Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī’s (917-990/1511-1582)
Treasure of Names and Other Ottoman-Era Arabic
Treatises on the Art of the Muʿammā

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Abstract
In Timurid times Persian literateurs devised a new kind of logogriph (muʿammā) that differed considerably from the muʿammā as was known in the Arabic tradition. The most salient feature of the new, Persianate muʿammā, which is normally a couplet, is that it has two levels of meaning: an obvious or surface meaning (the poetic meaning), and an encoded ‘riddle meaning’, which gives the clues to the solution of the riddle. Since the 16th century the new, Persianate muʿammā became very popular with Ottoman Turkish and Arabic litterateurs as well. In fact, to judge by the available evidence, it appears that the new muʿammā gradually became the most popular kind of literary riddle in Arabic. The present paper presents Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī’s (917-990/1511-1582) Treasure of Names, the most influential Arabic treatise on the new muʿammā, which is modelled on earlier Persian treatises. It discusses the growth of the new muʿammā in Arabic, describes the rules applying to it as presented in an-Nahrawālī’s treatise, analyses several Arabic muʿammayāt cited in that treatise and concludes by mentioning some additional Ottoman-era Arabic treatises on the riddle that testify to the great popularity of the new muʿammā in Arabic until the late 19th century.

Key words: Arabic literary riddles – muʿammā – Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī (917-990/1511-1582) – Ottoman-era Arabic literature – Persian influences on Arabic literature – Ottoman-era Arabic treatises on riddles

The rise of the riddle as a literary form in Arabic started in the Buyid era—apparently as a result of the growth of descriptive poetry and especially allusive and enigmatic descriptions that typically made extensive use of figures of speech. Since the fifth/eleventh century riddle exchanges between litterateurs and scholars became increasingly popular. The riddle gradually became a favourite pastime in elite gatherings as well as at the various Muslim royal courts. The Arabic literary riddle flourished especially in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods and continued to thrive throughout Ottoman times. In the course of time all three Arabic words initially used to denote a ‘riddle’ in general, to wit luġz (pl. alğāz), muʿammā (pl. muʿammayāt) and uḥjīya (pl. aḥājī), have acquired specific meanings and have come to signify particular kinds of riddles, even though not all premodern Arab authors were aware of the specific meanings of these words nor applied them accurately. In its special

1 On the first phase of growth of the Arabic literary riddle (tenth to twelfth centuries), see N. Papoutsakis, “Abū l-Maʿālī al-Ḥażārī (d. 568/1172) and His Inimitable Book on Quizzes and Riddles” (full bibliographical details are given in the Bibliography). On riddle exchanges between litterateurs and scholars in the Mamluk period, see EAD., “The Literary Riddle in the Age of an-Nawāġī: The Riddles of Ibn Ḥaṣār al-ʿAsqalānī and Shihābaddīn al-Ḥāfiẓī”.

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meaning the word *lugz* signified a ‘notional riddle’, a riddle whose topic (the encoded entity) is a notion, a word’s meaning (in Saussurian terms, the signified), not a word as such (signifier). The clues given in ‘notional riddles’ refer to properties and features of the encoded notion and are mostly puzzling and contradictory. A typical example of such a riddle is the following (metre *sari*):

I recall somebody scrawny, bowing down, putting his forehead on the ground, blind but discerning—his tears flowing,

He keeps to the five (prayers) in their appointed times and exerts himself in obeying the Creator (/the sharpener).

The solution to this riddle, which operates with metaphors and *double entendres*, is the pen. The five to which it keeps are the fingers—not the prayers as the context, which refers to a pious person and to ‘appointed times’, suggests. The context also misleads one to think of God, the Creator (*al-bāri*), even though *al-bāri* is the sharpener.

Besides being used for ‘riddle’ as well as for ‘encrypted text’ in general, the word *muʿammā*, on the other hand, has been applied from early on to logogriphs or ‘word riddles’, namely riddles whose topic is a word as such (in Saussurian terms, the *signifier*) and most often a person’s name in particular. The clues given in logogriphs hint at the letters of the hidden word, their sequence, way of writing, vocalization, numerical value, etc.³ Consider, for example, the following poem on the name Saʿīd (metre *munsariḥ*):

I recall somebody scrawny revealing the beginning of his name, then captivates one with its second letter.

Then two more letters—had he shown up with them, he would’ve done me a favour (*lit.* hand, *yad*) that builds the form of his name.

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2  Al-Inšīḥ, *al-Mustatraf*, 2:267; cf. a variant in Ibn Ḥuṣn, *Ḥizānat al-adab*, 4:167.

3  On the basic distinction between ‘notional riddles’ (*Sinnrätsel*) and ‘word riddles’ (*Worträtsel*), see T. Tomasek, *Das deutsche Rätsel im Mittelalter*, 46-9.

4  Al-Ḥaẓīrī, *al-Ḥājāz fī l-ahājī wa-l-ġāz*, MS Mashhad, fol. 22a. The poem is by ʿAbdaṣṣamad b. Bābak (d. 410/1019-20), a poet of the Buyid era. Al-Ḥaẓīrī expressly labels this riddle a *muʿammā*. 
Four letters, the half of which equals their sum in number—it doesn’t fall short nor exceeds it.

Moreover, there’s a day in his name, of which both Arabs and non-Arabs are proud.

Think about it and ponder and ride with it every intractable mount! (i.e. brave the difficulties).

Because of its shape, the letter sīn is typically likened to teeth; likewise, the letter ṣād is likened to a lovelock.\(^5\) Yā' and dal are hinted at in verse 2 (the word yad, which ‘builds the form of his name’), whereas the glorious day is the Ḣīd, the Feast of the Sacrifice. Because of its three teeth (nabra) the letter sīn may be analysed as three letters of the form of bāʾ, tāʾ, ṣād, etc., that is, composed of one nabra. Thus, half of the total number of the word’s letters, the sīn and the ṣād, can be said to be four letters, equalling the sum of the word’s letters in number when the sīn is counted as one letter.

As in this case, the great majority of logogriphs are on persons’ names. The reason why this is so, as Friedrich Rückert has ingeniously remarked, is that a person’s name is not a notion and the clues regarding it can only refer to its letters, the only other possibility being to refer to famous bearers of the name (which would make the riddle too obvious).\(^6\)

Certainly, several riddles encode elements of both the signifier and the signified and can therefore be called ‘mixed’, but there was no term used for them, even though some authors commenting on the difference between luġz and mu’ammā point to the existence of ‘mixed riddles’. The following is such a ‘mixed riddle’ (metre sarī’):\(^7\)

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\begin{align*}
\text{ياً أياً العطار أعرَبََلنا} & \\
\text{عن اسم شيء قلت في سوءك} & \\
\text{تبصره بالعيَّ فينيَّة} & \\
\text{كما يرى بالقلب في نومك} \\
\end{align*}
\]

O druggist, tell us plainly the name of a thing that you offer for sale for a bargain price,

You see it with your eyes while you are awake just as it’s seen with the heart (qalb) in your sleep (nawmik).

The solution to this riddle, which offers clues as to both the sought word’s meaning and its way of writing, is cumin (kammūn). Cumin is a cheap druggist’s ware, seen with one’s eyes when one is awake. Even though it can also be seen with the heart when one is asleep, namely in a dream, at the riddle level the word qalb means ‘inversion’: inverting the letters

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\(^5\) So according to al-Hazîrî’s explanation, but the poet may mean the beloved’s captivating eye, ‘ayn.

\(^6\) F. RÜCKERT, Grammatik. Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser, 317-8.

\(^7\) In the entry of its author Fatḥaddin al-Qināʾî (d. 708/1309): al-Uḏfūwî, at-Ṭâlî‘ as-saʿād, 400; as-Ṣafâdî, al-Wāfî, 21:280; id., Aʿyân al-ʿaṣr, 3:481; Ibn ʿAlār al-ʿAṣqalānî, ad-Durar al-kāmīnâ, 3:101; with minor variants cited anonymously in several other sources, e.g., al-Ḥusnîn, al-Mustawraf, 2:271; Ibn Hûja, Ḥiznāt al-ʿadâb, 4:194; an-Nahrāwî, Kanz al-asmâ, MS Escorial, fol. 4b; al-Muḥibbî, Ḥulāsât al-aṣr, 2:393.
of navmik (‘your sleep’) one obtains kammūn (the vocalization and the doubling of consonants are ignored).

Finally, uḥjīyya denoted specifically a charade. This special kind of ‘word riddles’ divides a relatively long word into two or very rarely three parts, each of which is a word in its own right, and substitutes each part with a synonym. The solver must guess what the synonyms stand for and thus reconstruct the encoded word. Arabic charades are for the first time attested in al-Harīrī’s al-Maġāma al-Malāṭiyya, who was also the first to apply the word to this special type of riddle, thus narrowing its meaning and making it a specialist term, but there are also several collections of abājī by later authors. Suffice it to mention one example by al-Harīrī (metre mujṭṭṭī):

8 يا من سيا بدكاء في الفضي واري الزناد
ما دا يثال قولني جوع أمد بزارد

O you who soars high in excellence with his sparkling intelligence,

What equals my saying ‘a hunger that has been supplied with provisions’?

As in this case, the uḥjīyya is normally a couplet or, very rarely, a three-liner. Its first line praises the excellence and sagacity of the addressee, who in the second verse is challenged to solve the riddle. The solution to the present uḥjīyya is tawāmīr (‘scrolls’, sg. ṭūmār). For tawā = tawan is a synonym of jāʿ (‘hunger’) and mīr(a) is a synonym of umidda bi-zād (‘it was supplied with provisions’).

Pre-Ottoman Arabic authors did not generally bother to distinguish between ṭuḡz and muʿamāmā. Abū l-Maʾālī al-Ḥaẓīrī (d. 568/1172), the author of Kitāb al-Jāz fī l-ʾaḥājī wa-l-alğāz (The Inimitable Book on Quizzes and Riddles), the first surviving Arabic treatise cum anthology on riddles, is a notable exception. For even though he does not give a definition of muʿamā and only notes that ‘it mostly relates to the way of writing’ (wa-huwa yakūnu fī l-ḥarṭī akṭar), he uses the term eight times to describe riddles cited in the anthology. All eight riddles thus labelled are logogriphs, whereas seven of them are on persons’ names. Al-Ḥaẓīrī never uses this term to describe notional riddles. Later authors, however, including Mamluk authors who took a vivid interest in riddles, such as Ṣalāḥaddīn aṣ-Ṣafadī, may refer to logogriphs on persons’ names as ṭuḡz and vice versa dub a notional riddle a muʿamman. This was probably due to the growing numbers of ‘mixed riddles’ in Mamluk times, when the use of encoding techniques typical of logogriphs, namely miswriting (tasḥīf), changes in the vocalization (tahrīf), inversion (qalb, ṣaks) and omission of letters (ḥaḏf), and computations based on the letters’ numerical value (ḥisāb), became noticeably more widespread in riddles encoding notions.

8 Maġāmāt al-Ḥarīrī, 412.
9 On the terms used by al-Ḥaẓīrī to denote various kinds of riddles, see PAPOUTSAKIS, “Abū l-Maʾālī al-Ḥaẓīrī”.
10 E.g. aṣ-Ṣafadī, al-Wāfī, 6:169: anšadanī min lafẓihī luḡzan fī Masʿūd, 18:247 yasifu l-fuqāʾa muʿaman.
Despite the long tradition of the Arabic literary riddle, a clear distinction between luğz and muʿammā was first made in early-Ottoman Arabic works. This is no coincidence. It is related to the rise and unprecedented efflorescence of the art of the muʿammā in Persian and the composition of several specialist treatises setting and describing the rules to be followed in composing and solving muʿammayāt by Persian authors of the fifteenth century, starting with the Timurid historian and littératueur Šarafaddin al-Yazdī (d. 858/1454). Al-Yazdī was probably the first (or one of the first) to describe the rules of this art and the operations involved in solving muʿammayāt in his treatise entitled Ḥolal-e mottarrāz (composed in 832/1428 for his patron Sultan Ibrāhīm b. Šāhrūh). The next great figure to compose treatises expounding the rules and operations of the muʿammā was ‘Abdarrāḥmān Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492), who was followed by several other writers, a most acclaimed one being the slightly later poet Mīr Ḥusayn al-Muʿammāṭī (d. 904/1498-9 or 912/1506-7) of Nisābūr. Another figure that must be mentioned in this context is the great Chaghatay Turkic poet ‘Ali Šīr Nawāštī (844-906/1441-1501), a close companion and adviser of the Timurid Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarār of Herat (r. 873-911/1469-1506) and a lifelong friend of Jāmī, who also penned a treatise on the muʿammā in Persian and as the literary doyen of Herat and a great patron of literature and the arts encouraged contemporary poets to cultivate the genre. Ottoman Turkish and Arabic authors followed suit. Throughout Ottoman times the muʿammā witnessed an extraordinary efflorescence in all three great Islamic literatures. But this was a new, Persianate muʿammā. The rules set by al-Yazdī

11 See C.E. BOSWORTH, "Sharaf al-Dīn ‘All al-Yazdī’, EJ; B. ROSENFELD and E. İHANOĞLU, Mathematicians, Astronomers and Other Scholars of Islamic Civilization, 280 (no. 825).

