We know of no orations (khutbas) except by the Arabs and Persians. As for the Indians, they have inscribed themes, ageless books, that cannot be ascribed to any known man … The Greeks have philosophy and the craft of logic, but the author of the Logic [Aristotle] himself … was not described as eloquent … The Persians have orators, except that the speech of the ‘Jām … derives from long contemplation and … the studying of books … [As for] the [speech] of the Arabs it is all extemporaneity and spontaneity, as though it is [simply] inspiration … (al-Jāḥīz, d. 255/868 or 9, al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn)

In the seventh and eighth centuries C.E., rather than painting or sculpture or music, the peoples of Arabia assiduously cultivated the

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*K* This paper is dedicated with deep gratitude to Wolfhart Heinrichs, a true mentor and a rare scholar, whose many works on classical Arabic literary theory have been foundational in the field.

** Many of the *khutbas* cited in this article derive from the following three anthologies: Ṣafwat 1933-4; al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015), *Nahj al-balāgha*; Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893), *Balāghāt al-nisā‘*.

*** “Oral literature,” being equivalent to “oral writing” (Latin: *littera*: a letter), is a contradiction in terms, but for lack of a more precise expression, I use in this paper the terms “literature,” “literary,” and “belles-lettres” to include the written and the oral artistic productions of language.

art of the spoken word—the eloquently, metaphorically, rhythmically, appositely spoken word. It is well known that a major genre of this oral tradition was poetry; it is less well known that the primary prose form of that art was the *khutba*, or oration.

The *khutba* was a crucial piece of the Arabic literary landscape, and a key component of political and spiritual leadership. In both the pre-Islamic and early Islamic phases of Arabian life, it had significant political, social, and religious functions. It roused warriors to battle, legislated on civic and criminal matters, raised awareness of the nearness of death and the importance of leading a pious life, called to the new religion of Islam, and even formed part of its ritual worship. For a long time, it was the only prose genre in existence; it included both speeches and sermons, and partially subsumed proverbs (*amthâl*) and the rhymed pronouncements of the soothsayers (*saj‘ al-kuhhân*). Written epistles and treaties, although existent, came a distant second in terms of volume, and did not pretend to high style. The *khutba* texts extant in the medieval Arabic sources form some of the most beautiful and powerful expressions of the Arabic literary canon.

Moreover, the early *khutba* had enormous influence on subsequent artistic prose. Indeed, the Qur‘an itself contained many of the stylistic features of the oration, such as parallelism, vivid imagery, direct address, rhyme, and assonance. For over a century, alongside the Qur‘an—without its divine authority, certainly, but with a great deal of spiritual and temporal clout—the *khutba* reigned supreme as the preeminent prose genre of the Arabic literary corpus. Towards the end of the Umayyad period, a vibrant new genre of written epistolary prose, called the *risāla*, emerged.3 The *risāla* was greatly influenced by Persian and Greek administrative writings, but it was also largely shaped by the form, themes, and style of the Arabic *khutba*.4 The

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2 Proverbs, sometimes derived from poems, were at other times single sentences wrested from a *khutba* or a *khutba*-like speech.

3 On the transition of Arabic culture from oral to written, see Toorawa 2005, 34; Schoeler 2006.

4 One indication of the influence of oratory on chancery prose is the direction given by writers of important chancery manuals to secretaries, to study and memorize *khutbas*: Abû Hilāl (d. after 395/1005), *Kitâb al-Šinâ‘atayn*, 64; al-Qalqashandî (d. 821/1418), *Šubh al-a‘shâ*, 1:210, quoting Abû Ja‘far al-Nâhîhîs (d. 338/950) and Abû Hilāl.
risāla’s chancery prose style of inshā’,⁵ as it came to be called, gave rise in turn to the major fictional genres of medieval times, particularly the maqāma.⁶ The maqāma, in its own turn, partially inspired the modern Arabic novel. In this context, then, the early khutba may be called the mother of the prose genres of Arabic literature.

Compared to other world cultures that produced orations still extant, such as the Greek and the Israelite, pre-Islamic and early Islamic society appears to be at a point on the oral-written continuum closer to a pristine primary orality.⁷ The Arabic orations under study in this paper thus form an important and perhaps unique set of materials for the study of this genre in its largely oral stage.

In light of its literary and cultural importance, it is surprising that Western critical scholarship on the early khutba has been reticent. Several studies have been published in Arabic (mostly descriptive rather than analytical),⁸ but almost none outside it. In European languages, the only monograph is Stephan Dähne’s published dissertation, Reden der Araber, which focuses on the rhetorical features of Umayyad and Abbasid political speeches.⁹ Encyclopedia entries that touch on the khutba, though useful, are brief,¹⁰ as are book subchapters on oratory.¹¹ Just a handful of articles analyze specific khutbas (these articles are footnoted at relevant points in this paper). Moreover, as Philip Halldén correctly pointed out, the numerous modern European studies of Arabic balāgha (rhetoric, eloquence) have generally ignored the khaṭāba (oratory) tradition.¹²

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⁵ On the inshā’ style, see Meisami 1998a 1:105-6.

⁶ Particularly in the 10th century, the genre that rendered poetry into prose named “loosening the rhyme,” or “ḥall al-nazm,” also played a part in giving literary prose its ornate character, by importing into it a large number of poetic motifs. Cf. Sanni 1998.

⁷ A comprehensive study of orality/literacy issues is Ong 1982.


¹⁰ The more recent encyclopedia articles that touch on the khutba are by Meisami 1998b, Leder 1998, and Bosworth 1998 in the Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature. Earlier ones are by Wensinck and Pederson in the EI².


¹² See Halldén 2005, 19-38. He finds that no European studies on balāgha have commented significantly on khaṭāba, from the earliest European exposition in 1853.
This lack of interest in a major genre of Arabic literature may be attributed partly to the fact that the medieval Arabic critics presented no sustained treatments of oratory. It may also reflect modern Western perceptions that the *khuṭba* is undeserving of serious attention, being of inferior quality,\(^\text{13}\) that *khaṭaba* belongs to the realm of philosophy, not literature,\(^\text{14}\) or that the early *khuṭbas* are—this, according to the eminent historian Albrecht Noth—“fictions from beginning to end.”\(^\text{15}\)

The first perception is disproved quite easily, by referring the reader to the texts themselves (see Appendix). The second is refuted equally effortlessly, by referring the reader to the numerous medieval belletrist anthologies that made a point of including examples of *khuṭbas*, thus demonstrating its validity as a literary genre; and by calling attention to the fact that, although Muslim philosophers used the term *khaṭaba* in discussing the Aristotelian syllogism, literary critics used it to denote the art of oratory, independent of philosophy. As to the third perception, it should be noted that Noth’s opinion does not reflect a consensus among scholars. R.B. Serjeant, in contrast, holds that the early orations could well be authentic in gist and even in some of their language.\(^\text{16}\)

Noth’s negative assessment of the genuineness of the early *khuṭba* material seems to be based solely on the fact that speeches made in late (Western) antiquity are known to be inauthentic. He does not provide further justification, apparently admitting no possible effect of the indigenous Arabian culture of memorization and transmission. The question of authenticity that he raises, however, is a grave one. Its ramifications will be examined later in this paper, where it will be shown that although a definitive authentication of individual orations is not possible because of the problems raised by its oral transmission, a genuine core of early

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\(^{13}\) A blithe unawareness of the literary qualities of pre-Islamic *khuṭbas*, or perhaps of their very existence, is suggested in a comment in the (otherwise quite excellent) anthology of classical Arabic literature by Robert Irwin 2001, 29, who states that “no literary prose worthy of the name has come down to us from the pre-Islamic period.” See also Swartz’s 1999, 36 discussion of scholars’ unfavorable assessment of the style of the later homily.

\(^{14}\) Cf. discussion of this perception in Halldén 2005.

\(^{15}\) Noth and Conrad 1994, 87-96, esp. 87. Noth refers the reader to the case of the 6\(^\text{th}\) century Byzantine historian Procopius.

\(^{16}\) Serjeant 1983, 118.
khutba material clearly exists, and even the possibly forged texts conform, by and large, to earlier conventions. Thus, a collective study based on the corpus of khutba materials as a whole rather than on single, individual texts, allows for a meaningful assessment of the genre.

Using a broad sampling of early khutba texts, this paper examines the evolution of its types and characteristics, focusing on the two centuries of the pre-Islamic, early Islamic, and Umayyad periods; the paper makes a brief foray into the subsequent Abbasid period, when the term came to denote solely the ritual sermon delivered with the prayer on Friday and the two Eids. Sections I, II, and III of the study present respectively a prefatory discussion of the denotations of the terms khutba and khataba, our sources for the early khutba, and the issues of oral transmission and authenticity. Section IV traces the development of the various types and subtypes of political, religio-political, religio-ethical, legislative, and civic khutbas. Section V describes the khutba’s characteristics, analyzing its structure and setting, as well as its literary traits. Finally, the Appendix presents the texts and translations of some of the most famous khutbas of pre-Islam and early Islam, with brief comments pointing out the categories and attributes isolated earlier.

I. Denotations of the Terms khutba and khataba

The early Arabic khutba (pl. khatab17) may be defined as an official discourse (for various purposes and containing diverse themes) which was extemporaneously composed and orally delivered in formal language to a large, live public audience, with the orator—with some exceptions—standing on a high place (later, the pulpit) and facing the audience. These characteristics may be considered prerequisites for classification as khutba (historical details follow in Section IV).

The term “oration” appears to be the best available one-word English equivalent for the Arabic term “khutba.” According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the oration is “a formal discourse delivered in elevated and dignified language, especially one given on a

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17 A less common plural form is makhāṭib, which is also said to be a plural of makhṭab, a noun of place, meaning the place where the khutba is delivered.
ceremonial occasion such as a public celebration.” It subsumes meanings conveyed by multiple English terms—exhortation, admonition, discourse, sermon, homily, debate, and speech—which also express the wide range of applications of the khutba. The definition of the term khutba by E.W. Lane, based on the medieval lexica, includes the umbrella category of “oration,” as well as the subcategories mentioned in the OED.

All these applications of khutba (and several others, such as the proposing of marriage), are associated with the underlying denotation of “direct address” of the root kh-t-b. The scribe and critic Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Kātib (wrote in or after 335/946 or 7) as well as the famed lexicographer Ibn Manzūr (d. 711/1311) offer an alternative derivation from “khatb,” which means “an important event” or “a calamity,” saying the khutba was thus named because the Arabs only delivered it on momentous or catastrophic occasions.

The morphological classifications of the relevant derivatives of kh-t-b are as follows: The form I verb “khaṭaba” (with a fatha on the 2nd root letter), according to the medieval lexicographers, means to deliver an oration, while “khaṭuba” (with a damma on the 2nd root letter), means to become a preacher. To indicate the orator, the intensive noun form (ism al-mubālagha) “khaṭīb” (pl. khaṭabā) is generally used in place of the active participle form (ism al-fā'il) “khāṭib.” However, the intensive sense of khaṭīb is not completely lost, for the term is also used to connote a superb orator or a professional preacher. The word “khutba” is most commonly categorized as a form I verbal noun (maṣdar). Alternatively, it is categorized as a substantive used as a maṣdar or passive participle (ism al-mafūl) equivalent to makhtūba.21

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18 The OED also offers two other specialized meanings of the word “oration:” a derogatory usage, denoting “any impassioned, pompous, or long-winded speech;” and, in the 15th-19th centuries, “a prayer or supplication to God,” derived from the Latin etymon orare = to pray; this latter usage is now rare, and confined chiefly to the Roman Catholic Church.

19 Lane 1863, kh-t-b. Lane leaves out the OED’s (internet site) oration subcategory of debate; but, as we shall see in Section IV, this was a valid subtype of the khutba.

20 Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Kātib (d. after 335/946), al-Burhān fi ṭuḥfah al-bayān, 192; Ibn Manzūr, Lisān al-ʿarab.

21 Lane 1863 says it is “a word of the measure fiʿla in the sense of the measure mafūla, like nuskha in the sense of mansūka.”
The term “khuṭba” secondarily denotes the written taḥmīd preface of a book or epistle (risāla or kitāb), which contains mainly praise of God and blessings on the Prophet. This naming is probably due to its adoption of three visible features of the oral khuṭba: a formulaic structure, parallelism, and sajʿ. The sense of direct address conveyed by the root kh-ṭ-b would appear at first sight to be the connecting feature between the epistle and the oral khuṭba; but this is not the case, for although the epistle has a direct addressee, the taḥmīd khuṭba of the epistle often takes the third grammatical person. Regarding parallelism and rhyme, the celebrated critic ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 474/1081) stated that the epistle’s khuṭba should “deliberately include parallelism and sajʿ-ryhme.” Ibn Manẓūr emphasized the connection between rhyme and the term khuṭba even more strongly, claiming that any rhymed prose (al-kalām al-manṭūr al-musajjaʿ) may be denoted by the term khuṭba.

The second form I maṣdar “khaṭāba,” which denotes the act (and sometimes the art) of oratory, is often placed by the critics alongside the term “balāgha.” The eminent belletrist al-Jāḥiz used the two terms ambiguously; seemingly assuming them to be identical, he switched back and forth between them without apparent distinction. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm, on the other hand, characterized balāgha mainly as the use of sajʿ, and deemed it a necessary component of khaṭāba (and of epistle-writing). Yet a third manner of characterization is represented by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. between 380 and 388/990 and 998), who deemed both khaṭāba and balāgha to be expressions of eloquence, differentiating between them along the fault line of oral (=khaṭāba) versus written (=balāgha); in his Fihrīst, he listed the names of orators under the term “khuṭābā” and scribes (kātibs) under the term “bulaghā.”

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23 al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078), Aṣrār al-Balāgha, 9.
24 See, for example, al-Jāḥiz, al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn, 1:92. Moreover, under his category of “the best person in terms of khaṭāba,” (akhtab al-nās), he often mentions the popular preacher and story-teller (wāʾiz and qāṣṣ; see discussion of these two terms in next section) indicating that he considers khaṭāba, at least in this context, to be the more general concept of eloquence, rather than one defined within the narrower context of the ritual sermon (ibid., 1:291, and elsewhere).
In contrast to the critics, Muslim philosophers followed the Greek rhetorical tradition in characterizing *khaṭāba* as focusing on logic and syllogism, alongside subordinate concerns about style and delivery. The philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) wrote a commentary on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* titled by the very term *al-Khaṭāba*, in which he defined it as “a syllogistic skill (*ṣinā‘a qiyāsīyya*), the goal of which was persuasion (*iqnā*).” He went on to say—highlighting an aspect of Greek rhetoric that overlaps with Arabic oratory—that *khaṭāba* used modes of persuasion that were “not specialized, but shared by all.” The Arabic lexicographer al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 817/1415), after defining *khaṭāba* in its oratorical aspect as “a literary prose art, whose purpose was the persuasion of the audience, or [its] counsel,” added that “in the science of logic, [*khaṭāba*] was a syllogism consisting of premises”—also touching on an aspect overlapping with Arabic oratory—“that were axiomatic or assumed” [Aristotle’s enthymeme]. Ibn Manẓūr wrote a slightly longer but similar definition of the philosophical *khatāba* in his *Lisān al-ʿarab*, in which he included examples of syllogisms. He stated that the active participle of *khatāba*, its agent, was, like the orator, called a *khaṭīb*.

“*Khiṭāba*” (with a kasra after the *kh*), yet another form-I *maṣdar*, is described in Lane’s *Lexicon* and the *Lisān al-ʿarab* as “the office of the preacher of a mosque.” In modern times, some collapsing and modification appears to have taken place in the denotations of the three *maṣdars*, and both *khaṭāba* and *khuṭba* have relinquished to *khiṭāba* some of their semantic implications. Hence, Hans Wehr’s dictionary of Modern Standard Arabic describes *khiṭāba* in terms as-

27 Cf. Aristotle (d. 322 B.C.), *Rhetoric* I:1: “… rhetorical demonstration is an enthymeme, which, generally speaking, is the strongest of rhetorical proofs; … the enthymeme is a kind of syllogism [from which part of the logical sequence is omitted, because of its obvious, or dubious, nature].”

Deborah Black (1990, 4), critiques what she calls “the current annexation of [the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*] to the realm of literary studies,” and attributes this “annexation” to modern scholarship’s dismissal of the medieval (Greek and then Arabic) viewing of those texts as part of the logic-focused Aristotelian *Organon*.

28 al-Fārābī, *al-Khaṭāba*, 1, 25. Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I:2: “Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion. This is the function of no other art; for each of the others is instructive and persuasive about its own subject: for example, medicine about health and disease … But rhetoric seems to be able to observe the persuasive about “the given,” so to speak. That, too, is why we say it does not include technical knowledge of any particular, defined genus [of subjects].”

29 For some of Aristotle’s comments on the enthymeme, see n. 27.
associated with medieval *khaṭāba* (rhetoric, oratory, art of eloquence), as well as terms connected with the medieval *khuṭba* (speech, lecture, discourse).

II. *Sources*

Of the two major literary genres of the early Arabs, much poetry was preserved, but the majority of early orations were lost. Poetry benefited from inbuilt mnemonic devices of rhyme and meter, multiple recitations such as the ones at the annual fair at `Ukāz, and the personal and collective transmitter (*rāwī* and *rāwiya*), who were the sources for the earliest *dīwān* collectors. Although the *khuṭba*’s rhythm and partial rhyme helped to some extent, it lacked poetry’s other aids to memorization, and thus did not fare as well. *Khuṭba* texts from the pre-Islamic period, in particular, were mostly lost, because, among other things, they experienced the longest time lag before being written down. To be sure, hundreds of oratorical texts derive from the early Islamic period, but this abundance is just a fraction of the *khuṭbas* that must have been delivered before and after the coming of Islam. Al-Jāḥiẓ correctly stated that “what we have remaining of the early Arabs’ spontaneous literary production—of *khuṭbas*, battle-verses in *rajaz*, and camel driving chants—is but a fraction of the whole, of which none but the God who is cognizant of the number of water-droplets in the rain-clouds, and the number of sand-particles in the world, is aware.”

Diverse literary, historical, and jurisprudential sources contain large numbers of early *khuṭba* texts and related material, including reports (*akhbār*) framing the orations, anecdotes about the orators, and some critical evaluations of the genre. The major genres and works from which the texts and culture of the early *khuṭba* may be culled, are the following:

– Al-Jāḥiẓ’s literary critical text-cum-anthology *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* is particularly useful for anecdotes and analysis as well as texts.
– Medieval compilations of the orations of `Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the *Nahj al-balāgha*, compiled by al-Sharīf al-Radī (d. 406/1015), being the best known. Its major commentary by Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 655 or

6/1257 or 8) contains more *khutbas* by ʿAlī and other early persons. Other extant collections include al-Qāḍī al-Quḍāʾī’s (d. 454/1062) *Dustūr maʿālīm al-ḥikam wa-maʿṭhūr al-shiyam min kalām amīr al-muʾminīn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālīb*; and al-Qāḍī Abū l-Fath al-ʿĀmidī’s (d. 550/1155) *Ghurar al-ḥikam wa-ḍurar al-ḥakīm*.

