

The Appearance of Rajaz in Arabic Poetry

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Summary

“Rajaz” is the name used for the short poems with a few couplets recited improvisely on battlefields, in poetic repartees and daily life in Pre-Islamic Period. Rajaz, which means tremor and spasm, was used like meter of prosody in Islamic periods. The origin of rajaz is “saj” (rhymes without meter) and it is considered as initial stage of Arabic Poetry. As time passed, saj developed and turned into rajaz in simple meters. Mostly, it was not regarded as a poem because of some religious risks and its relationship with saj. Since it was considered as a type of folk poem, the poets of Pre-Islamic and Islamic periods did not give importance to rajaz.

Rajaz, which is one of the sixteen meters (bahr)¹ of prosody, is also a type verse. We see that this term used for the short poems with a few couplets and recited improvisely in daily life activities, on battlefields, while taking water from wells, on travelling or in similar situations is mostly used as a meter of prosody in the eighth century A.D.

The old Arabs named this meter as rajaz for the reason that they likened the structure of it to a kind of tremor seen on the camel which is an indispensable part of their daily lives.

In Lisânu'l Arab, rajaz means “a disease occurring in thighs of camels” and it is defined as “shaking of camel’s legs for an hour when it wants to stand up and then calming down of it”. The word of “ارتجرت”, which is generally described as succesive movements and derived from the same root, means “ he recited rajaz ”; similarly, the word of “ترجرت” which means “successively coming of thunder” means “it thundered”. Some researchers make a connection between bahr of rajaz and the word of “الرجازة” by interpreting this word as “a means of equilibrium” or “tare”². As a meter of prosody, rajaz is expressed as rhythmic tremor, rapidity and movement³.

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¹ Bahr: 1: sea, 2: to cut ear of a camel. 3: width 4: a person who is generous and respected. As a literary term, the word of “bahr”, which means “cutting” (shaqq), is used since each of these sixteen meters are produced from each other. (See. Muhammed al-Bâtil, "Bahru'r-Rajaz", *Majallatu Câmi'ati'l-Malik Sau'ûd*, VII/2, Riyâdh 1415/1995, 267-268).

² A.Schaade, “Rajaz” ", *IA*, IX, 657,658-659 يقال رجزت الحمل إذا عدلت الرجيزة See. *Sherhu't-Taysir fi'l-'Arûdh Matbaatu'l-'Âmira* 1261, 42

³ Ibn Manzûr, a.g.e, V, 349-353;

The poems recited in bahr of rajaz are named as “urjûza” (أرجوزة). The plural form of it is “arajeez” (أراجيز). The Poet al-Kumait (death date 126/743) likened the sounds of a boiling caldron to “urjuze” and says ⁴: (al-Mutaqârib)

كأن العظام من غليها أراجيز أسلم تحجو غفارا

The bubbling sounds of (that boiling caldron) resemble AslAm’s urjûzes satirizing Gifâr.

The person who recites rajaz or urjûze is called rajeez “راجز” (singular male) and rajjâz “رجاز” (singular male) rujjâz “رُجَاز” (plural male) and rajjâzah “رُجَازة” (singular female). Another reason why rajaz is called rajaz is that when the camel suffering from this tremor disease it lifts its trembling leg up and stands on its other three legs at the moment of tremor. Most of it is “mashtûr”⁵, namely rajaz considered to be used on trimeter is resembled the camel standing on its three legs⁶. The lines below by al-Ra’î (death date 90/708) describing stones put on the fire in the shape of trivet throw light on this situation ⁷: (at-Tawîl)

ثَلَاثَ صَلْبِيَّ النَّارِ شَهْرًا، وَأَرْزَمْتَ عَلَيْهِنَّ رَجَزَاءُ الْقِيَامِ هَدُوحٌ

The three thrown over the fire and the bubbling sounds of a big caldron were released.

1. THE APPEARANCE OF RAJAZ AS A TYPE OF VERSE

1.1. Rajaz and Saj⁸:

Even literary critics of today try to find out what kind of connection between the types of lines written in prose and written in verse there is; some of them have concluded that the Arabic Poetry has gained its form after completing the stages of prose without meter, prose with saj, rajaz and qasîdah⁹. On the other hand, some others have made a relationship between poetry and music claiming that the poetry is much older than the prose; they have also said that the poetry and the prose appeared as entirely different styles expression.

Ibn Rashîq (death date 456/1063) stated that at first the words had been totally written in prose and then the Arabs invented the types prosody in order to pass their morality, traditions, customs, stoutheartedness, bravery, courage and

⁴ Abu’l-Faraj al-Îsfahânî, *al-Aghânî* (Yay. ‘Ali Muhenna_Samîr Câbir) Beirut 1986, I, 334; al-Jahiz, Abû ‘Othmân ‘Amr b. Bahr, *al-Bayân wa’t-Tabayîn* (Tah. al-Muhâmî Fawzî ‘Atvî), Beirut 1968, I, 325

⁵ Halved

⁶ Jalâluddîn al-Hanafî, *al-‘Arûz: Tahzîbuhu wa Î‘âdetu Tadvînuhu*, Baghdâd 1978, 645.

⁷ Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, V, 350; In fact, there might have similarity between a camel standing on its three legs or the positions of Stones around fire and mashtûr rajaz being the original verse type since it consists of three lines. This shape resembles to the orthography of short rajazs belonging to the first period because two of three lines are written side by side while one of them is below.

⁸ Saj: Rhyming straight lines

⁹ Ode

generosity to the next generations; they also called them “poem” after these meters were matured and become widespread¹⁰.

