrift*, ZA, XXVI, 19, note 1); *al-sab'u l-tiwāl al-jāhiliyyāt* (ib., 18), *al-sumūṭ* (Abū Zayd al-Qurashī: *Jamharat ash'ār al-'arab*, Beirut 1963, 80); *al-mudhakkhabāt* (Ibn 'Abd Rabbīhi: *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn, Aḥmad al-Zayn, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, Cairo 1965, V, 269); *al-mu'allaqāt* (ib., *wa-qad yuqātu lahā l-mu'allaqāt*). A poem from the collection of the Seven Odes was referred to as *al-wāḥida* (see al-Jumaḥī, *op. cit.*, 115); the poets of the Odes were called *ashḥāb al-wāḥida* (ib., 128), as rightly explained by the Editor (ib., note 3). See the discussion of this problem al-Ḥaufī, *op. cit.*, 202-206.

⁵ *Khizānat al-adab*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, Cairo 1967, I, 127.

⁶ *Khizānat al-adab*, Cairo 1299 H, I, 519.

of the Arabs (*min mafākhiri l-'arabi*); they were suspended for a long time in the Ka'ba" and concludes that "people knew about the *mu'allaqāt* and their being suspended in the Ka'ba a long time before Ḥammād" ¹.

A new light on the time of the compilation of the Seven Odes, the identity of their collectors, the purpose of the compilation and the changes it underwent, is shed in a significant passage of Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr's (d. 280 H) *Kitāb al-manthūr wa-l-manẓūm* ².

According to a tradition told on the authority of al-Ḥirmāzī ³ Mu'āwiya ordered the transmitters of poetry ⁴ to choose for him poems (*qaṣā'id*) which he would teach his son to recite; they chose for him twelve poems (*qaṣā'id*):

1. *Qifā nabki min dhikrā ḥabībin wa-manzilī* (Imru l-Qays)
2. *Li-Khaulata aṭlālun bi-burqati Thahmadī* (Ṭarafa)
3. *A-min Ummi Aufā dimnatun lam takallamī* (Zuhayr)
4. *Ādhanatnā bi-baynihā Asmā'ū* (al-Ḥārith b. Ḥilliza)
5. *'Afati l-diyāru maḥalluhā fa-muqāmuhā* (Labīd)
6. *Alā hubbī bi-ṣaḥnīki fa-ṣbaḥīnā* ('Amr b. Kulthūm)
7. *In buddilat* ⁵ *min ahlīhā wuḥūshan* ('Abīd b. al-Abraṣ)
8. *Basaṭat* ⁶ *Rābi'atu l-ḥabla lanā* (Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil)
9. *Yā dāra Mayyata bi-l-'Alyā'i fa-l-Sanadī* (al-Nābigha)
10. *Yā dāra 'Ablata bi-l-Jiwā'i (takallamī)* ('Antara)

Al-Ḥirmāzī remarks that he thinks (*wa-azunnu*) that the two additional poems were:

11. *Waddī Hurayrata inna l-rakba murtaḥīlū* by al-A'shā
12. *(A-)sa'alta rasma l-dāri am lam tas'alī* by Ḥassān b. Thābit ⁷

¹ *Maṣādir al-shi'r al-jāhilī*, 170-171; comp. Abū l-Baqā' Hibatu llāh: *al-Manāqib al-mazyadiyya*, Ms. Br. Mus. f. 38b: *wa-gālū: mafākhiru l-'arabi thalāthatun: qaṣīdatu l-Ḥārithi bni Ḥillizata l-Yashkuriyyi... wa-qaṣīdatu 'Amri bni Kulthūmin l-Taghlibiyyi... wa-qaṣīdatu Ṭarafaṭa bni l-'Abdi...*

² Ms. Br. Mus., Add. 18532, ff. 49a-50a; on Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir see FUAT SEZGIN: *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden 1967 I, 348-349.

³ al-Ḥassān b. 'Alī al-Ḥirmāzī. See on him al-Marzubānī, *op. cit.*, 208-210; Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, IX, 24-27.

