

CHAPTER 10

Andalusi usages and the use of dialect in Eastern *zajals* from the Mamluk era

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In a previously published article I analysed the impact of the Andalusi tradition on *zajal* poetics.¹ Poets and theorists from the East wrote these poetics starting with Şafiyaddīn al-Ḥillī's (677–749/1278–1348) *Kitāb al-ʿĀṭil al-ḥālī wa-l-murakkhkhaṣ al-ghālī*.² One conclusion of the analysis was that in many later poetics the Andalusi *zajals* were replaced by Eastern *zajals* as models: While Ibn Ḥijjah al-Ḥamawī (767–837 / 1366–1434) and especially al-Ḥillī refer to Andalusi *zajjāls* in order to put forward normative rules of *zajal* composition, other theorists such as al-Banawānī (d. 860 / 1456), al-Muqaddasī (fl. middle of the 15th century), Aḥmad al-Darwīsh (fl. 18th or 19th century) and al-Dajwī (fl. 19th century) base their theories on contemporary poets, mostly Egyptian and sometimes Syrian, and seem to be totally cut off from the poetics of al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ḥijjah, and thus from the Andalusi tradition.

Another observation of the study refers to the gradual emancipation of the Eastern *zajal* from their Andalusi counterpart in anthologies and literary encyclopaedias. While we can still find some examples of Andalusi *zajals* in the anthology *ʿUqūd al-laʿāl fī al-muwashshahhāt wa-l-azjāl* by al-Nawājī (785–859 / 1383–1455) there are almost none in anthologies or encyclopaedias of a later date.

Since the poetic genre took roots in the Eastern Arab world, presumably at the end of the 5th/11th century, Eastern poets and scholars alike have been aware of its Andalusi origin. Yet it was not only the Andalusi origin of the newly introduced genre that they were aware of, they also knew that the language of the *zajal* should reflect in some way its Andalusi origin. A first glance at any Eastern *zajal*, however, reveals that the language of the Eastern *zajal* has little in common with an Andalusi dialect that was used by people in everyday life al-Andalus. This holds true not only for Eastern *zajals* – Andalusi *zajals*, too, do not seem to be dialectal in the sense that they reflect the dialect that was actually spoken there at that time. The *zajals* composed by the famous Andalusi poet Ibn Quzmān for example can hardly qualify as specimens of pure dialectal poetry. At best Ibn Quzmān's language may be considered a stylised dialect. In any case, however, Eastern poets and readers considered the language of the *zajal* to be markedly different from the language used in their other poems.

Using the example of Ibn al-Nabīh's *zajal* (*al-zamān saʿīd muwātī*, “the time is joyous, felicitous”), one of the most famous and most cited *zajals* of the East, the present contribution aims at showing what kind of language Eastern poets used and to what extent it was actually Andalusi.

One dialectal feature that all *zajals* share, Andalusi and Eastern, is the absence of *iʿrāb* or desinential flexion. The following quote of Ibn Quzmān shows that this feature was also the hallmark of his *zajals* and linguistically the dialectal feature per se:

wa-qad jarradtuhu mina l-iʿrāb / ka-tajrīdi s-sayfi mina l-qirāb

“I stripped it (i.e. the *zajal*) of the desinential flexion / as the sword is unsheathed from the scabbard.”³

Ibn al-Nabīh

One of the early *zajal* poets of the East is Ibn al-Nabīh (560–619 / 1164–1222). Like Ibn Sanā al-Mulk (d. 608 / 1211) he counts among the few poets who breathed new life into the genre of praise poetry in the Ayyubid period. We do not know much about the first years or decades of his life. It seems, however, that he enjoyed a profound education, so that he was able to excel in the praise poems directed at the Ayyubid ruler of Egypt al-Malik al-‘Ādil (538–615 / 1145–1218, r. 596–615 / 1200–1218) and his son al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Ghāzī (r. 617–645 / 1220–1247), ruler of Mayyāfāriqīn (today's Silvan in south-eastern Turkey). Around the year 600/1204 he went to Naṣībīn (today's Nusaybin on the Turkish-Syrian border, 60 km southeast of Mardin) to pay his respects to the Ayyubid prince al-Malik al-Ashraf Mūsā (d. 635 / 1237). At that time, al-Ashraf was 24 years old and was busy expanding his reign over the northern Mesopotamian border region with Syria. To secure his claim to power he married the sister of the Zengid ruler Nūraddīn Arslanshāh of Mosul (d. 607 / 1211, r. 589–607 / 1193–1211) and the daughter of the Kurdish-Armenian-Georgian commander Ivane (d. 624 / 1227 and 626 / 1229).⁴ After the death of his father al-‘Ādil in 615 / 1218 he took over the rule of Jazīrah with the capital Ḥarrān until 626 / 1229.⁵

Like many other highly educated poets of his time, Ibn al-Nabīh looked for a patron and above all for a position at the court of a ruler. Court poets in the traditional sense, and those who earned their living exclusively with their poems, were rare then.⁶ However, patronage at the courts of the Ayyubid princes of Damascus, Ḥamāh, Ḥimṣ, Mayyāfāriqīn, Aleppo and other cities was flourishing at the time and was attracting elite poets and scholars.⁷ Rikabi notes:

Toute une vie littéraire se développe autour de ces princes établis dans des villes provinciales éloignées de la capitale. Chacun d’eux a ses poètes et ses favoris, et il arrive souvent que les poètes des grandes villes leur envoient des panégyriques ou, de préférence, aillent leur rendre visite pour être mieux récompensés.⁸

Al-Ashraf not only liked the poetry of Ibn al-Nabīh – who subsequently became his favourite poet – but also entrusted him with the chancery for correspondence (*dīwān al-inshā’*), in which Ibn al-Nabīh served until his death.