- Literary anthologies, such as Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr’s (d. 280/893) *Balāḡāt al-nisāʾ*, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih’s (d. 328/940) *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, the two *Amālī* works of al-Qālī (d. 356/967) and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), Abū al-Faraj al-Īṣfahānī’s (d. ca. 363/972) *Aghānī*, Ibn Qutayba’s (d. 276/889) *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* and *Maʿārif*, and al-Mubarrad’s (d. 285 or 6/898 or 9) *al-Ḵāmil*. Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. ʿAlī’s early anthology of orations of the prophets, *al-Khuṭb wa-l-mawāʾir*, is an interesting source, although the Arabic *khutbas* attributed therein to Abraham and Moses are either apocryphal, or translations.

- Historical texts, such as the works of al-Wāṣidī (d. 207/823), Naṣr b. Muzāḥim al-Minqarī (d. 212/827), Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), pseudo-Ibn Qutayba, al-Balāḏurī (d. 279/892), Ibn ʿAṭāʾ al-Kūfī (fl. 2nd-3rd/8th-9th c.), al-Ṭabarī (d. 314/923), al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956), al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974), and Ibn al-ʿĀthir (d. 650/1233).

- Chancery manuals, such as al-Qalqashandi’s (d. 821/1418) *Ṣuhb al-qāshā fī ʿināṭ al-inshā*, ʿĪsāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Kātib’s (d. after 335/946) *al-Burḥān fī wujūḥ al-bayān*, and Abū Jaʿfar al-Naḥḥās’s (d. 338/950) *ʿUmdat al-kātib*.

- Critical works, such as al-Bāqillānī’s (d. 403/1013) *Ijāz al-Qurʾān* and Abū Hīlāl al-ʿAskari’s (d. after 395/1005) *Kitāb al-Ṣināʿatayn*.

- Proverb collections, such as Abū Hīlāl’s *Jamharat amthāl al-ʿarab*, and al-Maydānī’s (d. 518/1124) *Majmāʿ al-amthāl*.

- Jurisprudential (*fiqh*) works and Ḥadīth compilations yield various kinds of information on the *khutba* in their sections on the Friday and Eid prayers, such as Mālik’s (d. 179/795, Sunnī Mālikī) *Muwaṭṭa*, al-Kulaynī’s (d. 329/941, Twelver Shīʿī), al-Kāfī, and al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān’s (Fatimid-Ismāʿīlī) *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*.

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31 22 compilations of ʿAlī’s *khutbas* and rasāʾil compiled before the *Nahj al-balāgha* (some extant, some lost) are listed in ʿAbd al-Zahr’s 1975, 1:51-86.

32 See Marshall 1972, 91-110, in which he translates and briefly describes a selection of the orations in Ibn Qutayba’s *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*.
— An *adab al-khatīb* treatise from later medieval times by Ibn al-
`Attār al-Dimashqī (d. 724/1324) offers details of the requirements
for an official ritual preacher and his *khutba*.

Most of the extant *khutba* texts are fragmentary, probably because of
their oral transmission; of the few intact ones, some, or even most,
may have been compiled from earlier fragments. Also, most of our
extant texts are rather short—perhaps due to their fragmentary na-
ture, or because the early orations were, indeed, short (a prophetic
Ḥadīth praises brevity in the *khutba*).\(^{33}\) However, we do have some
texts and reports of longer orations. A very long *khutba* is attributed
to Muḥammad himself—he is said to have begun preaching immedi-
ately after the ritual prayer of late afternoon, and to have ended three
to four hours later at the time of the sunset prayer.\(^{34}\) Two long
*khutbas* named *al-Ashbāḥ* (Phantasmic Beings) and *al-Qāṣi‘a* (The
Striker or Thirst-Allayer) are attributed to `Ali.\(^{35}\) The Mu’tazilite
theologian Wāsil b. ‘Aṭā’ reportedly delivered long *khutbas*.\(^{36}\)

There are several modern anthologies of early *khutbas*. These an-
thologies include Ahmad Zakī Ṣafwat’s three-volume *Jamharat
khutab al-‘arab*, which deals with the pre-Islamic and early Islamic,
Umayyad, and early Abbasid periods. Other scholars have published
colleced volumes of the *khutbas* of Muḥammad,\(^{37}\) Abū Bakr (d. 13/634),\(^{38}\) ‘Umar (23/644),\(^{39}\) and numerous tomes of *khutbas*
attributed to ‘Ali.\(^{40}\) They have also published *khutba* anthologies for the
early caliphs,\(^{41}\) the collected *khutbas* of al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (d. 61/680),\(^{42}\) and his great-grandson Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765).\(^{43}\)

\(^{33}\) Cf. al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, 1:303. Muslim, Ṣahīḥ, section on “Jum‘a,”
(internet Ḥadīth site).

\(^{34}\) Ṣafwat 1933 1:151, #6; after al-Bāqillānī, *Ijāz al-Qur‘ān*.


\(^{38}\) M. ʿĀshūr and al-Kūmī [1994].

\(^{39}\) M. ʿĀshūr 1984.

\(^{40}\) An 8-volume collection is al-Maḥmūdī 1965. See also n. 31 above.

\(^{41}\) Tāṣīn [1966]; Qumayha 1985; Q. ʿĀshūr 1998.

\(^{42}\) al-Mūṣawwī 1961; Bayḍūn 1974; Sharīfī 1995.

\(^{43}\) al-Wāʻizī 1988.
III. Authenticity

Since the early Arabic *khutbas* were initially transmitted orally, none can be definitively authenticated, nor can individual lines or words. Yet, given the large corpus of multiply transmitted and distinctly archaic orations extant, the body of early *khutba* material, as a whole, gives an approximate picture of the typology and characteristics of the genre in its early stages. The oral transmission took place over two to four generations. A few *khutbas* were written prior to delivery; 44 others may have been recorded in writing soon after being delivered. 45 However, as far as we can tell, the majority were recorded in the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, a hundred to a hundred and fifty years after their original delivery, after the proliferation of paper and the (relative) spread of literacy. 46

This long period of oral transmission raises questions about the reliability of the extant materials, questions which will probably never be fully answered. Later individuals certainly had incentives to fabricate *khutbas* and attribute them to their predecessors. Some put words in the mouths of religious leaders like Muḥammad (d. 11/632) or ʿAlī (d. 40/660) to bolster sectarian and other views. 47

Nevertheless, we have ample evidence to suggest that the Arabs consciously made an effort to memorize and transmit those *khutbas*—or, more accurately, those parts of a *khutba*—that they found

44 Cf. some records in the sources, from varying periods in early Islamic times, of orators writing a *khutba* prior to delivery (a systematic search would probably yield many more): 1) Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. 655/1257, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, 2:88) recounts that in the wake of the attack on Anbār, ʿĀlī b. Abī Ṭālib wanted to encourage the Kūfāns to fight Muʿāwiya, but he was unwell and unable to deliver a speech, so he wrote a *khutba*, gave “the *kitāb*” (written text) to his mawlā Saʿd, and had him read it out aloud to the people. 2) We can extrapolate that some early *khaṭībs* wrote their *khutbas* in advance, from al-Jāḥiz’s (*al-Bayān wa-l-tabyin*, 1:124) comments lauding orators who did not write down their *khutbas* beforehand: he thus cited verses by Bashshār praising Wāsīl b. Ṭāʾā for never writing down his *khutbas* beforehand; he also stated (ibid., 1:331) that Dāʾūd b. ʿĀlī b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās always delivered extemporaneous orations, that he “never ever wrote down a *khutba* ahead of time”. 3) Verses by Abū Mismār al-ʿUklī (ibid., 1:133) mention orators writing down *khutbas* ahead of time.

45 On Arabic writing in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, see Abbott 1967, 5-63; Pederson 1984, 3-11.

46 On oral transmission in early Islam, see Vajda 1983; Schoeler 2006.

47 On the phenomenon of attributing apocryphal material to founding figures, see Mourad 2006.
remarkable from a literary, tribal, political, and/or religious point of
view. Muḥammad’s frequent injunctions to the early Muslims to
remember and pass on his words are evidence of this conscious effort.
For example, he is reported to have said in a khuṭba at al-Khayf dur-
ing his last pilgrimage, “May God refresh the face of the servant [of
God] who hears my speech and takes it in, then conveys it to one
who has not heard it. For many a carrier of knowledge is not knowl-
edgeable, and many a carrier of jurisprudence carries it to one who
has more understanding than he.”48 In his famous khuṭba at ʿArafāt in
the same pilgrimage, he is reported to have said: “Let those present
convey [this speech] to those absent.”49

Moreover, the public setting of the khuṭba meant that there were
many potential first transmitters. In one report, when a man asked ʿAlī
to explain the concept of belief (ʾīmān), ʿAlī directed the questioner to
come back the next day to receive the answer “in a public audience
(علي أعين الناس) so that if he forgot [ʿAlī’s] speech, others would
remember,” and, presumably, pass it on.50 The fact that we have many
different versions of the better attested orations results from this
multiple mode of transmission, and supports their authenticity.

It is well known that the early Arabs routinely memorized enor-
mous amounts of literary material, thousands of verses of poetry, and
the entire 114-sūra, 6236-verse long Qur’ān; it is therefore entirely
believable that they could memorize orations as well. We know that a
parallel history of oral transmission belongs to pre-Islamic poetry51
and prophetic Ḥadīth,52 yet many recent scholars agree on the credi-
ble existence of a genuine core. So why should we not accord a simi-

48 Ṣafwat 1933 1:151; after al-Bāqillānī, Ṣfā al-Qur’ān; also in al-Qāḍī al-
Nuʿmān (d. 363/974), Daʾāʾīm al-islām, 1:80, The Pillars of Islam, 1:99; and al-
Shāfīʿī (d. 204/820), al-Risāla, 401.

49 Ṣafwat 1933 1:155, #13. In a similar vein, an Umayyad gover-
nor of Medina named Abū Bakr b. ʿAbdallāh is reported to have begun a long khuṭba
by saying: “I am about to deliver a speech. Whosoever takes it in and conveys it,
God will reward him.” Ṣafwat 1934 3:227; after al-
Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-arab; and al-Qalqashandī, Ṣūḥāl al-aʿshā.

50 al-Raḍī, Nahj al-balāgha, 687, #267.

51 Writings against the possibility of any kind of poetic material existing from
pre-Islamic times include Husayn 1926 and Margoliouth 1925. Works arguing for
the existence of a genuine core include al-Asad 1956, Arberry 1957, Monroe 1972,
Shāhīd 1996 and Schoeler 2006. On the transmission of this poetry and its recording
in the early Abbasid period, see Drory 1996, 38-49.

lar degree of acceptance to the corpus of khutba materials, which represent another oral genre from the same time?

Even in the case of those khutbas which are later forgeries, they conform closely to early conventions of style and theme. For the perpetrators were near in time to the early orators, familiar with the conventions of pre-Islamic and early Islamic oratory, and successful in passing off their creations as earlier productions to a likewise knowledgeable audience. Even though this complicates our detective work in determining the provenance of individual khutbas, the possibly fabricated khutbas, when taken together, lend themselves effectively to a study of the earlier period.

IV. Types:53

Political; Soothsayer’s Utterance; Religious (Pious Counsel); Civic (Marriage); Religio-Political (including Legislative and Ritual)

The khutba appears to be an old, indigenous genre, attested in the Arabian Peninsula from about the late sixth century C.E., when it had numerous applications. Sifting through the Arabic historical and literary sources, we can identify distinct types of early orations based on function and theme. These types and their subtypes experienced modification in response to the changing literary, social, political, and religious scene. Some earlier subtypes gradually merged, resulting in the materialization of new ones. With the coming of Islam in the early seventh century C.E., the various types of khutba continued to develop under the aegis of the pre-Islamic oratorical tradition combined with the relevant doxology and praxis of Islam, especially its ritual prayers, ethical teachings, and the Qur’an.

Not surprisingly, since it was a genre so deeply rooted in the native culture, there are few perceptible foreign influences on Arabic oratory. Neither before nor after the coming of Islam did the rhetorical traditions of the Greeks, the Persians, the Indians, or the Byzantines have much influence on the development of the khutba. During the period of intensive Greek-to-Arabic translation in Baghdad from

53 Cf. discussions of the types of the early khutba in some of the Arabic monographs on the subject, such as al-Nuṣṣ 1963, 145-260; al-Ḥāwī 1970, 29-52; al-Ḥūfī 1972, 62-119; Shalābī 1983, 77-118.
the 8th through the 10th centuries C.E. (2nd-4th c. H.), none of the works containing the famous speeches of the Greeks appear to have been translated: not the speeches of Demosthenes and other Attic orators, nor Thucydides’ history of the Peloponnesian war, nor the epics of Homer. To be sure, Aristotle’s theoretical work on oratory, the *Rhetoric*, was rendered into Arabic by an anonymous translator in the early part of the 3rd/9th c. But, although this book—a long with his other logical and ethical works—greatly influenced Islamic philosophy, it had little impact on Arabic literature, and none on the practice or theory of the *khutba*.

As is well known to classicists, the Greek and Latin rhetorical corpus is generally viewed through the lens of Aristotle’s division of oratory into the categories of forensic (court), epideictic (exhibition), and deliberative (political assembly) oratory, dealing respectively with past, present, and future events, in which the syllogism played a critical role. In contrast, in the early Arabic *khutba* tradition, the forensic and epideictic oration is completely missing. However, the category that Aristotle had termed deliberative oratory developed—without reference to Aristotle—in a large number of original directions. In addition, several completely new and primarily ritualistic categories unknown to the Greeks emerged.

The major types of the early Arabic *khutba* are the political and religio-political speech (which include the Islamic ritual sermon delivered on Friday and the two annual Eid days), the pre-Islamic soothsayer’s utterance, the religious sermon of pious counsel (*khutba* of *wa’z*), and the civic category of the verbal marriage contract. Details of their development and particulars of their subtypes follow.

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54 For information on the Graeco-Arabic translation movement and the impact of Greek philosophical and ethical thought on Islam, see Rosenthal 1965; Gutas 1998.

55 Aristotle, *al-Khatāba: al-tarjama al-arabiyya al-qadima*. The work was probably translated before the movement’s best-known translator, Ḥunayn b. Ishāq, arrived on the scene. In the fourth/tenth century, the bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm stated that he had seen a 100-page copy of the translation, and he mentioned Ishāq and Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abdallāh as possible translators (*al-Fihrist*, 349)—cf. details in al-Badawi’s introduction to *al-Khatāba*, z.

56 Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* was commented on, as mentioned earlier, by al-Fārābī, *al-Khaṭāba*, and Ibn Sinā (d. 428/1037), *Kitāb al-Majmū’ aw al-Ḥikma al-‘arudiyya fi ma‘āni kitāb riṭūriqā*, and abridged by Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), *Talkhīṣ al-Khaṭāba*.

Table 1: Typology of the Early Arabic *khutba*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Subtypes</th>
<th>Delivered by</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Political speech</td>
<td>a. during <em>ayyam</em> battles</td>
<td>a. tribal chiefs &amp; nobles</td>
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<td>b. blood money (<em>diya</em>) negotiations</td>
<td>b. tribal chiefs &amp; nobles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. social rank dispute (<em>munafara</em>)</td>
<td>c. (i) nobles (ii) contenders for leadership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. judgment of social rank dispute</td>
<td>d. (i) tribal chiefs &amp; nobles (ii) soothsayers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e. addressed to Persian monarch</td>
<td>e. Nu‘man b. Mundhir &amp; nobles</td>
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<td>Pre-Islamic</td>
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<td>2. Soothsayer’s utterance (<em>saj’d al-kuhhân</em>)</td>
<td>a. interpretation of dreams</td>
<td>soothsayer</td>
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<td>b. divination of future events</td>
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<td>c. adjudication</td>
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<td>3. Religious sermon of pious counsel (<em>khutba</em> of <em>wa’z</em>)</td>
<td>a. containing general themes of piety, contemplation of the imminence of death, obedience to God. [Also testament (<em>wa’iyya</em>)]</td>
<td>a. religious or religious-political leaders including Muhammad and his Companions, esp. ‘Alī]</td>
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<td>b. containing specific themes of (i) condolence, (ii) revering of the Ka’ba, etc.</td>
<td>b. (i) prominent tribe members (ii) Banū Ḥāshim</td>
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<td>Pre-Islamic &amp; Islamic</td>
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<td>4. Marriage <em>taḥmīd</em> &amp; contract</td>
<td>a. ritual sermon Friday—Eids (al-Fitr, al-Adhā) [drought relief (<em>istisqā</em>)—eclipse (<em>kusūf</em>)]</td>
<td>a. (i) Prophet Muhammad, (ii) caliph, (iii) governor, (iv) official preacher or <em>khaṭīb</em> (Abbasid period ff.)</td>
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<td>b. legislative speech (laying down laws)</td>
<td>b. Prophet Muhammad</td>
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<td>c. speech delivered at various religious occasions</td>
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<td>d. accession and policy speech</td>
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<td>e. battle oration</td>
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<td>f. sectarian sermon</td>
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<td>g. elite women’s speech (in special circumstances)</td>
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<td>Islamic</td>
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The evolution of Arabic khutbas begins in pre-Islamic times, when the most common type was apparently the political speech. In general, tribal leaders were expected to possess spontaneous eloquence, a quality necessary in their roles of verbally provoking the tribe’s members to certain forms of action, social or military. In addition to leaders’ speeches, we have some indication that just as a tribe often had a designated poet or shā’ir, it may have had a designated orator or khaṭīb, whose function was the vocal and eloquent promotion of the tribe’s glory and valor. An anecdote about early Islamic times could reflect pre-Islamic practice, in which a delegation from Tamīm to the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina asked him permission for “their poet, and their orator” to hold forth in a nobility-cum-eloquence contest with the early Muslims. Several observations by al-Jāḥiẓ support this hypothesis. He asserts that the standing of the pre-Islamic orator was slightly less than that of the poet, which indicates that such an institution probably existed. He states that Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās al-Anṣārī was Muḥammad’s official orator, who defended his cause just as his official poets did, a practice that could, again, reflect earlier practice. He names a few early Islamic poet-orators—Tirimmāh b. Hakīm, Kumayt b. Zayd, Quss b. Sā’ida, ‘Amr b. al-Ahtam, al-Baʾith al-Mujāshi, ‘Imrān b. Ḥiṭṭān, Daghfal b. Ḥanḍala, al-Qaʿqā’ b. Shawr, Naṣr b. Sayyār, Zayd b. Jundub, ‘Ajlān b. Saḥbān, and ‘Imrān b. ‘Īsām.

