

Notes on Musical Imagery in the Poetry of Jāmi

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Abstract The poet Nur-al-Din ‘Abd-al-Rahmān Jāmi (1414-92) is known to have been proficient in music theory; he also wrote a *Resāla-ye musiqi* (Treatise on Music Theory). In his poems he displayed an extensive and precise use of musical terms. To probe further into the elements of musical imagery, I scanned through his *maṭnavis Haft awrang* (The Seven Thrones) in search of lines dedicated to musical modes, instruments, and performers. Considering that musical imagery had a long-established tradition before his time, I pursued a comparative investigation and commented on some lines by way of examples. Finally, I argue that literary conventions shaped Jāmi’s poetry more than his expertise in music theory did.

Keywords Nur-al-Din ‘Abd-al-Rahmān Jāmi. Persian poetry. *Resāla-ye musiqi*. Musical instruments. Poetic imagery.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Method. – 2.1 Musical Modes. – 2.2 Musical Instruments. – 2.3 Performers. – 3 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction¹

Music is commonly perceived as one of the main sources of imagery in poetry. We may recall many Persian lines where events, persons, or things appear to be in some way related to music. Performances, singers, musical instruments, musical patterns are all part of the rich Persian poetic imagery. Although it is generally acknowledged that some pre-modern Persian poets made a wider use of musical imagery than others, only a limited number of studies have hitherto considered the importance of music in the works of single poets and a comprehensive picture of musical imagery from a comparative point of view has not yet been outlined.

In this paper, I provide some notes on musical imagery in the poetry of Nur-al-Din 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Ebn Aḥmad Jāmi (1414-92). Jāmi wrote a vast number of poems. He composed three *divāns* (collected poems) and seven long poems in the form of *maṭnavi* (poem with rhyming couplets) collectively known as *Haft awrang* (The Seven Thrones, or The Constellation of the Great Bear). He is known to have been proficient in music theory (*'elm-e musiqi*), and he displays an extensive and precise use of musical terms. Considering that Jāmi used musical technical terms to convey poetic imagery, and that musical imagery had a long-established tradition before his time, it seemed promising to pursue a comparative investigation of his poetical works.

As well as a poet, Jāmi was also a polymath well versed in the study of most disciplines of his time. He authored numerous prose works covering a wide range of topics. In this context it is worth mentioning his *Resāla-ye musiqi* (Treatise on Music Theory) (Jāmi 2000, 171-220). The book deals with music theory according to the principles of the traditional discipline called *'elm-e musiqi* (science of music). It covers both the modal (*ta'rif*) and the rhythmic (*iqā'*) systems of Persian music. It has been described as a summary of earlier works drawing from the Systematist tradition of musical theory with strong connections to the works of Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī (1216-94) and 'Abd-al-Qādir al-Marāḡī (d. 1435) (Baily 1988, 14).

His treatise should be understood in the context of the cultural policy of the Timurid court of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (1438-1506). The famous vizier 'Ali-Šīr Navā'i (1441-1501) promoted the writing of several works on the science of music. As he reported in his own writings, he had enrolled in the task four music masters of the time

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before turning to his close friend Jāmi (see the passage quoted by Sumits 2016, 132). In the introduction to *Resāla-ye musiqi*, Jāmi states that the study of music theory was part of his early education. He had, however, neglected the topic for many years until he received a request to write a treatise on it (Jāmi 2000, 182). He completed *Resāla-ye musiqi* on the first of Rajab 890/July 1485 (Dānešpažuh 1970, 14) when he was over seventy years old. To Navā'i's satisfaction, the treatise turned out to be a valuable work written in a simple, straightforward prose. Whether it was due to the lucidity of the contents, or the patronage of Navā'i, and the prestige of Jāmi himself, the *Resāla-ye musiqi* maintained its favourable reputation among scholars for centuries.

Since theory and practice are not necessarily two sides of the same coin, whether Jāmi actually played music remains unknown, although ethnomusicologists have posed the question on several occasions. In the absence of biographical data, scholars have offered different answers according to their different evaluation of the gap between theory and practice (Baily 1988, 15). Yad-ollāh Bahmani Moṭlaq and Moḥammad Reżā Sām Ḳānyāni (2015) investigated the use of a selection of technical musical terms in the three *divāns* of Jāmi. They demonstrated that Jāmi had an advanced knowledge in various subfields connected to music and, above all, he was acquainted with the technical aspects of how a suite should develop. Assuming that the accurate choice of terms adopted by Jāmi must also imply practical skills, they claimed Jāmi to be a poet connoisseur of music theory (*musiqidān*), composer (*āhangsāz*), performer and instrumentalist (*navāzanda*), organologist (*sāzšenās*), singer (*k'ānanda*), or, at least, acquainted with the art of singing (Bahmani Moṭlaq, Sām Ḳānyāni 2015, 66).

Evaluating Jāmi's subtle use of musical imagery exclusively in the light of expertise in music theory or practice has its limitations, as it does not take into consideration the literary heritage and the cultural milieu of Jāmi's poetry. The legacy of poets such as Neẓāmi (1141-1209), Jalāl-al-Din Rumi (1207-73), and Ḥāfeẓ (1315-90) is palpable in Jāmi's poetry. It is partly due to the rewriting of images and themes used by his predecessors that Jāmi's works appears to provide at times a "comprehensive digest of literary convention" (Losenky 2008, 474).

It is also worth noting that Jāmi contributed to the Sufi poetry canon by adopting the finest poetical motifs from the past. He is also noted for being the most significant poet to convey the thoughts of Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240) in his poetry. At a certain stage in his life, Jāmi entered the Naqšbandi order and joined Sufi circles. The Naqšbandis as a rule did not encourage the practice of *samā'*, the Sufi meditative audition. They rather recommended a silent *dekr* meditation. As for Jāmi, Hamid Algar remarked that:

[a] sign of individual preference at variance with Naqšbandi norms was his occasional indulgence in *samā'*, ecstatic circular motion to the accompaniment of music and song. (2008, 475)

Jāmi followed, in this respect, the practice of other Sufi orders who advocated the use of music and motion for contemplative purposes, such as the Mevlevi order (Mawlawiya) established by Rumi.

