

ART. XIV.—*Some Notes on the Divâns of the Arabic Tribes.*<sup>1</sup>

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THE *Divân of the Hudeilites* must be regarded as our single remaining inheritance of a great mass of literature which formed an important part of the results obtained by the Arab philologists in their first endeavours to collect the old poetry of the Arabs.

Indeed, the history of Arabic literature, which—if it be ever once realised—must suffice for the oldest period with recording many lost productions of learning and diligence, has exactly this office to fulfil when it begins to give an account of the labours of philological workers in the field of ancient poetry.

Besides preserving and revising those more remarkable poems which of old won fame and renown throughout all Arabdom as the most exalted products of their classic composers (*fuḥûl*), quite regardless of the special tribes which produced them, the old scholars did not fail to devote themselves to collecting the *divâns* of particular tribes. Their task was to gather together all the traditions of each tribe relating to earlier times, and to set them down in writing. In so doing, they turned their attention to the compositions of the *tribe-poets* which had been preserved in the memory of the tribe, and which were mostly associated with its historical recollections. To obtain such information, the philologists themselves were not always obliged to wander about in the desert from tent to tent. Frequently, they caused to be brought into town some dweller of the waste who was especially fitted to impart the desired

<sup>1</sup> For the English translation of the following article, written originally in German, the author is obliged to the kindness of his friend, Dr. F. D. Chester, Rogers Fellow of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

knowledge by his large acquaintance and the wealth of his remembrances, and interviewed him at their ease in their own apartments of study. Ishâk al-Mausilî, who was constantly engaged in the search for ancient traditions, neglected to breakfast one day with a certain man of high rank, by whom he had been invited, because at the time he had a Bedawî in his parlour, whose dictations he was eagerly taking down.<sup>1</sup> In that chapter of the *Fihrist* which deals with the Humanists, frequently occurs the name of some A'râbî who made himself useful to scholars in the city (p. 44 ff.).

Thus the studies pursued by the scholars of the second century A.H. with the pure-blooded representatives of Arabdom, were, apart from specifically linguistic researches, to a large extent directed to collecting the poetic memoirs of the various tribes. From them resulted the *Tribes-Diwâns*, and to such labours as above described they owed their birth. And it is not at all surprising to learn<sup>2</sup> that these collections, in the hands of able men like *Khalaf al-aḥmar*, were exposed to the risk of forgery and apocryphal interpolation. The impulse and stimulus which the cultivation of such studies already received under the Umayyads<sup>3</sup> among official circles—a fact illustrated by anecdotes preserved in the literature<sup>4</sup>—make it in

<sup>1</sup> *Aḡ.*, v, 120, 5 ff.—In 'Abbaside times the Bedawî-poet, Nāhiḍ ibn Thauma, used to make his appearance in Baṣra, at which time the philologists would take advantage of his presence in the city (*Aḡ.*, xii, 33). Likewise, from the contact with the desert-Arabs afforded by the *Ḥajj*, the philologists endeavoured to draw profit for their learning (*Aḡ.*, xviii, 190). It is interesting to learn at a later period how *Al-Azharī* (282-370), having fallen captive to the Carmathians, turned to account the intercourse he was then permitted to enjoy with Bedawî of diverse tribes, during his involuntary sojourn among them, for his *Tahḍīb al-luḡa*. He tells at some length about it in his introduction to that work (*Antiquities of the Khedivial Library at Cairo*, iv, 169). In the year 230, when Buḡa swept many Banû Numayr-Bedawî captive into Bagdad, the philologists hurried to the capital in order to make the most of the wild fellows for purposes of learning (*Al-Kātib, Nawādir*, MS. of the Bibl. Nationale in Paris, Suppl. arab., 1935, fol. 60<sup>a</sup> = *Khizānat al-adab*, iv, 239).

<sup>2</sup> *Muzḥir*, ii, 203.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob, *Das Leben der vorislamischen Beduinen*, 2. Cf. the passages quoted in *Muhammedanische Studien*, ii, 203.