The rulers of the politically divided regions of Syria and Northern Mesopotamia, among them the Artukid and Zengid rulers of northern Mesopotamia, vied with each other to lure the most famous poets, musicians, composers, and scholars to their court.⁹ Even quite insignificant cities like Dunaysir (20 km south-west of Mardin) developed into intellectual centres of regional importance with the claim to be part of this competition.¹⁰ Damascus cuts a fine figure in the favour of poets and scholars in comparison with other Syrian cities, such as Ḥamāh and Ḥimṣ, that surprisingly perform worse.¹¹ This dynamic literary life at the Ayyubid courts was to continue into the Mamluk period when ‘Imādaddīn Abū l-Fidā’ al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad (672–732 / 1273–1331, reg. 710–732 / 1310–1331) and his son al-Malik al-Afḍal Naṣīraddīn (712–742 / 1312–1341, reg. 732–742 / 1331–1341), two governors elected “princes” (al-Malik) and generous patrons of Ayyubid descent, ruled in Ḥamāh.

Thus, Ibn al-Nabīh managed to get one of these coveted posts and was able to work there for 18 years until his death. He dedicated a large part of his praise poems to his patron al-Malik al-Ashraf.¹² This was also the case with his only surviving *zajal*, *al-zamān sa’īd muwāṭī*, in which al-Malik al-Ashraf is mentioned by name. This *zajal* is not only one of the earliest *zajals* in full length ever, but also one of the most famous and most frequently quoted.¹³

In view of the fame of this *zajal*, it is surprising that this is the only one that has come down to us from him. Apart from that, his *dīwān* consists exclusively of poems in literary Arabic: praise poems, *qaṣīdahs*, epigrams, one *dūbayt*¹⁴ and a *muwashshahah*. The

dialectal forms of poetry were therefore not really his favourite genres. Also his position as head of the chancery of al-Malik al-Ashraf, which requires a special linguistic competence and comprehensive knowledge of stylistics, characterize him primarily as a representative of a literary elite and did not predestine him a priori for the main occupation with vernacular poetry. Likewise his language – Ibn al-Nabīh was born in Cairo and only moved to the Jazīrah, i.e. to the northern part of Syria, towards the end of his life – does not suggest that he began to write poetry in the dialect of his adopted country. The fact that he did not speak any dialect can safely be excluded. Studies, e.g. by Hopkins, have shown that diglossia has been predominant since pre-Islamic times.¹⁵ In his daily dealings with the people around him, Ibn al-Nabīh most probably spoke dialect. Even if he did not necessarily go to the baker to buy his bread himself – a man in his position could probably afford servants for that – he must have communicated in dialect, whether it be Cairene or the dialect of Mayyāfāriqīn. Can we therefore assume that his *zajal* is composed in the Cairene dialect? Or did he use the dialect of Mayyāfāriqīn in order to adapt to the community of *zajjālūn* there, if one already existed at that time, that is?

Even a cursory glance at his poem suffices to reveal that both suppositions do not hold up. The poem does not come across as particularly Cairene or showing elements of northern Mesopotamian; rather, it is composed in a stylised language; in its choice of words it is a quite sophisticated colloquial language, marked largely by the absence of *i'rāb*. This stylised, often regionally unspecific colloquial language, makes up the vast majority of the *zajal*, whereby conventional orthography stemming from the high-level language is an important feature that make it difficult to spot a specific dialectal influence.¹⁶ The *zajal* of Ibn al-Nabīh also shows some fragments of Andalusi Arabic or rather of the conventional language used by Andalusi *zajjālūn* and their Eastern counterparts

Ibn al-Nabīh's *zajal*: *al-zamān sa'īd muwāṭī*

Although Ibn al-Nabīh was not a *zajal* specialist and did not compose other *zajals* than the one under scrutiny here, it was held in high esteem by posterity. Several anthologies of the Mamluk time like *'Uqūd al-la'āl* as well as *Ḥalbat al-kumayt* of al-Nawājī, *Rawḍ al-ādāb* by al-Ḥijāzī and *al-Durr al-maknūn* by Ibn Iyās quote the poem in full length. The famous polymath al-Ṣafadī also recognized the importance of the poem, which he quotes in full length in his *Wāfī*. Like Ibn Nubātah (686–768 / 1287–1366), perhaps the most influential poet of the Mamluk era, al-Ṣafadī, too, wrote a contrafactum on this *zajal*. Moreover, it is extensively treated in Ibn Ḥijjah's *Bulūgh*. In establishing the version reproduced here, I have consulted, in addition to the sources mentioned, two lithographs of the *dīwān* by Ibn al-Nabīh and the edition of the same work by al-As'ad.¹⁷

maṭla':

الزَّمانُ سَعِيدٌ مُوَاتِي وَالْحَبِيبُ حُلُو مُقْرَطِقُ

The time is joyous, felicitous, / the beloved sweet, clad in a *qurṭaq*.¹⁸

وَالرَّبِيعُ بِسَاطُ وَأَخْضَرُ وَالشَّرَابُ أَشَقَرُ مُرَوِّقُ

The spring's carpet is green / and the wine filtered reddish-blond.¹⁹

1st stanza:

وَالنَّسيمُ سَخَرُ تَنْفَسُ عَنْ عَيْبِرٍ أَوْ مِسْكٍ أَذْقُرُ

The breeze in the first light of the day exhales / the scent of amber and musk.