2 Method

To probe further into the elements of musical imagery in Jāmi's poetry, I selected a number of keywords and scanned through Jāmi's *maṭnavis* in search of lines dedicated to music. My choice of keywords was limited to three areas of investigation: musical modes, instruments, and performers. Occasionally, I widened the research to include noteworthy lines selected from the *divāns*. In this paper I present the results of this preliminary survey on musical imagery and offer a selection of lines by way of examples. Where an appropriate English translation of Jāmi's lines is available, I quote the published translation (with slight editorial adaptations for consistency's sake) with due acknowledgment; otherwise translations are my own.

2.1 Musical Modes

The melodic material of Persian musical tradition passed down from master to pupil for centuries. The core part of music apprenticeship consisted in the memorization of particular arrangements of notes which created the structure of musical modes and their modulations. The term *maqām*, literally 'place, station (of the fingers on the instrument)', conveys the idea of a mode. Words such as *rāh/rah* (path), *āhang* (melodic line), and *parda* (key, fret) may convey the same meaning, or almost the same meaning, of the term *maqām*. In *Resāla-ye musiqi*, Jāmi described twelve *maqām* (musical modes), six *āvāza* (secondary scales, secondary melodic modes), and twenty-four *šo'ba* (tertiary scales, subsidiary modes). Jāmi reported the twelve modes names as follows: 'oššāq, navā, bu-salik, rāst, ḥosayni, ḥejāz, rāhavi, zangula, 'erāq, eṣfahān, zir-afkand, and bozorg (Jāmi 2000, 193-8). Modes bear meaningful names. They were named after place names, adjectives, or nouns. This feature opened a variety of possible combinations in the frame of a line of poetry as the use to pun on words with multiple meanings is a common rhetorical device in Persian poetry.

In the use of musicians, one mode may follow another in a sort of modulation. Music taste and specific restraints govern whether

one mode harmonises with another. A modulation from *navā* (melody [mode]) to *rāst* (right, straight [mode]) was regarded as outmoded in the Ottoman era, but was fashionable in earlier times (Wright 2019, 82-5). Jāmi mentioned the mode *navā* in combination with the mode *rāst* in the following line, which probably suggests a *navā* to *rāst* trajectory:

بیا مطربا زانکه وقت نواست
 بزن این نوا را در آهنگ راست
 (Jāmi 1999b, 2: 455)

Come O minstrel as it's time for music [*navā*],
 select the right mode of playing this melody.

or:

Come O minstrel as it's time for music [*navā*],
 play this *navā* in the mode *rāst* [*āhang-e rāst*].

Elsewhere Jāmi combines the names of two musical modes 'oššāq (lovers [mode]) and *rāst* with the word *āvāza*, which means 'song' or, in a technical sense, a 'secondary scale'. As the mode 'oššāq is found to be a modulation of the mode *rāst* (Miller 1999, 103), the following line contains a double meaning:

نمودم ره راست عشاق را
 ز آوازه پر کردم آفاق را
 (Jāmi 1999b, vol. 2, 433)

To the lovers ('oššāq), I've shown the straight path [*rah-e rāst*],
 and filled all the horizons with famous songs [*āvāza*].
 (Transl. Lewis 2018, 493)

or:

I've shown how the mode of *rāst* modulates to the mode of 'oššāq
 and filled all the horizons with a secondary scale [*āvāza*].

Punning on words may result in extremely elaborate lines. In a frequently mentioned couple of lines of a *qaṣida* (long mono-rhyme ode) in praise of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, Jāmi combined the names of six musical modes. In one line he mentioned the modes *ḥosayni*, 'oššāq, and *navā* in addition to the word *maqām*. The line offers three layers of interpretation. The first layer consists in adopting the literal value of the words *maqām* (place), *ḥosayni* (related to Ḥosayn), 'oššāq (lovers), and *navā* (melody). The second layer pertains to musical modes.

The third layer is context-derived and points to the patronage, as the words *ḥosayni* and *navā* were chosen to recall the names of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā and his vizier ‘Ali-Šir Navā’i:

هری مقام حسینی لقب شهنشاهیست
که می زند نوای محبتش عشاق
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 605)

For me the *maqām* (melody; or, place) Ḥosayni deserves the epithet ‘royal’, for lovers [*oššāq*] constantly sing the melody [*navā*] of his love. (Transl. Schimmel 1992, 274)

The line that immediately follows makes puns on musical modes *rāst*, ‘*erāq* (Iraq), and *ḥejāz* (Hijaz) to allude to some troubles which Jāmi had experienced in Baghdad:

ازان مقام مکن راست جامیا آهنگ
سوی حجاز که از ساز رفت راه عراق
(Jāmi 1999a, vol. 2, 605)

O Jāmi don’t leave that place [*maqām*] [i.e. the court of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā] to go straight [*rāst*] towards Hijaz [*ḥejāz*], as it turned to be the wrong way [when you pursued] the path to Iraq [*rāh-e ‘erāq*].

The same line could be read in a technical sense as:

O Jāmi don’t play *rāst* moving from that *maqām* [i.e. mode *ḥosayni*] to *ḥejāz*, likewise it turned to be out of tune ending it with the mode ‘*erāq*.

