

Working with Musics of Three Adjacent Regions

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I must first thank the program committee for their kind invitation to speak at this conference, which I accepted on the condition that Richard Wolf would respond to my remarks. Not only does he have extensive experience in South Asia, while I have none. He's spent time in Iran, lots of time in Tajikistan, and is deeply engaged in comparative studies, two results of which are his 2001 article "Three perspectives on music and the idea of tribe in India" and the 2014 book *The voice in the drum: Music, language, and emotion in Islamicate South Asia*. I'm hoping that Richard's and my remarks can initiate a discussion of issues relating to comparative studies in our three adjacent regions: topics that look promising, difficulties any of you have encountered, and so on. With that aim in mind, I'll comment on some of the topics addressed in the papers we're hearing. I've relied for the most part on the abstracts, since we have three concurrent sessions, and papers weren't circulated in advance.

One set of topics that has already been the subject of comparative work in all three regions is the performance of narratives that include sung poetry. Conferences devoted to comparative study of that topic have been convened at Berkeley, Mysore, Madison Wisconsin, Bonn, New Delhi, and of course here at Harvard.¹ It was one of my main interests in the late 1960s when I chose to do dissertation research in northeastern Iran, the large province of Khorasan which belongs culturally to West *and* Central Asia. I concentrated on sung poetry in the three principal languages of northern Khorasan: Persian, Kurmanji Kurdish, and the language of the Khorasani Turks, which at the time linguists had not yet identified as a distinctive and very old member of the southwestern branch of Turkic languages. Of the many genres of sung poetry that presented or alluded to narratives, I was especially interested in the repertoires of the bards known as *bakhshi*, most of whom sang in all three languages while accompanying themselves on the *dotār*, a long-necked lute with two strings tuned a fourth or fifth apart. Bards called by variants of that term have long been active in other Turkic-speaking regions of Central Asia, whereas in Anatolia and Azerbaijan bards are called *aşiq*, a term used for a different type of performer in northern Khorasan (Blum 1972). Both terms carry historical associations with shamanic and Sufi practices.

As I tried to describe the melodic and rhythmic resources that *bakhshis* use for singing verses in three languages, I got interested in three canonical repertoires that were likewise developed for singing poetry in Persian *and* in Turkic languages: the Bukharian *shashmaqom* 'six maqoms,' the Persian *haft dastgāh* 'seven systems,' and the

¹ For work resulting from these conferences and symposia, see Blackburn and Ramanujan 1986, Blackburn and others 1989, Harris and Reichl 1997, Reichl 2000, and Kaushal 2001.

Azerbaijani *muğam*, in which the most extensive sequences are also called *dastgāh* as Polina Dessiatnitchenko explained in her paper. Today, that bilingual history is most evident in the versions of the *shashmaqom* inherited by Bukharian Jewish musicians, notably Ari Babakhanov (b. 1932) whose grandfather, Levi Babakhanov, was the chief court musician of the last emir of Bukhara. Babakhanov's notation of what's sometimes called the Tajik-Uzbek *shashmaqom*, published in 2010, includes verses in Persian, Chaghatai Turkish, and Uzbek. Earlier notations treated the repertoire as cultural heritage of Tajikistan *or* Uzbekistan, with poetry in each republic's "national language," Tajik Persian or Uzbek. The same conception of national culture rooted in a national language made Azerbaijani Turkish the exclusive language of the *muğam* in the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, and Persian the exclusive language of *dastgāh* performance in Iran—never mind that both practices are based on resources with a common history. The theoretical terminology of all three practices—*shashmaqom*, *dastgāh*, and *muğam*—is essentially Persian, with a shared vocabulary for designating structural functions *and* a large set of names for units within the extended sequences called *maqom*, *dastgāh*, or *muğam*. Each unit's proper or generic name designates a bundle of features with varying degrees of relevance to performers and listeners, depending on their experience and interests, a topic to which I'll return. For the moment I'll point to this heavy use of proper names in the transmission of musical knowledge as a phenomenon with a long history in South, Central, and West Asia.

