OLD AND POSSIBLY NEW PERSPECTIVES ON METRICS AND PROSODY – COULD THERE BE A PLACE FOR METRICAL STRESS, AFTER ALL, IN THE RECITATION OF ARABIC POETRY?

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Abstract: The present paper approaches the issue of metrical stress in the recitation of classical Arabic poetry: it begins with an overview of the opinions expressed on the subject by Western philologists, from the XIXth century, when, under the considerable influence exerted by Graeco-Latin metrics – an influence that left its mark on the treatment of many aspects of the Arabic metrical system, including one as basic as the structure of metrical feet –, there were attempts at arguing in favor of the existence of such a feature and detecting the rules that might govern its distribution within a verse, up until the second half of the XXth century, when these ideas were largely discarded and the purely quantitative nature of the system gained an increasingly widespread acceptance; we also review some positions adopted by Arab philologists, who, while obviously preoccupied with the features granting Arabic poetry its musicality and rhythmicity, have generally stayed away from concepts pertaining to linguistic prosody, even when they have demonstrably come in contact with Western sources and ideas. Finally, based on the evidence that we have been able to gather so far (a survey of our own and a number of recordings available online), we argue that, contrary to the currently prevalent opinion, there are a few contexts where metrical stress can be brought to the fore: in the intervals occupied by the rhyme, if the lexical stress is not in alignment in all the verses, the reciter can artificially bring it into alignment; when poems are chanted rather than plainly recited, it is possible for the chanter to impress on the intervals occupied by the metrical feet the prosodic contour that they would have if they were actual words, with the metrical stress being placed, within these intervals, according to the rules governing the placement of lexical stress.
Keywords: *poetry, metrics, prosody, verse, syllable, syllabic quantity, lexical stress, metrical stress, meter, metrical foot, rhyme.*

The metrical system governing the structure of Arabic classical poetry has been subjected, in Western academia, to a diverse array of inquiries, many of which have been shaped by assumptions often originating in the European poetic traditions of their respective initiators. The absence of syllable as a theoretical concept in the Arabic grammatical tradition notwithstanding[1], the centrality of syllable quantity was acknowledged early on, and this

[1] The syllable as a theoretical concept did not emerge, in premodern eras, in the reflections of Arab grammarians and philologists: *'ahmala l-'ulamā'u l-'arabu dirāsata l-maqāṭi'i wa-'aškālihā wa-'aǧzā'ihā 'ihmālan tāmman*, "Arab scholars completely ignored the study of syllables, their forms and their parts" (Muḫtār 'Umar 1988: 120); it has, however, been adopted, in the modern era, by some specialists in different fields of language studies, including poetic metrics and prosody, as it will be shown in this paper; the term used in contemporary Arabic with the meaning of "syllable", *maqṭa'* (primary, non-specialized meaning: "section", "segment"), was, in fact, used as a specialized term in the metricians' lexicon, but it meant either one of the two types of subunits of the metrical foot, the quantitatively variable subunit known as *sabab* and the quantitatively invariable one known as *watid* (Wright 1996, vol. II 358-359, 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 17; see also note 6); the mere fact that these

alone can hardly be exclusively correlated with European or, more precisely, Graeco-Latin classical influence, because the system can really be accurately described, in the broadest of terms, as being designed so as to engender regulated sequences of short and long syllables[2]. The earlier sources, however, go beyond simply expressing the information provided by Arab authors on the subject through the filter of this concept on account of it being more familiar for a European readership and, thus, more pedagogically advantageous as a minimal metrical unit than the "(moving, *mutaḥarrik*, and quiescent, *sākin*) *ḥarf*", used in this capacity by Arab metricians[3]: they also show a quite marked preference for conjuring up notions belonging to their Graeco-Latin culture on a larger scale, making casual use of the terminology sanctioned by the classical European tradition. A good illustration of the balancing act done by Western philologists in their overviews of Arabic metrics from the early stages of their engagement with the matter is offered by the compendium on prosody coming at the end of William Wright (1830-1889)'s grammar of the Arabic language: the section about meters begins with a paragraph wherein the key Arabic terms relevant for the scansion of a verse are listed, then the meters themselves are exemplified with a series of

subunits are ranked, like syllables, at a level of complexity coming between the minimal one, represented by phonemes, and the relatively complex one, represented by metrical feet (in fact, there is even a type of *sabab*, known as *sabab ḫafīf*, "'light' *sabab*", that consists of a long syllable), can hardly be taken as a hint towards an intuition of the syllable as a concept – George Bohas & Bruno Paoli do recognize some degree of correspondence between the two types of units, but, at the same time, they unequivocally deny the emergence of the syllable as part of the arsenal of theoretical concepts that Arab grammarians operate with: "…la notion de syllabe telle qu'on l'entend couramment, à savoir une unité suprasegmentale composée d'une attaque et d'une rime branchante ou non […] n'existe ni dans l'analyse métrique ni dans l'analyse phonologique des grammairiens arabes; [c]ela ne veut pas dire qu'ils ne disposaient pas d'unités suprasegmentales, mais que celles-ci etaient définies différemment; [à] la place de la syllabe, les métriciens utilisent le *sabab*" (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 141-142). A somewhat more convincing argument in favor of there being an "intuition, if not an explicit theory of syllable structure" relies on terminology, pointing to the primary meanings of the terms *ḥarf* and *ḥaraka*, "limit" and, respectively, "movement" (Bohas et al. 2017: 95); the fact remains, however, that the premodern Arabic linguistic tradition did not operate with the concept of syllable.

[2] Syllable quantities will be symbolized in the metrical notation used in this article as follows: u for short syllables, – for long syllables and u̲ for quantitatively variable syllables.

[3] The minimal unit used in the Arabic linguistic tradition in general and in the Arabic metrical theory in particular is designated by the term *ḥarf*, which can generally label, depending on context, one of the graphemes making up the Arabic alphabet or the phoneme corresponding to it: "[t]he term *ḥarf* (pl. *ḥurūf, 'aḥruf*), 'part, particle, edge, end, boundary' is used in Arabic linguistic terminology to indicate (1) the final segment formed as a result of the linear segmentation of the Arabic word; (2) a component of the prosodic, morphological, and lexical pattern of a word…" (Karabekyan & Yavrumyan 2007: 236); "…les métriciens arabes, et les grammairiens en général, n'ont pas eu recours à la notion de syllable mais se sont plutôt attachés à la consonne (*ḥarf*), laquelle est tantôt mue, vocalisée (*mutaḥarrik*), tantôt inerte ou non-vocalisée (*sākin*)" (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 168); that the segments identified as *ḥarf*s are taken as the most basic building blocks of linguistic expression in ordinary speech as well as in metrically regulated texts becomes readily apparent from the very first lines of an elementary treatise of grammar or prosody: in his commentary on *al-'Āğurrūmiyya*, 'Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān (1816-1886) states that "linguistic expression is the sound containing some of the *ḥurūf hiğā'iyya*", i.e. the discrete sounds whose graphic counterparts are listed in the alphabet (*al-lafẓu huwa ṣ-ṣawtu l-muštamilu 'alā ba'ḍi l-ḥurūfi l-hiğā'iyyati* – Daḥlān 2014: 14), and in a modern handbook of poetic metrics, the definition of *wazn*, here "meter", is formulated as follows: *waznu l-bayti huwa silsilatu s-sawākini wa-l-mutaḥarrikāti l-mustantağatu minhu, muğazza'atan 'ilā mustawayātin muḫtalifatin mina l-mukawwināti*, "the meter of a verse is the series of quiescent and moving [*ḥarf*s] that can be abstracted from it, divided into different levels of constituents" (Ḥarakāt 1998: 7). Given the complexity of the concept, we will use the Arabic term in this paper.

verses that one usually finds in Arabic treatises (a mixture of hemistichs out of which some are taken from preexistent verses composed in the respective meters, some are created specifically for the purpose of exemplifying them and contain references to their names, some are Qur'anic passages that happen to reflect them and, finally, some are made up of the dummy words containing the consonants *f*, *ʿ* and *l* that are typically used for representing metrical feet); next, the sixteen meters[4] are organized into five groups, according to what he considers to be their basic metrical configuration: iambic, antispastic, amphibrachic, anapaestic and ionic (Wright 1997: 358-368). It is the selection of these bases and the manner in which they are projected onto the meters belonging to their respective groups that are particularly revealing of the Graeco-Latin background shaping Wright's understanding of Arabic metrics. For instance, the metrical foot, thrice repeated in a hemistich, of the *rağaz*, the first meter of the "iambic" group, whose structure is the most easily pliable so as to fit the iambic character ascribed to it, is said to be a diiamb, a foot that consists of two iambs, u – u –. However, if we look at the basic representation of the foot in strictly ḫalīlian terms, we can see that it does not completely coincide with a diiamb: the foot is, in fact, mnemotechnically rendered as *mustafʿilun*, which means that its primary (or "ideal"/"theoretical" – Stoetzer 1998: 622) syllabic structure is – – u – (or, in Western terms, it contains a spondee and a iamb)[5]. The purely iambic form, embodied by the diiamb, is achieved by selecting one of the possible actualizations of the foot, which is realized, in this system, by performing on the first of the two "light" (*ḫafīf*) *sabab*s coming before the *watid*[6], a *ziḥāf*[7] that consists in dropping its final *ḥarf* (which is

[4] For lists and descriptions of the sixteen meters of the ḫalīlian tradition (fifteen of which are reputedly identified as such by the philologist al-Ḫalīl b. 'Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (*c*. 100/718-175/791) himself, the one who is credited with the establishment of poetic prosody as a discipline, whereas the sixteenth, the *mutadārik*/*mutadārak*, is said to be added by his successor and Sībawayhi's disciple, al-'Aḫfaš al-'Akbar (d. 825~835) – Weil 1913: 464-465, Stoetzer 1998: 619), see Bohas & Paoli 1997: 19, 59-128 (where a Western perspective that is detached from the Graeco-Latin heritage can be found), and 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 35-206, Fāḫūrī 1987: 19-119 and Ḥarakāt 1998: 54-154 (where one can find a traditional Arab perspective).

[5] The maximally extended forms of the metrical feet, wherein the light *sabab*s, which are the most frequent, are realized as long syllables, are taken to be their basic, primary forms: "[t]he level of representation of the metre noted by al-Xalīl is only made up of *watid* and long syllables (except as regards circle 2 [i.e. the circle in which the ḫalīlian system includes the two meters containing heavy *sabab*s, the *wāfir* and the *kāmil*])" – Bohas et al. 2017: 143 (see also note 6); this is also reflected in the terms used to qualify these forms in Arabic handbooks and treatises: *namūḏaǧī*, "exemplary" (Ḥarakāt 1998: 24), *ṣaḥīḥ*, "complete", *sālim*, "sound"/"integral" (Fāḫūrī 1987: 120).

[6] The quantitatively variable and (mostly) invariable parts of a metrical foot are known as *sabab* (non-specialized meaning: "rope") and, respectively, *watid* (non-specialized meaning: "peg") – Ḥarakāt 1998: 16; the type of *sabab* known as "light" (*ḫafīf*), a long syllable (or, in traditional Arabic terms, a moving *ḥarf* followed by a quiescent one – a long vowel is analyzed in the Arabic grammatical tradition as what would represent, in contemporary Western terms, a sequence covering a vowel and a glide of the same quality (in the case of *a*, the "glide" is an "'alif", most likely interpretable as a lenited glottal stop): *ā = a'*, *ī = iy*, *ū = uw* –, which means that there is no distinction between the sequences cvc, i.e. a long closed syllable, and cv̄, i.e. a long open syllable, the latter being equated with the former – Weil 1913: 463, Bohas & Paoli 1997: 142, Bohas et al. 2017: 98-99), is found in all the meters, and the type known as "heavy" (*ṯaqīl*), a sequence of two short syllables (or of two moving *ḥarf*s), is only found in two (the *kāmil* and the *wāfir*); the *watid* is a sequence of two syllables of different quantities arranged in either order, the most frequent type of *watid* being the one where the short syllable comes first ('Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 17-22, Fāḫūrī 1987: 14-16, Ḥarakāt 1998: 19-20, Bohas et al. 2017: 143).

