

# TEXT AND PERFORMANCE IN HAUSA METRICS\*

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Studies of Hausa metrics have generally consisted of cataloguing poems as being in one meter or another based on canonical recurrent syllable patterns. The intention of this paper, a study of three poems in a meter referred to as “Anti-Mutadaarik”, is to show that a thorough understanding of Hausa meter and text setting requires examination of the text *and* its oral performance. The paper will show that constraints, storable primarily in terms of phonological phrasing, determine preferred line and stanza breaks. By contrast, metrical structure does not impose any such *phrasing* constraints internal to a line. Nonetheless, lines have hierarchical metrical structure consisting of eight obligatory metrical positions which are grouped into feet and which may have an optional extrametrical anacrusis. Lines can be analyzed into two halves, defined by a *rhythmic* caesura. Performers have latitude in how they present a text orally, but there are crucial ways in which properties of performance rhythm must coincide with metrical properties of the text. As a final note, the paper takes up the issue of whether the possibility for ending a line in a light syllable in Anti-Mutadaarik constitutes an exception to a widely observed, perhaps universal feature of quantitative meters that line final syllables always scan as heavy, regardless of phonological weight. The conclusion is that this meter does not constitute an exception.

## 1. Hausa Metrics

Discussion of Hausa poetry has generally distinguished *oral* poetry, which finds its roots in ancient Hausa tradition, and *written* poetry, which dates from the 19th century and whose meters can be traced to Arabic Islamic verse. Though the large and continually evolving body of Hausa poetic literature derives from these separate origins, there has now been considerable cross-fertilization between the two traditions, both thematically and metrically. Moreover, the “oral” vs. “written” distinction is misleading. Although poets working in the so-called “written” tradition generally codify their works in writing using regular stanzaic patterns, *all* Hausa poetry is composed for presentation in sung or chanted form—prose-like recitation, much less silent reading of poetic works is quite foreign to Hausa. Indeed, the Hausa language has a single word, *waka*, meaning either ‘poem’ or ‘song’. I am here using the words “poem” and “poetry” simply for convenience.

Hausa poetic meter is quantity based. Hausa has only two syllable types:

Light syllables: CV (V = a short vowel)

Heavy syllables: CVV, CVC (VV= a long vowel or diphthong)

Hausa metrics depends on this distinction, and in oral performance, the distinction is palpable, with many performance styles consistently rendering heavy syllables with duration exactly double that of light syllables.

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This paper will suggest that a theory of Hausa *metrics* must use information from both Hausa phonological structure and from aspects of oral performance.

## 2. The Present Study: 3 Poems in the Anti-Mutadaarik Meter

Most analyses of Hausa metrics, including my own previous work, take the syllable as the smallest relevant unit. The analysis then typically consists of working out the grouping of syllables into feet, of feet into lines, and of lines into stanzas.

In the analysis of English metrics, a numbers of studies, e.g. Kiparsky (1977), Hayes (1989), and others, have gone beyond such essentially taxonomic accounts and have found deeper phonological regularities than, say, a statement such as “iambic pentameter consists of lines of five pairings of syllables, the first syllable of each pair bearing relatively weaker stress than the second.” These studies have revealed not only phonological features of the meters themselves but also subtle differences in the practices of individual poets.

Taking inspiration from this work, I examined three Hausa poems which, in fact, are three “generations” of a single poem. The first is an oral song, “Mata Ku Yi Aure” [“Women Get Married”] by Alhaji Mamman Shata Katsina. Though the theme of the song is an admonition to women to get married, the form is that of a traditional praise song, in which a soloist sings verses of varying length and a chorus of singer/drummers repeats a refrain between the verses. I have two recorded versions of this song, which I will refer to as version “A” and version “B”. Rhythmically and thematically they are the same, and they use the same refrain, but the verses sung by the soloist are entirely different. At the beginning of the song, Shata first sings a variant of the refrain, which the chorus then sings in the form repeated throughout the song:

(1) Alhaji Mamman Shata Katsina, “Mata Ku Yi Aure” (version A), lines 1a-1d

*Shata:* A’a, don sallaa da salaatil Faatih  
Yaaraa, don darajañ kaakan Tijjaani.

*Chorus:* Don sallaa da salaatil Faa(tih),<sup>1</sup>  
A don Allah maataa ku yi auree.

‘Oh, for the sake of the prayers (*sallaa*) and the Fatiha  
Children, for the sake of elevation of the ancestors of Tijjani.’

‘For the sake of the prayers (*sallaa*) and the Fatiha,  
Oh, for the sake of Allah, women, get married.’

The “second generation” poem is “Yar Gagara” [“The Wayward Woman”] by Alhaji Aƙilu Aliyu. This poem, condemning prostitution, is the first of a series of moralizing poems by the same poet. Although Aƙilu Aliyu works in the tradition of “written” poetry and although most poetry composed in this tradition uses meters of Arabic origin, Aƙilu Aliyu is known to have used the Shata song as the source of the meter here (Muhammad 1979). The first three couplets of “Yar Gagara” make clear the theme of the poem:

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<sup>1</sup>The Fatiha is the opening verse of the Koran, often used as an invocation or benediction. As sung by the chorus, the syllable *-tih* is never audible. Hausa speakers who have helped me transcribe this song insist that it is there, and there is certainly a rhythmic pulse to accommodate it in the performance.

## (2) Alhaji Aƙilu Aliyu, “Yar Gagara”, verses 1-3

Too, bisimilla da faara faɗaataa,  
Zan maganaa bisa jaakaɗ maataa.

‘Oh, in the name of Allah begins my discourse,  
I will speak on the she-ass of women.

Mai fitinaa babbaɗ wata gwaazaa,  
Baa ta nufin zikiɗii ciɗ banzaa,

‘The trouble-maker, the greatest nymphomaniac,  
She has no intention of reciting the Muslim creed, get  
out worthless one!

Mai laalaataa, mai raagaitaa,  
Mai gaabaa da ma’auraa maataa.

‘The corrupted one, the aimless rover,  
The one who is enemy to married women.’

The “third generation” poem is a religious praise poem, “Tsarabar Madina” [“A Gift from Madina”] by Alhaji Aliyu Namangi. In an interview recorded with Neil Skinner in 1968, the poet states that he has used the meter of Aƙilu Aliyu’s “Yar Gagara” for his poem. Like Aƙilu Aliyu, Aliyu Namangi composes poetry in the “written” tradition, so the choice of meter is again a departure from meters typical of this tradition. The first three couplets of the poem illustrate the theme:

## (3) Alhaji Aliyu Namangi, “Tsarabar Madina”, verses 1-3

Allaahu shi baa ni sanii da basiiɗaa,  
In yi yaboo baakin ƙarfiinaa.

‘May Allah give me knowledge and insight,  
So that I may give praise to the limit of my strength.

In yabi Siidi Muhamman Baawaa,  
Mai hana sauran baayii kuunaa.

‘May I praise Noble Muhammad, Slave (of Allah),  
He who prevents the remaining slaves (of Allah) from  
burning (in Hell).

Yi daɗin tsiiraa Allah da amincii,  
Gun Manzonka daree haɗ raanaa.

‘Increase salvation, Allah, and trust,  
For your Prophet, night and day.’

If one listens to recordings of performances of each of these poems, it is obvious that the performance rhythms and “tunes” used by the three poets are quite different from each other, i.e. these artists have not done the equivalent of putting different lyrics to a single tune in the way that one might create new verses for a familiar hymn tune like “Amazing Grace”.<sup>2</sup> What the three poems have in common must therefore be the metrical organization of the linguistic *text*, with each poet having chosen his own performance setting.

