

# Pegs, Cords, and *Ghuls*: Meter of Classical Arabic Poetry

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There are many reasons to read poetry, filled with heroics and folly, sweeping metaphors and engaging rhymes. It can reveal much about a shared cultural history and the depths of the human soul; for linguists, it also provides insights into the nature of language itself. As a particular subset of a language, poetry is one case study for understanding the use of a language and the underlying rules that govern it. This paper explores the metrical system of classical Arabic poetry and its theoretical representations. The prevailing classification is from the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E., based on the work of the scholar al-Khaliil, and I evaluate modern attempts to situate the meters within a more universal theory. I analyze the meter of two early Arabic poems, and observe the descriptive accuracy of al-Khaliil's system, and then provide an analysis of the major alternative accounts. By incorporating linguistic concepts such as binarity and prosodic constraints, the newer models improve on the general accessibility of their theories with greater explanatory potential. The use of this analysis to identify and account for the four most commonly used meters, for example, highlights the significance of these models over al-Khaliil's basic enumerations. The study is situated within a discussion of cultural history and the modern application of these meters, and a reflection on the oral nature of these poems. The opportunities created for easier cross-linguistic comparisons are crucial for a broader understanding of poetry, enhanced by Arabic's complex levels of metrical patterns, and with conclusions that can inform wider linguistic study.\*

## Introduction

Classical Arabic poetry is traditionally characterized by its use of one of the sixteen

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meters described by the grammarian al-Khaliil in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This system is quantitative, relying on syllable weight and each meter is constructed from two basic units called *watid* ('peg') and *sabab* ('cord'), which are each one to two syllables. Combinations of *watid* and *sabab* then form the different feet of a line that distinguish each meter. Al-Khaliil's system is further characterized by his arrangement of related meters, those differing only by the relative location of the *watid* within each foot, for example, into 'circles.' His model accurately describes most classical poems, once the catalogue of variants is considered. I look at two early poems written in the *waafir* meter, one of the four most common meters, and show the general success of mapping from al-Khaliil's model. The problem remains, though, of how to best reconcile this system and its Arabic-specific units of representation with a more universal metrical theory, and how to create a system that is explanatory, as well as descriptive. I evaluate the major modern linguistic models with regards to these issues.

Many have attempted a reformulation of al-Khaliil's meters. Linguists such as Maling (1973) argue that a generative metric reanalysis of al-Khaliil's model is most successful. She suggests that his method of organizing meters into circles is necessary to account for why there are exactly sixteen meters possible, and she supplements the system with specific generative rules. Others such as Prince (1989) and Schuh (1996) have continued to approach the analysis more universally. Prince emphasizes the importance of the metron, a phonological unit between the foot and the hemistich, and reconstitutes *watid* and *sabab* in the modern inventory of Strong and Weak components. Schuh investigates the *kaamil* and *basiit* meters to show that a more basic metric theory using the syllable as the metrical unit sufficiently accounts for the realizations of Arabic meter. Ultimately it is the work of Golston and Riad (1997), however, which best accounts for these meters. Their theory makes use of the metron level and shifts away

from formulations based on *watid* and *sabab*. The emphasis on binarity further establishes their clear and well-formulated account. Finally, the application of prosodic constraints CLASH and LAPSE to predict the four most commonly used meters is an example of this model's superior explanatory potential.

## History

The poems addressed in detail here are pre-Islamic and early Islamic, from a time when Arab society was predominantly tribal. Poetry was an integral and unifying part of the tribal culture as Alan Jones (1994) describes: "The poetry of a tribe was something that helped to differentiate it from other tribes. It was a projection into words of the life of the tribe, its solidarity and its aspirations, its fears and its sorrows..." (1). He further highlights poetry's importance because of its ability to exist across time and space and writes, "[...] poetry had a quality not possessed by a tribe's worldly possessions. Land, camels, goods and chattels, even members of the tribe could be seized or destroyed by enemies, but as long as the collective memory survived, so would the tribe's poetry..." (1). These poems were not epic narratives in the spirit of the *Iliad* or *Mahabharata*, but were shorter, lyrical descriptions of everyday life. In "Ancient Arabian Poetry," Charles Lyall suggests that the Greek idyll is the closest approximation:

The Arabian ode sets forth before us a series of pictures, drawn with confident skill and first-hand knowledge, of the life its maker lived, of the objects among which he moved, of his horse, his camel, the wild creatures of the wilderness, and of the landscape in the midst of which his life and theirs was set. (xviii)

In achieving this significance, poems had one of four main purposes, with seven major themes.

The purposes were: *madih* ('panegyric'), *hija'* ('lampoon'), *ghazal* ('love'), and *ritha* ('lament'), and themes: *madih* ('panegyric'), *hija'* ('lampoon'), *ghazal* ('love'), *ritha'* ('lament'), *wasf*

(‘description’), *fakhr* (‘self-glorification’), and *hikma* (‘wise sayings’) (Jones 1994: 2). As such, this poetry addressed a wide range of subjects in daily life with relevance and significance to the entire community.

Orality is another crucial component of this poetry. Scholars did not begin recording these poems in writing until the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Even today, the phrase used by poets remains *qilt al-qasida* (‘I uttered a poem’) and not *katabt al-qasida* (‘I wrote a poem’) (Monroe 1972: 13). At the time, poetry was experienced through shared recitations. Tribes gathered to hear *rawi* (‘reciters’). *Rawi* were known for their artistry, and poets who recite their work are compared to singing birds and their verses to birdsongs (Adonis 1990: 15). The relationship of the *rawi* and poet was also like that of an apprentice; *rawi* would often become poets in their own right, though this was not a required stage in becoming a great poet. Lyall writes, “The office of a *rawi* was not only to know the text of his master’s compositions, but also to be able to explain its allusions, to clear up its difficulties, and to relate the circumstances in which each poem was composed” (1885: xxxvi). *Rawi* preserved and transmitted the poetic corpus.