Questions we can ask about the histories of those names is a subject pursued for over half a century by the late Harold Powers. That portion of his lifework started in the late 1950s with studies of Karnatak music in Madras and a 1959 dissertation on *The background of the South Indian raga-system*. Harry then moved on to a comparison of Karnatak and Hindustani ragas (1970), a magisterial survey of concepts of *mode* (1980), and a substantial study of what he termed "International *Segāh*" in musical practices of West and Central Asia (1989). The 1959 dissertation was concerned with "the dominance of scale-theory, and the weakness of contemporary understanding of ornament and phrase structure" (i, 87). Harry quoted extensively from three South Indian critics of the overemphasis on scale-theory: T.V. Subha Rao, K.V. Ramachandran, and T.L. Venkatarama Iyer. He pursued that issue through all the rest of the work I've mentioned. In the historical and comparative study of Hindustani and Karnatak ragas with the same or similar names, he found (1970, 16) that "melodic characteristics—emphasis, contour, and the like—seem to be more persistent than scale type." Late in his career, Harry treated V.N. Bhatkhande and Omkarnath Thakur as key protagonists in the reworking of *Hindustani* music theory at different historical moments—Bhatkhande, in Harry's words, a "forward-looking positivist in the heyday of the Independence movement," Thakur a participant in "the growing Sanskritization of Post-Independence Indian humanism" (Powers 1990, 212; cf. Powers 2010). In this drama, staged by Harry, positivism entailed a concentration on scale type, Sanskritization a close study of melodic theory in treatises of the thirteenth century and earlier. The Grove article on *mode* criticizes the bad habit of treating that term as a general concept whose diverse realizations include *rāga*, *maqām*, *diao*, *patet*, and so on. Harry noted, for instance, that "The strikingly different semantic fields of the musical terms *rāga* and *maqām* suggest that their musical senses may have less in common than at first appears" (1980, 429; repr. 2001, 837). He understood that

such terms designate collections of entities that differ in both structure and function: collections with many members or only a few, associated with solo or ensemble performance, providing a set of models for making music or a set of categories within an existing repertoire. I've already mentioned my view that assigning a proper name to every member of a system or repertoire of rāgas, maqāms, or analogous entities has facilitated transmission of knowledge concerning the distinctive attributes of each item within the system or repertoire.

Before talking more about my involvement with music of West and Central Asia, and how it relates to Harry's interest in relationships between melodic contours and proper names, I'll comment on some of the other topics that have been, or could be, studied in multiple areas of our three regions—concentrating on topics of the excellent papers we're hearing at this conference. This is the fourth time I've had the opportunity to participate in a conference or round table centered on South and West Asia. The first was a "Discussion Conference on Music of South and West Asia," organized by Bruno Nettl in December 1974 at the University of Illinois. Nazir Jairazbhoy advocated more attention to Central Asia, though I no longer remember how he thought that might contribute to South Asian musicology. I do remember expressing my dissatisfaction with the term *free rhythm*, and Nazir's encouraging remark that young people like me—I was 32--would come up with alternatives. Three years later I participated in a round table organized by Nazir at the Twelfth Congress of the International Musicological Society in Berkeley: "Rural-urban interchange in the music of South and West Asia." Our fellow panelists were Ed Henry, Dan Neuman, the late Mohammad Teqi Mas'udiye from Iran, and the late Komal Kothari whose paper on what he called "Rural-Urban Transitions" in Rajasthan made a deep and lasting impression on me, as have his conversations with Rustom Bharucha, published as *Rajasthan: An oral history* (2003). I arranged for a follow-up panel at the 1978 annual meeting of SEM in St. Louis, retaining the "Rural-urban interchange" title: it was a more parochial affair, without Kothari and Mas'udiye, who were sorely missed.

Nazir opened the discussion at the IMS roundtable by asking us to compare the Indian and Iranian situations described in our papers, which had concentrated on developments in India since independence and in Iran even more recently. That request to compare led some of us to generalize about much older developments, such as the bhakti movements in India (plural rather than singular at Kothari's insistence), and somewhat analogous efforts among certain Sufi groups in Iran.

