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14

STUDIA TATARSKIE  
pod redakcją  
Grzegorza Czerwińskiego

Seria 4

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„WSCHÓD – ZACHÓD”  
UNIwersYTETU W BIAŁYMSTOKU

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ESTETYCZNE ASPEKTY LITERATURY POLSKICH,  
BIAŁORUSKICH I LITEWSKICH TATARÓW  
(OD XVI DO XXI W.)

AESTHETIC ASPECTS OF THE LITERATURE OF  
POLISH, BELARUSIAN AND LITHUANIAN TATARS  
(FROM THE 16<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY)

ЭСТЕТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ  
ПОЛЬСКИХ, БЕЛОРУССКИХ И ЛИТОВСКИХ ТАТАР  
(XVI–XXI ВВ.)

Edited by  
**GRZEGORZ CZERWIŃSKI**  
**ARTUR KONOPACKI**

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NAUKOWA SERIA WYDAWNICZA

## COLLOQUIA ORIENTALIA BIALOSTOCENSIA

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### **MODERN MOROCCAN ARABIC POETRY: ITS BEGINNINGS AND DEVELOPMENT**

Nowadays modern Moroccan Arabic poetry draws much more attention from literary studies than it did in the 1990s. In the early 2000s the Eastern world saw a huge number of publications devoted to Moroccan Arabic poetry<sup>867</sup>.

However, even today we see a clear divide between the studies exploring the Moroccan Arabic poetry and the researches concerning the poetry in the European languages widely used in the Kingdom of Morocco. Local poetry written in MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) or its north African dialects. As for the European languages, the most popular are French, Spanish and, from the beginning of the new millennium, English.

Contemporary Moroccan authors do not oppose the East to the West; moreover, there is a clear trend among them to encourage a symbiosis of the two worlds, which finds its manifestation in the texts of poems. The French and Arabic languages coexist harmoniously, even within the frames of the same verse<sup>868</sup>. However, this trend is only common for the recent Moroccan poetry, which is the result of post-colonial politics of European countries and a cross-cultural dialogue.

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<sup>867</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Al-ru'ya wa-l-fann fī-l-šī'r al-'arabī al-hadīl bilmağreb*, Al-Dar al-Bayḍa 1987; M. Kasemi, *Sayrūrāt al-qasīda: bībliūğrafya al-šī'r al-'arabī al-hadīl wa-l-mu'aşīr bilmağreb 1936–2000*, Al-Rabat 2000; A. al-Kubbaj, *Al-adab al-mağrebī fī al-mağreb al-'aqşy*, Bayrūt 2005; A. al-Tarisi, *Ṭatawwur maşhūm al-šī'r al-mağrebī fī maşīrat mi'at sana*, Al-Qahira 2008; M. N. al-'Oufi, *'Alī 'Iqa' al-šī'r, yatağassad al-šī'r*, Tanğā 2013.

<sup>868</sup> A. D. Langone, *Facteur D (Darija) et nouvelle génération marocaine: la musique entre innovation et tradition*, [in:] *Between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans: Studies on Contemporary Arabic Dialects. Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> AIDA Conference, held in Vienna from 5-9 September 2006*, ed. by S. Procházka, V. Ritt-Benmimoun, Münster–Wien 2008.

We should distinguish between French literature and texts written by the immigrants from North Africa (Maghreb) who live in France, and the local Maghrebi literature written in French, the authors of which continue to associate themselves with the Arab cultural environment. Such bilingualism has several reasons.

The first reason is connected with the strong positions of the Franco-phone world. When writing in French, and targeting at all French-speaking readers, the Moroccan, Algerian, or Tunisian author automatically expands the range of potential audience beyond his native land. Therefore, the most popular and best-known works of the Maghrebi authors (both poetry and prose) are mostly written in French.

On the other hand, we can observe an opposite trend. The immigrant communities of the poor French suburbs do not enter into the active assimilation with the ethnic French, creating an environment of people detached from any cultural roots: both from their families (Arab) and a new surroundings circle (French). In such an environment there arises a manifest opposition of the East to the West, Islam and Western values. In the process of searching for answers, the authors of poetic texts return to the origins of their cultural and mental identity. This identity stands on certain “basic principles”: ideas of Ummah – the Islamic Brotherhood; as well as the contrast between the “spiritual” Muslim world and the “soulless” material world of the Europeans and Americans<sup>869</sup>.

