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## Abu Tammam Poetical Inspiration from his Forerunners' Poetry: A Glance through the Aesthetic of Poetical Intertextuality in Light of his Critics' Views

### Abstract

*Whenever we peruse through the works of Abu Tammam, we would find him being subjected to criticism or disparagement at times or being spoken about and praised at others by a multitude of critics be they prominent or not. Abu Tammam al-Ta'i poetry receded into history, is of a contemporaneous soul; his language, ever so scintillating, dazzles the discerner with pearls that fascinate the spirit before so the thought or sight. On this premise, this study was done based on the idea of observing how Al-Ta'i was influenced by previous poets. Thus, this study aims at observing previous poets' influence over Abu Tammam, which is considered an imprinted characteristic in his poetry- according to Al-Amedi's accusation, when he considered him as following in the path of the modernists. Furthermore, this study aims to elucidate these poetical aesthetics in the meanings that were evoked by Abu Tammam from the poetry of those who came before him, as well as to discuss the views of critics who critically dealt with the poetry of Abu Tammam, especially Al-Amedi in "Al-Mwazanah", and Al-Marzabani in "Al-Muwashah". To prove the two-way poetical influence, this study adopts a methodology that relies on the historical approach. Furthermore, it capitalizes on intertextuality to reveal how Abu Tammam was influenced by previous poets, resorting to analysis as an important procedural tool to get a sense of the aesthetics of Abu Tammam's poetry and that aforementioned influence.*

**Keywords:** Poetical Intertextuality, Poetical Aesthetics, Exaggeration of the Integrity.

### Introduction

Abu Tammam al-Ta'i was born in the year 172 AH (according to some accounts it was 180 AH, yet his son said that his father was born in 188 AH<sup>1</sup>) in Damascus, in a village called "Jassim" -between Damascus and Tiberias-and his name is: Habib bin Aws bin al-Harith bin Qais bin al-Ashad bin Yahya bin Muzina bin Saham bin Malhan bin Marwan bin Dafafa bin Mar bin Saad bin Kahal bin Amr bin Uday bin Amr bin

Al-Harith bin Ta'i. Looking at his life, we know that his father (and likely his mother as well) passed away when he was young; his wife and children also died in his life, except for Tammam. That is why he moved so nimbly in the world; had he remained shackled by his poor family; he undoubtedly would have been in a different state than that he ended up in. Al-Soli mentioned some of his virtues and physical attributes; physically, he was tall and brown; he mildly muttered yet was sweet and eloquent in his speech and he was sharp of wit. Virtues-wise, he was generous, munificent, and amiably

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good-natured. He passed away in Muharram in the year 232 AH, and he was buried in Mosul, outside the square, on the edge of the trench; his remains today are in the municipality garden in a huge mausoleum. Recalling the famous saying of Paul Valerie: "A lion is but the sum of sheep it digested," one could infer that the sheep that Abu Tammam digested were of various strains, basing the product of this digestion on the concept of being different from the digested; because he invested in these multiple cultures that his era opened up to and pervaded in his society, to achieve his own style of poetic creativity; he is anchored in heritage without any frantic zeal, able to oppose it without enmity. Al-Ta'i was - as Al-Amedi says - : "Careless about poetry, yet obsessed with it; He dedicated his entire life to sounding its depth and studying it, and his renowned compositions attest to that" Perhaps the most prominent evidence of his diligent exploration and vast knowledge in poetry is that Abu Al-'Ala Al-Maarri - of illustrious linguistic grasp and extensive knowledge - duly acknowledged Abu Tammam, and from that his comment on the word (أبيت) (dwell) when Al-Ta'i's said:

نسألها أي المواطن حلت وأي ديار أوطنتها وأيت

I ask her, where did you end up? in which abode did you dwell?

Al-Maarri commented: "It is possible that Abu Tammam heard it in old poetry, for he was immersed in the realm of the novel. Ibn al-Atheer summarized Abu Tammam's knowledge of poetry in his saying: "Abu Tammam is the imam of people when it comes to poetry and knowledge of it. All of this indicates that Abu Tammam sipped from the fountain of linguistic and literary sciences, which made critics fall in discord in terms of interpreting and explaining his poetry; standing in awe before its meanings with guidance and understanding. His intellectual attainments and knowledge were not limited to poetry and language; he also studied science, stars, astronomy, genealogies, history, theology, philosophy and logic, jurisprudence, hadith, and other disciplines that one, who reads his poetry, could sense. All of the foregoing is not only evidence of his broad knowledge and impressive comprehension, but also evidence of his linguistic athleticism and his ability to transform that which is not poetical into poetry affirming his poetical prowess and its distinctiveness, for Abu Tammam is not like other poets who preceded him; he is not one to rely on emulation alone, as was the case with the poets of the first century, or on mimicry with broad but shallow knowledge, like the poets of the second century, but he was a scholarly man of intellect before he was a poet. A true scholar, he was a narrator, grammarian, jurist, and a cognoscenti of Greek philosophy, Persian culture, and other cultures. The

influence of all these cultures and sciences is evident in his poetry, which could only be understood by referring back to these cultures. With this extent of clarity and lucidity, the impact of the first Abbasid era, with its entire cultural legacy, is demonstrated in the poetry of Abu Tammam, for it is not possible to separate this era from his poetry, as it is the context through which his poetry is understood and discerned with its various contents. Reflecting the culture, the civilization of the age, and the patterns of human knowledge branded the poetry of Abu Tammam with a label of modernity for distancing itself from the primordial traditions of Arabic poetry, which was notorious for its ambiguity, complexity, and fathomless meanings. Then, there was this peculiar idiosyncrasy that was present in the Abbasid society in which Abu Tammam lived; it was the odd mixture that combined the pious ascetic and the lascivious sensualist in one place, the paradoxical insidiousness that manifested itself in the Abbasid society was also manifested in Abu Tammam's poetry in which he called it "dissonance of opposites," in saying:

أبغضوا عِرْكَكُمْ وَوَدُّوا نَدَاكُمْ فَفَرُّكُمْ مِنْ بَغْضَةِ وَوَدَادِ

your splendid privilege they abhorred.. thus, they showered you with praise

your bountiful munificence they adored as loathing and amicability filled their gaze

لا عدمتم غريب مجر ربقتم في عراه نوافر الأضداد  
If envy only befalls those of preeminence Such is the nature of glory in its immanence

then long live the envious, your eminence to tether incongruent opposites albeit their dissonance

It is truly marvelous, this paradoxical insidiousness resulting from the contrariness in the structure of behavior, in which people love the praised for their gifts, and at the same time enviously hate them for their towering status.

Indeed, this "dissonance of opposites" is the imprint that the Abbasid era, with all its cultural, scientific, political, and social phenomena, left on Abu Tammam's poetry, and those who follow his poetry will find a widespread presence of these paradoxes<sup>2</sup> which transcend the logical and linguistic sense, imbuing it with the poet's philosophy, and with what was going on in his mind from these dissonant contradictions.

### The Influence of Pre-Islamic Poets on Abu Tammam

Abu Tammam was not just a poet, he was a scholar, a narrator, and a jurist-if needs be; and the light of his knowledge-particularly in poetry-shone through the poetry anthologies that

he produced; for what better indicator of their importance than seeing the commentators' diligent devotion to studying, explaining and revising them, especially when they included excerpts from other poets, such as the "Al-Bhatiri", for example.

"Poets have depleted the well of poetry" is a phrase that echoed in Abu Tammam's ears, as Antara said:

أم هل عَرَفْتَ الدَّارَ بَعْدَ تَوَهُّمٍ	هل غادر الشّعراءُ من مُتَرَدِّمٍ
Desiccated! Have poets depleted all there is to be said?	Illusioned? Will you cry the ruins of where once you ate your bread?

But he did not pay mind to what the forerunners had echoed; instead, he replied saying:

كم ترك الأول للآخر!	يقول من تفرغ أسماعه
Depleted and desiccated? Where did you get that from?	Reciting it on me again and again beating it like a drum
I say: misguided you are thinking solely of poetical crumb	Inexhaustible! replete is the well of poetry and then some

Al-Tai wouldn't have used words that indicate abundance had he not been sure of his poetical affluence. His affluent renewal was inseparable from the heritage of the poets before him, deriving influence while simultaneously distinguishing himself by ingeniously coming up with numerous new meanings by capitalizing on his immense cultural and poetical shrewdness which left no minute detail without discernment and analysis.

Abu Tammam pondered and studied the poetic meanings that were used by those who came before him; adding to them, expanding on them, or probing and deriving new jewels from them. And in all of this, he produced a new direction that is imbued by the tender and gentle soul of the era. Although the matter of being influenced by the poetic heritage is considered a natural thing for Abu Tammam, the prejudice of the critics and linguists against him, and the workmanship in his poetry, made way for the term (Plagiarism); a term which seems to have been linked to the emergence of this prejudice against Abu Tammam and his poetry, especially considering the fact that other terms were previously used like Ibn Qutaybah's term "Al Akhez" (taking), or the term "Al Salkh," according to Al-Asfahani in his book "Al-Aghani" (Songs).

The most prominent of those who accused Al-Ta'i of plagiarism was Al-Amidi, who proclaimed from the get-go that Abu Tammam's knowledge of the poems of his predecessors facilitated using many of their meaning<sup>3</sup> which is what was expressed more bluntly and crudely by Al-Marzabani when he mentioned that Abu

Tammam "plagiarized" from poets and included their work in his anthology as a literary "supply". In all probability, Al-Marzabani was brutally unjust to Abu Tammam, for he who peruses through the works and poetry of Abu Tammam would find most of the meanings he denotes ambidextrously inventive, and though some of them may be inspired by the previous works, it doesn't reach a point where it would be called "plagiarism" because, as Ibn Rashiq said: "A poet who does not contrive or generate meaning, does not inventively brew an expression, does not add to what has been unjustly abridged, does not abbreviate what is redundant, or playfully twiddled with a connotation to mean something else, would be only nominally a poet." Thus, Abu Tammam was not a mere transcriber from the poems, but rather an innovator who embraced the culture of others to thoroughly produce his own unique work. This isn't a dismissal of the idea that there are, indeed, "poetical plagiarism" among writers and poets, rather a preference for it to be called "Inspiration of meanings or words," consigning the term "plagiarism" to the explicit and deliberate literary theft; a deed only pulled off by a wannabe poet, not by an illustrious champion of poetry like Abu Tammam. Hence, the demand rises to discuss the issue of Abu Tammam's inspiration by previous poets, through the critical discussions that took place on this matter in the books "Al-Mwazanah," "Al-Wasatah," "Al-Muwashshah," and others in addition to what the poet himself proclaimed about being influenced by certain poets, notably: Abu Nawas and Muslim Ibn Al-Walid, as reported by the books and commentaries on his poetry. In this context, the study deals with a group of poets who were not known to adopt the "Al-Badi" stylistic approach in their poems, and who fall outside the time frame of the Abbasid era, as some of them belong to the pre-Islamic era, and others belong to the Islamic and Umayyad era; Thus, the spotlight will be on poets like Imru' al-Qais, Al-Nabigha Al-Dhubiani, Al-Nabigha Al-Ja'di, Antara, and Al-Asha, and others like Hassan bin Thabit, Al-Farazdaq, Jarir, and Kuthayyir.

