



STANZAIC POETRY

STANZAIC POETRY. Three different forms of stanzaic poetry can be discerned in Persian classical poetry: the *tarji'-band* (or *tarji'*), the *tarkib-band* (or *tarkib*) and the *mosammaṭ*. The *mostazād* might be seen as a related verse form.

A *tarji'-band* consists of several stanzas built up by a number of couplets (*bayt*), each stanza with its own rhyme and followed by an identical recurring couplet similar to a refrain; likewise a *tarkib-band* consists of a number of stanzas built up by couplets, but in this form each stanza is followed by a different couplet; a *mosammaṭ*, on the other hand, has stanzas built up by rhyming hemistichs (*meṣrā'*), rather than couplets, and the last hemistich of each stanza ends in a rhyme different from the one in the preceding hemistichs. This rhyme is then repeated in the last hemistich of each stanza, so that a formal unity is created through the rhyme of each stanza's last hemistich. A *mostazād* is a poem to which an additional phrase in the same meter is added; this phrase is like a supplement and shorter than a hemistich. It is debatable whether this form belongs to stanzaic poetry, though the added phrases give the verses of a *mostazād* a strophic quality. Stanzaic poems have never been more than a small part of the poetry collected in *divāns*, and not every poet has examples of stanzaic poetry. Nonetheless, this genre has never been out of vogue ever since its first appearance in classical poetry. Over the centuries, the genre has developed into a form deemed specifically suitable for elegies and eulogies on religious figureheads. Some specimens of stanzaic poetry, notably the *mosammaṭs* by Manuṣṣehri Dāmḡāni and the *tarkib-band* on the twelve Imams by Moḡtaṣam Kāšāni have found a great measure of



renown. From the end of the 19th century onwards, classical forms of stanzaic poetry were adapted and often used to convey the political messages of modern poets.

Tarji'-band and tarkib-band. Both tarji'-band and tarkib-band may consist of a varying number of stanzas, formed by a number of rhyming couplets. Each stanza has a different rhyme; the same rhyme may, however, occur in more than one stanza. The individual stanzas are followed and interlinked by a separate couplet with an independent rhyme, the so-called *wāseṭa* (linker) or *band-e še'r* (Elwell-Sutton, p. 256). The two hemistichs making up the *wāseṭa* couplet usually rhyme.

The Persian term for the stanza without the *wāseṭa* is *kāna*, the term for the stanza including the *wāseṭa* is *band*, though *band*, confusingly, is sometimes also used to denote the *wāseṭa* (Schoeler, p. 261). The *wāseṭa* and the rhyme that varies per stanza form the main characteristics of the tarji'-band and the tarkib-band. The *wāseṭa* is usually clearly marked in printed *divāns* as a separate unit, with the hemistichs forming the *wāseṭa*-couplet presented one above the other, rather than next to each other.

Both in tarji'-bands and tarkib-bands the meter remains the same throughout the poem, and this kind of stanzaic poetry occurs in a wide variety of meters. The length of the stanzas vary and may be of five to twenty-five couplets. Within a given stanzaic poem, the length of individual stanzas may also vary, usually by no more than two couplets, but sometimes by as many as eight (e.g., Hātef, pp. 27-32; Browne, IV, pp. 284-86).

In a tarji'-band, the *wāseṭa* that follows each stanza remains the same throughout the poem like a refrain and may have the same rhyme as the first stanza. Edward G. Browne named this a “return-tie” (Browne, I, p. 39).

A poem is named a tarkib-band if the *wāseṭa* is different for each stanza. Browne (I, p. 40) termed this variant a “composite-tie”. In case of a tarkib-band, one cannot speak of a refrain, since each *wāseṭa* is a new couplet, consisting of two rhyming hemistichs. In some tarkib-bands, the second hemistich of each *wāseṭa* rhymes with the second hemistich of the following *wāseṭa*, so that the *wāseṭa*-couplets form a formal unity in themselves and in this manner can be seen as a kind of refrain (e.g., Kāqāni, pp. 457-81; Moḳtāri, pp. 531-41).



The stanzas of a *tarji'*-band or *tarkib*-band may have either rhyming couplets or rhyming hemistichs. If the couplets out of which the stanza is built up rhyme, the poem may have the appearance of a short *qaṣida* or *ġazal*. Thus two different types of *tarji'*-band can be discerned:

1. aa ba ca da (...) XX; ff gf hf kf (...) XX, etc. [type 1]
2. aa aa aa aa (...) XX; bb bb bb bb (...) XX, etc. [type 2]

And similarly, two types of *tarkib*-band:

1. aa ba ca da (...)FF; gg hg kg lg (...)MM, etc. [type 1]
2. aa aa aa aa (...) BB; cc cc cc cc (...) HH, etc. [type 2]

A third type of *tarkib*-band may be distinguished by the following form:

3. aa ba ca da (...) FF; gg hg kg lg (...) MF, etc. [type 3]

This third type can be found for example in the *divāns* of [Kāqāni Šervāni](#)/Šarvāni (1127-86/99) and 'Oṭmān Moḳtāri (ca. 1075-between 1118-21). In this type of *tarkib*-band, the *wāseṭa* couplets taken together without the surrounding stanzas have a rhyme scheme identical to the *qaṣida* (Kāqāni, pp. 457-81, 490-514, 523-27; Moḳtāri, pp. 531-541, 557-66)

The following form may be distinguished as a fourth type of *tarkib*-band:

4. aa ba ca da (...); gg hg kg lg (...), etc. [type 4];

This fourth type is found, for example, in the *Divān* of Mas'ud-e Sa'd-e Salmān (1046-122), in which mono-rhymed stanzas sharing the same meter and number of verses are grouped without a *wāseṭa*, and thus without an obvious linker (pp. 741-44, 751-56).

