THEME AND LYRICISM: TWO CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ISLAMIC WRITING TRADITION MOTIVATING MUSLIM AUTHORS IN NAMING THEIR WORKS

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Abstract

The implementation of the *sajʿ* (rhymed prose) style for the denomination of works is a writing tradition among medieval Muslim intellectuals and a widespread artistic effort that is still extant today. Indeed, thematic restriction has played a role as a motivating factor in the creativity of authors in the classical era in terms of *sajʿ*. The objective of this paper is to present the distinctive solidarity between theme and *sajʿ* that stands out in the book titles of countless Islamic classics by means of a comprehensive examination of book names by Muslim authors between the 3rd and 10th centuries AH. This paper also attempts to identify why scholars could not renounce thematic restrictions and aesthetics based on ornamental sensibility when naming their scientific works.

Key Words: Islamic writing tradition, names of works, book title, onomastics, *sajʿ* (rhymed prose), aesthetics, embellished prose

Introduction

Experts in onomastics,[1] a subdiscipline of linguistics, have often concentrated on the names of persons, places, and regions. Nevertheless, this discipline comprises a scope and flexibility that enables the examination of book titles put to paper in a certain language, region or culture. In particular, the significant amount of variable book titles created by Muslim scholars using a limited word staff as well as the striking artistic effort in the design of these titles are truly worth noting and deserve closer analysis.

Rhymed prose (نَثْر مُسَجَّع), which initially emerged in works in the *maqāmāt* genre as of the 3rd century AH and rapidly flourished, is a much examined artistic style. The objective of this study is a comprehensive examination of the theme and form of book titles from various disciplines, particularly in the Arabic language and literature as well as tafsīr, ḥadīth, history of religions, Sufism, philosophy, botany, zoography, zoology, mineralogy, astrology, astronomy, and numismatics, created by the *sajʿ* style. The scope of our study covers the titles of works written between the 3rd and 10th centuries AH to follow the evolution and witness the ongoing vivacity of the *sajʿ* style,[2] which became a writing tradition among medieval Muslim intellectuals.[3]

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1   It was Aristotle who identified this linguistic discipline for the first time. In the course of time, dozens of subdisciplines were formed in consideration of the relevant object or concept. Murat and Gülkanat, who describe onomastics as an extensive phenomenon with dynamic structure, indicate that it covers a vast scope, from the names of buses to flowers. See Mualla Murat and Gizem Gülkanat, "Onomastik Bilimi ve Eğitim," *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 5, no. 28 (2018), 248, http://dx.doi.org/10.16990/SOBIDER.4485.

2   Geert Jan van Gelder, "Antidotes and Anecdotes: A Literary History of Medicine from 13th-Century Syria," in *Wit and Wisdom in Classical Arabic Literature: Leiden Lectures on Arabic Language and Culture*, Petra M. Sijpesteijn, James A. Montgomery, and Geert Jan van Gelder (Leiden: Leiden Publications, 2015), 58.

3   According to Devin J. Stewart, *sajʿ* in Arabic literature and Arab society dates back to the pre-Islamic period and maintained its importance until the 20th century AD. Indeed, almost all Arabic works made use of this method. See "*Sajʿ* in the Qurʾān: Prosody and Structure," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 21, no. 2 (1990), 101, https://doi.org/10.1163/157006490X00017. According to Shawqī

The content of this study excludes book titles that consist of a single word, such as اَلْبُخَلَاءُ (*The Avaricious*) by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), that include no artistic or aesthetic aspect of pronunciation regarding the formation of wording regardless of the quality of their content, such as اَلْبَيَانُ وَالتَّبْيِينُ by the same author, or that have an extremely long name, such as

اَلْعِبَرُ وَدِيوَانُ الْمُبْتَدَأ وَالْخَبَرِ فِي أَيَّامِ الْعَرَبِ وَالْعَجَمِ وَالْبَرْبَرِ وَمَنْ عَاصَرَهُمْ مِنْ ذَوِي السُّلْطَانِ الْأَكْبَرِ

by Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), which ultimately became known as *Muqaddimah*. Instead, we concentrate on relatively short or medium-length book titles that skillfully make use of certain techniques and practices of *saj'*, which is considered "wisdom *(al-ḥikmah)* composed in an expression *(al-lafẓ)*"[4] that comprise a lyrical air in pronunciation, consist of the same letters but different words to lead to occasional misreading, and prioritize form and meaning together. The works referred to in this study are interesting, compelling, and even, occasionally, laconic examples with humorous emphasis in terms of pronunciation or meaning.

Pursuant to our methodology, we evaluate book titles in categorical terms and include the name and date of death of the author; thus, we aim to demonstrate how rooted the tradition is. To highlight the theme within a book title, we often make use of bold characters and frames to identify lyrical elements.

Scholars from every discipline have exerted significant effort to create artistic book titles; however, the men of letters are particularly worth noting. While certain book titles are composed through a literary language, they express a certain thesis or assertion. For instance, تَنْوِيرُ الْغَبَش فِي فَضْلِ السُّودَانِ وَالْحَبَشِ (*Illuminating the Darkness: The Virtues of Blacks and Abyssinians)* by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) underlines, on the one hand, the principle that "superiority should be sought in piety and not in color of skin," while on the other, it provides a significantly eloquent introduction to the content of the

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Ḍayf, the *saj'* style became a widespread literary taste and practice particularly as of the 10th century AD. Shawqī Ḍayf, *Tārīkh al-adab al-'Arabī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1995), IV (*al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-awwal*), 573.

4   Dimitri Gutas, "Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature: Nature and Scope," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101, no. 1 (1981), 63, https://doi.org/10.2307/602164.

work. Ibn al-Marzubān al-Muḥawwalī (d. 309/921), who complains about the moral degeneration of the men of his time and their disobedience to rules of friendship, uses the title فَضْلُ الْكِلَابِ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ لَبِسَ الثِّيَابَ (*The Book of the Superiority of Dogs Over Many of Those Who Wear Clothes*).

Some authors are even more successful in echoing the content of their work in their book titles. Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), who is among these meticulous authors, calls his study about the permissibility of swimming اَلْبَاحَةُ فِي فَضْلِ السِّبَاحَةِ, his tract on the legitimacy of using spears اَلسِّمَاحُ فِي أَخْبَارِ الرِّمَاحِ, and his compilation of classical poetry and jokes about *kunafah* and *qaṭāʾif* مَنْهَلُ اللَّطَائِفِ فِي الْكُنَافَةِ وَالْقَطَائِفِ which managed to attract the attention of readers.

I. Possible Intentions behind the Denomination of Books

Muslim authors started the writing and registering movement as early as the 2nd century AH and attached particular importance to the names of their works. It was also a technical requirement to provide a work with a foolproof name. In his definition of the concept of a "book title (اَلْعُنْوَان)" among the eight essential elements within the opening pages of classical works, Kātib Chalabī (d. 1067/1657) writes as follows:

> اَلْعُنْوَانُ: اَلدَّالُّ بِالْإِجْمَالِ عَلَى مَا يَأْتِي تَفْصِيلُهُ وَهُوَ قَدْ يَكُونُ بِالتَّسْمِيَةِ
> وَقَدْ يَكُونُ بِأَلْفَاظٍ وَعِبَارَاتٍ تُسَمَّى بِبَرَاعَةِ الْإِسْتِهْلَالِ.

> The title is the thing or part that briefly expresses the issues to be eventually detailed. It may be an (ordinary) denomination or be applied through wordings and inscriptions called *good beginning*.[5]

By the abovementioned *good beginning*,[6] Kātib Chalabī understands not only meaning, but also the formal aesthetic ensured

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[5]   Ḥājī Khalīfah Muṣṭafá ibn ʿAbd Allāh Kātib Chalabī, *Kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*, ed. M. Şerefeddin Yaltkaya and Kilisli Rifat Bilge (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthanná, 1941), I, 38.

[6]   *Barāʿat al-istihlāl*, which is used in the sense of "good beginning" in verse or prose, is examined in classical references under the term *ḥusn al-ibtidāʾ*. This style, which ensures an impressive beginning to the qaṣīdah of a poet, the prose of a writer and the correspondences of a scribe, has been in use since earlier periods. See, for example, Abū l-ʿAbbās Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-

by *saj‘*. Indeed, an attentive examination of bibliographical and biobibliographical works, particularly *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, reveals how Muslim authors made use of "denomination" as an effective instrument to attract readers' attention to the book because they would duly benefit from the work. In other words, the essential objectives of classical authors in the creation of the names of their works are *extraordinariness* to the degree of astonishment, *noticeability* to the degree of intensity, and *artistry* to the degree of confusion in terms of syntax.

In our opinion, there are understandable reasons why Muslim authors since the early days have given interesting names to their works. A laconic name that appropriately expresses the content and wish was an incontestable factor in providing the author with popularity. Accordingly, many authors tried to attach their nicknames and epithets to the names of their books in a phonetically aesthetic manner. For instance, the frequently referenced work by Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 420/1029) is often mentioned together with the name of its author and became known as "اَلْأَغَانِي لِلْإِصْفَهَانِي". The same applies for the names of three following works: " اَلْأَمَالِي لِأَبِي عَلِيٍّ الْقَالِي ", " مَنْ غَدَرَ وَخَانَ لِابْنِ الْمَرْزُبَانِ " and " وَفَيَاتُ الْأَعْيَانِ لِابْنِ خَلِّكَان ".

In addition to their noble goal of "disseminating knowledge," the authors also proved their mastery and experience in the Arabic language in the eyes of readers through the extraordinary names of their works. Furthermore, a successful "denomination" meant a higher number of qualified readers and therefore higher commercial "earnings."

The *saj‘* style[7] has often been employed in the enigmatic expressions of soothsayers, oratories, moving counsels such as

Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshá fī ṣināʿat al-inshāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1987), I, 47; Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-taʿrīfāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1985), 63; Abū l-Baqāʾ Ayyūb ibn Mūsá al-Ḥusaynī al-Kafawī, *Al-kulliyyāt: Muʿjam fī l-muṣṭalaḥāt wa-l-furūq al-lughawiyyah*, ed. ʿAdnān Darwīsh and Muḥammad al-Miṣrī, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1998), 364.

