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Why Stress Does Matter: New Material on Metrics in *Zajal* Poetry

There has been a long and controversial debate among Arabists on how to scan the al-Andalus-born *zajals* and *muwashshaḥs*.¹ On one extreme we find the defenders of strict ‘*arūḍ*’ theory (also known as the quantitative or classical theory) whose latest and foremost proponent is Gregor Schoeler. This theory claims that it is possible to scan every *muwashshaḥ* or *zajal* verse with Khalilian and non-Khalilian meters. The second theory, which in the last decades has become synonymous with its main advocate Federico Corriente, posits that the meters of *zajals* from al-Andalus are based on ‘*arūḍ*’ meters, but that they were modified in such a way that stress patterns could overrule the requirements of the quantitative ‘*arūḍ*’ system.² Furthermore, in the centuries after the birth of strophic poetry in al-Andalus, Arab scholars and poetry experts from Ibn Bassām and Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk to Ibn Khaldūn declared that strophic poetry was not always governed by ‘*arūḍ*’.³

This article introduces some fresh theoretical material which may help to defuse this highly charged debate—at least as far as Eastern *zajal* poetry is concerned. The material is part of the treatise *Daf‘ al-shakk wa-al-mayn fī taḥrīr al-fannayn* (The dispelling of doubt and untruth in the writing of the two arts) written by a rather unknown author whose name has only recently surfaced in Western Arab philology: Jamāl al-Dīn or Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-

¹I am very grateful to my colleagues of the ALEA group at the University of Münster, who supported me with their valuable comments and suggestions.

²I refrain from giving a comprehensive account of the literature produced in this area. Suffice it to mention here the articles written by Corriente and the responses by Schoeler: Federico Corriente, “The meters of the *Muwašṣaḥ*, an Andalusian Adaption of ‘*arūḍ*’,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 12 (1982): 76–82; Gregor Schoeler, “Ibn Quzmān’s Metrik,” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 40 (1983), cols. 311–32; Federico Corriente, “Again on the Metrical System of *muwašṣaḥāt* and *zaḡal*,” *JAL* 17 (1986): 34–49; Gregor Schoeler, “Über die Metrik andalusischer und nicht-andalusischer *zaḡals*,” in *Festschrift für Hans-Rudolf Singer* (Frankfurt, 1991), 2:887–909; Federico Corriente, “Further remarks on the modified ‘*arūḍ*’ of Arabic Stanzaic Poetry (andalusi and non-andalusi),” *JAL* 28 (1997): 123–40.

³Margaret Larkin, “Popular Poetry in the Post-Classical Period,” in *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, ed. Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge, 2006), 205. On page 217, Larkin cites al-Qurayshī, the editor of Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Bulūgh*, who dates al-Banawānī’s death to 837/1434.



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DOI: [10.6082/M12J691D](https://doi.org/10.6082/M12J691D). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M12J691D>)

DOI of Vol. XIX: [10.6082/M1HH6H5C](https://doi.org/10.6082/M1HH6H5C). See <https://doi.org/10.6082/Y9V3-8H75> to download the full volume or individual articles. This work is made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY). See <http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/msr.html> for more information about copyright and open access.

Banawānī (d. ca. 860/1456).⁴ To date, I have found six manuscripts with this title.⁵ In Paris and Berlin Wetzstein II 108 the book is referred to as *Rafʿ* (“lifting”) *al-shakk wa-al-mayn fī taḥrīr al-fannayn*. Hoenerbach in his seminal work on Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī’s *Al-Kitāb al-ʿāṭil al-ḥālī wa-al-murakhkhaṣ al-ghālī* mentions it as written by an anonymous author.⁶ As the title indicates, the poetics of al-Banawānī is limited to two of the four non-canonical types of poetry, *zajal* and *mawāliyyā*, unlike its two precursors—al-Ḥillī’s *Kitāb al-ʿāṭil* and Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Bulūgh al-amal fī fann al-zajal*—both of which include the other two types, *kān wa-kān* and *qūmā*. Al-Ḥillī’s pioneering *Kitāb al-ʿāṭil* served as a blueprint for Ibn Ḥijjah’s *Bulūgh* and some other minuscule summaries of non-canonical poetics that are included in Ibn Khaldūn’s *Muqaddimah* and al-Ibshīhī’s *Mustaṭraf*. Hoenerbach states that although al-Banawānī copies al-Ḥillī in some minor aspects, he comes up with his own opinions on *zajal* and *mawāliyyā* theory. During my work on the *Dafʿ*, I could consistently verify Hoenerbach’s assumption, which means that this is perhaps the only original treatise on non-canonical poetry that did not plagiarize al-Ḥillī in the essential parts of its poetics. It is interesting to note here that all the poetics of non-canonical poetry were written in the East. Furthermore, while al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ḥijjah give a great amount of space to the masters from al-Andalus such as Ibn Quzmān, Ibn Ghurlah, Madghalīs, and others, al-Banawānī only rarely cites verses from them or includes them in theoretical discussions, a matter that requires further research and deserves a publication in its own right.

⁴Larkin, “Popular,” 202.

