

Arab poets' perspectives on the arts  
Until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> Century  
A thematic and rhetorical analytical approach

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## Abstract

This study investigates the perspectives of Arab poets on three kinds of arts: poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture from the Pre-Islamic era until the end of the 5th / 11th century. This issue is analysed and discussed through the ages focusing on two methodological approaches: first, thematic analysis has been employed to discover poets' perspectives and categorise them; second, Arabic rhetorical analysis through figures of speech or *'ilm al-bayān* has been used to delve deeper into the poets' meanings. This research is concerned to discover poets' views through their poetry that has been written regarding these art forms and the artists that created them.

In the analysis, this research distinguishes between two clear stages, each with its particular features. The first is termed the early stage where the poetic verses regarding the arts are limited, superficial, and only use minimal rhetorical tools. However, the second stage is called the developed stage, where the poetic verses regarding arts are much more extensive; furthermore, the art forms became a major theme in the poetry, the poets discuss the arts in-depth, and use rhetorical tools such as simile, metaphor, and personification substantially and actively.

Arab poets expressed their perspectives on the arts in various ways. They were interested in showing their opinions about poetry through drawing comparisons between poets and poetic texts, revealing both negative and positive opinions, and providing advice regarding poetry. Regarding music and singing, the poets show their perspectives both positively and negatively, focusing on some specific issues such as the lyrics, musical proficiency, performance technique, and so on. Concerning painting and sculpture, poets reflect upon this art form positively, showing their ardent admiration of this art form.

It can be argued that if arranging these three arts depending on the level of importance attached to each by Arab poets' writings, one would put poetry in the first position, music and singing in the second and finally painting and sculpture in the third.

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## Acknowledgements

(فَبِاللَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

“So all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the heavens, the Lord of the earth, the Lord of the whole Universe”. (Q. 45:36)

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## General Notes

- Translation: all translations of the Arabic poems and verses are mine except as indicated. The translation of the poetic verses will be presented in the main body of the text. All Qur'ānic verses have been translated by Yusuf Ali. See: <https://quran.com/>
- Both 'line', and 'verse' can be used to refer to the Arabic word *bayt*. In this thesis, *bayt* will be translated as 'verse'.
- Dates will be given in both the Arabic and the western calendr.
- Transliteration symbols:

ا	A	ض	ḍ
ء	'	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	'
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	Q
خ	kh	ك	K
د	d	ل	L
ذ	dh	م	M
ر	r	ن	N
ز	Z	ه	H
س	s	و	W
ش	sh	ي	Y
ص	ṣ	ة	A

Long vowels		Short Vowels	
ا	ā	◌َ	A
ي	ī	◌ِ	I
و	ū	◌ُ	U

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1.Introduction

Poetic texts provide a useful lens through which one can explore historical subjects and issues, especially when accompanied by the viewpoints of historians and scholars. Poets' odes and verses can reveal new facts regarding life's issues, societies' history, and the arts, as well as supporting and confirming information already provided in other sources. One persistent theme in literature that offers the potential for in-depth analysis is the relationship between poetry and other arts. As all aspects of life affect each other, literature in general (and poetry in particular) are fields that have relationships with other fields. These associations exist between different types of literature forms such as poetry with stories and novels. Additionally, the associations can be seen between poetry and external fields.<sup>1</sup> For example, poetry with the history, politics, and religion. Poetry also has important relationships with various other literary and non-literary arts, including music, singing, painting, sculpture, and poetry itself. As has been confirmed by Rene Wellek, 'the relationships of literature with the fine arts and music are highly various and complex. Sometimes poetry has drawn inspiration from paintings or sculpture or music'.<sup>2</sup>

This study examines poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture in terms of Arab poets' perspectives. There are several ways to analyse and engage with these various artistic mediums in a historical context. For instance, scholars can approach the ancient arts archaeologically, researching their sources through physical materials. However, as this thesis explores, when seeking to discover the relationship between poetry and the arts, the most important route is for scholars to examine poetry which discusses the subject of art itself, elucidating the poets' own opinions towards the arts. Trying to understand Arabic poets' viewpoints about other art forms, and how these views change over time, could allow for a deeper comprehension of all aspects of artistic life at that early time. Additionally, it could

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<sup>1</sup> Gustave Le Bonn, *La Civilisation Des Arabes*, trans. by 'Ādil Zu'aytar (Cairo: Mu'assasat Hindāwī; lil-Tta'lim wa-al-Thaqāfa, 2013), p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956), p. 124.

allow further discoveries regarding competition between artists; as some scholars such as Sumi,<sup>3</sup> and Shiloah,<sup>4</sup> have discussed, there seems to have been competition between different art forms and between the artists themselves. Poets were considered very popular artists among the Arab people. Some poets enjoyed a significant degree of popularity such as Ibn al-Rumī (d. 283 / 896), Abū Tammām (d. 231 / 845) and many others.

This study seeks to investigate this subject through an analysis of poetry written by Arabic poets about the other arts. Thus, poetry is the cornerstone of this study, where the art of music, singing, painting, and sculpture will be investigated through the poetry that illustrates it. Furthermore, poetry itself will be discussed in depth in this study, through the analysis of examples in which poets reflect upon the work of other poets within their own writings. Chapter Two explores this topic further, examining the ways in which poetry is self-reflexive and self-critical when it concentrates on other poetic works. Poets' attitudes toward poetry itself will thus be investigated, as well as poets' perspectives on music and singing in Chapter Three, and painting and sculpture in Chapter Four. Finally, differences and similarities regarding the issues in question across the three chosen arts will be compared and interpreted in Chapter Five.

### Poets' perspectives

Regarding Arabic poets' perspectives on the three arts under discussion in this thesis, there are in general many opinions, ideas, perspectives, impressions, appreciations, condemnations, and criticisms which can be observed through studying this poetry. For example, poets might show positive perspective towards works of art or artists through verses of praise, or panegyrics. Alternatively, they might utilise satire or ridicule to demonstrate dissatisfaction with or dislike of that particular artist or artwork. Poets sometimes write frankly about their opinions of other works of art or artists. However they tend to produce verses with little clarifications or clear reasoning, which leads us to form our own assumptions about hidden attitudes.

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<sup>3</sup> Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Waṣf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory*, Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures, 25 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam: A Socio-Cultural History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995), p. 12.

Through thematic analysis of the poems or verses and their semantic techniques, one can determine a poet's perspective. Poets have, through their writings, issued particular opinions at different times about arts. They deliver their perspectives in odes and verses to mention their impressions and clarify their attitudes towards the works of art. It seems that poets believe the cultural space is open for their perspectives on all aspects of life, including the arts. Since poets are primarily artists, they may have different and worthy opinions for the arts, and they should be discovered. Poets have particular skills and tools to describe and criticise different aspects of life. Usually, literary studies and literary criticism shed light on what poets are describing with respect to historical, political, economic, and literary life. However, some aspects of Arabic life have remained in the shadows (such as poets' perspectives on arts) and have not been commonly discussed by researchers through the poets' lens. Nevertheless, poets are generally the writers who are going to investigate issues, including those in the shadows, and present their own views through their poetry.

Briefly, poetry is a mirror of the Arabic life. It has the ability to portray nature, humanity, arts, and any other topic in an expressive way. The arts through poets' perspectives will be investigated in this thesis.

## The arts

For the purposes of this study, the word 'arts' requires a definition in Arabic and a clarification of its various applications. The word 'art' can be translated as *fann* in modern Arabic language. However, the meaning of *fann* slightly differs from the way in which the word is used in classical Arabic dictionary. In *Lisān al-'Arab*, the meaning of *fann* is equivalent to types of things or wonders.<sup>5</sup> In classical Arabic that is used to refer to the same thing as 'art' in English, it is *ṣinā'a*. However, this term is related to the handcraft in general, and one of its meanings is the proficiency displayed when doing something.<sup>6</sup> Al-Tahānawī (d. 12/ 18 century) provided several definitions for this word as a term. One meaning of *ṣinā'a* is the ability to do something by using the mind and thinking.<sup>7</sup> In aiming to employ the most accurate terminology

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<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1981), p. 3475.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Manzūr, p. 2508.

<sup>7</sup> Muḥammad A'lā ibn 'Alī al-Tahānawī, *Mawsū'at Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn wa-al-'Ulūm*, 1st edn (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, 1996), p. 1079.

to define the concept of art, it is tempting to use the aforementioned terms, but their underlying connotations are more complicated than one might initially expect. These terms are related to history, philosophy, classical, and modern conceptions of art. To illustrate this point, Mardaghānī states that al-Fārābī (d. 339 / 950) was the first philosopher to distinguish between the two concepts of *ṣinā'a* in Arabic which are handicraft and art.<sup>8</sup> In *al-Musīqā al-Kabīr* he attributed the major role of the intellectual mind to a musician when he creates his own art.<sup>9</sup>

The word *fann* is not mentioned in the Qur'ān, nor was it used in the Pre-Islamic era to mean art. Certainly, there were specific words used to mention each type of art. Nevertheless, the lack of a general term that means art implies that the Qur'ān and early Sunna texts used only more specific words to refer to artistic practices or artistic forms, such as *naḥt* /sculpture, *timthāl* /statue, *ṣanam* /idol, *lahw* /fun, *shi'r* /poetry, *mizmār* /pipe, *duff* /tambourine.

In the modern era there are many definitions of art, such as the one provided by the Oxford Dictionary: 'art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form, such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power'.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, art has also been defined as 'any work characterized by an obvious aesthetic element is to be deemed a work of art'.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of further modern artistic classification, art can be divided into multiple sub-concepts. There are expressionistic arts, such as music, dance, and poetry, and then there are fine arts, such as painting, sculpture, and photography. Additionally, these types of arts can be divided according to the senses through which they are appreciated: the auditory arts include music, singing, and oratory; the visual arts include painting, sculpture, and photography; the audio-visual arts include dance and drama; the evaluative arts include poetry; and the industrial

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<sup>8</sup> Zakā' Mardaghānī, *al-Fann 'ind al-Fārābī*, (Ṣafahāt lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, 2012), p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Mardaghānī, p. 24; al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Mūsīqā al-Kabīr* (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī lil-Ṭibā'a wa-al-Nashr, 1967), p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], 'Art', <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/art>> [accessed 27 June 2015].

<sup>11</sup> Peter Childs and Roger Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 11.

arts include pottery, engraving, and mosaics.<sup>12</sup> It is helpful to distinguish between works of art that benefit people for functional purposes and those created for purely aesthetic reasons.<sup>13</sup>

In terms of why only these three kinds of arts have been chosen to be investigated in this study, it is clear that there existed various other forms of art over several centuries, as is evidenced among different types of sources including written and hard physical materials: for example, architecture and calligraphy. However, this research concentrates on the most popular kinds of arts that have been mentioned by poets in their poetry. It has been found that poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture, are the most popular arts mentioned in poetry during the period covered by this study.

In general, the arts and poetry made enormous advances and were flourishing during the Abbasid age. Furthermore, because poetry was the cornerstone of the verbal Arabic arts, it seems that Arab poets had their own particular perspectives on the other kind of arts at that time, including their own views on poetry itself. Additionally, because of the words limitations of this research, it becomes more reasonable to limit the investigation to the most popular types of arts, which at the time were poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture.

There are two issues to be mentioned regarding the prior exploration of the matter examined in this thesis in Arabic and Western literature. *Al-mu'āraḍāt* and *al-naqā'id* in Arabic literature can be considered as exploring some similar ideas to the chapter of poetry, while ekphrasis can be considered as approaching Western literature in a similar way to the chapter on painting and sculpture.

It is crucial to investigate the extent of poetry's relationship to other poetry. There are some specific aspects such as *al-mu'āraḍāt* and *al-naqā'id* which should be acknowledged in this regard. *Al-mu'āraḍāt* is when a poet emulates another poet by writing in the same style, on the same themes and using the same melodies and rhymes.<sup>14</sup> *Al-naqā'id*, on the other hand, refers to poems created to disprove the claims of others.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, what has been

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<sup>12</sup> Ali Majdi and Safa Hanafī, *al-Tathawuq al-Fanni wa Tarykh Alfūnūn*, 1st edn (Dar al-Andalus, 2009), pp. 21-22.

<sup>13</sup> Gustave Le Bonn, p. 524.

<sup>14</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Lyric Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 273.

<sup>15</sup> For further reading see: Yūnus Ṭurkī al-Bajjārī, *al-Mu'āraḍāt fī al-Shi'r al-Andalusī: Dirāsa Naqḍīya Muwāzina* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 2008), p. 41; Aḥmad al-Shāyib, *Tārīkh al-Naqā'id fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabī*, 2nd edn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣrīya, 1954).

investigated here is poets' opinions or perspectives on others' works of art, and is something different from the two established forms noted above. Therefore, this study is not interested in investigating poetic works that are copies of other poetic works, or written with the specific aim of disproving the claims of others regarding *al-naqā'id*. Only poets' perspectives and their opinions on other poetic work will be considered, without consideration of the *al-mu'aradāt* or *al-naqā'id*.

Regarding ekphrasis, it is beneficial to understand similar issues such as the ekphrasis phenomenon in Western literature as a point of comparison. Ruth Webb confirms that the meaning of ekphrasis, a word first made prominent in the ancient Greek period, is speech that brings the subject matter vividly to life before another's eyes.<sup>16</sup> However, Webb agrees that this meaning has evolved between the ancient and the modern era; currently, scholars are in conflict concerning what arts the word applies to.

In general, ekphrasis can be used to refer to description in general and, specifically, to arts in which the artist uses verbal art to describe visual acts.<sup>17</sup> Ekphrasis is a rich subject in Western studies and has been the subject of many papers and books. The book *Poets and Painting* by Robert D. Denham provides a good example of the extent to which this is a well-developed subject in Western literature.<sup>18</sup> In part one of his book, Denham counts poems on paintings and painters; in part two, he enumerates the secondary literature. The book provides an excellent source of ekphrasis bibliographic material, and can give us an overview of the importance of the ekphrasis concept in Western literature.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, in ancient Arabic literature, the issue of ekphrasis needs to be investigated in greater depth to provide a comprehensive view of its potential role. It is clear that no mature concept of ekphrasis exists as an artistic, critical term in ancient Arabic literature.

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<sup>16</sup> Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Abingdon, England; New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Sumi, pp. 6–8.

<sup>18</sup> Robert D. Denham, *Poets on Paintings: A Bibliography* (McFarland, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> For more information, see: Antonella Braida and Giuliana Pieri, *Image and Word: Reflections of Art and Literature from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Legenda, 2003), p. 133.

## 1.2. Research questions

The main questions underpinning this project are: what are poets' perspectives and opinions towards poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture in their poetry? How do they express their perspectives on these art forms? And why? What are the differences and similarities between different poets' perspectives, and what are the reasons?

Under this overarching question, several subsidiary questions are addressed in the discussions presented in the various chapters. The specific research questions are as follows:

- How did poets deal, through the period of study, with the subject of the arts, and what are the different features that can be remarked upon?
- Did poets at the period of study have concerns about the arts? How and why?
- Did poets rely on specific rhetorical techniques to reflect their points of view about these arts in their own poetry?
- How can an analysis of the poetic themes and rhetorical tools used by these poets shed light on their perspectives of these three art forms?
- What are the differences and similarities that can be noted through poets' perspectives on these art forms and why?

## 1.3. The aims of the thesis

This research aims to make a contribution to the study of Arabic literature, in general, and to the field of poetic critical studies, in particular. It is intended to produce a better understanding of the relationship between poetry and the arts of poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture for the period studied. This thesis has several aims and objectives: some comprehensive, applying to the whole thesis, and others being specifically related to individual chapters and sections. The primary objectives of this thesis are (as mentioned previously):



- To discover the Arab poets' perspectives and opinions towards these three kinds of art: poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture.
- To discover poetic tools that have been used by poets to express their perspectives and opinions towards the arts and why they have been used.
- To determine the differences and similarities between poets' perspectives on these arts and what are the reasons and purposes that can be expected behind them.

The cornerstone of this research involves an examination into the extent to which poets in the period of study expressed their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes towards these three artistic modes in their own poetry, and why poets sought to express their perspectives and opinions in their poetry towards these arts.

In terms of the poetic tools that have been used by poets to express their opinions towards the arts, the assumption of this study is that poets relied on specific rhetorical techniques to present their own views on the arts and tried to convince readers to share their opinions. As will be demonstrated in the next section of the methodology, there are indeed some specific rhetorical tools that were commonly used by poets when attempting to convince readers of their opinion. The research presented here attempts to uncover the most common specific rhetorical tools that they used.

To further elaborate, one of the general objectives of this study is to provide a clear account of the poets' views towards these kinds of arts in the period of study to discern the various influences based on evidence obtained from the poetical materials. This will facilitate a comparison between the two stages with respect to this subject as we will discuss in the next page. A better understanding of the historical development of this thesis issue will be generated as a result. Finally, one of the comprehensive goals of this research is to look closely at examples and poetic works that have not been studied yet as we will show in the main chapters.

In terms of what each chapter is intended to accomplish, the literature review presents various works that are related to this matter and is intended to provide an understanding of the

limitations of previous studies in order to identify various gaps in previous research on this topic.

The first chapter will provide a foundational account of Islam and Arabs' attitude towards poetry in order to determine the extent to which such an attitude had an impact on the popularity of this art. The main section of the chapter aims to analyse and examine poetic materials about poetry arranged thematically and chronologically (inside each theme) in order to facilitate understanding of the development of this issue. The section of Arabic poets' perspectives will be divided into two general segments based on the features of each section.

The first part is given the name of the early stage. The second section has been given the name of the developed stage. Both stages contain poetic texts which discuss poetry. These two sections are intended to discover the perspectives of poets on poetry and a comparison can be drawn between both parts. The development of the subject will be observed to see whether it flourishes, atrophies, or even just disappears, giving mention to the probable reasons and justifications. Textual interpretation, including rhetorical analysis, is also provided in order to clarify the meaning of the main poetic texts and poets' opinions as well. The objective is to discover the poets' perspectives and to examine the popular rhetorical tools that have been used in the poets' odes. In addition, a comparison between the early and developed stages will be drawn at the end of this chapter to discover the differences and similarities that may uncover hidden reasons and purposes.

These general and specific goals in the chapter of poetry also apply to the other chapters of the thesis: Chapter Three on music and singing and Chapter Four on painting and sculpture.

Finally, the fifth and final chapter contains a comparison between these three modes of artistic expression in light of what has been investigated in previous chapters and provides further interpretation of the common characteristics that were noticed in the analysis.

#### 1.4. The methodology of study and poetic materials

The expression of the thesis' themes will be investigated over time from Pre-Islamic era until the end of 5 /11 century using thematic analysis and *'ilm al-bayān* in Arabic rhetoric. Thematic analysis will be used to examine poets' perspectives on poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture. The approach to analysing poetic materials in this thesis will follow the Braun and Clarke model (2006), explained further below. With regard to *'ilm al-bayān* in Arabic rhetoric, it will be used to discover poetical tools that have been used by poets to convey their point of views and ideas to readers. *'Ilm al-bayān* as a part of Arabic rhetoric will be used in its latest version as it has appeared in Arabic rhetoric books. There are several books written in English about Arabic rhetoric, such the valued book by Hussein Abdulraof, *Arabic rhetoric: A pragmatic analysis*. He translates the actual terminologies of Arabic rhetoric into English in an accurate way. This study uses the translations of Arabic rhetorical terminologies as they appear in Abdulraof's book.

- Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.<sup>20</sup> In the case of this thesis, the thematic analysis will help to obtain information that is related to Arab poets' perspectives on poetry, music and singing, painting and sculpture. The thematic analysis process that will be used to discover poets' perspectives' is briefly as follows: there are several phases starting with the collection of materials, and the familiarising process. Following this, the next phase is to determine the intended point of view. Next is the task of searching for themes and giving these themes names of categorisation and, finally, producing a report of the analysis containing interpretation and comparison.<sup>21</sup>

- Arabic rhetoric and *'ilm al-bayān*

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<sup>20</sup> Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke, 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2006), 77–101.

<sup>21</sup> Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke, p 79, and 87.

Before proceeding to describe Arabic rhetoric, it should be stated that eloquence is the primary facet of rhetoric. Arabic Rhetoricians assert that eloquence is the combined effect of three things: word, speech or text and speaker or author.<sup>22</sup> A word can be called an eloquent word when it is free from defects: for example, cacophony (*al-tanāfur*) and grotesqueness or oddity (*al-gharāba*). In terms of speech or text, this can be called eloquent when it is likewise free from such defects as word cacophony (*tanāfur al-kalimāt*), and semantic incongruity (*al-ta'qīd al-ma'nawī*). Finally, a speaker can be called an eloquent speaker when he or she has the capacity to express eloquent speech. Subsequently, rhetoric is known as the compatibility of eloquent discourse to its context and it has three parts: '*ilm al-ma'ānī*,<sup>23</sup> '*ilm al-badī*,<sup>24</sup> and '*ilm al-bayān*.

Regarding '*ilm al-bayān*, this research argues that the poets tend to use the semantic techniques of '*ilm al-bayān* from Arabic rhetoric to clarify or assert their views. It is suggested that '*ilm al-bayān* has the ability to convey poets' opinions and ideas to people clearly and precisely.<sup>25</sup> To further illustrate, '*ilm al-bayān* is defined as that part of Arabic rhetoric which has the ability to express one meaning in multiple ways using clear semantics.<sup>26</sup>

An important question can be raised here which is why is only '*ilm al-bayān* used in terms of Arabic rhetoric? This research argues that poets tend to use '*ilm al-bayān* as the main tool when they want to express their perspectives on arts. '*Ilm al-bayān* was defined as an

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<sup>22</sup> Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī, *Al-Īdāḥ fī 'Ulūm al-Balāgha* (Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthannā), p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī, p. 96. Rhetoricians agree that '*ilm al-ma'ānī* is the study of Arabic that informs the conditions of the language's lexical items, and that these, in turn, combine in the proper context, leading to eloquence. '*Ilm al-ma'ānī* has eight subheadings. As an example of '*ilm al-ma'ānī*, we will illustrate the *al-'ijāz* term. It means to express meaning through few words. This can be achieved in two ways: through omission and through brevity. *Al-'itnāb* is the expansion of lexical meaning. Finally, *al-Musāwāh* is the practice of expressing an intended meaning using an equivalent expression.

<sup>24</sup> Aḥmad al-Hāshimī, *Jawāhīr al-Balāgha fī al-Ma'ānī wa-al-Bayān wa-al-Badī*, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 2002), p. 218 and 243. '*Ilm al-badī*' (embellishments), is the third branch of Arabic rhetoric. Essentially, *al-Badī*' is the practice of beautifying or embellishing speech or texts, and it is subdivided into two main parts regarding words and meanings. First, beautifying words refers to the several kinds of modifications that soften a word's pronunciation and change its meaning based on the use of other words with similar letters; for example, alliteration (*al-Jinās*) is when a word is modified to make it sound more similar to other words. Second, beautifying meanings is the expression of beauty through a word's meaning. For example, antagonism (*al-muṭābaqa*) is the purposeful use of antagonism. Alternatively, metonymy (*al-tawrīya*) is when a word has two meanings, one familiar and unintended and the other unfamiliar but intended. Also, conceit (*Ḥusn al-Ta'līl*) is when a state of being is appropriate for a subtle reason but isn't true; and orientation (*al-Tawjīh*) is when a text has two different possible meanings.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 154.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī, vol. 3p.3-4.

essential function on Arabic rhetoric regarding the intended meanings. Depending on various kinds of application the one meaning can be expressed through simile, metaphor, and metonymy in various forms.

1. For further explanation, *'ilm al-bayān* is subdivided into three types. Firstly, simile (*al-tashbīh*), that is the comparison of two things with one adjective or more by certain tools:<sup>27</sup> for example, 'the woman is beautiful like the moon'. There are two aspects called two simile ends (*tarafay al-tashbīh*). In the example, the woman is the linked-to (*al-mushabbah*), and the moon is the linked (*al-mushabbah bihi*). The adjective or simile feature (*wajh al-shabah*) is the beauty, and the tool such as (*mithl, ka'ann, and al-kāf*).<sup>28</sup> There are several kinds of simile depending on different situations and simile elements. For example: Reverse simile (*al-tashbīh al-maqlūb*): 'the moon is beautiful like the woman'.
2. Implicit simile (*al-tashbīh al-ḍimnī*): 'the moon is reflecting her face'.
3. Imagery or compound simile, (*al-tashbīh al-tamthīlī*): the adjective can be gathered from several elements. For example: 'her face is like the full moon when it appears beyond the cloud'.
4. Effective simile (*al-tashbīh al-balīgh*): the simile is conducted without using a simile tool such as 'that woman is the moon'.
5. Multiple simile: mentioning several adjectives such as 'she is like the moon in beauty, distance, and fame'.<sup>29</sup>

A simile has several functions: some of them are related to the imagination, the originality, the clarity and ambiguity.<sup>30</sup> Others are related to the speaker's purposes. For example, hyperbole, clarification, identifying a specific feature, praise or dispraise of someone.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 157.

<sup>28</sup> Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis, Culture and Civilisation in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 197–198.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Hāshimī, pp. 157–173; Abdul-Raof, pp. 197–207.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Hāshimī, pp. 176–177.

<sup>31</sup> Abdul-Raof, pp. 208–209.

Secondly we have allegory (*al-majāz*), which can be broken down into two types, cognitive allegory (*al-majāz al-‘aqlī*), and linguistic allegories (*al-majāz al-lughawī*). The first ‘refers to attributing the meaning of a verb to someone or something other than what is referred to by the verb itself’.<sup>32</sup> For example, ‘the queen built a tower’, when in fact the queen merely ordered others to build a tower for her. Linguistic allegory refers to a lexical item used in an unsuitable way in relation to its denotative meaning. This second kind of allegory is divided into a further two subcategories. First, hypallage (*al-majāz al-mursal*) is when the relationship is dissimilar, for example, ‘I planted an orange’, when in fact the seed or tree was planted so that the eventuality of an orange will happen. Second, metaphor (*al-isti‘āra*), where the relationship shows similarity. One famous type of metaphor is the personification where its definition as it has been cited by Meisami is “a manner of speech endowing nonhuman objects, abstractions, or creatures with life and human characteristics”.<sup>33</sup> For example, ‘the tornado tore the city with his claws’. The speaker imagines a tornado as a monster with claws to illustrate its destructive capability.<sup>34</sup> Some of the functions of the use of allegory include conciseness, proficiency, and beautifying the discourse.<sup>35</sup> The third and last type of *‘ilm al-bayān* is metonymy (*al-kināya*) which is an allusion to someone or something without specifically referring to his, her, or its identity.<sup>36</sup> Metonymy has several functions such as succinctness, allusion implicit reference, hyperbole, providing the evidence of the claims, and transforming ideas from the ambiguous to the real state.<sup>37</sup> Regarding the rhetorical analysis, Arabic rhetorical tools that can detect the most important techniques used by poets in the investigation will be used. The use of tools in *‘ilm al-bayān* will be focused on as they are the most capable of analysing Arabic rhetoric and poetic imagery and allow for the identification of the most important rhetorical techniques used in the odes or poetry in general. Therefore, the term rhetoric and rhetorically have been used in this research to refer to the concept that has been clarified above. This section has clarified the methods used in this investigation and it has attempted to provide a brief summary of Arabic rhetoric as the general background of *‘ilm al-bayān*. Now we will move on to discuss the poetic materials of this research.

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<sup>32</sup> Abdul-Raof, p. 212.

<sup>33</sup> Meisami, p. 324.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Hāshimī, pp. 179–204; Abdul-Raof, pp. 209–232.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Hāshimī, pp. 183–183; Abdul-Raof, pp. 216–217.

<sup>36</sup> There are three main types of metonymy which are: metonymy of an attribute; metonymy of a modified; and metonymy of an infinity. Al-Hāshimī, p. 207; Abdul-Raof, p. 235.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Hāshimī, pp. 211–12; Abdul-Raof, p. 233.

### *Poetic materials of the research*

In this section, we will examine the poetic materials and the analysis process including different aspects such as the sources, the representative materials, and the limitations. *Dīwāns* or poetry collections have been searched for materials that reference the topic under investigation and then these poems and verses have been thematically and rhetorically arranged and analysed in order to understand the development of these themes. The materials have been classified and arranged by theme and the dates have been provided beside poets' names for the first time. The wide range of sources such as *dīwāns* or poetry collections, in addition to several historical, musical, and philosophical sources written at that time have been consulted looking for materials and evidence to answer the questions of this thesis.

It should be acknowledged that the outcomes of this study are limited to the materials studied in this thesis. There are potentially examples we could not find; materials may also have been lost over hundreds of years. Vast quantity of Arabic poetry have been lost (especially from earlier ages), as has been noted by scholars such as Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' (d. 154 / 771).<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, this researcher spent time looking at Pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry, looking for materials that would allow a comprehensive understanding of poets' perspectives on the study subject in this early period. Finally, the research provides a representative sample for each theme because of the limitation of the word count.

In terms of the limitations of poetic materials, the study focuses on poets' opinions and their perspectives on others' works of art. Verses or poems related to poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture will be investigated to extract poets' opinions on the arts. This will include poetry about others' works of art as following:

- Poetry when the poet mentions poetry in general or others' poetry specifically in his own poetic work.
- Music and singing when the poet mentions a piece of music, sound, or instruments in his own poetic work.

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<sup>38</sup> Muḥammad ibn Sallām al-Jumahī, *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shu'arā'*, ed. by Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr (Jeddah: Dār al-Madanī, 1974), p. 25.

- Painting and sculpture when the poet mentions the visual arts in his own poetic work.

Poets' verses about their own poetry and poetic capacity are not included for consideration. Scholars are aware of this matter: poets usually tend to praise and glorify their poetic works and their ability which is something that may or may not be accurate. For example, Salhi and Alqarni discuss the poetry of Ibn Harma (d. 176 / 792), suggesting that the poet may not reflect his life and his poetry truthfully in his own work.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, this thesis avoids such poetic texts that may mislead the research in this manner and move it to understand the subject through a biased lens. Furthermore, we do not want this research to be guided by only one poet's view which is prizing poetry.<sup>40</sup> This condition will be applied to the chapters on music and painting. Therefore, other artists' poetry such as musicians and singers,<sup>41</sup> about their works of art are not included for the same reasons as the exclusion of poetry of poets about their own poetry. This research understands poets' perspectives on their own artwork as often being accompanied with glory and panegyric. Additionally, while poets' reflections on their own work has been subject of some research, this study focuses on their views on others' work, which has not been studied yet. Therefore, the goal is discovering poets' perspectives on the arts in general and others' works of art. To this aim, the materials will be precisely collected in the following chapters.

One of the most critical issues related to whether or not there are enough materials to conduct worthy study regarding poets' perspectives on the arts. This is in addition to the question of whether or not poetry can convey criticism. In fact, the issue of whether or not there is a sufficient body of materials has been addressed recently in several pieces of research. 'Abd Allāh al-'Uḍaybī is one of the researchers who have dealt partly with this issue. He claims that poetic texts that include critical opinion are not common in Arabic poetry.<sup>42</sup> It is claimed in this thesis that this generalisation is something that cannot be accepted because of the absence of accurate Arabic poetry databases. Al-'Uḍaybī's and al-Hammāmī's works, as we will see, are individual efforts and there are several missing texts. Additionally, some poetic texts have been

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<sup>39</sup> Zahia Smail Salhi and Hussein Mohammed Alqarni, 'New Images in Old Frames: Ibn Harma (D. Ca. 176/792) between Classical Poetry and Abbasid Modernity', *Journal of Abbasid Studies*, 3.1 (2016), 56–89.

<sup>40</sup> 'Abd Allāh Al-'Uḍaybī, *al-Naqd 'inda al-Shu'arā' ḥattā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Rābi' al-Hijī*, 1st edn (Beirut: Manshūrāt Dīfāf, al-Riyād: Dār al-Amān, al-Jazā'ir: Manshūrāt al-Ikhtilāf, 2013), p. 59.

<sup>41</sup> Aḥmad ibn Ja'far Jah.z.a al-Barmaki, *Dīwān Jah.z.at al-Barmakī*, ed. by Jān 'Abd Allāh Tūmā, and Sa'dī Dānāwī, 1 edn (Beirut: Dār S.ādir, 1996), p. 132.

<sup>42</sup> Al-'Uḍaybī, p. 69.



discovered and studied in this research for the first time. Therefore, general decisions about the quantity of poetic materials are impossible. In terms of the amount of texts gathered for this study, the materials available are sufficient for conducting research; nevertheless this research is limited to the existing materials that are available.

Regarding whether or not poetry can convey criticism, this research is in line with al-‘Uḍaybī’s opinion that the normal and free language of criticism is prose, not poetry.<sup>43</sup> However, the view taken in this study is that poets have their own conceptions and perspectives regarding poetry and other art forms. Moreover, they have their own style when expressing ideas or opinions regarding something. Poets are skilful if they can encapsulate an issue in a few words and explore it in their poetry. Therefore, scholars and other interested parties should peer through the lens of the poet’s work to understand a poet’s opinions and their intended meaning.

### *Analysis process*

The analysis process of poetic materials consists of two main stages: thematic and rhetorical analysis / *‘ilm al-bayān*, and the discussion, interpretation, and the comparison. Thematic and rhetorical analysis will be shown in the sections 2.3., 3.3., and 4.3. Then the second stage will be shown in the sections 2.4., 3.4., and 4.4.

In the first stage, the thematic analysis process that has been mentioned earlier will be followed.<sup>44</sup> While the importance of this stage is clear, it is worth mentioning that this stage including the final result of categorising, dividing, arranging, and naming of the themes can be seen in the titles of themes. The poetic materials will be selected and gathered in order to highlight the most common themes. Research materials will be arranged thematically and chronologically inside each theme, which is important as the research seeks to prove that a literary theme persists and has undergone changes in several historical stages. The thematic analysis method is therefore important for discovering and analysing Arabic poets’ perspectives on the three arts. Furthermore, the chronological tracing of verses and poems that

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<sup>43</sup> Al-‘Uḍaybī, p. 59.

<sup>44</sup> See: 1.4.

deal with this topic will reveal the evolution of the themes in poetry over the years. To discover poets' perspectives on the arts, we will investigate poets' ideas verse by verse after the translation. This will allow us to better understand poets' perspectives and explore the meaning of each verse. After naming and arranging themes and materials (as mentioned previously in the first stage), the translation of Arabic poetic texts will be presented followed by analysis. The analysis has two parts: firstly, verse by verse analysis contains an interpretation and explanation of the poets' meanings, opinions, and their perspectives in the verses. This textual interpretation is one of the important analytical stages in explaining the meaning of verses and revealing the poets' attitudes.<sup>45</sup> Brief historical context will provide useful material when analysing poetic texts in light of the texts' specific historical circumstances. The second part of verse analysis is related to rhetorical tools that have been used by poets to assert their perspectives on the arts. Rhetorical analysis *'ilm al-bayān* specifically will answer the research questions in this regard. In terms of the aforementioned research objectives, this analysis will also discover the poets' reasons for using particular rhetorical devices in their perspectives.

In the second stage, discussion, interpretation, and comparison will be provided. We have mentioned earlier the historical sequence will help significantly in understanding this subject in general and allow comparisons with different historical stages. By the end of each chapter a section of results and interpretation will evaluate each chapter's parts, themes, rhetoric tools, and poetic issues deeply and comprehensively. Also, we will discover themes in terms of their existence, appearance, disappearance, and development within each chapter. By necessity, and for contextual purposes, it will be essential to assess the views of Arab poets of these arts from the Pre-Islamic age till the Abbasid age. The perspectives of the arts from the view of Arab poets will be provided by showing the most common themes that have been used, and the most important rhetorical tools poets tend to use. A worthy comparison can be drawn between the early and developed stages in the research inside each chapter and between the three arts in the final chapter. The study is limited to the interpretation of verses concerning the research subject, but unrelated verses will be clarified when the researcher feels that it is essential that the reader understands specific signals or the ambiguous meaning conveyed through the context.

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<sup>45</sup> Regarding controversial texts' attribution, the sources of the texts will be identified where they can be found especially when it seems compulsory such as when there is a conflict regarding poems' attribution.

### 1.5. The time period of the study

Regarding the period of study or the timeframe of this thesis, previous scholars have classified Arabic literature into ages, depending on historical and political divisions. These classifications are well known and widely used among scholars.<sup>46</sup> The Pre-Islamic age is the period before Islam emerged, while the Islamic era started from the time when the Prophet Mohammed moved to Madina (1 / 622) known as the *Hijra*, until the end of the year (41 / 661) which marks the end of what is known as the rightly guided Caliphs (*al-khilāfa al-rāshida* age). The Umayyad age started from (41 / 661) and lasted until (132 / 750). The Umayyad family continued its rule in Andalusia from (138 / 421) and lasted until (422 / 1031), and the end of Arab rule in Andalusia (897 / 1492). The Abbasid age started from (132 / 750) and lasted until (656 / 1258).

This research will focus on Arabic literature from the Pre-Islamic era until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century. However, the study will not follow the previous classification style, but instead it will create a new type of classification specifically for its subject. The period of study will be classified depending on the precise features of each segment. As mentioned above, this research claims that there are two clear stages related to the issue of Arabic poets' perspectives on the arts. Therefore, I have preferred to use the terms "early" and "developed" stages. More specifically, this study will proceed under the assumption that the early stage of the chapters on poetry, music and singing commences in the Pre-Islamic era and lasts until (80 / 700) whereas the developed stage starts in (80 / 700) and lasts until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century in this research. Likewise, this study understands the early stage of painting and sculpture to start in the Pre-Islamic era and last until (198 / 813) and the developed stage to start in (198 / 813) and last until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Poets' perspectives on the arts in the early stage feature specific characteristics that can be applied to all three arts. The features are as follows: poets mentioned these arts in a non-specific way, they did not use rhetorical tools widely to clarify their opinions towards the arts, and they expressed their ideas in one or two verses while there is no existence of special and intended long poems about the arts. On the other hand, the developed stage is distinguished by the existence of a great number of verses and poems have been written essentially about the

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<sup>46</sup> Shawqī Dayf, *al-‘Aṣr al-Jāhili*, Ta’rīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī, 1 edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1960), p. 14.

arts. Rhetorical tools / *'ilm al-bayān* were extensively used by poets to convey their perspectives' and opinions towards the arts. Additionally, poets have shown their perspectives and their opinions in developed and critical style.

The arts ultimately becomes a central part of many poets' odes. In the developed stage, works of art are addressed in more detail and building on several themes and aspects. The trend towards approaching the topic through only a small amount of verses was replaced by a trend towards using longer, deeper, and richer texts to explore the subject. Nevertheless, single or dual verses about the subject still exist in poetic works from the developed stage. This research does not claim these single verses disappear from Arabic poetry in latter ages. However, it can be argued that mature poetic texts generally contain several verses and the main themes of the odes are much clearer in contrast with the verses that were identified in the early stage. It is believed that poets' perspectives on the three arts have been shown in a complete, distinctive, and comprehensive perspective in the developed stage.

Regardless of the historical and political categorisation, this division is beneficial for the creation of a complete image of the research issue and also to avoid repetition. The poetic materials will be produced in chronological order and years of poets' death will be mentioned to give a glance at the historical period of their existence.

The Abbasid age in Arab-Islamic civilisation was rich in different aspects of life. Also, the arts and poetry made enormous advances and were flourishing as well.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, poetry is the cornerstone of the verbal Arabic arts, it seems that Arab poets had their own particular perspectives on the arts at that time, including their own views on poetry itself. It may appear that the golden age obtains primary importance when studied. But, in fact, that is because it enjoyed a huge development in different aspects of life at that time which has been reflected massively in poetry.

An important issue related to the poetic issues should be mentioned here. This research proposes that it is impossible to draw clear boundaries between meanings, themes, ideas, and literary phenomena, especially in ancient Arabic literature due to the nature of the verbal arts. Additionally, the dates of particular critical movements or poetic themes that many scholars contribute or establish cannot be accepted as undebatable. Literary phenomenon and poetic

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<sup>47</sup> Gustave Le Bonn, p. 511.

themes are continued through several centuries by different poets while the specific times of the beginning are vague and some sources are lost. Therefore, this research seeks to uncover the general characteristics of this subject that can be applied to all ages suggested by this thesis, but it is more reasonable and academically appropriate to limit the results of this thesis to what has specifically been analysed and investigated here.

#### 1.6. The importance of the study

This research is important in several aspects related to the field of Arabic literature containing poetry, rhetoric and criticism.

This research can be considered as beneficial for the general reader who wants to gain information about the arts and artists themselves in Arabic history. It is helpful for those with an interest in Arabic poetry, who have the desire to learn about the artistic life of old Arabic artists. In the modern age, artists use journals, newspaper, and media to share their opinions about the arts, works of art, and other artists. This research endeavours to give a similar platform to share the views of ancient poets and help the readers to discover these poets' opinions regarding three art forms. For those who are specialists in Arabic literature and poetry specifically, they will find an in-depth analysis of the poetry in both a thematic and a rhetoric analytical approach. They will discover the Arabic poets' perspectives on the three arts. They will observe the development of poets' concerns regarding the arts through centuries. They will benefit from the comparison that has been conducted in the last chapter between the three arts.

The thesis argues that there is no complete research providing thorough answers to the question of what are Arab poets' opinions about these three art forms the period of study. Therefore, this thesis aims to provide valuable reflections on the subject. and provide the answer to the above question by focusing on poetic materials containing poets' perspectives. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research is one of the most important fields in the humanities. This research engages with poetry, music and singing, painting and sculpture. Furthermore, this research shed lights on some areas that have not been studied very well in Arabic literature. Also, this research provides some points where the different arts have shared some concepts and features.

## 1.7. The Literature Review

The works reviewed will be divided into primary and secondary sources. The primary materials include reproductions of Arabic literature, known as *dīwāns* or poetry collections. Classical Arabic books of literature include history, stories, poetry and prose and in many cases, the topics are both diverse and generalised, not specialised in a particular area. Additionally, there are poetical works scattered throughout the historical period of Arabic literature examined in this study. This does not imply that such poetic material exists in abundance; on the contrary, the quantity is limited. For instance, many poems compiled into *dīwāns*, specifically in the Classical period, have just one line of verse or a few verses that pertain to the research subject. The secondary sources consist of academic research and studies. The resources will be arranged thematically depending on the art forms and chronologically inside each one. The scholars discussed below focus on different areas and aspects, such as theory of study, specific time, specific poet's work, poets' perspectives on the arts in English poetry, and using specific kind of analysis. These works deal with ideas within the scope of this study, but it should be noted that many studies did not make poets' perspectives on arts their main focus.

### 1.7.1. Primary Sources: Classical Arabic Literature

#### Classical Arabic Literature

Several different aspects of this subject have been mentioned in well-known Arabic literature books. These are considered as primary sources in the field of literature and criticism. For example, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih al-Andalusī (d.328 / 939),<sup>48</sup> the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356 / 967)<sup>49</sup>, and *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā' wa Muḥāwarāt al-Shu'arā' wa al-Bulaghā'*, by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 502/1108).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, ed. by Muḥīd Qumayḥa, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīya, 1983).

<sup>49</sup> Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās, Bakr 'Abbās, and Ibrāhīm Sa'āfīn, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā' wa-Muḥāwarāt al-Shu'arā' wa-al-Bulaghā'*, ed. by 'Umar Ṭabbā' (Beirut: Dār al-Arqam, 1999).

## Poetry Collections

Collections of poems can also be treated as source material for this study. They can be divided into two groups. The first group comprises poetic *dīwān* compiled by the poets themselves or scholars and containing only one poet's poetry such as Abū Nuwās (d. 198 / 813),<sup>51</sup> al-Buḥturī (d. 284 / 897),<sup>52</sup> and Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī's (d. 354 / 965) *dīwān*.<sup>53</sup> The second group contains different poems compiled from the work of a number of poets by scholars such as *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt* by al-Mufaḍḍal (d. 178 / 793), and *al-Tadhkira al-Fakhrīya*, by 'Alī al-Irbīlī (d. 692/ 1293 ).<sup>54</sup>

### 1.7.2. Secondary Sources: Academic Studies

Several critical academic studies have appeared in the last thirty years, addressing the arts in poetry. Some studies are relevant to the idea of this thesis but view the subject from different perspectives, while others contribute tangentially by examining this issue within a different era or in non-Arabic literature. Researchers have shown increased interest in the relationship between the various arts, such as poetry, music and singing, painting and sculpture. Studies in this section have been arranged thematically starting with poetry, music and singing, and finally painting and sculpture.

In the next pages, we will examine some works which have been written on this issue and research that has been conducted related to our subject. Some of these studies depend on old Arabic criticism, some on literary interpretation, while yet others take their own particular direction in terms of theory, categories, perspectives, applications, concepts and samples.

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<sup>51</sup> Abū Nuwās, Gregor Schoeler and Ewald Wagner, *Dīwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī' al-Ḥakamī*, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Nashr al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 2001).

<sup>52</sup> Al-Buḥturī, al-Walīd ibn 'Ubādh, *Dīwān al-Buḥturī*, ed. by Ḥassan Kāmīl al-Sirāfī, 3rd edn (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1964).

<sup>53</sup> Abū al-Faṭḥ 'Uthmān ibn Jinnī, *Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī*, 1st edn (Baghdād: al-Mu'assasa al-'Āmma lil-Ṣiḥāfahwa-al-Ṭibā'a, 1969).

<sup>54</sup> 'Alī ibn 'Īsā al-Irbīlī, *al-Tadhkira al-Fakhrīya*, ed. by Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ Dāmin and Nūrī Ḥammūdī Qaysī (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1987).

However, whilst this field of research has various dimensions and objectives, the cornerstone of this research remains Arabic poetry. Furthermore, this research shall argue that it is not the art of poetry in general but certain styles through which poetry is expressed that owe their existence to other branches of the arts such as poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture.

#### 1.7.2.1 Poetry

Studies in the field of critical poetry are prolific. Consequently, the study of poetry about poetry has often appeared in the modern era.<sup>55</sup> *Al-Shi'r 'alā al-Shi'r* "Poetry about Poetry" by al-Ṭāhir al-Hammāmī, for example, presents research on poetry through the lens of poets' writings about their own poems.<sup>56</sup> It is one of the most significant and comprehensive books published in the area of poetic criticism. The book is divided into two sections: the first describes the phenomenon and traces its development from the Pre-Islamic era to the eleventh century AD. Each chapter is titled after the name of a prominent poet from the period it discusses; for example, one such chapter discusses the poetry of Imru' al-Qays and the Pre-Islamic era. The second section assesses the poetic phenomenon in four in-depth chapters which analyse the evolution of poetry in the context of several considerations, such as their social environment. The author thus takes a statistical, historical approach in the first section, and an analytical, critical approach in the second.

Overall, despite the importance of this research, it could be argued that it has some imperfections. While this research consists of studying the poets' view towards their own poems, it does not consider poets' perspectives of others' poetry: the topic that this research is concerned with. Additionally, the book overlooks some important poetic materials, and it does not go into a deep analysis of the poems.

Additionally, *al-Naqd 'ind al-Shu'arā' ḥattā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Rābi' al-Hijī* by 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-'Uḍaybī addresses the issue of poetic criticism. The study has two chapters: the first is about the tools poets use to critique poetry such as the poetry itself and

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<sup>55</sup> There are several studies that examine this idea as a part of other literary phenomena such as *al-mu'arāḍāt*, and *al-naqā'id* issues, which we had already discussed in the introduction.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Ṭāhir al-Hammāmī, *al-Shi'r 'alā al-Shi'r: Baḥṭh fī al-Shi'riya al-'Arabīya min Manzūr Shi'r al-Shu'arā' 'alā Shi'rihim ilā al-Qarn 5 H/11*, 1st edn (Irbid: 'Ālam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2010).



books written in the field of criticism. The second chapter is about the direction of poets' criticism regarding meanings and styles.<sup>57</sup>

This book is limited in three ways. First, it is concerned with several sources such as books that have been written by poets and prose texts as well, and the writer does not rely on poetry to deal with perspectives on poetry. The second limitation is that the subject matter of his research is taken from the period up until the fourth Arabic century. Finally, the poetic materials provided discuss the idea mostly from the viewpoint of poets examining their own poetry, making it fundamentally different from the subject of my research, which seeks to discover the viewpoints of poets concerning the work of other poets. This study is useful in its similarities and my research can further these investigations.

To sum up, the aim of this section was to search for texts that deal with poetry written about the poems of others, where the poet looks at others' poetry. Based on this, al-Hammāmī and al-‘Uḍaybī are studies dealing with when the poet describes his own poems or his ability in terms of poetry. This is not the same idea as that of the present research, but bears many similarities. Al-Hammāmī applied a statistical and historical analytical approach while al-‘Uḍaybī looked at the issue through the concepts of old Arabic criticism. On the other hand, this research concentrates on poets' perspectives on others' poetic works through a thematic and rhetorical analytical approach. Additionally, this research seeks to discover new poetic materials and draws effective comparisons between the three arts.

#### 1.7.2.2. Music and singing

There are some very helpful studies which provide a context of poetic and historical materials relevant to the present thesis, illustrating different methods of dealing with such poetic texts. For example, an important work on the topic is *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Wasf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory*, by Akiko Sumi.<sup>58</sup> It is one of the most important

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<sup>57</sup> Al-‘Uḍaybī, p. 123.

<sup>58</sup> Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Wasf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory*, Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures, 25 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2004).

books addressing the issue of poetic description of the other arts in Arabic poetry. The author discusses the terms mentioned in the title and their implications in Western literature. The two meanings that she ascribes to the term 'ekphrasis' are description in general and the verbal description of other kinds of art. She has divided the book into five chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion. In the first chapter, Sumi discusses the descriptions of horses in two Pre-Islamic poems; in the second, she analyses two odes from the early Islamic era that deal with bees and honey-gathering. In the first two chapters Sumi discusses her subjects through the lens of the descriptive nature of poems. She uses the general meaning of ekphrasis, description, in the first two chapters, choosing poems that describe natural objects or processes, like horses, bees and honey-gathering. In the other chapters, in contrast, Sumi turns to poetry that contains descriptions of other artistic works, such as engravings on a wine cup, a mural in a palace or the voice of a singer. Sumi explains that here she depends on the modern concept of ekphrasis, which is the description of other arts in literary texts.

There are some observations related to the details in Sumi's work. In the fourth chapter of her work, Sumi presents a poem by Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283 /896) describing a singing girl called Waḥīd.<sup>59</sup> She discusses poetry in two sections, 'Strategy: emotion and challenge' and 'Poetics and metapoetics'. In these sections, the author analyses the poem through symbolic interpretation such as the wine. She applies the theory to poems as a whole, even if not all the verses are related to the idea of the description of other arts (a necessary condition to fulfil the second meaning of ekphrasis); this is one of the main differences between this thesis and her work. It is also notable that her analysis does not examine the Arabic rhetorical tools or techniques used by the poet as same as what we are going to do in this thesis.<sup>60</sup> By comparison, this thesis argues that we can understand the poetic viewpoint through the examination of poetic techniques and rhetorical tools. Furthermore, Sumi does not review previous Arabic poetry for examples and poetic texts that describe the other arts. Additionally, she does not provide context about the existence of the ekphrasis in the Pre-Islamic and early Islamic era.

Regarding the poetic materials in Sumi's work, the question that needs to be asked is whether one poetic text, in this case Ibn al- Rūmī's poem, is enough to comment on poets' views towards music and singing. In fact, it is unlikely that Sumi can reveal a connection

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<sup>59</sup> Sumi, p. 122.

<sup>60</sup> Sumi, pp. 126–127.

between verbal art and musical performance through one poet's perspective or a single poem.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, Sumi has chosen one poem from Ibn al-Rūmī's collection even though the poet wrote hundreds of verses about music, singing, and singers. There is no obvious reason why a researcher would choose this poem over other. Moreover, a serious weakness with Sumi's choice is that this poem has been provided as an example of the relationship between verbal art and musical art, but the poet was concentrating on providing his opinion about the physical beauty of the singer. This poem does not thus provide an accurate image of the poet's opinion in terms of the singer's artistic ability, as he is more interested in her physical beauty.

The cornerstone of the study *al-Ghinā' wa al-Qiyān wa al-Mughannūn fī Shi'r Ibn al-Rūmī*, by Nasīma Ghayth,<sup>62</sup> is singing and singers in Ibn al-Rūmī's poems. She examines this subject in light of the development of civilisation and musical culture during the time that the poet lived. This study deals with poems that have been written by Ibn al-Rūmī about singers and singing using a stylistic approach. One of the most important sections concerns the context of poetic studies. In terms of analysis, Ghayth is highly interested in the metrical and rhyming characteristics and patterns of poems as well as in the use of some rhetoric tools such as alliteration (*jinās*) and antithesis (*tibāq*).<sup>63</sup>

This useful article still has some shortcomings. For example, in several sections Ghayth provides only a brief analysis in comparison to the large number of poetic texts that she mentions. Additionally, her analysis pays little attention to semantic techniques (figures of speech or *'ilm al-bayān*), such as the use of similes and metaphors. Finally, Ghayth tries to ascertain the impact of the music, culture and civilisation of the time through the context of the poems. However, she does not seem interested in examining the significance of poetic materials as a whole in terms of poets' perspectives of music and singing. Therefore, the major difference between this thesis and Ghayth's article is that this thesis will provide a comprehensive view of the poets' perspectives on music and singing.

In *Musical Instruments as Objects of Meaning in Classical Arabic Poetry and Philosophy*,<sup>64</sup> Yaron Klein divides his research into two main parts, as described in the title of

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<sup>61</sup> Sumi, p. 123.

<sup>62</sup> Nasīma Rāshid Ghayth, *al-Ghinā' wa al-Qiyān wa al-Mughannūn fī "Shi'r ibn al-Rūmī*, Ḥawlīyāt al-Ādāb wa-al-'Ulūm al-Ijtimā'īya, al-risāla 240 (al-Kuwayt: Jāmi'at al-Kuwayt, 2006), pp. 23–30.

<sup>63</sup> Ghayth, p. 3-5.

<sup>64</sup> Yaron Klein, 'Musical Instruments as Objects of Meaning in Classical Arabic Poetry and Philosophy' (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2009).

the work. The most important topic in relation to the present thesis is the first part covering the description of instruments in medieval Arabic poetry. The author collects some poetic texts related to instruments, then classifies them under several subject headings such as poems associating the musical qualities of instruments with their origin, and poems humanising the relationship between the instrument and musician.

Klein mentions some rhetorical tools and attempts to analyse them by providing their meanings according to his interpretation. The second part of Klein's work is about musical philosophy, where he discusses writers works such as al-Kindī, the Epistles of *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, and *al-Musīqā al-Kabīr* by al-Fārābī in terms of the musical issues mentioned in their books.<sup>65</sup> Although Klein's research is highly useful, it seems that there is a distinct separation between both parts of his thesis with the only connection between them being the title of the work itself. The writer does not define a clear relationship between the (poetic descriptions and the philosophers' works). This is reinforced by the way in which the researcher ended his examination: he did not create a conclusion for the research as one comprehensive work, but instead opted to write two conclusions, one for each part.

Some clear differences exist between the research of this thesis and Klein's research. This thesis is not limited to the idea of descriptions of instruments by poets. It has a more specific focus in its concentration on poets' views towards music and singing. These views are not limited to the description of music instruments or to philosophy. In terms of specific observations about Klein's work, the writer indicates that the period of his study stretches from the Pre-Islamic era until the fourth / tenth century, yet poetic materials from different period were included.<sup>66</sup> Finally, some of his analysis strays far from the original meaning of the Arabic text due to the author's misunderstanding of Arabic grammar.<sup>67</sup>

Fuad Caswell's book *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyān in the Early Abbasid Era* explores the history of slave girls in Baghdad, their poetry and their singing.<sup>68</sup> The writer depends on historical and poetic texts to provide a comprehensive view about this subject

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<sup>65</sup> Klein, p. 102.

<sup>66</sup> Klein, p. 89.

<sup>67</sup> Klein, p. 48. He considers the lute 'ūd as the lover of the singing girl. However, the poet's intended meaning is mentioning someone who is her lover, not the 'ūd.

<sup>68</sup> Fuad Matthew Caswell, *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyān in the Early Abbasid Era*, Library of Middle East History, 28 (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

through twelve chapters that deal with different subjects, such as the social scene, the *Qiyān* poets and their singing. This study is highly useful and provides a clear image about singing and singers in the early Abbasid era. Caswell examines the *Qiyān* in terms of their position in society, their work, their singing, and their poetic ability, which differs from the topic of study in this thesis. However, it is still useful as it provides insights into poetry and the arts from the period of time that this thesis covers.

To conclude this section, aforementioned studies can be summarised under three broad headings: types of art, theory, and practice. In terms of the types of art, it is clear that poetry is fundamental to most of the studies discussed above. While Sumi deals with one poem from Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry, Ghayth deals with the ideas in the whole poetic collection of Ibn al-Rūmī's odes. Klein's work is distinguished by its dealing with its subject matter only in terms of the description of instruments in classical Arabic poetry. Caswell, meanwhile, is interested in the social lives of his case studies and the impact of female singers on the Abbasid life. In terms of theory and approaches, Sumi uses the modern concept of ekphrasis, whereas Ghayth employs a stylistics approach. Klein analysed poetic materials literally and mentioned some rhetorical techniques utilised by the poets. The works described above are interesting and contribute to the field in specific ways. It is clear that these pieces of research made efforts to discover more about music in Arabic history through different poems. However, none of them explored the Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing in general with concentrating on a thematic and rhetorical analytical approach. Filling this gap is one of the original contributions of this thesis.

### 1.7.2.3. Painting and sculpture

In this section, we will discuss studies that specifically focus on the relationship between poetry and painting or sculpture, such as *Qaṣīda wa Ṣūra* (Poem and Painting) by 'Abd al-Ghaffār Makkāwī.<sup>69</sup> The title of this work is clear in its association of two different kinds of art poetry and painting. The text is almost incomparable in the way the author talks about the relationship between poetry, engraving and painting, focusing on examples of literary and

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<sup>69</sup> 'Abd al-Ghaffār Makkāwī, *Qaṣīda wa Ṣūra: al-Shī'r wa-al-Taṣwīr 'Abra al-'Usūr*, 'Ālam al-Ma'rifa, 119 (al-Kuwayt: al-Majlis al-Waṭanī lil-Thaqāfa wa-al-Funūn wa-al-Ādāb, 1987).

visual art throughout history. Each chapter examines a photograph, painting or sculpture mentioned in poems by various poets. For example, Chapter Seventeen discusses the famed Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci (1452 - 1519).<sup>70</sup> The chapter begins with a discussion of various aspects of the artist's personal and aesthetic spirit. The author then reviews twelve poems by different poets, all of which refer to the Mona Lisa. This book is distinctive in its focus on the relationship between poetry and the visual arts. In all, the author reviews about forty-five works of art and lists many poems by world-renowned poets.

Indeed, the author discusses non-Arabic art and poetry in all forty-five chapters, the poems being translated into Arabic. Moreover, he offers no critical analysis of the works and does not attempt to compare the poems. Another noteworthy component of the book is the rich, fifty-five-page preface asserting that there is a need in Arabic literary studies to examine other kinds of poetry and poetic examples. The poetry examined in this book is a type of poetry which refers to other works of art, specifically painting and engraving. The otherwise in-depth preface overlooks the advantages and uniqueness of Arabic poetry, and fails to provide any kind of critical analysis or comparison on the other. Finally, it is clear that Makkāwī is not interested in discovering the poets' views towards the arts, neither in Arabic or even Western literature. However, the book remains an important one in the history of translating Western literature written about fine arts and poetry into Arabic.

Sumi, whom we have already mentioned in the previous section on music and singing, wrote in subsequent chapters in the same book about descriptions of visual arts in poems by Abū Nuwās and al-Buḥturī.<sup>71</sup> The author deals with the notion of reality, reverie, and wine.<sup>72</sup> Her approach depends on three steps: thematic and structural exploration, theoretical discussion and psychoanalytical examination, and, finally, an analysis of the poems' structural features in relation to the poets' socio-political context.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, she argues that Īwān Kisrā and panegyric are the main connections between Abū Nuwās and al-Buḥturī's poems.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Makkāwī, p. 167.

<sup>71</sup> Sumi, p. 92.

<sup>72</sup> Sumi, p. 93.

<sup>73</sup> Sumi, p. 97.

<sup>74</sup> Sumi, p. 98.

The last chapter in Sumi's work is about a poem on engravings in the al-Hambra by Ibn Zamrak (d.797 /1394).<sup>75</sup> Sumi discusses the ode in terms of structure and theme. The writer uses comparative methods and mentions some rhetorical tools such as simile. The main goal of this chapter in Sumi's study is to discuss panegyric in Arabic poetry through the concept of ekphrasis, as previously discussed. The present thesis concentrates on the perspectives of Arab poets on painting and sculpture. While Ibn Zamrak's poem is not included in the period covered by this research, Sumi's chapter is still a good example of the relationship between poetry and engravings.

*Jamāliyyāt al-Şūra*, by Klūd 'Ubayd,<sup>76</sup> discusses the relationship between fine art and poetry through the lens of fine art. The writer focuses primarily on historical analysis. One of the most prominent chapters of the book is the fifth, entitled "The painted poem in classical Arabic Poetry or '*Qaṣīdat al-Şūra*'.<sup>77</sup> This chapter considers an example from one of Imru' al-Qays's poems, but not deeply enough to fulfil the aim of her research to find the painting poem as she said in Imru' al-Qays's poetry.<sup>78</sup> In addition, it can be observed that this chapter mixes examples from different sources the author presents Abū Nuwās' poems in the description of the cup of wine, then presents poems by al-Buḥturī and al-Mutanabbī to describe the images, followed by verses by Abū Nuwās to describe a real scene; the shiftscan be quite confusing.<sup>79</sup> The writer also mentions poets from the modern era such as Khalīl Muṭrān (d.1949), illustrating one of his poems in which he describes a war. However, the poet does not describe a painting or image in this poem. Similarly, the author discusses the works of poets including Nāzik al-Malā'ika, al-Bayyātī, Elia Abū Mādī and Maḥmūd Darwīsh, none of whom is shown to depict works of fine art. This means that, in her critical approach, the writer has used the poetic image as an equivalent to the artistic image or painting in fine arts. On the other hand, the writer offers the example of a poem by Sadī Yūsīf that describes a mural by the artist Fāyig Ḥassan.<sup>80</sup>

This book is one of the most prominent pieces of scholarship in the field, but it appears that the author is interested in discussing modern works of art more than classical Arabic works

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<sup>75</sup> Sumi, p. 155.

<sup>76</sup> Klūd 'Ubayd, *Jamāliyyāt al-Şūra* (Beirut: Majd, al-Mu'assasa al-Jāmi'īya lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2010).

<sup>77</sup> 'Ubayd, p. 107.

<sup>78</sup> 'Ubayd, p. 108.

<sup>79</sup> 'Ubayd, p. 110.

<sup>80</sup> 'Ubayd, p. 163.

of art. Furthermore, she does not delve deeply into the historical aspects of this research, making no attempt to look for the roots of the phenomenon in the history of Arabic literature. Likewise, her study has not dealt with semantic and rhetorical tools in poetry. The researcher uses the viewpoint of fine arts to deal with the issue and does not provide a semantic analysis of poetry, observing features such as simile and metaphor. As a result, the book is devoid of rhetorical and critical analysis. Finally, she mentions only the most common and famous examples in this area and does not attempt to deepen the research by elucidating lesser-known examples.

It could be said that *Ḥiwār al-Funūn bayna al-Shi‘r wa al-Rasm, wa al-‘Imāra, wa al-Ghinā’*, by Aḥmad Darwīsh,<sup>81</sup> deals perfectly with the subject of the current research. The writer examines the view of al-Buḥturī in his famous poem *Īwān Kisrā* towards several kinds of arts such as painting, architecture and singing. It relies on interpretative literary analysis and is limited to one ode. There are three main matters in my research that distinguishes it from Darwīsh’s study. The author examines the viewpoint of a single poet through only one of his poems, whilst this thesis is concerned with obtaining an overview through examining several poets’ viewpoints. Additionally, Darwīsh’s study ignores the context of the text, which could provide better understanding of the issues discussed. Finally, Darwīsh is not interested in looking for rhetorical tools that impact the poetic text.

To conclude this section, Makkāwī provides the idea of poetic description of the visual arts in some examples from Arabic poetry in literary analysis. ‘Ubayd, deals with the phenomena through fine arts theory and provides examples from both ancient and modern Arabic poetry. Furthermore, she enriches the study by drawing also on Western literature. Sumi and Darwīsh both deal with similar ideas to this thesis in a useful way. Sumi analyses Abū Nuwās and al-Buḥturī poems and made comparisons between them, while Darwīsh analyses al-Buḥturī’s poem via a method of literary interpretation. Looking at the available literature, we can say that there have been some significant and useful works on this theme. However, the idea of poets’ perspectives on the arts does not appear as a major focus in the majority of these studies, except those by Sumi and Darwīsh who merely touched upon this idea in certain examples.

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<sup>81</sup> Aḥmad, Darwīsh, ‘Ḥiwār Al-Funūn bayna al-Shi‘r wa-al-Rasm wa-al-Mi‘mār wa-al-Ghinā’, Multaqā al-Shāriqa lil-Shi‘r al-‘Arabī’ (al-Shāriqa: Dā’irat al-Thaqāfa wa-al-I‘lām, 2011).



The review above leads us to consider the gaps that can be identified in the previous studies. Although each of these studies has addressed some aspects of the topic of interest to the present study, it is clear that the idea has not been comprehensively dealt with in Arabic studies as a primary literary phenomenon. Consequently, it is an appropriate subject of further rhetorical and critical study. A close examination of previous research shows that there are a large number of gaps in how it deals with the phenomenon at hand, both in theory and in practice. In particular, some of these studies did not deal directly with the idea of poets' perspectives on arts. Their aims are different from the goals of this present study. For instance, some of these studies focus on Western arts and not Arab ones. In addition, their motivations and primary purpose are mainly focused on the fine arts. Thus, these studies provide insights into music and singing and fine arts more than the art of poetry, and interest in such research is mainly to be found among specialists of the arts.

The aforementioned studies differ from the point of view of the present research. Several aspects can be considered as specific features of each study, such as the time of the research, the location, the poetic materials and the various ways in which different theoretical frameworks have been used. For more clarification, some researchers cover only a specifically defined period, such as the Abbasid age, while others cover numerous centuries across the entire corpus of Arabic literature. Even though some studies have concentrated on specific eras, it is clear that less attention has been paid towards discovering the historical development of the subject in Arabic literature, which is one of the most important topics under discussion in the present research study. Some studies focus on individuals such as the poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī, al-Buḥturī or Abū Nuwās. Additionally, some previous studies have looked at poems that reflect pictorial imagery without mentioning those concerned with the arts of music, painting or sculpture. With respect to poetic examples, there are several poetic examples have been repeated frequently in some research, indicating that no other examples can be found on the same subject within Arabic poetry. However, the materials available are sufficient for conducting research and this is one of the primary concerns of this research. In terms of the theoretical aspects, most previous studies have discussed only specific aspects of the issue, such as light and shadow, the analytical theory of fine arts, the statistical approach or literary analysis.

This study analyses poets' perspectives, poetic tools, and how they used their poetry to express their opinion and their own view towards specific arts. To clarify this issue, we need to understand that poets are artists who regard the arts with a special critical eye. Regarding their own art, they have specific poetic tools that they use to express their opinions. It would be valuable to investigate what their perspectives are and why they prefer to use a particular choice of tools when talking about the other arts. The examination of the research matter through time will be greatly helpful to understand the historical development of the research issue. Therefore, thematical analysis and *'ilm al-bayān* are the basic aspects that will be considered when studying this subject over time.

There are several aspects of the study of this topic which remain ambiguous and there is a need to clarify and illustrate them. Consequently, this research aims to fill these gaps in the existing body of work in order to achieve a clear and complete picture of this subject. The research methodology provided a focus on the issues of scope or content and of approach applied to the analysis of poetic works. This study shall seek different examples of poetry and the diverse art forms. In this way, the research will fill the gap related to examples while avoiding the limitation of repetition. As for methodological considerations, thematic analysis will be used to discover poets' perspectives on poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture. The poetic techniques that have been used by poets will be analysed with regard to *'ilm al-bayān* in Arabic rhetoric. It will aim to discover aspects that have remained undiscovered so far and have not been dealt with in earlier research.

The originality of this research can be seen through three aspects. First, discovering the wider picture of Arab poets' perspectives on these three arts through particular kinds of classification trying to make the subject understood easily. Secondly, defining the main trends of poets' perspectives on the arts through thematic and rhetoric analysis approaches while observing possible reasons beyond research issues and providing reasonable justifications for their significance. Thirdly, clarifying aspects of difference and similarity between poets' perspectives and their styles when discussing the arts in both the two main stages in each chapter.

This part has reviewed several studies regarding poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture. The next chapter of this study will begin the main body of the research, looking at Arabic poets' perspectives on poetry.

## 1.8. Thesis outline

- Chapter One: introduction including research questions, thesis aims, the methodology of research, study time, the importance of the study, the literature review including primary and secondary sources of poetry, music and singing, and finally painting and sculpture, and thesis outline
- Chapter Two: poets' perspectives on poetry where the poetry itself is examined. The Arabic poetry is considered in terms of poets' perspectives and opinions on poetry, on other poets, and on the poetry of others. Materials are arranged thematically and chronologically. This is based on an introduction that helps the reader to understand many issues related to the topic from several aspects, such as Islamic and Arabian attitudes toward poetry in general. The research then provides critical analysis of relevant materials in order to reflect poets' attitudes toward poetry by outlining the most common themes emerging and the most important rhetorical and poetical tools the poets tend to use to express their opinions. In addition, a comparison between the early and developed stages will be drawn at the end of this chapter.
- Chapter Three: is about poets' perspectives on music and singing. Poetic texts related to music and singing from the period of study are considered. This research aims to provide a foundational account of Arabic poets' attitudes towards music and singing and this will include specific reference to some relevant historical sources. All of these will be based on an introduction related to Islamic and Arab attitudes towards music and singing to ensure better understanding of the matters of this chapter. The main discussion will be provided under the title of 'Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing' in two stages. In addition, a comparison between the early and developed stages will be drawn at the end of this chapter.
- Chapter Four: focuses on Arabic poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture, looking for poetic texts in Arabic that were written by Arab poets to describe or give opinions about painting and sculpture. This is based on an introduction that helps the reader to contextualise the topic by exploring several elements such as Islamic and Arabian attitudes towards painting and sculpture. Then the main discussion will be provided under the title of 'Arab poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture in two stages. In

addition, a comparison between the early and developed stages will be drawn at the end of this chapter.

- Chapter Five: provides a comparison between this thesis' chapters and interpretation of the research issues will be provided. The research will attempt to find the differences and similarities between themes, poets' perspectives, poetic and rhetoric tools. Also, it will attempt to discover the hidden reasons for each particular issue or unexpected direction and provide the probable justifications for the different aspects of this thesis subject.
- Conclusion.
- References.

The previous information and thesis map are shown in figure No: 1 on the next page.

