'Ūd Taqsīm as a Model of Pre-Composition
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4. RIYĀḌ AL-SUNBĀṬĪ'S *TAQSĪM* PRACTICE

4.1 **Introduction**

In this chapter, I aim to gain deep familiarity with Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī's art of *taqsīm*, focusing on his later commercial recording repertoire. After having discussed al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm* practice in the previous chapter, the current chapter begins with comparing two *taqāsīm* in *maqām ḥijāz* by al-Qaṣabjī and al-Sunbāṭī. The comparison serves as an introduction to understanding al-Sunbāṭī's improvisation model and to pointing out its most significant features. The chapter continues with a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand* showing most of its unfolding steps. This analysis aims to show how the features contribute to the overall setting-up of the *taqsīm*. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary of the most significant features in al-Sunbāṭī's model of *taqsīm*.

Before proceeding with the analysis, the following paragraph briefly discusses *taqsīm nahāwand* recorded by al-Sunbāṭī in 1927 for Odeon company. This recording gives us with valuable insight into his *taqsīm* practice in this period and is a good starting point for examining his later practice, especially the *taqāsīm* recorded in the 1970s (discussed previously in chapter 1.6). In the recording, we find several similarities with al-Qaṣabjī's practice. The rhythmical aspect is perhaps the most notable in this case. As can be seen in Figure 96, in the first *fāṣilah* of this recording, the rhythmic patterns of Arabic prosody were part of al-Sunbāṭī's style: the metric *iqāma* at the beginning of the recording starts with the pattern *faʿūlun* and continues with the pattern *fāʿilun*. Another similar rhythmic element is how the melody combines and balances the sixteenth and eighth notes values (for instance, units 1.1c and 1.2). In addition, the *tarjīʿat* technique is frequently employed.

Figure 96: al-Sunbāṭī *taqsīm nahāwand* on Odeon, *fāṣilah* 1 [00:07-00:22]

On the structural aspect, al-Sunbāṭī's recording follows al-Qaṣabjī's model. In the exposition, *nahāwand* is introduced in an ascending-descending direction. Al-Sunbāṭī's recording shows a threefold sectional organization, including an exposition plus two development sections (Table 8): the first development section explores the dominant level, and the second explores the octave level; the climax is significantly dense and is carried out in the last *fāṣilah* which is the longest in the recording. Finally, the climax is followed by an elaborate closure process, and the last cadence shows the strongest finality. The total length of the recording is approximately three minutes and two seconds.

Fāṣilah	Timeline	Length	Section	Section length
1	00:07-00:22	15	exposition	33
2	00:22-00:40	18		
3	00:40-00:54	14	development 1	53
4	00:54-01:33	39		
5	01:33-01:45	12	development 2	96
6	01:45-03:09	84		

Table 8: *fawāṣil* and sections in al-Sunbāṭī *taqsīm nahāwand* on Odeon

4.2 Comparing two *taqāsīm* in *maqām ḥijāz* by al-Qaṣabjī and al-Sunbāṭī

Al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz* unfolds over a fourfold sectional organization (Table 9). As discussed previously, this structure is quite uncommon in al-Qaṣabjī's model, a structure which consists three sections. Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz* on the other hand develops over five sections (Table 10). Both recordings contain ten *fawāṣil*: the first two *fawāṣil* form the exposition; al-Qaṣabjī's recording includes three development sections, while al-Sunbāṭī's recording includes four development sections. Compared to an approximate length of three minutes and 18 seconds in al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm*, al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* develops in a significantly longer time, lasting approximately five minutes and 39 seconds.

Fāṣilah	Timeline	Length	Section	Section length
1	00:04-00:23	19	exposition	45
2	00:23-00:49	26		
3	00:49-00:59	10	development 1	45
4	00:59-01:34	35		
5	01:34-01:51	17	development 2	54
6	01:51-01:58	10		
7	01:58-02:12	14		
8	02:12-02:25	13		
9	02:25-02:39	14	development 3	57
10	02:39-03:22	43		

Table 9: *fawāṣil* and sections in al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz* on Odeon

Fāṣilah	Timeline	Length	Section	Section length
1	00:00-00:18	18	exposition	48
2	00:18-00:48	30		
3	00:48-01:35	47	development 1	47
4	01:35-02:02	27	development 2	102
5	02:02-02:16	14		
6	02:16-03:17	61		
7	03:17-03:25	8	development 3	64
8	03:25-04:21	56		
9	04:21-04:29	8	development 4	78
10	04:29-05:39	70		

Table 10: *fawāṣil* and sections in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*

Al-Qaṣabjī's uncommon organization manifests itself in the climactic structure: the last section is considerably shorter, and the climax is one of the least dense climaxes in his repertoire. In order to compare these two *taqāsīm*, I observe a number of similarities and differences in the melody, *maqām*, and rhythm. Noteworthy is a similar sectional organization which includes an exposition, two sections within the dominant level, and an arrival at a climax. In addition, the second development sections in both recordings show a similar path in terms of their pivot tones. Moreover, we find similarity in the high register, with both recordings having the tone F5# as their highest pitch.

Al-Sunbāṭī's recording shows a substantially different rhythmic approach when compared to his *taqsīm nahāwand* from the phonograph era. Here, al-Sunbāṭī 'abandons' the rhythmic patterns of Arabic prosody, and whenever there is metricity, the majority of these melodic segments are based on duple or triple meters.

Al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, exposition

The exposition (Fig. 97) is typical of al-Qaṣabjī's model. It establishes the tonic level with a significant presence of the *jins* below the tonic. The melody highlights some tones around the tonic. Eventually, it settles on the tonic and confirms it with an *iqāma* towards the end of the *fāṣilah,* more specifically in the last melodic unit before the cadence (units 1.4b).

Figure 97: al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz,* exposition [00:04-00:49]

The two *fawāṣil* are tied together with melodic repetition. Each phrase in *fāṣilah* 1 is repeated with some extent of alteration or variation in *fāṣilah* 2 (the repeated phrases are indicated with colored rectangles). Most phrases consist of al-Qaṣabjī's basic form of rhythmic structure, i.e., a rhythmic pattern based on *watad majmū'* or the pattern *fa'ūlun* followed by a group of eighth notes. In addition, the *tarjī'āt* technique marks the beginning of a significant number of phrases and semi-phrases.

We notice a divergence in the rhythm or the flow at several key points, at the cadences (units 1.5 and 2.8) and in the core of the variation (units 2.2-2.5). In these segments, the flow intensifies with the dominance of sixteenth notes in the rhythmic line. In fact, the exposition reveals most of the rhythmic ideas that shape the different rhythmic structures throughout al-Qaṣabjī's recording.

Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, exposition

The unfolding of al-Sunbāṭī's exposition (Fig. 98) shows a gradual increase of the music material. Pitch-wise, this notion is translated into a gradual expansion of the root *jins*. *Fāṣilah* 1 presents the root *jins* in its minimal form (D4, E4 flat, and F4#) and partially includes the *jins* below the tonic. In *fāṣilah* 2, the root *jins* is extended to five tones (D4, E4 flat, F4#, G4, and

A4). The *jins* below the tonic is utilized minimally and is not fully explored (it is only used in units 1b and 1c).

Figure 98: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, exposition [00:00-00:48]

The focus on the root *jins* coincides with highlighting the tonic. In unit 1a, the exposition directly emphasizes the tonic through a significant *iqāma*, and in *fāṣilah* 2, the tonic remains strongly present (unis 2.1, 2.3a and 2.4); at times, the tonic alternates with the tone C4 (units 2.2b, 2.3b and 2.5a).

There are several melodic ideas that shape the exposition (indicated with colored rectangles). The most prominent motif comes in the form of a descending-stepping passage (units 1.b, 2.2a, 2.3a and 2.4; indicated with black rectangles). This motif introduces and highlights the root *jins*. The stepping passage motif represents al-Sunbāṭī's most essential and most dominant form of rhythmic flow, i.e., a rhythmic movement that mainly includes sixteenth note values. With the dominance of sixteenth-note values, eighth notes are vital elements in differentiating or shaping new rhythmic-melodic ideas. There are few melodic figures (marked with red, blue, and green rectangles) that are shaped by partially deviating from the essential rhythmic structure. In general, eighth notes become more present in melodic figures that highlight specific points in a *fāṣilah*, especially in the beginnings and endings of phrases and semi-phrases – for instance, the last unit in *fāṣilah* 1, (unit 1c).

The beginning of *fāṣilah* 2 (unit 2.1) introduces a new musical element partially shaped by new rhythmic materials. The ascending sequence at the beginning of *fāṣilah* 2 includes three segments based on groups of three sixteenth notes. The phrase continues with a repeated melodic figure (marked with an oval) ending with two consecutive eight notes on the tone D4 and D3; this is another crucial element that adds to the 'freshness' of the melodic content. On the pitch level, the repeated melodic figure introduces the tone G4.

T he recording shows a motivic process. The stepping passage motif is transposed at different sections. In addition, unit 1c is repeated (with minor modifications) at the end of each *resolution* in development sections 2, 4, and 5. These occurrences are illustrated in Figure 99.

Figure 99: motifs in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, exposition [00:00-00:48]

Al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 1

Development 1 (Fig. 100) is the first of a pair of sections that gradually establishes the dominant level. The *action* begins with emphasizing the dominant tone employing an *iqāma* with a metric character (unit 3). The direct focus on the dominant is a typical first step in establishing the dominant level. As the next move after the introduction of tone G4, we expect the secondary *jins* to unfold (this was quite common in many of al-Qaṣabjī's recordings discussed in the previous chapter). However, phrases 4.1 and 4.2 descend to the tone G3 during which a modulation to *nawā-athar* (Fig. 101) is carried on. The modulation is realized through altering the tone C4 with C4#, and Bb4 half-flat with Bb3. After completing the modulation, the secondary *jins* occurs very briefly in unit 4.3.

The section continues with a gradual closure process back to the tonic. The *resolution* retrieves the tones C4 and B3 half-flat and the primary modality ends with a simple *iqāma* on the tonic. The *iqāma* is followed by a mild conclusive cadence; it only employs the first *jins*. The full closure in this section paves the way to the next section where a significant and vivid modulatory process will occur.

The modulation process in units 4.1b and 4.2b, in particular, is realized with a dense rhythmic structure employing sixteenth notes. However, when going back to the primary modality in the *resolution*, the rhythmic line reverts to patterns with a strong presence of eighth notes.

So far, we notice a motivic process realized through cadences. Al-Qaṣabjī repeats the same cadence at the end of *fawāṣil* 3 and 4 (marked with rectangles). He previously used this cadence at the end of the first *fāṣilah* (unit 1.5; see Figure 97).

