The verse riddles of ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn ʾAḥmad al-Muḡallis al-Marāḡī: a student edition and translation

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1. Introduction

This introduction argues for the importance of developing a dialogue between the riddling of Christian western Europe and the wider Abrahamicate world in the Middle Ages (§1.1) and discusses the rationale for this edition and its innovative characteristics (§1.2) before explaining how the edition itself is structured (§1.3). Thereafter, we introduce al-Muḡallis and his cultural context (§2) and describe the sources for our edition of the Arabic text (§3). We then explain the conventions used in our edition and survey some frequently occurring linguistic features of al-Muḡallis's verse that are likely to cause difficulty to a student of Arabic (§4). Finally, we offer a literary exploration of al-Muḡallis's riddle on the touchstone — the first riddle in our edition — to sketch some of the ways in which his verse opens doors into studying medieval Arabic-language culture (§5). §6 presents our edition and translation of those riddles by al-Muḡallis included in ʾAbū Manṣūr aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's anthology *Kitāb Yatīmat ad-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr*, while §7 covers those in the sequel, aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's *Tatimmat al-Yatīma*.[2]

1.1 Early medieval riddles

In his magisterial and still influential *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur,* originating in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Carl Brockelmann only touched on the genre of the riddle, noting that its first major literary exponent in Arabic was Ḏū ar-Rumma (d. c. 735). He added that 'one day, I hope to be able to return to poetic riddles and their history in a more comprehensive manner'.[3] That day never came, and the history of riddles in Arabic has

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[2] As discussed in §4.1, Romanisations in this article use the Wiktionary system, as it stood in 2021: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:About_Arabic. This is itself based on Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 4th edn by J. Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1979).

[3] Carl Brockelmann, *History of the Arabic Written Tradition*, trans. by Joep Lameer, Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1: The Near and Middle East, 117, 5 vols in 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2016–19), III (=Supplement Volume 1) p. 88 [trans. from *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1943–49) and *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur. Supplementband*, 3 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1937–42)].

remained little discussed until the last few years.[4] Brockelmann did, however, list three works, all from the latter half of the tenth century or the beginning of the eleventh CE, that would be particularly noteworthy for a history of Arabic riddling: the 'faṣl fī taʿmiyat al-ʾašʿār' ('section on the concealment of knowledge') in chapter 12 of the *Dīwān al-Maʿānī* by the Persian scholar ʾAbū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. c. 1010);[5] the 'bāb al-ištiqāq' ('chapter on etymology') in the *Kitāb Naqd an-naṯr* by Ibrāhīm ibn Wahb al-Kātib (fl. second half of the tenth century);[6] and the poems of ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn ʾAḥmad al-Muġallis.[7] It is the latter poet whose work we present in this article. Our understanding of Arabic riddling has come a long way since Brockelmann's time: Nefeli Papoutsakis's recent work on Abū al-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī's *Kitāb al-Iʿjāz fī l-aḥājī wa-l-alghāz bi-rasm al-amīr Qaymāz* ('inimitable book on quizzes and riddles, composed for the Amīr Qaymāz'), composed during the reign of Caliph al-Muqtafī (1136–60 CE), shows that there were many more composers of riddles at al-Muġallis's time than Brockelmann knew.[8] Nevertheless, we propose that al-Muġallis's work provides one useful way into studying medieval Arabic verse riddling.

The present publication offers the first English translation of the thirteen of al-Muġallis's riddles gathered in the two great poetic anthologies by ʾAbū Manṣūr aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī (d. 429 AH/1038 CE). The value of making al-Muġallis's work available to a wider audience is emphasised by the explosion in recent research on riddling in early medieval Eurasia. The investigation of verse riddles in Old English has surged, prompting new analyses of riddles in the culturally adjacent literatures of Latin and Old Norse. This research has demonstrated the degree to which early medieval riddling could constitute a profound exploration of the relationships between people, the material world, and the Abrahamic God, and has shown that riddles were especially well suited to challenging and questioning social norms and

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[4] Cf. Pieter Smoor, 'The Weeping Wax Candle and Maʿarrī's Wisdom-tooth: Night Thoughts and Riddles from the *Ǧāmiʿ al-awzān*', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 138 (1988), 283–312; Ḵayr ad-Dīn Šamsī Bāšā, 'al-ʾAlġāz wa-l-ʾaḥajī wa-l-muʿammayāt', *Majallat Majmaʿ al-Lugha al-ʿArabiyya bi-Dimashq*, 71 (1996), 768–816; A. A. Seyed-Gohrab, *Courtly Riddles: Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2010), pp. 14–18.

[5] Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskari, *Dīwān al-maʿāni*, ed. by Aḥmad Salīm Ġānim, 2 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Ġarb al-Islāmi, 1424 AH/2003 CE).

[6] ʾAbū l-Faraj Qudāmah bin Jaʿfar al-Kātib al-Baġdādī, *Kitāb Naqd an-naṯr*, ed. by Ṭaha Ḥusayn and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-ʿAbbādī (Būlāq: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʾAmīriyya, 1941), pp. 58–62. Brockelmann and others at his time thought that the author was Qudāma ibn Jaʿfar al-Kātib al-Baġdādī (d. 1030s or 1040s); on the attribution see P. Shinar, 'Ibn Wahb', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by P. J. Bearman and others, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005), s.v.

[7] Brockelmann actually knew al-Muġallis as 'al-Muflis': see §2 below.

[8] Nefeli Papoutsakis, 'Abū l-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī (d. 568/1172) and his *Inimitable Book on Quizzes and Riddles*', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 109 (2019), 251–69.

hierarchies.[9] Meanwhile, following a long dearth of research on Arabic riddles, the last few years have seen a raft of work from Nefeli Papoutsakis and Matthew L. Keegan on Arabic verse and prose riddling respectively.[10] As Alaric Hall and Shamira Meghani have recently emphasised, however, the research on western Europe is seldom even cognisant of the numerous riddles that were being composed in the same period in Greek, Hebrew, Persian, and Arabic, on the one hand leaving our picture of early medieval riddling lopsided and on the other depriving research on the poetry of North Africa and western and central Asia of the benefits of new methodological and theoretical insights applicable across Abrahamic cultures.[11]

Moreover, the main anthologies in which al-Muḡallis's riddles survive — aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's *Yatīmat ad-dahr* and *Tatimmat al-Yatīma* — have also enjoyed less research than they deserve given

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[9] A good and up to date impression of the range of work is offered by the articles in *Riddles at Work in the Early Medieval Tradition: Words, Ideas, Interactions*, ed. by Megan Cavell and Jennifer Neville (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), alongside the burgeoning free-access online resource *The Riddle Ages: Early Medieval Riddles, Translations and Commentaries*, ed. by Megan Cavell and others, 2nd edn (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2020–), https://theriddleages.com. Other major recent studies include John D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); Dieter Bitterli, *Say what I am Called: The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Patrick J. Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Helen Price, 'Human and NonHuman in Anglo-Saxon and British Postwar Poetry: Reshaping Literary Ecology' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 2013); Mercedes Salvador-Bello, *Isidorean Perceptions of Order: The Exeter Book Riddles and Medieval Latin Enigmata*, Medieval European Studies, 17 (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2015); Corinne Dale, *The Natural World in the Exeter Book Riddles* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017); James Paz, *Nonhuman Voices in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Erin Sebo, *In Enigmate: The History of a Riddle, 400–1500* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2018); *The Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, ed. and trans. by Andy Orchard, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 69 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); Andy Orchard, *A Commentary on the Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, Supplements to the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021).

[10] In addition to the previous footnote, see Rifrāfī Bilkāsim, 'Fann al-ʾalḡāz aš-šiʿriyya fī al-šiʿr al-ʿarabiyy al-qadīm (tīmāt wa-fanniyyāt)', *Majallat qirāʾāt*, 13.1 (2012), 199–212; Fāṭima Hilāl Fawzī, 'Fann al-ʾalḡāz aš-šiʿriyya — al-ruʾya wa-l-taškīl', *Majallat buḥūṯ kulliyyat al-ʾādāb*, 134 (2023), 433–512; Nefeli Papoutsakis, 'Zaynaddīn Ibn al-ʿAḡamī's (1195–1275) *Kitāb iʿḡāz al-munāḡī fī l-alḡāz wa-l-aḥāḡī*: A Thirteenth-Century Arabic Riddle Book', *Asiatische Studien*, 74 (2020), 67–83; 'The Literary Riddle in the Age of an-Nawāḡī: The Riddles of Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī and Šihābaddīn al-Ḥiḡāzī', in *The Racecourse of Literature: An-Nawāḡī and His Contemporaries*, ed. by Hakan Özkan und Alev Masarwa (ALEA, Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2020), pp. 147–68; 'Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī's (917-990/1511–1582) *Treasure of Names* and Other Ottoman-Era Arabic Treatises on the Art of the *Muʿammā*', *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, 20 (2020), 53–89; Matthew L. Keegan, 'Levity Makes the Law: Islamic Legal Riddles', *Islamic Law and Society*, 27 (2020), 214–39. See also David Larsen, 'Towards a Reconstruction of Abū Naṣr al-Bāhilī's *K. Abyāt al-maʿānī*', in *Approaches to the Study of Pre-modern Arabic Anthologies*, ed. by Bilal Orfali and Nadia Maria El Cheikh, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 180 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 37–83. We have not been able to consult *Fann al-alghāz ʿind al-ʿarab wa-maʾhu l-lafẓ al-lāʾiq wa-l-maʿnā l-rāʾiq; al-alghāz al-naḥwiyya; al-ṭāʾir al-maymūn fī ḥall lughz al-kanzal-madfūn*, ed. by Muḥammad Sālimān (Cairo: al-Hayʾ āl-Miṣriyyāl-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 2012).

[11] Alaric Hall and Shamira Meghani, '"I am a Virgin Woman and a Virgin Woman's Child": Critical Plant Theory and the Maiden Mother Conceit in Early Medieval Riddles', *Medieval Worlds*, 14 (2021), 265–88; cf. Alaric Hall, 'Latin and Hebrew Analogues to the Old Norse Leek-Riddle', *Medieval Worlds*, 14 (2021), 289–96. A good, recent example, is *The Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, ed. and trans. by Andy Orchard, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 69 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), which translates riddles from Old English, Latin (and not just Anglo-Latin) and Old Norse, and whose introduction recognises literary Latin riddles' debt to Greek, but does not mention other early medieval riddle traditions.

their considerable importance for our understanding of tenth-century Arabic literature.[12] The present publication makes available in English one poet as a case study of the verse which aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī represented as distinctively contemporary in his own time. In this respect, it sits alongside and hopefully encourages comparison with J. Christoph Bürgel's edition and German translation of the ekphrastic epigrams of Abū Ṭālib al-Maʾmūnī (d. 993), poems which we also owe to aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī and which, while positioning themselves less often as riddles, share many of the same qualities as al-Muḡallis's.[13] Indeed, Adam Talib has recently called attention to the lack of research on verse in the epigrammatic *maqṭūʿ* form — short, often ekphrastic Arabic poems that coalesced into a recognised genre in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries CE.[14] Like al-Maʾmūnī's epigrams, al-Muḡallis's riddles are among the large body of poems that can be understood as *maqāṭīʿ*, so making al-Muḡallis's work more widely available constitutes one small step in enabling a wider readership to assess the development of this under-appreciated verse-form.

1.2 Teaching Classical Arabic verse

As well as making al-Muḡallis's riddles available in translation, this article also seeks to make them as accessible as possible to study in the original by Anglophone students. Arising from Gamir's teaching of Arabic and Hall's studying of it at Leeds Beckett University, our edition explores and models ways to address a gap in resources for the study of classical Arabic poetry by students of Arabic as a foreign language.[15] It has often been noted that learning resources for Arabic are limited: within the last decade, for example, Abderrahman Zouhir went so far as to say that 'there is a dire need for [...] better textbooks'.[16] Within this general dearth, resources suited to any but the most advanced Anglophone students of Arabic verse are especially thin on the ground. Nor, given the economic challenges faced by Arabic teaching provision in many places, can it be assumed that an Arabic learner can rely on the oral guidance of an expert teacher.[17]

A. J. Arberry's 1965 *Arabic Poetry: A Primer for Students* remains in print and is still a key starting point.[18] The support it lends to the student extends to providing a prose English translation facing the Arabic text, along with occasional explanatory notes. The Arabic is not

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[12] Bilal Orfali, *The Anthologist's Art: Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī and his 'Yatimat al-dahr'*, Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures, 37 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), xi. See now also James White, 'Anthologists and the Literary Market: A Comparative Study of al-Thaʿālibī's *Yatīmat al-dahr* and ʿAwfī's *Lubāb al-albāb*' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2018).

[13] *Die ekphrastischen Epigramme des Abū Ṭālib al-Maʾmūnī: Literaturkundliche Studie über einen arabischen Conceptisten*, ed. and trans. by Johann Christoph Bürgel, Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 1965/14 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965). The riddling quality of al-Maʾmūnī's epigrams is emphasised by the inclusion of twenty-four in the *Kitāb al-Iʿjāz fī l-aḥājī wa-l-alghāz*: Papoutsakis, 'ʿAbū l-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī', 265.

[14] Adam Talib, *How Do You Say 'Epigram' in Arabic? Literary History at the Limits of Comparison*, Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures, 40 (Leiden: Brill, 2018). On the similarities and distinctions between Arabic epigrams and riddles, see pp. 26–31.

[15] Cf. Saadia Gamir-Shahin, *Arabic Reader for Beginners* ([no place]: Xlibris, 2011).

[16] Abderrahman Zouhir, 'Unpacking the Teaching and Learning Practices of Arabic at a Major U.S. University', *Journal of Second and Multiple Language Acquisition — JSMULA*, 1.3 (December 2013), 1–20 (p. 11); cf. Saadia Gamir, 'Adult Arabic Learning in the UK: Fidelity in Adversity', in *Learning and Teaching for Right to Left Scripted Languages: Realities and Possibilities. Proceedings of the B.A.A.L./C.U.P. Sponsored Seminar, 14 June 2014, Leeds Metropolitan University*, ed. by Naeema Hann (London: Scitsiugnil, 2016), pp. 33–52 (p. 37); *Early Arabic Poetry*, ed. and trans. by Alan Jones, Oxford Oriental Monographs, 14–15, 2 vols (Reading: Ithaca, 1992–96), I vii.

[17] Saadia Gamir, 'Realities of and Perspectives for Languages in the Globalised World: Can Language Teaching Survive the Inadequacies of Policies Implemented Today at Leeds Beckett University?', *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 7 (2017), 295–315.

[18] A. J. Arberry, *Arabic Poetry: A Primer for Students* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

fully vocalised, presenting the learner with a considerable interpretative task even to apprehend the sound of the poetry, not to mention numerous ambiguities that need to be unravelled before the words comprising the poems can all be identified and parsed. There is no glossary, and, given that English translations of dense Classical Arabic verse are almost inevitably paraphrases, the translation alone cannot constitute a key to reading the original, either at a literal level or with any appreciation of the connotative range of a poem's language. In short, this 'primer' presents students with a huge task to build a bridge between the Arabic text and the translation, let alone to begin any literary appreciation. The same problems arise from, for example, James T. Monroe's *Hispano-Arabic Poetry: A Student Anthology*, first published in 1974,[19] and, of course, to similar facing-page editions and translations which do not advertise themselves as being for students.[20] S. D. Goitein's comment that 'some colleagues thought that the authors have made it too easy for the student by providing him with a full glossary and partial vowelisation' in his 1963 preface to the third edition of Yellin and Billig's (prose-orientated) *An Arabic Reader* perhaps indicates the hair-shirt mentality lying behind other Arabic textbooks.[21] Alan Jones's *Early Arabic Poetry: Select Poems*, first published in 1992–96, recognises these problems and is much more supportive, providing full vocalisation, extensive historical and linguistic contextual information, translations, and a detailed commentary. It does not, however, provide much of an opening to students who are still coming to grips with Arabic script or the distinctive challenges of navigating Arabic dictionaries, and it focuses firmly on the earliest period of Arabic literature. S. A. Bonebakker and Michael Fishbein's *A Reader of Classical Arabic Literature* is helpful in similar ways to Jones — but is prose-focused, including only scattered quotations of verse and three complete poems — while the new and welcome *From Ibn Sinna to Sindbad* by David DiMeo and Inas Hassan is entirely prose.[22]

The present edition and translation, then, aim to enable the reader to engage productively with the original text of al-Muḡallis's riddles whether they have only the basics of Arabic or are at an advanced level, and to do so using conventions that are reasonably familiar in Anglophone linguistics. We hope, therefore, that as well as facilitating self-teaching, it also provides the flexibility often lacking in Arabic teaching resources to enable successful use in what are frequently mixed-ability classrooms.[23] This flexibility starts with the basic fact that we have chosen to publish in a free-access forum, under a creative commons license that facilitates adaptation by teachers. The edition itself provides full vocalisation, transliteration, glossing, and parsing.

Perhaps the most innovative feature of the edition, for those reading it in electronic form, is that in addition to providing a running gloss of all words, we hyperlink each word and suffix in the transliterated text to its entry in Wiktionary, sister to the better known Wikipedia in the larger family of Wikimedia websites. This has the potential disadvantage of tethering our edition to a resource which, since it can be edited by almost anyone on the Internet, is unstable by design. On the other hand, Wiktionary offers (so far) unique advantages over

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[19] James T. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry: A Student Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[20] For example the editions recommended for student use by *Classical Arabic Literature: A Library of Arabic Literature Anthology*, ed. and trans. by Geert Jan van Gelder (New York: New York University Press, 2013), pp. 454–56.

[21] *An Arabic Reader*, ed. by A. Yellin and L. Billig, 3rd edn (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1963), p. 1.

[22] *A Reader of Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. by S. A. Bonebakker and Michael Fishbein, Resources in Arabic and Islamic Studies, 1 (Atlanta, GA: Lockwood, 2012) [repr. from Quaderni di Studi Arabi: Studi e testi, 1 (Cafoscarina: Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, Dipartimento di Scienze Storico-Archeologische e Orientalische, 1995)]; David DiMeo and Inas Hassan, *From Ibn Sina to Sindbad: A Guided Reader to Classics of Arabic Literature* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2023).

[23] Cf. Gamir, 'Adult Arabic Learning in the UK', 37–38.

other online Arabic-English dictionaries. One of the benefits of the contiguity between Classical and Modern Standard Arabic is that resources developed with the latter in mind can be just as serviceable for students of the former, ameliorating the limitations of the learning resources aimed at students of the classical language, and Wiktionary's handling of Arabic generally serves both audiences well. Through the dedicated volunteering of many editors, Wiktionary is becoming as comprehensive as — and both more comprehensible and more readily navigable than — the major Arabic-English lexicographical works, such as Edward William Lane's nineteenth-century *Arabic-English Lexicon*, J. G. Hava's *Arabic-English Dictionary*, or Hans Wehr's *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*.[24] In view of the well known limitations of lexicographical resources for Arabic generally, this is not an inconsiderable benefit in its own right.[25] Moreover, Wiktionary entries can offer full parsing of each word, in both vocalised Arabic and transliteration, hugely reducing the burden on the inexperienced student. By providing both a contextual gloss and comprehensive linking to Wiktionary entries, then, we believe that we are enabling students to grapple with al-Muḡallis's poems directly with a minimum of fuss, but also providing a bridge to richer and fuller explorations of the meaning of his vocabulary. Wherever al-Muḡallis's poetry has revealed a gap in English Wiktionary's coverage, we have rectified this; thus the preparation of this edition has also entailed a substantial body of additions to Wiktionary, including around seventy-five new entries, whose usefulness will extend well beyond the present publication.[26]

We hope that this edition can stand as a template for the teaching of Classical Arabic in another respect too: at its centre is the recognition that extrinsic motivations are important to helping learners achieve even their intrinsic goals. As Jessica Lockhart has said, 'motivation is part of the Personal Sphere of a human being' — in other words, a person's 'Self'.[27] Teachers of Arabic — particularly those teaching outside the relatively controlled framework of BA Arabic degrees — not only need resources that can engage mixed-ability groups of students, but also groups of students driven by a wide range of motivations. Gamir has emphasised the diversity of the motivations that on the one hand attract adult learners to studying Arabic and on the other enable them to persist with that study, as well as the importance of teachers adapting their practice to try to harness these motivations.[28] Meanwhile, Hall has previously explored the motivational possibilities opened up by enabling students of Old Icelandic to participate in professional research and translation projects.[29] As the student in the present teacher-student collaboration, Hall constitutes a case study in

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[24] Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vols 6–8 ed. by Stanley Lane-Poole, 8 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–93); J. G. Hava, *Al-Farāʾid ad-durriyya fī l-luḡatayn al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-inklīziyya/Arabic-English Dictionary for the Use of Students* (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1899); Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*.

