



Kitāb Kamāl adab al-ghinā'

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# Kitāb Kamāl adab al-ghinā'

*The Book for the Completion of Musical Knowledge*

*By*

Al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Kātib [fl. 2nd half of the  
4th/10th century and the beginning of the 5th/11th century]

*Annotated translation and commentary by*

George Dimitri Sawa



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To the children of Gaza, orphaned, starved,  
traumatized, maimed, and massacred.  
We shall never forget you!





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## Preface

Al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Kātib’s *Kitāb Adab al-ghinā’* (*The book for the completion of musical knowledge*) is one of two unique treatises coming down to us from the fifth/eleventh century; the other is *Ḥāwī al-Funūn wa-salwat al-maḥzūn* (*Encompasser of the arts and consoler of the grief-stricken*) by Abū l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān al-Mūsīqī (d. after 449/1057). Both were written by practicing musicians and composers, and as such provide a most welcome supplement of musical practices to the fourth-/tenth-century legacy of music theory and literature, namely, the works of al-Fārābī (b. before 258/872 or 873; d. 339/950) and al-Iṣfahānī (284–360/897–971).

Little is known about the biography of the author; Shiloah surmised that he probably lived somewhere between Aleppo and Mosul, and flourished from the second half of the fourth/tenth century to the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

*Kitāb Adab al-ghinā’* (*The book for the completion of musical knowledge*) has an introduction and forty-three chapters dealing with the concept of *ṭarab*; the sophistication, meanings, and effects of melodies and their tight correspondence to the poem; the superiority of older music and poetry; the superiority of the musical arts over other arts and the superiority of theory over practice; how music affects the soul and the emotions; tetrachords; sound production, timbre, pitches, and durations; the resemblance between the rational soul and consonant notes, and the resemblance of the soul, melodies, and the celestial sphere; the definition of music, as well as the syllabic versus melismatic composition, and measured versus unmeasured music; the detailed lute fretting and string ratios with information about the tone system in the fifth/eleventh century; the fretting of the pandore; the tones extracted from the *nāy* and their relation to the lute fretting; consonant intervals; consonant letters; breathing; poetic meters; musical forms and structures; extensive and priceless details about vocal and instrumental ornamentations; the nature of preludes, interludes, postludes, and cadences; the aesthetics of what to highlight and what to hide in melodies; opening songs; melodic and rhythmic modes; composition, contrafacta, and partial contrafacta; string measurements and proportions; the qualities of a good singer; facial expressions and bodily movements; praise and requests for repetitions; what are beneficial for throats; lute dimensions and types of wood; music education; the origin of music, invention of instruments,

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1 Sh. 6–11.

and the role of instrumental music in relation to the voice; and the sources he used for the treatise.

The unique copy of this treatise is in Istanbul's Topkapı Sarayı MS 1727. It was copied in the city of Sinjār<sup>2</sup> in 625/1225 by al-Ḥasan b. Yūsuf Abī l-Qāsim al-Malakī al-Ashrafī. He was likely a secretary in the service of the Ayyūbid ruler al-Malik al-Ashraf (578–635/1182–1237) who occupied Sinjār in 607/1210–1201; he was a generous and cultured ruler and it is possible that the copy of the MS was done for him.<sup>3</sup> The MS is in 121 folios, the dimension of each page is 22×15 cm, with nine lines per page; the calligraphy is very beautiful, often with full diacritical marks, and according to Shiloah, the calligraphy is the regular one used in Ayyūbid times.<sup>4</sup> The original title on fol. 1 is *Kitāb al-Mūsīqī wa-ma'nāhu Kitāb Adab al-ghinā'* (*Book of music, meaning the book for the completion of musical knowledge*).<sup>5</sup>

Many chapters are based on al-Fārābī; al-Kātib's aim was probably to popularize al-Fārābī's writings. In the process of doing this, he summarized them a great deal; in other instances, there are serious lacunae that I filled using the original text, following the examples of Shiloah and Khashaba. Thus, al-Kātib does not add to the theories of al-Fārābī or to the writings of al-Iṣfahānī; however, being a performer and a composer like Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (a point that makes his treatise so priceless), he adds terms and their definitions relating to vocal and instrumental ornamentations. For instance, the list from al-Kātib's chapters 23, 24, and 35 (90 terms) plus the list from Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapters 25, 26, and part 2, chapter 15 (159 terms) are very important additions to al-Iṣfahānī's vocal terms, and to al-Fārābī's instrumental and vocal techniques and rhythmic variations and his masterly classification of voices. In the field of composition, al-Kātib provides useful details regarding *contrafacta* and partial *contrafacta*, as well as the step by step process to set a poem to music, namely, starting with the first poetic foot and setting it to a musical division and assessing the result, then moving on to other poetic feet until the verse is completely and

2 This city is in the Sinjār district of the Nineveh Governorate in northern Iraq; it is five kilometers south of the Sinjār mountains.

3 Sh. 3; al-Zirikli, *al-A'lām* vii, 237–238.

4 Sh. 3.

5 Although the word *ghinā'* means singing or vocal melody, it is clear from the content of the treatise that al-Kātib meant the musical arts in general, including composition, education, instrumental performance, aesthetics, etc. The author dispenses with the beginning of the title *Kitāb al-Mūsīqī* (*Book of music*) and presents the *Kitāb Adab al-ghinā'* (*The book for the completion of musical knowledge*) which mirrors the content of the treatise as he explains later on fol. 20; p. 6. The names of various owners and readers of this MS appear in the margins of fols. 1 and 240–241, see Sh. 4–5.

satisfactory set to music (chapters 29 and 30). For music education, he advises the student on how to choose a good teacher and listen to the works of great masters; he also advises them on how to circumvent their shortcomings (chapters 33 and 41). With regard to performance, he tells musicians about attractive facial expressions and bodily movements, how to breathe properly, what to highlight and what to hide in a song, and how to choose the correct song to start a performance (chapters 18, 34, 25–27). Finally, of great importance, he advises about the beneficial foods and drinks and the effect of the physical setting on the voice (chapter 39). These topics are also found in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, and all combined, supplement the writings of al-Fārābī and al-Iṣfahānī.

Al-Kātib's *Kamāl Adab al-ghinā'* (*Completion of the musical knowledge*) and Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's *Ḥāwī al-Funūn* (*Encompasser of the arts*) resemble each other in several respects, they share the same subject matter, they divide topics into short chapters, and use the same relatively little-known fourth-/tenth-century sources, such as the musical writings of [Ibn] al-Za'farānī.<sup>6</sup> Unlike Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, al-Kātib makes extensive use of the writings of al-Fārābī on musical aesthetics, philosophy, the fretting of the lute and the pandore, the holes in the *nāy* and their equivalent note on the frets of the lute.

To make this translation I accessed a facsimile of the original MS (1727, Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı MS) and the excellent and scholarly edition of my elder and friend, the late Prof. Amnon Shiloah. Shiloah's herculean endeavor was accomplished without the use of Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's *Ḥāwī al-funūn* (*Encompasser of the arts*), a complementary musical dictionary written in the same era, or al-Fārābī's two treatises on rhythms that are important revisions to his theory of rhythms (*κI* and *κII*). These three works would have solved many obscurities in al-Kātib's rather difficult treatise. I have also used the Iraqi edition of Zakariyyā Yūsuf and the Cairo edition of Khashaba.<sup>7</sup> The latter two helped a great deal when I encountered effaced words or unclear handwriting; however, neither one has the copious footnotes and commentaries of Shiloah's work, or his glossaries and indexes.

6 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Ḥāwī al-funūn*, ed. Neubauer vii.

7 ZY 101–154.

## Acknowledgments

I wish to express my eternal gratitude to Dr. Eckhard Neubauer (Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at Goethe University, Frankfurt) for his generous spirit and advice over the last forty-five years on bibliographical, linguistic, musicological, and sociocultural issues. I wish to thank my friend Tricia Postle for typing the musical examples. I wish to thank Prof. Bryan Gillingham (Institute of Mediaeval Music's publisher in Lions Bay, Canada), for permission to use the lute and pandore charts from my book, *Music performance practice in the early Abbāsid era*. I wish to thank Valerie Joy Turner for her thorough and patient editing and guidance with this book. I wish to thank my wife, Suzanne Meyers Sawa, for her encouragement in all my scholarly endeavors over many years.

# Abbreviations

- EI*<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., Leiden 1913–1938.
- EI*<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs. 12 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1954–2004.
- EI*<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*. Edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson. Leiden: Brill, 2007–.
- KA* al-Iṣfahānī, Abū l-Faraj, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 24 vols., Cairo 1927–1974.
- KI* al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr, *Kitāb al-Īqā'āt*, Istanbul: Topkapı Sarayı MS III, Ahmet 1878, fols. 160b–167a.
- KII* al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr, *Kitāb Iḥṣā' al-īqā'āt*, Manisa [Turkey] Public Library MS 1705, fols. 59–90a.
- KMK* al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr, *Kitāb al-Mūsīqī al-kabīr*, ed. Ghaṭṭās 'Abd al-Malik Khashaba, rev. and intro. Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī, Cairo 1967.
- MA* al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr, *Grand traité de la musique. Kitāb al-Mūsīqī al-kabīr: La Musique arabe*, 2 vols., trans. B.R. d'Erlanger, Paris, 1930, 1935.
- N-KI* Neubauer, Eckhard, *The science of music in Islam*, vol. 3: *Arabische Musiktheorie von den Anfängen bis zum 6./12. Jahrhundert. Studien, Übersetzungen und Texte in Faksimile*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, 128–184, 335–336.
- N-KII* Neubauer, Eckhard, *The science of music in Islam*, vol. 3: *Arabische Musiktheorie von den Anfängen bis zum 6./12. Jahrhundert. Studien, Übersetzungen und Texte in Faksimile*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, 185–310, 335–336.
- Kh.* al-Kātib, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb Kamāl adab al-ghinā'*, ed. Ghaṭṭās 'Abd al-Malik Khashaba, rev. Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī, Cairo 1975.
- Sh.* al-Kātib, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb Kamāl adab al-ghinā'*, trans. A. Shiloah, as *La Perfection des connaissances musicales. Kitāb Kamāl adab al-ghinā'*, Bibliothèque d'études islamiques, vol. 5, Paris 1972.
- ZY* al-Kātib, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb Kamāl adab al-ghinā'*, ed. Zakariyyā Yūsuf, *al-Mawrid*, 11 (1 April 1973), 101–154.

# [Short Descriptive] List of All the Chapters of the Manuscript Called the Completion of Musical Knowledge (*Kamāl Adab al-ghināʾ*) [fols. 2–12; Kh. 9–14; Sh. 31–34; ZY 119–120]

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful to whom I Entrust Myself



2; Kh. 9; [The following chapters are missing in the table of contents: Chapter 11: “The Causes or Mechanics of Production of Sound”; Chapter 14: “The Divisions of the Sh. 31; Frets of the Pandore”; and Chapter 15: “Melodic Modes.” Some chapters have the ZY 119 same chapter number as those in the text while others do not. The description of the chapters in this list is not always accurate; the reader should refer to the short introduction that precedes the translation of each chapter.]

- 1 Chapter on *ṭarab*: It treats the states of being of the *ṭarab* phenomenon (acute joy or grief), [including] its more complete and more perfect causes that benefit the listener during agitated or calm states<sup>1</sup>
- 2 Chapter on the virtues of melodies: It treats the uses one draws from melodies and the opinion of the ancients about the topic and related matters
- 3 Chapter on the meanings of melodies: It treats the intended aims inherent in them, the need for each type, and what makes each type more complete and more excellent
- 3 4 Chapter on the effects of melodies: It treats the influences of | different melodies on the soul and the imagination, and related matters
- 5 Chapter on the superiority of the older style of singing: It treats the superiority of the older singing and its melodies and their preeminence and nobler status over all others

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1 As Shiloah remarked, there are words that are hard to read; Khashaba and Zakariyyā Yūsuf suggested activity and repose (Kh. 9; ZY 107).

- 6 Chapter on the superiority of older poetry: It treats the superiority of the older poems used in the above-mentioned older songs, the appropriateness [of the choice of text] in each composition by its creator, the opinion of [other] composers about it, and related matters Sh. 32
- 7 Chapter on the superiority of music: It treats the superiority and nobility of the musical art and its practitioners
- 8 The characteristics of melodies: It treats the names and types of tetrachords used in melodies, | their attributes, as well as what characterizes them, and related matters Kh. 10  
4
- 9 Chapter on the states of the notes: It treats the qualities and quantities of the notes, and related matters
- 10 Chapter on resemblance: It treats the knowledge of the resemblance between the rational soul and consonant notes [and the celestial spheres]<sup>2</sup>
- 11 Chapter on the words [in] music: It treats the meaning of music, how the notes are set to and arranged over the syllables, and related matters [= chapter 12]
- 12 Chapter on the delimitations of the notes: It treats the types of notes used in types of melodies, their arrangements, their numbers, how they are extracted from the frets | which are set according to measurements, and related matters [= chapter 13] 5
- 13 Chapter on the fundamentals of melodies: It treats the types of notes on which melodies are built, the types of movements on the frets, the types of groups sharing notes, consonant and dissonant notes [= chapter 16]
- 14 Chapter on voiced letters: It treats the voiced letters used and prolonged in melodies, their numbers, which ones are efficiently used, how they are used, and related matters [= chapter 17]
- 15 Chapter on planning and determining<sup>3</sup> where and how much to breathe: It treats the amount of breath taken during the melody according to the opinion of Ishāq [al-Mawṣilī], and related matters
- 16 Chapter on poetic meters: It treats some poetic meters, defines the simple and the compound, the equal and unequal parts, and related matters [= chapter 19] 6

2 Chapters 9 and 10 in the table of contents are reversed in the main text of the ms. Khashaba (Kh. 10) set chapter 10 before chapter 9 to make them match the chapters in the body of the ms.

3 This corresponds to chapter 18. There is a copyist's error: instead of *taqdīr* (determining) it has *taqrīr* (deciding, which is a possibility, though the text of the chapter clearly has *taqdīr*, fol. 101) or *taqhīr*, which Shiloah read as *taqahhur* (running out of breath) (Sh. 32 n. 2).

- Sh. 33 17 Chapter on the structure of the melody: It treats the separations in the melodies, their arrangements and sections [= chapter 20]
- 18 Chapter on the qualification of melodies: It treats the qualities of the tetrachords and their rules [= chapter 21]
- 19 Chapter on the setting of melodies: It treats the types of poems and the need for each type to be set to a type of a melody that fits it as mentioned | in the chapter on tetrachords, and related matters [= chapter 22]
- 7
- Kh. 12 20 Chapter on the specific places in the melodies: It treats the names of specific places in the melodies which are beautiful and which [places] cannot be done without, and the explanation thereof [= chapter 23]
- 21 Chapter on the specific sections in the instruments [and how to beautify them]: It treats what is helpful and liked, and the explanation thereof [= chapter 24]
- 22 Chapter on what is preferable to highlight in the melodies: It treats what should be highlighted in vocal composition and [what should] not be hidden, and the reasons for it [= chapter 25]
- 23 Chapter on what is preferable to hide: It treats the topic of what is better hidden than highlighted, the reason for it, and related matters [= chapter 26]
- 8 24 Chapter on opening songs: It treats what the singer needs in his beginning songs, how to avoid mistakes, and related matters [= chapter 27]
- 25 Chapter on rhythmic modes: It treats the various types of rhythmic modes used in Arabic songs, their rules and what is needed in them, their numbers, the number of attacks and types of durations [= chapter 28]
- 26 Chapter on being in rhythm: It treats how to be in rhythm and build the melody on it [= chapter 29]
- Kh. 13 27 Chapter on the theft of melodies: It treats the various ways theft can be done, when to use it as needed, and related matters [= chapter 30]
- 9 28 Chapter on strings: It treats the lengths and thicknesses of strings, their ratios, their numbers, and their rules [= chapter 31]
- 29 Chapter on the names of the melodic and rhythmic modes: It treats the names of the melodic and rhythmic modes, their other names, peoples' disagreements about them, and related matters [= chapter 32]
- 30 Chapter on the qualities of the singer: It treats the good qualities the singer should have and what he should strive to attain, and related matters [= chapter 33]
- 31 Chapter on good qualities [to have while singing]: It treats what the singer needs in his qualities and motions, what is liked and disliked, and related matters [= chapter 34]
- 10 32 Chapter on the qualities of throats: It treats the names and [sound] qual-

- ities of throats [i.e., husky, loud, soft, etc.] and related matters [= chapter 35]
- 33 Chapter on the arrangement of singing: It treats the arrangement of singing in the performance sessions (*majālis*) and the proper choices of songs, and related matters [= chapter 36]
- 34 Chapter on praise and requests for repetitions: It treats what should be praised, its usefulness, how it is used, and related matters [= chapter 37]
- 35 Chapter on testing: It treats what the person who claims to be knowledgeable in this art should be tested about, the need to evaluate his claim, and related matters [= chapter 38]
- 36 Chapter on things that are beneficial to the throats: It treats | what is beneficial to them among things that are accessible and of what one should be wary [= chapter 39] 11
- 37 Chapter on dimensions: It treats the dimensions of the instruments, arrangements of frets, and the choice of strings [= chapter 40]
- 38 Chapter on music education: It treats what a person needs if he wants to practice the musical art, and related matters [= chapter 41]
- 39 Addenda chapter: It treats matters missing in the book such as the origin of music, its changes, bringing its topics to perfection, and related matters [= chapter 42]
- 40 Chapter on the sources: It treats my objections raised about | my alleged shortcomings, mention of what we missed, and [it] guides the reader to its sources, and related matter [= chapter 43] 12



## [Introduction]

[fols. 12–20; Kh. 15–18; Sh. 35–40; ZY 109–110]

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful



[In his introduction, al-Kātib lays out the approach he uses in the treatise. He concentrates on what brings perfection to the musical art; the duality of theory and practice, and how, in his mind, theory is superior to practice; he mercilessly criticizes practicing musicians who ignore theory and as a result commit serious errors in judgment and performance; he also criticizes practicing musicians who are ignorant of Arabic grammar and prosody and who commit serious mistakes.]

Praise be to God, Master of blessings, and Master of those who possess might and generosity; may God bless the Prophet Muḥammad the Chosen One, and grant him salvation, and may God bless ‘Alī the beloved, and bless the leaders belonging to the eminent members of their families, and grant them all salvation.

Each art (*ṣinā‘a*) aims to reach perfection, and has a measure of benefit with which this art will become more complete and more excellent. One must therefore pay careful attention to this goal.

Since the art of music (*ṣinā‘at al-mūsīqī*), that is, the melodies, | is divided into two parts: theoretical [or scientific] (*‘ilmī*) and practical (*‘amalī*), I found that one of them has a finer position, a more common usefulness, is of a greater benefit, is more established in description, and has a more noble name: it is the theoretical. | I found the other one less useful and less durable when compared to the first; it slips away easily, is more irregular, more faulty, more [likely to] misrepresent facts; it is also a heavy weight for the senses to handle; it achieves excellence, its pleasantness becomes more complete; its beauty becomes more apparent; its perfect and imperfect, correct and incorrect [aspects], are revealed; its picture draws itself clearly in the mind, its structure (*bunya*)<sup>1</sup> gains

Sh. 36

13

<sup>1</sup> As Shiloah remarked, the word is obscure; he suggested consolidation (Sh. 36 n. 2); Zakariyyā

strength only if it is combined with its companion (*ṣāhib*)<sup>2</sup> and agrees with it, imitates it, and matches it. This is so because the first [theoretical part] is nobler and superior to the second [practical part].<sup>3</sup> It gives esteem to the second, justifies it, and rules over it. This is so despite the fact that we have found much discourse about the practical art; the reason being that the practical is easier to handle, people have much need for it, and they love it.

Kh. 16 I have noticed that many kings, nobles, intelligent and knowledgeable people with perfect natural dispositions desire to understand this art and take an interest in it. They have access | to two kinds of books: one is difficult to understand, but very useful; the other is easy to understand but of little value.<sup>4</sup> The facts show that those who wrote on one or the other type excelled in one over the other, namely, theory or practice; each grabs the attention of the reader and ignores the other [type], even though they both need one another.<sup>5</sup>

Sh. 37 I noticed that people have ignored and discarded both [the theoretical and practical] arts. I have also noticed that practicing musicians have neglected the theoretical art and what [one] must know about it; as a result, they have fallen into the misrepresentation of facts and incorrectness. If a musician points to his own excellence and skills, he does so by basing them on the testimonial of a person who cannot differentiate between the good and the bad, the correct and the incorrect, the beautiful and the ugly.

15 We have noticed, and continue to notice, that | some people's sensory perceptions do not follow the natural course; they feel things not in their reality.<sup>6</sup>

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Yūsuf edited it as *nasab* (relation) (ZY 109); Khashaba edited it as *bunya* (structure). All of these edits are possible.

- 2 *Ṣāhib* can also mean possessor, that is, the theoretical part that possesses all the good qualities. This is how Shiloah translated it (Sh. 36).
- 3 It is indeed regrettable that al-Kātib, much like ancient Greece and the medieval world, considered the practical art inferior to the theoretical one; theorists who do not practice music miss many subtle aspects of it. For Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's more nuanced approach, and for more detail, see fols. 65a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 171–172.
- 4 Later, in fols. 236–238, pp. 182–184, al-Kātib gives more detail: the useful ones include the works on music theory by al-Kindī (d. after 256/870), Thābit b. Qurra (221–288/836–901) Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib, and al-Fārābī (b. before 258–339/ 872 or 873–950); the easy and less useful works include those by literateurs such as Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī (150–235/767–850), Maṣṣūr b. Ṭalḥa (d. ca. 250/864), Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī (162–224/779–839), Ibn Yaḥyā al-Munajjim (241–300/855–912), and Ibn Wāṣif al-Aḥmadī. Al-Kātib is obviously wrong to belittle Iṣḥāq, Maṣṣūr, and Ibn Yaḥyā: their works are important and some of them are on music theory. On the other hand, a magnificent piece of music literature, al-Iṣfahānī's *KA*, cannot be considered a work with little usefulness.
- 5 In this passage al-Kātib confuses and conflates the issue of music theory and literature on the one hand, and music theory and practice on the other.
- 6 This short paragraph is a summary of a passage from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 55; *MA* i, 9).

Among them are those who cannot differentiate the good from the bad, even in things that are clearly evident; and those whose natural disposition falls short in many arts and sciences, even if they work on them. We often find privileged, cultured, and intelligent people who do not find their way to anything musical and cannot imagine it, even when they practice it and listen to a lot of it; they only find pleasure in weak poems, faulty melodies, and impermissible (*munkara*) instruments.<sup>7</sup>

The philosopher Pythagoras [ca. 582–507 BCE] maintained that there are external factors that prevent the ear from hearing properly, causing it to make mistakes. First, the different temperaments of people cause them to have | poor hearing (*thaqīl*)<sup>8</sup> while others hear well (*hādd*)<sup>9</sup> all their lives. For the same reason, some are good composers and some are bad. [Second,] then bodies can get sick, or get older, or are weak for other reasons; in these cases, the hearing is affected and changes. | [Third,] other factors affect the senses and can cause a change: corpulence, drunkenness, fatigue, laziness, nausea, and indigestion [lit., “bad gastric juices”]. The fourth factor affecting the voice are the locations where one sings; some | cause the sound to be muted or the opposite obtains; some cause the sound to echo, make it resonate and reverberate (*dawīy*), or the opposite obtains.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, Pythagoras strove to establish the correct ratios of the notes and their arrangements which do not cease [to be correct] and do not change. This led him to invent musical instruments and according to Nicomachus,<sup>11</sup> he became the first to do so.

When a musician finds a privileged patron with power and wealth and works for him, he thinks that this allows him to claim musical skill and superiority. Another person to whom skills were attributed, said to me after I corrected one of his mistakes: “I sang this to such and such a person and he did not find faults in it, so why are you finding faults in it?” He thus attributed the mistake to that person and used him as an excuse to share the blame. I heard a skilled musician

7 Unfortunately, our author does not tell us what are these instruments. In the *samāʿ* literature, there are permissible and non-permissible instruments; the issue is obscure at best.

8 Lit., “heavy.”

9 Lit., “sharp.”

10 The author treats this topic in more detail in chapter 39, fols. 211–213, pp. 164–166, and includes the effects of the locations (indoor or outdoor) on the quality of the voice. The next two sentences are unrelated to the setting, indoors or outdoors, rather it treats the issue of intonation; clearly the author confused the two.

11 He flourished at the beginning of the second century CE; he wrote an elaboration of Pythagoras (Barker, *Greek musical writings* 11, 245). Nicomachus’ works were translated into Arabic in the third/ninth century (Farmer, *The sources* xii–xiii, xx, 16; Sh. 38 n. 3).

Sh. 39 singing a song whose poetry I did not understand, yet the notes of the melody were correctly ordered and the rhythm well measured. I said: “What is the poem of this song?” | He said: “It is a melody without a poem which I have composed [then set to a poem].”<sup>12</sup> He thought that he had done well and excelled. I also heard him sing a song about a candle. He said:

“Pale (*ṣafrā*)<sup>13</sup> and slender (*majdūla*)<sup>14</sup> ...”

18 I said: “I have never heard someone sing | a song about a candle except you!”

He said: “I only said it about a fair skinned (*ṣafrā*) slave girl.”

He was one of those people who liked women with yellow [skin]. There also occurred between us a debate about a certain rhythmic mode, which he called by two names, thinking it is made up of two modes.

I asked him: “What is the difference between them?”

He said: “The end of one musical phrase is on the index finger [G2] and the other [is] on the middle finger [A flat 2 or half flat 2].”<sup>15</sup> He clearly made a mistake, confusing the rhythmic modes and the melodic modes. That same person was asked about a rhythmic mode. He said: “This is how it is”; he proceeded to gesture with his hand as if tapping it, yet adding nothing else to it. By doing so he thought he had answered my question. I also saw him one day when an ignorant man asked him an impossible question: “Can the melodic mode with the open third string (*mathnā*) as a tonic (*muṭlaq*)<sup>16</sup> be the melodic mode of the middle finger fret of the third string as a tonic in the course of the middle finger (*maḥmūl*);<sup>17</sup> can the index finger of the third as a tonic in the course of the middle or ring finger fret (*maz-*

12 A similar story occurs in KA: “Mālik [d. ca. 136/754] was asked about his melody in *Lāḥa bil-dayri*. He said: ‘I took the melody from a donkey driver in Damascus—as he was driving donkeys, he sang it (*tarannama*) without words. I took the melody and clothed (*kasā*) it to this poem’” (KA v, 114; for another story, see KA v, 236–237; see also Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 81, 92).

13 Lit., “yellow.”

14 Lit., “shapely.”

15 These designations are used to denote melodic modes using the open third string [F1] as reference (see lute fretting chart, p. 204).

16 Here the course is not given, so it could be F1 G2 A2 B flat 2, or F1 G2 A flat 2 (or half flat) B flat 2.

17 It is this melodic mode: A flat 2 (or half flat) B flat 2 C2 D flat 2.

*mūm*)<sup>18</sup> be the ring finger fret of the third string as a tonic in the course of the ring finger fret (*maḥṣūr*)?<sup>19</sup> He did not answer this question, though he claimed to be more knowledgeable than the real masters of this art.<sup>20</sup> | A person whom I trust told me that he had asked one of them about the number of attacks in the first heavy rhythm;<sup>21</sup> he answered that there are one hundred attacks, and if he taps them, they will be more | than one hundred; in his mind there are more than one hundred thousand! I have seen those who have reached old age and whose only livelihood had come from singing; one of them sang a song in which the duration of the [melody] in the first verse equaled | the duration of a single hemistich of the second verse. This is the ugliest [music] that can be, and the most repulsive.

Kh. 18

19

Sh. 40

If one of them is knowledgeable in poetry and prosody and sang a song well, or close to it, then he would swear by God, may His name be exalted, and swear about divorcing his wife and freeing his slaves, that no one among the predecessors did as well as he did or reached his level. He would [even] discredit Iṣḥāq [al-Mawṣilī],<sup>22</sup> and other famous ones, in relation to their singing skills.

As for misplacements of diacritical marks and misspellings, grammatical mistakes, and faulty prosody, there are more than one can count. One skilled songstress sang:

“My patience diminished and my loyalty diminished ...”

I said: “This is not how it is said, it should be:

[not my loyalty diminished but] my solace diminished.”

She said to me: “All my life I sang it, and taught it in people’s houses, and nobody contested me about it.”

18 It is this melodic mode: G2 A flat 2 (or half flat) B flat 2 C2 or G2 A2 B flat 2 C2.

19 It is this melodic mode: A2 B flat 2 C2 D2.

20 Obviously, this musician had very little knowledge, as he did not understand that such a question was nonsensical.

21 It is a 4/2 | ♩ ♩ . |.

22 He was the son of the famous musician Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (125–188/742–804); he was born in Rayy and was well educated as a boon companion. He was a composer, virtuoso lutenist, singer, theorist, poet, dance historian, as well as historian of the socio-cultural aspects of music. His works have not survived but they are quoted extensively in sources such as *KA*, *KMK*, *KII*, Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, Ibn al-Munajjim, and in the present treatise.

I have found, with the strength of natural disposition and talent, and with much research, a way to write this book, after another one I wrote.<sup>23</sup> I have summarized my findings in the present book so it encompasses both the theoretical and the practical aspects in accessible and concise prose, without leaving out anything needed to understand both aspects in a brief manner. I devised a name for it out of the meaning of its content, and that is *Kamāl adab al-ghinā'* (*The completion of musical knowledge*); I divided it into chapters. In addition to its great usefulness, it has the pleasantness of novelty and the sweetness of passion (*ḥidda*).<sup>24</sup> When consulting it, one can discover the sources of this art and its obscure aspects; with it one will not need most other books on the subject, God willing.

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23 On fol. 85, p. 53, he gives its title as *al-Muqni' fi l-nagham wa-l-iqā'* (The convincing book about notes, melodic modes, and rhythmic modes); unfortunately, it has not survived.

24 Both Khashaba (Kh. 18) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 110) edited it to *jidda* (novelty). Shiloah translated it as *finesse* (Sh. 40).

***Ṭarab* [fols. 20–25; Kh. 19–21; Sh. 41–44; ZY 110–111]**

[Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a more elaborate chapter on this topic; namely, chapter 20, *Hāwī* fols. 20a–b, 23a–b, 29a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 54–58. He states that *ṭarab* should not be limited to music, but also applies to poetry, speech, good deeds, beautiful scenery, generous gifts, and the meeting of the beloved, as well as fear and the mention of death, disaster, and separation. He also states, like al-Kātib, that the more people are knowledgeable musically, the less they will be moved to *ṭarab* easily, unless the music and poetry are perfect.]

20; Kh. 19;

Sh. 41;

ZY 110

When most people among our contemporaries hear the words of music theorists, they have an aversion to them [i.e., these words], | suspect them of deception, and attribute to them delirium and folly. Following the example of Iṣḥāq, [one of the theorists] said that singing is what causes *ṭarab* and thought that it [alone] causes *ṭarab* for him and his peers. However, singing causes *ṭarab* only for those who are knowledgeable in music. Iṣḥāq was asked, while drinking four *rotls* [approx. 1 pound or 1 pint] to the singing of ‘Aqīd (the *mawlā*<sup>1</sup> of Ṣāliḥ b. Hārūn al-Hāshimī [al-Rashīd]) [“who is the best singer?” He replied: “The one who gave four *rotls* to drink.”]<sup>2</sup>

21

Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī [d. 286/899]<sup>3</sup> said:

Sh. 42

1 A *mawlā* is a freed slave or a client (an Arab from a weak tribe seeking the protection of a stronger tribe; a non-Arab seeking the protection of a stronger person).

2 The content added in square bracket is from KA xviii, 69–70; it fills a lacuna in the text. Both Khashaba (Kh. 19 n. 2) and Shiloah (Sh. 40) added this content. The sentence is then followed by the nonsensical: “He did not say the one who gave drink[s] to the people around, so that knowledgeable people would say it is Ḥakam [al-Wādī].” Khashaba (Kh. 19) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 110) have instead: “He did not say the one who sang.” Shiloah (Sh. 41) has: “so that the knowledgeable people could not name another one that Iṣḥāq had decided on.”

3 Al-Sarakhsī wrote five treatises on music: *Kitāb al-Mūsīqī al-kabīr* (Grand book of music); *Kitāb al-Mūsīqī al-ṣaġhīr* (Small book of music); *al-Madkhal ilā ‘ilm al-mūsīqī* (Introduction to the science of music); *Kitāb al-Lahw wa-l-malāhī* (Book of entertainment and musical instruments [about singing, singers, boon-companionship and funny stories]); *Kitāb al-Qiyān* (Book on singing slave girls); they are all lost (Farmer, *The sources* 11–12; al-Zirikli, *al-A‘lām* i, 205). He was al-Kindī’s student and wrote on philosophy, medicine, geography, politics, literature, history, astronomy, arithmetic, algebra, and chess. He taught and befriended the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid (ca. 245–289/ 860–902) who later killed him.

The listener [who is] in a state of *ṭarab* by himself or in company does not prove that he is knowledgeable. If a listener experiences *ṭarab* quickly, it is probably an indication that he is an ignorant listener and [it is evidence of] his lack of knowledge (*maʿrifa*). This is apparent when you see a person who has not mastered singing, poetry, grammar, and prosody, then, when he hears a bit of singing—though it is out of rhythm, dissonant, and full of mistakes—falls into a state of *ṭarab* when told | it is singing. On the other hand, for a person who hears the same song and who grasps grammar but not singing, his state of *ṭarab* will be reduced according to his ignorance of the musical aspect. As for a person who hears the same song, who grasps poetry, | grammar, prosody, and singing, he will not be moved to *ṭarab* at all; to him this song is analogous to defamation which one does not desire to listen to. Thus, the people who know very little about singing will be moved to *ṭarab* quickly by every song they hear, whereas those who are advanced in their knowledge will not, and they will not be satisfied with what they hear.<sup>4</sup> This faculty in a person manifests itself in him quickly (*sarīʿa*),<sup>5</sup> and it is likely (*akhliq*)<sup>6</sup> non-existent in many people; this faculty is the domain of a person with superior discrimination.

He also said:

In order to fully comprehend the nobility of this art, we need the faculty of the sense of hearing and the faculty of judgment. | Beautiful sounds that cause *ṭarab* to animals and ignorant people also cause *ṭarab* to the [majority] of people.<sup>7</sup> However, what causes *ṭarab* to knowledgeable people, for distinguishing a good composition, orderly arrangement, knowledge of being [in rhythm or] out of rhythm, dissimilar and dissonant notes, is the domain of the eminent ones, to the exclusion of ignorant people and animals. For this reason, we see that the more knowledgeable people

4 This is the same as in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān except that the latter gives detailed reasons for it, in short, superior poetry and composition. See the details in *Ḥāwī* fol. 23a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 54–55.

5 Both Khashaba (Kh. 20) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 111) edited it as *sharīfa* (noble).

6 Shiloah translated it as “wishing” (Sh. 42).

7 For a detailed discussion of the effects of music on animals, see KA ii, 208; KA viii, 273; KA x, 109–110; KA xii, 122; KA xi, 30; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 277–280; Ibn al-Ṭahḥān, *Ḥāwī* fols. 29a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 56. For the effects of *ṭarab* in general, see Sawa, *Arabic musical and socio-cultural glossary* 281–322; Sawa, *Music performance* 192–195; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 275–311.

are in this art, the less moved they are [by inferior music]; on the other hand, ignorant listeners are quick to be moved. This is so because the knowledgeable listener needs all the aspects of *ṭarab* to be combined to be fully moved; otherwise, shortcomings and defects | spoil and prevent his pleasure. The ignorant listener, however, is not distressed by defects and shortcomings. In summary, for the utmost degree of *ṭarab* to occur, a person needs to have the most delicate feelings and the most intimate knowledge of what is correct, because both of them go hand in hand. This happens when a person has a perfect nature, | has listened to a lot of music, and has maintained his knowledge about proofs and demonstrations from skilled practitioners.<sup>8</sup>

Sh. 43

24

He said:

Kh. 21

The art of singing is not an art that, if one desires it and studies it, one can excel in, even if the student has a skilled teacher to guide him and explain it, or if he listens to a lot of singing from vocal masters. This is so because this art requires that his soul be capable of assimilating it, his nature be easily amenable to it, [that he has] the speed to grasp [the flow of the melody], the finesse to comprehend the obscure, and to comprehend the ratios of the notes set on the lute as well as the melodic modes (*shudūd*), and the duration of its rhythmic modes. Learning this art cannot be accomplished without some natural talent, and those with natural talent cannot learn it without a teacher. If the student desiring to learn this art has a good natural talent, a capacity to learn, a skilled teacher, free time for constant practice, and a complete desire, then it is rare that he fails. If any aspect is missing, | the *ṭarab* will be missing proportionally.

25

If the singer has all the qualities [necessary to achieve] mastery and excellence, and the listener likewise comprehends everything, then the *ṭarab* will be complete, and the music will reach the soul, at which point happiness, relaxation, and generosity (*aryahiyya*) will appear; the faculty of judgment will come to the fore, the soul will adorn itself with the ornaments of knowledge, and will be honored for his art of singing [lit., “wear robes of honor”]. It [the soul] will run in the field of scientific joy, it will

8 Shiloah interpreted this sentence differently: “persevere more in his knowledge about the proofs and the demonstrations than reaching virtuosity”; he then made the statement that al-Kātib, in line with the ancient Greeks, thinks that understanding music is infinitely superior to practicing it, but this is not the meaning of the text (Sh. 43 n. 1).

Sh. 44

reject vice with ardor, it will attract virtues and raise itself to these characteristics, and be honored by them; if in the past it [the soul] was related to cowardice, now it is encouraged; or [if it was drawn] to avarice, it becomes generous; or [if it was drawn] to fear, | it will find ease, [its] fears and horrors will diminish, it will wear the garments of superior quality [so it] shines, [it will have] the power of safety to be happy, it will persevere, [swimming] in the sea of *ṭarab*, and will gallop in the field of happiness.<sup>9</sup>

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9 This is similar to the last paragraph of chapter 20 of Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 29b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 58. Shiloah adds an interesting note that this passage is influenced by Plato on the relation between music and philosophy (Sh. 44 n. 1).

## On the Virtues of Melodies

[fols. 26–33; Kh. 22–24; Sh. 44–49; ZY 111–112]

[This chapter discusses the subtleties of music, which go beyond mere enjoyment to bring therapeutical and behavioral improvements, and to praise God. This is similar to Ibn al-Ṭahḥān's chapter 3 (*Ḥāwī* fols. 8b–9a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 16–17), but more elaborate because it discusses more sayings from the ancient Greek writers.]

Some people do not know how much they can profit from listening to melodies. They think that melodies move the soul, let drinks go down nicely, and bring pleasure to the ear. But the profits are more grand and more honorable when its fundamentals and objects are made apparent. Some melodies bring pleasure to the ear and move the soul, but this is the lesser level attributable to them. Some think their role is fun and entertainment; but it is not so, because many people lack the ability to reach its aim, so they stop at the limits of their ability.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, there are two types of melodies [the serious ones and the frivolous ones]:<sup>2</sup> some people who talk about them superficially, imagine that they are the same, thus [they] mix them together and think that they follow the same path.

26; Kh.  
22; Sh. 44;  
ZY 111

The first one [serious melodies] was used by wise men and scholars | in the types of management [of proper behavior] (*sīyāsa*),<sup>3</sup> legal stratagems (*hiyal*),<sup>4</sup> and therapies; they lead the coward toward courage and [lead] the reckless toward resoluteness.<sup>5</sup>

Sh. 45  
27

It was related that an ancient Greek king heard that people in his neighboring region who were known for being brave and hardy—an enemy nearby

1 Shiloah made an interesting remark here, namely that this passage and another passage at the end of the book are a free adaptation of a more thorough passage from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1183–1189; *MA* ii, 97–99). Between the two, al-Kātib relates various anecdotes from ancient Greece to make his point about the real aim and power of music and the falsehood of those who see it only as entertainment (Sh. 44 n. 3).

2 See more detail at the end of this chapter.

3 It can also mean policy, or political regimes as in Sh. 45.

4 It can also mean tricks, or a means to accomplish an end.

5 A similar but more elaborate passage occurs in *KA* viii, 224–225; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 378–379.

could not fight them most of the time—could now no longer stand up to him, so he aspired to defeat them. The king asked for the reason and was told that a group of effeminates (*makhānīth*) bordered their region, [they] had increased in number, and this softened their character and [led to] a lack of bravery. He ordered that a group of musicians be sent to them to strengthen their souls and return them to their original character, and to expel the effeminates from their region. The musicians came, stayed with them, [they played specific melodies that gave them strength and]<sup>6</sup> returned them to their original state; they stood up to their enemy and defended themselves.

28 Kh. 23 Some of the famous stories from the ancients were related by Nicomachus from Empedocles (Ambādūqulūs) [ca. 490 BCE–430 BCE];<sup>7</sup> | when he was the guest of a man, another man pulled out his sword to kill the host; the lyre (*lūra*), a stringed instrument, was in the hand of Empedocles; he immediately changed the tuning (*tarkīb*)<sup>8</sup> and performed a melody to appease the [man’s] anger. The man relaxed and the host was saved from death.<sup>9</sup>

Sh. 46 Another famous story was about the musicians Terpander [fl. first half seventh century BCE]<sup>10</sup> and Arion<sup>11</sup> who saved the inhabitants of Lesbos and Antissa<sup>12</sup> | from an epidemic, [they did this] with melodies they composed for that purpose.

Nicomachus also mentioned that Pythagoras saw a young man going to the house of a woman he loved, [he intended] to burn it [because of] something he had heard about her. What incited him to do it was the sound of a melody played by Pythagoras’ wind player (*zāmir*); he called the melody [the one in the] phrygian mode (*fīruwījīyūn*), so Pythagoras ordered | the wind player to

6 The content of the square bracket is from Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 9a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 16).

7 He was born in Acragas, Sicily, and died in the Peloponnese Peninsula; he was a Greek philosopher, statesman, poet, religious teacher, and physiologist (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Empedocles>). Al-Kātib has his name as Asādūfīlīs, but Shiloah corrected it to Ambādūqulūs (Sh. 45).

8 Lit., “arrangement”; it could also mean that he did not change the tuning but changed the melodic mode, in which case the tuning was the same but the tonic was changed.

9 For variants of this story in other sources, see Sh. 45 n. 4.

10 He was a poet and musician born in Antissa, Lesbos.

11 He was a contemporary of Terpander, a poet and musician also from Lesbos (Sh. 45 n. 6). For Terpander and Arion, the MS fol. 28 has Ṭarbīdūrus and Arion undotted; Khashaba has Ṭarbīdūrus and Adion (Kh. 23); Zakariyyā Yūsuf has Ṭarbīdūrus and Artūn (ZY 112).

12 For Lesbos, the MS (fol. 28) has the word undotted; for Antissa it has Anussa. Shiloah edited both as Lesbos and Antissa and mentioned a similar story by Boethius (Sh. 45–46 n. 7).

play in the Lydian mode.<sup>13</sup> At this point the lover changed his mind; Pythagoras had told him to abstain from it and reprimanded him.<sup>14</sup>

Another story was about Achilles (Asbalyūs),<sup>15</sup> whose mother Thetis (Taṭis) hid him for fear that he would join the war. But Ulysses (Adūsūs) used a trick; he composed a melody (*lahn*) from melodic modes (*luḥūn*)<sup>16</sup> suitable for war and played it on the trumpet (*būq*). The sound incited Achilles to go to war. Nicomachus related this story and many more in his book.

Ancient Greeks had melodies built on melodic modes which they used in war and peace (*tarāju*).<sup>17</sup> Some melodies make people stronger and more active; some calm them down and relieve them from fatigue and weakness. | Wise men saw that melodies bring people benefits, wisdom, positive dispositions, morals, and they guide people to [follow] required good behavior; | they lead to gains in science, to blessings and charity, and to humanity, and they lead humans to attain an understanding of the speaking and universal soul.<sup>18</sup> It is for this reason that Pythagoras and his followers used music; they had melodies they called heavenly<sup>19</sup> which they hid from people; they also had melodies they called the harmony of the soul and they held the view that the whole world is built according to musical harmony.

Plato said:

God, to Him belong might and majesty, made us benefit from philosophy, which is the greatest blessing, and gave us from the voices | and ears like that which He gave us from other faculties. What gave us the perfection of philosophy and the benefit of the voice that went to the soul was

Sh. 47

30

Kh. 24

Sh. 48

13 The word is undotted in the MS (fol. 29). Shiloah remarked, interestingly, that the scribe was not familiar with the Greek language, and for this reason he left the names undotted (Sh. 46 n. 1). Khashaba edited the undotted word to *lidiyānūn* and said it must refer to the Lydian mode (Kh. 23 n. 3); Shiloah read it as *sbandiaqon*, which is closer to the MS, and then edited it to spondaic; the problem with this interpretation is that spondaic is a poetic meter and not a melodic mode (Sh. 46 n. 1).

14 For variants of this story in Boethius, see Sh. 46 n. 2.

15 Khashaba edited it to Absaliūs (Kh. 23).

16 *Lahn* means melody; *luḥūn* (in the plural) refers to melodic modes in the context of this story.

17 Lit., "retreat," as in Shiloah (Sh. 46), but the context favors the word peace, as Khashaba indicates (Kh. 23 n. 5).

18 According to Shiloah, the ideas expressed in this paragraph are inspired from Plato: music and morals, music and philosophy, and the role of the harmonious soul which makes for good citizens (Sh. 47 n. 1).

19 He probably meant the music of the spheres.

the musical harmony that corresponds to the movements in our souls. The benefit of music composition is not gaining bestial pleasure as many people think, but God gave it to us to have the strength to fight the ornament of the soul | that exists in us but without harmony.

He [Plato] also said:

God, to Him belong might and majesty, knew of our weakness so He gave us melodies to improve our souls. For this reason, we use them in our feasts, as well as in presenting offerings to God, to Him belong might and majesty, offerings such as [agricultural] yields, goods, and whatever they possess; some people shave their hair, cut their ear or pierce it, or cut something from their body, seeking God's gratification, to Him belong might and majesty.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, we present to God, may He be exalted, the best we have in our soul by praising Him with melodies.

We do the same to kings when we praise them, or noblemen, or eminent people.

Sh. 49 The effect of music is apparent not only on people but | also on all animals. The shepherds have chants which they use to send their animals to pasture and to bring them back; camels, sheep, and horses each have their own | chants which they know, like, and differentiate between.<sup>21</sup>

The one who contemplates the complete and partial matters knows that all the world has been put together according to musical harmony;<sup>22</sup> those who have expressed such an idea have said much about it.

When the practitioners of this art were inclined toward the frivolous type [of melody] and imagined that one finds total calm in it, they devoted themselves to it.<sup>23</sup> They held the same opinion about poetry and overdid it. This caused many kings and eminent people to stop studying music and stop enjoying it, thus they refused to follow the path of those who considered music play, thus diminishing its brilliance and nobility. It is clear that the types of serious music are more useful than the frivolous ones. The latter was used to attain tranquil-

20 The practice of inflicting pain to the body, such as piercing, is still common today among some Sufi orders. For the sources of this paragraph and the one before, see Sh. 48 nn. 1–4.

21 For other sources on the effect of music on animals, see Sh. 49 n. 1.

22 The text (fol. 32) inserts the word “book” to “the musical harmony”; Shiloah correctly points out that it was superfluous (Sh. 49 n. 2).

23 As Shiloah correctly points out, here the author goes back to al-Fārābī's passage starting on fol. 26, p. 11 (*KMK* 1183–1189; *MA* ii, 97–99; Sh. 49 n. 3).

ity and to recuperate the strength needed to accept the serious one. It is the frivolity of some of the music that made kings and eminent people stay away from it as we mentioned above, | and especially for [serious musicians] who likewise stay away from it. 33

It was mentioned that one should use the frivolous ones [in amounts corresponding to] the way salt is used in food.<sup>24</sup> Pythagoras said that the arts that are very useful to human beings in their lives are science and philosophy, medicine and music.

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24 The content in the square brackets is from al-Fārābī who also stated that the sentence is from Aristotle (*KMK* 1185–1189; *MA* ii, 98; Sh. 49 n. 6).

## The Meanings of Melodies

[fols. 33–38; Kh. 25–26; Sh. 50–53; ZY 113]

[This chapter discusses what is apparent in melodies (e.g., high and low notes), and what is hidden (e.g., sound composition), and the meaning of melodies and how they should be in harmony with the meaning of the poem. It is very similar to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 4 with the same title (*Hāwī* fols. 9a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 18–19). It is more elaborate in technical matters, whereas al-Kātib has interesting anecdotes at the end of the chapter.]

Some people despise a melody with few notes and few melodic modes (*shudhūr*)<sup>1</sup> that are easy to comprehend; they like a melody that is difficult to comprehend, with many notes.<sup>2</sup> They think that they are composed with the aim of having too many or too few notes! But there is more to the subject to be aware of and discover because there are aspects of melodies that are clear and apparent, and aspects that are obscure. The clear and apparent are, for example, high and low pitches, fast and slow tempos, softness and hardness,<sup>3</sup> heat and cold. |  
 34 The obscure aspects are in addition to the previous [apparent aspects], and are interspersed among them in many ways; the obscure aspects are correct compositions, proper musical divisions (*ṣiḥḥat al-qisma*) [to be set properly to poetic feet],<sup>4</sup> proper and pleasant settings, which means the poems and the  
 Sh. 51 melodies correspond; | the latter is the most difficult thing to achieve. The most

1 It literally means “tensions,” and, by extension, multiple modes and modulations. In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is *shudhūr*, sing. *shadhra* (*Hāwī* fol. 9a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 18) which means a short note that starts with a smooth voice and is sung to long low vowels, that is, long *ī*, and phonetic alterations (*a* and *ā* going toward *i* and *ī*). They are vocal ornaments added between two adjacent notes or immediately after a note. According to al-Fārābī, they should be used in moderation in the course of a melody and should not exceed two or three in one section (al-Fārābī, *KMK* 1073, 1173; *MA* ii, 59, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 102–104).

2 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān adds important detail, namely, that melodies with few notes also have little compositional craft, and short rhythmic cycles; that melodies with many notes also have long rhythmic cycles and many *shudhūr* (*Hāwī* fol. 9a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 18).

3 Metaphorically it can also refer to sweet/ripe (*ḥalāwa*) and unripe fruit (*fājāja*).

4 Shiloh, not having used Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's definition of *qisma* (*Hāwī* fol. 11b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 25), gave an imprecise translation, namely, the arrangement of notes with the letters of the poem (Sh. 50 n. 4).

obscure of all is knowing the meanings of the melodies, as many of them have no meaning. Some have no meaning; they are made up of a verse [with two hemistiches]. They may be good prosodically, have eloquent words, be well-measured, but still have no meaning and as such they are of no use. If it [the melody] has meaning, it will be more useful, more effective, and serve other purposes as well. The meaning of the melody is what the composer aims to attain, in the same manner that the poet aims for a certain goal and meaning. The composer may hit the mark and reach his aim, or he may fail, or he may fall short or come close to it.

These aims should be determined in | the melodies, the notes, and the voices; they should be similar to the way a person talks about various mental states and circumstances. All animals emit sounds that make sense to them in the same way the words do to us. Do you not see that the intonation of a happy person differs from that of a sad one, an angry one from a contented one, an irritating one from a person calming an agitated one, a preacher from a heedless one with little thought, a dignified scholar from a fun tempter, a combative hero from a cowardly | and meek one, a modest [one] from a flirtatious one, a calm one from an overbearing one, | a spoiled (*mutadallil*)<sup>5</sup> one from that of a seeker, | an aggressive (*mutaʿattib*)<sup>6</sup> one from a humble one. Further mention will take up too much space; what we say about this subject will take place at the appropriate place and time.

35

Kh. 26

36

Sh. 52

Most of these melodies [that have meanings] aim to reflect states of mind and circumstances to give them meanings in the same manner as poetry, as mentioned above. Poetry, after being soundly [prosodically] composed, needs to have meaning. It may occur that poems were composed starting with the meanings created in the mind, then the measured words were built around it and for it. These meanings are what cause imagination and passion in the soul. Poetry denuded of meaning can only produce pleasantness to the ear; poetry with meaning has well-known effects whether its subject is seriousness or jest, and it is used all the time and everywhere. Do you not see [the story about the caliph Hārūn] al-Rashīd [145–193/763–809] or his father who, when he was in

5 The ms (fol. 36) has a copyist error: the first line has *mutadhallil* (humble) instead of *mutadallil* (spoiled), and the second line has *mutadallil* instead of *mutadhallil*. I have corrected this mistake by following the text of Ibn al-Ṭahḥān, which fits the context correctly (*Hāwī* fol. 9b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 19). Shiloah translated the text with its fault and correctly added a question mark (Sh. 52).

6 Lit., “the complaining person” in the active voice; Shiloah translated it as if it were in the passive voice, “the one which people reprimand or complain about” (Sh. 52). In Ibn al-Ṭahḥān, it is *mutaʿazziz* (proud one) instead of *mutaʿattib* (*Hāwī* fol. 9b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 19).

- 37 the company of Anas | b. Abī Shaykh<sup>7</sup> in his *majlis*,<sup>8</sup> played chess for a long time with one of his courtesans who realized he was about to lose, so he [the courtesan] improvised this verse about the situation:

The sword licked its lips desiring Anas  
Death watches and destiny is waiting.

- Al-Rashīd ordered that Anas be beheaded on the spot.<sup>9</sup> It also happened that al-Rashīd had abandoned his slave girl Mārīda, until he heard a poem by al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf [d. 192/808]<sup>10</sup>:
- Sh. 53

The lover must arrive at a break  
Between abandonment and separation  
Such that if he extends his abandonment  
Then at once he will go back despite himself.<sup>11</sup>

- He said, “O by God, despite myself.” He got up, went to her, and made up with her. There are many cases like this, such as the use of poems in the *rajaz* meter (*irtijāz*) to incite soldiers in war or when such poems are necessary in times of stress. [There is a similar case, namely,] | what happened with Sulaymān b. Hishām [132/750]<sup>12</sup> and his two sons who were generously rewarded by [the
- 38

7 He was a friend of the Barmakids; after being murdered for *zandaqa* (free thinking, atheism) <https://al-maktaba.org/book/12397/6142> Shiloah mistakenly transcribed his name as Anīs (Sh. 52).

8 A *majlis* is an assembly of people, in this case, listening and discussing music and singing.

9 It is more likely that he was killed because of atheism, as mentioned in the footnote above.

10 He was famous for his amorous poems, and unlike most poets did not compose panegyrics or satires. He was born in al-Yamāma in Arabia, and grew up in Baghdad (al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām* iii, 259).

11 In *KA* v, 241 they broke with one another for days, so the vizier Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā, probably out of sympathy for Hārūn, ordered al-ʿAbbās b. al-Aḥnaf to compose a poem which the singer Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī set to music and sang to Hārūn. Upon hearing it, Hārūn made up with Mārīda; when she inquired about the reason for the song she was told the identities of the poet and musician and rewarded both with ten thousand dirhams. She asked Hārūn to reward them, so he gave each one, in the spirit of noblesse oblige, forty thousand dirhams. The same poem, with minor changes and four instead of two verses, occurs in *KA* vi, 295, but the subject of the anecdote is different. Another anecdote about the love between Hārūn and Mārīda occurs in *KA* xxii, 46–47; the poem is different and it was penned by Hārūn himself; when she received it, she asked the poet Abū Ḥafṣ al-Shitrānjī to respond with a poem.

12 He was the son of the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (26–86/646–705), was an amir and a poet (al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām* iii, 137).

first ‘Abbāsīd caliph] al-Saffāh [104–136/722–754] who set up pillows for them to sit on in his *majlis*. But one day the poet Sodayf [d. 146/763]<sup>13</sup> entered and recited for him:

Their being close to the throne and the pillows  
 Afflicted me and the one close to me  
 Lower them the way God wanted it  
 In the house of disgrace and misery.

He [the caliph] ordered that they be beheaded on the spot; to relate the whole story will [take a] very long [time].<sup>14</sup>

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13 He was a poet and a Bedouin from Mecca with limited poetic output (al-Zirikli, *al-A‘lām* iii, 80).

14 The story is very long indeed; it appears in *KA* iv, 344–354.

## The Effects of Melodies

[fols. 38–42; Kh. 27–28; Sh. 54–56; ZY 114]

[This chapter states that the best melodies are the ones that correspond to and strengthen the poem to which they are set. Al-Kātib also gives many examples of good and bad melodies, that is, those fitting or not fitting the poem.]

38; Kh. The melody is another element that adds to the meaning of the poem and its  
 27; Sh. 54; brilliance. The best melody is the one that corresponds to and strengthens the  
 ZY 114 poem to which it is set; there are many melodies that lower the value of the  
 poems and diminish their brilliance, and there are [other] ones that improve  
 39 the poems, add to their brilliance and hide their faults. | This becomes apparent  
 when we contemplate the older melodies. If you hear a melody with a certain  
 meaning, such as courage or generosity or other characteristics with these  
 attributes, and if your imagination is strong enough to fathom such characteristics,  
 and know to whom the song was addressed, then you will feel that you are  
 such a person by the sheer force of your imagination, the melody will touch you  
 and have its effect on you. The same obtains in relation to awakening a longing  
 in a person, or a request, or anger, and other emotions. Any person feeling one  
 of these emotions and expressing them genuinely in his poem will move the  
 listener and make him feel the same emotion. This poem is a case in point [of  
 failed emotions]:

You ask him, in the hope that he will come back and respond to your  
 wishes  
 Silence is his reply, which exhausts you.

This is a song with little beauty; most people will not like its melody or its  
 poem, and if someone desires to compose the like of it, he will not be able to  
 40 do so. Its melody fits its poem [in weakness]. However, if you contemplate |  
 Sh. 55 this [other] melody | and imagine it, you will find that the structure of its  
 notes resembles the structure of words [spoken by] an esteemed, thinking,  
 and serious man who was afflicted by the sight of the desolation and abandon-  
 ment of a house; he is then frightened and bewildered by its change. If  
 your imagination is strong enough to reach this state, you will feel as if you  
 are him.

Then this song:

Ask the dwelling of Laylā if it can appear and talk  
 How could a barren desert answer?  
 How could a dwelling answer, when it is akin to  
 A plain desert, because of its long tribulation and lapse of time.<sup>1</sup>

The melody fits the poem; its notes are rich and abundant (*mufakkkham*),<sup>2</sup> Kh. 28  
 inclining toward softness and inciting a feeling of regret; it is a very sound composition [done] with amazing skill.

Then this song:

My friend, did you ever hear of a shepherd  
 Giving back to the udder the milk he had drawn  
 The fire of my youth has gone, my youth left me  
 My critics got a rest from censuring me.<sup>3</sup>

Another version has “my ignorance has been lessened” [instead of “my youth 41  
 left me”].<sup>4</sup> Its melody fits the poem and likewise it is soft. If you imagine it, you  
 will find that it resembles the words of a contemplative, regretful person who  
 recalls his heroism and fun times; he resembles a person renouncing his sins  
 and divulging them.

Then this song:

Manifest in his magnificence, without worries, he walked swiftly  
 Past his people in a night with no water or moon

1 The poet Ibn al-Mawlā (d. ca. 170/786) flourished in the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd eras; he was a gentleman who praised various caliphs. It was set to music by ‘Aṭarrad (d. before 169/785 or shortly after 170/786) in the first heavy rhythmic mode and the melodic mode with the index finger as a tonic in the course of the ring finger fret, and was among the one hundred chosen songs (KA iii, 285; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* vi, 221; in viii, 145 the poem is attributed to Jamil (d. 82/701)).

2 For more details, see p. 88, fol. 128.

3 This is a slight variant of a poem by Ismā‘īl b. Yassār al-Nisā‘ī (d. ca. 130/748), see following footnote; he praised various Umayyad caliphs (al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* i, 329). The poem was set to music by Mālik in the (first) light heavy rhythmic mode and the melodic mode with the open string as a tonic in the course of the middle finger fret (KA iv, 412).

4 Shiloah did not trace this poem in KA iv, 412. It demonstrates that the sentence “my ignorance has been lessened” is the variant of “my youth left me” in the first hemistich of the second verse and not of “my critics got a rest” in the second hemistich (Sh. 55).

Young camels are frightened at his sight  
Such that the halters on their necks break.

This melody also fits the poem; it is a masculine melody belonging to the strong tetrachord (*al-jins al-qawī*)<sup>5</sup> which moves the soul toward generosity. The listener is frightened and shaken at the words “are frightened” when | the song goes from the *nashīd* to the *basīṭ*.<sup>6</sup>

To enumerate all these types will take too long, however, if the listener contemplates the old melodies, he will comprehend what I have mentioned. The one who contemplates them should have no problem | in striving to use them as he needs to in the right circumstances; they will also help him improve some aspects of his character, natural disposition, and temperament; he will also be able to deal with them according to his ability and benefit from them; the benefit will also go to those who seek to dominate his nature and soul, to gain what they want from him.

Melodies that are elegant to listen to are not hidden from anyone and [are] available to all. As examples, we shall use many melodies that are useful and demonstrate what we have mentioned above; we shall mention melodies that are famous and well known and point to specific [aesthetic] places in them, mention everything that is useful, and set them in a book separately, with the power and help of God.<sup>7</sup>

5 For more detail about the tetrachords, see pp. 78–79, fol. 118.

6 A *nashīd* is an unmeasured vocal prelude and the *basīṭ* is a measured song; for a detailed discussion of the *nashīd*, see p. 94, fols. 134–135; for a detailed discussion of both, see Ibn al-Ṭahhān (*Hāwī* fols. 45a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 119–121).

7 He dealt with this subject in chapters 23 to 25; but it seems he wanted to write a book solely on this topic and expand on it.

## The Superiority of Older Singing [fols. 42–46; Kh. 29–30; Sh. 57–59; ZY 114]

[Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 11, "Favoring Older Singing over the Modern" (*Hāwī* fols. 13a–15b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 31–36) is similar to this one but more technically elaborate: the older repertoire is superior because the songs abide by prosodic laws; the poetic divisions are sound, harmonious, and symmetrical; the musical sections are similar and harmonious, and they fit the poetic feet correctly. In addition to the colorful metaphors (e.g., food and embroidery) used by al-Kātib, Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān adds calligraphy.]

Some people very much dislike the good, old singing and find it low and despicable; when they hear it, they twist the corner of their mouths and say, | "This is the grinding of an iron comb." May God have mercy upon Adam and Abū Qābūs,<sup>1</sup> but these are the legends of old times.

Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib said that the people of that era<sup>2</sup> took it upon themselves to ornament (*taḥrīk*) the plain (*musmaṭ*)<sup>3</sup> melodies, | to add *shudhūr* (*tashd-hūr*)<sup>4</sup> to them, to make them more beautiful (*taḥsīn*) as a way to lead the soul to the strong melodies; but as a result, they took away their essence.<sup>5</sup> The truth of

42; Kh.  
29; Sh. 57;  
ZY 114  
43

Sh. 58

- 1 Shiloah thinks that it is likely to be Abū Qubays, a legendary figure who died or disappeared in a mountain near Mecca without leaving a trace; because of this legend, the mountain bears his name (Sh. 57 n. 1). Khashaba thinks Abū Qābūs refers to Qābūs b. al-Mundhir (d. ca. 42/582) one of the kings of al-Ḥīra in pre-Islamic times (Kh. 29 n. 1; al-Zirikli, *al-A'lām* v, 170).
- 2 As the paragraph unfolds, one realizes that it was the era of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, who gave himself the freedom to alter the older repertoire.
- 3 *Taḥrīk* also means moving, stirring, making alive; but in fact they altered it negatively. *Musmaṭ* literally means "one whose hair has been removed" (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* iv, 1426); i.e., plain; the word has no diacritical marks but the context clearly points to *musmaṭ*. Shiloah edited it as *musammaṭ* and related it to a prosodic term that means a new form of poetry with multiple rhymes. Thus, he concluded that we are dealing with new poetry and new music, but this does not fit the context of altering older pre-composed songs (Sh. 57 n. 3). Khashaba interpreted the word as a slow song arranged according to the fundamental rhythmic mode (Kh. 29 n. 2).
- 4 Zakariyyā Yūsuf wrongly edited it to *tashdid* (make stronger, more tense, higher pitch) (ZY 114).
- 5 In fact, they removed many notes and lightened the melodies to what suited them, as is evidenced in KA x, 69–70; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 258–260.

the matter is that they were incapable of performing the older repertoire properly, as it was composed. By doing so [making these changes] they spoiled it for the student who wants to learn such melodies; by ornamenting them they made them hard to learn since the same melody | has been ornamented in various ways by various musicians; each time a person heard a version, he would forget the preceding one and not remember all of them; in addition, every musician claims to have the correct version, further adding to the confusion.<sup>6</sup>

Despite his leading role and superiority, Ishāq said: “Just let us perform what we have learned the way it was taught to us.”<sup>7</sup> This is Ishāq, so imagine what others would say.

