

### Some Arab rhythmic cycles (*durub, awzan, iqa'at*)

There are three formal ‘letters’ in the ‘alphabet’ out of which the basic framework for each Arab rhythmic meter or cycle (*darb, wazn, iqa'*; plurals *durub, awzan, iqa'at*) is created: DUM (a low, strong accent), TEK (a high, weaker accent), ISS (least accented). These cycles *repeat*, over and over. The percussionist realizes and elaborates the cycle’s framework during performance by representing each dum, tek, or iss with various strokes, while adding fills (especially within ISS), variations, and improvisations. The following notations present the *basic* rhythmic framework for each *darb*. Read the notations from left to right; each box receives one time unit. ‘Dum’ and ‘tek’ may be abbreviated ‘d’ and ‘t’; iss is left blank. For several of the important *darbs*, simple realizations are included for performance on the *tabla* (s=strong hand, w=weak hand) just below the dashed line. Where two letters appear in one box, divide the time equally between them. Strokes associated with these realizations are variable and instrument-dependent; see sheet “Some strokes for the tabla and riqq”. Warning: there is no uniformity in nomenclature! The important thing is to understand the cycles musically; their names will vary.

#### Duple feels (the cycle divides into groups of 2 or 4 beats)

##### In one:

Wahda Tayra (“fox”):

dum	tek
s	w

##### In two:

Bamb (falahi):

d	t		t	d		t	
s	w	s	w	s	w	s	sw

Malfuf:

d			t			t	
s	w	w	s	w	w	s	w

Khaligi (Arabian “gulf”):

d			d			t	
s		w	s		w	s	w

Ayub (zar):

d			t	d		t	
s		s	w	s		s	

**In four:**

Maqsum (wahda wa nisf, duwayk):

dum	tek		tek	dum		tek	
s	s	sw	s	s	sw	s	sw

Sa'idi ("Upper Egyptian", stick dance=tahtib): [NB: initial dum may be omitted]

dum	tek		dum	dum		tek	
s	s	sw	s	s	sw	s	sw

Masmudi Saghir (baladi, "country"):

dum	dum		tek	dum		tek	
s	s	sw	s	s	sw	s	sw

Wahda Kabira:

dum			(tek)			(tek)	
s	sw	sw	s	sw	sw	s	sw

Zeffa ("wedding procession"):

dum	tek tek	tek	tek	dum	tek	tek	
s	ww	s	w	s	w	s	

**In eight:**

Double Wahda kabira:

dum			(tek)			(tek)	
(tek)			(tek)			(tek)	

Masmudi Kabir (sometimes simply "masmudi"):

dum		dum				tek	
dum				tek		tek	

Ciftetelli (taqsim) (may also be performed in four as a variant of Wahda):

dum		tek	tek		dum (or tek)	tek	
dum		dum		tek			

### Triple and compound triple feels (the cycle includes groupings of 3 beats)

Sama'i Tayir in 1.5 beats (half of Fals, below):

dum	(tek)	tek
s	w	s

Fals (waltz) in 3 beats:

dum		(tek)		tek	
s		s		w	

Sama'i Darij in 3 beats:

dum	(tek tek)	tek	tek	tek	
s		s	s	s	

Yuruk Sama'i in 3 beats (divided into two groups of 1.5, i.e. 6/8):

dum	tek	tek	dum	tek	
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Sanakin Sama'i in 6 beats (divided into two groups of 3, i.e. 6/4):

dum	tek	tek	dum	tek	
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### Odd and other compound cycles:

Dawr Hindi in 3.5 beats:

dum	tek	tek	dum		tek	
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Nawakht in 7 beats: (NB: approximately, nawakht: dawr hindi :: masmudi kabir : masmudi)

dum		tek	dum		tek	tek
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“karshilama” in 9 beats: (move the last tek to the last box, and you have Aqsaq, “limping”)

dum		tek		dum		tek	tek	
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Sama‘i Thaqil in 10 beats:

dum			tek	
dum	dum	tek		

‘Uwis in 11 beats:

dum		tek	dum	
tek	tek	dum	dum	
				tek

Mudawwar Masri in 12 beats:

tek		dum		tek	
dum	dum	dum			

Murabba‘ in 13 beats:

dum	tek		dum		tek	
tek	tek		tek	tek	dum	

Muhajjar in 14 beats:

dum		dum		tek		dum
	tek		tek	tek		tek
						tek

Shambar Halabi in 48 beats (each box represents two beats):

dum	tek	dum	dum dum	tek	
tek		tek	tek	dum	
tek	tek	dum		tek	
tek	tek	dum		tek	tek