7   Van Gelder, *Classical Arabic Literature: A Library of Arabic Literature Anthology* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2013), 110.

testaments, gnomical sayings, influential sayings such as maxims and parables, as well as religious ritual expressions since the Jāhiliyyah and early Islamic period. On some occasions, Muslim scholars benefited from *saj'* to ensure the formal attractiveness of their work. Indeed, as is still true today, a simple and unadorned title created pursuant to *saj'* in those days not only sounded nice but also raised notable curiosity about the content and moved the reader to access the inner pages. In addition, we should bear in mind that a rhymed phrase stylized by a calligrapher is pleasing to the eye. Indeed, book titles such as " رُمُوزُ الْكُنُوزِ " and " أَحَاسِنُ الْمَحَاسِنِ ", " سُلُوكُ الْمُلُوكِ " both sound and look nice.

Another reasonable ground for the use of puns in book titles is the aesthetic concern arising from the need to add an appropriate extension beginning with " ... شَرْحُ ..." or " ... فِي شَرْحِ ..." to the original title to name the studies within the age-long tradition of commentaries. The titles are created in this way and for this purpose in countless numbers of commentaries. The name given by al-Suyūṭī to his very well-known commentary of the ḥadīth collection جَمْعُ الجَوَامِعِ is an artistic example: هَمْعُ الْهَوَامِعِ شَرْحُ جَمْعِ الجَوَامِعِ.

In the Muslim world, almost all popular commentaries on *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* by the renowned ḥadīth scholar al-Bukhārī are named pursuant to the same method, and commentators have displayed praiseworthy endeavors to create puns with the name of al-Bukhārī. Here, we present some for clarification:

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449)	فَتْحُ الْبَارِي بِشَرْحِ صَحِيحِ الْبُخَارِيِّ
Al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451)	عُمْدَةُ الْقَارِي فِي شَرْحِ صَحِيحِ الْبُخَارِيِّ
Al-ʿAjlūnī (d. 1162/1749)	اَلْفَيْضُ الْجَارِي لِشَرْحِ صَحِيحِ الْبُخَارِيِّ
Ḥasan al-ʿIdwī al-Ḥamzāwī (d. 1303/1886)	اَلنُّورُ السَّارِي مِنْ فَيْضِ صَحِيحِ الْبُخَارِيِّ
Muḥammad al-Khiḍr al-Shinqīṭī (d.1354/1936)	كَوْئَرُ الدَّرَارِي فِي كَشْفِ خَبَايَا صَحِيحِ الْبُخَارِيِّ

In addition, we should note works that are written to summarize a voluminous book and that often rely on clichés such as " ... اِخْتِصَارُ/فِي ..." or " ... تَلْخِيصُ ..." or even those written in relation to a ... اخْتِصَارٍ/مُخْتَصَرُ ...

certain work and expressed with terms such as "تَشْوِيح", "تَهْذِيب",
"تَنْقِيح", "تَلْقِيح" "ذَيْل/تَذْيِيل," or "زُبْدَة".[8]

In addition to the foregoing, we should not overlook the influence
of Arabic as the common cultural language of the medieval Islamic
world. Accordingly, scholars preferred to name their works in Arabic
since it was available for ornate prose, even if their work was in fact
written in Ottoman Turkish or Persian. For example, the title of a
book in Persian that was written and presented to Sultan Bāyezīd II in
895 (1490) by Ḥusayn al-Khaṭṭābī al-Jīlānī, a scholar known for his
studies on medicine, astronomy, and mathematics, reads تُحْفَةُ الْحُسَّابِ
فِي الْحِسَابِ. The same applies for a work written in Turkish (first 222
pages) and Persian and presented to Murād III (1574-1595) by al-
Ḥazīnī (d. 1002/after 1594), who named it جَوَاهِرُ الْأَبْرَارِ مِنْ أَمْوَاجِ الْبِحَارِ.
Interestingly, this work about Aḥmad Yasawī and the Yasawiyyah order
bears the strong seal of the abovementioned writing tradition in its title
even though it is not actually in Arabic. Another example is the
Persian work called أَوْرَادُ الْأَحْبَابِ وَفُصُوصُ الْآدَابِ by Kubrawī shaykh
Yaḥyá ibn Aḥmad al-Bākharzī (d. 736/1335) about mystical etiquette.
We can even refer to the name of the Turkish work written in Mecca
by the 11th-century (17th-century AD) Ottoman mathematician ʿAlī ibn
Walī ibn Ḥamzah al-Jazāʾirī in 999 (1590), تُحْفَةُ الْأَعْدَادِ لِذَوِي الرُّشْدِ
وَالسَّدَادِ.

Apparently, the Ottoman scholars followed the same method in
their translations from Arabic into Turkish. For instance, a work on
sexuality, similar to the Kama Sutra, called نُزْهَةُ الْأَلْبَابِ فِيمَا لَا يُوجَدُ فِي
الْكِتَابِ (*Excursion of the Hearts in What Cannot Be Found in Any
Book*)" by the Tunisian qāḍī and sex manual writer Shihāb al-Dīn
Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī (d. 651/1253), is translated in Turkish by the

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8 See, for example,

Shumaym al-Ḥillī (d. 601/1205) — اللَّمَاسَةُ فِي شَرْحِ الْحَمَاسَةِ

Ismāʿīl Rusūkhī Anqarawī (d. 1041/1631) — اَلْحِكَمُ الْمُنْدَرِجَةُ فِي شَرْحِ الْمُنْفَرِجَةِ

Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Masʿūd (d. 8th/14th century) — مَلَاحُ الْأَلْوَاحِ فِي شَرْحِ مَرَاحِ الْأَرْوَاحِ

ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 1041/1631) — اَلتَّعْجِيزُ فِي اخْتِصَارِ الْوَجِيزِ

Al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392) — اَلتَّنْقِيحُ لِأَلْفَاظِ الْجَامِعِ الصَّحِيحِ

Mughalṭāy ibn Qılıj (d. 762/1361) — اَلتَّلْوِيحُ شَرْحُ الْجَامِعِ الصَّحِيحِ

Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) — اَلتَّوْشِيحُ عَلَى الْجَامِعِ الصَّحِيحِ

Ottoman Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Kamāl, who preferred an even more fantastic Arabic name for the translation: رُجُوعُ الشَّيْخِ إِلَى صِبَاهِ فِي الْقُوَّةِ عَلَى الْبَاهِ (*The Return of the Old Man to His Youth*). Another sex manual, called اَلْأَلْفِيَّةُ وَالشَّلْفِيَّةُ by Abū Bakr ibn Ismāʿīl al-Azraqī, was translated by Deli Birader Meḥmed Ghazālī (d. 941/1535?) into Turkish with the following Arabic title: رَافِعُ الْهُمُومِ وَدَافِعُ الْغُمُومِ (*What Disperses Sorrow and Destroys Sadness*).

II. Diversity within Thematic Restriction

The most striking point in the book titles by Muslim authors is the impression of restriction with five to ten themes or terms. As shown by numerous examples below, our authors seem to have restricted themselves with a limited number of words, such as "تُحْفَة," "نُزْهَة," "رَوْضَة," "دُرَّة," and "عِقْد." However, adjectives, phrases, and singular or plural forms in the company of these terms created huge diversity and, in a way, revealed the true skill of the author. In other words, even though a medieval author apparently seemed to have constrained himself in a very limited frame, he both stood out and proved his artistry by setting his personal seal on the mentioned clichés. *Sajʿ* is the most common style for this purpose since it reflects the phonetic aesthetic in the best manner. Indeed, thematic restriction was the main motivation behind the creativity of classical authors in terms of *sajʿ*. Consequently, it is possible to talk about a clear solidarity between theme and *sajʿ* in the titles of countless Islamic classics.

Presumably, the most appropriate examples of this practice are book titles that consist of names of jewelry and precious stones. Indeed, the association of book titles with certain valuable objects, particularly jewelry, was a common tradition and style among Muslim authors to arouse interest. Pearl was the most prominent of such objects; accordingly, hundreds of famous works were crowned with the singular or plural form of this word, "دُرَّةٌ plu. دُرٌّ/دُرَرٌ." In addition, "pearl" was employed together with numerous useful adjectives available for *sajʿ* techniques, such as "precious, exceptional, unique, well-protected, untouched/virgin, well-ordered/well-arranged, dispersed, chosen/select" or "flawless." Examples in the following list show how a limited theme can be diversified by means of additions to attain a phonetically artistic structure. The elements highlighting *sajʿ* are given in boxes:

Al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) اَلدُّرَّةُ الْفَاخِرَةُ فِي كشف عُلُومِ الْآخِرَةِ

Al-ʿAzfī (d. 633/1235-36) اَلدُّرُّ الْمُنَظَّمُ فِي مَوْلِدِ النَّبِيِّ الْمُعَظَّمِ

Al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122) دُرَّةُ الْغَوَّاصِ فِي أَوْهَامِ الْخَوَاصِّ

Al-Ḥamawī (d. 1098/1687) اَلدُّرَرُ الثَّمِينَةُ فِي حُكْمِ الصَّلَاةِ فِي السَّفِينَةِ

In addition to pearl, many other gems or jewelry adorn the covers of books in their singular or plural forms, such as jewel (جَوْهَر plu. جَوَاهِر), gold (ذَهَب/عَسْجَد), ruby (يَاقُوت plu. يَوَاقِيت), collar (عِقْد plu. عُقُود), (قِلَادَة plu. قَلَائِد), (طَوْق plu. أَطْوَاق), necklace or line for pearl (سِلْك plu. أَسْلَاك), (سُمُوط plu. سِمْط), pearl beading (نَظْم), or gold bullion (سَبِيكَة plu. سَبَائِك). The list may be complemented with terms that recall adornment/ornament in the broader sense, such as "حُلَّةٌ plu. حُلَل" ,"حِلْيَةٌ plu. حِلَى" ,"دِيبَاجَة plu. دِيبَاج," fashion/model (طِرَاز), crown "خِزَانَة plu. خَزَائِن" ,(إِكْلِيل plu. أَكَالِيل), and imperial crown (تَاج plu.تِيجَان), "كَنْز plu. كُنُوز" in the sense of treasury.[9]