⁵I have been able to consult three manuscripts of this work: (1) Berlin, Wetzstein II 108 (complete version); author is given as ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-Kurdī (d. 860/1456). Although this is the most neatly written of the manuscripts available to me, it contains misspellings, blurs some of the key terms, and omits others, which makes it unreliable in some cases. (2) Wetzstein II 1768, which is incomplete, gives as the name of the author ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-Yanawānī. The writer of this manuscript, which is bound together with a work on prayer times and the determination of the *qiblah*, left out parts of the introduction and the discussion of *zajal* theory. This becomes evident from the subsections of one chapter (fol. 40, last line: *wa-hum fī baḥrin min jahlihim yakhūḍūn*); in Wetzstein II 108 this sentence is followed by some explanations in rhymed prose on the origins of *zajal*. Instead, Wetzstein II 1768 jumps directly into the discussion of dotted and undotted letters in *zajal* poetry. (3) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 4454; the author is given as Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Yūsuf al-Banawānī al-Shāfiʿī. The manuscripts that I was not able to consult yet are: (4) Princeton 408h; (5) Cairo, Maḥad al-makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyyah, al-Azhar, adab 7211; and lastly (6) Istanbul, Millet 1127, fols. 47b–68b, which gives 857/1453 as the author’s date of death.

⁶Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Die vulgärarabische Poetik des Safīyaddīn al-Ḥillī* (Wiesbaden, 1956), 3. Gregor Schoeler follows Hoenerbach in his article on *zajal* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. Zadjal.



Metrics as Presented by Yūsuf al-Banawānī

One of the main differences between al-Banawānī in comparison to al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ḥijjah is his theories on prosody. He introduces us to a new system of metrics that other theoreticians employed, too. His contemporary Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī, for example, uses *en passant* two of the technical terms that figure in the *Dafʿ*, which I will return to later on in this article.

I applied the metrical system laid out by al-Banawānī to a number of Eastern *zajals* where it fitted well and was utterly versatile because of the short and freely combinable metrical units that this system is made of. After introducing this theory, I will analyze an entire *zajal* by Ibrāhīm al-Miʿmār to demonstrate the viability of al-Banawānī's metrics. The *zajal* in question is constituted exclusively of long syllables, which is an insurmountable challenge to any purely quantitative approach. Where the quantitative criteria of *ʿarūd* fail, measure and rhythm are achieved in a different way as the metrics of al-Banawānī and the inclusion of stress into the equation provide a solution to this issue.

Al-Banawānī begins his chapter on *wazn* with a definition: *al-waznu miʿyārun yukhtabaru bihi ḥālu l-kalāmi ṣiḥḥatan wa-khalalan bi-quwwatin fī ṭabʿi l-insāni walaysat li-kulli insānin bal hibatun mina llāhi l-ʿazīzi l-ḥakīmi li-ṣāhibi ṭ-ṭabʿi s-salīmi wa-lā tustafādu bi-taʿallumin* (fol. 3r, MS Paris). (The meter is a measure with which the condition of the speech is measured in terms of correctness and faultiness, by virtue of an innate power that lies in the nature of man, but not of every man, for it is a gift of the wise and almighty God to the sound-natured one, a power that cannot be acquired by learning.)

He then continues with the definition of terms that *zajal* poets used to describe verses and their structural units: *wa-qad iṣṭalaḥa ahlu ḥādḥā l-fanni ʿalā kalimātin ʿurfīyyatin wa-sammawhā shudhuran* [not *shudhūran* as one would expect] *wa-hiya ka-ṣ-ṣanji li-mawāzīnihim fihā yuḥarrirūna wa-ʿalayhā yuʿawwilūna*. (The people of this art agreed on conventional words and called them *shudhur* ["scattered pieces"] which are like cymbals to their poetic measures; within these they compose [their poems] and on them they rely.)

The sixteen *shudhur* that al-Banawānī lists now (I don't know if the number sixteen was chosen deliberately to refer to the sixteen meters of the Khalīlian metrics) are to be considered mnemonic expressions, from now on referred to as metrical units, which serve the *zajal* poet as an aid to measure the rhythm of his verses. It doesn't seem to be a coincidence that exactly these words have been picked because they occur in a considerable number of *zajals*, especially in the beginning verses.⁷ Thus they are especially apposite to *zajal* poetry because

⁷See, for example, a *zajal* by al-Ḥillī labelled as "Egyptian," which begins with the words *naʿshaq qamar*: Hoenerbach, *Poetik*, 99; and the same in a *zajal* on love by ʿIsā ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿIsā al-Muqaddasī: "Kitāb al-jawhar al-maknūn," MS Escorial 459, fol. 31: *naʿshaq qamar fāqa al-milāh*.



they can be easily remembered and related to (fol. 3r, MS Paris; fol. 5v, MS Berlin, Wetzstein II 108):

1. *na'shaq* (– –)
2. *qamar* (√ –)
3. *qamarī* (√ √ –)
4. *kallilī* (– √ –)
5. *fī sh-shārī'* (– – –)
6. *fī-l-maḥalla* (– √ – –)
7. *mawazzūn* (√ – –) or *fī-l-mawzūn* (– – –)
8. *bijunūkih* or *bijanūkih* (√ √ – –)
9. *man qāl anā* (– – √ –)
10. *ḥubayyibī* (√ – √ –)
11. *yā kalli kallī* (– – √ – –)
12. *kali l-mu'anbar* (√ – √ – –)
13. *badr* (–) or *badra* (– √)
14. *hal* (–)
15. *'asharawāq* (√ √ √ –)
16. *jibn-ə ṭarī* (– √ √ –)