Puns on names of the *maqāms* are attested before Jāmi’s time. Rumi, whose appreciation for music is well known, frequently punned on the names of musical modes (Schimmel 1980, 215-16). Images connected to modes whose names resemble places, such as ‘*erāq*, *ḥejāz*, or *eṣfahān*, were particularly in vogue among poets. For example, Sa’di (ca. 1210-1291 or 1292) says: “Apart from Iraq, I do not like any other place. | Oh minstrel, play a melody from the Iraqi musical mode [*parda-ye ‘erāqi*]!”; a couplet from one of Ḥāfez’s poems reads: “O minstrel, change your tune [*parda*] and play the melody of Hijaz [*rāh-e ḥejāz*], | as the Friend has gone along this way, without remembering us” (Orsatti 2015, 614). Commenting on some puns on the musical modes ‘*erāq* and *eṣfahān* written by Ḥāfez and Kamāl Ḳojandi (ca. 1320-1401), Dominic P. Brookshaw has noted that:

Hafiz alludes to the Injuids' control over the city of Isfahan and their ambition to conquer the entirety of 'Iraq-i 'Ajam through punning on the same musical modes [...] Kamal Khujandi makes similar use of the dual meaning of these toponyms to suggest the superiority of his Tabrizi poetry over that of 'Iraq-i 'Ajam, while also alluding to its performance to musical accompaniment. (2019, 60)

As for frequency, Jāmi mainly mentions the modes 'oššāq, *navā*, *rāst*, *ḥosayni*, *ḥejāz*, and 'erāq in his poetry. He also seems particularly familiar with modulations. Bahmani Moṭṭāq and Sām Kānyāni (2015, 58-9) listed further examples of modulations in the three *divāns* by Jāmi and reported that Jāmi mainly referred to modulations across the modes *navā*, *rāst*, and *ḥejāz*. Apparently, of the twelve *maqāms* only those whose names offered him the potential to create a pun found their way into his poetry.

2.2 Musical Instruments

Jāmi mentioned the names of several musical instruments in his poetry: *arḡanun* (pipe organ), *barbaṭ* (short neck lute), *buq* (horn), *čaqāna* (either a percussion instrument [a castanet or a rattle] or a stringed instrument bowed or plucked), *čang* (harp), *darāy* (bell [appended to the neck of a camel]), *daf* (tambourine, hand-held drum), *dohol* (drum), *jalājel* (jingles), *jaras* (bell [appended to the neck of a camel]), *kamānča* (fiddle spike), *kus* (kettle-drum), *musiqār* (pan flute), *nāqus* (bell [of a monastery]), *nay* (reed flute), *qānun* (plucked psaltery, zither), *rabāb* (rebec), *šur* (trumpet [of the angel Ešrāfil]), and 'ud (lute). The above inventory of musical instruments closely resembles the list of instruments mentioned by Ḥāfez (see the list provided by Lewis 2003). Instruments with a poetical value seem analogous, although slight differences in frequency can be found. Ḥāfez mentioned eight times the word *rud* in his *Divān* (Collected Poems) to denote a lute (or a string instrument in general), whereas Jāmi preferred the word 'ud. Ḥāfez did not mention *buq*, *dohol* and *musiqār*, although they had appeared elsewhere in Persian poems. For example, *buq* is attested in the *Šāh-nāma* (The Book of Kings) by Ferdawsi (940-1019 or 1025), and *dohol* and *musiqār* are attested in the poetry by Rumi (Schimmel 1980, 215). Despite the occurrence of a range of different instrument names, Jāmi showed a marked preference for a selected few, with a special preference for harp, lute, and flute.

The word *čang* has multiple meanings in Persian as it applies to almost everything that is crooked or bent. Meaning 'harp', 'clutches', 'grasp', or 'claw', *čang* offered various meaningful combinations in connection to music. In addition, it supplied a good rhyme-word for *āhang*.

Harp's sound may be either joyful or plaintive. As a consequence, harp appears in connection to different states of the soul. Persian language offers the possibility to describe people seized by an emotion as being in the *čang* of that feeling. The word *čang* appears in combinations such as *čang-e ʔarab* (the clutches/harp of *ʔarab*), where *ʔarab* refers to the strong feelings of joy and rapture induced by music. Harp appears in *be čang-e ġam* (in the clutches/harp of grief)' as in:

رامشگر این ترانه خوش
دستان زن این سرود دلکش
بر عود سخن چنین کشد تار
کان مانده به چنگ غم گرفتار
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 379)

The singer [*rāmešgar*] of this good melody [*tarāna*] and the performer [*dastānzan*] of this lovely song [*sorud*] plucks the string [*tār*] on the lute of speech such that he is imprisoned in the clutches [or harp] of grief.

The bent shape of the harp is a source of imagery. Commenting on some lines by Kaqāni Šervāni (d. 1190), Anna Livia Beelaert has noted that:

in both places where the harp, or *čang*, is mentioned [...] it is described as being bent. This curve is given negative interpretations. The instrument is described as old [...], lovesick or otherwise ill. (2000, 186)

According to Franklin Lewis:

[harp] apparently retained its trigonal shape through the time of Hāfez, who compares it to a person bent with age. (2003, 494)

To complain about the malady of aging, Jāmi compares his own back to the harp as well:

پشت من چون چنگ خم گشت و هنوز
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 398)

My back has become like the crooked harp.
(Transl. Lingwood 2013, 175)

In the same way a back bent by grief and sorrow may be compared to a harp:

به زاری پشت خود چون چنگ خم کرد
ز تار اشک بست آوتار بر چنگ

به دل پردازی خود ساخت آهنگ
(Jāmi 1999b, vol. 2, 51)

Her back with weeping like a harp was bent.
Her tears upon the harp as strings [tār] she laid,
to her own heart attuned its chords [awtār] she played
(Transl. Rogers in Jāmi 1892, 39)

In Persian poetry harp appears in association with planet Venus. Lewis noted that:

in the *Šāh-nāma*, as apparently in Sasanian times, the harp was mostly played by women, which perhaps in part explains its association with Venus. (2003, 494)

The iconography of Venus with a harp has a long astrological background. Venus appears in handbooks of astrology as a seated woman playing various musical instruments, mostly stringed ones. Such a representation of Venus as a female player became highly popular in Islamic art, and it was later carried into Western astrology through the translators of Arab astrologers (Twycross 1972, 50-70. I owe this reference to Mohsen Ashtiany). Jāmi referred to *čang-e Zohra* (the harp of Venus) and *čang-e Nāhid* (the harp of Venus). Venus is portrayed in the standard way as a harpist holding the harp to her chest and playing it with her fingers on the strings:

چون گرفتنی چو زهره در بر چنگ
چنگ زهره فتادی از آهنگ
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 294)

When she held the harp to the chest as Venus [Zohra]
the fingers of Venus [čang-e Zohra] renounced to play.