Contributing to the unifying nature of these poems, orality also influenced their form. The poets, themselves largely illiterate, relied on an “instinctive sense of rhythm” in their composition (Monroe 1972: 13). Monroe further argues that there are many facets of pre-Islamic poetry which align with Albert Lord and Milman Parry’s critical analysis of oral composition. The use of formulae, which Parry defines as “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea” (Lord 2000: 4), is a fundamental example. Monroe finds a high percentage of formulae within 5000 lines of early Arabic poetry. His findings are especially significant given that this percentage is about three

times higher than what he found in written poems composed much later. This suggests that the frequency of certain phrases is not merely related to the genre or subject matter, but more a result of the particular method of composition. Monroe also cites reports that Arab poets used bows and staffs during recitation for emphasis and possibly as a rhythmic aid. This external use of rhythm is crucial in oral composition, as Lord and Parry find with regard to the use of the stringed *gusle* in the Yugoslav oral epic. A further characteristic of oral poetry is its “fluidity and multiformity,” and, as R. Menedez Pidal writes, it is “a poetry that lives through variants” (Zwettler 1978: 189). Although early Arabic poems were short enough as to eventually lead to their memorization, pure memorization was not the primary means of expressing a poem, and different versions abounded. In collecting poems, medieval scholars often distrusted the different informants who recited slightly different versions of the poems (Monroe 1972: 10), but now there is a better understanding of the genre, with less emphasis on locating the ‘original.’ Monroe suggests approaching a poem as “probably not an exact recording of what a great poet once said, but a fairly close picture of it, distorted by the vicissitudes of an oral transmission in which both memorization and ‘de-paganization’ were operative and further complicated by a tradition of scribal correction” (1972: 41).

With this approach in mind, I address two early Arabic poems in detail, both of which are from the same time period and composed in the same meter. The poets and their subject matters differ, and together these poems are a representative sliver of great early Arabic poetry. The first poem, by al-Khansa, is a sixteen line *qasida*, “Rith'a Şakhr.”<sup>1</sup> Al-Khansa was a well-regarded poet from early Islam who lived from around 590 C.E. to 670 C.E., at the latest. She won poetry contests, and it is said that Muhammad often asked her to recite poems for him (Bezirgan et al

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for full Arabic text and English translation, both from Jones 1994.

1977: 4). Al-Khansa began composing poems after the death of a brother and almost all of her poems are laments, one of the four main poetic purposes. “Rith'a Şakhr”, in particular, is a well-known poem for her dead brother Şakhr, composed in the early to mid 7<sup>th</sup> century.

The other poem, “Qiṭ'a Nuniyya,” was composed by Ta'abbata Sharran. His name means “he carried a mischief under his arm” (Lyall 1885: 15), and he was known for his adventures and “rogue” nature and poems. This poem is considered *fakhr* (‘self-glorification’) because it is a description of his victorious encounter with a *ghul*, one of the malevolent species of *jinn*. *Jinn* are spirits, one of the intelligent beings, other than humans and angels, created by Allah. Benevolent *jinn* include those of poetry, as each poet was thought to have his own *jinni* (Jones 1994). *Ghuls*, however, are known for changing shapes and luring travelers astray in the desert. As described in this poem, *ghul* can be killed in one blow, but one must be brave enough not to hit again as a second strike brings the *ghul* back to life.

### **Meter and al-Khaliil**

In their common themes and shared tradition of oral composition, early Arabic poems took on similar forms. Shorter poems, *qita'*, were 7-10 lines, but the more common and important, especially by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, was the *qasida* (‘ode’) which can range up to 120 lines. These forms are characterized by their meter and rhyme. Each line is divided into two half lines, or hemistichs. A metrical pattern describes one hemistich, and this pattern is repeated in each hemistich throughout the poem. In writing, the poetic line is represented with a large space between its hemistichs. With recitation there is generally no discernable pause between hemistichs, but their existence is noted by the repetition of the meter and the rarity of enjambment, when a syntactic unit splits across a line or hemistich break (Monroe 1972: 27).

Other than the occasional gimmick or instructional piece, a poem will employ a single meter. All poems also make use of a single end line rhyme, and very often the first hemistich of the poem shares that rhyme as well. Case inflections are suffixing, so rhyme is not too difficult, but it is still an essential component of the poetic form. The modern poet Adonis writes:

Rhyme was the basic element which distinguished pre-Islamic Arabic poetry from the poetry of other peoples. Neither in Aramaic, Syriac, Hebrew or Greek was it considered an essential feature of poetry in the way it was for the Arabs. Because of this, the ancient Arabic critics maintained that the structure of pre-Islamic prosody was not an imitation of that of any other nation but was exclusive to the Arabs. (30)

The meter in Arabic poetry is quantitative, as in ancient Greek and Latin poetry. It is a system that makes use of an intermediary unit, the foot, within which are patterns of syllables based on their length. Similar systems pattern tone or stress instead, as in iambic pentameter in English, where each foot is a pair of syllables with a weak-strong stress sequence. These are in contrast with other metrical systems that are based on counting the number of syllables in each line, such as in the Japanese haiku.

Al-Khaliil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi is revered for his scholarship on the Arabic language and was responsible for the first and most well-established account of meter in early Arabic poetry. In addition to his work on poetics, he is known for compiling the first Arabic dictionary (*Kitab al-'ayn*) and for his contributions to the standard Arabic grammar published by Sibawaih, one of his students. He was born in Oman, but lived most of his life in Basra, the center of Arabic language research, and died in 791 C.E. He was profoundly pious, refused official patronage, and took seriously his duty to learn and teach (Carter 1998). His system remains the standard authority of describing the meters of classical Arabic poetry.

Al-Khaliil's metrical analysis is internal to the Arabic language so I will discuss his terminology, with a brief translation into syllables, and then present the sixteen meters. In

constructing the meters, Al-Khaliil did not use syllables, at the time Arab scholars did not use that concept explicitly, but instead relied on units called *watid* ('peg') and *sabab* ('cord').

These combine to form feet (*tafa'il*), two to four of which constitute one hemistich. A line of verse is called *bayt* ('house' or 'tent') and consists of two hemistichs. As a note on the structural metaphor, consider the necessity of pegs and cords in constructing a tent, with many possible arrangements. It has also been suggested that pegs are solid and invariant, whereas cords can be tight or loose, a possible reflection on the variations, or lack thereof, within their own construction (Maling 1973).

To understand the components of *watid* and *sabab* it is necessary to recognize the decomposition of Arabic letters into 'movement letters' and 'silent letters.' It is helpful to frame this distinction within written Arabic, where short vowels, *a*, *i*, *u*, are marked only as optional diacritics. A movement letter is a letter (that is, a consonant or the semi-vowels *w* and *y*) with a short vowel. A silent letter is one marked with a *sukun*, creating either an isolated consonant or a long vowel (Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Literature). For example, *kitaab* ('book') is written with four main letters: *k-t-a-b*. *K* is a movement letter as it is followed with the short vowel *i*, and so is *t* with its short vowel *a*. *A*, a long vowel, and *b* are both silent letters as they have no vowel following. This is not static: in *kitaabii* 'my book', written *k-t-a-b-i*, *b* is a movement letter instead.

