AN EGYPTIAN ARABIC ZAJAL FROM THE FOURTEENTH (?) CENTURY

Heikki Palva

The text published here, Ḥikāya fi ḍamm an-nisā‘ ‘A Story in Dispraise of Women,’ a sort of narrative ballad in Egyptian Arabic, is included in the manuscript Firkovich Evr.-Arab. II 852, a booklet (karrās, kurrās) of 18 folios, 15 x 11.5 cm in size, containing three other pieces of Arabic popular literature: Hikāyat al-ḥarb bayn al-tuyūr wa-l-wuhūṣ (folios 1–12), Ḥikāya li-ḥaḍad min al-buxalāʾ (folios 12–15), and Ḥikāya ‘an ba‘d al-nahwīya (folios 17–18). The manuscript is preserved in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, previously known as the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library. It belongs to the collection of manuscripts acquired by Abraham Firkovich (1787–1874) in 1862–76, mainly from the Old Karaite Synagogue in Cairo, by Firkovich called Genizat Miṣrayim, but also from other places, among them the famous “Cairo Geniza”, i.e., the Rabbanite Ben ʿEzra Synagogue in Fustāṭ. The whole manuscript, by Victor Lebedev dated to the 14th century,1 is written in Hebrew characters and by the same hand. Thus it probably was written in the Classical period of Judaeo-Arabic.2 Apart from a few folios, the text is fairly well preserved. Folios 15–17, which contain the present zajal, are preserved in good shape. I have published the text tentatively in a conference volume (1993);3 of the three prose texts in the manuscript, I published two, in 20024 and 2004.5

1 Lebedev 1987: no. 453, p. 95.
3 Palva 1993.
4 Palva 2002.
5 Palva 2004. In the same collection, different versions of the longest prose text (folios 1–12, 273 lines in all) are found in at least four further manuscripts and fragments: Evr.-Arab. II 1546 (9 fol., 14th–15th c.), Evr.-Arab. II 1528 (3 fol., 15th–16th c.), Evr.-Arab. I 1110 (2 fol., 4th–15th c.), and Evr.-Arab. II 1603 (1 fol., 15th c.). I discuss the language of these
1. THE LANGUAGE

The language form of the prose texts in this MS is sub-standard Arabic with some Egyptian Arabic features, whereas the linguistic structure of the zajal text is closer to the local dialect, with only a few classical devices common in sub-standard texts, such as 9b דד qd, 8c יטגdlwn, and 12c נא ל יסצ. In addition to the Hebrew script, the text displays rather few Judaeo-Arabic features. One of these is /$/ instead of /$/ in 5a עמש 8m'w ‘listen! (pl.)’. Another is probably the form ‘azūz(a) ‘old woman’ (4b ועז; 6a, 8a וצ; cf. Modern Cairene ‘agūza), which implies affricated pronunciation of /ğ/ at the time when the regressive assimilation took place. Compared with the texts written in prose, there is a natural reason for the lack of literary features, namely the more or less bound form of poetry. Above all, this is due to the fact that this poem is a zajal, and it belongs to the very character of this genre that it is composed in dialectal Arabic and not in literary Arabic like the muwaššaha, the other well-known genre of strophic poems originating in al-Andalus; in the latter, only the xarja is written in dialect.6

2. THE METRE

If the present manuscript actually comes from the 14th century, the ballad is a relatively early example of zajal poetry in Egypt. This poem (himl ‘a load’), which comprises 12 stanzas (dūr) divided into five distichs – except the first one, which has two lines – is far from being a literary masterpiece. The technical clumsiness of the poem is, of course, at least partially due to its rather poor oral transmission.