وَالعُصُونُ بِحَالِ تَدَامَى مِنْ سُلَافِ العَيمِ تَسْكُرُ

The twigs are like ²⁰ drinking companions, / who are inebriated by the choice wine of the clouds.

وَالْعَدِيرُ يَمْدُ مِعْصَمٍ يَنْجَلِي فِي نَفْسِ أَخْضَرٍ

The watercourse [or the water] extends his wrist, / which appears in green adornment.

وَالْهَزَارُ يَغْمَلُ طَرَائِقُ فِي الْغِنَى مَزْمُومٌ وَمُطَلَقٌ

The nightingale sings her melodies, / at times restraining itself and at times unrestrained in her singing.

2nd stanza:

هَاتِ يَا سَاقِي الْخُمَيِّ يَا إِنَّ نَجْمَ اللَّيْلِ غَرَّبَ

Give, oh cup-bearer, the wine. / Look, the night star just set.

مَنْ يَكُونُ الْبَدْرُ سَاقِيَهُ كَيْفَ لَا يَشْرَبُ وَيَطْرَبُ

How could someone not drink and be moved [by the music], / when his cup-bearer is the full moon [a beautiful boy with a moon-like face]!

أَنْتَ وَالْأوتَارُ وَالْكَاسُ لِلْهُمُومِ دَوَا مُجْرَبُ

You, the strings and the cup are / a proven cure for grief.

لَا تَخَافِ الصُّبْحَ يَهْجُمُ دَعِ يَجِي وَيَرْكَبُ أَبْأَقُ

Fear not, the morning when it rushes in. / Let it come and ride a piebald horse.

3rd stanza ²¹

وَاقْتَبَسْ يَاخِي بِيَدِكَ مِنْ فُصُوصِ يَاقُوتِ أَحْمَرٍ

Take, o brother, with your hand / gems of red ruby.

لَا تُقَرِّبْهَا لِيَخْدُكَ تَشْتَأَنَّ عَلَّ بِالنَّارِ وَتَسْكُرُ

But do not let it come close to your cheek, / because it would catch fire and be inebriated.

خَاجَاتٌ مِنْ نُورِ وَجْهِكَ إِذْ رَأَتْ أَجَلَّ مَنَظَرٍ

They (the rubies) became embarrassed by the light of your face, / when they saw the splendid sight.

وَالْحُبَابُ بَاهَتٍ لِيَغْرَكَ مِنْ حَايَاهُ يُعْومُ وَيَغْرَقُ

The bubbles (of the wine) are amazed by your teeth, / embarrassed, now they sink and now they reappear.

4th stanza

ذَا الْمَلِيحُ فِي الْجَأْنِ ²² يَبْدُو وَأَنَا مَسْكِينٌ فِي جَهَنَّمَ

This beautiful one seems to be in paradise / poor me, instead, I am in hell.

أَهْ عَلَى فُبْلَةٍ فِي خُدَيْدُو وَأَخْرَى فِي 23 ذَاكَ الْفَمِّ يَمِّ

O, what would I give for a kiss on his little cheek / and another one on this little mouth!

لَوْ تَرَى حُمْرَةَ خُدُو وَعَذَارُو ذَا الْمُنْمَنَمِّ

If you saw the blush of his little cheek / and his adorned down,

كَانَ تَرَى ثَوْبَ أَطْلَسٍ أَحْمَرَ مَعْدَنِي بِأَخْضَرٍ مُعَاوِقِ

it would be as if you saw a gown of red satin / embraced by green.

5th stanza

يَا نَدِيمِ أَسْمَعْ نَصِيحَةَ لَا تَنَمْ مَا دُمَّتْ تَمَكِّنُ

O, companion, listen to my advice, / don't fall asleep as long as you can.

الصَّبَّاحِ وَمِثْلُ فِي الْكَاسِ مَا تَرَى مَا أَبْهَجَ وَمَا أَحْسَنَ

The morning and something alike in the cup [i.e. red and white wine] ²⁴ / There is nothing more splendid and more beautiful!

وَالشَّقِيقِ حَمْرًا وَصَفْرًا كَأَنَّ رَايَاتِ شَاهِ أَرْمَنِ

Anemone[-like], red and yellow, / as if it is the banner of the king of Armenia. ²⁵

ذَا مَا لِكَ تَخَالَ جَمَّ أَلُو مَا خُلِقَ وَلَيْسَ يُخْلَقُ

That's a prince – figure his beauty, / [a beauty] that has not been created and will not be.

