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# THE EFFEMINATES OF EARLY MEDINA

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There is considerable evidence for the existence of a form of publicly recognized and institutionalized effeminacy or transvestism among males in pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabian society. Unlike other men, these effeminates or *mukhannathūn* were permitted to associate freely with women, on the assumption that they had no sexual interest in them, and often acted as marriage brokers, or, less legitimately, as go-betweens. They also played an important role in the development of Arabic music in Umayyad Mecca and, especially, Medina, where they were numbered among the most celebrated singers and instrumentalists. Although they were subject to periodic persecution by the state, such measures were not based on any conclusions about their own sexual status—they were not assumed to be homosexual, although a few were—but on their activities as musicians and go-betweens, which were seen as corrupting the morals of society and especially of women. A particularly severe repression under the caliph Sulaymān put an end to the *mukhannathūn*'s prominence in music and society, although not to their existence.

IN THE COURSE OF THE FIRST ISLAMIC CENTURY, the holy cities of Mecca and Medina suffered a drastic loss of political power. As the rapidly expanding empire incorporated the populous provinces of Syria and Iraq, the caliphal capital was moved first to Kūfa and then to Damascus, and, after the defeat of the counter-caliph Ibn al-Zubayr in Medina in 73 A.H./A.D. 692, the political significance of the Hijaz was reduced to an occasional futile rebellion. At the same time, the institution of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca from all corners of the empire assured the prosperity of the two cities, and the system of stipends (*dīwān*) instituted by the caliph ʿUmar provided the local aristocracy, among the Quraysh and Anṣār, with a dependable, and bountiful, source of wealth which—more or less intentionally—compensated for their political impotence. The result of this situation was the development of a refined and self-indulgent society, dedicated to luxury and the pursuit of the arts. Traditional Arabic poetry underwent a rapid evolution, producing among other innovations the independent love lyric; and a series of celebrated musicians, closely associated in their endeavors with the love poets, introduced new instruments and new musical styles into the peninsula.

Studies of this first, classical period of Arabic music have often remarked on the fact that the sources regularly identify many male musicians, including some of

the most prominent, as “effeminates,” *mukhannathūn*.<sup>1</sup> Observing that our meager sources on pre-Islamic music refer almost exclusively to women, while the most celebrated musicians of the subsequent ʿAbbāsīd period were men, Owen Wright has suggested that these *mukhannathūn* represent “an intermediate, transitional stage in the transfer from a female-dominated to a male-dominated profession”;<sup>2</sup> and he has further speculated that their presumably dubious social status, like that of the slave-girls who, with them, dominated musical circles, contributed to an increasing hostility by the pious to entertainment music, which they associated with wine, sexual license, and the frivolous pursuit

<sup>1</sup> Or *mukhannithūn*. The lexicographers generally consider the forms *mukhannath* and *mukhannith* simple variants, and I shall use the former throughout this article; on attempts to distinguish between the two semantically, see below, p. 675.

<sup>2</sup> Owen Wright, “Music and Verse,” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, I: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A. F. L. Beeston et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), 446f. See also H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century* (London: Luzac, 1929), 44; Shawqī Dayf, *al-Shiʿr wa-l-ghināʾ fī l-Madīna wa-Makka li-ʿaṣr Banī Umayya* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1967), 67.

of pleasure.<sup>3</sup> To my knowledge, no further investigation into who and what these *mukhannathūn* were has heretofore been undertaken, despite a relative abundance of sources, particularly anecdotal ones, which tell us a great deal about their identity, behavior, social function, and status, as well as their ultimate fate.

The very existence of a recognized category of persons labelled "effeminates" raises a number of obvious questions. In what way were they effeminate? Was it their mannerisms that were so recognized, their speech, their behavior? Did they wear women's clothes or adopt feminine hairstyles: were they transvestites? To what extent was their effeminacy voluntary, or seen as such? Did they constitute a cohesive social group, a subculture? What social functions, if any, did they perform? Did they represent a kind of *berdache* institution?<sup>4</sup> What sort of social status did they in fact have? Why, and to what extent, did they come to be associated with music?

Another important question is that of their sexual identity. It is well known to sociologists that the majority of transvestites in our own society are heterosexual in orientation,<sup>5</sup> and the anthropological literature on institutions classified as *berdache* in various societies reveals considerable diversity in their real or assumed sexual orientation and behavior, including celibacy, heterosexuality, and various forms of bisexuality, as well as homosexuality, although the latter is probably the most common.<sup>6</sup> An automatic link between the *mukhannathūn* of the Hijaz and homosexuality can therefore by no means be assumed. This question of

sexual identity is all the more significant because of its pertinence to the far larger problem of homosexuality in classical Islamic culture, a subject which has enjoyed remarkably little scholarly attention to date, despite its obvious importance. An inquiry into the role and identity of the early *mukhannathūn* may thus serve in part as a preliminary to future investigation of this larger problem.

The following study will focus on the evidence available on *mukhannathūn* through the first Islamic century. That they had a well-defined role already in pre-Islamic Arabian society is suggested by a number of Prophetic *ḥadīth*, which at least purportedly tell us something about the situation in the Prophet's time. Much richer, however, is the information provided by anecdotal literature, and above all by the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), on musical circles in Medina and Mecca several decades later, in the early Umayyad period; these sources offer a relatively full picture of a society in which the *mukhannathūn*, for a period of some two generations, enjoyed a position of exceptional visibility and prestige, and suggest answers to many of the questions posed above. They also describe how this unusual situation came to an abrupt and violent end, under the caliph Sulaymān (reigned 96–99/715–17), although there are wide divergences among the various accounts of this disaster which raise problems of interpretation. We have considerably less information about the *mukhannathūn* in late Umayyad society, and with the coming of the ʿAbbāsids their entire social context seems to have changed radically. Apart from a brief characterization of the nature of this social shift, investigation of the subsequent fortunes of the *mukhannathūn* in the ʿAbbāsīd period must await a future study.

#### MUKHANNATHŪN IN THE TIME OF THE PROPHET: THE EVIDENCE FROM ḤADĪTH

According to the lexicographers, the verb *khanatha* in the first form means to fold back the mouth of a waterskin for drinking. Derived terms develop the basic idea of bending or folding in the direction of pliability, suppleness, languidness, tenderness, delicacy.<sup>7</sup> According to Abū ʿUbayd (d. 224/838), the *mukhannathūn* were so called on account of their languidness (*takasur*, elsewhere usually paired with *tathannī*, supple-

<sup>3</sup> Wright, *ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> Or *berdache*. This term is applied by anthropologists to a social institution common to many American Indian cultures, in which a male adopts gender attributes (notably, clothing) assigned otherwise to females. See W. Roscoe, "Bibliography of Berdache and Alternative Gender Roles Among North American Indians," *Journal of Homosexuality* 14.3/4 (1987): 81–171; Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon, 1986); and, on the term *berdache* (ultimately from Persian *bardaj*, "slave," via Arabic, Italian, and French), Claude Courouve, "The Word 'Bardache,'" *Gay Books Bulletin* 8 (Fall–Winter 1982): 17–19.

<sup>5</sup> See C. A. Tripp, *The Homosexual Matrix* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 26.

<sup>6</sup> David E. Greenburg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), 44; J. M. Carrier, "Homosexual Behavior in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Homosexual Behavior: A Modern Reappraisal*, ed. J. Marmor (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 106.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.), 2:1272; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs* (Kuwayt: Maṭbaʿat Ḥukūmat al-Kuwayt, 1965–76), 5:240ff.

ness), while a languid woman was called *khunuth*.<sup>8</sup> The *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* attributed to al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d. c. 170/786), on the other hand, derives *mukhannath* rather from *khunthā*, hermaphrodite, on the basis of parallel gender ambiguity.<sup>9</sup> (Despite the plausibility of the latter, it should be noted that there is no term from this root signifying a mannish woman.) Later lexicographers define the *mukhannath* as a man who resembles or imitates a woman in the languidness of his limbs or the softness (*līn*) of his voice.<sup>10</sup> Al-Azharī (d. 370/980) defines the verb *takhannatha* as *faʿala fiʿl al-mukhannath*, “to do the act of a *mukhannath*,” but does not specify what this *fiʿl* is.<sup>11</sup> The lexicographers nowhere make mention of dress. From their evidence, then, *mukhannath* has the general meaning “effeminate,” without distinction between involuntary and voluntary behavior, and does not indicate transvestism.

A somewhat different picture of the *mukhannath* emerges, however, if we consider its occurrence in a number of generally accepted Prophetic traditions. These *ḥadīth*, and the literature of comment that developed around them, are of special importance for our subject, because—with the usual caveats about the authenticity of this material—they give us an indication of circumstances and attitudes at the very beginning of Islam, as well as Prophetic pronouncements on the subject which were considered as defining legal and ethical norms. In addition, the commentary literature gives some hints of change over time in societal attitudes.

Although they display the usual profusion of variants, the *ḥadīth* about the *mukhannathūn* which appear in the *Muwaṭṭaʿ* of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/797), the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), and the six canonical collections number essentially seven, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The Prophet cursed those exhibiting cross-gender behavior. In its most common form this *ḥadīth* reads:

<sup>8</sup> Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-ʿĀmma li-Shuʿūn al-Maṭābiʿ al-Amīriyya, 1984), 2:150f. Cf. Ibn Durayd, *Jamharat al-lughā* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm lil-Malāyīn, 1987), 1:418; al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, ed. A. ʿA. ʿAṭṭār (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1957), 281.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, ed. M. al-Makhzūmī and I. al-Samarrāʾī (Baghdad: Dār al-Rashīd, 1980), 4:248. On the question of attribution of this work, see *EL*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. “al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad.”

<sup>10</sup> Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs* 5:240ff.

<sup>11</sup> al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-lughā*, ed. ʿA. Sarḥān (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya lil-Taʿlīf wa-l-Tarjama, 1964–67), 7:335–37.

“The Prophet cursed effeminate men (*al-mukhannathīn min al-rijāl*) and mannish women (*al-mutarajjilāt min al-nisāʾ*).”<sup>12</sup> The principal variant substitutes “men who imitate women” (*al-mutashabbihīn min al-rijāl bil-nisāʾ*) and “women who imitate men.”<sup>13</sup> The two versions appear side by side in al-Bukhārī’s (d. 256/870) chapter on dress (*libās*); while the *ḥadīth* itself does not specify the kind of cross-gender behavior condemned, the great *muḥaddith*’s apparent assumption that this involved dress, or at least ornament, is supported by other evidence, as will be seen. Some authorities add, to the second version, the further statement that the Prophet commanded, “Cast them out from your houses!” and that he and the caliph ʿUmar each banished one.<sup>14</sup>

2. Ibn Māja (d. 273/886) and al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), in the section on false accusation (*qadhf*) of their books on *ḥudūd*, give *ḥadīth* specifying twenty lashes for falsely calling someone a *mukhannath*. In Ibn Māja this is paired with the same penalty for falsely calling someone a *lūfī* (approximately, one who takes the active role in homosexual intercourse), but al-Tirmidhī pairs it rather with the same penalty for falsely calling someone a Jew.<sup>15</sup>

3. Slightly more specific information on the *mukhannathūn* is provided by a *ḥadīth* in Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888), on the authority of Abū Hurayra, according to which, “A *mukhannath*, who had dyed his hands and feet with henna, was brought to the Prophet. The Prophet asked, ‘What is the matter with this one?’ He was told, ‘O Apostle of God, he imitates women.’ He

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, ed. A. M. Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1949–56), nos. 1982, 2006, 2123, 2291, 3458, 7842, 7878, 5649, 5328; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. L. Krehl and Th. W. Juynboll (Leiden: Brill, 1862–1908), *libās* 62 (4:94f.), *ḥudūd* 33 (4:308); Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, ed. M. M. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya, 1970), *adab*, no. 4930 (4:283); al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* (Ḥimṣ: Dār al-Daʿwa, 1965), *ādāb* 34, no. 2786 (8:24).

<sup>13</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *libās* 61 (4:94); Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, ed. M. F. ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Maktabat ʿĪsā al-Bābī, 1952–53), *nikāḥ* 22, nos. 1903–4 (1:613); al-Tirmidhī, *ādāb*, no. 2785 (8:24). The primary *isnād* for both versions goes back to ʿIkrima from Ibn ʿAbbās.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal (ed. Shākir), nos. 1982, 2006, 2123; al-Bukhārī, *libās* 62 (4:94f.), *ḥudūd* 33 (4:308); Abū Dāwūd, *adab*, no. 4930 (4:283).

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Māja, *ḥudūd* 15, no. 2568 (2:857f.); al-Tirmidhī, *ḥudūd* 29, no. 1462 (5:159). The *isnāds* are essentially identical, and go back, again, to ʿIkrima from Ibn ʿAbbās.

ordered him banished to al-Naqī<sup>c</sup>.<sup>16</sup> They said, 'O Apostle of God, shall we not kill him?' He replied, 'I have been forbidden to kill those who pray.'<sup>17</sup>

4. Banishment also figures in some versions of the most celebrated, and widely commented, of the *ḥadīth* on *mukhannathūn*, that concerning a person usually identified as Hīt.<sup>18</sup> According to various authorities, Umm Salama, one of the Prophet's wives, reported that on the eve of the taking of al-Ṭā'if (8/630) the Prophet visited her while a *mukhannath* (Hīt) was also present. She heard the latter say to her brother, 'Abdallāh b. Abī Umayya, "If God grants that you take al-Ṭā'if tomorrow, go after Ghaylān's daughter; for she comes forward with four and goes away with eight!" To this the Prophet said, "Do not admit these into your (fem. pl.) presence!"<sup>19</sup> Hīt's "four" and "eight" are explained by the commentators, at great length, as referring to the woman's belly wrinkles ('*ukan*), four in front, whose ends can be seen wrapping around on the two sides of her back when she walks away, thus appearing to be eight.<sup>20</sup> Some versions of the *ḥadīth* give the masculine plural rather than the feminine plural pronoun in "your presence," which the commentators explain as referring collectively to the women and the underage males or eunuchs present in the women's quarters.<sup>21</sup> In addition, some versions substitute "Cast

them out of your (masc. pl.) houses!" for "Do not admit these into your presence!"<sup>22</sup> or have both phrases together.<sup>23</sup>

5. An apparent doublet of this story is a *ḥadīth* reported from 'Ā'isha, which Ibn Hanbal and Muslim (d. 261/875) have preserved in the following form: "There was a *mukhannath* who used to be admitted to the presence of the Prophet's wives. He was considered one of those lacking interest in women (*min ghayr ulī l-irba*). One day the Prophet entered when this *mukhannath* was with one of his wives; he was describing a woman, and said 'When she comes forward, it is with four, and when she goes away, it is with eight.' The Prophet said, 'Oho! I think this one knows what goes on here! Do not admit him into your (fem. pl.) presence!' So he was kept out (*ḥajabūhu*)."<sup>24</sup> Abū Dāwūd supplies two additions to the story. The first states that the Prophet banished the *mukhannath*, who lived in the desert and came into Medina once a week to beg for food. According to the second, it was said to the Prophet (after the banishment), "He will die of hunger, then!" and he then permitted him to enter the city twice a week to beg and then return to the desert.<sup>25</sup>

6. Finally, Ibn Māja reports on the authority of Ṣafwān b. Umayya the following *ḥadīth*, the only one to link the *mukhannathūn* with music: "We were with the Apostle of God when 'Amr b. Murra came to him and said, 'O Apostle of God, God has made misery my lot! The only way I have to earn my daily bread is with my tambourine (*duff*) in my hand; so permit me to do my singing, avoiding any immorality (*fāhisha*).' The Apostle of God replied, 'I will *not* permit you, not even as a favor! You lie, enemy of God! God has provided you with good and permissible ways to sustain yourself, but you have chosen the sustenance that God has forbidden you rather than the permissible which He has permitted you. If I had already given you prior warning, I would now be taking action against you. Leave me, and repent before God! I swear, if you do it

<sup>16</sup> A place some three or four miles from Medina; see Yāqūt, *Muṣjam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1986), 5:301f.