It is easily understood from these statements of Ibn Rashîq that the writing was not widely used by the nomadic Arabs, who were transforming their information in the ways of oral tradition, and they discovered the poem in order to set their own values into the minds of new generations. It is rather difficult to save a prosaic expression than to save a poetic and rhythmic expression in a human mind. al-Jâhîz (death date 255/868) explained this difficulty of prosaic expression like in the following way: “The beautiful prosaic words said by the Arabs outnumber their beautiful poetic words. However, neither has one tenth of the prosaic words been preserved nor has one tenth of the poems been lost.”¹¹

Due to this difficulty of prosaic expression, the prose without meter gradually started to be formed again with rhyme and rhythm and in this way the saj, which is the primitive form of the rajaz, appeared. The saj, whose literal meaning is “singing of a dove repeatedly and monotonously “as a literary term means” to recite verse-like lines with rhyme but without rhythm,¹².

Brockelman clarified that the first artistic form expression was saj namely it was required to be non-rhythmic but rhyming, and that rajaz was derived from this saj which the oracles and the seers made some predictions; and that other bahrs were coming from the rajaz¹³. Goldziher had the same opinion with Brockelman and stated that saj was one of the ancient styles of expression, and it was older than qasîdahs and urjuzes; and also that rajaz was an improved form of saj¹⁴.

In his book named *Târîkhu'l-Âdâbi'l-Lughati'l-'Arabiyye*, Corcî Zaydân mentioned about his shared opinions with Ibn Rashîq. He expressed that the Arabs felt the need saj to pass their moral values and courage to the future generations by stating that they started the poetry with saj and supporting his idea by giving some saj examples of the oracles. He also added that these sajs were recited pleasantly with their correct rhymes¹⁵. The presence of the poems in the form of saj, rajaz and other bahrs seen in some expressions of various Arabic sources weakens the idea of that the poetry has completed many phases one of which is poem.

We see that the expressions with saj coming from Pre-Islamic Period mostly belong to the oracles. The soothsayers of Pre-Islamic Period, who claimed that they knew the things which would happen in the future, were answering the questions asked by their visitors. These questions supposed to be inspirations and divine inspirations, and also some information seen as possible signs of future events were being responded by these oracles indirectly but with a style which is full of both amazing and reliable implications consisting of various sajs. Sheqq Anmar and Satih

¹⁰ Abû 'Alî el-Hasan b. Rashîq el-Qayravânî, *al-'Umde fî Sina'ati al-Shi'r wa Nakdihi* (Tashih: Muhammed Badruddîn en-Na'sânî), Egypt 1907, I, 5

¹¹ al-Jâhîz, *Ibid* I, 153

¹² Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, VIII, 150

¹³ Carl Brockelmann, *Târîkhu'l-Âdâbi'l-Arabî*, ('Abdulhalîm an-Najjâr) Cairo 1959, I, 51; Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of The Arabs*, Cambridge 1956, 74

¹⁴ *Majallatu Fusûl*, (ديفين سنڀوارڊ) year 1993, number: 3, 8-14

¹⁵ al-Jâhîz, *Ibid* I, 154; Georgy Zaidan, *Târîkhu Âdâbi'l-Lugâti'l-'Arabiyye*, Beirut 1983, I, 58

az-Zi'bî were famous soothsayers of Pre-Islamic Period as well as the owners of the saj found in the sources¹⁶.

Both the oracles had interpreted the dream of Rabî'a b. Nasr al-Lakhmî, one of the ancient kings of old Yemen, with the same expressions by using them in a form of saj. When Sheqq and Satih's saj, which was asserted with almost the same words, is lined up one under the other a poetic appearance is achieved¹⁷.

رأيت حممه خرجت من ظلمة
فوقعت بأرض نهممة
فأكلت منها كل ذات جمجمة

*"A fire you saw from the darkness
To the soil of Sehmet it fell
From it ate all the skulled."*

When the saj, which was recited by 'Avf b. Rabî'a, the oracle of the Asad Tribe, after they had decided to kill Hucr b. 'Amr al-Kindî, the father of Imru'u'l-Qays (death date 545) who was their ancient master is written one under another the verse below is obtained¹⁸:

و الغلابُ غيرُ المغلَّبِ
في الإبلِ كأنَّها ربربِ
لا يقلقُ رأسه الصخبِ
هذه دمه يتعبِ
و هو غدا أولُ من يُسلبِ

*"Ever conquering and never defeated
Within the camels' herd employs
Wars uproar never aches his head
Now his blood shall flow
Tomorrow first he will be killed"*

The words above written one under the other closely resembles *al-Shi'ru al-Hurr* or *al-Qasidah an-Nathriyya* which are still being discussed by contemporary critics of Arabic Literature.

After a short time, some of the oracles began to foretell their predictions about the future with lines in a style containing a mixture of saj-rajaz. When The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was called the oracle, Khatar b. Mâlik, who was requested for information about this topic, replied as follows¹⁹;

¹⁶ al-Jâhiz, *Ibid*, I, 190

¹⁷ Ibn Hishâm , *as-Sîratu 'n-Nabawiyya* (Publisher:Mustafâ as-Sakâ' - Ibrâhîm al-Abyârî, 'Abdulhafîz esh-Shalbî). I, 16; Īsmâ'îl b. 'Omar b. Kathîr al-Kurâshî, Abu'l-Fidâ', *al-Bidâya wa' n-Nihâye*, II, 62; It is reported like this: جمجمة وثهمة على التوالى ويقصد بالأولى فحمة والثانية بقعة من الأرض واقعة على ساحل البحر فأكلت منها كل ذات جمجمة . See. Ibnu'l- Ethîr, *al-Kâmil fi 't-Târikh*, Beirut 1995, I, 323