In a *divān* the *tarji'*-bands and *tarkib*-bands usually come after the odes (*qaṣida*), sometimes after the lyrics (*ġazal*). Often the stanzaic poems section is entitled *tarji'āt* or *tarkibāt*, whereby both terms may refer to both *tarji'*-bands and *tarkib*-bands. Unlike the stanzaic form *mosammaṭ*, the *tarji'*-band and *tarkib*-band have no Arabic origin or equivalent and appear to be Persian creations on the basis of the *mosammaṭ* (Schoeler, p. 263; Thiesen, p. 235).

The first prosodist to write on *tarji'*-band and *tarkib*-band seems to have been



Šams-al-Din Moḥammad b. Qays (Šams-e Qays) Rāzi, in the sixth chapter of his book on poetics, *al-Moʿjam fi maʿāyir ašʿār al-ʿajam* (comp. after 1217-18 CE), under the heading *tarjiʿ* (pp. 393-400). He describes *tarjiʿ* from the viewpoint of the *qaṣida*:

“*Tarjiʿ* is the division of the *qaṣida* in a number of pieces (*qeṭʿa*), which all have the same meter, but different rhymes. The poets call each piece a *kāna* and in between they insert a separate couplet, and this couplet is named *tarjiʿ-band*. If they want, they make this very same couplet the *tarjiʿ-band* of all the *kānas* (stanzas); they may also decide to compose a separate *tarjiʿ-band* for each stanza” (Šams-e Qeys, pp. 393-94).

Šams-e Qeys does not use the term *tarkib-band* to distinguish between the use of the same or a different couplet after each stanza. Moreover, he uses the term *tarjiʿ-band* for the separate couplet (either repeated after each stanza or not) rather than for this type of poem as a whole. The example given by Šams-e Qeys is introduced as a *qaṣida-ye tarjiʿ*, as in case of the *mosammaʿ* (see below). Thus, neither the *tarjiʿ-band* nor the *tarkib-band* is regarded as a separate genre, but rather as a poetical device to be applied to *qaṣidas*.

The first extant examples of *tarjiʿ*-bands can be found in the *Divān* of Farroḳi Sistāni (d. after 422/1031), while the first extant *tarkib*-bands are included in the *Divān* of Qaṭrān Tabrizi (d. after 462/1070; Schoeler, pp. 260-61). Farroḳi has three *tarjiʿ*-bands, the first one consisting of twenty-four stanzas, each containing five couplets and a recurrent one (*wāseṭa*), in total six couplets per stanza. The couplets in the stanza are formed by rhyming hemistichs, as marked in bold in the following example, composed in the meter *hazaj moṭamman sālem* (Farroḳi, pp. 403-13, the fourth stanza):

1. *Delā bāz āy tā bā to ġam-e dīrina begsāram,*
Ḥadiṭ-i az to benyušam našib-i az to bar dāram.

2. *Delā gar man ba-āsāni to-rā ruz-i ba-čang āram,*
Čo jān dāram to-rā zirā ke bito k^vāram-o zāram.

3. *Delā tā to ze man duri, na dar k^vāb-am na bidāram,*
Nešān-e bideli peydāʿst az goftār-o kerdāram.

4. *Delā tā to ze man duri nadānam bar če kerdāram,*
Marā bini čonān bini ke man yak-sāla bimāram



5. *Delā bā to wafā kardam k'azin biš-at nayāzāram*
Biā tā in bahārān-rā be šādi bā to begzāram

Wāseṭa:

Bedin šāyestegi jašn-i bedin bāyestegi ruz-i,
Malek rā dar jahān har ruz jašn-i bād-o nowruz-i.

1. Oh heart, come back so that I can ease my long suffering together with you,
 I will listen to one of your stories, I will reap some benefit from you.

2. Oh heart, if one day I can get you into my hands with ease,
 I will hold you like my soul, for without you I am cast down and sad.

3. Oh heart, as long as you are far away from me, I do not sleep and I am not
 awake,
 The signs of a lost heart are visible from what I say and what I do.

4. Oh heart, as long as you are far away from me, I do not know what I am
 doing,
 Should you see me, you would see me if I were ill for a year.

5. Oh heart, I have been faithful to you and from now on I will not trouble you,
 Come so that I can spend this time of spring happily with you.

Wāseṭa:

Such a worthy feast, such a welcome day,
 May every day be a feast and a New Year's day to the king in the world!

