

Alev Masarwa – Hakan Özkan (Eds.)

The Racecourse of Literature

An-Nawāǧī and His Contemporaries



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An-Nawāğī and His Contemporaries

Herausgegeben von
Alev Masarwa und Hakan Özkan

ARABISCHE LITERATUR UND RHETORIK –
ELFHUNDERT BIS ACHTZEHNHUNDERT
(ALEA)

Herausgegeben von
Thomas Bauer – Syrinx von Hees

Band 8

ERGON VERLAG

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Umschlagabbildung:
Drei galoppierende Pferde. Iran, Mitte 16. Jahrhundert.
Möglicherweise Malerei aus einem Manuskript,
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https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1930-0607-0-10

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen
Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über
<http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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und für Einspeicherungen in elektronische Systeme.
Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier.
Gesamtverantwortung für Druck und Herstellung
bei der Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG.
Umschlaggestaltung: Jan von Hugo
Satz: Thomas Breier

www.ergon-verlag.de

ISBN 978-3-95650-811-0 (Print)
ISBN 978-3-95650-812-7 (ePDF)
ISSN 2365-8878

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Nearer, My Prophet, to Thee

Šamsaddīn an-Nawāğī's Supplicatory Poem in the Metre *Mutadārīk*

Thomas Bauer

Abū ʿAbdallāh Šamsaddīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī an-Nawāğī al-Qāhirī aš-Šāfiʿī, commonly known as Šamsaddīn an-Nawāğī (b. before 788/1386, d. 859/1455) had greater aspirations in his life than just to be known as the author of one or two anthologies. Instead, he aspired to be acknowledged as an all-rounder in the field of *adab*, the theory and practice of linguistics, stylistics, and literature.¹ Whereas his works on grammar and lexicography may indeed not be pioneering achievements, he could demonstrate in his anthologies that he was an excellent connoisseur of the literature of his time and a fine poet himself. And, of course, he left a *Dirwān* of his poetry, the last version of which must have been compiled shortly before his death, since it comprises a poem in praise of the Prophet from the year 858/1454.

Modern reception has not done him justice. Whereas several of his minor works on lexicography and poetics have been edited, his most famous anthology, the *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, is still lacking a critical and indexed edition. However, it is accessible at least in two older prints, whereas his *Marāṭiʿ al-ğizlān*, an anthology of the same importance and one of the major literary achievements of the century, is still in manuscript (in quite a number of manuscripts, indeed). His other anthologies fared better, thanks to the untiring effort of Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥādī.² The same ʿAbd al-Ḥādī edited the *Dirwān* of an-Nawāğī in 1980 as his doctoral thesis. Unfortunately, it never found the way into press and is hardly accessible today at all. Consequently, a large part of the poetical œuvre of one of the major poets of the 9th/15th century still remains inaccessible to a broader public.

Only one part of the *Dirwān* had a different fate: The poems in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad, which constitute the first part of it, have a story of their own. For a modern observer, these poems that testify to the deep and sincere piety of their author, seem to be hardly reconcilable with the topics of an-Nawāğī's 'best-seller'-anthologies dealing with wine and homoerotic love. In an-Nawāğī's

¹ On an-Nawāğī and his works see Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥādī, *Muʿallafāt Šamsaddīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan an-Nawāğī aš-Šāfiʿī*, Amman 2001; Thomas Bauer, "al-Nawāğī", in: Joseph E. Lowry, Devin J. Stewart (eds.), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1350-1850*, Wiesbaden 2009, pp. 321-331.

² See the list of an-Nawāğī's works and their editions in Bauer, *al-Nawāğī*, pp. 321-322.

times, which were more tolerant of such ambiguities, this seeming contradiction did not pose a major problem.³

A poem in praise of the Prophet has a triple nature. First, it is a mundane poem, a work of art meant to be read and enjoyed by the public for its artistic qualities. Second, it is a spiritual work, a contemplation of the Prophet and his deeds, and finally, it is a supplication for his benediction and his intercession. For an-Nawāḡī, these poems were not only meant to commemorate the Prophet and to pray to him, but to enter in direct conversation with him. Such a conversation seemed possible because, as is said in different *ahādīth*, the prophets are alive in their graves in such a way as to be able to perceive prayers directed to them and so act on behalf of the prayer.⁴ An-Nawāḡī's permanent conversation started in 830/1427. From this year onwards, he composed exactly one poem in the Prophet's praise every year and made sure that it was recited immediately to the Prophet in front of his grave in al-Madinah. In most cases, he asked a person who went to perform the pilgrimage in the respective year to recite his poem. It is easily imaginable how excited an-Nawāḡī was when the Prophet responded in 832/1429. In this year, an acquaintance of a friend of an-Nawāḡī, who did not know him personally, had a dream in which the Prophet appeared and asked him to greet a poet known as an-Nawāḡī. When an-Nawāḡī received this message, he fell in a state of ecstasy and composed a poem not in his own style, but a *tāʿiyyah* in the style of the mystic Ibn al-Fāriḍ (576-632/1181-1235).⁵ In the following year 833/1430 an-Nawāḡī performed the Hajj himself (it was his second Hajj) and took the chance not only to recite the poem of this year directly in front of the Prophet, but also to recite the poems of the past years.

The series of an-Nawāḡī's *madāʾih nabawiyyah* started in 830/1427. After twenty years, an-Nawāḡī published the poems composed so far in a work entitled *al-Maṭālīʿ aš-šamsiyyah fī l-madāʾih an-nabawiyyah* "Places of Sunrise: Eulogies on the Prophet". Yūsuf ibn Ismāʿīl an-Nabhānī (d. 1932) included these 20 poems in his *al-Maḡmūʿah an-nabhāniyyah* thus making them known to a modern audience. Still after having published *al-Maṭālīʿ aš-šamsiyyah*, an-Nawāḡī continued his series every year until 858/1454, the year before his death. Consequently, the corpus amounts to 29 poems, to which the *Dirwān* adds a short poem on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday (*maʿwidiyyah*) in order to yield 30 poems. The *madāʾih* composed between 850 and 858 did not become part *al-Maṭālīʿ aš-šamsiyyah*, neither were they known to an-Nabhānī. The editor of *al-Maṭālīʿ*, who had edited an-Nawāḡī's *Dirwān* before, added these poems in his edition, thus

³ See in general Thomas Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity*, New York 2021.

⁴ See for example al-Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt al-anbiyāʾ fī qubūribihim* and as-Suyūṭī, *Inbāʾ al-aḍkiyāʾ bi-ḥayāt al-anbiyāʾ*, Cairo n.d. (Maktabat al-Imān).