Figure 100: al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 1 [00:49-01:34]

nawā-athar G3

Figure 101: *nawā-athar* G3

Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 1

Al-Sunbāṭī's first development section (Fig. 102) continues in a similar fashion to the exposition and unfolds a few tones around the dominant. Unlike al-Qaṣabjī's development section, the *action* notably avoids a significant melodic emphasis of this tone. Alternatively, F4#, the leading tone to the dominant, is prominent throughout the section and contributes to or inspires a sense of destabilizing or postponing the dominant. As indicated in the ovals, the tone F4# is particularly notable in the opening *iqāma* (unit 3.1a), the melodic sequence (units 3.2c and 3.4a), and the conclusive cadence (unit 3.7).

Figure 102: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 1 [00:48-01:35]

This section exemplifies al-Sunbāṭī's most favorite tool of melodic development, the melodic sequence. Phrases 3.2-3.4, the core of the *action*, are carried out with a highly embellished and partially modified sequence. To show the sequence and its different constitutive segments clearly, Figure 103 illustrates the sequence in a basic form while leaving out embellishments; and the *iqāmāt* being stated in similar lengths. The sequence includes several elements: a descending four-tone melodic figure (marked with rectangles), a short *iqāma*, a short ascending line followed by a descending skipping pattern (marked with ovals), a skip of a third interval (shown with arrows).

Figure 103: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, sequence in phrases 3.2-3.4

In this section, and most of the development sections throughout the recording, al-Sunbāṭī places emphasis on the *resolution*. He utilizes these melodic segments to set up distinguished melodies characterized by well-defined or highly organized rhythm and melody.

Phrase 3.6 intensifies the pace towards the conclusive cadence. Unit 3.6b, in particular, launches an ascending-descending skipping pattern that pours into the *iqāma* in unit 3.6c. All

the *resolutions* in all the development sections employ similar rhythmic-melodic intensification towards the cadence.

Towards the end of the section in unit 3.7c the tempo is slowed down (*ritardando*). This is a simple example of a significant feature of al-Sunbāṭī's practice: a certain degree of flexibility in tempo or pulse. We find more examples of this quality further on in the recording.

Al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 2

The second development section (Fig. 104) exemplifies a unique approach to modulation in al-Qaṣabjī's practice. He utilizes a broad scope of *ajnās* or modal colors, and the section shows a fast modal tempo where a modal change occurs in almost every *fāṣilah*, phrase, or semi-phrase.

Figure 104: al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 2 [01:34-02:25]

Most of the modal colors in this section unfold in an immediate juxtaposition within *fāṣilah* 5 (Fig. 105). Perhaps the most significant aspect of this *fāṣilah* is the 'coloring' of the tone D with three *ajnās* within a very short melodic segment: *rāst* D4 (unit 5.1b), *bayātī* D5 (unit 5.1c)

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and *ḥijāz* D4 (5.2b). Other modal structures in *fāṣilah* 5 include an emphasis of *bayātī* on A4 (unit 5.2a), and *rāst* G4 (unit 5.1c).

Figure 105: al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, modal structure in *fāṣilah* 5

In contrast to the brief display of modulations in *fāṣilah* 5, al-Qaṣabjī dictates each of the following *fawāṣil* (units 6, 7 and 8) to one or two of the previous *ajnās*: *fāṣilah* 5 is in *bayātī* A4; *fāṣilah* 7 opens with *bayātī* A4 (unit 7.1) and moves to the *jins nahāwand* G4 (units 7.2 and 7.3); and *fāṣilah* 8 begins with *rāst* G4 and ends with *ḥijāz*.

Rhythm-wise, a notable quality is a constant interchanging between basic and dense rhythmic structures on the level of phrases and semi-phrases; this quality accompanies the fast modal tempo and aids in highlighting the different modal colors.

Finally, semi-phrases 8.2 and 8.3 are repeated in al-Qaṣabjī's climax, creating motivic ties or links between the current section and the following section.

Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 2

In contrast to the fast modal tempo and variety of *ajnas* in al-Qaṣabjī's section, the *maqām* in al-Sunbāṭī's second development section (Fig. 106) continues to unfold in a reserved and 'economized' manner.

Rāst G4 is the only modal change in al-Sunbāṭī's section. This modulation (including *ḥijāz* D5) occupies almost half of the *action* (lasting approximately 37 seconds out of a total of 72 seconds). It is worth mentioning at this point that *ḥijāz* D5 becomes al-Qaṣabjī's climax in the next section, while al-Sunbāṭī approaches the climax differently in terms of *maqām* (I will elaborate on this below).

The pulse in the *action* becomes flexible by applying slight *tempo rubato* and many ornaments. When the melody arrives at the dominant in phrase 5.1, and the *resolution* begins in phrase 6.6, there is a clear contrast in the rhythm: the pulse becomes rigid (*a tempo*) and we notice a 'centralized' metric structure using one or a combination of two durational patterns.

Figure 106: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 2 [01:35-03:17]

The melody continues working in the secondary *jins* until the middle of *fāṣilah* 5. Its fundamental melodic line gradually makes its way to the dominant through the tones A4, G4, F4#, A4, and G4 (marked with ovals). The cadence in phrase 5.2 establishes the dominant while modulating to *rāst* G4. *Rāst* continues throughout units 6.1-6.5, and the tone range expands to include *ḥijāz* D5.

Phrase 5.1 is molded almost entirely from three sixteenth notes and variations of a quarter note (such as four sixteenth notes and two eighth notes). Phrase 6.6 is a brief metric segment. It is organized as a real sequence, i.e., a sequence containing 'continuing segments that are exact transpositions of the first segment. Every tone is transposed at exactly the same intervallic distance.'[216] The sequence is twofold; it can be divided into two bars and each bar is made of twelve sixteenth notes (the bars are indicated with dashed bar lines). The transition from the metric segment to the following phrase is done smoothly: the ascending four-tone melodic figure or motif (indicated with rectangles) leads the melody into the next phrase (unit 6.7). This way of interweaving different melodic segments or phrases is a recurring technique in al-Sunbāṭī's repertoire.

Al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 3

As previously mentioned, the last section of *taqsīm ḥijāz* (Fig. 107) is one of the shortest in al-Qaṣabjī's repertoire, and it shows one of the least dense climaxes. *Maqām*-wise, the section mainly duplicates *jins ḥijāz* to D5 with *jins rāst* G4 below it.

The section realizes the climax in a typical fashion to al-Qaṣabjī's model. Before arriving at the climax, the *action* typically opens with a short *fāṣilah* (unit 9), introducing the *jins* on the octave. A typical feature of such a beginning is the *iqāma* with a metric character that emphasizes D5. The *action* introduces the climax in the last *fāṣilah* (unit 10). Though we might have expected a much longer and denser climax, phrases 10.1-10.8 are the longest and densest melodic line that forms part of an *action* throughout this recording. Phrases 10.7 and 10.8, which bring the climax to an end, are modified repetitions of phrases 8.2 and 8.3 from the previous section (Fig. 8).

The *resolution* is typical of al-Qaṣabjī's model and exemplifies his artistry in creating an elaborate descending melodic line. First of all, the *resolution* intensifies the pace towards the cadence. As is the case in *taqsīm bayātī* on Baidaphon, one of the main devices of achieving the pace lies in the way melodic and rhythmic variations are made. The ascending-descending shape of phrases is maintained most of the time. A great deal of variation is revealed by looking closely at the last melodic figure or cell of each phrase (indicated with rectangles). For instance, phrases 10.9 and 10.10 share a descending three-note figure moving in step-wise motion; however, phrase 10.9 uses three sixteenth notes while phrase 10.10 uses eighth notes. Phrase 10.11 utilizes the pattern *faʿūlun*. And finally, before reaching the *iqāma*, the melody ventures through the lower register with a steeping passage consisting of sixteenth notes.

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[216] Benward, Bruce, and Marilyn Saker. *Music in Theory and Practice.* vol. 1, McGraw-Hill, 2009, p. 122.

Figure 107: al-Qaṣabjī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 3 [02:25-03:22]

Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 3

Al-Sunbāṭī sets up his climax (Fig. 108) in a significantly different way. At the core of his approach, he opts for producing a 'tension-suspense' effect which is stimulated by a number of intertwined elements. One important aspect of al-Sunbāṭī's climax on the pitch or the *maqām* level is changing the tone C5 to C5#. It is interesting to mention here that D'Erlanger's contextualization of this tone as part of *ḥijāz* A4 (discussed previously in subchapter 2.2, p. 45) is only done very briefly (unit 8.2). In the end, the melody settles on *nawā-athar* G4 at the end of the *action* (unit 8.3). However, what is important here in my opinion, is the way in which the modulation unfolds, or the way al-Sunbāṭī utilizes its intervallic potential together with a substantial rhythmic change, to create a tension-suspense effect.

Figure 108: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 3 [03:17-04:21]

The modulation is carried out gradually in a descending manner and is spread over the whole of the *action*. The tension-suspense effect is partially simulated by melodic instability that is achieved through 'avoiding' the prominent tones (the octave and the dominant) until the end of the *action*. *Fāṣilah* 7 avoids a cadence on the octave tone, and instead, it ends on the unstable Bb4. The same tone is highlighted again at the end of the next phrase (unit 8.1). Phrase 8.1 highlights the tones Eb5 and C4#.

The tension-suspense effect is also stimulated by the different sonorities, or the different intervals created in these phrases in relation to the tonic and the octave: the minor sixth interval by highlighting Bb4, the minor second by highlighting Eb5, and the diminished third interval by highlighting Eb5 and C5#.

The modal instability continues into phrase 8.2 through highlighting the tone A4 while altering the tone G4 with G4# (the leading tone to A4). The melody reaches a point of relative stability when it settles on G4 in unit 8.3c.

Alongside the pitch elements mentioned above, we notice a few other elements that contribute to the climax, that is, an intense accentuation of the tones D5 and Bb5 in units 7 and 8.1, and

differentiated rhythmic elements. The rhythmic elements include an *iqāma* with a metric character that signals the beginning of the climax; and a notable utilization of long durational values such as the dotted eighth note that contribute to highlighting the tone C5# (unit 8.1b).

Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 4

In al-Sunbāṭī's last section (Fig. 109) a major difference occurs between the two recordings on the level of overall structure, organization within the section, and the choice of *maqām*. After reaching the climax, the section inspires a new episode or a new part within the recording.

Figure 109: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm ḥijāz*, development 4 [04:21-05:59]

An important aspect of the new episode is a modulation to *bayātī* on the tonic. The modulation in this context is significant; first of all, because by changing the root *jins* it creates a sense of distance from the original *maqām*; and secondly, due to its considerable length (it lasts approximately 45 seconds).

