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'Semantic rhyme' (parallelism) in Andalusian muwaššah

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‘SEMANTIC RHYME’ (PARALLELISM) IN ANDALUSIAN *MUWAŠŠAHĀT*

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As I was told, a Dutch professor of linguistics (whose name I do not want to reveal) was recently inspired to coin the term ‘semantic rhyme’ to refer to recurrent motifs and similarities in content and identical grammatical structures in poems. A similar phenomenon – generally identified as ‘parallelism’ – exists in literature, however, and it covers at least part of the notion of semantic rhyme. The Book of Proverbs in the Bible contains well-known examples of parallelism.

Variation in rhymes is also a prominent feature of the *muwaššahāt*. In addition to the formal features of the genre, it may thus be appropriate to analyse features of the content – to look for recurrent themes and recurrent grammatical patterns in addition to rhymes and metres¹.

In many respects, the language of the *muwaššah* is conditioned by the metre, with short clauses and many rhymes. The prosody of the *muwaššah* is usually considered in terms of quantitative metrics, as is customary with classical Arabic poetry. According to some Spanish scholars, however, it can be stress-syllabic². At any rate, it is undeniable that the metres of practically all *muwaššahāt* known today display a regular pattern of long and short syllables³. The *ağṣān* [main part of the strophes] and the *asmāt* [refrain parts of the strophes] of a poem often have

1 In a recent article I have discussed definitions, forms, contents and historical appearance of the *muwaššah* with an extensive bibliography, see A. Schippers, *s.v. Muwaššah*, in *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, On Line, Brill, Leiden 2011.

2 Federico Corriente, “The Metres of the Muwaššah, an Andalusian Adaptation of ‘Arūd (a Bridging Hypothesis)”, *Journal of Arabic Literature [JAL]* 13, 1982, pp. 76-82; Federico Corriente, “Again on the Metrical System of *Muwaššah* and *Zajal*”, *JAL* 17, 1986, pp. 34-49; criticised by Gregor Schoeler, “Review of Ibn Quzman, *Cancionero*, ed. Federico Corriente, Madrid, 1980”, in: *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 40, 1983, pp. 311-312; Alan Jones, “Sunbeams from Cucumbers? An Arabist’s Assessment of the State of Kharja Studies”, *La Corónica* 10, 1981-1982, pp. 38-53.

3 James T. Monroe, “¿Pedir peras al olmo? On Medieval Arabs and Modern Arabists”, *La Corónica* 10, 1982-1983, pp. 121-147.

different metres. As attested in Ġāzī's anthology⁴, the metres include *basīṭ*, *bazaj*, *ṭawīl*, *madīd*, *rajaz*, *ramal*, *munsariḥ*, *ḥafīf*, *muḡtatt*, *mutaqārib*, *muḡtaḏab*, which are generally short metres.

Albert Arazi⁵ introduces the theory proposed by Ḥāzīm al-Qarṭājannī that long metres are more transparent than short ones are. Long metres provide the poet with access to a 'surplus of vital space', allowing the free use of sentences and phrases that are close to normal speech and ordinary expressions in the language. The poet has enough space to avoid doing violence to the words (as noted by Jakobson⁶) and is not restrained by any special hindrances. In contrast, a poet who chooses short metres allots himself only limited space. Seeking to express as many themes and motifs as his colleagues who work with long metres do, he tends to create an overload of themes. This accumulation of themes constitutes the character of the short metres. Constrained to avoid common, superficial and predictable expressions, the poet concentrates on an elliptic, accumulative and precious mode of expression that is close to mannerism.

In this contribution, I limit my discussion to the effect of short metre in some early *muwašṣaḥāt*, notably two poems by 'Ubādah ibn Mā' al-Samā' (d. 1028 or 1031)⁷, as they appear in the anthology edited by Muṣṭafā Ġāzī⁸. In examining some early *muwašṣaḥāt* from this anthology, I want to show that the poet's message is ultimately very simple. Instead of condensing a topic or theme into a short piece of line within a short metre, he expands the very simple theme broached in the beginning into an accumulation of lines by continually adding identical sound patterns and identical-sounding topics.

4 Muṣṭafā Ġāzī, *Dīwān al-Muwašṣaḥāt al-Andalusīya*, 2 vols., Alexandria: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1979.

