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

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Abstract

In Timurid times Persian littérateurs devised a new kind of logograph (*mu'ammā*) that differed considerably from the *mu'ammā* as was known in the Arabic tradition. The most salient feature of the new, Persianate *mu'ammā*, 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 *mu'ammā* became very popular with Ottoman Turkish and Arabic littérateurs as well. In fact, to judge by the available evidence, it appears that the new *mu'ammā* 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 *mu'ammā*, which is modelled on earlier Persian treatises. It discusses the growth of the new *mu'ammā* in Arabic, describes the rules applying to it as presented in an-Nahrawālī's treatise, analyses several Arabic *mu'ammayāt* 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 *mu'ammā* in Arabic until the late 19th century.

Key words: Arabic literary riddles – *mu'ammā* – 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 littérateurs and scholars became increasingly popular. The riddle gradually became a favourite pastime in elite gatherings as well as at the various Muslim royal courts.¹ 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. *alġāz*), *mu'ammā* (pl. *mu'ammayāt*) and *uḥjiyya* (pl. *aḥājīṭ*), 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-Ma'ālī al-Ḥazīrī (d. 568/1172) and His *Inimitable Book on Quizzes and Riddles*" (full bibliographical details are given in the Bibliography). On riddle exchanges between littérateurs and scholars in the Mamluk period, see EAD., "The Literary Riddle in the Age of an-Nawāḡī: The Riddles of Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī and Šihābaddīn al-Ḥiġāzī".

meaning the word *luġz* 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 *sarī*):²

وَذِي نُحُولٍ رَاكِعٍ سَاجِدٍ أَعْمَى بَصِيرٍ دَمْعُهُ جَارِي
مُلَازِمِ الْخَمْسِ لِأَوْقَاتِهَا مُجْتَهِدٍ فِي طَاعَةِ الْبَارِي

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).

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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-bārī*), even though *al-bārī* is the sharpener.

Besides being used for ‘riddle’ as well as for ‘encrypted text’ in general, the word *mu‘ammā*, 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 Sa‘īd (metre *munsariḥ*):⁴

يَنْبِسُ عَنْ أَوَّلِ اسْمِهِ حَتَّى ثُمَّ يَثْنِي حُرُوفَهُ يَنْسِي
ثُمَّ يَحْرِفُ لَوْ بَدَأَ بِهَا أَسَدَى يَدًا صُورَةَ اسْمِهِ تَبْنِي
أَرْبَعَةً نَصَفُهَا كَجُمْلَتِهَا فِي الْعَدِّ لَمْ تَنْقُصْ وَلَمْ تَزْيِي
هَذَا وَفِيهِ اسْمُ يَوْمٍ اتَّفَقَتْ مَفَاخِرُ الْعُجْمِ فِيهِ وَالْعَرَبِ
فَأَعْمِلِ الْفِكْرَ فِي تَأْمُلِهِ وَأَرْكَبْ بِهِ كُلَّ مَرْكَبٍ صَعْبٍ

My sweetheart smiles 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.

² Al-IBŠIHĪ, *al-Mustaṭraf*, 2:267; cf. a variant in IBN ḤIJJA, *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-ḤAZĪRĪ, *al-I‘jāz fī l-aḥājī wa-l-alġāz*, MS Mashhad, fol. 22a. The poem is by ‘Abdaṣṣamad b. Bābak (d. 410/1019-20), a poet of the Buyid era. Al-Ḥazīrī expressly labels this riddle a *mu‘ammā*.

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 ‘*ayn*’ 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 ‘*īd*, the Feast of the Sacrifice. Because of its three teeth (*nabras*) the letter *sīn* may be analysed as three letters of the form of *bā’*, *tā’*, *lā’* etc., that is, composed of one *nabra*. Thus, half of the total number of the word’s letters, the *sīn* and the ‘*ayn*’, 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

يا أيها العطار أغرب لنا عن اسم شيء قل في سومك
تبصره بالعين في يقظة كما يرى بالقلب في نومك

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

⁵ So according to al-Ḥazīrī’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 Faḥḥaddīn al-Qinā’ī (d. 708/1309): al-UDFUWĪ, *aṭ-Ṭālī‘ as-sa‘īd*, 400; aṣ-ṢAFADĪ, *al-Wāfi*, 21:280; ID., *A‘yān al-‘aṣr*, 3:481; IBN ḤAJAR AL-‘AṢQALĀNĪ, *ad-Durar al-kāmina*, 3:101; with minor variants cited anonymously in several other sources, e.g., al-IBŠIHĪ, *al-Mustaṭraf*, 2:271; IBN ḤIJJA, *Ḥizānat al-adab*, 4:194; an-NAHRAWĀLĪ, *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 4b; al-MUḤIBBĪ, *Ḥulāṣat al-aṭar*, 2:393.

of *nawmik* ('your sleep') one obtains *kammūn* (the vocalization and the doubling of consonants are ignored).

Finally, *uhjiyya* 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-Ḥarīrī's *al-Maqāma al-Malaṭiyya*, 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 *aḥājī* by later authors. Suffice it to mention one example by al-Ḥarīrī (metre *mujtatt*):⁸

يا من ساء بذكاء في الفضل واري الزناد
ما ذا يُثايلُ قولي جوعٌ أمدُّ بزاد

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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 *uhjiyya* 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 *uhjiyya* is *ṭawāmīr* ('scrolls', sg. *tūmār*). For *ṭawā* (= *ṭawan*) is a synonym of *jū'* ('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 *luġz* and *mu'ammā*. Abū l-Ma'ālī al-Ḥazīrī (d. 568/1172), the author of *Kitāb al-I'jāz fī l-aḥājī wa-l-alġāz* (*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 *mu'ammā* and only notes that 'it mostly relates to the way of writing' (*wa-huwa yakūnu fī l-ḥaṭṭi 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-Ḥazīrī never uses this term to describe notional riddles.⁹ 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 *luġz* and vice versa dub a notional riddle a *mu'ammā*.¹⁰ 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 (*taṣḥīf*), changes in the vocalization (*tahrīf*), inversion (*qalb*, 'aks) and omission of letters (*ḥaḍf*), and computations based on the letters' numerical value (*ḥisāb*), became noticeably more widespread in riddles encoding notions.

⁸ *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, 412.

⁹ On the terms used by al-Ḥazīrī to denote various kinds of riddles, see PAPAOUTSAKIS, "Abū l-Ma'ālī al-Ḥazīrī".

¹⁰ E.g. aṣ-ṢAFADĪ, *al-Wāfi*, 6:169: *anṣadanī min lafẓihī luġzan fī Mas'ūd*; 18:247 *yaṣīfu l-fuqqā'a mu'amman*.

Despite the long tradition of the Arabic literary riddle, a clear distinction between *luğz* and *mu'ammā* 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 *mu'ammā* in Persian and the composition of several specialist treatises setting and describing the rules to be followed in composing and solving *mu'ammayāt* by Persian authors of the fifteenth century, starting with the Timurid historian and littérateur Šarafaddīn al-Yazdī (d. 858/1454).¹¹ Al-Yazdī was probably the first (or one of the first) to describe the rules of this art and the operations involved in solving *mu'ammayāt* in his treatise entitled *Ḥolal-e moʿtarraz* (composed in 832/1428 for his patron Sultan Ibrāhīm b. Šāhrūh).¹² The next great figure to compose treatises expounding the rules and operations of the *mu'ammā* was 'Abdarrahmān Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492),¹³ who was followed by several other writers, a most acclaimed one being the slightly later poet Mīr Ḥusayn al-Mu'ammā'ī (d. 904/1498-9 or 912/1506-7) of Nīsābūr.¹⁴ Another figure that must be mentioned in this context is the great Chaghatay Turkish poet 'Alī Šīr Nawā'ī (844-906/1441-1501), a close companion and adviser of the Timurid Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā of Herat (r. 873-911/1469-1506) and a lifelong friend of Jāmī, who also penned a treatise on the *mu'ammā* 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.¹⁵ Ottoman Turkish and Arabic authors followed suit. Throughout Ottoman times the *mu'ammā* witnessed an extraordinary efflorescence in all three great Islamic literatures.¹⁶ But this was a new, Persianate *mu'ammā*. The rules set by al-Yazdī

11 See C.E. BOSWORTH, "Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī al-Yazdī", *EP*; B. ROSENFELD and E. İHSANOĞLU, *Mathematicians, Astronomers and Other Scholars of Islamic Civilization*, 280 (no. 825).