III. Use of Terminology that Emits Positive Connotations to the Reader

Authors opted for emotionally positive terminology, such as cheer, pleasure, happiness, and joy, to arouse interest among readers as well as terms of consolation to eliminate sadness and grief. In this context,

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[9]   Here are some interesting examples of the abovementioned terms:

Abū Isḥāq al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022) جَمْعُ الْجَوَاهِرِ فِي الْمُلَحِ وَ النَّوَادِرِ

Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038) اَلْيَوَاقِيتُ فِي بَعْضِ الْمَوَاقِيتِ

Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) أَطْوَاقُ الذَّهَبِ فِي الْمَوَاعِظِ وَ الْخُطَبِ

Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) اَللَّآلِي الْمَصْنُوعَةُ فِي الْأَحَادِيثِ الْمَوْضُوعَةِ

Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094) سِمْطُ اللَّآلِي فِي شَرْحِ أَمَالِي الْقَالِي

Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī (d. 956/1549) عِقْدُ الْمَرْجَانِ فِيمَا يَتَعَلَّقُ بِالْجَانِّ

Fatḥ ibn Khāqān al-Qaysī (d. 529/1135) قَلَائِدُ الْعِقْيَانِ فِي مَحَاسِنِ الْأَعْيَانِ

Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Jarrāʿī (d. 833/1478) حِلْيَةُ الطِّرَازِ فِي حَلِّ الْأَلْغَازِ

Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 779/1377) دُرَّةُ الْأَسْلَاكِ فِي دَوْلَةِ الْأَتْرَاكِ

Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/ 1375) رَقْمُ الْحُلَلِ فِي نَظْمِ الدُّوَلِ

Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Mawwāq (d. 897/1492) الْإِكْلِيلُ وَالتَّاجُ فِي تَذْيِيلِ كِفَايَةِ الْمُحْتَاجِ

the first group comprises numerous words, and on each occasion, the book title is finalized with striking puns in line with these terms or concepts as their adjective or determinatum.[10] Popular expressions with positive associations include happiness (سُرُور), joy (بَهْجَة/مَباهِج), compassion (أُنْس), well-being (قُرَّةُ الْعَيْنِ), joyful trip (نُزْهَة), gift (تُحْفَة), and curio (طُرْفَة). For example, a work about provisions related to obligatory alms (zakāh) of gold and silver is called نُزْهَةُ الْعَيْنَيْنِ فِي زَكَاةِ الْمَعْدِنَيْنِ,[11] whereby the author makes an elegant implication as to the efficacy and privilege of the pleasant reading of his book. The same applies for a work on sexual themes and pornography by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, named نُزْهَةُ الْأَلْبَابِ فِيمَا لَا يُوجَدُ فِي الْكِتَابِ. On the other hand, *al-Ḥubūr wa-l-surūr fī waṣf al-khumūr*, which was written by al-Nawājī (d. 859/1455) and was subject to severe criticism due to the vulgar love poetry and obscene materials in its content but was supported by art patronage and eventually became a highly demanded work, brings together the words pleasure/joy and drink in its title. When the denomination caused a reaction, the author, by elusion, had to change the name of his work to *Ḥalbat al-Kumayt*.

In addition, the concept of "beauty" comes to the forefront as another emotional term with positive connotations. Numerous concepts with roughly the same meaning, such as "beauty (حُسْن)," "the

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10   Some examples include the following:

     Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181)   نُزْهَةُ الْأَلِبَّاءِ فِي طَبَقَاتِ الْأَدَبَاءِ

     Yaḥyá ibn Ḥusayn al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 1099/1687)   بَهْجَةُ الزَّمَنِ فِي حَوَادِثِ الْيَمَنِ

     Jamāl al-Dīn al-Waṭwaṭ (d. 718/1318)   مَبَاهِجُ الْفِكَرِ وَمَنَاهِجُ الْعِبَرِ

     al-Tijānī (d. 718/1318)   تُحْفَةُ الْعَرُوسِ وَنُزْهَةُ النُّفُوسِ

     al-Kāfiyajī (d. 879/1474)   اَلْفَرَحُ وَالسُّرُورُ فِي بَيَانِ الْمَذَاهِبِ الْأَرْبَعَةِ فِي الْعُصُورِ

     Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404)   قُرَّةُ الْعَيْنِ بِالْمَسَرَّةِ بِوَفَاءِ الدَّيْنِ

11   Other examples include the following:

     Al-Malik al-Ashraf al-Rasūlī (d. 696/1296)   اَلْمَلَاحَةُ فِي مَعْرِفَةِ الْفِلَاحَةِ

     Al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. 381/991)   أَحْسَنُ التَّقَاسِيمِ فِي مَعْرِفَةِ الْأَقَالِيمِ

     Ibn Aranbughā al-Zardakāsh (d. 867/1463)   اَلْأَنِيقُ فِي الْمَنْجَنِيقِ

     Zayn al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (d.?)   مَحَاسِنُ الْمَسَاعِي فِي مَنَاقِبِ الْإِمَامِ أَبِي عَمْرٍو الْأَوْزَاعِيِّ

     Ibn Ẓafar al-Ṣiqillī (d. 565/1170)   سُلْوَانُ الْمُطَاعِ فِي عُدْوَانِ الْأَتْبَاعِ

most beautiful (أَحْسَن)," "beauties (مَحَاسِن)," "comeliness (مَلَاحَة)," and "handsome (أَنِيق)," have been used to render more aesthetic hundreds of book titles. On the other hand, there are a significant number of consoling expressions, such as "سُلْوَة, سُلْوَان".

"Water" as the source of abundance is another concept with positive connotations employed by Muslim authors in book titles. Nourished by teachings of the Islamic revelation that descended in the Hejaz Desert, Muslim nations attached particular importance to water in their civilizations as the main source of life. Indeed, a Qurʾān verse declared the universal rule that "water is the source of life."[12] In addition, depictions of Heaven often pointed out rivers as the primary feature of paradise. One of the shortest sūrahs in the Qurʾān was named كَوْثَر, meaning "gushing water." These and similar factors provided a pragmatic theme for Muslims to highlight the importance of their work since they longed for Adam's wine in their desert region. Accordingly, it is not surprising to see in the titles of hundreds of Islamic classics terms such as wellspring (مَنْبَع), waterfront (مَوْرِد) plu. (مَوَارِد), منهل (مَنْهَل) plu. (مَنَاهِل), river (نَهْر/نَهَر) plu. (أَنْهُر/أَنْهَار), sea (بَحْر) plu. (بُحُور/بِحَار), ocean (مُحِيط), headspring (يَنْبُوع), fountain (صِهْرِيج), rain (قَطْر), downpour (وَابِل), or sip (نُغْبَة).[13] Particularly after the conquest of al-Andalus, Muslims came across new fauna and flora that paved the way for the conceptual enrichment of book titles in parallel with floral and hunting themes in the literature. Accordingly, such themes came to the forefront in the titles of works by Andalusian scholars.

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12 Q 21:30.

13 For examples, see

Ibn ʿAjībah (d. 1224/1829)   اَلْبَحْرُ الْمَدِيدُ فِي تَفْسِيرِ الْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ

Ibn ʿAllān (d. 1057/1648)   مَوْرِدُ الصَّفَا فِي مَوْلِدِ الْمُصْطَفَى

Shaykhzādah (d. 1078/1667)   مَجْمَعُ الْأَنْهُرِ شَرْحُ مُلْتَقَى الْأَبْحُرِ

Ibn al-Majdī (d. 827/1424)   اَلْمَنْهَلُ الْعَذْبُ الزُّلَالُ فِي تَقْوِيمِ الْكَوَاكِبِ وَرُؤْيَةِ الْهِلَالِ

Al-Haythamī (d. 807/1405)   مَوَارِدُ الظَّمْآنِ إِلَى زَوَائِدِ ابْنِ حِبَّانَ

Al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1403)   قَطْرُ السَّيْلِ فِي أَمْرِ الْخَيْلِ

Al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 817/1415)   نُغْبَةُ الرَّشَّافِ مِنْ خُطْبَةِ الْكَشَّافِ

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751/1350)   اَلْوَابِلُ الصَّيِّبُ مِنَ الْكَلِمِ الطَّيِّبِ

Kamāl al-Dīn al-Khwārazmī (d. 836/1453)   يَنْبُوعُ الْأَسْرَارِ فِي نَصَائِحِ الْأَبْرَارِ

The concepts of "brightness and light" represented truth, justice, faith, and wisdom against "darkness," which symbolized untruth, persecution, blasphemy, and ignorance. Accordingly, these concepts became attractive elements for Muslim scholars who bore the responsibility of a mission to appropriate the communication of justice and truth. Consequently, book titles frequently applied terms that evoke the meaning of brightness and radiance. In this regard, terms such as "نُور plu. أَنْوَار," "ضَوْء plu. أَضْوَاء," "لُمْعَة plu. لُمَع," "جِلَاء," as well as the expression "تَنْوِير," which means the illumination of darkness, are used in the titles of books not only with Sufi content but also in almost any discipline.[17]