⁵ See poem no. 3 in an-Nawāḡī, *Dirwān* and *al-Maṭālīʿ aš-šamsiyyah*.

making them easily accessible today. A tabular overview of the 29 poems plus the *mawlidīyyah* is given here:⁶

No.	Year	Mt.	Rhyme	Σ	Nabbānī	Incipit
01	830/1427	H	<i>āmab</i>	53	4:110-114	عَلَّوْهُ بِطَيْبَةٍ وَرَامَهُ ... تَهَامَهُ
02	831/1428	B	<i>2lū</i>	87	3:146-152	قَلْبٌ عَلَى الْحُبِّ وَالْأَشْوَاقِ مُجْبُولٌ ... وَالْقَيْلُ
03	832/1429	T	<i>atī</i>	115	1:535-543	بِعَيْشِكَ يَا حَادِي تَرْفُقْ بِمُهْجَتِي ... أَجَبْتِي
04	833/1430	H	<i>āʾi</i>	75	1:156-162	يَا رَعَى اللَّهِ حَيْرَةَ الْجُرْعَاءِ ... بِقَبَاءِ
05	834/1431	B	<i>ibī</i>	57	4:288-292	مَاتَ الْمَشُوقُ أَسَى مِمَّا يُقَاسِيهِ ... فِيهِ
06	835/1432	B	<i>3rī</i>	49	2:224-228	جُزْ بِالْكَثِيَّةِ ذَاتِ الضَّالِّ وَالسُّمْرِ ... خَبْرِي
07	836/1433	T	<i>āxīʿū</i>	81	2:348-354	زَمَانَ اللَّقَا بِالْخَيْفِ هَلْ أَنْتَ رَاجِعٌ ... قَوَاطِعُ
08	837/1434	Rm	<i>ay</i>	72	4:333-338	سَلَبَ الْوَجْدُ فُؤَادِي وَالْحَشَى ... وَمَنِي
09	838/1435	B	<i>3ġī</i>	40	1:577-580	حَيِّ الْمَنَازِلِ ذَاتِ الشَّيْحِ وَالْأَرْجِ ... شَبِّي
10	839/1436	K	<i>3ʿū</i>	61	2:355-359	لَوْلَا الْمُحْصَبُ وَالْعَقِيْقُ وَلَعْلَعُ ... وَلَعْلَعُوا
11	840/1437	T	<i>3rū</i>	65	2:219-224	أَمْنَزِلْ سَعْدِي لَا عَرَكَ التَّغَيْرُ ... مُنْطَرُ
12	841/1438	B	<i>3bū</i>	60	1:461-466	هَذَا الْعَقِيْقُ وَهَذَا الْبَانُ وَالْعَدَبُ ... وَالْكُتْبُ
13	842/1439	W	<i>ādī</i>	65	2:63-67	خُذُوا أَخْبَارَ مِسْعَرَ عَنْ فُؤَادِي ... الزِّنَادِ
14	843/1440	B	<i>3lī</i>	40	3:365-368	هِيَ الْعَيُونُ فَكُنْ مِنْهَا عَلَى وَجَلٍ ... وَالْمَقَلِ
15	844/1441	S	<i>āb</i>	48	4:292-296	لِلَّهِ كَمَ فِي حَيِّ لَيْلَى فَتَاهُ ... فَتَاهُ
16	845/1442	B	<i>3qī</i>	53	2:453-457	لَوْلَا دُمُوعُ كَصُوبِ الْعَارِضِ الْغَدِيقِ ... طُرُقِ

⁶ Column 1: Number of the poem in the *Dirwān* and in *al-Maṭālīʿ aš-šamsiyyah*; column 2: year of the Hajj, for which the poem was composed (the date of the Christian year is the date of the 1st of Dū l-Ḥiġġah); column 3: Metre; column 4: Rhyme (2 = *i/ū*, 3 = *a/i/u*, x = any consonant); column 5: Number of verses in the *Dirwān*; column 6: Text in *al-Maġmūʿah an-nabbāniyyah*; column 7: First hemistich plus final rhyme-word.

No.	Year	Mt.	Rhyme	Σ	Nabḥānī	Incipit
17	846/1443	Mtdk	3bū	40	1:470-472	أُمْدَامَةُ رِيْقِكِ أَمْ ضَرَبُ ... حَبَبُ
18	847/1444	Md	3mū	70	4:114-118	لَا وَتَغْرِ مِنْكَ مُبْتَسِمٌ ... شَمِ
19	848/1445	K	2nī	66	4:211-217	قَسَمًا بِأُلُؤِ تَغْرِهَا الْمَكْنُونِ ... مَقْرُونِ
20	849/1446	W	xbī	56	1:466-469	إِذَا أَنَا فِي حِمَاكَ فَضَيْبُ نَحْيِي ... جَنِّي
21	850/1447	K	3ġī	62		قَسَمًا بِبَارِقِ تَغْرِكَ الْمُتَبَلِّجِ ... الْأَدْعِ
22	851/1448	Ṭ	āxilū	68		إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَّا لَا تُشَدُّ الرَوَاحِلُ ... نَاقِلُ
23	852/1449	W	aynī	67		بُدُورُ سَنَا الْحِمَى بِالْمَطْلَعَيْنِ ... عَيْنِي
24	853/1450	Ṭ	3fā	53		سَمَاعُ حَدِيثِ الْمُصْطَفَى غَايَةُ الشِّفَا ... شَفَا
25	854/1451	Ṭ	3lā	29		لِرَبِّ الْعَلَا نَشْكُو أَدَى الْقَحْطِ وَالْعَلَا ... وَالْبَلَا
26	855/1451	B	3fā	77		الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَاقِي نَيْلُنَا وَوَفَى ... نَشْفَا
27	856/1452	Sil	ān	54		مَا لَاحَ سَنَا الْبَرَقِ بِالْعَقِيقِ وَنِعْمَانُ ... عُدْرَانُ
28	857/1453	W	binnaḥ	67		أَلَا جُزْ بِالْدِيَارِ وَحَيْثُ ... حَيْثُ
29	858/1454	B	āli	64		فِي التَّغْرِ وَاللَّحْظِ كَمْ نَاطَزْتُ عُذَّالِي ... وَعَزَّالِي
30	(<i>marwīd</i>)	K	2rū	7		مُلِثْتُ بِمَوْلِدِكَ الْقُلُوبَ سُرُورًا ... نُورًا

This corpus of 29 *madā'ih nabawiyyah* is a major contribution to the genre. Far from being uniform, each of the poems has its individual characteristics, be it in its form, its content, its intertextual references (no. 2 is a *mu'araḍah* of Ka'b's *burdah*, no. 3 interacts with Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *tā'īyyah*), or its literary peculiarities. A special occasion is behind poems no. 3 (the reaction to the Prophet's greetings in a dream), no. 12 (gratitude after the end of a plague), 24 (gratitude for recovery from a severe illness), 25 (praying for relief during a famine) and no. 26 (gratitude for an abundant flood of the Nile). The length of the poems ranges between 29 and 115 lines, while unusual rhymes like *-ay* (no. 8), *-āb* (no. 15) or *-binnaḥ/bunnaḥ* (no. 28) vary with common ones. Each poem takes its individual

stylistic shape, is a literary gem of its own, and would certainly deserve independent study. The poem chosen here is one of the shorter ones, and its rhyme - *3bū* is quite common. What makes it remarkable, though, is its very uncommon metre *mutadārik*, and it is exactly this metre in which the core message of the poem is to be found. In this respect, it seems quite singular in Arabic literature.