One of the contexts of pre-Islamic political speeches was inter-tribal revenge killing (thaṭr) and subsequent negotiations over blood money. The orations exchanged by members of the tribes of Taghlib and Bakr about thaṭr initiated the bloody forty-year War of Basūs (494-534 C.E.). Tribal wars and battles (ayyām, sing. yawm) were

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58 Perhaps because of the predominance of the political oration in early times, Bosworth, in his brief entry on “khutba” (1998), confines the pre-Islamic and early Islamic oration to this type, saying the khutba at that time “was … a tribal political or sectarian rallying cry.” Note that these “political” speeches could well have had a religious element to them that invoked pagan gods, and which the early Muslims purged, but since the texts at hand do not mention religious entities, the term religious-political would be speculative.

59 Šafwat 1933 1:163 #17; after al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil; Ibn Hishām, Sīra; and al-Qalqashandī, ʿŚubh al-dāʾshā.

60 al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn, 1:241.

61 Ibid., 1:201.

62 Ibid., 1:45-50.

63 Šafwat 1933 1:40-1, #24; after Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, al-ʿIqd al-farīd; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil; Abū l-Faraj, al-Aghānī.
themselves a fertile environment for producing rousing military orations, such as the said War of Basūs and the famous Battle of Dhū Qār (late 6th or early 7th c. C.E.) The speech of Hāni’ b. Qubaysa during the latter battle inciting the Shaybān to fight is a prime example.64

Other settings for the political speech were struggles over leadership (munāfara). These orations were couched in the framework of proving oneself nobler and abler than one’s opponent. Public debates on this issue survive in the sources, such as the debate between two paternal cousins of the Banū ʿĀmir over the leadership of their tribe.65 Judgments of these munāfara are also in the form of public speeches, such as the judgment of Harim b. Quṭba al-Fazārī arbitrating between the same ʿĀmirite cousins, equating them in nobility. The munāfara judgements were sometimes pronounced by a kāhin, such as the pronouncement of the Khuzā‘ī kāhin favoring Hāshim (d. 524 C.E.) over Umayya;66 they were also delivered by other persons of consequence, such as the same Hāshim judging between the tribes of Quraysh and Khuzā‘a.67

A subtype of political orations is the set of speeches addressed by the Lakhmid king of Ḫira, al-Nu‘mān b. al-Mundhir (r. ca. 580-602 C.E.) and other Arabian nobles to the Persian monarch Kisrā and his court in praise of the Arabs, to avert the covetous eyes of the Persians from Arabian lands.68 Even if Kisrā did not understand Arabic, as is most likely the case, we can surmise that given the lively trade, cultural, and political contact between the Arabs and the Persians at the time, he would have had translators.

Many political speeches were delivered not singly, but in packages, often constituting some kind of eloquence-cum-politics contest, one speech on the heels of another, often as a response.

The formal, rhymed pronouncements of pagan soothsayers (kāhin, pl. kuhhān, fem. pl. kawāhin), may be categorized as a second type of khutba, as they are sometimes delivered to what appears to be a fairly large public audience. A number of texts in the sources are credited to female soothsayers, being the only khutbas in pre-Islamic times at-

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64 Ibid., 1:37, #18; after al-Qālī, al-Amālī.
65 Ibid., 1:41-5, #25; after Abū l-Faraj, al-Aghānī; al-Qalqashandi, Ṣubḥ al-a’shā; Ibn Nubāta, Sarḥ al-‘uyūn; Ibn Rashīq, al-‘Umda.
66 See text in Appendix.
67 ʻAfīwat, 1933 1:75-6, #48; after al-ʻAlūsī, Bulūgh al-arab.
68 Ibid., 1:50-64, #31-41; after Ibn ʻAbd Rabbīh, al-Īiqd al-farīd.
tributed to women. The soothsayer’s *khuthba* is always conspicuously and completely in rhymed prose (*sajî*) and therefore commonly named the *sajî* of the *kuhhân*. Its themes, after the initial divining-of-secrets test (“what’s hidden in my bag?” … “a locust”), include the interpretation of dreams, the divination of momentous future events, the arbitration of high status mentioned earlier (*munafara*), and the adjudication of guilt. Many of these themes have a strong political underpinning.

A connection can be hypothesized between the domain of the *khuthba*, particularly that of the soothsayer, and the judgment of a case in pre-Islamic times. C.H. Becker and A.J. Wensinck have pointed out the influence of the setting of pre-Islamic judgment pronouncements on the practices of the later Islamic ritual sermon. They explain that a) like the old Arabian judge, the Muslim preacher delivering the sermon is required to sit down between the two *khuthbas*, and b) to lean on a staff or sword during them. To these points may be added the observations that c) the judges (including the soothsayers) perhaps pronounced judgments in a *khuthba* format, d) some of the most famous orators of the *jahiliyya* were also judges, such as al-Aktham, and e) the term *khiṭāb*, which is derived from the same root as *khuthba* (in addition to its more commonly known meaning of direct address or epistle), denotes the act of judging. Lexicographers and exegetes discuss at great length the exact nature of the quality that God bestowed upon the Prophet David expressed in the Qur’anic phrase “*fa‘al al-khiṭāb*,” and they proffer the following meanings, all variations on the theme of judging: deciding a case, passing sentence, judging; deciding between truth and falsehood; understanding, intelligence, sagacity, or knowledge in judging or passing sentence.

This category of *khuthba* is adjudicatory, consisting of a judgment pronounced by an arbiter. It differs from the Greek forensic category where a plaintiff and a defendant each present their case.

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69 Wensinck, “*Khuthâba*,” in: EJ²; Becker 1906, 331.
70 Qur’ân 38:19.
72 Modern Arab scholars categorize these as “legal orations” (*khuthab qaḍā‘iyya*, cf. al-Hâwi 1970, 24).
A third type of pre-Islamic oration is the *khutba* of pious counsel, either generic (more common) or specific. The generic subtype concentrated on reminding the audience of the inevitability of death, and subsequently, the necessity of leading a pious life; it focused on individual morality and ethical issues like truthfulness. The most famous orator of pious counsel is an Arab Christian, Quss b. Sā‘ida al-Iyādī (d. ca. 600 C.E.), who is known as “the orator of the Arabs.”73 Other well known orators of pious counsel are al-Ma‘mūn al-Hārithī, the *mu‘allaqa* poet ʿAmr b. Kulthūm (d. 584 C.E.),74 and al-Aktham b. Ṣayfī (d. 9/630) who preached mostly in the *jāhilīyya* but lived to embrace Islam. Some of these pious counsel sermons are condolences (*tażīya*),75 a context in which one would expect the speaker to dwell on death. But rather unusually, one sermon about the inevitability of Fate is addressed by a marriage suitor to his lady’s tribe.76

Other pious counsel sermons are attributed to Muhammad’s forebears, Ka‘b b. Luwayyy (7th generation forebear), Hāshim (great-grandfather), ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (grandfather, d.ca. 579 C.E.), and Abū Ṭālib (uncle, d. 620 C.E.) As keepers of the Ka‘ba in Mecca, they exhorted the Quraysh to revere the Sacred House,77 and urged them to provide provisions for Ḥaǧj pilgrims.78 The Banū Hāshim appear to have been an eminent pre-Islamic (and early Islamic) clan of orators. Once at the Umayyad court, when a prominent partisan of ‘Alī named Ṣa‘ṣa‘a b. Ṣuḥān expounded on the oratorical abilities of his own tribe of ʿAbd al-Qays, Mu‘awiyya (d. 60/680) jibed that Ṣa‘ṣa‘a had left nothing for the Quraysh; Ṣa‘ṣa‘a responded by saying that (the Qurashite clan of) Hāshim were the best orators. (He deliber-

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74 Ṣafwat 1933 1:37, #19; after al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*.


78 Cf. *khutba* of Hāshim, Ṣafwat 1933 1:74, #47; after Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*; see also extract in al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), *Asās al-balāgha*, “d.‘d.”.
ately left out Mu‘āwiya’s Qurashite clan of the Banū Umayya). The prominence accorded by the sources to the orations of the Banū Hāshim should be viewed, on the one hand, in the light of their known leadership role prior to Islam, but also with regard to their genealogical relevance, first to Muḥammad, and then to the Abbasids, and their importance to the Shi‘a in general. This importance could be viewed as a motive for fabrication, or it could have been the catalyst that prompted the sources to preserve a relatively greater number of Hāshimite orations.

Some testaments (waṣiyya) may be categorized as a subtype of the sermon of pious counsel or a quasi-khuṭba. Khuṭba anthologists, such as al-Raḍī in medieval times and Ṣafwat today, often include them, perhaps because even if the two appear to be separate genres, there is significant overlap. For even though most testaments are not technically khuṭbas—in that they are made to a small, private audience usually comprised of the offspring of the legator—some are delivered to a larger, public audience consisting of several members of the legator’s tribe, such as the testaments of Abī Ṭālib to the Quraysh, and the testament of Qays b. Zuhayr to the Banū al-Namir. In many cases, testaments were delivered standing, but on the death bed, they were presumably delivered sitting or lying down. A fourth type of pre-Islamic khuṭba is the marriage contract (khuṭbat al-nikāḥ or al-zawāj). This khuṭba begins with praise of God, then identifies the bride and groom and mentions the dower. It is delivered by the person officiating at the ceremony. The text of Abū Ṭālib’s khuṭba during Muḥammad’s marriage to Khadīja is one of few

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79 Ṣafwat 1933 1:442, #341; after al-Qalqashandī, Ṣubḥ al-aṣḥā; al-Mas‘ūdī, Murūj al-dhahab.

80 In his section on the khuṭbas of ‘Alī, al-Raḍī (Nahj al-balāgha, 33) includes non-khuṭba material, that he considers similar to the khuṭba, indicated in the (long) chapter title: “Chapter one, containing selections from the khuṭbas of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn (AS) and his commands; included in this are selections from his words that are like khuṭbas [uttered] in specific situations (maqāmāt), particular circumstances (mawāqif), and momentous affairs (khuṭūb).”

81 Ṣafwat 1933 1:20-5, #10&11, 1:41-9, #25-30, 1:66-72, #43-5 includes artistic oral prose, mostly fully musajja‘, that does not possess the formal features of the khuṭba genre, dialogues, debates, disputations, such as were said in the courts of kings, caliphs, and chieftains He claims (ibid., 1:4) that they “enter into the field of khuṭbas, and are threaded in their necklace.”

82 Ṣafwat 1933 1:161, #16; after al-ʿĀlīsī, Bulāgh al-arab.

existing examples of what could have been a common type. After
the initial praise formula, it outlines the merits of both parties to the
marriage. Al-Jâhiç cites a short formulaic version of the pre-Islamic
marriage khutba used by the Quraysh: “In your name, O God. Such-
and-such a woman has been mentioned. Such-and-such a man is en-
amored of her. In your name, O God. For you, what you ask for; for
us, what you give.” The application of the term “khutba” to the mar-
riage contract could indicate the public nature of the ceremony; or
perhaps it indicates the taḥmīd opening of the oral text of the contract.

Apart from these four major pre-Islamic types, a few miscellaneous
khutbas have also come down, including a khutba of congratulations
(tahni‘a) upon military victories by ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim.

After the coming of Islam, a few types and subtypes of the jāhiliyya
khutba died out, such as the munāfara boast and the rhymed prose of
the soothsayers (with the exception of the rhymed pronouncements
of pseudo-prophets, such as Sajāh and Musaylima). Other khutba
categories continued to be regularly utilized, albeit with significant,
mostly religious, modifications. The political khutba was adapted to
a new imperial political milieu, and a new religious setting, with the
inclusion of Islamic themes and Qur’ānic vocabulary. It evolved into
the Islamic religio-political khutba (fifth type) which was delivered
during battles and power struggles. The sermon of pious counsel also
continued to be an important part of the literary landscape, taking on
several additional religious hues. It now contained—in addition to
reminders about death, similar to pre-Islamic times—injunctions to
follow the example of the Prophet, and detailed advice about leading
a pious life (rarer in pre-Islamic times); a familiar phrase in these
sermons was “I enjoin you to be pious” (أوصيكم بثواب الله). The marriage
khutba also continued to be used. The Islamic marriage khutba in-
cluded a modified praise formula to encompass blessings on the
Prophet, and an invocation of the Islamic sharī‘a.

Most importantly in early Islam, the political speech and the ser-
mon of pious counsel came together in Medina to form the major
new Islamic type of religio-political khutba that accompanied the rit-

84 See text in Appendix.
85 al-Jâhiç, al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn, 1:408.
86 Ṣafwat 1933 1:76, #49; after Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, al-ʿIqd al-farīd; Ibn Ṣafar, An-
bā‘ nujabā‘ al-abnā‘).
ual prayer. The first Friday *khutba* was delivered by Muḥammad in Medina in the year 1/623. ⁸⁷ It displayed many of the features that were to become standard in the later Islamic Friday/Eid sermon, viz., *taḥmīd*, numerous Qurʿān citations, counsel to be God-fearing, and other moral advice. ⁸⁸ Although in large part moralistic, the ritual *khutba* in this earliest manifestation already contained some critical political material, such as injunctions to obey God and His Prophet. Moreover, the moral code was cast in a religio-political frame, equating virtue with Islam. In the verse: “Call to the path of your Lord through wisdom and good counsel” (אֲלֹהֵי אֲלֵינוּ רָאוּ אֶל הַמַּעֲשֶׂהָ הַתְּחִמָּה), the Qurʿān had enjoined Muḥammad to conduct the call (*daʿwa*) to the new religion and to the state it had established with moral advice (*mawʾīza*). The preaching of virtue was intrinsically connected with his religious and political mission, and the religio-political ritual sermon was one expression of this relationship.

It is somewhat more problematic to categorize as a *khutba* proper the oration-cum-prayer that went along with the ritual prayer (*ṣalāḥ*) in two special cases—asking God for rain in times of drought (*istisqāʿ*), and for protection in times of eclipses (*kusūf*). Although both medieval and modern scholars refer to these texts as *khutbas*, they do not completely fulfill its formal requirements: according to most reports, they are almost entirely prayers addressed to God rather than to a large public audience, ⁸⁹ and at times are delivered sitting down facing the Kaʿba in Mecca (*qibla*), rather than standing facing the audience. There are, however, accounts to the contrary. These include one of a rain *khutba* ascribed to ʿAlī, in which he ini-

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⁸⁸ In Islamic practice, the Friday and Eid *khutbas* are considered a segment of the ritual prayer, the two-part Friday *khutba* taking the place of two *raʾkas*. The *khutba* itself comprises of two sub-*khutbas* separated by a short interval, and is delivered by the prayer-Imam before the *ṣalāt al-jumʿa*, and after the *ṣalāt al-ʿīd*. The first *khutba* contains mainly pious counsel (*waʿīʿ*), the second, mainly supplication (*duʿāʾ*). It was the second *khutba* that, from the Umayyad period forward, contained the key political feature of praying for the reigning caliph’s long life. The Friday *khutba* is introduced by a *taḥmīd*, whereas the Eid *khutba* is introduced by *takbīr*. *Fiqh* manuals and Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār’s work detail the content and format of these ritual *khutbas*.

ially addressed the audience in the second person, reminding them that the sky and the earth bend to God’s will, informing them of the fact that droughts and similar natural disasters are a result of collective sins perpetrated by the people of the time, and counseling them that the current calamity could be alleviated by asking God for forgiveness; only after this khutba-style advice did he turn to the prayer section, in which he beseeched God for rain. The preface of another rain khutba attributed to Muhammad states that he climbed atop a pulpit (thus, probably standing facing the audience) in which he then prayed for rain. Hence, the large, public audience, even though not always addressed and faced directly, connected the format of the rain and eclipse prayer-ornations with the khutba. Moreover, the ritual nature and the du’ā’ component of the rain and eclipse prayer-ornations were common to the ritual Friday/Eid khutba.

Al-Jāfiṭ says that an Umayyad Syrian governor, al-Walīd b. al-Qa’qā’, would pray for rain (kāna yastasqī) in every khutba. Here the prayer for rain becomes a component in khutbas of all types, versus being a stand alone type of quasi-khutba.

A new component in Arabic khutbas was the laying down and explication of civic and criminal laws. This legislation included prohibitions on usury and blood revenge, penalties for murder or manslaughter, and regulations regarding fasting. The lawmaking function of the oration was restricted to the Prophet, and legislation is found, for example, in Muhammad’s khutbas at the conquest of Mecca, during his last pilgrimage, and at the onset of Ramaḍān.

The majority of extant Islamic khutbas of all types dating from Muhammad’s lifetime are his own.

In the three decades between the death of Muhammad and the death of ‘Alī, and continuing into the Umayyad and early Abbasid period, the khutba genre developed in response to the changing political and sectarian climate. Other than the legislative feature which

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90 al-Raḍī, Nahj al-balāgha, 291, #141.
91 Cf. n. 96.
92 See text in Appendix.
died out with Muḥammad, the categories established in his lifetime continued to be used and elaborated upon, viz., religio-political, ritual, pious counsel, and marriage (96) *khuṭbas*. Like Muḥammad before, caliphs delivered speeches containing military instructions and injunctions, as well as some homilies of pious counsel.

The largest number of *khuṭbas* from the early Islamic period, the most thematically varied, are attributed to the caliph ʿAlī. (97) Al-Jāhiz cites Abū al-Ḥasan saying that among the early caliphs, ʿAlī was “the best orator.” (98) Saḥbān Wāʿil (d. 54/674 C.E.) also serves as a proverbial model of oratory, even though just one sermon of pious counsel is attributed to him; an eloquent person is described idiomatically in classical sources as “*afṣāḥ min Saḥbān*” or “*akhtāb min Saḥbān*” (more eloquent or a better orator than Saḥbān). (100) A third distinguished orator of pious counsel was al-Aḥnaf b. Qays (d. 72/691). (101)

New subcategories of the religio-political *khuṭba* emerged. Caliphs delivered accession speeches—of which there are several extant—delineating their future policies in kernel form. Army chiefs, such as Khālid b. al-Walī (d. 21/642) in ʿUmar’s time, and Ṭāriq b. Ziyād (d. 102/720), the Umayyad general who first entered Spain, delivered impassioned exhortations to their legions. Newly appointed provincial governors, such as the Umayyads Ziyād b. Abīhi (d. 53/673) and al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafi (d. 95/714), used eloquent, strongly worded speeches to introduce their policies to the people. Sectarian leaders delivered speeches calling to rebellion and uprising. The Khārijites produced fiery specimens, including Abū Ḥamza al-Shārī’s (d. 130/748) famous address to the residents...
of Medina. The early Qadari ascetic al-Hasan al-Baṣrī\(^\text{106}\) (d. 110/728) and the Muʿtazila leader\(^\text{107}\) Wāṣil b. ʿAtā\(^\text{108}\) (d. 131/748) gave sermons skirting overt politics (interestingly, Wāṣil delivered only rāʾ-less khūṭbas, as he could not pronounce that letter.) Proto-Shiʿite ʿAlid leaders included al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, who delivered moving orations to his supporters and enemies in Kerbala. His grandson, Zayd b. ʿAlī, was likewise a powerful orator.\(^\text{109}\) Anti-establishment commanders, such as al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafī (d. 67/687), urged revenge for the killing of al-Ḥusayn.