In the manuscripts every single one of these metrical units is written alternately with red and black ink in order to make the distinction between them clearer. Because some forms may appear ambiguous, al-Banawānī as well as other *zajal* specialists, or in his words *ahlu hādihā l-fanni*, take great pains in detailing or rather calculating how these metrical units should be scanned. The basis for the calculation of the derivational forms is the word *na'shaq* and its 'aks ("counterpart") *qamar* (fol. 3r, MS Paris): *fa-hādhihi sittata 'ashara shadhratan 'alayhā madāru mawāzīni l-zajali wa-kulluhā min lafzati na'shaq*. (The *zajal* meters depend on these sixteen metrical units, which are all derived from the word *na'shaq*.)

Now he defines five basic operators with their respective long and short syllables inherent to them that are used to form the combined terms which are listed below:

fa-inna niṣfahā hal ("half of it is *hal*" equaling one length)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'ihā badr or badra
wa-kulluhā na'shaq
wa-'aksuhā muḥarrakan qamarī (the last radical is vowelized
 with a long vowel, written as *yā* in the manuscripts)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'i 'aksihā qamar

The following nine forms are combinations of the aforementioned basic operators which are given in parentheses:



wa-niṣfuhā muḍāfun ilā thalāthi arbā'i 'akshā kallilī (hal + qamar)
wa-niṣfuhā muḍāfun ilā kullihā fī-sh-shāri' (hal + na'shaq)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'i 'akshā ma'a niṣfihā mawazzūn (qamar + hal)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'ihā ma'a kullihā fī-l-maḥallah (badra + na'shaq)
wa-'aksuhā ma'a niṣfihā bijunūkih (qamarī + hal)
wa-kulluhā ma'a kullihā wa-wāwu al-'atfi baynahā yā kalli kallī
(na'shaq wa na'shaq)
wa-thalāthatu arbā'i 'akshā marratayn ma'a niṣfihā kali l-mu'anbar
(qamar + qamar + hal)
wa-niṣfuhā ma'a 'akshā jibn-ə ṭarī (hal + qamarī)
wa-thalāthatu arba'i 'akshā muḥarrakan ma'a niṣfihā mamdūdan
'asharawāq (qamara + hāl)

The terms in parentheses represent the exact syllable structure of the combined terms. Three of the sixteen metrical units listed above are not explained: (7) *fī-l-mawzūn*, (9) *man qāl anā*, and (10) *ḥubayyibī*.

In some cases, I was not sure how to exactly read the metrical units al-Banawānī lists. Luckily he helps us with some detailed explanations on this matter: *thumma ja'alū min dhālika sākinan wa-muḥarrakan* [and not as may be expected *mutaḥarrakan*] *laysa ka-sākini sh-shi'ri wa-muḥarrakihi bal iṣṭilāhan wa-ja'alū lahu qā'idatan fa-mā kāna thānīhi sākinan sammawhu sākinan wa-mā kāna thānīhi muḥarrakan sammawhu muḥarrakan* (fol. 3r, MS Paris). (Then they distinguished between quiescent and moving letters not as the quiescent and moving letters in the canonical poetry but as a [new] convention, which became a rule for them. Accordingly, they call a metrical unit *sākin* when its second letter is quiescent and they call it *muḥarrak* when its second letter is moving.)

fa-yusammūna na'shaq wa-kallilī, wa-badr wa-hal wa-fī-l-maḥallah wa-fī-sh-shāri' wa-man qāl anā wa-jibn-ə ṭarī wa-yā kalli kallī sākinan wa-yusammūna qamar wa-qamarī wa-ḥubayyibī wa-bijunūkih wa-kali l-mu'anbar wa-mawazzūn wa-'asharawāq muḥarrakan. (Therefore they call *na'shaq* and *kallilī* and *badr* and *hal* and *fī-l-maḥallah* and *fī-sh-shāri'* and *man qāl anā* and *jibn-ə ṭarī* and *yā kalli kallī* quiescent and they call *qamar* and *qamarī* and *ḥubayyibī* and *bijunūkih* and *kali l-mu'anbar* and *mawazzūn* [therefore to be read *mawazzūn* with a moving second letter and not *mawzūn*, as one might suppose, with a quiescent second letter] and *'asharawāq* [not *'ashrawāq* because then the second letter would be quiescent].)

In *yā kalli kallī* the second letter (the *alif*) is considered quiescent. In the case of *mawazzūn* and *fī-l-mawzūn* al-Banawānī's reasoning is not clear: in the list of metrical units with moving letters only *mawazzūn* is given, whereas the Berlin manuscript has *fī-l-mawzūn* in the list of sixteen metrical units but does not include it in the distinction between metrical units with *sākin* and *muḥarrak*.