---

6 Monroe characterizes the zajal and the muwaššaha, the two “sister-genres” (Stern’s term, Stern 1974: 12) as follows: Both are strophic, both incorporate vernacular elements, both contain puzzling departures from the rules of Classical Arabic metrics, muwaššaha poets often function as zajal poets and vice versa, muwaššaha passages are often quoted in zajal and vice versa, and both genres originated in Andalus. According to a medieval Arabic source, the muwaššaha was invented in Cordoba toward the end of the ninth century; however, the earliest surviving muwaššahas are from the beginning of the eleventh century. Although the earliest extant zajals are those of Ibn Quzman (d. 1169), in Monroe’s opinion, the muwaššaha is derived from the zajal, not vice versa as is usually supposed. According to him, it is probable that zajal poetry, often sung at markets, was popular in Cordoba at the beginning of the tenth century. See Monroe 1989.
The rhyme-scheme of the poem is regular: aa bbbbaa cccaa dddaa eeeaaa fffaa, etc. The poorest rhyming line is 7a, which orthographically is blameless, as it ends in the same sequence n- -nh as 7b and 7c, whereas its last word sana phonetically does not match with mitmanna (7b) and miftanna (7c). The zajal proper always has an initial refrain, matla', usually a couplet rhymed AA. This pattern is very popular; it is, for instance, used in the major part of the zajals included in the Bouriant collection.7 About this rhyme pattern, Pierre Cachia says: "I have never heard this particular pattern in a popular performance, and its prevalence in the 1893 publication must be taken to indicate either that Bouriant’s informant had strong personal preferences, or that the fashion has since changed. In particular, the arrangement in distichs has virtually disappeared from popular songs, except in print.8"

The underlying metrical pattern of the present poem seems to be - - / - -// - - / - - - - , but it is obvious that the person who has written down the text has not paid much attention to the metre. In the first stanza (lines 2a-2e) the hemistichs have been indicated by a space; the exceptionally long first hemistich of 2d has been separated from the second hemistich by the symbol "_. After 3a, no spaces have been left between the hemistichs.

In spite of a great number of metrical irregularities, some lines seem to follow a relatively regular pattern, provided that they for the most part are read according to the ḫrāb-less structure of spoken language. Such lines are, e.g., the following:

(1a) 'nfsd h'l 'zm'n // w'n'wğ 'pl'al
   'infasad hál / 'iz-zamân // w-in'awağ 'il- / ḫtidál
(2a) km mlyh mh'd'h // qsmh? q[s]m mśwm
   kam miliha / mudí'ā // qismáhā qis- / min mašūm
(3c) w'ly 'lsq mlraqy // txtdb ḫw ntnq's
   w'i'ala ṣ-ṣāq / i-r-raqiq // ti'tidib ḫaw / tntiqi's
(5c) 'ltgy srbh ns'n // qx'dyn fwq 'lqbwṛ
   'alîqi sur- / bat nisâp // qâ'idin fôq / 'il-qubûr
(6c) w'lyh? mnţqh // blhy'kl wthrź
   w'i-alēhā / mîntaqa // bi-l-hayākîl / w-il-ḥurâj
(8d) wlaqt dyk 'lšhd // qx'dyn fy qyl wq'l
   wî-laqêt dik / 'ś-šuḥûd // qâ'idin ft / qîl wî-qâl

7 Bouriant 1893. Of the 34 pieces, two are narratives.
8 Cachia 1989: 32.
It must be admitted that the number of such more or less regular lines is limited, and both the vocalization and the analysis can be questioned.

3. THE ORTHOGRAPHY

The orthography follows in broad outlines the conventions of Arabic script. It lacks many conventions of Judaeo-Arabic, such as the often occurring plene scriptum of short vowels (e.g. ﺲ ﻲ ﺲ ﻥ ﻲ ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ 

It has to be observed that the diacritic dots are most often omitted, obviously at random, for example: 2d ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺲ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺸ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ ﻲ ﺘ 

Blanc 1981: 188–193 discusses the different orthographical conventions for writing the dialectal reflex of the OA jim in Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic. In Cairo – in the Muslim, Christian and Jewish population – the final stage of depalatalization can be traced to the period 1800–1860. The postdental reflex had become stabilized in Cairo by 1900, in Alexandria somewhat later. According to Blanc, in the 17th century /g/ was not yet the normal equivalent of OA jim.
= tixnaq; 3b cons. dent. ntr = nadar (or naṣar); 5d ʿaḥal g3l = ḡazāl; 7e ʿaḥal ʿaḥal g3l = ḡalathā; 8e ʿaḥal q3y = qaḍī; 9c ṣabab grb = ʿūrāb; 9d ʿaḥal ḡb3l = xibāl.