12 On al-Yazdī’s works on the muʿammā (he also composed a Dastūr-i moʿammā), see Sh. ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, Loğaz und Moʿammā: Eine Quellenstudie zur Kunstform des persischen Rätsels, Index; C.A. STOREY, Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey, Vol. III, Part 2, 219-20. – In fact, as H. ETHÉ ("Neupersische Literatur", 345) notes, the first to compose a treatise on the muʿammā was Badīʿ at-Tabrīzī (d. 803/1400); cf. STOREY, Bio-Bibliographical Survey, 218-9.

13 Jāmī actually wrote three treatises, a long one, a medium one and a short one, as well as a poem in 68 rhyming couples, on the art of the muʿammā: see Paul LOSENSKY, ‘Jāmī 1. Life and Works’, EJ; ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, Loğaz und Moʿammā, Index; Storey, Bio-Bibliographical Survey, 221-3.

14 On Mīr Ḥusayn al-Muʿammāṭī, see ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, Loğaz und Moʿammā, Index; STOREY, Bio-Bibliographical Survey, 223-7. – These rules and operations as described in later, Ottoman-era Arabic treatises will be presented below. They have been expounded for the first time in a European language by J. H. GARCIN DE TASSY in his Rhétorique et prosodie des langues de l’Orient musulman (second edition, Paris 1873), 165-93, which is based on an early eighteenth-century Persian treatise on rhetoric. A chapter on the muʿammā is also found in RÜCKERT’S Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser, 317-36; Rückert cites, translates and solves several muʿammayāt without however expounding the rules and operations as described in Persian treatises. The most detailed recent discussion of these rules and operations as expounded in early Persian sources is by Anvari-Alhosseyni in his Loğaz und Moʿammā, 120-37.

15 Maria EVA SUBTELNY, "Mīr ‘All Šīr Nawāštī’, EJ; EAD., " ‘All Šīr Nawāštī’, EJ. More generally on the popularity of the genre in Timurid Herat, see EAD., "A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period". Subtelny’s and earlier scholars’ remarks about the muʿammā as a contrived genre are countered by P. LOSENSKY in his Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal, 154-60.

16 There are numerous recent Turkish studies on the Ottoman muʿammā that cannot all be listed here; for an overview, see A.F. BILKAN, Türk Edebiyatında Muamma, and M.A. Yekta ŞARAC, "Muamma. Türk
and his successors and reproduced in the Ottoman Turkish and Arabic specialist treatises describe a kind of muʿammā that differs from the ‘old’, Arabic muʿammā in many respects. In what follows I shall present the new, Persianate muʿammā in Arabic and the rules applying to it as given in Quṭbaddin an-Nahrawālī’s (917-990/1511-1582) Treasure of Names, the most influential Arabic treatise on this art, and conclude by mentioning some additional Ottoman-era Arabic treatises on the riddle that testify to its great popularity throughout the Ottoman period.

**Muʿammā Old and New**

The most salient feature of the new muʿammā is that the poem has a meaning of its own and can be read and appreciated for it, without the reader being aware of the fact that it is a muʿammā. In the relevant Arabic treatises this obvious or surface meaning is termed ‘the poetic meaning’ (al-ʿamnā ʿ-š-šīʿirī) to distinguish it from the meaning of the poem at the riddle level, which is termed ‘the riddle meaning’ (al-ʿamnā ʾl-muʿammāʾī). As a matter of fact, the Arabic treatises stress that a good muʿammā must have a second, ‘poetic meaning’ apart from its meaning as a riddle, even though this had not been expressly stipulated by the early Persian masters. Nonetheless, muʿammayāt put into circulation, sent to friends or published in anthologies, dīwāns, etc., were identified as such in the introductory rubrics, which usually also give the solution to the riddle. It is important to stress that the solution was mostly given in advance, the solver’s task being to discover how the sought word can be extracted from the poem by identifying and following the hidden clues, that is, decoding ‘the riddle meaning’. The various treatises deal with the different sorts of hidden clues and explain in detail how they can be identified and combined to extract the sought name from the muʿammayāt that are cited as examples. Obviously, having identified the clues and understood how the name is obtained, one admired the poet’s ability to compose a poem in the sense of ‘notional riddle’. According to Ġāhir al-Jazāʾirī (1267-1338/1851-1920), the author of Tashīl al-majāz ilā fann al-muʿammā wa-l-ʿalāẓ, the most recent Ottoman-era Arabic treatise on riddles (published 1303/1886), one must always give the solution of a muʿammā in advance, for otherwise it is impossible to solve it. Even though explicit comments to this effect are absent from the earlier Arabic treatises I have examined, both Ibn al-Ḥanbālī (see here below) and an-Nahrawālī occasionally refer to the evidence (garīna) that the hidden name affords, which means that the ‘hidden’ name was normally disclosed in advance and the solver was expected to use the evidence (indications, clues) it afforded in order to decode the ‘riddle meaning’. The fact that the solution was

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Edebiyatı, IL. Apart from the study by Anwarı-Alhosseynı and the brilliant comments of Losensky in Welcoming Fighānī, the Persian muʿammā seems to have been relatively little studied; see also STOREY, Bio-Bibliographical Survey, 218-35; F. RICHARD, “Quelques traités d’énigmes (Moʾammâ) en persan des XVᵉ et XVIᵉ siècles dans les collections de la Bibliothèque Nationale”; G.L. WINDFUHR, “Riddles”, esp. 315-26. A.A. SEYED-GOHRAI’s Courtly Riddles: Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry deals exclusively with the Persian logaz (in the sense of ‘notional riddle’).

17 Al-Jazāʾirī, Tashīl, 4; on al-Jazāʾirī and his treatise see the Appendix, no. 12.
more often than not given in advance shows that what was primarily appreciated was the existence of two different levels of meaning in the text.

As is true of old-style logogriphs, most new mu‘ammayāt are on proper names, but there are also several mu‘ammayaṭ on common names. Formally, the new mu‘ammā is usually a couplet, a single verse, or very rarely a three-liner, even though, to cover all possibilities, most treatises state that a mu‘ammā may also be in prose. The clues (‘the riddle meaning’) are mostly found in the last verse of the poem. The Arabic treatises expound the rules applying to this art as set and described by the Persian masters. It is very remarkable that they make no reference to figures of speech known and discussed at length in the Arabic rhetorical tradition, such as the tawriya (double entendre) or the jinās muṣrakkab (compound paronomasia), to name only the two most relevant figures for the new mu‘ammā. This indicates their dependence on Persian models. As to the genre of the poems at the surface level, they are mostly gazals (love poems), but as becomes clear from the selection presented below, they may also treat any other subject (wine, wisdom, religious topics, etc.).

The first author to write about the new, Persianate mu‘ammā in Arabic was Raḍiyyaddin Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, a polymath and historian of Aleppo known as Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (908–971/1502-3–1563), who authored several works on history, philology, the religious sciences, mathematics and the natural sciences. Ibn al-Ḥanbalī composed a mazdaṭiḥi poem (a poem in rhyming couplets) in the metre wafīr, which comprises 66 verses and deals with two riddle kinds, the (new) mu‘ammā and the uḥjīyya, as its title indicates: Kanz man ḥājā wa-ammaṭ fi l-aḥājā wa-l-mu‘ammā (The Treasure of Him Who Poses Charades and Logogriphs: On the Uḥjīyya and the Mu‘ammā). This poem was inspired by Jāmī’s poem on the mu‘ammā (see note 13, above) and was dedicated to the son of a Persian scholar and Sufi, Muḥammad al-Ḥālīḍī al-Ḵaššī as-Samarqandī known as Mullā Ṣāḥī, a second-generation disciple of Jāmī who died on his way to Mecca in Aleppo in 945/1538-9. At some later date, an unnamed person requested Ibn al-Ḥanbalī to compose a commentary on the Kanz man ḥājā, which he completed in Şābān 965 / May-June 1558 and titled Ḡamz al-‘ayn ilā Kanz al-‘ayn (Winking With the Eye to the Golden Treasure). The first nineteen verses of the poem are introductory, praising God, naming the subject of the work, and commending Jāmī and the dedicate. Verses 20-54 are each a mu‘ammā exemplifying one or more of the various operations involved in solving mu‘ammayāt (see below), whereas verses 55-63 are each an uḥjīyya. The last three verses mark the end of the poem and express the author’s wish that his friends and beloved ones pray for the forgiveness of

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18 GAL 2:368-9; S2:495-6 and Index; at-ṬABBĀḤ, Ḥājā wa-nubalā‘, 6:62-72; ZIRKILL, al-A‘lām, 5:302-3; R. BLACKBURN, Journey to the Sublime Porote, 44 fin.120; al-GĀZĪ, al-Kawākib as-sā‘ira, 3:38-9 and 3:41-2 (a mu‘ārada of his to a poem by an-Nahrawālī); al-ḤĀFĪZ, Rayḥānat al-ʿaṣbāb, 1:160-73; IIBN AL-‘IMĀD, Šadgarat ad-ḡahab, 10:533-4.

19 On the Arab reception of Jāmī in general, see F. SCHWARZ, “The Arab Reception of Jāmī in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” Schwarz does not mention Jāmī’s influence on Arabic authors on the mu‘ammā, but notes the interest Ibn al-Ḥanbalī took in Jāmī and his oeuvre in general, 178-9. Ibn al-Ḥanbalī also penned a treatise defending Jāmī from the accusations launched against him by a scholar from Qazwīn: at-ṬABBĀḤ, Ḥājā wa-nubalā‘, 6:68-9; GAL S2:496 (no. 19). His admiration for the Persian master is evident in both the Kanz man ḥājā and his commentary on it (see here below).

20 The date of composition of Ḡamz al-‘ayn is given in MS Munich, fol. 26b; cf. at-ṬABBĀḤ, Ḥājā wa-nubalā‘, 6:70. The Kanz man ḥājā was presumably written between 945 and 965.
his sins. Even though Ibn al-Ḥanbālī often expatiates on irrelevant matters, the Ḡamz al-ʿayn, his extensive commentary on the Kanẓ man ḥājā, is a good introduction to the new muʿammā (and a useful discussion of the ukhjīya, for that matter) and presents the various operations involved in solving muʿammayāt systematically, as was customary in Persian treatises following al-Yazdī. In the commentary to each of verses 20-54 Ibn al-Ḥanbālī discusses three issues: Firstly, he explains which operation is exemplified by the verse; secondly, he explains how the sought word is extracted, analysing the ‘riddle meaning’ of the verse and naming the additional operations required for its solution; and, finally, he explains the surface or ‘poetic’ meaning. In the commentary Ibn al-Ḥanbālī very rarely cites muʿammayāt by other authors as additional examples for the named operations.21

The slightly later treatise Kanẓ al-asmāʾ fi fann al-muʿammā (The Treasure of Names: On the Art of the Muʿammā) by Quṭbaddīn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī addīn an-Nahrawālī (b. 917/1511-12, d. 26 April 990/20 May 1582), the famous Meccan religious scholar, historian and mufti of the Two Holy Cities,22 however, serves its purpose better and was therefore more often referenced by later authors. For one thing, it is not a commentary on a poem dealing with two riddle kinds, but was conceived as a specialist treatise on the (new) muʿammā only, from the outset. Quṭbaddīn, who without a doubt was a much better poet than Ibn al-Ḥanbālī, very often cites muʿammayāt by other authors in addition to his own nice specimens and thus documents the growth of the genre in Arabic in his days better than his predecessor.