*Watid* and *sabab* are each two or three letters. A *sabab* is composed of one movement letter then a silent letter, or two movement letters. For example, *fii* ('in') is a *sabab* composed of the movement letter *f* followed by the silent long vowel *i*. Given the orthography, *sabab* is always written with two letters. *Watid* is composed of two movement letters then a silent letter, or two movement letters with a silent letter in between. For example, '*alaa* ('on') is a *watid* with

‘ and *l* as the movement letters and the final *a* is the silent letter. *Watid* are always three letters (al-Bustaanii 1962).

This is the traditional Arabic approach, but these terms can also be understood with standard syllables and sequences of consonants (C) and vowels (V). Movement letters are always CV, which is a short syllable. Consonant clusters are not permitted in Arabic so a movement letter followed by silent letters creates a long syllable, either CVV, CVC, or CVVC. Roger Finch (1984) has offered a slightly different formulation, which considers the dichotomy to instead be of open versus closed syllables. A movement letter is simply an open syllable and CVC is closed. He argues that long vowels can be analyzed as a short vowel followed by a homorganic glide (/ah/, /iy/, /uw/) and can thus be analyzed as a closed syllable. This is a compelling suggestion, and interesting for the implied distinction from the durational metrics of Greek and Latin, but for the purposes here the classification of syllables as long and short is sufficient. In the table and discussion to follow, I will adopt the notation ~ for short syllable, - for long syllable, and P for *watid* and K for *sabab*. The last is standard and presumably an allusion to the initial sounds of the English translations.

Given this translation into syllables, it follows that *sabab* can be described as a long syllable, and *watid* is a sequence of a short and long syllable. This syllabic formulation is standard in modern linguistic discussions and preserves the uniqueness and ingenuity of al-Khaliil’s work while improving general accessibility. For further illustration of the *watid* and *sabab*, consider the first line of *Qit’a Nuniyya*:

(1)   ʔalaa man mubligun fitaiana fahmin           bimaa laaqaitu 'inda rahaa bitaani

'Come, who will convey to the young men of Fahm the news of what I encountered face to face at Raha Bitan?'

The first word *ʔalaa* ('come') is two syllables, ʔa-laa, which are CV and CVV. This is a short,

long sequence so the entire word is a *watid*. *Man* ('who') is a long syllable, CVC, so it constitutes a *sabab*. It is not imperative that the syllables of a *watid* occur in the same word. For example, the fourth and fifth words of this line have a *watid* across their boundary, *fitaina fahmin*.

Combinations of *sabab* and *watid* form the feet of a meter. Al-Khaliil represented the eight basic feet with variations of the bare form F ' L. This provides a rhythmic way of remembering the meters and their variants, and also parallels the manipulation of F ' L used in explaining grammatical patterns. For example, the *tawiil* meter is:

*fa'uulun    mafaa'iilun    fa'uulun    mafaa'iilun*  
 P     K / P     K    K / P     K / P     K K

The sixteen meters of al-Khaliil follow. Table 1 organizes the meters using the Arabic words (al-Bustaani 1962) and the modern transformation from Prince (1989). Each column consists of the pattern for one hemistich, which is repeated to make the line. This includes some of the possible variants: L represents a location where a *sabab* can be two short syllables, and Q is the inversion of *watid*. A summary of the notation also follows.

TABLE 1:

Circle	Meter		
I.	<i>tawiil</i>	PK PKK PK PKK	<i>fa'uulun mafaa'iilun fa'uulun mafaa'iilun</i>
	<i>basiit</i>	KKP KP KKP (KP)	<i>mustaf'ilun faa'ilun mustaf'ilun faa'ilun</i>
	<i>madiid</i>	KPK KP KPK (KP)	<i>faa'ilaatun faa'ilun faa'ilaatun</i>
II.	<i>waafir</i>	PLK PLK PLK	<i>mufaa'alatun mufaa'alatun fa'uulun</i>
	<i>kaamil</i>	LKP LKP (LKP)	<i>mutafaa'ilun mutafaa'ilun mutafaa'ilun</i>
III.	<i>hazaj</i>	PKK PKK PKK	<i>mufaa'iilun mufaa'iilun mufaa'iilun</i>
	<i>rajaz</i>	KKP KKP (KKP)	<i>mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun</i>
	<i>ramal</i>	KPK KPK (KPK)	<i>faa'ilaatun faa'ilaatun faa'ilun</i>
IV.	<i>munsarih</i>	KKP KKQ KKP	<i>mustaf'ilun maf'uulaatu mustaf'ilun</i>
	<i>khafiif</i>	KPK KQK (KPK)	<i>faa'ilaatun mustaf'ilun faa'ilaatun</i>

	<i>muqtadab</i>	KKQ KKP	<i>maf'uulaatu mustaf'ilun</i>
	<i>mujtaəə</i>	KQK KPK	<i>mustaf'ilun faa'ilaatun</i>
	<i>mudaari'</i>	PKK QKK	<i>mufaa'iilun faa'ilaatun</i>
	<i>sarii'</i>	KKP KKP KKQ	<i>mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun maf'uulaatu</i>
V.	<i>mutaqaarib</i>	PK PK PK PK	<i>fa'uulun fa'uulun fa'uulun fa'uulun</i>
	<i>mutadaarik</i>	KP KP KP (KP)	<i>faa'ilun faa'ilun faa'ilun faa'ilun</i>

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF NOTATION

˘	CV
-	CVC; CVV; CVVC
<i>Watid/P</i>	˘ -
<i>Sabab/K</i>	-
L	˘ ˘
Q	- ˘

One final component of al-Khaliil's work is his organization of related meters into the five different circles. This reflects that when written circularly, the first meter of a circle can generate the other meters of that circle by selecting distinct starting points. For example, in Circle I the three meters all alternate feet of two and three units, varieties of PK PKK. The diagram below shows the three meters of Circle I, with each beginning at a different colon. Starting clockwise from the left is *tawiil*, *madiid*, and *basiiit*.

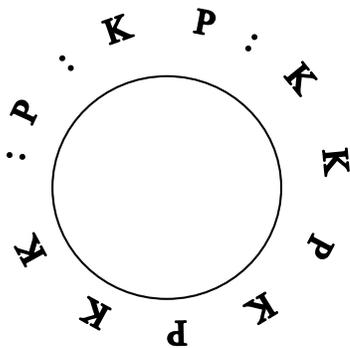


DIAGRAM 1: RELATIONSHIP OF CIRCLE I METERS

This circle model overgenerates and alone does not predict which sequences are

acceptable, but it does show an important relationship between extant meters. This abstraction is one of the strengths of al-Khaliil’s work because it condenses the system and attempts an additional level of organization. As Maling writes, “[...] al-Xalil's system of circles is not only a simple, elegant, and insightful analysis of the meters, but [...] it provides the only basis for an adequate metrical description of Arabic verse” (1973: 12). Others find that it simply adds to the inaccessibility of this model.

