Internal Rhyme and the History of Strophic Song

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Verses with inner cola (metrical “limbs”) marked by rhyme—in the refrain or the body of the strophe or both—appear in around forty cantigas d’amigo (Appendix 2). But their colometry has been misunderstood (Cohen 2003: 43; 2010b), so their formal properties have not been taken into account in discussions of the wholly or partially Romance kharajat. Techniques deployed in the composition of these cantigas provide unexplored evidence for the history of strophic forms in the Amigo genre and for the much debated history of rhymed strophic poetry in Andalusi Arabic and the medieval Romance languages.

Simplifying, the standard shape of an Andalusi Arabic muwashshah (rhymed strophic song) is: aa bbbaa, cccaa, dddaa, eeeaa, dddaa. The initial aa is an optional prelude, each successive aa is called qufl, and the last one also bears the name markaz or kharjāh (plural kharajāt). This corresponds (without prelude, but see Pae Soárez de Taveirós 2) to a cantiga d’amigo of the form aaaBB with cobras singulares (where rhyme-sounds outside the refrain change with each strophe). Ibn Bassam of Santarem (early twelfth century) says internal rhyme was introduced first in the qufl. In Amigo internal rhyme often occurs only in the refrain. Internal rhyme in muwashshat then spread to the body of the strophe, says Ibn Bassam. In Galician-Portuguese secular lyric, forms with internal rhyme throughout, found mainly in Amigo, are basically like those of the muwashshah, but—strangely—smaller, consisting of fewer verses. Is there a genetic relation between these forms and their Arabic counterparts? If so, which way does the influence run?

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1 Numbering and texts (with colometry corrected) of the cantigas d’amigo are from Cohen 2003. Punctuation has been modified, and tils added where historical phonology expects them and thirteenth century manuscripts of Galician-Portuguese lyric provide them. I avoid the word “hemistich.” In the texts analyzed in the Appendices, a strophe is made up of two periods; a period consists of one to three verses; and a verse is composed of one or two cola—which need not be equal. On strophic song and external responsion, see Cohen: 2010a: 11-12. For the chronology of the poets, see Oliveira 1994: 303-440. For information on Andalusian Arabic poetry, I depend on Corriente (2009) and Monroe (1994a, 1994b). See Zwartjes (1997: 134-158) for a discussion of the arguments.

2 I omit mention of the zajal-like strophes (e.g. AA bbba AA etc.) of many cantigas de Santa Maria, which resemble Andalusi Arabic forms. They require separate treatment.
The structure that Ibn Bassam says came first in Andalusi Arabic is found in Johan Servando 1, which has internal rhymes (represented here by bold font in the schema) only in the refrain: $a^6+a^6+a^6+a^6+B^6+B^6$. The inner colon boundary is marked by syllable count and cadence in the body of the strophe, but in the refrain this boundary is marked by both of these and by rhyme. Here is the text (a vertical bar | signals the inner colon boundary):

Johan Servando 1

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aaaBB (x4): 13 [6'+6]
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i    ix    on    en ∥ (ada) ei

Quand’ eu a San Servando | fui un dia daqui
faze-la romaria | e meu amig’ i vi,
direi vos con verdade | quant’ eu del entendí:
muito venho pagada | de quanto lhi falei;
mais á m’ el namorada | que nunca lhi guarrei. 5
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Que bõa romaria | con meu amigo fix,
ca lhi dix’, a Deus grado, | quanto lh’ eu dizer quix
e dixi lh’ o gran torto | que sempre dele prix:
muito venho pagada | de quanto lhi falei;
mais á m’ el namorada | que nunca lhi guarrei. 10
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U el falou comigo, | disse m’ esta razon:
por Deus, que lhi faria? | e dixi lh’ eu enton:
“Averei de vós doo | <e>no meu coração;”
muito venho pagada | de quanto lhi falei;
mais á m’ el namorada | que nunca lhi guarrei. 15
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Nunca m’ eu desta ida | acharei se non ben,
ca dix’ a meu amigo | a coita ’n que me ten
o seu amor, e cuido | que vai ledo por en:
muito venho pagada | de quanto lhi falei;
mais á m’ el namorada | que nunca lhi guarrei. 20
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This corresponds to what Ibn Bassam considers an “early” *muwashshah* with internal rhyme only in the *qufl*. And *cantigas d’amigo* with the forms aaB, aaB, aaBB and aaBB represent even earlier steps in a plausible history of rhymed strophic composition (Cohen 2005: 247-255; 2011: 637-639, 646-647). They obey the same principles as their sisters in the south but are simpler, reflecting size-limits appropriate to a phase of development before the first examples of the *muwashshah*. And Pero Meogo 3, which uses a distich *aa* (not a proper strophe) with two cola per verse (and internal *assonance* in strophes I-III), mirrors the stage of what scholars call the “proto-zajal,” which preceded and provided the base for the first rhymed strophic songs in Arabic (Meogo 3, vv. 1-2).³