Examination of the metrical structure reveals that this is the case. All three of these poems are composed in a meter called “Anti-Mutadaarik” in Schuh (1989).<sup>3</sup> I follow Halle and Keyser (1966) and Prince (1989) and use the *metrical position*, rather than the syllable, as the basic unit of scansion. This meter has 8 metrical positions in each line, arranged as follows (— = heavy syllable, v = either one heavy or two lights):

(4) Anti-Mutadaarik metrical schema: — v — v — v — v

<sup>2</sup>Like most African languages, Hausa is a tone language. The “tune” of a Hausa song, by and large, involves a melodic contour over an entire line. The pitch changes from syllable to syllable within that contour are determined in part by linguistic tones, which will differ more or less randomly from line to line. The poets do differ in the “tunes” they use, but a study of this aspect of their art would be beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>3</sup>I derived the term “Anti-Mutadaarik” from the Classical Arabic metrical term, Mutadaarik, which has the same number of metrical positions but with the syllable configurations reversed (see below, §4.2).

The table in (5) shows this schema applied to the refrain of “Mata Ku Yi Aure” and to the first couplet of each of the other two poems. The parenthesized anacruses in the second line from “Mata Ku Yi Aure” and the first line of “Tsarabar Madina” will be discussed below:

(5) Representative lines with Anti-Mutadaarik scansion

“Mata Ku Yi Aure”:	Don sal -laa da sa -laa -til Faa(-tih), — — — v v — — — —
	A don Al -lah maa -taa ku yi au -ree. (v) — — — — — v v — —
“Yar Gagara”:	Too, bi -si -mil -la da faa -ra fa -daa -taa, — v v — v v — v v — —
	Zan ma -ga -naa bi -sa jaa -kaĩ maa -taa. — v v — v v — — — —
“Tsarabar Madina”:	Al -laa -hu shi baa ni sa -nii da ba -siiĩ -aa, (—) — v v — v v — v v — —
	In yi ya -boo baa -kin far -fii -naa. — v v — — — — —

In Schuh (1989) I followed proposals by Prince (1989) and went on to group the eight metrical positions into four dactylic feet and those four feet into two metrons per line, providing a four-tiered hierarchical structure for each line. While I do not think this proposal was “wrong”, it was motivated primarily by an attempt to provide structure by grouping recurrent abstract “sames” rather than by a detailed examination of the text itself.

### 3. The Demarcation of Lines and Stanzas

Implicit in the claim that a “line” in a poem can be characterized by a certain configuration of metrical positions is the assumption that we know what a *line* is. Extralinguistic cues provide one type of evidence for knowing where lines begin and end. The most obvious such cue in Hausa poetry in the written tradition is that each metrical line written as a separate line on the page and a space is left between stanzas. In performance, line endings often coincide with pauses in delivery of the text. Where there is instrumental accompaniment, such as the drums accompanying “Mata Ku Yi Aure”, this accompaniment will maintain the rhythm through such textual pauses. In a *capella* performance, used for all poetry composed in the “written” tradition, the pause is marked by silence. For some performance styles, the pause has a fixed duration which fits into the rhythm of the performance (it serves as a *rest* in Western musical terminology), whereas in other performance styles, each line seems to be an independent rhythmic unit. In the recordings of the two poems here, Akilu Aliyu and Aliyu Namangi both maintain a strict rhythm throughout each couplet; Akilu Aliyu also maintains the rhythm between stanzas, but Aliyu Namangi inserts pauses of variable length.

The extralinguistic cues of written presentation and performance provide evidence for the intuitive notion that poems consist of lines which repeat a certain metrical pattern, with these lines being organized into stanzas, but extralinguistic cues are not an entirely reliable diagnostic. The way a poem is set on the page obviously is not applicable to poetry/song in the oral tradition, and in performance in both traditions, performers often deliver (putative) contiguous lines with no intervening pause. It is thus worth asking

whether any *linguistic* features coincide with the line boundaries implied by a metrical schema such as that above.

In the Akilu Aliyu and Aliyu Namangi poems, as in nearly all poems in the written tradition, *stanzaic* structure is marked by some regular *rhyme pattern*. In “Yar Gagara” each couplet has internal rhyme; in “Tsarabar Madina” there is a running rhyme pattern with the syllable *-naa* at the end of the second line of each couplet throughout the poem.<sup>4</sup> In the oral style of the Mamman Shata song, there is no *metrically* definable stanzaic structure. Poems/songs in this tradition never use rhyme, and “stanzas”, such as they are, vary in length, being demarcated by the refrain repeated by the chorus. In the versions of “Mata Ku Yi Aure” available to me, stanzas as sung by the soloist range from one to eight lines.

Preferred demarcation of *lines* can be described in terms of phonological phrasing. Hayes (1989), drawing on work by Selkirk (1978, 1980) and Nespor and Vogel (1983), shows how a theory of phonological juncture using a five-level prosodic hierarchy provides a framework for explaining constraints on poetic metrical structure from a range of poetic traditions. The five levels which Hayes proposes are the *Utterance*, the *Intonational Phrase*, the *Phonological Phrase*, the *Clitic Group*, and the *Word*. There are two features of particular interest in this theory of prosodic structure: (1) although these prosodic units tend to coincide with syntactic boundaries of various kinds, they represent structure which is at least in part independent of syntax; (2) the prosodic levels follow a pattern of *strict layering*, i.e. a phrasal juncture at a higher level must coincide with junctures at all the lower levels but not necessarily vice versa. Examination of the samples in this study, as well as impressions gained from work on a corpus of several hundred Hausa poems, suggest that there is a strong preference for a line break to coincide with a phonological juncture at the level of the P-Phrase or higher.<sup>5</sup> Although line breaks are occasionally made at lower levels, including word internal, these breaks occur in fewer than 5% of all lines for even the most adventurous poets and are thus highly marked. Below is a table showing types of phonological junctures at line beginnings for the present corpus:

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<sup>4</sup>The basis of rhyme in Hausa poetry is identity of the last syllable in rhyming lines. In general, rhyming syllables must be strictly identical, though long and short vowels are equivalent for the purpose of rhyme because the final syllable of a line must always be scanned as heavy, regardless of phonological weight. The running rhyme pattern used by Aliyu Namangi is far and away the most common pattern found in poems composed in couplets. In what is presumably the original version of “Yar Gagara”, i.e. the published version in Aliyu (1976), there is no rhyme at all, an unusual style for “written” poetry. In the recorded version used as the basis for this paper, Akilu Aliyu has recast the poem into rhymed couplets for the first 28 stanzas, but he reverts to the unrhymed published version for the remainder of the poem, which has a total of 68 stanzas.

<sup>5</sup>Almost no work has been done on Hausa phrasal phonology which would provide independent motivation for positing phonological junctures. The only work along this line known to me is Inkelas (1988), who argues for the Phonological Phrase as a distinct level in Hausa prosody. As a test for phonological phrasehood, Inkelas uses the (im)possibility of inserting a particle, *fa*, at a potential P-Phrase boundary. There is some variability among Hausa speakers as to how liberal they are in their use of *fa* insertion, and obviously, it is impossible to apply this test on the Hausa of the three poets studied here. For present purposes, I will therefore rely on a syntactic definition of P-phrases along the lines of Hayes’ (1989).



- d. Taa ki shirii da uwaa da ubaa maa, ‘She refuses to get along with her mother and father,  
Ballee Yaaya abookin faamaa. Let alone her Big Brother, the one she vies with.’  
(“Gagara” 8a-8b)

The line breaks in cases such as those above clearly come at I-Phrase boundaries because the conjoined or subordinate clauses in the “b” lines can, and usually would begin a new intonational contour, marked by setting a new pitch level for the first high tone in the phrase. The same diagnostic uncontroversially holds for most of the phrases that I have referred to in Table 6 as “Free NP’s”. Two types of commonly occurring “free NP’s” are topicalized NP’s and vocatives. These would usually be sentence initial and would thus occur at *utterance* rather than I-Phrase boundaries. However, example (9a, line b) is the second of two topicalized NP’s and hence is not utterance initial. Other phrases counted as “free NP’s” are NP’s which are part of a list, not connected syntactically in any obvious way to what precedes or follows (9b, lines b, c) and appositive NP’s (9c, line b). Cases less obviously constituting I-Phrases are phrases introduced with *mai* ‘(one) who does/has’ (9d, line b) and the second or later of NP’s conjoined with *da* ‘and, with’ (9e, line c). In a phrase like *yaarinyaa mai sayar da gooŋo* ‘a girl who sell’s kola nuts’, where the *mai* phrase is a direct modifier of a head noun, the phrase would not naturally begin a new intonational phrase and would thus fall at a P-Phrase boundary. The same would hold for a conjoined structure such as *faraaren tumaakii da bakaakeen awaakii* ‘white sheep and black goats’. It may be significant that in the sample here, none of the *mai* or *da* phrases which fall directly after line breaks constitute syntactically “tight” constructions such as these, which, as noted, would be P-Phrases rather than I-Phrases. In short, making a line break at a juncture as low as the P-Phrase seems to be a non-preferred option.