¹⁸ Ibn Qutaibah, Muhammad 'Abdullah b. Muslim, *esh-Shi'ir wa'sh-Shu'arâ'*, Beirut 1412 /1991, 52

¹⁹ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalânî, *al-Isâba fi Tamyîzi's-Sahâba*, (Publisher. 'Alî Muhammad al-Bajâvî) Beirut 1992 V, 690

أقسمت بالكعبة والأركان
قد مُنع السمع من عتاة الجنّ
بثاقب بكفّ ذي سلطان
من أجل مبعوث عظيم الشأن
يُبْعَثُ بالتَّنْزِيلِ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

"I swear upon the Ka'ba and its pillars that; it has been forbidden
To seek news from the fierce genies or demons, because an exalted prophet
With a lance, a clear proof and a book from the Almighty in this hand, has
been sent."

While Ibn Hajar was accepting these lines as a mixture of rajaz and saj. Dr. Frolov working on this subject did not regard them as the epitomise of saj²⁰. Frolov evaluated these lines as rajaz with trimeter according to the prosody, and he also found some irregularities related to the meter in the frequent appearance of rajaz to be regarded as the most ancient form of poetic expression in various written sources shows that once upon a time, rajaz was widely used by the old Arabic communities. It is quite possible to see several rajazs whose owners are definite and indefinite or anonymous in books written especially on language and literature.

The rare appearance of rajaz in the collections of the poems belonging to Pre-Islamic periods is for the reason that the rajaz mostly considered as a type of folk poem.

1.2 Rajaz and Cameleer's Songs (الحداء) al-Hudâ':

Some orientalist studying on Arabic Literature tried to establish a commencement theory for Arabic Poetry after taking many similar features of primitive communities such as the Pre-Islamic Arabs. According to this theory; the poetry, in ancient primitive communities, started with simple lines repeated by the members of the community while they are working or travelling together.

Tâhâ Husayn made a relationship between music and poetry by suggesting that poetry had appeared before prose and associated the beginning of poetry with singing a song. He also claimed that poetry and song occurred and developed together in Arabic society²¹. In the works of some old Arabic historians, it is possible to find some assertions which fit in with these opinions of the writer. These assertions tell us that the beginning of the singing song is al-Hudâ'²².

al-Hudâ' or al-Hida' and al-Hadv " الحداء ، الحدا ، الحدو " (to drive camel by singing and encourage it to walk or run faster) is the infinitive form of this verb²³. The person singing these melodies is called al-Hâdî. al-Hâdî is not a poet dealing with poetry but anyone from the band of travellers whose skill and voice is appropriate for singing hudâ'. He sings his hudâ' improvisely without any preliminary preparation²⁴.

²⁰ D. Frolov, "The Place of Rajaz in The History of Arabic Verse", *Journal of Arabic Literature*, XXVIII, Leiden 1997, 248

²¹ Tâhâ Husayn, *fi'l-Adabi'l-Jâhili*, Cairo 1927, 324

²² al-Mas'ûdî, *Murûj al-Dhahab*, Beirut 1988, IV, 222

²³ Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, XIV, 168

²⁴ Mâcid Ja'âfira, Ru'ya fi Makâneti'r-Rajaz 'Inda'l-Qudamâ' wa'l-Mu'âsirîn, *Mu'ta li'l-Buhûth wa'd-Dirâsât*, vol: 3, no: 2 (1988), 216

Khalil b. Ahmad, who invented meters of prosody by arranging meters of poetry, associated al-Hudâ' directly with rajaz and said: "Hudâ' is hâdî's reciting rajaz while going after camels"²⁵. Another linguist al-Akhfash stated that rajaz was recited while working, driving a camel and singing hudâ'²⁶. In addition to this, Ibn Jarîh who was talking about literature with people coming from Iraq to visit him asked them "What do you think about rajaz, namely al-Hudâ'?"²⁷

Although there are lots of similar assertions about the beginning of Hudâ', the most accepted one among them tells: Mudar b. Nizâr b. Ma'ad b. 'Adnân²⁸, one of the ancestors of The Prophet Mohammed, hit the hand of a shepherd with a stick since the shepherd scattered his herd of camels. Then, this good-voiced shepherd uttered: *O my hand, O my hand* "وا يداه وا يداه" or "وا يدا وا يدا" in tune and the scattered camels came together²⁹. Afterwards, these words were considered as Huda and used frequently. Yet, the words of "وا يداه وا يداه" are not in bahr of rajaz but bahr of ramal.

Owing to Hudâ', "Musiqâ" soon after developed among the Arabs who got accustomed to music and new types of music such as nasb, sinâd and hazaj. According to al-Mas'ûdî (death date 346/974), al-Hudâ' had appeared before song³⁰. Some critics claimed that the first melody used by the Arabs in order to keep their camels under control was Hudâ' and these Arabs accepted rajaz as Hudâ' by stating that all of the bahrs in meter of prosody were taken from the camels striking their hooves on the desert sands in harmony with the rhythm of this Hudâ'.

2. APPEARANCE OF RAJAZ AS A METER (BAHR) OF PROSODY

It is a fact that there are prosody or meters of poem resembling prosody in all Semitic communities. In order to protect Arabic poetry, Khalil b. Ahmad (death date 175/791) established the system of prosody after he had collected some bahrs having been used for a long time in this geographical region and types of verse described with the same name above. We see that some bahrs used rapidly in poems with a few couplets such as rajaz, ramal, hazaj had been different types of verse prior to this compilation of Khalil b. Ahmad.