[25] Cf. *A Reader of Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. by Bonebakker and Fishbein, pp. 3–4, 8.

[26] See https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Special:Contributions/Alarichall.

[27] Jessica J. Lockhart, 'The Difference Between Instrumental and Integrative Motivation', *CSM: The Magazine for Customer Service Managers & Professionals* (2017), https://www.customerservicemanager.com/the-difference-between-instrumental-and-integrative-motivation; Saadia Gamir, 'An Innovating Flipped-blended Teaching and Learning Model for Tackling Oral Reticence in the Language Classroom' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Leeds Beckett University, 2020), p. 72.

[28] See Gamir, 'Adult Arabic Learning in the UK'.

[29] Alaric Hall and others, '*Sigurðar saga fóts* (The Saga of Sigurðr Foot): A Translation', *Mirator*, 11 (2010), 56–91; Philip Lavender and others, '*Jarlmanns saga og Hermanns*: A Translation', *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies/Études Scandinaves au Canada*, 27 (2020), 50–104; Alaric Hall and Ludger Zeevaert, '*Njáls saga* Stemmas, Old and New', in *New Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of 'Njáls saga': The 'Historia mutila' of 'Njála'*, ed. by Emily Lethbridge and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2018), pp. 179–203. A yet more adventurous example of this approach in an early medieval context is the enthusiastically bizarre — and also open-access — *'Beowulf' By All: Community Translation and Workbook*, ed. by Jean Abbott, Elaine Treharne, and Mateusz Fafinski (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2021).

implementing both his own and Gamir's recommendations: he came to this project with an intrinsic desire to, for example, properly understand the Arabic verbal system and to enjoy medieval Arabic poetry, but also recognised that intrinsic motivation alone would be unlikely to propel him to fulfil these quite abstract desires. Undertaking these endeavours in the course of doing work that seemed worthwhile for extrinsic reasons — making Wiktionary a more useful resource for other students, making medieval Arabic verse more available to a wider audience, taking a small step towards what is fashionably called 'decolonising' the Western Medieval Studies curriculum, showing due respect for his teacher's time, and notching up a publication that can be offered up to the UK government audit of university research known euphemistically as the Research Excellence Framework — made the achievement of intrinsic goals possible. Put another way, one of the main objectives of the present work was to contribute to the development and empowerment of the Arabic learner's Self by providing them with the tools to facilitate their access to the intricacies of this language in the hope that the intensity of their determination to learn and improve would lead to a successful 'self-actualisation'. Conversely, it would be a selfless Arabist indeed who produced an edition with such intricate support for the beginner when they themselves had little to learn from the process, whereas Hall had to look up almost every word, scan every line, and parse every sentence anyway as part of achieving his intrinsic goals. This is not to say that teachers of Arabic can or should generally expect to collaborate with their students in publishing translations of Classical Arabic verse or contributing to Wikimedia projects; but it does stand as an example of how, in an adult-learning context, a teacher can respond to a student's motivations, recognise the usefulness of a student's pre-existing skills and perspectives, and empower them to harness their extrinsic motivations.[30]

Finally, to return to the rising appeal of the riddle among medievalist scholars discussed in §1.1, this edition also reflects our belief that these poems constitute a rich, stimulating, and open-ended — yet, for the learner, manageably concise — array of starting points for any classroom discussion of Arab or Islamicate culture. In this we follow in the footsteps of the early medieval English scholars who sought first to grasp and then in turn to teach the Latin language and its verse-forms as a medium for understanding the Judaeo-Christian culture of West Asia, and who alit on the riddle as a pedagogically useful form — principally Aldhelm of Malmesbury (d. 709), Tatwine (d. 734), Eusebius (d. 740s), and Boniface (d. 754). Today, we can only speculate as to what it was about riddles that made them seem pedagogically useful to Aldhelm and his colleagues, but our experience of al-Muḡallis's verse, at least, is that its deft personifications of the material world invite linguistic exploration and philosophical wonder.[31]

1.3 Structure of the edition

In the edition that follows in §§6–7, we present the riddles and their translations, preserving the ordering of aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's anthologies, and including the prose with which aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī most immediately frames al-Muḡallis's poems. For each riddle:

1. We note the metre, spelling out the form of a hemistich (from left to right) using the standard prosodic notation described in §4.2, and commenting on any peculiarities.

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[30] Cf. Zoltán Dörnyei, *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition*, ed. by Zoltán Dörnyei and Richard W. Schmidt, Technical report, University of Hawaii at Manoa: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, 23 (Hawaii: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2001).

[31] Cf. Jean Lauand, 'The Role of Riddles in Medieval Education', *Revista Internacional d'Humanitats*, 16 (2009), 5–12; Leslie Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions*, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, 8 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), pp. 260–65.

2. We give aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's prose introduction to the riddle in fully vocalised Arabic, in transliteration, and in translation.
3. We then give a fully vocalised Arabic text of the poem.
4. Next comes a Latin-script transliteration whose conventions foreground phonological features of the language important to the metre and sound of the poem (see §4.1). Words are, for readers of this article in its electronic form, fully hyperlinked to Wiktionary.
5. This is followed by a prose translation which seeks to be fairly literal while still representing some of the concision and literary character of the original.
6. We then offer a commentary on linguistic and, to a lesser extent, textual and cultural details likely to trouble an inexperienced Arabic learner.
7. Finally, we present a literal word-by-word gloss and morphological annotation based on the conventions of the *Leeds Quranic Arabic Corpus*, again hyperlinking to Wiktionary. Both for the benefit of readers consulting this article in hard copy and by way of future-proofing against changes in the structure of Wiktionary itself, we list headword forms of all stems, and roots of all stems that can be thought of as belonging to the Arabic root system. Our transliterations here use slightly different conventions, to foreground the morphological structure of the Arabic text (again, see §4.1).

2. Who was al-Muḡallis?

Conflating the information given in different sources, the name of our poet can be given in its fullest known form as ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn ʾAḥmad al-Muḡallis al-Marāḡī, and his *floreat* in the late tenth century CE. Nothing is known of his father, from whom he inherited the epithet *al-Muḡallis*, by which he is generally known. The epithet has caused some confusion since in some editions (and presumably manuscripts) it appears as 'al-Muflis' ('the bankrupt') through confusion of the letters ḡayn and fā (producing the unvocalised reading 'المفلس' for 'المغلس'). But Orfali has established that there is no doubt that *al-Muḡallis* is the correct reading.[32] A number of other people have borne the same epithet, not least the prominent Ṣūfī mystic ʾAbū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Muḡallis Sarī as-Saqaṭī (d. 253/867).[33] While the nickname was glossed by Gabriele vom Bruck in relation to yet another al-Muḡallis as 'the one who tarries',[34] it seems straightforwardly to be the present active participle of the verb *ḡallasa*, thus meaning 'going out into the last part of the night', 'going out into the pre-dawn twilight', conceivably referring to its bearer's subscription to the view that dawn prayer should be sung during the dark time of *ḡalas* rather than the brighter stage of the dawn, *isfār*.[35]

Almost all we know of al-Muḡallis's life and poetry comes from the hints offered by two anthologies of Arabic verse edited by ʾAbū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad ibn ʾIsmāʿīl aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī (350–429 AH/961–1038 CE), which together provide a crucial witness to Arabic literature of the tenth and early eleventh centuries.[36] Aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī was a scholar based in Nishapur (currently in north-eastern Iran) who travelled widely within south-central Asia. Among many other works, he composed the *Kitāb yatīmat ad-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr* ('the book of the peerless of this age, on the fine qualities of the people of the period'), an anthology that gathered what aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī viewed as pre-eminent poetry by his

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[32] Orfali, *The Anthologist's Art*, p. 120 n. 90.
[33] On whom see B. Reinert, 'Sarī al-Saḵaṭī', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by P. J. Bearman and others, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005), s.v.
[34] 'al-Kibsī Family', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by Kate Fleet and others, 3rd edn (Leiden: Brill, 2007–), s.v.
[35] Lane, s.v. غَلَّسَ. For the debate concerning dawn prayer-times, see for example Christopher Melchert, 'Al-Shāfiʿī Against the Kufan School', *Islamic Law and Society*, 29 (2022), 34–57 (pp. 48–49).
[36] See Orfali, *The Anthologist's Art*; White, 'Anthologists'.

(near-)contemporaries. Aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī began composing the *Yatīma* in 384/994, though he clearly continued revising it for a long time (indeed, the version in which it survives is aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's second edition). Having created the *Yatīma*, aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī compiled a sequel, the *Tatimmat al-Yatīma* ('completion of the *Yatīma*'), adding material that he had previously missed. This too survives only in a second edition, completed near the end of aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's life, sometime after 424/1032. He organised both anthologies with a then-innovative geographical structure, dividing his material into four regions: Syria and the west (that is, Egypt and the Maghrib); Iraq; Western Iran (al-Jibāl, Fāris, Jurjān, and Ṭabaristān); and Eastern Iran (Ḵurāsān and, to its north-east, the central Asian region of Transoxania).[37]

The *Yatīma* introduces al-Muġallis in the third region, western Iran, and specifically al-Jibāl, a region extending southwards from the Alborz mountains, which themselves fringe the southern coast of the Caspian Sea. The chapter in question focuses on material transmitted by ʾAbū l-Ḥusayn ʾAḥmad ibn Fāris ibn Zakariyyā al-Muqīm (d. 395/1004), who spent most of his career based in al-Jibāl. According to aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī,[38]

كَانَ بِهَمَذَانَ مِنْ أَعْيَانِ الْعِلْمِ وَأَفْرَادِ الدَّهْرِ يَجْمَعُ إِتْقَانَ الْعُلَمَاءِ وَظَرْفَ الْكُتَّابِ وَالشُّعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ بِالْجَبَلِ كَابْنِ لَنْكَكَ بِالْعِرَاقِ وَابْنِ خَالَوَيْهِ بِالشَّامِ وَابْنِ الْعَلَّافِ بِفَارِسَ وَأَبِي بَكْرٍ الْخَوَارِزْمِي بِخُرَاسَانَ وَلَهُ كُتُبٌ بَدِيعَةٌ وَرَسَائِلُ مُفِيدَةٌ وَأَشْعَارٌ مَلِيحَةٌ وَتَلَامِذَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهُمْ بَدِيعُ الزَّمَانِ وَأَنَا أَكْتُبُ مِنْ رِسَالَةٍ لِأَبِي الْحُسَيْنِ كَتَبَهَا لِأَبِي عَمْرٍو مُحَمَّدِ ابْنِ سَعِيدٍ الْكَاتِبِ فَصْلاً فِي نِهَايَةِ الْمَلَاحَةِ يُنَاسِبُ كِتَابِي هَذَا فِي مَحَاسِنِ أَهْلِ الْعَصْرِ وَيَتَضَمَّنُ أُنْمُوذَجًا مِنْ مُلَحِ شُعَرَاءِ الْجَبَلِ وَغَيْرِهَا مِنَ الْعَصْرِيِّينَ وَظَرْفِ أَخْبَارِهِمْ كَأَبِي مُحَمَّدٍ الْقَزْوِينِي وَابْنِ الرِّيَاشِي وَالْهَمَذَانِي الْمُقِيمِ بِشِيرَازَ وَابْنِ الْمُنَاوِي وَأَبِي عَبْدِ اللهِ الْمُغَلِّسِي الْمَرَاغِي وَغَيْرِهِم ثُمَّ أُورِدُ مَا وَقَعَ إِلَيَّ مِن مُلَحِ أَبِي الْحُسَيْنِ إِن شَاءَ اللهُ تَعَالَى.

kāna bi-Hamaḏāna min ʾaʿyāni al-ʿilmi wa-ʾafrādi ad-dahri yajmaʿu ʾitqāna al-ʿulamāʾi wa-ẓarfa al-kuttābi wa-š-šuʿarāʾi, wa-huwa bi-l-Jabali ka-bni Lankaka bi-l-ʿIrāqi wa-bni Ḵālawayhi bi-š-Šāmi wa-bni al-ʿAllāfi bi-Fārisa wa-ʾAbī Bakrin al-Ḵawārizmī bi-Ḵurāsāna wa-lahu kutubun badīʿatun wa-rasāʾilu mufīdatun wa-ʾašʿārun malīḥatun wa-talāmiḏatun kaṯīratun min-hum Badīʿu z-Zamāni wa-ʾanā ʾaktubu min risālatin li-ʾAbī al-Ḥusayni kataba-hā li-ʾAbī ʿAmru Muḥammadin ibni Saʿīdin al-Kātibi faṣlan fī nihāyati al-malāḥati yunāsibu kitāb-ī hāḏā fī maḥāsini ʾahli al-ʿaṣri wa-yataḍammanu ʾunmūḏajan min mulaḥi šuʿarāʾi al-jabali wa-ġayri-hā min al-ʿaṣriyyīna wa-ẓarfa ʾaḵbāri-him ka-ʾAbī Muḥammadin al-Qazwīnī wa-bni ar-Riyāšī wa-l-Hamaḏānī al-muqīmi bi-Šīrāza wa-bni al-Munāwī wa-ʾAbī ʿAbd Allahi al-Muġallisī al-Marāġī wa-ghayri-him ṯumma ʾūridu mā waqaʿa ʾilayya min mulaḥi ʾAbī al-Ḥusayni ʾin šāʾa allāhu taʿālā.

In Hamaḏān among the elite of learning and the individuals of the period, he used to combine the precision of sages and stylishness of writers and poets, and he is to al-Jabal as ibn Lankak is to ʿIrāq and ibn al-ʿAllāfi to Persia and ʾAbū Bakr al-Ḵwārazmī to Ḵurāsān, and has marvellous books, useful treatises, tasteful verses, and many students (among whom was Badīʿ az-Zamān). I quote here, from a letter by ʾAbū al-Ḥusayn which he wrote to ʾAbū ʿAmr Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Kātib, who wrote a chapter which is very witty, and which befits this my book on the fine qualities of the people of this period. It includes examples of the tales of the poets of al-Jabal and others of my contemporaries, and refined stories about them, such as ʾAbū Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī, ibn ar-Riyāšī, al-Hamḏānī al-Muqīm in Šīrāz, ibn al-Munāwī, ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Muġallisī al-Marāġī, and others; then I produce what came to me from the anecdotes of ʾAbū al-Ḥusayn, if God Almighty wills it.

The letter by ibn Fāris is quoted at length in the *Yatīma*; in it, ibn Fāris makes the case that the poets he thought of as 'the contemporaries' (*al-ʿaṣriyyūn*, writing from around the 930s

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[37] Orfali, *The Anthologist's Art*, pp. 97–99.
[38] *Yatīma*, ed. by Qumayḥah, III 463–64.

CE) both sought to outdo the predominantly ninth-century poets whom he thought of as 'modern' (*muḥdaṯ*) and succeeded. The letter makes it clear that ibn Fāris saw al-Muġallis as an exponent of contemporary style, and there is no reason to doubt that aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī shared his view.[39]

The epithet which aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī gives to al-Muġallis in the *Yatīma* — *al-Marāġī* — suggests that either al-Muġallis or his ancestors came from a place called *Marāġa*, undoubtedly the Marāġa which is the capital of what is currently Iranian Azerbaijan in the north-east of the country; this fits tolerably well with aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's inclusion of al-Muġallis as a poet of al-Jibāl.[40] It is evident that when compiling the *Yatīma*, aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī had access to little verse by al-Muġallis: he quoted one riddle on a touchstone and another on a banner, and then explained the high opinion in which ibn Fāris held al-Muġallis's powers of arcane description and said he would later add more if he could and if it came up to scratch (see §7.3). Aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī may not, then, have known much more about al-Muġallis than he recorded in the *Yatīma*.

However, by the time he compiled the *Tatimma*, aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī had got hold of more poems by al-Muġallis. In the *Tatimma*, aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī drops al-Muġallis's geographical epithet, groups him with the writers of Iraq instead of Persia, and emphasises that al-Muġallis composed in praise of the Būyid *amīr* Bahāʾ ad-Dawla (b. 360/970). Bahāʾ ad-Dawla succeeded his elder brother Sharaf ad-Dawla as supreme *amīr* (*amīr al-umarāʾ*) in Baghdad in 379/989. Having seen off dynastic competitors, he moved his capital to Shiraz in Persia around 390/1000, where he continued to be based until his death in 403/1012.[41] C. E. Bosworth commented that, concerning Bahāʾ ad-Dawla's 'cultural interests, little is known specifically, and the first half of his reign was in any case largely taken up with warfare', implicitly associating al-Muġallis's activity with Bahāʾ ad-Dawla's later court in Shiraz. However, not only does the *Tatimma* group al-Muġallis with writers of Iraq and not with Persian writers, it indeed opens its collection with a riddle about a date-palm on the River Tigris. The association of al-Muġallis with Baghdad in the *Tatimma* is in turn consistent with the only substantive extra information added to our picture by Ṣalaḥ ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣafadī's vast fourteenth-century biographical dictionary *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*. Aṣ-Ṣafadī's biographical note on al-Muġallis says:[42]

الْحُسَيْنُ اِبْنُ أَحْمَدَ اِبْنِ الْمُغَلِّسِ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللهِ شَاعِرٌ مَدَحَ الْقَادِرَ بِاللهِ وَلَهُ أَشْعَارٌ كَثِيرَةٌ فِي اللُّغْزِ وَالأَحَاجِي . وَرَوَى عَنْهُ أَبُو عَلِيٍّ مُحَمَّدٌ اِبْنُ وَشَّاحٍ الزَّيْنَبِي.

Al-Ḥusaynu ibnu Aḥmada ibni al-Muġallisi, ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāhi, šāʿirun madaḥa al-qādira bi-l-lāhi wa-lahu ʾašʿārun kaṯīratun fī-l-lughzi wa-l-aḥājī. Wa-rawā ʿanhu ʾAbū ʿAlī Muḥammadun ibnu Waššāḥin az-Zaynabī.

Al-Ḥusayn ibn ʾAḥmad ibn al-Muġallis, ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh, poet. He praised al-Qādir bi-l-lāhi and he has many verses in the form of riddles and puzzles. And he was cited by ʾAbū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn az-Zaynabī.

[39] White, 'Anthologists', pp. 202–3.

[40] Cf. Radwan, Ahmad Shawqi, 'Thaʿālibī's "Tatimmat al-Yatīmah": A Critical Edition and a Study of the Author as Anthologist and Literary Critic' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1972), p. 120.

[41] C. E. Bosworth, 'Bahāʾ al-Dawla Wa-ḍiyāʾ al-Milla, Abū Naṣr Fīrūz', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by P. J. Bearman and others, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005); Klaus Hachmeier, 'Bahāʾ al-Dawla', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by Kate Fleet and others, 3rd edn (Leiden: Brill, 2007–).

[42] Salah ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. by Muḥammad ʿAdnān al-Baḥīt, Bibliotheca Islamica, 29, 30 vols (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ at-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2000), XIII 202 [no. 3555].

