

**PhD THESISES**

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**THE HORSE TERMINOLOGY  
IN THE MEDIEVAL ARABIC LITERATURE**

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## I. SUBJECT AND AIM OF RESEARCH

The subject of our research is Mediaeval Arabic literature dealing with horses between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Two fields of sciences were discussing horses in detail: literature and military science. Military science handed down many *furūsiyya* handbooks through generations. The *furūsiyya* handbooks had a certain pattern that started with the origins of the Arab horse according to the Islamic traditions.

According to Islamic Creation, the earthly horse was born two days before mankind. The first horse was a bay mare, the second was a stallion. When God wanted to create the horse, he gave impulse to the southern wind, which thus thickened. Then He gave order to Archangel Gabriel who took a handful of the southern wind. God then created the horse from it, which neighed and God blessed the neighing. He then marked the horse with a star on his forehead and with whiteness on his feet.

According to Arab-Islamic sources two traditions exist about the origins of the Arab horse. One of them is promoted by the Northern Arabs, the other one is by the Southern Arabs. According to the Southern Arab tradition the first horse that arrived to the Arabs comes from King Solomon. When the king visited the Queen of Sheba, Bilqis, in 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the delegation of the Omani al-Azd tribe approached him. To show his friendship King Solomon gave them a horse named *Zād ar-Rākib* as a parting gift. The name of the horse probably originates from here, since its meaning is “the travellers supplies” or provisions for the journey. The horse had excellent descendants who are mentioned by the name in *al-ʿArābī*'s book in which he collected famous horses and their riders. By this time, according to the Bible, King Solomon had 1420 chariots and 12.000 trained horsemen.<sup>1</sup> He had equestrian and chariot camps and he received countless different horses from the neighboring areas. Solomon's father, King David also had a number of equestrian soldiers which he took as booty in 1100 B.C. from Hadad Ezer, king of the Aramaean Coba. However, the golden age of horse breeding was made possible with the wealth of King Solomon. He became in contact

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<sup>1</sup> Bible, Book of Kings 10., Chariots of Solomon

with the Pharaohs through his Egyptian marriage (950 B.C.). The Egyptians had horses since the arrival of the Hyksos (1650 B.C).<sup>2</sup>

According to the Northern Arab traditions the first horseman was the forefather of the Northern Arabs, *Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm*, who caught a mare roaming in the wild and tamed her. Her offsprings were inherited by *Ismā'īl*'s grandchildren. Since the Prophet's tribe, the *Qurayš* also descends from *Ismā'īl*, Islam cultivates this legend. According to the Southern Arab tradition this horse is *A'wağ* and his offspring is *Zād ar-Rākib* and the other forebear horse is *Kuḥaylān*. They name *Banū Tağlib* as the first horsemen. So the horses of the Northern Arabs can descend from the Southern Arabs' wandering and feral horses.

Both traditions agree that wild horses were living in the Arabian Peninsula. *Ğawād 'Alī* mentioned a stallion named *Aḥdar*, which got away either from King Solomon or from *Ardašīr*, became wild and by the name *Aḥdariyya* became the forefather of the Peninsula's wild horses. There is a type of black wild ass on the Peninsula that has the same name.<sup>3</sup>

In the cavalry handbooks after discussing the creation of the horse and the traditions of his origins, comes the part mentioning the names of the Prophet's horses and then the description of the noble Arab horse suitable for battle. This is quite a short description about the most important body parts, after which comes the discussion about the possible injuries and illnesses of the horse together with their treatment methods. The cavalry handbooks are ended with manège exercises which show the movements used in battle. These prepare for battle and they also show the movement directions with explanatory illustrations.

In literature poetry and lexicography have many descriptions of horses. It is because of the important role of the horse in the thinking of the Arabs. There are countless descriptions of the horse with the titles *Kitāb al-ḥayl* (Book about the horses) and *Kitāb al-faras* (Book about the noble riding horse). These books don't have cavalry training and veterinary chapters, they were rather made for grammatical and lexicographical reasons. The most renowned of all authors is *Abū 'Ubayda* of Persian origins, who lived in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Our research uses his work as the main source and compares it in his style and contents with the work of the same title of his contemporary *al-Aṣma'īl*.

The aim of our research, regardless of the countless material about the horses, is the study of the names of the body parts. Because of the character of the research, the study will make

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<sup>2</sup> The Hyksos is not a people, it is the name of a ruling elite. They were not the only people coming from Asia, who could have brought horses to Egypt, but through their chariots the Hyksos had the biggest influence on Egyptian horse breeding.

<sup>3</sup> *Ğawād 'Alī*, *Mufaṣṣal X/VII.al-ḥiṣān*. Baghdad, *Maktabat al-Nahḍa*

broaden visits to other fields of sciences, such as anatomy, veterinary sciences, horse-breeding, horse racing and ethnography. By touching upon these fields of sciences it is necessary to make occasional lengthy interruptions to the study to give explanations to the given parts.