44 Those adhering to a new style of composition content themselves | with using pretension, ornamentation, and novelty. The latter [novelty] is akin to fruit that is perishable and does not last long. Then they produce other songs and keep doing so each year, with the result that each year they give up the songs of the preceding year. We shall not mention their songs or attribute them to their composers. Their actions of composing songs and giving them up a year later are akin to the story of the monkey and the locusts: it was said that a Persian fable recounted a [story of a] monkey that exerted itself in hunting for locusts; every time it caught one, it sat on it patiently for an hour; when it saw another locust, it jumped to catch it, but the first one flew away. This went on for a long time, at the end it only had the last locust caught. This is the same with  
Kh. 30 their songs: the songs of the year they live in are what they have | but the songs of the preceding years are lost for good. However, there are songs that people  
45 strove to conserve; | they are [set to] poems composed about kings of the time, and they do not pass into oblivion. As for other [songs of lesser quality], they are few and insignificant.

Sh. 59 This manner of “moving” songs makes the original composer almost unable to recognize his own songs; they become like strangers to him. Every time he hears a song, he disapproves of it because of the many changes wrought to it; he

6 This is amply corroborated in *KA* x, 69–70; clearly the change was caused by the new generation’s laziness and unwillingness to spend the time necessary to master the artful repertoire and its inability to learn it because of its difficulty. Al-Iṣfahānī then brilliantly commented on the process of change: succeeding generations, one by one, alter the repertoire and it is then transmitted in its altered form; when this process goes through five or more generations, the final product is far from the original (Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 258–260). About the difficulty the student finds when the songs are constantly altered, see *KA* xi, 334; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 178–180.

7 For the long anecdote in which Ishāq was challenged by ‘Allūya (d. 236/850) for not ornamenting his performance, see *KA* v, 287–288; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 263.

would say this is not the way I composed it; there remains [something missing], and the musician who altered the song is between the door and the house.<sup>8</sup>

The older singing is such that it is repeated in our ears all the time. Singers sing it from the time it was composed for its aesthetic purpose without the souls becoming tired of it, without the ears rejecting it, and without the days wearing it out; each day it gains in beauty and freshness. The modern singing that strays from the path of the old is not beautiful and is not liked.

[Hārūn] al-Rashīd asked Ibrāhīm b. Maymūm al-Mawṣili to speak about the old and the new singing. He said: “The old singing | is like the old garment with 46  
multicolored ornamentation and embroidery (*washy*); its superiority is known, its beauty becomes more apparent when one looks at it time after time and contemplates it; the more you contemplate it, the more its beauty appears to you. Modern singing is like a new garment with multicolored ornamentation and embroidery; its sight will delight you, but every time you contemplate it you find its shortcoming, and its beauty diminishes.”

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<sup>8</sup> I.e., he does not entirely fit in.

## The Superiority of Older Poetry [fols. 46–47; Kh. 31; Sh. 59–60; ZY 115]

[Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 10, "Favoring Older Singing over the Modern" (*Hāwī* fols. 12b–13a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 29–30) is similar to this one.]

46; Kh. 31;  
Sh. 59;  
ZY 115

Many people, when hearing Arabic poems—composed about dwellings, traces, vestiges, meadows, places, homelands, journeys, camels, steppes, water, wild animals, desolate regions, battles, intertribal hostilities, hatred, revenge—find them unappealing and reject them, | as they do not bring them *ṭarab*. They make fun of them, especially when they are made up of only one verse; they do not know the context in which the verse was composed, or do not understand its meaning. They only like poems about love, flirtation and eroticism, gardens, wine, | singing slave girls, gatherings (*majālis*), and the like, because they understand them easily.

Sh. 60

47

The musician who is genuinely interested in the art of composition needs to become familiar with and study these older poems, know their states over the ages, and strive to clarify every aspect of them to understand their meanings and aims. Composers have used these poems because they are famous for their language and [for their evocation of] the past. They are [prosodically] proportionate, masterly, famous, and contain the history of the Arabs, unrestrained intertribal hostilities, exquisite events, biographies, ways of life, behavior, character, and morals. They were known among the composers and told to one another. They are pleasant, but only to those who know and understand them; enumerating each type is well established and known.

## The Superiority of Music

[fols. 47–53; Kh. 32–34; Sh. 61–65; ZY 115–116]

[This chapter deals with the superiority of the science of music over other sciences; the superiority of theory over practice; and the effect of singing to clear the mind and act as emotional therapy. It has an anecdote about Alexander the Great, who elevated musicians to the highest level in society and sought their help to clarify his thoughts.]

Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib said: “This art—if one investigates it fully and follows up on every unknown aspect | [of it] until it becomes completely known—is ahead of all other sciences in eminence and nobility, according to the philosophers. They considered arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy as inferior to music in eminence and nobility,<sup>1</sup> except when the lowly people attached their name to this art, and debased its meaning; they claimed what they have not perfected and earned income from ignorant people who do not understand it. The enlightened ones do not regard these faults as coming from good musicians or these imperfections as coming from connoisseurs. They have given this art its proper due, have known its value, and have examined its science with [the intention of] glorifying and honoring [it], and consider the practising musicians with reverence and beneficence.”

It was related that Alexander the Great, also called by the epithet the “two-horned” (*dhū l-qarnayn*), got up | from his seat and offered it to a musician (*mūsīqār*). When the dignitaries | disapproved of this, he said to them: “I did not honor him except for the musician[ship] (*mūsīqār*)<sup>2</sup> in him.” He elevated the practitioners of this art | above all other arts because of its eminence and nobility. He used to say: “I did not elevate them but it is their art which did [that].” He made their ranks such that they were seated in the front in his gatherings. Whenever a matter became serious, he would gather the musicians and tap the rhythm [to their music] with a wand (*qaḍīb*), he would reflect on the

47; Kh.  
32; Sh. 61;  
ZY 115  
48

ZY 116  
Sh. 62

49

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- 1 Here Shiloah clearly remarks that for al-Kātib music was in first place among the four sciences that made up the medieval quadrivium; for the Platonic and Pythagorean influence in this passage, see Sh. 61 n. 1.
  - 2 Shiloah and Zakariyyā Yūsuf edited it to *mūsīqī* (music) (Sh. 62 n. 1; ZY 116); Khashaba edited it to musical art *mūsīqārīyya* (Kh. 32).

matter until the right opinion came to his mind, at which point he would let go of the wand, which was a sign for the musicians to leave. He used to say: “I have never met an enemy but knew from the measure of my soul and the harmony of its numbers if I would be victorious or vanquished,<sup>3</sup> in this manner, I take the necessary precautions before worrying events occur, and I am sure of the matter.”

Kh. 33 The caliph Mūsā, nicknamed al-Hādī [ca. 145–170/763–786], gave permission to Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī to go to the treasury; he took one hundred bags [of money] despite al-Hādī’s power and pride.<sup>4</sup> There are also many similar stories.

Sh. 63 One of the philosophers said: “Singing clears the mind by mingling with  
50 the sweetness of the notes and its *shudhūr*, the excellence of natural talent, | the soundness of the rhythmic division and the poetic feet, [it] helps guide the musician’s natural disposition (*naḥīza*),<sup>5</sup> scrutinizing the correct from the faulty, the sound knowledge of the rhythmic and melodic modes.”

Another one said: “Only the one with the correct natural disposition, the subtle knowledge of this art, and a well-balanced frame of mind can unlock the particularities of this art, know the special meaning of singing, the durations of its notes, the size of its poetic feet, and how they fit with the rhythmic divisions.”

He also said: “Singing makes one remember sadness patiently [to reduce its pain], diverts one from sadness, accompanies the bewildered and lonely, brings happiness to the lonely and yearning person, cools down the burning fire of the broken heart, and seeks to win over the union of the beloved.”

As for knowing which of the two arts [theoretical and practical] is more noble, I shall mention the sayings of the ones we can trust and rely on.

Al-Kindī Ya‘qūb<sup>6</sup> said that theory and practice are the first superior qualities.  
51 Each is divided into three | sections. The theoretical one is made up of physics,

3 For the Platonic and Pythagorean influence in this passage, see Sh. 62 n. 3.

4 In *KA* v, 185, it is a more detailed and colorful story. When moved by Ibrāhīm’s singing, al-Hādī asked him what he wanted as a reward; Ibrāhīm said the fountain of Marwān. Al-Hādī became livid, called him the son of a smelly uncircumcised woman, and said he wanted to ruin his reputation so that people say you caused me to be in a state of *tarab* and as a reward I gave you this fountain! He then ordered that the musician be taken to the treasury and that he could take whatever he wanted. The fountain in question was a public treasure in Medina; it was commissioned by the caliph Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (20–60/ 603–680), and later built by Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (2–65/623–685) and bore his name.

5 Khashaba misread it as *tamyīz* (differentiation) (Kh. 33); Zakariyyā Yūsuf misread it as *khibra* (experience) (ZY 116).

6 This is a strange inversion of his name; it is usually Ya‘qūb b. Iṣḥāq al-Kindī and his full name is Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb b. Iṣḥāq al-Kindī.

mathematics, and theology; the practical one is made up of the administration of the soul (*siyāsāt al-naḥs*), the administration of the house (*siyāsāt al-bayt*), and the administration of the city (*al-siyāsa al-madaniyya*);<sup>7</sup> and some determine others.<sup>8</sup>

Nicomachus said in his book on harmonics (*taʿlīf*)<sup>9</sup> that no one should think that much research<sup>10</sup> in music is not needed by those who have recourse to the real philosophy.<sup>11</sup> [They] need [research in music] more than the practical art, the one done by the hands [of the musicians]. This is because the superiority of one of the arts over the other is not negligible in nobility, rank, or the truth of the science, which is the highest aim of happiness and the perfection of true philosophy. The practical art done manually is but one section | of craftsmanship; if it is measured against the science of music (*al-ʿilm al-muṭribī*),<sup>12</sup> the latter will hold the same position as the chief carpenter who gives orders to the workers who are his servants; the scientific and theoretical art of music holds the same position as the king who commands | and prohibits.

Those who, in their studies, follow the way of analogical deduction (*qiyās*) and strive to acquire knowledge about the things that we have mentioned above are the real masters of music. Everything related to | understanding music should be attributed to them and [not] to the practicing musicians, in the same way that a beautiful building is attributable to the master [architect] and not to his servants [the masons].<sup>13</sup> In general, analogical deduction and understanding is more noble than the practical art; this is so because the theoretical comes before the practical,<sup>14</sup> and the practical needs the theoretical as the body needs the soul, and as perception needs the brain. Socrates and Plato testified

Sh. 64

52

Kh. 34

Sh. 65

7 Hitti (*History* 371) translated *al-siyāsa al-madaniyya* as political regime.

8 These are discussed in detail in al-Khuwārizmī, *Mafātiḥ* 132–134. Shiloah traced also them to peripateticism in Cassiodorus. The theoretical arts are physics, mathematics, and theology; the practical arts are individual morality, domestic or familial morality, and public or civic morality (Sh. 63 n. 3). The three practical arts are translated by Shiloah as psychology, economics, and politics (Sh. 63).

9 This is the *Enchiridion*; for details about Nicomachus and his *Enchiridion*, see Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 245–269.

10 Here the copyist added a sentence from fol. 50 but then mentioned that it was added.

11 I.e., one should know that much research in music is needed by those who have recourse to real philosophy.

12 Lit., “the science or theory of the art of musical *ṭarab*.”

13 The metaphors of the chief carpenter versus his workers and the architect versus the masons are taken from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 61; *MA* i, 12); in the latter, however, it is composition versus performance and not theory versus practice as in al-Kātib.

14 This is a false statement common among theorists; the aim of theory is to explain already existing and established practice, so practice comes first, not theory.

to this. As for Archytas [ca. 440–360 BCE],<sup>15</sup> he wrote a book devoted to the musician [53]; in it he said one must not call masters of music (*aṣḥāb mūsīqī*) those who devote themselves to the practical art, those who strive for dexterity to play instruments but do not try to understand the reasons, causes, and do not apply analogical deduction to musical matters. They should be called artisans (*ṣunnāʿ*, sing. *ṣāniʿ*) and we should attribute to each what he performs. The theoreticians are the ones who should be called masters of music; they do not need to practice the art, their skills are noble and should not be ignored.<sup>16</sup> Thus, we have narrated what was said.

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15 The text transcribes the name as Arkhūṭas; he was a mathematician and a Pythagorean philosopher (Sh. 65 n. 2); he was also a friend of Plato.

16 The text is ambiguous, as it is not clear if the skills are those of the theoreticians or the practicing musicians. Shiloah interpreted it as the musicians (Sh. 65). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān is more nuanced as he stressed the importance of having both theoretical and practical knowledge and adds that theoretical knowledge can be helpful; if the singer stumbles, he will know how to return to the right track (*Hāwī* fol. 65a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 171–172). It is indeed regrettable that ancient Greece and the medieval world considered practical arts inferior to theoretical arts; theorists who do not practice music miss many subtle aspects of it (see Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Hāwī*). In addition, theorists often make their living and base their theories on the efforts and productions of practicing musicians, whether the latter are composers or performers. This state of affairs continues today in Arabic societies, as for instance at music conferences where historians and theorists are housed in expensive hotels and performing musicians are housed in second-rate ones. In my opinion, this is due to the social status of musicians in the Arab world and to centuries of writings that consider them below music theorists.

## The Characteristics of Melodies

[fols. 53–58; Kh. 35–37; Sh. 65–68; ZY 116–117]

[This chapter deals with how melodies bring pleasure to the listener, but more importantly, how they affect his soul; it also deals with music and emotions, the tetrachords, how music benefits poetry, and how vocal ornaments embellish singing. Some paragraphs in this chapter are borrowed from al-Fārābī, *KMK* 63–64, 1071, 1171–1172, 1178–1181; *MA* i, 14–15; *MA* i, 89–91, 93–95.]

Abū Naṣr [al-Fārābī] said:<sup>1</sup>

Melodies are of two types: one that pleases only the senses without producing other effects in the soul; [the other type is composed to benefit the soul, in addition to pleasure],<sup>2</sup> with other aspects such as images and emotions that correspond to other aspects. The first type is less useful; the second is the useful one | and constitutes the complete and perfect melodies that are also the ones set to measured language, I mean poetry. | The perfect melodies are of three types: strengthening, softening, and moderating. The latter [moderating melodies] are also called settling or stable (*istiqrārī*) as they cause the soul to gain stability and calm;<sup>3</sup> they are also called the keeper (*ḥāfiẓ*) as they keep the soul in a state of moderation and guard it from inclining to another state. As for how each type is composed, it was mentioned in its proper place in the books of the philosophers; here we shall mention what comes to our mind.

53; Kh.  
35; Sh. 65;  
ZY 116

54  
Sh. 66

Abū Naṣr [al-Fārābī] said:

Melodies help in perfecting the meaning of poetry not only with the sound composition of high (*shadīd*) and low (*thaqīl*) notes; there should

1 This paragraph is a shorter version of al-Fārābī's (from *KMK* 1179–1181; *MA* ii, 94–95). For a translation of al-Fārābī's text, see Madian, *Language-music relationships* 349–351.

2 The square brackets are from *KMK* 1180; *MA* ii, 94–95 fill a lacuna in the MS (fol. 53), and in Shiloah (Sh. 65).

3 Ibn al-Ṭahḥān talks about *istiqrārī* as a stable tetrachord and not a stable melody; it calms the soul into moderation (*Hāwī* fol. 16a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 38–39; see also pp. 78–79, fol. 118).

55 be other states of the notes with which the melodies become more per-  
 Kh. 36 fect and more superior, and thus more able to help reach the aim | [of  
 the poetry]<sup>4</sup> in pleasure and benefit. These states of the notes are four.  
 One gives the listener pleasure and elegance, and increases the melody's |  
 beauty and ornamentation. Another creates imaginings in the soul in the  
 same manner as the ones that occur in the craft of making poetry. Another  
 causes passions in the soul, such as satisfaction, indignation, anger, com-  
 passion, cruelty, sadness, regrets, and the like. The fourth increases a per-  
 son's understanding of the meanings of the poetry whose letters are set  
 to musical notes;<sup>5</sup>

that is, poems set to music and chanting [the Qurʾān], and the like. When these  
 come together, each is attributed to the most particular aspects that the soul  
 attempts to reproduce through them.

Sh. 67 Notes that stir emotions are of three types. | Some increase the soul's  
 strong passions and are attributed to strength, such as power, cruelty,  
 56 anger, aversion, and the like. | Some increase the soul's weakness, such  
 as fear, compassion, anxiety, cowardice, and the like. Some increase the  
 soul's mixture of the last two [groups], which are in opposition to each  
 other.

[This last one] is the middle, which guards the moderation of the present state  
 and it is called the keeper (*hāfiẓ*).<sup>6</sup>

As for differentiae of the notes, they are their manners of being, which  
 are particular to each one of them. They increase the soul's passions; let  
 us derive their names from their types of passion.<sup>7</sup> What causes sadness is  
 called sad or sadness-causing; what causes regret is called regretful; what  
 causes affection is called affectionate; what causes hatred is called hat-  
 ing; what causes compassion is called compassionate; what causes fear is  
 called fearsome.

4 The square brackets are added after al-Fārābī's text (*KMK* 1171; *MA* ii, 89; Sh. 66 n. 3).

5 Here ends the borrowing from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1171; *MA* ii, 89; Sh. 66 n. 5). For a translation of  
 al-Fārābī's text, see Madian, *Language-music relationships* 339–340.

6 The sentence “which guards the moderation of the present state and is called the keeper” is  
 an addition to al-Fārābī's passage (*KMK* 1179; *MA* ii, 94).

7 The passage from al-Fārābī mentions that they do not have names, they derive their names  
 from their types of passion (*KMK* 1178; *MA* ii, 93).

Passions are the changes (*istiḥāla*) affecting the soul [and are] caused by melodies of various types. For this reason, there must be a similarity between the soul and the melodies, as was mentioned [by philosophers]; we shall relate some of them, God willing.<sup>8</sup>

The states of being of these notes that cause emotions is better imagined when associated with fitting poems. What is understood by way of the notes can also be understood by means of the word; this is so because each type of word has a type of sound particular to it. If it is sounded, then it is understood, whether the situation is | *ṭarab*, or fear, or safety. We always see this in birds and animals; we understand the meaning of their sounds whether they are in a state of *ṭarab*, or safety, or fear.

57

Sh. 68

What make the melodies more pleasing to the sense of hearing are manifold: the vocal and instrumental notes should be pure and not muddled (*sha'ith*);<sup>9</sup> long notes should be broken (*munkasira*) and shaken (*mahzūza*); short (*qiṣār*)<sup>10</sup> notes should be humid; some notes should be sung with complete nasality (*zamm*, singing an unvoveled m) and half nasality (*ghunna*, singing an unvoveled n);<sup>11</sup> | some are slightly accelerated (*tukhabbab*)<sup>12</sup> in the middle or end of the song; some are made ample by means of chest notes, and by expanding the air passage.<sup>13</sup>

Kh. 37

8 He explains some of it in the next chapter (Sh. 67 n. 7).

9 Lit., “disheveled, unkempt, disarranged,” the term is defined in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān as a sound that is sometimes clear, disarranged at other times, with an unfinished sound (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71).

10 This word is added in the margin. The original passage in al-Fārābī has *mumattāṭa* (protracted, stretched, long) (*KMK* 1172; *MA* ii, 90), so it seems redundant given the sentence that precedes it; it is likely that al-Kātib noted this redundancy as a mistake and corrected it. Al-Kātib also defined the related word *tamaṭṭī* as long and stretching, as it is the completion of the song with the breath taken to its limit (fol. 133; Kh. 82; Sh. 127). In *KA* the related words *maṭṭāṭa* and *maṭmaṭ* mean using many notes to ornament the melody in a melismatic way (*KA* i, 41; *KA* xxiii, 183). Shiloah used the ornamentation issue from the related expression *tamaṭṭāṭa fī* (to ornate a story) to justify his use of “ornate” instead of “short,” then added that usually ornamented notes are short and thus al-Kātib is justified in using “short”; however, it is the long notes that utilize ornaments more than the short ones.

11 For their definitions, see fol. 128; Kh. 79; Sh. 124.

12 The word is missing some dots; Shiloah and Zakariyyā Yūsuf edited it as *tujannab*, meaning the note is played half a tone lower. However, the original passage of al-Fārābī clearly has *tukhabbab* and the related word *mukhabbaba* (*KMK* 1071, 1172; *MA* ii, 58, 90). Lane defines it as slightly accelerated, in the manner of a trotting horse (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* ii, 692). Al-Fārābī further clarifies it as being similar to the speech of a sleepy person, as opposed to that of one awake (*KMK* 1071, 1172; *MA* ii, 58, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 100).

58 We can add to these | other techniques that help (*mu'īnatan*)<sup>14</sup> the melodies; we shall mention them in a later chapter.<sup>15</sup> When we contemplate these techniques in older songs and modern ones that follow their path we are able to appreciate each type and know the strength of its effect on our soul. Anything we come across we will know what it is used for and we will use each type for what fits it and what is worthy of it. When the listener and the singer know this they benefit from it greatly.

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13 See also the definition in fol. 128, Kh. 80; Sh. 124; ZY 132. Here ends the quote from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1172; *MA* ii, 90).

14 Shiloah read it as *mu'ūyyanatan* (determined) but the MS does not have a doubling over the letter *y*.

15 This he does in chapters 23–25.

## The Resemblance between the Soul, the Melodies, and the Celestial Sphere

[fols. 58–64; Kh. 38–40; Sh. 69–74; ZY 117–119]

[This chapter contains many speculations about music; these make for a nice elegant theory about the relation of music (notes, intervals, consonances, and dissonances) to the soul and the celestial sphere. But regrettably this theory is of no use because it is unrelated to musical practices. Al-Kâtib based this chapter on the opinions of al-Kindî and other Greek theoreticians.]

We shall mention here a short exposition of this art; a longer one would take too long, and much has been written about it in the past. The following is what al-Kindî and others have said about the resemblance [between] the actions of the soul and the divisions of the groups of consonant intervals (*al-jumû' al-mushtarakât li-l-aṣwât*)<sup>1</sup> that make up the melodies; explaining them will take place in the appropriate chapter.<sup>2</sup>

58; Kh.  
38; Sh. 69;  
ZY 117

He said simple consonances are three; here simple means that the extremities are similar<sup>3</sup> and in noble ratios.<sup>4</sup> They are | the fourth, fifth, and octave.<sup>5</sup> The origin of the | soul is also tripartite: rational, sensible, and natural.<sup>6</sup> The similarity between the musical groups and the origins of the soul are in the following manner. The rational is identified with the octave, which is the perfect consonance. Whenever the rational exists, then the sensible and natural will also exist; by rational we mean the capability of differentiating. In the same manner, whenever the octave occurs, then the fourth and fifth are present in it.<sup>7</sup> The sensible is similar to the fifth because it is closer to the rational; the natural is similar to the fourth.

59  
ZY 118  
Sh. 70

1 In this chapter, al-Kâtib means the octave, double octave, the fifth, and the fourth.

2 See chapter 16.

3 He means consonant with each other and when sounded together they appear as one: the octave, fifth, and fourth. See later in this chapter, pp. 37–38, fol. 63, regarding notes an octave apart.

4 That is  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{2}{3}$ , and  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

5 Lit., “group of four, group of five, and the group that encompass all the notes,” i.e., the octave.

6 Shiloah mentions that the source of this division goes back to Aristotle, and its identification with the music interval goes back to Pythagoras (Sh. 70 n. 1). Furthermore, al-Kindî’s tripartite origin of the soul, “rational, sensible, and natural” is a paraphrase of Ptolemy “intellectual, perceptive and animating” (Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 375).

7 Lit., “The fourth and the fifth exist because of the octave” means that they are contained in

60 As for the rational, | they are seven, and are equivalent to the seven types of  
 Sh. 71 octaves: comprehension, intelligence, memory, deliberation, estimation, ana-  
 logical deduction, and knowledge.<sup>8</sup> | Concerning comprehension, it is what  
 Kh. 39 the senses bring to the soul. Intelligence is the formation of concepts in the  
 soul brought about by images received by the senses. | Memory is the retention  
 in the soul of images received by the soul. Deliberation is the state in which  
 the soul compares things from their exterior forms. Analogical deduction is the  
 state in which the soul establishes a comparison by advancing a correct argu-  
 ment, I mean, deducing conclusions from true premises. Knowledge is the soul  
 attaining the truth.

The sensible soul is quadripartite like the [four] types of fifths: ear, eye, taste,  
 and smell.<sup>9</sup>

The natural soul is tripartite like the [three] types of fourths: the beginning  
 of growth, the end of growth, and diminished growth.<sup>10</sup> This is how each type  
 responds to what is equivalent to it.

61 The superior qualities | of the notes are their consonances (*i'tilāf*)—called  
 Sh. 72 *amālās*—and their dissonances, which are the opposite—called *ūmālās*<sup>11</sup>—  
 since the soul likewise has superior and dislikable qualities [corresponding to  
 the notes]. The harmony | in the notes is the consonance, and the dissonance  
 is its opposite; similarly, the superior qualities of the soul are its moderation  
 and the harmony of its parts. Thus, it is clear that music leads the soul to var-  
 ious elements to indicate that it is similar to it, music is in harmony with the  
 soul if well arranged, but not in harmony with the soul if the music is not well  
 arranged. It could lead it to desire and joy, or to a lack of desire and depression,  
 or to tranquility and the elimination of sensation (that is sleep), or to anger and

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the octave. Al-Kindī's rational "comprehension, intelligence, memory, deliberation, esti-  
 mation, analogical deduction, and knowledge" are a loose paraphrase of Ptolemy's "imagi-  
 nation, intellect, reflection, thought, opinion, reason, and knowledge" (Barker, *Greek musi-  
 cal writings II*, 375–376).

8 The seven types of octaves are explained in al-Fārābī as G to G; A to A; B to B; C to C; D to  
 D; E to E; and F to F (*KMK* 956; *MA* ii, 22–23; Sawa, *Music performance* 55–56).

9 The four types of fifths are Tone Tone Semitone Tone, TSTT, STTT, TTTS (*KMK* 956; *MA*  
 ii, 22–23; Sawa, *Music performance* 55–56). Al-Kindī's "ear, eye, taste, and smell" are from  
 Ptolemy's "sight, hearing, smell, and taste" (Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 375).

10 The three types of fourths are TTS, TST, STT (*KMK* 956; *MA* ii, 22–23; Sawa, *Music perfor-  
 mance* 55–56). Al-Kindī's "beginning of growth, end of growth, and diminished growth"  
 are from Ptolemy's "growth, maturity, and decline" (Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 375).

11 Shiloah interestingly suggests that the word *amālās* should be *mālās*, which is closer to  
*melos* and hence consonant; the second word he read as *amālās* (and not *ūmālās*) and  
 suggested that the *a* at the beginning is a privative, meaning non-consonance. Zakariyyā  
 Yūsuf read *ūmālās* as *famālās* (ZY 118).

indignation, or to silence and immobility, or to motion and jumping, | or to joy, 62  
or to sadness, or to safety, or to fear.

Dionysius mentioned notes (*nagham*)<sup>12</sup> that he had made equivalent to the superior qualities of the soul: justice is equivalent to the index finger of the second string [D<sub>1</sub>], comprehension to the open third string [F<sub>1</sub>], virtue to the middle finger of the second string [E flat 1], intelligence to the index finger of the third string [G<sub>2</sub>], care to the open fourth string [B flat 2], rage to the middle finger of the third string [A flat 2], patience to the index finger of the fourth string [C<sub>2</sub>], and virility to the middle finger of the fourth string [D flat 2]. The ancients have much to say about this issue but we do not need it here.

As for the resemblance between music and the celestial spheres | in their Kh. 40;  
position and movements, this relates to both nature and position.<sup>13</sup> As for the Sh. 73  
nature of each sphere, its movement has no beginning that affects its position. As for its position, one can situate its beginning in every case and in different locations; that is, whichever position can be used as its beginning, | because 63  
the line of the noon divides the sphere of the zodiac in two halves everywhere according to two opposing signs; each can be used as the extremity of the diameter of the sphere of the zodiac. The complete system, called the double octave (*bis diapason*)<sup>14</sup> contains the largest musical (*ṣawṭīyya*)<sup>15</sup> interval twice, the largest interval being the octave. The extremities of the first octave are the *mafrūḍa* (*proslambanoménos*) [G<sub>1</sub>] and the *wuṣṭā* (*mèse*)<sup>16</sup> [G<sub>2</sub>]; [the extremities of the second octave are the *wuṣṭā* (*mèse*)] and *ḥāddat al-ḥāddāt* (*nète hyperboléon*) [G<sub>3</sub>].<sup>17</sup> By *mafrūḍa* we mean the open first string [G<sub>1</sub>], by *wuṣṭā* we mean the index finger fret of the third string [G<sub>2</sub>], and the last one is the ring finger fret (*binṣīr*)<sup>18</sup> of the fifth string [G<sub>3</sub>]. The notes in the double octave

12 The word can also mean melodic modes, and this is how Shiloah translated it. The problem with this translation is that the definitions of the melodic modes in medieval Arabic music were based on the third string in its open position and its frets, and not on other strings.

13 Shiloah correctly noted that this passage is obscure at best.

14 Sh. 73.

15 The MS (fol. 63) has *ḍaw'īyya* (optical), a copyist error; Khashaba, Shiloah, and Zakariyyā Yūsuf correctly edited it as *ṣawṭīyya* (Kh. 40; Sh. 73 n. 3; ZY 119).

16 Here *wuṣṭā* should not be confused with the middle finger fret.

17 The MS (fol. 63) has *ifrāt al-ḥāddāt*, a copyist error; Zakariyyā Yūsuf read it as *awsāt al-ḥāddāt*, which makes no sense (ZY 118). The Greek and Arabic terms are from Ptolemy (Barker, *Greek musical writings* II, 327) and al-Fārābī (KMK 340; MA I, 122). It is worth noting that this double octave, or complete system of ancient Greece, survived over 2 millennia in modern Arabic music theory: *yakāh* [G<sub>1</sub>]—*nawā* [G<sub>2</sub>]—*sahm* [G<sub>3</sub>], even though the Arabic *qānūn* (psaltery) has a range of three octaves and one-fifth.

18 The MS (fol. 63) has *nabḍ*, a copyist error.

have the same quality: when played together, each two [e.g., A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub>] will sound as one.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the double octave is potentially a circle, as its ends join its beginning [G<sub>1</sub> to G<sub>3</sub>].<sup>20</sup> The sphere of the zodiac is divided into twelve parts; they are the houses of the zodiac. | We think that it has been divided this way because [the number twelve] can be divided into halves, thirds, or quarters. 64 These are the same divisions | we find in the complete system: the last note in the octave is half of the first [G<sub>2</sub> to G<sub>1</sub>, or G<sub>3</sub> to G<sub>2</sub>]; the fifth is one and one-half [D<sub>2</sub> to G<sub>1</sub>]; the fourth is one and one-third [C<sub>2</sub> to G<sub>1</sub>]. The excess of the first note of the fourth to its last note, and with the octave [*sic*] resembles the ratios of the sphere of the zodiac and the complete system; this will be studied in the appropriate chapter.<sup>21</sup> Sh. 74

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19 This is from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 223–224; *MA* i, 86).

20 Here Shiloah notes the influence of the Pythagorean concept which assigns the highest perfection to circular shapes and movements (Sh. 73 n. 7).

21 Shiloah noticed the obscurity of this sentence and suggested a Platonic origin of this theory (Sh. 74 n. 1).

## The State of the Notes

[fols. 64–66; Kh. 41; Sh. 74–75; ZY 119]

[This chapter deals with the physics of sound production, timbre, pitch, and duration. It borrows from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 215, 1066, 1069–1071, 1164–1166, 1172–1173; *MA* i, 81–82; *MA* ii, 54–58, 81–82, 86, 90) and is similar, almost word for word, to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s part 2, chapter 7: “The States of the Notes, Their Qualities, Quantities, Number, and Placements on the Strings of the Lute,” save for the latter extra sentence on the number of notes on the lute (*Hāwī* fols. 92a–93a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 226–227).]

The notes coming from the strings (*watar*, pl. *awtār*) when they vibrate (*tuhazz*)<sup>1</sup> occur because of the waving (*tamawwuj*)<sup>2</sup> of the air around it. If the air waves when the string vibrates [the motion continues from the edges of the string for a certain time, spreads to its parts one by one, even if the one plucking it left it, ... the note occurs from it because the remaining motion of the string pushes the air away; as a result, there occurs a continuous striking of the air that continues as long as the motion of the string remains, when it stops vibrating, the sound stops. Or the sound occurs when one slides (*zahafa*)<sup>3</sup> on the struck body with continuous striking, as in the case of the rebec (*rabāb*), and as a result the air bounces off it. As for the case in which the air flows bit by bit with powerful force in a concave body, the air strikes the sides of the inner body, or the air strikes itself continuously for a certain time, then a note occurs, as is the case with the woodwind],<sup>4</sup> it has concavity as well as holes [on the body of the instrument] as well as a hole [at the top] which leads the air

64; Kh. 41;  
Sh. 74;  
ZY 119

1 Lit., “shaken, set in motion, stirred, perturbed.”

2 It also means “vibration, swaying, motion.” In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, it is *tamazuj* (mixing) (*Hāwī* fols. 92a–93a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 226), that is, the motion of the string mixing with the air around it.

3 Lit., “creep, crawl.”

4 The square brackets are added from al-Fārābī’s passage (*KMK* 215; *MA* i, 81–82) which both Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān and al-Kātib quoted but from a secondary source with a lacuna that makes the text incomprehensible. Shiloah correctly mentions the possibility of a lacuna that causes the text to jump from a string instrument to a wind instrument (Sh. 74 n. 4). In my translation of this passage from Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, I commented on the fallacy of a theory of strings having cavities within them and passageways leading to the cavities (Sawa, *Encompasser* 226).

65 to its concavity, | as a result, the air contained in it causes a sound. | The ear  
 Sh. 75 (*samaʿ*) cannot distinguish the note from the sound before they combine and  
 [the ear hears it as] the same sound.<sup>5</sup> If the sound is followed by another one  
 [that is] in harmony (*mulāyim*) with it, then it will be consonant (*muttafiq*); if  
 it is not harmonious, then it will be dissonant.

The musical notes are those whose locations are determined by frets; we shall mention them in their chapter.<sup>6</sup>

Abū Naṣr [al-Fārābī] said:

The states of the notes are of two types: their quantity and quality. Their qualities are what we attribute to them: pleasure, dislike, clarity, muddiness, solidity, flexibility, softness, hardness.<sup>7</sup> Their quantities relate to the high and low notes. Their amounts and causes in the voices are similar to those heard from wind instruments; this is because the voices are natural wind instruments, | and the latter [wind instruments] are man-made throats.<sup>8</sup> A note is a single sound lingering [for a period of time],<sup>9</sup>

66

such as the notes of the first string (*bamm*) or the third string, or its index finger, or others. A sound comes before a note and the former is the genus to the latter; there cannot be notes without sounds, and [there cannot be] sounds with a plucking or beating (*qarʿ*). There are no harmonious sounds unless [there are harmonious and consonant] notes.<sup>10</sup>

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5 This is an obscure statement.

6 See chapter 13.

7 This is a very short summary of a masterly passage in which al-Fārābī classifies the timbral ornaments of the voice into sensations peculiar to the senses other than the sense of hearing, such as those peculiar to sight and touch; to some which draw their names from words describing human passions; to some which are technical terms; and finally, to some without names at all (*KMK* 1069–1071, 1164–1166, 1172–1173; *MA* ii, 57–58, 86, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 99–101).

8 This is similar to al-Fārābī's passage (*KMK* 1066; *MA* ii, 55).

9 This sentence is verbatim from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 214; *MA* i, 81).

10 Shiloah traced this sentence to Boethius, Nicomachus, and Euclid (Sh. 74 n. 2 and 75 n. 5).

## [The Causes or Mechanics of] Sound Production (*Taṣwīt*)

[fols. 66–72; Kh. 42–44; Sh. 76–78; ZY 119–120]

[This chapter, in large part, is a borrowing from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 212–214, 1066–1069; *MA* i, 80–81; *MA* ii, 55–57) about the physics of sound production in general and the voice in particular; the propagation of sound as well as the way high and low notes are produced by the voice and wind instruments. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 7: "The Definition of the Voice and Its Production" (*Hāwī* fols. 11a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 24) is different (shorter but more detailed with regard to vocal sound), as it concentrates on vocal sound production, taking into account the lungs, larynx, pharynx, tongue, palate, teeth, nose and lips, and it delineates two types of voices.]

Sound occurs because of a strike (*qarʿ*); the strike is the contact of a solid body with another solid body hitting (*muzāḥim*)<sup>1</sup> it as the result of a motion. The sound occurs when the air rebounds from the striking and the struck objects in a compacted way and the molecules of the air are connected to one another. The more the rebounding (*nābī*)<sup>2</sup> air is compacted, the clearer and better the sound will be; this happens when the objects are solid, hard, compacted, and polished, such as [objects] of copper, iron, and the like. If the struck object is rough and its molecules are loose, | then the sound will be less possible. In short, whenever any struck object resists the striking one, a sound occurs; whenever it lets it pass through (*inkharaqa*)<sup>3</sup> and does not resist it, then no sound will occur at all. In general, this is how sound is produced. But how does the sound reach the ear? The air that rebounds from the struck object is the one that carries the sound; with its motion, it moves the section that is next to it, which receives the sound and passes it on to the third, which receives it and passes it on to the fourth; in this manner the sound is transmitted from one section to the next until it reaches the ear of the listener; and it is the last section that ultimately touches the ear and makes the listener hear the sound.

66; Kh.  
42; Sh. 76;  
ZY 119

67

1 Lit., "pushing, pressing."

2 A copyist error (fol. 66) has *thānī* (second).

3 ZY edited it incorrectly as *inḥarafa* (deviate) (ZY 119); *KMK*, from which this passage is summarized, clearly has *inkharaqa* (*KMK* 214).

68 The vocal sounds come into being when the air moves in the throat and  
 Sh. 77 strikes its concave (*muqa‘arāt*) parts as well as the parts of other organs which  
 it traverses, such as parts of the mouth | and nose.<sup>4</sup> | This air is what the singer  
 breathes into his lungs<sup>5</sup> from the air around him, to fan the heart (*līyurawwiḥa*  
*bihī al-qalba*),<sup>6</sup> then exhales it when warmed up [by the heart]. If he exhales  
 Kh. 43 his breath at once, and in a gentle way, then no sound will be heard. But if he  
 holds back this air in his lungs and in what | surrounds them up to the bottom  
 of the throat, and lets it out little by little (*sarraba*),<sup>7</sup> consecutively pressing  
 against the concave parts of the throat and striking its various parts; in that  
 way a sound is produced. The same occurs in the woodwinds (*mazāmūr*, sing.  
 ZY 120 *mizmār*) when the air passes through them; | [as for higher or lower pitches  
 in the voice, and similarly in the wind instruments] if the conduit of the air  
 is narrow, the note will be higher; if it is wide, the note will be lower. In addition,  
 if the traversing air, or some of it, strikes a part of the throat that is close  
 to the pushing force, then the sound will be higher, if further away, the sound  
 69 will be lower. In addition, if the pushing force is stronger or weaker, the sound |  
 will follow [as higher or lower]. Similarly, if the air passes through the solid  
 or rough, soft or polished concave parts of the throat, then the sound will be  
 higher with the solid, and lower with the soft. The concave parts of the throat  
 that (*allatī*)<sup>8</sup> are close to the pushing force share the position of frets that are  
 close to the [right] hand of the player plucking the strings of the lute or pandore,  
 that is, the frets that are close to the lower bridge (*mushṭ*), the closest  
 being the little finger fret<sup>9</sup> and those after it [those that produce higher pitches  
 than the little finger and performed without frets below the little finger]. [The  
 concave parts of the throat closer to the pushing force] also share the position  
 of the holes of the woodwinds that are closer to the mouth of the player. The

4 This long paragraph is almost verbatim from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1066–1069; *MA* ii, 55–57); for a translation, see Madian, *Language-music relationships* 265–269. This part is far more detailed in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān (*Hāwī* fols. 11a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 24); see the information in the square brackets at the beginning of this chapter.

5 The text has the redundant expression: “and into his chest.”

6 The text has *līyurawwiḥa bihī ‘an al-qalbi* (fan from the heart or relax the heart) as does the Egyptian edition (*KMK* 1066) but *KMK* Köprülüzāde MS does not have the added ‘*an*. This may mean that the air that is fanning the heart is being warmed by the heart. This is how D’Erlanger interpreted it: “[the singer] ... having brought the air near the heart where it got warmed up” (*MA* ii, 55). Shiloah overlooks this sentence and adds in square brackets an ill-fitting interpretation: “to recover his breath” (Sh. 77).

7 A copyist’s error (fol. 68) has *sarrata*.

8 A copyist’s error has *āla* (instrument) instead of *allatī* (which); Khashaba corrected it (Kh. 43) but Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 120) does not.

9 Shiloah mistranslated *khinšir* (little finger) as ring finger.

parts of the throat that are further away share the same position as the frets that are further away from the [right] hand of the player of the lute and pandore; the furthest is the anterior [to the index finger] fret, and then the frets that are below it. The concave parts that are further away also share the same position as the holes of the woodwinds that are further away from the mouth of the player; indeed, the air moving through the pipes of the woodwinds produces lower notes when it hits | places further from the mouth of the player. It is not possible to determine the places where the air coming out of the chest hits the throat, or to measure | how far or near they are from each other. Similarly, it is not possible to measure the amount (i.e., how much) the throat widens or narrows. Similarly, it is not possible to measure the vocal notes unless [they are] measured against the notes coming out of stringed instruments, where one finds the location of the notes precisely determined and measured by means of the frets of the lute and pandore and rebec.<sup>10</sup> | Many people imagine that the sound is sometimes higher and sometimes lower, and under the delusion of this imagining, they think that the higher and lower sounds are because the sound comes from the head sometimes, and the chest and other organs in between at other times; they are wrong [in this]. The reason for the high and low sounds is what we have explained above, and because of too much or too little air, and because of the slowness and the speed. | These all cause the sound to be powerful and thick, penetrating, remaining (*dhāhib*), [or] small and weak, [or] thick and high-pitched.

70

Sh. 78

Kh. 44

71

This air moves in circular motions<sup>11</sup> until it reaches the ear. This is similar to what happens to a body of still water when an object is thrown into it; it causes waves to start at the location of the thrown object, that is, a motion that starts from the center. The waves [in the water] move in a circular motion like the air that moves in a circular motion in ever expanding circles until it reaches the ear; it is the same with the waves in the water until they reach the edge, if they are strong enough to reach it; if they weaken before reaching the edge, then they will return to their previous calm state. The same obtains with regard to the circles of air; if their motion slows down before reaching the ear,<sup>12</sup> and if their strength exceeds its bounds and returns to where | it started, it would be heard again, as happens to echoes that answer their own sound.<sup>13</sup>

72

10 This is an odd statement because the rebec was most often used without frets, according to al-Fārābī (*KMK* 801; *MA* i, 277).

11 More correctly, it moves in spherical motions.

12 This sentence is missing in Kh. 44.

13 Of course, this is an acoustical impossibility, as the dying sound does not return; for an echo to occur, the sound must be strong and must hit a wall or something solid.

## [The Meaning of the] Word Music [fols. 72–77; Kh. 45–47; Sh. 79–82; ZY 120–121]

[Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's part 2, chapter 1: "The Meaning of the Word Music" only shares the first two paragraphs of this chapter; he devotes the rest to Greek mythology (*Ḥāwī* fols. 83a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 201–202). In this chapter al-Kātib relies on al-Kindī and al-Fārābī for the definition of melodies and relies heavily on the latter for the definitions of melismatic, syllabic, and extra-syllabic compositions.]

72; Kh. 45; Sh. 79; ZY 120 The word "music"<sup>1</sup> means melodies; a melody consists of notes composed in a determined manner (*ta'līf maḥdūd*)<sup>2</sup> attached to syllables that make up words measured in the usual manner<sup>3</sup> to indicate meanings.<sup>4</sup>

It was also said that music has been named after the name of the highest and greatest celestial sphere (*al-falak al-a'zam*),<sup>5</sup> called *mūsīqāqīyā* [in Greek] because of the eminence of this [celestial] sphere and the corresponding eminence of the art of music over all other arts.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Kindī Ya'qūb said:<sup>7</sup> "The melody is the composition of a song of high (*aḥadd*)<sup>8</sup> and low notes arranged in a delightful way."

According to the ancients, a perfect melody (*al-laḥn al-tāmm al-mūsīqārī*) is tripartite, made of poetry, notes (*ta'līf*),<sup>9</sup> and rhythm.<sup>10</sup>

1 Lit., "The name music."

2 That is, with respect to the tone system, melodic modes, durations, and rhythmic modes.

3 That is, poetry.

4 This is a shorter version of al-Fārābī's definition (*KMK* 47; *MA* i, 5–6).

5 Eckhard Neubauer kindly suggested this English translation during the course of my translation of Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's *Ḥāwī*. He also added that in Arabic astronomy it was the eighth sphere, and was held by the fixed stars (Sawa, *Encompasser* 201 n. 4).

6 Shiloah remarked that al-Kātib confused two theories: the etymological link between music and the Muses, and the music of the spheres (Sh. 79 n. 2).

7 This is a strange inversion of his name; it is usually Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Kindī and his full name is Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ishāq al-Kindī.

8 The MS has a copyist's error, *ākhir* (other) instead of *aḥadd* (high).

9 Later (fol. 120) it is referred to by the more complete expression *ta'līf talḥīn*, lit., "musical composition." Shiloah mistranslated it as harmony (Sh. 79 and also 118). This tripartite is later called *ḥaramī* (fol. 120; Kh. 76; Sh. 118; ZY 130).

10 By ancients, al-Kātib probably meant al-Kindī, whose following definition closely resem-

Abū Naṣr [al-Fārābī] describes it (*rasama*) | also, as follows: “A melody is a group of many notes of determined [number], all or almost all consonant with one another, arranged in a determined way, in a known melodic mode that uses a particular tetrachord, with determined melodic intervals, specific tonality, and with defined melodic movements and rhythmic modes.”<sup>11</sup>

73

The notes are set to measured letters, I mean words [in a poem], [as follows:] whenever the letters in the verse are more than the notes (that is, the notes that fill the letters are spread over them to build a melody, with one, two, three, four or more letters per note), the notes cover<sup>12</sup> all the letters. | The letters that are combined with the notes are either set at the extremities of the notes—these are the beginnings (*bidāyāt*, sing. *bidāya*)<sup>13</sup> of the notes [melismatic]—or they [fully] fill what is between the extremities of the notes [extra syllabic] | such that the notes | are not prolonged, as there are letters set at the beginning and end of each note. The first type is called “empty” [or rather semi-filled with letters, i.e., melismatic] (*fāriḡh*) and the second “full” [syllabic and extra syllabic] (*mumtali*).<sup>14</sup>

Sh. 80

Kh. 46

74

ZY 121

Whenever a melody is made up of notes full of letters, then it is easy to understand the poem; however, the melody is less pleasant and less brilliant. Whenever a melody is made up of “empty” notes [of letters], then it becomes difficult to understand the poem; however, the melody is more brilliant and more pleasant. The melody should thus be a mix of both, to enjoy hearing it and to understand the poem.

One must set vowels at the extremities of the notes with “empty” letters, when such vowels are hidden, they do not spoil the meaning of the poem and

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bles that of the above-mentioned ancients, including the little used term *mūsiqārī*: “As for the completion of the musical art (*mūsiqārīyya*), it occurs when a [musical] composition is set to properly proportional poetry that is free of metrical defects, in durations of equal cyclical amounts and similar inner proportions (i.e., rhythm)” (*Risāla fī khubr ta’līf al-alḡān* [Epistle on the knowledge concerning the composition of melodies], al-Kindī, *Mu’allaḡāt*, ed. Yūsuf 64; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 79).

11 This is almost verbatim from al-Fārābī (KMK 487–488; MA i, 160).

12 The MS has *yustab’ad* (to regard as unlikely) and both Khashaba (Kh. 45) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 120) correctly edited it to *tustanfadh* (to exhaust); Shiloah translated it well as “englober” (comprise) (Sh. 80).

13 The MS has *maddāt* (prolongations) but al-Fārābī’s *bidāyāt* is clearer in the context of the passage; Shiloah edited it to *bidāyāt* after the text of al-Fārābī (KMK 1096; MA ii, 66; Sh. 80 n. 2).

14 Al-Fārābī refers to a melody with too many notes as a melody with empty notes (a confusing denomination in which he means notes empty of letters, or with few letters, i.e., melismatic), a melody with few notes as a melody with filled notes (he means empty of notes and filled with letters, i.e., extra syllabic) (KMK 1096–1097; MA ii, 66).

they do not hide much of the poem. Such letters do not add much to the poem or remove much of it except for their role in sound prolongations and *tarnī-māt*.<sup>15</sup> [It is important to note this because] understanding the poem affects the soul in a way | that notes alone cannot.

75 The letters are set to the notes according to certain ratios: if the notes are more than the letters or equal to them, then the melody cannot be “full” of letters; if the letters are double the number of notes or more, then the melody can be considered “full.” If a person considers an [already] composed and arranged (*mu'allafa murattaba*) melody [without words]<sup>16</sup> with which to compose a song [to a pre-existing poem] he should examine the ratio of notes to the letters of the poem. If they are equal or the number of notes is greater<sup>17</sup> than the number of letters, then he knows that it is not possible to have a song with “full” letters. If the number of letters is double or more the number of notes, then the song will have notes with “full” letters. If the number of notes is more than the number of letters, then it is only possible to make a song with “empty” letters; or a song that is a mix of “empty” and “full” letters. If the number of notes and letters | is equal, then the beginning of each note will accompany a letter until all the letters are set musically [syllabic].<sup>18</sup> | If the number of notes is double, triple the number of letters, or more, then the notes can be set to the letters equally or unequally. When it is done equally, the notes of the melody are divided into groups of equal numbers. [When it is] done unequally, it means that the melody is divided into unequal parts so that some will have one note, some three notes, or four notes or more; they can follow a certain order from one to more, or not, such that many notes will come before the lesser ones or vice versa.<sup>19</sup> [If there remain notes without letters,]<sup>20</sup> and this is a possibility, then these notes will be set to other letters than those in the poem, in such a way that they do not spoil the meaning of the poem as has | been mentioned.<sup>21</sup>

76  
Kh. 47  
Sh. 82

15 This term has many meanings: vibrato; vocalizations in the sense of textless singing or textless chanting; lyrics sung to long durations; melismas. In this passage it refers to the last two.

16 Shiloah translated it as a series of notes, but looking at the original passage in al-Fārābī it is clear that it is an already existing melody without words (*KMK* 1105; *MA* ii, 69).

17 The MS fol. 75, Kh. 46, Sh. 81, and ZY 121 all have “less” which is wrong; the original passage in al-Fārābī has “more” (*KMK* 1101; *MA* ii, 68).

18 This is almost verbatim from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1110; *MA* ii, 70).

19 This is a summary of a long passage in al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1109–1132; *MA* ii, 70–76).

20 The square brackets are from Khashaba who clarified a rather incoherent sentence (Kh. 47).

21 See pp. 45–46, re. fol. 74.

Such letters are the glottal stop (*hamza*), *nabra*,<sup>22</sup> light *h* (*hā'*); the *nabra* is close to the *hamza*; these are always associated with unvoveled letters when needed.<sup>23</sup>

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22 For the definitions of *nabra* and *hamza*, see pp. 86 and 96, re. fols. 127, 138.

23 This is summarized from a longer passage in al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1117–1119; *MA* ii, 71–72); al-Fārābī explains that adding voveled letters to make up for the missing letters would be difficult to pronounce, so one has to have recourse to unvoveled ones to be the beginnings of voveled ones (*KMK* 1117; *MA* ii, 71; Madian, *Language-music relationships* 303).

## The Delimitations of the Notes

[fols. 77–85; Kh. 48–53; Sh. 82–88; ZY 121–123]

[This is a very detailed exposition of the tone system in the author’s era, with nine fret placements, and string ratios; it is close to the one explained by al-Fārābī, though it has fewer frets and some have different names. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān mentions six frets, and interestingly, they do not include the Zalzal fret; furthermore, he gives no measurements, claiming that measurements pose difficulties for students, rather he advises them to copy their placements with a divider. Al-Kātib’s present chapter is thus a useful addition to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s part 2, chapter 4: “The Frets, Their Names, Placements, Tying Them on the Finger Board, and Their Functions” (*Hāwī* fols. 88b–89b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 214–216).]

77; Kh.  
48; Sh. 82;  
ZY 121

[Notes are determined by] the frets dividing the strings. Some people think that the notes coming out of the lute vary in number because of disagreements about the number of frets; each person thinks that he is right to the exclusion of others. We shall mention that which needs no more additions and omit those who made mistakes.

78 We know that the frets determine the notes and their positions [on the neck] of the lute, which includes too many of them, too little of them, | or in between. Some are used, though not needed [in the basic melody] except for multiplications (*takthīrāt*, sing. *takthīr*),<sup>1</sup> arrangements (*tartībāt*, sing. *tartīb*)<sup>2</sup>

1 Lit., “making many,” and this means using more than seven notes in the melodic mode as well as accidental notes (*KMK* 1059–1061; *MA* ii, 50–51; Sawa, *Music performance* 91–95). For musical examples illustrating this technique and the next two, see Sawa, *Music performance* 91–107.

2 Zakariyyā Yūsuf misread it as *tarnīmāt* (vocalizations, melismas) (ZY 121). Al-Fārābī explains that the arrangement is a way to add to the melodic modes, notes that do not have a particular fret to produce their sound. Some are located between the frets, some below the little finger fret, and some above the index finger fret; the goal is to enrich the melody (*KMK* 516; *MA* i, 174). Here it is important to note that al-Fārābī made a distinction between added notes that are produced by frets that he called *mujāwirāt* (neighboring or adjacent notes) and notes between the frets that he called *muqāribāt* (approximating notes) and which are sharper or flatter than the notes of the chosen melodic mode (*KMK* 1059–1060; *MA* ii, 50–51). It is also possible that it is a copyist’s error for *tazyīnāt* (ornamentations) as occurs in al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1060; *MA* ii, 51).

and supports (*mu'āwanāt*, sing. *mu'āwana*).<sup>3</sup> We also learned that the number of notes is similar and taken from the number of frets; some cannot be omitted because they are the essential ones, and each fret corresponds to notes on the strings. The essential frets are | four and they are related to the four fingers (*iṣba'*, pl. *aṣābi'*), | as people realized, | became accustomed to, and related the notes to them. The ancients considered them the natural ones. Natural things in general are those whose other sides are not taken and one feels relaxed with them; thus spoke Plato.<sup>4</sup>

Sh. 83  
Sh. 84  
Kh. 49

To these four frets, one can add one and up to five,<sup>5</sup> but one can take a middle road and limit them to six and omit the rest. These six frets are the index finger fret, | the ancients called it the key (*miftāh*);<sup>6</sup> the Persian middle finger; Zalzal [middle finger] fret; the ring finger fret; the little finger fret; and the anterior to the index finger fret.

79

To the six, one can also add the anterior to the middle finger fret; the second anterior to the index finger fret; and a strange fret | that al-Fārābī mentioned which occurs between the Zalzal middle finger fret and the ring finger fret [*sic*].<sup>7</sup> In this manner, | including the open string, we have ten notes. If we drop from the count the open strings [except for the first string] because their little fingers are in unison with the open strings, then the first string gives us ten notes, the rest nine notes. The total number of notes | from the four strings is thirty-seven,<sup>8</sup> and if one adds a fifth string, their number increases by nine [and the total number is forty-six].

ZY 122

Sh. 85

Kh. 50

The essential ones | used by people in their melodies are twenty-six from five frets and five strings [plus the open first string].<sup>9</sup> I shall mention their divi-

80

3 This may mean going beyond the range of the melody and using notes that are an octave, or a fifth, or a fourth higher or lower, or achieving harmonic notes by playing a note together with its octave, fifth, or fourth (*KMK* 516–517; 1060–1061; *MA* i, 174; *MA* ii, 51–52; Sawa, *Music performance* 81, 95–97).

4 This is a very unclear sentence, as Shiloah stated. He interprets it as follows: “Natural things are those that present only outward aspects to which one is exposed, and with which one feels at ease” (Sh. 84 n. 1). He also doubted that it can be traced to Plato. For natural notes, see al-Fārābī’s passage (*KMK* 113–142; *MA* i, 41–52).

5 This makes a total of nine frets, and if one adds the open string, there are ten. In al-Fārābī there are twelve plus the open string (see lute charts, pp. 204–205).

6 It is unclear why the ancients called it the key, unless they mean that it opens the way to the remaining frets. In a similar vein, Ibn al-Munajjim called the third string (*mathnā*) the pillar or support (*amūd*) because musicians rely on it for the sound level and tuning (Ibn al-Munajjim, *Risāla* 17; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 60–61).

7 This is definitely a mistake, as there are no frets in al-Fārābī’s system between the Zalzal fret (354 cents) and the ring finger (408).

8 The MS (fol. 79) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 122) wrongly have forty-nine.

9 These are the open first string plus the five index finger frets, five Persian middle fingers, five

Sh. 86 sions; | each note has a related and consonant replica at the octave, in the ratio of two to one. These notes are low-pitched and high-pitched; each low one [is produced by a string] which is double in length that of the high one provided they are octave consonants. The register of the low-pitched notes corresponds to the first and second strings; the register of the high-pitched notes corresponds to the third and the fourth strings. The point of separation from the low to the high is the little finger of the second string (*mathlath*) [F<sub>1</sub>]; the point of separation from the high to the low is the open third string [the same one, F<sub>1</sub>, but on a different string].<sup>10</sup> The high notes are at the higher octave (*ṣiyāḥ*) of the lower notes (*ṣijāḥ*), and each high note is just a replica of each low note.

The frets are set on the length of the strings; they divide the strings from the lower bridge (*musḥt*) to the end of the neck (*anf*) of the lute and similar  
81 instruments;<sup>11</sup> the strings and their divisions | give the various sounds (*ṭanīn*).<sup>12</sup>

Kh. 51 The index finger fret is set at the ninth of the string [from the neck, 8/9]; the ring finger fret is set | at the ninth of the string and the ninth of what remains [81/64]; the ancient middle finger is set at one-ninth of the string and half of what remains [68/81]; the little finger fret is set at the fourth of the string [3/4].

The strings can also be divided from this latter fret into eight parts; if one adds one of them it becomes the ancient middle finger related to the Persians [27/32]; or it would be set at the eighth and one-quarter of the eighth of the string [68/81] [i.e., the ancient middle finger]. Between the two divisions [27/32  
Sh. 87 and 68/81] | there is little perceptible difference.<sup>13</sup> After I examined it, I found it to be a portion of a portion of many portions! The one we have chosen is the second one, even though the first is also possible.<sup>14</sup>

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Zalzal middle fingers, five ring and five little fingers, Shiloah wrongly adds the anterior to the index finger; this makes the total thirty-one and not twenty-six (Sh. 85 n. 2).

10 Shiloah makes an interesting point when he suggests that the point of separation is not F<sub>1</sub>, but more correctly G<sub>2</sub>; it correctly divides the first octave G<sub>1</sub> to G<sub>2</sub> from the second octave G<sub>2</sub> to G<sub>3</sub> (Sh. 86 n. 2).

11 The *anf* is the higher bridge of the lute at the intersection of the neck and peg holder.

12 Lit., "tones."

13 That is, 27/32 equals 294 cents whereas 68/81 equals 302 cents. The difference is 8 cents, less than half a comma; it may seem that there is a little difference, except that in the Syrian *qānūns* with full levers, there is a marked nuance of approximately half a comma between the first which is a flat, and the second which is a raised flat. The flat lever is used when playing the *kurd* tetrachord (D E flat F G); the raised flat lever is used when playing the *ḥijāz* tetrachord (D E flat raised by half a comma F sharp lowered by half a comma G); to the uninitiated it may seem a small difference but to performers and connoisseurs the difference is not small.

14 Al-Kātib contradicts himself as he considers the Persian middle finger to be the middle finger, see fols. 94–95, p. 60.

The anterior to the middle finger is between the index finger | and the Persian middle finger; it is set at approximately one-ninth [*sic*] of the string.<sup>15</sup>

82

The Zalzal middle finger fret (*wuṣṭā Zalzal*), known also as the middle finger fret of the Arabs (*wuṣṭā al-Arab*) and also known as *al-muḥaddab*,<sup>16</sup> is set at one-sixth and one-sixth of its ninth [22/27]. It is easier to divide it by dividing the second anterior to the index finger which is set at half of one-sixth of the string, that is, dividing the string into twelve and setting the second anterior to the [index] finger fret<sup>17</sup> [at the twelfth division, 11/12, i.e., 150 cents, three-quarter tone],<sup>18</sup> then we drop one-ninth of what remains of the strings and set this position to obtain the Zalzal middle finger [22/27, i.e., 354 cents].<sup>19</sup> [The location of the first anterior] is easy to determine by finding the lower octave of the ancient middle finger<sup>20</sup> on the third string [A 2 flat, at 98 cents from the open third string] on the first string [A 1 flat, at 98 cents from the open first string].<sup>21</sup> It is found behind the frets and at a position of a finger from the neck; | we proceed in the same manner to get the second anterior.<sup>22</sup>

Kh. 52

Sh. 88

There are no frets to be added to the ones above, but one can use fewer as mentioned above.<sup>23</sup>

83

15 This is clearly a mistake because the ninth is the index finger fret. Shiloah and Zakariyyā Yūsuf did not notice this (Sh. 87; ZY 122). Khashaba suggested a seventh (Kh. 51 n. 7). This anterior to the middle finger fret is as the author mentions, between the index and the Persian frets, that is, between 204 and 294 cents; thus, it is at approximately 250 cents from the open string, that is, a tone and a quarter. Later however (on fols. 94, 179, pp. 60, 135) he identifies it with the Persian middle finger [E flat at 294 cents] which happens to be also al-Fārābī's anterior to the middle finger, this coincidence may have caused the confusion we witness in al-Kātib.

16 Shiloah (Sh. 87) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 122) both edited it as *mujannab* (anterior) but the ms (fol. 82) clearly has *muḥaddab*, which literally means convex. Khashaba suggests that it means going sharper than the Persian fret (294 cents) or the ancient fret (302 cents), and it is indeed sharper at 354 cents (Kh. 52 n. 1).

17 The ms (fol. 82) has "first anterior to the index finger" and Shiloah correctly edited it to "second" (Sh. 87 n. 3). It is the second at 150 cents that is higher than the 98 cents that makes up the other anterior to the index finger; hence, it is the first.

18 In al-Fārābī's lute chart, it is close to the anterior to the index finger, Persian type, at 145 cents.

19 The ms (fol. 82) wrongly says first anterior.

20 The ms (fol. 82) wrongly says Persian middle finger.

21 In al-Fārābī's lute chart, it is the anterior to the index finger placed at half a tone from the index finger, at 98 cents from the open first string.

