

**Zeitschrift
für arabische Linguistik**

**Journal
of Arabic Linguistics**

**Journal
de Linguistique Arabe**

Herausgegeben von
Hartmut Bobzin und Otto Jastrow

8—82

Otto Harrassowitz Wiesbaden

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THE PROSODIC RELATIONSHIP OF NABAṬĪ POETRY TO CLASSICAL ARABIC POETRY

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Nabaṭī poetry is the vernacular poetry which is popular in Arabia. Due to the great mobility of the Arab tribes, it is not easy to confine this poetic tradition to one particular locality. It is widespread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. The frequent droughts and famines and the political instability of Arabia in the past had forced whole tribes and settlements to migrate to the north and to the east carrying with them their Nabaṭī poetic tradition. But the indigenous home of Nabaṭī poetry has always been Najd, a vast territory which includes the central Arabian Plateau and the areas around it. All renowned Nabaṭī poets come from Najd and the diction of the poetry conforms to the colloquial speech of that region. People outside Najd who are familiar with Nabaṭī poetry are people who originally come from there where this poetry is most popular and whence it diffuses to the peripheries.

As is well known, the word *nabaṭī* originally referred to the language of the Nabataeans. However, the meaning of the word was eventually extended by the early Arab philologists and it came to be applied loosely to any speech which did not strictly conform to the rules of classical Arabic. It is in this latter sense that the word was applied by learned compilers to the vernacular poetry of Arabia in order to set it apart from the well-established and highly respected classical tradition. In this usage, Nabaṭī is not intended to imply that this poetry is linked in any way to the Nabataeans but means only that it is composed in vernacular rather than High Arabic.

Nabaṭī poets rarely use the term *nabaṭī* in reference to themselves or to their poetry and many of them do not even know this sense of the word.¹

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¹ A Nabaṭī poet is called by his peers simply a poet (*šāʿir* or *gaṣṣād*) and his work is called poetry (*šīʿir* or *giṣīd*). The poet usually introduces his composition as *giṣīdih* "ode", *abyāt* "verses", *gāf* or *ḡifān* "rhymes", *gōl* or *ḡīl* "contemplated utterance", *kalām* "solemn address",

It is not certain when, or by whom the term was first used in this context. IBN ḤALDŪN (1125), who was the first to write on this poetry, did not call it *nabaṭī* but reported that it was called *badawī*, *qaysī*, *ḥawrānī*, or *aṣ-ma^cīyyāt*. The first recorded use of the word *nabaṭī* in reference to this poetry is in a poem by ABŪ ḤAMZIH AL-^cĀMRĪ, a Nabaṭī poet who died over four centuries ago. W. G. PALGRAVE, who claims to have traversed Arabia in 1862, mentions Nabaṭī poetry three times (I 169, 281, 335). R. F. BURTON 224 also mentions Nabaṭī poetry but mistakes Nabaṭī for Nabataean. The term now appears in the titles of many printed collections and anthologies.

No one who has studied Nabaṭī poetry closely can fail to be impressed by its striking resemblance to classical Arabic poetry. Their affinity was first noted more than six hundred years ago by IBN ḤALDŪN and was confirmed later by ALBERT SOCIN who wrote of the Nabaṭī poetry he himself had collected from Najdī informants residing in Mesopotamia that it was "a direct continuation of the ancient Arabic art of poetry according to content, form, and language" (III 46). It is now widely accepted that Nabaṭī and classical Arabic poetry are somehow related but what exactly their relationship is a problem which has yet to be systematically explored.

The formal and thematic correspondences between classical Arabic and Nabaṭī poetry go beyond incidental similarities or the mere influence of an early tradition on a later one. The roots of the latter can be traced back to the former and the divergences that distinguish the two traditions from each other do not imply any categorical difference between them. Their divergences are the outcome of slow incremental diachronic changes. This can best be demonstrated by examining their prosodic relationship. In this paper, I shall analyze the prosody of Nabaṭī poetry and compare it with classical prosody. This, however, must be preceded by a preliminary discussion of some phonological aspects of the vernacular diction in which Nabaṭī poetry is composed and recited, taking into full account the historical relationship of this vernacular diction to classical Arabic.

1. Phonological Observations

The diction of Nabaṭī poetry and that of classical Arabic poetry are the two ends of one and the same poetic idiom which is based on, but, of

← *amṭāl* or *miṭāyil* "allegories", or *jawāb* "response" (many a poem is composed as a response to the composition of another poet, such a response is also called *mgāḏāt* "paying in kind"). A short poem is called *byātāt* "a few verses" or *mšāxītiḥ* "ditty" (pl. *mšāxītāt*, *mišāxīt*).

course, more polished than, the spoken language of Arabia. This poetic idiom changes slowly and imperceptibly through time as a consequence of changes affecting the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics of the spoken language. In the following pages, I will discuss very briefly sound changes, specifically those affecting short vowels and the glottal stop, which triggered a realignment in the syllabic structure of the spoken language and which in turn contributed to the development of the prosodic structure of Nabaṭī poetry and its divergence from classical prosody.

Needless to say, there are dialectal differences and variations in pronunciation between the various regions and tribes of Arabia but for our purpose here these variations are negligible since they rarely affect the syllabic structure. In this work, Nabaṭī poetry is transliterated and scanned to the pronunciation rules of the dialect of ^cUnaizah,² my hometown, which is famous for its outstanding Nabaṭī poets. T. M. JOHNSTONE characterized the dialect of ^cUnaizah as "a stable dialect and therefore particularly well-suited to throw light on problems of the phonology of the Nejdi dialects as a whole. This stability results partly from the fact that there has not been, at least until recently, any substantial influence of prestige dialects from outside the area, and partly from the fact that the Nejdi dialects are regarded by their speakers as preserving many important features of Classical Arabic which have not been so preserved in other dialects. A certain pride also is felt in the colloquial poetry, *al-shi^cr al-nabaṭī*, which is composed in a poetical 'Nejdi' dialect" (1967a, 1).

The following is an inventory of the consonants in the dialect of ^cUnaizah:

' = ا	d = د	ṭ = ط	l = ل
b = ب	ḡ = ض	ḡ = ظ، ض	m = م
t = ت	r = ر	c = ع	n = ن
ṭ = ث	z = ز	ḡ = غ	h = ه
j = ج	s = س	f = ف	w = و
ḡ = ح	š = ش	g = ق	y = ي
x = خ	ṣ = ص	k = ك	

The classical sound ḡ (ض) has merged with ḡ (ظ) and q (ق) is realized as g. In certain phonetic environments, mainly in the contiguity of

² For more information on the phonology and syllabic structure of the dialect of ^cUnaizah the reader is urged to consult JOHNSTONE (1967a). Other relevant works include J. CANTINEAU (1936-37), JOHNSTONE (1967b), H. BLANC (1970), and H. PALVA (1976).

the high front vowels *i*, and *ī*, the voiced velar stop *g* and its voiceless counterpart *k* are fronted to voiced and voiceless affricates *ǧ* and *č* respectively.³

In addition to the three long vowels *ā*, *ī*, *ū* of classical Arabic, the dialect of ^CUnaizah has two more, *ē* and *ō*, which are reflexes of the classical diphthongs *ay* and *aw*. In the dialect, the two diphthongs *ay* and *aw* appear only as the terminal elements of a final syllable and in most cases as reflexes of the old *ū* and *ī*: *gūlaw* "say (m.p.)!", *gūlay* "say (f.s.)!".