If somebody reads one of the Arabic hippological books, he will have some new or unknown words for him among the different explanations about the places of the body-parts of the horse, like the different parts of the forehead, the croup, the side or the hoof. For example the „frog” in the European languages means the horny-matter part at the sole of the hoof, between the sulci. In the Arabic texts the „frog” (*difda'*) is inside the hoof, perhaps it means the navicular bone, and the part which protrudes from the sole of the hoof is called the „eagle” (*nasr/nusūr*). This word we cannot find in any of the European languages.

There is another interesting speciality among the names of the horse's body parts, namely that 17 of them bear flying animals' names – sparrow (the root of the forelock), owl (top of the head), fly (tip of the ear), sparrow-hawk (vein under the tongue), butterfly (temporal bone and tongue bone), wasp (or bee-queen) (white stripe on the nose that reaches neither the forehead nor the nostrils below), swallow (hair ridge at the front part of the neck), eagle (frog at the bottom of the hoof), eaglet (fleshy part near the point of the shoulder), falcon (groin), sandgrouse hen (the back at the groin) and cock (flank), crow (the upper part of the croup above the tail), starling (the rear part of the croup), hawk (the upper part of the neck at the nucha), bat (the place on the horse's sides behind the elbows), pidgeon (anus).

Perhaps they are references to the speed of the horse, or there may be some other (symbolic?) connection with these birds. For example the eagle (*nasr*) symbolizes for the Arabs, clear sight, long life and speed.<sup>4</sup> The expressions of long life and speed are also linked to the „frog” (the fleshy part of the hoof), and the health of this part is very important for the horse. This body part's name (*nasr* – eagle) is one of the names that remained from the medieval Classical Arabic words, in the inventory of modern Arabic expressions, unlike the Arabic „frog” (*difda'*), which has disappeared from among the old terms. Perhaps this body part's name has changed because of its parallelism with the meaning of the European termination concerning to other body part. The Arabs did not want to delete „eagle” from among the hoof's parts, and therefore they gave a new name to the Arabic „frog”: *al-ʿazm az-zawraqī*. The frog as an animal species has been registered in the thinking of the Arabs as one

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<sup>4</sup> *ar-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī: Muḥādarāt al-ʿudabāʾ*. Beirut, Dar Sader 2004. pp. 722., 780-781.

that fell down from among the clouds. It has no bones, and it was the rain that created it out of the earth.

It could not be impossible to separate the dialectal words concerning to horse's body parts and the scientific expressions to them. It seems like they complete each other. The classical meanings of these words are change sometimes, they are widen or disappear or they get a new meanings. The account for changes of these anatomical names the more exact explanation of the body parts. In the Middle Ages the hippological books were written by philologists and they look like a register books of anatomy without illustrations. Later, in the 12th-15th century, appeared the illustrated anatomical books about horses, but these works and the figures in them are very similar to each other as they are routine duties. Perhaps the cause of this similarity is the standardization of anatomical expressions, which began in the 11th century.

### 1.1. The description of the horse in the historical texts.

We can classify in many ways the different descriptions telling us about the body-parts of the horse. One of these versions is that wherein the horse is described by scientists or philologists. This kind of description we can find in essay form in historical and geographical texts<sup>5</sup> (and also in the *ḥadīths*), which are not dedicated specifically to horses, but mention them because of their prominent role among the Arabs. The horses in these works are mentioned as battle-tools after the camels, and directly follow the description of weaponry. They tell eloquently what a good or noble horse looks like, and what are those things that need to be long on its body, and what parts are short or wide or smooth, and so on. These fragments are good /fairly typical examples:

- ابن الأعرابي قال: سئل رجل من بني أسد: تعرف الفرس الكريم؟ قال أعرف الجواد المبر من المبطئ المقرف، أما الجواد المبر فالذي لهز لهز العبير وأنف تأنيف السير، الذي إذا عدا اسلهب وإذا قيد اجلعب وإذا انتصب اتلاب، وأما البطئ المقرف فالمدكوك الحجة الضخم الأرنبة الغليظ الرقبة الكثير الجلبة، الذي إذا امسكته قال ارسلني وإذا أرسلته قال امسكني.

*Ibn al-'A'rābī said: A man from the Banū Asad tribe was asked once if he knew the noble horse. And the man said: I can distinguish the good running steed from the lowly- descended and slow horse. As regards the swift steed, its stature is that of the wild-donkey and its walk is equal. Its gallop is extended, and if its (feet are) in fetters, it is resting on the ground quietly, and it is standing firm. Whereas the slow walked and lowly-descended horse has a sloping*

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-'arab*. 1933 Cairo, vols. 25/10. pp.19-55. *Ibn Sīda, al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*. Beirut n.d. vols. 6/2. pp. 138.-147. *Al-Maṣ'ūdī, Murūğ al-ḡahab*. Beirut n.d. vols. 2/2. pp. 696.