12 On al-Yazdī's works on the *mu'ammā* (he also composed a *Dastūr-i mo'ammā*), see Sh. ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, *Loğaz und Mo'ammā: 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 *mu'ammā* was Badī'ī at-Tabrīzī (d. 803/1400-1); 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 couplets, on the art of the *mu'ammā*: see Paul LOSENSKY, 'Jāmī 1. Life and Works', *ELr*; ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, *Loğaz und Mo'ammā*, Index; Storey, *Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, 221-3.

14 On Mīr Ḥusayn al-Mu'ammā'ī, see ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, *Loğaz und Mo'ammā*, 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 *mu'ammā* is also found in RÜCKERT's *Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser*, 317-36; Rückert cites, translates and solves several *mu'ammayāt* 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 Anwari-Alhosseyni in his *Loğaz und Mo'ammā*, 120-37.

15 Maria Eva SUBTELNY, "Mīr 'Alī Šīr Nawā'ī", *EP*; EAD., "'Alī Šīr Nawā'ī", *ELr*. 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 *mu'ammā* 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 *mu'ammā* that cannot all be listed here; for an overview, see A.F. BİLKAN, *Türk Edebiyatında Muamma*, and M.A. YEKTA SARAÇ, "Muamma. Türk

and his successors and reproduced in the Ottoman Turkish and Arabic specialist treatises describe a kind of *mu‘ammā* that differs from the ‘old’, Arabic *mu‘ammā* in many respects. In what follows I shall present the new, Persianate *mu‘ammā* in Arabic and the rules applying to it as given in Quṭbaddīn 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.

Mu‘ammā Old and New

The most salient feature of the new *mu‘ammā* 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 *mu‘ammā*. In the relevant Arabic treatises this obvious or surface meaning is termed ‘the poetic meaning’ (*al-ma‘nā š-ši‘rī*) to distinguish it from the meaning of the poem at the riddle level, which is termed ‘the riddle meaning’ (*al-ma‘nā l-mu‘ammā’ī*). As a matter of fact, the Arabic treatises stress that a good *mu‘ammā* 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, *mu‘ammayāt* 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 *mu‘ammayāt* 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 with an obvious and a hidden meaning. According to Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī (1267-1338/1851-1920), the author of *Tashīl al-majāz ilā fann al-mu‘ammā wa-l-alġāz*, the most recent Ottoman-era Arabic treatise on riddles (published 1303/1886), one must always give the solution of a *mu‘ammā* in advance, for otherwise it is impossible to solve it.¹⁷ Even though explicit comments to this effect are absent from the earlier Arabic treatises I have examined, both Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (see here below) and an-Nahrawālī occasionally refer to the evidence (*qarīna*) 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

Edebiyatı”, *İA*. Apart from the study by Anwari-Alhosseyni and the brilliant comments of Losensky in *Welcoming Fighānī*, the Persian *mu‘ammā* seems to have been relatively little studied; see also STOREY, *Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, 218-35; F. RICHARD, “Quelques traités d’énigmes (Mo‘ammā) en persan des XV^e et XVI^e siècles dans les collections de la Bibliothèque Nationale”; G.L. WINDFUHR, “Riddles”, esp. 315-26. A.A. SEYED-GOHRAB’s *Courtly Riddles: Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry* deals exclusively with the Persian *loġaz* (in the sense of ‘notional riddle’).

¹⁷ AL-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *Tashīl*, 4; on al-Jazā’irī 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'ammayāt* 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 murakkab* (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 Raḍiyyaddīn 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.¹⁸ Ibn al-Ḥanbalī composed a *muzdawij* poem (a poem in rhyming couplets) in the metre *wāfir*, which comprises 66 verses and deals with two riddle kinds, the (new) *mu'ammā* and the *uḥjiyya*, as its title indicates: *Kanz man ḥājā wa-ʿammā fī l-aḥājī wa-l-mu'ammā* (The Treasure of Him Who Poses Charades and Logogriphs: On the *Uḥjiyya* 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-Ḥālīdī al-Kaššī as-Samarqandī known as Mullā Šāh, a second-generation disciple of Jāmī who died on his way to Mecca in Aleppo in 945/1538–9.¹⁹ At some later date, an unnamed person requested Ibn al-Ḥanbalī to compose a commentary on the *Kanz man ḥājā*, which he completed in Šaʿbān 965 / May–June 1558 and titled *Ġamz al-ʿayn ilā Kanz al-ʿayn* (Winking With the Eye to the Golden Treasure).²⁰ The first nineteen verses of the poem are introductory, praising God, naming the subject of the work, and commending Jāmī and the dedicatee. 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 *uḥjiyya*. 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

18 GAL 2:368–9, S2:495–6 and Index; aṭ-ṬABBĀḤ, *Iʿlām an-nubalāʾ*, 6:62–72; ZIRIKLĪ, *al-Aʿlām*, 5:302–3; R. BLACKBURN, *Journey to the Sublime Porte*, 44 fn120; al-ĠAZZĪ, *al-Kawākib as-sāʿira*, 3:38–9 and 3:41–2 (a *muʿaraḍa* of his to a poem by an-Nahrawālī); al-ḤAFĀJĪ, *Rayḥānat al-alibbā*, 1:169–73; IBN AL-ʿIMĀD, *Šaḍarāt aḍ-ḍaḥab*, 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: aṭ-ṬABBĀḤ, *Iʿlām an-nubalāʾ*, 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 *Ġamz al-ʿayn* is given in MS Munich, fol. 26b; cf. aṭ-ṬABBĀḤ, *Iʿlām an-nubalāʾ*, 6:70. The *Kanz man ḥājā* was presumably written between 945 and 965.

his sins. Even though Ibn al-Ḥanbalī often expatiates on irrelevant matters, the *Ġamz al-‘ayn*, his extensive commentary on the *Kanz man ḥājā*, is a good introduction to the new *mu‘ammā* (and a useful discussion of the *uḥjiyya*, for that matter) and presents the various operations involved in solving *mu‘ammayāt* systematically, as was customary in Persian treatises following al-Yazdī. In the commentary to each of verses 20-54 Ibn al-Ḥanbalī 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-Ḥanbalī very rarely cites *mu‘ammayāt* by other authors as additional examples for the named operations.²¹

The slightly later treatise *Kanz al-asmā fī fann al-mu‘ammā* (The Treasure of Names: On the Art of the *Mu‘ammā*) by Quṭbaddīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alā’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) *mu‘ammā* only, from the outset. Quṭbaddīn, who without a doubt was a much better poet than Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, very often cites *mu‘ammayāt* 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 *Kanz al-asmā fī fann al-mu‘ammā*

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 *mu‘ammā* in the Arabic tradition.²³

He starts by noting that the *mu‘ammā*, 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 *mu‘ammayāt* (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 Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. ‘Abdalḡaffār (d. 940/1533-4), who used to encourage his pupils to compose *mu‘ammayāt*.²⁴ Quṭbaddīn followed his advice and collected a large number of *mu‘ammayāt*

21 The *Risāla fī l-aḥājī wa-l-alḡāz* mentioned in GAL 2:368 as an additional work by Ibn al-Ḥanbalī is the same as the *Kanz man ḥājā*. From the later treatises available to me, only al-BAKRAJĪ’s *Naṭīja* (see the Appendix, no. 6) mentions the *Ġamz al-‘ayn*.

22 See GAL 2:381-2, S2:223, 514; J.R. BLACKBURN, “al-Nahrawālī”, *EP*; ID., *Journey to the Sublime Porte*, I-XVI.

23 Extensive passages from the introductory part of Quṭbaddīn’s *Treasure* are cited in ‘Abdalḡādir al-BAGDĀDĪ, *Ḥizānat al-adab*, 6:452-6.

24 On Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. ‘Abdalḡaffār al-Mālikī al-Miṣrī, a jurist and mathematician, see GAL 2:125, S2:155, 536; at-TINBUKTĪ, *Nayl al-ibtihāj*, 139-40; al-BAGDĀDĪ, *Hadiyyat al-‘arīfīn*, 1:142; ID., *Īdāḥ 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 965,²⁵ whereas Quṭbaddīn composed his *Treasure* after 974.²⁶ 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 *hamza*—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 (*idā dalla 'alā smin ḥāṣṣin bi-mulāḥazati kawnihī lafẓan*).²⁷ As Quṭbaddīn adds and shows by citing an apposite example (the riddle cited above on *kammūn*), 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-ḥabab*, 2:439-41. Note also the word *Kanz* in both works' titles.