<sup>17</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *adab*, no. 4928 (4:282). According to a well-known *ḥadīth*, the shedding of a Muslim's blood is lawful only in cases of adultery, murder, and apostasy; see, e.g., al-Bukhārī, *diyāt* 6 (4:317).

<sup>18</sup> Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-Ayn*, 6:325, claims that the reading "Hīt" favored by the *muhaddithūn* is a mispointing for "Hīn." This view was supported by Ibn Durustawayh, according to Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1959), 2:331, but is contested by al-Azhārī, *Tahdhīb al-lughā*, 4:325. In the canonical collections considered here, the *mukhannath* is unnamed, except by al-Bukhārī, who gives the name in the form "Hīt."

<sup>19</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *maghāzī* 56 (3:150f.), *libās* 62 (4:94f.); cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo, 1895), 6:290. In the event, 'Abdallāh b. Abī Umayya was killed in the battle; see Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*, ed. Th. 'Ukāsha, 4th ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1981), 136.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī* 11:249. The ultimate source of most of these explanations is Abū 'Ubayd, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, 2:96-102.

<sup>21</sup> Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭa'* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1971), no. 1453 (p. 544); Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (with *sharḥ* of al-Nawawī) (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Miṣriyya bil-Azhar, n.d.), *salām* (14:162); and cf. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *nikāḥ* 113 (3:454).

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, *nikāḥ* 22, no. 1902 (1:613), *ḥudūd* 38, no. 2614 (2:872); Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *adab*, no. 4929 (4:283).

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo, 1895), 6:318. All these versions are traced back to Hishām b. 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, from his father, from Zaynab, Umm Salama's daughter.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo, 1895), 6:152; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *salām* (14:162f.). Abū 'Ubayd, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, 2:96-102, conflates the Prophet's comment in this *ḥadīth* with the circumstances of the previous one, and appeals to the phrase "*min ghayr ulī l-irba*" (from Qur'ān 24:31; see below) in his interpretation without including it in the *ḥadīth* itself.

<sup>25</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *libās*, nos. 4107-10 (4:62f.). The *isnād* is from al-Zuhrī from 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr from 'Ā'isha.

(*fa'alta*) after this warning to you, I will give you a painful beating, shave your head as an example, banish you from your people, and declare plunder of your property permissible to the youth of Medina!' 'Amr went away, burning with a grief and shame that none but God could comprehend. When he was gone, the Prophet said, 'Any of these rebels (*uṣāh*) who dies without repenting will be gathered by God on the Day of Resurrection just as he was in this world—*mukhannath*, naked, without a fringe to cover him before people, unable to stand without falling!'"<sup>26</sup>

7. A final mention of *mukhannathūn* in al-Bukhārī occurs, not in a *ḥadīth*, but in an opinion (*ra'y*) by al-Zuhri (d. 125/742), added as a supplement to a number of *ḥadīth* on the validity of a prayer led by an *imām* of questionable orthodoxy or morals, namely, that one should pray behind a *mukhannath* only in cases of necessity.<sup>27</sup>

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this *ḥadīth* material, and can in turn be supplemented by further information from the commentaries, much of which is conveniently brought together in the massive commentaries on al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* by Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) and al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451). First, the *mukhannathūn* were an identifiable group of men who publicly adopted feminine adornment, at least with regard to the use of henna, and probably in clothing and jewelry as well. Al-ʿAynī quotes from al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) the statement that in the days of the Prophet the *mukhannathūn* spoke languidly, and dyed their hands and feet (with henna), but were not accused of immoral acts (*fāḥisha*)—although they sometimes played hobbyhorse (*kurraj*), a frowned-upon frivolous activity.<sup>28</sup> According to Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 238/852), "a *mukhannath* is an effeminate (*muʿannith*) man, even if he is not known to be guilty of immoral acts, the derivation being based on the idea of languidness in gait and in other ways."<sup>29</sup> Later com-

mentators make less historically based, but nevertheless interesting, distinctions. Al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384), defining a *mukhannath* as a man who imitates women in his speech and acts, distinguishes between constitutional (*khilqī*) and affected (*takallufī*) effeminacy, only the latter being blameworthy.<sup>30</sup> Al-ʿAynī himself speaks specifically of imitation of women in dress and adornment (listing veils and several types of ornament as examples) and in acts, "such as languidness of body and feminine modes of speaking and walking."<sup>31</sup> Both al-ʿAynī and Ibn Hajar repeat al-Kirmānī's distinction between involuntary and voluntary effeminacy, but go on to say that the man who is constitutionally, as opposed to affectedly, effeminate must make efforts (*takalluf*) to stop being so; if he does not do so, he becomes blameworthy, "especially if he seems to take pleasure in (his effeminacy)."<sup>32</sup> Al-ʿAynī further adds that "in our time" *mukhannath* means simply the passive partner in homosexual intercourse, and makes both male and female homosexual activity a more heinous extension of *takhannuth* and *tarajjul*; he also claims that the difference between *mukhannath* and *mukhannith* (generally considered simply variants) is that the first signifies "effeminate" and the second "catamite."<sup>33</sup>

On the basis of the *ḥadīth* themselves, we may infer that in the first/seventh century the *mukhannathūn* were sometimes, and perhaps customarily, admitted to the women's quarters, on the assumption that they lacked sexual interest in women. "*Ghayr ulī l-irba*" in the fifth *ḥadīth* cited above refers to Qurʾān 24:31, where a list of persons to whom women are permitted to reveal their charms includes, besides various relatives, female slaves, male retainers who lack desire (*al-tābīʿīn ghayr ulī l-irba min al-rijāl*), and children. Al-ʿAynī glosses the phrase as "impotent" (*ʿinnīn*) as well as "insensitive to women's charms."<sup>34</sup> Nowhere in

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, *ḥudūd* 38, no. 2613 (2:871f.). I have not succeeded in identifying this 'Amr b. Murra.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *adhān* 56 (1:181).

<sup>28</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* (Beirut: Muḥammad Amīn Damaj, 1970), 17:304; cf. Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī*, 11:248. On the *kurraj*, see F. Rosenthal, tr., *The Muqaddima of Ibn Khaldūn*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), 2:404f., and note; M. Gaudetroy-Demombynes, "Sur le cheval-jupon et al-kurraj," in *Mélanges offerts à William Marçais* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve, 1950), 155–60.

<sup>29</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* 20:215; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī* 11:248. This Ibn Ḥabīb is the Andalusian Mālikī *faqīh* and historian 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, not his better-known Iraqi contemporary, Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb (d. 245/860).

<sup>30</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* 22:42, and cf. 5:232f., 20:25. See also Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī* 2:331 and 10:248.

<sup>31</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* 22:41; cf. Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī* 12:452.

<sup>32</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* 22:41; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī*, 11:248 and 12:452, the latter quoting al-Nawawī (d. 676/1278).

<sup>33</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* 5:232f., 20:25; cf. Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī* 2:331, 12:452. See also al-Zabīdī, *Taj al-ʿarūs* 5:240ff.

<sup>34</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* 20:216. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Cairo, 1961), 19:38, gives a total of five interpretations of the phrase, including the two cited by al-ʿAynī as well as "eunuch" (*khaṣī majbūb*), "old man," and "young slave." The Ḥanafī *faqīh* al-Sarakhsī (d. 483/1090), in a discussion of the seclusion of women in his *Mabsūṭ* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿāda, 1906),

the early material, however, is it implied that these *mukhannathūn* were sexually interested in males. Ibn Ḥabīb in the ninth century and al-Ṭabarānī in the tenth make this distinction explicitly, thereby suggesting that by their own time assumptions had changed and *mukhannathūn* were expected to be homosexually inclined.<sup>35</sup>

In the *ḥadīth* of ʿĀʾisha, the Prophet's words imply that the *mukhannath*'s awareness of what men found attractive in women was proof of his own sexual interest in them, and that it is for this reason that he and those like him should be barred from the women's quarters. The various *ḥadīth* about banishment of the *mukhannathūn*, however, go well beyond this in implying that *takhannuth* was objectionable in itself, and that the *mukhannathūn* should be banished from society altogether, not just from the women's quarters. Only these latter *ḥadīth*, it should be noted, condemn *takhannuth* as a behavioral complex in itself. But there is apparently another factor involved. In the two *ḥadīth* of Umm Salama and ʿĀʾisha, the *mukhannath* is not simply expressing his own appreciation of a woman's body, but describing it for the benefit of another man;

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10:158, offers three interpretations—*majbūb*, *mukhannath*, and *ablah* ("insensitive to women's charms")—and makes a further distinction between two kinds of *mukhannath*, stating that a man who is *mukhannath* "in evil acts (*fi l-radī min al-afʿāl*) is, like other men—indeed, like other sinners (*fus-sāq*)—prohibited from (being admitted to) women; as for the one whose limbs are languid and whose tongue has a lisp (*takassur*) by way of gentle natural constitution, and who has no desire for women and is not *mukhannath* in evil acts, some of our shaykhs would grant such a person license (*rakhkhaṣa*) to be with women"—on the basis of the *ḥadīth* of al-Ṭāʾif, which al-Sarakhsī cites in a version that has the Prophet remark, "I did not realize that he was acquainted with this sort of thing," the implication being that only Ḥit's "obscene remark" (*kalima fāḥisha*) led to his expulsion from the women's company.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Zabīdī (*Tāj al-ʿarūs* 5:240ff.), commenting on the attempt to relate this distinction to two distinct terms *mukhannith* and *mukhannath*, states flatly that "the *takhnūth* which is an act of immorality (*fi l-fāḥisha*) is unknown to the (pure, original) Arabs, is not present in their language, and is not what is meant (by the word) in the *ḥadīth*." Ibn Hajar (*Fath al-bārī* 15:174), discussing the *ḥadīth* prescribing exile for those exhibiting cross-gender behavior, which al-Bukhārī puts in his section on the *ḥudūd*, cites a legal argument for the necessity of distinguishing the *mukhannath* from the passive homosexual offender, based on the fact that the penalty for the latter, stoning, would obviate the penalty of exile.

and there is evidence, from the time of the Prophet as well as the following half century, that, because of their admission to the women's quarters (which continued despite the Prophet's reported disapproval), the *mukhannathūn* played a significant role as matchmakers for eligible bachelors with secluded women. In a non-canonical variant of the *ḥadīth* of ʿĀʾisha, the Prophet's wife asks a *mukhannath* named Annah to direct her to (*tadullunā ʿalā*, the standard verb for match-making) a suitable wife for her brother ʿAbd al-Raḥmān; and al-Muhallab explains that the Prophet "only barred (the *mukhannath*) from the women's quarters when he heard him describe the woman in this way (i.e., her belly-wrinkles) which excites the hearts of men; he forbade him (to enter) in order that he not describe (prospective) mates to people and thus nullify the point of secluding women (*al-hijāb*)."<sup>36</sup> it is not entirely clear, then, to what extent the *mukhannathūn* were punished for their breaking of gender rules in itself, and to what extent such measures were taken rather because of the perceived damage to social institutions from their activities as matchmakers and their corresponding access to women.

The second alternative is supported by the isolated *ḥadīth* in Ibn Māja, the sixth cited above, according to which the Prophet chastised ʿAmr b. Murra for making his living as an entertainment musician. This is the only *ḥadīth* to link the *mukhannathūn* with music, and at that only weakly, as ʿAmr is nowhere referred to directly as a *mukhannath*; on the other hand, the specific association of *mukhannathūn* with the tambourine (*duff*) is common in later reports, which might suggest anachronism here. If the Prophet found *takhannuth* shameful, his real quarrel with ʿAmr seems to have been the latter's frivolity and purveyance of music, itself thought to be a corrupter of morals.<sup>37</sup> If the

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<sup>36</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī* 20:216; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī* 11:250. Ibn Hajar adds, however, that the context gives the impression that Annah was barred also on his own account, since his words showed that he was one of the *ulū l-irba*. I have not been able to identify al-Muhallab.

<sup>37</sup> On the debates about the licitness of music, and the *ḥadīth* pro and con, see Wright, "Music and Verse," 447; J. Robson, *Tracts on Listening to Music* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938) (translation of works by Ibn Abī l-Dunyā and Aḥmad al-Ghazālī); D. B. MacDonald, "Emotional Religion in Islam as Affected by Music and Singing," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1901: 195–252, 705–48, and 1902: 1–28 (translation of a section from Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī's *Ihyāʾ ulūm al-dīn*); L. I. al-Faruqī, "Music, Musicians and Islamic Law," *Asian Music* 17 (1985): 3–36.

*mukhannathūn*, or rather a few of them who took advantage of their unique social position, endangered the social fabric by breaking down appropriate barriers between men and women and inciting passions with music and with intimate descriptions of respectable ladies to perfect strangers, perhaps this would be considered reason enough for banishment.

