

THE MUWASHSHAḤ IN YEMENITE JEWISH WOMEN'S POETRY ¹

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Abstract

Because Jewish women in Yemen were denied access to literacy their poem-songs were almost entirely oral. Nevertheless elements of the *muwashshah*'s complex configurations were adopted, but with modifications. This paper's first section will analyse two Yemenite Jewish women's poem-songs that have incorporated aspects of the *muwashshah*. The second section will contain a *muwashshah* created by the author.

Introduction

In Jewish Yemen men's sexuality and virility were equated with literacy, an association that effectively stymied most men from teaching their daughters to read the Biblical Hebrews and Aramaics. It should then come as no surprise that there appear to be only two Yemenite Jewish women who can be unequivocally validated as literate. One lived in the twelfth century, the second in the seventeenth.

"In a beautiful and correctly written Bible codex from Yemen, the copyist Miriam, the daughter of the famous scribe Benáya asks for indulgence with regard to any shortcoming, as she was at the time suckling a baby."²

The second was Sham'á(t), the daughter of Sháalom ash-Shábazi.³

Denying women access to literacy effectively excluded them from learning to speak in the holy languages. Women and girls who attempted to learn to read or even verbalise Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic phrases were ridiculed by members of both sexes. Phrases such as "*Indish síbla (qátib)?*" – "Do you have a penis?" – effectively limited women to the highly Arabicised Judeo Yemeni speech forms.⁴

Except for Şan'ā, strict separation of the sexes in most of Muslim and Jewish Yemen was essentially limited to religious observances outside the home – in the *kanís*, synagogue, and the *másjid*, mosque. In the close quarters of a home complete separation was rarely possible. When Jewish men congregated in a *díwan*, an assembly/living room, the women were nearby. With the exception of Shábboth, they and their children kept the men well supplied with water to supplement the *qat* (*Catha edulis*) and 'áraqi (raisin brandy) the men consumed. This proximity facilitated women's access

to men's actions, including performances of Dīwan poem-songs.⁵

When Jewish men sang from the Dīwan (pl. *diwāwin/diwānim*), a collection of poem-songs – and some of them were *muwashshahāt* – the women heard. Being a woman a *maghānniya(t)* was not allowed to join in, but it is highly likely that she paid close attention to the verse structures, the topics, and the rhyme schemes.⁶

The *maghānniya(t)*

The Yemenite *maghānniya(t)* or woman poem-singer had to rely on her excellent memory. Whether she lived in one of the large towns – Sā'ada, Tā'izz, Manākha, Dhamār, Radhā, Aden and Ṣan'ā the capital – or in the more than 1,000 villages scattered throughout Yemen, her status depended considerably upon her ability to memorise several hundred verses and dozens of melodies and to perform them with artistic skill.

Categories of verses and melodies are associated with different activities. Among them are a number with rhythms specific to particular dances. Another category consists of verses, melodies and dances corresponding to particularly important events such as the *hinna(t)*'s *záffa(t)*, the procession of women carrying the henna powder mixed with water to the bride. The *záffa(t)* verses are somewhat uniform and for the most part sung in a more or less fixed order as well, a rare mirroring of the men's written poem-songs.

An accomplished *maghānniya(t)* created new verses for *hinna(t)* and other celebrations, both Jewish and Muslim. Supposedly impromptu, these verses commented on recent happenings, recalled particular events associated with the host families, wittily poked fun at individual members, and extolled the elder women and men. She also danced during part of her vocal-percussion performance. A *maghānniya(t)* often performed solo, but during day- and night-long performances she was spelled by others.