The way the section is organized is also unique. In my opinion, this section could be divided into an *action* plus a *resolution* in the new modulation (units 9 and 10.1-10.7), followed by an *action* and a complete closure process in *ḥijāz* (units 10.8-10.13).

The first *action* instantly replaces the root *jins* with *bayātī* D4 (unit 9). In phrase 10.1, the feeling of a new episode is also signaled by using a new element or a new technique that affects the rhythmic flow: the damping of a note immediately after the attack (or *secco*). This element 'interrupts' the continuity or the movement of the rhythmic line, resulting in very short rests within phrase 10.1. This technique is particularly applied to mark a very short motif (marked with ovals). The motif simply includes the descending tones Bb4–A4–G4, in other words, the secondary *jins* in its most basic form. The motif is repeated within the same phrase. From phrase 10.2 onwards the rhythmic line abandons the *secco* technique and goes back to continuous movement.

Al-Sunbāṭī utilizes the modulation to the fullest and uses a complete *bayātī* scale. In phrases 10.2-10.5, the *action* continues with a repetitive or non-developing melodic character that adds to the difference from the music material in the previous sections. It simply repeats (with modification or variation) the same music material from phrase 10.1 (i.e., a melodic descent that is based on the secondary *jins*). The phrase does so by introducing three melodic sequences with different rhythmic character (marked with rectangles). In the first sequence, the durational pattern of a dotted eighth note plus a sixteenth note and the pattern based on thirty-two notes are notable. The real sequence in phrase 10.3 on the other hand stimulates a metric structure (indicated with dashed bar-lines).

In phrase 10.6, the first *resolution* brings a notable rhythmic change; its melodic figures are comprised of consecutive eighth notes. In phrase 10.7, the rhythmic flow is intensified towards the *iqāma* with a significant ascending-descending passage played with tremolo.

Al-Sunbāṭī avoids a conclusive cadence in *bayātī*, and in phrase 10.8 he instantly reverts to *ḥijāz*. To maintain a motivic link into *ḥijāz*, this *jins* is reintroduced with a motif that is borrowed from the *bayātī* segment (marked with ovals). After a very brief *action* that settles on the tone G4 (unit 10.9) in phrase 10.10, the second *resolution* opens with a real sequence stimulating a metric rhythmic structure (indicated with dashed bar-lines).

4.3 The unfolding of al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*

I chose to present a thorough analysis of *taqsīm nahāwand* because it occupies a special place in al-Sunbāṭī's late commercial repertoire: it is the only *taqsīm* that gradually builds-up into a climax in the last section. In addition, the rhythmic-melodic features characterizing al-Sunbāṭī's practice discussed in the previous subchapter are elevated and more visible here. In my opinion, one of the recording's most distinctive qualities that exemplifies al-Sunbāṭī's artistry in the *taqsīm* genre, is a constant change in the musical fabric, or a constant change of 'scenery', achieved through rich and varied melodic-rhythmic elements.

This subchapter takes into consideration the analysis of al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand* by two scholars. The first analysis by Soufiane Feki, a Tunisian musicologist, appears in his doctoral dissertation *Musicologie, sémiologie ou ethnomusicologie. Quel cadre épistémologique, quelles méthodes pour l'analyse des musiques du* maqâm*?*[217] Feki's analysis is part of an attempt to draw general formal features of *maqām nahāwand* in the *taqsīm* genre.

This recording was also analyzed (together with the other five *taqāsīm*) by the Syrian-American composer Kareem Roustum in his Master's dissertation *A Study of Six Improvisations on the 'Ūd by Rīyād al-Sunbāṭī*.[218] Roustum's analysis focuses solely on *maqām* and on pointing out the most significant modulations within the recordings. The studies of Feki and Roustom are taken into consideration at several points in the subchapter.

The length of *taqsīm nahāwand* is approximately five minutes and 47 seconds. It includes 14 *fawāṣil* grouped into seven sections (Table 11).

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[217] Feki, Soufiane. *Musicologie, sémiologie ou ethnomusicologie. Quel cadre épistémologique, quelles méthodes pour l'analyse des musiques du* maqâm*? Eléments de réponse à travers l'analyse de quatre taqsîm.* PhD dissertation, Paris-Sorbonne University, 2006.
[218] Roustom, Kareem Joseph. *A Study of Six Improvisations on the 'Ūd by Rīyād al-Sunbāṭī.* master's thesis, Tufts University, 2006.

Fāṣilah	Timeline	Length	Section	Section length
1	00:02-00:18	16	exposition	16
2	00:18-00:24	6	development 1	40
3	00:24-00:58	34		
4	00:58-01:11	13	development 2	37
5	01:11-01:35	24		
6	01:35-01:54	19	development 3	57
7	01:54-02:32	38		
8	02:32-02:42	10	development 4	58
9	02:42-03:30	48		
10	03:30-03:42	12	development 5	71
11	03:42-04:04	22		
12	04:04-04:41	37		
13	04:41-04:54	13	development 6	74
14	04:54-05:45	61		

Table 11: *fawāṣil* and sections in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*

Exposition

Al-Sunbāṭī's exposition (Fig. 110) includes a very short *fāṣilah* covering the range of the root *jins nahāwand* plus the leading tone to the tonic (B3). *Maqām nahāwand* unfolds in an ascending direction.
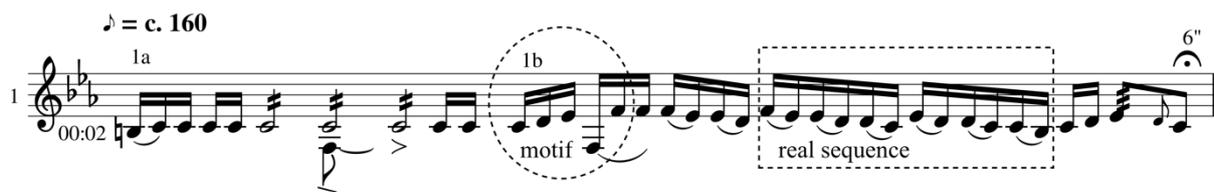

Figure 110: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, exposition [00:02-00:18]

This minimal exposition introduces a number of elements that are essential to further developing the *taqsīm*. As was the case in *taqsīm ḥijāz*, the stepping passage (unit 1b) is the starting point of the melodic development. The passage is carried out in a twofold real sequence (marked with a rectangle). The sequence is a prominent tool of melodic elaboration throughout al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*.

The rhythmic flow in the exposition is achieved through continuous movement of sixteenth notes from its beginning until the last cell. By beginning with this basic form of rhythmic flow, al-Sunbāṭī creates a platform to gradually introduce different rhythmic structures, particularly

in the development sections 1-3. As will be discussed below, many phrases in these sections (and a few in the later stages of this recording) are molded from one or a combination of two durational patterns. Each phrase introduces a new rhythmic character by featuring new rhythmic ideas where eighth notes form a key element in the design.

The beginning of unit 1b introduces a short melodic idea or motif, the ascending four tones C4–D4–Eb4–F4 indicated with an oval. The motif recurs throughout the *taqsīm* by means of repetition or transposition, creating an elaborate motivic process throughout the recording. The recurrences of the motif throughout the recording are indicated in Figure 111.

Figure 111: recurring motif in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*

The pedal tone F3 within the *iqāma* (unit 1a) is an interesting element. Unlike the practice of *tarjī'āt* technique in the phonograph era, the tones F3 and the tonic C4 are played at the same time; in other words, they are produced while using the same plectrum stroke. In the general consensus of *maqām nahāwand* practice, the idiomatic pedal tone in such an act would most likely be the tone G3, the lower octave tone of the dominant. Al-Sunbāṭī's choice to play an F3 signals the centrality of the tone F. The tone F3 is significantly present throughout this *taqsīm*, and eventually, the centrality of the tone F manifests itself in an uncommon modulation to *nakrīz* F4 in development 4.

Development 1

After a very short exposition, the dominant tone immediately becomes the pivotal point of the melody, and the section (Fig. 112) shows a highly elaborate melodic content. G4 is instantly introduced and highlighted in *fāṣilah* 2. This very short phrase is organized as a threefold sequence based on one short melodic figure or cell (the last cell is slightly modified). Compared to the exposition, the cell introduces a new durational pattern comprised of an eighth note plus two sixteenth notes. The eight notes outline the phrase's fundamental tones, the tones C4–Eb4–G4 (marked with red ovals), and the sixteenth notes carry the movement of the pitch. The phrase ends with an accentuated tone G3.

Figure 112: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, development 1 [00:18-00:58]

The structure of phrase 2 stimulates a rhythmic or a quasi-metric fraction that is equal to one bar of duple meter (indicated by the dashed bar–line in Fig. 3; a simplified model of this fraction is represented in Fig. 113). This rhythmic fraction is found throughout the *action* and the *resolution*.

Figure 113: rhythmic fraction of duple meter in

Unit 3.1 displays contrasting pitch and rhythmic elements forming an antecedent phrase to *fāṣilah* 2. It shifts the focus from G4 back to C4. As opposed to the ascent in *fāṣilah* 2, unit 3.1b outlines the descent G4–Eb4–C4 (marked with red ovals).

Phrase 3.1 introduces new rhythmic material: the eighth notes become prominent in the rhythmic structure. This is a rare moment in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand* where the durational patterns consist of mainly eighth notes. Another notable rhythmic aspect of this phrase is playing the pedal tone F3 at its beginning as if it was a 'pick-up' tone, a usage that is typical of a metric melody.

Phrase 3.2 is one of the most distinctive *action* phrases in this *taqsīm* and it has an unconventional character that is similar to *fāṣilah* 2. It covers a considerably wide tone range (A3–Bb5). The intervallic structure of unit 3.2a is consisting of four consecutive skips (4th interval, plus two 3rd intervals), and the chromatic tones A, F#, and Db.

The rhythmic structure in unit 3.2a is based on an eighth plus sixteenth note durational pattern; unit 3.2b is mostly based on variations of four sixteenth notes and it stimulates a rhythmic fraction that is equal to one bar of duple meter. The two units or semi-phrases are intertwined in a unique way. To achieve a smooth transition between the units, the first cell of 3.2b (the three sixteenth indicated with a rectangle) utilizes a similar durational pattern of the previous unit (eighth plus sixteenth).

In his analysis of this *taqsīm*, Roustom highlights the distinctiveness of this phrase, especially its significant use of chromatic tones.[219] He claims that 'an attempt to explain these three pitches, […], in terms of a complete scale is not always satisfactory nor it is always possible. Rather, we must take these pitches as embellishments of important pitch centers within the central maqam.'[220]

In my opinion, phrase 3.2 forms a variation on *fāṣilah* 2. This observation helps in clarifying the phrase's distinctive nature and its significant use of chromatic tones. The notion of variation is underpinned by a number of similarities between the two phrases: phrase 3.2 reintroduces the tone G4; it finishes in the same manner as *fāṣilah* 2, with an accentuated pedal tone G3; unit 3.2a is based on an ascending sequence; and finally, similar to *fāṣilah* 2, unit 3.2b includes one bar of duple meter.