In the 1970s ethnomusicologists had not yet paid enough attention to processes of rural-urban interchange to support comparative studies. By now, work on interaction among members of social formations defined by multiple criteria, not just by rural or urban ways of life, can be seen as a major contribution of South Asian ethnomusicology to music scholarship, anthropology, religious studies, and other fields. It's heartening, for instance, that so many presentations at this conference offer well-informed studies of religious communities with complex identities. At the same time, it's horrifying to note how far removed the best scholarly representations of those identities are from the

stereotypes and outright lies that dominate political discourse—and decision-making—in this nation and several others.

As researchers, we face the challenge of identifying the most appropriate terms both for whatever social formations we're interested in and for the types of social interaction we'd like to explore. Several of the papers we're hearing describe processes of emergence, transmission, contestation, appropriation, transformation, transition, reinterpretation, revival, and so on, occurring over periods of time understood (by whatever interested parties) as long-term, rapid, or anything in between.

In reading the conference abstracts, I became quite interested in the range of historical perspectives adopted *or reported on* by the authors—or supplied by readers and listeners from our own concerns with history. Specific historical perspectives come to the fore in the papers on *transition* from an older to a newer role or situation. In Joseph Palackal's film we meet members of the generation of St. Thomas Christians that experienced the transition of liturgy from Syriac to Malayalam in the 1960s—a generation which, in Joseph's words, “continues to own an extensive memory base of sounds, melodies, and meanings of the Syriac chants,” portions of which they hope to transmit to younger generations. Most often, in studies of transition, the newer role or situation is bound up in commerce or a rapidly changing economy, often described as *neoliberal*. This morning Carol Babiracki probed multiple “factors contributing to successful transitions from traditional professionals to modern commercial agents.” Brigita Sebald's abstract for the paper she was unable to present describes a transition in post-Soviet Georgia from status based on education to status based on consumption of luxury goods, in which some Georgians are still able to “fake a higher economic status by displaying education and superior taste.” But maybe not for long. Peter Kvetko and Anna Morcom identify moments of transition or emergence in the production of Hindi films, exemplified in song sequences. Peter sees one 1989 film as marking a transition from over-production of action movies to “the emerging era of family-centered fantasies of wealth and beauty.” Anna takes the curtailment of performed song in films two decades later as “evidence of the emergence of a stable and hegemonic bourgeois public” and a radical change in the function of song sequences.

As a topic, transformation is perhaps broader than transition, though the questions of *from what to what?*, *starting when?* and *lasting how long?* are still pertinent, alongside questions about the agents and agencies involved and the question of how often a particular type of transformation is brought about. The *from what to what?* question becomes *from what context to what other context?* in studies of *appropriation*, such as Kanniks Kannikeswaran's analysis of indigenization of colonial tunes by Dikshitar in the nineteenth century and Tagore in the early twentieth, and Brita Renee Heimarrck's exploration of several contexts for Indian music and ritual in the Boston area. We have papers on transformations of several types:

Those that are achieved or contemplated in education, as in Zoe Sherinian's film showing the transformation of young Dalit women at the Sakthi Folk Cultural Centre in Tami Nadu, “from their first day struggling to walk and clap in time, to their final public

festival and . . . graduation,” and in Anaar Desai-Stephens’s analysis of discourses about talent and hard work in relation to the question “how *much* can a person transform?”

Tranformations that are dramatized, as in the Kathakali play *Putana Moks* which, as Rolf Groesbeck explains, reenacts “the transformation of Putana from nurturing mother to wild, murderous demoness”—no limit to how much a goddess can transform!—and as in the films discussed by Natalie Sarrazin where music serves “as a transformative medium accompanying moments when the protagonists achieve illumination and enlightenment”

Transformations of a single performer’s career, as in Sain Zahoor’s transformation from shrine singer to popular artist, recounted by Muhammad Usman Malik

Transformations accomplished in part through performance genres like the cobra dance of Rajasthan in which Marianne-Sarah Saulnier sees “contestation and transformation of gender roles”

The multiple transformations effected when Baloch *dammal* is extended, as George Mürer reports, from a shrine-oriented practice in Sindh and Punjab to a Makrani idiom, a ceremonial genre juxtaposed with African and Qaderi ritual sequences, a framework for African practices in South Asia, *and* a current within South Asian popular music.