*croup, and the tip of its nose is bulky, and its neck is thick with many scars on it. If you wanted to stop this kind of horse, it would go instead (it tells you to let it run away), and if you wanted it to go, it is halting (it asks you to stop him instead).*<sup>6</sup>

- وهذه الحكاية أيضاً نقلت عن صعصعة بن صوصان وقد سأله معاوية: أيّ الخيل أفضل؟ فقال: الطويل الثلاث، العريض الثلاث، القصير الثلاث، الصافي الثلاث. قال معاوية: فسّر لنا. قال: أما الطويل الثلاث فالأذن والعنق والحزام وأما القصير الثلاث فالصلب والعسيب والقضيب وأما العريض الثلاث فالجبهة والمنخر والورك. وأما الصافي الثلاث فالأديم والعين والحافر.

*This story also originates from Ṣa‘ṣa‘ b. Ṣūṣān, who once asked Mu‘āwiya: Which is the best horse? He said: (It has) three long, three wide, three short and three pure (parts).*

*Mu‘āwiya asked: Explain it us! He said: The three long (parts) are the ears, the neck and the side where the saddle<sup>7</sup> is. The three short are the spine, the root of the tail and the penis. The three wide is the forehead, the nostril(s) and the croup. The three pure is the skin<sup>8</sup>, the eye(s) and the hoof(s).<sup>9</sup>*

- قال أبو عبيدة طويل العنق طويل الأذنين طويل الذراعين طويل الأقرب طويل الناصية، قصير الأرساغ قصير عسيب الذنب قصير الظهر قصير الأظرة وهي عصبه فوق الصفاق قصير النضي وهي الذكر. عريض الجبهة عريض اللبان عريض المحزم عريض الفخذين عريض وظيفي الرجلين عريض مثنى الأذنين (وإلى آخره)

*Abū ‘Ubayda said: (the good horse is) long necked, long eared, long forearmed, long shanked, long forelocked, short pasterned, short rooted of its tail, short backed, short flanked, short penised, wide foreheaded, wide chested, wide haunched, wide thighed, wide cannoned on the hind legs, wide placed between the two ear-roots<sup>10</sup>(and so on).*

## 1.2. The description of the horse in the hippological books.

The other kind of description also comes from the philologists, but these books are devoted exclusively to horses under the title of *Kitāb al-ḥayl* or *Kitāb al-faras*, and are of course more detailed than the aforementioned works. And among these are the hippological works in the form of practical handbooks for horsemen or soldiers that the *Kitāb al-furūsiyya*. These works describe the horse from the tip of the ears to the soles, including its inner body-parts also, as a kind of anatomical books, but with a lot of fragments from poems as a kind of

<sup>6</sup> *Ibn Qutayba, al-ma‘ānī al-kabīr. /kitāb al-faras. Beirut 1953. vols. 3/ pp. 109.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ḥizām* means the girth, and if its long, it means that the side of the horse is wide. The name of this part of the horse is *maḥzim*.

<sup>8</sup> The short, smooth haired and single coloured coat.

<sup>9</sup> *Al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-‘arab. 1933 Cairo, vols. 25/10. pp. 19.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibn Qutayba, al-ma‘ānī al-kabīr /kitāb al-faras. Beirut 1953. pp. 110.*

support to buttress the definitions of the descriptions of the body-parts of the horse. The sources of these works are the expressions used by the Jāhiliyya's poets and the Bedouins, who trained the horses on the desert fringes or in the oases.

### 1.3. The descriptions of the horse in the poems.

And this leads us to the third kind of description, namely the poems that serve as the basis of the aforementioned works. The following are examples:

- كليتاها كالمَرَوْتَيْنِ وقلب      نَبْضِي كأنه بر عوم

*Its two kidneys are like two flints, and the sound of its throbbing heart like the trembling of the flower's petal*<sup>11</sup>

- ضروح الحماتين سامي الذراع      اذا ما انتحاه خبار وثب

*The two muscles of its thigh and its forearms are so tight when it wants to jump from the bottom of the hole.*<sup>12</sup>

- وحاجب خاشع وماضغ لهز      والعين تكشف عنها ضاقي الشعر

*Humble eyelids, strong masseters and the eye that the opulent forelock leaves bare.*<sup>13</sup>

- لها ذنب مثل ذيل الهدي      إلى جَوْجُوْ أيد الزافر

*It has a tail like the dress's tail, reaching the deep-sighed chest.*<sup>14</sup>