Except in some pronominal forms and before a geminate bilabial, the short high back vowel *u* has been fronted and completely assimilated to the front vowel *i*⁴ which leaves the dialect with two contrastive short vowels; the high vowel *i* and the low vowel *a*. These two vowels behave differently in open syllables as I will explain below. But first, the syllable must be defined.

A short syllable consists of a consonant followed by a vowel *CV* and a long syllable consists of a consonant followed by a long vowel *CV̄* or a short syllable closed by a consonant *CVC*. A syllable always begins with a consonant. In case the utterance begins with a vowel, a glottal stop which is concomitant with vocalic onset takes the place of an initial consonant.

3 On rare occasions, these affricates are realized by native speakers as independent phonemes contrasting with *g* and *k* as shown in the following minimal pairs: *gaḷb* "heart" - *ǧalb* "upside down, inside out", *gadd* "worthy, equal, fit" - *ǧadd* "aim (m.s.)!"; it is fit", *šigg* "tear" - *šiggǧ* "side", *digg* "beat, pound (m.s.)!" - *diǧǧ* "tiny, insignificant (opposite of *jill*)", *ḥigg* "a tin can" - *ḥiǧǧ* "an adult male camel", *ragg* "it (m.) softened" - *raǧǧ* "bring up (m.s.) to the roof!", *sāgi* "my leg" - *sāǧi* "an irrigation channel", *kaḥḥ* "he split" - *čabb* "fumigate (m.s.)!", *kaff* "he refrained from; he went blind" - *čaff* "palm of the hand", *čakk* "he carried on his back" - *čáčč* "hard", *ǧakk* "it (m.) became tight" - *ǧáčč* "it (m.) is tight". But generally native speakers realize *ǧ* and *č* simply as variants of *g* and *k*. This is born out by inconsistent pronunciation and by the rhyme of Nabaṭī poetry. It seems that *g* and *k* were about to disappear and *ǧ* and *č* were going to take over completely but recent rise in literacy has reversed the process and now it is *ǧ* and *č* which are rapidly disappearing. Young people use *g* and *k* in place of *ǧ* and *č* and although they realize that these are merely variants, they are beginning to lose their intuitive ability to make the right choice so much so that when they try to imitate the speech of their elders, they overdo it and use *ǧ* and *č* indiscriminately, even in places where *g* and *k* are expected.

4 It seems that the affrication of *g* and *k* into *ǧ* and *č* in the contiguity of *i* may have taken place before the assimilation of *u* to *i* because this affrication does not take place when the adjacent *i* is historically *u*. This creates contrastive pairs of the following sort: *giḥḥ* "be quiet (m.s.)!" - *ǧirr* "confess (m.s.)!", *kil* "eat (m.s.)!" - *čil* "measure, load (m.s.) the gun!". The initial consonants of *giḥḥ* and *kil* are not affricated because their vowel is historically *u*.

In an initial open syllable, the high vowel *i* is elided⁵ thus giving rise to initial consonant clusters; a feature not permitted in classical Arabic: *flān* "so and so", *rjāl* "men", *^cgad* "knots", *q̄biḥ* "he was slain". In a medial open syllable the vowel *i* is elided only if the initial consonant of this medial syllable is identical with the consonant closing the preceding syllable which gives rise to a cluster of three consonants. This applies to all the active participles of the second verbal form: *mdarrsīn* "teachers", *mrawwḥāt* "they (f.) are going". But if the aforementioned consonants are not identical, then the medial three consonants cluster is not permitted and instead of eliding the vowel *i*, a metathesis takes place whereby the vowel moves forward one consonant: *misilmīn* "Muslims", *takitbīn* "you (f.s.) write".

The low vowel *a* is raised to *i* in an open syllable: *jibal* "mountain", *ḡidam* "foot", *gi^cūd* "young male camel", *giṭa^c* "he cut", *q̄ibaḥ* "he slew". The raising of the low vowel does not take effect when it is

a. preceded by a guttural (*ḥ x^c ḡ h'*): *hadab* "fringes", *ḡadīr* "pond", *xarūf* "lamb", *ḥamād* "hard plain", *'akal* "he ate";

b. followed by a long syllable the initial consonant of which is a guttural or a sonorant (*l m n r w y*) and the vowel of which is *a*, *ā*, *ē*, or *ō*.⁶ *wa^cad* "he promised", *daxal* "he entered", *walad* "a youth", *q̄ahab* "gold", *salām* "peace", *saḥāb* "clouds", *saḥēt* "I forgot", *banāt* "girls", *darā* "he knew".

The vowel *a* is homorganic with gutturals and its behavior is strongly influenced by them. Gutturals do not only inhibit the raising of *a* to *i* but also when a guttural closes a nonfinal syllable the vowel of which is *a*, the copy vowel *a* is introduced after the guttural: *laḥam* "meat", *ṣa^car* "hair". The copy vowel is not introduced when

a. the guttural is followed by a short high vowel which is elided: *ta^cbat* "she became tired";

b. the guttural is the last radical in the stem: *ṭala^cnā* "we went out, left";

c. the form is an elative: *aḥlā* "sweeter", *axḡar* "greener";

d. the form is the perfect of the verbal form IV: *aḡdā* "he lost";

e. the form is the active participle of verbal form I: *ta^cbān* "he is tired".

5 When the short high vowel *i* which is not historically *u* is elided, its fronting and affricating effect on the adjacent *g* and *k* remains after its elision: *ḡlādih* "necklace", *ḡlābih* "dogs".

6 In the case of *ā* and *ō*, this is probably a lingering effect of the ini-

In addition to the elision of short high vowels in open syllables, the short vowels marking mood and case have also been deleted which gives rise to final consonant clusters. In case the last consonant in this final cluster is sonorant, an epenthetic vowel *i* is introduced to break up the cluster: *ḡabiy* "deer", *ḡaziw* "a raid", *ṣi^Cir* "poetry", *^Cajil* "swift", *najim* "star", *xaṣin* "coarse". The anaptyctic vowel is not inserted when the consonants in the cluster are both sonorant: *jirm* "stature", *garn* "horn, century". In continuous speech, the anaptyctic vowel disappears when the final consonant cluster is followed by a vowel or by a word which begins with an initial consonant cluster. Hence the word for foot *rijil*, becomes *rijlēn* "feet", *rijl al-walad* "the boy's foot", *rijl mḥammad* "Muhammad's foot". In other cases, however, the anaptyctic vowel appears even in a non-final position: *rijil mūsā* "Musa's foot".