Inderjit Kaur shows how “the temporalities of music are elaborated . . . into time vistas of awe” in Sikh *sabad kirtan*, where “varieties of musical rhythm” have the capacity to generate sensations of awe among participants in *each* kirtan performance.

In contrast, the “re-imagination of culture” that produced what Utpola Borah terms “Hindu-Islamic synthesis in Assamese zikir” was a *long-term* process requiring countless acts of transformation.

A third *trans-* term, *transmission*, replaces the *from what to what?* question with *from whom to whom, by what means?*—allowing for multiple means as well as any number of interested parties to the transactions. Here again we’re hearing papers that do justice to the multiple means, and the conflicting interests of the parties involved. Peter McMurray’s abstract traces the project of recording and documentation initiated by a shaykh of the Cerrahi order of Sufis in Turkey, Safar Dal, which led to transcription, limited publication, and commercial recording. Joseph Alpar likewise emphasizes “multiple processes” in his account of the transmission of a para-liturgical synagogue repertoire in Istanbul. Congregants hear the text recited and elucidated by a rabbi, are helped in remembering it by use of familiar tunes, can follow a printed text in services, and have access to a notation of the tunes if they wish to learn the repertoire. Brian Fairley treats recordings as “cultural agents which augment and subvert oral traditions and genealogies of practice” as he probes the complexities of one Georgian singer’s

engagement with recordings made in 1907 by his great-grandfather and in the 1950s by his grandfather.

Written music theory as *one* means of transmitting musical knowledge has a long history in South, Central, and West Asia which can be compared with the long histories of written music theory in East Asia and Europe. Terms deriving from the music theory developed in Sanskrit and Arabic turn up in more languages than we could conveniently name, within *and* beyond our three regions. The intense interest in qualities of the human voice that's evident in Sanskrit music theory, a point to which Lewis Rowell draws attention, seems to me a focus that differs rather strikingly from those of ancient Chinese and ancient Greek theory.²

If the knowledge formulated with reference to musical instruments that's transmitted in writing can be copied from one treatise to the next, the knowledge of musical instrument-making that's transmitted from one generation to the next needs to be continually updated as ecological and social systems change. I hope that Jennifer Post's stimulating paper on "Ecology, economy and musical instrument making in late and post-Soviet Inner Asia" will inspire further research on instrument construction in relation to changes in ecological, social, and cultural systems in other regions of South, Central, and West Asia. This is a topic where ethnographic studies of the knowledge instrument makers rely on, like Jennifer's, can assist historians in formulating questions about changes in construction and uses of instruments they might ask with reference to the available documents. Likewise, ethnographic studies of musicians' theorizing can suggest good questions to scholars working on treatises of whatever period.

Our papers on written music theory deal with twentieth-century developments. Eshantha Joseph Peiris describes and critiques four theories formulated by post-colonial Sri Lankan scholars with reference to the recently gentrified up-country dance tradition. He lists four functions that are evident in much music theoretical writing: "to legitimize national traditions, preserve repertoires, prescribe normative practices, promote cultural values and," he adds, "much else." The second paper on music theory, by Max Katz, introduces many of us to theoretical writings of two brothers active in the anticolonial struggles of the early twentieth century. Two of the functions mentioned by Eshantha intersect in the brothers' Urdu writings, which promoted cultural values that would legitimize the longstanding involvement of Muslim musicians in music that a "Hindu-centric reform movement" sought to establish as a national heritage.