*Tawiil* was the most prevalent meter used in Arabic poetry, and the next three most common are *kaamil*, *waafir* and *basiit*. Golston and Riad cite two different corpora, Vadet and Stoetzer, which place *tawiil* as the meter of either 50.4% or 35% poems, respectively. Vadet uses almost 2300 poems and fragments and Stoetzer draws from 130 poems from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. These four meters together make up 80-90% of the meters used.

The two poems examined here are written in the *waafir* meter:

*mufaa'alatun mufaa'alatun fa'uulun*  
 P L K / P L K / P K

*Waafir* is one of the two meters in Circle II, the only group in which two short syllables can be substituted for a *sabab*. This variation is only permitted in the first *sabab* of each foot, though. This and other variations will be discussed as they appear, with reference to al-Khaliil’s variations as recorded in works such as al-Bustaani’s *al-Bayan*.

## Ritha’ Şakhr

“Ritha’ Şakhr” follows, line by line.<sup>2</sup> I have analyzed its metrical structure and coded the component parts. The first line is separated into syllables, with its syllabic components and each

<sup>2</sup> Another version of this poem in Arabic from the website adab.com shows a few differences. That version omitted what is line 6 here, and line 9 appeared as its 13<sup>th</sup> line. There were four lexical variations: alternations between *wa* and *fa-* (both ‘and’) and a different verb meaning ‘console’ was used in line 14.

length (˜ or -), followed by the P or K unit. From this point, K is written for both L and K for simplicity; the pattern remains unchanged. The remaining lines also list syllable length and P and K and foot boundaries are marked with / . All lines are followed by Jones’s translation, then a discussion of my scansion.

(1)

yu	war	ri	qu	nii	–al	ta	thak	ku	ru	hii	na	ʔum	sii	fa	ʔus	bi	hu	qad	bu	līi	tu	bi	far	ti	nuk	sii
cv	cvc	cv	cv	cvvc	cv	cvc	cv	cv	cvv	cv	cvc	cvv		cv	cvc	cv	cv	cvc	cv	cvv	cv	cv	cvc	cv	cvc	cvv
˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘	˘
P		K		K / P		K		K / P		K			P		K		K / P		K		K / P		K			

'In the evening remembrance keeps me awake, and in the morning I am worn out by the overwhelming disaster [that has befallen us],'

Note that the first *sabab* is made up of two short syllables *ri-qu*, rather than one long syllable. The effects of elision in Arabic also show in scanning this line, a reminder of the importance of orality in this poetry. In speech, the vowel of the definite article *al* is elided when preceded by a vowel, and assimilation of the *l* occurs when it precedes ‘sun letters’ (e.g. *t, s, sh, r, th, d*). In this line, *al-tathakkuru* means ‘the remembrance’ where the final *u* is a subject case marker, and *al* marks its definiteness. Assimilation alone yields the pronunciation *at-tathakkuru*. It is preceded by a vowel, *i*, in *yuwariqu.nii* (‘keeps me awake’) so the final pronunciation is *yu-war-ri-qu-niit-ta-thak-ku-ru*. Interpreting this sequence successfully is crucial for scanning the meter correctly:

yu	war	ri	qu	niit	ta	thak	ku	ru
cv	cvc	cv	cv	cvvc	cv	cvc	cv	cv
P		K		K / P		K		

Neither eliding nor assimilating results in the incorrect sequence:

*yu	war	ri	qu	nii	ʔal	ta	thak	ku	ru
cv	cvc	cv	cv	cvv	cvc	cv	cvc	cv	cv
P		K		K	K	P		K	

This line, as in the remaining 15 lines of the poem, ends with a degenerate PK foot rather than the theoretical PLK foot.

Both hemistichs end with *sii*, satisfying the condition that hemistichs of the first line rhyme.

(2) 'alaa ṣakhrin waʔayyu fatan kaṣakhrin      liyaumi kariihatīn wati'aani khalsi  
 P   K   K/P      K   K/P      K      P   K   K/P      K   K/P      K

'In the case of Ṣakhr, and what youth is there like Ṣakhr to deal with a day of warring and skillful spear-thrust'

This line does not use the  $\sim \sim$  *sabab* option in each foot, as occurred in the first line. Both hemistichs also lack the final *sabab*. This line also ends with what should be a short syllable, *si*. It is an overwhelming assumption that a short syllable at the end of a line should be scanned as long, however. This reflects Arabic convention that both syllable length and the pronunciation of diacritics is variable before a natural pause. Maling also suggests that a CV sequence is considered a short syllable only if it is directly followed by a single C and V. She argues this parallels Halle's analysis of classical Greek meter, and provides a sufficient explanation for why end syllables are always long (1973: 20).

*Si* rhymes with *sii* from the first line and the end rhyme is maintained.

(3) walilkhasmi-alʔaladdi ʔithaa ta'addai      liyaʔkhuthu haqqa mathluumin biqinsi  
 P   K   K/P      K   K/P      K      P   K   K/P      K   K/P      K

'And to deal with tenacious opponents when they transgress, so that he can assert the right of someone on whom oppression has fallen?'

(4) falam ʔara mithlahu ruzʔan lijinnii      walam ʔara mithlahu ruzʔan liʔinsi  
 P   K   K / P      K   K/P      K      P      K   K/P      K   K/P      K

'I have not seen his like in the extent of [the] disaster [caused by] his death, either among *jinn* or among men'

Line (4) is interesting for its treatment of *hu*, the masculine suffix. Based on the orthography it appears to be a short syllable, written with one letter. The location in the metrical sequence suggests it would be a long syllable, however. This is precisely one of the phonological segments that should be interpreted counter to its written realization. *Hu*, as a pronoun following a short vowel (such as in *mith-la* 'like-him'), is scanned as a long syllable; if it follows a silent letter (such as in *min-hu* 'from-him'), this interpretation is optional (al-Bustaani 1962). The feminine suffix is written *haa*, with a long vowel, and perhaps *hu* more closely paralleled this in the past. Willem Stoetzer also addresses this particular issue in "Some Observations on Quantity in Arabic Metrics" where he concludes that *hu* is a long syllable. He compared historical examples of verse written traditionally and "prosodically" to show that *hu* does have a long vowel. Using this interpretation resolved over 90% of all the differences he found between the theoretic meter and almost 1900 feet written in the *waafir* and *kaamil* meters.