Phrase 3.2 is reintroduced the dominant tone in a new modal context. Here, the tone G4 becomes the third tone in a brief emphasis of *'ajam* Eb4 (Fig. 114).
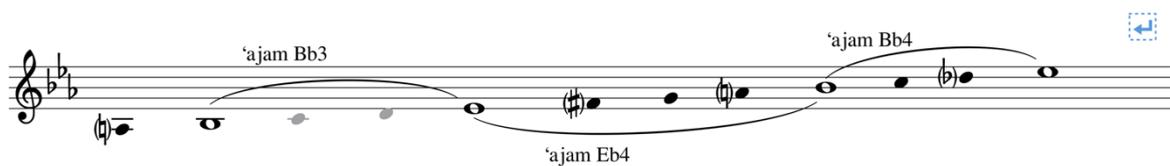

Figure 114: *'ajam* Eb4

The sequence in unit 3.2a outlines the primary tones of *'ajam* Eb4, forming a triad Bb3–Eb4–G4. The chromatic tones A3, and F# function as lower leading tones and highlight the tones Bb3–G4. In addition, using the lower seventh tone (the tone D5b in this case) is a common practice in *maqām 'ajam* and one of its features according to theoretical sources.[221]

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[219] Roustom, *A Study of Six Improvisations on the 'Ud*, pp.82-83.
[220] Ibid., p. 83.
[221] For instance, see D'Erlanger, *La Musique Arabe*, p. 148

The *resolution* shows an intricate motivic process of the *resolution* that is mostly based on two short intertwined cells or motifs. These motifs are introduced in phrase 3.3. The first motif consists of a descent to the lower neighboring tone, and an ascent back to the starting tone, followed by a skip of a third interval (the tones F4–E4–F4–Ab4 indicated with a rectangle). The second motif comprises a stepwise descent of three tones (the tones Ab4–G4–F4 indicated with an oval).

Rhythm-wise, the *resolution* is mostly based on variations of quarter notes. As indicated by the dashed bar lines, phrase 3.3 includes a rhythmic fraction that is equal to one bar of duple meter. In addition, similar to phrase 3.1, the pedal tone F3 at the beginning of the phrase stimulates a pick-up tone to a metric melodic line. The last part of the *resolution*, particularly units 3.4b-34e, includes a significant metric segment comprised of three consecutive bars of duple meter (the bars are indicated with numbers between brackets).

Unit 3.4a is a threefold ascending sequence that is based on transpositions of the two motifs. As indicated by the rectangles and ovals, the two motifs are put together in a continuous intertwining manner or in the form of a chain, which highlights the elaborate melodic content. The elaboration on the same melodic materials continues into the metric segment (units 3.4b, 3.4c and 3.4d). In this threefold sequence, several transpositions of the ascending four-tone motif (marked with ovals) form an anacrusis or pickup for each bar.

Phrase 3.5 is a conclusive cadence that represents a scheme for the majority of cadences at the end of each development section. The core of the scheme consists of three main melodic components. Described in a general manner, the three melodic components consist of:

> 1) a descending stepping passage from the tone C5 to C4 using sixteenth notes (unit 3.5a);
> 2) a descending passage from G4 to C4 using sixteenth note triplets or groups of three sixteenth notes (unit 3.5b);
> 3) an ending melodic figure (unit 3.5c).

The large leap of an octave at the beginning of the phrase and the ascending cell C4–D4–Eb4 in the beginning of unit 3.5b are key in maintaining the flow in this phrase. The ascending cell C4–D4–Eb4 in unit 3.5b utilizs a 'syncopation', a sixteenth note plus eighth note plus sixteenth note (short-long-short rhythmic pattern). This cell carries the transition between the two passages while maintaining the flow to the second descent. The flow is also maintained by a brief anticipation as a result of the accentuation of the unstable tone D4. Similar ascending cells recur in the cadences of development sections 2, 5 and 6.

As previously mentioned, the core of the scheme is found in most of the conclusive cadences, yet many variations are introduced. The most variable component in the cadence is the first passage. The second passage is mostly less flexible, especially in the pitch contour. As the description above implies, the scheme conveys an intensification towards the ending melodic figure through a gradual narrowing of the tone range (C5 to C4, G4 to C4, and Eb4 to C4). This

is paralleled with narrowing the rhythmic patterns of each unit (groups of four sixteenth notes, followed by groups of sixteenth note triplets or three sixteenth notes).

At this point, I would like to reflect on a quote from Feki's dissertation that applies to the exposition and development 1:

> L'exposition du maqâm nahāwand a été introduite par deux syntagmes. Le premier est une sorte de courte phrase qui avait pour rôle à mon avis d'asseoir la tonique du maqâm. Le deuxième a une structure assez particulière. Il est assez sub–phrase é et repose sur des motifs. Il n'expose pas une cellule particulière mais l'échelle racine toute entière. Tous ces éléments laissent penser que ce syntagme repose plus sur des idées musicales précomposées que sur l'improvisation proprement dite. Il constitue donc une sorte de prélude au taqsîm. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas surprenant de voir ce type d'idées préétablies quand on connaît le génie de Sunbâtî dans le domaine de la composition.
>
> Après cette introduction qui a duré près d'une minute, le musicien commence son travail d'exposition et de développement de la cellule racine puis de la cellule complémentaire.[222]

In the first paragraph, Feki suggests that the music material in development 1 is based on pre–composed ideas. This suggestion is strengthened by the unconventional melodic characteristics that I have pointed out in my analysis, namely, the highly sequential nature of the phrases, the minimalist approach to rhythmic patterns in each phrase, the quasi-metric and the metric phrases, and finally, the elaborate motivic materials.

In the second paragraph of the quote, Feki suggests that the exposition and development 1 form an introduction to the *taqsīm*, which implies that the improvisation process in this recording begins in section 2. As an alternative to this suggestion, I believe that al-Sunbāṭī applied a pre-compositional process to other melodic segments in this *taqsīm*, in particular in development sections 2 and 3 where similar unconventional music materials are evidently found.

Development 2

The second development section (Fig. 115) retrieves to the tonic level and uses a considerably narrow tone range B3–Ab4. Despite that, in my opinion, the section maintains the character of a development section and includes an *action* plus an elaborate closure process: In *fāṣilah* 4 (*action*) the prominence of the tone G from the previous section is maintained in the

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[222] Feki, *Musicologie, sémiologie ou ethnomusicologie*, p. 308.

background (I will expand on this below); and in *fāṣilah* 5 (*resolution*) the melody gradually descends and resolves to the tonic.

Figure 115: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, development 2 [00:58-01:35]

The melodic content in the *action* and the *resolution* maintain a distinctive melodic and rhythmic character as in the previous section. The *resolution* displays an intensification of the music material towards the arrival at the tonic. Moreover, the melodic fabric in *action* and the *resolution* is slightly modified due to the complete 'lack' of pedal tones.

Phrase 4.1a focuses on *jins nahāwand* in its minimal form. In unit 4.1a, the tone Eb4 is repeated several times, and unit 4.1b interchanges between Eb4 and C4 through a descending three-tone motif Eb4–D4–C4. This short motif recurs later on in the *resolution*.

The prominence of quarter note variations and the rhythmic accents in phrase 4.1 stimulate a quasi-metric character. The resemblance of this phrase to metricity is enhanced with the introduction of two phrases in duple meter in the next *fāṣilah*. In addition, the motif includes a new rhythmic element, the thirty-two notes durational values.

The interchange between the tones Eb4 and C4 in phrase 4.1 is followed by a cadence on the tone D4 in phrase 4.2. The cadence on the relatively unstable tone D4 – the second tone of *nahāwand*, creates anticipation to the next phrase.

The modality in this phrase is interesting. Feki, for example, refers to this modality as *kurd* D4.[223] Even so, the presence of the tone B3 suggests that the tone D4 in this phrase is the fifth tone of *ḥijāz* G3, the *jins* below the tonic C4. Figure 116 illustrates the full scale of *ḥijāz* G3, while the shaded tones and the slur indicate its complete *ajnās*. The tone B3 plus the cadence on D4 enhance the tone G3 in the background.

Figure 116: *ḥijāz* G3

Fāṣilah 5 is comprised of three metric phrases that gradually descend and resolve the anticipation created by the cadence on D4. Phrases 5.1 and 5.2 include four bars of duple meter organized as a real sequence. Phrase 5.3 includes two descending passages, one bar of triple meter (or 3/8) plus one bar of duple meter.

Phrases 5.1 and 5.2 elaborate on short motifs from previous phrases. These motifs (Fig. 117) are the ascending four-tone motif introduced in the exposition and the descending three-tone motif from phrase 4.1. For the purpose of illustration, I will call them motifs 1 and 2. Motif 1 forms a pickup to bars 1 and 3 (marked with rectangles in Figure 115), and motif 2 is used four times as an exact repetition and a transposition (marked with ovals in Figure 115). In addition, motif 1 forms a linking cell between phrases 5.2 and 5.3, demonstrating once again the unconventional interweaving of a few semi-phrases in this *taqsīm*.

Figure 117: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, two motifs in development 2

Pitch-wise, the tone G comes to the foreground and is emphasized by its metrical position on the first beat of the first bar.

The *resolution* intensifies the pace towards the conclusive cadence. Though this was a prominent pattern in *taqsīm ḥijāz*, in the current *resolution*, the intensification is spread on a larger melodic portion, and it is achieved through a gradual augmentation of the size of the different melodic units. In phrases 5.1 and 5.2 the melody is spanned over two bars in duple or in 4/8 meter. This is followed by two short semi-phrases: unit 5.3a consists of one bar of 3/8 meter and unit 5.3b is consists of one bar of duple meter. The intensification is enhanced

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[223] Ibid., p. 290.

through a large leap of a minor sixth interval from the tonic to the tone Ab4, followed by a descent using thirty-two note durational values.