In *Resāla-ye musiqi*, Jāmi called the lute 'ud 'the most noble string instrument' (Jāmi 2000, 192) and described the various *maqāms* with notations related to finger positions on the lute. This was a method often used by music theorists writing in Arabic. As for poetry, lute provided a wealth of imagery related to scent, sound, and tuning aspects. Moreover, the word 'ud offers a convenient rhyme-word for *sorud* (song).

Apparently lute derived its name from the wood from which its sound-box was made. The word 'ud refers to the scented wood of a tree (black aloes or agarwood) used as incense. As a fragrance, the word 'ud appeared in Persian poetry from the time of Ferdawsi and Manučeḥri (d. 1040 or 1041). In the fourteenth century, poets including Ḥāfeẓ also used the word 'ud in the sense of either incense or lu-

te. Jahān (d. after 1391) employed the word ‘*ud*’ twice in the same poem, once in the meaning of aloes and once in the meaning of lute: “In his absence, he placed me on fire, like aloes [‘*ud*’] | He strikes me like a harp, although his strokes are less intense | He hits me hard at every moment with separation, like a lute [‘*ud*’]” (Transl. Brookshaw 2019, 94). Jāmi as well punned on the word ‘*ud*’. The precious wood called ‘*ud*’ was widely commercialised either fresh or ripened. On this basis, Jāmi further punned on the adjective *kām*, whose two meanings are ‘unmelodious’ and ‘fresh, crude’, in connection to lute in a long excerpt in the *maṭnāvī Salāmān o Absāl* which is worth reporting here in full:

عمرها شد تا درین دیر کهن
تار نظمم بسته بر عود سخن
هر زمان از نو نوایی می زدم
دم ز دیرین ماجرای می زدم
رفت عمر و این نوا آخر نشد
کاست جان وین ماجرا آخر نشد
پشت من چون چنگ خم گشت و هنوز
هر شبی در ساز عودم تا به روز
عود ناساز است و کرده روزگار
دست مطرب را ز پیری رعشه دار
نغمه این عود موزون چون بود
لحن این مطرب به قانون چون بود
وقت شد کین عود را خوش بشکنم
بهر بوی خوش در آتش افکنم
خام باشد عود را ناخوش زدن
خوش بود در عود خام آتش زدن
بو که عطر افشان شود این عود خام
عقل و دین را زان شود خوشبو مشام
عقل و دین را تقویت دادن په است
زانکه این تن روی در سستی نه است
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 398)

It has been many ages that, in this ancient abode,
the strings [*tār*] of my verses were tied onto the lute of speech
[‘*ud-e soḵon*].

Every time I strike a new melody [*navā*],
I speak about ancient happenings.
My life has passed, and this melody [*navā*] has not ended,
so too my soul is reduced, but this happening has not finished.
My back has become like the crooked [*kām*] harp, and yet,
each night, I am engaged in the tuning [*dar sāz*] of my lute, till
daylight.

The lute is discordant [*nāsāz*], and time has made
the hands of the musician [*moṭreb*] tremulous with old age.

How can the melody [*naġma*] of the lute be harmonious [*mawzun*],
how can the intonation [*lahn*] of the musician [*moṭreb*] be as fine
as the zither [*qānun*]?
The time has come for me to gently break this lute,
and cast it into fire, so that I might smell its sweet fragrance.
It would be crude [*kām*] to play the lute badly,
it is pleasing to set the unmelodious lute [*'ud-e kām*] on fire.
May it be so that the fragrance of the unmelodious lute [*'ud-e*
kām] is dispersed,
and that from it comes the perfume of Reason and Faith.
It is good to fortify Reason and Faith,
for this body [*tan*] of mine is pointed in the direction of weakness.
(Transl. Lingwood 2013, 175-6)

The reference to *'ud-e kām* may be also intended as follows:

it is pleasing to set the fresh wood [*'ud-e kām*] on fire.
May it be so that the fragrance of the fresh wood [*'ud-e kām*] is
dispersed.

It was uncommon to associate lute and poetic speech. Nonetheless Jāmi identified some common features of the two. They both provide pleasant sounds. Lute is equipped with double courses of strings to be tuned in pairs in the same way as Persian lines of poetry consist of two hemistiches composed in the same meter. Lute and poetic speech may be both qualified by the adjective *mawzun* when they adhere to the rules of balance. A lute may be defined *mawzun* when it provides harmonious sounds. A verse may be defined *mawzun* when it is well-measured.

Tuning a lute is an arduous activity that requires constant attention. The strings of the lute have to be tightened frequently. It is due to this peculiarity that, as Annemarie Schimmel (1992, 275) points out, Persian poets described their condition of grief as being twisted as the lute. Tuning pegs, which are called *guš* (ear), enter in the imagery associated to lute:

عود خاموش ز یک مالش گوش
کودک آساست برآورده خروش
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The silent [*kāmuš*] lute started to cry [*koruš*] at the touch of the
fingers on its pegs [*ze yak māleš-e guš*]
just like children start to cry [*koruš*] when someone rubs their
ears.

Tuning is described as ‘boxing the ear’ (*guš mālidan*) of a stringed instrument. This image is also found in several poets, including Manučehri, Nezāmi, Rumi, Sa’di, and Ḥāfez (Beelaert 2000, 190).