- ترى بين حواميه      نسورا كنوى القسب

*You can see between (the two parts of) its sulci the frogs that so hard as a date's kernel.*<sup>15</sup>

### 2. Problems of interpreting the names of a horse's body parts.

We need some help to understand these poems regarding the body-parts of the horse and generally we can find this assistance in the author's commentary in the foot-notes. The first problem is added when the critical word (concerning one of the body-parts of the horse) is examined in different ways by different authors, and they tend to have different interpretations in the case of any word. For example in the case of „sāq” the word means tibia (Classical Arabic L.), or cannon (in Saudi dialect), or else the bone of the forearm, or a lot of other things also<sup>16</sup>. “Ġubba” means ankle, hoof, or the two bones of the pastern.<sup>17</sup> “Dirā”

<sup>11</sup> ibid pp. 55.

<sup>12</sup> ibid pp. 20.

<sup>13</sup> ibid pp. 115.

<sup>14</sup> ibid pp. 149.

<sup>15</sup> ibid pp. 168.

<sup>16</sup> Practical animal biology. Cairo, 1980. vols. 3

<sup>17</sup> *Ibn Sīda, al-muḥaṣṣaṣ*. Beirut n.d. vols 6/2. pp.145.

means forearm (CAL), or cannon<sup>18</sup>. “Zawr” means the part of the thorax from the first rib to the sixth (CAL), or the throat<sup>19</sup>, and so on.

## 2.2. Combinations between the terminology of the horse and the terminology of other animals.

Sometimes one of the commentators think that the description refers to a camel or a wild donkey or something else, (for example, to an arrow), and not to a horse. See an example of this:

- إذا سقط الأنداء صيَّنتُ وأُكْرِمْتُ      حَبِيرًا ولم تدرَجْ عليها المعاوزُ

*By the time the morning dew have fallen, it was wrapped up in fine clothes carefully not in worn rags, and great attention was paid to it.*<sup>20</sup>

Here the verse deals with an arrow, and not with a noble horse, but the horse might also be draped in fine clothes so that it should not catch a cold at dawn.

- يعالج بالعطفين شأوا كأنه      حريق الأباء حاصد

*Shows his two sides one after another on the hop as he is a fire piled up from pieces of wood by a reaper.*<sup>21</sup>

We can find the same verse at the horse's description and at the wild ass also.

- كأن على الكتفين منه اذا جرى      مداك عروس أو صِراية حنظل

*Like on his two shoulders is the bride's little millstone for her eye-powder or the colocynth's juice.*<sup>22</sup>

Both of them are yellow, but the horse's sweat is white therefore I think that we can read here about the camel instead.

Sometimes we can see some names among the names of horse's body parts, which originally participated to the camel's or the sheep's terminology. For example „*kalkal*” (part of the chest, that reach the earth if the camel/horse lies down) or „*baraka/birka*” (chest of the camel/horse) or *k(i)rā'* (rear cannon of the sheep/horse in the Syrian dialect).

## 3. Another classification of the horse's body parts' descriptions.

<sup>18</sup> Carl Raswan, Vocabulary of Bedouin words. JNES 4/1945, Alois Musil, The Manners and customs of the Rwala Bedouins. New York, 1928.

<sup>19</sup> Egyptian dialect (*Kitāb al-ma'ārif al-'ilmī/ al-huyūl*. Cairo, 2001.), Janet C. Watson, Lexicon of Arabic Horse Terminology. London, 1996.

<sup>20</sup> *Dīwān al-Šammāh b. Ḍirār*. Cairo, 1977. pp. 193.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibn Qutayba, al-ma'ānī al-kabīr / kitāb al-faras*. Beirut 1953. pp. 18. and 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibn Qutayba, al-ma'ānī al-kabīr / kitāb al-faras*. Beirut 1953. pp. 137.

According to another classification of descriptions, in which the author names the inner as well as the outer parts of the horse's body, we can distinguish five types of such comments.

3.1., Visual description – as in the case, for example, of the *muḥayyan* (the place of the forehead at which the two bones leading to the eyes fork off), *ḥadaqatān* (black circle in the eyes), *nawāhiq* (well-visible bones under the eyes), *muḍammar* (the part of the neck behind the ear-bones), *ḡurābān* (upper part of the croup, where the two muscles join), *fahdatān* (protruding part of the chest near the shoulder), *mukḥulān* (well-visible bone inside the carpus), *ašḡa'ān* (protruding bone on the inside part of the cannon). → This kind of view describes the easily visible, or salient characteristic parts of the horse's body.