A Long-Syllable *Zajal* on the Throes of a Married Man by Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār

While Thomas Bauer, Anke Osigus, and I were working on the edition of Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār’s *dīwān*, we were surprised to find three *zajals* that consist exclusively of long syllables. One of these is an eighteen stanza-long *zajal tāmm* (a *zajal* with a *maṭla‘* or beginning verse) on a married man who can satisfy neither his wife nor his lover. Only once, in the sixth stanza, does al-Mi‘mār use a short syllable in the word *yaqūl*. All the other cases that might be read short boil down to instances of *wa-* (“and”) and the *a-* of *ana* (“I”), which are read long.

Of course, *zajals* are particularly prone to having more long syllables than poems in classical Arabic mainly because *i‘rāb* is largely absent.⁸ One might argue that a freak version of the *mutadārik* (– –) is at work here, which is normally scanned like this: ˘ ˘ – , but there is a far better solution to the issue at hand. Let’s have a look at the first verses of the poem:

مِنْ عِلْقِي وَالْكُدَّةِ	مَا أَنَا إِلَّا فِي شِدَّةِ
صَفَّوْنِي مِنْ دَمِّي	وَأَبْقَا خِرْقَه مَرْمِي
	فِي طُولِ ذِيكَ الْمُدَّةِ

In transliteration the verses would read like this:

<i>mā nā llā fī sh-shiddah</i>	<i>min ‘ilqī wa-l-kuddah</i>
<i>afrigh fihim sammī</i>	<i>wa-bqā khirqah marmī</i>
	<i>ṣaffawnī min dammī</i>
	<i>fī ṭūl dhīki l-muddah</i>

“Oh my, I am in a plight // because of my sweetheart and the woman
I empty my poison in them // and end up a torn towel discarded
// they sucked my blood
during all this time”

Kuddah is a term used for women, especially beggar women; *‘ilq* means “precious one” and is known, at least since Abū Nuwās, as the passive lover in homosexual relationships. The reading of the first words in verse one as *mā nā llā* instead of *mā ‘anā ‘illā* results on one hand from the avoidance of the disjunctive *hamzah* in *zajals*, which became a general rule. Exceptions to this rule are, however, allowed—a phenomenon that can be observed in this *zajal*, too.⁹ Another reason is the homogeneous metrical structure of the poem that I will describe later, which suggest this reading.

⁸See, for example, Corriente, “Further Remarks,” 126.

⁹Al-Banawānī, Paris ms., fol. 11a; see also Ibn Hījjah, *Bulūgh*, 76.



When scanned with the *mutadārik* or with the metrical unit called *naʿshaq* in al-Banawānī’s treatise that likewise consists of two lengths, we get this picture for the whole stanza:

-- / - - / - - // - - / - - / - -
 -- / - - / - - // - - / - - / - - // - - / - - / - -
 -- / - - / - -

Yet the structure of the verses suggests a more effective and elegant solution— if we use the metrical unit called *fī-sh-shāriʿ* (– – –), as suggested by al-Banawānī, the metrical setup would rather look like this:

- - - / - - - // - - - / - - -
 - - - / - - - // - - - / - - - // - - - / - - -
 - - - / - - -

The reason why this scansion with three long syllables is more appropriate than the *mutadārik* with two (– –) or the metrical unit *naʿshaq* by al-Banawānī is that it consists of larger homogeneous units that break up the verse into two parts or feet. There is something else to the metrical structure of the verses: stress. Reading the verses while paying attention to stress, the basic metrical unit becomes – ‘ –, which is exactly the way the metrical unit *fī-sh-shāriʿ* by al-Banawānī is scanned:¹⁰

- ‘ - / - ‘ - // - ‘ - / - ‘ -
 ‘ - - / - ‘ - // ‘ - - / - ‘ - // - ‘ - / - ‘ -
 - ‘ - / - ‘ -

mā nā llā / fī sh-shiddah //

min ‘ilqī / wa-l-kúddah

áfrigh fī- / -him sámmī //

wá-bqā khir- / -qah mármī // šaffáwnī / min dámmī

fī tūl dhī- / -ki l-múddah

As we see from the scansion of the verses, the stress is always on the penultimate syllable of every metrical unit – ‘ – except for the first two verses after the *maṭlaʿ*, which follows a different pattern that will be discussed later. This makes it especially appropriate for scanning – ‘ – / – ‘ – instead of – – / – – / – –. Another strong indication for the preference to be given to the scansion – ‘ – is the recurrent appearance of words consisting of three syllables and having the stress

¹⁰ Al-Banawānī does not give any information on stress, yet the existence of two metrical units that both consist of three long syllables suggests that such a reading is possible. But even if such a distinction is not intended on the part of al-Banawānī, the evidence of this *zajal* is enough to demonstrate the importance of stress for the rhythmic structure of the verses of this poem.



on the penultimate syllable. In the poem there are many of these forms, as the two verbs in the second verse (*wa-trábbat* / *wa-tqáyyad*) of the three verses that directly follow the opening stanza demonstrate:

مَّا نِيكَ أَيَّرِي أَحَدًا وَأَتَرَبَّطُ وَأَتَقَيِّدُ أَكْتُبُ لَوْ شِئِي يَمْتَدُّ

mimmā nīk ayrī nhadd wa-trábbat wa-tqáyyad aktúb lū shī yímtadd

“Of what my penis fucked it got wrecked / and strapped and fettered / so I write something [an amulet] that it get long again”

Both verbs are of the *tafa*“*al*-type which are pronounced in *pausa* with an initial *a*- and a quiescent *-t* in dialect: *atrábbat*, *atqáyyad*. Together with the preceding *wa*- the transliteration reads as given above. As we see, every three-syllable word accounts for one metrical unit with stress on the penultimate syllable.