6th stanza ²⁶

الكَرَمِ وَالْعِفَّةِ وَالْبِرِّ عِنْدَكَ أَبُو الْفَتْحِ مُوسَى

Generosity, virtue, and strong will. / You possess all these, Abū l-Fath Mūsā.

الْأَسَدِ إِذَا تَنَمَّرَ وَالْعَدُوَّ يَحَالُ فَرِيْسَةً

When the lion rages / and the enemy becomes a prey,

لَمْ يَدَعْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُدْكَرُ لَا صَنَمٌ وَلَا كَنِيْسَةً

nothing remains on the earth that is worth to be mentioned: / neither idols nor churches.

وَكَسَا الْإِسْلَامَ جَلَالُو إِنَّ ذَا أَسْعَدَ مُوَقِّقُ

He enshrouded Islam with his glory. / How blissful and prosperous this is!

7. Strophe

وَرَشِيْقَةُ الْمَعَاظِفِ رَأَيْتُ وَبَيْنَ الصَّنَاجِقِ

The delicate neck of his banner / stands out among the flags,

وَالْعُجْبَارُ بِحَالِ غَمَائِمٍ وَالسُّيُوفُ بِحَالِ بَارِقِ

the dust like clouds, / the swords like lightnings.

وَسَنَا جَبِيْهُ يَرْمِي بِشُعَاعِ عَلَى الْخَالِيْقِ

The glory of his forehead / irradiates all creatures.

زَعَقْتُ حَرَامَ زَوْجِي وَالنَّبِيَّ غَدًا نَطِئُ

She shouted: the cunt of my mother-in-law!²⁷ / By the prophet! Tomorrow I will be divorced.

Andalusi usages, dialect, and style in Ibn al-Nabīh's *zajal*

Altogether, this *zajal* is characterized by elegant simplicity. This is reflected in the stylistic means which Ibn al-Nabīh sparingly uses and manifests itself already in the entrance verses. The first, second and fourth hemistich have exactly the same syntactic structure – a subject with two predicate nouns (*al-zamān sa'īd muwātī* = “The time is joyous, felicitous” etc.). In the third hemistich the same syntactical structure reappears in the comment of the topic-comment structure: *al-rabī' bisāṭū akḥḍar* = “spring, its carpet is green”. The topic is spring. The comment is what is said about this spring, namely that its carpet is green. The verses of the first stanza are also arranged in topic-comment order.

Note the three personifications of morning breeze, branches and water in verse one. The morning breeze breathes, the watercourse stretches out its wrist and the branches are like drinking companions intoxicated by the rain. Personifications also appear in the following stanzas: In stanza two, the tavern becomes the moon, which one cannot resist, and in the following stanza the beauty of the beloved's face even embarrasses the ruby, which in turn is a metaphor for wine. Other metaphors are in stanza six, with al-Malik al-Ashraf, the furious lion, and in stanza seven the forehead of the prince is understood as the sun, which casts its glorious rays on all creatures.

Ibn al-Nabīh prefers simple comparisons, which he introduces with the Andalusi word *bi-ḥāl* for *mithl* (Ar. “like, such as”). Four times he uses this word in his poem: In verse one there are branches, which are similar to drinking companions. In the sixth stanza, the enemy is compared to the prey of the lion. In the last stanza the dust (meaning the dust that the army raises) appears like clouds and the swords like lightnings. Ibn al-Nabīh uses other comparisons, this time without the word *bi-ḥāl*, in stanza five within the *takhalluṣ*, where he compares the colours of the anemone with the flags of al-Malik al-Ashraf.²⁸

With the comparisons using *bi-ḥāl*, we have already arrived at the Andalusi and other linguistic peculiarities of this *zajal*. Ibn al-Nabīh uses this Andalusi usage wherever possible, but otherwise refrains from including Andalusi elements in his *zajal*. The only other word that goes back to an Andalusi origin is *bi-yaddak* in stanza three, which must be read with geminated *dāl*, as is customary in Andalusi Arabic.²⁹ Diminutiva are not Andalusi usages per se, but they are typical for *zajals* since Ibn Quzmān's times.³⁰ In one verse Ibn al-Nabīh makes use of them twice. Both times they are part of the face of the beloved: *khudaydū* (“his little cheek”) and *fumayyam* (“the little mouth”).

Like many other *zajal* poets, Ibn al-Nabīh mixes dialect with literary language. Nevertheless Ibn Ḥijjah accuses him of many language “errors”, although the mixture of literary language and dialect (*taznīm*) is common in *zajal* poetry. Ibn Ḥijjah applies a strict standard when discussing Ibn al-Nabīh’s *zajal*, which he does not apply to other *zajals* that he also analyses in his work. Actually, Ibn al-Nabīh’s *zajal*, apart from the internal passive *yukhlaq* in the common rhyme verse of the fifth stanza, or *yudhkar* in the third special rhyme verse of the last stanza, and *nuṭallaq* in the common rhyme verse, contains a rather little *fushā* influence.

Let us now look at the other side. How dialectal is Ibn al-Nabīh’s *zajal*, as far as we can tell from the written text?