As we will see, its overall structure follows a major tendency of the Mamlūk *qaṣīdah*. As has already been demonstrated with *qaṣīdahs* by Ibn Nubātah (686-768/1287-1366), Mamluk *qaṣīdahs* seem to follow a different pattern than those composed by the Abbasid panegyric poets, thus reflecting a trend from a primarily representative to a primarily communicative function of literature:

Abbasid *qaṣīdahs* are made up of several building blocks, which are clearly separated from each other, each constituting an independent thematic unit. (...) Ibn Nubātah's *qaṣīdahs* are different. Still, they consist of different building blocks, which I call "the frame," mostly *nasīb* and *madīḥ*. But the boundary between these sections is blurred. Instead in the *nasīb*, the poet introduces several *themes* as well as what I call *leitmotifs*. The *nasīb* thus functions as a sort of *exposition* of the themes and leitmotifs of the *qaṣīdah*, whereas the rest of the *qaṣīdah* is the *development*, in which this material is subject to continuous variation and recontextualization.⁷

In the following, it will be shown that an-Nawāḡī, a century younger than Ibn Nubātah, still uses the same scheme to organize his *qaṣīdah* as his predecessor did. This makes it even more plausible that poets organized longer poems according to the following main structural parameters: (1) The *frame* organizes the sequential structure of the *qaṣīdah*; (2) *qaṣīdah-theme(s)* dominate the whole of the *qaṣīdah* and elucidate and/or illustrate its central idea, and (3) *leitmotifs* permeate the whole or parts of the *qaṣīdah*, are constantly recontextualized and interact with the *qaṣīdah-theme(s)* and the *qaṣīdah's* central idea. Obviously, this way to structure a *qaṣīdah* was not limited to certain poets, but rather typical for the whole of the period. Our analysis will also show that an-Nawāḡī's poetry, so heavily neglected until now, is comparable indeed in its subtlety and refinement to that of the great master of the period, Ibn Nubātah.

Šamsaddin an-Nawāḡī composed the poem analysed here for the Hajj of the year 846/1443, in which it was recited in front of the Exalted Prophetic Highness (*al-*

⁷ Thomas Bauer, "‘Ayna hādhā min al-Mutanabbi! Toward an Aesthetics of Mamluk Literature", in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 17 (2013), pp. 5-22, here p. 20. A detailed analysis of a poem by Ibn Nubātah, in which the function of *Rahmen* "frame", *Qaṣidenthemen* "qaṣīdah-themes", and *Leitmotive* "leitmotifs" is presented in detail by Thomas Bauer, "Der Fürst ist tot, es lebe der Fürst! Ibn Nubātas Gedicht zur Inthronisation al-Afdāls von Ḥamāh (732/1332)", in: Ulrich Marzolph (ed.), *Orientalistische Studien zu Sprache und Literatur. Festgabe zum 65. Geburtstag von Werner Diem*, Wiesbaden 2011, pp. 285-315.

ḥaḍrah aš-šarīfah an-nabawīyyah) by means of a messenger.⁸ Its frame structure is quite clear and unsurprising. At first sight, the poem appears to consist of two major parts plus a connecting passage: (1) an introduction in form of love poetry (line 1-13), (2) a transition in the form of a short *raḥīl* and *taḥalluṣ* (line 14-17), and (3) the final *madīḥ* (lines 18-40). However, this first impression of the poem's structure as exhibiting a rather conventional tripartite *qaṣīdah* consisting of *nasīb*, *raḥīl* and *madīḥ*, does not do justice to its more refined complexity. Whereas the tripartite structure remains visible, an-Nawāḡī transcends it in several respects. First, the initial section is not a *nasīb*, but a *ḡazal*.⁹ Since the time of Abbāsīd poets like Abū Tammām (d. 232/845), it was quite common to fill the slot of the *nasīb* with a "modern" *ḡazal* in panegyric poems. However, for the genre of poems in praise of the Prophet references to the traditional *nasīb* such as naming the beloved Mayy or Su'ād, mentioning places in the Naḡd and the Ḥiḡāz, talking about the deserted campsite of the beloved or a nightly vision of her (*ḥayāl*), are almost indispensable. In an-Nawāḡī's corpus of *madā'ih nabawīyyah*, no. 12 is the first (but not the last) poem to dispense with these references altogether. His introductory section is a clear-cut *ḡazal*, not a *nasīb*. The final part is not just a *madīḥ* but should instead be analysed as two parts, a *madīḥ* proper and a final prayer. Therefore, the poem's outer frame structure can be analysed as a four-part poem consisting of (1) *ḡazal* "introductory love poem" [line 1-13], (2) *raḥīl* and *taḥalluṣ* "journey plus bridge to the addressee" [line 14-17], (3) *madīḥ* "praise of the Prophet" [line 18-30], and (4) *du'ā'* "supplication" [line 31-40].

These four macrosections can in turn be divided in 11 easily recognizable sections that form the inner frame, in which the poem's proper development takes place: The *ḡazal* comprises the sections [1] to [3], the *raḥīl/taḥalluṣ* the section [4], the *madīḥ* the sections [5] to [8], and the *du'ā'* the sections [9] to [11]. The following analysis of the poem moves from section to section, giving its text and translation and figuring out the *qaṣīdah*-themes and the leitmotifs that characterize the poem as a whole.

In the *ḡazal*-part, the poet addresses a beautiful woman in the second person just as the Prophet will be addressed in the second person in the final prayer part. The *ḡazal* consists of three sections, which I call [1] the *taḡābul-al-ʿarīf*-section, [2] the *beloved's brightness*-section, and [3] the *tarwīḡib*-section:

⁸ an-Nawāḡī, *al-Maṭālīʿ aš-šamsīyyah fī l-madā'ih an-nabawīyyah*, no. 17, pp. 153-155; an-Nawāḡī, *Dirwān*, pp. 86-88; an-Nabhānī, *al-Maḡmūʿah an-nabhānīyyah*, 1:470-472. All three editions, though based on a substantial number of different manuscripts, give a completely identical text. The only exception is the word *wa-nal* in line 25, where the *Dirwān* reads *wa-qul*, which is almost certainly a mistake.

⁹ On the difference between both, see Thomas Bauer, "The Arabic ghazal: Formal and thematic aspects of a problematic genre", in: Angelika Neuwirth et al. (eds.), *Ghazal as World Literature II: From a Literary Genre to a Great Tradition*, Würzburg 2006, pp. 3-13.

[1] Ġazal I: *taġābul al-ʿārif* “feigned ignorance”

١	أَمْدَامُهُ رِيْقُكَ أَمْ صَرَبُ	وَلَا لِي تُغَرِّكَ أَمْ حَبَبُ
٢	أَمْ أَتُجِّمُ قُوطِكَ تَسْبِيحُ فِي	فَلَّكَ وَبِكَاسِكَ تَغْتَرِبُ
٣	وَشَقَائِقُ خَدِّكَ أَمْ عَمِّ	بِدِمَا عُشَّاقِكَ مُحْتَضِبُ
٤	أَمْ وَرْدُ حَيَاهُ سَقْتُهُ مِيَا	هُ الْحُسْنِ فَاَرْجَمَ الْهَبُ
٥	وَمَفَارِقُ فَوْودِكَ أَمْ أَفُقُ	بِالْبَرِّقِ تُطَرِّزُهُ السُّحُبُ

- 1 *Is this the wine of your saliva or is it honey? Are these the pearls of your teeth or bubbles that rise when wine is mixed with water?*
- 2 *Or the stars of your earrings that swim in the firmament¹⁰ and set in your cup of wine?*
- 3 *Are these red anemones on your cheeks, or are they acacia strap flowers, dyed red in the blood of your lovers?¹¹*
- 4 *Or are they the roses of your cheek's shame¹² irrigated by the waters of beauty with which flames intermixed?*
- 5 *Is that the parting of your hair on the sides of your head, or is it a horizon embroidered with lightning and rainclouds?*

The first section of the *ġazal* is characterized by a single stylistic feature. It is called *taġābul al-ʿārif* “feigned ignorance”. The speaker is comparing things while pretending not to know which part of the comparison is the real object.¹³ The use of *taġābul al-ʿārif* is quite common in poetry, but to extend its use over five verses is extraordinary and must have a deeper meaning in the poem. We will later see how the ignorance prevailing in this first section will give way to certainty towards the end of the poem.