All these factors contribute to a dissonance in the perception of the Maghrebi (and, therefore, Moroccan) literature as a unified whole. French researchers turn their attention to the French language texts, Arabic scholars operate primarily with the MSA works, considering them as part of the global Arabic literature; but this does not mean that Moroccan writers who write in French (Spanish, English, or Berber dialects) do not take part in literary life of their motherland.

Since the past decade there have appeared a number of Arab literary works devoted to the foundations of the Moroccan poetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this respect, we should note the following scholarly studies:

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<sup>869</sup> D. Drissel, *Hip-hop hybridity for a Globalized World: African and Muslim Diasporic Discourses in French Rap Music*, “The Global Studies Journal” 2009, vol. 2, 3, p. 125-126.

a monograph of the Moroccan critic Ahmad al-Tarisi (b. 1946) *Ṭatawwur mafhūm al-ši'r al-maġrebī fī masīrat mi'at sana* [The Way of One Hundred Years: the Evolution of the Concept of Poetic Art in Morocco], as well as the substantial bibliographic compendium of Muhammad Kasemi (b. 1960), professor at the Oujda University (Morocco), *Sayrūrāt al-qasīda: bibliūġrafya al-ši'r al-'arabī al-hadīth wa-l-mu'aşir bilmaġreb 1936–2000* [The Way of Qasida: Bibliography of Modern Moroccan Poetry 1936–2000]<sup>870</sup>. In this work, the author analyzes the evolution of poetry in the Kingdom and provides detailed statistics of Moroccan poets' publications year by year, including titles of publications, numbers of pages and places of publication.

The beginning of the 2000s saw a growing interest in Moroccan Arabic poetry among Western scholars<sup>871</sup>. Due to the development of science and technology and the rapid spread of the Internet around the world, the authors find new forms of manifesting their creative vein, exploring first the media space first. Combining poetry with music, young performers convey their ideas to the audience through videos on YouTube and by being active within on-line social networks. On the one hand, we see the melting of linguistic, geographical and cultural barriers. On the other hand, the differences between genres are becoming less and less noticeable. The modern Western research in Maghrebi poetry is usually not limited to literary approach only: philology is closely combined with cultural studies, art, history, political science and other disciplines. For example, in his article *Hip-hop hybridity for a Globalized World: African and Muslim Diasporic Discourses in French Rap Music*, David Drissel<sup>872</sup>, professor of the Fort Dodge University (Iowa, USA), examines the impact of the Arab-Muslim tradition on popular music culture – hip-hop and its modifications resulting from the influence of French colonial politics on African (including North African) rhythms, and Islamic themes. Another researcher from France, A. D. Langogne, analyses Moroccan hip-hop

<sup>870</sup> M. Kasemi, *op. cit.*

<sup>871</sup> S. Sheehi, *Foundation of Modern Arab Identity*, Gainesville 2004; J. ben Jameledine, *The Discourse of Identity in the Maghreb between Difference and Universality*, "International Review of Information Ethics" 2007, vol. 7.

<sup>872</sup> D. Drisel, *op. cit.*

from the linguistic viewpoint: in the article *Facteur D (Darija) et nouvelle generation marocaine: la musique entre innovation et tradition* [Factor D (Darija) and the New Generation of Moroccans: the Music between Innovation and Tradition]<sup>873</sup>, she examines the achievement of the Moroccan dialect poetry of young Arabic hip-hop performers from the generation of the 1980s and the 1990s. This strategy allows us to study the Moroccan poetry without limiting the analysis to any particular textual approach. To estimate the full value of the Maghrebi poetry, we need to use the whole spectrum of instruments: literary, linguistic, or art studies.

While discussing the development of Moroccan poetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries we do not frame the whole evolution within these two periods. Modern critics notice that contemporary Moroccan Arabic poetry began to crystallize only in the 1930s. There are two main dates tied with this event: the initiation of the “Eid al-Arch” in 1934 and 1936, when the first printed collection of Moroccan Arabic poems, *Aḥlam al-faḡr* [Dreams of the Dawn], was published by Abdelkader Hassan. In other countries of the Maghreb, however, this process started earlier. For example, the first collection of Libyan poetry appeared in print in 1908, in Tunisia – in 1911, in Algeria – in the 1933 (the fact that was strongly affected by the language policy of France).

