

# The Poetics of the Hebrew *Muwashshah* Revisited

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Today no one would claim that medieval Hebrew poetics, started in al-Andalus in the middle of the tenth century, was not an adaptation of the poetics used by Arabic poets. Any account of Hebrew prosody and metrics must therefore be based on the form of Arabic prosody, the '*arūd*', as it was then used in al-Andalus. In spite of some discrepancies in details, most scholars describe this prosody as 'quantitative', based on a regular alternation of 'short' and 'long' units, *sabab* and *watid*. Some, for example Gotthold Weil, considered stress a very important element of this system and part of the metrical pattern in poetry—a theory strongly rejected, however, by such scholars as W. F. G. J. Stoetzer.<sup>1</sup> In recent times, the question has been posed again in the following form: Is the oldest Arabic prosody, represented by Bedouin poetry, 'qualitative' or 'quantitative' in nature? That is, is it accentual and based on the opposition of stressed and non-stressed syllables, or is it rather based on vowel or syllable length, like classical Arabic poetry?<sup>2</sup> In his research based on fieldwork conducted in al-Mahra in southeast Yemen, Sam Liebhaber has analyzed poetic performance among speakers of one of the indigenous languages of the Arabian Peninsula, one which preserved an oral poetic practice free from the influence of literate Arabic poetics. This analysis shows that both types of prosody were used, depending on the type of performance. The upshot of this kind of debate is to question whether the two categories, 'quantitative' and 'qualitative', are really mutually exclusive, as some scholars have suggested. This is not the place to discuss further this question as it pertains to the interpretation of Arabic metrics. Do these theories, however, have any consequences for Hebrew prosody?

In this paper, I offer a revision of Hebrew poetics and, in particular, of the poetics of the *muwashshah* in light of Federico Corriente's description of Andalusian

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1 Gotthold Weil, *Grundriss und System der altarabischen Metren*, Wiesbaden 1958; Willem F. G. J. Stoetzer, *Theory and Practice in Arabic Metrics*, Leiden 1989, for example pp. 90-96.

2 See Sam Liebhaber, "Rhythm and Beat: Re-evaluating Arabic Prosody in the Light of Mahri Oral Poetry," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55:1 (2010), pp. 163-182.

Arabic. In his *Árabe andalusí y Lenguas Romances*,<sup>3</sup> Corriente has shown that the Arabic dialects of al-Andalus competed with the native Romance from the very beginning (eighth century), creating circumstances of unequal bilingualism, with the Arabic dialectal bundle as the cultural, urban language and Romance as the language of the poor Christian villagers.<sup>4</sup> In his account, the ensuing move towards a clear Arabic monolingualism was completed in the thirteenth century, whereas during the eleventh and twelfth centuries bilingual geographical areas were becoming very limited.<sup>5</sup> From a synchronic point of view Corriente has shown very convincingly that the Arabic language used in al-Andalus did not preserve the quantitative rhythm of Classical Arabic, replacing it with a stress marking the prominence of some syllables.<sup>6</sup> This development, he claims, had consequences for the history of Arabic Andalusian metrics: there are clear signs that the metrics of Classical Arabic, the *'arūd*, suffered an accentual adaptation when it was used in the *muwashshah* and, above all, in the *zajal*.<sup>7</sup>

Corriente's studies have made, in my opinion, a very important contribution to our knowledge of the linguistic circumstances of Arabic al-Andalus and their consequences for Iberian literary history. I believe, however, that this new perspective on the linguistic development of al-Andalus has yet to be fully incorporated into the study of Hebrew metrics.

