

The Influence of Poetry on the Rhyme System in Lexicography: Evidence from Bandanīgī's (d. 284/897) *Kitāb al-Taqfiya*

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Arabic semasiological lexica — which we shall refer to, in accordance with Ibn Sīda's (d. 458/1066) terminology, as *muğannas* lexica — are those that are not specialized in a specific topic or a number of topics and normally aim at listing all the roots and most of the lexical items of the language. In these lexica, sign leads to meaning, unlike onomasiological lexica (referred to by Ibn Sīda as *mubawwab*) in which meaning normally leads to sign, and which embrace a variety of genres (e.g. *ğarīb al-Ḥadīṭ*, plants, animals, human body, solecism, masculine and feminine) as well as multithematic works or thesauri.¹ Based on the criterion of the arrangement of their lemmata, *muğannas* lexica may be classified into three types. The first adopts the phonetic-permutative system, in which roots are arranged according to a phonetic ordering and the permutations of each root listed together (e.g. 'QD, 'DQ, Q'D, QD', DQ' and D'Q). Lexica thus arranged include *K. al-'Ayn* by Ḥalīl b. Aḥmad (d. 175/791), *al-Bāri' fī l-luğa* by Abū 'Alī al-Qālī (d. 356/967) and *Tahdīb al-luğa* by Azharī (d. 370/981). The second type follows an alphabetical ordering (i.e. ', b, t, ṭ, etc.), and with the exception of Ibn Durayd's (d. 321/933) *Ğamharat al-luğa* do not take permutations into account. Among the best known examples of such lexica are Ibn Fāris's (d. 395/1004) *Maqāyīs al-luğa* and *Muğmal al-luğa*. The most widespread system of arrangement however particularly after Ğawharī (d. c. 400/1010) authored his famous *Tāğ al-luğa wa-ṣaḥāḥ al-'Arabiyya*, and which is shortly referred to as *al-Şaḥāḥ/al-Şiḥāḥ*, is the rhyme system. Although it follows the ', b, t, ṭ, etc. alphabetical arrangement, it proceeds not from the first then intermediate then final radical, but from last to first to intermediate. Hence, instead of the order 1+ 2+ 3 in trilaterals and 1+ 2+ 3+ 4 in quadrilaterals, the rhyme system adopts the

¹ Ibn Sīda is probably the first author to use the terms *muğannas* and *mubawwab* to distinguish between the two types of Arabic lexical works, the semasiological and the onomasiological (*Muḥaṣṣaṣ* I, 10). To illustrate these two types, he cites his own *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* and *al-Muḥkam* respectively. That Ibn Sīda authored a major lexicon of each type demonstrates the fact that each serves a different purpose and thus explains why they coexisted throughout the lexicographical tradition.

order 3+ 1+ 2 and 4+ 1+ 2+ 3 respectively.² The dominance of this system stems mainly from the prestigious and comprehensive lexica which adopted it, among which, other than *al-Ṣaḥāḥ*, are Ṣaḡānī's (d. 650/1252) *al-Takmila wa-l-ḍayl wa-l-ṣila* and *al-'Ubāb al-zāḥir wa-l-lubāb al-fāḥir*, Ibn Manẓūr's (d. 711/1311) *Lisān al-'Arab*, Fīrūzābādī's (d. 817/1415) *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, and — on the eve of the modern era — Zabīdī's (d. 1205/1790) *Tāğ al-'arūs*.

The study of the rhyme system evokes the puzzling question of why any philologist should consider the arrangement of lexical items according to their final radicals. Obviously, this type of arrangement is likely to be described as less “natural” than the other types, and hence a very good reason must be sought to justify its existence. Before tackling this issue, a brief chronological comment on the beginnings of the rhyme system may be in order. It seems that this system appeared later than its two counterparts, i.e. the phonetic-permutative initiated by Ḥalīl (d. 175/791),³ and the alphabetical, probably used for the first time by Abū 'Amr al-Ṣaybānī (d. 206/821) in *K. al-Ġīm*. In its “standard” form, with which one is most familiar in lexica such as *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* or *Lisān al-'Arab*, the rhyme system was perfected by Ġawharī. But although Ġawharī does not acknowledge in *al-Ṣaḥāḥ* the influence of his maternal uncle and one of his principal teachers, Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Fārābī (d. 350/961), we know that he was familiar with the latter's *Dīwān al-adab*,⁴ which is arranged according to the rhyme system based on all the radicals of the roots. Ġawharī's contribution to the refinement of the system lies in the adoption of the order of the radicals of roots as the only criterion of arrangement, that is, without any consideration for the morphological patterns, unlike Fārābī, who divides his lexicon into sections based on these patterns and then arranges the lexical items within each section according to their radicals.