Here and often, the first section of the poems fulfils a function comparable to the exposition in a sonata. As such, it introduces the *leitmotifs* of the poem, which are pointed out quite clearly: There are three *plants* here (lines 3 and 4),

¹⁰ Allusion to Q 21:33 and Q 36:40, where it is said about the sun and the moon: *kullun fi falakin yashabūn*.

¹¹ *ʿanam* designates various species of the mistletoe family such as *Plicosepalus acaciae* (or *Loranthus acacia*, the acacia strap-flower) or *Plicosepalus / Loranthus curviflorus* with scarlet blossoms, which are compared to women's fingers dyed with henna, see Manfred Ullmann, “Beiträge zum Verständnis der ‘Dichterischen Vergleiche der Andalus-Araber’”, in: *Welt des Orients* 9 (1977), pp. 104-124, here pp. 107-108.

¹² *ḥiāʾ* = حياء, allowed at least in poetry, see Lane 682 a 22-24.

¹³ On this stylistic device, see Pierre Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician or The Schemer's Skimmer*, Wiesbaden 1998, no. 135.

and we find plants or parts of plants in abundance in the rest of the poem (lines 8, 9, 20, 21, 29, and finally in the concluding line no. 40). There is also an abundance of *water* in the poem. In the first section, we hear about “swimming” in line 2, and have water and clouds in lines 1 (water-bubbles), 4 (waters), and 5 (clouds). Furthermore, water occurs further in lines 6, 10, 25, and 26. A third candidate for a leitmotif is *fire and light*, including shining celestial bodies, which we find in lines 2 (*aṅḡum*), 4 (*labab*) and 5 (*barq*) in the first section, and later in lines 6 (*hilāl*), 7 (*faḡr, ṣubḡ*), 8 (*iltahaba*), 11 (*bālāb*), 27 (*nīrān*), 33 (*sa‘īr*), 38 (*ṣubḡ*).

Since we have *water*, *fire* and plants, it is not too daring a hypothesis to suggest that they represent another, more comprehensive, leitmotif, namely the *four elements*.¹⁴ Plants represent the *earth*. From line 16 to 19 landscapes and the mineral gold that is found in the earth substitute the plants and continue the leitmotif. The *air* is only peripherally present in the form of scent in lines 8 and 40, but these are crucial lines in the poem, and they fit neatly into its program. These leitmotifs permeate the whole of the poem, are constantly varied, and appear in different contexts. This is shown in the illustration at the end of the article where the leitmotifs are marked in the text of the poem in colour, whereby blue stands for *water*, yellow for *fire*, green for *earth* and grey for *air*. It is certainly no coincidence that the term ‘*anāṣir* “elements” appears in line 21 of the poem, its exact middle!

Section [1] thus introduces the poem in the form of a sweet *ḡazal* and introduces the poem’s leitmotif, which can be identified as *the four elements of water, fire, earth* (represented by plants), and, peripherally, *air* (represented by scent, only appearing in the third section). The whole section is held together and derives much of its literary charm through the use of the stylistic device of *taḡābul al-‘arīf* over the surprising length of five verses.

[2] Ḡazal II: The beloved’s brightness

بُغْيُومُ شُعُورِكَ يَحْتَجِبُ	وَهَلَالُ جَبِينِكَ لَاحَ فَكَمْ	٦
رَبِضُوحِ الثَّغْرِ وَرَتَقِبُ	وَبَلَالُ الْخَالِ يَرَايَ الْفَجْـ	٧
فَعَلَيْهِ خُودُكَ تَلْتَبُ	وَالْمُنْدَلُ ضَاعَ بَعْنُ بَرِهِ	٨

- 6 Brightly shines the crescent moon of your forehead, but how often do the clouds of your hair conceal it!

¹⁴ On the four elements in philosophy and theology, see Catarina Belo, “Elements”, in: *EI3* (online). Still, the story of the elements in adab and sufism remains untold.

- 7 *The Bilāl of your mole watches awaiting and looking out for the daybreak to come with the morning of your teeth.*¹⁵
- 8 *And the incense wood disseminates its scent of ambergris, your cheeks burning upon it.*

The questions of section [1], “is it x or y?” are now replaced by declarative sentences in a simple subject → predicate structure, which continue the description of the beloved, especially of her brightness. Again, the elements *water* (clouds in line 6) and *fire* (burning cheeks in line 8; in the form of light: moonshine in line 6, daybreak and morning in line 7) are conspicuously present, and they are joined now by the element *air* represented by scent in line 8, in which incense wood, a plant, represents the *earth*. In this way, three of the four elements are present in a single line. Line 8 is also the first line after the initial one, in which the division between the two hemistichs forms a clear syntactical break. This is an obvious section marker, a feature corroborated by line 9, which is the first in which the beloved is addressed directly (*yā qiblata ḥusnīn*), a clear signal for the onset of a new section. This “change from first, second, or third person to one of the others intended to reawaken interest and revive attention”¹⁶ is called *iltifāt* in Arabic stylistics. It is often used to mark the onset of a new text paragraph. In the present poem, it is used in this function again in lines 14, 25 and 31.

[3] *Gāzal* III: *tarwīḥ*-section

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| طُوعاً لِمَعَاطِفِ الْقُصْبِ | ٩ يَا قِبْلَةَ حُسْنٍ قَدْ سَجَدَتْ |
| بِدَوَائِرِ هَجْرِكَ تَضْطَرِبُ | ١٠ لِعُرُوضِ جَفَاكِ بُحُورُ هَوَى |
| لَمَعَانِي حَسَنِكَ تَجْتَلِبُ | ١١ وَبِهِمُ الْوَجْهَ دَائِرَةُ |
| وَزَحَافٌ لَيْسَ لَهُ سَبَبُ | ١٢ وَبِجَسَمِ الصَّبِّ جَرَتْ عَلَلٌ |
| هُ يَعْضِبُ لِحَاضِكَ مُقْتَضِبُ | ١٣ فَبِتَقْطِيعِ الْأَحْشَاءِ جَاوَا |

- 9 *Oh kiblāh of beauty, the twigs bend down submissively to your body's curves.*
- 10 *Seas of passion, agitated by the calamities caused by your avoidance, surge at the side of your hard-heartedness.*
- 11 *In the halo of your face a circle assembles the meanings of your beauty.*

¹⁵ Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ was the first muezzin. He is compared with the mole since he, as muezzin, took a prominent position, and since Bilāl was of Abyssinian origin and hence of black colour.