Some expressions such as "بُزُوغ," and "صُبْح", "شُرُوق", "فَجْر," which mark the beginning of the day or daylight, or even different time spans in proportion to brightness seem functional. For instance, when al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) named his famous work on essential themes of literary composition, he likened the followers of this path to a person who walks in twilight and therefore cannot see well, and expressed the contribution of his work for such a person as follows: صُبْحُ الْأَعْشَى فِي صِنَاعَةِ الْإِنْشَاءِ.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Bisṭāmī al-Ḥurūfī (d. 858/1454)	اَلْفَوَائِحُ الْمِسْكِيَّةُ فِي الْفَوَاتِحِ الْمَكِّيَّةِ
Al-Suyūṭī	اَلنَّخْلَةُ الزَّكِيَّةُ فِي الرِّحْلَةِ الْمَكِّيَّةِ
ʿAlī al-Ṭabarī (d. 1070/1660)	أَلْأَرَجُ الْمِسْكِيُّ فِي التَّارِيخِ الْمَكِّيِّ
Ibn ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Ḥimyarī (d. 727/1327)	اَلرَّوْضُ الْمِعْطَارُ فِي خَبَرِ الْأَقْطَارِ
Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144)	رَبِيعُ الْأَبْرَارِ وَنُصُوصُ الْأَخْبَارِ

[17] Some examples include

Al-Yaghmūrī (d. 673/1274)	نُورُ الْقَبَسِ الْمُخْتَصَرُ مِنَ الْمُقْتَبَسِ
Al-Dimnātī (d. 1306/1889)	نُورُ مِصْبَاحِ الزُّجَاجَةِ عَلَى سُنَنِ ابْنِ مَاجَةَ
Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285)	أَنْوَارُ الْبُرُوقِ فِي أَنْوَاعِ الْفُرُوقِ
Al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497)	اَلضَّوْءُ اللَّامِعُ لِأَهْلِ الْقَرْنِ التَّاسِعِ
Al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085)	لُمَعُ الْأَدِلَّةِ فِي قواعد أهل السنة
Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936)	اَللُّمَعُ فِي الرَّدِّ عَلَى أَهْلِ الزَّيْغِ وَ الْبِدَعِ
Ḥākim al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101)	جِلَاءُ الْأَبْصَارِ فِي مُتُونِ الْأَخْبَارِ
Al-Suyūṭī	تَنْوِيرُ الْحَوَالِكِ شَرْحُ مُوَطَّأِ مَالِكٍ

Many astronomical terms made an appearance in book titles, particularly sun (شَمْس) as the most powerful light source, moon (قَمَر), full moon (بَدْر plu. بُدُور), star (نَجْم plu. نُجُوم or دُرِّيٌّ plu. دَرَارِيّ), meteor (شِهَاب plu. شُهُب), or the place where the sun or moon rises (مَطْلَع plu. مَطَالِع).[18]

In addition, book titles comprised manmade instruments of illumination such as lamp (مِصْبَاح plu. مَصَابِيح) or lampion (قِنْدِيل/ مِشْكَاة). For instance, the work by the famous Sufi ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) on the holiness of Prophet Muḥammad's ascension to heaven is named اَلسِّرَاجُ الْوَهَّاجُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْمِعْرَاج.

In addition to the foregoing, a few concepts likely to arouse interest among disciples have served as a key in the creation of book titles. These expressions include the following terms with the same meter or pattern: "بُغْيَة" and "مُنْيَة" mean what is sought and desired by students of Islamic sciences; "غُنْيَة" means what requires nothing further; and "بُلْغَة" means the very simple thing needed for life. In addition, book titles include expressions such as "مُنْتَهَى," "نِهَايَة," and "غَايَة," which refer to a certain goal and the summit to be attained. For instance, the versatile medieval Muslim scholar and physician Ibn al-Akfānī (d. 749/1348) named his work on preventive medicine غُنْيَةُ اللَّبِيبِ عِنْدَ غَيْبَةِ الطَّبِيبِ (*Rich Information for Intelligent Men in the Absence of Physicians*). Likewise, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 730/1330) claimed that his work signified the peak of astronomy at the time and accordingly named it نِهَايَةُ الْإِدْرَاكِ فِي دِرَايَةِ الْأَفْلَاكِ

Some book titles, in turn, allowed for an assertive and even arrogant discourse by an author who claimed that the information therein was the ultimate knowledge attainable in the respective branch or discipline. Such titles include نِهَايَةُ الْإِقْدَامِ فِي عِلْمِ الْكَلَامِ (*The*

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18   See, for example,

ʿAbd al-raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Bisṭāmī	شَمْسُ الْآفَاقِ فِي عِلْمِ الْحُرُوفِ وَ الْأَوْفَاقِ
Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (d. 864/1459)	اَلْبَدْرُ الطَّالِعُ فِي حَلِّ جَمْعِ الْجَوَامِع
Al-Suyūṭī	اَلْبُدُورُ السَّافِرَةُ فِي أُمُورِ الْآخِرَة
Ibn Jamāʿah (d. 819/1416)	اَلْكَوْكَبُ الْوَقَّادُ فِي شَرْحِ الْاِعْتِقَاد
Ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)	اَلْكَوَاكِبُ السَّارِبَةُ فِي مِائَةِ جَارِبَة
Alāʾ al-Dīn al-Ghazūlī (d. 815/1412)	مَطَالِعُ الْبُدُورِ وَمَنَازِلُ السُّرُور
Ibn al-ʿAdīm al-Ḥalabī (d. 660/1262)	اَلدَّرَارِيُّ فِي ذِكْرِ الذَّرَارِيِّ

End of Steps in the Science of Theology) by the famous religious historian al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) and نِهَايَةُ الْأَرَبِ فِي فُنُونِ الْأَدَبِ (*The Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*), the 31-volume encyclopedia by the famous Mamluk historian al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333).[19]

Likewise, authors often employed terms such as "ٱلْوَافِي," "ٱلْكَافِي," and "كِفَايَة" to point out the sufficiency of a work in its respective discipline without the need for any other book:

كِفَايَةُ الْمُتَحَفِّظِ وَنِهَايَةُ الْمُتَلَفِّظِ   Ibn al-Ajdābī (d. 470/1077)

In some books, the titles consist of terms such as "stair" (سُلَّم), (مِزْقَاة), (مِعْرَاج) and "step(s)" (دَرَجَات), which signify the spiritual paths (مَسْلَك plu. مَسَالِك) to be taken by means of relevant work. Thus, the work is introduced to the reader as a means of attaining a distant or high objective. For example, the famous work by Ibn Hishām al-Naḥwī (d. 672/1274) is named as below:

أَوْضَحُ الْمَسَالِكِ إِلَى أَلْفِيَّةِ ابْنِ مَالِكٍ.

Such works are also considered a pathfinder, guide, assistant, savior, source of right guidance, or evidence, and they are named accordingly.[20] For instance, pursuant to his objective of spiritual

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[19] Some relevant examples include

Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631/1233)   غَايَةُ الْمَرَامِ فِي عِلْمِ الْكَلَامِ

Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405)   غَايَةُ الْأَرَبِ فِي كَلَامِ حُكَمَاءِ الْعَرَبِ

Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī   مُنْتَهَى الْوُصُولِ فِي عِلْمِ الْأُصُولِ

Al-Jammāʾīlī (d. 600/1203)   نِهَايَةُ الْمُرَادِ مِنْ كَلَامِ خَيْرِ الْعِبَادِ

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210)   نِهَايَةُ الْإِيجَازِ فِي دِرَايَةِ الْإِعْجَازِ

Al-Ḍabbī (599/1203)   بُغْيَةُ الْمُلْتَمِسِ فِي تَارِيخِ رِجَالِ أَهْلِ الْأَنْدَلُسِ

Ibn al-ʿAdīm (660/1262)   بُغْيَةُ الطَّلَبِ فِي تَارِيخِ حَلَب

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Qalṣādī (d. 891/1486)   بُغْيَةُ الْمُبْتَدِي وَ غُنْيَةُ الْمُنْتَهِي

al-Maydānī (518/1124)   مُنْيَةُ الرَّاضِي بِرَسَائِلِ الْقَاضِي

[20] Some examples include

Al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085)   مُغِيثُ الْحَقِّ فِي اخْتِيَارِ الْأَحَقِّ

Ṭāshkubrīzādah (d. 968/1561)   مِفْتَاحُ السَّعَادَةِ وَ مِصْبَاحُ السِّيَادَةِ

Ibn al-Mibrad (d. 909/1503)   اَلْهَادِي إِلَى تَرْجُمَةِ يُوسُفَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْهَادِي

guidance for the reader, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751/1350) named his work as follows:

هَادِي الْأَرْوَاحِ إِلَى بِلَادِ الْأَفْرَاحِ.

Some book titles benefit from other practical similes. In this context, some works are introduced as a kind of indispensable spiritual nourishment (غِذَاء) or sustenance (قُوت), (زَاد). For example, Ibn al-Jazzār (d. 369/979), the famous 4th-century pharmacist and physician, named his work, which was translated into Latin in a relatively earlier period thanks to its fame in the Muslim world,[21] through an assimilation of indispensable practical knowledge in his book to the sustenance of travel or sustenance زَادُ الْمُسَافِرِ وَقُوتُ الْحَاضِرِ. In addition, a ḥadīth commentary by al-Suyūṭī attained successful harmony between the relevant theme and the name of the author: قُوتُ الْمُغْتَذِي عَلَى صَحِيحِ التِّرْمِذِي.

A group of book titles claim that truths unknown to most are explored by the author. Indeed, such titles may ensure interest in a certain work among readers. Presumably, the following title stimulates remarkable motivation for those who want to know more about the views of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah about the whirling ritual and music:[22]

كَشْفُ الْغِطَاءِ عَنْ حُكْمِ سَمَاعِ الْغِنَاءِ

(Unveiling of the Rules on Listening Songs)

We may note the use of expressions with sexual content in book titles. They mostly echo the male perspective and reflect lust, including examples such as houri(s) (حُور), bride (عَرُوس plu. عَرَائِس), and virgin (بِكْر plu. أَبْكَار). For instance, Ibn al-Dalāʾī (d. 478/1085) compiled some ḥadīths that constituted the basis for jurisprudent

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اَلْمَنْهَجُ الْأَحْمَدُ فِي تَرَاجِمِ أَصْحَابِ الْإِمَامِ أَحْمَدَ   al-Yumn al-ʿUlaymī (d. 928/1522)

[21] Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām: Qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl wa-l-nisāʾ min al-ʿArab wa-l-mustaʿrabīn wa-l-mustashriqīn*, 15th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002), I, 85.