[7] The *ziḥāf* is an operation that can be performed on the *sabab*s, the variable parts of a foot, and leads to their contraction, either by dropping the quiescent *ḥarf* coming at the end of a light *sabab* (which has the

also the second *ḥarf* of the foot, or the *s* in *mustafʿilun*), an operation known as *ḫabn* (non-specialized meaning: "folding", "contracting")[8]. It is through this operation that the foot becomes a "diiamb" (symbolized by the form *mutafʿilun*). We can thus clearly see that, were it not for the strong influence of Graeco-Latin metrics, there would be no particular reason why Wright (or any other scholar having a similar take on the issue) should choose, of all the possible actualizations of this foot, the one that happens to have this structure (by looking at this case in isolation, one might be left with the impression that perhaps it is the form of the *watid* that has offered an incentive for going in this direction and regularizing the structure of the whole foot by choosing a form of the variable part of the foot identical with it, but it is just a coincidence, because a look at all the basic forms will quickly make it clear that the only criterion for selecting one particular actualization of a foot as the basic configuration of a group of meters is its coincidence with a foot sanctioned by the Graeco-Latin tradition: the antispast, u – – u, for instance, the basis of the second group, in which only one meter, the *hazağ*, is included – Wright 1997: 363, is an actualization of the foot *mafāʿīlun*, u – – –, whose *watid* comes at the beginning and is followed by two variable syllables representing the light *sabab*s, the second one of which is realized here as short, and the same kind of selection of actualizations that conveniently match Graeco-Latin meters is transparent in the case of all the other bases). Wright mentions what he takes as alternative actualizations of the diiamb together with its basic form in the case of the *rağaz* – "the basis is u – u – (diiamb), which may be varied in one or two places by the substitution of – – u – or – u u –, and more rarely u u u – (ibidem: 362)" –, and a synthesis of all the information he provides about this meter and the others, together with the adoption of the syllable as a minimal unit, strongly suggests that Wright, and any other philologist sharing his view, already had at their disposal the primary data and theoretical tools necessary for reaching the conclusion that, in those portions of the feet that

effect of shortening the long syllable that the light *sabab*, in its maximal and theoretically original actualization, represents – cvc > cv) or by stripping the moving *ḥarf* coming at the end of a heavy *sabab* of its vowel (which entails the substitution of two short syllables with a single long one – cvcv > cvc); the other type of operation that can modify a foot is named *ʿilla* (primary meaning: "illness"), and there are a few differences that set the two operations apart: the *ʿilla* generally modifies the last foot of a hemistich, unlike the *ziḥāf*, that can modify any foot, it can alter the *watid*, the part of the foot that is invariable in the rest of the hemistich, and it must, in principle, be constantly present, in the same position, in all the verses of a composition, a condition that the *ziḥāf* does not have to fulfill (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 155-162, Fāḫūrī 1987: 120-126, Ḥarakāt 1998: 34-45); Bohas & Paoli name the first operation *ziḥāfa*, perhaps following Weil (cf. Weil 1913: 464); however, we have not been able to find this form of the term in any Arabic or other Western source; we can only guess that it is an erroneous back-formation from the plural *ziḥāfāt*, which does appear quite often, perhaps more so than the singular sometimes, in texts theorizing about the subject (as an example, in the chapter on metrics of the book *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*, only the plural *ziḥāfāt* is used – Bohas et al. 2017: 145-148); the term is, in fact, a verbal noun corresponding to the verb *zāḥafa* (primary meaning: "to draw near"; Weil translates the noun as "relaxation" – Weil 1913: 464, while Stoetzer tentatively translates it as "dragging gait" – Stoetzer 1998: 622).

[8] Each *ziḥāf* has a distinctive name, according to the position of the affected *ḥarf* within the foot (Fāḫūrī 1987: 121-123, Bohas & Paoli 1997: 156-158, Bohas et al. 2017: 145-147); there are contemporary Arab reference works that do away with listing these terms and, while acknowledging their existence, deem it possible to account for the variations associated with the *ziḥāf* just by relying on its general definition and properties (cf. Ḥarakāt 1998: 40).

are occupied by light *sabab*s, long and short syllables alternate freely[9] (with some restrictions in specific cases that do not invalidate the general principle – Bohas & Paoli 1997: 56-58), and in the intervals occupied by heavy *sabab*s the free alternation occurs between a sequence of two short syllables and a long syllable[10]. By placing all variations at the same level, such a perspective has the capacity to delegitimize the idea of there being a certain basic or primary form of the foot, in regard to which all the others are supposed to be particular actualizations, and thus to render the issue of identifying such a form pretty much moot and inconsequential, at least for purely practical purposes[11]. If, instead of taking such a step, Wright cast aside the basic forms of the feet as they are posited by the Arabic tradition only to replace them with other forms, that happen to coincide with Graeco-Latin meters, it is in large part due to the great normative force of the models offered by European classical studies in this field of research.

This situation, telling as it is for how a whole era[12] witnessed, in the study of Arabic poetic metrics in Europe, the influence of the locally authoritative poetic tradition, is not

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[9] Bohas & Paoli (1997: 20) assign to the 1920s and 1930s the first sources that reflect the adoption, in Western academia, of the view that the feet of Arabic meters contain positions that can be occupied by either long or short syllables.

[10] Bohas & Paoli (1997: 53-54, 75-80, 106-108) refer to this particular kind of alternation by using the term "diaeresis" ("diérèse", from Gr. *diaíresis*, lit. "taking apart", "division"); the choice of terms here is quite interesting, because it does not reflect very faithfully their general theoretical stance, which does not intentionally favor one actualization over the other: the explanation they provide for the conventional notation of the position where such an alternation is allowed, a capital X, is "syllabe variable pouvant être réalisée comme deux brèves [vv] ou une longue [–]" (p. 20), a formula that reflects more or less the idea of free alternation; at the same time, the term "diaeresis" seems to suggest that the process referred to here is not as much an alternation as it is a unidirectional operation, in which one long syllable is "taken apart", "divided" into two separate, short syllables, and thus the long syllable implicitly becomes the basis; if this were so, it would be a departure from the Arabic traditional theory, which grants this status to the sequence of two short syllables (see note 7), but only inasmuch as it would substitute one basis for the other.

[11] The attachment to the idea of identifying basic forms that coincide with Graeco-Latin meters might seem all the more striking if one thinks that circumventing these bases in favor of assuming the existence of positions that can be occupied by syllables of either quantity, like later theoreticians have done, would not have necessitated a complete detachment from the frame of Graeco-Latin theory, which does operate with the concept of "anceps", defined as a "space for either one short or one long syllable in a metrical unit" (Halporn et al. 1963: 121), and whose use could be extended so as simply label as anceps all those positions where syllables of either quantity can be placed. This is, in fact, not to be wondered at, because this concept was indeed involved already in the explanations of Heinrich Ewald, the author who has, very early on, so thoroughly reshaped the description of Arabic meters along the lines of the Graeco-Latin tradition that he has been deemed worthy of "tak[ing] equal rank to al-Khalil" (Weil 1913: 466): "sunt autem in his pedibus syllabae, quae quo valore ponantur poetarum relictum est arbitrio, *ancipites* vulgo dictae", "there are however in these feet syllables, commonly called *anceps*, that have been left at the poets' discretion as to the value with which they should be placed" (Ewald 1825: 24); and yet it did not suggest to the author the slightest departure from systematically using Graeco-Latin terms, concepts and, most importantly, meters in describing the Arabic metric system.

[12] The period when the Graeco-Latin influence was prevalent in descriptions of the Arabic metrical system lasted from the 1820s to the 1960s (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 163); the interactions between the authors that wrote on the subject are quite complex, ranging from acknowledged influences to disapprovals and recurrent reassessments (the article "'Arūḍ" by Gotthold Weil in *The Islamic Encyclopedia* (1913) provides an account of the disputes going on up until its publication and, at the same time, offers the author's own contribution as an active participant in the debate); the grip of the Graeco-Latin tradition

necessarily reflective of the most impactful ways in which inputs from different traditions and theories have been grafted on the understanding of the formal features of Arabic poetry. After all, the fact that both systems share the core feature of relying, either directly or convertibly, on syllable quantity neutralizes the practical consequences of applying the theoretical frame of one to the other in settling an issue such as what the primary forms of the feet, from which their variations are presumedly derived, might be. These projections become more conspicuous and more heavily felt when they involve aspects that have a direct bearing on a most practical corollary of any theory about Arabic versification, namely on how Arabic poetry is actually supposed to be recited. The formal features that tend to be impacted in such situations are suprasegmental and thus the field that generally covers them is prosody, provided that the term be associated here not with the meaning ascribed to it in poetics, where it can sometimes be used interchangeably with "metrics", but with the meaning it carries in linguistics (which is also the one it is meant to carry in the title of this paper). The Western philologists' conjectures about the prosodic specificities of Arabic verse were stimulated in great part by the absence of references to them in the works of Arab metricians, a fact that is unsurprisingly concordant with a lack of preoccupation with prosody in the Arabic linguistic tradition in general (with one notable exception, the strict regulations to which the recitation of the Qur'an is subjected in accordance with a tradition passed down both orally and in writing – Bohas et al. 2017: 96-97). Stress, the prosodic feature that is almost by default approached in any contemporary general reference work on a given language, is not conceptualized by premodern Arab linguists[13] (there is an unmistakably coherent picture emerging from the absence of both syllable and stress from the array of concepts that the Arabic linguistic tradition operates with, since they are both situated at the same level of complexity in a phonological system, the stress of a word being assigned to one of its syllables – cf. Kager 2007: 344)[14]. All this was perceived by the earliest Western authors as an oversight that needed to be compensated, and the diversity of the hypotheses that they came up with speaks for their personal backgrounds and preferences and, on a wider scope, for the tendencies prevalent at different stages in their research area. The existence, in the prosody of Arabic poetry, of metrical stress (also known, in classical terminology, as ictus[15] –

and its premises was progressively loosened as time went by, and Wright's classification of meters can itself function as an example of this evolution, being, as he himself acknowledges, "adopted" from Ewald (Wright 1997: 361) and, at the same time, closer, at least in Bohas & Paoli's view (Bohas & Paoli 1997: 171), to the Arabic theory.

13 *'ahmala l-'ulamā'u l-'arabu dirāsata n-nabri 'ihmālan tāmman, wa-li-hāḏā fa-'innanā lā nastaṭī'u 'an natabayyana mawāḍi'a n-nabri fi l-'uṣūri l-'islāmiyyati l-'ūlā*, "Arab scholars completely neglected the study of stress, which is why we cannot identify the positions of the stress in the earliest ages of Islam" (Muḫtār 'Umar 1988: 120).

14 "It is well known that the Arabic linguistic tradition, beginning by Sībawayhi, has ignored the question of lexical stress, perhaps because the same tradition does not even seem to have worked on the concept of syllable" (Mion 2011: 344).

15 The existence of ictus has been a matter of debate in European classical poetics as well, as it is stated in the following definition: "[ictus is a]n emphasis in pronunciation which, as some modern metricians believe, is to be placed above the arsis (or on the first syllable of the arsis) of every metron or foot; e.g., in a dactyl the ictus is regarded as falling upon the first syllable, and in an iamb upon the second syllable; [w]hether Greek and Latin poetry actually had ictus or not is still controversial (Halporn et al. 1963: 125); for the meanings of "arsis" (and "thesis"), see note 16.

primary meaning in Latin: "hit", "blow"), was often the focal point of the debates, with the first generations of interested Arabists practically taking for granted the idea that the recitation of Arabic poetry must have been punctuated by a regularly distributed beat.