In addition to the above mentioned vowel changes, the glottal stop *hamzah* has also undergone changes that have profoundly affected its syllabic status. In classical Arabic, the glottal stop functioned as a consonant that can open or close a syllable anywhere in the utterance. In the vernacular, it has been either assimilated to an adjacent vowel, or changed to *w* or *y*, or has been deleted altogether, except in a very few restricted positions or in cases of direct lexical borrowings from classical/literary Arabic. All these changes are determined by the phonetic environment, but since the glottal stop, as any other consonant, can occur in a wide variety of environments, it is very difficult to exhaust all the possibilities or to formulate a general rule that would cover all the cases. Here I can only point out the most frequent changes which the glottal stop has undergone in the dialect of ^CUnaizah.

When it closes a syllable, the glottal stop drops and the preceding vowel is prolonged if it is not already long: *bēā* "crying", *xaṣā* "wrong-doing", *ardā* "worse", *garā* "he read", *birī* "he became cured", *rās* "head", *ḡīb* "wolf", *lūlū* "pearls". If it can be assumed that the long vowels *ī* and *ū* are really *iy* and *uw*, then it can be stated that a glottal stop after a long high vowel or a diphthong drops and the last element of the vowel or the diphthong is geminated: *biriyy* "innocent", *suww* "evil", *ṣayy* "a thing", *fayy* "shade", *ḡaww* "fire", *xaṣiyyih* "wrong-doing", *mruwwih* "altruism, manliness". When the glottal stop opens a syllable in a non-initial position, it changes to *y* unless the preceding vowel is *u* in which case it changes to *w*: *gāyim* "standing up", *ḡyābih* "wolves", *ryih* "lung", *fwād* "heart", *lūlwih* "a pearl".

An initial open short syllable which begins with a glottal stop which is not part of the root is frequently dropped especially if the following

- tial *a* of the old diphthongs *ay* and *aw* of which *ē* and *ō* are reflexes.

syllable is also open (see exceptions a. and b. below): *gāmiḥ* "staying", *rādiḥ* "will", *^camā* "blind", *xaḡar* "green", *hawaj* "rash". Therefore, the citation form for the word "family" is *'aḥal* but when this word is linked to another word after it causing the second syllable to be open, then the first syllable drops: *ḥal al-bēt* "people of the house". If the initial glottal stop is the first radical of the root, it drops only when the next two syllables are both open in the old form: *klituh* "she ate it (m.)". When the initial glottal stop is the first radical of the root it is preserved in a few cases: *'akal* "he ate", *'axaḡat* "she took", but it usually changes to *w*: *wilif* "he became used to, fond of", *wimar* "he ordered". The glottal stop always changes to *w* in the passive voice and in the second and third verbal forms: *wēil* "it was eaten", *wakkal* "he gave to eat", *wākal* "he ate with". To avoid the initial glottal stop, the functions of the fourth verbal form have been frequently relegated to the first or to the second verbal forms: *dār* "he caused (something) to turn", *ṭā^c* "he obeyed", *mawwat* "he put to death", *nawwax* "he caused (a camel) to kneel", *dammā* "he caused to bleed", *dannā* "he brought (something) near".

Short syllable sequences, although permitted in classical diction, are avoided in the vernacular. When two short syllables follow each other and the vowel of the second syllable is *i*, i.e., *CVci--*, the vowel of the second syllable drops and its consonant closes the preceding syllable and makes it long: *ḡibḥat* "she was slain", *ṣarbat* "she drank". In case the vowel in both syllables is *a*, i.e., *CaCa--*, the vowel of the first syllable drops while that of the second syllable remains: *ḡibat* "she lied", *mḡarib* "sunset" (this last example illustrates the stability of the copy vowel introduced after a guttural; it is the old *a* which drops while the new one remains). In case this type of sentence of two short syllables is in a medial position, i.e., *-CaCa-*, either vowel may drop: *ista^cjal/ist^cajal* "he rushed", *iṣṭaḡlat/iṣṭḡalat* "she worked". A sequence of two short syllables is, however, unavoidable under the following phonetic conditions:

a. when the imperfect of the first form of a verb whose first radical is a guttural is conjugated with the first person singular: *a^carif* → *a^ca rif* "I know";

b. when the imperfect of the fifth and sixth verbal forms is conjugated with the first person singular: *atigallab* → *a ti gal lab* "I toss and turn", *atimēwat* → *a ti mē wat* "I pretend to be dead";

c. when nunation is suffixed to a noun of the form *CaCaC*: *waladin garm* → *wa la din garm* "a gallant lad";

d. when the definite article *al* is prefixed to a noun that begins with a vowel which is not syllabically linked to the following consonant:

al-aṣṣāyil → *a la ṣā yil* "the thoroughbreds", *al-asad* → *a la sad* "the lion".⁷

2. Scansion

Previous scholars who tackled the prosody of Nabaṭī poetry failed to provide a satisfactory method of scanning this poetry. The long discussion by A. SOCIN (1900-01 II, 52-70) is rather fuzzy and unrevealing. A. IBN ḤAMĪS (1958, 56-66) and Š. AL-KAMĀLĪ (1964, 76-104; 156-77) do no more than throw their hands in the air after identifying a few Nabaṭī meters with classical ones. The most interesting observations were made by G. A. WALLIN (1852 193) and C. DE LANDBERG (1895 17ff). They noted that short vowels which are elided when Nabaṭī poetry is recited are usually restored back to their positions when the poetry is chanted or sung. They both hinted at the necessity of restoring these vowels to discern metrical regularity but neither demonstrated in a rigorous manner how this was to be done and the mangled verses in their collections betray their lack of sensitivity to Nabaṭī meter. As I have shown above, the elision of these vowels gives rise to consonant clusters which are permitted in ordinary conversation and poetic declamation. To enunciate the elided vowels while reciting would make the poetry sound stilted but it is almost impossible to sing or chant Nabaṭī poetry without these vowels. The restoration of these vowels is also necessary for metrical regularity as I will show below.

Like that of classical Arabic poetry, the meter of Nabaṭī poetry is quantitative. It is determined by the number of short and long syllables to a foot and the manner in which these short and long syllables are concatenated. A Nabaṭī poem consists of from a few to a few hundred but on the average from twenty to forty monorhyming lines with each line divided into usually equal hemistichs and all having the same meter. In Nabaṭī poetry, the hemistich (not the verse) is the maximum unit of scansion, the syllable is the minimum unit. Metrically speaking, the hemistich is not a collection of words but a collocation of short and long syllables. In scanning, word boundaries must be disregarded completely and the hemistich is taken as one unit of continuous utterance. When a word in a non-initial position begins with a vowel, this vowel becomes syllabically linked to the final consonant of the preceding word: $rā^c$ *al-hawā* → $rā^c$ *al ha wā* "the man in love", $šift$ *al-ḡaḏī* → $šif$ *tal ḡa ḏī* "I saw my beloved", rab^c *at al-bēt* → rab^c *a tal bēt* "the men's part of the tent".