Apart from this obvious division into two units of three syllables each based on verb forms from the *tafa*“*al*-type, it happens often that this bipartite division is corroborated by word boundaries that are situated between the two three-syllable units; see for example in the first stanza: *mā nā llā* / *fī-sh-shíddah*, *aktúb lū* / *shī yímtadd*, *min ‘ilqī* / *wa-l-kúddah*, *ṣaffáwnī* / *min dámmī*, *mimmā nīk* / *ayrī nhadd*. This division according to word boundaries accounts for the majority of the metrical units in this *zajal*.

So, how consistently does al-Mi‘mār use this metrical structure in his *zajal*? At the end of a verse the metrical unit – ‘ – is the only one used with the exception of the last metrical units of verses with separate rhyme in stanzas nos. 8, 13, and 16. These three stanzas show stress on the ultimate syllable (– – ‘), thus coinciding with al-Banawānī’s metrical unit *fī-l-mawzūn*, which suggests that al-Mi‘mār diversifies the primary metrical unit *fī-sh-shāri*‘ with a secondary one, *fī-l-mawzūn*. Most probably al-Mi‘mār wanted to liven up the monotonous cadence of ever-recurring *fī-sh-shāri*‘ units throughout the eighteen stanzas of the poem. From the point of view of *zajal* poetics, the changing of metrical units within a poem is allowed if there is any in this case.¹¹ Let’s have a look at stanza no. 8:

وَأَمَّا مِزْرُ السُّودَانَ فَرَعْنَا مِثْلَ أَدْنَانَ مِمَّا أَرَعَقَ يَا رَيْحَانَ

قُمْ حَوْلَ لِي وَرَدَّهْ

wa-mmā mizra s-sūdān farrīghnā minnū dnān mimmá z‘aq yā rayḥān

qum ḥáwwil lī wárdah

¹¹Ibn Hījjah, *Bulūgh*, 98.



“As to the Sudanese beer / I emptied jars of it / which make me
scream ‘Oh Rayḥān’ // Get up and turn a cheek to me”

A look at the metrical structure of the stanza reveals the following pattern:

– ˘ – / – – ˘ // – ˘ – / – – ˘ // – ˘ – / – – ˘
– ˘ – / – ˘ –

The last feet of the three verses with separate rhyme all clearly have the accent on the last syllable as in *fī-l-mawzūn*, while the other five metrical units of the stanza adhere to the primary metrical unit *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ.

Apart from these regular occurrences of the secondary unit *fī-l-mawzūn* at the end of the verses in stanzas nos. 8, 13, and 16, al-Miʿmār uses it another five times as the first metrical unit of a verse, two of which occur in the *fī-l-mawzūn*-stanza no. 13 (*qālat ḥāk* in verse one and *ibn an-nās* in verse two), where the verses with separate rhyme already show this type at the end of each verse, as we have seen above. That leaves us with three instances of this unit used elsewhere in the poem, namely in stanza two, verse three: *wa-ysh hū n-náyk*, which could possibly also be scanned as *wa-ysh hú n-nayk*; in stanza six, verse two: *li-l atfāl*; and in stanza ten, verse one: *wa-l-mayshūm*.

As said above al-Miʿmār employs a third pattern in some verses: The first verse after the *maṭla*ʿ is scanned: *áfrigh fī- / -him sámmī //wá-bqā khir-/qah mármī*. Of this type I found four further instances: stanza five, verse one: *áyri mínhā ázla*ʿ; stanza seven, verse two: *nárʿū mínnú mārīs*; stanza fourteen, verse four: *yábqā máhā nájdah*; stanza sixteen, verse four: *yákhra ʿinda l-ʿuqdah*. In all these cases he seems to apply another alternative stress pattern with three times the metrical unit *náʿshaq* (˘ – / ˘ – / ˘ –).

Now, let’s have a look at the numbers. In total the poem consists of 146 three-syllable units, 127 of which are of the type *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ and 14 belong to the *fī-l-mawzūn* type (11 of which occur in stanzas where *fī-l-mawzūn* is the exclusively preferred type at the end of the verse). In five cases the metrical unit *náʿshaq* was employed instead of *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ.

It should be borne in mind that the *náʿshaq* type does not change the accent of the last three syllables, which stays – ˘ –. Only the initial positions change, which means that changes in accent never occur in the crucial end-of-verse positions that always have *fī-sh-shāri*ʿ (or the alternative *fī-l-mawzūn* in the three stanzas mentioned above). As I mentioned earlier, Ibn Ḥijjah uses the same terms for metrical units as al-Banawānī and gives us some information on a similar issue in his *Bulūgh*, where he states that *qamarī* (◡ ◡ –) cannot change into *kallilī* (– ◡ –) when it is placed in end-of-verse position: be it at the end of the first half of a verse, *darb*, or the end of the second half of the verse, *ʿarūd*. Yet in the *hashw*