22 This is then followed by an obscure sentence: "One can reverse the process until all locations are correct."

23 See pp. 48–49, re. fols. 78–79.

One can also facilitate the divisions by measuring the distance between the higher and lower bridges with a piece of twine or a string and dividing it by four; one then sets one of its ends at the higher bridge and the other end will be the location of the little finger.<sup>24</sup> Then one sets a distance the size of a meaty finger above the little finger fret to obtain the location of the ring finger fret. Then one sets a distance the size of a finger above the ring finger to obtain the location of the Persian middle finger fret.<sup>25</sup> Then one sets a distance the size of a finger above the Persian middle finger<sup>25</sup> to obtain the location of the index finger. Then one sets a distance the size of a finger above the index finger to obtain the location of the second anterior to the index finger.<sup>26</sup> Then one sets a distance the size of a finger above the second anterior to obtain the location of the first anterior finger.<sup>27</sup>

Kh. 53

84

The interval between the Persian middle finger and the index finger [98 cents] is [almost] equivalent to the interval between the ring and the little finger [90 cents]; the interval between | the ring finger and the Zalzal middle finger [54 cents] is equivalent to the interval between the [second] anterior to the index finger and the index finger [54 cents]. If we replace the Persian middle finger [294 cents] by the anterior to the middle finger [between 204 and 294, average 250 cents], then this anterior will be moved a bit below [higher than] the index finger.<sup>28</sup>

Sh. 89

ZY 123

To be correct and to examine the locations of the frets, one should make sure that the note coming out of the ring finger of the third string [A<sub>2</sub>] is the same as the index of the first string [A<sub>1</sub>]; that the ring finger of the fourth string [D<sub>2</sub>] is the same as the index finger of the second string [D<sub>1</sub>]; that the Persian middle finger of the first string [B<sub>1</sub> flat] is the same as the open fourth string | or little finger of the third string [B<sub>2</sub> flat]. If all these frets are in tune, then the lute is in tune. Likewise, one should examine the Zalzal middle finger on the third string [A<sub>2</sub> Zalzal, 150 cents from G<sub>2</sub>] with the second<sup>29</sup> anterior to the index finger on the first string [A<sub>1</sub> Zalzal, 150 cents]; similarly, the interval between the index and the ring fingers [204 cents] should be equivalent to the interval | between

24 What follows is a very imprecise system to locate the frets.

25 This sentence “to obtain the location of Persian middle finger fret. Then one sets a distance the size of a finger above the Persian middle finger” is missing in Shiloah (Sh. 88).

26 The MS (fol. 83) wrongly has first anterior.

27 The MS (fol. 83) wrongly has second anterior.

28 The terms Persian middle finger and anterior to the middle finger as used by al-Kātib differ from their use by al-Fārābī: al-Kātib's Persian (294 cents) is al-Fārābī's anterior to the middle finger; al-Kātib's anterior to the middle finger (approx. 250 cents) is different from al-Fārābī's anterior (294 cents) that in al-Kātib is nothing but the Persian middle finger!

29 MS fol. 83, Kh. 53, and ZY 123 all have first instead of the correct second.

the Persian and the little fingers [204 cents]; similarly, the interval between the Zalzal middle finger and the second anterior to the index finger [204 cents] should be [almost] equivalent to the interval between the Persian middle finger and the first anterior to the index finger [196 cents].<sup>30</sup>

These are the only frets used in the melodies. As to why such divisions are used, it is a matter that requires much explanation; this we have shown in our book *al-Muqni' fi l-nagham wa-l-īqā'* (The convincing book about notes, melodic modes, and rhythmic modes),<sup>31</sup> God willing, I shall explain some of them. 85

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30 MS fol. 83, Kh. 53, and ZY 123 all have first instead of second, and second instead of first.

31 Unfortunately, this book has not survived; it would have been a treasure to enable us to discover more rhythmic variations and possibly new rhythmic modes practiced in the fifth/eleventh century.

## The Divisions of the Frets of the Pandore [fols. 85–86; Kh. 54; Sh. 89–91; ZY 123]

[This is an extremely short summary of the frets of the *ṭunbūr* as it appears in al-Fārābī (*KMK* 663–670; *MA* i, 227–229).]

- 85; Kh. 54; Sh. 89; ZY 123 The frets of the Arabic pandore—known as the *baghdādī*—are such that our people do not know their locations or divisions except by sense, guess, or habit.<sup>1</sup> They [our people] only set two or three frets when their number had reached ten with the ancients. One can add more but one should use the fret system of the lute to obtain more notes than is usual | in the pandore.
- Sh. 90 86 The divisions of the ten frets | occur in the quarter of the string, that is, when dividing | its length—from the lower to the upper bridge at the intersection of the neck and peg holder—into four sections. Then one divides this quarter into ten and sets a fret at each section. One often needs only seven, from the little finger to the seventh toward the upper bridge. The frets lead to equal intervals, but they can also be unequal, though the inequality is not sensed much.<sup>2</sup> I have explained this matter comprehensively in my first book.<sup>3</sup> One can also add more frets.
- Sh. 91

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1 Al-Fārābī mentioned two types: the *baghdādī* and the *khurasānī*, the first used in Baghdad and the second in Khurasān (*KMK* 629–631; *MA* i, 217–218).

2 Al-Fārābī mentioned that the pandore had two and rarely three strings. It had only one fret for the index finger; the other three fingers played on the unfretted neck. Four imaginary frets were above the index finger fret and were only used in the pre-Islamic era; three imaginary frets were below the index fret and their would-be location was used by the other three fingers. The placement of the fingers followed an equidistant division of the neck into forty equal or unequal parts (*KMK* 663–670; *MA* i, 227–229; Sawa, *Music performance* 81–83).

3 This is likely his *al-Muqniʿ* (Convincing book) mentioned above.

## Melodic Modes (*Ajnās al-nagham*)

[fols. 86–88; Kh. 55–58; Sh. 91–93; ZY 123–124]

[Al-Kātīb delineates three modes that differ from one another by the use of the ring finger or two types of middle fingers, Zalzal and Persian.<sup>1</sup> He also mentions the difficulty of using the ring and middle fingers in a melody.]

There are three melodic modes (*ajnās*, sing. *jins*) on which melodies are built and which are extracted from the essential frets | and from the frets popular among people; each mode has seven notes.

The first melodic mode is made up | of the note of the first open string; it is used to tune the general register of the lute (*yushadd*)<sup>2</sup> because it is the first string and its note is the lowest; then after [this note] comes the index finger, the ring finger, the little finger, the index finger of the second string, its ring, and little fingers [G<sub>1</sub> A<sub>1</sub> B<sub>1</sub> C<sub>1</sub> D<sub>2</sub> E<sub>2</sub> F<sub>2</sub>].

The second melodic mode is made up of the open first string, then its index finger, the middle Zalzal finger, the little finger, the index finger of the second string, its Zalzal middle finger, and its little finger [G<sub>1</sub> A<sub>1</sub> B Zalzal<sub>1</sub> C<sub>1</sub> D<sub>2</sub> E Zalzal<sub>2</sub> F<sub>2</sub>].

The third melodic mode is made up of the open first string, then its middle finger of the ancients [Persian], little finger, [index finger of the second string, its finger of the ancients, and its little finger]<sup>3</sup> [G<sub>1</sub> A<sub>1</sub> B flat<sub>1</sub> C<sub>1</sub> D<sub>2</sub> E flat<sub>2</sub> F<sub>2</sub>].

86; Kh.

55; Sh. 91;

ZY 123

87

Sh. 92

ZY 124

Kh. 56

1 Usually, the word *ajnās* (sing. *jins*) refers to tetrachords and not modes. Here it seems that the author is stretching the meaning to include melodic modes. Al-Kātīb borrows this passage from al-Fārābī except that the latter does not use the word *jins* but the word *mutajānisāt*, meaning notes belonging to the same genus (*KMK* 133–135; *MA* i, 49–51; Sh. 91 n. 3).

2 The word is undotted in the MS and Shiloah correctly suggests *yushadd* (to pull, to tune). Khashaba edited it as *nusadd* (we close up) (Kh. 55); Zakariyyā Yūsuf edited it as *yabda' bihi* (one starts with) (ZY 123). The sentence on tuning does not come from al-Fārābī but more likely from al-Kindī, who suggested tuning the first string to the lowest note that comes out of the singer's throat, and that would be his utmost bass note (al-Kindī, *Risālat al-Kindī fi l-luhūn* 15). This tuning differs from that of Ishāq al-Mawṣilī, who advocated the use of the third string to start tuning the lute; this string is called the pillar or support (*imād*) because musicians rely on it for the sound level of their voice and for tuning the lute (Ibn al-Munajjim, *Risāla* 17).

3 The content of the square bracket is from al-Fārābī except that his Persian fret is different from al-Kātīb's (*KMK* 135; *MA* i, 51).

Sh. 93 Each of these melodic modes has notes that are most consonant with one  
 Kh. 57 another. | Other modes can be constructed and have consonant notes but to a  
 lesser degree than the above; some are mixed;<sup>4</sup> some are built from bottom to  
 top; some are built in the same way as the above three but using the third and  
 fourth strings.

88 In a given melody, the middle finger is not consonant with the ring finger  
 in a melody. Iṣḥāq [al-Mawṣilī] mentioned that one can compose [a melody]  
 Kh. 58 using both of them |;<sup>5</sup> it is possible but requires a subtle trick or it will sound  
 dissonant.<sup>6</sup> It was related that in this song:

O the one [who,] because of a neglectful heart,  
 has let youth [deal with] its power.<sup>7</sup>

The melody shares the middle and the ring fingers on the third string and they contend with one another over it (*tanāzaʿa*). I shall mention how this is possible in the appropriate place and clarify it. This can happen on the third string or other strings, but I mention the third string because it occurs in Iṣḥāq's narration.

The notes in the third and fourth strings are replicas at the higher octaves of the notes in the first and second strings. Each one of the seven notes can be used as the beginning of a melody.

4 The author means mixing middle frets, as he shows in the next sentences.

5 Shiloah thought that Iṣḥāq combined them in his compositions, but the text states that Iṣḥāq only mentioned the possibility of combining them. The one who composed the song that follows and who combined them is Ibn Muḥriz; he set the poem to music gathering eight notes in it (KA ix, 344–345). For other composers who used more than seven notes in a song, see Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 22–28.

6 Al-Iṣfahānī mentions two ways of mixing the middle and the ring finger. One way is to have them in succession but they will lack beauty. The other way is to disperse them: the song will be beautiful but hard to compose because of the mutually exclusive nature of the middle and the ring finger frets; to remedy this, special care must be taken to separate them in the composition (KA viii, 373–375; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 23–26).

7 The poem is by Musāfir b. Abī 'Amr (d. ca. 10/613), an eminent pre-Islamic poet who belonged to the house of Umayya (al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām* vii, 213).

## The Fundamentals of Melodies

[fols. 88–96; Kh. 59–62; Sh. 93–99; ZY 123–124]

[The Arabic word *mabānī* in the title, *mabānī al-alḥān*, is a translation of the Greek word *systema* and is equivalent to the Latin term *constitutio*.<sup>1</sup> Much of this chapter is based on al-Fārābī (KMK 113–115, 126, 223–239, 269–272, 959–966; MA i, 41–42, 47, 86–89, 100–101; MA ii, 18–19). It delineates various intervals: octave, fifth, fourth, their multiples, including notes in them, and how to find them on the lute; it also includes smaller intervals such as the tone, half-tone, three-quarter tone, and even a tone and one-quarter. A clever way to look at the lute player to figure out the melodic modes and the range of the melody is of interest.]

[The fundamentals of melodies] are the essential groups on which melodies are built. The ancient [Greek theorists] called one of them | “the group that encompasses all”: by all, they meant all the notes [the octave].<sup>2</sup> It contains seven notes, the first note is the open first string [G<sub>1</sub>] as we have described before, following the same order and arrangement of the notes until we reach the last one, the open third string [F<sub>1</sub>]. They called another one “the group that encompasses five”; by five, they meant five notes beginning with the first open string [G<sub>1</sub>] and ending with the index finger of the second string [D<sub>1</sub>].<sup>3</sup> This occurs [not only] with the first and second strings, but also with the second and third, and the third and fourth. | They called another one “the group that encompasses four”; by four, they meant the four notes beginning | with the first open string [G<sub>1</sub>] and ending with its little finger [C<sub>1</sub>];<sup>4</sup> in general, this applies to any string beginning with the open string and ending with the little finger.

89; Kh.  
59; Sh. 93;  
ZY 123  
Sh. 94

ZY 124  
Sh. 95

1 Sh. 93 n. 6.

2 The Arabic expression is *al-jamʿ alladhī bi-l-kull*; it is a literal translation of the Greek word *dia pasōn* (through all [the strings, i.e., notes]) (Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 140 n. 84; Sh. 94 n. 1).

3 The Arabic expression is *al-jamʿ alladhī bi-l-khams*; it is a literal translation of the Greek word *dia pente* (through five [strings, i.e., notes]) (Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 140 n. 84; Sh. 94 n. 1).

4 The Arabic expression is *al-jamʿ alladhī bi-l-arbaʿ*; it is a literal translation of the Greek word *dia tessarōn* (through four [strings, i.e., notes]) (Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 140 n. 84; Sh. 94 n. 1).

90 They called another one “the group that encompasses all plus four” [octave plus fourth]; it contains eleven notes beginning with the first open string [G<sub>1</sub>] and ending with the index of the fourth string [C<sub>2</sub>]. They called another one “the group that encompasses all plus five” [octave plus fifth]; it contains twelve notes beginning with the first open string [G<sub>1</sub>] and ending with the ring of the fourth string [D<sub>2</sub>].<sup>5</sup> They called another one “the group that encompasses double the four three times”; it contains thirteen notes beginning with the open Kh. 60 first string [G<sub>1</sub>] and ending with the index of the fifth string [F<sub>2</sub>].<sup>6</sup> They called “the group that encompasses all [notes] twice” the complete group (*al-jam‘ al-tāmm*) which contains fourteen notes beginning with the first open string [G<sub>1</sub>] and ending with the ring finger of the fifth string [G<sub>3</sub>].<sup>7</sup>

91 All these follow the above-mentioned arrangements on all five strings: index to ring to little fingers; or index to ancient middle [Persian] to little fingers; or Sh. 96 index to Arab middle [Zalzal] to little finger. || It is not necessary here to take into account all the numbers of notes [of the various groups], as they are equivalent to one another.

Every group consists of notes and intervals; each interval contains two notes at its ends, so all intervals are one number less than the notes.<sup>8</sup>

If we want to know the notes in a group arranged [in one of the above aspects] in a melody, we watch the fingers of the lutenist, the frets, and the highest and lowest notes in the melody [i.e., the range of the group], and in between the highest and lowest notes we look for the type of middle fingers or the ring finger used and figure them out. A group could be mixed with another group but the result will lack [melodic] harmony.<sup>9</sup>

5 The ms fol. 90 and ZY 124 have “middle finger, whichever middle it is”; this is wrong because it gives a D flat or half flat, thus not a perfect octave plus fifth. Both Khashaba and Shiloah corrected it (Kh. 59 n. 2; Sh. 95 n. 2).

6 This sentence is full of mistakes. Doubling the four three times means multiplying it by twelve and this takes it well beyond the range of the lute. Furthermore, beginning with G<sub>1</sub> and ending with F<sub>2</sub> results in fourteen and not thirteen notes; it is more likely to be the open fifth string E flat 2. This is how Khashaba interprets it, and it also fits perfectly with Khashaba and Shiloah’s suggestion that al-Kātib meant four conjoined fourths, that is, the end of each fourth is the same as the beginning of the next fourth (Kh. 59 n. 4; Sh. 95 n. 3).

7 More correctly it should be F<sub>2</sub> to make fourteen notes, but maybe al-Kātib thought that the G<sub>3</sub> was not counted.

8 This is followed by an ill-fitting sentence: “I shall mention the fifth string in its appropriate place.”

9 The lack of melodic harmony is due to the poor use of mixing the middle fingers and the ring fingers, see p. 56, re. fol. 88.

As for the anterior [to the index finger] type, it uses the anterior instead of the index and replaces it |, but it is not possible to go from one to the other in succession except to replace the index by its anterior.<sup>10</sup> 92

We are not able to truly (*bi-l-ḥaqīqa*)<sup>11</sup> figure out the notes of the various groups except by using fretted string instruments.

It has been apparent from what transpired above, and we shall mention it again, that the group in a melody cannot exceed seven notes; if the eighth does occur, it is only a repeated note [at the octave], I mean the eighth is the index of the third string [G<sub>2</sub>]; it is similar to the first note, that is, the open first string [G<sub>1</sub>]. Sh. 97

The second group, which is the double octave, consists of all the notes of the first octave repeated an octave higher.<sup>12</sup>

Let us now mention the rest of the intervals.<sup>13</sup> The ancients called the notes coming out of the frets the intervals, meaning the distance from one sound to another, and one note to another. | Each interval encompasses two notes, one lower than the other or higher than the other. | Some intervals are large, containing many notes; these are the groups [i.e., octaves]; some are medium, which are less than the large; some are small. The large ones are those that encompass all, I mean all the notes where the first in the group is similar to the last; this relation [between first and last] is called the greatest consonance (*al-ittifāq al-a'zam*). The first is the interval from the first open string [G<sub>1</sub>] to the index of the third string [G<sub>2</sub>] mentioned above; the second interval is from the index of the first string [A<sub>1</sub>] to the ring finger of the third string [A<sub>2</sub>]; the third interval is between the Persian middle finger of the first string [B<sub>1</sub> Persian = B<sub>1</sub> flat] to the little finger of the third string [B<sub>2</sub> flat] which is also the open fourth string; the fourth interval is between the ring finger of the first string [C<sub>1</sub>],<sup>14</sup> which is also the open second string, and the index of the fourth string [C<sub>2</sub>]; the fifth interval is between the index finger of the second string [D<sub>1</sub>] and the Kh. 61

10 In this musical example from the Ottoman era, a note is replaced by its anterior:



Last bar of the refrain of Samā'ī Kūrdeylī Ḥijāzkār of Ṭātyos Efendī (1858–1913).

11 A copyist's error (fol. 92) has *bi-l-khafīfa* (with the light).

12 This is from al-Fārābī (KMK 126; MA i, 47).

13 This paragraph is a short summary from al-Fārābī (KMK 113–115, 223–239, 269–272; MA i, 41–42, 86–89, 100–101).

14 A copyist's error (fol. 93) has "third string."

94 ring finger of the fourth string [D<sub>2</sub>]; the sixth interval is between the anterior | to the middle finger of the second string [E<sub>1</sub> flat] and the little finger of the fourth string [E<sub>2</sub> flat at 792 cents];<sup>15</sup> etc.

Sh. 98 The same goes for the other intervals of fifths, fourths [medium intervals], and others [smaller intervals]. | In the interval of the fifth, the first note equals one and one-half the last note [in string length, 3/2]; in the interval of the fourth, the first note equals one and one-third the last note [in string length 4/3]; this ratio is also between consecutive strings [as they are tuned in fourths].

Of the smaller intervals, there is the tone (*ṭanīnī*): the first is between the open first string and its index finger [G A]; then between the index and the ring finger [A B]; then between the anterior to the middle finger [*sic*],<sup>16</sup> that is, the Persian middle finger and the little finger [B flat C]; this also applies to all other strings, and is called the interval of a tone (*bu'd ṭanīnī*). All the above intervals are consonant and used in melodies a great deal, and the composer moves from one to another.

95 As for the [even] smaller ones, such as between | the ring and little fingers  
Kh. 62 [B-C] |, and between the middle and the index [B flat A], they are called half tones (*niṣf ṭanīnī*)<sup>17</sup> and they are also called limma (*baqīyya*). In truth it is not a half tone, but, in the manner of a metaphor (*majāz*), as when one says half wet and sprinkled (*naḍḥ*)<sup>18</sup> or half a sound; it can also be called a half tone (*niṣf madda*), and the *ṭanīnī* is [also] called *madda*.<sup>19</sup>

As for the interval between the index finger and the Arab middle finger [Zalzal], it is a three-quarter tone.<sup>20</sup> The interval of a tone can be augmented by a quarter tone in the following manner: one replaces the index finger with the second anterior to the index finger and goes up to the ring finger;<sup>21</sup> the result-

15 This sentence and another on fol. 94 go a long way to clarify the nature of the anterior to the middle finger; it is not between the index and the Persian as the author claims on p. 51, fol. 82; but is the Persian fret itself.

16 This is incorrect because al-Kātib's anterior to the middle finger is at approximately 250 cents from the open string, unless he meant al-Fārābī's anterior to the middle finger that is at approximately 294 cents from the open string, and thus is equal to the Persian middle finger at 294 cents.

17 A copyist's error (fol. 95) has *faṭīn* or *qaṭīn*.

18 It can also mean oozed; Khashaba edited it to *naḥkh* (blowing) probably on account of the next words "half a sound" (Kh. 62).

19 Shiloah translated it as *mudda* (duration); it is clearly *madda* as it appears in al-Fārābī (KMK 144; KMK Köprülüzāde fol. 76; MA i, 54).

20 A copyist's error (fol. 95) has three-half tone.

21 When one goes from the second anterior to the index finger—not the first anterior as appears in the MS—one goes from 150 cents from the open string and reaches the ring finger at 408 cents, this results in 408 - 150 = 258 cents; this is precisely a quarter tone above

ing sound is loose and not pleasant. The anterior is seldom used in the whole melody except | for some parts of the melody, but using it in the whole melody is unpleasant and inharmonious. Sh. 99

If a note is prolonged more than | we have mentioned, the ear will not accept it, will not figure out [the length of its duration], and it will be void of rhythm.<sup>22</sup> 96

Each interval is bound by two notes in the same way that a duration is bound by two attacks. The interval is similar to the duration, so if the interval is divided into more<sup>23</sup> than four, then it will lead to an interval smaller than a quarter tone, it will not have an effect on the ear, and will not be differentiated. I have explained this fully in the first book.

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the full tone (208 + 50). The sentence is preceded by an obscure one that says: "The interval of a tone is the one in which it is not possible to add to it the distance between two notes in one duration in the melody."

22 The longest duration is  $5/2$ , see p. 116, fol. 159.

23 A copyist's error (fol. 96) has "less" instead of "more."

## Voiced Letters

[fols. 96–101; Kh. 63–65; Sh. 99–102; ZY 125–126]

[Much of this chapter is based on al-Fārābī’s *KMK* 1072–1075; *MA* ii, 58–60.<sup>1</sup> In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is much shorter and does not have the quotation of Ishāq al-Mawṣilī or Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī; this is fortunate because both are obscure.]

96; Kh.  
63; Sh. 99;  
ZY 125  
Sh. 100

97

Some letters can be prolonged and some cannot. Of the prolonged ones, some are ugly to hear, and some are not. Those that are not ugly are the necessary ones; there are three of these: the *lām* (*l*), *mīm* (*m*), and *nūn* (*n*).<sup>2</sup> | The vowels are divided into three: *alif* (*a*), *wāw* (*u*), and *yāʾ* (*i*). The Arabs call them letters of prolongation (*madd*) and softness (*līn*). | They are the long vowels that always occur at the ends of words and are prolonged in melodies. The *alif* (*a*) is high (*mustaʿlīn*), the *yāʾ* (*y*) is low (*munkhafiḍ*), and the *wāw* (*u*) is medium (*mutawassit*) between the high and the low. Each one is further divided into three mixed letters: *alif* (*a*) and *yāʾ* (*y*), *yāʾ* (*y*) and *wāw* (*u*), and *wāw* (*u*)<sup>3</sup> and *alif* (*a*), like the uttering of: *wā*, *yā*, *wī*, and *ay*. All of these can be easily prolonged and thus the mixed vowels are nine.<sup>4</sup> When we add to them the nasalized letters which are prolonged with the notes—*lām* (*l*), *mīm* (*m*), and *nūn* (*n*)—[we get twelve letters; then we add the vowels *a*, *u*, *i*], we get fifteen letters; these are the letters that are set to the notes and accompany one another; the notes cannot be without these and the latter facilitate their use and are not disagreeable. They are of utmost importance for the melodies.

98

Ishāq | al-Mawṣilī erred when he said that the inflection (*naghma*)<sup>5</sup> is the “motion” of the vowel; the motion is what is called the desinential inflection

1 For an English translation of this passage, see Madian, *Language-music relationships* 271–276.

2 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān wrongly said that they are ugly (*Ḥāwī* fol. 24b; Sawa *Encompasser* 62).

3 The MS (fol. 97) wrongly has *yāʾ* (*y*), as does Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Ḥāwī* fol. 25a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 62); al-Fārābī has the correct *wāw* (*u*) (*KMK* 1073; *MA* ii, 59).

4 Al-Fārābī clarifies the number nine by stating that each of these three combinations inclines toward one of the two extremities, or can be in between and not inclining; when inclining, it is toward one or the other (*KMK* 1072–1074; *MA* ii, 58–59). For more details, see Madian, *Language-music relationships* 274–275.

5 It usually means a musical note, but in the context of this passage it is an inflection in the language. Shiloah translated it as the equivalent “phonetic modulation” (Sh. 100).

(*ḥarakat al-i'rāb*) in Arabic grammar: *ḍamma* (*u*), *fathā* (*a*), and *kasra* (*i*).<sup>6</sup> This is so because he said | that the three inflections, when prolonged (that is, the desinential inflections) are thus: the *ḍamma* (*u*) becomes a silent *wāw* (*ū*), the *fathā* (*a*) becomes a silent *alif* (*ā*), and the *kasra* (*i*) becomes a silent *yā'* (*ī*).<sup>7</sup> In this manner | the desinential inflections are the vowels in the voweled letters, and it follows that the silent letters (*ḥarf sākin*) should not be among the *alif* (*a*), *wāw* (*u*), and *yā'* (*y*).<sup>8</sup> He also said that the number of inflections is twelve, meaning the letters and their combinations. Then he said that in the silent [attack]<sup>9</sup> there is no motion and no sound; the desinential inflections are the vowels in the voweled letters and when prolonged they become the silent *alif* (*a*), or *wāw* (*u*), or *yā'* (*y*).

Kh. 63

Sh. 101

[Aḥmad] b. al-Ṭayyib [al-Sarakhsī] [d. 286/899] said that the unvoiced letters must be other than *alif* (*a*), or *wāw* (*u*), or *yā'* (*y*) or their combinations. If it were so, then the melody would be disordered with gaps filled by letters that have no sound. In fact, not all letters in a verse are voweled, and the voweled ones are not necessarily prolonged. Among the unvoiced letters, there are the *lām* (*l*), *mīm* (*m*), and *nūn* (*n*) that allow for prolongations. If a person says that they do not carry sound, then the lute will prove them wrong, because each one of them has a location on the frets, and thus a sound; this also occurs with the other unvoiced letters [*sic*]. | He mentioned that the *alif* (*a*), *wāw* (*u*), and *yā'* (*y*) combine to three mixed sounds and become six differing in shortness and length, thus giving twelve sounds.<sup>10</sup> The length and shortness correspond to the length and shortness of the sound and not to the prolongation or shortening of

99

Sh. 102

6 Respectively, these are the case endings for the nominative, accusative, and genitive cases.

7 Al-Kātib Probably means "silent" in the sense that they are not immediately followed by another letter.

8 In Arabic grammar, the *ḥaraka* refers to a short vowel added to a consonant which is then called *ḥarf mutaḥarrik* (moving letter); the *sukūn* (silence) is an unvoiced consonant (*ḥarf sākin*). The dichotomy of moving (*mutaḥarrik*) and silence (*sākin*) was used by al-Kindī to define the rhythmic modes with the moving attack meaning an attack followed by another one and the silence meaning a rest: he defined the first heavy as made up of three consecutive attacks, then a silent attack, then the rhythmic mode returns as it began (4/2 | ♪♪♪♯ |); he defined the second heavy as made up of three consecutive attacks, then a silent attack, then a moving attack, then the rhythmic mode returns as it began (5/2 | ♪♪♪♯ |) (al-Kindī, *Risāla fī ajzā' khubrīyya fī l-mūsīqī*, ed. Yūsuf 97; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 86). Shiloah suggests a very interesting explanation here: the vowels give life to the still consonants as the attacks give life to the silences (Sh. 100 n. 4).

9 It cannot be a silent letter because a silent letter is an unvoiced consonant and has a sound, unless he means that the unvoiced letter cannot carry a sound. But this is also wrong since the unvoiced *l*, *m*, and *n* carry a sound.

10 No further details were given; this makes the sentence quite obscure (Sh. 102 n. 1).

100 something that makes one go from a sound to another. | If it were so, then we  
 would have more than twelve sounds, that is another twelve to correspond to  
 the elongation and shortness. Anyone who knows the art of singing will not  
 doubt that what is composed over two equal parts [verse one and verse two],  
 ZY 126 is such that the second part is equivalent to the first in its notes; each | note in  
 the first part occurs in the same place in the second part.<sup>11</sup> Poetry is clothed by  
 means of music, so we find the composer following the motions of the letters;  
 for example, the location of the *alif* (*a*) in the first part is answered by a *wāw*  
 (*u*) or *yā'* (*y*) without the musical notes being affected. If the notes [set to] *alif*  
 (*a*), *wāw* (*u*), and *yā'* (*y*) occur in the first part, they are repeated in the second  
 101 part in the same way. These letters are set | to high | and low notes.  
 Kh. 65

A note happens as a held sound. If this is true, then a letter cannot be fol-  
 lowed by another letter as thought by Iṣḥāq, but it is correct that a note cannot  
 happen without being set to a vowel or voweled consonant, and where a letter  
 exists it must be voweled, and when a voweled letter exists it can be set to a  
 note. A letter is either voweled or unvoweled.

It is not because a quality can be dissociated from what is qualified, or  
 because the follower can be dissociated from the one that one follows, such  
 that in the end the follower is the one that one follows, or the quality is what is  
 qualified. This shows the nature of the note.

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11 This clearly describes a song in a strophic form.

## Planning and Determining [Where and How Much to Breathe]

[fols. 101–103; Kh. 66; Sh. 103–104; ZY 126]

[Al-Kātib relates here important advice to singers from Ishāq al-Mawṣilī about the importance of having enough breath to sing a long passage; to keep a steady tempo throughout the song; to sing in tune; and to determine the sound level that fits their voice.<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar chapter with the same title (chapter 36: *Hāwī* fols. 41b–42b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 109–110), and in addition to suggesting that the singer takes enough air before a long passage, he suggests taking his breath at the end of a section or at the separator to have enough breath before a difficult passage, at ornamental repetitions, at high-pitched notes, at the *tajnība*, and also at notes too close together.]

Ishāq [al-Mawṣilī] said that the tempo of a song (*qadr al-ṣawt*) is only one of three cases: held back (*maḥbūs*), fast (*maḥthūth*), or medium (*mutawassīṭ*).<sup>2</sup> Each tempo has a grading attributed to it: some fast tempos can be faster than others, | some held back [tempos] can be held back more than others. If the singer starts with a particular tempo, he must stick to it for the whole song until its end.

He also said that breathing (*nafas*) should be done in a way to allow the singer to have enough air to sing a passage requiring a long breath; this breathing in occurs at the end of a section (*maqṭaʿ*) preceding the said long passage.

101; Kh.  
66; Sh.  
103;  
ZY 126  
102

1 The square brackets contain information from the table of contents that are missing here (fol. 5, p. xvii).

2 Terms in this statement echo terms in Ishāq's definition of the rhythmic modes in *KII* and *KMK*: *qadr* (tempo) and *qadr al-ḥathth* (amount of fastness, i.e., tempo) are found in *KII* fols. 79b–80a, *N-KII* 169–170; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 32–33; *maḥbūs* is the synonym of *mum-sak* (held back) and *amsak* (more held back); they are found in *KII* fols. 80a, 81a; *N-KII* 169, 171; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 33, 35; *maḥthūth* (fast) is found in *KII* fol. 79b, *N-KII* 169, Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 32; *mutawassīṭ* (medium) is found in *KMK* 1025, Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 209. Shiloah translated *qadr al-ṣawt* as the force of the vocal emission, and qualified it by held back, pushed, or medium (Sh. 103). The terms in common clearly indicate that the issue here is tempo and not vocal emission; in addition, it cannot be the vocal emission but must be the tempo because the last sentence in the paragraph mentions that it must be constant until the end of a song.

In this manner the singer is able to master the passage and succeed in having enough air to the limit of his capability, then he is able to cajole it and control it until it is over, thus allowing the singer not to be exhausted and out of breath, and not to be overcome and in trouble. Also because [he has] enough air, the singer will be strong [enough] to fill (*ishbā'*)<sup>3</sup> the notes at the end of the section; the latter [notes] are neither weak nor veiled. This is what the singer needs the most.

Sh. 104 He also said that the vocal notes must be of the same pitch as those defined by the | frets of the strings or the woodwinds; they should not be lower or higher, so they come out as if, in their similarity and correctness, they are from a string or a woodwind. This is extremely important at the end of the section.

103 Verily Ishāq was right in his statements above.

One of the philosophers said that some people cannot receive or perceive the durations of rhythms and are unable to tap or clap anything they hear. And some whose throats are unable to figure out the pitches cannot sing at all. We see these phenomena frequently.

What the singer also needs is to determine his tone level (*ṭabaqa*) so as not to sing too high and be defeated, nor to sing too low and produce a weak sound.

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3 The MS (fol. 102) has *imtinā'* (forbidding) and so does Kh. 66. Zakariyyā Yūsuf edited it as *ishbā'* which makes more sense; it is also a term found in a similar chapter in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 42a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 109). Shiloah uses the sentence in the negative and that also makes sense: "not to miss the final notes of the passage" (Sh. 103).

## The Poetic Meters

[fols. 103–110; Kh. 67–70; Sh. 104–111; ZY 126–128]

[Al-Kātib only mentions a few poetic meters, but how they fit with the music and its rhythms is of great importance. He also mentions that music following the rhythm of poetry is weak.]

Melodies are always set to poems made up of equal (*mutasāwiya*) or unequal (*mutafāḍila*) rhythmic feet (*ajzāʿ*, sing. *juzʿ*). The equal are the homogeneous ones; | the unequal are the heterogeneous ones, which are a mix of equal and unequal feet, the difference is either because of many feet or just | one foot. The equal and the unequal are *muṣraʿa* with separation (*fawāṣil*, sing. *fāṣila*) or *masrūda* (consecutive) without separation.<sup>1</sup> Each one can be made up of too few or too many feet; the most is made up of eight feet, the least of two.

The equal rhythmic feet in poetry are like this measure:

*faʿūlun faʿūlun faʿūlun faʿūlun // faʿūlun faʿūlun faʿūlun faʿūlun*

or

*mustafʿilun mutafʿilun*<sup>2</sup> throughout the verse;

or

*mafāʿilun mafāʿilun* throughout the verse.

The heterogeneous are those with symmetrical patterns (*mutakāfiʿa*), such as

*faʿūlun mafāʿilun faʿūlun mafāʿilun // faʿūlun mafāʿilun faʿūlun mafāʿilun*

1 Later (on fol. 105, p. 68) the *muṣraʿa* is the prosodically sound one with the same pattern in both hemistiches, and the *masrūd* is the unsound one with the first hemistich being different in length from the second.

2 Khashaba edited it to *muftaʿilun muftaʿilun* (Kh. 67); Shiloah correctly edited it to *mustafʿilun mustafʿilun* (Sh. 105).

103; Kh.  
67; Sh.  
104;  
ZY 126  
Sh. 105  
104

and like

*mustaf'ilun fa'ilun mustaf'ilun fa'ilun // mustaf'ilun fa'ilun mustaf'ilun  
fa'ilun*<sup>3</sup>

and like

*mafā'ilun fa'ūlun // mafā'ilun fa'ūlun*

Sh. 106; and like

ZY 127

*fā'ilātun mafā'ilun fā'ilātun // fā'ilātun mafā'ilun fā'ilātun*

Kh. 68 and the non-symmetrical, like

105 *fā'ilātun | mafā'ilun fā'ilātun // mafā'ilun fā'ilān*<sup>4</sup> or *maf'ūlun*

and like

*mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilun // mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilān* or  
*fā'ilātun* or *maf'ūlun*

in both hemistiches or in one only.<sup>5</sup>

Poetic meters are numerous, but here we will limit ourself to a few as examples.

When the end of the first half of a verse, which is the limit of the hemistich, occurs correctly [according to the proper prosodic rules] and the last letter in that limit is similar to the [last] letter of the second part of the verse, then the verse is called *mušra'* (hemistich-like).<sup>6</sup> If the measure of the poetic foot of the

3 Khashaba and Shiloah edited it to *fa'ilun to fā'ilun* (Kh. 67; Sh. 105).

4 Shiloah has *mafā'ilun?* (Sh. 106); Khashaba has it entirely wrong (Kh. 68).

5 It is unclear what al-Kātib means by this sentence.

6 This means that the first and second hemistiches have the same rhyme; however, this is quite unlikely to be the case as the monorhyme usually occurs at the end of every verse. To add to this improbability is the definition of the *masrūd* that follows, namely, that in the *masrūd* the last poetic foot of the first hemistich is different than the one in the second hemistich; thus, it is very likely that in the *mušra'* case the last two poetic feet in the first and second hemistiches are the same. It is also interesting that the use of the related word *mušarra'* (hemistich-like) indicates a *nashīd* (unmeasured prelude) occupying the first hemistich in Ibn al-Ṭahhān (*Hāwī* fol. 45b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 119). It is then followed by a measured melody (*basīṭ*) in

first half of the verse is different from that of the poetic foot at the end of the verse, such as *fā'ilun* at the end of the first hemistich and *fā'ilān*<sup>7</sup> or the like, it is in the second hemistich. If the verse is not prosodically correct and not free [of defects], then the verse is *masrūd*.<sup>8</sup> If the words are correct | and free of defects at the end of both hemistiches, then it is possible to take a rest and stop [briefly] there. If it is not free of defects, then it not possible | to stop there except to breathe. Sh. 107  
106

Notes can be set to letters in poetic feet in a symmetrical fashion in heterogeneous feet,<sup>9</sup> for example | by setting each syllable of *mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun* into the [Arabic] notes a b g d // a b g d<sup>10</sup> in this manner: Kh. 69

a    b    g    d    //    a    b    g    d  
mus taf 'i lun // mus taf 'i lun

The poetic feet do not change but the notes do, such as one foot having the notes a, y, k, l; another having the notes a, m, d, h; another having d, w, ḥ, d, and vice versa.<sup>11</sup> It sometimes happens that there are many notes in one poetic foot or one hemistich and fewer in others; however, equality in both hemistiches is best. Sometimes notes are repeated many times in one place; [there] may be one time [notes set to] the last foot of the first hemistich (*fāšila*, i.e., separator) can be different from the [notes in the] rest of the hemistich, and this is good; or the [notes in the] last foot of the second hemistich (*maqṭa'*) can be likewise. I meant | the aspects of the notes, or one [repeated] note; they can also be equal and homogeneous. Heterogeneity can also occur in a different way, for example by making some passages in a high octave (*šiyāḥ*) and some in a low octave (*sijāḥ*); this heterogeneity is done in one hemistich or part of it, | and the latter is answered in a part in the following hemistich. Heterogeneity can also involve some high notes in some parts and some low ones in others; they can both occur in the same verse or one of them prevails; some verses use high Sh. 108  
107

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the second hemistich, then the *nashid* in the third hemistich, then the measured melody in the fourth hemistich.

7 Shiloah mistakenly edited *fā'ilān* to *fā'ilan*, thus making it equal to *fā'ilun* and not different from it as stipulated in the text.

8 In the mind of al-Kātib, not being prosodically correct is akin to unmeasured speech or recitation. This is not exactly right since much of the verse is measured.

9 It is unclear why al-Kātib chose the heterogeneous only.

10 These are not to be confused with the notes of the frets; they are the first of eight words comprising the letters of the alphabet in the order they were originally disposed (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* i, 4).

11 Khashaba edited note d to note z (Kh. 69).

notes only or low notes only according to the need of the melody; or [verses can use] a mix of both as mentioned above and as required.

As for the correspondence, or lack thereof, between the rhythmic modes and the poetic meters,<sup>12</sup> and which is better and more complete, [I would say that] the lack of correspondence is always better [because it makes] the melody more masterly. Melodies where the rhythmic modes and the poetic meters fit together lack elegance, might, and pleasantness.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps most people who do not investigate this matter think differently than we do; they believe that the correspondence of rhythmic modes and poetic meters is more melodically harmonious than the ones lacking correspondence. But | the matter is not like this: in fact, the notes in a melody are different [from one another and not just one single note, their non-correspondence mirrors that of rhythms and metrics], even though comparing the two cases is a bit far-fetched. | So if a poem is set to a rhythm that is like it, then the melody will not be pleasant, such as

O the one who caused suffering to my life  
And the pleasantness of living with him turned into unhappiness.<sup>14</sup>

If one uses the *ramal* or the second heavy *mumakhhkar* [i.e., second light heavy or *al-mākhūrī*] [in this poem] whose measure is the same as the measure of these two rhythmic modes, then it will not be pleasant. The measure of both rhythms is *fa'ūlun fa'ūlun*; they occur in every cycle (*dawr*) and they are almost similar.<sup>15</sup>

12 In other words, it is the contrast between melismatic and syllabic melodies. The melismatic has many notes to a syllable whereas the syllabic has one note per syllable.

13 There are, however, examples in the twentieth century in which syllabic songs were beautiful. One is the beginning of *Ḥayyart albi m'āk* composed by Riyāḍ al-Sunbātī (1906–1981) for Umm Kulthūm (1898 or 1908–1975); another one is the jolly Palestinian wedding song *Yā nūr*.

14 The poem is by al-'Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf (d. 192/808); it was set to music by al-Zubayr b. Daḥmān (fl. end of second/eighth century) in the first heavy rhythmic mode and with the melodic mode of (the open string) in the course of the middle finger, according to 'Amr b. Bāna (d. 278/891); it was also set to music by the latter in the *mākhūrī* (second light heavy) rhythmic mode; it was set to music by Sulaym (fl. end of second/eighth century) in the *hazaj* rhythmic mode; it was set to music in the second heavy rhythmic mode by Ḥusayn b. Muḥriz (d. ca. 140/757) and 'Abbās Minqār. The original poem is slightly different in KA: "O the one, my joy with him is suffering // And the pleasantness of living with him made me unhappy" (KA xv, 254).

15 Al-Kātib uses the modal and not the metric definitions of these two modes. On fols. 136 and 157 he defines the *ramal* in its metric aspect as 3/2 | ♪ ♪ ♪ | and the second heavy as 5/2 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; but since he did not define the second light heavy, then one can notate it as half

Let the one in the second heavy [*sic*] be slower and its attacks left as single, and let the other one [the *ramal*] be shorter in duration and its second attack doubled in every cycle.<sup>16</sup>

And like

109

The one you saw me talking to  
This morning is but a messenger.<sup>17</sup>

If one sets music to it in a rhythm similar to its poetic meter, that is, the *hazaj* in its basic [metric] form with its paradigm *mutafā'ilun mutafā'ilun*, with its five attacks, it will not be pleasant.<sup>18</sup>

Sh. 110

the value, i.e., 5/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪|. For the modal aspect, al-Fārābī's definition of the *ramal* is 3/2 | ♪ ♪| and the second light heavy is 5/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪| (*KII* fols. 65a–b, 74b; *N-KII* 141, 157; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 344, 382). The second light heavy can be rendered prosodically as *fā'ūlun*: its pattern of short syllable, long syllable, long syllable equals the musical pattern of short note, long note, long note; the *ramal* in its modal definition does not follow this *fā'ūlun* prosodical pattern, but a variation from 3/2 | ♪ ♪ ♪| to | ♪ ♪ ♪| does follow this pattern, even though the prosodical paradigm does not distinguish between long and longer. In short, al-Kātib is correct in saying that the two rhythmic modes are almost similar. The following examples illustrate the correspondence of the prosodic meter of the poem (*fā'ūlun* eight times) with the rhythmic modes of *ramal* and second light heavy. Here only the first poetic foot is shown:

*Ramal*:

♪        ♪        ♪  
*fā*      'ū      *lun*

Second light  
heavy:

♪        ♪        ♪  
*fā*      'ū      *lun*

- 16 The second heavy with its attacks left single is: 5/2 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪|; the *ramal* is correctly of a shorter duration and with its second attack doubled it is: 3/2 | ♪ ♪ ♪|. Here al-Kātib reverts to the metrical aspect of the two rhythmic modes and it is not clear what he is after here.
- 17 The poem is by Abū Nuwās (ca. 140–198/755–813) (<https://www.aldiwan.net/poem64970.html>). The original poem is slightly different: “The one I saw talking to me this morning, is but a messenger.”
- 18 On fol. 159, p. 116 al-Kātib defines it, after al-Fārābī, as having five attacks in each cycle; according to al-Fārābī it can be notated as 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪|. The prosodic paradigm *mutafā'ilun* does not fit correctly here, as is the case in most prosodic paradigms when used to notate rhythms. A more correct paradigm is the curtailed *mutafā'ilun*, as follows:

♪        ♪        ♪        ♪        ♪  
*mu*    *ta*    *fa*    'i    *lun*

The same applies to all cases when the prosodic meter and the rhythmic mode correspond to one another. Most professional musicians do not compose music with this correspondence, I may even say [they] never [do this]. If such a correspondence is found, it is in the light meters used in the lyres (*ṭurq* or *ṭuruq al-ma'āzif*),<sup>19</sup> rhythms [used in music for] the shadow-play, shadow dance, and puppetry (*ṭuruq al-khayāl*),<sup>20</sup> | and the like; the purpose is to let the listener understand what they are saying without using sophisticated melodies.

In general, heterogenous poetic meters are most brilliant and often more strong (*athbat*)<sup>21</sup> when used in melodies. As for which rhythmic mode agrees best with which poetic meter, a close study of this subject will take too long and must be dealt with in a separate treatise, even though no one has dealt with it,  
 110 so here we do not find it | necessary to investigate it.

19 On fol. 160, p. 118, it has the synonym *ṭarā'iq al-khayāl*. *Ṭurq*, *ṭuruq*, and *ṭarā'iq* (sing. *ṭarq*); *ma'āzif* (sing. *mī'zafa*). In the MS, *ṭurq* is left undotted, but on fol. 159 it has a *ḍamma* (*u*) over the *ṭ* but no vowel marking over the *r*. Shiloah (Sh. 110 n. 3) has *ṭuraq* but it is more likely *ṭurq* or *ṭuruq*. For the various meanings of *ṭarq* and its derivatives, see n. 7, p. 171, re. fol. 219.

20 Shiloah translated it as an evocation formula (Sh. 110); for details about shadow dances and puppetry, see al-Tifāshī, *Mut'a* fols. 166–169; al-Tifāshī, *Mut'a*, ed. al-Sillāmī 301–304.

21 The MS has *ashbah* (more similar); it is likely a copyist's error for *athbat* as edited by Khashaba (Kh. 70). A previous and similar passage said that such melodies are better and more masterly (fol. 107; Kh. 69; pp. 69–70), so *athbat* (strong) is likely the word. ZY edited it to *ashhā* (more desirable, more pleasant) which is also acceptable.

## The Structure of the Melody

[fols. 110–118; Kh. 71–74; Sh. 111–116; ZY 128–129]

[The author discusses the main components of songs as words, notes, and durations; he explains the musical forms (i.e., mainly strophic); the relation of music in the first and second hemistiches, how music is clothed to poetic feet, separators, and the end of the verse; their relation to breathing; voweled and unvoweled letters and the end of rhythmic feet, hemistiches, and verses; and melodic movements. Some passages are summarized from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 418–434, 986–987, 1061–1062, 1079–1085; *MA* i, 145–149; *MA* ii, 27, 50–52, 60–61).]

A melody is composed of three things: words, consonant notes [used in composition] (*ta'tif al-nagham*),<sup>1</sup> and a rhythmic mode.<sup>2</sup> The notes of the melody in the second verse should be similar to those of the first verse in all its aspects,<sup>3</sup> unless there is a note at a higher octave.<sup>4</sup> | The [music set at the] small poetic separators (*fawāṣil*, sing. *fāṣila*) (that is, the ends of the poetic feet (*maqāṭi'*, sing. *maqṭa'*)) and the large separators (that is, the end of the hemistiches), should not be different from one verse to another; notes and their durations should be the same in all verses. The third verse should be like the second, and all verses that follow the first should be similar to it. Many of the ancients composed a complete *qaṣīda* (a long monorhyme classical poem) in this manner.

The best place for a high note or notes (*ṣayḥa*) is in the first hemistich of the second verse to its middle, or from its middle to its end. The high notes can also be mixed with other notes in the second hemistich [of the second verse], | but the high notes should not continue until the end of the verse because the end of the second verse should be similar to that of the first verse.

The end (*maqṭa'*) of the melody or sections thereof, the end of the breath, the pauses when the singer takes a rest, and the end of the prolonged notes [set

110; Kh.  
71; Sh. 111;  
ZY 128

Sh. 112

111

Sh. 113

1 Shiloah calls it harmony.

2 Shiloah traces this definition to Plato's *Republic* (iii, 398d) (Sh. 111 n. 3).

3 Clearly this indicates a strophic form.

4 Later, on the same page (fol. 110) al-Kātib mentions that the best place for the higher octave is in the first hemistich of the second verse; it seems to be the replacement of a note by its higher octave, a technique al-Fārābī called *tabdīl* (*KMK* 1060–1061; *MA* ii, 51; Sawa, *Music performance* 97).

to] the fifteen voweled consonants should coincide with the end (*maqṭaʿ*) and extremities of the rhythmic feet that divide the verse. This is necessary unless there is a need to do otherwise, as I shall mention later. All these endings should be the same from verse to verse.

Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī said the following about how to embellish a melody and make it better:<sup>5</sup>

The melody should be made up of even-numbered sections. The melody should have small, large, and medium sections: the large ones have the position of the verses in poetry, each large section [is set] to a verse; the medium ones have the same position as the hemistiches; the small ones have the same position as the poetic feet. | The medium sections should have an equal number of notes and durations, that is, in the rhythmic mode used; they should be similar in the duration of the separating times, that is, the pauses;<sup>6</sup> they should be similar in [rhythmic] arrangements. | It is best for the small sections to be different in sizes, or they can be equal.<sup>7</sup>

The notes occurring in the space of a rhythmic mode should all, or almost all, be consonant with one another, especially when they are close to one another in time, and the separators are small separators [i.e., poetic feet]. [As for the ones separated by a large separator (end of verse), there is no need for them to be consonant with one another].<sup>8</sup> As for the ones sep-

5 *KMK* 1061–1062; *MA* ii, 50–52.

6 The sentence: “that is, in the rhythmic mode used ... that is, the pauses” is not in al-Fārābī. Al-Kātib’s additions in the latter sentence aim to clarify the meaning of rhythmic arrangements.

7 The following Syrian/Ottoman *muwashshah* example, *Yā Ghazālī*, illustrates the contents of the paragraphs very well. The complete melody—that al-Fārābī called the large section—is made up of two bars that are set to one complete verse. The first half of the melody—the first medium section—is made up of one bar set to the first hemistich; the second half of the melody—the second medium section—is made up of one bar set to the second hemistich. The medium sections are set to equal and unequal small parts. In the example below, the first line shows the first hemistich; the music set to it has three equal sizes (3 plus 3 plus 3) while the second line shows the second hemistich with unequal sizes (2 plus 2 plus 2 plus 3). *Muwashshah Yā Ghazālī*:

Yā gha-zā - lī kay - fa ʿa - n - nī ab - ʿa - dū - k

Shat - ta - tū sha - m - lī wa ha - j - rī ʿaw - wa - dū - k

8 These square brackets and the following ones are from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1062; *MA* ii, 52) to fill lacunae in the ms.

arated by medium separators (i.e., hemistiches), they can be consonant, but if not consonant, then the composition will still not be defective.<sup>9</sup> [As for the ones with no separators] they should all be consonant. [If one has to use dissonant notes (*munāfarāt*)], then one should use them mixed (*mamzūja*) with other notes that are consonant.<sup>10</sup>

The melodic movement can be between two notes | that are not consonant, so if one inserts | a note that is consonant with both, then the movement from the first to the second note will be consonant and the whole will be heard as consonant. This is called mixing (*tamzīj*) and it is often used.<sup>11</sup>

113  
Sh. 114

Let us return to the topic of the end of the rhythmic feet. If a vowelized letter<sup>12</sup> occurs at the end of the rhythmic foot, its prolongation would sound beautiful and easy. If a vowelized letter occurs just before the end, then one must prolong this vowelized letter so as to reach the end with ease and subtle means. If the vowelized letter occurs before the end of the rhythmic foot by two or three letters, and it is not possible to stop and sing (*tanghīm*) except at the end of the rhythmic foot, then the [last] letter of the poetic foot should be followed by a vowelized letter and prolonged with the notes.

If a letter, which is not part of the vowelized letters, is unvowelized, and if it is necessary to set it at the beginning of a note, then such a letter must be affixed with a vowel, thus prolonging it. If we are dealing with one of the three | vowelized letters [*a, u, i*], its prolongation with the notes is easy. If the letter is not vowelized, then a vowel is added to it; this is so because the unvowelized consonant has no sound and cannot follow a letter that has a sound and [cannot] be understood.<sup>13</sup>

114

A vowelized letter (*ḥarf mutaḥarrik*) followed by a silent one (*sākin*) is similar to a complete attack.<sup>14</sup> The vowelized letters can remain as they are, or they

Kh. 73

9 I have rephrased this sentence with recourse to al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1062; *MA* ii, 52). In al-Kātib the sentence is faulty: “either consonant or not defective” (fol. 112).

10 Al-Fārābī’s passage is from *KMK* 1061–1062; *MA* ii, 51–52. To remedy the problem of the dissonant notes, namely the middle and ring fingers, al-Ṣfahānī suggests that they be separated in a melody, see p. 56, re. fol. 88.

11 This sentence, which does not occur in al-Fārābī’s passage, explains the process of mixing. Al-Kātib says that one uses a note consonant with the two dissonant notes; one can guess that he means the use of the open string or index finger, and set either one between the middle and ring fingers. It is indeed an interesting addition to the solution of al-Ṣfahānī.

12 The MS (fol. 113) wrongly says quiescent.

13 Compare with Iṣḥāq’s statement about “no sound” (see fol. 98; Kh. 63; Sh. 101; pp. 62–63).

14 It is a light *sabab*, notated later by al-Fārābī as *tan*. For the various types of attacks and their terms according to the practitioners and al-Fārābī’s linking them to grammar and phonology, see *KMK* 986–987; *MA* ii, 27; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 166–170.

can be prolonged by the smallest amount, or by the addition of glottal stops (*hamzāt*, sing. *hamza*) or *nabarāt* or a light *hā'* (*h*) to its vowel. If there are many [voweled] letters ending with a voweled letter, then this voweled letter will be prolonged by the smallest amount or affixed with a *nabra* or a light *hā'* (*h*),<sup>15</sup> [so it is] similar to a silent attack, and the singing stops at it; this is because stopping at a vowel is difficult, and similarly it is difficult to move from a silent to a moving one. | This is also what happens in plucking, it is difficult to move (*intiqāl*) from a silent attack,<sup>16</sup> so the silence is filled by means of a soft attack, or in vocal melodies, by a light *hā'* (*h*) | by means of a glottal stop to facilitate the movement.<sup>17</sup> When a voweled letter is added to another in this manner, the vowel of the first will be inclined toward the vowel of the second, and the first in turn causes what precedes it to be inclined toward it [i.e., phonetic inclination].<sup>18</sup>

The end of the verse is either similar or dissimilar to the end of the hemistich; the dissimilar is better.

The amount of breath at the pause at the end of all poetic feet should be the same. The size of the durations of the notes (*qarānī* [*sic*] *al-nagham*)<sup>19</sup> varies in a verse. The location of the high and low notes also varies in a verse, except that it is better to arrange them from low to high or from high to low; they should be ordered such that the first note is low, the next higher, until we reach the last one, which is the top and least low-pitched [i.e., highest]; the same obtains if we start from the high-pitched notes | and follow the order mentioned above about the melodic modes and the tetrachords.<sup>20</sup> All of these techniques are found in the old melodies.<sup>21</sup> In addition, one can choose high-pitched notes all the way through, or low-pitched [notes] all the way, as mentioned before; compositions should not stray from this arrangement.

Let us add the topic of melodic movements (*intiqāl*) to this chapter and mention those that are more accessible. In general, the movement can be from note

15 A copyist's error has *humā* (the two of them).

16 A silent attack is followed by a pause.

17 This passage is a summary of a longer passage in al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1079–1085; *MA* ii, 60–61).

18 For the vowels' inclinations, see pp. 62, 91, re. fols. 97, 131.

19 The sentence is obscure. Khashaba read it as *iqtirān* (association) (Kh. 77); Shiloah has maintenance, or association (Sh. 115); Zakariyyā Yūsuf has *naqarāt* (attacks) (*ZY* 129). Khashaba suggests the high and low pitch. I think it is more likely to be the durations.

20 See chapters 15 and 16.

21 In *KA* there is indeed a composition fitting this description: "When Ishāq composed his song *A-Māwīyya inna al-māla ghādīn* in the *ramal* rhythmic mode, he came up with a very rare *ramal*. He starts it on a very high note (*ṣūyāḥ*) then it gradually descends until it reaches a cadence (*qatā'ū*) on a low note (*sajḥa*)" (*KA* v, 366–367; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 103).

to note, interval to interval, tetrachord to tetrachord, [melodic mode to melodic mode, tonality to tonality (*tamdīd*)].<sup>22</sup> The movement from note to note can be direct and rectilinear or curving. The rectilinear is, for example, like going | from the open string to its index and the series of notes mentioned before [making up the tetrachord and the melodic mode] that are used to compose a melody. The curving returns the note on which one begins [i.e., C F E D C], or [returns it] to | another note that occurred between the beginning note and after the note on which the curve occurred<sup>23</sup> [i.e., C F E]; in both cases, the curve | is either after one note [i.e., C F C, C F E] or after more than one note [C F E D C, C F E D].

Sh. 116

Kh. 74

117

The rectilinear can be consecutive (i.e., stepwise), or not (i.e., it skips). The consecutive is the one in which no note in the middle is left out; the non-consecutive is the one in which one or more notes are skipped. In both rectilinear and curving motions one can stay on one note, that is, repeat it many times.

The best melodic movement is the one between consonant notes interspersed with dissonant ones in such a way that one does not feel they are dissonant. If one starts with a note, then one must move to another consonant with it, and from the second one to another one consonant, etc.

Each note belonging to the double octave can be used as a beginning note for a melody. [For the beginning notes, it is better to use]<sup>24</sup> the middle notes which are equidistant from both the highest note and the lowest note; this way we can move | to both as well as to the notes in the higher and lower octave.

118

22 Here al-Kātib only deals with the movement from note to note, usually known as melodic movement. The square brackets are added after al-Fārābī's passage, which al-Kātib summarized (*KMK* 418–434; *MA* i, 145–149; for a study comparing al-Fārābī's theory with Kolin-ski's, see Sawa, Bridging one millenium).

23 The MS (fol. 116) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 129) have a copyist's error which makes the phrase incomprehensible: "between the beginning note and another note between the two prolongations from which there is a curving." Khashaba (Kh. 74) and Shiloah (Sh. 116) edited it correctly with recourse to al-Fārābī's passage (*KMK* 420; *MA* i, 145).

24 The MS (fol. 117), has a lacuna which both Khashba (Kh. 74) and Shiloah (Sh. 116) filled from al-Fārābī's passage (*KMK* 422; *MA* i, 146).

## The Qualification of Melodies

[fols. 118–121; Kh. 75–76; Sh. 116–119; ZY 129–130]

[Al-Kātīb delineates three types of tetrachords based on the writings of al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and al-Khuwārizmī; he mentions the basic constituents of notes in the melodies; namely, the basic and the ornamental notes based on al-Fārābī; he closes the chapter with types of melodies: measured and unmeasured vocal music, measured and unmeasured instrumental music, and a type of music that occurs when tuning instruments. The chapter shares much material with Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s chapter 12: “The Character, Effects, and Types of Melodies” (*Hāwī* fols. 16a–17a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 37–41)].

118; Kh.  
75; Sh.  
116; ZY 129

Ancient and modern people have unanimously agreed that the melodies are built on three different tetrachords (*jins*):<sup>1</sup>

- 1 the diatonic (*qawī*),<sup>2</sup> which is the perfect and complete (*kāmīl*), it is also called the strengthening one (*al-muqawwī*),<sup>3</sup> and the strong one (*qawī*);
- 2 the chromatic (*mulawwan*)<sup>4</sup> which is less than the first in strength, it may also be | called *lawī* (curved);<sup>5</sup>
- Sh. 117

1 Of the three tetrachords, only the first one was used in Arabic music; the other two go back to ancient Greece but they are mentioned nonetheless. These three tetrachords are mentioned in al-Kindī’s *Risāla fī khubr ta’līf al-alḥān*, ed. Yūsuf 59; al-Khuwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ* 243–244. Al-Fārābī divides the tetrachords into two main groups: the *qawī* (strong) and the *layyīn* (soft). The latter is further subdivided into two groups: the extremely soft is called *rāsīm* and *nāzīm* (organizer), and the *mutawassīṭ* (moderate) is called *mulawwan* (chromatic). Al-Fārābī then adds that some ancients called the strong “manly” and the soft “womanly” (KMK 161–163; MA i, 60–61). Al-Khuwārizmī has a tripartite division: “The first (strong) is the most outstanding because it stirs the soul toward help, much enjoyment, and *tarab*, and it is called the manly; the second has the soul between much enjoyment and depression, and it stirs the soul toward generosity, freedom, and courage and it is called the effeminate (*khunthawī*); the third creates a touching mood, sadness, and depression and it is called womanly” (al-Khuwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ* 243–244). For an overview of tetrachords from al-Kindī to al-Lādhiqī, see al-Faruqī, *An annotated glossary* 125–127.

2 Lit., “strong.”

3 In addition to *qawī* and *muqawwī*, al-Khuwārizmī also calls it *al-ṭanīnī* (lit., “having intervals of a tone”) and defines its intervallic structure as tone, tone, and half tone (*Mafātīḥ* 243–244).

4 Lit., “colored.”

5 Al-Khuwārizmī also calls it *mulawwan* and *lawī*, and defines its intervallic structure as half

the enharmonic (*nāẓim*)<sup>6</sup> which is the softest and the least adequate [in terms of harmony] (*mulā'ama*). It was called *nāẓim* (arranger, organizer) because it resembles a drawing of a shape then organizes its parts. 3

The chromatic is called colored because it resembles a drawing that has been made, then colored, and thus it comes to light. The diatonic is the most complete; it resembles a drawing that has been made, embellished, brought to perfection, and become beautiful. The enharmonic is sometimes called the composed (*ta'līfī*).<sup>7</sup>

Melodies that have many notes, *shadharāt*, and embellishments (*taḥsin*) are complete (*kāmil*) and perfect (*mutqinuhā*); they are beautiful and pleasant. Melodies | that have notes at the extremities of the poetic feet (*ajzā'*) [and not in other parts of the cycles], are inferior (*dūn*) to the first; they are half melodies. [What are inferior to the latter are those with {poor} detailed presentation (*sard*)<sup>8</sup> of the melody, and that neglect the separators; such melodies are worth (*taqdīr*) one-quarter of the first].<sup>9</sup> [Finally,] some have notes that are 119

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tone, half tone, and three half tones (*Mafātīh* 243–244). Khashaba and Shiloah edited it as *lawnī* (colored) (Kh. 75; Sh. 117).

6 Lit., “arranger, organizer.” In addition to *nāẓim*, al-Khuwārizmī also calls it *ta'līfī* (composed) and *rāsīm* (drawer, sketcher) and defines its intervallic structure as quarter tone, quarter tone, and two tones (*Mafātīh* 243–244). Al-Kātib, a few lines later, also calls it *ta'līfī* (fol. 118; Kh. 75; Sh. 117).

7 This sentence is a bit more detailed in al-Fārābī: “The extremely soft (*rāsīm* [drawer, sketcher] and *nāẓim* [organizer]) have a weak influence on the soul. They are comparable to an artist’s first drawing of a shape and organizing it, then coloring it but without embellishments (it thus becomes colored. i.e., chromatic), and then completing it (with embellishments, it thus becomes complete and strong, i.e., diatonic)” (*KMK* 161; *MA* i, 60). In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is called *basṭī* (causing cheer and delight); it is then followed by the *qabḍī* tetrachord which causes anxiety and depression, then the *istiqrārī* (stable) which calms the soul in to moderation (*Hāwī* fol. 16a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 38–39). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān likely borrowed the term *istiqrārī* from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 1180–1181; *MA* ii, 95) when discussing types of melodies.