The claim that al-Muġallis praised al-Qādir Bi-llāh refers to the caliph whom Bahāʾ ad-Dawla appointed 381/991, who reigned from Baghdad until his death in 422/1031.[43] Presumably for this reason, Orfali gave al-Muġallis's *floreat* as 381/991.[44] (Az-Zaynabī, meanwhile, is said in Šams ad-Dīn aḏ-Ḏahabī's *Taḏkirat al-ḥuffāẓ* to have died in 463/1070.[45])

Thus, assuming our information is correct, we can read al-Muġallis as a tenth-century CE poet who was at least ancestrally from Marāġa who, however, was associated primarily with the court life of Baghdad, and whose poetry was characteristic of the tenth-century Arabic 'contemporary' verse movement.

3. Sources of this edition

This edition reproduces (with the addition of full vocalisation) the sections containing the riddles of al-Muġallis found in the *Yatīma* and *Tatimma*, including the prose immediately framing the poems. According to Orfali, aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī quoted from al-Muġallis in other works,[46] but we have not attempted systematically to track down these passages: we have essentially been content to accept aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's assurance that the *Yatīma* and *Tatimma* constitute a judicious selection of al-Muġallis's work.[47]

Happily, the *Tatimma* is available in a critical edition by Ahmad Shawqi Radwan based on a good selection of early manuscripts, now readily available online after many years of inaccessibility.[48] While consulting the 1983 Beirut edition,[49] we have reproduced Radwan's critical text except for one point where we have accepted other editors' readings, finding that confusion over consonant pointing is a plausible explanation for a misreading: §7.3, line 4a (where we read *jaṣaṣnā-hā* for *ḥaṣaṣnā-hā* and *mujtaṣṣin* for *muḥtaṣṣin*). Editions of the *Yatīma* are less satisfactory,[50] but we have consulted the 1885 Damascus, 1956 Cairo, and 1983 Beirut editions; they show no inconsistency from one another and we have seen no need to emend.[51] Where we have consulted editions of the work of later scholars who drew material from the *Yatīma* and *Tatimma*, they attest to textual variation which future research might show constitutes a useful witness to aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's own editions of the texts (and which is certainly interesting in its own right). But since no such variant is obviously better than the *Yatīma* and *Tatimma* editions, and since the present edition aims primarily to produce an accessible text for students, we have not charted this textual variation in any detail.

[43] D. Sourdel, 'al- Ḳādir Bi'llāh', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by P. J. Bearman and others, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005), s.v.
[44] *The Anthologist's Art*, 121.
[45] As-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān aš-Šīʿa*, 14 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Tʿāruf, 1983), x 96.
[46] *The Anthologist's Art*, p. 120 n. 81.
[47] We are aware of one riddle by al-Muġallis attested outside Ṣalaḥ-Ṯaʿālibī's anthologies: Salah ad-Dīn aṣ-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfī bi-al-wafayāt* quotes al-Muġallis's riddles on the touchstone and (in some editions) date-palm, presumably from aṯ-Ṯaʿālibī's collections, but also quotes three lines of *ġazal*-style love poetry and a riddle on a steelyard.
[48] Radwan, 'Thaʿālibī's "Tatimmat al-Yatīmah"', pp. ٦٩–٦٧ [ch. 66], at https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.490552.
[49] *Yatīmat ad-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr maʿ at-tatimma wa-l-fahāris*, ed. by Mufīd Muḥammad Qumayḥah, 6 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīya, 1983), V 24–26.
[50] Orfali, *The Anthologist's Art*, xvii–xix.
[51] ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr fī shuʿarāʾ ahl al-ʿaṣr*, 4 vols (Damascus: [al-Maṭbaʿah al-Ḥifnīyah], 1302 AH [1885 CE]), II 228; *Yatīmat al-dahr fī shuʿarāʾ ahl al-ʿaṣr*, ed. by Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 4 vols (Cairo: [n. pub.], 1956), III 415–16; *Yatīmat al-dahr fī maḥāsin ahl al-ʿaṣr maʿ at-tatimma wa-l-fahāris*, ed. by Mufīd Muḥammad Qumayḥah, 6 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 1983), III 481; cf. Orfali, *The Anthologist's Art*, xvii–xix.

4. General linguistic notes

Here we discuss some features of al-Muḡallis's riddles whose handling in our edition and translation merits discussion or which are likely to cause difficulty to beginning readers, and which are pervasive enough that they cannot be handled in the commentary on individual texts. Although more recent grammars exist, we refer as a rule to William Wright's *Grammar of the Arabic Language*, which remains a standard reference for Classical Arabic in English; the public-domain status of earlier editions of Wright, moreover, means that these are readily available online.[52]

4.1 Vocalisation and transliteration

In line with Jones's *Early Arabic Poetry*, we have vocalised our text fully. The only diacritic unlikely to be familiar to the beginner is the *waṣla* (ٱ), a ṣād over word-initial ʾalif indicating that the word-initial vowel is elided with the preceding word-final vowel.

Our Romanisation uses almost the same conventions as Wiktionary, themselves based closely on those used in the fourth edition of Wehr's *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*.[53] The attractions of this system are that, since our edition links systematically to Wiktionary, it enables consistency for the learner; that Wiktionary's explanation of its norms is both clear and freely available; and that where Wiktionary's Romanisation differs from Wehr, it usually does so in ways that make it better suited to representing the phonology of verse (such as representing initial hamza, which is omitted by Wehr but constitutes a consonant in classical verse).

We offer two transliterations of each poem, each applying a system which differs slightly from Wiktionary in different ways to achieve different ends.

The first transliteration emphasises phonological features of the verse that are important to understanding its metre and appreciating its sound. Like Wiktionary, we represent the elision of vowels and assimilation of consonants. Thus, for example, we transliterate 'بِالنُّضارِ', that is the prefixed preposition *bi-*, the definite article *al-*, and the genitive singular noun *nuḍāri* as *bi-n-nuḍāri*. Unlike Wiktionary, but following Wehr, we represent the phonotactically defined variation in the vowel-length of the third-person masculine singular suffixed pronoun *-hu*: this takes the form *-hu/-hi* following a long vowel, but *-hū/-hī* following a short one. While this variation is not represented orthographically in Arabic script, it is metrically important. Meanwhile, it is common in classical Arabic verse for word-final vowels which would in prose be short to be lengthened to conform to the metre (especially at the end of a hemistich), and for word-final *-n* to be lost (with compensatory lengthening of a preceding short vowel). Whether these lengthened vowels are represented with a long vowel graph in the Arabic or, as more usually, not, we mark these as long using an acute accent (*á, í, ú*) rather than a macron (*ā, ī, ū*), to make clear the distinction between conventional vowel-length and distinctively poetic forms.

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[52] W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language, Translated from the German Tongue and Edited with Numerous Additions and Corrections*, 3rd edn by W. Robertson Smith and M. J. de Goeje, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933 [repr. Beirut: Librairie de Liban, 1996]). *A Reader of Classical Arabic Literature*, pp. 4–7.

[53] 'Wiktionary:About Arabic', *Wiktionary: The Free Dictionary* (16 August 2021), https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:About_Arabic; cf. Wehr, xii.

The second transliteration forms part of the running gloss that we provide for each poem. Here our divergences from Wiktionary's conventions serve to represent more closely the orthography of the Arabic, and to explicate its morphology. Unlike Wiktionary, but in keeping with the American Library Association-Library of Congress transliteration schemes for non-Roman scripts, we do not here represent elisions of vowels and assimilations of consonants.[54] For example, we transliterate 'بِالنُّضارِ' as *bi-al-nuḍāri*. Where the verse phonology diverges from prose, usually in lengthening vowels, omitting nunnation, or omitting inflections line-finally, we represent the prose phonology and the full forms of its inflections.

4.2 Glossing

As we have discussed in §1.2, we have, for readers of this text in electronic form, facilitated their exploration of the semantics of al-Muḡallis's words by hyperlinking from our transliterations to Wiktionary; meanwhile, our running gloss also provides the information needed readily to look up words in dictionaries. For greater future-proofing, we could have linked not to the current version of each entry, but to a stable, archived version: with rare exceptions, every version of a Wiktionary entry that has ever existed remains available. But, while hereby calling the reader's attention to the facility to view the page history of any Wiktionary entry and check the form it took in late 2021, we have opted to link to the current version of each entry in the belief that, as a rule, entries will generally improve rather than degrade over time; indeed, our own contributions have frequently benefited from the oversight of other editors, and we hope that they encourage further contributions from teachers and students of Arabic. Where we have concluded that words might plausibly carry a double meaning in a given text, we discuss this in the explanatory notes.

Our running gloss also offers a morphological annotation for each poem, using the conventions of the *Leeds Quranic Arabic Corpus*.[55] For the most part these conventions will be familiar to people used to studying Indo-European languages, but it is worth noting that the 'noun' category is capacious, containing all substantives that are not an adjective directly following the substantive with which it agrees. Additionally, where verb stems are followed by person-markers, and where these markers are represented by full letters in Arabic script (rather than by diacritics), these are annotated, in keeping with traditional Arabic grammar, not as inflections but as subject pronouns. Thus whereas the Class I third-person masculine singular perfect verb بَخَصَ (*baḵaṣa*, 'he gouged'), which might be thought to carry the inflection *-a*, would be annotated as one morpheme (because the *-a* is not represented with a letter), its plural form بَخَصُوا (*baḵaṣū*) is annotated as two morphemes, the verb *baḵaṣ-* and the subject pronoun *-ū* (because the plural marker is represented with a letter — or in this case two, the latter of which has no phonetic value).

Where a feature is considered to be the unmarked state of a word-class, it is not annotated; thus nouns are assumed to be definite unless marked as indefinite (and the definite article is

[54] 'Arabic', in *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Transliteration Schemes for Non-Roman Scripts* (Washington (D.C.): Library of Congress, 2012), https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/arabic.pdf.

[55] Kais Dukes, *The Quranic Arabic Corpus* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2009–17), https://corpus.quran.com/. For explanations of its conventions, see especially 'Part-of-speech Tagset' at https://corpus.quran.com/documentation/tagset.jsp and 'Morphological Features' at https://corpus.quran.com/documentation/morphologicalfeatures.jsp. Cf. Kais Dukes, 'Statistical Parsing by Machine Learning from a Classical Arabic Treebank' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 2013), pp. 75–104.

accordingly not annotated) and to be singular unless marked as dual or plural, while verbs are assumed to be active indicative unless marked as belonging to a different voice or mood.

4.3 Metre

In keeping with Arabic editorial custom, the metre of each of al-Muḡallis's riddles is noted in the editions, and accordingly also in this edition. Wright offers a full description of the traditional Arabic metres and associated poetic conventions, but it is worth summarising the key principles here.[56] Classical verse comprises end-rhymed lines, each divided into two hemistichs. In this edition, we mark the division between the hemistichs with an asterisk (*). Each hemistich comprises a number of feet, characterised by a set distribution of long and short syllables. Short syllables are characterised by a consonant followed by a short vowel and no coda (that is, CV). Long syllables are characterised by all other combinations: a short vowel followed by a coda (CVC), or a diphthong or long vowel, with or without a coda (CVV, CVVC). This is probably most readily communicated by example, using the notation ˘ for a short syllable, – for a long syllable, ˣ for a syllable which can be of either length, ⏓ for a position which can be taken by two short syllables or one long one, and | for a foot boundary.

The first of al-Muḡallis's riddles in this collection is in his favoured metre, *ṭawīl*, whose usual form (from left to right) is | ˘ – ˣ | ˘ – ˣ – | ˘ – ˣ | ˘ – ˘ – | (though there are variations on the most common patterns for most metres). Thus the first line, *wa-muštamilin min ṣibḡati l-layli burdatan * yufawwafu ṭawran bi-n-nuḍāri wa-yuṭlasú*, scans:

˘	—	˘		˘	—	—	—		˘	—	—		˘	—	˘	—
wa-	mu š	ta		mi	lin	mi n	ṣib		ġa	ti l-	lay		li	bu r	da	tan

˘	—	˘		˘	—	—	—		˘	—	˘		˘	—	˘	—
yu	fa w	wa		fu	ṭa w	ra n	bi- n-		nu	ḍā	ri		wa-	yuṭ	la	sú

Another riddle, on the *sufra* (a drawstring bag for carrying food), is in the *wāfir* metre: | ˘ – ⏓ – | ˘ – ⏓ – | ˘ – – |. It opens: *wa-rāfiʿatin ʾilay-ka bi-lā jufūní * ʿuyūnan lā tuṭīqu la-hā nṭibāqá*.

˘	—	˘	˘	—		˘	—	˘	˘	—		˘	—	—
wa-	rā	fi	ʿa	tin		ʾi	lay-	ka	bi-	lā		ju	fū	ní

˘	—	—	—		˘	—	˘	˘	—		˘	—	—
ʿu	yū	nan	lā		tu	ṭī	qu	la-	hā n		ṭi	bā	qá

The last vowel of the line in each of these examples is lengthened artificially, a poetic convention usual at the ends of lines and sometimes applied elsewhere too; it is worth adding too that -*an*, usually occurring as the indefinite accusative singular ending, is

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[56] II §191–253.

normally realised as -*á* at the end of a hemistich. As mentioned in §4.1, we use an acute accent to indicate both short vowels made long for metrical purposes (as in the transliteration above) and -*á* from -*an*.

4.4 Translating gender

While denoted by words which in Arabic grammar are gendered masculine or feminine, the objects, plants, and animals that are the subjects of these riddles could all reasonably be referred to with 'it' in translation. Yet most are personified, and the gendering of the words which constitute the solutions to the riddles has an important role in both the personification and the audience's hunt for a suitable word to stand as a solution. Presenting the graceful palm-tree, the bag of supplies which serves dinner, or the egg producing new life as female, and the sagacious touchstone, the sword defending its bearer, or the book which ties up its secrets with a belt as male is part of how al-Muḡallis both utilises and reinscribes social norms. Gendered pronouns and verbs can also help to ensure clear anaphoric reference in translations of dense and elliptical verse.

In the running glosses, whose primary aim is to indicate the fundamental grammar and semantics of the text, we have been entirely literal in our representation of gender. In our translations, we have been more pragmatic, but, despite the concern that we over-emphasise al-Muḡallis's animating of the material world, we have as a rule stuck to the grammatical gendering when referring to the personified subjects of the riddle: thus the date-palm is 'she' and the touchstone 'he'. In our literary translations, we have usually referred to other inanimate things with the more natural 'it'; this often facilitates a concise translation which does not need further to disambiguate the referents of different pronouns. Thus the grammatically masculine breeze that shakes the feminine date-palm is 'it'. The baths, figured in the first line of their riddle metaphorically as a grammatically masculine *manzil* ('lodging-house') but not anthropomorphised, are also 'it'.

4.5 *Wāw rubba*

Each of al-Muḡallis's riddles opens with the word *wa*, which is integral to the metre and followed by a substantive which constitutes the subject of the first sentence. Notwithstanding the usual function of *wa* as a conjunction and the substantive's function as a subject, in this construction, *wa* has an exclamatory function and puts the substantive into the genitive case. This usage is traditionally known, from the letter *wāw* which is used to spell *wa*-, as *wāw rubba* ('*wāw* of many') because of a supposition that this exclamatory usage of *wa*- arises from the ellipsis of the phrase *wa-rubba* 'and many a…'. In poems like al-Muḡallis's riddles, however, *wa* is, rather, a conventional means of asking the audience to listen and, in their mind's eye, to look.

From the point of view of English translators — if they do not simply omit the word entirely — this opening *wa* poses a similar problem to the first word of *Beowulf*, *hwæt*, which has provoked an infamous abundance of responses, including 'Lo!', 'Hear me!', 'Yes,', 'Attend!', 'Indeed', 'Listen!' and, latterly, 'Bro!'.[57] Seamus Heaney's solution was 'So.'[58] We have followed his lead, except that, unlike Heaney (yet in line with the syntactic role of exclamative *hwæt*), we have punctuated our 'so' with a comma rather than a full stop, recognising the integral place of *wa* in the metre and syntax of al-Muḡallis's verse.

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[57] George Walkden, 'The Status of *Hwæt* in Old English Poetry', *English Language and Linguistics*, 17 (2013), 465–88 (p. 466); *Beowulf: A New Translation*, trans. by Maria Dahvana Headley (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2020), p. 3.

[58] *Beowulf*, trans. by Seamus Heaney (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), p. 1.

4.6 *Iḏā*

Most of al-Muḡallis's riddles pivot around a conditional statement: if *x* happens then the subject of the riddle does *y*. The word with which these conditional statements are usually constructed is *iḏā*; since this is usually used of conditions that are likely to come about, it can usually equally well be translated 'if' and 'when'. *Iḏā* is always followed in these circumstances by a perfect-tense verb regardless of natural time-reference.[59]

The riddles collected here also make fairly extensive use of *iḏā* ('when') in conjunction with *mā*. *Mā* here is in its role as a subordinating conjunction following particles or genitival nouns in conditional statements, known as مَا الزَّائِدَة (*mā az-zāʾida*, 'additional mā'). It does not greatly affect the meaning of *iḏā*; possible English translations include 'if and when' and 'if ever'. In our glosses, we have rendered the construction literally as 'if/when that...'

4.7 Adverbial accusatives

The capacity of Arabic to deploy accusative substantives (usually indefinite ones) adverbially is both embedded in everyday language and crucial to poetic invention in classical verse.[60] Adverbial accusatives present a challenge to the English translator, who must often render these elegant constructions with clunky — and potentially over-precise — prepositional phrases. They are also potentially confusing to the student who, when presented with an accusative, must judge whether it is the object of a verb, a predicate, or an adverb. Moreover, according to the conventions of the *Leeds Quranic Arabic Corpus*, adverbial accusatives are annotated as accusative nouns without explicit marking of their adverbial function.

Here, then, we offer a few examples of al-Muḡallis's adverbial accusatives to help the reader get their eye in. An example of an everyday adverbial accusative is *ṭawran* (accusative indefinite singular of *ṭawr* 'time'). Thus the riddle on the sword (§7.8) closes with 'fa-ṭawran yuṭawwilu min wajhi-hī * wa-ṭawran yuʿarriḍu ašdāqa-hū' (which we render below as 'so one moment his face grows big, * and the next he presents his cheeks'). A less conventional, but syntactically straightforward, example comes in the riddle on the mirror (§7.11): 'yaẓallu yalḥaẓu-nī ʿujban' ('he keeps looking at me in admiration'). Likewise, in the riddle on the bundle of herbs (§7.5), 'yuḍamminu-hā * nakkāsu-hā ḥīna tujtalā mulaḥá' ('her seller guarantees her, * when she is revealed, regarding her tastiness') deploys *mulaḥá* ('regarding her tastiness') adverbially. More challengingly, the third line of the riddle on the *sufra* (a drawstring bag for holding food) reads 'muzakrafatun ka-ʾanna r-rawḍa fī-hā * ʾiḏā -stujliyat laḥẓan wa-ntišāqá' ('she is adorned as if a meadow were within her, * if she is asked to reveal to a sidelong glance and a sniff'). *Laḥẓan wa-ntišāqá* here could be mistaken for direct objects of the verb *ustujliyat* (putatively 'if she is asked to reveal a sidelong glance and a sniff'), but, rendered hyperliterally, the words rather mean 'if she is asked, sidelong-glancingly and sniffingly, to reveal'.