The first ten hemistichs in the stanza have identical rhyme (-āram), and are followed by a couplet (the wāseṭa functioning as a refrain) with two rhyming hemistiches in a different rhyme (-ruz-i), described above as type 2. The following tarji'-band by Farroki (pp. 414-26) follows the same pattern, but the third one by him (pp. 427-32) is of a different type, described above as type 1. Instead of rhyming hemistichs in each stanza, the seven stanzas of this tarji'-band are formed each by nine couplets in mono-rhyme, apart from the first couplet of each stanza, which is in double rhyme, following the pattern of a



qaşıda or ġazal. All three tarji'-bands of Farroki are panegyric poems composed on the occasion of Nowruz.

In contrast to Farroki, in whose *divān* we only find tarji'-bands, Qaṭrān Tabrizi has both tarji'-bands (five), tarkib-bands (five) and mosammaṭs (two) ascribed to him, (Qaṭrān, pp. 410-53). He is the earliest poet of whom tarkib-bands have been preserved (Schoeler, p. 261). The presence of three different forms of stanzaic poetry in his *divān* proves that it had become a fully developed genre in the course of the 11th century.

Just as Farroki has two different kinds of tarji'-bands, Qaṭrān also has two different kinds of tarkib-bands and tarji'-bands: four tarji'-bands and one tarkib-band with stanzas consisting of rhyming hemistichs, that is, double rhyme (type 2) and one tarji'-band and four tarkib-bands consisting of rhyming couplets rather than hemistichs, that is mono-rhyme (type 1). A number of his tarji'-bands and tarkib-bands have stanzas of different lengths, his tarkib-bands more so than the tarji'-bands. Assymmetric stanzas appear to be very common in the stanzaic poetry composed in subsequent centuries.

The following example is the eighth stanza of the second *tarkib-band* in Qaṭrān's *divān*, composed on the occasion of Nowruz for his patron, the Shaddadid amir of Ganja, Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Ali Laškari (r. 1034-49), composed in the meter *ramal-e moṭamman-e maḥḍuf* (Qaṭrān, pp. 413-17).

1. *Ḳosrow-e turān-o sālār-e hama Irān to'ī,*
Ḳosrow-e bornā ke dārad dāneš-e pirān to'ī.

2. *Zinat-e šāhān to'ī, pirāya-ye mirān to'ī,*
Faḳr-e in dōwrān to'ī, tāriḳ-e in mirān to'ī.

3. *Gāh-e šamšir aždahā'ī, pir-e šamširān to'ī,*
Gāh-e tadbir āftābi, pir-e tadbirān to'ī.

4. *Ān ke bestānad bemardi molkat-e Irān to'ī,*
W'ān k'az u ābād gardad 'ālam-e virān to'ī.

5. *Bā tan-e pilān to'ī, bā zahra-ye širān to'ī,*
Az jahāndārān sari, šāh-e jahāngirān to'ī.

Wāseṭa:



*Tā ke begrefti jahāni-rā be yak peykār to,
Tā jahān bāšad beguyand ānče kardi kār to.*

1. You are the king of Turān and the commander of entire Iran,
You are the youthful king who has the wisdom of the old.
2. You are the ornament of kings, you are the jewel of emirs,
You are the pride of this age, you are the history of these emirs.
3. When it is time for the sword, you are a dragon, you are the leader of
swords,
When it is time for planning, you are a sun, you are the leader of planning.
4. You are the one who courageously conquers Iran,
And you are the one by whom the ruined world prospers.
5. You have the strength of elephants, you have the courage of lions,
You lead those who rule the world, you are the king of those who conquer the
world.

The subjects treated in the stanzaic forms tarkib-band and tarji'-band in general do not differ much from the subjects found in a poet's qaṣidas or ḡazals. In Ghaznavid and Saljuq court poetry we thus find many tarji'-bands and tarkib-bands in praise of a patron, often with a few stanzas that seem to function as a prelude, similar to the prologue (*nasib*) of a qaṣida. Nowruz seems to have been a favorite occasion for the composition of a stanzaic poem.

The mystical poet Farid-al-Din 'Attār (d. 1221, q.v.) has one tarji'-band and two tarkib-bands with mystical contents, as other mystical poets, such as [Fakr-al-Din 'Erāqi](#) (d. 1289), who followed him ('Attār, pp. 83-91; 'Erāqi, pp. 109-40).

A distinctive trend in as far as the contents of stanzaic poetry are concerned can be perceived from the later Ghaznavid period onwards. In the *divāns*, the tarkib-band and the tarji'-band appear increasingly as popular forms for the elegy (*marṭia*), composed both for the poet's patrons and for Prophet Moḥammad and his circle. In the *divān* of Mas'ud-e Sa'd-e Salmān (1046-122) we find an elegy in the form of a tarkib-band for one of his patrons, Sultan



Ebrāhim's minister, Abu'l-Roṣd Rašid b. Moḥtāj (Mas'ud-e Sa'd, pp. 751-56; Sharma, 2000, pp. 80-81). The 12th-century poet Kāqāni Šervāni (1127-1186/87) has a total of sixteen tarkib-bands, twelve praise poems and four elegies (Kāqāni, pp. 445-546), one of which is for his son Rašid al-Din (pp. 541-546). 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Jāmi (1414-92) has four tarji'-bands and six tarkib-bands: four of the six tarkib-bands are elegies (Jāmi, pp. 113-24). In *divāns*, elegies in the form of tarkib-band or tarji'-band are often arranged separately in a subcategory *marāṭi* (elegies).