⁷ In Nabaṭī poetry a sequence of two, but no more, short syllables is permitted under these specified conditions but in ordinary speech one may encounter, in extremely rare and very circumscribed cases, sequences of three short syllables: $šif$ *al-asad* → $ši$ *fa la sad* "look at the lion!"

When the preceding word ends with a long vowel, the long vowel is deleted: *ćimā aq-ḡārī* → *ći maḡ ḡā rī* "like a hungry wolf", *alā al-finjāl* → *a lal fin jāl* "on the cup".

When Nabaṭī poetry is scanned or chanted all consonant clusters must be resolved, except at the very beginning or the very end of the hemistich. To resolve these clusters, a metathesized or elided vowel is restored back to its original position to form with the preceding consonant an independent short syllable: *misilmīn* → *mis li mīn* "Muslims", *sarrḡah* → *sar ri ḡah* "take it (f.) to pasture", *al-mḡawī* → *al mi ḡā wī* "the medicine man", *dam^c enī* → *dam^c i ē nī* "the tears of my eyes", *tḡannī ṡyūr al-mā* → *ti ḡan nī ṡi yūr al mā* "the waterbirds are singing". Restoration of elided vowels cancels out the anaptyctic vowel which is introduced to break up final consonant clusters. The anaptyctic vowel is retained only at the very end of the hemistich. For example, the scanning of the word *al-^caṡir* "the afternoon" is *al^c aṡ ri* in medial position but *al^c a ṡir* in final position.

The prosodic structure of Nabaṭī poetry, in harmony with that of the spoken language, does not allow short syllable sequences except in those very restricted and phonetically conditioned cases which have been specified at the end of the previous section. Otherwise, the short syllables in the hemistich must be separated from each other by no less than two but no more than three long syllables as we will see below. Therefore, when the restoration of elided vowels yields two short syllables, these two short syllables are automatically reduced to one long syllable by dropping the vowel of the second syllable and linking its consonant to the preceding syllable to close it and make it long. For example, the utterance *jibt slaḡī* "I brought my weapon" scans as *jib tis lā ḡī* but not as **jib ti si lā ḡī*. More examples: *jāb^c yālūh* → *jā bi^c yā lūh* "he brought his children", *ḡinnā^c nizih* → *ḡin nā^c ni zih* "we are of the ^cAna-zeh tribe", *tiḡl rmikih* → *tig lir mi kih* "as an adult female horse".

The metrical form of a Nabaṭī poem is a syllabic matrix to which all the verses conform. Therefore, when in an individual hemistich, we come across an utterance that can be scanned in more than one way, we choose the one that conforms to the metrical form of the poem. For example, an utterance consisting of a word with a final closed syllable followed by a word with an initial consonant cluster, e.g., *ṡaggag ṡyābuh* "he tore off his garment (out of extreme passion)", may be scanned in two ways. We can restore the elided vowel after the initial consonant of the second word *ṡag gaḡ ṡi yā buh*, or we can reduce the final closed syllable in the first word to a short syllable and link its terminal consonant to the initial consonant of the second word: *ṡag ga ḡiṡ yā buh*. Another example is when we have an utterance consisting of a word with a final long

vowel followed by a word with initial consonant cluster, e.g., *ṣirnā frag* "we became divided into small groups", may scan either as *ṣir nā fi rag* or *ṣir naf rag*.

A final consonant cluster is permitted at the very end of a hemistich. An initial consonant cluster is permitted at the very beginning of a hemistich. In this position, a long syllable with an initial consonant cluster may be counted just as one syllable or the initial consonant may be counted as an independent short syllable; this is determined by whether the first foot of the meter of the poem begins with a short syllable or a long one. Thus, a word like *ḥṣānī* "my horse" may scan, depending on meter, either as *ḥṣā nī* or *ḥi ṣā nī*. If the initial syllable with the initial consonant cluster is short, it may be counted, again depending on the meter of the poem, either as short, e.g., *gḏibat* → *gḏi bat* "she seized", or as two short syllables reduced to one long syllable, e.g., *mtawall^cin* → *mit wal li^cin* "burning with passion".

By observing these scanning techniques, the verses of a poem, from first to last, become arranged into strings of syllables which are collocated in such a way that the short syllables and the long syllables of all the verses perfectly align themselves in vertical columns. By so arranging the verses, we will find that in many instances syllables are unambiguously long or short with each syllable falling in its expected columns with the clear cut cases. For example, consonants which are followed by elided vowels and which are expected to form independent short syllables will always fall in the same columns with consonants which are followed by unelided short vowels.

To demonstrate the validity and applicability of the scanning techniques outlined above, here are three short poems of different meters. First, I shall transliterate the poems syllabically according to the scanning techniques outlined above. So that the reader can readily see the working of these techniques, elided vowels will not be supplied; their places will be left as blanks which can be filled simply by inserting the vowel *i*. Then, I shall transliterate the poems as they are recited with facing translation. In the first poem, ^cGĀB IBN SI^cDŪN AL-^cWĀJĪ from the Wild Slēmān section of the ^cAnazeh tribe laments the departure of his sweetheart, Nūt. The second is a love poem by SLĒMĀN IBN ŠRĒM. The last selection is from a long poem by ^cABDALAZĪZ AL-GĀDĪ.

These three poems are scanned as follows:

I.

yā	nū	t	^C an	naḏ	^C ū	ni	kum	lē	h	šā	lat
yā	ḥē	f	tam	m f	rā	gi	nā	yā	ḥa	bī	bī
zam	lić	ma	^C al	ḥaz	mal	m	šar	rif	ti	kā	lat
wag	gaf	ta	rā	^C I	hin	w	gal	bī	ḡa	ḏī	bī
^C ig	bić	^C	yū	nī	bad	d	mū	^C is	ta	xā	lat
dam	^C I	^C a	lā	xad	dī	ni	ṭar	fō	g	jē	bī
^C ig	bik	^C a	lay	yā	zē	na	lay	yā	m	mā	lat
ir	ja ^C	w	^C ā	lij	ḏā	m	rī	yā	ṭi	bī	bī
wid	yā	ri	nā	min	^C ig	b	far	gā	k	sā	lat
min	dam	^C	^C e	nī	gā	m	yid	rij	ši	^C I	bī
win	ćā	n	far	gā	kum	^C a	lal	gal	b	ṭā	lat
nan	šā	k	fō	g m	naṭ	ṭ	rā	tas	si	bī	bī
nā	šal	k	lō	min	dū	ni	kal	gō	m	ḥā	lat
min	fō	g	gib	bin	yar	ha	jin	nal	ḥa	rī	bī
law	ćā	n	dū	nik	gir	ra	ḥal	xē	l	jā	lat
lā	zim	yi	jī	bik	ḥaḏ	ḏi	nā	min	ni	šī	bī