The conclusive cadence displays a modification to the scheme described previously and has a weaker conclusive effect. Its first melodic unit briefly emphasizes *nahāwand muraṣṣaʿ*[224] (Fig. 118), which is a combination of *jins nahāwand* plus *jins ḥijāz* F4.
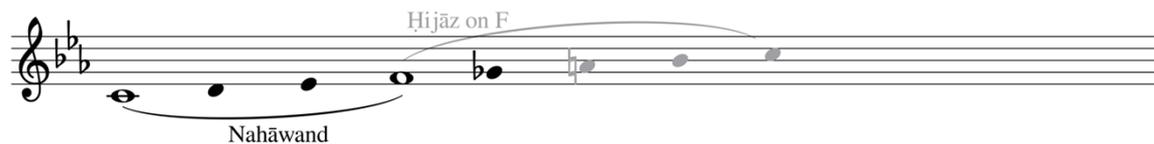

Figure 118: *nahāwand muraṣṣaʿ*

According to Feki, this brief modal change adds 'color' to the *maqām*,[225] and according to Roustom 'the use of the Gb also serves the purpose of delaying the expected *qafla* [cadence].'[226]

In addition to these observations, this modal change should be seen as a continuation of the 'suspension and resumption' of the tone G which started in the *action* and the *resolution*. Through emphasis on the tone F4 (supported by the pedal tone F3) and the use of the alternating tone Gb4, the modulation temporarily suspends the tone G4. The suspended G4 is revealed once again in the next semi-phrase 5.4b. Furthermore, the ascending four-tone motif at the beginning of the phrase (marked with a rectangle in Figure 115) creates a sense of continuation and cohesion with the *resolution*.

Like the cadence scheme, the transition between the first melodic component (unit 5.4a) and the second melodic component (unit 5.4b) is achieved through the use of an ascending cell C4–D4–Eb4, consisting of a sixteenth note plus an eighth note plus a sixteenth note.

Development 3

The *action* (Fig. 119) gradually re-establishes the dominant tone as the melodic pivot and emphasizes the secondary *jins kurd* for the first time in this *taqsīm*.

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[224] Also known as *nahāwand rūmī*.
[225] Ibid., p. 291.
[226] Roustom, *A Study of Six Improvisations on the ʿUd*, p. 84.

Figure 119: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, development 3 [01:35-02:32]

Compared to the prominent quasi-metric phrases in previous *actions*, *fāṣilah* 6 introduces new melodic elements: two long *iqāmāt* on the tones F4 and G4 in phrase 6.1; large leaps of a minor sixth interval C4–Ab4, and a fifth interval Eb4–Bb4 (marked with red ovals); and the slow settling on the dominant in unit 6.2b. At the same time, it maintains the motivic process by opening with the ascending four-tone motif C4–D4–Eb4–F4 (marked with a rectangle). In addition, the variations of an eighth plus sixteenth note and the variations of a quarter note in unit 6.2a resembles the previous section.

The *resolution* of development 3 turns back to the prominent sequential organization in previous sections and the utilization of meter. The metric phrases in particular are mostly organized as real sequences (units 7.3, 7.4a and 7.4b) and they form the pinnacle of metricity in al-Sunbāṭī's recording. From semi-phrase 7.2b and throughout phrases 7.3 and 7.4, the melody includes ten bars (indicated with numbers between brackets in the score): bars 1–4 are in duple meter and bars 5-10 are in triple meter. Moreover, in phrase 7.3, the melody proceeds with the motivic process. As the ovals in Figure 24 show, the pickup to each bar consists of a transposition of the ascending four-tone motif.

The *resolution* descends from the range of the dominant to the tonic in a gradual and significantly orderly manner. Figure 120 outlines the highest and lowest tones in each unit in the melodic descent. It clearly shows the orderly pitch organization of parallel stepwise motion where the units of the descent – be it a phrase or a semi-phrase – are confined to consistent intervals; i.e., a fifth (or diminished fifth) interval in units 7.1-7.3c, and a sixth interval in phrase 7.4.

Figure 120: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand,* fundamental melodic line of development 3

The distinctive rhythmic and pitch structure correspond with unconventional melodic figures. In phrase 7.3 the melody shows atypical intervallic behavior consisting of consecutive triads: units 7.3a, 7.3b and 7.3c and uses two successive descending skips of third intervals, forming altogether the three consecutive descending triads Ab4–F4–D4, G4–Eb4–C4 and F4–D4–B3 (indicated with rectangles in bars 3–5).

The triadic figures in units 7.3a-7.3c go against the 'traditional' intervallic nature or behavior in the *taqsīm* genre; it contradicts, for instance, with al-Faruqi's statement that 'chordal melodies do not exist.'[227] These triads combined with the meter are perhaps the most striking elements in *taqsīm nahāwand*, and they are an explicit example of the influence of westernization on Arabic melody in the course of the 20th century.

The unconventional melodic figures are carried on with two successive descending passages in units 7.4a and 7.4b, followed by a descending skipping passage of third intervals in unit phrase 7.4c. The passages are intertwined with frequent leaps: in bar 7, the melody uses a leap of a ninth interval (G3–Ab4); in bar 8 there is a leap of a fifth interval (C4–G4); and in bar 9 the melody uses a leap of a minor sixth (B3–G4).

In a similar fashion to development 2, the current *resolution* displays an intensification of the music material by means of a gradual augmentation of the different melodic units in parallel to the descending melody.

The first segment of the fundamental melodic line (Fig. 120), the tones F4–Eb4, is spanned over two long melodic units in phrases 7.1 and 7.2. The middle segment of the descent, the tones D4–C4–B3–D4, is spanned over four shorter units in phrase 7.3, each equaling two quarter notes. In the last portion of the descent, the tones C4–B3–C4, the structure is narrowed

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[227] Al-Faruqi, *The Nature of Musical Art*, p. 233.

to two passages consisting of six sixteenth notes, followed by a skipping passage consisting of four pairs of sixteenth notes.

The intensified structure in the *resolution* continues into the cadence, which displays a strong conclusive character, the strongest in this *taqsīm* so far. This implies expanding the cadence scheme. The first component includes three semi-phrases (units 7.5a-7.5c) that form a large ascending-descending scalar passage spanning an interval of a minor tenth. The passage reaches a pitch climax with the tone Eb5. Moreover, the significant use of tremolo in this atypical passage enhances its climactic character.

The second component includes two sequential passages descending from the tone G4 to C4 (units 7.5d and 7.5e) that are rhythmically varied. The last component of the scheme, the ending melodic figure (unit 7.5f), consists of a large descent from the tone Ab4 to C4 grouped in a sextuplet. The descent of a sixth interval resembles previous melodic units in this section, the C4–Ab4 leap at the beginning of unit 6.1c, and the descending passage using the same tones in unit 7.4a (Fig. 119).

Development 4

Development 4 (Fig. 121) introduces new music material and a different structure which evidently differentiate it from the previous sections. The section remains within the dominant level and carries a long modulation to *bayātī* G4. Figure 122 illustrates the tone range of the modulation (the shaded tones depict the complete scale of *bayātī* G4 plus *jins rāst* below G4). The section 'lacks' a *resolution* and the transition from *bayātī* back to *nahāwand* is realized abruptly within a bridge that links the *action* and the cadence.

Fāṣilah 8 introduces *bayātī* G4 and decreases in the tempo from an average of 160 BPM in the previous sections, to approximately 135 BPM. The new average tempo is maintained throughout the *action* until the cadence. The *action* continues into *fāṣilah* 9 with a number of consecutive short phrases (9.1-9.9) that expand on the new modality. When referring to this segment of the *taqsīm*, Roustom writes: 'the use of tremolo is more prominent in al-Sunbāṭī's interpretations of *bayyātī-nawa* as is the increased use of vibrato. At times, he combines tremolo and vibrato to heighten the emotive effect. Vibrato is a device that was hardly heard in the previous *nahāwand* section.'[228]

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[228] Roustom, *A Study of Six Improvisations on the 'Ūd by Rīyād al-Sunbāṭī*, p. 85.

Figure 121: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, development 4 [02:32-03:30]

Figure 122: *bayātī* G4

In addition to the characteristics described above by Roustom, the most significant quality of this melodic segment is perhaps the motivic process that is realized through repeated phrases (marked with colored rectangles). Phrases 9.1-9.4 introduce a songlike 'theme' or a large motif, i.e., a motif that occupies a whole phrase or more. The motif includes two parts (marked with black rectangles). Phrase 9.1 forms the first part and is repeated with modification in phrase 9.2. The first part of the motif ends with the unstable tone F4, creating an anticipation for an arrival of tone G4. The arrival is realized in the motif's second part, phrase 9.3. Phrase 9.4 is a repetition with modification of phrase 9.3.

Phrase 9.5 forms a short bridge between the motif and its restatement in the next melodic segment. The phrase begins with an elaboration on the second part of the motif, more specifically in unit 9.4b. The melody descends to the lowest tone of the modulation, the tone E4 half flat in unit 9.5b, and ascends to the first tone of the motif's restatement, the tone Bb4 in phrase 9.6.

The bridging phrase is differentiated from the motif with fewer embellishments and the lack of tremolo. As a result, it has a clearer rhythmic structure. Its last semi-phrase, unit 9.5c, enhances the forward movement towards the restatement of the motif in the next two phrases. Phrases 9.6-9.8 are a restatement of the motif with modification. Phrases 9.6 and 9.7 are a repetition of phrases 9.1 and 9.2. Phrase 9.8 is a repetition of phrase 9.3. The motif avoids an ending on G4, and ends with F4.

Phrase 9.9 is another bridge that links the *action* and the cadence (unit 9.10). It elaborates on the previous unit 9.8b and descends from the tone C5 to the tonic. The descent gradually turns back to the original *maqām*. The tone Ab4 at the beginning of the cadence signals the return to *nahāwand*, and the phrase progresses directly into the cadence. In parallel, the passage includes an acceleration in tempo and the cadence reverts to a similar tempo as the previous sections (approximately 160 BPM).

Development 5

We could describe the main point in development 5 (Fig. 123) as establishing an unexpected modulation to *nakrīz* F4 (Fig. 124), a combination of *nawā-athar* F4 plus *nahāwand* C5. This modulation completes an ongoing process from the beginning of the *taqsīm* by emphasizing the tone F, especially in the pedal tones. However, al-Sunbāṭī's artistry is also reviled in the way he executes the modulation, and in the way he resolves back to the main *maqām*, and correspondingly, in the overall structure of this section in addition to other distinctive features.

The *action* proceeds to *nahāwand* C5 with the leading tone B4 announcing the melodic shift to the octave level at the beginning of *fāṣilah* 10. The pedal tone F3 in the *iqāma* and the melodic fragment in unit 10b hint on the modulation in the next *fāṣilah*.

Figure 123: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, development 5 [03:30-04:42]

Figure 124: *nakrīz* F4

Fāṣilah 11 establishes the modulation with a gradual descent and creates modal instability and un-clarity until the cadence: phrases 11.1 and 11.2 descend through two consecutive skips of triton intervals (marked with rectangles) creating an 'expectation' to an arrival at the dominant tone G4; phrase 11.3 'defies' the expectation and skips from the tone C5 to F4; in unit 11.4a the tone A4 is contrasted with Ab4 and the tone Bb4 is contrasted with B4; before the cadence in unit 11.4d, units 11.4b emphasize *nakrīz* and strengthen it with the leading tone E4 and the *iqāma* on F4.