4. THE TEXT

15a

(1a) ʾaḥna li ṣāmīr
(1b) ʾaḥna li ṣāmīr
(1a) ʾnfsd ḡb3l ʾlzmūn // w3n3īw ḡd3l
(1b) ʾlmPh yqwlw ṣx3s // wlb3š3 yqwlw ḡw3l

Time has become corrupted, and equity has become distorted.
Nice people are held in contempt, and uncivilized people are held in high esteem.

(2a) k3m mlīyhh mbdʾh // qsmh q[s]m mšwm
(2b) ṣkI ʾlkwmw tgwl // ṣhyln dʾydwm
(2c) ʿlyhm frd twb // llsqy wlsmwm
(2d) wʾxrh ḡwh ṣmʾ tkwn // byn tyʾbh ʿxrl
(2e) nfšh ʾfwq ʾlsh // why ṣmh fʾqtʾl

How many a most refined lady has met with a sad fate!
She eats caraway and thinks: We hope there will be enough of this.
They wear the same dress in cold weather and in scorching sun,
while another woman, the most barbarous that exists, wears fashionable clothes.
Her mind soars above the Suha star,10 and she is at odds with the fine lady.

10 The middle star in the tail of Ursa Major. Because it is the dimmest star in the constellation, it was thought to be the highest among them.
Beautifully she struts in a new loincloth.  
She tries to hide that she is a plump girl, but her appearance is wild.  
She is painted and decorated with minute care.  
Of what avail are mosaic decorations on the floor or the moisturizer on her hands?  
When she takes off the loincloth, it will appear that nobility is out of her reach.

How often I set my eyes on a woman who has woven a most desirable veil!  
How many a veiled old woman looks as in the days of a young girl!  
But when [she takes off the veil], you see a face like that of an ogre.  
When you see those eyes, you are sure that there are men in the house,  
But when she takes off the veil, you see something that dispels the beauty.
Listen what happened to me, when I with presentiments of ill fortune the other day came to the Bāb in-Naṣr, to have a look and then to visit the place.

I saw a group of women sitting on graves.

Among them I set my eyes on a woman whose eyes were like gazelle’s eyes

and whose loincloth and veil were worth two hundred thousand pounds.

11 Syntactically unclear. The translation is based on the assumption that tāyr is here used in the meaning ‘(bad) omen’; cf. G. W. Freytag, Lexicon Arabico-Latinum ‘aegurium, peculiari
ter’ infaustum, malum omen’; E. W. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon là tāyra ʾillā tāyru ʾilla
‘there is no evil fortune but that which is of God’. On the other hand, tāyr also means ‘thoughtlessness’, ‘inconstancy’.
I went nearer, and watching more closely, I noticed among them an old woman,
whose responsibility it perhaps was to act as her guardian and to act on
her behalf.
She wore a belt, decorated with dummies and amulets.
She asked, “What do you want, young man?” I said, “I want to have one
of a good family.”
She said, “Come here, I will let you marry my neighbour, from a top
family.”