8 Lit., “unraveling, uninterrupted succession of the notes.” Detailed presentation here means perfect melodies with regard to the rhythm, rhythmic modes, melodic movements, and embellishments. Shiloah has a different take, namely, rhythm of the words, but it does not fit the context of the sentence (Sh. 117 n. 5).

9 The content in the square brackets is from Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 16a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 39); it follows the context of the paragraph that goes from perfect, to half perfect, to a quarter of perfect melodies, as opposed to the obscure one in al-Kātib that reverts back to the perfect. His sentence says: “A melody that has notes, *shadharāt*, and arrangements in the separator and end of the verse yet the rest is detailed presentation, is a melody” (fol. 119; Kh. 75; Sh. 117; Kh. 75 correctly added “a quarter of the perfect melody”).

inserted (*madkhūl*)<sup>10</sup> into their melody after the end of the verse; they resemble things that calm people but do not benefit or harm them, they are just not melodies.

Kh. 76 Al-Fārābī likened melodies [to architecture and textiles] when he said:

We find that each melody consists of two types of notes. The first is like the warp and woof in a cloth, the mud brick and wood in buildings. The second type is equivalent | to the carving, engraving, facilities, and exteriors in buildings, and the dyes, smoothing, ornaments, and fringes in the cloth. The first type is called the basis and fundamental (*uṣūl*) of melodies, while the second type is called the additions and embellishments (*tazyīdāt*) to melodies. Then we find additions that are pleasant and elegant, | and some that are not, and because of this they are detrimental to the melody and they spoil it. Some additions and embellishments beautify and bring completion to the melody, and some do not.<sup>11</sup>

This is very apparent to one who contemplates the melodies after much research; as a result, the listener will know the strong from the medium from the soft melodies, the masterful from the weak, the complete from the incomplete.

Melodies are of three types: the ancients call them *ḥaramī*,<sup>12</sup> *baṣṭī*, and *khaṭṭī*.

The *ḥaramī* is made up of three components: poetry, notes (*ta'rif talḥīn*),<sup>13</sup> and rhythm. It is the complete tripartite melody that contains all musical elements.

The *baṣṭī* is made up of two components: notes and poetry, or notes and rhythm. As for poetry and musical rhythms, they do not mix because the musical rhythm is the domain of the movement of the melodies; this is the saying of al-Kindī.<sup>14</sup> The one made up of notes and poetry is like the music | of the cara-

10 *Madkhūl* can also mean weak; Shiloah translates it as foreign (Sh. 117).

11 This paragraph is very similar to the original one from al-Fārābī (*KMK* 110–111; *MA* i, 39; Sawa, *Music performance* 72). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a shorter, faulty version of it (*Hāwī* fols. 16a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 40).

12 Shiloah read it as *hazmī* but in the MS it is clearly *ḥaramī* and it appears likewise in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 16b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 40).

13 Lit., “musical composition.” Shiloah mistranslated it as harmony (Sh. 118).

14 This is also because the rhythm of poetry is different from musical meters, and if the rhythm of the melody is made to follow that of the poetry, the result will be unpleasant, as discussed above (fol. 107; pp. 69–70). As for al-Kindī’s reference to the word *baṣṭī*, it occurs in his *Risāla fī khubr ta'rif al-alḥān* (The epistle on knowledge concerning the composition of melodies) as part of three ethological types of musical composition in which the *baṣṭī* causes cheerfulness and delight; the other two are the one causing anxiety and depres-

van song and similar types that are unmeasured yet have a melody, or the ones used in recitations of the Qurʾān, [intoned] storytelling, and the Christian chant (*taqsīs*).<sup>15</sup> | The one made up of notes and rhythm is the one coming from the complete plucking (*al-aqrāʾ al-tāmma*)<sup>16</sup> of string instruments, or from blowing in rhythm (*al-zamīr al-muwaqqaʿ*);<sup>17</sup> these are made up of notes and rhythms.

Sh. 119

The *khattī* is made up of one component with regard to the subject of music, namely, [unmeasured instrumental] notes. It is divided into two types. One [type] exists in all perceptible sounds, such as when strings are tuned in accordance to the correct degree of tightening (*shadd*) or loosening (*irkhāʾ*), or as in [unmeasured] instrumental introductions (*mabādīʾ*, sing. *mabdaʾ*) which the ancients called a prelude (*muqaddima*) to the vocal parts. The other exists in wind instruments (*nafasiyyāt*), such as the *mizmārs* when the player blows to adjust and check the tuning (*nafkh al-taswiya*). We have covered everything necessary in this topic.

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sion (*qabdī*) and the moderate one (*muʿtadīl*); all three can be traced to Quintilianus' *De Musica*, Book 1 (Barker, *Greek musical writings* 11, 445). *Basī* does not relate specifically to the domain of melodic movements, but to composed measured songs. Al-Kātib may have been referring to al-Kindī's definition of rhythm as it appears in the above treatise: "As for the completion of the musical art, it occurs when a musical composition is set to properly proportioned poetry that is free of metrical defects, in a duration of equal cyclical amounts and similar inner proportions. People habitually give the name rhythmic mode (*īqāʿ*) to such types of organized durations" (al-Kindī, *Risāla fī khubr taʿlīf al-alhān*, ed. Yūsuf 64–65; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 79–80, 502–503). In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is caused by the enharmonic tetrachord (*Ḥāwī* fol. 16a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 38).

15 Khashaba edited it to *taqsīs* (Kh. 76).

16 According to al-Fārābī, the complete attack is the loud, strong, resounding one (κΜΚ 987; MA ii, 27; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 168).

17 Khashaba edited it as *zamr* (Kh. 76); Zakariyyā Yūsuf edited it as *tazmūr* (ZY 130).

## Composing Melodies That Suit the Poems [fols. 122–123; Kh. 77; Sh. 119–120; ZY 130]

[The title is a misnomer, as only the first sentence fits the title; the rest of the chapter consists of a quote from Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī about the effect of singing on the listener, namely, it brings him joy or sadness; it also contains al-Kātib's advice to the singer to read his audience carefully so as to please it and achieve sought-after rewards. This is a shorter version than Ibn al-Ṭahḥān's chapter 5 with the same title (*Hāwī* fols. 9b–11a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 20–22.)]

122; Kh.  
77; Sh.  
119; ZY 130

The composer must take care to set the poems to music that suits them; if he ignores this, he will not be considered superior in this art. Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī said that singing is of many types. | Some singing touches the heart, softens it, makes it more tender, and makes people cry, [these include] songs about flirtation, about crying over the passing of youth, longing for one's country, elegies, destiny, and the mention of death. Some singing brings joy, and stirs and incites toward generosity, such as panegyrics, [songs about] battles, intertribal hostilities, and glorious deeds.

Sh. 120

This is a comprehensive statement. But I say:

123

The singer, knowing the above situations, also needs to know the character of his audience and what went on in his [own] mind in the past | as well as what goes on in the present time. For example, a person may listen to the twittering (*taghrīd*) of a bird and feel joy; he may feel sad because of something that occurred to his mind and caused him to become sad; he may listen to the descriptions and qualities of the *majālis* and drinking parties, then it occurs to his mind that one day he will lose everything and be separated from it, as a result he becomes sad; he may listen to the mention of asceticism, death, and Judgment Day, so it comes to his mind to repent and turn to God and be forgiven. In this manner, he would be rewarded by both situations, win them over, and become joyful, happy, and delighted.<sup>1</sup> What I have said here is too subtle [and difficult] for a

1 It is unclear what al-Kātib meant by both situations; it could be the enjoyment of sin and the relief of not being punished. Shiloah also questioned the two situations and suggested either penitence and pardon, or the enjoyment of life on earth and that of the afterlife (Sh. 120 n. 3).

thorough examination and should not be considered a law. The musician should look at his listener and closely follow his looks, movements, and the way he is affected by *tarab*; he should fulfill his listener's requests for specific songs, should choose songs that fit his emotional state and any type of melodies and poems that please him and bring him into a state of *tarab*; in this manner he will succeed in getting what he wants [in terms of rewards].

## Specific Places in Melodies [to Beautify with Specific Techniques] [fols. 123–139; Kh. 78–84; Sh. 121–131]

[This is truly one of the most informative chapters in the treatise; it is about ornaments in both composition and performance. It deals with high and low pitches, their use as ornaments for relaxation; long and short notes and their ornamentations; ornamented repetitions; chest voice; vocal timbre and dynamics; modulations; accidentals; cadences; gradation; sounds and emotions; phonetic alterations; vowels, voweled and unvoweled consonants, and their relationship to the notes and vocal ornaments; types of nasal sounds and the role of the mouth in producing them; types of vowels and notes emanating from a wide open mouth; the replacements of notes and letters; preludes, interludes, and postludes; aesthetics of lute accompaniment to the voice. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 26: "Beautiful Vocal Music, Techniques, and Qualities" (*Hāwī* fols. 28a–31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 74–86) deals with the same topics but has more entries (75 as opposed to 47); sometimes there are synonyms, and sometimes similar words have different meanings, and some words occur in another chapter. The beginning of the chapter lists 47 technical terms, one of which (*al-nahrāt*) is not defined in the body of the text, and one of which (*tanahhud*) is not mentioned in the list but defined later in the text; the total of the defined terms is 47 with the word *inshād* in the list defined later by its synonym *nashīd*.]

123; Kh.  
78; Sh. 121

The older and excellent melodies have specific places [to beautify with special techniques]. Some have technical names affixed to them and are well known; some do not, but names could be derived for them from their meanings and would fit accordingly. The techniques are *al-ṣiyāḥ*, *al-sijāḥ*,<sup>1</sup> *al-nabarāt*, *al-shadharāt*, *al-ṣarkhāt*, *al-nahrāt*,<sup>2</sup> *al-ḍajrāt*, *al-zajarāt*, *al-tadrīj*, *al-zamma*, *al-ghunna*, *al-ta'liqa*, *al-tafkhīm*,<sup>3</sup> *al-ta'awwuh*, *al-nawḥ*, *al-tarjī*,<sup>c</sup> *al-tarjīḥ*, *al-karra*,

1 The ms has *sajāḥ* on fols. 124 and 126; Sh. 121 and 122 is similar. I chose the original spelling of *sijāḥ* as it appears in the original ms of al-Fārābī (KMK Köprülüüzade fol. 61).

2 Unfortunately, this term is left out in the definitions in this chapter; Khashaba has *nahdāt* (Kh. 78), Shiloah has *nazhāt* (Sh. 121), Zakariyyā Yūsuf has *hazzāt* (ZY 131).

3 A copyist's error has *ta'jīm* (lit., "making Persian, making foreign").

*al-tashyī'a*,<sup>4</sup> *al-ibdāl*, *al-istihlāl*, *al-inshād*, *al-istighātha*, *al-na'ir*,<sup>5</sup> *al-qahqaha*, *al-hazza*, *al-itbā'*, *al-intizā'*, *al-tafkīk*, *al-tafāghur*, | *al-shahaqāt*, *al-imāla*, *al-tamaṭṭī*, *al-tawṭiya*, *al-muhāhāt*, *al-maqṭa'*, *al-radda*, *al-ṣila*, *al-istiḥāla*,<sup>6</sup> *al-tath-wīb*, *al-ṣahīl*, *al-madda*, *al-hamza*, *al-tajnība*,<sup>7</sup> *al-zahma*,<sup>8</sup> *al-takāhun*,<sup>9</sup> *al-gham-za*.

125

If these techniques are known and understood by the audience, they would ask the singer to repeat them at the right place and time. The singer would then apply himself to perfect them and perfect similar things that might perhaps (*'asāh*)<sup>10</sup> come up unexpectedly,<sup>11</sup> as for example the calligrapher, who on purpose perfects the choicest calligraphy and treats some letters (such as the letters *'ayn*-s, *ṣād*-s, *ḥā'*-s, *ṭā'*-s, and *nūn*-s) with more care than | others.<sup>12</sup>

Sh. 122

Those cognizant of the art of singing are well aware of and familiar with these techniques, such that they will recognize them when they occur unexpectedly in modern songs. The souls are fond of what they know and what they are accustomed to, and for this reason, the *ṭarab* becomes stronger.

It is possible to derive other names | for other techniques or even for the above techniques,<sup>13</sup> but we will not choose words, such as *shahaqāt* (inhaling, sighing, and sobbing) or *tafāghur*, even though some people use them [for this purpose].<sup>14</sup>

126

The *ṣayḥa* is the highest note in the melody. | The [string that produces the] *ṣijāḥ* is double | [the one that produces the] *ṣiyāḥ*; the sound level of the *ṣijāḥ* on the lute pertains to the first and second strings [going from *ṣiyāḥ* to *ṣijāḥ* means] going from high to low pitch with the [string] ratios of 2 to 1. In singing, the *ṣijāḥ* has two functions: one is embellishment and improvement; the other is rest, diversion, and relaxation for the throat.<sup>15</sup> The *ṣijāḥ* |

1

2

Kh. 78

Sh. 123

4 Khashaba (Kh. 80, 82), and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) wrongly edited it to *tashbī'a* (filling).

5 Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) has *ta'bīr* (expression).

6 Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) has *istimāla* (bending).

7 Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) has *taḥmīna* (tenderness).

8 Khashaba (Kh. 78, 84) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) have *zakhma* (plectrum).

9 Shiloah edited it to *takahhun* (Sh. 121, 131).

10 Zakariyyā Yūsuf read it as *ghannāh* (sang it), though the word is clearly *'asāh* (ZY 131).

11 This very likely means that out of creativity the singer adds these techniques in places where they do not belong, thereby beautifying his performance further.

12 For calligraphy as an important, very developed, and beautiful art, see Sh. 122 n. 1.

13 The clause "or even for the above techniques" is missing in Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131).

14 This is an obscure sentence, odd at best, since he is using these two terms (fols. 131, 134; pp. 91, 93–94).

15 The singer may want to take a break from the demanding high register and sing an entire passage, not just one note, at an octave lower. This technique is still used in secular singing and sacred chanting. Al-Fārābī also mentions going from higher to lower octaves and vice

notes<sup>16</sup> on the two strings at the top, that is, the first and second strings<sup>17</sup> are clearer than those at the bottom; the *sijāḥ* notes are distinct (*faṣīḥa*), soft (*layyina*), loud (*jahīra*), and ample (*fakhima*).<sup>18</sup> If the [*sijāḥ* notes] accompany high-pitched notes emanating from the throat, then the vocal notes will be more evident and the notes from the strings will appear [as clearly contrasting with the voice]. This enables the singer to hear himself better, to be in better control of his voice, and [ensures that] none of his notes will be drowned out, concealed, or overwhelmed. This is because accompanying the

127 high-pitched vocal notes | with similar high-pitched notes from the strings will mute the voice.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the high pitch of the sounds [of the strings]<sup>20</sup> distracts his attention from hearing his own voice and startles him so that he cannot hear himself well and distinguish the notes he is singing, especially if his voice is weak. If his voice is powerful, then he can do what he wants; however, he should not abuse its potential (*rifq*)<sup>21</sup> and treat it exhaustively (*istifā'*)<sup>22</sup> since voice injuries often come from being constrained to singing high-pitched notes.

- 3 The *nabarāt* (sing. *nabra*) are short letters starting with a glottal stop (*hamza*); they always occur in vowels (*al-ḥurūf al-muṣawwata*).<sup>23</sup>

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versa as part of the ornamental replacement (*tabdīl*) technique (*KMK* 1060–1061; *MA* ii, 51; Sawa, *Music performance* 97).

- 16 The MS (fol. 126), Shiloah (Sh. 122), and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) have *ṣiyāḥ*, which is a copyist's error; Khashaba corrected it to *sijāḥ* (Kh. 79).
- 17 The lute is strung so the low frequency strings are at the top and the higher frequency ones are at the bottom.
- 18 Instead of soft and loud Shiloah has "plaintive and biting" (Sh. 123).
- 19 The same technique obtains today in the Middle East. The accompanying instruments are always an octave lower than the voice in order to support it. Only a novice, an unexperienced accompanist, would play in the same register as the singer.
- 20 Shiloah considered the voice of the singer and not the strings, but his translation differs from the context of the paragraph (Sh. 123).
- 21 Lit., "niceness, friendliness." Khashaba (Kh. 79) misread it as *taraqquq* (softness).
- 22 The word is partially dotted; Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) has *istibqā'*; this renders the sentence "think it will last forever" and this reading does not fit the context. Shiloah skipped this subphrase (Sh. 123).
- 23 Shiloah mistranslated it as melodious letters (Sh. 123). Al-Fārābī defines the *nabarāt* differently: they consist of short notes and not short letters; these short notes are sung with a soft glottal stop before or after a vowel, and for which the time value should not exceed a *watad*, i.e., a 3/8 duration. *Nabras* are added in the middle of a song as embellishments (*KMK* 1077–1078, 1173; *MA* ii, 60, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 102–104). When a *nabra* (or soft *hamza*) is added to a vowelized consonant the result is a light *sabab* with a value of 2/8; a *nabra* (or soft *hamza*) is also added when the end of a section, or the end of a song, lands on a vowelized consonant, thus facilitating the difficult cut-off (*KMK* 1084–1085, 1173; *MA* ii, 61). The *nabra* (or soft *hamza*) is also added at the beginning of a long note and long vowel

The *shadharāt* (sing. *shadhra*) are short, soft letters starting with an *imāla*;<sup>24</sup> 4  
 some people call them *randaḥa*<sup>25</sup> and combine the two words [and think they  
 mean the same thing].<sup>26</sup>

The *ṣarkha* (scream) is a continuous and single high-pitched sound that is 5  
 not followed by another similar sound; it may occur at the end of the melody  
 after its cut off; it can also happen in the middle.

The *ḍajara* resembles the sound of sorrow and worry (*ḍajr*); it is also the 6  
*nazafa* (exhaustion).<sup>27</sup> Sh. 124

The *zajara* (holding back) is close to the *ḍajara*, | though it may escape the 7  
 one listening to it.<sup>28</sup> 128

The *tadrīj* (gradation) goes from low-pitched notes to high-pitched ones and 8  
 vice versa; this occurs a lot.<sup>29</sup> ZY 132

The *zamma* (complete nasality) occurs in the unvoveled letter *mīm* (m), 9  
 such that all the air flows from the nose while the lips are closed. It is very much  
 liked in singing. One should not follow it immediately by another [*zamma*], nor

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to facilitate its performance (KMK 117; MA ii, 71). See also Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 34–35.

24 The MS (fol. 127), and Khashaba (Kh. 79) have *malāla* (weariness, boredom, impatience); Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) has *tasalsul* (in succession); for the definition of *imāla*, see p. 91.

25 It is a type of vocalization that consists of emitting a light sound without words (<https://www.alawda-pal.net/index.php?s=52&id=2001>). In the Greek Orthodox church in Egypt, it is a type of responsorial singing between the two male choirs as a prelude to the mass.

26 The *shadharāt* (lit., “tiny pieces”) are defined differently in al-Fārābī, where they consist of short notes, not letters, starting with a smooth voice and sung to low long vowels such as *ī* and *imālāt*, that is, the phonetic phenomenon in which the long *ā* tends toward long *ī* and the short vowel *a* tends toward the short vowel *i*, such that it sounds like an *é*. The *shadharāt* are added between the notes of a melody, i.e., halfway between two adjacent notes, or immediately after a note. They should be used in moderation in the course of a melody and should not exceed two or three in one section. They are also used in vocal preludes (KMK 1173–1174; MA ii, 90–91; Sawa, *Music performance* 102, 104).

27 The MS (fol. 127) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 131) have *nazaqa* (haste, recklessness), which makes no sense; Shiloah read it as *nazha* (sigh, or gasp of flight, *soupir d'élan*); Khashaba correctly edited it to *nazafa* (Kh. 79). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has the same definition (*Ḥāwī* 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 82).

28 Al-Kātib did not clarify why, so maybe it is a faint sound of sorrow that escapes the listener's ear.

29 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has the same definition (*Ḥāwī* fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 86). In KA there is a vivid example of this technique: “When Ishāq composed his song *A-Māwīyya* ... in the *ramal* rhythmic mode, he came up with a very rare *ramal*. This is so because he starts it on a very high note then gradually (*alā tadrīj*) descends until it reaches a cadence on a low note” (KA v, 366–367).

overuse it in a melody, rather one should use it in a measured way. This condition applies to all the techniques in this chapter.<sup>30</sup>

10 The *ghunna* (half nasality) occurs in the unvoiced letter *nūn* (ن) so that  
 Kh. 80 some of the air passes through the nose and some from between the lips.<sup>31</sup>

11 The *ta'liqa* occurs in the unvoiced letter *lām* (ل) when [the tongue] is moved  
 (tunqal)<sup>32</sup> and stuck to the palate, and held that way for a certain time and pro-  
 longed.

12 The *tafkhīm* (enrichment, abundance) is strengthening the note with what  
 is similar to it;<sup>33</sup> in general, it expands the air passages in the lungs (*ṣadr*)<sup>34</sup> and  
 makes the notes heavier.<sup>35</sup>

13 The *ta'awwuh* (moaning) resembles the sound of a person moaning in pain;  
 a melody can be built on all or some of it, producing a nice and soft melody.<sup>36</sup>

14 The *nawh* (lamentation) occurs in soft | and sad melodies, and it is known  
 129 to everyone.<sup>37</sup>

30 In modern Middle Eastern music this is what one calls over-ornamenting. It is in bad taste; in short, the less the better. The definition is similar to that of al-Fārābī, who adds that the *zamm* applies to both short and long notes (KMK 1070, 1172; MA ii, 57, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 101).

31 The original text is obscure; it says that “the air is divided in a letter and breathing.” The definition above is from al-Fārābī, who also adds that the *ghunna* applies to both short and long notes, and that it is used in vocal preludes (KMK 1070, 1172–1173; MA ii, 57, 90–91; Sawa, *Music performance* 101, 104).

32 The word is partially dotted; Khashaba (Kh. 80) edited it as *tuthqal* (heavied) which is a possibility.

33 In al-Fārābī it is very detailed. It consists of obtaining notes between the frets of the lute; singing two or three notes in quick succession; sounding the notes of the voice with lute accompaniment in unison (this is very likely what al-Kātib meant), or at a higher or lower octave, higher or lower fourths and fifths, at a higher or lower octave plus a fourth or octave plus a fifth (KMK 1059–1060; MA ii, 50–51; Sawa, *Music performance* 95–97).

34 The MS (fol. 128), Khashaba (Kh. 80), and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 132) have *maṣādir* (sources) which likely means the source of the air, that is, the lungs; in fol. 57, it is clearly *ṣadr*. The sentence is then followed by an enigmatic addition *mā hiya* (whatever it is); Khashaba (Kh. 80) edited it to *al-tanāhī* (to a high degree).

35 In al-Fārābī it is the ample sound coming out of the chest; however, expanding the air passage is called *murajjah* and the verbal noun is *tarjih* (KMK 1172–1173; MA ii, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 101). In Ibn al-Ṭahḥān, it is making the notes more ample, emphatic, richer, and grander (Ḥāwī fol. 28b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 75).

36 It is different in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān: it causes *ṭarab* and resembles the sound of its name, and is used by Baghdadi singers (Ḥāwī fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 85).

37 Lit., “it is not hiding” (*lan yakhfā*); this is how it was read by Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 132) and Shiloah (Sh. 124), although the MS (fol. 129) has “it is hiding” (*an yakhfā*), and Khashaba (Kh. 80) has “if it is hiding” (*in yakhfā*).

The *tarjīʿ* (ornamented repetition) consists of many long notes repeated one or more times from their beginning to their end and from their end to their beginning.<sup>38</sup> 15

The *tarjīḥ*<sup>39</sup> (preference) resembles the *tarjīʿ*; it also consists of long repeated notes that one brings from their beginning to their end and from their end to their beginning.<sup>40</sup> 16 Sh. 125

The *karra* (recurrence) may be called *radda*;<sup>41</sup> it is the repetition of one note or technique (*mawḍīʿ*)<sup>42</sup> in the melody. 17

The *tashyīʿa*<sup>43</sup> (postlude, lit., “sending off”) occurs after the end of the melody; to a certain degree it is different in nature from what preceded it. In general, it is a passage (*mawḍīʿ*)<sup>44</sup> that is different than the build-up of the song proper. We shall explain it later in another passage. In most cases, it appears more clearly when played by string instruments. 18

The *ibdāl* is the replacement of a vowel with another, in one breath or at the same time;<sup>45</sup> it also occurs in music when moving from one letter to the next in the melody,<sup>46</sup> as in saying, *yā-wā*, *wā-yā*, *wā-nā*.<sup>47</sup> It may be replaced with 19

38 Shiloah correctly notes the obscurity of this definition. The answer is to be found in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān who devoted a short chapter to it. He defined it as repeating the notes with sweetness and grace, beauty, causing *tarab*, and with rhythmic variations and ornaments; it is derived from the word revision (*murājaʿa*). He also adds that some singers use it at the ends of sections, and in this way, it is most beautiful and is best at causing *tarab*. In essence, the singer repeats a section (this is probably what al-Kātib meant by repeating from beginning to end and from end to beginning), and revises it by developing it with further embellishments and glosses (*Hāwī* fols. 44b–45a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 117–118), but it is not a refrain as Shiloah suggested (Sh. 124 n. 6).

39 The ms (fol. 129) wrongly has *tarjīʿ*.

40 Al-Kātib likely made a mistake here by equating the *tarjīḥ* with the *tarjīʿ*. A more likely and correct meaning is found in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, who defines it as making the notes incline (*murajjah*) between the melodic mode starting with the index finger (*mazmūm*) and the melodic mode starting with the open string (*muṭlaq*) (*Hāwī* fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 85). As mentioned also on p. 88, n. 35 expanding the air passage is called *tarjīḥ* and *murajjah* (*KMK* 1172–1173; *MA* ii, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 101).

41 The *radda* is actually different, it is specifically returning to the words—not notes—of the first verse, or another verse, or the last verse of the poem after finishing the last word. See more details about it on fol. 131, pp. 91–92.

42 It can also mean a passage in the melody.

43 The word is partially dotted in the ms; Khashaba (Kh. 80) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 132) edited it as *tashbīʿa*.

44 Shiloah translated it as formula, i.e., specific technique (Sh. 125).

45 “One breath” and “at the same time” must be synonymous.

46 In al-Fārābī, the *ibdāl* is the replacement at the octave, fifth, fourth, or neighboring notes, and occurs in the middle of the song; it is also called *tabdīl* (*KMK* 1060–1061, 1173–1174; *MA*

130 the *hā'*, such as saying, *wā-hā*, *yā-hā*, | *wā-hā*,<sup>48</sup> and *wā-hiyā*,<sup>49</sup> as, for example, when it occurs in this verse:

The affectionate one is blamed, so I said, warning him  
Give up a bit, so that you will not be affected by what I am experiencing  
(*mā biyā*).<sup>50</sup>

Sh. 126 All of these replacements add beauty to the melody and allow the singer to be at ease and rest because they are easy to produce; indeed, it is disliked and troublesome to follow a vowel that has a long duration in a letter by another one, and it also | lacks beauty. These replacements are a remedy to this problem. They are often found in the melodies of Ma'bad and others of the same old generation.<sup>51</sup> These techniques occur a lot in the melodies known in our time, such as

The affectionate one is blamed ...

Kh. 81 and

Give this (*dhā*) up, and go back to talking about (*fi*) old age.

And

Neither the birds praising me (*tathnīnī*) nor  
The omen from their flight when chased by arrow throwers [will change  
my mind].

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ii, 51, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 97). In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is different: it means replacing the index finger note with that of the open string (*Ḥāwī* 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 83).

47 Khashaba (Kh. 80) wrongly has *a-yā*, *a-nā* for the last two. The examples given here and in the next sentence are samples only, not an exhaustive list.

48 The expression *wā-hā* seems to be a repetition; Khashaba (Kh. 80) read it as *wā-ahā* although the sign over the *alif* not clearly a glottal stop; Shiloah transcribed it wrongly as *wā-wā-hā* (Sh. 125).

49 Shiloah mistranscribed it as *wā-hā-yā* (Sh. 125).

50 Lit., "what is in me." In the context of letter replacement, the *yā* in *mā biyā* is replaced by *hā*. Shiloah misinterpreted it and said that *biyā* was originally *bī*, then altered to *biyā*, but this does not fit the definition in which *yā* is replaced by *hā*, as in the second set of examples (*yā-hā*).

51 This is an odd statement, as none of these melodies had survived to the time of al-Kātib. See p. 173, n. 3, re. KA x, 70.

And

Did you know of remnants about the beautiful one to refer to (*muḥīlan*)?

And

She did not conceal her face with her veil (*maʿzarihā*).<sup>52</sup>

And others.

The *istighātha* (cry for help) consists of a soft, high-pitched cry; it resembles the sound of a person crying for help; it has humidity and a musical sound.

The *tafkīk* (taking apart, unfastening) occurs in the letters *tāʾ* (t) and *yāʾ* (y).<sup>53</sup>

The *tafāghur* (opening the mouth widely) occurs in letters accompanied by the short vowel *a* (*fatha*).<sup>54</sup> The Baghdadi musicians have a particular style related to it. They also have the *naghānigh*<sup>55</sup> and *maghāmiz* (winks), but we shall not use or relate them.

The *imāla*<sup>56</sup> is a technique known and named in the melodies. It is possible in all the letters except those pronounced in the higher part of the mouth such as the *ṭāʾ*, *qāf*, *ʿayn*, *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*, *alif*, and *kāf*.<sup>57</sup> These are the letters that are produced in the palate and its proximity. The *imāla* consists of inclining the vowel in a letter to the one that follows.<sup>58</sup>

The *radda* is the return, after the end of the song, to the same verse or others, such as the *radda* in *saqaṭa al-naṣīfu ...* (the veil fell ...) [which is the last verse]; it is then followed by the first verse of the poem *A-mina Āli Mayyā ...* ([Are you going to or leaving] | the tribe of Mayyā ...).<sup>59</sup> | In general, it is the

131

20

21

22

23

24

Sh. 127

132

52 The replacements occur in the words in italics, the last one would probably have the *hā* of *maʿzarihā* replaced in reverse, that is *yā*.

53 Unfortunately, al-Kātib does not give us more information about this technique; it may mean the repetition of the letter t or the repetition of the letter y.

54 From the meaning of *tafāghur*, the technique may mean opening the mouth widely when singing a consonant set to the short vowel a, thus giving it more strength.

55 In Steingass, it is the partition between the alimentary canal and the windpipe (*A learner's* 134). In Lane, it is certain portions of flesh by the uvula (*An Arabic-English lexicon* viii, 3036). Shiloah translated it as a guttural sound (Sh. 126 n. 3).

56 See definition above, fol. 127; p. 87, n. 26 (re. *shadharāt*).

57 These are the letters *t*, *q*, *ʿ*, *b*, *t*, *a*, and *k*. Shiloah rightly corrected these letters to *ṣād*, *ḍād*, *ṭāʾ*, *ẓāʾ*, *ghayn*, *qāf*, and *khāʾ*, that is, the letters *ṣ*, *ḍ*, *t*, *ẓ*, *gh*, *q*, *kh* (Sh. 126 n. 5).

58 For detail, see Fleisch, *Imāla*, *E1*<sup>2</sup>.

59 The poem is by al-Nābigha al-Dhubaynī (fl. end of sixth century); for the context of the

exact repetition of one of the verses after the end of the song [but with new melodic material].<sup>60</sup>

- 25 The *itbāʿ* (following) is making nasal letters follow their like, once or more, such as following the *nūn* with a *nūn* (n with an n), the *mīm* with a *mīm* (m with an m), *lām* with a *lām* (l with an l);<sup>61</sup> it is very much liked and is best when used with | these three letters only. This happens when one letter meets itself, or it is made heavier, or prolonged, so that one letter follows itself to become one, or the sound of the letter is prolonged until the end of the note to which it is sung. Especially in the case of the *lām* (l), it is called *taʿliqa* (suspension) when it is prolonged and suspended in the mouth, with the tongue stuck to the palate.
- 26 The *naʿīr* (shouting)<sup>62</sup> is what the drunken man emits, it is long and can be broken, though it is in one breath<sup>63</sup> such as the one in “Would contentment make her anger go away?”
- 133 The *qahqaha* (laughter) resembles loud and broken laughter; it is often used  
27 in the singing of Baghdadi singers,<sup>64</sup> then it became common.
- 28 The *hazza* (shaking) means shaking the notes; [in general] some notes are shaken, and some are plain and stable (*qārra*),<sup>65</sup> that is, steady and straight

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poem, see *KA* xi, 8–11. The poem was set to music by various early composers whose versions did not reach al-Kātib; in all likelihood, he is talking about a contemporary musical composition set to the poem and which exhibited the *radda* technique.

- 60 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has the same definition (*Hāwī* fol. 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 83). Al-Fārābī has a more detailed explanation of the *radda* and its reasons. He restricts the verse for the *radda* to the first verse only, or part of it. This first verse is repeated but to a different melody; according to him, this phenomenon is due to the use of the first line of the poem, or a part of it, as a measured or unmeasured vocal prelude. As a result, there is a shortage in the lyrics that is remedied by using the lyrics of the first line (*KMK* 1162–1163; *MA* ii, 85; see also Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 83). A good example from the nineteenth century is a song by Sayyid Darwīsh (1892–1923) *Sībūnī yā Nās*, in which the word *Sībūnī* that starts the verse also ends it.
- 61 In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it has a different meaning, namely, one song following another in the same rhythmic and melodic modes (*Hāwī* fol. 30b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 80).
- 62 Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 132) wrongly edited it to *taʿbīr* (expression).
- 63 In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is limited to shouting (*Hāwī* fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 86).
- 64 It is similar in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 81). Shiloah has “musicians” instead of “Baghdadi singers” (Sh. 127). In the dictionaries it is defined as repeated and extended laughter, and laughter accompanied by the word *qah*; when repeated it becomes *qahqah*. *KA* reports that Ibn Surayj sang in a laughing manner (*KA* i, 293; Sawa, *Arabic Musical and socio-cultural glossary* 425; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 208).
- 65 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has the same definition up to this point (*Hāwī* fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 84).

(*muqīma*); some are imagined by the listener (*sāmiʿ*) as being circular (*mus-tadīra*), and some are imagined as being sent in the back of the throat; the latter occurs at the end of the notes when the voice stops.<sup>66</sup>

The *tamaṭṭī* (stretching)<sup>67</sup> is the completion of the song with the breath taken | to its limit [on the last note] as if an innovation was brought about.<sup>68</sup>

The *intizāʿ* (extraction) holds the same position as the exit from the *nasīb* (erotic introduction) to the *madīḥ* (panegyric, praising a person or tribe) in poetry, but we shall not call it exit in relation to melodies, rather, we shall call it separation motif (*infīṣāl*) because it is more befitting. It comes in various degrees of excellence, and some are better than others; it occurs in the middle of the verse if it is of two hemistiches, or at its end, | or in the second verse. It can be intense or mild, good or not good, for this reason it should be made more beautiful and strengthened.<sup>69</sup>

The *tawṭīya* (introduction) is beginning the song with a high-pitched note or notes, or with a *tarannum*,<sup>70</sup> or composed notes [different from those of the song] and then begin the song.<sup>71</sup>

The *muhāhāt* are like the *shahaqāt* (inhaling, sighing, and sobbing); they occur in the letter *hāʿ* (h) as in saying *hā hā, hahahā, hahāhā*. When too many *h-s* are used and repeated they called them *muhāhāt*.<sup>72</sup>

66 Al-Fārābī mentions that a long, shaken note that occurs at the end of the melody and that is imagined as wavy when sent back in the throat is called *sharqa* (choking) by Arabic-speaking people because it gives the impression that something is stuck in a person's throat. For his exposition of shaken, stable, circular, and which is the source of al-Kātib's, see *KMK* 1069–1071, 1164–1166, 1172; *MA* ii, 58, 86, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 99–100. Al-Tifāshī adds a very interesting piece of historical information: he heard an Andalusian singer perform seventy-four shaken notes in one line of a poem composed by the poet Abū Tammām (ca. 189–232/805–845) (al-Tifāshī, *Mutʿa* fols. 30–31; al-Tifāshī, *Mutʿa*, ed. al-Sillāmī 104).

67 Lit., “walking with a swinging gait and stretching one's arms.”

68 It can also mean voiding one's excrement or passing wind (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* ii, 528, Sh. 128 n. 1).

69 In Ibn al-Ṭahḥān the *intizāʿ* has a different meaning, that is, extracting the melody of a song and setting it to another poem (*Hāwī* fol. 30b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 80).

70 This is a melody or chant without text, or a vocalization with long notes, or ornamented repetitions that are sung softly, or a melisma (*KMK* 56–57, 990, 1099, 1160; *MA* i, 10; *MA* ii, 29, 67, 84; Sawa, *Music performance* 103; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 577, 636; Sawa, *Arabic musical and socio-cultural glossary* 180–183).

71 In Ibn al-Ṭahḥān it has a different meaning, namely, the preparation of the high note before its occurrence (*Hāwī* fol. 30a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 78).

72 Ibn al-Ṭahḥān has a shorter definition, namely, the repetition of the letter *hāʿ* in vocal melodies (*Hāwī* fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 86).

33 [The *shahaqāt*] are called *shahaqāt* when there are fewer *h*-s and [they are] not repeated as in saying *hā hā*.<sup>73</sup> But if [the *ā*-s are] prolonged further, *hā hā*,<sup>74</sup> then we are dealing with the lamentations (*nadb*) and the caravan chant (*ḥadw*).<sup>75</sup>

34 The *istihlāl* (vocal prelude) occurs in a section or a poetic foot (*juz'*) of a line of poetry; it is unmeasured (*ghayr munaghgham*) and chanted (*murta-*  
Sh. 129 *lan*).<sup>76</sup> As for the sayings of al-Kindī and | [Aḥmad] b. al-Ṭayyib [al-Sarakhsī] [d. 286/899] and others, they said that the *nashīd* (vocal prelude) is what starts  
Kh. 83 at the beginning of lines of poetry, or some sections of speech if it is not | poetry, with unmeasured notes; the *istihlāl* is what starts at its beginning with a word  
135 set to unmeasured notes.<sup>77</sup> | The *nashīd* (vocal prelude) consists of one line of poetry if the poem is made up of two lines; two lines if the poem is made up of four lines where the two lines of the *nashīd* can be in succession or not. More than two lines of *nashīd* are only used by the singers of the *qaṣīda* (a long monorhyme poem). As for the *nashīd* of five lines and more, it is called *niṣf*<sup>78</sup> by the pandore players. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī said that it is only mentioned in relation to the pandore.<sup>79</sup>

73 The ms wrongly inverts the *h* and *ā* to *āh āh*; Khashaba (Kh. 82), Shiloah (Sh. 128), and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 133) did not correct the mistake.

74 In the ms there is a *madda* sign (vowel extension) over the *h*; Khashaba (Kh. 82), wrongly altered it by placing it over the *ā*.

75 Here, Shiloah adds an interesting remark, that Chailley used this passage in his article “Elmuahim et Elmuarifa” (Sh. 128 n. 5).

76 The word is undotted; both Khashaba (Kh. 82) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 133) read it as *mur-salan* (easy and plain), but this does not make sense in the context of the sentence. In addition, it cannot be *mursalan* because it does have the letter *sīn* (*s*); it is always written in the *naskh* form with its 3 teeth, here it is written as a long dash.

77 Al-Fārābī clearly defined them as follows: the *istihlāl* is a vocal prelude that varies in length from a word to less than a hemistich and is unmeasured like speech; the *nashīd* consists of a hemistich or more, a verse, two verses or more, and it is also unmeasured (KMK 1160–1162; MA ii, 84–85; Sawa, *Music performance* 103). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān takes both of them to a new level, which includes not only preludes but also interludes and postludes; he also explains their rich forms in detail (*Hāwī* fols. 45a–46a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 119–121). Shiloah, without giving his source, claims that the *nashīd* is close to musical recitation, but the *istihlāl* is a highly ornate vocal improvisation; the extant texts do not support his thesis (Sh. 129 n. 1).

78 *Niṣf* literally means “half,” but as Shiloah points out, half of what is not clear (Sh. 129 n. 2). Khashaba (Kh. 83) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 133) edited it to *naṣb*, which is a type of singing that follows the style of recitation, but with a bit of *ṭarab* and a bit of ornamented repetitions and the raising of the voice; it is more refined than the caravan song. In the context of unmeasured *nashīd*, *naṣb* may be the correct term (Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 453).

79 If it is true that al-Iṣfahānī said it, then it must be from a different book than KA; it is likely

The *tanahhud* (sighing) occurs after a note or notes followed by high breathing;<sup>80</sup> it occurs most often in notes that depict longing (*muḥannana*).<sup>81</sup> 36

The *maqṭaʿ* (cadence, end of section, end of melody) can be high or low pitch, long or short. The high pitch consists of short notes ending with a high-pitched note. The low pitch consists of a low-pitched note at its end. The long consists of a prolonged note at its end. The short ends on a letter that is not prolonged or a short note. Whenever a non-voweled letter occurs at the end of a verse, then it is better | for the melody to end on a short and high-pitched note. Among the *maqāṭiʿ* (sing. *maqṭaʿ*) there is one called the “resuming one” (*mustaʿnaf*), it is the one which starts after (*baʿd*)<sup>82</sup> a *maqṭaʿ* preceding it; thus, it appears as if it is separated from it. These are examples of the “resuming” *maqāṭiʿ*: 136

I have fallen in love with a young woman ...

And

The women’s anklets wander about ...

and other similar ones. The end of both consists of long and low-pitched notes. Sh. 130

The *ṣila* (link) connects a verse to a verse, or a hemistich to a hemistich (if the verse is made up [two] of hemistiches) without cut-off (*maqṭaʿ*) or breathing.<sup>83</sup> 38

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from al-Ṣfahānī’s book entitled *Kitāb Akhbār Jaḥḥa al-Barmakī* (Book of stories of Jaḥḥa al-Barmakī); Jaḥḥa wrote a book about the pandore players (Farmer, *A history* 133; Farmer, *The sources* 32).

80 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān adds that it means sighing and occurs during separation, longing, and desire (*Ḥāwī* fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 85).

81 Except for the second-to-last letter, which is a *nūn* (*n*), the word is undotted. Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 133) read it as *muḥannana* (longing) with the second-to-last being an *n* as in the MS; it may be the correct reading because it not only follows the MS partially but it also fits the context of longing. Shiloah (Sh. 83) edited the second-to-last letter *n* as *b* as *mujannaba* (notes anterior to the index finger); he may be correct for two reasons: (1) the same word occurs with the same spelling on fol. 138 with regard to the definition of the related word *tajnība*, and (2) playing a half note lower gives the feelings of sadness and sighing. Khashaba (Kh. 83) incorrectly read it as *mukhabbaba* (slightly accelerated) reading the second letter *n* as a *b* and adding dots in the wrong places.

82 The MS fol. 136, and ZY 133 have “without” (*bi-ghayr*), Sh. 129 also translated it as without. Kh. 83 edited it to *baʿd* (after) which makes more sense in the sentence.

83 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān adds an amusing definition to the context of the *ṣila*, namely, that when the cup is still in the mouth of the patron and the verse is finished, then the singer links it to another verse (*Ḥāwī* fol. 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 83).

39 The *tathwīb* (enriching, repeating)<sup>84</sup> is a long, stretched, and broken note, akin to the sound of the call to prayer.

40 The *istiḥāla* is the change of a song from a melodic mode (*naw‘*) to another in one verse, as for example, if it is in the *mazmūm* mode and then some of it goes to the *maḥṣūr* mode or *maḥmūl* mode, as occurs in “O House of Mayya” and other similar instances. The origin of the *istiḥāla* is the move from one state  
137 to another, as well as going from a higher to a lower pitch, and vice versa |. The largest change is the one in the ratio of one to two (i.e., going from the high to the low pitch, or from the low to the high pitch). It is like going from the ring finger of the fourth string (*zīr*) [D<sub>2</sub>] to the index finger of the second string [D<sub>1</sub>], or the reverse; | or going from the Zalzal middle finger [of the fourth string] [D<sub>2</sub> Z 648 cents] to the second anterior to the index finger [of the second string] [D<sub>1</sub> Z 648 cents], and the reverse; or going from the little finger of the fourth string [E flat 2] to the middle finger of the ancients [related to the Persians] of the second string [E flat 1] [then the reverse]; the same obtains with respect to the first and third strings. Knowing this facilitates the changes and will benefit the musician.

41 The *ṣahīl* (neighing) consists of gradual notes that resemble the neighing of a horse; they are shaken and resemble the *nabarāt*; we could dispense with the term *ṣahīl* and use *nabarāt* instead.

42 The *madda* (elongation) is a sound that takes up a certain time exiting from one place from the mouth; in general, it is a long note.

43 The *hamza* (glottal stop) | is a powerful and abundant sound that comes from  
138 the chest; it resembles a sigh or a moan (*zafra*).<sup>85</sup>

44 The *tajnība* consists of softening and lowering the note of the index finger [by half a tone] on whatever string, and replacing it with the anterior note (*mujannaba*)<sup>86</sup> that occurs before it.

45 I heard about the *zaḥma* (crowding)<sup>87</sup> that resembles the *hamza*.

84 Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* i, 361. On fols. 203–204, p. 158 al-Kātib adds more detail to the meaning of *tathwīb*: a note broken equidistantly as in the gradation (*tadrīj*) and akin to a pigeon flying upward and flapping its wings in a temporally equidistant manner.

85 Ibn al-Ṭahḥān defines it as a glottal stop used in some notes in a song, making it very agreeable (*Hāwī* fol. 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 81). In al-Fārābī the *hamza* is used to fill the beginning of a note (KMK 1117; MA ii, 71; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 34). It is also used in the *nabras* (see pp. 47, 76, 86).

86 ZY 133 read it as *muḥannana* (longing).

87 The word is undotted; Khashaba (Kh. 84) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 133) read it as *zakhma* which means thrusting or plectrum; the former makes sense in the above definition, but not the latter. It is more likely *zaḥma*, with the meaning of crowding, since in its definition it resembles the *hamza*, which is a glottal stop and a moan, causing a tightening of the throat.

This state of affairs that is, [in which there are] many terms that happen a lot and spread from those who wish to multiply them and also vary among people and among locales when naming techniques and applying them, but we do not need to add more than we have mentioned above.

The *takāhun* (monk-like) technique makes the voice reverberate powerfully (46 *dawī*)<sup>88</sup> in the throat as if it is coming from the high fourth string; it resembles the speech of the monks and resembles the growl (*hamhama*) of a person with a harsh throat sound [lit., “thick throat”].

The *ghamza* (lit., wink) is a high-pitched note that is sung furtively (*tukhtalas*) (47 at the end of a section after lower pitched notes that preceded it.<sup>89</sup>

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88 It also means a ring, clang, roar.

89 This definition is more detailed than the one in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, where the *ghamza* occurs at the end of melodies or sections thereof (*Ḥāwī* fol. 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 82). Later, when al-Kātib is discussing rhythmic ornaments, it has the meaning of a soft or weak attack (fol. 140; pp. 99–100).

## Specific Places in the Playing of Instruments [to Beautify with Specific Techniques] [fols. 138–143; Kh. 85–87; Sh. 131–134; ZY 134]

[The eighteen terms mentioned in this chapter relate to rhythmic variation techniques for string instruments, except for *tajnīb* (replacing the index note by its anterior), *tasrīj* (the compositional style of Ibn Surayj), cadences, preludes and postludes. Except for the words *tajnīb* and *jarrāt*, all the terms are in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān. It is Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān who replaces the term *khabb* (fast tempo) by its synonym *ḥathth*. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has forty-seven terms but these are listed, not defined; one can find their definitions by referring to al-Fārābī and al-Kātib, or to medieval dictionaries; the meaning of some terms can only be guessed at. The techniques from al-Kātib and Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān are an important addition to al-Fārābī's sixteen rhythmic techniques.]

138; Kh.  
85; Sh.  
131; ZY 134

*al-daghdagha*, *al-mabādī*,<sup>1</sup> *al-tafṣīl*, *al-idrāj*, *al-tartīl*, *al-khabb*, *al-taḍḍīf*, *al-taw-ṣīl*, *al-ṭayy*, *al-tajnīb*,<sup>2</sup> *al-tasrīj*, *al-taqnīāt*,<sup>3</sup> *al-nafaḍāt*, *al-ikhtilāsāt*, *al-ba'tharāt*,<sup>4</sup> *al-munṣarafāt*, *al-tashbīāt*,<sup>5</sup> *al-jarrāt*.

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The *daghdagha* (lit., “tickling, crushing”) is the continuous touching (*jass*) of the strings with the fingers.<sup>6</sup>

- 1 It is spelled as *mabādī* in the MS (fol. 139), as well as in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 99b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 241–243).
- 2 Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 134) wrongly edited it as *takhnūth* (singing in counter-tenor style, softness, effeminacy) here and below; about *takhnūth* see KA v, 326–327; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 204–205.
- 3 It is later written as *muqtana'āt* (fol. 142); Khashaba (Kh. 85) edited it as *taqnīāt* without the long *i*; he (Kh. 86) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 134) edited it as *muqna'āt*; Shiloah has *taqannu'āt* and *muqtana'āt* (Sh. 131, 134). *Taqnīāt* is more likely because the definition says it resembles the *taqnī* and because it appears as *taqnīāt* in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 100a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 245).
- 4 It is later written as *ta'thīrāt* (fol. 142); it resembles the partially dotted word in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 100a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 254).
- 5 The author left it undefined, but Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān defines it as filling the end of a section with ornaments (*Hāwī* fol. 31a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 83).
- 6 Note that no pick is used, and the plural “fingers” may refer to the fingers of the left hand that are tapping the strings on the fingerboard, or to the fingers of the right hand that are plucking

The *mabādī*<sup>7</sup> are instrumental preludes (*istiftāh fi l-darb*) in which attacks are separated by equal durations (*tawṣīl*) for a number of cycles without the use of a separator. Some notes are mixed (*muzija*) with others and played simultaneously.<sup>8</sup> Different light meters are used, in many types [this may mean rhythmic variations] at the same time, mixed (*mukhtalaṭ*), and interlocked (*mutadākhil*).<sup>9</sup>

The *tafṣīl* (disjoining) is much liked in instrumental playing,<sup>10</sup> especially | in good, old, and outstanding melodies. It consists of separating the attacks and the cycles and not filling the separators with anything.<sup>11</sup>

The *tawṣīl* (joining) is the opposite of the *tafṣīl* [above].<sup>12</sup>

The *idrāj* (gradation) is filling the separators between the cycles and between the heavy and slow attacks either with light attacks<sup>13</sup> or with rubbings

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the strings. The latter meaning is taken by al-Khuwārizmī, who clarifies the *jass* technique as plucking the strings with the thumb and index finger and not the plectrum. This is a playing technique, but can also serve to check the tuning as is evidenced in *KA* v, 233 (al-Khuwārizmī, *Maḥāṭib* 239–240; see also al-Kindī's lute exercise in *Risālat al-Kindī fi l-luḥūn* 26–31; Sawa, *Arabic musical and socio-cultural glossary* 60–61). Shiloah adds an interesting remark, namely that the lute player, before performing the piece, plays some brief techniques to check his instrument (Sh. 131 n. 3).

7 Al-Fārābī gives more detail about the nature of instrumental preludes: they may or may not be thematically related to the song proper; those that are thematically unrelated are the types that cannot be sung, and are also used as training exercises for the ears and hands (*KMK* 68–70; *MA* i, 17; Sawa, *Music performance* 103–107).

8 This may mean playing two strings at the same time to produce simple harmonies.

9 This rather obscure sentence may mean that related meters, such as *hazaj* and then *khafīf* (light), or light *ramal* then first light heavy then second light heavy, follow one another.

10 Shiloah translated it as “rhythmic accompaniment” but the text does not support the notion of accompaniment (Sh. 132).

11 It is more detailed in al-Fārābī who defines the *tafṣīl* as: (1) turning a conjunctive into a disjunctive: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | etc. becomes 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; (2) elongating the separator in a disjunctive: 3/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | becomes 4/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; (3) introducing a separator in a disjunctive in a location different from the normal place of the separator: 3/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | becomes 4/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (*KMK* 1014, 1031–1033; *MA* ii, 36, 42–43; *KI* fol. 161b; *N-KI* 206; Sawa, *Music performance* 49; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 538, 602).

12 Al-Fārābī defines it as: (1) shortening the duration of the separator in a disjunctive rhythm, resulting in metric contraction: 3/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | becomes 5/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; (2) removing the separator completely, thereby reducing the duration of the cycle: 3/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | becomes 2/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ |; (3) placing an attack of passage, thereby keeping the duration of the cycle intact: 3/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | becomes | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (*KMK* 1013, 1018; *MA* ii, 36, 38; *KI* fol. 161b; *N-KI* 205–206; Sawa, *Music performance* 48; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 551, 614–615). Both *tafṣīl* and *tawṣīl* are grammatical terms al-Fārābī uses to explain musical phenomena.

13 According to al-Fārābī, they are attacks separated by short durations, namely, of eighth note values (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 553, 609).

(*masha*),<sup>14</sup> or winks (*ghamza*),<sup>15</sup> or desires (*rawm*),<sup>16</sup> or scents (*ishmām*).<sup>17</sup> These additions do not change the [duration of the] melody but change the shape of the rhythm [by means of rhythmic variations].<sup>18</sup>

- 6 The *tartil* is the slow tempo (*imsāk*);<sup>19</sup> it is much liked in songs and adds to the brilliance (*bahāʿ*) of melodies.
- 7 The *khabb*<sup>20</sup> is speeding up what should be slow.
- 8 The *taḍʿif* is doubling the single attacks in the fundamental form of the heavy rhythmic cycles (*uṣūl al-iqāʿāt*), | especially when a single attack is replaced by two, such that the duration is filled with two attacks.<sup>21</sup>

14 Al-Fārābī mentions that this is the practitioners' term for what he calls a moderate or weak attack (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 569, 630).

15 Al-Fārābī mentions that it is the practitioners' term for what he calls a soft or weak attack (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 580, 639).

16 Lit., "desiring a vowel," that is, an obscure and slurred vowel sound that is more than the *ishmām* (scent of a vowel); it is a phonological term used by al-Fārābī to describe the sound quality of a soft attack (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 538, 602).

17 Lit., "scent of a vowel," that is, a vowel sound that is very feeble and less than the desire; it is a phonological term used by al-Fārābī to describe the sound of a soft or weak attack (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 569–570, 630). For a detailed discussion of the meaning of *rawm*, *ishmām*, *masha*, and *ghamza*, and for al-Fārābī's occasional inconsistencies correlating them with moderate, weak, and soft attacks, see Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 166–169, 350, 471–474.

18 It is more detailed in al-Fārābī, who defines the *idrāj*, a practitioners' term, as consisting of doubling all attacks, including those of passage and support, resulting in temporally equidistant attacks in the rhythmic cycle; it leads to complete conjunction and gives a false impression of speed, yet does not alter the durations of the cycle, as for instance: 3/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ | becomes | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (*KMK* 1919–1920; *MA* ii, 38–39; *KI* fols. 161b, 165a–b; *N-KI* 205, 225–226; Sawa, *Music performance* 41; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 547, 609).

19 Lit., "holding back," the term *tartil* is borrowed by al-Fārābī from the Qur'ānic sciences, where it means the elaborate and slow chanted recitation of the Qur'ān (*KI* fol. 162a; *N-KI* 207; *KII* fol. 63a; *N-KII* 137; Sawa, *Music performance* 52, 248; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 574, 634).

20 Lit., "jogging, trotting"; the practitioners called it *hathth* and al-Fārābī calls it *hadr*; he borrowed the term from Qur'ānic sciences, where it means the rapid yet clear recitation of the Qur'ān (*KMK* 998, 1019–1020; *MA* ii, 31, 38–39; *KI* fol. 162a; *N-KI* 206–207; *KII* fols. 63a, 66a–b; *N-KII* 137, 143; Sawa, *Music performance* 51; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 543, 606). For the related word *tukhabbab* see fol. 57; p. 33.

21 In al-Fārābī it means doubling as well as multiplying the attacks: (1) In *KI* and *KII* it consists of inserting an attack between two attacks: 4/2 | ♪ ♪ .| becomes | ♪ ♪ ♪ .|; (2) In *KMK* it is called multiplying, and consists of inserting more than one attack between two attacks: 4/2 | ♪ ♪ .| becomes | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ .|; or inserting one attack but not necessarily in the middle of the two attacks: 4/2 | ♪ ♪ .| becomes | ♪ ♪ . ♪ .|; (3) In *KI* and *KII* the doubling does not alter the durational length of the cycle (*KMK* 1018; *MA* ii, 38; *KI* fol. 162a; *N-KI* 206; *KII* fol. 63a; *N-KII* 137; Sawa, *Music performance* 47; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 539–540, 603).

The *ṭayy* (lit., “folding, dropping out”) is of two types: one in which | some of the doubled attacks are dropped out, thus making the doubled attack a single one; the other is when some of the attacks in the fundamental cycle are dropped out, but indicated with a rubbing or a wink or a desire, but we will mention them later in their proper chapter.<sup>22</sup>

The *tajnīb* (lit., “to the side”) is softening and lowering notes in the middle of the melody and at the end of sections or end of melodies. It consists of replacing the index finger note with its anterior; it is best used in moderation in the middle of the melody or at the end of the sections or at the end of the melodies. It is always obtained, not on the frets, but below the little finger fret because it is doable and possible [there]. Most performers are not clever enough to do it because of its difficulty. | It is often used in melodies in the *mazmūm* mode as we shall explain later.<sup>23</sup>

The *tasrīj* resembles the style of some of Ibn Surayj’s melodies; it is well known. According to the opinion of the people of our era, it is most often related to the ring finger [melodic mode]<sup>24</sup> in whichever rhythmic mode is used, we shall explain later.<sup>25</sup>

The *taqnīāt*<sup>26</sup> occur at the end of sections or at the end of melodies; they consist of attacks by means of the plectrum (*miḍrāb*) in a downward motion, while the hand is moved away from the strings toward the right side. The motion resembles the raising (*taqnī*) of the head of a beast of burden.

The *nafaḍāt*<sup>27</sup> are close in meaning to the *taqnīāt*.

22 See fol. 152; p. 111. This latter technique was originally introduced by al-Fārābī in *κI* and *κII* to turn the *īqāʿ* from its metric aspect to its rhythmic mode aspect: 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | becomes 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (*κI* fol. 162a; N-*κI* 206; *κII* fol. 71b; N-*κII* 152; Sawa, *Music performance* 48; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 540, 603).

23 He does this in chapter 32 when discussing the *mazmūm* mode, fols. 178–179; pp. 134–135.

24 Shiloah adds an important note, namely, that it could also be that the ring finger notes occur frequently in a song (Sh. 134 n. 3). In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, the *tasrīj* occurs in the chapter on rhythmic ornaments, then it may refer to a succession of notes rhythmically arranged in the particular style of the songs of Ibn Surayj (*Hāwī* fol. 100a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 250).

25 He does this on fol. 182, pp. 137–138, where he mentions that melodies that resemble Ibn Surayj’s style are often called *surayjī*, but more correctly should be called *musarraḥj*.

26 See p. 98, n. 3, about the spelling of this word (re. fol. 138).

27 The ms has *nafaṣāt* and *baʿaṣāt* on fols. 139 and 142; Shiloah has *nafaṣāt* (Sh. 131, 134); Khashaba (Kh. 85–86) has the correct *nafaḍāt* for two reasons: it appears this way in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 100a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 246), and because it means shaking, and that fits with the shaking inherent in its synonym *taqnīāt*, that is, moving the right hand to the right and away from the strings.

14 The *ikhtilāsāt* are done with the plectrum when the attack is played in a quasi-imperceptible way (*ikhtilāsan*); the best place for it is at the end of sections or melodies.<sup>28</sup>

15 The *ta'thīrāt*<sup>29</sup> is the tumbling of the plectrum between two strings to create quick intermixed attacks that do not alter the rhythm. It comes up beautifully when used on and off in the performance of a piece.<sup>30</sup>

Kh. 86 16 The *munṣarafāt* (lit., “leaving, exiting”) make the listener imagine that they are at the end of a piece, when in fact these are followed by another ending.

17 The *maqṭa'* (cadence) in instrumental performance is like the vocal one [cadence]; that is, [it is] long, short, high- or low-pitched. The long is as mentioned above.<sup>31</sup> The short | comes up suddenly without any warning that it will occur.<sup>32</sup> The ancients have a very good opinion about the cadences and [how they can] be used beneficially: the cadence should not come to an end without the listener being prepared and alerted to it [by means of the *munṣarafāt*] because a cadence coming suddenly will decrease his *ṭarab*.

18 The *jarrāt* is dragging or pulling the plectrum across the strings so that the plucked attacks are consecutive (*musalsala*).<sup>33</sup>

28 Al-Fārābī borrowed this term from phonology; he uses it to refer to the dynamic and timbral quality of the doubled attacks when performed in a quasi-imperceptible way (*κΙΙ* fol. 66b; *Ν-κΙ* 144; Sawa, *Music performance* 53; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 575, 627, 635). In *κΑ*, an excellent performance involves singing the *nabarāt* stealthily and imitating them faithfully in plucking the strings on the accompanying lute (*κΑ* i, 315; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 206–207).

29 Khashaba (Kh. 86) edited it as *ba'tharāt* (dispersing) following the appearance of this word on fol. 139.

30 Shiloah translated it as “accompaniment” but the text does not support this meaning (Sh. 134).

31 See p. 95, fol. 136.

32 Shiloah mistranslated this sentence in the negative; he said that the short cadence cannot occur suddenly without a warning that precedes it (Sh. 134).

33 This is an obscure definition; Khashaba (Kh. 87) suggested a circular plucking; Shiloah suggested a zigzag motion causing a tremolo (Sh. 134 n. 5). The verb *jarra* describes the pulling or dragging of the bow on the string to produce a sound on the *rabāba* (rebec), and as such it makes sense for the rebec; transferring it to the lute plucking is problematic.

## What It Is Preferable to Highlight in Melodies [fols. 143–146; Kh. 88–89; Sh. 135–136; ZY 135]

[In this short chapter the author gives advice as to what to highlight in a song; these may be positive themes, particular letters that bring beauty to the song, or assimilations that are used to remedy problems. It mentions what to avoid, such as letter replacements that are negative. More on the subject of ugly letters and expressions and how to remedy them are explained in the next chapter.]

The things one should highlight (*iẓhār*) in a melody are as vast as an ocean (*baḥr*),<sup>1</sup> one cannot mention them in one breath. These are themes that increase one's activity, such as pointing to one's present or expected state and reminding one of past states, as in saying: "take the present opportunity," "go ahead and enjoy the pleasures," | "hurry and seize the opportunity," "do good deeds," "decide to [do something]," "I have been highly esteemed and honored," "may God take care of you for a long time," "when I remember," and the like.

Many singers often assimilate letters (that is, contract a letter into another) during their singing; this is sometimes acceptable and does not cause much harm. However, it is not acceptable when it is applied to the above expressions; if the singer wants to do so, then it will not have the required action on the soul, and will have no effect because it is not understood. In general, assimilation is disliked and it is a significant shortcoming, unless one must do so, as we have noted in the chapter on setting notes to letters.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, if the number of notes greatly exceeds the number of letters, then the letters will not be comprehended fully except with much effort and long contemplation, provided that the meaning (*ma'nā*)<sup>3</sup> of the poem is clear. | Assimilation kills the *ṭarab*, reduces the brilliance of the melody, and veils its beauty. Likewise, if the notes are far fewer than the letters, then the singing will lack brilliance | and

1 Khashaba read it as *bi-ḥayth* (such that) (Kh. 88); Zakariyyā Yūsuf read it *bi-ḥadd* (to a limit) (ZY 135).

2 Here assimilation means adding vowels, as explained in this sentence: "one must set vowels at the extremities of the notes with 'empty' letters; when such vowels are hidden, they do not spoil the meaning of the poem and they will not hide much of the poem. Such letters do not add much to the poem or remove much of it except for their role for sound prolongations" (fol. 74; pp. 45–46).