Al-Walid b. al-Mughîrah (death date 1/622), one of the old living in Quraish, wants to talk to a group of clansmen of Quraish about how they introduce The Prophet Mohammad to the people visiting the Ka'bah in approaching season of pligrimage. As the clansmen of Quraish prefer to call him poet, al-Mughîrah says: "We know all kinds of poetry: rajaz, hazaj, qasîdah. What he (The Prophet Mohammed) recites are not poems."³¹ We understand from these words of him that there were not only qasîdahs but also other types of poetry such as rajaz, hazaj. In his

²⁵ al-Khalil b. Ahmad al-Farâhîdî, *Kitâbu 'l-'Ayn*, (Publisher: Mahdî al-Mahdhûmî es-Sâmarâ'î) Beirût 1988, II, 326

²⁶ Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, II, 1126

²⁷ *al-Aghânî*, I, 396

²⁸ Mudar b. Nizâr b. Ma'ad b. 'Adnân: He is the grandfather of Prophet Muhammad in seventeenth generation and the great ancestor of some 'Adnâni tribes.

²⁹ al-Mas'ûdî, *Ibid*, IV, 222; Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, II, 242

³⁰ al-Mas'ûdî, *Ibid*, IV, 222

³¹ Ibn Hishâm, *Ibid*, I, 270

book titled "al-Qawâfi", al-Akhfash states: "I have heard from the most of the Arabs: The whole poetry consists of qasîdah, rajaz, and ramal. Qasîdah originates from simple, long, wholly complete, entirely long, exactly plentiful and the whole bahrs of rajaz. The people sitting on their mounts sing with it. Some of these people claim that they sing these songs in bahr of al-Haffî. The ramal is a group of poems except for qasîdah and rajaz. In Arabic Literature, each poem with trimeter is rajaz. They recite it while they are working and driving their camels."³² It is understood from these statements of al-Akhfash that rajaz and ramal were not only bahrs but also each of them might have been used as a term in different meanings previously and even as a type verse³³.

There are also data about rajaz is being different type. In the book named as "al-Kâfi fi 'Ilmayi'l-Arûd ve'l-Qawâfi" it is suggested that poets who accepted all the short poems with a few meters as rajaz did not take the bahrs of these poems into consideration³⁴. Furthermore, al-Jawharî claimed that rajaz involved each of the bahrs being formed of Mustaf'ilun whether was short or not and both of al-munsarih and al-muktadab were rajaz³⁵. In the following periods, we see that some qasîdahs which were not in the form of bahr of rajaz were considered as rajaz since the all couplets of them were in the same rhyme³⁶.

These statements show that rajaz had been known as a type of verse until Khalîl b. Ahmad compiled the meters of prosody and also after that rajaz and other sorts of prosody were given as a name to some bahrs of prosody which were similar to themselves. Another data explaining how rajaz turned into a bahr of prosody was not able to be reached. When Khalîl b. Ahmad was asked why rajaz was called with this name, perhaps due to the relationship of its metrical scales³⁷, he replied as "Because it looks like the tremor on the legs of a camel"³⁸ Since it was such a changeable and active bahr, it was later called "*Himâru al-Shi'r*" (the ass of the poetry), or "*Matiyyatu al-Shu'arâ*" (the mount of the poets).

2.1 Terms of Rajaz and Qasîd - Qasîdah

Many experts asserted that in the beginning, the whole poetry consisted of rajaz and quatrains and they called the ones reciting poems "shâ'ir", and reciting rajaz "râjiz". In later periods, Ibn Rashîq stated that the word of "shâ'ir" comprised both of "sha'ir" and "râjiz"³⁹.

The first qasîdahs had emerged at the time of 'Abd al-Muttaleb and Hashim b. 'Abdi Manâf and then expanded⁴⁰. The first poets reciting qasîdah were al-Mohalhil (death date 531), Imru'u'l-Qays. According to an assertion, the first

³² al-Akhfash Sa'îd b. Mas'ada, *Kitâbu'l-Qawâfi*, (Publisher: Izzat Hasan), Damascus 1970, 68

³³ Nihat M.Çetin *Eski Arap Şiiri*, Istanbul 1973, 66

³⁴ Jalâl al-Hanafî, *Ibid*, 646

³⁵ Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, I, 137

³⁶ Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, I, 121

³⁷ Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, V, 350

³⁸ Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, I, 89

³⁹ Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, I, 123

⁴⁰ Ibn Sallâm, *Ibid*, I, 26

qasîdah was recited by al-Afwah al-Awdî (death date 570) and he was the oldest one among the others⁴¹.

The poetry had started to expand approximately one hundred and fifty years before the Hijrah and then a type of prosody which were named as qasîd and related to some rules appeared. To recite a qasîd is derived from the root of “فصد” which means “to head towards something.” The reason why it was called qasîd was shown as that the poet had completed his poem with words and then selected the good and nice meanings. By the help of the quotations in the book “Lisân” of al-Jawhary⁴².” Like the plural form of safîn is safinah, qasîd is the plural form of qasîdah. Both qasîd and qasâ'id are the plural forms.” The cause of this naming was that the poet intended to recite qasîdah after he had tried to regulate that he felt in his heart and mind instead of expressing them improvisely⁴³. According to the integrity of chain of saj-rajaz-qasîdah, some studies were made about meter of “مستفعلن” in rajaz and how this meter turned into the bahr of “Kâmil”. The cause of this was explained like: As meter, the form of “مستفعلن” converted to the form of “متفاعلن”, namely al-sabab al-Thaqîl (rapid heavy rhythmic beat) turned into Sabab al-Khaffif “مُسْتَعْلِنٌ” (light rhythmic beat), and also this form “مُتَفَاعِلُنْ” changed into this form extracting the letter Sin. As a result, the structure of the first Arabic qasîdah was completed and this bahr was named as al-Kâmil as a sign of this completion⁴⁴. The first two couplets of a qasîdah of al-Muraqqish al-Akbar (death date 552), who is among the Pre-Islamic poets, are given as an example for this conversion from rajaz to Kâmil⁴⁵:

هَلْ بِالذَّيَارِ أَنْ يُجِيبَ صَمَمٌ لَوْ كَانَ رَسْمٌ نَاطِقًا كَلَّمَ
الذَّارُ قَفْرًا وَالرَّسُومُ كَمَا رَقَّشَتْ فِي ظَهْرِ الْأَدَمِ قَلَمٌ

Is it possible for the remains of the house which does not feel anything to answer?

If there were some traces to tell, they would speak.

The house is deserted, and the traces are like the marks made on the face by the pen.

Additionally, the presence of rhyme in the first two couplets is accepted as a trace of old tradition Arabic poetry based upon rajaz⁴⁶. After these developments in poetry, the bahr of Tawîl (long meter) were started to be used more frequently in qasîdahs and also other sorts of bahr such as kâmil, wâfir, and basît were used⁴⁷. Because, the poet can adapt to expression better in completed meters and long bahrs; but this is

⁴¹ as-Suyûtî, *al-Muzhir fî 'Ulûmi'l-Luga ve Envâ'ihâ*, Beirut, 1998, II, 404

⁴² Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, III, 354

⁴³ Ibn Manzûr., *Ibid* III, 354-355

⁴⁴ Jalâl al-Hanafî, *Ibid*, 651

⁴⁵ Jalâl al-Hanafî, *Ibid*, 651-652

⁴⁶ Sâlim Hadâdah, “Ustûratu'r-Rajaz wa Wâqî'u't-Tawîl fi'sh-Shi'ri'l-'Arabiyyi'l-Qadîm”, *Majallatu'l-Kuwait* April 2001, no: 210, 70

⁴⁷ Brockelmann, *Ibid*, I, 53

impossible in short meters such as rajaz⁴⁸. Tawîl is the longest and the most suitable one to qasîdah in regard to strength. But, only real poets manage to recite poems in this meter, the ones who are not poet fail⁴⁹.

Qasîdah, which became the most important type of prosody for Arabs, is a kind of poem whose both of couplets are complete, and again whose meter has not changed with various modifications and defects⁵⁰. After stating that he had heard that most of the Arabs said that the whole poetry consisted of qasîd, rajaz and ramal; al-Akhfash described the word of “qasîd” as “a poem in full shape of tawîl, basîl, kâmil, madîd, wâfir, rajaz, and light bahrs.” It must be concluded from the word “full” here that these bahrs are the ones which are not majzû’ “مجزوء”, mashtûr “مشطور”, and manhûk “منهوك”⁵¹. After defining qasîd in this way, he described rajaz as trimeter poem whose name was hudâ’ recited by the Arabs while working or travelling on camel and he named other poems except for the frame of these as ramal⁵². Another rule of qasîdah is related to the number of couplets. If poem consists of three or six couplets, this is called “segment”, “strophe” or stanza. There must be a unity of meter in these types of poem⁵³. Although many other statements were made about the number of couplets, it impossible to reach a certain definition. Al-Akfash regarded poems with three or more than three couplets as qasîdah. However, Ibn Jinnî (death date 392/1001) claimed that poems with three, ten or fifteen couplets could be counted as poem but he did not make a certain statement. Generally, the most accepted idea in this matter is that qasîdah involves at least seven couplets⁵⁴. On the other hand, al-Bâqillânî did not accept the poems with less than four couplets as rajaz and the poems with less than two couplets as qasîd. If poem is in different bahrs, this is not called qasîd⁵⁵. Among the most important conditions of qasîdah, the unity of bahr in each couplet is revealed. If the couplets have different bahrs this poem cannot be qasîdah⁵⁶. In his “Sharhu Arûdu’s-Sâvî”, Najmaddîn Sa’îd b. Muhammad As-Sa’îd claims that if the qasîdahs in bahrs such as rajaz and ramal have various changes, it is impossible to call them qasîdah and even poem⁵⁷.

The most outstanding feature distinguishing rajaz from qasîdah is the lack of intention of reciting a literary poem and again the lack of the procedure of consideration, selection and separation. In rajaz, the feelings and emotions are expressed sentimentally and improvisely. The reason lying behind the rejection of rajaz as poem may be the definition of poem given like this: “Poem depends upon

⁴⁸ *al-Ağânî*, IX, 388

⁴⁹ Sâlim Hadâdah, *Ibid*, 70

⁵⁰ Muhammad ‘Abdulmun‘im Khafâcî, *al-Qasîdatu’l-‘Arabiyya*, Beirut 1993, .42

⁵¹ Majzû’: Brachycatalectic; Mashtûr: Halved; Manhûk; Depleted

⁵² al-Akhfash, *Ibid*, 68 ve Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, III, 355

⁵³ Khafâcî, *Ibid*, 40

⁵⁴ Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid* I, 125

⁵⁵ al-Bâqillânî, *Î‘jâzu’l-Qur’ân*, (Publisher: Ahmad Sakr), Cairo 1963, 83

⁵⁶ Khafâcî, *Ibid*, 41

⁵⁷ Sevim Özdemir, *Najmuddîn Sa’îd b. Muhammed as-Sa’îd’s hand-written work Sharhu ‘Arûzi’s-Sâvî’s text criticism*, non published doctoral thesis, Süleyman Demirel University, The Institute of Social Sciences, Isparta 2001, 215

four factors following the intention; word, meter, rhyme and meaning.”⁵⁸ Rajaz is accepted as expression of emotions in a improvisely reproachful way. The word “reproachful” is intentionally used here. Because, it is quite possible to find Turkish meanings of “rajaz” except for its being a literary term of prosody in the word of “reproach”.