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_–Tal vai o meu amigo, _con amor que lh’ eu dei, 13 [6′+6]

come cervo ferido _de monteiro del rei._

_Amigo_ strophes of the general form aaB may contain clues to the evolution of internal rhyme because they can use either inner cola throughout but rhyming only in the refrain or inner cola rhyming in both periods.⁴ Two *cantigas* by Johan de Requeixo, an as yet unknown and undated Galician *jograr*, exemplify these forms:

Johan de Requeixo 1

aaB (x3): 15′/16 [7′/8+7′/8] ∥ 15 [7′+7′]
igo _ei on_ || (ia) ia

Fui eu, madr’, en romaria _a Faro con meu amigo_
e venho del namorada _por quanto falou comigo,_
ca mi jurou que morria _por mi, tal ben mi queria._

Leda venho da ermida _e desta vez leda serei,_
ca falei con meu amigo _que sempre <muito> desejei,_
ca mi jurou que morria _por mi, tal ben mi queria._

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³ Corriente 2009: 118. Corriente thinks that “old zajals must have evolved from couplets (aa), to inner rhymed couplets (abab), to more complicated structures” (personal communication, 2009).
⁴ And there are other possibilities; see Cohen 2013a. Camanêz 1 and Dinis 4 can be analyzed as aaB but this is uncertain. See Appendix 2.
Du m’ eu vi con meu amigo | vin leda, se Deus mi perdon,
ca nunca lhi cuid’ a mentir | por quanto m’ el<e> diss’ enton,
ca mi jurou que morria | por mi, tal ben mi queria.

Johan de Requeixo 5

aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]
(ĕsse) igo (ado) enha (ada) ida \ (ia) ia

Amiga, quen oje ouvesse | mandado do meu amigo
e lhi ben dizer podesse | que vêesse falar migo
ali u sempre queria | falar mig’ e non podia.

Se de mi ouver mandado, | non sei ren que o detenha,
amiga, pelo seu grado | que el mui cedo non venha
ali u sempre queria | falar mig’ e non podia.

U foi mig’ outra vegada | atende-lo ei velida,
fremosa e ben talhada | en Far<o> ena ermida
ali u sempre queria | falar mig’ e non podia.

This strophic system appears to be pivotal: other forms can be derived from it (Cohen 1996: 20-23). Still, no cantiga d’amigo is formally equivalent to a muwashshah with internal rhyme throughout. But a cantiga d’escarnho by Lopo Lias fits the bill. And in the first verse the poet calls his song “son de negrada,” an expression glossed by Lapa as “Moorish melody” (“toada mourisca;” CEM, s.v. negrada; see Ferrreira 2006: 276-277 n34). The colometry should be aaBBB with internal rhyme in both periods—and, apparently, two internal rhymes in the first verse of the refrain.
aaB and kindred forms raise questions. How do we explain their survival in the northwest corner of the Iberian Peninsula? Are they early borrowings from Andalusi Arabic? Or do they support the thesis of a Romance origin for rhyme?

Let us consider two possibilities: (1) Galician-Portuguese or a Romance tradition very like it was the source of rhymed strophic song in Arabic; (2) Galician-Portuguese, like other Romance languages, took rhymed strophes—directly or indirectly—from Arabic. In either case the borrowing could have occurred in the tenth century (where Ibn Bassam places the earliest *muwashshat*) or even earlier. And, either way, the Galician-Portuguese forms survived in a geographically and linguistically marginal area. But what accounts for the simplicity of aaB and aaBB forms and the relative sophistication of their inner rhymes? Neither the self-proclaimed “Moorish melody” of Lopo Lias nor the two fragmentary *cantigas d’ amor* of Vidal, *Judeu d’ Elvas* (Cohen 2010b) can help us decide, since their Andalusian sources are evidently contemporary.

Two positions characterize the debate: Corriente (2009) favors an Arabic origin; Monroe (1994a: 404-413) supposes early Romance forms. There is, however, fresh evidence in the *cantigas d’amigo*, if colometry is correctly analyzed. The forms aa and aaB (and aaBB) with internal rhymes display features of the proto-*zajal* and the *muwashshah* in its various phases. They look much like missing links.
Might aaB be a stem-strophe? Let’s define it as consisting of two periods: aa \( \parallel \) B. If each verse has two cola with rhyme, there are four rhymed cola in the first period, and two in the second: aa \( \parallel \) B. With one more homogeneous verse—consisting of two rhymed cola—in each period, the strophe becomes aaa \( \parallel \) BB. That is basically the form of a muwashshah.