None of our sources in fact state that Muḥammad actually banished more than two *mukhannathūn*, and there is considerable evidence that such men continued to have access to women's quarters and to describe women to other men. (On the other hand, there can be no question about the low social status of the *mukhannath*, as is clear from the second *ḥadīth* cited above, which imposes a punishment for use of the term as an insult.) The various sources marshalled by al-ʿAynī and Ibn Ḥajar give altogether five different names of *mukhannathūn* banished by Muḥammad, of which Hīt (or Hinb) is the one most often mentioned; a long discussion can be traced through the commentators over whether Hīt and Mātī<sup>c</sup> (or Mānī<sup>c</sup>) were two different banished *mukhannathūn* or only one with two names.<sup>38</sup> A total of six different places of banishment are mentioned as well.<sup>39</sup> A particularly elaborate version of the Tāʿif *ḥadīth* quoted by al-ʿAynī and Ibn Ḥajar from Ibn al-Kalbī has Hīt going beyond belly-wrinkles to give a longer and more extravagant description of the woman (to which are added glosses by Abū ʿUbayd), and the Prophet replying "You have taken too good a look, enemy of God!" and banishing him from Medina to al-Ḥimā; Ibn al-Kalbī reports further that after the Prophet's death Abū Bakr refused to reconsider the man's sentence, but ʿUmar was finally prevailed upon, when he had become old and sick, to permit him to enter the city once a week to beg.<sup>40</sup> A parallel but even more elaborate account, in which the *mukhannath* cites verses, appears in the *Aghānī*, likewise citing Ibn al-Kalbī, but making it ʿUthmān who finally relented and permitted the weekly visits.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī* 20:215; Ibn Ḥajar, *Faṭḥ al-bārī* 11:247f. Besides Hīt, Mātī<sup>c</sup>, and Annah, al-ʿAynī mentions al-H.d.m and al-Ḥurr (*ʿUmdat al-qārī* 17:304); the former appears as Harim in Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *al-Durra al-fākhira fī l-amthāl al-sāʿira*, ed. ʿAbd al-Majīd Quṭāmish (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1971–72), 1:182.

<sup>39</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī* 17:303f., 20:215f.; Ibn Ḥajar, *Faṭḥ al-bārī* 11:250.

<sup>40</sup> Al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī* 17:303f.; Ibn Ḥajar, *Faṭḥ al-bārī* 11:249. This longer form of the *ḥadīth* with Abū ʿUbayd's glosses does not appear in his *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*.

<sup>41</sup> Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Cairo, 1323/1905–6), 2:166.

As indicated by the *Aghānī* citation, the story of Hīt also entered the *adab* tradition. Al-Jāḥiẓ gives a straightforward version of it in his *Mufākharat al-jawārī wal-ghilmān*, as does Ibn ʿAbd Rabbiḥ in the *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*.<sup>42</sup> A longer version, similar to that in the *Aghānī* but even fuller, appears in Ḥamza al-Isfahānī's book of proverbs, under the expression "more effeminate than Hīt (*akhnath min Hīt*)"; according to this version, Hīt was exiled to Khākh, where he remained until the days of ʿUthmān. Ḥamza drew material from many earlier books of proverbs, and in particular from several of the *Amthāl ʿalā afʿal* genre, and a wider search in both earlier and later *adab* literature would undoubtedly turn up many more (and varied) citations.<sup>43</sup>

#### THE MUKHANNATHŪN AND MUSIC IN MEDINA: ṬUWAYS

Except for the reports just cited about Hīt's later years, and the *ḥadīth* which report that the Prophet and ʿUmar each banished one (anonymous) *mukhannath*, we have very little information about the *mukhannathūn* after the death of Muḥammad, until the consolidation of Marwānīd rule sixty years later under ʿAbd al-Malik. But from the following period we have relatively rich sources, primarily because of the importance of a number of *mukhannathūn* in the development of Arabic song in the Hijaz at this time. The *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, by far the most important of these sources, offers extensive biographies of all the leading musicians, both male and female, who contributed to this development, including two men, Ṭuways and al-Dalāl, who were equally celebrated as *mukhannathūn*, meriting inclusion beside Hīt in the books of proverbs under the rubric "more effeminate than." From these biographies, supplemented by scattered information in

<sup>42</sup> Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Mufākharat al-jawārī wa-l-ghilmān*, in *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. A. M. Hārūn (4 vols., Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1965), 2:101; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbiḥ, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, ed. A. Amīn et al. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Taʿlīf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1940–53), 6:105.

<sup>43</sup> Ḥamza's version is the one reproduced in later proverb books, e.g., Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharat al-Amthāl*, ed. M. A. Ibrāhīm and ʿA. Quṭāmish (Cairo: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya al-Ḥadītha lil-Ṭabʿ wa-l-nashr wa-l-tawzīʿ, 1964), 1:435f.; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ al-Amthāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), 1:249f.; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Mustaqṣā fī l-amthāl* (Hyderabad: Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1962), 1:111f. This "long" version also appears (minus the poetry) in al-ʿAbī, *Nathr al-durr* (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Kitāb, 1980–), vol. 5, ed. M. I. ʿAbd al-Rahmān, 1:292, and in Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīkh*, ed. C. J. Tornberg (Leiden: Brill, 1868), 2:268.



other *adab* works, it is possible to draw a rather fuller picture of the *mukhannathūn* in general, especially in Medina.

Ṭuways,<sup>44</sup> the older of the two, was celebrated not only for his music and his *takhannuth*, but also as a jinx—thus meriting a second entry in the proverb books, under the rubric “more unlucky than Ṭuways (*ash'am min Ṭuways*).” The explanation given of this (with a number of variants) is that he was born the day the Prophet died, weaned the day Abū Bakr died, circumcised the day ʿUmar was killed, married the day ʿUthmān was killed, and blessed with his first child the day ʿAlī was killed.<sup>45</sup> Born in the year 10/632, he died, according to Ibn Khallikān, in 92/711, at the age of 82 (lunar).<sup>46</sup> According to most accounts, his name was Abū ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿĪsā b. ʿAbdallāh, Ṭuways (“little peacock”) being a nickname (*laqab*).<sup>47</sup> While the various *mukhannathūn* mentioned from the time of the Prophet in the *ḥadīth* all have regular given names (*asmāʾ*), albeit mostly quite unusual ones, after Ṭuways the adoption of fanciful *laqabs* seems to have become standard practice among the *mukhannathūn* of Me-

dina. The other *mukhannathūn* are said also to have changed Ṭuways's *kunya* to Abū ʿAbd al-Naʿīm, apparently in reference to the frivolity and hedonism normally associated with the *mukhannath*. Ṭuways was a client (*mawlā*) of the Banū Makhzūm;<sup>48</sup> *mawlā* status seems in fact to have been usual among *mukhannathūn* both earlier and later.

According to the *Aghānī*, Ṭuways was the first of the *mukhannathūn* to sing “art music” (? *ghināʾ mutqan*), and the first person to compose in the “lighter” rhythms of *hazaj* and *ramal* in Islam—in fact, he is mentioned in yet a third proverbial expression, “better at *hazaj* than Ṭuways (*ahzaj min Ṭuways*).”<sup>49</sup> Elsewhere, Abū l-Faraj reports rather that Ṭuways was the first person to sing in Arabic in Medina, and also the first to flaunt publicly his effeminacy (? *alqā l-khanath*) there; or again that he was the first in Medina to sing in measured rhythm (*ghināʾ yadkhulu fī l-iqāʿ*).<sup>50</sup> Al-Nuwayrī in his *Nihāyat al-arab* attempts to rework the information provided in the *Aghānī* on early Arabic song into a rough chronology, which he begins with three men, naming Saʿīd b. Misjah, a black *mawlā* in Mecca, and Sāʿib Kāthir, a *mawlā* who settled in Medina, as well as Ṭuways.<sup>51</sup> The first two, neither of whom is ever called a *mukhannath*, are said to have been active in the days of Muʿāwiyā (41–60/661–80). All three men trained pupils who were to become the leading musicians of the next generation. They differed from one another in the instruments they employed, as well as in their styles of music, although the exact meanings of the technical terms specifying these styles are difficult to interpret.<sup>52</sup> Sāʿib Kāthir introduced the *ūd* to Medina, while Ṭuways relied exclusively on the *duff*, a

<sup>44</sup> He has, uniquely and inexplicably, two biographies in the *Aghānī* (2:164–72, 4:37–39). Despite the fact that the former gives his real name as ʿĪsā, while according to the latter it was Ṭāwūs, the general congruence of the two accounts rules out the possibility that they refer to two different people.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Mufaḍḍal b. Salama, *al-Fākhir*, ed. C. A. Storey (Leiden: Brill, 1915), 85; Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Durra al-fākhira* 1:185f.; Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharat al-amthāl* 1:436f.; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 145f.; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ al-amthāl* 1:258f.; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Mustaḥṣā* 1:109f. See also *Aghānī* 2:165, 4:38, and the biographies in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, ed. I. ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 3:506f.; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab* (Cairo: al-Muʿassasa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-taʿlīf wa-l-tarjama wa-l-ṭibāʿa wa-l-nashr, n.d.), 4:246–49; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, ed. I. ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 2:137f.; and al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bil-wafayāt*, vol. 16, ed. W. al-Qādī (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), 501f., with further references to later biographical works.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān* 3:506, repeated in al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt* 2:137, both without indication of source. According to *Aghānī* 2:166, he died in the caliphate of al-Walīd (86–96/705–15).

<sup>47</sup> *Aghānī* 2:164. But according to *Aghānī* 4:37, his real name was Ṭāwūs, and Ḥamza, *Durra* 1:185, also gives him the name Ṭāwūs, changed to Ṭuways “*lammā takhannatha*” (so also in al-Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāh*, 941f.). A very brief notice in Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 322, says his name was ʿAbd al-Malik. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* 3:506, notes these variant reports.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 322 (see previous note) makes him a *mawlā* of Arwā bt. Kurayz, the mother of the caliph ʿUthmān.

<sup>49</sup> *Aghānī* 4:37. There is probably a reference to a particular vocal quality or technique here; E. W. Lane defines *hazij* as “a singer . . . who prolongs his voice, with trilling, or quavering, making the sounds to follow close, one upon another” (*An Arabic-English Lexicon* [Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1984], s.v.).

<sup>50</sup> *Aghānī* 2:165. For other versions of Ṭuways as “first” singer see Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:27; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Maḥāsīn wa-l-masāwī*, ed. M. A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Maktabat Nahḍat Miṣr, n.d.), 2:71; Ḥamza, *Durra*, 1:185; Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Kitāb al-Awāʾil*, ed. M. al-Miṣrī and W. Qaṣṣāb (Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1975), 2:161–66.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* 4:239–48.

<sup>52</sup> See Wright, “Music and Verse,” 435–44.

square tambourine, and sang "lighter" songs, both characteristic of later *mukhannathūn* as well. One of Sāʿib Kāthir's pupils, ʿAzza al-Maylāʾ, is called by Abū l-Faraj the first woman to sing in measured rhythm (? *al-ghināʾ al-mūqaʿ*) in the Hijaz; although she is also said to have sung the songs of the earlier slave girls (*aghānī al-qiyān min al-qadāʾim*), none of the names mentioned of the latter recur elsewhere in the *Aghānī*.<sup>53</sup> In general, while our contradictory sources do not give us a clear picture of the earliest developments of Arabic song, these indications seem to offer little support for a chronological progression of singers from women to *mukhannathūn* to other men, as suggested by Wright.<sup>54</sup>

Music was very much part of the frivolity and high living which our sources describe in the Holy Cities in the years after the final defeat of Ibn al-Zubayr, and of which the poet ʿUmar b. Abī l-Rabīʿa is the best-known representative.<sup>55</sup> Bon vivants such as ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib and, especially, Ibn Abī ʿAtīq, a great-grandson of the caliph Abū Bakr, patronized musicians, and defended music against the strictures of the pious, as well as those of the caliph himself and his governors in Medina.<sup>56</sup> While some anecdotes indicate a general disapproval of singing by the aristocracy (*ashraf*) of the city, numerous others tell of Ṭuways being asked to sing by groups of young men (*fityān*) from Quraysh, apparently his most appreciative audience; there seems to have been a generational split on the question. These young men sometimes invited Ṭuways to entertain them at pleasure parties in the "parks" (*muntazahāt*) outside Medina. They seem to

have appreciated his wit and charm as much as his music, but held more mixed opinions about his *takhan-nuth*. Here is how one authority describes him:<sup>57</sup>

A group of people in Medina were one day talking about the city, and Ṭuways' name came up for discussion. One man said, "If you had seen him, you would have been impressed by his knowledge, his elegance, his singing, and his skill with the *duff*. He could make a bereaved mother laugh!" But another said, "Still, he was ill-omened"—and he told the story of his birth, etc. . . .—"and, on top of that, he was a *mukhannath*, who would try to trip us up and make us stumble."<sup>58</sup> He was tall, ungainly, and wall-eyed." Then another, from the midst of the group, said, "If he was as you say, he was nevertheless diverting, astute, respectful to anyone who treated him with appropriate politeness, and quick to be of service; but he refused to listen to anyone who granted him less than equal respect. He was a great partisan of his patrons, the Banū Makhzūm, and their allies among the Quraysh, but behaved peaceably toward their enemies and avoided provoking them. One cannot blame someone who speaks with knowledge and astuteness. 'Blame to the wrong-doer, and the initiator does more wrong!'" Yet another said, "If what you say is true, then the Quraysh should have crowded around him, enjoyed his company, eagerly listened to his speech, and clamored for his singing. His downfall was his *khunth*; were it not for that, there is not one of the Quraysh, or the Anṣār, or anyone else, who would have failed to welcome him."

Another anecdote shows a similar difference of opinion, as well as illustrating Ṭuways' sharp tongue. ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar was enjoying a spring evening with some companions in the *muntazah* of al-ʿAqīq, when they were overtaken by a shower. He proposed that they take refuge with Ṭuways, near whose residence they were standing, and enjoy his conversation, but ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Ḥassān b. Thābit objected, saying, "With all due respect, what do you want with Ṭuways? He is under the wrath of God, a *mukhannath* whom it is shameful to know." ʿAbdallāh replied, "Don't say that! He is a witty, delightful person, and will give us good company." Overhearing this conversation, Ṭuways instructed his wife to cook a goat and ran to invite the party in. After serving them a princely dinner,

<sup>53</sup> *Aghānī* 16:12f.

<sup>54</sup> For attempts to reconstruct the earliest period of Arabic music, see H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music* (London: Luzac, 1929); N. Asad, *al-Qiyān wal-ghināʾ fī l-ʿaṣr al-jāhilī* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1969); A. Shiloah, "Music in the Pre-Islamic Period As Reflected in Arabic Writings of the First Islamic Centuries," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986): 109–20.

<sup>55</sup> See R. Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe des origines à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle de J.-C.* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1952–66), 661–716; Ḍayf, *al-Shiʿr wal-ghināʾ fī l-Madīna wa-Makka li-ʿaṣr Banī Umayya*; J.-Cl. Vadet, *L'Esprit courtois en Orient dans les cinq premiers siècles de l'Hégire* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1968), 61–158.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:55f.; also al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil fī l-luḡa wa-l-adab* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Maʿārif, 1985), 1:380; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:49f.; al-Ḥuṣṭī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, ed. ʿA. M. al-Bijāwī (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1953), 54f.; *Aghānī* 8:9f.

<sup>57</sup> *Aghānī* 2:165.