<sup>4</sup> We refer to anecdotes relating to philologists such as *Aḡ.*, v, 106 (= *Al-Ḥarīrī, Durrat al-jawwāḥ*, ed. Thorbecke, 177), vi, 128, xx, 179. Noteworthy in this connection is the following narrative from the introduction of

a high degree likely to suppose that the preparation of such repertoires, if we may so call them, was even then in progress. At any rate, it is related of Ḥammād al-Rāwiya, in a passage already brought to our notice by

*Abū Ahmad Ḥasan al-Askarī* (d. 382) to his شرح ما يقع فيه التصحيف والتحريف (MS. Landberg):—

وأخبرني أبو العباس بن عمار سمعتُ سليمان بن أبي شيخ يحكي  
ان الأصمعي ذكر يوماً بنى أمية [او قال بنى مروان انا أشك]  
وشغتهمم بالعلم فقال كانوا ربّما اختلفوا وهم بالشام في بيت من  
الشعرا وخبروا يوم من ايام العرب فييبردون فيه بربدا الى العراق  
واخبرني ابو بكر محمد بن الحسن بن دريد اخبرنا ابو عثمان عن  
التوزي عن ابي عبيدة قال ما كنا نَقْد في كل يوم راكبا من ناحية  
بنى أمية يُسبخ على باب قتادة يسأله عن خبر او نسب او شعر  
وكان قتادة أجمع الناس ، قال ابو بكر اخبرني ابن اخي الاصمعي  
عن محمد بن سلام الجُمحى قال لقد كان الرجلان من بنى مروان  
يختلفان في بيت شعر فيرسلان راكبا الى قتادة يسأله ، قال ولقد قدم  
عليه رجل من عند بعض اولاد الخلفاء من بنى مروان فقال لقتادة  
من قتل حمراً و عامراً التعلّيبين يوم قِصّة فقال قتلها جحدر بن  
ضُبَيْعَة بن قيس بن ثعلبة ، قال فشخص بها ثم عاد اليه فقال أجل  
قتلها جحدر ولكن كيف قتلها جميعا فقال اعتوراها فطعن هذا  
بالسنان وهذا بالزجّ فعادى بينهما ، واخبرني الحسين بن ابراهيم  
بن شعيب قاضى أَرْجان اخبرنا ابو العيناء حدّثنا ابو عاصم عن ابيه  
قال ان كان الرجلان من بنى أمية يختلفان في البيت من الشعر  
فيبردان فيه بربدا الى العراق

Cf. *Aj.*, iv, 146, 14 ff.

Wellhausen,<sup>1</sup> that he made ready for an interview with the caliph Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd, in the belief that the caliph would question him concerning the poems of one or another tribe to which he stood in kindred relation, by cramming the "*Book of the Kureish*" and the "*Book of the Thakīf*" (فنظرتُ في كتابي قريش وثقيف). Very old also must have been the كتاب بني تميم, to which I have called attention on a previous occasion.<sup>2</sup> Yet, if the passage in which such a book is mentioned, can really be referred to a written collection of the *memoirs and poems of the tribe of Tamim*, the ascription of the verse containing that mention to the poet Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim rests on a very weak basis. It is improbable—nay, impossible—that such a collection existed as early as the time of that poet.

In the following generation these labours move actively forward. The scholars of the 'Abbaside epoch, on the basis of the preliminary attempts of the previous period, make their humanistic studies to share in the general outburst of the sciences and energetically continue the collection of tribe-divāns.

Under the name of Khālid ibn Kulthūm,<sup>3</sup> who apparently belongs back in Umayyad times, a كتاب اشعار القبائل is mentioned, with the observation that it embraced a number of Arab tribes (ويحتوي على عدة قبائل).<sup>4</sup> From the lips of an Arab of the tribe of Asad, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Faḫ'asī (lived down to the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd), the *memoirs of the tribe of Asad*<sup>5</sup> were compiled, resulting in a كتاب مآثر بني اسد واشعارها. Possibly Abū 'Ubeida (d. circa 207–10 A.H.) followed in the same path with his

<sup>1</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidenthums*, 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Z. D. M. G.*, xxxii (1878), 355, *Muḥ. Stud.*, ii, 205. (Cf. also Abū Zeid, *Nawādir*, ed. Beirūt, 32, 12, where the verse is cited anonymously.)