Before delving into the details, it is worth mentioning that Al-Tai's influence by previous poets was like stages of development for his poetry so that his comprehension of the poetical heritage would reach artistic maturity, which was also nourished by the civilization and the cultural components. Here, it is quite fitting to say that: "Abu Tammam managed to transform the meaning of poetry to produce new literary yield aided by the shrewdness of his thought and the acuity of his imagination, adding to his nuanced sagacity and prudent faculties." So, we will be examining the distinguishing features of Abu

Tammam's poetry that separate it from those from which he drew inspiration in an attempt to explore the aesthetic of intertextuality in his poetry.

### The Influence of Pre-Islamic Poets

Pre-Islamic poetry is distinguished by its sincerity in representing its environment, simple expression in its images and imaginations, and its inherited meanings related to the life of the Badia; it is different from the Abbasid poem in its dimensions, and its preoccupation with renewal in its meanings. Karl Brockelmann explained the difference between the pre-Islamic poem and the Abbasid poem, by saying: "The template of the poem - as was known in pre-Islamic poetry - became an outdated style at the end of the Umayyad era, as it did not keep up with the age, for its limited inherited materials and meanings were greatly linked to the life of the desert, so it no longer corresponded with the new ties and connections that differs completely from the relations of the Badia; ties that formed between the mixed population of Arabs and Persians in the large cities that became the centers of intellectual life. Therefore, the influence of pre-Islamic poets on Abu Tammam is mostly distinguished by generating new meanings, and tinkering with them so that they would denote different notions than the ones originally intended.

### The Influence of Imru' Al-Qais

Imru' al-Qais said:

بمَنْجَرِدٍ قَيْدِ الْأَوَابِدِ هَيْكَلِ I ride onward, as birds embrace their nests in the morning	وَقَدْ أَغْتَدِي وَالطَّيْرِ فِي وَكُنَاتِهَا On a tremendous glabrous steed fettering the beasts and storming
--	---

By virtue of being the precedent, Imru' al-Qais became his own poetic dictionary, to the point where his influence would be recognized on other poets work, like when Abu Tammam used the compound expression (قيد لأوابد) (fettering the beasts):

يَرُوحُ وَيَغْدُو فِي خَفَارَتِهِ الْخُبُّ Still captivated by her fettering countenance, her presence	لَهَا مَنْظَرٌ قَيْدِ الْأَوَابِدِ لَمْ يَزَلْ love oscillates endlessly as coyness polish her luminescence
---	---

The usage of the connotation of the "fettters" was transformed from an object of description to an object of "Ghazal" in the verse of Al-Ta'i, in what the author of "Khizanat Al-Adb" calls "generating meaning,"<sup>4</sup> which acquits Al-Ta'i from "plagiarism," and proves him to be a bringer

of renewal. While Imru' al-Qais describes his steed as mighty and swift to the point it fetters and binds beasts, Abu Tammam attributed a great deal of beauty to the woman he is describing to the point where her lavishing charm and fairness is binding and captivating, fettering the eye of the beholder, rendering him unable to lift his gaze from her.

Another aspect to that influence was the union of purpose in description, like when Al-Qais said:

مَتَى مَا تَرَقَّ الْعَيْنُ فِيهِ تُسْهَلُ A mare so glorious, lest you jinx it, dare you behold ?	وَرَحْنَا وَرَاحَ الطَّرْفِ يَقْصِرُ دُونَهُ once glimpsed, transfixed eyes can't help but enfold
---	--

Al-Ta'i said describing the mare of Al-Hassan bin Wahb when he wanted to praise him:

فِي صَهْوَتَيْهِ الْعَيْنُ لَمْ تَتَلَقَّ Flawlessly sleek and gloss, such faultlessly wondrous steed	إِمْليسه إمْليده لو غَلَقَتْ Eyes cannot behold but a whole speckless being indeed
--	---

The two verses have a great similarity in meaning. However, Al-Tai wanted to describe the texture of his horse and the softness of his body, and the symmetry of this texture and this softness, so that if one looks at a part of it, it will be as though he looked at it as a whole because how perfectly symmetrical it is. Thus if one needs to examine it he does not need to do so thoroughly; it is an exaggeration of the integrity of this mare from the defects, such as scabies, for example.

As for Imru' al-Qais, he wanted his mare to be immunized against being jinxed by the "eye or envy," and as such, the eye and the act of beholding are the things in common between the two verses. Additionally, one can't behold the mare described by Al-Qais because of how fast it is, as was described in previous verses, for it appears before the beholder, only to suddenly disappear again from the intensity of its speed, he says:

دِرَاكًا وَلَمْ يَنْضُخْ بِمَاءٍ فَيَغْسَلْ Racing the bull and the sheep, vanishing like a silhouette	فِعَادَى عِدَاءٍ بَيْنَ ثَوْرٍ وَنَعْجَةٍ Effortlessly beating them both without breaking a sweat
---	--

So, each of the two poets deals with an aspect of the description that differs from the other, which makes one questions the uncalled for stultification of Abu Tammam's verse by Al-Marzabani, saying: "Al-Taie wanted to say that the eye can't but behold the mare as a whole because of the perfect smoothness of its color and texture; Yet, he overhyped it for no

avail."<sup>5</sup> This is only due his prejudice against Abu Tammam.