One step in this direction was taken by Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875), who relied on the principle that the cadence of the verse was marked by arsis (from Gr. *ársis*, primary meaning: "lifting", "raising") and thesis (from Gr. *thésis*, primary meaning: "placing", "setting", "putting (down)")[16], and his definition of "rhythm", which is equated with "measure" (Lat. *numerus*, i.e. "cadence" in musical terms or "metrical foot" in poetical terms), centers around these concepts: "rythmum (sic) (quem Latini numerum dixere) constat aequabili arseos et theseos vicissitudine contineri", "it is well known that rhythm (which the Latins have called 'measure') consists of a uniform alternation of the *arsis* and the *thesis*" (Ewald 1825: 19). The distribution of these two prosodic features was supposedly conditioned by syllable quantity: "[h]abetque hoc Arabum poesis non tam singulare (idem enim ab initio Graecis fuit), quam constans ubique et immutatum, ut sicut rei indoles suadet, arsis syllabis longis insigniatur, thesis brevibus", "and the poetry of the Arabs has this [property] which is not so much unique (for the Greeks had it from the beginning) as it is pervasive and invariable, that, as the very nature of the phenomenon requires, the arsis be assigned to (lit. "marked by") long syllables and the thesis to short ones" (ibidem: 20). It is not entirely clear how the arsis is supposed to be phonetically realized in Ewald's mind: some of the terms that he uses (like the verbs "tollo", "to raise", "surgo", "to rise") seem to suggest a higher pitch, but terms like the noun "nisus", "pressure", or the adjective "remissior", "more relaxed", used to describe the realization of the thesis, on the other hand, make it hard to entirely rule out an increase in volume, i.e. a stress (or dynamic) accent, whereas an adjective like "elatior", the comparative of "elatus", which mostly means "elevated", but is, nevertheless, the passive participle of the verb "effero", whose primary meaning is "to bring forth", leaves some room for ambivalence; it is, of course, possible (and perhaps safer) to altogether abstain from projecting such a

[16] This pair of concepts initially emerged in the field of music and was subsequently taken over by poetics as well; the following passage reflects the "traditional" view on the primary meanings of the corresponding terms and their semantic evolution: "[t]hese terms refer originally to the 'raising' and 'lowering' respectively of the foot in Greek dancing and beating rhythm; [l]ate Roman metricians later transferred the terms to the raising and lowering of the voice; [s]cholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries called *arsis* that part of the metron or foot which is normally occupied by long elements and thesis the part normally occupied by short elements; [t]hus, a dactyl was described as a 'falling' rhythm, because in it the arsis precedes the thesis" (Halporn et al. 1963: 122); a more recent study of both Greek and Latin sources has reached the conclusion that, in the field of music and musical rhythmics, these terms did not exclusively designate, initially, the "raising" and, respectively, "lowering" of the foot in dancing (which would make the thesis the marked element in a sequence reuniting the two) – and the marked element was not signaled by means of dynamic accentuation –, but denoted, in broader physical terms, a general "upward motion" (Lynch 2016: 496), and, respectively, "stillness" (ibidem: 500) and were realized, phonetically, as a high and, respectively, low pitch, with the arsis being the marked element (ibidem: 499-501); as for the scansion of Latin verse, which was accompanied by audible and physical signals mostly in didactical contexts, it indeed entailed realizing the arsis, the marked element, "with a raise in the voice's sound" (ibidem: 510), but the arsis and the thesis had come to occupy invariable positions within a foot, with the arsis marking the foot's beginning and the thesis coming at the end (ibidem: 511-512); Ewald clearly reflects, by connecting the distribution of arsis and thesis with syllable quantity, the understanding of these notions that was prevalent in his days.

distinction on his text. The interval allotted to the arsis is marked by an ictus, an idea reflected by his description of the iamb (a foot that he treats at this stage as the fundamental unit of Arabic metrics, a position which he later backs down from – Weil 1913: 466) as being made up of "two syllables, the latter of which, being marked by the ictus, is long, and the former, placed by its side, is pronounced faster" ("syllabae duae, quarum posterior quia ictu insignitur, longa est, prior huic opposita celerius pronunciatur" – Ewald 1825: 21). The definition of rhythm clearly states that the arsis and the thesis are supposed to alternate, which means that the sequences where the conditions for this alternation are not met from his perspective (more exactly, where two or more long syllables or three short syllables are found side by side) pose a problem that needs to be addressed. The solution is found in relativizing the power of the arsis when two long syllables coexist in the same foot as a general principle, even if they are not contiguous, by postulating that "in a foot containing two long syllables, nature itself requires that one or the other be less elevated by the power of the arsis" ("in pede duas syllabas longas complectente hoc ipsa natura fer[t], ut alterutra arseos valore minus tollatur" – ibidem: 25); conversely, in the rather rare situations where three short syllables are in immediate succession, the first one qualifies for being marked with an arsis, because it is automatically "prolonged" ("producitur"), also by virtue of the very "nature" of things, "which does not allow three syllables, all initially short, to be brought together" ("quae tres syllabas ab initio omnes breves legi non sinit" – ibidem: 26). This is when the quantitative variability of syllables in certain positions, which does not escape Ewald (see note 11), comes in handy, because he takes this variability as a proof that in those positions the arsis can be converted into a (quasi-)thesis and, more rarely, the thesis can be promoted to the status of an arsis (ibidem: 24-29).

Music was even more overtly embraced as a source of inspiration for filling the void left by the absence of explicit references to linguistic prosody in traditional Arabic poetics by Stanislas Guyard (1846-1884), who constantly uses musical notation for explaining what he thinks is the prosodic contour of the metrically regulated sequences he subjects to his analysis. Already at this early stage he bemoans the excessive reliance of his predecessors on Western classical metrics (Guyard 1877: 2) and, establishing, as a premise for his theory, the existence of a close connection between music and linguistic prosody (ibidem: 4-5), he adopts a maximally rigorist view on what qualifies for regularity and symmetry, taking the uneven dimensions of the feet in some of the meters or the quantitatively variable syllables in some positions as proof that the traditional, either Arab or Western, sources cannot convincingly claim that the system as they present it is regular and, hence, musical[17] (ibidem 1877: 37-40). The fundamental concepts that he operates with are the equivalents of Ewald's arsis and thesis, the "downbeat", "temps fort", and the "upbeat", "temps faible", that coexist within a musical bar, or measure, and he assumes that words are to be treated, from a rhythmical point of view, as sequences equally divided

[17] "Les métriciens arabes ont beau nous dire que la métrique et la musique sont sœurs, que Khalîl découvrit les lois de la versification en entendant à Baṣrah le marteau d'un forgeron tomber en cadence sur l'enclume, on se prend à croire qu'ils ont rêvé tout cela quand on jette seulement les yeux sur les schémas transcrits à l'européenne d'un *Radjaz*, d'un *Ṭawîl* ou de tout autre mètre. Les mots *musique, versification* éveillent dans l'esprit certaines notions de régularité, d'ordre sévère, qui paraissent singulièrement violées dans la prosodie arabe" (Guyard 1877: 37-38).

between them (ibidem: 21-25), so that the rhythm of a word is "le rapport de quantité établi entre ses syllabes par le temps fort et le temps faible" (ibidem: 25; at this point, it is worth mentioning that he does not single out languages that have, like Arabic, phonological and phonotactical systems relying on vowel and, respectively, syllable quantity, but sketches a unified theory of rhythm and prosody that is supposedly appliable to any language, the examples adduced in the introductory chapter being taken from a number of languages, including French). The ictus marks the interval occupied by the "temps fort" (ibidem: 17); it is realized as a stress accent (ibidem: 15) – unlike Ewald, Guyard clearly distinguishes between pitch accent and stress accent (ibidem: 14-15) –, and the interval ascribed to a "temps fort" is a long syllable[18] (ibidem: 17). His skepticism towards the accuracy of both Arab and Western descriptions of the system does not extend to the system itself, which he does believe is characterized by a regularity that must have been aurally perceived by the Arabs, who did not have the completely suitable theoretical tools for describing it (ibidem: 40-41). One element of their description is, however, taken as a foundation for his argumentation and a reflection of some of their intuitions: the division of the verse into feet, which were, in turn, represented by "*mots* empruntés à la technique grammaticale" (ibidem: 41), a fact that he takes as proof that the verse was perceived as "un groupe de complexes, isolés les uns des autres" (ibidem: 42). This division of the verse into groups of syllables whose representation is, in the metricians' convention, similar to that of words in the general grammatical tradition suggests to Guyard that metrical feet must share with ordinary words rhythmical and prosodic features that make them approachable as if they were, themselves, actual words (ibidem: 43-44). This, in turn, justifies, for him, taking the basic forms of the feet (which he names "pieds primitifs" – ibidem: p. 44) as they are envisioned by the Arabic metrical theory (a sign of increased receptiveness, Guyard's declared skepticism notwithstanding, to the premises of Arab theorists, if we remember that Ewald and Wright do not accept these forms at face value) and looking at them through the filter provided by the rules that should apply to words. Much like Ewald, he assumes that the

[18] Long syllables are, in fact, called by Guyard not only "longues", but also "fortes", and his choice of terms reflects his specific takes on articulatory phonetics and phonotactics: in consonance with his definition of rhythm as the quantitative ratio established between syllables by the two beats, syllable length becomes rather a consequence than a cause of a syllable falling within the interval allotted to either a "temps fort" or a "temps faible" (hence the metonymical transfer of the adjectives "fort, -e" and "faible" from the beats to the syllables; he also argues that it is under the impact of the ictus, a stress accent, which, unlike the pitch accent, influences the whole syllable, that a syllable is lengthened – Guyard 1877: 18-19; the description of the iamb by Ewald, quoted above, suggests, in less elaborate terms, a similar point of view); when he talks specifically about Arabic meters, he also describes long syllables as "composées", a term used as an alternative to "fermées" (ibidem: 11), in a referral to the Arabic grammatical tradition, which, adopting the *ḥarf* as a minimal phonological unit, invariably sees, in a long syllable, a sequence covering a moving *ḥarf* and a quiescent one (ibidem: 45; see also note 6), a perspective which, while not identical to that of Guyard, is not very far off from it either, as he states, in the introductory chapter, that consonants are, in principle, always followed "d'une voyelle ou d'une résonnance quelconque" and the emission of vowels is preceded and accompanied by a "very light" ("très léger") glide of the same quality (for *i* and *u*) and an "aspiration gutturale" for *a*, the logical outcome of these premises being that any given word can be analyzed as a series of "articulations", each of which consists of a consonant followed by a vowel, and it is these "articulations" that ought to be recognized as actual syllables (ibidem: pp. 7-11).

two beats must alternate (ibidem: 35, 44) and, also in the same vein, that in more extended, polysyllabic words, it is to be assumed that there are more than one "temps fort", but only one of them is the "dominant" one, the other one(s) being "sous-fort" (ibidem: 26, 44). The situations that seem to challenge the alternation principle are addressed by assuming the following: whenever there are three contiguous "temps forts", either within the same foot or straddling the boundary separating two feet, the one in the middle is not really strong, and he finds in the permutations and quantitative variations allowed by the system arguments supporting this assumption (ibidem: 46-47); when only two "temps forts" occur in contiguity, their sequence is expanded by inserting between them a pause functioning as a "temps faible", so that the alternation between beats is secured and, at the same time, every one of the "primitive" feet ends up preserving two "temps forts" (ibidem: 48-51). As for the issue of identifying the dominant "temps fort" of a foot, he shows his preference for the first one, resorting, once more, to the analogy with words, wherein he argues that radicals usually come first and desinences and suffixes come second (ibidem: 61-62).

Finally, in what amounts to yet another proof of increasing openness towards solutions suggested by the Arabic theoretical system itself, Gotthold Weil (1882-1960) incorporates, besides the Arab metricians' segmentation of the verse into feet, an additional element of their theory, namely the distinction between *watid*, the invariable part of the foot, and *sabab*, the variable part (see note 6), into the data he uses in developing his own hypothesis about what might determine the prosodic contour of an Arabic verse. He does agree with the previously mentioned authors on the Arabic metrical system being both quantitative and accentual and on there being an ictus, the central tenet of his theory being that the ictus falls on the *watid*. The arguments brought forth for supporting this idea share with Guyard's reasoning their reliance on an analogy with actual words: the two *sabab*s, corresponding to one long or two short syllables, have the syllabic structure of proclitics or enclitics, that do not carry a stress of their own in the prosody of ordinary speech, whereas the two *watid*s, corresponding to a short syllable followed by a long one and vice versa, have the syllabic structure of words or phonetic sequences that do have, in Weil's view, a stress of their own (Weil 1958 apud Bohas & Paoli 1997: 177-179).

This type of conjecturing, that reflects expectations for there being a specific prosodic system distinguishing the recitation of Arabic poetry from ordinary speech, has been left aside, for the most part, in later works on the subject, and there is now a quasi-consensus about the exclusively quantitative nature of Arabic poetry – Dmitry Frolov, while giving a nod of acknowledgement to the efforts made by those who tried to detect such a system, ultimately dismisses them, stating that "in spite of their ingenious arguments, their theories did not hold; [a]t the end of the 20th century, several scholars independently and almost simultaneously reaffirmed the quantitative character of Arabic metrics" (Frolov 2007: 208). A rebuttal of both Guyard and Weil is offered by Georges Bohas and Bruno Paoli: Guyard's thesis that all feet have two "temps forts", the first of which is always the dominant one, is seen as reductionistic and too restrictive and, moreover, the bidirectional equivalence between words and feet has the inconvenient effect of projecting on words an unnatural stressing pattern, one that is not in agreement with the actual rules governing the placement of stress in Classical Arabic (Bohas & Paoli 1997:

176-177); as for Weil's thesis, it is rejected by questioning the clitic nature of some of his examples, by pointing to the existence of words that contradict his assumptions about what constitutes, in Arabic, a stressed or unstressed word and, in more general terms, by criticizing an insufficient distinction between rhythm and meter (ibidem: 179-180).