3 Khashaba (Kh. 88) edited it wrongly to *mughannī* (singer).

sound like a recitation (*qawl masrūd*). The best solution is the one in between.<sup>4</sup> What also causes difficulty in understanding the meaning are problems with speech, such as stammering (*tamtama*), shabbiness (*raththa*),<sup>5</sup> a thin and high tone (*ṣafīr*),<sup>6</sup> and a lack of clarity (*kadāra*).<sup>7</sup>

In general, one should take care to highlight all the letters but, in particular, the sibilants (*hurūf al-ṣafīr*), such as *sīn* (= s); *zāy* (= z); and *ṣād* (= ṣ). If they are highlighted and emitted clearly, they add much brilliance and beauty to the sound of the voice and have a likeable and pleasurable feel. The same applies to the nasalized letters (*ghunna*).

Kh. 89 Some of these defects may be acceptable when used in a song; however, it would be best, whenever possible, to drop out and go beyond some of them while singing. One could be on guard about these defects or most of them, especially in letters where the tongue stumbles and substitutes some of them; this is done either by prolonging the singing<sup>8</sup> | or by replacing a letter by another.<sup>9</sup> 146 As for the one who replaces a *lām* (= l) with a *nūn* (= n), a *ḥā'* (= ḥ) with a *khā'* (= kh), a *sīn* (= s) with a *shīn* (= sh), he simply should not sing. As for the defective pronunciation (*lathgha*),<sup>10</sup> even though it is a replacement [brought about by a shortcoming in pronunciation], it is the least harmful and is nevertheless considered beautiful and desirable by some listeners.

4 That is, a balance between the words and the notes: too many notes make the meaning hard to comprehend, too many letters make the singing akin to recitation.

5 Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 135) edited it as *ranna* (ringing).

6 It can also mean “whistling, hissing.”

7 Lit., “turbidity.” Ibn al-Ṭahḥān has more detail about good and bad speeches (*Ḥāwī* fols. 69a–b; Sawa, *Encompassser* 179).

8 Shiloah comments on it very well, saying that to hide the defect the singer resorts to prolonging the voice, that is, pronouncing a difficult letter in a vague way, and drowning it with singing (Sh. 136 n. 2). See also above p. 104, n. 2.

9 See *ibdāl* above, fols. 129–130, pp. 89–90.

10 Al-Sillāmī defines it as pronouncing the letter *s* as *th*, or *r* as *gh*, or *l*, or *y*, or when the tongue is not completely raised, resulting in heaviness, confinement, and speech defect (al-Tifāshī, *Mutʿa*, ed. al-Sillāmī 177 n. 4).

## What It Is Preferable to Hide in Melodies [fols. 146–147; Kh. 90; Sh. 137–138; ZY 135]

[The author mentions the letters, prolonged syllables, and words to avoid because they are ugly and offensive; he also offers advice on how to remedy them. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 47: "Good and Bad Song Themes" is a much larger chapter on this topic (*Ḥāwī* fols. 51b–53b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 132–135).]

There are [words and letters] in songs that are repulsive, so one must use a trick to assimilate and incorporate them with other words [or letters] to mask them. The following are such examples: *min asfalī* (from below), *min fawqi* (from above), *istirāḥatī* (my repose), *istīḥāshī* (my strangeness), because when the *i* (*kasra*) sound is lengthened (*ushbi'at*), it becomes ugly (*qabīḥa*).<sup>1</sup> So they [the *kasras*] must be covered with notes or avoided. Similarly, if two words combine to create an ugly utterance, then some letters should be moved forward and some moved backward to hide the ugliness and eliminate it. It was related | that a singer was singing to Kāfūr al-Ikhshīdī [292–357/905–968]<sup>2</sup> when the latter chose to begin the performance with a poem by Abū Nuwās<sup>3</sup> about a productive person (*khaṣīb*):

You are the productive one and this is Egypt.

The singer stopped at the word *khaṣī* [by not adding the letter b, it means "You are the eunuch"] and repeated it and reached a state of *ṭarab* doing so, until Kāfūr said to him, "So I am the eunuch, I know that, and what comes next?" The singer was embarrassed and stopped singing.

1 Shiloah misread it as *fathā* (*a* sound) (Sh. 137).

2 He was a famous prince and eunuch, originally an Ethiopian slave bought by al-Ikhshīdī, the king of Egypt (d. 312/925), who then freed him, and Kāfūr affixed Ikhshīdī to his name. Kāfūr was smart—a good politician and administrator; he ruled Egypt officially for two years (355–357/966–968), though he served the Ikhshīdīd dynasty longer than this, from 333/945 (Hitti, *History* 456–457; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām* 5, 216).

3 The poem is by the poetess Wallāda bt. al-Mustakfī (d. 484/1091) (al-maktaba.org) or by Abū Nuwās (al-Tifāshī, *Mut'a*, ed. al-Sillāmī 170 n. 3).

It does not make sense to enumerate all the repulsive words; they cannot be hidden from the one paying attention to them. Some are less ugly when uttered by men as opposed to being uttered by women.

When prolonged some letters, such as *ḥī*, *kī*, *nū*, are unpleasant<sup>4</sup> and like similar ones they should be incorporated [with other words or letters] or avoided.

Ishāq [al-Mawṣilī] criticized Ibrāhīm b. Shakla<sup>5</sup> [b. al-Mahdī] in his pronunciation [of *dhahabtu*] in *Dhahabtu min al-dunyā wa-qad dhababat minnī* (I left the world and it left me); [Ishāq] said this pronunciation resembles that of the Nabateans because he lengthened the *u* (*ḍamma*) and stayed there.<sup>6</sup>

4 The word is undotted in the MS; Shiloah overlooked it (Sh. 127); Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 135) edited it as *nū*, which is also how it appears in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān; the latter also included the following: *ḥū*, *sū*, *fū*, *ṭū*, *ṭī*, *qū* (*Hāwī* fol. 53b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 135).

5 Shakla was his mother; her name was also given as Shikla (KA x, 95 n. 1).

6 The anecdote is more detailed in KA. Ishāq sent a messenger to Ibrāhīm to tell him: “You know that in your song, you must say *dhahabū* with a *wāw* [the long *ū* at the end of *dhahabū*], because if you say *dhahabtu* with a short vowel *u*, and you do not extend it, as in *ū*, then the poetry and the melody will fall short (*inqaṭaʿa*). And if you extend it, then the language will be ugly (*qabuḥa al-kalām*) and will be similar to the Nabatean’s language” (KA v, 288). The Nabateans were inhabitants of Iraq; they were neither shepherds nor soldiers. Here the term is applied contemptuously to Aramaic-speaking peasants (Honigman, Nabateans *ET*<sup>1</sup>; Sawa, *Music performance* 136).

## Opening Songs [fols. 149; Kh. 91; Sh. 138; ZY 135]

[The author advises the singer to choose songs properly to fit the patron's feelings and situation, and to avoid repulsive ones. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 44: "Opening Songs in the Company of Kings" is more detailed than the present chapter (*Hāwī* fols. 48a–49b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 124–126).]

The singer must avoid what brings the sense of an evil omen to the listener. He must do his best because the listener greatly desires what first reaches his ears; the singer should aspire for the song to fit the listener's present state, or future state, or expected and desired state. In general, he must avoid repulsive songs, and [this is even] more true in the company of kings and eminent people. And even though the singer [might have, in the past,] sung songs set to various poetical themes, [kings and eminent people expect the singer] to sing what befits the situation and use it for a particular reason.<sup>1</sup> So let us also aspire to do that and avoid songs with frightful themes and explicit satires. The latter should only be sung to kings and [must be] directed at their enemies and those who disagree with them in order to calm down their [the kings'] fury. When it comes to special requests from the audience, then we have no say in it.<sup>2</sup>

149; Kh.  
91; Sh.  
138;  
ZY 135

<sup>1</sup> This is amply corroborated in *KA*; good choices were rewarded and bad ones were frowned upon. See Neubauer, *Musiker* 91–92; Sawa, *Music performance* 128–138, 160, 226.

<sup>2</sup> Shiloah misunderstood this sentence, saying that the singer's improvisations are a domain beyond his understanding (Sh. 138).

## Rhythms and Rhythmic Modes

[fols. 149–160; Kh. 92–103; Sh. 139–148; ZY 136–137]

[This long chapter is heavily based on al-Fārābī’s writings, namely, *KMK*, *KI*, and *KII*, either directly, or through an intermediate source. It deals with the definition of types of attacks, rhythms and rhythmic modes, rhythmic variation techniques, and the relation between verses in poetry and rhythmic cycles in music. In addition, and of interest, al-Kātib mentions the use of light rhythms that are specific to the lyre, in dances, and in shadow plays, shadow dances, and puppetry. It is a longer chapter than Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s chapter 6: “The Names of the Rhythmic Modes, Their Types, Their Cycles, and Number of Attacks” and chapter 9: “The Rhythmic Modes in Use” (*Hāwī* fols. 91b–92a; 94a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 221–225, 230–232).]

149; Kh.  
92; Sh.  
139;  
ZY 136

The meter and rhythmic mode (*īqāʿ*) are the temporal division of a melody by means of attacks. They are the motion through [musical] sounds (*aṣwāt*) that are [temporally] similar and consecutive (*mutarādīfa*)<sup>1</sup> [and that are contained] in consecutive and equal time periods (*azmina*);<sup>2</sup> [each time period] is called [a cycle (*dawr*)].<sup>3</sup>

The shortest cycle is made up of two attacks; tapping it (*naqrihi*) takes up the shortest time, that is, in the words of al-Fārābī (*lafzihi*)<sup>4</sup> and those who preceded him.<sup>5</sup> The duration (*zaman*) is thus called because there are two attacks

1 *Mutarādīfa* means not only consecutive but also similar (Lane, *An English-Arabic lexicon* iii, 1067–1069). It is the perfect word to use in al-Fārābī’s definition of the *īqāʿ* to mean meter as opposed to rhythm (*KMK* 435–436; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 128–129), or rhythmic and rhythmic mode (*KI* fol. 160b; *N-KI* 201; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 241). In this revised definition, the fundamental form of the *īqāʿ*, separator excluded, consists of attacks that are equally spaced within a cycle with a clear idea of beats, their number, and their size.

2 *Azmina* (sing. *zaman*) means a time period or a cycle.

3 This is the definition of al-Fārābī, almost verbatim, as it appears in *KII* fol. 59b (see also *N-KII* 131; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 324). Shiloah found this definition difficult to understand; and it is difficult if one does not consider the updated definition of rhythm in *KII*.

4 Shiloah misread *naqrihi* and *lafzihi* as *naqra* (attack) and *lafza* (syllable); he then said that the attack is the shortest time and equivalent to a syllable, but in al-Fārābī the attack is timeless.

5 The wording in *KII* on the same folio is different; it is about the shortest rhythmic mode composed of two cycles; much like the verse, it is made up of two hemistiches. What al-Kātib mentions here comes from al-Fārābī’s first attempt to theorize about rhythms; in it, al-Fārābī

at its extremities which delimit it;<sup>6</sup> they produce the sound that remains in the ear for a certain time. The number of attacks exceeds the number of durations by one;<sup>7</sup> for this reason, it is easy to figure out the number of notes [in a cycle]; in a melody, without recourse to a melodic instrument, we simply count the number of attacks and remove one | from the count, provided the attacks are single (*mufradāt*) and are the fundamental ones, and the *īqāʿ* is considered in its metric format [and the separator is not counted].<sup>8</sup>

150

The durations are surrounded by attacks out of which the musical sounds are created (*yunaqgham bihi*); linking each individual sound creates the melody. They are as in the following example in which each syllable represents an attack: | attack duration, attack duration, attack duration, attack duration attack, thus four durations delimited by five attacks.<sup>9</sup> Each one of the durations represents a frequency (*buʿd*)<sup>10</sup> from low to high or high to low.

Kh. 93

The *īqāʿāt* are of two types: conjunctive (*muttaṣil*) and disjunctive (*munfaṣil*).<sup>11</sup> The conjunctive rhythmic mode is the one whose attacks [are equally

Sh. 141

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mentions that it is the first fast disjunctive—which is the smallest cycle—it is made up of two attacks separated by the shortest perceivable duration, it is then followed by the separator which is longer (*KMK* 456–457; *MA* i, 154; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 143).

6 *KMK* 136; *KMK* 286; *MA* i, 52; *MA* ii, 27; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 136, 166.

7 *KMK* 481; *MA* i, 157; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 157.

8 *KI* fol. 161b; *N-KI* 204; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 248. It becomes even clearer in *KII* when al-Fārābī defines the durations of the heavy and light heavy meters (*KII* fol. 64a; *N-KII* 139; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 339) e.g., the heavy *ramal* is defined as having one medium time unit but not including the separator; here is an example of two cycles of the heavy *ramal* with the separator shown in brackets: 3/2: | ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ( ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ) | ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ( ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ) |.

9 The ms only shows a small circle below the word attack, yet Shiloah (Sh. 140) and Khashaba (Kh. 93) added a dot after each attack, following the practice of prosodic notations: O . O . O . O . O The O represents the attack and the dot represents the duration.

10 Lit., “amount, note, interval.”

11 They are also called by their synonyms *muwaṣṣal* and *mufaṣṣal*. Conjunctives and disjunctives are al-Fārābī’s terminology in his attempt to create a theory of music that reflects Ishāq’s definition. The term conjunctive is al-Fārābī’s way of explaining three different rhythms defined by Ishāq and quoted and commented upon in *KII* fols. 79b–80a: (1) the first consists of attacks following one another consecutively at a fast pace, and at the same pace; it has no name, and is a theoretical construct laid out as the origin of the other two conjunctives; (2) the *khafīf* (light), which consists of attacks following one another regularly and at the same pace but held back more than the first one; (3) the *hazaj*, which consists of attacks following one another in the same way as those of the light, except that its tempo is slower. Note that the last two are the most common variations of the light and the *hazaj*. The term disjunctive is also al-Fārābī’s way of explaining six different rhythms defined by Ishāq and quoted and commented upon in *KII* fols. 80b–81b. Their attacks do not follow one another consecutively at the same pace like the conjunctives, but are separated by different durations, e.g., the light *ramal* is such that its attacks follow one another,

spaced and] whose cycles are connected [by means of a duration similar to the inner durations in the cycle]. [The disjunctive mode is the one whose attacks are not separated by equal duration, and its cycles are separated by a larger temporal disjunction]. The separators between the disjunctive cycles consist of durations that are longer (*abṭa'*)<sup>12</sup> than those between all the attacks in the cycle, | as they fall between every two cycles and their durations are double that which occur between the attacks.<sup>13</sup> This is a condition that obtains in (*fī*)<sup>14</sup> all rhythmic modes. The position of the two cycles in rhythmic modes is similar to the position of a line in a poem; the position of one cycle is similar to the hemistich in poetry.<sup>15</sup> The rhythmic mode is only complete if it is made up of [at least] two cycles.<sup>16</sup> Sometimes the duration of the separator (*al-fāṣila*)<sup>17</sup> is occupied with an attack to connect two cycles; it is called the attack of passage (*naqrat al-majāz*);<sup>18</sup> another attack is added at the end of the second cycle to rely on it [to end the cycle] and to rest; it is called the attack of support (*naqrat al-i'timād*).<sup>19</sup>

151

Kh. 94

Between the heavy attacks, especially those separated by pauses (*waqfa*) and slowness (*ibṭā*), there may occur small soft (*lawayina*) attacks, rubbings (*mashāt*), or winks (*ghamzāt*) by means of the plectrum; some attacks are desired (*rawm*) and some [give] the scent of a vowel (*ishmām*). The *rawm* is

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as two coupled together and then two coupled together, etc. with a pause between each two pairs. For the complete definitions of all rhythmic modes and commentaries thereof, see *N-KII* 168–171; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 32–37, 409–416.

12 Lit., “slower”

13 This definition only applies to the cycles in their metric format; see the example of the heavy *ramal* above, p. 109, n. 8. This definition is verbatim from *KII* fol. 59b; *N-KII* 131–132; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 325.

14 A copyist's error (fol. 151) has *wa* (and).

15 See the illustration from an excellent nineteenth-century example showing the setting of one musical bar to one hemistich, and two musical bars to a verse: p. 74, n. 7, *Yā Ghazālī*.

16 The last two sentences go back to al-Fārābī (*KII* fols. 59b–60a; *N-KII* 131–132; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 325).

17 The *ms* (fol. 151) has *alfāzihi* (its syllable); this is a scribal error that *ZY* 136 copied.

18 Although it seems likely that al-Fārābī borrowed the term *majāz* either from civil engineering, where it means “bridge, way, road, path, alley,” or from rhetoric, where it means “metaphor or loose trope.” It is most interesting that here he uses it in its most literal sense of “moving, transference,” from one cycle to the next, or as a bridge that “allows” (*ajāza*) and facilitates the “moving, passing, crossing or traversing” (*jāza* or *jawaza*) from point A to point B, that is, from one bar to the next (*KMK* 1018; *MA* ii, 38; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 201).

19 Two versions of the refrain of *Samā'ī Kūrdeyli Hījāzkār* of Tātyos Efendi; the top version, lines 1 and 2, are plain, the second version, lines 3 and 4, are ornamented with attacks of passage and support. In this example, music indeed follows poetry with two bars being similar to a verse.

to desire the attack, not to show it, but indicate its location so that people can be aware of it. The *ishmām* | is to show it a little bit by means of a rubbing or a wink or a small light attack.<sup>20</sup> And in general, the greater the length of the pause between the two attacks and the slower [the music], the greater the need to fill the location with some of these lighter attacks.

152

Attacks can be doubled so that [the duration of] one attack is taken up by two attacks.<sup>21</sup> It is [not] good to double all the attacks in a rhythmic mode, as this leads to less beauty; instead, one should double some and leave others single.

Some attacks can be dropped out from one cycle or from two consecutive ones. The empty place can be filled with the plectrum performing a rubbing or a wink as we have mentioned already,<sup>22</sup> so that the location can be made apparent to the sense [of hearing]. This is what is called *tamkhūr*.<sup>23</sup>

Heavy rhythmic modes can be accelerated (*ḥathth*) and the lights can be held back (*imsāk*) and slowed down (*tartīl*). The disjunctive can be joined | as mentioned before,<sup>24</sup> and the conjunctive can be disjoined by means of dropping out [of attacks], pauses, and hiding some of the attacks.

153



20 Al-Kātib took the levels of *rawm* and *ishmām* the wrong way around by copying al-Fārābī's oversight in *KII* fol. 67a; N-*KII* 144; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 350. In phonology the *ishmām* is weaker than the *rawm*. See fol. 140, p. 100, n. 17.

21 As, for example, when a half note is replaced by two quarter notes.

22 See fols. 140–141, p. 101.

23 The *tamkhūr* has many meanings: in the heavy rhythmic modes it involves doubling and not dropping out; in the medium and light meters it involves dropping out. In *KI* it involves a very interesting performance technique, namely, a decrease in the plucking of strings when playing the lute; this gives the impression of dropped out attacks (see more details, fol. 180, p. 136).

24 Al-Kātib explained this on fols. 151–152, pp. 110–111; in essence, it is adding attacks of passage or support, or filling the durations between attacks with soft attacks, rubbings, winks, desires, and scents. Rubbings refer to the degree of softness, it is the practitioners' term for a moderate or weak attack.

Sh. 143 In general, the rhythm is the temporal division of a melody by means of attacks, I mean the prolongation of the measured vocal melody [divided] by means of attacks (*maddat al-ṣawt al-munaghgham bi-naqarāt*),<sup>25</sup> | either too many or too few. Many [added] attacks are possible in rhythmic modes with long durations, I mean the slow and heavy ones; lesser attacks are not feasible, but are feasible in rhythmic modes that are short and fast. The lighter the attacks the greater their number in the long durations.

Kh. 95 The clear and strong attacks are the loudest ones; one can figure out their numbers and comprehend them. The weak attacks and those played in a quasi-imperceptible way (*mukhtalisa*)<sup>26</sup> are soft and [so it is] difficult to figure out their numbers when listening to them and attempting to comprehend them. The strong and the weak are sometimes mixed together in a melody and sometimes not. | When the melody is made up of many light attacks, then the melody will be easy and plain (*mursal*) and connected (*muttaṣil*);<sup>27</sup> when made up of heavy ones only, then | the melody can be slowly chanted (*murattal*) and [then it is] beautiful and elegant (*muḥarrar*),<sup>28</sup> the latter is as strong as the former is weak. I can compare them to two types of handwriting, the accurate and elegant (*muḥarrar*) and the easy and plain (*mursal*) one.<sup>29</sup> The *mursal* is without beauty, has faults, and allows for indulgence and excess, whereas the *muḥarrar* always consists of excellence and achievement.

154

Sh. 144 The multiplicity of light attacks or their absence between attacks depends on the ability and strength of the player, his technical skills (*takhalluṣ*),<sup>30</sup> the lightness and speed of his hand or [it depends] on the heaviness and slowness of his hand.<sup>31</sup> | For these reasons, the rhythmic modes appears differently when heard; [I mean] one and the same rhythmic mode might be heard once with

25 This can also refer to the poem set to measured music.

26 The MS, fol. 153, has *munṭaliya* (filled, full); Shiloah (Sh. 143) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 137) have the same; Kh. 94 edited it to *mukhtalisa* (played in a quasi-imperceptible way) which makes more sense.

27 *Mursal* also means calm and without many melodic jumps. See KA ix, 247; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 78–79; Sawa, *Encompasser* 88. *Muttaṣil* means connected; the connection is due to the fact that the attacks are light and thus close to one another.

28 In calligraphy, *muḥarrar* is a type of writing that is accurate, beautiful, elegant, free from defects, with its characters properly formed, its faults corrected, and without omission or erasure (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* ii, 538).

29 For a similar passage comparing music to calligraphy, see Ibn al-Ṭahhān, *Hāwī* fol. 13b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 32.

30 Lit., “freedom” in the sense that the player is free of technical difficulties and has mastered his instrument.

31 A similar and shorter sentence occurs in al-Fārābī (KMK 447; MA i, 152; KI fol. 161a; N-KI 204; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 135, 246).

the addition of an attack or attacks, or once with the subtraction of an attack or attacks. Its shape differs in a variety of ways, so it becomes ambiguous such that one would think that it has completely faded away from its origin;<sup>32</sup> the changes are sometimes due to an alteration in the number of attacks, and sometimes due to the alteration of the length | or shortness of the durations.<sup>33</sup> These two aspects are the reason rhythmic modes differ from one another.

155

A person looking into my book *al-Muqni‘ fī l-nagham wa-l-īqā‘* (The convincing [book] about notes, melodic modes and rhythmic modes) will find examples of types of rhythmic modes (*īqā‘āt*);<sup>34</sup> he may choose what he wants, in his rhythmic modes and melodies, that is, if he is a clever instrumentalist. In this way he can exceed other instrumentalists and effortlessly put them to shame.

There are two types of rhythmic modes: the simple and the compound. The simple is the one [that is] not combined with another of a different genus. The compound is the one that combines two different genera, as, for example, one cycle from a particular genus combined with one from a different genus, as in a first heavy appended to *ramal* or the like.<sup>35</sup>

The rhythmic modes used by the Arab[ic speaking people] are seven: the *ramal*, the first heavy, | the second heavy, and each has a respective light,<sup>36</sup> then

Kh. 96

156

32 Al-Fārābī clearly warned that doubling the attacks of rhythmic modes in the light heavy category would pull them out of their genus and into the light category. To remedy this, he suggested that the added attacks be played with stealth, i.e., rubbing, wink, weak attacks (*KI* fols. 66b, 70a, 74a; *N-KII* 144, 149, 156, 349, 361, 379).

33 The latter case involves the change in tempo. In addition to this, al-Fārābī mentioned that the meters (*īqā‘āt*) differ from one another according to the size of the inner durations and the total duration of each cycle. The latter was well articulated in *KI* and *KII*. In *KI*: “The genera of disjunctive *īqā‘āt* differ from one another, either according to the greatness or smallness of the whole durational length of the cycles, or according to the size of the temporal parts that make up the whole duration of the cycle. It is by these that the genera of disjunctive *īqā‘āt* differ” (*KI* fol. 161b; *N-KI* 204–205; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 248). In *KII*: “The various genera of *īqā‘āt* differ first in regard to the number of time units (beats) in each of their cycles, and second in regard to the length or shortness of the time unit in each one of their cycles” (*KII* fol. 60b; *N-KII* 133; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 327).

34 A copyist’s error has *alifāt* instead of *īqā‘āt*.

35 Earlier, al-Fārābī mentioned combining two different rhythmic modes, as, for example, a  $3/8$  and a  $4/8$ , or a  $5/8$  and a  $7/8$ , or a  $7/8$  and a  $4/8$  (*KMK* 475; *KII* fols. 76a, 78a; *N-KII* 160, 167; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 153, 387, 404–405). This is different from compounding parts in a rhythmic mode to create longer modes (*KMK* 1013; *MA* ii, 36; *KI* fol. 161b; *N-KI* 206; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 193, 198, 250–251). Later on, fol. 162, p. 120, compound means two cycles of the same rhythmic modes with differing variations.

36 Shiloah made an important remark, namely that the light heavy modes are mentioned in passing but are not defined, as is customary (Sh. 147 n. 4).

the *hazaj*, which is a light rhythmic mode but without its own light [i.e., a light *hazaj*], but it could be made heavier or lighter.<sup>37</sup>

The *ramal* is made up of six attacks at its maximum, and four at its minimum, which is the basic form.<sup>38</sup> When doubled, the maximum number of attacks is twelve, and the minimum is eight. If some attacks are left single and some doubled, then the maximum [?],<sup>39</sup> this happens when one attack is doubled and another is not, they will not look like the first six single attacks because the two sets have different durations, some [are] longer, and some [are] shorter. The different one also consists of two cycles.<sup>40</sup>

157 The first heavy is made up of eight attacks at its maximum, and six at its minimum, which is the basic form.<sup>41</sup> When doubled, the maximum number of attacks is sixteen, and the least is twelve.<sup>42</sup> | This rhythmic mode [of two cycles] can be four attacks followed by four but it is not liked because the quiddity of this rhythm fades away.<sup>43</sup>

37 Al-Kâtib is wrong here because there is a light *hazaj* (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 33–34, 56, 59, 66, 69). At the end of the sentence al-Kâtib clearly contradicts himself. About making the *hazaj* heavy or lightening it, al-Fārābī delineated four types: fast *hazaj*, light *hazaj*, light heavy *hazaj*, and heavy *hazaj* (*KMK* 450–452; *MA* i, 153; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 138–139).

38 That is,  $3/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of passage) plus  $3/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of support); the two cycles combined make up six attacks. When the attacks of passage and support are not added, we get the basic form of the rhythmic mode, and the two cycles make up four attacks:  $3/2$  | ♪ ◦ | ♪ ◦ | (*KII* fol. 64a; *N-KII* 139; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 339–340). This section, which defines the modes in their basic and altered forms, comes from *KII*, where al-Fārābī brought in the concept of the *īqāʿ* as a meter and not a rhythmic mode; the attempts of Shiloah and Khashaba to transcribe them using the modal theories of prior and later theorists were thus all fruitless (Kh. 96–103; Sh. 145–148).

39 The ms (fol. 156) has *bayt* which al-Fārābī sometimes uses synonymously with the *īqāʿ*, with the understanding that the *īqāʿ* is made up of two cycles (*dawr*) in the same way that a verse is made up of two hemistiches. This sentence makes no sense, and it is possible that there is a lacuna here. Khashaba (Kh. 97) edited *bayt* to *sitt* (six), which also makes no sense.

40 Al-Kâtib is trying to say that the altered *ramal* looks different from the basic *ramal*.

41 That is,  $4/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of passage) plus  $4/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of support). When the attacks of passage and support are not added, it is the basic form of the rhythmic mode, and the two cycles produce six attacks:  $4/2$  | ♪ ♪ ◦ | ♪ ♪ ◦ | (*KII* fol. 67b; *N-KII* 145–146; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 352–353).

42 The ms (fol. 156) wrongly has eight, copying the minimum of the doubled attacks of the *ramal*. This is then followed by a nonsensical sentence: “eight, when each attack in each cycle is doubled and the rest are left as single.”

43 This happens when dropping out the second attacks of the basic form:  $4/2$  | ♪ ♪ ◦ | ♪ ♪ ◦ | becomes  $4/2$  | ◦ ◦ | ◦ ◦ |.

The second heavy is made up of ten attacks at its maximum, and eight at its minimum, which is the basic form;<sup>44</sup> [a further minimum] is six when an attack is dropped out of each cycle.<sup>45</sup> | When doubled, the maximum number of attacks is twenty, and the minimum is sixteen.<sup>46</sup> Doubling can also involve the second attack in every cycle, or the third or the fourth, or two attacks doubled in both cycles or two in the first cycle and only one in the second cycle. These result in heterogeneity or homogeneity between cycles.

Kh. 99

Kh. 100

In all these rhythmic modes, too much doubling lacks beauty. Each one of them can undergo many variations; enumerating all of them is difficult.<sup>47</sup> In our era, the rhythmic mode in use | is the *mustahadd*;<sup>48</sup> some of it is unknown to many people.

158

The duration of every heavy rhythmic mode is twice (*dif*)<sup>49</sup> that of its light [mode].<sup>50</sup>

Sh. 147

The attacks are of three types: the loud, strong, and resounding (*qawiyya*), the soft (*layyina*), and the moderate (*mutawassita*). The strong is the full one (*mushabba'a*), the moderate is the above-mentioned *mustahadda*,<sup>51</sup> and the

44 That is,  $5/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of passage) plus  $5/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of support). When the attacks of passage and support are not added, the result is the basic form of the rhythmic mode; two cycles result in eight attacks:  $5/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (*KII* fol. 71a; *N-KII* 151; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 364–365).

45 For example, if the third attack of the last example is dropped out, the result is  $5/2$  | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |. Incidentally, this is the modal way of this rhythmic mode and it is the one that Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī defined (*KII* fol. 72a; *N-KII* 153; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 368).

46 The MS (fol. 157) wrongly has ten which is the maximum without doubling! As in the example of the *ramal*, it is then followed by a nonsensical phrase: “ten, when each attack in each cycle is doubled and the rest are left as single.”

47 This echoes al-Fārābī, who considered them limitless (*KMK* fol. 1022; *MA* ii, 40; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 207).

48 Shiloah read it as *mustahabb* (liked, best) and suggested that it could also be *mutajād* (good) (Sh. 146 n. 3). Unfortunately, al-Kātib does not define this term. A paragraph later he relates it to the moderate attack, a dynamic and timbral quality, adding more mystery to the term (see n. 51 below).

49 Shiloah translated it correctly as “twice” but also added “weak” to it (Sh. 147).

50 Al-Fārābī adds to this statement, namely, by stating that each durational part (i.e., beat) of the light heavy is twice that of the light, and each durational part of the heavy is four times that of the light (*KI* fol. 166a; *N-KI* 229; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 309). This makes sense when the rhythmic modes are defined in their metrical aspects and not the modal one; this fact led Shiloah, who did not use *KI*, to say that the sentence is not clear (Sh. 147 n. 2).

51 *Mustahadd* literally means to sharpen a knife or the like with a stone or file (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* ii, 524–525). Transferring this meaning to music, it means that the sound of the moderate attack is of a higher pitch, short, and not resounding; in this respect it fits with al-Fārābī’s likening it to a short vowel and not a nunation (see following note).

soft is the one that one desires (*rawm*) or one that gives it a bit of a scent (*ish-mām*).<sup>52</sup>

In measured music, the longest duration a note can take, and which is most used in melodies and generally conforms to practice, is equivalent to the time it takes to utter ten letters, that is, a duration of eight consecutive light attacks followed by a pause. [If the pause is dropped out] we will have, in fact, seven durations because the durations are always one less than the number of attacks, as mentioned previously.<sup>53</sup> If a note is prolonged more than that [and followed by a similar one] then they would lack rhythmic harmony (*ʿṭilāf*). This is the longest duration between the beginning of two consecutive notes, | [the first note taking up the whole duration of a second heavy cycle of  $5/2$  and then followed by a second similar note]. [The duration of the beat in the second heavy is the longest and is equivalent to a half note;] when divided in half it will give rise to the duration [of the beat] in the rhythmic modes in the light heavy category [equivalent to a quarter note]; when the latter is divided by half it will give rise to the duration [of the beat] in the rhythmic modes in the light category [equivalent to an eighth note]; when the latter is divided it will give rise to the utmost | lightness [equivalent to a sixteenth note].<sup>54</sup> This is the duration used in the rhythms specific to playing the lyres (*ṭurq* or *ṭuruq al-maʿāzif*),<sup>55</sup>

52 This paragraph is a shorter version of al-Fārābī's magisterial definitions: "Let us postulate the attacks as belonging to three classes: some are loud, strong, and resounding (*qawīyya*); some are soft (*layyīna*); some are moderate (*mutawassiṭa*). The loud, strong, and resounding resembles nunation (*tanwīn*) in the desinential inflection in the grammar of the Arabic language [as in *un, an, in*]; the moderate resembles the short vowel (*ḥaraka*) added to the letter (*ḥarf*) in their language [as in *u, a, i*]; the soft resembles the scent or the desiring of the vowel" (*KMK* 986; *MA* i, 27; *Sawa, Rhythmic theories* 166–167).

53 From where this paragraph is taken in al-Fārābī, it is not letters but light *sababs* (such as *tan*) and the pause is defined as being close to double the duration that falls between two light *sababs*. Here al-Fārābī alludes to is the duration of the heaviest and longest rhythmic mode, the second heavy in  $5/2$ , that is, five half notes (*KMK* 988–990; *MA* i, 28–29; *Sawa, Rhythmic theories* 172–173).

54 Indeed, the original text without the square brackets is obscure. This is caused by al-Kātib's juxtaposing of two unrelated passages: one from *KMK* and one from *KII*. The passage from *KMK* relates to the duration of the longest and slowest rhythmic cycle, the second heavy in  $5/2$ . The passage from *KII* relates to the duration of the beat in this heavy rhythmic mode and other heavy ones, and is equivalent to a half note; the durations of the beats in the light heavy and light are respectively a quarter note and an eighth note (*KMK* 992–999; *MA* ii, 29–30; *KII* fol. 61a; *N-KII* 133–134; *Sawa, Rhythmic theories* 175–180, 328–329).

55 See p. 72, n. 19, re. fol. 109. *Ṭurq* and *ṭuruq* (from sing. *ṭarq*); *maʿāzif* (sing. *miʿzafa*). The MS has a *ḍamma* (*u*) over the *ṭ* but no vowel marking over the *r*. Shiloah (Sh. 110 n. 3) has *ṭuraq*, but it is more likely *ṭurq* or *ṭuruq*; for their various meanings, see fol. 219, n. 7, p. 171.

the *takrī*,<sup>56</sup> rhythms [used in music for] the shadow play, shadow dance, and puppetry (*turq al-khayāl*),<sup>57</sup> | the kettledrums (*dabdāb*),<sup>58</sup> and the like. As to what is used in melodies [among the fast rhythmic modes] it is the one that is a quarter of the beat in the heavy rhythmic modes [a quarter of the half note is the eighth note].<sup>59</sup>

Sh. 148

The *hazaj* is made up of ten attacks [at its maximum,] five in each cycle, six at its minimum number [three in each cycle] and this occurs | when the second is dropped out together with either the fourth or the third.<sup>60</sup> Dropping out means removing (*ḥadhf*) the attacks. The cycles of the *hazaj* are used in a homogenous or heterogenous way; doubling is not possible in it because of the shortness of its durations,<sup>61</sup> | and will rob it of its beauty. This rhythmic mode was not used very much by the ancient composers, such that Ma'bad composed only one song in it.<sup>62</sup>

Kh. 103

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56 This is also how it appears in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 100a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 248). Literally, it means burping, belching; it is an interesting metaphor as it suggests a quick burst of notes in succession. Al-Kātib, however, does not mention what instrument produces such a sound. Shiloah suggested *taqrī* instead of *takrī* and defined the former as the fast beating of light attacks, but he does not state what instrument produces these attacks (Sh. 147 n. 7). Khashaba edited it as *takrīj*, a derivative of *kurraj* (hobbyhorse dance) and suggested an instrument used for it (Kh. 102 n. 1). *KA* relates the instruments used in the *kurraj*, namely, the drums and loud oboes (*tubūl* and *sumāyāt*) (*KA* xviii, 71–72; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 247–248).

57 Shiloah translated it as an evocation formula (Sh. 147).

58 The related word *dabdaba* (pl. *dabādib*) mean short motions, the sounds of hoofs falling on hard ground, cries, shouts, noises, or clamor, a kind of drum; *dabdāb* (pl. *dabādib*) also mean a drum (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* iii, 842). Farmer is more precise, translating it as kettledrum (*A history* 154, 207–209, 210).

59 The original sentence is faulty; it says, “As to what is used in melodies [among the fast rhythmic modes] it is the ones that use half of half of the first duration, which is the shortest of durations used out of the highest of eight attacks”; the “eight attacks” may be part of a cut up sentence about the minimum number of attacks in the second heavy (fol. 157). Right after it comes the definition of the *hazaj* that should have come earlier after the second heavy; very likely there is a lacuna in the ms.

60 That is, 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of passage) plus 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | (the last one is the attack of support). Here al-Kātib decided to overlook the attacks of passage and support giving 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |, i.e., ten attacks with five in each cycle. Dropping the second and the third attacks results in 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |; dropping the second and the fourth results in 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |, thus, six attacks in the cycles combined. Except for the version in which the second and third are dropped out, the rest is found in *KII* fols. 76a–b; *N-KII* 161; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 389–391.

61 This is from *KI* where al-Fārābī mentions that doing so will lead to attacks in a thundering manner (*KI* fols. 163a–b; *N-KI* 213; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 267).

62 This is not correct, as we know from *KA* that Ḥakam al-Wādī, one of the ancient composers, excelled in composing in the *hazaj* (*KA* v, 230–231; *KA* vi, 283; Sawa, *Musical and*

The remaining heavy rhythmic modes, other than the ones [mentioned above], are not used in melodies in our era.<sup>63</sup> As for the lights, they are used only in the shadow play, shadow dance, and puppetry (*tarāʿiq al-khayāl*), the lyres, the rebec (*rabāb*),<sup>64</sup> dances, and the like. I have mentioned many such topics in my book, the *Muqniʿ*.

As for what Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī mentioned about the rhythmic modes, for each genus (*jins*) he mentioned only one type (*nawʿ*) and one aspect (*wajh*);<sup>65</sup> he thought that [the one type] was all there was [to the rhythmic mode] in practice and all that was possible. But we must not think that what he mentioned is the basic form of the rhythmic modes; this is not the case because he mentioned the basic form of some, whereas he did not mention the basic form of others and instead mentioned their types, [i.e., variations] which included doubling and dropping out. This we have elucidated in the *Muqniʿ*.<sup>66</sup>

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*socio-cultural anecdotes* 97–98). In addition, according to one narration, one of the three best songs was by Ibn Surayj in the *hazaj* rhythmic mode (KA i, 8).

- 63 Unfortunately, al-Kātib neither mentions their names nor defines them; they appeared in his other book, the *Muqniʿ*, as is clear at the end of this paragraph.
- 64 Shiloah correctly suggested that it is not the *rabāb* but the *dabādīb* for two reasons: the *rabāb* does not fit in this context; and a previous sentence (pp. 116–117) sounds similar to this one, that is, it includes the shadow dance and lyres (Sh. 148 n. 3).
- 65 Types and aspects are the variations of the basic form of the rhythmic mode. This paragraph is a summary of al-Fārābī's commentary of Iṣḥāq's theory (KII fols. 79b–81b; N-KII 168–171; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 409–416).
- 66 Again, it is most unfortunate that this book has not survived; more could have been learned about both rhythms and Iṣḥāq's writings.

## Being in Rhythm

[fols. 161–164; Kh. 104–105; Sh. 149–151; ZY 139]

[Here al-Kātib stresses the importance of being in rhythm in both performance and composition. More importantly, likely being a composer himself, he explains how a composer sets music to a poem, namely, by starting with the first poetic foot and setting it to a musical division and, if he is satisfied with that, he goes on to the next foot, etc. until the whole verse is composed.<sup>1</sup> Then he goes to the process of trial and error to fine-tune the melody, a process encountered in KA.]

By “entering” in rhythm, [we] mean being in its temporal measure and [in sync with] the number of its attacks; “exiting” the rhythm [being off rhythm] is to be off [the measure and the number of attacks]. The vocal notes must be in sync with the rhythmic mode, they should be measured with the attacks of the rhythm so that the motions of the rhythms correspond to the motions of the vocal notes, and likewise, silences correspond to silences.<sup>2</sup> When they come together in time and break in time, then this is called “entering” in rhythm; not being together in time is “exiting,” misfitting, and temporal disharmony. One should look carefully into the rhythms and their cycles, as they should come together in time in the cadences (end of sections or end of melodies or end of the second cycle) in a symmetrical and similar manner; they should also come together in time | with regard to the long and short notes; the last poetic foot of the first hemistiches (*fawāṣil*, sing. *fāṣila*) and the last poetic foot of the second hemistiches (*maqāṭiʿ*, sing. *maqṭaʿ*) should also be measured and properly calibrated with the rhythmic cycles, | and should follow in pairs;<sup>3</sup> cutting off (*maqṭaʿ*) the song should fall on the last note of the second cycle.<sup>4</sup>

161; Kh.  
104; Sh.  
149;  
ZY 139

162  
Sh. 150

1 Lit., “entering in rhythm.”

2 See the example of the song *Yā Ghazālī*, n. 7, p. 74.

3 It means the poetic foot of the first hemistich, then the poetic foot of the second hemistich, then the poetic foot of the first hemistich of the next verse, then the poetic foot of the second hemistich of the next verse, etc.

4 Sometimes al-Fārābī refers to the end of the verse as *nihāyat al-bayt* or *maqṭaʿ al-bayt*, which also means the end of the second musical cycle (KII fol. 68a; N-KII 146; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 352–353).

A compound (*murakkab*) rhythmic mode is one whose two cycles are different; [if] they are similar, then the mode is not compound.<sup>5</sup> The *maqta'* should also be set at [the end of] each set of two cycles and remain the same [for the rest of the melody].<sup>6</sup> This occurs mainly in compound cycles made up of two different cycles; one should contemplate this in such compound rhythms, as they are amazing.

Kh. 105 The composer should begin to compose his melody [by first] determining  
163 what rhythmic mode he will use, being cognizant of its measure and duration, I mean its duration and whether it is slow, fast, or medium, and maintain its fundamental form (*'amūd*)<sup>7</sup> and set its rhythmic part [by tapping it] | against the first foot of the verse until he masters it.<sup>8</sup> He may then proceed to the next poetic foot and concentrate on | setting it correctly into that rhythmic mode and its measure and to notes that come to his imagination and which belong to a particular melodic mode (*išba'*).<sup>9</sup> If the hemistich is musically finalized

5 Here compound does not mean two different rhythmic modes juxtaposed (as was the case in fol. 155, p. 113), rather it means the same rhythmic mode with differing variations following one another. This is what al-Fārābī called heterogeneity (*mukhālafā*) (KII fol. 65; N-KII 142; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 345, 478, 612).

6 The *maqta'* could mean the end of the melody or a section thereof, or it could mean the last poetic foot. If it is the end of a section, it would mean the melodic material is the same throughout the song.

7 In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, the word *'amūd* means the basic constituents of the rhythmic mode: "The number of attacks is the basic constituents (*'amūd*) of the rhythmic modes," that is, the basic rhythmic mode before variations are applied (Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 92a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 224). In KA the word *'amūd* means the basic melody without ornamentation: "Ibn Jāmi' used to prepare the highest note (*ṣayḥa*) of the song before composing its basic melody (*'amūd*); [ʿAwn al-ʿIbādī sang a song of his grandfather, Ḥunayn b. Balwa', with a voice that lacked beauty] but he did not stray from the main melody (*'amūd al-ṣawt*) until he finished it" (KA ii, 353; KA vi, 293; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 78, 202). In KA the expression *'amūd ṭarīqa* means a melodic mode played in a scalar manner (KA v, 353–354; Sawa, *Encompasser* 21, 226).

8 That is, having the musical division (*qisma*) properly set to the poetic foot (*tajzi'a*); see Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 11a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 23.

9 The following example of *Yā ghazālī* (O my gazelle), a classical nineteenth-century song from Aleppo, illustrates this point well. The first measure, in 9/4, is set to the first hemistich *Yā ghazālī kayfa 'annī ab'adūk*, and has the prosodical scheme *fā'ilātun fā'ilātun fā'ilūn*. The composer divided the lyrics as follows: *Yā ghazālī = fā'ilātun; kayfa 'annī = fā'ilātun; ab'adūk = fā'ilūn*. Then he musically divided the 9/4 into three sets of 3/4: the first set is "married or clothed" to *Yā ghazālī = fā'ilātun*; the second set is *kayfa 'annī = fā'ilātun*; and the third set is *ab'adūk = fā'ilūn*. Note that, in the Arab world, in classical song compositions (*muwashshaḥāt*) the medieval setting of poetic divisions to musical ones survived up to the beginning of the twentieth century; it was then gradually replaced by a freer style of setting lyrics to music.

(*istawā*),<sup>10</sup> then he listens to it and tests it (*dhāqa*);<sup>11</sup> if he finds it pleasant, [and finds that it] flows with ease and [is] natural in this rhythmic mode, then he puts the final touches to it and releases it. If not, then he resorts to other variations (*gharāʿib*)<sup>12</sup> of the rhythmic mode; if its measure works out properly then he goes back to the notes [already composed, i.e., pitch-wise,] follows them, replaces whatever he likes with what is more pleasant, stronger, and more harmonious with one another such that it is ordered according to what is necessary (*yajibu*)<sup>13</sup> to reach a composition according to his talent and knowledge.

Talent sometimes hits the mark and sometimes fails, but knowledge never fails because it is based on known laws and a well-established order. So if the talent is perfect and follows the rules, then the talent adds other [positive] aspects to the laws. The composer keeps doing this until | he is delirious and raves about his melody; with further practicing and performing it, repeating and revising it, | evaluating it many times, the melody then gains more beauty and excellence.<sup>14</sup> The melody becomes clearer with such repetitions and revisions; it is better when heard from the shackles at its end [?], lightened in such a way that the characters agree with it.<sup>15</sup> If he could examine it with the help of the lute, that is better.<sup>16</sup> If this is not possible, then he could show it to someone whose taste he trusts and who is a music connoisseur and, if not, a practicing musician.

Sh. 151

164

Yā gha - zā - li // kay - fa 'an - nī // ab - 'a - dūk  
Fā - 'i - lā - tun // fā - 'i - lā - tun // fā - 'i - lūn

(dumm) (takk)

10 Lit., “straightened up.”

11 Lit., “tastes it.”

12 Khashaba (Kh. 105) edited it as *qarāʿib* (relatives of, variations of); Shiloah (Sh. 150) also has variations. This means that if a variation does not work, then the musician moves to another one that may work.

13 Khashaba (Kh. 105) edited it as *yuhibbu* (likes).

14 This is corroborated in an anecdote in *KA* ii, 365; *KA* v, 172, 220; *KA* vii, 88–89; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 76–78.

15 This is an obscure sentence, Shiloah also found it problematic and suggested the following, with reservations: “It would become clearer by applying [repetitions and revisions] to it and will become easier to hear in his last achievement in a way that the natures could agree with it” (Sh. 151).

16 See *KA* v, 172, 236–237; *KA* xxi, 75; *KA* xxii, 52, where a musician uses the lute accompaniment to examine a composed song; see also Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 76–78, 81–82.

## The Theft of Melodies (*al-Sariqāt*)

[fols. 164–169; Kh. 106–108; Sh. 151–154; ZY 139–140]

[This is a shorter version of Ibn al-Ṭahḥān's chapter 19: "The Grand, Medium, and Smaller Composition," and chapter 27: "Tricks Used in Stealing Songs and Precautions to Prevent This" (*Hāwī* fols. 19b, 21a–b, 20a, 31b, 22ba–b, 32a–34a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 50–53, 87–92).<sup>1</sup> There are various ways to use or alter a melody of a song to create a new one: set it without any alteration to a new poem of the same poetic meter as the original; set the melody to a poem of the same poetic meter, but change the rhythmic mode and alter the durations; do the same but also alter the tempo; set the melody to a poem of the same poetic meter, leave the rhythmic mode intact, but change the melodic mode; set the melody to a poem of the same poetic meter, then add or remove notes; set the melody to a poem of a different poetic meter and change the rhythmic mode, add or remove notes, and if it is not possible, then replace the notes. The chapter ends with a paragraph unrelated to the theft of songs, but related to the nobility of attributing its composition to other musicians for fear of social censure.]

164; Kh. The skilled singer can take the melody of a song and transfer it to another poem  
 106; Sh. (*ḍarb*)<sup>2</sup> in various ways, one in which taking the melody is veiled, and one in  
 151; ZY 139 which it is apparent. The veiled [method] is the better one. This is similar to  
 what occurs in poetry, speech, and in treatises that some people appropriate  
 from one another. The original melody is the one that brings pleasure because  
 it is more elegant, likeable, and preferable.

Sh. 152 The singer may take the melody of a song | and set it to another poem that  
 165 has the same poetic meter as the original; this is the easiest way;<sup>3</sup> [or] he keeps

1 Shiloah translates it as the kinder and gentler "borrowing" (*emprunt*) (Sh. 151), but the Arabic word is unequivocally theft. Shiloah is justified in using the term "borrowing," as we learn in this chapter that the melody can be taken intact or altered.

2 The word *ḍarb* has many meanings: playing, plucking, instrumental piece or exercise, playing technique or style or ornament, instrumental performance, instrumental rendition of a song, instrumental accompaniment (Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes*, 386–387). Here the context clearly indicates yet another meaning: a poem that is to be set to music.

3 Ibn al-Ṭahḥān calls it the smaller composition and agrees with al-Kātib saying that it is the least exacting (*Hāwī* fols. 20a, 21b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 52–53). Ibn al-Ṭahḥān provides more

the original melody but changes its rhythmic mode.<sup>4</sup> Or he changes a fret to another one but leaves the rhythmic mode intact; in this manner the notes change and the [new] melody hides its origin [a little bit] more than in the previous case, and the melodic mode (*nawʿ*) is altered; for example, it is in the *mazmūm* melodic mode then is altered into the *maḥṣūr* melodic mode, or other modes. [Changing the rhythmic mode] is not easily done in every melody; it is possible in some and difficult in others. To make sure this is possible,<sup>5</sup> the composer should contemplate all the notes in the melody, and not alter the notes but change their durations by adding or curtailing the durations a bit<sup>6</sup> in the whole melody or in sections of it.

One can also change notes from one melodic mode to another by either flattening or sharpening [them]. It is also possible that notes can be added | to alter the melody, or some notes can be removed so that the original melody is unrecognizable. | If the singer goes a step further to look into | transferring the notes of a melody into a poem of a different poetic meter as well as altering the rhythmic mode, then the original melody will be unrecognizable. If he adds or removes notes, that is even better; if the addition and removal are not possible, then he can resort to replacing notes. In these various alterations, one can set the same poem to music in different rhythmic modes and different melodies.<sup>7</sup>

166

ZY 106  
Kh. 107

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detail: he explains how it is done, namely, by setting the poetic divisions of the new poem to the musical division of the original one; he also explains the reasons for using this easy type of composition: to steal and play a trick on a rival, or because the composer did not have enough time to compose a completely new song.

- 4 Shiloh gives a literal translation of the text, that is, without the addition of “[or],” namely, the melody is unchanged but the rhythm is changed. As it is the easiest type of composing, as stated by both al-Kātib and Ibn al-Ṭahḥān, then it cannot change the rhythm because that would make it more difficult. There are amusing examples in the *KA* in which the musician indeed changes the rhythmic mode, rhythmically altering the melody and setting it to a new poem: a song of Ishāq in the *ramal* rhythmic mode was altered by Mukhāriq into the first light heavy rhythmic mode (*KA* v, 366; *KA* xxii, 302–303); a song by al-Abjar in the first heavy rhythmic mode was altered by Ishāq into the second heavy rhythmic mode (*KA* i, 60, 253); Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 64–65, 87.
- 5 The ms has a copyist’s error here; it says “not possible” fol. 165; Khashaba (Kh. 106) and Zakariyyā Yūsuf (ZY 139) did not notice it.
- 6 The text is ambiguous; it may also mean adding or removing a few notes, not their durations.
- 7 This is amply demonstrated in *KA*, see for instance, *KA* ii, 238; *KA* vi, 239; *KA* ix, 153–154, 248; *KA* xviii, 308–309; *KA* xx, 298; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 110–114. Ibn al-Ṭahḥān details more techniques, such as changing the locations of high and low notes; changing the melodic movement; using different ornaments; controlling the sections and cadences to fit the change; altering the musical divisions to fit the new poem (Ibn al-Ṭahḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 21b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 52). Al-Kātib adds the replacement of notes and the change in durations and tempi.

Sh. 153 Ishāq al-Mawṣili said:

If one of two competing composers is more skillful than the other, and the latter sang a song which the more skillful worried that he could not match, but knew that it could be altered successfully into another rhythmic mode, then he alters it [and sings it]; if he is unable to alter the rhythm, then he would alter the tempo from fast (*ḥathth*) to slow (*ḥabs*)<sup>8</sup> or from slow to fast and sing it.

In my opinion, this will not go unnoticed by animals, let alone to humans.<sup>9</sup> [Ishāq] also said:

167 If he wishes, he can change both the rhythmic modes | and the tempi (*aqdār*),<sup>10</sup> he can speed [it] up in some places and slow [it] down in other places, making it at times heavier and at times lighter, changing it to *ramal* at times, and *hazaj* at other. If he does this, he will win over his friend.

This statement from Ishāq made people act irresponsibly in these matters because it came from him.

I find his statement—that one can change both the rhythmic modes and the tempi at the same time—difficult to execute. If one does it, he will be accused of foolishness and delirium. Ishāq made a mistake and kept repeating it, and in addition he did not mention the changes that affect the rhythmic modes.<sup>11</sup>

8 The ms has *jins*, which means rhythmic mode, but it makes no sense here. Al-Kātib very likely copied the copyists' mistake from al-Fārābī's MSS, which have *jins* instead of the more fitting word *ḥabs* (holding back). D'Erlanger (*MA* ii, 31) correctly read it as *ḥabs* (*posé*); see also Sawa, *Rhythmic theories*, 179–180.

9 Altering the tempo is hardly a change that will go unnoticed by anyone!

10 *Aqdār* (sing. *qadr*) means duration; it does not mean that some durations are longer or shorter, but that the durations are uniformly longer or shorter in the song, i.e., it is a change in tempo. This becomes clear in the next sentence where the statement says speeding up or slowing down.

11 Al-Kātib erred in his attack on Ishāq here. One can certainly go from *ramal* (a 3/2 rhythmic mode) to a *hazaj* (a 6/8 rhythmic mode) and change the tempo at the same time: one can play the 3/2 in a slow tempo and the 6/8 in a fast one. Similarly, al-Kātib erred when he said that Ishāq did not mention the changes that affect the rhythmic modes; al-Kātib's sentence is in the wrong place, because in this passage Ishāq did not mean a variation affecting a particular rhythmic mode, but a change from one mode to another. However, al-Kātib is correct—copying al-Fārābī—that Ishāq did not mention the changes that affect the rhythmic modes; in his writings Ishāq only gave one version of a rhythmic mode and did not tackle the variations, see fol. 160, p. 118.

Sometime a skillful musician can use subtle means to alter some melodies from their original mode/style and, as a result, the melodies will be better and more pleasant. He can do so by going through various melodies and getting to know the style of every composer, [he then alters them to suit his taste], for it is likely that each composer is unique in his style, excels in it, and is known by it. | The skilled and intelligent listener will be able to figure out the identity of the composer by recognizing his style. Similarly, the skilled listener will be able to know that some melodies are modern, [he will know] from where they derived [stylistically] and know the way they were composed. [In this respect] I witnessed a singer who sang:

Have I not perhaps exhausted my riding animals for you  
And overburdened them crossing through the waterless desert though  
they were limping

I had not heard this song before and the listeners liked it. I was asked about it, so I said it is fine but | it was a modern melody. We asked about it and we knew that it was composed by the singer himself; such a style cannot go unnoticed by [an expert like me] to whom the song was sung.

It was related that ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir al-Muṣ‘abī<sup>12</sup> [182–230/798–844]—a very skillful composer—attributed a song he had composed for Mālik b. Abī l-Samḥ [d. ca. 136/754].<sup>13</sup> A number of singers learned it and thought it was Mālik’s composition, until one day it was sung before [the caliph] al-Ma’mūn while ‘Abdallāh and Ishāq were present. It was mentioned that it was Mālik’s song, | but ‘Abdallāh told Ishāq that it was his. Ishāq checked Mālik’s song collection but could not find it. Ishāq was very impressed with ‘Abdallāh’s skill and style. The song is:

O Banū Jarm, have you not given a drink to your prisoner  
I will ransom myself for you from those who have a burning thirst for  
revenge.

12 He was the governor of Egypt and then Khurasān under al-Ma’mūn and al-Mu‘taṣim. He was a patron, a man of letters, a poet, and a musician (Kilpatrick, *Making* 322).

13 He gave his song to Mālik because he used to deem himself above the art of singing (KA xii, 111–112; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 366–367). He also attributed his compositions to his slave girl Shāji and to Fulayḥ b. Abī l-‘Awfā’ (KA ix, 40, 122; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 150, 366–367). For more details about the social status of musicians, see Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 336–377.

Whoever can imitate the compositions of such skilled musicians would reach the highest degree and best rank.<sup>14</sup>

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14 This story does not fit well in this chapter because there it does not relate to stealing a song or slightly altering it; rather it is about a matter of attribution.

## The Strings

[fols. 169–175; Kh. 109–111; Sh. 155–159; ZY 140–141]

[In this chapter al-Kātib explains the acoustical reasons for high and low pitches, the number of strings used and the ratio of their lengths. The opening paragraph of this chapter is similar to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s part 2, chapter 5: “The Strings, Their Characters, Names, Choosing [Them], and Stringing Them on the Lute” (*Hāwī* fols. 89b–91b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 217–220). Al-Kātib adds more detail than Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān about tuning and the mathematical ratios between the notes and the consonances (unison, octave, fifth, and fourth). On the other hand, Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān adds interesting detail about stringing the lute.]

Compactly twisted (*mustaḥṣafa*) strings cause acuity (*ḥidda*) and the less dense (*mutakhallil*) [strings] cause a lower sound (*līn*).<sup>1</sup> The thin (*raqīq*)<sup>2</sup> strings cause acuity and speed, I mean the speed of the motion [of vibrating strings]; the thick [strings] cause a lower [frequency] and slower speed [of the vibrating strings]. The former penetrates the ear and pierces the air, and, in the case of the latter, the thickness of the body [of the strings] and their slow motions<sup>3</sup> [do not allow speed and penetration]. Since the notes have high (*ḥādd*) and low (*thaqīl*) pitches—by high we mean light (*khafīf*), and by soft (*layyin*)<sup>4</sup> we mean heavy—|these result from solid (*ṣulb*) and soft (*layyin*) [strings], fast (*sarī*) [and slow (*batī*) vibrations], so they made strings for them to relate to and resemble (*ḥakā*) so as to be complete and fulfill all the notes, and thus be more brilliant and more perfect.

169; Kh.  
109; Sh.  
155;  
ZY 140

170

The matter is not what Ishāq and his followers have said; he thought that two strings<sup>5</sup> [third and fourth strings] have enough notes so that one has no need for other strings. He forgot, but really did not know, that the five strings were set up to cover all the notes a human can sing.<sup>6</sup> | [the high and the low notes]

Sh. 156

1 Lit., “softness.” Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān adds an important detail here, namely, that the silk and gut strings, respectively, cause the high and low sounds (*Hāwī* fol. 89b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 217).

2 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has the synonymous *daqīq* (*Hāwī* fol. 89b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 217).

3 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has the synonymous expression “heaviness of their motions” (*Hāwī* fol. 90a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 217).

4 Soft (*layyin*) is the equivalent of low (*thaqīl*) above.

5 Al-Kātib wrongly has “one string,” in fact, they are two strings, see n. 6 below.

6 This relates to a passage in Ibn al-Munajjim in which he quotes Ishāq as saying that there are

by means of thin and thick [strings], and solid and soft [strings]; this leads to the supreme perfection.

According to the scholars there are five strings; they arranged them—agreed among themselves—to extract [them] and represent all natural and human notes. The fifth string is similar in its tuning and proportion to others strings, and is fretted similarly.<sup>7</sup> It has a beautiful and wondrous position in the lute: it helps complete the melodies, improves instrumental performance, and increases the number of notes thereby reaching the full range [of the double octave].<sup>8</sup> | Many musicians disliked the addition of the fifth string because of their lack of skill and their inclination toward simplification and reduction, and they dispensed one thing for another.<sup>9</sup> They added here, and removed there, until they limited them to four strings and four frets in their lutes. This is the original [tone system] that the ancients knew.<sup>10</sup> Other people increased the frets by using the complete set of frets,<sup>11</sup> thus by adding more; they also added | strings so that each is not [produced by] a double but by a triple string; | the purpose is to amplify the sound. But, in general, the middle road is what we have mentioned above [i.e., double strings].

If the strings are tuned in the usual way [i.e., in perfect fourths], then the note from the open first string [G<sub>1</sub>] will be an octave lower than the index fin-

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ten notes in use, and that they are extracted from the third and fourth strings. Of course, Iṣḥāq was aware that they had their replica at the lower octave, except for the open third string note, which does not have an equivalent an octave lower (*Risāla* 17–18).

- 7 This means it is tuned a perfect fourth higher than the previous strings, and the ratio of its thickness follows that of the other strings (see below).
- 8 The first four strings give notes from G<sub>1</sub> to E flat 2; the fifth string gives E flat 2 to G<sub>3</sub>. In short, the five strings give the double octave G<sub>1</sub> to G<sub>3</sub>. However, in Ibn al-Munajjim, the purpose was not to achieve the double octave but to reach E<sub>2</sub>, which is the tenth note in the gamut of Arabic music (*Risāla* 18).
- 9 This means they used another way to obtain the E<sub>2</sub>. This is clarified by Ibn Munajjim (*Risāla* 18) who mentions that some musicians disliked adding a fifth string just to obtain one extra note (i.e., E<sub>2</sub>). They resorted to finding E<sub>2</sub> below the E flat 2 fret on the fourth string, or they chose to find it an octave lower, as E<sub>1</sub>, that is, from the ring finger of the second string.
- 10 He alluded to the tone system of Ibn al-Munajjim, which is quite reductive. The four frets are the index, middle, ring, and little fingers giving the following notes, if the open string is G: A at 204 cents from the open string; B flat at 294 cents from the open string; B at 408 cents from the open string; C at 498 cents from the open string. The system overlooks the three other middle fingers: the Persian and two Zalzal frets respectively at 302, 318, and 354 cents from the open string. For further details, see the lute charts of al-Fārābī and al-Kātib, pp. 204–205, and Sawa, *Music performance* 75, 79.
- 11 See the lute charts of al-Fārābī and al-Kātib, pp. 204–205, and Sawa, *Music performance* 79.

ger fret of the third string [G<sub>2</sub>],<sup>12</sup> the ratios [of their length] will be 2/1, that is, a double.<sup>13</sup> The note of [the index finger fret of the third string {G<sub>2</sub>}] will be double [the length] of the ring finger fret of the fifth string [G<sub>3</sub>], called *al-ḥādd*. The ratio of the notes between the two extreme strings [highest and lowest] | will be 4/1,<sup>14</sup> that is, a quadruple. The note of each open string will be equal to a time and one-third of the next string [4/3], | that is, like the half and quarter [of the preceding string,<sup>15</sup> i.e., ¾], the ratio of 4/3 is also the ratio between the open string and its little finger fret.