(5)    ʔashadda ʔalaa ʃuruufi-aldahri ʔaidan            waʔafʃala fii-alkhuʔuubi bighairi labsi  
           ʔ        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -  
           P        K    K/P    K    K/P    K        P        K    K/    P        K    K/P    K

'Truly strong against the vicissitudes of fortune and decisive in affairs, showing no confusion'

6)        waʔakramu ʔinda ɗurri-alnaasi jahdan            lijaadin ʔaw lijaarin ʔaw li'irsi  
           ʔ        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -  
           P        K        K/P    K    K/P    K        P        K    K/P    K    K/P    K

'At times when people were suffering hardship most generous in his endeavours towards those who sought help or towards neighbours or to his wife.'

(7)        waɗaifin ʔaariqin ʔaw mustajjirin            yurawwa'u qalbuhu min kulli jarsi  
           ʔ        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -        -  
           P        K K/P    K K/P    K        P        K    K/P    K    K/P    K



- (12) walaakin laa ʔazaalu ʔaraa ‘ajuulan                      wanaaʔiḥatan tubuuḥu liyawmi naḥsi  
           P     K K/P     K    K/P    K                      P     K   K/P     K   K/P     K

‘All the time I can see the woman grieving for her dead child and the woman wailing over the death of her husband on a day of misfortune.’

- (13) humaa kiltaahumaa tabkii ʔakhaahaa                      ‘ashiyyata ruzʔihi ʔaw ghibba ʔamsi  
           P     K K/P     K K/P     K                      P     K   K/P     K   K/P     K

‘Both of them weep for their [lost ones] in the evening of the day disaster befell them or after that’

*Hi* in *ruzʔi-hi* is the masculine suffix and is thus scanned as a long syllable.

- (14) wamaa yabtiina mithla ʔakhii walaakin                      ʔusallii al-nafsa ‘anhu bittaʔassii  
           P     K K/P     K    K/P    K                      P     K   K/P     K K/P     K

‘Yet they are not weeping for the like of my brother; but I console myself with the example of those who bear grief patiently.’

*Laakin* (‘but’) is another example where the *a* is only written as a short vowel (*lakin*) but the pronunciation is often long, and it is another exception listed in al-Bustaani.

- (15) faqad waddaʔtu yawma firaaqi ṣakhrin                      ʔabii ḥassaana ladhdaatii waʔunsii  
           P     K   K/P     K    K/P    K                      P     K K/P     K K/P     K

‘On the day that I parted from Abu Hassan Ṣakhr I said farewell to my pleasures and my cheer.’

- (16) fayaa lahfii ‘alayhi walahfa ʔummii                      ʔayuṣbiḥu fii al-ḍariiḥi wafiihi yumsii  
           P     K K/P     K   K/P     K                      P     K   K/P     P   K   K/P     K

‘Alas for my sorrow for him; alas for the sorrow of my mother! Does he [really] spend the morning in the grave and the evening in it?’

The sixteen lines of this poem consistently match al-Khaliil’s descriptions of the *waafir*

meter. “Ritha’ Şakhr” had 32 instances of two short syllables occurring as the first *sabab* of a foot, out of the 64 (two per hemistich and 32 hemistichs) possible locations. All lines have with degenerate feet, and ten lines end on a ‘short’ syllable. Remaining issues are resolved upon applying assimilation and recognizing *hu* as a long syllable.

“Qīṭa’ Nuniyya” similarly adheres to the pattern<sup>3</sup>. There are no cases of *hu* but many uses of elision and assimilation. “Qīṭa’ Nuniyya” had thirteen instances of two short syllables in the place of a long syllable out of the 36 possible locations. All lines have degenerate feet with syllables and six of the nine lines end with a short syllable.

As it has endured so long, it is not too surprising that al-Khalīl’s work achieves such accuracy. Despite this accuracy, these descriptions are not widely accessible and they do not meet explanatory expectations. In the sections that follow I evaluate some of the modern theoretical approaches in the search for a better system.

### **Modern Metrical Accounts**

Joan Maling’s 1973 dissertation, “The Theory of Classical Arabic Metrics,” is important in the field for bringing al-Khalīl’s model into modern generative metrics. As quoted above, Maling believes in the validity and usefulness of al-Khalīl’s model, especially the circles, and is largely attempting modernization. She writes basic generative rules such as:

L → H H  
H → F F (F) (F)  
F → PKK

where L is a line, H is a hemistich, F is a foot, and P and K are *watid* and *sabab*, respectively.

Maling embraces the use of *watid* and *sabab* and creates many further rules to generate each particular meter. She supports the cyclic permutations afforded by a circular representation.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix for the complete scanned lines of *Qīṭa’ Nuniyya*.

Although her rule is  $F \rightarrow PKK$ , there are clearly many foot variations across the meters, and she accounts for this by allowing permutations within the foot as well. Although largely a re-enumeration, her work does provide sufficient advantages for those more familiar with a generativist framework.

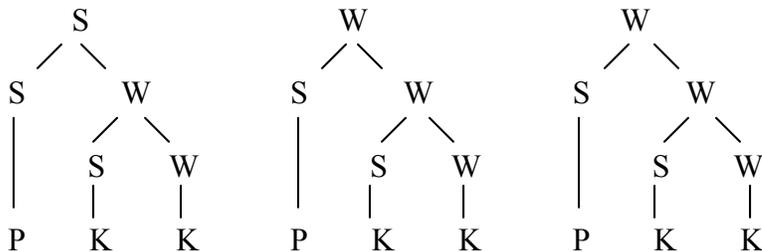
Others such as Prince (1989) and Schuh (1996) take the generative approach and further adapt it. Prince retains *watid* and *sabab*, relabeling them as Strong (S) and Weak (W), whereas Schuh rejects their use as the basic unit. Prince also emphasizes the structural hierarchy within each meter. The smallest unit is the metrical position (MP), followed by the foot (F) and metron (D) and finally the line itself. Binarity is assumed but not absolute; a foot consists of two metrical positions and a metron consists of two feet, but he uses the metron as a way to create ternary feet, which he maintains are found in meters such as *waafir*. To complete the analysis, Prince manipulates basic structures as such:

$PK = [S W]$

$PKK = [S \quad W] \quad \text{or} \quad [S \quad W]$



He predicts that *waafir* takes the left version of PKK above, ( $[S[S W]]$ ), but does not provide sufficient justification for this. His formulation of *waafir* follows:



There is lingering ambiguity from the different foot possibilities and that P and K are both assigned as strong positions. The structural hierarchy is an important contribution towards

clarifying the meters and approaching a deeper understanding of the structure and organization of these meters. The simultaneous existence of binary and ternary feet is not ideal, though, and the system is not notably simplified.