Plectrum and strings take part in the creation of images connected to suffering. While Ḥāfez possibly alluded to a technical usage of the word *zaḳma* (plectrum) or *mežrāb* (plectrum) in his poetry (Mallāḥ 1972, 130-1, 189-90), Jāmi made clear references to both in association with the action of plucking the strings of lute or harp. Jāmi used several terms to refer to strings: *tār*/pl. *awtār* (string), *bam o zir* (lower and higher strings), *abrišam* (silk string), *rag* (animal-derived string), and *rešta* (string). He used the word *rag* either in the general sense of ‘vein’ or in a technical way such as in *rag-e čang* (string of the harp) and *rag-e ‘ud* (string of the lute). The association of the ‘soul’s vein’, that is, of the jugular vein, and the strings of musical instruments offers an image of physical suffering. Poets as ‘Aṭṭār (1145 or 1146-1221) and Rumi compared veins to the strings of the *rabāb* (Schimmel 1980, 213). Besides Jahān’s verses quoted above, Brookshaw reported that:

a feature common to a number of Jahan’s *ghazals* is the portrayal of the poet-lover as a stringed instrument which is struck mercilessly by the hand of a harsh beloved. Similar depictions of complaining musical instruments are also found in the poetry of Khaqani Shirvani [Kāqāni Šervāni]. (2019, 94)

Jāmi connected veins to the strings of the lute:

به سرهنگی اشارت کرد تا زود
زند بر جان یوسف زخمه چون عود
به زخم غم رگ جاننش خراشد
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 140)

He gave an officer a sign, a blow
to strike on Joseph’s soul, as lute with bow [*zaḳma*]:
to tear his soul’s vein [*rag-e jān*] with the wound [*zaḳm*] of grief
(Transl. Rogers in Jāmi 1892, 152)

Apparently the production of sound is achieved through an act of violence:

نادیده خراش رشته چنگ
از چنگ کجا برآید آهنگ
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 271)

If the string [*rešta*] of the harp had never been [painfully]
struck
how could the song [*āhang*] resound from the harp?

In pre-modern Persian poetry “there is a marked tendency to interpret the sound of most instruments as a lament” (Zipoli 2009, 208). Several words may identify the sound of musical instruments in the poetry by Jāmi, such as *bāng* (loud sound), *nağma* (melody), *şawt* (voice), *zamzama* (timbre of voice or instrument). Nonetheless, *nāla* (lament) and *koruř* (cry) seem the most evocative. In addition, the word *koruř* provided a good rhyme-word for *kamuř* (silent) as in:

راست چون چنگی بی زخمه خموش
 چون رسد زخمه درآیی به خروش
 زخمه بر چنگ برای طرب است
 تو به آن غمزده ای این عجب است
 (Jāmi 1999b, 1: 628)

Truely [*rāst*] you are like the harp: silent [*kamuř*] when not
 touched by the plectrum,
 when it comes the pick you start to cry [*koruř*].
 Strumming the harp with a pick is made for joy [*tarab*].
 As for you, it makes you feel woe... This is strange!

Jāmi highlighted that lament is somehow hidden in the instruments:

بر رگ عود که در دامن مطرب خفته ست
 منه انگشت که صد ناله زار است در او
 (Jāmi 1999a, 1: 165)

Do not pick up the sleeping lute [*dar dāman-e moṭreb kofta st*]
 and playfully strum it [*bar rag-e ‘ud ma-neh angořt*]
 unless you are ready for a hundred sorrowful tunes [*nāla*] hiding
 in it. (Transl. Vraje 2006, part 7, no. 2)

Lament comes frequently in association with the reed flute. Reed flute derived its name from the material from which it was made, that is *nay* (reed). The plaintive sound of the reed flute is said to represent the voice of the reed, pining to return to its origins. In a Sufi interpretation, the reed flute represents the soul that seeks union with the original roots from which it has been sundered. Ever since Jalāl-al-Din Rumi began his *Maṭnavi-e ma’navi* (Spiritual Couplets) with the famous lament of the reed, it has become the most evocative instrument in Persian poetic imagery.

Jāmi was deeply immersed in the theme. He composed the short commentary *Resāla-ye nā’iya* also known as *Şarḥ-e baytayn-e Maṭnavi* (Commentary on Two Verses of the *Maṭnavi*) (Jāmi 2000, 325-36) to clarify the sense of the first two lines of *Maṭnavi-ye ma’navi* by Rumi, that is: “Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations | Saying, ‘Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my la-

ment hath caused man and woman to moan” (Transl. Nicholson in Rūmī 1926, 5). Jāmi interpreted Rumi’s speech as an allusion to God’s divine breath. The core of the message is expressed by the image of the flute whose voice resounds only when someone blows in it, an idea expressed before Rumi by the poet Sanā’i (d. ca. 1130) (Schimmel 1980, 211). According to this interpretation, every note and melody depend on the action of the flute player and, in the same way, all actions performed by human beings are due to God. Based on this assumption, Rumi and Jāmi consistently adopted the image of the flute player or musician in their poetry with reference to God. For example:

یاد آن مطرب که ما را هرچه بود از یاد بُرد
 بادی اندر نی دمید اندیشه ها را باد برد
 (Jāmi 1999a, 1: 434)

Glory to the Musician [*moṭreb*] whose Melody
 erases everything that burdens the heart,
 the One whose breath [*bād-i*] blowing in the flute [*nay*]
 releases us [*bād bord*] from all that burdens our mind.
 (Transl. Vraje 2006, part 4, no. 1)

It has been noted that in pre-modern Persian poetry “musical instruments may also be depicted as silent” (Brookshaw 2019, 94). In many examples available from Jāmi’s works, musical instruments appear to be soundless. Most of the time, some external intervention is required in order to hear their sound. Reed flute needs someone to blow in it. Tuning is necessary before any attempt to play a lute. Strings should be painfully struck. Otherwise, instruments remain *ḵamuš* (silent) (Jāmi 1999b, 1: 628). They rest *dar dāman-e moṭreb* (in the lap of the musician) (165). They may be *ḵofta* (asleep) (165). In light of these considerations, a spiritual interpretation should be considered in order to understand the dichotomy sound/silence and Jāmi’s usage of this motif in poetry.