Another reason why rajaz and qasîdah are understood as different types of verse that is difference in their number of couplets. In almost the works belonging to language and literature, the poetry is frequently divided into two parts as rajaz and qasîdah by not mentioning other kinds of prosody and probably by taking the length of poem into consideration ⁵⁹. Ibn Rashîq claimed that the name of rajaz was given to mashtûr, manhûk and similar pieces of verse, whereas long types of prosody with several couplets was called qasîdah. He also claimed that mashtûr and manhûk rajaz, which were not accepted as poem, was regarded as qasîdah according to the number of couplets. He permits calling these types of poetic verses qasîdah by stating the the importance of qasd and intention in the length of qasîdah and poem recited in these types of rajaz⁶⁰.

The qasîdahs recited in the bahr of rajaz are called “urjûzah”⁶¹. The plural form of is “Arâjîz”. It is more suitable to name the short poems recited in the bahr of rajaz or rarely in other bahrs in Pre-Islamic Period and Sadru’l-Islam as rajaz since they are not evaluated under the definition of qasîdah. The plural form of this is “Arjâz”.

Ibn Rashîq defined these terms and tried to make the uncertainties about this subject clear in his work *al-‘Umdah* in which he reserved a chapter under the title of “ar-Rajaz and el-Qasîdah”. He stated that urjuze might be called as qasîdah at any rate whether it is long or short, but qasîdah might not be called as urjûzah even if the lines of it have the same rhyme unless it is one of the kinds of qasîdah; that each rajaz might be called as qasîd while each qasîdah whose lines are similar to rajaz might not be called be rajaz. With a quotation from Ibn Nahhâs, he described the word of “qarîd” as “poem which is not rajaz” originated from the word “to cut something”. In order to explain “qarîd”, a definition which means “to give up doing something belonging to the same type” is also made here and by the help of a quotation from Ebû Ishâq it is described as “to seperate things from each other, to cut and as if to quit something by leaving rajaz outside of poem entirely”⁶².

In Arabic poetry, The first distinction between qasîdah and rajaz was made by al-Aghlab al-‘Ijlî. The caliph Omar advised al-Mughîre b. Shu’ba (death date 51/671), who was appointed to be governer for the city, to listen to the poems recited in Islamic Period. Upon this, Labîd and al-Aghlab were invited, too. Labîd wrote

⁵⁸ Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, I, 77

⁵⁹ See, *al-Aghânî*, XVI, 21; *al-Bayân wa’t-Tabayîn*, I, 405

⁶⁰ Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, I, 125

⁶¹ Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, V, 350; Khafâcî, *Ibid*, 42.

⁶² Ibn Rashîq, *Ibid*, I, 122

“Baqarah” sura of Qur’ân on a paper in order to imply that he did not recite any poems since he had become Muslim. Al-Aghlab replied:⁶³

أ رَجَزاً سَأَلْتَ أَمْ قَصِيداً
فَقَدْ سَأَلْتَ هَيْباً مُؤْجُوداً

“Did you want rajaz or qasid
or something that is easy to find?”

2.2. Rajaz as an Art of Poetry:

Rajaz that was not counted as a type of fine art in the beginning and this state of rajaz continued in Islamic Period⁶⁴. The reason for this was that rajaz was a kind of folk poem or metrical verses. There were also ones who did not accept rajaz as poem, since they considered rajaz as the words of simple and ordinary people⁶⁵. Furthermore, a general opinion of poets and critics was the presence of poetic weakness in rajaz. Rajaz, in a sense of usage area, was to express emotions felt in daily life between bedouin and his surroundings. In a sense of meter, rajaz was an active meter used in lines telling the situations such as desert life, enjoyment of children, challenging enemy on battlefields or situations that were not related to palaces and city life such as travels lasted for a day or night. Because of this reason, rajaz could not replace qasidah which addresses to caliphs or governors; and few rājiz had the chance to reach their rajazs to caliphs⁶⁶.

Abu'l-‘Alâ’ Al-Ma’aarî (death date 449/1057) saw rajaz as a worthless type of poetry and he stated this opinion frequently in his works. He claimed that rajaz was the least valued poem and he did not consider it as even a poem. He sometimes accepted rajaz as poem; but the worst poem. In somewhere else, he said that rajaz was weaker than qasidah and also Ru’bah (death date 145/762) and al-‘Ajjâj were weaker than Jarîr (death date 110/728) and al-Farazdaq in poetry. His strongest proof about the weakness of rajaz were the words of al-Farazdaq: “I see a weakness in rajaz. Leave it.”⁶⁷ The poet had put himself in a place above rājiz⁶⁸. On the other hand, al-Farazdaq was regard as the one who did not manage to catch the renovations in poetry and also among the poets who were not able to pass to rajaz whose usage area had already expanded⁶⁹.

