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common among later classical authors, and their post-classical imitators is the detailed commentary which is appended to poems. This is sometimes necessary because the poem is couched in deliberately difficult language and employs complex figures of speech ; often, however, it is a vehicle for the display of erudition.

Panegyric on the Prophet and his Companions is a conventional exercise among Muslim poets, and there is a common fund of figures of speech from which the poet may draw. The Prophet is frequently compared to a full moon, and his Companions to its stars ; he is a lion and they are the lion-cubs ; he is a paragon of martial virtue, and they the paladins who uphold him. One of the earliest of these panegyrics was composed by Ḥassān ibn Thābit, the Prophet's personal bard. Here the Prophet is compared to a light which shines on the whole world ; his Companions are ' The Helpers ' who are with him in every hour, bearing witness.

The elegy on Muḥammad Thanbu at f.111.b, para. 10, closely follows the classical type. The figures of speech which occur in this elegy—' the lightning of (his) coming ' ; the rain-bearing ' east wind . . . of good tidings ' ; the ' rainless lightning, with a sterile west wind ' are all echoes from classical odes and fragments which have been repeated immemorially by the Arabian poets.

'Abdullāh's major literary work is the *TW*, which is largely a collection of his own *qaṣīdas*. In these and in particular in his well-known *qaṣīda* in *jīm* [1] his dependence on the classical convention can be most clearly seen. The odes follow successfully a pattern which became fixed, at the latest, during the century before the birth of the Prophet. It is in his ability to follow this pattern that the merit of the poet lies, and 'Abdullāh is thus justly held in high regard by the Muslims of Northern Nigeria.

[1] *TW* (A) p. 13, (B) p. 13, ' The ode rhyming in " j " '.

NOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

THE ' ARABIAN TAILOR ', HENRY WILD

The British orientalist, not least the British Arabist, has some odd and unexpected strains in his intellectual ancestry, and one of these ancestors, if the expression may be used, is Henry Wild, the so-called ' Arabian tailor '.

He is mentioned by August Müller in the preface to his monumental edition of Ibn abī Uṣaibi'ah,[1] and by John Mousley of Balliol College, Oxford, in his *Abdollatiphi Bagdadensis vita*, from Ibn abī Uṣaibi'ah, published at Oxford in 1808. Mousley, still writing in Latin in the old-fashioned way, says : ' *Denique in eadem Bibliotheca* (sc. the Bodleian) *adservatur codex manuscriptus recentioris aevi, Osaibae (sic) opus integrum, exceptis quinque sectionibus prioribus, continens, a Wildio Anglo exaratus, qui ex collatione duorum MSS Pocock. 356 et Hunt. 171, conflatus esse videtur* '. In the second volume of the Bodleian Catalogue there is indeed a substantial amount about him. II, 131, gives ' *Henricus Wild, Norvicensis* ' (i.e. of Norwich). A substantial number of works were copied by him, and these transcripts are still in the Bodleian. II, 384, states that a short work, or rather section, of Bukhārī, dealing with the celebrated Night-Journey of Muḥammad, was translated and published by Wild in 1734. This translation must be very rare. It is not, it seems, in the British Museum. It is said to have been dedicated to a Mr. Mackrel of Norwich, presumably a friend and patron of Wild.

But more particularly, at II, 557, of the Bodleian Catalogue a short notice of Wild is given and reference is made to Chalmers's *Biographical dictionary*, where the facts of his life are treated more fully. Chalmers's *Biographical dictionary* is, of course, antiquated. It appeared in 1817, and derived most of its information about Wild from a letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1755. The information thus given was taken over by the Rev. Hugh James Rose, B.D., author of a *New general biographical dictionary*, published in 1848, and also by the editors of the original *Biographie universelle*. Here the transmission seems to have stopped. The *Nouvelle Biographie universelle* knows nothing of Henry Wild, and our own *Dictionary of national biography* has no notice.

Yet he was clearly a remarkable man. Born at Norwich about 1684, he received the usual elementary education at the grammar school there. He was then apprenticed to a tailor for seven years, and worked as a journeyman, according to the writer of the notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for seven years more. At this time an illness prevented him from following his trade, and, having discovered from some old books of divinity the stress laid upon the Hebrew original of Scripture, he turned his attention first to Hebrew, later to Arabic and possibly other oriental tongues as well. After becoming known accidentally to the Dean of Norwich, Dr. Prideaux, Wild was sent up to Oxford, where he arrived some time before 1718, comparatively late in life.

[1] p. xix.