II.

sa	ral	bā	r	ḡal	lī	lih	zi	mā	nē	n	mā	sa	rā
ši	dū	gal	ma	xā	yil	bā	r	ḡih	yaj	ḏ	bas	sā	rī
^C a	lā	far	^C a	tal	wā	dī	w	sē	lih	ta	ḥad	da	rā
t	ḡan	nī	ṭ	yū	ral	mā	^C a	lal	ḥā	y	ral	jā	rī
ma	ḡā	nī	ḥa	bī	bin	^C ig	b	^C ir	fiḥ	ta	nak	ka	rā
^C a	lē	hal	la	hak	bar	kil	l	mā	ḥal	l	lih	ṭā	rī
ni	ṭaḥ	nī	b	gar	ḏal	hē	l	ḥad	ral	m	šaj	ja	rā
ji	mī	lal	ma	ḥā	sin	lā	ḏi	xī	min	wa	lā	^C a	rī
i	bū	lib	bi	tin	mit	lal	gi	mar	ḏā	ḥ	was	fa	rā
wi	lā	ḡā	bi	tal	gam	rā	ti	ḡad	dā	ba	has	sā	rī

I. Lament of the Departure of Nūt, by ^CGĀB IBN SI^CDŪN AL-^CWĀJĪ

1. yā nūt ^Cannā ḏ^Cūnikum lēh šālat *
yāḥḥēf tamm frāḡinā yā ḥabībī.
2. zamlić ma^C al-ḥazm al-mšarrif tikālat *
waggaft arā^CIhin w-galbī ḡaḏībī.
3. ^Cigbić ^Cyūnī b-ad-dmū^C istaxālat *
dam^CI^Calā xaddī niṭar fōg jēbī.
4. ^Cigbik ^Calay yā zēn al-ayyām mālat *
irja^C w-^Cālij ḏāmri yā ṭibībī.

III.

dā	r	ṭī	bal	ka	rā	nō	ḍ	bar	gin	sa	rā	
yiḡ	^C i	laḍ	wā	h	fī	šā	m	xā	taḍ	ḍ	rā	
ḥā	l	ḥal	lō	n	daj	laṭ	ṭa	hā	mis	ti	ṭīl	
šam	m	naf	ḥaṣ	ṣi	bā	wir	ta	wā	wig	ta	rā	
mir	^C i	fin	miḡ	mi	lih	fō	g	tē	mā	ḥa	gūg	
mis	bi	lin	mē	mi	nih	min	wa	rā	ḡaḍ	wa	rā	
ḥin	ṭi	miy	yih	b	ṭū	fā	n	sē	lih	ti	dūm	
wiz	di	jar	win	fi	jar	bal	mi	din	wal	ḡ	rā	
^C al	l	wan	hal	w	naz	zal	w	ḥā	šal	w	ḥūš	
hir	ra	bin	tit	ti	ḡī	fī	k	hū	faḍ	ḍ	rā	
wal	ba	sad	dō	ḥ	was	sid	ri	min	mā	ni	fā	
miṭ	l	lib	sal	^C a	mā	yim	^C a	lal	^C as	ka	rā	
whaṭ	ṭa	lō	kā	r	min	rū	s	šum	maḍ	ḍ	rā	
bal	wi	ṭā	waḡ	ra	gaḍ	ḍab	b	bal	miḥ	ja	rā	
wal	'a	kā	mī	m	hiš	rat	ba	hal	ḥar	ba	lā	
miṭ	l	sī	mā	xa	ṭī	bin	ṣa	^C ad	mim	ba	rā	
win	ja	lal	ḡē	m	min	ba	^C d	naj	m	w	ša	har
waš	ri	gat	raḥ	mi	tal	lah	^C a	lā	mā	ja	rā	
^C at	ṭ	bar	rō	ḍ	xan	nat	fi	tī	ḡal	ki	mām	
ḥin	ni	hal	mis	ḥ	fī	šam	mi	hal	'aḍ	fa	rā	
wal	mu	kā	fō	ḡ	zah	ran	ni	fal	baṭ	ṭa	rab	
jā	b	ṣō	tin	^C a	jī	bin	^C a	lā	mā	ṭa	rā	
wgar	ra	tal	^C e	n	fī	mā	ra	'at	wir	ta	^C at	
wiṭ	ma	'an	nat	bi	ḥal	wā	li	ḍī	ḍal	ka	rā	
win	sa	rā	bā	ri	ḡin	miṭ	l	ḍā	fin	š	dū	
ḍā	r	ṭī	bal	ka	rā	nō	ḍ	bar	gin	sa	rā	

* * *

Translation

1. O Nūt, why did you load your camels and depart with your tribe?
I am sorry to see you leave, my love.
2. With a broken heart, I stood watching your pack camels climb
the high hill.
3. My eyes became clouded with tears that ran over my cheeks and
fell to my lap.
4. since you have gone, O beautiful lady, my happy days have left me;
come back, O love, and cure my heart.

5. wi-dyārinā min ^Cigib fargāk sālāt *
min dam^C ^Cenī gām yidrij šī^CIbī.
6. win éān fargākum ^Cala al-galb t̄ālat *
naṣṣāk fōg mnaṭṭrāt as-sibībī.
7. nāṣalk lō min dūnik al-gōm ḥālat *
min fōg gibbin yarhajinn al-ḥarībī.
8. law éān dūnik girraḥ al-xēl jālat *
lāzim yijībik ḥaḍḍinā min niṣībī.

II. Poem by SLĒMĀN IBN ŠRĒM

1. sarā al-barq̄ allī lih zimānēn mā sarā *
šidūg al-maxāyil bārghih yajid̄b as-sārī.
2. ^Calā far^Cat al-wādī w-sēlih taḥaddarā *
tḡannī tḡūr al-mā ^Calā al-ḥāyr al-jārī.
3. maḡānī ḥabībin ^Cigib ^Cirfih tanakkarā *
^Calēh allah akbar kill mā ḥall lih t̄ārī.
4. niṭahñī b-garḍ al-hēl ḥadr al-mšajjarā *
jimīl al-maḥāsīn lā ḍixīmin walā ^Cārī.
5. ibū libbitin miṭl al-gimar ḍāḥ w-asfarā *
wilā ḡābt al-gamrā tiḡadda bah as-sārī.