⁴ In the text: *gāla l-Ḥirmāziyyu: wa-qad ruwiya anna Mu'āwiyata min al-ruwāti an yantakhībū lahu qaṣā'ida yurawwihā bnahu*; I read: *amara l-ruwāta...*

⁵ In the text: *in tubuddilat*.

⁶ In the text: *nashaṭat*.

⁷ Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *op. cit.*, f. 50a.

Another tradition told on the authority of al-Ḥirmāzī traced back to some scholars (... *annahu qāla: dhakara lī ghayru wāḥidīn min al-‘ulamā’i* ...) gives a valuable report about the selection of the Seven Odes carried out by ‘Abd al-Malik. “The number of seven odes”, states al-Ḥirmāzī, “was fixed by ‘Abd al-Malik and he collected them” (*anna l-sab‘a l-qaṣā’ida llatī sabba‘ahā ‘Abdu l-Maliki bnu Marwāna wa-jama‘ahā*). No one in the Jāhiliyya ever collected them (*wa-lam yakun fī l-jāhiliyyati man jama‘ahā qatṭu*). People consider, says al-Ḥirmāzī, that in the Jāhiliyya period they were made use of in prayer (*wa-l-nāsu yarauna annahu kāna yuṣallā bihā fī l-jāhiliyyati*)¹. Al-Ḥirmāzī records six odes chosen by ‘Abd al-Malik in the following order:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>Alā hubbī bi-ṣaḥnīki fa-ṣbaḥīnā</i> | by ‘Amr b. Kulthūm |
| 2. <i>Ādhanatnā bi-baynīhā Asmā’ū</i> | by al-Ḥārith b. Ḥilliza |
| 3. <i>Basaṭat Rābi‘atu l-ḥabla lanā</i> | by Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil |
| 4. <i>A-min al-manūni (wa-)raybihā tatawajja’ū</i> | by Abū Dhu‘ayb al-Hudhalī |
| 5. <i>In buddilat min ahlīhā wuḥūshan</i> | by ‘Abīd b. Abraṣ |
| 6. <i>Yā dāra ‘Ablata bi-l-Jiwā’i² takallamī</i> | by ‘Antara |

Al-Ḥirmāzī continues: “Then ‘Abd al-Malik stumbled and came to a halt in the choice of the seventh ode (*qāla: thumma urtiḡa ‘alā ‘Abdi l-Maliki l-sābi ‘atu*). At that moment his son, Sulaymān, then a young boy, entered into his presence and recited the poem of Aus b. Maghrā’ in which the poet says:

*Muḥammadun³ khayru man yamshī ‘alā qadamin
wa-ṣāḥibāhū wa-‘Uthmānu bnu ‘Affānā⁴.*

Muhammad is the best of those who walk on feet
and his two Companions and ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān.

¹ This expression is not clear; it may probably denote that they were venerated, esteemed and respected by the people of the Jāhiliyya.

² In Ms. *bi-Liwā’in*.

³ In Ms. *Muḥammadun ṣallā llāhu ‘alayhi wa-ālihi*.

⁴ Al-Jumahī, *op. cit.*, 410 records some verses of this poem. But the verse quoted by Ibn Abī Ṭāhir consists of the first hemistich of verse four and the second hemistich of verse two, as recorded by al-Jumahī. The verses of Aus

'Abd al-Malik became impassioned in favour of the poem (*wa-ta'aṣṣaba lahā*) and said *maghghirūhā* i.e. include the poem of Ibn Maghrā' in with them (i.e. with the six afore-mentioned ones – *fa-qāla 'Abdu l-Maliki, wa-ta'aṣṣaba lahā, maghghirūhā ay adkhitū qaṣidata bni Maghrā'a fihā*)¹.