<sup>3</sup> As to the uncertainty which prevails respecting the age when this scholar lived, see my Introduction to the *Divān of al-Huṭai'a*, 48 note.

<sup>4</sup> *Fihrist*, 66, 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, 16 f. Flügel, *Gramm. Schulen*, 55.

monographs on the *Ġatafân*, *Aus*, and *Khazraj*, as also the *Banû Mâzin*.<sup>1</sup> And elsewhere a "Book of the Tamîmile Tribe of Mâzin" is anonymously cited.<sup>2</sup> On the authority of Al-Dâraḡuṭnî (d. 385) we learn of "an old book in which the author had collected notices of the tribe of *Dabba* and its poets."<sup>3</sup> Abû-l-Ḳâsim al-Âmidî (d. 370), in his book on homonymous poets (*Kitâb al-mu'talif wal-mukhtalif*), having occasion to determine whether a certain verse belonged to Abu-l-Ġûl al-Ṭuhawî or to a poet of the tribe of Nahshal bearing the same name, rests his decision on the fact that he had discovered accounts of Al-Ṭuhawî in the "Book of the Tribe of Ṭuhayya," while he had never seen a poet of this name mentioned in the "Book of the Tribe of Nahshal."<sup>4</sup> The same Al-Âmidî refers also to a "Book of Banû-l-Ḳein b. al-Jasr."<sup>5</sup> At what time these collections were first edited we cannot, from the notices to which we are indebted for the knowledge of their actual existence, conclude with any certainty. We are equally left in ignorance as to the names of their authors. A collection of the *Dabba* and *Nahshal* poets is given by the *Fihrist* (159, 7, 8) as the work of Al-Sukkarî; but it is not probable that a book from this philologist would be alluded to a century later as a *Kitâb 'alîk*. Apparently an older, less elaborate work is to be understood, whose further revision and completion were undertaken by Al-Sukkarî, as in the case of the Hudeilite compositions and the individual diwâns which that careful scholar published. However that may be, we perceive

<sup>1</sup> *Fihrist*, 54, 7. 13. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Yâḡût*, *Geogr. Diet.*, iv, 360, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Apud *Usd al-gâba*, ii, 339, 3: ذكر صاحب الكتاب العتيق الذي جمع فيه اخبار بنى ضبة واخبار شعرائهم.

<sup>4</sup> *Khizânat al-adâb*, iii, 108: وله (لابى الغول الطهوى) في هذا حديث في هذا حديث . . . . . ولم أر له ذكراً في كتاب نهشل وخمير في كتاب طهية . . . . .

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 426: كذا وجدته في كتاب بنى القين بن الجسر.

that the philologists of the fourth century A.H., whenever any matter relating to a poet was unclear to them, could turn to the respective Tribe-Monograph. Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. circa 250-2) had done the same, in order to determine the correct reading in a crooked verse<sup>1</sup>: that is to say, he collated the verse with the collection of that *Ḳabīla* to which the author of the verse in question belonged.

To this end stood ready about this time for scholars' reference the complete works of a man who, as it seems, marks the highest point in the redaction of those *Ḳabīla*-repertoires, to wit, *Abū 'Amr al-Sheibānī* (d. circa 205-10). He is reported to have put together over eighty tribe-dīwāns. All further propagation of this mass of literature was based upon his communication of the same<sup>2</sup> (وَأَخَذَ عَنْهُ) (دواوين اشعار القبائل كلها). He may be said to have incorporated all the acquisitions of his predecessors. Only three hundred years ago single portions of this work lay within reach of the learned '*Abd al-Ḳādir ibn 'Omar al-Baġdādī* (eleventh century A.H.), at the disposal of whom stood a whole library of bibliographic curiosa, now partly lost, as material for his *Khizānat al-adab*, a book throughout rich in all kinds of learning.<sup>3</sup> He is able,

<sup>1</sup> Abū Zeid, *Nawādir*, 118, 16: نظرتُ في شعر القبيلة فإذا فيه الخ.