Closely connected to the genre of *marṭia* is *manqabat*, poetry in which the heroic deeds of Moḥammad, Imam 'Ali or Imam Ḥosayn are described and for which the tarkib-band or tarji'-band forms have often been used. K̄vāju Kermāni (1290-ca. 1349) has a tarkib-band on the four rightly-guided caliphs and one on 'Ali, both of type 1 as described above (K̄vāju Kermāni pp. 128-35). Salmān Sāvaji (1309?-76) has a tarkib-band in praise of Moḥammad and one in praise of 'Ali, also both of type 1 (Salmān Sāvaji, pp. 317-27). Ahli Širāzi (1454?-1535) has a tarkib-band (of type 1) in praise of the twelve Imams (Ahli Širāzi, pp. 519-23).

The tarkib-band on the martyrdom of Imam Ḥosayn in Karbalā by Moḥtašam Kāšāni (1528/29-1588) forms the culmination of this development (Moḥtašam Kāšāni, pp. 280-85; see Losensky). This elegy is often described and introduced as a *davāzdah-band*, as it contains twelve *bands* or stanzas. The first stanza opens with the verse *Bāz in če šureši'st ke dar kaḷq-e 'alam ast / Bāz in če nawḥa-o če 'azā-o če mātam ast*, translated by Losensky as "What is this tumult now among the world's creatures? / What now is this wailing, this mourning, this lamentation?" (Losensky). Edward G. Browne (IV, pp. 173-77), who described this elegy as "extraordinarily simple and direct," translated three (4th-6th) of the stanzas. Each of these stanzas consists of seven couplets in mono-rhyme and one non-repetitive couplet with double rhyme forming the *wāseṭa*. It is therefore called haft-band, which is slightly confusing, since the term band denoted the whole stanza including the *wāseṭa*, not the number of couplets per stanza. On the basis of the popularity of this specific tarkib-band, the so-called haft-band form became common for *marṭias* (Thiesen, p. 235). This is slightly confusing, as the term band denoted the whole stanza including the *wāseṭa*.

A later famous stanzaic poem is a tarji'-band on divine unity by the 18th-century poet Hātef Eṣfahāni (d. 1783), translated in an early stage into French and German (Hātef Eṣfahāni, pp. 27-32; for the full text with Eng. tr., see



Browne, IV, pp. 284-97, see also II, p. 40).

From the late 19th century onwards, a number of poets who were also politically active used variant forms of stanzaic poetry to express their ideas. [Moḥammad-Rezā Mirzāda ‘Ešqi](#) (1894-1923) composed a type of tarji‘-band of forty stanzas, entitled “Jomhuri-nāma,” in the months before he was assassinated (‘Ešqi, pp. 286-94).

This tarji‘-band is a satire on the idea of a republican regime for Iran. It is built up by stanzas of six couplets and a hemistich (*Dariḡ az rāh-e dur-o ranj-e besyār*), which is repeated after each stanza. The same hemistich forms the second hemistich of the opening couplet of the poem: *Če dellathā kešid in mellat-e zār / Dariḡ az rāh-e dur-o ranj-e besyār* (What misery this lamentable nation suffered / Alas for the distant road and the load of pain). After this couplet the first stanza starts, consisting of four rhyming hemistichs (two couplets) in a rhyme that changes per stanza, followed by two rhyming hemistichs (one couplet) with the rhyme *-ār* and the refrain-hemistich cited above. Schematically the stanzas have the rhyme-scheme x x x x a a a. This type of tarji‘-band does not correspond with the types found in classical poetry and may perhaps be regarded as a hybrid form of stanzaic poetry, one of the examples of poetry heralding an age of poetical experimenting leading up to modern poetry (*šer-e now*).

Mosammaṭ. The *mosammaṭ* is the third main type of stanzaic poetry in Persian. The first poet with a sizeable quantity of *mosammaṭs* is Manučehri Dāmḡāni (d. after 432/1040), but remnants of *mosammaṭs* are also ascribed to Rudaki (d. 329/941) and Kesā‘i Marvazi (d. after 394/1004), who lived a century before Manučehri (Elwell-Sutton, p. 258; Schoeler, p. 258).

A *mosammaṭ* is composed of a number of stanzas consisting of three to ten rhyming hemistichs and one hemistich in a different rhyme; the rhyme of the last hemistich of the first stanza is repeated in the last one of each stanza, so that the stanzas are formally unified through this recurrent rhyme. As in the tarji‘-band and tarkib-band, the meter is the same in all the stanzas. The term *mosammaṭ* is usually explained as “the stringing of pearls on a necklace”; or alternatively as “the tying to the saddle-straps” (Dehḡodā, s.v.).