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī’s Kanẓ al-asmāʾ fi fann al-muʿammā

In the introductory part of the Treasure Quṭbaddīn discusses the origins and rise of this genre, his reason for composing the treatise, the sources he relied upon, and the antecedents of the new, Persianate muʿammā in the Arabic tradition.23

He starts by noting that the muʿammā, which is one of the many fields of adab, has been invented by the Persians and has gradually become a discipline in its own right, with its rules and its specialists. In his times, Arab littérateurs had started composing muʿammayāt (of the Persian kind) in Arabic, without however knowing the rules and conditions applying to this genre. The first to do so, according to his knowledge, was his teacher Ahmad b. Mūsā b. ʿAbdalqādir (d. 940/1533-4), who used to encourage his pupils to compose muʿammayāt.24 Quṭbaddīn followed his advice and collected a large number of muʿammayāt

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21 The Risāla fī l-ahājī wa-l-alāḏāz mentioned in GAL 2:368 as an additional work by Ibn al-Ḥanbālī is the same as the Kanẓ man ḥājā. From the later treatises available to me, only al-BAKRAJĪ’s Natījā (see the Appendix, no. 6) mentions the Gamz al-ʿayn.
22 See GAL 2:381-2, S2:223, 514; J.R. BLACKBURN, “al-Nahrawālī”, EF; id., Journey to the Sublime Porte, 1-XVI.
23 Extensive passages from the introductory part of Quṭbaddīn’s Treasure are cited in ’Abdalqādir al-BĀGDĀDĪ, Ḥīzānat al-adāb, 6:452-6.
24 On Ahmad b. Mūsā b. ʿAbdalqādir al-Mālikī al-Misrī, a jurist and mathematician, see GAL 2:125, S2:155, 536; at-TINBUKṬĪ, Nayl al-ibtiḥāj, 139-40; al-BĀGDĀDĪ, Hadīyyat al-ʿārifīn, 1:142; id., Idāh al-maknūn, 2:23.
by himself, his teachers and his fellow students during his studies, but that early collection had meanwhile been lost. Therefore, he decided to write down what he could remember of his own mu‘ammayāt and those by his friends in order to preserve them, and to expound the rules of this art based on what he had read in the Persian specialist treatises, his aim being to exercise people’s minds and hone their taste. Claiming to be the first to write about this art in Arabic, Quṭbaddīn asks for the reader’s indulgence. Despite this claim, he probably knew of Ibn al-Ḥanbalī’s work, since the two are known to have met in Aleppo in 965, whereas Quṭbaddīn composed his Treasure after 974. Interestingly, he adds that he did not deny that it would have been better for him to keep to his prayer place and spend his time on things that would profit him in the Hereafter than to busy himself with this treatise, but for the likes of him it were enough to avoid sin and dubious activities.

Thereupon he gives a definition of the mu‘ammā, states the conditions it has to meet and explains them. Two of these conditions must be stressed: firstly, that the sought word must be hinted at obliquely and must not be obvious. Secondly, in his opinion, the mu‘ammā must without fail have a second, poetic meaning, even though mu‘ammā specialists (the Persian masters) do not stipulate this. Otherwise it is not nice and good taste rejects it. Another very important rule he mentions is that the vocalization and the doubling of consonants—as well as the kānza—are not taken into consideration in the (new) mu‘ammā. To offer clues as to these features of a word is supererogatory. Quṭbaddīn also stresses that more than one word may be extracted from a single mu‘ammā and subsequently explains the difference between luğz and mu‘ammā: Luğz is to hint at a thing by mentioning its distinguishing qualities, whereas mu‘ammā is to hint at a specific word as an utterance (iḏā dalla ‘alā smin ḫāṣṣin bi-mulāḥazatī kawnīhi lafzan). As Quṭbaddīn adds and shows by citing an opposite example (the riddle cited above on kammān), there are also ‘mixed’ riddles, riddles that are both luğz and mu‘ammā, in that they hint at both the letters of a word and at the properties of the thing that this word signifies.

In addition, he stresses that the rules and operations described by mu‘ammā experts are not aimed at restricting the ways in which to hint at a word and that any clue agreeable to

25 Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, Durr al-bahbah, 2:439-41. Note also the word Kanz in both works’ titles.
26 974 is the death year of Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytamī, to whom Quṭbaddīn refers in the Treasure as deceased. Hence the Treasure must have been written between 974 and 990, the year of Quṭbaddīn’s death. At the end of the treatise he actually gives the date of its completion, but does so in a cryptic way that I have not been able to decipher: ḥitāmites fi mustahalli l-MuḥarramiṣahbaṭiṣSabti l-muḥārak; ḥitāmites ṭāliṯu ṭāliṯu min sinī l-aqdi ṭāliṯu ṭāliṯi min sinī l-ḵāṣṣin ba’dalā ikmāli l-aqdi ṭāliṯi ṭāliṯi min sinī l-ḵāṣṣin l-ḥītraṭi š-ḵarfa (the last ‘aqd should stand for 300 years); the years in which the first of Muḥarram was a Saturday were 976, 979, 984 and 987.

27 Kanz al-asdā, MS Escorial, fol. 4b, cf. al-BAGDĀDĪ, Ḥizānat al-adab, 6:452-3; ḥāṣṣ should here mean ‘specific’, rather than ‘proper’, since there are several mu‘ammayāt on common names, as the examples given below show, and despite the fact that most mu‘ammayāt are on proper names. In Arabic the word ism may mean ‘proper name’ or a ‘noun’ as such, i.e. the signifier, as opposed to musammā, which denotes a word’s meaning, the signified. But Quṭbaddīn makes this very clear by referring to laqţ (‘spoken word, vocal sound’), which is implicitly opposed to ma‘nā (‘meaning’), the Arabic pair laqţ and ma‘nā corresponding to the Saussurian ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’. – For similar definitions and distinctions in the Persian tradition before and after al-Yazdi, see ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, Loğaz und Mu‘ammā, 70-88. As Anwari-Alhosseyeni points out, a clear distinction between loğaz and mu‘ammā was first made in al-Badfī and al-Yazdi.
good taste can be used. It is also possible that a poet composes a *muʿammā* on a certain name giving specific clues about it, but one may find some other way to solve it extracting the same or a different name. One may also extract names from ‘simple’ poetry, poetry that has not been composed as a riddle. He illustrates this point by citing a verse by al-Wawād-Dimaṣqī (d. between 370/980-1 and 390/1000) from which his friend Yahyā al-Lāhijī (unidentified) had extracted two names, and a verse by Ibn al-Fārīd (576-632/1181-1235) from which he himself had extracted four names. Nevertheless, he adds, most people are unfamiliar with the operations used to solve *muʿammayāti* and their taste may therefore reject them. One must not follow the opinion of such people, as they are loath to learn the number of examples of *muʿammā* that to him was comparable to *iqṭībās* (integrating Quranic passages in literary texts), and stresses that the *muʿammā* is not a game (*talāʿub*), as al-Haytāmi claimed, but an exercise of the mind. He also names a few examples of miraculous predictions of dates of events based on the numerical value of the words of certain Quranic passages—predictions made by respected religious figures and which he considered as inspired by God.

Subsequently Quṭbaddīn briefly presents the history of the (new) *muʿammā* as devised and developed by the Persians and mentions by name three great masters offering summary biographies of them: According to him, al-Yazdī was the first to describe the rules of this art in his *al-Hulal al-muṭarrāz*. Quṭbaddīn remarks that al-Yazdī’s work was very influential and that several authors after him composed similar treatises further specifying the features and rules of the genre. The next great figure he names is Jāmī, about whose several treatises he says that they were repeatedly commented upon by later writers. As opposed to Ibn al-Hanbālī, who was a great admirer of Jāmī and based his poem and commentary on the latter’s treatises, Quṭbaddīn praises especially Mīr Ḥusayn al-Muʿammātī, who in his opinion produced ‘licit magic’, ‘an almost inimitable’ treatise (*kataba fīhi risālatan takādu tabluġu ḥadda l-iʿjāz*), and surpassed all other authors on this subject—so much so that Jāmī declared that had he read al-Muʿammātī’s treatise he would not have composed his own ones. Quṭbaddīn adds that the number of later Persian authors on the *muʿammā* is so big that to write their biographies (*tarājim*) would require a whole volume. Therefore he only mentions those whom he had met personally, namely a certain ‘Anbar al-Harawī with whom he had read the treatise of Mīr Ḥusayn al-Muʿammātī and who had read that work with the poet; a certain Muḥammad ʿIyān al-Harawī (d. after 940/1533-4), a pupil of Jāmī who had settled in Mecca and with whom he read Jāmī’s long treatise; and one Abdalwahhāb an-Nisābūrī (d. 950/1543-4), who had composed a ‘superb’ commentary on al-Muʿammātī’s *risāla* and with whom he read that commentary during his second trip to Egypt in 945.28

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28 On this practice as exercised by Persian littérateurs, see SUBTELNY, “A Taste for the Intricate”, 78.

29 I have not been able to trace these three men in the sources. All data are drawn from the *Treasure*. – The online catalogue of the library of the Juma Al Majid Center for Culture and Heritage (Riyadh) lists at least ten Arabic manuscripts of commentaries on the riddles of Mīr Ḥusayn al-Muʿammātī (not seen by
After that Quṭbaddīn revisits the issue of the origins of the mu‘ammā and notes that there are several Arabic riddles that fit the definition of the mu‘ammā as given by the Persians. In his view, the Persians did not really invent it but ordered, systematised, refined and added subtleties to it, whereas the Arabs used to cast it in the mould of luḡz. One should keep in mind that the Persian masters did not stipulate that a mu‘ammā must without fail have a second meaning, even though this was typically the case in Persian mu‘ammayāt as well. For Ibn al-Ḥanbālī, an-Nahrawānī and later Arabic authors, however, this was obligatory. Thus, all mu‘ammayāt that do not have a second meaning and can immediately be recognized as riddles, that is, make clear that a word must be sought in them—as Ibn Bābak’s mu‘ammā on the name Sa‘īd cited above—, were perceived by Quṭbaddīn and later Arabic authors as ḥālţāz. Nevertheless, according to Quṭbaddīn, there were some rare logographs in the earlier Arabic tradition that fitted exactly the description of the (new) mu‘ammā, but the few examples he cites do not really prove this. He is however right in noting that several of the operations involved in the new mu‘ammā were earlier used by the Arabs in their old-style mu‘ammayāt, for which point he cites some apposite examples.30

By saying that the Persians ‘recorded, ordered, arranged and diversified’ this art (dawwanaḥu wa-rattabāḥu wa-ba-wawabāḥu wa-ṣannanāḥu), Quṭbaddīn apparently means to say that they set and described the rules and, most importantly, the operations involved in solving mu‘ammayāt. Perhaps more than the existence of two different levels of meaning in the poem—something that the Persians did not deem mandatory but which for Arab authors became the distinguishing trait between luḡz and mu‘ammā—it was the systematic exposition of these operations by the Persian masters, starting with al-Yazdī, that intrigued Quṭbaddīn and other Arabic and Turkish authors to the extent that they ascribed its invention to the Persians.31

The subsequent, main part of Quṭbaddīn’s Treasure is devoted to the systematic exposition of the mu‘ammā operations in Arabic following al-Yazdī’s system. After explaining what each operation does, Quṭbaddīn cites a few mu‘ammayāt by himself and other contemporary authors to exemplify its use. In total, the treatise comprises seventy-one mu‘ammayāt by ten different persons.32

me). These Arabic works offer further evidence of the popularity of the new mu‘ammā and deserve closer study.

30 Pace Quṭbaddīn no riddles by Ibn al-Ḥanbālī fit the definition of the new mu‘ammā.
31 To judge by al-Muhībbī’s remarks on the origins of the (new) mu‘ammā in his note on the genre in Ḥulāṣat al-ḥatar, 2:390–3, the issue was much debated. Al-Muhībbī reports that he once had an argument with somebody in ‘Rūm’ (Rumelia and Anatolia) who asserted that the mu‘ammā was invented by the Persians and the Rūm-Turks (Arwām) and that the Arabs did not know it. To counter him, al-Muhībbī cited several mu‘ammayāt in Arabic as well as a passage by Ibn Qutayba (sic! – he does not cite this passage in the Ḥulāṣa) that stated that the Arabs had invented it and the Persians and the Rūm-Turks took it from them—for all three words, mu‘ammā, ḥayjīya and luḡz, are Arabic. Al-Muhībbī concludes that actually the Persians and the Rūm-Turks contributed to it so much that they excelled. It is worth noting that, in the same note, al-Muhībbī stresses that a mu‘ammā must have a second, ‘poetic’ meaning, this being the reason why it is counted among the funūn and the muḥassināt of the bādī’. Obviously, to him as to later Arab authors a mu‘ammā was solely the new, Persianate mu‘ammā.
32 Twenty-five are by Quṭbaddīn himself, the second and third most frequently cited authors being Ibn al-Yutayyīm (twenty pieces) and Ibn Mullā Ḥājī (fourteen pieces): on these authors see below.
Persian, Turkish and Arabic authors adhering to al-Yazdí’s system in discussing the various kinds of clues and hints used in the new *mu’ammā* divide these into three basic categories dubbed ‘operations’: *al-ʿamal at-taḥṣīlī* (‘productive operation’); *al-ʿamal at-takmilī* (‘perfecting operation’); and *al-ʿamal at-tashilí* (‘facilitating operation’). Each of the three categories actually subsumes several subcategories; therefore, in what follows, I shall be speaking of ‘productive operations’, ‘perfecting operations’ etc. *Al-ʿamal at-taḥṣīlī* encompasses eight operations that are used to solely extract the letters of the sought word, irrespective of their order. The order of the letters is deduced by means of *al-ʿamal at-takmilī*, which includes three operations. *Al-ʿamal at-tashilí* subsumes four operations that, as their name suggests, are meant to facilitate and support the productive and perfecting operations by offering additional clues regarding their implementation. Finally, there is a fourth operation, *al-ʿamal at-tajyílī* (‘accessory operation’), which is just one operation and refers to supererogatory clues concerning the vocalization of the sought word.

