

5. Notes on the Metrical Structure of the Poems

5.1. Quantitative analysis

The poems included in this collection have been recorded from oral performance, and the oral realization therefore constitutes the most natural basis for their metrical analysis. One possible point of departure is the scansion which often gives prominence to the metrical stress. The first poem of Text IX is a striking example of this feature; the reciter declaims it very rhythmically:

- IX 8a tálga šyúx ib-líbs il-ǧúx
 b byútin tábna lí-ǧ-ǧēfān
 IX 9a tálga šhún u-kább id-dhún
 b w-fóg irdúnhum mtún id-ǧān

This scansion suggests a metrical pattern which is mainly based upon an *accentual* system. However, many poems give a spontaneous impression of being at least partly based on a *quantitative* metrical structure. Thus, the scansion of the poem of Text II does not give the same prominence to the metrical stress, but it is recited with natural stresses. An analysis which does not pay attention to anything but the surface representation of the poem would yield the following pattern:

- II 17a ʔil.bār.ḥa.bā.tin.ʕu.yū.ni.sa.hā.ra
 — — v — — v — v — v
 b w.tig.lir.ra.šā.dib.mug.le.til.ʕēn.mad.rūr
 v — — v — — — v — — —
 II 18a ʔaw.wāh.ʕa.dah.rin.ma.ǧā.lib.gā.ra
 — — v — — v — — — v
 b bī.šah.ra.but.tō.bāt.xa.ǧēt.li.dūr
 — — v — — — v — v —

This kind of analysis on purely phonetic grounds, strictly based on the surface structure, does not reveal any consistent pattern, however. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether it should be applied at all. Even if the vernacular dialect spoken by the reciter be used as the point of departure, its surface structure cannot afford a solid basis for metrical analysis, which always refers to abstract models. Therefore the underlying phonemic structure is likely to be a more relevant basis.

On the phonemic level, all final vowels of the dialect irrespective of their etymology must be regarded as long. This of course also applies to the last syllable of the hemistich, which traditionally is counted as prosodically long. In the dialect of the reciter, the normal reflexes of the preposition *bi-* are *b-* (before nouns) and *bī-* (before suffixed pronouns), the latter form often occurring before nouns as well, probably lengthened analogously with *fi*. The same holds true of the majority of the neighbouring sedentary and Bedouin dialects as well. In the two pairs of hemistichs analyzed here, the preposition occurs in both forms, in different metrical positions.

Even if all final vowels are counted as long, the analysis still does not yield a regular pattern. To reveal a more regular metrical pattern, some systematic changes in

the phonetic shape of the recitation can, however, be rather safely done. Such a change is restoring short vowels which disappear as results of *synchronic* processes, an adjustment agreeing with the genitive phrase **muglet il-‘ēn** (— v — —) II 17b, which in its local dialectal surface form is **múgilt il-‘ēn** (v — — —). Here the synchronic process of deleting short vowels other than /a/ in unstressed open syllables is impeded by metrical reasons clearly bearing upon the syllable structure and not the stress. That the word boundaries in a quantitative analysis as a rule must be disregarded is a matter of course, but all further steps leading to a greater regularity might seem arbitrary. Thus it looks unjustified to increase the number of short syllables by restoring short vowels the disappearance of which is the result of a *diachronic* process, or by adding short final vowels which do not exist in the spoken language. Yet this is not totally ungrounded; as a matter of fact, such short extra vowels sometimes occur both in recitation (e.g. IX 25-34) and, perhaps more commonly, when poems are sung. The arbitrariness is reduced to a minimum when short vowels are added in order to systematically analyze all overlong syllables (CVC, CVCC) that occur in positions other than at the end of a hemistich as metrically representing the sequence of a long (C \bar{V} , CVC) and a short (CV) syllable. It must be pointed out that this procedure does not imply restoration of any vowels which have been elided as results of diachronic processes; rather, it only systematically splits overlong syllables into two syllables. After these kinds of mechanical adjustments, the above hemistichs run:

- II 17a ʔil.bā/ rə.ḥā.bā.tin/ ‘u.yū.nī/ sa.hā.rā
 — — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
 b [w.]tig.lir/ ra.šā.də.bə.mug/ le.til.‘ē/ nə.maḍ.rūr
 [v] — — / v — v v — / v — — / v — —
- II 18a ʔaw.wā[h]/ ‘a.dah.rin/ ma.ḍā.lī/ bə.gā.rā
 — — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
 b bī.šah/ ra.but.tō.bā/ tə.xa.ḍē/ tə.lī.dūr
 — — / v — — — / v v — / v — —

Now only hemistich 17a displays a regular pattern clearly akin to the **ṭawīl**. The regular quantitative pattern of the acatalectic **ṭawīl** hemistich is as follows:

v — x / v — x — / v — x / v — v —

in which x stands for anceps (short or long), while the sequence v — in the beginning of every foot is a fixed, unchangeable element of the foot (**watid maḡmū‘** according to the terminology of al-Xalīl ibn Aḥmad). Compared with this pattern, the metre in 17a is regular but shorter, both acephalic and catalectic. Also 18a is rather regular: ‘a $\bar{l}\bar{a}$ may be read instead of ‘a-—as is actually done by another reciter of the same poem¹—and to the preposition b- a short vowel may be added as indicated above. The anceps syllables are in both hemistichs represented by a long syllable, a feature very common in the metrical pattern of Nabaṭi poetry. In 17b the first short syllable fills the slot reserved for the conjunction, i.e., it is metrically optional, a case characteristic of orally transmitted Nabaṭi poetry. The second foot remains too long, unless—contrary

¹ Text II 25, footnote.

to the rules applied here—analyzed as /ra.šād. ʔib.mug/. The third foot of line 18b remains irregular as well, most probably due to some change in the original wording.

In most poems it is possible to find some verses which without any adjustments display a regular metrical pattern. These can rather safely be used as a basis for further metrical analysis of the remaining verses. In this way the metres of a majority of the poems can be defined. In the following analysis the metrically most regular verses occurring in the present poems are used as a point of departure. These are followed by examples of possible ways to analyze verses which do not seem to follow any regular pattern.