According to Al-Tarisi, initially, the Moroccan Arabic poetry played a certain role in the life of the people but was not considered a valuable art form or even literature. “Rhymes” were used at festivals, religious events, in the folklore texts, proverbs etc. Moreover, verses were considered a kind of training in eloquence: for example, this was the way in which scholars studied the Arabic grammar<sup>874</sup>.

A number of factors can account for this “utilitarian” approach to poetry. First, unlike monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula, Morocco, historically, has always been a conglomerate of nations, languages, and worldviews. Throughout its history, the Kingdom fell under the influence of many ethnic groups: the Berbers, Romans, Arabs, Ottoman Turks, and Europeans (mainly the Portuguese, Spanish and French); Jews also played

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<sup>873</sup> A. D. Langone, *op. cit.*

<sup>874</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Tatawwur maḡhūm...*

an important role in shaping Morocco. Thus, the pre-Islamic Arabic poetic tradition was only one of the common traditions for the Maghreb World, but it was not unique.

The second reason is the historical circumstances which affected the national identity of Morocco inhabitants in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, a generation of philosophers who identified themselves with the Arabic world, not with the culture of the Ancient world or Southern Europe had not formed yet. Before the Fes agreements of 1912, which put the Kingdom under the French protectorate, Morocco was not a united state. Even today part of Moroccans (especially not ethnic Arabs, among them Berbers) prefer to associate themselves with Europeans but not with Africans or Arabs.

Al-Tarisi divides the history of development of Moroccan poetry into five periods<sup>875</sup>: the earliest one spanning the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the 1930s of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the period of “An-Nahda” in Morocco; from the 1940s to the 1960s of 20<sup>th</sup> and the intensification of contacts with Mashriq poets; the 1960s of 20<sup>th</sup> century (the early post-colonial period); and, finally, the modern period that has continued since the 1980s till now. This classification overlaps with the statistics of Muhammad Kasemi, according to which, the total number of print publications of Moroccan poets grew in the following progression: the 1930s: 2 collections (1936, 1937); the 1940-1950s: 6 collections (1947, 1948, 1955, 1956, 1958 (2)); the 1960s: 18 collections; the 1970s: 71 collection; the 1980s: 148 collections; the 1990s: 319 poetry anthologies<sup>876</sup>.

Some trends within the first period of Moroccan Arabic poetry evolution before the 1930s have already been mentioned. Al-Tarisi associates the second period in the history of Moroccan poetry (i.e. from the 1930s to 1940s) with the rise of Salafis movements in Morocco. Salafis exhorted their followers to return to the canons of Islam and avoid of all the “unclean” or “heretical” influence<sup>877</sup>. The ideas of Salafis spread in mosques and public places such as markets or festival squares. Salafis supported the reign of royal family, who continued to lead the state but were forced

<sup>875</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Tatawwur mafhūm...*

<sup>876</sup> M. Kasemi, *op. cit.*

<sup>877</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Tatawwur mafhūm...*



to waive their real power and agree to the military occupation of the country by the French.

Al-Tarisi notices that, despite all positive changes that were implemented by Salafis in the context of national identification of the Moroccans, the poetry of this period continues to play a “utilitarian” role: verses serve as an instrument to achieve the goals of the reformers; it is not created for art’s sake. Thus, the most famous Moroccan poets of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Abdullah al-Kubbaj and Muhammad al-Jazwali, discuss the same social issues as Salafis in their sermons.

Moroccan critics call the 1930s “An-Nahda” (in Arabic ‘Al-Nahḍa’ means ‘Renaissance’) and associate the period with the penetration of new literary trends – especially Egyptian ideas of the “Renaissance school” (Al-Madrassa al-‘Iḥyā’iyya), which included such famous Arab poets as Ahmad Shawki, Hafiz Ibrahim, and Mahmoud Sami al-Barudi – from the Mashriq into Morocco. Works of Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rifa‘i, Abbas Akkad, and Taha Hussein played an important role in the process of shaping the Moroccan poetry. Moroccan authors of the 1930s saturated their poems with intertextual references to the works of Egyptian, Syrian, and Lebanese poets. For example, the critic Muhammad ibn al-Abbas Kubbaj says that the Moroccan poet Muhammad al-Mokhtar Soussi (1900–1963) addresses (in one of his Qasidas) the coryphaeus of the modern Arabic literature, the Egyptian writer, poet, and translator Hafiz Ibrahim. The intertextual connections can be found both in the meanings conveyed and in the form of the verse.