¹⁶ Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, no. 143, p. 106.

12 *And the body of the lovelorn lover suffers maladies and fatigues for which no reason can be found.*

13 *But by tearing his intestines, you have also cut off his passion with the sword of your glances!*

The section starting with line 9, the third and last section of the *ğazal*, is remarkable and unusual in its own right. Just like Ġazal I, it is characterized by a single stylistic device. This time it is the figure called *tawğih*, that is, a series of technical terms belonging to the same field, but not used in their technical meaning, but in their meaning in everyday language.¹⁷ Here, the terms are taken from the semantic field of metrics: line 10: *‘arūd* “prosody”, *baħr* (*buħūr*) “metre”, *dā’irah* (*dawā’ir*) “circle” (that forms the deep structure from which the different metres can be derived according to the Ḥalilian system), line 11 *dā’irah* again, line 12: *‘ilal* and *ziḥāf* (terms describing the transformational rules to recast the ideal form of the metre into its actual surface structure), *sabab* “cord” (the name of one of the basic units of a verse), line 13: *taqtī’* “scanning”, and *muqtaḍab* “cut off, short” (name of a certain metre). *Tawğih* using the terminology of metrics is quite common in this period. However, it is hardly ever extended over more than one, or at most two lines. Here, the section comprises four whole verses and eight different terms pertaining to this field. Another point is remarkable, too. Other poems using metrical *tawğih* mostly concentrate on the names of the different metres. Metres like *ṭawīl* “long”, *baṣīṭ* “plain”, *ḥafīf* “light” or *madīd* “extended” lend themselves easily to *tawğih* because these words have a clear and widely usable everyday meaning. Here, instead, the only name of a metre is *muqtaḍab*, which is hardly ever used in such a context elsewhere and is the name of a metre that is also hardly ever used by poets. The prominence of the word *muqtaḍab* is underlined by the word *quḍub* “twigs”, derived from the same root and used as rhyme word in line 9 and again in line 29, and *‘aḍab*, another word for “twigs”, at the end of the poem. The prominence of this word and the overall length of the section are an obvious signal to the reader, and far more than mere wordplay. We will come back to this later.

The many metrical terms leave little room for the leitmotifs. Nevertheless, three of them are present in this section: The *earth* (in the form of the twigs, line 9), the *water* (the “sees” = “metres” in line 10), and the *light* (the “halo” in line 11).

[4] Transition (*raḥīl* and *taḥalluṣ*)

١٤ وَلرَکْضِ الْخَيْلِ بَادِمِعِهِ مِنْ فَوْقِ مُحَاجِرِهِ خَبَبُ
١٥ کَفَلَائِدِ هَذِي جَدِّهَا طَلَبُ وَتَجَادِبِهَا طَرَبُ

¹⁷ See Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, no. 67.

- ١٦ فَلَّتِ الْفَلَوَاتِ فَلَا تَعْبُ تَلْقَاهُ هُنَاكَ وَلَا نَصْبُ
١٧ لِتُرْزَوْحِي الْمُخْتَارِ وَمَنْ شَهِدَتْ بِرِسَالَتِهِ النُّجُبُ

14 The tears (lingering) over his lower eyelid were made to flow as the horses galloped away in an amble/ in the meter *ḥabab*.¹⁸

15 (Tears) resembling the necklaces of sacrificial animals; a quest urges them on, and pleasure contends with them [or: pulls them back and forth].

16 They passed through the deserts but suffered neither fatigue nor strain there –

17 To visit the *Himā* [or: protected land] of the chosen-one, of him whose message all the noble-bred confirm.

Section [4] forms a transition from the separation from the beloved to the Hajj caravan that moves to the Prophet, who is introduced as the *muḥtār* “chosen one” in line 17, which can be considered the *taḥalluṣ* line that introduces the *mamdūh*, the person that is praised in a panegyric poem, and thus leads to the *madīḥ* section.

In the first verse of this section (no. 14), an-Nawāḡī takes up the *tarwīḡ* on metres from the previous section by using the terms *rakḍ al-ḥayl* and *ḥabab*, both alternative designations of the metre *mutadārik*.¹⁹ Mentioned in this rather indirect way, the metre *mutadārik* is put into direct contrast to the metre *muqtaḍab*, with which the preceding verse 13 ends.

Corresponding to the subject of terrestrial movement in travelling to the Prophet, this section is an *earth*-section. The earth is represented here through landscapes (“deserts” in line 16 and the *Himā* in line 17). There is no *water* (the only thing flowing are tears), no *fire*, and no *air*.

[5] Praise I: The Prophet’s roots

- ١٨ الْهَادِي الصَّفْوَةُ مِنْ أَشْرَا فِ جُوهِ كِنَانَةٍ مُنْتَخَبُ
١٩ إِبْرِيْزُ الْفَضْلِ وَمَغْدِنُهُ وَخُلَاصَةُ جَوْهَرِ الذَّهَبِ
٢٠ كَرَّمَاتٍ فِي الْأَصْلِ أُرُومَتُهُ فَأَزْدَانٌ بِمُخْتَلِدِهِ النَّسَبِ
٢١ وَزَكَّاتٍ فِي الْخَلِيمِ عِنَاصِرُهُ فَأَطَابَ جَرَاتُهُ الْحَسَبِ

¹⁸ Obviously related to a similar *maʿnā* (with camels instead of horses) used by al-Mutanabbi, see G.J. van Gelder, “Camels on Eyelids and the Bafflement of an Emperor: a line of al-Mutanabbi “translated” into Greek”, in: *Proceedings of the XIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association. Spaces and Boundaries*, München 1988, 3:446-451.

¹⁹ See Mohammed Ben Cheneb, “Mutadārik”, in: *EI2*, 7:759.

- 18 *The leader, the choice one,*²⁰ *chosen from among the nobles of the elite of Kinānah.*
- 19 *The mine and the pure gold of excellence, while gold is the essence of his substance.*
- 20 *His root is originally noble so that (his) lineage adorns itself with his origin.*
- 21 *The qualities of his nature are pure and his personal merit further purifies his roots.*

The first section of the *madīḥ* concentrates on the subject of the Prophet's roots. In this section, the central *qaṣīdab*-theme of the poem becomes prominent, which was already present before, but less visible. It is the theme of "the high" and "the low" and the movement and interaction between them.

In order to trace this *qaṣīdab*-theme, let us return to Ġazal I and II. In these sections, representatives of the four elements interact with each other mostly in the form of a downward movement. Clouds or lofty celestial bodies descend or send something down: In line 2 they disappear in the wine-cup; in line 3 blood comes down on the cheeks of the beloved, in lines 4, 5 and 6 water comes down and clouds get in the way for those looking upward. Still in line 9, the twigs bend down, but now the downward movement comes to a halt. Instead, circles appear, and both the beloved and the tormented lover become self-contained entities, unable to move towards or away from the other or even to communicate. Finally, in line 13 with the crucial word *muqtaḍab* "cut off", all movement stops.