3.2., Description of the mount (saddle-horse) – as we can see for example in the case of *qadāl* (place behind the forelock in which the halter is put), *marsin* (the place of the halter's nose-strap), *mustaṭ'am* (the place between the halter's nose-strap and the lips), *sālifatān* (place of the collar, upper part of the neck up to the ear bone), *qaṣara* (part of the neck behind the place where the collar is put), *kātiba* (place on the withers before the rider), *ṣahwa* (the rider's seat on the back of a horse), *qaṭāa* (place behind a rider on the back of the horse, the place of the second rider), *ma'addān* (the two sides of a horse at the place of the rider's feet), *markal* (the place on the horse's sides at which the rider urges it for a gallop, behind the elbows), *ṣafḥatān* (the two sides of the thorax of the horse, where the rider's thighs touch them), *dā'irat al-qāli'* (tuft at the place of the saddle, on the horse's back), *dā'irat al-'amūd* (tuft at the place of the collar). → With this kind of description, the author explains the body-parts of the horse in relation to its rider. According to this kind of view we need to know the harness (the bridle and the saddle) and the rider's attitude on the back of the horse. The horse and its rider appears together in this description like one single living creature.

3.3., One name referring to two or more places on the horse. – For example, *ḍubāb* (tip of the ears, and the iris in the eyes), *watra* (part between the two nostrils, and part between the hock and the stifle), *raḍfa* (small, independent "bone" inside the hoof between the coffin bone and the frog ~ cartilage, small bone in the knee ~ patella, small bone between the cannon and the pastern), *ma'biḍ* (round mobile bone at the rear part of the knee (*rukba*), joint between femur and tibia, on the outer part of the patella). → This type of identification gives explanations of such body-parts as resemble one another in shape, matter/tissue or other common characteristic (cartilage, joint, tendon).

3.4., The body parts as compared to each other. → This kind of description is also visual (1.), but the explanation of the body parts is based on the parts connected with them as though they formed a kind of “chain”. Such explanation is utilized, when the bigger parts are divided into smaller ones, for example on the forehead, on the hoof and on the croup. The parts of the forehead are the *nāṣiya* (the forehead under the forelock above the *ḡabha*), the *ḡabha* (part of the forehead under the ears, above the *ḡabīn*), the *ḡabīn* (the place above the eyes, under the *ḡabha*), the *laṭma* (the centre of the *ḡabha*), the *muḥayyan* (the place of the forehead, at which the two bones leading to the eyes fork off, under the *nāṣiya*). All of these Arabic names correspond to one single term in the European languages, and that is the forehead. The forehead has anatomically (topographically) four main parts: squama temporalis, pars nasalis, pars orbitalis and pars temporalis. These parts are too small places on the forehead to identify them with one of the Arabic expressions.

The description of the hoof (*ḥāfir*) – I will return to it later in more detailed form – is similar to European descriptions with the exception of the frog and the heel. One part of this description is visual, but the other parts demand more attention because of their chain-like form, like this one: The *sunbuk* is the wall or the horny wall. The *al-'am'ar* (sensitive lamina) is between the *sunbuk* and the *salīm* (white line). The *salīm* is between the *al-'am'ar* and the *ṣaḥn* (sole). The *ṣaḥn* is between the *futūr* (bars) and the *salīm*. The *futūr* is at the edge of the *nasr* (frog). The *faḡwa* (gap, centre of sulci) is between the *ḥawāmī* (sulci). The *ḥawāmī* are at the rear part of the hoof, on the two sides of the *faḡwa*. The *na'r* (gap between the two bulbs) is at the rear part of the hoof (*'alya*). The *dawābir* (heel) is on the top of the *'alya* and on the two sides of the *'umm al-qirdān* (short pastern bone). The *'umm al-qirdān* is between the *'alya* and the *marīṭ* (long pastern bone) inside the *rusḡ* (pastern).<sup>23</sup>

The croup has two kinds of description too, the visual and the chain-like type. The all croup is the *warik*, but this word means also the m. biceps femoris, the biggest muscle of the croup. The *warik* is between the *ḥaḡabatān* (top of the croup) and the *ḡā'iratān* (semitendinosus). The *ḥaḡabatān* are the two tops of the *warik*. The *tuwwāra* is in the centre of the *warik*. At the rear part of the croup, next to the *ḡā'iratān* is the *'aḡb*. The *tuffāḥa* is on the top of the *fahid* (thigh), inside of the *warik*.<sup>24</sup> The *ṣalā* is between the two parts of the *warik*.

**3.5.**, This type of description is similar to the third one, but contrary to that here, two or more things bear the same name. These things are in the same place, but are not identical.

<sup>23</sup> *Abū 'Ubayda: Kitāb al-ḥayl*. Cairo, 1986. pp. 136-137.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid* pp.143.

For example, the *nāṣiya* (the forelock and the part of the forehead under it), just as the *sālifa* (a part of a neck and the mane above it)<sup>25</sup>. *Qawnas* means the place above the forelock, properly speaking the top of the head, and the mane above it.