² It is interesting to note the case of Muḥammad b. Tamīm al-Barmakī's (d. 433/1041) *al-Muntahā fī l-luġa*, a supplement to Ġawharī's *al-Ṣaḥāḥ*, which, according to Yāqūt (*Mu'ğam* VI, 2437; cf. Ṣafadī, *Wāfi* II, 280) was completed in 397/1007. It has been erroneously suggested that the lexicon follows full alphabetical order starting with the first letter; cf. 'Aṭṭār (1990: 116, 133, 202) and *Ṣaḥāḥ*'s introduction 89, 104, 167; Aḥmad (1969: 134-136). In fact, however, Barmakī adopts the rhyme system, but, as opposed to the prevalent arrangement, considers, after the final radical, the one that directly precedes it until he reaches the first radical, i.e. 3+ 2+ 1 in trilaterals and 4+ 3+ 2+ 1 in quadrilaterals; cf. Naṣṣār (1968: II: 511-512) and Sāmarrā'ī (1970: 154-155). This attests to the variety of models of arrangement within the rhyme system (cf. also the lexica that do not go beyond the last radical), as is also the case within each of the other two systems, i.e. the phonetic-permutative and the alphabetical (cf., for example, the various morphological divisions in the former and Ibn Fāris's unique cyclical arrangement of the letters of the alphabet in the latter).

³ Even if we accept reports that Ḥalīl's student, al-Layṭ b. al-Muzaffar (d. 190/805) authored all or part of *al-'Ayn* (cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 48; Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt* 96-98; Yāqūt, *Mu'ğam* V, 2254-2255), the lexicon must have been authored only a few years or a couple of decades following Ḥalīl's death.

⁴ Note that Yāqūt (*Mu'ğam* II, 658) mentions that he saw in Tibrīz a copy of *Dīwān al-adab* in Ġawharī's own handwriting.

Prior to Fārābī, Abū Bišr al-Bandanīgī (d. 284/897) arranged the lexical items in his *al-Taḥfīya fī l-luġa* according to their final radicals only, i.e. without consideration of the other radicals. Consequently, it is generally assumed that he is the one who invented the rhyme system. Yet contemporaries of Bandanīgī may have used the same system in works that did not reach us. Based on Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. 380/990) testimony, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889, i.e. several years prior to Bandanīgī) authored a book titled *K. al-Taḥfīya*.⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm describes this book as larger and better than Bandanīgī's, which leaves little doubt that the two books have a similar arrangement.

The present author has demonstrated elsewhere⁶ that there was an attempt at arranging lexical items based on their final radicals even prior to Bandanīgī and Ibn Qutayba. This appears in the lengthy chapter on the nominal patterns *fa' l* and *fa' al* in Ibn al-Sikkīt's (d. 244/858) *Iṣlāḥ al-manṭiq*.⁷ Although the book is well-known, the importance of that chapter seems to have escaped the attention of modern scholarship. The significance of this attempt does not stem only from its early date, but also from the fact that Bandanīgī almost fully incorporated Ibn al-Sikkīt's material into his own book and often retained the exact order of appearance of the lexical items cited by him. Given that the latter did not arrange the items according to the ' , *b*, *t*, *ṭ*, etc. ordering (the first few letters are *b*, *r*, ' , *q*, *d*, *l*, *n*, *m*) and that his examples are confined to two patterns, it seems most likely that Bandanīgī used Ibn al-Sikkīt's material as a starting point or a base from which his own lexicon can be expanded (note that he normally starts his chapters with the pattern *fa' l* and *fa' al*, and only then does he add other patterns); rearranged the groups of lexical items by distributing them into sections beginning with *alif* and ending with *yā'* (also based on final letters); added other examples of the *fa' l* and *fa' al* patterns; and introduced other patterns to make his lexicon more comprehensive.

In contrast to the rhyme system, the phonetic-permutative and the alphabetical systems are easy to justify. In the first, Ḥalīl chose not to follow the two arrangements which were known in his time, namely, the ' , *b*, *ġ*, *d*, *h*, *w*, *z*, etc. arrangement and the ' , *b*, *t*, *ṭ*, etc. arrangement. Whether he avoided the first because of its foreign origin and its use in calculation (*ḥisāb al-ġummal*) and the second because it is derived from the first and arranged according to the written forms of letters is difficult to establish with any certainty.

⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 85.

⁶ See Baalbaki (forthcoming a, b).

⁷ Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Iṣlāḥ* 37-84.