The *action* continues the motivic process from the exposition and development sections 1–3. Like the exposition, the melody constantly moves with sixteenth-note values, and phrases 11.1 and 11.4 use transpositions of the ascending four-tone motif (marked with ovals).

The *resolution* opens with an unconventional melodic figure in the shape of a triad (unit 12.1a) comprising the tones F4–Ab4–C5 and ending with tone F4. This semi-phrase resembles the modulation in the previous *fāṣilah*, and at the same time its core rhythmic material, the eighth plus sixteenth note durational pattern, is used as the bases for rhythmic construction in the following phrases. This is another example of how the coherency and continuity of music material is maintained throughout the recording.

Units 12.1b and 12.1c begin a process of re-establishing *nahāwand*. They elaborate on the opening semi-phrase and introduce a melody in *nahāwand* that has a songlike character. The melody includes a twofold sequence that is mostly based on eighth plus one three sixteenth note and creates a quasi-metric character.

Phrase 12.2 expands the melodic line to the secondary *jins kurd* on G4. Units 12.2b and 12.2c are a restatement of units 12.1b and 12.1c. The re-establishment of *nahāwand* is further strengthened in phrase 12.3. This phrase displays a structure of a cadence. Unit 12.3a employs the same durational pattern as the songlike melody.

The conclusive cadence is another variation on the scheme, more specifically, it introduces a rhythmic variation in the scheme's second component. In units 12.4c and 12.4d, the melody descends from G4 to C4 with two cells, each using a rhythmic pattern consisting of an eighth plus three sixteenth. In addition to the new rhythmic pattern based on five, unit 12.4c expands the descending passage by repeating the descent Eb4–D4–C4 in groups of three sixteenth notes. The repetition, the tremolo, and the ending on the leading tone B3 in unit 12.4c, create intensification towards the ending melodic figure.

Development 6

The *action* of the last section (Fig. 125) draws the attention of both Feki[229] and Roustom.[230] Their point of focus here is the modality in phrases 14.1 and 14.3, particularly the usage of the accidental tones Db5 (in units 14.1b and 14.3b) and F#4 (in units 14.1c and 14.3c).

[229] Feki, *Musicologie, sémiologie ou ethnomusicologie*, p. 301.
[230] Roustom, *A Study of Six Improvisations on the 'Ud*, p. 86.

Figure 125: al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand*, development 6 [04:42-05:49]

Feki describes this modality as ambiguous: 'sur le plan maqâmique ce syntagme affiche une certaine ambiguïté.'[231] Eventually, both Feki and Roustom choose to classify the modality in the *action* as *athar-kurd* (Fig. 126). Roustom describes this point as follows: 'although the full *maqām* is not present the use of the Db5, B4 natural and F#4 all hint at *Athar Kurd*.'[232] In Figure 126, the missing *jins* of *maqām athar-kurd* is indicated with the shaded tones and slur.

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[231] Feki, *Musicologie, sémiologie ou ethnomusicologie, p.* 301.
[232] Roustom, *A Study of Six Improvisations on the 'Ud by Rīyād al-Sunbāṭī,* p. 86.

Figure 126: *athar-kurd* scale

In my opinion, the modality in the *action*, or more specifically the accidental tones and their context, are better understood in a comprehensive examination that also includes the function of this melodic segment in the overall structure: it forms the structural climax of the *taqsīm*.

Al-Sunbāṭī creates the climax by introducing a repeated melody, or a large motif with a tension-suspense effect. This effect is stimulated by a number of interlinked elements. In addition to the ambiguous modality or accidentals, there is an emphasis on the highest pitch, melodic repetition and variation, unconventional intervals, long durational values, and atypical behavior of the cadence.

The motif includes two parts, a *fāṣilah* and phrase 14.1. In phrases 14.2 and 14.3 the motif is repeated with variations. The first part of the motif (phrases 13 and 14.2) ends on the tone Eb5, the pitch climax of the *taqsīm*, and the second part of the motif (phrases 14.1 and 14.3) ends on the tone G4. Pitch-wise we notice three significant elements that enhance the tension-suspense effect:

1) a prominent use of unconventional intervallic behavior (indicated with colored ovals): the uncompensated skips of third intervals C5–Eb5, Eb5–C5 and C5–Ab4; a triadic melodic figure G4–C5–Eb5; and the use of a triton interval B4–Eb5.

2) the ambiguous modality mentioned by Feki and Roustom. In phrases 14.1 and 14.3 the melody contrasts or twists the tones D5 and Db5. In terms of *ajnās* the melody alternates between *jins nahāwand* and *jins kurd* C5 (Fig. 127).
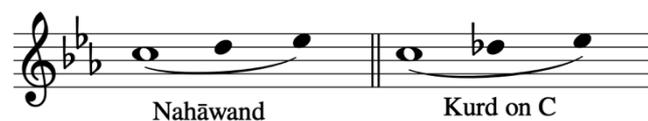

Figure 127: *ajnās nahāwand* and *kurd* C5

3) the lack of a clear and stable cadence in *fāṣilah* 13 and the ending on the non-structural tone Eb5, and more importantly, avoiding a cadence on the octave tone, or cadences that defy expectations.

Rhythm-wise, the large motif uses long durational values – i.e., durational values that are longer than sixteenth notes – at two pivotal points: 1) in phrases 13 and 14.2 the emphasis of the highest pitch Eb5 uses the eighth and dotted quarter notes durational values; and 2) the

alternation of *jins nahāwand* and *jins kurd* in units 14.1a and 14.1b introduce the uncommon eighth note triplets.

Phrase 13 opens with the prominent ascending four-tone motif and maintains the cohesion with the previous section.

Al-Sunbāṭī's final *resolution* is distinctive as it establishes a modulation which is gradually set to *maqām nawā-athar* (Fig. 128).
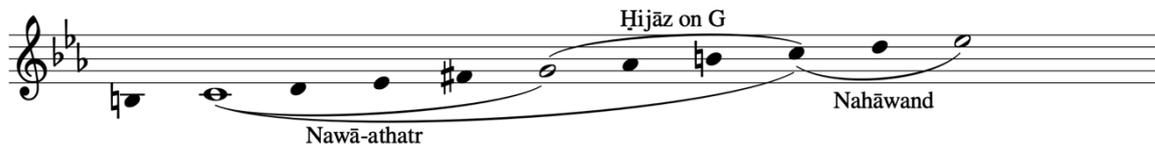

Figure 128: *nawā-athar* scale

In phrase 14.4, the *resolution* begins the process of clarifying the modality and resolving the 'ambiguity' by emphasizing *ḥijāz* G4, the secondary *jins* of *nawā-athar*. As opposed to the tone Db5 in the *action*, the melody in unit 14.5a uses the tone D4. The rhythmic structure is mostly dominated by sixteenth note values and unit 14.5a mostly introduces new rhythmic materials, the thirty-two note plus dotted sixteenth note.

From phrase 14.6 until the end of the *resolution*, the melody gradually descends to the root *jins nawā-athar* and the modulation is finally completed with the *iqāma* on the tone C4 at the end of phrase 14.7.

The final cadence in the *taqsīm*, phrase 14.8, re-establishes the original modality *nahāwand*. It expands on the cadence scheme to significantly magnify the conclusive effect. Most notable here is the expansion of the scheme's first component: unit 14.8 is a descending passage that repeats each tone of *nahāwand*'s scale four times.

Another notable feature of this cadence is the temporary anticipation before the ending melodic figure. The anticipation is realized through a descent to the leading tone B3 and the emphasis on the tone D4 with a quarter note at the end of unit14.8b. The *taqsīm* ends with a significant melodic figure that includes five tones within *jins nahāwand*.

Based on *maqām* development and melodic-rhythmic features, it is possible to organize al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm nahāwand* into three major parts. The first part includes the exposition and development sections 1-3. The different segments explore the basic scale of *nahāwand* and introduce a melodic-rhythmic content resembling al-Sunbāṭī's instrumental pre-composed pieces. The second part includes development section 4; it modulates to *bayātī* on G4 and its melodic content shows a large motif with songlike character. And the third part includes development sections 5 and 6. These sections incorporate *jins nahāwand* on the octave in their

melodic development, and the last section reaches a climax by stimulating a tension-suspense effect.

I like to conclude this subchapter with observations on two points. The first point is the distinctive character of the music material in development sections 1-3. The elaborate and unique musical material prominent in these sections resemble the music material in al-Sunbāṭī's instrumental works. These are pre-composed pieces primarily based on meter and having a well-defined musical form (such as a rondo), performed mainly by a large ensemble. Moreover, most of the pieces were written as preludes and interludes to songs composed throughout al-Sunbāṭī's musical career. The similarities between the two artists strengthen the notion that al-Sunbāṭī applied a pre-composition process in these sections.

To illustrate this, I present an examination of the prelude to the song *Dhikrayāt* (Fig. 129), a song in *maqām nahawānd* which was composed by al-Sunbāṭī and performed by Umm Kulthūm in 1955.

This prelude was performed by an ensemble or orchestra consisting a large string section (mainly dominated by violins), in addition to traditional instruments such as *qānūn*, *'ūd*, *nāy* and *riqq*. In terms of structure, it consists of six different sections organized in the form ABCDCEF. Sections A and C are played in free time or *ad libitum*, and the rest of the parts are based on varying meters. The majority of sections alternate between a solo performer (mostly *qanūn*) and the full orchestra (*tutti*); parts E and F are played in *tutti*.

The similarities or resemblance between this instrumental piece and the music material in *taqsīm nahāwand* manifest themselves in a direct and indirect way. *Dhikrayāt*'s prelude is a good example of al-Sunbāṭī's treatment of temporal structures in his ensemble works and it closely resembles the meter in the first three development sections. This prelude combines various metric and rhythmic structures alternating between duple, triple and quadruple meters (in sections D, B and E–F respectively), in addition to *ad libitum* (in sections A and C). In fact, this is a recurring compositional pattern in several of al-Sunbāṭī's orchestral works, especially the repertoire he composed for Umm Kulthūm.[233]

Another major aspect in *Dhikrayāt*'s prelude that resembles the music material of *taqsīm nahāwand*, is its prominent sequential structure (especially real sequences), which is found in each of the parts. This includes the *qanūn* solo in sections A and C, bars 5-6 and 10-11 in section B, bars 19-40 in section D, bars 58-59 in section E, and bars 77-81 in section F.

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[233] This examination is based on my familiarity with al-Sunbāṭī's ensemble repertoire. For example, the songs *Gadidt Ḥubak Līh* and *Ghulubt Aṣaliḥ Fī Rūḥī*, two other pieces in *maqām nahāwand*, use the same compositional pattern as in the prelude to *Dhikrayāt*.