Since the early days of research on the poetics and metrics of medieval Hebrew poetry, most scholars have agreed that it was Dunash ben Labrat who introduced a new technique of writing poetry in Hebrew which 'imitated', or adapted biblical Hebrew to, an Arabic system of long and short units. And since classical Arabic poetry was based on a 'quantitative' prosody, Hebrew metrics has been studied exclusively in terms of 'quantitative' categories, a perspective shared by all manuals aiming to elucidate the core traits of medieval Hebrew poetry. Most scholars have also recognized that what Dunash did was not obvious and marked a significant innovation: since at the time the new metric and poetic system was introduced there were no 'long' or 'short' syllables in Hebrew, considerable adaptation was

3 Federico Corriente, *Árabe andalusí y lenguas romances*, Madrid 1992.

4 Corriente, note 3 above, pp. 33-34.

5 Corriente, note 3 above, note 3 above, p. 34.

6 "Una serie de rasgos grafémicos, sociolingüísticos e histórico-literarios confluyen en significar que el andalusí no conservaba el ritmo cuantitativo del á., habiéndolo sustituido por un sistema de prominencia silábica basada en el acento tónico como fonema suprasegmental": Corriente, note 3 above, p. 60.

7 "Hay indicios vehementes de que esta situación les llevó a producir una adaptación acentual de la métrica del ác. o *'arūd* utilizada en el *muwaššah* y, sobre todo, en el *cejel*" (Corriente, note 3 above, p. 62).

necessary.<sup>8</sup> The most important novelty of Dunash's system was the creation of a special unit, the *yated*, formed by a *shewa'* or *haṭef* vowel followed by one of the regular vowels, in keeping with the classical Arabic *watid*.

Despite general acknowledgment of Dunash's innovative adaptation of the Arabic prosodic system, some scholars stress the fact that going as far back as the tenth century, none of the medieval descriptions of this type of Hebrew metrics lamented the absence of long and short vowels or syllables, suggesting that from the very beginning other elements of the new poetics were deemed more important. Medieval Hebrew writings on prosody described Dunash's new metrics very differently, with no reference to 'long' or 'short' units. Some relatively late medieval criticisms and explications of his technique presented Hebrew metrics as combining two kinds of vowels, 'kings' and 'servants'—somewhat different from the classical Arabic meters, but still fairly close to them. Hebrew meters, somewhat modified from the classical Arabic patterns, were enumerated and described using this combination. This, however, was not the only account offered by Hebrew experts on metrics. In the earliest criticisms of Dunash's work, besides other important objections, the disciples of Menaḥem mentioned the "change of accent," the "destruction of the *te'amim*," as one reason for their criticism:<sup>9</sup>

ועוד תשחית הטעמים והעኒינים, ותשים מלרע מלעיל, ותחליף קצת קטן, כאשר  
נמצא ראש שירך

לדורש החקמות / בעיצות ומזומות

הן בהיביאך דורש במשקל, יהיה בפתח קטן והטעם מלעיל, והיה עיקרו קצת  
קטן, והטעם מלרע.  
וכה יקרה

לגועך בתנומות / נשפים ושקרים

ובעשותך כהה, תחליף אומר עצתי תקים כמו יתן אמר. כן דורש מלרע כמו  
אומר עצתי תקים, ודורש מלעיל כמו יייתן אמר. וזאת השחתה גדולה בטעמיים  
ובעኒינים.

<sup>8</sup> The system of Tiberian masoretic vowels used in the Middle Ages did not classify the vowels according to their length (as either 'short' or 'long'), distinguishing instead between different vocalic tones.

<sup>9</sup> Santiaga Benavente (ed.), *Tešubot de los Discípulos de Menaḥem contra Dunaš ben Labraṭ*, Granada 1986, p. 14\*.

The change of accent מילרע מלעיל ("וחתשים מלרע מלעיל") conditioned in their opinion vocalic changes such as פתח קטע / קטע קטע , distinguishing the regular form in prose of a word, from its poetic form, its form in meter ("במשקל").<sup>10</sup>

Yehudi ben Sheshat seemed to understand the question, כי הפק הרוב הקמן לפתחה מהן הפתוחה ל�מוץ והמליה הנקודה מלעיל ל�מוצחה חטופה but in his usual way of simplifying the debate he simply denied the value of the proofs of Menahem's disciples.<sup>11</sup>

In his short treatise on Hebrew metrics,<sup>12</sup> Judah Halevi adopted an attitude close to that of Menahem's disciples, regretting above all the loss of the distinction between *mil'el* and *milra'* words that did not respect the differences between name and verb or between verbal forms.