#### 4. The method of *Abū ‘Ubayda’s* description.

The above analysis has been made on the basis of *Abū ‘Ubayda’s*<sup>26</sup> *Kitāb al-khayl* (Book about Horses), because this is the very best and most detailed description about the horse in my opinion. In this book, the author has divided the horse’s body into eight parts from its head to its hind legs. These are (1.) the head, (2.) the neck, (3.) the back, (4.) the shoulders with the chest and the forearms, (5.) the front legs, (6.) the body and the inside parts, (7.) the croup and the thigh, (8.) the hock and the hind legs.

This sort of description is very useful for someone who wants to find the meaning of certain body parts, for example, who wants to know the meaning of *qaṭāa*. He can find this name among the back’s parts in *Abū ‘Ubayda’s* book and not at the description of the croup, although its translation is the upper part of the croup, or simply the croup and not the back. In European thought, the back extends from the withers to the tip of the croup, thus this expression means both being on the edge of these two parts. The *qaṭāa* (in the form *al-qatan*) is occurs in Fonahn’s dictionary<sup>27</sup> as *regio lumbalis*, therefore this name is not specific to the horse’s terminology, where it is described as the “place behind the rider on the back of a horse”.

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid* pp. 125, 185.

<sup>26</sup> *Abū ‘Ubayda* (d. 209/824-5), Mesopotamian of a Persian origin (and possibly Jewish descent too) philologist and a polymath.

<sup>27</sup> A. Fonahn, *Arabic and Latin Anatomical Terminology chiefly from the Middle Ages*. 1922. pp. 123.

## 5. Reading problems of the Arabic horse-terminology.

When the name of a smaller part within a bigger body part has been translated from Arabic into one of the European languages, it was collapsed into the bigger one's name. Thus the smaller part is named with the bigger's name: the croup, the chest, the neck or the hoof and so on. But we can find similar simplifications in the Arabic authors too, for example, in the case of *markal* and *ma'add*. While *Abū 'Ubayda* has distinguished them and said that the *markal* was the place on the horse's sides, at which the rider urges it (*yurakkiluhu*) for a gallop, behind the elbows, it seems that the *ma'add* does not really have the same meaning: two sides of a horse at the place of a rider's feet, hard, stiff muscular tissue on its two sides, behind the shoulders.<sup>28</sup> Namely this is a description of a body part anatomically, and not merely the identifications of a place on the horse's body. Thus the two expressions do not mean the same, yet some authors do not distinguish them because of their identical location. For example *al-'Aṣma'ī* (d. 213/828) in his *Kitāb al-khayl*, who seems a more practical scientist than *Abū 'Ubayda*, held both of them to be the same thing, but then he is not so meticulous in the description of the horse.

As to the *ma'add*, *al-Nuwayrī* (d.733/1333) says that it is at the place of the girth on the horse's sides.<sup>29</sup>

*Ibn Sīda* (d.488/1066) has collected a lot of explanations from different authors about the body parts of the horse.<sup>30</sup> For example, the *ḥawšab* means for *Abū 'Ubayd* the interior of the hoof (*ḥašw al-ḥāfir*), just like the *ḡubba* (ankle). *Abū 'Ubayda* states that the *ḥawšabān* means the two bones of the pastern (*rusg*). *Ibn Sikkīt* holds that the *ḡubba* is the same as the *ḥāfir*.

The *ḡubba* means in the *al-mu'aḡam al-wasīṭ* the joint between the *sāq* (tibia) and the *fahid* (thigh), namely the stifle. Its means also the *ḥiḡāḡ* (palpebra) in the eyes. If we look into the *muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ*, the *ḡubba* means, beside the above, the connecting part between the *ḥāfir* and the *wazīf* (cannon). Since this description does not mention the pastern between the hoof and the cannon, we can conclude it that the *ḥāfir* means both the hoof and the pastern together. The *ḥāfir* as nail sometimes replaced with the word *sunbuk* (the wall), but in the meaning of "hoof". (See above, when the smaller part was named by the bigger's name.)

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<sup>28</sup> *Abū 'Ubayda, Kitāb al-khayl*. Cairo, 1986. pp. 204.

<sup>29</sup> *Al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-'arab*. 1933 Cairo, vols. 25/10. pp. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibn Sīda, al-muḥaṣṣaṣ*. Beirut n.d. vols 6/2. pp. 138.