# Arabic poets' perspectives on arts.

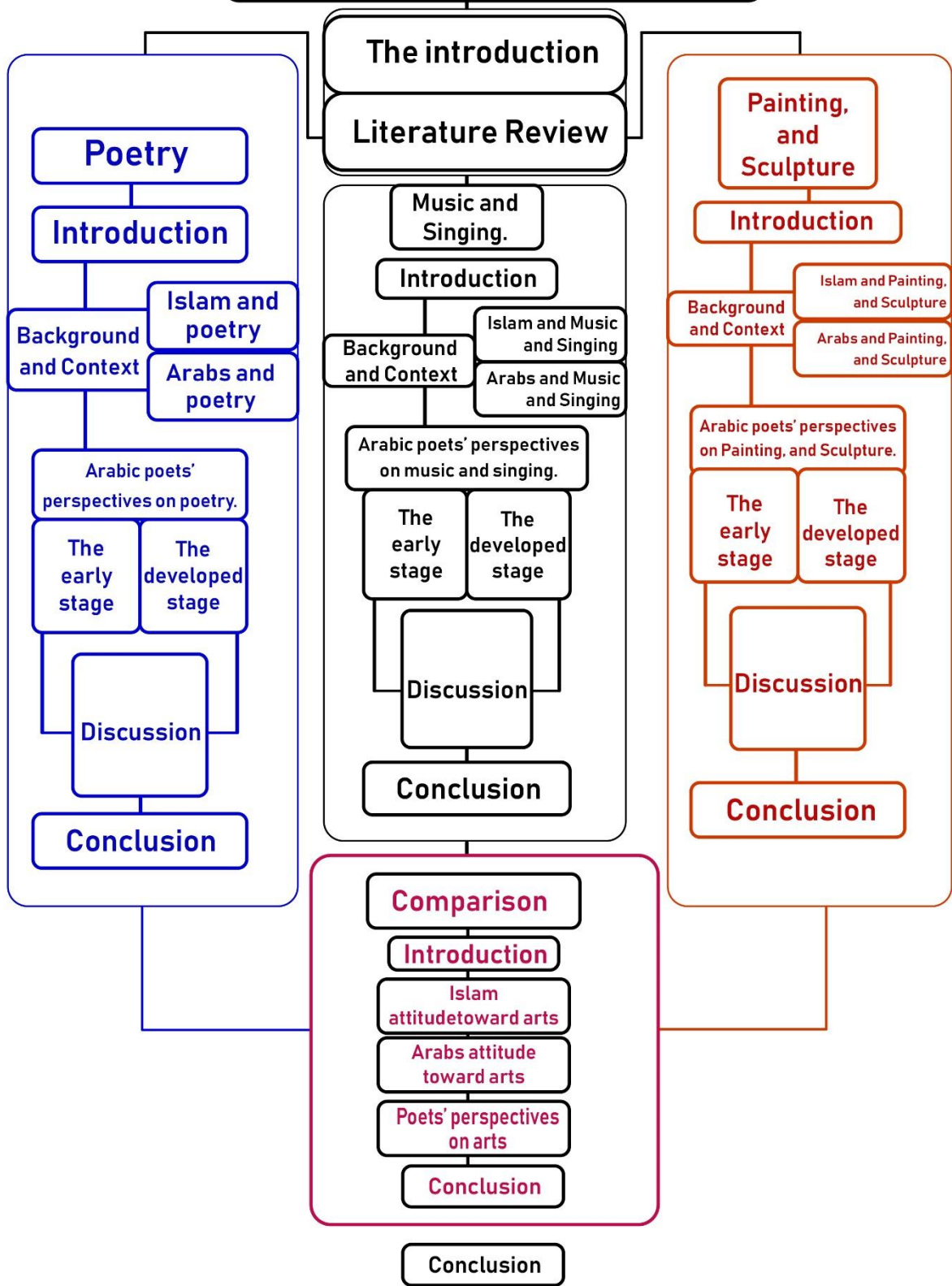


Figure 1 Thesis map.

## Chapter Two: Arabic Poets' Perspectives on Poetry

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, poems and odes that have a connection to poetry and poets are discussed. Poems or verses that reveal the poet's opinion of poetry or that describe poems and poets' abilities will be examined. Since poets are primarily artists, this chapter is designed to discover poets' points of view in relation to their own artistic medium, including poets, poems and verses. The research questions that we have mentioned earlier regarding Arab poets' perspectives on poetry will be examined in this chapter with in depth analysis.<sup>82</sup>

This chapter is divided into five parts. After an introduction, it goes on to explore background and context concerning Islamic and Arabic attitudes toward poetry in light of texts including the Qu'rān, the Tafsīr, the Ḥadīth, and the works of other scholars. Before the main discussion it is important to introduce background and context to the subject, giving a brief foundation about issues that will contribute to a better understanding of the main theme of this chapter. The third part of this chapter focuses on the Arabic poets' points of view concerning poetry. The poets' viewpoints are divided into two main stages. Based on the common characteristics of the poetic texts in the first stage, this is known as the early stage in this research. The second stage has been named the developed stage as this group of verses has significantly different characteristics. The poetic materials in both stages are explained and analysed in this chapter based on the themes, and the rhetorical tools used.<sup>83</sup> Fourthly, there is the discussion, interpretation, and comparison of the themes, and common features of poets' ideas and poetry that have emerged through the analysis, as well as their relationship to the context of Arabic criticism at that time in terms of poetic theory and Arabic criticism. Fifthly, and finally, the last section concludes the chapter.

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<sup>82</sup> See: section 1.2.

<sup>83</sup> See: section 1.4.

## 2.2 Background and Context

### 2.2.1 Islam and poetry

Poetry had a significant value for Arabs before the coming of Islam. There is no evidence that suggests that Arabs had an unfavourable opinion of poetry itself, which indicates that poetry was held in high regard by the majority. This elevated status did not last, however, especially after the coming of Islam, after which anti-poetic sentiment grew. In this section, Qur'ānic verses and the sunna texts are provided to offer a better understanding of this issue. In the Qur'ān, there is a *sūra* named the poets (*al-shu'arā'*) and there are verses that describe the behaviours of poets and their followers:

Moreover, the Poets,- It is those straying in Evil, who follow them: Seest thou not that they wander distracted in every valley?- Moreover, that they say what they practise not?- Except those who believe, work righteousness, engage much in the remembrance of Allah and defend themselves only after they are unjustly attacked. Moreover, soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take!<sup>84</sup>

Regarding Sunna texts related to poetry, most of the texts can be divided into two groups. In the first group, the texts give a positive impression of poetry, such as Ḥassān's text where the Prophet encourages him to recite poetry in order to defend the Prophet and Islam.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, Allah's Apostle said, 'Some poetry contains wisdom'.<sup>86</sup> These texts and others demonstrate the positive attitude of the Prophet towards poetry. On the other hand, the second group contains texts warning of poetry, where the Prophet says, 'it is better for a man to fill the inside of his body with pus than to fill it with poetry'.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, as confirmed by 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, there is a group of people who avoid poetry due to their comprehension of

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<sup>84</sup> Q. (26: 224-227). See: Qur'ānic Verses' appendix. Verse No. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sah'ḥ Al-Bukhārī: Arabic-English*, New edition (Riyadh: Dar al-Salām, 1997), vol. 1, p. 116.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 8, p. 1368.

<sup>87</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 8, p. 1371.

such texts.<sup>88</sup> However, the majority enjoy both reading and writing poetry. Therefore, a person who believes and supports poetry provides sufficient justification to understand the negative reaction toward poetry in the Qur'ānic verses and the Prophet's texts as well. Regarding the verses of the Qur'ān, it has been said that these verses are related to a specific event that took place in the time of the Prophet where there were several unbeliever poets who attacked the Prophet and his new religion. Therefore, the Qur'ānic verses describe this specific situation and exclude poets who accepted the instructions of Islam as it has been mentioned in the Qur'ānic verse.<sup>89</sup>

The Prophet's text mentioned above about the wisdom in some poetry is positive opinion. However, some justifications have been provided to understand the negative reaction toward poetry such as considering the Prophet's text as similarly being related to only one kind of poetry, where some unbeliever poets satirised the Prophet or Islam. This means that the Prophet's warning does not pertain to all kinds of poetry – there may be other types considered perfectly suitable. They support this argumentation by considering the existence of texts that assert that the Prophet heard poems and asked his companions to recite verses for him.<sup>90</sup>

General Islamic teachings encourage people to say the right thing as well as to avoid dishonouring people and saying negative things. Islamic teachings take a balanced position towards poetry and poets through the Qur'ān's verses and the Prophet's texts. However, different opinions in previous discussion towards poetry can be attributed to two factors. The first can be considered as a personal understanding of the Qur'ānic verses and Prophet texts, while the other can be attributed to bad practice by some poets where they attack others without giving appreciation to general Islamic teachings. Poetry can be described as desirable poetry when the poetry is in accordance with Islamic thought, while undesirable poetry simply refers to poetry that abandons Islamic rules and teachings.

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<sup>88</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, ed. by Maḥmūd Shākīr, 3rd edn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1992), pp. 7–8.

<sup>89</sup> Ismā'il ibn 'Umar ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, ed. by Sāmī ibn Muḥammad Salāma, 2nd edn (al-Riyadh: Dār Ṭayba, 1999), vol. 6, p. 176.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, pp. 16–17.



## 2.2.2 Arabs and poetry

Poetry in the dictionary of *Lisān al-‘Arab* is related to *al-ma‘rifa*, which can be translated to knowledge and feeling.<sup>91</sup> The first critic who tried to construct a definition of poetry was Qudāma ibn Ja‘far (d. 227 / 841). He says, ‘poetry is speech that is based on metre and rhyme and has a meaning’.<sup>92</sup> Poetry is the most important art form in early Arabic and Islamic culture.<sup>93</sup> There are many commentaries on poetry, such as that provided by ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 / 644), who said that “poetry is a kind of knowledge for people who have no other real knowledge”.<sup>94</sup> This importance of poetry is the result of several factors, including the fact that Arabic speakers were illiterate for much of history, but, nevertheless, often ingenious at composing poetry. Poetry was memorised verbatim, and many celebrations of poetry were held in *Sūq ‘Ukāz*.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, many early Arabic speakers had a natural capacity for distinguishing between good and bad poems.<sup>96</sup>

Early Arabic speakers’ ancestors continually wandered with their livestock in search of water and grazing pastures and, as a result of this nomadic lifestyle, the kind of art most easily practised under these circumstances was verbal art.<sup>97</sup> Poetry and prose / *khaṭāba* are therefore considered by various scholars to be the most practised modes of expression in Arabic civilisation since antiquity.<sup>98</sup> Poetry managed to retain its cultural dominance in Arabian life,<sup>99</sup> Arabic literature, and poetry further flourished in the later ages. For example, Arabic poets in the Abbasid age were in a battle with critics’ ideas and new poetic thoughts. Additionally, poets themselves participated in literary criticism, not only through their poetry, but also by creating conflict between people about styles of poetry, ideas, critics, rulers, and so on.<sup>100</sup> For example,

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<sup>91</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, p. 2273.

<sup>92</sup> Qudāma ibn Ja‘far, *Naqd al-Shi‘r*, nd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīya, 1978), p. 64. In English, according to the definition in the Oxford Dictionary, poetry is ‘literary work in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by the use of distinctive style and rhythm’. ‘Poetry’, The Oxford Dictionary’ <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/poetry>> [accessed 20 March 2018].

<sup>93</sup> Marshall G. S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), vol. 2, p. 452.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Jumāhī, p. 24.

<sup>95</sup> Muṣṭafā Šādiq al-Rāfi‘ī, *Tāriḫ Ḍāb al-‘Arab*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1974), p. 1, p. 65.

<sup>96</sup> Ḍayf, *Al-‘Aṣr Al-Jāhili*, p. 186.

<sup>97</sup> Ḍayf, *Al-‘Aṣr Al-Jāhili*, p. 140.

<sup>98</sup> Pierre Cachia, *Arabic Literature an Overview* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Ḍayf, *Al-‘Aṣr Al-Jāhili*, pp. 143–144.

<sup>100</sup> See: 3.3.2.2.

poets created different new styles of poetry in contrast with the traditional styles, just as Abū Nuwās, Abū Tammām, and al-Mutanabbī did.

Based on the above, it is clear that poetry was in line with different progressive features of the Abbasid period during this era. In an important sense, poetry is a mirror of Arabic-speaking life. It can portray nature, humanity and any other topic in an expressive way. However, poetry is also self-reflexive or self-critical. This is addressed later in this chapter considering poets' views of poetic work, as well as of the poetic artists themselves.

To summarise, Arabs have long been generally interested in poetry and it seems that this interest originates from the Pre-Islamic period, becoming more complex in the latter ages. Poets were also encouraged and motivated in the Abbasid ages by a flourishing civilisation in the Abbasid age. The development of the different aspects of life at that time enlarged the field of poetry significantly. Therefore, the poets' works reflect their lives as well as their knowledge of poetry, especially when they express their perspectives on poetry itself and other poets. We will now move on to discuss Arab poets' perspectives on poetry.

### 2.3. Arabic poets' perspectives on poetry

The primary research objective of this thesis is to discover, analyse, and understand, the Arab poets' perspectives on the arts. This chapter specifically considers poets' opinions on poetry. The concern here is to discover how the poets dealt with poetry and other poets' verses and odes and in what way. This research considers particular criteria to discover whether the poets looked deeply into such issues. These criteria are: the main and intended meaning, the use of poetic and rhetorical tools, and the quantity of verses. A subject can be considered relatively incidental when the speaker talks about it whilst also moving through several themes and, as such, the topic seems marginal. Meanwhile, as has been mentioned in the section on Arabic rhetoric, the extensive use of poetic techniques, including rhetorical tools, reflects a high degree of concern for the subject and reflects to what extent the poet attempts to convince the readers of his opinions as to what has been mentioned. Finally, the number of verses can be considered as a sign of the importance of the subject regarding the speaker's view or message.

This study suggests that when something has earned the poets' attention, they put it at the core of their poem, talk about it in many verses, and/or use rhetorical tools to present their opinions about it. This research collects reflections regarding this issue to answer the research questions related to this subject.<sup>101</sup> The verses related to poetry and poets are presented to create an accurate image of the poets' attitudes towards this specific issue. There is enough evidence and poetic material to classify the Arab poets' perspectives on poetry into two main stages (an early stage and a developed stage). Each one of them has different features related to the quantity of verses or poem size, meaning, rhetorical tools, and has different opinions, characteristics and thoughts. The poetic texts in each stage have been organised thematically and presented to create an accurate picture of the poets' attitudes towards this specific kind of arts through ages.

### 2.3.1 The early stage<sup>102</sup>

Poetic materials about the poetry in the early stage have been gathered and it is clear that the number of verses relevant is limited. Some verses provide incomplete and personal critical ideas about poetic issues. Of course, many of the verses' ideas are superficial without justification or a theory, but they should not be neglected for this reason. This concept can be found in different ways during several ages of this stage in the poetry. Poetic issues are mentioned in the poetry about the poetry itself such as a predecessor's poetic manner, plagiarism, honesty, personal decisions, using poetry as a weapon and mentioning advice in poetry. All will be discussed further with examples as follows.

Following the manner of previous poets is one of the poets' ideas about poetry at this stage. Some verses tell us there is a particular stylistic tradition set by a predecessor that should be followed by later poets. For instance, mentioning abandoned encampments or *al-bukā'* '*alā al- aṭlāl*' is a common traditional poetic style among Pre-Islamic poets where the poet is

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<sup>101</sup> See: 1.2.

<sup>102</sup> From Pre-Islamic to the second half of Umayyad age or 80 / 700.

reminded of his past emotional loss.<sup>103</sup> Imru' al-Qays (d. 544) follows Ibn Khidhām's (Pre-Islamic poet) manner in poetry, especially in his style of mourning the remains of old places. He says:

Back to the old place, let us cry like Ibn Khidhām did.<sup>104</sup>

Imru' al-Qays specifically mentions an old poet's manner and he wants to follow Ibn Khidhām's style especially in this poetic tradition. Additionally, 'Antara ibn Shaddād (d. 601) complains in the first verse of his hanging ode / *al-mu'allāqa* where he expresses his idea in a question, asking:

Did earlier poets leave subjects for later poets? ...<sup>105</sup>

Yaḥyā al-Tibrīzī interprets the above to mean that the earlier poets discoursed upon subjects in such an entire and complete way that later poets could not find any new meaning to add in their odes.<sup>106</sup> Another example is from Labīd al-'Āmirī (d. 41 / 661). He states that poets follow the styles of Pre-Islamic poets and especially Muraqqish (d. 552 or 570) and Muhalhil (d. 531), saying that:

The poets followed the path of Muraqqish and Muhalhil.<sup>107</sup>

This idea has also been found in the work of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr (d. 26 / 646). He believes that the whole of poetic creation in his time is a kind of repetition of other poets' works. He says:

We just borrow others' speech and repeat it again.<sup>108</sup>

The ideas of plagiarism and honesty are also mentioned at this early time, and these are considered in the Abbasid age to be one of the most important issues in Arabic criticism.

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<sup>103</sup> Sharron Gu, *A Cultural History of the Arabic Language* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc, 2014), p. 116.

<sup>104</sup> Imru' al-Qays, *Dīwān Imru' al-Qays*, ed. by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 5th edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1990), p. 114.

<sup>105</sup> 'Antara ibn Shaddād, *Dīwān 'Antara ibn Shaddād*, ed. by Ḥamdū Ṭammās, (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 2033), p. 11.

<sup>106</sup> Yaḥyā ibn 'Alī al-Tibrīzī, *Sharḥ Dīwān 'Antara*, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 2002), p. 147; Seeger A. Bonebakker, 'Ancient Arabic Poetry and Plagiarism: A Terminological Labyrinth', *Quaderni Di Studi Arabi*, 15 (1997), 65–92 (p. 83).

<sup>107</sup> Labīd al-'Āmirī, *Dīwān Labīd al-'Āmirī* (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, nd), p. 128.

<sup>108</sup> Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, *Dīwān Ka'b ibn Zuhayr*, ed. by 'Alī Fā'ūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 1997), p. 26.

There are two verses attributed to Ṭarafa which have addressed the idea of plagiarism. He says:

- 1- I do not invade poetry to steal verses, I am rich (in poetry), and the worst is he who has stolen poetry.
- 2- The most poetic verse is that one when people may reply saying he is honest.<sup>109</sup>

In these verses, he declares his innocence of plagiarism and claims his ability is sufficient that he need not resort to it. Then he mentions his opinion that truth is a criterion for good poetry. Ḥassān ibn Thābit (d. 54 / 673), in another example, considers poetry an indication of a poet's intelligence. He says:

- 1- Poetry is the thinking of the poet when he circulates it; he shows his intelligence or stupidity.
- 2- The most poetic verse is that to which people reply saying he is honest.<sup>110</sup>

These verses have been attributed to Ṭarafa (d. 564), and Zuhayr (d. 609),<sup>111</sup> as well as to Ḥassān, with some changes.<sup>112</sup> It seems that the meaning of plagiarism was clear at that time as an issue in poet's perspectives on poetry but without huge attention where it cannot be found in many verses or odes as a clear poetic theme in this stage.

Regarding the other issue about peaking the truth in the poetry, Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī's opinion on this issue is that the truth is required from the Prophets, while the poet is required to ‘speak beautifully’.<sup>113</sup> Walīd al-A‘ẓamī claims that the previous verse by Ḥassān has been affected by Islam's teachings. However, this cannot be confirmed without a specific date for

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<sup>109</sup> Ṭarafa ibn al-‘Abd, *Dīwān Ṭarafa ibn Al-‘Abd*, ed. by Muḥammad Mahdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiya, 2002), p. 57.

<sup>110</sup> Ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī, *Dīwān Ḥassān ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī*, ed. by ‘Abd Allah Sanda, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifa, 2006), p. 183.

<sup>111</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *Al-‘Iqd Al-Faīd*, vol. 6, .p 120.

<sup>112</sup> This thesis is more focused on the verses' meanings than these verses' attribution. Since all the potential poets are from the early stage, it is unlikely that attribution issues will affect the interpretation.

<sup>113</sup> Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Askarī, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā‘atayn al-Kitāba wa-al-Shi‘r*, ed. by ‘Alī Muḥammad Bajāwī and Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, nd), p. 143.

Ḥassān's text, according to al-'Uḍaybī.<sup>114</sup> It is clear that the idea has been discussed before the coming of Islam as in Ṭarafa's verses.

Additionally, related to the idea that poetry should be honest, Khawwāt ibn Jubayr (d. 40 / 660) says:

You praise someone who does not deserve panegyric; it is a sham and a lie<sup>115</sup>.

In this verse, it can be noted that honesty is demanded of poets. Additionally, after the coming of Islam, some poets, such as al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, (d. 65 / 684) talk about their personal decisions concerning poetry. Al-Nu'mān explains his past style in his poetry saying:

1. I will leave poetry and will keep on with what is better and right guidance.
2. Even in the past, I was distanced from the abuse.
3. Except glorifying God or mentioning a leader who has done a great service to others.<sup>116</sup>

This poet undoubtedly made his decision after the coming of Islam. The poet mentions that he instead of composing poetry will pursue a more worthwhile activity, possibly reciting the Qur'ān. He also describes his poetic style in the poetry before this decision, suggesting he kept far away from unsuitable kinds of poetry. However, the poet does not provide much information about this 'bad' poetry. We can understand what proper poetry is since al-Nu'mān mentions it praises God or praises a good man with a good reputation.

Considering poetry as a tool or weapon that can be used to threaten others is another use which can be recognised at this early time. The poetry reflects poets' understandings of the function of poetry, suggesting it was considered a powerful weapon. For example, one of the most well-known verses is attributed to Mālik ibn Fahm al-Azdī (n.d.) and Ma'n ibn Aws al-Muzanī (d. 64 / 683). This work mentions teaching someone how to use an arrow, but when the

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<sup>114</sup> Al-'Uḍaybī, p. 179.

<sup>115</sup> Al-'Abbas ibn Mirdas al-Sulamī, *Dīwān al-'Abbas ibn Mirdas al-Sulamī*, ed. by Yahya al-Juburi (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1991), p. 39.

<sup>116</sup> Al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr al-Anṣārī, *Shi'r al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr al-Anṣārī*, 2nd edn (al-Kuwayt: Dār al-Qalam, 1985), pp. 96–97.

student becomes a good shot, he shoots the teacher. The poet (Fahm or Ma'n ) says similarly in the second verse:

I taught him to compose poetry a long time ago; when he started composing poetry, he satirised me.<sup>117</sup>

Ṭarafa expresses his idea about poetry's ability to affect others, hitting them and having an impact that is beyond measure. He says:

Poetry can go in so deep, even needles cannot go as deep as poetry.<sup>118</sup>

Also, he believes that poetry can be equal to the sword and that good poetry is highly appreciated. He says:

With your sharp sword, or tongue, a beautiful speech is the best.<sup>119</sup>

Zuhayr considers poetry as something that cannot be controlled once it has been recited or circulated. He says:

Poetry cannot be controlled when people circulate it in their meetings.<sup>120</sup>

Abū al-Muthallam al-Hudhalī (Pre-Islamic poet) suggests that when someone has the ability to compose poetry, he should not underestimate others' ability. He says:

Oh, Ṣakhr ibn 'Abd Allāh if you are a poet, I am a poet too.<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī (d. 605) mentions that someone called Zar'a sent him some strange verses contain warning. He says:

I have been told that Zar'a sent me some strange verses.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ma'n ibn Aws al-Muzanī, *Dīwān Ma'n ibn Aws al-Muzanī*, ed. by Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Ḍāmin, (Baghdad: Dār al-Jahīdh, 1977), p. 72.

<sup>118</sup> Ṭarafa ibn al-'Abd, p. 37.

<sup>119</sup> Ṭarafa ibn al-'Abd, p. 78.

<sup>120</sup> Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, *Dīwān Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā*, ed. by Ḥamdū Ṭammās, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 2005), p. 29.

<sup>121</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-al-Tabayīn*, ed. by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Ḥārūn, 4th edn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1975), vol. 2. p. 275.

<sup>122</sup> Al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, *Dīwān al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī*, ed. by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1985), p. 54.

Poets in this early period also mention poetry in their work as a message to others. For example, Imru' al-Qays mentions poetry in a nonessential way. He says:

I will pray for my sister to have rain when she is away, and I will send her my poetry.<sup>123</sup>

The poet uses poetry as a connection between him and his sister when she leaves for a faraway place. Therefore, praying and poetry are ways that he is able to feel connected to her.

An important idea is to be found in Ḥassān ibn Thābit's poetry, in which he addresses verses and advises avoiding poetic mistakes. He uses his broad knowledge of poetry to provide recommendations. Ḥassān's advice suggests how a poet can assess his poetry in terms of melody. He suggests singing poetry as a tool for discovering the mistakes in melodies.<sup>124</sup>

Ḥassān also uses a simile in the second verse to support and explain his idea. He says:

1. Sing the verses that you are composing, singing is a racetrack.
2. Singing poetry is a way of discovering verses' mistakes, the same as the fire purifying silver.<sup>125</sup>

It is clear that in the first stage, poets do indeed discourse upon poetry, but in a limited way. It is for this reason it has been called the early stage. The poetry did not self-examine in the early stage to the same degree as in later stage. Poets still use the ancient poetic manner efficiently where the poem contains several subjects and themes. Depending on the context, the aforementioned perspectives cannot be considered as the main intended meaning in the poems. It is clear that it is not possible to find a poem with poetry itself as the main subject.

### 2.3.2 The developed stage<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Imru' al-Qays, p. 73.

<sup>124</sup> It is a quick and practical way to discover the meter of the verses and their prosody problems. Each meter has its specific melody.

<sup>125</sup> Ḥassān ibn Thābit, *Dīwān Ḥassān ibn Thābit*, ed. by Walīd 'Arafāt (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 2006), vol. 1. p. 420.

<sup>126</sup> From 80 / 700 to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century.



The second stage is referred to as the developed stage in this thesis. This name reflects facts and considerations related to the poetic materials addressed. For example, in the developed stage there is a large amount of verses and poems written about poetry, and poetry becomes a core theme. Moreover, there is heavier use of rhetorical devices when writing about poetry. This is shown later in this thesis more clearly through a comparison between the previous and later stage. It is clear that poets paid a great deal of attention to poetry and poets, as well as to others' odes and poems at this stage. This concern can be seen as a clear theme emerging through specific poems, specific pieces of poetry (*qit'a* / short poem), and several verses written about poetry. It can also be seen through the meanings in the poems where the poets talk extensively about poetry and poetic issues in several verses. Furthermore, the poets tend to use poetic and rhetorical tools extensively when they write about or express their opinions about poetry. It is understood that poetic and critical movements in the earlier ages cannot be considered as having definite dates or specific times. However, the research attempts to draw general conclusions based on the majority of poetic texts. Some examples may be found that generally reflect the features of the previous stage. However, the extensive and worthy odes and poems about the subject of this chapter cannot be found in the early stage.

In the following sections, poems and verses related to poets' perspectives on poetry or other poets and their poetry are discussed and analysed. The materials are arranged and classified into several groups based on themes related to the meanings of the verses and the poets' intended ideas and opinions. The materials can be divided into four general groups. The first group contains poetry which draws a comparison or judgement between poets or poetry. This is a new feature found in the developed stage that is not found earlier. The second group contains poetry that carries negative opinions of poets and poetry. This group can be considered as a development of previous poets' critical ideas. The third group contains poetry that reflects a positive opinion of poets or poetry. This is a completely new kind of poetry and it cannot be found in the early stage at all. Additionally, this group of works contains new thoughts and ideas. The fourth group contains poetry that provides advice and recommendations on poetry, which can be considered as the development of the ideas of the early stage but based on new thoughts and concepts.

### 2.3.2.1 Drawing comparisons between poets or poetry

The following section can be considered as the beginning of the developed stage. However, the poetic materials grouped here have particular factors for their existence and there are also specific reasons why this type of poetry disappeared in later ages. Drawing comparisons is an important issue, especially when the decisions made are related to the poetic issues. The value of a comparison increases when there is an argument among poets as to whether one of them is better than the other. To illustrate this point, it is sensible to explore the poetic situation at that time. At the Umayyad age, there were rivalries between various poets, but the most famous competition was that between Jarīr (d. 110 / 728) and al-Farazdaq (d. 114 / 732).<sup>127</sup> This case is well known in Arabic literature as *al-naqā'id*, which refers to poems that disprove other poets' claims. The genre of *al-naqā'id* was very common among poets during the Umayyad era. Poems thus contain a lot of information about rival poets, including reflections on their poetic ability.

This theme will be examined in two poems in the following pages. The first is a poem containing opinions of two poets and making a comparison between them critically, deciding who is better at poetry. This comparison-based kind of poetry has been found in several texts about the two poets Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, but generally features only in a few verses and not in an entire poem, as has been found in al-Ṣalatān's poem. The poet draws a comparison between poets regarding their poetry in general. The second poem also draws a comparison between poets regarding specific verses, which means we are facing a new way of dealing with other poets' works. We will first examine the poetic text that draw comparisons between poets regarding their poetry in general.

Al-Ṣalatān al-'Abdī's (80 / 700) poem can be considered as the first poem in Arabic regarding others' poetry. He began this by drawing a comparison between Jarīr and al-Farazdaq on being asked to do so. He says:

1. I am al-Ṣalatān, you know me, and my judgment is clear and right.

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<sup>127</sup> Hussain Abulfaraj, 'Umayyad Poetry as Verbal Duel' (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012), p. 152.

2. Tamīm looked for my judgment when their judges could not make a judgment, but I can judge by the truth.
3. Like al-A‘sha’s judgment in the ‘Āmir’s case. Tamīm has no right to appeal.
4. He also judges in Ja‘far’s case; I will not resume my judgment forever.
5. I will judge between them fairly; you should listen to clear judgment.
6. I am not scared if they want to curse me, and their panegyric is not beneficial to me.
7. I am not a judge who looks for bribes in judgment.
8. You chose me to judge, so, listen, do not be worried, and be satisfied.
9. Your anger or satisfaction does not matter; there are those who like and those who dislike the truth.
10. I swear I will not go away from the right.
11. Both have the same sea, but the whales and frogs are not equal.
12. (And) the spear is not similar to a stick, (and) the mountains are not similar to the sand.
13. (And) feathers of the tail are not similar to feathers of main wings, (and) your fingers are not similar.
14. Kulayb,<sup>128</sup> is known for their poetry, Dārim and al-‘Aqāri’,<sup>129</sup> are known for their nobility.
15. They have wisdom and they are leaders, and others follow them.
16. I saw Jarīr’s poetry defeat al-Farazdaq, but al-Farazdaq’s family is better than Jarīr’s family.
17. Jarīr is a poet and there is no poet like him, but his family are simple.
18. He is a strong poet, but al-Farazdaq has honour above Jarīr.
19. Al-Farazdaq’s poetry is good because it is long and high.
20. The dull sword can be praised for its sheath, others can be found to have a bad sheath but to be sharp.
21. Al-Farazdaq appeals to me to help him when Jarīr sends him thunderbolts.
22. Then I said “if I help you I would be like one who fixes a nose that has been cut by others”.
23. Kulayb said “we have nobility better than al-Farazdaq’s family”, but I said “there is no chance”.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Jarīr’s family.

<sup>129</sup> Al-Farazdaq’s family.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r wa-al-Shu‘arā’*, ed. by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Dhakhā‘ir Al-‘Arab, 55 (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2003), vol. 1., p. 491.

Al-Ṣalatān al-‘Abdī talks about the case of two well-known poets Jarīr and al-Farazdaq in the Umayyad age. He introduces his poem by saying that he is going to establish a comparison or make a judgement between them. In the first ten verses, he mentions the background of this case. Then he outlines his decision in the last thirteen verses.

In verse 1,<sup>131</sup> he introduces himself as the judge in the case by mentioning his strength and his ability to make the right decision. Then he mentions who asked him to look at this case and says that they are from Tamīm’s tribe. In fact, both poets are from the same tribe, but from different families. For this reason, many people would like to know who is the best at writing poetry. In verses 3 and 4, Al-Ṣalatān mentions an old case, which is known as the case of ‘Āmir and Ja‘far, where the judge was al- A‘shā (a well-known Pre-Islamic poet). In the following six verses, the poet describes his sense of justice and his bravery. He is not afraid of being cursed by the parties and he is not in need of their praise. Then he mentions that he is not one of those judges who will accept a bribe. Also, he mentions people’s potential reactions to the pronouncement of judgement. The poet declares his decision in the next verses. His decision is split in terms of the parties’ ability in poetry and their glory and nobility. In verses 11-13, he confirms that they are both from the same level but, he says, within each level, there are further divisions. He mentions that the same sea contains both whales and frogs, and the spear is not similar to the stick. He adds there are differences between mountains and sand. Similarly, feathers of the tail are different from feathers of the main wings, just as fingers are not similar.

In verse 14, the poet gives his decision, giving preference to the poetry of Jarīr and his family, while the glory goes to al-Farazdaq and his family. Then he states that al-Farazdaq’s people are leaders and others are subordinate. Then the poet repeats his decision, saying Jarīr’s poetry defeats that of al-Farazdaq, but he adds that al-Farazdaq’s family is better than Jarīr’s. In verses 17-19, the poet outlines the same idea in other words for more confirmation. In verse 20, the poet mentions an idea that can be used as an argument about his decision: that a dull sword can be praised for its beautiful sheath, while another sword can be found to have a bad sheath, but is nevertheless very sharp. In verses 21 and 22, the poet states that al-Farazdaq asked him to help when Jarīr’s poetry was like thunderbolts above him, but the poet likened

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<sup>131</sup> Verse by verse analysis will be used for this poem and other verses which follow. See: Analysis process. 1.4.

any help that would be forthcoming to al-Farazdaq to someone trying to re-attach a nose that has been cut off – something it is impossible at that time. Finally, in the last verse, the poet observes that Jarīr’s family also claim the greater honour, but argues that this is something that cannot be real.<sup>132</sup>

Rhetorically and poetically, al-Ṣalatān provides a reasonable justification exploiting a simile relating to the environment, such as the sea, whales, frogs, spear, stick, mountains, sand, feathers, and fingers. He uses implicit simili when he says that some swords can be praised only because they have a beautiful sheath, while others can be found to have a bad sheath, but nevertheless be very sharp.<sup>133</sup> To confirm his opinion and convince the reader of his idea he mentions two actions: the first was when al-Farazdaq asked him to help when Jarīr’s poems were like a thunderbolt upon his head. The second action is when Jarīr’s family said they were better than al-Farazdaq’s family in terms of honour and glory, which is not true.

To move on to poetic texts drawing comparisons between poets regarding specific poetry, an example of this group is provided by a poem attributed to al-Aṣma‘ī (216 / 831). The poem contains a comparison between three verses by three girls. Al-Aṣma‘ī wrote a poem containing his opinions on specific poetry. He says:

1. I am going to talk wisely about girls’ conversations that I heard.
2. Three beautiful girls lived in the heart of a man who is suffering.
3. They were lonely at night when people sleep.
4. Then they disclosed their secrets in poetry.
5. The first beautiful girl said.

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<sup>132</sup> Two ideas in this poem are explored in depth in the discussion and interpretation section (3.4.). The first is that the poem mentions a previous case in the Pre-Islamic era called the ‘Āmir and Ja’far case, where al-A‘shā, an expert poet, gave his opinion on them. By exploring historical and poetical texts on this issue it can be said that this previous case does not relate to poetic issues such as those addressed here. As such, this study considers al-Ṣalatān’s poem the first long and complete poem related to the topic of this thesis. The second idea in this poem is that the poet considers familial honour as a criterion in the comparison. There are some examples support this idea. But it should be considered as an irregular criterion in an individual and specific cases. It cannot be regarded as a common feature for evaluating poets.

<sup>133</sup> Sharīf ‘Alāwina, *Shi’r al-Ṣalatān al-‘Abdī: min Shu‘arā’ al-Baḥrayn fī al-‘Aṣr al-Umawī: Jam‘ wa-Taḥqīq wa-Dirāsa*, 1st edn (Amman, 2007), p. 51.

6. "I wondered when he visited me in a dream, but the more wonderful would be if he visited me when he was awake".
7. When she finished her beautiful ornamented verse, the second said.
8. "I have not been visited in my dream by him, but by his vision, then I said: welcome".
9. The third one, the youngest, spoke wonderfully with good words.
10. "I protect him by my soul and my family, I wish to see him sleeping with me while his smell is better than musk".
11. Then I reflected on what they had said, and I made my judgement.
12. The best verse is that said by the youngest; her words are beautiful and correct.<sup>134</sup>

In the above poem, the poet tells a short story about three women composing three verses. The poet composes his poem while mentioning the story, the girls' verses, and his decision on the best verse. This poem concentrates only on these three verses, not on other aspects. This poem is notable because the poet recites the three verses that are being critiqued by him. He only offers a short comment on the excellent choice of words in the third woman's verse. In the end, the poet outlines his decision based on two criteria: beauty and truth. Rhetorically, the above poem is free of simile and metaphor. The poet uses narrative description. It can be noticed that the poet provides his justification following his decision, which includes two aspects: beauty, which should exist in all arts, and truth.

### 2.3.2.2 Negative perspectives on poetry and poets

This group of texts reflects negative opinions of poets and poetry. The materials in this group can be divided into four parts. The first contains negative opinions which address poetry generally. Poetry is criticised in general because of its value and for financial reasons, as well

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<sup>134</sup> Muḥammad Diyāb al-Itlīdī, *I lām al-Nās fī-mā Waqa'a lil-Barūmika ma'a Banī al-'Abbās*, 1st edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1990), p. 152–153. This work is attributed also to unknown poet. See: Al-Mu'āfā ibn Zakariyyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Garīrī al-Nahrawānī Abū al-Faraj, *al-Jalīs al-Ṣāliḥ al-kāfī, wa-al-Anīs al-Nāṣiḥ al-Shāfi*, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās, 1st edn (Beirut: 'Ālam al-kutub, 1993), vol. 2, p. 198.

as for religious reasons. The second contains negative opinions about the use of specific unsuitable styles in poetry, such as starting poems in a traditional way or using logical styles in poetry. The third group of texts contain criticism or negative opinions on specific poets in their poetic work. For instance, Ibn al- Rūmī criticises al-Buḥturī's poetry and Abū Tammām criticises Yousuf's poetry. The fourth group contains texts where poets produce negative opinions about unspecified poets because of their personal manners and behaviours. The poetic texts in this part tend to criticise poets in general, without mentioning a specific poet or definitive name.

### *Negative opinions toward poetry in general*

As noted, the first set of texts relate to instances of poets criticising poetry itself in general. For example, poetry has been criticised for financial and religious reasons. The criticism of poetry due to financial reasons is not found in the early stage. It is possible that Arabic poets from the early ages felt that poetry was a talent, or a gift that could not be considered negatively. However, in the later era, this highly valued opinion of poetry had changed. It should not be claimed that this idea was common among the later poets, but rather that such criticisms of poetry itself cannot be found in the early age at all. To illustrate this point, it is noted that in later generations, poetry is criticised because of its value. Al-Hammāmī believes that many poets, such as Ibn al-Rūmī, deal with poetry as a source of money, whereby poetry can facilitate earning money from rulers and others.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, when poets face economic difficulties in their lives and their skill cannot provide them with what they wish, they come to regard poetry as an unsuccessful source of money. Ibn al-Rūmī says:

1. It is not the time of panegyric or satire or granting.
2. Compose your poetry in flirtation, humour and joking.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 281.

<sup>136</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān Ibn al-Rūmī*, ed. by Aḥmad Ḥasan Basaj, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīya, 2003), vol. 1, p. 321-322.

Ibn al-Rūmī suggests that the time of appreciating poetry is over; there is no love of panegyric or fear of satire. Therefore, poets according to his opinion should use their gift for love, elegy (*nasīb*), and jokes. Another example, Kushājim (d. 360 / 970) says:

Poets cannot obtain wine where the value of poetry is of a lowly degree<sup>137</sup>.

Kushājim mentions that poetry is undervalued at this time and the poet cannot even buy wine, which again reflects this idea of the monetary value of poetry. This pessimistic view continued into the later age, as has been found in the poetry of al-Jazzār al-Saraqustī (d. 5<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> century). He says:

1. I left poetry when I saw stinginess was widespread.
2. Poetry was the best thing for those who like fun and joking.
3. But now poets have become lower than lice.
4. If you want to be hated, just compose poetry and look for a gift.<sup>138</sup>

The poet mentions his reason for leaving poetry. He also draws a comparison between poets' states in the past and his present time. He mentions earlier times where poets had a good position, and they were in demand because of their poetry. However, in his time, poets have become so humble they are considered less than lice. Finally, the poet clarifies the real reason for his unsatisfactory opinion, which is related to earning money through poetry.

Additionally, some verses offer other reasons for criticising poetry, such as religious men and scholars considering poetry in contrast to what the scholar or religious man should be. For example, Muhammad ibn Munāthir (199 / 814), a known scholar, provides what can be considered as advice to leave poetry, but he puts a condition on the quality as well. He says:

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<sup>137</sup> Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥusayn Kushājim, *Dīwān Kushājim*, ed. by Khayrīya Muḥammad Maḥfūz (Baghdad: Wizārat al-ʿĪlām, 1970), p. 306.

<sup>138</sup> Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad al-Jazzār al-Saraqustī, *Rawḍat al-Maḥāsīn wa-ʿUmdat al-Muḥāsīn*, ed. by Munjid Muṣṭafā Bahjat and Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Maṭrūḥ (Irbid: Jadārā lil-Kitāb al-ʿĀlamī; ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2008), p. 120.



Do not think to compose poetry, but if you are composing poetry, be proficient.<sup>139</sup>

In another example, al-Shāfi'ī (204 / 820) considers poetry as a shameful thing for theologians and he adds a new reason for denying poetry:

Except for the idea that poetry disparages theologians, I will be better than Labīd.<sup>140</sup>

Another example in which a negative view of poetry can be found comes from Ibn Durayd (d. 321 / 933) where he says:

Some people glorify poetry, but I think it is despicable.<sup>141</sup>

#### *Negative opinions toward the use of specific styles in poetry*

The second part is a group of poetic texts where poets provide negative opinions toward the use of specific styles in poetry. Therefore, regarding the research question about Arab poets' perspectives on poetry, we will discover negative poets' perspectives on poetry in the next few pages: including their opinions towards abandoned ruin description / *al-muqaddima al-ṭalalīya*, the meanings of verses, logical style, using unsuitable words, conciseness, and bad poetry.

Abandoned ruin description / *al-muqaddima al-ṭalalīya* is an original poetic tradition used by generations of Arabic poets. In this tradition, the writers began their poems with the mention of abandoned encampments.<sup>142</sup> However, some poets in the Abbasid age (as we will see in the next verses) believed that *al-muqaddima al-ṭalalīya* was simply blind imitation and it should be removed from poems in the contemporary age. For example Abū Nuwās (d. 198 / 813) says:

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<sup>139</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al-'Iqd Al-Faīd*, vol. 2. p 106.

<sup>140</sup> Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, *Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfi'ī*, ed. by Imīl Ya'qūb, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1996), p. 71.

<sup>141</sup> Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Durayd, *Dīwān shi'r al-Imām Abī Bakr al-Azdī*, ed. by Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn 'Alawī (Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Ta'līf wa-al-Tarjama wa-al-Nashr, 1946), p. 48.

<sup>142</sup> Gu, p. 116.

1. *Aṭlāl*'s description is the rhetoric of oldness. So, make your description of the wine.
2. Why do you overlook the wine, and keep describing *aṭlāl*'s.
3. You describe the *aṭlāl* depending on hearing, does the eyewitness like him who hears?
4. If you describe things while following others, you will make mistakes.<sup>143</sup>

In these verses, Abū Nuwās expresses his opinion about the use of an abandoned ruin description / *al-muqaddima al-ṭalālīya* in poetry. Based on his opinion, Abū Nuwās believes that *al-muqaddima al-ṭalālīya* is an ancient poetic style used by previous poets, while the contemporary poets should describe the wine as a symbol of modernism at that time,<sup>144</sup> according to several researchers such as al-‘Uḏaybī and Gu.<sup>145</sup> In Abū Nuwās’ poems, it was found that he uses several symbols as icons of his modernism, but we are limited here by what he has said in his previous verses. Another objection is his suggestion that those who use the *al-muqaddima al-ṭalālīya* manner at that time were describing things that they have no idea about. Such people only follow previous poets, which will lead them to make mistakes. Furthermore, Abū Nuwās’ verses let us remember Imru’ al-Qays’ verses in the early stage where he follows Ibn Khidhām in this style of poetry. In a ridiculing fashion, Abū Nuwās claims in another poem that Imru’ al-Qays could not have revenge for his father when he was killed because he was busy with girls and *aṭlāl*'s description specifically.<sup>146</sup>

Another case belonging to this group is when poets mention and evaluate a previous poet’s meaning. For example, al-Shammākh ibn Ḍirār al-Dhubaynī (d. 30 / 650) says the following talking to his camel:

<sup>143</sup> Abū Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī’, *Diwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī’*, ed. by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Abū al-Futūh Ghazālī, nd (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1966), pp. 57–58.

<sup>144</sup> Philip F Kennedy, *The Wine Song in Classical Arabic Poetry: Abū Nuwās and the Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 40.

<sup>145</sup> Al-‘Uḏaybī, p. 277; Gu, p. 182.

<sup>146</sup> Abū Nuwās, p. 552. The verse is:

ألهي امرأ القيس تشبيبٌ بغانية عن ثاره وصفات النوى والوند

If you transport me to ‘Uraba, I don’t care if you die.<sup>147</sup>

The poet’s meaning is: when I reach ‘Uraba, I will be in luxury and I will not be in need of you, so, I do not care what happens to you, even if you die. It has been said that ‘Uḥayḥa ibn al-Jullāḥ (Pre-Islamic poet) criticised this meaning at that time.<sup>148</sup> Later poets looked at this verse carefully and some of them believed that al-Shammākh’s meaning was free of nobility as we will see in following pages. In this regard Abū Nuwās provides his perspective on al-Shammākh’s meaning. He says:

1. I say to my camel: “if you transport me, you will be in a great position”.
2. I will not leave you dying, and I will not say: “I don’t care if you die”.
3. But you are free of reins, saddle, and its rope.<sup>149</sup>

It is clear that Abū Nuwās is criticising al-Shammākh where he should provide a reward for the hard work of his camel. Abū Nuwās does not mention al-Shammākh by name. Instead, he quotes his words and puts them in his verses. It is likely that the poet wants to say he will not do the same as al-Shammākh, but instead will give his camel freedom as a reward. Several classical scholars, such as Ibn Rashīq,<sup>150</sup> and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih,<sup>151</sup> and modern critics such as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hādī, praise Abū Nuwās’ intention over al-Shammākh’s.<sup>152</sup>

However, in contrast, al-Mubarrad (d. 286 /899) thinks that al-Shammākh’s meaning is the pinnacle of beauty because he means when you transform me into this person, I will not be

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<sup>147</sup> Al-Shammākh ibn Ḍirār al-Dhubyānī and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hādī, *Dīwān al-Shammākh ibn Ḍirār al-Dhubyānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1977), p. 323. The Arabic text is:

إذا بُلِّغْتَنِي وَحَطَّطت رَحْلِي      عَرَابَةَ فَأَشْرَقِي بِدَمِ الْوَتِينِ.

<sup>148</sup> Al-‘Askarī, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā‘atayn al-Kitāba wa-al-Shi‘r*, p. 216.

<sup>149</sup> Abū Nuwās, pp. 32–33.

<sup>150</sup> Al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-‘Umda fī Ṣinā‘at al-Shi‘r wa-Naqdih*, ed. by al-Nabawī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Sha‘lān, 1st edn (Egypt: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2000), vol. 2, p. 1090.

<sup>151</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *Al-‘Iqd al-Farīd*, vol. 6, p. 188.

<sup>152</sup> Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hādī, *al-Shammākh ibn Ḍirār al-Dhubyanī Ḥayātuhu wa-Shi‘ruhu*, (Cairo: Dar al-Ma‘ārif, 1968), p. 343.

in need of travelling to another lord.<sup>153</sup> Al-Āmidī supports al-Shammākh's meaning, but he suggests his meaning is not wishing for his camel to die. Instead, his purpose is: if I reach this lord I will obtain richness.<sup>154</sup> Al-'Uḍaybī, a modern scholar, supports al-Āmidī's opinion, asserting that al-Shammākh did not wish for his camel to die but he simply does not care.<sup>155</sup> In fact, it would be better to show nobility towards the camel who helped the poet to achieve his goal.

However, there is no evidence as to whether the poet's intended meaning is wishing for the death of his camel or whether this was just an expression to encourage the lord to show generosity. There are several texts confirming that this action is unusual and it cannot be considered a real and common action by poets at that time due to the condemnation of this meaning, such as in the Prophet's text,<sup>156</sup> 'Uraba and 'Uḥayaḥa story as well.<sup>157</sup> Sharron, in similar cases, claims that the animals were offered up not to any God but to the tribe.<sup>158</sup> Therefore, al-Shammākh's verse and other verses are in opposition to general views. This matter probably needs further and more comprehensive investigation. However, the most crucial point for this research is looking for poets' perspectives on al-Shammākh's poetic work or his meaning specifically.

Al-Shammākh's verse continued to be debated through the generations. Later, Abū Tammām also mentioned this meaning, specifically stating al-Shammākh's name. He says:

1. I am not like al-Shammākh in his bad gift.
2. He does not care for his camel. Well-mannered man strayed from his excellent habits.
3. 'Uḥayaḥa ibn al-Jullaḥ has made this judgement in his castle.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil fī al-Lughā wa-al-Adab*, ed. by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī (al-Riyadh: Wizārat al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmīya wa-al-Awqāf wa-al-Da'wa wa-al-Irshād, 1998), vol. 1. P187.

<sup>154</sup> Al-Ḥasan ibn Bishr al-Āmidī, *Al-Muwāzana Bayna Shi'r Abī Tammām wa-al-Buḥturī*, ed. by Ṣaqr Aḥmad and 'Abd Allāh Muḥārib, 4th edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1990), vol. 1, p. 438.

<sup>155</sup> Al-'Uḍaybī, p. 248.

<sup>156</sup> Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī; Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. by Ṣidqī Jamīl 'Aṭṭār, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2003), p. 814.

<sup>157</sup> 'Abd al-Qādir ibn 'Umar Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-Adab wa-Lubb Lubāb Lisān al-'Arab*, ed. by 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, 1st edn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1986), vol. 3, p. 39.

<sup>158</sup> Gu, p. 117.

<sup>159</sup> Al-'Askarī, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atayn al-Kitāba wa-al-Shi'r*, p. 216.

Abū Tammām agrees with Abū Nuwās that al-Shammākh made a mistake when he did so poorly by his camel. The best reaction from their point of view is giving freedom to the camel because of the great job that she has done. Both poets criticise the attitude of al-Shammākh. A final text has been found regarding this matter attributed to Muhammad al-Hamadhānī (d. roughly 295 / 908). He says talking to his camel:

1. If I reach his land, I do not care if you will die.
2. This is not because of offences from you, and not because I do not appreciate what you have done for me.
3. It's the action of al-Shammākh with his camel when she took him to the patron's palace.<sup>160</sup>

Al-Hamadhānī looks at al-Shammākh's action as a model to be followed. He seems to confidently accept the idea of killing the camel when she finishes the job. He agrees that the camel did not do poorly and he is aware of her favour. However, his argument is that this was al-Shammākh's action and so it should be followed.

Al-Shammākh's verse led to a substantial debate among poets, rulers and critics, as discussed above. It made poets consider his intended meaning in depth. Starting with Abū Nuwās who believes this poetic work could be improved, he writes his new poetic work trying to avoid al-Shammākh's mistake. In the late age, Abū Tammām supports Abū Nuwās' opinion and he criticises al-Shammākh's behaviour. By contrast, al-Hamadhānī, a poet who came later, supports al-Shammākh, but he believes there is no reason for what he has done to his camel. It seems that al-Hamadhānī appreciates al-Shammākh's work as an old poetic form, especially when he mentions his justification which is only to follow al-Shammākh's manner in poetry.

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<sup>160</sup> Muḥammad ibn 'Imrān al-Marzubānī, *Mu'jam al-Shu'arā'*, ed. by Fārūq Asalīm, 1st edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 2005), p. 489.

Another aspect of negative perspectives to be considered is regarding the use of logic in poetry; the use of logic by poets seems to have supporters such as Ibn al-Rūmī,<sup>161</sup> but there are also those who oppose its use in poetry. In some verses of a long poem, al-Buḥturī declares his opinion on poetry and especially his view on the use of a logical manner in poetry. He says:

1. You forced us to use a logical manner in poetry, but poetry cannot be assessed based on truth or falsity.
2. Imru' al-Qays did not use logic in poetry; what was its kind and its reason?
3. Poetry is a glance using quick signs not long prattling speech.
4. Words are the jewellery of the meanings; brass cannot show beauty the same as gold.
5. Thieves of money ran away, but thieves of poetry remain plundering.<sup>162</sup>

The poet denies the idea of the relationship between logic and poetry. Then he provides evidence of his previous opinion: Imru' al-Qays is known as the best poet in Arabic literature, but he is not known for his logical knowledge but because of his poetry. He believes that poetry comprises brief signs, not long speech without benefits. Then the poet gives his opinion on the words: he likens words to jewellery. Therefore, if the jewellery (word) is worthy then you can see the greater meaning. Finally, the poet mentions that normal thieves can be controlled in prison, while thieves of poetry (plagiarists) are free. Rhetorically, the poet uses clear language to express his ideas and appears to avoid overtly poetic language except for comparing words to gold and brass.

Unsuitable words are also an issue mentioned in negative considerations of poetry. In another example, al-Buḥturī criticises the choice of weak or unsuitable words in poetry. He mentions his opinion, while he imagines complaining to Imru' al-Qays, the poet who would cry blood for the poor situation of poetry, leading a number of good poets to take part in his lamentation. He says:

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<sup>161</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-‘Aṣr al-‘Abbāsī al-Thānī*, Ta’rīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1973), p. 286.

<sup>162</sup> Al-Buḥturī, vol. 1, p 209.

1. Oh, Imru' al-Qays, if you see poetry using weak words.
2. You will cry with bloody teardrops.
3. Then you will make Ṭarfa, Zuhayr, Labīd, and the poet of al-Nuhayk cry as well.
4. Al-Nābighān, and Sinnāja will cry as well.
5. Where is Shammākh, al-Kumayt, and Dhū al-Rumma?
6. Where is Ibn Hānī, who is the friend of kings?<sup>163</sup>

In these verses, al-Buḥturī criticises current poets in his time and their poor linguistic choices in their poetry (*lafz rakīk*). The poet uses his imagination to deliver his ideas. He calls on Imru' al-Qays, considering him the best of poets in ancient times, to tell him about the disaster that has taken place in poetry. He imagines that if Imru' al-Qays knew about this he would cry blood. Then, the poet lists ten poets who would cry as well. The poet uses exaggeration to express his opinion about the poor language that is being chosen by poets, and which would not be accepted by the extremely famous poets mentioned in previous verses. These verses also imply that the poet looks at these poets' poetry with a high degree of appreciation, especially regarding their language choice in poetry.

Another aspect of this set relates to one of the most important issues in Arabic rhetoric: conciseness or (*al- 'ijāz*). Al-Ṣābī (d. 383 / 994) mentions this issue in some verses. He says:

1. Some poetry is long because it has meaning while its words are few.
2. Other poetry is too long, and when you think about it, you find it is nonsense.
3. The big sea is salty, and little water is pleasant.<sup>164</sup>

In the above, the poet mentions two kinds of poetry. Long poetry often has little meaning, while short verses can have several meanings (*al- 'ijāz*), according to the poet. The poet prefers

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<sup>163</sup> Al-Buḥturī, vol. 3, p. 1593.

<sup>164</sup> Abū Ishāq Al-Ṣābī, *Durar al-Nathr wa Ghurar al-Shi'r*, ed. by Qays Mughashghash Sa'dī, 1st edn (Germany: Drabsha, 2009), p. 412.

conciseness, and he provides evidence of the benefit found in a small supply. Agreeable water is limited in the world, while salty water is less agreeable, but highly abundant.

In another example, he also expresses his dissatisfaction with certain kinds of poets, suggesting their poetry is not good enough. Below, he compares this kind of poetry with ice in terms of its coldness, an expression that suggests it is too foolish / bad poetry. He says:

1. Some poets harm poetry; their poetry is colder than ice (foolish).
2. God, if you do not guide them in the right way, please lead them away from poetry.<sup>165</sup>

### *Negative opinions toward specific poets regarding their poetry*

The third part of this theme concerns when poetry contains negative opinions toward specific poets regarding their poetry. Such negative feeling may emerge from personal problems or problems related to competition among poets, such as the competition between al-Buḥturī and other poets.<sup>166</sup> The poets tended to satirise people by criticising different aspects of their life. Therefore, if they were poets their poetry would be criticised as well. This section considers verses that satirise poets based on their poetry. It is understood that poets may dislike other poets and write verses that disparage other poets' poems. They may also mention some negative opinions related to others' poetry, but these are just claims. However, the most important point here is to look for negative poets' opinions toward other poets based on their poetry regardless of any enmity that may be found beyond their opinions. The goal here is not to undertake an investigation of bad feeling between poets, but to investigate poets' opinions toward others' poetry.

In this section, we look at poetry carrying negative opinions of other poets' poetry where the negative opinions among poets towards the poetry of others can be discovered and analysed. Poets discuss poetic issues in their poetry, and this allows for determining some of the critical issues from that time. As we will discuss, certain known poets such as al-Buḥturī, Abū Bakr,

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<sup>165</sup> Al-Ṣābī, p. 413.

<sup>166</sup> Ḍayf, *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Thānī*, pp. 292–93.



and Yusuf were criticised for their poetry. Furthermore, poetic issues were a common topic for poets, and they mention, discuss or express their opinions about them in their poetry. For example, ambiguity, plagiarism, the use of odd words or arcane lexicon,<sup>167</sup> / *al-gharīb* or, a lack of harmony, foolish or cold poetry, and weak poetry are all discussed. Some poets criticise specific poetry or a specific poem as a poetic artwork.

The suspended / hanging odes or *al-mu‘allaqāt* are well known as the best poems in Arabic literature from the Pre-Islamic era.<sup>168</sup> However, even the good reputation of the poem and the poet did not spare them from criticism. For example, Qays ibn Zamān (3<sup>rd</sup>/ 9<sup>th</sup>),<sup>169</sup> criticised the most famous poem by ‘Amru ibn Kulthūm (d. 584) and his negative opinions are based on two points. He argues that the poem causes difficulties for honour where they stopped doing good things and consider this poem as the utmost degree of the human's success, and the poem becomes boring. He says:

1. Banū Taghlib were delayed from doing well by ‘Amru ibn Kulthūm’s poem.
2. They all recite it, how they cannot be bored of this poem.<sup>170</sup>

It has been said that the Banū Taghlib started to avoid this poem after Qays’s declaration of opinion on their favourite poem.<sup>171</sup>

As mentioned above, some poets criticise poets themselves, but in terms of their poetry. An interesting point here is that the poets appear to mention their critical opinions explicitly in their poetry and in much more detail. The first point to consider is when a poet satirises or criticises a poet who is well known. For example, in several verses Ibn al-Rūmī talks about al-Buḥturī’s poetry. He says:

1. The poet with a long face cannot compose good poetry.

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<sup>167</sup> G J H van Gelder; Marlé Hammond, *Takhyil: the imaginary in classical Arabic poetics* (Exeter, Warminster: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2008). p. 197.

<sup>168</sup> Cachia, p. 4.

<sup>169</sup> Al-Marzubānī, *Mu‘jam al-Shu‘arā’*, p. 523.

<sup>170</sup> Ibn Qutayba, vol. 1, p 230.

<sup>171</sup> Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa‘īd ibn Sharaf al-Qayrawānī, *Rasā’il al-Intiqād fī Naqd al-Shi‘r wa-al-Shu‘arā’*, ed. by Ḥasan Ḥusnī ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1983), p. 26.

2. He says I can compose poetry the same as others, but his lineage and poetry are both bad.
3. Al-Buḥturī produces ugly and foolish poetry.
4. It seems like (when knowledgeable people hear it).
5. It is like a scorpion's spell or a builder's prattle when working on walls.
6. Sometimes he composes mixed poetry, so, the brass is his own poetry, and the golden poetry is from previous poets.
7. His best poetry is gathered from different poets, and his foolish poetry is his original work.
8. His originality is bad, but when he faces difficulties, he is a good and strong thief.
9. He attacks dead poets and steals their perfect verses without bringing an army.
10. Always, you see him wearing the beautiful dress of dead people.
11. He steals poetry forcefully, and then he recites it in secret.
12. Listeners who do not know about him say: well done, the best poet of all.<sup>172</sup>

The poet here focuses on the idea that al-Buḥturī's poems are bad and are stolen. He wonders how he who has a long face can recite good poetry. It is clear that this idea cannot be taken seriously. Then he confirms that his poetry is bad, the same as his lineage. the poet attacks al-Buḥturī's poetry in general, suggesting his poetry is ugly or bad and that it cannot be easily understood. In verses 4 and 5, the poet uses similes to describe the extent to which the subject's poetry is strange. He claims that his poetry is like a scorpion's spell, or the prattle of builders. Here, the poet wants to convince readers of his idea that the poetry cannot be understood by suggesting that it is similar to very strange sounds. In verse 6, the poet starts with the second charge, suggesting that al-Buḥturī's poetry is stolen. The poet further claims that al-Buḥturī's poetry is mixed. Some is brass, some gold, but the golden poetry is not his own while the brass is. Then he confirms this idea by saying his best poetry is stolen from others, and he can only compose poor poetry. In verse 8, he essentially repeats the previous verse, but inverts the order. He says his original poetry is bad but he makes it better by stealing from others. Then he imagines al-Buḥturī as a thief who specialises in stealing from the dead and he can be seen wearing beautiful clothing belonging to dead poets. In the final two verses, the poet describes

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<sup>172</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, vols 1, pp. 197–180.

al-Buḥturī reciting his poetry secretly. It is also noted that the naive listener praises the poet, not knowing what he has done.

Rhetorically, the poet uses various techniques including ridicule in the first verse as well as similes with several meanings to express lack of clarity in al-Buḥturī's poetry and to make him out to be a thief. The poet uses metaphors when he refers to bad poetry being brass and good poetry, gold. He imagines al-Buḥturī as a thief who specialises in stealing from dead people. The poet compares a good poem by dead poets to the good clothes stolen by al-Buḥturī. Finally, Ibn al-Rūmī insists on his ideas and repeats them to convince his readers of his argument.

The previous verses criticise a well-known poet, but Ibn al-Rūmī also criticises someone called al-Ḥuraythī (d. 3<sup>rd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> century). He says:

1. You are the Prophet of poetry, you are Jesus, the son of Mary.
2. You are one of the best poets that God has created, until you talk.<sup>173</sup>

Another example of this is where Ibn al-Rūmī creates humorous meanings and uses his religious knowledge to deliver his ideas. He calls al-Ḥuraythī the Prophet of poetry, which is untrue. This may gesture towards the Qur'ānic verses that deny the relationship between the Prophet and poetry.<sup>174</sup> Thus, this suggests that the poet denies the relationship between al-Ḥuraythī and poetry, thereby ridiculing him. The poet also refers to the subject as Jesus, which suggests that al-Ḥuraythī may not have a known father since he states the name of his mother. Then he uses ridicule by saying: yes, I agree you are one of the perfect poets, but only when you keep your mouth closed without actually reciting your poetry.

Additionally, one less famous poet, Abū Bakr al-Riqqī (d. 3<sup>rd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> century), was also criticised by Ibn al-Rūmī but in more critical manner. He says:

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<sup>173</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, vol. 1, p. 361.

<sup>174</sup> Q. (36: 69). See: Qur'ānic Verses' appendix. Verse no. 2.

1. Abū Bakr has only one kind of poetry, it cannot be changed.
2. It seems that God prevented him from knowing the language.
3. He uses repetition frequently.
4. He has some verses that have been gathered, double and single.
5. Without integrated rhymes, they are a perfect monkey necklace.
6. He has intentionally gathered the strangest rhymes.
7. He gathered different letters from the dictionary.
8. He enumerated letters, *kāf*, *mīm* and *dāl*.
9. Such as when you see a path gathering people from different ethnicities.
10. You mix the language's grammar strenuously and randomly.<sup>175</sup>

Ibn al-Rūmī criticises Abū Bakr al-Riqqī in this poem in two ways. The first relates to Abū Bakr's behaviour and his personality, while the other is related to his poetry. The poet criticises Abū Bakr's poetry in different regards. For example, he says he writes poetry only in one way which is boring.<sup>176</sup> He does not have good linguistic knowledge, and he uses repetition more than he should. He cannot use rhymes perfectly and he gathers oddities intentionally. Also, he gathers several letters such as *kāf*, *mīm* and *dāl* together. The word is *kamad* which means gloominess or sadness. Finally, the poet mentions the regular grammatical mistakes in his poetry. He suggests that if the verses were a necklace, this would be perfect for a monkey. He also uses similes whereby he compares the vast differences between verses to a path gathering different people.

In another example, Abū Tammām criticises a poet called Yusuf (d. 3<sup>rd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> century). He says:

1. Oh Yusuf you made wonders where people are now in confusion.
2. I heard about each disaster but I did not hear about a saddler who is a poet.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, vol. 1, p. 432.

<sup>176</sup> Mohammed Hamdouni Alami, *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition: Aesthetics, Politics and Desire in Early Islam* (London: Tauris, 2011), p. 90.

3. If your ignorance were transferred to knowledge then you would have access to the invisible knowledge.
4. You do not know what the odd words are *al-gharīb*, so it is incomprehensible when you use it.
5. If Zuhayr came back to life, he would cry and wail.<sup>177</sup>

The poet expresses his negative opinion about Yusuf as a poet. He mentions several meanings related to the main idea of criticising Yusuf. The poet offers a general idea in the first verse about what wonderful things Yusuf has done, which is a kind of ridicule. Abū Tammām tends to alert people to what he is going to say. Then he uses ridicule providing details as to his knowledge of many disasters on Earth, but the disaster of the saddler poet is not included. Also, he imagines the ignorance of Yusuf as knowledge, whereby he would know inconceivable things in verse 3. Then he mentions another bad characteristic of Yusuf, who allegedly claimed falsely that he has wide knowledge of *al-gharīb* / odd words or arcane lexicon, when he does not. Finally, the poet brings Zuhayr into his speech to assert that Yusuf's knowledge about *al-gharīb* cannot be accepted by an expert such as a Pre-Islamic poet. It is clear that Abū Tammām criticises Yusuf in three regards: his job, his ignorance and his use of odd words or *al-gharīb*.

In another example, Abū Na'āma (d. 260 / 873) believes that the poetry of Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣa al-Aṣghar (d. 240 / 854 ) is very foolish to the degree that the weather is becoming colder because of it.<sup>178</sup> The poet relies on the ridicule style here. Cold poetry is a term that can be considered as the equivalent of foolish or weak poetry as we have noticed early. He says using implicit simile:

1. I feel a tough winter, so I question what the reason is.
2. They say Ibn Abī Ḥafṣa's poetry has been recited.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Abū Tammām Ḥabīb ibn Aws al-Ṭā'ī; and Yaḥyā ibn 'Alī al-Tibrīzī, *Dīwān Abī Tammām bi-Sharḥ al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī*, ed. by Muḥammad 'Abduh 'Azzām, 3rd edn (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1965), vol. 4, P 315.

<sup>178</sup> Poets, as we will see in the next chapter, tend to describe foolish work of art as cold.

<sup>179</sup> 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shu'arā'*, ed. by 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, 3rd edn (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1968), p. 391.

Another aspect in this theme is when the poet shows his dissatisfaction with another poet and tries to insult him, listing charges such as plagiarism, bad style, and weak ability. Al- Sarī al-Raffā' (d. 366 / 976 ) says:

1. Oh butcher of *Bāb al-Shām*, how did you feel when you became a carcass between my canine and claw.
2. I saw you plundered poetry then hid it from people like those who are scared.
3. You kept away from poets by using your knife and did not feel bad.
4. When good poets' poetry appear in the light, you stumble in the darkness.
5. You used conciseness and good words, but in the wrong way.
6. You claim that Arabic poetry has discovered you are eloquent.
7. Why poets' poetry is known very well, but your poetry is unknown.<sup>180</sup>

Al-Raffā' criticises al-Nāmī (d. 399 / 1009) in these seven verses based on several ideas. The poet ridicules from al-Nāmī by describing the strange state of someone who is a butcher becoming the butchered. The poet criticises al-Nāmī because of plagiarism and keeping what he has stolen hidden. Then the poet uses al-Nāmī's occupation to emphasise the previous claim. He imagines al-Nāmī using his work tools (knives) to steal others' poetry. In verse 4, he compares good poets' performances to the light of morning and al-Nāmī's poetry to darkness. He provides clarification for his previous claim in two things: conciseness and word choice, whereby al-Nāmī cannot utilise these effectively. In the final two verses, the poet discusses the idea of creating a standard by which it can be assessed whether a poet is any good. The poet says eloquent claims in the poetry are evidence of his eloquence. However, he attempts to disprove this claim by saying good poetry is well-known and famous, yet al-Nāmī's poetry is unknown completely. Rhetorically, the poet imagines al-Nāmī uses his work tools to steal poetry. He uses metaphors with which he paints good poetry as being like the light and bad poetry as being like darkness. In another example, al-Raffā' also says:

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<sup>180</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad Sarī Al-Raffā', *Dīwān al-Sarī al-Raffā'*, ed. by Karam Bustānī, 1st edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1996), pp. 74–75.

1. He invited me to make me hear his poetry, but I left; I was nearly dying because of hunger.
2. He said: “my poetry is like jewellery”, but I said: “oh, salt seller. It is date seeds”.
3. Then he handed me the draft, which is similar to tar regarding blackness.
4. He praised in his poetry someone undeserving of praise, so I said: “stop, you do not know”.<sup>181</sup>

Al-Raffā’ first criticises the length of the poem and he claims it contains some fake praise that is not deserved. Then the poet likens the poem to the seeds of dates: the poem has no value. He also compares the draft of the poem that has been handed to him to tar because of an overuse of black ink. In general, al-Raffā’ rates this as the lowest of all poetry. It can be noted that, as a poetic technique, al-Raffā’ regularly mentions poets’ occupations as evidence of his claims about their dubious status as real poets. In other known cases, he refers to another poet who was a barber,<sup>182</sup> and one who was a teacher.<sup>183</sup>

From the previous poetic texts we have noticed that, one of the most important issues in old Arabic criticism is plagiarism.<sup>184</sup> Poets also talk about this poetic issue in their odes with a more developed vision. For example, Abū Nuwās says about plagiarism:

1. When Dāwūd composed poetry, you should say well done Bashshār.
2. He has a lot of rubbish poetry.
3. However, none of it belongs to him, what a shame.<sup>185</sup>

In three verses Abū Nuwās deals with the issue of stolen poetry, talking about a poet called Dāwūd. He begins by inviting the audience to express praise for the alleged source poet

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<sup>181</sup> ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad al-Tha’alibī, *Yafimat al-Dahr, fi Mahāsin Ahl al-‘Aṣr*, ed. by Mufīd Muḥammad Qumayḥa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīya, 1983), vol. 2, p. 177. There are two verses only in his *dīwān*, p. 25.

<sup>182</sup> Al-Raffā’, pp. 172–73.

<sup>183</sup> Al-Raffā’, p. 165.

<sup>184</sup> Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Haddāra, *Mushkilat al-Sariqāt fi al-Naqd al-‘Arabī: Dirāsa Taḥlīliya Muqārana* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjilū Miṣrīya, 1958), p. 85.

<sup>185</sup> Abū Nuwās, p. 545.

when Dāwūd recites poetry. He agrees that Dāwūd has much poetry, but all of it is stolen from Bashshār ibn Burd poetry. In another example, al-Mutanabbī says:

1. Poetry is shouting for help, while the signs of truth are clear.
2. Oh, those who compose poetry from their armpits, so, when they recite their poetry, the worst smell diffuses.
3. You are safe from satire because you are worse to the degree that the satire can be considered as praise comparable with your evil.
4. You stole my poems, so it is a favour from you to leave my clothes.<sup>186</sup>

Al-Mutanabbī, a famous poet in Arabic literature, makes claims of plagiarism here. He believes that poetry is in a miserable state and thus the poetry shouts for help. It has been kidnapped! He provides a humorous yet disgusting depiction of those bad poets. He imagines that they create their poems through their armpits, and, as a result, bad smell will spread when the poetry is recited. He says that punishing those poets by creating a poem to curse them is, in fact, panegyric for them. Finally, he thanks them for leaving him with at least his clothes while they stole his poems. The poet uses ridicule when talking about plagiarism, which is considered bad behaviour among poets. In another example, al-Buḥturī also says:

1. He composed stolen verses from different places.
2. He pulls his poetry like carcasses, what can I say about he who is a carcass.
3. We wonder at the saddler poet and now a cobbler poet.
4. You stole my poetry; then you satirised me, it is not fair.<sup>187</sup>

In these verses, al-Buḥturī claims the poem is stolen from others, and from him specifically. Further, he uses the poet's job to rebuke the poet. It is notable that the poet uses a metaphor in the second verse to conjure a disgusting image of the poet and his poetry by

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<sup>186</sup> ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Maymanī Rājīkūtī, Muḥammad ‘Uzayr Shams, and Muḥammad Ya‘lāwī, *Buḥūth wa-Taḥqīqāt*, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1995), pp. 106–107.

