FIFTH CHAPTER
TRANSLATION OF TEXTS

The arrangement of the texts was determined by the desire of having a complete and continuous translation of the long biography of Ash'ab from the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* 17.82-105. This translation is given the first place. It covers nos. 1-100. It is followed by the other Ash'ab passages from *Agh.* (nos. 101-115). The remaining texts (nos. 116-161) then follow according to the approximate chronological sequence of the works from which they are derived.

A story which occurs in different works has of course been translated only once in this book, on its first occurrence according to the arrangement just mentioned. References to other works in which the same story is found are added in footnotes in the appropriate places. The small variations which the stories underwent at the hands of successive authors often are quite interesting, because they reveal different ideas as to the best technique of storytelling. This, however, is a matter which can be savored only by those who know Arabic and which can rarely be explained through the medium of translation. Those variations, therefore, are as a rule not discussed here.

1). Another melody:

I am calling our neighbors—they should come,
And we'll finish the matter or come to an agreement.
It is as if there is upon my liver a sore,
From being wary of separation, which will not cool.

The words are by Kuthayyir 2), and the music by Ash'ab, who is known as Ash'ab the Greedy. Second *thaqil* with the middle finger 3). For the second verse, there exists a tune by Ibn Jāmī' 4), in the first *thaqil* with the third finger, taken over from Ḥabash 5).

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1) Cf. also Nuwayrī.
5) He appears quite often in *Agh.* as a transmitter of songs, but nothing else seems to be known about him.
Ash‘ab’s Biography

He is Ash‘ab b. Jubayr. His given name was Shu‘ayb, and his kunyah Abū l-‘Alā’.

His mother was called Umm al-Khalandaj 1), or rather Umm Jamil. She was a client of Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr 2). Her given name was Ḥumaydah 3).

His father had participated in the revolt of al-Mukhtār b. Abī ‘Ubayd. Muṣ‘ab had taken him prisoner and beheaded him, saying: “You revolt against me, even though you are my client?” 4)

Ash‘ab grew up in Medina in the ménage 5) of the family of Abū ‘Ishālī. His education and guardianship were in the hands of ‘Ā’ishah bint ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān 6).

2 7). Ash‘ab is reported to have stated that his mother caused quarrels among the wives of the Prophet and that she committed adultery. (Because of her being an adulteress), her hair was cut off, and she was led around (in public. While she was being led around), she was calling out (all the time): ‘Whoever sees me

1) The form of the name is uncertain. Agh. has here al-Kh-l-n-d-j. Agh. 6.144 (cf. below, p. 38, fn. 1) has Umm al-Khalandaj. Since the last syllable appears to rhyme there with azwāj, the final 7 at least would seem to be established. A form Umm al-Jalandaḥ might be suggested on the strength of Lisān al-‘Arab 3.350, where jalandaḥ is listed as meaning ‘a big and fat man.’ On the other hand, Lisān al-‘Arab 3.64 also has ḥulunduṣyah meaning ‘strong camels.’

2) This daughter of the caliph Abū Bakr was married to az-Zubayr and thus connected with the Zubayrids to whom so much of the Ash‘ab story relates. She was the mother of ʿAbdallāh b. az-Zubayr, and she died about the same time as her son, in October 692, cf., for instance, adh-Dhahabi, Taʾrikh al-islām 3.133-7 (Cairo 1367 ff.); Ibn Ḥajar, Tahdhib 12.397.

3) According to Taʾrikh Baghdād, her given name was Ja•dah, and her kunyah was either Umm Hamīdah or Umm Ḥumaydah. Dhahabi, Mizān, and Ibn Ḥajar, Lisān, who depend on the Taʾrikh Baghdād, call Ash‘ab the son of Hamidah or Umm Ḥumaydah. Cf. below, no. 26.

4) Muṣ‘ab, another son of az-Zubayr and half-brother of ʿAbdallāh, lost his life one year before the latter’s death. He subdued the revolt of al-Mukhtār who was killed in April 687. Cf. also below, no. 5.

5) Diwān, in this context, can hardly mean anything but ‘household, ménage.’ However, the text may not be correct. Nuwayrī has dār ‘houses.’

6) She is mentioned among the daughters of the caliph (cf. Ibn Kathīr 7.218) and appears as the bride of SaʿId b. al-ʿĀṣ b. SaʿId b. al-ʿĀṣ (cf. Agh. 10.55), but it seems that she was not of sufficient importance to rate a biography of her own.

7) Cf. below, no. 9; Nuwayrī. For the widespread custom of leading adulteresses and other criminals around on animals, cf., for instance, W. R. Halliday, The Greek Questions of Plutarch 43 f. (Oxford 1928).