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Sh. 157

The ratios (*munāsabāt*)<sup>16</sup> between the notes can be equal, such as between the little finger of a string and the open string that follows it [1/1]. Or it can be double, such as between the index finger fret of the first string [A<sub>1</sub>] and the ring finger fret of the third string [A<sub>2</sub>], or the index finger fret of the second string [D<sub>1</sub>] and the ring finger of the fourth string [D<sub>2</sub>], or the index finger of the third string [G<sub>2</sub>] and the ring finger of the fifth string [G<sub>3</sub>], or the open first string [G<sub>1</sub>] and the index finger fret of the third string [G<sub>2</sub>], or the open second string [C<sub>1</sub>] and the index finger fret of the fourth string [C<sub>2</sub>], or the open third string [F<sub>1</sub>] and the index finger fret of the fifth string [F<sub>2</sub>], or the Persian middle finger fret of the first string [B flat 1] and the little finger fret of the third string and the open fourth string [B flat 2], or the Persian middle finger fret of the second string [E flat 1] and the little finger fret of the fourth string and the open fifth string [E flat 2], or the Zalzal middle finger of the first string [B<sub>1</sub> Z 354 cents] and the first anterior of the fourth string [B<sub>2</sub> Z 1554 – 1200 = 354 cents],<sup>17</sup> or the Zalzal middle finger fret of the third string [A<sub>2</sub> Z (1350 – 1200 = 150 cents)] and the second<sup>18</sup> anterior | of the first string [A<sub>1</sub> Z 150 cents], or [the Zalzal middle

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12 Al-Tifāshī calls this tuning the *mazmūm* (*Mut'a*, ed. al-Sillāmī, 133).

13 To understand the ratios in this paragraph one has to think (hypothetically) of the first string being stopped in its middle; this gives the octave and the ratio of 2/1, where 2 represents the full length of the first string and 1 represents its half, which coincides with the index finger fret of the third string. Similarly, if the first string is stopped at its quarter, this gives the double octave and the ratio of 4/1, where 4 represents the full length of the first string and 1 represents its quarter, which coincides with the ring finger fret of the fifth string.

14 MS (fol. 172) and Khashaba (Kh. 110) have ¼.

15 Shiloah (Sh. 157) adds “third string,” which is not in the MS.

16 The MS (fol. 172) wrongly has *sabbābāt* (index fingers). This passage, as correctly noted by Shiloah (Sh. 157 n. 2), is quite confused; I have been able to correct the confusion by referring to the lute chart I made for al-Kātib's frets.

17 There is no fret on the fourth string to give 354 cents, so it is between the open string (294 cents) and the first anterior (392 cents) and not the second anterior, as the MS and Shiloah (Sh. 157) state.

18 MS (fol. 172) and Shiloah (Sh. 157) have “first.”

finger fret] of the fourth string<sup>19</sup> [D<sub>2</sub> Z (1848 – 1200 = 648 cents)] and the second anterior of the second string<sup>20</sup> [D<sub>1</sub> Z 648 cents].<sup>21</sup> All of these are called the most perfect consonances.

Or the ratios can be one and one-half times, such as the note of every open string and the note of the index finger fret of the next string [e.g., the open first string G<sub>1</sub> and the index of the second string D<sub>1</sub>].

The first consonance<sup>22</sup> is called the one and one-third, that is, the perfect fourth, as | we have mentioned before. The second is the octave.<sup>23</sup> | [The third] is the fifth.<sup>24</sup> These are the intervals [of consonant notes].

It has been already established that no animal [or human being] can start with a [first string G<sub>1</sub>] note, and end beyond a note half of half [of its string, G<sub>3</sub>], that is, the note from the ring finger of the fifth string, which is a note half of half of the first string, | or beyond double of the double of the [frequency of the first string]. If one starts at the bottom with the open first string [G<sub>1</sub>] then one needs to set (*naṣb*)<sup>25</sup> a fifth string to obtain half of half [of the first string] or the double of double [of its frequency] [G<sub>2</sub>]; the latter is the higher octave of the octave [*ṣiyāḥ al-ṣiyāḥ*] of the former; the former is the lower octave of the octave [*ṣijāḥ al-sijāḥ*] of the latter.<sup>26</sup> Some practitioners [however] content themselves with four strings and find them sufficient.

19 MS (fol. 173) erroneously has *watar* (string) instead of *zīr* (fourth string).

20 MS (fol. 173) erroneously has “the first anterior of the first string.”

21 Shiloah edited it as the Zalzal middle finger of the fifth string (*ḥādd*) (1146 cents) with the first anterior of the third string (*mathnā*) (1094 cents).

22 This is incorrect because the first consonance is the octave, the second is the fifth, and the third is the fourth.

23 This is followed by an obscure sentence: “[The octave consonance] means the complete string, that is, all the consonant notes, consonants at their extremities, because the ratio here is about the extremities of the notes.”

24 This is again followed by an obscure sentence: “It follows the same ratios.” In al-Fārābī the octave and the double octave are the great consonances; the fourth, octave plus fourth, the fifth, and octave plus fifth are the medium consonances (*KMK* 114–115, 1059–1060; *MA* i, 41; *MA* ii, 50–51; Sawa, *Music performance* 95–97).

25 The MS wrongly has “half (*niṣf*) of the fifth string”; its half will not produce the required half of half, that is, the G<sub>3</sub> note; it will produce the E flat 3. Khashaba (Kh. 111) correctly edited it to *naṣb* (setting) but Shiloah kept the wrong word *niṣf* (half) (Sh. 158).

26 Al-Fārābī gives more detail about the types of *ṣiyāḥ* and *sijāḥ*. There are three types of *ṣiyāḥ*: the higher octave (*al-ṣiyāḥ al-aʿẓam*, meaning the *ṣiyāḥ*), the higher fifth (*ṣiyāḥ awṣaʿ*, meaning medium *ṣiyāḥ*), the higher fourth (*ṣiyāḥ aṣghar*, meaning small *ṣiyāḥ*). There are three types of *sijāḥ*: the lower octave (*al-sijāḥ al-aʿẓam*, meaning the *sijāḥ*), the lower fifth (*sijāḥ awṣaʿ*, meaning medium *sijāḥ*), the lower fourth (*sijāḥ aṣghar*, meaning small *sijāḥ*) (*KMK* 114–115, 505, 517; *MA* i, 41, 169, 174).

There are different tunings, but the most famous and common is the one in which the note from the ring finger of every string is similar to the open string that follows it. One starts with the *bamm* string because it is the first string; it gives the first note, which is also the lowest and most powerful. Some people attribute power to the high notes because of their powerful propagation, but this does not serve our purpose. The one who chose the high notes did so because of the propagation and strength of the sound, whereas the one who relates the powerful sound to the low notes | does so because of the length of their strings. | After tuning the lute in the usual manner, we can go back to the first string and tune it [to F<sub>0</sub>] an octave lower than the third string [F<sub>1</sub>]<sup>27</sup> to suit the modes that use open string melodic modes (*muṭlaqāt*).<sup>28</sup> The idea [behind] adopting this tuning is to strengthen and amplify the notes. It is also possible to tune the first string to the [lower octave (A flat 1) of the] middle finger fret of the third string [A flat 2] to accommodate the melodic modes that use the middle finger fret of the third string as a tonic in the course of the middle finger fret (*maḥmūlāt*). Likewise, we can tune the first string to the [lower octave {A<sub>1</sub>}] for the modes that use the ring finger fret of the third string [A<sub>2</sub>] as a tonic in the course of the ring finger fret (*maḥṣūrāt*),<sup>29</sup> etc., but there is no need to expand further.<sup>30</sup>

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Sh. 159

27 Tuning the first string to be in unison with the third string is problematic; if it is tuned that high it will break the string.

28 This agrees with al-Tifāshī (*Mutʿa*, ed. al-Sillāmī 133).

29 Al-Tifāshī does not have the *maḥmūlāt* and the *maḥṣūrāt*, rather he has the *mujannab* and the *khusruwānī*; the latter two consist of tuning the first string to the E and G flat respectively (al-Tifāshī, *Mutʿa*, ed. al-Sillāmī 133).

30 For a thorough, lengthy discussion of alternative tunings according to al-Fārābī, see *KMK* 597–627; *MA* i, 207–215.

## The Names of the Melodic and Rhythmic Modes (*Tarā'iq*) [fols. 175–184; Kh. 112–117; Sh. 159–165; ZY 141–143, 138]

[This long chapter is very interesting in that it defines the old names of the melodic modes that Iṣḥāq made obsolete with his new terminology.<sup>1</sup> The old names appear sporadically in the sources and are only defined in al-Kātib's work. We learn that the *mazmūm* is related to the index finger, the *maḥmūl* is related to the middle fingers, and the *maḥṣūr* is related to the ring finger. He defines the courses after Iṣḥāq's writings, detailing three types of middle finger frets, the ring and index finger frets, and the lowered index finger fret, and the related suspended mode. He defines the rhythmic modes according to al-Fārābī's *KI*, then he defines the *tamkhīr* from al-Fārābī's *KMK*, *KI*, and *KII*. After this, he defines the heterogeneity and the technical concept of *surayjī*. This chapter is similar to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's part 2, chapter 6: "The Names of the Rhythmic Modes, Their Types, Their Cycles, and Number of Attacks"; part 2, chapter 18: "The Definitions of *al-surayjī*, *al-mākhūrī*, *al-mujannab*, and *al-mukhālīf*" (*Ḥāwī* fols. 91b–92a; 102a–103b; *Encompasser* 221–225; 262–264).]

175; Kh. 112; Sh. 159; ZY 141  
ZY 142  
176  
Sh. 160

There are many differences of opinion among people regarding the modes; they use technical terms that would take too long to explain. Most are related to the fingers, and the rest are related to the finger frets.<sup>2</sup> The most famous and common are those attributed to the four fingers: | the open string (*muṭlaq*) is related to the little finger, the *mazmūm* to the index finger, the *maḥmūl* to the middle finger, either to the first middle finger fret [Persian] | or the second middle finger fret [Zalzal], and the *maḥṣūr* to the ring finger. Each is of a sharper pitch than the one preceding it: | the lowest is the open string and the following ones are gradually ascending pitches.

The open string is thus called because it contains the notes that come out of all the open strings and the ones resembling them. A thing is called according

1 Zakariyyā Yūsuf placed the section on rhythmic modes in chapter 28: "Rhythms and Rhythmic Modes."

2 There are four fingers and five additional frets.

to what it corresponds to, [what] is similar to it, and [what is] close to (*muḡāwir*) [it];<sup>3</sup> for this reason the open string is related to the little finger.<sup>4</sup>

The *mazmūm* is thus called because it corresponds to the first note produced by the first fret that one fastens to the neck; it is stopped by the index finger [A<sub>1</sub>].

The *maḡmūl* is thus called because it resembles something carried between two things, as if it is carried between the little finger fret [C<sub>1</sub>]<sup>5</sup> and the *mazmūm* fret [A<sub>1</sub>]; it is associated with the middle finger fret [B Persian flat or B Zalzal half flat].<sup>6</sup>

The *maḡṣūr* is thus called because it is confined<sup>7</sup> and gives a powerful sound; it is associated with the ring finger fret [B<sub>1</sub>].

Kh. 113

I have seen people calling the two middle fingers the first *maḡmūl* and second *maḡmūl*; they mean the first *maḡmūl* is the first middle finger fret, and the second *maḡmūl* is the second [middle finger fret]. Some also call the ring finger fret | the *maḡmūl*.<sup>8</sup>

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A good way to determine the melodic mode [of a song] is as follows: if the notes of the open string and their similar notes coming out of the little finger are abundant [in a melody], then its melodic mode will be referred to as the one [starting] with the open string [as a tonic]. There is no need to mention the little fingers since the open strings are equivalent to them. | We have followed the language of the practitioners because it makes it easy to understand the modes.<sup>9</sup>

Sh. 161

In our opinion, we see that the index finger fret must be included in all melodic modes and melodies, because it is a constant that does not change. The genera that differentiate the modes are three: the two middle finger frets and the ring finger fret. If the genus uses the ancient middle finger fret [related

3 Lit., “neighboring.”

4 As, for example, the open second string C<sub>1</sub> is the same as the little finger of the first string.

5 The text has the equivalent “open string.”

6 More correctly and precisely, it is between the ring finger fret [B<sub>1</sub>] and the index finger fret [A<sub>1</sub>]. However, Shiloah makes a very important remark: the middle finger frets (B flat Persian and B half flat Zalzal) and the ring finger fret (B) are a variety of thirds in relation to the open string (G) and are all thus “carried” or “between” the index finger fret and little finger fret; these thirds are but a variety within the tetrachord made up of the open string, the index, one of the above thirds, and the little finger fret. For these reasons, even the ring finger fret is considered “carried” between the index finger fret and the little finger fret; to that effect, see the next paragraph.

7 This may mean that the fret is confined between the middle finger fret (B flat and half flat) and the little finger fret.

8 See p. 133, n. 6.

9 This sentence is mistranslated by Shiloah (Sh. 160–161); he says: “In their speech, people confuse the two ways of obtaining these notes because of their [equal] relation[ship].”

to the Persians], then it will be attributed to it; if it uses the ring finger fret, it will likewise be attributed to it. This will obtain when the note in question [that defines the genus] is dominant in the melody;<sup>10</sup> no melody is without one of these three genera. This is similar to the opinion of physicians regarding the senses; they count four and overlook the fifth because it is included in, and similar to, all four. | They keep the sight, hearing, taste, and smell senses but leave out the [sense of] touch because [touch] is common to [all four of them and [is thought] to resemble them.<sup>11</sup> The reason I left the index finger fret in every melodic mode and melody is because it is common and present in all modes. The middle finger frets—Persian and Zalzal—and the ring finger fret are the three courses [and are the variables, whereas the open string, the index and the little fingers, are the constant]. If two of the three are present in one melody, then it is called *murajjah* (inclining).<sup>12</sup> If the note of the index finger is lowered (*līnat*)<sup>13</sup> and replaced by the note of the *mujannab* (anterior to the index finger), then the process is called *tajnīb*. The melody | remains the same except for the replacement of one note with another. But if this anterior is used instead of the note of the index finger, then the melodies gain softness (*līn*) and the melody will be called *mujannab* (anteriorized); this is my opinion.

The softened *mazmūm* is related to the anteriors to the index finger fret. In this type, the anteriors to the index finger fret, the middle finger Persian fret, | and the middle finger Zalzal fret follow one another on one string.<sup>14</sup> It

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Kh. 114;

Sh. 162

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10 If, for example, the melody starts with a mode that has the open string as a tonic, the result will be three different tetrachords, depending on the course the mode takes: one can be in the course of the Persian middle finger fret (G A B flat Persian C); one can be in the course of the Zalzal middle finger fret (G A B half flat Zalzal C); one can be in the course of the ring finger fret (G A B C). The constants here are the G, A, and C.

11 This is an erroneous idea that was rejected by Aristotle (Barker, *Greek musical writings II*, 375 n. 43).

12 By *murajjah* al-Kātib must have meant “inclining” between the ring and the Zalzal middle fingers, or the ring and the Persian middle fingers, or the Persian and the Zalzal middle fingers. However, as the paragraph continues, he switches to the index finger and its anterior. The meaning of *murajjah* (inclining) is clear in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān’s definition of the *tarjih*, but it is not related to the ring and middle fingers; he defines the *tarjih* as making the notes incline (*murajjah*) between the melodic mode starting with the index finger (*mazmūm*) and the melodic mode starting with the open string (*muṭlaq*) (Ibn al-Ṭahḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 31b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 85). Shiloah translated it as “disturbed”? (Sh. 161).

13 Lit., “softened.”

14 Shiloah correctly remarked that, without further explanation from al-Kātib, it is hard to figure out the series of notes that make up the mode (Sh. 162 n. 2). It is worth noting that the use of the ring finger fret and the middle finger frets in one song is mentioned in KA; however, the middle finger frets are referred to by the general term “middle finger fret.” In KA there are mentions of melodies made up of eight notes and ten notes: the eight notes

is called softened because when one uses the first *mazmūm* in the third and fourth strings, and likewise in the first and second strings<sup>15</sup> [they are both softened but] one thinks that they are similar, when in fact the one on the upper strings [first and second]<sup>16</sup> is softer because it is of lower frequency (*siġāḥ*).<sup>17</sup> This<sup>18</sup> is called by many people the anterior to the middle finger (*mujannab al-wuṣṭā*), but in truth, the anterior to the middle finger fret [294 cents from the open string] is the one between the index finger fret [204 cents] and the middle finger fret of the ancients [302 cents] (*wuṣṭā al-quḍamāʿ*); it is also called the Persian middle finger fret.<sup>19</sup> The practitioners' use of the middle finger fret of the ancients [302 cents] or the anterior to the middle finger [294 cents], and more often the Zalzal middle finger fret [354 cents]<sup>20</sup> in some melodies [they do so by replacing either the middle finger fret of the ancients (302 cents) or the anterior to the middle finger (294 cents) with the Zalzal middle finger fret (354 cents)]. This is so because the note of this fret, I mean the Persian middle finger fret, or the anterior to the middle finger fret, is used to replace the note of the | index finger fret [204 cents]; the aim is to fortify the note by sharpening it a bit;<sup>21</sup> it is much liked | in melodies that are suitable to this kind of replacement.

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Kh. 115

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are F G Ab (or half flat) A Bb C Db (or D) Eb (or half flat). The ten notes are F G Ab (or half flat) A Bb C Db (or half flat) D Eb E. In some melodies, the notes follow one another in succession, and in others they do not; the latter is the more artistic one (Ibn al-Munajjim, *Risāla* 24; KA viii, 373–375; KA ix, 43, 60–61, 344–345; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 22–28).

- 15 The MS adds the wrong expression, “the first string of the *mathlath*.”
- 16 The stringing of the lute is such that the low frequency strings are set at the top.
- 17 This is the lower fourth (*siġāḥ aṣghar*, meaning small *siġāḥ*), and not the lower octave, as Shiloah stated (Sh. 162) and the lower of the lower fourths, etc.: for instance, the B flat 1 and E flat 1 on the first and second strings are a fourth, a seventh, and a tenth lower than the A flat 2 and D flat 2 on the third and fourth strings (see n. 26, p. 130 above about the small *siġāḥ*).
- 18 There must be a lacuna because it is not clear to what the word “this” refers.
- 19 It is interesting to note that the interval between the anterior of the middle finger fret and the Persian middle finger fret is 8 cents, or less than half a comma; it is still found in the Syrian *qānūns* that use nine or eleven levers. Al-Kātib diverges from al-Fārābī about the anterior to the middle finger and the Persian one: al-Kātib's Persian middle finger is al-Fārābī's anterior to the middle finger (294 cents) and al-Kātib's ancient middle finger is al-Fārābī's Persian middle finger (302 cents).
- 20 The practitioners would most likely use either the middle finger of the ancients (302 cents) or the anterior to the middle finger (294 cents) but not both in succession as they are so close to each other; then the practitioners would add the Zalzal middle finger fret (354 cents) to either one depending on whether it is used in succession or separately.
- 21 In al-Fārābī the replacement technique is the opposite: the anterior to the index finger replaces the index finger, namely, lowering it and not sharpening it (KMK 1060–1061; MA ii, 51; Sawa, *Music performance* 97–99).

Sh. 163 Most of them belong to the open string modes. The anterior to the middle finger fret is the same | as the Persian [middle finger fret]. I heard some people calling this mode the suspended (*mu'allaq*).<sup>22</sup>

ZY 138 As for the rhythmic mode known as the *mākhūrī*, in the opinion of most people in our era it is synonymous with the second light heavy, it is the second heavy lightened. The technique of *tamkhūr* can affect all rhythmic modes but is better in some rhythmic modes than others; regardless, it became quite popular as a technique in the second light heavy. In general, it consists of dropping out some attacks from the mode, namely, dropping attacks from the fundamental form of the rhythmic mode [i.e., in their metrical forms], or lightening them, and speeding them up [?] by means of scents (*ishmām*) or attacks performed stealthily in a quasi-imperceptible manner,<sup>23</sup> or soft attacks (*layyina*)<sup>24</sup>  
181 or pauses.<sup>25</sup> Because practitioners used these techniques in the | second heavy and the second light heavy,<sup>26</sup> the *tamkhūr* was then related to them.<sup>27</sup>

22 The meaning of suspended may be due to the fact that the index finger is not used in the melodic mode that starts with the open string as tonic.

23 This is a term al-Fārābī borrowed from Arabic phonology to refer to the soft dynamic and timbral quality of double attacks (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 349).

24 The MS has *bayyina* (clear) but it is definitely a copyist's mistake; soft (*layyina*) is the correct word, because it is in apposition to the scents and the stealth attacks, and all share the same level of timbre and dynamics.

25 Al-Kātib obtained his information from al-Fārābī but he mixed lightening with speed. Lightening is the correct word; it involves doubling the attacks (the half note is replaced by two quarter notes) and some of the doubled attacks are performed softly by means of scent or stealth; speed affects the tempo, and it is unclear how the scent, stealth, soft attacks, and more importantly the pauses, would cause an increase in speed!

26 Al-Kātib is wrong here; the technique is only used in the second light heavy, which is also known as the *mākhūrī*; he misunderstood al-Fārābī's exposition of the *tamkhūr*; see the next footnote.

27 Al-Fārābī explains the *tamkhūr* in *ΚΜΚ*, *ΚΙ*, and *ΚΙΙ*. The *tamkhūr* has many meanings and all are rooted in the idiosyncracies of the *mākhūrī*; because its metrical form has a multitude of attacks, and the space between them is worth a quarter note (5/4 ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪), then it is possible to drop out a few of them; this is called *tamkhūr*. This technique, applied to other rhythmic modes, means making the durations of some or all attacks in any rhythmic mode similar to the first part of the *mākhūrī*, that is, a duration of a quarter note (5/4 ♪ ♪ ♪). Because these attacks are made to look like the first part of the *mākhūrī*, the technique of copying such attacks is referred to the related and derived word *tamkhūr*; the rhythmic modes affected by this technique are qualified by the related word *mumakhhār*. In the case of the heavy rhythmic modes with a beat of a half note, the *tamkhūr* means doubling the attacks, thus making them lighter and converting them to quarter notes. The reverse obtains when the *tamkhūr* is applied to the light rhythmic modes; the eighth note beat is converted to a quarter note by dropping out attacks, or hiding them by the use of desire or scent or stealth. In *ΚΙ* it involves a very interesting performance technique, namely,

The *mukhālif* is [the term used to describe] when the successive cycles are rhythmically different;<sup>28</sup> if you listen carefully it will not escape you. It is such that the attacks in the first cycle differ from the [attacks in the] second cycle in number and arrangement. Since this technique happens often in the *ramal* and the *hazaj* and is pleasant, it was then related to them. This technique is also possible in other rhythmic modes, but people are not aware of it; they overlook it and concentrate only on the previous two modes.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes the *ramal* and the *hazaj* with *tajnīb* are also called *mukhālif*, but this is not correct.<sup>30</sup>

In general, the mode must be related according to its end or its beginning, when it comes into existence; as for what is agreed upon from a group of players (*ḍurrāb*)<sup>31</sup> | in various places | it is not to be believed. What we have mentioned is what is possible.

The *surayjī* is [the term used to describe] what resembles some of the compositional style of Ibn Surayj; he was unique in this style in his era, and the style was named after him. If notes in a melody resemble such a style, then they were attributed to him and called *surayjī*. One should only use this term in relation to his melodies, but [some] use the term *musarraj* for melodies and notes [of other composers imitating his style]. In the same vein, the *mākhūrī* is attributed to a rhythmic mode characterized by its attacks. So if a compositional style (*ṭarīqa*)<sup>32</sup> must be attributed | to Ibn Surayj's melodies, then another

Sh. 164  
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Kh. 116

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a decrease in the plucking of strings when playing the lute; this gives the impression of dropped out attacks (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 115, 179–180, 232–235, 300–302, 383–384, 426).

28 This means applying different variation techniques from one cycle to the next. In al-Fārābī there is a technique to that effect; he refers to it by the related term *mukhālafa* (heterogeneity); it adds variety and beauty and prevents boredom (K11 fol. 65b; N-K11 142; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 345, 478, 612).

29 This is absolutely false, as there are many examples in al-Fārābī's treatise that show heterogeneity in other rhythmic modes (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 267 ff.).

30 Khashaba (Kh. 115) edited the word *tajnīb* as *takhfif* (lightening) but this does not make sense. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān explains it as being used in the pandores more than the lute, and adds that its origin is the *ramal maḥmūl* and that its rhythmic mode [?] was altered to raise the index finger fret to its anterior and therefore, this name was used (*Hāwī* fol. 103b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 264). Though Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's sentence is obscure, it reiterates the fact that the *tajnīb* technique is part of the *mukhālif*. It may be that if one cycle uses the *tajnīb* and the following one does not use it, then they are *mukhālif* to one another not by virtue of rhythmic variations but by virtue of melodic ornaments. For an interesting example of *ramal* with *tajnīb*, see Ṣafī al-Dīn, *al-Risāla al-Sharafiyya*, MA iii, 182; Sh. 163 n. 3.

31 The Ms has *ḍurrīb* (pluckings, beatings, rhythmic modes); Shiloah translated it as [types of] terms; regardless, the sentence is quite obscure.

32 This usually means a rhythmic or melodic mode, but in this context it means a com-

style should be attributed to the melodies and compositional style of Ma'bad, another to al-Gharīḍ, and to others who each have their own compositional style; in such cases one would say *ma'badī*, *gharīḍī*, as one says *surayjī*.

ZY 143 As for the sayings of Ibrāhīm and Ishāq [al-Mawṣilī] and those who followed them regarding the expressions *mazmūm* in the course of the ring finger and [mazzmūm] in the course of the middle finger, it was a statement and opinion in 183 their time. | Ibrāhīm or Ishāq called them by these names;<sup>33</sup> according to Ishāq the course is either the middle finger fret or the ring finger fret. This is what he said in his book:<sup>34</sup> “Singing follows two courses on every string (*ṭabaqa*);<sup>35</sup> one is the middle finger fret and one is the ring finger fret.”<sup>36</sup> These are his words. Then he said that the index finger is shared by both [ring and middle finger tetrachords]; this is known by one’s sense and practice, not by theoretical knowledge or analogical deduction. He also said: “Whichever is the course, then the tetrachord (*ṭabaqa*) will be attributed to it.” He is correct in what he Sh. 165 said,<sup>37</sup> but the courses in our practice | are three whereas he counted only one middle finger fret; however, if he considered that one middle finger fret meant three different ones (Persian, ancient, and Zalzal) then he is fine.

ZY 138 As for the *ramal* and the first heavy, it was mentioned that Ibrāhīm called 184 them by these names. As for the ancients, they knew the rhythmic mode | of one duration, [by this] they meant the *ramal*; [by] the rhythmic mode of two durations, they meant the first heavy; [by] the rhythmic mode of three durations, they meant the second heavy; [by] the rhythmic mode of four durations, they meant the *hazaj*.<sup>38</sup> As the number of attacks increases, the dura-

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positional style. As the paragraph continues, it is clear that al-Kātib contradicts himself, because the composers he names all have their distinctive style.

33 This may be the case for Ibrāhīm, but not for Ishāq, since the latter was responsible for the elimination of the old terminology and its replacement by his own, e.g., the *mazmūm* became “the index finger as a tonic” (KA v, 269–270; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 16–18).

34 This may be *Kitāb al-Nagham wa-l-īqāʿ* (The book on the notes and melodic and rhythmic modes); he wrote more books by this title, and none have survived (Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* 174). It could also be another book mentioned by al-Fārābī (KI fol. 79b; N-KI 168–169) that was entitled *Kitāb fi Taʿlīf al-nagham* (The book on the composition of notes and melodic modes) (Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 30–31).

35 Lit., “sound level,” but it can also mean a tonality or a tetrachord (Sh. 164).

36 This is the same as reported in Ibn al-Munajjim, *Risāla* 17, 22.

37 Lit., “his taste is correct in this meaning.”

38 The definitions were copied from al-Fārābī’s *Kitāb al-Īqāʿāt* (Book of rhythms) (KI fol. 162b; N-KI 209; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 256–258) where he defines the durations but excludes the separator. The *ramal* is 3/2 | ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ |; the first half note represents the first duration, the next two half notes after the second downward arrow represent the separator; in the



## The Qualities of the Singer

[fols. 184–191; Kh. 118–121; Sh. 165–170; ZY 143–144]

[Al-Kātib outlines the criteria to check before taking on a good student; he also delineates the criteria for a good singer and the importance of practical and theoretical knowledge; he mentions the superiority of women in performance; warns students to avoid bad teachers, especially those who sing below pitch or those who over-ornament their performance; he advises teachers who teach students who sing the high notes below pitch to avoid songs with high pitches. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 69: "The Qualities of a Skilled Singer" and chapter 73: "How to Choose Would-Be Singers in Order to Teach Them Singing" (*Ḥāwī* fols. 64b–66b, 69a–70a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 170–173, 179–180) shares some topics with this chapter; the latter also adds some interesting anecdotes.]

184; Kh.  
118; Sh.  
165;  
ZY 143  
Sh. 166

For the art of singing one must choose the perfect student. It is rare to find a person knowledgeable in this art, as well as naturally talented, with a clear and beautiful voice, not an incomplete (*nāqīṣa*) one, below pitch, | nor broken [i.e., not continuous] (*munqaṭī'a*),<sup>1</sup> nor disheveled, disordered, or disarranged (*mun-sha'itha*).<sup>2</sup> He must have met and studied with the skilled singers, learned their styles | and methods, must have spent most of this time with them, and must not be young in age. In fact, one does not profit from teaching a young person who is still growing [and not yet mature], who is not stable, who goes from one thing to another and one method to another, unable to find the right one. So one cannot gain much from teaching a young person. It is worthy for a youth, [should he want to] perform correctly [in the future], to study with a skilled teacher and to have excellent natur[al talent].

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- 1 Shiloah (Sh. 166 n. 1) translated the last two words as imperfect and strangled because they occur again as opposite—according to Shiloah—another word “crammed and with much timbre” (*redondantes, zawā'idī*) on fol. 187 (Sh. 167). They are not necessarily opposite the latter; they are just bad voice qualities and according to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, they refer to a voice that can barely be heard, or singing below pitch when singing high notes (*Ḥāwī* fols. 28a, 67a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71, 176).
- 2 The related word *sha'ith* occurs on fol. 195 but is not defined. Luckily, Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān defined it as “a sound that is clear sometimes, disarranged at other times, with an unfinished sound” (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71, 175–176).

The perfect person in the art of singing is the one who sings with *ṭarab* and causes his audience to reach a state of *ṭarab* (*aṭraba*), who performs well when he sings, who imitates (*hakā*) [the previous great masters] and relates and transmits (*rawā*) [the tradition],<sup>3</sup> and has a deep comprehension of what he performs. Rarely does one encounter such an artist. It was related that only three have perfected these matters: Ibrāhīm b. Maymūn [al-Mawṣilī] [125–188/742–804], ‘Allūya<sup>4</sup> [and Iṣḥāq]; Iṣḥāq was more knowledgeable [in theoretical matters] but his voice was less beautiful than theirs.<sup>5</sup> It was also said that the one who excels is the one endowed with a beautiful voice. It was also said that the one who excels is the one endowed with | four characteristics: natural disposition (*ṭabʿ*), capability (*iqtidār*), a moving and touching mood (*shajā*), and knowledge. Lacking one of the four makes a singer | three-quarters excellent; lacking two makes him half excellent; lacking three makes him one-quarter excellent; lacking all four makes him not excellent at all!

186

Kh. 119

Most of these good qualities are not found in most eras, except in women. If all of them are found in one woman, then, to me, she is excellent a thousand times. The superiority of this art is more [often] found in women; with them the art is more durable [and more reliable] and more | prosperous.<sup>6</sup> Iṣḥāq said: “Vocal compositions are [akin to] written works (*nusakh*)<sup>7</sup> that men create and women redact (*ḥarrara*).”<sup>8</sup> He also said: “If the singer has perfected three

Sh. 167

3 The two verbs *hakā* and *rawā* literally mean “to relate, narrate, tell.”

4 *KA* reports the following about his beautiful and powerful voice and his intellect: “Al Wāthiq used to say, “The singing and voice of ‘Allūya is like the sound of a washbasin that is struck, it remains in the ears for an hour after he stops’”; “‘Allūya is more knowledgeable in understanding (*aʿraf fahman*) what comes out of his [head], and more cognizant (*aʿlam*) of what he sings and performs on the lute” (*KA* xi, 334, 337; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 179, 198).

5 This is corroborated in *KA*, which states that Iṣḥāq had a less beautiful voice than other singers and he overcame it by introducing the technique of *takhnūth*, an ambiguous term that means singing in counter-tenor style; singing softly; or a head voice (*KA* v, 326–327; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 204–205).

6 An interesting anecdote in *KA* corroborates the durability of this art [of singing] with women. When the singer Mukhāriq made mistakes in his singing, Iṣḥāq told him to go to the older songstresses of al-Ḥārith b. Buskhmnar to correct his mistakes (*KA* xxiii, 179; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 163). For women singers, the art made them more prosperous, see following sentence in the text.

7 Khashaba and Zakariyyā Yūsuf wrongly edited it to *nasj* (fabric, weaving) (Kh. 119) and *nasj* (woven fabric) (ZY 143).

8 Zakariyyā Yūsuf wrongly edited it to *aḥraza* (to preserve) (ZY 143). The verb *ḥarrara* also means to revise, edit, clarify, as well as release; thus, this sentence deals with the role of women in improving the song and also spreading it. This sentence occurs verbatim in al-Fārābī (*KMK* 59; *MA* i, 11). See also the interesting footnote, *MA* i, 309 n. 12, where D’Erlanger

qualities, then he does not need a fourth one; these are the narration and transmission (*riwāya*) [of the tradition], imitation (*ḥikāya*) [of the previous great masters], and awareness of musical knowledge (*dirāya*). It is as if he dropped out the moving and touching mood (*shajā*) though [the singer] needs<sup>9</sup> to have it, and [Iṣḥāq] decided on what was most important and useful.”

Mālik b. Abī l-Samḥ said: “I asked Ibn Surayj about people saying: ‘So-and-so makes mistakes (*akhṭaʿa*), and so-and-so hits the mark in his singing (*aṣāba*).’<sup>10</sup>

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He said, ‘The singer who hits the mark is the one who fully ornaments (*ashbaʿa*)<sup>11</sup> the melodies, fills (*malaʿa*) the musical notes with proper and sufficient breath,<sup>12</sup> scans the poetic measure (*ʿaddala al-awzān*),<sup>13</sup> clearly articulates the words (*fakhkhama al-alfaz*),<sup>14</sup> takes care of the grammatical inflections (*irāb*),<sup>15</sup> holds long notes and cuts short notes according to their proper durations, and performs the songs correctly according to their various genres of rhythmic modes; such a singer is the one who hits the mark.’

I mentioned what he said to Maʿbad who said, ‘If there was a Qurʾān of singing, it would be thus.’”

It is strongly advisable not to learn from a singer who sings below pitch (*al-nāqiṣ al-nagham, al-qatīʿ*).<sup>16</sup> Only the very clever can learn from him [by avoiding

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quotes the last two verses of the ballad in Azénor of Barzaz Breiz’s Chants populaires de la Bretagne: “the bard of the old master had composed it, and a damsel wrote it.”

9 Khashaba edited wrongly as “does not need” (Kh. 119). Here the quadripartite division of “transmission, imitation, awareness of knowledge, and touching mood” differs in two characteristics from the quadripartite mentioned earlier: “natural disposition, capability, moving and touching mood, and knowledge.”

10 This passage is heavily reduced from the original one that occurs in KA i, 315; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 206–207. It is less reduced in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Ḥāwī* fols. 64b–65a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 70–71.) and fully quoted in al-Tifāshī (*Mutʿa* fol. 16; al-Tifāshī, *Mutʿa*, ed. al-Sillāmī 77).

11 A copyist’s error (fol. 187) has *yushbih* (to imitate) instead of *yushbiʿ* (to fully ornament).

12 This is important not only to produce a good and full sound but also to have enough air to finish a long and difficult passage without weakening or veiling the notes. For more detail, see fols. 101–102; pp. 65–66.

13 This is very important for composition, as each poetic foot should fit properly to a rhythmic part. It must also be adhered to carefully in the performance.

14 That is, to have good diction, so that the words are clearly understood when sung.

15 That is, the nominative, accusative, and genitive cases, all of which are important to understand the meaning of the sentences.

16 This is clearly defined by Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, who gives the reason people sing below pitch,

his intonation mistakes]; otherwise [those who are not as advanced] will hurt their throats learning from him. It is also strongly advisable not to learn from a singer who over-ornaments his melodies (*zawāʿidi*);<sup>17</sup> his songs are always disorganized, unsettled (*muḍṭarib*), and unstable. Every day he sings differently,<sup>18</sup> leading the student astray.

I think Yaḥyā b. Khālīd asked Iṣḥāq about a singer and consulted him about his singing. [Iṣḥāq] said: “He is good but not useful as a teacher.” [Yaḥyā] said: “And why [is this] so?” | [Iṣḥāq] said: “Because of the over-ornamentation out of this throat, | so one cannot learn from him.”<sup>19</sup> This singer is Wajh al-Qarʿa,<sup>20</sup> as we are told by al-ʿAttābī and others. The teacher with a good voice leads the student to profit from his beautiful voice and teaches him his style. Verily throats are not constant; they can change positively or negatively according to the student’s imitation of his teacher.<sup>21</sup> Imitation is a large part of this art. It was related that the writer ʿAmr b. Bāna, despite the hardness of his throat (*jasā*) and its lack of touching mood, was the most skilled at imitation. He would learn a song and imitate its composer, so that if he were singing but not seen, the audience would think that it was the composer singing it. He sang solo, that is, without accompanying himself on an instrument; he was thereby known as having a superior quality that others did not possess.<sup>22</sup>

Sh. 168

Kh. 120

188

such as the nature of their throats, having a disease, giving birth, going through puberty, being fatigued, being obese, being a habitual wine drinker, or having bad teachers (*Hāwī* fols. 67a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 175). Shiloah mistranslated it as imperfect and strangled because he had not consulted Ibn al-Ṭahḥān (Sh. 166 n. 1).

17 Lit., “added notes.” Later al-Kātib defines it as added notes that are densely packed (fol. 195, p. 149). Ibn al-Ṭahḥān defines it similarly as “the one with notes added to the song itself,” i.e., over-ornamented (*Hāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 69). In *KA* they can be aesthetically pleasing or detrimental to the melody, and if the singer changes the ornaments a lot, then the student will have a difficult time learning the song (*KA* x, 129; *KA* xxiii, 179; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 41, 164). Shiloah mistranslated it as redundant and with too much timbre (Sh. 167).

18 Lit., “in a different color.”

19 Shiloah mistranslated it as “notes with a heavy timbre which cannot be imitated” (Sh. 168).

20 This is reported in *KA* among the anecdotes about the ʿAbbāsīd singer Wajh al-Qarʿa (*KA* xv, 359). Mukhāriq was another singer who over-ornamented his songs, and Iṣḥāq clearly mentioned him as an unreliable transmitter: “Mukhāriq, with his mastery over his voice and excessive ornamentation and creative changes (*kathrat al-nagham*) cannot convince someone to learn from him because he does not sing a song as he learned it and does not sing it twice the same way, because of his additions (*kathrat al-zawāʿid*)” (*KA* xi, 334; see also *KA* x, 129; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 179).

21 Clearly a bad teacher damages the student’s voice, especially if he sings below pitch; see Ibn al-Ṭahḥān (*Hāwī* fols. 34b–35a, 67a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 94, 175).

22 The fact that a singer singing without accompanying himself was superior is corroborated

In the same vein, it was related that a male mourner (*nā'ih*) heard about an animal in the sea called a mermaid, which came out of the water when it felt people traversing the sea and it appeared in absolute brilliance. It has hair and face like a human and whistles in such a way that humans could not resist and threw themselves at it. For this reason people blocked their ears. The mourner took a boat and arrived at its location, but when they got close to it, the people in the boat immediately blocked their ears as they usually did. They pointed to him to do likewise, but he refused and said: "Tie me to the mast [or pole] and leave me alone." They did, at which point the mermaid appeared and whistled; the mourner lost consciousness for an hour. When he woke up, he imagined the sound that was imprinted on him. He used it when mourning and chanting and his voice was fashioned out of it. He returned to his city and became one of a kind.

It was also related that Ibn Jāmi' and Ishāq went to the *majlis* of [Hārūn] al-Rashīd. Ibn Jāmi' was in love with a woman from Medina.<sup>23</sup> He had asked al-Rashīd to ask the postmaster to let him know of her news in every letter

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in the anecdote of Ibn Jāmi', who sang a cappella, thus needing no aid; he said that he was like a wild gazelle that needed no veterinarian (i.e., a metaphor for an accompanist) (*KA* vi, 298). In composition, for obscure reasons, the reverse was the case: the composer who did not compose without the help of a music instrument produced weaker compositions. Whereas 'Amr b. Bāna was a superior performer for not needing instrumental accompaniment, at the same time he was a weaker composer for not using one: "What prevented 'Amr b. Bāna from reaching the rank of the leading composers was that he was a *murtajil* (he sang unaccompanied), and the *murtajil* among the new generation cannot reach the level of the instrumentalists" (*KA* xv, 269; see also *KA* xi, 343–344; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 151). It could be that using an instrument while composing helped with the sections and cadences, and may also have helped with the use of more than seven notes.

23 In *KA* (vi, 305–308; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 283) there are two anecdotes narrating this event, and both were about Ibn Jāmi's mother, not lover. In the first one, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī told Ibn Jāmi' that Hārūn had received a letter mentioning the death of his mother; upon hearing the sad news, Ibn Jāmi' burst into singing while Ibrāhīm asked him to repeat it a number of times until he had learned it. Then Ibrāhīm told him that it was a joke. Then he asked Ibn Jāmi' to repeat it; he did, but could not match the previous performances. Ibrāhīm then told him to learn it from him, and he did. In the second anecdote, Hārūn knew that Ibn Jāmi' sang best when sad, so he asked al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī' (138–208/757–823) to send him a fabricated letter announcing the death of this mother. Hārūn mentioned the death to Ibn Jāmi', who burst into singing with much burning pain and sadness. The account in al-Kātib is thus flawed: it was not Ibn Jāmi's lover but his mother; in al-Kātib's account, Ibn Jāmi' sang well after he knew it was a joke, when in fact he sang very well and powerfully in extreme sadness when he thought his mother had died, then did not sing as well when he knew the truth. In Ibn al-Ṭahhān it was not his mother but his wife (*Hāwī* fol. 47a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 122).

addressed to him. In this way her news arrived to him. Iṣḥāq, despite his talent and good nature, said one day to al-Rashīd to immediately order the fabrication of a letter similar to the letters coming from the Hijaz and to write in it about the death of Ibn Jāmi's woman. His purpose was to see the extent of his [Ibn Jāmi's] love for her and the excessive pain he would endure. Al-Rashīd ordered the fabrication, and it was done. It arrived, the seal was broken, and al-Rashīd read the letter announcing her death. | He offered his condolences, at which point Ibn Jāmi' grieved and was extremely sad. When al-Rashīd saw his state, he told him that it was a joke and ordered him to sing. He did and expressed in his songs the pain he had experienced; these songs were often heard by his audience. Everyone cried, and Iṣḥāq went to learn them as performed in such a state; they showed amazing additions.

Kh. 121

This is only possible from a voice that is not poor or defective,<sup>24</sup> and that is not below pitch in the high notes.<sup>25</sup> If there appears weakness in the voice of the student, or if he sings the high notes | below pitch, then the clever teacher should have the kindness to give him melodies in the lower registers (*līn*) and turn away from the high registers.<sup>26</sup> In fact, the former will be easier for him to sing and will hide his flaws, whereas the latter will embarrass him and increase his flaws and damage his voice. If the weak singer sings strong melodies [in the high register], he will become tired; he will not profit from them, they will damage him, and break his voice.

Sh. 170

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24 Shiloah mistranslated it as "a voice that is sufficiently good" (Sh. 170).

25 Shiloah mistranslated it as "choked."

26 This is not a remedy to the problem, but the avoidance of the difficulty. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a remedy that he outlines in chapter 24: "Tricks Used to Bring Throats in Tune with the Strings" (*Hāwī* fols. 26a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 65–66); in essence, if the student's voice is higher than the lute, then the teacher should guide the student to sing at a tone a level lower, by half a fret, than the lute is tuned; if the student's voice is lower than the tone level of the lute, then the teacher should guide the student to sing at a higher level until his voice is in tune with the lute.

## Good Qualities [to Have While Singing] [fols. 191–194; Kh. 122–123; Sh. 171–173; ZY 144–145]

[In the previous chapter al-Kātib delineated the musical criteria for a good singer and the importance of practical and theoretical knowledge. In this short chapter he deals with facial expressions and bodily movements; some improve singing and some harm it. Some tricks are used to hide one's shortcomings; in other situations, tricks are used to show extraordinary skills, such as playing on an out of tune lute. The chapter closes with an amusing story of a lutenist playing the lute behind his back. This chapter is similar to chapter 46 with the same title and part 2, chapter 14: "Tuning and Detuning the Strings" (*Hāwī* fols. 50b–51b, 99a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 129–131, 240).]

191; Kh.  
122; Sh.  
171; ZY 144

It is desirable for the singer not to twist the corners of his mouth, or twist his neck; he should not bend down or extend his chest, should not move his whole body,<sup>1</sup> should not sway back and forth, should not contort his face,<sup>2</sup> should not overwork himself because this leads to the swelling of the jugular vein, [then] other veins also swell, and his eyes become crossed or squinty, and he should not move his instrument (*ālatahu*)<sup>3</sup> from one side to another. As for changing the shape of his lips according to the desinential inflections—the sounds *u*, *a*, and *i*—it is not | disliked as long as it is not overdone. In fact, the changing of the shape of his lips strengthens vowel sounds, adds to their clarity, and makes them more perfect. However, overdoing the *i* sound is ugly and disgusting.

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The best gestures (*ishāra*) are those made lightly with the eyes, eyebrows, palms, shoulders, and head.<sup>4</sup> Some musicians use gestures that probably amaze

1 Ibn al-Ṭahḥān has hands and feet instead of the whole body (*Hāwī* fol. 50b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 129).

2 This is missing in Sh. 171.

3 Ibn al-Ṭahḥān and Khashaba have *albatta* (at all) (*Hāwī* fol. 50b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 129; Kh. 122).

4 It is slightly different in Ibn al-Ṭahḥān: "eyes, eyebrows, palms, and a few head movements that are used in rare cases to help the singer keep the correct rhythm, and being in rhythm is praiseworthy" (*Hāwī* fol. 51a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 130). *Ishāra* also means gestures with the fingers, edge or side of the face, of the sides of the body (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* iv, 1616). Gestures were so important that musicians hired spies to learn what their colleagues did, so that they could copy them (KA iii, 251–252; Sawa, *Arabic musical and socio-cultural*

the audience, but they divert attention from [enjoying and appreciating] singing; in this way, gestures almost meld | with singing and appear as if they are part of it; in such a case, if gestures are not used with singing, the latter appears imperfect. Some singers even content themselves with gestures instead of fully singing the notes and the melody, especially in the cadences, thereby deceiving and amazing the audience, according to the saying: “Often a gesture is clearer and more eloquent than a verbal expression.” They do so especially with a light wink. This behavior consists of ugly tricks of the art and resting pauses, both of which only indicate weakness. | Sometime tricks are necessary and liked, but not in the above situation. Ishāq al-Mawṣilī, despite his skills, | played a lot of tricks in front of kings and succeeded because of the esteem the kings had toward him and his luck among them. In one amusing story,<sup>5</sup> one of his contemporaries, I think it was Rabrab,<sup>6</sup> criticized and attacked his lute playing in the presence of the caliph al-Mu‘taṣim or al-Wāthiq. Ishāq said to him, “I have stopped playing the lute for a while as I was relieved from it

Sh. 172

Kh. 123  
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*glossary* 239–240; Sawa, *Music performance* 174; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 325). Al-Fārābī also mentioned gestures, such as moving the shoulders, eyebrows, and head, and similar body parts (members, limbs), not necessarily as aesthetic facets of performance but as musical instruments in their own right (visual rhythm). He listed these in his hierarchical classification of musical instruments, the lowest being instruments used in war, followed by the *zafī* (that is, a dance producing no sound), then the voice at the top (KMK 76–80; MA i, 21–22). In this respect, Meiver de la Cruz noted the following about visual rhythms: “This connects very neatly to theories of kinesthesia, and kinesthetic empathy in dance studies: we can *feel/hear/see* the rhythm through these silent movements (which then are not factually ‘silent’)” (Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 313). KA also refers to *ishāra* as a teaching tool: “[‘Abdallāh b. al-‘Abbās b. al-Faḍl al-Rabī‘ī (d. 247/861) was teaching a song to a young girl,] repeating it, and motioning, pointing, and making gestures (*awma’a*) with all his body to explain to her the notes [and their movements and values]” (KA xix, 258; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 183). In addition, Ibn Khurdādhbih quoted ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Abī Salama [fl. mid-second/eighth century] who said: “I saw Yūnus al-Kātib, when he lost his voice he taught his slave girls with hand motions, so that they understood what he wanted as if he were singing” (Ibn Khurdādhbih, *Mukhtār* 42; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 183). This footnote is quoted with the permission of the publisher, from Sawa, *Encompasser* 130 nn. 9 and 10.

- 5 This is a reduced and altered account of an anecdote in KA (v, 280–282; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 227–229). It occurred in the *majlis* of the caliph al-Wāthiq and not al-Mu‘taṣim; the lute player was not Rabrab but Mulāḥiḏ; the learned Persian musician and virtuoso lutenist was al-Fahlidh, and the king was Kisrā; Ishāq was not feigning anything. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar story but different actors: the caliph al-Hādī and Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (*Ḥawī* fols. 99a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 240).
- 6 KA mentions Rabrab as an outstanding lutenist together with Mulāḥiḏ (KA xi, 355; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 139). Shiloah read it as Dabrab and correctly said that such name was a mistake (Sh. 172).

(*rafā'a 'an*),<sup>7</sup> but there remains in me a bit that no one else has; detune your lute." He did, and Iṣḥāq took the lute, examined it, then said, "This is a difficult and complex detuning." He then sang a song and did not miss a note [on the lute]. Al-Mu'taṣim was amazed at this [feat] and asked Iṣḥāq where he got such skills. Iṣḥāq said, "I got it from the learned Persian musicians and practiced it for a long time." The caliph asked him to teach such skills to the slave girls, but Iṣḥāq said, "They cannot learn it because it is very difficult. I have succeeded only because I practiced it for many years." He made the audience believe | that it was an established technique in the musical arts and a foundation to learn and work on. But this is not true; in fact he took the lute, examined which notes  
 194 were out of tune, | and which were not, knew well all their locations, and followed them with his fingers. He then sang a song composed of a few notes and used the bare minimum of notes and succeeded. Because of his luck, fame, and skill in hiding every possible mistake, he succeeded and his feat was deemed  
 ZY 145 extraordinary. It was beautiful and extraordinary, but if | it were founded on a musical foundation, then every able and knowledgeable person would have learned it.

Some lutenists, on festive occasions, would play the lute from behind their back<sup>8</sup> and would think they had excelled; or put the sleeve of their garment between their fingers and the strings and make people think that they plucked an open string when in fact their fingers touched another. If the note was disheveled, they would think they had excelled! Playing behind the back involves turning the hands behind the back like a person whose hands are tied behind his back; the lute, however, is unchanged and the player plays and thinks while his hands are behind his back [playing it unchanged from the regular way.]

7 Instrumentalists had a lower status than singers, and since the caliph al-Wāthiq held Iṣḥāq in high esteem, he exempted him from playing the lute (*KA* v, 280–282; *KA* ix, 286; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 227–229, 377). Shiloah has the redundant sentence "I do not play anymore" (Sh. 172) which overlooks the reason he stopped playing; it was indeed the exemption that caused it.

8 This is still common in the Middle East among lutenists.

## The Qualities of the Throats

[fols. 195–197; Kh. 124–125; Sh. 174–175; ZY 145]

[This chapter is similar to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s chapter 25: “The Names of Voices, Their Good and Bad Qualities” (*Hāwī* fols. 27a–28a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 67–73). It has twenty-five names, as opposed to the thirty-seven in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān. Al-Iṣfahānī has twenty-five terms; most are common (the same words or synonyms). The list from Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s chapters 25 and 26 and al-Kātib’s present chapter, and al-Kātib’s chapters 23 and 24 are very important additions to al-Iṣfahānī’s vocal terms,<sup>1</sup> and to al-Fārābī’s instrumental and vocal techniques and rhythmic variations and his masterly classification of the voices. Al-Fārābī’s list of terms includes corresponding sensations peculiar to the senses other than hearing, human passions, and technical terms about the specific ways air passes through the organs.<sup>2</sup>]

Among the qualities of the throats (voices) are:<sup>3</sup>

- (1) *al-shajī* [moving, touching, sad; it is the best, most beautiful, clearest voice, and the one filled with notes].<sup>4</sup>
- (2) *al-nadī* [see *raṭb* below]
- (3) *al-raṭb* [lit., “moist, humid”; it is the one that resembles water flowing freely and with beauty]: It is similar to *al-nadī*.<sup>5</sup>
- (4) *al-zawā’idī*: It is the one with added notes that are densely packed (*mutakāthifa*).<sup>6</sup>

195; Kh.

124; Sh.

174;

ZY 145

1 The list of positive terms in *KA* has sweet/juicy, thunderous, loud like a washbasin; the negative attributes have a damaged throat (Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 189–190).

2 Sawa, *Music performance* 99–101.

3 The technical terms that are mentioned here without being defined are defined according to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān’s chapter 25 (*Hāwī* fols. 27a–28a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 67–73). For synonyms found in al-Fārābī and al-Iṣfahānī, see his chapter 25 for more details.

4 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 67.

5 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Hāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71. Shiloah mistranslated them as “fresh and delicate” (*fraîche et délicate*) (Sh. 174). Al-Fārābī has the related word *ruṭba* and says that it is used to embellish long notes and notes at the end of the song (*KMK* 1172, 1174; *MA* ii, 90–91; Sawa, *Music performance* 101–104; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 34, 194).

6 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān defines it similarly as “the one with notes added to the song itself” (i.e., over-ornamented) (*Hāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 69). See also al-Kātib’s explanation of the

- (5) *al-nagham*: It is similar to the one above.<sup>7</sup>  
 (6) *al-mujaljal*: It is the one in which one hears a loud clamor (*jalaba*).<sup>8</sup>  
 (7) *al-abahḥ* (husky): It may be nice, provided one does not overdo it; if one does, then it stops being beautiful (*inqaṭaʿa*).<sup>9</sup> It was said to Ishāq, “Which is the best voice?” He said, “the husky and tired.”  
 (8) *al-mudawwar* (round, circular note): It is a medium voice inclining toward loudness.<sup>10</sup>  
 Sh. 175 (9) *al-jahr*:<sup>11</sup> It is a loud [voice], | thick,<sup>12</sup> with clear notes.  
 (10) *al-amlas* (smooth): It is the clear one.<sup>13</sup>

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term and how it is difficult to learn from a singer who uses them (fol. 187; pp. 142–143). Shiloah mistranslated it as redundant and of thick timbre (*redondante, timbrée et épaisse*) (Sh. 166 n. 1, 167, 174).

- 7 It is more likely *al-munaghgham* (having many notes) as edited in Khashaba (Kh. 124); *al-munaghgham* fits the context because al-Kātib said it is similar to the *zawāʿidī*.
- 8 Lit., “one in which one hears a clamor toward loudness, whatever it is.” Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has *mukhalkhal*: lit., “anklet sound; it is the loud (*ʿālin*) and high-pitched (*ḥādd*) sound endowed with beauty and loudness (*jahāra*)” (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 68). Both *mujaljal* and *mukhalkhal* have the idea of loudness, but *mukhalkhal* is a more nuanced one, with a high pitch and beauty. There may have been a copyist’s error: the letter *kh* instead of *j* or vice versa. Shiloah mistranslated it as a biting voice (*mordante*) (Sh. 174).
- 9 Shiloah mistranslated *inqaṭaʿa* (and the related word *qaṭīʿ*) as “chokes the voice” (*étrangler*) (Sh. 174). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān defines it as “caused by three factors: natural disposition, fatigue, and illness. The best is the natural one” (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 69). It is clear that there is a disagreement here: whereas Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān relates huskiness to natural disposition, fatigue, and illness, al-Kātib relates it to the free will of the singer. Ishāq’s definition gives more credence to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān.
- 10 Al-Fārābī uses the synonymous word *naghama mustadīra* (*KMK* 1070; *MA* ii, 57; Sawa, *Music performance* 99). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān uses the verb *tadawwara* in chapter 23 and gives more detail: “The notes of some who sing [appropriately] in the lower register become clear and manifest, become round (*tadawwara*), give a beautiful impression, and gain sweetness and beauty” (*Ḥāwī* fol. 26a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 64).
- 11 In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is the related term *jahīr* (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 68).
- 12 Shiloah translated it as “heavy” (*lourde*), but it is not a matter of low pitch, rather that of a powerful one (Sh. 175). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has more detail: “It is the thick voice that penetrates and remains in the ears” (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 68). For loudness as a good vocal quality, see *KA* vi, 167, 291–293; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 448. For a sound that remains in the ear, see the anecdote about ‘Allūya’s voice, which resembled the sound of a struck washbasin (*KA* xi, 337; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 198).
- 13 Al-Fārābī provides the related word *malāsa* (smoothness) (*KMK* 1070; *MA* ii, 57; Sawa, *Music performance* 99). In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is more detailed: it is moderate, clear, and without too many notes and ornamental repetitions (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71).

And all of them are likeable. There are also:

- (11) *al-ajashsh*: [It is a loud voice with a nice huskiness, with rich and abundant notes, and ample sound (*mufakhkham*).]<sup>14</sup>
- (12) *al-sha'ith*: [lit., “disheveled, disordered, disarranged”; it is a sound that is clear sometimes, disarranged at other times, with an unfinished sound.]<sup>15</sup>
- (13) *al-mukhtaniq*: (choked) It is a narrow tenaciousness or compression (*al-ḥaziq al-ḍayyiq*) of the voice.<sup>16</sup>
- (14) *al-qatī'*: It is a voice that can barely be heard (*qatī'*);<sup>17</sup> it resembles the voice of a tired (*maḥsūr*) singer who cannot complete the notes.
- (15) *al-muẓlim* (dark):<sup>18</sup> | It is a voice in which all or most of its sounds are hidden (*khāfatan*) and invisible (*mu'ammāt*).<sup>19</sup> This can also happen to the sound of strings. 196
- (16) *al-mantiqī* (speech-like): It is weaker than the *muẓlim*.<sup>20</sup>
- (17) *al-ḥaziq*<sup>21</sup> (lit., “tenaciousness”): It is the one that expands and exceeds the proper bounds so that the notes come out spread out all the way, their value is increased [in volume]; they [i.e., the notes] are also the spread one, that is, the sounds spread in them.<sup>22</sup>
- (18) *al-muṣalṣal* (lit., “ringing, clinking, clanking, clattering, rattling”): It is the sharp (*muḥtadd*), dry (*yābis*) [voice] lacking humidity (*nadāwa*).

14 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 69). In al-Fārābī, the related word *tafkhīm* qualifies the ample sound as coming from the chest (*КМК* 1172; *MA* ii, 90; Sawa, *Music performance* 101, 104–105).

15 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71).

16 This may be a copyist's mistake for a narrow throat (*al-ḥalq al-ḍayyiq*); Shiloah has “constricted and comes out with difficulty” (*génée et sort difficilement*) (Sh. 175).

17 Shiloah mistranslated it as choked (*étranglée*) because he tied it to the previous one, that is, the *mukhtaniq* (Sh. 176). For the use of *qatī'* to mean singing below pitch, see p. 142, n. 16 re. fol. 187.

18 The word does not have a diacritic over or below the letter l; Shiloah read it as *muẓlam* but it is clearly *muẓlim* in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71).

19 Khashaba (Kh. 124) edited *khāfatan* to *khāfitatan* (inaudible). It is interesting that al-Kātib uses the sense of sight “dark, hidden, and invisible” to describe the sense of hearing. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's definition is almost similar: “It is the one with no sound, which almost cannot be heard” (*Hāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71). Shiloah translates *muẓlim* as deaf, dead, or muffled (*sourde*) and says that it is one which is hardly heard and a voice that does not carry (Sh. 175).

20 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar definition: “It has no [musical] sound because of its feebleness (*taḍā'ul*) and cessation (*inqitā'*)” (*Hāwī* fol. 28a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 72).

21 The MS (fol. 196) has the related word *ḥizq*.

22 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar definition: “It is the one that spreads all the way and does everything conceivable” (*Hāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 71). Shiloah mistakenly groups it with the weak *mantiqī* (speech-like) and the *mukhtaniq* (choked) (Sh. 175).

This voice causes [a sound] akin to screeching or stridulation of crickets (*ṣarīr*), and the voice is termed cricket-sounding (*ṣarrār*).<sup>23</sup>

- Kh. 125 (19) *al-mubalbal* (lit., “confused”): It is the one in which the notes are disordered and do not occur in their right places.<sup>24</sup>
- (20) *al-murtaʿid* (trembling): It is the sound of one chilled because of a fever.<sup>25</sup>
- (21) *al-munʿaṣir* (lit., “squeezed, wrung”): It is the curved one and resembles the voice of a hunchbacked person.<sup>26</sup>
- (22) *al-jāsī* (hard, rough, rugged):<sup>27</sup> It is the opposite of a soft (*nāʿim*) [voice].
- (23) [*nāʿim* (soft)]
- (24) *al-mutaqaʿqi*<sup>28</sup> (lit., “clattering, rattling, clanking, noisy, gnashing, high-sounding words”): It has a clatter and resembles the speech of the Bedouins.
- 197 (25) *al-riḵhw* (lit., “loose, flabby, languid, soft”): It is the one in which the notes are kneaded together | or chewed.<sup>29</sup> All of these qualities are objectionable.<sup>30</sup>

23 Shiloah has “screaming” (*criarde*) (Sh. 175). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a more detailed definition: “It is the fine and delicate, dry, adept, and efficient sound, without a moving, touching mood, and sadness.” He adds the cricket-like sound in a subsequent entry: *al-ṣarṣūrī* (lit., “cricket, cockroach-like”): “it is the thin, high pitch and sharp (*ḥādd*), naked sound that has an ugly impression” (*Ḥāwī* fols. 27a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 70).

24 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar definition: “The notes are different from the original, and do not fall in the right place” (*Ḥāwī* fol. 28a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 73).

25 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar definition (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 70).

26 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar definition (*Ḥāwī* fol. 28a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 72). Zakariyyā Yūsuf wrongly edited it as *maḡhūr* (subdued) (ZY 145).

27 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar definition (*Ḥāwī* fol. 27a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 73).

28 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has the related word *muqaʿqaʿ* (*Ḥāwī* fol. 28a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 70); Khashaba (Kh. 125) edited it as such. The definition in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān is similar but adds that it is without beauty.

29 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a slightly different definition: “it is the voice in which the notes are kneaded together and broken up” (*Ḥāwī* fol. 28a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 73).

30 The author meant items 11 to 25.

## The Arrangement of Singing [fols. 197–202; Kh. 126–128; Sh. 175–179; ZY 145–146]

[Here al-Kātib delineates a faulty theory of the order of the songs in a *majlis*, beginning with slow rhythmic modes and ending with fast ones; this theory is not supported by empirical evidence in *KA*; neither is his theory that songs of different melodic modes should not follow one another.]

197; Kh.  
126; Sh.

The singer should start his performance, at the beginning of the *majlis*, with melodies set to heavy rhythmic modes,<sup>1</sup> and start with | the *nashīds* and *istih-lāls* (types of vocal preludes). In general, he should start with the heavy, not the light rhythmic modes, and end with the *ramals* and *hazajs*.<sup>2</sup> He should start with melodies in the melodic modes of the index finger (*mazmūm*) or open string (*mutlaq*) as a tonic because they are [in a] medium [pitch] and moderate between high (*shidda*) and low (*līn*) pitches.<sup>3</sup> He can then use all other or most modes, or whatever is possible. For me, it is preferable to start with the index finger because it is stronger than the open string. Starting with songs with stronger melodic modes makes the audience active, and activity at the right time is best | and brings joy; activity leads to [more] activity.

175;  
ZY 145  
Sh. 176

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In general, at the beginning, soft and weak melodies are damaging to the listener and they afflict him. It is thus better to perform soft melodies at the end,

1 From *KA* it is clear that songs were chosen for their uses and functions, and thus the modes did not follow the dictates of the modes but the dictates of the lyrics of the songs and the context of the *majlis*: for example, there are anecdotes in which the slow meters precede the medium ones and others in which the medium meters precede the slow ones (*KA* xi, 360–361; *KA* xiv, 131–132; Sawa, *Music performance* 170). What al-Kātib said above may just be his personal taste.