The rhyme pattern of Text II 17-25 is a regularly alternating AB AB AB (A -āra, B -ūr).

An alternative analysis is to regard the optional short syllable in the beginning of the hemistich as a metrically irrelevant element. This yields the pattern

— — v — / — — v — / — v — —

which can be regarded as a variety of the *sarīʿ*, lengthened with a *muraffal* syllable. This is the analysis proposed by AL-BARGŪŪŪ, who points out that this seems to be the most frequent metre in Palestinian and Jordanian popular poems.² On the other hand, AL-SAʿID, who does not use the classical names of the metres, calls this measure *hilāli*, a pattern characteristic of the Hilāli epics.³

Text I

Since the poem was sung, no regular quantitative pattern can be discerned, but when analyzed according to the principles indicated above, the pattern of the acatalectic *ṭawīl* is revealed:

- 10a w-čam sābğin yā šēx b-is-sēf ʿugtha
w.čam.sā/ bə.ğin.yā.šē/ xə.bis.sē/ fə.ʿug.tə.hā
v — — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —
- 10b rayyaḥt āhilha min imğāḍab ʿalīğha
ray.yaḥ/ ta.hil.hā.min/ mə.ğā.ḍab/ ʿa.lī.ğə.hā
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —
- 11a čam sābğin yā šēx šallēt maniʿha
čam.sā/ bə.ğin.yā.šē/ xə.šal.lē/ tə.man.ʿə.hā
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —
- 11b rayyaḥt āhilha min imğāḍab šahīlha
ray.yaḥ/ ta.hil.hā.min/ mə.ğā.ḍab/ ša.hī.lə.hā
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —

In order to obtain this regular pattern, at least one deviation from the systematic restitution of certain short vowels has to be made: the word ʔahl must be analyzed as *ahil*. Occasionally it seems impossible to arrive at a regular pattern with a consistent

² AL-BARGŪŪŪ, ʔAğānī, p. 65.

³ AL-SAʿID, Al-Šiʿr al-nabaḥī, p. 46. According to him, this metre is the basic metre of Nabaḥī poetry, since its origins must be traced back to the rise of Hilāli poetry. Correspondingly, he traces the poetic koine of this genre to the dialect of the Banū Hilāl, p. 27f.

analysis, e.g.:

- 12a ḡitmannētak maktūl ib-tāli ḡūnana
tə.man.nē/ tak.mak.tū.lə/ bə.tā.lī/ ḡə.ū.na.nā
v — — / — — — v / v — — / v — v —

Here both the pronominal suffix **-ak** and the word **maktūl** cause metrical problems. However, the same wording appears in the version published by AL-^ʿUZAYZI. To take another example, in 9b there are too many syllables in the first foot:

- 9b mā yirmīh min il-fursān ḡilla ḡiḡīlha
mā.yir.mī.[hə]/ mi.nil.fur.sā/ nə.ḡil.lā/ ḡi.ḡī.lə.hā
— — — [v] / v — — — / v — — — / v — v —

In 8a the extra syllables in the beginning may be explained as an exclamation not included in the first line:

- 8a yā zēd bāḥ il-xafa l-yōm mā b-ḡamāyri
yā.zēd: bā.ḥil/ xa.fā.ḡal.yō/ mə.mā.bə/ ḡa.mā.ḡi.rī (?)
[— —] — — / v — — — / v — v / v — v —

The rhyme pattern is a simple monorhyme **-īlha** in the second hemistichs, once deviating slightly (**-īḡha** 10b). The first hemistich once has the same rhyme (17a).

Text III

- 51a kasirtum ḡināḥi w-istaḡallēt ḡūgubku
ka.sir.tum/ ḡi.nā.ḥī.wis/ ta.ḡal.lē/ tə.ḡug.bə.kum
v — — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —
- 52a lā tiḡṭa ḡu ḡēbātkum ḡan bilādna
lā.tiḡ/ ṭa.ḡū.ḡē.bā/ tə.kum.ḡan/ bi.lā.də.nā
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —

This analysis gives a regular **ṭawīl** pattern with an optional first short syllable, i.e., the hemistichs are optionally acephalic. If adjustments of this type are accepted, less regular verses can be analyzed as follows:

- 42a tilfi ḡala sṭambūl w-idxul ḡala l-malak
til.fī/ ḡa.las.ṭam.bū/ lə.wid-xul/ ḡa.lal.ma.lak
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —
- 46a luh ḡēltin ḡaḡḡat min il-ḡū ḡ w-il-ḡara
luh.ḡē/ lə.tin.ḡaḡ.ḡat/ mi.nil.ḡū/ ḡə.wil.ḡa.rā
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —
- 40a ḡawḡītin naḡḡītin binit ḡāyir
ḡaw.ḡī/ yə.tin.naḡ.ḡī/ yə.tin.bin/ tə.ḡā.yir
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
- 49a yā māxḡīn is-sabi ḡ xallu yamīno
yā.mā/ xə.ḡī.nis.sab/ ḡə.xal.lū/ ya.mī.noh
— — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

The last two examples display a variety which is both acephalic and catalectic, a very common line in both this and other poems approximately following the **ṭawīl** metre. It must be admitted, though, that many verses are more irregular, e.g.:

- 41a w-gaḏḏabtha darb il-ḥāḡḡ tilga mawāḏi^c
 [w.]gaḏ.ḏab/ tə.hā.dar.bil.ḥāḡḡ/ ḡə.til.gā/ ma.wā.ḏi^c
 [v] — — / v — — — — / v — — / v — —
- 56a min ‘úgubkum ḥirrimna ḡazt ir-rīš b-il-gana
 min.‘ug/ bə.kum.ḥir.rim.nā.ḡaz/ zə.tir.rī/ šə.bil.ga.nā
 — — / v — — — — / v — — / v — v —
- 43a w-ta‘fi ‘an rās iš-šiḡḡī^c ‘ibin mazyad
 [w.]ta^c.fi/ ‘an.rā.siš.šiḡḡī^c/ ḡī.‘ib/ nə.maz.yad
 [v] — — / — — — — / — — / v — —