More probably, Ḥalīl found that both lacked any linguistic justification for them to suit his lexicon, as opposed to his phonetic arrangement, which clearly has a solid linguistic basis that is explained in detail in *al-‘Ayn*’s introduction. For their part, authors who follow the alphabetical system typically justify their choice by its popularity and ease of use. The first author of a *muğannas* lexicon to adduce this argument is Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933), who declares that he chose the ‘, b, t, t, etc. (i.e. not the phonetic) arrangement because it is easier for the user, given that it is known both by the ‘*amma* (common people, generality of people) and the *ḥāṣṣa* (elite or highly educated people).⁸ Similarly, Zamaḥṣarī (d. 538/1144) justifies his choice of an alphabetical ordering of letters in his *Asās al-balāga* by reference to its popularity and ease (*‘alā ašhar tartīb mutadāwalan wa-ashalihi mutanāwalan*).⁹ Analogous statements are also found in numerous *mubawwab* lexica.¹⁰ Authors who adopt the rhyme system, however, are generally silent about its justification. But in a rare instance, Bandanīgī’s disciple who wrote its introduction¹¹ claims that the feature that attracted the author’s attention in examining usage (*kalām*) is that each word (*kalima*) ends with one of the twenty-eight letters of the alphabet.¹² However, it surely could also not have escaped Bandanīgī’s notice that each word also begins with one of the twenty-eight letters of the alphabet. Why then should he choose the final and not the first letter as the basis of his arrangement?

Several suggestions are forwarded by modern scholarship in justifying the rhyme system. For example, ‘Umar suggests that Fārābī (to whom he ascribes the invention of this system, obviously before the publication of Bandanīgī’s *al-Taḳfiya*) must have adopted it for the sake of innovation.¹³ Other than this claim, which certainly defies substantiation, ‘Umar,

⁸ Ibn Durayd, *Ġamhara* I, 40.

⁹ Zamaḥṣarī, *Asās* 8.

¹⁰ For example, Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Luḡawī (d. 351/962), in his short introduction to *K. al-Addād* (I, 2), explains that he opted for an alphabetical arrangement because people of his own time preferred it and their ardor was confined to it (*iq kānat himam ahl zamāninā maqṣūra ‘alayhi wa-qulūbuhum mā’ila ilayhi*). Another example is Ibn al-Ġawzī (d. 597/1201), who declares in the introduction to *Taqwīm al-lisān* (p. 74) that he had intended to arrange his material according to types of error, but then decided to adopt an alphabetical order so as to facilitate the book’s use.

¹¹ It is interesting to note that *al-Taḳfiya* is significantly different from *al-‘Ayn* (i.e. the latter is phonetically arranged, takes all the radicals of any root into account, and aims at exhausting all Arabic roots), but its introduction, though much shorter, is reminiscent of *al-‘Ayn*’s introduction. Not only are the author’s views reported by one of his disciples in the third person, at times appearing in the first person, but a justification is also given in each to the system of arrangement which its author adopted based on thorough contemplation of speech (cf. the expressions *a‘mala fikrahu* in *Ayn* I, 47 and *naẓara fī l-kalām* in *Taqfiya* 36).

¹² Bandanīgī, *Taqfiya* 36.

¹³ See ‘Umar’s introduction to Fārābī, *Dīwān* I, 18-19.

among others,¹⁴ suggests another justification, namely, that the final letters of words are more stable than initial and medial ones, as these undergo several changes in certain derivatives and are often preceded by affixes that may be confused, on part of the user who is not skillful in morphology, for radicals of the word's root. It should be counterargued, however, that final letters themselves are frequently subject to change and to the loss of their final position due to suffixation or elision.¹⁵ Moreover, the suggestion that Fārābī's choice was prompted by facilitating the task of the less skillful user in morphology completely ignores the fact that *Dīwān al-adab* is practically useless for the user who is not cognizant enough of morphological patterns to distinguish augmented and unaugmented forms, given that the whole lexicon is meticulously divided into sections and subsections based on morphological patterns.

Another suggestion comes from Carter, who argues that the rhyme system might be due to the significance that the last radical assumes in distinguishing many near-synonymous roots that share their first two radicals (e.g. *NBĠ*, *NBD*, *NBT*, *NB'*, *NBĠ*, *NBQ*, all related to the gushing of water).¹⁶ Yet this argument is oblivious of the fact that, as far as semantic significance is concerned, the first two radicals are the ones that determine the general meaning of such roots and exclude all other possible meanings, whereas the last merely differentiates between specialized meanings within the semantic range specified by the first two. Furthermore, given that the phenomenon referred to by Carter is quite limited and has received but little attention from Arab philologists, the likelihood of its giving rise to an entire system of classification is quite feeble. Carter further observes that "abbreviations often select the *last* important consonant", e.g. *q* for folio (*waraqā*) and *ḍ* for al-Ḥāmiḍ (proper name), although he admits that this may be a result rather than a cause for the rhyme system to come into existence. It should be remembered, however, that abbreviations do not exclusively use the last consonant and that in numerous other cases the first consonant is chosen, as in *ğ* for plural (*ğam'*), *m* for known (*ma'rūf*), and *š* for explanation (*šarḥ*).