A somewhat more sympathetic and accommodating position is expressed by Georges Bohas, Jean-Patrick Guillaume and Djamel Eddine Kouloughli, who, drawing an analogy with the disciplines that regulate the recitation and chanting of the Qur'an, which rely, to a great extent, on an orally transmitted expertise, leave some room for the possibility of finding illuminating data on the matter, pinning their hopes on the existence of an oral "tradition of declaiming poetry" that could provide such data:

"Arabic metrics did not entail the notion of metrical stress (*ictus*). That has distressed a lot of people. Some have concluded, prematurely, that stress played no part in Arabic metrics; others have attempted to find the notion of *ictus* somewhere in the circles and, Heaven knows, at least if we have understood anything, it does not appear there! If the grammarians did not speak about stress, and the metricians did not speak about *ictus*, that need not distress us: these suprasegmental phenomena have been transmitted by oral tradition and it is by referring to it that we can speak about them. Let us compare the metrics with a field in which the oral tradition plays a big part: what would we know of the *tartīl* of the Qur'ān if we had only the reading marks of the Qur'ānic text at our disposal? Or what would we know of the *tajwīd* if we only had specialized treatises? Similarly, there is a tradition of declaiming poetry, and it is by analyzing the suprasegmental phenomena within that framework that we can hope to progress, while, of course, correlating our analysis with the collection of facts which we know, but without asking the Arab grammarians and metricians to treat points which did not fall within their province; that would be as absurd as to reproach specialists of the *naḥw* for not treating figures of speech, when this field belonged to the rhetoricians" (Bohas et al. 2017: 150-151).

This fluctuation is, understandably, not to be found in the writings of Arab philologists, largely because, as we have mentioned before, linguistic prosody was not developed as a discipline in the Arabic linguistic tradition and, therefore, stress and its distribution, either in ordinary speech or in poetry, did not emerge as an object of preoccupation for them. This state of affairs has largely been carrying over into the modern era, with Arab authors describing the Arabic metrical system in a way that closely reflects the traditional and, specifically, ḫalīlian theoretical mindset: we can find in their works, for instance, descriptions of the meters based on the *ḥarf* as a minimal unit (cf. Ḥarakāt 1998: passim, 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: passim) or the grouping of meters into circles, according to the classification system attributed to al-Ḫalīl[19] (cf. 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 315-327). This is not to say that the interest for the acoustic characteristics of recitation and its aesthetic qualities are absent from the minds of Arab authors. On the contrary, the very title of two of the books used for the writing of this paper (*Mūsīqā š-ši'r al-'arabī – The* Music *of Arabic Poetry*) bears witness to such an interest, and one can find, in this kind of works,

[19] "The original classification of meters incorporated in the *'arūḍ* theory by its author is that of the circles, which are often called 'mysterious'. […] The circle represents the ordered sequence of the *'awtād* and the *'asbāb* […], which has neither a beginning nor an end, and which generates different meters according to the point of departure" (Frolov 2007: 214).

chapters and passages dedicated to the description of those features that are seen as ingredients contributing to the "musicality" and "rhythmicity" of poetic texts. In one of the books bearing the aforementioned title, the one written by Maḥmūd Fāḫūrī, there is a chapter titled *Mūsīqā š-ši'r al-'arabī fī l-qaṣīda at-taqlīdiyya* ("The Music of Arabic Poetry in the Traditional *Qaṣīda*"), wherein we can find an overview of the metrical system and the general features of Arabic poetry aimed at highlighting those elements that contribute to the elevation of a poetic text to a level warranting the listener's enjoyment and appreciation. There are, in the author's view, two opposing overarching qualities that must coexist and balance each other in a poem, regularity and variation. Among the elements providing regularity there are rhythm, *'iqā'* (defined as *tawālī l-ḥarakāti wa-s-sakanāti 'alā naḥwin muntaẓimin* – Fāḫūrī 1987: 164, "the succession of movements and quiescences in a regular manner"), and meter, *wazn* (defined as *maǧmū'u t-taf'īlāti llatī yata'allafu minhā l-baytu* – ibidem: 165, "the totality of the feet that the verse is made of")[20]. These elements need to be balanced by those that provide variation: the first one is an integral part of the metrical system itself, and is represented by the variations of metrical feet obtained by means of the processes known as *ziḥāfāt* and *'ilal* (ibidem: 167-168; see note 7); the second one is the variation of the words' sounds (in the examples discussed by Fāḫūrī a special prominence is given to the distribution of long and short vowels in a way that matches the mood that the verses in question are meant to convey – ibidem: 168-169); the third element is *'inšād*, "declamation", which is explained as "the reading of poetry in accordance with what is required by the meaning" (*qirā'atu š-ši'ri 'alā ḥasabi mā yataṭallabuhū l-ma'nā* – ibidem: 171), and the detailed presentation of what it consists of is of particular interest, because it is clear that what the author has in mind falls well within the scope of linguistic prosody: *wa-l-'inšādu yaqtaḍī ḍ-ḍaġṭa 'alā ba'ḍi l-maqāṭi'i wa-l-kalimāti fī ḫilāli l-bayti, wa-ṭūla ṣ-ṣawti fī ba'ḍi l-kalimāti, wa-qiṣarahū fī l-'uḫrā, wa-'uluwwa ṣ-ṣawti 'awi nḫifāḍahū; wa-kullu ḏālika ya'tamidu 'alā fahmi ma'ānī l-'abyāti, wa-ṣilatihā bi-nafsi ṣāḥibihā…* (ibidem: 172), "declamation requires pressure upon some sections[21] and words

[20] Given that feet are, themselves, made up of relatively regular sequences of moving and quiescent *ḥarf*s according to the Arabic metrical theory, we can see how, even if the definition of rhythm, taken in its literality, seems to place more of an emphasis on the distribution of vowels (which does not amount to much in terms of specificity or distinctiveness, because a formula like *ḥarakāt wa-sakanāt* can easily be interpreted as just a metonymy for *mutaḥarrikāt wa-sawākin*, "moving and quiescent (*ḥarf*s)"), the distinction between rhythm and meter, in the absence of other elements (such as those pertaining to linguistic prosody), leaves quite a lot to be desired. This relative closeness between the two concepts might hearken back to the premodern era, when *'īqā'*, "rhythm", emerged as the equivalent, in the field of music, of what *wazn*, "meter", or *'arūḍ*, "metrical system", represented in the field of poetry, as musicians took inspiration from the metrical system of poetry in quantifying the units they were operating with (al-Maqdūd 2019: 123-124), the difference between the two being that rhythm deals with sound in general, while meter operates with the material provided by language (ibidem: 128); in some of the earliest lexicographic sources there is no mention of *'īqā'* as a specialized term related to music, while in others its definition is rather vague; its meaning may be related to the meaning of the verbal nouns *waq'*, "the audible impact of a strike" and/or *tawqī'*, "falling ununiformly on the ground (in reference to rain)" (ibidem: 125-126); in the premodern era, the term was not used, in general, in relation to poetry, or in the works of literary critics (ibidem: 127-131).

[21] It is not entirely clear what is meant by *maqāṭi'* in this context – Fāḫūrī does not use the concept of "syllable", currently designated with the term *maqṭa'* (see note 1), in explaining how the metrical system works, but in this context the term's association with this meaning cannot be completely ruled

inside the verse, the length of the sound in some words, its shortness in others, the height of the sound or its lowness; all this relies on understanding the meanings of the verses and their connection with their author's soul…". The terms *ḍaġṭ*, "pressure" *'uluww*, "height", *inḫifāḍ*, "lowness" suggest that, in strictly physical and acoustic terms, Fāḫūrī might very well be talking, among other things, about stress and pitch accent, but the wider context framing this remark clearly indicates that they are not to be taken as signifying lexical or metrical stress: first of all, the very fact that *'inšād* is listed among the elements providing variation means that it cannot include metrical stress, because this feature, whenever it is found, does not mitigate regularity but, on the contrary, enhances it; nor can it include lexical stress, because the unit of meaning whose interpretation must lie at the basis of the reader's performance is the verse, therefore the "pressures" and "heights" involved in reciting cannot be conditioned by lexical units, but refer instead to modulations of the voice that are dictated, first and foremost, by the reciter's own perception of the verse's meaning. The same goes for the "length" and "shortness" of the sound, which cannot be the phonological length of vowels. Finally, the recitation's dependance on the reciter's intellectual and emotional abilities means that a certain amount of subjectivity is implicit, which drives whatever *'inšād* means here further away from predictability and, ultimately, regularity. All this leads to one inescapable, and fairly obvious, conclusion – the prosodic features that Fāḫūrī talks about here fall under the broad category of intonation. The same idea is supported by another passage, in which an abridged definition of *'inšād* is provided: *murā'āt*[*u*] *l-ma'nā wa-n-nabri wa-l-lahǧati 'inda qirā'ati l-qaṣīdati 'aw 'inšādihā* (ibidem: 178), "the observance of meaning and of [the appropriate] inflection and tone when reading or reciting a *qaṣīda*". This definition brings an enticing addition, namely an occurrence of the name *nabr* (primary meaning: "raising"), regularly used for designating "stress" in modern Arabic sources (see note 13), but which in this context, where the same association between meaning and performance is mentioned, clearly does not signify either lexical or metrical stress.

An extensive work on Arabic poetry, titled *al-Muršid 'ilā fahm 'aš'ār al-'arab wa-ṣinā'atihā* and divided into four parts, with the fourth part containing two sections, that was published, in several editions, in five volumes, was penned by the Sudanese writer and philologist 'Abd Allāh aṭ-Ṭayyib (1921-2003). Its purpose is to offer a comprehensive presentation of Arabic poetry and its metric system. While the information included therein is thorough and detailed, the book's layout and content make it look less like a typical handbook and more like a treatise bearing the obvious marks of the author's own, personal takes on its topic. Right from the start a marked and significant difference with the previously mentioned work can be noticed – the definitions and explanations use the concept of "syllable" (*maqṭa'*), which demonstrates the author's exposure to, and receptiveness towards, the influence of Western sources and theories. When introducing meter as one of the two pillars of versification, together with rhyme, he states that "it is usually made up of a number of long and short syllables, arranged in a particular way" (*yatakawwanu 'ādatan min 'adadin mina l-maqāṭi'i ṭ-ṭawīlati wa-l-qaṣīrati munaẓẓamatan bi-ṭarīqatin ḫāṣṣatin* – aṭ-Ṭayyib 1970: 13), and then, aware of the possible novelty that this concept might represent for his readers, he explains, in a footnote, the different types

out; even if it were so, the understanding of the passage could still not be convincingly geared towards detecting a reference to lexical or metrical stress.

of syllables by equating each of them with the corresponding moving and quiescent *ḥarf*(s) – he identifies two types of syllables, long and short, further dividing the latter type into two subtypes, the first one being what is usually defined as a long syllable and the second one – the overlong syllable (ibidem). The internal structuring of the field covering the "musicality" and "rhythmicity" of poetry is similar, though not identical, to the one put forth by Fāḫūrī. At the beginning of a chapter titled *'Awzān aš-ši'r wa-mūsīqāhā*, "Poetic meters and their music", in which the predilection of meters for being associated with specific moods and poetic themes (*'aġrāḍ*) is argued for (aṭ-Ṭayyib is not alone in supporting this idea – Fāḫūrī is also one of its proponents and inserts, at the end of each of the chapters in which the sixteen meters are presented and exemplified, a section containing his ideas about what moods the respective meter inspires and what themes it is mostly suited for), the musicality of poetry is said to be provided by two elements: *mūsīqiyyan-i š-ši'ru 'amrāni : an-naġamu l-muntaẓimu, wa-huwa t-taf'īlātu, wa-ǧarsu l-'alfāẓi* (ibidem: 72), "musically poetry consists of two elements: regular melody, which is the metrical feet, and the sonority of words". It thus becomes apparent that regularity is provided by "(metrical) feet", i.e. by meter, which no longer shares this specific function with rhythm, while "the sonority of words", *ǧars al-'alfāẓ*, is complementary with meter in contributing to poetry's "musical" character. As it turns out, the term *ǧars* alone, with no modifiers, is explicitly equated by aṭ-Ṭayyib with the English term "rhythm" and is granted a quite comprehensive scope, that includes meter and rhyme, but also other features – the rhetorical figures *ǧināS*, "paronomasia" and *ṭibāq*, "antithesis", word order and the choice of words in general – so that *ǧars*, i.e. rhythm, ends up covering all the phenomena that contribute to the musicality of the poetic text – and it is these features, that fall under the category of rhythm besides meter and rhyme, that are taken as a topic for the second part of the book, titled *Fī l-ǧars al-lafẓī*, "About verbal sonority" (ibidem: 459), which means that the phrases *ǧars al-'alfāẓ* and *al-ǧars al-lafẓī* designate all the "musically" and "rhythmically" relevant features that fall outside the boundaries of meter and rhyme. The author submits *ǧars* as a successor of sorts for the premodern *faṣāḥa*, "eloquence", that was at the center of Arab rhetoricians' reflections about the criteria for aesthetically evaluating speech, the reason for this proposal being that if a term like *ǧars*, or even *ǧars* itself, was not included in the specialized terminology of rhetoric, it was only because it would have been too evocative of music, only marginally accepted, back then, as a legitimate part of an Islamically sanctioned culture (ibidem: 459-460). The two concepts overlap to a considerable degree, since the intended meaning of *faṣāḥa* itself is "the resonance of words" (*ranīn al-'alfāẓ* – ibidem: 458), without them being identical, because *faṣāḥa* includes aspects that are closer to style and thus do not fall under the category he calls *ǧars* (ibidem: 463). After a lengthy excursus on, and a contribution to, the debates that revolved around the appropriate criteria that should be adopted when looking into the aesthetic properties of words (ibidem: 463-482), aṭ-Ṭayyib argues that beauty is primarily reliant on "harmony" (*insiǧām*), that comes, in turn, as a conjunction of "unity" (*waḥda*) and "diversity" (*iḫtilāf*) or "dissimilarity" (*tabāyun*), of "repetition" (*takrār*) and "diversification" (*tanwī'*), with the former set of features characterizing the whole and the latter being characteristic of the details making it up (ibidem: 489-491). In the case of poetry, harmony is realized by the reunion between meter and ordinary speech, each with its own, specific "resonance" (*ranīn*); in more concrete terms, this means that the recitation of a verse, whose structure is already impacted by meter, is not supposed to reflect the