As Yemen's Jews were forbidden to play drums, reed, horn and string instruments, a *maghānniya(t)* tapped out the rhythms with a large metal key on a *sahn*, a round, eight-to-twelve-inch copper plate.⁷

The *muwashshah*

Although Alan Jones (1988: 24) provides an ideal *muwashshah* schema, Otto Zwartjes' example and description of al-Kumyāt al-Gharbīa's eleventh century *muwashshah* exemplifies the realities: its extensive structural varieties (1997: 29-30). Al-Kumāyt al-Gharbīa's poem has a *mātla'* or prelude (which is not always present) with a rhyme scheme of aa. This schema is repeated, as is customary, after each verse in all the *asmāt*. Each *simt* retains the metre of the *mātla'* but creates novel poetic strings for each repetition. As both hemistichs of al-Kumāyt al-Gharbīa's *mātla'* rhyme end

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in —u, it is reflected in each of the *asmaʿ* or strings, structurally linking the verses into a semblance of coherence apparently mandatory from Western perspectives.^{8, 9, 10}

A common pattern is five verses with each verse consisting of three lines, each a hemistich, in a distinctive rhyming pattern (bbb, ccc, etc). As the *muwashshah* was developed by well-educated, highly literate men in al-Andalus (9th to 12th centuries), Classical Arabic and the Hebrews (in religious Jewish *muwashshahāt*) were the only acceptable languages of composition. The final verse, the *kharja* or “exit”, had to be written in Romance or in a non-standard Romance/Arabic fusion dialect, such as Andalusian Mozarabic.¹¹

Topics were as diverse as nature (*wasf*) court panegyric (*madh*) love lyric (*ghazal*), lamentation (*rithāʾ*), satire (*hijāʾ*), epigram (*tahākkum*) wine poetry (*khamriyya*), pride and boasting (*fakr*) and excitement to courage (*hamās*).¹² The speaker was usually a man, sometimes speaking in the “voice” of a woman, but when proclaiming his love for a woman, she is fantasised as mute maiden or ranting virago.¹³

The irony is that these *muwashshah* were sung by professional women slave singers. They performed at banquets and other social occasions, in the courts and for wealthy people, to the music of lute, flute, tambourine and, according to Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk, to the *urghūn*, an organ.¹⁴

Yemenite Jewish women's *muwashshahāt*

Muwashshah-specific features such as disjunctiveness, an absence of development, and a dependence upon a refrain for linking the verses are found in some Yemenite Jewish women's poem-songs. Repetition (*takārrur*) and symmetry (*tanāsūq*) are guiding principles as well. “They provide whatever unity exists, since unity dependent on organic growth of rhythmic and melodic and poetic themes is nonexistent.”¹⁵

Yemenite women compose oral *muwashshahāt* on the same topics (love, panygyric, satire) and enjoy performance elements apparently denied composers: performers of the written *muwashshahāt*. A *maghānniya(t)* can combine verses in any order at any given moment. She is able to change the contents of verses and compose new ones extemporaneously. She can switch melodies and in doing so change dance patterns. In common with the *muwashshah*, the poem-songs of Yemenite women are often composed to particular melodies.

The diversity of *muwashshahāt* forms that have evolved over the centuries is a considerable part of its attraction as a poetic form.

Following Lois Ibsen al-Farūqi (1975: 5), Tova Rosen (2000: 166) identifies qualities that make the *muwashshah* so appealing:

It exemplifies a pluralistic cultural politics that allowed for difference and plurality, clashes and juxtapositions. It admits non-Arabic and nonlearned cultures, recognises the female voice, and expresses both secular sentiments and religious yearnings. If the *muwashshah* continues to fascinate us today, it is precisely because of the cultural hybridness that it embodies. It is important to reiterate this fact because of those who would reduce the *muwashshah* to a product of “pure” and prescriptive poetics.

The two Yemenite women’s *muwashshahāt* below are from Mishael Maswari Caspi (1985), who does not include musical notation.¹⁶

In both, a *pizmon/refrain* replaces the *mātla'* and the *asmāt*. A *mātla'* and its *asmāt* would flag a poem as a *muwashshah*. As the *muwashshah* is supposed to be written down and in Yemen the purview of men only, a *maghānniya(t)* would be leaving herself wide open to ridicule, diminishing, even eliminating her ability to earn her living. Also missing is the *kharja*, and for the same reason. Since women’s poem-songs are composed in Judeo-Yemeni vernaculars, the *kharja* has no place, unless it is composed in, say, the Biblical Hebrews and Aramaics – reversing the pattern from colloquial to elite.¹⁷