¹⁴ Darwīš (1956: 93-94); 'Aṭṭār (1990: 154-155).

¹⁵ Consider, for instance, the words *ab*, *ibn*, *bint* and *dam*, whose third radical is supposedly a weak letter (hence the roots are *'BW*, *BNW*, and *DMW*); words ending with *t*, such as *sanat(un)* (year) and *sinat(un)* (slumber), which in spite of their apparent similarity, are assumed to be derived from *SNH* and *WSN* respectively; words such as *'izat(un)*, *zinat(un)*, *'idat(un)*, *ğihat(un)*, etc., whose final *t* is generally explained as a substitute (*badal*) for the elided initial *w* (hence the roots are *W'Z*, *WZN*, *W'D*, *WĠH*, etc.); and jussive verbs whose final weak letter is elided in writing, as in *yanqaḍī* vs. *lam yanqaḍī*.

¹⁶ Carter (1990: 110-111); cf. Seidensticker (2002: 153).

A more plausible proposition put forth by a number of scholars¹⁷ is that the original purpose of the rhyme system is to provide poets with a useful tool that would facilitate their search for suitable rhymes when composing poetry (*šī'r*) or writing rhymed prose (*sağğ*). Although this view rests on more solid grounds than the above-mentioned suggestions, particularly given the dominance of poetry in the philological tradition as a whole, its proponents fail to exploit the textual evidence which the introduction and structure of Bandanīgī's *al-Taqfiya* provide. Bandanīgī's disciple who wrote the lexicon's introduction makes a direct link between the rhyme system and poetry and explains that the lexicon's title (which literally means "rhyming") refers to *qawāfi*, plural of *qāfiya*, which he defines as a line of poetry (*al-bayt min al-šī'r*).¹⁸ Bandanīgī introduces *qāfiya* as an essential criterion which narrows down the search for the required word, and the *afā'il* — which are referred to in the introduction and by which are meant the rhyming pattern or groups of patterns exemplified by a collection of lexical items — are designated as *qāfiya* in the text. To take the short chapter of *ṣ* as an example, it starts with an untitled group of words of the patterns *fa'l* (e.g. *qabṣ*), *fu'l* (e.g. *ḥuṣṣ*) and *fi'l* (e.g. *ḥirṣ*), followed by six sections, each of which is called *qāfiya*. The first of these includes words of the pattern *fa'al* (e.g. *qabaṣ* and *ḥaraṣ*); the second words whose final syllable is of the type CVC (e.g. *miṣqaṣ*, *dihriṣ* and *aḥmaṣ*); the third words whose final radical is preceded by *-ā* (e.g. *qiṣāṣ*, *manāṣ* and *iqtināṣ*); the fourth words of the patterns *fi'la*, *fu'la* and *fa'la* (e.g. *ḥiṣṣa*, *'urṣa* and *farṣa*); the fifth words whose final radical is preceded by *-ī* or *-ū* (e.g. *raṣīṣ* and *qurmūṣ*); and the sixth mostly words of the pattern *fa'ila* (e.g. *qamīṣa* and *naqīṣa*) or words that rhyme with that pattern (e.g. *ḥarbaṣīṣa*).¹⁹ Hence, the *afā'il* in each group do not represent a single morphological pattern, but primarily have one feature in common: their suitability to be used as *qāfiya* in the same poem. In other words, *qiṣāṣ*, *manāṣ* and *iqtināṣ* are of three different patterns, namely, *fi'āl*, *fa'āl* and *ifti'āl* respectively, but are obviously assembled in one section because they can be appropriately used as last words in lines of the same poem. For example, the constructions *lahu l-qiṣāṣu* (our examples) and *lahu qtināṣu* can occur at the end of a line of the *wāfir* meter, as in *mufā'alatun mufā'alatun **fa'ūlun*** (relevant parts in boldface), and in the *rağaz* meter when its third foot is *fa'ūlun*, hence *mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun **fa'ūlun***. The same also applies in specific meters to *'atīd*, *muğrūd*, *tabdīd* and *huğūd* as well as to *akbas*, *'arandas*,

¹⁷ See, for example, Naṣṣār (1968: II, 486); 'Aṭīyya (1976: 302); Āl Yāsīn (1980: 283); see also the discussion in Haywood (1965: 71-74).