Abraham ibn 'Ezra, in his *Sefer sahot*, explained the different types of Hebrew meter (*mishqal*) as a function of sequences of *tenu'ah* and *yated* (a mobile *shewa'* followed by a *tenu'ah*).<sup>13</sup> What he, as well as the poets, deemed important was just the number of the vowels ("כִּי לَا ישׁמוּ רַק מִסְפֵּר הַתְּנוּעוֹת").<sup>14</sup>

David ben Yom Tov ibn Bilya explained the meters in terms of a division of the vowels into 'kings' and 'servants'. No mention of accent was made in his description of the eighteen different meters. He spoke for the first time of a different kind of 'melodic poem' (השירים הלחניים) which takes into consideration only the number of *nequdot* (vowels or syllables: "בָּמֹות מְسֻפֵּר נְקוּדוֹתֵי"), same as the Romance languages which have "only kings and no servants" ("כִּי כָּלָם מְלָכִים"). The poets decide the number of syllables and in that way give shape to the structure of the poem ("וְעַל פִּיהֶם יִהְיֶה בְּנִין הַשִּׁיר").<sup>15</sup>

Saadia ibn Danan, in the fifteenth century, described the Hebrew meters as composed of three kinds of vowel—'kings', 'servants', and those that can be either 'kings' or 'servants'—combinable in *tenu'ot* ('kings') and *yetedot* ('servant'/'king')

10 It has become usual among scholars of medieval Hebrew poetry to change the masoretic vocalization, adapting it to the requirements of prosody—especially so in the case of the *shewa'* and the *haqef*. In my opinion, this usage is not at all justified. Medieval authors did not usually vocalize their poetry, but insofar as they did, I don't think they would have adapted the grammatical vocalization to the prosody. They did not alter the grammar of the words, only the performance of the reading according to the laws of meter.

11 María Encarnación Varela Moreno (ed.), *Tešubot de Yehudi ben Šešet*, Granada 1981, p. 17\*.

12 Heinrich Brody, *Die schönen Versmasse*, Berlin 1930.

13 Abraham Ibn 'Ezra: *Sefer Saḥot*, Carlos del Valle (ed.), Salamanca 1977, p. 147.

14 Ibid., p. 147.

15 See Carlos del Valle, *El diván poético de Dunash ben Labrat: la introducción de la métrica árabe*, Madrid 1988, pp. 487-488.

compounds) whose organized sequences (in '*amudim*, 'feet') form the sixteen *neharot* ('rivers').<sup>16</sup> As in the case of Abraham ibn 'Ezra, no reference was made to a possible accent in the meters and their components.

We see, then, that among medieval authors who analyzed the nature of Hebrew prosody there was not one homogeneous way of explaining the essence of Hebrew meter. None of the theoretic writers in Medieval Sepharad viewed Hebrew prosody and meters as purely quantitative, however, that is, as based on the 'length' of the vowels in terms of 'short' versus 'long' units. The opposition of 'king' and 'servant' is, in my opinion, of a grammatical nature, a description of the material reality or composition of the units, and has little to do with prosody or with phonic realization. It could mark, in any case, the predominance of certain vowels or syllables over others, which is not easy to understand from a simple 'quantitative' point of view. The best expression of this material description is perhaps Saadia ibn Danan's way of representing the different kinds of meters through combinations of the signs T / 0 (*yated* / *tenu'ah*). The prosody of classical Hebrew poetry becomes in that way a combinatorial technique. The only writers who considered and stressed the accent of the words included in the meter—namely, the disciples of Menaḥem and Judah Halevi—viewed Dunash's innovation negatively, as contrary to the traditional pronunciation of Hebrew. In their view, the phonic performance of the verses in keeping with Dunash's innovation caused unwarranted grammatical changes in the words, destroying the nature of the Hebrew language.