There is no reason to cast a doubt about the authenticity of these two accounts of al-Ḥirmāzī. The deep interest of Mu'āwiya in poetry, his close contacts with contemporary poets and the high esteem in which he held them are well attested². 'Abd al-Malik's familiarity with poetry was not less than that of Mu'āwiya³. The circumstances mentioned for the composition of the collection by Mu'āwiya for the prince (it was probably Yazīd) are quite plausible: Mu'āwiya wanted to give him a literary education in the manner of Arab society, to teach him the poems which were considered the best and probably most widely discussed and recited in the circles of chiefs and governors⁴ whom he had

b. Maghrā' are mentioned by al-Jumahī in connection with the story of a contest between al-Akhtal and Jarīr in the presence of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik. When al-Akhtal recited the poem of 'Amp b. Kulthūm – al-Walīd urged Jarīr to recite the poem of Aus b. Maghrā' saying, exactly as in the text of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *maghghir yā Jarīr. L'A*, s.v. *mghr* mentions that 'Abd al-Malik bade Jarīr to recite the verses of Ibn Maghrā' saying *maghghir* (but the verses are not quoted). Comp. al-Zamakhsarī: *al-Fā'iḡ*, ed. al-Bijawī-Muḥ. Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo 1948, III, 40 ('ABD AL-MALIK: *maghghir yā Jarīr*). Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī in his *Iṣāba*, Cairo 1323 H, I, 118, n. 495 records the verse as quoted in the Ms. and mentions the opinion of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir about the poem of Aus b. Maghrā': "nobody composed a poem nicer than this".

On Aus b. Maghrā' see: al-Aṣma'ī: *Fuḥūlat al-shu'arā'*, ed. Khafājī-Zaynī, Cairo 1953, 44; al-Balādhurī: *Ansāb al-ashraf*, Ms., f. 1046b; IBN QUTAYBA: *al-shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden 1904, 432; al-Bakrī: *Simt al-lā'ālī*, ed. al-Maymanī, Cairo 1936, 795; *al-Aghānī*, index; Shauqī Ḍayf: *al-Taṭawwur wa-l-tajdīd fī l-shi'r al-umawī*, Cairo 1965, 20.

On the daughter of Aus b. Maghrā', Zaynab, see al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, Ms. f. 397a. On the son of Aus b. Maghrā', Wabr, see *Naqā'id*, ed. A. A. Bevan, Leiden 1909, 717-718; M. NALLINO: *An-Nābiḡah al-Ga'dī e le sue poesie*, RSO, 1934, 393-399; idem: *Le poesie di an-Nābiḡah al-Ga'dī*, Roma 1953, 135-136.

¹ Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *op. cit.*, f. 50a.

² See e.g. *Aghānī*, index; al-Suyūṭī: *Tārīkh al-khulafā'*, ed. Muḥ. Muḥyi l-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamid, Cairo 1952, 202-203; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd: *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥ. Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo 1964, XX, 156; al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, Ms. ff. 348b, 349a, 350a, 352a, 354b, 355a, 357b, 359a, 361a-363b, 364b-365b, 367b, 370a-b, etc.

³ See e.g. *Aghānī*, index; al-Suyūṭī, *op. cit.*, 220-221; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *op. cit.*, XX, 161-165; KUTHAYYIR 'AZZA: *Dīwān*, ed. H. Pérès, Alger 1930, index.

⁴ See J. OBERMANN: *Early Islam* (in R. C. Dentan's -ed.- *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East*, Yale University Press 1966, 289): "... genealogy and poetry

to meet. It was the heritage of Arabism which he had to absorb and display. It was probably the same aim that 'Abd al-Malik pursued when he decided to compile his anthology: to educate the crown prince within the Arabic tradition of poetry. It was evidently the same reason which caused al-Manşūr to employ al-Mufađđal al-Đabbī and to engage him to compile the anthology of the *Mufađđaliyyāt*¹.