26 974 is the death year of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, 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: *ḥitāmuhu fī mustahallī l-Muḥarrami ṣabīḥati s-Sabti l-mubārak; iḥtītāmuhū iālīṭu l-tāmini mina l-'aqdi l-tānī ba'da ikmālī l-'aqdi l-iālīṭi min sinī l-hijrati š-šarīfa* (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-asmā*, 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 *lafẓ* ('spoken word, vocal sound'), which is implicitly opposed to *ma'nā* ('meaning'), the Arabic pair *lafẓ* and *ma'nā* corresponding to the Saussurian 'signifier' and 'signified'. – For similar definitions and distinctions in the Persian tradition before and after al-Yazdī, see ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, *Loğaz und Mo'ammā*, 70-88. As Anwari-Alhosseyni points out, a clear distinction between *loğaz* and *mo'ammā* was first made in al-Badī'ī and al-Yazdī.

good taste can be used. It is also possible that a poet composes a *mu'ammā* 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-Wawā' ad-Dimašqī (d. between 370/980-1 and 390/1000) from which his friend Yaḥyā al-Lāhijī (unidentified) had extracted two names, and a verse by Ibn al-Fāriḍ (576-632/1181-1235) from which he himself had extracted four names.²⁸ Nevertheless, he adds, most people are unfamiliar with the operations used to solve *mu'ammayāt* and their taste may therefore reject them. One must not follow the opinion of such people, as they are loath to learn things they do not know and only value what they know. On the other hand, there are people who, using these operations, extract names from Quranic passages. Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-Haytamī (909-974/1503-1567), the famed religious scholar of Mecca, disapproved of this and argued with Quṭbaddīn on this matter. Quṭbaddīn mentions the arguments he had adduced to defend the legitimacy of this practice, which to him was comparable to *iqtibās* (integrating Quranic passages in literary texts), and stresses that the *mu'ammā* is not a game (*talā'ub*), as al-Haytamī 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) *mu'ammā* 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-Ḥulal al-muṭarraraz*. 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-Ḥanbalī, who was a great admirer of Jāmī and based his poem and commentary on the latter's treatises, Quṭbaddīn praises especially Mīr Ḥusayn al-Mu'ammā'ī, who in his opinion produced 'licit magic', 'an almost inimitable' treatise (*kataba fīhi risālatan takādu tabluḡu ḥadda l-i'jāz*), and surpassed all other authors on this subject—so much so that Jāmī declared that had he read al-Mu'ammā'ī's treatise he would not have composed his own ones. Quṭbaddīn adds that the number of later Persian authors on the *mu'ammā* 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-Mu'ammā'ī and who had read that work with the poet; a certain Muḥammad 'Iyānī 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-Nīsābūrī (d. 950/1543-4), who had composed a 'superb' commentary on al-Mu'ammā'ī's *risāla* and with whom he read that commentary during his second trip to Egypt in 945.²⁹

²⁸ On this practice as exercised by Persian litterateurs, 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-Mu'ammā'ī (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 *luġz*. 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-Ḥanbalī, an-Nahrawālī 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 *alġāz*. Nevertheless, according to Quṭbaddīn, there were some rare logogriphs 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 (*dawwanūhu wa-rattabūhu wa-bawwabūhu wa-fannanūhu*), 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 *luġz* 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-Fāriḍ fit the definition of the new *mu'ammā*.

³¹ To judge by al-Muḥibbī's remarks on the origins of the (new) *mu'ammā* in his note on the genre in *Ḥulāṣat al-aṭar*, 2:390-3, the issue was much debated. Al-Muḥibbī 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-Muḥibbī 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*, *uḥjiyya* and *luġz*, are Arabic. Al-Muḥibbī 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-Muḥibbī 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 *badī'*. 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-Yutayyim (twenty pieces) and Ibn Mullā Ḥājjī (fourteen pieces): on these authors see below.

Persian, Turkish and Arabic authors adhering to al-Yazdī'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-'amal at-taḥṣīlī* ('productive operation'); *al-'amal at-takmīlī* ('perfecting operation'); and *al-'amal at-taḥlīlī* ('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-'amal 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-'amal at-takmīlī*, which includes three operations. *Al-'amal at-taḥlīlī* 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-'amal at-taḍyīlī* ('accessory operation'), which is just one operation and refers to supererogatory clues concerning the vocalization of the sought word.

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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-Yazdī'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-Yazdī'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.

³³ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 11a; cf., e.g., IBN AL-ḤANBALI, *Ġamz al-'ayn*, 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 *taḥṣīṣ* obviously stands for several other operations.

³⁶ See ANWARI-ALHOSSEINI, *Loḡaz und Mo'ammā*, 137-64, cf. 91-100. – It should be added that, even among the Persian authors who adhere to al-Yazdī'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 SystemA. *al-‘Amal at-Taḥṣīlī* or Productive OperationsA1. *aṭ-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‘īl* (metre: *ṭawīl*)³⁷

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أَيَا سَيِّدًا أَضْحَى لَأَلِ مُحَمَّدٍ مُجِبًّا بَلَغْتَ الْمَجْدَ وَالْعِزَّ وَالْعُلَا
أَعَدُّ ذِكْرَهُمْ لِي وَأَتَتُّدِ إِيَّتِي أَمْرُؤُ سَمَاعِي فِي آلِ الْمَشْفَعِ قَدْ حَلَا

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‘ī*) to (the mention of) the family (*āl*) of him whose intercession will be accepted on Judgment Day is sweet.

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

Qutḥbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Qāsim (metre: *rajaz*)³⁸

لَبِسْتُ ثَوْبَ الْعَيْشِ مَعَهُ بَدَّرِ وَفَى لِي عَهْدُهُ
وَلُبِسِي الْآنَ غَدَا ثَوْبَ سِقَامٍ بَعْدَهُ

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.

³⁷ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 11b; al-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *Tashīl*, 11. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim (d. 971/1563–4) was a Meccan littérateur and friend of an-Nahrawālī: see al-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *al-Durar al-farā’id*, 1:724; al-‘AYDARŪS, *an-Nūr as-sāfir*, 338; IBN AL-‘IMĀD, *Šaḍarāt aḍ-ḍahab*, 10:469; as-SINJĀRĪ, *Manā’ih al-karam*, 3:330.

³⁸ *Kanz al-asmā*, 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-qāf-alif-mīm*), is citation (*tanṣīṣ*) 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 *qāf-alif* (‘the first and last letters of *saqām* after it’ being the *taḥṣīṣ*), yields Qāsim (*qāf-alif-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:

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Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājī on Quṭb (metre: *mujtatt*)³⁹

أُطَلَّتْ فَاقْصِرْ عَتَابَا	يَا لَانِي فِي هَوَا
مُحِبُّهُ عَنْهُ غَابَا	أَمْرَضَتْ قَلْبَ مُحِبِّ
بِهِ تَلَا قَا فُطَابَا	لَكِنَّهُ مَذِيرَاهُ

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 fa-tābā* (‘he gets together (with him) and recovers his health’) can be analysed as *talā qāfa tā bā*, namely, ‘[the letters] *tā*’ and *bā*’ follow [the letter] *qāf*. Placing *tā*’ and *bā*’ after *qāf* yields Quṭb (*qāf-tā-bā*). 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. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on Ishāq (metre: *ḥafīf*)⁴⁰

لَكَفِيلٌ لَخَلْقِهِ بِالْكَفَايَةِ	إِنَّ رَبًّا أَمَدَ أَهْلَ الْعَنَايَةِ
يَقْتَضِي فَضْلَهُ بَغِيرَ نَهَايَةٍ	دَارَ إِحْسَانِهِ إِلَى نَحْوِ قَافٍ

³⁹ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 12a-b; al-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *Tashīl*, 13. Muḥibbaddīn b. Munlā (or Mullā) Ḥājī was a Meccan scholar and littérateur and a friend of an-Nahrawālī (he died before the composition of the *Treasure*): see al-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *al-Durar al-farā’id*, 1:569, 2:479; al-MUḤIBBĪ, *Ḥulāṣat al-āṭār*, 1:464.

⁴⁰ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 12b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 73 (*yaqtafī*).

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.⁴¹

At the riddle level, the verb *dāra* ‘to circulate, go round’ indicates that the word *ihsān* (written *alif-hā'-sīn-alf-sīn*) must be inverted (perfecting operation B3, inversion, *qalb*); ‘without end’ means that the *nūn* at its end must be dropped first (perfective operation B2, elimination, *isqāṭ*). This yields *alif-sīn-hā'-alif* that then ‘reaches’ *qāf*, the letter, yielding *Ishāq* (*alif-sīn-hā'-alif-qāf*).