It is important to stress that, as Quṭbaddīn and most other authors remark, in every *mu’ammā* there are normally several—not just one—operations at work.\(^33\) As a result, as one works through the list of the operations presented, one must also comment on the additional operations involved in the *mu’ammayāt* that are cited to exemplify the given operation.\(^34\) This complicates the presentation of the system. Besides, one may object to subsuming this or that operation to one of the first three categories or to the necessity of certain operations that require or overlap with others.\(^35\) To be sure, one can explain how a *mu’ammā* is solved, namely how the sought word is extracted from it, more simply. Discussing the *mu’ammā* in his *Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser*, Rückert, for example, dispensed with presenting this elaborate and complex system of operations and explained how the cited *mu’ammayāt* are solved avoiding unnecessary terminology and categorization. Moreover, as shown by Anwari-Alhosseini, there were Persian authors who did not adhere to al-Yazdí’s system and did not distinguish four categories of operations. These authors list and discuss more or less the same operations and various subcategories of them but do not bother to group and hierarchise them.\(^36\) But apparently al-Yazdí’s system served well its purpose, which was twofold: to assist *mu’ammayāt* authors in composing them and to help their recipients and the general public to solve them. In what follows I present this system based on Quṭbaddīn’s presentation and cite two to three *mu’ammayāt* for each operation, a selection of the *mu’ammayāt* cited by Quṭbaddīn.

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33 *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 11a; cf., e.g., IBN AL-ḤANBALI, *Gāmz al-ʿayn*, MS Munich, fol. 9b.
34 Given that I follow Quṭbaddīn’s presentation, the same is true of the following presentation as well.
35 E.g., as will become clear below, the operation termed *tasmiya* presupposes and therefore partly overlaps with the operation termed *tarāduf*, whereas the operation called *taḥṣīl* obviously stands for several other operations.
36 See ANWARI-ALHOSSEINI, *Loğaz und Moʿammā*, 137-64, cf. 91-100. – It should be added that, even among the Persian authors who adhere to al-Yazdí’s system, there are minor differences in the way they present the fifteen operations and especially various subcategories of them. The same is true of Arabic authors.
The *Mu‘ammā* Operations According to al-Yazdī’s System

A. *al-‘Amal at-Taḥṣīlī* or Productive Operations

A1. *af-Tanṣīṣ wa-t-taḥṣīṣ* (Citation and Specification)

According to the common definition of this operation, *tanṣīṣ* (citation) is to cite the sought letters in the poem and *taḥṣīṣ* (specification) is to deal with them in one of the various acceptable ways in order to specify them. To judge by the given examples, however, *tanṣīṣ* seems to refer specifically to citations of segments of the sought word (as opposed to single letters), whereas *taḥṣīṣ* refers to practically any instructions offered as to how to handle these segments in order to solve the riddle, including the various operations described in the following pages.

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on Ismā’l (metre: *tawil*)

My lord, you’ve become a devotee of Muhammad’s family—may you attain glory, power and highness!

Mention them to me again without haste, for, to me, listening (*samā‘i*) to (the mention of) the family (āl) of him whose intercession will be accepted on Judgment Day is sweet.

*Samā‘i*, ‘my listening’, is citation (*tanṣīṣ*) of the central part of the word Ismā’l (the letters *ṣin-mīm-alif-‘ayn-yā‘*) and ‘in āl (written alif-lām)’ is specification (*taḥṣīṣ*) and means—at the riddle level—that the segment *ṣin-mīm-alif-‘ayn-yā‘* must be inserted between the letters *alif* and *lām*. Inserting this segment between *alif* and *lām* yields Ismā’l (*alif-ṣin-mīm-alif-‘ayn-yā‘-lām*). What is here termed *taḥṣīṣ* is actually the perfecting operation called *ta’līf* (composition, B1).

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrwālī on Qāsim (metre: *ra’jaz*)

I enjoyed a period of time (lit. ‘I donned the garb of life’) with a full-moon-like beloved who used to keep his promises.

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37 Kanz al-asnā, MS Escorial, fol. 11b; al-Jazā’īrī, Tashīl, 11. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim (d. 971/1563–4) was a Meccan littérature and friend of an-Nahrwālī: see al-Jazā’īrī, al-Durar al-fardīd, 1:724; al‘AYDARUS, an-Nūr an-sāfīr, 338; IBN AL‘IMĀD, Ṣaḍarāt aq-dāḥab, 10:469; as-SINJĀRĪ, Manā‘ih al-karam, 3:330.

38 Kanz al-asnā, MS Escorial, fol. 11b; al-BakraJī, Natīja, MS Cairo, 73.
But now, after he is gone (lit. ‘after him’), I don a garb of sickness.

Saqām, ‘sickness’ (written ُsīn-gorm-f-alif-mīm), is citation (tansīṣ) of the sought letters. At the riddle level, the garb of saqām are its first and last letters, i.e. the ُsīn and the mīm, that encompass as it were the word’s core (see facilitating operation C1, intiqād, which is to hint at the position of specific letters within a word found in the poem). Putting ُsīn and mīm after the rest of its letters, i.e. after gāf-alīf (‘the first and last letters of saqām after it’ being the talṣīṣ), yields Qāsim (gāf-alīf-ُsīn-mīm).

A2. at-Tasmiya (Naming)

This is to mention the name of a letter and mean the letter itself or vice versa to mention a letter and mean its name.

At the surface level, a letter’s name is not used as such but bears some other meaning it may have as a word. It may also be a segment of a word found in the poem, as in the following example:

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on Quṭb (metre: mujtaṯṯ)39

يا لائمي في هوا
أطلتََفاَقصرَََعتابا
أَمرضتََقلبََمحَبَََ
محبوب هَعنهَغابا
لكََ
هََ
مذَيراه
بهَتلاقاَفطابا

O you who blames me for loving him (= a third person)—you overdid it, cut short your reproof!

You’ve racked the heart of a lover whose beloved is absent from him.

But as soon as he sees him, he gets together with him and recovers his health.

At the riddle level, the phrase talāqā faṭṭābā (‘he gets together (with him) and recovers his health’) can be analysed as talā qāfa ṭā bā, namely, ‘[the letters] ʾālā’ and bāʾ] follow [the letter] gāf’. Placing ʾālā and bāʾ after gāf yields Quṭb (gāf-ṭāʾ- ʾālāʾ). This reading of the text involves both uniting and dividing the speech flow differently than at the surface level and the written form. Uniting and dividing the speech flow differently is what they call synthesis (tarkīb) and analysis (taḥlīl)—the facilitating operations C2 and C3 (see below).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Yutayyim on Isḥāq (metre: ĥaffī)40

إنّ ريًا أمرُ أهل العناية
لكفيلّ خلقته بالكتابة
دار إحسانه إلى نحو قاف
ي取证ي فضله بغير نهاية

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39 Kanz al-asmā, MS Esorial, fol. 12a-b; al-Jazāʾiri, Tashīl, 13. Muḥibbaddīn b. Munlā (or Mullā) Ḥājjī was a Meccan scholar and littérateur and a friend of an-Nahrawālī (he died before the composition of the Treasure): see al-Jazāʾiri, al-Durar al-farāʾīd, 1:569, 2:479; al-Muḥibbī, Ḥulāsāt al-āḏār, 1:464.
40 Kanz al-asmā, MS Esorial, fol. 12b; al-Bakraji, Natīja, MS Cairo, 73 (yaqtaf).
A Lord who provides for those who are in His care warrants sufficiency for His creatures.

His beneficence circulates endlessly, reaching as far as Qāf (the mountain surrounding the inhabited world) and rendering His gift obligatory.\textsuperscript{41}

At the riddle level, the verb \textit{dāra} ‘to circulate, go round’ indicates that the word \textit{iḥsān} (written alif-ḥāʾ-ṣīn-alf-ṣīn) must be inverted (perfecting operation B3, inversion, \textit{qalb}); ‘without end’ means that the \textit{nūn} at its end must be dropped first (perfective operation B2, elimination, \textit{isqāt}). This yields \textit{alif-ṣīn-hāʾ-ʿalif} that then ‘reaches’ \textit{qāf}, the letter, yielding Isḥāq (\textit{alif-ṣīn-hāʾ-ʿalif-qāf}).

\textit{A3. at-Tarādūf wa-l-Iṣṭirāk (Synonymy and Homonymy)}

\textit{Tarādūf} (synonymy) is to use a word in the poem hinting at a synonym of it in Arabic, Persian or Turkish to be used in solving the riddle. For example, when you mention the Arabic word \textit{māʾ}, ‘water’, and mean \textit{āb}, the Persian word for it, or when you say \textit{layṣa}, ‘is not’, and mean the negative particle \textit{mā}. \textit{Iṣṭirāk} (homonymy) is when you use a polysemous word, its meaning at the surface level being different from its meaning at the riddle level, as in the above example for \textit{tasmiya}, where the word \textit{Qāf} is a toponym at the surface level but stands for the letter \textit{qāf} in the riddle. Or as in the following example, where the word \textit{qalb} has two different meanings:

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on Šihāb (metre: \textit{ḫafīf})\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{center}
\textit{Ya ʿassatīyān āna ṣayrātibān ḥāla il-ḥabībān ārhamū yāʿānā tāʾirīy mūṭīn}\\
\end{center}

\begin{center}
My cupbearers, who serve me from the very best wine, I am thirsty. So keep filling my cup!
\end{center}

\begin{center}
And have mercy on a desperate, destitute and distressed man, whose heart cheers up over the water of life!
\end{center}

At the riddle level, \textit{qalb}, ‘heart’, means ‘inversion’—the inversion of all or some letters of a given word is a very common perfecting operation (see below B3). Inverting the word \textit{hašša}, ‘it cheers up’ (written ḥāʾ-ṣīn), yields ṣīn-hāʾ; added to (‘next to’, ‘inda’) ‘water’ in Persian, āb (written alif-ḥāʾ), this yields Šihāb (ṣīn-hāʾ-ʿalif-bāʾ).

\textsuperscript{41} Three out of four MSS of the \textit{Treasure} (see Bibliography) have \textit{yaqtaḍī} (\textit{lectio difficilior}); the exception is MS Žāhiriyya no. 4094, fol. 6a, which reads \textit{yaqtafī}, as does al-Bakraji.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Kanz al-asmā}, MS Escorial, fol. 13b; al-Bakrajī, \textit{Natīja}, MS Cairo, 73; al-Jazīrī, \textit{Tashīl}, 17.
A4. al-Kināya (Indirect Expression)  
This is to use a word or expression and mean some other word or expression conveying the same meaning figuratively or obliquely, as when one says, for example, ‘the brightest star’ meaning the sun, or ‘the contrary of lesser sins’ meaning ‘the grave sins’ and suchlike. As Quṭbaddīn rightly stresses and as the following examples show, the possibilities one has for oblique expression are countless.

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Ḥusām (dībāyī)

في ذا الحمام قَمِحَامِي
ثاني الأحصان وأحده الأرام
كَلَامِه يصِلُ جَسَمَهُ من ترك
ما أطف ذا الإنسان في الحمام

The manager of this hammam is a bath-keeper twin to slender twigs, a fair gazelle.

His body is so soft that it flows like water. How delicate is this person in the hammam!

As Quṭbaddīn explains, a person, insān (written alif-nūn-sīn-alif-nūn), entering the hammam (written ḥā’-mīm-alif-mīm), takes off his turban and clothes. This means that the first letter of insān, alif, its ‘turban’ (see facilitating operation C1, intiqād), and the two nūns that surround the central part of the word like a shirt, must be dropped, yielding sīn-alif. In this case, kināya is the oblique reference to the dropping of these letters (an operation which is otherwise called isqāt, see below B2). Sīn-alif must then be inserted in the word hammām (‘this person in the hammam’), whose water, māl’, written mīm-alif, must be shed, because water is shed in the hammam, as Quṭbaddīn explains. Inserting sīn-alif between ḥā’ and mīm (what is left when mīm and alif are dropped from the word hammām) yields Ḥusām (ḥā’-sīn-alif-mīm).

Nūraddīn al-ʿUsaylī on Ḥusām (metre: ramāl)

ِإِنْ حَسَّنَتَا لَكُمْ حَدًّا
ذُهُبَ يَا ذَا الشِّفَاءِ
صَبِّ العَاقِلَ مَحْوَنَ/ َ تَا كَانَ السِّيْلُ عَاكِلَ

O you with the good qualities, your beauty has no limit—
It has rendered the sane insane and the insane sane!