- (9) a. Maalaman birnii da na kauyee, ‘Learned men of the city and the village,  
Roƙon da nakee, don Allah, The plea that I am making, for God’s sake,  
Kun sallaa, kun d’au wuƙidinku, Do the prayers and take on your (Koranic) recitation,  
(“Aure-B” 6b-6d)
- b. ... Baa ta nufin zikiƙii ciƙ banzaa, ... ‘She doesn’t recite the creed, out! useless one,  
Mai laalaataa, mai raagaitaa, The corrupted one, the aimless rover,  
Mai gaaba da ma’auraa maataa. The one in competition with married women.  
Kaaruuwa baa ta nufin ta yi auree, ... A prostitute has no intention of getting married, ...  
(“Gagara” 2b-4a)
- c. Inaa kamnanka R̄asuulullaahi, ‘I love you Messenger of Allah,  
Haskee mai dushe zaafin raanaa. The light which makes fade the heat of the sun.’  
(“Tsaraba” 22a-22b)
- d. Ku cee masa sarkin gandun Allah, ‘Call him the master of Allah’s farm,  
Mai bautansa daree har raanaa. (The one) who submits to him night and day.’  
(“Tsaraba” 45a-45b)
- e. Yi daƙin tsiiraa, Allah, da amincii, ‘Increase chances of salvation, Allah, and trust,  
Gun Manzonka daree haƙ raanaa For your prophet, night and day,  
Da aaloolinsa da kau sahabai nasa, And his family members and also his disciples,’  
(“Tsaraba” 3a-4a)

Hayes (1989:211) relates *P-Phrases* directly to syntax, stating that “[P-Phrases] apply within maximal projections, adjoining material to the head.” *Mai*-phrases and conjoined NP *da*-phrases internal to an NP, such as those mentioned in the preceding paragraph,

would, by this definition, be P-Phrases. In the sample here, there is only one example which would be likely to be a P-Phrase under this definition, viz. the relative clause in (10a, line b). Even this example is somewhat suspect and may constitute an I-Phrase, i.e. the relative clause *wanda akee maa doodon goonaa* could be interpreted either as having *gaataa* ‘male monkey’ as its direct antecedent, in which case it would constitute a P-Phrase, or it could be interpreted as having *birii* ‘monkey’ as its antecedent, in which case it would be an extraposed clause and hence an I-Phrase. The remainder of the cases which I have called P-Phrase junctures involve “adjunct phrases”, including several *locative phrases* (see, for example, line 3b in (9e) just above, one *temporal phrase* (10b, line b), and one “*except*” phrase (10c, line b). Whether these meet the definition of a P-Phrase above depends on one’s view of syntax. I have relied on the intuition that it would be somewhat unnatural to begin a new intonation contour at these phrase breaks, at least for locative phrases. The cases in (10) might allow this, however, in which case they should be considered I-Phrases.

- (10) a. Kun mance birii tooroo na gaataa, ‘You have forgotten the monkey, the “bull” guard,  
Wanda akai masu doodon goonaa. The one for whom the scarecrow has been made.’  
(“Tsaraba” 41a-41b)
- b. Mai karyar darajaa da mukaamii, ‘The one who lies about rank and stature,  
San da ta sauka bigeegen girmii(?). When she arrives in a big town(?)’<sup>6</sup>  
(“Gagara” 10a-10b)
- c. Baa wani naawa maɗaurin auree, ‘There’s no one getting married to me,  
Ban da Yaɗiima uban ‘Yaɗ Bauree. Except for Yarima, father of ‘Yar B’auree.’  
(“Gagara” 27a-27b)

The above discussion has shown that for the corpus examined here, the preferred phrasing overwhelmingly begins a line with a phonological juncture at the Utterance or I-Phrase level, and even the few suggested cases with breaks at the P-Phrase level are equivocal and might be I-Phrases. Nonetheless, a small number of lines break at the level of the Clitic Group or even within a word. All the cases in the sample examined here are given in (11).

- (11) a. Abin neemanmu mu leɓka ziyaaran ‘What we seek is that we observe the visit of  
Wannan Daa mai daaɗin suunaa. That noble man whose name delights.’  
(“Tsaraba” 20a-20b)
- b. Da gangan nee koo kau da juhaalaa ‘Be it on purpose or indeed out of ignorance  
Nee suka saa masa wannan suunaa. Is it that they place upon him this name.  
(“Tsaraba” 32a-32b)
- c. Ban da nashaad’aa baa ta da aikii ‘Other than having a good time she has no work  
Maa, kalwaa tata saabon Sarkii. Indeed, her seasoning is defiance of the Lord.’  
(“Gagara” 36a-36b)

<sup>6</sup>The pronunciation *girmii* is quite clear on the tape. This word is not in any Hausa dictionary, nor did the Hausa speaker with whom I checked know such a word. Line 10b in the published version, Aliyu (1976), reads *San da ta sauka a baakon biɗnii* ‘When she arrives in a strange town’. Paul Newman in personal communication has suggested that it is a slip of the tongue, blending *biɗnii* ‘city’ and *girmaa* ‘greatness, importance’.

- d. Uwaa da ubansa Kuřaishaawaa, ‘His mother and father were Koreish, how  
 řaa-  
 řaa zaa sui masa langon suunaa? ... would they give him a disputable name?’  
 (“Tsaraba” 39a-39b)

The line breaks in (11a-c) fall within Clitic Groups. In (11a), *Wannan Daa* ‘that Son’ is the complement of *ziyaařan* ‘visit of/by’, the final *-n* of which is the genitive “linker”. Phrases of the form N-*n* N always act as syntactic and intonational phrasal units; the second N cannot be extracted from the phrase, leaving phrase final *-n*. In (11b), the second line begins with the “copula” *nee*. The copula is cliticized to its preceding host as evidenced by the fact that its tone is always polar to the final tone of the host. In (11c) likewise, the “modal particle” *maa* ‘indeed, also’ is cliticized to the preceding word. In (11d), the line break falls in the middle of the word *řaakaa* ‘how?’ These examples show that lines of poetry can break at levels below the P-phrase but the small proportion (1.4%) of the 277 lines examined here shows that such cases are highly marked.

#### 4. The Internal Metrical Structure of Lines

In all the descriptions of European systems of metrics that I know of, including both stress-based and quantity based meters, the strings of syllables (or metrical positions) of a line of poetry are grouped into higher levels of intralinear structure. There is generally independent evidence justifying these groupings, in particular restrictions on where word breaks and phrasal boundaries must fall. Within lines, such linguistic structural evidence does not exist for Hausa poetry, i.e. examination of even the relatively small number of illustrative lines above will reveal that within lines, there are no restrictions as to where word boundaries, much less syntactic boundaries must fall.<sup>7</sup>

In order to find out whether evidence exists to support any structure to a line other than a string of 8 metrical positions, I compiled statistics on how each metrical position is realized over a sizable number of lines. I have two recorded versions of “Mata Ku Yi Aure”. The two lines of the refrain are identical in the two, but there are no verse lines repeated between them. The version which I will refer to as “A” has 40 verse lines; the version which I will refer to as “B” has 35 verse lines. These 75 verse lines plus the two lines of the refrain total 77 lines. For the other two poems, I have both recorded and published written versions. I scanned the first 100 lines of the texts of the recorded versions, which closely match, but are not identical to the published printed versions. In addition to the eight obligatory metrical positions (p1-p8), lines may have an optional extrametrical anacrusis (An). The numbers in the table in (12) indicate the number of lines which have a particular metrical position filled by a particular syllable configuration. For “Mata Ku Yi Aure”, the total number from the two versions is the top figure, with the separate figures for the two versions in smaller numbers underneath, version A on the left and version B on the right:

<sup>7</sup>Consider just the transitions p3-p4 and p4-p5, two reasonable candidates for some sort of obligatory juncture, in the lines in (5). For p3-p4 we find the following text settings: “Mata Ku Yi Aure”, P-Phrase (-*laa da*) and I-Phrase (-*lah maa-*); “Yar Gagara”, Word (-*mil-la*) and P-Phrase (-*naa bi-*); “Tsarabar Madina”, Clitic (*baa ni*) and I-Phrase or P-Phrase (-*boo baa-*). For p4-p5 we find the following: “Mata Ku Yi Aure”, Word (*sa-laa-*) and Word (*maa-taa*); “Yar Gagara”, Clitic (*da faa-*) and Clitic (-*sa jaa-*); “Tsarabar Madina”, Word (*sa-ni*) and Word (*baa-kin*).