5 Albert Arazi, "Métrique et langage poétique, le cas de Ḥālid al-kātib et des poètes de muwašṣaḥ", in: Sasson Somekh (ed.), *Israel Oriental Studies* 11, Leiden: Brill, 1991, pp. 107–136; especially pp. 113 ff. Arazi analyses several *muwašṣaḥāt* by al-A'mā al-Tuṭīlī and poems by Ḥālid al-kātib. His conclusion is that Ḥāzīm al-Qarṭājannī is only true for long metres. We will not investigate here Ḥāzīm's theory, but concentrate upon 'semantic rhyme' and parallelism in some early Andalusian *muwašṣaḥāt*.

6 Roman Jakobson, O češskom stixu preimuščestvenno vsopostavlenii s ruskim, *Sborniki po Teorii Poëticeskogo Jazyka* 5, Berlin, Moskwa : Sborniki 1923, p. 16.

7 Samuel Miklos Stern, *Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry: Studies*. Selected and Edited by L. P. Harvey, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, pp. 63–66; p. 94. See L. Alvarez, in Julie Scott Meisami & Paul Starkey (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, London: Routledge 1998, Vol. 1 p. 347.

8 Muṣṭafā Ġāzī, *Dīwān al-Muwašṣaḥāt al-Andalusīya*. 2 vols. Alexandria: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1979, Vol. 1, pp. 5–10.

The style of ‘Ubādah ibn Mā’ al-Samā’ was characterized as follows by Ibn Bassām:⁹ “Then there appeared our ‘Ubādah [b. Mā’ al-Samā’] who invented the [technique] of *tadfir*, that is to say, he reinforced the caesurae in the *āḡsān* by adding internal rhyming to them, just as al-Ramādī had reinforced the caesurae in the *markaz*.”

Ġāzī qualifies the structure of Ibn Mā’ al-Samā’ ‘s first *muwašṣaḥ*¹⁰ as *muṣaṭṭar mar’ūs sādiḡ*. It has two hemistichs, the first being shortened to one foot only, further it has a *muḡammas* structure (i.e five strophes and five verses). The *sarī‘* metre can be described as *fā‘ilun/ mustaf‘ilun -mustaf‘ilun-fā‘ilun//*

This metre goes as follows: LSL//XXSL/XXSL/LSL//

The following topics are addressed in this *muwašṣaḥ*:

0. A general statement about the injustice/cruelty of the beloved, with a reference to the eyes of the gazelle/beloved
1. Dialogue with the beloved exhorting him to be just and show his willingness, as the poet-lover suffers from burning love
2. The fire of seductions and the shooting of the beloved
3. Invocation of his beloved because of his reproachers, who themselves are free of love
4. The eyes of the beloved, which kill, but which are slow, generous gifts at the same time
5. Dialogue with the beloved, the poet-lover asks him to spare him with his eyes in the refrain part of this strophe.

The subject of the poem is restricted almost exclusively to the eyes of the beloved. Although the metre is extremely short, the poet nevertheless uses enjambment to create a full sentence in strophe 0. This sentence stresses the exceptional position of the eyes, which are mentioned throughout the entire poem. The poet uses all of the space in the five strophes to expand upon the same topic. It is not the case that the poet is restricted by the limited space of the short metre. Is it the poet himself who is extending the subject.

0. *Man walī/ fī ummatin amran wa lam ya’dili/*
 [Whosoever is in charge of power within a people, but is not just//
Yu’adālī/ illā liḡāza l-rašā’i -l-akḡali/
 Will be reproached, except for the glances of the black-eyed gazelle//

9 Ibn Bassām, *Kitāb al-Ḍaḡira fī maḡāsin ahl al-Jazīra*, ed. I. ‘Abbās, Beyrouth 1979, I, i, p. 469; James T. Monroe, ‘Zajal and Muwashshaha’, in Salma Khadra Jayyusi (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, Leiden: Brill, 1992, p. 410.

10 Cf. Alan Jones, ‘Index of Andalusian Arabic *muwašṣaḥāt*’, in Alan Jones and Richard Hitchcock (eds.), *Studies on the Muwašṣaḥ and the Kharja*, Oxford: Ithaca Press 1991, pp. 190-191 [no. 527].

The introductory strophe contains a general statement that is intended to emphasise the injustice of the beloved. The eyes of the beloved are an exceptional factor, casting doubt upon the general value expressed in the sentence.