The verse-internal rhyme of aaa, bbb, ccc, etc. is also frequently modified, a common phenomenon in many written *muwashshahāt*.¹⁸

I. Mishael Maswari Caspi (1984: 32-3), Poem No. 10

'IDHĀYB AL-LAMĀ

(A tender sapling)

Reprise/*mātla'*/*pizmon*:

	<i>'idhāyb al-lamā</i>	A tender sapling –
Verse 1	<i>danā kamā danā</i> <i>wa ghisāniḥ rawā</i> <i>'alā shirūb al-mā</i>	Casting down Well-watered branches Over many creeks.

[Reprise/*mātla'*/*pizmon*]

Verse 2	<i>yā sā' iq al-buhīmī</i> <i>sayyirni mi'ak</i> <i>mā 'ād lī bi ummī</i>	Mounted on an ass, Take me with you. I no longer need my mother.
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[Reprise/máṭla'/pizmón]

Verse 3

<i>yā sā'iq al-barī</i>	Mounted on a young camel,
<i>sayyirnī mi'ak</i>	Take me with you,
<i>mā 'ād lī ba ahli</i>	I no longer need my family.

[Reprise/máṭla'/pizmón]

Verse 4

<i>yā sā'iq al-nāḡah</i>	Mounted on a she camel
<i>sayyirnī mi'ak</i>	Take me with you,
<i>mā 'ād lī tāḡah</i>	I can no longer wait.

[Reprise/máṭla'/pizmón]

Verse 5

<i>yā nāzil al-dihdūh</i>	Climbing down falling rocks,
<i>sayyirnī mi'ak</i>	Take me with you,
<i>wa l-mal yifdā al-rūh</i>	And wealth will save my soul.

Comments

The metres of the single-line reprise/pizmón, 'idháyb al-lamā, the second line in verse #1, and the second verse-internal reprise *sayyirnī mi'ak* are, in writing, 5. If they are to fit a melodic and dance line of 6, then both will have to be stretched another syllable: 'idháy[i]b al-lamá, and say[i]rinī mi'ak.

Another necessary rhythmic modification, the first line of verse 2, *yā sā iq al-buhimī*, is a 7. To fit a 6/4 or 6/8 rhythm it will have to be truncated to *yā sā iq al-buhmī*.

The four *abyāt* or verses are split in the middle with a second reprise – *say[i]rinī mi'ak* – creating a most unusual structure. Lines two and four of each bayt or verse rhyme conservatively.

Verse 1: —imi/—ummi Verse 2: —ahri/—ahli

Verse 3: —qa(t)/—qa(t) Verse 4: —duḥ/ —ruḥ

To complicate matters, the absence of musical and dance notation makes it difficult to determine if the melodic rhythm is a 6/4 or a 6/8.¹⁹

The two reprises/pizmonim do not restrict a *maghánniya(t)*'s choices as to which she sings first. They do, however, create an analogous framework to the *máṭla': simṭ muwashshah* configuration.

Unable to record her poem-songs in writing, this innovative pattern allows a *maghánniya(t)* to weave the pearls of her verses into a unique and intricate girdle of verse and melody.

II. Mishael Maswari Caspi (1984: 74-77), Poem No. 35

NĀZILAH MIN BEYT ABŪHA
(Coming down from her father's house)

Reprise/*māṭla'*/*pizmón*:

<i>nāzilah min beyt abūha</i>	Coming down from her father's house,
<i>tāli 'ah beyt al-jirān</i>	Up to the neighbor's house,
<i>lābisah fistān 'alā al-mōdhah</i>	Dressed according to the fashion –
<i>wa 'yūnā tadrūb salām</i>	Joy and happiness in her eyes.

VERSES

Verse 1

<i>qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī</i>	He said to her: "Allow me to see you, Oh, beautiful one!"
<i>wa 'alā shā'rek farijīnī</i>	Allow me to see your hair!"
<i>qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī</i>	She replied: "Go away, poor one!"
<i>sha'rī hibāl al-jamāl</i>	My hair is rope for camels."