III. From a poem by ^CABDAL^CAZĪZ AL-GĀḌĪ

1. ḍār t̄īb al-karā nōḍ bargin sarā *
yiš^Cil aḡwāh fī šāmāat aḡ-ḍrā.
2. ḥāléc al-lōn dajl aṭ-ṭahā mistiṭīl *
šamm nafḥ aš-šibā w-irtawā w-igtarā.
3. mir^Cfin mišimlih fōg tēmā ḥagūg *
misiblin mēminih min warā ḡaḍwarā.
4. éin ṭimiyyih b-ṭūfān sēlih tidūm *
w-izdiyar w-infijar b-al-midin w-al-ḡrā.
5. ^Call w-anhal w-nazzal w-ḥāš al-wḥūš *
hirrabin tittiḡī fī khūf aḡ-ḍrā.
6. w-albas ad-dōḥ w-as-sidir mimmā nifā *
miṭil libs al-^Camāyim ^Calā al-^Caskara.
7. w-ḥaṭṭ al-ōkār min rūš šumm aḡ-ḍrā *
b-al-wiṭā w-aḡrag aḡ-ḡabb b-al-miḥjarā.

5. Since you have gone, rain has come over our territory from my tears which have flooded the land.
6. Should you stay away much longer, we will come to you on swift mares.
7. Despite the fighting men of your tribe, we will reach you on slender mares which will frighten the foes and send them into flight.
8. Despite full-grown horses with riders trying to prevent my advances, with luck I shall have you to myself.

* * *

1. Through the night lightning such as I have not seen for two years flashes in the distance, surely a night traveler is attracted by a promising cloud.
2. It flashes in the distance where the tributaries of the wadi converge; here the wadi is surging and water birds are singing on its banks.
3. This is the camping ground of a lady who left me after I had fallen in love with her; sweet memories come to mind at the mention of her name.
4. I met her donned in her embroidered green dress; she is beautifully shaped, not too plump and not too lean.
5. Her neck shines like a clear full moon, and when the moon sets, her light guides the night traveler.

* * *

1. Lightning flashing throughout the night drove sweet slumber away from my eyes; it illuminates the tops of lofty mountains.
2. The heavens were wrapped up in thick dark clouds; clouds driven by the ṣabā (east) wind until they were saturated with rain.
3. Heavy rain fell from Taimā' in the north to Ghaḍwarā' in the south.
4. The mountain of Ṭimiyyih is swirled in flood and the torrent fell also on the settled country.
5. It watered and quenched the land, rounding up the wild beasts on the mountain tops and driving them down seeking refuge in the cave shelters.
6. Its debris near the top of lotus trees resembles turbans on the heads of soldiers.
7. It stripped falcon's nests from the summits of high mountains and it drowned the lizards in their holes.

8. *w-al-akāmīm ḥiṣrat bah al-ḥarbalā **
miṭil sīmā xaṭībin ṣa^Cad mimbarā.
9. *w-injalā al-ḡēm min ba^Cad najm w-ṣahar **
w-aṣṣrigat raḥmit allah ^Calā mā jarā.
10. *w-^Caṭṭ b-ar-rōḍ xannat fitīḡ al-kimām **
ćinnih al-miṣc fī ṣammih al-aḍfārā.
11. *w-al-mukā fōḡ zahr an-nifal b-aṭ-ṭarab **
jāb ṣōtin ^Cajībin ^Calā mā ṭarā.
12. *w-garrat al-^Cēn fī mā ra'at w-irta^Cat **
w-iṭma'annat bi-ḥalwā liḍīḍ al-karā.
13. *win sarā bargīn miṭil ḡa f-inṣdū **
ḡār ṭīb al-karā nōḍ bargīn sarā.

3. Metrical Structure

The first step in determining the meter of a Nabaṭī hemistich is to divide it into its constituent syllables. Then syllables are grouped into larger units of metrical measurement called feet. A foot is a unique combination of one short syllable and two or three long syllables.⁸ The procedure via which metrical feet are discovered is quite simple. First, we find simple meters in each of which only one type of short and long syllable combination repeats itself and this combination is isolated and identified as a foot. After examining all the simple meters and identifying their feet, we then proceed to analyze complex meters as combinations of two or more of the already identified feet.

The following is an inventory of metrical patterns which I have been able to identify in Nabaṭī poetry. Each metrical pattern will be represented by one hemistich.

- I. #1. *agūl an-niṣāyih w-a^Cidd al-fiḍāyih*
- II. #2. *yā-rjāl al-ḥamiyyih*
 #3. *ya-llah al-yōm yā-rawwāf*
 #4. *yā-mjallī tisamma^C l-^Cōdin fiṣīḥ*
- III. #5. *^Calāmh marr ^Cajlān*
 #6. *ḡarīmin b-al-hawā rūḥī*

8 By combining a short syllable with two long ones we get three feet: --, --, - and by combining a short syllable with three long syllables we get four feet: ---, ---, ---, ----. The number of simple and complex meters and all their variants which can be formally derived by combining these basic feet is almost infinite but the Nabaṭī poets

8. The chameleons were forced to seek refuge on lofty peaks, stretching their heads like preachers on pulpits.
9. After forty days, the clouds disappeared and the mercy of Allah shone upon the world.
10. Pastures began to smell of blossoming flowers; their aroma as sweet as fragrant musk.
11. The whistling birds landed on the aromatic shrubs and began to sing wonderful notes.
12. This pleasant sight cheered me up and now my eyes can enjoy sweet slumber.
13. Whenever you see lightning like this, sing with me: lightning flashing throughout the night drove sweet slumber away from my eyes.

* * *

- #7. sigā ṣōb al-ḥayā miznin tahāma
 #8. anā mā-nīb haḏḏārin miṭil nāsin yahaḏrūn
 #9. salāmin sālmin mihdīh lik yā-gāyd al-ḡizlān

- IV. #10. yōm ṣāf al-ḡāwyāt
 #11. fazz galbī fazz galbī
 #12. yā-salāmī yā-salām allah
 #13. kill ṣayyin ḡēr rabbik w-al-^Camal
 #14. rawwaḥan miṭl al-ḡiṭā ṣōb aṭ-ṭimīlih
 #15. bint ṣēxin mā yihīd aṭ-ṭēr ^Can mandātih
 #16. lī ṭalāṭ snīn a^Caḏḏil fīc y-al-^Cēn aš-ṣiḡiyiyih
 #17. yā-hal al-^Cērāt bācīr cān marrētū ṭawārif xillī
- V. #18. yā-rabbinā mā min miṭīr
 #19. yal^Cab ṭarab w-al-^Camm mā jāh
 #20. yā-ḡ-al-ḥamām allī sija^C bi-l-ḥūn
 #21. yā-galb lā tiyyis walā tirtā^Cī
 #22. hāḏī ^Cnēzih mā nibī^Cah b-az-zihīd
 #23. ya-dḥēm yā-mašḡāy ṣīlaw ^Cadl al-amṭāl
- VI. #24. anā hāḏ mā bī nōḏ barrāḡ
 #25. al-a^Cmār sifnin w-as-snīn bhār
 #26. al-ayyām mā xallan ḥadin mā cawannih
 #27. bidā al-ḡīl min jafnih jifā laḏḏat rgādih
 #28. xalūjin tijidḏ al-galb b-a^Clā ^Cwālḥā

← employ only a small and manageable number of these possibilities.