<sup>58</sup> *Yakīdunā wa-yaḥlubu ʿatharātīnā*. On the *kayd* or *kiyād* of the *mukhannathūn*, see note 135 below.

he offered to sing and dance for the company, and was encouraged to do so. They were delighted with his song and praised its verses, but then Ṭuways asked them if they knew who had composed them. When they said no, he revealed that they were love verses written by Ḥassān b. Thābit's sister about a prominent Makhzūmī, and thus took his revenge on ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥassān b. Thābit, who was mortified.<sup>59</sup>

Ṭuways showed himself more conciliatory in a similar account, which links him with the earlier *mukhannath* Hīt. With an audience that included the son of ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Umayya, to whom Hīt had made his unfortunate matchmaking proposal, Ṭuways sang the very verses with which Hīt had praised the proposed bride of al-Ṭāʾif. Although pressed to stop, Ṭuways insisted on completing the song, but then promised ʿAbdallāh's son that he would never sing it again if it angered him. Abū l-Faraj links these two anecdotes by making Hīt the *mawlā* of ʿAbdallāh and suggesting that Ṭuways owed his *khunth* in some way to association with Hīt.<sup>60</sup>

Our sources offer very little information on the outward manifestations of this *takhannuth*. Perhaps relevant here is a joke in Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-Maʿārif*, according to which Ṭuways was seen performing the pilgrimage rite at Minā of throwing stones at a stone representing the devil—but he had coated the stones with sugar and saffron. Questioned on this, he replied, "I owed the devil a favor, and I'm making up for it."<sup>61</sup> More concrete are two accounts which associate *takhannuth* with irreligion and frivolity, and show an ambivalence toward it on the part of the government similar to that it displayed toward music. When Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥakam was ʿAbd al-Malik's governor over Medina (75–76/694–95),<sup>62</sup> he noticed a suspicious-looking character and had him hauled before him. The man

had the appearance of a woman: he was wearing fine dyed garments, and had dressed his hair and applied henna to his hands. He was identified to the governor as Ibn Nughāsh the *mukhannath*. The governor said, "I doubt that you ever read the Qurʾān. Recite the Mother of the Qurʾān!"<sup>63</sup> Ibn Nughāsh replied, "O Father, if I knew the mother, I would know the daughters!" Outraged at this irreverence, Yaḥyā had him executed, and put a bounty of three hundred dirhams on the other *mukhannathūn*. The narrator subsequently found Ṭuways entertaining a party. Informed of the news, Ṭuways sang verses deriding the governor, and complained that he had not had a higher bounty placed on him than did the others.<sup>64</sup>

We hear no more about this policy or its effect on the *mukhannathūn*, and a year later Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥakam was replaced by Abān b. ʿUthmān.<sup>65</sup> As the latter approached Medina to take up his office, the townspeople and their leaders went out to meet him. Ṭuways was among them, and when he saw Abān he said, "O amīr, I swore to God that if I saw you become amīr I would dye my hands and arms with henna up to the elbows and strut with my tambourine," and proceeded to do so, delighting the new governor with his singing. The latter cried, "Enough, Ṭāwūs!" addressing him by the non-diminutive form of his *laqab* out of respect. He seated Ṭuways beside him, then said, "They claim you are an unbeliever." Ṭuways replied with the confession of faith and the assertion that he observed the five prayers, the fast of Ramaḍān, and the pilgrimage. When the governor (tactlessly?) asked Ṭuways whether he or the governor's (elder) brother ʿAmr was older, he replied, "I was trailing at the heels of the women of my people who accompanied your blessed mother's wedding procession to your good father."<sup>66</sup>

All of this anecdotal material is too riddled with variants and chronological improbabilities to warrant belief in the historicity of any single account. A variant of the bounty story, for example, is assigned by Ibn al-Kalbī to the much earlier governorship of Yaḥyā's

<sup>59</sup> *Aghānī* 2:167, followed by another version, which also appears in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* 6:28f. The story may hinge in part on political rivalries between the Anṣār, among whom the family of Ḥassān b. Thābit was prominent, and the Banū Makhzūm (of whom Ṭuways was a *mawlā*). Cf. a similar anecdote in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* 6:29; Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-akhbār*, ed. Y. ʿA. Ṭawīl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1986), 1:441f.; idem, *Maʿārif*, 294.

<sup>60</sup> *Aghānī* 2:167. The text is obscure and possibly corrupt: "wa-kāna Hīt mawlan li-ʿAbdallāh . . . wa-kāna Ṭuways lahu fa-min thamma qīla (l. qabila) al-khunth. ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Umayya was a Makhzūmī.

<sup>61</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 322. For other versions of this story, see p. 685 below.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wal-mulūk* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1960–69), 6:202, 209, 256.

<sup>63</sup> That is, the first *sūra*.

<sup>64</sup> *Aghānī* 2:166.

<sup>65</sup> Governor from 76/695 to 82/701; see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* 6:256, 355.

<sup>66</sup> *Aghānī* 4:38; cf. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* 2:424, 4:27f. Al-Jāḥiẓ mentions the last part of this anecdote, pointing out Ṭuways' delicacy in avoiding the (expected?) locution "your good mother" (and "your blessed father"), which could be taken as a double entendre (*al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ed. A. M. Hārūn [Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, n.d.], 1:263f.; cf. idem, *al-Ḥayawān*, ed. A. M. Hārūn [Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1965–69], 4:58).

brother Marwān, under the caliph Mu<sup>c</sup>āwīya, and Ibn al-Kalbī claims that at that time Ṭuways went into self-imposed exile at al-Suwaydā<sup>3</sup>, two nights' journey north of Medina, where he spent the rest of his life.<sup>67</sup> Compatible with this is Ibn al-Kalbī's version of the account of the verses by Ḥassān b. Thābit's sister, which makes Ḥassān's grandson Ṭuways' target, and sets the scene at al-Suwaydā<sup>3</sup>, under the governorship of <sup>c</sup>Umar b. <sup>c</sup>Abd al-<sup>c</sup>Azīz (87–93/706–12).<sup>68</sup> Despite such inconsistencies, however, I think we can accept the general picture drawn of Ṭuways, as the most prominent example, and perhaps in some sense leader, of a group of male professional musicians who publicly adopted women's fashions and were appreciated by many for their wit and charm as well as their music, but were disapproved of by others who, in varying degrees, saw their music, their *takhannuth*, and their flippant style as immorality and irreligion. They were also subject to varying degrees of repression by the state. References to a role as matchmaker are lacking in the case of Ṭuways, as are any references to homosexuality, or indeed to sex at all.<sup>69</sup> It may be noted in passing that Ṭuways is reported to have married and fathered children.<sup>70</sup>

#### OTHER MUKHANNATH MUSICIANS IN MEDINA AND MECCA

A lengthy anecdote in Abū l-Faraj's biography of the songstress Jamīla, while historically implausible (as he himself points out), illustrates the role of the *mukhan-*

*nathūn* of Medina as a distinct group among the musicians of the Hijaz, while never using the word. Jamīla was a Medinese who owed her start in the profession to being a neighbor of Sā<sup>3</sup>ib Kāthir, and became the principal teacher of Ma<sup>c</sup>bad, the most famous singer of the next generation.<sup>71</sup> According to the story,<sup>72</sup> she once went on pilgrimage, taking with her all the principal Medinese singers, of both sexes, as well as the principal poets and other luminaries, including Ibn Abī <sup>c</sup>Atīq. Arriving in Mecca in grand procession, these were met by an equally dazzling assemblage of the most famous musicians and poets in that city, including in particular <sup>c</sup>Umar b. Abī Rabī<sup>c</sup>a. After performing the pilgrimage rites, Jamīla was asked to organize a concert (*majlis lil-ghinā<sup>3</sup>*), but refused to mix the serious and the frivolous (*jidd* and *hazl*). <sup>c</sup>Umar b. Abī Rabī<sup>c</sup>a then resolved to return with her to Medina, and in the event all the prominent Meccans joined the Medinese on their return, in a yet statelier procession than the first. <sup>c</sup>Umar then arranged for all to convene at Jamīla's house for three days of song.<sup>73</sup>

Jamīla opened the proceedings by singing some verses by <sup>c</sup>Umar, and then called on the other singers, one by one. On the first day, thirteen male singers performed, Meccans alternating with Medinese. On the second day, it was the turn of "Ṭuways and his companions." All these were Medinese, whose names were included in the earlier list of participants in the pilgrimage procession, but grouped separately from the other Medinese male musicians. The eight names given are: Hīt, Ṭuways, al-Dalāl, Bard al-Fu<sup>3</sup>ād ("coolness/contentment of the heart"), Nawmat al-Ḍuḥā ("morning nap"), Qand ("candy"),<sup>74</sup> Raḥma, and Hibat-allāh. Ṭuways was called on to sing first, then al-Dalāl. Hīt was exempted on account of his advanced age. (This detail is apparently a concession to chronological plausibility, despite the otherwise drastic chronological telescoping of the story.) Then Bard al-Fu<sup>3</sup>ād and Nawmat al-Ḍuḥā performed together, and the last three as a group. Finally, on the third day, eleven women performed, and the grand occasion closed with a song sung by all in unison.

Although they are nowhere in this account so identified, the singers of the second day undoubtedly represent the *mukhannathūn* of Medina. All but two of

<sup>67</sup> *Aghānī* 2:166; the other *mukhannath* is here named al-Nughāshī, and the bounty specified as ten dinars. According to Yāqūt, *Mu<sup>c</sup>jam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 3:228, Ṭuways died and was buried in Suqyā al-Jazl, a place somewhere near the Wādī al-Qurā, north of Medina; cf. idem, *al-Mushtarik*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Dieterichschen Verlag, 1846), 250, and Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* 3:507.

<sup>68</sup> *Aghānī* 2:168, and Ibn <sup>c</sup>Abd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:28f.; cf. note 59 above. An appended report asserting that these verses were by "Ibn Zuhayr *al-mukhannath*" (rather than Ḥassān's sister herself?) is probably garbled from an attribution of the song to this Ibn Zuhayr; cf. Ibn Khurraḍādhbih, *Mukhtār Kitāb al-Lahw wa-l-malāhī*, ed. A. Khalifé, in *al-Machriq* 54 (1960): 151, where the verses, attributed to Ḥassān's sister, are quoted as a famous song by the Medinese *mukhannath* Ṣāliḥ b. Zuhayr al-Khuzā<sup>c</sup>ī. On <sup>c</sup>Umar b. <sup>c</sup>Abd al-<sup>c</sup>Azīz's tenure as governor of Medina and Mecca, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta<sup>3</sup>riḥ* 6:427, 481f.

<sup>69</sup> A single exception will be dealt with below, p. 686.

<sup>70</sup> In the story of his *shu<sup>3</sup>m*. The anecdote with <sup>c</sup>Abdallāh b. Ja<sup>c</sup>far and <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥassān b. Thābit also refers to his wife (*Aghānī* 2:167).

<sup>71</sup> *Aghānī* 7:118ff.; *ET*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Djamīla."

<sup>72</sup> *Aghānī* 7:128–33; cf. al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* 5:44ff.

<sup>73</sup> From the *Aghānī*'s statement that, at the end of the first day's concert, the *amma* left, while the *khāṣṣa* remained, it appears that this was a public event.

<sup>74</sup> This *laqab* is, however, probably to be emended to the *ism* Find; see below, p. 687, n. 124.

them are in fact so described in other sources, and the gratuitous and anachronistic inclusion of Hīt, who is nowhere else associated with music and even here does not sing, confirms that *takhannuth* is essential to the identity of these musicians as a distinct group.<sup>75</sup> Their placement between the other men and the women is certainly a reflection of their ambiguous gender status, although one version of the story has it that Jamīla had "Tuways and his companions" and "Ibn Surayj and his companions" draw lots for the first day, with the latter winning.<sup>76</sup> Noteworthy, too, is the fact that the *mukhannathūn*, like the women, are known by nicknames (*alqāb*), in contrast to all but one of the other men, suggesting that the *mukhannathūn* shared with the women the kind of inferior status which permitted relative familiarity in address and general social intercourse.

The one participant from the first day who is known by a *laqab*, al-Gharīd, was, however, apparently also a *mukhannath*—as was, according to some accounts, his master Ibn Surayj.<sup>77</sup> Their participation on the first day, rather than the second, would seem to rule out a distinction between the two groups exclusively on the basis of *takhannuth*; on the other hand, both men were Meccans, and our sources give no indication of the existence in Mecca of any wider, high-profile group of *mukhannathūn*, musical or otherwise, comparable to what we hear of in Medina. The concocter of the Jamīla anecdote may simply have been unaware of reports of the *takhannuth* of Ibn Surayj and al-Gharīd (which does not loom very large in their biographies in the *Aghānī*); or, plausibly, the *mukhannathūn* of Medina may have developed a musical style that set them apart from the other male musicians, one which the Meccan *mukhannathūn* did not share.

There is in any case evidence that the songs of the *mukhannathūn* were, in some way, recognizable as such. Tuways' preference for the *duff* and for the "lighter" rhythms of *hazaj* and *ramal* was shared by al-Dalāl, in particular, as well as his other *mukhan-*

*nathūn* pupils. In a sequel to the account of Tuways' impertinent singing before 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥassān of verses by his aunt, Tuways, al-Dalāl, and an otherwise unknown *mukhannath* named al-Walīd are said to have been together at a wedding when 'Abd al-Rahmān arrived. Seeing them, the latter said, "I will not sit in company that includes these." But when Tuways acknowledged his earlier offense, and al-Dalāl lightened the atmosphere with a song in *hazaj*, accompanied by all three *mukhannathūn* on their tambourines, 'Abd al-Rahmān agreed to stay.<sup>78</sup> In another anecdote, Ibn Abī 'Atīq praises specifically al-Dalāl's "light" (*khafīf*) rendition of some verses by al-Aḥwaṣ, as opposed to the "heavy" style (*thaqīl*).<sup>79</sup> Less clear is the statement that al-Dalāl sang only "doubled" songs (*ghinā' muḍa'af*), glossed in our source as "*kathīr al-ʿamal*" (carefully composed? complex?).<sup>80</sup> But a special "*mukhannath*" style of singing does seem to be implied by another anecdote; praised for his setting of verses by al-Nābigha, in which he is said to have outdone Ibn Surayj, al-Dalāl responded, "And there is in it something yet greater than that!" and when asked what, replied, "Reputation (*sumʿa*)! Anyone who hears this will know that it is by a *mukhannath* in truth!"<sup>81</sup> A full generation later, in the early 'Abbāsid period, *mukhannathūn* were still associated with *hazaj* and with the *duff*.<sup>82</sup>

Where the two Meccan *mukhannathūn*, Ibn Surayj and al-Gharīd, fit in this picture is unclear. According

<sup>78</sup> *Aghānī* 4:65.