The second hemistichs display a shorter variety:

- 39b ḥurrin u-lā-luh b-ir-rčāb miḡīl
 ḥur.rin/ u.lā.luh.bir/ ri.čā.bə/ mi.ḡīl
 — — / v — — — — / v — v / v —
- 40b b-iš-šōb mā yaṭra ‘alēha miḡīl
 biš.šō/ bə.mā.yaṭ.rā/ ‘a.lē.hā/ mi.ḡīl
 — — / v — — — — / v — — / v —

Some lines are more irregular, e.g.:

- 55b w-xaḏūna b-il-ḥīlāt w-it-tadbīr
 [w.]xa.ḏū/ nā.bil.ḥī.lā/ tə.wit.tad.bīr
 [v] v — / — — — — / v — — / —

It seems that a final vowel is here treated as short (xa.ḏū.na); the lack of a syllable at the end may be due to a substitution of *tadbīr* for an original *tadābīr* or another word of the same syllable pattern and ending in -īl.

The rhyme pattern is a monorhyme (CiCīl) in the second hemistichs, with one deviation (*tadbīr* 55b).

Text IV

- 39a ‘il-lām lāyamna bkārin ḥarāra
 ‘il.lā/ mə.lā.yam.nā/ bi.kā.rin/ ḥa.rā.rā
 — — / v — — — — / v — — / v — —
- 35b w-hāḏa zimāni šift bīh it-ti‘āḡīb
 [w.]hā.ḏā/ zi.mā.nī.šif/ tə.bī.hit/ ti.‘ā.ḡīb
 [v] — — / v — — — — / v — — / v — —
- 30c rab‘in ‘ala šōf il-mi‘ādi ḡilīlīn
 rab.‘in/ ‘a.lā.šō.fil/ mi.‘ā.ḏī/ ḡi.lī.līn
 — — / v — — — — / v — — / v — —
- 37d čam ḏayya‘at ‘iḡwād gabil zilāli
 čam.ḏay/ ya.‘at.‘iḡ.wā/ də.gab.lə/ zi.lā.lī
 — — / v — — — — / v — v / v — —

The metre thus seems to be a variety of the catalectic *ṭawīl*. However, irregular hemistichs occur commonly:

- 34a ʔil-ʿēn ʿēni nṭarat māha
 ʔil.ʿē/ nə.ʿē.nī.ʔin/ ṭa.rat/ mā.hā
 — / v — — — / v — / — —
 or: — — / v — — / v — / — — (ʿē.nin.ṭa.rat)
 22b ʔilli laww gillet mašāḥīh yilgāh
 ʔil-lī/ law[w].gil.let/ ma.šā.ḥī/ hə.yil.gāh
 — — / — — — / v — — / v — —
 22c ya-wēl ma ʔaktar ʿazūtah ma ʿtanāyāh
 yā.wē/ lə.mā.ʔak.ṭar/ ʿa.zū.tah.ma ʿ/ ṭa.nā.yāh
 — — / v — — — / v — — — / v — —
 or: — — / v — — — / — v — / v — — (ʿaz.wə.tah)

The rhyme follows the pattern aaaA bbbA cccA, etc. However, there are several deviations from the A rhyme (20d, 22d, 25d, 35d, 36d, 37d). The rhymes in lines abc are regular except 33abc. In 41, -lha rhymes with -la.

Text V

The metre is a catalectic variant of the *ṭawīl*:

- 15a w-min ʿúgubhin mā dūgt darr il-miṣāʿīb
 [w.]min.ʿug/ bə.hin.mā.dug/ tə.dar.ril/ mi.ṣā.ʿīb
 [v] — — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
 15b w-nuṭbux ʿala l-mā ma ndūg il-gifāra
 [w]nuṭ.bux/ ʿa.lal.mā.mā/ nə.dū.gil/ gi.fā.rā
 [v] — — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

In this poem, too, many lines are irregular, e.g.:

- 11a w-xallētna yā šēx ʿala biʿīrə biʿīrēn
 [w.]xal.lē/ tə.nā.yā.šē.xə/ ʿa.lā.bi.ʿī.rə/ bi.ʿī.rēn
 [v] — — / v — — — v / v — v — v / v — —
 11b ʔamma ṭ-ṭalāṭe b-imrāḥəna mā yitəbāra
 ʔam.maṭ.ṭa.lā.ṭē⁴.bim.rā.ḥə.nā.mā.yi.tə.bā.rā
 — — / v — — — / — v — — v / v — —

The rhyme follows the monorhyme pattern in the second hemistichs. In the first hemistichs there is a partial rhyme (CīC/CēC), which occasionally occurs in a more complete form (Cēḍ 9a, 10a, 13a).

Text VI

The metre is a catalectic variety of the *ṭawīl*:

- 5a yā rāčb-alli la-ḍ-ḍana ma-rzamanni
 yā.rā/ čə.bal.lī.laḍ/ ḍa.nā.mar/ za.man.nī
 — — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
 5b ḥīn il-ihdād ilhin ʿan iz-zamil ḥarrās
 ḥī.nil/ hi.dā.dil.hin/ ʿa.niz.zam/ lə.ḥar.rās
 — — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

⁴ Alternatively to be analyzed ṭa.lā.ṭih.

The rhyme follows the alternating AB AB AB pattern; in 15a there is an occasional deviation. Otherwise, the only license in the rhyme is the variation -anni, -inni, -anna, -inna.