[Reprise/*māṭla'*/*pizmón*]

Verse 2

<i>qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī</i>	He said to her: "Allow me to see you, Oh, beautiful one!"
<i>wa 'alā jabīnek farijīnī</i>	Allow me to see your forehead!"
<i>qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī</i>	She replied: "Go away, poor one!"
<i>jābīni qamar sha'bān</i>	My forehead is like the full moon."

[Reprise/*māṭla'*/*pizmón*]

Verse 3

<i>qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī</i>	He said: Allow me to see you, Oh beautiful one!
<i>wa 'alā ḥawājibek farijīnī</i>	Allow me to see your eyebrows!"
<i>qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī</i>	She replied: "Go away, poor one!"
<i>ḥawājibī khītūt 'aqlām</i>	My eyebrows are lines of a pen."

[Reprise/*māṭla'*/*pizmón*]

Verse 4

<i>qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī</i>	He said: Allow me to see you, Oh beautiful one!
<i>wa 'alā 'yūnek farijīnī</i>	Allow me to see your eyes!"
<i>qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī</i>	She replied: "Go away, poor one!"
<i>'iyūnī jawāhir ḥumrān</i>	My eyes are like amber."

[Reprise/*māṭla'*/*pizmón*]

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Verse 5

qāl lah yā hilewā warnī

He said: Allow me to see you,
Oh Beautiful one!

wa 'alā khúshmek farijīnī

Allow me to see your nose!"

qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī

She replied: "Go away, poor one!

wixúshmī sef as-sultān

My nose is like a sultan's sword."

[Reprise/*mátla'*/pizmón]

Verse 6

qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī

He said to her: "Allow me to see you,
Oh, beautiful one!

wa 'alā fūmek farijīnī

Allow me to see your mouth!"

qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī

She replied: "Go away, poor one!

ufūmi huqqah murjān

My lips are a mosaic of coral."

[Reprise/*mátla'*/pizmón]

Verse 7

qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī

He said to her: "Allow me to see you,
Oh, beautiful one!

wa 'alā 'unqék farijīnī

Allow me to see your neck!"

qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī

She replied: "Go away, poor one

'unqī žabyat al-bustān

My neck is like the gazelle of the garden."

[Reprise/*mátla'*/pizmón]

Verse 8

qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī

He said to her: "Allow me to see you,
Oh, beautiful one!"

wa 'alā sadrek farijīnī

Allow me to see your bosom!"

qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī

She replied: "Go away, poor one!

Wi sadrī saṭṭh al-medān

My bosom is as smooth as a
racetrack."

[Reprise/*mátla'*/pizmón]

Verse 9

qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī

He said to her: "Allow me to see you,
Oh, beautiful one!

wa 'alā ki 'ūbek farijīnī

Allow me to see your breasts!"

qālat loh rūh yā miskīnī

She replied: "Go away, poor one!

Wiki 'ūbi ḥabb al-rummān

My breasts are a garden of
pomegranates."

[Reprise/*mátla'*/pizmón]

Verse 10

qāl lah yā hilewā warīnī

He said to her: "Allow me to see you,
Oh, beautiful one!"

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wa 'alā batnek farijīnī Allow me to see your waist (belly)!"
qālat loh rūḥ yā miskīnī She replied: "Go away, poor one!
batni ḥarīr al-kattān My waist (belly) is like wool and linen."

[Reprise/*māṭla'*/pizmón]

Comments

This poem-song is also composed using a reprise/pizmón-plus-verse-internal reprise/pizmón pattern.²⁰ Poem-song I has a single-line external reprise/pizmón of *'idhāyb al-lamā* ("A tender sapling"). Poem-song II is expanded to four lines in an abab format. The verse-internal reprise/pizmón pattern also varies. In Poem-song II, the single-line (3rd line) internal reprise that characterises Poem-song I above is now located on the first as well as third lines of each of the 10 *abyāt*, verses. There is another innovation. The second line of each verse contains three phrases; only the middle one (a body part) changes.