Ibn Abī Ṭāhir furnishes us with important details about the Seven Long Odes (*al-qaşā'idu l-sab'u l-ṭuwalu*), current in his period, in the third century of the Hijra. He records two lists. In the first list he enumerates eight poems in the following order:

1. Imru l-Qays: *Qifā nabki min dhikrā ḥabībin wa-manzili*
2. Ṭarafa: *Li-Khaulata aṭlālun bi-burqati Thahmadi*
3. 'Abīd b. al-Abraş: *Aqfara min ahlihi Malḥūbu*
4. Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā²
5. 'Antara²
6. Labīd²
7. 'Amr b. Kulthūm²
8. Al-Ḥārith b. Ḥilliza²

Ibn Abī Ṭāhir attempts an assessment of the merits of the odes. He mentions the opinion of scholars that the Seven Odes surpassed all other poems because of the many themes which they contained; they had no match.

The *qaşīda* of Imru l-Qays contained themes superior to those of other (poets); other poets derived theirs from him and based their poems on his poetry.

The *qaşīda* of Ṭarafa is one of the best odes written by one of the *Aşḥāb al-wāhida*³. He closed it with the most eloquent proverb: *sa-tubdī laka l-ayyāmu mā kunta jāhīlan: wa-ya'tika bi-l-akhbāri man lam tuzawwidi*. Some poets of the period of the Jāhiliyya tried to compose a poem like this, but without success.

must be seen to enjoy far greater popularity in the early Islamic era than Koran and Ḥadiṭ"; and see Sh a u q i Ḍ a y f, *op. cit.*, 145-146.

¹ See R. SELLHEIM: *Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte*, Oriens, 18-19, 1967, 41: "Natürlich musste der junge Prinz als künftiger Regent des islamischen Reiches, als höchster Vertreter der muslimischen Gemeinde, als Verwandter des Propheten mit der Kultur und Geschichte der arabischen Ahnen vertraut sein".

² The poem is not mentioned.

³ See note 4, p. 28, above.

No one in the Jāhiliyya, except Dhū l-Iṣba' al-'Adwānī, composed a poem in the metre and 'arūḍ of the poem of 'Abīd b. al-'Abrās: *aqfara min ahlihi Malḥūbu*'; this poem of Dhū l-Iṣba' is more likely to be an eloquent speech than a *qaṣīda*.

The *qaṣīda* of Zuhayr has no match in its description of the war, in what he says about peace, in the manner he made reproaches and in the proverbs he used.

The *qaṣīda* of 'Antara surpassed other poems by the use of descriptive passages and by expressions of bravery. Every poet borrowed from it.

The *qaṣīda* of Labīd is the best of his poems ('*aynu shi'rihi*) and contains beautiful themes. It was therefore incorporated into the collection of the odes though Labīd is not like them (i.e. he is inferior to the poets of the odes).

The *qaṣīdas* of 'Amr b. Kulthūm and al-Ḥārith b. Ḥilliza are concerned with approximately the same theme, they produced fine poems, but they are not like the preceding ones (i.e. they are inferior to them).

Some people, continues Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir, added to the Seven Odes the *qaṣīda* of al-Nābigha concerning the subject of apology; it is unique in this matter. As this *qaṣīda* is the best of al-Nābigha's poetry, some people incorporated this poem: *Yā dāra Mayyata bi-l-'Alyā'i wa-l-Sanadi* into the (collection of) Seven Odes. The author quotes a saying of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' stating that Zuhayr does not deserve to be a hireling of al-Nābigha, remarks however that, in his opinion, Abū 'Amr erred².

The *qaṣīda* of al-'A'shā: *Waddi' Hurayrata inna l-rakba murtaḥilu* is excellently done but it stands in no relation to the afore-mentioned odes.

"General consent", concludes Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, "is in accordance with what we have said" (i.e. about the eight odes, without the additional ones)³.

In another passage Ibn Abī Ṭāhir records the second list of the Seven Odes. Here only seven poems are mentioned. The order of the poems is different.