The *kasrah* at the end of *l-ghaymā* in the second verse of the first stanza corresponds to the epenthetic vowel [ə], which is added to the word actually spoken in pausa for metric reasons and most likely reflects the actual pronunciation in dialect. The same applies to *l-laylā* (stanza 2, verse 1), *l-badrā*, *kayfā* (stanza 2, verse 2) and *wa-l-awtārā* (stanza 2, verse 3) etc. The writer of ms. Cairo Ma’had 429 of al-Ḥijāzī’s Rawḍ writes out some of these *kasrahs* (as in the case of *kayfā* and *wa-l-awtārā*).

Ibn Ḥijjah puts forward that Ibn al-Nabīh uses *tanwīn* in some places (as in the case of the word *misk* in verse 1, stanza 1 and *naqsh* in verse 3) and declares that this is a gross violation of *zajal* rules (see Ibn Ḥijjah, *Bulūgh*, pp. 87–88). It seems that Ibn Ḥijjah overlooks the fact that in Andalusi an indeterminate noun can be connected with an adjective by a so-called “linking *tanwīn* (-an-)”.³¹

The variant *dāl* instead of *dhāl* (as in *adfar* for *adhfar* in the first verse of the first verse) occurs frequently in the reproduction of dialectal poems in the manuscripts, so for example in source غ and ق etc. This could well correspond to the actual realisation of this fricative in some dialects. For the sake of better understanding, I decided to follow the dictionaries, in this case *dhāl*.

As shown by the example of *al-kās* and the following *dawā* (*dawā*’), the *hamzah* in the middle and at the end of the word in vernacular (and also *fushā*) poems is omitted under normal circumstances. Some manuscripts, like in this case ق, have the *hamzah* (*dawā*’). This is, however, an exception. In vernacular pronunciation the *hamzah* is most likely not articulated in any of these poems. *Hamzahs* in word initial position as in *wa-l-’awtār* in the same verse can sometimes be articulated, even if not written, as *hamzah*, in particular if the metric requires this. It is important to note that the *hamzah* can be omitted here as well, namely when one connects the *lām* directly with the following *a*: thus *wa-lawtār*, or in syllables *wa / law / tār*. Metrically, the difference is negligible as the initial *wa-* can be read short and long.

Another example for the omission of *hamzah* in word initial position lies in the second part of the fifth stanza, where the disjunctive *hamzah* (*hamzat al-qat*’) of the elative in *abhaj* and *aḥsan* is elided. According to *fushā* grammar it should be pronounced like this: *mā abhaja wa-mā aḥsana* or in pausa *mā abhaj wa-mā aḥsan*.³² In this *zajal*, however, the *hamzah* is not pronounced. The spelling of the *hamzah* in the witnesses reflects the changed pronunciation, because the *hamzah* on the *alif* is not necessarily set. Taking this changed pronunciation into account, the phrase is spelled with *hamzat al-waṣl*: مَا أَبْهَجُ وَمَا أَحْسَنُ. Another spelling is possible: The *Bulūgh* for example elides both *alifs*, i.e. the elongation sign of مَا and the *alif* of the elative in أَبْهَجُ and أَحْسَنُ. The whole appear as follows: مَبْهَجٌ وَمَحْسَنٌ. This spelling corresponds exactly to the pronunciation of the above version with *hamzat al-waṣl*. A similar phenomenon is found in the manuscripts غ and ق: The وَتَا in the first hemistich of the first verse is written without *alif* and without *hamzah*. Also the publisher of *Bulūgh* uses this spelling. The reason for this is that the spelling with *alif* would lead to the assumption that a *hamzat al-qat*’ (أ) is at play here which in turn would lead to a deviation from the metre. The publisher of al-Nawājī’s *’Uqūd* seems not to

be aware of this. He writes erroneously with *hamzat al-qaṭ* (أ). It results from this that there can be only two possible spellings in such cases: either with *hamzat al-waṣl* (وا) or as in the other witnesses without *alif* (ا). I choose the spelling with *hamzat al-waṣl* in order to make the original spelling stand out without neglecting the pronunciation.

Alif mamdūdah (ل) and *alif maqṣūrah* (ع) can be used indiscriminately in the respective manuscripts. Intervocal *hamzah* in words like *al-khalā'iq* are often written with *yā*' (*al-khalāyiq*, stanza seven, verse three). This corresponds to the probable pronunciation in dialect.

In source *بيدوا ج و غ*. In this case and in the following verse (جدوا) as well as in similar cases in the manuscripts, the ending -ū is often written with *alif otiosum* contrary to the orthographic rules. The wāw in *bisāṭū* in the second verse of the *maṭla'* is a common spelling for the pronoun -*hu* with preceding vowel -*u*- and/or -*a*- in popular poems and corresponds very probably to the actual pronunciation in dialect. This feature is one of the most distinctive dialectal features in *zajal* poetry and can be observed in all *zajals* that I have been able to consult.

Three further dialectal characteristics should be pointed out here: The first concerns the negation of the verb in imperfect with the particle *mā*, which is the standard variant for negations of verbs in imperfect and perfect in dialects like Levantine. In stanza five, verse two, *mā* is used to negate the following *tarā* (“you do not see / don’t you see” or “you do not know / don’t you know”).³³ This type of negation is also frequently encountered in other Eastern *zajals*. In none of the Eastern *zajals* I examined, not even in the Egyptian ones, I have seen the discontinuous negation *mā ... -sh* (as for example in the sentence *mā bayaktābsh* “he does not write”).³⁴ In this respect, it would be interesting to examine *zajals* from later centuries to see if and when the discontinuous negation found its way into vernacular poetry.