This series of verses replicates some of the metre and rhythm variations found in Poem-song I above. Line metres within each verse vary from 7 to 8 to 9 to 10. This variable pattern suggests that the dance is a *dā'asa(t)*, traditionally a 9/4 or 11/4 pattern which western influences have modified to 8/4.

If we follow the current western-style reduction to 8/4, then all 7, 9 and 10 lines must be modified. For example, line 2 of the reprise/pizmón must be stretched to *tāli 'ah lil beyt al-jīrān*. In contrast, line 3 is one beat too long and must be reduced to *lābisah fistān al-mōdhah*, whereas line 4, like line 2, has to be expanded to *wa 'iyūnā tadhrūb salām*.

The verses' rhyme template is essentially 9-10-8-7. All ten verses share a single rhyming pattern: —īnī. Line 4, the shortest (7) pattern is —aan. As lines 1 and 3 are identical in each four-line verse and only the middle phrase of line 2 is modified, it is to be expected that all ten verses are cccd. The 4-line reprise/pizmón (8-7-9-7) does not rhyme internally and therefore cannot be separated into hemistichs. Its pattern is abac (*abūha/jīrān, al-mōdah/salām*). The ten verses do lend themselves to internal rhyming. If we divide each line into hemistichs then the pattern appears as follows. The first three lines of each verse as illustrated in Verse 1, has an identical pattern. Only line 4 varies. Verses 2 and 4 and 4 through 10 display the same hemistich pattern.

Verse 1	line 1	a d	(lah, warīnī)
	line 2	d d	(sarek, fariḡīnī)
	line 3	e d	(rūḥ, miskīnī)
	line 4	d f	(sa'arī, gamāl)

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Verse 2	line 4	d b	(jabīnī, sha'bān)
Verse 3	line 4	d c	(hawāgibī, 'aqlām)
Verse 4	line 4	d b	(fi'yūnī, dhumrān)
Verse 9	line 4	d b	(wiki'tūbī, al-rummān)
Verse 10	line 4	d b	(baṭnī, al-kattān)

A Yemenite Jewish woman's *muwashshah* composed to the 9-beat da'asa(t)²¹

This *muwashshah* may very well be the first composed by a Yemenite Jewish woman. Instead of Classical Arabic, it is composed in the women's highly Arabicised Judeo-Yemeni but in a common *muwashshah* pattern: a *mátla'* of three hemistichs, three *abyāt* or verses of three hemistichs each and with internal rhyming, three single hemistich *asmaf*, also with internal rhyming, and a *kharja* containing four hemistichs. Contrary to custom, the *kharja* is composed in Biblical Hebrew and not in the more customary Arabic dialect.

III. Dina Dahbany-Miraglia: Poem No. 1

'ABDĀ'
(I Begin)

mátla'

<i>'abdā' an-lā</i>	<i>al-badī rābī</i>
I begin not with	The Deity, the Creator,
<i>wallā ma'ā</i>	<i>al-badī' hāqī</i>
But with	My wondrous one.
<i>farāq annā</i>	<i>yī farūqanī</i>
I am fearful	They will send me away.

Verse 1

<i>nazālt lil sīl</i>	<i>al-rāḥat al-qalb</i>
I went down to the stream	To ease my heart.
<i>mā jawsh al-khil</i>	<i>mā karānsh al-ḥab</i>
My lover did not come.	The seed did not merge.
<i>dhāḥiq al-sīl</i>	<i>mātarat min shab</i>
The stream mocked me	with a flood of abuse.

Simt 1

<i>sham ḥawātak</i>	<i>qatal 'arūdīnī</i>
Your fresh scent	has demolished my defences.

Verse 2

<i>rāqqas qalbī</i>	<i>min ghayr mawzūn</i>
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My heart dances unrhythmically.
ḥub ḥabībī *'asqanī majnūn*
My lover's loving maddens me.
hu tayyarnī *lil umm al-nijūm*
He makes me soar to the star-filled skies.

Simt 2

birāqusak *lā tuwāʿufnī*
Your dance, Do not stop.