### **Golston and Riad**

Golston and Riad's 1997 paper "the Phonology of Classical Arabic Meter" most successfully translates al-Khaliil's meters into a universal framework with strong explanatory results. Their work rejects the approaches of Maling and Prince and instead shifts towards using the syllable as the basic unit of analysis. In this way, their work is similar to that of Schuh, but with the addition of prosodic constraints they create a more effective system. The crucial component of their theory is binarity, with regards to which they argue for three main points:

metrical positions are maximally bimoraic,  
verse feet are binary,  
the most popular Arabic meters are iambic.

Additionally, instead of *watid* and *sabab*, they introduce three possible metrical positions as the smallest metrical unit:

H     bimoraic, monosyllabic  
L     monomoraic, monosyllabic  
LL    bimoraic, disyllable

Applying the first binary point prevents metrical positions such as LH or LLL, which are both trimoraic. In this reformulation, L is equivalent to a short syllable, and LL is two short syllables. This also assumes that H is a long syllable, and so that long syllables in Arabic are bimoraic. It is clear for long syllables with long vowels, but CVC sequences are less obviously bimoraic. Golston and Riad do not address this assumption directly, but it appears to be commonly accepted.



Golston and Riad’s model also more transparently describes the metrical positions that permit certain variations. In *waafir* this is the position where H or LL might occur. Al-Khalil’s model, based on *mufaa’alatun*, shows where the two short syllables occur, but it is not clear from this alone that a long syllable could be in that position, or that short syllables cannot substitute elsewhere. Using the natural class  $\phi$  successfully addresses this kind of variability.

The final advantage of Golston and Riad’s model is its explanatory power, especially concerning which meters were most popular. As mentioned above, the most common were *tawiil*, *kaamil*, *waafir* and *basiit* in which 80-90% of early Arabic poetry was composed. Golston and Riad use prosodic constraints, and the evidence that stress does play some role in Arabic meter, to predict the four meters. Their analysis is based on the assertion that the unifying characteristic of these meters is their iambic base [L H], as seen in the following metron groupings, with feet separated with a period:

*tawiil* – [LH.σØ], [LH.σH]  
*kaamil* – [ $\phi$  H.LH]  
*waafir* – [LH.ΦH]  
*basiit* – [σH.LH], [σØ.LH]

This distinguishes them from meters which are not iambic, such as *madiid*: [σL.HH],[ σL.HØ].

This iambic core is crucial to their application of the prosodic constraints CLASH and LAPSE, “rhythmic notions that are universal and familiar,” because [LH] is the only combination of L and H that violates neither. Rice (2000) defines CLASH as a ban on stress of two adjacent syllables and LAPSE as a ban on a sequence of two unstressed moras. These constraints apply both within the verse foot and the metron. It is generally accepted, though, that local violations, in this case those within a foot, are considered worse than those across foot boundaries in metrons.

All other sequences violate LAPSE within a foot. For example, HL violates LAPSE by

allowing a sequence of two unstressed moras. Recall that H is bimoraic, and that the first mora in a syllable is more prominent. The second unstressed mora of H is then followed by the unstressed L mora, which is a LAPSE violation. Note, in contrast, that LL is considered a well-formed trochee; it does not violate LAPSE in the way the ‘uneven’ HL does. The only meters that avoid this violation are the ones with feet that end in H: [L H], [LL H], and [H H]. These are precisely the set of feet in *waafir* and the other most common meters. LH sequences do occur in other meters as well, but those meters include violating sequences as well. For example, the four basic feet in *khafif* are [σL], [HH], [σH], [LH], of which [σL] commits the LAPSE violation. Poets did not compose in these meters with this in consideration, but this application of underlying linguistic constraints helps explain why these would have been the meters most commonly used.

Applying CLASH and LAPSE across metrons within the set of four common meters reveals that *tawiil*, by far the most prevalent meter, is the only one that consistently avoids any violation. *Kaamil* [ϕH.LH] and *basit* [σH.LH] always violate LAPSE at the level of metron across the foot boundary. *Waafir* always violates CLASH at the metron, whether it is LH.HH or LH.LLH. The first metron possibility results in adjacently stressed syllables within the foot and the metron. The latter causes a violation across the foot boundary, because LL is trochaically stressed. The other three meters similarly might result in violations depending on their surface realization, and only *tawiil* is guaranteed to be violation-free.

One issue Golston and Riad’s analysis does not address directly is the catalexis and degenerate feet that often occur at the end of lines. For example, the two poems I scanned above have many instances of degenerate feet. Although a common occurrence in many poetic traditions, it is unclear how to best formalize it. Including an optional catalexis above the last

syllable in their analysis is not quite sufficient, as that would leave *waafir* ending with  $\phi$ . It is never the case that a line ends with LL, so it is unlikely that a deleted position leaves the variable position behind unchanged. Except for the rarest meter, *hajaz*, no meter ends with a variable unit, so perhaps this constraint is enough to extend to all final syllables, including any created by degenerate feet, so that they are all scanned as long.

Golston and Riad create a compelling analysis of the meters of classical Arabic poetry. Using three metrical units, H, L, LL, they reduce the number of possibilities and predict more consistency across surface variations. Moreover, this model uses important linguistic features, such as binarity, to situate their analysis in relevant theory and to avoid the asymmetries such as the combinations of binary and ternary feet that are required in Prince and al-Khaliil. This works to integrate the meter with characteristics of the Arabic language, while also making this system more universally accessible.

## **Conclusion**

The meter of classical Arabic poetry contains a fascinating set of patterns and rhythms. At first glance overwhelming, a combination of different formalizations makes this system more accessible. Further situating the analysis in the modern work of linguistics with metrical units, binary, and prosodic constraints, adds explanatory power, which increases its viability and further utility as a theory.