metrical divisions highlighted by scansion, but should be paced by the flow of ordinary speech, with its own, natural pauses and divisions, because otherwise the regularity of meter would be overpowering and monotony would prevail (ibidem: 491-492). At this point, it has already become apparent that meter is considered fully capable, with no additional help, of providing regularity, so much so that it needs to be counterbalanced by the rhythm of ordinary speech. The self-sufficiency of meter in this regard is further highlighted when aṭ-Ṭayyib conjectures that recurrent formulas, or whole verses that, by virtue of their repetition, enhance regularity and are functionally similar to what refrain is in Western poetry, are, in Arabic poetry, a remnant of a more distant stage in its evolution, one in which meter had not yet been fully developed (ibidem: 495-497).

In the book's third part, he reverts to the issue of syllables and their adoption as a theoretical tool for explaining the Arabic metrical system and offers a series of clarifications that contain ampler references to music. He states that by using the syllable – and, more specifically, "long and short syllables" (*al-maqāṭi' al-qiṣār wa-ṭ-ṭiwāl* – aṭ-Ṭayyib 1989: 45) –, a theoretical concept borrowed from Western sources, it is possible to simplify the complex terminology surrounding the variations incurred by metrical feet, which is why he chose to integrate it in his presentation, even though the syllable is not capable of fully capturing the musicality of Arabic poetry (ibidem: 44-46). This musicality, aṭ-Ṭayyib claims, was a feature that al-Ḫalīl was well aware of (he is, at the same time, cautious enough not to hype up expectations about the detectability of his musical expertise in the form of the theoretical system that is traditionally ascribed to him: *wa-fī niẓāmi l-ḫalīli llaḏī tabi'ahū, ġayri hāḏā llaḏī yarwūnahū 'anhu, mā yadullu dalālatan wāḍiḥatan 'alā 'idrākihī li-ḥaqīqati n-nisabi z-zamāniyyati wa-l-mūsīqā l-kāminati fī l-'a'ārīḍi* – ibidem: 47, "in al-Ḫalīl's system, the one that he followed, not this one, that they report as belonging to him, there is clear proof that he was aware of the true nature of the temporal proportions and the music that were inherently present in the metrical feet"). The evidence that is still present in the system is said to be represented by the segmentation of the meters into symmetrically positioned feet and the envisioning of "ideal meters" (*'abḥur miṯāliyya* – ibidem), and for whatever shortcomings there may be the blame is laid on al-Ḫalīl's and his successors' formation as grammarians: it is the search for complete regularity, "his habit of bringing the exceptions into conformity with the rules" (*mā ta'awwadahū min 'itbā'i l-qawā'idi š-šawāḏḏa* – ibidem: 48), typical for a grammarian, that made him establish the cumbersomely numerous terms designating the different types of *ziḥāfāt* and *'ilal* that account for the departure of the actual verses from the templates embodied by the "ideal meters" (ibidem: 47-48; leaving aside the issue of the dispensability of these terms, admitted by other modern Arab authors as well – see note 8 – we cannot help but detect at least a whiff of internal contradiction here: on the one hand, aṭ-Ṭayyib takes al-Ḫalīl's positing of ideal forms of the meters as a proof of his musical acumen and presents it in a positive light and, on the other hand, he takes a disparaging look at his efforts of finding a way to reconcile the formal variations exhibited by Arabic verses with these very ideal forms). The connection with music is further explored by looking into the composition of the feet, which are said to be formed by units that are named *ranna*, "sound", "reverberation" (ibidem: 49) or *ḍarba*, "beat" (ibidem: 50), and it ensues from his explanations and exemplifications that they are not identical with the long and short syllables that he uses, along with Western specialists, to symbolize the configuration of the

feet, nor do the syllable quantities in the ideal forms of the feet necessarily reflect the temporal proportions between these units[22] (temporal proportionality is taken as a core feature of the system: *al-wazn*[*u*] *yadūru ʿalā nisabin wa-ḍarabātin lā ʿalā muǧarradi tafʿīlātin maqṭaʿiyyatin* – ibidem: 58, "meter revolves around proportions and beats, not just around syllabic feet"). The interpretation of the term *ziḥāf* enables the author to expound on the meaning of these key terms: whenever a short syllable is substituted for a long one in a *ḍarba*, there is a "silence" or "pause" (*sakta*) coming after the syllable, so that the *ḍarba* is not quantitatively altered – at this point he also makes a brief digression towards the *watid*, which he states was distinguished by Arab metricians because they "wanted […] to communicate something of a melodic nature" (*rāmū nawʿan mina l-bayāni n-naġmiyyi* – ibidem: 50). All this means that the *ḍarba*s (or *ranna*s) are "temporal gaps the inside of which is occupied by syllables, with no disturbance of the proportional relation [between the *ḍarba*s]" (*faǧawāt*[*un*] *zamāniyyat*[*un*] *taḥillu l-maqāṭiʾu fī ǧawfihā min ġayri ḫtilālin bi-t-tanāsubi* – ibidem: 51). As for the term *ziḥāf*, it is inspired by the dragging gait of the camel, because, when a *ziḥāf* intervenes, it is "as if the poet, from their perspective, were stricken by a bout of fatigue and dragged the hoof of his speech in order to complete the metrical foot" (*ka-ʾanna š-šāʾira ʿindahum ʾaṣābahū ʾiʿyāʾun fa-ǧarra firsina kalāmihi ǧarran li-yukmila t-tafʿīlata* – ibidem: 51-52; his interpretation is thus convergent with the translation of the term by Stoetzer – see note 7).

In the first section of the book's fourth part, aṭ-Ṭayyib revisits the meter as one of the factors contributing to the unity of the *qaṣīda*, and some of the ideas he formulates therein throw additional light on his engagement with Western theories about the issue at hand. One particular paragraph, in which he mentions the terminological equivalence between the Arabic *tafʿīla* and the English *foot*, is especially important, because it contains the originally Graeco-Latin names of different feet used in English poetry, together with English words used as examples for them, briefly presented in the author's own words and with his own terminology: the "iambic" foot is exemplified with the word *away*, the "trochaic" one with *father*, the "anapaestic" with the formula *go away* and the "dactylic" with *merrily* (aṭ-Ṭayyib 1990: 42). The pairing of Graeco-Latin terms with English examples is, in a way, symptomatic for the whole book, even if the English language and literature are specifically mentioned here, considering that in numerous other occasions he treats the Western poetic tradition holistically (using the term *ʾifranǧī*, "European", originally "Frankish", to designate it), while constantly using English poems and verses,

[22] In discussing one of the examples, composed in the meter *raǧaz* (whose foot is, as we have already mentioned, *mustafʿilun*, syllabic configuration: u̲ u̲ u –), he states that the foot of this meter contains three equal time intervals (for which he uses the terms *buʿd*, "dimension", here "interval", and *ḥayyiz*, "extent") and the four *ranna*s are distributed among them so that the first two intervals are occupied by one *ranna* each and the last one is occupied by two *ranna*s; while the quantitative correspondences in the case of the first two intervals do not require much of an explanation – each interval is occupied by one *ranna*, and each *ranna* is filled, in turn, with a long syllable –, the less straightforward correspondence between one interval and two *ranna*s filled with two syllables one of which is long is succinctly explained as follows: *mā ʾaḥrā ʾan yakūna ʾawwaluhumā qaṣīran li-yakūna ʾadalla ʿalā t-talāḥuqi* "how appropriate it is for the first one of them (i.e. "of the last two syllables", that actually make up the *watid* of the foot) to be short, so that it may better indicate [their] close succession" (aṭ-Ṭayyib 1989: 49).

not surprisingly composed in accentual verse, to illustrate phenomena or characteristics that he ascribes to this tradition – in the third book, in the previously mentioned context of discussing the suitability of long and short syllables for describing Arabic poetry, he goes as far as to say that syllables "are totally suitable for explaining Western meters" (*ṣaluḥat muṭlaqa ṣ-ṣalāḥiyati fī tawḍīḥi l-'awzāni l-'ifranǧiyyati* – aṭ-Ṭayyib 1989: 48). All this strongly suggests that he does not differentiate, in general, between quantitative and accentual metrical systems when it comes to Western poetry, and this is what makes this paragraph all the more remarkable, because here, while he does use the traditional Arabic convention for explaining the syllabic structure of these English words (*fa'ūl* for *away*, *fa'lu* for father, *fa'ilun* for *go away* and *fā'ilu* for *merrily*), which would, by itself, indicate the equation of stressed syllables in English with long ones in Arabic and of unstressed syllables in English with short ones in Arabic, he does not fail to point out that this is just an approximation and that the two languages function differently in this respect: *wa-l-lafẓu l-'inkilīziyyu taḫtalifu ṭarīqatu n-nuṭqi bihī 'ani l-lafẓi l-'arabiyyi wa-'innamā 'aradnā t-taqrība* (aṭ-Ṭayyib 1990: 42), "English words are pronounced differently from Arabic words, but we just wanted an approximation". Even more importantly, he refrains from using the same terminology that he uses for long and short syllables in Arabic, using instead the phrases *maqṭa' šadid*, "strong syllable" and *maqṭa' ḍa'īf*, "weak syllable", for designating stressed and, respectively, unstressed syllables in English. This distinctive set of terms proves that, in this instance, he no longer amalgamates quantitative and accentual systems and implicitly recognizes that they are to be set apart from each other (we do not exclude the possibility that he had only gradually come to the realization of these differences, because there are other instances where, in later parts of his book, he reacts to new works that he comes across in the meantime, to criticisms elicited by opinions expressed by him in earlier parts, which suggests that his book was a work in progress and the evolutions of his views on different matters did not lead to emendations of previously published parts, but were signaled as he went along writing the book). At the same time, it is equally significant that we do not have, even here, explicit references to linguistic prosody or to stress, either lexical or metrical, and this, in spite of the fact that the author is obviously open to Western concepts and, more than that, in some points his ideas are convergent with some elements of the theories put forth by Western authors: like Guyard, he resorts to the insertion of "pauses" in order to achieve the desired form of a metrical sequence, and his remark about the Arab metricians having singled out the *watid* because it must have a "melodic" quality is, of course, reminiscent of Weil's theory (this is not to say that these convergences provide a sufficiently solid ground for entertaining the thought of actual influences having been exerted by these authors, especially in the case of his passing, extremely brief digression about the *watid*). He was, it seems, either oblivious to the existence of linguistic prosody or, if he ever took notice of it, which is not unlikely in light of his discernible interactions with Western sources, was reluctant to engage with it and ultimately chose to stay away from it. In any case, his obvious interest for "musicality" and "rhythm" notwithstanding, his openness to Western ideas and theories does not extend to this discipline and the tools it might offer him for conducting his analysis.

These writings give us just a glimpse into the vast Arabic literature concerning the Arabic metrical system, but they are illustrative, to a considerable degree, of how the rhythm of Arabic poetry is generally treated by modern Arab authors in the absence of

concepts pertaining to linguistic prosody, whether their perspective is shaped in its entirety by the Arabic linguistic tradition or has been exposed to Western influences. We certainly do not rule out the possibility that lexical or metrical stress be explicitly referenced by Arab authors in their treatment of this topic, but this is not something we have as yet been able to find.

Up until this point, we have been approaching the prosodic contour of Arabic verse and the ideas entertained about it exclusively through theoretical works about the subject, but this is certainly not the only possible path for such an investigation. A look into the direct, practical engagement with Arabic verses and poems is also possible and should be capable of producing meaningful results. One type of such engagement, which is still likely to be more or less theoretically conditioned, is the translation of Arabic poetry in forms meant to imitate, as faithfully as possible, the metrical structure of the original texts, and another one is, naturally, the recitation of Arabic poems by native Arabic speakers.