<sup>187</sup> Al-Buḥturī, vol. 3, p. 1433.



comparing them to carcasses being gathered by this poet. There is another example, where the poet highlights the harmony between words to a very significant degree. Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣa,<sup>188</sup> criticises ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm (d. 249 / 863) when he praises the Caliph Ja‘far al-Mutawakkil (d. 247 / 861) and says:

Allah is the greatest, Muhammad is the Prophet, the right is clear, and the Caliph is Ja’far.<sup>189</sup>

He believes there is no harmony in ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm’s verses. He says:

1. ‘Alī wanted to beautify his poem in praising the Caliph, but he was calling for prayer.
2. I said “do not start prayer now; I am not ready to pray”. He said “neither am I”.<sup>190</sup>

Marwān suggests ‘Alī has made a mistake by starting his poem in a way that is too similar to the *adhān*. He discusses this mistake in a humorous way, by imagining a quick conversation between him and the poet. The poet imagines telling the subject that he is not ready to pray and he needs to do his ablutions first. Normally, the Muezzin should be ready to pray, but the surprise is that the poet himself (the Muezzin in this text) is not ready either. The criticism is of the bad choice of words because there is no harmony between them and the situation.<sup>191</sup> The poet prefers to use ridicule to criticise such verses.

Additionally, Ibn Qalaqīs (d. 567 / 1172) in the following verses claims that the poetry itself is a witness to whether the poet deserves to be a poet. He says:

1. Do not deny, your poetry is not Arabic, and your words are the proofs.
2. Clean it from grammatical mistakes and go to correct it by the experts.

<sup>188</sup> Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣa who has been criticised by Abū Na’āma and charged that his poetry is foolish (cold).

<sup>189</sup> ‘Alī ibn Al-Jahm, *Dīwān ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm*, ed. by Khalīl Mardam, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1980), p. 137. The verse is:

الله أكبرُ، والنبِيُّ محمدٌ      والحقُّ أبلجٌ، والخليفةُ جعفرُ.

<sup>190</sup> Muḥammad ibn ‘Imrān al-Marzubānī, *al-Muwashshah fī Ma’ākhidh al-‘Ulamā’ ‘alā al-Shuarā’*, ed. by Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiya, 1995), p. 384.

<sup>191</sup> See: Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam*, p. 39.

3. Moreover, transcribe it accurately, you always transcribe wrongly what the poets give you.<sup>192</sup>

Ibn Qalāqis criticises a poet who exhibits some mistakes in his poetry. First of all, he uses non-proper and non-correct Arabic words, and he has grammatical mistakes. The poet asks him to find an expert to correct his errors. Then he advises him to fix the poetry in his collection which contains regular mistakes when he rewrites poems that have been written for him. Ibn Qalāqis criticism is concentrated on three points: the use of non-Arabic words in Arabic poetry, grammatical mistakes and other people writing his poetry for him.

Additionally, a poet called ‘Abd Allah has been criticised by Ibn Qalāqis. He says:

1. I attended and described your dining table, it was easy for me to compose a poem.
2. I thought ‘Abd Allah’s mind could create a poem, but he was unable.
3. He was unable to describe it, therefore, I will satire him.
4. He says: I am busy because of someone, he is a liar like Musaylima.<sup>193</sup>
5. He does not care and knows nothing about al-Khalīl’s rules of poetry.<sup>194</sup>
6. He recites the whole book of *al-‘Ayn*, but he is unable to speak accurately.
7. He uses prosody but he is like the Prophet who cannot compose poetry.
8. He cannot compose poetry from the metre of *al-Ṭawīl* and *al-Madīd*.<sup>195</sup>
9. Even *al-Basīt* metre he cannot use it, nor that of *al-Khafīf*.
10. He cannot use the right grammar, and his words are too odd.
11. His name is evidence that he cannot be a poet.

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<sup>192</sup> Ibn Qalāqis Naṣr ibn ‘Abd Allāh, *Dīwān ibn Qalāqis*, ed. by Sihām Furayḥ, 1st edn (al-Kuwayt: Maktabat al-Mu‘allā, 1988), pp. 363–64.

<sup>193</sup> Someone known as the liar because he claimed to be a prophet. ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *Tahdhīb Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, ed. by ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, trans. by Inās Farīd (Cairo: Mu’assasat al-Falāḥ lil-Tarjama wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī’, 2000), pp. 268–270.

<sup>194</sup> Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 75 / 791), his rules are well known as *‘ilm al-‘Arūd* / prosody. For further information about al-Khalīl see lami, p. 70.

<sup>195</sup> For more reading about prosody, see: Alami, p. 75.

12. It has been said that “he is Byzantine”, so for that, he is not eloquent.
13. What strange evidence he has to prove he is a Prophet in poetry, he is an illiterate poet.
14. He said: “my speech is an authority”, but in fact the whole of his speech is incorrect.
15. He gave himself another name to be a noble man.
16. This is his situation; please excuse him, he is still a young boy.<sup>196</sup>

In this poem, Ibn Qalāqīs criticises a poet called ‘Abd Allah in several regards. At the beginning, the poet asks ‘Abd Allah to describe a dining table as part of a competition, but ‘Abd Allah could not describe it, so Ibn Qalāqīs considers this as a weakness in his ability. Ibn Qalāqīs mentions ‘Abd Allah’s capacity as the weakest one. Starting in the fifth verse, he outlines several criticisms of ‘Abd Allah’s poetry. The first is that ‘Abd Allah does not pay any attention to prosody, known as the al-Khalīl rules, which provide basic information on poetry. The poet confirms that ‘Abd Allah knows the dictionary of *al-‘Ayn* by al-Khalīl very well, but, even then, he cannot speak perfectly. In verse 7, the poet claims that ‘Abd Allah tries to practice *‘Arūd*, which is prosody, but he is like a Prophet who cannot compose poetry.<sup>197</sup> Then the poet notes that he cannot compose poetry in any acceptable form. The second criticism is related to grammatical mistakes and where ‘Abd Allah makes these errors. The poet also suggests ‘Abd Allah’s poetry is bad because he is Byzantine and not an Arabic poet. The poet ridicules his capacity by imagining he is an illiterate poet who is a tool of miracle, just as the Prophet Muhammed is illiterate, though he is not a poet while ‘Abd Allah is. The poet uses ridicule when he attacks ‘Abd Allah. He criticises ‘Abd Allah regarding his bad poetry, his weakness in prosody, and his bad grammar.

#### *Negative poets’ opinions on unspecified poets*

The fourth part of this theme is negative poets’ opinions on unspecified poets where the focus is bad poets’ morals and behaviours. Ibn al-Rūmī offers his general opinion about poets

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<sup>196</sup> Naṣr ibn ‘Abd Allāh, pp. 576–77.

<sup>197</sup> Indicating to the Qur’ānic verse. Q, 36: 69. See: Qur’ānic Verses’ appendix. Verse no. 2.

making life difficult for others. However, he suggests that they do not accept such behaviour from others. He says:

1. Poets are motivators, while they are blaming motivators.
2. Some of them are commanders of others to do virtuous things but they do not do them themselves, and they ask others to do the best while they refuse to do it themselves.<sup>198</sup>

The poet talks about all poets in relation to some of their morals, suggesting one of their characteristics is inciting people to do what they wish, whilst blaming those who incite. Additional bad behaviour includes asking others to do their best while they do not themselves. He thus prays to God to put poets into a bad situation where they are shown to be liars. He says:

I pray for bad things for poets where they praise you while others are better than you.<sup>199</sup>

Ibn al- Rūmī stresses his opinion by mentioning the Qur’ānic verses that describe poets as those who say something but do not do it. He says:

1. Poets say what they do not do. This is a curse from God to them.
2. Not only is this what they do, but also they say that princes did things they did not.<sup>200</sup>

The poet mentions the Qur’ānic verse as a fact and a type of undesirable behaviour from poets, while the verse describes this action from the poets’ side. The poet further creates the opposite meanings related to describing others: poets usually attribute actions to princes that the princes did not actually perform. Thus, poets lie about themselves and others. Another example from al-Sharīf al-‘Aqīlī (d. 450 / 1058) addresses jealousy among poets:

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<sup>198</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, vol. 2, p. 282.

<sup>199</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, vol. 1, p. 474.

<sup>200</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, vol. 1, p. 31.

1. A poet always envies me, and all people are envious or envied.
2. His face is always yellow because of me, like the lute next to the tambourine.<sup>201</sup>

In these verses, the poet mentions his opinion about a particular poet's undesirable envious behaviour. He uses the example of instruments to assert his idea. He refers to another poet who envies him because of his good poetry. This leads him to compare himself to the lute and the other poet to the tambourine, saying he is the best, in the way that the lute is more valued than the tambourine.

At the end of this section it is clear that poets provide negative opinions on both poetry and poets. The first part of this theme regards criticism that is directed towards poetry itself. It is seen as a useless source of money. Another criticism relates to the poets and their value in society. There also exist poetic criticisms directed at specific kinds of poetry due to their poetic style. For example, criticism levelled at ruin of old home / *al-muqaddima al-talaliya*'s description, meaning, logic, weak words, and foolish or overly lengthy poetry. In the second part of this theme, there are criticisms oriented towards specific poets. Some poets were well known in contrast to others. The poets are criticised because of plagiarism, the use of odd words / *al-gharib* or arcane lexicon, and the absence of harmony. The poets seem to use other poets' jobs as tools to ridicule them. Finally, unspecific poets are criticised regarding their behaviours. This kind of poetry is not specifically directed at known poets, but at everyone who can be called a poet.

### 2.3.2.3 Positive perspectives on poetry and poets

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<sup>201</sup> 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-'Aqīlī, *Dīwān al-Sharīf al-'Aqīlī*, ed. by Zakī Maḥāsīnī (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, nd), p. 120.

The third theme contains poetry that carries positive opinions about poetry or poets. There are different kinds of poetic methods and styles used by poets to express their positive opinions towards poets and poetry. This theme has been divided into two further groups. Firstly, into those verses that look positively at poetry in general and, secondly, those works that look positively at specific poetry. This theme cannot be found in the early stage.

*Poetic texts containing positive opinions on poetry in general*

Regarding poetry in general, the poetic materials that have been found seem to respond to opposite opinions that already exist.<sup>202</sup> For example, al-Şanaubarī (d. 334 / 945) numbers several benefits of poetry in a poem, saying:

1. She scoffs at me because I am a poet, poetry is my best gift.
2. Do not blame me, poetry is the best lovers' embellishment.
3. It has many advantages, lonely amusement, and the relaxation of longing.
4. It is eloquence of minds, and spreads wisdom in horizons.
5. Poetry praises communication and satirises separation.
6. Poetry describes a face like yours that is better than the sun shining.
7. Poetry describes a good companion who is not bored or a liar.
8. Poetry describes lute's melodies that captivate you while wine is held in a bartender's hand.
9. Poetry has wonders that are necklaces on necks.
10. Poetry is consolation on days of separation and congratulations on days of meeting.<sup>203</sup>

In these verses, the poet replies to a woman who has scorned him because he is a poet. The poet divides his defence into two parts: firstly, denying her claim completely and suggesting, indeed, that poetry is the best thing that can happen to people. Secondly, he outlines

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<sup>202</sup> See 3.3.2.2.

<sup>203</sup> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Şanawbarī, *Diwān al-Şanawbarī*, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās, 1st edn (Beirut: Dar Şādir, 1998), pp. 361–62.

some of poetry's benefits as he sees them. The poet claims that being a poet means you have the best morals and that poetry can also be considered the most beautiful feature for lovers. In verses 3-10, the poet numbers some of poetry's benefits such as lonely amusement, relaxation, eloquence, wisdom, praise, communication, comfort, describing a beautiful face, friendship, lute's melodies, wonders, consolation in separation, and congratulations in meetings. In this poem the poet uses narrative description and his language is direct with use of implicit simile in verse 9.

Another example by ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī (d. 463 / 1163) names several advantages of poetry. It can be considered a work which reflects the importance of poetry in people's lives at that time,<sup>204</sup> but, most importantly, the poem is a clear statement from the poet about poetry. He says:

1. Poetry is a good thing, and it has no sin.
2. One of its advantages is removing sadness from the heart.
3. It can find solutions to resolve problems.
4. It can make your foolish excuse an acceptable one.
5. It can make your suffering of love free of harm.
6. It can put mercy into a strict heart.
7. It can make a difficult request from someone beloved come easily.
8. Teach your children the medicine of hearts.<sup>205</sup>

Al-Qayrawānī provides his opinion about poetry with use of implicit simile in the eighth verse. He believes poetry is something good and he numbers some of its advantages. Poetry, for him, can remove sadness, resolve problems, make foolish excuses seem better, help lovers, make people feel sympathy, and it can be used to soften lovers' relations. Therefore, the poet's advice is that it is advantageous to teach children this kind of literature, which is the medicine of hearts.

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<sup>204</sup> Rābiḥ al-ʿAwbī, *al-Mudawwana al-Naqdiyya fī al-Qarnayn al-Thānī wa-al-Thālith al-Hijriyayn*, 1st edn (Irbid: Dār al-Kitāb al-Thaqāfī, 2013), p. 212.

<sup>205</sup> Al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *Dīwān Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī*, ed. by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Yāghī, nd (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1989), pp. 50–51.

### *Poetic texts containing positive opinions on specific poetry*

In the second part of this theme, we consider works looking positively at specific poetry. In this section, positive opinions on specific verses, poetry, and poems are investigated. For more clarification this theme has been divided into two parts: friends' poetry and other poets' poetry.

#### *Friends' poetry*

The first part is positive opinions on friends' poetry. For example, Abū al-'Umaythil (d. 240 / 854) speaks of Abū Tammām's poem in a highly appreciative way. He says:

1. I heard what you have composed. It is well-composed poetry.
2. It contains wonders of mature poetry, critics said.
3. Its shape is soft when hearing, like soft stones.
4. I heard when the prince said "it is like honey mixed with cloud water".
5. I was attended when good people (you) granted good poetry to a great man (the prince).<sup>206</sup>

The poem describes Abū Tammām's poem as well-composed poetry. In the original Arabic text, the poet uses a word which has a meaning related to beautifying something. Then the poet asserts what he said earlier by quoting a positive critical statement about the poem. He compares Abū Tammām's verses to stones regarding their feel and shape. He also indicates the prince's opinion on the poetry, comparing it to the water of a cloud mixed with honey. Finally, as evidence, the poet mentions the views of the majority of people who were there, implying

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<sup>206</sup> Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā Ṣūlī, *Akḥbār Abī Tammām*, ed. by Khalīl Maḥmūd 'Asākir, Muḥammad 'Abduh 'Azzām, and Naẓīr al-Islām Hindī, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1980), pp. 225–26.



that they believe Abū Tammām's verses are excellent. Al-Āmidī confirms that Abū al-‘Umaythil was one of several scholars to criticise Abū Tammām's poetry and they suggested Abū Tammām's poetry did not deserve attention.<sup>207</sup> However, the opinion expressed in this poem is ultimately the opposite of this. By looking at the context of both poems, it can be found that al-Amidi's text describes the first meeting between Abū Tammām and Abū al-‘Umaythil. The context of Abū al-‘Umaythil's verses above is that they are a reaction to Abū Tammām 's poem, which has been recited in front of the prince. This may allow us to say that Abū al-‘Umaythil's verses feature two different opinions towards Abū Tammām's poetry. The initial one criticises his poetry according to al-‘Amidī's text. However, the previous text by Abū al-‘Umaythil presents the final decision of Abū al-‘Umaythil regarding Abū Tammām's poetry.

Another example is a poem by Tamīm al-Fāṭimī (d. 374 / 985), who received verses from his friend and he composes a poem saying:

1. Your meanings are gentle, and there is nothing similar to them.
2. The verses are strong and their words make lines shine.
3. (Your poetry) is sweet and short.
4. (Your poetry) is like luck or remedy or coming back to life.
5. (Your poetry) is like youth and happy life.
6. (Your poetry) came to me at midnight while darkness does not move.
7. Your poem turns on the light in all surrounding me.
8. Moreover, bad luck stays away from me.
9. Moreover, I saw happiness in orbit around me.
10. I opened your letter, and it was like an ornamented dress.
11. Handwriting and a letter are like sideburns and teeth.
12. It was like night when the morning appears.
13. It has handwriting like a happy life.
14. It has creations that make hearts fly because of joy.
15. Meanings like wealth for the poor.

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<sup>207</sup> Al-Āmidī, vol. 1, p. 20.

16. Alternatively, like freedom earned after a prisoner of war felt hopeless.
17. Alternatively, like happiness, or like difficulties becoming easy.
18. Be protected, and still life, like the mountains of Dhū Salam and Thabīr.<sup>208</sup>

Tamīm al-Fāṭimī describes his friend's poem in eighteen verses. He numbers several of its features, and he adds his own imagination to it. Tamīm mentions the gentle meanings and good words have been composed by his friend, where both descriptions are an allegory and personification. The poet considers his poem as sweet as a drink or food. Then the poet likens the poem to three important things: luck, remedy or coming back to life. The poet continues by drawing a comparison where he likens the poem to youth and a happy life in verse 5. Additionally, the poet uses his imagination where he recalls the time when he received his friend's poem. This was at midnight, but the poet uses another expression meaning he was confused and could not go on in the darkness. Therefore, when his friend's poem arrives, it is full of shining light. Then the poet considers the poem a reason for the good luck that he has had. The poet continues his depiction of finding happiness around him. Then the poet returns to the moment when he opened the letter that contained his friend's poem, and notes it was like an embellishment on a beautiful garment.

Then in the following three verses, the poet concentrates on the beautiful calligraphy on the sheet. He likens the calligraphy to sideburns regarding the black colour of the ink and the sheet to teeth, highlighting the white colour. Both feel like the bright morning appearing from night. In verse 13, the poet likens the straight handwriting to a steady, happy life. Then he mentions that there are some creations that are so beautiful they make hearts fly with joy. In verses 15-17, the poet returns to describing the meanings of his friend's poem - it seems like wealth for those who are poor, freedom for the prisoner, or when difficulties resolve. Finally, the poet prays for the author of the poem to live for as long as the mountains. Rhetorically, this poem is one long poem providing the poet's view on another poem. The poet uses more than ten similes and six metaphors in his poem. The poet expresses his complete satisfaction in his friend's poem as mentioned above.

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<sup>208</sup> Tamīm ibn al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh al-Fāṭimī, *Dīwān Tamīm ibn al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh al-Fāṭimī*, 1st edn (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriya, 1957), pp. 193–94.

Another rich example is a poem by al-Qāḍī al-Tanūkhī (d. 342 / 953). He says:

1. A poem, its words are like organised pearls.
2. It is like successfulness in everything.
3. It is lighter than a gentle complaint and better than a happy life.
4. If it is in front of a blind man, he will see again.
5. It is like hope becoming real after hopelessness.
6. Alternatively, like a person who is missing, then someone comes to share good news about him.
7. Alternatively, like sleep for someone who passes the night awake, or safety for someone who is looking for protection.
8. Alternatively, like a remedy for someone who is ill, or wealth for someone who is poor.
9. It seems created by gathering youth or resurrection.
10. Words like this arrest an enemy, or free a prisoner of war.
11. It seems when it appeared from the paper and lines.
12. It is like roses of cheeks touched by the pearls of a mouth.
13. It is bright like the forelock of an antelope.
14. It has all kinds of meanings like security or making difficulties easy.
15. It was written by ink like remoteness, for someone ungrateful of favour.
16. In days like a good relationship or like good luck.
17. You presented it to me, you are he who has generosity and blessing.<sup>209</sup>

Al-Qāḍī al-Tanūkhī describes the poem in 17 verses and concentrates on representing four elements: the poem in general, its words, its meanings, and the ink and paper. Of course, it is clear that the paper and ink are not an element of poetry itself, but this was considered a good feature at that time, especially when combined with a great poem.<sup>210</sup> The poet mentions the words and compares them to pearls. In the verses 2–9 he describes the poem in general. He likens it to success, hope, the return of those lost, sleep for those who need it, safety for those

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<sup>209</sup> Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yaūmat al-Dahr, fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-‘Aṣr*, vol. 2, p. 401.

<sup>210</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 426.

who need protection, a remedy for the sick, wealth for the poor, and youth and coming to life. Then in 3 verses the poet returns to describing the words and he compares them to the happiness of arresting an enemy or freeing a prisoner. Then the poet mentions the beauty of the poem, noting it seems like roses in cheeks and it looks bright like the forelock of an antelope. The poet considers the poem's meaning in verse 14, where he compares this to the happiness that comes when a person reaches safety or when difficulties abate. Finally, the poet describes the ink and paper. He compares the black ink to remoteness, or to someone who is ungrateful of favour. The suggestion is that black is a colour of remoteness, and also the colour of the action of those who are unappreciative of support. Then the poet mentions the tone of the paper, which is white. However, he does not say this directly - he imagines its colour is similar to the colour of a good relationship or good luck. Therefore, we can understand that, if there is a colour it should be white. Rhetorically, this poem is clearly full of similes, and the poet tends to reflect on the extent of his happiness at receiving the poem by mentioning examples of happiness. He uses similes to describe the poem's words and meanings, which seem to be the most important elements in the poem that is addressed.

The last example for this group is by Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398 / 1008). He describes a poem by someone, saying:

1. He presented me with a poem like a necklace of pearls; I heard the best of what can be heard.
2. Flirtation poetry (*nasīb*) - if it transferred to be hard materials it will be jewellery on a girl's chest.
3. Moreover, praising can change badness to goodness.
4. It has words, not easy to be gathered, like wild animals in the mountains.
5. Moreover, meaning cannot be gathered, it is cautious like a raven.
6. Great verses when recited and repeated.
7. I recite them, and I remove thier veil, and I let ears hear them.
8. I was dissolved in thier hands, and I was near to cutting my clothes.

9. I become wonder when I recite one verse of the poem and I was nearly about to go out of my body.<sup>211</sup>

Badī' al-Zamān describes a poem through several aspects. He mentions the poem in general, flirtation / *nasīb* verses, panegyric verses, the words, the meanings, the rhymes, and the poem's effect on others. The poet mentions the poem in general and compares it to a necklace of pearls. He talks about two elements related to the parts of the poem containing flirtation and panegyric verses. The poet imagines that if the flirtation verses were exchanged for hard materials, they would be like jewellery or necklaces on a woman's chest in their beauty. The second element in this poem is panegyric, which can change negative behaviour to good. The poet considers the choice of words, comparing excellent words to wild animals living in remote mountains. In verse 5, he mentions the meanings and he says good meaning cannot be found easily - it cannot be held, just as a raven. Then the poet mentions rhymes and describes them as something pleasant. Rhymes can be considered to refer to the original use here – appearing at the end of each verse - and it can also be considered as an allegory where the poet mentions a part when he means the whole.<sup>212</sup>

In verse 7, the poet describes the moment when he was asked to recite the poem and he likens the poetry to a beautiful face, glimpsed as a veil is lifted. Then he mentions his reaction after he had read it and compares his situation to materials that can be dissolved. He also uses personification when he attributes to the poem a hand the same as a human being has. In the same verse, he describes the extent to which he finds the poem interesting - he is about to cut his clothes because of his joy. Finally, the poet further elaborates on this theme where he suggests he was about to transcend his body. Rhetorically, the poet uses similes, such as a necklace of pearls, metaphors, such as the poem's hand, and imagination, such as being dissolved and leaving the body. The poet mentions several elements in the poem, for example, flirtation verses, panegyric verses, the words, the meanings, the rhymes and their effect on others.

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<sup>211</sup> Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, *Diwān Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*, ed. by Yusrī 'Abd al-Ghanī 'Abd Allāh, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 2003), pp. 36–37.

<sup>212</sup> Abdul-Raof, p. 227.

### *Other poets' poetry*

In the second part, there are examples of odes praising other poets' poetry. However, these are cases where there is no relation of friendship that can be found between the poets. For example, al-Mutanabbī praises the verses of a Pre-Islamic poet called al-Nābigha al-Thubyānī, Ziyād. He says:

1. I see you give poets valuable gifts, both to live and dead poets.
2. You give those who are alive much money, and those who are dead great honour.
3. I heard you reciting Ziyād's verses. Great verses like your honour.
4. It was not surprising for me but I became envious of him.<sup>213</sup>

Al-Mutanabbī heard his prince Sayf al-Dawla al-Ḥamadānī (d. 356 / 967), reciting two verses by a Pre-Islamic poet called Ziyād, also known as al-Nābigha. Al-Mutanabbī speaks of Ziyād's verses as great poetry. He also believes that the poetry can be appreciated after the poet's death in the same way as in life: before death by giving him money and after death by reciting his poetry. He declares that he does not deny Ziyād's capacity in poetry and he wishes for the same honour after his own death.

A similar situation occurred in a later age regarding al-Mutanabbī's verses. Al-Mu'tamid ibn 'Abbād (d. 488 / 1095) recited a verse by al-Mutanabbī several times, and he was admired for this specific verse. When 'Abd al-Jalīl ibn Wabhūn (d. 480 / 1088) heard it, he said:

1. Ibn al-Ḥusayn's poetry is great because he grants great gifts.
2. He was known as the Prophet of poetry, if he knew you would recite his poetry, he would become the God of poetry.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī* (Beirut: Dār Bayrūt lil-Ṭibā'a wa-al-Nashr, 1983), p. 413.

<sup>214</sup> Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-'Āmūdī, *Shu'arā' Andalusīyūn*, 1st edn (Gaza: Maṭba'at al-Miqdād, 2010), p. 84.

‘Abd al-Jalīl ibn Wahbūn heard his prince recite al-Mutanabbī’s verse admiringly, so he presents his opinion on al-Mutanabbī’s poetry. He agrees that the poetry of al-Mutanabbī is great, but the reason, in his view, is the enormous gift that he earned. In the second verse, the poet uses imagination to produce a new idea related to this situation. It is well known that al-Mutanabbī is a name of the person who claims to be a Prophet. The poet here imagines that if al-Mutanabbī (the poet) knows you will recite his verse, he will claim to be the God of poetry and not just the Prophet.

In another example by al-Raffā’, where he looks positively at Abū Tamām’s poetry, his only objection is to the person who recites Abū Tammām’s poetry. His opinion is related to the entire work of Abū Tammām. He says:

1. Ibn Aw’s poetry is a garden, so we are pleased to be inside it.
2. However, we hated it when it came through your dirty mouth.
3. Poetry is like wind, it is perfumed when it passes by flowers, and mouldy when it passes by a cadaver.<sup>215</sup>

Al-Raffā’ praises Abū Tammām’s poetry. He likens his poetry to a beautiful garden. Then he attacks the person who was reciting Abū Tammām’s poetry and mentions his unclean mouth. It seems that al-Sarī’s focus is on satirising this person and he was waiting for a chance to do so because there is no relationship between the beauty of Abū Tammām’s poetry and the action that the poet imagines. The poet provides his justification for his opinion, which he communicates via the simile of the wind passing over flowers or passing by a corpse. The most important issue in these verses, however, is al-Rafā’s opinion about Abū Tammām’s poetry: it is compared to a garden filled with different beautiful flowers.

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<sup>215</sup> Al-Raffā’, p. 307.

### *Comparing others' poetry to specific arts*

One important issue that cannot be ignored in this theme is the likening of others' poetry to painting, music and other poetry, or comparing poets to other poets. To illustrate this issue, several examples will be analysed and discussed in the next pages.

### *Comparing others' poetry to painting*

Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Ḥusayn (4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> /10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century) compares poetry to an embellishment on a garment has been woven by artists from Ṣan'ā'.<sup>216</sup> He says:

1. Poetry is like Ṣan'ā' painted garment, and like buds of flowers in the meadow.
2. Its meanings shine when you read the black lines.<sup>217</sup>

The poet uses a simile where he compares the beauty of the verses to the beauty of the painted dress. Also, the meanings of verses have such energy, so, they shine in the second verse.

Another example comes from 'Alī ibn Abī al-Ḥusayn (d. 430 / 1038) uses a comparison with painting to describe poetry by others. He says:

1. I have received your poem, which is a rainy cloud.
2. Your poetry is like a meadow and your knowledge is its flowers, and it is like rain, and you are the sky.
3. I left my mind looking at the painted dress, artists from Ṣan'ā' cannot provided a similar thing.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Ṣan'ā' is the capital city of Yemen. More information about this matter will be provided in the chapter 5.

<sup>217</sup> Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Kattānī, *Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt min Ash'ār Ahl al-Andalus*, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1967), p. 113.

<sup>218</sup> Ibn al-Kattānī, p. 113.



In these verses, the poet uses similes as the primary tool for expressing his ideas. He compares the poem to valuable rain and meadows in the second verse. All these uses can be considered standard conventions the field of poetry. In verse 3, the poet compares the poem to Şan‘ā’ painted dress. Indeed, the poet compares the poem to the painted dress while he denies the ability of Şan‘ā’ artists to make a similar product.

Furthermore, al-‘Utbī (4<sup>th</sup> /10<sup>th</sup> century) compares the poetry of satire to the sharp sword or the shooting star. Its meaning is compared to women wearing embellished dresses. He says:

1. His satire is like his sharp sword or like a shooting star.
2. The meanings like girls walking while dressed in ornamented dresses.<sup>219</sup>

Additionally, al-Th‘ālibī (d. 430 / 1038) says:

1. He has the ability to write poetry and prose; he mixes al-Walīd’s poetry with al-‘Aşma’ī’s beautiful prose.
2. Like light, or magic, or the moon, or an ornamented garment.
3. Your poetry is like the blossoms of flowers, it is inlaid by beauty and its internal rhyme.
4. You made horsemen of poetry walking on foot, and you groomed al-Badie’s horses, you are the best creator.
5. You engraved the gorgeous creation of the ages, better than productive signs of spring<sup>220</sup>

The poet compares the poetry by another poet to two famous artists in Arabic literature regarding his good choice of words: al-Buḥturī and al-Aşma‘ī. The poet uses similes with which he compares the poetry to light, magic, the moon and, finally, to the ornamented garment. Then the poet compares the poetry to flower blossoms. The poet uses the word

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<sup>219</sup> Ibn al-Kattānī, p. 116.

<sup>220</sup> ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad al-Tha‘ālibī, *Dīwān al-Tha‘ālibī*, ed. by Maḥmūd ‘Abd Allāh Jādir, 1st edn (Baghdad: Dār al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiya al-‘Āmma, Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 1990), p. 85.

*Muraṣṣa*‘, which means that the verses are inlaid with beauty. The similar word *Muṣrra*‘ is also used: a rhetorical term that means making the ends of the first two parts of a verse similar to each other.<sup>221</sup> By using those two similar words, the poet also employs alliteration. Then he imagines the poets on a racetrack for horses of poetry, but they do not seem to do well, so his friend drops them and rides poetry horses and domesticated horses (*al-badī*) instead. Finally, the poet uses the word engraving. As it has been pointed out by al-Khawwām, it was common at the time to make beautiful sculptures in stones for rings.<sup>222</sup> The poet compares the poet (his friend) to another artist who is a sculptor. While the sculptor puts his engraving on a small stone, his friend marks his engraving on the ring stone of the ages and his embellishment is better than signs of spring. Exaggeration or hyperbole is used in this verse to suggest that poetry is similar to and better than an ornamented garment and a fantastic engraving.

### *Comparing others’ poetry to music and singing*

Not only are various kinds of painting used to create similes or metaphors, but poets also compare good poetic work to music and singing. For example, Ibn Ghalbūn (d. 419 / 1041) says:

1. Verses on praising him make you delighted while the poet did not compose a tune.
2. Because of your joy when hearing them, you do not know whether he recited or sang.<sup>223</sup>

The poet strengthens the idea of comparing poetry to other arts, which reflects a high degree of esteem for music and singing, an important art. In another example, in one of his verses, Miḥyār al-Daylamī (d. 428 / 1037) compares poetry to the melodies of singing, saying:

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<sup>221</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 249.

<sup>222</sup> Riyād Ḥasan al-Khawwām, ‘al-Khawātīm wa-Nuqūshuhā fī al-Turāth al-Lughawī’ <<http://www.m-a-arabia.com/vb/showthread.php?t=11139>> [accessed 29 March 2018].

<sup>223</sup> ‘Abd al-Muḥsin ibn Muḥammad ibn Ghalbūn al-Ṣūrī, *Dīwān al-Ṣūrī*, ed. by Makkī al-Sayyid Jāsīm; Shākir Hādī Shukr (Baghdad: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-al-I‘lām : Dār al-Rashīd lil-Nashr, 1981), vol. 2, p. 40.

You accustom your ears to admire praise; poetry seems like a melody.<sup>224</sup>

*Comparing others' poetry to other poets' works*

Another trend is that of comparing poetic work to other poetic work. This reflects a kind of agreement about the quality of both poetic works. In this section, the research addresses poetic materials considering poets' poetry and comparing it to other poetry, comparing poets themselves to other poets, or considering some poets or poetry better than others. Some examples are presented for illustration. Abū Firās (d. 357 / 968) praises the poetry of al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥuṣayn and considers his poetry to be better than all previous poetry. He says:

1. My poetry is a small part of yours. Your poetry is like a sea.
2. Your poetry is like pearls on a conch.
3. When comparing your poetry to all the poetry of previous poets.
4. Their poetry seems shorter than yours, like when letters are less than *al-Alif*.<sup>225</sup>

The poet agrees with Abū Ḥuṣayn's capacity for poetry. He focuses his verses when he compares his poetry to the sea, so the poet can benefit from the production of the poem. He also compares Abū Ḥuṣayn's verses to pearls on a conch. Then the poet compares his friend's poetry favourably to all previous poetry. The poet uses comparison to assert his opinion, stating that all alphabet letters are less than the letter *al-Alif*, and, similarly, the poetry of others is less than that of his friend. Ibn Manẓūr says in regard to *al-Alif* that it was so-called because all alphabetical letters can join onto it.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, skilful scribes and geometers were looking for a criterion to find measurement tools that could be used by calligraphers.<sup>227</sup> *Al-Alif* was

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<sup>224</sup> Miḥyār ibn Marzawayh Daylamī, *Dīwān Miḥyār al-Daylamī* (Cairo: Matba'at Dar al-Kutub al-Misriya, 1925), vol. 3, p. 363.

<sup>225</sup> Abū Firās al-Ḥamadānī, *Dīwān Abī Firās al-Ḥamadānī*, ed. by Khalīl Duwayhī, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1994), p. 219.

<sup>226</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, p. 1.

<sup>227</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: on music : an Arabic critical edition and English translation of Epistle 5*, ed. by Owen Wright; (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 141.

chosen as the tool of harmonic measurement thanks to its ideal proportions.<sup>228</sup> The poet thus uses a simile, comparison, and argument to express his exaggerated opinion.

Another example is provided by Ibn Hānī (d. 362 / 973) where he talks about someone describing his poetic ability. The poet mentions three levels of poetic skill. The poet considers his capacity for poetry not on the same level as the first two, but rather on the same as the last. The first layer is from the Abbasid period, also known as *al-muḥdathīn*, and included poets such as Abū Tammām,<sup>229</sup> and Di‘bil al -Khuzā‘ī (d. 246 / 860).<sup>230</sup> In the second verse, the poet adds another layer from the Islamic period with al-Farazdaq,<sup>231</sup> Jarīr,<sup>232</sup> and al-Rā‘ī al-Numayrī (d. 90 / 708).<sup>233</sup> In verse 3, the poet mentions that these deserve to be equal to those from the Pre-Islamic era, ‘Aalqama al-Faḥl,<sup>234</sup> and Imru’ al-Qays.<sup>235</sup> Ibn Hānī uses comparison without any rhetorical tools but the word (compare ) does generate a comparison and clear sense of preference. He says:

- 1- He does not compare himself to al-Ṭā‘ī nor al-Khuzā‘ī.
- 2- Nor al-Farazdaq who is the best, nor Jarīr, nor al-Rā‘ī al-Numayrī.
- 3- He compares himself instead to ‘Aalqama al-Faḥl and Imru’ al-Qays.<sup>236</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear that poets looked at poetry positively in both general and specific ways. The first section looked positively at poetry in general. We saw poetic materials that reflected poets’ own perspectives on poetry in a positive way. Al-Ṣanawbarī and al-Qayrawīnī named several benefits of poetry, for example: poetry solves problems, it makes foolish excuses better, it is good for lovers, and it describes beautiful things.

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<sup>228</sup> Muḥsin Muḥammad ‘Aṭīya, *Ilṭiqā’ al-Funūn* (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 2005), pp. 40–41.

<sup>229</sup> Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, p. 282.

<sup>230</sup> Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, p. 264.

<sup>231</sup> Al-Jumaḥī, p. 299.

<sup>232</sup> Al-Jumaḥī, p. 374.

<sup>233</sup> Al-Jumaḥī, p. 502.

<sup>234</sup> Al-Jumaḥī, p. 139.

<sup>235</sup> Al-Jumaḥī, p. 52.

<sup>236</sup> Muḥammad Ibn-Hānī’ al-Andalusī, *Dīwān Ibn-Hānī al-Andalusī*, ed. by Karam al-Bustānī (Beirut: Dār Bayrūt lil-Ṭibā‘a wa-al-Nashr, 1980), p. 380.

In the second part of this theme, there are several different aspects to how poets deal positively with others' poetry, verses and poems. Some poets look positively at the poetry of others when there is a relationship between them. For example, Abū al-'Umaythil praised Abū Tammām's odes because of their quality. Tamīm al-Fāṭimī praised a poem in a long poem, just as al-Qāḍī al-Tanūkhī did, and he described different aspects of those poems' characteristics. Badī' al-Zamūn al-Hamadhānī does the same in several verses. The friendship between artists in some poetic texts was the motive for this kind of poetry. This association should not prevent us from developing a good understanding of the advantages of the poets' perspectives. In some cases, however, poets also state their poetic opinions about the poetry or verses of someone who has died and where there is no pre-existing relationship between them. For example, al-Mutanabbī praised al-Nābighā's verses and confirmed his ability. They have compared poetry to other kinds of arts such as music and painting. The poets here also introduce some critical poetic issues. For example, they mention meanings, words, genres of poetry (*nasīb*, *madh*, *hijā'*) and rhymes. The poets sometimes mention other poets' names as they are the masters of poetry, such as Abū Tammām, Ziyād and Ibn al-Ḥusayn.

#### 2.3.2.4 Poetry providing advice on poetry

The fourth theme deals with poetry that provides advice and recommendations about poetry. The poetry that contains this idea can be considered as an evolution of the previous kind of poetry in the early stage. However, it is also clear that the poetry that contains this idea in later ages has many verses in contrast with the poems from the earlier time. It is well known that the mature critical movement at the time of the Abbasid age is reflected in some poems. The poetry of latter ages became increasingly more complex.

The verses addressed below are attributed to Ru'ba (d. 145 / 762) as several verses within a long poem,<sup>237</sup> and also to al-Ḥuṭay'a (d. 45 / 665) as a separate piece in his *dīwān*,<sup>238</sup>

Ru'ba claims that poetry is a gift and the poet needs to have broad knowledge of it. These are considered useful verses about poetry, despite the confusion over authorship. The poet says:

1. Poetry is difficult and has a long way to go.
2. ... when someone ascends its path who does not have good knowledge of it.
3. His feet will slip to the bottom.
4. Poetry needs someone with special skills.
5. Not someone who makes it ambiguous.
6. It needs someone to take care of it.
7. Whose enemies make signs because of his poetry.<sup>239</sup>

One of the most important impressions of poetry is that which is created in Ru'ba's verses. He talks about poetry, clarifying its difficulty, especially for those who do not have good reciting ability. Moreover, he considers poetry a kind of knowledge.

In other verses, Badī' al-Zamān says:

1. Poetry is difficult; it is not something you can make with your mouth.

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<sup>237</sup> Because of the importance of these verses, it is necessary to explore authorship. The verses appear in al-Aghānī's book for the first time, where the author attributed them to al-Ḥuṭay'a (Al- Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 2, p. 128). The verses come in al-rajaz meter and there is not one verse by al-Ḥuṭay'a using this meter except for what was taken from al-'Aghānī's book. Ru'ba has around 180 poems in al-rajaz meter, so it is reasonable to attribute these verses to Ru'ba.

<sup>238</sup> Jarwal ibn Aws Al-Ḥuṭay'a, *Dīwān al-Ḥuṭay'a*, ed. by Ḥamdū Ṭammās, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 2005), p. 136.

<sup>239</sup> Ru'ba ibn al-'Ajjāj, *Majmū' Ash'ār al-'Arab: wa-huwa mushtamil 'alā Dīwān Ru'ba ibn al-'Ajjāj wa-'alā abyāt mufradāt mansūba ilayhi*, ed. by W Ahlwardt (al-Kuwayt: Reuther and Reichard, reprinted by Dār Ibn Qutayba, 1990), p. 188.

2. Poetry is like the sea, and your ideas are like crossings, so you should look at the sea and its ships.
3. If you see me composing bad poetry, I deserve to have my ears pinched.<sup>240</sup>

In these verses, the poet expresses his ideas about poetry by saying that poetry is not easy and that it cannot be made up on the spur of the moment. The poet uses his imagination to clarify his ideas. He compares poetry to the sea and ideas to crossings. Thus, the poet should be aware of the sea and other ships. He finally considers poetry as a competition among poets where the loser should be punished.

Later on al-Nāshi' al-Akbar (d. 263 / 906) expands this meaning when talking about knowledge. Poetry in the latter ages became more complicated, with several directions and conceptions. He says:

1. God cursed the creation of poetry, we faced problems with ignorant people.
2. They prefer tough words instead of clarity.
3. They think an incorrect meaning is like a correct one, and that mean talk is a valuable thing.
4. They do not know the accurate of it, and they ignore that they do not know.
5. So, they have been blamed by others, but we excuse them.
6. In fact, poetry should have a perfect arrangement; even it has different characteristics and different kinds.
7. Its parts should be similar to each other, and its beginning should prepare its body.
8. Each meaning of it, is perfectly formed as if it satisfies your wishes.
9. So, it (the poetry) becomes perfect in a clear style, anyone can see its beauty.
10. Its words are like faces, and its meaning like eyes.
11. It is like what you wish for, and he who recites it finds it like a jewel.
12. If you praise a great man, you have exceeded all verbosity. (compose long poem).
13. Then you compose the (*nasīb*) nice verses and make panegyric poem clear and true.

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<sup>240</sup> Al-Hamadhānī, p. 117.

14. Moreover, leave what sounds ugly even if it is metrical.
15. If you compose satire poem, you should criticise evil manners.
16. So, your clear expression is a remedy, and insinuation is a disease.
17. If you cry because of (your love) who goes away.
18. You should prevent sadness from coming to you and make it easy for teardrops to run.
19. Yet, when blaming anyone, be firm in both promises and warnings, and mix firmness with solidity and gentleness. .
20. So, leave him cautious, safe, respectable and humble.
21. The perfect poetry is one that has different styles, full of expressiveness and clarity.
22. So, when it has been recited people wish to compose poetry like it, but it should disable the greatest when trying to imitate it.<sup>241</sup>

Researchers have different opinions about this poem. Al-‘Uḍaybī thinks that one should not expect to find whole poetic texts about poetry in Arabic literature.<sup>242</sup> However, this poem is a complete poetic text about poetry. Additionally, he considered this poem as the first whole poem about poetry.<sup>243</sup> However, this is not the case due to the existence of the al-Ṣalatān poem from the first theme (drawing comparisons between poets and poetry), which can be seen as the first known complete poem about poetry.<sup>244</sup>

Al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar mentions in this long poem several pieces of advice related to poetry. He begins by complaining about some ignorant people who behave in a way that is incorrect towards poetry in the poet’s view. In the first five verses, the poet explains this and provides some examples of their misunderstanding of poetry. Verses 6–22 are a clear expression of his thoughts on poetry in several aspects and they encourage people to follow his advice.

In verse 1, the poet uses a strong expression about poetry itself, but, in fact, his complaint is related to what he faces in this field from ignorant people. In the next three verses, the poet enumerates examples of poor understanding: such people think ambiguity is better than clarity, impossible meanings are correct, and that contemptible poetry is valuable, for example. In the

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<sup>241</sup> Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-‘Umda fī Ṣinā‘at al-Shi‘r wa-Naqdih*, vol. 2, p. 769-770.

<sup>242</sup> Al-‘Uḍaybī, p. 59.

<sup>243</sup> Al-‘Uḍaybī, p. 59.

<sup>244</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 324.



second part of this poem, the poet starts expressing his own opinions on poetry. Balanced composition should exist in every kind of poetry, he says. It should express a relationship between its parts and its beginnings should prepare for the body. The poet asserts that clarity of meaning and proper meaning can move things from an unclear situation to a brighter state. The poet likens words to faces and meanings to eyes.

In verse 11, he mentions two criteria: the first is related to the poet himself where the poem should appear as he wishes. The second is related to readers, who will recite and sing the poem. In the later verses, the poet discusses the purpose of poetry. If the poet uses panegyric, he should use prolixity (*taṭwīl* or *īṭnāb*). Therefore, he should make a good *nasīb*, true panegyric, and keep away from bad-sounding words. In verse 15, he mentions another purpose, which is satire. Poets should criticise bad behaviours. The poet should use both clarity and insinuation. In verse 17, he speaks of the poetry that has been written to describe leaving and travellers. Such poetry should keep sadness away from your soul and make eyes generous with teardrops. Regarding poetry blaming someone, the poet should mix promise with threat, and toughness with softness. In verse 21, the poet returns to asserting the idea that the best poetry is composed with clarity.

Another example, about words and meanings by Ibn Ḥimdīs (d. 527 / 1133) says:

1. Choose good words for your meaning and compose poetry like magic or leave it.
2. Al-Kohl is not fascinating unless it becomes eyeliner in beautiful eyes.<sup>245</sup>

Ibn Ḥimdīs expresses his opinion by emphasising the importance of a good choice of words. To confirm this idea, the poet uses a logical argument related to daily experience - kohl (eyeliner) is not beautiful in its jar, it only achieves beauty when used on eyes. The poet uses a kind of simile called (*al-tashbīh al-ḍimnī*) or implicit simile,<sup>246</sup> whereby the kohl is the meaning and the beautiful eyes are the words, but the words “like” or “as” are not explicitly used to force the comparison.

To conclude here, it can be noted that poets provide a wide range of advice in their poetry about poetry. They mention issues related to poetry’s knowledge, words, meanings,

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<sup>245</sup> Ibn Ḥamdīs, *Dīwān ibn Ḥamdīs*, ed. by Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1960), p. 401.

<sup>246</sup> Abdul-Raof, p. 203.

styles and genres. Poets use direct expressions to explore this theme, such as in al-Nāshi' al-'Akbar's poem. This may be because this manner of poetry is intended to teach features of poetry, and give comments. Consequently, clear words and direct meanings are more appropriate. Some poets rely on some rhetorical tools. For example Badī' al-Zamān and Ibn Ḥimdīs rely on simile. It has been shown that poets provide their opinions on how to compose poetry. It seems that this kind of poetry demonstrates significant development of poets' recommendations in the poetic field in the previous stage. This thesis now turns to reflecting on the discussion of this chapter themes and findings.

## 2.4. Discussion, interpretation and comparison

This section is intended to find answers to questions related to the perspectives of poets on poetry and other poets. As we have investigated in the previous analysis, this research attempts to find common characteristics that allow us to classify, analyse, discuss, and interpret the materials. A classical scholar, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih,<sup>247</sup> and modern scholars such as Jawād ‘Alī<sup>248</sup> and Shawqī Ḍayf,<sup>249</sup> agree that the poems and odes in the Pre-Islamic age clarify the existence of mature poetic styles at this early time. Poets repeat previous verses' meanings and ideas which means there are previous mature examples, as has been mentioned by Imru’ al-Qays and others.<sup>250</sup> However, by exploring the poetic materials grouped together for the early stage, it can be noted that poets give little attention to poetry in their poetic work, they only do so through a number of specific and limited characteristics. Based on the materials that have been found for this period, it can be concluded that Arab poets’ perspectives on poetry in this stage cannot be considered to be developed, unlike the works of the second stage.

Depending on the poetic materials examined above,<sup>251</sup> it can be said that poetry about poetry in the early stage has limited comments can be considered as elementary and superficial. We can consider this stage as a foundation for the developed stage. The poets’ comments contain personal critical ideas towards poetry and other poets. Poets mention previous styles in poetry, and where poets should follow previous poets such as in Imru’ al-Qays’ verse. ‘Antara, meanwhile, complained that previous poets talked about virtually everything. One such critical idea relates to plagiarism where it has been considered bad behaviour by Ṭarafa and it should be avoided. Ḥassān believes that poetry is an indication of poets’ mental ability and he agrees with Ṭarafa on the suggestion that the best poetry tells the truth. It has been noted that some poets after the coming of Islam such as al-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr declare an avoidance of reciting poetry. Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī (d 231 / 846) thinks poetry has been affected negatively after the coming of Islam.<sup>252</sup> This statement can be accepted to some extent depending on al-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr’s verses. One of the ways that poets talk about poetry is to give advice and make

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<sup>247</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *Al-‘Iqd Al-Faīd*, vol. 6, p. 118-129.

<sup>248</sup> Jawād ‘Alī and Nadīm Mar‘ashlī, *al-Mufaṣṣl Fī Tūākh al-‘Arab Qabla al-Islām*, 2nd edn, 1998, vol. 9, p. 62.

<sup>249</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Fann wa-Madhahibuhu fī al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabi*, 11th edn (Egypt: Dar al-Ma‘arif, 1969), p. 14.

<sup>250</sup> See: section 3.3.1.

<sup>251</sup> See: section 3.3.1.

<sup>252</sup> Al-Jumāhī, p. 25.

recommendations on how to compose poetry. Ḥassān is an example of this. He mentions a method that can be used to make a whole verse in a poem follow the same melody or meter: singing the poetry. The verses also present advice for avoiding poetic mistakes.

In terms of the meanings and length of verses, poets have mentioned various ideas, such as considering poetry as a weapon.<sup>253</sup> The verses of Mālik ibn Fahm al-Azdī or M'an ibn 'Aws al-Muzanī represent good examples of this issue and it can be seen that poets used simile to compare poetry to weapons. It can be seen that the poets do not tend to describe poetry for artistic reasons, but rather the poets tend to warn others about their ability in poetry. Regarding criticising the poets themselves, it has been found that the criticism of some poets was due to previous problems between poets, with no relation to the poetry itself, as with the work of al-Nābigha al-Dhubayānī when he mentions a poet called Zar'a in his verse. Regarding the length of the texts, based on the material that has been found concerning poetry and poets, it is clear that no long poem was created to talk about or describe poetry. The majority of relevant verses from this stage are lone verses or a few verses where the poetry does not constitute the main subject of the poems.

Poets from the developed stage reflect several kinds of reflections upon the subject. The previous verses in the developed stage can show the poetic development in terms of this thesis matter. The first theme discussed was poetry that compares poetry and poets. This is a new topic found in the developed stage and it cannot be found earlier. The second theme discussed was negative opinions towards poetry in general. This group can be considered as a development of previous poets' critical ideas. This development is found in different aspects related to poetry and poets. The third theme focuses on positive opinions about poetry and poets. This is a completely new kind of poetry. Such poems and verses cannot be found in the early stage at all, and thus reflect new ways of thinking about poetry. Finally, the fourth theme discussed was poetry that provides advice and recommendations about poetry, which can be considered as a development of early stage ideas but based on new and modern thoughts and concepts.

The first theme was poetry that compares poetry and poets regarding their whole poetry or regarding specific verses. This research has found that this drawing of a comparison between

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<sup>253</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 51.

poets or poetry occurred at around the middle of the Umayyad age. As mentioned earlier, there was much conflict among poets at that time and this thesis is particularly interested in poets' perspectives of other poets' poetry. Al-Ṣalatān's poem is an expert answer to the question of who is the best at poetry. It appears that the poet takes this issue seriously. He draws on a specific technique producing several justifications for his decision. He did not pay attention to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's wishes. Al-Ṣalatān uses the first ten verses as an introduction to several things: to introduce himself as a judge, stating who asked for this tribunal, to mention similar cases in history, to confirm the justice and strength of the judge, and to ask people to accept his decision even if they are not happy. The second part contains the poet's decision on the case, where he mentions that things from the same source can exhibit differences. The poet uses this reasonable argument to convince his audience of his idea based on visible environments such as the sea, sand and mountains. After providing these arguments, he delivers his decision in the later verses: Jarīr is the best at poetry, while al-Farazdaq is the best in terms of honour and nobility.

The existence of this direction in poetry has a relation to the absence of critics. It is understandable that when poets play the role of critic they combine this with their work composing poetry. Al-Ṣalatān sets the trend for this kind of poetry by looking at the work of two famous poets to compare them. Al-Ṣalatān's poem is the first of this type that has been found in the developed stage. It is the first developed representative text containing twenty-three verses where the main meaning of the poem is to look at other poet's works. There are two important issues that should be investigated here. The first concerns the previous case of 'Āmir and Ja'far and the other concerns the criteria of al-Ṣalatān's comparison or decision. In terms of the case of 'Āmir and Ja'far, it seems that al-Ṣalatān mentions them in two verses as an example of a case where judgement has been pronounced without appeal. These two verses let us conduct a deep investigation into whether the prior case was related to poetic critical issue. 'Āmir and Ja'far are the parties involved which means there is only one case not two as it may be understood from the verses. The historical texts confirm that this case was not a comparison between two poets and it was not in regard to poetic issues at all. Instead, this matter was rather about nobility, generosity, and honour.<sup>254</sup> In addition, by looking at the poetic

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<sup>254</sup> More information about this case can be found in: Al- Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 16, p. 192-200.

text and its context, we have found that al-A'shā judged between 'Āmir and Ja'far, which nobody asked him to do, and he decided 'Āmir was better than Ja'far at long poems,<sup>255</sup> which was incorrect based on al-Baghdādī's arguments.<sup>256</sup> As a result, the 'Āmir and Ja'far case that was mentioned in al-Ṣalatān's poem has no relationship to poetry or the current concern of the study. Therefore, based on the above, al-Ṣalatān's poem can be viewed as the first complete poem about poetry. It presents the expert poet's opinion on poetry. The poet gives his opinion based on the entirety of both poets' work and he uses the procedure of serious judgement in this poetic case.

In terms of the second issue, Ibn Qutayba mentions this poem saying that it is the answer to the question about Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry and who is better than the other.<sup>257</sup> However, it is notable that, in his answer, al-Ṣalatān mixes honour and poetic ability. He considers them both as criteria for his comparison. Therefore, this leads the researcher to ask a question here: is honour (nobility) a common criterion in such a case or are there other circumstances that led the poet to consider this criterion? 'Alāwina thinks that this mixing happened by mistake and al-Ṣalatān could not distinguish between artistic and non-artistic decision.<sup>258</sup> Ibn Qutayba considers this comparison to only be about poetry, which suggests that the honour of the poet was viewed as a part of his poetic ability or that the poetry can be considered of high value in itself. However, after analysis and based on al-Ṣalatān's answer or judgement, there is a hidden question which could be added here. The complete question may be: who is better than the other in terms of poetry and honour (nobility)? Al-Hammāmī, suggests that honour could also be considered as a criterion at that time.<sup>259</sup> There are indeed some poetic materials where poets consider certain poetry better than other poetry based on criteria related to the personal characteristics of the poet, for example his colour, or kind, or race. For instance, al-Farazdaq and Nuṣayb both recited poetry in front of the prince but only Nuṣayb was praised. Therefore, al-Farazdaq said:

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<sup>255</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, *Dīwān al-A'shā al-Kabīr Maymūn ibn Qays*, ed. by Maḥmūd Raḍwānī, 1st edn (Qatar: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-al-Funūn wa-al-Turāth, 2010), vol. 1. P 342.

<sup>256</sup> 'Abd al-Qādir ibn 'Umar Baghdādī, vol. 1, p. 184.

<sup>257</sup> Ibn Qutayba, vol. 1, p. 491.

<sup>258</sup> 'Alāwina, p. 43.

<sup>259</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 74.

Good poetry is that which is recited by nobles, and the worst is what has been composed by the slaves.<sup>260</sup>

By looking at the context it seems that al-Farazdaq's decision has been affected by what happened. On the other hand, this criterion of nobility cannot be considered to be important without looking at the context of the poems. The context suggests that poets usually consider such meanings when enmity and jealousy are found, such as with al-Farazdaq and Nuṣayb. Hence, based on the above, it is argued that considering honour, race and gender as criteria for poetic ability cannot be considered valuable, especially without looking at the context. Therefore, depending on the context of the examples, this study considers other evidence such as personal opinions produced under particular circumstances.

'Alāwina believes that al-Ṣalatān's poem is highly important but he considers this poem as the only one in this style.<sup>261</sup> This cannot be accepted by this research. There is another poem by al-Aṣma'ī which produces an image of poets' opinions when they draw a comparison between poets or poetry. In general, poets' poetry and their poetic ability were not the cornerstones of the poems before those two poems mentioned above. Poets commonly used rhetorical tools such as similes and metaphors, and al-Ṣalatān's poem is an example of such use. Direct description is also employed and al-Aṣma'ī's poem is an example of this. Generally, this kind of poetry appears where no critics existed to record or pass a critical judgement on poetry, as with al-Ṣalatān's poem. After critics appear in the poetic field (Abbasid age) and begin to use prose to convey their opinions, there is no need for this kind of poetry anymore, so it disappears.

Based on the materials that have been found in this theme and also on the historical context (mentioned earlier), some reasons can be suggested as to why. First of all, if conflict (*al-naqā'id*) between poets in the Umayyad period was the reason it existed, then the resolution of the conflict would make it disappear. It is clear that there was a pressing need for critics' opinions at that time, but the critics were limited. Poets, therefore, seem the most expert and appropriate for filling the gap. The idea of making a comparison between poets or poetry using the mode or framework of poetry later disappeared because such critical opinions came to be

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<sup>260</sup> Ibn Qutayba, p. 399. The Arabic text is:

وخير الشعر أكرمه رجالا وشر الشعر ما نطق العبيد

<sup>261</sup> 'Alāwina, p. 39.

reflected by critics in prose form. Ultimately, the critical movement developed at that time, moving beyond the poet's remit of drawing comparison through the poetry.

The second theme related to negative opinions towards poetry and poets. This theme was divided into four parts. The first part, where the poetry contains negative opinions towards poetry itself, is completely new and simply cannot be found in earlier Arabic poetry. This first group is related to the poetry in general where it is believed that money was the cause of this unusual view of poetry given the status quo in the early stage. Ancient Arabic poets dealt in poetry as a gift but it could also be used as a source of money, such as in the case of al-A'shā who looked for money in different countries.<sup>262</sup> Nevertheless, there was no complaining because of poetry. Of course, it can be argued that some asked for money at that time, but there is no evidence of poets producing negative opinions about poetry because it was a poor source of money. This research is in line with al-Hammāmī's interpretation of the change, whereby poetry became the only available source of money among some poets in the later ages.<sup>263</sup> It seems that 'for medieval poets, poetry is, indeed, a craft which requires study, skill, and artistry, a craft whose finished product is an artefact of great beauty, quality, and value'.<sup>264</sup> The financial reason was not the only reason that poets looked upon poetry unfavourably. There are other reasons, such as considering poetry as shameful, especially for religious people and some scholars such as al-Shāfi'ī and Ibn Munāthir. Nevertheless, later on, the opposite meaning existed as well where some poets look at poetry positively in an aesthetic way, and not just as a source of money: as we will see in the third theme of positive poets' opinions.

The second part in the second theme is a negative opinion directed towards specific unsuitable styles of poetry. Some specific types of poetry are criticised by the poets. For example, starting the poem by mentioning the ruin of old home / *al-muqaddima al-ṭalālīya*, meanings, a logical style, unsuitable words, conciseness and bad poetry. For more illustration, literary and critical movements in the Abbasid age showed better development and had developed in comparison to Pre-Islamic era. It has been mentioned above that significant debate and discussion was related to poetry, both new and old in manner, and some poetic issues have been investigated by scholars, and critics. Poets also participated in these

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<sup>262</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, p. 179.

<sup>263</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 508.

<sup>264</sup> Meisami, p. 16.



discussions. They were the cornerstones of the subject and they took part in poetic discussion about poetry and its issues at that time. Also, they have reflected in historical, critical and poetic texts. These issues include, but are not limited to, classical and modern / *al-qadīm wal-ḥadīth*, words and meaning / *al-lafḍ wal-ma'nā*, and odd words / *al-gharīb* or arcane lexicon. Among scholars and critics, there were supporters and opponents for poets and poetic issues as well. Therefore, critical books about such issues have been written, such as *al-Muwāzana bayna Shi'r Abī Tammām wa-al-Buḥturī* by al-Āmidī, and *al-Wasāṭah bayna al-Mutanabbī wa-khusūmih* by al-Jurjānī. The previously raised poetic issues and others have been reflected in critical books and also in poets' poetry as we have discovered in this chapter.

The research strongly agrees with Wellek and Warren's opinion regarding the artists in that they 'may be strongly influenced by a contemporary critical situation and by contemporary critical formulae while giving expression to their intentions'.<sup>265</sup> For example, we have seen the criticising of an abandoned ruin description / *al-muqaddīma al-ṭalalīya* by Abū Nuwās a modern poet at that time. Furthermore, the issue of a logical manner in poetry has been criticised by al-Buḥturī.<sup>266</sup> Old and modern scholars discuss al-Buḥturī's opinion in the above verses about the use of logical style. Al-Buḥturī was asked to follow a logical manner and provide a high level of philosophical argumentation in poetry.<sup>267</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī supports al-Buḥturī's opinion.<sup>268</sup> Ḍayf, however, believes that al-Buḥturī was weak in this respect, and that he should have studied philosophy to make his poetry more mature.<sup>269</sup> He argues that this was the modern approach to poetry at that time and it was to be followed. Additionally, he refutes al-Buḥturī's argument, saying that if Imru' al-Qays was alive at that time, he would study philosophy and logic to use in his poetry.<sup>270</sup> Regardless of this, however, we should at least respect al-Buḥturī's perspective towards poetry. It seems that al-Buḥturī looks at poetry in an aesthetic, as opposed to a rational, way.

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<sup>265</sup> Wellek and Warren, pp. 148–149.

<sup>266</sup> See 2.2.2.2.

<sup>267</sup> M. M. Badawi, 'From Primary to Secondary Qaṣīdas: Thoughts on the Development of Classical Arabic Poetry', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 11 (1980), 1–31 (p. 25).

<sup>268</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb Asrār al-Balāgha*, ed. by Maḥmūd Shākīr (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1991), pp. 270–271.

<sup>269</sup> Ḍayf, *al-Fann wa-Madhahibuhu fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabi*, pp. 196–99.

<sup>270</sup> Ḍayf, *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Thānī*, p. 286.

Some poets have been mentioned by name, and they are criticised in different respects relating to their poetry. For example, al-Buḥturī's poetry apparently cannot be understood and it is plagiarised, while Abū Bakr has only one style of poetry and his poetry is full of mistakes in grammar, repetition and rhyme. It is notable that poets in particular use other poets' jobs as tools to ridicule them. Poets mention professions such as saddler, butcher, barber, salt seller, cobbler and teacher. In this group, poets use a variety of poetic styles and rhetorical tools to express their opinions on poetry and poets. Tools used here include direct expression, comparison, imagination, logical evidence, ridicule, similes and metaphors.

The third part of this theme concerns poetry containing negative opinions towards specific poets for their poetic works. Satirical (invective) poetry is a genre or *gharaḍ* of Arabic poetry.<sup>271</sup> In the past, poets used this kind of poetry as a specific weapon to provide security for themselves and their tribe. Gradually, in the Umayyad and Abbasid ages, poets began to use satirical poetry to attack and criticise other poets. Poets face criticism or satire because of personal considerations such as competition, but they were also criticised because of their poetry. This practice was very common in the developed stage. Some poets mixed personal considerations and poetic criticism in poetry that related to other poets. In several cases, there was clear enmity between poets, but this should not prevent scholars from considering these poets' points of view. Therefore, it is concluded that this kind of poetry is a rich source which can be exploited to shed light on criteria related to this kind of art. Poets were also subjected to criticism without consideration of their names or poetic reputations. Well-known names such as al-Buḥturī can be found, as well as someone less well-known called al-Ḥuraythī. The poets were also criticised for several issues such as ambiguity, plagiarism, repetition, grammatical errors and metre mistakes. These examples reflect to what extent poets were aware of poetic issues from their own experience and even from the flourishing critical movement at that time.

Regarding poets' abilities, al-Buḥturī, as an example, criticises a poet, describing him as powerless, thieving and pretentious regarding his poetry. For more illustration, one of the most important issues in old Arabic criticism is plagiarism. This issue has been mentioned by earlier Arabic poets in the Pre-Islamic era.<sup>272</sup> However, this issue generated huge discussion

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<sup>271</sup> Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-'Umda fī Ṣinā'at al-Shi'r wa-Naqdih*, vol. 1, p. 195.

<sup>272</sup> See: The early stage, Ṭarafa verses.

from critics, poets, and scholars in the Abbasid era. Poets accused other poets of plagiarism while some poets, al-Farazdaq for example, actively plagiarised poetry – he confessed to this.<sup>273</sup> Some well-known books such as *al-Muwāzana* by al-Āmidī, discussed this issue from the Abbasid era to the defence of some poets. Poets' perspectives on plagiarism show to what extent they were angered by such behaviour. They have felt for some time that their poetic rights were not reserved.

The fourth part of this theme concerns poetry containing negative opinions towards unspecified poets for their behaviour. There is a relation between poets and their works, and this is stated by some poets. For example, poets encourage others to do things they themselves do not do, they advise others to do well in their life while themselves ignoring such advice. They lie or claim to do something they do not, and imply jealousy. This perspective was confirmed by Ibn al-Rūmī in several verses, as discussed earlier.<sup>274</sup>

The third theme of poetry from the developed stage features positive opinions about poetry and poets. This reflects the meanings of poets looking positively at poetry in general as well as at specific poetry, poets and poems. This group of works is completely new. Similar poems cannot be found in the early stage. It seems that several studies and scholars have paid much attention for negative critical perspectives and satirical texts instead of looking for positive poets' perspectives on poetry.<sup>275</sup> However, it is held in this research that poets' views of poetic works and poets should be gathered from both sides with consideration of apparent external affection. Firstly, the attitude of looking positively at poetry, in general, opposes the view that some poets have criticised poetry in general as a poor source of money. In fact, poets in this group look positively at poetry itself without any consideration of financial benefits where the arts have nothing to do with money in this particular view. The poets number more than twenty different benefits of this kind of art and none of them has any relationship to money. To illustrate this point, al-Ṣanawbarī's and al-Qayrawānī's poems suggest that they are responding to negative opinions about poetry, as we discussed in the first part of the previous theme. As a result, the poets respond to this by declaring their positive opinions towards poetry.

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<sup>273</sup> Al-Marzubānī, *al-Muwashshah fī Ma'ākhidh al-'Ulamā' 'alā al-Shuarā'*, p. 135.

<sup>274</sup> See: section on negative poets' opinions on poetry and poets.

<sup>275</sup> Haddāra, p. 240.

The poets' attitudes towards this kind of poetry leads one to look for reasons. Scholars mention the low value of poets and poetry in this age.<sup>276</sup>

In the first part of the previous theme above, poets have mentioned the weak value of poets in their society and their opinions on poetry (for example when it is a poor source of money). Can this current group be considered a reaction to this pessimistic view and a defence of the value of poetry? This seems to give the poetry what it deserves concerning its appreciation, as al-Hammāmī claims.<sup>277</sup> As well as the negative views of the poets, some scholars, such as 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, have mentioned some common negative opinions towards poetry among people at that time.<sup>278</sup> This may allow us to understand why this positive opinion toward poetry has been reflected within it.

The second part of this theme is when poets express their opinions about other poets' poetry. Positive opinions show to what extent poets looked at poetry aesthetically whether the poets are friends or not. Such opinions lead us to understand the specific styles that make poetry better from the poets' point of view. Furthermore, poets emphasise some ideas they like in the works of others, which can provide clues about advantageous characteristics in poetry and their views thereon. *Al-Ikhwānīyāt* is a theme that developed gradually in both prose and poetry.<sup>279</sup> Poets tended to send poems to their friends and their friends would reply by writing another poem containing their opinions, feelings, and impressions of the poem. The comments include but are not limited to the meanings of verses, words and calligraphy.<sup>280</sup>

In general, the reason for this was to speak in a friendly manner to friends. For example, Abū al-'Umaythil praises Abū Tammām's poem, Tamīm al-Fāṭimī praises his friend's poem, as do al-Qāḍi al-Tanūkhī and Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī. In many cases, friendship between artists was the motive for this kind of poetry. This association should not prevent us from understanding the advantages of the poet's points of view. In some cases, however, there are several examples investigated in this section where the poets have no relationship with the

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<sup>276</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 273.

<sup>277</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 338.

<sup>278</sup> Al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, pp. 11–27.

<sup>279</sup> For more reading see: Ḍayf, *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Thānī*, p. 562; Ṣafīya al-'Utaybī, 'Tawẓīf al-Shi'r fī al-Rasa'il al-Ikhwānīya min Bidāyat al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī ḥattā Nihāyat al-Qarn al-Rābi' (Umm al-Qurā University, 2010), pp. 42–48.

<sup>280</sup> Al-Hammāmī, p. 426.

other poet, except through the poetic field and their desire to reflect their positive opinions on others' poetry. The poets give their poetic opinion about the poetry or verses of someone who died, as with al-Mutanabbī's verses about al-Nābigha's work. Furthermore, some poets mention their admiration without mentioning specific verses or poems such as in al-Raffā's verses regarding Abū Tammām's poetry.<sup>281</sup> Furthermore, the poets in this theme also mention some critical poetic terms such as meanings, words, nasīb, madḥ, hijā' and qawāfī.

One important issue that cannot be ignored in this theme is the likening of poetry to painting, music and other poetry, or comparing poets to the arts including poetry. Poets mostly compare poetry to various natural things, for example, pearls, the moon, water, stones and flowers. On the other hand, however, poets also compare poetry to other kinds of art such as painting, music or singing. Additionally, they compare specific poetry to other poetry, as well as comparing poets to other poets. Comparing the poems to pieces of art made by other artists suggests that poets value these arts and consider them to represent beauty in the highest degree. Drawing a comparison between different poetry also suggests that the compared works are in a favourable position in terms of quality. Furthermore, considering specific poets to be like other poets means that there may be a kind of classification among poets, and that there is a consensus about the quality of both, as perhaps in the case of al-Th'ālibī's verses.

Additionally, poets also compare good poetic work to music and singing. Alami, for example, cited Adūnīs's opinion regarding comparing poets to singing birds.<sup>282</sup> However, we are looking here for something slightly different which is comparing poetry to the art of singing. This issue raises the question of the hidden reasons and the significance of this. These comparisons can certainly be considered as a sign of the poets' views towards the arts. Music can be considered one of the most beautiful products of humanity and it has been appreciated to a degree that allowed poets to draw a comparison between poetry and singing or music. Ibn Ghalbūn and Mihyār's verses are the example. Furthermore, it can be considered the height of poetic thought to compare poetic works, reflecting a kind of agreement about the quality of both works. There is consideration of poetic materials addressing poets' work and comparing it to other poetry. There is work that compares poets themselves to other poets or considers some poets or poetry better than other examples. All of these poetic expressions provide a

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<sup>281</sup> See: section 3.3.2.3.

<sup>282</sup> Alami, p. 57.

positive impression about poets' opinions of others' poetry and poets, whereby creating a classification is essentially criticism. This reflects a personal decision about both poets and poetry and what a high standard consists of. Abū Firās's and Ibn Hānī's verses are good examples of this idea.

In this theme, the poets use different poetic tools to express their positive opinions about poetry. For example, poets noticeably use direct expression, comparison and metaphors. However, the most common device employed is the simile. Poets compare poetry to various natural elements to express their satisfaction and admiration. For example, they compare poetry to stones, reflecting strength, meadows, reflecting beauty, a necklace of pearls, and rain and stars. The poets also compare poetic works to different kinds of artwork. They compare poetry to works of art such as music, song, painted garments or engraved stones. They also compare poetry to poetry, and poets to other poets. The poets considered other works of art to have a high value, allowing them to make positive comparisons between poetry and these other creative disciplines. The comparisons that have been drawn between poetry and poets themselves suggest there was a broad appreciation of all these poetic works and poets as well.