[22] Other examples include

كَشْفُ الْغُمَّةِ عَنْ جَمِيعِ الْأُمَّةِ   Al-Shaʿrānī (d. 973/1565)

كَشْفُ الْجِلْبَابِ عَنْ عِلْمِ الْحِسَابِ   Abū l-Hasan al-Qalṣādī (d. 891/1486)

provisions as early as the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad and named his compilation as follows, hinting that it was the first of its kind:

إِفْتِضَاضُ أَبْكَارِ أَوَائِلُ الْأَخْبَارِ

(Defloration of Virgins, The Firsts of Narrations)

The prolific 15th-century author al-Suyūṭī crowned the title of his annotation about *Anwār al-tanzīl*, the renowned tafsīr by al-Bayḍāwī, with a name pleasing to male lust:

نَوَاهِدُ الْأَبْكَارِ وَ شَوَارِدُ الْأَفْكَارِ

(Virgins with Recently Blossomed Nipples [and] Overlooked Ideas)

In fact, we encounter elements with sexual connotations in a semi-humorous context in the titles of الْمُسْتَظْرَفَةٌ فِي أَحْكَامِ دُخُولِ الْحَشَفَةِ and some other works by al-Suyūṭī.[23]

Another smart move by Muslim intellectuals to enhance the popularity of a work was to refer to Qurʾānic terminology, making use of its profound influence on the spiritual world of readers.[24] Accordingly, many classical and modern works skillfully incorporated certain concepts from holy scripture in their titles. For instance, the name chosen by the Arab linguist al-Muḥibbī (d. 1111/1699) for his work about duals is inspired by the Qurʾān: جَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ فِي نَوْعَيِ الْمُثَنَّيَيْنِ.

In a similar manner, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn al-Wazīr al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 1147/1735) employs a clause completely identified with the Qurʾān in his work about a certain period in the history of Yemen: طَبَقُ الْحَلْوَى وَصِحَافُ الْمَنِّ وَالسَّلْوَى.

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[23] Other examples include

Al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035)   عَرَائِسُ الْمَجَالِس

Shams al-Dīn al-Āmulī (d. 753/1352)   نَفَائِسُ الْفُنُونِ فِي عَرَائِسِ الْعُيُونِ

Al-Dawwānī (d. 908/1502)   شَوَاكِلُ الْحُورِ فِي شَرْحِ هَيَاكِلِ النُّورِ

Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn (d. 870/1466)   عُقُودُ الْأَبْكَارِ مِنْ بَنَاتِ الْأَفْكَارِ

[24] Von Grunebaum gives a comprehensive evaluation of the stimulating influence of Islamic religious motives on literature in general and on poetry in particular. See "The Spirit of Islam as Shown in Its Literature," *Studia Islamica* 1 (1953), 101-119, https://doi.org/10.2307/1595011.

Finally, it is worth noting that the thematic restriction, self-imposed by authors in naming their works, as seen in the foregoing examples, has occasionally led to certain confusions. Authors from different periods or different disciplines have sometimes chosen very similar and even identical names for their respective works. For instance, the same name is shared by a work of the 5th-century author Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) on grammar and a book by the 11th-century author Abū l-Qāsim al-Samarqandī (d. after 888/1483) on metaphor as a term of rhetoric: فَرَائِدُ الْفَوَائِدِ. Likewise, the paths of Ḥasan ibn Bishr al-Āmidī (d. 371/981) and al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995) intersect in the names of their works: اَلْمُؤْتَلِفُ وَالْمُخْتَلِفُ

Most likely because of this defect, authors added distinctive expressions to the similar beginning of titles. An example can be seen below, showing one classical and one modern work:

Al-Maqqarī (d. 759/1358)   نَفْحُ الطِّيبِ مِنْ غُصْنِ الْأَنْدَلُسِ الرَّطِيبِ

Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī (1875-1945)   نَفْحُ الطِّيبِ فِي الْخَطَابَةِ وَ الْخَطِيبِ.

Therefore, the mere mention of book titles may not be sufficient in academic references; the name of the author should also be indicated on some occasions to prevent confusion.

IV. Strong Language of Refutations or Military Terminology in Book Titles

The severity of criticisms within the content of a work is successfully reflected by their authors in book titles inspired by a rhetoric peculiar to military language. In this respect, book titles have, in a sense, served as a platform of defiance and the settling of accounts between authors from different madhhabs and backgrounds in public. The titles of many classical works are, so to speak, an area where scientific authorities square accounts with one another or seek prestige. The title of a work by al-Suyūṭī in response to criticisms against Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767) by the famous historian and ḥadīth scholar al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) is a clear example of such a denomination: اَلسَّهْمُ الْمُصِيبُ فِي نَحْرِ الْخَطِيبِ (*Arrow Aiming at Chest of al-Khaṭīb [al-Baghdādī]*). Likewise, the Ḥanafī jurist Ibn al-Dayrī (d. 867/1463) aims at the chest of apostates in the title of his work: اَلسِّهَامُ الْمَارِقَةُ فِي كَبِدِ الزَّنَادِقَةِ (*Outlaw Arrows Stuck in the Heart of Apostates*).

In addition to "arrow," "sword" is another much-referenced military weapon, including all its types and qualities. For instance, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) gives the following name essentially about "punishment for insulting Allah, prophets, and companions" but also punishment for disunion, blasphemy, the violation of agreements by dhimmīs, apostasy, profaneness, and banditry: اَلصَّارِمُ الْمَسْلُولُ عَلَى شَاتِمِ الرَّسُولِ (*Unsheathed Sharp Sword against Insulters of Prophet*). In a similar manner, the biographer Taqī al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Tamīmī (d. 1010/1601) named his work (which is no longer available) about his scapegrace son Ḥasan as اَلسَّيْفُ الْبَرَّاقُ فِي عُنُقِ الْوَلَدِ الْعَاقِّ (*Shiny Sword on the Neck of Rebel Son*), implying his rage and fury. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Bakrī (d. 1162/1749), a relatively later author, named his work in a similar way: اَلسُّيُوفُ الْحِدَادُ فِي الرَّدِّ عَلَى أَهْلِ الزَّنْدَقَةِ وَالْإِلْحَادِ (*Sharp Swords in Response to Apostates*). In another later work, Ibn ʿUsfūr al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772) writes a refutation by hinting at the title of *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah* of Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258) and calls it سَلَاسِلُ الْحَدِيدِ فِي تَقْيِيدِ ابْنِ أَبِي الْحَدِيدِ (*Putting Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd in Iron Chains*), to which Muḥammad Amīn al-Suwaydī (d. 1246/1831) replies in a similar style: اَلصَّارِمُ الْحَدِيدُ فِي عُنُقِ صَاحِبِ سَلَاسِلِ الْحَدِيدِ (*Iron Sword Hanging on the Neck of the Author of "Iron Chains"*).

The terminology becomes even harsher, employing natural elements instead of military tools in times of heated rivalry between faiths, ideas, or madhhabs. For instance, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/ 1567) puts his foe to "burning thunderbolts" in the title اَلصَّوَاعِقُ الْمُحْرِقَةُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الرَّفْضِ وَالزَّنْدَقَةِ (*Thunderbolts Burning Refusers and Profanes*). In refutation of al-Haytamī's work, Amīn al-Ḥulwānī (d. 1316/1898) tries to neutralize this attack by means of treacherous waters: اَلسُّيُولُ الْمُغْرِقَةُ عَلَى الصَّوَاعِقِ الْمُحْرِقَةِ (*Floods to Drown Burning Thunderbolts*). In modern times, a work for the refutation of Riḍā Khān Biralwī (d. 1921) makes the respondent an aim of burning meteors:.اَلشِّهَابُ الثَّاقِبُ عَلَى الْمُسْتَرِقِ الْكَاذِبِ

In some titles, interest is aroused through partially humorous touches. For instance, when Ibn Diḥyah al-Kalbī (d. 633/1235) wrote اَلصَّارِمُ الْهِنْدِيُّ فِي الرَّدِّ عَلَى الْكِنْدِيِّ in criticism of Abū l-Yumn al-Kindī (d. 613/1217), he received a humiliating rejection in return:

نَتْفُ اللِّحْيَةِ مِنِ ابْنِ دِحْيَة (*Tearing the Hair of Ibn Diḥyah*)

A similar approach is observed in the famous tract by Ibn al-Muraḥḥal (d. 699/1300), the poet and man of letters from Malaga, in

response to criticisms against him: اَلرَّمْيُ بِالْحَصَى وَالضَّرْبُ بِالْعَصَا (*With Stones and Sticks*).

In his work in response to allegations by a scholar who was a Muslim before converting to Christianity, al-Māzarī (d. 536/1141) adopts humor as well as explicit defamation and violence: قَطْعُ لِسَانِ النَّابِح فِي الْمُتَرْجَمِ بِالْوَاضِح (*To Tear off the Tongue of Who Barks in Response to Eloquence*).

Evidently, such defiance in book titles not only consolidated the respective community or fanatical followers of authors but also established a strong motivation to attract curious intellectual minds.