Verse 3

lisān al-nar *alā 'ayn harāb*
The language of passion Where has it gone?
al-ḥub shakār *al-yowm? bil katāb*
Love made us drunk. Today? It's just in a book.
qālbī fāqur *ḥayātī karāb*
My heart is poverty-stricken; My life destroyed.

Simt 3

nar nazārak *ramād qawāmī*
The fire of your gaze Cindered my resistance

Kharja

ānah halākh dodī *ḥayafēh bigvarīm?*
Where has my beloved gone? The most handsome of men?
barāh dodī minnī *rūḥo al aḥerīm*
He has left me, His mind is on others.
tivtāh timkhotī *tinōq ei dam kokhī*
He still relies on me He still sucks my strength.
umāh titēn otī? *im gazim maziqīm.*
And how does he reciprocate? With his noxious gases.

CLOSING COMMENTS

In her book on medieval European women troubadours (*troubairitz*) Meg Bogin spotlights the issue that trouble all histories however they are investigated, namely the paucity of women's voices:²²

[Women's poems] have an immediacy and charm that are particularly their own... They represent the first female voices we have from a culture that has hitherto been known only through its men.²³

Caspi 1985, Compton 1976, Dahbany-Miraglia 1982, Gamlieli 1974, Gerson-Kiwi 1980, Shai 1985, 1987, and Spector 1960, 1968 have made it quite apparent that neglecting to mine the treasures of the women's poem-songs has seriously distorted our understandings of the complexities of Yemenite Jewish culture.

This centuries-long pattern of neglecting to incorporate what women do

continues to distort our understanding of the past, our ability to evaluate the present with some objectivity, and by extension, we have seriously hampered our capacity to predict the future even minimally with some degree of accuracy.

The women's poem-songs are an untapped reservoir of Yemenite Jewish culture. How much more is out there? How much more remains? How much more can the poem-songs teach us?

NOTES

1. My sincerest thanks to Marcia Kovler, Queensborough's Interlibrary Loan Officer, and to Tom Shemansky and Ray Perez of Media Services. Without their considerable efforts preparing this paper would have been overwhelming. Thank you!!!
2. Goitein, S.D. 1971. (*A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza. Volume II. The Community*). Berkeley, University of California Press. 469-70.
3. There seems to be only one Jewish woman in Andalus who can be unequivocally identified as poet, namely Qasmūna(t) bint Isma'il ibn Baghdala ibn Yūsuf (Maryam Annaghri). It is believed that she died young around the middle of the eleventh century. Only three short poems, written in Arabic, have survived. Bellamy, James A. 1983. "Qasmuna the Poetess: Who Was She?" (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*). 103, 423-4; Brann, Ross. 2000. "The Arabized Jews." Ed. Maria Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells. (*The Literature of Al-Andalus*). Cambridge University Press. 436; Gerli, Michael E. 2003. Qasmūna bint Ismā'il. (*Medieval Iberia. An Encyclopedia*); Goitein, S.D. 1983. (*A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza. Volume V. The Individual*). Berkeley, The University of California Press. 469-70; and Nichols, James Mansfield. 1981. "The Arabic Verses of Qasmunah bint Ismail ibn Bagdala". (*International Journal of Middle East Studies*). 13. 155-158; al-Suyūti, Jalāl ad-Dīn. 1958. (*Nuzhāt al-Julāsa fī Ash'ār al-Nisā. Entertaining Company with Poems by Women*). Sālah Munājjid, Ed. Beirut, al-Hiqūq. 86-87. Of the cited authors only al-Suyūti includes in his collection the three poems she composed. He is also the only one who identifies Qasmūna(t) as "al-Yahūdiya(t)" (p.86). Another Andalusian woman is the Muslim Granadan poet Nazhūn; Hammond, Marle. 2004. "He Desires Her?" Situating Nazhūn's *Muwashshah* in an Androgynous Aesthetic of Courtly Love" (in this volume).
4. One of the few exceptions was the women *shohātat*, ritual slaughterers, who memorised the prayers, blessings and techniques necessary to slaughtering and preparing meat according to *halakhāh*, Jewish law.
5. In her role as homemaker/hostess the Yemenite Jewish woman had considerable access to men's doings that was not reciprocated. Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1986. (*Veiled Sentiments. Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*). Berkeley. University of California Press. 23, comments on the asymmetrical flow of information in a Bedouin society which appears to be a Middle Eastern universal. Men spoke to each other and to women but with few exceptions women restricted the flow of information to other women. See also Dahbany-Miraglia, Dina. 2003. "Communitas endures: Yemenite