Further examples of images involving different musical instruments may focus on sound, lament, material, or shape. In the following line Jāmi recalled the sound of the pipe organ:

آن را که به شب ز ره برون است
 بانگ تو نوای ارغنون است
 (Jāmi 1999b, 2: 368)

To the one who lost his way in the night
 your shout [*bāng*] sounds as the melody [*navā*] of the pipe organ
 [*arḡanun*].

In another line a reed fence is compared to a pan flute. They are both made of a set of reeds of different length. The sound of the pan flute resembles cries and laments of grief:

بدو کردند نی بستنی حواله
چو موسیقار پر فریاد و ناله
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 175)

The house was fenced around with reeds [*nay*]
like a pan flute [*musiqār*] engaged in plaintive laments [*faryād o nāla*].

The following image focuses on the round and floral shape of the frame of the tambourine to which jingles are mounted:

بر دف گل برگ جلاجل شده
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 495)

Petals became jingles [*jalājel*] on the tambourine [*daf*] of the rose.

The following line plays on the double meaning of the word *kāsa* (goblet and sound-box). The single round sound-box of the rebec resembles a goblet of intoxicating wine:

به یکی کاسه شده مسدت ریاب
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The rebec got intoxicated with only one *kāsa* [goblet; or sound-box].

2.3 Performers

Professional music performers are mainly designated by the words *moṭreb* and *moḡanni* (singer). Jāmi employed both terms indifferently in connection to singers, instrumentalists, and singers accompanying themselves on an instrument. In several lines, Jāmi presented minstrels in association with lute, harp, flute, rebec, jingles, or plectrum, at times performing as solo, as duo, or as a group. For example:

شکرلب مطربان نکته پرداز
به رسم تهنیت خوش کرده آواز
مغنی چنگ عشرت ساز کرده
نواى خرمی آغاز کرده
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 70)

Singers [*moṭrebān*], sweet-lipped, conceits repeating choice,
congratulating all with pleasing voice [*āvāz*],

musicians [*moğanni*], tuned of pleasure's harp the string,
 commenced the song [*navā*] of merriment sing.
 (Transl. Rogers in Jāmi 1892, 63)

The word *moṭreb* shares the same root and semantic field with *ṭarab*. This implies that the distinctive feature of a minstrel's performance is the ability to evoke a strong sense of joy and rapture in the audience. Further words seldom appear in Jāmi's poetry to define singers and musicians, such as *rāmešgar*, *dastānzan*, *dastānsarā*, *koṇyāgar*, *nağmapardāz*, *nağmasarāy*, and *nağmasāz*. The word *qavvāl* (cantor, professional reciter) recurs in pious contexts such as a Sufi gathering:

لحن قوال شده صومعه گیر
 نه مرید از دم او جستنه نه پیر
 (Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The chant [*laḥn*] of the Cantor [*qavvāl*] seized the monastery;
 nor novice nor old master escaped from his breath.

Lines of poetry where a pair or a group of musical instruments are mentioned suggest the presence of duo or other ensemble performances. Bahmani Moṭlaq and Sām Kānyāni (2015, 48-9) detected three kinds of duo in the *divāns* by Jāmi: *nay/čang*, *čang/daf*, and *daf/nay*. Further examples of duo to be found in Jāmi's lines include *čang/rabāb*, *čang/'ud*, and *čang/čāgāna*. Apparently *čāgāna* occurs only in the compound *čang o čāgāna*. The latter seems valid also in the poetry of Ḥāfez where *čāgāna* is:

closely associated in both occurrences in the *Divān* with *čang*, probably in part because of its phonetic similarity. (Lewis 2003, 495)

In the stylised environment described by pre-modern Persian poets, the function of musical performances may vary in accordance with the context. Music may celebrate joy in a festivity context, dispel grief in the context of a convivial gathering, awaken spiritual awareness in the context of a Sufi audition. In addition to these settings, Jāmi combined further standard pictures commonly depicted in poetry in connection with music: the song of birds in the context of a rose garden or green field gathering; the non-Muslim environment of the monastery; the wine-house and travel lodging whose space offers the set where performers play music. As was customary in poetry, Jāmi at times portrayed performers in settings characterised by a significant degree of religious and social reproach:

مطرب از مصطبه دُرْدکشان
 داده از منزل مقصود نشان
 (Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The Minstrel [*moṭreb*] at the tavern of tipplers
 showed the inn of the Beloved.

When it comes to defining to what extent musical performances were acceptable in the time of Jāmi, there is a risk of becoming lost or enmeshed in the debate among Islamic theologians, jurists, Sufis, and philosophers. Although generally prohibited by the orthodoxy, music has been tolerated within certain boundaries. According to the eminent theologian Abu Ḥamid al-Gazālī (1058-1111), the *samāʿ* of the Sufis was licit and the use of both music and poetry was even considered praiseworthy on occasions of joy such as weddings (Lewisohn 1997, 16; Klein 2014, 221). Jāmi followed the teachings of Ibn ʿArabī and had a specific vision of what music was intended for. As William C. Chittick remarked:

Sufi thought of the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī - of which both ʿIrāqī and Jāmi are representatives - holds that the things of this world are not just things, rather they are created by God, derived from God, and ultimately Self-Manifestations of God. [...] The Sufis usually take the stand that as long as it [i.e. music] acts as a reminder of its Source and not as a veil, it is permissible. (1981, 193-4, 199)