As mentioned earlier, female soothsayers had delivered khūṭbas in the jāhiliyya, but no women among the tribal nobility appear to have done so. In contrast, in early Islam, women from prominent religio-political families are reported to have delivered public khūṭbas in exceptional circumstances. Among them is an extraordinarily strong and eloquent khūṭba by Fāṭima (d. 11/632), daughter of the Prophet and wife of ʿAlī, delivered from behind a curtain to Abū Bakr and the assembled Companions defending her husband’s greater right to the caliphate, and claiming her own inheritance of the lands of Fadak from her father.\(^\text{110}\) ʿĀʾisha (d. 58/678), widow of the Prophet and daughter of Abū Bakr, delivered several khūṭbas in Medina defending her father, and later, instigating the populace against ʿAlī before and during the Battle of the Camel.\(^\text{111}\) Zaynab (d. 62/682) and Umm Kulthūm (d. ca. 65/685), daughters of ʿAlī, delivered a number of bitter, threatening khūṭbas to the Umayyad governor and caliph after the martyrdom of their brother al-Ḥusayn in Kerbala.\(^\text{112}\)

\(^{106}\) On al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s life and legacy, see Mourad 2006. See text of his famous khūṭba in Appendix.

\(^{107}\) For a study of a Muʿtazilite khūṭba, see van Ess 1983.

\(^{108}\) See text in Appendix.

\(^{109}\) See oration by Zayd b. ʿAlī in al-Ḥuṣaynī, Ṣaḥāba, 400.

\(^{110}\) See text in Appendix.

\(^{111}\) Cf. texts of ʿĀʾisha’s khūṭba in Ṣafwat 1933 1:207-10, #73, 74; after al-Qalqashandi, Ṣabāḥ al-aʾshā; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, al-Iqd al-farid; al-Nuwayri, Nihāyat al-arab; al-Ḥusaynī, Zahr al-adāb; al-Jāhiz, al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn. Some khūṭbas by her also in Ṣayfūr, Balāḡāt al-nisāʾ, 35-53.

\(^{112}\) Cf. text of Zaynab’s khūṭba in Appendix; her biography in Qutbuddin 2005b. See Umm Kulthūm’s khūṭba in Ṣafwat 1933 2:134-6, #123, after Ṣayfūr, Balāḡāt al-nisāʾ, 74-7.
During the Abbasid, Fatimid, and Spanish Umayyad periods, and forward through modern times, as mentioned earlier, the term *khuṭba* came to denote solely the ritual Friday/Eid *khuṭba*. Although the Fatimid caliphs continued to deliver the Friday/Eid *khuṭba* themselves, the Abbasid caliphs gradually handed over the responsibility of delivering the Friday *khuṭba* to an officially appointed preacher, and the word *khaṭīb* came to indicate him exclusively. Hand in hand with this shift in denotation, the focus of later scholars writing about the “*khuṭba*” came to dwell squarely on the ritual sermon, in stark contrast to the contextually and thematically eclectic presentations of earlier scholars, such as al-Jāḥīz and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih. The earliest *fiqh* manuals had already dealt in detail with the content and form of the ritual *khuṭba*, but now, model (ritual) *khuṭba* works were composed, such as the one by the Aleppo preacher Ibn Nubāṭa al-Khaṭīb (d. 374/984-5), as were *mawāʿiz* (pious counsel) works such as the one by al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144). In the appointment letter of a judge (who was also presumably to fill the office of the Friday *khaṭīb*), the late Fatimid chancery scribe al-Qāḥṣ al-Fāḥīl (d. 596/1200) described the “*khuṭaba*” as “knights of the pulpits, tongues of assemblies, interpreters of feelings, imāms of prayer-gatherings, and ambassadors of hearts.” In the course of his praise, he went on to outline common expectations from them: eloquence, good articulation, emotive arousal skills, dignified demeanor, and, above all, the art of effective moral counseling. Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār laid out dos and don’ts in his full-blown *adab al-khaṭīb* work, whose high level of prescriptive detail demonstrates the increasingly rigid thematic and formal parameters of the ritual *khuṭba*.

Despite the takeover of the term *khuṭba* by the ritual *khuṭba*, many other earlier categories persisted under a different name. At some

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113 Cf. forthcoming monograph on the Fatimid *khuṭba* by Paul Walker.
114 On Andalusian sermons, see Jones 2004.
115 Numerous collections have been published of modern Friday/Eid *khuṭbas*. See for example, Azharite scholars 1986, topically organized model *khuṭbas*); Khayyāṭ [1968] (collection of sermons delivered in Mecca).
117 Ibn Nubāṭa, *Diwān Khuṭab Ibn Nubāṭa* (including the sermons of his son Abū Tāhir).
118 al-Zamakhsharī, *ʿIwāq al-dhahab fī l-mawāʿiz wa-l-khuṭab*.
120 Ibid., 10:433.
point, the *khutba* of pious counsel lost the appellation “*khutba*” and came to be progressively represented by the term “*wa’iz*” (rather than “*khutba of wa’iz*”). The change was not solely in name, for many of the formal requirements of the *khutba*, including its official nature, and the orator’s standing on a pulpit or high place, also ceased to apply. Side by side with the official ritual *khutba*, the new sit-down *wa’iz* developed as a non-ritual, semi-official branch of preaching, with its own set of regulations and features, until the Seljuks institutionalized the position of the *wa’iz* (preacher) at the Nizāmiyya in 5th/11th century Baghdad.  

Perhaps the most famous *wa’iz* of the later Abbasid period was the Ḥanbalite Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1097), who preached abundantly to large audiences up to a reported number of 300,000 (sic) listeners, and also wrote copious model *wa’iz* texts in full rhyme. A parallel oral genre of storytelling that existed in the Umayyad period and enjoyed high visibility in late Abbasid times was promulgated by the *qāṣṣ*, a popular (as opposed to scholarly) preacher. However, the related verbal noun *qasaṣ* (and its verb *qassa‘ alā*) might have been used much earlier to mean a *khutba*; the term occurs in Ṭabarī’s *Ṭārīkh* of the year 76H to denote what appears to be an oration by the Khārijite Śāliḥ b. Musarriḥ. To complicate matters still further, Ṭabarī relates that this *qasaṣ* [=*khutba*] was sent by a man named Qubaysa b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān to some fellow Khārijites in written form (*kitāb*). The religio-political *khutba* also persisted after the end of the Umayyad period, and we see it today in the speeches of modern Arab leaders who consistently invoke Islam in the validation of their policies; the term *khiṭāb*, rather than *khutba*, is generally used for these. Similarly, the marriage *khutba* (exceptionally, still called by that name) continues to be pronounced across the world.

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121 Cf. Radtke and Jansen, “*Wa’iz*,” in *EI2*. A biographical work on preachers is Ibn al-Jawzī’s (d. 597/1201) *Kitāb al-Quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*. On the origins of the institutions of *qāṣṣ* and *wa’iz*, see Berkey 2001, 22-35.  
122 Ibn al-Jawzī divided the sit-down *wa’iz* into four segments: 1) the *khutba*, a stylized *taḥmīd*, in the sense of the ornate prelude mentioned earlier; 2) the *wa’iz* or *taḥdīr*, pious counsel or contemplation of mortality; 3) the *qiṣṣa*, or story; and 4) the *khawātīm*, verses of poetry used to end the session. Cf. Swartz 1999, Hartmann 1987-8; Seidensticker 1998.  
123 Cf. Pellat, “*Kāss*,” in *EI2*.  
125 Cf. collected speeches of the late President Anwar Sadat of Egypt 1971.
In this way, the manifold types of religious, political, religio-political, and civic orations developed through the pre-Islamic and early Islamic eras. Some forms died out, others changed or fused, and new forms emerged, until, from the Abbasid period forward, a new nomenclature evolved.

V. Characteristics: Structure, Setting, and Style

There was a noticeable degree of evolution in the structure, setting, and style of the oration, as generation after generation of orators exhibited new sensibilities of literary taste, as well as changing social, religious, and political mores. Key impulses to change were the coming of the new religion of Islam, the shifting political climate from a tribal to an imperial setting, and most significantly, the gradual transformation of the literary culture from a primarily oral to a primarily written one. While some features such as direct address and public audience persisted, others, such as spontaneous improvisation, the use of Qur’ânic and poetic quotations, and the format of the praise introduction, were modified.

Data about the characteristics of the oration have to be gleaned from here and there. In contrast to their expositions on poetry and chancery prose, medieval Arabic literary critics did not present a systematic, normative exposé of oratory. However, their works contain comments pertinent to the subject. Al-Jâhiz’s long exposition in the Bayân wa-l-tabyiän, in his typically rambling style, is probably the fullest.127 Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih in his anthology al-‘Iqd al-farîd,128 and Ishâq b. Ibrâhîm, in his chancery manual al-Burhân fi wujûh al-bayân,129 also offer brief analytical remarks. Moreover, the khutba texts themselves, along with adjacent anecdotes and comments, yield relevant information, both about expectations from an orator, and the standard features of a khutba.

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126 On medieval Arabic poetics, see ‘Abbâs 1986.
127 See index entry on khatâba in al-Jâhiz’s al-Bayân wa-l-tabyiän, 4:107-8.
129 Ishâq b. Ibrâhîm, al-Burhân, 191-216.
Table 2: Structure, Setting, and Style of the Early *Khûţba*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Islamic (circa last quarter of 6th c.-610)</td>
<td>Fixed format: 1. Probable praise formula (<em>taḥmīd</em>). 2. “… and after that” phrase (<em>ammā ba‘d</em>). 3. Body of <em>khûţba</em>.</td>
<td>1. Large public audience. 2. Orally delivered. 3. Delivered standing from high ground, or back of camel (except marriage <em>khûţba</em>); facing the audience. 4. Official setting.</td>
<td>Extemporaneously composed. Aimed to persuade. Features included: 1. Rhythm: strong parallelism (<em>izdiwâj</em>), assonance (<em>muwâţana</em>), and repetition (<em>takrâr</em>); brief sentences; sporadic rhyme (<em>sajî</em>); some paronomasia (<em>jinâs</em>) and antithesis (<em>ṭībāy</em>). 2. Audience engagement: direct address; oaths and other emphatic structures and exclamations; rhetorical questions; imperatives. 3. Imagery of the desert, animals, and cosmos (both metaphorical and literal) 4. Citations of poetry. 5. Formal language; simple syntax and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early caliphs (632-661)</td>
<td>Same as above, plus: 1. Praise formula modified to include Islamic creed of faith. 5. Prayer for forgiveness often used the phrase: “I say these words and beg forgiveness from God for myself and for all believing men and women.”</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umayyad (661-749)</td>
<td>Same as above, plus: 5. Prayer for caliph introduced at end of ritual <em>khûţba</em>, and, less consistently, cursing of enemies.</td>
<td>Same as above, plus: 3. Permanent pulpit in mosque.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Periods and Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early-Abbasid forward (749 ff.)</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Often composed in writing prior to delivery, or prepared based on model <em>khuṭbas</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Longer sentences; more <em>sajِs</em>, often completely rhymed; more <em>jīnās</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Imagery/vocabulary no longer of desert and animals.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. More Qur'ān quotations; fewer citations of poetry.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The format of the oration became gradually established during early Islamic times. By the end of the Umayyad period, the *khuṭba* always began with a formulaic *taḥmīd* introduction, which generally encompassed most or all of the following: the name (*basmala*) and praise (*hamdala*) of God; the double testimonial (*shahāda*), that “there is no god but God and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God”; glorification of God (*subḥāna*) and an entreaty for His aid (*istiʿāna*); and invocation of blessings upon the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*).

The essential nature of the *taḥmīd*, particularly the naming and praising of God, is underscored by the Muslims’ coining of the negative term “maimed oration” (*khuṭba batrā‘*) for the anomalous *khuṭba* that opened without it, an epithet given to Ziyād’s famous Basran *khuṭba*, which begins directly with the address “O people of Iraq.”

The *taḥmīd* was followed by the phrase *ammā baʿd* (“… and after that”), or, more rarely and only in pre-Islamic times, by a simple *thumma* (“then”). According to some reports, Quss was the first orator to have used *ammā baʿd*. Later, the use of this oratorical phrase

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131 For details of the evolution and role of the *taḥmīd* formula in Arabic literature, see forthcoming doctoral thesis by Aziz Qutbuddin, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

132 In a boast situation (*munāfāra* or *muṭākhara*), the *khāṭīb* often used the divine praise formula to introduce praise of his own tribe (cf. Ṣafwat 1933 1:163-4 #17).


134 Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Isāba*, 7:254, #7334. The *ammā baʿd* phrase is also attributed to the prophet David, in one explanation of the Qur’ānic phrase *faṣl al-khiṭāb* (Ibn Maẓzūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, *kh-t-b*).
following the prefatory *taḥmīd* became *de rigueur* in epistolography as well.

The existence of the transition phrase in pre-Islamic times may be taken as an indication that the Islamic *taḥmīd* formula had a precursor therein, in the form of a formulaic opening of sorts, perhaps even a *taḥmīd*. We cannot be sure of this, because rather than full orations, only parts of pre-Islamic *khūbas* survive, and the preserved pieces, with one exception, lack a formulaic opening. The *khūba* pronounced by Abū Ṭālib at Muḥammad’s marriage to Khadija before the coming of Islam represents the only surviving example of a pre-Islamic *taḥmīd* (and it might not be genuine). But if there was an *ammā ba’d* (what comes after), there must have been an *ammā qabl* (what comes before). The pre-Islamic *taḥmīd* probably invoked the pagan gods, and was, in consequence, deliberately excised by early Muslims.

The *ammā ba’d* phrase was followed by a phrase of direct address to the audience, and often by instructions to the audience to listen. The main body of the *khūba* followed, and it contained different themes, depending on the occasion, including moral counsel, exhortations to battle, other political issues, or legal maxims. Ritual *khūbas* of early Islam often contained military instructions towards their end. The *khūba* often concluded with prayer (*du‘ā‘*) for the orator, the audience, and all Muslims, in some variation of the phrase “I say these words and beg forgiveness from God for myself and for all believing men and women” (*aqūlu qawlū hādhā wa-astaghfirūllāhā lī wa-li-jamī‘ al-muṣminīna wa-l-muṣmināt*).

In later times, the supplication also included a prayer for the caliph’s long life. The naming of the caliph (e.g., Fatimid vs. Abbasid) publicly proclaimed the townspeople’s allegiance, making the final segment of the *khūba* an important religio-political implement. Ibn Khaldūn (d. 780/1378) reports that ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās, who was ‘Ali’s governor in Basra, was the first to include this formula, saying in his orations, “O God, help ‘Ali, who represents the truth!” Also,

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the final segment occasionally included curses upon the enemies of the state. The Umayyads used to curse (al-la‘n or al-sabb) ‘Ali in their khutbas.\textsuperscript{139} Later, the Fatimids publicly cursed the Umayyads.

The fixed structure of the khutba worked to the advantage of the orator by setting up and fulfilling expectations in the audience.

Significant aspects of the setting of the early khutba are: public audience, oral delivery, official nature, and (physically) high placement of the khaṭib.

The audience of the khutba was a general, public one. Any person from the community, regardless of social standing or gender, could attend. However, a significant segment of the audience was composed of men with religious, social, political, and military weight. In many cases, the phrase “al-ṣalātu jāmi‘a,” literally meaning “Ritual prayer gathers,” was proclaimed loudly to gather people for a khutba, either by the orator himself or an aide.\textsuperscript{140} According to Ibn Sa‘d,\textsuperscript{141} the phrase was originally used as a call for the ritual prayer; when the adhān replaced it, its own use shifted to collecting all the people around to listen to a khutba. The open spaces outside the dwelling areas, and later the mosque, were used to deliver khutbas, and both were public spaces. The sources tell us that at its largest, the audience could number in the thousands (probably a rare occurrence). Muhammad’s audience for his sermon on Mount Ṭarāf during his last pilgrimage was enormous, according to some reports, ten thousand, when most of the Muslims of the Arabian Peninsula are said to have attended. Although the orator presumably had a bold voice, clear diction, and mastery over the art of voice projection, one wonders how such huge audiences could have heard the speaker. These numbers are probably not meant to be taken literally—historians

\textsuperscript{139} Cf. the following records of the Umayyads’ cursing of ‘Ali: al-Mu‘ayyad al-Shirāzī, al-Majālis al-Mu‘ayyadiyya, 3:119, # 227; Yāqūt, Mu‘jam al-buldān, 3:191 (“Sijistān”); verse by Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī re. ‘Ali, in Muhammad al-Samāwī, al-Ṭali‘a min shu‘arā‘ al-shī‘a, bio. #157, retrieved from the alwaraq internet site: “Do you curse him on the pulpit, when it was by his sword that its planks were erected for you?”; al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, al-Majālis wa-al-musāvarāt, 176.

\textsuperscript{140} Cf. khaṭba of Mu‘awiya II, in al-Ṭabarī, Ta‘rīkh, 5:530; a search of the phrase on the alwaraq website yields 255 hits in 79 different classical texts, including early works of Ibn Sa‘d, al-Waqīqī, and al-Balādhurī.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibn Sa‘d, Ṭabaqāt, “Dhikr al-Adhān.”
could have used them to emphasize the large size of an audience. But several reports explain how such a vast audience could indeed be addressed satisfactorily; they point out that a second, loud-voiced person often stood by the orator, or at a short distance from him, and repeated his words to the farther audience. Rabî‘a b. Umayya b. Khalaf, a Companion who possessed a resounding voice, stood just below the neck of Muḥammad’s camel to thus broadcast the pilgrimage *khutba*.\(^{142}\) Reports of similar broadcasting appear in later Ḥadīth dictation assemblies, in which one or two people would relay the lecture at intervals to those sitting at a distance from the professor.\(^{143}\)

The orator addressed his audience directly. Accordingly, a pleasing physical appearance and a powerful manner of delivery were essential to the effectiveness of his presentation. Medieval critics discussed at some length the expected demeanor of the orator while delivering the *khutba*, as well as desirable physical traits. Al-Jāḥiz, for example, praised loud voice, wide mouth, and stillness of deportment.\(^{144}\) He deplored trembling, excessive sweating, and missing teeth,\(^{145}\) and disapproved of coughing and blowing one’s nose.\(^{146}\) Ishāq b. Ibrāhîm added to the list of disapproved physical expressions playing with one’s beard, as well as hemming and hawing.\(^{147}\)

The stylized government epistle (*risāla*) that appeared in the late Umayyad period was composed in writing, but influenced in part by the oral oration, and adopting some of its functions, it was likewise delivered orally to a large public audience. So was the appointment letter (*taqlīd*). The oral delivery was probably more efficient in ensuring the message reached the populace, which was still largely unlettered.

