

## A study on caesura in Persian prosody

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### Abstract

Caesura is a pause in a line of poetry that were used primarily in Greek poetry and moreover in the poetry of most indo- European languages: Latin, Sanskrit, Avestan, German and old English.

Although in Persian prosody, Caesura has an important place; critics have paid little attention to it and consequently, its relations with prosodic meter of Persian poetry remains unclear. In first view it seems that the main situation of caesuras in Persian prosody is between two hemistiches of line or in middle of hemistiches with cyclical (symmetrical) meter; but in this study we tried to observe other inter-hemistich caesuras. The principle question we follow is the functions of caesura in Persian prosodic poem. We tried to prove that caesura is rarely the basic element of meter and in most cases, its main assistant.

Primarily, we recognized caesuras in two kinds of meter: meter with obligatory caesura (that caesura is the main factor of its rhythm) and meter with voluntary caesura (that caesura is an assistant of its rhythm).

### 1. Meter with obligatory caesura

In prosodic Persian poetry, these meters are low usage and in order to their rhythm be heard, it is necessary to set caesuras strictly in proper place. It must notice that these meters, contrary to most of Persian prosodic ones, are not composed of two syllable types (long & short syllables). They are made exclusively of long syllables. It seems that caesura in this kind of meter, is replaced with short syllables and made possible to form syllabic ordered sets; so these meters could be considered as a different kind of ordinary quantitative Persian prosodic meter.

### 2. Meter with voluntary caesura

In this kind, Caesura is an assistant of meter and so, there is no obligation to pause at its place, however, on the one hand it can intensify rhythm and on the other hand, there is a relation between caesura and the meaning of the line. In other words, the reader of this kind of poetry can hear two kinds of music: first the prosodic music made by arrangement of short and long syllables; other, the music made by ordered caesuras.

### The functions of caesura

The main functions of caesura in Persian poetry meter are:

- Calling to reflection:

Caesura makes reader of poem to pause, so it decreases the speed of reading and therefore, calls reader to reflect on the meaning.

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- Intensifying the rhythm:

Contrary to the first function, caesura could be a main factor of intensifying the rhythm. In this case, on the one hand the frequency of caesuras increases and on the other hand, their places occur in the end of prosodic elements; so both kinds of music (made by caesura and prosodic meter) will intensify the rhythm.

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