Text VII

The metre is a relatively regular catalectic *ṭawīl*:

- 21a gāl ʾibin ġēt ʾinn ḥārabat ʿēnoh an-nōm
 gā.lib/ nā.ġē.ṭin[n].ḥā/ ra.bat.ʿē/ no.han.nōm
 — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
- 21b ʿabdallah aṣ-ṣābir ʿala ḥukum wālīh
 ʿab.dal/ la.ḥaṣ.ṣā.bir/ ʿa.lā.ḥuk/ mā.wā.līh
 — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
- 22a ʿabdi wuġīʿa mā tabi kill maṭʿūm
 ʿab.dī/ wu.ġī.ʿā⁵.mā/ ta.bī.kil/ lə.maṭ.ʿūm
 — / v — — — / v — — / v — —
- 22b w-iš-šurb u-laww hū min ḥalīb il-mitāli
 wīš.šur/ bu.law[w].hū.min/ ḥa.lī.bil/ mi.tā.lī
 — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

The rhyme follows the regular alternating pattern AB AB AB, etc., with one exception (27b)

Text VIII

The poem seems to follow the catalectic pattern of *ramal*:⁶

- 9a b-iš-šigāʿa bāsilin ʾinte l-waḥīd
 bi.š.ši.ġā.ʿā⁷/ bā.si.lin.ʾin/ tel.wa.ḥīd
 — v — — / — v — — / — v —
- 9b ʾantaxīka yā simūw il-ʿabdali
 ʾan.ta.xī.kā⁸/ yā.si.mū.wil/ ʿab.da.lī
 — v — — / — v — — / — v —
- 13a ʾallaḏī bāʿū waṭanhum b-iz-zahīd
 ʾal.la.ḏī.bā/ ʿū.wa.ṭan.hum/ biz.za.hīd
 — v — — / — v — — / — v —
- 13b lā turāʿīhum bi-ʿēn il-mikmali
 lā.tu.rā.ʿī/ hum.bi.ʿē.nil/ mik.ma.lī
 — v — — / — v — — / — v —

The metre of this poem is rather regular, but some irregularities are found here also, e.g.:

⁵ According to an alternative analysis, *wu.ġī.ʿah*.

⁶ The classical pattern of acatalectic *ramal* dimeter is *x v — x / x v — x // x v — x / x v — —*.

⁷ Or: *bi.ġā.ʿah*.

⁸ The vowel of *-ka* can be analyzed either as short or long; if analyzed phonemically on synchronic level, the vowel is long, if looked upon as a literary loan not to be analyzed according to the phonemic system of the dialect, it is short.

The rhyme follows the monorhyme pattern in the second hemistichs (-āba, -ābi, -ābin).

Text X

The metre is a catalectic variety of the *ṭawīl*:

18a/26a wallāh u-ṭumm allāh u-dīnin b-aṭar dīn
 wal.lā/ hu.ṭum.mal.lā/ hu.dī.nin/ ba.ṭar.dīn
 — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

This is one of the lines where no adjustments are needed in order to find a regular metrical pattern. Significantly, this is a line which is formulaic in its entirety and often occurs as such in Nabaṭi poetry. Since it is composed of formulas exactly corresponding to the feet of the line, it could alternatively be analyzed as four separate feet:

wal.lāh / w.ṭum.mal.lāh / w.dī.nin / ba.ṭar.dīn

20a ṭār l-imzēbag min ikfūf il-imḡallīn
 ṭā.ril/ mə.zē.bag.min/ kə.fū.fil/ mə.ḡal.līn
 — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

20b w-ir-rūḥ min kill il-ḡiwānib itsāba
 wir.rū/ ḥə.min.kil.lil/ ḡi.wā.nib/ tə.sā.bā
 — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

Examples of irregularities:

17a talfu ‘a-bu turki rīf il-misāčīn
 tal.fū/ ‘a.bū.tur.kī/ rī.fil/ mi.sā.čīn
 — / v — — — / — — / v — —

25b w-muḡṣab ḡidīd alli lā bī sarāba
 [w.]muḡ.ṣab/ ḡi.dī.dal.lī/ lā.bī/ sa.rā.bā
 [v] — — / v — — — / — — / v — —

15a w-gūmu ‘alēhin b-ad-difāfič ‘āḡlīn
 [w.]ḡū.mū/ ‘a.lē.hin.bad/ di.fā.fī/ čə.‘ā.ḡə.līn
 [v] — — / v — — — / v — — / v — v —

Analyzed consistently according to the same principles as the rest of the poem, this hemistich displays a complete, acatalectic *ṭawīl* thus differing from the general catalectic pattern of the poem.

The rhyme follows the regular alternating pattern AB AB AB, etc.

Text XI

The metre is catalectic *ṭawīl*:

8b w-lī ‘illtin b-aḡṣa ḡamāyir xafīya
 [w.]lī.‘il/ lə.tin.bag.ṣā/ ḡa.mā.yir/ xa.fī.yā
 [v] — — / v — — — / v — — / v — —

9a ḡan-nafis ‘ayyat lā tmaḡḡid min iz-zād
 ḡan.naf/ sə.‘ay.yat.lā/ tə.maḡ.ḡid/ mi.niz.zād

- / v — — — / v — — — / v — — —
 21b w-^ʔalfin šabāḥ il-xēr w-^ʔalfin taḥīya
 [w.]^ʔal.fin/ ša.bā.ḥil.xēr/ ru.^ʔal.fin/ ta.ḥī.yā
 [v] — — / v — — — / v — — — / v — — —

Examples of irregularities:

- 9b w-il-^ʕēn ^ʕan laḍḍet manāməha mi^ʕayya
 wil.^ʕē/ nə.^ʕan.laḍ.ḍet/ ma.nā.mə.hā/ mi.^ʕay.yā
 — — / v — — — — / v — v — / v — — —
 13b ^ʔal-marāda yisrāk w-irča l-maḥīya
^ʔal.ma.rā/ dā.yis.rā/ kə.wir.čal/ ma.ḥī.yā
 — v — / — — — — / v — — — / v — — —
 21a ^ʔalfin hala b-rab^ʕi ^ʕa-gadd ramlin b-il-iblād
^ʔal.fin/ ha.lā.bə.rab.^ʕi/ ^ʕa.gad.də.ram.lin/ bə.lib.lād
 — — / v — v — — — / v — v — — — / v — — —

The rhyme follows the regular alternating pattern AB AB AB, etc., with one deviation in 13a (-āḩ instead of -ād). In rhyme B, -īya and -ayya vary freely.