1. *Jurta fi/ ħukmi-ka fi qatliya yā musrifu//*
 [You were unjust in your sentencing me to death, mischief!]
Fa-nṣif/ fā-wājibun an yunṣifa-l-munṣifu//
 [Be just, as a judge is bound to do justice]
Wa-rʿaf/ fa-inna hādā-l-šawqa lā yarʿafu//
 [And be merciful, for this longing is without pity.]
ʿAllili/ qalbī bi-dāka-l-bāridi-l-salsali//
 [Give my heart a second drink from this icy cold fountain.]
Yanjali/ mā bi-fuʿādī min jawan mušʿili//
 [So that the burning pain disappears from my heart.]

The first strophe contains the key words ‘just’ and ‘unjust’, and it mentions the death sentence that was pronounced over the lover. In this context, the imperatives to ‘be just’ and to ‘be merciful’ are roughly parallel expressions, with the roots *nsf* and *rʿf* repeated several times. The third imperative, to grant a second drink, fits into this context, and the conclusive part refers to the antithesis between granting cold water and the burning pain of love in the poet’s heart. This strophe thus contains three parallel imperatives.

2. *Innamā/ tabruzu kay tūqida nāra-l-ḥitan//*
 [You came only along to enflame the fire of seductions]
Ṣanamā/ muṣawwaran min kulli šayʿin ḥasan//
 [As an idol coloured with all manner of good things]
In ramā/ lam yuḥḫī min dūni -l-qulūbi-l-junan//
 [When he shoots, he does not miss the shields of the hearts]
Kayfa lī/ taḥalluṣun min saḥmi-ka -l-mursali//
 [How should I escape from your arrow, once it has been shot ?]
Fa-šili/ wa-stabqi-nī ḥayyan wa-lā taqtuli//
 [So come, let me live, and do not kill me.]

The second strophe begins with the fire of seductions; the beloved is compared to an idol who shoots against the shields of hearts. There is a parallelism between the verse in the third person (‘he does not miss the shields of hearts’) and the verse in the first person (‘how should I escape from your arrow, once it has been shot?’). Another parallelism is contained in the phrase ‘let me live, and do not kill me’.

3. *Yā sanā/ al-šamsi yā abbā min a-l-kawkabi//*
 [Oh splendour of the sun, brighter than the star]

Yā munā/ al-naḥsi yā su'li wa-yā maṭlabī//
 [Oh desire of my soul, oh my demand, my pursuit!]
Hā anā/ ḥalla bī-'a'dā'i-ka mā ḥalla bī //
 [Oh me! May your enemies be overcome, what has overcome me!]
'Uḍḍalī / min alami-l-hijrāni fī ma'zili//
 [My reproachers are detached from the pains of separation!]
Wa-l-ḥalī / fī-l-ḥubbi lā yas'alu 'amman bulī//
 [He who is free of love does not ask about the one who has suffered.]

Parallelisms dominate the third strophe as well, including 'Oh splendour of the sun!' and 'brighter than the star' and 'Oh desire of my soul', 'my demand' and 'my pursuit'. The three last lines contain the following parallelisms: the sufferings that have overcome the lover and, in the next line, 'the pains of separation'. The enemies are parallel to the reproachers. The poet draws a further parallel between the people who are 'detached from the pains of separation' and those who are 'free of love'.

4. Anta qad/ ṣayyarta bi-l-ḥusni min al-ruṣḍi ḡay//
 [You have made, by beauty, right into blame.]
Lam ajid/ fī ṭarafay ḥubbi-ka ḍanban 'alay//
 [I did not feel in the extremes of your love any fault against me]
Fa-tta'id/ wa-in taṣa' qatliya ṣay'an fa-ṣay//
 [Take it easy! even though you want to kill me bit by bit!]
Ajmilī/ wa-wālī-nī min-ka yada-l- muḥḍilī//
 [Be generous and give me, from you, the hand of the abundant giver!]
Fa-hya lī/ min ḥasanāti -l-zamani -l-muḡbili//
 [So that, for me, these gifts can belong to the good things of the time to come!]

The fourth strophe also contains elements that are parallel and repeated more than once: keywords are connected with right and blame, which are mentioned in the two first lines. The blame against the poet is that the beloved wants to kill him; the killing must then be 'bit for bit' or 'Be still'. The poet wants the beloved to 'be generous' and to 'give with the hand of the abundant giver'. The final line also expresses a desire for the gift in the time to come.