### The Influence of Al-Nabigha Al-Dhabiani

From it, is the praise of Al-Nabighah to Nu'man Ibn Al-Mundhir in his verse:

إذا طلعت لم يبدُ منهن كوكبُ for in the heavens, kings are mere planets and thou art the sun	بأنتك شمس والملوك كواكبُ Cast thy light ever so brightly, their presence is undone
---	---

Al-Tai said:

إذا الشمس لم تغرب فلا طلع البدرُ Thus she professed: cast you the moon to the abyss of your remembrance ?	وقالت أنتسى البدر قلت تجلداً the moon wanes so long the sun remains, Answered I in all temperance
---	---

And the purpose of Al-Ta'i's verse is "Al-Ghazal" (flirtation), as he answers his beloved (the full moon) when she asked him if he had forgotten her Al-Tai (the sun) replied that he would not forget her. For, in the absence of the sun, the moon rises again, and this interpretation may limit the preciousness in it, as Al-Ta'i said in a previous verse:

خلي وما يخلو له من هوى صدُر. She wept dolefully like she made him weep previously when	بكته بما أبكته أيام صدُرها her heart was empty while his was padded with her love again
---	---

Now she is crying because he is leaving her, just as he cried for her before.

Al-Ta'i was influenced by Al-Nabigha, and the author of "Al-Wasata" commented on this type of influence, saying: "If the masterfully subtle poet had to resort to pilfering a meaning, he would modify it in terms of its form, type, rhythm, and rhyme; to the obviously unmindful, the two meaning would be distinctly unlinked, however, a mindful observant would be aware of the similarity.

Another example is when Abu Tammam was influenced by the verse of al-Nabighah when he praised Amr ibn al-Harith al-Asghar, one of the Ghassanid kings, painting the image of vultures/birds following the army of the subject of praise:

عصائب طير تهتدي بعصائب Birds of prey soar and hover over the army as it presses forward to invade من الضاريات بالدماء الدوارب following these belligerent masses	إذا ما غزوا بالجيش حلق فوقهم hovering in flocks guiding more of their kin to the fellowship of this parade يُصاحبهم حتى يُغرن مغارهم blood thirsty, atrociously swooping down to the fray for the
--	---

as if ardent to join the  
crusade

جلوس الشيوخ في ثياب  
المرانب

You see them tailing  
the hordes  
with eyes as piercing  
as a blade

army's aid

تراهن خلف القوم خُزراً عيونها  
like sitting Sheiks in  
their leathery  
garments preparing to  
ambuscade

Abu Tammam used this image in praising Caliph Al-Mu'tasim and his leader Al-Afshin:

بعقبان طير في الدماء نواهل Lofty banners, soaring like blood-thirsty birds of prey, were shaded	وقد ظللت عقبان أعلامه ضحى by flocks of eagles hovering over their heads as they raided
من الجيش إلا أنها لم تقابل Dwelling and residing with the banners as if they joined the army and faded	أقامت مع الزبايات حتى كأنها into their ranks, merging with their men, save for fighting, they abated

Al-Ta'i added to the meaning by making the birds of prey as a company to the army's banners, as if they were among the ranks of the fighters but did not fight with them, and his expression (bloodthirsty birds of prey) is a metaphor for the victory of Al-Mamdouh's Army. The spatial depiction by al-Ta'i was more accurate, as these birds of prey flew with the army, shading them like an umbrella, and resided with "banners"; he did not say with "the army" because the army resides on the ground, while the Eagles were flying where the flags flutter in the air. As for Al-Nabigha, the spatial depiction was: flying (over), and (behind), which indicates that the birds followed the army in its movements. At the beginning of the invasion, they were (flying), during the battle, they were (accompanying), and in victory, they hovered (behind) the hordes devouring the bodies of the dead.<sup>6</sup>

### The Influence of Antarah Ibn Shaddad

As he said:

لا مُعِينَ هَرَبًا وَلَا مُسْتَسَلِمَ A dauntless warrior heavy of armor whom is feared even by the fearless knight	وَمُدَجِّجِ كِرَّةِ الْكُمَاةِ نَزَالَهُ Never pusillanimous, never was he one to escape or turn his back on a fight
ليس الكريم على القنا بمحرّم I struck him down piercing his plate mail with my callous spear with all my might	فشككت بالرّمح الأسمّ ثيابه Not even the noblest blood is inviolable in battle, such is the clashing rite

Al-Tai said in Fath al-Kharramiyya:

بإهابه أولى من السيزبال And thus they carry to	يحملن كل مدجج سمر القنا veterans of war,
---	---

the fray brave gallant  
warriors armored with  
heavy spears

inclined to relegate  
even their garments for  
their weapons and  
gears.

Antarah wanted to say that he fought the strong and courageous warrior who was feared by knights, but he was able to stab him with his spear, piercing his body and clothes. As for Al-Ta'i, he wanted to say that these armies that fought the "Khurramiyya" had knights who were so heavily-armored to the point where they had to discard their clothes. Al-Ta'i cleverly added to this verse, which was not to the liking of Al-Amidi who commented on the two verses, saying: "He said that because he thought Antara was mentioning and meaning the "clothes," while what he meant is the person.

Another verse that Al-Ta'i was influenced by is when Antara proudly described himself, saying:

والطعن مني سابق الآجال  
I am the harbinger of  
death when swords  
clash, when spears  
meet

وأنا المنية حين تشتجر القنا  
concede to your fate  
before I even stab  
you, before facing your  
defeat

Then Al-Ta'i said praising Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Thaghri:

قبل السنان على حوانبه يرذ  
harrowing trepidation  
reigns as the imminent  
death by the spear  
looms

يكاذ حين يلاقي القرن من حنق  
nearly forerunners of  
fate, before the stab  
they rush to their  
tombs.

