

al-Khirniq

Al-Khirniq bt. Badr b. Hiffān (or bt. Hiffān b. Badr) of the Banū Ḍubay'a b. Qays (Bakr) (fl. mid-sixth century C.E.) was a pre-Islamic female poet. Her name, meaning rabbit kitten or leveret, also appears without the article, Khirniq, and some sources persist in reading her name as Khirnaq.

Her descent shows some variations: bt. Sufyān, bt. Qaḥāfa, and bt. 'Ab'aba. She is considered to be the half-sister or aunt of the famous poet Ṭarafa b. al-'Abd, also from Ḍubay'a. As she is usually referred to as "sister of Ṭarafa," it seems safe to assume that they belonged to the same generation. Al-Khirniq was married to Bishr b. 'Amr b. Marthad, whom she mourns in her elegies, as she does her son 'Alqama, who apparently died, together with his father, in the battle of Qulāb against the Banū Wāliba (Asad).

She is one of the earliest female poets whose poems have been transmitted. Her *dūwān* contains thirteen poems, a total of fifty-eight to sixty verses: nine elegies (one on Ṭarafa, one on 'Abd 'Amr b. Bishr, and seven on Bishr), one *wasf* (description, probably a fragment), and three *hijā'* (invective) poems. One poem seems to be part of an *aḥlāl*, the opening part of a *qaṣīda*, a kind of poetry normally composed only by men. Its attribution to al-Khirniq is therefore unlikely, all the more so because it is composed in the *ḥazaj* metre, which is rare in pre-Islamic poetry.

Al-Khirniq's elegies represent the earliest known stage of this kind of poetry entering a more elevated and stylish realm, developing away from the earlier lament (*nijāha*). Some of the features of later female-composed elegies start to take shape in her work. Examples are the possibly fictitious dialogue as an *incipit*

and the prominent role of *madīḥ* (praise) cataloguing the deceased's manly virtues, known as *muruwwa*.

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Khurāsān, Banū

The **Banū Khurāsān** were a small autonomous dynasty that governed the city of Tunis (at the time part of Ifrīqiya but now the capital of the modern-day state Tunisia) between c. 450/1058 and 522/1128, and again shortly between 543/1148 and 554/1159 [Illustration 1]. The political history of these local rulers is