Plants in The Pre-Islamic Poetry with Special Reference to The Diwan of Imru al-Qays

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ABSTRACT

Environmentally plant is a young tree, shrub or herb for planting. Imru al-Qays the pre-Islamic poet has poetically versed the description of the plants in many hemistichs. It hemistically can be compartmentalized into several categories, cloves, colocynth, henna, moss, onion, pepper, trees acacia, aloe, dal, jujube, palm and tamarisk. He has carefully portrayed the sweet smell of his beloved as a gentle breeze of the east wind arriving with the sweet smell of cloves. Moreover, he has craftily presented himself during the separation with his beloved, it was as though I were a man who broke colocynth near the acacia trees of the tribe. Furthermore, he has described beautifully the strength of his leading horse/camel (the blood on its neck is like the juice of henna). Imru al-Qays also has skillfully elucidated the destructive power of the rain in his popular poems in the evening, the birds of prey are drowned in the furthest, part of the desert Jiwa' like plucked roots of wild onion. The poet has beautifully arranged the lines by comparing the dung of white antelopes like the pepper, the separation like the man who broke colocynth near the acacia trees, the body sweats of his fast and strong horse like the murmuring of the wind passed the Ath’ab tree. The poet has continuously rhymed the lines by versing the dal, jujube, palm and tamarisk. It is actually the plants, that assist the life of Bedouins in the barren land to survive.

Key words: Plants, Imru al-Qays, Pre-Islamic Poetry

Introduction

Plantplänt, n. a vegetable organism, or part of one, ready for planting or lately planted: a slip, cutting, or scion: an offshoot: a young person: a sapling: a cudgel: any member of the vegetable kingdom, esp. (popularly) one of the smaller kinds: growth: amount planted: the sole of the foot: mode of planting oneself, stand: something deposited beforehand for a purpose: equipment, machinery, apparatus, for an industrial activity: factory: bedded oyster (U.S.): a thief’s hoard (slang): a spy, detective, picket or cordon of detectives, or police trap (slang): a deceptive trick, put-up job (slang). –v.t. to put into the ground for growth: to introduce: to insert: to fix: to place firmly: to set in position: to station, post: to found: to settle: to locate: to place or deliver (as a

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blow, a dart): to leave in the lurch: to bury (slang): to hide (slang): to place stolen goods, etc., in another’s possession so as to incriminate him: to place as a spy, etc. (slang): to instil or implant: to furnish with plants: to colonise: to stock: to furnish or provide (with things disposed around): to salt (as a mine) (slang). –v.i. to plant trees, colonists, or anything else. –n. *plant’ a* the sole of the foot. –adj. *plant’able* in general. –adj. *plant’ar* or the sole of the foot. –ns. *plant’a’tion* place planted, esp. with trees: a colony: an estate used for growing cotton, rubber, tea, sugar, or other product of warm countries: a large estate (Southern U.S.): the act or process of introduction: the act of planting (Milt.); *plant’er* one who plants or introduces: the owner or manager of a plantation: a pioneer colonist: a settler: an instrument for planting: an ornamental pot or other container for plants. –adj. *plant’i’grade* walking on the soles of the feet. –n. an animal that walks so. –*n. plant’ing* the act of setting in the ground for growth: the art of forming plantations of trees: a plantation (Scot.). –adj. *plant’less*. –*n. plant’let, plant’ling* a little plant; *planto’racy* a ruling class of plantation owners and managers: government by plantation owners and managers: *plant’ule* a plant embryo. –*plant’-associa’tion, plant’-forma’tion* an assemblage of plants growing together under like conditions, as in a salt-marsh, a pine-wood, etc.; *plantation song* a Negro song, such as the workers sang on American plantations; *plant’house* a structure for growing plants of warmer climates: *plant’ic-e’cruive* (-kroov; Orkney and Shetland) a kitchen garden, enclosure for cabbage. –adj. *plant’-like*. –*plant’-lore* folk-lore of plants; *plant’s louse* an aphis or greenhouse fly; –pl. *plant’-louse*. –*plant’-pot* a pot for growing a plant in. –*plant out* to transplant to open ground, from pot or frame: to dispose at intervals in planting. [O.E. *plante* (n.) –L. *planta*, shoot, slip, cutting, and O.E. *plantian* (vb.), and partly from or affected by Fr. *plante* and L. *planta*, plant, also (perh. a different word) sole.

*Plants:*

*Cloves:*

Idhaqamatatadawwa’a al-miskminhuma
Nasiyma al-sabaja’atbirayya al-qaranfud(iii)
When both of them stood up, the musk diffused from them was like a gentle breeze of the east wind arriving with the sweet smell of cloves.

*Colocynth:*

Kaanniyghadat al-baynyaumatahammalu
Lada samurat al-hayynaqifuhanzali(iv)
On the morning of the day of separation, when they loaded up, it was as though I were a man who broke colocynth near the acacia trees of the tribe.

Kaanna ‘ala al-matayniminhuidhaantaha
Madaka ‘arusin aw salayatahanzali(v)
When he leans on one side, the sides of his back are like a bride’s mortar or a pestle used for colocynth.

*Henna:*

Kaannadima’a al-hadiyatibinahrihi
‘asaratuhinna in bishaybinmurajjali(vi)
The blood of the leader-camels on his neck is like the juice of Henna in combed white hair.

*Moss:*

Wa yakhatu ‘ala summinsilabinka’annaha
Hijaratughaylinwarisatun bi tuhlabi(vii)
He walks on solid, firm hooves that are like the stones of a stream, overgrown with moss.