A3. *at-Tarāduf wa-l-Ištirāk* (Synonymy and Homonymy)

Tarāduf (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 *mā*, ‘water’, and mean *āb*, the Persian word for it, or when you say *laysa*, ‘is not’, and mean the negative particle *mā*. *Ištirāk* (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 *tasmiya*, where the word *Qāf* is a toponym at the surface level but stands for the letter *qāf* in the riddle. Or as in the following example, where the word *qalb* has two different meanings:

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on Šihāb (metre: *ḥafīf*)⁴²

يا سُقَاتِي مِنْ أَطْيَبِ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَنَا ظَامٌ فَوَاصِلُوا كَأَسَانِي
وَأَرْحَمُوا يَأْسًا فَقِيرًا مُعَيَّ قَلْبُهُ هَشٌّ عِنْدَ مَاءِ الْحَيَاةِ

My cupbearers, who serve me from the very best wine, I am thirsty. So keep filling my cup!

And have mercy on a desperate, destitute and distressed man, whose heart cheers up over the water of life!

At the riddle level, *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 *hašša*, ‘it cheers up’ (written *hā'-šīn*), yields *šīn-hā'*; added to (‘next to’, ‘inda) ‘water’ in Persian, *āb* (written *alif-bā'*), this yields Šihāb (*šīn-hā'-alif-bā'*).

⁴¹ Three out of four MSS of the *Treasure* (see Bibliography) have *yaqtaḍī* (*lectio difficilior*); the exception is MS Zāhiriyya no. 4094, fol. 6a, which reads *yaqtafi*, as does al-Bakrajī.

⁴² *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 13b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 73; al-JAZĀ'IRĪ, *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 (*dūbayt*)⁴³

في ذا الحمام قِيمٌ حَمَامِي ثاني الأغصانِ واحدُ الآرامِ
كلما يسيلُ جسمُهُ من تَرْفٍ ما أَلُفَ ذا الإنسانَ في الحمامِ

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 *ḥammām* (‘this person in the hammam’), whose water, *mā*[], 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 *ḥammām*) yields Ḥusām (*ḥā'-sīn-alif-mīm*).

Nūraddīn al-'Usaylī on Ḥusām (metre: *ramal*)⁴⁴

إِنَّ حَسَنًا لَكَ لَا حُدَّ / دَلَّهْ يَا ذَا الشَّائِلِ
صَيَّرَ الْعَاقِلَ مُجْنَوً / نَأْكَذَا الْمَجْنُونَ عَاقِلُ

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

⁴³ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 14a; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 12; al-JAZĀ'IRĪ, *Tashīl*, 19.

⁴⁴ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 14b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 13; al-JAZĀ'IRĪ, *Tashīl*, 19. On Nūraddīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-'Usaylī (d. ca. 994/1585-6), an Egyptian scholar and littérateur, see al-ĠAZZĪ, *al-Kawākib as-sā'ira* 3:161-2; IBN AL-'IMĀD, *Šaḡarāt aḍ-ḍahab* 10:637-8; al-ḤAFĀJĪ, *Rayḥanat al-alibbā*, 2:197-207.

render the sane insane’ means to detract ‘*aql* ‘intelligence’ (written ‘*ayn-qāf-lām*), from ‘*āqil*, ‘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 *hā’-sīn* produces *Husām* (*hā’-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*.

Qutbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Jamāl (metre: *muḥalla‘ al-basīṭ*)⁴⁵

لا تعجبوا من نحول جسمي حين جفائي الذي أحبه
فمن يقاسي الذي أقاسي لو أنه الطود ذاب قلبه

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 *tawd*, ‘mountain’, Qutbaddīn 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, *mā* [ʔ] (written *mīm-alif*). Substituting *bā’* 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 *hā’*, or even making *sīn* into three letters with a single *nabra* (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-*, *miṭl*, etc., meaning ‘similar to’ such and such a word. This is termed *taṣḥīf waḍ‘ī* (‘conventional(?) *taṣḥīf*’).

Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭayr al-Yamanī on ‘Umar (metre: *ḥafīf*)⁴⁶

فاتن الطرف فاتر قد رمانى ببندقة
غَرَّ من غير حلية كيف لو جا بمنطقه

⁴⁵ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 14b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 13.

⁴⁶ Unidentified author, a contemporary and friend of an-Nahrawālī (*ṣāhibunā*): *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 16a; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 14; al-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *Tashīl*, 23. Al-Bakrajī and al-Jazā’irī read *fātīru ṭ-ṭarfī fātīnun*.

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!

Ġarra, ‘he allured’ (written *gayn-rā*) *min gayri ḥilyatin*, ‘without any ornaments’, means to delete the dot of *gayn*, which yields ‘*ayn-rā*’. Because of its shape, the letter *mīm* is often likened to a belt, *minṭaqa* (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-basīl*)⁴⁷

القَدُّ والرْدُفُ من حَبِيبِي عُصْنٌ تَنْتِي عَلَى كَثِيبِ

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

Because of its shape, the letter *ḥā*’ 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 *kaṭīb*. The word *kaṭīb*, ‘hillock’, is analysed as consisting of two words (operation C2, analysis), the preposition *ka-*, ‘like’, and the grapheme *ṭīb*, meaning ‘what resembles (in writing) *ṭīb*’, i.e. the miswriting of the word segment *ṭīb* (written *ṭā-yā-bā*’), namely, *bīb* (written *bā-yā-bā*’). For both *ṭā*’ and *bā*’ consist of a single *nabra* (tooth) but differ in the number and the position of the diacritical dots. Putting *ḥā*’ in front of *bā-yā-bā*’ yields Ḥabīb (*ḥā-bā-yā-bā*’).

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-mu‘arrif* 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 ‘*arrafa*’).

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on ‘Isā (metre: *kāmil*)⁴⁸

سَتَرْتُ حَوَاجِبَهَا بِكَفِّ حَاجِبٍ فَأَنْظُرُ إِلَى الْعَيْنَيْنِ دُونَ حَوَاجِبِ

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, *ištirāk*, homonymy, ‘*ayn* may mean

⁴⁷ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 15a; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 14.

⁴⁸ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 16b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 15.

‘sun’). The word *šams* hints at the letter *sīn*, which is used by astronomers to indicate the sun (*šams*); here the poet means to indicate the letter’s name, the word *sīn* itself. The name ‘*Isā*’ (*‘ayn-yā’-sīn-yā’*) is produced by uniting the words ‘*ayn*’ (*‘ayn-yā’-nūn*) and *sīn* (*sīn-yā’-nūn*), having dropped the *nūns* or ‘eyebrows’ at their end—since due to its shape the letter *nūn* is often likened to an eyebrow (productive operation A7, comparison or metaphor, and perfecting operation B2, elimination).

Raḍiyyaddīn al-Qāzānī on Ṣāliḥ (metre: *ḥafīf*)⁴⁹

عَبْدُكُمْ قَتْلُ عَشَقِكُمْ أَنْكِرُوهُ فَأَجْجِفُوا
ثُمَّ لَمَّا فَنِي بَكُمْ صَحَّ فِيهِ الْمَعْرِفُ

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.

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In legal terminology, *mu‘arrif* 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, *ṣaḥḥa fīhi l-mu‘arrifu* means ‘the witness will give sound testimony concerning him (the slain slave)’, but at the riddle level, it means ‘*alif-lām* [must be inserted] in *ṣaḥḥa* (written *ṣād-hā’*)’ (perfective operation B1, *ta’līf*, composition). Inserting *alif-lām* between the letters *ṣād* and *hā’* yields Ṣāliḥ (*ṣād-alif-lām-hā’*).

A7. *at-Tašbīḥ* or *al-Istī‘āra* (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 *alif* may be hinted at by words such as *sarw* (‘cypress’), *naḥl* (‘date palm’), *rumḥ* (‘spear’), *qanā* (‘shaft’), *qadd* (‘stature’), *aṣā* (‘stick’), *šam‘a* (‘candle’), etc. The words for mouth (*fam*, *mabsim*), belt (*minṭaqa*), anklet (*ḥalḥāl*), etc., may stand for *mīm* (because of its round shape); ‘ear lock’ (*ṣudḡ*) may stand for *wāw* or *ḥa’*; ‘polo stick’ (*ṣawlaḡjān*) or ‘stature’ (*qadd*) may stand for *lām*, etc.