Dhikrayāt

Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī

Figure 129: instrumental prelude to the song *Dhikrayāt*

A number of melodic figures shows direct similarity. The most explicit melodic figures are the descending triads in bars 73 and 75 in part F. Pitch-wise, they are an exact copy of the triads in units 7.3a and 7.3b in *taqsīm nahāwand* (Fig. 119). Rhythm-wise, they also employ a similar durational pattern, a dotted eighth plus a sixteenth note. Furthermore, the triads are used in a similar context in both musical pieces where they form part of a melodic descent from the dominant to the tonic.

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The skipping patterns are another similarity on the level of melodic figures. For instance, the pattern of thirds in the *qanun* solo (section A) could be aligned with the passage in unit 7.4c (Fig. 119). Moreover, on the level of intervals, we already illustrated the prominence of the minor sixth interval C4–Ab4 in section 3 in *taqsīm nahāwand*. In *Dhikrayāt*'s prelude we find the same sonority in bars 72–73.

The second and final point addresses the tension-suspense effect in the climax. The most distinguished climax incorporating a tension-suspense effect in al-Sunbāṭī's repertoire is found in *taqsīm nahāwand/Ashwāq*. In this recording, the effect occurs as a preparation before the climax between 07:00-07:38 in the timeline. The effect continues in the course of a climax between 07:38-08:31.

In this *taqsīm*, the *maqām* is transposed to A3 (Fig. 130). At 07:00 in the recording's timeline, the beginning segment prior to the climax, the melody modulates to *jins ḥijāz* E4 (Fig. 131). This modulation could also be interpreted as working in the secondary *jins* of *nawā-athar*. In general, this melodic segment has a slower pace; at 07:15 there is a short and slow metric segment using quarter notes triplets; and the section ends on E4. At 07:38, the beginning of the climax, the phrase or *fāṣilah* starts with skips from A4 to C5 (without touching the tone B) and stays on this tone for a couple of seconds; the skip of a third is repeated in the melody several times; this *fāṣilah* briefly creates modal ambiguity and eventually, it replaces the tone B4 with the tone Bb4, gradually completing modulation to *kurd* (Fig. 132). The *kurd* forms a contrast to *ḥijāz*, and the tones Bb4 and G4 contrast with the tones B4 and G4#. Most importantly, *kurd* on A contrasts with the original *maqām nahāwand.*. The distance is mainly manifested in the shift of hierarchy between the prominent tones: in *nahāwand* A the dominant is E, while in *kurd* A, the dominant is D.
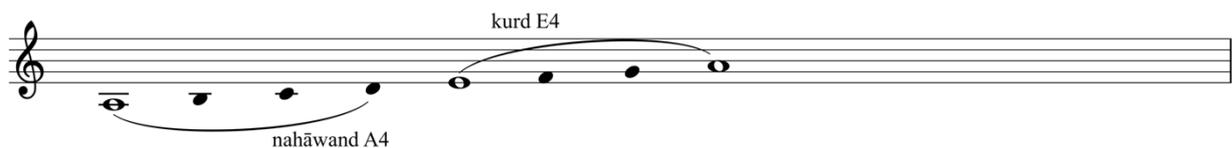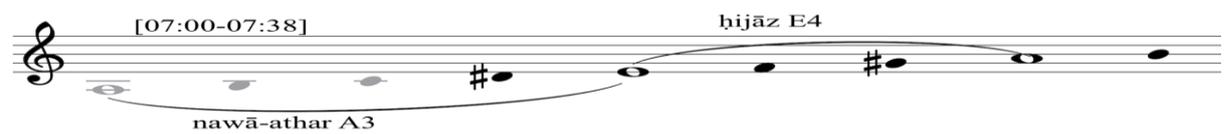

Figure 130: *maqām nahāwand* A3 scale

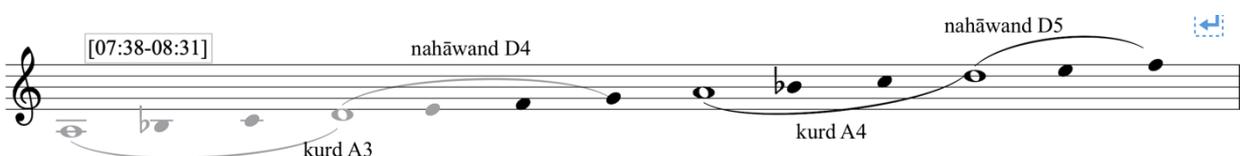Figure 131: modality in *taqsīm nahāwand/Ashwāq* [07:00-07:38]

Figure 132: modality in *taqsīm nahāwand/Ashwāq* [07:38-08:31]

4.4 **Summary of the significant features of al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* model**

In the following pages, I summarize the most significant features of al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* model. Most of the features will be illustrated with reference to *taqsīm rāst*. A full score of this recording is found in Appendix 1; Table 12 shows the *taqsīm's fawāṣil* and sectional organization; And Figure 133 shows the melodic progression and the main modal entities in each section.

Fāṣilah	Timeline	Length	Section	Section length
1	00:00-00:12	12	exposition	78
2	00:12-00:44	32		
3	00:44-01:18	34		
4	01:18-01:32	14	development 1	57
5	01:32-02:15	43		
6	02:15-02:50	45	development 2	45
7	02:50-03:57	67	development 3	67
8	03:57-05:04	77	development 4	77
9	05:04-05:13	9	development 5	58
10	05:13-06:02	49		

Table 12: *fawāṣil and sections in* al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm rāst*
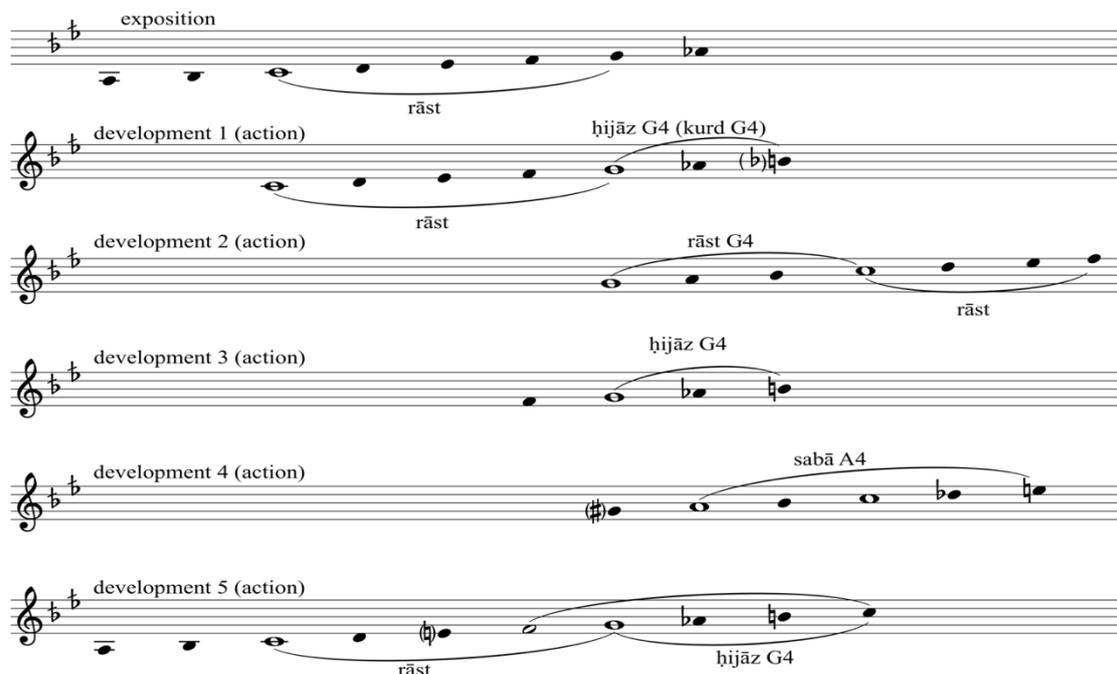

Figure 133: melodic progression in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm rāst*

4.4.1 Structural features

Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* model is variable in terms of its overall structure. The exposition consists of one to three *fawāṣil*. The first *fāṣilah* is mostly restricted to the root *jins*, and it works the *jins* below the tonic in a minimal way – other *fawāṣil* highlight different tones within the root *jins* mostly with simple *iqāmāt*. The exposition of *taqsīm rāst* includes three *fawāṣil*. The *jins* below the root is partially used (the tones A3 and B3 half-flat) and is used minimally in the opening melodic figure (indicated with an oval). After presenting the root *jins*, *fawāṣil* 2 and 3 highlight the tones D4 and F4 with a simple *iqāma*.

The number of development sections differ in each recording, and they mostly include three to five sections. The favorite organization within a development section includes a short plus a long *fāṣilah*. The short *fāṣilah* introduces one of the main tone levels (and/or a modulation) while the long *fāṣilah* explores it.

While al-Qaṣabjī tends to use a *resolution,* i.e., a gradual descending melodic line in the final closure process (after the climax), al-Sunbāṭī uses elaborate closure processes (including *resolutions* and cadences with strong or intense finality) frequently in development sections. The *resolution* is a key expansion tool or element; it contributes to creating development sections or development processes with different sizes or time durations in every recording.

In terms of climax, al-Sunbāṭī's repertoire varies from building up towards one climax (for instance, in *taqsīm nahāwand* discussed in the previous subchapter) to having two climaxes. Compared to al-Qaṣabjī vibrant and intense single climax, some al-Sunbāṭī's climaxes display a tension-suspense effect. The effect is mostly achieved by an atypical melodic behavior, modulation and a significant change in the rhythm-temporal aspect.

The idea of having two climaxes relates to a structural approach where the *taqsīm* is divided into major parts, with each part including several sections. *Taqsīm rāst* could be divided into three macro parts; the first includes the exposition and development sections 1 and 2. In this part, there is a straightforward build-up into a climax on the octave level, reaching the highest pitch in the recording. One of the salient tools in demarcating the different macro parts are cadences with a strong finality. At the end of the first part in *taqsīm rāst*, for instance, the strength of the cadence is magnified by the noteworthy scalar patterns and movements in phrases 6.5 and 6.6.

The second part includes development section 3; it introduces a distinctive melodic segment based on metricity in a modal area that, as Figure 133 shows, has unfolded earlier in the recording (*ḥijāz* G4). The third part includes development sections 4 and 5. Development 4 goes back to the octave level and introduces a distant modulation to *ṣabā* A4. And the last section reaches a climax with a short modulation to *nawā-athar*, creating a tension-suspense effect in addition to a melodic segment played in *zīr-bamm* technique.