Other than the marriage *khutba*, which was delivered sitting down, the orator maintained a physically higher position vis-à-vis the audience. He stood on a rise or mound in the ground, on an ad hoc pulpit facing the audience,\(^{148}\) or sat on the back of a camel (or a horse

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143 Cf. al-Samānī (d. 562/1166), *Methodik des Diktatkollegs*.
145 Ibid., 1:134.
146 Ibid., 1:40.
in battle). Besides enabling the audience to better see and hear the speaker, this bodily elevation could have symbolized the elevated status of the orator. Exceptionally while delivering his last khutba, because of his illness, Muḥammad sat down on the pulpit. According to al-Qalqashandī, Muʿāwiyā was the first to routinely preach seated because “his fat increased.” The expression “qāma khaṭīban” (he stood up orating), which is common in the medieval historical and literary sources, indicates that a standing position was typical for the orator (except when he sat on his mount, of course). The earliest sermons were delivered from the location of the prayer-leader/preacher’s place of prayer (muṣallā) standing in front of and facing the congregation, without being higher than them, or just slightly raised. Muhammad’s pulpit in Medina was said to be two or three steps high, which was increased in the early Umayyad period to six. According to al-Qalqashandī, Tamīm al-Dārī built the first pulpit for the Prophet, having seen the church pulpits of Syria. According to other reports, Marwān (r. 645/684-5) may have been the first to build a permanent pulpit.

The setting of the khutba was in all cases a formal, official one. As mentioned earlier, the political and religio-political speech provided a vehicle for tribal or state policy from the earliest times, and was delivered only on momentous or catastrophic occasions. In the case of apolitical sermons of pious counsel, the setting was still formal and serious, and the orator a person of spiritual authority, whether endowed with political weight or not. In all cases, unwritten regulations regarding silence and close attention of the audience prevailed. The location of khutba delivery from the pulpit of the mosque also lent it authority. Another visual symbol of the orator’s authority was the

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150 Ṣaḥwat 1933 1:158, #14; after al-Ṭabarī, Taʾrīkh; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil.
151 al-Qalqashandī, Ṣubḥ al-ʾaṣḥāḥ, 1:421.
152 Cf. al-Jaḥiz, al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn, 2:55.
154 al-Qalqashandī, Ṣubḥ al-ʾaṣḥāḥ, 1:421.
155 Cf. Wensinck, “Khutba,” in: EI². Wensinck does not indicate his primary source, which is probably Muslim’s chapter on “Going to the prayer-place in the two Eids” in the Ṣahih, the source he cites for statements before and after this. Muslim’s chapter does contain a reference to Marwān building a pulpit of bricks and clay for the Eid prayer; although the report admits of the possibility of Marwān’s being the first to build a permanent pulpit, the wording is ambiguous.
staff or sword upon which he leaned during the *khutba*. Quss is said to have been the first to preach leaning on a sword or staff (or mounted on a camel).\textsuperscript{156} The pre-Islamic judge supposedly also did the same. Muḥammad is said to have leaned on a staff during the Friday *khutba*, and on a sword during *khutbas* delivered in battle.\textsuperscript{157} The custom prevailed in al-Jāḥiz’s time (and later as well), and he defended it, citing the Qur’ānic examples of Solomon and Moses.\textsuperscript{158}

The early Arabic *khutba* displayed five kinds of literary characteristics:\textsuperscript{159} (1) heavy use of brief, parallel sentences, and repeated phrases, as well as the sporadic utilization of rhyme (*saj*)—which yielded a strong rhythm in the *khutba* and facilitated its comprehension; (2) frequent direct address, emphatic structures, and rhetorical questions—which engaged the audience in the speech act; (3) vivid imagery to portray abstractions as observable, desert phenomena—which gave physical form to theoretical concepts; (4) citation of Qur’ānic and poetic verses—which anchored the orator’s words in the sacred or semi-sacred literature of pre and early Islam, bestowing divine or semi-divine authority to them; and (5) employment of dignified yet simple language—which rendered the oration formal and made it understandable to its public audience.

The consistent, almost relentless use of the first feature of parallelism (*izdiwāj*), in which two or more adjacent phrases, clauses, or sentences, show identical or near identical syntax, is one of the most conspicuous features of the early Arabic *khutba*.\textsuperscript{160} Additionally, parallel phrases commonly display repetition (*takrār*) of expressions, which added emphasis and created a refrain. Parallel clauses were also concise, mostly limited to two to four words. (Non-parallel clauses were usually brief too, but not as consistently as parallel ones.) Parallelism

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\textsuperscript{157} Ibn Māja (d. 273/887), *Sunan*, section on “*iqāma*” from internet Ḥadīth site; Abū Dā‘ūd (d. 275/889), *Sunan*, section on “*salāh*,” from same.

\textsuperscript{158} al-Jāḥiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, 3:28. Elsewhere, he says in a tongue-in-cheek assessment that if the *khaṭīb* used a staff, it was a sure sign that the *khutba* would be long.

\textsuperscript{159} Cf. discussions of the characteristics of the *khutba* in some of the Arabic monographs, such as al-Ḥāwī 1970, 53-64, and literary analyses of particular *khutbas*; al-Ḥūfī 1972, 5-38, 146-205; Shalābī 1983, 23-60; Dähne 2001, 141-210.

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was often combined with the use of rhyme (saj‘), paronomasia (jinās), and assonance (muwāzana). The critic Abū Hilāl directs “writers” of (risālas and) khuṭbas (sic) to focus on parallelism, and not to force rhyme.\footnote{Abū Hilāl, al-Šinā‘atayn, 165.} An example of parallelism is an oration by Abū Ṭālib, in which, after advising reverence for the Ka‘ba, he explains his reasons for this counsel in the following three syntactically parallel lines “fā‘innā fihā mardātan li-r-rabb, wa-qiwāman li-l-ma‘āsh, wa-thabātan li-l-wa‘a.” (Indeed, in it is pleasure for the Lord, stability for livelihood, and pacification for violence.)\footnote{Ṣafwat 1933 1:161, #161; after al-Ālūsī, Bulūgh al-arab. Here and in the following example, the translation is literal, to mirror parallelism in Arabic text.} In each of these three phrases we observe a maṣdar in the accusative case, followed by the particle “li”, followed by a noun.

Syntactical parallelism was sometimes enhanced by the use of either synonymous or antithetical pairs (ṭibāq). The subcategory of synonymous parallelism can be observed in the many orations with two or more adjacent phrases of almost the same meaning. This type of parallelism, in which the second, parallel phrase echoed the first, displayed rhetorical skill. More practically, as mentioned earlier, it also facilitated aural comprehension. For if the audience did not catch the first sentence, they would probably grasp the second, and they would thus be able to follow along. An example is the following set of lines in an oration by ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib, in which he said, describing a dying man’s last thoughts, “yufakkiru fī ma afnā ‘umrah, wa-fīma adhhaba dahrāh.”\footnote{al-Raḍī, Nahj al-balāgha, 239, #108.} (He thinks about the things he used up his life [doing], and squandered his allotted span [achieving].) Synonymous pairs here are: afnā (spent)/adhhaba (squandered); ‘umrah (his life)/dahrāh (his span); note that the two phrases also rhyme in “r.” The parallel structure can be presented as fīma +verb+direct-object+pronoun suffix.

Antithetical parallelism can be observed in the many orations that have two adjacent phrases of opposite meaning. An example is the set of opening lines in the oration of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, in which he addressed the “son of Adam,” “al-thawā‘u ḥāhunā qalīl, wa-l-baqā‘u hunāka ṭawīl.”\footnote{See text in Appendix.} (Residence here is short, and remaining there is long.) The antithetical pairs here are: ḥāhunā (here)/hunāka (there); qalīl (little, i.e., short)/ṭawīl (long); the parallel words either share a
morphological pattern (thawār and baqāʾ; qalīl and ṭawīl), or a deictic element (hunā); note also the rhyme in “l.” Overall, the layered parallelistic construction of the early Arabic oration endowed it with a compelling, rhythmic cadence.

The rhythmic, crisp, concise, and eloquent nature of the khuṭba phrases produced many proverbs (amthāl). Therefore, many of the extant khuṭbas survive in etiologies of proverb collections.\textsuperscript{165} Even modern Arabic proverbs might have their roots in the pre-Islamic khuṭba: for example, the Egyptian colloquial proverb “illī māt fāt” (He who dies is lost [forever]) was perhaps influenced by Quss’s identical phrase in classical Arabic: 

Regarding the feature of rhyming prose (ṣajī)—in which the last word of two or more succeeding sentences, clauses, or phrases, contained the same consonant—the early khuṭba used it only sporadically.\textsuperscript{166} The intermittent and unforced usage of ṣajī kept the pre-Islamic and early Islamic khuṭba relatively unstylized. Usually, two or three consecutive phrases would be rhymed, after which the rhyme would either cease, or be replaced in the next few lines with a different rhyme letter. In most types of orations, the full khuṭba was never rhymed. The use of ṣajī abounded only in the formulaic taḥmīd preface of the khuṭba. An example is the oration by Muḥammad delivered to the Quraysh upon the conquest of Mecca. Four of the five opening clauses describing God, end in the letter “d” with the pronoun suffix “h[ū]” (note also the full parallelism in clauses three and four, followed by the partial parallelism of clause five): “lā ilāha illa ʿlāhu wahdah, lā sharīka lah, šadaqa waʿdadah, wa-naṣara ʿabdah, wa-hazama l-ahzāba wahdah.” (There is no god but God, one; He fulfilled his promise; aided his servant; and defeated the confederates, alone).\textsuperscript{167} Pre-Islamic sermons of pious counsel sometimes used full ṣajī in their early segments, if these segments referred to natural phenomena. Such prefaces usually led to the affirmation of a Creator, and a reminder of coming death. (Examples follow in the paragraph on natural imagery).

One type of early khuṭba was entirely ṣajī-focused and usually fully rhymed, namely, the pre-Islamic rhymed prose of the soothsay-

\textsuperscript{165} Cf. Ṣafwat 1933 1:43, 65-6, #25, 42-3.
\textsuperscript{166} There is significant overlap between the ṣajī of the early khuṭba and Qurʾānic sajī; a detailed analysis of the latter is Stewart 1990.
\textsuperscript{167} See text in Appendix.
ers, the *sajj* al-kuhhān. An example is the following warning to the Banū al-Ḥārith by their kāhin not to fight the tribe of Tamīm, in a seven-line rhymed (and parallel) pronouncement, with the first six ending in the “b” rhyme “ābā”: “innakum tasīrūna āqābā, wataghzūna aḥbābā, Sa’dan wa-Rabābā, wa-taridūna miyāhan jiḥābā, fa-talqawna ālayhā ẓirābā, wa-takūnu ghanimatukum turābā.”¹⁶⁸

(Indeed, you will walk one after the other; fight loved ones; [the clans of] Sa’d and Rabāb; come to water at deep, full wells; then meet upon them battle-thrusts; your booty will be dirt.) The preface of these kāhin pronouncements was mostly in the form of oaths by natural objects and phenomena (examples follow in paragraph on nature imagery).

More common than *sajj* was assonance or balance (*muwāzana*), meaning rough rhyme similarity, in which vowel sounds resembled each other in the last words of the sentence, clause, or phrase, with changes in the intervening consonants. Assonance was often created through morphological balance. One example is found in a speech by al-_NUMERIC_NAME_ b. Mundhir: “…ma’a ma’rifatihimi l-ashyā, wa-ḍarbihim li-l-amthāl, wa-iblāghihim fi s-ṣifāt, mā laysa li-shay’in min alsinati l-ajnās.”¹⁶⁹ (…along with [the Arabs’] knowledge of things, their citing of proverbs, and their accuracy in descriptions, which is not found in the tongues of [other] races). The assonance is created by the words *ashyā*, *amthāl*, *ṣifāt*, and *ajnās* occurring at the end of four successive phrases; they all have a long *ā* sound before their final consonants, which differ: *ā*, *l*, *t*, and *s*. Three of the four words (all except *ṣifāt*) are also morphologically identical, being broken plurals in the form *afāl*.

The second large category of the *khūṭba*’s persuasive literary techniques is represented by the devices it used to encode the live audience into its linguistic format.¹⁷⁰ The most obvious of these was direct address, *de rigueur*, and used throughout the oration. The term

¹⁶⁸ Ṣafwat 1933 1:80, #53; after Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*; Abū al-Faraj, *al-Aghānī*. Note that the next line, the seventh and last, does not rhyme: “fā’atī‘u amrī wa-lā taghzū Tamīmā.” (So obey my command and do not fight Tamīm).

¹⁶⁹  Ibid., 1:52, #31.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. comments to that effect by Jones 2005, 42: “The ultimate aim of the sermon was to elicit audience response (conversion, repentance, jiḥād, etc.), and thus one must be attuned to the rhetorical and narrative devices the preacher uses towards this end.”
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khutba and its derivatives all tapped into the root meaning of direct address, which was particularly visible at the commencement of each new thematic section and served as a section marker. The orator addressed the audience in the second person plural, in the vocative (nidā') form. Sometimes he overtly used the particle (ḥarf al-nidā'); at other times, he implied it. He usually used the masculine gender in the plural form, often to encompass both sexes. The address was sometimes to all people (O people)—generic forms of address include (nās and qawm) words: “ayyuhā al-nās,” “yā ayyuhā al-nās,” “ma‘āshir al-nās”; at other times, the address was to Muslims “ma‘āshir al-muslimūn,” and servants of God “ibāda llāh;” at yet other times, the address was to the people of a particular country or town, “yā ahl al-‘Irāq” (O people of Iraq!) and “yā ahl al-Madīnā” (O people of Medina). Sometimes, a single person could be the overt addressee, with a larger secondary audience present, particularly in the munāfara debates and addresses to kings and caliphs. In such a circumstance, that single person was addressed by name, as in Zaynab’s address to Yazīd, and Fāṭima’s address to Abū Bakr.

After the address, the orator often directed the audience to listen, bend ears and hearts, and pay heed. Examples abound in the orations of pre-Islamic Mā’mūn al-Ḥārithī, who said “Heed me with your ears!” (arūnī asmā‘akum), and Quss, who said “Listen and retain!” (isma‘ū wa-‘āyū), as well as Islamic orators such as Muḥammad, who said “Listen to me, so that I may explain to you!” (isma‘ū minnī ubayyīn lakum).

The orator would often refer to himself in the first grammatical person. Alternatively, he used the third grammatical person, often, but not always, in an oath format. Quss says of himself, “Quss swears an oath by God ……” Other examples are found in several orations by Muḥammad, in which he says “I bear witness that Muḥammad is [God’s] servant and His messenger;” “… He who prays [for God

171 Cf. al-Radī, Nahj al-balāgha, 157, 222, 357, 385, #79, 100, 174, 186.
172 Ibid., 139, 315, #65, 155.
173 Ibid., 144, #70; Ṣafwat 1933 2:469.
174 Ṣafwat 1933, 1:39, #22.
175 Ibid., 1:38, #21.
176 Ibid., 1:156, #13.
177 Ibid., 1:38, #21.
178 Ibid., 1:155, #13.
to] bless Muḥammad...,”179 and “By Him, in whose hands Muḥammad's soul lies.”180 ʿUmar proclaimed in one speech: “Suffice ʿUmar as a grievous affair, [his] awaiting of … the Reckoning…”181 One of ʿAlī's orations has the following reference to himself: “By the [God] in whose hands lies the life of Abū Ṭālib's son…”182

The orator also encouraged the audience’s involvement with numerous emphatic structures. He applied the nūn al-tawkīd to the end of verbs, the lām of emphasis to the beginning of verbs, and the particles inna (Verily!) and alā (Lo!) to the beginning of sentences.183 He also interjected into sentences fervent exclamations such as “hay-hā” (Far be it!) and “qabbaḥakumu llāh” (May God disfigure you!). In an eleven line oration of ʿAlī, no less than seven sentences begin with alā (Lo!), the first of which runs “Lo! Today is the day for preparing [the horses], and tomorrow is the race.”184 In a protracted use of the emphatic nūn and lā (combined with some graphic similes and strong parallelism) al-Ḥajjāj threatened his recalcitrant Iraqi subjects, saying: “I shall skin you (la-ḥuwannakum) as I would skin a rod. I shall strike you (la-aqraʾannakum) as I would strike a flint. I shall wrap you up (la-uḥābannakum) as I would wrap a salama tree. I shall beat you (la-aʿribannakum) as I would beat alien camels.”185 Orators also incorporated strong oaths, such as the following pronouncement by the female soothsayer Zabrāʾ: “By the sky-wind blowing, by the night pitch-dark, by the morning shining forth, by the star night-rising, by the white rain-cloud pouring…”186

Yet another device the orator used to encourage audience engagement was questioning. Sometimes, the orator asked of the audience real questions and they responded with short answers such as “Yes, by God” (allāhumma naʾam). But mostly, the questions were rhetorical, with obvious answers. Rather than as a means of eliciting information, they served to emphasize. Ṭāriq b. Ziyād began his address rousing his army to fight the Andalusians by saying “Where is

179 Ibid., 1:150, #14.
180 Ibid., 1:152 #8.
181 Ibid., 1:212, #77.
182 al-Raḍī, Nahj al-balāgha, 268, #122.
184 al-Raḍī, Nahj al-balāgha, 93-4, #28.
185 See text in Appendix.
186 Ṣafwat 1933 1:111, #68.
the escape?" The answer is implied: "There is none." In sermons of pious counsel, rhetorical questions were often in the *ubi sunt* mode that emphasized the inevitability of death by asking "Where are the kings? Where are those who ruled the earth?" The obvious response would be: "They are dead. They are gone. They no longer rule." Wašil proclaimed "Where are the kings who built Ctesiphon? And strengthened palaces? And fortified gates? And kept masses of chamberlains? And trained purebred horses? And possessed [all] the lands? And made use of inherited cattle and slaves?—[This world] grabbed them along with their carrying litters, it crushed them with its breast, it chomped on them with its canines! …”

A more direct method of persuasion was through normative, prescriptive phrases. The imperative form "Do this! Do not do that!" recurs in *khutbas* of all types, but most heavily in the sermon of pious counsel. Al-Ḥasan al-Bašrī began one oration with a string of four imperatives, in the first of which he commanded the "son of Adam," "Sell this world of yours in return for your hereafter!"