The view of classical Andalusian Hebrew metrics as 'quantitative' is apparently the invention of modern scholars who had in mind the nature of the classical Arabic '*arūd*'. Whether adequate or not for describing Dunash's innovation, it is certainly not in agreement with the perceptions of any of the medieval theoretical commentators on Andalusian Hebrew poetry. Nobody will deny that Dunash tried to imitate classical Arabic prosody by infusing his Hebrew verses with the main attributes of traditional Arabic poetry. But if it is indeed the case that Andalusian Arabic had already undergone deep changes in the tenth century and was in the process of replacing the quantitative rhythm of classical Arabic with an accentual one, it is easier to understand why Dunash's medieval followers and critics did not primarily see the 'quantitative' combination of long and short units as the core of this technique.

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16 Angel Sáenz-Badillo and Judit Targarona, "Los capítulos sobre métrica del granadino Se'adyah ibn Danan," *Homenaje al Prof. Darío Cabanelas Rodríguez, O.F.M., con motivo de su LXX Aniversario*, vol. 2, Granada 1987, pp. 471-489, esp. pp. 482-486.

If we assume, however, that for these medieval writers the decisive factor was *not* the length of the units, what was the function of the retained sequence of *yated* and *tenu'ot*? It could have been neither a purely written or graphic device, nor a plastic combinatory technique. Though this new technique (unlike the older tradition of the Hebrew *piyyut*) prescribed a fixed number of syllables per line, it is unlikely that this was seen as the main characteristic of the new prosody: had this been the case, the criticism leveled by Menaḥem's and Judah Halevi's disciples would have remained unmotivated. In these authors' view, a certain rhythmic element besides the isosyllabism was characteristic of Dunash's innovation and had a notably negative influence on the language. The rhythm was primarily conditioned by the *yated* and its position within the verse; the *tenu'ot*, though much more numerous in comparison, had no substantial influence on the rhythmic structure of the composition. It was the rhythm marked by the *yated* that was responsible, then, for the changes denounced by Menaḥem's disciples. Since, from a grammatical point of view, the *shewa'* was a secondary vocalic element, it was the syllable after the *shewa'* that had to receive an ictus or stress (it was for this reason, the disciples said, that Dunash's technique converted *wě-omér*—the participle's proper enunciation—into *wě-ómer*, as if it were a substantive). For these writers, the proper way to describe the *yated* in the medieval Hebrew poetry of al-Andalus would thus be as a non-stressed element followed by a stressed one.

In this context, what was the function of the 'syllabic meter'? The creators of this alternative system were apparently in search of a solution that could replace Dunash's system without making the same 'mistakes', without destroying the nature of the Hebrew language. The only explanation for their isosyllabic anti-Dunashian alternative is that since they believed syllable length was not important for Hebrew (as it was for classical Arabic) and denied its rhythmic function, the *shewa'* and *hatef* vowels became irrelevant. Since only full-voweled syllables were to be counted, the *shewa'* and the *hatef* could be placed anywhere in the verse. Admittedly, this system of prosody was far less successful than Dunash's; the proposal came, however, from experts on Hebrew philology and was doubtlessly rooted in good knowledge of the language and its pronunciation.

Recent work by Corriente as well as Liebhaber gives rise, however, to the question whether it is not possible to describe the technique created by Dunash as a combination of 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' prosodies. Meters formed by feet ('*amudim*) with 'long' and 'short' units are not the only possible basis for Dunash's technique. To arrive at a more accurate picture of Hebrew metrics, at least as they were seen in the Middle Ages, we need to add the distinction between 'stressed' and 'unstressed' syllables. Above all, we must not presuppose that the

two kinds of prosody are incompatible or radically different; if, by contrast, rhythm is understood as the essential component of the verse in both cases, this is consistent with a purely 'quantitative', a purely 'qualitative', or a combined prosody. And the linguistic situation in al-Andalus in the tenth and eleventh centuries permits us to believe that the third answer is not incorrect.