Al-Amadi was fair to Abu Tammam this time, commenting: "Antara wanted to say that death comes to his enemies before he stabs them, to express the extent of the fear they experience as they face him. Al-Ta'i, took the expression and capably altered it, as Al-Ta'i depicted the enemy rushing to his death from the severity of fear before the spears reached him.

### The Influence of Al-Asha

As he said:

حتى يري كالفن الناضر  
and those of lavishing  
munificence for their  
neighbors, fending off  
the clutches of starvation

والشافعون الجوع عن جارهم  
resurrecting their  
spirits, reviving their  
vitality, like a branch of  
verdant salvation

Abu Tammam was inspired by him in his verse that praised Al-Ma'mun:

بالبذل حتى استطرف الإعدام  
He who cast out  
indigence from his  
land, the banisher of  
destitution

من شرد الإعدام عن أوطانه  
subrogating it with  
opulence, till poverty  
became a coveted  
absolution

حتى وددنا أننا أيتام (7)  
A saint of solicitude  
who took the  
fatherless under his  
wing

وتكفل الأيتام عن آياتهم  
now we wish we were  
orphans just to be  
braced by the king

Al-Ta'i expanded on the meaning and added to it, by making the generosity of the caliph inclusive of the homelands, not limited to the "neighbor" - as al-Asha said - then he went with a hyperbole, making poverty or destitution - by virtue of the generous endowments of the praised- something to be desired, then he exaggerated some more by making people as wishful to be orphans after they saw Al-Ma'mun's care, clemency, and generosity with them.

### The Influence of Al-Nabagha Al-Ja'di

As he said, describing war:

وعند نوي الأحلام منها  
التجارب  
know ye not the  
ravages of war?  
فتهلكهم والسباحات النجائب  
even the most  
honorable of men are  
brought to the fore  
ضنينا بها والحرب فيها  
الحرانب  
black mares cared for  
and nurtured since  
times of yore

ألم تعلموا ما تزرأ الحرب أهلها  
its scars that the  
prudent wore?  
لها السادة الأشراف تأتي عليهم  
with their noble steeds  
as death settles the  
score  
وتستلب الذم التي كان ربها  
were ransacked, such  
is the deplorable verity  
we all abhor

Al-Ta'i was inspired and influenced by him in his verse:

والحرب مشتقة المعنى من  
الحرب  
When Theophilos saw  
the verity of war for his  
own eyes

لما رأى الحرب رأي العين  
توفلس  
plundering and  
pillaging; two of war's  
meanings in disguise

Al-Nabigha Al-Jaadi talks about the calamity and misfortune that the war brings and at the same time the experience of the prudent minds that witnessed it; about how it inflicts those of honor and sovereignty and degrades them, and how horses and steeds get blundered. Abu Tamam benefited from Al-Nabigha Al-Ja'di's idea about the plundering and pillaging that happens in war, but used it to talk about something else, which is the Byzantine leader "Theophilos". Thus, the pre-Islamic heritage's influence, with its unmistakable fame, is evident in the poetry of Abu Tammam, and it is noticeable how Al-Ta'i was influenced by the renowned poets-of Mu'allaqat fame- from this era. Lastly, he expanded on meanings -that were inspired by pre-Islamic poetry- and transformed them to fit other purposes, imbuing them with his vision.

## The Influence of Islamic and Umayyad Poets on Abu Tammam

Those who are familiar with the movement of poetry in these two eras would find that it took the same path that pre-Islamic poetry followed; there is no denying, of course, all the developments that occurred, which are mainly represented in new poetical purposes for which poets wrote, such as the poetry of jihad and conquest, for example, in the Islamic era. Other purposes developed in the Umayyad poetry as a result of the emergence of tribalistic fanaticism, in what is known as the poetry of "opposites"; additionally, the renewal in meanings also had its share, as Dr. Shawqi Dhaif noted, the "Al Badi" stylistic approach started with Al-Numayri, a contemporary of Al Farazdaq<sup>8</sup>, yet, he did not reach the level of renewal reached in the Abbasid era. Abu Tammam was inspired by many of the meanings drawn from the poetic heritage of these two eras, in addition to the influence of many poets; the most prominent of which are:

### 1. Hassan Bin Thabet

As he said:

كالسَيْلِ يَغْشَى أَصُولَ الدُّنْدَنِ  
البالي  
for wealth and  
fortune favors those  
with no grace

والمالُ يَغْشَى رِجَالاً لَا طِبَاحَ بِهِمْ  
As the gushing stream  
quenches dried roots and  
embrace

Then came Abu Tammam to say:

فالسَيْلُ حَرَبٌ لِمَكَانِ الْعَالِي  
Shame not the  
insolvent, for wealth  
and generosity scarcely  
meet

لَا تَتَكَرَى عَطَلُ الْكَرِيمِ مِنَ الْغَنَى  
as scarcely as the  
stream climbs up hill  
and succeeds in the  
feat