The third category in the *khutba*’s stylistic repertoire was vivid imagery. The early oration used metaphorical expressions derived mostly from desert flora, fauna, and natural phenomena. Much of this imagery (as in early poetry) was related to animals like the camel, the horse, predatory birds and beasts, the sand-grouse, the ostrich, and the lizard. It also referred to water courses and rain/cloud formations, as well as the dry desert landscape, with its distinctive plants, its twisted sands, and winding dune-valleys. The use of these dramatic images well known to the early Arabs helped the orator bring abstractions into the realm of the immediate audio-visual. The lines of Wašil quoted earlier which described death as a beast that "crushed [people] with its chest, bit into them with its canines,” are a clear example of animal imagery, as are the following lines of ʿAlī warning his people of brewing agitation, in which he used a camel image to drive home the urgency of his message: "Ask me! [before it is too late] … before a sedition rushes in raising its hind-foot, stepping in its nose-rein.” In this last example—and this is typical in

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187 See text in Appendix.
188 See text in Appendix.
189 See text in Appendix.
early oratory—the word camel is not used, but rather, its image is evoked by the use of words specific to it, here the words “hind-foot” and “nose-rein.” Similarly, Fāṭima, in her speech, did not mention the camel directly, but used the camel-related word al-ṭarq, meaning water in which camels had bathed and urinated.\textsuperscript{191}

In addition to metaphors and similes, the orator also referred to natural objects and events literally. In sermons of pious counsel, the orator commonly used images signifying the all-encompassing and all powerful character of the forces of nature, to remind his desert-dwelling nomadic audience of the inevitability of death. Quss, in his famous \textit{khutba} of counsel, said: “A dark night…a bright day…a sky that has zodiacal signs…stars that shine…seas [whose waters] roar…mountains firmly anchored…an earth spread out…rivers made to flow…” The following phrases indicated to the audience his reason for mentioning these objects—to remind them of the coming of death: “Indeed, there are signs in the sky. There are lessons in the earth. What is the state of the people—going and never returning?…”\textsuperscript{192}

These natural images also helped the orator lead his audience to affirming the necessity of the Creator of the objects. Another pre-Islamic pious counsel orator, al-Ma’mūn al-Ḥarithī, said (in full \textit{saj’}) “… Indeed, in what you see is a lesson for one who would take heed. An earth, laid out…a sky, elevated…a sun, that rises and sets…a youth, dying…an old man, gone… Indeed, in [all] this is the clearest of proofs of the [existence of] the Planner, the Destiny-Writer, the Creator, the Shaper.”\textsuperscript{193}

The oaths used by the soothsayer \textit{s} in the preface of their pronouncements almost exclusively invoked natural objects and phenomena. This is illustrated by the earlier cited pronouncement of the \textit{kāhina} Zabrā’. Most widespread were auspicious cosmic images of light and fertility, such as stars and rain, which would evoke feelings in the audience of bliss and of hopeful expectations for a bright future.\textsuperscript{194}

The nature imagery of the soothsayers, like all their pronouncements, was rhymed, as were the nature-invoking prefaces ascribed to Quss and al-Ma’mūn cited above. It is likely that the model of the

\textsuperscript{191} See text in Appendix.  
\textsuperscript{192} See text in Appendix.  
\textsuperscript{193} Şafwat 1933 1:39-40, #22.  
\textsuperscript{194} E.g. Şafwat 1933, 1:78, #51.
soothsayers prompted other pre-Islamic orators, particularly those who preached pious counsel, to combine natural images and rhyme in their opening statements.

The fourth set of stylistic tools employed by the orator was the frequent citing of poetic, and later, Qurʾānic verses, and, less frequently, proverbs (the last, in this context, a component of the khutba, rather than a product as mentioned earlier). Since both poetry and the Qurʾān were beloved to the Arabs, and because the audience had large quantities of verses committed to memory, their mention evoked strong associations. The orator stacked the odds in favor of a positive response by linking his current agenda to literary instruments that were part of the audience’s cherished heritage. Qurʾānic citation became particularly widespread in ritual sermons and sermons of pious counsel;¹⁹⁵ there are fewer quotes in political and religio-political khutbas. Gradually, the choice of Qurʾānic verses cited in the ritual sermon became quite standardized. Citation of poetry too, had been, and continued to be, a common practice in all types of khutbas. Half-lines, single lines, or two or three lines, were cited, and they occurred anywhere in the oration, at the beginning, somewhere in the middle, or at the end. Examples are the multiple lines of poetry, perhaps his own, cited by Quss;¹⁹⁶ the single line by Suḥaym b. Wathīḥ al- Riyāḥī and the cluster of lines by Ruwayshid b. Ramīd al-‘Anbarī cited by al-Ḥajjāj;¹⁹⁷ and the half verse by Imrū’ al-Qays cited by ‘Alī.¹⁹⁸ Although the citing of poetic verse was common in practice, the theorists and the jurists—particularly the latter, and mostly in the ritual sermon—appear to have disapproved, comparing it unfavorably with the citing of the Qurʾān.¹⁹⁹ Less often, proverbs were quoted. ‘Alī, for example, used in his oration the proverb: “In the morning, night-travelers will be praised.”²⁰⁰

In a similar exploitation of the known and accepted, the orator connected universal themes such as the inevitability of death and the merit of honor with an immediate, particular, context, with a view to

¹⁹⁶ See text in Appendix.
¹⁹⁷ See text in Appendix.
¹⁹⁸ al-Rāḍī, Nahj al-balāgha, 326, #158.
²⁰⁰ al-Rāḍī, Nahj al-balāgha, 323, #160.
persuading the audience to action. In the many sermons of pious counsel, the abstract concept of death is always anchored in the here and now, in the reality of the audience’s own mortality, as in the sermon where Muḥammad said: “O people! [You behave] as though death in this world is decreed for people other than us! … [You behave] as though the dead whose biers we carry are travelers who will soon return to us …”

An example of invoking honor is ʿAli’s *khuṭba* urging the Iraqis to rise up and defend their religion, their women, and their property, in which he opened his address by comparing his soldiers to women and children: “O parodies of men, not men! Minds of children and intellects of canopy-covered ones!”

Such an address would presumably shame the audience, galvanizing them to fulfill their knightly roles.

The fifth stylistic category of the *khuṭba* is that of its language register, where simplicity and dignity were the rule. Straightforward syntax prevailed, particularly in comparison with the more complex syntax of early poetry. The diction was at all times formal and elevated.

The lexicon should have been perfectly clear to the orator’s contemporary audience; the scribe of the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī is reported to have censured the use of rare words (*gharīb*) in oratory. The reason the modern reader finds the early oration less accessible is that, like early poetry and the Qurʾān, it contains numerous words and idioms long since fallen out of use. An example is the following phrase in the oration of al-Ḥajjāj: “*lā yughmazu jānibayya ka-taghmāzī t-tīn*” (“My sides cannot be squeezed to test for freshness like the squeezing of figs,” which uses the word *taghmāz* that is here taken out of its more common context of the good health of fatty sheep, and associated with the uncommon one of squeezing figs for freshness.

The *khuṭba*’s stylistic features reflect its extemporaneous composition. In contrast to the Greek way of prior preparation and writing, the early *khuṭba* was typically generated spontaneously. The early literary anthologies and chancery manuals unanimously stressed spontaneous,
natural orating. Al-Jahiz, as we saw in the anti-shu’ubiyya passage cited at the beginning of this paper, lavishly praised this feature, stating that the Persians, Indians, and Greeks did not possess the art of oratory—the only people in the world with real khutbas were the Arabs, because they spoke spontaneously through inspiration without lengthy preparation. He went on to claim that no formal training was required, that orators acquired their skills by pure inspiration and osmosis.

Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih and Abū Hilāl cited the following remarks which also emphasized lack of artifice: “Oratory’s head is a suitable natural disposition. Its backbone is practice. Its wings are the narrating of [wise] sayings. Its ornament is correct vocalization. Its splendor is the appropriate choice of words—for appeal comes with a reduction in forcedness.” Extemporaneity, then, according to the early critics, was the true hallmark of eloquence.

This extemporaneous composition was not of the formulaic, stockphrase based, oral composition kind detailed by Albert Lord and Milman Parry for Homeric and Balkan epic poetry, then proposed by James Monroe and Michael Zwettler for pre-Islamic poetry (and refuted in this context by Gregor Schoeler). Unlike epic poetry, the khutba did not contain a fictional, narrative sequence, nor was it metrical. However, it did reflect many of the stylistic features that one would expect from orally composed literature in general, such as short sentences, much repetition, additive rather than subordinative phrases, aggregative rather than analytic expositions, and closeness to the human lifeworld.

Later, oratory became associated with the chancery (kitāba), and the same Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih prescribed scribal training for the orator. From the Abbasid period onward, the preacher often wrote the khutba beforehand, or had someone (often a chancery official) write it for him; he then read it out on the pulpit, or memorized it and delivered it pseudo-extemporaneously. Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170-93/786-809) is said to have been the first who committed to memory sermons pre-

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209 For details of the characteristics of primarily “orally based thought and expression,” see Ong 1982, 31-76.
pared by others. His son, al-Amīn, had his teacher, the grammarian al-Aṣma’ī, prepare for him ten model sermons. At this time, many preachers began relying partially or completely on model ākūbat.

VI. Conclusion

The ākūba was a preeminent genre of early Arabic literature, with diverse functions. A reflection of these numerous functions can be found in the varied types of the oration, and its multiple characteristics. Both the types and features of the oration evolved over time, with the changing religious, political, and social milieu. The numerous manifestations of the political speech, the religio-political discourse, the sermon of pious counsel, the religious sermon, and the marriage ākūba developed through pre-Islamic and early Islamic times in step with the changing lifestyle, values, and aesthetics of the increasingly Islamicate and imperialist Arabic-speaking world. The terminology was altered too, and in the Abbasid period, the word ākūba came to denote almost exclusively the ritual sermon of Islam. The literary features of the oration were also modified over time, in response to the transition from an oral and spontaneous culture to an increasingly written and stylized aesthetic, and from a tribal, nomadic lifestyle to a progressively urbanized way of life.

The characteristics of the early ākūba—particularly its style, but also its setting and structure—reflect its overall literary purpose: convincing the audience of the validity of a course of action, a mode of behavior, a way of thought, or a type of belief. To this end, the early oration used logical and emotive persuasion. It combined rational argumentation with the evocation of emotions like anger, shame, fear, and hope. The ākūba evoked these emotions chiefly through literary techniques such as parallelism and citation of poetry, which, combined with an orator’s high status and powerful delivery, rendered an oration effective. Those orators who succeeded in fully exploiting these features, the ones who took the persuasive characteristics of the oration to the heights of sophistication, were recorded in history as models of Arabic eloquence, each a brilliant orator, a khaṭīb mišqa’.

211 Cf. Mez 1937, 318; from al-Tanūkhī, al-Faraj ba’d al-shidda.
The following are some of the most famous *kuṭbas* of pre-Islam and early Islam, full pieces or excerpts. They illustrate the typology and characteristics of the genre at that time.

As mentioned earlier, there are several versions for most of these *kuṭbas*. Since the purpose of their citation here is to provide an overall sense of the famous *kuṭbas* rather than a comparison of the different versions of each, I have noted the sources but not the variants, and have mostly based the transcription of the text and its translation, on Ṣafwat’s anthology.

1. *Quss b. Sā‘ida al-Iyādī*  
(Bishop of Najran or ḥanīf, d. ca. 600 C.E.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Type</strong></th>
<th>pre-Islamic sermon of pious counsel delivered at the Great Fair of ‘Ukāz in Mecca.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
<td>large, public audience; delivered sitting from back of his camel; direct address; mention of natural objects and phenomena as signs; swearing of oath in the 3rd person; syntactic and antithetical parallelism; some <em>saj</em>; short sentences; simple syntax; citing of poetry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O People! Listen and retain! He who lives dies. He who dies is lost [forever]. Everything that could happen will happen. A dark night…a bright day…a sky that has zodiacal sign…stars that shine…seas [whose waters] roar…mountains firmly anchored…an  

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earth spread out...rivers made to flow. Indeed, there are signs in the sky. There are lessons in the earth. What is the state of the people—going and never returning? Have they been satisfied, thus choosing to reside [there]? Or were they abandoned, [are they] sleeping? Quss swears an oath by God in which there is no sin: God has a religion that is more satisfactory to Him and better than the religion in which you believe. Indeed, you do evil deeds.

In those that went before

in eons past, are instances for us to take heed.

When I looked at the watering holes of death,

from which there is no returning—

[When] I saw my people towards them going, young and old—

The one who passed not coming back to me and not from those who remain, he who goes.
I became convinced that I—without a doubt—will go\(^{213}\) where the people have gone.

2. *Kāhin* of Khuzā‘a (6th c. C.E.)\(^{214}\)

*Type* political khutba, sub-type munāfara judgment in favor of Ḥāshim b. ʿAbd Manāf over Umayya b. ʿAbd Shams (the persons, not the clans); contains anti-Umayyad material—could be later propaganda; this khutba is not famous, but no specific surviving piece of the *sajf al-kuhhán* appears to be better known than another, so this is as good a sample as any.

*Features* oaths by auspicious natural objects (moon, stars, rain) followed by a judgment; full *sajf*; syntactic parallelism; short sentences.

By the glorious moon, by the shining star, by the rain-pouring cloud, by the bird[s] in the air, by the beacon that guides the traveler,\(^{215}\) one going to Najd and another to Ghafr: Indeed, Ḥāshim has outstripped Umayya to glorious deeds. There is a first in this and a last.\(^{216}\) Abū Hamhama\(^{217}\) knows this.

\(^{213}\) Read ṣāra here as tāmma, meaning *intaqala*.


\(^{215}\) There is one problem if the text is read this way with the *mā* taken to be a relative pronoun (*mā mawsūliyya*), for the required referent pronoun in the *jumlat al-ṣīla* is missing. An alternative reading would be “as long as the beacon guides the traveler” with the *mā* being *maṣdarīyya* (*zařfīyya zamāniyya*). But the first reading is more likely because a) the wāw of ʿafaf connects it to the previous oath sequence, b) it is syntactically parallel to the previous phrase, and c) the meaning of the passage is unclear if read in the “as long as” mode.

\(^{216}\) “Awwal” could also be read in the genitive case, as a *badal al-juzʿ min al-kull* of *maẓāḥir*. Thus, “Ḥāshim has outstripped Umayya to glorious deeds, the first of them and the last.” But the problem here is that the pronoun *hu* of *minhu* is in the
3. *Abū Ṭalib*
(Muḥammad’s uncle and guardian, d. 620 C.E.)

**Type**
pre-Islamic marriage *khutba*, on the occasion of Muḥammad’s marriage to Khadīja, about 15 years before his message of Islam, and 28 years before Hijra.

**Features**
tahmīd formula, tracing Abū Ṭalib’s genealogy to Abraham and Ismā’īl, followed by a “then” clause (*thumma* rather than *ammā ba’d*); strongly parallel, a sprinkling of *sajī*; mention of Ka’ba; short sentences; simple syntax; many elements of the later Islamic marriage *khutba* present, such as naming of the two parties and a clear expression of their desire to wed, as well as the dower.

Praise be to God, who made us from the seed of Abraham and the progeny of Ismā’īl; who made for us a sacred city and a veiled House; who made us rulers over the people.

Then: Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh, my nephew, is one with whom no youth of Quraysh can be weighed without finding [Muḥammad’s scale] heavier, in goodness and merit, generosity and intelligence, glory and nobility. If there is scarcity in wealth, wealth is but a passing shadow, a loan that is to be returned. He desires [to wed] Khadīja b. Khuwaylid, and she him. Whatever you [plural] wish in terms of dower, I take upon myself.

masculine, and *ma‘āthīr* is a broken plural, thus denoted by the feminine. Its singular is also feminine, *ma‘āthura*.

217 Abū Hamhama was Umayya’s father-in-law and present at the arbitration.
4a. Muḥammad
(the Prophet of Islam, d. 11/632)\textsuperscript{219}

*Type* religious, ritually prescriptive, early Islamic *khutba*, delivered at the onset of the holy month of Ramaḍān.

*Features* direct address; repetition of the word “month,” brief sentences.

A grievous morning! … O sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭālib. O sons of ‘Abd Manāf. … If I informed you that horsemen are riding out [to attack you] from behind the foot of this mountain, would you believe me? [They said: “You have not lied to us in our previous experience.”] [He said:] Indeed, I am a warner to you before a harsh chastisement!

4b. Muḥammad
(the Prophet of Islam, d. 11/632)\textsuperscript{220}

*Type* religious, ritually prescriptive, early Islamic *khutba*, delivered at the onset of the holy month of Ramaḍān.

*Features* direct address; repetition of the word “month,” brief sentences.


O people! An exalted month has come nigh to you; a month that contains one night in which good deeds performed [count for more] than good deeds performed over a thousand months.

Whosoever performs in [this month] a non-mandatory act in order to achieve closeness to God, is like one who performs a mandatory act at other times. Whosoever performs in it a mandatory act, is like one who performs seventy mandatory acts at other times. It is a month of forbearance, and the reward of forbearance is Paradise. [It is] a month of charity.\(^{221}\) A month in which the believer’s decreed sustenance is increased. Whosoever feeds a fasting person at the time of breaking fast, will gain forgiveness for his sins and the freeing of his neck from Hellfire; he will have the like of [the fasting person’s] reward, without any decrease in [that person’s] reward.

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\(^{221}\) Cf. Hava 1986, gives the meaning of āsāhu muwāsātan as: “He gave him a part of his goods; he was munificent to him.”
4c. Muḥammad
(the Prophet of Islam, d. 11/632)²²²

Type religio-political early Islamic khutba containing legislative material; address to Quraysh upon the conquest of Mecca in 8/630.

Features tahmīd preface; no ammā baʿd, but the marker alā (Lo!); parallelism but no sāf; short sentences; final direct address; interactive—real questions with audience answering in chorus.

There is no god but God, [He is] one, He has no partner. He has fulfilled His promise, aided His servant, and defeated the armies Himself alone.

Lo! All claimed honors, blood-revenge, and property are below my two feet here, except for the caretakership of the House, and the watering of the pilgrim. Lo! Unintentional murder is like deliberate [murder] by whip and staff; in both there is strict blood money; forty pregnant she-camels whose young are in their womb.

O assembly of Quraysh! God has removed from you the arrogance of the jāhiliyya, and its boasting about forefathers. People are from Adam and Adam was created from dust. “O people! We have created you male and female, and we have made you peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed the

most honored among you near God is the most pious.”  

**O assembly of Quraysh!** What do you think I shall do with you? [They said: “You will do good.”] [He said:] Go, for you are free men.

5. **Abū Bakr b. Abī Quḥāfa**  
(1st Sunni caliph, d. 13/634)

*Type* religio-political accession speech followed by pious counsel; delivered in 11/632; lays out his policy, explaining to the community his personality and weaknesses, and instructing them as to how they should behave with him; the pious counsel consists of a reminder about death, and encouragement to do good deeds.

*Features* direct address; heavy use of emphatic particles *inna* and *alâ*; short sentences; simple syntax; imperatives.

O people! Indeed, I am like unto you. I do not know whether you will burden me with [responsibilities] which the Messenger of God (God’s blessings upon him!) was capable of bearing. Indeed, God chose Muḥammad over all the worlds, and rendered him immune from [perpetrating] injuries. Verily, I am a follower; I am not one to devise new things. If I stay straight, then follow me. If I go astray, then...
straighten me. Indeed, the Messenger of God
(God’s blessings upon him!) was taken away,
while no single person from this community
was claiming restitution from him for an injus-
tice, a single whip stroke or less. Lo! I have
a satan\textsuperscript{225} who possesses me. If I get angry,
avoid me, [such that] I do not leave a mark on
your hair and skins. … (one paragraph pious
counsel)

6. Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad
(Muḥammad’s daughter, ʿAlī’s wife, d. 11/632)\textsuperscript{226}

Type religio-political speech; addressed to Abū Bakr and his assem-
bly of Companions; arguing for ʿAlī’s right to the caliphate and
for her own right to inherit from the Prophet her father the lands
of Fadak; delivered in 11/632.