This new perspective on Dunash's technique has important implications for the *muwashshah*.<sup>17</sup> If it is accurate, there would have been no need to introduce radical changes in order to adapt Hebrew poetry to the new scheme. The Hebrew *muwashshah* would have been the result of a combinatory prosody that could be considered both 'quantitative' and 'qualitative', though due to the type of performance and to the introduction of elements in a different language the 'qualitative' aspects would have become increasingly important.

Discussions about the prosody of the *muwashshah* have been lengthy and sometimes formulated in a very passionate tone, but after many years of debates it seems to be well-established that this type of strophic form was of Arabic origin and that the Hebrew poets appropriated it from their Arabic counterparts in al-Andalus. For our current purposes, it is important to ask whether the linguistic circumstances of Andalusian Arabic had any consequences for the pattern of the Hebrew *muwashshah*. If it is true that the contrast between long and short vowels had disappeared or become completely secondary by the time the *muwashshah* was adopted by Hebrew poets, this obviously means that the classical Arabic prosody, or '*arūd*', had already been deeply modified. In such a case, the extreme classicist, 'quantitative' interpretation of the *muwashshah* can no longer be defended. The consequences for the Hebrew imitation of the *muwashshah* are also obvious.

Some of the conjectures about a modified '*arūd*' are reasonable and consistent with the linguistic development analyzed by Corriente and described at the outset of this paper.<sup>18</sup> Corriente's studies have made, in my opinion, a very important contribution to our knowledge of the linguistic circumstances of Arabic al-Andalus and their consequences for Iberian literary history. I believe, however,

17 See the excellent description and classic study of the genre by Tova Rosen-Moked, *The Hebrew Girdle Poem (Muwashshah) in the Middle Ages* [in Hebrew], Haifa 1985. Also useful are Samuel Miklos Stern, *Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry*. L. P. Harvey (ed.), Oxford 1984; Ezra Fleischer, "Reflections on the Rise and Reception of the *Muwashshah* in Medieval Hebrew Poetry" [in Hebrew], *Millet* 1 (1983), pp. 165-197; and Otto Zwartjes's helpful bibliography in Henk Heijkoop and Otto Zwartjes (eds.), *Muwaššah, Zajal, Kharja: A Bibliography of Strophic Poetry and Music from al-Andalus and their Influence in East and West*, Leiden and Boston 2004.

18 Corriente has defended this theory in numerous books and papers; see for example Federico Corriente, *Poesía dialectal árabe y romance en Alandalús*, Madrid 1998, pp. 88-92.

that this new perspective on the linguistic development of al-Andalus has yet to be fully applied to the study of Hebrew metrics, which is one of my main aims in this paper. The problem is where to place the supposed modifications of the classical prosody and how to fix their limits. Some suggestions, especially those of a combinatory nature, are highly contentious; in any case, the modifications must have differed markedly from the variants foreseen by the classic descriptions of Hebrew prosody, in some cases producing 'monsters' far removed from the classical meters. Nonetheless, a moderate 'modified 'arūd' theory seems to me reasonable.<sup>19</sup>

But if both the linguistic circumstances of al-Andalus and Dunash's own technique were characterized by a 'combined' prosody, what was novel about the prosody and structure of the Hebrew *muwashshah*? First of all, there is the division into strophes (in contravention of the classic pattern of the *qasida*) and the double-rhyme system. In particular, the closing verses of the *kharja*, often written in Romance languages or in dialectal Arabic, seem to be an essential component, though scholars differ about their structural function and influence.