2 These were light rhythms in pre-ʿAbbāsīd times; al-Fārābī designates the *ramal* as not light but among the slow rhythmic modes. The attitude of many writers continued this fallacy well into and after the ʿAbbāsīd era. Shiloah noted al-Kātib’s mistake in considering the *ramal* a light meter; he quoted al-Maqqarī as using the more suitable word *mutaḥarrikāt* (moving) (*Analectes* i, 88; Sh. 176 n. 2).

3 Shiloah acknowledges that *shidda* and *līn* refer to high and low pitches, but says that the context requires that they be translated as vivacity (*vivacité*) and softness (*douceur*) (Sh. 176 n. 3). He claims that the open string is the low pitch and thus cannot be medium and moderate (that is, between the high and low pitches). But this is not true because the open string is that of the third string, which is definitely of medium range.

for the purpose of repose and calm. Strong melodies, if they keep recurring, tire out the soul when it contemplates them and the senses when they attain and realize them; the audience then needs a rest from them. In this restive period, it regains the strength to listen to such melodies. Strong, intense, and masculine melodies will be separated by means of soft, lax, and feminine melodies from time to time | to rest. This is so because the soul becomes weary and tired whenever it is aroused and active, and therefore it needs a rest. | For this reason the moving melodies and the light rhythmic modes are very pleasurable at the end of the performance | after hearing the heavy ones. The soul does not feel tired when listening to the light rhythmic modes, it moves to them and comprehends them quickly because of their light motions. This is the reason why most people prefer this art, because their weak souls cannot attain the heavy ones—[the light modes] are less strong (*qillat quwwatihā*)<sup>4</sup>—and [people with weak souls] fall short of accepting and favoring them. On this subject we shall talk later, despite the fact that it is difficult to grasp and access to it is arduous, but we shall do the minimum required. This is so because dealing with this subject has been a burden on a group of knowledgeable people and intellectuals, such that their sayings went on for a long [time], and they strayed from clarity, leaving the reader at a loss. To examine this subject further, according to the opinion of the eminent philosophers, requires many explanations; the reader will find them in the philosophers' writings. The theory found in their books is called "Theory on the effects of rhythmic modes on the soul," and it is a large section of their philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

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ZY 146  
Sh. 178  
One should not move from one mode to another in one series (*hazzāz*)<sup>6</sup> of consecutive songs unless suggested<sup>7</sup> by a member of the audience. It is better to add a song or two [of the same mode], but if the singer wishes to move from mode to mode, then he should set a period of time between the two modes and busy himself | with something such as touching (*jass*)<sup>8</sup> [the strings of] the lute [to check the tuning] or twisting a peg, to separate the two songs.<sup>9</sup> Ishāq said

4 Shiloah mistranslated it as "their [the people's] little strength" (Sh. 117).

5 Al-Kātib probably had in mind al-Kindī's theory about the ethos of rhythms. It is a faulty theory, and, luckily for the reader, al-Kātib ignored it. For more detail about this faulty theory, see Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 496–497, 502–506.

6 Lit., "jolting, rocking, rolling, swinging." It is an odd name for a series of consecutive songs. Shiloah noticed the difficulty of this term and suggested "movement" (Sh. 177). The theory that al-Kātib expounds here is false; there are examples in *KA* of three songs in different modes that follow one another consecutively (*KA* vi, 165–166; Sawa, *Music performance* 169).

7 This was mistranslated by Shiloah as "unless one improvises" (Sh. 177).

8 For more meanings of the word *jass*, see p. 98, n. 6, re. fol. 139.

9 Lit., "the two times."

that, “The ear dislikes hearing two different modes separated by a short time.” But if one must change because of ignorance or not properly remembering [a song in the same mode] (*riwāya*)<sup>10</sup> or for another reason, then let the singer move to another rhythmic mode [and not another melodic mode].<sup>11</sup> The character of songs performed in succession, [in the same mode], must be similar and share much in common. The series of songs [in one mode] (*hazzāz*) was called *qusāt*<sup>12</sup> among the older generation. Single lines of poems should not be repeated, but if repeated, it should not be done more than twice; they should be sung at the beginning of a performance.<sup>13</sup> | If the singers sing together, they should always follow the leader of the ensemble. This arrangement is customary to this day among the elders of this art.<sup>14</sup>

201

One must look into the choice of the soft oboe (*nāy*) accompanying a voice; one chooses them according to the tone level of the voices, and this is important. For a low-pitched and thick voice, one chooses a soft oboe with a large diameter; for a high-pitched voice, a smaller diameter. As for | a smooth, soft, and clear voice (*al-ṣāfi al-ḥiss*),<sup>15</sup> I prefer not to use a soft oboe or other instruments that will divert attention away from its sound. But if one must use a soft

Kh. 128

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- 10 Lit., “relating, performing, transmitting.” However, the context indicates that the singer was at a loss to find a song in the same mode. Shiloah translates this literally as “shortcoming in the transmission” (Sh. 178).
- 11 A similar but more detailed passage occurs in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Hāwī* fols. 24a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 60–61) where the switch from tonality (*bisāt*) to tonality, and not mode to mode, is to be avoided. Instead of mode, he talks about the more appropriate term tonality. One can move from mode to mode provided it is in the same tonality: one finds such an example of a succession of songs in different modes but in the same tonality—Sallām sang three songs in *hazzaj* in succession: the first was in the (open string as a tonic) in the course of the middle finger fret; the second was in the (open string as a tonic) in the ring finger fret; the third had the same melodic mode as the first (KA vi, 165–166)—so, to be more precise, it is the switch from tonality to tonality, and not mode to mode, that is problematic. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān warned against moving from tonality to tonality and suggested that it is best to sing at least three songs in the same tonality. He differed from al-Kātib in the following ways: instead of not knowing or remembering (*riwāya*), Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān had falling short (*qaṣṣara*); in addition to tuning the strings to allow a change in mode, Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān added talking or drinking, and finding a song in a tonality closer to the first one without changing the rhythmic mode.
- 12 This must be a copyist’s or al-Kātib’s mistake for the word *bisāt* (tonality); it is explained in great detail in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān; see preceding footnote (*Hāwī* fols. 23b–24b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 59–61). Khashaba edited it wrongly as *aqṣāt* (portion) (Kh. 127).
- 13 It is not clear here if the song is made up of only one verse and in this case it should be repeated only once; or if it is one verse (that should be repeated only once) in a multi-verse song.
- 14 Zakariyyā Yūsuf edited wrongly as “youths” (ZY 146).
- 15 Khashaba (Kh. 128) misread it as *ḥasan* (beautiful); Shiloah (Sh. 178) has harsh!

oboe, then one [should] choose one that is lower than the sound level of the voice.<sup>16</sup> For the lutes, one [should] choose long soft oboes with large diameters; otherwise they would be too high and too loud for the lute. The singer should consider his voice in relation to the strings of the lute and make his register at a medium level so that he can reach the highest notes without much effort and toil. His register should fit | his voice most of the time.

202

Sh. 179

Sometimes it happens that a singer stumbles [by forgetting] and makes a mistake during his singing. When he remembers the correct notes, he should not continue with his mistakes but take the right path, not change anything and not become perturbed.<sup>17</sup>

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16 This is the same concept as when a voice is accompanied by a lute, see p. 86, re. fols. 126–127.

17 Sh. 179 does not have the singer as the subject of “not change anything and not get perturbed” but the singing itself. The context and the way the sentence is constructed favors the singer and not the singing as the subject.

## Praise and Requests for Repetitions

[fols. 202–207; Kh. 129–130; Sh. 179–182; ZY 146–147]

[The main theme in this chapter is that praise in the proper place is useful but in the wrong place is detrimental; the first comes from connoisseurs and the second from ignorant people. This chapter is similar to Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān's chapter 66: "On the Proper Behavior to Praise Men and Women When They Reach a State of *Ṭarab*" (*Ḥāwī* fols. 60a–61b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 156–158). The main difference between al-Kātib and Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān is that Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān differentiates between praise for male singers and praise for songstresses. Both praise and repetition can occur at the end of a song, or in the middle at the cadences. The two writers use different anecdotes; the only one in common is that in which a songstress singing a particular note is likened to a pigeon flying upwards.]

Some people do not do well in their praise (*zahzaha*)<sup>1</sup> of singing or when asking for repetitions (*iqtidā*). They place it in the wrong place believing that [praise] only pleases the singer and makes him more active. The proper placement of praise and asking for repetitions is more subtle and more useful.

I heard a music connoisseur<sup>2</sup> say to a singer—when he wanted to draw attention to his skill and excellence—"he is not aware of what he does." He thought he had praised him a lot. | I said to him, "If he is not aware of what he does, | then he is like a mixed-up person and there is no superiority in him. Superiority is the quality of a person doing what he is aware of."<sup>3</sup> I heard another person

202; Kh.  
129; Sh.  
179;  
ZY 146

203  
Sh. 180

1 This word is Arabized from the Persian *zihāzih*, which means well done, bravo. In addition, the Sasānid patrons praised a great performance by exclaiming *zah zah we-zehān zeh* (a multi-bravo); in the 'Abbāsīd era patrons would say *aḥsanta* (you did well) (KA v, 281; Neubauer, *Musiker* 91; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt* ii, 717; Sawa, *Music performance* 112).

2 Lit., "a person gifted in the art of listening" (*samā*). Shiloah translated it as ear (Sh. 179), but the context is clearly listening to music and reacting to it.

3 Al-Kātib is definitely wrong here; many creative and talented musicians are not necessarily aware of what they do; they cannot articulate it, yet they produce music out of innate talent. The gist of this passage is similar to the one of Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān, in which he states that the good singer is the one who combines theoretical and practical knowledge: the theoretical not only serves the practical art; only the practical is problematic, as correct performance often occurs by luck and not by theoretical knowledge; equipped with the latter, the singer who stumbles will know how to go back to the right track (*Ḥāwī* fols. 65a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 171–172).

say to the same singer, describing his lute playing, “his beautiful creative performance (*taṣarruf*),<sup>4</sup> and his capabilities in plucking are beyond the strings!” But this is impossible.

I saw a person, when listening to a dignitary’s [singer or songstress behind] a curtain (*sitāra*),<sup>5</sup> would bless the Prophet—may God bless him and his family and grant them salvation—during each song, and say nothing else until it ends.

A music connoisseur who listened to much singing and liked it a lot, said to me about a passage in a song, “Look, it is as if a thing jumped on something to hunt it!” He put his fingers together, pointing with them like a person capturing something, I thought he conceived it as a cat jumping on a mouse. He also said, when a *tathwiba*<sup>6</sup> occurred in a passage in a song: “Look at this | location, it is as if a pigeon is flying upwards”; in this comparison, he meant the gradation (*tadrīj*) in the long note.<sup>7</sup> He also told me about another place: “Now, here is long-suffering patience.” He also said about a cadence: “Look at this passage, it is as if a person ran, then sat down.”

Kh. 130 I heard another say, “May God keep your body in good health,” [that is,] the same utterance directed at builders and porters.

Others say: “More, O my lady, and other bad and ugly words.”

4 This means that his improvised ornamentations and improvisation are exquisite.

5 Shiloah adds an interesting remark here: *sitāra*, which means curtain, can also mean a songstress, because songstresses were hidden behind a curtain (Sh. 180 n. 1, who refers to Dozy, *Supplément* i, 632). The matter, however, is not that simple: curtains were sometimes used to separate the audience from the singers, to prevent the singers from knowing the identity of the patron, his behavior, or to conceal his women; curtains were not used for slave girls unless their patron did not want them to be seen by male visitors, but a freed slave girl would be concealed from the audience (Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 410; Sawa, *Music performance* 122–123).

6 The word is undotted in the MS; Khashaba (Kh. 129) and Shiloah (Sh. 180) correctly have *tathwiba*, but Zakariyyā Yūsuf edited it to *tabwiba* (grouping) (ZY146) which does not make sense. *Tathwiba* was previously defined as a long, stretched, and broken note, akin to the *tathwib* of the call to prayer (fol. 136; p. 96).

7 Gradation means consecutive notes of equal durations (or temporally equidistant attacks in a rhythmic cycle). Here the author likely means that the broken note is such that all of its parts have the same duration; indeed, this may be similar to the pigeon flapping its wing in a gradual manner to fly higher. Shiloah mistakenly translated the related term *idrāj* (rhythmic gradation) as acceleration (*ḥathth*) (Sh. 180 n. 3); he missed the clear differentiation al-Fārābī made between the two: “The Arabic-speaking people call a fast motion that has acquired even faster speed because of added attacks filling in empty durations in the heavy *iqā’āt*, the rhythmic gradation (*idrāj*). They call moving through the notes of the heavy *iqā’āt* at a faster speed, but without adding attacks, acceleration or faster tempo (*ḥathth*). Thus, gradation does not change or shorten the duration of the melody as a whole, whereas a fast tempo does by shortening it” (KMK 1019–1020; MA ii, 38–39; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 203–204).

In general, praise and requests for repetitions, if they occur in the right place and time are akin to the splendor and brightness of a jewel.<sup>8</sup> The person uttering the praise wants to say that, if singing contains a jewel, it becomes manifest because of the praise and the kindness shown when requesting a repetition; it also shows off the good qualities of singing. But if it contains no jewel, then it requires additional qualities and activity [to be praised].

Sh. 181

Kind praise helps show what is hidden in singing, | especially if the singer knows that in the audience there is a person who esteems and values his performance. For this reason, the singer enhances his good qualities and makes great efforts to show them and to show what he loves (*maḥābb*)<sup>9</sup> best in his art. Indeed, praise has been used to gain the attention of the singer [and tell him that he is doing well]. If a beautiful and most excellent passage occurs, the singer must be alerted about it at the exact point when it happens by praising it with a word, a shout, a roar (clamor) (*na'ra*); one may say: "O by God, beautiful by God, how beautiful this is, is it yours, how beautiful is this prolongation (*madda*)<sup>10</sup> or this half nasality, that is, a prolonged unvoiced n (*ghunna*), this unvoiced m (*zamma*)," and similar | vocal qualities mentioned in a previous chapter.<sup>11</sup> The singer is thus alerted to the specific passages, as a result he beautifies them further, repeating them skillfully on purpose.<sup>12</sup>

205

ZY 147

It is much disliked to mention the praise in the wrong place, and by trickery, to get ahead of the singer (*li-rabbi al-ghinā'i wa-ṣāḥibihi*).<sup>13</sup> This is startling and

8 That is, at the end of the song or sections thereof.

9 Lit., "cause of love" (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* ii, 498). Khashaba (Kh. 130) edited it as "hidden aspects" (*makhā'ib*).

10 The Ms has *marra* (time); Khashaba (Kh. 130) correctly edited it as *madda*; Shiloah has *mudda* (duration) (Sh. 181 n. 2).

11 That is, chapter 23. For a list of phrasing of praise in *KA*, see Sawa, *Music performance* 159–160. In the modern Middle East praise is very important, with phrasings such as: "yā sīdī (O my master), yā 'aynī (O my eye). Allāh Allāh (O by God), Allāhu Akbar (God is the greatest), a'id (repeat), etc."

12 Ishāq al-Mawṣilī mentioned the importance of praise: "The singer likes to be told: Sing! And, if he sings, he likes to be told: 'you did well' (*aḥsanta*)."<sup>12</sup> Praise acts as a psychological uplift, encouraging the singer to excel and giving him the confidence to overcome any fear or uneasiness. Praise was used positively to improve a performance, whereas the lack of it was used to break a rival. An illuminating anecdote attests to this: Ḥakam al-Wādī praised the performance of Fulayḥ b. Abī l-'Awra' and vice versa, and both agreed not to praise Ibn Jāmi' to "break him" (*kasr*) (*KA* iv, 362–363; *KA* vi, 282–283; *KA* xx, 322–323; Neubauer, *Musiker* 91; Sawa, *Music performance* 161).

13 This is an obscure sentence that may mean: (1) getting ahead of the master of the household where the *majlis* occurs, and who should be the first to praise his singer; (2) getting ahead of the singer before he sings a passage and excels in it. Shiloah (Sh. 181) has a very odd translation: "a race of horses trying to get ahead of the singer."

206 damaging to the singer, especially if | he possesses little intelligence or is very impressionable.

For these reasons, requests for repetitions and praise should happen only when the person praising and requesting repetitions knows full well the location [in the song] where it should be praised; he should have spent a long time listening to music, his mind should be present when listening, he should apply himself to it nicely and listen to it (*inṣāt*),<sup>14</sup> should examine it often, and be able to critically differentiate the good from the bad, the complete from the incomplete; he should not miss anything worthwhile in the song and should not let anything escape him. [Praise in the proper place] will increase the singer's good qualities | and [make them] manifest, and indeed it is the most beneficial and most helpful thing for a singer. The opposite will upset and harm the singer; it is best not to mention it than to mention it. For this reason, when those [in a certain social status] as above discuss and praise singing, such as the kings and viziers, must bring a [musically knowledgeable] person to the singer to incite him, alert him, and make things clear to him;<sup>15</sup> this is because constraint in this matter will bring hardship, more trouble to the suffering he [the singer] is enduring,<sup>16</sup> and [make him] more preoccupied about his performance, and [cause him] to be careful with it.

207 A story was told about al-Asmar al-Nadīm, that one day he said to his boon companions while wonderful singing took place: "O friends, this is a piece of ambergris thrown in your midst, whoever desires a bit of it will earn it." This is an exquisite comparison.<sup>17</sup>

If [the person praising the singer] is also knowledgeable in the practical art, fills the lacunae, and brings about [and corrects] what went wrong, then he is an eminent teacher.

14 The ms has *aṣwāt* (sounds, songs), but this is a copyist's mistake; Shiloah (Sh. 181) translated it literally as "different chants"; Khashaba (Kh. 130) correctly edited it as *inṣāt* (listening).

15 In a general context, not that of kings or viziers, such a person in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt was called *muṭayyibātī*; the term refers to a musically knowledgeable person who sat with the performers and whose job was to say "it is good and delightful" at the right places. The leader of the *takht*, a vocal and instrumental chamber ensemble, often employed one or more *muṭayyibātīs*.

16 Shiloah (Sh. 182) translated it as "tiring [for the singer] to comprehend the song." This does not fit the context, namely, the list of troubles the singer suffers because of the lack of praise.

17 It means that the singing is as good as a piece of ambergris; the audience is welcome to like it and enjoy what it wants of it, that is, the passage they like best.

## Testing

[fols. 207–211; Kh. 131–132; Sh. 182–184; ZY 147]

[Al-Kātib sets up a test to examine the reliability of a person who pretends to know the intricacies of the art of the modal system. Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a shorter chapter about this topic: Chapter 70: “Tools to Use to Test the Person Who Pretends to Know the Science of Music” (*Hāwī* fols. 66b–67a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 174); there the connoisseur is tested only according to issues and topics in the book provided he had not read it. As for the singer, he should be versed in both theory and practice.]

Most people’s interest in this art consists of learning the poems set to music by heart, the names of the compositions,<sup>1</sup> and the rhythmic and melodic modes used in them. [Then] one of them may think that he has fully understood all that is to be known in this art,<sup>2</sup> | especially if he read some of the sayings of Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī<sup>3</sup> or | Maṣṣūr b. Ṭalḥa<sup>4</sup> and their like.<sup>5</sup> His [faulty] thinking becomes stronger and his pretension increases; he may even pretend that he can notice mistakes about an attack or a note in a performance.

What brought me to mention this, and to draw people’s attention to the matter, was a person [who] claimed that another made a mistake about the second heavy he had just performed, namely, that he tapped it and added an attack to it.<sup>6</sup> This occurred in the presence of those who are not able to understand

207; Kh.  
131; Sh.  
182;  
ZY 147  
208  
Sh. 183

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- 1 This is likely the title of the song; Khashaba edited it to *mulaḥḥinihā* (their composers) (Kh. 131).
  - 2 This is followed by a redundant sentence: “and took possession of an abundant amount of it.”
  - 3 His writings on rhythms are quoted in *KMK* 1025–1040; *MA* ii, 40–44; *KII* fols. 79b–81b; *N-KII* 168–171; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 29–36, 409–416. His writings on the melodic modes can be found in Ibn al-Munajjim’s *Risāla*. Much of his other writings can be found in *KA* as well as in the present treatise.
  - 4 A fragment of his writings on rhythm is quoted in *KII* fols. 72b, 76b–77a; *N-KII* 154–155, 162; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 49–51, 370–371, 393–394.
  - 5 This is likely Ibn Khurdādhbih. He has two passages on rhythms: *Mukhtār min kitāb al-lahw wa-l-malāhī* (A select choice from the book of entertainment and musical instruments), 54–55; his oration in al-Mas‘ūdī’s *Murūj al-dhahab* (Meadows of gold) ed. Pellat, v, 131; Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 52–54.
  - 6 For the transcriptions of the second heavy and its variations, see p. 115, fol. 157.

this art, as well as those whose excellent capabilities are too subtle for me to describe. The latter had doubts about his opinion [while the former] accepted it on the grounds that he was a music connoisseur who had listened to a lot of music.<sup>7</sup> By subtle means I went about to prove the falsehood [of his claim] and to ruin his pretensions. In his opinion, he had relied on his instinct and not his knowledge. I said that this person had pretended to comprehend what  
 209 only the strongest and most knowledgeable person in both arts, | the theoretical and the practical, can comprehend and only after thorough contemplation and research. This is so because in this rhythmic mode one does not think of one more attack or one less attack because of the multitude of attacks in it. This becomes clear to the connoisseur when he analyzes the melody; if he does so, it is easier, even though it is very difficult.<sup>8</sup> This is so because this rhythmic mode in its basic form consists of eight attacks, four in each cycle. With the  
 Kh. 132 attack of passage, it becomes nine, and it is tapped that way when used | in the melodies.<sup>9</sup> With the attack<sup>10</sup> of support it becomes ten. The attacks of the basic form can be doubled, leading to sixteen attacks; the attacks of the above form [with attacks of passage and support] can be doubled, leading to twenty  
 Sh. 184 attacks. Or, in a variety of ways, some can be doubled and some left single; some  
 210 attacks | or one attack can be dropped out. This leads to a large number of variations used in the melodies. In short, it makes no sense to say one more attack or one less attack. So if a person claims to know something, then let him be tested by having a singer sing for him a song he does not know and not tap the rhythmic mode that would otherwise accompany it (*ashbaʿa*).<sup>11</sup> The singer will then add more notes, bit by bit, and remove some notes if he can.<sup>12</sup> Then he will ask what is the melodic mode (*iṣbaʿ*) of the song; what is its rhythmic mode; and

7 Here Shiloah confused the performer with the connoisseur who voiced his opinion about the performer (Sh. 182).

8 This is odd: one would think listening to the pattern on a percussion instrument would be easier than listening to it clothed in a melody.

9 This is unlikely, as it would sound boring without further ornamentations. For a list of variations, see Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 630–631.

10 The MS has a copyist's error: instead of *naqra* (attack) it has *bi-quwwa* (with strength).

11 Lit., “fill in, sate, saturate, satisfy.” The idea of not tapping the rhythmic mode is intended to check if the listener can figure it out from the melody proper. Khashaba (Kh. 132) edited it to *ashbaha* (resemble); Shiloah (Sh. 184) rephrased it as not performing the rhythmic mode correctly. Both are incorrect.

12 In short, he will add ornaments here and there, possibly to fully test the skill of the person who claims musical knowledge. Adding and removing notes may confuse the person being tested with regard to the rhythmic mode; adding accidental notes may confuse him with regard to the melodic mode.

where are the faults in it. These are the closest questions with which one tests a person who pretends to be knowledgeable in this art.<sup>13</sup> If he pretends to be knowledgeable in theoretical matters, then he should be asked about various issues discussed in this book. But if one wants to test a singer and choose him [to sing in his *majlis*],<sup>14</sup> one should spend much time listening to him singing various songs; one should carefully watch the letters coming out of his mouth so as [to be certain they are] not defective or corrupted; one should watch the ease with which he sings | the poem; evaluate the power of his voice in relation to his effort to sing; one should watch how he sings the high notes; finally, one should test his voice when singing strong and relevant (*al-khāṣṣa*)<sup>15</sup> melodies.

211

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13 Here al-Kātib wrongly switches from the connoisseur to the practicing musician. Two sentences later it is correctly the practicing musician who is tested.

14 Shiloah interpreted it as a would-be student (Sh. 184).

15 Khashaba (Kh. 132) edited it as *khāṣṣatan* (especially); Shiloah (Sh. 184) has “powerful.”

## Things That Are Beneficial to the Throats [fols. 211–213; Kh. 133; Sh. 185–186; ZY 148]

[The contents of this chapter are also found in two successive chapters in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān: Chapter 28: “Food and Drinks That Are Beneficial to the Throats and Those That Are Not,” and Chapter 29: “Locations That Are Beneficial for Voices and Improve Them, and Those That Diminish and Spoil Them” (Ḥāwī fols. 34a–35b; Sawa, *Encompassser* 93–97). Al-Kātib has a shorter version than these two chapters, but also adds some interesting details.]

211; Kh. 133; Sh. 185; ZY 148 What are beneficial to the throat are warm water before breakfast, the gum obtained from tragacanth (*al-kathīrā*),<sup>1</sup> almond oil (*duhn al-lawz*) before breakfast and also when hungry, gargling with (*ʿaqīd*),<sup>2</sup> toasted green wheat pounded with butter and sugar (*farīk*),<sup>3</sup> grilled sweet sugar cane, soft-boiled egg (*nīm-riṣht*),<sup>4</sup> eating sebesten plums (*sibistān*), drinking the juice of toasted and crushed grains (*sawīq*),<sup>5</sup> violet juice (*banafṣaj*) diluted in warm water, sucking on the julep plant, the use of *sīwāk* in the early morning,<sup>6</sup> and the water of soaked and sprouting beans (*bāqillā*).<sup>7</sup>

[Other beneficial things to do include] going to the bathhouse, continuing practice (*dirāsa*), and chanting (*inshād*);<sup>8</sup> [the latter two] help the voice keep

1 Shiloah misread it as *kathīran* (a lot) (Sh. 185); Zakariyyā Yūsuf misread it a *kathīr* (many) (ZY 148).

2 It is a refreshing drink prepared by condensing milk and dissolving it into water (Dozy, *Supplément* ii, 151).

3 Nasrallah, *Treasure* 691.

4 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has *nīmbirīshht*, which literally means “half soft-boiled egg.” *Bīrīshht* means soft-boiled egg (Wehr, *Dictionary* 53). But in Persian, *bīrīshht* (from the verb *bīrīshtan*) means to fry, roast, or bake, so in this case it would be a half-fried egg (Steingass, *Persian English dictionary* 175).

5 Nasrallah, *Treasure* 701.

6 The *sīwāk* is a small stick whose tip is softened by chewing or beating so that it can be used for cleaning and polishing the teeth.

7 Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a much longer and detailed list of drinks and food and other practices that are beneficial or detrimental to the voice (Ḥāwī fols. 34b–35a; Sawa, *Encompassser* 93–95).

8 Here Shiloah makes an interesting remark, that chanting may have been a useful exercise to develop the voice (Sh. 185 n. 5).

its beauty. | Giving up on these two leads to its [i.e., the voice's or throat's] blockage (obstruction) (*sudūd*) and negative change. 212

There are many voice therapies and diseases that are documented in medical books. It was said that the best thing for the throat is extensive practice until it becomes well prepared and trained (*indabagha*).<sup>9</sup>

It was narrated that Ma'bad [d. ca. 125/743] asked Jamīla al-Khazrajiyya [fl. late first/seventh century]<sup>10</sup> about the care of the voice. She said: "Being careless about it, overworking it, and staying up at night ruin the voice. In addition, dancing too much (*idmān al-raḡṣ*)<sup>11</sup> and | eating acidic food, especially for those with dry throats, but not for [those with] moist ones." Sh. 186

The voice gains beauty, purity, and distinctiveness (*ḥidda*) in wide open spaces,<sup>12</sup> and in plastered (*mujaṣṣaṣa*) and solid places, such as in structures built in a long or oblong form (*azj*)<sup>13</sup> and their like. In the opposite case [environment], it gains harshness, coarseness (*ghilṣ*), hardness (*jumūd*) and a disheveled state (*sha'ith*).<sup>14</sup> Whenever the voice meets solid smooth surfaces it becomes purer and more distinctive. What harms the voice are cold breezes, dew and dampness, and cold. In the winter, and in cloudy weather, the voice becomes deeper or lower. In the summer, | and under a cloudless sky, it becomes higher. 213

The singer should be aware of these surroundings; they should not be soft or porous (*mutakhalkhil*)<sup>15</sup> like [places filled with] furniture, carpets, and mattresses (*furūsh*),<sup>16</sup> filled with coverings and drapes (*kīlal*),<sup>17</sup> and [he should

9 Lit., "tanned."

10 The MS and Shiloah have al-Ḥadrā (Sh. 185); Khashaba (Kh. 133) correctly edited it to Khazrajiyya, as she married a client of Banū al-Ḥārith b. al-Khazraj (al-Zirikli, *al-A'lām* ii, 139).

11 Shiloah misread it as *alḥān al-raḡṣ* (songs to dance to) (Sh. 185). Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān has a similar passage, but it is a bit ambiguous because it may mean dancing while singing, or dancing between singing: "Dance also overwhelms voices ... as for dancing, it causes the singer to be out of breath" (*Ḥāwī* fol. 37a; Sawa, *Encompasser* 100).

12 In Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān it is the opposite and rightly so (*Ḥāwī* fol. 35b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 97).

13 It also refers to an arched or vaulted structure, portico, gallery, piazza (Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* i, 52).

14 Shiloah mistranslated this sentence as gaining volume, thickness, and range (Sh. 186); Zakariyyā Yūsuf misread it as *ta'ab* (fatigue) (ZY 148).

15 Shiloah translated it as effeminate (Sh. 186).

16 The MS has a copyist's mistake; instead of *furūsh*, as in Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (*Ḥāwī* fol. 35b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 97), it has *ʿarūs* (bride). Shiloah translated it as such (Sh. 186); Khashaba (Kh. 133) edited it as *ʿurūsh* (a structure made of cane, reeds, or palm-sticks for shade; or corners in a house [Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon* v, 2000]); it is most likely *furūsh* because of what follows immediately in the sentence.

17 *Kīlal* (sing. *killa*) which mean covering and drape. Shiloah read it as *kalal* (fatigue); but this does not fit the context of soft and porous material (Sh. 186).

also avoid] wooden terraced ceilings (*muqarnaša*) and the like as much as possible.<sup>18</sup>

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18 For a longer and more detailed list see Ibn al-Ṭahḥān (*Hāwī* fols. 35a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 96–97).

## The Dimensions of Instruments, Arrangements of Frets, and Choice of Strings

[fols. 213–217; Kh. 134–135; Sh. 186–190; ZY 148]

[The author delineates the quality of the wood used to make the lute, its length, the qualities of the strings and their thicknesses, as well as those of the frets. He delineates the notes of the soft oboe (*nāy*) with respect to their equivalent notes on the lute and explains playing techniques to obtain notes outside the main holes. He closes the chapter by relating the strings to the humors, then by ridiculing the astronomers for studying what is irrelevant, namely, the relation of the parts of the lute with the stars and the zodiac; he claims that they do so because of their incompetence in studying real musical matters.]

The dimensions of the instruments that some people have already defined are of no use here, since the instruments already exist among us in their most complete and perfect shapes. The differences between the length and width of the instruments do not lead to a damaged sound [that is, one has a good sound and one has a bad sound]; rather, they cause either a powerful or a less [powerful] sound, either a propagation of the sound or the opposite. The medium length | is often forty fingers or more or less, [which does] not lead to a difference in sound. As for the high and low pitches, they depend on the length of the string; a long string causes | a low and soft note; a short string causes a light, high, and hard sound, provided they are under the same tension (*tamdid*). This is a condition that obtains in all stringed instruments. The clarity and purity of the sound depends on the wood on the inside and outside [of the lute] being old and ripe, [its parts] must be equal in cross-section, thin, and light.<sup>1</sup> The strings must be fine, smooth, and strong; they should be arranged according to their degrees of thickness and thinness: the first string is the thickest and the fourth string is the thinnest. Their frets should follow likewise: the first is

213; Kh.  
134; Sh.  
186;  
ZY 148

214

Sh. 187

1 Shiloah rightly pointed out that the sentence is obscure. It says at the end that it is swollen wood (*nāfisha*) and Shiloah suggested that the wood is soaked in water so as to become swollen; however, he warned that his own interpretation must be taken with reservations (Sh. 187 n. 2). Khashaba (Kh. 134) edited *nāfisha* (swollen) to *nāshifa* (dried wood); Zakariyyā Yūsuf read it as *yābisa* (dried up) (ZY 148); it is then followed by an unreadable partially dotted word in the manuscript.

- 215 the thickest and the last is the thinnest.<sup>2</sup> The first is set | after the neck, and all the frets are but the courses of the strings. This is all we need to know at this point.
- Kh. 135 As for the choice of a suitable soft oboe with the lute, the one most in use—to the exclusion of other *nāy*s and the *dūnāy*<sup>3</sup>—has seven holes in a row on the front side, and two on the back side. One is always open and does not count among the notes, its purpose is to control the air coming out of the soft oboe.<sup>4</sup> As for the seven holes in a row, the one farthest from the mouth is the seventh one from the head of the soft oboe, and it is similar to the open third string [F1]; the sixth is similar to its index [G2]; the fifth is similar to its ring finger [A2]; the fourth is similar to its little finger | which is also the open fourth string [B flat 2]; the third is similar to the index finger of the fourth string [C2]; the second is similar to its ring finger [D2]; the first is similar to its little finger [E flat 2], which is the hole nearest to the mouth. | The eighth note of the lute [E2] [is obtained from the back hole closer to the mouth, it is similar to the note below the frets of the fourth string].<sup>5</sup> If there occurs a note that is not among the above-mentioned eight, then the player uses its higher [or lower] octave;<sup>6</sup> | except for a few notes that have no octave higher or lower, or that can be replaced by other notes. In this case the player usually resorts to a trick: blowing more strongly or weakly, or slightly lifting (*rafa'a*)<sup>7</sup> his finger that is blocking the hole so as to obtain a note that is close to what comes out of the
- Sh. 189
- 216
- ZY 149

2 Shiloah misinterpreted it as the spacing between the frets (Sh. 187 n. 3). Al-Kindī informs us that the ratios of the strings, starting with the thickest to the thinnest, is 4/3/2/1; likewise, the four frets (index, middle, ring, and little fingers), starting from the index, are in the ratio of 4/3/2/1 (al-Kindī, *Risālat al-Kindī fī l-luhūn* 12–15).

3 This is a *nāy* with two tubes.

4 Ibn Zayla mentions that this hole is at the utmost bottom limit (*aqṣā*) of the soft oboe (Ibn Zayla, *al-Kāfi*, ed. Yūsuf 78). In al-Fārābī, a similar hole is used for fine tuning the instrument to make sure that the bottom note, from the open end of the tube (i.e., below the seventh hole) (E flat 1), is one octave lower than the first hole (E flat 2) (*KMK* 786; *MA* i, 272). In *Kanz al-tuḥaf*, fols. 175–176, the *surnāy* (loud oboe) has only one hole in the back and it is placed between the first and second hole.

5 The contents of the square bracket are from Ibn Zayla, *al-Kāfi*, ed. Yūsuf 78. Al-Kātib's sentence makes no sense: "The eighth note of the lute is extracted from the *nāy* [a copyist's error has *thānī* (second) instead of *nāy*] using a trick." There is no trick; the note is obtained, as in Ibn Zayla, from the back hole at the top. The trick in question occurs a bit later and relates to using air pressure or a half opening to obtain neighboring notes.

6 This likely means higher or lower notes (i.e., C2 can replace C3 or C1). The MS (fol. 216) has a copyist's error, instead of *dī'fihā* (its double) it is *ṣan'atihā* (its making).

7 This reading is from Ibn Zayla, *al-Kāfi*, ed. Yūsuf 78. The MS has the less clear *yūqi'* (to set). This technique is still used today in the Middle East when playing wind instruments.

lute. This is how the player obtains the middle finger note from the ring finger hole, that is, applying less air pressure to obtain the middle finger note<sup>8</sup> [A flat 2 or D flat 2],<sup>9</sup> [or half opening the ring finger holes A or D to obtain them]. These techniques are only known to *nāy* players.

Some people have likened the strings to the four humors: the first string corresponds to the black bile; the second string corresponds to the phlegm; the third string corresponds to the blood; and the fourth string corresponds to the yellow bile. And each | activates what is inherent in its character.<sup>10</sup> Some astronomers claimed that all strings, frets, pegs, bridge, and neck are set according to the fixed and moving stars, the signs of the zodiac, and the sun and the moon.<sup>11</sup> They have many sayings about this matter which have become imprinted in many people's minds. They are found in their works. [In truth] they are the ones who were incapable of understanding the true musical science, so they resorted to such [irrelevant] topics and other subjects to fill their books.

Sh. 190

217

8 MS has *bayād* (whiteness) instead of *banāšir* (middle fingers).

9 The MS (fol. 216) has "or more pressure," but it is a mistake since more pressure would translate into a sharpened ring finger note and not a middle finger note.

10 It is similar to Ibn al-Ṭahḥān (*Hāwī* fols. 90a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 218–219) and he attributes it to Pindar. For the sources of these correspondences, see Bülus al-Bizantī in Kazemi, *Die Bewegte* 252, 311; al-Kindī in Sawa, *Rhythmic theories* 500–502.

11 In al-Tifāshī the stars are related to the eight modes (*Mut'a* fols. 14–15; al-Tifāshī, *Mut'a*, ed. al-Sillāmī 75).

## Music Education

[fols. 217–221; Kh. 136–137; Sh. 191–193; ZY 149]

[The author advises serious and talented students on how to study music and excel in the art of singing and composition, namely, to study with great masters and listen to a lot of good compositions and analyze them, to look for the aesthetic passages and ornaments, and to make sure he follows the rhythm properly. He also advises singers with weak voices on ways to circumvent their shortcomings. He states that instrumental music is subordinate to, and should act as a support for, vocal music.]

217; Kh.  
136; Sh.  
191; ZY 149

218

The one who would like to learn the art of singing should take it upon himself to listen to singing from skilled masters, to seriously study the art, and to do much listening (*inṣāt*)<sup>1</sup> [to singing in general] in order to recognize the strong melodies | from the soft, or medium ones, which are moderate. He should endeavor to recognize the different types [of feelings] he would gain from each one of them; and to know the aesthetic [beautifully ornamented] locations in the song. He should figure out the location of the attacks in the rhythmic mode that pervades the melody, and the durations of the notes; he should make sure that the vocal notes are performed in synchronization with the attacks of the rhythmic modes; they should correspond to it, and not be shorter nor longer. Many singers do not complete the sung notes with the attack of the rhythmic mode, and fall short with the duration. This is because of their limited knowledge or | because of their weak voices, or [because they have a] shortage of breath. However, the singer with the weak voice could complete the performance of the notes by cleverly coaxing (*mudārāt*) his breath with gentleness and grace.<sup>2</sup> Despite their weak voices, many skilled singers often use good grace

Sh. 192

1 There is a copyist error here: the MS has *aṣnāf* (types, that is, rhythmic and melodic modes) which Kh. 136 edited as *inṣāt*. Shiloah noticed the problem and suggested it was redundant here (Sh. 191 n. 2).

2 An anecdote in *KA* illustrates this point very well: “Jahḥa told me, Muḥammad b. al-Makkī al-Murtajil told me, I said to Zurzūr al-Kabīr: ‘How did Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī do better than you in the presence of the caliphs, when you, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī and Mukhāriq, have better voices (*ṣawt*) and a better sound (*naghma*)? He said, ... when Iṣḥāq sang, he incorporated in his singing tricks (*mudārāt*), skill (*hidḥq*), and grace (*lutf*), till he brought us all down.’” (*KA* v, 326. Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 204).

to hide their weakness. He should watch for the high notes and see if there is, or is not, an extreme limit he can reach with them; a thorough examination of the high notes is a must, as well as notes that are not high [but which can be altered into notes at a higher octave]. Indeed many people | take the liberty of doing this in their melodies and those of others, [but they also] remove the high notes, thus spoiling the melodies. They may do this in all of the melody, replacing (*yubdilu*)<sup>3</sup> and deleting some of its notes. He must also figure out the rhythmic modes so that they are imprinted in his mind and [so he] knows the heavy from the light as well as all other matters the ear can grasp. If he is able to do this and has a rich (*aysar*)<sup>4</sup> talent, then he will be able to compose music; the more talent and knowledge, the more his strength will increase.

219

Instrumental performance needs the vocal one.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, instrumental performance follows, is dependent and subordinate to [vocal] melodies,<sup>6</sup> [and is rhythmically organized according to] the rhythmic modes whose role is the control of the temporal movement of the melody. [Instrumental music] is used to support and help the voice; its weak or good qualities depend on those of the vocal one. The instrumentalist who plays the rendition of songs (*ṭarā'iq*)<sup>7</sup> well is not a master unless | he can use them [to accompany vocal]

Sh. 193

3 Shiloah misread this word as *yudillu* (to indicate); this made him translate the sentence as: "If the musician deletes a note at the higher octave in all of the melody, he must indicate it and state precisely that he has deleted it" (Sh. 192).

4 It can also mean the opposite, that is, the slightest talent; this is how Shiloah translated it (Sh. 192).

5 Lit., "cannot be free of want or dispense or manage without vocal music."

6 This is in line with al-Fārābī's hierarchical classification of musical instruments (*KMK* 78–80; *MA* i, 22–23; Sawa, Classification of music instruments). According to him, vocal music is superior to instrumental music because it not only includes the melodic and rhythmic elements of instrumental music, but it also uses words that have meanings. Instruments play a role subservient to the voice. They accompany a vocal line by imitating it as closely as possible; their purpose is to amplify and enrich it, give it brilliance, make it more pleasant, and beautiful by idiosyncratic ornaments. Instruments also play an important role, that of guardian or support for the singer, giving him the proper intonation, correct durations, and reminding him of the melodic line. Instruments also provide a prelude to prepare for the singer's entrance, interludes to give him a rest, and a postlude to mark the end of a song (*KMK* 68–70, 74–75, 77, 1170; *MA* i, 17; *MA* ii, 88; Sawa, *Music performance* 105–107).

7 *Ṭarā'iq* (and other plurals: *ṭurq*, *ṭuruq* *ṭurūq*; sing. *ṭarq* and *ṭarīqa*) usually means melodic and rhythmic modes as Shiloah translated it in this passage (Sh. 192–193), but it is unlikely that a good instrumentalist would limit his performance to playing abstract modes! A few sentences later, the word *ṭarā'iq* means an instrumental rendition of a melody and not a mode. It is noteworthy here to mention that the related word *ṭarq* has many meanings: striking a percussion instrument or a stringed instrument, prelude, instrumental exercise, instrumental piece, an instrumental rendition of a song, a playing technique, style, ornaments, or instrumental accompaniment (Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 157, 160, 386).

<sup>220</sup>  
Kh. 137

melodies; by melodies I mean those that are good, strong, complete, that is, the old [melodies] or those that resemble them. || Some people are of the opinion that instrumental performance is better and more honorable than singing with instrumental accompaniment. I do not find [that this makes] any sense because singing is more honorable than instrumental performance and more useful. [To them] if instrumental performance is added to singing and imitated it, then both will fall short. But this opinion is contrary to the truth. Those holding this opinion and putting down (*shanna'a*)<sup>8</sup> singing are the ones unable to sing but who can play well. We have also seen some—and until now we see them—who play a number of song renditions (*tarā'iq*) and sing types of soft, incomplete melodies. But if they take it upon themselves to sing the good and difficult ones, they will not be able to. Some imitate the behavior of the Persian kings, who gave up singing to eliminate the fatigue that results from singing and playing at the same time. Most of their performances are but an imitation of the vocal melody; they first play the prelude (*tarīqa*) then perform the vocal melody instrumentally (*ṣūrat al-laḥn*).<sup>9</sup> | They do this to lighten the burden and give up on singing. Many of the older generation who practiced this art and who were not professional did that.

221

8 Lit., “slander, revile, defame, condemn.” Shiloah misread it as *shayya'a* (divulged) (Sh. 193).

9 Lit., “an image of the melody”; this is a very apt expression since the instrumental rendition is in reality an image of the vocal one.

## Addenda

[fols. 221–235; Kh. 138–143; Sh. 193–204; ZY 150–153]

[Most of this chapter is based on al-Fārābī's discussion of the origin of music, perfect and imperfect melodies, the alteration of melodies, vocal and instrumental melodies, the role of instrumental music, the invention of musical instruments, and their classification.]

Let us now mention in this chapter what we missed in this treatise and what we need to know.

Some melodies may be imperfect and incomplete and nothing can be done | to make them complete. Other melodies are the opposite; there is no place that requires any additions. Others, though perfect, can still stand more additions for improvement so that they become more perfect and more beautiful when heard. This feat can be achieved, in particular, by a musician endowed with a good natural disposition and talent and with a nice voice, without much effort or known rule to explain it.<sup>1</sup> If we find a person who makes additions to some of | the melodies of Ma'bad, Ibn Muḥriz, Ibn Surayj, al-Gharīd, and their like,<sup>2</sup> or who removes some of their notes, then we know with certainty that he has spoiled them.<sup>3</sup> This is because, as we know, these songs are examples of the utmost excellence, and reach the limit of what can be achieved in them, so one must not change anything unless we fully know that we need to.

221; Kh.  
138; Sh.  
193;  
ZY 150  
Sh. 194

222

1 In Middle Eastern music today, ornaments are very subtle and require good taste from the performer. There are no written rules as to what constitutes a good ornament; it is all done instinctively according to the aesthetics of the culture. The talented musician knows what types of ornaments to use and where to add them to beautify the melody.

2 Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī added Mālik and classified all five in this order: “The outstanding masters are Ibn Surayj, then Ibn Muḥriz, then Ma'bad, then al-Gharīd, and then Mālik” (KA i, 380; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 139).

3 This is a hypothetical statement, as none of these melodies survived to the time of al-Kātib. A century before al-Kātib, al-Iṣfahānī said it succinctly, when discussing the alterations brought upon the older repertoire: “It is hoped that there perhaps remained a few of those singers who adhered to this principle [of not altering the songs], though by now, in our era, all of the correct [songs] and the altered [songs] have disappeared” (KA x, 70; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 260).

Ishāq [al-Mawṣilī] and his adherents blamed and found fault with Ibrāhīm [b. al-Mahdī] b. Shakla for altering the older repertoire and [they] blamed his boldness [in doing] it, this despite his skills.<sup>4</sup> But stories keep recurring that Ishāq was more discerning and knowledgeable than Ibrāhīm in the vocal art. It was related that [the caliphs] al-Ma'mūn or al-Mu'taṣim said, "The mistake of Ishāq in singing is better than the correct [singing] of Ibrāhīm."<sup>5</sup> One should not alter the melodies, for reasons laid out at the beginning of this treatise; indeed, not altering the older songs is praiseworthy because they are perfect.<sup>6</sup>

Sh. 195  
223

Kh. 139

It is difficult to know, in a definitive way, the time | when the musical arts and instruments were created and how they started. Many people have different opinions and attribute them to a group of named philosophers, | and to Persian and Greek kings, as well as to the Devil (Iblīs), may God curse him, and it was narrated that he is the one who invented them, and to a group of prophets, may God bless them.<sup>7</sup> Here we shall mention what is in line with the truth guided by eminent people, by the sayings of theorists, and especially by those who hold an important place and who have a long standing [position] in this art. These allow us to have no need for others.

Sh. 196

224

Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī said that there are two aspects of music [performance]: the performance of complete melodies, that is, the ones heard through | the human voice, and the performance of melodies heard through musical instruments constructed [by men]. The latter is divided according to the types | of instruments: the art of playing [the lute] and the pandore and other instruments; the former is divided according to the poems to which the notes are set and follow, and [according] to their purpose, such as [the artistic] composition of vocal art, lamentations (*niyāḥa*) and elegies (*marāthī*), reciting classical poems in a declamatory style [likely improvised in a non-measured musical form] (*qawl al-qaṣā'id*), chanting the Qur'ān, the caravan songs (*ḥudā'*), and the like.<sup>8</sup>

4 See the long passage about this topic in *KA* x, 69–70; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 258–260.

5 In *KA* there is a similar story but with different musicians: "The mistake of Mukhāriq is like the correct one by 'Allūya; the mistake of Ishāq is like the correct one by Mukhāriq" (*KA* xviii, 345; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 222).

6 I have paraphrased the original sentence to make sense of it. The original says: "If one should not alter the melodies except for reasons laid out at the beginning of this treatise, indeed, imitating the older songs is praiseworthy, and the known praiseworthiness has a reason, and the reason is that one should not alter them."

7 Ibn al-Ṭahḥān has a similar story but notes that it was a weak one (*Hāwī* fols. 84a–b; Sawa, *Encompasser* 204). In *KA*, Iblīs is the Devil who transmits songs to composers and teaches music (*KA* v, 233, 235; *KA* x, 104; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 81, 104, 302, 443, 446).

8 Al-Fārābī, *KMK* 68; *MA* i, 17.

The melodies heard from instruments are of two types. One type imitates the complete melodies [i.e., vocal melodies in unison or in a higher or lower octave] as much as possible, and at the same time adds more notes (*takthūr*),<sup>9</sup> ornaments (*tazyīnāt*),<sup>10</sup> preludes (*iftitāh*), cadences or postludes (*maqṭaʿa*), interludes (*istirāḥa*), during the accompaniment [to give the singer a rest] and complements what the voice is unable to do thoroughly.<sup>11</sup> Other instrumental melodies | are such that it is difficult for them to imitate the vocal melodies or [they] could not bring any support for them at all.<sup>12</sup> Their function is similar to that of decorations that do not imitate anything, they just | look beautiful. They are akin to Persian and Khurāsānī instrumental pieces (*ṭarāʿiq* and *rawāshīn*) that cannot be sung; these are the best Persian instrumental pieces.<sup>13</sup>

Sh. 197

225

Since these are incomplete, and have only a portion of total perfection, the soul listening to it alone desires the addition of other elements to reach total perfection. If the incomplete [melodies] are repeated without adding what the soul desires, then the soul will leave it and loathe it; the soul will become tired (*tabarrama*)<sup>14</sup> of its excessive repetitions. For this reason, these types of instrumental music should be used | as ear training and technical exercises (*irtiyādāt*) for the hands, preludes (*taqdīmāt*) to vocal music, and interludes (*istirāḥāt*) to allow the audience to rest [from vocal music]. We shall call the

Kh. 140

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- 9 It is a melodic ornament consisting of increasing the number of notes, either through an extension in range or through an increase in the number of notes within the range, or both, or notes foreign to the components of the fundamental melody (KMK 1059; MA ii, 50; Sawa, *Music performance* 91–95, 209).
- 10 The ms has *tartīb* (arrangement) but neither *tartīb* nor *tazyīn* are in the original text of al-Fārābī (KMK 69; MA i, 17); the word *tazyīn* appears later (KMK 80; MA i, 22).
- 11 Here al-Kātib copied al-Fārābī's ambiguous passage in which he may have meant that instruments complement what a voice is unable to do, that is, they reach a range that a voice cannot reach; he may have meant doubling the voice with an instrument playing at a higher or lower octave, or impressionistically, with a fifth or fourth; he may have meant that instruments perform idiosyncratic ornaments that a voice is unable to do (KMK 69; MA i, 17; Sawa, *Music performance* 105–107).
- 12 The ms has a lacuna that Khashaba filled from the original text of al-Fārābī: "*lā yumkin aṣlan an tuǰ'al lahā ma'ūna*" (could not bring any support for them at all) instead of "*lā yumkin aṣlan aw lahā ma'ūna*" (incomplete sentence that makes no sense) (Kh. 139; KMK 69).
- 13 KMK 69; MA i, 17.
- 14 The ms has *tarannama*; it is a copyist's error that Shiloah translated it as vocalizations (Sh. 197); D'Erlanger skipped it (MA i, 17). Khashaba (Kh. 139) edited it as *tabarrama*, by following the correct and original passage of al-Fārābī (KMK 69). The word *tarannama* cannot be correct since it contradicts the fact that such instrumental music cannot be sung.

*taqdīmāt mabādiʿ* (preludes) that are used [before] the unmeasured vocal preludes (*nashāʿid*).<sup>15</sup>

[Al-Fārābī] said that what created music are the various innate natural dispositions implanted in humans | from the time of their birth. [One of them is the disposition to create poetry].<sup>16</sup> One is the innate animal nature to emit sounds due to joy or pain; another is the desire for repose after tiredness during work; the chanting (*tarannumāt*) keeps | fatigue at bay during work so that one does not feel it, and likewise one does not feel the time spent at work and does not feel irritated by it and continues to work further. The sense of time is followed by an impression of greater fatigue, [which in turn gives the sense of real fatigue]; it is because fatigue comes from movement and time follows movement, indeed, they follow one another and are inseparable. It is also believed that chanting has an effect on animals; a case in point is what happens to Arabian camels when listening to caravan songs.

These are the innate, natural dispositions implanted in humans who create music. As for how the various practical arts | of music happened until they became established, this is thanks to the natural dispositions that we have mentioned. | Some people wanted repose and pleasure through chants [to not feel fatigue and the notion of time];<sup>17</sup> some wanted the nurturing of emotional states and reactions such as anger, sadness, joy, and the like,<sup>18</sup> and [sought to] increase them, or cancel them, forget them, and reduce them; some sought them in poems [by setting them to music] to excite the imagination and to help [one] understand them. These unmeasured chants (*tarannum*) and measured vocal compositions (*tanghīm*)<sup>19</sup> were built up in every type of practical art, bit by bit, time after time, people after people, until they increased. In the midst of this, people gifted with natural dispositions and talent composed music<sup>20</sup> to the three above-mentioned categories.<sup>21</sup> Others did not have such talent; those

15 This sentence is not in the original work of al-Fārābī; it was added by al-Kātib as a further elucidation. Shiloah has a different and valid interpretation, in which the interludes, not the preludes, are used as short instrumental segments performed between parts of the unmeasured vocal introduction (Sh. 197 n. 7).

16 *KMK* 70; *MA* i, 18.

17 *KMK* 71; *MA* i, 18.

18 The three reactions are not in al-Fārābī, but were added here by al-Kātib.

19 The text of al-Fārābī adds *talhīn* (composing) (*KMK* 71; *MA* i, 18–19). Shiloah translated *tarannumāt* as cantillations and *tanghīmāt* as melismatic chants, but this is redundant (Sh. 199); *tanghīmāt* must be measured vocal compositions as they relate to setting music to poetry.

20 *Tarannumāt*, lit., “chants.”

21 They are the repose, emotional state, and setting music to poetry.

who did excel and became famous. People who came after them followed them | and added to the arts with their talents. This continued throughout the ages,<sup>22</sup> and the aims of incorporating all three categories were achieved. Those who wanted repose and pleasure—found that they can be obtained with musical notes as well as imagination brought about by lyrics associated with the notes, [lyrics] that increase the desirable reactions or decrease those to be avoided—[and they] realized that combining the notes and melodies with lyrics<sup>23</sup> helps them reach their goal more completely, | that is, vocal melodies with lyrics in which the music helps [the listener] to understand the words and listen to them.<sup>24</sup>

228

Kh. 141

Likewise, music that brings pleasure when added to words makes the audience listen with more attention and continue to listen without boredom and displeasure, and thus [this music] reaches its goal. [To illustrate this point] it was narrated that the poet ‘Alqama b. ‘Abada [d. ca. -20/603] went | to [Prince] al-Ḥārith b. Abī Shamir al-Ghassānī [d. 8/630] to ask for what he needed [in remuneration]. He [the prince] did not listen to his poem until it was set to music and sung to him; only then did he give him what he needed.

229

When all the categories are combined and they use each one of them in their appropriate context—some at times of joy, some at times of sadness, some for consolation, some during poetic competitions<sup>25</sup>—the musicians will contemplate everything they have done and learned from others in every situation, so they can reach their goal perfectly. This is especially so since people and circumstances have become more numerous, and since musicians and listeners have also become more numerous; as a result, | generous rewards were given in money and kind.<sup>26</sup> Competitors also increased in number, as did their boastfulness. In the process, some curtailed what was superfluous in their colleagues’

Sh. 201

22 Here al-Kātib skips an important short paragraph about musicians lacking creative talents, these musicians who are performers only (*KMK* 72; *MA* i, 19).

23 The MS has “his aim notes or melodies from all bodies,” which does not make sense. Al-Fārābī’s original text is correct; it literally means “his aim from all these various elements [embedded in the lyrics]” (*KMK* 72–73; *MA* i, 19).

24 For a skipped paragraph and its importance, see Sh. 199–200.

25 Shiloah mentioned that this last statement is obscure in al-Kātib, who borrowed it from al-Fārābī. He suggested improvised competitions between poets in a melodic declamatory style but not real melodies (Sh. 200 n. 3).

26 In *KA* rewards included commissioned compositions, excellent performance, monthly stipends, and music lessons. For a list of types of rewards, see Sawa, *Music performance* 195–199, 245.

compositions, and some added what was incomplete, and in this way the musical art became perfect or close to perfect.<sup>27</sup>

230 These [vocal] melodies, when imitated and accompanied by the sounds of various instruments (*ajsām*),<sup>28</sup> become more abundant (*aghzar*),<sup>29</sup> richer and more ample (*afkham*), more brilliant (*abhā*), and more pleasant to the ear (*aladhdh masmū'an*); they are also more adequately supported and guided with regard to the arrangement and order of the melody [that is, its intonation and correct durations].<sup>30</sup> Musicians decided at this point, or after, to seek notes that are similar to the vocal ones obtainable from musical instruments. They looked at the places on the instruments where each vocal note—of known melodies—can be found (*yajidūnahā*)<sup>31</sup> and knew their placement and defined them and used them in their performances. Then, with their talent, they examined—  
 231 from among natural and artificial bodies, the latter being man-made, the former being natural throats—what gives notes more perfection.<sup>32</sup> Every time they came upon one instrument and felt it had faults, they, or those who came after them, sought | to correct them until the lute and other instruments came to fruition. In this manner the art of practical [music] achieved perfection and the rules of melodies were set. It became evident, then, which [vocal] melodies and notes [are natural to humans and which are not, I mean]<sup>33</sup> the consonant or the dissonant, and likewise with regard to the instrument; it also became evident which consonants were more perfect and which were less perfect. [Some consonances are perfect, some less so, until we reach the end of the spectrum, at which point they are not consonances at all].<sup>34</sup> The perfect consonances are comparable to [essential] natural food, and the less perfect to [non-essential] fruit.<sup>35</sup> | And what is not natural at all are the [loud] and high-pitched sounds  
 Kh. 142

27 Lit., “some decreased what one added, and another added what another one decreased.”

28 Lit., “bodies.”

29 The MS has *aghrab* (stranger than) but this is clearly a copyist's error; Shiloah edited it as *aghras*, but surely meant *aghzar*; this is likely due to a typo (Sh. 201 n. 1).

30 Shiloah used the vague terms “forms and harmony” (Sh. 201); D'Erlanger mistranslated the last sentence as “easier to learn by heart, because of the poetry and the rhythm” (MA i, 20).

31 The MS has *yukhayyilūnahā* (imagine them) and this is how D'Erlanger translated it (MA i, 20); Shiloah edited it as *yahdhūnahā* (imitate them) (Sh. 201 n. 2).

32 In the next sentence it becomes clear that only the man-made ones (i.e., the instruments) were meant.

33 The additions in the square brackets are from *KMK* 75; MA i, 20.

34 The additions in the square brackets are from *KMK* 75; MA i, 20–21.

35 The MS has *sa'uda bihi* (to bring pleasure). Al-Fārābī has *yutafakkah bihi* (to amuse oneself with, to joke, and by extension, what is frivolous, superfluous); in the context of the sentence, it refers to eating fruit. D'Erlanger chose superfluous (MA i, 21); Shiloah chose dessert (Sh. 201).

that people cannot tolerate and the instruments made for that purpose. Instruments are used for human aims: some are like medicine used for | human bodies;<sup>36</sup> some are like poison and used the way poisons are used; these include the destructive and deafening sounds that come out of instruments used in war, such as the bells (*jalājil*)<sup>37</sup> [232] that one Egyptian king in the past ordered to be made by a learned man named Sā'itlus [?],<sup>38</sup> and like the instruments used by Byzantine kings in the past, and the shouters (*muṣawwit*) used by the Persian kings in war. As for the tambourines, drums shaped like an hourglass with a double membrane, cymbals, clapping, and *zafn*,<sup>39</sup> they follow and are subordinate to the other [melodic] instruments and are more imperfect. Among them, some are more perfect than others; the least perfect is the *zafn*.<sup>40</sup>

Sh. 202

After all of this [al-Fārābī] said: "Melodies are of three types. One type causes the soul to gain the pleasure of listening and gives the benefit of repose, and no more. Another has the same quality as the previous type, and in addition, it causes the soul to gain imagination and reactions,<sup>41</sup> seeing things and imitating matters that take shape in the soul. | Their case is similar to that of decorations and statues perceived with the sense of sight. [The decorations] give a nice sight to the eye [whereas the statues] imitate the forms of beings,<sup>42</sup> their reac-

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36 Regrettably, al-Kātib and al-Fārābī do not elaborate further on how such unbearable instruments are used in situations comparable to medicine.

37 It is large type of bell that jingles.

38 This name is unclear and does not occur in the passage of al-Fārābī; Shiloah read it as Banba'aṭlis (Sh. 202).

39 This is a type of dance which, according to al-Fārābī, produces no sound and consists of moving the shoulders, eyebrows, head, and similar organs (*KMK* 78; *MA* i, 22). This is contradicted in *KA*, where there are examples in which *zafn* produces sound (*KA* i, 29; *KA* xix, 218; Sawa, *Musical and socio-cultural anecdotes* 314).

40 This is a highly reductive version of al-Fārābī's original passage, in which he hierarchically classified musical instruments. In short, he started with the instruments used in war as the lowest of the low because of the pain and destruction they and war cause; then the *zafn*, which is superior to war instruments because it involves visual rhythm and is peaceful; then the clapping, dancing, playing percussion instruments, and cymbals, which are superior to the *zafn* because they engender sound; then the lute, pandore, lyre, rebec, and wind instruments, which are superior to percussion instruments because, in addition to rhythm, they produce musical notes; at the top sits the human voice; it includes all the above characteristics plus it uses words that express meanings and emotions. In the second last category, the instruments that better imitate the voice are superior to the others (*KMK* 77–80; *MA* i, 21–23).

41 Here Shiloah notes that the reactions or passions belong to the third category, which incidentally, al-Kātib skipped (Sh. 202 n. 6). For the complete passage, see *KMK* 62–63; *MA* i, 13.

42 Lit., "things."

Sh. 203 tions, actions, characters, and | physiognomy (*shūma*).<sup>43</sup> This is how old statues were used in the past by the masses: they glorified and adored them as being like their gods depicted according to forms and natural dispositions that made known their actions, characters, and the wills attributable to each of them. This is how it is in India to the present day.”

We have clarified the origin of music, its arts, and their causes. Then, famous learned men made statements about it; among them are Pythagoras, Aristoxenus, Muristus, Archytas, Euclid, Daryūnūsīs [?],<sup>44</sup> Plato, Philūlāwus, Nicomachus, Ptolemy, | and many others, making | for a long list.

234  
Kh. 143

Philosophers and learned men have written large and small books and [made] statements scattered in many places; some added to others.