Ḥusn, ‘beauty’ (written ḥā’-sīn-nūn), ‘without limit’, i.e. without its last letter, is ḥā’-sīn (facilitating operation C1, intiqād, and perfective operation B2, elimination, isqāt). ‘To

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43 Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 14a; al-Bakrafi, Natīja, MS Cairo, 12; al-Jazā’īrī, Tashilī, 19.
44 Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 14b; al-Bakrafi, Natīja, MS Cairo, 13; al-Jazā’īrī, Tashilī, 19. On Nūraddīn ’Alī b. Muhammad al-ʿUsaylī (d. ca. 994/1585-6), an Egyptian scholar and littérateur, see al-Gazzālī, al-Kawākīb as-sā’ira 3:161-2; Ibn al-ʿImād, Ṣafarāt aqāḥah 10:637-8; al-Ḥafṣ, Rayhānat al-alibbā, 2:197-207.
render the sane insane’ means to detract ‘aql ‘intelligence’ (written ‘ayn-qāf-lām), from ‘āqīl, ‘intelligent, sane’ (written ‘ayn-alif-qāf-lām); this yields alif. Likewise, ‘to render the insane sane’ means to detract junūn, ‘madness’ (jīm-nūn-wāw-nūn), from majnūn, ‘mad’ (mīm-jīm-nūn-wāw-nūn), which yields mīm. Adding alif-mīm to ḥā’-sīn produces Ḥusām (ḥā’-sīn-alif-mīm). While the operation involving the extraction of alif and mīm is isqāt, the oblique way this is hinted at justifies labelling it a kināya.

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Jamāl (metre: muḥalla’ al-baṣīf) ⁴⁶

لا تعجبوا من خُول جسمي
فِن يقاسي الذي أقاسي
لَوَ أنَّهَ الطود ذاب قابه

Do not wonder at the leanness of my body when the one I love has been rude to me.

Even if he were a mountain, the heart of him who suffers what I suffer would melt.

By mentioning ṭawd, ‘mountain’, Quṭbaddīn alludes to its synonym, jabal (written jīm-bā’-lām) (tarāduf, A3). If the ‘heart’, that is, the middle letter (see operation C1, intiqād), of the word jabal melts, it becomes water, māf]' (written mīm-alif). Substituting ḥā’ with mīm-alif yields Jamāl. The oblique way this substitution is hinted at justifies labelling it a kināya.

A5. at-Taṣḥīf (Miswriting)

In the new mu'ammā, taṣḥīf is restricted to adding, omitting or changing the position of the diacritical dots over or under a given letter, as opposed to taṣḥīf in the earlier Arabic tradition, which meant any kind of miswriting, e.g., changing lām into kāf, or final ‘ayn into final jīm or ḥā’, or even making sīn into three letters with a single nabl (tooth) each, etc. The diacritical dots may be hinted at by words denoting things similar to them visually or metaphorically, like tears, drops, points, moles, decoration, ornaments, etc., whereas the context indicates the necessary change in their number and/or position. This is termed taṣḥīf ja‘lī (‘artificial(?) taṣḥīf’). This operation may also be hinted at by words or particles denoting similarity, for example ka-, mišl, etc., meaning ‘similar to’ such and such a word. This is termed taṣḥīf wadā’ī (‘conventional(?) taṣḥīf’).

Muḥammad at-Ṭayar al-Yamanī on ʿUmar (metre: ḥafīf) ⁴⁶

فَأَنَا الطرف فَأَنَا
کَيْفَ لَوْ جَا بِمَنْطِقَةَ
وَعُرَوْتُ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَلِيَةٍ
کَيْفَ لَوْ جَا بِمَنْطِقَةَ

⁴⁵ Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 14b; al-Bakraji, Natīja, MS Cairo, 13.
⁴⁶ Unidentified author, a contemporary and friend of an-Nahrawālī (ṣāhibunā): Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 16a; al-Bakraji, Natīja, MS Cairo, 14; al-Jazā’īrī, Tashīl, 23. Al-Bakraji and al-Jazā’īrī read fāṭira t-ṭarfi fāṭima.
A youth with captivating, languid eyes has shot at me with a shot (i.e. cast at me a captivating glance),

He allured me without having any ornaments on—imagine how he would affect me, were he to wear a belt!

Garra, ‘he allured’ (written ḡayn-rā’) min ḡayri ḥilyatin, ‘without any ornaments’, means to delete the dot of ḡayn, which yields ‘ayn-rā’. Because of its shape, the letter mīm is often likened to a belt, minṭaq (operation A7, comparison or metaphor). As such, in the present context, it should be placed in the middle of the segment ‘ayn-rā’, which corresponds to the young man’s waist, yielding ‘Umar (‘ayn-mīm-rā’).

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Ḥabīb (metre: muḥalla’ al-basīf)\(^47\)

The stature and buttocks of my beloved are (like) a bending twig on a hillock.

Because of its shape, the letter hā’ is often likened to a lock of hair or a bending twig (operation A7, comparison or metaphor). Ḥā’ must be placed ‘on top of’, i.e. in front of kāfīb. The word kāfīb, ‘hillock’, is analysed as consisting of two words (operation C2, analysis), the preposition bā-, ‘like’, and the grapheme ǧīb, meaning ‘what resembles (in writing) ǧīb’, i.e. the miswriting of the word segment ǧīb (written ǧā-yāʾ-ḥā’), namely, bīb (written hā’-yāʾ-ḥā’). For both ǧā’ and hā’ consist of a single nabra (tooth) but differ in the number and the position of the diacritical dots. Putting hā’ in front of bā’-yāʾ-ḥā’ yields Ḥabīb (ḥā’-ḥā’-yāʾ-ḥā’).

A6, at-Talmīḥ (Allusion /Hint)

This is to allude to widely known things and to conventions of the various sciences: for example, the astronomers’ convention to name the planets after the final letter of their name in Arabic (qamar, ‘moon’, hints at rā’, šams, ‘sun’, at sīn, ‘utārid, ‘Mercury’, at dāl, etc.). Likewise, the word al-muʾarrif may be used to allude to the letters alif-lām, given that in the grammarians’ terminology it means the definite article al- (in the poem, however, this word may have any of the possible meanings of the active participle of the verb ṣarrafā).

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Ṣād (metre: kāmil)\(^48\)

She covered her eyebrows with a protecting hand. Look at her two eyes without the eyebrows!

As Quṭbaddīn explains, by her ‘two eyes’ he means the word ‘ayn and, further, the word šams, given that ‘ayn is a synonym of it (operation A3, īstirāḵ, homonymy, ‘ayn may mean

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\(^{47}\) Kanz al-asmāʿ, MS Escorial, fol. 15a; al-Bakrafi, Natīja, MS Cairo, 14.

\(^{48}\) Kanz al-asmāʿ, MS Escorial, fol. 16b; al-Bakrafi, Natīja, MS Cairo, 15.
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‘sun’). The word ʿsam hints at the letter ʿsin, which is used by astronomers to indicate the sun (ʿsam); here the poet means to indicate the letter’s name, the word ʿsin itself. The name ʿĪsā (‘ayn-ʿyā-ʿsin-ʿyā’) is produced by uniting the words ‘ayn (‘ayn-ʿyā-ʿnūn) and ʿsin (ʿsin-ʿyā-ʿnūn), having dropped the ʿnūn or ‘eyebrows’ at their end—since due to its shape the letter ʿnūn is often likened to an eyebrow (productive operation A7, comparison or metaphor, and perfecting operation B2, elimination).

Radiyyaddin al-Qazānī on Šāliḥ (metre: ḥafīf)\(^{49}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{عَدْبُكُمُ قَتَلَ عَشَقُوا} \\
\text{ثُمَّ مَا فِي بَكَّمَحَهُ بَعِينَ}
\end{align*}
\]

Your love has killed your slave. If you reject him, you will ruin him.

Then, after he perishes because of you, the legal witness will rightly identify (you) as the culprit at court.

In legal terminology, muʿarrif is a special witness identifying the persons involved in a court case. As a grammatical term, however, it denotes, as said, the definite article al-, written alif-lām. At the surface level, saḥba fīhī l-muʿarrifū means ‘the witness will give sound testimony concerning him (the slain slave)’, but at the riddle level, it means ‘alīf-lām [must be inserted] in saḥba (written ʿṣāf-hā’) (perfective operation B1, taʿīfī, composition). Inserting alif-lām between the letters ʿsād and ʿḥā’ yields Šāliḥ (ṣād-alīf-lām-ḥā’).

A7. at-Taṣbīḥ or al-Istāʿra (Comparison or Metaphor)

This is to mention various items that resemble letters of the alphabet in shape, hinting at these letters. For instance, the letter alīf may be hinted at by words such as sarw (‘cypress’), nahāl (‘date palm’), rumh (‘spear’), qanā (‘shaft’), qadd (‘stature’), ʿaṣā (‘stick’), ʿsamā (‘candle’), etc. The words for mouth (fam, mabsim), belt (mintaqa), anklet (ḥalḥāl), etc., may stand for mīm (because of its round shape); ‘ear lock’ (ṣudā) may stand for wāw or ḥā; ‘polo stick’ (sawlaḏān) or ‘stature’ (qadd) may stand for lām, etc.

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on Masīḥ (metre: muḫallaʿ al-basīf)\(^{50}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{عَفْدُ الَّذِي حَبّهُ بَقَلَبَ} \\
\text{شَيْبُ فُؤَدٍ يُبْتَسَعُ}
\end{align*}
\]

\[\text{مبَسِّمٌ مَطَلاِبٌ وَصُدُعُ}
\]

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49 Kanz al-asmā, MS Esorial, fol. 17a. On Radiyyaddin al-Qazānī (d. 990/1582), a Meccan scholar and littératour contemporary of an-Nahrawālī, see al-ʿAYDARŪS, an-Nūr as-sāfīr, 505.

50 Kanz al-asmā, MS Esorial, fol. 17b-18a; al-Bakrajī, Natīja, MS Cairo, 15-6; al-Jazāʾīrī, Tashīl, 27. The correct reading fawdī is from Kanz al-asmā, MS Zāhiriyya no. 4094, fol. 9a, and al-Bakrajī. All other MSS of the Kanz and al-Jazāʾīrī have fuʿāḍī, which is metrically impossible.
May I be the ransom of the one whose love is deeply rooted and anchored in my heart and my heart-blood!

I seek his mouth and his ear lock, with which he has turned my temples and my head grey.

The mouth stands for mīm and the ear lock stands for ḥā’, about which letter is said warā-sī. At the riddle level namely, the words wa-rāsī, ‘and my head’, are analysed as warā-sī, meaning ‘after -sī’, i.e. ‘after sīn-yā’ (the operations involved are C3 tarkīb, synthesis, and C2 tahillī, analysis). Adding this segment (sīn-yā’-hā’) to mīm yields Masīh (mīm-sīn-yā’-hā’).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on Maḥmūd (metre: ṣawā’il)⁵¹

A gazelle of gracile stature, shooting with his glances, beautiful of face, enwrapped in splendour.

A handsome youth whom I love and who loves me—a little belt is tied around his supple waist.

At the riddle level, the phrase maliḥun lahū wuddun wa-li minhu means that wudd, ‘love’ (written wāw-dāl), must be added to (lahū, ‘to him’), and lī (written lām-yā’), must be dropped from (minhu, ‘from him’), the word maliḥ (written mīm-lām-yā’-hā’). Dropping lām-yā’ from mīm-lām-yā’-hā’ yields mīm-hā’; adding wāw-dāl to mīm-hā’ yields mīm-hā’-wāw-dāl. The ‘little belt on his waist’ is the letter mīm that must be inserted in the middle of these letters (‘the waist’), yielding Maḥmūd (mīm-hā’-mīm-wāw-dāl). Note the many witty jindāses (rašīq—yarṣaqa, munaytiqa—tunaṭṭaqa, ḡasr—raḥṣ).

A8, al-‘Amal al-Ḥisābī (Computations)

This involves several kinds of clues and computational operations based on the numerical value of the letters of the alphabet.

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Šams and Kamāl (metre: ṣawā’il)⁵²

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⁵¹ Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 18a; al-Bakrafi, Natīja, MS Cairo, 74 (bi-l-jamāli mutaywaqa‘); al-Jazā’īrī, Tashīl, 27.

⁵² Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 18b; al-Bakrafi, Natīja, MS Cairo, 16; al-Jazā’īrī, Tashīl, 30–31.
The censurer says: “The sun is a dearer being than the person whom you love”, but he is wrong in this.

I only see the face of my beloved once a year, but what he named is obtained daily.