Scholars of the Arabic *muwashshah* have expressed serious doubts about the Romance origins of many of the *kharajāt*, which were traditionally interpreted as Romance in character. Not so in the case of the close to thirty *kharajāt* of Hebrew *muwashshahāt*, which were clearly composed in Romance and thus written in a purely 'qualitative', accentual-syllabic prosody. Of particular importance to answering our questions is the use of earlier *kharajāt* in the Hebrew *muwashshahāt*—a well-known practice, as is the formation, following earlier examples, of 'families' of *muwashshahāt*, in many cases sharing the same *kharja*, sometimes with small variants. These are clear examples of the *kharja*'s decisive structural function, already underscored in many early accounts of these compositions.<sup>20</sup> In these cases it is obvious that the *muwashshah* was composed on the basis of a preexisting *kharja* taken from an earlier poem. Poets composing this type of bilingual composition needed to create a certain harmony between the two sections. To this end, they had to adapt the Hebrew section of the *muwashshah* to its Romance *kharja* and to establish a rhythmic unity in the entire composition despite the different literary traditions represented in its two sections. The author of the new *muwashshah* had to try to

19 Scholars insisting on the musical, melodic, *lahn*-based character of the *muwashshah* (see Ulf Haxen, "The Mu'āraḍa Concept and its Musico-Rhythical Implications: A Preliminary Clue," *Al-Andalus* 43 [1978], pp. 113-124) may also be right—a possibility not irreconcilable with the theory just discussed. Musical performance can contribute much to our understanding of the modified 'arūd by pointing to dimensions absent from classical Arabic or Hebrew poetry.

20 See the well-known description by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk in Otto Zwartjes, *The Andalusian Xarja-s: Poetry at the Crossroads of Two Systems?* Nijmegen 1995, p. 57.

reproduce the rhythmic pattern of the *kharja*, adapting to a 'qualitative,' accentual system elements that had originally corresponded to a 'quantitative' prosody.

The main difference between the Hebrew *muwashshah* and its Romance *kharja* is that although in most cases the number of syllables is the same, the former has one or more *shewas*, apparently in fixed places. Is that a remnant of the old classical prosody? There is no doubt that in the Hebrew *muwashshah* it is possible to find a sequence of *yated* and *tenu'ot* similar to that of the classical poetry. But it is also clear that in most cases the classical meters are unrecognizable unless we assume they were subject to radical changes, with '*amudim*' or *tenu'ot* dropped or added. While this assumption is conceivable and even respectable—not a few serious scholars have tried to apply the 'modified' *arūd* theory not only to the verses of the *muwashshah* but also to the Romance *kharja*<sup>21</sup>—I believe it is not necessary for understanding the Hebrew *muwashshahāt*. The Romance *kharajāt* came from a different literary tradition based on another, non-'quantitative' technique and did not have to be adapted to the structure of the Hebrew section. As Menaḥem's disciples stressed in their account of Dunash's technique, the function of the *yated* in the Hebrew verses seems to be mainly rhythmic in nature. The most important question for understanding this type of bilingual composition is how the reading or singing of the Hebrew *muwashshah* was made to correspond with the accentual-syllabic poetry of the Romance *kharja*.

Most of the difficulties in fully understanding the Hebrew *muwashshah* come from the contrast between what most scholars see as two radically different, mutually exclusive systems: the 'quantitative' system of post-Dunash[ian] classical Hebrew poetry, and the *muwashshah* system, in which a Romance accentual-syllabic *kharja* was seen by most authors writing on Hebrew metrics as an importune addition. Once we have serious reasons for describing Dunash's poetry as combining 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' prosody, it becomes much easier to understand how eleventh-century Hebrew authors could take the new scheme of the *muwashshah* without needing to justify it and without finding it in real contrast with the more classical type of monorhymed poetry. The rhythmic function of the *yated* and the principle of isosyllabism could be maintained even if the new compositions had to be adjusted to fit the previously established accentual-syllabic poetry of the Romance *kharja*.