The metrically imitative translations[23] we will be looking at are exhibited by two works going back to the end of the XIXth and the first half of the XXth century, a period marked, as we have already mentioned, by the popularity of the thesis that Arabic poetry must have had a specific prosodic contour involving metrical stress: Charles James Lyall's *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry* (1930, first published in 1885) and Reynold A. Nicholson's *A Literary History of the Arabs* (2004 (1930), first published in 1907). In the introduction to his book, Lyall (1845-1920) states the following: "[i]n the majority of the translations contained in this volume an attempt has been made to imitate the metres of the original Arabic" (Lyall 1930: xlv), and signals that he is fully aware of the fundamental difference between the Arabic and the English metrical systems: "Arabian prosody in its general features resembles that of Greek and Latin: that is to say, the prosodial value of syllables depends not upon their accent, as in English, but upon the quantity or position of their vowels"[24] (ibidem: xlvi). Some of his theoretical stances can be deduced from the actual notation of the metrical structure of the meters, because his reasonings are sparingly described in explicit statements. He embraces the existence of the ictus as a matter of fact, as it is apparent from the accents placed on the syllables that are supposed to bear it. Within any given foot, the invariably stressed syllable is the long syllable of the *watid*, but it is not uniquely distinguished in this manner, because in the longer, tetrasyllabic feet, that contain two *sabab*s, there is also a second accent, placed on the second closest syllable to the stressed one within the *watid*. In the case of the meter *basīṭ*, in the second and fourth foot

[23] In the context of assessing the translation of the *Muʿallaqāt* into different European languages, Pierre Larcher tentatively links the productivity of translations in poetic form to the degree of compatibility between the types of versification characteristic of the source and target languages respectively: "[l]a traduction poétique est un genre où se sont particulièrement illustrés les Allemands […m]ais les traducteurs de langue anglaise ont aussi beaucoup donné […]; [e]n revanche, les Français semblent plus réticents, peut-être (ce n'est qu'une hypothèse) en raison de la nature syllabique du vers français, qui le rend moins aisément compatible avec le système arabe que les vers allemands ou anglais, de type quantitatif-accentuel" (Larcher 1999: 131) and further states, in a footnote, that "aucun système métrique n'est pur" (ibidem); for the sake of the present discussion, we will not address the issue of whether English versification also has, as Larcher claims, a quantitative dimension, especially since the authors whose translations we are investigating operate on the assumption that it is accentual.

[24] This is obviously a faulty presentation of the basis of the Arabic metrical system because it fails to capture the crucial distinction between vowel and syllable quantity.

of the hemistich (*fā'ilun*, syllabic configuration: u̲ u –), where the long and stressed syllable of the *watid* occupies the last position, he assumes there is a "secondary stress" (ibidem: li), graphically marked with a grave accent, on the first syllable: "[i]n the second and fourth foot of this metre (u u –), the Arabs are accustomed to lay a somewhat strong stress on the first short syllable (which in the second foot may be a long one)" (ibidem: l-li). A secondary stress is also placed on the first syllable of the first and third feet of the *ḫafīf* and on the first syllable of all the feet of the *madīd* (ibidem: li-lii). He does not elaborate on the reasons why these syllables should bear a secondary stress, but by looking at the scansion of one hemistich of each of the respective meters (*basīṭ*: u̲ ú u – / ù u̲ – / u̲ – u – / ù u –; *ḫafīf*: ù u – – / u̲ – u – / ù u – –; *madīd*: ù u – – / ù u̲ – / ù u – –) it becomes more than plausible that the reason for the secondary nature of their stress is their coming, either once or twice, in direct contiguity with stressed syllables of the adjacent feet (the first syllable of the second foot of the *madīd* does not face this situation, but it is possible that the secondary stress that it bears is carried over from the *basīṭ*, whose second foot is identical, since Lyall considers the *madīd* "a sort of compound of [the *ḫafīf* and the *basīṭ*]" – ibidem: lii). Here is the scansion and the metrically imitative translation by Lyall of the verse he uses for exemplifying the meter *basīṭ* (the transcription from Arabic is ours):

u – u – / u u – / – – u – / u u – // – – u – / u u – / – – u – / u u –

wa-'inna 'aš'ara baytin 'anta qā'iluhū / baytun yuqālu 'iḏā 'anšadtahū ṣadaqā

Of áll the vérses which thoú hast máde the faírest in praíse, / is thát whereóf, when they heár, men sáy, yea, thát is the Trúth (ibidem: l)

and here is the English verse by which he intends to imitate the secondary stress that he claims to exist in the same meter:

And wélcome thoú whèn the wínds blew shríll in dárk wìntertíde (ibidem: li).

It seems, based on these scansions and remarks, that, unlike Ewald, Lyall accepts the coexistence of two stresses, or ictuses, in one foot, but he is still committed to the general principle of alternation between stressed and unstressed intervals and, like both Ewald and Guyard, has a problem especially with stressed syllables appearing side by side. As for the rendition of Arabic verses into English, the transition from one system of versification to another is, for him, not a drastic one, given that the Arabic system itself is treated by him, in practice, as a mixed one, and thus all he has to do is make the positions of the metrical stress in the Arabic original be matched by those of the lexical stress (that also happens to be enhanced by intonation) in the English translation.

A less theoretically conscious and more intuitive approach to metrically imitative translation is exhibited by Nicholson (1868-1945), who offers, in the chapter of his book dedicated to pre-Islamic poetry, a number of translations that are transparent or even explicit attempts at replicating in English the Arabic versification, whose quantitative nature is obviously not lost on him ("all the metres are quantitative, as in Greek and Latin" – Nicholson 2004 (1930): 75). He resorts to a method that resembles Lyall's, inasmuch as it also consists of matching the positions of stressed syllables in English with the positions of metrically salient syllables in Arabic. What is less clear in Nicholson's case is how these syllables are identified, because he is stingier with theoretical remarks than even Lyall is. It is most likely that he is, at least in intention, tributary to Lyall, because he mentions him precisely in connection with his aforementioned introduction about meters (ibidem). In an attempt to clarify his method, we will be looking at some verses of the translation of a poem

by the pre-Islamic poet Ta'abbaṭa Šarran, in relation to which he states that he "endeavored to suggest as far as possible the metre and rhythm of the original" (ibidem: 97). The translation is preceded by the specification of the meter (which is the *madīd*) and of this meter's scansion: u – – / u – / – u – – (ibidem: 98). As we can see, the scansion does not include any accents, but the presence of metrical stress in his theoretical background cannot be ruled out, especially if we take into account his reference to Lyall in this context as well (he says, in a footnote, that in translating the poem he has followed Lyall's "masterly interpretation" – ibidem: 97) and also the mention of both "meter" and "rhythm" in talking about the formal features of the original. The poem's first verse is

'inna bi-š-ši'bi llaḏī 'inda Sal'in / la-qatīlan damuhū mā yuṭallū

(the transcription from Arabic is ours) and Nicholson's rendition of it is the following:

In the glen there / a murdered / man is lying –

Not in vain for / vengeance his / blood is crying (ibidem; the partition into feet is ours).

If we look at the prosodic features of the sequences corresponding, in English, to the first and last foot of each hemistich (*in the glen there*, *man is lying*, *not in vain for*, *blood is crying*) we can see that the penultimate syllable, the one that corresponds to the long syllable of the *watid* in Arabic, is constantly stressed, which would suggest that stressing this syllable is a priority. The picture is different, however, when it comes to the sequences corresponding to the second foot of each hemistich (*a murdered*, *vengeance his*), where, if we look for a primarily stressed syllable, which, in accordance with Lyall's theory, should be the last one (and, if there is another, it should be the first one and it should bear a secondary stress), we can see that, in the first foot, it is the second one that bears the stress (with no apparent position for a secondary stress), while the first one is the most plausible candidate in the second. A look at the second couplet yields relatively similar results:

He hath left me / the load to bear / and departed;

I take up the / load and bear / it true-hearted (ibidem; the partition into feet is ours).

The approximation in this case goes a step further: the second foot of the first hemistich has four instead of three syllables, and this, together with its prosodic contour, draws the hemistich closer to the *ḫafīf* (*fā'ilātun mustaf'ilun fā'ilātun*, syllabic configuration: u – u / u – u u / u – u). The distribution of stress is also rather loosely evocative of the one that is associated, according to Lyall, with the *madīd*: in the sequences *he hath left me*, *I take up the*, *it true-hearted*, the penultimate syllable is, indeed, stressed, but one could argue that the overall prosodic contour could just as well fit the distribution of stressed syllables that the foot of the *hazağ* (*mafā'īlun*, syllabic configuration: u – u u) might suggest, with the syllables immediately preceding the stressed ones bearing what one would call, together with Lyall, a secondary stress; this oversight is significant, because these syllables correspond to the short ones of the *watid*s, and a *watid*-centered rendition could be expected to take greater care not to stress them.

A corroboration of all these facts suggests that the prosodic contour that Nicholson had in mind is more of an approximation of the one that Lyall's stricter approach would require, and the arrangement of the stressed positions does not seem to be necessarily conditioned by the long syllable of the *watid*. In fact, a source for the prosodic contour of his verses that is at least as probable as one that prioritizes the positions occupied by the long syllables of the *watid*s could simply be, also with a certain degree of approximation,

the one suggested by the reading of the dummy words symbolizing the feet making up the hemistich of the *madīd* (*fā'ilā́tun fā'ilun fā'ilā́tun*), so that the primarily stressed positions would generally be those occupied by the syllables that would be stressed if the sequences representing the feet were read in accordance with the stress rules that apply to the words of the Arabic language[25]. This treatment of the verses, their meter and their prosodic contour is, as we have already said, more intuitive and less constrained by the adherence to a clear set of theoretical premises, but it does ultimately fall back on one of the central tenets of a theorist like Guyard, who argues that the partition of verses into feet reflects the existence of rhythmic and prosodic commonalities between the sequences making up these feet and actual Arabic words.

Finally, the recitation of Arabic poetry by native Arabic speakers is arguably the most obvious way of investigating the prosodic contour of Arabic verses. Such experiments have already been conducted, and Bohas & Paoli provide us with the detailed description of one, beginning with the initial theoretical assumptions and ending with the results and conclusions. The theoretical premise that they put to the test was the core of Weil's theory, namely the existence of a metrical stress on the long syllable of the *watid*, and, in connection with this, they sought to verify two theses: ictus, or metrical stress, and lexical stress are "une seule et même réalité", which would mean that the long syllables of the *watid*s are "des positions accentuelles potentielles" that are actualized whenever they are stressed as per lexical stress rules, or ictus and lexical stress are two distinct realities, which would mean that either lexical stress is superseded by metrical stress in recitation or they coexist, creating "une courbe prosodique, un rhythme complexe" (Bohas & Paoli 1997:

[25] Stress rules in Arabic are presented either in a single set, accounting for both complete and pausal forms, or in separate, customized sets; Bohas and Paoli (1997: 182), for instance, opt for an integrated presentation, with rule d) specifically designed to cover situations presented by some pausal forms: "a) [l]'accentuation est fixée par les limites du mot (syntagme accentogène accompagné de ses clitiques satellites); b) [l]a zone accentuable est limitée aux trois dernières syllabes du mot; c) [l]'accent peut frapper toute syllabe, quelle que soit sa longueur (ou son poids); d) [l]'accent porte sur la dernière syllable du mot si elle est surlourde (CVXC); e) [i]l porte sur la pénultième si d) ne s'applique pas et si la pénultième est lourde ou surlourde, ou si le mot est dissyllabique ; f) [i]l porte sur l'antépénultième si d) et e) ne s'appliquent pas"; Karin Ryding (2005: 37-38), on the other hand, distinguishes the stressing of complete and pausal forms: "[…] in words of two syllables, stress is on the first, no matter what that first syllable is like (strong or weak); […s]tress is on the second syllable from the end of the word (the penult) if that syllable is strong (CVC or CVV); […i]f the second syllable from the end of the word is weak (CV), then the stress falls back to the third syllable from the end (the antepenult); […t]he same basic set of rules applies to pause form, but there is an important additional rule for pause form pronunciation: stress falls on the final syllable of a word if that syllable is a super-strong one (CVCC or CVVC)". From a diachronic point of view, there is no consensus about whether stress rules have evolved throughout the centuries or not: Mion (2011) contemplates, relying on arguments involving both Classical Arabic and vernacular Arabic varieties, the idea that there might have been, initially, two accentual systems, both originating in the Mashreq, with the older one eventually spreading to the Maghreb and the newer one ultimately prevailing in the East and becoming associated with the pronunciation of Classical Arabic, whereas Bohas & Paoli (1997: 182) adopt the opposite view: "[…] aucune indication historique ne nous donne à penser que l'accentuation de la langue arabe ait évolué dans le temps; [d]'ailleurs, […] l'arabe littéraire est très conservateur, ce qui l'a préservé jusqu'à présent de changements significatifs: la stabilité remarquable du système vocalique est en corrélation avec celles de la quantité syllabique et de la localisation de l'accent".