At the surface level Quṭbaddīn plays with the meanings of aʿazz. The censurer refers to the preciousness of the sun, while the lover supposedly understands the word to refer to its ‘dearness’, the rareness of its appearance. At the riddle level, wajh man, lit. ‘the face of man (mīm-nūn)’, means the first letter of the word man, i.e. mīm (facilitating operation C1, intiqād). ‘Ām, ‘a year’, stands for the number 360, the number of days of the ‘natural’ solar year. 360 equals 300 + 60, the numerical value of the letters šīn and sīn respectively. Wajh man fī l-ʿām means that mīm must be inserted between šīn and sīn, which yields Šams (šīn-mīm-sīn). Inserting mā (mīm-alif) between kāf and lām, the letters of the word kull (mā fī kull, ‘mīm-alif in kāf-lām’), yields Kamāl (kāf-mīm-alif-lām).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Yutayyim on ʿUṯmān (metre: munsarih)\textsuperscript{53}

يا من عن الراح بات في شغلي
حتى أكنت حرة من الحبل
إشرت ففصل البريع جاء وقد
قارنت الشمس أول الخلي

O you who were distracted from drinking wine at night, so that Wine blushed (became red) with shame—

Drink, because spring has come and the sun has just entered (lit. joined) (the zodiac sign of) the Ram! (Spring is the time when the sun is in Aries / the Ram.)

Šams, ‘sun’, stands here for ʿayn, its synonym (operation A3, tarādaḍ, synonymy), which also means the letter ʿayn (operation A2, tasmiya, naming). ‘The beginning of the Ram’ (awwal al-ḥamāl) is its first letter (operation C1, intiqād, selection), i.e. ḥaʾ, whose numerical value is eight, ṭāmān”, written ṭāʾ-mīm-alif-nūn. ‘Joined to’ ʿayn, this yields ʿUṯmān (ʿayn-ṭāʾ-mīm-alif-nūn).

B. al-ʿAmal at-Takmīl or Perfecting Operations

B1. at-Taʾlīf (Assembling/Composition)

This is to bring together the various segments of the sought word that are mentioned in various places of the riddle and either add one to another (taʾlīf ittiṣālī) or insert it into it (taʾlīf iṃtizājī).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Yutayyim on šarāb / wine (metre: kāmil)\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{53} Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 18b; al-BAKRAFI, Natīja, MS Cairo, 17; al-JAZĀʾIRI, Tashīl, 31.

\textsuperscript{54} Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 19b.
How noble is he, pious and devout! You always see him revered among people. He joyfully throws himself prostrate before the Lord, so that you see the lines of his face touch the soil.

This is an example of *talīf ittiṣālī*. The face (*wajh*) of a word is its first letter (facilitating operation C1, *intiqād*). Here the face refers to the word *bāšran* (‘joyfully, with joy’), written *bā*-šīn-*rāʾ*-alif. *Bā* touches the soil, i.e. it must be placed at the very end of the word, thus yielding *sārah* (šīn-rāʾ-alif-bā’). This is because, in the new *muʾammā*, letters standing at the beginning of a word are referred to by various words indicating things placed high, whereas letters standing at the end are referred to by words indicating things placed low (see below C1, *intiqād*).

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Jaʿfar (metre: *țawīl*)

If my wrongdoing is boundless, your pardon of it has no end.

This is an example of *talīf imtizājī*. *Jurm*, ‘crime, wrongdoing’ (jīm-rāʾ-ʾmīm), ‘without limit’ means dropping the letter ʾmīm and retaining jīm-ʾrāʾ. Likewise, *ʿafw*, ‘forgiveness’ (ʿayn-fāʾ-ʾwāw), ‘without extremity / end’ means dropping the wāw and retaining ʿayn-fāʾ. Inserting ʿayn-fāʾ between jīm and ʾrāʾ (ʿafwuka fīhi, ‘<your> ʿafw [without end] in it’) yields Jaʿfar (jīm-ʿayn-fāʾ-ʾrāʾ). The verse may be taken to be addressed to God, a beloved or a patron.

**B2. al-Isqāṭ (Elimination)**

This is to drop one or more letters from a word. The shedding is usually indicated by words such as *izāla* (‘elimination’), *ḥafāʾ* (‘hiding’), *ḡurūb* (‘setting’), *maḥw* (‘effacement’), *zawāl* (‘disappearance’), *idmār* (‘concealing’), *ṭarḥ* (‘casting away’), etc.

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on Jawhar (metre: *wāfir*)

55 *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 19b; al-JAZĀʾIRI, *Tashīl*, 10-11.

56 *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 19b-20a.
A handsome youth avoids me and puts me off more and more often, but my heart cannot resist him.

I have discarded love from my existence because of his forsaking me that tore apart what my ribs enclose.

At the riddle level, asqaṭtu wuddī min wujūḍī (‘I have discarded love from my existence’) means to drop wāw, dāl and yā’, the letters of the word wuddī, from the word wujūḍī (written wāw-jīm-wāw-dāl-yā’), i.e. to only retain jīm-wāw. These two letters must be added to hā’-rā’, namely the word hajr, ‘forsaking’ (written hā’-jīm-rā’), after the elimination of jīm, its middle letter (‘its innermost has been torn apart’), to produce Jawhar (jīm-wāw-hā’-rā’). At the surface level, minhu means ‘because of it’, but in the riddle context it means ‘from it’.

Muḥibbadīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on imām (metre: basī)\(^{57}\)

با غَضْبٍ ذَغْبَي مَنُ التسويف والعلَمِ
 ما دَامَ ضَحَّ وَدِادي فيكِ يا أَمَيْ

Slender twig, spare me the deferrals and the excuses so long as you love me (lit. your love of me lasts), my hope!

The twig (guṣn) stands for alif (operation A7, comparison or metaphor), the first letter of the sought word. Ṣaḥḥa means ‘to be sound, healthy’. Hence, mā dāma ṣahha may be taken to mean ‘[the phrase] mā dāma (written mīm-alif dāl-alif-mīm) is healthy’, namely, it has no dā’, ‘ailment, illness’ (written dāl-alif). Dropping dāl-alif from mīm-alif-dāl-alif-mīm yields mīm-alif-mīm. Imām (alif-mīm-alif-mīm) is produced by adding this to the alif of the twig.

\(B3.\) al-Qalb (Inversion)

This is to invert all or some of the letters of words occurring in the poem as part of the operations required to solve the riddle. The inversion is indicated by words like qalb (‘inversion’), ‘aks (‘reversal’), dawr (‘turning, round’), fatl (‘twisting’), dāra (‘to turn’, ‘to revolve’), etc.\(^{58}\)

Quṭḥaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Aḥmad (metre: wāfi)\(^{59}\)

لا إِن دَارَتْ الكَشَّ العَقَرَ
 بَأَطرافِ الرَّواحِ دَمَ يَنْدُورُ

If the wine cup goes round (for other people), for us blood goes round on spear-tips.

\(^{57}\) Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 20a.

\(^{58}\) In fact, there are two subcategories of qalb depending on whether all or some of the letters of a given word are inverted: qalb al-kull (total inversion, e.g. qāf-alif-lām becomes lām-alif-qāf) and qalb al-ba’ād (partial inversion, e.g. jīm-bā’-dāl becomes jīm-dāl-bā’). Most of the examples given by Quṭḥaddīn exemplify qalb al-kull.

\(^{59}\) Kanz al-asnād, MS Escorial, fol. 20b-21a.
At the riddle level, atrāf ar-rimāḥ ‘the extremities of the spears’ means the very first and last letters of ar-rimāḥ, namely the letters alif and ḥāʾ (facilitating operation C1, intiqād). By inverting (yadūru) and adding the letters of the word dam (dāl-mīm) to alif and ḥāʾ, one forms the word Aḥmad (alif-ḥāʾ-mīm-dāl) (perfecting operation B1, taʿlīf, composition).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Yutayyim on Rustam (metre: mujtaṯṯ) 60

I only disclose my secret to him who kindly bonds with me.

At the riddle level, bi-l-qalb (‘in the heart’) means ‘by inverting’. Inverting the letters of the word sīr, ‘secret’ (sīn-rāʾ) and adding them to the letters of the word tamm, ‘it becomes complete’ (tāʾ-ʾmīm), yields Rustam (rāʾ-ʾsīn-ʾtāʾ-ʾmīm).

C. al-ʿAmal at-Tashīlī or Facilitating Operations

C1. al-Intiqād (Selection, Picking Out)

This is to hint at letters that occur in the poem and contribute to the solution of the riddle by indicating their place in the words in which they occur. The first letter of a word is indicated by words meaning ‘the beginning, the front, the face, the first, the head, the crown, the uppermost, the pinnacle, the froth’, etc. Words meaning ‘the end, the edge, the back, the rear, the last, the foot, the sediment, the lowest, the tail’, etc., indicate the last letter of a word. Words meaning ‘the heart, the guts, the belly, the filling, the middle, the innermost, the pith, the seed, the heart’, etc., indicate the middle letter. The first and last letters of a word may be referred to by words meaning ‘the two sides’, ‘the two wings’, ‘shell’, (aṭ-ṭarafān, al-janāḥān, qišr), etc.

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Aḥmad (metre: sarī) 61

O You, the Unique One, who has no beginning—whoever vanishes in You has no end!

Wāḥid, ‘one, unique’ (written wāw-alif-ḥāʾ-dāl), ‘without beginning’, becomes alif-ḥāʾ-dāl. ‘You’ in ‘in You’ (fīka) is ‘the Unique One, who has no beginning’, i.e. alif-ḥāʾ-dāl. At the riddle level, man yafnā fīka mā lahū āḫirū (‘whoever vanishes in You has no end’) means

60 Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 21a.
61 Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 22b.
to insert mīm, the word man (mīm-nūn) after dropping the nūn, its last letter (mā lahū āḥirū, ‘he has no end’), in alif-hā’-dāl. This yields ʾĀḥmad (alif-hā’-mīm-dāl).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Yutayyim on ḥammāma, ‘dove’ (metre: muḥalla’ al-basīṭ)\(^62\)

I recall a party (as lovely) as a garden—I plucked a rose there (i.e. I kissed a cheek) that greeted me with cheer.

Its wild thyme (lit. slanderer) then started shouting: ‘My cover is gone and my aroma has spread!’

At the riddle level wa-rāḥa, ‘it started’, should be analysed as warā-ha, i.e. ‘after (the letter) hā’ (the operations involved are C3, synthesis, and C2, analysis). Dropping the first letter (zāla niqābī, ‘my cover is gone’) of nammāmuhū (nūn-mīm-ʿalif-mīm-hāʾ) and putting what remains ‘after ḥāʾ’ yields ḥammāma (ḥāʾ-ʿalif-mīm-mīm-hāʾ). The epigram exemplifies the use of the word niqāb (cover) to hint at the first letter of a word.

Abū Bakr (b. Sālim) al-Qunāwī al-Makkī on šorba, a Turkish loanword meaning ‘soup’ (metre: sarī)\(^63\)

How often have I told the censurer, when he reproved me because of a full moon abiding in my heart:

‘Explaining my passion has no end and my love of him has no beginning’!

Dropping the hāʾ at the end of the word šarḥ, ‘explaining’ (šīn-rāʾ-hāʾ), and the hāʾ at the beginning of ḥubbuhū, ‘the love of him’ (ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ-hāʾ) and uniting the two remaining segments yields šorba (šīn-rāʾ-hāʾ-hāʾ).

C2. at-Taḥlīl (Analysis)

As in some of the above examples, both this and the next operation (tarkīb, synthesis) involve analysing the text at the riddle level in a different way than at the level of the surface meaning of the poem. Taḥlīl is to read as two or more words what at the surface level of the text is one word. Tarkīb is the opposite, namely, to read as one word what at the surface level of the text is two or more words. The two operations are mostly combined.

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\(^62\) Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 22b.
\(^63\) Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 23a-b; Iḥn al-Ḥanbalī, Gāmẓ al-ʿayn, MS Munich, 10b. On Abū Bakr (b. Sālim) al-Qunāwī, a Meccan littérateur contemporary of an-Nahrawālī, see al-Jazīrī, al-Durar al-fardʿid, 1.211-2.
Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Nūr (metre: ṭawīl)\(^{64}\)

Do not fret over the times when the times are grim, because mild times will follow.

At the riddle level, ‘uqabāhū, which at the surface level means ‘the times’ outcome’, ‘the times that will come next’, means the last letter of the word dahr, ‘the times’ (dāl-hā’-rā’), namely rā’, about which is said yalīnū (‘will be mild’): at the riddle level, yalīnū is analysed as yalī-nū, ‘it follows nū’ (vowels are lengthened in rhyme position, so that nū may be written out as nūn-wāw). Putting rāʾ after nūn-wāw yields Nūr (nūn-wāw-rāʾ).

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Nāṣir (metre: jawāli)\(^{65}\)

We took patience and as Patience saw our courage, it fell behind us broken-hearted.