Despite the signing of the Fes agreements by Abdel Hafiz in 1912, the political situation in the Kingdom did not improve. Some regions, especially the southern and eastern Morocco, inhabited by mountain tribes, continued to resist European invaders up to 1934. The residents of large cities in the central and northern Morocco such as Fes, Casablanca, Rabat, Tangier (especially intellectuals who were educated in European or Muslim schools abroad) understood that any armed resistance against foreigners had no point unless it was strengthened by cultural activities. Poets began to understand their social role; poetry ceased to be pure literature, but it became an instrument for consolidation of the national spirit and

national identity. Similar processes can be observed in Algerian literature from the 1920s to the 1940s<sup>878</sup>.

In this respect, the “generation of the thirties” continued the work of their predecessors – Salafis. However, there was a significant difference in approach between the poetic movement of “An-Nahda” and the Muslim reformers. While Salafis saw the way to consolidate the nation in the return to “pure Islam” and separation from foreign influence, the poets of the “Renaissance school” wanted to be guided by the experience of their “foreign colleagues” – Egyptian, Syrian, and Lebanese writers. At that time, in the 1930s in the nearby Maghrebi countries (Tunisia and Algeria), there were writers of considerable social position who supported the Moroccans in their educational initiatives. Because of the common history and culture of these countries, many of Maghrebi authors do not consider themselves purely Moroccan, Algerian, or Tunisian as long as they take part in literature of each of the countries. Let us recall, for example, Muhammad al-Id al Khalifa (1904–1979), the Algerian poet and social activist, who wrote not only about the struggle for Algerian independence but was also concerned about the fate of kindred peoples. Similarly, the author of the Algerian anthem, Moufdi Zakaria, the winner of literary awards in two states, Algeria and Tunisia, actively contributed to literature and socio-political life of both countries<sup>879</sup>.

In his Qasida, Al-Mokhtar Soussi, a poet and a public figure, addresses his nation, urging Moroccans not to wait until someone helps them out to love and appreciate their culture; he advises them to take their own steps toward education instead<sup>880</sup>.

In several short verses of his Qasida *Ḥatta maṭỵ ša‘bi ya‘biduhu l-ḡahalu* [How Long Will My People Obey the Ignorance], Soussi managed to aptly reflect on the situation of Moroccan society in the 1930s. The poet addresses people, underlining that the King is the protector of traditions, but he cannot force anyone to overcome personal ignorance. Unlike Algerian authors of the same period, the poet does not blame colonialists

<sup>878</sup> С. Рибалкін, *Поетія Муфді Закарії в боротьбі за самоідентифікацію алжирського народу*, “Східний світ” 2013, № 1.

<sup>879</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>880</sup> A. al-Kubbaj, *op. cit.*

for the problems of his nation. Muhammad al-Mokhtar, in turn, emphasizes the fact that spiritual and cultural traditions of Morocco date back to ancient times; to illustrate this, he mentions in his text the Almoravid dynasty (Arabic – Al-Murabiṭīn), a Muslim spiritual brotherhood founded by Abdullah ibn Yasin al-Huzuli (1058–?) in the 11<sup>th</sup> century on the lands of the Sahara and Senegal. The brotherhood was well-known by its educational activities among the Berber tribes of the Sahara and soon became a significant force in the region, bringing together separated clans of the desert. At the same time, Almoravid dynasty established a kingdom on the lands of Algeria, Morocco and Spanish properties. The state lasted until mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, when a change came – the Berber dynasty of Almohad<sup>881</sup>.

Besides Muhammad Soussi, the works of such authors as Abbas ibn Ibrahim al-Marrakeshi (1905–1959), Ibn Abdarraḥman Zeydan (1873–1946), Muhammad al-Kanuni (1893–1938), Abdullah Gennoun (1908–1989) and others, testify to the exceptional character of the 1930s in Moroccan Arabic literature. Thanks to the achievements of these poets, the cultural climate in Moroccan society changed: Arabic language schools appeared and the number of literary journals and reviews was on the rise<sup>882</sup>.