Sh. 204

Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī [d. 286/899] said that it was not possible to bring a demonstrative method to every aspect of this art, because it [the demonstrative method] cannot break into all the arts and be applied to it. Arithmetic is based on rules (*‘ibra*),<sup>45</sup> that is, on calculations. Geometry is based on the demonstration, on the evidence by which one goes from ignorance to knowledge, and on persuasion. The musical art is based on the evidence by which one goes from ignorance to knowledge, demonstration, comparison, and on persuading one and the other.<sup>46</sup> He said: “The origin that is mentioned about the science of music, is that a man in the past went out to probe the ratios | between the striking and struck objects, he passed by the coppersmiths or ironsmiths market and heard sounds | that he felt were in proportional amounts and resembled a song he knew. He contemplated them and found that they were consonant. When he followed up with the striking and [what was] struck, he found that their proportions were the way he felt. When he went [home], he compared the ratios of various bodies. Then, guided by his ear, he looked into the proportions of the consonant sounds. They became clear to him, and thus he succeeded in what he wanted with regard to the ratios, calculations, and senses.”<sup>47</sup>

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43 Lit., “natural disposition, temper, quality, property.” I have chosen physiognomy, following Shiloah, because it fits the context very well (Sh. 203).

44 Shiloah suggested Dionysos or Dionyson (Sh. 203 n. 5).

45 Shiloah translated it as concrete method (Sh. 203); Khashaba (Kh. 143) edited it as *‘adad* (number).

46 These three sentences are quite obscure. Shiloah’s translation may shed light on it: “Arithmetic is founded on the concrete method, that is, on calculation. Geometry is founded on the demonstration of calculations and deduction. Music is founded on calculations, the demonstrative method, on comparison, and on demonstration based in turn, sometimes on certain premises, and sometimes on improbable premises” (Sh. 203).

47 Shiloah corrected this section, saying that Pythagoras tied two identical strings with

Nicomachus mentioned that Pythagoras was the first to discover the proportions of the sounds and that he was the man mentioned above. The origin of all of this is not known; what al-Fārābī said about it is enough.<sup>48</sup>

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weights with the ratios he heard in the market, obtained the same results, and was happy about it (Sh. 204 n. 2).

48 This could mean the origin of the music, or the origin of the proportions.

## The Sources (*al-Irshād*)

[fols. 235–240; Kh. 144–146; Sh. 204–208; ZY 153–154]

[In this last chapter the author mentions his sources, which were written by authors who were good scholars, as well as those who were not.<sup>1</sup> He then mentions, in passing, his useful contributions.]

235; Kh.  
144; Sh.

204;

ZY 153

236

Sh. 205

Each chapter in this book can be taken wholly or partially from the sayings | of past theorists, or [can be taken as] invented and original. With regard to the first category [the sayings of past theorists], | one must go back to their works to fully comprehend the subject.<sup>2</sup> They are found in famous theorists' books, [which are] dispersed, as well as complete and incomplete. Among them are al-Kindī, Thābit b. Qurra,<sup>3</sup> Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib [al-Sarakhsī], and Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī. These are the music philosophers to whom modern researchers resort, we have relied heavily on them even though we have also discussed others who came before them.<sup>4</sup> In addition, there are also other musically related matters in Arabic books on grammar, prosody, and poetics. The most complete and perfect treatises about the musical arts are those of al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and [Aḥmad] Ibn al-Ṭayyib [al-Sarakhsī]. As for al-Fārābī, he mentioned that he did a comprehensive study in his *Kitāb al-kabīr* [Grand book [of music]], and that he read carefully what the old and new theorists had written; he did not find that any of them made a complete and perfect study of the subject. As for the books | written by other modern writers, their rank is that of littérateurs such as Ishāq [al-Mawṣilī], Maṣṣūr b. Ṭalḥa [d. ca. 250/864],<sup>5</sup> ʿUbaydallāh

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1 Lit., "guidance, instruction."

2 Shiloah has "to draw complementary elements of information" (Sh. 205).

3 He was a Sabian from Ḥarrān, a physician, scientist, mathematician, philosopher, and a translator from Greek and Syriac into Arabic. He wrote nine treatises on music, but only one has survived, *Mas'ala fi l-mūsīqī* (A musical question). See Farmer, *A history* 173; Farmer, *Sources* 22–23; Shiloah, *The theory of music* 348–349; Sh. 205 n. 4; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām* ii, 98.

4 That is, the Greek theorists.

5 He was the son of Ṭalḥa b. Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 213/828); he was the prince of Khurasān during the reign of the caliph al-Ma'mūn, a music patron who personally knew Ishāq al-Mawṣilī and generously rewarded him for his performance. It is not known if his son also knew Ishāq personally, but al-Fārābī relates that Maṣṣūr followed Ishāq's definitions of the rhythmic modes in his music treatise *Kitāb al-Mu'nis fi l-mūsīqī* (The music companion book).

b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir,<sup>6</sup> Ibrāhīm b. al-Imām al-‘Abbāsī,<sup>7</sup> Ibn Yaḥyā | al-Munajjim [241–300/855–912],<sup>8</sup> Ibn Waṣīf al-Aḥmadī.<sup>9</sup> The theory [of this latter writer [Ibn Waṣīf al-Aḥmadī] is especially better and more useful than the other [modern ones] and resembles the theories of the ancient ones, even though he followed many of Ishāq’s writings; otherwise, it is mostly based on the ancients. The writings of the others, though numerous, are without usefulness; however, there is no objection to using them as introductions for those wanting to study [later more thorough] books on music, [but be warned that] their instructional methods are not praiseworthy.

Sh. 206

Kh. 145

[Ibn] al-Za‘farānī al-Kātib mentioned in his *Kitāb al-kabīr* [Grand book] a number of ancient and modern writers. He said much about their sayings, which contained many mistakes. [I have the intention, with the help and power of God, may He be exalted, to mention them separately, and to show [what is] correct from [what is] mistaken, because the latter will mislead students.

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Kushājim al-Kātib [d. 360/970]<sup>10</sup> also wrote on music and [wrote] a poem that is not bad at all, but most of it requires a commentary.

Ḥarra al-Kātib also wrote an essay for Kāfūr al-Ikshshidī [292–357/905–968]<sup>11</sup> but it contains little that is useful.

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Manṣūr was the governor of Marw and Khuwārizm; he wrote on philosophy, astronomy, arithmetic, and music theory. Fragments of his definitions of rhythmic modes are quoted and commented on by al-Fārābī in *KII* fols. 72b–73a, 76b–77a, 88b (*N-KII* 154–155, 162–163, 172–173; *Sawa*, *Rhythmic theories* 49–51, 370–371, 393–394, 418).

6 The name is problematic in the MS; it reads ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ṭāhirayn; this led Shiloah to correctly write the names of two persons, ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir and his son, presumably, ‘Ubaydallāh b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir.

7 He is very likely Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī.

8 His full name is Yaḥyā b. ‘Alī b. Yaḥyā al-Munajjim, his *Risāla* (Epistle) follows the teaching of Ishāq al-Mawṣili regarding the melodic modes.

9 Shiloah could not find any biographical notice about him (Sh. 206 n. 2).

10 He was a poet and a writer on many topics including music, boon-companionship, and cooking. His most famous book is *Kitāb Adab al-nadīm* (Behavior and knowledge of the boon companion); many of his poems on music, music instruments, and musicians were quoted in the works of Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān and al-Tifāshī.

11 He was a famous prince and eunuch, originally an Ethiopian slave bought by al-Ikshshidī, the king of Egypt (d. 312/925), who then freed him and Kāfūr affixed Ikshshidī to his name. He was smart, a good politician and administrator; he ruled Egypt officially for two years (355–357/966–968), though he served the Ikshshidid dynasty longer than this, from 333/945 (Hitti, *History* 456–457; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* v, 216). Not much is known about Ḥarra al-Kātib, but since he wrote an essay for Kāfūr, it is safe to say that he lived in Egypt in the middle of the fourth/tenth century. Khashaba edited Ḥarra as Ibn Khurdādhbih, but this is not possible, since the latter died in 820/911 when Kāfūr was just a child (Kh. 145).

The person who reads this [present] book and the other one, *al-muqni'* (the Convincer), will not need many of the other books.

Sh. 207 Concerning the second type, which is invented (new),<sup>12</sup> we can draw anal-  
 zY 154 ogous conclusions to complete its chapters, explain them, | and add similar  
 239 topics to them. The one who would like to do this can certainly do so if he  
 can handle the task or [do] what is easy in it. | As for us, we do not have  
 to inquire further and study everything. We are allowed to give it up, either  
 because we were unable to treat them thoroughly, that is, reach the utmost  
 degree required, or because of annoyance or desire | for brevity. These excuses  
 are valid.

Kh. 146 The one reading some of the works of the modern writers should beware  
 240 that he understood what he read and be careful if he thinks that what he  
 read is absolutely correct. Their works are full of mistakes. One can only trust  
 the works of the ancients and the philosophers and find them to be correct,  
 except that they are hard to understand. A person followed this course when  
 he desired to look into this science and practice it. He came to me to ask about  
 the number of attacks of the first heavy.<sup>13</sup> I told him what I knew but he nei-  
 ther grasped it on the spot nor understood a melody [in that rhythmic mode].  
 Then when he was not | able to read the eminent scholars, he turned to Ḥarra's  
 essay and read it. He then went on to compose a book and started to research  
 the | dimensions of the instruments, especially those of the ancients, and was  
 convinced that no theoretical and no practical matters can take place perfectly  
 except in these instruments. His thoughts were concentrated on this issue and  
 he refuted [the idea that modern instruments] could also have the potential  
 and qualities of the ancient ones [in theoretical and practical matters]. He also  
 thought that notes in the modern instruments were unlike those of the ancient  
 ones. His thought went the way of the alchemists in the science of alchemy.<sup>14</sup>  
 He then went on to say that these notes cannot be rendered from modern lutes  
 because they are different from the lutes of the ancients, and that the mea-  
 surement of the notes cannot be known or correctly obtained but from the

12 Al-Kātib likely meant his wonderful chapters (23, 24, 35) on vocal and instrumental ornaments.

13 Shiloah has "second heavy" but the MS is very clear that it is the first heavy (Sh. 207).

14 According to Shiloah, the person claiming that the notes of the modern instruments are different from the ancient ones, is doing a useless task similar to the tasks of alchemists. Moreover, Shiloah traces this line of thinking to two texts of Plato: a musician / philosopher criticizes a "harmonicien" for not receiving proper musical training, who spends his time tuning the lyre, and is thus a "tuner"; "harmoniciens" waste their time comparing the tuning of various instruments and, as a result, their work is as useless as that of astronomers (Sh. 208 n. 1).

dimensions of the instruments. | I left him in his ignorance as he did not accept [my advice] and [I] waited till his book appears so that I could make fun of him. Sh. 208

This is the end of the book, achieved with the help of God and His mercy.

The book was finished on Wednesday the eleventh of Muḥarram 625/1225, in the city of Sinjār the protected; it was copied by the Mamlūk Ḥasan b. Yūsuf Abī l-Qāsim al-Malikī al-Ashrafī, praise God and pray for our master Muḥammad the illiterate, and the pure members of his family, may they all be blessed, and we ask God the most sublime, forgiveness for him and his nation, may peace be upon him.



# Glossary

- abahl̥** a husky voice, a nice quality  
(but it should not be overdone)
- abhā** more brilliant
- adab** knowledge; good behavior;  
belles-lettres
- ‘addala al-awzān** scanning the poetic  
measure
- afkham** richer and more ample (see  
also *tafkhīm*)
- aghzar** more abundant
- aḥsanta** “you did well”
- ajashsh** a loud husky voice with rich,  
abundant notes and ample sound
- ajsām** see *jism*
- ‘ajuz** second hemistich
- ajzā’** see *juz’*
- akhṭa’a** to make mistakes (in a perfor-  
mance)
- āla** a music instrument
- aladhdh masmū’an** more pleasing to  
the ear
- ‘ālīn** loud; high-pitched (voice)
- ‘amal** musical sound, performance
- ‘amalī** practical musical art
- amlas** smooth, moderate, clear voice  
with few ornamented repetitions
- ‘amūd** basic constituents of the rhyth-  
mic modes; main melody
- anf** higher bridge of lute at the inter-  
section of the neck and peg holder
- aqdār** see *qadr*
- ‘aqīd** a refreshing drink prepared by  
condensing milk and dissolving it in  
water
- (al-) aqrā’ al-tāmma** complete pluck-  
ing that results in a loud, strong, and  
resounding sound
- ‘arūd** prosody
- ‘arūd al-ghīnā’** durations and mea-  
suring notes
- aryaḥiyya** to be generous, relaxed, and  
happy (as a result of *ṭarab*)
- aṣāba** to hit the mark (in a perfor-  
mance)
- aṣābi’** see *iṣba’*
- ashba’a** to fully ornament; to accom-  
pany by tapping the rhythmic  
mode
- aṣl** see *uṣūl*
- aṣwāt** pl. of *ṣawt*
- athbat** stronger (poems)
- aṭraba** to cause the audience to reach  
a state of *ṭarab*
- awqa’a** to tap the rhythmic mode; to  
sing
- awtār** see *watar*
- awzān** see *wazn*
- azj** oblong
- azmīna** pl. of *zaman*
- bahā’** beauty, brilliance
- bamm** first and lowest string of the  
lute
- banafsaḥ** violet juice
- bāqillā** sprouted beans
- baqīyya** limma
- basīṭ** measured music
- basṭī** type of unmeasured melody  
made up of notes and poetry; notes  
and rhythms from instruments; caus-  
ing cheer and delight
- bidāya** (pl. *bidāyāt*) beginning (of the  
notes)
- binṣīr** ring finger fret at 408 cents from  
the open string; melodic mode that

uses the ring finger fret as a tonic in the course of the ring finger fret

*bis diapason* double octave

*bisāt* tonality

*bu'd* interval

*būq* trumpet

*dabādīb* pl. of *dabdāb*

*dabdāb* kettle drum

*daghdagha* continuous touching of strings with fingers

*dajara* resembling the sound of sorrow, worry, and exhaustion

*daqīq* thin (string)

*daraj* see *idrāj*

*darb* poem; playing, plucking, instrumental piece or exercise; playing technique or style or ornament, instrumental performance, instrumental rendition of a song, instrumental accompaniment (see also *istiftāh fi l-darb*)

*dārīb* (pl. *ḡurrāb*) instrumental performer

*dastān* fret

*dawīy* powerful, reverberating sound

*dawr* rhythmic cycle (two cycles make up a rhythmic mode)

*dhāhib* penetrating, remaining in the ears

*dhāqa* to test (the first hemistich set to music)

*ḡīf* double

*dīrāsa* learning and practicing

*dīrāya* awareness of musical knowledge

*duhn al-lawz* almond oil

*dūn* inferior (melody)

*dūnāy* a double *nāy*

*ḡurrāb* see *dārīb*

*fakhīma* ample (notes)

*fakhkhama al-alfaz* clearly articulating words

*falak* star

*al-falak al-a'zam* the highest and greatest celestial sphere; in Arabic astronomy it was the eighth sphere held by the fixed stars (see also *mūsīqāqiya*)

*fāriḡhat al-nagham* melismatic melodies

*farīk* toasted green wheat pounded with butter and sugar

*faṡīha* distinct notes (found in low-pitched notes)

*fāṡila* (pl. *fawāṡil*) poetic separators; last foot in the first hemistich; separator between two cycles

*fawāṡil* see *fāṡila*

**first heavy** in its metrical form it is made up of six attacks plus the attacks of passage and support: 4/2 | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; its modal form is | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |; the **first light heavy** its metrical form is 4/4 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; its modal form is | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |

*Furs* Persians

*furūsh* (pl. of *farsh*) furniture, carpets, mattresses

*ghamza* (lit., “wink”) soft or weak attack; soft notes occurring at the end of sections or at the end of melodies; high-pitched note furtively sung at the end of a section after lower-pitched notes preceding it (see also *maghāmīz*)

*gharā'īb* (pl. of *gharīb*) variations of rhythmic mode

*gharīḡī* the compositional style of al-Gharīḡ

*ghilz* thickness, coarseness (of a voice)

- ghināʾ** singing; vocal composition; musical arts and knowledge
- ghunna** half nasality, singing an unvoiced *n* so that some of the air passes through the nose and some from between the lips
- habs** slow tempo
- hādd** high-pitched (note, voice); fifth string of the lute, also known as **zīr**
- hādd**  
**hāddat al-hāddāt** (*nète hyperboléôn*) [G3], the highest note of the double octave (see also **hidda**)
- hadhf** removal of attack (see also **ṭayy**)
- hadīth** sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad
- hadr** see **hathth**
- hadw** caravan chant
- hāfiẓ** keeper of the soul in a moderate state (character of a tetrachord); see also **istiqrārī**
- hakā** to resemble, imitate
- halq** throat and pharynx
- hamza** glottal stop; powerful abundant sound coming from the chest, it resembles a sigh or a moan (see also **nabra**, **zafra**, **zaḥma**)
- hanjara** larynx and throat
- haraka** action, motion; short vowel; moderate attack  
**harakat al-iʿrāb** desinential inflections
- haramī** type of melody made up of poetry, notes, and rhythm
- harf** a letter of the alphabet (see **hurūf**)  
**harf mutaḥarrik** voveled letter  
**harf sākin** silent letter or unvoveled consonant
- harrara** to compose; revise, edit, clarify, redact, release
- hasan** beautiful
- hathth** faster tempo; acceleration; also known as **hadr**
- hazaj** in its metrical form it is made up of four attacks plus the attacks of passage and support: 6/8 | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; its modal form is | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |; the **light hazaj** has the same pattern but faster
- haziq** (a voice that) expands and exceeds the proper bounds so that the notes come out and spread all the way and increase in volume
- hazza** a shaking of the note
- hazzāz** a series of consecutive songs in a concert, preferably in the same melodic mode
- hidda** acuity, distinctiveness (of a voice); passion (see also **hādd**)
- hidḥq** skill
- hikāya** imitation (of compositional style)
- hiss** voice
- hudāʾ** a caravan song that consists of a type of singing in the style of recitation but with a bit of **taṭrīb** (causing **ṭarab**), ornamented repetitions, and a raised voice
- hurūf** (sing. **harf**) letters  
**hurūf al-ghunna** *lām* (*l*), *mīm* (*m*) and *nūn* (*n*)  
**hurūf al-līn** soft letters: *alif* (*a*), *wāw* (*u*) and *yāʾ* (*i*)  
**hurūf al-madd** letters of prolongation: *alif* (*a*), *wāw* (*u*) and *yāʾ* (*i*)  
**hurūf muṣawwata** voveled letters (*a*, *u*, *i*)

- hurūf al-ṣafīr* the sibilants, such as  
(*sīn*) (s), (*zāy*) (z), and (*ṣād*) (ṣ)
- ibdāl* replacement of a vowel with  
another in one breath; replacement  
of a note with another
- Iblīs* the devil
- ibra* rule
- ibṭā* slowness
- idrāj* gradation, also known as *daraj*:  
doubling all attacks including the  
attacks of passage and support,  
resulting in temporally equidistant  
attacks; filling the separators between  
the cycles and between the heavy and  
slow attack either with light attacks,  
or with rubbings, or winks, or desires,  
or scents; additions do not alter the  
meter (see also *tadrīj*)
- iftitāh* prelude (see also *istiftāh*)
- ikhtilās* it is done with the plectrum,  
in which the weak attack is played in  
a quasi-imperceptible way, it is best  
placed at the end of the sections or  
melodies (see also *mukhtalis*)
- (*al*)-*ilm al-muṭribī* science of music
- ilmī* theoretical and scientific (aspect  
of music)
- imāla* the phonetic phenomenon in  
which the long *ā* tends toward long *ī*  
and the short *a* tends toward short *i*;  
it consists of inclining the vowel in a  
letter to the one that follows
- imsāk* (lit., “holding back”) slow tempo
- indabagha* (lit., “tanned”) well pre-  
pared and trained (voice)
- index finger* see *sabbāba*
- infiṣāl* separation motif, it occurs in  
the middle of the first verse, at its  
end, or in the second verse
- inqaṭa’a* to stop being beautiful, as in  
the case of a voice that is too husky;  
poetry and melody that falls short  
because of the use of a short vowel  
instead of a longer one
- inṣāt* listening
- inshād* chanting (see also *nashūd*)
- intiḳāl* moving from attack to attack,  
moving note to note, interval to  
interval, tetrachord to tetrachord,  
melodic mode to melodic mode,  
tonality to tonality; melodic move-  
ment
- intizā’* see *infiṣāl*
- īqā’* musical bar and cycle; two cycles;  
rhythm; rhythmic mode; meter;  
tempo; dynamics; timbre
- iqtidā’* asking for repetitions
- iqtidār* (performer’s) capability
- i’rāb* grammatical inflections
- irkhā’* loosening the string while tun-  
ing
- irshād* sources
- irtijāz* use of poems in the *rajaz* meter  
to incite soldiers in war or for poems  
needed in times of stress
- irtiyād* technical exercises
- iṣba’* (pl. *aṣābi’*) finger; mode; tonic;  
tonic and course
- ishāra* gestures by means of eyes, eye-  
brows, palms, shoulders, and head  
movements
- ishbā’* filling (singing with enough air  
and ornaments, see also *tashbī’*)
- ishmām* scent of a vowel; weak or soft  
attack; a rubbing, wink, or small light  
attack; a very feeble vowel sound that  
is weaker than the *rawm* (desire)
- isjāh* lower octave (see also *sijāh*)
- isjāh al-isjāh* lower than the lower  
octave

- istawā* finalized (first hemistich set to music)
- istifā'* overdoing (singing of high-pitched notes)
- istiftāḥ fi l-ḍarb* an instrumental prelude in which attacks are separated by equal durations; light meters are used in it (see also *iftitāḥ*)
- istighātha* a soft and high-pitched cry that resembles the sound of a person crying for help, it has humidity and a musical sound
- istihāla* transition from one melodic mode to another; moving from a higher to a lower pitch and vice versa; changes affecting the soul
- istihlāl* chanted and unmeasured vocal prelude occurring in a section or a poetic foot or less than a hemistich (see also *nashīd*)
- istiqrārī* stable, moderate (character of a tetrachord); see also *ḥāfiẓ*
- istirāḥa* interludes to give the singer a rest
- itbā'* doubling or prolonging the letters *l*, *m*, and *n*
- ītilāf* consonance, harmony; rhythmic harmony; notes that make up a melody
- ītlāq* see *muṭlaq*
- īṭrāb* causing *ṭarab*
- ittifāq* consonance  
*al-ittifāq al-a'ẓam* greatest consonance
- izhār* highlighting elements in a melody
- Jāhiliyya* pre-Islamic era
- jahīra* loud
- jahr* a loud, thick voice with clear notes
- jalājil* bells
- jam'* a group of notes  
*al-jam' alladhī bi-l-arba'* the fourth  
*al-jam' alladhī bi-l-khams* the fifth  
*al-jam' alladhī bi-l-kull* the octave  
*al-jam' al-tāmm* the group that encompasses all notes twice, the complete group, the double octave (see also *jumū'*)
- jarrāt* dragging or pulling the plectrum across the strings so the notes are consecutive
- jasā* hardness (of throat)
- jāsī* a hard, rough, and rugged (voice)
- jass* tapping the strings on the fingerboard with the fingers of the left hand; right fingers (likely just the thumb and index finger) plucking the strings without the use of the plectrum; checking the tuning
- jins* rhythmic and melodic mode; tetrachord  
*al-jins al-qawī* diatonic tetrachord
- jism* (pl. *ajṣām*) (lit. "body") instrument
- jullāb* julep  
*(al-) jumū' al-mushtarakāt li-l-aṣwāt* groups of consonant intervals (see also *jam'*)
- jumūd* hardness (of a voice)
- juz'* (pl. *ajzā'*) poetic foot, poetic division
- kadāra* lack of clarity (of a voice)
- kāmil* complete, perfect, strong tetrachord; diatonic tetrachord; complete melody
- karra* recurrence, it may be called *radda*, it is the repetition of one note or technique in the melody
- kathīrā* gum obtained from tragacanth

- khabb** (lit., “jogging trotting”) speeding what should be slow
- khāfa** hidden (voice or sound of strings)
- khafīf** light (music, dance)
- khafīf al-hazaj** light *hazaj*
- khafīf al-thaqīl al-awwal** first light heavy
- khafīf al-thaqīl al-thānī** second light heavy
- khaṣī** eunuch
- khaṣīb** productive
- khattī** unmeasured instrumental music; unmeasured instrumental prelude; sound emanating from tuning a string or wind instrument (see also *nafasiyyāt*)
- khiffa** lightness of rhythmic mode
- khinṣir** little finger fret at 498 cents from the open string; melodic mode that uses the little finger fret as a tonic in the course of the middle or ring finger fret
- killa** (pl. *kilal*) drape, covering
- kürdeyli ḥijāzkar** a melodic mode: C D flat E flat F G A flat B flat C
- lahn** (pl. *luḥūn*) melody; melodic mode
- al-lahn al-tāmm al-mūsīqārī** a perfect melody that is tripartite (made of poetry, notes, and rhythm)
- lathgha** defective pronunciation
- lawī** curved; chromatic tetrachord
- layyin** low-pitched voice; soft (attack, string, tetrachord) (see also *līn*)
- light** light *hazaj*
- līn** gravity, low pitch, low register (see also *layyin*)
- līnat** lowered (by half a tone)
- little finger** see *khinṣir*
- luḥūn** see *lahn*
- lūra** lyre
- lutf** grace (of melodies)
- ma‘āzif** see *mī‘zafa*
- mabādī’** see *mabda’*
- ma‘badī** the compositional style of Ma‘bad
- mabānī** see *mabnā*
- mabda’** (pl. *mabādī’*) fundamental form of rhythmic mode; instrumental prelude with attacks separated by equal durations, and which uses different light meters (see also *taqdī-māt*)
- mabnā** (pl. *mabānī*) fundamental elements of a melody
- madda** long vocal notes exiting from one place in the mouth; prolongation of notes; whole tone (see also *ṭanīnī*)
- niṣf madda** half tone (see also *niṣf ṭanīnī*)
- madīh** panegyric, praising a person or tribe
- madkhal** introduction (to an essay or book)
- madkhūl** inserted (notes in a melody)
- mafrūḍa** (*proslambanoménos*) the first note of the double octave
- maghāmiz** winks (see also *ghamza*)
- maḥbūs** held back
- maḥmūl** a melodic mode that uses the middle finger fret of the *mathnā* string as a tonic in the course of the middle finger fret
- maḥsūr** a tired (singer)
- maḥṣūr** a melodic mode that uses the ring finger fret of the *mathnā* string as a tonic in the course of the ring finger fret

- maḥthūth* light, fast, accelerated
- mahzūza* shaken (note; see also *hazza*)
- majlis* (pl. *majālis*) an assembly of people (depending on context, listening and discussing music and singing)
- majrā* course (of middle or ring finger fret)
- makhānīth* see *mukhannas*
- mākhūr* tavern
- mākhūrī* second light heavy
- mala'a* filling the notes with sufficient breath
- malāḥa* beauty (of voice)
- malwan* (pl. *malāwī*) peg of the lute
- manākhīr* nostrils and nose
- manṭiq* logic; diction
- manṭiqī* (lit., "speech-like") very feeble (voice), less than the *muzlīm*
- maqāla* essay
- maqāṭi' al-ajzā'* ends of sections and separators
- maqrū'* see *qar'*
- maqṭa'* cadence in vocal and instrumental music, it uses long or short notes, high- or low-pitched ones; end of section; end of melody; end of second cycle in a rhythmic mode; last poetic foot (see also *munṣarafāt*)
- maqṭa' al-bayt* end of verse; end of musical cycle
- maqṭa' musta'naf* a resuming cadence following a cadence
- maqṭa' ṭawīl* long end of section or cadence
- marāthī* see *marthiya*
- ma'rifa* knowledge of musical matters
- marthiya* (pl. *marāthī*) lamentations, elegies
- masha* (lit. "rubbing") the practitioners' term for a moderate or weak attack
- masrūd* poetic feet that follow one another without separation; a poem in which the first hemistich differs in length from the second one (see also *qawl masrūd*)
- mathlath* second string of the lute
- mathnā* third string of the lute
- maṭwī* dropped out (see also *ṭayy*)
- mawḍī'* (pl. *mawāḍī'*) passage (in a melody); ornamental technique
- mawlā* a freed slave or client seeking the protection of a strong Arabic tribe
- mazāmīr* see *mizmār*
- mazhar* lute
- mazmūm* a melodic mode that uses the index finger fret of the *mathnā* string as a tonic in the course of the middle or ring finger fret
- mèse* see *wuṣṭā*
- middle finger** see *wuṣṭā*
- miḍrāb* pick
- miṭṭāḥ* key (it refers to the index finger fret)
- miṣrā'* hemistich
- mi'zafa* (pl. *ma'āzif*) lyre
- mizmār* a soft or loud oboe
- mu'allaq* (lit., "suspended") a melodic mode that starts with the open string, it uses the Persian middle finger or the anterior to the middle finger fret but does not use the index finger fret
- mu'ammāt* invisible (sound of a voice)
- mu'āwanāt* supporting notes used for ornamentation (see also *mu'in*)
- mubalbal* (lit., "confused") voice in which the notes are disordered and do not occur in their proper places

- muḍāʿaf* doubled (see also *taḍʿif*)
- muḍārāt* clever coaxing (to hide a weak voice)
- mudawwar* a round, circular note; a medium voice inclining toward loudness
- muḍṭarīb* unsettled (singing, because of over-ornamentation)
- mufakkkham* ample sound (see also *tafkhīm*)
- muḥḥadāt* single and fundamental attacks in a rhythmic mode
- mughannī* a singer
- muḥaddab* another name for the Zalzal middle finger fret
- muhāhāt* repetition of the letter *hāʾ* (*h*) in vocal melodies, it involves sighing and sobbing
- muḥannan* (notes that depict) longing
- muḥarrar* accurate, excellent, beautiful, and elegant (slow melodies)
- muḥtadd* sharp (voice)
- muḥdath* modern (music and poetry)
- muʿīn* techniques and ornaments that support the melody (see also *muʿāwanāt*)
- mujaljal* a voice with a loud clamor
- mujannab* anterior to the index finger; it is not clear if it is used as a tonic, or a course, or both, or just for softness and ornamental purposes
- mujannab al-sabbāba al-awwal* anterior to the index finger fret at 98 cents from the open string
- mujannab al-sabbāba al-thānī* anterior to the index finger fret at 150 cents from the open string
- mujannab al-wuṣṭā* anterior to the middle finger, it is between the index finger and the Persian middle finger and set at approximately 250 cents from the open string (this is different from al-Fārābī's *mujannab al-wuṣṭā* at 294 cents from the open string)
- mujjaṣṣaṣa* plastered
- mujn* a shameless pleasurable quality in melodies
- mujūn* shameless pleasures
- mukhālīf* a rhythmic variation technique in which successive cycles have differing patterns; the *ramal* and the *hazaj* with *tajnīb* are wrongly called *mukhālīf*
- mukhalkhal* a loud, high-pitched, beautiful voice
- mukhannas* (pl. *makhānīth*) effeminate
- mukhtalaṭ* mixed light meters
- mukhtalīs* (an attack) stealthily played in a quasi-imperceptible manner (see also *ikhṭilās*)
- mukhtaniq* constricted (voice)
- mulahḥin* composer
- mulawwan* chromatic tetrachord
- mulāyim* harmonious (sounds)
- mumakkkhar* rhythmic modes to which *tamkhīr* was applied
- mumtalīʿat al-nagham* syllabic and extra syllabic melodies
- munāfarāt* dissonant notes
- munaghgham* measured vocal music (see also *tanghīm*); it is similar to the *zawāʿidī*
- ghayr munaghgham* unmeasured
- munāsabāt* ratios
- munʿaṣir* curved, squeezed, wrung (voice) resembling the throats of hunchbacked people

- munfaṣil** disjunctive rhythmic mode in which the temporal spacing of attacks is unequal and its cycles are separated by a long duration
- munkasira** a broken note
- munkhafīḍ** low vowel sound *i*
- munna** stamina
- munqaṭīʿ** a broken (voice); voice below pitch
- munṣarafāt** (lit., “leaving, exiting”) a musical segment(s) preceding a cadence and alerting the listener that the cadence is about to happen
- munshaʿitha** see *shaʿith*
- muqaddima** an instrumental introduction to the vocal part (see also *nashīd* and *istihlāl*)
- muqaʿqaʿ** see *mutaqaʿqiʿ*
- muqarnaṣ** a wooden-terraced ceiling
- muqawwī** strengthening; a diatonic tetrachord
- muqīma** a steady and straight note
- muqtanaʿāt** see *taqnīʿ*
- murājaʿa** the revision of a section of a song such that it is sung again and again and improved each time; a kind of musical gloss, painting, interpretation and rhetoric (see also *tarjīʿ*)
- murajjah** inclining (notes between the *mazmūm* and *muṭlaq*) (see also *tarjīh*)
- murakkab** heterogeneity (i.e., two consecutive cycles with variations); a compound rhythmic mode made up of two different genera
- murattal** chanted
- mursal** a plain melody made up of small light attacks; without beauty
- murtaʿid** a trembling (voice)
- musalsal** consecutive plucking (plucked attacks)
- muṣalṣal** sharp, dry, sometimes akin to screeching or the stridulation of crickets
- musarraj** singing and composing in the style of Ibn Surayj (see also *surayjī*)
- muṣawwit** a shouter
- mushabbaʿ** (songs with) filled, embellished notes; full attack (see also *tashbīʿ*)
- mushākīl** successive cycles with the same pattern
- mushṭ** the lower bridge of a lute
- mūsīqāqiya** (apocryphal) Greek name for the highest and greatest celestial sphere (see also *al-falak al-aʿzam*)
- mūsīqār** musician; musicianship
- al-laḥn al-tāmm al-mūsīqārī** a perfect melody that is tripartite (made of poetry, notes, and rhythm)
- mūsīqārīyya** musical art (see also *ṣināʿat al-mūsīqi*)
- mūsīqī** music
- aṣḥāb mūsīqī** masters of music
- musmaṭ** plain (melody)
- muṣraʿ** poetic feet that follow one another with a separator; a poem that is prosodically sound with the same pattern in both hemistiches
- mustadīra** a note imagined as circular
- mustahadd** a rhythmic mode much used in al-Kātib’s era (unfortunately, he did not define it)
- mustahṣafa** compactly twisted (strings)
- mustahsan** liked, preferred
- mustaʿlin** high vowel sound *a*

- musta'naf* see *maqta'*
- mutadākhil* interlocked light meters
- mutafādila* poems made up of unequal rhythmic feet
- mutakāfi'a* heterogeneous poems with symmetrical patterns
- mutakāthif* densely packed notes
- mutakhalkhil* soft or porous (strings)
- mutakhallil* non-compact twisted (strings)
- mutaqa'qi'* clattering voice resembling the unpleasant speech of the Bedouins
- mutarādif* consecutive and equally spaced (attacks)
- mutasāwiya* poems made up of equal rhythmic feet
- mutawassīta* moderate (attack, tempo, tetrachord); medium vowel sound *u*
- muṭlaq* open string; melodic modes that use the open *mathnā* string as a tonic in the course of the middle or ring finger fret
- mutqin* perfect (melody)
- muṭribī* see *al-'ilm al-muṭribī*
- muttafiq* harmonious, consonant (voices and strings)
- muttaṣil* conjunctive (rhythmic mode in which attacks are equally spaced temporally, and in which the attacks and cycles are continuous and uninterrupted); melodies made up of attacks that are continuous and close together
- muzīja* notes that are mixed heterogeneously or homogeneously
- muḥlim* a voice or string with a hidden and invisible sound
- nābī* rebounding air
- nabra* a short letter sung starting with a glottal stop, it always occurs in vowels; short notes are sung with a soft glottal stop (*nabra* or *hamza*) before or after a vowel; added to the beginning of a long note and long vowel to facilitate its performance; when the end of a section or song lands on a voweled consonant, a *nabra* is added to facilitate the cut off
- nadāwa* humid (voice) (see also *nadī*, *raṭb*)
- nadb* lamentation
- nadī* moist (voice) (see also *nadāwa*, *raṭb*)
- nadīm* boon companion
- nafaḍāt* (lit., "shaking off, shaking out") similar to *taqnī'*
- nafas* breath; breathing
- nafasiyyāt* wind instruments
- nafkh al-taswiya* blowing the *mizmār* to adjust its tuning
- nafs* mind, soul
- naghānigh* certain portions of flesh by the uvula, or the partition between the alimentary canal and the wind-pipe that produces certain vocal sounds
- naghma* or *naghama* note; melody; motion of the vowel
- nā'ih* male mourner
- nā'im* soft (voice)
- na'ir* shouting similar to that of a drunk man, long or broken, but in one breath
- nāqiṣ al-naghām* singing below pitch
- naqra* musical attack; the beating of a percussion instrument; the plucking of a string instrument
- naqra layīna* soft attack

- naqra mutawassiṭa* moderate attack
- naqra qawīyya* loud, strong, and resounding attack
- naqrat al-i'timād* attack of support
- naqrat al-majāz* attack of passage
- na'ra* see *na'ir*
- nashīd* unmeasured vocal prelude that is longer than the *istihlāl*; it consists of one line of poetry if the poem is made up of two lines, or two lines if the poem is made up of four lines in which the two lines of the *nashīd* can be in succession or not; more than two lines of *nashīd* are only used by singers of a *qaṣīda* (see also *nisf*)
- nasīb* erotic introduction in classical poetry
- naw'* melodic mode; rhythmic mode; rhythmic variation
- nawḥ* lamentation, it occurs in soft and sad melodies
- nāy* soft oboe
- nazafa* exhaustion
- nāẓim* arranger, organizer; enharmonic tetrachord
- nète hyperboléôn* see *ḥāddat al-ḥāddāt*
- nūmrishṭ* soft boiled eggs
- nisf* a *nashīd* of five lines
- nisf madda* half tone (see also *nisf tanīnī*)
- nīyāḥa* lamentations
- nusakh* written works
- proslambanoménos* see *mafrūḍa*
- qabḍī* causing anxiety and depression
- qabīḥ* an ugly (sound)
- qaḍīb* a wand
- qadīm* old (singing)
- qadr* (pl. *aqdār*) durational amount; tempo
- qadr al-ḥathth* amount of fastness
- qadr al-ṣawṭ* tempo of song
- qāfiya* rhyme
- qahqaha* singing akin to loud and broken laughter, common among Baghdadi singers.
- qar'* plucking, beating
- qārra* a plain and stable note
- qaṣīda* a long monorhyme classical poem
- qaṣīr* (pl. *qīṣār*) short (note)
- qaṣṣara* falling short (in performance)
- qaṭī'* (a voice) that can barely be heard; it resembles the voice of a tired singer who cannot complete the notes; a singer who sings the higher notes below pitch
- qawī* strong; diatonic tetrachord
- qawl masrūd* recitation
- qawl al-qaṣā'id* reciting classical poems in a declamatory style
- qisma* musical divisions
- qiyās* analogical deduction
- qusāṭ* see *bisāṭ*
- rabāb* rebec
- radda* a return to the first word or first verse of the poem after finishing its last one
- rafa'a 'an* being relieved (from playing an instrument)
- ramal* in its metrical form it is made up of four attacks plus the attacks of passage and support: 3/2 | ♪♪♪ | ♪♪♪ |; its modal form is | ♪♪♪. | ♪♪♪. |; light *ramal* 3/4 | ♪♪♪ | ♪♪♪ |; its modal form is 3/4 | ♪♪ | ♪♪ |
- randaha* see *shadhra*
- raqīq* thin (string)

- raqṣ** dance (see also *zafn*)
- raṭb** humid beautiful voice resembling freely flowing water (see also *nadāwa, nadī*)
- raththa** shabbiness
- rawā** to relate, transmit
- rawāshūn** Persian and Khurasānī instrumental pieces
- rawm** desiring the attack but not showing it yet to point to its location so that people can be aware of it; a soft attack; an obscure and slurred vowel sound stronger than the *ish-mām* (scent)
- riḥw** (a voice) in which the notes are kneaded together or chewed
- ring finger** see *binšir*
- rīwāya** recital, transmission
- Rūm** Byzantium
- sabbāba** index finger fret; melodic modes that use the index finger fret as a tonic in the course of the middle or ring finger fret
- sadd** see *sudūd*
- ṣadr** chest, lung; front of foot; first hemistich
- ṣāfi** clear (voice)  
(*al-*) *ṣāfi al-ḥiss* clear voice
- ṣafīr** thin and high tone; hissing
- ṣahīl** gradual notes resembling the neighing of a horse, they are shaken and resemble the *nabra*
- ṣajha** low note, lower octave (see also *ṣijāḥ*)
- sama**<sup>ʿ</sup> ear
- samā**<sup>ʿ</sup> listening to music
- samā**<sup>ʿ</sup> an Ottoman-era instrumental form in 10/8 meter with the form A refrain B refrain C refrain D refrain; sometimes the D section is in a different meter such as a 3/4 or a 6/8
- sāmi**<sup>ʿ</sup> listener
- ṣāni**<sup>ʿ</sup> (pl. *ṣunnā*<sup>ʿ</sup>) artisan
- sard** presentation (of melody, a detailed presentation of a melody involves a perfect melody with regard to rhythm, rhythmic modes, melodic movements and embellishments)
- sariqāt** theft (of melodies)
- ṣarīr** a voice akin to screeching or the stridulation of crickets (see also *muṣalṣal*)
- sarī**<sup>ʿ</sup> fast
- ṣarkha** (pl. *ṣarkhāt*) scream; a continuous high-pitched sound; it occurs in the middle or the end of melodies
- ṣarrār** a voice that sounds like crickets (see also *muṣalṣal*)
- ṣarṣūrī** a voice that sounds like crickets, it is cockroach-like, thin, high-pitched, naked, and ugly
- sawīq** juice of toasted and crushed grains
- ṣawt** sound; voice; sung poem  
*al-ṣawt al-munaghgham* a measured vocal melody
- ṣayḥa** a high note; a higher octave; the highest note in a song (see also *ṣiyāḥ*)
- second heavy** in its metrical form it is made up of eight attacks plus the attacks of passage and support: 5/2 | ♪♪♪♪ | ♪♪♪♪ | ; its modal form is | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ; the **second light heavy** its metric form is 5/4 | ♪♪♪♪ | ♪♪♪♪ | ; its modal form is | ♪♪♪ | ♪♪♪ |
- shadd** (pl. *shudūd*) pulling the string while tuning; melodic mode
- shadhra** (pl. *shadharāt, shudhūr*) a short soft letter starting with an

- imāla*; a short note that starts with a smooth voice and is sung to low long vowels (long *ī*), and phonetic alterations (*a* going toward *ī*)
- shadīd* high-pitched notes
- shahaqāt* inhaling, sighing, sobbing; they occur in the letter *hā'* (*h*)
- sha'ith* (a voice that is) sometimes clear, disarranged at other times, muddled, its sound is unfinished
- shajā* moving, touching mood, sadness; among the qualities that produce *tarab*
- shajā* moving, touching, sad, best, and the most beautiful, clearest voice filled with notes
- shamā'il* nature and character
- shidda* high-pitched notes
- shudhūr* see *shadhra*
- shudūd* see *shadd*
- sibistān* sebesten plum
- ṣihhat al-qisma* proper musical divisions
- ṣijāḥ* low note; lower octave; transition to a lower octave; lower register; its role is to ornament and let the throat rest
- ṣijāḥ al-ṣijāḥ* lower octave of the octave (see also *isjāḥ* and *sajḥa*)
- ṣila* connecting a verse to a verse or a hemistich to a hemistich without a cut-off or breathing
- ṣinā'a* art
- ṣinā'at al-mūsīqī* musical art, theoretical and practical
- sitāra* curtain; *ṣāhib al-sitāra* is the man in charge of the curtain
- sivāk* a small stick whose tip is softened by chewing or beating so it can be used to clean and polish the teeth.
- ṣiyāḥ* a high note; higher octave; transition to a higher octave; higher register; cry, scream
- ṣiyāḥ al-ṣiyāḥ* a higher octave of the octave
- ṣiyāḥī* a voice out of tune with the strings (see also *ṣayḥa*)
- ṣiyāsa* management (of proper behavior)
- al-ṣiyāsa al-madaniyya* administration of the city
- ṣiyāsat al-bayt* administration of the house
- ṣiyāsat al-naḥs* administration of the soul
- sudūd* (pl. of *sadd*) blockage, obstruction (of voice)
- sukūn* silence; unvoiced consonant
- ṣulb* solid (string)
- ṣūrat al-laḥn* instrumental version of a vocal melody
- surayjī* compositional style of Ibn Surayj (see also *musarraḥ*, *tas-rīj*)
- ta'awwuh* moaning, a melody can be built on all or some of it; producing a nice and soft melody
- ṭab'* character; natural disposition
- ṭabaqa* register; range; intonation; key; tone level; tonality; string tone; tetrachord
- tabarrama* to become tired (of too much instrumental music)
- tabdil* replacing notes
- taḍā'ul* a feeble (voice)
- tadawwara* to become round
- taḍ'if* doubling or multiplying the attacks (see also *muḍā'af*)
- tadrīj* gradually descending from a higher to a lower register and vice

- versa; a note that is repeated with equal durations (see also *idrāj*)
- tafāghur** opening the mouth widely in letters with the short vowel a; the Baghdadi musicians have a particular style related to it
- tafkhīm** an ample, emphatic rich sound from the chest; expanding the air passages in the lungs and making the notes heavier; strengthening the note with what is similar to it (as in an instrument playing a note in unison with the voice) (see also *afkham*, *fakhima*, *fakhhama*, *mufakhhama*)
- tafkīk** taking apart, unfastening; it occurs in the letters *t* and *y*
- tafṣīl** disjoining; separating the attacks and the cycles and not filling the separators; turning a conjunctive rhythm into a disjunctive one; elongating the separator in a disjunctive rhythm; introducing a separator in a disjunctive rhythm in a location different from its normal one
- taghrīd** twittering
- tahrīk al-ghinā'** ornamenting the melody
- taḥsīn** embellishment, improving (the melody)
- tajnīb, tajnība** (lit., "to the side") softening and lowering of notes in the middle of the melody and at the end of sections or end of melodies; a technique in which the note of the index finger is replaced by its anterior in the middle or end of melodies; it is not obtained on the frets but below the little finger because it is possible there; it is often used in melodies in the *mazmūm* melodic mode (see also *mujannab*)
- tajzī'a** poetic divisions, feet
- takāhun** a technique that makes the voice reverberate powerfully in the throat, as if it comes from the bass string, it resembles the speech of the monks or the growl of a person with a thick throat
- takhalluṣ** technical skills
- takhayyul** imagination
- takrī'** burping; it may mean successive notes of very short duration akin to burping
- takhīr** (pl. *takhīrāt*) the multiplication of notes
- talhīn** composition
- ta'līf** composition; harmonics (of Nichomachus)
- ta'līf maḥdūd** (notes) composed in a delimited manner with respect to the tone system, melodic modes, durations, and rhythmic modes
- ta'līf al-nagham** consonant notes used in a composition
- ta'līfi** an enharmonic tetrachord
- ta'līqa** it occurs in the unvoiced letter *l* when the tongue is suspended from the palate and held for a certain time
- tamaṭṭī** the completion of a song with the breath taken to its limit on the last note as if an innovation was brought about
- tamawwuj** waving
- tamdīd** string tension; tonality
- tamkhūr** making some or all of the attacks of a rhythmic mode resemble the first part of the second light

- heavy in duration (a quarter note); sometimes it entails the repetition of such attacks and the creation of a longer cycle; dropping-out the attacks of a rhythmic mode in its original form and repeating the parts with dropped-out attacks; decreasing the plucking of strings
- tamtama** stammering
- tamzīj** mixing consonant and dissonant notes such that a consonant note is placed between two dissonant ones
- tanahhud** a sighing that occurs after a note(s) are followed by high breathing; it depicts longing
- tanāzaʿa** to contend with one another
- tanghīm** measured vocal music composition; composing; singing (see also *munaghgham*)
- ṭanīn** ringing, reverberation; sounds; whole tone
- ṭanīnī** diatonic tetrachord; whole tone (see also *madda*)
- buʿd ṭanīnī** whole tone
- niṣf ṭanīnī** half tone; limma (see also *niṣf madda*)
- taqdīmāt** preludes (see also *mabādiʿ*)
- taqdīr** worth (of a melody)
- taqnīʿ** (lit., “raising the head of a beast”) plucking the strings toward the end of sections or melodies in a downward motion when the hand goes away from the strings toward the right side
- taqsīs** Christian chant
- ṭarab** acute emotion of joy or grief
- ṭarāʿiq** see *ṭarīqa* and *ṭarq*
- tarannum** unmeasured chant; melody or chant without text; vocalizations with long notes; melisma; ornamented repetitions sung softly
- ṭarīqa** (pl. *ṭarāʿiq*) compositional style; instrumental prelude; instrumental rendition of a vocal melody; rhythmic and melodic modes (see also *ṭarq*, *ṭurq*, *ṭuruq*)
- ʿamūd ṭarīqa** melodic mode played in a scalar manner; rhythmic mode in fundamental form
- tarjīʿ** repetition of a section and returning to it many times, revising it to improve it; repeating the notes with sweetness, grace, and beauty with rhythmic variations and ornaments that cause *ṭarab*
- tarjih** inclining notes between the index finger melodic mode and that of the open string; singing notes in a weightier, more powerful way by widening the air passage
- tarkhīm** the softness and pleasantness of singing, making the voice graceful, tender, and delicate and with good enunciation; see also *murakhhkam*
- tarkīb** tuning; melodic mode
- tarnūm** (pl. *tarnūmāt*) vibrato; vocalizations in the sense of textless singing or textless chanting; lyrics sung to long durations; melismas
- ṭarq** striking a percussion instrument or a stringed instrument; prelude, instrumental exercise, instrumental piece, an instrumental rendition of a song, a playing technique, style, ornaments or instrumental accompaniment (see also *ṭarīqa*)
- ṭarāʿiq al-khayāl** see *ṭuruq al-khayāl*
- tartīb** (pl. *tartībāt*) (lit., “arrangement”) a way to add to the melodic

- modes, ornamenting notes that do not have a particular fret to produce their sound: some are between frets, some are below the little finger fret, some are above the index finger fret
- tartīl** slow tempo
- taşarruf** creative performance
- tashbī** ornamented fillings
- tashbī'a** filling the end of a section with ornaments (see also *ashba'a*, *ishbā'*, *mushabba'*)
- tashdhīr** adding
- tashyī'a** mainly instrumental  
postlude, different than the melody of the song
- tasrīj** a succession of notes rhythmically arranged in the particular style of Ibn Surayj or compositions resembling his style; often related to the ring finger melodic mode (see also *surayjī*)
- taşwīt** sound production
- taswīya** tuning (see also *naḥkh al-taswīya*)
- ta'thīrāt** tumbling the pick between two strings, causing intermixed quick attacks that do not alter the rhythm and produce beauty if added to one section and then to another
- tathwīb (tathwība)** a long, stretched, and broken note, akin to the sound of the call to prayer; a note broken equidistantly as in a gradation; akin to a pigeon flying upwards and flapping its wings in a temporally equidistant manner.
- tawşīl** joining; shortening the duration of the separator; removing the separator completely; placing an attack of passage in the separator; attacks separated by equal durations
- tawṭīya** the introduction of a song with high-pitched note(s); starting with notes different from those in the song proper; starting with a *taran-num*
- ṭayy** (lit., "folding") dropping-out the attacks of the fundamental or the doubled ones but not reducing the duration of the cycle; a dropped-out attack can be replaced by a softer one such as a *maşha*, *ghamza* or *rawm* (see also *maṭwī*)
- tazyīdāt** additions and embellishments
- tazyīnāt** ornaments
- thaqīl** heavy; low-pitched note  
*al-thaqīl al-awwal* see first heavy  
*al-thaqīl al-thanī* see second heavy
- thiqāl** heaviness of rhythmic mode
- ṭunbūr** pandore; a long-necked lute with two strings
- ṭurq, ṭuruq** rhythms  
*ṭurq* or *ṭuruq al-ma'āzif* light meters used in the performance of lyres  
*ṭuruq al-khayāl* light meters used in shadow plays
- ūd** wood; lute
- ṭunq** the neck of a lute
- uşūl** (pl. of *aşl*) the basis and fundamental (aspects of melody)  
*uşūl al-iqā'āt* the fundamental form of a rhythmic mode
- wajh** a rhythmic variation
- waqfa** a pause, rest
- wasaṭ** a medium tempo
- washy** multicolored ornamentation and embroidery

*watar* (pl. *awtār*) a string

*wazn* a poetic measure

*wuṣṭā* the first note of the second octave in Greek music and known as *mèse*; middle finger; melodic mode that uses the middle finger fret as a tonic in the course of the middle finger fret

*wuṣṭā al-ʿArab* see *wuṣṭā Zalzal*

*wuṣṭā al-Furs* Persian middle finger fret at 294 cents from the open string

*wuṣṭā al-quḍamāʾ* middle finger fret at 302 cents from the open string

*wuṣṭā Zalzal* the Zalzal middle finger fret at 354 from the open string (see also *mujannab al-wuṣṭā*)

*yābis* dry (voice)

*zafn* a dance; dance producing no sound

*zafra* a moan, sigh

*zahāfa* slide (of the bow on string)

*zahma* crowding; it resembles the glottal stop (*hamza*); a moan causing a tightening of the throat

*zahzaha* praise

*zāʾida* (pl. *zawāʾid*) ornament

*zajara* holding back; a sound of sorrow and worry though it may escape the one listening to it

*Zalzal* see *wuṣṭā*

*zaman, zamān* (pl. *azmān*) duration

*zāmīr* wind player

*al-zāmīr al-muwaqqaʿ* measured music played on wind instruments

*zamm, zamma* complete nasality in which all the air flows from the nose while the lips are closed, it occurs in the unvoiced *m*

*zamr* wind instruments

*zawāʾidī* a voice that adds too many densely packed ornaments; unstable

*zīr* the fourth string of the lute

*zīr ḥādd* see *ḥādd*

# Charts

	<i>bamm</i>	<i>mathlath</i>	<i>mathnā</i>	<i>zūr</i>	<i>ḥādd</i>
open ( <i>muṭṭlaq</i> )	$g_1 = 0$	$c_1 = 498$	$f_1 = 996$	$b_{p2} = 294$	$e_{p2} = 792$
1st anterior to index ( <i>muḡannab al-sabbāba 1</i> )	$a^b_1 = 98$	$d^b_1 = 596$	$g^b_2 = 1094$	$c^b_2 = 392$	$f^b_2 = 890$
2nd anterior to index ( <i>muḡannab al-sabbāba 2</i> )	$a_{1/2}^b_1 = 150$	$d_{1/2}^b_1 = 648$	$g_{1/2}^b_2 = 1146$	$c_{1/2}^b_2 = 444$	$f_{1/2}^b_2 = 942$
index ( <i>al-sabbāba</i> )	$a_1 = 204$	$d_1 = 702$	$g_2 = 1200 = 0$	$c_2 = 498$	$f_2 = 996$
anterior to middle finger ( <i>muḡannab al-wuṣṭā</i> )	$\approx 250$	$\approx 748$	$\approx 46$	$\approx 544$	$\approx 1042$
Persian middle finger ( <i>wuṣṭā al-Furs</i> )	$b^b_{p1} = 294$	$e^b_{p1} = 792$	$a^b_{p2} = 90$	$d^b_{p2} = 588$	$g^b_{p2} = 1086$
middle finger of the ancients ( <i>wuṣṭā al-qudamā'</i> )	$b^b_1 = 302$	$e^b_1 = 800$	$a^b_2 = 98$	$d^b_2 = 596$	$g^b_2 = 1094$
Zalzal middle finger ( <i>wuṣṭā Zalzal</i> or <i>wuṣṭā al-ʿArab</i> )	$b^z_1 = 354$	$e^z_1 = 852$	$a^z_2 = 150$	$d^z_2 = 648$	$g^z_2 = 1146$
ring finger ( <i>al-biṣṣir</i> )	$b_1 = 408$	$e_1 = 906$	$a_2 = 204$	$d_2 = 702$	$g_3 = 1200 = 0$
little finger ( <i>al-khīṣir</i> )	$c_1 = 498$	$f_1 = 996$	$b^b_2 = 294$	$e^b_2 = 792$	

CHART 1 Lute Frets of al-Kātib

	al-bamm (1st string)	al-mathlath (2nd string)	al-mathnà (3rd string)	al-zîr (4th string)	al-hâdd (5th string)
al-muṭṭlaq (open string)	$g_1 = 0$	$c_1 = 498$	$f_1 = 996$	$b_2^b = 294$	$e_2^b = 792$
mujannab al-sabbābah bi-tankīs dhī al-maddatayn (anterior to index finger, two tones from little finger)	$a_1^b = 90$	$d_1^b = 588$	$g_1^b = 1086$	$c_2^b = 384$	$f_2^b = 882$
mujannab al-sabbābah bi-tanṣīf al-ṭanīnī al-awwal (anterior to index finger, half tone)	$= 98$	$= 596$	$= 1094$	$= 392$	$= 890$
mujannab al-sabbābah bi- baqiyyah (anterior to index finger by a limma)	$g_1^\# = 114$	$c_1^\# = 612$	$f_1^\# = 1110$	$b_2 = 408$	$e_2 = 906$
mujannab al-sabbābah bi-wuṣṭà al-Furs (anterior to index finger, Persian)	$= 145$	$= 643$	$= 1141$	$= 439$	$= 937$
mujannab al-sabbābah bi-wuṣṭà Zalzal <sub>1</sub> (anterior to index finger, Zalzal <sub>1</sub> )	$= 168$	$= 666$	$= 1164$	$= 462$	$= 960$
al-sabbābah (index finger)	$a_1 = 204$	$d_1 = 702$	$g_2 = 1200 = 0$	$c_2 = 498$	$f_2 = 996$
mujannab al-wuṣṭà (middle finger)	$b_1^b = 294$	$e_1^b = 792$	$a_2^b = 90$	$d_2^b = 588$	$g_2^b = 1086$
wuṣṭà al-Furs (Persian middle finger)	$b_1^p = 302$	$e_1^p = 800$	$a_2^p = 98$	$d_2^p = 596$	$g_2^p = 1094$
wuṣṭà Zalzal <sub>1</sub> (Zalzal middle finger)	$b_1^{z_1} = 318$	$e_1^{z_1} = 816$	$a_2^{z_1} = 114$ $= (g_2^\#)$	$d_2^{z_1} = 612$ $= (c_2^\#)$	$g_2^{z_1} = 1110$ $= (f_2^\#)$
wuṣṭà Zalzal <sub>2</sub> (Zalzal middle finger)	$b_1^{z_2} = 354$	$e_1^{z_2} = 852$	$a_2^{z_2} = 150$	$d_2^{z_2} = 648$	$g_2^{z_2} = 1146$
al-binṣīr (ring finger)	$b_1 = 408$	$e_1 = 906$	$a_2 = 204$	$d_2 = 702$	$g_3 = 1200$
al-khinṣīr (little finger)	$c_1 = 498$	$f_1 = 996$	$b_2^b = 294$	$e_2^b = 792$	

CHART 2 Lute of al-Fārābī

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	o	cent	A	40		B = 89
			(H)	39		(Z)
	89		(H)	38		(T)
			(K)	37		(L)
			(M)	36		(N)
226	=		S	35		'A = 315
281	=		F	34		Ḍ = 370
333	=		Q	33		R = 422
387	=		Sh	32		T = 476
Tuning B = H = 89 cents						
Equidistant divisions of forty parts						

	o	=	A	40		B = 89
226	=		S	35		'A = 315
298	=		F	$33 + \frac{13}{19}$		Ḍ = 387
320	=		Q	$33 + \frac{1}{4}$		R = 409
387	=		<u>Sh</u>	32		T = 476
Tuning B = H = 89 cents						
Non-equidistant divisions						

	o	=	A	40		B = H	F	Q	<u>Sh</u>
						89	271	320	360
226	=		S	35		'A = 315	497	546	586
271	=		F	$34 + \frac{1}{5}$		Ḍ = 360	542	591	631
320	=		Q	$33 + \frac{1}{4}$		R = 409	591	640	680
360	=		<u>Sh</u>	$32 + \frac{2}{5} + (\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{5}) + (\frac{1}{5} \times \frac{1}{5})$		T = 449	631	680	720
Tuning B = H, F, Q, <u>Sh</u> respectively									
Non-equidistant divisions									

CHART 3 al-Fārābī's Ṭunbūr Frets

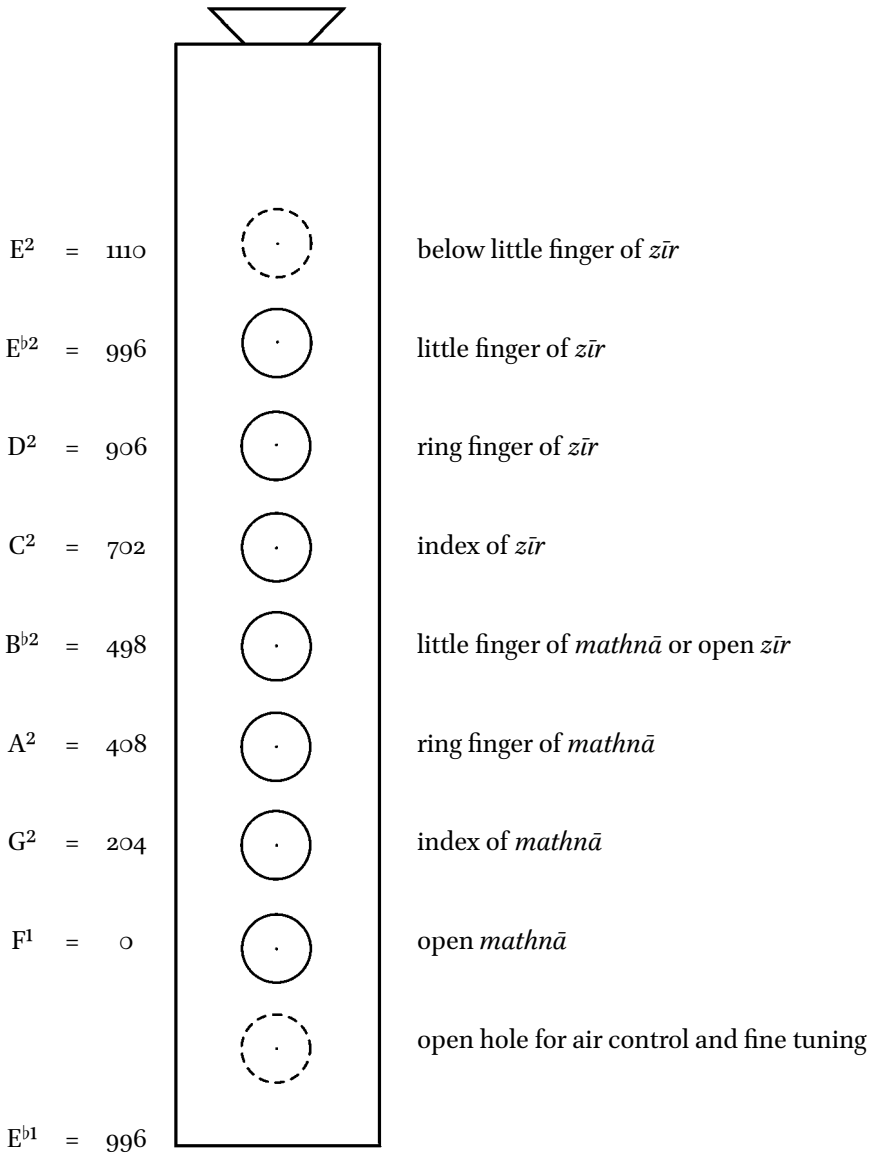


CHART 4 The Nāy of al-Kātib

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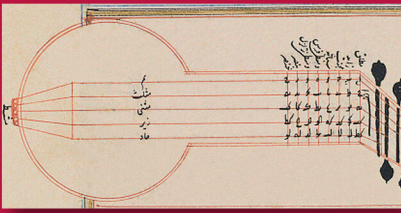
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*Kitāb Kamāl adab al-ghinā': The Book for the Completion of Musical Knowledge* is one of two unique treatises coming down to us from the 11th century; the other is *Encompasser of the Arts of Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān al-Mūsīqī*. Both are written by practicing musicians and composers, and as such provide a most welcome musical practices supplement to the tenth-century legacy of music theory and literature, namely, the works of al-Fārābī and al-Iṣfahānī. In composition, al-Kātib provides useful details regarding the process to set a poem to music; in education, he advises students on how to choose a good teacher; in performance, he advises students about how to breathe properly and how to ornament vocal and instrumental music.

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