5. Mā-ḡtaḍā/ ṭarḥiya illā bi-sanā nāzīray-k//
 [My eye will be nourished only by the splendour of your eyes]
Wa-kadā/ fī-l-ḥubbi mā bī laysa yaḥfā 'alay-k //
 [And so, in the love from that which is in me, nothing is hidden from you]
Fa li-qā/ unṣidu wa-l-qalbu raḥīnun laday-k//
 [I therefore recite, while my heart is held in pledge:]
Yā 'Alī / sallatū jafnay-ka 'alā maḡtalī//
 [Oh 'Alī, I have empowered your eyes to kill me!]

Fa-bqi-lī qalbī wa-jud bi-l-faḍli, yā maw'ili
[And let my heart live, and be generous with abundance, my refuge!]

The fifth strophe also contains keywords that were present in previous strophes: the eyes, the love and the heart of the lover, which is held in pledge by the beloved. The last part is directed to the poet's beloved 'Alī, once again, with a plea not to kill him – as the eyes of 'Alī have the power to do so – but to be generous and spare him. The entire poem is filled with parallelism and repetition.

B. Another example is to be found in his second *muwašṣaḥ*:¹¹

Ġāzī qualifies the official analysis of the metre as a *muḥammas muzdawij mujarrad a'raju-l-qufl muraṣṣa'* of the *rajaḥ* metre, having a structure of five strophes and five verses [of unequal length], double rowed, pure [without additions], limping of *qufl* [refrain part], inlaid with inner rhyme [*tarṣī'*].

The *rajaḥ* metre in the *bayt* [main part of the strophe] can be described as *mustaḥḥilun/fa'ūlun/mustaḥḥilun-fa'ūlun//*

This metre can usually be expressed as follows:

Thus according to LLSL/ or SSSL/ with three feet [with some variants]; in this poem, two feet.

The basis for the *qufl* [refrain part] is

Mustaḥḥilun fa'ūlun/ mustaḥḥilun mustaḥḥilun mus/ taḥḥilun fa'ūlun//.

The abnormality is evident in the cripple refrain.

The introductory part, which indicates the refrain rhyme, begins as follows:

0. *Ḥubb al-mahā 'ibādah//*

[The love for the cows (= women with beautiful eyes) is a religious duty.]

Min kulli bassāmi -l-siwwāri / qamarun yaṭla'//

[From all of the splendid stars, a rising moon ascends]

Min ḥusni āfāqi -l-kamāli/ ḥusnu-bu-l-abda'//

[From the beauty of the horizons of perfection/ its most wondrous beauty]

The refrain rhyme is presented in the opening part. Other strophes contain a clear dichotomy between the initial part of the strophe and the refrain, in motif as well as metre and rhyme. Several of the subsequent strophes clearly consist of two parts: a descriptive opening part and a final part consisting of speech. The motif of this introduction is a proverb or sentence: 'the love for the cows is a religious

11 Cf. Alan Jones, 'Index of Andalusian Arabic *muwašṣaḥāt*', in Alan Jones and Richard Hitchcock (eds.), *Studies on the Muwašṣaḥ and the Kharja*, Oxford: Ithaca Press, 1991, pp. 194-195 [no. 572].

duty'. The remainder of these lines are a prelude to the mention of the beautiful beloved woman.

1. *Li-l-Lābi dātu ḥusni/ malīḥatu-l-muḥayyā//*
 [What a beautiful lady, with a lovely face]
La-hā qawāmu ḡuṣni/ wa-šinfu-hā-l-turayyā//
 [She has the figure of a branch, her earrings being the Pleiades]
Wa-l-taḡru ḥabbu muzni/ ruḏābu-hu-l-ḥumayyā//
 [Her bright mouth is the bubble of a cloud, its saliva being the wine.]
Min rašfi-bi sa'ādab//
 [From sobbing it, comes happiness]
Ka-anna-hu širfu l-'uqāri/ jawharun ruṣṣi'//
 [As if it were pure wine, a jewel that was inlaid]
Yasqī-ka min ḥulwi-l-zulāli/ tayyiba-l-mašra'//
 [It pours you sweet pureness, healthy of source]

In the first strophe, we make acquaintance with elements that will be repeated in the following strophes. The beautiful lady has an erect posture, a quality that is repeated in the second strophe, and her neck is apparently long, as the earrings are in a lofty position, as the Pleiades in the sky. This qualification is also repeated in the second strophe, which refers to the 'roaming of necklace', which carries the same implication. The bright mouth, lips and saliva will reappear in the other strophes (e.g. the second and third), although the motif of 'saliva as wine' from the first strophe is extended over multiple verses until the end.