To recommence movement, a different object must be chosen. It is none other than the Prophet. This is done in section [4], the *raḥīl* and *taḥalluṣ*-section. Here, the movement is horizontal and a very concrete one, leading right away from the beloved via deserts to the Prophet. The last word of this section, *nuḡub* "the noble-bred", sets the tone for the following section, the *roots of the Prophet*-section, where corresponding words are *aṣrāf* "the noble", *faḍl* "excellence", *karuma* "to be noble" and *ḥasab* "nobility". Now the movement is an upward one, aiming towards the loftiness and highness of the Prophet.

In the meantime, what happened to the *four elements*? In fact, they already almost stopped interacting with each another in the *tawḡīb*-section and became reduced to the *earth* in the *raḥīl*-section so as to not interact with each other again. Instead, they are transformed and experience development. Gold that is found in the depths of the earth comes to light and is refined in the Prophet (line 19), roots grow high and are purified through him (lines 20-21). In line 21, in the exact middle of the poem, the *ʿanāṣir* "elements" are explicitly mentioned as being "pure" in the Prophet's nature.

²⁰ See Lane, *Dictionary* p. 1704 a: Moḥammad is said to be *صَفْوَةُ اللَّهِ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ* and *مُضْطَفَّاهُ* [i.e. *God's choice one, or elect, or favourite, of his creatures*].

[6] Praise II: The Prophet's nearness to God

- ٢٢ اللَّهُ حَبَّاهُ وَشَرَّفَهُ بِالْقُرْبِ تُنَاطُ بِهِ الْقُرْبُ
 ٢٣ وَلِخِصْرَةٍ قُدُسٍ عُلَاهُ سَمَا رُتَبَاتٍ تَنْزَاحُ بِهَا الرِّيبُ
 ٢٤ وَبَعَيْنِ الْحَقِّ رَأَهُ وَقَدْ رُفِعَتْ لَجَلَاتِهِ الْحُجُبُ

22 *God granted him His nearness and honoured him therewith – a nearness from which all ranks depend!*

23 *He (–the Prophet–) rose to the presence of the holiness of God's elevated rank, reaching stations where all doubts vanish.*

24 *And beheld Him truly with his own eyes, as the veils were lifted to cast a glance at his majesty.*

In section [5] *The Prophet's roots*, the upward movement achieves its aim in the person of Muḥammad. In section [6], the upward movement will reach the utmost possible goal, God. An-Nawāḡī was not one of those mystics who believed that man can already attain union with God in this world. For him, this was the prerogative of the Prophet. The Prophet's nearness to God is the subject of lines 22 to 24. Muḥammad is honoured by God's *qurb* "nearness", he "rose" (*samā*) to his presence and could even see him and communicate with him. It goes without saying that the four elements of God's creation do not play any role in these heavenly realms. God is the creator of the elements but cannot be described and characterized through them.

[7] Praise III: The Prophet's generosity

- ٢٥ حَدَّثَ عَنْ بَحْرِنَدَاهُ وَنَلَّ مِنْ فَيْضِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا عَجَبُ
 ٢٦ فَلَكُمْ أَجْرَى بَهْمَانِهْرًا تَحْجَلَّتْ لَزِيَادَتِهِ السُّحُبُ

25 *Tell about the seas of his generosity and take from the abundance that his hands spend without being perplexed.*

26 *For how many a river have his hands made to flow copiously, so that the clouds were put to shame by its profusion!*

Water, one of the four elements, reappears powerfully in this section *madīḥ* III, but it is transformed to a hypernatural state. The Prophet's sea causes perplexity, and his river puts the clouds to shame. In the same way as the water is no longer the same water as it was in the lines before, the movement is no longer the same. It changes its direction again and becomes a downward movement a second time.

But this downward movement is different to the downward movement from the beginning because it is not an interaction between profane elements, but it is a bounty that descends from the Prophet down to us.

[8] Praise IV: The Prophet's miracles

٢٧	وَمَوْلِدُهُ نَحْدَثَ نِيرَا	نُ الْفُرسِ فَلَيْسَ لَهَا لَهَبُ
٢٨	وَأَنْشَقَّ لَهُ الْإِیْوَانُ فَبَا	سَدَ الْقَوْمُ وَهَالَهُمُ الزَّهَبُ
٢٩	وَلَهُ سَاعَتِ الْأَشْجَارُ وَفِي	يُنْمَاهُ فَأُورِقَتِ الْقُضْبُ
٣٠	وَحَدِيثُ الْغَارِ لَهُ نَبَأٌ	نَزَلَتْ بِتِلَاوَتِهِ الْكُتُبُ

27 *When he was born, the Persians' holy fire died out and had no flame anymore.*

28 *For him (Chosroe's) Īwān was split, its people perished and were struck with terror.*

29 *Trees hastened to him, and, while in his right hand, sticks put forth leaves.*

30 *In the report about the cave, too, is a tiding; scriptures that bespeak it have been sent down.*

The transformation continues in section [8] *madīḥ* IV dedicated to the Prophet's miracles. Compared to other poems in praise of the Prophet, the section is rather short, comprising only four lines. They complete the transformation-tableau of the preceding lines, in which we heard about the transformation of water. In line 27, it is the *fire* that is transformed by being extinguished. The *earth* takes part in this transformation as well: Buildings made from clay are equally destroyed, even subterranean caves end up as the subject of messages conveyed from high to low, and plants move to the Prophet and are transformed by him.

[9] Prayer I: Supplication

٣١	يَا أَفْضَلَ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ	شَرَفَتْ بِنُبُوتِهِ الْعَرَبُ
٣٢	هَبْنِي فِي الْحَشْرِ رِضَاكَ إِذَا	مَا خِيفَ عَلَيَّ بِهِ الشَّجَبُ
٣٣	وَأَجِزْ مِنْ حَرِّ سَاعِيرِ لَظَى	عَبْدًا لِمَدِيحِكَ يَنْتَسِبُ

31 *Oh best of God's creatures, oh you whose prophethood made the Arabs gain elevated rank,*

32 *Grant me your favor on the day of resurrection when I shall fear perdition!*

33 *And protect from the glow of the flames of hell a servant who seeks to establish a link to you by praising you.*

The last macrosection of the poem is a *prayer* directed from the poet to the Prophet. Necessarily, the movement expressed in a prayer is an upward movement again, this time with an intention, namely the intention to be granted the Prophet's intercession before God.

The first part of the prayer, section [9] *supplication*, answers section [3], the *tawḡīl*-section, in which the poet addresses his beloved. Section [3] starts with the words *yā qiblata l-ḥusni* "oh kiblāh of beauty!". However, the invocation of this *qiblāh* was to no avail and did not help avoid calamities, maladies and fatigue. Line 31 is the only other line starting with the vocative particle *yā*, but now the addressee changes: *yā afdala ḥalqi llāh*. It is the Prophet, and only he can grant hope and protection on the day of judgement, protection, among others, from the fire of hell.