(“the inner parts”) this is allowed: *wa-min al-mamnū‘āti ‘indahumu l-intiqālu min “kallilī” ilā “qamarī” wa-huwa l-khabnu ‘inda l-‘arūdiyīn ka-l-intiqāli min “fā‘ilun” ilā “fa‘ilīn” fa-in kāna fī-l-ḥashwi jāza wa-in kāna fī-l-qāfiyati allatī hiya l-‘arūdu wa-ḍ-ḍarbu ‘addahu z-zajjālatu khaṭaan fī-l-wazni.*¹² (The shift from *kallilī* (– ʾ –) to *qamarī* (ʾ ʾ –) is forbidden among them. This is called *khabn* among the experts of ‘*arūd*’ where it is like the shift from *fā‘ilun* to *fa‘ilīn*. So if this occurs in the inner part (*ḥashw*) then it is allowed, but when it occurs in the rhyme, either in the ‘*arūd*’ (“last foot of the first hemistich”) or in the *ḍarb* (“last foot of the second hemistich”) then the *zajal* experts deem it an error of meter.)

This rule which resembles rules on meter variation in *qarīd* poetry, of which there are many also in al-Banawānī’s treatise, supposedly contradicts the one that I mentioned earlier on: namely, that a poem may vary the meter in one and the same poem. It seems that the latter rule applies to the consistent use of a meter over larger portions of the poem, as is the case in our *zajal*, where the meter of three verses with separate rhyme in three stanzas differs from the meter of the *kharjah* of the same stanza and the rest of the verses in the surrounding stanzas.

A Contrasting *Zajal* by Ibn Nubātah and Some Concluding Remarks

Zajal was truly not Ibn Nubātah’s (686–768/1287–1366) favorite genre, as he only reluctantly agreed to compose one at Abū al-Fidā’s request. Abū al-Fidā, or by his official title al-Malik al-Mu‘ayyad (672–732/1273–1332), was the governor of Ḥamāh, a city where *zajal* poetry was very much appreciated—as a matter of fact one of the most famous *zajal* poets, ‘Alī ibn Muqātil (d. 761/1359), hails from there. Ibn Nubātah wrote this laudatory *zajal* beginning with the opening verse *lī ḥabīb mā‘ū ‘uwaynāt* (“I have a loved one that has sweet little eyes”) in praise of Abū al-Fidā and included it in his anthology *Muntakhab al-Hadīyah* as well as in his *dīwān*.¹³ Compared with the *zajals* by Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār or al-Ghubārī (d. 741/1341), another widely acclaimed *zajjāl* from Egypt, Ibn Nubātah is rather conservative in the sense of *qarīd*-like in his choice of themes, verse structure, and use of vernacular: only the consistent use of pausal forms, the ending *-ū* for *-hu*, the absence of the disjunctive *hamzah*, and a clumsy Andalusicist *zab* (“now”) in the beginning verse mark it clearly as a *zajal* from the point of view of language. Interestingly, Ibn Ḥijjah praises it as the best of its genre because it supposedly contained none of the “errors” typically committed by other *zajal* authors. It is

¹²Ibn Ḥijjah, *Bulūgh*, 97.

¹³Apart from this *zajal* only one other *zajal*, or *bullayq* as the heading reads, is known. It is located in the autograph manuscript of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s “Ziyādāt ‘alā Diwān Ibn Nubātah,” Göttingen 80 Cod. MS arab. 179, fols. 59r–v.



one of the few not of his own making that Ibn Ḥijjah included at full length in his *Bulūgh*.¹⁴

The whole poem can be scanned unequivocally as *ramal* (– ʊ – –) with the alternative patterns (ʊ ʊ – –), (– ʊ – ʊ), and (ʊ ʊ – ʊ) also occurring several times. In al-Banawānī's nomenclature this would correspond to the metrical unit *fī-l-mahallah* (– ʊ – –). In this respect, too, Ibn Nubātah made a conservative choice by sticking to the conventions of the Khalilian system, an important fact considering that *zajjālūn* had a rich array of resources for meter (as we have seen in the discussion of al-Banawānī's poetics above) but also for verse structure and verse arrangement at their disposal. By way of illustration, other *zajjālūn* composed verses that had the length of one verse foot or one word; furthermore they followed conventions on alternation of verse length and inner verse structure in order to create special rhythmic effects within the stanza.¹⁵

When it comes to stress, the verses of Ibn Nubātah's *zajal* have the accent on the penultimate syllable of every verse foot in the majority of the cases but not in the same regular way as is characteristic of al-Mi'mār's *zajal*. Verse-end positions in al-Mi'mār's poem were totally free of variation of stress except in the three verses of the three strophes where he used stress shift from the penultimate to the ultimate syllable homogeneously through all three verses, thus achieving a more regular rhythm over the whole poem. This is not so for Ibn Nubātah: in 38 out of 104 feet he diverges from the basic accent on the penultimate; of these 19 are in verse-end position. Here also Ibn Nubātah seems much closer to *qarīd* than *zajal* poetry, as his adherence to the Khalilian *ramal* and its specific variants seems to favor quantitative over stress-based scansion, thereby establishing a stronger rhythm than the former.