2. *Rašiqatu-l-ma'ātif/ ka-l-ḡuṣni fi-l-qawāmi//*
 [She is elegant in the curves of her body as a branch in an upright state]
Šubdiyyatu-l-marāšif/ ka-l-durri fi niḡāmi//
 [Lips tasting of honey, [her teeth] like pearls on a string]
Di'šyyatu-l-rawādif/ wa-l-ḥaṣru dū-nbiḏāmi//
 [Buttocks like sandhills, but with a waist full of slenderness]
Jawwālatu-l-qilādab//
 [Roaming of necklace [because of her long neck, AS]
Maḥlulatun 'aqdu l-izāri/ ḥusnu-hā abda'//
 [Loosened the knot of her loincloth, whose beauty even more splendid]
Min ḥusni dayyāka-l-ḡazāli/ akḥali-l-madma'//
 [Than the beauty of that gazelle near you who is black painted of eyelids.]

The second strophe contains the description of the beloved woman's body, rather than her face, which receives emphasis again in the third strophe. In the second strophe, only the mouth (teeth and lips) are mentioned as elements belonging to

her face. The first and third verses contain contrasts between round and straight: curves versus an upright position and the thickness of the buttocks versus the slenderness of waist. The verse referring to the ‘roaming of necklace’ is reminiscent of the verse segment of ‘Umar ibn Abi Rabī‘ah¹²: ‘The chasm below her earrings is deep’. Bāqillānī’s *Ijāz al-Qur’ān*¹³ contains the following commentary on this verse segment; ‘[Here] he wants to describe merely the length of her neck, but actually mentions only a feature from this quality of hers’. The expression ‘roaming of necklace’ may also refer to the length of her neck.

This strophe contains no dichotomy between description and speech, as in the two strophes that follow, but merely a continuation of the description. The final part, however, contains a comparative, as in the final parts of the third strophe; it also contains the contrast between the beloved woman and a male gazelle, as in strophe five.

3. *Layliyyatu-l-dawā’ib/ wa-wajhu-hā nahāru//*

[She is nightly dark in her tresses, but her face is daylight]

Maṣqūlatu-l-tarā’ib/ wa-rashfu-hā ‘uqāru//

[Her chest is polished, and sipping her is drinking wine]

Aṣdāḡu-hā ‘aqārib/ wa-l-ḥaddu jullanāru//

[The hairs covering her temples are scorpions, and the cheeks are pomegranate blossoms]

Nadaytu “wa-fu’āda!”//

[I shouted: “Oh heart of mine!”]

Min ḡādatin dāta-ḡtidāri/ laḡzu-hā aḡta’//

[Because of a tender bough [i.e. soft woman] full of power, whose glance is more cutting]

Min ḥaddi masqūli-l-niṣāli / fi-l-fatā-l-aṣṣa’//

[Than the edge of a polished sword/ upon a brave fighter.]

The third strophe describes the outward appearance of the beloved lady’s face, with its killing glances. In the first lines, colour-based antithesis plays a role: black hair contrasted against the white face, a polished or white appearance contrasted against dark-red lips, with her saliva behind them, tasty as red wine. The black scorpions are contrasted with the red cheeks, which are compared to pomegranate blossoms. The traditional underlying motif for the combinations of scorpions and cheeks is that the black temple hair constitutes the scorpions that defend the red cheeks of the beloved from being kissed. The cheeks of a beloved are always red, due to her proverbial bashfulness.

The final part of the strophe is direct speech. As in the fourth strophe, there is a clear caesura between the descriptive part in the beginning and the more

12 ‘Umar ibn Abi Rabī‘ah, *Dīwān*, ed. P. Schwarz: Leipzig, 1901, p. 77

13 Cf. Gustave von Grunebaum, *A Tenth century Document*, Chicago, 1950, p. 8.

involved second and final parts, which addresses the audience with direct speech or exclamations. As in the second strophe, there is a comparative. The poet refers to the woman as a ‘tender bough’ – an expression that will be repeated in the fourth strophe, just as ‘*iqtidāri*’ (power) will be repeated in the fifth strophe.