(7a) קהל אדם את ענראות קהלת מתברך תבונ
(7b) קהל אדם𦭣י שאריאה קהלת סטיריה מתברך
(7c) קהל אדםغالאיוםלאה קהלת וד׳ מברך
(7d) סחט ספי טורשרדה קהל תמיigli—heבאל
(7e) קהל אדםغالאיוםלאה קהלת סטיריה אל תבונ

(7a) qlt 'n ʾyšʾ mrkḥ // qʾlt ʾmrʾs r snh
(7b) qlt 'n ʾšwʾrh // qʾlt ʾṣyrh mtmnḥ
(7c) qlt 'n ʾyšʾ mlʾkhʾ // qʾlt dwʾ mfnḥ
(7d) ʾšʾlt 'n ʾtwʾ ʾšʾrh // qʾlt ʾṭwyl mlʾ lḥʾbʾl
(7e) qʾlt wʾyšʾ hw ʾgltḥʾ // qʾlt smynḥ lʾ ṣʾl

I said, “How old is she?” She said, “Twelve years”.
I said, “Her dowry?” She said, “It is as valuable as one ever can hope
for.”
I said, “What does she possess?” She said, “Fine houses.”
I asked about the length of her hair. She said, “It is as long as a string of
ropes.”
I said, “What is her flaw, then?” She said, “She is a good catch, don’t
ask.”

16b (8a) דבלכטני דל דא ענראות דך הלאה
(8b) תימחט נוכמה קcamelן לאמש.TimeUnit
(8c) אתחפסק אשתני ויהי גנא גמלדנס
(8d) הלקת דך לאשתו כמאצי פי קיל דקאל
(8e) כלת קיאימלי קדאמ לאקסי Zielal

(8a) dwlbntn dl 'zwz // wbqt dyk 'lmns
(8b) wṣfwt wṣfḥ // qʾl ḡḥʾ lʾtmʾ sʾ
(8c) ṭfqt lṭqy // rḥwy ḡwʾ lʾmrṣs
The old woman fooled me, and those women went on describing the girl to me. They said: "You are the greedy Juḥa, we suppose?"
I agreed, and I found myself in a madrasah and found the witnesses sitting and saying "It is said" and "He said". They all were quarreling before the judge and the Majesty.

She said, "Let's be friends! Come over here before writing the marriage contract."
While we hesitated between "no" and "yes", the veil loosened.
I turned around, and what did I see? I saw a woman more black than the raven.
I said, "Oh my heart, get me to run away lest you fall into this chaos. Sleeping with dogs is much better than this pack."
I thought, “Oh my heart, get me to run away lest you get caught!”
I said, “I must go and buy a sheet of paper for the marriage contract.”
She said, “Fie! I feel embarrassed; how could I belong to that riffraff?
All my husbands bought for me a marriage contract of finest quality,
for about fifty ells of rare, expensive silk.”

I said, “How many husbands have you had?” She said, “It’s nothing extraordinary:
I have had ‘Umar, Ṣahr al-Subay’, the Ṣilahdar, and al-Ṣarif,
and al-Muḥawgab, al-Ṭubayli, Saʿīd, and ‘Abd al-ʿArif,
and Zuqaylam, Zuqaymo, Mufarrag, and Hilāl,
and I have had Muhammad, Šihāb, ‘Ali, and Ibn Kamāl.”
I said, "That is like an amir's inn or a hostelry, but I have to tell you the truth: I have very little money, and in addition to that, my body is getting worse day by day." It was my aim to disengage myself lest I fall into that jumble. Had I let them fool me, how much would I have to blame myself, day and night!
The end.