Finally, it is notable that poets in the previous themes mention the names of other poets in their verses. Regarding big names in poetry, without doubt poets as artists were well known at that time by their name and their distinctive style of poetry. So, some of their names have been mentioned in the poetry. However, less famous poets have been specified by their names as a kind of defamation or ridicule.

The fourth theme is poetry which contains advice for others about poetry. It has been found that poets began giving advice about poetry in the early stage.<sup>283</sup> However, it has been found that several poetic texts from later ages that give advice about poetry. Writing poetry has become difficult and has its own knowledge that should be understood perfectly. This kind of poetry reaches a length of twenty-two verses in al-Nāshi' al-'Akbar's poem. He talks about meanings, words, genre '*aghrād al-shi'r*' such as *nasīb*, *madḥ*, *hijā'*, and admonition. For example, al-Nashi' al-Akbar's verses about this meaning (two poems and some verses) can be considered as a poem that has been affected by a new kind of poetry which developed at that

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<sup>283</sup> See: section of the early stage 3.3.1., Ḥassān verses.

time called *shi'r nazm al-'ulūm* – a kind of didactic poetry that seeks to teach.<sup>284</sup> Therefore, some scholars think that al-Nāshi' al-Akbar poems in this theme were affected by *shi'r nazm al-'ulūm*.<sup>285</sup> Nevertheless, poets who were interested in producing advice in poetry are still considered poets, not *nāḍim* or composer, which may mean that this is a result of a strong belief in poetry and the right way to compose verses. Moreover, it may be considered as normal practice in this field but there is no strong evidence to confirm its purpose. Furthermore, regarding al-Nāshi' poem, *shi'r nazm al-'ulūm* is known through the meter of *al-rajaz*, while al-Nāshi's poem uses *al-khafīf*.

### *A comparison between the early and developed stages*

Poets' perspectives of poetry reflect meanings, ideas, characteristics and thoughts through ages. However, this research attempts to classify the poetic texts based on the materials that have been found to show a comprehensive and complete image of poets' views of this kind of art. It is strongly believed that the second stage is the richest and the most developed stage where poets express their meanings in different ways. A comparison between both stages is conducted in the following pages with reference to three aspects: verses meanings, poetic styles and rhetorical tools, and the quantity of odes and verses.

### *Regarding meanings*

In the early stage, poets mention poetry in non-specific ways. For example, poets mention the poetic manner of a previous poet, such as Imru' al-Qays mention of Ibn Khidhām. This is followed by Zuhayr and Antara who complained that previous poets probably talked about everything. This approach has also been found in the developed stage where the poets criticised some issues in others' poetry. Furthermore, in the early stage, Ḥassān mentioned advice about making poetry better regarding metre, as well as ensuring honesty in poetry. However, this meaning flourished and was extensively developed in the developed stage. After

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<sup>284</sup> Dayf, *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Thānī*, pp. 246–54.

<sup>285</sup> Al- Hammāmī, p. 324.

several generations, al-Nāshi' expressed his opinions about poetry in twenty-two verses containing several new aspects. Additionally, after the coming of Islam, poets have been affected by its teachings. For example, al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr al-Anṣārī preferred to leave poetry forever as an optional and personal decision. This way of dealing with poetry is rarely found in the developed stage, where some poets expressed the same idea depending on various factors such as being pious, or a scholar, or because of money. Therefore, it cannot be considered a common direction in Arabic poetry. Finally, in the developed stage, there are some completely new approaches such as making comparisons between poets or poetry, and praising someone's poetry or giving positive opinions about it. These new ideas are simply not found in the early stage.

#### *In terms of poetic style and rhetorical tools*

In the early stage, poets also tended to use direct language with little interest in using rhetorical tools such as simile and metaphor. This changed completely in the developed stage. The research has found sufficient evidence in the poetic texts to say that poetry was discussed using these tools in the later stage. This also allows us to discover various clear perspectives on poetry and other poets. However, on the other hand, the poets of the developed stage used comparison as a completely new strategy for communicating their opinions about poetry. Additionally, they use panegyric, and friendship poems, or the *ikhwāniyyāt*, to provide positive opinions. Some poets instead opted for a ridiculing style as a tool for their negative opinions. Descriptive poetic language was seen to be used when poets provided advice about poetry.

In terms of rhetorical devices, simile and metaphor have been used extensively. Poets compare poetry to several natural elements to express their satisfaction and admiration. For example, they compare poetry to stones, meadows, necklaces, pearls, rain and stars. Some poets also compare poetic works to different kinds of artwork. They compare poetry that they like to music, singing, painted garments or engraved stones. They compare poetry to other poetry, and poets to other poets as well. They liken good poetry to the gold, and bad poetry to the brass. It is believed that these poets considered others' artwork to have a high value in order to make these comparisons. This kind of comparison reflects an appreciation of both works. This type



of expression, where poets compare the poetry of someone to different kinds of art, is unique and cannot be found in the early stage.

*The quantity of odes and verses*

The diagram (No: 2) clarifies the development of the poetic materials during the period of the study in both early and developed stages.

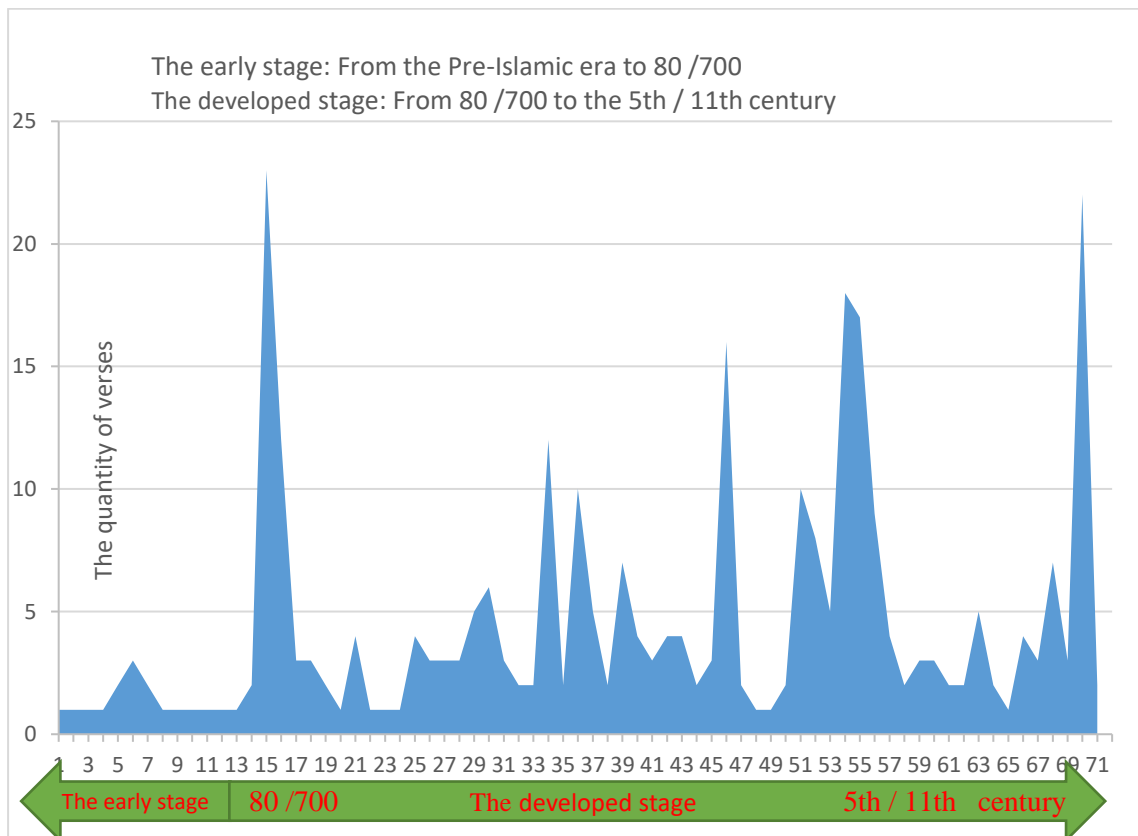


Figure 2: The quantity of verses about poetry in the early and developed stages from the Pre-Islamic until the end of fifth century.

Poets in what we have termed the early stage only devote a few verses to the subject of poetry qua poetry. There are neither long nor dedicated poems for this topic. However, in the developed stage, research led to the discovery of many long poems, and several works reach twenty verses in length. There is no doubt that poets in the later ages have different opinions and styles when talking about poets or the works of other poets. Moreover, it is clear that the developments in all areas of Arabic life through the Umayyad and Abbasid ages have had an impact on the ways that poets regarded their art. Gradually, the poets themselves and their poetry became the cornerstone of some poetic text. Findings such as the provision of negative opinions about poets, poems and pieces of advice about poetry reflect complexity and maturity and suggest a need for prolixity about this kind of arts in the developed stage.

## 2.5. Conclusion

To answer the research questions of this thesis, the sections above discover, analyse, discuss, interpret and compare Arab poets' perspectives on poetry through their poetic work. The level of attention given to poetic works in poetry is commensurate with the amount of rhetorical tools employed and the length of poem. Heavy use of rhetorical devices is taken as evidence of the extent to which poets were interested in communicating opinions towards the poetry. This idea about poets' attention is supported by other evidence such as verse quality, poem length, and essential intended meanings. By looking at poetry that talks about poetry in the early stage, it can be agreed that poets use direct language. They also do not use similes or metaphors as their most common tools. However, on the other hand, poets in the developed stage provide their opinions by employing extensive use of rhetorical tools such as similes and metaphors. Similes are used as the main semantic tool for expressing poets' ideas. Strong poetry is likened to a sword, to death and to stones. Beautiful poetry is likened to gardens, flowers, pearls, girls, Şan'ā' painted dress, and melodies. Good poets are compared to the most famous poets - Imru' al-Qays and 'Alqama al-Fahl.

It can be said that poets' perspectives with regard to poetry and poets have developed extensively, starting in the early stage with one or two marginal verses. On reaching the developed stage, there is a long poem that contains more than twenty verses which makes extensive use of poetic and rhetorical tools. Poets are successful in drawing attention to their perspectives of other art forms when they compare beautiful poetry to singing and painting, and this naturally leads us to explore this further in the coming chapters. The next chapter will investigate Arabic poets' perspectives on music and singing.

## Chapter Three: Arabic Poets' perspectives on Music and Singing

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing will be discussed and investigated. Since poets are primarily artists, this chapter will try to discover the image of music, singing, and musicians in poets' thought by examining their particular points of view through their poetry. The research questions that related to Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing will be examined through in-depth analysis in this chapter.<sup>286</sup>

This chapter is divided into five parts as follows: firstly, the introduction. Secondly, the background and context. It is important to note that the subject will be introduced in terms of several important aspects to clarify Islam's attitudes toward music and singing in light of the Qu'rān, and Sunna. In addition, the Arab attitude toward music will be examined. This background and context will serve as a brief foundation about issues that will contribute to a better understanding of the main issue of this chapter. Thirdly, the core of this chapter is the Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing. The poets' viewpoints are divided into two main stages. In this thesis and based on the common characteristics of the poetic texts we have divided the poetic materials to early and developed stages as each has significantly different characteristics. The poetic materials have been analysed in two ways: thematically, looking at poets' perspectives, and rhetorically, looking at poetic tools.<sup>287</sup> Fourthly we have the discussion, interpretation, and comparison of the themes and common features that have emerged through the analysis: such as the meanings, poetic styles, rhetorical tools, and the quantity of verses. The last section is the conclusion, which will provide a summary of the results and the common features of the issues that have emerged through the analysis.

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<sup>286</sup> See: section: 1.2.

<sup>287</sup> See: section: 1.4.

## 3.2 Background and Context

### 3.2.1 Islam and music and singing

Music and singing are controversial issue in Islamic teachings. *Madhāhib*, scholars and theologians have long been conflicted whether music and singing are permitted or forbidden. Although this matter is not the subject of this thesis, it will be helpful to clarify it briefly. There are several opinions related to whether music is permitted or forbidden, or whether this depends upon the situation, qualities or context. Ibn Kathīr (d.774 / 1372) is an example of a scholar who believes music and singing should be forbidden, regarding the Qurānic verse: ‘but there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the Path of Allah and throw ridicule (on the Path): for such there will be a Humiliating Penalty’.<sup>288</sup> Ibn Kathīr mentions several scholars’ opinions confirming that the Qur’ān uses the term *lahw al-ḥadiīth* with reference to music and singing. But, he states two extra different opinions regarding the meaning of idle tales or *lahw al-ḥadiīth*. The first is from al-Ḍaḥḥāk (d. 105 / 723) who says *lahw al-ḥadiīth* is polytheism, while the other by Ibn Jarīr (d. 310 / 923) who says it is any speech that can make people avoid the path of the God.<sup>289</sup> Additionally, al-Manbijī quoted the agreement that singing is forbidden when combined with instruments.<sup>290</sup>

On the other hand, Ibn Ḥazm, the founder of *al-Madhhab al-Zāhirī* (d. 456 / 1064), is one of those who believed music and singing should be permitted and objected to such commentary, quoting other texts as evidence of the art’s permissibility. His explanation of ‘*lahw al-ḥadiīth*’ was in reference to singing being forbidden only when the purpose of the song is to make people avoid the way of God. He also pointed out that there is no clear evidence that ‘*lahw al-ḥadiīth*’ means singing.<sup>291</sup> In terms of evidence to support his opinion, he referred to texts such as the *ḥadiīth* narrated by ‘Ā’isha in al-Bukhārī when Abū Bakr came to ‘Ā’isha’s

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<sup>288</sup> Q. (31: 6). See: Qur’ānic Verses’ appendix, verse no. 3.

<sup>289</sup> Ibn Kathīr, vol 6, p. 330-332.

<sup>290</sup> Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Manbijī, *Risāla fī al-Samā’ wa-al-Raqṣ*, ed. by Muḥammad Ṣubḥī Ḥasan Ḥallāq (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm., 1993), p. 55.

<sup>291</sup> Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥlla* (Cairo: Idārat al-Mṭabā’a al-Muniriya, 1929), pp. 59–60.

house while two small Anṣār girls were singing stories of the Anṣār concerning the Day of *Bu‘āth* (the war of *Bu‘āth*), and they were not professional singers. Abū Bakr protested what he considered to be instruments of Satan in the house of Allāh’s messenger. In response, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, ‘there is an *‘Eid* (festival) for every nation and this is our *‘Eid* (festival)’.<sup>292</sup> In addition, one of the pieces of evidence supporting the belief that music is not forbidden is another *ḥadīth* where the Prophet Muhammad asked his wife ‘Ā’isha about a wedding of a man from the Anṣār and the Prophet said to ‘Ā’isha, “haven’t you got any amusement<sup>293</sup> (during the marriage ceremony), as the Anṣār like amusement?”<sup>294</sup>

Based on the previous debates, Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī, a modern scholar, has suggested several conditions that must exist for music to be permitted. First, of course, poetry and music have always been closely connected because a great deal of singing is based on poetry (lyrics of songs). Therefore, music, singing, and lyrics should not glorify anything forbidden by Islam, such as drinking wine or atheist beliefs and practices. Second, it should not be seductive. Third, it should not encourage forbidden matters. Fourth, it should not be extravagant or flamboyant so that it causes an unwarranted loss of time. Finally, it should not be heard by someone whose personal faith will be shaken or who can be led away from piety by listening to it.<sup>295</sup> However, a modern scholar called Mūsā refutes al-Qaraḍāwī’s opinion and argues that the four *madhāhib* all believe that music and singing are completely forbidden.<sup>296</sup>

According to the above, it is clear that there are several opinions on this issue in terms of whether it is permitted or forbidden. The main point here is that there is no definitive opinion that has been determined. Therefore, it is clear that there are some issues in Islam related to a person’s individual faith. This is reflected in the Prophet’s teachings where he told one of his companions who came to ask about righteousness: ‘consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels tranquil, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and moves to and fro in the breast even though people again and again have given you their legal opinion

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<sup>292</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 2, p. 58.

<sup>293</sup> The Arabic word is: *lahw*.

<sup>294</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 7, p. 70.

<sup>295</sup> Yūsuf Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Ghinā’ wa-al-Mūsīqā fī Ḍaw’ al-Qur’ān wa-al-Sunna* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 2001), p. 185.

<sup>296</sup> ‘Abd Allāh Ramaḍān Mūsā, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Qaraḍāwī wa-al-Juday’*, 1st edn (Dohuk, al-Atharīya lil-Turāth, 2007), p. 372.

in its favour'.<sup>297</sup> Based on this, people are to be responsible for their own faith with respect to issues that have no clear textual basis or evidence, and concerning vaguely determined issues regarding whether or not something is permitted or forbidden. If these issues may cause some harm to a person's faith, he has to avoid it.

### 3.2.2 Arabs and music and singing

Music is an extremely ancient art, as confirmed by many historians.<sup>298</sup> Rock art has been found in Arabic lands which shows scenes of dancing and playing instruments.<sup>299</sup> Additionally, there are oral traditions regarding ancient instruments that can conclusively prove its existence a long time ago before the Pre-Islamic period, as we will see in the following pages. Most of the evidence that exists comes from inscriptions, stories, and poetry in Arabic literature books.<sup>300</sup> These oral traditions and inscriptions are evidence that Arabs recognised this kind of art hundreds of years ago.

In the Pre-Islamic era, ancient sources reveal that two singers would perform songs for one of the Quraysh leaders in the Pre-Islamic era, and they were called *al-Jarādatān*,<sup>301</sup> which leads Shawqī Ḍayf to state that there was a rich musical culture in Arabia at that time.<sup>302</sup> Furthermore, al-Asad has argued that there were certainly singers and specific styles of Arabic music, though what these styles were is now unknown.<sup>303</sup> There were some signs of music in Imru' al-Qays poetry, and in the work of other poets. In what follows, more evidence of the existence of music in Arabic poetry will be provided. Therefore, it is possible to imagine that there was a significant amount of music shared among Arabs in the Pre-Islamic era.

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<sup>297</sup> Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, 'Izz al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, and Denys Johnson-Davies, *al-Nawawī's Forty Hadith* (Beirut: Damascus: Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 1976), p. 90.

<sup>298</sup> Salīm al-Ḥulw, *Tārikh al-Mūsīqā al-Sharqīya* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1975), p. 17.

<sup>299</sup> Robert G Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 193.

<sup>300</sup> Al-Ḥulw, p. 181.

<sup>301</sup> Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century* (London: Luzac and Co, 1967), p. 11.

<sup>302</sup> Ḍayf, *Al-'Aṣr al-Jāhili*, pp. 191–93.

<sup>303</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad, *al-Qiyān wa-al-Ghinā' fi al-'Aṣr al-Jāhili*, 2nd edn (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1968), p. 128.

Ibn Khaldūn emphasised a high opinion of music by mentioning Arabic civilisation as an example where Arabs did not cling to music strongly at the beginning of their civilisation, but when their lives became more comfortable in Abbasid times, their music and singing developed.<sup>304</sup> Mecca and Medina the two holy cities were well known as a centre of music and singing for a while.<sup>305</sup>

Furthermore, there is evidence in the ancient Arabic body of literature that supports the development of music and singing in this regard. In fact, there are many Arabic books on music, including books on music in general, the creation of melodies, or specifically about instruments.<sup>306</sup> It would take a long time to mention all of the Arabic sources in this era that give evidence of the development of music in the Arab-Islamic civilisation, but *The Sources of Arabian Music* by Henry George Farmer itemises about 240 sources related to music and singing in Arab-Islamic civilisation during the researched period.<sup>307</sup>

This high number of sources shows there was much interest shown among artists and scholars toward music at that time. For example, the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, whose title can be translated as the *Book of Songs*, is the Arabic poetry that was set to music and singing from the Pre-Islamic era until the author's time. The author names 426 poets and 68 singers, mentioning their odes, songs and telling their stories. For each song, he gives the name of the singer, the composer of the melody, the method of singing and playing the instruments, even stating which fingers should be used and in what way, the type of sounds, and other aspects of the song.<sup>308</sup> This book attests to a great deal of excellent singing, describing songs, singers, and instruments. It also shows that music was widespread during this period.

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<sup>304</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. by Franz Rosenthal, 2nd edn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul : Secker and Warburg, 1958), vol. 2, p. 403-4.

<sup>305</sup> Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam*, p. 11.

<sup>306</sup> Francisco Salvador Daniel and Henry George Farmer, *The Music and Musical Instruments of the Arab: with Introduction on How to Appreciate Arab Music* (Portland, Me: Longwood Press, 1976).

<sup>307</sup> Henry George Farmer, *The Sources of Arabian Music: An Annotated Bibliography of Arabic Manuscripts Which Deal with the Theory, Practice, and History of Arabian Music from the Eighth to the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965).

<sup>308</sup> Mu'taşam 'Adīla, 'Tajnees al- Aghani (The Songs) at al- Asfahani', *Jordanian Journal of the Arts, Yarmouk University*, 1.1 (2008), 27-49.



Another example is *Kitāb al-musqā al-Kabīr* by al-Fārābī. He is the first author who defines music as an art. He says: ‘the art of music generally is the art that contains the melodies, and what makes them gathered, and what makes them perfect and better’<sup>309</sup>

Regarding the melodies there are eight fundamental melodies of Arab song as it has been cited by Owen Wright, which are: 1- The first heavy (*thaqīl awwal*). 2- The light of the heavy (*khafīf al-thaqīl*). 3- The second heavy (*thaqīl thānī*). 4- Then its corresponding (light *khafīf*). 5- The *ramal*. 6- The light of ramal (*khafīf al-ramal*). 7- The light of the light (*khafīf al-khafīf*). 8- The *hazaj*.<sup>310</sup>

There are many well-known musicians who lived at that time such as Ma‘bad (d. 126 / 744), Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 188 / 804), Ishāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 236 / 850), and ‘Ulayya bint al-Mahdī (d. 210 / 825). Furthermore, in Spain,<sup>311</sup> or Andalusia, there was a vibrant musical life in Cordoba that incorporated Christians, Muslims and Jews, as well as musical innovations and influences from a number of directions’.<sup>312</sup> A famous musician in Arab history called Ziryāb (d.243 / 857) is known to have established a singing and music academy in Andalusia.<sup>313</sup>

To summarise what has been written in the last two sections above, we can say that Arabs were generally interested in music especially in Abbasid age. It seems that this interest was somewhat progressive for the time particularly considering the religious debate over the permissibility of music. Furthermore, the Abbasid period, with its wealth and scholarly output at that time, had a great impact on music and singing, contributing to several important developments related to music and singing, such as the invention of instruments, the composition of tunes and melodies, and the establishment of academies to teach the art of music in Andalusia. As a result, music and singing under the auspices of Arab-Islamic civilisation flourished at that time, and this was reflected in poetry as we will see in the next sections.

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<sup>309</sup> Al-Fārābī, p. 49.

<sup>310</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, p. 150. We have very little information about all these melodies.

<sup>311</sup> See: Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam*, p. 80.

<sup>312</sup> Reynolds, Dwight, and Conklin Akbari, 'Arab Musical Influence on Medieval Europe: A Reassessment', *A Sea of Languages* (2013), 182.

<sup>313</sup> Hānī Ḥusayn Abū al-Rubb, ‘Ziryāb wa-Atharuhu fī al-Ḥayāh al-Ijtimā’īya wa-al-Fannīya fī al-Andalus’, *Majallat Jāmi‘at al-Quds al-Maftūḥa lil-abḥāth wa-al-dirāsāt*, 15 (2009), 263–93.

### 3.3. Arabic poets' perspectives on music and singing

The primary research objective of this chapter is to determine, analyse, and interpret Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing. This research considers particular features as criteria to discover whether the poets looked deeply into such issues. These characteristics are: the main and intended meaning and the use of poetic, rhetorical tools, and the quantity of verses. As mentioned previously, the heavy and extensive use of poetical techniques, including rhetorical tools, reflects a high degree of concern for the subject and reflects to what extent the poet attempts to convince the readers of his opinions as what has been mentioned in the section of Arabic rhetoric.

The number of verses can be considered as a sign of the importance of the subject regarding the speaker's view or his message. It can be regarded as an unessential subject when the speaker talks about it whilst moving through several themes where it may not seem the primary goal, but rather a marginal one. Therefore, this study suggests that when something has earned the poets' attention, they put it in the core of their poem, use rhetorical tools to present their opinions about it, or talk about it in many verses. This research will collect reflections of this issue to answer the research questions related to this subject and draw a useful comparison between this section's elements.

However, the concern here is not to look for evidence to assert the mere existence of music but to instead discover to what extent poets show their point of views on music and singing. Odes and verses related to music and singing in poetry that were written in the period of study will be provided to create an accurate image about this issue. This research finds enough evidence to allow the study to classify Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing into early and developed stages. Each one of them has different features related to meaning, rhetorical tools, verses' quantity, and has different opinions, characteristics and thoughts. As we have claimed in the previous chapter the developed stage is the richest and the most developed stage where poets express their thoughts on this specific kind of art and the artists as well in perfect ways. The poetic texts in each stage have been organised thematically and chronologically, and presented to create an accurate picture of the poet's attitude towards this specific kind of art.

### 3.3.1 The early stage<sup>314</sup>

In fact, poetry about music and singing in this era can be put into two general groups as follows. The first of these is when poets mention music and singing while describing battle. The second group is when poet mentions music and singing where he and his companions are meeting.

It was very common for Arabs to bring singers and some instruments with them when they went to fight wars. For example, in one of his poems, Imru' al-Qays says:

1. If I am in a bad situation and in great trouble today, what about the many times when I was happy and a beautiful singer was singing and playing her *kirān*?
2. She has a *mizhar* (with the army); its sound is loud when she plays it.<sup>315</sup>

Through the context, it is clear that the poet is not talking about the singer and her instruments for purely artistic reasons. More specifically, there are several different themes in the poem and the other verses in the poem do not share the same meaning of music or singing at all. In addition, Mu'qir ibn Ḥimār (d. 580), provides another example, and the context of the poem is related to war between his tribe and another. He says:

They were our guests, and we had a blessing. We had singers with tambourines and pipe men.<sup>316</sup>

Through the context of the poem, the poet is comparing the situation of his tribe with that of other people in the war where they were being entertained by some musicians and singers.

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<sup>314</sup> From Pre-Islamic to the second half of Umayyad age or 80 / 700.

<sup>315</sup> Imru' al-Qays, p. 86.

<sup>316</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al-'Iqd Al-Farīd*, vol. 6, p.13.

Regarding the second group, poets often tend to describe and mention music and singing when they spent time meeting with friends and drinking, chatting, and listening to music.<sup>317</sup> For example, ‘Abd al-Masīḥ ibn ‘Asala (d.592) invited someone to share an entertaining time listening to the singing-girl in a cloudy day. He says:

“Be content to listen to the singing-girl who delights us on a cloudy day”.<sup>318</sup>

The poet is describing a meeting with his friend while they were listening to a singer on a cloudy day which is the best time for fun. He describes the situation without going into depth about the music or the singer.<sup>319</sup> ‘Abīd ibn al-Abrāṣ (d.598) also says:

There is a singer whose voice is becoming hoarse because of drinking. She was bending over the lute.<sup>320</sup>

In this verse, we can see the poet tending to describe the situation simply by using simple language without elaborate rhetorical tools.

Salāma ibn Jandal (d.600) provides another example when he numbers several things that existed in their meeting and one of them is the singing girl. He says:

We have a tent, glass, and a singer with a big black vessel.<sup>321</sup>

Another example comes from ‘Alqama al-Faḥl (d.603), who says:

I attend friends’ meeting. The lute / *mizhar* is played; and they are drunk.<sup>322</sup>

This is the only verse in this long poem about instruments in descriptive language without the use of rhetorical semantic tools. In addition, al-A‘shā (d.7 /629) says:

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<sup>317</sup> See: George Dimitri Sawa, *Music Performance Practice in the Early ‘Abbāsīd Era 132-320 AH / 750-932 AD*, Studies and Texts, 92 (Toronto, Ont., Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1989), p. 111.

<sup>318</sup> Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century*, p. 1.

<sup>319</sup> Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Muḥammad al-Ḍabbī, *Al-Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, ed. by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 6th edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1979), p. 279.

<sup>320</sup> ‘Abīd ibn al-Abrāṣ, *Dīwān ‘Abīd ibn al-Abrāṣ*, ed. by Ashraf Aḥmad ‘Adra, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār alkitāb al‘arabi, 1994), p. 33.

<sup>321</sup> ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘īl Ibn Sīda, *al-Muḥkam wa-al-Muḥīt al-A‘zam Fi al-Luḡha*, ed. by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīya, 2000), vol. 6, P 575.

<sup>322</sup> ‘Alqama ibn ‘Abada; and Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān A‘lam al-Shantamarī, *Sharḥ dīwān ‘Alqama ibn ‘Abada al-Faḥl*, ed. by Ḥannā Naṣr Ḥittī, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1993), p. 45.

There is an enthusiastic singer and when the drinking companions shout, she raises her voice.<sup>323</sup>

This is one verse in long poem, again without being used for any particular rhetorical tool. In another poem, he says one verse in a simple way as well,<sup>324</sup> and recounted some instruments in that meeting. Furthermore, in another one of his poems, the poet describes a party where there are two female singers, and a woman playing a lute.<sup>325</sup> There was also a lute where it was at work all the time. Additionally, in another poem, he describes how two instruments were played at a party.<sup>326</sup>

Another poet, ‘Adī ibn Wadā‘ (Pre-Islamic poet), says he pawned his arrow, glass, singer, and barman for his drinking companion.<sup>327</sup>

In addition, Ḥassān ibn Thābit says:

We woke up in a place called *Nājūd* accompanied by a singer between the garden and *jaz‘ al-Qaṣṭal* area.<sup>328</sup>

Another verse describes the situation of his companions in *Bilād al-Shām*:

We woke up and then went to drink and listen to a singer. Poverty and misery are in al-Ḥijāz.<sup>329</sup>

Furthermore, Tha‘laba al-Māzinī, talks about his friends when Tha‘laba entertains them at his home by presenting them with three beautiful things that include an ancient lute, listening to a singing girl, and the generosity of their host.<sup>330</sup> Additionally, Al-Nābigha al-Ja‘dī (d. 79/

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<sup>323</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, vol. 2, p. 200.

<sup>324</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, vol. 2, p. 172.

<sup>325</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, vol. 2, p. 205.

<sup>326</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, vol. 2, p. 33.

<sup>327</sup> Muḥammad ibn al-Mubārak Ibn Maymūn, *Muntahā al-Ṭalab Min Ash‘ār al-‘Arab*, 1st edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1999), vol. 8, p. 317.

<sup>328</sup> Ibn Thābit, p. 75.

<sup>329</sup> Ibn Thābit, p. 245.

<sup>330</sup> Al-Ḍabbī, p. 130.

698) writes in memory of one of his great days a verse describing some fun taking place in the town of *Daskara* where he spent his night there with an old lute and a glass of wine.<sup>331</sup>

Other poets like Labīd al-‘Āmirī mentions the lute when he describes the chest of his camel and compares it to the wood of a *kirān*.<sup>332</sup> Additionally, Labīd mentions an instrument with strings when he had fun. He mentions wine and singing by a female singer who played her instrument.<sup>333</sup>

A verse has been found in the Islam era advocates leaving behind prohibited things such as gambling, songs, and wine. The verse is by Zīrār ibn al-Azwar (d. 15 / 636) who says:

I left gambling, songs of singing girls, and wine.<sup>334</sup>

By examining the above, we can determine the general features of the poets’ views towards music and singing in the early stage. There was little attention paid by the poets to music and singing in this stage. However, this changes in the second stage, where singing, musicians, and instruments were described through the use of many rhetorical techniques such as similes and metaphors.

### 3.3.2 The developed stage<sup>335</sup>

In this part, poems and verses about music and singing in terms of the views of poets will be considered. In addition, it becomes possible to make a comparison between what will be presented in this section and what we found in the early stage in terms of the perspective of the poets on music and singing. The poet’s concern regarding music and singing can be seen through specific poems, *qit‘a*, and several verses.

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<sup>331</sup> Al-Nābigha al-Ja‘dī, *Dīwān al-Nābigh al-Ja‘dī*, ed. by Wāḍiḥ Ṣamad, 1st edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1998), p. 33.

<sup>332</sup> Al-‘Āmirī, p. 210.

<sup>333</sup> Al-‘Āmirī, p. 175.

<sup>334</sup> Niḍāl al-Zubaydī, al-Ṣaḥābī al-Fāris, Ḍirār ibn al-Azwar: Ḥayātuhu wa-mā Tabqā min Shi‘riḥ’, *Majallat Kulliyat al-Tarbiya al-asāsīya*, 2009, 71–90.

<sup>335</sup> From 80 / 700 to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Adam Mez argues that resources about poetry describing sounds and voices are scarce,<sup>336</sup> which may lead to the belief that poets were negligent in describing audible sounds in their poetry at that time. In fact, what was found earlier in the early stage will make us more optimistic about the treatment of music and singing in later ages as we will see. Some themes and characteristics related to the main research question will be considered, including the style of presenting poets' opinions in terms of the use of rhetorical tools. It can be said that the meaning within the odes concerning the professional abilities of the singers is considered as evidence for the development of music at that time.<sup>337</sup>

Furthermore, although music and singing were not the main subjects of poems in the early stage, the poets in this stage represent music, singing, instruments, and singing girls as main topics of their poems. The poetic materials in the following section will be arranged thematically and chronologically and it has been divided into two main parts: the first is a group of poetic texts containing positive opinions about music and singing. This theme has several aspects such as mentioning the lyrics of songs, describing a good singer regarding the voice, good singing, good appearance, and great ability, on addition to describing the instrument such as the lute and mentioning its good sound. The second theme is a group of poetic texts containing negative opinions toward music and singing, including negative opinions related to the musician himself where musicians can be criticised because of bad singing, bad voice, bad performance, bad prestige, and bad manners. Additionally, there are negative opinions because of bad instruments' sounds, plus negative opinions due to religious considerations.

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<sup>336</sup> Adam Mez, *al-Ḥaḍāra al-Islāmīya fī al-Qarn al-Rābi' al-Hijrī: aw 'Aṣr al-Nahḍa fī al-Islām*, trans. by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Rīda, 5th edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī), vol. 1, p. 493.

<sup>337</sup> Lisa Emily Nielson, 'Diversions of Pleasure: Singing Slave Girls and the Politics of Music in the Early Islamic Courts (661-1000CE): Their Influence, History and Cultural Roles as Seen through the "Kitab Al-Muwashsha" ("Book of Brocade") of Ibn Al-Washsha, the "Risala Al-Qiyan" ("Epistle on the Singing Girls") of Al-Jahāid and the "Dhamm Al-Malahi" ("Centure of Instruments of Diversion") of Ibn Abi'l Dunya' (The University of Maine, 2010), p. 1.

### 3.3.2.1 Positive perspectives on music and singing

The first theme is a group of poetic texts containing positive poet's opinions about music and singing. In many poems or verses it is difficult to categorise poets' opinions whereby they tend to mention their positive opinions accompanied with description of several aspects such as the song, the singer, the lyrics, the performance, the appearance, the capacity, the sound of instruments, comparing singers to other well-known musicians, mentioning poet's feelings and impressions. Nevertheless, this research will arrange them in groups as much as it can depending on the most common poets' opinions. Based on this there are several aspects which can be considered in this theme.

#### *Mentioning the lyrics of songs in poetry*

Mentioning the lyrics of songs in poetry that carries positive perspectives. For example, we have considered al-'Uqayshir al-Asadī (d.80 /699) as the first poet who quotes the lyrics of songs in his poetry. He says:

1. The most beautiful thing in life is the combination of the string's sound and the melody of a lovely singer.
2. The singing girl sings "when my beloved arrives to al-'Aqīq".<sup>338</sup>

It appears that he is talking about his own personal experience of the enjoyable tune and lyrics by the singing girl. The poet mentions a part of the song in the second verse, but there is no other source that can tell us who the songwriter is. It seems that the poet himself is the writer where this verse cannot be found in any other sources except his poetry collection. It is the first poetic text that allows us to know the words of the song.

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<sup>338</sup> Al-Uqayshir al-Asadī, *Dīwān al-Uqayshir al-Asadī*, ed. by Muḥammad 'Alī Daqqa, (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1997), p. 98.



This meaning continues among poets in latter ages. For example, Bashshār ibn Burd (d. 167 / 783) describes singing meeting in a narrative way and the poet includes the lyrics of the songs in his poem. He says:

1. A singing girl like the moon was singing in the night to a drunk lover.
2. “In dead wide eyes they kill us then they did not give life to us”.
3. I said “well done my hope, may I hear from you”, God reward you the best.
4. “How lovely is al-Rayan Mountain, how lovely is he who lives in al-Rayan”.
5. She said will you not want to hear even better than this for who is an amazed lover.
6. “O people my ear is in love with someone, and the ear can be in love before the eye sometimes”.
7. I said, “Well done you are the sun shining”; you have burnt fires in my heart.
8. Let me hear from you a happy melody (*hazaj*) which will increase my love for you.
9. “If only I were slices of apple or sprigs of basil”.
10. “Until when she found my smell, and she became impressed and we are in privacy, I become a human man”.
11. She played her lute and became rapturous, she sang in public.
12. I became the most obedient person for who is disobedient for me in love.
13. I said “you are the best in our meeting at making us happy, may we hear from you”.
14. If I had known love would kill me I would have prepared my shroud.
15. Then she sang beautifully (*ramal*) for the companions, the sound of her voice brings happiness and sometimes makes eyes fill with tears.
16. “God does not destroy a determined lover, but cheaters will be ended”.<sup>339</sup>

This poem is a special one among poems that have been written about music and singing not only because of its story,<sup>340</sup> but also because of its poetic features. It has specific characteristics which can be rarely found in other poems. For example, the singer asks the poet

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<sup>339</sup> Bashshār ibn Burd, *Dīwān Bashshār ibn Burd*, ed. by Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn ‘Āshūr (Algeria: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 2007), vol 4, p. 193-197.

<sup>340</sup> Many sources mention a story about this poem where the poet was a noble’s friend and regularly visited this noble. One day the poet was in a meeting with his companions in the noble’s home to listen to singing and drink wine. At the end of this party, the singer girl asked the poet to describe this meeting without mentioning the names of the noble or the singer. Then the poet wrote this poem and send it to her. See his *dīwān* vol.4, p. 195.

to describe the meeting and the poet includes lyrics of the song in his poem. In narrative style the poet describe the singer and the noble. The whole poem is talking about what had been done at that meeting. He mentions five lyrics from his own poetry and from other's poetry.<sup>341</sup> In the opening of the first verse poet talks about the singer and in the second part he talks about the noble.

Bashshār starts by using a reverse simile,<sup>342</sup> saying that the moon is similar to her image (face). It is clear that the poet should say her face like the moon but instead of this he chooses an inverted simile to exaggerate the meaning of her beauty and to convince us of his idea. The second verse is the first song where Bashshār includes its lyrics in his own poem. However, it is well-known that this verse has been written by Jarīr.<sup>343</sup> The verse has also been mentioned as song number 83 in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.<sup>344</sup> In verse 3, the poet hid himself and conveys what had been done by the noble. The poet conveys the conversation between the singer and her lord. He tells us about the lord's satisfaction with the first song, as he said at the end of this song 'well done my hope'.<sup>345</sup> Additionally, the lord suggests the second song which is also by Jarīr. In fact, the verse or the lyrics in the second song is from the same poem of Jarīr.<sup>346</sup>

However, in verse 5 the singer replies gently to her lord and suggests other lyrics by Bashshār, which forms the sixth verse in the current poem and the third song in this meeting.<sup>347</sup> Bashshār repeats this verse in this new poem again as lyrics. The poet uses allegory in this verse by giving the ear and eye the ability of love, but in fact they are only causes of love. This allegory is one of his creations and critics such as Ibn Rashīq have said that nobody before the poet used anything similar in Arabic poetry.<sup>348</sup> The seventh verse describes what the lord said to the singer when she sang the third set of lyrics. Bashshār uses simile again when he compares

<sup>341</sup> Philip F. Kennedy, *The Wine Song in Classical Arabic Poetry: Abū Nuwās and the Literary Tradition*, Oxford Oriental Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 57–59.

<sup>342</sup> Abdul-Raof, p. 202.

<sup>343</sup> Jarīr and Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Dīwān Jarīr bi-Sharḥ Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb*, ed. by Nu`mān Muḥammad Amīn Ṭāhā, 3rd edn (Egypt: Dār al-Ma`ārif, 1971), p. 163. The Arabic text is:

إِنَّ الْغُيُونَ الَّتِي فِي طَرْفِهَا حَوْرٌ قَتَلْنَا ثُمَّ لَمْ يُحْيِينِ قَتَلْنَا

<sup>344</sup> Adīla, p. 34.

<sup>345</sup> An important expression to praise a singer. See: Sawa, p. 159.

<sup>346</sup> Jarīr and Ibn Ḥabīb, p. 165. The Arabic text is:

يَا حَبْدًا جَبَلُ الرِّيَّانِ مِنْ جَبَلٍ وَحَبْدًا سَاكِنُ الرِّيَّانِ مَنْ كَانَا

<sup>347</sup> Bashshār ibn Burd, vol. 4, p. 206. The Arabic text is:

يَا قَوْمِ أَذْنِي لِبَعْضِ الْحَيِّ عَائِقَةٌ وَالْأَذُنُ تَعَشِقُ قَبْلَ الْعَيْنِ أَحْيَانَا

<sup>348</sup> Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-'Umda fī Ṣinā'at al-Shi'r wa-Naqdih*, vol. 1, p. 996.

the singer to the sun. That may be because of what he feels towards her or because of her good performance.<sup>349</sup> The eighth verse shows another request from the lord to singer. The poet restricts his request to specific kind of melodies that is *al-hazaj*.<sup>350</sup>

The next verses (9 and 10) are contain an imaginary idea related to the poet's wishes without any particular rhetorical technique. The idea of Bashshār is related to unseen action where the poet wished to become piece of an apple or branch of basil. This idea stems from some traditions which were used at that time in such a meeting. Throwing apples between those who are in the meeting is likened to saying hello. In addition, cutting the apples into slices and provide branches of basil is a way to perfume the place of meeting.<sup>351</sup> Therefore, the poet wishes to be "slices of apple or sprigs of basil" then when the singer would like to smell the fragrance of apples or basil the poet will transform to his original state of humanity. Thus, he can meet the singer privately. Verse 11 shows the reaction of the singer to the lord's request in verse 8. The poet describes what the singer has done where she played her lute and sang the fourth song that he asked for, which is: 'I became the most obedient person for who is disobedient for me in love', by al-'Abbās ibn al-Aḥnaf (d. 2nd /8<sup>th</sup> century). The editor of Bashshār's *dīwān* says the verse probably by Bashshār. However, I have found it in al-'Abbās ibn al-Aḥnaf poetry.<sup>352</sup> In verse 13 the poet conveys another request by the lord for the singer to sing another song. The poet describes what the lord said which is: if I had known love would kill me I would have prepared my funeral. Then the poet tells us that the singer started singing to fulfill her lord's request. She used a new melody this time that is *ramal* then she sang the fifth song about God protecting the honest lovers while cheaters should be killed. This lyric cannot be found in other source accept the *dīwān* of Bashshār. It's probably by him. Ultimately, the poem contains the lyrics of five songs which have been mentioned in positive way and such thing cannot be found in any other poem.

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<sup>349</sup> As it will be mentioned in next pages the poets use the coldness to describe bad performance and maybe they use the hotness to describe good performance.

<sup>350</sup> See 4.2.2. About Arabic melodies names.

<sup>351</sup> Bashshār ibn Burd, vol. 4, p. 195-196.

<sup>352</sup> Al-'Abbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān al-'Abbās ibn al-Aḥnaf*, ed. by 'Ātika Khazrajī, (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya, 1954), p. 265. The Arabic text is:

أَصْبَحْتُ أَطْوَعُ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ كُلِّهِمْ      نَفْسًا لِأَكْثَرِ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ عَصِيَانَا

Another example by Abū Nuwās mentions the first part of Pre-Islamic verse which is the lyrics of a song. He says:

1. Good companions with good singing. Singing with instruments is the best.
2. A girl sings and the lute make us joyful, “say goodbye to Hurayra the convoy is leaving”.<sup>353</sup>

The poet praises his companions and the musical tune with singing where this kind of singing is the best in his opinion. Then the poet describes physical features of the singer / *ghaydā* where she plays the lute to provide satisfying amusement in a lovely song. Its lyrics are: “say goodbye to Hurayra the convoy is leaving”.<sup>354</sup> This lyric is the first verse from a famous poem by Pre-Islamic poet called al-A’sha.<sup>355</sup> It has been mentioned in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* as one of Ma’bad’s melodic creations.<sup>356</sup>

Furthermore, the verses below by ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm (d. 249 / 863) relating to lovers’ story are about two singers called Banān (d. 3<sup>rd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> century) and Faḍl (d. 257 / 871). The poet wrote the history of this love through one of his poems. To understand the content of the next verses we will review the context and the story of those two singer briefly.<sup>357</sup> Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī stated that Banān and Faḍl were singers and they fell in love with each other in secret. In fact, Faḍl’s lord did not know about this relationship between them. Only a few people know this and the poet is one of them. The poet realises this love through the songs when each one of them replies to the other by singing a song as a response.<sup>358</sup> The poet says:

1. Whenever Banān sings “listen or tell us”.
2. Faḍl sings “hello Madina”.
3. She agreed his meaning with her meaning, while the companions are inattentive.

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<sup>353</sup> Al- Ḥasan ibn Hānī’ al- Ḥakamī Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī’ al-Ḥakamī*, ed. by Ewald Wagner, 1st edn (Berlin,Beirut: Dār al-Nashr Klāws Shwārts, 1988), vol. 3, p 256.

<sup>354</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, vol. 1, p. 203. The Arabic text is:

وَدُعْ هُرَيْرَةَ إِنَّ الزَّكْبَ مُرْتَجِلٌ      وَهَلْ تُطَبِّقُ وَدَاعاً أَيُّهَا الرَّجُلُ

<sup>355</sup> Philip F Kennedy, p. 49.

<sup>356</sup> ‘Adīla, p. 38.

<sup>357</sup> Caswell, pp. 94–96.

<sup>358</sup> Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-‘Umda fī Ṣinā’at al-Shi’r wa-Naqdih*, vol. 2, p. 724.

4. She did well when she did not reply by singing “expatriate’s homeland”.
5. If she did we were the laughingstock.
6. Her lord asked to repeat the song, and he encouraged drinkers to drink.
7. I said to the lord “when we became intoxicated”.
8. “There is a great song germinating horns in the head£. <sup>359</sup>

These verses contain parts of songs have been written by other poets. The poet mentions in the first two verses the situation at that meeting where the singers were replying to each other by songs. Each time Banān sings the song of ‘listen or tell us’ Faḍl replies to him by singing the song of ‘hallow Madina’. The first song is a famous one by Salam al-Khāsir (d. 186 / 802) and the verse is:

Listen or tell us, oh, expatriate’s homeland. <sup>360</sup>

The second song has been written by al-Kumayt al-Asadī (d. 126 / 744) who says:

Hello Madina, there is no problem when saying hello. <sup>361</sup>

Here when the poet hears the songs he discovers the relationship between the singers. He clarifies the meaning in the third verse when he states the similarities between the two songs in their meaning, but points out it was difficult to discover this relationship because all the companions are unaware. Then the poet says “well done” to Faḍl because she did not make her reply too obvious: such if she were to reply by re-singing the same song as her lover, ‘expatriate’s homeland’. <sup>362</sup> The poet says if this were to happen there will be a huge scandal. The poet tells us about her lord where he was impressed by the song and asked her to repeat it several times. <sup>363</sup> Then the poet talks to the lord when they all became drunk and he said may a great song germinate horns in the head which indicates one of the worst scandals in Arabic culture, related to someone who is a cuckold or who is pimping his family as we will see.

<sup>359</sup> ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm and Mardam, *Dīwān ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm*, 2nd edn (Beirut: 1980), p. 185.

<sup>360</sup> Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-‘Umda fī Ṣinā‘at al-Shi‘r wa-Naqdih*, vol. 2, p. 724. The verse is:

اسمعي أو خبرينا يا ديار الطاعينا

<sup>361</sup> Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-‘Umda fī Ṣinā‘at al-Shi‘r wa-Naqdih*, vol. 2, p. 724. The verse is:

الا حبيت عنا يا مدينا      وهل بأس بقول مسلمينا

<sup>362</sup> It is the second part of the first verse by Banān.

<sup>363</sup> A repetition was requested after an excellent performance. See: Sawa, p. 159-161.

Rhetorically, this poem is empty of simile and metaphor. The poet uses narrative style to convey the story to readers. In the last verse the poet uses metonymy / *al-kināya* to suggest the meaning of cuckold in a euphemistic way. The evidence of this meaning is what has been said by Faḍl herself, in another poem in the book of *al-Imā' al-shawā'ir* by al-Iṣfahānī. She says it directly without using metonymy in this story: Oh' prince, you are a noble pimp.<sup>364</sup>

Another example by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih who describes a singer's singing saying:

1. A beautiful singer sang at the end of the night, her singing makes long night become shorter.
2. "Oh, Banī al-Ṣaydā', bring back my horse, this only can have happened with a lowly man".<sup>365</sup>

The poet describes in these two verses the end of the night and he does not say a great deal about this singing except what we can understand from his sentence, where it appears in a positive way because it makes a long night seem shorter. The poet then states the lyrics of the song which is by Zayd al-Khayl al-Ṭā'ī (d. 9 / 630).<sup>366</sup>

#### *Mentioning good music and singing in general*

Another aspect of this theme is a group containing poetry that carries positive opinions on music and singing in general. The poet describes the beauty of the singer, his or her capacity,

<sup>364</sup> Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Imā' al-Shawā'ir*, ed. by Jalīl 'Atiya, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Niḍāl, 1984), p. 81. The verse is:

أنت قواد نبيل يا أمير المؤمنين

<sup>365</sup> 'Abd Rabbih, *Dīwān ibn 'Abd Rabbih*, ed. by Muḥammad Riḍwān al-Dāya, 1st edn (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1979), p. 146.

<sup>366</sup> Zayd al-Khayl al-Ṭā'ī and Aḥmad Mukhtār Bizra, *Shi'r Zayd al-Khayl al-Ṭā'ī : jama' wa-dirāsa wa-taḥqīq* (Damascus: Dār al-Ma'mūm lil-Turāth, 1988), p. 151. The Arabic text is:

يا بني الصيداء رُدوا فرسي إنما يُفعلُ هذا بالذليل

and the poet impressions as well. For example, as cited by al-Şūlī (d. 335/ 946), Abū Tammām says:<sup>367</sup>

1. What a good night when I was watchful without sleeping. Wakefulness came, and sleeping departed.
2. I heard singing. It should have saved me from my sadness.
3. The singer made my hearing amazed; I will not become deaf and hope she will not.
4. When she touched her strings, I became so interested and desirous. The listeners should sacrifice themselves for her.
5. I could not understand the meaning but she had burned my heart / *kabidī*.
6. I was like a blind man when he falls in love with a beautiful girl without seeing her.<sup>368</sup>

The poet starts his poem by mentioning his gratitude about the wonderful night he experienced. He describes how he heard fabulous singing capable of removing his worries and concerns. The singer amazed the poet by what he heard and the poet denies the idea that her voice might make him deaf. Then he prays to God to keep the singer safe.<sup>369</sup> When the singer starts feeling her strings, it makes the poet very happy and excited. Anyone hearing her singing would wish to suffer instead of her if she had been exposed to any harm. Then the poet illustrates the situation where he does not have the ability to speak another language and this puts him in a complicated position as the singer was singing in another language that the poet did not understand. First, he confesses that he did not understand her singing. Second, he gives his opinion about his pleasure. He thinks that music is understandable between people around

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<sup>367</sup> These verses have appeared in a variety of sources, such as Akhbār Abī Tammām by al- Şūlī. Unfortunately, the verses do not exist in Abī Tammām’s poetry collection, and some other sources attribute them to unknown poet such as al-Tadhkira al-Ĥamdūnīya by Ibn Ĥamdūn (d. 562 / 1167). See, Muḥammad ibn al-Ĥasan Ibn Ĥamdūn, *al-Tadhkira al-Ĥamdūnīya*, ed. by Iḥsān ‘Abbās, and Bakr ‘Abbās, (Beirut: Dār Şādir, 1996), vol. 9, p.17-18.

<sup>368</sup> Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Şūlī, pp. 213–14.

<sup>369</sup> The verse number 3 has been translated by Klein as follows: ‘A female singer who pleases the ears with beauty, she does not deafen them, nor is her voice muted’. On the other hand, al-Marşafī argues that the last part in this verse has another meaning in Arabic which is an invocation for God to protect her. There are many scholars who support al-Marşafī’s opinion which is also adopted by this thesis. Klein’s translation moves away from the poet’s meaning. See, Yaron Klein, ‘Musical Instruments as Objects of Meaning in Classical Arabic Poetry and Philosophy’ (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2009), p. 62. Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad and Sayyid ibn ‘Alī al-Marşafī, *Ragħbat al-Amīl min Kitāb al-Kāmil* (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ĥadītha lil-Ṭībā’a wa-al-Nashr), vol. 7.p31, and Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar Zamakhsharī, *al-Mustaḥṣā fī amthāl al-‘Arab*, (Ḥaydarābād al-Dakkan: Maṭba‘at Majlis Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmānīya, 1962), vol. 1, p. 212.

the world and people have the ability to feel for others through music and singing.<sup>370</sup> In his situation, he was confident that the singing was the result of sadness and therefore the song had immediately burned his liver. Even though this is a very strange and unclear situation, the poet will not leave readers in total ambiguity. Therefore, he compares his position to another one more familiar to the reader. Because of his ignorance of the singer's language, he compares his position to that of a blind man who falls in love with a beautiful girl without ever having seen her. Before leaving this point here, we should mention that Klein argues that the liver was considered by Greek and Arab physicians to be the locus of emotions.<sup>371</sup> Therefore, ancient Arabic poets referred to livers and hearts to express happiness and sadness. 'Abīd Ibn al-Abrāṣ, in the Pre-Islamic era, says: 'that water that if I were to drink some, it will make well my injured liver'.<sup>372</sup> Additionally, other poets refer to the liver and heart when talking about desire and love, as 'Alqama ibn 'Abda says:

Water and fire have in my heart and liver like kiln and noria because of the love.<sup>373</sup>

Therefore, when Abū Tammām used this expression he was following the path of the ancient poets. This literary expression is still in use in the modern age while Arab poets obviously know what the real function of the liver and heart is.<sup>374</sup> Rhetorically, the poet uses a metaphor and a simile to express his view regarding the singing. First of all, we should be aware of the central meaning in this ode, and that is the poet's desire to inform readers about the singer's excellent performance, in addition to her professionalism. He also draws attention to his own capacity to discover the beauty of the music. To achieve these goals, the poet uses rhetorical techniques such as conceit,<sup>375</sup> or *ḥusn al-ta'īl*.<sup>376</sup> To illustrate this point, the poet

<sup>370</sup> Klein, p. 62.

<sup>371</sup> Klein, p. 62.

<sup>372</sup> 'Abīd ibn al-Abrāṣ, p. 11. The verse is:

فَذَلِكَ الْمَاءُ لَوْ أَنِّي شَرَبْتُ بِهِ، إِذَا شَفَى كَبِدًا شَكَّاءَ مَكْلُومَةٍ

<sup>373</sup> 'Alqama ibn 'Abadah; and Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān A'lam al-Shantamarī, p. 86. The verse is:

لِلْمَاءِ وَالنَّارِ فِي قَلْبِي وَفِي كَبِدِي مِنْ قِسْمَةِ الشُّوقِ سَاعُورٌ وَنَاعُورٌ

<sup>374</sup> Aḥmad Shawqī, *Dīwān Shawqī*, ed. by Aḥmad Muḥammad Ḥūfī (Cairo: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr, 1980), vol. 2, p. 118. Shawqī (d. 1351 / 1932) says what can be translated to: The death of liver is in your eyes. His liver has been overcome and surrounded by the love.

فِي مُقَلَّتَيْكَ مَصَارِغَ الْأَكْبَادِ اللَّهُ فِي جَنْبِ بَغِيرِ عِمَادٍ  
كَانَتْ لَهُ كَبِدٌ فَحَاقَ بِهَا الْهَوَى فُهِرَتْ وَقَدْ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْأَطْوَادِ

<sup>375</sup> This form of semantic embellishment expresses a personal evaluation of something. Abdul-Raof, p. 248.

There are other terms for the same concept such as a good cause, and fantastic aetiology. Gelder; and Hammond, p.221.

<sup>376</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 223.



depends on metaphors such as the one provided in the first verse where he describes the status of being wakeful then being attentive to the music. Additionally, he uses metaphor in the second verse when describing how the singing should have saved him from sadness. Then he uses allegory in reference to listening to express the concept of confusion in verse 3. Allegory was also used again in the fourth verse. For more illustration, the poet uses a word in the original Arabic text *marat* which is usually used in the context of when someone wants to milk a *nāqa* (female camel), he must touch it gently.<sup>377</sup> However, the poet here uses this word to describe the singer touching the strings of her instrument in order to produce its melodies.

In verse 5, the poet starts by using negative meaning in reference to his inability to understand what she was singing because of language differences. He then expresses his opinion and gives a logical justification for this strange situation as well. His opinion depends on his own feelings when he hears the song and the impact of that song on his emotions. As a result, he believes that the song and melodies can be understood, even if the language of the artist is foreign or unknown. The poet uses the simile to achieve two things: asserting the meaning and giving an acceptable example everyone can agree with. The poet uses the main tool of the simile with the word ‘like’. This kind of simile is one of the most effective types and is called an imagery simile / *al-tashbīh al-tamthīlī*. Depending on the use of imagery simile the poet compares the whole situation with another situation. Therefore, in this ode, the poet describes his situation when he hears the song without understanding and likens this to the situation of a blind man who falls in love with a beautiful girl with no way to see her beauty. In this regard, al-Ṣūlī recites an interpretation by the poet himself about the intended meaning of his verse where he says he meant the blind poet Bashshār ibn Burd.<sup>378</sup> Abū Tammām means Bashshār’s verse which is “O people my ear is in love with someone, and the ear can be in love before the eye sometimes” which we have discussed earlier in Bashshār’s poem.

Another example by ‘Alī al-Munajjim (d. 399 / 1009) expresses the harmony between the instrument’s sound and singer’s voice. He says:

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<sup>377</sup> Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad and Sayyid ibn ‘Alī al-Marṣafī, *Ragħbat al-Āmil min Kitāb al-Kāmil li-Sayid ibn ‘Alī al-Marṣafī* (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadītha lil-Ṭibā‘a wa-al-Nashr), vol. 7, p. 31.

<sup>378</sup> Al-Ṣūlī, p. 216.

1. She sang and hid her voice within her lute's sound. Altogether, the sounds are like strings' melodies.
2. A beautiful girl gives a command to her lute and it obeys her all the time, and it follows her as a lover.
3. Her voice is softer than the flower at the morning, and gentler than the best reputation.
4. The singer and her lute's sounds, when they are combined, are like the mixture of wine and water.<sup>379</sup>

First, the poet describes how the singer begins her song and contains her voice within the sound of her lute. It makes people think that there is only one sound. It seems only the lute's sound which means there is a high degree of the harmony between them. This singer is then described as a pretty, soft girl, who has the ability to ask her lute to do what she wants, and her lute will do it; her lute is generous because it conforms to her wishes. Then the poet gives his opinion about her voice. He believes that her voice is more beautiful than the flowers in the morning; additionally her voice is better than the reputation of a good person. Next, the singer's voice and her lute's sound are united like wine mixed with water.

Rhetorically, the poet believes that there is a union and harmony between the singer's voice and the sound of her lute. He thinks the singer tends to disperse her own voice into the lute's melodies and uses the verb 'hid' *akhfat*. He uses a metaphor when he attributes human characteristics to the lute and makes it seem as though the lute has the ability to hear orders from the singer and to obey them as a man who has fallen in love with a beautiful woman. Personification / *al-tashkhīṣ* is when an inanimate object is given human characteristics.<sup>380</sup> In verse 3, the poet twice uses the comparison technique to express his idea. First, he makes her voice sound better than flowers in the best part of the day (the morning). Additionally, her voice is believed to be better than the best reputation. Finally, using a simile, the poet shows how he believes there is a union between the singer and her instrument that is similar to the union between wine and water, suggesting that there is no way to dismiss the great union between her sound and the lute's melodies.

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<sup>379</sup> Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*, ed. by Muḥīd Qumayḥa (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1954), vol. 5, p. 121.

<sup>380</sup> Fadl Ḥaṣan 'Abbās, *al-Balāgha, Funūnuhā wa-Afnānuhā: 'Ilm al-Bayān wa-al-Badī'*, 8th edn ('Ammān: Dār al-Furqān lil-Tiḥbā'a wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2005), p. 181.

Furthermore, al-Ḥamdawī (d. 260 / 874) mentions some clear aspects regarding the description of a female singer's performance, as well states some other features such as the high quality of the lyrics and the tune:

1. She sings a melody by four strings; the secrets of inmost thought becoming public.
2. She makes companions hear happy melodies from her voice and the lute tunes but the melodies' details are sorrowful.
3. There is no stammering in the melodies produced by her lute, and she does not stammer herself.
4. Her fingertips present for each one of the audience members a magical melody.
5. The audience's eyes are grazing a meadow on her cheek, and their ears are travelling in her lyrics.<sup>381</sup>

The poet starts his verses by saying that this singer sings a melody through her lute. This melody makes people express their secret problems in front of people. When the singer plays her lute, she creates a melody that is described as delightful, but with sorrowful undertones. He then mentions her ability in terms of her professionalism because her lute is played without any mistakes and her voice is accurate in the melodies. Because of her professional ability, she sings well and she seems to be giving melodies as gifts for each one of the audience members. The members of the audience are so happy because their eyes and ears are being indulged in equal measure. Their eyes see her beautiful face and their ears fly along with the fantastic melodies and lyrics.

There are several ideas in this text, but the main one is the admiration of the singer's capabilities. This is clear when the poet says: 'There is no stammering in the melodies produced by her lute' because *tala'tham* or stammer is a word used to describe people's actions and not the actions of inanimate things.<sup>382</sup> In addition, he uses the Arabic word *taḥayyar*, which means

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<sup>381</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al-'Iqd Al-Faīd*, vol. 7, p. 79-80. Al-Ḥamdawī's poems have been collected by Ibrāhīm Najjār. See, Ibrāhīm Najjār, *Shu'arā' 'Abbāsīyūn mansīyūn*, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1997), vol. 3, p. 151.

<sup>382</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, p. 4041.

amazed, to describe the sound but usually such a word is not used in reference to sound.<sup>383</sup> All of these uses are hypallage / *al-majāz al-mursal*, where the words have been used not in their original meanings.<sup>384</sup> In verse 4, the personification technique is used: the poet writes that the songstress' fingers present gifts, but in fact fingers cannot do that, but present the melodies by playing the lute. Finally, the poet uses metaphor twice in the last verse, first when he describes the audience's eyes grazing her cheek, and second when he describes the audience's ears as flying.<sup>385</sup>

### *The singer's appearance*

Another aspect of this theme is when a poet mentions positive opinions about the musicians or their singing with concentration on the appearance of the singer. In the verses below, the anonymous poet deals with both her wonderful singing and her beautiful appearance. Al-Irbilī believes that the poet in the next verses dealt with infrequent or remarkable meaning specifically in the last verse.<sup>386</sup> The poet says:<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, p. 1066.

<sup>384</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 180.

<sup>385</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 186.

<sup>386</sup> Al-Irbilī, p. 255.

<sup>387</sup> The verses have appeared in a variety of sources. The oldest source mentions them is *al-Munṣif* by Ibn Wakī', but he attributes them to no-one, as does al-Irbilī in *al-Tadhkira al-Fakhrīya. Ma'āhid al-Tanṣīs* attributes them to al-Akḥṭal (d. 90/708), while *Mu'jam al-Audabā'* attributes them to Ja'far Ibn Hidhār (d. 276 / 893). Unfortunately, these verses do not exist in surviving manuscripts of al-Akḥṭal's poetry, and Ibn Hidhār has no extant collection of poems. To complicate matters further, in *Fawāt al-Wafā'āt* the verses are attributed to Kushājim. However, although they can be found in some editions of Kushājim's collected work, in some editions they are located in the last section, where the editor is not sure. Thus, it is probably impossible to determine who wrote the verses, as there is no clear evidence that any of the aforementioned poets wrote them at all. Indeed, the known poetry of said poets tends towards the same types, themes, and forms and thus the only thing we can say with absolute certainty is that all the poets named above lived between 90 / 708 and 360 / 970, and therefore these unattributable verses probably appeared sometime during the Abbasid era.

See: al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī Ibn Wakī' al-Tinnīsī, *al-Munṣif fī al-Dalā'lat 'alā Sariqāt al-Mutanabbī*, ed. by Ḥamūdī Zayn al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mashhadānī, 1st edn (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1993), p. 106, Al-Irbilī, p. 255, 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Abbāsī, *Ma'āhid Al-Tanṣīs. 'alā Shawāhid Al-Talkhīs*, (Misr: Matḥa'at al-Sa'āda, 1947). Yāqūt ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Udabā': Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-aḏīb*, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993), vol. 2, p.792. Muḥammad ibn Shākīr al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafāyāt* (Būlāq: Matḥa'at Būlāq, nd), p. 4100. Kushājim, p. 465.

1. She came to us, her face was as the moon, her body as a bough.
2. When she looked at you, her eyelids seemed full of drowsiness.
3. She sat in her seat, she became like a statue.
4. Then she sang and not one limb did not wish it were an ear.<sup>388</sup>

The poet describes beautiful singing but, to fully describe the scene, first presents three verses of context to clarify the singing girl physical beauty. Based on the verses' content, it seems the poet was at a meeting with several others, awaiting the singer's performance. This is much like the modern concert, with fans or spectators assembled at a specific time and in a specific place for a musical performance. Then, as the singer enters, the poet describes the beauty of her face, likening it to the moon, and comparing her body to the boughs, or branches, of a tree. When she arrives, he says she looks at the audience, and her eyes seem sleepy. He then relates how she sits in the place prepared for her performance and how she becomes like a statue in the midst of it. She begins singing, and the poet says not one of his limbs did not wish that it were itself an ear or, in other words, did not wish it were receiving the same degree of pleasure as the poet's ears were.

Regarding the rhetorical tools that have been used by the poet to confirm his opinion in these verses, we should first consider how the first three verses provide support for the final verse through the poet's perspectives of the singer's performance. The poet focuses on external characteristics and uses simile to express his impressions of the singer's physical appearance by comparing her face to the moon and her body to a tree's branches. Moreover, when the poet concentrates on the singer's sleepy eyes, we should bear in mind that such traits are traditionally viewed in a positive light within Arabian culture regarding the features of beauty.<sup>389</sup> In verse three, the poet again employs simile by comparing the singer to a statue. Here we should note how this comparison relates to the elegant similes in the previous verses to indicate, perhaps, the singer's and audience's context: we might easily imagine the singer, the poet and the other audience members in a beautiful place such as a temple. This image and the use of the word *wathan*, which means an idol to describe a beautiful girl. It has been used

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<sup>388</sup> The poet uses *jariha* in this verse and it has many meanings in Arabic, such as 'carnivorous birds and animals', but in this context, it means 'a person's limbs'. See Ibn Manẓūr, p. 587.

<sup>389</sup> Al- Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 9, p. 231.

by poets in the Abbasid age such as ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī's verse when he describes a beautiful girl by saying that: she is a statue of beauty, but my religion does not accept the worship of idols.<sup>390</sup> This means that this simile and its use was known at that time among poets. Yet the most important description to our subject comes in the last verse, when the poet describes the singer's voice. The poet primarily relies on metaphorical technique. The poet metaphorically gives the 'limbs' the ability to 'wish' becoming 'ears'. He thus says all his body parts wished they could make contact with the singer's art and, therefore, used metaphorical technique to emphasise the verse's meaning. Finally, the poet discusses the singer's performance in a way that, as we can see from our rhetorical analysis, reveals his genuine appreciation for her performance. Doing so is obviously a major concern for the poet, as the most emphatic of the rhetorical device he deploys appears in the last verse, where he introduces and discusses the singing itself by using this rhetorical metaphor.

In another text, Kushājim emphasises the beautiful singer's appearance on the same level as the diversity and quantity of her melodies. He says:

1. She came to you, accompanied with happiness; like happy life when it comes.
2. She walks smoothly and wears a beautiful embroidered very long dress.
3. She carries a lute. It is an eloquent responder, capable of multiple melodies.
4. It has a neck like a girl's leg, and the strings have knots like a girl's anklet.
5. The singer continues to play strings by *hazaj* and *ramal* melodies.
6. She does touch the strings like veins and she strains the strings.<sup>391</sup>

First, the poet begins as though he is talking to his friend: a poetic technique aiding him to express his feelings about the singer simply. He starts by talking about a time she came to meet the people. The expression he uses in Arabic in the first verse is usually used to express the happiness and comfort of someone. In fact, the poet used this expression at the time when the singer came to the meeting to say that this is one of life's pleasures. Poets usually use such

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<sup>390</sup> Yāqūt ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Udabā': Irshād al-Arīb ilā Ma'rifat al-Adīb*, vol. 2, p. 862. The verse is:

وَتُنُّ الْمَلَا حَةَ غَيْرَ أَنْ دِيَانَتِي تَأْبَى عَلَيَّ عِبَادَةَ الْأَوْثَانِ

<sup>391</sup> Kushājim, p. 416.

meaning to reference huge amounts of pleasure and happiness.<sup>392</sup> Then the poet uses a common literary expression to express happiness and pleasure. He describes the singer's walk and her dress as being long and elegant. The singer is then described as carrying her lute. It has the perfect ability to produce wonderful melodies. This lute has the ability to emulate any type of notes or melodies. However, part of the lute is too slim in comparison to the other parts. Therefore, the poet compares it to a girl's leg as a reference to its size. Additionally, there is another part of the lute that has knots related to the lute's fret. The poet compares this part to a girl's anklet. The singer is then described as playing the lute with several kinds of melodies. Specifically, the poet states two tunes are *hazaj* and *ramal*. It seems that, Kushājim was very happy in this encounter because we were told that those two type of melodies are used in pleasurable and happy situations.<sup>393</sup> The poet seems happy because he only mentions those two happy melodies. The last verse is about when she deftly touches the strings in the same way that a physician touches veins.

Rhetorically, this poem conveys several ideas regarding music and singing. The poet uses a simile to express the meaning of happiness and a comfortable life to say this is the feeling one gets when the singer comes to the meeting. This gives the reader a clear idea about how much this singer was appreciated by the poet.<sup>394</sup> The poet uses implicit metaphor to give the lute human characteristics to convey its eloquence. Before moving on from this verse, something should be said about his inelegant choice of the word 'respond' in the original Arabic text *al-jawāb*. The poet observed that the strings did not produce sound or melodies without touch. An answer or response is provided because of a question or action at the beginning. Therefore, he used this word because the strings do not produce sound without being touched, and therefore they are responsive to touch.

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<sup>392</sup> It is similar to a verse can be translated as: 'now the whole world comes to you as you wish, so do not forget me'. See: 'Abd al-Muta'āl Ṣa'īdī and Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qazwīnī, *Bughyat al-Īdāh li-Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ fi 'Ulūm al-Balāgha* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1999), vol. 4, p. 121. The verse is:

والان أقبلت الدنيا عليك بما تهوى فلا تنسى إن الكرام إذا

<sup>393</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', p. 161, and p. 166.

<sup>394</sup> Abdul-Raof, pp. 257–258. There is another way to analyse the first verse, where it can be considered as the shift technique or (*al-Iltifāt*). For more illustration, the poet says 'she came to you' but there is no evidence whether he references himself via the *al-Iltifāt* style or whether he means someone else, because the pronoun of 'ك' in Arabic can be used to refer to the addressee or the speaker in this technique. In fact, the second word has a significance in terms of supporting *al-Iltifāt* style, where the poet uses the word 'wa dunyāya' and its pronoun is 'ي' for the speaker. The poet can use either pronoun but he prefers to use the last one which suggests that he means himself in the first word.

The poet uses a simile in the fourth verse to make a comparison between the lute and the girl. One of the purposes is to clarify the beauty of the lute. In the first part, the poet compares the slim part of the lute (the neck) to a girl's leg. In the second part, he uses the simile again to clarify the design of the strings' knots or fret. He compares this part to anklets that girls wear. He uses anklets to describe the design of a ring or a circle.