The Hebrew poets seem to have constructed their strophic poems in close harmony with the already-existing *kharajāt*, with the *kharja* determining the meter and rhyme of the last two verses of each strophe ('vueltas') and even their

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21 See for instance Corriente, note 18 above, pp. 308-310.

melody (the remaining verses could follow different patterns, either in part or in whole).<sup>22</sup> The poets may have tried to imitate the rhythm of the *kharja* using a technique similar to Dunash's, modifying it in order to adapt it to new needs. This may explain why the *shewa'* is placed in the same position in all the verses of the strophes—namely, because it maintains the rhythmic function of a pre-tonic syllable. The long element following the *shewa'* is the one that seems to have the accent.<sup>23</sup> In most cases, the syllable after the *shewa'* in the *muwashshah* seems to correspond with the accented syllable in the Romance *kharja*. This means that at least in the 'vueltas' of their own composition the poets tried to reproduce or to imitate the accentual-syllabic structure of the *kharja*, even if they wrote in a meter that did not completely differ from their monorhymed compositions.

Usually, the metric structure of the strophes is the same as that of the 'vueltas'; elsewhere, it is a variant that does not substantially change the rhythmic unit of the composition.<sup>24</sup> In all such cases, the authors did not invent a new sequence of '*amudim*' in keeping with Dunash's technique, but rather tried to reproduce the accentual-syllabic structure of the *kharja* without completely abandoning the patterns used in their other classical compositions.

To illustrate this method, let us consider Judah Halevi's *shalom le-gever*,<sup>25</sup> a poem sent to Moshe ibn 'Ezra on the occasion of the death of one of his brothers. Judah Halevi chose a Romance *kharja* previously used by an Arabic poet, Abū Bakr Yahya ibn Bāqī:

Bened la pánsa ayún sin ello  
kom kande(d) mew qoraón por ello.<sup>26</sup>

In this case there is no doubt that the poet had seen the *kharja* prior to composing the rest of the composition. This Romance *kharja* has ten syllables in each line,

22 See the comments on this topic by Yosef Yahalom, "Aportaciones a la prosodia de la moaxaja hebrea," *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebreos* 34:2 (1985), pp. 1-25; cf. Benjamin Hrushovsky, "Prosody, Hebrew," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem 1972, pp. 1195-1240; Dan Pagis, *Change and Tradition in Secular Poetry: Spain and Italy* [in Hebrew], Jerusalem 1976, p. 134.

23 See the discussion of Menaḥem's disciples and Dunash in S. G. Stern (ed.), *Teshuvot Talmide Menahem*, Wien 1870, 20 ff.; and in Benavente (ed.), note 9 above, 12\* ff. and 15 ff. See also my "Los discípulos de Ménahem sobre la métrica hebrea", *Sefarad* 46 (1986), pp. 421-431.

24 The strophe reproduces the first half of the *kharja* in some cases, only the second in others. Sometimes the *kharja* is slightly modified or abridged without altering the basic rhythm.

25 Judah Halevi: *Dīwān*, vol. 1, Heinrich Brody and A. M. Haberman (eds.), Berlin 1894, reprinted Farnborough 1971, pp. 168-169.

26 Federico Corriente and Angel Sáenz-Badillo, "Nueva propuesta de lectura de las xaraját con texto romance de la serie hebrea", *Revista de Filología Española* 74 (1994), pp. 283-289 (at p. 285).