According to Al-Tarisi, at the end of the 1930s, there emerged in Morocco a distinct school of literary criticism, clearly divided into two factions: the “conservatives” and the “reformers”. The conservatives, following Salafis, called for the purification of literature of all non-Arabic elements and urged writers to bring the form of Qasida closer to its canonical origins; the reformers were oriented towards the Egyptian Renaissance School<sup>883</sup>. Although both factions emphasized the necessity to preserve Qasida in its traditional form (i.e. they promoted adherence to a single rhyme, precise definition of genres, the structure of the poem etc.), the Egyptian Revival School endowed Qasida with new values. The school, in the works of Ahmad Shawki, Hafiz Ibrahim, and Mahmud Sami al-

<sup>881</sup> G. Stewart, *Is the Caliph a Pope?*, “The Muslim World” 1931, № 21.

<sup>882</sup> M. Khalil, *op. cit.*; A. al-Tarisi, *Ṭatawwur maḥūm...*

<sup>883</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Ṭatawwur maḥūm...*, p. 9.

Barudi, created such genres as “patriotic Qasida”, “social Qasida”, “didactic Qasida” (all within the acceptable forms of classical Arabic poem), and developed the theater.

However, despite the differences in views on the source of the Qasida revival, both factions represented a new way of literary criticism that analyzed the impact of literature on social consciousness and national identification, and introduced the notions of “creativity”, “authorial outlook”, and “collective consciousness”<sup>884</sup>.

Moroccan critics identify a number of phenomena within “An-Nahda” of the 1930s: writers’ growing awareness of the value of the poetic word in the process of searching for national identity and unity; the development of typography; the emergence of literary criticism; the impact and significance of the Arab Mashriq writers; and other social and political changes. Therefore, by the late 1930s and early 1940s, literature of Morocco had qualitatively and quantitatively (the total number of publications) achieved the productivity of the neighboring Maghreb countries (Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya).

As far as the evolution of Moroccan Arabic poetry is concerned, the 1940s were marked by the deepening of the cooperation between Moroccan authors and their colleagues from the Mashriq. The poets of this generation discovered the legacy of the Syrian-Lebanese poetic school and the schools of Apollo and Divan<sup>885</sup>. Moroccan literary journals published excerpts from Syrian, Egyptian, and Lebanese classics. The links with the literature of other Arab countries enriched Moroccan poetry with new themes, images, poetic techniques, etc. At the time, lots of talented authors appeared on the literary scene: Abdelkarim ibn Thabit (1917–1961), Abdelmajid Benjelloun (1919–1981), Muhammad Al-Sirghini (b. 1930), and others.

Thematically, the poetry of the 1940s began to gravitate towards Arabic romanticism; social and individual rhetoric went hand in hand with each other, and new genres such as pastoral lyrics developed. In general, the poets of the forties were more interested in the inner world of man; in

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<sup>884</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>885</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

his mental faculties and spiritual desires. Al-Tarisi is quite expressive while writing about the poetical art of this period, which, according to him, was full of sensuality and feelings:

In this poetry joy mixed with sorrow, smile with tears, the morning with the night, sunrise with sunset, tenderness with suffering, and hope with despair. It brings out all the meaning and depth of new words.<sup>886</sup>

Moroccan literary critics of the 1940s and 1950s grouped the poets into two “camps”: those who wrote about the personal, spiritual world of man as an individual, and those who thought that literature was meant only for solving specific social problems. According to Al-Tarisi, the first category of authors relates to Moroccan Romantic poetry, and the second – to Moroccan Realistic poetry<sup>887</sup>. Similar processes occurred also in the literatures of neighboring Arab countries. For example, in Egypt in 1954, Taha Hussein, a famous writer, literary critic and philosopher, initiated a discussion over the issue of engagement (Iltizam). This debate spread far beyond the frontiers of Egypt; Taha Hussein asserted that the principle of engagement is unacceptable for literature because it is alien to the nature of art itself<sup>888</sup>. Engagement was also an urgent problem in Algeria, but Algerians looked at it from a different angle: the national liberation struggle against the French government was becoming more intense, and the topic of revolution came to the foreground<sup>889</sup>.