5. Reading a riddle

This edition does not attempt to provide a literary commentary on al-Muḡallis's riddles beyond what is necessary to enable a reader to begin their own exploration. We also doubt that we have the last word on the correct interpretation of how the imagery of these riddles

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[59] See wright, II §5.
[60] See Wright, II §§43–44.

corresponds to the objects they describe. In this respect, we take some comfort from the situation surrounding the one riddle plausibly attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad in the *ḥadīṯ*, found in the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* by Mālik ibn ʾAnas (d. 179/796) and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Buḵārī (d. 256/870). Here, as with the riddles of al-Muġallis, we have both the riddle and the answer. Muḥammad says: 'ʾinna mina š-šajari šajaratan lā yasquṭu waraqu-hā, wa-ʾinna-hā maṯalu l-muslimi; ḥaddiṯū-nī mā hiya' ('there is a kind of tree that does not lose its leaves and is like a Muslim. Tell me what it is'). The *ḥadīṯ* records the answer as the date palm (*naḵla*, also the subject of one of al-Muġallis's riddles). But the tradition does not explain in what way the date palm is like a Muslim, which led to a debate in Islamic scholarship still unresolved.[61] The path from al-Muġallis's riddles to the known solutions is likewise not always crystal clear to us, and we trust that future readers will refine our suggestions.

We do, however, have particularly important evidence for the reading of one of al-Muġallis's riddles, and this provides a convenient example through which to indicate the opportunities which the poems presented here hold for literary and cultural analysis, as well as a hint as to how they were read around al-Muġallis's own time. The first of the riddles in the *Yatīma* is on the touchstone. A touchstone is a smooth piece of dark stone such as slate; drawn across it, gold leaves a trace whose colour enables one to determine the purity of the metal. This riddle is also attested (with slight textual variation) circulating anonymously around the early thirteenth century, and, moreover, provoking the composition of a solution in verse (a practice for which we have a scattering of other examples in al-Muġallis's time).[62] This attestation comes from *al-Maṯal as-sāʾir* by Ḍiyāʾ ad-Dīn ʾAbū al-Fatḥ Naṣr Allāh ibn al-Aṯīr (d. 1239), which included a chapter *fī l-aḥājī* ('on riddles'). Abetting and adapting Smoor's translation of this sequence, we quote the relevant passage:[63]

<div dir="rtl">

فِي حَجَرِ المَحَكِّ:

وَمُدَرَّعٍ مِن صِبْغَةِ اللَّيلِ بُرْدَةً * يُفَوَّفُ طَوْراً بِالنُّضَارِ وَيُطْلَسُ
إِذَا سَأَلُوهُ عَن عَويصَيْنِ أَشْكَلَا * أَجَابَ بِمَا أَعْيَا الوَرَى وَهُوَ أَخْرَسُ

وَهَذَا مِن اللَّطَافَةِ عَلَى مَا يَشْهَدُ لِنَفْسِهِ، وَكَانَ سَمِعَهُ بَعْضُ المُتَأَخِّرِينَ مِن أَهْلِ زَمَانِنَا، فَأَجَابَ عَنْهُ بِبَيْتَيْنِ عَلَى وَزْنِهِ وَقَافِيَتِهِ وَهُمَا

بِسُؤَالِكَ جُلْمُودٌ مِن الصَّخْرِ أَسْوَدٌ * خَفِيفٌ لَطِيفٌ نَاعِمُ الجِسْمِ أَطْلَسُ
أُقِيمَ بِسُوقِ الصَّرْفِ حُكْماً كَأَنَّهُ * مِن الزَّنْجِ قَاضٍ بِالخُلُوقِ مُطَلَّسُ

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fī ḥajari al-miḥakki:

wa-mudarraʿin min ṣibghati l-layli burdatan * yufawwafu ṭawran bi-n-nuḍāri
wa-yuṭlasú
ʾiḏā saʾalū-hu ʿan ʿawīṣayni ʾaškalá * ʾajāba bi-mā ʾaʿyā l-warā wa-hwa
ʾaḵrasú

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[61] See Keegan, 'Levity', pp. 221–22; we quote the Arabic from *The Translation and the Meanings of Sahîh al-Bukhâri: Arabic-English*, trans. by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, new edn, 9 vols (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), I 90 [book 3, ch. 61]. Cf. Papoutsakis, 'Abū l-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī', 261–62 for al-Ḥaẓīrī's own failure to solve a number of the riddles in his extensive thirteenth-century collection.

[62] Abū al-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī's Kitāb al-iʿjāz fī l-aḥājī wa-l-alghāz quoted eighteen solution poems and eleven prose solutions in a collection of 863 riddles: Papoutsakis, 'Abū l-Maʿālī al-Ḥaẓīrī', 261.

[63] *al-Maṯal al-sāʾir fī ʾadab wa-l-šāʿir* (Cairo: Dār Nahḍat Maṣr lil-Tabʿ wa-n-Našr, [no date]), III 84–96 (p. 88); Smoor, 'The Weeping Wax Candle', p. 289 n. 17.

wa-hāḏā min al-laṭāfati ʿalā mā yašhadu li-nafsi-hī wa-kāna samiʿa-hū baʿdu l-mutaʾakkirīna min ʾahli zamāni-nā fa-ʾajāba ʿanhu bi-baytayni ʿalā wazni-hī wa-qāfiyati-hī wa-humā

> suʾāluka julmūdun min aṣ-ṣakri ʾaswadun * kafīfun laṭīfun nāʿimu l-jismi ʾaṭlasú
> ʾuqīma bi-sūqi ṣ-ṣarfi ḥukman kaʾanna-hū * min az-zanji qāḍin bi-l-kalūqi muṭallasú

On the touchstone:

> So, armoured with a cloak the colour of night-time, * at times he becomes white-streaked with gold, and at times is wiped clean.
> When they ask him about two difficult, ambiguous things * he will answer with what thwarted mankind, while being silent.

This testifies to such subtlety as is evident of its own accord. Someone of the later generations, from our own contemporaries, heard this and responded to it in two lines of identical metre and rhyme, as follows,

> Your question concerns a black piece of rock, light-weight, fine, smooth to the touch, greyish-coloured.
> It has been appointed in the market of exchange as an authority: as if it were a judge from East Africa rubbed over with yellow perfume.

Ibn al-Aṯīr thought that this riddle was obviously good, then, and he attests to the continued circulation of al-Muḡallis's verse in the thirteenth century. The fact that ibn al-Aṯīr does not mention al-Muḡallis's name hints that the riddle, as well as the verse response, was circulating anonymously, and so had a life beyond the pages of the *Yatīma*. Moreover, ibn al-Aṯīr portrays the riddle's respondent as hearing it: the implication is that it had become part of the oral stock in his literary world. It remains entirely possible that, in reality, the respondent to this riddle read it in the *Yatīma* or a related text, saw the solution written before him, and composed his response on that basis (not least because in Arabic one can 'hear' a written text, much as books 'say' things in English). But the impression that ibn al-Aṯīr seeks to create, at least, is surely that riddles in classical verse were posed orally and that audiences were expected to use their own wits to identify the solutions. We can reasonably approach al-Muḡallis's riddles from this critical standpoint.

Like all of al-Muḡallis's riddles, this riddle on the touchstone revolves around the anthropomorphisation and personification of the inanimate: we wonder why this man is having gold applied to him, and both why and how he answers questions in silence. Indeed, as al-Muḡallis's personifications go, the touchstone riddle is not among the most inventive, and ibn al-Aṯīr's enthusiasm may partly reflect the ingenuity of al-Muḡallis's choice of subject matter: we are aware of no other medieval Eurasian riddles on the touchstone, but al-Muḡallis leaves us in no doubt as to what an apt subject this object is for riddlic personification; he deftly awakens our sense of wonder towards a tool, fundamental to medieval economies, that was mundane yet arcane.

The solution, meanwhile, attests to how a medieval reader responded to al-Muḡallis's use of personification. In its first line, the solution undoes the personification of the touchstone, firmly declaring it a 'julmūdun min aṣ-ṣakri' (literally 'a rock of stone') and filling out the line with a cavalcade of adjectives expounding on its materiality. Yet the final words of the first line have double meanings that pivot the riddle to a bold re-embarkation on personification in the second, affirming the centrality of this device to al-Muḡallis's art. In context, al-Muḡallis's words 'l-jismi ʾaṭlasú' must mean 'the object is dusky-coloured', but can also mean 'the body

is dark-skinned'. The second line of the solution goes on to develop this play on words by re-personifying the touchstone as a black African judge in a marketplace. The last word of the solution echoes the root *ṯ-l-s* used at the end of al-Muḡallis's first line to imagine the touchstone as 'min az-Zinji qāḍin bi-l-ḵalūqi muṭallasú' ('a judge from East Africa, smeared with *ḵalūq*'). Asking what is to the human body as gold is to stone, the poem opts for *ḵalūq*, a thick, yellow (and presumably valuable) ointment whose ingredients include saffron.[64]

The solution extends its defamiliarisation of the touchstone not simply by re-personifying it, but by positioning the dark touchstone to other stones as an East African is to the implicitly normative white body of the Arab.[65] It would be possible to stop the reading of race here: on African shores, at least, Arab merchants will indeed have encountered black authorities in marketplaces, and perhaps we should assume that this solution, while exoticising the black body, otherwise implicitly accords the East African *qāḍi* nothing but respect, and stands primarily as evidence for the importance of the marketplace in the imaginative world of al-Muḡallis's audience. On the other hand, the association of black people with enslavement, and the negative perception of the black body, is strong in medieval Arabic writing.[66] Given this context, the poem perhaps encodes as much wonderment at the idea of the black man being in the lofty position of judge as it does at the idea of the stone solving problems. In this reading, the black human body's passive reception of the perfume emphasises its objectification. In turn, the possible evocation of images of enslavement in this response to al-Muḡallis's poem recalls how roughly contemporary Old English riddles contemplate humans' exploitation both of their material environment, of other animals, and of one another — research which points the way to social and ecological perspectives from which al-Muḡallis might be read.[67]

Thus the solution to al-Muḡallis's touchstone riddle emphasises the imaginative play which al-Muḡallis's writings could open up, and the cultural commentary that they could imply and provoke. While our manuscripts provide al-Muḡallis's riddles with answers, it seems that they were posed as genuine riddles to at least some audiences, and it is certain that their use of personification was recognised and explored. They demand similar exploration from their readers today.

6. Riddles from the *Yatīma*

6.1 Touchstone for gold (مِحَكُّ الذَّهَبِ [*miḥakku ḏ-ḏahabī*])

Metre

Ṭawīl: | ⌣ — ⌣̆ | ⌣ — ⌣̆ — | ⌣ — ⌣̆ | ⌣ — ⌣ — |

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[64] Lane, s.v. خَلُوقٌ.

[65] For medieval Arabic conceptualisations of the Arab body as white (in contradistinction to the black bodies of Africa or the red bodies of Europe) see Helmi Sharawi, 'The African in Arab Culture: Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion', in *Imagining the Arab Other: How Arabs and Non-Arabs View Each Other*, ed. by Tahar Labib (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008), pp. 92–156 (pp. 118–22).

[66] Helmi Sharawi, 'The African in Arab Culture: Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion', in *Imagining the Arab Other: How Arabs and Non-Arabs View Each Other*, ed. by Tahar Labib (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008), pp. 92–156; John O. Hunwick, 'A Region of the Mind: Medieval Arab Views of African Geography and Ethnography and Their Legacy', *Sudanic Africa*, 16 (2005), 103–36.

[67] The key study in what has since become a substantial body of research is Jennifer Neville, 'The Unexpected Treasure of the "Implement Trope": Hierarchical Relationships in the Old English Riddles', *Review of English Studies*, 62 (2011), 505–19.

The last foot of line 2b exhibits the poetic license whereby a word-final vowel absorbs a following hamza: thus what would ordinarily be articulated in classical verse as *huwa ʾakrasu* becomes (with lengthening of the line-final vowel) the four-syllable foot *huwa ḵrasú*.[68]

Text and translation

أَبُو عَبْدِ اللهِ المُغَلِّسِي المَرَاغِي قَدْ تَقَدَّمَ لَهُ ذِكْرٌ فِي الفَصْلِ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ أَبِي الحُسَيْنِ ابْنِ فَارِسٍ وَهُوَ القَائِلُ فِي مِحَكِّ الذَّهَبِ

ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāhi l-Muḡallisī l-Marāḡī qad taqaddama la-hū dikrun fī-l-faṣli min risālati ʾAbī al-Husayni ibni Fārisi wa-huwa l-qāʾilu fī mihakki d-dahabi:

ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāh al-Muḡallisī al-Marāḡī. Mention of him has preceded in the section from the letter of ʾAbū al-Ḥusayn ibn Fāris, and it is he who says on the touchstone for gold:

وَمُشْتَمِلٍ مِن صِبْغَةِ اللَّيْلِ بُرْدَةً * يُفَوَّفُ طَوْراً بِالنُّضارِ وَيُطْلَسُ

إِذا سَأَلُوهُ عَن عَويصٍ وَمُشْكِلٍ * أَجابَ بِما أَعْيا الوَرى وَهُوَ أَخْرَسُ

1. wa-muštamilin min ṣibghati l-layli burdatan * yufawwafu ṭawran bi-n-nuḏāri wa-yuṭlasú

2. ʾiḏā saʾalū-hu ʾan ʾawīṣin wa-muškilin * ʾajāba bi-mā ʾaʿyā l-warā wa-hwa ʾakrasú

So, comprising a cloak the colour of night-time, * at times he becomes white-streaked with gold, and at times is wiped clean.

When they ask him about something difficult and confusing * he will answer with what thwarted mankind, while being silent.

Notes

A touchstone is a smooth piece of dark stone such as slate. Drawn across it, gold leaves a trace, whose colour enables one to determine its purity. For a fuller literary commentary on this riddle, see §5.

As well as being quoted by ibn al-Aṯīr (see §5 above), the riddle is quoted in aṣ-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, with slight textual variation.[69]

For a sense of the possible stylistic range of translations arising from more or less the same text, it is informative to compare our translation of this riddle with Pieter Smoor's rendering of the text as it appears in *al-Maṯal as-sāʾir* (discussed in §5):

> Someone covered by the fabric of night's (dark) cloak, once scratched by pure gold, then having it wiped off again.

> When people ask him about two inscrutable things which appear so much alike as to cause doubt between them, his answer transcends the power of humans, but he remains mute nevertheless.

1a *wa-muštamilin min ṣibghati l-layli burdatan*. Contrary to normal syntax, the prepositional phrase 'min ṣibḡati l-layli' ('of the colour of the night') depends on the following word

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[68] Wright, II §234a.
[69] XIII 202 [no. 3555].

'burdatan' ('cloak'), which is the object of the opening present participle 'muštamilin' ('comprising').

1a *burdatan*. Translated above as 'cloak', and more fully by Kazimirski as 'pièce de vêtement oblong en étoffe de laine ordinaire, grise ou brune, et qui sert pour s'envelopper et coucher dessus' ('an oblong piece of clothing made of ordinary woolen fabric, grey or brown, which is used to wrap oneself and sleep in').[70] According to Lane, *al-Muḥkam wa-al-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam* by Ibn Sīdah (d. 458/1066) and the partly derived *al-Qāmus al-Muḥīṭ* by al-Fayrūzabādī (d. 817/1414) specify that the *burda* is stripy, which would fit well with one image suggested by *yufawwafu*.[71]

1b *yufawwafu*. Neither Lane, Kazimirski, or Wehr lists a verb *yufawwafu*, and Smoor's translation 'once scratched by pure gold' looks like a guess based on the context. A past participle *mufawwaf* meaning 'white-striped' does exist, mostly used for clothing. *Mufawwaf* implies the existence of a class II verb *fawwafa, yufawwifu*, so on this basis we could gloss *yufawwafu* in the riddle as a passive third-person masculine present singular 'is made white, becomes covered with white stripes'. However, the other word of this root, *fawf*, primarily means a fine membrane or skin, like the fine white skin on a date-stone or garments of gauzy cloth.[72] So, taking both words into consideration, it is not self-evident whether whiteness or cotton-like covering is the primary meaning for *yufawwafu*. Either way, the association of *mufawwaf* and *fawf* with clothing fits well with the image of the *burda* ('cloak') in the first hemistich.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-muštamilin so, comprising	وَمُشْتَمِلٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite active participle	اِشْتَمَلَ	ش م ل VIII
min of	مِن	**P** – preposition	مِن	
sibḡati the colouration	صِبْغَةِ	**N** – genitive feminine noun	صِبْغَة	ص ب غ
al-layli of the night-time	اللَّيْلِ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	لَيْل	ل ي ل
burdatan a cloak	بُرْدَةً	**N** – accusative feminine indefinite noun	بُرْدة	ب ر د
yufawwafu [he] becomes white-striped[?]	يُفَوَّفُ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular passive imperfect verb	فَوَّفَ	ف و ف II
tawran at times	طَوْراً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	طَوْر	ط و ر

---

[70] A. de Biberstein Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français, contenant toutes les racines de la langue arabe, leurs dérivés, tant dans l'idiome vulgaire que dans l'idiome littéral, ainsi que les dialectes d'Alger et de Maroc*, 2 vols (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie, 1860), s.v. بُرْدة.
[71] Lane, s.v. بُرْدٌ.
[72] Lane, s.v. فوف.

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
bi-al-nudāri with the gold	بِالنُّضَارِ	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **N** – genitive masculine noun	نُضَار	ن ض ر
wa-yutlasu and is effaced	وَيُطْلَسُ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **V** – 3rd person masculine singular passive imperfect verb	طَلِسَ I	ط ل س

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidā if	إِذا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذا	
saʾalū-hu they asked him	سَأَلُوهُ	**V** – 3rd person masculine plural perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	سَأَلَ	س ء ل I
ʾan about	عَن	**P** – preposition	عَن	
ʿawīsin something difficult	عَوِيصٍ	**N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	عَوِيص	ع و ص
wa-muškilin and confusing	وَمُشْكِلٍ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **N** – genitive masculine active participle	أَشْكَلَ	ش ك ل IV
ʾajāba he would answer	أَجابَ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	أَجابَ	ج و ب IV
bi-mā with what	بِما	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **REL** – relative pronoun	ما	
ʾaʿyā thwarted	أَعْيا	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	أَعْيا	ع ي ي IV
al-warā mankind	الوَرى	**N** – accusative masculine noun	وَرى	و ر ى
wa-huwa and he [is]	وَهُوَ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular personal pronoun	هُوَ	
ʾakhrasu silent	أَخْرَسُ	**ADJ** – nominative masculine singular adjective	أَخْرَسُ	خ ر س

6.2 Pennant (اللِّوَاءُ [*al-liwāʾu*])

Metre

Ṭawīl: | ᵕ – ᵛ | ᵕ – ᵛ – | ᵕ – ᵛ | ᵕ – ᵕ – |

Text and translation

<div dir="rtl">

وَلَهُ فِي اللِّوَاءِ

</div>

[wa](#)-[la](#)-[hū](#) [fī](#) [l](#)-[liwāʾi](#):

Also by him, on the pennant:

<div dir="rtl">

وَمُرْتَفِعٍ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ مُحَارِبٍ * تَرَى رَأَسَهُ فِي بَسْطةِ البَاعِ مائِلَا

حَكَى ثَمِلاً أَصْغَى إِلَى البَيْنِ فَآغْتَدَى * يَشُقُّ عَن الأَذْيَالِ مِنْهُ الغَلَائِلَا

</div>

1. [wa](#)-[murtafiʿin](#) [li](#)-[n](#)-[nāzirīna](#) [muḥāribin](#) * [tarā](#) [raʾsa](#)-[hū](#) [fī](#) [basṭati](#) [l](#)-[bāʾi](#) [māʾilá](#)

2. [hakā](#) [tamilan](#) [ʾasḡā](#) [ʾilá](#) [l](#)-[bayni](#) [fa](#)-[ghtadā](#) * [yašuqqu](#) [ʾan](#) [al](#)-[ʾadyāli](#) [min](#)-[hu](#) [l](#)-[ḡalāʾilá](#)

So, upright to his observers when waging war: * you see his head, when hanging, is a fathom long.

He resembled a drunkard who heard a separation [of lovers] and immediately began * to tear the fringes of his robe.