## (12) Counts of syllable configurations in anacrusis and metrical positions

	An.	p1	p2	p3	p4	p5	p6	p7	p8
Alhaji Mamman Shata, "Mata Ku Yi Aure"									
Heavy	16 8/8	74 41/33	37 22/15	76 42/34	24 14/10	76 42/34	66 37/29	77 42/35	75 41/34
Light-Light	6 5/1	1 1/0	26 15/11		48 27/21		9 4/5		1 0/1
Light	9 6/3	1 0/1	2 0/2	1 0/1			1 1/0		
Heavy-Heavy	3 3/0		3 1/2		3 1/2		1 0/1		
Light-Heavy									
Heavy-Light	2 2/0		8 3/5		2 0/2				1 1/0
Other	4 4/0	1 (Ø) 0/1	1(?) 1/0			1 (Ø) 0/1			
Alhaji Ak'ilu Aliyu, "Yar Gagara"									
Heavy		100	48	100	19	100	78	100	96
Light-Light			52		81		22		4
Light	1								
Alhaji Aliyu Namangi, "Tsarabar Madina"									
Heavy	3	98	50	100	32	100	68	100	93
Light-Light	4	2	49		68		32		3
Light	30								4*
Other			1 (h-1)						

\*P8 is counted as a single "light" only when the next line has a single light as an anacrusis (see §6).

**4.1. Metrical and unmetrical lines.** I have assumed that a metrical position will be filled by either a heavy syllable or two light syllables, an assumption which is born out 100% of the time in "Yar Gagara" and in 99 of the 100 lines for "Tsarabar Madina". In "Mata Ku Yi Aure", in order to achieve the most rational scansion, I had to assume that a single metrical position was filled by syllable configurations other than one heavy or two lights in a number of cases.<sup>8</sup> Following are all the lines showing the "deviantly" filled metrical positions. All the lines are from "Mata Ku Yi Aure", version A or B, except the one marked "Ts.", which is from "Tsarabar Madina" (h = heavy syllable, l = light syllable; the position in question is underlined; material separated from the remainder of the line by a slash is an anacrusis):

<sup>8</sup>The claim that the proposed scansions here are the only "rational" possibilities may not be uncontroversial. In most cases, it is clear where the metrical positions must be divided, e.g. taking the first example in the table in (13), if the heavy syllable *suu* were taken as filling p2, this would cause the following light syllable *na* either to fill p3 alone or to be grouped with the heavy syllable *faa-* to fill p3, in both cases creating a "deviant" configuration for p3 and moreover, leaving no way to fit the next two light syllables (*-ra na-*) into the canonical metrical structure. In some lines of "Mata Ku Yi Aure", I relied on performance rhythm to determine scansion. In *all* the "non-deviant" lines, there is a clear heavy tactus on the odd-numbered metrical positions. In cases of equivocal grouping of syllables into metrical positions, I therefore assumed that syllables with heavy tactus were the first or only syllables of odd-numbered positions. Thus, in version B, line 6e, the tactus falls on the syllables marked with acute accents: *Kúì mani róókoo koo cán gun Állah*. Beginning with *róo-* onward, there are 7 syllables but only 6 metrical positions, meaning that two of the syllables will have to be grouped into a single metrical position, but because all the syllables are heavy, there is no *phonological* basis for one grouping over another. I thus relied on the fact that two syllables (*koo koo*) lie between the tacti on *róo-* and *cán* to group those syllables as filling p4 rather than, say, grouping the syllables *gun Al-* to fill p6.

## (13) “Unmetrical” lines found in the corpus

Unexpected scansion	Line #	Text	Translation
h-l in p2	Ts., 28b	Don <u>suu na</u> faara naɗ'ee hannuunaa	'Because of them I began to wring my hands'
	A, 2b	Sabooda/ <u>albaṙkacin</u> girman Mai Girmaa	'Because of the grace of the Lord'
	A, 5a	Kai <u>dai mu</u> jii ka a baabin maataa	'You let's hear from you as concerns women'
	A, 15e	??/ Koo <u>baa ka</u> shaa ? ? ? ? ?	'... even if you don't drink ...'
	B, 3a, 3b	Dattii <u>jo</u> ne baa yaaroo nee ba	'He's a middle-aged man, not a boy'
	B, 6f	Allah <u>ya</u> waatse gijjigon Bauci	'May Allah drive out the Bauci louts'
	B, 8b	Yaa <u>zaa ka</u> sooki mutumcin auree?	'How would you refute the respectability of marriage?'
	B, 13b	Allah <u>ya</u> baa ku mijii kui auree	'May Allah give you a husband so you might marry'
h-l in p4	B, 4d	Su san <u>halin</u> gijjigon Bauci	'That they know the character of the Bauchi louts'
	B, 9a	Kai,/ kaa san baa <u>zaa mu</u> daidaitaa ba	'You, you know we will not reach agreement'
h-l in p8	A, 4b	Muu waaka ba mu woo girman <u>kai ba</u>	'We we did not create our song out of arrogance'
h-h in p2	A, 3c	??/? Maataa <u>gaaban</u> baaban ban kai ba	'... women, I have not come to enmity with father'
	B, 4a	Fi/ <u>laanin</u> Garwaa ba su gaanee mai ba	'The Fulani of Garwa did not see through him'
h-h in p4	A, 16a	Shii ko kwa-/ɗon roogoo <u>ai baa</u> naamaa nee ba	'It, pounded cassava, it is not meat'
	B, 6e	Kui mani roo <u>koo koo</u> can gun Allah	'Plead for me there to Allah'
	B, 8a	Kai,/ Dan Maanii <u>in baa</u> jaahilcii ba	'You, son of Mani, if it is not ignorance'
h-h in p6	B, 10b	Annabi Mamman ( ) <u>shii maa</u> yaa cee	'The Prophet Muhammad, he did say'
l in p1	B, 4d	<u>Su</u> san halin gijjigon Bauci	'That they know the character of the Bauchi louts'
l in p2	B, 6a, 6b	Maalam <u>an</u> biɓnii da na kauyee <sup>9</sup>	'Learned men of city and village'
l in p3	B, 4d	Su san <u>halin</u> gijjigon Bauci	'That they know the character of the Bauchi louts'
l in p6	A, 15b	Da/ ɗan wani kwan maganaɗ <u>Tarauni</u>	'?And a little saying from Tarauni'
∅ in p1	B, 6c	( ) Roo <u>kon</u> da nakee don Allah	'The plea that I am making for the sake of Allah'
∅ in p5	B, 10b	Annabi Mamman ( ) shii maa yaa cee	'The Prophet Muhammad, he did say'

There are four types of unexpected scansion (separated by double lines in the table): (i) h-l in an even position where l-l would be expected (eleven examples—the identical lines 3a and 3b in “Aure” B are counted as one case); (ii) h-h in an even position where l-l would be expected (6 cases); (iii) a single light rather than a single heavy in any position (4 cases—the identical lines 6a and 6b in “Aure” B are counted as one case); (iv) no linguistic filler at all (2 cases). There are almost as many cases of type (i) as all the

<sup>9</sup>Lines 6a and 6b differ only in that 6a has an anacrusis, *Kuu* ... ‘Oh you ...’, absent in 6b.