To describe her ability, the poet refers to her continuous capacity to sing several types of melodies, which means she is very professional in her performance. Finally, the poet uses the simile technique to describe what she is doing when she sings. He mentions that she feels and touches the strings of the lute as when someone tries to touch one's veins in a delicate manner. The purpose of this simile is to clarify the careful way in which the singer deals with lute. In other words, she was gently playing the lute because no one touches veins in a violent way.

Another example where the poet interested in emphasising the idea of singers' beauty is found in the work of Ibn Nubāta al-Sa'dī (d.405 / 1014 ). He mixes images of the beauty of the singer's appearance and the beauty of his performance as well.

1. A singer played his lute, his eyes like arrows injuring my heart.
2. He came to me and his hand touched a string, then my soul strayed between the arrow and the string.<sup>395</sup>

Ibn Nubāta mixes images of the beauty of the singer's appearance and the beauty of his performance. The first verse uses arrow to create a harmony between the arrow and the strings of the lute. The poet says the singer's eyes (arrows) injure his heart. Then he uses metaphor to continue his poetic idea. The singer comes to the poet as a hunter then when he or she touches one string of the lute, the poet's soul is set loose. The poet carefully chose arrow as the simile in the first verse to connect the image to the string in the second verse, thus creating an extended metaphor throughout.

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<sup>395</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Umar ibn Nubāta, *Dīwān Ibn Nubāta al-Sa'dī*, ed. by 'Abd al-Amīr Maḥdī Ḥabīb Ṭā'ī (Baghdad: al-Jumhūrīya al-'Irāqīya, Wizārat al-I'lām, 1977), vol. 2, p. 615.



### *The singer's proficiency*

Another aspect of this theme is when the poets provide positive opinions on music and singing accompanied with confirmation of the proficiency of the singers. The verses below by Kushājim contain several points related to the singer's singing and her lute. One of the most important points among them is the quality, diversity, and quantity of melodies which indicates her proficiency:

1. She has many melodies that make you think she has given a mouth to each limb.
2. She sang, then I felt like I was flying in the sky because of joy.
3. The strings spoke and I will describe what I found.
4. The sound is like my moan; I am in love and the lute is free but complaining of passion.
5. She plays by her lute, its sound and her voice are compatible.
6. Even if her fingertips did not touch the strings, the air would move them.
7. She handled the lute skilfully like the doctor when he checks the patient's vein.
8. I felt her right hand as thunder and the left hand as lightning.<sup>396</sup>

The poet begins the poem by mentioning his admiration for this fabulous singer. He describes her ability in terms of the wealth of melodies that she can produce. It is unbelievable to the poet which makes him think that she has several mouths in each limb of her body because of the richness of the melodies that she can produce. When the singer begins her song, the poet thinks of himself as having wings and flying in orbit because of his incredible rapture. When the strings create sounds, the poet thinks they have the ability to speak as though they were human. The sound of the strings is similar to the moans and groans of the poet as though he were in love while the singer feigns her love. The poet believes that he is truthful, while the strings are untruthful regarding the sadness. The singer is very talented in terms of the

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<sup>396</sup> Kushājim, p. 354.

performance, and the lute's sound and her singing are astoundingly identical. More specifically if her fingers could not move and touch the strings, it sounds as if the air itself could do it. She is such an expert in singing, and she touches and feels the strings of the lute exactly as a physician does when he starts checking veins in the arm of a sick person.<sup>397</sup>

The ode contains several examples of figures of speech or *'ilm al-bayān*. The first verse mentions the wealth of melodies and how they are appreciated. From the first verse, we can easily see how the poet uses imagery to evoke meaning. For instance, he describes the singer as a creature with many mouths to express the richness of the melodies. Additionally, the second verse also expresses his admiration, but this time he describes himself as being like a bird that has the ability to fly high in the sky. He uses the metaphor technique again in the same form to express the meaning of his joy and happiness. In verse 3, the poet continues his use of metaphor by imagining that the lute's strings are somehow capable of human speech. The fourth verse has the same use of rhetorical techniques as in the previous verse but the expressed meaning is different, and is one of the most beautiful expressed on this subject. The poet describes the sound of the strings as being similar to the moan he makes because of his love, but in fact, there is a real difference between the poet and lute's strings in that the poet is honest in his love, whereas the strings merely pretend to be.

An important point here should be clarified related to the last issue, and that is whether the singer is intended as the subject of the poet's verse or the strings, since the poet uses a pronoun that could feasibly indicate either. It is better to assume that the strings are intended, then this creates an interesting use of personification.<sup>398</sup> Verse 5 describes human interaction in terms of the hug between the singer and the personified instrument. The poet's admiration is represented in his description of the compatibility between her singing and the lute's melodies. He describes her professionalism and how the union is free of dissonance. Klein states that the instrument has its own voice that appears by the air itself.<sup>399</sup> In verse 7, the poet uses a more direct kind of simile called an effective simile, which is one of the most important kinds of similes in Arabic rhetoric in terms of showing confirmation of the idea.

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<sup>397</sup> Klein, p. 74.

<sup>398</sup> Fadl Ḥasan 'Abbās, *al-Balāgha, Funūnuhā wa-Afnānuhā : 'Ilm al-Bayān wa-al-Badī'*, p. 181.

<sup>399</sup> Klein, p. 74.

Its importance in this case rests in the confirmation of the poet's meaning. The poet here is highly appreciative of the singer's professionalism. He observed her hands as she was playing the strings and he found her performance to be of the utmost level of accuracy. He makes a comparison between the singer when she touches the strings of the lute and a doctor when he carefully checks the veins of the patient. By the use of effective simile, the poet draws a comparison between the singer and doctor in terms of the quality of their performance and the ease with which they work. It is clear that this illustrates a high level of ability for this singer since he elevated her to the same position of a doctor, which is here a symbol of professionalism. Klein claims that the patient in this verse is related somehow to the lute. He writes: 'the image also echoes the topos of the instrument as a lover, sick with unfulfilled love for the musician'.<sup>400</sup> In fact, by looking for simile feature between likened and the likened to in this verse in order to find the connection between the two parts, it appears that simile feature is not related to the instruments at all but to the singer and her ability. This argument is supported by the second word in the verse (*'ālimatan*) which means skilfully. Finally, in the last verse, the poet relies on the same technique of the simile by using the tool 'like' when comparing the singer's right hand to thunder and the left hand to lightning. Klein,<sup>401</sup> and Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī,<sup>402</sup> believe that this may signal the power and speed of the singer in her performance as is clear in the verse.

Furthermore, the verses below by al-Qādī al-Fāḍil's (d.596/ 1200) describe a wonderful ability of the singer by discussing a kind of hidden miracle in her singing:

1. She brought a lute as her fiancé, and the gathering people were careful because of his honour.
2. She plays the lute, and obtains excellence. The other singers are below her in rank.
3. She has a miracle when you consider it carefully, you will discover it.
4. The lute is dumb and the dumb can talk in her hands.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Klein, p. 74.

<sup>401</sup> Klein, p. 74.

<sup>402</sup> Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abd Allāh al-'Askarī, *Dīwān al-Ma'ānī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Quds, 1933), vol. 1. p. 328.

<sup>403</sup> 'Abd al-Rahīm ibn 'Alī al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, *Dīwān al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil*, ed. by Aḥmad Aḥmad Badawī (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1961), p. 53.

The poet begins his verses by clarifying the situation or context at the beginning. First, he mentions that the singer brought her lute where the poet and his group were waiting. The poet gives the lute a high level of appreciation when he refers to the lute like the singer's fiancé because of what he had seen of her love of the lute and its importance for her. The position of her lute makes people more careful and they show more respect for her lute. Then the poet talks about the musician's performance when she starts playing. He expresses her professionalism by saying that she displays quality and excellence in terms of her ability. Therefore, she is held in high regard and that puts other singers at a lower rank. The poet believes that this singer has a magical power or she uses a kind of miracle. Concerning what the poet believes, this gift can be remarkably easily to determine with a little thought. The secret of her miracle, as he believes, is that the lute is like a mute or dumb person, but she has the ability to transform the mute into a thing capable of speech.

Rhetorically, the poet uses a metaphor to convey his ideas to the readers. He expresses the relationship between the singer and her lute by using the word 'fiancé'. The poet describes a special link between the singer and her lute in terms of a special human connection by using hypallage where it clarifies the strength of the connection. Additionally, the poet expresses the situation in the meeting and the actions of the gathering people when the singer comes accompanied by her lute and people are reserved because of the lute's solemnity. In fact, the poet uses a metaphor to express the actions of the gathering people. Such actions are in fact normal behaviour in these types of meetings to show respect for the singer and their art and to give them opportunity to concentrate on their performance as well. However, the poet ignores those realities and creates a new metaphorical meaning, which is solemnity or veneration. It is clear that when he provides the first metaphorical use of fiancé, he finds it more suitable to say the actions were formal in order to make people appear to be in a respectful position.

The poet asserts the meaning of the singer's professional performance and shows that all other singers are beneath her level. In addition, he uses this technique to convey meaning, but this time he directs the reader to convince him or her of his idea. Finally, the poet uses a simile to clarify his previous idea that the singer possesses a miracle. He describes the lute as a person who is dumb, but the miracle here is that the singing girl has the ability to make it a speaker. This ability has been described as a sign of the singer's proficiency, which is one of

several aspects mentioned by al-Jāhiz, who says: ‘Hārūt and Mārūt, Mūsās’ staff, and Pharaoh’s magicians, are not so skillful as these singing-girls are’.<sup>404</sup>

Another example is by the minister al-Muhallabī (d. 352 / 963) who says:

1. A singing girl is rich in singing and melodies, she spends them wastefully.
2. Like a horseman on a horse who likes to look at himself.<sup>405</sup>

In these two verses, the poet states his admiration of a woman singer, who has beautiful voice and is ‘rich in singing’. The poet likens the singer’s voice to one who is rich in money. However, like those who are rich in money, those who are rich in talent have a potential for wastefulness. Then he poet uses simile in the most obvious way by using ‘like’. The poet compares the singer and her voice to a horseman and his horse: the singer, in her self-conceit, ‘watches’ her voice sing in the same way the horseman, in his self-conceit, watches himself as he rides.

Another example by al-Khubz Arzī (d.327 / 939) says:

1. I found happiness with him. What a beautiful night of talking and entertainment.
2. Her singing spread poetical pearls, her speech like pearls scattered.
3. If you are not a messenger of entertainment, the lute would not be talking.
4. It is still talking to you, and the earth was about to move.
5. If the seas become wine when you sing, then we will drink the seas.
6. Night is shorter because your singing, then it goes quickly.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Al-Jāhiz, *The Epistle of Singing - Girls of Jahiz*, trans. by A. F. L Beeston (England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1980), p. 34. The Qur’ānic Verse about ārūt and Mārūt is: (2: 102 ), and the Qur’ānic Verses about Mūsās’ staff is: (27: 10-12)

<sup>405</sup> ‘Alī ibn Zāfir, *Badā’i’ al-badā’ih*, ed. by Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīya, 2007), p. 236.

<sup>406</sup> *Majallat al-Majma’ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Irāqī, Dīwān al-Khubz Arzī*, ed. by Muḥammad Ḥasan Āl Yāsīn (Baghdad: al-Majma’ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Irāqī, 1989), vol. 1, p. 181.

The poet in this poem is highly appreciative of his companion's singing, with whom he found happiness and entertainment. He illustrates the reason for his happiness, which is his friend's singing and talking. Then the poet compares the singer to a messenger who has special gifts that enable lifeless things to talk. He uses exaggeration in the fourth verse, where he says the lute talks to you all the time even when the earth has moved or there has been an earthquake. Additionally, the poet again uses exaggeration when he says his singing will give the companions the ability to drink sea water as if it were wine. Finally, he states that the lovely singing has the ability to even make a long night seem short.

Additionally, Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī concentrates on the proficiency of the singer. He says:

1. He appears with the lute on his lap to show me his talent in playing.
2. Once he touches its (belly) / *baṭn*, and once he tightens its throat.
3. Then he sets the melody and sings perfectly.
4. I tear my clothes and if my heart were in the place of my clothes I would split my heart.<sup>407</sup>

The poet in this work describes a singer's performance. The first verse describes the moment when he meets the singer, who shows him his ability in playing the lute. The poet says he plays the lute from the middle and from the end. The poet describes the singer's actions when he plays the lute to make strings ready for playing. Then the singer describes the moment before the song then begins singing perfectly. The poet says when he hears the song, he tears his clothes because of his great happiness. Furthermore, he uses exaggeration saying if his heart was in the place of the clothes then it will be torn as well.

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<sup>407</sup> Al-Hamadhānī, p. 60.

Another poetic text has been composed by Ibn Wakī‘ al-Tinnīsī (d. 393/ 1002). He says:

1. A singer, his lute’s strings swear to not be in conflict with the tune of the pipe.
2. An Intelligent singer stirs each quiet limb like his stirring for quiet strings.
3. His singing makes solemn people sell solemnity to buy silliness.
4. The best kind of singing gives wings to the mind once it is heard.<sup>408</sup>

The poet concentrates on the singer’s proficiency and he is highly appreciative of the singer’s excellent performance. He uses simile and metaphor, and personifications to clarify and confirm his ideas.

#### *The instruments*

Another aspect of this theme is when poets describe the instruments in positive way. For example, the instruments can provide beautiful sounds with different features. Kushājim describes the harmony and conformity between a singer and her lute.<sup>409</sup> Additionally, the poet pays attention to the lute’s design and its decoration in these verses:

1. She brought a lute, its sounds like a girl’s voice when she complains about leaving her beloved.
2. The sound is slight, and souls prefer it. There is a painting on the lute like a flower growing up around.
3. Its strings are consistent like fingers of your two hands if you gather them.
4. If she had used its melodies to bring back someone, he would have come back to the sound.

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<sup>408</sup> Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Yaūmat al-Dahr, fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-‘Aṣr*, vol. 1, p. 455.

<sup>409</sup> See: Caswell, p. 232.

5. How amazing that her sound and the lute's sound are like two sisters talking to each other gently.
6. It talks when she stops and she talks when the lute stops.<sup>410</sup>

The poet mentions the singer with her lute. Immediately, when the poet hears the lute's melodies, he thinks the sound of the lute is similar to a girl's sound when she complains about separating from her beloved. He describes two things related to the singer's lute. First, its sound is soft and light, and souls like it upon hearing it. The second is a description of the lute's features in terms of its form and design, where there are flowers drawn on the lute as a natural scene. The strings of the lute are completely conforming to each other like fingers of both hands webbing together, as the poet states in the third verse. Then the poet imagines that the lute's melodies have the ability to bring back someone who is a fugitive or a runaway. The poet shows his admiration by saying that a beautiful harmony exists between the singer and her lute. They are similar to two sisters talking to each other intimately and in familiarity. The poet describes the outstanding alternating conversation between the singer and her lute: each one of them starts when the other stops, which reveals a professional cooperation between them.

It is clear that the poet is highly interested in using rhetorical tools to express his point of view. The poet concentrates on the technique of the simile to show his ideas through comparison. He uses the simile technique in four out of six verses. At the beginning, the poet tries to convey his ideas related to the sound of the lute. Nevertheless, at the same time, the poet informs the reader about the performer's identity as a girl. He uses a simile in the first verse by making a comparison between the lute's sounds and a girl's voice. Actually, the poet gives more details about this girl, including that her voice's softness sounds like a girl complaining about being separated from her beloved. This kind of simile is compound simile (simile of likening one to compound) / *tashbīh mufrad bimurakkb*, where the likened to (*al-mushabbh*) is one part (the lute) and the likened (*al-mushabbh bih*) the other: forming the compound structure).<sup>411</sup> The reason for using a simile here is that there are some details about the lute's sound that the poet can effectively clarify by using this method to refer to those

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<sup>410</sup> Kushājīm, pp. 71–72.

<sup>411</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 158.



special features.<sup>412</sup> In verse 2, the poet mentions the sound of the lute by describing it with delicate words. The poet observes some patterns on the lute, and he uses the tool ‘like’ to say that these beautiful patterns convey truth in the flowers that are growing around it.<sup>413</sup>

In verse 3, the poet expresses his perception of the lute’s strings. He finds that they conform to each other in an interesting way so he tries to find a similar object to compare them to. Here, he uses the webbing together of the fingers of both hands as a simile. He assumes that the sound of the lute has the ability to bring people back when they hear it, even if they were fugitives. In verse 5, the poet further expresses his admiration of the sounds of both the lute and the singer by using *al-nidā’* which shows this kind of admiration (*yā husna*).<sup>414</sup> Additionally, he uses a simile to clarify his opinion. He uses ‘like’ (*ka’anna*) which is one of main tools of the simile to describe and compare the lute and the singer to two sisters who are talking to each other gently and intimately. Additionally, the poet describes the relationship between the lute and the singer. There is a high level of harmony between them where the singer and her lute are alternating in the song. Most importance here is given to the singer herself, which gives us an indication of the poet’s opinions on her professionalism. According to the overall rhetorical analysis, it is clear that the poet uses the technique of the simile to generate a strong impact in terms of transferring his ideas to the reader. Additionally, the poet is very clear in terms of his expression of his admiration and appreciation of the singer’s performance. Finally, there is a high level of accuracy when he discusses the meaning related to the singer and her lute to demonstrate her professionalism. Nevertheless, the poet seems to prefer to describe what he is looking at without mentioning anything related to his feelings except for his general admiration.

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<sup>412</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 170.

<sup>413</sup> Al- Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 8, p. 187. This feature of patterns and paintings on the lute is common in other poetry. For example, Abū al-Faraj al- Iṣfahānī mentions a verse by Muzāḥim al-‘Aqilī (d. 120 / 738) alludes to the patterns and decorations on a Persian lute, showing how descriptions of lute patterns exist in other poetry from the period. The verse is:

بجُوزِ كُحْقِ الهَاجِرِيَّةِ زَانِهٍ      بِأَطْرَافِ عَوْدِ الْفَارَسِيِّ وَشُومِ

<sup>414</sup> Fadl Ḥaṣan ‘Abbās, *al-Balāgha, Funūnuhā wa-Afnānuhā: ‘Ilm al-Ma’ānī*, 4th edn (‘Ammān: Dār al-Furqān li-Tiḃā’a wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī’, 2000), p. 166.

Some poets look at the lute where it is on the singer's lap and describe it. For example, al-Nājjim (d. 314 / 926) describes the relationship he imagines between singer and lute:

1. When 'Āteb hugs her lute and whispers to it, it then can speak.
2. She tickles its belly / *batn*, gently, then we hear wonderful laughing.<sup>415</sup>

The poet in these two verses makes a human relationship between the singer and her lute. He uses words like hug, whisper, talk, tickle, and laughing to describe actions usually exchanged between humans. The poet gives the lute the capacity to talk after the singer hugs and whispers to it. The poet also uses personification technique to give human features to the lute. Then the poet uses the same technique by comparing playing the strings with tickling the lute's belly. In the second part of the last verse, the poet uses personification to give the lute the ability to make listeners hear wonderful laughing as a result of tickling its belly.<sup>416</sup> He mentions the listeners' reaction of admiration at hearing the beautiful melodies. Another example by Ibn Nubāta al-Sa'dī (d.405 / 1014 ). He describes the lute on the lap of a singer:

1. Her lute on her lap like her baby she pities him all time.
2. All the time she tickles his belly / *batn*, and when he sleeps, she pulls one of his ears.<sup>417</sup>

In these two verses, the poet describes the relationship between the singer and her lute. We should first note that the poet concentrates on the singer's actions more than the lute's sound. The poet uses a simile in the first verse, describing the relationship between the singer and her lute as the close relationship of a mother to her baby. Then the poet notices that playing the strings of the lute is similar to tickling a baby's belly. The result of tickling a baby's belly is the sound of laughing. However, the results from tickling the lute is the melodies. To some extent, Klein's interpretation of the use of the word '*hafa*' can be accepted, in that the poet plays on the double meaning of the verb '*hafa*'.<sup>418</sup> The meaning of misbehaving regarding the

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<sup>415</sup> Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Awn, *Kitāb al-Tashbīhāt*, ed. by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īd Khān (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 118.

<sup>416</sup> Klein, p. 52.

<sup>417</sup> Ibn Nubāta, vol 2, p. 627.

<sup>418</sup> Klein, p. 53.

lute is to be out of tune. A mother pulling the baby's ears as a punishment of something is likened to the singer tightening the strings of the lute: when the lute strings are loosening the musician punishes it by turning its ears. The poet uses imagery simile where he compares the whole situation to another situation.

Additionally, al-Khubz Arzī (d.327 / 939), describes a Greek girl singer playing the lute. He says:

1. A virgin Greek singer, her forehead like the full moon.
2. The lute cries, it is yearning on her lap and she rolls its ears like when pack it.
3. *Al-Shāhijān* has a lovely crying like the singing of who is living in the trees (birds).<sup>419</sup>

He uses simile to describe her ability in playing the lute and *al-Shāhijān*, another musical instrument. Also, he compares her forehead to the full moon. He uses metaphor when he compares the sound to weeping, then uses simile to compare its crying to yearning. The poet makes other comparisons between the actions of the singer when she rolls the strings to someone rolling things up to pack. In verse 3, the poet states *al-Shāhijān* makes a sound like crying. Finally, to clarify, he uses simile in the last part of the last verse to compare this crying to birds singing using metonymy, with the poet suggesting birds by saying 'who lives in the trees'.

### *Famous musicians*

Another aspect of this theme is when poets look at music, singing, and singers positively while mentioning names of well-known musicians to make comparisons. Through examining poetic texts that give positive opinions about singers, the poets tend to make comparison between singers using superlatives. The first aspect is when the singer has been

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<sup>419</sup> Yāsīn, vol. 1, p. 181.

preferred to everyone. For example, Ishāq al-Mawṣilī prefers Mulāḥiḍ's singing (d. 3<sup>rd</sup> /9<sup>th</sup> century) and he says that Mulāḥiḍ is the best singer of all. He says:

- 1- I will drink as long as Mulāḥiḍ sings, while the white hair is warning.
- 2- Mulāḥiḍ sing and keep what I like from your singing.
- 3- I swear no skillful singers sing as your singing and nobody pronounces as you do.
- 4- This opinion will sadden singers and it will anger them.<sup>420</sup>

The poet declares he will keep drinking wine while Mulāḥiḍ still sings to him even though it should be stopped when he becomes an old man. The poet swears by God to confirm his claim that he is the best singer compared to any skillful musician. He uses narrative description to deliver his opinions.

The second aspect is when the singer has been preferred to a specific degree by mentioning specific names of the well-known musician. For example, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih describes the good voice of the singing girl in narrative description style.<sup>421</sup> He says:

1. Someone who begrudges the sound of the singing nightingale, I was not expected this stinginess from any other one.
2. If all people on the earth were listening to this sound, it will not decrease and will not increase.
3. I am afraid of your shooting star. I will listen to the sound from another place.
4. If Ziryāb was a life and he hear the voice he will die by the jealousy, or dissolve by gloominess.
5. Do not begrudge sound that will tour inside my body as the soul.
6. I will not drink at all, and I will come while my food is in my hand.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Al- Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 5, P 260.

<sup>421</sup> It has been said he heard the voice and stopped in the street beside the door to listen while a bucket of water poured upon him then he sent a letter to the lord with these verses.

<sup>422</sup> 'Abd Rabbih, p. 51.

It is clear that the poet believes the singers' voice is the most beautiful. He compares her singing to the singing of nightingale and he makes a comparison between her and the highly famous singer *Ziryāb*. The poet imagines the situation of this well-known singer being alive to hear this amazing singing. The result that has been chosen by the poet is *Ziryāb*'s death, whether by jealousy or gloominess. Additionally, he says:

1. The lute is played, and birds sing in the morning.
2. Stones have *ahzāj* when it sings, birds of the land repeat it.
3. And the sand hill talks in tune, it makes lovers talk about his secrets.
4. The lute among us is like the king walking slowly with his soldiers following him.
5. When he walks with his soldiers like *Kisrā ibn Hurmuz* followed by his companions.
6. The lute is rare not common, if it was common people will not break poetry.
7. Soft voice with lute playing, if we compare it to poetry then poets will be lost.
8. If *Ziryāb* were alive and he heard his voice, he would die of jealousy when he did not see him.<sup>423</sup>

The poet here talks about music meeting only with the lute. In the first three verses, the poet describes the background of this meeting. The lute is playing all its strings when the birds sing in the morning time, which is the best time to hear birds singing. The poet gives the stones the ability to talk and sing the *hazaj*, which is a kind of happy melody, and the birds also sing with these stones. The poet uses personification in this verse to convey his idea where everything seems happy. In verse 3, personification is used when the poet gives the sand hill the ability to talk in melodies that can make the lover talk about his love.

Then in five verses the poet talks about the lute in a highly appreciative way. He starts by using a simile in the beginning of the fourth verse, then he compares the lute to the king, as the king is always in the front with the soldiers following him. Then the poet asserts this meaning by giving another simile. To illustrate this point clearly, the poet gives the same meaning in another way by bring to memory one of the greatest kings in the ancient world, the

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<sup>423</sup> ‘Abd Rabbih, p. 74–75.

Persian King Kisrā ibn Hurmuz (Khusrow), when he would walk with his companions following after him. The poet in later verses praises the lute and its sound. He believes that the lute is rare and is an instrument that has the ability to make verses in perfect meters. Poets continue to praise the lute and its sound, saying the poets themselves will not be recognised by others. Finally, the poet refers to the great singer of that time, Ziryāb, to show to what extent this lute, its sound, and the player's voice are of the highest degree of goodness.

Another example is the work of Ibn al-Zaqqāq al-Balansī (d. 528 / 1134). He says:

1. His singing reminds me the singing of singer pigeon.
2. He has melodies not found in any singer, and he has a singing voice moving singer's emotions.
3. Leave what you have been told about Ma'bad's voice, and keep away from singing about Ibn Mabad's singing.<sup>424</sup>

Ibn al-Zaqqāq speaks directly to the reader advising him to let any others singing about Ma'bad sing on where the singer can sing better than Ma'bad.<sup>425</sup>

### 3.3.2.2 Negative perspectives on music and singing

Negative poet's opinions can be divided into several categories where the poets criticise the musicians because of bad singing or foolish songs, or because of the unpleasant voice of the singer. Additionally, the singers can be criticised because of their bad voice, weak capacity, bad performance, and bad appearance. Furthermore, singers have been criticised by poets over their manners or behaviour, and due to the bad sound of their instruments. Poets also display negative opinions toward music, singing, and singers motivated by religious consideration.

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<sup>424</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Aṭīya ibn Muṭrif al-Balansī ibn al-Zaqqāq, *Dīwān Ibn al-Zaqqāq al-Balansī*, ed. by 'Afīfa Maḥmūd Dayrānī (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1964), p. 292.

<sup>425</sup> Ma'bad (d. 126 / 644) is a famous singer lived in the Umayyad age.

### *Bad singing / cold or foolish*

To illustrate these aspects the research will present and analyse poetic texts materials starting with the first category, where the poets have considered musicians' singing to be bad or their songs to be foolish. An important contextual point to bear in mind is that Arabs believe that professional singers will make those who listen feel excited and therefore warmer. Weak singers, on the other hand, make people feel quiet and cold. Therefore, many poets express this idea by using a specific word in Arabic *bārid* / cold meaning that the singer or singing is not very good. For example, 'Alī ibn al-Jahm criticises a singer and says:

1. I was in a meeting, then the singer asked when the winter would come.
2. Then I spanned (measured) the carpet between us, and said "in so much before your singing".
3. You decide to sing, so summer is gone.<sup>426</sup>

Alī ibn al-Jahm builds these verses on the idea that uninspiring singing can cause emotional coldness. The poet does not mention any specific aspect of the performance, such as the instrument or the voice, or the melodies. The poetical style used is a question-and-answer format, with the poet using his imagination to form the criticism, which depends on the shared association of coldness being induced by bad singing. The reader clearly sees the meaning; the singer's lack of skill is the source of winter.

Another example is provided by Ibn al-Rūmī where he says:

1. A cold singer has dew; fire extinguishes when he opens his mouth.

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<sup>426</sup> Al-Jahm, p. 103.

2. He sings without request but will not be silent without his own conditions.
3. Listeners wish to be dead before hearing his singing.<sup>427</sup>

The poet in these verses talks about a singer who does not meet his expectations. He concentrates on the meaning of a cold singer and imagines a new way to express his meaning by using a metaphor to make the effect of the singing similar to cold water. He mentions the idea when a fire can be extinguished when the singer opens his mouth to sing because of his unprofessionalism. Then the poet relates another problem with this singer, who starts singing without any request and does not stop singing without his own conditions. Finally, he says the listener would rather be dead than have to hear more of his horrible voice.

Additionally, Kushājim uses a new idea to criticise a singer. He mentions his foolish singing and claims that the singer was never invited back to a party. He says:

1. A singer has a foolish tone and shaky hands.
2. He has not been seen twice in someone's house.
3. His appearance hinders pleasure more than death itself.<sup>428</sup>

In discussing another unsatisfactory singer, the poet in these verses draws attention to two features that are not acceptable. These are related to the singer's capacity for melody and tone. The melody is foolish; Kushājim expresses this idea by using the word *bārid* / cold. Furthermore, the singer's hands are 'shaky'. The poet gives proof for his opinion about the singer's ability in the second verse. It seems that singers were invited to enliven a musical private party. However, in this case, the poet confirms that this singer was never invited to people's homes a second time, he made such a terrible impression during his first performance. Finally, the poet notes that the pleasure of listening to the singer is less than that of the act of dying.

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<sup>427</sup> Ibn al-Rūmī, vol. 1, p. 177.

<sup>428</sup> Kushājim, p. 475.



In other examples, poets agree that the singing is too bad to the degree that going deaf is better than listening to bad singers' performance. For example, *Di'bil al-Khuzā'ī* says:

1. A singer when he is singing fills his companions with sadness.
2. The best of the companions is he who is deaf.<sup>429</sup>

The poet here does not use any rhetorical tools to express his idea. He only confirms the singer's poor performance by saying he is bringing worry and distress to the listener. Then he compares the companions and finds that the one who is suffering from deafness is better off than the ones who can hear.

Additionally, Abū al-Faḍl ibn al-'Amīd (d. 360 / 970) says:

1. When he sings, I fill up my ears with deafness.
2. And when I saw his face, I fill up my eyes with blindness.<sup>430</sup>

In these two verses, the poet only wants to express to what extent this singer is bad. The poet does not mention specific problems with the singer's performance, but rather he talks generally. The poet clarifies his own situation when he listens to this singer by first saying that when he hears the singer, he avoids this predicament by filling his ears with deafness, which is like people filling their ears with cotton; but the poet prefers deafness to cotton as a metaphorical use. Then the poet uses the same technique to express another reaction when he sees the singer's face, so when he should use black kohl to make eyeliner, he uses blindness to avoid seeing him.<sup>431</sup>

In the next two texts, the poets describe dissatisfied reactions toward the singers. They count several problems related their singing. For example, al-Khaṭīb al-Ḥaṣkafī (d. 551 / 1156) says:

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<sup>429</sup> *Di'bil ibn 'Alī al-Khuzā'ī, Dīwān Di'bil al-Khuzā'ī*, ed. by Ḥamad Ḥasan, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1994), p. 212.

<sup>430</sup> *Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī*, vol. 1, p. 822.

<sup>431</sup> There are examples of similar idea by Ibn al-Zaqqāq al-Balansī and Ibn Ghalbūn al-Sūrī.

1. A singer has painful singing. He is prevented from entering people's houses.
2. As he sang his eyes flashed and his jaw moved; we said "he must have epilepsy".
3. And he cut the lyrics and we wished his tongue were cut.
4. He never comes to a party with an invitation, and never has he left without a slap.<sup>432</sup>

The poet, in these four verses, criticises a singer whose performance is highly unsatisfactory. In fact, he suffers from various bad qualities related to his capacity and to his ethics. Firstly, the poet states that his singing is unacceptable, but he tends to force people to listen to his singing. People try to prevent him from entering their houses or attending their parties. The poet describes two of his features when singing. He always sings while blinking or flashing his eyes and moving his jaws too much. As a result, people think he suffers from epilepsy. Another bad quality is related to his ability to sing by singing the lyrics incorrectly. According to the poet, the singer usually cuts the poetry, which is one of the worst among his other bad features, and wishes his tongue was cut, which is one of the worst things that can happen to a singer. Finally, nobody likes to invite him to parties. In spite of this, however, he attends parties without invitation, but also he never leaves without an insult and a slap.

Additionally, Sibṭ ibn al-Ta'āwīdhī (d. 583 / 1187 ) numbers several problems in one singer:

1. Singing should heal our sadness; but this singer gives the sorrow in the depth of hearts.
2. His nature is unfamiliar. When he enters the house we hate his coming and his departure.
3. Tell him when you find him.
4. Abū al-Faṭḥ, your singing is unnatural, unoriginal, and unacceptable.
5. The only one in the *kitāb al-Aghānī* book who is like you is *al-khafīf al-thaqīl*.
6. If God decided to bring about the best for me and humanity, you would be dead.

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<sup>432</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1977), vol. 6, p. 208.

7. For how many nights has my hearing and my heart been affected by your harmful singing?
8. The fat becomes frosted while it was hot, and when you sing even a short song it drags on like Judgement Day.
9. You deprived my eyes from sleep: you did not increase my energy', and you did not make me feel well.
10. Faṭḥ, go away from the protection of God: you are hateful, and boring.<sup>433</sup>

The poet in his poem expresses his opinion in regard to Abū al-Faṭḥ performance: he does not concentrate on one bad feature but instead of that he lists them quite specifically. He remains dissatisfied with singer's performance. First he mentions a general idea about the benefit of music and he states the reason why should people listen to music: the poet declares that singing should relieve people's sadness. This singer has the ability to plant sorrow in the bottom of people's hearts, which obviously inverts what the poet understands as the intended benefit of music.

In verse 2, the poet mentions an issue related to the singer's instinctive character: clearly an artist should have a minimum capacity to be able to create art, but the problem with this singer instinct is extremely the worst. As a result, the audience are not happy to welcome the entry or departure of the singer, despite it being the usual behaviour to welcome singers warmly. In verse 4, he describes Abū al-Faṭḥ's singing by mentioning three features, all of which are highly problematic in the field of singing: unnatural singing, unoriginal singing, and unacceptable singing. Then the poet cites the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by al-Iṣfahānī, where he finds a similar tune for this singer called *al-khafīf al-thaqīl*. In fact, it is the original meanings of these two words that is significant here. In this context the meaning of light (*al-khafīf*) is crazy and (*al-thaqīl*) weighty is foolish. Then the poet makes a huge generalisation by saying all people know to what extent this singer is bad. Therefore the best thing for everyone is to lose this singer.

In the seventh verse, the poet uses the semantic technique of metaphor in the original Arabic text where he uses a word very similar in Arabic to the English word 'graze'. The poet uses this word not with regard to livestock but rather referencing his hearing and his heart. This

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<sup>433</sup> Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ta'āwīdhī, *Dīwān Sibṭ al-Ta'āwīdhī*, ed. by D S Margoliouth (Egypt: Maṭba'at al-Muqtaṭaf, 1903), pp. 467–68.

pasture (singers' singing) was unhealthy and harmful for the poet's hearing and his heart. Additionally, the poet has another criticism with regard to the singers' performance; as we discussed previously one of the most important features of a singer's entertainments is to keep his audiences warmer (i.e. engaged) by make his singing interesting. This singing is too cold (unengaging). This performer's singing makes the hot fat become frosted. Additionally, when he tries to make his singing shorter to fix his singing mistakes his performance still seems as long as judgement day in length. According to the Qurānic verse, the length of the judgement day is fifty thousand year.<sup>434</sup>

Then the poet explains other problems with this singer which are the outcome of his bad performance. First, he deprived the poet's eyes from sleep, he did not spread any positive energy and he did not improve anyone's health or wellbeing. The poet asks God to exclude this singer from his protection. Finally, the poet sends a stark message to the singer directly saying that he is a hateful and boring singer.

#### *Bad voice and weak capacity*

The poets also have criticised singers because of their voices. In several poetic texts the bad voice of singer was the main core of the criticism. This led some poets to compare singers' voices to animal sounds. For example, Abū Hilāl (d. 395 /1005) expresses his opinion about a singer's voice clearly in the following verses and compares the voice of the singer to those of animals.

1. She made us listen to her bad singing, which sounded like cats when one pinches their ears.
2. Until she raised her voice; she presented it then to my hearing as pigs' roaring.
3. If she lowered her voice and hummed, you would think of wasps warbling in vials.
4. Do not be fooled by colourful dress; this sets traps for simpletons.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Q. (70: 10).

<sup>435</sup> Abū Hilāl al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abd Allāh al-'Askarī, *Dīwān al-ma'ānī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1933), vol. 1, p. 215.

Each of these verses depends on a semantic technique. The poet asserts that the singer forces the poet and his group to hear her singing. The first criticism is that her singing is too poor; the poet compares it to mewling cats when their ears are pinched. The poet provides another ridiculous and negative quality to her voice when she sings loudly; she sounds like a pig (or a group of pigs). Yet, lowering her voice doesn't help; the poet thinks of wasps buzzing, the sound emphasised by them being in vials. He means the sounds of wasps' wings movements.<sup>436</sup> The poet finally ends the passage by warning readers not to be taken in by colourful clothing; a dressed-up singer can still be terrible yet trap simpletons with her physical appearance. This meaning has been confirmed by al-Jāhīz where the singing girl used emotions love as trap.<sup>437</sup>

Additionally, another poet says about a singer who has limited and bad songs:

1. If you listen to his limited melodies.
2. You will think there is someone sitting in his throat pinching cat's ears.<sup>438</sup>

He compares the singer's melodies to the sounds cats make when someone is pinching their ears.

Another poet mentions the limitation of melodies that the singer uses and the horrible quality of the sound, using simile to further describe the quality of the singer's voice. He imagines two people with mental issues fighting in the singer's throat. He says:

1. If you listen to his limited melodies.
2. You would think inside his throat a crazy person is throttling an idiot.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', p. 91.

<sup>437</sup> Al-Jāhīz, p. 32.

<sup>438</sup> Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī and Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh 'Aydārūs, *Maṭāli' al-Budūr wa-Manāzil al-Surūr* (Idārat al-Waṭan, 1881), vol. 1, p 236.

<sup>439</sup> Al-Ḥamawī and 'Aydārūs, p. 236.

### *Bad performance*

One important aspect in this theme is where poets have criticised singers over their bad performance. For example, Abū Nuwās criticises a singer called Abū al-Mughallis (d. 2nd /8<sup>th</sup> century), concentrating on his facial expressions. He says:

1. When Abū al-Ḥusayn sings he looks like someone who sneezes when he turns his face to the sun.
2. Sometimes he seems the same as he who is eating his tongue, and sometimes he seems as if he has a toothache.<sup>440</sup>

In these two verses, the poet uses his imagination and rhetorical tools to draw a funny image of the singer's actions when he is singing. The poet concentrates on the singer's facial expressions. He uses simile to clarify this image in both verses. First, the singer sings like someone who is looking directly at the sun and sneezes, which gives us in a few words a variety of expressions. Then the poet describes what the act of singing looks like. The singer looks like someone who eats his tongue or has toothache. The poet uses simile to interpret his idea and clarify the appearance of the singer's face when singing.

Another example of this aspect by Ibn Ghalbūn al-Sūrī where he criticises Abū Naṣr (d. 4<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> century) where he chose an improper melody for his song. He says:

1. When Abū Naṣr sings, we think he calls to prayer.
2. If he uses the same tune when reciting the Qur'ān he will convert people to Christianity.
3. A yellow piper is just as terrible as his playing.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al-'Iqd Al-Farīd*, vols 7, p. 81.

<sup>441</sup> Ibn Ghalbūn al-Ṣūrī, p. 212.

In these verses, the poet clearly criticises Abū Naṣr's singing, which is when a singer does not have the ability to distinguish between the manner of singing and the style of calling to prayer. In fact, the poet has strong feelings about this idea, and even intensifies the idea in the second verse. The poet imagines that if the singer tries to read the Holy Qur'ān in this manner of singing, he will make Muslims change their religion to Christianity. Then the poet claims that the colour of the singer can affect the singing. The piper's colour is yellow and the poet imagines yellow to be a colour of decayed things. The poet means that the piping is foolish and decayed, the same as the colour of the piper himself. The poet does not depend on rhetorical techniques in his claim, but rather he uses exaggeration as well as the unpredictable idea related to the piper's colour to express his opinion.

Furthermore, al-Sharīf al-'Aqīlī expresses dissatisfaction with a singer who has a problem with the pronunciation of song lyrics. He says:

1. This singer has a stumbling tongue: all of his lyrics are incorrect.
2. When he sings I tear my clothes, angrily; I hope a wasp sings in his clothes.<sup>442</sup>

The poet in these two verses concentrates on one point: the singer's pronunciation is completely wrong. He mentions that the words of his songs all are incorrect. In fact, the poet uses metaphor when he describes singer's tongue. He uses a word usually employed to describe someone who has fallen down, 'stumble' ('*athūr*'). The poet uses the word (*maksūr*) at the end of this verse, which is used to refer to broken things in general and broken verses specifically (for example, if the poetry has the wrong metre). Then the poet describes his situation when he listens to the singing: he destroyed his clothes and he wishes a wasp were inside the singer's clothes. We can note that the poet's indicates to the singer's voice by mentioning the wasp's sound.

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<sup>442</sup> 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn 'Aqīlī, p. 146.

In another example, ‘Alī ibn Bassām al-‘Abartā’ī (d. 302 / 915) criticises a singer because of his bad performance but the reaction of the poet has been moved from the singer to the writer of lyrics who is well known poet. He says:

1. He sings badly. So, I say: “Liḥyat al-Tays, stop singing”
2. Leave ‘*Qifa nabkī*. My God does not show mercy to Imru’ al-Qays.<sup>443</sup>

The poet here uses ridicule to express to what extent this singer is so bad. The singer repeats one song several times. First, he uses an adjective rather than the singer’s name, using ‘goat beard’ as a humorous name for this singer. Then the poet clarifies the song lyrics, which are formed of the first verse of Imru’ al-Qays’s famous poem.<sup>444</sup> However, the most unusual aspect of this verse is when the poet prays to God and asks him to not grant Imru al-Qays mercy, which is an uncommon style among poets to say that about one of the greatest poets of the Pre-Islamic era. In fact, this reaction gives us an idea about what a bad singer’s performance can lead a poets to say, even about a great poet such as Imru’ al-Qays.

### *Bad appearance*

Another aspect of this theme is when poets have negative opinions due to the bad voice of the singer combined with the singer’s appearance. For example, Ismā‘īl ibn Badr (d. 351 / 962) says:

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<sup>443</sup> ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Thimār al-Qulūb fī al-Muḍāf wa-al-Mansūb*, ed. by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 1st edn (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣrīya, 2003), p. 308.

<sup>444</sup> Imru’ al-Qays, p. 8. The Arabic text is:

بَسْفَطِ اللَّوَى بَيْنَ الدُّحُولِ فَحَوْمَلِ      قَفَا نَبْكَ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبٍ وَمَنْزَلِ



1. We listened to a bald singer with broken teeth. Her voice brings deafness to our ears.
2. I swear to God I do not know what is in her throat: dogs barking or frogs croaking.<sup>445</sup>

In these two verses, the poet criticises the singer's looks and her voice. The poet describes the physical quality of her mouth and her head. It is clear that poet wants to produce an absurd image of the singer. Singers should be an example of fashion and beauty, with good teeth to ensure good singing and in keeping with the singer's bad teeth, the poet tells us her voice brings deafness to the listener. By swearing to God in the second verse, the poet not only emphasises but validates the truth of his opinion that her voice sounds like one of two irritating, unpleasant sounds made by either dogs or frogs.

In another example by al-Nājim, he says:

1. To insult a bad singing girl is to recite a prayer; her best sound is silence.
2. She is slim except for her heavy abdomen. She is a spider.<sup>446</sup>

He expresses his opinion about a bad singer's sound, comparing several of her sounds, and concluding that the best result would be silence. Additionally, he describes the singer's physical characteristics using simile to clarify his idea. This singer has slim limbs and a huge belly, so is similar to a spider.

Furthermore, Ibn Qalāqis expresses his dissatisfaction regarding a bad singer's performance accompanied with an unappealing appearance in three verses. He says:

1. Lute player sang a song like death struggle.
2. When the lute is on her lap, she is like a bereaved woman who lays a dead man on her lap.

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<sup>445</sup> Ibn al-Kattānī, p. 257.

<sup>446</sup> Al-'Askarī, *Dīwān al-ma'ānī*, vols 1, p. 215.

3. She is playing the strings of the lute like a spider weaving her web.<sup>447</sup>

The poet uses simile to compare the singer's voice to the process of a life-and-death struggle, and to death itself. Then the poet uses simile to accomplish his idea. He uses 'like', a conventional form of simile for more assertion. He makes comparisons between the singer's situations when the lute is on her lap to a bereaved women laying a dead man on her lap. This image is to highlight the miserable nature of the situation with this bad singer. Finally, the poet uses simile again to create a ridiculous image of the singer, comparing her playing her lute to a spider when it makes her web. In contrast, let us remember the previous poet who was describing the singing girl while the lute lies similar to a child on her lap.

### *Bad manners*

In another poetic text Ibn Abī al-Bishr (d. 465 / 1072) criticises a singer over his bad manners in addition to his bad singing. He says:

1. We have a singer who usually makes us angry by what he is doing.
2. Vaunting, a lot of bragging, and haughtiness.
3. He sang a melody called (*thaqīl awwal*)<sup>448</sup> and he is the (*thaqīl awwal*).<sup>449</sup>

Ibn Abī al-Bishr talks about a singer who does not spread happiness, but rather he makes his companions very angry because of his arrogance and other bad qualities. The poet counts in the second verse some of these features. In fact, such features will make people angry even if he is not a singer. Additionally, his choice of songs is too bad because he starts singing

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<sup>447</sup> Naṣr ibn 'Abd Allāh, p. 382.

<sup>448</sup> It is one of the eight fundamental Arabic melodies. See: 4.2.2.

<sup>449</sup> Muhammad ibn Muhammad 'Imād al-Dīn al-Isfahani, *Kharīdat al-Qaṣr wa-Jarīdat al-'Aṣr*, ed. by Muḥammad Marzūqī, and others, 3rd edn (Tunisia: al-Dār al-Tūnisīya lil-Nashr, 1986), vol. 1, p. 13.

by the melody of *al-thaqīl al-awwal*. The poet repeats the meaning of the tune's name which means foolish and boring.

### *Bad instruments sound*

Another aspect of this theme is when the poet shows his dissatisfaction with the singer's performance criticising his lute sound especially. The musician described was a specialist in playing the lute, but unfortunately did not meet the level of the poet's expectation. Therefore, the poet decides to criticise him and compare his odd sound to animals' sound. Al-Muṣayyis al-Nāmī says:

1. When he sat down and started playing his lute lazily.
2. Like when the entire city's rats inside his lute gnawed dry bread.<sup>450</sup>

The poet satirises a specific singer. The verses start with the poet describing the singer's style when he sits down; the way the singer sits seems to reveal that the singer is not a professional. The poet asks God to prevent the singer from sitting in this way again.<sup>451</sup> Additionally, the poet is unsatisfied with the musician's stylings on the lute; he seems laggardly, lazy, and careless in his playing. The poet tries to convince the reader that the lute player is of minimal ability and uses an imagery simile. The poet's image of ridicule clarifies the poor sound of the lute. He uses the main tool of the simile (like), to emphasise the bad sound of the lute. 'Rats' convey disgust at the song; he broadens the simile to mentioning the rats of the 'entire city'. The 'gnawing of hard bread' is used to convey the actual sound of the lute. At the end, we should note that the poet in these two verses orients his criticisms and shows his feelings about the specific performance. As has been the case in many of these examples the critique is not extended to cover music or musicians in general.

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<sup>450</sup> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Nāmī, *Shi'r al-Nāmī: Abī al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Nāmī al-Maṣīṣī*, ed. by Ṣabīḥ Radīf, 1st edn (Baghdad: Dār al-Baṣrī, 1970), p. 98.

<sup>451</sup> Singers' posture when singing: Sawa, p. 154.

In other verses, al-Nāmī satirises a musician named Naṣr (4<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> century). The poet uses ridicule again, and also mentions the sounds of animals.

1. I saw Naṣr while he was sitting playing a tune, then I ran away.
2. Because there are dogs in his lute's strings, barking at me.
3. His companions are thinking—a fox is strangling a hen in his throat.
4. I am not an admirer because of him; I am only an admirer because he admires and wonders at himself.<sup>452</sup>

The poet again uses ridicule in these verses as a poetic device, perhaps to make people laugh at this singer. We can note that the poet concentrates on the ability of the singer in terms of his lute playing, the sound of his strings, and his own voice. The poet depends on the drawing of an imaginary caricature: flight should usually be precipitated by potential harm, but the poet clarifies that it is because of the singer's lute. Then the poet indicates that the lute playing is an acceptable reason for running away, with metaphor used as a semantic technique to explain the extent to which he was in a terrible situation because of the singer's poor performance (the player makes the strings 'bark'). Then the poet uses another simile to describe the thinking of the player's companions, using another caricature to ridicule the singer's voice. The poet does not want to say this is his own opinion, but rather would like to convince the reader by attributing the opinion to the singer's companions. Finally, the poet provides a general comment about the performance, saying that nothing deserves admiration except for the singer's own satisfaction and self-admiration. The last verse can be interpreted in another way where there is nothing deserves admiration except for the singer's fans' satisfaction and his lovers' admiration. The second one is more likely and more understandable, as the second suggests that someone admired his work, yet it would seem odd to find a bad singer who has fans. In fact, we can note that al-Nāmī in both texts creates funny images by comparing the singer's voice and lute playing to the sounds of animals.

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<sup>452</sup> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Nāmī, p. 90.

### *Negative poets' opinions depending on religious beliefs*

Some poets provide negative opinions toward music and singing depending on religious beliefs. These opinions condemn music and singing in glances without going deeply into clarifying their reasons. For example, Abū al-‘Atāhiya (d. 210 / 826) says:

The destruction of life happens because of amusement when pipe, lute, and cymbals have gathered.<sup>453</sup>

Simply the poet attributes the destruction of civilisation to the bad influence of amusements such as music, and he mentions three kind of instruments which are pipe, lute, and cymbals. Depending on the context it is clear that the poet condemns the use of music due to his religion perspective. Another example is a poem by Abū al-Asad al-Ḥammānī (d. 3<sup>rd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> century), who was asked to compose some elegiac verses for the singer Ibrahim al-Mawṣilī when he died; he closed his elegy with an unusual verse suggesting religious condemnation. He says:

1. The lute, instruments, and jar of wine will weep because of his death.
2. Bad people will cry his death but not those who recite The Qur’ān.<sup>454</sup>

The poet emphasises a group of people who will be sad because of his death. Those people are those who are astray and who love singing and drink, in contrast to another group of people: those who read the Qur’ān and are doing well in their life. The condemnation of music and singing has been found also in Abū Firās poetry. He compares the Abbasid’s family to the ‘Alawī’s family in terms of listening to music and singing. He says:

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<sup>453</sup> Ismā‘īl ibn al-Qāsim Abū al-‘Atāhiya, *Dīwān Abī al-‘Atāhiya* (Beirut: Dār Bayrūt lil-Ṭibā‘a wa-al-Nashr, 1986), p. 112.

<sup>454</sup> Al- Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 14, p. 90.

1. The Qur'ān's recitation is in their house, while the sound of strings and melodies is in yours.
2. 'Ulayya is from your tribe not from theirs, the same as the master of singing Ibrahīm.
3. Who asked to hear the melodies, your 'Alī or 'Alī of them?
4. They recite Qur'ānic verses while your Imam sings 'O, stop in the place that is not old'.<sup>455</sup>

These verses rely on comparative style. The main idea is that music and singing are indications of evil as in the contrast reading the Qur'ān is the sign of the charitable. The poet makes an initial comparison where 'Alawī's family house has the sound of Qur'ān recitation while in the Abbasid's family house the sound is singing and melodies. Additionally, he mentions two famous names in singing, 'Ulayya bint al-Madhī and Ibrahim al-Mūsili, then asks if they are attributed to their family. Then he mentions a person's name that can be found in both families and asks which one of them the melodies were composed for. Finally, he describes how Alawi's family house has the sound of reading the Qur'ān while in the Abbasid's family house the Imam himself sings lyrics by Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, that is 'O, stop in the place that is not old'.<sup>456</sup>

Ultimately, the Arabic poets' perspectives on music and singing have been analysed depending on the thematic and rhetorical analysis. We find that Arabic poets' opinions on music and singing have developed through generations as it appears clearly there are two main stages that we have mentioned earlier. We find that there are two general themes which are positive and negative opinions with different variations within each one. It can be argued that the poets' heavily use particular rhetorical tools to express their perspectives. In the next section, we are going to discuss, interpret, and compare these themes and discover some other critical issues.

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<sup>455</sup> Abū Firās al-Ḥamadānī, p. 304.

<sup>456</sup> Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, *Dīwān Zuhayr Ibn Abī Sulmā*, p. 59. The Arabic text is:  
قف بالديار التي لم يعفها القدم بلى وغيرها الأرواح والديم

### 3.4. Discussion, interpretation and comparison

In this chapter, we have tried to determine Arabic poets' perspectives on music and singing. This research has divided the poetic texts that have been found into two main parts. The first part is a group of poetic texts from the stage that has been called the early stage due to its common characteristics. Normally, in the early Arabic age, poets explore several themes and ideas in one poem. Therefore, it is not possible to find a poem that talks about music and singing as the main theme or even as one key theme besides others in this period, in contrast with later ages.

In the early stage it has been found that poets did not reflect opinions on music and singing in their odes extensively. For example, poets did not compose their poems specifically in order to describe music and singing, to provide a panegyric or satirical view of musicians, or to evaluate singers' performances, or to criticise their instruments, appearance and their moral. Music and singing were fairly insignificant subject among several other themes in their poems. One of the poetic materials that has been found at this stage is describing instruments or singing girls when they accompanied the army in battles. For example, Imru' al-Qays's verses that describe a singing girl with the army are part of a longer poem that covers many non-musical subjects. Without doubt, music has often been used with armies and is an old human tradition.<sup>457</sup> In the poetry it is clear that the poet describes the singing girls in relation to the battles which means there is no great concern shown towards the music itself.

Another poetic trend related to music and singing is the describing of friends meeting while listening to singing girls. It is a well-known idea among poets and there are several poetic examples of this feature. Such meetings have been given the name musical *majlis* in the Abbasid age, and have been defined as "assembly of people listening to music performance...".<sup>458</sup> Sawa confirms that such *majlis* were not Abbasid inventions as they were well known long before the Pre-Islamic era. This research supports Sawa's idea through the Arab poets' perspective, since poetic texts about music in the early stage refer to *majlis*.

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<sup>457</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', p. 77.

<sup>458</sup> Sawa, p. 111.

However, they do so only in regard to the informal *majlis* which “lacked the patron/ musician relationship”.<sup>459</sup> For instance, ‘Abd al-Masīḥ ibn ‘Asala invited his friend to share good time while listening to a singing girl on a beautiful cloudy day and this idea has been found in several poetic texts which have been mentioned earlier. Furthermore, there is an important idea from the Islamic era where the music and singing have been mentioned as something should be avoided. For example, Zīrār ibn al-Azwar mentions the rejection of songs of singing girls due to religious considerations. It is clear that one of the effects of Islam in people living at that time is what has been recited by Zīrār where he rejected several taboo things, one of them being the singing of girls *‘azf al-qīyān*.

In terms of the poetic styles that have been used by poets in the early stage it is clear that poets mentioned musicians and instruments in merely descriptive ways, without using the tools of *‘ilm al-bayān* as particular rhetorical techniques to demonstrate their opinions of music or singing. For example, ‘Alqamaa al-Faḥl writes only one verse about his friends drinking and listening to *mizhar*. He uses fairly simple descriptive language without the use of specific rhetorical tools.

It is clear that the poets did not mention singers’ or musicians’ names in their poetry. It was very common to mention an adjective that can be generically applied to any musician or singing girl. For example, Imru’ al-Qays mentioned *qayna* / slave singing girl, and *karīna* / girl plays *kirān*, while Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Asala used *mudjina* / girl sings in a cloudy day. This research does not refute the existence of musicians or their names, but the poets were not interested in mentioning singers’ names in the poetry. Therefore, clear poets’ opinions about specific musicians or singing girls cannot be found in this stage. According to al-Asad there are several names of the singing girls’ that have been mentioned in historical sources.<sup>460</sup> However, the poets did not provide clear poetic texts about music and singing girls while mentioning their names. Maybe there are some reasons can justify this situation. Music and singing were not widespread in poets’ life to the degree that can take part of the poets’ attention in their poems. Additionally, it seems that the singing girls were not only musicians but also were providing the drink.<sup>461</sup> Therefore, they have another job besides singing which means they

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<sup>459</sup> Sawa, p. 116.

<sup>460</sup> Al-Asad, pp. 69–94.

<sup>461</sup> Al-Asad, p. 110.



are not professionals to the degree that led poets to go deeply in describing their art. Famous musicians, their names, manners, achievements, all are unknown. It seems that there is no clear view whether there were competitions among singers or what their styles of singing were in the earlier time. However, according to Sawa different types of competitions have been known historically between singers in Abbasid ages.<sup>462</sup>

Another two issues that are remarkable in the early stage are that, firstly, there is no evidence to confirm the existence of male musicians by mentioning their names in the poetry. There were female singers have been mentioned in the poetry, which support previous scholars' views such as those of Farmer,<sup>463</sup> and Shiloah,<sup>464</sup> with regard to the existence of female singers. The second is that there are no poetic texts which express poets' dissatisfactions of musicians' performances. The poets did not provide verses in criticism of unprofessional singers. Thus, it is not easy to imagine that there were professional and well-known musicians in the same way as has been found in the second stage. Of course, a lot of poetic material has been lost or cannot be found now, but this interpretation is based on the poetic texts that are available. On the other hand, this changes in the second stage, many aspects of music and singing were described and criticised in depth in later ages as we will see in next pages.

In the developed stage, it has been found that several odes and verses where the poets were interested in evaluating the music of that time and in expressing their opinion towards music and singing, both in terms of positive and negative perspectives. Therefore, based on the existence of common poetic features that appear more mature it has been named the developed stage. This research has divided this stage into two general themes. The first theme is a group of poetic texts which contain positive opinions about music and singing while the other is a group of poetic texts containing negative opinions about music and singing. Positive opinions have been shown in several different aspects, and this research in the previous analysis attempts to locate the idea or meaning that is the most important for the poet. Therefore, the study distinguishes between six positive aspects regarding positive perspectives on music and singing although all of them show positivity in someway.

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<sup>462</sup> Sawa, p. 153, and 178.

<sup>463</sup> Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century*, p. 44.

<sup>464</sup> Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam: A Socio-Cultural History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995), p. 13.

The first aspect is when poets show positive opinions while mentioning the lyrics of songs. Scholars call this concept intertextuality,<sup>465</sup> and others may consider it to be a rhetorical device called *al-taḍmīn*,<sup>466</sup> or a quotation.<sup>467</sup> However, the primary concern of this research is finding this manner in poetry in relation to poets' perspectives on music and singing. After all, lyric means the words of songs which is, in essence, poetry. Therefore, there is no Arabic songs have been written in prose. Also, poetry has been considered as the most beautiful art of language and is preferred in singing because it has metre and rhyme.<sup>468</sup> As al-Jāḥiẓ says: 'we can see no harm in singing, since it is basically only poetry clothed with melody. If (the poetry) is truthful, it is good; if false then evil'.<sup>469</sup> He generalises the common feature of good poetry to include song lyrics. This research finds poets in complete harmony with this opinion in their verses about lyrics. For example, the first poetic text containing song lyrics is by al-'Uqayshir al-Asadī where he mentions a song in his verses. Later on, several poetic texts provide positive opinions on lyrics, such as the long poem by Bashshār ibn Burd. It can be noted that the poets quote the original lyrics in their verses without changes. Furthermore, they have also composed their own verses using the same meter and rhythm of the lyrics. For example, Bashshār's verses are written in the same meter and rhythm of Jarīr's lyrics, and Ibn 'Abd Rabbih verses respond in the same way to the lyrics of Zayd al-Khayl.

This aspect leads us to think about the significance of this trend among the poets, the reasons, and what we can understand through discovering such a trend. Certainly the poets using lyrics of specific songs in their poem were expressing their appreciation of the song. The poetic texts that have been found regarding use of lyrics demonstrate the poets' satisfaction with the singing and have emphasised this by determining the specific reasons of their joy or their happiness: the songs and the lyrics. Furthermore, it is clear that the poets in the whole poetic texts aforementioned have composed their poems and verses depending on the same meter and rhythm of the songs which shows further appreciation of these songs. So, it is acceptable for them to imitate the previous poets in this regard. Also, we can note that the poets never mention the names of those who have written the lyrics, suggesting that the concern of the poets is not the poetry or the poets but the songs and in the art of music not the art of poetry.

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<sup>465</sup> Philip F. Kennedy, pp. 49–61.

<sup>466</sup> Al-Hāshimī, p. 257.

<sup>467</sup> Abdul-Raof, p. 256.

<sup>468</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', p. 137.

<sup>469</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ, p. 23.

Finally, by looking at the dates of these poetic texts, it is clear that the poets were the first to refer to song lyrics in their poetry, before scholars and before the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* or book of songs by al-Iṣfahānī.

The second aspect is when poets provide good opinions while mentioning good singing and singers. This aspect can be understood in the same context of poets' appreciation of this art form. They clarify to what extent they felt positively towards this form of art. They mention several issues related to their feelings when listening to music such as Abū Tammām, 'Alī al-Munajjim, and al-Ḥamdawī's verses. It is notable that Abū Tammām was interested to mention Bashshār's experience with a singing girl, as is been recorded in his poetry where he borrowed Bashshār's situation (blind man) and compared it to his contemporary situation (hearing an incomprehensible song).

The third aspect is when the poets provide positive opinions about singer and singing while mentioning the good appearance of the musicians. For example, a poet was describing a singing girl's beauty and likening her face to the moon in terms of the light, and her body to a statue in terms of perfection. Additionally, Kushājim describes a singer's beauty and her gorgeous clothes. Certainly the poets were concentrating on the appearance and the beauty of the musicians, which means that there are some criteria which have been considered as compulsory for the musicians. The poets were not only aware of this but they appreciated these aspects, and they wrote about them positively in their verses. The poet suggests that a singer should be the icon of beauty and fashion as well as a capable performer. In general, poets were highly interested to describe the goodness of singing in the same way as a singers' beauty.

The fourth aspect is when the poets provide positive opinions about singers and singing while mentioning the great ability of the musicians, such as in the verses by Kushājim where he mentions that the singing girl has many melodies and tunes. He describes himself as feeling like he flies in the sky when hearing her singing, and compares her when playing the lute gently to the physician who touches a patient's veins skillfully. In al-Qādī al-Fādīl's verses the singing girl is similarly described as a master of playing the lute: her performance is perfectly correct and the poet describes her proficiency as a miracle. Furthermore, other images and ideas in this vein appear in other verses such as the singer who is rich in singing in al-Muhallab's verses, or who is the messenger of joy in al-Khubz Arzī's verses. This aspect is highly significant because it is revealed that the poets have other criteria related to the musicians' ability. The poets were

not interested only in the beauty or the appearance of the musicians, but also they were looking for the ability of the musicians to give total pleasure and joy. The criterion that has been mentioned in this trend can show to what extent the poets can distinguish between different ability levels in musicians. The extensive experience of the poets in this subject may give them the ability to evaluate the singers depending on their expertise.

The fifth aspect is when the poets provide positive opinions about singers and singing while describing the instruments in terms of their sounds and shapes and so forth. It has been said that the instruments sounds ‘differ depending on their shapes and the materials from which they are made; whether they are large, small, long, or short; their interior dimensions, the bore of their holes, and whether their strings are thick or thin; and on the variety of techniques players use on them’.<sup>470</sup> In this regard, the lute obtains the attention of many poets and considered as the main instruments for the singer. Thus, it has been described in a variety of verses. It has been said that ‘the most perfect instrument devised by the sages and the best of their creations, is the instrument called the lute’.<sup>471</sup> For example, Kushājim, and Ibn al-Mu‘tazz mention that the lute gives clear expression, revealing the secrets of souls and the innermost recesses of the heart’.<sup>472</sup> Additionally, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih likens the lute to a king, which emphasises the importance of this instrument in terms of poets’ perspectives on music. The significance of this aspect lies in showing poets’ admiration towards the instruments that have been used by the musicians, and which they have mentioned in their verses. It is clear that the poets realise the importance of instruments as an essential part of the appreciation of this art form.

The sixth aspect is when the poets provide positive opinions about singers and singing while making comparison between musicians. The comparisons that have been made by poets show their satisfaction regarding the singers’ performance. Therefore, this research suggests that when the poet compares the singer to another famous singer, he provides a kind of classification where the musicians are put in a hierarchy depending on their talent and capacity. For example, Ishāq al-Mūṣilī preferred the singing of Mulāḥiḍ, and praised him as being better

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<sup>470</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, p. 91.

<sup>471</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, p. 112.

<sup>472</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, p. 164.

than any other singer. Meanwhile, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih’s verses described the singer that he was listening to as being even better than the famous singer called Ziryāb.

Ultimately, the cornerstone of this theme is showing positivity toward music and singing. This positive view can be seen through several aspects such as the lyrics, the musicians’ appearance and their beauty, their excellent ability when singing, the diversity, quantity, and the instruments. All these aspects have been shown positively, and the poets were uniformly keen to clarify the beautiful points of this art form. We can understand the importance of this issue from the poets’ point of view and we can also see how the poets appreciate different aspects of this art form. This does not mean that the poets were enthusiastic to the degree that made them blind towards unacceptable kinds of singing, or ignorant bad singing: these negative reactions will be explored in the next theme.

The second theme is a group of poetic texts that contain negative opinions about music and singing. It has been said that the singer should have various good features and characteristics related to his or her appearance and job.<sup>473</sup> For example, the singer should be beautiful, well-mannered, have excellent speech, his moustache is clean,<sup>474</sup> be able to memorise a lot of jokes, tell stories, recite poetry, and understand grammar. He should not be a talebearer, slander, busybody, or blamer. His smell should be fragrant, his skin pure, and his limbs should have no fault. His work should be professional, and his songs should be joyful.<sup>475</sup> However, with regard to these aspects there are several criticisms toward musicians and their singing from the view of Arab poets as we have mentioned in the previous analysis.

The first point is when poets provide negative opinions while considering foolish or bad singing as ‘cold’ and unexciting such as ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm’s verses and others have been mentioned. We here discovered poets’ opinions about specific kind of singing where they have considered some singers’ performances as being ‘cold’ or foolish. This indicates that the poets considered listeners’ reaction as a criterion to evaluate the performances of the singers and their songs. In this regard, as we have mentioned, Arab poets believe that a strong and original performance will never lead the audience to feel cold while a bad performance will cause this feeling. Therefore, they have referred to bad singing as ‘cold’. Ultimately, such expressions

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<sup>473</sup> Sawa, p. 174.

<sup>474</sup> Concerning male singers.

<sup>475</sup> ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ghazūlī, *Maṭāli‘ al-Budūr fī Manāzil al-Surūr* (Cairo: Idārat al-Waṭan, 1881), p. 232.

show clearly their dissatisfaction toward specific musicians or their performance. Additionally, some singing can be bad to the degree that leads the listener to wish to be deaf to avoid hearing it, as is described in Di‘bil al-Khuzā‘ī’s and Abū al-Faḍl ibn al-‘Amīd’s verses.

Some poets criticise bad voice of the singer, such as Abū Hilāl’s verses. A beautiful voice is a fundamental talent for the singer, and without it, the singer cannot be considered a good singer. But much worse is when the voice of the singer is bad to the degree that allows for the poet to compare it to animals’ voices such as those of cats and pigs. Poets also provide negative opinions toward specific music or singing depending on the bad performance of the artists. For example, Abū Nuwās criticises a singer for his facial expressions when singing. This criticism indicates that the singer was trying to force himself to produce the sound and melodies by doing many movements with his mouth and jaws. The poet considered this to be a weak ability since the singer is incapable of singing smoothly. Ibn Ghalbūn al-Sūrī criticises a singer because of a mistake when choosing the melody of a song. It is clear that “the most enjoyable metred verse is that which is regular and without prosodic variations”.<sup>476</sup> This kind of criticism is related to the musical knowledge and the critical ability that should exist among the essential skills for the singer. Therefore, such mistakes considered by the poet to be some of the worst mistakes can be seen in the singers' performances. Also, al-Sharīf al-‘Aqīlī criticises a singer who has problems with pronunciation. General principles should be followed by singers such as the correct pronunciation. However, mistakes along this line lead to another significant problem related to the poetry meter which is seen to be unacceptable in the prosody system of poetry.

Additionally, ‘Alī ibn Bassām al-‘Abartā‘ī criticises a singer because of his boring repetition. Repetition itself has been considered as evidence of the great ability of the singer. This is right only when the repetition has been requested by the audience as a sign of the excellence of singing and their wishing to hear it again.<sup>477</sup> Nevertheless, repetition can alternatively be considered as revealing the weak ability of the singer. Repeating specific songs many times without an audience request results in boredom and reveals the lack of ability of a singer where he or she only knows very few songs. Of course, as we have mentioned above, one of the good criteria that has been cited by poets is when the singer knows many melodies.

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<sup>476</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, p. 137.

<sup>477</sup> Sawa, pp. 161-164.

Another criticism has been mentioned by al-Khaṭīb al-Ḥaṣkafī related to musicians' invitations. It has been cited that a musician may invite himself to someone's home and offer his services for free.<sup>478</sup> This is true and acceptable behaviour from skilled and well-known musicians. However, it has been considered as unacceptable when a bad musician invites himself. Therefore, this singer deserves to be punished via slapping him. Furthermore, poets provide negative opinions about singing due to the bad appearance of the singer where the artists should be at the peak of beauty and fashion such as Ismā'īl ibn Badr and Ibn Qalāqīs' verses. This view is supported by several poetic texts suggesting that the beauty and good appearance are signs of good musicians as we have discovered in discussing the positive opinions of poets. There is negative opinion about singing because of bad singing accompanied by bad morals and behaviours, such as the singer described in Ibn Abī al-Bishr verses. This idea gives signs about some good features related to musicians' manners and behaviours in some poets' view. Thus, perfection is not only associated with quality but also related to proper behaviour. Also poets give their negative opinions toward music and singing due to bad instruments such as those featured in Ibn al-Rūmī and al-Nāmī's verses. These poetic texts show to what extent the poets at that time can deliver their perspectives regarding many aspects of this art form, even about the instruments.

Finally, one of the most interesting aspects is when poets criticise music and singing in general based on religious ideas such as Abū al-'Atāhiyah's, Abū al-Asad al-Ḥammānī's, and Abū Firās' verses. However, these views are limited, superficial and appear only in specific contexts. It is notable that poets were mainly dissatisfied with a specific performer and his or her lack of ability, rather than with music as a whole, except for in the case of religious attitudes that have been found in some verses. Those poets' verses contain negative opinions toward music or singing depending on religious meaning. Abū al-'Atāhiya considers music as something destructive to society when the people engage in joyous celebration. It is likely that Abū al-'Atāhiya employs this meaning to support his general direction in poetry which is ascetic poem (*zuhdiyya*). Therefore, it can be said that this opinion can be seen clearly through the whole context of Abū al-'Atāhiya direction in poetry.<sup>479</sup> Al-Ḥammānī, as mentioned earlier, justifies his verse by saying after singer's death good people (who recite the Qur'ān) will not

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<sup>478</sup> Sawa, p. 117.

<sup>479</sup> Abū al-'Atāhiya, p. 112.

feel sad. This opinion clarifies the viewpoints of religious people toward musicians at that time which cannot be considered as an appreciative view or even friendly. Abū Firās is *Shīʿī* leader and his verses make a political stand where he criticises music to express the differences between religious people and those who have been led astray. From the context of this poem it appears that the poet was attacking the rulers of Abbasid state and considering ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his sons as those who should be the rulers instead of the current rulers.<sup>480</sup> Therefore, this opinion is better understood through its context.