*Al-Mas'ūdī* quotes a short story<sup>31</sup> from the time of the caliph 'Umar (634-644), who held examination for the horse to determine their nobility. They put a vessel full of water on the ground and led the horses one after another to drink from it. That horse which drank from the vessel with its forelegs upright, since its neck was long enough to reach the water, was declared a noble one, and that horse which bent its forelegs because of its short neck was recorded as a common horse. The expression “bent its forelegs” was expressed with the terms *ḥāfir* (*ḡādat ḥawāfiruhu*) or *sunbuk* (*tanā aḥad as-sunbukayn*) in the same meaning. Yet the hoof cannot bend itself, which only the pastern can. Thus I think that here the *ḥāfir* or *sunbuk* mean the hoof and the pastern together. In that case, *Ibn Sikkīt* may be right in stating that “the *ḥāfir* means the *ḡubba*”, namely the part from the hoof to the ankle is the *ḥāfir*.

According to the *muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ*, the meaning of the *ḥāfir* is the same as the human's foot (*qadam*), on which one goes. In comparison of the horse's skeleton with that of the human, the human's *qadam* is the same as the horse's hind leg from the hock to the hoof. So the *ḥāfir* is the general name of the hoof, which the horse goes on, and not that of the nail only.

#### 6. Changes of the names of the horse's body parts in the modern age.

If we compare the names of the horse's body parts in the Middle Ages with the corresponding names in our times, we will find that the modern age has opted for the practical style of *al-'Aṣma'ī*, and prefers to use the simple and definite expressions from the Classical Arabic terminology of the horse. Thus have disappeared from the hoof's parts names like *dahīs* (coffin bone), *'umm ul-qirdān* (short pastern bone), *marīt* (long pastern bone) and modern expressions translated from the European languages like the first foot bone (long pastern bone – *aṭ-tulāmā al-awwal*), the second foot bone (short pastern bone - *aṭ-tulāmā aṭ-tānī*) and the third foot bone (coffin bone - *aṭ-tulāmā aṭ-tālīt*) have taken their place. The *sunbuk* has disappeared and became *ḡidār al-ḥāfir* (wall of the hoof) instead. The old name of the white line in the hoof (*salīm*) has changed into *al-ḥaṭṭ al-abyaḍ* (white line). The names of the smaller parts of the chest and the croup have also disappeared and only the bigger parts' names have remained. As from among the names of medieval division of the forehead remained the *ḡabha* only, meaning the whole forehead. The *ka'b* in the CAL means the hock, but in the modern dialects means the heel on the hoof. The cause of the appearance of this

<sup>31</sup> *Murūḡ ad-dahab*, Beirut, 1989. vols. 2/2. pp. 696.

word at the place of the heel is the above mentioned similarity with the names of the human's body parts.

## 7. Connections between the dialectical variations and the Classical Arabic language.

I have collated four different collections concerning the names of the horse's body parts. Two groups from these words are in the Syrian and Saudi dialects, and the other two from Egyptian and Iraqi agricultural school-books together with a modern expressions for them. I have compared them with the Classical Arabic terminology and found that among the dialectical words, some Classical Arabic expressions are preserved, but with meanings different from those in the Middle Ages. Thus *zawr* in the Saudi dialect means the chest, instead of the place of the first six ribs on the horse's side, (as in Classical Arabic Language) and in the Egyptian dialect means the throat like in the case of a human. According to the explanation of the *al-Mu'ağam al-wasīf*, the *zawr* is the meeting point of the first ribs at the bottom of the chest, which means that it should be at the bottom of the chest and on the place behind the elbows too. It depends on the author's interpretation what he means by the term. The best way for us to find a correct meaning of a word concerning one of the horse's body parts, if we know the author's living place. It is impossible to explain a Saudi horse's description with the horse terminology in Iraqi or in Egyptian dialects. For example *sāq* (tibia) means in Saudi dialect cannon, and on the place of the CA *sāq* is the *fahid /afhād* (thigh in CA). *Sāq* means the cannon at the human's body parts, therefore I think that the Saudi Bedouins named the horse's body parts like they did it at the case of the human, but they did not name it in anatomically meaning.

Then the foremost cause of the difference among the interpretations referring to the horse's body parts is the false correspondences to the human's parts. As we know, in the place of the horse's hocks are our heels, and our feet are similar to the horse's cannons, our fingers and our nails correspond to the horse's pasterns and its hoofs. In the Saudi dialect, the basis of comparison is the function and not the anatomy. We can see an excellent example of this among the names of the camel's body parts<sup>32</sup>, where the names are "slipped up" on the hind legs because the tibia's name is lacking on it. Its name is in the place of the cannon. Likewise, on the fore legs the upper arm is in the place of the forearm and the forearm is in the place of

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<sup>32</sup> *Al-ibil al-'arabiyya al-aşīla*. Dār Ğarrūs Press, Libanon, 1990. pp. 68. and 83.

the cannon. (As the anatomical upper arm does not exist.) Therefore the Classical Arabic name of the cannon (*waẓīf*) is lacking. The book on the camel is replete with Classical Arabic verses which were written about the camel's body parts as metaphors. Since there are many differences among the Classical Arabic interpretations and the modern Arabic descriptions concerning the camel's body parts, thus the explanations in the verses are uncertain too.