The *mosammaṭ* is classified according to the length of its stanzas as *morabba‘* (composed of four [i.e., hemistichs]), *moḡammas* (composed of five), *mosaddas* (composed of six), *mosabba‘* (composed of seven), *moṭamman* (composed of



eight), *motassa'* (composed of nine), or *mo'aššar* (composed of ten; Elwell-Sutton, pp. 257-58). In contrast to the tarkib-band and tarji'-band, there are no variations in the length of the stanza within a mosammaṭ: every stanza has the same length throughout the poem. In a schematic representation, the mosammaṭ may then have the following forms:

1. a a a – b, c c c – b, d d d – b etc. (morabba')
2. a a a a – b, c c c c – b, d d d d – b etc. (moḳammas)
3. a a a a a – b, c c c c c – b, d d d d d – b etc. (mosaddas)
4. a a a a a a – b, c c c c c c – b, d d d d d d – b etc. (mosabba')
5. a a a a a a a – b, c c c c c c c – b, d d d d d d d – b etc (moṭamman)
6. a a a a a a a a – b, c c c c c c c c – b, d d d d d d d d – b etc (motassa')
7. a a a a a a a a a – b, c c c c c c c c c – b, d d d d d d d d d – b etc (mo'aššar)

The moḳammas and mosaddas, and to a lesser extent the morabba', are most common. The rhyme scheme of the moḳammas and the mosaddas may also be respectively a a a b b and a a a a b b. Other rhyme schemes have been mentioned by Elwell-Sutton, but they are rare (Elwell-Sutton, pp. 257-58). Elwell-Sutton introduces the mosammaṭ by stating that “the couplet basis is abandoned” (Elwell-Sutton, p. 257). In the morabba', mosaddas, moṭamman and mo'aššar forms of the mosammaṭ, however, the stanzas can be perceived as to consist of respectively two, three four, and five couplets, with the rhyme changing in the last or penultimate hemistich of each stanza; for the moḳammas, mosabba' and motassa' one might perceive each stanza to consist of respectively two, three, and four couplets and one hemistich. In collected poetical works (*divān*), mosammaṭs are always presented in a way that the couplet seems to be the basic unit of the stanza. If a poet has both mosammaṭs, tarji'-bands and tarkib-bands in his divān, the mosammaṭs usually come last and the tarji'-bands first.

Moḥammad Rāduyāni, in his *Tarjomān al-balāḡa* (comp. between 1088-1114 CE), the earliest extant Persian book on rhetoric, describes mosammaṭ and mentions one of Manučehri's as an example (pp. 104-5). It is noteworthy, however, that the descriptions by Rāduyāni and in other early works on prosody focus on a slightly different, though related, poetic device for which



the same term *mosammaṭ* is used. These descriptions throw some light upon the perception and the development of the *mosammaṭ* in Persian poetry.

Rāduyāni starts his description of *mosammaṭ* by presenting a couplet of *Kesā'i*. This couplet, according to Rāduyāni, is an example of a *qaṣida* in which the poet has divided every couplet into four parts. The first three parts of the couplet have the same rhyme, called *saj'* by Raduyāni, while the fourth part of each one shares its rhyme (*qāfīa*) with the fourth part of each following couplet.

The couplet of *Kesā'i* can be understood as a couplet of a *qaṣida*, but also as a stanza of a *mosammaṭ* in the *morabba'* format, hence the appearance of this couplet under the heading “*mosammaṭ*,” which, according to Rāduyāni, is “grouping” (*goruh goruh kardan*), that is, composing a *qaṣida* with couplets built up of three parts with internal rhyme and one part with end-rhyme. This type of *qaṣida* is quite common in Persian poetry (Van den Berg, pp. 215-16). The example of *Kesā'i*, in *možāre' moṭamman akṛab*, given by Rāduyāni is the following:

Bizāram az piyāla w'az arḡavān-o lāla / Mā-o ḡoruš-o nāla konj-i gerefta tanhā.

I have had enough of the cup, the Judas tree, and the tulip,
I am alone, wailing and crying, sitting in a corner.
This couplet can also be understood as a stanza:

*Bizāram az piyāla,
W'az arḡavān-o lāla,
Mā-o ḡoruš-o nāla,
Konj-i gerefta tanhā.*

Rudaki has a similar couplet, discussed by Schoeler (Schoeler, p. 258).

According to Rāduyāni, this kind of couplet is *mosammaṭ*. He adds: “It may occur that the parts of the couplet in scanning be larger than what I just mentioned (*Wa bovad ke aqsām-e bayt ba taqti' ziādat az in bovad ke yād kardam*), as we can see in Manuḡehri:

*Kizid-o ḡaz ārid ke hangām-e ḡazān ast,
Bād-e ḡonak az jāneb-e ḡvārazm bazān ast,
Ān barg-e razān bin ke bar ān šāḡ-e razān ast,
Gu'i ke yak-i kārgah-e rangrazān ast,*



*Dehqān ba ta'ajjob sar-e angošt gazān ast,
K'andar čaman-e bāḡ na gol mānd-o na golzār.*

Rise and bring fur because it is autumn,
A cold wind is blowing from K̄vārazm,
Look at those vine leaves with the vines on top,
You would say it is a workshop of dyers,
The landowner bites the tip of his finger in amazement,
For in the meadow neither rose nor rose-bed remained.

“And it is possible to expand this as much as you like” (Rāduyāni, pp. 104-5).

Rāduyāni's version of this first stanza of Manučehri's mosammaṭ slightly differs from the text in the edition of the *divān* (Manučehri, pp. 147-56). The meter of this mosammaṭ is *hazaj moṭamman akṛab makfuf maḥḍuf*; it is composed in description of the autumn and in praise of Sultan Mas'ud of Ġazna.