<sup>79</sup> This anecdote appears in many sources, with numerous variants; it is usually presented as a sequel to the castration story discussed below. See al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil* 1:395f.; Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:50; Ḥamza, *Durra* 1:188; *Aghānī* 4:62 (two versions, one of which opposes *hazaj* rather than *khafīf* to *thaqīl*); Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī, *Sharḥ mā yaqūʿu fīhi l-taṣḥīf wa-l-tahrīf*, ed. S. M. Yūsuf (Damascus: Majmaʿ al-Lughā al-ʿArabiyya, 1978), 1:54–56; al-ʿAbbāsī, *Nathr al-durr*, vol. 7, ed. U. Būghānīmī (Tūnis, 1983), 221; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 51; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ al-amthāl* 1:251.

<sup>80</sup> *Aghānī* 4:59.

<sup>81</sup> *Aghānī* 4:63.

<sup>82</sup> *Aghānī* 6:64; 4:169f. In his *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* (3:64), Abū 'Ubayd refers to the *duff* as "that which women beat," but does not mention *mukhannathūn*; on the other hand, the association of the latter with the *duff* is still attested in the fifth/eleventh century by al-ʿUtībī, who describes captives after a defeat being met in Bukhara by *makhānūth* bearing *dufūf* and spindles (al-Manīnī, *Sharḥ al-Yamīnī* [Cairo: Jamʿiyyat al-Maʿārif, 1869], 1:139).

<sup>75</sup> All these names are attested also in other anecdotes, except Raḥma (who appears as "Zujja" [?]) in the parallel to this account in al-Nuwayrī).

<sup>76</sup> This version is juxtaposed by the *Aghānī* with another version that has Tuways protesting Jamīla's organization of the event and, by implication, his and his companions' relegation to the second day. As in the anecdotes cited above, Tuways seems here to be insisting, against widespread prejudice, on his equality of status with other men.

<sup>77</sup> *Aghānī* 1:95, 105, 2:125ff.

to one account in the *Aghānī*, both men began as professional lamenters (*nāʿih*), an activity traditionally restricted to women. Confronted with the younger al-Gharīd's competition, Ibn Surayj switched to conventional singing (*ghināʾ*); but then al-Gharīd followed suit. Another version reports that Ibn Surayj, noting the similarity of al-Gharīd's singing style to lamentation (*nawh*), himself turned to (the lighter) *ramal* and *hazaj*. Accused then by al-Gharīd of corrupting song, he retorted, "You, you *mukhannath*—may you sing laments over your mother and father—you say this to me!" and swore to sing the "heaviest" song ever heard. Both men, it should be noted, performed with the *ūd*, unlike the *mukhannathūn* of Medina.<sup>83</sup>

Apart from questions of musical style, additional information on the appearance and behavior of the *mukhannathūn* is offered by our sources in their biographies of al-Dalāl, the third *mukhannath*, after Hīt and Ṭuways, whom the Medinese included among the sophisticates (*ẓurafāʾ*) and wits (*aṣḥāb nawādir*) to whom they pointed with pride.<sup>84</sup> Al-Dalāl's real name was Nāfid, his *kunya* was Abū Yazīd, and like his master Ṭuways he was a *mawlā*.<sup>85</sup> The *laqab* al-Dalāl ("coquetry") is explained as referring to his physical beauty and the charm of his manner; but the wit which constituted much of the latter was often crude, and he

was also criticized in some quarters for his profligacy (*mujūn*) and flippancy (*safah*).<sup>86</sup> A story that he farted during prayers and said, "I praise Thee fore and aft!" is typical; according to another account, when the *imām* recited, "And why should I not serve Him Who created me?"<sup>87</sup> he said, "I don't know," and caused most of the assembled worshippers to laugh and invalidate their prayer.<sup>88</sup>

More serious, in the eyes of some, were al-Dalāl's activities as a go-between, about which we have a number of anecdotes (in notable contrast to Ṭuways).<sup>89</sup> While some of these stories, such as the account of his role in the marriage of ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar's daughter to the governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf,<sup>90</sup> imply no impropriety, others depict al-Dalāl as encouraging immodesty and immorality among women. Of particular interest is one which mentions al-Dalāl as a close associate to two of the most profligate women in Medina (they are said to have indulged in horse-racing and while riding to have shown their ankle-bracelets), one of whom was the daughter of Yahyā b. al-Ḥakam. When Yahyā's brother Marwān, the governor, was instructed by the caliph Muʿāwīya to do something about his niece's behavior, he used trickery to bring about her death. He also pursued al-Dalāl, who fled to Mecca. There he was reproached by the women, who said, "After killing the women of Medina you have come to kill us!" He retorted, "Nothing killed them but the Tempter(?)"<sup>91</sup> When they warned him with threats to stay away from them, he said, "Who then will diagnose your illness and know where to find the proper

<sup>83</sup> *Aghānī* 1:95–97, 124f.; according to some reports, Ibn Surayj's instrument was the *qaḍīb*, a percussion instrument. I am not sure of the implications of the reply by Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 188/804) to the question who was the best singer, "Of the men, Ibn Muḥriz, and of the women, Ibn Surayj" (*Aghānī* 1:96); another version of this story adds that "It is said that the best male singers are those who imitate (*ta-shabbaha bi-*) women, and the best female singers are those who imitate men" (*Aghānī* 1:119). It would be tempting to speculate that the *mukhannathūn* sang in falsetto, but I have found no evidence for this; from a century later we are told that Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī's son Iṣḥāq (d. 235/850) compensated for some natural defect in his voice by inventing the technique of *takhnīth*, which E. Neubauer translates "Kopfstimme"; see *Aghānī* 5:75, 96, and E. Neubauer, *Musiker am Hof der frühen ʿAbbāsiden* (Frankfurt am Main: Diss. J. W. Goethe-Universität, 1965), 25.

<sup>84</sup> *Aghānī* 4:59.

<sup>85</sup> *Aghānī* 4:59; Ḥamza, *Durra* 1:186. Variants in: Ibn Khurraḍādhbih, *Mukhtār* 149 (Abū Zayd Nāfid); al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ* 1:251 (Abū Zayd Nāfidh); al-Zamakhsharī, *Mustaqṣā* 1:109 (Abū Yazīd Nāfidh); al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* 4:298 (Abū Zayd Nāqid).

<sup>86</sup> *Aghānī* 4:59, 64.

<sup>87</sup> Qurʾān 36:22.

<sup>88</sup> *Aghānī* 4:62, 64.

<sup>89</sup> The possibility of vocalizing his *laqab* as al-Dallāl, "marriage broker," is ruled out implicitly by the *Aghānī* (see note 85) and explicitly by Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl* (Hyderabad: Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1962), 3:343–46, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih*, ed. ʿA. M. al-Bijāwī (Cairo: al-Muʿassasa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma lil-Taʾlīf wa-l-Anbāʾ wa-l-Nashr, n.d.), 564. The proverb books (Ḥamza, Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, al-Maydānī, al-Zamakhsharī) give the *laqab* without the article.

<sup>90</sup> *Aghānī* 4:70. The marriage was short-lived; see *Aghānī* 13:102f. Al-Ḥajjāj was governor of Medina in 74–75/693–94; see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* 6:195, 202, 209.

<sup>91</sup> *Al-Hakkāk*, literally, "scratcher." The lexica define *hakkākāt* as the devil's whisperings in the heart. Perhaps the correct reading is simply *al-hukkām*, "the authorities."

treatment? By God, I have never been guilty of fornication, nor of submitting to a fornicator! I have no desire for what the men and women of your city lust after!"<sup>92</sup>

Al-Dalāl seems here to be referring to his activity as a go-between, while absolving himself of responsibility for its consequences. His claims about his own behavior are less clear. He might mean that he has neither committed nor been tempted by illicit sexual conduct; or that he lacks sexual desire altogether;<sup>93</sup> or, indeed, that he had nothing to do with specifically heterosexual, as opposed to homosexual, behavior.<sup>94</sup> All of these alternatives are compatible with the statement that al-Dalāl "adored women and loved to be with them; but any demands (by them for his sexual favors) were in vain."<sup>95</sup> But it is the third—an exclusively homosexual orientation—which is supported by another story, set at the time of the caliph Hishām's pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>96</sup> One of Hishām's Syrian commanders, lodged in Medina near al-Dalāl's home, overhears his singing and accepts an invitation to visit him, bringing along two servant boys. He is ravished by al-Dalāl's first song, but the latter refuses to sing another until he agrees to sell him one of the boys, which he does with alacrity. The commander then tells al-Dalāl, whom he calls a "beautiful man" (*ayyuhā l-rajul al-jamīl*), that he is looking for a slave-girl of a particular—and very voluptuous—description. Al-Dalāl replies, "I have just

the girl!" and offers to arrange a viewing, in return for being made a gift of the other boy, to which the commander again agrees with alacrity. Al-Dalāl then goes to one of the respectable ladies of Medina and asks her help, describing his infatuation with the two servant boys and maintaining that only her daughter fits the commander's description; there is no real danger involved, since the second boy is to be given up after a viewing of the girl, not after the sale. The commander is allowed to see the girl, naked, and touch her; but when he makes a specific offer, the mother reveals her identity and that of her daughter and heaps scorn on the commander as a typical representative of the "crudeness of the Syrians" (*ghilaẓ ahl al-Shām wa-jafā'uhum*).<sup>97</sup>

More explicit testimony to this aspect of al-Dalāl's shameless behavior (*mujūn*) comes from an account of his accompanying a party of young men of Quraysh on one of their pleasure excursions outside the city.<sup>98</sup> Among them was a good-looking boy to whom al-Dalāl was attracted. This attraction was noticed by the party, who congratulated themselves, saying, "Now we have him for the entire day!" (The explanation for this is that al-Dalāl was always impatient to get away, finding men's conversation tiresome and much preferring that of women.) When they winked at the boy, al-Dalāl noticed, and, angry, rose to depart; but they persuaded him to stay and sing, and then brought out wine and began to drink, plying al-Dalāl with wine as well. Their exuberance attracted the attention of the authorities, who arrived as they fled. All escaped except for al-Dalāl and the boy, who were too drunk to move, and were brought before the governor (unnamed). Al-Dalāl's impudent responses to the governor are classic *mujūn*: when the latter bursts out, "You wanton degenerate (*fāsiq*)!" he replies, "From your lips to heaven!"<sup>99</sup> To the command, "Slap his jaw, (guards)!" he retorts, "And cut off his head, too! (?)"<sup>100</sup> The governor asks, "Enemy of God, were you not comfortable enough at home, so that you had to go out into the desert with this boy and do your foul business there?" Al-Dalāl answers, "If I had known that you were going to attack us, preferring that we do our foul business

<sup>92</sup> *Aghānī* 4:63. The anecdote seems improbably early for al-Dalāl, and it would be tempting to move it forward to the governorship of Yahyā b. al-Ḥakam himself, under 'Abd al-Malik. On the other hand, Marwān is reported elsewhere to have been particularly severe toward people of loose morals; see p. 687 below.

<sup>93</sup> In contrast to Ṭuways, none of the anecdotes about al-Dalāl I have seen mention his wife; but this cannot be taken as evidence that he did not have one.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Dalāl's statement that "*mā zanaytu qaṭṭu wa-lā zuniya bī*" is problematical. The passive verb would seem to imply a passive role in (necessarily) homosexual intercourse; the latter, however, would not ordinarily be called *zinā*, but *liwāṭ*. Since, however, the verb is negated, perhaps he means simply that, not being a woman, he has not submitted to fornication as a woman (unlike, he implies, his interlocutors).

<sup>95</sup> *Aghānī* 4:59. The phrase is, however, obscure and the reading uncertain: *wa-kāna yuṭlabu* (*yaṭṭubu*?) *fa-lā yuqḍaru* (*yaqḍiru*?) 'alayhi. Another possibility would be "he attempted (to have intercourse with them) but was incapable of doing so."

<sup>96</sup> The only pilgrimage by Hishām reported by al-Ṭabarī was in the year 106/725 (*Ta'rikh* 7:35f.).

<sup>97</sup> *Aghānī* 4:67f.

<sup>98</sup> *Aghānī* 4:64f.

<sup>99</sup> That is, "May your prayer be answered!"

<sup>100</sup> Literally, "strike his neck, too!": *qāla jī'ū fakkahu qāla wa-'unqahu ayḍan*. Were it not that the lexica define "*waja'a*" as "to behead," I would suspect a reference to masturbation here; as it is, I do not get the joke.

secretly, I would never have left my house!" "Strip him and give him the stipulated flogging!"<sup>101</sup> "That will do you no good, for, by God, I get stipulated floggings every day!" "And who undertakes to do that?" "The penises of the Muslims!" "Throw him on his face and sit on his back!" "I suppose the amīr wants to see what I look like when I'm sodomized!" Then the governor ordered him and the boy paraded in shame through the city. When the people asked, "What is this, Dalāl?" he said, "The amīr wanted to 'bring two heads together,'"<sup>102</sup> so he has brought me and this boy together and proclaimed our union; but if someone now calls him a pimp, he will be angry!" Hearing of this, the frustrated governor let them both go.

#### TAKHANNUTH AND PASSIVE HOMOSEXUALITY

Unlike his predecessors among the *mukhannathūn*, then, al-Dalāl is presented by at least some sources as an unabashed *ma'būn*, that is, someone who sought the passive role in homosexual relations; as Ḥamza al-Ḥafāhānī has him say, in a version of the anecdote of the sugared stones at Minā attributed to al-Dalāl rather than Ṭuways, the Devil's favor for which he owes recompense is that he "made me like *ubna*."<sup>103</sup> Although a comprehensive investigation of this phenomenon in early Muslim society cannot be undertaken here, a few basic observations will help to put this statement in context.<sup>104</sup> Beginning with early ʿAbbāsīd times, when the literary expression of homosexual sentiment became fashionable, our sources on the topic are extraordinarily rich. In contrast, homosexuality is

rarely mentioned in our sources for Umayyad and pre-Umayyad society, and most references occur either in the *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* literature, or in vituperative poetry. Both the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth* strongly condemn homosexual activity;<sup>105</sup> the *fiqh* literature defines this activity, more or less exclusively, as anal intercourse, and prescribes equal punishment for both the active and passive partners, distinguished when necessary as "*fāʿil*" and "*mafʿūl bihi*." It is, however, abundantly clear that in classical Islamic culture in general "active" and "passive" homosexuality were considered essentially two different, albeit complementary, phenomena. (This state of affairs is hardly surprising, given the fact that the same was, on the whole, true of Western classical civilization, and, arguably, of medieval Europe; indeed, it remains the case in much of Middle Eastern—and of Western—society today.)

