

Al-Qal'at al-Hamrā'

The king favours not inferior mounts.
Bring us but thoroughbred Arabian
mares never trained nor broken in.

The king would furthermore
tough raiment to lead the hunt, not
frilly broidery of velvet, silk or
mink-trimmed robes bejewellèd,
but leather jodhpur boots and
breeches rough of warp and waft.

The king wouldst away from the rabble's
noisome suitors, innovators, priests, or
whomsoever deigns to keep us far
from watching the precession of the stars,
from hearing the music of the spheres.

Behold the hewn stone passage to Orion!
The hornèd Beast, once mighty, slain
sinks into the quagmire horizon
spilling stars like azure blood.

Therein is the sign, the call to arms:
Chamberlain, fetch me my scimitar!

There is today a better place to be.

There!

There is the sign.