Text XII

The metre is a catalectic variety of the *ṭawīl*:

- 16a w-ḍabbāḥhum sulṭān dibbin walad dibb
 [w.]ḍab.bā/ ḥə.hum.sul.ṭā/ nə.dib.bin/ wa.lad.dibb
 [v] — — / v — — — — / v — — — / v — — —
 17a w-min ^ʕugubhum galbi bah an-nār talhab
 [w.]min.^ʕug/ bə.hum.gal.bī/ ba.han.nā/ rə.tal.hab
 [v] — — / v — — — — / v — — — / v — — —
 18b ^ʔagfa w-xallāni b-dār al-miḍāmi
^ʔag.fā/ wu.xal.lā.nī/ bə.dā.ral/ mi.ḍā.mī
 — — / v — — — — / v — — — / v — — —

Examples of irregularities:

- 13a yā wannəti tiwannətha tagṭa^ʕ al-galb
 yā.wan/ nə.tī.ti.wan.nē/ tə.hā.tag/ ṭa.^ʕal.galb
 — — / v — v — — — / v — — — / v — — —
 15a ^ʔaš-šyūx iḍbaḥūhum mālhūm ḍanb
^ʔaš.šə.yū.xiḍ.ba.ḥū.hum.mā/ lə.hum.ḍanb
 — v — — — v — — — — / v — — —

The rhyme follows the alternating pattern AB AB AB, etc. Rhyme A normally consists of -Vb(b), but in 13a, 15a and 20a of only -b. In the last-mentioned cases the rhyme is most unorthodox, since it implies the occurrence of an overlong ("super-heavy") syllable of the type CVCC in rhyme position.

Text XIII

The metre is a catalectic variety of the **ṭawīl**:

- 10a ʾams iḍ-ḍaḥa šaddēt kūr in-niḡība
 ʾam.siḍ/ ḍa.ḥā.šad.dē/ tō.kū.rin/ ni.ḡī.bā
 — / v — — — / v — — — / v — — —
14b ḥālu ‘alēya t-turk u-māli ḡinīya
 ḥā.lū/ ‘a.lē.yat.tur/ ku.mā.lī/ ḡi.nī.yā
 — — / v — — — — / v — — — — / v — — — —
15b mitwaḡḡhin yamm il-fḡūḡ il-xalīya
 mit.waḡ/ ḡi.hin.yam.mil/ fə.ḡū.ḡil/ xa.lī.ya
 — — / v — — — — / v — — — — / v — — — —
16d yā šēx niḡrak l-al-maxālīḡ ‘azzām
 yā.šē/ xə.niḡ.rak.lal/ ma.xā.lī/ ḡə.‘az.zām
 — — / v — — — — / v — — — — / v — — — —

Examples of irregularities:

- 10d ʾal-‘aṣīr milfāh dimaṣḡ iš-šām
 ʾal.‘aṣ/ rə.mil.fā.hə.di.maš.ḡi.š.šām
 — — / v — — — v v — — — —
11c w-agūl ya-hal allāh u-ya-hal al-misārīḥ
 [w]a.gū.lə.yā.ha.lal.lā/ hu.yā.ha.lal/ mi.sā.rīḥ (?)
 v — v — v — — — / v — v — / v — — —
or: [w]a.gū/ lə.yah.lal.lāh / w.yah.lal/ mi.sā.rīḥ (?)
 v — / v — — — — / v — — — — / v — — — —
12c w-lā naḥtisif amwālna laww ḡābat bīh
 [w].lā.naḥ/ ti.sif.ʾam.wā/ lə.nā.law[w]/ ḡā.bat.bīh
 [v] — — / v — — — — / v — — — — / — — — —

The rhyme pattern of the poem is aaaA bbbA cccA, etc., with the exception of 13d. The last lines deviate from the common pattern.

Text XIV

The metrical pattern of this poem is rather irregular. Some hemistichs can without constraint be analyzed as catalectic variants of the **basīṭ**, popular especially in **ḥḡēni** songs.¹¹

- 44b w-irgābna gunṭara la-ḍ-ḍēf dōm iḥnāy
 wir.gā.bə.nā/ gun.ṭa.rā¹²/ laḍ.ḍē.fə.dō/ miḥ.nāy
 — — v — / — v — / — — v — / — — —
45b yā xēlna yā ḥamad tar‘a b-marā‘īna
 yā.xē.lə.nā/ yā.ḥa.mad/ tar.‘ab.ma.rā/ ‘ī.na
 — — v — / — v — / — — v — / — — —

¹¹ Metrical class no. 36 in SOWAYAN, *Nabaṭi Poetry*, p. 159f.

¹² Or **gun.ṭa.rah**.

Occasionally the catalectic **basīṭ** rhythm is followed, but the catalectic last foot is preceded by a regular acatalectic pattern:

- 45c w-la ʿēn min šakkat iq-dihbān taḥt il-marāḡīna
 [w.]lā.ʿē.nə.min/šak.ka.tiḡ/dih.bā.nə.taḥ/til.ma.rā/ḡī.nā
 [v] — — v — / — v — / — — v — / — v' — / — —

Some hemistichs display great irregularities:

- 46a ḥinna dōm ma tāhat baṣīritna
 ḥin.nā.dō.mə.mā.tā.hat.ba.ṣī.rit.nā
 — / — — v — / — — v — / — —
- 46b w-lā dabbat rīḡīlna ʿala gaṣīritna
 [w.]lā.dab.bat.rīḡ.lə.nā.ʿa.lā.ga.ṣī.rit.nā
 [v] — — / — — v — / v — v — / — —
- 46c nāmi yā gaṣīritna b-sīritna
 nā.mī.yā.ga.ṣī.rit.nā.bə.sī.rit.nā
 — / — — v — / — — v — / — —

The rhyme pattern is uncommon: AAAA BBB CCC AAA. It might be mentioned that two or three listeners criticized the rhyme finding it somehow unsatisfactory, perhaps because the Šammari type pl. fem. morpheme -āy (instead of -āt) was felt strange.