<sup>2</sup> *Fihrist*, 68, 7.

<sup>3</sup> To give only an example or two: '*Abd al-Ḳādir al-Baġdādī* had before him an autograph copy of the commentary of *Abū 'Ubcida Mu'amar ibn al-Muthannā* on the *Dīwān* of *Bishr ibn Abī Khāzim* (according to *Al-Baġdādī*, in *Kusf* script: cf. ii, 262).—The citations from the *Dīwān of the Hudeilites* he was able to collate with a well-attested copy dating from the year 200 A.H. (ii, 317, bottom):

نسخة قديمة صحيحة تاريخ كتابتها في سنة مائتين بعد الهجرة عليها خطوط العلماء منهم ابن فارس صاحب المجلد في اللغة كتب على ظهرها سند روايته. He makes use of the same codex, iii, 161, where he

names as its executor (ابو بكر القاري شارح اشعار الهذليين

The single existing copy of Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Mu'ammārīn*, now

for instance, to cite a verse of Ufnûn al-Taglibî from the "Taglib Poets" of Abû 'Amr.<sup>1</sup> In speaking of another poet he states that he has used the same author's collection of the poems of the tribe *Banû Muḥârib b. Kḥaṣafa ibn K̄eis ibn 'Ailân*, in a manuscript of that work dated 291 A.H. This manuscript had been prepared on the basis of an earlier one, executed by Abu-l-Ḥasan al-Ṭûsî (also noted<sup>2</sup> as a *راويّة القبائل*) and approved by his teacher Ibn Al-A'râbî (d. 231-3)—

وَأَمَّا الشَّعْرُ الثَّانِي فَهُوَ . . . . لِرَقِيمِ أَخِي بَنِي الصَّادِرَةِ الْمَحَارِبِيِّ  
 وَأُورِدَهَا أَبُو عَمْرٍو الشَّيْبَانِيُّ فِي أَشْعَارِ قَبِيلَةِ مَحَارِبِ بْنِ خَصْفَةَ بْنِ  
 قَيْسِ عَيْلَانَ وَهُوَ عِنْدِي فِي نَسْخَةٍ قَدِيمَةٍ تَأْرِيضُ كِتَابَتَهَا فِي صَفْرَسَنَةِ  
 أَحَدَى وَتَسْعِينَ وَمِائَتَيْنِ وَكَاتَبَهَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ  
 الْفَزَارِيِّ قَالَ نَقَلْتَهَا مِنْ نَسْخَةٍ أَبِي الْحُسَيْنِ (sic) الطُّوسِيِّ وَقَدْ عَرَّضْتُ  
 عَلَى ابْنِ الْأَعْرَابِيِّ<sup>3</sup>

Even Al-Sukkarî (d. 271) busied himself not only with re-editing the dîwâns of the classical poets, but also with

in the University Library of Cambridge (Q 285), was used by 'Abd al-Kâdir al-Baghdâdî. The title-page bears an autograph notice from him. For literary-historical purposes, an orderly list of the books and treatises cited in the *Khizâna* would form a most desirable supplement to Guidi's index to the same. Many a rare or entirely lost work can now be known only from such citations.

<sup>1</sup> *Khizânât al-adab*, iv, 466, 5: *أفنون التغلبى أوردها له أبو عمرو*. الشيبانى فى اشعار تغلب. Cf. iii, 614, 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Fihrist*, 71, 10. For *Al-Ṭûsî* see Kremer, *Über die Gedichte des Labyd* (Sitzungsber. d. Wiener Akademie d. Wiss., phil. hist. Cl. 1881), 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Khiz. ad.*, iii, 165.

publishing a whole lot of tribe-dīwāns.<sup>1</sup> Of the latter (in Sukkarī's recension) nothing more than a large part of the *Hudēilite dīwāns* now remains, which owes much to the pains bestowed upon it by that philologist. But about this time, in place of full dīwāns of the tribes, series of selections from this now vast literature begin to give satisfaction. Such a chrestomathy of Ḳabāil-dīwāns, in addition to his Ḥamāsa, which he arranged according to subject-matter, was put into shape by *Abū Tammām* (d. 231) in his compilation entitled *مختارات اشعار القبائل*. But this chrestomathy, often used by the author of the *Khizānat al-adab* for the purpose of collating verses cited by him, has also not come down to us.