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from the above is that regularity, rhythm, and meter in *zajal* are not only limited to quantitative scanning of the verses but include to a large degree stress, verse structure, and verse arrangement, which are integral to the rhythmic and musical composition of the *zajal* even if its meter is "sufficiently" characterized by the quantitative scansion provided by the Khalilian system, as in Ibn Nubātah's *zajal*. This being said, it seems that some *zajals*, like the one by al-Mi'mār, attach more importance to rhythm and musicality. When considered that most of the *zajal* experts from Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk to Ibn Ḥijjah to Ibn Sudūn state that *zajals* were sung, the enhanced musicality of some *zajals* should not surprise us. This becomes particularly obvious in *zajals* where Khalilian meters do not fit the pattern of a poem, like Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār's *zajal* discussed in this article and many other *zajals*, which according to al-Banawānī

¹⁴Ibn Ḥijjah, *Bulūgh*, 85, 91–93.

¹⁵See for example Hoenerbach, *Poetik*, 21, and Hakan Özkan, "The Drug Zajals in Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār's Diwān," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 17 (2013): 220–23.



and Ibn Ḥijjah are governed by a basic set of sixteen metrical units that have hitherto been unaccounted for.

Appendix

The following *zajal* (no. 541 in the *dīwān*) has been taken from the edition of Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār’s *dīwān* currently under preparation at the University of Münster under the supervision of Thomas Bauer. The sigla in the critical apparatus refer to the following manuscripts:

- | | |
|----|--|
| س | = Escorial, árabe 463, fols. 78b–85b |
| ف | = Istanbul, Fatih 3793 |
| ت | = Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-qawmīyah, Taymūr, shi‘r 673 |
| د | = Dublin, Chester Beatty 5483 |
| هـ | = Tehran, Kitābkhānah-yi Millī |
| ل | = London, British Library 8054 |



[٥٤١]

- وَقَالَ أَيضًا [س، ف، ت، د، ه، ل]
- 3 مَآ اَنَا الْإِلَهِي شِدَّةً مِنْ عَلْقَمِي وَالْكَدَّةَ
أَفْرَغُ فِيهِمْ سَمِّي وَأَبْقَا خِرْقَه مَرْمِي صَفَّوْنِي مِنْ دَمِّي
فِي طُورٍ ذِيكَ الْمُدَّةَ
- 6 مَمَّا نِيكَ أَيْرِي أَنَهْدُ وَأَثْرَبْتُ وَأَثْقَيْتُ أَكْتُبُ لَوْ شِي يَمْتَدُّ
مَا تَلَقَّى لَوْ مَدَّةَ
- 88a / نَاكَ مِيَّه فِي جُمَعَه أَصْبَحَ مَا فِيهِ مَنَعَه وَأَيْشُ هُوَ النَّيْكَ غَيْرَ صَنَعَه
وَأَنَا مَالِي عُدَّةَ
- 9 وَالْقَحْبَه قَالَ نِيكَ عِشْرِينَ لَا تَرْحَمْنِي وَالْإِلَهِي طَلَّقْنِي
إِنْ لَمْ تُنَوِّفِ الْعُدَّةَ
- 12 أَيْرِي مِنْهَا أَرْزَعُ وَالْقَحْبَه مَا تَشْبَعُ قَالَ أَعْرِفُ بِالْأَصْبَعِ
ذَالْقَحْبِيَّ هِيَ تُزْدَهُ
- 15 مَا أَحْلَا الْمَعْشُوقَ يَنْبِيكَ لِلْأَطْفَالِ صَارَ يَحْكِي يَصِيحُ حُو حُو كِي
يَقُولُ أَيْرِي إِدَّةَ
- 18 فِي الْأَخْضَرِ نِتَكَآيْشُ نَزَعُوا مِثْلَ مَارِشِ وَأَنْ كَانَ ذَاكَ الْيَسَابِشِ
يَخْرُجُ لَكَ مِنْ فَزْدَه
- 21 وَأَمَّا مِزْرُ الشُّودَانَ فَرَعْنَا مِثْلَ أَدْنَانَ مِمَّا أَرْعَقَ يَا رِيحَانَ
فَمِنْ حَوْلِ لِي وَزْدَه
- 24 وَنَانِيكَ حَمِّي حَتَّى اتَّقَرْمَطُ أَيْرِي صَارَ كَيْتُو تَكْرُورِي
مُتَلَفِّفٌ فِي جِلْدَه
- 27 وَالْمَيْشُومِ الْأَحْوَالِ طُولٌ لَيْلُو يَتَمَلَّمُ قَامَ بَكْرَه ائْتَلَلُ
مَعَ عَلْقَمِي مِيَّه عُدَّةَ
- 24 صَارَ يَزْمِيه مِنْ كَلِمَه حَتَّى عَمُو عَمَه دَارَ قَلِي يِي نِعْمَه
قَالَ لَا حَتَّى أَتْنُدَّه
- هُوَ يَصْرَعُ فِيهِ فَاصِحُ وَالْقَحْبَه تَتَوَاقِحُ تَصْرُخُ لَوْ يَا رَاغِحُ
بِالْمَلْعُوبِ تَتَعُدَّه
- قَالَتْ هَاكَ يَا مَهْتُوكُ أَيَشَ أَعْمَلُ بِكَ صَعْلُوكُ ابْنُ النَّاسِ لَكَ مَمْلُوكُ
وَأَلَا أَنَا لَكَ عَبْدَه