5.2. Accentual analysis

According to the above analysis, eleven of the metres can be regarded as varieties of the catalectic **ṭawīl**, one as the acatalectic **ramal**, one as the catalectic **hazaḡ**, one as an irregular **basīṭ**, while one metre (poem IX 3-16) remains unidentified. Since the metrical basis of the old poetry composed in Classical Arabic mainly is quantitative, it would seem natural to base the metrical analysis of the present poems on syllabic quantity as done above. In my opinion, it scarcely depends on mere chance that in almost every poem there are several lines which unforcedly fit in regular quantitative patterns. However, using a quantitative analysis as the sole basis for the metrical patterns is rendered questionable by the numerous irregularities. A significant fact that should not be overlooked is that the recitation of a majority of the poems does not reflect quantitative patterns. On the contrary, the scansion often clearly suggests that metrical stress is relevant to the structure, perhaps even more relevant than the syllable quantity. Therefore an alternative analysis based on the number of stressed syllables should also be tested.

The analysis of an accentual system could most appropriately first be applied to poem IX 3-16, recited with a very rhythmic scansion.

- IX 3a ʾawwāl mibḏāy / ḏīʿr allāh
 b yā līlāh / yā ruḥmān
 4a ʾanā lli ʾagūl / ib-ṭīb ifʿūl
 b ʾanā magbūl / ʿind iṣ-ṣḫān
 5a ʾimsāllam nāf / ib-ṭīb il-gāf
 b sēlin yīḡrī / mīn ʿaddān

6a	gum yā ġimīl / šidd id-dīlī
b	ʾil-ʾāšʿal mádmūġ / id-dirʿān
7a	ʾirčáb fōġih / ya-báyy ġiddī
b	šárrig tálfī / ʿá-l-bidwān
8a	tálga šyūx / ib-líbs il-ġūx
b	byūtín tábna / l-id-đēfān

In every hemistich four syllables are stressed, divided into two groups, but besides stressing the last syllable of every hemistich, as well as the rhyme pattern aaA bbA ccA, no additional regularity is to be found. Yet the auditory impression of the scansion is remarkably regular. Only in a few cases does the reciter follow natural stresses through a whole hemistich. The hemistichs may begin with an unstressed as well as a stressed syllable, and the number of unstressed syllables varies between four and two.

Another example of a rather distinct declamation is poem II 17-25, the pattern of which follows natural stresses. In an analysis of this kind of scansion it seems therefore appropriate to treat phonetic words as separate units exactly as in normal vernacular speech, and not to extend a syllable over an open juncture. Thus, overlong syllables (CVC, CVCC, CCVC) occur in all positions:

II 17a	ʾil- bārḥa bātin / ʿuyūni sa hāra
b	w- tiġl ir-ra šād / ib- muglet il-ʿ en ma ḡrūr
18a	ʾawwā h ʿa- dahrin / ma ḡāli b- gāra
b	bī šahr abu t- tōbāt / xa ḡēti dūr
19a	lā ya-bin-ʿ ammi / ya-ʿ aziz is- sikāra
b	yil finnak ha-l-xul fāt / maʿ šummax il-x ūr
20a	ḥurr il- ḥarāra / lli yi šid i š-ṣigāra
b	w- illi ʿala rukba / min fōg ma šhūr
21a	laww xayyarūni / b-silā fin tibā ra
b	w- bī bir-ra šid / u- ġam ʿatak yā ʾibin ma ṣūr
22a	ma-xtā r kūd nūr ʿ eni / ya-xiyā ra
b	mi ḥazzma mi tlazzma / ġilt ma šhūr

The rhythm is composed of four natural stresses the last of which always falls on the penultimate syllable in the first hemistich, and on the ultimate in the second. There is some irregularity in the number of main stresses, and sometimes the natural stress is omitted. Such a case is 22a, in which both **kūd** and **nūr** lack main stress; the missing fourth stress would most naturally fall on the vocative particle **yā**. Although it is possible, as shown above, to analyze the poem as a variety of catalectic **ṭawīl**, a quantitative metre, it seems justified to ask whether the poem, such as it is recited, more adequately should be analyzed as being based on accents. The same is, in broad outlines, true of all the **ṭawīl** varieties in the present texts. Their scansion follows the natural stresses, and additional short vowels are only sporadically inserted. Their metrical structure may be characterized as hybrid: the surface structure is mainly accentual, whereas the underlying structure reflects a basically quantitative metrical pattern.

Poem VIII 5-15, above analyzed as a variety of catalectic *ramal*, also has a rather distinct accentual scansion:

VIII 5a	nibtadi bi- dī čir xallāg il- [˘] abīd
b	fōg sab [˘] ibrūg rāgi ma [˘] tali
6a	min garār il- ħabis ʾ allaft il- gašīd
b	mwaggafin min gēr ħaggin ʾ alzami
7a	gult māli gēr kassāb il- ħamīd
b	bi-guṣūr il- mağid bāli minzali
8a	yā šarīf inte š-šarīf w- inte sayyid
b	sayyidin min sayyidin mitsalsali
9a	b-iš-šiğā [˘] bāsilin ʾ inte l- waħīd
b	ʾ antaxīka yā simūw il- [˘] abdali

Here the metrical accent is totally independent of the natural stress. Besides the somewhat surprising stress on the syllable /te/ in 8a (the vowel is realized phonetically as short), another striking irregularity is found: in some cases a stressed syllable is immediately followed by another stressed syllable (5b, 6b, 7a), which suggests that a short vowel should be added in order to form a short unstressed syllable between the stressed syllables: **fōg** → **fōgə**, **rūg** → **rūgə**, **gēr** → **gērə**, **gult** → **gultə**. After this slight adjustment, a regular stress pattern can be discerned: every second syllable is stressed, and the lines can actually be divided into feet according to the *ramal* pattern. The relevance of this metrical analysis is corroborated by the fact that, with a few exceptions, the lines are recited as continuous units without separating words by external junctures. Although the measure undoubtedly is based on syllable quantity, the actual scansion of the poem is a combination of quantity and a very conspicuous metrical accent.