With the disappearance of the immediate interest in the tribal life of the desert, regard for Ḳabāil-dīwāns more and more vanished in the background. Most of what the tribes preserved from their poets and transmitted to the eager philologists now excited but a limited interest, and this for the most part only in the narrow circle of the members of the respective tribes. Not all that a tribe preserved from its bards stood on a level of poetic vigour and perfection adequate to a wider, less personally interested, universal demand. The redactors of poetical compilations, therefore, came to pick out those classic pieces which won recognition in wider circles, or to select whatever, by reason of its celebrity or because of the historical points of interest attaching to its origin, appeared worthy, over and above the particular fellowship of the tribe, to become the common property of Arab society at large and to be valued in the widest circles as masterpieces of poetry. It is possible that even a large part of the *Mufaddaliyyāt* is only a selection containing the better pieces of various tribe-dīwāns. According to a literary-historical notice, *Abu 'Amr al-Sheibāni* really became acquainted with the tribe-dīwāns

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-five of these are enumerated in the *Fihrist*, 169, 6-10. Further, 78, 24: *وعمل السكّري اشعار جماعة من النحول وقطعة من القبائل*.



which he afterwards published, from the instruction he received from Al-Mufaddal al-Dabbî.<sup>1</sup> Such anthologies, in which the best specimens from among the poetical treasures of the tribes were brought together, as well as the ever more firmly crystallizing diwâns of the *Fuhûl*, must be placed first among the causes whereby the tribe-diwâns fell into neglect—later on into actual oblivion. One single collection has been spared this fate through the special care shown it by the transmitters of poetical tradition,<sup>2</sup> it may be because the poetic excellences of its contents entitled it to an exceptionally high place above the general compositions of tribe-poets—I mean the “*Diwân of the Tribe of Hudeil*.” This work shows us, among other things, that these tribal traditions covered not only the events of the Jâhiliyya period, but extended quite down into the Umayyad epoch, that is to say, well on to the time when activity in making collections of this sort was already under way. With the decay of this literature at once fell into oblivion poets’ names which once loudly resounded in the midst of their respective tribes. Compositions likewise disappeared which were once objects of admiration in the camps of Beduin, who haughtily boasted of the deeds of their fellow-kinsmen. Fragments of such poems are still plentifully preserved in the *Nawâdir*-works, now standing without their original context. And many a unique, otherwise unknown, poet’s name appearing in the work of Abu Zeid al-Ansârî, printed in Beirût some two years ago, with the verses thereto attached, was drawn from the *Ash‘âr al-Ḳabâil*.

Of those tribe-dîwâns whose collection formed the labours of the most important philologists during the second and third centuries A.H., and of which a number, though in only

<sup>1</sup> Abû-l-Barakât al-Anbârî (d. 577), *Nuzhat al-alibbâ’ fî ṭabaḳât al-udabâ’* (Cairo, 1294), 121 ult. ويحكى أنه اخذ عن المفضل الضبي دواوين العرب وسمعتها منه.

<sup>2</sup> *Aj.*, xxi, 144, 11 ff.

rare and unique copies, were still to be found as literary rarities three hundred years ago, nothing further is known. For the completion of our acquaintance with the inner life of the various Arab tribes, they would be to us of inestimable value. But like so many other precious portions of the old Arabic literature, they seem to have irretrievably vanished. Only an unexpected turn of fortune, such as favours literary finds in our day, can bring them once more to light from the dark depths of some Oriental library.

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