5. LINGUISTIC NOTES

1b ُقُولُوَكُنِّي َيَقُولَوَكُنَّ 3rd pl. masc. morpheme; here the 3rd p.pl. act. is used in passive function.
2a ُقَسِمَة ُقَصِمَة "qism" for metrical reasons, probably to be read qismin, a typical case of using tanwin in sub-standard texts.13
2a ُمَسُومَة ُمَسُؤُومَة "masūm"; the glottal stop of masūm has been dropped in plain omission.
2b ُعَلَيْهِنَّ "'ašyrhān"; in this item, the classical-type Form VIII is genuinely dialectal.
2b ُذَيِّدُهُ "zaydūhū"; in Egyptian Arabic vernacular poetry, the demonstrative pronoun is often used independently, as a rule preceding the noun.14
2c ُعِلمَهُ "'ilyhm"; as in modern sedentary dialects, separate feminine plural forms of personal pronoun have disappeared.
2c ُلِّسْقَيْهِ ُوْلْسَمْ "līsqa'y ʾwls̱mwm"; in the latter word, the definite article has probably been written phonetically, i.e., it remains graphically unexpressed (li-s-saqī ʿwi-li-s-samūm). The spelling can also simply be due to haplography. For metrical reasons, asymmetric use of article as in 12e, ُوْلِنْهُ ُوْلِنْ "'lnhū ʾw-līnū", is ruled out.
2d ُرَايْهِ "'arāyah"; in a 14th-century Judaeo-Arabic text, the orthography ُرَايْهِ ُرَايْهِ probably implies that the /-h/ here is understood as a feminine morpheme (ʿuxra); in later Judaeo-Arabic texts, such an implication does not exist.

---

12 In Blau & Hopkins 1985: 458, the longer form ُتَقَولُوَنِّي ُتَقُولُوَنَّ you (pl.) say' is attested, but there are several instances of forms without /h/: ُلِثَبْيُهُ ُلِثَبْيُهُ 'do not sell', ُتُنَّ ... ُلِثَبْيُهُ 'that ... you do not come' (most likely not to be explained as Classical jussive/subjunctive forms).
13 The optional use of tanwin as a morpheme, indicating that the indefinite noun to which it is affixed is followed by an adjectival attribute, is well documented in Middle Arabic texts; see, e.g., Blau 1979: 215–262, esp. 250 and references there.
2d | ty'bh: the final h probably marks the tā' marbūta; for metrical reasons, read tiyābatin.

3a | mljb: the final h probably marks the tā' marbūta; for metrical reasons, read miliḥatin.

3b | ntr: it is uncertain whether the word has to be read nador or naẓar. In most cases, the result of the merger of Old Arabic ḍād and ẓā' is [ṭ] or, in dialects in which the interdentals are preserved, [ṭ]. However, in Modern Cairo Arabic this item belongs to a limited group of words in which the reflex of ḍād and ẓā' is the sibilant substitute ẓ. No conclusions can be drawn from the orthography, though, since in 6a the corresponding verb is written [ṭ] in Arabic, which cannot be read but as nador.

3c | ṭxtb ‘she is painted/paints herself’, ṣntṣn ‘she is decorated/decorates herself’: instead of the local dialectal t + Form I pattern, the classical Form VIII is used.

3d | ẓiṣ: ṣiṣ is a rather widespread old dialectal form commonly occurring in sub-standard texts. In Modern Egyptian Arabic, it is mainly used in proverbs and set phrases, a usage probably inherited from an earlier period when ṣiṣ was more common, or even the predominant form.

3d | ẓrā: Egyptian (etc.) Arabic dialectal form.

4b | ṣwzh: Judaeo-Arabic assimilation < 'aḡūza, which implies affricate pronunciation of [g] at the time when the assimilation occurred.

4c | ṣrū ṣwgh: for metrical reasons perhaps to be read wi-kin, as qismin 2a above; the form may reflect a situation in which ǧim in Cairene Arabic still had two phonetically-conditioned variants (g and g; cf. the assimilated Cairene (etc.) form wiṣḥ). Therefore it might here be read as wiṣḥ. There is, however, an alternative possibility to explain the development of the historical reflexes of ǧim in Cairene Arabic; in that case,

---

15 Hinds & Badawi 1986, s.v. In modern Egyptian dialects, the form ạṣṣ is uncommon, only found in the area of Bani Swayf, see Belimstedt & Woldich 1985: Map 182. According to Hinds & Badawi 1986: 46, it is mainly used in proverbs and set phrases. For the history of the form, see Fischer 1905.