Returning to the issue of historical perspectives, Max Katz's paper is one of several that explore or propose alternative *narratives*. Andrew Colwell reports on alternative histories of the origins of Mongolian *xöömei* that Mongolian scholars have produced in response to what he terms the "branding strategies" by which residents of Chandman district lay claim to a central role in making that practice a national style and

² "I know of no other tradition of world music in which vocal quality has been prescribed in as consistent and systematic a manner over such a long period of time" (Rowell, 1992, 309).

promoting it internationally. Francesca Cassio, in the paper we did not hear last night, makes a convincing case for rejecting the common misinterpretation of the Sikh musical heritage as no more than, quoting Francesca, “a vernacular variant of the classical repertoires of the Hindu and Muslim courts.” And this morning Rumya Putchha offered a much-needed corrective to the “now standard patriarchal and nationalist narratives” that obscure the work of hereditary female performers in films of the decade 1935 to 45.

I don’t recall seeing the term *historical ethnomusicology* in the abstracts of any of the papers I’ve briefly mentioned, and I think we’re better off without it. What topics do ethnomusicologists study that stand outside historical processes? Certainly not those dealing with responses of South, Central, and West Asians to the colonizing and empire-building projects directed against them from London and Moscow, or with postcolonial or post-Soviet situations, as several of our papers do. Thinking of our work as action that engages multiple modes of human action is one way to step outside the unnecessarily limiting conception of ethnomusicology as a field divided between so-called “anthropological” and “musicological” orientations. As a scholar of sung poetry, I try to keep in mind a sentence in the Arabic-language commentary on Aristotle’s *Poetics* written by the Iranian philosopher Ebn Sina, a native of Bukhara: he described the singing (*talhīn*) of poetry as an action (*fi’l*) that can imitate other meaningful actions.³ That claim doesn’t mean much until we begin to learn *how* the actions of participants in a performance can represent other modes of action, and how the acts of performance presuppose earlier acts and prepare or make possible subsequent acts.

We’re hearing several papers on sung poetry that examine actions or processes in which participants are engaged, or results of those actions or processes:

“How musical structures enable singers to easily learn, memorize, alter, and present devotional poetry” in Vivek Virani’s analysis of *Sant bhajan* in Malwa;

How musical and poetic knowledge constitute a *nexus* in Nathan Tabor’s consideration of salons in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Mughal India and Safavid Persia;

“How [sung poetry] affects the instrumentalists’ improvisatory activity” in Polina Dessiatnitchenko’s paper on the Azerbaijani *muğam*;

How a vocalist’s “emotional expression” makes “textual content” a “fluid signifier” in Hans Utter’s paper on *thumri*.

Eben Graves analyzes the role of the double-headed *khol* drum in “the musical processes that accompany song texts” in performance of Bengali *lila-kirtan*.

³ *Kitāb aš-šifā’*, I, *al-Mantiq*, 9, *aš-Ši’r*, ed. A. Badawī (Cairo, 1966), p. 45; English translation of the pertinent passage in Dahiyat 1974, 90.

Pei-ling Huang's paper focuses on "the relationship between the poetic meter and musical rendering of the poetic forms" when Shāh Abdul Latif Bhitāi's verses are *told* at his shrine in Sindh;

And Brian Bond shows how visions of Sufi practice are enacted in performances of Bhitāi's verses in Kachhh.

I envy Pei-ling and Brian, who can share their experiences and problems in studying performances of Shāh Abdul Latif Bhitāi's Sindhi poetry even as they're engaged in dissertation research. I had to wait two decades after my initial fieldwork before meeting a colleague I could collaborate with in studying the sung poetry of the Khorasani bakhshis, Ameneh Youssefzadeh. When the two of us decided to make critical editions of narratives performed by bakhshis, in which sung verse is introduced by spoken prose, we chose to start with one whose diffusion in Anatolia for more than a century is well documented, *Shāh Esmā'il*, and one whose diffusion may not have extended west of Khorasan, *Ebrāhim ebn Adham*, a major protagonist in the early history of Sufism. All printed versions of *Shāh Esmā'il* known to me are in the Turkish of Anatolia or Azerbaijani, and the only printed texts of *Ebrāhim ebn Adham* I've seen are those of a book in Turkmen I purchased in Afghanistan and a Malay version in the library of Columbia University. The bakhshis whom Ameneh and I have studied perform verses in Khorasani Turkish that they've seen in Azerbaijani and Turkmen publications, though they generally use notebooks written in their own language to learn verses or refresh their memories. They tell the prose portions of narratives in Turkish, Persian, or Kurmanji Kurdish, according to their listeners' preferences.