Notes

The vocabulary of this riddle presents an exceptionally large number of plausible alternative interpretations, making this riddle perhaps the hardest of al-Muḡallis's to decode: our translation errs on the side of literalism and may not be the best. The word *liwāʾ* could be used loosely, synonymously with the other key terms for flags, banners and standards in Arabic, principally *rāya* and *ʿalam*. But used more specifically it meant a pennant attached to a spear, sometimes specifically of an army's commander.[73]

2a *ʾaṣḡā ʾilā l-bayni*. The usual meaning of *ʾaṣḡā* is 'listened', but its etymological and alternative meaning is 'leaned, inclined'. Meanwhile, *baynu*, most familiar to the Arabic learner as its prepositional derivative *bayna* 'between', usually means 'separation' (sometimes specifically of two friends or lovers), but in Classical Arabic could also have the contranymic meaning 'union'. Given the martial context of the first line, a translation like 'he resembled a drunkard who inclined towards the strife' might be possible. We have interpreted the word as 'strife' in our translation, but 'he resembled a drunkard who heard a separation (of lovers)' is equally possible.

2b *al-ḡalāʾilá*. The basic denotation of *ḡilāla* is an undergarment such as a shift (in which sense it appears in §7.4, on the egg) or a gambeson worn beneath a mail-coat. However, the word can also denote the rivet connecting the two heads of a ring of mail, and in the

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[73] Lane, s.v. لِوَآءٌ; J. David-Weill, 'ʿAlam', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn ed. by P. J. Bearman and others (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2007), s.v.

plural the mail-coat itself.[74] Notwithstanding the martial context, we take the word to be in a general sense here. Our translation draws on the idea that tearing at a garment was well recognised as an unbecoming display of grief: regardless of how accurately they represented pre-Islamic customs, *ḥadīṯ* concerning funerals gave the view that, to quote al-Burkhārī's account, 'laysa minnā man laṭama al-ḵudūda, wa-šaqqa al-juyūba, wa-daʿā bi-daʿwā al-jāhiliyyata' ('he who slaps (his) cheeks, tears (his) clothes and calls to (or follows) the tradition of the Days of Ignorance is not from us').[75] The real-world reference here is perhaps the form of a swallowtail pennant.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>wa</u>-<u>murtafiʿin</u> so, upright	وَمُرْتَفِعٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite active participle	إِرْتَفَعَ	ر ف ع VIII
<u>li</u>-<u>al</u>-<u>nāẓirīna</u> to the observers	لِلنَّاظِرِينَ	**P** – prefixed preposition *li* **N** – genitive masculine plural noun	نَاظِر	ن ظ ر
<u>muhāribin</u> warring	مُحَارِبٍ	**N** – genitive masculine active participle	حَارَبَ	ح ر ب III

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>tarā</u> you see	تَرَى	**V** – 2nd person masculine singular imperfect verb	رَأَى	ر ء ي I
<u>raʾsa</u>-<u>hu</u> his head	رَأَسَهُ	**N** – accusative masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	رَأْس	ر ء س
<u>fī</u> to	فِي	**P** – preposition	فِي	
<u>bastati</u> the extent	بَسْطَةِ	**N** – genitive feminine noun	بَسْطة	ب س ط

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[74] Lane, s.v. غِلاَلَةٌ.

[75] *The Translation and the Meanings of Sahîh al-Bukhâri: Arabic-English*, ed. and trans. by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 9 vols (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), ii 223–24 [no. 1297/vol. ii, book 23, number 382]. For some further references see Alia Hanafi, 'Two New Arabic Editions: A Land Survey from Ihnās and Ḥadīths Concerning Funerary Practice', in *Documents and the History of the Early Islamic World*, ed. by Alexander T. Schubert and Petra M. Sijpesteijn, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 261–90 (pp. 280–81); for similar customs in the Bible, see Melanie Köhlmoos, 'Tearing One's Clothes and Rites of Mourning', in *Clothing and Nudity in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. by Christoph Berner and others (Lodnon: t&tclark, 2019), pp. 303–14, and for questions of pre-Islamic reality Peter Webb, 'Cry me a *Jāhiliyya*: Muslim Reconstructions of Pre-Islamic Arabian Culture—A Case Study', in *Islam at 250: Studies in Memory of G. H. A. Juynboll*, ed. by Petra M. Sijpesteijn and Camilla Adang, Leiden Studies in Islam and Society, 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 235–80.

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
al-bāʾi of a fathom	البَاع	**N** – genitive masculine noun	بَاع	ب ي ع
māʾila hanging down	مَائِلَا	**N** – accusative masculine active participle	مَالَ	م ي ل I

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
hakā he resembled	حَكَى	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	حَكَى	ح ك ي I
tamilan a drunkard	ثَمِلاً	**N** – accusative masculine singular indefinite noun	ثَمِل	ث م ل
ʾasghā who heard	أَصْغَى	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	أَصْغَى	ص غ و IV
ʾilā to	إِلَى	**P** – preposition	إِلَى	
al-bayni the separation	البَيْن	**N** – genitive masculine noun	بَين	ب ي ن
fa-ightadā and then hastened	فَاغْتَدَى	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	اِغْتَدَى	غ د و VIII

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
yašuqqu he tears	يَشُقُّ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	شَقَّ	ش ق ق I
ʾan about	عَن	**P** – preposition	عَن	
al-ʾadyāli the hems	الأَذْيَال	**N** – genitive masculine plural noun	ذَيْل	ذ ي ل
min-hu of himself	مِنْهُ	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	مِن	
al-ghalāʾila the robes	الغَلَائِلَا	**N** – accusative feminine plural noun	غِلَالَة	غ ل ل

6.3 Epilogue

<div dir="rtl">

وَأَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو الحُسَيْنِ النَّحْوِي أَنْ لَهُ فِي الأَوْصَافِ وَمَا يَجْرِي مَجْرى العَوِيصِ شَيْئاً كَثِيراً وَإِذَا وَقَعَ إِلَيَّ مِنْهُ مَا يَصْلُحُ لِلإِلْحَاقِ بِهَٰذَا الفَصْلِ أَلْحَقْتُهُ إِنْ شَاءَ ٱللَّهُ تَعَالَى

</div>

wa-ʾakbara-nī ʾAbū al-Husayni an-Nahwī ʾan la-hū fī-l-ʾawsāfi wa-mā yajrī majrā al-ʿawīsi šayʾan katīran wa-ʾidā waqaʿa ʾilayya min-hu mā yasluhu li-l-ʾilhāqi bi-hādā al-fasli ʾalhaqtu-hu ʾin šāʾa al-lāhu taʿālā.

And ʾAbū al-Ḥusayni n-Naḥwī told me that in his descriptions appear a great many obscure things, and if any of it comes my way which warrants the augmentation of this chapter I will append it, if exalted God wills it.

7. Riddles from the *Tatimma*

7.1 Introduction

<div dir="rtl">

أَبُو عَبْدِ اللهِ الْحُسَيْنُ اِبْنُ أَحْمَدَ الْمُفَلِّسُ

قَدْ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي كِتَابِ "الْيَتِيمَة" وَأَوْرَدْتُ يَسِيراً مِن شِعْرِهِ ، وَهَٰذَا مَا ذَكَرَهُ أَبُو الْحُسَيْنِ مُحَمَّدِ اِبْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ الْفَارِسِي النَّحْوِيّ مِن أَنَّ لَهُ شِعْراً كَثِيراً فِي اللُّغْزِ وَالأَحَاجِي وَقَدْ ظَفَرْتُ بِهِ الْآنَ ، وَكَتَبْتُ مَا ٱسْتَحْسَنْتُهُ وَٱخْتَرْتُهُ ؛ وَكَانَ عَمَلُهُ لِبَهَاءِ الْدَّوْلَةِ فَاسْتَخْرَجَهُ كُلَّهُ ؛

</div>

ʾAbū ʿAbd Allāhi l-Husaynu ibnu Ahmada l-Muḡallisu

qad dakartu-hū fī Kitābi al-Yatīmati wa-ʾawradtu yasīran min šiʿri-hī, wa-hādā mā dakara-hū ʾAbū al-Husayni Muhammadun ibnu al-Husayni al-Fārisī an-Nahwī min ʾan la-hū šiʿran katīran fī al-luḡzi wa-l-ʾahājī wa-qad zafartu bi-hī al-ʾāna, wa-katabtu mā stahsantu-hū wa-ktartu-hū; wa-kāna ʿamalu-hū li-Bahāʾi ad-Dawlati fa-stakraja-hū kulla-hū …

I have mentioned him in *Kitāb al-Yatīma* and reported a certain amount of his poetry. And this is what ʾAbū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Fārisī n-Naḥwī mentioned about the fact that he has many poems in [the form of] riddle and puzzle, and I have succeeded in obtaining it now, and I wrote what I approved of and selected. And his service[?] was to Bahāʾ ad-Dawla and he elicited each from him[?] …

7.2 Palm tree on the bank of the River Tigris (نَخْلَةُ عَلَى شَاطِئ نَهْرِ مِن دِجْلَةِ [naḵlatu ʿalā šāṭiʾ nahri min Dijlati])

Metre

Mutaqārib: | ˘ – ˘ | ˘ – ˘ | ˘ – ˘ | ˘ – |

This poem exhibits the common device of dropping short vowels at the end of each hemistich (as would be the case in ordinary speech).[76]

Text and translation

<div dir="rtl">

فَمِن ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي نَخْلَةٍ عَلَى شَاطِئٍ نَهْرٍ مِن دِجْلَةِ

</div>

---

[76] On which see Wright, II §§223–24.

… fa-min ḏālika qawlu-hū fī naḵlatin ʿalā šāṭiʾi nahrin min Dijlati

… and from among those, his poem on a palm tree on the bank of the River Tigris:

وَغَيْدَاءَ تَهْتَزُّ طَوْعَ النَّسِيمْ * إِذَا جَدَّ مُعْتَلُّهُ أَو مَزَحْ

إِذَا المَاءُ مَثَّلَ لِي ظِلَّهَا * تَوَهَّمْتُها مِخْوَضاً فِي قَدَحْ

1. wa-ḡaydāʾa tahtazzu ṭawʿa n-nasīm * ʾiḏā jadda muʿtallu-hū ʾaw mazaḥ

2. ʾiḏā l-māʾu maṯṯala lī zilla-hā * tawahhamtu-hā mikwaḍan fī qadaḥ

So, graceful, she stirs with the breeze, * whether its faintness is in earnest or playful.

When the water shows me her shadow * I envisage her as a stirrer in a drinking bowl.

Notes

This poem is also attested, with textual variation, in at least some texts of aṣ-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*.[77] A different riddle 'fī an-naḵlati' is attributed to al-Muḡallis in an-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-ʾarab fī funūn al-ʾadab*.[78]

1a *tahtazzu*. Though the literal and usual meanings of this verb concern coming into motion (hence our translation 'stirs'), it is also used figuratively to denote the sprouting or growing of plants, so might be read here as a pun.

1a *ṭawʿa an-nasīmi*. *Ṭawʿa* ('obedience') is here an adverbial accusative; the phrase literally means 'in obedience of the breeze', or, more idiomatically 'in obedience to the breeze'.

1b *muʿtallu-hú*. *Muʿtallu* is an active participle of the class VIII (therefore reflexive/passive) verb *iʿtalla* (grow sick, weak'). Its masculine gender makes it clear that it refers to *an-nasīmi* ('the breeze'), and the verb is used idiomatically to refer to the wind growing gentle. We have thus ventured to render *muʿtallu* as 'faintness'.[79]

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-ghaydāʾa so, graceful	وَغَيداءَ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive feminine adjective	أَغْيَد	غ ي د

[77] XIII 202 [no. 3555].

[78] Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo: al-Muʿassasa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Taʾlīf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-Nashr, 1923–97), iii 170 [§2.2.1]:

وقل أبن المغلِّس في النخلة
وفأعة أبدا لا تنام * وما قعدت قطِّ مذ قامت
تعيش إذا غسلوا رِجاها * وإن حلقوا رأسَها ماتت

[79] Lane, s.v. اعتلّ.

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
tahtazzu she shakes	تَهْتَزُّ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular imperfect verb	اِهْتَزَّ	ه ز ز VIII
tawʿa obedience	طَوْع	**N** – accusative masculine noun	طَوْع	ط و ع
al-nasīmi to the breeze	النَّسِيمِ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	نَسِيم	ن س م
ʾidā whether	إذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إذَا	
jadda was serious	جَدَّ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	جَدَّ	ج د د I
muʿtallu-hu his weakness	مُعْتَلُّهُ	**N** – nominative masculine active participle **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	اِعْتَلَّ	ع ل ل VIII
ʾaw or	أَو	**CONJ** – coordinating conjunction	أَو	
mazaha was joking	مَزَحَ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	مَزَحَ	م ز ح I

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidā when	إذَا	**T** – time adverb	إذَا	
al-māʾu the water	المَاءُ	**N** – nominative masculine noun	مَاء	م و ه
maṭṭala shows	مَثَّلَ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	مَثَّلَ	م ث ل II
lī to me	لِي	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 1st person singular object pronoun	لِ	
zilla-hā her shadow	ظِلَّها	**N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular possessive pronoun	ظِلّ	ظ ل ل
tawahhamtu-hā I envisage her	تَوَهَّمْتُها	**V** – 1st person singular perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	تَوَهَّمَ	و ه م V

mikwadan as a stirrer	مِخْوَضاً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	مِخْوَض	خ و ض
fī in	فِي	**P** – preposition		
qadahi a drinking bowl	قَدَح	**N** – genitive masculine noun	قَدَح	ق د ح

7.3 *Sufra* (drawstring bag for food) (السُّفْرَةُ [as-sufratu])

Metre

Wāfir: | ˘ – ̰ – | ˘ – ̰ – | ˘ – – |

Text and translation

<div dir="rtl">

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي السُّفْرِة

</div>

wa-qawlu-hū fī s-sufrati

And his poem on the *sufra*:

<div dir="rtl">

وَرَافِعَةٍ إِلَيْكَ بِلَا جُفُونٍ * عُيُوناً لَا تُطِيقُ لَهَا آنْطِبَاقَا

تَبَسَّمُ فِي الْمَنَازِلِ عَنْ وُجُوهٍ * زَهَاهَا الْحُسْنُ تَأْتَلِقُ آتْئِلَاقَا

مُزَخْرَفَةٌ كَأَنَّ الرَّوْضَ فِيهَا * إِذَا آسْتُجْلِيَتْ لَحْظاً وَآنْتِشَاقَا

جَصَصْنَاهَا بِزُنَّارٍ ظَرِيفٍ * فَفَاقَتْ كُلَ مُخْتَصٍّ وِفَاقَا

إِذَا وُضِعَتْ يَكُونُ لَهَا نِطَاقاً * فَإِنْ رُفِعَتْ يَكُونُ لَهَا خِنَاقَا

فَلَمْ نَرَ مِثْلَهَا بَدْراً مُنِيراً * وَلَمْ نَرَ مِثْلَ أَيْدِينَا مَحَاقَا

</div>

1. wa-rāfiʿatin ʾilay-ka bi-lā jufūnin * ʿuyūnan lā tuṭīqu la-hā ntibāqá

2. tabassamu fī l-manāzili ʿan wujūhin * zahā-hā l-husnu taʾtaliqu ʾtilāqá

3. muzakrafatun ka-ʾanna r-rawda fī-hā * ʾidā -stujliyat lahzan wa-ntišāqá

4. jasasnā-hā-hā bi-zunnārin zarīfin * fa-fāqat kulla mujtassin wifāqá

5. ʾidā wudiʿat yakūnu la-hā nitāqan * fa-ʾin rufiʿat yakūnu la-hā kināqá

6. fa-lam nara mitla-hā badran munīran * wa-lam nara mitla ʾaydī-nā mahāqá

So, she raises — towards you — eyes without eyelids * that cannot bear to close before her. She smiles in stopping-places on account of the faces; * resplendent in her beauty, how she shines!

She is adorned as if a meadow were within her, * if she is asked to reveal to a sidelong glance and a sniff.
We tied her tightly with an elegant belt * so she surpassed in her cramming everything in respect of desire.
If she is set down, the belt becomes a border for her * but if she is hoisted, the belt becomes a garrotte.
And we hadn't seen a shining, full moon to compare with her * and hadn't seen an obscuring of moonlight to compare with our hands.

Notes

The term *sufra* has acquired a wide range of meanings in the Islamicate world, but in this riddle it clearly refers to a kind of bag in which a traveller would carry food comprising a circular piece of skin or cloth with a drawstring running round the circumference. Food could be placed in the middle and the drawstring pulled to create a bag in which to carry the food. When it was time to eat, the bag could be placed on the ground and the drawstring released, creating a surface from which to eat the food.[80]

The riddle exhibits extensive use of third person feminine singular concord with inanimate third person plural nouns (e.g. 1b ʿ*uyūnan lā tuṭīqu […] intibāqā* 'eyes [which] cannot bear […] to close', with feminine singular verb). This produces some grammatical ambiguities: for example, does the suffixed feminine singular object pronoun -*hā* in *zahā-hā al-ḥusnu* in line 2b mean 'the beauty invigorated her [the *sufra*]' or 'the beauty invigorated them [the onlookers]'?

1 The dense opening line envisages the masculine addressee of the poem ('you') carrying a *sufra*. It is not clear to use precisely what is envisaged here: if the opening of the *sufra* is an eye, how does the *sufra* have more than one? And what is the function of *la-hā* in this case?

2a *tabassamu*. Although the standard third-person feminine imperfect form of this verb is *tatabassamu* (where the first *ta*- is the personal prefix and the second is the reflexive prefix characteristic of Form V verbs), assimilation of the first *ta*- to the second, seen here, is accepted in classical usage. The basic meaning of the verb is 'smile', but Lane also offers 'he opened his lips like him who displays to another his teeth' as one more specific understanding of the verb: this being so, the point of al-Muǧallis's hemistich seems to be that the *sufra* is not merely smiling but doing so in a way that opens her lips or mouth — that is, the drawstring bag is being opened.

2b *taʾtaliqu ʾtilāqá*. This construction is an example of *al-mafʿūl al-muṭlaq* (the objective complement or cognate accusative), whereby a verb is intensified by the addition of the derived verbal noun in its indefinite accusative form.[81] Since the feminine singular imperfect verb *taʾtaliqu* is being used here in concord with an inanimate plural subject, the phrase literally means 'they radiate a radiance' or, more idiomatically, 'they shine a great deal'.

4 *jaṣaṣnā-hā ... muḵtaṣṣin*. We have emended here. Radwan's edition is clear that these words derive from the root *ḥ ṣ ṣ*, giving *ḥaṣaṣnā-hā* (3rd person masculine singular class I, 'we shaved it' or 'we shared it') and the class VIII participle *muḥtaṣṣin* (though neither Lane, Kazimirski, nor Wehr records a class VIII form of this root). Radwan records the variant reading *ḥaḍaḍnā-hā* ('we urged, incited') in MS س, but in this case the use of a different root from the following participle makes the reading less likely, and does not help with the problem of interpreting *muḥtaṣṣin*. The 1934 and 1983 editions of the *Tatimma*, however, use the rare root *j-ṣ-ṣ* for both words. Although for this root both Lane and Wehr record only

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[80] Lane, s.v. سُفْرَةٌ.
[81] Wright, II §26.

a Class II verb, 'plaster, whitewash' (with Lane observing the likelihood that it is borrowed from Persian گَچ, gač, 'gypsum'), Kazimirski offers the Class I verb *jaṣṣa* 'tied too tightly, to the point of causing suffering', used of cattle, with the Class VIII counterpart *ijtaṣṣa* 'was tightly packed, lived cheek-by-jowel', used of neighbours whose homes are contiguous. Radwan has presumably read his source manuscripts correctly, and we can view the 1934 and 1983 editions' readings as emendations, but they are plausible emendations: at some point in transmission one or more scribes who did not use full consonant pointing led to what in fully pointed script would ج (*j*) being transmitted as ح (*ḥ*).