The Arabic terminology alone leaves little room for doubt about the importance of this distinction. *Liwaʿ*, formed from *Lūʿ*, is the general as well as legal term for homosexual anal intercourse, and technically may refer to the "activity" of either partner; *lūʿī*, on the other hand, a term rare in the legal literature but otherwise common, always refers to the active partner, who, at least from ʿAbbāsīd times, was inevitably exposed to less intense societal disapproval than the passive partner, and, indeed, whose desires, if not his acts, were widely considered normal from at least the fourth/tenth century.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the *lūʿī*'s partner was not assumed himself necessarily to be acting from motives of sexual desire, and no single term refers simply to such a person, without reference to his motives: if he is paid, for instance, he is a *muʿājir*; if he agrees to be the passive partner in exchange for a turn as the active partner, he is a *mubādil*; if he is indeed acting out of sexual desire for the passive role, he is most commonly called a *ma'būn*. The word *ma'būn* carries strong connotations of pathology, and *ubna* is in fact frequently called a "disease" (*dāʿ*).<sup>107</sup> It is perhaps due to this rather clinical tone that a number of other, synonymous terms have been adopted over time, which are

<sup>101</sup> *Idrābūhu ḥaddan*. The *ḥadd* punishment applied only to certain specific offenses. The relevant offence here is *zinā*, to which *liwaʿ* was analogized. Whether *liwaʿ* was in fact punishable with a *ḥadd* penalty was controversial; see al-Sarakhsī, *Mabsūṭ* 9:77–79; Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muḥadhdhab* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī, 2nd ed., 1976), 2:344.

<sup>102</sup> That is, to make a match.

<sup>103</sup> Ḥamza, *Durra* 1:188; Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Jamhara* 1:437f.; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ* 1:251; al-Zamakhsharī, *Mustaṭṭāʿ* 1:109. A more elaborate version of this anecdote, mentioning both Ṭuways and al-Dalāl and attributing to the former the comment that the Devil "made me like this desire (*shahwa*)," appears in al-Ṣafadī's biography of Ṭuways, *al-Wāfi bil-wafayāt* 16:502.

<sup>104</sup> For fuller treatment of the issues discussed in the following pages, see my essay "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. J. Epstein and K. Straub (forthcoming).

<sup>105</sup> Qurʾān 7:80f., 26:165f., 27:54f., 29:27f., 54:37. For the *ḥadīth*, see, e.g., Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwattaʿa*, no. 1503 (p. 593). See also *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "*liwaʿ*."

<sup>106</sup> The normal object of such "active" desires was a pubescent boy; the expression of such desires toward a full adult male was considerably more controversial, but never considered as reprehensible—or pathological—as the desire for the passive role.

<sup>107</sup> See F. Rosenthal, "Ar-Rāzī on the Hidden Illness," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 52.1 (1978): 45–60.



used more commonly in non-medical (and non-legal) contexts. In the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries, the most common of these was *baghghā*<sup>108</sup>, with an abstract form *bighā*<sup>109</sup>. In the Umayyad period, the more common synonym for *ubna* seems to have been *ḥulāq*, the practitioner being a *ḥalaqī*.<sup>109</sup>

What, if any, is the relationship between the *maʿbūn*, *ḥalaqī*, or *baghghā* and the *mukhannath*? For the ʿAbbāsid and later periods, the answer is clear: *mukhannathūn* were assumed to be *baghghāʿūn*, while continuing to display many of the distinctive traits for which they were known in the Umayyad period, such as wit and flippancy, association with music in general and certain musical instruments in particular, and activity as go-betweens, as well as cross-dressing. The combination of their flippancy, effeminacy, and *bighā* earned them their own subsection in some of the later joke collections.<sup>110</sup> For the pre-ʿAbbāsid period, we have seen reason to doubt this equation. The accounts of Hīt neither state nor imply it, and in some respects seem to contradict it. Ṭuways is nowhere in the *Aghānī* associated with *ubna*. In al-Thaʿālibī's *Thimār al-qulūb*, Ṭuways is indeed called *maʿbūn*, and even said to be famous for *ubna*, as well as *takhannuth* and *shuʿm*,<sup>111</sup> but al-Thaʿālibī is here generalizing from a single passage in Ḥamza, in an account which nowhere else mentions *ubna*. What Ḥamza says is that Ṭuways was *maʿūf*, that is, he had an affliction (*āfa*), which he was not ashamed of and did not hide from people; he even composed the following verses about it:

I am Abū ʿAbd al-Naʿīm,  
I am the Peacock of Hell (*Tāwūs al-Jahīm*),  
And I am the most ill-omened (*ashʿam*) person  
To creep over the face of the earth.  
I am a *ḥāʿ*, then a *lām*,  
Then a *qāf* and the stuffing of a *mīm* (i.e., a  
*yāʿ*).

<sup>108</sup> See, e.g., al-Qaḍī al-Jurjānī, *al-Muntakhab min Kitāb al-Kināyāt* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1984), 37–52.

<sup>109</sup> See, e.g., al-Khaḫāḫī, *Shifāʾ al-ghalīl fīmā fī kalām al-ʿarab min al-dakhl*, ed. M. A. Khaḫāḫī (Cairo: al-Ḥaram al-Ḥusaynī, 1952), 105, and, for examples of usage, al-Jāḥiẓ, *Madḥ al-nabīdh*, in *Rasāʾil*, ed. A. M. Hārūn (Cairo: al-Khānjī, 1979), 3:118; al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Imtāʿ wa-l-muʿānasa*, ed. A. Amīn and A. al-Zayn (Beirut: al-ʿAṣriyya, n.d.), 2:52.

<sup>110</sup> See the successive chapters in al-ʿAbbāsī's *Nathr al-durr*, vol. 5, ed. M. I. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿAmma lil-Kitāb, 1987), 277–306, entitled *Nawādir al-mukhannathīn*, *Nawādir al-lāqūb*, and *Nawādir al-baghghāʿīn*.

<sup>111</sup> Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb*, ed. M. A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1985), 145f.

Certainly no more emphatic association between Ṭuways and *ḥulāq* could be imagined than these verses; they could not, even with considerable textual tampering, refer to anyone or anything else. On the other hand, their authenticity might well be questioned, since *ḥulāq* seems otherwise to play no role in Ṭuways' persona, in such notable contrast to al-Dalāl; if Ṭuways was famous as the leader, in some sense, of the *mukhannathūn* of Medina, and if all *mukhannathūn* were later assumed to be *maʿbūnīn*, then some motivation for such a fabrication might be imagined.<sup>112</sup>

Besides al-Dalāl, the other prominent figure from the Umayyad period to achieve some notoriety as a *maʿbūn* was, in fact, not one of the *mukhannathūn* musicians of Medina, but rather the city's most famous poet, al-Aḥwaṣ.<sup>113</sup> The *Aghānī* several times refers to accusations that al-Aḥwaṣ was guilty of *ubna* or *ḥulāq*,<sup>114</sup> and also offers a number of anecdotes which imply the activity without naming it. One of these concerns a beautiful boy whom al-Aḥwaṣ brought with him to one of Jamīla's public concerts,<sup>115</sup> while two others claim that women associated with the poet were actually men.<sup>116</sup> None of these stories, however, specify the nature of these relationships explicitly; and the need for caution in interpreting them is suggested by al-Aḥwaṣ's own reported statement that when he was aroused it did not matter to him whether he met a *nākiḥ* (active sexual partner), *mankūḥ* (passive), or *zānī* (heterosexual fornicator).<sup>117</sup> Whether an anecdote

<sup>112</sup> It should perhaps be stated explicitly that we can, of course, say nothing about Ṭuways' actual sex life. What is in question here is the public image of the *mukhannathūn* and whether this included assumptions about homosexual behavior, either explicitly or implicitly.

<sup>113</sup> On him, see Shawqī Dayf, *al-Shiʿr wa-l-ghināʾ*, 151–89; ʿĀdil Sulaymān Gamāl, ed., *Shiʿr al-Aḥwaṣ al-Anṣārī* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1970), 1–55; K. Petrāček, “Das Leben des Dichters al-Aḥwaṣ al-Anṣārī,” *Orientalia Pragensia* 7 (1970): 23–57.

<sup>114</sup> *Aghānī* 1:113 and 7:39 (the two accounts are identical, except for the use of *ḥulāq* in the first and *ubna* in the second); 1:139 and 14:167; 4:43.

<sup>115</sup> *Aghānī* 7:139.

<sup>116</sup> *Aghānī* 18:196–98, in two versions, and 198f.

<sup>117</sup> *Aghānī* 4:43. If the text is sound, *nākiḥ* must here have, unusually, the meaning *lūṭī*; it would be tempting to emend *zānī* to *zāniya*. Petrāček, “Leben,” 35, takes all three terms as referring to women, and translates “verlobte, verheiratete oder ehebrecherische,” but while the lexica support the meaning “married woman” for *nākiḥ*, I have found no lexical justification for his feminine interpretation of the other two terms.

portraying him as entering a mosque wearing two polished, saffron-dyed garments, bedaubed with saffron perfume and with a bundle of basil behind his ear is intended to imply *takhannuth* is quite unclear, although he is called a *mukhannath* explicitly once in the *Aghānī*—by the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik on the occasion of his pilgrimage (in 75/695), when he sermonized the Medinans and reproached them for their frivolity, illustrating his point with verses by al-Aḥwaṣ, whom he calls “your *mukhannath* and brother.”<sup>118</sup>

One anecdote, however, does testify quite explicitly to al-Aḥwaṣ’s *ubna*. During a stay with the caliph al-Walīd, he is said to have attempted to seduce the baker boys in the retinue of a fellow guest into having (active) intercourse with him (*yafʿalū bihi*); about to be exposed for this, he compounded his problem by attempting a diversionary tactic, inciting a disgruntled client of the guest to accuse the latter himself of sexual harassment. The truth came out, however, and the caliph sent al-Aḥwaṣ to Ibn Ḥazm, his *qādī* in Medina, with orders to give him a hundred lashes, pour oil on his head, and parade him in shame before the people.<sup>119</sup> Either at this time or somewhat later, Ibn Ḥazm, an inveterate enemy of al-Aḥwaṣ, went a step further and banished him to the Red Sea island of Dahlak, where the poet remained for something over five years, until pardoned by the caliph Yazīd II. The reason usually given for this banishment is not, however, al-Aḥwaṣ’s *ubna*, but his unwillingness to give up his practice of mentioning aristocratic ladies by name in his amatory verses.<sup>120</sup> Such behavior, in its challenge to society’s mores and the dignity of its members, was seen as symptomatic of a general profligacy which could then be readily fleshed out by accusations of sexual irregularity—*zinā* and *liwāṭ*, as well as *ubna*—whatever the truth of the latter. The suggestion of *takhannuth* belongs to another, but related range of objectionable activities, representing luxury, self-indulgence, and frivolity, and including the adoption of ostentatious dress and perfumes, wine-drinking, and music.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> *Aghānī* 4:51.

<sup>119</sup> *Aghānī* 4:43f. On the *bulus*, sacks on which offenders were set as a form of public humiliation, see Lane, s.v.

<sup>120</sup> *Aghānī* 4:43, 48, and 8:54. For further references and discussion, see Gamāl, *Shiʿr al-Aḥwaṣ*, 35ff., and Petráček, “Leben,” 41–49; on the Hijazi *tashbīb*, see Vadet, *L’Esprit courtois*, 102–12.

<sup>121</sup> Summed up by the word *lahw*. Besides his close association with Jamīla, al-Aḥwaṣ was closely tied with musical circles because of Maʿbad and Mālik’s musical settings of his *ghazal*, which contributed considerably to his celebrity.

#### GOVERNMENT PERSECUTION OF THE *MUKHANNATHŪN*

That there were sporadic attempts by the government to suppress these trends has been noted above. Sanctions against *mukhannathūn* in the time of the Prophet and the early caliphs seem to have been intended to safeguard the privacy of the realm of women—infringed upon in a different way by the *tashbīb* of al-Aḥwaṣ. Under the early Umayyads, the execution of Ibn Nughāsh and the bounty put on the heads of other *mukhannathūn* was, according to the extant reports, based on a perceived connection between cross-dressing and a lack of proper religious commitment. This persecution is attributed both to Muʿāwīya’s governor Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and to the latter’s brother Yaḥyā, later governor under ʿAbd al-Malik. While the latter attribution may be chronologically more plausible, the former is supported by other evidence for Marwān’s severity. The account of his drastic measures to stop Yaḥyā’s daughter’s too-public behavior, with al-Dalāl’s consequent flight to Mecca, has been noted above; elsewhere, the *Aghānī* claims that Muʿāwīya appointed Marwān and Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ as governor of Medina for alternate years, and contrasts the harshness of Marwān, under whom the (sexually) profligate<sup>122</sup> would flee the city, with the mildness of Saʿīd, under whom they would come back.<sup>123</sup>

This last statement is made in the context of an account of the *mukhannath* Find, a participant in Jamīla’s concert and a close friend of the poet Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt, many of whose verses he set to music.<sup>124</sup> Like al-Dalāl, Find acted as a go-between—specifically, he provided a space in his house for lovers’ trysts—and Ibn Qays composed some verses in appreciation of this service. According to the story in the *Aghānī*, Marwān, during one of his years out of office, was on his way to the mosque when he encountered Find; striking him with his staff, he quoted these verses by Ibn Qays, accused him of promoting immorality, and threatened him. Find turned and coolly replied, “Yes, you’re right about me! But, praise God, what an ugly ex-governor you are!” Marwān laughed, but added, “Enjoy while you can! It won’t be long before you see what I have in store for you!” (We hear nothing,

<sup>122</sup> *Ahl al-dīʿāra wa-l-fusūq*.

<sup>123</sup> *Aghānī* 16:59f.; cf. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:34f.