I'll briefly discuss two quatrains from *Ebrāhim ebn Adham* to illustrate some ways that bakhshis coordinate several sequences of events in performance. Both texts appear to have been copied from another printing of the Turkmen text I mentioned, and adjusted to Khorasani Turkish. Both are initial quatrains of a *monājāt*, a genre of intimate communication addressed to God. The first is sung in the story by the early Sufi Rābi'a al-'Awadiyya, who died in 801 CE, about a quarter century after Ebrāhim ebn Adham. In the introductory prose, Ebrāhim asks Rābi'a why the Ka'ba displaced itself from its foundation in Mecca and traveled to greet her, but stayed put until *he* came to *it* like any other pilgrim. She tells him she heard a voice saying "Give it all up!" which left her bewildered and led her to ask "My God, for seven years I traveled on foot toward the Ka'ba. If I was not worthy to be your guest, why did you ask me to come? And if I *am* worthy, why this pain?" The five quatrains that follow this question express a new and deeper understanding of her situation. The final line of each quatrain, and the second line of the first, is a variable refrain, asking God to spare others the bewilderment she is experiencing, and telling herself not to weep. Weeping is one of the actions most often represented through sung poetry in the Iranian world, and protagonists in a narrative *never* accede to requests that they refrain from weeping and lamenting. The Arabic word *heyran* in Rābi'a's second line denotes states of bewilderment, amazement, or wonder that are often represented in sung verse, as does a term from the same root, *Muhayyer*, that has long served as a name for units in *maqām* and *dastgāh* repertoires. Prominent vocal genres in Armenian and Sorani Kurdish are called *heyran*.

The quatrains of Rābi‘a’s monājāt have lines of eleven syllables, usually grouped as 6 + 5, but sometimes, as in the initial line, 4 + 4 + 3. That line is a Turkish adaptation of a phrase from the Qur’ān: Arabic *Badīhu al-samāwāti wa ‘l-ardi* ‘Absolute Creator of the heavens and the earth’ becomes *yer o göyi xəlq eyləyən ki ne Bār* ‘What a Creator, continually creating earth and sky!’⁴ Turkish ‘creating earth and sky’ places earth before heaven and, by combining the gerund *eyləyən* ‘making’ with the Qur’ānic noun for ‘creation,’ comprehends creation as a continuing act. The second line of the quatrain recalls one of Rābi‘a’s complaints in the *Elāhi-nāme* ‘Book of God’ by the great Persian poet ‘Attār. Ameneh and I mean to include annotations of this sort in our editions of the narratives.

Before singing a quatrain, a bakhshi often strums a rhythmic pattern appropriate to most or all of a quatrain’s lines. In this instance, a pattern of four beats [tap the pattern while counting] works better with the 6 + 5 lines than with those grouped 4 + 4 + 3, though the pattern is often truncated. In this performance idiom, the momentum created when attacks of successive syllables occur at predictable intervals of time and coincide with the next beat in a sequence is precarious: the next syllable may be articulated sooner or later than we expect, and the bakhshi must interpolate expressive vocables at certain moments for the performance to be compelling to listeners. On the handout, interpolated vocables and repeated words are placed within parentheses, and prominent interruptions in the four-beat sequence are marked with a fermata over a syllable or a forward arrow toward an attack that occurs sooner than expected. I’ve placed numbers above the syllables that to my ear coincide with beats in a full or truncated sequence of four, and have marked in bold syllables that coincide both with a beat and with a melodic ascent from the second to the third degree of the tetrachord. So far as I know, Khorasani bakhshis have not attached a name to this particular combination of verse structure, four-beat pattern, and tune. [play Example 1]