Lapa (1965: 231) is right to say that if we are to study the forms of peninsular versification we should begin with the schema aaB.\(^5\) He argues that throughout the secular lyric the integrity of long verses should be maintained—at least up to 15 syllables (Lapa 1965: 183). In an oral-based tradition of strophic song, colometry is constrained by the limits of working memory (Willett 2002) and the longest cola in the cantigas d’amigo fall within those limits. In aaB forms with verses of two cola the inner colon boundary is usually marked by rhyme in one or both periods, producing cognitive chunks that can be more easily processed (Cohen 2013b).\(^6\) In form, rhetoric and pragmatics aaB compositions in Amigo facilitate the task of working memory, suggesting that they derive from an oral tradition. But leaving aside action and rhetoric, the formal properties of aaB strophes require a reexamination of their place in the history of European rhymed strophic song.

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\(^5\) “É, pois, do esquema aaB que devemos partir para o estudo das formas da versificação peninsular.” Lapa did not fully understand or follow the repercussions of his own observation (witness the flawed colometry of CEM 256; see above) and was not in a position to solve the riddle of the Romance kharajat.

\(^6\) The longest colon in the genre scans nine syllables (8’; in Nuno Fernandez Torneol 1, vv. 1, 4). The first colon in the first period of Bernal de Bonaval 7 scans eight syllables.
Appendix 1. Strophic Forms aaB and aaBB with Internal Rhyme: Examples (see key, below)

SUMMARY

1) *Calheiros 4: aaBB > aaB  \( \emptyset \) || horizontal
3) Pae Soarez 3: ababCC > aaB  vertical || horizontal
3) *Requeixo 2: ababCC > aaB  vertical || horizontal
4) *Bonaval 5: aaBBBB > aaBB  \( \emptyset \) || horizontal
5) *Zorro 9: aaBCBC > aaBB  \( \emptyset \) || vertical
6) Berdia 4: ababCCCC > aaBB  vertical || horizontal
7) *Pae Calvo 1: ababCDCD > aaBB  vertical || vertical

KEY

lower case letters = body of strophe
upper case letters = refrain
a or B = verse with internal rhyme
> = “should be analyzed as”
vertical = vertically corresponding rhyme
horizontal = horizontally corresponding rhyme
\( \emptyset \) = no internal rhyme
\| = division between periods
7'7/8 = equivalent scansion
15' [7'+7'] = verse divided into cola

* = see Cohen 2003, ad loc.

TEXTS (only the first strophe is cited, except for Requeixo 2)

1) Fernan Rodriguez Calheiros 4: aaB  15' [7'+7']

Direi vos agor', amigo, | camanho temp' á passado
que non pudi veer cousa | ond' ouvesse gasalhado
des que vos de mi partistes | tães ora que me vistes.

2) Pae Soarez de Taveirós 3: aaB  15' [7'+7']

Quando se foi meu amigo, | jurou que cedo verria,
mais, pois non ven falar migo, | por en, por Santa Maria,
nunca me por el roguedes, | ai donas, fe que devedes.

3) Johan de Requeixo 2: aaB  14/13' [5'/6+8/7']  ||  14 [6+8]

A Far<o> un dia | irei, madre, se vos prouguer,
rogar se verria | meu amigo, que mi ben quer,
e direi lh' eu enton | a coita do meu coraçon.
Muito per desejar eu que vêesse meu amigo
que m’ estas penas deu e que falasse comigo
e direi lh’ eu enton a coita do meu coração.

4) Bernal de Bonaval 5: aaBB 15’ [7’+7’]

Se vêess’ o meu amigo a Bonaval e me visse,
vedes como lh’ eu diria, ante que m’ eu del partisse:
“Se vos fordes, non tardedes tan muito como soedes;”
diria lh’ eu: “Non tardedes, amigo, como soedes.”

5) Johan Zorro 3: aaBB 10 9’/9’ [4’+4’]

Pela ribeira do rio salido
trebelhei, madre, con meu amigo;
amor ei migo que non ouvesse,
fiz por amigo que non fezesse.

6) Pero de Berdia 4: aaBB 15 [7’+7’]/15’ [7’+7’]

Assanhô s’ o meu amigo a mi, por que non guisei
como falasse comigo, Deus lo sabe, non ousei,
e por en, se quiser, ande sanhud’ e non mho demande;
quant’ el quiser, atant’ ande sanhud’ e non mho demande.