In addition to military terminology, critical or refutation works employed some libelous expressions that may damage the pride of readers as well as those with elements of violence. The two following examples, each written in defense of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), may clarify our point:

Al-Suyūṭī	تَنْبِيهُ الْغَبِيِّ فِي تَبْرِئَةِ ابْنِ الْعَرَبِيِّ
Al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480)	تَنْبِيهُ الْغَبِيِّ عَلَى تَكْفِيرِ ابْنِ الْعَرَبِيِّ

V. Techniques

There are certain criticisms and allegations that early Muslim intellectuals were interested in form rather than content and that therefore ornate prose and the *sajʿ* style are insufficient for the appropriate expression of the meaning. However, the objective of this paper is not to respond to such allegations or to show the evolution of the Arab style depending on eras. Instead, in this chapter, we will dwell upon positive examples of the extent to which certain book titles reflect the content. Indeed, Muslim authors have displayed extraordinary attention in determining the title of a work and have yielded appropriate book titles neither more nor less than required despite limitations due to *sajʿ* and alliteration techniques. For instance, an explanatory tract about the nuance between bribery and a gift includes outright "clarity" in rhetorical terms: تَحْقِيقُ الْقَضِيَّةِ فِي الْفَرْقِ بَيْنَ الرِّشْوةِ وَ الْهَدِيَّةِ

A similar situation is observable in the laconic title of the sorrowful work by al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) on scarcity and famine in Egypt until his lifetime: إِغَاثَةُ الْأُمَّةِ بِكَشْفِ الْغُمَّةِ. Finally, the title of a book by the 18th-century Azhar shaykh al-Damanhūrī (d. 1192/1778) about

hemorrhoids involves explicit clarity: اَلْكَلَامُ الْيَسِيرُ فِي عِلَاجِ الْمَقْعَدَةِ وَالْبَوَاسِيرِ.

The following section of our study identifies certain techniques used in book titles that we find interesting in terms of form and theme. We provide relevant explanations after classifying them under certain categories.

A. Rhymed Book Titles of Two, Four, or Six Words

Muslim authors apparently did not exclude aesthetic elements such as meter, pun, and *sajʿ* even in the formation of remarkably short titles that consist of two words. Indeed, hundreds of classical works are designed in a very concise manner since this style ensures significant advantages in pronunciation and memorability.

Some of the two-word book titles with *sajʿ* are possessive constructions. One of the earliest examples is أَحَاسِنُ الْمَحَاسِن by Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Ḥanbalī (d. 203/647). Furthermore, أَبْكَارُ الْأَفْكَارِ by Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī and عَوَارِفُ الْمَعَارِفِ by al-Suhrawardī consist of two plural words with the same meter, whereas بِدَايَةُ الْهِدَايَةِ by Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī and تَحْرِيرُ التَّحْبِيرِ by Ibn Abī l-Iṣbaʿ (d. 654/1256) consist of two singular concepts with the same meter.[25]

Some of the two-word titles are in conjunctive form and connected to one another with the letter و. Plural examples with the same meter

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25 For other examples, see

Sayf al-Dīn al-Dihlawī (d. 1052/1642)	أَخْبَارُ الْأَخْيَارِ
Ibn Abī l-Shukr (d. 682/1283)	أَدْوَارُ الْأَنْوَارِ
ʿAlī ibn Ẓāfir (d. 613/1216)	بَدَائِعُ الْبَدَائِهِ
Salāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)	جِنَانُ الْجِنَاسِ
Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī	حَدَائِقُ الدَّقَائِقِ
Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī	رُمُوزُ الْكُنُوزِ
Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī	سُلُوكُ الْمُلُوكِ
Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī	فَرَائِدُ الْفَوَائِدِ
Al-Asʿad ibn Mammātī (d. 606/1209)	قَوَانِينُ الدَّوَاوِينِ
Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī Ṣāfī (d. 939/1532-33)	لَطَائِفُ الطَّوَائِفِ
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Khāzin	مَقْبُولُ الْمَنْقُولِ
Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1265)	مَرَاصِدُ الْمَقَاصِدِ

include اَلتَّوَابِعُ وَالزَّوَابِعُ by al-Jāḥiẓ and اَلْهَوَامِلُ وَالشَّوَامِلُ by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), whereas singular examples with the same meter include اَلْإِيجَازُ وَالْإِعْجَازُ by Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038) and اَلْبِدَايَةُ وَالنِّهَايَةُ by Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373).[26]

In addition to the two foregoing categories, there are rhymed book titles of two words with prepositions. Pursuant to our examination, this preposition may sometimes be فِي, as in اَلْإِقْتِصَادُ فِي الْإِعْتِقَادِ by al-Ghazālī, عَلَى, as in اَلْأَمَدُ عَلَى الْأَبَدِ by Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992), or even مِنْ as in اَلْعَوَاصِمُ مِنَ الْقَوَاصِمِ by Abū Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 543/1148).[27]

In punned noun phrases that consist of four words and are connected to one another with a conjunction, the determinatum is associated with the determinatum and the determinant is associated with determinant; in addition, there is an effort to establish a parallelism based on phonetic assimilation between equivalents in regard to adjective clauses. For better comprehension of the relation between words, we highlight the relation between elements in the first example below:

Ibn Abī l-Khiṣāl (d. 540/1146)	لَوْعَةُ الشَّاكِي وَ دَمْعَةُ الْبَاكِي

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[26] For other examples, see

Ḥamzah ibn ʿAlī (d. 411/1012)	اَلْإِعْذَارُ وَ الْإِنْذَارُ
Muḥammad al-Tamīmī al-Dārimī (d. 378/989)	اَلتُّحَفُ وَ الطُّرَفُ
Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī	اَلْبَصَائِرُ وَ الذَّخَائِرُ
Al-Suyūṭī	اَلْمُحَاضَرَاتُ وَ الْمُحَاوَرَاتُ
Al-Shahīd al-awwal (d. 786/1384)	اَلْقَوَائِدُ وَ الْفَوَائِدِ

[27] Also see the following examples:

Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭarsūsī (d. 758/1357)	اَلزَّوَائِدُ عَلَى الْفَوَائِدِ
Al-Suyūṭī	اَلْأَرَجُ فِي الْفَرَجِ
Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004)	اَلْإِلْمَاعُ فِي الْإِتْبَاعِ
Qāsim al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333)	اَلْإِلْمَامُ بِالْأَعْلَامِ
ʿUmar ibn Badr al-Mawṣilī (d. 622/1225)	اَلْوُقُوفُ عَلَى الْمَوْقُوفِ
Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 984/1577)	اَلْمُرَاحُ فِي الْمُزَاحِ
Al-Suyūṭī	اَلْمُنَى فِي الْكُنَى
Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī	اَلنِّهَايَةُ فِي الْكِنَايَةِ

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)	أَعْيَانُ الْعَصْرِ وَ أَعْوَانُ النَّصْرِ
Ibn Abī l-Khiṣāl al-Ghāfiqī (d. 540/1146)	خَطْفُ الْبَارِقِ وَ قَذْفُ الْمَارِقِ
Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Fahd (d. 871/1476)	عُمْدَةُ الْمُنْتَحِلِ وَ بُلْغَةُ الْمُرْتَحِلِ
Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mārdīnī (d.629/1232)	نِصَابُ الْحَبْرِ فِي حِسَابِ الْجَبْرِ
Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī	سِحْرُ الْبَلَاغَةِ وَ سِرُّ الْبَرَاعَةِ
Zakariyyā al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/ 1283)	مُفِيدُ الْعُلُومِ وَ مُبِيدُ الْهُمُومِ
Ibn al-Naqīb (d. 769/ 1368)	عُمْدَةُ السَّالِكِ وَ عُدَّةُ النَّاسِكِ
Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (d. 971/1563)	عُدَّةُ الْحَاسِبِ وَ عُمْدَةُ الْمُحَاسِبِ
Al-Nawājī	رَوْضَةُ الْمُجَالَسَةِ وَ غَيْضَةُ الْمُجَانَسَةِ
Ibn al-Azraq al-Gharnāṭī (d. 896/1491)	بَدَائِعُ السِّلْكِ فِي طَبَائِعِ الْمُلْكِ
Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī	اَلْأَجْوِبَةُ الْفَاخِرَةُ عَنِ الْأَسْئِلَةِ الْفَاجِرَةِ
Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370)	مَنْعُ الْمَوَانِعِ عَنْ جَمْعِ الْجَوَامِعِ

Punned book titles of six words literally recall an equation. The title is divided in two in the middle by means of a conjunction, leaving three words on each side in a symmetrical manner. Some examples are as follows:

al-Nahrawānī (d. 387/ 997)	اَلْجَلِيسُ الصَّالِحُ الْكَافِي وَ الْأَنِيسُ النَّاصِحُ الشَّافِي
Ibn Hudhayl al-Fazārī al-Andalusī (8th century AH/14th century AD)	عَيْنُ الْأَدَبِ وَالسِّيَاسَةِ وَ زَيْنُ الْحَسَبِ وَالرِّيَاسَةِ
Ibn Hudhayl al-Fazārī	كِيمْيَاءُ السَّعَادَةِ الرَّبَّانِيَّةِ وَ سِيمْيَاءُ السِّيَادَةِ الرُّوحَانِيَّةِ

In both prose and verse, the most superior implementation of the art of *muqābalah* (comparison and collation) is to create a harmony in contradiction between more than two opposites.[28] Muslim authors have yielded the most meticulous examples of this craft and created phrases that establish reciprocal relations between opposite elements

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[28] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn Rashīq al-Azdī al-Qayrawānī, *al-ʿUmdah fī mahāsin al-shiʿr wa-ādābihī wa-naqdihī*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 5th ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1981), II, 15.

in book titles of both four and six terms, as seen in the following examples:

ʿAzīz Maḥmūd Hudāʾī (d. 1038/1628)	جَامِعُ الْفَضَائِلِ وَ قَامِعُ الرَّذَائِلِ
Al-Qarabāghī (d. 942/1535)	جَالِبُ السُّرُورِ وَسَالِبُ الْغُرُورِ
Al-Waṭwāṭ (d.718/1318)	غُرَرُ الْخَصَائِصِ الْوَاضِحَةِ وَ عُرَرُ النَّقَائِصِ الْفَاضِحَةُ

B. Utilization of Arabic Plural Forms in the Creation of Puns

Muslim authors mobilized all means of linguistics to create book titles that are pleasing to both the eye and the ear. In this respect, they often referred particularly to certain plural patterns. Thanks to their pronunciation and lyrical resonance that remain in the memory, „فُعَاة“ and „فُعُول“, „فِعْلَان“, „فُعْلَان“, „أَفْعِلَاء“, „أَفْعَال“, „فَوَاعِل“, „فُعَلَاء“ are the most preferred patterns. For instance, al-Suyūṭī preferred إِتْحَافُ النُّبَلَاءِ بِأَخْبَارِ الثُّقَلَاءِ for his satirical tract about unlikeable typologies.