Al-Ta'i verse is the best worded; Therefore, it became prevalent as an aphorism or a running proverbial saying. One would be amazed by the vivid imagination of Abu Tammam in this verse- that's considered the door to implicit analogy- in which he likened that generous who lost his wealth, to a high place from which water flows; within this holistic depiction lies another metaphor, where (wealth) is compared in its usefulness and its necessity for people with (water) and its indispensability. This piece of the imagery -contained within the greater metaphor-is what inspired Abu Tammam to establish an analogy, based on imagination, which combines two elements (the subject and the object) which are, originally, unlinked. From our surroundings, we see that the water runs down (flees) from a high place, and that's due to the nature of water which is to flow and to gush;

however, that does not apply in the case of wealth when it's lost. Accordingly, Al-Ta'i chose the attribute of "benefit" that applies to (money and water) to establish other imagined qualities, which is what Imam Abd said Al-Qaher Al-Jarjani said when commenting on the verse: "His metaphor was based on imagination and visualization, not cognizance and principles; the reason why the stream is not fixed in place in high areas is that the water flows in its nature, and it is not retained unless placed in a location equipped (geographically in this case) with attributes that prevent it from flowing, and no such attributes exist in case of wealth, and the wealthy<sup>9</sup> (to prevent it from being dissipated.)" One could notice the ability of this implicit metaphor, in this image, to show what is considered reprehensible and blameworthy as accepted and beloved; for falling into insolvency after being wealthy is disgraceful even if this wealth was dissipated as a result of excessive generosity. Abu Tammam, however, deliberately turned this perspective, making it a way to reach the sublime, damming any pretext for disapproval.

Al-Amedi recorded in his "Al-Mwazanah" what he considered plagiarism by Al-Ta'i, when Hassan said:

إذا ما ترعرع فينا الغُلا  
مُ فَمَا إِنَّ يُقَالُ لَهُ: مَنْ هُوَ؟  
if in our midst the  
child soundly grows  
for everyone knows

Only for Abu Tammam to say:

بِحَمِيهِ لِأَلَاؤِهِ أَوْ لَوُدْعِيَّتِهِ  
من أن يُقَالُ بِمَنْ أَوْ مِمَّنِ الرَّجُلُ  
by virtue of his  
incandescent  
righteousness and might  
at sight

Obviously, such meaning is prevalent among poets; the verse of Hassan highlights pride in the kindred of the boy, and that he only managed to reach fame due to his consanguinity to them. While, in Al-Ta'i's verse, the tribalistic zeal diminishes when he attributes the fame of the one he praises to his intelligence, honor, heightened resoluteness, and other personal virtues that gathered for the praised, to the point where these attributes became part of him, thus, elevating Al-Ta'i's verse to a greater and better status for coming up with a new original concept of pride, as opposed to the prevalent overused sense of pride the stems from tribalistic zeal.

### 2. Al-Farazdaq: (38 - 110 A.H.)

Not only did Abu Tammam have a keen interest in the poems of Al Farazdaq, but was a good reader of his stories and news. He benefited from the story that Marzabani reported

in "Al-Mawashah" about a man from Banu Tamim (kin) who recited poetry for Al-Farazdaq, then asked him to look into it and say something about it, so Al Farazdaq said: O son, the poetry was a great pale camel. Umaru al-Qays took its head, Amr bin Kulthum took its hump, Ubaid bin Al-Ibras took its thigh, Al-A'sha its rump, Zuhair its shoulders, Zuhair its chest, and each of the two Al-Nabigha its side, then we realized that there was nothing left but the limbs and the stomachs, so we distributed them among us! The butcher said: "There is nothing left but the blood and the remains of the stomach, and I did all of the work for you, so let me have them." "It is yours!" we said, So, he took the remains and the blood, cooked them, and ate them, then he defecated, so your poetry was from the excrement of the butcher! "Is this your opinion!?" he exclaimed, "then I swear that I would never recite poetry again."

Al-Ta'i was definitely acquainted with this story which inspired his verses in which he praises Muhammad bin Saeed:

فذهبت أنت فقدته بزمامه If virtue and modesty were dived among us all وذهبت أنت برأسه وستأمامه people took but small portions Of generosity and still من فرثه وعروقه وعظامه nothing is left but the filth, the vessels, the bone	قسم الحياء على الأنام جميعهم then you took the rein and made the call وتقسم الناس السخاء مجزاً you ended up with the head and with the hump at will وتركت للناس الإهاب وما بقي the skin, and all of what is left, to them you have thrown
--	---

Abu Tammam was influenced by the poetry of Al Farazdaq, when the latter said:

لئلا يصيح بجانبه نهاراً gray hairs announce the end of the daring youth	والشيب ينهض في الشباب كأنه like dawn surrounds the night with thundering truth
--	---

Then, Abu Tammam said:

كالصبح أحدث للظلام أفولا verily, gray hairs exile the years of adolescence	والشيب إن طرد الشباب بياضه like morning dampens the night into evanescence
---	---

Al-Farazdaq had better wording and more eloquent meaning, and it has a sense of embodiment in (a graying rise) and (night screams), while Al-Ta'i's house was nothing but a duplicate image in the negligence metaphor and the usual wit of depiction.

### 3. Jarir: (d 114 AH)

He is a Mudarri poet, who is famous for his ruthless Hija' (slander) poetry with al-Farazdaq and al-Akhtal; and from his poetry, which Al-Ta'i was influenced by, he said:

فقتلنا ثم لم يحيين قتلانا Eyes of vehement white and intense blackness وهن أضعف خلق الله أركاناً they ruin the sagacious of us, paralyzed they lay, such is their fate	إن العيون التي في طرفها حور always devastate, yet never bring back the lifeless يصرعن ذا اللب حتى لا حراك به the weakest of god's creation is the most deadly, or so they dictate
--	---

Abu Tammam transformed the meaning to fit the description of wine, saying:

قتلت كذلك قدرة الضعفاء feeble it's perceived until presented with a chance	وضعيقة فإذا أصابته فرصة down a deadly path you go, such is the weakling's dance
---	--

The verse of Al-Ta'i includes what he called (the dissonance of opposites) because when wine, despite its weakness, takes hold of a person, it leads him down a ruinous path. While, Jarir's verse carries weakness and strength metaphorically, which shows how destructive her beautiful eyes could be, devastating the enamored lover, striking down the prudent with their weakness. Credit is due to Al-Ta'i's verse for its successful transfer of meaning to fit the description of wine; while still recognizing the delicacy and sophistication of Jarir's verse.