others put together. In six of these cases, the heavy syllable is a monosyllabic non-substantive: *suu* ‘they, them’, *dai* ‘indeed’ (a topic marker), *baa* negative marker, *zaa* future marker (seen in two lines), and *kai* ‘you (m.sg.)’. One hypothesis, which will receive further support below, is that such elements can be treated as light for metrical purposes. Two cases of type (i) involve the phrase *Allah yà* ... ‘May Allah ...’. Although the word *Allah* would usually be pronounced [allaa], with a long final vowel (the final *-h* is purely orthographic in Hausa, reflecting the Arabic spelling), there are expressions, usually formulaic, in which it is pronounced with a short final vowel. The underlined portion may thus be the expected light-light rather than heavy-light. Line 4d of version B is sung as follows: (˘) *su san hálin gijíngon Báuci*, i.e. with the tactus in the positions marked with an acute accent (cf. fn. 8). In order to make this line scan in Anti-Mutadaarik, there must be three deviant metrical positions, viz. single light syllables and both p1 and p3 and a heavy-light sequence in p4. The quality of the recording of this version is good, and the song was transcribed by Aliyu Umaru, a native speaker of Hausa already familiar with this song. I can only conclude that Shata may have sung the text incorrectly.<sup>10</sup> In short, there remain only two unequivocal cases involving substantive lexical items where a heavy-light syllable sequence appears in place of an expected light-light: *albakacin* in version A, line 2b, and *Dattijo* in version B, lines 3a/3b.

The second most frequent unexpected configuration for a metrical position is case (ii), where heavy-heavy appears in place of light-light. There are six examples, three of which involve a sequence of two monosyllabic non-substantive items: *ai baa* ‘well not’, *in baa* ‘if not’, *shii maa* ‘he indeed’. These examples provide support for the hypothesis ventured above that such items can count as metrically light. Moreover, one of the three remaining examples, *rookoo koo* ‘praise indeed’ has a monosyllabic non-substantive as the second syllable. This leaves only two examples where the syllables in question belong entirely to substantive items: *Maataa gaaban* in version A, line 3c<sup>11</sup> and *Fillaanin Gaɓwaa* in version B, line 4a.

There are four examples where a single light fills a metrical position in which a heavy would be expected (counting as one example the repeated lines 6a/6b of version B). Two of the examples are p1 and p3 of a single line, viz. line 4d of version B, already discussed above as probably being a missed line. P7 of version A, line 15b is given with a single light. The transcription of this line is suspect, again because of the quality of the recording (cf. fn. 11), but the light syllable here does seem to be correct. P2 in lines 6a/6b is unequivocally filled by a single light: *Maalamai* ....

In summary, among the 21 cases of types (i-iii), 10 “unmetrically filled” metrical positions involve non-substantive monosyllables, which I have hypothesized may count as metrically light, 2 cases may not be unmetrical inasmuch as they may involve an alternative pronunciation of the word *Allah*, with a light final syllable, and 3 cases occur in a single *unmetrical line*. Thus, in the 616 metrical positions found in the 77 lines of “Mata Ku Yi Aure”, only 6 are unequivocally filled by syllable configurations not predicted by the metrical schema in (4) proposed for Anti-Mutadaarik. Moreover, there is never more than one deviation per line and the deviations themselves are of limited

<sup>10</sup>It is, of course, possible that poets might *choose* to deviate from metricality when they have a particular text they wish to use. This seems to be the case for at least some of the lines under consideration here, but the deviations in all the lines other than 4d are limited to a single metrical position, with the remainder of the line keeping metrically on track. It seems more likely, in the case of line 4d, that there is a performance error. Poems/songs such as “Mata Ku Yi Aure” are never performed the same way twice, opening up opportunity for such error. The poet has lines and even whole verses committed to memory, but in any given performance s/he may change the order of lines/verses, shorten, lengthen, or repeat verses, and add new lines and verses as s/he is inspired by the performance environment.

<sup>11</sup>Because of the poor quality of the recording, it has been impossible to verify that this line is correctly transcribed. Even if it is, the meaning is obscure. However, surrounding text and the parts of this line which can be made out make it clear that substantive items are involved in the stretch being discussed.

types, viz. heavy-light or heavy-heavy in place of light-light and a single light in place of a single heavy. There are, for example, no cases of light-heavy in place of light-light and no metrical positions filled by more than two syllables.

Two lines remain to be discussed, viz. the last two lines in table (13), where I claim that a metrical position has no linguistic material filling it. The performance of “Mata Ku Yi Aure” is in a triple meter.<sup>12</sup> Let us take “x” as the basic performance counting unit, with performance tactus falling on every third x. Line 6c of version B is performed as follows, with the tactus shown by acute accents: The proposed scansion is given above the line:

(14)	p1	p2	p3	p4	p5	p6	p7	p8
	—	—	—	v	v	—	—	—
	´	roo-kón	da	na	-kée	don	Ál--lah	
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Shata performs no syllable on the first instrumental tactus in the line. This alone does not show that the line has an empty first metrical position inasmuch as he frequently performs the first syllable of a line on the offbeat. However, if the first syllable of the line were taken as filling the first metrical position, the only way this line could be scanned would be to have the light syllables *da na* fill p3 and p4 respectively, forcing two consecutive metrical deviations in one line. The combination of performance combined with preferred matching of syllable types to metrical positions thus supports the scansion proposed here.

The situation is less clear for line 10b of version B, which is performed as follows:

(15)	p1	p2	p3	p4	p5	p6	p7	p8
	—	v	v	—	—	—	v	v
	´	An-nabi	Mám -man	´	shii	maa	yáa	cee
	x	x	.	.	x	x	x	x

The text of this line scans correctly, i.e. the heavy syllable *An* fills p1, the two lights *-nabi* fill p2, and the remaining heavies would fill p3-8. No doubt Shata could and would perform the line according to this scansion on other occasions. However, this line illustrates the possibility of alternate scansions when instrumental accompaniment is available to maintain the tactus. Shata comes in on the offbeat on the first syllable, but it seems necessary to scan this syllable as filling p1 rather than p2 in order to have the two light syllables fall into p2 (the two dots rather than an x under these syllables indicate that they are performed on a subdivided beat). It is p5 which is of interest. Here Shata makes a clear pause. One could argue that he has assigned 3 x's to the syllable *-man* of p4 but has not sung the syllable through. However, nowhere else in either version of “Mata Ku Yi Aure” does he assign 3 x's to a single syllable within a line. I therefore propose that he has treated this line as if p5 were linguistically empty, assigning the two syllables *shii maa* ‘he indeed’, which, significantly, are non-substantive monosyllables, to p6.

**4.2. Syllable configurations in p1-7: a rhythmic caesura?** The table in (12) shows that the three poets vary considerably in their use of anacruses, and, to a lesser extent, they vary in the possibilities they allow in p8. I return to these issues below. Let us consider first how p1-p7 are filled. Table (12) reveals a nearly categorical requirement that the odd numbered metrical positions be filled with heavy syllables. In the lines examined, there are only three exceptions: Shata appears to fill p1 with light-light in one

<sup>12</sup>Issues of performance will be taken up in detail below. Here, I present just enough information to explicate the issue being discussed.

line of version A, but the text is unintelligible to Hausa speakers, even on repeated listenings. Aliyu Namangi fills p1 with light-light in the following two lines:

(16) Su yi tuubaa a wunii haĩ kwanaa

‘They should do repentance by day and by night’ (“Tsaraba”, line 33b)

Masaraa, koosai baa ku da riibaa

‘Maize, bean cakes, you bring no profit’ (“Tsaraba”, line 40a)

The recording I have does not cover the full 100 lines which I counted, and the two lines here are among those not on the recording. The verb *yi* ‘do’ is often contracted with a preceding vowel-final pronoun, so it is possible that the underlined portion of 33b would be performed as a heavy syllable, *sui*. No such explanation exists for line 40a, however, the only conclusion being that light-light in place of heavy is possible as a disfavored option in at least p1, and perhaps in other odd numbered positions.