Likewise, „أَفْعِلَاء“ is used by Ibn al-Miṭrān al-Dimashqī (d. 587/1191) in بُسْتَانُ الْأَطِبَّاءِ وَرَوْضَةُ الْأَلِبَّاءُ; the meter „فُعَاة“ is used by al-Kāfiyajī (d. 879/1474) in „فَوَاعِل “ by Kafawī سَيْفُ الْقُضَاةِ عَلَى الْبُغَاةِ; and Ḥusayn Effendī (d. 1010/1601) in سَوَانِحُ التَّفَؤُّلِ وَ لَوَائِحُ التَّوَكُّلِ; and „فِعَال“ by Zakariyyā al-Qazwīnī in آثَارُ الْبِلَادِ وَأَخْبَارُ الْعِبَادِ.[29]

The foregoing list should be complemented with feminine plural forms as one of the most available patterns for puns:

Al-ʿAwfī (d. 629/1232)	جَوَامِعُ الْحِكَايَاتِ وَلَوَامِعُ الرِّوَايَاتِ
Al-Iṣfahānī (d. 410/1010)	مُحَاضَرَاتُ الْأُدَبَاءِ وَ مُحَاوَرَاتُ الشُّعَرَاءِ وَالْبُلَغَاءِ

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29   For other examples, see

Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Jurjānī (d. 482/1089)	كِنَايَاتُ الْأُدَبَاءِ وإِشَارَاتُ الْبُلَغَاءِ
Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111)	مَقَامَاتُ الْعُلَمَاءِ بَيْنَ يَدَي الْخُلَفَاءِ وَ الْأُمَرَاءِ
Al-Jāḥiẓ	اَلْبُرْصَانُ وَ الْعُرْجَانُ وَ الْعُمْيَانُ وَ الْحُولَانُ
Ibn Iyās (d. 930/1524)	بَدَائِعُ الزُّهُورِ فِي وَقَائِعِ الدُّهُورِ
Anonymous	رَقَائِقُ الْحُلَلِ فِي دَقَائِقِ الْحِيَلِ
Al-Suyūṭī	بُغْيَةُ الْوُعَاةِ فِي طَبَقَاتِ اللُّغَوِيِّينَ وَ النَّحَاةِ

The authors, who had mastered syntax, were able to create astonishing combinations even in unforeseeable plural forms. In addition, some examples show that plurals in a certain meter coexist with other plurals that are similar in terms of form or pronunciation, albeit with different meters. Moreover, there are a significant number of examples in which a plural form skillfully creates a pun with a completely different, non-plural word:

Abū l-Ḥajjāj al-Balawī (d. 604/1208)   كِتَابُ أَلِفْ بَاءِ لِلْأَلِبَّاءِ

Al-Khaṭīb al-ʿUthmānī (d. 780/1378)   رَحْمَةُ الْأُمَّةِ فِي اخْتِلَافِ الْأَئِمَّةِ

Another effective pun technique is the phonetic harmony established by a present participle derived from the same root and plural forms of words that rhyme with it, such as "noun of place" or "infinitive with *mīm*." Old scholars invented striking titles in this respect. The artistry in the following examples becomes even more interesting when the chosen words are read by pausing on them:

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghaznawī (d. 593/1197)   عُدَّةُ النَّاسِكِ فِي الْمَنَاسِكِ

Marʿī ibn Yūsuf al-Karmī (d. 1033/1624)   دَلِيلُ الطَّالِبِ لِنَيْلِ الْمَطَالِبِ

Ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ (d. 688/1289)   سُلُوكُ الْمَالِكِ فِي تَدْبِيرِ الْمَمَالِكِ

Ibn al-Akfānī   إِرْشَادُ الْقَاصِدِ إِلَى أَسْنَى الْمَقَاصِدِ

Taqī al-Dīn al-Jarrāʿī   تُحْفَةُ الرَّاكِعِ وَ السَّاجِدِ فِي أَحْكَامِ الْمَسَاجِدِ

C. Skillful Assembly of Nouns and Verbs in Puns

Since the classical period, Muslim authors have invented interesting book titles where one part of the pun consists of a noun and the other is created by appropriate verbs. In this respect, the harmony between nouns and verbs is remarkable. For better perception of this harmony, the noun at the beginning and the verb at the end should be read without wovelizing their final letters (by a pause). For instance, the classic by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) on history should be read as follows:

<div align="center">اَلْعِبَرُ فِي خَبَرِ مَنْ غَبَرَ</div>

<div align="center">al-ʿ**Ibar** fī khabar man **ghabar**</div>

Some striking examples are given below:

ʿAbd al-Salām Effendī al-Mārdīnī (d. 1843)	أُمُّ العِبَرِ فِي ذِكْرِ مَنْ مَضَى وَ مَرَّ
Ibn al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1089/1679)	شَذَرَاتُ الذَّهَبِ فِي أَخْبَارِ مَنْ ذَهَبَ
Ibn ʿAqīlah (d. 1150/1737)	اَلسِرُّ الأَسْرَى فِي مَعْنَى سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى
Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355)	أَحْكَامُ الكُلِّ وَمَا عَلَيْهَا تَدُلُّ
Al-Yumn al-ʿUlaymī	اَلتَّارِيخُ المُعْتَبَرُ فِي أَنْبَاءِ مَنْ غَبَرَ
Al-Kalāʿī (d. 634/1237)	مِصْبَاحُ الظُّلَمِ مِنْ حَدِيثِ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Thus, nouns and verbs are brought together to create puns. In addition, we encounter the interesting assimilation of a possessive conjunction with a pronoun and a noun without a pronoun. For example, the tract by al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 817/1415) about famous personalities whose names are ascribed to others than his father is named as follows: تُحْفَةُ الأَبِيهِ فِي مَنْ نُسِبَ إِلَى غَيْرِ أَبِيهِ.

D. Titles Based on Wordplay

Because of the intense use of puns, some book titles recall tongue twisters and consist of alliterations that are relatively difficult to pronounce. Indeed, it is by no means easy to memorize these book titles, and pronunciation undergoes frequent tongue slips. This might be considered a joke by the author as well. For instance, Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404), who wants to enlighten his contemporaries with the important information in *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, names his work "إِخْبَارُ الأَحْيَاءِ بِأَخْبَارِ الإِحْيَاءِ;" likewise, ʿAlāʾ al-Dawlah al-Simnānī (d. 736/1336) names his work on the virtues of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib "مَنَاظِرُ المُحَاضِرِ لِلْمُنَاظِرِ الحَاضِرِ," whereas Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854) names his work, originally a testament, " إِنْبَاءُ الأَبْنَاءِ بِأَطْيَبِ الأَنْبَاءِ." Furthermore, the mathematician Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mārdīnī (d. 629/1232) designs his own elementary numbers as a kind of equation, namely, "إِعْدَادُ الإِسْرَارِ فِي أَسْرَارِ الأَعْدَادِ."

1. Book Titles Formulized in Anagrams

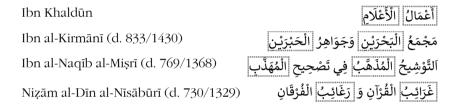Scholars also opted for anagrams in which they reversed a given title or two terms therein or created a kind of riddle between words by reversing the letters in these terms to create parallel, contrasting, or associated combinations. For example, al-Suyūṭī establishes such a relation between the words "كَتْب" and "كَبْت" as well as قُرْآن and "أَقْرَان" in the title of his work that seeks to gather his contemporary

scribes under a standard practice of Qurʾānic orthography: كَبْتُ الْأَقْرَانِ فِي كَتْبِ الْقُرْآنِ.

In a similar manner, when naming his book about the fire in Damascus in 740 AH, Ibn al-Wardī applies the technique of alteration and establishes such a relation between the words صَفْو and وَصْف as صَفْوُ الرَّحِيقِ فِي وَصْفِ الْحَرِيقِ : حَرِيق and رَحِيق well as

The qaṣīdah anthology by the famous book seller and poet al-Ḥaẓīrī (d. 568/1172), also known as the "book guide," is named in a manner we can include in the same category: لُمَحُ الْمُلَحِ.

Below are some interesting book titles that are derived pursuant to the technique of an anagram, where a relation is established between two words by the interchange of the places of letters:

Ibn Khaldūn	أَعْمَالُ الْأَعْلَام
Ibn al-Kirmānī (d. 833/1430)	مَجْمَعُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ وَجَوَاهِرُ الْحَبْرَيْنِ
Ibn al-Naqīb al-Miṣrī (d. 769/1368)	اَلتَّوْشِيحُ الْمُذَهَّبُ فِي تَصْحِيحِ الْمُهَذَّب
Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (d. 730/1329)	غَرَائِبُ الْقُرْآنِ وَ رَغَائِبُ الْفُرْقَانِ

2. Technique of Establishing Relationships between Dotted and Non-Dotted Letters

Some wordplays in book titles establish relations between words that are formally identical but vary through dots. Such relations are often between analogous letter groups such as ج-ح-خ , ع-غ , and ص-ض. For example, the title of the famous biography of his contemporaries by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī has such an aesthetic aspect:

إِنْبَاءُ الْغُمْرِ بِأَبْنَاءِ الْعُمْرِ.