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on Masīḥ (metre: *muḥalla‘ al-basīṭ*)⁵⁰

أَفْدِي الَّذِي حَبَّه بَقْلِي وَمُهِجَتِي رَاسِخٌ وَرَاسِي
مَبْسُومُهُ مَطْلَبِي وَصَدَغٌ شَيْبَ فَوْدِي بِهِ وَرَاسِي

⁴⁹ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 17a. On Raḍiyyaddīn al-Qāzānī (d. 990/1582), a Meccan scholar and littérateur contemporary of an-Nahrawālī, see al-‘AYDARŪS, *an-Nūr as-sāfir*, 505.

⁵⁰ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 17b-18a; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 15-6; al-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *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-Jazā’irī have *fu’ādī*, 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 *ḥāʾ*, 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-yāʾ*’ (the operations involved are C3 *tarkīb*, synthesis, and C2 *taḥlīl*, analysis). Adding this segment (*sīn-yāʾ-ḥāʾ*) to *mīm* yields *Masīḥ* (*mīm-sīn-yāʾ-ḥāʾ*).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on Maḥmūd (metre: *ṭawīl*)⁵¹

غزالٌ رشيق القَدِّ باللحظ يرشق جميل المحيّا بالبهاء مطوّق
مليحٌ له ودٌّ ولي منه قد غدت مُنِيطقة في خَصْرِهِ الرخص تنطّق

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 *malīḥun lahū wuddun wa-lī minhu* means that *wudd*, ‘love’ (written *wāw-dāl*), must be added to (*lahū*, ‘to him’), and *lī* (written *lām-yāʾ*), must be dropped from (*minhu*, ‘from him’), the word *malīḥ* (written *mīm-lām-yāʾ-ḥāʾ*). Dropping *lām-yāʾ* from *mīm-lām-yāʾ-ḥāʾ* yields *mīm-ḥāʾ*; adding *wāw-dāl* to *mīm-ḥāʾ* yields *mīm-ḥāʾ-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-ḥāʾ-mīm-wāw-dāl*). Note the many witty *jināses* (*raṣīq—yarṣuqū*, *munayṭiqa—tunaṭṭaqū*, *ḥaṣr—raḥṣ*).

A8. *al-ʿAmal 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: *ṭawīl*)⁵²

يقول عدولي الشمسُ مَن تُحِبُّهُ أعزُّ وجودًا وهو في ذاك يَجْهَلُ
أرى وجهه من أهواه في العام مرّةً وما قاله في كلّ يوم محصّلُ

⁵¹ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 18a; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 74 (*bi-l-jamālī muṭawwaqū*); al-JAZĀʾIRĪ, *Tashīl*, 27.

⁵² *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 18b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 16; al-JAZĀʾIRĪ, *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 Qutbaddīn plays with the meanings of *a'azz*. The censurer refers to the preciousness of the sun, while the lover supposedly understands the word to refer to its ‘deariness’, 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-‘ām* 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. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on ‘Uṭmān (metre: *munsariḥ*)⁵³

يا من عن الراح بات في شغلٍ حتى أكنست حمرةً من الخجلِ
إشربُ ففصلُ الربيع جاء وقد قارنت الشمسُ أولَ الحملِ

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 ‘*ayn*, its synonym (operation A3, *tarāduf*, synonymy), which also means the letter ‘*ayn* (operation A2, *tasmiya*, naming). ‘The beginning of the Ram’ (*awwal al-ḥamal*) is its first letter (operation C1, *intiqād*, selection), i.e. *ḥa*’, whose numerical value is eight, *tamān*^m, written *tā’-mīm-alif-nūn*. ‘Joined to’ ‘*ayn*, this yields ‘Uṭmān (*‘ayn-tā’-mīm-alif-nūn*).

B. *al-‘Amal at-Takmīlī* or Perfecting Operations

B1. *at-Ta’līf* (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 (*ta’līf ittīṣālī*) or insert it into it (*ta’līf imtizājī*).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on *šarāb* / wine (metre: *kāmīl*)⁵⁴

⁵³ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 18b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 17; al-JAZĀ’IRĪ, *Tashīl*, 31.

⁵⁴ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 19b.

أَكْرَمَ بِهِ مِنْ صَالِحٍ مَتَنَسِّكٍ أَبَدًا تَرَاهُ مُعَظَّمًا بَيْنَ الْوَرَى
بَشْرًا يَجْرُ إِلَى السَّجُودِ لِرَبِّهِ فَتَرَى أَسْرَةً وَجْهَهُ فَوْقَ الثَّرَى

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 *ta'lif ittiṣālī*. The face (*wajh*) of a word is its first letter (facilitating operation C1, *intiqād*). Here the face refers to the word *bišran* ('joyfully, with joy'), written *bā'-šīn-rā'-alif*. *Bā'* touches the soil, i.e. it must be placed at the very end of the word, thus yielding *šarāb* (*šīn-rā'-alif-bā'*). This is because, in the new *mu'ammā*, 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*).

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Qutbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Ja'far (metre: *ṭawīl*)⁵⁵

مَا لَهُ مِنْ نَهَايَةٍ فَعَفْوِكَ فِيهِ مَا لَهُ قَطٌّ حَدٌّ إِذَا كَانَ جُرْمِي

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

This is an example of *ta'lif imtizājī*. *Jurm*, 'crime, wrongdoing' (*jīm-rā'-mīm*), 'without limit' means dropping the letter *mīm* and retaining *jīm-rā'*. Likewise, 'afw, 'forgiveness' (*ayn-fā'-wāw*), 'without extremity / end' means dropping the *wāw* and retaining 'ayn-fā'. Inserting 'ayn-fā' between *jīm* and *rā'* ('afwuka fīhi, '<your> afw [without end] in it') yields Ja'far (*jīm-ayn-fā'-rā'*). 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'), *ḥafā'* ('hiding'), *ḡurūb* ('setting'), *maḥw* ('effacement'), *zawāl* ('disappearance'), *iḍmār* ('concealing'), *ṭarḥ* ('casting away'), etc.

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on Jawhar (metre: *wāfir*)⁵⁶

مَلِيحٌ زَادَ هِجْرَانًا وَمُطْلًا وَقَلْبِي لَا يُطِيقُ الصَّبْرَ عَنْهُ
وَقَدْ أَسْقَطْتُ وَدِّي مِنْ وَجُودِي لِهَجْرٍ قُتِّتَ الْأَحْشَاءُ مِنْهُ

⁵⁵ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 19b; al-JAZĀ'IRI, *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 wujūdī* (‘I have discarded love from my existence’) means to drop *wāw*, *dāl* and *yā’*, the letters of the word *wuddī*, from the word *wujūdī* (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’.

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājī on *imām* (metre: *basī*)⁵⁷

يا عُصْنُ دَغْنِي مِنَ التَّسْوِيفِ وَالْعِلَلِ مَا دَامَ صَحَّ وَدَادِي فَيْكَ يَا أَمَلِي

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 (*ḡuṣn*) stands for *alif* (operation A7, comparison or metaphor), the first letter of the sought word. *Ṣaḥḥa* means ‘to be sound, healthy’. Hence, *mā dāma ṣaḥḥa* 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

Quṭbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Aḥmad (metre: *wāfir*)⁵⁹

لَنَا إِنْ دَارَتْ الْكَأْسُ الْعَقَاوُ بِأَطْرَافِ الرِّمَاحِ دَمٌ يَدُورُ

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‘d* (partial inversion, e.g. *jīm-bā’-dāl* becomes *jīm-dāl-bā’*). Most of the examples given by Quṭbaddīn exemplify *qalb al-kull*.

⁵⁹ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 20b-21a.

At the riddle level, *aṭrāf ar-rimāḥ* ‘the extremities of the spears’ means the very first and last letters of *ar-rimāḥ*, namely the letters *alif* and *ḥā*’ (facilitating operation C1, *intiqād*). By inverting (*yadūru*) and adding the letters of the word *dam* (*dāl-mīm*) to *alif* and *ḥā*’, one forms the word Aḥmad (*alif-ḥā*’-*mīm-dāl*) (perfecting operation B1, *ta’līf*, composition).

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on Rustam (metre: *mujtatt*)⁶⁰

كَتَمْتُ سِرِّي إِلَّا عَمَّنْ يَوْضِلِي تَكْرُمُ
وَكَيْفَ لَا وَهُوَ سِرٌّ بِالْقَلْبِ وَضَلِي بِهِ تَمُّ

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

How could it be otherwise? The secret is in my heart and makes my bond complete.