7) Pae Calvo 1: aaBB 11’ [5’+5’]

Foi s’ o namorado, madr’, e non o vejo;
e viv’ én coitado, moiro con desejo;
torto mi ten ora o meu namorado,
que tant’ alhur mora e sen meu mandado.
Appendix 2. Internal Rhymes in aaB, aaBB and aaaBB Forms in the *Cantigas d’Amigo*

Fernan Rodriguez de Calheiros

2  aaB (x4): 7’ 10 [2+8]
3  aaB (x3): 9/9’ 11 [2+9]
4  aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]
6  aaB (x3): 12 12 [6+6]
8  aaB (x4): 15’ [7’+7’]

Vaasco Praga de Sandin

1  aaB (x4): 13’ [6’+6] 16 [8+8]
2  aaB (x3): 16 [7’+8] 15’ [7’+7’]

Pae Soares de Taveirós

3  aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]

Pero Garcia Burgalês

2  aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]

Vaasco Gil

1  aaB (x3): 16 [7’/8+8] 15’ [7’+7’]

Johan Perez d’ Avoin

9  aaB (x4): 16 [7’+8] 15’ [7’+7’]

Johan Lopez d’ Ulhoa

2  aaB (x3) + fjinda: 15 [7’+7’]
3  aaB (x4): 11 12 [6+6]
6  aaB (x3) + fjinda: 13’ [6’+6’]

Fernan Fernandez Cogominho

1  aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]
4  aaB (x3): 15/15’ [7’+7’] 15’[7’+7’]

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7 This list includes most aaB(B) texts with internal rhyme. Songs in any form (including aaB and kin) without inner cola, songs with inner cola but without internal rhyme, and songs with internal rhyme but no clear colon boundary are not considered here. For the last category, see, e.g., Pae Gomez Charinho 6, which should be taken as aaBB (x2): 9’ [4’+4’] 10 [4+6] 10; and Fernan Rodriguez Calheiros 7, probably best seen as aaBBB (x3): 11’ 8 13 [4+4+5] 8.

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Gonçal’ Eanes do Vinhal
1  aaBB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]  \parallel  15’ [7’+7’]

Johan Garcia de Guilhade
7  aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]
10 aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]

Afons’ Eanes do Coton
2  aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]
3 (=Pae Soarez de Taveirós 3)

Pero de Berdia
4  aaBB (x4): 15/15’ [7’+7’/7’]  \parallel  15’ [7’+7’]

Pero de Veer
3  aaB (x2): 10’  \parallel  10 [5+5]
5  aaB (x1 [fragment]): 15’ [7’+7’]  \parallel  14 [7+7]

Bernal de Bonaval
4  aaB (x4): 16 [7’/8+8]  \parallel  16 [8+8]
5  aaBB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]

Johan Servando
1  aaaBB (x4): 13’ [6’+6]
2  aaB (x3): 15/15’ [7’+7’/7’]  \parallel  14 [7+7]
4  aaB (x3): 7’  \parallel  13 [5+8]

Johan Zorro
9  aaBB (x2): 10’ 9’  \parallel  9’ [4’+4’]

Juião Bolseiro
12 aaB (x3): 15’ [7’+7’]
15 aaB (x2): 15 [7’+7]  \parallel  15’ [7’+7’]

Nuno Treez
1  aaBB (x3): 16 [8+8]
3  aaB (x6): 16/15’ [7’/8+7’]  \parallel  15’ [7’+7’] (aaB in V-VI)

Pedr’ Amigo de Sevilha
7  aaB (x3): 15 [7’+7]  \parallel  14 [7+7]

Pae Calvo
1  aaBB (x4): 11’ [5’+5’]
Martin Padrozelos
9  \text{aaB} (x3): 13 \ [6'+6] \ || \ 13' \ [6'+6']

Johan de Requeixo
1  \text{aaB} (x3): 15'/16 \ [7'/8+7'/8] \ || \ 15 \ [7'+7']
2  \text{aaB} (x3): 14/13' \ [5'/6+8/7'] \ || \ 14 \ [6+8]
5  \text{aaB} (x3): 15' \ [7'+7']

Totals: \text{aaB} 21  \text{aaBB} 3  \text{aaaBB} 1
\text{aaB} 12  \text{aaBB} 3
Works Cited


___. 2013a. “*Cantigas d’Amigo* with aaB Forms by Galician *Jograres*.” Washington DC: Virtual Center for the Study of Galician-Portuguese Lyric. Web