[10] Prayer II: Doxology

فَلَأَنْتَ شَفِيعُ الْخَلْقِ وَأَنْتَ	سَتِ السُّؤَالُ وَأَنْتَ هُوَ الْأَرْبُ
وَلَأَنْتَ مَلَاذُهُمْ إِنْ عَمَّ	سَمِ الْخَطْبُ وَعَزَّهُمُ الطَّلَبُ
قَصُرَتْ عَنْ شَأْوِ عُلَاكَ وَعَنْ	إِدْرَاكَ حَقِيقَتِكَ الرَّتَبُ
تَرْدَادُ بِلَاغَاءٍ إِنْ سَجَعَتْ	بِبِدْعِ مَحَاسِنِكَ الْخَطْبُ
وَتَوَدُّ فُخَاراً لَوْ نُظِمَتْ	فِي وَصْفِ شَمَائِلِكَ الشُّهُبُ

34 *For you are the intercessor for all people, you are the one who they ask, you are the one who they desire.*

35 *You are their refuge if misfortune encompasses them and their needs overwhelm them.*

36 *No rank is high enough to reach your highness or to grasp your true nature.*

37 *Speeches increase in eloquence when they tell of the marvelousness of your good deeds in rhymed prose.*

38 *The brightly-shining stars wish – for glory – they were (verses) composed to depict your qualities.*

The central part of the prayer is a *doxology*, a hymn of praise, addressed to the Prophet. It answers the very first section of the poem, the *tagābul al-ʿarīf* section. There, the poet did not know what to make of the beloved. By using the particle *am* "or" five times, he amply demonstrates his confusion and perplexity. Now, in

lines 34 to 38, doubt has given way to certainty. Contrary to the beloved, the nature of the Prophet is unambiguous. Clear-cut statements about who the Prophet is are introduced four times by *anta*, twice enforced by the particle *la*: *fa-la-anta* “verily, you are ...”. He is the intercessor and the refuge in a seemingly hopeless situation like that described in the *tawğih*-section. In order to find a way out, people have to reach out for him, which is a difficult task, since “no stairs are long enough to reach him” (line 36). The act of watching out, following, reaching out, trying on the one hand to grasp and that of arriving and being rewarded and granted on the other hand is the central notion that is behind the upward, downward and horizontal movements that permeate the poem. Here it is again an upward movement, not only of people and prayers, but also of prose and poetry which gain rank and glory by being addressed to the Prophet. Even the stars, here mentioned for the last time, seek transformation into verses.

[11] Prayer III: Blessing

۳۹ فعليك صلاة إلهك في خُتِبَ تَدَاوُلُهَا حَقُّبُ
 ٤٠ مَا هَبَّ نَسِيمٌ شَذَاكَ عَلَى بَانَ فَرْتَحَتْ الْعَذْبُ

39 *May your Lord's blessings be upon you, aeon after aeon,*

40 *So long as the gentle breeze of your scent wafts over the moringa trees making their twigs sway.*

The poem ends with two lines in which the poet asks God's blessings for the Prophet. Finally, the elements are reconciled by the Prophet. Breezes impregnated with his scent (in an analogy to the beloved's scent in line 8) move the twigs of moringa trees and transform the violent image of the burning scent of the beloved into a very peaceful image.

So far, we have addressed the structure of the poem, its themes and leitmotifs, but we still miss its central point. As already indicated, this is to be found in prosody and poetry. Let us return to the *tawğih*-section, an unusually long *tawğih* based on the terminology of metrics. No listener can fail to see the signal it sends: Look at the metre, and you will find the clue to the poem! The only metre, however, that is mentioned by its conventional name, is *muqtaḍab* (in line 13), a metre that is almost never used. The word *muqtaḍab* is a rhyme word and the last word in the whole section, thus occupying a very prominent position. Perhaps it was even the reason why an-Nawāğī chose *b* as rhyming consonant for this poem. Further, the word *muqtaḍab* is reinforced by two further occurrences of the word *quḍub* in lines 9 and 29. But why *muqtaḍab*? Its meaning is “cut off”,

and this is a concise formulation of the poet's situation: He is cut off from love, from any help and any hope.

Where is a way out of this situation? It is to be found in another metre, a metre which is at least as rarely used as *muqtaḍab*, a metre which is even called *al-ḡarīb* "the strange one" in treatises about prosody, and this metre is *mutadārik*. It is not mentioned in the poem by its conventional name, but it is not only the metre the poem stands in but is also indicated by the alternative though rarely used designations *rakḍ al-ḥayl* and *ḥabab*. In the nine-volume anthology *at-Taḍkirah al-ḥamdūniyyah*, for example, there is not a single verse either in *muqtaḍab* nor in *mutadārik*, and I never came across a *mutadārik* poem of any length.²¹ As it seems, *mutadārik* is not regarded as a very poetic metre, and an-Nawāḡi had to pay the price to struggle with a metre that does not lend itself easily to smoothly running verses.

The verb *tadāraka* means "to reach" as in Quran 68:49: *lawlā an tadārahāhū ni'matun min rabbihī* "Had not a gracious favour from his Lord reached him". It also means "to follow one after the other, to continue without interruption". It is the act of *tadāraka* in all its meanings that gives a meaning to all the movements in the poem and opens the way out from being *muqtaḍab* "cut off": The poet follows the Prophet and tries to reach him, the Prophet reaches God and lets in turn his protection and God's *ni'mah* "favour" reach his followers. The act of being *mutadārik* saves them from being *muqtaḍab*. The poet's personal way of following the Prophet is pronounced in line 33, again a prominent line at the end of a subsection: The poet deserves salvation because he is a servant who seeks to establish a link to the Prophet through praise (*ʿabdan li-madiḥika yantasibū*). As we know, an-Nawāḡi sent a poem to the Prophet every year, this one being number 17 of the series. An-Nawāḡi let one poem follow the other, another meaning of *tadāraka*. Thanks to the Prophet, they increase in eloquence and glory so that even stars want to be transformed into poems, as we learn in lines 37 to 38.

To sum up the message of the poem: We live in a world of confusion and doubt and are trapped in our passions and helpless in our suffering, in short: we are *muqtaḍab*, "cut off" from help and salvation. The way out is a way that lets us reach (*tadāraka*) the Prophet and thereby brings us nearer to God. In it, we let the world and the elements from which it is created behind us, set out for pilgrimage, and send our prayers to God and his Prophet. The poet's very own way to reach the Prophet (*tadāraka*) is by composing poems uninterruptedly (*tadāraka*), so that through the Prophet God's favours reach (*tadāraka*) his followers.

A close reading of the poem reveals a subtle interplay between leitmotifs and *qaṣīdah*-themes that enfolds itself in the frame of 11 sections as part of four macrosections. The leitmotif of the *four elements* (*ʿanāṣir*) presents man as trapped in the material world. Only God is exalted above it, but the Prophet has the power

²¹ Ibn Ḥamdūn, *at-Taḍkirah al-ḥamdūniyyah*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās and Bakr ʿAbbās, 9 vols. + index, Beirut 1996.

to transform it. As the *qaṣīdah*-theme of “movement” demonstrates, the downward or stagnant movement in the transient world can be transcended by a movement towards the Prophet, who is the medium to overcome this earthly limitation and to transform it to an upward movement towards God, who himself in turn sends down his blessing on the prayer. The second *qaṣīdah* theme is “metre”, to which section [3] is dedicated. This section closes with the word *muqtaḍab*, the name of a seldomly used metre. At the same time, the theme of “metre” is tacitly present throughout the whole of the poem, which uses the extremely rare, outlandish and rather unpoetic metre *mutadārik*. These two metres, *muqtaḍab* and *mutadārik*, put the central idea of the poem in words: The act of being *mutadārik* “reaching out for the prophet” saves them from being *muqtaḍab* “cut off” from help and intercession.