Jewish women in America.” Paper read at the *Association for Jewish Studies*, Boston MA SU 12/21-TU 12/23.

6. A few of the illiterate older women I have worked with since January 1970 admitted to memorising prayers and Diwan poem-songs which they sang when they were out of earshot of their families and neighbors. A number grew so bold that when they attended *kanīs*, synagogue, in the 1970s and 1980s, on Shabbath (the Sabbath) and on the holy days, they shouted corrections from the balcony to the men who were praying below.

7. Johanna Spector’s 1960 article, “Bridal Songs and Ceremonies from San’a, Yemen.” Raphael Patai, Francis Lee Utely and Dov Noy, Eds. (*Studies in Biblical and Jewish Folklore*). Bloomington. Indiana University Press. 259 (255-288), reprises her 1958 article, “Yemenite Wedding Songs.” (*Reconstructionist*). 24 #13. 11-16, with one difference. The 1960 version includes musical scoring. The Dánukh sisters performed together in Israel for a number of years, at the very least since the early 1970s.

8. In both articles, Spector 1958: 11, 1960: 258, says that Yemen’s Muslims were also forbidden by the Zaidi to play musical instruments, such as the *turbia*, a lute-like instrument. Schuyler, Phillip P. 1990/1991. “Music and Tradition in Yemen.” (*Asian Music*). 17 #2. (51-71) 59-60 claims that since the mid-twentieth century the *turbia* has been almost entirely replaced by the Egyptian *’udh*.

9. Jones, Alan. 1988. (*Romance Kharjas in Andalusian Arabic Muwaššah Poetry. A Palaeographical Analysis*). Oxford. Ithaca Press. 24, and Zwartjes, Otto, 1997. (*Love Songs from Al-Andalus. History, Structure and Meaning of the Kharja*). Leiden. Brill, 29-30. If a verse has three lines, each line contains a hemistich (it is split into two segments). The final syllable of the first hemistich of every line must share the same rhyme. The final syllable of the second hemistich of every line must also share the same rhyme. For example:

Line 1.	_____ u	_____ i
Line 2.	_____ u	_____ i
Line 3.	_____ u	_____ i

See al-Farūqi, Lois Ibsen. 1975. “*Muwashshah*: A Vocal Form in Islamic Culture.” (*Ethnomusicology*). 19 #1. (January). 3-5. for a more extensive delineation.

10. Lois Ibsen al-Farūqi (1975: 10-14) identifies two key differences between Western and Eastern poetic forms. In common with other forms of Arabic poetry the *muwashshah* is disjunctive or agglutinative. In spite of the linking *asmāt* each verse stands alone. A second feature of difference is the kind of limits on individuality, as to how creative one can be within the limitations of standard themes and verbal repetitions. Rosen, Tova. 2000. “The Muwashshah.” Menocal et al., Eds., 169.

11. Federico Corriente (personal communication) states that of the 500 or so extant *muwashshahāt* a minority of 50 or so *kharajat* are found to be composed in a non-Arabic language.

12. al-Farūqi, Lois Ibsen. *art. cit.* 7; Knysh, Alexander. 2000. “Ibn al-Khaṭīb”. Menocal, et al., eds. 364; and Rosen, Tova. 1988. “On Tongues Being Bound and Let Loose: Women in Medieval Hebrew Literature.” (*Prooftexts*). 67-87.

13. Rosen, 1988.

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14. Rosen, 2000, 170, 172. Dwight Reynolds' "Musical Aspects of Ibn Sana' al-Mulk's *Dar Al-Tiraz*." (in this volume) identifies the instrument as a long horn made up of several sections. Each section has a different shape and size.