<sup>124</sup> On him, see the references in F. Rosenthal, *Humor in Early Islam* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1956), 8, n. 7. His name appears in the sources as both Find and Qand; Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī* 16:59, expresses a preference for Find.

however, of a sequel to this story.) Here once again it is the promotion of *heterosexual* immorality which occasions government intervention. About Find's own sexual proclivities we are told nothing.<sup>125</sup> What we do hear about is, as with other *mukhannathūn*, his charm and his ability to make people laugh. It is striking that he, as well as at least five other Medinan *mukhannathūn*, are included in a list in the *Fihrist* of nineteen buffoons (*baṭṭālūn*) about whom monographs had been written;<sup>126</sup> the most famous comics of this period, however, were not *mukhannathūn*.<sup>127</sup>

No mention is made of Find in our accounts of the bounty put on the *mukhannathūn*, whether by Marwān or by his brother Yaḥyā, and there seems to be no other evidence for persecution by the latter of either *mukhannathūn* or musicians. That Ṭuways went into permanent exile under either seems unlikely, particularly in view of the account referred to above of his reception of Yaḥyā's successor, the more indulgent Abān b. ʿUthmān.<sup>128</sup> Concerning the attitude of Abān's successor, Hishām b. Ismāʿīl al-Makhzūmī (83–87/702–6), I have found no information. Hishām was ʿAbd al-Malik's last governor of Medina, and was replaced only when al-Walīd came to the throne, by ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (87–93/706–12), who is described as being at this time rather a *bon vivant* and devotee of

poetry and even music (in contrast to his later ascetic piety as caliph). These years seem to represent the heyday of poetry and music in the Hijaz, and the first hint of trouble comes only under ʿUmar's successor, ʿUthmān b. Ḥayyān (93–96/712–15). When the latter arrived in Medina, we are told, some prominent citizens urged him to put an end to the rampant "corruption" by purifying the city of "singing and fornication"; he responded by giving the people involved in these activities three days to leave town. At the eleventh hour, the eminently respectable—but music-loving—Ibn Abī ʿAtīq, who had been away, returned and heard the news from Sallāma al-Zarqāʾ, one of the city's best-loved singers. Going immediately to the governor, he convinced him to admit Sallāma, who impressed him first with her piety, then her skill at Qurʾānic recitation, and finally was permitted to sing, at which ʿUthmān was so delighted that he dropped his banishment order.<sup>129</sup>

ʿUthmān's original order was directed against singing and fornication, and nothing is said about the *mukhannathūn*. In contrast, probably about the same time, al-Walīd's governor of Mecca, Nāfiʿ b. ʿAlqama al-Kinānī, "took stringent measures against singing, singers, and date-wine, and issued a proclamation against the *mukhannathūn*."<sup>130</sup> Only two of the latter, Ibn Surayj and his pupil al-Gharīd, are mentioned by name; Ibn Surayj seems to have played a game of cat and mouse with the governor, and escaped serious reprisals (he apparently died soon thereafter), while al-Gharīd is said to have fled to Yemen, where he spent the rest of his life. Although we have no indication of a wider *mukhannathūn* "community" in Mecca, the relevant anecdotes about both these musicians conform to the image of the *mukhannath* we have seen in Medina. Ibn Surayj is described as wearing dyed clothing and playing with a locust which he had on a string; when someone chided him for this, he retorted, "What harm does it to do people if I color my garments and play with my locust?" To the rejoinder that his "immoral

<sup>125</sup> The entry on him in the rather mangled *Mukhtār kitāb al-lahw wa-l-malāḥī* of Ibn Khurradādhbih edited by Khalīfē (p. 150) may refer to these, but is unclear in its present textual state.

<sup>126</sup> Al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), 435. Also included are Nawmat al-Ḍuḥā and Hibatallāh, known from Jamīla's concert; Ibn al-Shūnīzī (?), who has an entry, in the form "Ṭarīfa b. al-Shūtarī," in Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Mukhtār* (149f.), between the entries for al-Dalāl and Find; and Abū l-Ḥurr al-Madīnī, referred to as a Medinan *mukhannath* and marriage broker by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:105, and presumably identical to the "Abū l-Khazz" mentioned in both Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Mukhtār* (p. 144) and al-ʿAbī's chapter of *mukhannathūn* jokes (*Nahr al-durr* 5:282). Of the other *mukhannathūn* included in Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Mukhtār* (pp. 149–51, 159), Šālīḥ b. Zuhayr has been mentioned above (n. 68); the rest—Sajjiyya, Shabīb, Šaʿtar, and the Meccan Madār—do not appear in other sources I have consulted.

<sup>127</sup> The most famous of all was Ashʿab, the accounts of whom constitute the core of Rosenthal's *Humor in Early Islam*.

<sup>128</sup> For the common depiction of Abān as rather simple, see Rosenthal, *Humor*, 21, 53, 95.

<sup>129</sup> See note 56 above.

<sup>130</sup> *Aghānī* 2:142, 11:19–22. Confusion reigns with regard to the dates of Nāfiʿ's tenure as governor. The *Aghānī* account calls him al-Walīd's governor and has him communicating with al-Ḥajjāj (d. 95/714); al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* 1:302, 393, makes him governor of both Mecca and Medina (certainly erroneously) under ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 86/705); E. von Zambaur, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam* (Hanover: Heinz Lafaie, 1927), 19, lists him as governor of Mecca under Sulaymān in 96/715.

songs" led people into temptation, he replied with a song which left his antagonist speechless with delight.<sup>131</sup> Al-Gharīd is depicted conveying verses between Meccan poets and aristocrats, a kind of "go-between" activity not directed toward marriage, but probably only possible because of his *mukhannath* status.<sup>132</sup> Al-Gharīd's erotic interests were apparently, like al-Dalāl's, in males (although whether he was a *ḥalaqī*—as seems probable—or a *lūṭī* is unspecified), at least according to one anecdote in the *Aghānī*. Invited to join a group on an outing, he was attracted to a young man (*ghulam*) and asked the group to speak to him about meeting with him privately; when the young man agreed, the two withdrew behind a rock. When al-Gharīd had "fulfilled his need," the young man rejoined the group, and al-Gharīd began to pelt the rock with pebbles, explaining that, as on the Day of Judgment the rock would testify against them, he was trying to "wound" this testimony (*ajraḥu shahādahā*).<sup>133</sup>

Al-Gharīd and al-Dalāl are the only two *mukhannathūn* from the pre-ʿAbbāsīd period for whom we have explicit anecdotal evidence of homosexual activity. The *Aghānī* offers one further anecdote which would seem to make this linkage, but whose implications are unclear.<sup>134</sup> A *mukhannath* from Mecca named Mukhkha is said to have come to al-Dalāl in Medina and asked him to introduce him to (*dullinī ʿalā*) one of the *mukhannathūn* of Medina, whom he could beguile, tease, and then seduce (*ukāyiduhu wa-umāziḥuhu thumma ujādhibuhu*).<sup>135</sup> Al-Dalāl replied, "I have just the person for you!" and described a neighbor of his,

whom he would find at that moment in the mosque, performing his prayers, "for show."<sup>136</sup> In fact, however, this man was the police chief of Medina, Khaytham b. ʿIrāk b. Mālik.<sup>137</sup> Finding Khaytham in the midst of his prayers, Mukhkha told him to hurry up and finish, addressing him in the feminine.<sup>138</sup> Taken aback, Khaytham exclaimed, "Glory to God (*subḥān Allāh*)!" Mukhkha retorted, "May you sleep (*sabaḥṭa*) in a pinching shackle (?)"<sup>139</sup> Finish up, so I can talk with you for a while!" But when Khaytham finished his prayer, he ordered the *mukhannath* seized, given a hundred stripes, and imprisoned. Sexual activity between *mukhannathūn* seems to be clearly implied by this anecdote, a situation I have not encountered anywhere else in the literature, either pre-ʿAbbāsīd or ʿAbbāsīd; one could perhaps imagine here a sort of reverse *bidāl*, that is, taking turns for the sake of enjoying the passive (rather than active) role, but the historicity of the anecdote is so problematical that it is perhaps best discounted altogether.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>136</sup> "*Li-yurāʿiya l-nās*," clearly a reference to the assumed irreligiosity of the *mukhannathūn*.

<sup>137</sup> Khaytham was *ṣāhib al-shurṭa*, we are told, under Ziyād b. ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥārithī; the latter was governor of Medina from 133/750 to 141/758, according to al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* 7:459, 511.

<sup>138</sup> "*ʿAjilī bi-ṣalātiki lā ʿallā Allāh ʿalayki*." I have seen no other examples of this use of the feminine among the *mukhannathūn* in the pre-ʿAbbāsīd period, although later it became not uncommon.

<sup>139</sup> "*Sabaḥṭa fī jāmiʿa qarrāṣa*." Clearly some sarcastic pun is intended here, but the meaning is obscure. In the parallel version of the anecdote in the *Muwaffaqiyyāt* of al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (see next note), the phrase is "*Sabaḥṭa bi-umm al-zinā fī jāmiʿa qamila*," which is followed by an intrusive gloss, explaining that "*jāmiʿa*" means "shackle" (*qayd*), and "*qamila*" means "being imprisoned so long that one's shackle (reading *qayd* for *qadd*) becomes lousy." According to Lane, s.v. *ghull*, the latter term, a synonym for *jāmiʿa*, was used metonymically for "wife" (that is, "ball and chain"), while *ghull qamil* referred to "a woman of evil disposition." *Sabaḥṭa* may mean "swim," "gallop," "burrow," and other things, as well as "sleep."

<sup>140</sup> Al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, *al-Akhbār al-Muwaffaqiyyāt*, ed. S. M. al-ʿĀnī (Baghdād: Maṭbaʿat al-ʿĀnī, 1972), 32f., has a garbled version of this anecdote in which the Medinan joker is not al-Dalāl but Muzabbid, a well-known Medinan comic similar to Ashʿab and nowhere else associated with *takhan-nuth* (see Rosenthal, *Humor*, 14). The placement of the story under an ʿAbbāsīd governor is too late for either al-Dalāl or Muzabbid.

<sup>131</sup> *Aghānī* 1:97f.

<sup>132</sup> *Aghānī* 3:101f.; cf. 2:133.

<sup>133</sup> *Aghānī* 2:128f. "*Jaraḥa*" means both "to wound" and "to impugn the probity of a witness."

<sup>134</sup> *Aghānī* 4:64.

<sup>135</sup> *Kayd al-nisāʾ*, "the guile of women," is a standard cliché, based in part on the statement of Qurʾān 12:28, in the context of the story of Potiphar's wife, "*inna kaydakunna ʿazīm*"; see al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb*, 305 (*kayd al-nisāʾ*). The third form of this root, *kāyada*, with verbal noun *kiyād*, seems equally stereotypical for *mukhannathūn*, as indicated by Ḥamza, *Durra*, 61, where "*kiyād mukhannath*" is included in a list of clichés created by settled Arabic speakers on the model of the Bedouins' animal clichés. Similarly, the ʿAbbāsīd poet Abū l-ʿAtāhiya, reproached in his youth for *takhan-nuth*, and in particular for taking up the *zāmila* (a kind of *ṭabl* or drum) of the *mukhannathūn*, justified himself by saying "I want to learn their *kiyād* and memorize their speech"; see *Aghānī* 3:122–24.

## CULMINATION OF THE PERSECUTION

Of considerably greater interest is another anecdote concerning al-Dalāl, and indeed all the *mukhannathūn* of his generation, which describes a particularly severe persecution to which they were subjected and seems to explain the rather abrupt end to their prominence and influence in Medina. Unfortunately, as with so many of the stories recounted above, this most widely reported of all the *mukhannathūn* anecdotes appears in a great variety of versions, which differ not only on the nature and scope of the persecution, but also on its occasion and rationale; at the same time, however, the different accounts provide numerous details which help further to fill out our picture of the *mukhannathūn* at this time.

In the *Aghānī*, Abū l-Faraj juxtaposes a number of these accounts, but specifies two very similar versions among them as being the most reliable. According to the first, the caliph Sulaymān was in camp in the desert one night, enjoying the company of a slave girl. He ordered her to assist him in his ablutions, but she failed to notice when he gestured to her to pour the water. Looking up, he saw that she was listening intently to a man's singing drifting in from the camp. He noted the voice, and the verses, and the next day brought up the subject of song with his companions, feigning a genuine interest in it. Their comments quickly led him to the identity of the previous night's singer, one Samīr al-Aylī, whom he summoned and interrogated. He then pronounced that "[t]he he-camel brays, and the she-camel comes running; the male goat cries, and the female goat submits herself (?);<sup>141</sup> the male pigeon coos, and the female struts; a man sings, and a woman swoons (*taribat*)," and had the singer castrated. When he then asked him where this business of singing originated, he replied, "In Medina, among the *mukhannathūn*; they are the best and most highly skilled at it." The caliph then sent an order to his governor in

Medina, Ibn Ḥazm al-Anṣārī, to castrate (*akhṣī*) all the *mukhannathūn* singers there, which he did.<sup>142</sup>

In this version, the *mukhannathūn* were punished simply because they were musicians. The grotesque choice of punishment, meted out equally to the non-*mukhannath* Samīr,<sup>143</sup> is a response, if not an entirely clear one, to the nature of the offense: music rouses women's passions and is thus a moral threat to society. The implication that the caliph was acting out of personal jealousy over his own slave girl is made explicit in Abū l-Faraj's other preferred version, which gives the verses of Samīr's song as follows:

Secluded, she heard my voice, and it kept her  
awake

Through the long night to a wearisome dawn,  
Her neck veiled by two swathes of saffron,

With green ornaments on her breast,  
On a night of full moon, her bed companion  
unable to say

Whether her face or the moon shed more light.  
Were she free, she would come to me on feet

So delicate they would almost shatter from  
her tread.

Needless to say, the description in the verses matched the slave girl; Sulaymān, furious with jealousy, imprisoned the singer and threatened the girl with her life. She protested that she had spent her entire life in the Hijaz until being purchased by Sulaymān, and would have had no opportunity to become acquainted with anyone locally (apparently somewhere in Syria). Samīr when summoned also protested his innocence, and Sulaymān was finally convinced. He was unwilling to let Samīr go free, however (*lam taṭib nafsuhu bi-takhliyatihī sawiyyan*), so he had him castrated and ordered the same for the *mukhannathūn*.<sup>144</sup>

Other versions also stress Sulaymān's jealousy, and some have nothing to say about the *mukhannathūn* at all. Such is the case in the *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, which gives one version which ends with the singer's castration, and another in which even he gets off with a warning.<sup>145</sup> Other sources omit the story of the singer, and have

<sup>141</sup> *Shakarāt*, apparently related to *shakr*, "female pudenda"; see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* 4:2307. The reading is confirmed by a parallel in Ghars al-Niʿma, *al-Hafawāt al-nādira* (Damascus, 1967), 89–91. Other versions substitute forms of the verb *istahramat*, "to desire the male": Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* 6:66–69; ps. -Jāhīz, *al-Maḥāsin wa-l-aḍḍād*, ed. G. Van Vloten (Leiden: Brill, 1898), 292–94; Ḥamza, *Durra*, 186–88; Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Jamhara* 1:437f.; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 676; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ* 1:258f. This phrase is lacking altogether in the abbreviated version in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil* 1:393, and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* 6:24.

<sup>142</sup> *Aghānī* 4:60f.

<sup>143</sup> In no version of the story is he ever identified as a *mukhannath*.

<sup>144</sup> *Aghānī* 4:61f.