The second monājāt, sung in the story by Ebrāhim’s father, Adham-e Divāna ‘Crazy Adham,’ is performed here by the mentor of the previous singer, Mohammad Hoseyn Yegāne, who died in 1992. He chose to sing these verses to one of the maqāms known to bakhshis as *Shāh Khatā’i*. That name denotes what I’ve earlier termed a bundle of features, such as sequences of events to be coordinated in performance, topics of verses to which it is suited, the history it evokes as the pen-name of the first Safavid shāh. Each line of a quatrain sung to *Shāh Khatā’i* will have 15 syllables in the quantitative poetic meter that’s represented with the formula *fā-e-lā-ton fā-e-lā-ton fā-e-lā-ton fā-e-lon*. More often than not, the attacks of syllables 3, 7, 11, and 15—those that start in the formula with the consonant *l*—coincide with the beats in a cycle of four, which is extended when the performer chooses to repeat a word or sing vocables or strum for a few more beats before starting the next line. In singing to *Shāh Khatā’i*, singers tend to

⁴ *al-Badi* ‘the Renewer’ and *al-Bāri* ‘Originator’ are two of the Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God. The words *xəlq eyləyən* ‘continually creating’ in the Turkish verse retain the sense of ‘Renewer’ as the first of these names is replaced by the second.

maintain the momentum of predictable attacks, with fewer pauses and interruptions than we heard in the preceding example. [play Example 2]

This 15-syllable *ramal* is the only quantitative meter represented in the bakhshi repertory, and it's the one that proved itself over time more congenial than any other for verse in Turkic languages. Depending on the topic, bakhshis might sing verses in this meter to the *maqām* they call *Navā'i* rather than to *Shāh Khatā'i*; but the latter is the appropriate choice for a monājāt in the 15-syllable *ramal*. My two examples illustrate only a few of the variables that differentiate one scheme for singing verse from another in the bakhshi performance idiom (see, further, Blum 2004). Before the 1979 revolution, several schemes that are now called *maqāms* were regarded as species of *āhang* 'tune,' or *rāh* 'way,' or *tariqe* Arabic for 'way,' each species having its own controls on the timing of syllables. Only a few were distinguished with proper names like *Shāh Khatā'i* and *Navā'i*, most of which—including these two—designate similar or utterly different bundles in other practices (see Blum 2009 on *Shāh Khatā'i*).

In the three canonical repertories I mentioned earlier—*shashmaqom*, *dastgāh*, and *muğam*—names of certain constituent units function in much the same way that *Shāh Khatā'i* functions in Khorasan: to denote a bundle of features, perhaps including topics and affects of the verses to which that unit is most suited. For example, the name *Sāqi-nāme*, when applied to one unit in the Persian *dastgāh* called *Māhur*, designates a melody with a distinctive rhythmic pattern over a cycle of eight slow beats that will accommodate verses in only one quantitative poetic meter, *motaqāreb*, which can be represented with the syllables *fa-u-lon / fa-u-lon / fa-u-lon / fa'ul*, repeated twice to make a full line. *Sāqi-nāme* is also the name of a poetic genre whose verses ask a cup-bearer to bring wine and are not necessarily in the *motaqāreb* meter if they're not meant to be sung to the unit in *Māhur* called *Sāqi-nāme*.⁵ Example 3 is the initial line of the *Sāqi-nāme* composed by the Persian poet Hāfez, as sung by the late Mahmud Karimi (1927-84) to *Sāqi-nāme* in *Māhur*. I've marked the quantitative poetic meter above the verse on page 2 of the handout, and the diagram above the text shows approximately how the eleven syllables of each half-line are timed in relation to the eight-beat cycle. [play Example 3]