4.4.2 Pitch and melodic features

Maqām

All of al-Sunbāṭī's late commercial recordings, with no exception, are in ascending *maqāmāt*. After establishing the octave tone level, some sections retrieve the dominant level. These sections evolve around a modulation and/or introduce unique melodic content. *Taqsīm rāst* establishes the octave level in the second development section. The *action* of development 3 works mainly in *ḥijāz* G4 (Fig. 133) while introducing one of the most distinctive metric segments in al-Sunbāṭī's repertoire (this segment is discussed below).

In contrast to the fast modal tempo that characterizes some of al-Qaṣabjī's development sections, al-Sunbāṭī tends to dedicate large melodic segments to one modulation. In other words, al-Sunbāṭī's recordings are characterized by full-fledged modulations. The most significant modulation in *taqsīm rāst* happens in the fourth development section, to *ṣāba* A4 (Fig. 133). The 'distance' of this modulation from the main *maqām* is evident, as the 'new tonic' shifts temporarily to the sixth tone. Most of the action, more specifically units 8.1-8.9a, is dedicated to this new modality; but in unit 8.9b, the modality returns to *rāst* C5, preparing for the *resolution* in phrase 8.10.

Melodic sequences

The sequential organization, more specifically real sequences, are evident at a small scale in al-Qaṣabjī's recordings, i.e., they occupy short melodic units such as semi-phrases and phrases. In al-Sunbāṭī's recordings on the other hand the real sequence (or the slightly modified sequence) is one of the most prominent features in his *taqsīm* model and a landmark of his style. Sequences in al-Sunbāṭī's recordings have a significant size, and may occupy large (mostly descending) melodic segments within a section, most importantly at the *resolutions*.

In their investigation of several *taqāsīm* in *maqām nahāwand* performed by Racy, Nettl and Riddle point out the importance of the sequence as a melodic device.[234] After examining transcriptions of two *taqāsīm* by Racy which appear in the article by Nettl and Riddle,[235] it is clear that the sequence in al-Sunbāṭī's model has a more profound role as a tool of melodic development. Racy's *taqāsīm* mostly involve small scale sequences and are used sporadically; for example, compare a fraction of sequences in Racy's recordings (Fig. 134) with phrases 7.8-7.10 in *taqsīm rāst*.

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[234] Nettl, Bruno, and Roland Riddle. "Taqsim Nahawand: A Study of Sixteen Performances by Jihad Racy." *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*, vol. 5, 1973, pp. 22-25. JSTOR, doi:10.2307/767493. Accessed 12 May 2014.

[235] Ibid. pp. 30-43.

Figure 134: A classification by Nettl and Riddle of sequences in Racy's recordings[236]

Motivic process and melodic patterns

A number of al-Sunbāṭī's recordings include an elaborate motivic process. Such a process is evident in *taqsīm ḥijāz* and *taqsīm nahāwand* discussed in the previous subchapter. What differentiates al-Sunbāṭī's motivic process from al-Qaṣabjī's is the use of large motives, or motives that are equal to significant melodic segments such as a phrase or more. This includes the immediate repetition or restatement of phrases.

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[236] Ibid. pp. 30-43.

Scalar motion is one of the prominent melodic patterns or melodic figures in al-Sunbāṭī's recordings and is strongly identified with his *taqsīm* model. These patterns are used as a tool for enhancing momentum and they are typical for *resolutions* and conclusive cadences and help achieving a strong closure within a section.

Figure 135 illustrates a number of prominent scalar passages within *taqsīm rāst*. We can classify such scalar patterns according to three intertwined categories. Firstly, according to their general direction: a descending direction is the most prevalent (units 7.9b, 7.10, 3.1b, 10.11a, 8.11); ascending (unit 5.4), and ascending- descending (units 10.10 and 6.5a) directions are also evident. Secondly, according to their 'shape'; for instance, units 5.4, 7.9b and 10.11a show a straightforward motion, whereas units or 7.10, and 8.11 have a 'curvy' melodic motion. And thirdly, their intervallic organization: in this category we can name a number of patterns such as gradual stepping motion (units 7.9b and 10.11a), skipping patterns (units 5.4 and 6.51) and leaping patterns (unit 6.5b).

Figure 135: scalar patterns in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm rāst*

Tension-suspense effect at the climax

The tension-suspense effect is one of the most distinctive features in al-Sunbāṭī's model. It is mainly used to create climaxes. Al-Sunbāṭī creates this effect with various melodic and temporal-rhythmic tools. The most salient tool could simply be described as a rare or an uncommon modulation. However, such modulations will most probably involve atypical intervallic behavior. This is mostly paralleled with a significant change or contrast in the temporal-rhythmic layer when compared to previous phrases or sections. Another common tool is the open cadence, i.e., a cadence that ends or stops on non-prominent or non-structural tones. The most distinguished climaxes with tension-suspense effect in al-Sunbāṭī's late commercial repertoire occur in *taqsīm nahāwand* and *taqsīm nahāwand/Ashwāq*. These two climaxes were discussed in the previous chapter (see subchapter 4.3, pp. 133-136 and p. 139).

In the majority of recordings, the tension-suspense effect is used on a small scale. The second and last climax of *taqsīm rāst* is carried out in a short *fāṣilah*, unit 9. This short phrase modulates to *jins nawā-athar* F4: the phrase starts with an *iqāma* on the tone B4 and continues with an *Iqāma* on the tone C5; the phrase continues with a descending leap and an *iqāma* on the tone F4; and the phrase ends with a cadence on this non-structural tone supported by the leading tone E4. This brief modulation creates a sense of distance with the tonic. The tension-suspense effect is also enhanced by the leap C5–F4, and by the fact that the leap is incompletely compensated (after the leap, the tone B is not present in the melody

Iqāmāt

Al-Sunbāṭī's practice is dominated by simple *iqāmāt* (with occasionally a redoubling of the repeated tone), and *iqāmāt* with metric character are rare. The simple *iqāmāt* contribute to the rhythmic process in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqāsīm* where there is a preference to carry the rhythmic flow with sixteenth notes (for example, the opening *iqāmāt* in units 1 and 7.1).

4.4.3 Rhythmic features

Al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* model displays a broad spectrum of elements that contribute to a rich rhythmic fabric. When compared to al-Qaṣabjī's recordings, the pulsation in al-Sunbāṭī's model exhibits a certain degree of flexibility. While a fairly steady pulse is maintained over a large duration of a recording, changes in tempo are occasionally evident. We can point out a few prominent patterns of a change in tempo:

1) the utilization of *tempo rubato* within *fawāṣil* (for example, units 2.4a, 5.2b, 8 and 8.11b);

2) a slight deceleration (*ritardando*) at the end of a cadence (for example, units 7.11c and 7.11d);

3) a slight drop in tempo at the beginning of a new section that introduces a modulation (for example, in the modulation to *ṣabā* A4 in *fāṣilah* 8, there is a notable drop from a general tempo of 170 to 140 BPM).

Durational values are another element where variety is more apparent when compared with al-Qaṣabjī's rhythmic language. Sixteenth notes remain the dominant durational values also in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* practice. Nevertheless, other durational values achieve a more significant and more profound expression in the rhythmic fabric. Among these, we find long notes such as the dotted eighth and quarter note, thirty-two notes, and sixteenth and eighth notes triplets.

A significant difference in al-Sunbāṭī's rhythmic language when compared to al-Qaṣabjī's, is the near absence of the rhythmic pattern complying with the paradigm *fa'ūlun*. The pattern *fā'ilun* on the other hand is used occasionally. We can also point out to rhythmic patterns that are rare or almost absent in al-Qaṣabjī's model and are pretty common al-Sunbāṭī's recordings (Fig. 136).

Figure 136: common rhythmic patterns in al-Sunbāṭī's rhythmic language

On the phrase level, we find a few common types of phrases that could be classified according to rhythmic qualities. In some cases, these qualities are intertwined and could exist in one phrase. The first type is a phrase that is mainly based on movement with sixteenth notes, the most basic form of rhythmic flow in al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* model. Phrases 7.1-7.5 are typical examples of such a structure. The sixteenth notes largely dominate the rhythmic flow in these phrases with the occasional use of single eight notes. These phrases typically use concise melodic figures such as the ascending or descending passages and short *iqāmāt* that highlight specific tones within the melody.

The second type is the use of metric phrases that resemble al-Sunbāṭī's pre-composed instrumental pieces; they form one of the most distinctive features of al-Sunbāṭī's rhythmic language. These phrases are mostly based on duple, triple, or quadruple meters, and mainly occur within *actions* and *resolutions*. Phrases 7.6 and 7.7 illustrate this quality very clearly. In fact, they form one of the most distinguished metric melodic segments in al-Sunbāṭī's repertoire, because we can associate it with a rhythmic cycle (*iqā'*), and for its dance-like character. The segment begins with a pick-up or an anacrusis (unit 7.6a), and includes four bars in 4/4 meter.

The third type are phrases based on one or two durational patterns. Many of these phrases are organized in sequences. For instance, phrases 7.8-7.10 are based on real sequences, and each sequence mostly repeats one durational pattern; consequently these phrases could also be categorized under metric phrases where each sequence has its own internal meter. For example,

phrases 7.8 and 7.9 follow two different patterns of six sixteenth notes, and phrase 7.10 follows a pattern of three sixteenth notes. Metric segments showing an orderly organization based on real sequences are typical of the *resolution* phase within a section.

4.5 **Conclusion**

Compared to al-Qaṣabjī's compact model where a sharp arch-shape is evident, Sunbāṭī's late *taqsīm* recordings form an expanded model characterized by variability in terms of structure. One *taqsīm* could be divided into macro parts, each part including several sections; and each *taqsīm* might revolve around one or two climaxes. Some climaxes display a tension-suspense effect achieved by an atypical melodic behavior, modulation and a significant change in the rhythmic-temporal layer. There is an expansion of and/or alternation between the dominant or the tonic levels in several recordings. The expansion or the alteration is mostly achieved through full-fledged modulations and/or through sections with unique melodic-rhythmic content.

The unique melodic-rhythmic content resembles al-Sunbāṭī's pre-composed pieces for a large ensemble. Sequential melodic organization, significant scalar passages, and melodic segments based on duple and triple meters are among the most prominent features of this influence. In addition to the distinctive use of meter, al-Sunbāṭī's practice is characterized by a flexible pulse where tempo changes are occasionally evident.

While the *resolution* phase is mostly kept for the final closure in al-Qaṣabjī's model, they are often used within development sections by al-Sunbāṭī. The *resolutions* display distinctive melodic-rhythmic materials.

Similar to al-Qaṣabjī's model, the elaboration on concise melodic ideas (creating coherent melodic content by means of repetition, transposition, and modification) forms an integral part of al-Sunbāṭī's *taqsīm* practice.