The stance of Moroccan romanticism was clearly expressed by the poet and literary critic of the forties, Abdelkarim ibn Thabit, in his book *Ḥadīṭ miṣbah*:

Poetry is an expression of oneself, and the poet in his texts needs to discover white spaces of the soul and should not dwell on routine; however, he needs to do this in accordance with the interests of the society in which he live.<sup>890</sup>

<sup>886</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>887</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13-14.

<sup>888</sup> В. Кирпиченко, В. Сафронов, *История египетской литературы XIX–XX веков в 2 томах*, Т. 2.: *Литература второй половины XX в.*, Москва 2003, с. 55.

<sup>889</sup> С. Рыбалкин, *op. cit.*, с. 72-73.

<sup>890</sup> A. ben Ṭabit, *Ḥadīṭ miṣbah*, Tūnis 1957.

Some poets and philosophers of this period were skeptical about long-term perspectives of Moroccan Arabic literature. Those critics, among them Abdessalam al-Allawi (d. 1994), were rather radical in their admiration of Western literature and complained that their work would never be comparable to masterpieces of the European canon<sup>891</sup>.

However, even such pessimistic individuals do not reduce the importance of the changes that have taken place in Moroccan poetry of the 40s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, such skepticism indicates that the literary process went beyond the region and the critics obtained an opportunity to look at the work of Moroccan authors wider, comparing it with the global literary trends. This enabled the Moroccan writers to deepen into the problems of their works, so if “Renaissance” called the 30s of the twentieth century in the Kingdom’s literature, the 40s perpetuate this success and promote entry of Moroccan poetry in the global context.

The next stage of the Moroccan poetry, which began in the 60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, brought radical changes into the essence of Moroccan verse. First, it is a significant increase in the number of literary periodics and reviews, same as an augmentation of number of the *divans* – poetical collections of individual authors. This is indicated in particular in the statistics of Muhammad Kasemi, according to which the number of poetry collections for the 40s – 50s years equaled six, for the 60s – 18, and in the 70s, this number reached 71<sup>892</sup>.

Second, the poetry became fashionable among young people, not only the prerogative of university professors and supporters of antiquity. Young authors of the 60s – 70s bring some fresh breath in the sound of *Qasida*. They are not afraid of experimenting with new forms and meanings, trying to move out of the frames of traditional Arabic strophic poem.

And finally, the third and the most important factor: during this period, since the 60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some prominent figures appears on the scene of the Arabic literature, mostly Iraqi and Egyptian writers who own poetic and critical achievements reassessing the foundations of Arabic verse. Those names are Nazik al-Malaika (1923–2007, Iraq), Badr

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<sup>891</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Ṭatawwur mafhūm...*

<sup>892</sup> M. Kasemi, *op. cit.*

Shakir al-Sayyab (1926–1964, Iraq), Abdel Wahhab al-Bayati (1926–1999, Iraq), Salah Abd al-Sabur (1931–1981, Egypt), Ahmed Hijazi (b. 1935, Egypt) and others. Due to the active literary relations between the Maghreb and Mashriq poets, Moroccan authors become able to familiarize themselves with the latest trends in the literature of the region and to adopt the topics and techniques that would meet the realities of their cultural environment.

In addition to the factors mentioned by Al-Tarisi and the other Moroccan critics, we should also mention the political factors, which made influence on the process of Moroccan Arabic poetry evolution. In the March of 1956, the Kingdom gained independence from France, in April of the same year – from Spain. This led to changes in the national consciousness of the people, and, subsequently, to a review of literary values<sup>893</sup>.

Since the 1960s, Moroccan Qasida changed, both in content and form. At the time, the word ‘Qasida’ ceased to mean only the traditional Moroccan Arabic literary form and began to refer to any poetic work. For example, there appeared new terms like “qasidat an-nathr” and “qasida nathriyya”, meaning “poetry in prose” and “Qasida prose”. In the late 1960s, a new trend in the literature of Morocco established itself – “al-shi‘r al-horr”, or free verse<sup>894</sup>.

Freed from the “shackles of Qasida”, Moroccan poets of the 1960s filled their texts with new ideas, in particular with reflections on the changes that had taken place in the country since gaining independence. Both supporters of Moroccan romanticism and realism did not ignore changes occurring in society, and included their reflections in their poetical texts. At the time, poems were full of melancholy as many poets were unsatisfied with changes taking place in their country<sup>895</sup>. Authors tried to convey their poetical experience using untypical comparisons, colors, puns, and oxymora. Poets, especially of younger generation, no longer restrained from different modes of poetry, explored the world of free verse.