The prosodist Rašid-al-Din Vaṭvāṭ (d. 1182 CE), like Rāduyāni, describes mosammaṭ as an art or device (*šan'at*) whereby the poet divides the couplet in four parts; at the end of the first three parts he observes internal rhyme (*saj*) and in the fourth part he introduces end-rhyme (*qāfiat*); according to Vaṭvāṭ, this is also called *še'r-e mosajja'* (Vaṭvāṭ, pp. 61-62). He mentions two examples of this device, one of which is the well-known *qašida* by Mo'ezzi (1048/49-1125/27) *Ey sār-bān manzel makon joz dar diār-e yār-e man*. This *qašida*, composed of fifty-five couplets, is in *rajaz moṭamman sālem* (Mo'ezzi, pp. 597-599). From the second hemistich onwards, the couplets of this *qašida* follow the same pattern as the single couplet of Kesā'i cited by Rāduyāni.

*Ey sār-bān manzel makon joz dar diār-e yār-e man,
Tā yak zamān zāri konam bar rab'-o aṭlāl-o daman.
Rab' az del-am por kun konam, kāk-e daman golgun konam,
Aṭlāl rā jeyhun konam az āb-e čašm-e kvištan.*

Oh camel-driver, do not halt but in the realm of my beloved,
That I may lament a while over the abode, the ruins, and the traces left.
With my heart I will make the abode full of blood, I will make the traces left
behind rose-red with my tears,
I will turn the ruins into the river Jeyhun by weeping.

Vaṭvāṭ adds to this description that the Persians also compose the mosammaṭ



in a different manner, namely that five hemistichs are composed in one rhyme (*qāfiat*) and that at the end of the sixth hemistich the basic rhyme (*qāfiat-e ašli*) is introduced, on which the poem in its entirety is based (Vaṭvāṭ, p. 63). To illustrate this Vaṭvāṭ presents the first stanza of Manuĉehri's mosammaṭ opening with *Āmad bāng-e korus mo'den-e meyk'vāragān* (see below).

The original mosammaṭ was thus understood as a mosammaṭ in the morabba' format, and described as a device applied in the couplets of a qaṣida. The term morabba' is however not used in early works on prosody in connection to this poetical device. This device, named mosammaṭ, seems gradually to have developed into something larger, which in the time of Rāduyāni was apparently seen as an extension of a poetical device in which three of the four parts of the couplet (*aqsām-e bayt*) had internal rhyme (*saj'*) and the fourth one the recurrent rhyme (*qafia*). Rāduyāni does not yet acknowledge this as a different form.

Vaṭvāṭ, on the other hand, seems to have perceived this "extended form of mosammaṭ" as a different kind of mosammaṭ, and refers to its parts as hemistichs with rhyme (*meṣrā's* with *qāfia*) and no longer as parts of the couplet with internal rhyme (*aqsām-e bayt* with *saj'*). Vaṭvāṭ distinguishes rhyme and basic rhyme (*qāfiat* and *qāfiat-e ašli*) to denote the difference between the rhyme used in the hemistichs of the separate stanza and the recurrent rhyme in the last hemistich of each separate stanza. For this kind of mosammaṭ, according to him composed by Persians, Vaṭvāṭ no longer uses the term *saj'*.

This shift in approach, illustrated by the descriptions of Rāduyāni and Vaṭvāṭ, shows how the mosammaṭ gradually came to be seen as a separate genre, a stanzaic poem, rather than a poetical device used in couplets of mono-rhymed qaṣidas. The fact that mosammaṭ was seen as a poetical device initially is probably the reason why this form is included in the first place in the early works on prosody, which usually do not describe genres of poetry.

This development of the mosammaṭ as a separate genre in poetry can be illustrated furthermore by the description of Šams-e Qeys in *al-Moĵam*, composed more than a century later than Rāduyāni's and probably more than forty years after Vaṭvāṭ (Šams-e Qeys, pp. 382-83). Noticeably, Šams-e Qeys begins his description of mosammaṭ with the stanzaic Persian form, rather than the internal rhyme form and groups them under the heading *tasmiṭ*. By the time of Šams-e Qeys, the mosammaṭ of the mosaddas form, the form used



by Manuĉehri, seems to have been perceived as the standard form of a mosammaṭ, which might well be because of the presence of this particular form in Manuĉehri's *divān* and its apparent popularity. Incidentally, Šams-e Qeys is the first to describe *tarji'* (see above), which is not included in the works of Rāduyāni and Vaṭvāṭ.

The mosammaṭ is not as widespread in the *divāns* of Persian poets as the *tarji'*-band and *tarkib-band* are. Manuĉehri is an exception with as many as eleven mosammaṭs in his *divān*. His mosammaṭs are all mosaddas and follow the rhyme scheme sketched above, that is five rhyming hemistichs and a sixth hemistich with a rhyme that comes back in the sixth hemistich of each stanza. The tenth mosammaṭ in Manuĉehri's *divān* (pp. 197-206), however, has another scheme, and consists of thirty-seven stanzas with six rhyming hemistichs. The last hemistich of each stanza in this case does not stand out at all, and the stanzas are not formally unified by a recurrent rhyme. However, there is some doubt on the authenticity of this poem (Manuĉehri, p. 197, note 1). The other ten mosammaṭs of Manuĉehri have between ten and thirty-five stanzas. The subject matter of these mosammaṭs is similar to his *qaṣidas*. The first two stanzas of the sixth mosammaṭ of Manuĉehri's *divān*, composed in the meter *moṣṣareḥ moṭamman maṭwi maksuf*, are dedicated to the benefits of the morning cup.