The second characteristic, this time of a syntactic nature, concerns the hypotactic construction in the common rhyme of stanza two, in which the conjunction/particle *an* is not used, which corresponds to the usage in Levantine or Egyptian dialects of today: *lā takhāfa ṣ-ṣubḥ yahjum*. In *fushā* this sentence should have a *an* between *al-ṣubḥ* and *yahjum*.³⁵ Thirdly and lastly, still in the same verse, all copyists write the imperative with a long ā: *takhāf*, i.e. not with the short apocopal form of the verb that would be correct according to *fushā* grammar. These imperative forms are typical of the Levantine and Iraqi dialects of today.³⁶

Conclusion

As was mentioned earlier in this article the most conspicuous colloquial element of Western and Eastern *zajals* alike is the absence of *i'rāb*. What I did not mention before is the almost universal usage of the verbal prefix *na-* for the first person singular in imperfect forms. In Ibn al-Nabīh’s *zajal* we do not find any, not because he used the non-Andalusi prefix *a-* (or *bā-/ba-* as in Levantine and Egyptian), but because he did not use any of them at all. Beyond this, the influence of the Andalusi dialect on the language of Ibn al-Nabīh is limited. Nor do we see an excessive number of dialectal, let alone regionally coloured expressions. We see, however, that the mentioned dialectal characteristics in his *zajal* are typical for Eastern dialects or apply to other dialects, too. This is the case for most of the Eastern *zajals* that I have studied with some minor differences: Ibrāhīm al-Mi'mār for example uses expressions that pertain to the usage of certain milieus in Cairo but refrains largely from the use of Andalusi usages.³⁷ Sirājaddīn al-Maḥḥār, who was a famous Syrian *zajal* and *muwashshaḥ* poet, said of himself at the end of one of his *zajals*: *maghribī lafzī lākinnī min ahli sh-Shām* (“my language is Western, yet I am Syrian”).³⁸ We may expect, therefore, to find more Andalusi usages in his *zajals* than in Ibn al-Nabīh’s *zajal* for example. A closer look at his *zajals* reveals that his affirmation *magribī*

lafẓī is nothing else than a pose.³⁹ He does not use more Andalusi usages than his fellow poets. But even if he did, it is unlikely that he would use Andalusi expressions, words, and grammatical features that were incomprehensible to Eastern ears and/or did not pertain to a certain conventional set of Andalusi features which were already adopted by earlier Eastern *zajal* poets. For example, it would have been unusual for an Eastern *zajal* poet to use Andalusi expressions such as *yaddā*, “in fact”, or words such as *mazād* which means “mosque”. It seems therefore that most of the Eastern *zajjālūn* were not specialists of the Andalusi dialect nor of Andalusi *zajal* poetry (except maybe al-Ḥillī); and most probably they did not scour the poems of Ibn Quzmān to find fancier Andalusi usages than those that were already in use in *zajals* of their time and the circles of their fellow-poets.

To sum up, the large majority of Eastern *zajals* are not dialectal in the sense that they reflect the dialect of a certain region. We can rather speak of non-*mu‘rab*-poems seasoned with (often over-regional) dialectal elements and a limited number of conventional Andalusi usages. Many poets, especially the learned ones such as Ibn al-Nabīh, Ibn Nubātah, and Fakhraddīn Ibn Makānis (745–794 / 1345–1393), composed their *zajals* without mutating into poets of vernacular poetry. Instead, they applied the conventions of the genre while putting to use the very same imagery, stylistic and literary devices they were accustomed to (see the Ibn al-Nabīh’s *takhalluṣ* in this *zajal*, for example), and also the literary language they employed in their highbrow poems. The degree of “literariness”, however, be it on a stylistic or linguistic level, varied from poet to poet. This also applies to *zajal* poets from al-Andalus. Corriente, for example, established that al-Shushtarī uses literary language more amply than Ibn Quzmān.⁴⁰

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1. Özkan, Hakan: “L’émancipation du zağal oriental de ses modèles andalous à l’ère mamelouke”, in: *Asiatische Studien* 72,3/2018, pp. 819–862.
2. Al-Hillī, Ṣafīyyaddīn Abū l-Faḍl ‘Abdal‘azīz: *K. al-‘Āṭil al-ḥālī wa-l-murakkhaṣ al-ghālī*. Hoenerbach, Wilhelm (ed.). Wiesbaden 1955.
3. Nykl, Alois Richard: *El cancionero del Seih nobilísimo visir, Maravilla del tiempo Abú Bakr ibn ‘Abd al-Malik Abn Guzmán [Ibn Quzmān]*. Madrid 1933, p. 9.
4. Humphreys, R. Stephen: *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260*. New York 1977, p. 436.
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6. Bauer, Thomas: “In Search of ‘Post-Classical Literature’: A Review Article”, in: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11,2/2007, pp. 137–167, here p. 155.
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9. Korn, Lorenz: “Art and Architecture of the Artuqid Courts”, in: Fuess, Albrecht u.a. (ed.): *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Ninth Centuries*. London 2010, pp. 385–407.
10. Hirschler, *Ashrafiya*, p. 29.
11. Ibid, p. 39.
12. Ibid, p. 434.