- VII. #29. *gāl min wallaf jawābin ʔarā lih*
 #30. *lā tikāʔar jayyitī yā-niḏar ^Cēnī*
 #31. *yā-hal al-bistān min faḏlikum ^Cingūdī*
 #32. *ya-llah innī ʔālbik ya-mṭīb allī ʕibar*
- VIII. #33. *^Caddēt b-al-mistiḡillī*
 #34. *yā-mill galbin ^Calā mīhaf*
 #35. *yā-sidritin gā^Cat al-ḡirmūl yizzīḥ*
 #36. *ḥayy allah allī yiḡīb w-yisri^C ar-riddih*
 #37. *in ḥān hāḏī miṭālbik gaharnā ar-rḥīl*
 #38. *yahḥōl anā min jrūḥ al-galb w-al-ḥibb yahḥōl*
- IX. #39. *yā-^Calī ʕiḥt b-aṣ-ṣōt ar-rifī^C*
 #40. *yā-ḥamāmin ^Calā al-ḡābih yinūḥi*
 #41. *yōm ^Caddā ar-rīḡībīh rās maṣḏūbih*
 #42. *yā-ḥamāmiḥ ḡarībīh ^Cind bāb as-salām*
 #43. *ams fī sūg m-adrī ^Carriḏat lī ḡazālih*
- X. #44. *ḏibaḥnī b-at-tiḡillī lih ^Czūmin giwiyyih*
- XI. #45. *yā-^Cēn ya-llī ḡilīlin nōmahā min ḥamm lēlih*
 #46. *^Cayyant kisrā w-gēṣar ^Cazzalaw w-al-kill bāsīh ʕidīd*
- XII. #47. *yā-ḡār^C ad-dammām gim w-igri^Cih*
 #48. *nāḥ al-ḥamām b-^Cālyāt al-miḡāṣīr*
 #49. *^Cadat ^Calā allī b-al-hawā sabbal al-ḥibbih*
- XIII. #50. *yā-hal al-fāṭr allī fōgahā min kill daṣṣnin jidīdin ḡalt*
- XIV. #51. *māni^C xayyālin b-ad-dakkīh*

To show the relationship between these metrical patterns, I will convert the above hemistiches into short and long syllables. Each hemistich is a string of short and long syllables with the short syllables separated from each other by no less than two but no more than three long syllables. The only exception is hemistich #51 which is made up of long syllables only and that makes it impossible to divide into feet. The fifty-one hemistiches will group themselves into fourteen meters, each having one to eight variants. The variants of a meter all share the same foot or combination of feet but they are different in length, i.e. number of syllables. The addition of syllables to the shortest variant may be even as in V. or there may be jumps and leaps. The gaps created by these jumps and leaps are accidental and not formal. They may be the result of incomplete sampling or they may be neglected variants (*muhmal*).

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| I. #1. | u-- u-- u-- u-- | #27. | u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| II. #2. | u-- u-- | #28. | u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| #3. | u-- u-- | VII. #29. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #4. | u-- u-- u-- u-- | #30. | u-- u-- u-- |
| III. #5. | u-- u-- | #31. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #6. | u-- u-- | #32. | u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| #7. | u-- u-- u-- | VIII. #33. | u-- u-- |
| #8. | u-- u-- u-- u-- | #34. | u-- u-- |
| #9. | u-- u-- u-- u-- | #35. | u-- u-- u-- |
| IV. #10. | u-- u-- | #36. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #11. | u-- u-- | #37. | u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| #12. | u-- u-- | #38. | u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| #13. | u-- u-- u-- | IX. #39. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #14. | u-- u-- u-- | #40. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #15. | u-- u-- u-- u-- | #41. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #16. | u-- u-- u-- u-- | #42. | u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| #17. | u-- u-- u-- u-- u-- | #43. | u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| V. #18. | u-- u-- | X. #44. | u--u--u--u--u-- |
| #19. | u-- u-- | XI. #45. | u-- u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| #20. | u-- u-- | #46. | u-- u-- u-- u-- u-- |
| #21. | u-- u-- | XII. #47. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #22. | u-- u-- u-- | #48. | u-- u-- u-- |
| #23. | u-- u-- u-- | #49. | u-- u-- u-- |
| VI. #24. | u-- u-- u-- | XIII. #50. | u--u--u--u--u--u--u-- |
| #25. | u-- u-- u-- | XIV. #51. | u--u--u--u--u--u--u-- |
| #26. | u-- u-- u-- u-- | | |

The scanning techniques explained in the previous section are consistent with the way the poetry is chanted or sung. But the above metrical inventory is a formal classification which does not have a corresponding ethnic classification. Nabaṭī poets, except perhaps the literate among them, are not and need not be consciously aware of the metrical structure of their compositions. If a Nabaṭī poet cannot determine whether his verse is metrically sound (*ʿadil*) or broken (*maksūr*) by recitation, then he can make sure by singing it. The way a verse is sung or chanted is called *ṭarg* "beat, rhythm" or *šēlih* "raising of the voice". When one hears a new poem one may ask "*wiššū h-aṭ-ṭarg?*", "what is this rhythm?" or "*wišlōn šēlitah?*", "how is it sung?". Just as it is possible to group the fifty-one hemistiches above into metrical classes based on syllable arrangement, the Nabaṭī poets arrange them into me-

lodic categories. The most famous melodies are *maṣḥūb*, *marbū^C*, *hlālī*, *xmišī*, *ṣḫarī*, *hǰēnī*, *sāmrī*, *ḥōṭī* and *^Carḡih*. The first five categories are usually sung individually to the accompaniment of *ribābih*, a one-string, fiddle-like instrument. The sixth category is sung to the accompaniment of *ribābih* or while riding on thoroughbred camel mounts (*hijīn*). The last three categories are sung collectively to the accompaniment of drums (*ṭbūl*). This melodic classification does not in any way correspond to or accord with the metrical classification worked out above. Poems of different meters, although they are sung differently, are grouped in the same melodic category. For example, hemistichs #14, 34, 36 and 43 are all *hǰēnī* and #22, 30, 32, 40 and 41 are all *^Carḡih*. Also, a poem, although it has only one meter, may belong to several melodic categories. For example, hemistich #7 is both *ṣḫarī* and *sāmrī*, #34 is both *hǰēnī* and *sāmrī*, and #46 is *maṣḥūb*, *marbū^C* and *ḥōṭī*.