"We found the transmitters agreed upon the Seven Long Jāhili Odes", says Ibn Abī Ṭāhir (*wa-lladhī wajadnā 'alayhi l-ruwāta mujtami-'ina fī qaṣā'ida l-sab'u l-ṭuwalu l-jāhiliyyātu*):

¹ See on the metre of this *qaṣīda* the note of Lyall in his edition of the *Dīwān* of 'Abīd, Leyden 1913, 5, note I.

² See this saying quoted: Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *op. cit.*, XX, 161.

³ Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *op. cit.*, f. 49a-49b.

1. Imru l-Qays: *Qifā nabki*
2. Zuhayr: *A-min Ummi Aufā*
3. Ṭarafa: *Li-Khaulata aṭlālun*
4. 'Amr b. Kulthūm: *Alā hubbī*
5. 'Antara: *Hal ghādara l-shu'arā'u*
6. Labīd: *'Afatī l-diyāru*
7. Al-Ḥārith b. Ḥilliza: *Ādhanatnā bi-baynihā Asmā'u*

Some people, says Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, incorporated (*wa-minhum man adkhala*) into the collection:

1. 'Abīd: *Aqfara min ahlihi Malḥūbu*
2. Al-A'shā: *Waddī Hurayrata inna l-rakba murtaḥilu*
3. Al-Nābigha: *Yā dāra Mayyata bi-l-'Alyā'i wa-l-Sanadi*

“ We have not found them ”, concludes Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, “ mentioning other poems except these, composed by these first class poets in accordance with what we have mentioned about their selection ” (*wa-lam najidhum dhakarū ghayra hādhihi l-qaṣā'idi li-hā'ulā'i l-mutaqaddimīna li-mā dhakarnā min ikhtiyārihim*)¹.

The ten poets of these Jāhiliyya Odes are considered by Abū 'Ubayda the excelling poets of the Jāhiliyya (*wa-qāla Abū 'Ubaydata: ash'aru shu'arā'i l-jāhiliyyati 'asharatun, awwaluhum Imru l-Qaysi...etc.*)².

The account of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir shows clearly that the collectors of the odes started almost immediately with the establishment of the Umayyad rule. The collection of Mu'āwiya contained twelve odes and was intended as an anthology for the education of his son (apparently the crown prince). The expression *yurawwihā bnahu* does not make it possible to decide whether these odes were written down or not. The anthology of Mu'āwiya contained indeed the ten poems which form the collection of the *mu'allaqāt*. The two additional poems were of two contemporaries: Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil and Ḥassān b. Thābit. Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil was a famous poet³ and his *qaṣīda* was known

¹ Ib., f. 50a; for the variants of *al-mutaqaddimīn* see e.g. Ibn Qutayba, *op. cit.*, 141, “ a ” (*al-ma'dūdīn* and *al-muqaddamīn*).

² Al-'Abbās b. 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī al-Mūsawī: *Nuzhatu l-jalīs wa-munyatū l-adīb l-anīs*, Najaf 1968, II, 182; and comp. Ibn Sharaf al-Qayrawānī: *Rasā'il al-intiqād* (in Kurd 'Alī's *Rasā'il al-bulaghā*), Cairo 1946, 314-316).

³ See on him: Ibn Qutayba, *op. cit.*, 92, 141, 250-251; *Aghānī*, XI, 165-167; al-Bakrī: *Simṭ al-la'ālī*, 313; Ibn Ḥajar: *al-Iṣāba*, III, 172, no.

as *al-yatīma* in the time of the Jāhiliyya; it contained many *ḥikam* and was probably therefore incorporated into the collection¹. Ḥassān b. Thābit was an adherent of 'Uthmān and favoured Mu'āwiya. The poem itself is a Jāhili one and is therefore considered a fine one².