‘Broken-hearted’ sabr, ‘patience’, is šād-bāʾ-rāʾ without bāʾ, its ‘heart’ or middle letter, namely šād-rāʾ. At the riddle level taʾaḥḥara ʿannā (‘it fell behind us’) is analysed as taʾaḥḥara ʿan nā, ‘falls behind (i.e. must be put behind) nā (nūn-alif)’. Ṣād-rāʾ placed after nūn-alif yields Nāṣir (nūn-alif-ṣād-rāʾ).

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on Mājid (metre: munsariḥ)\(^{66}\)

O you who leave me flurried about your love like a feather cast in the open air,

You took away my heart-blood—but how often have you, too, suffered your innermost to be taken away from you as I did!

At the riddle level, the possessive suffix in aḥšāhu (‘his innermost’) is understood to refer to the word jaluda (jīm-lām-dāl) (at the surface level it refers to the beloved). If its ‘innermost’, i.e. lām, its middle letter, is ‘taken away’ (maʿḥūdah), there remain jīm and dāl. Likewise, the suffix in alayhi, which also refers to the beloved at the surface level of the poem, refers to what remains from jaluda after the elimination of lām. In the context of the muʿammā, alayhi means ‘on top of it’, that is, ‘in front of it’. Analysing maʿḥūdah as

\(^{64}\) Kanz al-asmāʾ, MS Escorial, fol. 24a; al-JAZʾIRI, Tashīl, 38.

\(^{65}\) Kanz al-asmāʾ, MS Escorial, fol. 24a; al-JAZʾIRI, Tashīl, 38.

\(^{66}\) Kanz al-asmāʾ, MS Escorial, fol. 24b.
two words, mā, mīm-alif (hamza is not taken into account), and ḥūdah, mā is construed as the subject of a nominal clause, namely ‘alayhi mā, ‘mā is (i.e. must be placed) in front of it’. Mīm-alif placed in front of jīm-dāl yields Mājid (mīm-alif-jīm-dāl). Quṭbaddīn praises the poet for using the word māḥūdah twice in the clues and comments that this is very subtle (huwa fi gāyati l-lutf).

C3. at-Tarkīb (Synthesis)

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on ‘Ā’iṣa (metre: wāfir) 67

A matured wine (looking) like a sun in a crescent moon (= the goblet)—the bubble stars on its surface resemble pearl necklaces.

Take the sun and leave ‘no!’ and you will gain, along with the old wine, new joy!

Ṣams in the second verse stands for ‘ayn, its synonym (operation A3, tarāduf), which hints at the letter ‘ayn. By ‘leave ‘no!’’ Quṭbaddīn hints at its opposite, namely ī, ‘yea’ (written alif-ī), meaning ‘take ‘ayn and take alif-ī’, ‘ayn-alif-ī’ being the first three letters of the sought name. Applying the facilitating operations of tarkīb and taḥlīl, the phrase sarābī ‘aṭiqīhim (‘their old wine’) should be read as ša- rābī’u taṭiqīm. This indicates two things: firstly, that ‘ṣīn is the fourth [letter]’ of the sought name (ṣ- rābī’); and, secondly, read together with the word ḥuḍ that stands at the beginning of the verse and ignoring the ūn, i.e. read as ḥuḍ rābī’u taṭiqīm, it means ‘take the fourth [letter] of the segment taṭiqim (tā’- yā’-qāf-hā’-mīm), which is a hā’, the last letter of the name ‘Ā’iṣa (‘ayn-alif-ī’-ṣūn-hā’).

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Ḥalīl (metre: mujattāf) 68

I fell in love with his forehead, which shines like the crescent moon.

My body grew thin like a toothpick for love of my crescent moon.

Read together with the word sāra, which stands at the beginning of the verse, the phrase fi ḥilālī (‘in my crescent moon’) must be analysed as fiḥi lā ḥi, namely sāra fiḥi lā ḥi, ‘the ḥa (lām-alif) in it becomes lā (lām-yā’)’. The suffix in fiḥi refers to the word ḥilāl (‘toothpick’). If ‘lām-alif in it becomes lām-yā’”, ḥilāl (ḥā’-lām-alif-lām) becomes Ḥalīl (ḥā’-lām-yā’-lām).

67 Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 25a; al-JAZA’IRI, Tashīl, 41.
68 Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 25a; al-JAZA’IRI, Tashīl, 42.
C4. at-Tabdīl (Substitution)

This is to substitute one or more letters of a word with some other letter or letters.

Abū Bakr Muhammad b. ʿUmar al-Yutayyim on ʿImād and ʿĀbid (metre: basīt)⁶⁹

I swear by the mouth that tastes like honey and honeycomb and swear by a rose on top of a blushed cheek—

The heart of your slave is not out of stone, master, so that you make it bear the unbearable!

At the riddle level, the phrase mā qalbu ʿabdika (‘the heart of your slave is not’) must be understood as meaning ‘mā (mīm-alif) is the heart, i.e. the core or middle letters, of the word ʿabd (ʿayn-bāʾ-dāl), thus yielding ʿImād (ʿayn-mīm-alif-dāl). If the same is done with ʿāb (alif-bāʾ), the Persian word for water and a synonym of māl[,] in this sense, the name produced is ʿĀbid (ʿayn-alif-bāʾ-dāl).

D. al-ʿAmal at-Tadyīlī or Accessory Operation

Given that the vocalization and the doubling of consonants are not taken into account in the new muʿammā, clues relating to these features count as supererogatory. They are indeed very rare and Quṭbaddīn cites only one muʿammā in which such clues are given.

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Hilāl or hilāl, ‘crescent moon’ (metre: ḥaftī)⁷⁰

You have accused your lovers of trespassing against you, so that they seek another love.

You have broken their hearts, so that they change. Have you seen any change by breaking them?

For the purposes of the riddle, the word raʿaytum in the last hemistich is redundant. The clues to the solution are given in the phrase hal bi-kaṣrī ha ṭahwi lā, which must be analysed as hal bi-kaṣrī ha ṭahwi lā, namely ‘hal (ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ), the ḥāʾ being vocalized with kasra, encompasses lā (ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ). In other words, the subject of ṭahwi is hal, ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ, about which segment is said that it must encompass lā-ḥāʾ, yielding ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ-ḥāʾ. This is how the

⁶⁹ Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 25b; al-JAZAIRI, Tashīl, 43.
⁷⁰ Kanz al-asmā, MS Escorial, fol. 25b; al-BAKRAI, Natīja, MS Cairo, 21 (v. 2: li-yahūnū); al-JAZAIRI, Tashīl, 44.
word hilāl is written. The ḥā in bi-kasri-ḥā is the letter ḥāʾ of hal, which must be vocalized with kasra, this being the supererogatory clue indicating the vocalization.

I hope that the above sample gives the reader an idea of the complexity as well as of the Wittiness and beauty of the new genre—traits that justify the fondness of Ottoman-era Arab intellectuals for the Persianate muʾammā. To appreciate and enjoy this poetry, one has to familiarize oneself with the various kinds of clues offered in the poems. To be sure, in several cases, some steps in the solution procedure as described by Qutbaddīn may seem arbitrary to new Initiates. The deeper one delves into this world, however, the more one admires the poets’ skill and ingenuity in creating poems with an obvious and a hidden meaning. Various later sources—treatises on the (new) muʾammā or the riddle in general, ʿammāt, anthologies, as well as other literary works—testify to the great popularity that this genre enjoyed throughout the Ottoman period. It is very significant that, starting with Ibn al-Ḥanbalī’s Kanz man ḥājā and Ġamz al-ʿayn, specialist treatises on the riddle in general (or on more than one riddle kind, as Ibn al-Ḥanbalī’s works) treat the muʾammā first and devote to it noticeably more space and attention. This fact suggests that it gradually became the most popular kind of literary riddle in Arabic. Another indication of the genre’s growth are the rising numbers of authors whose muʾammayāt are cited in specialist treatises and anthologies over time. Nonetheless, given that the Arabic literature of the Ottoman period has been very little studied and most sources are still unpublished, a more thorough examination of the relevant material must be undertaken in order to show the efflorescence of the genre in its full extent. In the following Appendix, I list those specialist treatises, both extant and lost, which I know of. I have not been able to examine all the extant works and therefore comment only on the contents of those available to me. The list is most probably not exhaustive; additional titles will surface in the future, as our knowledge of the Arabic literature of the Ottoman period improves. Finally, it is important to stress that, as becomes clear from the identity of the authors of the works listed below, due to its complexity the new muʾammā was a genre that attracted elite writers in particular.

To give just a few random examples that could easily be multiplied, apart from the specialist works listed below: see, e.g., al-Muḥīḫī, Naḥḥat ar-Rayḥān, 1:23-4 (Abū Bakr al-ʿUmārī); 1:126 (Muḥammad b. Nūraddīn aš-ṣahīr bi-Ibn ad-Darā); 1:150, 157 (ʿAbdalḥayy b. Abī Bakr al-maʿrūf bi-Ṭarraza r-rayḥān); 1:214 (Ǧuṣayn al-bān); 1:215-6 (Ibn aṣ-Ṣuḡayyīr); 1:262-3 (ʿAbdalbāqī b. Muḥayyīlī). An important muʾammayāt author was, e.g., the Damascene poet Ḥanbīlī as-Safarjalānī (1055-1112/1645-1700), whose divān contains thirty-nine pieces, only one of which is cited in Naḥḥat ar-Rayḥān, 1:257; see M. Kūčkūsārī, Ḥanbīlī as-Safarjalānī, 241 (as-Safarjalānī’s muʾammayāt are however often cited in al-Bakrāji and al-Jazīrī). Muʾammayāt occur randomly in very diverse literary works, e.g. in Yūsuf al-Badīʿī’s Awj at-taharrī (see below), or Naṣīf al-Yāẓīfī’s Majmaʿ al-bahrayn, al-Maḥāmīn al-Hiliyya, 250-1.
Appendix

1 – The Egyptian littérateur ‘Abdalmu‘in b. Ahmad known as Ibn al-Bakkā‘ al-Balḥī, who travelled extensively in the Ottoman domains and died in Medina in 1040/1630-1,72 authored at-Ţarz al-asmā‘ al-ʿalā Kanz al-asmā‘ (The Loftiest Way in the Manner of the Treasure of Names), a collection of 112 mu‘ammayāt all composed by himself,73 which he dedicated to the Damascene littérateur Darwīs Muḥammad at-Ţāluwī (950-1014/1543-1606), who also took an interest in this art.74 In the introduction he states that he took his inspiration from an-Nahrawālī’s Treasure, a work which he greatly admired, then praises the dedicatee for saving him from the vicissitudes of Time and adds that at-Ţāluwī encouraged him to rewrite his risāla, which he had initially composed after reading an-Nahrawālī’s work but which had meanwhile perished. Thereupon Ibn al-Bakkā‘ gives an abridged version of an-Nahrawālī’s definition of the mu‘ammā and his descriptions of the various operations without citing any examples and omitting details (subcategories etc.), while adding very little in terms of his own remarks. Finally, he notes that in composing his mu‘ammayāt he mostly relied on ten operations. Therefore, in the subsequent collection, he arranges the poems in ten sections, each containing mu‘ammayāt that primarily illustrate one of the ten named operations.75 Each mu‘ammā is followed by a short explanation in prose of how the sought name is extracted and which additional operations are involved. Ibn al-Bakkā‘ rounds off by appealing to the reader’s indulgence for his shortcomings and adds that he completed the work on the 30th Muharram 993 (1 Feb. 1585). Zirikī and Brockelmann (G2:382) state that this work is a commentary on an-Nahrawālī’s Treasure, but this is obviously a mistake. Mu‘ammayāt by Ibn al-Bakkā‘ are cited in the treatises by al-Bakrājī and al-Jazā’īrī (nos. 6 and 12 below) and in Yūsuf al-Badī‘ī’s (d. 1070/1662) Awj at-taḥarrī.76

2 – The great Imāmī scholar and littérateur Bahā’addīn al-ʿĀmilī (953-1030/1547-1621),77 who took a vivid interest in riddles in general, authored a three-folio long Risāla fi...
ʿamal al-muʾammayāt wa-l-알ğāz, a copy of which survives in the Maktabat al-Auwqāf al-ʿĀmma in Baghdad (not seen by me). Two muʾammayāt of his are cited in al-Bakraji (no. 5).

3 – A seven-folio Risāla fi ʿamal al-muʾammayāt written in 1016/1607-8 by a disciple of one Wahhābīn ʿAbdārrahmān b. Bākīr survives in the Maktabat al-Auwqāf al-ʿĀmma in Baghdad (not seen by me).