4. *Safarjalu –l-nubūdi/ fi marmari-l-ṣudūri//*

[Quinces of breasts on marble of chests]

Yuzbā ‘alā-l-‘uqūdi/ min labbati-l-nubūri//

[Are proud above the necklaces of the upper parts of the breasts]

Bi-muqlatin wa-ḡīdi/ min ḡādatin safūri//

[With an eye and a neck, from a tender bough [i.e. soft woman] without veil]

Ḥubbī la-hā ‘ibādab//

[My love for her is a religious duty]

A‘ūdu min dāka-l-faḡāri/ bi-rashan yarta’//

[I take my refuge to a gazelle against that excellence, a gazelle pasturing]

Fī rawḡi azḡāri-l-jamāli/ kullamā ayna’//

[In the garden of the flowers of beauty, every time it ripens.]

The description of the woman in the fourth strophe contains many parallel elements: the alternation between breasts, chest and neck and necklaces is stressed repeatedly. For the second time, the word *ḡādab* [tender bough] is used to describe the lady. The final part of the strophe introduced by the sentence ‘My love for her is a religious duty’ reminds us the identical expression in the introductory strophe 0, and is interesting, as it contrasts the woman with a male gazelle for the second time.

5. *Aḡḡatu-l-ḡuyūli/ naḡiyātu-l-tiyābi//*

[Decent of skirts/ clean of clothes]

Sallābatu-l-‘uqūli / araqqu min ṣarābi//

[Taking away the intellects/ more subtle than the effect of wine]

Aḡḡā la-hā nuḡūli/ fi-l-ḡubbi min ‘adābi //

[my leanness in love became, with her, a punishment]

Fī l-nawmi lī ṣarādab//

[In the sleep is for me a distraction]

Wa-ḡukmu-hā ḡukmu qtidāri/ kulla-mā umna’ //

[And her sentence is a sentence of power, every time when I am denied]

Min-hā, fa-in ṡayfu-l-ḡayāli/ zāra-nī ahja’//

From her, but when the phantom of imagination visits me, I slumber.

The fifth strophe also contains clear parallelism in the description of the woman: ‘decent in skirts’ and ‘clean in clothes’ are intended as near synonyms. Her charms

bear influence on the mind of the beloved, recalling the wine description in Abū Tammām's poem no. 2.¹⁴ The first part is descriptive, while the second and last parts are more sententious. In particular, the line with *'Ibādah* serves the same function as did the sentence in the earlier strophe with *'Ibādah* [love as a religious duty]. In the last part of the strophe strikes the repetition of words that are used earlier - *Ḥukm* (sentence) and *Iqtidār* (power) - , and the effect of sleep in order to see the phantom of his lady is stressed as a distraction from his pangs of love.

In the five strophes together, we see several repeated elements that are parallel to each other. Examples include the dichotomy of description and speech, the repetition of comparative constructs, the repetition of the contrast between the woman and a male gazelle, and the repetition of such words as *Iqtidār* and *ḡādah*.

Conclusions

In both *muwašṣaḥāt* that we discussed in this article, we see the overwhelming presence of parallelism and repetition. The use of short metre does not mean that the poet has allotted himself only limited space within which to express as many themes and motifs as do his colleagues who use the long metre, thus creating an overload of themes while avoiding common, superficial and predictable expressions. On the contrary, the poet confines himself to one or two motifs, expanding and repeating them as much as possible.

SUMMARY

In this contribution the effect of short metre is discussed in some early *muwašṣaḥāt*, notably two poems by 'Ubādah ibn Mā' al-Samā' (d. 1028 or 1031). In examining these strophic poems, it appeared clearly that the poet's message is ultimately very simple. Instead of condensing a topic or theme into a short piece of line within a short metre, he expands the very simple theme into an accumulation of lines by continually adding identical sound patterns and identical-sounding topics. In both *muwašṣaḥāt* we see the overwhelming presence of parallelism and repetition.

14 Abū Tammām, *Diwān*, ed. 'Azzām, Vol. 1, no. 2, Cairo 1969, 26 ff.