Ultimately, this theme of the negative perspectives is remarkable among Arabic poetic texts about music and singing in the study period. The Arab poets provide many critical points in the poetic form. These texts show different views on various aspects related to music and singing. The poets have succeeded where they have mentioned different comments and provide their views in different poetic styles as well. There are various poetic texts that show poets expressing dismay or dissatisfaction with specific singers and specific performances. Poets felt free to express negative opinions about particular singers’ voices and music. For the ability-deficient musician, images encouraging ridicule were common. For example, al-Nāmī, Kushājim, and Abū Hilāl all tended to describe the performance of singers in an amusing, laughable way. To achieve the derision of these works, the poets compare singers’ voices to animal sounds. They clarify the sounds of instruments by using metaphors and similes where they liken instrument sounds to animal sounds.

There are some general characteristics which can be seen throughout the developed stage such as the quantity of singing girls mentioned by name in the poets’ poetry. According to Shiloah, there is a great deal of evidence that Arab culture has long embraced amusement in the form of music and singing by professional female musicians,<sup>481</sup> and Garth believes women singers were common compared to female poets.<sup>482</sup> Caswell numbers names of many singing girls in the Abbasid age which gives a sign of their popularity at that time.<sup>483</sup> This research confirms that poets mention talented female musicians in their poetry such as Faḍl, ‘Ulayya, and ‘Ātib. Additionally, bad female singers have been mentioned in some verses by Ibn al-

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<sup>480</sup> Al-Ḥamadānī, p 300.

<sup>481</sup> Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam*, p. 29.

<sup>482</sup> Garth Fowden, *Qūṣayr ‘Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 81.

<sup>483</sup> Caswell, p. 56, 133.



Rūmī, who mentions a singing girl called Shuṭuf.<sup>484</sup> Nevertheless, depending on the poetic materials it can be said that mentioning names of bad singing girls was not common among poets. Furthermore, male singers have been mentioned in the poetry by their names such as good singers Mulāḥiḍ, Ziryāb, or bad singers such as Abū al-Faṭḥ, and Abū Naṣr.

### *A comparison between early and developed stages*

This research attempts to classify the poetic texts based on the materials that have been found to show a comprehensive and complete image of poet's views of this form of art. The second stage can be referred to as a developed stage where the poets' perspectives of music and singing in this stage reflect different meanings, characteristics and thoughts. It is the richest and the most developed stage where poets express their meanings in different ways. Comparisons between beginning and developed stages will be conducted in the following lines regarding three aspects as follows: verses' meanings, the poetic styles and rhetorical tools, and the quantity of odes and verses.

### *Regarding meanings*

With regard to the ideas that have been analysed in this chapter, the poets in the early stage commonly mention music and singing when they describe battles and meetings with friends. The description is superficial with no concern to go into detail about the singer (regarding appearance and capacity) or the instruments. On the other hand, poets in the developed stage provide several kinds of meanings and ideas within two mature themes related to the subject. This stage has several different aspects as shown above. Some of them can be considered to be a development of previous poets' meanings while some of these aspects can be considered to represent new, modern views toward music and singing.

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<sup>484</sup> Ghayth, p. 40.

Poets in the early stage mention music and singing in the battle, however this meaning has disappeared completely in the developed stage where this research could not find any similar meaning. Additionally, poets in the previous stage were interested in describing their meeting with their friends while listening to music, a topic which can be found among poets in the developed stage. Finally, after the coming of Islam a verse by Zīrār contains the meaning of leaving the songs of singing girls depending on religious belief, where this idea continues its existence among poets in the developed stage but is rare.

The developed stage carries several new ideas related to positive opinions such as mentioning lyrics of songs within the verses, describing good singing, and beautiful singers' appearances, singers' proficiency, describing the instruments, and making a comparison between singers while mentioning their names. The second theme of this stage is completely new where the poets provide their negative opinions about music and singing. For instance, bad singing and a preference for deafness and silence, criticising singers' voices, criticising their bad performance in terms of some mistakes such as facial expression, the wrong melody, incorrect pronunciation, and repetition.

Additionally, poets criticise singers because of their bad appearance and manners. For example, there are some examples that exist related to musicians playing at private parties in people's homes. Kushājīm, for instance, writes of a musician who will never be invited to the same house twice because of his bad performance. Poets are also able to distinguish between good and bad singers and musicians. For example, al-Nāmī talks about the low level of the singer's voice and his instruments, meaning that artists had a level of proficiency it was expected they would not fall below.

#### *In terms of poetic style and rhetorical tools*

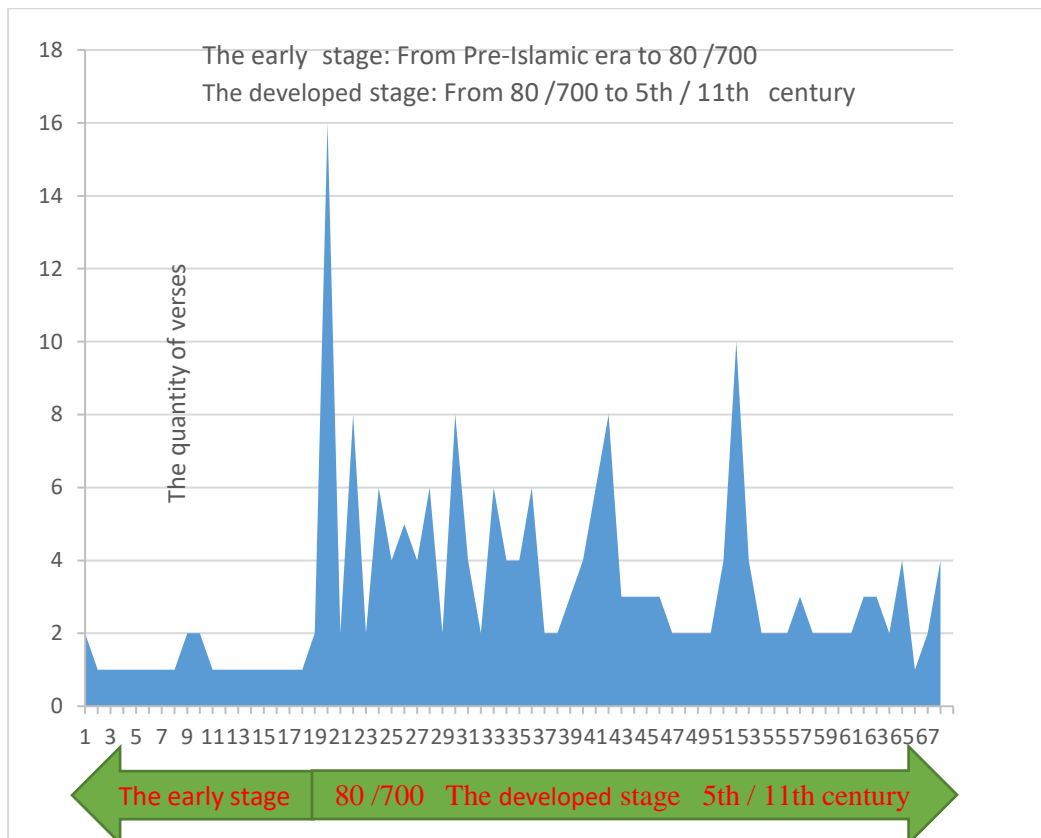
The use of rhetorical tools to clarify meanings in the early stage was limited. In contrast, during the second stage poets were highly interested in using rhetorical tools that presented their views towards music and singing. To illustrate this point, regarding positive poets' opinions toward music, musicians, singing, and singers the poets used rhetorical tools such as simile and metaphor. The poets compare beautiful singing girls to the moon, the sun, a statue,

stars, a physician; a singer's eyes are like arrows; the sound and colour of a hand when playing is likened to thunder and lightning; the talent of the singer is likened to the horseman, messenger of entertainment, and the singer's voice likened to a nightingale voice. Additionally, the poets liken a good voice to the flowers in the morning, the best reputation, pearls, and the soul in body. Furthermore, the instrument such as lute's neck is likened to a girl's leg, and the strings have knots like a girl's anklet, lute string likens arrow string, the lute is likened to a fiancé, and the king. The harmony between singer's voice and instrument's sound is likened to the mixture of wine and cloud's rain, singer's voice and the lute's sound is likened to two sisters talking to each other gently. In addition, the poets use metaphor where they give the singer's voice and instrument's sound the ability to create happiness: the strings can talk, laugh, and cry. The limbs of the listener have the ability to wish, to be ears, and the body seems to be flying. Regarding the use of metonymy the poets use it when comparing instrument sounds to the sound of those who live in the trees (birds).

On the other hand, poets also used rhetorical tools such as simile and metaphor to demonstrate their negative opinions towards unprofessional musicians. In their negative perspectives poets use simile to liken bad and foolish singing to winter or cold water. A bad voice is likened to the sound of cats when one pinches their ears, to pigs' roaring, wasps warbling in vials, a crazy person throttling an idiot, and dogs barking or frogs croaking. A bad performance when the singer is flashing his eyes and moving his jaws too much is likened to someone who suffers from epilepsy, or to someone who sneezes, or someone who has a toothache. The experience of hearing a short and bad song is likened to the length of judgement day. The bad situation of a listener is likened to the darkness. An ugly singer is likened to spider, or bereaved women. Bad instrument sounds are like the sound of rats when gnawed dry bread, or dogs' barking, or a fox strangling a hen. Also, the poets use metaphor to compare hearing bad singing to eating bad grass.

*The quantity of odes and verses*

The diagram below (No: 3) clarifies the development of poetic texts about music and singing during the period of the study.



*Figure 3: The quantity of verses about music and singing in early and developed stages from the Pre- Islamic until the end of 5<sup>th</sup> century.*

Poets in the early stage mention this kind of art in one or two or few verses and not in long and specific poems. However, in the developed stage many long poems and several verses have been found such as Bashshār ibn Burd poem that contains sixteen verses. The poets in the developed stage tended to elaborate when talking about music to give more space for their opinions and feelings. The development of Arabic-Islamic life during this time led artists to acquire the ability to provide high-quality music and singing, and also increased the availability of quality instruments. Arabs clearly had an interest in music as Ibn Khaldūn describes the causality of the development of singing and music in terms of the evolution of culture and civilisation.<sup>485</sup> This opinion is commonly accepted by scholars. Garth argues that wealth started once Islam in his view had united the whole Middle Eastern world.<sup>486</sup> Shiloah believes that economic growth led to a class of people very interested in the arts generally and other aspects of culture in the Abbasid period.<sup>487</sup>

This research strongly believes that advances in civilisation and wealth led to the development of music and singing.<sup>488</sup> Furthermore, Sawa believes the generosity of Abbasid patrons led to the active musical life at that time.<sup>489</sup> In this regard, poets revealed these developments by discussing different aspects of music and singing such as musicians' professional abilities and emphasising singers' quality in their odes, which is evidence of the importance of music at that time. Poets considered music and singing to be important kinds of arts and they expressed this in their poetry. Most poetic texts provided in this chapter are specifically about music and singing, with no other competing subjects. Poets gave singers and musicians value by putting them at the centre of their odes when they deserve this attention. Findings such as the provision of negative opinions about music and singing reflect the ability to distinguish between different levels of quality in performance and singers.

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<sup>485</sup> He says: Luxury and prosperity came to them, because they obtained the spoils of the nations. They came to lead splendid and refined lives and to appreciate leisure. The singers (now) left the Persians and Byzantines. They descended upon the Hijaz and became clients of the Arabs. They all sang accompanied by lutes, pandores, lyres, and flutes. See: Ibn Khaldūn, vol. 2, p. 404-405.

<sup>486</sup> Fowden, p. 80.

<sup>487</sup> Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam*, p. 23.

<sup>488</sup> Filastīn Ḥasan, *Majālis al-Lahw fī Quṣūr al-Khulafā' fī al-'Aṣr 'al-'Abbāsī 'al-'Awwal*, (Nāblus : Jāmi'at al-Najāḥ al-Waṭaniya, 2012), p. 144.

<sup>489</sup> Sawa, p. 206.

### 3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, Arabic poets' perspectives on music and singing have been examined. Regarding the relationship between Islam and music, there is an unclear view of music's role, and there are no definitive texts about Islam's attitude towards music and singing. Therefore, some Islamic scholars have examined this issue and revealed their particular opinions by establishing conditions that should be followed by artists and the general public in this regard.

As has been reported by scholars and historians, Arabs had a significant impact on the development of music and singing through books, instruments, and songs. It is notable that the poets in the Pre-Islamic era mentioned several themes in their poems, while music and singing can hardly be seen. However, in later ages, the music and singing developed extensively in both practically and in poets' odes.

Concerning the attitudes of Arabic poets towards music and singing this research has divided the poetic texts into two main parts: the early stage where the poets mention music and singing slightly and in a non-specific manner, in few verses, with little use of rhetorical tools, and the developed stage, where the poets express their views about music and singing in-depth, in longer poems to express their opinions deeply. They also use rhetorical tools extensively to clarify their views. Poets' views varied between negative and positive perspectives for different reasons and considerations such as the musicians' proficiency, their appearance, performance, their beauty, their voice and regarding their instruments and so on. Poets provide their perspectives on all these aspects and others, and used rhetorical poetic tools to express their opinions such as simile, metaphor, personification: as it has been discussed above. The next chapter will discuss the third art form focused on in this thesis painting and sculpture. Arabic poets' perspectives on this art form will be analysed and discussed.

## Chapter Four: Arabic Poets' perspectives on Painting and Sculpture

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the perspectives of Arab poets on painting and sculpture. Hence, the poetry that describes painting and sculpture, poets' impressions, or opinions regarding painters and sculptors' ability will be examined. Specifically, the research questions that related to Arab poet's perspectives on painting and sculpture will be investigated in this chapter as we have mentioned earlier.<sup>490</sup>

This chapter has been divided into five parts starting with this introduction. In the second part, background and context will be provided about painting and sculpture from the perspectives of Islam and Arabs, providing a general context. Thirdly, the main part of this chapter examines Arabic poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture. The poets' viewpoints are divided into two main stages. As stated in previous chapters, based on the common characteristics of the poetic texts in the first stage, this has been termed the early stage, while the second stage has been named the developed stage as this group of verses has significantly different characteristics. The classification of the two stages clarifies the important features of the topic where the materials will be explained and analysed based on the themes, and the rhetorical tools used.<sup>491</sup> The body of this section will provide poetic materials related to painting and sculpture, including the use of paint on walls, glass, flags, garment, tents, and the use of paint on the body. Regarding sculpture, there are poems about statues of people as well as statues of animals such as lions, elephants, giraffes, and plants, such as trees. The fourth section contains discussion and interpretation of the themes and common features that have emerged through the analysis and the fifth and final section is the conclusion.

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<sup>490</sup> See: section 1.2.

<sup>491</sup> See: section 1.4.

## 4.2 Background and Context

### 4.2.1 Islam and Painting and Sculpture.

Painting and sculpture are a controversial issue in Islamic thought. This section will provide a brief review of this matter, through examining the texts that have been employed by each side of the argument: those who believe painting and sculpture are permitted versus those who believe these arts are forbidden. The Holy Qur'ān mentions idols, statues and sculptures in several Qur'ānic verses. For example, the Holy Qur'ān says *jinn* made statues for King Sulaymān: "They worked for him as he desired, (making) arches, images, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places): "Work ye, sons of David, with thanks! but few of My servants are grateful!"<sup>492</sup> The Arabic word in the Qur'ānic verse is *tamāthīl*, and it has been interpreted to mean images by several scholars.<sup>493</sup> One aspect that may undermine the use of this verse as an evidence of the claim that painting and sculpture are permitted is to consider the verse as giving special permission for King Sulaymān.<sup>494</sup> Furthermore, other theologians which forbid these arts understood things were accepted in previous religions does not mean they will be accepted in Islamic teachings.<sup>495</sup>

Additionally, there are two verses in the Holy Qur'ān even more closely related to the subject of creating statues of living things. The first describes a miracle performed by Jesus when he creates the likeness of a bird from clay.<sup>496</sup> The second verse describes the Samaritan's sin in the story of Moses' nation, when al-Sāmirī created a golden calf for them to worship instead of God.<sup>497</sup>

In fact, each one of these verses has its own specific context in which the meaning becomes clear. The first example describes the miracle of Jesus and displays the power of God

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<sup>492</sup> Q. (34: 13). See: Qur'ānic Verses' appendix. Verse no. 4.

<sup>493</sup> Ibn Kathīr, vol. 6, p. 500.

<sup>494</sup> Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 82.

<sup>495</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Sa'd ibn 'Alī Shithrī, *Fatāwā Kibār al-'Ulamā' fī al-Taswīr*, 1st edn (al-Riyadh: Dār al-Tawḥīd lil-Nashr, 2016), p. 132.

<sup>496</sup> Q. (3: 49). See: Qur'ānic Verses' appendix. Verse no. 5.

<sup>497</sup> Q. (20: 88). See: Qur'ānic Verses' appendix. Verse no. 6.



working through Jesus.<sup>498</sup> Therefore, it does not necessarily include the idea of giving people permission of creation or sculpture, but has rather been known in Islamic thought as a demonstration of a personal miracle through Jesus as a messenger of God. The second verse is held within the context of the great sin of idolatry, where people relied on a human-made idol rather than on God.<sup>499</sup> Therefore, the second proof cannot be provided as evidence to support the notion that creating statues is permitted by Islam since the context is unhelpful in this regard.

In the Sunna, there are several texts which argue that making statues is a great sin. For example, a text describes how some ancient statues were made to remind people to worship after several generations had passed. Yet, as it explains, individuals who came later thought the statues themselves were gods, thus explaining the advent of polytheism. The text then goes on to say that, once humanity's idolatry had become severe, God sent messengers to remove it from human hearts by removing the idols themselves.<sup>500</sup> Therefore, the images and statues were completely prohibited inside the mosques.<sup>501</sup> Nevertheless, paintings have been found of living things in some Abbasid and Fatimid mosques.<sup>502</sup> The conservative direction led to decoration and ornamentation in mosques that avoided prohibited things in latter ages. Nevertheless, al-Jāhiz as cited by Alami believes that the Muslims generally hold that ornamentation inside mosques can affect the worship and meditation negatively.<sup>503</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad reportedly had every idol he found around the Ka'ba destroyed, as he did on the day when, it is said, he entered Makka and found three hundred and sixty idols.<sup>504</sup> Furthermore, the Prophet Mohammad says: 'the painters (i.e. owners) of these pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection. It will be said to them, "Put life in what you have created (i.e. painted)"'.<sup>505</sup> Additionally, there is another text, in al-Bukhārī's book, where someone came to Ibn 'Abbās and said to him: 'my sustenance is from my manual

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<sup>498</sup> Ibn Kathīr, vol. 3, p. 44.

<sup>499</sup> Ibn Kathīr and Khan, vols 5, p. 309-311.

<sup>500</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 6, p. 1095.

<sup>501</sup> Hodgson, vol. 2, p. 505.

<sup>502</sup> 'Īd Sa'd Yūnus, *Falsafāt al-Fann wa-al-Jamāl fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī: Naḥ wa Istāṭīqīya Islāmīyat al-Hawā 'Arabīyat al-Huwīya*, 1st edn (Cairo: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 2015), p. 148.

<sup>503</sup> Alami, p. 49.

<sup>504</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 3, p. 564.

<sup>505</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 3, p. 477.

profession and I make these pictures'.<sup>506</sup> Ibn 'Abbas said, 'I will tell you only what I heard from Allah's Apostle. I heard him saying, "Whoever makes a picture will be punished by Allah till he puts life in it, and he will never be able to put life in it". Hearing this, that man heaved a sigh, and his face turned pale. Ibn 'Abbas said to him, "What a pity! If you insist on making pictures I advise you to make pictures of trees and any other unanimated objects"'.<sup>507</sup>

This text helps us understand some issues related to making pictures and statues, and we will talk about it in terms of other meanings related to the popularity of sculpture in addition to the beginnings of Islamic guidance towards suitable art forms.<sup>508</sup> This section, however, concentrates on Islam's attitude towards sculptors and their work. The above text directly forbids statue-making by mentioning the harsh punishment of those who create statues of people or animals. Based on religious grounds, many Islamic artists refused to engage in traditional sculpture and instead invented new mediums of expression consistent with their faith. Thus, new types of sculpture, engraving and calligraphy were invented.<sup>509</sup> It can be argued that Islam's position on painting, sculpture and statues has given rise to controversial discussions on the visual arts in Islamic culture, and there are many scholarly reflections on this topic. The Qur'ān does not explicitly forbid Muslims from engaging in painting or sculpture; it only forbids the use of such arts to make idols or to direct worship away from God. The banning of such arts in many Arabic and Islamic communities is based on the possibility that such works could lead to idolatry, which is categorically forbidden.

On the other hand, other theologians believe that the arts have benefits for people. This opinion is founded on general evidence in the Qur'ānic verse, some of which concentrates on the meanings of embellishment and beauty. For example, in the Qur'ān a verse describes two qualities of animals that benefit humanity, utility and beauty:

And cattle He has created for you (men): from them ye derive warmth, and numerous benefits, and of their (meat) ye eat. And ye have a sense of pride and beauty

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<sup>506</sup> Pictures means statues.

<sup>507</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 3, p. 500.

<sup>508</sup> See 5.2.2.

<sup>509</sup> Majdi and Hanafi, p.176.

in them as ye drive them home in the evening, and as ye lead them forth to pasture in the morning<sup>510</sup>

In another famous text narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd, the Prophet says: ‘Allah (God) is beautiful, and he loves beauty’.<sup>511</sup> Because of such texts and other similar evidence, al-Qaraḍāwī looks at the arts positively, but gives some conditions regarding this specific kind of art. For example, as al-Qaraḍāwī states, statues are prohibited,<sup>512</sup> and other works of art should not be worshipped, glorified, or compete with God; however, paintings of living things are not taboo, but only hateful.<sup>513</sup>

Furthermore, the use of paint on the body such as tattoos and *ḥenna* / henna is another issue in Islamic thought. Firstly, tattoo in Arabic is *al-washm* and it is an aesthetic aspect in ancient Arabic life. Ibn Manẓūr says it originated when a woman has injured her hands with a needle and sprinkles *kuhl* / eyeliner on the wounds, causing the colour to become black or green.<sup>514</sup> Tattooing was common in the Pre-Islamic era, as we will see through poets’ verses. The Qur’ān does not say anything related to tattoos. However, in the Sunna, the Prophet texts stress banning tattoos and considers tattooing a great sin because it tries to change what God has created.<sup>515</sup>

*Ḥenna* is a dye used to colour the body and to beautify hair, hands, feet and nails. Originally, *ḥenna* was an Indian product brought to the Persians, then exported to Arabia in the Pre-Islamic era. Later, Arabs added other ingredients to henna to make red and black and used saffron to get yellow and sulphur to get white.<sup>516</sup> Again, the Qur’ān did not talk about henna, but in Sunna, the Prophet texts encourage people to beautify their white hair by using red or yellow *ḥenna*.<sup>517</sup> After the coming of Islam, the use of *ḥenna* paint became more popular, and, as this chapter will show, the word ‘tattoo’ became less common than ‘*ḥenna* paint’ in poetry, as well.

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<sup>510</sup> Q. (16: 5-6). See: Qur’ānic Verses’ appendix, verse no. 7.

<sup>511</sup> Al-Qushayrī, p. 67.

<sup>512</sup> Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ḥalāl wa-’l-ḥarām fī ’l-islām*, 22nd edn (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1997), p. 90.

<sup>513</sup> Al-Qaraḍāwī, p. 106.

<sup>514</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, p. 4845.

<sup>515</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 6, p. 1084.

<sup>516</sup> Filastīn Ḥasan, p. 107.

<sup>517</sup> Al-Qushayrī, p. 1061.

The attitude of Islam towards *henna* is clear, especially with the Prophet's clear statements about it. However, tattoos are banned if they are like the tattoos of the Pre-Islamic time, especially if they are permanent tattoos. Al-Munajjid as a modern scholar says that tattoos are permitted under some circumstances, depending on whether it is harmful or not, permanent or temporary, a painting of living things or not, has been done by a man or woman and on private parts of the body or not.<sup>518</sup>

In conclusion, Islamic culture has long been forbidden to use sculptures or paintings to create a work whose purpose is to receive worship in place of God, or that casts the artist as a god, or whose purpose is to glorify anything but God. However, it is also considered undesirable or hateful when art depicts a live person or animals in a way that does not glorify it. Finally, painting of nature is permitted unless it leads people to neglect their religious or mundane duties or to glorify the piece of art over God.

#### 4.2.2 Arabs and Painting and Sculpture

Different studies have shown that paintings and sculptures were present amongst the Arabs since the earliest times and were used to construct idols, as we discussed previously.<sup>519</sup> Arabic painted carpets were coloured and painted after the advent of Islam. Şan'ā' and Yemen, too, had long been producing textile products and were described in Pre-Islamic poetry.<sup>520</sup> History books,<sup>521</sup> and Sunna books,<sup>522</sup> tell us that three hundred and sixty idols were around the Ka'ba when the Prophet entered Makka. Jaber is one of the Prophet's companions, said that: inside the Ka'ba were several paintings of the Prophets Abraham, Ishmael and Mary.<sup>523</sup> The scholar Graber speculated that the paintings inside the Ka'ba were likely done by non-Arabic painters or were the best of local art. Graber later confirmed that the large paintings

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<sup>518</sup> Muḥammad Sāliḥ al-Munajjid, 'Temporary, and Permanent Tattoo.' <<https://islamqa.info/ar/99629>> [accessed 20 March 2018].

<sup>519</sup> Grabar, pp. 78-80.

<sup>520</sup> Al-Hassani Salim, *Muslim Heritage in Our World*, 2nd edn (Istanbul: FSTC LTD, 2007), p. 41.

<sup>521</sup> Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, ed. by Aḥmad Zakī, (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmīya, 1965), p. 13.

<sup>522</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 3, pp. 564, vol. 6, p. 1035.

<sup>523</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 4, p. 777.

were indeed from Egypt or al-Sham.<sup>524</sup> Quraysh, too, had an extensive collection of idols inside and around the Ka'ba, but the greatest was Hubal. Ibn al-Kalbī relates that Hubal was created in the likeness of the human body and was made of red garnet. When the left hand was broken, Quraysh created a gold hand for Hubal.<sup>525</sup> Grabar believes that the idols were primitive, created during the Pre-Islamic era.<sup>526</sup> In general, it seems that the early Islam era was poor in visual arts, particularly paintings and sculptures.<sup>527</sup> There are some texts that appear after the introduction of Islam which claim there were paintings on the pillow of 'Āisha inside the Prophet's house.<sup>528</sup>

However, we can conclude from the previously discussed text about the man who said he was a sculptor that there was, in fact, a market for statues during the first century of Islam.<sup>529</sup> There has been a great deal of tolerance of sculpture amongst the upper classes in the Arabic world throughout history. Many historical studies are showing the presence of paintings and sculptures in the rulers' palaces. During the Umayyad period more progress had been made toward creating a richer collection of paintings and sculptures. Waḥdān confirms that many different kinds of paintings in the Umayyad palaces were done. For example, in Quṣayr 'Amra palace,<sup>530</sup> there is a painting of the Caliph on the wall sitting on the throne, in addition to several paintings of birds, ladies, and singing girls.<sup>531</sup> Paintings such as this seem to confirm Gustave Le Bon's assertion that Arabs were not concerned about Islam's rules regarding painting and sculpture, particularly among the Caliphs and princes.<sup>532</sup> Ibn Khaldūn has stated that art evolves as civilisation progresses, for example Iraq, Sham (Syria), Yemen and Egypt

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<sup>524</sup> Grabar, p. 80.

<sup>525</sup> Ibn al-Kalbī, p. 28.

<sup>526</sup> Grabar, p. 80.

<sup>527</sup> Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650-1250*, 2nd edn (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 4; Tharwat Waḥdān, *Waṣf al-Quṣūr fī al-Shi'r al-'Abbāsī* (Nāblus: Jāmi'at al-Najāḥ al-Waṭaniya, 2003), p. 26.

<sup>528</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 3, p. 565.

<sup>529</sup> Al-Bukhārī and Khan, vol. 3, p. 500.

<sup>530</sup> Quṣayr Amra, Umayyad bath house complex in the eastern desert of Jordan famous for its painted frescoes. The building was probably built by the Umayyad caliph al-Walid between 712 and 715. See: Andrew Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 240.

<sup>531</sup> Fowden, p. 58,65,66,68, and 70. Waḥdān, p. 26.

<sup>532</sup> Gustave Le Bonn, p. 525; Alami, p. 55.

have produced good art since the early period because they evolved from ancient civilisations.<sup>533</sup>

The Abbasid period was the golden age of Arabic-Islamic civilisation and arts as well. Progress occurred in every aspect of life during this era and was passed on to the arts in general, and painting and sculpture, specifically. Mez has shown that in the Abbasid era, a significant number of paintings had been drawn on carpets with a great variety of subject matter, including floral designs, horses, camels, predatory animals and birds.<sup>534</sup> Gustave Le Bon's opinion that Arabs did not pay much attention to Islam's rules about arts is justified by the existence of statues and paintings. He quotes al-Maqrīzī, who says there were Arabic art schools, which has also been confirmed by a scholar called 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad who mentions schools of paintings from the Abbasid age such as in Baghdād, Mosul, Syria, Egypt, Iran, Maghreb and Andalusia.<sup>535</sup> Al-Maqrīzī describes several pieces of art, such as the painting of two singing girls, with details of their clothes, and in one of the Cairo palaces there was a painting of a stairway that was so realistic that it fooled the viewer into thinking the stairs were real.

Additionally, it has found in the Caliph's palace around 460 AH/ 1068 AD, along with one thousand pieces of painted textiles of the Caliph's attendants and other men.<sup>536</sup> Also, Grabar mentions paintings and sculpture in different locations and inside ancient palaces in the Umayyad period, and he provides several photos in this regard.<sup>537</sup> There are beautiful examples of works of art at that time such as the throne of the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mu'taṣim (d. 227 / 842), which has an al-'Anqā' bird (magical bird) painted or engraved on it. Additionally, al-Aṣma'ī wrote about the minister, al-Faḥl ibn Yaḥya al-Barmakī (d. 192 / 808), who had a lion statue with ruby eyes.<sup>538</sup> Sigrid Hunke provided a painting of a clock that has statues of two falcons and several paintings of animals and musicians playing different instruments.<sup>539</sup> This clock is similar to what has been described by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in his journey to the Damascus

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<sup>533</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, vol 2, p. 301-347.

<sup>534</sup> Mez, vol. 2, p. 361.

<sup>535</sup> 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, 'al-Madrasa al-'Abbasiya fī al-Taṣwīr al-Islāmī' (University of Jordan, 2003).

<sup>536</sup> Gustave Le Bonn, pp. 525–26.

<sup>537</sup> Grabar, p. 160.

<sup>538</sup> Filastīn Ḥasan, pp. 110–12.

<sup>539</sup> Sigrid Hunke, *Shams al-'Arab Taṣṭa' 'alā al-Gharb: athar al-ḥaḍāra al-'Arabīya fī Ūrūbba*, ed. by Mārūn 'Īsā Khūrī, trans. by Fārūq Bayḍūn and Kamāl Dasūqī (Beirut: Dār al-Jil : Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1993), p. 114, 582, and 567.

mosque, which was also intricately decorated and coloured with different dyes.<sup>540</sup> Aḥmad Taymūr names artists (painters and sculptors) such as, Abū Tajzi'a in Pre-Islamic era, Ḥamdān al-Kharrāṭ, and Ibn 'Azīz in later ages.<sup>541</sup>

Nevertheless, there was a strong direction among Arabic-Islamic artists to create ways to express their perspective of life without colliding with Islam teachings. It seems that the earlier text of Ibn 'Abbās was the first strong recommendation for Muslim artists to seek new directions in art, urging them to concentrate on 'wood, trees, and every lifeless thing'. Thus, Arabic-Islamic artists directed their abilities to a new kind of visual art that included vegetal ornament, geometric patterns, glasses' embellishments, decorations and calligraphy.<sup>542</sup>

Finally, it can be said that although paintings and sculptures in the Arabic peninsula during the Pre-Islamic era were present, they were not common. Yemen was famous for its painted rugs. Palaces had statues and idols, especially in Makka, and there were paintings inside the Ka'ba. Moreover, there is evidence that there appears to have been a market for statues after the coming of Islam. The Umayyad age produced many of this kind of art for the Umayyad Caliph palaces. The Abbasid age was the golden age of painting and sculpture in Arabic culture. The high quality of art has been verified by not only historians but also by poets throughout the years, as will be shown later in this chapter.

### 5.3. Arabic Poets' perspectives on Painting and Sculpture

This chapter will specifically consider poets' opinions on painting and sculpture. In the following section, Arab poets' poetry about painting and sculpture will be reviewed to present a full understanding of this matter.

Before going deeply in this chapter issues, we are going to review our claims in this thesis bravely in the next two paragraphs. This research considers some features as criteria to

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<sup>540</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa al-Mawsūmmāh Tuḥfat al-Nuzzār fī Gharā'ib al-Amṣār wa-'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, ed. by 'Abd al-Hādī Tāzī (al-Rabāṭ, al-Mamlaka al-Maghribīya: Akādīmīyat al-Mamlaka al-Maghribīya, 1997), vols 1, p. 306-312.

<sup>541</sup> Aḥmad Taymūr, *Al-Taṣwīr 'inda al-'Arab*, ed. by Zakī Muḥammad Ḥasan (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-al-Tarjama wa-al-Nashr, 1942), p. 104-106.

<sup>542</sup> Majdi and Hanafi, p. 183.

discover whether the poets looked deeply into such issues. These characteristics are: the main and intended meaning, the use of poetic and rhetorical tools, and the quantity of the verses. For more clarification, the heavy and extensive use of poetical techniques, including rhetorical tools, reflects a high degree of concern for the subject and reflects to what extent the poet attempts to convince the readers of his opinions as has been mentioned in the section on Arabic rhetoric. The number of verses can be considered as a sign of the importance of the subject regarding the speaker's view or his message. Or, something can be regarded as an unessential subject when the speaker talks about it whilst moving through several themes where it may seem not the primary goal, but rather a marginal one. Therefore, this study suggests that when something has earned the poets' attention, they put it in the core of their poem, talk about it in many verses, or use rhetorical tools to present their opinions about it.

This research will collect reflections of this issue to answer the research questions related to this subject. Arab poet's odes and verses related to painting and sculpture have been discovered, gathered, and analysed. This research finds enough evidence will allow the study to classify Arab poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture into early and developed stages. Each stage has different features related to meaning, rhetorical tools, the quantity of verses or the poem size, and has different opinions, characteristics and thoughts. The second stage is the richest and the most developed stage where poets express their thoughts on this specific kind of art and the artists as well in perfect ways. The poetic texts in each stage have been organised thematically and presented to create an accurate picture of the poet's attitude towards this specific kind of arts.

#### 4.3.1 The early stage<sup>543</sup>

Poetry about painting and sculpture from the Pre-Islamic era to the Umayyad age can be considered as the early stage and it can be divided into four groups or themes. The first is poetry describing a beloved's belongings; the second group of verses compares beloved girls to statues; the third group of verses mentions or describes paintings, or statues. Finally, the

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<sup>543</sup> From Pre-Islamic to 198 / 813.



fourth group addresses the use of paint on the body, where the poet mentions tattoos or henna on ladies' hands or bodies.

The first group is poetry describing the beloved's belongings. Poets in the Pre-Islamic era express their feelings about their beloved leaving by describing the departure of the beloved's desert caravan and her belongings. There are several different styles that poets have used to deal with these ideas. The most popular one is the poet's description of the embellishments on the beloved's belongings, especially, their dresses and the rugs that were made in Antakya or Iraq, indicating the beloved's social class. For example, Imru' al-Qays says:

They sat on rugs surrounded by embellished Iraqi weaving.<sup>544</sup>

Al-Muraqqish al-Akbar (d. 552) another poet who describes decorated rugs and dresses. He says:

They got down from decorated and embellished howdahs like palms.<sup>545</sup>

Also, Ḥassān ibn Thābit says:

1. They decided to leave at night, they took caravans and sat on ornamented garment / *deraql*.
2. They left, their necks are like deer's necks, and they showed the miniature ornamented lining of the garment.<sup>546</sup>

Ḥassān describes the high-class status of his beloved family when they make their departure. He mentions painted rugs and the embellishment of belongings.

Another style is when poets describe their girl's belongings, concentrating on the colour of their dresses or rugs. For example, 'Abīd ibn al- Abraṣ says:

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<sup>544</sup> Imru' al-Qays, pp. 42, 168.

<sup>545</sup> 'Amr ibn Sa'd al-Muraqqish; and 'Amr ibn Ḥarmala al-Muraqqish, *Dīwān al-Muraqqishayn*, ed. by Kārīn Ṣādīr (Beirut: Dar Ṣādīr, 1998), p. 60.

<sup>546</sup> Ibn Thābit, vol. 1, p. 34.

1. They sat on ornamented garment. The robe and howdah have good ancient smell.
2. The rug'' colour at the morning is shiny; it is painted like blood.<sup>547</sup>

The poet describes the ladies' departure when they were putting on ornamented garment and describes its red colour. Additionally, al-A'shā follows this approach when he says:

They sat on fashions clothes and embroidered dress. They have two colours in both sides rosy and semi rosy.<sup>548</sup>

The second group of verses compares beloved girls to statues. There are several different techniques that poets have used to deal with this topic. The poet compares a woman to a statue to portray an image of beauty in comparison to statues. For example, Imru' al-Qays says:

Many days and nights I had fun with a girl like a perfect statue.<sup>549</sup>

The poet compares a girl to the perfect statue regarding beauty and accuracy. Another example in this group is when the poet compares his beloved to the statue by Al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī says:

She is like a statue of alabaster raised up and built by tile.<sup>550</sup>

A third group of verses mentions statues or engravings which have been found at that time. There are some techniques used by poets when mentioning paintings or statues. For example, 'Abdat ibn al-Ṭabīb (d. 25 / 645) describes different kinds of paintings that were found among the belongings of a household. He says:

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<sup>547</sup> 'Abīd ibn al-Abrāṣ, p. 110.

<sup>548</sup> Maymūn ibn Qays, vol. 2, p. 45.

<sup>549</sup> Imru' al-Qays, p. 29.

<sup>550</sup> Al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānī, p. 93.

1. Then we leant on carpet embellished with good embroidery and paintings.
2. There are chickens, and lying lions. Everything can be seen painted there.<sup>551</sup>

The poet describes paintings on the furnishing he was lying on. He mentions that the painting is good and there are two of each painting. In the second verse, he gives examples from the painting, referring to chickens and lions. Additionally, he indicates there are many other things which have been painted as well.

Another technique is when a poet describes paintings on clothes. For instance, Imru' al-Qays says:

I went out with her, and she was pulling painted garment on the sand to cover our footprints.<sup>552</sup>

The poet in this verse describes the actions of his beloved. The important part of his verse is a painted garment: al-Zawzanī says this garment was painted with saddle shapes.<sup>553</sup> This means that there is a kind of painting at that time for ornamentation and aesthetical purposes.<sup>554</sup> Additionally, Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt (d. 5 / 626) describes a palace of one of Yemen kings and he mentions the huge number of statues have been seen in his palace. It can be translated as follows:

1. Have a drink while you put your crown at the top of your palace Ghimdān.
2. Your father king Dhū Yazan has built a palace, we could not see a similar palace in the whole earth.

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<sup>551</sup> 'Abdah ibn al-Ṭabīb, *Shi'r 'Abdah ibn al-Ṭabīb*, ed. by Yahyā Jubūrī (Baghdad: Dār al-Tarbiya, 1971), p. 80.

<sup>552</sup> Imru' al-Qays, p. 14.

<sup>553</sup> Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad Zawzanī, *Sharḥ al-Mu'allaqāt al-Sab'* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, nd), p. 24.

<sup>554</sup> Al-Ahmari, Jaber, *Tajalliyāt al-Naṣṣ al-Mushākil: Dirāsa Naẓariya Taṭbīqīya li-Mutashābih al-Ma'ānī fī Shi'r Imri' al-Qays Furūqan wa-Siyāqan*, 1st edn (al-Riyāḍ: al-Nādī al-Adabī bi-al-Riyāḍ, 2016), p. 221.

3. It is furnished with Marble stones has brought for it, and we saw a statue in each corner.<sup>555</sup>

The poet describes king's palace named Ghimdān, stating that they brought marble for this palace and whoever looks can see statues in each corner. Grabar confirms that this palace was ornamented with alabaster, garnet, and the statues of lions and eagles.<sup>556</sup> The final example is what has been said by Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt in one of his poems which is a controversial verse. It can be translated as follows:

A man and a bull under his right foot. An eagle under his left one, and prepared lion.<sup>557</sup> This verse acquires several interpretations over time, as shall be discussed later in this chapter.<sup>558</sup>

The fourth group is painting on the body, where poets mention tattoos (temporary and permanent) or henna on ladies' hands or bodies.<sup>559</sup> The most popular style is comparing the rest of their beloved's house to the tattoo on a girl's body that is hardly to be seen. For example, Bishr ibn abī Khāzim says:

Ashes between three corners like when the wrist is painted with a tattoo.<sup>560</sup>

Additionally, Zuhayr in his *mu'allaqa* says:

She had a house in al-Raqmatayn like the rest of the tattoo on her wrist.<sup>561</sup>

Regarding henna, it was used among Arabs in different ways for both women and men as it has been confirmed in a verse by al-Aswad ibn Ya'fur where he describes some characteristics of the bartender.<sup>562</sup> Poets' styles differ in the mentioning of henna as a good way

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<sup>555</sup> Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt, *Dīwān Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt*, ed. by Sajī' Jamīl Jubaylī, 1st edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1998), p. 177.

<sup>556</sup> Grabar, p. 79; Hoyland, p. 175.

<sup>557</sup> Ibn Abī al-Ṣalt, *Dīwān Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt*, p. 50.

<sup>558</sup> It will be discussed deeply in the discussion. Section 5.4.

<sup>559</sup> Nāṣir al-Zāhirī, *Waṣf al-Jasad fī al-Shi'r al-Jāhilī*, 1st edn (Amman: Dār al-Khalīj lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2017), p. 221.

<sup>560</sup> Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim, *Dīwān Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim*, ed. by Majīd Ṭirād, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1994), p. 77.

<sup>561</sup> Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, *Dīwān Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā*, ed. by 'Alī Fā'ūr, 1st edn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 1988), p. 102.

<sup>562</sup> Al-'Askarī, *Dīwān al-ma'ānī*, vol. 254.

of decorating ladies' hands; in Zuhayr's verse, for example, he states the day of his beloved's departure when she showed her fingertip ornamented by henna.<sup>563</sup> Another approach to the subject of henna in poetry is where the poet compares other things in life to henna or the water of henna. For example, Imru' al-Qays compares the blood of hunted animals to the colour of henna, saying:

The blood of hunted animals dyed the front of the horse as the henna when painted white hair.<sup>564</sup>

Later on, the poetic materials will be discovered regarding this matter in the developed stage and we will see how poets have dealt with henna or the use of paint on the body at that time.

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<sup>563</sup> Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, *Dīwān Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā*, p. 22.

<sup>564</sup> Imru' al-Qays, p. 23.

#### 4.3.2 The developed stage<sup>565</sup>

This section aims to uncover further information on this issue from the perspective of poets' views towards painting and sculpture. In the following pages, we will consult poetry that describes painting and sculpture, aiming to produce a complete image of this issue by looking at poets' attitudes towards these forms of art in particular. Several themes related to the poets' perspectives will be considered, including the poets' expression of their opinions.

The poets' style of presenting their views will also be explored: both in terms of poetic style, in general, and in terms of rhetorical tools specifically. For example, verses within the odes concerning the professional abilities of the painters and sculptors can be considered evidence for the development of painting and sculpture, during the time that passed between the earlier stage and this particular stage. Although painting and sculpture were not yet the main subjects of poems in the early stage, poets in this later research period do represent painting and sculpture as main topics of their poetry as well as featuring them as one theme besides others.

The materials in the following section have been arranged thematically and divided into six themes all containing positive impressions of visual arts. The first theme is a group of poetic texts describing painting and sculpture found in palaces. For example, paintings and sculpture on walls' palaces or statues in palaces' gardens. The second theme is a group of poetic texts describing paintings and sculpture on Hammām's walls. The third theme is a group of poetic text when poets describe painting and sculpture on glasses. The fourth theme is a group of poetic texts describing paintings on fabric. The fifth theme contains poetic texts describing the use of paint on the body. The sixth theme is a group of poetic texts describing statues of human beings.

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<sup>565</sup> From 198 / 813 to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4.3.2.1. Painting and Sculpture in palaces

This section will deal with some works of art inside palaces that have been mentioned by poets in their poetry. One of the most remarkable scenes is the painting of battles on walls. The following verses are from one of the most famous poems in Arabic poetry, not only because of its historical and tragic story but also because of the description of a battle painting. The poem is mostly known as the *sīnīya*.<sup>566</sup> Al-Buḥturī says:

1. If you see the painting of the Antakya war, you will be frightened because of the Byzantine and Persian armies.
2. Death is there, while Anūshirwān is preparing rows under the flag.
3. In the green suit, with yellow, mixed in dye of orange.
4. And men's fighting in front of him, while they were silenced and quiet.
5. There is who gets away from the stick of the spear, and who repels bayonet by the shield.
6. The eye believes they are alive, they talk by sign language.
7. My doubt is boiling about their reality until my hand feels them.<sup>567</sup>

Ancient and modern scholars have dealt with different aspects of this poem, but here we will concentrate on the verses that describe the painting of the battle, which happened in 540 AD and has been painted on the palace wall.<sup>568</sup> At the beginning we should mention that most scholars have called the artwork that has been described by the poet a painting. It should be noted that the poet says *ṣūrat Antakya* and the word of *ṣūra* in Arabic at that time can be

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<sup>566</sup> Its story in brief is this: the poet faced some difficulties in Baghdad. He decided to leave for another place, to refresh his mind and stay away from difficult political problems. He went to Iwān Kisrā in al-Mada'in which is the name of a Sasanian Persian monument in Iraq, where the poet found this painting on the wall of the palace. Thus, he described his situation and this mural.

<sup>567</sup> Al-Buḥturī, vol. 2, p. 1156.

<sup>568</sup> Makkāwī, p. 35.

used to mean a painting with colours on a wall, or a prominent engraving (relief sculpture).<sup>569</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to know which one of those two this example represents.<sup>570</sup>

The poet begins by mentioning the names of the armies fighting in the painting. In verse 1, he states that the painting is of the war between the Persians and Byzantine in Antakya. Then the poet mentions the preparation of the Persian armies, while death is around them, and their leader, Anūshirwān, arranges rows of his army's soldiers under Persia's flag. In verse 3, the poet describes Anūshirwān's clothes in the battle: a green suit mixed with yellow and orange dyes. Additionally, the poet describes the scene of the battle where the soldiers were fighting in front of Anūshirwān.

The poet imagines the battle does not appear in the painting; it seems that the fighting is happening in silence in front of his eyes. Also, the poet describes the scene of two soldiers in the battle, fighting each other. One of them has been painted as trying to avoid a spear, while the other has been depicted protecting himself with a shield. In the last two verses, the poet concentrates on the professionalism of the paintings, which is a kind of praise for their painter.

Scenes depicting animals on the battlefield is another kind of painting found on the palaces' walls. Al-Ḥakam ibn Abī al-Salt (d. 529 / 1134) describes a palace that has been built by Fatimid leader. The palace is called the House of Glory / *Manzil al-'Izz*.<sup>571</sup> The poet says:

1. The gold flowed at palace's roof and the water froze at its floor.
2. In its surrounding battleground, the horses in continual war.
3. You see the horseman heavily armed, but his spear is not smeared with blood.
4. And you see a bowman far away from his goal.
5. And you see rows of animals and sky birds; their scenes are impressive.
6. Their calmness seems like movement, and differences like similarities.<sup>572</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> See the texts in the section of Islam and painting and sculpture: 5.2.1.

<sup>570</sup> Makkāwī, p. 35.

<sup>571</sup> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-Ṭīb min Ghuṣn al-Andalus al-Raṭīb: wa-Dhikr Wazīruhā Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb*, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1968), vol. 1, p. 496. It has been said that the palace was in Egypt, or in al-Mahdiyya (Kairouan).

<sup>572</sup> Al-Maqqarī, vol. 1, p. 496.



The poet writes about the prince's palace. There were murals inside this palace, and the poet describes them in six verses. First, he mentions the golden colour that has been used to paint the roof. The floor was painted or covered with colour, making it look like ice or, as he says, frozen water. Then the poet continues on to describe one of the murals in the palace, which is a painting of a battleground or racecourse, in which the horses are at continual war. Also, the poet also describes the fighting scene. He mentions a horseman who is fully, heavily armed, yet whose spear has never been used in fighting, so it is not bloodied.

The fourth verse describes another part of the fighting scene in this painting. It talks about the Bowman who was continuing to shoot his arrows towards a goal far away from him. The poet mentions another painting in the fifth verse, which depicts several rows of beautiful animals and birds. Finally, the poet confirms that he is describing paintings or murals by mentioning the accuracy of this mural. He says all those he has mentioned in his verses are very quiet and motionless, but because they are accurate you may think they are real. Even though there are differences, the figures depicted may seem similar to real ones.

‘Umāra al-Yamanī (d. 509 / 1174) describes several different kinds of paintings and ornaments on a house. He says:

1. Look at a house that has been built by a leader's resolution, (his resolution) makes difficult things become too easy.
2. It absolutely exceeded every building, and it passes everything except Umm al-Qura.
3. You created for eyes wonderful creatures, their preciseness amazed the eyes.
4. Its marble is: straight, arrow, miniature, like *dirham*, and like *dīnār*.
5. Ivory is between ebony like land of camphor is growing ambergris.
6. You watered its roof with dissolved gold, it seems to be dropped.
7. It looks beautiful, and you made it the most beautiful one by the embellishments.
8. Like antelope necks are beautiful without jewellery, and the Holy mosque is better with its drapes.
9. It wears white and red curtains, they seem like the flowers and roses, white and red.
10. Seats have worn white textile, and other seats have worn yellow textile.
11. Many kinds of soundless and speakers was painted and depicted inside it.

12. There are gardens that were not watered with clouds and did not rise on the land.
13. Meadows did not appear without their flowers, and the palms and pomegranates did not appear without their fruits.
14. The birds, when they fall on its branches, and the fruits as well, they could not fly again.
15. And there are animals similar to real ones, they wore excellent painted silk.
16. Eyes still see, among its meadows, lions and antelopes of sand.
17. Its wild animals become tame, where its antelopes are not afraid of the lions.
18. Your bravery seems to give them security so they are not horrified.
19. There are giraffes, their necks like army flags in terms of their height.
20. They are from Nubia. Her horn like an antelope's horn and their lips like camel's lips.
21. They have been created with lowest buttocks, you think they are coming back when walking.<sup>573</sup>

The poet, in these verses, describes a house that has been decorated in different ways and ornamented with many things, including paintings of animals and gardens. The whole poem is in the style of a prince's panegyric, and one of the poem's key aspects is this description of the prince's house. The first part of these verses is about general decoration and embellishments of the house; the second part is about the paintings that were in this house.

In the first part, the poet starts by asking us to look at this beautiful house. He then mentions the ability or resolution of this leader, which can make every difficult thing – like this house – become a reality easily. He continues describing this house, which he believes better than any other building in the world but which, to show respect for religion, he puts beneath Umm al-Qura, the Mecca mosque. He adds the idea of the unique things that have been created by the owner, which amaze people when they look at these different creatures. This general verse is followed with specific verses describing several aspects of this stunning house in verses 4 and 5. The poet describes the floor of house, where the marble is of different shapes and colours. In terms of shapes, there are some like rectangles, others are similar to arrows, and some are miniatures. In terms of colour, the poet mentions two colours of marbles—silver and gold—which he calls dirham (silver coins) and Dīnār (golden coins). The floor seems to be

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<sup>573</sup> Al-Nuwayrī, vol 1, p. 380-381.

inlaid with ivory inserted into ebony wood, showing a high level of artistic talent, and the poet compares it to high-priced things: a field of camphor that has been planted with amberggris.

In verse 6, the poet moves on to describe the roof, which was painted or dyed with water of gold so that it seems about to drip onto the floor. Then he talks about the house in general, saying that it looks fantastic as the owner made it more beautiful by ornamenting and embellishing it. In verse 8, he provides evidence containing two parts of how things can be beautiful with and without embellishments. First, he notes that some things are left without ornament, which sometimes is good because the elements are beautiful in themselves without any additions. For example, the poet says, antelope necks are beautiful without jewellery. However, some things can become more beautiful with additions. For example, the Holy Mosque is most beautiful with its drapes. The poet is preparing the reader for his next idea expressed in the following two verses, where he intends to talk about the house's drapes. In verses 9 and 10, the poet describes white and red drapes that hang on the walls of house in such a way as to look like roses in two colours: white and red. Additionally, he states that the house's seats have two different colours: white and yellow.

The second part of these verses, which is about the house's paintings, has ten verses. It starts in verse 11 by mentioning a general idea about the paintings: the poet says that this house contains all different kinds of soundless and speaking creatures that can be found in these paintings: a generalisation to convey their quantity. Then in three verses the poet describes scenes of gardens in the paintings. The first point he mentions here is that this garden is not watered with rain from clouds and that it is not planted in real sand, which is an indication that this is a garden depicted in a painting and not a real one. Additionally, he describes the scene of meadows full of flowers and palms and pomegranate trees heavy with fruit, as they appear in the paintings. He confirms that the trees were full of fruits at all times, not only in one season as in real life.

The final scene is in verse 14, where the poet describes birds that have been painted on the branches of trees. He confirms their condition, saying they cannot fly, since they are painted. Then the poet mentions animals painted on silk and imagines that these animals are dressed in the silk. In verse 16, he says a lion and antelope can be seen among the meadows. This verse follows a description of the paintings in verse 15 and is evidence that the poet is still talking in verse 16 about a painting: one that contains a scene of meadows, lion, and antelope.

More evidence appears in verse 17, where the poet restates the previous idea, that wild animals like lions become tame and antelopes are at peace with them. Again, this is a sign that the poet is talking about paintings. In verse 18, the poet uses his imagination to think of other reasons to uncover the secret of how the relationship between those animals has become different. Thus, the poet claims that the palace owner's bravery is the secret: it has spread a sense of security even among these animals. In verses 19, 20, and 21, the poet describes the scene of a group of giraffes, comparing their long necks to army flags. He says there are similarities between the giraffes' horns and antelopes' horns. He also finds that giraffes' lips are similar to camels' lips. In the last verse, he notes that the giraffes are created with very low buttocks, so that they seem to be walking backwards when they move. Mawāsī thinks these were large murals, where the giraffes appeared in the scene at their actual height, as in a normal environment, and looked especially real because they were painted to look as though they were walking.<sup>574</sup>

The poet makes heavy use of rhetorical tools in the last verses. He uses allegory where he states that the owner's determination has the ability to build the house, when in fact determination alone cannot build a house. He uses metaphor in the third verse, where he says that the owner has created wonderful things in the house—when in fact the creators are the builders or artists, not the owner. In verse 4, the poet uses simile when he compares maple trees' colours to the colours of coins at that time, which were gold and silver. He also uses simile to describe ebony wood inlaid with white ivory, when he compares it to a field of camphor (which is white) that is planted with ambergris (which is black). The poet uses metaphor in verse 6 as well, in two aspects. First, he describes the owner as having dyed the roof, when in fact it has been dyed by the artist. Yet, because this action has been carried out under the owner's orders, the poet states that the owner has done the dying himself. Second, the poet uses personification where he gives the roof a human ability: this roof is able to drink, just as a human body can drink.

The poet again uses personification and simile in verse 9. He gives the house the ability to wear dresses. He uses simile when he compares the curtains' red and white colours to the flowers and roses. In verse 12, he uses metonymy, where the gardens that have never been watered with rain are the gardens in the painting. In verse 15, the poet uses personification

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<sup>574</sup> Mawāsī, p. 368.

when he gives the animals in the paintings the ability to wear silk like human beings. In verse 19, the poet uses simile to compare the giraffes' necks to army flags, in terms of their height. He uses simile as well, when he compares the giraffes' horns and lips to antelopes' horns and camels' lips.

The second aspect in this theme is the description of statues of animals and trees that have been found inside or around the palace. There are several pieces of poetry that describe the statues of different kinds of animals, such as lions and elephants, as well as golden statues of trees. Al-Raffā' has written this poem to describe several statues and scenes in Abū Ishāq's (d. 4<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> century) house. He says:

1. Hands made the statues, but they are incapable of creating like God.
2. Statues have faces like the full moon, and nimble stature like branches.
3. They make them wearing beautiful shapes, but they could not give them beautiful ethics.
4. If the wind move the paintings (on the curtains), you think the horses race.
5. Lions appear jumping while they show their mandible daggers.
6. Cheetah hunts antelopes, they look at them with half-closed black eyes.
7. Animals without souls, some of them avoiding their death and other are meeting with it.
8. And singing girls prevent our ears of delight but transform it to our eyes.
9. And meadows have no sand to grow in, and no cloud has watered it.<sup>575</sup>

The poet mentions paintings and statues that have been created for his lord's house. First, he mentions the statues that he sees in the house. He emphasises the sculptors' inability to create as God does. Then the poet illustrates in detail the characteristics of the statues. He concentrates on two features: their faces and their stature. Regarding the first feature, the poet compares the statues' faces to the full moon, in terms of their radiance. Regarding the second feature, the poet compares the stature of the statues to branches on a tree, in terms of their agility. Then the poet mentions the excellent abilities of sculptors. Yet he states that, while they may be capable of creating high-quality statues, they are not capable of giving their creations good morals or ethics. The poet, in verse 4, moves on to describe scenes of paintings on a

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<sup>575</sup> Al-Raffā', pp. 337–38.

curtain moving in the wind. When the wind moves the curtain the painted horses seem to be racing.

The poet continues describing another scene: a painting of lions, where they are opening their mouths while jumping in a scene of devouring. There is other scene in verse 6, about cheetahs hunting. The poet describes the scene of cheetahs' eyes while hunting antelopes. Then the poet mentions that these animals are without souls but they seem as though they have souls. Therefore, some of them can go beyond death and overcome the hunt but others do not and cannot. The poet, in verse 8, moves on to another scene that is related to human activities that have been painted in the wall which is scenes of singing girls. He confirms that these painted girls can of course not be heard, but their image provides a visual sense of the pleasure found in singing. The pleasure and delight have presented for the eyes rather than the ears. Finally, the poet moves on to another scene as well, which is related to a painting of meadows. He says these meadows fill up with flowers but do not grow in sand and are not watered with rainwater.

Rhetorically, the poet uses several kinds of rhetorical tools. First, he uses simile twice in verse 2, where he compares the statues' faces to the full moon in terms of the lighting, and when he compares the statues' stature to the branches of tree in terms of their agility, as has been mentioned earlier. Secondly, the poet uses metaphor in verse 3, when he compares the good quality of sculpture to the actions of humans when they wear beautiful clothes, and where he says the sculptors make statues wear good creation. In verse 8, the poet talks about a painting of singing girls and he gives them the ability to sing and the ability of giving permission and prohibition. The poet uses personification where he gives the paintings human abilities.

Another example, inside the Abbasid palace called "the palace of tree" there was a statue of an amazing tree created for the Caliph al-Muqtadir (d. 320 / 932). Ibn al-Mu'tazz describes the tree in one of his long poems. He says:

1. Nobody has seen anything like the tree, it has leafed, fruitful branches.
2. It is not planted in soil, and it is not a tree irrigated by water.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>576</sup> Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Dīwān Ibn al-Mu'tazz* (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1980), p. 496.

Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, in his verses, only describes this created tree briefly. The poet starts by mentioning that it is unique; people cannot find a similarly beautiful thing. Its branches are full of leaves and fruits, the poet confirms, yet, in the second verse, he also confirms that this tree has two strange features that cannot be found in a normal tree. The poet indicates that it is a tree but it cannot be planted in normal sand or soil, nor can it be watered like a normal tree. To better understand the poet’s verses, some historical sources need to be consulted regarding this tree. Historians state that this tree in the Caliph al-Muqtadir palace and it has strange features.<sup>577</sup> This tree has been engraved or otherwise created for aesthetical purposes. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz concentrates on the qualities of this tree and its strangeness. He does not use any rhetorical tools to describe it. However, he is amazed by its features. He conveys this emotion to those who read his verses, in unspecific and vague words. This is why historical sources are so important to understand the poet’s verses also to understand this strange tree.

Furthermore, there are two long poems by Ibn Ḥamdīs to describe paintings and statues that have been found in palaces.<sup>578</sup> One of his texts will be examined as an example of Ibn Ḥamdīs’s contribution in this regard. He describes his lord al-Manṣūr’s palace (d. 498 / 1104) called *al-Lu‘lū‘a*,<sup>579</sup> and says:

1. Lions live in presidential lair, they make the sound of water like lions’ roaring.
2. It’s like when the gold covers their bodies, put dissolved crystal in their mouths.
3. Lions’ quietness seem like their movements in the soul, but there is no stimulation.
4. They remember their killing, they as if ready to pounce.
5. With the flash of the sun the lions’ colour like fire and their tongues like light.
6. It like swords of creeks were dissolved without use fire and return as water in brook.

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<sup>577</sup> Grabar says: There is a tree standing in the midst of a great circular pond filled with clear water. The tree has eighteen branches, every branch having numerous twigs, on which sit all sorts of gold and silver birds, both large and small. Most of the branches of this tree are of silver, but some are of gold, and they spread into the air carrying leaves of diverse colours. The leaves of the tree move as the wind blows, while the birds pipe and sing p. 170.

<sup>578</sup> This poem contains verses describing statues, which are in the majority, as well as six verses about paintings. The logical place for the last six verses would normally be in the first section, which covers poetry about paintings. However, trying to keep verses within their original context, I leave them in this section, which is about statues.

<sup>579</sup> Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām, Qāmūs Tarājim li-Ashhar al-Rijal wa-al-Nisā’ min al-‘Arab wa-al-Musta‘ribīn wa-al-Mustashriqīn*, 15th edn (Cairo: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 2002), vol. 7, p. 305.

7. Breeze wove for the water a flawless shield.
8. A wonderful tree has amazing fruits, my eyes cross a sea of miracles to see it.
9. A golden tree has a magic that can affect minds hugely.
10. Its branches like scythes in creation, birds from the sky hunt by them.
11. Preventing the birds on its branches from flight.
12. Each one her beak like water or like a chain of clear silver.
13. They cannot speak, but they sing with water accurately.
14. You see in the cistern drops of water, like spread pearls upon aquamarine.
15. Its beauty smiles at you like when you put glowing stars in its mouth.
16. The golden doors have decorated equally with engraving.
17. Golden nails seem like woman's breasts mounted high.
18. The sun puts an orange dress on it, the eyes cannot look at it clearly.
19. If you look at the fantastical roof you will see meadows in the sky.
20. I wonder about the golden bird flew to build nests on its top.
21. Painters use their pens and show the quarries clearly.
22. The painted sun used to improve embellishments and vegetal ornament.
23. Like lines of punctured lapis lazuli in the sky.
24. Like an ornamented garment its scarf is free of embellishment.<sup>580</sup>

This poem is a panegyric to the poet's lord. The poet describes his lord's palace in general and concentrates on several aspects of works of art that appear in the palace. These previous verses describe statues of lions, a golden tree, and statues of birds, as well as decorated doors; paintings of meadows, birds, and animals; a painting of the sun; and the general use of ornaments.

In the first seven verses, the poet describes statues of golden lions that were put in the lake, where water flowed through their mouths in a fountain. The poet starts by mentioning lions in their lair. In fact, the palace is not their normal lair, yet the poet intends to convey the meaning that the lord is like a lion and his house is similar to a lion's lair. The poet uses the word 'presidency' to emphasise his lord's leadership. It appears that the poet noticed the water falling through lion's mouths, and the sound of the water was like lions roaring. The poet

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<sup>580</sup> Ibn Ḥamdīs, pp. 548–49.



concentrates on the colours where the lions seem to be created from brass. This leads the poet to say that the lions are covered with gold and the water flowing out of their mouths is similar to dissolved crystal. Additionally, the poet asserts the lion statues' condition: they were calm and unmoving. The poet insinuates the lion's fearful nature, where they are dangerous even they were quiet. He imagines that these lions can move if they are stimulated by an action or thing. Then he assumes the lion's point of view, where he thinks as they think and remember their devouring. They were kneeling and ready to leap on their victim. In verse 5, the poet finds other way to describe the lions, this time under the sun's rays. Their glare, he says, because of the rays of the sun, is similar to fire flames, and their tongues are like light that is the white colour of water. Then he continues describing the scene, where he imagines the lions deliver swords made of streams. These swords are dissolved without using fire and change into water in the brook. At the end of this section the poet describes a brook, where the air makes tiny waves on the top of the water. He compares this to an accurately-made shield.

Rhetorically, the poet uses several rhetorical tools throughout these verses. He uses metaphor when he endows lions with the ability to live in a palace as might a human being. He uses simile when he compares the sound of falling water to lions roaring. He uses simile verse 2 as well, when he compares the lions' colour to gold and compares the colour of water to crystal. The poet imagines that, if the lions have souls, they will move if something encourages them to move, especially with their wild nature. In verse 4, the poet uses personification when he gives the lions the human ability to remember their actions. The poet makes the lion sculptures remember their attacks; then they kneel, preparing to return to their devouring. In fact, they clearly do not kneel by their own decision, preparing to attack, as the poet intends to convince us. Instead, it is by their designer's or sculptor's choice. Yet here it can be seen that the poet wishes to find an alternate, internal reason for this kneeling. As noted, this style called *ḥusn al-ta'īl* or conceit. The poet returns to the use of simile, in terms of describing the lions' colour under the sun's rays, in verse 5. Because of the glare of the sun he imagines them as flames of fire, while the water flowing through their mouths is similar to lights. The poet uses simile again in verse 6. He compares the state of the water, when it flows out the lions' mouths, to swords. He continues in this imagination by making his imaginary swords dissolve without the use of fire. They are then turned back into water which was their first form. In verse 7, the poet continues using simile when he compares the small waves on the top of the creek to a

shield. The poet intends to create harmony between the earlier verse, where he talks about swords, and the last verse, where he talks about a shield.

In the second section of the verses, the poet describes a golden tree (verses 8-15). He starts by mentioning incredible fruits that have been produced by this strange tree. He stresses that his eyes see miraculous creatures and this golden tree has its own magic, which can powerfully affect people's minds. Then he describes the tree's branches, which are made with crooked heads. Therefore, the tree branches hunt the birds in the sky. The poet, in verse 11, talks about the birds on the tree's branches. He imagines that the tree does not allow the birds to fly anymore. Then he describes statues of birds and their wonderful beaks, which are similar to silver. In verse 13, the poet states that they are unable to talk, as they are statues, while in natural life they were considered the most eloquent singers of all. However, in this situation the birds can 'sing' by using the sound of water, when it falls down through their beaks. Then he describes the tank of falling water. He compares the state when the water fills down and makes balls of water drops to pearls on aquamarine. In verse 15, the poet describes the happiness of the palace in general and the action of the water on the cistern. He compares this magical happiness to the lights that can be seen in the stars.

Rhetorically, in this section the poet uses the same rhetorical tools that have been used in the earlier section. In verse 9, he compares the tree's influences to the impact of its magic. Additionally, in verse 10, he compares the crooked branches of the tree to a sceptre. This simile leads the poet to another simile, which is comparing these specifically designed branches to hunting tools—especially with the birds existing amongst its branches. In the same verse, the poet uses personification and metaphor, where he gives the tree the ability to carry out a human action: hunting. In verse 11, the poet again uses personification when he endows the tree with the ability to refuse or accept things. Here, the tree does not allow the birds in its branches to fly. The poet gives the birds' inability to fly another reason beyond the fact that they are statues. Thus, the poet also gives the tree a specific power against the birds. Then the poet uses simile, where sculptures made from water run through the birds' beaks. The poet compares the whole scene to a magical scene where flowing water is similar to a flow of pure silver. The poet uses metaphor where he asserts, in the beginning of verse 13, the fact that the birds are incapable of speaking because they are statues. Generally, live birds and nightingales are known as good singers, but in this specific case they are 'singing' by using the flowing water sound. In verse

14, the poet uses simile again when he compares water drops from the birds' beaks to pearls on aquamarine. In verse 15, he uses metaphor, simile, and personification when he gives the palace the advantage of having mouths able to smile or laugh. He uses simile when he imagines there is a light, like stars, shining in this imaginary scene.

In the third section (16-18), the poet describes palace doors. He mentions that the doors were covered with lamina of gold. Additionally, these doors are decorated and engraved with symmetrical patterns. The poet mentions that there are big tacks made of gold that seem to be shaped like girls' breasts. Then he describes these golden doors under the sun's rays, where they seem to be dressed up in a transparent dress so their colour turns orange. This shining scene makes it difficult to look directly at the doors. The poet uses simile when he compares the shape of the tacks to girls' breasts. Also, he uses personification by giving the sun the ability to put a dress on the door.

In the fourth section (19-22), the poet gives a general description of the paintings. There are several scenes of meadows and of a bird. Additionally, he mentions hunted animals and describes about a painting of the sun. Finally, he mentions general patterns of decoration and calligraphic ornamentation. In verse 19, the poet describes the vegetal ornament that adorned the palace roof. The poet expresses this by saying that a pretty meadow was put in the sky of this palace. He admires the golden bird that was placed on the roof. This bird seems, in the poet's eyes, to be trying to fly to the top of palace to build its own nest.

In verse 21, the poet mentions artists with their pens. He uses the ancient Arabic word for art which is *ṣinā'a*. The poet does not provide more details about the hunted animals. He mentions only that their prey was painted in high quality which can be understood from the last word in the Arabic text *taṣwīrā*. Then the poet states that the painted sun seems to be stuck on the wall. He expresses the idea that this sun might help artists to create embellishments and vegetal ornaments, as it does when it is in its natural environment. Then the poet mentions the colour used in the calligraphy, which is lazuli. Finally, he notes that this palace seems to be dressed in ornamented garments, but that the area where a scarf would be in this outfit was empty of any embellishments, in terms of pattern or design.

Rhetorically, the poet uses metaphor in verse 19 when he states that you can see a meadow, while in fact there are only paintings of meadows, not a real one. In verse 20, he uses

personification where he gives the painting the ability to fly. He imagines the martin is alive and looking for a good place at the top of the palace to build its nest.

Another example in this theme is describing statues of animals in the palace which have been put in the garden. One statue is an elephant, made of silver, throwing water from the edge of the pond in the palace of al-Mu‘tamid ibn ‘Abbād. The poet who describes this elephant statue is ‘Abd al-Jalīl ibn Wahbūn. He says:

1. Each inanimate body has created in living shape, their appearance in boasting or coquetry.
2. A statue has a role without movement, and meaning without talking.
3. An Invented elephant throws the water like a sword without boredom.
4. The elephant grazes wet silver to become solid, so he isn't afraid of emaciation.
5. He seems not satisfied with other animals, he doesn't even raise his head to look at them.<sup>581</sup>

He uses personification when he gives the statue the ability to talk, and employs simile to compare the water arcing into the pond to the blade of a sword. Additionally, the poet uses personification when he gives the elephant a human reaction: boredom. Furthermore, the poet uses metaphor when he imagines that the elephant eats silver grass so his body becomes solid and strong.