180-181). The validity of the first thesis was verified by Bruno Paoli, who examined 566 verses of the pre-Islamic poet Imru' al-Qays with the aim of establishing the percentage of cases where the position of lexical stress (established in accordance with the commonly accepted rules – see note 25) coincides with that of the long syllable of the *watid*, and concluded that there was no statistically significant prevalence of cases where such a coincidence occurs (ibidem: 181-185). As for the verification of the second thesis, which requires examining the recitation of Arabic verses by native Arabic speakers, Bohas & Paoli begin by pointing out that whatever results this kind of survey might produce are not automatically projectible on how Arabic poetry used to be recited centuries ago, then go on to describe the experiment, stating that they chose verses in which the coincidence between the position of the long syllables of the *watid*s and that of the lexically conditioned stress was reduced to the minimum, so that the substitution of lexical stress with metrical stress may become readily apparent in case it really is resorted to in the course of the verses' recitation. The persons that were recorded while reciting them were two native Arabic speakers and al-Azhar graduates, who were also well versed in the classical Arabic literary culture and tradition. Upon examining the recordings, Bohas & Paoli concluded that they exhibited no discernible modification of the lexical stress, the only noticeable phenomenon being the propensity of one of the two reciters for stressing, mainly in the last foot of the verse, the short syllable preceding or following the long syllable of the *watid*, which frequently resulted in the stressing of the penultimate short syllable of the verse, a stressing pattern that might qualify as an "accent de rime". Their overall conclusion was, however, that the recitation of Arabic poetry involves no metrical stress, lexical stress being overwhelmingly prevalent, which means that there is no basis for Weil's theory or for any other theory arguing in favor of the existence of metrical stress in Arabic poetry, and that this poetry is of a strictly quantitative nature (ibidem: 185-188).

It must be said that, for all those who have had the experience of listening to Arabic verses being recited by native Arabic speakers, the absence of metrical stress is hardly surprising, because there is, indeed, no apparent difference between the distribution of stress in ordinary speech, in accordance with lexical stress rules, and the stressing habits generally adhered to in reciting Arabic poetry. However, Bohas & Paoli's judicious caution against projecting the current state of affairs on previous eras works both ways, i.e. the absence of metrical stress or, in more general terms, of a specifically poetic prosodic contour of the verses in the present does not automatically mean that there was no such thing sometime in the past either. The hints towards the possibility that recitation in the past might have been different than it is today are not totally absent – if native Arabic speakers are justifiably involved as reciters in testing the existence of metrical stress, it is no less justifiable to involve them as recipients as well, so that not only their performance, but also their reaction to the performance may be put to the test. This is a kind of experiment we have not yet been able to conduct systematically, but we did come across some anecdotal evidence that might be significant in this respect: on more than one occasion, we witnessed how native speakers of Arabic that were clearly knowledgeable in the field of Arabic poetry and metrics found it difficult to spontaneously identify the meter of a given verse or poem. If this proves to be a statistically significant occurrence, it will be, in our opinion, something of a challenge to the idea that the Arabic metrical system has always relied exclusively on syllable quantity, because any given metrical system, no matter what

it operates with, should be capable of creating for the speakers of the language in relation to which it has been developed, by itself and with no additional props, symmetrical and regular sequences that should be perceived as such spontaneously and, we might add, even in the absence of theoretical knowledge about the system in question[26]. If this does not happen, then two possibilities could serve as explanations: there really is something lost (perhaps, at this stage, irretrievably so) in the Arabic metrical system, an additional element, likely pertaining to linguistic prosody (whose disappearance from the system might have been facilitated by the absence, in the Arabic linguistic tradition, of a discipline contributing to its preservation by codifying it), that used to contribute to the regularity and symmetry of Arabic poetry, in the absence of which these qualities are not as readily perceived as they used to be (a possible argument in favor of this hypothesis can be found in Arabic poetic terminology: the term *'inšād* can be used in modern Arabic, as we were able to see in Fāḫūrī's text, for signifying artistic, expressive, but not technically specific recitation, and yet the very existence of a special term designating the recitation of poetry suggests that it might have had formal features setting it apart from ordinary speech[27]); another possibility is that the contrast between short and long syllables may no longer be nowadays as salient as it used to be[28], which would increase the difficulty of perceiving the metrical regularities relying on this contrast.

Going back to a strictly synchronic perspective, we sought to verify, for our part, whether there are really no contexts whatsoever in which stress acquires a metrical quality in the recitation of Arabic poetry by native speakers of Arabic, and the possibility that caught our attention was that such a context might be provided by rhyme[29] (after all, it is

[26] Nigel Fabb & Morris Halle (2008: 12) claim that the Chomskyan thesis of there being an innate, universally shared "human capacity for language" can be extended to metrics as well: "[p]oets and their audiences have the ability to judge that lines are metrical, and this ability is part of the human capacity for language; [t]his capacity, which must minimally include the ability to judge certain word sequences as syntactically well formed, includes, in our view, also the ability to judge word sequences as metrically well formed"; going by this, if a given metrical system does not offer the legitimately expected sense of regularity, then maybe it is the system that is, or rather has become, deficient, and not the speakers' perceptive abilities.

[27] Šawqī Ḍayf (1960: 195) states that the term *'inšād* used to designate a kind of performance representing an intermediate type between "(ordinary) reading/recitation" (*qirā'a*), and "singing" (*ġinā'*); a look at the meanings of different terms having the root *n.š.d.*, such as the noun *našīd*, defined as "the elevation of the voice" (*raf' aṣ-ṣawt – al-Munǧid* 1986: 808), does suggest that *'inšād* might have signified some sort of special reciting technique (perhaps one that entailed "elevating one's voice" in conspicuous places in the recited text, that did not coincide with the lexically conditioned ones?).

[28] Such a development would be analogous to the one that occurred in later stages of Latin's evolution, when the compensatory practice of using metrical stress (or "artificial accentuation" – Lynch 2016: 511) was introduced, mostly in didactic settings: "the new practice of verse scansion was introduced in didactic contexts to compensate for the weakened perception of syllable quantities caused by the rise of stress accents, which undermined a 'natural' identification of metrical feet on the basis of pure quantities" (ibidem); the analogy only works up to a point though, because, as Bohas & Paoli have showed, there is, in general, no (compensatory) "artificial accentuation" in the recitation of Arabic poetry.

[29] According to the commonly accepted definition, that is attributed to al-Ḫalīl himself, rhyme (*qāfiya*) is the interval stretching from the end of the verse to the moving *ḥarf* coming immediately before the second quiescent one, counting from the end – the verse always ending with a long syllable, the first quiescent *ḥarf* invariably comes at the absolute end ('Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 211-215; Fāḫūrī 1987: 137-138);

not without significance that the only specificity worth mentioning, in Bohas & Paoli's experiment, was the habit, exhibited by one of the subjects, of placing the last stress of the verse in a lexically atypical manner). Rhyme is, in Arabic poetry, a sequence that requires elements of regularity going well beyond its nucleus, the *ḥarf* named *rawiyy*: for instance, the *rawiyy* can be followed by a long vowel that must be the same throughout the poem, it can be preceded by a long vowel that must always be either *ū*/*ī* or *ā*, there can be a long syllable, with *ā* as a nucleus, separated from the *rawiyy* by a short syllable etc. ('Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 219-250; Fāḫūrī 1987: 139-147). This high degree of regularity should induce the reciter to expect that the sequences covered by the rhyme in a poem or a poetic fragment be totally convergent, not only phonetically, but also prosodically, i.e. that the stressed positions within the rhyme be in alignment in all the verses and, if this expectation is not fulfilled, it can be expected, at least from some reciters, to artificially bring them into alignment.

In order to test this idea, we conducted a small-scale survey of our own, involving eight subjects (henceforth S1, S2 etc.) represented by native Arabic speakers from Jordan, Syria and Egypt[30]. The text used for our test belongs to the type known as *qiṭ'a* (lit. "fragment", a term used to designate a monothematic short poem) and is selected from the *Luzūmiyyāt* of 'Abū l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (973-1058):

> *'in kunti yā warqā'u mahdiyyatan / fa-lā tubannī l-wakra li-l-'afruḫī*
> *wa-lā takūnī miṯla 'insiyyatin / matā yanubhā ḥādiṯun taṣruḫī*
> *wa-nfaridī fī baladin 'āzibin / 'annā wa-'īšī ḏāta bālin raḫī* (Naṣṣār 1992: 383)
> ("If you are, oh grey dove, rightly guided, do not build a nest for [your] offspring / and do not be like a human female, who shouts whenever a mishap befalls her; / stay away, in a country far removed from us, and live with a carefree mind")

In this poem composed in the meter *sarī'* (*mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilun*, syllabic configuration: u u u – / u u u – / u u –), the rhyme has the syllabic structure – u – (which means it belongs to the type of rhyme known as *mutadārika* – 'Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 260-261), and occupies, within its verses, the intervals *'afruḫī*, *taṣruḫī* and *lin raḫī*. Out of the three rhymes, it is the third that is, in principle, of interest for our test, because, if in the other two rhymes the lexical stress falls on the first syllable (*'áfruḫī*, *táṣruḫī*), the purely lexical stress should fall, here, on the last syllable, since the complete, non-pausal form of the adjective is *raḫíyy*(*un*), "relaxed", "carefree" (root *r.ḫ.w.*, pattern *fa'īl*). In strictly phonetic terms, by looking at the other rhymes it becomes clear that the reading intended by the author is *raḫī*, with a final *yā'* serving as a *waṣl*, a *ḥarf* which, together with the preceding *ḥaraka*, equates a long vowel, in this case *ī*, coming after the *rawiyy*. The poem was submitted to the participants in the survey with the aim of observing what positions will be occupied by the stressed syllables at the end of the verses in their readings. The text was presented to them in a fully vocalized form reflecting the lection intended by the author, so as to facilitate a smooth reading and prevent their attention from being distracted by other possibly difficult elements they might stumble upon. A special care was taken not to inform them about the purpose of the survey, in order to preclude any interference that might spoil the experiment and distort its results.

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in syllabic terms, this means that the rhyme stretches over the interval encompassing the last two long syllables of the verse and whatever short syllables may come between them.

[30] We wish to thank our student Naǧāḥ Ša'bān and our colleagues Florentina Laurența Pîrlog and Yousra Rouchdi for helping us in collecting the recordings for this survey.

The results obtained from the eight readings of the poem are the following:
S1 stressed the first syllable of *raḫī* (*ráḫī*) and made a small pause before reading it.
S2 stressed the first syllable of *raḫī* (*ráḫī*).
S3 left both syllables of *raḫī* unstressed and placed the stress, instead, on the first syllable of *bālin* (*bā́lin raḫī*).
S4 stressed the penultimate syllable of both *taṣruḫī* and *raḫī* (*taṣrúḫī… ráḫī*), making a small pause before reading *raḫī*.
S5 stressed the penultimate syllable of both *taṣruḫī* and *raḫī* (*taṣrúḫī… ráḫī*).
S6 read *raḫī* with the desinential vowel *-i* and stressed the penultimate syllable, the one that becomes final in a fully pausal reading (*raḫíyyi*).
S7 stressed the first syllable of *raḫī* (*ráḫī*).
S8 stressed the final syllable of *raḫī* and also uttered the final consonantal *y*, but, probably because of its final position, it is not entirely clear if it is geminated or not (*raḫíy(y)*).
No apparent influence was exerted on the reading of any subject by his/her dialectal background.

The readings presented above offer us quite a few interesting data. It has to be admitted, right from the start, that the maximal expectation, of finding a reading that aligns all the stressed positions within the theoretical confines of the rhyme (* *'áfruḫī… táṣruḫī… lín raḫī*), did not materialize. However, this does not invalidate the premise of our experiment, but only makes us question the validity of the theoretically prescribed limits of the rhyme in relation to it and admit that, at least in some cases, maybe it is not the rhyme, with its traditionally inflexible boundaries, that should be taken into account, but the final portions of the verses delineated by somewhat looser limits, provided that they always contain the last stressed syllables. In hindsight, there is one inconvenient factor that mitigates, to a certain extent, the relevance of the results, namely the fact that the placement of the stress on each of the two syllables entails, like the readings have shown, not just prosodic but also phonetic differences, which means that for further experiments of this kind one should choose samples allowing the results to be attributed, with full confidence, to exclusively prosodic factors and considerations.