'Abd al-Malik reduced the number of the odes from twelve to seven. He included however among these seven odes two odes which were not contained in the selection of Mu'āwiya: the *qaṣīda* of Abū Dhu'ayb and the *qaṣīda* of Aus b. Maghrā', both poets who composed their poems in the period of Islam. The tendency of 'Abd al-Malik in his incorporation of the *qaṣīda* of Aus is obvious and can be gauged from the verse recited by his son Sulaymān: the Prophet is mentioned with his two Companions (i.e. Abū Bakr and 'Umar) and 'Uthmān b. 'Affān. 'Alī is not mentioned. This was in perfect harmony with the Umayyad idea of the legitimacy of the Muslim government. The *qaṣīda* of Abū Dhu'ayb was included in the anthology of 'Abd al-Malik because of its popularity: already Mu'āwiya, according to tradition, recited verses of this *qaṣīda* before his death³.

The tradition about the compilation of the anthology of the Seven Odes, begun by Mu'āwiya and concluded by 'Abd al-Malik, fell into oblivion probably due to the fall of the Umayyad dynasty and the victory of the Abbasids. Scholars of a later period apparently were not satisfied with the selection of 'Abd al-Malik and returned to the

3716; IBN DURAYD: *al-Ishtiḡāq*, ed. 'Abd al-Ṣalām Ḥārūn, Cairo 1958, 340-341; *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, ed. Lyall, Introduction, p. XIV; Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Baṣrī, *al-Ḥamāsa al-baṣriyya*, ed. Mukhtār al-Dīn Aḥmad, Hyderabad 1964, I, 94; IBN QUTAYBA: *'Uyūn al-akḥbār*, Cairo 1928, II, 10; al-Baḡhdādī: *Khizānat al-adab*, Cairo 1299 H, II, 546-548; Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawarī: *al-Akḥbār al-ḥiwāl*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Āmir—Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, Cairo 1960, 308; Muḥ. 'Alyān al-Marzūqī: *Mashāhid al-inṣāf 'alā shawāhid al-kashshāf*, Cairo 1354 H, 72 (appended to al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf*); Muḥ. Bāqir al-Sharīf: *al-Jāmi' al-shawāhid*, Iṣbahān 1380 H, II, 25; al-Anṣārī: *Mughnī l-labīb 'an kutub al-'arīb*, ed. Muḥ. Muḥyi l-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, al-Maktaba al-tijāriyya, n.d., I, 328, n. 533; idem: *Shudhūr al-dhahab fī ma'rifaṭi kalām al-'arab*, ed. Muḥ. Muḥyi l-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo 1942, 138, no. 63.

¹ See the contradictory opinions of OMAR A. FARRUKH: *Das Bild des Frühislam in der Arabischen Dichtung - von der Hīgra bis zum Tode 'Umar's*, Leipzig 1937, 22: 50, 98, 110 and SHAUQĪ Ḍayf: *al-Taṭawwur wa-l-tajdīd fī l-shi'r al-umawī*, p. 20 about whether this *qaṣīda* is a Jāhili one or it is influenced by the teachings of Islam.

² See the opinion of al-Aṣma'ī: *ḥādḥā Ḥassānu bnu Thābitin faḥḥun min fuhūli l-jāhiliyyati fa-lammā jā'a l-islāmu saqaṭa shi'ruhu* (Ibn Qutayba: *al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'*, 170).

³ See al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, f. 380a.

anthology of Mu'āwiya. They confined themselves to the Seven Jāhili Odes upon which "the scholars unanimously agreed" and which form the popular anthology of the seven *mu'allaqāt* to the present day. The odes of Suwayd b. Abī Kāhīl and Ḥassān b. Thābit were eliminated. The three additional odes of the collection of Mu'āwiya (Abīd, al-Nābigha, al-A'shā) were in fact incorporated in a wider anthology already in the third century of the Hijra, as attested by Ibn Abī Ṭāhir; this was the collection of the Ten Odes which is in fact transmitted even today.

The merit of Ḥammād seems to have been that he transmitted the Seven Jāhili Odes derived from the collection of Mu'āwiya and that he discarded the collection of 'Abd al-Malik. Later literary tradition attributed the selection to Ḥammād.

In the third century these Odes gained wide acclaim and children were taught them in the *kuttāb*¹.

¹ Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *op. cit.*, f. 49b.