⁶³ Jaakko Hameen Anttila, Five Rağaz Collections (*al-Aghlab al-Iğlî, Bashîr ibn an-Nikht, Candal ibn al-Muthannâ, Humayd al-Arqa, Ghaylân ibn Hurayth*). Materials for the Study of Rağaz Poetry II. Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society 1995, (Studia Orientalia. 76.) 152-153

In al-Aghânî it is reported differently :

لقد طلبت هينا موجودا

أ رجزا تريد أم قصيدا

See. *al-Ağânî*, XV, 358

⁶⁴ Nihat M.Çetin, *Ibid*, 65

⁶⁵ al-Bâqillânî, *Ibid*, 55

⁶⁶ Jalâl al-Hanafî, *Ibid*, 657

⁶⁷ Ihsân ‘Abbâs, *Tarkhu ‘n-Naqdi ‘l-Adabî ‘Inda ‘l-‘Arab*, Jordan 1993, 384

⁶⁸ Muhammad al-Bâtil, *Ibid*, 277

⁶⁹ al-Jâhiz, *Ibid*, I, 599

Al-Ma'arrî appreciated rajaz as the houses in the lowest part of paradise, since rajaz was the worst of type poetry. If he runs into Ru'bah in paradise, he shall say: "How compelled you are because of disliked rhymes; even if yours and your father's rajaz are turned into qasîdah, a singular nice qasîdah can not be obtained."⁷⁰

This approach of al-Ma'arrî to rajaz projected in his poems. In "Luzûm Mâ Lâ Yalzam" he said:

فَصَّرْتُ أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْعُلْيَاءَ فِي شَرْفٍ أَنْ الْعَصَائِدَ لَمْ يَلْحَقْ بِهَا الرَّجَزُ

You could not reach loftiness of honour , rajaz cannot also reach the level of qasîdah

The poet compared "shâ'ir" and "râjiz" in his another poem that "sha'ir" cannot reach his degree of veneration; yet, in this comparison , "rajiz" is certainly in a lower position than "sha'ir":

لَمْ أَزُقْ فِي دَرَجَاتِ الْكَرِيمِ وَهَلْ يَبْلُغُ الشَّاعِرِ الرَّاجِزُ

You could not reach degree of veneration. Can a rajeez reach the degree of a poet

In another poem, he expressed this couplet carrying the same meaning:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَنْلِ بِالْعَوْلِ رِثَةَ شَاعِرٍ تَقَنَّعَ فِي نُظْمٍ بِرِثَةِ رَاجِزٍ

The one, who is unable to obtain the degree of being poet in expression, is satisfied with rank of rajîz?

While al-Ma'arrî is insulting rajaz in this way he admits abundance of rajaz in Arabic poetry⁷¹.

al-Ma'arrî makes the following expressions about that rajaz had reached to peak from the aspect of art during the rule of Ommayad claiming that it does not comply with panegyric because of queer words in it: "Your words are not in accordance with praise, they are nothing more than a black pitch, you are scratching ears of praiseworthy with a stone. It is enjoyed with a nice incense of lute. When did you turn into a running horse as if swimming or a barking dog for its hunt, after pulling the quality of camel for which you are lamenting because of too much travelling." He criticizes internal structure of "urjûzah" recited about nearly every subject with his this words⁷².

In his couplets below, al-La'in al-Minqârî expressed that rajaz had weaker structure than the structure of qasîdah by looking down upon this art of al-'Ajjâj who had completely established the term of "urjûzah" in Arabic literature.⁷³

أ بِالْأَرَاخِيزِ يَا ابْنَ اللُّؤْمِ تَوَعِدُنِي وَبِى الْأَرَاخِيزِ-جِلْتُ - اللُّؤْمِ وَ الْحَوْرُ

⁷⁰ Abu'l-'Alâ'el-Ma'arrî, *Risâlatu'l-Gufrân*, (Publisher. 'Âiše 'Abdurrahmân binti'ş-Şâti') Cairo 1977, 376

⁷¹ Ihsân 'Abbâs, *Ibid.*, 385

⁷² al-Ma'arrî, *Risâletu'l-Gufrân*, 377

⁷³ Abu'l-'Alâ' al-Ma'arrî, *al-Fusûl wa'l-Gâyât fî Tamjîdillâh wa'l-Mawâ'iz*, Cairo 1938, I, 320

O son of the wretched! Do you threaten me with the urjuzes? It seems to me that there are vileness and weakness.

We also see that Jarîr, accepted as one of the poets who were not able to recite rajaz in Ommayyad Period by al-Jâhiz, had a prejudice against rajaz. In a comparison made between al-Farazdaq and Jarîr, we understand that Jarîr was considered as a better poet. When the poet, who had never recited nasîb⁷⁴ and rajaz, was asked the reason of this, he answered: "I have never fallen in love, had I fallen in love I would have recited such good nasîbs that even old women would weep over their youth having lapsed away. I liken rajaz to horseshoe prints on the ground. If I had not been afraid of them to be lapsed away, I would have recited many rajazs."⁷⁵

2.3. Discussions On Whether Rajaz is a Poem or not:

Since there is a difference of opinion on whether rajaz is a type of poem or not, some of the people do not accept rajaz as a poem. The claims about this topic generally focus on two points. The first one of these claims is religious risks and the other one is a group of reasons coming from the technique of poetry. In Lisânu'l-'Arab, there are some conflicts in statements of al-Khalîl b. Ahmad, who was the inventor of prosody, about rajaz and quotations related to this topic. It is first expressed by al-Khalîl b. Ahmad in his work that rajaz would fit in with this situation owing to its good structure; even if a single meter is used after accepting rajaz as poem. On the other hand, in the quotation drawn from the vocabulary titled "at-Tahzîb" it is known that al-Khalîl b. Ahmad claimed that rajaz consisted of only half couplets or the one third of couplets since he did not consider rajaz as poem⁷⁶. The objection of al-Khalîl b. Ahmad against rajaz being a poem at this point is about that some couplets asserted that The Prophet Muhammad had recited and belonging to himself or others can not be regarded as poem; if these couplets had been poem The Prophet Muhammad would not have attempted to recite them. According to the same assertion, The Prophet Muhammed did not recite any couplet entirely based on its meter, he recited just "sadr" or "ajuz"⁷⁷ of a couplet; and he did not recite a couplet according to its meter while he was reciting the whole couplet. The example of Labîd:

أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خَلَا اللَّهَ بَاطِلٌ □ □ وَكَلَّ نَعِيمٍ لَا مَحَالَةَ زَائِلٌ

Pay attention to that everything is nothing except for Allah. Every being will perish.

Only "sadr" of a couplet:

أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خَلَا اللَّهَ بَاطِلٌ

was recited but "ajuz" was not. Consequently; since these are half couplets, they are neither poems nor couplets according to al-Khalîl b. Ahmad. If a half couplet was called poem, it would be possible to accept even a part of it with a meter as poem⁷⁸.

⁷⁴ Nasîb: Love poetry

⁷⁵ *al-Aghânî*, VIII, 48

⁷⁶ Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, V, 350

⁷⁷ Sadr: First hemistich; 'Ajuz: Second hemistich

⁷⁸ Ibn Manzûr, *Ibid*, V, 351

There are also some lines asserted to have recited by The Prophet Muhammed himself. In the battle of “Hunayn” or “Hevâzîn” and on a white mule he recited the couplet below in order to bring together his scattered warriors:

أنا النبي لا كذب أنا ابن عبد المطلب

It is not a lie, I am the Prophet and the son of 'Abd'Almuttalib.

At the time of the Hijrah from Macca to Madînah in the cave where he shaltered, he recited these lines for his bleeding finger as a result of a stone struck:

هل أنت إلا إصبع دميت وفي سبيل الله ما لقيت

You are just a bleeding finger, what happens to you on the way of Allah is only this.

The first line was considered as “manhûk”, while the second one as “mashtûr” and they were not accepted as poem.

The reason underlying this thought of al-Khalîl b. Ahmad was the perspective of Qur’ân about poet and poetry. As the society of the time which was trying to make a synthesis between a group terms belonging to Pre-Islamic Period and Islamic concepts viewed The Prophet Muhammad as a “shâ’ir” or sh’er and Qur’ân as a collection of poetry, some verses of Qur’an appeared in order to strengthen the belief that Qur’an was not a group of words uttered by people and pull down the false beliefs about this subject⁷⁹. A contradiction appeared between the verses of Qur’an about this topic and establishing a close relationship between The Prophet Muhammad and poetry or regarding The Prophet as a “shâ’ir” and the lines recited by him as poem. This situation caused a negative point of view for the poetry. This might be one of the reasons why al-Khalîl did not consider rajaz as a poem.

In Lisân, following these quotations, opinions of al-Akhfash about rajaz are found. In respect of this; while al-Khalîl was accepting rajaz as poem, al-Akhfash did not. Al-Akhfash stated that the verses of Qur’an mentioned above forced him not to regard rajaz as poem. al-Azharî commenting the verses of Qur’an above as “Since we have not taught him poetry, why does he recite poem and try to make a book about this subject” said “his reciting one or more couplets belonging to somebody else does not change this situation because this means that we have not made him a poet.” Following this, it was mentioned that al-Khalîl b. Ahmad had not regarded rajaz of “mashtûr” and “manhûk” as poem. From this assertion, it might be concluded that al-Khalîl b. Ahmad considered complete and majzoo rajaz as poem. Again under the light of the same meaning, al-Shantarîni stated: “In my opinion, mashtûr and manhûk are not couplets. Because, the principle of couplet is that it consists of two lines. In this way, the words which are not possible to express plainly are not couplets. Consequently, masthoo and manhook are just the halves of couplets⁸⁰.” al-Ma’arrî added that urjûzah of manhûk rajaz had not been heard from the old poets and the poets could not express what they wanted to state due to the shortage of these meters and this had led the rejection of it as a poem⁸¹.

⁷⁹ See. Glorius Qur’ân: al-Shu’arâ’: 224-226, Yâsîn: 69, el-Hâqqa: 41

⁸⁰ Muhammad al-Bâtil, *Ibid.*, 276

⁸¹ al-Ma’arrî, *al-Fusûl ve’l-Gâyât*, I, 137

Although rajaz was considered as a different type of prosody in the past, it should not be forgotten that it puts the same expression with the poem in human spirit. Yet, according to the definition of poem made by the Arabs, because of the lack of intention, these lines might not be accepted as poem⁸². These are the lines recited haphazardly as they are wished and without thinking upon them, and as consequence without a structure. Someone's reciting a few couplets does not show that he is a poet. The reason why these were called rajaz was the fact that The Prophet Mohammed, who recited these lines, was a rajeez and that this rajaz was not regarded as poem and consequently the attempt of keeping The Prophet Mohammed from the doubt of being considered as a poet while the holy book Qur'an as a book of poetry. There is no obvious and objective scientific evidence about these attempts. In addition to this, rājizs were not accepted as poets in later periods⁸³. Some found resemblance between rajaz and Qur'an owing to its addressing style with saj even though they did not accept rajaz as a type of poem.

⁸² Ibn Rashīq, *Ibid*, I, 123

⁸³ Ibn Rashīq, *Ibid*, I, 124