- 30 وَالْآخِرُ سَاعِدَهَا وَقَوَى سَاعِدَهَا كُتِبُوا أَلَا وَأَعَدَهَا
يَبْتِغِي مَعَهَا نَجْدَهُ
- 33 وَقَالَ ذَا يَبْتَغِيْنَا كَمْ مَرَّةً يَرْفُضُنَا طُولَ عُمُرِهِ يَمْخُضُنَا
مَا عَنَدُو مِن زُبْدِهِ
- 88b / مَا يَعْرِفُ لِي مِقْدَارُ كَمْ أَحْمِلُ ذَا الْأَشْطَارِ قَدْ كَانَ عَلِقُوا النَّجَارِ
يَخْرُجُ عِنْدَ الْعُقْدَةِ
- 36 انْوَاصُوا فِي حَزْبِي صِرْتُ أَرْعَقُ مِنْ كَرْبِي ذَا كُتِبُوا مِنْ زُبِّي
لَيْشَ مَا أَقْطَعَ ذِي الْقِدَّةِ
- 39 أَنَا وَاللَّهِ تَأْيِيبُ مَا أَعْمَلُ غَيْرَ وَاجِبٍ أَفْضَدُ نِعَمَ الصَّاحِبِ
هُوَ يَكْشِفُ ذِي الشَّدَّةِ

3 مَا أَنَا [مانا هـ | عَلِقِي] عقلي ل 4 سَمِي [سهي ف | خَرَقَه] خُرْمَه ف 5 ذِيكَ [ديك د هل
6 وَأَتْرَبْتُ] واتقرمط هـ | وَأَتَقَيَّدُ] خذ واتعقد (تحت السطر س)؛ واتعقد د هل | لَوْ [لوا هل
شي] (لا ترد في ت) | يَمْتَدُّ] ممتد د 7 تَلَقَى] يلتقي ف د هل | لَوْ [لوات هل 8 أَصْبَحُ]
وأصبح هـ | وَأَيْشُ] واش د | هُوَ] في هـ 9 عُدَّة] (في حاشية س) 10 وَالْإِ] ولا هـ 11 إِنْ لَمْ
أَلَمْ ف هـ | تُوفٍ] توفي ت د هل 12 أَيْرِي] صار أيري هـ | أَرْزَعُ] انزل د 13 ذَالْقَحْبِهِ] هي
القحبه س؛ هي ذِي الْقَحْبَةِ ت؛ ذَالْقَحْبَةِ د؛ ذِي الْقَحْبَةِ هـ؛ (والصواب من ف ل) | تُرْدَةُ] ترده د هـ
ل 14 يَصِيحُ] يقول د؛ يصرخ هل 15 يَقُولُ] يقل لو هـ 16 نِتْكَائِسُ] يتكليس د | نَزَعُوا]
نزعوا ف؛ نزعى ت هـ؛ يزعاد؛ ترعال | مِئُو] منوات د هـ | مَارِسُ] ماريس ت | ذَاكَ] داك د
17 يَخْرُجُ] نخرج ف ت؛ تخرج ل 18 فَرَعْنَا] فرعنا س هل؛ (والصواب من ف ت د) | مِئُو] منوات
ت د هل | أَرْعَقُ] فارقع ف 20 وَنَانِيكَ] وانا نيك د هل | كِتُو] كوات د هل 22 لَيْلُوا] ليلوا
ت د هل | بُكْرَهُ] بكرا هـ 23 عَلِقُوا] علقوات هل | مِيَهُ] ميت ل 24 يَزْمِيَهُ] ترميه د | عَمُو]
غمه ف؛ غموات د هـ؛ عموال | عَمَهُ] غمه ت د هل | قَلِي] بي] خ صح قال بسي (في حاشية
س)؛ قال بسي د؛ قال بسي هل 25 لَأ] (لا ترد في هـ) | أَتْنَدُهُ] انده ل 26 فَاصْحُ] فاصح هـ
تَشَوَاقِحُ] تتوافح هـ | لَوْ [لوا د هل | يَا] يا راجح هـ 27 تَتَعَدُّهُ] تتغده ت هل
28 يَا] مال | صَعْلُوكُ] يا صعلوك ل | مَمْلُوكُ] مهلوك س؛ (والصواب من ف ت د هل)
30 وَالْآخِرُ] قام الآخر د | كُتُو] كوات د ل 32 وَقَالَ] قالت د 32-39 وَقَالَ... الشَّدَّةِ] (لا ترد
هذه الايات في ل) 32 ذَا] دات | عُمُرُهُ] عمرو ف؛ عمرو د؛ ليلوا هـ 33 عَنَدُوا] عندوات د
هـ 34 ذَا] داد | الْأَشْطَارُ] الأسطارات د هـ | عَلِقُوا] علقوات د هـ | النَّجَارُ] النجار هـ 37 ذِي
الْقِدَّةِ] ذالقدته ت؛ ذالقدته د 38 مَا أَعْمَلُ] مما أعمل ف | أَفْضَدُ] واقعد هـ 39 هُوَ] وهو س؛
(والصواب من ف ت د هـ) | ذِي الشَّدَّةِ] دالشدته