The *shashmaqom* has far more units called *Soqi-noma* than does the Persian *dastgāh* repertory or the Azeri *muğam*. Thirteen of the 22 *soqi-nomas* in Ari Babakhanov's notation of the *shashmaqom* have verses in the *motaqāreb* meter, and the melodies of all 13 follow the rhythmic template we've just heard in the Persian *Sāqi-nāme*. The template now includes an *usul*, notated at the bottom of the diagram on page 2, and the timing of syllables 5, 6, 7, and 8 has shifted in relation to the eight-beat cycle. Here is the *Soqi-noma* of the *Bayot* section in *maqom Buzruk*, the first of the *shashmaqom*, sung by Monajat Yulchieva. [play Example 4]

⁵ I've discussed a *sāqi-nāme* in the 15-syllable *ramal* meter that bakhshis sing in the *maqām Navā'i* in Michael Tenzer's collection of *Analytical studies of world music* (Blum 2006).

In his 1984 dissertation on the *shashmaqom*, Ted Levin suggested that, for performers, “there must be a type of metric ‘common denominator’ encompassing *usul* and verse meter that assures metro-rhythmic accommodation between them” (Levin 1984: 143). I mean for the term ‘rhythmic template’ to cover the accommodation or coordination of whatever features are pertinent in a given unit, as understood by individual performers or lineages (cf. Blum 2006: 41-44). Pertinent features vary from one named entity to another.

The vocal genre *saraxbor* is the first and most substantial piece in the *vocal* portion of any one of the *shashmaqom*. A singer normally chooses a poem either in the *motaqāreb* meter we heard in the *Sāqi-nāme* examples, or in the 14-syllable meter illustrated at the top of page 3 above another verse by Hāfez. Here is a demonstration of the *saraxbor* melody of maqom *Navo*, played on the tanbur by the late poet-musician Ilyas Mallayev (1937-2008). He strums a steady pulse that makes it easy to remember the moment when each of the 14 syllables ought to be articulated. I’ll speak the opening line of this *saraxbor* as notated by Ari Babakhanov in the rhythm copied on my page 3. In order to coordinate the two, my conducting must acknowledge a second “measure 6” in Mallayev’s demonstration. More significantly, for the second half-line Mallayev plays once again the rhythm of the first half, without the expansion I’ve notated as measures 11 and 12; you’ll hear that expansion when Ari Babakhanov’s group sings the *saraxbor*. [Play Tracks 5 and 6]

Saraxbor literally means ‘initial material,’ referring above all to the melodic contour, which is made to fit with different poetic meters in the remaining pieces of the vocal section. In Kashmiri genre *Sufyana musiqi*, a performance of *maqām Navā* opens with a purely instrumental version of the melodic contour we’ve just heard, called *shakl* ‘shape.’ The basic meaning of the Arabic root *shakala* is ‘to hobble an animal with the fetter called *shikal*,’ then by extension “to shape, build up, vary.” The sequence of instrumental genres in any of the *shashmaqom* is called *mushkilot*, a noun from the same root that’s often translated ‘difficulties’ or ‘problems’ (e.g., in Jung 1989, 247). I think of those “difficulties” as results of “fettering” a melodic contour by imposing upon it a series of conventional rhythmic templates, as in the *shashmaqom*'s instrumental sequences.

In Persian *dastgāh* music, the analogue of *saraxbor* is the *darāmad*, literally ‘entering in.’ Some *dastgāhs* have just one *darāmad*, others have more—five in the case of *Shur*, two of which adjust the basic melodic contour to one poetic meter. More often, it’s the singer who chooses verses in a meter that he or she wishes at that particular moment to fit to a given *darāmad*'s contour. In my final example, you’ll once again hear Mahmud Karimi, this time singing another verse of Hāfez to the first *darāmad* of Persian *Navā*. The melodic contour has nothing in common with the *shakl* of *Navo* in the Tajik-Uzbek *shashmaqom* or Kashmiri *Sufyana musiqi*. As names travel around in South, Central, and West Asia, they may or may not retain *any* connection to the rhythmic and melodic structures they formerly identified.

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