13. Özkan, Hakan: *Geschichte des östlichen zağal – von den Anfängen bis zum Ende der Mamlukenzeit*. Baden Baden 2020, p. 206.
14. “The *dūbayt* in Arabic is a poetic quatrain, corresponding to its more famous Persian counterpart, the *rubāʿī*. In the Arabic tradition, the poem is counted as a two-liner (with a Persian name) whereas in Persian it is a quatrain (with an Arabic name) [...]. The *dūbayt* has its own metre and may display either monorhyme throughout (a-a-a-a) or the third line may be excluded from the rhyme (a-a-b-a).” Talib, Adam: “Dūbayt in Arabic”, in: *EP³*.
15. Hopkins, Simon: “On Diglossia in Pre-classical Arabic”, in: Talay, Shabo et al. (ed.): *Arabische Welt – Grammatik, Dichtung und Dialekte*. Wiesbaden 2010, pp. 237–256. Similar conclusions have been drawn regarding the dialects of al-Andalus: see Institute of Islamic Studies of the University of Zaragoza: *A Descriptive and Comparative Grammar of Andalusī Arabic*. Leiden 2013, p. 54.
16. Cf. Voegeli, Madeleine: “*Mansūbat Ṣafā l-ʿaiš* – Ein volkstümliches ägyptisch-arabisches zağal aus dem 17. Jahrhundert”, in: *Asiatische Studien* 50/1996, pp. 463–478, here p. 468. Li Guo writes on the language of dialectal poetry in Ibn Dāniyāl’s shadow plays: “Even in the most vernacular poetic form, the *zajal*, colloquial elements are kept to a minimum.” Guo, Li: *Performing Arts in Medieval Islam. Shadow Play and Popular Poetry in Ibn Dāniyāl’s Mamluk Cairo*. Leiden 2012, p. 117.
17. Here is a list of the sources that I have used to establish the *zajal*. The sigla in Arabic refer to one of the following sources: Ibn al-Nabīh, Kamāladdīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī: *Dīwān*: ١) Beirut 1299/1881–2, pp. 53–55; ٢) Kairo 1280/1863, pp. 46–47; ٣) al-Asʿad, ʿUmar Muḥammad (ed.). Beirut 1969, pp. 314–317; ٤) al-Nawājī, Shamsaddīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan: *ʿUqūd al-laʿāl fī l-muwashshahāt wa-l-azjāl*. ʿAṭā, Aḥmad Muḥammad (ed.). Cairo 1999, pp. 265–268; Ibn Hījjah al-Ḥamawī, Taqīyyaddīn Abū Bakr: *Bulūgh al-amal fī fann az-zajal*: ٥) al-Qurayshī, Riḍā Muḥsin (ed.). Damascus 1974, pp. 86–91; ٦) ms. Cambridge Qq. 185, fols. 16^v–17^v; al-Hijāzī, Abū ṭ-Ṭayyib (or Abū l-ʿAbbās) Shihābaddīn Aḥmad: *Rawḍ al-ādāb*: ٧) ms. Gotha 400, fol. 80^r–80^v; ٨) ms. Ayasofya 4017, fols. 100^v–101^r; ٩) ms. Ayasofya 4018, fols. 154^v–155^r; ١٠) ms. Kairo Maʿhad 429, fols. 103^v–104^r; ١١) ms. Cairo Maʿhad 1764, fol. 104^v; ١٢) ms. Mossul 44/8, fol. 78^r; ١٣) ms. Bagdad Maktabat al-Maḥaf al-ʿIrāqī 12, fol. 174^r–174^v; ١٤) Ibn Iyās, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad: *al-Durr al-maknūn fī al-sabʿ funūn*, ms. Kairo Dār al-Kutub Shiʿr Taymūr 724, fols. 178^v–179^r; ١٥) al-Ṣafadī, Ṣalāḥaddīn b. Khalīl b. Aybak: *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*. 32 vols. Ritter, Hellmut et al. (eds.). Wiesbaden/Stuttgart/Beirut 1962–2013, vol. 21, pp. 447–449; ١٦) al-Nawājī, Shamsaddīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan: *Ḥalbat al-Kumayt*, pp. 377–378. See for a critical edition of this poem Özkan, *Geschichte*, pp. 479–483.
18. *Muqartaq* is derived from *qurtaq* (from Pers. *kurtah*): “une courte chemise qui va juste au corps, avec des manches qui vont jusqu’au coudes” (see Dozy, Reinhart: *Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements chez les arabes*. Amsterdam 1845, p. 362). Some sources have *rushayyaq* here. Since the manuscripts of the *dīwān* of Ibn al-Nabīh were not accessible to me, I could not clearly determine whether some of them also read *rushayyaq*. However, the variant *muqartaq* from Ibn al-Nabīh’s *dīwān* represents the unusual one.
19. Although most sources read *aṣfar* (“yellow”), I prefer the *lectio difficilior* from the *divan*, *ashqar*.
20. The expression *bi-ḥāl* is an andalusism and should be used instead of *mithl* according to *zajal* poetics, see for example al-Banawānī: *Dafʿ ash-shakk wa-l-mayn fī tahrīr al-fannayn*. Ms. Berlin 7170, fol. 18r.
21. This stanza is only contained in the *dīwān* of Ibn al-Nabīh, in al-Nawājī’s *ʿUqūd* and in al-Ṣafadī’s *Wāfi*.
22. The second syllable is read short because of the metre.
23. In *zajal*-poetry *-ā* at the end of a syllable can be read long and short alike.
24. Cf. Wagner, Ewald: “*Husn at-takhalluṣ* bei Ibn al-Nabīh und Ibn Sanāʿ al-Mulḳ”, in: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 48,1/2017, pp. 59–82, here p. 65.