6a *nara*. Jussive after *lam*.

6b The image in the first hemistich of line 6 of the circular *sufra* as a full moon is straightforward. We find the subsequent comparison of the eaters' hands to a *maḥāqá* less obvious. *Maḥāq* is defined by Kazimirski as complete absence of moonlight, especially on the last three nights of the lunar month, whereas it is defined rather differently by Wehr as the waning of the moon. The root *m-ḥ-q* is associated with effacement and obliteration, and that may be important to the valence of *maḥāq* in al-Muǧallis's poem. Presumably the diners' hands constitute an obliteration of the full moon in the sense that after the meal they close up the *sufra* such that its moon-like quality vanishes.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-rāfiʿatin so, raising	وَرَافِعَةٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive feminine indefinite active participle	رَفَعَ	ر ف ع I
ʾilay-ka towards you	إِلَيْكَ	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 2nd person masculine singular object pronoun	إِلَى	
bi-lā without	بِلَا	**P** – preposition + negative particle	بِلَا	
jufūnin eyelids	جُفُونٍ	**N** – genitive masculine plural indefinite noun	نَسِيم	ن س م
ʿuyūnan eyes	عُيُوناً	**N** – accusative feminine plural indefinite noun	عَيْن	ع ي ن
lā [that can] not	لَا	**NEG** – negative particle	لَا	
tutīqu bear	تُطِيقُ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular imperfect verb	أَطَاقَ	ط و ق IV
la-hā before her	لَهَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	لِ	

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
intibāqan to close	أَنْطِبَاقَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	إِنْطَبَقَ	ط ب ق VII

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
tabassamu she smiles	تَبَسَّمُ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular imperfect verb	تَبَسَّمَ	ب س م V
fī in	فِي	**P** – preposition	فِي	
al-manāzili the way-stations	الْمَنَازِلِ	**N** – genitive masculine plural noun	مَنَازِل	ن ز ل
ʾan on account of	عَنْ	**P** – preposition	عَنْ	
wujūhin the faces	وُجُوه	**N** – genitive masculine plural indefinite noun	وَجْه	و ج ه

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
zahā-hā invigorated her	زَهَاهَا	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	زَهَا	ز ه و I
al-husnu the beauty	الْحُسْنُ	**N** – nominative masculine noun	حُسْن	ح س ن

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
taʾtaliqu they shine	تَأْتَلِقُ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular imperfect verb	إِئْتَلَق	ك ت ب VIII
iʾtilāqan a shining	أْئْتِلَاقَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	إِئْتَلَق	ك ت ب VIII

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
muzakrafatun adorned	مُزَخْرَفَةٌ	**N** – nominative feminine passive participle	زَخْرَفَ	ز خ ر ف Iq
ka-ʾanna as if	كَأَنَّ	**ACC** – accusative particle	كَأَنَّ	
al-rawda	الرَّوْضَ	**N** – accusative masculine	رَوْض	ر و ض

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
a meadow		noun		
<u>fī</u>-<u>hā</u> in her	فِيهَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	فِي	
<u>ʾidā</u> if	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
<u>ustujliyat</u> she were asked to reveal	اُسْتُجْلِيَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular passive perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	اِسْتَجْلَى X	ج ل و
<u>lahzan</u> to a sidelong glance	لَحْظاً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	لَحْظ	ل ح ظ
<u>wa</u>-<u>intišāqan</u> and sniffing	وَاْنْتِشَاقَا	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	اِنْتَشَقَ VIII	ن ش ق

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>jasasnā</u>-<u>hā</u> we tied it tightly	جَصَصْنَاهَا	**V** – 1st person plural perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	جَصَّ	ج ص ص I
<u>bi</u>-<u>zunnārin</u> with a belt	بِزُنَّارٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	زُنَّار	loanword
<u>zarīfin</u> elegant	ظَرِيفٍ	**ADJ** – genitive masculine singular adjective	ظَرِيف	ظ ر ف
<u>fa</u>-<u>fāqat</u> and then she surpassed	فَفَاقَتْ	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **V** – 3rd person feminine singular perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	فَاقَ	ف و ق I
<u>kulla</u> all	كُلَ	**N** – accusative masculine noun	كُل	
<u>mujtaṣṣin</u> cramming	مُجْتَصٍّ	**N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	اِجْتَصَّ VIII	ج ص ص
<u>wifāqan</u> in respect of desire	وِفَاقَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	وَافَقَ	و ف ق

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidhā if	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
wuḍiʿat she is set down	وُضِعَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular passive perfect verb	وَضَعَ	و ض ع I
yakūnu he becomes	يَكُونُ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	كَانَ	ك و ن I
la-hā for her	لَهَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	لِ	
nitāqan a border	نِطَاقَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	نِطَاق	ن ط ق
fa-ʾin but if	فَإِنْ	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **COND** – conditional particle	إِنْ	
rufiʿat she is hoisted up	رُفِعَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular passive perfect verb	رَفَعَ	ر ف ع I
yakūnu he becomes	يَكُونُ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	كَانَ	ك و ن I
la-hā for her	لَهَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	لِ	
kināqan a garotte	خِنَاقَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	خِناق	خ ن ق

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
fa-lam so not	فَلَمْ	**CAUS** – prefixed particle of cause **NEG** – negative particle	لَمْ	
nara had we seen	نَرَ	**V** – 1st person plural imperfect verb, jussive mood	رَأَى	ر ء ي I
mitla-hā her like	مِثْلَهَا	**N** – accusative masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular possessive pronoun	مِثْل	م ث ل
badran to a full moon	بَدْراً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	بَدْر	ب د ر

munīra shining	مُنِيرًا	**ADJ** – genitive masculine singular adjective	مُنِير	
wa-lam and not	وَلَمْ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **NEG** – negative particle	لَمْ	
nara had we seen	نَرَ	**V** – 1st person plural imperfect verb, jussive mood	رَأَى	ر ء ي I
miṯla resemblance	مِثْلَ	**N** – accusative masculine noun	مِثْل	م ث ل
ʾaydī-nā our hands	أَيْدِينَا	**N** – genitive masculine plural noun **PRON** – 1st person plural possessive pronoun	يَد	ي د ي
mahāqan to obscuring of moonlight	مَحَاقًا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	مَحاق	م ح ق

7.4 Egg (البَيْضَةُ [al-bayḍatu])

Metre

Ṭawīl: | ⌣ – ⌣̆ | ⌣ – ⌣̆ – | ⌣ – ⌣̆ | ⌣ – ⌣ – |

Text and translation

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي الْبَيْضَةِ

wa-qawlu-hū fī-l-bayḍati

And his poem on the egg:

وَصَفْرَاءَ فِي بَيْضَاءَ رَقَّتْ غِلَالَةً * لَهَا وَجَفَا مَا فَوْقَهَا مِن ثِيَابِهَا

جَمَادٌ وَلَكِنْ بَعْدَ عِشْرِينَ لَيْلَةٍ * تَرَى نَفْسَهَا مَعْمُورَةً مِن خَرَابِهَا

1. wa-safrāʾa fī baydāʾa raqqat ḡilālatan * la-hā wa-jafā mā fawqa-hā min tiyābi-hā

2. jamādun wa-lākin baʿda ʿišrīna laylatin * tarā nafsa-hā maʾmūratan min karābi-hā

So, yellow in white, her covering grew delicate, * and he treats harshly what is above her in terms of clothing.

An inanimate thing — but after twenty nights, * from her ruins, she sees herself filled with life.

Notes

This riddle expects the audience to know that the usual incubation period for chickens' eggs is around twenty-one days: it is specifically *after* twenty nights that hatching is to be expected.

1a. *raqqat*. Chicken eggs indeed grow thinner as the chick approaches hatching.[82]

2b. *ḵarābi-hā*. *Ḵarāb* is given by Lane to mean 'a ruin, or waste; a place, country, place of abode, or house, in a state of ruin, waste, uninhabited, depopulated, deserted, desolate, uncultivated, or in a state the contrary of flourishing'. More than one of these meanings may be at work at once here: the egg is lifeless within until the chick takes form, so it finds itself inhabited following a period of being uninhabited. On the other hand, the hatching of the chick leaves the egg in literal ruins, and we have taken this as the salient meaning.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-safrāʾa so, the yellow	وَصَفْرَاءَ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive feminine noun	أَصْفَر	ص ف ر
fī in	فِي	**P** – preposition	فِي	
baydāʾa the white	بَيْضَاءَ	**N** – genitive feminine noun	أَبْيَض	ب ي ض
raqqat grew thin	رَقَّتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	رَقَّ	ر ق ق I
ḡilālatan in respect of covering	غِلالَةً	**N** – accusative feminine indefinite noun	غِلالَة	غ ل ل
la-hā of hers	لَهَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	لِ	

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-jafā and she treats harshly	وَجَفَا	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	وَجَف	و ج ف
mā what is	ما	**REL** – relative pronoun	ما	

[82] Dimitra Athanasiadou and others, 'Nanostructure, Osteopontin, and Mechanical Properties of Calcitic Avian Eggshell', Science Advances, 4.3 (March 2018), article eaar3219 (p. 9).

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
fawqa-hā above her	فَوْقَهَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	فَوْقُ	
min in respect of	مِن	**P** – preposition	مِن	
tiyābi-hā her garments	ثِيَابِهَا	**N** – genitive masculine plural noun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular possessive pronoun	ثَوْب	ث و ب

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
jamādun an inanimate thing	جَمَادٌ	**N** – nominative masculine indefinite noun	جَمَاد	ج م د
wa-lākin but	وَلَكِنْ	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **AMD** – amendment particle	وَلَكِنْ	
baʿda after	بَعْدَ	**P** – preposition	بَعْدَ	
ʿišrīna twenty	عِشْرِينَ	**N** – genitive masculine plural noun	عِشْرُونَ	ع ش ر
laylatin nights	لَيْلَةٍ	**N** – genitive feminine noun	لَيْلَة	ل ي ل
tarā she sees	تَرَى	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular imperfect verb	رَأَى	ر ء ي I
nafsa-hā herself	نَفْسَهَا	**N** – accusative feminine noun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular possessive pronoun	نَفْس	ن ف س
maʿmūratan inhabited	مَعْمُورَةً	**ADJ** – accusative feminine singular adjective	عَمَرَ	ع م ر I
min from	مِن	**P** – preposition	مِن	
karābi-hā her desolation	خَرَابِهَا	**N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular possessive pronoun	خَرَاب	خ ر ب I

7.5 Bundle of herbs (بَاقَةُ الْبَقْلِ [bāqatu al-baqli])

Metre

Munsariḥ: | ˗ ˗ ˘ – | – ˗ – ˘ | – ˘ ˘ – |

Text and translation

<div dir="rtl">

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي بَاقَةِ البَقْلِ
</div>

wa-<u>qawlu</u>-<u>hū</u> <u>fī</u> <u>bāqati</u> <u>l</u>-<u>baqli</u>

And his poem on a bundle of herbs:

<div dir="rtl">

وَغَضَّةٍ رَطْبَةٍ يُضَمِّنُهَا * نَخَّاسُهَا حِينَ تُجْتَلَى مُلَحَا

إِذَا اشْتَرَوْهَا تَنَصَّرَتْ فَإِذَا * أُدْخِلَتْ الْبَيْتَ أَسْلَمَتْ مَرَحَا
</div>

1. wa-<u>ġaddatin</u> <u>ratbatin</u> <u>yudamminu</u>-<u>hā</u> * <u>nakkāsu</u>-<u>hā</u> <u>hīna</u> <u>tujtalā</u> <u>mulahá</u>

2. <u>ʾidā</u> <u>štaraw</u>-<u>hā</u> <u>tanaṣṣarat</u> <u>fa</u>-<u>ʾidā</u> * <u>ʾudkilat</u> <u>al</u>-<u>bayta</u> <u>ʾaslamat</u> <u>marahá</u>

So, tender, fresh: her seller guarantees her, * when she is revealed, regarding her good quality.

When they bought her she corroborated him, but when * she was brought into the house she drooped, becoming weak.

Notes

This is a riddle of the kind labelled 'homonymous riddles' by Pieter Smoor, of which Smoor saw al-Muġallis's younger and far more renowned contemporary al-Maʿarrī as the seminal exponent: by selecting different meanings of several of the words in the riddle, two quite different texts can be produced.[83] Al-Muġallis's seems also to be a double entendre riddle, whose obvious meaning is erotic and where the challenge for the interpreter is to find an innocent meaning. Accordingly, unlike in the rest of al-Muġallis's riddles, two quite different translations of the entire text are possible. The interpretation of this text required by the declared solution for this riddle — and thus given above — is that a grocer is advertising the attractiveness of a bunch of vegetables or herbs (our translation 'herbs' above is perhaps too restrictive) to his buyers; at the point of sale, the herbs are still fresh and firm, thus corroborating the seller's account, but by the time they arrive home they have wilted. But the initially probably more obvious interpretation of the Arabic, at least in the time of al-Muġallis, is that the poem depicts the sale of a female slave, perhaps specifically a *qayna* or *jāriya*, trained in the arts to provide entertainment (potentially extending to sexual services) to her patron or owner. For the text can also mean:

> So, tender, fresh: her slave-trader guarantees her, * when she is unveiled, regarding her witty anecdotes.

> When they bought her she professed Christianity, but when * she was brought into the house she submitted to Islam with joy.

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[83] Smoor, esp. 304–9.

The connotations of the ostensible (rather than correct) meaning of this riddle may be sexual: while on display for sale, the slave-girl presents herself as Christian (and implicity as chaste in Christian fashion), but after purchase, she converts to Islam. Is this conversion simply because she anticipates better treatment or higher chances of manumission as a Muslim? Or might it present the enslaved woman as cheerfully accepting the traditional Islamic legal principle that slave-owners have a right of sexual access to their slaves?[84] One possible scenario that the riddle could be evoking is suggested by El-Cheikh's account of Arab attitudes to (implicitly Christian) Byzantine women: 'the Arabs knew Byzantine women mostly through the institution of concubinage; *rūmiyyāt* [Byzantine women] were among the many singing slave girls who filled Abbasid Baghdad'. Byzantine women specifically had a reputation for both seductive beauty and licentiousness, which would fit the idea that this riddle has sexual connotations.[85] If this interpretation is correct, al-Muḡallis's text certainly evokes how both enslavement and masters' sexual dominance of female slaves were normalised in his society, much as the anonymous verse solution to his touchstone riddle normalises enslavement and racism (cf. §§5, 6.1). In turn, this reading of a female slave's cheerful gratification of the sexual demands of her master makes the mundane 'correct' story of a buyer's regret at the wilting of his groceries especially wry.

1a *wa-ḡaḍḍatin raṭbatin*. These initial adjectives, describing the object of the riddle, can both be used idiomatically of fresh plants and of young women (an ambiguity we have tried to represent with 'tender' and 'fresh').

1a *nakḵāsu*. This derives from the verb *nakasa* 'goaded', and specifically means 'seller of livestock or slaves'; thus the seller of the poem is positioned as a slave-merchant. We have regarded it as a metonym for 'seller' for the purpose of fitting the riddle to its correct solution.

1b *tujtalā*. This verb is used specifically of removing a wife's veil, so that she can see her husband and he her.

1b *mulaḥá*. Among other meanings (all distantly connected with the word *milḥ* 'salt'), this word can mean 'prosperities, blessings', which we have rendered as 'good qualities' with reference to the bundle of herbs and which could work as well for the 'slave' interpretation. But *mulaḥá* can also mean 'witty stories', which would be a key selling-point for a *qayna* or *jāriya*.

2a *ištaraw*. A masculine verb, indicating the gender of the buyers and so developing the implied gender-dynamics of the transaction.

2a *tanaṣṣarat*. The main meanings of the Class V verb *tanaṣṣara* are 'lent one another mutual assistance' (from the root *n-ṣ-r*) and 'became Christian, professed to be Christian' (from *naṣārā*, 'Christians', etymologically from the Aramaic word meaning 'Nazarenes'). A specific meaning of the former sense is 'corroborate, support one another's claims', and is the meaning we infer here for the correct interpretation of the riddle. Yet reading the meaning 'professed Christianity' is made the more obvious one because the verb *ʾaslamat* in the next hemistich can mean 'became a Muslim'. (We have contemplated emending here to *tanaḍḍarat* 'became verdant, was in bloom', which would be a more obvious verb for a bundle of herbs, but Radwan records no alternative readings that would suggest this and the double meaning of pun on *tanaṣṣarat* is clearly important.)

[84] K. Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam* (London: Oneworld, 2006), 39–55.

[85] Nadia Maria El-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs, 36 (Cambridge, MA: Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University, 2004), pp. 123–29 (quoting p. 123).

2b ʾaslamat. The class IV verb ʾaslamat can mean not only 'submitted, forsook, abandoned' but also 'became Muslim' and, as here in the surface meaning, 'let fall, drop'.

2b maraḥá. This adverbial accusative verbal noun comes from the class I verb mariḥa, whose classical meanings include 'exulted' (either in a negative, over-proud way, or simply in a positive, joyous way) and 'became weak'.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-ḡaddatin so, tender	وَغَضَّةٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive feminine indefinite noun	غَضّ	غ ض ض
ratbatin fresh	رَطْبَةٍ	**N** – genitive feminine indefinite noun	رَطْب	ر ط ب
yudamminu-hā insures her	يُضَمِّنُهَا	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	ضَمَّنَ	ض م ن II
nakkāsu-hā her seller	نَخَّاسُهَا	**N** – nominative masculine noun	نَخَّاس	ن خ س
hīna when	حِينَ	**T** – accusative masculine time adverb	حِينَ	
tujtalā she is revealed	تُجْتَلَى	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular passive imperfect verb	إِجْتَلَى	ج ل و VIII
mulahan regarding her prosperities	مُلَحًا	**N** – accusative masculine plural indefinite noun	مُلْحَة	م ل ح

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidā when	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
ištaraw-hā they bought her	إِشْتَرَوْهَا	**V** – 3rd person masculine plural perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun **PRON** – 3rd person feminine singular object pronoun	إِشْتَرَى	ش ر ي VIII
tanaṣṣarat she corroborated	تَنَصَّرَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	تَنَصَّرَ	ن ص ر V

fa-ʾidā and when	فَإِذَا	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
ʾudkilat she was made to enter	أُدْخِلَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular passive perfect verb	أَدْخَلَ	د خ ل IV
al-bayta the house	الْبَيْتَ	**N** – accusative masculine noun	بَيْت	ب ي ت
ʾaslamat she drooped	أَسْلَمَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	أَسْلَمَ	س ل م IV
maraḥan with weakness	مَرَحَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	مَرِحَ	م ر ح I

7.6 Hornet (الزُّنْبُورُ [az-zunbūru])

Metre

Rajaz: | ⚬ ⚬ ⌣ – | ⚬ ⚬ ⌣ – | ⚬ ⚬ ⌣ – |

Uniquely among Classical Arabic metres, *rajaz* lines are not organised into hemistichs: although we have here followed the usual convention of presenting the lines in pairs, each is really an independent line, in this case rhyming on -*b*.