Most interesting is the way p2, p4, and p6 are filled. In every poem, p2 has about equal numbers of lines with a single heavy or two lights. However, p4 has at least twice as many lines filled with two lights as with one heavy, whereas p6 has an inverse relation of heavy vs. light-light. I suggest that these differential proportions form a sort of “rhythmic caesura”. In §4.2.1, I will show that each poet has a preference for beginning lines with something like an “upbeat”. The strong preference for two lights in p4 seems to be a corresponding upbeat for the second half of the line, which itself is preferentially performed as an even rhythm of four long syllables.<sup>13</sup> This pattern gives each line a canonical rhythmic feel which might be characterized as

(17) (da-da) DUM da-da DUM da-da DUM dum DUM dum

Admittedly, this is impressionistic and is subject to verification over a larger corpus. One small test case does exist within this corpus in the two versions of “Mata Ku Yi Aure”, recorded at different times and with different verse texts, yet with proportionately about the same syllable configurations in the respective metrical positions. The notion that poets preferentially fill metrical positions in particular ways to give the line halves a particular rhythmic feel also receives support from counts I have made in poems in the Mutadaarik meter (Schuh 1989). This meter has eight metrical positions in the following schema:

(18) Mutadaarik metrical schema: vv — vv — vv — vv —

I made counts of the first 102 lines<sup>14</sup> of “Waƙar Haɗa Kan Afirka” [“Song of African Unity”] by Alhaji Abubakar Ladan and the first 100 lines of “Waƙar Hana Zalunci” [“Song to Thwart Tyranny”] by Alhaji Salihu Kwantagora, with the following results:

<sup>13</sup>Variation from line to line in the first half of the line, with the second half being relatively uniform, accords with a principle of “beginnings free, endings strict”, found in many (all?) poetic traditions (Kiparsky 1968). Other features of the poetic corpus examined here which accord with this principle are variation in the use of anacruses (§§4.2.1-2) and the fact that the “unmetrical” features of the lines examined in §4.1 fall mostly in the first halves of the lines.

<sup>14</sup>I counted the first 102 lines rather than the first 100 so as to include the last full stanza in the count. This poem has mainly five line stanzas, but a couple of stanzas have six lines.



(21)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
(x)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ha	-naa	mata	lee	-ka	wa	-jen	maa	-tan	-ka	
	‘Forbid her from looking in on your wives’ (“Gagara”, line 38a)									

Of interest is the fact that in this line, unlike the other 99 in the sample, the syllable in p1 falls on the strong beat rather than the offbeat. Why does Aƙilu Aliyu preferentially use the rhythm pattern in (20) rather than the one in (21), which is like that used by Aliyu Namangi and which more closely fits the rhythm one would predict from the abstract grid for this meter? The answer is that Aƙilu Aliyu performs the entire poem as a connected text, with one stanza rhythmically flowing directly into the next. Aliyu Namangi, on the other hand, pauses between stanzas, beginning each one rhythmically anew. For Aliyu Namangi, the anacrusis forms an upbeat to get started on the new stanza; for Aƙilu Aliyu, beginning p1 on an offbeat gives him a place to breathe!

Another feature of the performance of the line in (21) is that Aƙilu Aliyu gives a duration of 3 x’s to the syllable in p1 while giving a duration of only 1 x to the heavy syllable in p3, the result being that the line has the full 16 grid positions, but distributed in an unexpected way. Such “borrowing” of grid positions in performance will be taken up in §5.

**4.2.2. What can fill an anacrusis position?** The table in (12) shows a variety of syllable configurations which fall into the anacrusis position. The main criterion for deciding that a syllable or syllables form an anacrusis is that by *not* including the line-initial syllable(s) in question, the remaining syllables will scan correctly in the eight metrical positions of (4). Another criterion is that the claimed anacrusis falls before the first performance tactus in a line (see §4.3). The table in (22) gives figures on the syllable configurations of anacrusis and where they occur. Line “a” is the first line of a verse sung by the soloist after the refrain for “Mata Ku Yi Aure” and the first line of a stanza for the other poems:

**(22) Syllables in anacrusis**

Syllable configuration	1 light		1 heavy		2 syllables		3 syllables	
	a	other	a	other	a	other	a	other
“Mata Ku Yi Aure”	5	5	8	7	8	4*	2	2*
“Yar Gagara”	1							
“Tsarabar Madina”	25	5	3		4			

\*In two of the four lines counted as having 2-syllable anacrusis in lines other than verse initial and in one of the two lines counted as having 3-syllable anacrusis in a line other than verse initial, the line initial text is unintelligible. The figures thus represent only a guess at where the line break is and what the syllables in the anacrusis are.

Let us first consider “Tsarabar Madina”. All but 5 of the 37 anacrusis are in the first line of a stanza. The preferred type of anacrusis is one light syllable; the maximum anacrusis is one heavy syllable or two light syllables. Anacrusis are always performed in the predicted way, i.e. with a light being given half the duration of a heavy. Examples of each of the stanza initial possibilities are found in lines presented above: a single light in (9c), viz. *I-naa kamnanka* ... ‘I love you ...’; a single heavy in the first line of (3), repeated with the scansion shown in (5), viz. *Al-laahu shi baa ni*... ‘May Allah give me ...’; and two lights in (9e), viz. *Yi da-d’in tsiiraa* ... ‘Increase salvation ...’. In the preceding section, I suggested that these *stanza* initial anacrusis provide an upbeat for the beginning of a new stanza, which, in Aliyu Namangi’s performance style, is not

connected rhythmically to the preceding stanza. Only five stanzas in the 100 lines surveyed have an anacrusis to the second line, and this always consists of a single light syllable. It turns out that line b anacrusis are always rhythmically “borrowed” from p8 of line a. I illustrate this and discuss it more fully in §6.

The sample from “Yar Gagara” has only one line with an anacrusis, seen in (21). I have suggested in the preceding section that Akilu Aliyu’s very sparing use of anacrusis is related to the fact that he rhythmically connects stanzas one to the other, and introduction of anacrusis syllables would not only crowd syllables but would give him nowhere to pause for breath.

The anacrusis picture is more complex for “Mata Ku Yi Aure”. Unlike “Tsarabar Madina”, there is no evident preference for anacrusis to be verse initial, at least for those consisting of a single syllable. There does seem to be at least a slight preference for not using anacrusis of two or three syllables in positions other than verse initial. The reason that Shata is more liberal than Aliyu Namangi in his use of anacrusis in lines not initial in a verse is performance time. In Aliyu Namangi’s performance, each metrical position is strictly timed to accommodate two grid positions (x’s). Thus, as noted in the discussion of Aliyu Namangi above, the only way an anacrusis to the second line of a stanza can be squeezed in is to use one of the grid positions which would be allotted to p8. However, Shata, performing in a triple rhythm, allots three beats to each pair of grid positions. In his performance of “Mata Ku Yi Aure” (both versions) *every* p7 is filled by a single syllable which is given no more than one beat,<sup>16</sup> leaving two beats for p8. This gives sufficient time to include an anacrusis to the next line without uncomfortably compressing the text. The example below shows how an anacrusis of two light syllables (italicized) fits into the rhythmic pattern across lines:

(23) “Mata Ku Yi Aure”: 2-syllable verse internal anacrusis

An	p1	p2	p3	p4		p5	p6	p7	p8	An	p1	p2	p3	p4		p5	p6	p7	p8	
Nii	dái	ban	kín	ma	-ga	-naĩ	ba	-baa	-naa	/Wa-ta	-	jii	yái	a	wu	-rín	ka	-káa	-	
							a				kíl						a		naa.	
x	x	xx	xx	.	.	xx	x	x	x	.	.	x	xx	xx	.	.	xx	x	x	xx

‘As for me I don’t reject the words of my father,  
Perhaps he heard them from my grandfather.’ (“Aure”, A, 7a-7b)

A song with a refrain can accommodate even longer anacrusis in verse initial position because the soloist can begin a verse with syllables overlapping the end of the refrain. This is what happens in any anacrusis of more than two syllables:

(24) “Mata Ku Yi Aure”: 3-syllable anacrusis overlapping with refrain

				p8																
<b>Refrain:</b>	...	ku	yi	au	-ree.															
		x	x	x	xx					p1	p2	p3	p4		p5	p6	p7	p8		
<b>Verse:</b>						<i>Shii</i>	<i>koo</i>	<i>kwa</i>	-	roo	-goo	ai	baa	naa	-	née	ba,			
									don						maa					
						x	.	.	xx	x	x	x	x	xx	x	x	xx			

‘It, indeed, pounded cassava is not meat’ (“Aure”, A, 16a)

It may be stretching things to call the italicized section an “anacrusis” inasmuch as it seems to be more than just a rhythmic upbeat. However, it is clearly a lead-in to the verse line, and to call it a partial line on its own would require that a line break fall within a word, a possibility which Shata never exploits in this song.