If we have a look at the dictionaries collecting the medieval anatomical expressions concerning the human, we found that “*maḥṣil al-sāq wa-l-qadam*” means ankle, which in the case of the horse corresponds to the *ḡubba* (ankle). This fact shows unambiguously that the “*qadam*”, a word which means the same as *ḥāfir* in some CA explanations and in the Saudi dialect too, connects with the *sāq*. *Sāq* here really means the cannon, but the connecting bone with it from above is the *dirā'* (forearm), and not the *fahid* (thigh), according to anatomy.<sup>33</sup>

## II. THE HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH AND ITS MAIN PROBLEMS

The earliest descriptions about the horses can be considered the descriptive parts of the pre-Islamic (*ḡāhiliyya*) poetry. The pre-Islamic poetry was handed down orally and was only written down after the rise of Islam, in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. By examining the description of the horses by different poets we see that all of them depicted a kind of ideal horse which was first put into words by *Imru-l-Qays*. He is considered the Prince of Poets. He has kingly origins; he was the son of *Huḡr*, the king of the Southern Arab Kinda alliance. His contemporaries either quote from him or tell his poetic visions with their own words.

The dignified lines with some poetic hyperboles subtly demonstrate the quality of the given body part of the horse by comparisons. For example shin as rope twined from palm fiber, abdominal wall hard as shoemaker's wood, muscular (sinewy) shoulders as the bride's grinding stone for her eye's make up, face long as the point of the spear. Smooth skin as the staff of bachelors being far away from their families. Forehead as the back of a shield which was made by an expert artisan. Ears as the points of reed pens, or the leaves coming out from the buds, or as the crop of *marḥa* (similar to pea) when the grain has already fallen from it.

The poems after the appearance of Islam follow the ideal horse depicted by *Imru-l-Qays*, but these descriptions are very detailed and difficult to understand without explanations.

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<sup>33</sup> In Hungarian language the *sāq* (*szár*) means the cannon and the tibia also, in French the *sāq* means „le canon” in both cases, in German the *sāq* means in both cases „e Röhre”. In English the *sāq* means „shank” and „cannon”.

The family origins of the ideal horse depicted in the poems are also important, not only the qualities of some parts, such as the long neck. There are some horse names mentioned in the medieval horse descriptions, and being their offsprings were also the proof of nobility. According to the horse breeding Bedouins, the important thing in nobility is the proof, the usability, since the Arab horse is noble, because these horses keep their characteristics through generations and can be usable.

### III. SOURCES OF RESEARCH

The base and frame of our research are three main works.

- *Abū ‘Ubayda, Ḥayl = Ma‘mar b. al-Muṭannā at-Taymī Abū ‘Ubayda. Kitāb al-Ḥayl. Cairó, 1986. (Book about horses)*

- *al-Aṣma‘ī, Ḥayl = Abū Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Malik b. Qurayb, Kitāb al-ḥayl Publisher: Nūrī Ḥamūdī al-Qaysī, Baghdad 1970 (Book about horses)*

- *Ibn Qutayba, Ma‘ānī = Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba al-Dīnawarī, Kitāb al-ma‘ānī al-kabīr fī abyāt al-ma‘ānī Publisher: F.Krenkow. 3 volumes, Beirut, Dār al-Nahḍa al-Ḥadīṭa, 1953 (Big collection of poetic theme elements)*

The three works, mostly in translation and with explanations, give the base of the research which aims to give the exact translation of the name of the horse’s body parts

Since according to his 8<sup>th</sup> century contemporaries *Abū ‘Ubayda* was a polyhistor with the most thorough knowledge, and because his descriptions of the horse were the most thorough in the works I researched, I chose his work as the base and etalon in this chaos concerning the names of the body parts of the horse. The dictionary made from his work follows the structure of the book (*Kitāb al-ḥayl*), that is describing the horse from head towards the rear hoof. I supplemented the definitions given by the author with the appropriate Hungarian or Latin names. I drew a parallel between his work and *al-Aṣma‘ī*’s book, which is much shorter, contains less material and doesn’t give explanation to all parts of the body, so I made explanations to it based on *Abū ‘Ubayda*’s dictionary.

In the literary part of the thesis I followed the structure of Ibn Qutayba's book.

The thesis also deals with the transmittal of classical authors to the modern era, for which I used the following authors' collection: Carl Raswan (1893-1966) the collection of dialects of the Middle East in the Ottoman era, Waslaw Rzewusky (1777-1831) collection of Saudi Arabian dialects (Najd), Alois Musil (1868-1944) the dialect of the Syrian Ruwala tribe and Janet C.E. Watson (1959-) Egyptian classical and dialect words.

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