Another notable mention is the Jarir's verse that disparages Al Akhtal:

خيلاً تكرر عليكم ورجالا Still disturbed and traumatized after a Disgracing ruinous defeat	ما زلت تحسب كل شيء بعدهم envisaging shadows pressing the attack with their horses and crushing fleet
---	--

Al-Ta'i benefited from him in his verse describing Babk Al-Khurrami and his astonishment of the war:

محلولياً ذمه المعسول لو رشفنا behind the vanquished, Babik, being led around all lamb-like and meek	ومر بابك مر العيس منجماً if only sip from his sweet blood his conqueror could seek حيران يحسب سجت النقع من دهش seeing crumbling mountains and shaky cliffs in every cloud of dust
--	--

Jarir's verse had a better grasp of the meaning, but Al-Ta'i created a dramatic paradox championed by Babak. The picture he drew of him is full of humor and mockery of his behavior after his defeat, as he thinks that every heap of dust is a mountain that will fall on him or a shaky cliff that will collapse and take him down. One could be satisfied with this meaning with a mere perfunctory reading -that Abu Tammam only wanted to make people laugh at the behavior of this man; however, a more mindful reading would reveal a more profound meaning, one of



seriousness and adherence, not humor and mockery; for Babak, after his defeat, became terrified from the terror he witnessed in battle; to the point where every shout counted as a war-cry. This picture that Abu Tammam drew for him is called the kinetic (movement) paradox, and it is: (The linguistic drawing of peculiar kinetic behavior in terms of motives and causes- which involves a hideous fallacy-the result of which is a technical picture of a second connotation, or an indirect meaning that contradicts the truth and origin of the picture drawn, that contradiction generates mockery and ridicule<sup>10</sup>.) In Abu Tammam's depiction of Babak, the dramatic dimension is evident through the portrayal of Babak as a victim of the lens of poetic depiction. It is as if Abu Tamam is looking at him from afar, depicting him with what the reader knows, yet the depicted character itself - within the text - is ignorant of, contributing to the disclosure of his hidden psychological corners. In the end, this is interpreted by pinpointing the meaning of irony to reveal the state that Babak came to after his defeat; thus, that the connotational result of a perfunctory reading is humor and unguided jest, while a deeper reading would produce a sense of irony.

#### 4. Abu Dahbal Al-Jamahi (d.63 AH)

Abu Tammam said, praising the Al-Ma'mun:

حَتَّى وَدَدْنَا أَنَّا أَيْتَامَ  
A saint of solicitude  
who took the  
fatherless under his  
wing

وَتَكْفَلُ الأَيْتَامَ عَنْ آبَائِهِمْ  
**now we wish we were  
orphans just to be  
braced by the king**

It was also inspired from Abu Dahbal's verse:

لَاقٍ لِعَانٍ بِجُرْمِهِ غُلَقٍ  
and still gracefully  
your merciful  
absolution you lend  
عِنْدَكَ أَمْسُوا فِي القَدِّ وَ الحَلَقِ  
even those not yet  
tarnished or defamed  
with sin or crime wish  
to spend

مَا زِلْتُمْ فِي العَفْوِ لِلذَّنُوبِ وَإِطِ  
for the yoked, for the  
imprisoned and for  
those who offend  
حَتَّى تَمْنَى البرَاءَةَ أَنَّهُمْ  
Time in your prison, so  
that your gracious  
tolerance to them  
would extend

The meaning by Al-Jamahi is greatly exaggerated when he portrayed people's greed for the pardon of the praised after they saw his solemn forgiveness for criminals and perpetrators, portraying those who never committed a crime as longing to be shackled criminals just to be included in his pardon. However, Abu Tammam did not reach this level of exaggeration in the verse in which he praises Al-Ma'mun for his care for the orphans, to the

point where people wished that they were orphans themselves.

#### 5. Kuthayyir (d. 105 AH)

Abu Tammam was mesmerized by kuthayyir mentioning and praising him a lot in the "Naseeb" (introduction) of his poetry, like when he praised Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Thaghri, he said:

فَاقَ وَصَفَ الذِّيَارِ وَالتَّشْبِيهَا  
jubilant I am while  
praising you  
Ye who are more  
praise-worthy than  
بمعانيه خالهن نسيبا  
Katheer, the  
cornerstone of  
Naseeb  
A permeable to  
express love and  
affection

طَابَ فِيهِ المَدِيحُ وَالتَّذْحَى  
women or homeland or  
any other premeable  
with which poets once  
began

لَوْ يُفَاجَا رُكْنَ النَّسِيبِ (كَتَيْرٍ)  
if he was to witness my  
rhyme about him he  
would see Naseeb in its  
reflection

Al-Soli recounted: When he read this poem to Abu Malik, he asked him about this verse; He said: "He wanted "Kuthayyer" but referred the name back to its superlative form and didn't use the form that indicates miniature" Al-Soli replied: "How did he refer to "Kuthayyer"? Abu Malik said: He heard Al-Ta'i said in more than one occasion: the most praise-worthy people are: Zuhair and Al-Asha, then Al-Akhtal and Kuthayyer."