16 Examples of the use of ạṣṣ in seventeenth-century Lower Egyptian Arabic are found, e.g., in al-Magrībi’s Daq’ al-ṭiṣr ‘an kalām ʿahl Misr: ṣṣ ṣgh ‘l-xǔzd’alāt ‘what are these xǔzd’alāt ‘superstitions’, Zack 2004: 383, and in the dialectal narrative MS Firkovich Evr.-Arab. II 1536: d’yṣ ‘what’s this?’ 2b19, 7a1, Palva 2000: 93. Still at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Mixā’il Ṣabbāġ (1784–1816) gives both ṣḥṣ and ạṣṣ as Egyptian Arabic forms, Ṣabbāġ 1886: 42, 11–20; the reproach ‘what’s this?’ is (the newer) dā ʿiḥ 46, 14–15; see also Talmon 2000: 199–200.


18 In al-Ṣirbīn’s Hazz al-Qubūf, ṣwgh occurs side by side with wṣ, which may be evidence of a palatal realization, Davies 1981: 69. The fully assimilated form is attested from the 15th century, see Blanc 1981: 190 n. 9 (in al-Mustatrafī kull fann mustatraf).
the form wišš is not the result of an internal development of Cairene Arabic but due to contact with a dialect in which the reflex of ǧim was affricated.\footnote{Thus Woidich 1995: 502f. According to him, the phonological development supposed by Blanc is highly unnatural.}

\begin{itemize}
  \item[d)\textit{dyk l}‘\textit{ywn}: dialectal demonstrative pronoun preceding the noun, see note on 2b.
  
  \item[e]\textit{ṣ}:	extit{ṣ}y: for metrical reasons, read ṣayiyn.
  
  \item[a]\textit{ṣm}w: probably a Judaeo-Arabic ṣ reflex of sin; cf., e.g., Tunisian Judaeo-Arabic салон, ‘six’; 탈, ‘nine’; ھئ, ‘to feel’; ںئ, ‘people’; ںکن, ‘knife’; ںکن, ‘poor’ etc.\footnote{Cohen 1975: 21f.}
  
  \item[a]\textit{w}n\textit{‘lywr l}‘\textit{hdwr: syntactically unclear, see footnote 11 above.}
  
  \item[c]\textit{ltqy}: as in 3c above.
  
  \item[c]\textit{srbh}: written according to Arabic orthographic conventions; the final ہ probably marks the tā’ marbuṭa.
  
  \item[c]\textit{q\textsuperscript{-}dyn}: active participle, especially when used in verbal function, lacks feminine plural forms as is common in modern dialects.
  
  \item[d]\textit{fyhm}: as in 2c above (‘lyhm).
  
  \item[d]\textit{mnhm}: as in 2c above (‘lyhm).
  
  \item[d]‘\textit{bk ‘what do you want?’ See footnote 15 above.
  
  \item[e]\textit{kwzk}: metathetic form (‘ağawwizak, cf. zwŷ) common in modern dialects; the metathesis cannot be understood if it had not taken place before the generalized depalatalization of /\textit{ŷ}/.
  
  \item[a]\textit{t}‘\textit{sr}: compound, invariable for both case and gender.
  
  \item[c]‘\textit{ṣ}y: for metrical reasons probably to be omitted.
  
  \item[e]\textit{ts}l: for metrical reasons, read \textit{tisal}; the form might have been a living dialectal form, as in the Syrian oasis of Suxne.\footnote{Behnstedt 1994: 67f. (\textit{ṣal} · ہئ, \textit{ṣal} at · ںئت, \textit{ṣal} al · ںئل, \textit{ṣal} at but not ںئل).}
  
  \item[a]\textit{dl ‘zwz: dialectal demonstrative pronoun preceding the noun, here perhaps used in a pejorative sense.\footnote{Doss 1979: 353.}}
  
  \item[a]\textit{dyk l}‘\textit{ns}: as in 8a above.
  