This poem exhibits the common device of dropping inflections at the end of each hemistich.[86]

Text and translation

<div dir="rtl">

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي الزُّنْبُورِ

</div>

wa-qawlu-hū fī az-zunbūri

And his poem on the hornet:

<div dir="rtl">

وَأَعْجَمِيٍّ لَابِسٍ لِبْسَ الْعَرَبْ * لَا يَسْتَفِيقُ مِن غِنَاءٍ إِنْ رَكِبْ

مُبَرْقَعٍ بِبُرْقُعٍ مِن الذَّهَبْ * يُضْحِي وَيُمْسِي بِحِقَابٍ مُحْتَقَبْ

وَخَنْجَرٍ يَسْتَلُّهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبْ * كَأَنَّهُ شُعْلَةُ نَارٍ تَلْتَهِبْ

</div>

1. wa-ʾaʿjamiyyin lābisin labsa l-ʿarab * lā yastafīqu min ġināʾin ʾin rakib

2. mubarqaʿin bi-burquʿin min ad-dahab * yudḥī wa-yumsī bi-ḥiqābin muḥtaqab

3. wa-kanjarin yastallu-hū ʿinda al-ġaḍab * kaʾanna-hū šuʿlatu nārin taltahib

So, a barbarian wearing the clothing of an Arab * (he doesn't rouse from droning, even if he has mounted),

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[86] On which see Wright, II §§223–24.

dappled with a patchwork of gold; * from dawn till dusk adorned with a bound girdle

and a dagger; he draws it when angry — * as if it were a flaming spark of fire.

Notes

As well as meaning 'hornet, bee', *zunbūr* can also mean 'penis, clitoris', raising the possibility that this is a double entendre riddle. But the content of the riddle seems too precisely tailored to the insect for the obscene meaning to be relevant.

1. The humour of the first line is more apparent when recognising that although *ʾaʿjamiyy* means 'non-Arab', it comes from a root meaning related to chewing, so specifically connotes people whose foreign language was construed as sounding barbarous. This connotation connects with the image of the hornet singing ('droning' in our translation, but more literally the noun means 'an utterance of the voice with a prolonging and a sweet modulation thereof ... or a raising of the voice, and continuing it without interruption').[87]

1a *wa-ʾaʿjamiyyin lābisin labsa l-ʿarab*. As Yedida Kalfon Stillman's history of Arab dress indicates, people in the tenth-century Islamicate world might wear all sorts of patterns and colours of clothing (including striped clothing, decorated with either gold thread or gold leaf), in ways that did not necessarily relate to ethnicity or religion.[88] Even sartorial laws requiring *dhimmī* people to dress in certain ways to distinguish them from Muslims—which might be relevant to this riddle and did sometimes include requirements for *dimmī*s to wear yellow—varied widely in the clothing, colours, or signs they required.[89] But for most of the ʿAbbasid period, most officers of the ʿAbbasid court were required to wear black. These garments might, however, be adorned with gold thread, which might fit with the image of line 2a.[90] Therefore the hornet is, we suppose wearing the black garb of an ʿAbbasid, Arab officer. However, further research on tenth-century sartorial trends might produce alternative explanations. In some contents, *ʾaʿjamiyy* specifically denoted Persians, and the riddle might specifically be positioning the hornet as a Persian dressed as an Arab, evoking the tensions surrounding the adoption of Islamicate culture by non-Arab ethnic groups following the Arab conquests, and perhaps specifically the *shuʿubiyya* movement whereby Persians, in particular, asserted the validity of their language and culture within Islam.

1b *ʾin rakib*. 'If he mounted': the image seems to be that the hornet continues to make a buzzing sound despite having landed.

2b *bi-ḥiqābin muḥtaqab*. Lane defines a *ḥiqāb* as 'a thing to which a woman hangs ornaments, and which she binds upon her waist' and 'an ornamented thing which a woman binds upon her waist', which we have rendered 'girdle'.[91] We take *muḥtaqab* in the gloss below to be a genitive singular indefinite passive participle *muḥtaqabin*, agreeing with and emphasising *ḥiqābin*. The precise meaning of the past participle *muḥtaqab* is significant to the interpretation of the riddle: *iḥtaqaba* can simply mean 'bear, carry', but more specifically it means 'bind a burden behind the saddle (of a camel or horse)'. Thus it surely refers specifically to the decorations on the hornet's abdomen, so distinctively situated behind the narrow thorax.

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[87] Lane, s.v. غَنَّى.

[88] Yedida Kalfon Stillman, *Arab Dress: A Short History From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times*, ed. by Norman A. Stillman, 2nd edn, Themes in Islamic Studies, 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2003) (pp. 59–60 for golden stripes).

[89] Stillman, *Arab Dress*, esp. pp. 52–53, 101–19.

[90] Stillman, *Arab Dress*, pp. 34, 42, 48.

[91] On this word, Lane is more informative than R. P. A. Dozy, *Dictionnaire des nomes des vêtements chez les Arabes* (Amsterdam: Müller, 1845), p. 143.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>wa</u>-ʾaʿjamiyyin so, a non-Arab	وَأَعْجَمِيًّ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	أَعْجَمِيّ	ع ج م
<u>lābisin</u> wearing	لَابِسٍ	**N** – genitive masculine active participle	لَبِسَ I	ل ب س
<u>libsa</u> the clothing	لِبْسَ	**N** – accusative masculine noun	لِبْس	ل ب س
<u>al</u>-ʿarabi of the Arab	الْعَرَبْ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	عَرَب	ع ر ب

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>lā</u> not	لَا	**NEG** – negative particle	لَا	
<u>yastafīqu</u> he awakes	يَسْتَفِيقُ	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	اِسْتَفَاقَ	ف و ق X
<u>min</u> from	مِن	**P** – preposition	مِن	
<u>ḡināʾin</u> singing	غِنَاءٍ	**N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	غِنَاء	غ ن ي II
<u>ʾin</u> if	إِنْ	**COND** – conditional particle	إِنْ	
<u>rakiba</u> he has mounted	رَكِبْ	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular perfect verb	رَكِبَ	ر ك ب I
<u>mubarqaʿin</u> dappled	مُبَرْقَعٍ	**N** – genitive masculine indefinite passive participle	بَرْقَعَ	ب ر ق ع Iq
<u>bi</u>-<u>burquʿin</u> with a patchwork	بِبُرْقُعٍ	**P** – preposition **N** – genitive masculine indefinite active participle	لَبِسَ	ل ب س I
<u>min</u> of	مِن	**P** – preposition	مِن	
<u>al</u>-<u>dahabi</u> gold	الْذَّهَبْ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	عَرَب	ع ر ب

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
yudhī he is in the morning	يُضْحِي	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	أَضْحَى	ض ح و IV
wa-yumsī and he is in the evening	وَيُمْسِي	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	أَمْسَى	م س و IV
bi-hiqābin with a girdle	بِحِقَابٍ	**P** – preposition **N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	حِقَاب	ح ق ب
muhtaqabin bound	مُحْتَقَبْ	**N** – genitive masculine indefinite passive participle	إِحْتَقَبَ	ح ق ب VIII
wa-kanjarin and a dagger	وَخَنْجَرٍ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	خَنْجَر	خ ن ج ر

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
yastallu-hu he draws it	يَسْتَلُّهُ	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	إِسْتَلَّ	س ل ل VIII
ʿinda at	عِنْدَ	**P** – preposition	عِنْدَ	
al-ghadabi the anger	الْغَضَبْ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	غَضِبَ	غ ض ب I
kaʾanna-hu as if it [were]	كَأَنَّهُ	**ACC** – accusative particle **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular subject pronoun	كَأَنَّ	
šuʿlatu a flame	شُعْلَةُ	**N** – nominative feminine noun	شُعْلَة	ش ع ل
nārin of a fire	نَارٍ	**N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	نَار	ن و ر
taltahibu	تَلْتَهِبْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular imperfect verb	إِلْتَهَبَ	ل ه ب VIII

bursting into flame				

7.7 Scissors (الْمِقْرَاضُ [al-miqrāḍu])

Metre

Hazaj: | ˘ – – x | ˘ – – x |

It is unusual (though not abnormal) in Arabic verse for a word to run across a caesura. That it happens in this poem twice in two lines is clearly not accidental. In the first line the device perhaps specifically mimics the statement that the onlooker cannot distinguish between two bodies (not only the two blades of the scissors, but the two hemistichs of the line). Meanwhile, in both lines the cutting of words by the caesura surely evokes the function of the scissors. We have not attempted to mark the word-splitting caesuras in our translation of these two short and snappy *hazaj* lines.

Text and translation

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي الْمِقْرَاضِ

wa-qawlu-hū fī-l-miqrādi

His utterance on scissors:

وَذِي جِسْمَيْنِ لَا يَفْرُ * قُ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا نَاظِرْ

إِذَا مَا بَخَصُوا عَيْنَيْ * هِ أَمْسَى فَمُهُ فَاغِرْ

1. wa-dī jismayni lā yafru- * qu mā bayna-humā nāzir

2. ʾidā mā bakasū ʿaynay- * hi amsā famu-hū fāġir

So, a two-bodied one; the onlooker cannot distinguish one from the other.

If people gouge his eyes, his mouth starts gaping.

Notes

The scissors comprise two blades which are parted by the user putting their fingers through thumb/finger-holes, construed here metaphorically as eyes.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-dī so, an owner	وَذِي	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine noun	ذُو	
jismayni of two bodies	جِسْمَيْنِ	**N** – genitive masculine dual noun	جِسْم	ج س م

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
lā not	لَا	**NEG** – negative particle	لَا	
yafruqu distinguishes	يَفْرُقُ	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	فَرَقَ	ف ر ق
mā at all	مَا	**NEG** – negative particle	مَا	
bayna-humā between them	بَيْنَهُمَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person dual object pronoun	بَيْنَ	ب ي ن
nāzirun onlooker	نَاظِر	**N** – nominative masculine indefinite noun	نَاظِر	ن ظ ر

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidā if	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
mā that	مَا	**SUB** – subordinating conjunction	مَا	
bakasū they gouge	بَخَصُوا	**V** – 3rd person masuline plural perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	بَخَصَ	ب خ ص I
ʾaynay-hi his eyes	عَيْنَيْهِ	**N** – accusative masculine dual noun **PRON** – 3rd person singular possessive pronoun	عَيْن	ع ي ن
amsā becomes	أَمْسَى	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	أَمْسَى	م س و IV
famu-hu his mouth	فَمُهُ	**N** – nominative masculine singular noun **PRON** – 3rd person singular possessive pronoun	فَم	ف م
fāghiran gaping	فَاغِرْ	**N** – accusative masculine singular active participle	فَغَرَ	ف غ ر I

7.8 Sword (الْسَّيْفُ [as-sayfu])

Metre

Mutaqārib: |ᵕ – ˘ | ᵕ – ˘ | ᵕ – ˘ | ᵕ – |

Text and translation

وَقَوْلُهُ في السَّيْفِ

wa-qawlu-hū fī-l-sayfi

And his poem on the sword

وَمُسْتَعْرِضٍ صَاحِباً لَا يَزَا * لُ يَحْمِي مِن الْذُلِّ أَطْوَاقَه

فَطَوْراً يُطَوِّلُ مِن وَجْهِهِ * وَطَوْراً يُعَرِّضُ أَشْدَاقَه

1. wa-mustaʿriḍin ṣāhiban lā yazā * lu yaḥmī min ad-dulli ʾaṭwāqa-hū

2. fa-ṭawran yuṭawwilu min wajhi-hī * wa-ṭawran yuʿarriḍu ašdāqa-hū

So, demanding a companion, he doesn't cease * to protect from humiliation what is around him;

so one moment his face lengthens, * and the next he widens his jaws.

Notes

The riddle portrays the sword as needing a companion, that is, someone to wield the blade. In its second line, the riddle evokes the rapid movement of a sword from the point of view of the swordsman's assailant; perhaps the image is that at one moment the point ('face') of the sword thrusts forward ('lengthens') and that a another the sword slashes ('boradens').

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-mustaʿriḍin so, asking to be shown	وَمُسْتَعْرِضٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite active participle	إِسْتَعْرَضَ	ع ر ض VIII
ṣāhiban a companion	صَاحِباً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	صَاحِب	ص ح ب
lā not	لَا	**NEG** – negative particle	لَا	
yazālu he ceases	يَزَالُ	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb		

yahmī [that] he protects	يَحْمِي	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	حَمَى	ح م ي I
min from	مِن	**P** – preposition	مِن	
al-dulli the humiliation	الْذُلّ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	ذُلّ	ذ ل ل
ʾaṭwāqa-hu his surrounding things	أَطْوَاقَهُ	**N** – accusative masculine plural noun **PRON** – 3rd person singular possessive pronoun	طَوْق	ط و ق
fa-ṭawran such that at times	فَطَوْراً	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	طَوْر	ط و ر
yuṭawwilu he lengthens	يُطَوِّلُ	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	طَوَّلَ	ط و ل II
min from	مِن	**P** – preposition	مِن	
wajhi-hi his face	وَجْهِهِ	**N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person singular possessive pronoun	وَجْه	و ج ه
wa-ṭawran and at times	وَطَوْراً	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	طَوْر	ط و ر
yuʿarriḍu he widens	يُعَرِّضُ	**V** – 3rd person masuline singular imperfect verb	عَرَّضَ	ع ر ض II
ašdāqa-hu his cheeks	أَشْدَاقَهُ	**N** – accusative masculine plural noun **PRON** – 3rd person singular possessive pronoun	شِدْق	ش د ق

7.9 Water-spout (الْمِيزَابُ [al-mīzābu])

Metre

Rajaz: | ˘ ˘ ˘ − | ˘ ˘ ˘ − | ˘ ˘ ˘ − |

Rajaz poetry is conventionally written out as if it was formed of hemistichs, but metrically it consists simply of short lines with no caesuras. We have laid out the verse to emphasise its metrical form.

Text and translation

<div dir="rtl">

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي الْمِيزَاب

</div>

wa-ǧawlu-hū fī-l-mīzābi

And his poem on a water-spout

<div dir="rtl">

وَمُخْطَفٍ قَد أَبْرَزوهُ بادِيَا

تَلْقَاهُ فِي الصَّيفِ فَقِيراً عَارِيا

وَفِي الشِّتَاءِ بِاللُّجَيْنِ حَاليا

إِذَا يَدَاهُ ٱلْتَقَطَتْ لِسُؤَالِيَا

صَاغَتْ لَنَا مِنْهُ حُسَاماً مَاضِيَا

</div>

1. wa-muḵtafin qad ʾabrazū-hu bādiyá

2. talqā-hu fī ṣ-ṣayfi faqīran ʿāriyá

3. wa-fī š-šitāʾi bi-l-lujayni ḥāliyá

4. ʾidā yadā-hu ltaqatat li-suʾāli-yá

5. sāǧat la-nā min-hu husāman mādiyá

So: a skinny guy; they have brought him out, visible.

In the summer, you find him poverty-stricken, bare,

and in the winter adorned with silver.

If his hands made a request of me

they would forge from it a sharp sword-edge for us.

Notes

Mīzāb normally denotes guttering or a drainpipe; this riddle clearly discusses a gutter concealed by its builder in the structure of a wall or roof whose presence is revealed by an outlet, hence our translation 'water-spout'. We think it likeliest that the riddle implies that in the winter, this flows with water, and the downward, arcing gush of water constitutes the sharp blade, but conceivably al-Muǧallis imagines the channel adorned with ice or frost, and an icicle hanging from the spout.

Much the most famous *mīzāb* in the Islamicate world is the one that enables water to drain from the Kaʿba, the *Mīzāb ar-Raḥma* ('water-spout of mercy'), whose water was (and is)

thought to be blessed.[92] The attractions of standing beneath the torrent of this particular water-spout, at least, are portrayed vividly by the account of ibn Jubayr of events at the Kaʿba in 579/1183 CE, when men hastened to stand beneath the *mīzāb* during a rainstorm following Friday prayers, 'stripping off their clothes and meeting the water that flowed from it with their heads, their hands, and their mouths'.[93] But use of a short spout to enable water to flow off flat roofs is hardly limited to this building.

4. *ʾiḏā yadā-hu ltaqaṭat li-suʾāli-yá*. Ostensibly this means 'if his hands took up my request', but we are at a loss as to precisely what — if anything — the *yadā* ('hands') would represent in this case. We have instead supposed an image of a beggar pressing his hands together (perhaps representing two streams of water flowing into the *mīzāb*) in a petition for alms, but this may stretch the meaning of the verb *iltaqaṭa*.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-muktafin so, a skinny guy	وَمُخْطَفٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite passive participle	أَخْطَفَ	خ ط ف IV
qad they have	قَد	**CERT** – particle of certainty	قَد	
ʾabrazū-hu brought him out	أَبْرَزوهُ	**V** – 3rd person masculine plural perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	أَبْرَزَ	ب ر ز IV
bādiyan visible	بادِيَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite active participle	بَادٍ	ب د و I

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
talqā-hu you meet him	تَلْقَاهُ	**V** – 2nd person masculine singular imperfect verb **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	لَقِيَ	ل ق ي I
fī in	فِي	**P** – preposition	فِي	
al-ṣayfi the summer	الصَّيْف	**N** – genitive masculine noun	صَيْف	ص ي ف

[92] A. J. Wensinck and J. Jomier, 'Kaʿba', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by P. J. Bearman and others, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005), s.v.
[93] *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr: A Medieval Journey from Cordoba to Jerusalem*, trans. by R. J. C. Broadhurst (London: I. B. Tauris, 2020 [first publ. London: Cape 1952]), pp. 134–35.

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
faqīran as a pauper	فَقِيراً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	فَقِير	ف ق ر
ʿāriyan bare	عَارِيا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite active participle	عَرِيَ	ع ر ي I
wa-fī and in	وَفِي	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **P** – preposition	فِي	
al-šitāʾi the winter	الشِّتَاء	**N** – genitive masculine definite noun	شِتَاء	ش ت و
bi-al-lujayni with the silver	بِاللُّجَيْن	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **N** – genitive masculine definite noun	لُجَيْن	ل ج ن
hāliyan ornamented	حَالِيَا	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite active participle	حَلَى	ح ل ي I

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidā if	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
yadā-hu his hands	يَدَاهُ	**N** – nominative masculine dual noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	يَد	ي د ي
iltaqatat respond	ٱلْتَقَطَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	إِلْتَقَطَ	ل ق ط VIII
li-suʾāli-ya to my request	لِسُؤَالِيَا	**P** – prefixed preposition *li* **N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 1st person singular possessive pronoun	سَأَلَ	س ء ل I
sāḡat they would fashion	صَاغَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	صَاغَ	ص و غ I
la-nā for us	لَنَا	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 1st person plural object pronoun	لِ	
min-hu from it	مِنْهُ	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person singular object pronoun	مِنْ	

husāman a sword-edge	حُسَاماً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	حُسَام	ح س م
mādiyan sharp	مَاضِيَا	**ADJ** – accusative masculine singular indefinite adjective	مَضَى	م ض ي ا

7.10 Book (الْكِتَابُ [al-kitābu])

Metre

Ṭawīl: | ‿ – ᵛ | ‿ – – – | ‿ – ᵛ | ‿ – ‿ – |

Text and translation

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي الْكِتَابِ

wa-qawlu-hū fī-l-kitābi

And his poem on the book

وَمُسْتَوْدَعٍ سِرّاً تَضَمَّنَ صَوْنَهُ * فَأَصْبَحَ مِنْهُ فِي الضَّمِيرِ مُكَتَّمَا

إِذَا مَا طَوَى كَشْحاً عَلَى سِرِّ صَاحِبٍ * تَمَنْطَقَ حَزْماً فَوْقَهُ وَتَخَتَّمَا

1. wa-mustawdaʿin sirran taḍammana ṣawna-hū * fa-ʾaṣbaha min-hú fī-d-ḍamīri mukattamá

2. ʾiḏā mā ṭawā kašḥan ʿalā sirri ṣāḥibin * tamanṭaqa ḥazman fawqa-hū wa-taḵattamá

So, someone entrusted with a secret: it guaranteed his preservation * and it has, because of him, come to be hidden in the mind;

if he enfolded someone's secret * he would gird himself with a covering and fasten it.