Āmad bāng-e korus mo'den-e meyk'vāragān,
Šobḥ-e noḳostin nemud ruy ba nazṣāragān,
Koh be katef bar fekand ĉādor-e bāzāragān,
Ruy be mašreq nehād ḳosrow-e sayyāragān,
Bāda farāz āvarid ĉāra-ye biĉāragān,
Qumu šorb al-šabuḥ yā ayyoha'l-nā'emin.
Mey zadagānim mā, dar del-e mā ḡam bovad,
Ĉāra-ye mā bāmdād reṭl-e damādam bovad,
Rāḥat-e kaḫdomzada košta-ye kaḫdom bovad,
Meyzada-rā ham ba mey dāru-o marḥam bovad,
Har ke šabuḥi zanad bā del-e ḳorram bovad,
Bā do lab-e moškbuy, bā do rok-e ḥur-e 'in.

The crowing of the cock sounds, the muezzin of those who drink wine,
The first morning light showed its face to those who watched,
The mountain has thrown the tent of the traders over its shoulders,
The emperor of the planets has directed his face to the east,
Bring wine, the remedy of the wretched,



Oh you who are asleep, rise and drink the morning cup.

We are afflicted by wine, our heart is filled with grief,
 Incessant cup of wine at dawn is our remedy,
 The comfort of the one bitten by the scorpion is the scorpion's corpse,
 For the one afflicted by wine, the wine is likewise medicine and balm.

Whoever drains the morning cup is glad in his heart,
 With two musk-scented lips, with two cheeks of black-eyed paradise virgins.

Other poets favored other types of *mosammaṭ*; Qaṭrān Tabrizi has two *mosammaṭ*s of the *moṭamman* format, while Mas'ud-e Sa'd-e Salmān, with four of the same, seems to have a preference for this type (Qaṭrān, pp. 442-49; Mas'ud-e Sa'd, pp. 766-79). In the last stanza of one of them, he cites the opening hemistich of Manuṭehri's famous *mosammaṭ*, *Kizid-o kaz ārid* (Mas'ud-e Sa'd, p. 771). Sanā'i (pp. 572-73, 577-78, 587-88, 591-92) has four *mosammaṭ*s in the *morabba'* format, Mo'ezzi (pp. 768-71) has one in the *moṭamman* format, and Kāvāju (pp. 126-28, 137-39) one in the *moṭamman* and one in the *moḳammas*. The *moḳammas* of Kāvāju is an expansion (*taẓmin*, lit. citation) on a *qaṣida* of Sanā'i (Elwell-Sutton, p. 259). The *moḳammas* type seems to have been developed in later years as an appropriate form for expanding on an existing poem, though also other types of *mosammaṭ* are used for this purpose. A *taẓmin* in the *moḳammas* format is often termed *takmis* (Schoeler, p. 661), and in the same manner the terms *tarbi'*, *tasdis* etc. are used for the corresponding types of *mosammaṭ* used as *taẓmin* (Elwell-Sutton, p. 259).

Ahli Širāzi (pp. 536-539) has three *mosammaṭ*s in *moḳammas* format, all based on existing *ḡazals*. In the first one, nine stanzas are based on nine couplets of a *ḡazal* of Ḥāfeẓ (ca. 1315-90), composed in the meter *mojtatt moṭamman maḳbun maḥḍuf* (Ahli, pp. 536-37, based on Ḥāfeẓ, p. 320, no. 152). Each stanza consists of three hemistichs by Ahli and two of the *ḡazal* of Ḥāfeẓ. The last two hemistichs of each stanza are formed by a couplet of the *ḡazal* of Ḥāfeẓ. The last stanza includes in the third hemistich the penname Ahli, and in the fourth hemistich, part of the original *ḡazal*, naturally the penname Ḥāfeẓ. The first stanza of this *moḳammas* has five rhyming hemistichs, the last two being the first couplet of Ḥāfeẓ's *ḡazal* (*ḡazal* verses translated by Peter Avery, p. 207):

1. *Pari behosn-e rok-e gol'edār-e mā naresad;*



2. *Malak bekolq-e k^voš-e ġamgosār-e mā naresad;*

3. *Wafā-ye kas ba wafā-ye negār-e mā naresad;*

4. *Ba ħosn-e kolq-o wafā kas ba yār-e mā naresad;*

5. *To-rā dar in soġan enkār-e kār-e mā naresad.*

1. A peri cannot outreach the beauty of the face of our rose-cheeked beloved;

2. An angel cannot outreach the pleasant disposition of our dear friend;

3. No one's loyalty outreaches the loyalty of the beloved idol;

4. No one outreaches our friend in beauty of disposition and fidelity;

5. Contradicting us in this matter is not for you.

The second stanza rhymes with the last syllable of the first hemistich of the third couplet of Ḥāfez:

1. *Marā ke nist ba kas ġayr-e yār-e k^viš niyāz,*

2. *Ḥoquq-e šoġbat-e k^vod ham ba yār guyam bāz,*

3. *Če ħājat ast ze nāmaġramān kešidan-e nāz,*

4. *Ba ħaqq-e šoġbat-e dirin ke hič mahram-e rāz,*

5. *Ba yār-e yakjehat-e ħaqqozār-e mā naresad.*

1. I who have no need for anyone except my own friend,

2. I will repeat the just claims of my association to my friend as well

3. What need is there to glorify those who are no intimates.

4. By right of old association I swear no secret-sharer,

5. Comes up to our unwavering, favor-requiting friend.

In more modern times the mosammaṭ was used by poets such as Moġammad-



Taqi Bahār (1886-1951) and Mirzāda ‘Ešqi for political verse. Bahār modeled on of his earliest mosammaṭs on a mosammaṭ of Manuĉehri (see BAHĀR). ‘Ešqi made extensive use of the moḳammas format, most famously in one of his long narrative poems on social and political injustice entitled *Se tablo* (Karimi-Hakkak, pp. 210-31), containing 139 stanzas each consisting of five hemistichs (‘Ešqi, pp. 173-93).

Mostazād. The mostazād has been described by Elwell-Sutton as a variant of the ḡazal or short qaṣida, and sometimes of other forms such as the quatrain (*robā’i*). In this variant an additional phrase with a meter identical to the meter of the rest of the poem is attached either to each hemistic or to each couplet. This additional phrase is as a rule not essential for the understanding of the poem. Elwell-Sutton places this verse form under “mono-rhyme verse forms,” together with the qaṣida, ḡazal, fragment (*qeṭ’a*) and quatrain, rather than under “stanzaic verse forms” (Elwell-Sutton, pp. 249-51). The earliest extant mostazād may be found in the *divān* of Mas‘ud-e Sa’d (Sharma, 2008). This is a mostazād of fourteen couplets, in the metre *možāre’ moṭamman aḳrab ṣadrayn*, in praise of his patron Sultan Mas‘ud III (Mas‘ud-e Sa’d p. 783). This mostazād consists of double-rhymed couplets, with an additional phrase, different for each couplet, rhyming in *-ān*; the metrical pattern of this phrase is the first foot of the *možāre’* meter used for this poem. The rhyme of the phrase follows the rhyme of the first couplet of the *mostazād*.

<i>Ey kāmgār solṭān,</i>	<i>Enṣāf-e to ba geyhān,</i>	<i>Gašta ‘eyān.</i>
<i>Mas‘ud šahriāri,</i>	<i>Ḳvoršid-e nāmdāri,</i>	<i>Andar jahān.</i>
<i>Ey awj-e ĉarḳ jāyat,</i>	<i>Giti ze ruy-o rāyat,</i>	<i>Čun bustān.</i>
Oh auspicious sultan,	Your justice in the world,	Has become evident.
You are the fortunate king,	You are the illustrious sun,	In the world.
Your place is the firmament’s pinnacle,	The world is because of your appearance and wisdom,	Like an orchard

It can be seen in the verses above that it is not always possible to have a satisfactory understanding of the couplet without taking into account the additional phrase.

Mostazāds are quite rare in classical poetry, but they seem to have gained popularity in the poetry of the early 20th century. Bahār, ‘Ešqi and Abu’l-Qāsem Lāhuti (1887-1957) composed mostazāds to convey their political ideas.



In the early twenties of the 20th century, ‘Ešqi wrote a *mostazād* satirizing the Fourth Majles, entitled *mostazād-e majles-e čahārom*. This *mostazād* has over a hundred couplets, and each hemistich is followed by an additional phrase. The first two hemistichs are followed by the phrase “*didi če kabār bud?*,” and this phrase is repeated in the following couplets after every second hemistich, forming a kind of refrain:

<i>In majles-e čārom ba kodā nang-e bašar bud,</i>	<i>Didi če kabār bud?</i>
<i>Har kār ke kardand zarar ruy-e zarar bud,</i>	<i>Didi če kabār bud?</i>
<i>In majles-e čārom, k^vodemānim, tamar dāšt?</i>	<i>Wa’llāh zarar dāšt!</i>
<i>Šad šokr ke ‘omr-aš čo zamāna begodar bud,</i>	<i>Didi če kabār bud?</i>
This Fourth Majles was a disgrace for mankind, by God!	Have you seen what happened?
Whatever they did, it was damage upon damage	Have you seen what happened?
This Fourth Majles, “let us be frank,” had it results?	I swear to God, it was damage!
Thanks a million that its life, like the era, will pass	Have you seen what happened?

The meter of this *mostazād* is *hazaj moṭamman akṛab makfuf maḥḍuf*, a meter, which is common for this form (Elwell-Sutton, p. 249).

Stanzaic verse forms have been part of the corpus of classical Persian poetry from the early stage onwards and have continued to play a role until modern times. The development and history of this genre can be explored via works on prosody and *divāns* of poets. It appears from the prosodic sources that various forms of stanzaic poetry can be considered to have originated in the *qašida*. The examples present in *divāns* show that, with respect to content and sometimes form, this genre has been subject to change and adaptation by its users to suit their purposes over time. Though the quantity of stanzaic poetry in Persian literature is modest in comparison to other verse forms, a few examples of this genre have obtained widespread fame and an iconic value in Persian culture and society.

See ‘[ARUŽ](#)’ for meters in poetry.



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