Features many Qur’ānic quotations; archaic vocabulary; strong, rhythmic
parallelism with short sentences and almost no \textit{saf}; profusion of
camel imagery; some proverbs cited.

\[\text{[Praise of God, blessings on the Prophet]. “A messenger from among you came to you, [a man for whom] your suffering is painful; [one who is] concerned for you; for believers, [a}\]

\[\text{ءَلَدَ جَآَءَكُمْ رَسُولُ مُنَّ اَلْيَسْمُ عَزَّرِّي عَلَيْهِ ما عَمَّنْ خَعَصَ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَفِعَ رَجِبَ} \]

\[\text{إِنَّكُ فَأَفْرَأْوَهُ تَجَدَوَهُ أَيْبُ دُونَ آيَالَكُمْ} \]

\[\text{وَأَخَا أَن غَيِّي دُونَ رِجَالَكُمْ.}\]

\textsuperscript{225} A literal (and negative) explanation of the word “\textit{shayṭān}” is offered by most Shiʿīs. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīḍ, a Muʿtazilite Sunni, interprets the “satan” metaphorically as “anger.” Ṣafwat 1933 1:181, n. 2; after Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīḍ, \textit{Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha}.

\textsuperscript{226} Tayfūr, \textit{Balāghāt al-nisā'}, 54-8. Two other, similar, versions of the same \textit{khutba} are provided in ibid., 58-66. In those versions, Fāṭima cites the Qur’ānic verse “And Solomon inherited from David” (16:27) in support of her right to inherit from Muḥammad. Cf. same \textit{khutba} with variants in al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, \textit{Sharḥ al-akhbār}, 3:35-40.
man who is] compassionate, merciful.”227—If you know him, you will find that he is my father, not yours; my cousin [‘Alī’s brother, not yours.228

[The Messenger] delivered warning, publicly announcing his message, blocking the path of the polytheists, striking their backs, seizing their necks, crushing the idols, breaking crowns [of heads]—until he defeated them all and they [fled] showing their backs; night divested itself and gave way to morning, pure Truth gleamed forth, the leader of religion spoke, and the camel-frothings of the satans subsided. You were [then] at the lip of the precipice of Hell-fire, a draught for the drinker, an opportunity for the covetous, a thing easily grasped by the speedy, a trampling place for feet; you drank camel-urinated water and ate leaves; [you were] lowly, humbled, fearful that the people around you would swoop down on you.

Then God saved you through his Messenger, “after the small [calamity] and the big one,”229 after [Muhammad] was tried with [attacks by] brave warrior men, Bedouin wolf-bandits, and unbelieving people of the Book. Each time they kindled “a fire for battle, he extinguished it.”230 Whenever a horn of error appeared, and a polytheist maw opened wide, he would throw his brother ['Ali] into its jaws—['Ali] would not return until he had stamped on its ear with his soles, and dampened its blaze with his [sword] edge, toiling for God,231 being near to the Messenger of God, a leader among the friends of God. [All this,] while you were in ample circumstances, calm, secure.

Until, when God chose for His Prophet the abode of His prophets, the thorny tree of hypocrisy appeared, the robe of religion decayed, the anger-suppressing one ['Umar? Abū Bakr?] belonging to the covetous evil-mongers spoke up, the obscure person [Abū Bakr] of the friends of God.  

Proverb, signifying all sorts of calamities. See its etiology in al-Maydānī, Majma` al-anthāl, 1:92, #440.

Qur'ān 5:64.

231 Literally, “for the essence of God.”
transient ones emerged, the camel stallion of the error-mongers bellowed and wagged its tail in your courtyards. Satan raised his head from sleep, shrieking out at you, and he found you quick to answer his call and attentive to his deception; he aroused you and found you quick to rise; he toyed with you and found you easy to anger. So you branded [as your own] camels that were not yours, and brought them to drink at a watering hole that was not yours. This, when the age [of the Prophet] is still recent, the gash still vast, the wound not yet healed.

O haste! You claimed that [your assumption of leadership] was from fear of dissension. “Lo! Into dissension they have fallen, and Hellfire is all-encompassing for disbelievers!” May you be thrown far! Where is it that you are going?! How you do lie!—when this, the Book of God, is before you, its warnings unmistakable, its proofs bright, its commands clear! Do you turn away from it in dislike? Or do you judge by another [book]? “O what an evil exchange

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232 I.e., being completely at ease.
233 Qur’ân 9:49.
the oppressors will obtain!”

“Whosoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers in the hereafter.”

You did not wait even for the boiling [of grief] to subside, “drinking in big gulps while hiding your true intentions, pretending to sip froth,” while we forbore your [misconduct, which was] like the slashing of a dagger. And now you claim that we have no inheritance. “Do you seek the judgments of the jähiliyya? Who is a more favorable judge than God, for those who possess conviction!”

Woe [to you] O assembly of Emigrants! Am I to be stripped of my father’s inheritance?! Is it said in the Book that you inherit from your father, and I do not inherit from mine? “You have come up with a remarkable lie!” Take it then! Muzzled and saddled, it will meet you on the day of your resurrection. Then what a good

234 Ibid., 18:50.
235 Ibid., 3:85.
236 I.e., after Muhammad’s death.
237 Proverb, said of one who pretends one thing when he means another. Cf. Lane 1863 (r-gh-w).
238 Qur'ān 5:50.
239 Ibid., 19:27.
judge will God be; the leader, Muhammad; the meeting-time, the day of reckoning! At the Hour, the impostors will lose. “For each report there is an appointed time, and you will indeed know.”

7a. ‘Ali b. Abi Ta’lib
(Muhammad’s successor according to Shi’a, 4th Sunni caliph, d. 40/661)

Type sermon of pious counsel about this world and the hereafter, warning of the nearness of the Reckoning; perhaps part of a Friday khutba.

Features two-fold division, and ta’lim ba’da takhsīs; direct address in beginning and throughout; short sentences; vivid physical imagery; no sajj; short sentences, with slightly longer ones interspersed; prescriptive; some antithetical and syntactic parallelism in last few lines; emphatic structures.

O people! The most fearful thing I fear for you is twofold: following your desires, and lengthy yearning. As for the following of desire, it stops you from Truth. And as for lengthy yearning, it makes you forget the hereafter. Lo! This world has turned away in speed, and nothing remains of it except for a residue like the residue in a vessel which a pourer has emptied.

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240 Ibid., 6:67.
Lo! The hereafter has come forward. Each of the two has children. Be you from the children of the hereafter; do not be from the children of this world, for each son will be returned to his mother on the Day of Resurrection. Today is action and no reckoning, and tomorrow is reckoning and no action.

7b. ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālīb
(Muhammad’s successor according to Shi’a, 4th Sunni caliph, d. 40/661)\(^{242}\)

Type religio-political \textit{jihād khūṭba}; excerpt from one of ‘Ali’s poignant orations to the people of Kūfah, who were unresponsive to his calls for battle; delivered in the wake of the post-Ṣiffīn attack on Anbār by Mu‘āwiyah’s commander Sufyān b. ‘Awf al-Ghāmidī, who killed and looted with a free hand.

Features direct address; some \textit{sajj}; exclamations; rhetorical questions; vivid metaphorical language; short sentences; strong parallelism.

O parodies of men, not men! Minds of children and intellects of canopy-covered ones! Would that I had never seen you, had never known you, a knowing that has, by God, yielded regret and ended in grief. May God fight you! You have filled my heart with purulence and

weighted my breast with ire. You have made me swallow the drink of anguish with every breath. You have subverted my judgment through disobedience and desertion, so that the Quraysh have begun to say, “Abu Talib’s son is indeed a brave man, but he has no knowledge of warfare.” May God [forgive] their father! Is there any one among them more experienced and of longer standing in it than I? I was active in it when I was not yet twenty, and here I am, over sixty. But one who is not obeyed—his opinion carries no weight.

8. Ziyād b. Abīhi
(Umayyad governor of Iraq, d. 53/673)

Type religio-political khutba; announcing to the people of Baṣra his policies as the new governor, with regard to crime and anti-government activities; the harsh punitive measures for anti-Umayyad activity, theft, and rape that Ziyād outlined in this khutba appear to have been effective—al-Ṭabarî reports that “a thing would fall from [the hand of] a man or a woman, and nobody would approach it until its owner came back to it; a woman would sleep without locking her door; …”

Features known as the “khutba batrā‘,” literally, an amputated or maimed oration, meaning that it does not contain a formulaic praise intro-

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244 al-Ṭabarî, Taʾrīkh, 5:222.
Indeed, the most ignorant ignorance, the most blind straying, the transgression that will certainly lead its people to Hellfire, is that in which the fools among you are [entrenched], and that which the mature among you subscribe to. [These are] grave matters, the young grow up in them, and the old do not avoid them. It is as though you have never read the Book of God, have never heard about what God has prepared, of generous reward for the people who obey Him, and of painful punishment for the people who disobey Him, in time eternal which will never cease. Will you be like the one whose eyes were made too watery by this world to see? Whose ears were blocked by desires? Who chose the transient [abode] over the everlasting one? You do not bear in mind that you have done something new and impure in Islam, something unprecedented. For you have let the weak man be subjugated, his property...
seized, [you have let] brothels be set up, and
the weak woman be robbed in broad daylight.
This, when [your] numbers are not small! Were
there not forbidders among you who could pre-
vent offenders from going abroad at nightfall
and attacking in the day? You have brought
nigh your relatives and distanced religion! You
proffer unacceptable excuses, and avert your
eyes from the furtive thief! Each man among
you defends his own fool, this being the act of a
person who does not fear a Reckoning, and
does not hope for a Return. You are not mature
people; rather, you have followed the fools!
You continued to shield them, until they rent
[the fabric of] that which is inviolable in Islam.
Then, sheltering behind you, they silently crept
into shady hiding places. May all food and
drink be unlawful for me until I level them to
the earth, demolishing and burning!

I see that the end of this affair will not be re-
solved except by that with which its beginning
was resolved: gentleness without weakness,
and strength without violence. Verily, I swear
by God that I shall punish the owner for [the offences of] the slave, the resident for [the offences of] the one who has fled, the one who comes forward for [the offences of] the one who runs away, the one who obeys for [the offences of] the one who disobeys, the sound of soul among you for [the offences of] the diseased, until [each] man among you, when he meets his brother, will say "Save yourself, Sa’d, for Sa’d has perished"—[this,] or [until] your spear shaft becomes straight for me. Indeed, a falsehood spoken on the pulpit is [as recognizable as] a horse with white in its feet up to its thighs. If you find that I have lied to you, consider it legal to disobey me. If you hear [this resolve] from me, blame me, but know that I have others like it.

Whosever[’s property] among you is broken into, I will be the guarantor for that which he has lost.

Sa’d and Sa’id were the sons of Dabba b. Udd who left home in search of their father’s camels. Sa’d found them and brought them back, but Sa’id was killed (cf. Safwat 1933 2:272, n. 2). Cf. etiology of this proverb in Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-’arab, “s-‘d”.

Presumably because such a horse visibly stands out.
Beware of me if [you go] abroad at nightfall! No person who goes abroad at nightfall will be brought to me without my spilling his blood. I am granting you a respite in that,\textsuperscript{248} of the time a report takes to reach Kūfa and come back to you. Beware of me if [you give] the call of the jāhiliyya\textsuperscript{249} I will not find any who has called to it, but I will cut out his tongue. You have done new things which were not existent, and we have laid down new punishments for every transgression: Whosoever drowns people, we shall drown him. Whosoever burns people, we shall burn him. Whosoever breaches a house, we shall breach his heart. Whosoever digs up and robs a grave, we will bury him alive in it. Restrain your hands and tongues from me, and I will restrain my hand and tongue from you. Let there not appear from any one of you a doubt that is contradictory to what the majority of you are agreed upon, or else I shall behead him.

\textsuperscript{248} In implementing the curfew and the fatal consequences of breaking it.
\textsuperscript{249} I.e., evoking the tribal solidarity of the pre-Islamic period (cf. Šafwat 1933 2:272, n. 8).
There have been feuds between me and certain people, and I have put them behind my ears and beneath my feet. Whosoever among you is a doer of good, let him increase his beneficence. Whosoever among you is a doer of evil, let him desist from his evil mongering. If I find out that all-consuming enmity for me is killing one of you, I will not expose his weapons and will not rent his cover, until he shows me its blade. But if he does that, then I will not grant him a delay. So continue with your affairs, and help yourselves. Perhaps one who was made despondent by our arrival will be gladdened, and one who was pleased by our arrival will be made despondent.

O people! We have become your directors and your protectors. We direct you by the power of God which He has granted to us, and protect you through the tax monies that belong to God, which He has bestowed on us. Incumbent upon you, for us, is to listen and obey in [all] that pleases us. Incumbent upon us, for you, is justice in [all] that we have charge of. So become
deserving of our justice and our tax monies by your sincere counsel for us.

Know that whatever I fall short of, I will not fall short of three [things]: I will not veil myself from any seeker of a request among you, even if he comes knocking [on my door] at night. I will not withhold any salaries and allowances beyond their due date. I will not [inordinately] detain in enemy lands a battalion [made up of people] from among you. So pray to God for the soundness of your Imāms. For they are your directors who discipline you, and your succor-cave, in which you take shelter. When they are sound, you are sound. Do not make your hearts drink of enmity for them, such that your rage, because of that, becomes severe; because of which your grief becomes prolonged; because of which you do not achieve your desire. In addition to which, if your prayer [for their downfall] were answered, it would be the worse for you. I ask God to aid each [person] against each other.

If you see me executing a command among you, then execute it in all its little paths. An
oath by God! Indeed, there are among you numer-  
merous people whom I will fell! Let each man  
among you beware of being among the people I  
fell!

9. *Zaynab bt. ‘Alî*  
(Muḥammad’s granddaughter, ‘Alî and Fāṭima’s daughter,  
d. 62/682)\(^{250}\)

**Type** religio-political *khutba*; addressed overtly to Yazīd, but simul-  
taneously to all people present in his court; denouncing him and  
his killing of her brother al-‘Uṣaīn at Karbala, and his humiliat-  
ing and cruel treatment of the women of the Prophet’s family;  
together with no. 6, one of the few women’s *khutbas* in early Is-  
lam.

**Features** direct address; many Qur’ānic citations; synonymous parallel-  
ism; idiomatic phraseology; short sentences; rhetorical ques-  
tions; *taḥmīd* closure.

God and his messenger spoke truth, O Yazīd:  
“Then the outcome of the evildoers was the  
most evil, because they disbelieved the signs of  
God and ridiculed them continuously.”\(^{251}\) Did  
you think, O Yazīd, when we were forced to the  
ends of the earth, [under] the shelter of the sky,  
being driven as prisoners are driven, that we  
were insignificant to God and you were hon-  
ored? And that this was because of your im-

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\(250\) Saḥwat, 1933 2:136-138, #124; after Tayfūr, Balāghāt al-nisā’, Cairo  
Hindāwī ed., pp. 70-73, #3. Also in al-Ṭabarsi, al-Īḥtiyāj, ed. Muḥammad Bāqir  

\(251\) Qur’ān, 30:10.
mense stature? You raised your nose and
looked around yourself gay and happy when
you saw this world gathered to you, all affairs
flocking to you [like camels]. Indeed, you have
been given a respite [before punishment] and a
breathing space, for He says "Let not the disbe-
lievers think that our giving them a respite is a
good thing for them, indeed we give them a
respite so that they increase in trespass and a
shameful punishment awaits them."²⁵²

Is it justice, O son of freedmen,²⁵³ your veiling
of your women and concubines, and your herd-
ing forward of the daughters of the Messenger
of God, having torn their veils and made hoarse
their voices [with weeping], grieving, camels
speeding with them, enemies herding them
from town to town, unguarded and undefended,
the near and the far speaking to them directly,
[and they] without a protector (walli) from
among their men? How to stop in loathing of

²⁵² Ibid., 3:178.
²⁵³ Derogatory term, referring to those of the Quraysh who remained committed enemies of Islam until forced to capitulate upon the Muslims’ conquest of Mecca. On that day, they would have been forced into captivity according to their standard warfare practices, but Muhammad pardoned them and granted them their freedom—thus, “freedmen.” Cf. Muhammad’s khutba to the Meccans on the day of the con-
quest, in which he says to them “You are free[d] men” (Appendix, text #4e).
us, the one who looks at us with coveting and rancor, with hatred and malice!

Do you say “Would that my venerable forefathers at Badr had witnessed …”\(^{254}\) without considering it a sin, without thinking it a major concern? You strike Abū ʿAbdallāh [al-Husayn’s] teeth with your cane?! Why should this not be, when you have picked the wound and extirpated the root by your spilling of the blood of the progeny of the Messenger of God, the stars of the earth from the line of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib! You shall come before God soon, as they have. And you will wish that you had been blind and dumb [earlier], that you had not said “Praise God and shine forth in joy!”\(^{255}\)

O God, give you us our right[s], and exact vengeance for us from those who oppressed us.

By God, you [O Yazīd] have pared naught but your own skin. You have incised naught but

254 At the Battle of Badr, on Muhammad’s side, Ḥamza and ʿAlī had killed Yazīd’s forefathers, ʿUtba b. Rabīʿa, Wālid b. ʿUtba, and Shayba b. Rabīʿa (prominent members of the opposing pagan Meccan side) in a duel; Yazīd recited the verses cited here indicating that he has taken blood vengeance, by killing al-Husayn, the grandson of Muhammad and the son of ʿAlī, and his entire family.

255 Part of the verses that Yazīd had recited, addressing his pagan forefathers who had been killed opposing the Muslims during the Battle of Badr.
your own flesh. You will come before the Messenger of God despite your [wishing the contrary]. His offspring and his family will be with him in the garden of Paradise, on the day that God brings them together, gathered after being scattered. That is the word of God Almighty, “Do not think those who have been killed in the path of God dead; rather, they are alive near their Lord, sustained.”

He who put you in this place and gave you charge over the necks of the believers, [i.e. Mu‘awiya], will know—when the judge is God, the protagonist Mu‘am-mad, and your limbs bear witness upon you, “What a terrible exchange for oppressors!”—“which of you is the most terrible of abode, and the weakest of army.”

With all this, I, by God—O enemy of God and son of His enemy—find your value little, and your oppression great. But eyes are full of tears, breasts are on fire, and that, nevertheless, does not do anything for us when al-‘Usayn has been killed, when the party of Satan takes us

256 Qur’an 3:169.
257 Ibid., 18:50.
258 Ibid., 19:75.
before the party of fools, so that the [latter] give
them wealth that belongs to God, for violating
sanctities proclaimed by God. These hands drip
with our blood; these mouths milk our flesh;
and those pure bodies!—wolves of the wilder-
nesses come to them in the dark.