Notes

2a. *ʾiḏā mā ṭawā kašḥan ʿalā*. This literally means 'if he folded his flank over'; this is an idiom for 'he concealed something', but also anthropomorphises the book, evoking the turning of a page or the closing of an open codex.

2b. *tamanṭaqa*. This image of girding alludes to the use of a strap to hold the volume shut, routine in medieval bookmaking. This class II quadriliteral verb is formed from the noun *minṭaqa* ('girdle'), itself formed from the triliteral root *n-ṭ-q*.[94]

2b. *ḥazman*. The root *ḥ z m* is associated with binding; here the noun *ḥazm* is an adverbial accusative, any of whose main meanings could apply: 'discretion', 'firmness' or 'wrapping'. As a literal description of a closing book, the latter meaning is clearly the correct one, but the appropriateness of the former meanings both complicate the solving of the riddle and evoke other aspects of the book.

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[94] Wright, *Grammar*, I §67c.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-mustawdaʿin so, having been entrusted	وَمُسْتَوْدَعٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite passive participle	إِسْتَوْدَعَ	و د ع X
sirran a secret	سِرّاً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	سِرّ	س ر ر
tadammana it constituted	تَضَمَّنَ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	تَضَمَّنَ	ض م ن V
sawna-hu his preservation	صَوْنَهُ	**N** – accusative masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	صَوْن	ص و ن
fa-ʾasbaha and it has become	فَأَصْبَحَ	**REM** – prefixed resumption particle **V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	أَصْبَحَ	ص ب ح IV
min-hu from him	مِنْهُ	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person singular object pronoun	مِنْ	
fī in	فِي	**P** – preposition	فِي	
al-ḍamīri the mind	الضَّمِيرِ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	ضَمِير	ض م ر
mukattaman concealed	مُكَتَّماً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite passive participle	كَتَّمَ	ك ت م II

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidā if	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
mā that	مَا	**SUB** – subordinating conjunction	مَا	
ṭawā he enfolded	طَوَى	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	طَوَى	ط و ي I
kašhan his flank	كَشْحاً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	كَشْح	ك ش ح
ʿalā	عَلَى	**P** – preposition	عَلَى	

over				
[sirri](#) the secret	سِرِّ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	سِرّ	س ر ر
[ṣāḥibin](#) of a man	صَاحِب	**N** – genitive masculine indefinite noun	صَاحِب	ص ح ب
[tamanṭaqa](#) he would gird	تَمَنْطَقَ	**V** – 3rd person masculine perfect verb	تَمَنْطَقَ	م ن ط ق IIq
[ḥazman](#) with a wrapping	حُزْماً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	حَزْم	ح ز م I
[fawqa-hu](#) around himself	فَوْقَهُ	**P** – preposition **PRON** – 3rd person singular object pronoun	فَوْقَ	ف و ق
[wa-taḵattamá](#) and fasten itself	وَتَخَتَّمَاً	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	خَتَّمَ	خ ت م V

7.11 The image he sees in the mirror (صُورَتُهُ الَّتِي يَرَاهَا فِي الْمِرْآةِ [ṣūratu-hu allatī yarā-hā fī l-mirʾāti])

Metre

Basīṭ: | ˘ – ˘ – | ˇ ˘ – | – – ˘ – | ˷ – |

Text and translation

وَقَوْلُهُ فِي صُورَتِهِ الَّتِي يَرَاهَا فِي الْمِرْآةِ

[wa-qawlu-hū fī ṣūrati-hī allatī yarā-hā fī-l-mirʾāti](#)

And his poem on his image which he sees in the mirror.

وَزَائِرٍ لَسْتُ فِي عِشْقِي وَلَا شَغَفِي * بِوَجْهِهِ حِينَ أَلْقَاهُ بِمَحْجُوجِ

يَظَلُّ يَلْحَظُنِي عُجْباً وَأَلْحَظُهُ * وَبَيْنَنَا سَدُّ يَأْجُوجٍ وَمَأْجُوجِ

1. [wa-zāʾirin lastu fī ʿišq-ī wa-lā šaḡaf-ī * bi-wajhi-hī ḥīna ʾalqā-hú bi-maḥjūjí](#)

2. [yaẓallu yalḥazu-nī ʿujban wa-ʾalḥazu-hū * wa-bayna-nā saddu yāʾjūjin wa-māʾjūjí](#)

So, a visitor. I am not in love, in my passion * for his face, when I meet with the one I have sought.

He keeps looking at me in self-admiration; and I glance at him furtively; * and between us is the barrier of Gog and Magog.

Notes

The conceit of the first line seems to be that ostensibly the person one sees in a mirror is a visitor who is seeking to meet the onlooker, and at the same time is the onlooker himself; and yet that the onlooker is not really looking at himself, but rather at the mirror itself.

Meanwhile, the final hemistich alludes to Qurʾān, Sūra al-Kahf, 18, Ayahs 83–101, which portrays a somewhat mysterious traveller to the extreme East, D̲u al-Qarnayn ('possessor of two horns'), meeting a human people whom he can scarcely understand. They ask for his help in preventing raids by Yāʾjūj and Māʾjūj (whose names correspond to the biblical figures whose names are routinely Anglicised as Gog and Magog). D̲u al-Qarnayn blocks a mountain valley by instructing the forging of an iron wall, which presumably corresponds to the polished metal of which the mirror used by al-Muḡallis would have been made.[95]

1a. *lastu*. Qumayḥah's edition does not vocalise this word: the second-person singular masculine *lasta* would be possible; but Radwan vocalises *lastu* and we have retained this.

1b. *ʾalqā-hú bi-maḥjūjí*. The verb *laqiya* can take as object an accusative (here *-hú* 'meet him') or a prepositional phrase in *bi-* (here *bi-maḥjūjí* 'meet with the sought-for one'). *Maḥjūj* can specifically mean 'the object of a pilgrimage', and in the context of this poem's interest in self-regard, it is possible that 'when I meet the object of my pilgrimage' is connoted here.

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-zāʾirin so, a visitor	وَزَائِرٍ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive masculine singular active participle	زَارَ	ز و ر I
lastu I am not	لَسْتُ	**V** – 1st person masculine singular imperfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	لَيْسَ	
fī in	فِي	**P** – preposition		
ʿišq-ī my love	عِشْقِي	**N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 1st person singular possessive pronoun	عِشْق	ع ش ق I
wa-lā	وَلَا	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction	لَا	

[95] 'He [Dhū al-Qarnayni] travelled on; then, when he reached a place between two mountain barriers, he found beside them a people who could barely understand him. They said, 'Dhū al-Qarnayni, Gog and Magog are ruining this land. Will you build a barrier between them and us if we pay you a tribute?' He answered, 'The power my Lord has given me is better than any tribute, but if you lend me your strength, I will put up a fortification between you and them: bring me great lumps of iron!' and then, when he had filled the gap between the two mountainsides [he said], 'Work your bellows!' and then, when he had made it glow like fire, he said, 'Bring me molten metal to pour over it!' [Their enemies] could not scale the barrier, nor could they pierce it, and he said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord. But when my Lord's promise is fulfilled, He will raze this barrier to the ground: my Lord's promise always comes true.' On that Day, We shall let them surge against each other like waves and then the Trumpet will be blown and We shall gather them all together. We shall show Hell to the disbelievers, those whose eyes were blind to my signs, those who were unable to hear'. *The Qurʾān*, trans. by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 189.

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
and not		*wa* **NEG** – negative particle		
<u>šaḡaf</u>-<u>ī</u> my infatuation	شَغِفِي	**N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 1st person singular possessive pronoun	شَغِف	ش غ ف
<u>bi</u>-<u>wajhi</u>-<u>hī</u> with his face	بِوَجْهِهِ	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 3 rd person singular possessive pronoun	وَجْه	و ج ه
<u>hīna</u> when	حِينَ	**T** – accusative masculine time adverb	حِينَ	
ʾ<u>alqā</u>-<u>hū</u> I meet him	أَلْقَاهُ	**V** – 1st person masculine singular imperfect verb **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	لَقِيَ I	ل ق ي
<u>bi</u>-<u>mahjūji</u> the sought-for one	بِمَحْجُوج	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **N** – genitive masculine indefinite passive participle	حَجَّ I	ح ج ج

Translation	**Arabic word**	**Syntax and morphology**	**Headword**	**Root**
<u>yazallu</u> he remains	يَظَلُّ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	ظَلَّ I	ظ ل ل
<u>yalhazu</u>-<u>nī</u> [that] he looks at me out of the corner of his eye	يَلْحَظُنِي	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb **PRON** – 1st person singular object pronoun	لَحَظَ I	ل ح ظ
ʾ<u>ujban</u> in self-admiration	عُجْباً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	عُجْب	ع ج ب
<u>wa</u>-ʾ<u>alhazu</u>-<u>hū</u> and I glance at him	وَأَلْحَظُهُ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **V** – 1st person masculine singular imperfect verb **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	لَحَظَ I	ل ح ظ
<u>wa</u>-<u>bayna</u>-<u>nā</u> and between us	وَبَيْنَنَا	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **P** – preposition **PRON** – 1st person plural object pronoun	بَيْنَ	

saddu the barrier	سَدُّ	**N** – nominative masculine noun	سَدَّ	س د د
yāʾjūjin of Gog	يَأْجُوجِ	**PN** – genitive singular proper noun	يَأْجُوج	loanword
wa-māʾjūji and Magog	وَمَأْجُوج	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **PN** – genitive singular proper noun	مَأْجُوج	loanword

7.12 The baths (الْحَمَّامُ [al-ḥammāmu])

Metre

Ṭawīl: | ᴗ – ˘ | ᴗ – – – | ᴗ – ˘ | ᴗ – ᴗ – |

The poem twice makes use of the poetic license whereby a medial short vowel is omitted: *wa-hwa* for *wa-huwa* in 2b and *kurbī* for *kurabī* in 3a.[96] We have vocalised the Arabic here in accordance with its poetic pronunciation rather than the standard forms.

Text and translation

وَقَوْله فِي الْحَمَّامِ

[wa](wa)-qawlu-[hū](hu) [fī](fi)-[l](l)-[ḥammāmi](hammami)

And his poem on the baths

وَمَنْزِلِ أَقْوَامٍ إِذَا مَا ٱلْتَقَوْا بِهِ * تَشَابَهَ فِيهِ وَغْدُهُ وَرَئِيسُهُ

يُخَالِطُ فِيهِ الْمَرْءُ غَيْرَ خَلِيطِهِ * وَيَضْحَى عَدُوُّ الْمَرْءِ وَهْوَ جَلِيسُهُ

يُنَفِّسُ كُرْبِي أَنْ تَزِيدَ كُرُوبُهُ * وَيُؤنِسُ قَلْبِي أَنْ يَقِلَّ أَنِيسُهُ

إِذَا مَا أَعَرْتَ الْجَوَّ طَرْفاً تَكَاثَرَتْ * عَلَيْكَ بِهِ أَقْمَارُهُ وَشُمُوسُهُ

1. [wa](wa)-manzili [ʾaqwāmin](aqwamin) [ʾidā](ida) [mā](ma) ltaqaw [bi](bi)-[hī](hi) * [tašābaha](tasabaha) [fī](fi)-[hí](hi) [waǧdu](wagdu)-[hū](hu) [wa](wa)-[raʾīsu](raisu)-[hū](hu)

2. [yukālitu](yukalitu) [fī](fi)-[hi](hi) [l](l)-[marʾu](maru) ghayra [kalīti](kaliti)-[hī](hi) * [wa](wa)-[yadhā](yadha) [ʾaduwwu](aduwwu) [l](l)-[marʾi](mari) [wa](wa)-[hwa](hwa) [jalīsu](jalisu)-[hū](hu)

3. yunaffisu kurb-[ī](i) [ʾan](an) [tazīda](tazida) [kurūbu](kurubu)-[hū](hu) * [wa](wa)-[yuʾnisu](yunisu) qalb-[ī](i) [ʾan](an) yaqilla [ʾanīsu](anisu)-[hū](hu)

4. [ʾidā](ida) [mā](ma) [ʾaʿarta](aarta) [l](l)-jawwa [ṭarfan](tarfan) [takāṭarat](takatarat) * [ʿalay](alay)-[ka](ka) [bi](bi)-[hī](hi) [ʾaqmāru](aqmaru)-[hū](hu) [wa](wa)-[šumūsu](sumusu)-[hū](hu)

So, a waystation for people; when they meet in it, * the villain sort and the prince sort look the same;

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[96] See Wright, II §246.

a man mingles in it with his opposites; * he becomes a person's adversary and is his companion.

It relieves my worries as its torments increase, * and it reassures my heart when its close friends diminish.

Yet when you lend the atmosphere a glance, * moons and suns throng before you in it.

Notes

1a. *manzili*. While routinely meaning 'house, home' now, etymologically this word denotes a temporary residence. In astronomy it can also denote one of the twenty-eight stations of the moon, which given the final hemistich is perhaps relevant here.

1b. *tašābaha*. Perfect tense used to express a hypothetical situation following ʾiḏā.

1b. *waǧdu-hū wa-raʾīsu-hū*. The suffix *-hū* here means 'of its kind', '-type', thus literally 'the villain kind of person and the prince kind of person'.

3a. *tazīda kurūbu-hū*. Feminine singular verb agreeing with masculine plural inanimate subject. Here the bath-house clearly comforts at its own expense. Al-Maʾmūnī's epigrams on the *ḥammām*, also composed in later tenth-century Baghdad, describe how the bath is tormented by heat to the benefit of the bather, and our translation assumes that similar imagery is at work here.[97]

3b. *qalbī*. An accusative singular noun whose accusative marker *-a* has been assimilated to the following first-person possessive pronoun. Perhaps people go to the baths to rid themselves of the stress and tensions of everyday life, but this stress can get accentuated by the crowds, so the bath comforts the bather better if its users are fewer?

4. *ʾiḏā mā ʾaʿarta l-jawwa ṭarfan takāṭarat * ʿalay-ka bi-hī ʾaqmāru-hū wa-šumūsu-hū*. This line refers to the oculi (small skylights) that characterise the roof of a *ḥammām*, which constitute a constellation above the bather.[98] These non-human subjects take the feminine singular form of verb. Perhaps there is a second meaning, that as one scrutinises the scene people who are well known can be recognised; they are 'moon kinds [of people]' and 'sun kinds [of people]' in the sense that they are celebrities ('stars' or 'luminaries').

Running gloss

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-manzili so, a dwelling	وَمَنْزِلِ	**P** – prefixed preposition *wa* **N** – genitive singular masculine noun	مَنْزِل	ن ز ل
ʾaqwāmin of people	أَقْوَام	**N** – genitive plural masculine indefinite noun	قَوْم	ق و م
ʾiḏā if	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	

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[97] *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, ed. by Qumayḥah Beirut, iv 197; Bürgel, *Die ekphrastischen Epigramme*, pp. 268–69, 316–17 [nos 35 and 35a].

[98] For comparisons see Bürgel, *Die ekphrastischen Epigramme*, pp. 268–69. For a range of images from late medieval and early modern baths, see Magda Sibley, 'Let There Be Light! Investigating Vernacular Daylighting in Moroccan Heritage Hammams for Rehabilitation, Benchmarking and Energy Saving', *Sustainability*, 10 (2018), article 3984.

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>mā</u> that	مَا	**SUB** – subordinating conjunction	مَا	
<u>iltaqaw</u> they meet	ٱلْتَقَوْا	**V** – 3rd person masculine plural perfect verb **PRON** – subject pronoun	ٱلْتَقَى	ل ق ي VIII
<u>bi</u>-<u>hī</u> in him	بِهِ	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	بِ	

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>tašābaha</u> looks the same	تَشَابَهَ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular perfect verb	تَشَابَهَ	ش ب ه
<u>fī</u>-<u>hī</u> in him	فِيهِ	**P** – prefixed preposition *fī* **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	فِي	
<u>waġdu</u>-<u>hū</u> villain-type	وَغْدُهُ	**N** – nominative singular masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	وَغْد	و غ د
<u>wa</u>-<u>raʾīsu</u>-<u>hū</u> and leader-type	وَرَئِيسُهُ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **N** – nominative masculine singular active participle **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	رَئِيس	ر ء س I

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
<u>yukālitu</u> mingles	يُخَالِطُ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	خَالَطَ	خ ل ط III
<u>fī</u>-<u>hī</u> in him	فِيهِ	**P** – prefixed preposition *fī* **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	فِي	
<u>al</u>-<u>marʾu</u> the person	الْمَرْءُ	**N** – nominative masculine noun	اِمْرُؤ	م ر ء

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ghayra [someone] other than	غَيْرَ	**N** – accusative masculine noun	غَيْر	غ ي ر
kalīti-hī his companion	خَلِيطِهِ	**N** – genitive masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	خَلِيط	خ ل ط

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-yadhā and becomes	وَيَضْحَى	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	أَضْحَى	ض ح و IV
ʿaduwwu an enemy	عَدُوٌّ	**N** – nominative masculine singular indefinite noun	عَدُوّ	ع د و
al-marʾi of a person	الْمَرْءِ	**N** – genitive masculine noun	اِمْرُؤ	م ر ء
wa-huwa and he [is]	وَهْوَ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular personal pronoun	هُوَ	
jalīsu-hu his table-companion	جَلِيسُهُ	**N** – nominative masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	جَلِيس	ج ل س

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
yunaffisu he relieves	يُنَفِّسُ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	نَفَّسَ	ن ف س II
kurab-ī my worries	كُرْبِي	**N** – accusative feminine plural noun **PRON** – 1st person singular possessive pronoun	كُرْبَة	ك ر ب
ʾan so that	أَنْ	**SUB** – subordinating conjunction	أَنْ	
tazīda increase	تَزِيدَ	**V** – 3rd person feminine singular imperfect verb	زَادَ	ز ي د

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
kurūbu-hu his torments	كُرُوْبُهُ	**N** – nominative masculine plural noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	كَرْب	ك ر ب

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
wa-yuʾnisu and he comforts	وَيُوْنِسُ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	أَنَسَ	ء ن س I
qalb-ī my heart	قَلْبِي	**N** – accusative masculine noun **PRON** – 1st person singular possessive pronoun	قَلْب	ق ل ب
ʾan so that	أَنْ	**SUB** – subordinating conjunction	أَنْ	
yaqilla diminishes	يَقِلَّ	**V** – 3rd person masculine singular imperfect verb	قَلَّ	ق ل ل I
ʾanīsu-hu his close friend(s)	أَنِيسُهُ	**N** – nominative masculine noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	أَنِيس	ء ن س

Translation	Arabic word	Syntax and morphology	Headword	Root
ʾidā if	إِذَا	**COND** – conditional particle	إِذَا	
mā that	مَا	**SUB** – subordinating conjunction	مَا	
ʾaʿarta you lent	أَعَرْتَ	**V** – 2nd person masculine singular perfect verb	أَعَارَ	ع و ر
al-jawwa the atmosphere	الْجَوَّ	**N** – accusative masculine noun	جَوّ	ج و و
ṭarfan a glance	طَرْفاً	**N** – accusative masculine indefinite noun	طَرْف	ط ر ف
takātarat congregate	تَكَاثَرَتْ	**V** – 3rd person feminite singular perfect verb	تَكَاثَرَ	ك ث ر VI

ʿalay-ka around you	عَلَيْكَ	**P** – prefixed preposition *ʿalā* **PRON** – 2nd person masculine singular object pronoun	عَلَى	
bi-hi in him	بِهِ	**P** – prefixed preposition *bi* **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular object pronoun	ب	
ʾaqmāru-hu moons-type	أَقْمَارُهُ	**N** – nominative masculine plural noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	قَمَر	ق م ر
wa-šumūsu-hu and suns-type	وَشُمُوسُهُ	**CONJ** – prefixed conjunction *wa* **N** – nominative masculine plural noun **PRON** – 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronoun	شَمْس	ش م س