Today, some Arab poets compose in these meters or consciously alter them, while others write in a prose style. Poets such as the Syrian Adonis (1930- ) have directly addressed this shift in a way that addresses larger questions of composition and orality. He sees the descriptions of an oral genre, as captured with al-Khaliil's system and reformulated in the analysis here, coming

to dictate written poetry, instead of allowing for the inherent differences between the two. To him this stifles what written poetry should be:

This critical discourse, having defined the characteristics of pre-Islamic poetry as oral poetry, then transformed them into absolute criteria for written poetics: henceforth poetry was only to be considered as poetry if its metres followed the rules of oral poetry, as laid down by al-Khalil. [...] Thus, instead of metre being considered as a regulating device for reciting and singing in a particular type of speech, it came to be viewed as the essence of all poetical speech. As a result, the written poetic text was viewed by the critics as if it were an oral text, in so far as all that writing demands – contemplation, exploration, abstruseness, thought itself – was banished from the domain of poetry. [...] Thus the critical discourse which pre-Islamic poetry generated in the past, and continues to generate, is the very thing which obscures that poetry from us. (Adonis 1990: 33)

This raises questions of whether meter is merely a tool for organizing and presenting thoughts, or an integral goal of the poetry itself. While Adonis has been a strong proponent of free verse poetry, his poems do not lack for rhythm or cadence. This internal sense of rhythm, also captured by al-Khansa and Ta'abbaṭa Sharran and their peers long before al-Khalil's formulations, is a crucial part of one's relationship with language. By expanding our models into universal framework and situating it within other linguistic theory, meter is best illuminated and its study most valuable.

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يُورِقُنِي التَّدَكُّرُ حِينَ أُمْسِي  
عَلَى صَحْرٍ وَأَيُّ فَتَى كَصَحْرٍ  
وَاللَّخْصَمِ الْأَلْدَى إِذَا تَعَدَّى  
فَلَمْ أَرْ مِثْلَهُ رُزَّةَ الْجِنِّ  
أَشَدَّ عَلَى صُرُوفِ الدَّهْرِ أَيْدَا  
وَأَكْرَمَ عِنْدَ ضَرِّ النَّاسِ جَهْدَا  
وَصَيْفِ طَارِقٍ أَوْ مُسْتَجِيرِ  
فَأَكْرَمُهُ وَأَمَنُهُ فَأَمْسِي  
فَلَا يَا صَحْرًا لَا أَنْسَاكَ حَتَّى  
يُذَكِّرُنِي طُلُوعُ الشَّمْسِ صَحْرًا  
فَلَوْلَا كَثْرَةُ الْبَاكِينَ حَوْلِي  
وَلَكِنِ لَا أَرَى عَجُولًا  
هُمَا كَلْتَاهُمَا تَبْكِي أَخَاهَا  
وَمَا يَبْكِينَ مِثْلَ أَخِي وَلَكِنْ  
فَقَدْ وَدَّعْتُ يَوْمَ فِرَاقِ صَحْرٍ  
فَيَا لَهْفِي عَلَيْهِ وَلَهْفَ أُمِّي

فَأُصْبِحُ قَدْ بُلِيْتُ بِفِرْطٍ نُكْسِي  
لِيَوْمِ كَرِيهَةٍ وَطِعَانِ خَلْسِ  
لِيَأْخُذَ حَقَّ مَظْلُومٍ بِقِنْسِ  
وَلَمْ أَرْ مِثْلَهُ رُزَّةَ الْإِنْسِ  
وَأَفْضَلَ فِي الخُطُوبِ بِغَيْرِ لَبْسِ  
لِجَادٍ أَوْ لِحَارٍ أَوْ لِعُرْسِ  
يُرْوَعُ قَلْبُهُ مِنْ كُلِّ جَرَسِ  
خَلِيًّا بَالُهُ مِنْ كُلِّ بُوْسِ  
أَفَارِقُ مُهْجَتِي وَيُشَقُّ رَمْسِي  
وَأَذْكُرُهُ لِكُلِّ غُرُوبِ شَمْسِ  
عَلَى إِخْوَانِهِمْ لَقَاتَلْتُ نَفْسِي  
وَنَائِحَةَ تَنُوحِ لِيَوْمِ نَحْسِ  
عَشِيَّةَ رُزْنِهِ أَوْ حُبِّ أَمْسِ  
أَسْلَى النَّفْسَ عَنْهُ بِالنَّاسِي  
أَبِي حَسَانَ لَذَاتِي وَأَنْسِي  
أَيُّصْبِحُ فِي الصُّرْبِ وَفِيهِ يُمْسِي

بِمَا لَأَقَيْتُ عِنْدَ رَحَى بَطَانِ  
 بِسُهْبٍ كَالصَّحِيفَةِ صَحْصَحَانِ  
 أَخُو سَفَرٍ فَخَلَى لِي مَكَانِي  
 لَهَا كَفَى بِمَصْقُولِ يَمَانِي  
 صَرِيعًا لِلْيَدَيْنِ وَلِلْجِرَانِ  
 مَكَانَكَ إِنِّي ثَبْتُ الْجَنَانِ  
 لِأَنْظُرَ مُصْبِحًا مَاذَا أَتَانِي  
 كَرَأْسِ الْهَرِّ مَشْقُوقِ اللِّسَانِ  
 وَثُوبٍ مِنْ عَبَاءِ أَوْ شِنَانِ

أَلَا مَنْ مُبْلِعٌ فِتْيَانَ فَهَمِ  
 وَإِنِّي قَدْ لَقَيْتُ الْعَوْلَ تَهْوِي  
 فَقُلْتُ لَهَا كِلَانَا نِضْوُ أَيْنِ  
 فَشَدَّتْ شِدَّةً نَحْوِي فَأَهْوِي  
 فَأَضْرِبُهَا بِلَا دَهْشٍ فَحَرَّتْ  
 فَقَالَتْ عُدْ فَقُلْتُ لَهَا رُوَيْدًا  
 فَلَمْ أَنْفَكْ مُتَكِنًا عَلَيْهَا  
 إِذَا عَيْنَانِ فِي رَأْسٍ قَبِيحِ  
 وَسَاقًا مُخْدَجٍ وَشَوَاةُ كَلْبِ

Appendix 2a: English Translation of *Ritha' Şakhr*<sup>1</sup>

In the evening remembrance keeps me awake, and in the morning I am worn out by the  
overwhelming disaster [that has befallen us],  
In the case of Şakhr, and what youth is there like Şakhr to deal with a day of warring and skillful  
spear-thrust?  
And to deal with tenacious opponents when they transgress, so that he can assert the right of  
someone on whom oppression has fallen?  
I have not seen his like in the extent of [the] disaster [caused by] his death, either among *jinn* or  
among men,  
Truly strong against the vicissitudes of fortune and decisive in affairs, showing no confusion,  
At times when people were suffering hardship most generous in his endeavours towards those  
who sought help or towards neighbours or to his wife.  
Many was the guest who arrived by night or the man who was seeking protection, [people]  
whose hearts were alarmed at every sound.  
He treated [such people] kindly and made them safe, so that their state was free from every  
pressing need.  
Ah, O Şakhr, I shall [never] forget you until I part from my soul and my grave is cut.  
The rising of the sun reminds me of Şakhr, and I remember him every time the sun sets.  
But for the multitude of people around me weeping for their kin I would have killed myself.  
All the time I can see the woman grieving for her dead child and the woman wailing over the  
death of her husband on a day of misfortune.  
Both of them weep for their [lost ones] in the evening of the day disaster befell them or after that.  
Yet they are not weeping for the like of my brother, but I console myself with the example of  
those who bear grief patiently.  
On the day that I parted from Abu Hassan Şakhr I said farewell to my pleasures and my cheer.  
Alas for my sorrow for him; alas for the sorrow of my mother! Does he [really] spend the  
morning in the grave and spend the evening in it?