  \item[b]\textit{wsf\textit{w}: as in modern sedentary dialects, without distinction between masc. and fem. in plural forms of finite verb.
  
  \item[b]‘\textit{q}: schematically used 3rd p. sing. masc.
  
  \item[c]‘\textit{tfqt: the geminated \textit{t} is exceptionally written with two letters.}
\end{itemize}
210

HEIKKI PALVA

8c ṭaw rōh: used as a synonym of nafs, as rōh in Modern Egyptian Arabic.

8c לַדְּמִיר mdrēs: orthography follows the rhyme, the fem. suffix is therefore written as /f/.

8d ḏykh lishwd: cf. 8a ʿd l ṭav dl ṭwzd.

8d q*dy:n: as 5c.

8d ṭũny: dialectal long vowel in the imperative; Form I used in the function of the obsolete Form IV.

9a yš q ʿl: qāl ‘she said’, schematically used masc. form.

9c ʿlif ʿlaq as 3c.

9d ṭũny: as 8d.

9d and 9e ṭav dl: cf. 8a ʿd l ṭav dl ṭwzd.

9e ḥm xxr: ṣawr, attested not only in modern dialects but also in a vocalized letter dated to the 12th–13th centuries.

10a ṭũny: as 8d.

10b ṭũny b*str: dialectal b-imperfect the function of which seems here (still) to be volitive and future, cf. ʿštšn ʿsīhy 10c, which is present indicative. By the 12th century the b-imperfect had become a fixed verbal form in Judaeo-Arabic.

10c ʿštšn ʿsīhy: /š/ instead of /s/, one of the few Judaeo-Arabic devices of the text.

10c l ṭav dl ṣql: prepositive demonstrative pronoun undoubtedly used in a pejorative sense.

10d ṭũny ʿar: māt ṭaw zāřtay ʿstrwln: probably a hyper-correct Classical Arabic agreement.

10e ṭaw ṭaw: = wū-gāl(i), shortened in order to rhyme.

11a ʾygh: used in the dialectal sense ‘about’.

11b ʾlslḥdʾr: /š/ instead of /s/ in back environments is common in Judaeo-Arabic texts; in the first narrative in this booklet (folios 1-12), the title is written in the Classical Arabic sīrkān. In that narrative several other ranks in Mamluk administration are mentioned: wazīr, muṣīr, ḥāǧīb, sāği, nāḥib, ḡandār, and ʿustadār.

23 This item occurs also in a 17th-century Judaeo-Arabic text, Lebedev 1977: 76f., text III ʿinīā ʿšī ṭawḥān.


25 For a more detailed diachronic discussion, see Palva 2000: 86–89.

26 The earliest example of the b-imperfect reported by Blau occurs in a Christian Arabic text from the end of the 9th century, others are found in Judaeo-Arabic texts from the 12th century, Blau 1981: 121f.

27 The same form occurs twice in a 17th-century manuscript from the same collection, Lebedev 1977: 63 (yīgī ʿal-fāriq, yīgī miyāt al-f dinār).


An Egyptian Arabic Zajal from the Fourteenth (?) Century

12a *nt d*: as in 2b.
12c *n'aydl* (= *'ayd* or *'aydan*): frozen Classical Arabic adverb commonly occurring in sub-literary texts as well as, e.g., in Bedouin poetry (in both forms).
12c *nl P yz'l*: Classical Arabic phrase commonly occurring in sub-literary texts.
12d *dl*: as in 10c.
12e *'iddln*: = *'itdallnā*, the passive-reflexive *t + I* Form. The genuinely dialectal *'itdallēnā* would not match the metre.

REFERENCES


Plate 1. MS Firkovich Evr.-Arab II 852 15a
Plate 2. MS Firkovich Evr.-Arab II 852 15b
Plate 4. MS Firkovich Evr.-Arab II 852 16b
Plate 5. MS Firkovich Evr.-Arab II 852 17a