4 – Sallāḥīn b. Muhammad al-ʿĀmmār (d. after 1049/1639), an Aleppine littérateur who earned his living as a court secretary and, as his diwān shows, took a vivid interest in the riddle in general, is the author of a twenty-folio treatise entitled Nūr mašābīh ad-dāyājī fī l-muʾammā wa-l-ahājī (The Light of the Nightly Stars: On Muʾammayāt and Ahājī), a copy of which survives in the Zāhiriyya Library in Damascus (not seen by me). The treatise, which first deals with the muʾammā and then with the uhjyya, contains 103 muʾammayāt by al-ʿĀmmār that exemplify the various operations. This treatise is referenced a few times in al-Bakraji.

5 – The Medinan littérateur Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāḥ known as Kibrīt (1012-1070/1603–1659-60), who also spent some time in India (Golconda and Hyderabad), wrote, among other things, the now apparently lost work Rīkāz ar-rikeikā fī l-muʾammā wa-l- алкgāz (Precious Ores of Buried Treasures: On Muʾammayāt and Alğāz).

6 – The Aleppine littérateur and philologist Qāsim b. Muḥammad al-Bakraji (1094-1169/1683-1756), composed a most interesting and informed treatise cum anthology on riddles, the Nāṭijat al-ḥijāj wa-l-ilgāz fī l-muʾammā wa-l-ahājī wa-l- алкgāz (The Fruits of Posing Riddles and Making One’s Speech Obscure: On Muʾammayāt, Ahājī and Alğāz). The work is divided into four parts that are preceded by a short introduction explaining the

78 al-Jahārī, Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt, 229. This, however, may be one of the many complicated Arabic prose riddles by al-ʿĀmmī, on which see ANVARI-ALHOSSEYNI, Logaz und Muʾammā, Index.

79 al-Jahārī, Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt, 232.

80 See Zirākī, al-ʿĀʾlām, 3:207; Kāhālā, Muʿjam al-muʾallīfīn, 1:642; at-Ṭabbāḥi, Iʾlām an-nabalāʾ, 6:237-52; al-Ḥaṣafī, Rayhānāt al-alībbā, 1:281-3; al-Muhībī, Ḥulāṣat al-qāyīf, 2:252-6.

81 On the MS of this work and its contents, see MURĀD and as-SAWĀS, Fihris Maṭḥūṭāt Dār al-Kutub az-Zāhiriyya, Adab, 2:375-6. Al-ʿĀmmār’s diwān survives in the autograph MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Taymūrī, ʿĪr 246.

82 See GAL 2:239 and S2:538; Zirākī, al-ʿĀʾlām, 6:240; Kāhālā, Muʿjam al-muʾallīfīn, 3:455; al-Muhībī, Ḥulāṣat al-qāyīf, 4:28-31; Ibn Maṣʿūm, Sulāfat al-ʿāṣr, 2:432-5; al-Gazzī, Ḥūwān al-Islām, 4:58-9; A. KHĀN, The Arabian Poets of Golconda, 58 and Index. The most famous works by Kibrīt are his history of Medina entitled al-Maḥāsin at-ṭamīna fī muḥāsin al-Madīna and his Istanbul travelogue entitled Rihlat al-liʾlā wa-l-ṣamāw (both edited).

83 See GAL 2:287, S2:397 and Index (the date given in S3:342 is wrong); Zirākī, al-ʿĀʾlām, 5:183.

84 The work survives in two MSS: Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Taymūrī Balāḡa 281 is presumably copied from an autograph and contains 140 pages with seventeen lines per page (all references are to this MS). The second, Zāhiriyya no. 8445 (MURĀD and as-SAWĀS, Fihris Maṭḥūṭāt Dār al-Kutub az-Zāhiriyya, Adab, 1:329-30, forty-seven folios), was written by a disciple of al-Bakraji who then read it to him (pace Murād and as-SAWĀS, who state that it is an autograph); it omits all subsections with riddles in Persian and Turkish (see here below). The work deserves to be studied more thoroughly. I here limit myself to issues related to the muʾammā.
The section of the anthology that is devoted to the
(new) mu’ammā (pp. 4,4-40,13), is divided into four sections preceded by an introduction. The introduction and the first three
sections—one for each category of operations (al-‘amal at-tahsīlī, al-‘amal at-takmilī, al-‘amal at-tashīlī)—rely heavily on an-Nahrawālī and Ibn al-Ḥanbālī, whose treatises al-Bakrājī praises highly. Al-Bakrājī illustrates the various operations by citing one or two
examples drawn from these works, but, as he notes in the introduction, he also knew the
works by Ibn al-Bakḵā′ and Ṣalāḥaddīn al-Kūrānī as well as by others that he does not name, from which he draws mu’ammayāt that he cites in the anthology (ḥātima). In the last
section of the first part (pp. 22,11-40,13) he cites and explains sixty-two mu’ammayāt of his
own composition, arranged in alphabetic order according to the sought name.

The section of the anthology that is devoted to the (new) mu’ammā comprises three
subsections: the first cites and explains forty-one mu’ammayāt in Arabic, the second eleven
mu’ammayāt in Persian, and the third forty-two mu’ammayāt in Ottoman Turkish, ten of
which by al-Bakrājī himself.85 The section of the anthology that is devoted to alġāz
comprises two subsections, one on Arabic and one on Turkish alġāz (the last three by al-
Bakrājī).

As in Ibn al-Ḥanbālī (and al-Kūrānī), here too, the (new) mu’ammā is given more space
and attention. The forty-one Arabic mu’ammayāt cited and explained in the first section of
the anthology are by twenty-five different authors, which, too, shows how popular the
genre had become since an-Nahrawālī’s times. It is also very important that, as becomes
clear from the poems cited in the section of the anthology on alġāz, old-style
mu’ammayāt—logographs that state more or less clearly that a name is sought and lacking a
second, poetic meaning beyond their meaning as riddles—were considered as alġāz. Al-
Bakrājī would classify the mu’ammā of Ibn Bābak on the name Sa’īd which is cited at the
beginning of this paper and which al-Ḥazīrī had expressly labelled thus, as luḡz. Another
very important point is al-Bakrājī’s citation of Persian and Turkish mu’ammayāt as well as
Turkish alġāz. The knowledge of all three languages and the ability to compose in more
than one was not uncommon among Ottoman-era Arab intellectuals. In fact, the spread of
the new mu’ammā from Persian into Turkish and Arabic is a result of the increased contacts
and exchanges among these literatures during the same period.86

85 Al-Bakrājī possibly wanted to add a few more mu’ammayāt in Persian, because there are two pages
left blank between the Persian and the Turkish subsection. A page is left blank at the end of the Turkish
subsection as well.

86 Another genre that the Arabs adopted from the Persians in early Ottoman times was the chronogram
(ta’rīḥ), on which see T. Bauer, “Vom Sinn der Zeit: Aus der Geschichte des arabischen Chrono-
gramms”.

Nefeli Papoutsakis
7 – The great eighteenth-century philologist and religious scholar Muḥammad Murtadā az-Zabīḍī (1145-1205/1732-1791), the author of the famous dictionary Tāj al-ʿarūs, penned a now lost Risāla fi ʿuṣūl al-muʿammā.87

8 – Ahmad b. ʿAbdallāḥ al-Barbīr (1160-c.1226/1747-c.1811), who is known as a maqāmāt author, composed a four-folio work entitled Dalāʾīl al-ʿiṣāʾ fi l-ḥājī wa-l-maʿammā wa-l-ʿalīgāz (Proofs of Inimitability: On ʿAḥājī, Muʿammāyat and Alīgāz). A copy of it exists in the Zāhirīyya Library in Damascus (not seen by me).88

9 – The Baghdadi scholar and littérateur Abū l-Faww Muḥammad Amin as-Suwaydī (d. 1246/1830), scion of a renowned scholarly family of Baghdad, wrote a nine-folio Risāla fī l-muʿammayāt, two copies of which survive in the Maktabat al-Awqāf al-ʿĀmma in Baghdad (not seen by me).89

10 – A treatise entitled Jalāʾ ad-dayyāʾī fī l-muʿammayāt wa-l-ʿalīgāz wa-l-ʿaḥājī (Dispelling Darkness: On Muʿammāyat, Alīgāz and ʿAḥājī) by the Syro-Libanese littérateur and scholar Ibrāhīm b. ʿĪsā al-Ḥawrānī (1260-1334/1844-1916) was published in Damascus in 1882 (?) (not seen by me).90

11 – According to Ziriklī (al-ʿAlām, 2:261), Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan al-Ṭawfīq al-Ḥakīm (d. after 1336/1918), a Baghdadi medical doctor who composed treatises on medicinal and scientific topics, also penned al-Ḥulyy al-fayrückiya fī l-muʿammayāt wa-l-ʿalīgāz (Turquoise Ornaments: On Muʿammāyat and Alīgāz), a copy of which survives in Dār al-Kutub in Cairo (Ș87, not seen by me, reference from Ziriklī).

12 – Tāhir al-Jazāʾīrī (1267-1338/1851-1920), a prominent Syrian intellectual and reformer, is the author of Tashīl al-majāż ilā fann al-muʿammā wa-l-ʿalīgāz (Facilitating the Entry into the Art of the Muʿammā and the Alīgāz), the most recent Ottoman-era Arabic treatise on the riddle (published in Damascus in 1303/1886).91 Al-Jazāʾīrī, too, begins with the (new) muʿammā, to which he devotes more attention than to other riddle kinds. In the introduction he gives a definition of it, names al-Yazdī as its originator, mentions the four categories of operations and acknowledges his debt to an-Nahrawānī, “the first author to write about this kind in Arabic”. Al-Jazāʾīrī seems to have ignored the works by Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, al-Kūrānī and al-Bakrājī. The first three of the four sections of the treatise deal with the three categories of muʿammā operations, al-ʿamāl at-takmīlī, al-ʿamal at-tahṣīlī, al-

87 On az-Zabīḍī, see S. Reichmuth, The World of Murtadā al-Zabīḍī; on his Risāla, ibid, 128.
88 On this author, see Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, “al-Barbīr”, EI. On the MS of his work on the muʿammā, see Murād and as-Sawās, Fihris Maḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub az-Zāhirīyya, Adab 1:217-8.
89 On this author, see GAL S2:785; on his Risāla, written in 1238/1822-3, see al-Jabhūrī, Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt, 230.
90 On this author, see Zirkilī, al-ʿAlām, 1:56-7; Kāhīlā, Muʿjam al-muʿallīfīn, 1:50-1; cf. M. Bencheneb, “Lughz”, EI. Sarkis, Muʿjam al-muṭḥūṭāt, 1:803, gives Damascus as the place of the print but omits the year.
91 On al-Jazāʾīrī, see J.H. Escovitz, “‘He was the Muḥammad ʿAbdah of Syria’: A Study of Tāhir al-Jazāʾīrī and His Influence”; D.D. Commins, Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria, Index. Pace Escovitz, 294, the Tashīl was not written for use in schools.
'amal at-tashīlī—in that order. Al-'amal at-tadīlī is mentioned briefly at the end of the third section. Al-Jazāʾirī gives numerous examples for each operation, several of which are of his own composition, while others are drawn from the treatises of an-Nahrawālī and Ibn al-Bakkaʿī and presumably other works that he does not name. In sum, the three sections comprise 133 maʿammayāt by seventeen authors (these include al-Jazāʾirī, Ibn al-Bakkaʿī, five authors cited in an-Nahrawālī, four authors cited in al-Bakraji and six additional authors). Section Three is followed by six lengthy remarks (tanbihāt), three of which concern the muʿammā: (one should not compose too difficult maʿammayāt, so as not to discourage others from engaging in this art; on the possibility of extracting names from texts that have not been composed as maʿammayāt; every littérater worth his name should know and engage in this art, but one should not despise those who ignore it). Two remarks concern complicated chronograms (taʾrīḥ) and dating events in puzzling ways, whereas the last one concerns a Persian work of admonitions that makes extensive use of puns, of which al-Jazāʾirī translates some examples.

The fourth section of the book is devoted to alḡāz and is divided into two subsections: the first is on 'notional riddles' (alḡāz maʿnawiyya) and the second on 'word riddles' (alḡāz lafiyya or ismiyya), which are what I call 'old-style maʿammayāt'. Al-Jazāʾirī remarks that 'notional riddles' refer to the properties of the encoded notion, whereas 'word riddles' refer to the letters of a given word. 'Professional riddles' (alḡāz fanniyya), i.e. grammatical and juridical riddles, fall under the first category. It is further worth noting that several of the examples that al-Jazāʾirī cites in the second subsection are 'mixed riddles'. Finally, the last part of the book (ḥātimā) contains ten 'useful lessons' (fawāʿid) on alḥājī, 'professional riddles', and some other issues traditionally discussed in Arabic works on the riddle.

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92 EI and EI′, Elr (Encyclopedia Iranica) and İA (Islam Ansiklopedisi) have been consulted online. Encyclopaedia entries are not listed in the Bibliography.

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