<sup>16</sup>In version B, Shata performs six of the p7’s on a half beat. An example can be seen below in (27).





- (3) **Non-lengthening of light syllables:** Heavy syllables can be performed with any duration which falls within the confines of the above constraints (we have seen examples of heavy syllables performed on a half-beat, one beat, and two beats—performance longer than 2 beats is rare because of the second constraint). Light syllables, however, are almost never performed longer than one beat.<sup>21</sup>

A hallmark of Mamman Shata's performance, and undoubtedly one of the features of his music which has made him the most popular traditional musician in Hausaland for decades, is the rhythmic variety he infuses into his singing. Singers performing to instrumental accompaniment obviously have more freedom than singers in a *capella* performance, i.e. without a tactus coming from the singing itself, it would be difficult to keep track of the beat. However, some *a capella* performers do introduce rhythmic variety. This is normally done by “borrowing” metrical grid units from one metrical position and adding them to another. Akilu Aliyu does this 13 times in the 100 lines examined here. In the table below, I give figures for these “metrical borrowings” with one example for each. I give only the bottom row of the grid, showing the number of grid positions allotted to each metrical position. Recall (§4.2.1 above) that Akilu Aliyu almost always performs the first syllable on the offbeat, meaning the first grid position is empty in most examples:

(29) Cases of grid position borrowing in “Yar Gagara”

Altered positions	#	Line #	Example	Translation
p1+, p3-	1	38a	see (21) above	
p2+, p3-	6	4b	x x    x x x    x    x x    x x    x x    x x    x x Kai dai    bar ta a waa -san tsii -rii	‘Hey, just leave her to her games of gossip’
p3+, p4-	1	2a	x x    x    x    x x x    x    x x x    x    x x    x x Mai fi -ti -naa bab -bañ wa -ta gwaa -zaa	‘The trouble-maker, the greatest of nymphomaniacs’
p3+, p5-	4	4a	x    x    x    x    x x x    x    x    x    x    x x x    x x Kaa -ru -wa baa ta nu -fin ta yi au -ree	‘A prostitute has no intention of marrying’
p4+, p5-	1	35a	x    x    x    x    x x x x x    x    x    x x    x x Baa ta da kun -yaa baa ta na -daa maa	‘She has no shame, she has no remorse’

It is always the earlier position which borrows from the later, and the borrowing position is always in the first half of the line. It is most commonly the next contiguous position which is borrowed from, but borrowing can be from the second position to the right. Borrowing is always from a heavy syllable, and in three of the five cases where borrowing is from a non-contiguous position, the intervening position is filled by light-light (cf. lines 38a, 4a). There are no evident restrictions on the substance of the borrowers or the lenders, i.e. borrowing is both from and to both syllables of substantive items and non-substantive monosyllables (cf. the hypothesis in §4.1 that phonologically

needed. I retain constraint (1) in order to have a way to refer to the intuition that performers and listeners must have about what constitutes a *line* and where that line must begin and end.

<sup>21</sup>In the corpus here, I found two cases where light-light in a single metrical position was performed with one and a half beats on the first and a half beat on the second. In this meter, a single light not paired with another light would normally occur only in an anacrusis. No light anacrusis syllables were performed longer than one beat. Likewise, in none of the cases mentioned in §4.1, where a single light syllable “unmetrically” fills a metrical position, were the light syllables performed with more than one beat duration.

heavy non-substantive monosyllables may be treated as metrically light). Perhaps the most surprising fact is that borrowing can be to either an odd or an even numbered position. I have noted that the tactus of performance always falls on the odd numbered positions, and I have claimed that this is evidence for the relatively greater “strength” of these positions. One might therefore expect that a borrowed metrical grid unit would be attracted to the strong metrical positions. Yet over half the extra-weighted positions in this sample are *even* numbered. It is, however, borrowing to just these positions which creates rhythmic variety through syncopation.

## 6. p8

Above, we discussed the even metrical positions p2, p4, and p6, noting that each of these positions can be filled either by two light syllables or a single heavy syllable, albeit with a strong preference for the former in p4 and for the latter in p6. The schema of metrical positions for Anti-Mutadaarik in (4) also allows for the choice of one heavy or two lights in the line final metrical position, p8. The table above reveals that the overwhelming choice for p8 is a single heavy—75 of the 77 lines in the Shata song, 96% of the lines counted for Akilu Aliyu, and 93% for Aliyu Namangi. What is surprising is that the light-light option is available at all in p8. In the Classical Arabic tradition, from which Hausa written poetry derives, no meter allows for lines which must be scanned as ending in a light syllable. Light syllables can appear in line final position, but they must always be scanned as heavy, both in Arabic poetry and in Hausa meters historically based on Arabic meters. Anti-Mutadaarik is not an Arabic-based meter, but in other traditional Hausa meters known to me, heavy and light syllables would also be neutralized to scansion as heavy.<sup>22</sup>

In the Akilu Aliyu and Aliyu Namangi poems, doubly filled p8 can occur only at the end of the first line of a stanza. Because performance rhythm is maintained throughout both lines of a stanza, the effect is that the consecutive lines merge without a pause. One of the Shata lines with a doubly filled p8 is verse final in the sense that it is the final line Shata sings before the choral refrain, but because the instrumental rhythm continues and the chorus begins singing with no pause, the “line-merging” effect is the same as for the other two poets. Below are examples of doubly filled p8 from Shata and Akilu Aliyu.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Arabic derived meters used in Hausa have been quite well documented, e.g. Galadanci (1975), Hiskett (1975), Schuh (1988). The only study that I know of which documents a range of Hausa traditional meters is Greenberg (1949). This study is limited to what Greenberg calls “popular poetry”, i.e. children’s songs, songs sung at dances, etc. Greenberg (1949:132) says, “The reckoning of final syllables as long for metrical purposes is another specific trait common both to classical Arabic and popular Hausa poetry.” There has been virtually no study of the metrical structures, much less metrical constraints, found in the huge, continually developing and evolving music/literature of “professional” musicians/poets like Mamman Shata, who work in traditional oral genres.

<sup>23</sup>In the Shata example, p8 is filled by a heavy-light syllable configuration. This is one of the cases discussed in §4.1 where this “non-metrical” scansion is required.

## (30) Rhythmic structure of a line with doubly filled p8 from “Mata Ku Yi Aure”

X						X					
X		X				X		X			
X	X X	X X		.	.	X X	X	X	X	X	
Muu	waa	-kaa		ba	mu	woo	gir	-man	kai	ba,	
X						X					
X		X				X		X			
X X	X	X	X	X	X	X X	X	X X		X	
Don	sal	-laa	da	sal		-laa	-til	Faa		(-ti)	

‘We in our song have not been arrogant,

(Refrain) For the sake of the prayers and the Invocation,’ (“Aure”-A, 4b-4c)

## (31) Rhythmic structure of a line with doubly filled p8 from “Yar Gagara”

X			X			X		X			
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X	X	
Kin	ban	hau	-shii	tsaa	-waa	zan	mi	-ki,			
X		X		X		X		X			
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X		
Doo	-min	kin	mi	-ni	zan	-cen	kar	-yaa.			