Poem IX 25-34 was analyzed above as a variety of the catalectic *hazağ*. Although its scansion is mainly based on natural stresses, short vowels are rather systematically inserted in order to avoid overlong syllables, cutting them into two syllables (CVCC → CVC.CV, CVC → CVC.CV), a procedure obviously involving a quantitative metre.

5.3. Discussion

The metrical basis of contemporary Bedouin poetry has been discussed in the context of some major text collections and special studies devoted to this tradition. After the pioneering work by WALLIN (1851, 1852), WETZSTEIN (unpublished, see SOCIN, *Diwan* III, p. 8f.), SACHAU (1889), STUMME (1894), and HARTMANN (1897), SOCIN's *Diwan aus Centralarabien* (1900-01) is a large-scale study on the subject. In its *Einleitung* a detailed metrical analysis of all measures found in his collection of more than one hundred poems (over 2000 lines), mainly originating in Najd (Burayda, ʿUnayza, al-Ḥasa; collected in Baghdad and Sūq aš-Šuyūx) is presented. Assuming that the measure is based on syllable quantity, Socin establishes the varieties of different metres, of which the majority (61 poems) are coined as 'new *ṭawīl*'. Twelve poems were composed in the *ramal*, three in the *basī*, seven or eight in the *hazağ*, and nine in the *rağaz*, while the remaining metres are unidentified. Having proved the

correctness of the observation already made by WALLIN that short vowels were optionally added without regard to whether the poems were declaimed or sung,¹³ Socin found it reasonable to write the poems down from scansion and dictation, and only occasionally to let the *rāwi* sing them. He also found it justified to add optional short vowels (in italics) in his transcriptions in order to adjust the lines to the demands of quantitative metres.¹⁴

In his study of the prosody of Nabaṭi poetry, SOWAYAN finds the long discussion by Socin "rather fuzzy and unrevealing". Pointing to the observations by Wallin and Landberg concerning the necessity of restoring short vowels which are elided when Nabaṭi poetry is recited, and their failure to demonstrate in a systematic manner how this was to be done, Sowayan undertakes to illustrate the procedure. According to him, the metre is quantitative, the hemistich is the maximum unit of scansion, the syllable the minimum unit; in scanning, word boundaries must be disregarded completely, and the hemistich taken as one unit of continuous utterance. All consonant clusters must be resolved except those at the very beginning or the very end of the hemistich. This is done by restoring "metathesized or elided" vowels to their "original positions" to form independent short syllables. Using this method, Sowayan arrives at an inventory of fifty-one metrical patterns, almost all of which he identifies as varieties of the classical metres.¹⁵

In his recent extensive collection of Bedouin poetry from Sinai and the Negev, BAILEY points out that Sowayan does not present "any consecutive lines of poems of one pattern or another to establish that any given pattern was used in an entire poem", and, furthermore, that "most of the poems that he examined were [...] from the written page rather than from live recordings, and could have been put into quantitative metre by literate people who thought it more respectable than accentual metre."¹⁶ Basing his metrical analysis solely on the recorded scansion, Bailey not only rejects the theory of the quantitative prosody of the poems analyzed by him, but in fact of all orally composed and transmitted Bedouin poetry in all times and places. As he states his opinion, "it seems unlikely to the present writer that an illiterate person can compose poetry according to quantitative metre, since this requires a knowledge of too many rules that can only be comprehended by seeing the written word on the page." Consequently, according to Bailey, the only thinkable metrical basis for oral poetry must be "accentual verse, in which metre is measured [...] by stressed syllables in keeping with the natural stress of conversation."¹⁷

It may be recalled that many, perhaps even the majority, of the poems circulating

¹³ WALLIN, ZDMG 6, p. 193.

¹⁴ The same method was already used by STUMME in his metrical analysis of Tripolitanian-Tunisian Bedouin poetry, *Beduinenlieder*, pp. 24-47.

¹⁵ SOWAYAN, *Nabaṭi Poetry*, pp. 152-162; this does not imply exact conformity with the classical metres: "Although the prosody of Nabaṭi poetry exhibits some differences from that of classical Arabic poetry, the two are generically related, and their differences can be explained as the result partly of linguistic changes and partly of a general tendency toward symmetry and simplification of the metrical paradigm" (p. 160); SOWAYAN, ZAL 8, is for the most part identical with *Nabaṭi Poetry*, pp. 152-162.

¹⁶ BAILEY, *Bedouin Poetry*, p. 397, n. 18.

¹⁷ BAILEY, *Bedouin Poetry*, p. 397f.

at the present day among the Bedouin and their neighbours, most often through oral transmission, but occasionally also in writing, were originally composed in writing. This fact is also pointed out by SOCIN, with special reference to a common type of Bedouin *qaṣīda*, viz. poems of communication, which often are petitions.¹⁸ WALLIN, who in the 1840s wrote down a few poems by the well-known Bedouin poet Nimr ibn ʿAdwān (1746-1822/3), reports that Nimr not only knew how to read and write but he also diligently studied Fīrūzābādī's *Qāmūs* in order to find elegant and impressive words for his poems.¹⁹ On the other hand, much of Bedouin poetry is also composed orally; a vivid description of oral composition among the *Rwala* tribe is given by MUSIL.²⁰ In the course of oral transmission, the difference between poems originally composed orally and in writing tends to fade away, as both types are recited and chanted without distinction, and different versions of both are occasionally written down from recitation on pieces of paper or in copy-books.