#### 4.3.2.2. Paintings and Sculpture on *Ḥammām*'s walls / bathhouses

This research will deal with the available literary data in one aspect of this subject: poets' views towards *ḥammām* paintings and sculpture, where they have been mentioned in

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<sup>581</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī, *al-Dhakhīra fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-Jazīra*, ed. by Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1997), vol. 2, p. 509.

their odes. Al-Raffā' was a poet who was interested in bathhouses' description. He described their general uses, along with the art of the paintings that were found on their walls. There are five texts in which the poet describes different scenes of paintings and the embellishments of bathhouses. He mentions bathhouses many times in his poems, but this research is interested in those poems that contain descriptions of the paintings on the bathhouse walls. Therefore, this research will concentrate on the verses that contain this topic and will provide two texts as examples of this matter in al-Raffā''s poetry. In the first text he says:

1. Its shining walls seem like the pure silver.
2. The domes in its roof like circles of concave crystal.
3. A man who was known as the hero who can grab his enemy uniform, he was grabbed inside bathhouse.
4. You can see something here you cannot see it elsewhere.
5. It may seem empty while inside it there are all kinds of wars, hauntings, and carouses.
6. Horses (were painted) on its walls, some were driven and others were ridden.
7. Its horsemen meet soldiers, so there are beatings and others are beaten.
8. Scenes of war without reality, its weapon dyed with blood.
9. The victor does not want glory, and defeated does not fear disgrace.
10. Hunting dogs run after animals while their claws are bloody.
11. Chest was injured by canine, and shoulder was nailed by nail.
12. A drinker drinks wine while reclining and wearing his crown.
13. His scene told you about his blessing, but he is a painting.
14. Then we have earned delight, which has been earned and is free of sin.<sup>582</sup>

The poet starts by describing the *ḥammām*'s walls and likens its shining walls to shining silver. He continues describing some of this *ḥammām*'s features, such as its roof or domes, which are compared to concave crystal in terms of their colour. In this regard, Grabar mentions many features of the halls or domes of bathshouses which may be found in different baths, such as their decoration with mosaics, paintings, carved stuccoes, and complicated shapes.<sup>583</sup> Verses

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<sup>582</sup> Al-Raffā', p. 89.

<sup>583</sup> Grabar, pp. 154–55.

3 and 4 could be a description of paintings on the wall yet could also be a description of a real scene. The poet says a brave man is he who has the ability to plunder his enemy's uniform after defeating him. Yet this brave man seems to have no power, in this place where he appears without clothes. Jocelyn Sharlet's opinion is that this is a description of a real scene of undressed people inside this bathhouse.<sup>584</sup> This understanding can be supported by a verse of the poet from another poem, and is what Sāhira al-Ḥubayṭī believes about its meaning.<sup>585</sup> The verse is:

A shy person will take off his shame, then he walks inside it like the bare sword.<sup>586</sup>

However, it can also be a description of figures in a painting who appear without clothes. This interpretation is supported by another verse from a different ode by the same poet, where he describes paintings of undressed men, saying:

There are undressed males like the males inside, and females dressed in ornamented silk.<sup>587</sup>

Sharlet believes that in verse 4 the poet says that, in this place, you can see parts of human bodies that cannot be seen on usual days.<sup>588</sup> On the other hand, the verse can be read to mean that you can see things in this bath that you could not see without coming to this place. This may refer to the scenes from the paintings, which the poet describes in the next verse. The poet uses an ambiguous expression about this scene— and it is not clear whether he refers to real action or simply describes a painting. Both possibilities may be intended. But it is most likely a description of reality, since the poet then begins, in verse 5, with numbering several scenes from works of art that he will talk about in next verses. The poet says this place, when it empties of people, seems full of other people and of different actions that have been carried

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<sup>584</sup> Sharlet, p. 152.

<sup>585</sup> Sāhira al-Ḥubayṭī, 'Signs of Urban Civilization in the Poetry of al-Sarī al-Rafaa (D. 362/ 977)', *College Of Basic Education Researches Journal*, 11.4 (2012), p. 140.

<sup>586</sup> Al-Raffā', p. 241.

The original Arabic verse is:

يَنْضُو الْحَيِّي الْوَجْهَ مَاءَ حَيَاءِهِ      فِيهِ فَيَخْطُرُ كَالْحَسَامِ الْعَارِي

<sup>587</sup> Al-Raffā', p. 239.

The original Arabic verse is:

فَمِنْ ذَكَورٍ غُرَاةٍ كَالذُّكُورِ بِهِ      وَمِنْ إِنَاثٍ عَلَيْهَا الْوَشْيُ وَالْحَبْرُ

<sup>588</sup> Sharlet, p. 152.

out by fighters, hunters, and drinkers. It seems that the poet describes the painting in the most accurate way.<sup>589</sup>

In verse 6, the poet describes horses that have been painted on its walls in different ways: some have been painted as though they are being driven, and others as though they are being ridden. Then the poet continues describing a side of this war, where the horsemen were fighting with soldiers wearing a helmet. This scene shows you some of them striking others. He mentions that this war is false, without reality. However, the swords of this war were dyed with blood, which means a red colour appears in the painting. One great concern of wars is winning, and loss has been mentioned in verse 9. The poet states the reality that the fighters in the painting have no purpose in this war and that they are not under pressure regarding the war's outcome.

Regarding verses 10 and 11, Sharlet asserts that the poet describes another painting on the wall, which portrays a hunting scene with high accuracy.<sup>590</sup> Hunting dogs are mentioned in verse 10, where the poet describes a scene in which the dogs run after animals while their claws are bloody. The poet describes a hunting scene by concentrating on the hunted animal's state, while mentioning the dogs' canine teeth and claws specifically.

In verses 12 and 13, the poet describes a scene of drinkers that has been painted on the wall of the bathhouse as well. The poet mentions the king lying down while wearing his crown. The king seems to be in a majestic situation, as it appears in the painting that has been described to us by the poet in verse 13. The poet adds that the scene is only a painting but in fact there is no king and no majestic. Finally, the poet gives his own opinion on visiting the bathhouses, where he believes that delight or pleasure are permitted, free of any guilt. This may be the pleasure of bathing and relaxing and it may be the delight of looking at paintings. This meaning can be considered a religious opinion, related to the paintings, from the poet's view. This is because the poet especially associates the delight with sin, which is absolutely a religious association. Rhetorically, the poet uses simile and personification in his verses where he likens the *ḥammām*'s walls and roofs to silver and crystal and makes the walls laugh as well.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Al-Ḥubayṭī, p. 139.

<sup>590</sup> Sharlet, p. 154.

<sup>591</sup> Al-Ḥubayṭī, p. 139.

In the other text, the poet says:

1. Perhaps you enjoyed your excursion inside it, because of this place you get out of your home.
2. You see on its walls war's soldiers walking among long spears.
3. Their swords were brought out without shining, and their horses ran without dust.
4. Two armies, the winner did not obtain high position, and the low loser did not come back in disgrace.
5. And others were blessing without fighting, they wore happiness when fates ignored them.
6. Someone hands his companion a good gift, and other takes a wineglass.
7. The reality of their life is faraway, while the eyes can see its beauty.<sup>592</sup>

The poet starts by saying that the *ḥammām* is a place where you can enjoy yourself, and that it can encourage you to get out of your house. He mentions, in this poem, two paintings of armies and drinkers. Then he says that you may be interested because you can see, on its walls, brave soldiers at war walking among spears. He continues to describe their swords and their horses, noting that their swords have lost their shine and their horses cannot move the dust and sand, which is completely true since they are paintings. In verse 4, the poet emphasises his idea about the armies. Their fighting cannot obtain any end result in the war—whether glory for the winner or disgrace for the loser—since they are paintings.

In the second part of this description, which discusses the other scene of the drinkers, the poet mentions, in verse 5, that one of their clear features is blessing people. He states that they are in a separate part of the scene, away from the war. He describes them as wearing happiness like clothes. Then the poet mentions the state of two friends as they appear in the painting. The first is receiving a beautiful gift from his companion, which is something simple like a rose or an apple. The second one is being given a wineglass at the same time. The poet closes his verses by noting his opinion on their life. He believes, in verse 7, that their life is beautiful. It may not be a real life, but it comes close to it because it has been painted perfectly on the wall.

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<sup>592</sup> Al-Raffā', p. 241.



Furthermore, it has been said that Spain had huge number of bathhouses. For example, Cordoba had between three hundred and six hundred public bathhouses and other cities had similar numbers.<sup>593</sup> Other sources confirm that Andalusian bathhouses received the same degree of the beautiful decoration and they were painted as same as eastern bathhouses.<sup>594</sup> Poetically, a statue of a woman and her son in a bathhouse was mentioned by Abū Tammām ibn Rabāḥ (d. 484 / 1091):

1. A statue of a woman is made of alabaster: her neck is white and rosy.
2. She has a son without a husband, and she did not suffer childbirth pains.
3. We know she is a stone but we are in love because of her beautiful eyes.<sup>595</sup>

The poet uses direct description in these verses, giving us information related to the statue's material and colours. He mentions her son, who is also a statue. The poem takes the most popular approach among poets when they write about statues (with a similar approach to paintings): looking for differences between a human and a statue in the shape of a human. Therefore, the poet, in the second verse, confirms that this woman has no husband and that she did not suffer pain in childbirth. Finally, the poet mentions the reason for which they like to look at her: her beauty. The poet uses personification, where he makes the statue like a real woman whose gorgeous eyes can affect people.

#### 4.3.2.3. Painting on glasses

This section will deal with poetic materials related to describing painting on glass drinking vessels. The following pages will present verses that show the poet's view towards this matter. The description of painting or engraving on glasses was not a tempting subject for

<sup>593</sup> Cherif Abderrahman Jah, Inés Eléxpuru, and Margarita López Gómez, *El enigma del agua en Al-Andalus* *lughz al-Ma' fi al-Andalus*, trans. by Zaynab Binyāya, 1st edn (Abu Dhabi: Kalima, Hay'at Abu Dhabi lil-siyāḥa wa-al-thaqāfa, 2014), p. 91.

<sup>594</sup> Basilio Pavón Maldonado, *al-'Imāra al-Andalusīya: 'Imārat al-Miyāh*, ed. by Muḥammad Ḥamza Ismā'īl Ḥaddād, trans. by 'Alī Ibrāhīm 'Alī Munūfī, 1st edn (Cairo: Maktabat Zahrā' al-Sharq, 2008), pp. 375–378.

<sup>595</sup> Ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī, vol. 3: 826.

Arabic poetry until Abū Nuwās started this style in his poetry.<sup>596</sup> Kistrā and his soldiers were the most popular subjects that could be found painted or etched onto glasses, but other subjects included Caesar, Abū Nuwās, girls, trees, and lions, as will be shown in this section.

The first poetic material regarding the subject of this section have been found in the Abbasid age by Abū Nuwās. It contains some characteristics deserving of the categorisation of developed stage. The context of the most popular piece in this subject is when Abū Nuwās and some of his companions went on a picnic to al-Mada'in, which is a town of Persian kings, and they found signs of people who had been there before they had arrived. Abū Nuwās' companions asked him to describe the whole situation; he did so in this poem, in eight verses. He described the group that was in the place before them, as well as his group with his friends. Then he described the paintings on the glass.<sup>597</sup> He says:

1. Wine produced to us in golden glasses, painted with different paintings by Persians.
2. Kistrā on the bottom, antelope on the edges while horsemen are hunting her.
3. Alcohol is reaching the top of the dress and the water is reaching their bonnets.<sup>598</sup> (The dresses and bonnets of the paintings)

Abū Nuwās describes the paintings clearly in these verses. The poet clarifies the colour of the cup and its paintings, where it has been dyed a golden colour. Then he describes the scenes of the paintings, which depict Kistrā the king of Persians, painted on the bottom of cup, and a painting of horsemen while they were hunting an antelope. S. alāh Faḍl considers the poet to be comparing girls who were painted on the edges of the glass to antelopes.<sup>599</sup> This would mean that the poet is not describing real antelopes but girls who are like antelopes. He adds that the wine was reaching up to the girls' necks, which are at the top of their dresses, while

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<sup>596</sup> Yūsuf al-Badī'ī, *al-Ṣubḥ al-Munbī 'an Ḥaythiyat al-Mutanabbī*, ed. by Muḥammad Shitā; and Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, 3rd edn (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1963), p. 150.

<sup>597</sup> Al- Ḥasan ibn Hānī' al- Ḥakamī Abū Nuwās, vol. 3, p. 183. Ewald Wagner, an editor of Abū Nuwās poetry, presents this poem by saying he is 'describing a glass'. Meanwhile Al- Ghazālī, also an editor of Abū Nuwās poems, presents the ode under the title of his own creation: aṭlāl ḥāna) (The Ruins of a Tavern). See: Abū Nuwās, p. 37; Sumi, p. 94.

<sup>598</sup> Al- Ḥasan ibn Hānī' al- Ḥakamī Abū Nuwās, vol. 3, p. 183.

<sup>599</sup> Ṣalāh Faḍl, 'Bayna ibn al-Mu'tazz wa abū Nuwās', *Alittihad.ae* <<http://www.alittihad.ae/details.php?id=22790&y=2010>> [accessed 11 March 2017].

the water was covering their bonnets in the paintings. This understanding has been unacceptable to other scholars, such as Sumi and Makkāwī.<sup>600</sup> It overlooks the scene of the horsemen hunting and does not provide any interpretation of this missing element.

Ultimately, the poet mixes descriptions of the painting with what he was drinking. He intends to clarify how much wine he was drinking, by showing that the wine reached the top of the dresses and the water that was mixed with the wine was only reaching their bonnets. Al-Mu'ayyad praised this description, but he has another interpretation of the meaning: he thinks that the poet means the wine is mixed with only a little water, so that it looks like 'bonnets' on the glasses.<sup>601</sup> This understanding can be considered as a result of the poet's imagination, where he used his poetic strength to add new meanings to the painting's description.

Another scene in this theme is the painting of horsemen on the glasses. For instance, al-Sarrī al-Rafā' says:

1. Glasses painted with horsemen by Persians were floated and sunk in the wine.
2. I kiss everyone who is heavily armed and who holds in his hand an arrow pointed at me.<sup>602</sup>

The poet in these verses follows Abū Nuwās, in terms of his painted glasses description. In the first verse, the poet clarifies that the glasses were painted with Persian soldiers. The poet uses his imagination, making the soldiers float and sink in the wine as the wine washes up and down against the painting of the soldiers inside the glass. Then the poet follows his imagination even further, comparing his action when sipping the wine to someone who kisses soldiers even though they hold their arrows at the ready to shoot him. The poet uses personification when he gives the painted soldiers the ability to float or sink. Additionally, he uses simile when he compares his drinking to the action of someone who kisses the soldiers.

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<sup>600</sup> Sumi, p. 99; Makkāwī, p. 35.

<sup>601</sup> Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamza al-Mu'ayyad, *Kitāb al-Ṭirāz al-mutaḍammīn li-asrār al-Balāgha wa-'Ulūm Ḥaqā'iq al-I'jāz*, ed. by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī, 1st edn (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriya, 2002), vol. 1, p. 99.

<sup>602</sup> Al-Raffā', p. 331.

In another example, Ibn Ḥamdīs writes:

1. Red wine can be drunk by the nose because of its wonderful smell, as well as by the ears and eyes.
2. The glass decorated with a drawing of horsemen. You see a war in the hand of he who provides the drink.
3. The horsemen's swords seem to be bleeding and they were about to sink, the blood reached their necks.
4. The glass wore a red dress with pearls on the top.<sup>603</sup>

The poet, in this piece, again follows the theme of drinking wine with a painting on the glass. The first verse is good beginning to understand the idea where the poet uses exaggeration when he makes the wine so delicious that it can be drunk by the nose, ears, and eyes. The second verse is about the painting on the glass. The painting is of horsemen and their swords, which makes one think that there is a war in the glass as it is held in the waiter's hands. Then he continues his imagination but refers to the swords this time. He imagines that the swords have caused bloodshed, which is the wine, and that the horsemen are about to drown in the wine. Finally, the poet comes back to describing the glass of wine and uses simile to compare the red colour of the wine in the cup to a red dress 'worn by the glass', with the bubbles like pearls at the top of the wineglass. Rhetorically, the poet uses imagination to 'see' a war in the wineglass. He also uses imagination and simile when he sees the swords bleeding and the red wine blood rising to reach the horsemen's necks.

Another aspect in this theme is the girls' scene. They were often painted on glass, and have been described by poets as well. For example, al-Nāshī' says:

1. What a tasty wine, when someone has got it he will not ask his God any more.
2. Paintings on the glass, of beautiful girls come out of the tents.

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<sup>603</sup> Ibn Ḥamdīs, p. 326.

3. When it is becoming mixed, it seems like gold and pearls, single and double.
4. Paintings of girls seem like they are wearing golden dress, and they wear the pearls necklace.<sup>604</sup>

Al- Ḥuṣarī believes that the writer of this poem obtained the idea from Abū Nuwā's poem but that he created a new view in his own verses.<sup>605</sup> Beyond the general style of describing paintings on glasses, al-Nāshi' created a new image when he describes the bubbles as pearls as we will see. In verse 2, the poet describes the paintings on the wineglass. The paintings are of lovely girls; when they are viewed, they seem like beautiful women coming out of the tents. Third, the poet describes the action of mixing the drink with another liquid—the colour becomes like gold and the bubbles like pearls, whether they are double or single. Then the poet describes the image of the paintings when the cup is full of wine and mixed.

Rhetorically, the poet seems aware of what he wants to convey to the reader. The first verse is merely a message to inform the reader of what he is going to talk about, which is the drink. He aims to amaze the reader by claiming that it is the best thing someone can get in life, and that once it has been obtained there should be nothing else left to seek out. Thus the poet, in the latter verses, concentrates on the paintings on the cup of wine under three conditions. First, the painted girls seem to be undressed when the cup is empty. The poet uses simile when comparing the girls painted on the cup with real girls emerging from tents. Second, the drinker mixes wine with another liquid and the colour becomes golden with frothy bubbles. The poet uses simile in this scene as well: he compares the coloured wine and bubbles to gold and pearls. Third, in the last scene, when the drink covers up the painted girls, the poet imagines the girls now wearing dresses and necklaces. Their dresses are the golden colour of the drink and their necklaces are made of the bubble-pearls at the top of cup.

Additionally, al-Babbaghā' (d. 398 / 1007) in another example, describes a blue painted glass mentioning shapes in the paintings:

<sup>604</sup> Ibrāhīm ibn al-Qāsim Raqīq al-Qayrawānī, *Quṭb al-Surūr fī Awṣāf al-Anbidha wa-al-Khumūr*, ed. by Aḥmad al-Jandī (Damascus: Majma' al-Lughā al-'Arabīya, 1969), pp. 574–75.

<sup>605</sup> Ibrāhīm Ibn-'Alī al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-Ādāb wa-Thamar al-Albāb*, ed. by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Hawwārī, 1st edn (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣrīya, 2001), vol. 3, p. 177.

1. In many mornings wine delivered me from shining morning to shining morning too.
2. So, hand me clear wine like my pure morality.
3. In a blue glass like the air, eyesight passes through it, even if it would not have perforated.
4. I still accompanied men's paintings, remaining drunk from the first time bartenders provided a drink for them.
5. They sink in seas of wine but our drinking protects them from sinking.
6. If you see my palm dyed with shining safflower.
7. You will think the air gave me a piece of sun when it was on the horizon.<sup>606</sup>

The context of this poem is about drinking wine and describing a blue painted glass. The poet marvels at the huge number of mornings on which he has drunk wine. One of the good qualities of the wine is its clarity; the poet claims that the cup of wine is very clear, and then compares it to his own pure morality. The poet wants to convey his personal good morals and high level of politeness. The poet then turns to describing the cup of wine. Then he starts by specifying the wineglass' blue colour. He describes the colour by saying it is like the air—eyes can pass through it without damaging it. Then the poet states that his companions have been painted on the glass. He assumes that the people appearing in the painting are still drunk, ever since the first time they were served a drink. Clearly, he means that they are still drunk due to his regular use of the glass for the purpose of drinking wine.

In verse 5, the poet creates an imaginary scene in which he supposes that—when the bartender fills the glass—the painted men sink into seas of wine, yet when the poet and his companions drink the wine they save those people from drowning. In the last two verses, he tries to describe the colour of wine in the blue glass he is holding. He describes the moment when the glass is full of wine in his hand, and compares the colour of his hand in that moment to the colour of a safflower. He imagines the air giving him a present of a piece of the sun at sunset. Rhetorically, the poet uses simile in the third verse, when comparing the colour of the

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<sup>606</sup> Al-Tha'ālibī, *Yaūmat al-Dahr, fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-'Aṣr*, vol. 1: 323.

glass to the air, as well as in the last verse, where he compares the transformed colour of the wine in his hand to the colour of the sun at sundown.

One of the most interesting texts in this theme has been mentioned by poets is the painting of Abū Nuwās on the glass. This is a topic specifically approached by al- Ṣanawbarī (d. 334 / 945). He describes paintings on drinking glasses where the person who was painted was Abū Nuwās. There was an interesting artistic development during that time, in which painters moved from painting Kisrā on wineglasses, to instead painting the first poet who mentioned Kisrā's painting on wineglasses. Al- Ṣanawbarī says:<sup>607</sup>

1. A pearl full of carnelian, on top of it there are small pearls.
2. In the bottom of my glass a painting of Abū Nuwās while the glass was stable in his hand.
3. He was an honest and companionable friend; his manners are good.
4. His lute is without *zīr* and his bottle is without tar.
5. He plays with a young girl with friends.
6. Examples of them are on the glass, such as their eyes, brows, and foreheads.
7. Additionally, there are their crowns, dresses, and waistcoat.
8. And between them what we wish, from the land and seas.
9. The lion, antelope, whale and the lizard.
10. That is a hawk, and that is a falcon. Those are wrens, and these are nightingales.
11. Turners who create it are proficient without debate or consultation.<sup>608</sup>

In general, the poet uses the description as the main tool in this poem. He mentions a cup of wine in a transparent glass like a pearl filled with red carnelian, and the bubbles like small pearls. Then the poet states that the painting was on the glass where Abū Nuwās was painted on the bottom of the cup, drinking wine as well. In verse 3, the poet describes his

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<sup>607</sup> Al- Ṣanawbarī deals with this topic in two poems and both contain similar kinds of description. The poem presented here provides one example of al- Ṣanawbarī's works.

<sup>608</sup> Al-Ṣanawbarī, pp. 80–81.

companion, saying that Abū Nuwās was his friend that night. He praises him, describing him as an honest friend who has good looks as well as solemnity.

The poet describes the instrument that was painted in Abū Nuwās meeting with his companions, and singing girl. In the scene, his lute is a kind of lute with no *zīr* string, which is the Arabic name of the fourth string.<sup>609</sup> Lisa Nielson thinks the classical lute was uncertain and we can imagine the typical lute has at least four strings.<sup>610</sup> The poet mentions that the lute that appeared in the scene with Abū Nuwās was without *zīr*.<sup>611</sup> Muḥsin ‘Aṭīya, a modern scholar, confirms that the ancient paintings of singers can be considered as musical recoding where the shape of instrument and the number of strings can specify some features of the instrument.<sup>612</sup> However, in this case it is unclear whether the poet uses his imagination, or simply describing the paintings, or whether he adds this information to his poem from his own knowledge about the lute strings in Abū Nuwās’ time.

The poet adds that Abū Nuwās’ bottle of wine is free of any tar taste or colour. Then he describes a scene in which Abū Nuwās was playing with a beautiful girl, and adds that his companions were known as friends with unethical behaviour. Then the poet confirms that he describes scenes that have been painted on the glass. He especially emphasises the figures’ eyes, brows, and foreheads as they appear on the glass. Also, the poet mentions their crowns and dresses as well as their waistcoats.

In verse 8, he says that on the glass appears things which we would love to see, including paintings of animals which live on land and in the sea. In the last two verses, the poet mentions eight kinds of animals that have been painted on the glass: lion, antelope, whale, lizard, hawk, falcon, wrens, and nightingales. The poet’s aim seems to be to inform and to impress his readers regarding the diversity and the quantity of these animals. Ultimately, the poet expresses his own opinion towards the creators or painters who have created these paintings: he believes they were highly skilled and produced high-quality work.

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<sup>609</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, p. 114.

<sup>610</sup> Nielson, p. 77.

<sup>611</sup> The names of the fourth and fifth strings.

<sup>612</sup> ‘Aṭīya, p. 51.



#### 4.3.2.4. Paintings on Fabric

Painting on fabric is an ancient kind of painting especially in the Yemen, as mentioned earlier in the introduction. However, new kinds of materials have been used in this particular stage, along with the new kinds of scenes. Therefore, while painting on fabric was itself already an old tradition at that time, the paintings that have been described in poems in latter ages have features that are unique and innovative. In this section, examples of poems about two kinds of paintings on fabric will be examined. The first part examines painting on flags which is a style that did not appear in the early stage. Secondly, poems about painting on tents will be discussed.

Paintings of animals on flags is a new kind of painting on fabric appearing in this period. They are mentioned, for example, in this poem by Ibn Ḥamdīs:

1. Flags beat in the sky, like enemy hearts while they are in palpitation of fright.
2. They move in the sky, and they contain (paintings) on silk.
3. The horses dust them by their running and the wind dusts them off.
4. A snake hung on a lion among the flags appearing furious and angry.
5. Paintings have been drawn in inanimate things, they seem alive by their violence and vaulting.
6. They open their big mouths while they are empty of tongue and canines.
7. Their bodies are moved by the wind instead of souls.
8. You see al-‘Anqā’ moves her head in a huge space.
9. It (al-‘Anqā’) arrived at al-Mahdīyatayn, it departed from her nest in India.<sup>613</sup>

The poet, in these verses, describes images that were painted on flags. He starts by mentioning the flags’ movements and compares them to the palpitation of the frightened hearts of enemies. Then he compares what has been written on the flags to pieces of silk. Also, the

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<sup>613</sup> Ibn Ḥamdīs, p. 60.

poet describes the situation when horses stir the dust and cause it to get caught in the flags, while the wind re-cleans the flags regularly. In verse 4, the poet describes a particular painting on the flag, which is that of a snake hanging on the body of a lion while the snake seems angry. Then he imagines these paintings of animals are alive because of the high quality of the paintings. The poet continues describing the animals and concentrates on how their mouths were open, yet empty of tongues and canine teeth. Then the poet imagines that the paintings are alive: when the wind blows, it seems like their souls can move them. Additionally, the poet mentions a magical bird called the al-‘Anqā’ that was painted on the flags. It has been said that this magical bird has a human face, the beak of an eagle, four wings on both sides, and hands with claws.<sup>614</sup> This bird seems to be flying as it appears in the paintings—or else the poet means that the bird seems to be flying when the wind moves the flag. Ultimately, the poet imagines the long journey of this bird, all the way from its origin in India to the North of Africa in al-Mahdīyatayn.

Rhetorically, the poet uses simile and imagination when describing the paintings on the flags. Simile has been used in two first verses. In verse 3, his expression about the wind’s ability can be considered a metaphor (personification), where he gives the wind specific actions that are usually made by humans. In verse 4, he uses simile when he considers the snake in an angry shape. Furthermore, he uses implied simile in verse 7. He likens the flags’ moving to live animals which have souls, yet it is the wind moving them instead of real souls. In the last two verses, the poet imagines the ‘Anqā’ bird flying, travelling, and arriving in North Africa from India—while in fact it is only a painting on the flag.

Poets also describe paintings that have been found on tents. For example, al- Mutanabbī describes paintings on a prince’s tent, while praising the prince in one of his poems.<sup>615</sup> He says:

1. The rain and lightning inside the tent is better than the power of youth.
2. There are meadows have not woven by cloud, and there are branches of trees where the pigeons cannot sing on them.

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<sup>614</sup> Mez, vol. 2, p. 224.

<sup>615</sup> Makkāwī, p. 37.

3. On the edges of each garment there is a collar of non-pierced pearls.
4. You can see wild animals in peace. Some is in war and other are in peace.
5. When the wind moves the tent, it surges, and on it horses seem to be walking and the lions seem to be hunting.
6. And the painting of the Byzantine who has a crown seems humble in front of one who has no crown except his bonnet.<sup>616</sup>

Al- Mutanabbī here describes paintings on the tent while the prince is inside it. The poet makes a comparison between the youthfulness and generosity of the prince where he compare the prince to the rain. He finds that the generosity of the prince, whom he can see inside the tent, is better than the youthfulness of youth. Then he describes the paintings on the tent. He starts with a description of the meadows, saying that these meadows have not been made by clouds nor because of rains. The poet does not specifically say the real reason for the meadows, which is an artistic reason, but refers to it indirectly. Al- Mutanabbī adds that there are branches of trees and birds but without singing. In verse 3, the poet continues by describing some garments where the edges of each have two-sides of colours and unused pearls.

The poet, in verse 4, describes other painted scenes depicting the animals of the land. They are living in peace, as it seems, in the tent. Yet they have been painted in a fighting state. Then the poet describes the condition of the tent when it moves because of the wind, and when the paintings move as well. He imagines that the horses are walking and the lions are trying to hunt gazelles. In fact, the poet tries to transform the movements of these animals. As he is imagining them, in that moment, he uses words such as ‘when’ and ‘like’ to remind readers that they are only paintings, as Makkāwī states.<sup>617</sup> Finally, the poet mentions a painting of a Byzantine king wearing a crown. The poet describes the Byzantine king as being in a submissive condition, in spite of his crown, to the prince in the tent— who has no crown except his bonnet.

Al-Mutanabbī fills his verses with rhetorical tools. In verse 1, the poet uses metaphor when he expresses that the prince inside the tent was similar to the cloud or the rain in terms of generosity. In verse 2, he uses metonymy when he gives incomplete elements of the

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<sup>616</sup> Mutanabbī, p. 258.

<sup>617</sup> Makkāwī, p. 37.

meadows and the branches of trees. In verse 4, he uses personification when he gives the animals a human quality: the ability to make war or peace. In verse 5, the poet uses simile, comparing the condition of paintings when the wind moves them to real-life action when horses walk and lions hunt.

Additionally, al-Mutanabbī describes another tent or howdah with a beautiful girl inside it. He says:

1. I hope all camels be in miserable situation except one has departed at the morning with a girl like a statue wearing painted silk.
2. I am jealous of the painting on her howdah, if I was the painting I would disappear to see her.
3. May God not make poor the hands that made it where they put Kisrā and Caesar above here instead of doorkeepers.
4. They were protecting beautiful eyes in a howdah, she left but she was kept in my heart.<sup>618</sup>

The poet wishes that all howdahs / *hawdag* should be in a bad condition, except the one that was holding the girl who left in the morning. He compares his girl to a statue because of her beauty, in addition to her dress which was painted silk. Then the poet expresses his jealousy of the painting that was in her howdah. Then he imagines himself as the painting on the garment, or the garment itself, so that he could disappear to give the poet the chance to see the girl.<sup>619</sup> Then the poet asks God to protect the hands of those who painted that painting from poverty. He also asks that God put Kisrā and Caesar in place as doorkeepers, instead of two soldiers. Their new job is to protect this girl, who has beautiful eyes. She leaves the place but she still exists in the poet's heart.

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<sup>618</sup> Al-Mutanabbī, p. 522.

<sup>619</sup> Al-Badī'ī, p. 148.

#### 4.3.2.5. The use of paint on the body

The use of paint on the body is one piece of evidence of the luxury some people enjoyed at that time. One of the most important issues that we should mention here is the term *washm* ‘tattoo’ could not be found in this period, in contrast with the early stage. In this section, we will find poetic materials that are similar to those in the prior section of painting on glass: poets seem to use visual artwork as a mere starting point to show off their poetical powers, in terms of language use and the strength of their imaginations. It can thus be said that poets create detailed descriptions of drawing and painting on the body in order to demonstrate their poetic ability. The poetic texts that describe painting on the body can be divided to two broad categories. The first is painting on ladies’ hands; the second is painting on ladies’ cheeks.

The first group of verses, about painting on hands, contains several poetic ideas. For example, painting can affect the lover’s strength. Al-Wa’wā’ al- Dimashqī (d. 370 / 980) says:

1. She got on her hand what I cannot get on my hand, painting on the wrist makes my strength too weak.
2. It is like ants’ footprints on her fingertips, or an inlaid meadow with hailstone.
3. She worried that her eye’s dart hit her hand, so she dressed her wrist in chain mail.
4. Her hairdressers put traps on her hand, so she hunts my heart inside my body.<sup>620</sup>

The poet describes paintings on a woman’s hand. He does not clarify what kind of materials have been used—whether it is a tattoo or henna—but, rather, he concentrates on the artwork. He draws attention to the idea that girls are permitted to put decorations on their hands that men are expected not to have: in this case, painting on hands. The poet expresses his weakness when it comes to this beautiful drawing on the woman’s hand. Then the poet compares this drawing to several things. He uses simile when he compares the tiny drawing on her hand to the footprints of tiny ants. The poet shows a high degree of interest in describing

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<sup>620</sup> Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Wa’wā’, *Dīwān al-Wa’wā’ al-Dimashqī Abī al-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ghassānī al-mashhūr bi-al-Wa’wā’ al-Dimashqī*, ed. by Sāmī Dahhān, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1993), pp. 265–266.

the tiny drawing on her wrist with accuracy and detail. Therefore, he uses a unique simile in his first comparison, where the link is like ants' footprints.

Additionally, in the same verse he uses simile, comparing her hand to a meadow inlaid with hailstone. The poet imagines that tiny white on her hand like hailstone or the very green painting on her hand like a meadow. Then the poet creates an imaginative image: he describes the woman's eyes as the equivalent of an arrow and says that they can throw darts at her beautiful hand, but, because she wants to protect her hand, she dresses it in a shield of chain mail which is the henna. The poet compares her eyes to an arrow when comparing this painting to a shield of chainmail containing small rings. Finally, he imagines that paintings on her hand are like traps that have been laid by her hairdressers to hunt his heart.

A poet describes another drawing on a girl's hand. He says:

1. Green painting on her wrist like net of musk on hand of hailstone.
2. Anyone has filled his eyes with her beauty, so it will protect his eyes from illness.<sup>621</sup>

The poet makes a comparison related to the design of the painting on the woman's hand. He states that the colour of the painting is green, which is used in Arabic as a synonym for black.<sup>622</sup> To be sure of the exact colour, the poet mentions musk in the same verse; the colour of musk is black. Additionally, he imagines that seeing her beauty is a way for people with eye disease to recover the strength of their eyes. The poet uses simile to clarify the style of the painting and its location: he mentions a net of musk, likened to the design of the painting on her hand. He also uses the image of a hailstone to describe the white colour of her hand.

Another feature sometimes used by poets is using precious stones in simile. For example, Ibn Ghalbūn al-Ṣūrī writes:

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<sup>621</sup> Dāwūd ibn 'Umar al-Anṭākī, *Tazyīn al-Aswāq bi-taḥṣīl Ashwāq al-'Ushshāq*, 2nd edn (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Azharīya al-Miṣrīya, 1901), p. 240.

<sup>622</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, p. 1182.

1. She shows us the drawing, then we said “ivory has mixed with chain mail”.
2. Then she smiled and we said “the hailstone have organized in your mouth”.<sup>623</sup>

The poet describes the drawing of henna on the girl’s body, without specifying which part of her body. He uses simile when he compares the intricate circles of the drawing to the small rings of the shield, while the other white spaces on her body make it seem like ivory has been used as part of the drawing. He continues describing some of her features, such as the beauty of her teeth, which he compares to hailstones.

The second part in this theme is the use of paint on girls’ cheeks. The poetic texts contain several meanings that can be arranged according to the main ideas of the verse. Women were drawing snake and scorpion on their cheeks. In the next few texts of poetry, the poets mention the paintings or drawings on ladies’ cheeks briefly. Poets sometimes take advantage of this topic to display their poetical ability, or they might show their religious knowledge through different poetical subjects such as this. As noted, poets do not give much attention to describing this kind of painting in detail. Poets mention the painting on the body in several different meanings, such as being miracles of prophets, or imagining them being painted in their typical environments. The most popular poetic idea among poets is that women have paintings of prophets’ miracles. For example, Ibn al-Sā‘ātī (5<sup>th</sup> / 12<sup>th</sup> century) says:

1. (There is a white girl). Her anger is like her hair (black), and her satisfaction is like her forehead (white).
2. Her hairdressers drew paintings on her cheeks, I became a slave because of her love.
3. I am wondering how a snake in meadow (painted on her cheek) obtained the water and shadow instead of me.
4. Be as careful as you can, a long time ago a snake cheated Adam in a meadow like this.<sup>624</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> Ibn Ghalbūn al-Ṣūrī, vol. 2, p. 130.

<sup>624</sup> Ibn Ḍāfir, p. 192.

The poet talks about her beauty, using a specific description of her hair and forehead. Then, in three verses, he talks about the paintings on her cheeks. There were hairdressers who, at the time, could paint ladies' cheeks, as the poet is saying. Then he creates an imaginary idea related to the painting of a snake on her cheeks, where he imagines that the snake was living in her cheek like in a garden, and that her lover cannot be as near to her as the snake. The poet, in the last verse, points out how religious context warns him away from the snake. He mentions the story of Adam who was in Heaven before the snake led him into sin.<sup>625</sup>

Rhetorically, the poet uses simile and personification, but the most important thing we should note is the poet's imagination and the connection between his idea and the religious story. The poetical style does not pay attention to describe the paintings in details.

In another poem, different ideas are explored by the minister Najm al-Dīn (5<sup>th</sup> / 12<sup>th</sup> century), who says:

1. I protect a girl has been created from pleasure.
2. I have asked her to grant me a kiss on her golden cheek.
3. She replied while she was amazed because of her dyed hand.
4. What a great and heavy request.
5. It cannot exist forever.
6. The meadow of my cheek has been kept by the snake and scorpion.
7. Someone wants to kiss my cheek must provide the gold.
8. Then he can drink the medicine from my cold mouth.<sup>626</sup>

The context of these odes is that, the minister Najm al-Dīn was asked by his king to compose a poem describing a girl who had musk drawings on her cheeks in the shapes of a snake and a scorpion. Therefore, the minister writes these verses. The poet uses a narrative style and makes the girl the narrator of the conversation. He imagines a dialogue has been conducted between him and the king's girl. The poet claims that this girl has been created from

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<sup>625</sup> Ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, p. 236.

<sup>626</sup> Ibn Zāfir, p. 191.



glee, which is literally incorrect since she has been created like any whole human being. However, the expression is one of metonymy, to show the extent to which this girl is a source of pleasure.

The poet imagines that he asked her to allow him to kiss her in her beautiful golden cheek. then the poet mentions her dyed hand where she seems amazed because of her hand's beauty. In verses 4 and 5, the poet conveys how she was in awe of his request and considers whether the request is possible or not. Then the poet imagines that her cheek is like a meadow, which is a probable place for the snake and scorpion to be found. He suggests that the reason for the existence of the snake and scorpion is to protect the cheek from any unexpected kiss. There is a solution, which has been provided by the poet in verse 7: the person who wants to obtain a kiss on her cheek must provide a charm for the snake and scorpion, in order to be protected from their attack. In fact, the spell involves a piece of gold that should be provided to the girl. Then, as has been said in the last verse, the kiss will provide medicine for their probable stings and bites.

#### 4.3.2.6. Statues of Humans

This section contains two parts: the first focuses on the description of Palmyra statues. The second focuses on verses which describe statues of girls in churches.

##### *Tadmur's statues*

Tadmur's or Palmyra statues have been described in several poetic pieces. Poets deal with them through several areas of focus as well. One of them is immortality.

Abū Dulaf (d. 226 / 840) writes some verses about the same two statues, but deals with them in a different way:

1. Two statues in Tadmur amazed wise men and lovers.
2. They continued in their intimacy and embracing for a long time without boredom.

3. Age will disarrange them by separation's arrow.
4. And age will decay them by a succession of nights and days.
5. Thus, scholars will know there is no everlasting, except the only creator, God.<sup>627</sup>

Here the poet deals with the two statues through the idea of necessary separation in the life. The poet expresses how the statues amazed two particular groups of people who were concerned with them more than others (wise men and lovers). In fact, the poet implies why he specifies these two groups: wise men are interested in how they can make lifetimes longer, while lovers are interested in spending their lives close to their beloved. The poet clarifies his view in the second verse, where it relates it to the statues' age and shape. The statues were created hundreds of years ago, in the shape of two lovers hugging each other.

Then the poet delivers his opinion towards the lovers' wishes. He argues that time will separate them, as is the normal rule with lovers in real life. Then the poet expresses his opinion towards wise men's thinking, when he states that he believes time will destroy the statues. He closes this piece by mentioning what he believes in, related to the idea of immortality: he confirms that God is the only one who is immortal. Rhetorically, the poet uses metaphor in verses 3 and 4. In verse 3, he likens time to a soldier whose arrow can cause a separation between the lovers. In verse 4, he compares time to an army that can attack continually, which will lead to the destruction of the statues.

In another poetic text by Mohammad ibn al-Hājib (3<sup>rd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> century), he looks at the two statues in terms of their long time standing and explores some of their secrets. Yet he also expresses great concern about their immortality. He says:

1. Oh, Tadmur, your two girls (statues) concerned my heart without any likeness.
2. I am thinking about you, so, I cannot sleep when people sink into their sleeping.
3. I am wondering, why they are standing for this long time.
4. Did they have the power of standing forever, it is something human cannot do it.

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<sup>627</sup> Al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, p. 18.

5. They are like two peers were standing in front of a judge in a complicated case.
6. Age passes, day after day, and year after year.
7. Their staying makes them more beautiful, pearls are beautiful when they are in a string.
8. They will never escape the rule of age, its law is annihilation.<sup>628</sup>

At the beginning of this text, the poet mentions to what extent his heart is concerned about those two statues of Palmyra's girls, where there is nothing equal to them in terms of his concern. The poet continues to highlight his concern, mentioning how he is still thinking about them even at bedtime, where he could not sleep because of his deep thinking about them. Then the poet wonders how they can stand for all that time. He thinks on whether they have been gifted with the ability of standing forever, something that people are unable to achieve. In verse 5, he compares their lengthy standing to two opponents standing in front of a judge for a long time, in a complicated case. Then the poet mentions the very long time for which they have been standing while still seeming beautiful day after day. Finally, the poet asserts what he believes about their immortality: he thinks that time is too powerful for creatures in this life, and that even the statues will be destroyed by time one day. Rhetorically, the poet uses simile to describe the long period the statues have spent standing, when he compares them to two opponents standing before a judge.

One of the most important ideas in this theme is the subject of professional creation. Abū al-Ḥasn al-ʿIjlī (d. 216 / 874) says:

1. I see two statues in Tadmur, they have been created by an intelligent sculptor.
2. They are what eyes prefer to see, they tilt people's hearts with their beauty.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>628</sup> Al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, p. 18.

<sup>629</sup> Al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 2, p. 18.

The poet, in these two verses, appreciates the sculptor's handiwork. He states that the sculptor is intelligent, and that the professional quality increases the beauty of the statues. The poet describes the statues' beauty; they can affect people's hearts directly.

In general, the ideas of all of the poems that describe these two statues have concentrated on the description of their shapes, as well as on the idea of immortality in this world—as pointed out by Muwāsī.<sup>630</sup> However, the last poem cited here is a unique one: it does not deal with this idea at all, but instead concentrates on the idea of wonder and appreciation towards the artist who created them, by describing him as an intelligent, absorbed sculptor and by describing the statues' effects on people's minds.

### *Statues of girls*

The second group discussed here is that of poetic texts which describe statues of girls in church. This topic has been mentioned by poets in several different styles and contexts. Some examples will be discussed in this section to give more illustration about this subject. The first is a text by Muhammad al-Mauqifī (d. 215 / 830), which describes a statue of girl in church:

1. Many times we have drunk from small and big glasses where there were many statues.
2. There was a statue that had seduction for the hearts and eyes.
3. She made us joyful without singing. There is no need of the lutes and pipes.
4. The body languishes when she shoots several kinds of beauty through her magical eyes.
5. She is indicating towards who was looking at her.
6. I swear by her beautiful eyes, coloured lips, and rosy cheeks.
7. I will not fail to attend to the monastery she is in even if I was far away from her.<sup>631</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> Muwāsī, p. 357.

<sup>631</sup> Al-Tha'ālibī, *Yaūmat al-Dahr, fī Maḥāsīn Ahl al-'Aṣr*, vol. 1: 516.

The poet, in these verses, describes a female statue in church. He starts by mentioning that several times he has drunk wine with friends inside the monastery as they looked at the monastery's statues. He becomes more specific by describing a particular statue of a girl. The poet concentrates on the perfection of the statue by asserting that the statue had a kind of magic that could affect hearts and eyes. Then the poet feels happiness and joy when hearing music for his situation, when he is looking at the girl. He confirms that she cannot sing but she can make people joyful without any instruments. Also, he describes her effect on the human body when she looks at someone. He compares the strength of her eyes to what alcohol does to a human body—making it droop—and he attributes this ability to the magical power in her eyes. In verse 5, he continues his theme by describing her subservient way of looking at people, which he says can also lead the body to be weak. Then the poet swears not by God but instead by some of her features, such as her beautiful eyes, her coloured lips, and her rosy cheeks. He vows that he will not stop visiting the place where she exists. Generally, the poet concentrates on the accuracy of the statue during his verses. He transfers this accuracy to his verses as well. For instance, the poet describes specific things such as her eyes, lips, cheeks, and her subservient pose. The poet uses personification, giving the statue human abilities. For example, she can make people feel joy, she can see, and she can shoot at people through her eyes. She has the ability to indicate or transmit a feeling, and her facial features are human.

‘Abd Allāh al-Rubay‘ī (4<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> century) similarly describes a statue in church while mentioning its accuracy and beauty. He says:

1. Painting in church fascinates us.
2. The sculptor increased her beauty when he created her as a Christian girl.
3. No doubt, her face is magic in my eyes and others' eyes as well.
4. I am jealous of the priest because of her, I wish someone would shatter it.<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn Abū al-Faraj al- Iṣfahānī, *al-Diyārāt*, ed. by Jalil Ibrahim al-Attiya (London: Riyāq al-Rayyis, 1991), p. 148.

A narrative style has been used by the poet, to describe a statue he saw in a church. The poet states the extent of his amazement felt toward the statue. He believes that this statue is magic in some way. Then he expresses one reason for her beauty, in his view, which is her religion. It seems that the poet found it more beautiful because 'she' was Christian, which is clearly consistent with 'her' existence in church. Then he concentrates on one thing: her face. He believes that her face is a piece of magic and that everyone who can see it must agree with this belief. Finally, the poet expresses his jealousy towards the priest, and his wish that someone would damage the statue. Yet he is careful to say, here, that it could not be him; he is dangerously jealous but could not damage the statue himself.

So far we have analysed the poetic texts that have dealt with painting and sculpture, giving both thematic and rhetorical analysis. In the next section, we will move on to discuss the themes and critical issues that we have discovered, interpreting poetic matters and themes, and comparing stages and ideas to each other.

#### 4.4. Discussion, interpretation and comparison

In this chapter, Arab poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture have been analysed. The poetic materials which are the main source of our discussions have been classified into two major stages. As noted above, these stages have been classified depending on the specific common characteristics that have been discovered in each stage.

With regard to the poetic materials that have been found in the early stage, it is clear that poets at this point were not interested in describing painting or sculpture as the core theme of their poems. Instead, their work contains several themes and ideas while the verses that describe paintings or statues are limited; this is something which can be considered as a common feature at that time. Poets do mention painting or sculpture in their poems, but it tends to be in a marginal way, focusing on different aspects, purposes, and meanings, however, none of them can be considered as a key artistic theme. Additionally, we have observed that poets tended to overlook the visual artists' roles and to concentrate their description of the direct objects within just one or two verses.

The poetic materials have been classified into four themes and groups depending on the poets' intended meanings. In the first group, poets are interested in mentioning some of their beloved's belongings, such as painted rugs, coloured scarfs, and garments, to convey a signal to others about the high class of their beloved especially when they travel in the desert. It can be said that poets focused on particular aspects such as embellished howdah, painted clothes and garments. Poets did not pay attention to describing painting or sculpture in great depth. Poets mention some signs which allow us to better understand some of their live arts such as the painted garment and scarfs. They did not aim to convey general information about the quality of arts that they encountered in their environment but rather they had particular personal or poetic purposes. For example, Imru' al-Qays did not tend to describe the paintings or statues for artistic reasons. In other verses, as previously mentioned, he describes some of his beloved's painted belongings, such as rugs and garments, only to convey the meaning of their wealth, and show that they were high-class people.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Muḥammad Abū Mūsā, *al-Shi'r al-Jāhili Dirāsa fī Manāzi' al-Shu'arā'*, 1st edn (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 2008), pp. 67, 75.

The second group of verses is when poets compare their beloved girls to statues or compare people to statues for other purposes, and we can note some particular features. Poets tend to compare their beloved girls to statues in terms of beauty, accuracy, and colour. It is clear that poets did not intend to focus their descriptions on the statues themselves but rather they were aiming to highlight aspects related to their beloved girls through making comparison between their girls and the statues. For instance, Imru' al-Qays, al-A'shā, and 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt compare their girls to statues in terms of accuracy and beauty. Ḥassān, meanwhile, used this technique of comparison people to statues differently. In his verse Ḥassān compares someone to statue hung on a wooden door to express his weakness and harrowed will, likening it to the state of the statue.

A third group of verses mentions paintings, statues or engravings for non-artistic reasons. In all those verses that we mention in this third group the poets describe painting and sculpture in detail but do not explore artistic reasons. For example, 'Abdat ibn al-Ṭabīb in his two verses describes paintings on furniture he was lying on. He mentions chickens and lions painted on the carpet and gives details about it but for non-artistic reasons. Meanwhile, Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt's verse describes a man and a bull under his right foot. An eagle for his left one, and lion. It can be considered as a controversial verse and many scholars have been interested to discover its meaning. This verse and scholars arguments about it will be discussed extensively in the next four paragraphs.

Al- Jāḥiẓ,<sup>634</sup> al- Iṣfahānī,<sup>635</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih,<sup>636</sup> and al- Baghdādī,<sup>637</sup> believe that the poet describes an angel. The last three authors probably follow al- Jāḥiẓ in his opinion because he is the first scholar to make such an argument. Additionally, all of them recite the Prophet's text when he says: Umayya tells the truth. Therefore, it seems that al- Jāḥiẓ and those who believed his opinion have some evidence to support their opinion: the context of the poems, support from the earlier Prophet's text, and some historical stories about the poet's religion. Additionally, al-Qimnī a modern scholar thinks that 'Umayya describes an angel and he recites

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<sup>634</sup> Al- Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. by 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn, 2nd edn (Egypt: Sharikat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1965), vol. 6, p. 222, vol. 7, p. 51.

<sup>635</sup> Al- Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 4, p. 101.

<sup>636</sup> Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al-'Iqd Al-Farīd*, vol. 6, p. 126.

<sup>637</sup> 'Abd al-Qādir ibn 'Umar Baghdādī, vol. 1, p. 248.



the Prophet's text as well.<sup>638</sup> However, al-Qimnī provides photo of a Lamassu and says: 'Umayya tells the truth', and he does not provide much clarification about his opinion,<sup>639</sup> (al-Qimnī's opinion will be discussed later on).

If we consult Umayya's collection of poetry to ensure the real meaning of his verse through the context, we find that there is discrepancy between two copies of his *dīwān* where this verse is in two different poems, but both are written in the context of describing angels.<sup>640</sup> Therefore, al- Jāhiz's understanding and what other scholars (mentioned above) believe about angel's description seems completely true regarding the context of both poems. With regard to the Prophet's text that all the scholars have mentioned above when they were talking about this text, we find that scholars are in conflict about the Prophet's text .Al-Ḥashidī says this text is regarded as *ṣaḥīḥ*,<sup>641</sup> (which means that the text has been said by the Prophet). On the other hand, al- Albānī says it is regarded as *ẓa'īf al-īsnād*,<sup>642</sup> (which is a big problem related to the text and it may not the prophet text). In terms of Islamic views towards angels' description in some texts, we should be clear that Islamic texts have no accordance to the poet's verse or even a Lamassu photo. In fact, there are some Qura'ānic texts that describe angels as being created from light, with two, three, or four wings.<sup>643</sup> Also, in some texts by the Prophet they are described as being huge.<sup>644</sup> Scholars' opinions about the Prophet's text differs, and made us looking for other directions (such as the ancient monuments in the museums) to find any potential similarities between angel characterisations in Islamic conceptions and the poet's description in his verse.

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<sup>638</sup> Sayid Al-Qimni, *al-Uṣṭūra wa-al-Turāth*, 3rd edn (Cairo: al-Markaz al-Miṣrī li-Buḥūth al-Ḥadāra, 1999), p. 85.

<sup>639</sup> Al-Qimni, p. 96.

<sup>640</sup> Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt, *Sharḥ Dīwān Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt*, ed. by Sayf al-Dīn Kātib; and Aḥmad 'Iṣām Kātib (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1980), p. 31; Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt, *Dīwān Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt*, p. 50.

<sup>641</sup> Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Asmā' wa-al-Ṣifāt*, ed. by 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥāshidī (Jeddah: Maktabat al-Sawādī lil-Tawzī', 1992), vol. 2, p. 207.

<sup>642</sup> Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Kitāb al-Sunna: wa-Ma'ahū Zilāl Al-Janna fī Takhrij al-Sunna*, ed. by al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and Aḥmad ibn 'Amr Ibn Abī 'Āṣim, 1st edn (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 255-256.

<sup>643</sup> Q. (35: 1). See: Qur'ānic Verses' appendix. Verse no. 8.

<sup>644</sup> Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj and al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, 2nd edn (Cairo: Mu'assasat Qurṭuba, 1994), vol. 18, p. 167.

Regarding al-Qimnī's opinion, we found that there is no scholar before al-Qimnī that made a connection between Lamassu and Umayya's verses. But he does not provide his own justification of Lamassu's photo; he provides the photo in terms of its relationship to the poet's verse. In fact, it is clear that Lamassu has been discovered between 1845 and 1851 in Iraq.<sup>645</sup> Therefore, it is impossible to say the poet saw the Lamassu personally at that time. It is an illogical idea especially since nobody talks about Lamassu in Arabic literature until it has been discovered in the modern time. So, we should look for other interpretations. There is great similarity between Lamassu's description by the poet's verse and the photo of Lamassu that can be seen in the British Museum website. By looking at the poet's biography, it can be found that he studied ancient religious teachings and was familiar with the Holy Scriptures of ancient religions through his frequent travelling to Irāq and Shām.<sup>646</sup> Therefore, it seems that the poet probably obtains his idea from previous religious books or other stories from the religious teachers at that time. The high accuracy of his description suggests that the poet probably read or heard an accurate description of Lamassu or saw an ancient painting or engraving about it so he could describe it accurately in his verse.

Finally, the fourth group is a group of poetic materials describing the use of paint on the body, such as tattoos or henna painted on ladies' hands and bodies. It is clear that poets were looking at tattoos on ladies' body as a kind of beauty. Qays ibn al-Mulwwah, Zuhayr, and others as we mentioned earlier were interested to mention the beauty of their girls by describing their tattoos and also for other poetic reasons.

It is clear that without any doubt that poets' expressions toward painting and sculpture in this stage were very simple and superficial, poets from this stage mention painting or statues in one verse, and they rarely give the subject two verses, as several themes are being in the poem, with less use of rhetorical tool. It appears to be a starting point for poetry which later developed in the developed stage as we will see how this changed in the following stage.

In the developed stage there are huge differences and developments present in this stage and there are different and unique poetic materials as well. Therefore, these poetic materials deserve to be considered as mature and rich in comparison to the previous stage. In the early

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<sup>645</sup> 'Assyrian Sculpture', *British Museum*  
<[http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/galleries/middle\\_east/room\\_6\\_assyrian\\_sculpture.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/galleries/middle_east/room_6_assyrian_sculpture.aspx)> [accessed 5 March 2017].

<sup>646</sup> Al-Jumahī, p. 263.

stage, poets would dedicate just one or two verses to talk about painting and sculpture. Yet, in the developed stage, poems that describe painting and sculpture have reached up to twenty-four verses, implying that poets have more recently tended to describe these works of art in greater detail. Additionally, it suggests there were larger quantities of painting and sculpture in the later periods, in comparison with earlier ones. The Abbasid age produced a great deal of this kind of art for the Abbasid Caliph palaces. It was the golden age of painting and sculpture in Arabic culture. Gustave Le Bon mentions several examples in which paintings and sculptures appear in historical Arabic texts. He opines, however, that the texts and ancient monuments he cites are insufficient to establish a judgement related to the painters' ability as shown in their artwork. Le Bon likewise asserts that the statues that have been found or mentioned are insufficient to discover the real skills of Arabic sculptors.<sup>647</sup> The works of art of that age have been discovered and analysed not only by historians, but also by poets throughout the ages, as shown earlier in this chapter. Many verses were created to describe specific works of art and the ability of some artists. This shows that poets place a high interest on such artwork, often putting it at the heart of their work. To provide more detail, the developed stage has been divided into six themes.

The first theme is a group of poetic texts that contains description of paintings and sculpture found in palaces. Paintings on palace walls is one aspect can be seen clearly in this theme. Some scholars like Grabar, and Mez confirm that there were different kinds of paintings and shapes in the palaces of the Abbasid Caliphs and princes in latter ages.<sup>648</sup> For example, Salāma Mūsā confirms that the Fatimid age was a golden age of paintings, especially animal paintings. Palaces of the Fatimid age were ornamented with animal paintings; the Ayyubid rulers later followed in the same style.<sup>649</sup> Some of the works of art were put on walls and others on curtains. In both cases, they contained brocade embroidered with gold, all magnificently figured with representations of drinking-vessels, elephants, horses, camels, lions, and birds.<sup>650</sup> Palace walls have been adorned with paintings throughout various ages, with different contents

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<sup>647</sup> Gustave Le Bonn, pp. 525–29.

<sup>648</sup> Grabar, pp. 168–69; Mez, vol. 2, p. 222, 361.

<sup>649</sup> Salāma Mūsā, *Tārīkh al-Funūn wa-Ashhar al-Šuwar*, 1st edn (Cairo: Mu'assasat Hindāwī lil-Ta'līm wa al-thaqāfa, 2011), p. 24.

<sup>650</sup> Grabar, pp. 168–69; Mez, vol. 2, p. 222, 361.

and scenes. For example, there were paintings of battles, animals, horses, suns, and people, most of which now only exist in poetry.

The first text explored above is by al-Buḥturī where he describes a battle's painting in the Persian palace wall. Scholars such as Farūq Mawāsī,<sup>651</sup> and Sumi,<sup>652</sup> assert the idea that al-Buḥturī clearly has a bias for Persians revealed through these verses and the painting's description. Therefore, scholars such as Sumi and Jocelyn Sharlet believe that describing paintings in palaces implies a kind of panegyric poem.<sup>653</sup>

Scholars such as Darwīsh and Makkāwī argue that this poem is one of a small group of Arabic poems that have dealt with the artist's (poet's) scrutiny of other artists' creations, such as paintings, architecture, and music.<sup>654</sup> Although the research agrees with the idea of a relationship between different arts it is still believed that verses describing other arts are not scarce in Arabic poetry. Especially when considering the participation of different poets spanning different ages. Some scholars believe that the poet held a high degree of admiration for the Persian civilisation.<sup>655</sup> This research is interested to know the poet's attitude to the painting where the poet expresses his admiration of the proficiency of the painting as it has been mentioned in his poem. Scholars have been attracted by the poet's mode of expression when he touches the painting. Sperl argues that the poet almost gave life to the painting, and Darwīsh thinks that while the painter was unable to give his painting two important features—sound and movement—the poet tries to complete these missing elements, as well as providing his own interpretations of the painted scene.<sup>656</sup> Darwīsh and Sumi believe the poet was successful in giving life to the painting in the next verse, where the poet states that the eyes believe they are alive and that the battle is happening while the poet is looking at the painting.<sup>657</sup> The two soldiers seem to talk but the poet cannot hear them, which leads him to think they are

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<sup>651</sup> Fārūq Muwāsī, *Nabḍ al-Maḥār: Dirāsāt fī al-Adab al-'Arabī*, 1st edn (Majma' al-Qāsīmī lil-Lughā al-'Arabiya wa-Ādābuhā, Akādīmiyat al-Qāsīmī, 2009), pp. 365–69.

<sup>652</sup> Sumi, p. 109.

<sup>653</sup> Sumi, p. 109; Jocelyn Sharlet, 'Inside and Outside the Pleasure Scene in Poetry about Locations by al-Sarī al-Raffā al-Mawṣilī', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 40.2 (2009), 133–69 (p. 138).

<sup>654</sup> Darwīsh, p. 92; Makkāwī, p. 37.

<sup>655</sup> Sperl, Stefan, "'Crossing Enemy Boundaries: al-Buhturis Ode on the Ruins of Ctesiphon Re-Read in the Light of Virgil and Wilfred Owen'", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 69no. 3, (2006), 365–79.

<sup>656</sup> Darwīsh, p. 103.

<sup>657</sup> Darwīsh, p. 104; Sumi, p. 116.

talking with sign language. These suspicions continue in the poet's mind: he is still thinking the soldiers are real, but when he touches the paintings he becomes convinced of their reality. Darwīsh and Makkāwī confirm that this verse is the moment in which the poet is explaining his admiration towards the painting, a position from which he could not distinguish whether they were alive or merely painted people, so he uses his sense of touch to be sure.<sup>658</sup>

The descriptions of the high degree of the quality of painting suggests an admiration of the poet. Of course, the poet avoids direct expression of his attitude toward the painting, but when he uses his poetic tools to describe the painting we can infer his admiration of the accuracy and proficiency of the painting. Furthermore, we can take the positivity in poets' texts as signs that the poets al-Ḥakam ibn Abī al-Ṣalt and al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad went deeply into the description of paintings. This is clear in 'Umāra al-Yamanī's poem in particular, where the poet takes more than twenty verses to describe several beautiful and artistic aspects in the palace. Thus, this research fully agrees with Muwāsī, when he confirms that this poet felt a high degree of amazement and wonder as he looked at these paintings on the palace walls.<sup>659</sup> It is clear that the poet feels and expresses his good opinion toward the paintings through his description when he emphasises the wonderful, beautiful, and diverse.

Another aspect in this theme is poetry which describes statues of animals and trees, such as those mentioned in Ibn Ḥimdīs poem. The palaces were filled with statues of different animals, with some of them used as fountains such as lions, elephants, antelopes, and giraffes.<sup>660</sup> For example, in Ibn Ḥimdīs poem there were statues of lions on the lakes of their palaces, along with elephants, and giraffes. The poet describes fountains in the shape of lions; these these statues were very common and it has been confirmed that the logo of the Fatimid state was also in the shape of lion which has been put in the gates and palaces.<sup>661</sup> This tradition has been transferred to Andalusia where it has been found that many animals' shapes were used as fountains,<sup>662</sup> and the statues of lions were very common.<sup>663</sup> But they are not the only statues: elephants, for example, existed as well.

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<sup>658</sup> Darwīsh, p. 103; Makkāwī, p. 35.

<sup>659</sup> Muwāsī, pp. 368–69.

<sup>660</sup> Pavón Maldonado, pp. 271–292.

<sup>661</sup> Muḥammad 'Abd al-Sattār 'Uthmān, *Mawsū'at al-'Imāra al-Fāṭimīya*, 1st edn (Cairo: Dār al-Qāhira, 2006), p. 15.

<sup>662</sup> Pavón Maldonado, pp. 278–279.

<sup>663</sup> Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins-Madina, p. 97.

It is clear that, none of these sources mentioned the elephant that has been described by ‘Abd al-Jalīl ibn Wahbūn as we said earlier. Here, poets tend to use simile, imagination, and personification, yet the style most often used is direct description. Generally, Arabic poets described these paintings and statues as a part of their panegyric poems, which often included descriptions of the leaders’ palaces and the artwork therein. They reveal their admiration toward the painting and sculpture artwork through the verses but not in an especially clear and direct way.

The second theme is a group of poetic texts contains description of paintings, and sculpture on bathhouse walls. A bathhouse, or *ḥammām*, is a communal place where people can attend to find hot water to bathe. It is a meeting place, where people relax and talk to each other while bathing, and it can be considered a typical feature of medieval Islamic culture.<sup>664</sup> Oleg Grabar states that ‘it would be interesting to collect available literary data about the uses of the bath in the Middle Ages and about its importance in the transmission of oral literature and in the formation of social movements’.<sup>665</sup> Many bathhouses were ornamented with paintings of people and animals which has been confirmed by al- Ṣanawbarī in one of his verses where he says:

Look at the *ḥammām* you will find various paintings of every kind.<sup>666</sup>

Bathhouses or *al-ḥammām* can be found in many Arabic lands such as Egybt, Bilād al-Shām, ‘Irāq, and in Andalusia as well, with colourful floor tiles in many places, as is confirmed by Mez.<sup>667</sup> The walls of bathhouses contained different paintings as well. Most material about these paintings that was found for this section was by al-Rafā’, the poet who apparently was deeply interested in describing this kind of painting. The poet describes bathhouses in two ways: an optical way, related to their paintings and embellishments; and a sensory way, related to their effects on people’s feelings.<sup>668</sup>

<sup>664</sup> Grabar, p. 155.

<sup>665</sup> Grabar, p. 155.

<sup>666</sup> Al-Ṣanawbarī, p. 106. The original Arabic verse is:

عليك باب الحَمَّامِ تَلَقَّى بِهِ      مِنْ كُلِّ صَنْفٍ مِنَ التَّصَاوِيرِ

<sup>667</sup> Mez, vol. 2, p. 224.

<sup>668</sup> Al-Ḥubayṭī, p. 123.

With regard to the paintings, the poet describes several scenes such as battles, hunting, and people drinking. These specific paintings cannot be found now physically, or at least there is no evidence about whether they have been survived destruction. However, we still have a chance to imagine how they were by looking through poetic texts, and at the remaining paintings such as those found in Quṣayr ‘Amra where there are paintings of kings, hunting scenes, women, families, and nude scenes.<sup>669</sup> The different scenes that have been mentioned by the poet in bathhouses have been interpreted philosophically by al-Rāzī (d. 311 / 923),<sup>670</sup> who considers such artwork as a remedy for human souls.<sup>671</sup> This research through examining poetic texts can confirm that the different paintings that have been mentioned by al-Rāzī existed in the poetic texts in the description of the bathhouses’ paintings by al-Raffā’. However, the poet did not mention any painting of meadows in the bathhouses. Probably, the poet did not see a painting of trees or meadows in the bathhouses when he was describing them. Nevertheless, it is believed that paintings of trees or meadows have been found in other places such as in palaces. Also, the poetic materials that have been found are by one poet, and the bathhouses are in a specific place. This means that the absent scene may be found in other locations and other poetic texts if there are any.

Furthermore, through the limited poetic texts that can be found in this specific theme we can say that nudity scenes existed but they were not common to the extent that they draw

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<sup>669</sup> Fowden, pp. 58, 93, 97, 228, and 234.

<sup>670</sup> For the Arabic text see: al-Ghazūlī, vols 2, p. 7-8.

<sup>671</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *Classical Heritage in Islam Arabic Thought and Culture*, 1st edn (London ; New York: Taylor Francis Group, 1992), p. 266. Al-Rāzī says: ‘when beautiful pictures also contain, apart from their subject, beautiful, pleasant colours—yellow, red, green and white—and the forms are reproduced in exactly the right proportions, they heal melancholy humours and remove the worries to which the human soul is prone, as well as gloom of spirits. For the mind is refined and ennobled by the contemplation of such pictures. The gloom in which it finds itself dissolves.... Consider only how the philosophers of old who, in the course of many years, invented the bath realized, thanks to their subtle mind and sound intellect that a considerable part of the powers of a man who enters a bath relaxes. Their wisdom enabled them to discover through their intelligence how this can be accomplished swiftly, and they therefore had artistically made pictures, with beautiful, pleasing colours, painted in the baths. In addition, they were not content with a single subject but undertook a division into three, since they knew that the body possesses three sorts of spirits, animal, psychological and physical. Hence they arranged that each subject of a painting should serve to strengthen and increase one of the above-mentioned powers. For the animal power they have depicted battles, fights, hunts on horseback and the chase of beasts. For the psychological power they have depicted love, themes of lovers and beloved, how they accuse one another or embrace, etc. And for physical power they have depicted gardens, trees pleasant to look at, a mass of flowers in charming colours. Such and similar pictures belong to first-class baths. If one asks a discerning painter why painters use only these three subjects for the painting of baths, he cannot give a reason for this; he would not remember those three qualities of the mind as the reason. This is due to the fact that the earliest beginnings lie so far back, and hence the cause is no longer known. The philosophers have not omitted anything that is correct, nor introduced anything meaningless.’

the poet's attention. Nudity scenes paintings were existed but not common in such places. This can be confirmed by al-Raffā' verse when he says:

There are undressed males like the males inside, and females dressed in ornamented silk.<sup>672</sup>

Regarding physical evidence, it has been discovered that there are several nudity shapes on the walls of Quṣayr 'Amra which can be considered as suitable kind of arts in such places.<sup>673</sup> Some scholars tend to consider some paintings in the Quṣayr 'Amra as pornographic scenes.<sup>674</sup> There is a verbal text confirming that pornographic scenes have been found in private bathhouses.<sup>675</sup> But there is certainly no poetic text to confirm this. Yet the description of pornographic scenes cannot be found in any poetry describing paintings in public bathhouses. It can be argued that if nude and pornographic scenes were common on the walls of bathhouses then poets would give clear description of them.

Finally, some characteristics of how the poets deal with paintings can be noted. First, the poets concentrate on certain meanings and ideas to draw the boundaries between reality and paintings. For example, in the first text al-Raffā' confirms that the armies fighting in the war have no goal of winning, nor are they afraid to be the losers. There are several ways in which the poet distinguishes between paintings and reality, as mentioned above. Second, through different texts the poet uses words that show his admiration of the paintings—words like 'marvels', 'pleasure', 'wonder paintings', and 'delight'. He highly appreciates the painter's works when he describes them as gorgeous creatures created by smart thinking.<sup>676</sup> Third, the poet refers to religious meaning in one of his verses, where he says the pleasure that can be earned from visiting bathhouses is free from any sin. The poet states this at the end of his description of the bathhouse and the paintings. Fourth, the poet uses direct description and rhetorical semantical tools as well. Direct description was the only way to depict the paintings accurately. Rhetorical and semantical tools such as simile, metaphor, and personification, were used as poetic tools to convey the paintings to readers. Additionally, the statue of a woman and her son in a bathhouse has been described by Abū Tammām ibn Rabāḥ. It is remarkable that

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<sup>672</sup> See: p. 225.

<sup>673</sup> Fowden, p. 57.

<sup>674</sup> Grabar, p. 164; Fowden, p. 64.

<sup>675</sup> Al-Maqqarī, vol. 3, p. 349.

<sup>676</sup> Al-Raffā', p. 239.



he emphasises the accuracy of the woman's eyes which indirectly portrays the artist's proficiency.

The third theme is a group of poetic texts containing description of paintings or engravings on glasses. The first poet who mentions this kind of painting is Abū Nuwās, and then many poets follow him in this style. Arabic poets have dealt with this kind of art in their poetry through several aspects, meanings, and techniques. The research in this theme discusses this issue through several poetic examples. Scholars have mentioned some details about this kind of art in the Arabic-Islamic civilisation. For example, Grabar mentions different uses of painting and engraving in the early Islamic period, on silver plates, from Iran or Central Asia. He adds that a specific type of artwork was found on these objects, especially hunting scenes and scenes showing females in different conditions. Grabar also presents a photo of an eighth-century silver vessel from Iran.<sup>677</sup>

The first poetic text and the most controversial one is by Abū Nuwās. Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637 /1239) mentions that scholars such as al-Mubarrad consider Abū Nuwās to be the first poet to deal with this topic in Arabic poetry and as he cites, al-Jāhīz believes that poets still borrow ideas from each other but not this idea (the description of wine glass paintings), which Abū Nuwās alone possesses.<sup>678</sup> Mawāsī states that the painting of Kisrā reappeared many times, in poetry describing wine.<sup>679</sup> In fact, poets tended to follow Abū Nuwās' example in terms of describing paintings on wine cups. One of the most important reasons is the competition between poets themselves to emphasise their poetic ability. This topic became increasingly popular among poets especially when critics were praising earlier verses by Abū Nuwās. We will see, at the end of this section, how poets dealt with this idea to achieve their aims, especially when painters replaced the painting of Kisrā or updated their work with new paintings of Abū Nawās.

In general, scholars like Sumi claim that poets were interested in showing their poetic ability, more than in praising or evaluating the paintings in terms of their quality.<sup>680</sup> This is completely true where the poets in several examples tend to show off their own ability in

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<sup>677</sup> Grabar, p. 176, and 320.

<sup>678</sup> Diyā' al-Dīn Naṣr Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mathal al-Sā'ir fī Adab al-Kātib wa-al-Shā'ir*, ed. by Aḥmad Muḥammad Jawfī; and Badawī Aḥmad Ṭabāna, 2nd edn (Cairo: Dār Naḥdat Miṣr, 1959), vol. 2, p. 13.

<sup>679</sup> Muwāsī, p. 362.