<sup>893</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Tatawwur mafhūm...*

<sup>894</sup> В. Кирпиченко, В. Сафронов, *op. cit.*, с. 56.

<sup>895</sup> A. al-Tarisi, *Tatawwur mafhūm...*

Ahmad al-Mijaty (b. 1936), the winner of two literary awards, was one of the leading “pessimist authors”. But he was not alone in such a perception of reality. Poets of the 1960s felt and understood well the nature of significant social processes and transformations in history, such as a revolution, a change of the government or gaining independence. They realized that any big transformation would always cause different, often negative reactions in society. In fact, some people were openly against “Arabization” of the Kingdom and the distancing of the country from European ideals. For another category of authors, hopes and dreams did not come true because of the changes in the political situation. Thus, despite the recognition of the sovereignty from Spain, some areas of Morocco, including the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, still remained under the Spanish jurisdiction.

In 1985 Al-Mijaty received a literary award from the Ibn Zeydun Institute of Arab-Spanish culture (Madrid, Spain) for his divan *Al-Farus-iyya*, which includes the poem entitled *Sabta* [Ceuta]. In this poem author reflects on the general atmosphere of hostility and frustration that gripped Moroccan intellectuals immediately after the Declaration of Independence. The image of the city in the poem is not realistic. The author does not blame Spaniards for the Kingdom’s problems: Ceuta has been an important site since ancient times, and before the arrival of the Arabs, due to its strategic location, served as the “gate” between the northern coast of the African continent and the Iberian Peninsula<sup>896</sup>. Ceuta in Al-Mijaty’s poem is an allegorical setting; the poet emphasizes the fact that some policy changes were not enough to enable a social consensus. Reaching a consensus and uniting the nation took time and effort of those who had to forget their mutual claims and unrealistic dreams that were not able to be solved by purely political means. In this sense, the poem of Al-Mijaty echoes the verses of Muhammad al-Mokhtar Soussi, the poet of the 1930s.

Al-Tarisi and other critics, such as Muhyuddin Subhi and Mohamed Najib al-‘Oufi point to another important factor that shaped the range

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<sup>896</sup> D. G. Flórez, *Ceuta y Melilla, cuestión de estado*, Ceuta–Melilla 1999.



of topics of modern Moroccan Arabic poetry. After gaining its independence from France and Spain in 1956, the cultural climate in the Kingdom animated not only the skeptics such as Al-Mijaty, who mourned the lost European past, but also added new values to literature, e.g. the concept of “Ummah”. Moroccan authors, whose aesthetic tastes and poetic technique formed in relation to the Mashriq poets’ heritage, now began to feel strong connections with their neighbor nations, such as Algeria and Tunisia. The ideas of pan-Arabism became popular among the new generation of Moroccan poets<sup>897</sup>.

Nevertheless, if in the early 1960s these ideas inspired poets and added optimistic notes to their verses; the events of 1967 (Arab defeat in the Six Day War with Israel) painfully hurt the national pride and feelings of Moroccan authors. Their texts became saturated with melancholy, excessive pessimism and often brought up the themes of death, destruction and depression.

One of the notable poets of this period was Al-Sirghini, who tended to perceive a certain fluidity in human existence, introduced in his poetry a number of allusions and reminiscences on the Arab-Muslim religious and cultural heritage, and referred to stories of canonical texts (the Old Testament story of the Golden Calf) – all these expressed in free verse rather than in the forms of classical Qasida.

If at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Moroccan poetry existed mainly thanks to conservative Muslim thinkers, and from the 1930s to the 1950s mainly because of the contacts with the authors of Mashriq; in the late 1960s Moroccan poetry rose up to a new level. In its ideological and thematic content and poetical techniques, Moroccan Arabic literature was no longer lagging behind the poetical art in the neighboring countries. Moroccan poets felt their connection with other Arabic nations, sharing the anxiety and feelings of fraternal peoples. This can be noticed in the very titles of the poems in Divans by Moroccan poets at the time. For example, Ahmad al-Mijaty included in his divan such poems as *Al-Farusiyya*, *Casablanca*, *Ceuta*, *Scripture on the Banks of Tangier* and other poets – verses entitled, for example,

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<sup>897</sup> M. N. al-‘Oufi, *op. cit.*

*Jerusalem* and *Outside Damascus*. Many poets expressed their concern about Palestinian issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Among the most prominent Moroccan poets of the 1960s and the 1970s there are Ahmad al-Mijaty (1936–1995), Muhammad Al-Sirghini (b. 1930), Muhammad Al-Mokhtar al-Kanuni (1941–1991), Abdelkarim al-Tabbal (b. 1931), Ahmad al-Jawmar (1939–1995) and others.