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At the riddle level, *bi-l-qalb* (‘in the heart’) means ‘by inverting’. Inverting the letters of the word *sirr*, ‘secret’ (*sīn-rā*’) and adding them to the letters of the word *tamm*, ‘it becomes complete’ (*tā*’-*mīm*), yields Rustam (*rā*’-*sīn-tā*’-*mīm*).

C. *al-‘Amal 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 core, 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-ṭaraṣān*, *al-janāḥān*, *qiṣr*), etc.

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

يَا وَاحِدًا لَيْسَ لَهُ أَوَّلُ مَنْ فِيكَ يَفْتَنِي مَا لَهُ آخِرُ

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

Wāḥid, ‘one, unique’ (written *wāw-alif-ḥā*’-*dāl*), ‘without beginning’, becomes *alif-ḥā*’-*dāl*. ‘You’ in ‘in You’ (*fīka*) is ‘the Unique One, who has no beginning’, i.e. *alif-ḥā*’-*dāl*. At the riddle level, *man yafnā fīka mā lahū āḥirū* (‘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-ḥā’-dāl*. This yields Aḥmad (*alif-ḥā’-mīm-dāl*).

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

وروض إنيس جنيث منه وردًا خفيّا بكلّ بشرٍ
وراح تّمّاه ينادي زال نقابي ففاح نشري

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-ḥa*, i.e. ‘after (the letter) *ḥā*’ (the operations involved are C3, synthesis, and C2, analysis). Dropping the first letter (*zāla niqābī*, ‘my cover is gone’) of *nammāmuḥū* (*nūn-mīm-alif-mīm-hā*) and putting what remains ‘after *ḥā*’ yields *ḥammāma* (*ḥā’-mīm-alif-mīm-hā*). 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 *ṣorba*, a Turkish loanword meaning ‘soup’ (metre: *sarī*)⁶³

كم قلتُ للآئم إذ لآمني في قمرٍ قلبي له منزلُ
شرحُ غرامي ما له آخرُ وحُبّه ليس له أولُ

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 *ḥā*’ at the end of the word *ṣarḥ*, ‘explaining’ (*ṣīn-rā’-ḥā*), and the *ḥā*’ at the beginning of *ḥubbuhū*, ‘the love of him’ (*ḥā’-bā’-hā*) and uniting the two remaining segments yields *ṣorba* (*ṣīn-rā’-bā’-hā*).

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.

⁶² *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 22b.

⁶³ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 23a-b; IBN AL-ḤANBALI, *Ġamz al-‘ayn*, MS Munich, 10b. On Abū Bakr (b. Sālim) al-Qunāwī, a Meccan littérateur contemporary of an-Nahrawālī, see al-Jazīrī, *al-Durar al-farā‘id*, 1:211-2.

Qutbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Nūr (metre: *wāfir*)⁶⁴

وَلَا تَجْزَعْ لِدَهْرِكَ وَهُوَ قَاسٍ فَإِنَّ الدَّهْرَ عَقْبَاهُ يَلِيْنُ

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

At the riddle level, *‘uqbāhū*, 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*’, i.e. *nūn-wāw* (vowels are lengthened in rhyme position, so that *nū* may be written out as *nūn-wāw*). Putting *rā* after *nūn-wāw* yields Nūr (*nūn-wāw-rā*).

Qutbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Nāṣir (metre: *tawīl*)⁶⁵

صَبْرُنَا فَلَمَّا أَنْ رَأَى الصَّبْرُ بَأْسَنَا تَأَخَّرَ عَتَا وَهُوَ مُنْقَطِعُ الْقَلْبِ

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

‘Broken-hearted’ *ṣabr*, ‘patience’, is *ṣād-bā-rā* without *bā*, its ‘heart’ or middle letter, namely *ṣād-rā*. At the riddle level *ta’aḥḥara* ‘*annā* (‘it fell behind us’) is analysed as *ta’aḥḥara* ‘*an nā*, ‘falls behind (i.e. must be put behind) *nā* (*nūn-alif*)’. *Ṣād-rā* placed after *nūn-alif* yields Nāṣir (*nūn-alif-ṣād-rā*).

Muḥibbaddīn b. Mullā Ḥājjī on Mājid (metre: *munsariḥ*)⁶⁶

يَا تَارِكِي فِي هَوَاهُ ذَا قَلْقٍ كَرِيشَةٍ بِالْعَرَاءِ مُنْبُوذَةٍ
لَا أَخْذِيهِ مُهْجَتِي وَكَمْ جَلْدٌ أَحْشَاءَ مِثْلِي عَلَيْهِ مَأْخُوذَةٍ

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 *aḥṣāhu* (‘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’ (*ma’ḥūḍah*), 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 *mu‘ammā*, *alayhi* means ‘on top of it’, that is, ‘in front of it’. Analysing *ma’ḥūḍah* as

⁶⁴ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 24a; al-JAZĀ’IRI, *Tashīl*, 38.

⁶⁵ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 24a; al-JAZĀ’IRI, *Tashīl*, 38.

⁶⁶ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 24b.

two words, *mā*, *mīm-alif* (*hamza* is not taken into account), and *hūdah*, *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*). Qutbaddīn praises the poet for using the word *māhūdah* twice in the clues and comments that this is very subtle (*huwa fī gāyati l-luṭfi*).

C3. *at-Tarkīb* (Synthesis)

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

مُعْتَقَةٌ كَشَمْسٍ فِي هَلَالٍ نَجُومٌ حَبَابُهَا يَحْكِي الْعُقُودَا
خُذْ شَمْسًا وَدَعْ لَا تَسْتَفِذْ مَع شَرَابٍ عَتِيقِهِمْ فَرَحًا جَدِيدَا

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!

Šams in the second verse stands for ‘*ayn*, its synonym (operation A3, *tarāduf*), which hints at the letter ‘*ayn*. By ‘leave ‘no!’’ Qutbaddīn hints at its opposite, namely *ī*, ‘yea’ (written *alif-yā*), meaning ‘take ‘*ayn* and take *alif-yā*’, ‘*ayn-alif-yā*’ being the first three letters of the sought name. Applying the facilitating operations of *tarkīb* and *taḥlīl*, the phrase *šarābi ‘atīqihim* (‘their old wine’) should be read as *ša- rābi‘a tīqihim*. This indicates two things: firstly, that ‘*šin* is the fourth [letter]’ of the sought name (*š- rābi‘*); and, secondly, read together with the word *hūd* that stands at the beginning of the verse and ignoring the *šin*, i.e. read as *hūd rābi‘a tīqihim*, it means ‘take the fourth [letter] of the segment *tīqihim* (*tā‘-yā‘-qāf-hā‘-mīm*), which is a *hā‘*, the last letter of the name ‘Ā’iṣa (‘*ayn-alif-yā‘-šin-hā‘*).

Qutbaddīn an-Nahrawālī on Ḥalīl (metre: *mujtatt*)⁶⁸

عَشِقْتُ مِنْهُ جَبِينًا مِثْلَ الْهَلَالِ يُلَالِي
وَصَارَ جِسْمِي خِلَالًا مَحَبَّةً فِي هَلَالِي

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 *šāra*, which stands at the beginning of the verse, the phrase *fī hilālī* (‘in my crescent moon’) must be analysed as *fīhi lā lī*, namely *šāra fīhi lā lī*, ‘the *lā* (*lām-alif*) in it becomes *lī* (*lām-yā*)’. The suffix in *fīhi* refers to the word *hilāl* (‘toothpick’). If ‘*lām-alif* in it becomes *lām-yā*’, *hilāl* (*hā‘-lām-alif-lām*) becomes Ḥalīl (*hā‘-lām-yā‘-lām*).

⁶⁷ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 25a; al-JAZĀ’IRI, *Tashīl*, 41.

⁶⁸ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 25a; al-JAZĀ’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 Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Yutayyim on ‘Imād and ‘Ābid (metre: *basīf*)⁶⁹

أقسمت بالشجر فيه الشهد والعسلُ ووردت فوق خدي عَمَّها الخجلُ
ما قلبُ عبدك يا مولاي من حجرٍ حتى تُحْمَلَه ما ليس يُحْتَمَلُ

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!

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At the riddle level, the phrase *mā qalbu ‘abdika* (‘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 ‘*abd*’ (‘*ayn-bā-dāl*’), namely, *mīm-alif* must take the place of *bā*, thus yielding ‘Imād (‘*ayn-mīm-alif-dāl*). If the same is done with *āb* (*alif-bā*), the Persian word for water and a synonym of *mā* in this sense, the name produced is ‘Ābid (‘*ayn-alif-bā-dāl*).