<sup>680</sup> Sumi, p. 116.

poetical language by using their own poetic tools, without paying much attention to the paintings themselves. The poets use descriptive language when they talk about painting which leads scholars to make arguments about the hidden reason of this choice. Ibn al-Athīr, for example, opposes earlier scholar's opinions which prize Abū Nuwās' verses. Ibn al-Athīr believes that the verses are good only because of their eloquence / *faṣāḥa*, not because of their meaning, since the poet is not especially innovative with ideas and meanings here. In his view, Abū Nuwās simply saw that a gold wineglass had paintings on it, and transcribed it in his poetry.<sup>681</sup> Ibn al-Athīr believes that the real contribution of Abū Nuwās, in this piece, related to his word choice and their arrangement, not the meaning or the painting, because he did not create them. It is completely the work of another artist and he is simply the person who describes it accurately.

Modern scholars take part in interpreting this issue, as well. Sumi investigates the odes in light of ekphrasis, especially the verbal representation of visual art works.<sup>682</sup> Therefore, she argues that the *wasf* for ekphrasis is a kind of panegyric for the Persian kings, without an explicit expression of praise.<sup>683</sup> Sumi considers the description of the hunting scene of the Persian kings on the glass as evidence of her opinion, without any dependence on the idea of the *shu'ūbīya* movement. This suggests, essentially, a preference by Abū Nuwās of the Persian culture over the Arabic one.<sup>684</sup> Scholars such as al-'Uḏaybī, and Sharron confirm that Abū Nuwās' attitude should not be considered as a part of the *shu'ūbīyya* claim, but should rather be considered as Abū Nuwās' normal longing for the urban civilisation in Abbasid age.<sup>685</sup> Scholars like Mawāsī have another opinion related to the relationship between the poet and the painting. He believes that the poet was in love with the idea of the emotional similarity between his situation and the painting on the glass.<sup>686</sup>

As it has been mentioned, there are several scenes that have been painted on the glasses, such as Kīsrā, soldiers, horsemen, girls, and lions. In Abbasid ages, Abū Nuwās himself with his companions were painted on the glasses as al-Ṣanawbarī's verses. The research observes that the verses in this theme have several characteristics. In terms of poetical meanings, scholar

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<sup>681</sup> Ibn al-Athīr, vol. 2, p. 14.

<sup>682</sup> Sumi, p. 12.

<sup>683</sup> Sumi, pp. 93–94.

<sup>684</sup> Sumi, p. 99.

<sup>685</sup> Al-'Uḏaybī, p. 277; Gu, p. 182.

<sup>686</sup> Muwāsī, pp. 358–63.

and this research have observed that poets mostly tend to show off their poetic ability more than concentrating on fully describing a painting on a glass. It is thus rare to find the details of such paintings, except in some pieces, such as al-Ṣanawbarī's poems. It seems that the poets have dealt with this meaning as a competition starting from the date of Abū Nuwās verses. Additionally, this research has shown poetry's observation of painting's development, through times where the painters moved from Kisrā paintings to make paintings of Abū Nuwās, as it appears in al-Ṣanawbarī's poems. The research observes that poets use imagination, simile, and personification, but the style most frequently used is direct description of the paintings.

The fourth theme is a group of poetic texts containing description of paintings on fabric, such as flags, and tents. This kind of painting is an ancient one, as we discovered through examining the early stage. It continues to be a theme in the second stage, but with more development regarding the kinds of materials and paintings. Describing paintings on flags is a new and unique kind of description; for example where the army's symbols or 'logo' appear in Ibn Ḥimdīs' verses. It has been known that the lion is the logo of the Fatimid state.<sup>687</sup> But Ibn Ḥimdīs mentions a snake appearing on the lion, which is probably the logo of an army flag, as is the painting of the al-'Anqā' bird.

Furthermore, paintings on tents were one of the most modern kinds of painting in the period studied. Al-Mutanabbī's verses describe princes' tents and girls' *howdahs*. The poet mentions different kinds of paintings on the tents, such as kings, people, animals, birds, and meadows. The poems in this theme pay much attention to the description of the scenes. It can be noted that the poets did not go beyond the paintings to express ideas about the painters' proficiency or his attitude toward this form of art. The poets were too interested in showing their poetic ability to explore deeper meaning. Imaginative description and personification are used a great deal in poems on this theme. The poet relies on rhetorical tools in his description such as simile and metaphor as it has been mentioned earlier. Al-Mutanabbī used the paintings and shapes themselves in poetic style to create new poetic meaning where he imagines himself to be the painting and thus he can see his beloved.

The fifth theme is a group of poetic texts containing the use of paint on the body. The use of paint on the body is a reflection of the luxury of some people's lives at that time, where

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<sup>687</sup> 'Uthmān, p. 15.

it was kind of body art used to enhance beauty, as with the use of tattoos in the present day. In fact, poets in the period of this study avoided all use of the word ‘tattoo’ in their poetry, in contrast with poets in the early stage. Therefore, a verse specifically describing a tattoo on a woman’s body or hand could not be found, in contrast with much poetry of the previous stage. Poets use the Arabic word *naqsh* which in this context means drawing or painting significantly, to describe the use of paint on the body. Several scholars confirm that the ‘paint’ used was henna.<sup>688</sup> As a kind of hairstyle of that time, Mez mentions that boys and girls would shaping their hair on their cheeks in the shape of an Arabic letter *nūn* (ن), or in the shape of Scorpio.<sup>689</sup>

However, what can be confirmed by this research is that paint was used on ladies’ bodies for beautification purposes, as it has been mentioned previously. In general, poets seem to talk a lot about drawings or paintings on the body. Yet their descriptions are not specific. They did not go deeply into detail to describe different paintings, although we can discover more about the body paintings’ shapes. It seems that there were new materials being used instead of the material of the ancient tattoo. The use of paint on the body has two main types: painting on ladies’ hands, and on their cheeks. Numerous verses have dealt with this subject, in contrast with earlier ages; this reflects the extent to which this meaning has earned poets’ concerns. Poets tend, in this subject, to show off their poetic ability by the creation of new, unique, and different poetic conceits. For example, al-Wa’wā’ al-Dimashqī imagines the painting on his beloved’s hand as a shield to protect her hand from her own eyes’ arrows. Ibn al-Sa’ātī and ibn Mamātī use the snakes that were painted on girls’ cheeks to explore some religious ideas. They are highly interested in using imagination to express their ideas in this regard. Also, it can be said that both aspects in this section used a descriptive style rather other poetic tools.

The sixth theme is a group of poetic texts containing verses to describe human statues. This part contains two subjects. The first subject is poetry about Tadmur’s (Palmyra) statues where the poets describe these statues and create their poetical meanings depending on how they look at each statue. There are several poets who have dealt with this kind of description through their verses differently, based on their own views towards the art of sculpture. Most poets deal with Tadmur’s (Palmyra) statues as entry points into exploring the meaning of

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<sup>688</sup> Ibn Manzūr, p. 4522; Al-‘Askarī, *Dīwān al-ma’ānī*, vol. 1, p. 255.

<sup>689</sup> Mez, vol. 2, p. 231.

immortality and or meanings around the sculptor's professionalism, as in Abū al-Ḥasn al-'Ijlī's verses. Poets use simile and personification to convey their ideas about statues. It is clear that poets pay little attention to talking about the sculptors' abilities in a direct way except for Abū al-Ḥasn al-'Ijlī, when he describes the sculptor as an intelligent, absorbed creator. However, poets' wonder can be observed when they describe statues with a lot of good qualities.

One of the most important issues we will deal with, in this section, is trying to explain why poets described statues in churches—while they did not describe the ornaments of mosques, at least not in the poetic materials that we have found in this research. Without doubt, mosques were ornamented and embellished at that time.<sup>690</sup> This is especially perplexing because, as Muwāsī says, paintings on temples, churches, and dishes were very well-known at that time.<sup>691</sup> But Grabar believes that the impact of art in mosques was limited because its functions were exclusive and culturally restricted.<sup>692</sup> Poets may therefore have avoided describing mosques' ornaments in their poetry as a sign of respect. As has been pointed out, paintings of living things were forbidden inside mosques. Poets could clearly not describe such items, therefore, because of their nonexistence.

On the other hand, in terms of poets' descriptions of statues inside churches, al-Ḥubayṭī confirms that poets, at that time, were visiting churches regularly to buy wine from the priests. This, therefore, gave poets the chance to look at church statues and describe them.<sup>693</sup> In fact, this reason is probably suitable justification as to why poets tend so frequently to describe such statues in churches.

The second group is a collection of verses describing statues of girls in churches. This description gives a mixture of a narrative description of the sculptures and an account of the poets' emotions regarding its beauty and the sculptors' ability.

An important issue we should mention here is that poets did not express negative opinions about painting and sculpture. Therefore, we can say clearly that Arabic poets have not condemned painting and sculpture at all. In the poems and verses discussed in this thesis, there cannot be found a single verse where a poet expressed unsatisfactory opinions about these

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<sup>690</sup> Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins-Madina, p. 25.

<sup>691</sup> Muwāsī, p. 360.

<sup>692</sup> Grabar, p. 178.

<sup>693</sup> Al-Ḥubayṭī, pp. 123–28.

works of art. Instead, poets mention the positive qualities of the creatures portrayed, and the skills and intelligence of the painters and sculptors, but they have not condemned any paintings or statues. It can be said that several works of art were found in the rulers' palaces, which means there was no possibility to voice negative opinions about them, especially when the context is one in which poets have earned a living, in part, by praising leaders. Furthermore, no sufficient evidence can prove the ability of the poets in terms of criticising painting and sculpture depending on in-depth artistic views.

One of the most important issues we should note is that painters and sculptors were not mentioned by name. Therefore, the artists of paintings and sculpture are unknown, perhaps even until today, in contrast with their works of art, which have been recorded and made known by poets. It is disappointing to find that, among the many odes about painting and sculpture, none have mentioned the artists' names. The research has found that none of the poets have mentioned painters' or sculptors' names in their verses. However, the historical sources tell us more about artists' identities, and in later ages works of art contain artists' names.<sup>694</sup> For more illustration, al-Buḥturī did not mention the painter's name while he mentioned the name of the famous Persian singer called al-Balahbadh in the same poem.<sup>695</sup> Scholars try to interpret this issue; Darwīsh says that the poet forgot to look for the painter's name, which was seemingly written in one of the painting's corners, when describing a painting of a battle.<sup>696</sup> However, it can be said that the poet did not simply forget, just as other poets did not. In this case we are going to assume the artist's name was recorded. The poet mentions other tiny things about the painting, yet none of them is the name of the artist. 'Afīf Bahnasī as cited by 'Īd Sa'd Yūnus thinks that the absence of artists' names is related to their avoidance of paintings of living things.<sup>697</sup> Additionally, it has been interpreted as a normal action by Bedouin with their works of art.<sup>698</sup>

The first opinion seems to produce religious motivations as a justification for why artists' names are largely unknown. It is not reasonable to think that the religious aspect is the

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<sup>694</sup> Taymūr, pp. 104–14.

<sup>695</sup> Sumi, p. 105.

<sup>696</sup> Darwīsh, p. 104.

<sup>697</sup> 'Īd Sa'd Yūnus, *Falsafāt al-Fann wa-al-Jamāl fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī: Naḥ wa Istāṭīqīya Islāmīyat al-Hawā 'Arabīyat al-Huwīya*, p. 184.

<sup>698</sup> 'Īd Sa'd Yūnus, *Falsafāt al-Fann wa-al-Jamāl fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī: Naḥ wa Istāṭīqīya Islāmīyat al-Hawā 'Arabīyat al-Huwīya*, p. 184.

reason that prevented the artist from writing their names on their works of art where the right action in this case is leaving painting and sculpture completely not just hiding one's name. It can be argued that, there is no condemnation towards those artists where they were working at the princes' palaces. Additionally, concerning Bedouin, this reason does not seem good justification where it seems more like fantasy. Those Arabic Bedouin were highly strict toward their poetic works in terms of attribution and the plagiarism.<sup>699</sup> So, there is no good reason to consider them as careless regarding painting and sculpture only because they are Bedouin. Similar to this justification, there is also the opinion the artists were not keen to record their names on their works of art.<sup>700</sup>

By looking deeply into this issue Grabar indicates that the names of the Caliph and leaders were recorded in some of the works of art at that time.<sup>701</sup> This could mean that artists have avoided recording their names on some of their works of art because that may lead to them growing a reputation, instead of giving the glory to the owner of the works or to rulers, which was something unacceptable at that time.<sup>702</sup> This interpretation is reasonable to some extent. Nevertheless, there are several artists known and some of their names have been found on their works of art as well.<sup>703</sup> Also, this way of dealing with visual artists in poetry may be a sign that painters and sculptors were less famous. This kind of art is not a daily practice and poets only see their art work when it has been completed which means there is no chance to meet or negotiate with the artist himself or learn of his name. Therefore, the poets tend to describe the paintings and sculpture in the poetry without referencing the name of the artists who created them.

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<sup>699</sup> The ideas of plagiarism and honesty have been discussed in the chapter of poetry. See: 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.2.

<sup>700</sup> 'Īd Sa'd Yūnus, *Jamāl wa-Ẓilāl: Dirāsa Naqdiyya fī Jamāliyyāt al-Fann al-Islāmī wa-Ẓilālīh 'alā al-Fann al-Ḥadīth*, 1st edn (Cairo: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 2015), p. 63.

<sup>701</sup> Grabar, pp. 62, 141.

<sup>702</sup> 'Īd Sa'd Yūnus, *Jamāl wa-Ẓilāl: Dirāsa Naqdiyya fī Jamāliyyāt al-Fann al-Islāmī wa-Ẓilālīh 'alā al-Fann al-Ḥadīth*, p. 60.

<sup>703</sup> Taymūr, p. 99.

### *A comparison between the early and developed stages*

Finally, poets' perspectives of painting and sculpture in this stage reflect different meanings, characteristics and thoughts. However, this research also attempts to know more about the poetic texts based on the materials that have been found to show a comprehensive and complete image of poet's views of this form of art. Therefore, comparisons between both stages will be conducted in next lines regarding to three aspects as follows: verses' meanings, the poetic styles and rhetorical tools, and the quantity of verses.

#### *Verses' meanings*

Regarding the meanings, there are some themes and ideas that have developed through generations and others have disappeared while some new meanings have been created. For example, poets in the early stage were interested in mentioning some of their beloved's belongings such as painted rugs, coloured scarfs, and implemented garments. However, in the developed stage, this meaning was not seen as interesting by the poets. So, it could not be considered as a significant poetic meaning. In the early stage, poets tended to mention statues in general as in 'Umayya ibn Abī al-ṣalt verses or to compare their beloved girls to statues as in Imru' al-Qays verses. However, in the developed stage, the poets did not tend to compare their beloved but instead they described the statues in detail and some of them seem to fall in love with those statues. Also, the description of the paint used on the body and on fabric flourished and developed massively in the second stage. Furthermore, poets in the developed stage describe the paintings and sculpture in the palaces in details. They recorded tiny details of the paintings on the walls. The description of the paintings on the *ḥammām*'s walls and the engraving on the glasses have been found only in the developed stage. Additionally, poets used their poetic ability to add some specific meanings in their verses to show the capacity in the poetry itself such as using their religious knowledge.



### *Poetic styles and rhetorical tools*

Regarding poetic style and rhetorical tools that have been used by poets, the poetic style or technique most frequently used is the direct description style, where the poets were describing scenes from paintings and statues. It can be said that if they, instead, chose to use more poetical tools, they could lead readers to fail to recognise whether the poet is describing a piece of art or a real scene. Therefore, poets tend in many pieces of their poetry, when describing paintings, to use specific style. For example, al-Rafā', when he describes paintings on bathhouse walls, asserts specific meanings, such as the victor does not want glory, and the defeated is not scared of disgrace, which indicate the idea of the paintings' description, rather than real actions where people are trying to win and avoid losing. Additionally, al-Mutanabbī uses the same style when he describes the painting of meadows and says it has not been made by the cloud, and the birds on the branches cannot sing.

Regarding rhetorical tools, poets use simile, metaphor, and personification. But the use of simile is more frequent than the use of the other tools. For example, Ibn Ḥimdīs in his long poem uses metaphor, simile, and personification when he gives the palace the advantages of mouths and makes them able to smile or laugh. He uses simile when he imagines there is a light, like stars, shining in this imaginary scene and he uses simile and personification when he describes the paintings of the flags. Other examples include the work of al-Rafā' who likens statue's faces to the full moon in terms of lighting, and their nimble stature to branches of trees. Al-Ḥakam ibn Abī al-Salt imagines the calmness of the painted animals seeming like movements, and the differences seeming like similarities. In another painting 'Umāra al-Yamanī also imagines the reason that led wild animals to become tame with no feeling of the horror, which is his patron's strength. Another example comes from the poetry of al-Babbaghā', who imagines when the blue painted glass is in his hand full of wine that the air gave him a piece of the sun when it was on the horizon as a present.

*The quantity of verses*

The diagram below (No: 4) clarifies the development of the odes and verses about this chapter issue during the period of the study.

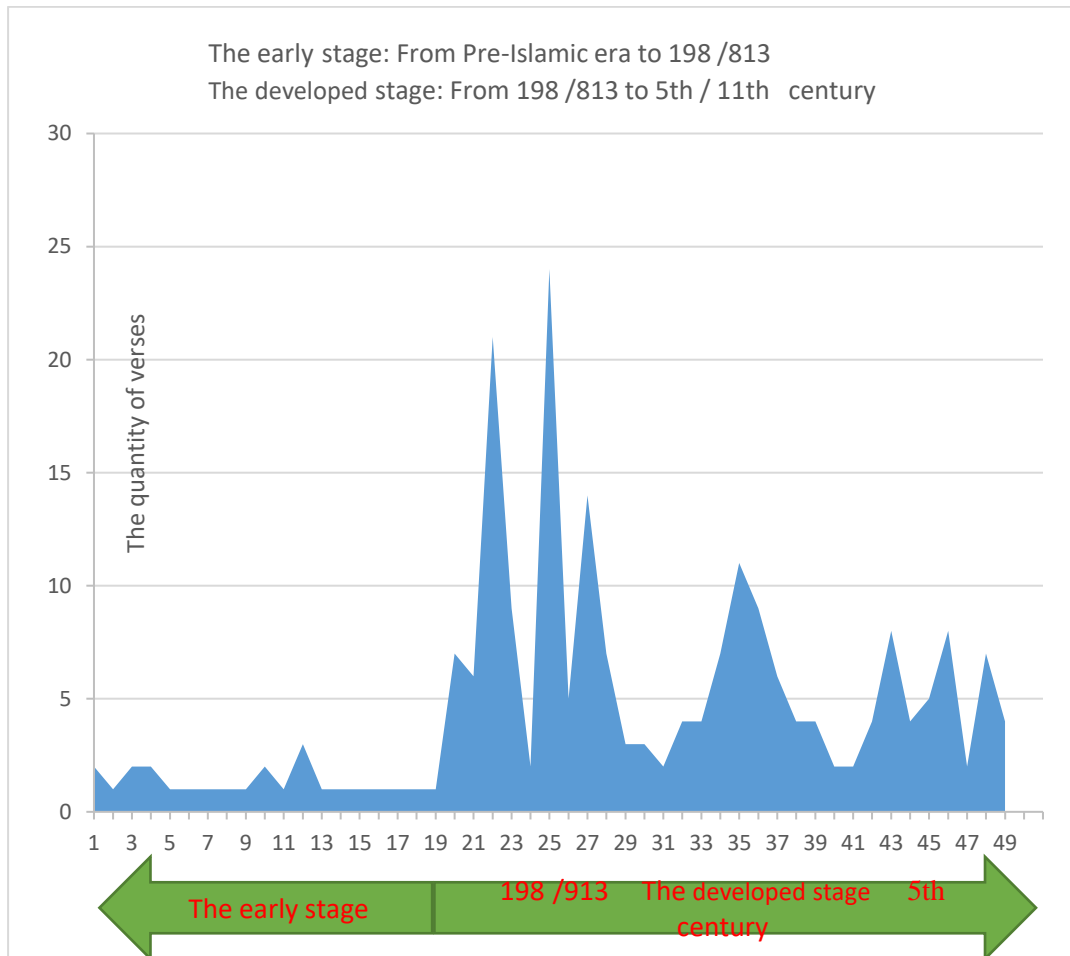


Figure 4: The quantity of verses about painting and sculpture in early and developed stages from the Pre-Islamic until the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Poets in the early stage mention painting and sculpture in one or two verses, not in long and specific poems. However, in the developed stage this research found many long poems, several that reach twenty-four verses. This leads us to be convinced of the idea that poets in the later ages have dealt with painting and sculpture in different styles and the painting and sculpture became an important theme inside the poetic text. Additionally, a review of the variety of poetic materials makes clear that the development of civilisation and the lives of Arabs at that time had a specific impact on the arts generally and on poets' views about painting and sculpture in particular. It is clear that, the development of Arabic-Islamic civilisation, during this time, led painters and sculptors to acquire the ability to provide high-quality productions. In this regard, poets revealed these developments by mentioning new paintings and statues. For example, new paintings of Abū Nuwās have been created by painters and mentioned by poets. Additionally, new materials have been created by sculptors, such as statues of animals. Paintings on the walls of bathhouses and statues of human give information about people's attraction towards arts in public places, as well as an indication of the extent to which society is interested in seeing and experiencing such artwork.

#### 4.5. Conclusion

To sum up what has been discussed in this chapter. Arab poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture have been examined. Regarding the Islamic attitude towards painting and sculpture, it is well known that Islam has a conservative view towards this kind of arts, especially when it comes to their depiction of a live person or animal. Additionally, there has been a major debate among scholars, in terms of the conditions and specific circumstances that may allow for satisfactorily dealing with artwork of these kinds. In terms of the Arab attitude towards painting and sculpture, we have found that the ancient Arabs knew of these types of art. Historical sources tell us of paintings and statues in palaces. Later, when Arabic-Islamic civilisation developed, broadened, and grew to contain several nations, painting and sculpture developed massively and dramatically.

Concerning the Arab poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture, this research has divided the poetic texts into two main parts: the early stage where poets mention painting and sculpture in a non-specific way, in a few verses, with lesser use of the rhetorical tools, and the developed stage where poets express their views about painting and sculpture in long poems. Several kinds of this artwork can be found in the poetry such as the paintings on the walls of palaces and *ḥammāms*, paintings on glasses, on the body, and statues of humans and animals. They used rhetorical tools extensively to clarify their views. Poets' views can be considered as positive perspectives where they tend to describe this kind of art in detail with intense emotions. Furthermore, they were interested in some cases in showing their admiration of the artists and their works. However, the Arab poets have never shown negative opinions or dissatisfaction in their perspective towards painting and sculpture.

In the previous three chapters we have investigated Arab poets' perspectives on poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture. The next chapter will compare and discuss the differences and similarities that we have discovered among these three art forms and how they are presented in the poetry.

## Chapter Five: Comparison and Interpretation

### 5.1.Introduction

This chapter compares the features and characteristics of poets' perspectives on the three genres of arts that are investigated in this thesis. There are some contextual Islamic and Arabic perspectives on the arts which may somewhat affect poets' perspectives. Therefore, it is helpful to make comparisons involving these matters to obtain a better understanding of the issue. This chapter will not repeat what has already been written in the previous chapters but will explore the differences between various elements, looking for the reasons behind each significant matter or unusual case. It seeks to discover differences and similarities between themes and the specific techniques which were used by poets when they talked about the arts in their poetry.

This chapter is divided into five parts. First comes the introduction. Second, Islam's attitudes towards the three arts are compared to discover elements that may influence Arab poets' perspectives on them. Third, Arabs' attitudes towards the arts are compared, looking for the differences that may affect poets' perspectives on these three arts. Fourth, the chapter draws comparisons between the poets' own perspectives on these three arts. This section will contain comparisons between themes, poetic styles, rhetorical tools, characteristics of the early stage, and characteristics of the developed stage. Finally comes the conclusion of the chapter.

## 5.2. Comparing Islam's attitudes towards the three art forms.<sup>704</sup>

The attitudes of Islam towards the three arts addressed in this thesis have been addressed thoroughly in the previous chapters. The general consensus is that Islam's attitudes towards the arts is highly conservative. This view is correct to an extent. However, there are some details which may challenge it. Based on the previous discussions of Islam's attitudes towards poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture, it is clear that the conservative attitudes of Islam towards the arts are different, and not all arts are seen in the same way.

Poetry is the most acceptable art form. This is followed by music and singing, and then by painting and sculpture. The Qurānic verse about poetry is direct, clear, and does not require substantial interpretation.<sup>705</sup> However, it has been found that some misunderstood the mainstream of Islam toward poetry and what kind of poetry that should be condemned.<sup>706</sup> The Qurān makes an exception for the right kinds of poet who follow an appropriate path as is set out by Qurānic verse. Furthermore, it has been said that the Prophet listened to poetry and he liked it, and some of his companions were poets whom he supported and did not prevent from engaging in poetry.

The arts of music and singing is in the second most acceptable art form from the Islamic perspective. The Qurānic verse about music and singing is subject to various interpretations. Some scholars believe that the Qurānic verse about the term *lahw al-ḥadīth* means music and singing. However, there are other scholars who think there is another meaning. There is no conclusive evidence from the Sunna. Theological scholars conduct large debates on whether music and singing are forbidden or permitted.<sup>707</sup> Some scholars have had more flexible opinions on this matter and put forward their views, but with some conditions attached.

The arts of painting and sculpture were subject to the greatest degree of prohibition. The Qurānic verses are not clear. Both those for and against painting and sculpture use the same verses to support their arguments. The Sunna's texts are clear when considering painting

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<sup>704</sup> See: 3.2.1, 4.2.1, and 5.2.1.

<sup>705</sup> See: 3.2.1.

<sup>706</sup> Nadia Al-Bagdadi, 'Registers of Arabic Literary History', *New Literary History*, 39.3–4 (2009), 437–61.

<sup>707</sup> Alami, p. 55.

and sculpture as a great offence, and the punishment would be severe for this crime. It was thought that those undertaking such arts wanted to equal God in terms of creative ability. Theologians have debated whether such art forms are permitted under specific circumstances and other situations, and these were addressed in the previous chapters. This chapter uncovers the impact of the religious thought that has been set out above on poets' opinions or perspectives on the arts in their poetry. Only a few verses have been found that deal with this matter. Therefore, the poets were not deeply interested to deal with the arts through religious opinion.

Through poets' perspectives on poetry that were discussed earlier, it is clear that poets were not committed to the Islamic teachings. There are uncountable examples of poetry against Islamic teachings on wine, sex, and satirical poetry. However, there are some poets who prefer to leave composing poetry completely. For example, al-Nu'mām ibn Bashīr chose to leave the composing of poetry as a personal decision while al-Shāfi'ī believes that poetry is a lowly topic for theologians. Nevertheless, this idea cannot be considered as a main stream for poets. There are limited opinions towards poetry in a very small number of separate verses and one reason for this could be the fear of God and to be away from anything can harm what he believes.

This paragraph addresses poets' perspectives on music and singing depending on religious thought. One particular poet perceives music and singing negatively: an attitude that depends on religious thought. For example, after the coming of Islam, Zīrīr ibn al-Azwar declares that he gave up the music of singing girls in response to new religious teachings. Additionally, Abū al-'Atāhiya believed that joy combined with the lute and pipe is a sign of the breakdown of civilisation. It is clear that Abū al-'Atāhiya's opinion is related to *al-zuhd* stream. Al-Ḥammānī thought that only individuals who 'strayed' would mourn the singer's death, not those who recite the Qurān. Abū Firās provided an example of the good features that should be found in rulers. He believed that the best rulers recited the Qurān and did not listen to music and singing. Abū Firās' opinion can be understood better within the frame of political competition.

Regarding poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture depending on religious thought, poets did not deal with the subject in terms of permission or forbidding. They only mentioned this issue in one verse in a way that was positive towards and supportive of Islamic teachings. For example, Abū Dulaf al-'Ijlī talks about the meaning of immortality. He believes

that the statues of which he writes will be destroyed one day and then people will know that only God will remain and not any other creations. Another example by al-Raffa' confirms that those who create beautiful statues are incapable of creating things on a par with the creations of God. It is clear that verses containing religious ideas are rarely found. However, when they are found, they appear to concord with Islamic teachings. Finally, in this section, we have compared and analysed the attitude of Islam towards these three arts. In the next section, we will examine the Arabs' attitude towards the arts as well.

### 5.3. Comparing Arabs' attitudes towards the three art forms.<sup>708</sup>

In general, Arabs' attitudes towards these specific kinds of arts is positive, as outlined in previous chapters. Nevertheless, this research distinguishes between the attitudes based on three levels. It is proposed in this study that these three art forms can be organised into a hierarchy depending on their importance to the Arabs. The first level contains poetry in which it is absolutely clear it is the most important art form among Arabs. Cachia confirms that 'poetry has long been deemed the supreme art form among the Arabs, one that flourished even at times when other arts were virtually unknown'.<sup>709</sup> Music and singing come second in importance, and the third is painting and sculpture. This kind of classification depends on Arabs' reactions to these three arts in comparison to each other.

To give further illustration, poetry earned a great response from writers and was highly appreciated by the people, rulers, and scholars alike. This is evidenced by the hundreds of books and *dīwāns* that have been written about poetry. On the other hand, music and singing, for Arabs, earned a decent reputation, but one still lesser than that of poetry. In the latter Abbasid ages, there are tens of books about music and singing which evidence the interest of scholars with regard to this art form.<sup>710</sup> Finally, painting and sculpture are lesser in importance than both aforementioned art forms: books about this subject are a rarity. If we try to find a

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<sup>708</sup> See: 3.2.2, 4.2.2, and 5.2.2.

<sup>709</sup> Cachia, p. 1.

<sup>710</sup> See: 4.2.2.



criterion to measure this idea practically, one can take the written Arabic heritages and use them to make a comparison between the three forms. For example, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* is about poetry, lyrics, and singing. On the other hand, there are no known books about painting and sculpture. Unfortunately, painting and sculpture are the least addressed art form of the three kinds examined in this thesis. It appears that there is no book written in the Abbasid age on the topic of painting and sculpture as a kind of art. Cited by ‘Īd Yūnus, Zakī Ḥasan confirmed that there was a trend in Arabic culture to create biographical texts to give information about groups of people such as poets. However, this did not apply to other group of artists such as painters and sculptors.<sup>711</sup> Furthermore, the art of poetry has been defined by Qudāma (d. 227 / 841), and the art of music has been defined by al-Farābī (d. 339 / 950). However, some modern scholars think that the first definition of the painting as an art is by Butrus al-Bustani (d. 1300/1883) in the modern time.<sup>712</sup> This shows that Arabic culture did not pay much attention to this art form until the modern era at least theoretically.

#### 5.4. Comparisons between poets’ perspectives on the arts

##### 5.4.1. Characteristics of the early stage

This research classifies the existence of the poetic materials in the chapters into two stages: early and developed. This choice is evidence-based and is also linked with the poetic materials that have been studied. The research focuses on verses and poems on the arts. It must be noted, however, that some poets really only wrote a few verses related to the arts. Sometimes, the arts are only mentioned very briefly. Some poetic texts revere poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture, but the amount of verses is small – sometimes just a single verse. Such instances are included as evidence of the beginning of poets’ perspectives

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<sup>711</sup> ‘Īd Sa‘d Yūnus, *Falsafat al-Fann wa-al-Jamāl fī al-Fikr al-Islāmī: Naḥ wa Istātīqīya Islāmīyat al-Hawā ‘Arabīyat al-Huwīya*, p. 184.

<sup>712</sup> *Modern Art in the Arab World*, ed. by Anneka Lenssen, Sarah Rogers, and Nada M Shabout (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018), p. 36.

on the arts in the early age. These single verses are often dated to the stage before the Abbasid period where the poets only briefly mention the arts in their poetry in one or two verses.

Regarding the time frame for the early stage, it is clear that the first poetic texts that have been found are attributed to the Pre-Islamic era. Imru' al-Qays' poetry contains verses related to poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture in the way that was discussed in the previous chapters. Common poets' perspectives on the arts in the early stage are shown in table 1 below.

Poetry	Music and singing	Painting and sculpture
Following previous poets' manner	Mentioning music and singing in the battles	Describing ornamented belongings of beloved
Plagiarism and honesty	Mentioning music and singing in the meetings of companions	Comparing beloved girls to statues
Personal decisions to leave poetry depending on religious beliefs		Mentioning works of art , or statues have been found at that time
Considering poetry as a tool, message or weapon.		Mentioning painting on the body (tattoo or henna)
Advice to avoid poetic mistakes		

*Table 1: Poets' perspectives on poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture in the early stage.*

The above table briefly shows the general poets' meanings, or their ideas about poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture in the early stage. Some features are noticeable when drawing this comparison. In terms of poetry, the poets point out some critical issues. Some of these ideas became the main critical issues in the following centuries such as plagiarism and honesty. Most of the verses that have been found in this stage are descriptive and some verses appear to be used as a weapon for threatening others.

There is a use of some poetic tools such as similes, but these cannot be considered in common use. There are also some critical reflections emerging from the poets' practice, such as plagiarism, truth and falseness. Further, poets do not criticise other poets based on poetic reasons. Some poets transfer their knowledge in poetry by mentioning some recommendations and advice from their experience. In the early stage, there are no examples of poems written specifically about poetry, and there is no heavy use of rhetorical tools to express ideas on poetry.

Furthermore, in terms of music and singing, and painting and sculpture in the early stage the poets showed less awareness of these arts' issues in their poetry. They have only addressed these works of arts in a limited manner. It can be said, however, that the poems do not express negative opinions related to the works of art that were carried out at that time.

The poetic texts provided in the early stage in music and singing show that the poets tended to mention the singer or music or instruments in usually one single verse, or two verses in rare occasions. In fact, poets show that music is a small part of their concerns especially in poems containing several themes. It can be argued that the available poetic texts about music give evidence to confirm that poets did not deal with music or singing in an independent poem. By looking at the context of the previous poetic texts, it appears that there is clear proof of the fact that the main idea of the poem or odes is not about the music or singing at all. It is obvious that the poets did not mean to focus their poetry on the art of music or singing specifically. Furthermore, it is clear from the texts that the primary motivation that led to the poets mentioning music and singing is not for an artistic but instead is for battle description or the depiction of companions meeting.

Poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture in the early stage are similar to what has been mentioned above. The poets tended to describe some ornamented belongings, compare their beloved girls to statues, describing paintings or statues have been seen at that time, and mention tattoo and henna on bodies. Many verses or long and specific poem about painting and sculpture cannot be found as it has been investigated in chapter 5.

In terms of rhetorical tools used by poets and verse quantity from this stage, it is believed that the poets were not keen on using rhetorical tools extensively to show their opinions towards the arts. They rarely use simile or metaphor to clarify their perspectives and,

in many cases, poets did not intend to specifically describe the works of art. For example, when Labīd ibn Rabī'a described the chest of his camel and compared it to the wood of a *kirān*, he used the *kirān* as a tool to clarify the size and the beauty of his camel chest, which means that the musical instrument is not intended to be the main focus but has been brought up only to clarify the size of the camel's chest.

Regarding verse quantity, it was very common among poets to mention works of art in limited verses as it has been shown in figures 2, 3, and 4 where the quantity of verses has developed gradually through the ages.<sup>713</sup>

There are some reasons why this is considered as the general trend of poets in the early stage. Firstly, the poets expressed self-impressions with no great concern regarding the works of others. They dealt with works of art in a descriptive way and the general poetic style and the subjects of Arabic poetry at that time were very interested in a variety of topics such as journeying, camels, war, and hunting. Consequently, it can be imagined that there were lesser works of art which were practised in front of the poets' eyes. Furthermore, we can imagine that the existing works of art of the time were not admirable enough to draw attention to themselves or their creators, of course, and there were no debatable works of art.<sup>714</sup> A consequence of this was less poetry about the arts, and less use of rhetorical tools as well.

Through poetic context it can be understood that poets have good impressions toward poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture. However, they did not pay much intention to expounding upon these good feelings in their poetry. For instance, al-A'shā in one of his verses about music and singing was only counting some music instruments when he met his friends without going into depth, such as describing the instruments' sounds. One verse discussing the leaving of music and singing behind because of religious consideration has been found in this stage. Therefore, it has been determined that poets and verses in this stage do not show any in-depth points of view toward these three arts compared to the subsequent stage where there was more interest in the subject of their perspectives on the arts, as we will now go on to explore.

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<sup>713</sup> See: p. 119, 192, and 268.

<sup>714</sup> There are controversial works of art in the developed stage as we will see in the following pages.

#### 5.4.2. Characteristics of the developed stage

This section has been divided into two parts. The first is related to the general characteristics of the developed stage. The second is related to specific characteristics regarding some features of some poetic texts.

##### *General characteristics*

First of all, regarding the general characteristics of the developed stage, it can be said that ‘certain times or nations were extremely productive only in one or two arts, while either completely barren or merely imitative and derivative in others’.<sup>715</sup>

Regarding the beginnings of the developed stages, there are three poetic texts can be considered as the texts where the developed stage has been started. The first text regarding poetry is attributed to al-Ṣaltān al-‘Abdī (d. 80 / 700) where it can be considered a paradigm shift regarding poetry. Additionally, the first text that carries a specific feature where we can identify a paradigm shift regarding music and singing is attributed to the same age and is by al-‘Uqayshir al-‘Asadī (d.80 /700). Regarding painting and sculpture, the first poetic text that can be considered as the beginning of developed stage is by Abū Nuwās (d. 198 / 813) in the Abbasid era.

Poets’ perspectives about the three kinds of arts addressed developed significantly in the developed stages. The developed stage may be identified by clear poetic perspectives on the arts which means clear themes and clear use of poetic and rhetorical tools. The following table (2) sets out the poetic themes that were expressed by poets towards the arts.

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<sup>715</sup> Wellek and Warren, p. 134.

Poetry	Music and singing	Painting and sculpture
Comparison or judgement between poets or poetry.	Positive opinions about music and singing (lyrics, the voice, singing, appearance, and ability).	Positive impressions of: painting and sculpture in palaces
Negative perspectives of poetry generally because of its value and specifically because of specific styles or manners.  Negative perspectives of poets regarding their poetic work, or regarding poets' behaviour.	Negative opinions towards music and singing (foolish singing, bad voice, bad performance, lack of prestige, bad manners, bad instruments, sounds, and religious consideration).	Paintings and sculpture on <i>Ḥammām</i> 's walls
Positive perspectives on poetry in general, and positive perspectives on specific poetry.		Painting and sculpture on glasses.
Advice and recommendations on poetry.		Paintings on fabric.
		Use of paint on the body.
		Statues of humans.

Table 2: Poets' perspectives on poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture in the developed stage.

Regarding the differences and similarities that can be noticed through poets' perspectives on the arts, it is clear that the theme of drawing comparisons between two works of art or artists for the purpose of evaluation only occurs for poetry. For example, al-Ṣaltān al-'Abdī conducted a comparison between Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, and al-Aṣma'ī also composed one, as well as addressing three girls' verses. However, this theme is missing in the poets' perspectives on music and singing, and towards painting and sculpture. There was no evidence of a comparison by poets between singers or musicians, or between painters and sculptors, such as that which exists in the writings on poetry. Of course, there are some texts that mention two poets or seem to compare one musician to another but what is under discussion here is different. It is similar to what was seen in the poetry chapter, whereby poets draw a comparison between two specific poetic works. Perhaps there are some reasons which explain and justify this issue.

Poets had long, broad practice in this particular art form and poetry was their own particular area of practice, so they were experts in it. Additionally, the conflict that was mentioned earlier among poets at Umayyad age specifically, as well as a lack of critics, may have led to the appearance of this theme. This interpretation does not mean that there was no conflict between musicians, painters and sculptors, but, at least, the poets did not mention any of them and they were less involved in this. Additionally, giving advice and recommendations about poetry is a particular feature of the poetry. This is not found for music and singing and for painting and sculpture. Poets gave recommendations because they were specialists in their field. Also, they may have been affected by the critical ideas at that time.<sup>716</sup> For example, the issues of *al-muqaddima al-ṭalaliya* and poetic plagiarism can be seen only in poets' perspectives on poetry.<sup>717</sup> Poets did not become involved in areas where their information could not extend beyond showing good impressions towards the works of art depending on general, visible, and physical information.

Regarding similarities, providing negative and positive perspectives by poets is a common feature of two arts: poetry, and music and singing. Poets showed negative opinions towards poetry in general, as well as some specific styles of poetry, in addition to negative views towards both named and unnamed poets. For music and singing, poets showed negative opinions addressing foolish singing, bad voices, bad performances, limited prestige, bad

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<sup>716</sup> Wellek and Warren, pp. 148–49.

<sup>717</sup> See: 3.4.

manners, bad instrumental sounds, and religious considerations. Poets, however, showed positivity towards poetry in general and certain kinds of poetry specifically. This was also the case for music and singing, but there was an absence of positive poetic views on the art of music and singing in general.

On the other hand, poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture are totally different in this regard. An important issue that we should mention here is that poets did not express negative opinions or meanings about painting and sculpture in the same way that they did for poetry, and music and singing. In fact, poets talked positively about painting and sculpture in their poetry, and there was an absence of negative opinions towards this kind of art. The poets went deeply into their descriptions of painting and sculpture and their opinions seemed filled with admiration and positive impressions.

All of the materials for this study have been collected and analysed thematically, and representative samples are introduced with a strong focus on the analysis of the main questions and aims of the study. Based on the previous analysis it can be considered that the development of Arabic civilisation in the developed stage is reflected by poets in comparison with the early stage. Evidence of this claim is shown in this study through poets' perspectives on the three kinds of arts that are studied in this thesis. Civilizational development demonstrates to what extent knowledge, wealth and power in the Abbasid ages played a clear role in ensuring the welfare of the people, poets included. Therefore, there were many luxuries in private life, as well as in public life. Additionally, Klein notes that music and instruments in the Abbasid era were a symbol of culture.<sup>718</sup> In terms of poetry, prior research has concluded that the evolution of civilisations exerted a significant influence at that time. It orientated poets towards several new themes such as the description of the arts through poems, whether they were conscious of this process or not. The poets did this with the arts just as they did with *khamrīyāt's* and *rawzīyāt's* themes.<sup>719</sup>

Different kinds of poetic ideas and opinions have been mentioned towards various kinds of arts. Poets' opinions towards the arts are included but not limited to showing admiration, appreciation, criticism, theorisation, recommendation, satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

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<sup>718</sup> Klein, p. 4.

<sup>719</sup> Farrin provides further explanation in his book by giving the example of *khamrīya's* poem by Abū Nuwās and others. Raymond Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry*, Middle East Literature in Translation (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 2011).



Additionally, some poets tend to mention other arts because of personal admiration, and some mention arts in their poems because they are representative of beauty in general. Some poets refer to the other arts in their odes simply to satisfy the desires of an important person through the composition of a panegyric ode, and some poets tend to show their excellence in poetry through the description of other arts. All of the different forms of poets' opinions reveal a tendency to record an attitude towards various arts when looking deeply at the context of a text, and when using specific rhetorical tools. In other words, the poets' underlying intentions to follow the path of cultural evolution is clear even if they only saw this as a part of expressing their interests. Therefore, it is clear that as Ḍayf and Grabar show Arab-Islamic civilisation had a clear impact on the arts. It was an impressive civilisation because it was able to absorb previous civilisations and create a distinctive path in history for itself.<sup>720</sup> Furthermore, Arab-Islamic civilisation was in itself both remarkable and inspiring, and this led poets to become interested in other art forms.<sup>721</sup> Therefore, the affluence of the Arab-Islamic civilisation at this time encouraged poets to look deeply at different arts because of the evolution of knowledge and financial wealth which led to developing different aspects of life. Arts and poetry belong to these developing aspects, and the developments were expressed by poets in their work.<sup>722</sup>

Let us turn now to rhetorical tools, quality and length. Without doubt, the developed stages were active in this aspect as discussed in the previous chapters. Poets used simile and metaphor more than any other semantic tools. Rhetorical tools were widely used by poets to convey their perspectives' and opinions towards the arts, especially in the developed stage. The research addresses the rhetorical tools that were used as essential devices to deliver poets' perspectives on arts. This can be confirmed by the large amount of poetic materials that were analysed in the previous chapters.

The developed stage is distinguished by the existence of a great number of verses on the arts.<sup>723</sup> Diagrams 2, 3, and 4 show this development over the ages.<sup>724</sup> Some poems contain more than twenty verses, which indicates an in-depth treatment of the arts by poets. There are some reasons that may underpin this. Firstly, it seems that the arts were well-known among the

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<sup>720</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī Al-Awwal*, Ta'rīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī, 3, 8th edn (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1966), pp. 110–16.

<sup>721</sup> Grabar, p. 217.

<sup>722</sup> Ḍayf, *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Awwal*, p. 44.

<sup>723</sup> See the previous sections in this thesis: 3.4, 4.4, and 5.4.

<sup>724</sup> See: p. 120, 193, and 268.

people, artists and their works had become widespread, and the new modern way of life at that time had given significance to these art forms. Secondly, poets were very knowledgeable about the excellent use of semantic and rhetorical tools for introducing their ideas about works of art. Finally, poets sought honour in their poetry by trying to create new, different and remarkable poetic images by using rhetorical tools.

### *Specific characteristics*

The second part of this section is related to specific characteristics regarding some features of some poetic texts which have been discovered in the research. These features will be mentioned with reference to poets' perspectives on the arts that have been examined earlier.

Poets dealt with some works of art (poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture) in a similar manners. For more illustration, al-Shammākh's verse was a controversial work for poets. Several poets have discussed the verse, for example Abū Nuwās, Abū Tammām, and al-Hamadhānī all discuss al-Shammākh's verse and present their perspectives on it.<sup>725</sup> Poets did the same regarding the art of sculptors. For example, Tadmur's (Palmyra) statues were discussed by Abū Dulaf, Mohammad ibn al-Hājib, and Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ijlī.<sup>726</sup> However, similar poetry regarding music and singing where performance or singing drew the opinions of several poets could not be found. Abū Tammām does refer to this art in his verses when he was talking about singing in a foreign language (mentioned by Bashshār ibn Burd in a poem regarding a girl who sang in front of a blind man).<sup>727</sup> It is clear that poetry and painting and sculpture can survive for a long time and people can see them in the long term in written books or physical shapes. However, music and singing are the art that depends on the live performance (at that time). Some works of art (poetry and sculpture) were controversial, so several opinions and perspectives were conducted in response to them. Concerning music and

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<sup>725</sup> See: pp 67-69.

<sup>726</sup> See section: 5.3.2.6.

<sup>727</sup> See: p. 141 and p.142.

singing, it is understood that the only poet who can produce his opinion about music and singing is the poet that was attending the performance.

The poets have criticised repetition in both poetry and singing. For example, Ibn al-Rūmī criticised Abū Bakr because of repetitiveness in his poetry,<sup>728</sup> and al-‘Abartā’ī criticised the singer named Liḥyat al-Ttays when he repeats his song many times.<sup>729</sup> Repetition is a tool used in Arabic rhetoric and it can also be called *mutashābih*, *taṣarruf*, and *iqtidār*. Also it can be seen in high poetic texts such as Imru’ al-Qays poetry.<sup>730</sup> Furthermore, repetition can be seen as a natural technique in music and singing as well as in painting.<sup>731</sup> However, drawing attention to repetition has been considered to be a criticism when the poets feel there is a misuse of this technique in other artists’ works. There are no poetic texts that have been found to criticise repetition in the painting and sculpture.

Ibn Ghalbūn al-Sūrī’s verse when he compares the tune of Abū Naṣr singing to the tune of calling for prayer is similar to Marwān ibn Abī Ḥaḥṣa’s verse when he compares ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm’s verse to the calling for prayer.<sup>732</sup> This can give us an indication about a criterion of harmony that should exist in works of art. Additionally, Ibn Ghalbūn al-Sūrī’s verse when he describes the music of the musician Abū Naṣr as bad because of reasons of race is similar to al-Farazdaq’s verse when he describes Nuṣayb’s poetry as bad because of race.<sup>733</sup> Both poets’ views toward poetry and music demonstrate how some poets digress away from reasonable criticism.

Badī’ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī uses hyperbole in the expression of having an out of body experience when enjoying a good poem. Moreover, he uses a similar style of expression when he describes good singing, saying he was about to split his clothes or his heart.<sup>734</sup>

There are two similar examples by different poets in two art forms which demonstrate the effect of Islam on the arts. After the coming of Islam, Zīrār ibn al-Azwar decided to stop

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<sup>728</sup> See: p.75.

<sup>729</sup> See: p.172.

<sup>730</sup> Al-Ahmari, pp. 67-74.

<sup>731</sup> ‘Īd Sa‘d Yūnus, *Jamāl wa-Ẓilāl: Dirāsa Naqdiyya fī Jamāliyyāt al-Fann al-Islāmī wa-Ẓilāl al-Fann al-Ḥadīth*, pp. 41-45.

<sup>732</sup> See: p. 171 and p.80.

<sup>733</sup> See: p. 171 and pp.108-109.

<sup>734</sup> See: pp. 92-93 and p.155.

listening to singing while al-Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr decided to discontinue composing poetry.<sup>735</sup> Certainly, this shows the effect of Islam on the artists. However, the matter was still a personal decision as many artists continued their works of art after the coming of Islam.

Poets tended to describe poor works of art in poetry and singing by calling them foolish literally *bārid* / cold. For example, ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm and Ibn al-Rūmī used this technique to describe music and singing.<sup>736</sup> Similarly, Abū Na‘āma and al-Ṣābī produced verses regarding foolish kinds of poetry.<sup>737</sup> However, poetry regarding poets' perspectives on painting and sculpture describing this art form as ‘cold’, or foolish cannot be found. We may notice that reciting poetry, and singing a song, relies on live performance which is something that does not exist in painting and sculpture. In a similar vein, Ibn al-Rūmī mentioned bad manners of poets and Ibn Abī Bishr did the same with singers,<sup>738</sup> but there is no poetic texts regarding painters’ and sculptors’ manners. Live performance and the absence of communication between poets and visual artists is the reason for this specific issue.

Bashshār ibn Burd used his imagination when he wished to disappear inside slices of apple or a piece of basil and then become visible in front of a singing girl.<sup>739</sup> Al-Mutanabbī used the same imagination when he wished to be the painting of a man on the hawdah, allowing him to see the girl he admires.<sup>740</sup> Both are well known poets in Arabic poetry field and they tend to use a new, unique, and unusual poetic style to emphasise the strength of their poetic ability.

Al-Mutanabbī greatly appreciates al-Nābigha’s poetry in his verses,<sup>741</sup> and this led, after several years, to appreciating Al-Mutanabbī’s verses by Ibn Wahbūn.<sup>742</sup> It seems there is a kind of appreciation towards some specific poetic works. In terms of paintings, Abū Nuwās mentions the painting of Kisrā on glass,<sup>743</sup> and, after several years, al- Ṣanawbarī mentions Abū Nuwās as being depicted in a glass painting. It seems that Abū Nuwās was a well-known name

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<sup>735</sup> See: p. 133 and p.55.

<sup>736</sup> See: pp.164-165.

<sup>737</sup> See: p. 77 and p.72.

<sup>738</sup> See: pp. 84-85 and p.174.

<sup>739</sup> See: p. 134.

<sup>740</sup> See: p.239.

<sup>741</sup> See: p.93.

<sup>742</sup> See: pp. 95-96.

<sup>743</sup> See: pp. 230-231.

among artists and, as he was the first poet who describes painting on glass, eventually came to be portrayed on glass himself.<sup>744</sup>

It is common among poets when describing paintings to give allusions or indication about painting. For example, al-Mutanabbī says that the meadows have not been created by clouds nor because of rain. It is the poetic way to acknowledge that these meadows are not a real scene.<sup>745</sup> However, this style could not be found in the poems regarding poetry or music and singing.

The poets did not mention the names of any painters and sculptors whatsoever. This stands in contrast with the fact that they mentioned the names of musicians and poets, as noted in the previous chapters. For example, al-Buḥturī mentioned the name of an ancient Persian musician called al-Balahbadh in the same poem in which he described the battle painting cited in Chapter 4.<sup>746</sup> This way of dealing with visual artists may be a sign that painters and sculptors were less famous than singers and poets, so maybe they were unknown. Furthermore, if we assume the paintings and sculptures were produced by several artists that means it is difficult to mention all of them in the poetry. Finally, painting and sculpture are works of art which take a long time to accomplish which means that the names of artists may pale in contrast to musicians or poets whose names are immediately attached to their performances. With live performance, there is no disconnection between the artists and their productions.

Another comment about painting and sculpture, the poets in the developed stage did not mention tattoos in their poetry as they did with the use of paint on the body.<sup>747</sup> They have avoided to mention the term of tattoo specifically but they have used other words such as *naqsh* and *raqm* which can be translated to drawing and design. Depending on the poetic texts it seems that drawing or the use of paint was very popular among people at that time more than making a tattoo.

Poetry is the only form of art that has been compared to other kinds of arts by poets. For example, poets compared a beautiful poem to others' works of art including music, painting

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<sup>744</sup> See: p. 236.

<sup>745</sup> See: p. 239.

<sup>746</sup> See: p. 266.

<sup>747</sup> See: 5.3.2.5.

and other's poetry.<sup>748</sup> This is additional evidence that can be added to the idea of the importance of poetry in Arabic culture.

Poetic and musical works have been compared to others' work in the same fields. For example, good poetry has been compared to other poets' poetry,<sup>749</sup> and good singing has been compared to other musicians' singing.<sup>750</sup> However, this was not the case for painting and sculpture. Comparison is a critical idea which showed the development of critical poets' perspectives and their ability in terms of evaluating others' work.

Depending on what has been found in the previous investigation, there is no artistic competition between artists from the different art forms. There is no poetic evidence that indicates the existence of competition between poets and musicians, or between poets and painters or sculptors. However, it is too easy to see the competition between poets.<sup>751</sup> Competition can be noticed between musicians as well,<sup>752</sup> but not between painters and sculptors.

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<sup>748</sup> See: p. 96.

<sup>749</sup> See: p. 99.

<sup>750</sup> See: pp. 161-163.

<sup>751</sup> See: pp. 73-78.

<sup>752</sup> See: pp. 161-163.

## 5.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparisons that have been made between Islam's attitudes towards this study art forms show that these attitudes vary depending on the art form. Islam's attitudes are conservative with painting and sculpture, less so with music and singing, and much less so for poetry. Regardless of Islam's view of the arts, it appears that most artists were not particularly concerned with Islamic teachings. Of course, there are some exceptions, but the majority were quite indulgent regarding poetry, music and singing, painting and sculpture. The general Arabic way regarding the arts is welcoming. However, these three arts can be classified depending on the degree of importance to Arabs. Poetry would come first, music and singing second, and, finally, painting and sculpture.

Regarding Arabic poets' perspectives on the arts, it has been found that the early stages and the themes that have been mentioned by poets in regard to each art form differ from each other. However, there are some similarities in that the verses were few, and the use of rhetorical tools was limited. On the other hand, the developed stages were more valuable and contained rich poetic texts about arts. We have discovered both similar and differing poets' perspectives on the arts as well as some specific distinguishing features regarding poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture. Additionally, this research identifies a heavy use of rhetorical tools by poets in these stages. Furthermore, it is clear that the length of verses increased in the developed stage. All these factors indicate that by this stage poets were highly interested in expressing their perspectives, opinions, and feelings towards the arts.

The following pages present the conclusion of this thesis, and contain a summary of the research findings, discussion of limitations of the work, as well as suggestions for future study.

## Conclusion

This research has investigated a unique issue in Arabic poetry related to the arts from the Pre-Islamic era to the end of the 5th / 11th century. The original contribution and the primary goal of this research is discovering the whole image of poets' perspectives on poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture in their poetry. Determining the poetic tools they have used to show their perspectives in addition to discovering the reasons and the significances. The study has concentrated on poetry as the primary source of the poets' views and their opinions regarding these specific forms of arts. The research used two tools to achieve the investigation. The first tool is thematic analysis to determine poets' perspectives on the arts. Poets' perspectives have been classified and categorised in stages, and in themes to reveal and better understand the main direction of their views. The second tool is the second part of Arabic rhetoric, *'ilm al-bayān* the semantic tools that were used by poets to express, clarify, and emphasise their views on arts. We know that the second part of Arabic rhetoric, *'ilm al-bayān*, or figures of speech, can highlight the importance of ideas through the use of specific semantic tools in the poetry, such as simile, metaphor, and personification.

The analysis process of this study has several stages and steps. It began by looking for poetic materials that have a connection to the three selected art forms. It then arranged them thematically depending on the poets' intended meanings, and chronologically by using the date of poets' death to better monitor the development process of the subject. As a result of this methodology, the research finds Arabic poets' perspectives about arts can be divided into two main parts. The first is when the poets talk about the arts in a non-specific way: this stage has been called early stage. The second stage is when the poets are greatly concerned with the arts in their poetry and this has been called developed stage. The materials of the study have been translated and analysed verse by verse with two analytical approaches as mentioned above. The previous steps led to further discussion, interpretation, and comparison, which is essential in terms of understanding the poets' perspectives, how their opinions regarding the arts related to the context of the time, and how the argument of this thesis relates to other scholars' opinions and their discussion. Additionally, this section of the thesis contains a comparison between the two main stages that have been studied previously. This methodology has been applied to



analysis of poetic appearances of the three art forms in this thesis (chapters 3, 4, and 5). The last chapter contains comparisons between the content analysed in earlier chapters. In the following pages, we will conclude the results of this thesis by providing brief answers to the research questions that have been uncovered and answered in in-depth analysis in the previous chapters. The main question underpinning this project is: what are poets' perspectives, how do they express their opinions in their poetry towards three kinds of arts: poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture, and why?

Poetry has been investigated in Chapter 2. It is well known that poetry is the main and greatest loved art form among Arabs. However, in the early stage (from Pre-Islamic era to the second half of Umayyad age or 80 / 700), Arab poets' perspectives and ideas on poetry were limited and difficult to glean. For example, they mentioned previous poets' styles in poetry and they talked about plagiarism but in rare cases. In the developed stage (from 80 / 700 to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century), the Arab poets showed their attitudes towards poetry in a very developed, knowledgeable, and remarkable way. It has been found that some poets draw comparisons between poets and works of poetry. By looking at the texts and their context, the research tends to interpret this theme by considering it as a normal result of the absence of critics, and authorship in criticism at the time of the poetic texts under investigation. Therefore, the poets as the experts in their field tried to fill this gap but in their specific style.

Additionally, the poets provide negative opinions regarding poetry and poets, and they reflect upon specific poetic issues. We have discovered some hidden reasons for such criticisms, such as financial difficulties, religious reasons, and the effect of modern poetic trends at that time. Also, we have noticed that the competitions between poets are a significant reason where the poets were interested to raise their voices with their opinions about their competitors' poetry. Their experience and wide knowledge about poetry also helped and affected poets' opinions in this regard and allowed them to criticise mistakes in different elements of other people's poetry from their individual perspectives.

Another theme has been found is that the poets offer positive views towards poetry and other poets as well. This research considers that the poets were constituting a defence against a group of people who did not believe in the importance of their art. Also, they looked positively at some poetry due to personal reasons, such as praising the poetry of a friend. However, this cannot be considered as a common aspect of this theme, where the poets were

very interested in looking positively at other poets' poetry with a high degree of appreciation. This leads us to think about poets' criteria, and their focus when they talk about others' poetry. Additionally, the poets provide advice and recommendations about several aspects of poetry. This theme provides clear evidence of the poets' desire for improving this art form. They tried to produce their experiences and share and show their knowledge to help other poets' and guide them to the right way of poetry. Therefore, Arab poets' perspectives about poetry in the developed stage is distinctive and remarkable in comparison to the early stage and what they have done with the other art forms at the time.

In terms of poetic style and rhetorical tools that have been used by poets to transfer their perspectives about poetry in the early stage, the poets use direct and descriptive language. They also do not use similes or metaphors as their most common tools. For example, referring to poetry as a weapon is an idea that does appear in some verses, yet without the use of proper simile as a tool. On the other hand, poets in the developed stage provide their opinions by employing extensive use of rhetorical tools such as similes and metaphors. Similes are used as the main semantic tool for expressing poets' ideas. Regarding similes linked with good poetry, strong poetry is likened to a sword, to death and to stones. Beautiful poetry is likened to gardens, flowers, pearls, girls, *Ṣan'ā'* painted dress, and melodies. Good poets are compared to the most famous poets - Imru' al-Qays and 'Alqama al-Faḥl. Ultimately, it is clear that poets' perspectives about poetry and other poets have developed extensively over several centuries regarding the content and quality as mentioned above, and regarding the quantity on the other hand where the verses became more numerous, and the poems became longer.

Arab poets' perspectives on music and singing were also examined in Chapter 3. The materials were divided into two main stages, the early stage (from Pre-Islamic era to the second half of Umayyad age or 80 / 700) where the poets mention music and singing insignificantly and in a non-fundamental way, in few verses, with less use of rhetorical tools to express their opinions deeply. They mentioned music and singing in their wars and in their meetings. However, their approaches developed extensively in the developed stage (from 80 / 700 to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century), where the poets expressed their views about music and singing in mature style and longer poems. Poets' views varied from negative to positive perspectives for different purposes and considerations. The poets showed their positive views towards music and singing regarding several aspects such as the lyrics of songs quoted in the poetry. The poets

have looked positively towards some specific songs, and they have quoted the lyrics in their verses. This manner in their poetry shows to what extent the poets were keen on music and keen to elaborate their appreciation of these specific songs. They have appreciated the appearances of the singers where they considered the musician as the icon of beauty and fashion which indicates their understanding of the general rules that should be followed by the artists and specifically the musicians. Additionally, they have mentioned musicians' performances and their ability. This issue is highly important where the admiration here is related to musicians' skill and the quality. It may indicate to the good ability and experience of the poets when evaluating musicians. Another aspect is that of mentioning the instruments positively in the poetry, and this research draws attention to the admiration of the instruments shown in the poets' verses about them. The final aspect of this theme is drawing comparisons of good singers with well-known singers or musicians at that time. This aspect shows us the poets' ability to categorise musicians and to put them in a hierarchy which reveals a kind of criticism from the poets of the singers and musicians.

The second main theme in this chapter is the poetry that is containing negative opinions regarding music and singing. Several aspects have been mentioned negatively by poets such as poor performances, bad songs, horrible singers' voice and bad instruments' sounds. Additionally, they have mentioned the lack of singers' ability or their limited melodies or songs. All these points of criticism mentioned by poets above indicate to several aesthetic criteria required for the musicians from poets' view. We can understand that poets were demanding musicians to have the general principles of music and singing. Such criticisms allow us to evaluate the poets' experience, knowledge, and level of critical thinking on music and singing. This research does not claim that the poets were specialists in this art form, or they discussed musical issues in great depth, but they tried to express their impression and their criticism regarding the apparent mistakes that did not reach the acceptable level from their perspective. Furthermore, it has been noticed that music and singing have been criticised depending on religious considerations from the perspective of some poets. However, the poetic texts that have been found regarding this issue have been interpreted depending on the context and the hidden purposes that have been revealed in analysis of the texts. Therefore, this research does not tend to provide this aspect to be considered mainstream or a strong poetic trend in the field of music and singing from poets' perspectives.

Regarding the use of poetic semantic tools, the poets used rhetorical tools extensively to clarify their views in both themes. For example, al-Munajjim considers a beautiful voice to be “softer than the flower at the morning, and gentler than the best reputation”. Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih suggests that beautiful singing can shorten a long night, Abū Tammām gives good singing the ability to burn his insides, and Kushājim compares the sound of the lute to a girl’s voice. On the other hand, in more negative expressions, the bad singing is described as foolish or cold like the winter in ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm’s opinion, a bad singer voice is likened to a cat’s voice in Abū Hilāl’s verses, and in al-Nājim’s verses a girl who sings and appears badly is described as being like a spider.

Arab poets’ perspectives on painting and sculpture were examined in Chapter 4. This research divided the poetic texts into two main parts. First is the early stage (from Pre-Islamic era to 198 / 813) where the poets mention painting and sculpture only briefly and in non-specific poems, using few verses, and with less frequent use of rhetorical tools. They describe their beloved’s belongings and compare their girls to statues. Also, they mention paintings or statues for non-artistic reasons and they talk about the use of paint tattoos or henna on the body. However, in the developed stage (from 198 / 813 to the end of the 5th / 11th century), poets express their views about painting and sculpture in several aspects, in more mature style, and in longer poems. The poets’ views are overall very positive. It is clear that the Arab poets have never shown negative opinions or dissatisfaction towards painting and sculpture. They tend to describe the works of art in detail and they tend to express the admiration they feel toward the works of art. Furthermore, they were interested in some cases in showing their admiration for the artists and their works. Several kinds of paintings and sculptures can be found described in the poetry, such as paintings on the walls of palaces. It is clear that some poetic texts have been composed in the context of a panegyric for a lord, where praising the painting in the palaces is expected as a part of the lord’s achievements. From the details of the paintings that have been mentioned the painters seem highly skilful and specialist. On the other hand, it can be seen clearly that the panegyric or praising is not the only reason for description of paintings where the poets described works of art on bathhouse walls or ḥammām where there are no financial benefits for such praising. The reason for the poet’s description of bathhouse paintings seems to be genuine delight and pleasure found in this art form. The poets have described the paintings on the glass positively, drawing attention to several different scenes on the glasses, and trying to show off their poetic ability through this specific manner of description. Describing paintings

on fabric is another group of poetic texts. We have noticed that the poets were interested in describing these paintings as part of praise poems. It has been noticed that the poets used these paintings in an artistic and poetic way such as in the verses of al-Mutanabbī.

Additionally, another group of poetry talks about the use of paint on the body. It has been found that the poets have described such paintings on girls' cheeks and hands with the primary concern of showing their poetic ability. Finally, the poets have described statues of humans and girls, especially in the church. It is clear that the poets were interested in showing their positive opinions toward these works of art. They express their admiration towards the statues and to the sculptors who create those beautiful artistic works. Regarding the use of semantic tools, in the early stage, the poets did not pay much attention to using rhetorical tools to describe works of art at that time. But in the developed stage, the poets used rhetorical tools extensively to clarify their views and to elaborate their poetic ideas. For example, Ibn Wahbūn compared the statue of an elephant to a lively elephant while he was grazing wet silver to become solid. Another poet compares the use of black paint on a white hand to a net of black musk that has been put on a hand made of hailstones. Other poets use a direct expression to express the excellent capacity of the artists. For example, al-Ṣanawbarī and Abū al-Ḥasn al-'Ijlī mention the great ability of the artists, and al-Mawgifi, as well as other poets, describe their positive impressions of the works of art of painters and sculptors in their poetry.

The comparison that was conducted in the final chapter 5, regarding several aspects. The first aspect focuses on two elements related to the background and the context that can be seen regarding Islamic and Arabic attitudes towards the three arts. Regarding the Islamic attitudes toward the three arts, they have been compared to each other and they have been found to vary according to the art form. The Islamic attitude is conservative regarding painting and sculpture, is less so for music and singing, and less so still for the poetic art form. Regardless of Islamic perspectives, it seems that most artists were not particularly concerned with Islamic teachings. They have practised their arts while they were enjoying a great deal of freedom. The second aspect is the Arabic attitude to the arts; generally, Arabs were welcoming towards the arts during the time period of this research depending on what has been mentioned in the section of background and context. However, if these three arts have been classified regarding the degree of their importance to Arabs, poetry will come first, music and singing second, and painting and sculpture last. We have found some evidence to support this claim such as the

general trend of knowledge through Arabic literary authorship, and scholars' efforts regarding the three arts at that time. For example, Arabic books that have been written about poetry are numerous and have been found in early Arabic age. In the second level is what has been written about music and singing where it comes less than poetry. Painting and sculpture can be considered in the third level in this regard. Another aspect of the comparison is that of Arabic poets' perspectives on the arts. It has been found that the early stages differ from each other. The themes and techniques drawn on by poets are completely different. However, there are some shared similarities in that the verses were few, and the use of rhetorical tools was limited.

On the other hand, the developed stages were more valuable and contained richer poetic texts about the arts. Both similarities and differences have been uncovered in poets' perspectives on the arts as well as some specific distinguishing features regarding poetry, music and singing, and painting and sculpture. Additionally, this research brings to light a heavy reliance on rhetorical tools by poets in these stages. Moreover, it is clear that the length of verses increased in the developed stage. All these elements indicate that poets became more interested in expressing their perspectives, opinions, and feelings towards the arts. The level of attention given to works of art in poetry is commensurate with the amount of rhetorical tools employed. Heavy use of rhetorical devices is taken as evidence of the extent to which poets were interested in communicating opinions towards the arts and convincing readers as well. This idea about poets' increased levels of attention is supported by other evidence such as verse quantity, poem length, poetic ideas, poetic styles and rhetorical tools. In the second part of the comparison, we have discovered some specific and remarkable features of some poetic texts through the materials of this thesis. For example, poets over several years discussed some works of art regarding poetry such as al-Shammakh's verse and regarding sculpture such as Palmyra statues. However, they did not do the same with music and singing. Regarding the poetry, it is clear that the poets were interested to discuss other poets' meaning and express their opinions about it because it is controversial. Regarding the the Palmyra statues, they have been seen by tens of poets where they lived a long time in the same way as poetry. However, singing only can be seen in live performance. Another example is when the poets have criticised repetition in poetry such as Abū Bakr's work, where the repetition has been considered as a mistake by Ibn al-Rūmī as it is used badly, and in singing such as liḥyat al-ttays' performance where al-'Abartā'ī thinks the singer lacks knowledge of other songs.

Nevertheless, poets of the period did not write the same of painting and sculpture and there is no criticism oriented towards repetition in painting or sculpture.

There are two points worthy to be mentioned at the end of this research. Firstly, in terms of the poetic materials in Arabic literature, there is no single complete bibliographical book which collects together Arabic poetry about poetry, or about music and singing, or about painting and sculpture like there is in the English literature about paintings.<sup>753</sup> Some poetic materials cannot be found easily. It would be useful for Arabic literature studies to have an official website of trusted Arabic poetry. This could be a valuable resource for the researcher when looking for poetic phenomena and making comparisons or looking for issues of poetic evolution. Secondly, this research illustrates Arabic poets' perspectives on the arts until the end of the 5th / 11th century, yet there is another huge period of Arabic literature which needs to be covered. For example, the modern era of Arabic literature contains many poetic materials about works of art. They differ in various ways and can be studied depending on specific aspects such as comparing Arabic or western arts, or poetry versus prose and so on. Furthermore, other art forms can be investigated in terms of poets' perspectives, such as dancing and architecture. Poetic materials which discuss other arts could be studied and compared, allowing us to understand many aspects of the relationship between various art forms. Also, such study will discover unknown aspects of the artistic Arabic life in terms of its development and the conflict between artists' opinions as well.

Based on what have been mentioned in this thesis, poetry can be considered as the key subject that has earned poets' concern. Music and singing can be considered as the art form that has earned the secondary position in poets' attention. Painting and sculpture have also earned significant interest from Arabic poets, and this art form can be put in the third position concerning the level of attention given to its discussion in Arabic poetry. Finally, this thesis contributes to the field of Arabic studies by discovering and presenting the answers to research questions. It has tried to discover Arabic poets' perspectives on the three arts. It has tried to classify, analyse, discuss, interpret, compare, and justify issues that have appeared in the study of this subject.

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<sup>753</sup> See p. 7 about Denham's book 'Poets on Paintings'.

## Qur'ānic verses appendix

No.	Qur'ānic verses	Sūra's No.
1	<p>وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ [224] أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ [225] وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ [226] إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا ۗ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ [227]</p>	24
2	<p>وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ ۗ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُبِينٌ [69]</p>	36
3	<p>وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ [6]</p>	31
4	<p>يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحَارِبٍ وَتَمَائِيلٍ وَجَفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رَاسِيَاتٍ ۗ اعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُودَ شُكْرًا ۗ وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ [13]</p>	34
5	<p>وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ أَنِّي أَخْلَقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ ۗ إِنْ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ [49]</p>	3
6	<p>فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ فَقَالُوا هَٰذَا إِلَهُكُمُ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَنَسِيَ [88]</p>	20
7	<p>وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا ۗ لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ [5] وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ [6]</p>	16
8	<p>الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مِّننَّيْ وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ ۗ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ [1]</p>	35



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