¹⁸ Bandanīgī, *Taqfiya* 36.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 482-490.

'irmis and *tafağğus*, each group of which is cited under one *qāfiya* in the letters *d* and *s* respectively.²⁰ Contrastively, the reason why words ending with long vowels are not placed under one *qāfiya*, but under two, is that those ending with *-ī* or *-ū* (e.g. *rašīs* and *qurmūs*) cannot be used in the same poem as those that end with *-ā* (e.g. *qišās* and *iqtinās*).

Other features of *al-Taqfiya* provide further proof in favor of the existence of a firm link between poetry and the rise of the rhyme system. The first is that no distinction is made in the same *qāfiya* between geminated and ungeminated words (cf. *all*, *ball*, *ṭall*, *ill* and *fill* with *nağl*, *muhl*, *ğidl*, *basl* and *waşl*)²¹ since both types are of the same *qāfiya* and can thus occur as last words in the same poem. Another relevant feature is that Bandanīgī cites only lexical items (exclusively nouns and verbal nouns), but not roots. Had roots been cited instead, or had they been placed at the beginning of each entry (i.e. to be followed by their derivatives), search for the required rhyming words would have become more difficult. Finally, Bandanīgī frequently includes within each group commonly used words and does not explain them, e.g. *şabīh*, *malīh*, *şahīh*, *şahīh*, *madīh*, *nağīh*, *qabīh*, *dabīh*, *ğarīh*; *tafāhur*, *takātur*, *taḍāfur*, *taḍākur*, *tağāwur*, *taşāwur*, *tağāsur*, *tanāhūr*, *tağāfur*, *taṭāyur*; *tadāfu* ' , *tağāmu* ' , *taḥādu* ' , *tawādu* ' , *tanāzu* ' , *taqātu* ' , *tasāmu* ' , *taḥāşu* ' ; and *sā* 'a, *biḍā* 'a, *iḍā* 'a, *ğamā* 'a, *şafā* 'a, *manā* 'a, *iḍā* 'a, *işā* 'a, *şagā* 'a.²² Such words, which most probably represent the type described in the introduction as both eloquent and understood by the generality of people (*al-kalām al-faşīh al-laḍī lā yağhaluhu l-'awāmm*),²³ are obviously not included for any semantic reason, rather in order to increase the corpus of rhyming words from which the user can choose.

Bandanīgī's arrangement of lexical items based on their final radicals, as well as grouping those that represent a specific *qāfiya* under separate headings in each letter, might not be conclusive evidence that his primary purpose was to provide an aid to poets and writers of rhymed prose. Yet his lexicon — which effectively is a rhyming lexicon — does indeed provide such an aid to the user who needs it, and clearly demonstrates that the rhyme system has its origin in poetry. In fact, *al-Taqfiya* is essentially founded upon two main principles, both of which are borrowed from verse, namely, the *rawiyy* (rhyme letter) and the patterns of the words containing that letter. Accordingly, the lexicon's twenty-eight chapters correspond to the *rawiyy*, and the divisions into *afā 'il* within each chapter correspond to the

²⁰ Ibid., 319-326, 463-465.

²¹ Ibid., 617-623.

²² Ibid., 269, 431, 537-538, 563-564.

²³ Ibid., 37.

patterns. It is also worth observing that, save those that follow no arrangement, the *dīwāns* or *dawāwīn* — i.e. collections of poems by specific scholars — are invariably arranged according to rhyme, starting with ' and ending with y, and the similarity between them and rhyming lexica is unmistakable. It is thus no coincidence that Bandanīgī himself was a poet and that his two other books, *Ma'ānī l-ši'r* and *al-'Arūd*,²⁴ deal with poetry matters. Also significant is the fact that Ibn al-Sikkīt, whose chapter on the pattern *fa'l* and *fa'l* must now be recognized as the first example we know in which lexical items are arranged according to their final letters, was one of those who collected the *dīwāns* of several *Ġāhili* and Islamic poets, such as Umru' al-Qays, Zuhayr, Ġarīr and Abū Nuwās.²⁵ Regardless of the actual arrangement of these *dīwāns*, focus on the rhyme letter in this chapter of *al-Iṣlāḥ* is certainly linked to the fact that words which share the same pattern and end with the same letter may occur in the same poem.

²⁴ Yāqūt, *Mu'ğam* VI, 2844; Qifī, *Inbāh* IV, 79; Şafadī, *Wāfi* XXIX, 53; Suyūfī, *Buġya* II, 352.

²⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 177-179, 182.

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