Far beyond exhausting the poem’s full complexity, what has been said here may present a strong argument that it is indeed an extraordinary poem, a perfect synthesis of sublime artistry and devote piety. It is subtle and complex, carefully structured with all its motifs and themes sophisticatedly intertwined, and it is the only poem known to me in which its metre gives the central clue to its meaning.

- ١ أُمْدَامُهُ رِيْقًا أَمْ صَرْبٌ وَلَا يُتَعَرَّكُ أَمْ حَبِيبٌ
٢ أَمْ أَلْجِمُ قُوطِكَ تَسِيحًا فِي قَلْبِكَ وَيُكَلِّسُكَ تَعَرِّبٌ
٣ وَشَقَائِي خَدَّكَ أَمْ عَنَّمُ يَدِمَا عُنُقَاكَ مُخْتَصِبٌ
٤ أَمْ وَرْدٌ حَيَاهُ سَقَنَهُ مِيَاهُ الْحَسَنِ فَأَزْجَاهَا لَهَبٌ
٥ وَمَعَارِفُ قُودِكَ أَمْ أَفُقُ بِالْبَرَقِ تَطَرُّهُ السَّحْبُ
٦ وَهَلَالٌ جَبِينِكَ لَاحَ فَكَمْ يَغِيومُ شُعُورِكَ يَحْتَجِبُ
٧ وَبِلَالُ الْخَالِ يُرَاعِي الْفَجْرَ بِطُيُوحِ الثَّغْرِ وَرَيْقُوبُ
٨ وَالْمَعْدَلُ ضَاعَ يَغْتَبِرُهُ فَعَلِيهِ خُلْدُكَ تَلْتَبِيبُ
٩ يَا قَبِيْلَةَ حُسَيْنٍ قَدْ سَجَدْتَ طَوْعًا لِمَعَاطِنِهَا الْقُسْبُ
١٠ لِعَرُوضِ جَنَاحِكَ لِحُورٍ يَدَوَائِرُ هَجْرِكَ تَضْطَرِبُ
١١ وَيَهْأَلُ وَجْهَكَ دَائِرَةً لِعَانِي حَسَنِكَ تَجْتَنِبُ
١٢ وَيَجْسَمُ الصَّبِّ جَزْرَتْ عَلَلٌ وَزَحَافٌ لَيْسَ لَهُ سَبَبُ
١٣ فَيَنْقَطِعُ الْأَحْشَاءُ جَوَاهُ يَعْصِبُ إِحْاطِيكَ مَقْتَضِبُ
١٤ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ الْخَيْلَ بَادِمُوعٍ مِنْ فَوْقِ مَحَاجِرِهِ خَبِيبُ
- ١٥ كَقَلَائِدِ هَذِي جَدَّ يَهَا طَلَبٌ وَتَجَادُهَا طَرْبُ
١٦ قَلْبُ الْقَلَاتِ فَلَا تَقْعَبُ ثَلَاثُهُ هَاكَ وَلَا نَصَبُ
١٧ يَتَوَرَّرُ حَتَّى الْخِتَارِ وَمَنْ شَهِدَتْ رِسَالَتُهُ الْيُجِبُ
١٨ الْهَادِي الصَّفْوَةَ مِنْ أَشْرَافِ وُجُوهِ كِنَانَةِ مُسْتَحِبُ
١٩ لِيرِيَّ الْفَضْلِ وَمُعْدِلُهُ وَخُلَاصَةُ جَوْهَرِهِ الذَّهَبُ
٢٠ كَزَمْتُ فِي الْأَصْلِ أَرْوَمُهُ فَأَزْدَانُ بِمَخْتَلَدِهِ النَّسَبُ
٢١ وَزَكْتُ فِي الْجَيْمِ عَنَاصِرُهُ فَأَطْلَابُ جَرَائِمِهِ الْحَسَبُ
٢٢ اللَّهُ حَيَاهُ وَشَرْعُهُ بِالْقُرْبِ تُنَاطُ بِهِ الْقُرْبُ
٢٣ وَلِحَضْرَةِ قُدْسٍ غَلَاةٍ سَامِرْتَابًا تَنَازُحُ بِهَا الرِّيبُ
٢٤ وَبَعَيْنِ الْحَقِّ رَأَى قَدْ زُفَعَتْ لِحِلَاتِيهِ الْحُجُبُ
٢٥ حَدَّثَ عَنْ بَحْرِ نَدَاهُ وَتَلَّى مِنْ فَيْضِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا يَجِبُ
٢٦ فَلَمْ أَجْرَى بِهَمَا نَهْرًا نَحَلْتُكَ لِرِيَادَتِهِ السَّحْبُ
٢٧ وَمَوْلَاهُ تَحَدَّثَ نِيرَانُ الْقُرْسِ فَلَيْسَ لَهَا لَهَبُ
٢٨ وَأَنْشَقَّ لَهُ الْإِيوَانُ فَبَادَ الْقَوْمُ وَهَالَهُمُ الرَّهَبُ
- ٢٩ وَلَهُ سَعَتِ الْأَشْجَارُ وَفِي مِيْنَاهُ فَأَرْقُبُ الْقُسْبُ
٣٠ وَحَدِيثُ الْغَارِ لَهُ نَبَأٌ زِلْثُ بَتَلَاتِيهِ الْكُثْبُ
٣١ يَا أَفْضَلَ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ شَرُفَتْ بَنُوهُ الْعَرَبُ
٣٢ هَبْنِي فِي الْحَشْرِ رِضَاكَ إِذَا مَا خِيفَ عَلَيَّ بِهِ
الشَّعْبُ
٣٣ وَأَجُزُّ مِنْ خَزَرٍ سَعِيرٍ لَطْفِي عَبْدًا لِمَدِيحِكَ يَنْتَسِبُ
٣٤ فَلَأَنْتَ شَفِيعُ الْخَلْقِ وَأَنْتَ السُّؤَالُ وَأَنْتَ هُوَ الْأَرْبُ
٣٥ وَلَا أَنْتَ مَلَأَهُمْ إِنْ عَمَّ الْخَطْبُ وَعَزَّمِ الطَّلَبُ
٣٦ فَصُرْتُ عَنْ شَأْوِ غَلَاقٍ وَعَنْ إِدْرَاكِ حَقِيقَتِكَ الرَّقَبُ
٣٧ تَرْدَادُ بِلَاغًا إِنْ سَجَعْتَ بِبَدِيعِ مَحَاسِنِكَ الْخَطْبُ
٣٨ وَتَوَدَّ فُخَارًا لَوْ تَطْمَنَّتْ فِي وَصْفِ شَائِلِكَ الشُّهْبُ
٣٩ فَعَلِيكَ صَلَاةُ إِلَهِكَ فِي خُفٍّ تَتَدَاوَلُهَا جَقِبُ
٤٠ مَا هَبَّ نَسِيمٌ شَذَاكَ عَلَى بَابٍ فَتَرْتَحِتُ الْعَذَبُ

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