Since syllable is the minimal metrical constituent, the syllable patterns in different dialects should be looked upon as a most substantial criterion when considering what is the most pertinent analysis of metrical patterns in different dialect areas. In the analysis of the metrical patterns of Bedouin poetry in Northern Arabia and its periphery, due attention has therefore to be paid to the different syllable patterns in different dialect types. According to CANTINEAU, the dialects of the area can typologically be divided into three groups: the ʿAnazi (Group A), the Šammari (Group B), and the pre-ʿAnazi Syro-Mesopotamian (Group C) dialects. To these must be added Group Bc, consisting of Šammari dialects influenced by dialects of Group C. One of the distinctive features between these groups bears upon the syllable structure, which in Group A and Group B is "trochaic", in Group C "atrochaic". In "trochaic" dialects overlong syllables as a rule do not occur in non-final position, whereas such syllables commonly occur in "atrochaic dialects". Some instances provided by Cantineau may illustrate the difference: *nāgəti* ("trochaic") vs. *nāgti* ("atrochaic"), *nāgətən* vs. *nāgtən*, *čáləbti* vs. *čáləbti*, and "trochaic" forms: *xšūm^ana*, *rūs^ana*, *fwāh^ana*, *ʔúmmana*, *ʔummahātana*, *xwānakām*, *ʔəxtana*, *yəqərbūnakām* (Cantineau does not give "atrochaic" counterparts to these forms). There are two exceptions to the rule: (1) in the nominal patterns *qātil-* and *qarātil-*, /i/ is elided and the resulting overlong syllable is allowed (*šārbi*, *hawāgbi*, *barāt^amak*, not **šārəbi* etc.), (2) overlong non-final syllables are allowed if the long vowel is followed by two identical consonants (*xwānna*, *fwāhhom*, *təqərbīnni*; *xwān^ana* etc. also occur).²¹

In the territories of the ʿAnazi and Šammari confederations which cover the greatest part of Northern Arabia and the Syrian Desert, the syllable structure follows in

¹⁸ SOCIN, *Diwan* III, p. 5f.

¹⁹ WALLIN, *ZDMG* 6, p. 192f.

²⁰ MUSIL, *Rwala*, p. 283f.: "A poem is but rarely written down. As a rule the poet's friends learn it by heart, and others learn from them. Every Bedouin knows several poems but hardly ever the whole of any. [...] If two Bedouins know the same verses of the same poem, they never recite them in exactly the same way but change the original words and often whole verses."

²¹ CANTINEAU, *Nomades* I, pp. 114-116, II, pp. 156-164. He interprets the short vowels in these cases as residues of Old Arabic inflectional vowels, which have lost their morphological functions.

broad outlines the pattern applied above in the quantitative analysis. The exceptions mentioned by Cantineau are too few to affect significantly the conventional syllable pattern of traditional poetry. Consequently, it is evident that syllable quantity provides an appropriate basis for the metrical analysis of North Arabian Nabaṭi poetry.

In the Syro-Mesopotamian dialect area, on the other hand, the situation is different: in order to follow quantitative metres, overlong syllables must be split into two by adding short vowels in positions where they do not occur in these "atrochaic" dialects, a procedure involving learned models. These models are, of course, not learned theoretically by reading books, but they are transmitted orally when reciters of poems learn them from Bedouin who recite or chant poems following the "trochaic" syllable structure of their own dialect type, which in broad outlines corresponds to the metrical conventions of North Arabian Nabaṭi poetry. This by no means implies that only poems originally composed in the "trochaic" dialect area would follow syllable patterns suited for quantitative metrics.

Direct contacts are certainly not the only way through which North Arabian metrical conventions exercise influence on Bedouin poetry in the adjacent areas, but in past centuries they must have been the primary channel for the rise and preservation of a common poetic tradition cherished by all North and Central Arabian Bedouin, the Syro-Mesopotamian tribes included.²² As the result of cultural contacts during dozens of generations, quantitative metrical patterns can be imitated by composers and transmitters of poetry far outside the area where they approximately correspond to the syllable structure of the vernacular dialect. It is no wonder that imitation of structurally alien patterns often leads to linguistic inconsistencies. Thus, interference from the "atrochaic" syllable structure of the native vernacular dialect necessarily weakens the quantitative pattern, and, accordingly, the stress is given more prominence. If the oral poetic tradition in such circumstances is not supported by continuous contacts from its core area, the logical result of such a development is a gradual breakdown of the quantitative metrical structure. This might already be the case among the tribes of Sinai and the Negev, whose poetry, according to Bailey, should preferably be analyzed as being metrically based on stress.²³

The present poems illustrate two important phenomena: firstly, transmitted by a Christian villager, they are a good example of the important role of Bedouin culture among the sedentary population of the area,²⁴ and, secondly, their hybrid metrical structure mirrors their peripheral position in relation to the core area of the tradition.

²² Cf., e.g., BURCKHARDT's report: "The people of Djof are famous for their poetical and musical talents. Their poets visit the Aenezes from time to time, singing at the sheikhs' tents for a trifling remuneration; but the Aenezes themselves never accept any reward for having entertained the company", *Bedouins and Wahabys*, p. 43.

²³ DALMAN, *Diwan*, p. XXIII f., calls attention to the fact that the traditional quantitative metrical basis in modern popular poetry often has given way to accentual metrics.

²⁴ This may be compared with the observation that many of the narratives circulating among Central Palestinian peasants in the beginning of the 20th century came from Transjordanian Bedouin, SCHMIDT & KAHLE, *Volkserzählungen I*, p. 16*. Lively cultural contacts are also reflected by linguistic adstrate or superstrate influence that spread to the rural areas of Central and South Palestine from Transjordan during the Ottoman reign, see, e.g., PALVA, *Classification*, p. 9f., a phenomenon paralleled by the gradual Bedouinization of the Euphrates group of the Mesopotamian qəltu dialects, JASTROW, *Qəltu I*, p. 42f.