Al-Ta'i benefitted from Kuthayyer's verse, in which the latter said:

حَصَانٌ عَلَيْهَا نَظْمٌ دُرٌّ يَزِينُهَا  
resoluteness  
incarnate, If his mind  
to conquest and glory  
was set

إِذَا مَا أَرَادَ الغَزْوُ لَمْ يَشْنُ هَمَّةً  
never discouraged, for  
no beauty or woman  
could encumber facing  
the threat

So, Al-Ta'i said, praising the Caliph Al-Mu'tasim:

بَرَدِ النَّعُورِ، وَعَنْ سَلْسَالِهَا  
الحصب  
The Heat of war and  
fending off the  
invasion from the  
thagar (borders) of  
your land

عَدَاكَ حَرُّ الشُّعُورِ المَسْتَضَامَةِ عَنْ  
prevented you from  
enjoying the coolness of  
her Thagar (the mouth of  
his beloved) or a cold  
glass of in your hand

Abu-Tammam embroidered his verse with Al-Jinas Al Kamel (complete alliteration) in Al-Thaghour (vulnerable entry points at the border) and Mutabaqa (conformity) in harr (hot), and barrd (cold) to highlight the strength of Al-Mu'tasim's determination, who left the comfort and the company of beautiful women to protect the borders from invasion in Ammuriyah; while Kuthayyer did not resort to such stylistic tools. The alliteration in al-Ta'i verse was built on the verbal commonality (pun) on the word (Al-Though'our), which is a deceptive tool that prompts one to believe that by ostensibly

repeating the same word, he repeats the same meaning; as the connotational juncture lies in breaking the expectation of the reader, who is waiting for symmetry in the deep structure of the verse.

Al-Tai was able, through complete alliteration, to express the domination of Al-Mu'tasim and his resoluteness, which made him move from the state of comfort and the company of beautiful women to war to defend his land and honor. In the context of what Al-Tabrizi mentioned about the two verses, Abu-Tammam succeeded in associating the border's vulnerable points with through the mouths of beautiful women through alliteration; the word got to him while holding a mug in his hand that he wanted to drink from, so he placed it and commanded that it be preserved; he drank from it once he returned triumphant from Amuriyah<sup>11</sup>. Exaggerated as it may be, we find that (al-Thaghar) is the keyword in the transformation of al-Mu'tasim, from the state of savoring the company of good-looking women in a state of comfort to the aid of a Thagar (point)/ woman in Amuriyah, which indicates that women are not associated only with pleasure for al-Mu'tasim, but with value as well; this sturdy connection between the two through alliteration demonstrates his determination and courage.

Kuthayyer also said, praising Al-Aziz bin Marwan:

قوافيها مُنازعة الطراب	ونازعني إلى مدح ابن ليلي
eager am I to praise	as lovers' quarrel to
Ibn Laila, yet contested	express their love,
am I to it by my rhymes	love tend to do that
	some times

Al-Ta'i was inspired by this verse, saying:

حتى ظننت قوافيه ستقتل	تغايّر الشعر فيه إذ سهرت له
As I try to praise	vehemently battling, to
him, rhymes engage	the death I thought, till
in a rattling brawl	none is left at all

However, One could see that in the verse of "Kathayyer" the meaning is consistent with the purpose of praise, as the poem of Al-Kuthayyer - praising Al-Marwan- is conflicted in its rhymes, but it is a conflict like that of lovers in rapture and is in a state of congruence between meaning and praise. While the conflict of Al-Ta'i's rhymes is that of dispute and death, for example: What if the rhymes of his poem killed each other? There is no doubt that poetry, then, would perish, for being without rhymes! Thus, one could say that this intensity in highlighting the meaning in Al-Ta'i's verse was not compatible with the status of the praise, while the verse of Kuthayyer was appropriate for its purpose and status.

And so, Abu Tammam was able to develop his meanings by benefitting from those who came before him, while imbuing his poetical meanings with his pigment, through the usage of original colors, intellectual depth, and the induction of the idea, to come up with new creative output.

## Conclusion

This study tackled the topic of how Abu Tammam's drew inspiration from the poetry of his predecessors in an attempt to explore the aesthetic of intertextuality in his work, to highlight the meaning which he came up with, and to touch upon the views of those who critiqued his poetry accused him of plagiarism

The conclusions reached in this study could be summarized as follows:

- Abu Tammam was most influenced by "Al-Mu'allaqat" poets in the pre-Islamic era, notably, Imru' al-Qais, Antarah, Al-Asha, and Al-Nabighah Al-Dhabyani.
- Abu Tammam employed the meanings he was influenced by differently than their original purpose, as was noticed in Imru' al-Qais' description of his mare; Abu Tammam transformed the meaning to fit a different purpose which is "Al-Ghazal."
- Not only was Abu Tammam influenced by poetry but with the biography of the poets as well, as was mentioned previously of the influence of Al Farazdaq's biography of and his sayings on Abut Tammam.
- Abu Tammam was able to develop the meanings employed by his forerunners in his poetry, by adding to them and evolving their usage.
- Plagiarism does not apply in the case of Abu Tammam -like he was accused by his critics- because he added to and enhanced the old meanings to the point where they were, evidently, his own.
- According to Al-Amedi's point of view, the multiplicity of the pre-Islamic poets whom Al-Ta'i was influenced by strips him of the status of modernity; he was someone who took poetry as a craft. Additionally, he being influenced by these poets stemmed from a long-standing knowledge of ancient poetry to the point where it was imprinted in his style. Al-Ta'i was influenced by numerous Islamic and Umayyad poets including Dhabal Al-Jamhi, Hassan, Al-Farazdaq, Jarir, and Kuthayyir.

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