In the *maṭnavi Yusof o Zolaykā* (Joseph and Zolaykā) Jāmi portrayed a wedding scene where music brings joy. In the imminence of the arrival of the bride's caravan to Egypt, the groom organises a welcoming party where pages, maids, and a full band of musicians appear. Jāmi mentioned a group of singers, performers, and six musical instruments. Although the scene is supposed to take place in ancient Egypt, it displays a Persian musical ensemble:

شکرلب مطربان نکته پرداز
 به رسم تهنیت خوش کرده آواز
 مغنی چنگ عشرت ساز کرده
 نوای خرمی آغاز کرده
 به مالش داده گوش عود را تاب
 طرب را ساخته اوتارش اسباب
 نوای نی نوید وصل داده
 به جان از وی امید وصل زاده
 رباب از تاب غم جان را امان ده
 برآورده کمانچه نعره زه
 در افکنده دف این آوازه از دوست
 کزو در دست ره کوبان بود پوست
 (Jāmi 1999b, 2: 70-1)

Singers [*moṭrebān*], sweet-lipped, conceits repeating choice,
 congratulating all with pleasing voice [*āvāz*],
 musicians [*moḡanni*], tuned of pleasure's harp the string,
 commenced the song [*navā*] of merriment sing.
 When to attune it the lute's ear is wrung,
 its sweet chords [*awtār*] echo to the cheerful song [*ṭarab*].
 Good news of meeting brings the flute's [*nav*] sweet sound
 [*navā*],
 and for the soul the hope of union's found.
 Freed by rebeck [*rabāb*] the soul from string [*tāb*] of woe,
 its dulcet [*kamānča*] tones evokes the sounding bow.
 The drum [*daf*] awakens too the friendly sound [*āvāza*],
 that in the travellers' hand the skin is found.
 (Transl. Rogers in Jāmi 1892, 63)

Pre-modern Persian poetry widely referred to music and drinking as having the power to dispel grief. This assumption developed into the aesthetics of the genre called *sāqi-nāma* (book of the cupbearer). It consisted of:

a poetic genre in which the speaker, seeking relief from his hardships, losses, and disappointments, repeatedly summons the *sāqi* or cupbearer to bring him wine and the *moḡanni* or singer to provide a song. (Losensky 2009)

This suggests the idea of a solo performance in the context of a drinking symposium. Poetical imagery mirrored the private space of courtly feasting as an ideal setting to a musical performance. The poet Neẓāmi used the summoning of the cupbearer and the minstrel as a structural device to confer unity to various narrative parts of his own *maṭnavi Eskandar-nāma* (The Book of Alexander). Jāmi modelled his own *maṭnavis* after Neẓāmi's long poems, and closed the main episodes of his own *maṭnavi Kerad-nāma-ye Sekandari* (The Alexandrian Book of Wisdom) with the invocations *beyā sāqi-ā* (O cupbearer come!) and *beyā moṭreb-ā* (O minstrel come!):

بیا ساقیا ساغر می بیار
 فلک وار دور پیایی بدار
 ازان می که آسایش دل دهد
 خلاصی ز آلایش گُل دهد
 بیا مطربا عود بنهاده گوش
 به یک گوشمال آورش در خروش
 خروشی که دل را به هوش آورد
 به دانا پیام سروش آورد
 (Jāmi 1999b, 2: 436)

O cupbearer, come, pass the bowl, I entreat,
 and like heaven, I pray thee, the cycle repeat!
 That wine I desire which to peace giveth birth,
 and frees us from all the defilements of earth.
 O minstrel, approach, that the listening [*be-nhāda guš*] lute
 at the touch of thy fingers [*gušmāl*] may cease to be mute [*dar koruš*].
 The heart of the heedless shall wake at its cry [*koruš*],
 and the message of angels descend from the sky.
 (Transl. Browne 1920, 538)

The use of themes such as wine and music in expounding spiritual thoughts is a common feature in Persian poetry under the influence of Sufism. Apparently recalling a mundane milieu, Jāmi's lines convey a spiritual message where, again, a reference to God is implied in the allusion to the Minstrel. Jāmi used the summoning of the minstrel also in connection to the key concept of silence. Silence may involve instruments, as the above-mentioned lute, or audience as below:

بیا ساقیا جام دلکش بیا
 می گرم و روشن چو آتش بیا
 که تا لب بر آن جام دلکش نهیم
 همه کلک و دفتر بر آتش نهیم
 بیا مطربا تیز کن چنگ را
 بلنددی ده از زخمه آهنگ را
 که تا پنبه از گوش دل بر کشیم
 همه گوش گردیم و دم در کشیم
 (Jāmi 1999b, 2: 529)

Come O cupbearer bring heart alluring cup,
 bring bright and warm wine like the Fire;
 so that I may put my lips on that cup,
 and put all pen and paper on fire.
 Come O minstrel prepare to play loudly [*tiz kon*] on your harp
 so that we may remove cotton from the heart's ear,
 become all ear, and be silent.
 (Transl. Dalal 1995, 299)

On this same topic, Jāmi wrote a line where the interaction between two polarities, the minstrel and the poet, provides the cornerstone of his imagery. The minstrel is invited to obtain the poet's silence in a way that leaves us speechless:

بیا مطربا و عود را ساز ده
 ز تار ویم بر زبان بند نه
 چو او پرده سازد شوم جمله گوش

نشینم ز بیهوده گویی خموش
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 429)

O Minstrel come and tune the lute,
tie my tongue with one of its strings [*tār*].
As when he plays music [*parda sāzād*] I become all ears,
I stop talking in vain and sit in silence.