4. Relationship to Classical Prosody

Although the prosody of Nabaṭī poetry may seem somewhat different from that of classical Arabic poetry, the two are generically related and their differences can be explained, as I shall try to do now, partly as the result of linguistic changes and partly as the result of a general tendency towards symmetry and simplification of the metrical paradigm.

AL-KHALĪL IBN AḤMAD was the first to formulate the metrical system of classical Arabic poetry. He posited five metrical circles each containing from two to nine ideal metrical forms. A metrical circle is a circle consisting of a specific number of long and short syllables combined in a specific manner. The meters of a circle are formally related to each other. By starting to count from one point on a circle, one of its meters is obtained; the others are likewise derived from it by changing the starting point. The total yield of the five metrical circles is twenty-two ideal meters, including six neglected (*muhmal*) meters. These six are accidental gaps in the metrical system in that they are not employed by classical poets even though there are no formal constraints to prevent their usage.

The number of the actually attested classical meters is much larger than the number of the ideal meters from which they are derived, so to speak, through formal rules. Several variants can be derived from the ideal form of a meter by changing the syllabic structure of the last foot (*^Carūḡ*) of the first hemistich and the last foot (*ḡarb*) of the second. These changes are called *^Cilal* and they are binding. Whatever chan-

ges the poet chooses to introduce on the ^carūḍ and ḍarb of the first verse of a poem, he must adhere to throughout the poem. The verses in a poem are all of the same meter and the two hemistiches of every verse are metrically similar except for the ^carūḍ and ḍarb which are usually different. Because of this probable difference, it is not possible to identify exactly the meter of a classical verse without knowing both of its hemistichs in order to know its ^carūḍ and ḍarb.

Besides the ^cilal there are other syllabic changes called *ziḥāfāt*. It has been said that the ^cilal are binding and they affect only the ^carūḍ and ḍarb of a classical verse. The *ziḥāfāt* affect the other parts of the verse called ḥašw and are optional poetic license. Unlike the ^cilal the *ziḥāfāt* do not affect all the verses of a poem in the same way.

The general tendency toward symmetry in Nabaṭī verse has resulted in eliminating the difference between the last foot of the first hemistich and that of the second hemistich. The two hemistichs of a Nabaṭī verse are identical in meter except in those verses that are composed in the classical ṭawīl meter. For this reason, I consider the hemistich, and not the entire verse, to be the maximum unit of metrical measurement in Nabaṭī poetry; the syllable is the minimum unit. No classical poem is free of *ziḥāfāt* but in Nabaṭī poetry they are rare and affect only the initial syllable of a hemistich which can be optionally reduced from long to short, or, if already short, deleted altogether. As a matter of fact, the *ziḥāfāt* which permit the deletion of one of two short syllables, the substitution of two short syllables by a long one, and the reduction of a long syllable to a short one in the contiguity of another short syllable are all inapplicable to Nabaṭī poetry because they all presume the unconditioned permissibility of the sequence of two short syllables, a feature which is avoided in Nabaṭī vernacular. The phonetically conditioned sequence of two short syllables which was discussed in the preceding pages may affect a verse in a Nabaṭī poem in which case one of these two short syllables will always fall in a column of corresponding short syllables but the other will fall in an adjacent column of long syllables. But this is a phonetically conditioned and not optional syllable substitution and therefore cannot be considered a *ziḥāfāt*. To state formally the rules of *ziḥāfāt* in classical poetry, the feet of a classical meter are divided into smaller units of syllable combinations called *asbāb* and *awtād*. But since ^cilal and *ziḥāfāt* rarely apply to Nabaṭī poetry, it would suffice to divide the feet of Nabaṭī meters simply into short and long syllables.

The avoidance of two short syllable sequences has also resulted in the disappearance of two classical meters, *al-wāfir* and *al-kāmil* from the metrical inventory of Nabaṭī poetry because two of the feet of these

meters, namely *mufa^Calatun* and *mutafa^Cilun*, have a sequence of two short syllables each.

Five more classical meters all of the *al-muštābih* circle, namely *as-sarī^C*, *al-munsariḥ*, *al-xafīf*, *al-muḍāri^C* and *al-muqtaḍab* have no correspondences in Nabaṭī poetry. Uniquely among the classical meters, in these five short syllables are separated from one another by four long syllables. It is perhaps this anomaly which led to their disappearance from Nabaṭī poetry. In Nabaṭī meters, short syllables are separated from each other by no more than three but no less than two long syllables.

The meters of the last five hemistichs ##47-51, in the metrical inventory presented above do not correspond exactly with any of the classical meters. We may consider the meter of hemistichs ##47-49 as an adaptation of the classical *ṭawīl* meter because they differ from it only by the absence of an initial short syllable. It is not possible to determine the meter of hemistich #50 because there is more than one way by which it can be divided into feet and none of the possible divisions corresponds to any classical meter. Hemistich #51 cannot be divided into feet since its constituent syllables are all long.

Despite these differences between the metrical structure of Nabaṭī and classical Arabic poetry, a cursory examination of the Nabaṭī metrical inventory will show that many classical meters are still being used; *al-mutaqārib* #1, *al-mutadārik* ##2-4, *al-hazaḡ* ##5-9, *ar-ramal* ##10-17, *ar-raḡaz* ##18-23, *aṭ-ṭawīl* ##24-28, *al-madīd* ##29-32, *al-baṣīṭ* ##33-38, and *al-muḡtaṭṭ* ##45-46. The two meters of *al-mumtadd* ##39-43 and *al-muṣ-ṭaṭīl* #44 which belong to the *al-muxṭalif* circle are utilized by Nabaṭī poets even though they are neglected by classical poets. Some of the classical meters used in Nabaṭī poetry have been made longer, e.g., *al-hazaḡ* ##8-9 and *ar-ramal* ##15-17. A Nabaṭī hemistich can be as long as it is possible for a gifted singer to chant in one breath. As far as I am able to determine, breath seems to be the only limiting factor on Nabaṭī hemistich length. Hemistich #50 has a sum total of twenty syllables; the longest hemistich in classical Arabic poetry is fourteen syllables.

Turning now to the rhyming scheme of Nabaṭī poetry, we also notice some similarities and differences with classical Arabic poetry. In a classical poem, only the second and never the first hemistichs of verses rhyme while a Nabaṭī poem usually has two rhymes; one rhyme for the first hemistichs and a different rhyme for the second. Not infrequently, the rhyming consonant, i.e., *ar-rawiyy*, of the first and second hemistichs is the same while the preceding vowel, i.e., *ar-riḍf*, is different. For example, the first hemistichs may rhyme in *-ūb/-ōb* and the second in

-īb/ēb. As a result of the monophthongization of diphthongs, ū and ē can serve interchangeably as *riḏf*; so can ī and ē. Certain blemishes such as *iqwā'* and *sinād* against which medieval prosodists warned post-classical poets are not applicable to Nabaṭī poetry due to the shedding of case endings and the leveling effect of centralizing high and low vowels.

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