*Onion:*

Kaanna al-siba’afihigharqa ‘ashiyyatan
Bi’arja ‘ihi al-quswa ‘anabissyhu ‘unsuhi(viii)

The text appears to be a mix of English and Arabic, with certain phrases and terms translated into both languages. The English text provides definitions and descriptions of various plants and their uses, while the Arabic text seems to be a poetic or narrative passage, possibly referencing traditional or cultural practices involving plants.
In the evening, the birds of prey are drowned in the furthest parts of the desert of Jiwa’ like plucked roots of wild onion.

Pepper:

\[\text{Tara ba’ara al-aramifi ‘arasatiha}\\Wa q\text{' anihakaaannahuhubbfufid}\text{[ix]}\]
You see that the dung of the white antelopes in its courts and depressed plains is like the seeds of the pepper.

Unspecified:

\[\text{Waqad ‘aghtadiywattayru fi wukunatiha}\\Lighaythin min al-wasmiyyira’iduhu khali\text{[x]}\]
And I have gone out on the morning when the birds are still in their nests to herbage produced by spring rain – he who searches for fodder there will be alone.

\[\text{Bimahniyyatinqd ‘azara al-dalu nabtaha}\\Majarrajusuyh ‘animiyn wa khuyyab}\text{[xi]}\]
In a winding valley where the Dal trees have assisted its plants (to grow by giving them shelter) and where soldiers pass – both the looter and the empty – ended.

\[\text{Warahkataysi al-rabliyanfudura’sah}\\’azatanbihi min sa’ikinmutahallib}\text{xii}\]
My beast returned like the goat of the autumnal herbage, shaking its head through an injury it received of flowing sweat.

Trees:

\[\text{Acacia:}\]
\[\text{Kaanniyghadat al-bayniyawmatahammalu}\\Lada samurat al-hayyinaqifuhanzal}\text{xiii}\]
On the morning of the day of separation, when they loaded up – it was as though I were a man who broke colocynth near the acacia trees of the tribe.

\[\text{Aloe:}\]
\[\text{Ath’ab:}\]
\[\text{Idha ma jara sha’waynwabtalla ‘itfuhu}\\Taqlulhazyaz al-riyhimarratbi’atha’bi}\text{xiv}\]
When he gallops two heats and his body sweats, you would say, the murmuring of the wind has passed by the Ath’ab tree.

\[\text{Dal:}\]
\[\text{Bimahniyyatinqd ‘azara al-dalu nabtaha}\\Majarrajuyushghanimiynwakhuyyab}\text{xv}\]
In a winding valley where the Dal trees have assisted its plants (to grow, by giving them shelter) and where soldiers pass – both the looter and the empty-handed.

\[\text{Jujube:}\]
\[\text{Kaannaqulub al-tayriratba wa yabisa}\\Lada wakriha al-‘unnabwahashafu al-bali}\text{xvi}\]
As if the hearts of birds, some moist and some dried, by her nest, were the fruit of the Jujube and dried dates.

\[\text{Palm:}\]
\[\text{Wa far’iyaziyn al-matna ‘aswad fahimin}\]
She has black, luxuriant hair adorning her back like the bunch of dates of a palm tree loaded with clusters.

She has thin flanks, and is slender in the waist like a twisted rope; her shanks are like the stem of a well-watered palm-tree with evenly set branches.

In Tayma’ it did not leave even the trunk of a palm tree nor any strong-hold except for one built with mighty stones.

They raised garments of Antioch cloth over red patterned-cloth like ripening dates cut from palm trees or the garden of Yathrib.

Its ropes are the strands of choice palm-trees | ropes of excellent camels with sunken eyes. Its peak if of Athami cloth, with a fringe to it.

Tamarisk:

She raises her thin fingers which are nor hard, rough and callous but are like the red worms of zaby or like the toothpicks of the tamarisk tree.

For all his fatigue, he responds quickly to the spur as though his back, because of his leanness and the galloping, was the large tree of an outpost.

Rounded behind his ears, it is as though his bridle and his halter were around the head of a pruned tree trunk.

The poet has craftily established the clove – as the sweet perfume – biryyaa al-qaranafuli- with the sweet smell of cloves – to describe his beautiful beloved – colocynth – to portray the bad day of separation - naqifhanzal- a man who broke colocynth or to present the swiftness and leanness of his horse – by using the comparison – such as,

When he leans on one side, the sides of his back are like a bride’s mortar or a pestle used for colocynth.

Furthermore, the poet has comparatively rhymed that the blood of the leader-camels is like the juice of henna.

Meanwhile, he has accurately elucidated the solid hooves of his camel by putting the line:
Moreover, the poet has firmly described the heavy rain – in the desert which that directly caused the calamity.

The poet has metrically compared the dung of antelope is like the seeds of the pepper.

All the plants that which are gracefully versified by the poet are the basic needs of Bedouins, their poultry and wild animals to survive in the remote barren land.

References

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Endnote

ii Ibid, page 980-981.
v Ibid, page 56.
vi Ibid, page 56.
viii Ibid, page 63.
x Ibid, page 143.
xi Ibid, page 66.
xii Ibid, page 71.
xiv Ibid, page 68.
xvi Ibid, page 145.
xvii Ibid, page 44.
xviii Ibid, page 45.
xxii Ibid, page 46.
xxiv Ibid, page 68.