D. *al-‘Amal at-Taḍyīlī* or Accessory Operation

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

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

قد رَمَيْتُمْ عُشَّاقَكُمْ بالتَّجْيِ لِيَرَوْمُوا عَنِ الْغَرَامِ بَدِيلًا
وكسرتم قلوبهم لِيُحْوِلُوا هل رَأَيْتُمْ بِكَسْرِهَا تَحْوِيلًا

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 *ra’aytum* in the last hemistich is redundant. The clues to the solution are given in the phrase *hal bi-kasrihā taḥwīlā*, which must be analysed as *hal bi-kasri hā taḥwī lā*, namely ‘*hal* (*hā-lām*), the *hā*’ being vocalized with *kasra*, encompasses *lā* (*lām-alif*)’. In other words, the subject of *taḥwī* is *hal*, *hā-lām*, about which segment is said that it must encompass *lām-alif*, yielding *hā-lām-alif-lām*. This is how the

⁶⁹ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 25b; al-JAZĀ’IRI, *Tashīl*, 43.

⁷⁰ *Kanz al-asmā*, MS Escorial, fol. 25b; al-BAKRAJĪ, *Natīja*, MS Cairo, 21 (v. 2: *li-yaḥūnū*); al-JAZĀ’IRI, *Tashīl*, 44.

word *hilāl* is written. The *hā* in *bi-kasri-hā* is the letter *hā*’ 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 *mu‘ammā*. 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 Quṭbaddīn 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) *mu‘ammā* or the riddle in general, *dīwāns*, anthologies, as well as other literary works—testify to the great popularity that this genre enjoyed throughout the Ottoman period.⁷¹ It is very significant that, starting with Ibn al-Ḥanbalī’s *Kanz man ḥājā* and *Ġamz al-‘ayn*, specialist treatises on the riddle in general (or on more than one riddle kind, as Ibn al-Ḥanbalī’s works) treat the *mu‘ammā* 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 *mu‘ammayāt* 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 *mu‘ammā* was a genre that attracted elite writers in particular.

⁷¹ To give just a few random examples that could easily be multiplied, apart from the specialist works listed below: see, e.g., al-MUḤIBBĪ, *Nafḥat ar-Rayḥāna*, 1:23-4 (Abū Bakr al-‘Umarī); 1:126 (Muḥammad b. Nūraddīn aš-šāhīr bi-Ibn ad-Darā); 1:150, 157 (‘Abdalḥayy b. Abī Bakr al-ma‘rūf bi-Ṭarrazā r-rayḥān); 1:214 (Ġuṣayn al-bān); 1:215-6 (Ibn aš-Šuġayyir); 1:262-3 (‘Abdalbāqī b. Muġayzil). An important *mu‘ammayāt* author was, e.g., the Damascene poet Ibrāhīm as-Safarjalānī (1055-1112/1645-1700), whose *dīwān* contains thirty-nine pieces, only one of which is cited in *Nafḥat ar-Rayḥāna*, 1:257: see M. KÜÇÜKSARİ, *İbrāhīm es-Sefercelānī*, 241 (as-Safarjalānī’s *mu‘ammayāt* are however often cited in al-Bakrajī and al-Jazā’irī). *Mu‘ammayāt* occur randomly in very diverse literary works, e.g. in Yūsuf al-BADĪT’s *Awj at-taḥarrī* (see below), or Nāṣif al-YĀZIJ’s *Majma‘ al-baḥrayn*, al-Maqāma al-Ḥillīyya, 250-1.

Appendix

1 – The Egyptian littérateur ‘Abdalmu‘īn b. Aḥmad known as Ibn al-Bakkā’ al-Balḥī, who travelled extensively in the Ottoman domains and died in Medina in 1040/1630-1,⁷² authored *aṭ-Ṭarz al-asmā’ alā 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 Darwīš Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭāluwī (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 aṭ-Ṭāluwī 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 Muḥarram 993 (1 Feb. 1585). Ziriklī 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’irī (nos. 6 and 12 below) and in Yūsuf al-Badrī’s (d. 1070/1662) *Awj at-taḥarrī*.⁷⁶

2 – The great Imāmī scholar and littérateur Bahā’addīn al-‘Āmilī (953-1030/1547-1621),⁷⁷ who took a vivid interest in riddles in general, authored a three-folio long *Risāla fī*

72 On Ibn al-Bakkā’ see *GAL* 2:381; ZIRIKLĪ, *al-A‘lām*, 4:155; al-ĠAZZĪ, *Dīwān al-Islām*, 1:347-8; al-BAGDĀDĪ, *Hadiyyat al-‘arīfīn*, 2:467.

73 MSS consulted: Escorial Derenbourg no. 556, fol. 28a-50b (completed on 7 Šawwāl 997 / 19 August 1589); Tehran University Library no. 2864-4, fol. 72a-87b (written 1042/1632); Riyadh, King Sa‘ūd University Library no. 1167 (written 1159/1746). In some MSS the *Ṭarz* is entitled *ar-Risāla al-Mu‘amma’iyya*. – I would like to cordially thank Dr. Shams Anwari-Alhosseyni for kindly sending me a copy of the Tehran MS together with copies of other Arabic MSS in his possession.

74 On aṭ-Ṭāluwī see *GAL* 2:273 and S2:384; ZIRIKLĪ, *al-A‘lām*, 2:338; al-Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a‘yān*, 1:201-21; al-ḤAFĀJĪ, *Rayḥānat al-alibbā*, 1:53-77; al-MUḤIBBĪ, *Ḥulāṣat al-a‘ṭar*, 2:149-55; al-ĠAZZĪ, *Dīwān al-Islām*, 3:230.

75 1. *at-Taḥṣīṣ wa-t-tanṣīṣ* (sic); 2. *at-Taṣbīḥ*; 3. *at-Tarāduf*; 4. *at-Taṣḥīf*; 5. *al-Ḥisāb*; 6. *at-Ta’līf*; 7. *al-Isqāt*; 8. *al-Qalb*; 9. *al-Intiqād*; 10. *at-Tabdīl*.

76 *Awj at-taḥarrī ‘an ḥayyiyyat Abī l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī* is a treatise on al-Ma‘arrī. Ibn al-Bakkā’’s *mu‘ammayāt* are cited by way of an excursus, 109-15; a few sentences from the beginning of Ibn al-Bakkā’’s treatise, 115-6; *mu‘ammayāt* by various authors, including aṭ-Ṭāluwī, 106-109.

77 See D. STEWART, “Bahā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad al-‘Āmilī (1547-1621),” in: J.E. LOWRY and D. STEWART. (eds.), *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography*, 27-48.

'amal al-mu'amayāt wa-l-algāz, a copy of which survives in the Maktabat al-Awqāf al-Āmma in Baghdad (not seen by me).⁷⁸ Two *mu'amayāt* of his are cited in al-Bakrajī (no. 5).

3 – A seven-folio *Risāla fī 'amal al-mu'amayāt* written in 1016/1607-8 by a disciple of one Wahīdaddīn 'Abdarrahmān b. Bākīr survives in the Maktabat al-Awqāf al-Āmma in Baghdad (not seen by me).⁷⁹

4 – Ṣalāhaddīn b. Muḥammad al-Kūrānī (d. after 1049/1639),⁸⁰ an Aleppine littérateur who earned his living as a court secretary and, as his *dīwān* shows, took a vivid interest in the riddle in general, is the author of a twenty-folio treatise entitled *Nūr maṣābiḥ ad-dayājī fī l-mu'ammā wa-l-aḥājī* (The Light of the Nightly Stars: On *Mu'amayāt* and *Aḥājī*), a copy of which survives in the Zāhiriyya Library in Damascus (not seen by me). The treatise, which first deals with the *mu'ammā* and then with the *uḥjiyya*, contains 103 *mu'amayāt* by al-Kūrānī that exemplify the various operations.⁸¹ This treatise is referenced a few times in al-Bakrajī.