<sup>145</sup> Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd* 6:24, 50, 66–69. Cf., respectively, al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil* 1:393, and al-Zubayr b. Bakkar, *al-Akhbār al-Muwaffaqiyyāt*, 191f.

only the castration of the *mukhannathūn*. According to one version in Ḥamza al-Ḥṣāhānī, this was done because "they had become many in Medina, and were ruining the women for the men (*afsadū l-nisāʾ ʿalā l-rijāl*);<sup>146</sup> similarly, another version in the *Aghānī*, which names the caliph as al-Walīd, says that he took action when informed that the women of Quraysh were visited by the *mukhannathūn* in Medina, despite the Prophet's explicit prohibition.<sup>147</sup> The *Aghānī* also records a particularly lurid version, on the authority of Muṣʿab al-Zubayrī, who claimed to know best why al-Dalāl—specifically—was castrated. After arranging a marriage, according to Muṣʿab, al-Dalāl would convince the bride that her sexual excitement at the prospect of the wedding night was excessive and would only disgust her husband, and then he would offer to calm her down by having sexual intercourse with her first. He would then go to the groom, make the same point, and offer himself, passively, to cool him down as well. The outraged Sulaymān, here again called "jealous," *gharūr*, but in a general sense, wrote to have *all* the *mukhannathūn* castrated, saying, "They are admitted to the women of Quraysh and corrupt them."<sup>148</sup> Here, even with explicit testimony to al-Dalāl's homosexual behavior, it is the morals of the women which are of concern.

There is considerable variation among versions even with regard to the identity of the caliph and the governor, the former appearing sometimes as al-Walīd, ʿUmar II, or Hishām, and the latter as ʿUthmān b. Ḥayyān,<sup>149</sup> although Sulaymān and Ibn Ḥazm are by far the most frequently named. The singer and the slavegirl are also variously named.<sup>150</sup> One fairly common addition to the story, which serves as the basis for its inclusion in several of our *adab* sources, absolves Sulaymān of responsibility for the castration by claim-

ing that what he actually wrote to the governor was "make a register (*aḥṣī*) of the *mukhannathūn*"; but the spluttering pen of the amanuensis added a dot to the *ḥāʾ* so that it read "*ikhṣī*," "castrate." Some of these sources let the governor off the hook as well, reporting that he questioned the reading but was assured that the dot "looked like a date," or "was as big as the star Canopus." These stories perhaps imply that Sulaymān's action was viewed by some as unexpectedly brutal.<sup>151</sup>

Several sources name some or all of the victims (besides al-Dalāl, who is almost always included). A number of these also report a series of quips said to have been pronounced by them on the occasion. The fullest version of these statements is offered by Ḥamza, whose list is as follows:

Tuways: "This is simply a circumcision which we must undergo again."

al-Dalāl: "Or rather the Greater Circumcision!"

Nasīm al-Saḥar ("Breeze of the Dawn"): "With castration I have become a *mukhannath* in truth!"

Nawmat al-Ḍuḥā: "Or rather we have become women in truth!"

Bard al-Fuʿād: "We have been spared the trouble of carrying around a spout for urine."

Zill al-Shajar ("Shade Under the Trees"): "What would we do with an unused weapon, anyway?"<sup>152</sup>

<sup>151</sup> The most extensive discussion of this "*taṣḥīf*" version is in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* 1:121f. It also appears, in one form or another, in al-Jahshiyārī, *K. al-Wuzarāʾ wa-l-kuttāb*, 54; al-Ṣūlī, *Adab al-kuttāb* (Cairo: al-Salaḥiyya, 1341), 59; Ḥamza, *Durra*, 186–88; *Aghānī* 4:61; Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī, *Sharḥ mā yaqaʿu fīhi l-taṣḥīf wal-taḥrīf* 1:54–56; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 51; al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī, *Muntakhab*, 27; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ* 1:251, 258f.; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Akhhbār al-nisāʾ*, 83–88.

<sup>152</sup> Ḥamza, *Durra*, 186–88, reproduced by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *Jamhara* 1:437f., and al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ* 1:251. Ibn Khurraḍādhbih, *Mukhtār*, 149, attributes the first two of these sayings to, respectively, Ṭarīfa (or Ṭarīqa) b. al-Shūtārī (on whom see note 126 above) and al-Dalāl, and names as other victims Bard al-Fuʿād and Nawmat al-Ḍuḥā. Since, according to Ibn Khallikān, Tuways had died three years before this event (see note 46 above), it seems likely that in Ḥamza's account his name has replaced that of the less well-known Ṭarīfa/Ṭarīqa; this supposition is supported by the version in the *Aghānī* 4:61, which claims that altogether nine *mukhannathūn* were castrated, including al-Dalāl, Ṭarīf, and

<sup>146</sup> Ḥamza, *Durra*, 186, repeated in al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ* 1:258.

<sup>147</sup> *Aghānī* 4:62.

<sup>148</sup> *Aghānī* 4:59f.

<sup>149</sup> See, e.g., al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* 1:121f.; *Aghānī* 4:62; al-Jahshiyārī, *K. al-Wuzarāʾ wa-l-kuttāb*, ed. M. al-Saqqa et al. (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 2nd ed., 1980), 54.

<sup>150</sup> Samīr also appears as Sinān; "al-Aylī" is sometimes "al-Ubullī"; the slavegirl is called al-Dhalfāʾ or ʿAwān. See Ibn Khurraḍādhbih, *Mukhtār*, 149; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd* 6:66–69; ps.-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Maḥāsin wa-l-aḥdād*, 292–94; *Aghānī* 4:60; Ghars al-Niʿma, *Hafawāt*, 89–91; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Akhhbār al-nisāʾ* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, n.d.), 83–88.

The last two statements imply that what the *mukhannathūn* underwent was *jibāb*, the more drastic form of castration in which the penis was truncated.<sup>153</sup> They serve to stress the *mukhannathūn*'s lack of sexual interest in women, while the two preceding statements identify the essential psychological motivation behind *takhannuth* as gender identification with women. The flippancy of tone in these quips is of course characteristic of the *mukhannath* persona, and also points to the singular inappropriateness of the punishment, despite its savagery; significantly, there is no positive reference to sexual orientation, as opposed to gender identity.

Our sources offer few details about the aftermath of this traumatic event. One much-repeated anecdote has Ibn Abī ʿAtīq reacting to news of the castration of al-Dalāl by insisting that (whatever one might say against him) he had done a fine rendition of some verses by al-Aḥwaṣ.<sup>154</sup> According to another story, both Badrāqus, the physician who performed the castration, and his assistant were part of a group who set out from Mecca at some later date and were offered hospitality en route by Ḥabīb Nawmat al-Ḍuḥā. When the assistant asked Ḥabīb his identity, he replied, "Do you not recognize me after having 'circumcized' me?" Taken aback, the assistant avoided the food offered by Ḥabīb for fear of poisoning.<sup>155</sup> A third account, dependent on the "*taṣḥīf*" version of the castration story, reports that the caliph Sulaymān was grieved by the accidental castration of the charming al-Dalāl, and had him secretly brought to his court. When the caliph asked him how he was, al-Dalāl replied, "Now that you've truncated (*jababta*) me in front, do you want to truncate me in back?" Sulaymān laughed, and ordered him to sing. Unable to decide whether he was more charmed by his wit or his singing, the caliph kept him

with him a month, rewarded him richly, and sent him back to the Hijaz.<sup>156</sup>

What is more striking than these few stories is the general silence in our sources on the Medinese *mukhannathūn* after this event, in sharp contrast to the wealth of anecdotes for the few decades before it. Whatever the historicity of the details of the account of their castration, this silence supports the assumption that they did suffer a major blow sometime around the caliphate of Sulaymān.<sup>157</sup> The individual victims presumably lived out their lives, and it is not improbable that al-Dalāl, for example, may have continued to sing, to act as a go-between, and to pursue boys, as in the one anecdote we have about him which is datable after this time.<sup>158</sup> But none of the next generation of singers, which included such major figures as Mālik b. Abī l-Samḥ, Ibn ʿĀṣisha, Ibn Muḥriz, Yūnus al-Kātib, ʿUmar al-Wādī, and Ḥakam al-Wādī, are ever referred to as *mukhannathūn*. An anecdote about Ḥakam al-Wādī suggests that, while the connection between the *mukhannathūn* and music was not entirely broken, they had suffered a severe loss of prestige. Like several other Hijazi musicians, Ḥakam emigrated to Iraq, where he enjoyed the patronage of the dissolute Muḥammad b. Abī l-ʿAbbās, nephew of the ʿAbbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr (136–58/754–75). Muḥammad was particularly appreciative of Ḥakam's songs in *hazaj*, a style he had only begun to cultivate late in his life. Ḥakam's son, however, disapproved of this, and reproached his father, saying, "In your old age, will you take to singing in the style of the *mukhannathūn*?" But his father replied, "Be quiet, ignorant boy! I sang in the heavy (*thaqīl*) style for sixty years, and never made more than my daily bread; but in the last few years I have sung songs in *hazaj* and made more money than you'd ever seen before!"<sup>159</sup>

Another Hijazi singer who made his way to ʿAbbāsīd Iraq in his old age was Mālik b. Abī l-Samḥ, who was patronized briefly by Sulaymān b. ʿAlī, uncle of the caliph al-Saffāḥ (132–36/749–54) and the latter's

Ḥabīb Nawmat al-Ḍuḥā. According to the *Aghānī*, one of the victims simply enunciated the benediction, appropriate to a circumcision, "*salima l-khātīn wa-l-makhtūn*." See also Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī, *Taṣḥīf* 1:54–56; al-Ṣūlī, *Adab al-kutāb*, 59; al-Jurjānī, *Mukhtār*, 27, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Akhbār al-nisāʾ*, 83–88.

<sup>153</sup> See A. Cheikh Moussa, "Ġāḥiṣ et les eunuques ou la confusion du même et de l'autre," *Arabica* 29 (1982): 184–214, esp. 192f.

<sup>154</sup> See note 79 above. In most versions, Ibn Abī ʿAtīq makes his comment in the midst of his prayers in the mosque, and the intention is clearly to show how he combined piety with appreciation for music.

<sup>155</sup> *Aghānī* 4:61. A year or two after the operation, the narrator adds, Ḥabīb's beard began to fall out.

<sup>156</sup> *Aghānī* 4:66.

<sup>157</sup> Sulaymān's punishment of al-Aḥwaṣ would seem to represent a similar move on the caliph's part, although I have not seen the two measures mentioned together in any of the sources.

<sup>158</sup> At the time of Hishām's pilgrimage, in 106/725; see p. 684 above. The improbability of the Mukhkha anecdote, which has al-Dalāl still alive in ʿAbbāsīd times, has been pointed out above, note 140.

<sup>159</sup> *Aghānī* 6:64.

governor of lower Iraq, before returning to Medina. While staying in Basra, we are told, Mālik met ʿAjjāja, the most famous of the *mukhannathūn* there. ʿAjjāja insisted in singing for Mālik a song he had learned from another *mukhannath*, accompanying himself with the *duff*. The song turned out to be Mālik's own, and Mālik did not know whether to be appalled or amused, but kept repeating, "Who sang this to you? Who passed it on to you from me?"<sup>160</sup> This story should not be interpreted to suggest that *mukhannath* musicians represented a phenomenon in late Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid Iraq comparable to that earlier in Medina. ʿAjjāja may have been the most famous *mukhannath* in Basra, but to my knowledge he is mentioned nowhere in our sources except in this single anecdote. As with the later Hijazi musicians, none of the indigenous Iraqi musicians known to us, beginning with Hunayn al-Ḥīrī, are referred to as *mukhannathūn*. In fact, the only significant figure in Iraq in this period whom I have found linked to *takhannuth* is the late Umayyad governor Khālid al-Qaṣrī (105–20/723–38). According to a number of malicious, and highly improbable, reports in the *Aghānī*, this man, who spent his youth in Medina, is identified with a certain Khālid al-Khirrī, a *mukhannath* who associated with the Medinese *mukhannathūn* and musicians and used to convey messages between the poet ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa and various aristocratic ladies in the city.<sup>161</sup> Yet even were we to grant these reports some credence, no trace of such frivolity is to be found in al-Qaṣrī's stern governorship of Iraq, where, we are told, he issued a decree forbidding singing.<sup>162</sup>

Reports about *mukhannathūn* begin to appear again with any frequency in our sources only in the high ʿAbbāsid period, and then primarily in Baghdad. But by then their situation had changed rather radically. While we do hear occasionally of *mukhannath* musicians at court, none achieved sufficient celebrity even to have their names preserved. They continued to play the *duff*, but became associated also with a particular kind of drum and with the *ṭunbūr*, a long-necked

lute.<sup>163</sup> More than their music, however, it was their wit that now defined their persona, as illustrated most clearly by the career of ʿAbbāda, the son of a cook at the court of al-Maʾmūn (198–218/813–33), who served as a kind of court jester, with some interruptions, for over forty years. In no way a musician, ʿAbbāda was also less a wit than a buffoon, whose stock in trade was savage mockery, extravagant burlesque, and low sexual humor, much of the latter turning on his flaunting of his passive homosexuality.<sup>164</sup> All these characteristics were henceforth to be associated with the figure of the *mukhannath*, and offer a considerable contrast with the earlier situation in the Hijaz.

An analysis of the nature of this change, and its relation to differing social conditions in Iraq, or processes of social change there, must be reserved for a future study of the *mukhannathūn* in the ʿAbbāsid period. Certainly a crucial factor was the sudden emergence of (active) homoerotic sentiment as an acceptable, and indeed fashionable, subject for prestige literature, as represented most notably by the poetry of Abū Nuwās. Increased public awareness of homosexuality, which was to persist through the following centuries, seems to have altered perceptions of gender in such a way that "effeminacy," while continuing to be distinguished from (passive) homosexual activity or desire, was no longer seen as independent from it; and the stigma attached to the latter seems correspondingly to have been directed at the former as well, so that the *mukhannathūn* were never again to enjoy the status attained by their predecessors in Umayyad Medina.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>163</sup> See note 82 above. E. Neubauer, *Musiker am Hof der Frühen Abbāsiden*, 38, notes the connection between the fast *hazaj* rhythm and the *ṭunbūr*, which had little resonance.

<sup>164</sup> For examples of ʿAbbāda's humor, see the sections on *mukhannathūn* and on *baghghāʿūn* in al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr* 5:277–92, 302–6.

<sup>165</sup> The evidence for *mukhannathūn*, not only in the ʿAbbāsid period, but also in subsequent periods up to the present day remains to be investigated. A well-known nineteenth-century reference is E. W. Lane's description in *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: John Murray, 1860 [Dover reprint, New York, 1973]), 381f., of the transvestite dancers of Cairo called *khawals* and *ginks*. The only significant study of contemporary *mukhannathūn* in the Middle East is Unni Wikan's controversial article on the *khanīth* of Oman, "Man Becomes Woman: Transsexualism in Oman As a Key to Gender Roles," *Man* 12 (1977): 304–19.

<sup>160</sup> *Aghānī* 4:169f.

<sup>161</sup> *Aghānī* 19:55f.

<sup>162</sup> *Aghānī* 1:160. Al-Qaṣrī was also governor of Mecca for a time, under either ʿAbd al-Malik or al-Walīd; see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Khālid b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qaṣrī." I have found no reports on his relations with musicians or *mukhannathūn* during his tenure there.