with the main accent on the seventh syllable and a possible additional accent on the fourth. Both verses have the same rhyme in -llo (-llu). Both the syllabic structure of the *kharja* and the rhyme are the same used in the first two verses of the Hebrew composition (*ha-madrikh*) and in the last two verses of the other four strophes (*ha-'ezorim*), if we count the grammatically ultra-short vowels as full prosodic vowels. There is no doubt that in all of the previously mentioned Hebrew verses the poet tried to imitate the Romance *kharja*. The three remaining verses in the five strophes have the same number of vowels, but, as is usual in the *muwashshah*, the rhymes are different. All the Hebrew verses of the *muwashshah* have a *shewa'* or a *hatef* in the third and sixth positions. If we analyze the verses from the perspective of Dunash's prosody, we have a sequence of three '*amudim*: *mitpo'ālim*, *pa'ālim*, *nif'alim*'. This pattern, however, does not correspond to any of the classical meters. If we consider the two ultra-short vowels as pre-tonic, then the Hebrew verses of the entire composition have the stress on the fourth and seventh syllables, in keeping with the Romance verses of the *kharja*. In my view, this is a clear case of Dunash's technique being adapted to the requirements of a bilingual composition. That Judah Halevi apparently found it easy to do so is explained by the fact that he was proceeding not from a purely 'quantitative' prosody but from a system of syllabic predominance based on the tonic accent.<sup>27</sup>

Let us now consider another *muwashshah*, Todros Abulafia's '*ofer yimtaq ki-debaš*'.<sup>28</sup> Here, the poet uses, with very small modifications, a Romance *kharja* found in a panegyric by Judah Halevi:<sup>29</sup>

Báy(d)se mew qoraçon de míb / ya ráb si se me tornarád  
tan mál me dóled l' alhabib / enférmo yéd kand sanarád.

Todros adapts the text of the *kharja* to the needs of his composition, replacing for instance *alhabib* with *algarib*, without changing the rhythmic structure. In both poems, the Romance *kharja*, as an accentual-syllabic composition, has two verses with two internally rhyming hemistiches of eight syllables each. The main accent is on the last syllable. All the verses of the *muwashshah*, by Judah and by Todros, have exactly the same number of syllables. From the perspective of Dunash's prosody, we find in each hemistich a sequence of three '*amudim*: *nif'al*,

27 See my "Las moaxajas de Yehuda ha-Levi," *Actas del VI Simposio de la Sociedad Española de Literatura General y Comparada*, Granada 1989, pp. 123-130; and "Las moaxajas de Todros Abu'lafia," *Actas del IV Congreso Internacional "Encuentro de las Tres Culturas"*, Toledo 1988, pp. 135-146.

28 Todros Abulafia ben Judah Halevi: *Gan ha-meshalim yeha-hidot* [The Garden of Proverbs and Riddles], David Yellin (ed.), Jerusalem 1932-36, p. 32 f., n25.

29 *Rav-lakhem mokhiyah*, in Brody and Habrman (eds.) note 25 above, vol. 2, pp. 321-322.

*nif'al*, and *mitpa'ălim*, with a single *yated* in the final position—a construction not in keeping with any of the classical meters used in Hebrew poetry. If my interpretation is correct, the final *yated* indicates that the last Hebrew syllable is a tonic one, exactly like the last syllable of the *kharja*.

I have chosen these two examples because they are particularly clear cases of *mu'āraqa*. In these two compositions, the Romance *kharja* preexisted the Hebrew composition, with the author achieving a perfect structural and rhythmic cohesion between the *muwashshah* and the *kharja*. I am well aware that not all Hebrew *muwashshahāt* must be analyzed in exactly the same manner: there are cases in which other explanations of the prosody of the *muwashshah* may be accepted. But I have not found a single *muwashshah* that cannot be read and understood from this point of view.

As we have seen, Corriente's explanation of the development of Andalusian Arabic has significant consequences for understanding Hebrew prosody in medieval Andalusian poetry. This is probably the case with Dunash's system, which should be reconsidered as accentual, with the stress playing some role, rather than purely 'quantitative'. This is particularly clear in the strophic poems, in which the 'qualitative' prosody is in many cases no less important than the 'quantitative'. In most cases, the Hebrew *muwashshah* adapted its classic 'quantitative' components, the '*amudim*', to the accentual-syllabic structure of the *kharja*—a pattern particularly evident in bilingual compositions including Hebrew strophes and Romance *kharjas*.

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