Other examples are given below:

Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239)	اَلْمَثَلُ السَّائِرُ فِي أَدَبِ الْكَاتِبِ وَالشَّاعِرِ
Al-Biqāʿī	أَسْوَاقُ الْأَشْوَاقِ مِنْ مَصَارِعِ الْعُشَّاقِ
Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249)	اَلْمَقْصَدُ الْجَلِيلُ فِي عِلْمِ الْخَلِيل
Ibn Yaḥyá al-Wansharīsī (d. 914/1508)	مِعْيَارُ الْمُعْرِب وَالْجَامِعُ الْمُغْرِبُ

3. Technique of Reading the Same Word with Different Vowels

Vowels are a phenomenon in the Arabic language that allows diverse pronunciations of the same word. This characteristic has pushed classical Muslim authors to make use of this linguistic feature and to turn it into an artistic advantage. Consequently, authors have found a kind of pleasure in gathering together in their book titles analogous words that differ through one or more vowels despite consisting of the same letters. Thus, we have many classical works that can be pronounced in different manners with or without vowels; this method points out the subtle wit and fine anticipation of the author.

For instance, in his اَلْمُشْرِقُ فِي حُلَى الْمَشْرِقِ, Ibn Saʿīd (d. 685/1286) employs a change of vowels in the letter *mīm*, whereas *shaddah* is replaced in بَحْرُ الْعَوَّامِ فِيمَا أَصَابَ فِيهِ الْعَوَامّ by Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (d. 971/1563). The title of the following work by the Shāfiʿī jurist Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī (d. 694/1295) would be hard to read if the letter ق is not vowelized:

خَيْرُ الْقِرَى فِي زِيَارَةِ أُمِّ الْقُرَى

In this regard, some examples in which a kind of play is made with words and concepts are given below:

ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1038)	اَلْفَرْقُ بَيْنَ الْفِرَقِ
Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142)	طِلْبَةُ الطَّلَبَةِ
Asʿad Effendī (d. 1166/1753)	إِطْبَاقُ الْأَطْبَاقِ
Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505)	اَلْهَيْئَةُ السَّنِيَّةُ فِي الْهَيْئَةِ السُّنِّيَّةِ
Al-Jaʿbarī (d. 732/1332)	نَفِيسُ الْإِجْزَاءِ فِي مَعْرِفَةِ الْأَجْزَاءِ
Ibn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 826/1423)	اَلْإِطْرَافُ بِأَوْهَامِ الْأَطْرَافِ

Another important category based on phones and timbers is ensuring matchup or identification by dropping or adding a letter. For example, Jamāl al-Khalwatī (d. 899/1494) makes use of the formal and vocal similarity between "حَبَّة" and "مَحَبَّة" in his حَبَّةُ الْمَحَبَّةِ. Likewise, there is a similar relation between the words "قِنَاع" and "إِقْنَاع" in the work كَشَّافُ الْقِنَاعِ عَنْ مَتْنِ الْإِقْنَاعِ by Manṣūr ibn Yūnus al-Buhūtī (d. 1051/1641).

4. *Technique of Title Formation Based on the Pronunciation of Analogous Letters*

In some titles, authors opt for wordplay based on pronunciation by establishing a relationship between phonetically similar letters. This relation, which can be found between ع/أ، س/ص، ظ/ز and similar duos, comprises such artistry that it can only be understood through an attentive experience of pronunciation. For example,

Al-Fīrūzābādī	اَلْإِسْعَادُ بِالْإِصْعَادِ إِلَى دَرَجَةِ الْاِجْتِهَادِ
Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir (d. 692/1293)	اَلرَّوْضُ الزَّاهِرُ فِي سِيرَةِ الْمَلِكِ الظَّاهِرِ
Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī	بَسْطُ الْأَرْضِ فِي الطُّولِ وَالْعَرْضِ

5. *Techniques of Dropping, Adding and Changing Letters*

Another particularly effective and successful implementation of *sajʿ* is to bring together words, one shorter and one longer in pronunciation, within the same book title. More precisely, authors use this technique to create the shorter word by dropping some letters of the longer. For instance, the work by al-Suyūṭī in praise of a rooster is named اَلْوَدِيكُ فِي فَضْلِ الدِّيكِ, where the author obtains the word دِيك by dropping one letter of وَدِيك.

The same applies for هَدِيَّةُ الْمُسَافِرِ إِلَى النُّورِ السَّافِرِ by Shāfiʿī jurist Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 773/1372) and تَحْبِيرُ الْمُوَشَّيْنَ فِيمَا يُقَالُ بِالسِّينِ وَالشِّينِ by al-Fīrūzābādī. The opposite examples are observable in the titles of تَرْغِيبُ الرَّائِضِ فِي عِلْمِ الْفَرَائِضِ by the famous mathematician Ibn al-Hāʾim (d. 815/1412) and اَلْوَافِي فِي نَظْمِ الْقَوَافِي by the renowned elegiac poet Abū l-Baqāʾ al-Rundī (d. 684/1285).

Another common *sajʿ* method is to use two words together that consist of an equal number of letters with a single different letter. For instance, Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (d. 730/1329) named his annotation as follows:[30] اَلصَّافِيَةُ شَرْحُ الشَّافِيَةِ.

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[30] Other examples include

Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī	شَقُّ الْجَيْبِ لِمِفْتَاحِ الْغَيْبِ
Al-Biqāʿī	أَخْبَارُ الْجِلَادِ فِي فُتُوحِ الْبِلَادِ
Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Ṣafadī	تَصْحِيحُ التَّصْحِيفِ وَ تَحْرِيرُ التَّحْرِيفِ

E. Skillfully Created Titles with Puns in Compliance with Proper Nouns

Proper nouns are another area of application where Muslim authors proved their creativity in the style of *saj'*. In the titles of thousands of classical works, these nouns are matched with words that are phonetically appropriate and pleasing to the ear. By combining authors' language taste with their subtle wit, many foreign names are adapted to the meters and patterns of the Arabic language. In addition, there is no distinction regarding whether a name actually belongs to a person, place, or book. Successful examples are observable in a work by Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī about scholars of Samarqand, where he uses the word "sugar" (قَنْد) together with a place name (سَمَرْقَنْد); in the work by Ibn 'Asākir (d. 600/1203) with the adjective "مُغَطَّى" on the famous "اَلْمُوَطَّأ" of al-Imām Mālik; and finally, between the word "فَاشُوش" and the proper noun "قَرَاقُوش" in the political criticism by Ibn Mammātī, who wrote about the deeds of Bahā' al-Dīn Qarāqūsh (d. 597/1201), the potent governor of Cairo in the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (589/1193):[31]

Kamāl al-Dīn al-Fārisī (d. 716/1319)	أَسَاسُ الْقَوَاعِدِ فِي أُصُولِ الْفَوَائِدِ
Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī	اَلْاِسْتِغْنَاءُ فِي أَحْكَامِ الْاِسْتِثْنَاءِ
Al-Kātibī (d. 675/1277)	اَلْمُفَصَّلُ فِي شَرْحِ الْمُحَصَّلِ

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[31]   Other examples with prominent artistic aspects include

a) Person Names

'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī	اَلْحَرْبُ عَلَى ابْنِ حَرْبٍ
Abū Ṭālib al-Marwazī (d. 614/1217)	غُنْيَةُ الطَّالِبِ فِي نَسَبِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ
Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546)	اَلزَّهْرُ الْأَنْعَشُ فِي نَوَادِرِ الْأَعْمَشِ
Ibn al-Mulaqqin (d. 804/1401)	مَا تَمَسُّ إِلَيْهِ الْحَاجَةُ عَلَى سُنَنِ ابْنِ مَاجَةٍ
Al-Bisāṭī (d. 842/1439)	شِفَاءُ الْغَلِيلِ عَلَى كَلَامِ الشَّيْخِ خَلِيلٍ
Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī al-Maqdisī (d. 744/1439)	اَلصَّارِمُ الْمُنَكِّي فِي الرَّدِّ عَلَى السُّبْكِيِّ

b) Place Names

Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb	اَلْإِحَاطَةُ فِي أَخْبَارِ غِرْنَاطَةَ
Al-Sakhāwī	اَلْمُفَاخَرَةُ بَيْنَ دِمَشْق وَ الْقَاهِرَةِ

اَلْقَنْدُ في ذِكْرِ عُلَمَاءِ سَمَرْقَنْدَ

كَشْفُ الْمُغَطَّى فِي فَضْلِ الْمُوَطَّا

اَلْفَاشُوشُ فِي أَحْكَامِ قَرَاقُوش

Conclusion

Rhymed prose, which Muslim authors could not help but employ in naming their works, is one of *sui generis* characteristics of Arabic linguistics. In fact, this practice based on phonetic aesthetics has become an artistic effort uncommon in other cultures but ever popular among Muslim authors.

It is fair to say that the works written during first two centuries AH do not include such ornamental endeavors or concerns. Nevertheless, particularly as of the early 3rd century AH, scholars have tried to generate titles with eloquent, compelling, and artistic wordings so that their intellectual crops and scientific studies are remembered in an easier manner. Consequently, the work by a scholar or man of letters attracted greater attention from intellectual circles and attained greater popularity among the public.

The embellishment of book titles by ornamental concerns can bring together a Mauritanian scholar, an Andalusian poet, a Basrian journalist or a Yemeni historian in a very specific field of language and in the same pot of pleasure.

The influence and pressure of the age-long tradition of composing thematic and lyrical book titles in the Muslim world is also observable in non-Arabic works. For instance, the same method has been followed for centuries in the Ottoman writing tradition; similarly,

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Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Jaznāʾī (d. 766/1365)	زَهْرَةُ الآسِ في بِنَاءِ مَدِينَةِ فَاسَ
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dabbāgh (d. 699/1300)	مَعَالِمُ الْإِيمَانِ في مَعْرِفَةِ أَهْلِ الْقَيْرَوَانِ
ʿAlī ibn Ḥasan al-Khazrajī (d. 812/1410)	طِرَازُ أَعْلَامِ الزَّمَنِ في طَبَقَاتِ أَعْيَانِ الْيَمَنِ
Ibn ʿAsākir	اَلْجَامِعُ الْمُسْتَقْصَى في فَضَائِلِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى

Iranian scholars, who wrote in Persian, could not stand idly by this tradition as they named their respective works.

The technique of making use of the power of *saj'* is based on the humorous and artistic syntax of words in book titles. This technique still preserves its importance today, and modern authors continue to name their works with similar attention and sensitivity.

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