If you have taken us as booty, indeed, you will
find that a sin, at a time when you will not find
anything except that which your two hands
have submitted. You will scream [for help] "O
son of Marjāna" [‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād], and
he will scream for you. You, with your follow-
ers, will howl at the Scale,260 when you find
that the best provision that Mu‘āwiya has pro-
vided you with is your killing of the progeny of
Muhammad! By God, I do not fear but God,
and my complaint is to none but God. Plot
your plot, extend your efforts, and wage

259 I am not certain of the vocalization of the word عَسَلْةٍ; Lane states that ‘assāl
means wolf, but he gives its plural as ‘ussal and ‘awāsīl. The plural of ‘asal (meaning
honey) is ‘uslān, which could also be the vocalization for our word.

260 I.e. when actions are weighed on the Day of Judgment.

261 The text edition contains رَجَعَ which means “to permit,” which does not give
us any clear meaning here; it is clearly a typographical error, with the dot of the dād
shifted to the hā‘. On the other hand, the word رَجَعَ “to wash away” works well with
“shame,” the two forming an idiom.
Praise be to God who gave an ending\textsuperscript{262} of felicity and forgiveness to the chiefs of the youth of paradise\textsuperscript{263} and affirmed for them heaven. I ask God to raise their standing, and to affirm for them yet more, by his grace. He is a loving, all-capable [God].

10. \textit{Tāriq b. Ziyād} (Umayyad general who first invaded Spain, d. after 95/714)\textsuperscript{264}  

\textbf{Type} religio-political \textit{khutba} delivered 92/711, urging his men to fight; the Umayyad governor of North Africa, Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, sent Tāriq with a Berber army to raid the Iberian peninsula of coastal Andalusia; when the Visigothic king Roderic (Ludh-āriq) learnt of Tāriq’s landing at Gibraltar (Jabal Tāriq), he came forth with a large army; Tāriq’s own men, perhaps twelve thousand, were vastly outnumbered; to motivate them to fight, he burnt his own ships, cutting off the possibility of retreat, and delivered the following speech.

\textbf{Features} rhetorical questions; direct address; antithetical and other parallelism; \textit{sajī}; Qur’ānic phraseology; imperatives; short sentences; emphatic structures.

O people! Where will you flee? The sea is behind you, and the enemy in front. There is salah\textsuperscript{262} the sea, behind you, the enemy in front. There is salah, amongst your warriors, your brothers. Allah has not abandoned you, nor has Allah deprived you of his protection.

\textsuperscript{262} L.e. death.

\textsuperscript{263} Meaning al-Hasan and al-Ḥusayn, referring to the prophetic Hadith in this vein: “Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are the chiefs of the youth of paradise.” Cf. al-Qāḍī al-Nu’mān, \textit{Sharḥ al-akhbār}, 3:76; al-Balādhurī, \textit{Ansāb al-ashrāf}, 2:368.

naught for you but truth and patience. Know that you, in this [peninsula], will gain fewer [favors] than orphans at the table of the base.

The enemy has confronted you with his army. His weapons and provisions are abundant. You have no refuge except your swords, and no provisions except those which you wrest from the hands of your enemy. If days go by with you still in poverty, without your executing your affair, your breath will disperse, and hearts will exchange their awe of you for acts of boldness. Cast off the humiliation of such an end to your affair by battling this tyrant. His fortified city has thrown him out to you, and it is possible to snatch the opportunity if you put your lives on the line. I do not warn you of something while I myself stand on a safe hillock, nor do I urge you to a line of action in which the cheapest commodity is lives from which I excuse my own life.

Know that if you are patient with the difficult for a short time, you will enjoy the luxurious and delectable for a long time. So do not turn away from me regarding something in which
your share of fortune will be more abundant than mine. It has surely reached you what manner of beautiful sloe-eyed women this peninsula has nurtured—daughters of Greece, proudly trailing long skirts, wearing pearls and coral and garments woven with pure gold, secluded in the palaces of crowned kings.

Al-Walid b. ‘Abd al-Malik, the Commander of the Believers, has chosen you, single men, from among all the warriors. He has selected you as sons and relatives in-law for the kings of this peninsula, trusting that you will be at ease with spear thrusts and generous [with your lives] in fighting warriors and knights; such that his share of fortune, through you, be God’s reward for raising His word, and making His religion manifest in this peninsula; and so that its booty be for you, solely, not for him, and not for believers other than you. God Almighty is the giver of aid in this endeavor which will remain a memoriam for you in both abodes.

Know that I will be the first to answer that which I call you to. When the two armies meet, I shall attack the [Andalusians’] tyrant Lu-
dharīq [Roderic], and, God willing, kill him.

Attack with me! If I die afterwards, you will have been sufficed his affair, and will not have difficulty finding a sensible, heroic warrior to whom you can entrust your affairs. If I die before reaching him, then succeed you me in this my firm intention, and attack him. Undertake the essential part of the conquest of this peninsula by killing him. For after him they shall be subjugated.

11. al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī
(Umayyad governor of Kūfā, d. 95/714)²⁶⁵

Type political khūṭba, delivered to the people of Kūfā, who were largely pro-ahl al-bayt and anti-Umayyad, when he arrived there in 75/695 as the city’s new governor; probably a full khūṭba.

Features use of desert imagery such as dry water skins; strong, metaphorical language; direct, emphatic address with nūn al-tawkīd and particles of emphasis; proliferation of oaths; parallel syntax; poetry and Qurʾān citation; short sentences; military draft instructions in final segment.

“I am a son of the morning, an [intrepid] climber of narrow mountain paths,”²⁶⁶


²⁶⁶ Connotes an able man and experienced manager.
When I don my turban, you will know me.”

O people of Kufa. Indeed, by God, I contain evil by its [own] scabbard. I shoe it with its [own] shoe. I reward it with its like. Indeed, I see ambitious eyes, long necks, and heads that have ripened, the time for whose plucking has arrived. I am the person for it. I am like to see blood dripping between turbans and beards.

[Several verses of poetry].

By God—O people of Iraq, O people of dissension and hypocrisy and wicked morals—I am not one to [be spooked] by the rattling of dry water skins. My sides cannot be squeezed to test for freshness like the squeezing of figs.

Verily, I have been examined [like horse’s teeth] for maturity, and checked for experience—and I have galloped to the final goal post. To be sure, the Commander of the Faithful ['Abd al-Malik b. Marwān]—may God prolong his life—strewed his quiver in front of him and bit down on its shafts—he found me the strong-

267 The verse al-Hajjāj quotes is by Suḥaym b. Wathṭal al-Riyāḥī.
of them in wood, the most solid of them in column. Then he shot me at you, for you have long been quick to sedition. You have lain down in the couches of error. You have walked the paths of transgression.

Indeed, by God, I shall skin you as I would skin a rod. I shall strike you as I would strike a flint. I shall wrap you up as I would wrap a salama tree. I will beat you as I would beat alien camels. Indeed, you are like “the people of a town that was protected, at ease, its sustenance coming to it lavishly from every place, then it showed ingratitude for the favors of God, so God made it taste the garments of hunger and fear because of what they had been doing.”

Indeed, I do not make a promise without carrying it out. I do not intend [a thing] without following it through. I do not measure without cutting. So beware of me, and beware of these intercessors and groups and assemblies, of speaking this and that, of “What do you say?” and “Where do you [stand] in that?” Indeed, by

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268 *Amarr* is an elative of *mirra*, indicating strength and firmness.

269 Qur’ān 16:112.
God, you shall stay on the path of Truth, or I shall bequeath to each man among you some preoccupation in his body.

The Commander of the Faithful has commanded me to give you your pay, and to send you to battle your enemy [the Azāriqa Khārijites] with al-Muhallab b. Abî Šufra. I swear by God that I shall not find a man who has stayed behind after taking his pay by three days but I will spill his blood, seize his property, and demolish his house.

12. al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī
(ascetic preacher of Basra, d. 110/728)\(^{270}\)

**Type** excerpt from a sermon of pious counsel, urging *zuhd* and reflection on death

**Features** direct address; refrain “O son of Adam!”; prescriptive; many rhetorical questions, oaths, and exclamations; simple, repetetive syntax and vocabulary; syntactical and antithetical parallelism.

O son of Adam: sell this world of yours in return for the hereafter and you will profit in both. Do not sell your hereafter for this world, or you will lose both. O son of Adam: if you see people doing good, compete with them for it. If you see them doing evil, do not envy them.

for it. Residence here is short, and the abode there is long. Your community is the last of communities, and you are the last of your community. The best among you have been quickly taken, so what do you await? Seeing [the hereafter] with [your own eyes]? It is as though indeed—Far be it! Far be it!—this world has gone, along with the one who ornaments oneself with it, and deeds remain as collars around the necks of the sons of Adam! O what a counsel it is, if only it would find life in hearts! Indeed, by God, there is no community after your community, no prophet after your Prophet, and no Book after your Book. You drive the people forward and the Hour drives you. Indeed, the first among you is made to wait so that the last among you can catch up with him. Whosoever saw Muḥammad—May God bless him—saw him coming and going without laying brick upon brick, or stick upon stick. A banner

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271 Cf. similar phrase in ‘Ali’s khutba (al-Raḍī, Nahj al-balāqha, 79, #21)—Could this be possible influence from ‘Ali? Or is it a back projection of al-Ḥasan’s words on ‘Ali’s? Or could it be a common sentiment expressed by both? Double attribution appears to be a common problem. For a list of words attributed to both ‘Ali and al-Ḥasan al-Ṯāfī, see Mourad 2005, 85-7, who points out that al-Sharīf al-Murtuḍā (al-Ḥumā, 1:153) claimed that al-Ḥasan commonly borrowed from ‘Ali, the latter being the unanimously acknowledged model [of eloquence].
was raised for him and he strove towards it. So, quick, quick! Escape, escape! What are you stopping for? You have been come upon, by the Lord of the Ka‘ba! The best among you have been quickly [taken], and you, every day, became more lowly! What do you await? ……..

O son of Adam! Tread the earth [gently] with your foot, for it will soon be your grave. Know that you have been using up your lifespan ever since you dropped from your mother’s womb. May God have mercy on a man who looks and reflects, reflects and pays heed, perceives and is patient. For many a people perceived but did not have patience. Then [their] trepidation took away their lives— they did not obtain what they sought, nor did they return to what they left behind ……

Lit., their hearts.

Perhaps a word is missing here, conveying the meaning “gently.”
13. *Abū Hamza al-Shārī*

(Khārijite commander, d. ca. 130/748)\(^{274}\)

**Type**
religio-political speech, threatening the people of Medina, and
laying out in detail the Khārijite view of the historical caliphate—namely, that Muḥammad was the Prophet of Islam, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were his rightful successors and righteous caliphs, ʿUthmān was good and bad, ʿAlī was not good, the Umayyads after him stained the name of Islam, the Shi‘ites were misguided in their doctrine of allegiance to the family of the Prophet, whereas the Khārijites were the only real Muslims, because they prayed, fasted, and gave their lives for God; my excerpt.

**Features**
Qur’ānic references and vocabulary; direct address; parallelism; full *sajī* in some passages; cursing of the Umayyads; short sentences; simple syntax; graphic descriptions; rhetorical questions; exclamations.

O people of Medina! Your words about my companions have reached me. If I had not been aware of the weakness of your opinions, and the littleness of your brains, I would have taught you a good lesson.

Woe to you! Indeed, the Book was revealed to the Messenger of God (God’s blessings upon him!), the paths (*sunan*) were disclosed to him in it, the ways (*sharā‘ī*) were laid out for him in it, and what he should do and what he should leave was explicated for him in it. He did not

go forward except by God’s command, and he did not desist except by God’s command, until God took him back (God’s blessings upon him!), after he had discharged all that was incumbent upon him, after he had taught the Muslims the signposts of their religion.

He did not leave them any doubt in their affair. He charged Abū Bakr with leading them in their ritual prayer, so they charged him with their worldly matter[s], when the Messenger of God charged him with their religious matter[s]. [Abū Bakr] acted according to the Book and the Practice [of the Prophet] (sunna), fought the people who turned away (ahl al-ridda), and tucked up his garments in the affair[s] of God, until God took him back, the community being pleased with him—may he have God’s mercy and forgiveness.

Then ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb [became caliph] after him. He followed the path (sīrah) of his companion, acted by the Book and the Practice [of the Prophet] (sunna), mobilized the armies, settled
cantonments, collected taxes, … assembled the people in the month of Ramadān.\footnote{Refers to the \textit{tarāwīh} prayed introduced by ʿUmar, which is prayed by Sunni Muslims nightly in Ramadān after the \textit{ʿishā} prayer communally, led by an Imām.} …

Then ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān [became caliph] after him. He followed the path of his two companions for six years—although he was less able than them—then did in the last six years that which cancelled the first [six] …

Then ʿAff b. Ṭālib [became caliph]. He did not reach the goal, in terms of Truth, and he did not raise up a guiding lantern to it. Then he went on his way.

Then Muʿāwiyah b. Abī Sufyān [became caliph]—a man cursed by the Messenger of God (God’s blessings upon him!), son of the man cursed by him, a dry water skin of the Bedouins, a remnant of the Confederates (\textit{aḥzāb}),\footnote{Reference to the coalition of Arab tribes lead by Muʿāwiyah’s father against Muḥammad and the Muslims in the year 5/627; the ensuing battle is known as the Battle of the Confederates (\textit{al-Ahzāb}) and also as the Battle of the Trench (\textit{al-Khandaq}), after the trench dug by the Muslims around Medina to stop enemy forces from entering it.} a man whose loyalty was bought by money, a man freed [after being imprisoned fighting Islam]. He spilt sacred blood, made slaves of the …

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
    \item \textit{tarāwīh} (Ramadan prayer)
    \item \textit{ʿishā} (evening prayer)
    \item \textit{aḥzāb} (Confederates)
    \item \textit{al-Khandaq} (Trench)
\end{itemize}
\normalsize
servants of God … until he went on his way. 

Curse you him!—May God curse him!

Then his son Yazīd [became caliph] after him—

Yazīd of the wines, Yazīd of the hawks, Yazīd of the leopards, Yazīd of the hunting parties, 
Yazīd of the monkeys, a man licentious of stomach, blameworthy of genitals. He contra-
vened the Qur’ān, followed the soothsayers, took the monkey as a boon-companion, and fol-
lowed his pleasures, until he died doing that. 

May God curse him, and do countless [bad things] to him!

Then Marwān b. al-Ḥakam [became caliph], a repudiated man, a man cursed by the Messen-
ger of God (God’s blessings upon him!), son of the man cursed by him, a man licentious of stomach and genitals. Curse you him and curse his forebears!

Then the sons of Marwān tossed around [the caliphate] among them, after him—people of the house of accursedness, men repudiated by the Messenger of God (God’s blessings upon him!), a group of men freed [after being impris-
oned fighting Islam], who were neither from
the Emigrants or Helpers, nor from “the successors in the good.” They devoured the property of God, and played games with the religion of God … (3 pages on the Umayyads omitted).

As for our brothers, these Shi’a—they are not our brothers in religion! But I heard God Almighty say in His Book, “O people, we have created you peoples and tribes such that you get to know one another.” They are a sect which pretends to follow the Book of God, but manifests falsehood against God … (one page omitted) … they have charged the people of an Arab house with their religion, and they think that their allegiance to them absolves them of the need to perform good deeds, that it will save them from retribution for evil deeds. May God fight them! How they do falsify!

So which of these sects, O people of Medina, will you follow? Which of their denominations will you conform to?

I have heard that you criticize my companions. You have said they are youths of tender age and harsh Bedouins. Woe to you, O people of Medina! Were the companions of the Messenger of God from among the helpers, nor those who succeeded in the good. They devoured the property of God, and played games with the religion of God. … (2 pages on the Umayyads omitted).
God (God’s blessings upon him and his progeny!)—people mentioned in the [Hadith]—other than youths of tender age? ... [My companions] are youths who have attained the maturity of the old in their youth, their eyes are averted from evil, their feet are heavy [and hold back] from the path of wrongdoing, they are emaciated by worship, gaunt from night vigils. They traded lives that will end tomorrow for souls that will never die ... (one and a half pages omitted) ... Alas! Alas! For the loss of brothers! God’s mercy upon those bodies! May He admit their souls into Paradise!

14. Wāsil b. ʿAtā’
(Muṭṭazilite leader, d. 131/748)\(^\text{277}\)

Type sermon of pious counsel with Muṭṭazilite ideas; my excerpt.
Features rā’-less khatba; Muṭṭazilite ideas of God’s justice, creation ex nihilo, and the importance of rationality; extended ubi sunt segment with rhetorical questions; syntactical parallelism; powerful animal imagery; graphic descriptions; repetition; Qur’ānic citations.

Praise be to God! Timeless without [beginning], eternal without end. Elevated in His 

\(^{277}\)Ṣafwat 1933 2:501-3, #475; after Ahmad Miftāḥ, Miftāḥ al-afkār. Cf. also text and translation of another of his sermons in Wāsil, Wāsil ibn ʿAtā’ als Prediger und Theologe, 21-37.
nearness, near in His elevation. Time does not contain Him, Place does not compass Him, the protection of His creation does not tire Him. He did not create it based on a prior model. Rather, he produced it from nothing, and made it even (‘addalahū) while crafting it. He made beautiful each thing he created, completed his intent, made clear his wisdom, and thus demonstrated his divinity. Glory be to God! There is nobody who can refute His command; there is nobody who can prevent the execution of His decree. Every thing humbles itself in the face of His greatness. Every thing is subservient in the face of his power. His generosity extends to every thing. A grain weight does not escape His notice. He is the all-Seeing, the all-Knowing. I bear witness that there is no God but God, One, a God whose names are blessed, whose favors are great, who is exalted above the characteristics of every creature, and is disassociated from similarity with every crafted thing. Thoughts cannot reach Him. Neither intellects nor cognitive faculties can compass Him. When He is disobeyed he forbears. When He is invoked He
hears. He accepts repentance from his servants, forgives transgressions, and knows what you do.

… (praise of Muḥammad and prayer for him, one paragraph omitted) …

I counsel you, servants of God, and myself, to be God-fearing (taqwā), to act in obedience to Him, to avoid disobeying Him. I urge you to do what brings you close to Him, what takes you near to Him. For piety in fear of God is the best provision, and the best end in [the] Returning.

Let not worldly life distract you with its ornaments and deceptions … (censure of the world omitted) … Where are the kings who built Ctesiphon? And strengthened palaces? And fortified gates? And kept masses of chamberlains? And trained purebred horses? And possessed [all] the lands? And made use of inherited cattle and slaves?—[This world] grabbed them along with their carrying litters, it crushed them with its breast, it chomped on them with its canines! It gave them in exchange for vast space, narrow confines; for might, humility; for
life, perishing. They went to reside in graves. Maggots ate them. They became such that you see only their abodes, and you find only their signposts. You do not sense [the presence] of any one of them. You do not hear a single sound from them. So assemble provisions—May God protect you! The best provision is piety, fearing God: “Fear God, O people of intelligence, such that you prosper.” May God place us, and you, with one who benefits from his counsels, and acts for his good fortune and felicity … (prayer and Qur’ānic verses, one paragraph omitted).

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