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<sup>1</sup> Poems and translations from Jones (1994) *Early Arabic Poetry, vol. 1*.

Appendix 2b: English Translation of *Qīṭa Nuniyya*

Come, who will convey to the young men of Fahm the news of what I encountered face to face at  
Raha Bitan?

Truth to tell, I met a *ghul* darting along on a waterless stretch of desert, flat and featureless like a  
sheet of writing material.

I said to her, 'Both of us are worn out by fatigue and are ever travelling, so leave my place free  
for me.'

She rushed to attack me, and I stretched out to her my hand that was holding a polished Yemeni  
[sword].

I was not confounded, and I struck her, and she fell, mortally stricken, on to her hands and her  
neck.

She said to me, 'Strike again.' I answered her, 'Just stay where you are. I am firm in my resolve.'  
And I remained lying on top of her, so that I might see in the morning what had come [and  
attacked] me.

[What met my gaze] were two eyes in an ugly head, like the head of a tom-cat, with a cleft  
tongue,

and two legs [with cloven hooves] and the scalp of a dog and clothing of a striped woolen cloak  
or of old water-skins.

Appendix 3a: Scansion of *Ritha' Şakhr*

(1)

yuwarriquni^altathakkuru hiina ?umsii  
~ - ~ - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - -

fa?usbihu qad buliitu bifarti nuksii  
~ - ~ - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - -

(2)

'alaa şakhrin wa?ayyu fatan kaşakhrin  
~ - - - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - -

liyaumi kariihatın wati'aani khalsi  
~ - ~ - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - ~

(3)

walilkhaşmi^al?aladdi ?ithaa ta'adda  
~ - - - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - ~

liya?khuthu haqqa mathluumin biqinsi  
~ - ~ - / ~ - - - / ~ - ~

(4)

falam ?ara mithlahu ruz?an lijinnin  
~ - ~ - / ~ - - - / ~ - -

walam ?ara mithlahu ruz?an li?insi  
~ - ~ - / ~ - - - / ~ - ~

(5)

?ashadda 'alaa şuruufi^aldahri ?aidan  
~ - ~ - / ~ - - - / ~ - -

wa?afşala fii^alkhuṭuubi bighairi labsi  
~ - ~ - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - ~

(6)

wa?akramu 'inda đurri^alnaasi jahdan  
~ - ~ - / ~ - - - / ~ - -

lijaadin ?aw lijaarin ?aw li'irsi  
~ - - - / ~ - - - / ~ - ~

(7)

wadaifin ṭariqin ?aw mustajjirin  
~ - - - / ~ - - - / ~ - -

yurawwa'u qalbuhu min kulli jarsi  
~ - ~ - / ~ - - - / ~ - ~

(8)

fa?akramahu wa?amanahu fa?amsaa  
~ - ~ - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - -

khaliyan baaluhu min kulli bu?si  
~ - - - / ~ - - - / ~ - ~

(9)

falaa yaa şakhru laa ?andaaka hattaa  
~ - - - / ~ - - - / ~ - -

?ugaariqa muhjatii wayushaqqaa ramsii  
~ - ~ - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - -

(10)

yudhakkirunii ṭuluu'u^alshamsi şakhran  
~ - ~ - / ~ - - - / ~ - -

wa?adhkuruhu likulli ghuruubi shamsi  
~ - ~ - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - ~

(11)

falawlaa kathratu^albaakiina hawlii  
~ - - - / ~ - - - / ~ - -

'alaa ?ikhwaanahim laqataltu nafsii  
~ - - - / ~ - ~ - / ~ - -

(12)

walaakin laa ʔazaalu ʔaraa ʻajuulan

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - -

wanaaʔiḥatan tunuuḥu liyawmi naḥsi

˘ - - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - - ˘ - /˘ - - ˘

(13)

humaa kiltaahumaa tabkii ʔakhaahaa

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

ʻashiyyata ruzʔihi ʔaw ghibba ʔamsi

˘ - - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - - - - /˘ - - ˘

(14)

wamaa yabtiina mithla ʔakhii walaakin

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - -

ʔusallii^alnafsa ʻanhu bittaʔassii

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

(15)

faqad waddaʻtu yayma firaaqi ṣakhrin

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - - -

ʔabii ḥassaana ladhdaatii waʔunsii

˘ - - - /˘ - - - - /˘ - - -

(16)

fayaa lahfii ʻalayhi walahfa ʔummii

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - - -

ʔayuṣbiḥu fii^alḍariihī wafiihi yumsii

˘ - - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - ˘ ˘ - /˘ - - -

Appendix 3b: Scansion of *Qit'a Nuniyya*

(1)

ʔalaa man mubligun fitaiana fahmin

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

bimaa laaqaitu 'inda rahaa bitaani

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - ˘

(2)

waʔinnii qad laqiitu^alghuula tahwii

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

bisuhbin kaaṣṣahiifati ṣahṣahaani

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - ˘

(3)

faqltu lahaa kilaanaa nidhwu ʔainin

˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

ʔakhuu safarin gakhallii lii makaanii

˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

(4)

fashaddat shiddatan iahwii faʔuhwii

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

lahaa kaffii bimaṣquulin yamaanii

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

(5)

faʔadribuhaa bilaa dahashin fakharrat

˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - -

ṣarii'an lilyadaini waliljiraani

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - ˘

(6)

faqaalat 'ud faqltu lahaa ruwaidan

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - -

makaanaki ʔinnanii thabtu^aljanaani

˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - - - /˘ - ˘

(7)

falam ʔanfakka muttakiʔaan 'alaihi

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - -

liʔanthuda muṣbihaan maa thaa ʔataanii

˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - - - - /˘ - -

(8)

ʔithaa 'ainaani fii raʔsin qabiihin

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - -

karaaʔsi^alhirri mathquuqi^allisaani

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - ˘

(9)

wasaaqaa mukhdajin washawaatu kalbin

˘ - - - /˘ - ˘˘ - /˘ - -

wathuubun min 'abaaʔin ʔaw shinaani

˘ - - - /˘ - - - /˘ - ˘