25. *Shāh Arman* is the patron of Ibn al-Nabīh, Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Muẓaffaraddīn Abū l-Faḥ Mūsā b. Abī Bakr b. Ayyūb al-Malik al-Ashraf Mūsā (d. 635/1237).
26. This verse is missing in *Bulūgh*, *Rawḍ*, *Durr*, and *Halbat al-kumayt*.
27. The expression *أَمْ حَرَّ* already occurs in older poems. Nöldeke mentions it in the section “Extraordinary omission of endings” of his grammar: Nöldeke, Theodor: *On the grammar of Classical Arabic*. Vienna 1896, p. 9.
28. A *takhalluṣ* by Ibn al-Nabīh, which Ewald Wagner discusses in the article: “*Huṣn at-takhalluṣ* bei Ibn an-Nabīh and Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk”, in: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 48,1/2017, S. 59–82; see also the examples of this style by Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk. The way Ibn al-Nabīh uses the *kharjah* and the frequent comparisons resemble the style of Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk.
29. See for example the *zajal* no. 90 by Ibn Quzmān in Monroe, James T. and Pettigrew, Mark F.: “The Decline of Courtly Patronage and the Appearance of New Genres in Arabic Literature: The Case of the *zajal*, the *maqāma*, and the *Shadow Play*”, in: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 34, 1–2/2003, pp. 138–177, here p. 141 (verse 14: *khallā yaddak min lihyatī yā ḥimār* = “Let go my beard, you ass!”); further examples in Corriente, Federico: *A Dictionary of Andalusi Arabic*. Leiden 1997, pp. 144, 165, 169, 575 and *passim*.
30. Abu-Haidar, Jareer A.: “The Diminutives in the ‘*dīwān*’ of Ibn Quzmān: A Product of Their Hispanic Milieu?”, in: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 52,2/1989, pp. 239–254.
31. Corriente, Federico: *Grámatica, métrica y texto del cancionero hispanoárabe de Aban Quzmān*. Madrid 1980, p. 46: “/maṣāyiban ‘izám/ ‘grandes desgracias””.
32. Cf. Vrolijk, Arnoud: *Bringing a Laugh to a Scowling Face: A Study and Critical Edition of the Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-muḍḥik al-‘abūs by ‘Alī Ibn Sūdūn al-Baṣbugāwī (Cairo 810/1407–Damascus 868/1464)*. Leiden 1998, p. 148 and Davies, Humphrey T.: *Seventeenth-Century Egyptian Arabic – a Profile of the Colloquial Material in Yūsuf al-Shirbīnī’s Hazz al-quḥūf fī Sharḥ Qaṣīd Abī Shadūf*. Unpublished dissertation. University of California Berkeley. Berkeley 1981, pp. 117–118.
33. Cowell, Mark W.: *A Reference Grammar of Syrian Arabic (based on the dialect of Damascus)*. Washington 1964, p. 383.
34. Woidich, Manfred: *Das Kairenisch-Arabisches*. Wiesbaden 2006, pp. 333–334; see also Vrolijk: *Scowling*, p. 156 and Davies: *Profile*, pp. 283–292. In the epigrams of al-Mi‘mār, however, this occurs more frequently, see al-Mi‘mār, Ibrāhīm: *Der Dīwān des Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār (gest. 749/1348–49)*. *Edition und Kommentar*. Bauer, Thomas et al. (eds.). Würzburg 2018, e.g. no. 270 and 271.
35. Cf. Vrolijk: *Scowling*, p. 156.
36. Cf. McLoughlin, Leslie J.: *Colloquial Arabic (Levantine)*. London 1982, p. 36; Cowell: *Grammar*, p. 359; Brustad, Kristen: *The Syntax of Spoken Arabic – A Comparative Study of Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, and Kuwaiti Dialects*. Washington 2000, p. 294; Blanc, Haim: *Communal Dialects in Baghdad*. Cambridge 1964, p. 118.
37. Al-Mi‘mār, *Dīwān*, pp. 282–326.
38. Al-Maḥḥār, Sirājaddīn Abū Ḥafṣ (or Abū l-Khaṭṭāb) ‘Umar Ibn Mas‘ūd: *Dīwān Sirājaddīn al-Maḥḥār*. ‘Aṭā, Aḥmad Muḥammad (ed.). Cairo 2001, p. 344.
39. See for example *zajals* no. 1–6 in his *dīwān*, p. 343–352
40. Corriente, Federico: *Poesía estrófica (cejeles y/o muwaššahāt, atribuida al místico granadino aš-Šuštārī, (siglo XIII d.C.))*. Madrid 1988, pp. 19–21.