5 – The Medinan littérateur Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh 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 *Rikāz ar-rikāz fī l-mu'ammā wa-l-algāz* (Precious Ores of Buried Treasures: On *Mu'amayāt* and *Algāz*).⁸²

6 – The Aleppine littérateur and philologist Qāsim b. Muḥammad al-Bakrajī (1094-1169/1683-1756),⁸³ composed a most interesting and informed treatise cum anthology on riddles, the *Natījat al-ḥijā wa-l-ilgāz fī l-mu'ammā wa-l-aḥājī wa-l-algāz* (The Fruits of Posing Riddles and Making One's Speech Obscure: On *Mu'amayāt*, *Aḥājī* and *Algāz*).⁸⁴ The work is divided into four parts that are preceded by a short introduction explaining the

78 al-JABBŪRĪ, *Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt*, 229. This, however, may be one of the many complicated Arabic prose riddles by al-Āmilī, on which see ANWARI-ALHOSSEYNI, *Loḡaz und Mo'ammā*, Index.

79 al-JABBŪRĪ, *Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt*, 232.

80 See ZIRIKLĪ, *al-A'lām*, 3:207; KAḤḤĀLA, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, 1:642; al-ṬABBĀḤ, *I'lām an-nubalā'*, 6:237-52; al-ḤAFĀJĪ, *Rayḥānat al-alibbā*, 1:281-3; al-MUḤIBBĪ, *Ḥulāṣat al-aṭar*, 2:252-6.

81 On the MS of this work and its contents, see MURĀD and as-SAWĀS, *Fihris Maḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub az-Zāhiriyya*, *Adab*, 2:375-6. Al-Kūrānī's *dīwān* survives in the autograph MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Taymūr Ši'r 246.

82 See *GAL* 2:393 and S2:538; ZIRIKLĪ, *al-A'lām*, 6:240; KAḤḤĀLA, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, 3:455; al-MUḤIBBĪ, *Ḥulāṣat al-aṭar*, 4:28-31; IBN MAS'ŪM, *Sulāfat al-ʿaṣr*, 2:432-5; al-ĠAZZĪ, *Dīwān al-Islām*, 4:58-9; A. KHAN, *The Arabian Poets of Golconda*, 58 and Index. The most famous works by Kibrīt are his history of Medina entitled *al-Maḥāsin at-tamīna fī maḥāsin al-Madīna* and his Istanbul travelogue entitled *Riḥlat aṣ-ṣitā' wa-ṣ-ṣayf* (both edited).

83 See *GAL* 2:287, S2:397 and Index (the date given in S3:342 is wrong); ZIRIKLĪ, *al-A'lām*, 5:183.

84 The work survives in two MSS: Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Taymūr 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 Maḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub az-Zāhiriyya*, *Adab*, 1:329-30, forty-seven folios), was written by a disciple of al-Bakrajī 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 *mu'ammā*.

author's reasons for composing it (the utility of the riddle as a mind-trainer and its entertaining character, pp. 2,1-4,3). The first part is devoted to the (new) *mu'ammā* (pp. 4,4-40,13), the second to the *uḥjiyya* (pp. 40,14-53,17), and the third to *algāz* (pp. 54,1-63,1). The last and longest part (*ḥātima*, pp. 63,2-140,13) is an anthology of riddles by various authors, divided into three sections, one for each riddle kind in the same order (pp. 63,7-94,16; 96,1-102,15; and 103,1-140,13 respectively).

The first part of the work, which 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-taḥṣīlī*, *al-'amal at-takmīlī*, *al-'amal at-taḥṣīlī*)—rely heavily on an-Nahrawālī and Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, whose treatises al-Bakrajī praises highly. Al-Bakrajī 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-Bakkā' 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-Bakrajī himself.⁸⁵ The section of the anthology that is devoted to *algāz* comprises two subsections, one on Arabic and one on Turkish *algāz* (the last three by al-Bakrajī).

As in Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (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 *algāz*, old-style *mu'ammayāt*—logogriphs 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 *algāz*. Al-Bakrajī 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-Bakrajī's citation of Persian and Turkish *mu'ammayāt* as well as Turkish *algāz*. 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-BAKRAJĪ 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 Chronogramms".

7 – The great eighteenth-century philologist and religious scholar Muḥammad Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī (1145-1205/1732-1791), the author of the famous dictionary *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, penned a now lost *Risāla fī uṣūl al-muʿammā*.⁸⁷

8 – Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallaṭīf al-Barbīr (1160-c.1226/1747-c.1811), who is known as a *maqāmāt* author, composed a four-folio work entitled *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz fī l-aḥājī wa-l-muʿammā wa-l-alḡāz* (Proofs of Inimitability: On *Aḥājī*, *Muʿammayāt* and *Alḡāz*). A copy of it exists in the Zāhiriyya Library in Damascus (not seen by me).⁸⁸

9 – The Baghdadi scholar and littérateur Abū l-Fawz Muḥammad Amīn 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-dayājī fī l-muʿammayāt wa-l-alḡāz wa-l-aḥājī* (Dispelling Darkness: On *Muʿammayāt*, *Alḡāz* and *Aḥājī*) 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-Aʿlām*, 2:261), Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan al-Wafāʾī al-Ḥakīm (d. after 1336/1918), a Baghdadi medical doctor who composed treatises on medicinal and scientific topics, also penned *al-Huliyy al-fayrūziyya fī l-muʿammayāt wa-l-alḡāz* (Turquoise Ornaments: On *Muʿammayāt* and *Alḡāz*), a copy of which survives in Dār al-Kutub in Cairo (Š87, not seen by me, reference from Ziriklī).

12 – Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī (1267-1338/1851-1920), a prominent Syrian intellectual and reformer, is the author of *Tashīl al-majāz ilā fann al-muʿammā wa-l-alḡāz* (Facilitating the Entry into the Art of the *Muʿammā* and the *Alḡāz*), the most recent Ottoman-era Arabic treatise on the riddle (published in Damascus in 1303/1886).⁹¹ Al-Jazāʾirī, 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-Nahrawālī, “the first author to write about this kind in Arabic”. Al-Jazāʾirī seems to have ignored the works by Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, al-Kūrānī and al-Bakrajī. The first three of the four sections of the treatise deal with the three categories of *muʿammā* operations, *al-ʿamal at-takmīlī*, *al-ʿamal at-taḥṣīlī*, *al-*

⁸⁷ On az-Zabīdī, see S. REICHMUTH, *The World of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī*; on his *Risāla*, *ibid*, 128.

⁸⁸ On this author, see Jaakko HÄMEEN-ANTTILA, “al-Barbīr”, *EI*³. On the MS of his work on the *muʿammā*, see MURĀD and as-SAWĀS, *Fihris Maḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub az-Zāhiriyya*, *Adab* 1:217-8.

⁸⁹ On this author, see GAL S2:785; on his *Risāla*, written in 1238/1822-3, see al-JABBŪRĪ, *Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt*, 230.

⁹⁰ On this author, see ZIRIKLĪ, *al-Aʿlām*, 1:56-7; KAḤḤĀLA, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifin*, 1:50-1; cf. M. BENCHENEB, “Lughz”, *EI*². SARKĪS, *Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt*, 1:803, gives Damascus as the place of the print but omits the year.

⁹¹ On al-Jazāʾirī, see J.H. ESCOVITZ, “‘He was the Muḥammad ʿAbduh of Syria’: A Study of Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī 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-taḍyīlī* is mentioned briefly at the end of the third section. Al-Jazā’irī 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-Bakkā’ and presumably other works that he does not name. In sum, the three sections comprise 133 *mu‘ammayāt* by seventeen authors (these include al-Jazā’irī, Ibn al-Bakkā’, five authors cited in an-Nahrawālī, four authors cited in al-Bakrajī and six additional authors). Section Three is followed by six lengthy remarks (*tanbīhāt*), three of which concern the *mu‘ammā* (one should not compose too difficult *mu‘ammayāt*, 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 *mu‘ammayāt*; every littérateur worth his name should know and engage in this art, but one should not despise those who ignore it). Two remarks concern complicated chronograms (*ta’rīḥ*) 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-Jazā’irī 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 ma‘nawīyya*) and the second on ‘word riddles’ (*alḡāz lafẓīyya* or *ismiyya*), which are what I call ‘old-style *mu‘ammayāt*’. Al-Jazā’irī 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-Jazā’irī cites in the second subsection are ‘mixed riddles’. Finally, the last part of the book (*ḥātima*) contains ten ‘useful lessons’ (*fawā’id*) on *aḥājī*, ‘professional riddles’, and some other issues traditionally discussed in Arabic works on the riddle.

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⁹² *EI²* and *EI³*, *EIr* (*Encyclopedia Iranica*) and *ĪA* (*İslam Ansiklopedisi*) have been consulted online. Encyclopaedia entries are not listed in the Bibliography.

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