15. al-Farūqi, 1975, 15.

16. All of the poems in Caspi's book are in English transcription as well as translated into English by the author. Caspi, Mishael Maswari. 1985. (*Daughters of Yemen*). Translated from the Arabic by the author. Berkeley, University of California Press. Caspi acknowledges his debt to Nissim Binyamin Gamlieli. 1974. (*Ahavat Teiman. Beloved Yemen. HaShirah ha'Amamūt haTeimanūt. Yemenite Folk Poetry*). Tel-Aviv, Davar Publishers, who gave permission to select poems from his collection and include them in Caspi's volume xv. Neither Caspi nor Gamlieli include musical notation.

17. Referring to Hebrew *muwashshahāt* and citing Tanḥūm Yerushālmī (mid-13th century) in Egypt, Stern, Samuel Miklos. 1974. (*Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry: Studies by Samuel Miklos Stern*). Selected and edited by L.P. Harvey. Oxford, Clarendon Press. 17, states that "The *maṭla'* is termed *pizmón* ('refrain') because it is given as a response as the reciter ends each strophe." Stern comments further on this common practice of repeating the *maṭla'* (*pizmón*) between verses. "[It] was imported from al-Andalus...and...it corresponds...with Spanish zajals [as well] ... the whole recital of the *muwashshahāt* ...is based on the repetition of the *maṭla'* as a refrain." (1974: 17)

18. Stern, 1974, 20-26.

19. Musical beat (*ḍarb*) and poetic metre are often in conflict, likely a universal factor. One of the ways singers filled in musical "spaces" was to insert "melismatic passages with non-lexical syllables" (like "na-na"). Gerson-Kiwi, Edith. 1980. "Musical Settings of the Andalusian *Muwashshah* Poetry in the Oral Tradition." Edith Gerson-Kiwi, Ed. (*Migrations and Mutations of the Music in East and West*). Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts, Department of Musicology. 171. Al-Farūqi points out that "although *muwashshahāt* are musical settings of poetry, the correspondence between words and music is not one in which the tune follows the poetic line programmatically." (1975: 6) As Yael Shai. 1985. (*The Traditional Women Songs of the Habbani Jews and Their Role in the Yemenite Wedding Ceremonies*). M.A. Thesis, Department of Musicology, Bar-Ilan University, 162, sums it up (with respect to Yemenite Jewish Habbani women's poem-songs), "the verses serve the music". Yet Johanna Spector (1960: 279-80), also an ethnomusicologist, states that "in almost all cases the text is more important to the singer than the melody and that the melodies are often mutilated in order to fit a shorter text. If a text line becomes longer, the melody has to be extended; if the text line becomes shorter, the melody has to be shortened as well". Spector contradicts her colleagues a second time when she claims that "On the other hand, repetition of syllables and the interpolation of meaningless sounds have not been observed" (1960: 280). A conclusion? Artists modify verse and melody when it serves an artistic purpose.

20. Ed Emery (personal communication) suggests that "Nāzilah min bet abūha" is in the classic form of the song of sexual progression – "First I put my hand upon her ankle" etc, progressing ever-closer to the promised land – and that an interesting parallel is provided by the zajalesque "Rosa fresca aulentissima", one of the earliest

examples of Italian vernacular verse in the man-woman dialogue genre known as *contrasto*.

21. Referring to Yemenite Jewish women poem-singers as more modern prototypes, S.D. Goitein. 1988. "Women as Creators of Biblical Genres." (*Proof texts*), 8, 1-33, recognises the contributions of Jewish women as creators of specific literary genres, such as lamentations, love and victory songs. As women were excluded from literacy they rarely contributed to the finalised written versions. This situation has changed. Jewish women can now, if they wish, write in the extant genres and continue to create new ones as well, this time codified on paper.

22. Bogin, Meg. 1976. (*The Woman Troubadours*). New York, Paddington Press Ltd.

23. Bogin 1976: 60.

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