Despite all these possible reservations, it is clear that stress did play a role in determining the choices made by the readers, and the sheer variety of readings proves that the prosodic asymmetry between the rhymes, or, in less technically specific terms, between the ends of the verses did make them look for ways to eliminate or at least alleviate it. From a strictly statistical perspective, the placement of the stress on the second syllable of *raḫī* is in a clear minority, as only S6 and S8, that is two out of eight subjects, opted for it. As for the other six subjects, five of them (S1, S2, S4, S5 and S7) stressed the first syllable of *raḫī*, and the hesitation of S1 and S4 before reading it suggests that they took notice of the disparity they were faced with and settled upon their solution after a moment of deliberation.

The readings of S4 and S5 exhibit an effort to align the stress in the last two verses, by placing the stress in *taṣruḫī* on the penultimate syllable; these readings acquire additional importance in light of Bohas & Paoli's observation concerning the possibility that the penultimate short syllable of the verse be stressed, because the absence of a penultimate last stress in the first verse suggests that the stressing of *taṣruḫī* on its penultimate syllable was done, most likely, not in virtue of a general tendency like the one

signaled by Bohas & Paoli, but in anticipation of *raḫī* and out of a desire to harmonize the reading of *taṣruḫī* with its reading in particular.

The most drastic solution was resorted to by S3, who not only left *raḫī* unstressed, but placed the last stress of the verse on its pre-antepenultimate syllable, i.e. the first syllable of *bālin*, and this is the reading that comes closest, in our opinion, to the maximal expectation we have described above, because it exhibits the furthest displacement of the stress away from the end of the last verse, and if it does not completely fulfil this expectation by stressing the syllable *lin*, it may be because, despite the clear metrical function that is acquired by stress in these contexts, the rules governing lexical stress can still exert their influence and prevent some of the possible options from taking shape (in this case, the rule that might have dictated the position of the stress is the interdiction of stressing the last syllable in the complete, non-pausal form of a word – see note 25). Another factor that might have prevented the stressing of the syllable *lin* is the morphological boundary separating *lin* from *raḫī* and the fact that the sequence *lin raḫī* was, for obvious morphological reasons, not perceived as a unit suitable for bearing a single stress of its own. All this means that, in a context like this, metrical stress becomes a reality, but lexical stress rules, and maybe also morphological boundaries, are still not completely superseded and ignored.

If our maximal expectation, of a total alignment of the stress in the rhyme despite lexical stress rules and morphological boundaries, was not realized in our survey, we have found proof that it can nevertheless be realized while listening to recordings of Arabic poems available on the Youtube channel. One of these recordings[31] contains a song by the Lebanese singer Fayrūz, whose lyrics are the verses of a poem by the Lebanese poet Bišāra al-Ḫūrī (1885-1968). The poem is in the meter *basīṭ*, and the syllabic structure of the rhyme is – u u – (which means it belongs to the type of rhyme known as *mutarākiba* – ’Abū Ġarbiyya 2018: 262). The lack of stress alignment within the rhyme is found in the very first, internally rhymed, verse of the poem, i.e. its *maṭla‘*:

> *yabkī wa-yaḍḥaku lā ḥuznan wa-lā faraḥā / ka-‘āšiqin ḫaṭṭa saṭran fī l-hawā wa-maḥā*
> (“he cries and laughs not out of sorrow nor out of joy, / like a lover who wrote a line about love and then erased [it]”)

In the intervals occupied by the rhyme at the end of the two hemistichs, *lā faraḥā* and *wā wa-maḥā*, the last positions of the lexical stress do not coincide (*lā fáraḥā*, *wā wa-máḥā*), and yet, at min. 0’53’’, Fayruz can be heard stressing the conjunction *wa-*, “and”, coming before the verb *maḥā*, “he erased”, and she can be heard doing the same at min. 1’10’’, 2’10’’, 6’12’’, because the verse is repeated, as it often happens especially with the *maṭla‘*, more than once during the song, including at its very end. The difference between this context and the one exhibited by the sample used in our survey is, we think, that here the morphological boundary separating the two words is much weaker, because *wa-*, like all the other particles represented by single short syllables, has a strong tendency to behave, prosodically, like a proclitic attached to the following word. This situation also makes us revisit one particular statement of Bohas & Paoli (1997:188), whereby they adamantly deny the existence of metrical stress, irrespective of the kind of performance that might be involved (‘[q]uant à une éventuelle scansion métrique, psalmodie ou chant,

[31] Web address: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F9nOZiD-AY.

il n'y en a pas, ou plus, de traces"), as we cannot help but consider music, here, as yet another possible stimulus towards searching for this kind of prosodic harmony.

Finally, the most spectacular proof against the categorical denial of the existence of metrical stress in the recitation of Arabic poetry that we have been able to come upon so far – a proof that reinforces the idea that chanting and music really can stimulate the use of this device – comes from a number of recordings, also available on the Youtube channel, attributed to a person named 'Usāma al-Wā'iẓ, who, rather than plainly reciting Arabic poems, chants them and, in doing so, uses metrical stress quite consistently. The method that he uses predominantly in distributing the stress is the same that seems to be reflected by Nicholson's translations: he relies on the boundaries separating the hemistichs into feet and prosodically treats the sequences thus obtained as if they were words, placing the stress on the syllables that would be stressed in accordance with lexical stress rules, with no consideration for the position of the *watid* in general or of its long syllable in particular, whence it can be deduced that, contrary to Weil's theory, the *watid* is not afforded any special status.

In the remainder of our paper, we will exemplify some of the most prosodically significant features of his chanting technique.

The first verse we will be presenting, the *maṭla'* of a poem[32] by al-Mutanabbī (c. 915-965), has been chosen to illustrate al-Wā'iẓ's indifference towards the position of the *watid*:

li-hawā́ n-nufū/si sarī́ratun/ lā tú'lamū // 'araḍán naẓar/tu wa-ḫíltu 'an/nī 'áslamū

("the passion of the souls has an unknown inner disposition; / I had just taken a look by chance and thought I would be safe [from being stricken with passion]")

The poem is composed in the meter *kāmil* (*mutafā'ilun mutafā'ilun mutafā'ilun*, syllabic configuration: u u – u – / u u – u – / u u – u –; the first two short syllables of the foot alternate freely with a long one). As it can be seen above, we have segmented the verse into feet and placed accents on the vowels of the syllables stressed by al-Wā'iẓ, and it is obvious that these syllables are the ones that would be stressed in words having the syllabic structures of the feet characteristic of the *kāmil*: u u – ́u –, – – ́u –. The *watid*, in this meter, comes at the end of the feet, therefore, in accordance with Weil's theory, the stressed syllables would be those coming at the end of the feet (which is not the case):

**li-hawā n-nufū́/si sarīratún/ lā tu'lamū́ // 'araḍan naẓár/tu wa-ḫiltu 'án/nī 'aslamū́*

As we have mentioned before, not all the poems are stressed in this manner, and we think that, at least in some cases, the reason for this might be the asymmetrical character of the meters in question, i.e. the fact that they are composed of short and long feet alternating with each other. The following verse is the *maṭla'* of a poem[33] by 'Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī (932-968):

'arāka 'aṣiyya d-dam'i šīmatuka ṣ-ṣabru / 'a-mā li-l-hawā naḥyun 'alayka wa-lā 'amru

("I see you are immune to crying and are patient by disposition; / does passion have absolutely no authority over you?")

The poem's meter is the *ṭawīl* (*fa'ūlun mafā'īlun fa'ūlun mafā'īlun*, syllabic configuration: u – u / u – u u / u – u / u – u u) and its feet are different in size (in one

[32] The web address of the file containing its chanting is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6QOr3SdE_Q.

[33] The web address of the file containing its chanting is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbB2x1afhYU.

hemistich, the first and third feet are trisyllabic and the second and fourth are quadrisyllabic). This is one possible reason for which al-Wā'iẓ does not apply here the previously mentioned method, which would have yielded the following result:

** 'arā́ka/ 'aṣiyyá d-dam/'i šī́ma/tuka ṣ-ṣábrū // 'a-mā́ li-l/-hawā náhyun/ 'aláyka/ wa-lā 'ámrū*

Instead, he apparently divides each hemistich into two subunits, each containing two feet, and distributes the stress in a trochaic manner within them, with the exception of the last two syllables of each unit, which are left unstressed:

'árāká 'aṣíyya d-dam/'í šīmátuká ṣ-ṣabru // 'á-mā lí-l-hawā́ nahyun / 'álayká wa-lā́ 'amru

What makes us believe that the meter's asymmetry is the reason behind this special treatment of the poem is that, by dividing the hemistichs like he does, the chanter obtains, in a way, the meter's originally lacking symmetry, by creating, within each hemistich, two equally sized subunits. Going back to Weil's theory, we can see that the *watid*, that comes, in this meter, at the beginning of the feet, remains irrelevant even in this alternative way of partitioning the verse and distributing the stress, which is not surprising, given that the boundaries between feet have partially collapsed and, moreover, syllable quantity itself is ignored.

The last verse we will be looking at belongs to a poem[34] by 'Abū l-'Atāhiya (748-826):

yabkī́ wa-yaḍ/ḥáku ḏū/ nafsín muṣar/ráfatin // wa-llā́hu 'aḍ/ḥákahū/ wa-llā́hu 'ab/kā́hū

("someone whose soul is subjected to all sorts of changes cries and loughs, / and it is God who has made him lough, and [also] God who has made him cry")

The poem's meter is the *basīṭ* (*mustaf'ilun fā'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilun*, syllabic configuration: u u u – / u u – / u u u – / u u –), and it is also an asymmetric meter, with the alternation between short and long feet coming in a reversed order to that of the *ṭawīl*. As we have showed above by the partitioning of the verse into feet and the distribution of graphical accents, al-Wā'iẓ uses, once more, the first method we have signaled, consisting in prosodically treating the feet as if they were words, in spite of the meter's asymmetry. Nevertheless, the chanting of this poem exhibits an extraordinary feature – the first syllable of the second and third foot of each hemistich (*fā'ilun*), which is originally a quantitatively variable syllable, is constantly realized as long, and for achieving this purpose the chanter does not shy away from phonetically distorting the text by lengthening the short vowels of the etymologically short syllables that occupy this position (he appears to be lengthening all the short vowels of these syllables, even when the syllables are closed and thus long, but the most audible lengthening, for us, involves the vowels of the etymologically short, open syllables), so that a phonetically more faithful transcription of the verse would actually run as follows:

yabkī́ wa-yaḍ/ḥā́ku ḏū/ nafsín muṣar/rā́fatin // wa-llā́hu 'aḍ/ḥā́kahū/ wa-llā́hu 'ab/kā́hū (sic!)

If we were to look for an explanation, in light of the treatment of the previously cited poem in the meter *ṭawīl* and seeing as how the artificially lengthened vowels belong to the shorter of the two types of feet, we could take this phenomenon as yet another attempt, of a different kind, at compensating the asymmetry of a meter composed of differently sized feet.

[34] The web address of the file containing its chanting is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUORJT3kPSE.

The material presented so far allows us to conclude, rather confidently, that metrical stress is not totally absent from the recitation of Arabic poetry. It is certainly not an easily detectible feature – on the contrary, it is utterly marginal and one has to look hard for finding proof of its existence. But, under special circumstances like the ones described in this paper, it does come into being. These circumstances can be internal – the one that we have been able to discover is represented by rhyme, and the reaction of the reciters, readers or singers to it seems to be, in general, spontaneous, reflexive and not conditioned by theoretical expertise. Conversely, in the case of the type of chanting we have just described, the pervasive use of metrical stress appears to be heavily reliant on an in-depth knowledge of the system and a considerable degree of sophistication and artistry. All this does not tell us anything about previous stages in the evolution of Arabic poetry and its recitation, as the existence of the hitherto described phenomena can be explained within a strictly synchronic framework and, thus, we see no reason to treat them as some remnants of a formerly extant and now largely lost tradition. A more easily conceivable opening towards diachrony would be realized by considering the already mentioned possibility of the erosion of syllable quantity taking place in connection with the consolidation of stress, but this would offer a platform for projecting our interest on future rather than past developments by studying the potential proliferation of metrical stress and assessing the extent to which it can be treated as a consequence of the erosion of syllable quantity. In relation with the different theories reviewed by us at the beginning of this paper, the only element that seems to be validated is the credit given by some of them to the partition into feet as a central feature of the prosodic system. As for the marked tendency, on the part of the first generations of orientalists that have treated the subject, of constantly seeking sources of inspiration in music, it is not supported by the conditions and rules governing the use of metrical stress that we have come upon. On the contrary, we have noticed that there is a strong connection with rules already extant in the linguistic prosody of the Arabic language, i.e. the rules governing lexical stress.

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