‘You vex me, I will scold you,

Because you have told me speech full of lies.’ (“Gagara”, verse 30)

Notice that in these examples, there is at least a break at the I-Phrase level between the lines. The same is true for all the other examples of doubly filled p8 from the Shata and Akilu Aliyu poems. Consider now two consecutive verses from Aliyu Namangi:

## (32) Rhythmic structures of two lines with doubly filled p8 from “Tsarabar Madina”

	X			X			X		X		
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
(x)	X	X X	X X	X	X	X X	X	X	X X	X	X
Da	aa	loo	-lin	-sa	da	kau	sa	-ha	-bai	na	-sa,
	X		X			X		X		X	
	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
	X X	X	X X	X	X	X X	X	X	X X	X X	
Maa	-	sa	-nin	da	-ra	-joo	-jin		juu	-naa.	
		su									

‘And his family and also his disciples,

Those who know each others’ rank.’ (“Tsaraba”, verse 4)

	X			X			X		X		
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
(x)	X X	X X	X X	X	X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X	
Da	maa	-taa	-yen	-sa	da	'yaa	-yaa	-yen	-sa,		
	X		X			X		X		X	
	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
(x)	X	X	X	X X	X	X	X X	X X	X X	X	X
Da	muu	ma	-bi	-yin	-sa	da	-ree	hañ	raa	naa.	

‘And his wives and his children,

And we his followers, night and day.’ (“Tsaraba”, verse 5)

The performance rhythm of these two verses is identical (the one minor difference being at p6 in the “a” lines, where verse 4 has light-light but verse 5 has heavy). Nonetheless, I propose that the two verses have a different analysis at the line break. The reason is phonological phrasing. In verse 4, as in the Shata and Akilu Aliyu examples in (30-31), the line break falls after the second syllable of p8, and as in those examples, the juncture after p8 is at an I-Phrase boundary (or possibly a P-Phrase boundary, depending on whether the second line is understood as an appositive or a restrictive phrase). In verse 5, on the other hand, grouping two light syllables into p8 would require that the line break fall within a *Clitic Group*, i.e. between the preposition/conjunction *da* ‘with/and’ and its complement. As we saw in §3, line breaks can occur within Clitic Group boundaries, but this is disfavored. I therefore claim that ambiguous scansion, as in these two verses, can be resolved by phonological phrasing junctures: in verse 4, the two light syllables following p7 are grouped as p8 because the major juncture follows the second of those syllables; in verse 5, p8 is filled by a single light syllable and the following light syllable is an extrametrical anacrusis to line 5b. This difference in analysis is supported by the fact that the verses are printed in Namangi (1972) with the line breaks at the larger phrasal boundaries.

As noted, a configuration light-light in p8 is of interest in that there is a wide-spread restriction in quantitative meters which disallows the possibility of a *metrically* light syllable in a line final metrical position, i.e. any syllable, regardless of phonological weight, would always be treated as metrically heavy in this position. In Hausa, there is a general metrical equivalence between one heavy and two lights, an equivalence which is freely exploited in some environments (as in p2 in Anti-Mutadaarik) while it is rarely exploited in other environments (as in p3, p5, and p7 in Anti-Mutadaarik). One could argue that the lines ending in light-light are an instance of this equivalence and thus conform to the neutralization of a line final position to heavy. However, line 5a from “Tsarabar Madina”, where a line break *must* fall between contiguous light syllables (assuming that my claim about phrasing junctures marking line breaks is correct) raises the question of whether the final syllable must be analyzed as *metrically* as well as *phonologically* light. I suggest that the answer is, “No,” i.e. this is another instantiation of performance rhythm overriding metrical scansion. Thus, the syllable in p8 of line 5a should be considered metrically heavy even though it is phonologically light and is performed with the duration of other light syllables. It is worth noting, however, that in the five verses in the sample studied here where Aliyu Namangi begins the “b” line with an anacrusis, four of these have a *phonologically* light syllable ending line “a”, suggesting that the poet is sensitive to how that syllable will fit into the metrical pattern.

## 7. Summary and Conclusion

This study has examined selections from three Hausa poems, all in a meter referred to as “Anti-Mutadaarik”. These poems represent three “generations” of a single poem in that two of the poets acknowledge that they took the earlier poems as the basis for their compositions. It is moreover clear that what each of the poets took from their predecessors was the linguistic metrical structure—the three poems differ radically from each other thematically and in oral performance.<sup>24</sup> The basic Anti-Mutadaarik metrical schema of eight metrical positions per line, represented in (4), can be worked out from

<sup>24</sup>It is worth noting that the poets could not have borrowed the meter from each other by reading that text of their predecessors, then creating their own performance style for the meter that they extracted from the text alone. The first generation song by Mamman Shata is purely oral and has never been published in written form. Akilu Aliyu had to have heard it as a recording or perhaps in live performance. Aliyu Namangi is blind and therefore could not have read the Akilu Aliyu poem which he acknowledges as his influence.

examination of the texts alone. Line breaks are delimited both by performance pauses and written presentation. These extralinguistic delimiters correlate with the linguistic feature of phonological phrasing: line breaks almost always occur at the level of the Utterance or Intonational Phrase, perhaps occasionally at the level of the Phonological Phrase, and only as a disfavored option at lower levels.

Although the schema of eight metrical positions provides a basic structure for the Anti-Mutadaarik meter, this schema without further structure fails to account for a number of observations. In particular, (i) there are strong statistical preferences for how even numbered positions are filled whereas the schema alone would predict equal choice of either one heavy syllable or two light syllables in these positions; (ii) a number of lines appear to be unmetrical according to this schema; (iii) the three poets show systematic variation in the way they implement the meter, particularly with respect to their use of anacruses.

The patterning of choices for metrical positions as well as the use of anacruses leads to the hypothesis that lines have a *rhythmic caesura*, with an underlying feel for a line divided into two halves, each with a rhythmic upbeat. Looking into further intralinear metrical organization, performances by the three poets suggest that pairs of odd and even numbered metrical positions be grouped into feet. The basis for this grouping is the fact that all three poets, though using differing performance rhythms, consistently have a tactus on odd numbered metrical positions, indicating that these positions are the “strong” positions of the metrical grid. This could not be predicted from text alone, since lines can potentially consist of strings of eight heavy syllables and hence would show no phonological differentiation between positions.

Examination of “unmetrical” lines reveals that unmetricality is constrained in a number of ways. While a few lines suggest that it is possible for a poet to override the canonical syllable configurations for certain metrical positions, most of the cases of apparent unmetricality involve heavy syllables where light syllables would be predicted and most of the offending heavy syllables are monosyllabic “non-substantives” (pronouns, tense markers, topic markers, etc.). I therefore hypothesize that these items may be treated as metrically light.

Performance style also provides an explanation for differences between the poets in terms of text setting, particularly the use of anacruses. Mamman Shata uses a triple rhythm in performance and has instrumental accompaniment whereas Akilu Aliyu and Aliyu Namangi use a duple rhythm and perform *a capella*. Shata’s rhythmic choice provides more time for anacruses, especially internally in a verse. Akilu Aliyu and Aliyu Namangi differ in that the latter makes a rhythmic break between stanzas, permitting time for stanza-initial anacruses rarely found in the former. In an excursus on performance, I further discuss how poets may introduce rhythmic variety by departing from a predicted rhythmic ideal where heavy syllables would be consistently performed with greater duration than light syllables.

A final section discusses the unusual feature of Anti-Mutadaarik which allows for a line final metrical position to be filled with two light syllables. I conclude that this meter probably does not constitute an exception to a perhaps universal feature of quantitative meters that line final syllables be neutralized to scansion as heavy, regardless of phonological weight.

This paper has looked at the way three Hausa poets have set text and performed poems in a single meter. Some of the paper’s results derive from insights in theoretically studies of meter. Few such studies have dealt in any detail with quantitative metrical systems still in active use. I therefore hope that this study will contribute to the empirical base available for the theory of metrics. Many of the observations here coincide with work on systems of stress-based metrics and on quantity-based traditions which are no longer active. I believe there are, however, observations which, if correct, would not directly follow from previous theoretical work. In particular, performance style not

evident from text alone appears to play a role in metrical text organization, e.g. in the proposed rhythmic caesura and in the way anacrusis are used.

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