Jāmi devoted various pieces of poetry to the *samā'*. He intended *samā'* as a way to attain knowledge and wisdom, in modalities that went far beyond the mere act of performing music or listening to music. In an ecstatic *gāzal* he paired the sound coming from musical instruments with a form of prayer. In the setting of a *samā'* audition, he evoked two levels of understanding: the worldly setting of a Sufi gathering where only the few well-trained Sufis may benefit from the ecstasy evoked by musical performance; and the celestial level where the divine Minstrel leads the universe into a dance:

چيست می دانی صدای چنگ و عود
أنت حسبي أنت كافي يا ودود
نیست در افسردگان ذوق سماح
ور نه عالم را گرفته ست این سرود
آه ازین مطرب که از یک نغمه اش
آمده در رقص ذرات وجود
(Jāmi 1999a, 1: 356)

Do you know what it is – the sound [*ṣedā*] of lute and rebec [*čang o 'ud*]?
'You are my sufficiency, You are my all, O loving God!'
The dry and dismal have no taste of *samā'* –
otherwise that song [*sorud*] has seized the world.
Oh that Minstrel [*moṭreb*]! One tune [*naḡma*]
and every atom of being began to dance.
(Transl. Chittick 2000, 79-80)

Schimmel (1992, 276) states that one of the functions of music in Persian poetry is to “induce listeners into whirling dance”. As for Jāmi, he supported the idea that it is not music to induce into whirling dance, rather it is the underlying cosmic motion that finds physical expression in a dance. When earthly music leads auditors to ecstatic states, it is because it resounds of a superior kind of music:

چرخ در گرد ازین بانگ و نوا
کوه در رقص ازین صوت و صدا
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The celestial globe revolves thanks to this sound and melody,
the mountain starts to dance thanks to this tune and voice.

Jāmi admitted, and probably expected, his poetry to be recited and eventually sung during Sufi sessions. This point is expressed in the following lines where Jāmi refers to a musician and a singer who interpret the poet's verses in the context of a *samā'*:

چنان به شعر شدم شهره در بسیط جهان
که شد محیط فلک زین ترانه مالامال
عروس دهر پی زیب گوش و گردن خویش
ز سلک گوهر نظم گرفت عقد لیل
سرود عیش ز گفتار من کند مطرب
ره سماع ز اشعار من زند قوال
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 37)

My poems brought me such fame in the world,
that the space of heavens is filled with their melody [*tarāna*].
The bride of age, to adorn her ears and neck,
took out a string of rubies from the jewel necklace of my poetry.
With my speech the musician [*moṭreb*] composes delightful
songs [*sorud*],
the singer [*qavvāl*] treads the path of music [*rah-e samā'*] with
my verses.

(Transl. D'Hubert, Papas 2018, 12)

According to Jāmi's thought, musical performances are a medium to convey the meaning of the words sung. In the following lines of a *qet'a* (fragment) Jāmi advised performers against playing music for music's sake, and offers a witty image by combining the double meaning of the word *tan* (body) and 'tan' (that is, the onomatopoeia for a rhythmic item):

دست در تن تن بسیار مزن ای مطرب
رونقی می دهش از شعر نکو گفتاری
جان این تن تن بیهوده تو شعر خوش است
هست هر تن که در او جان نبود مرداری
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 404)

O minstrel don't play so much *tan tan*:
make it always shine with a well-written poem!
The soul of your vain *tan tan* is the good poem;
every soulless *tan* is a dead body.

Despite the fact that Jāmi shows awareness of the contribution of performers in the spread of his poems and their message, he sometimes expresses a somewhat lofty attitude toward them:

حاجت صوت مغنّی نبود جامی را
جاودان بانگ سماع از دل خود می شنود
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 174)

Jāmi needs no singer's voice [*ṣawt-e moḡanni*],
for eternally he listens with his own heart the loud sound [*bāng*]
of *samā'*.

3 Conclusion

In conclusion, although more elements should be taken into account to gain a full evaluation of musical imagery in the poetry by Jāmi, I wish to express four final remarks.

First of all, most of musical imagery in the poetry of Jāmi shows strong resemblance to musical imagery in the works by earlier poets. Jāmi was indebted to an already established poetical canon where objects, landscapes, and themes assumed the form of highly standardized clichés. Jāmi, who was deeply immersed in this poetic corpus, rearranged already established elements in order to express Sufi teachings in the most eloquent manner. It seems that literary conventions and spiritual concerns shaped his poetry more than his expertise in music theory did.

What is impressive in Jāmi's use of musical imagery is not solely due to the accuracy and consistency of his musical terminology, but also includes the way in which he was able to develop traditional images into extremely elaborate lines. In comparison to fourteenth-century poets, Jāmi used to combine a higher number of musical modes in the same line. He did not limit himself to composing a wordplay on one or two words with a double meaning. He created complex puns on the musical modes and, at the same time, he made references to modulations across them. He used words with multiple meanings to express up to three different concepts in the same line. As Maria Eva Subtelny (1986) has noted, the Timurid period was marked by a "taste for the intricate" that resulted in a deep appreciation for elaborated images and riddles. It would be interesting to widen the research on musical imagery to include Jāmi's contemporaries in order to clarify whether complex punning on musical modes was an idiosyncratic feature of the poet Jāmi or rather the product of a shared taste.

Although Jāmi sometimes includes biographical data in his poetry, I have not to date identified any verse in which the poet presented himself as a musician. Musical imagery does not tell us much with respect to Jāmi's level of music proficiency. The very idea of musical modes imagery, which seems to imply a high level of competence, has been inherited from previous poets whose level of expertise in music theory or practice is less known or totally unknown. The use of

music terminology is not by itself enough of a clue to ascertain professional expertise.

Further research should be devoted to arrive at an appropriate understanding of the average level of musical instruction in the age of Jāmi. Although we do not know whether Jāmi's audience had any musical training, it seems reasonable to think that the more educated in Jāmi's circle would understand references to the main modes, modulations, instruments, and related elements. The activity of making or finding the image implies an intellectual interaction between poet and addressed audience, where the poet invites the audience to find out the relation of judgment he had established. That is, the image, complex as it might be, should be understood on the basis of a common ground. I believe Jāmi was conversing with an élite capable of enjoying most of his poetical refinements. It would be anachronistic to judge his poetry through the lens of our contemporary hyper-specialised canons of knowledge which may not apply to the Timurid era.

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