Further development of the Moroccan Arabic poetry since the late 1970s has been associated with general situation in the Arab region. Arabic poets continue to write about topics relating to the entire Middle East (the Palestinian problem, the Gulf Crisis, the question of emigration in search for a better life in Europe, the USA or Arabian monarchies, etc.), while Moroccan poets, writing in French, have distanced themselves from the Arab-Muslim world, and either moved to the West or continue to live in Morocco and associate themselves with the Francophone zone. Another factor that brought to the Moroccan poetry and criticism some new and often painful ideas related to 1975 and the problem of Western Sahara, which became a disputed territory between Morocco and Mauritania after decolonization.

While speaking of poets who began their literary careers in the 1970s still continue their creative work, we should mention Mohammed Bennis (b. 1948 in Fes), whose work in the field of poetry has been recognized by many Arab and foreign critics. For the French translation of his divan *Le Don du vide* [The Gift of the Emptiness] in 1993, Bennis received the award of “Best Moroccan Book”. In 2003 the French government awarded the poet the title “Chevalier des arts et des lettres” [The Knight of Arts and Literature]. Critical recognition of the poet was later confirmed by Italian literary prizes in 2007 and 2011. In 2010 Bennis received a literary award from the government of Tunisia for his contribution to the culture of the Maghreb.

Bennis’s first collection of poetry was published in 1969 under the title *Ma qabla l-kalamu* [What Precedes Words]. Today Bennis is the author of over thirty books of poetry, critical studies and translations from European languages into Arabic. Some of his works have been translated into Turkish, French, English, German, Spanish, Italian, Balkan and some

Scandinavian languages. In 2013 Bennis published two new books *Chemin d'encre* [The Way of the Ink] and *Kitab al-nisyan* [The Book of Oblivion], in 2015 – a collection of poems *This Blue*.

Poems from the divans of Bennis are diverse both in terms of form and content. In his poetry there can be found love lyrics, socio-political rhetoric, poetical allusions to historical events, patriotic Qasidas, translations of foreign authors, etc. In an excerpt from the poem *I am not I* translated into French and Arabic the author calls himself *Zahirite*, a supporter of Zahiri Islamic School (Al-Maḡhab al-Zahiri), which became widespread in the Muslim world from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and gained high popularity in Andalusia. In the context of Muhammad Bennis's poem, as it seems, the mention of Zahiri Islamic School is allegorical, as long as this religious and philosophical current had already lost its popularity in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. While introducing the memory of Zahiri School, the Andalusian poet emphasizes its belonging both to the European and Arab culture. This statement was strengthened by the phrase "Zahirite of Cordoba". At the time, Cordoba was the capital of the Caliphate of Cordoba, the Iberian Peninsula state that existed from 929 to 1031, and contributed to the intensification of contacts between the Arab-Muslim world and European civilization.

The transition from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century did not bring any radical changes to Moroccan poetry. In the absence of major social and political upheavals, which, for example, occurred in Algeria in the 1990s as a consequence of terrorism, Moroccan writers walked "out" to search deep into human consciousness, and social rhetoric decreased. As for new trends, there could be observed an increase in the popularity of dialect poetry, represented by, for example, Abdullah ibn Said, Ahmed Abdelhadi and Ahmed Lemsih. After 2000, Moroccan Arabic literature witnessed a wave of "feminist poetry" which introduced such topic as discussion on the rights and freedoms of Moroccan women. The pioneers of this type of verse were Zuhra al-Mansouri and Wafa al-Amrani.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century lots of bright stars of Moroccan Arabic poetry continue to shine across literary heaven, among them Muhammad al-Sirghini, Abdellatif La'abi, Mustafa Nissaburi, Idris ibn al-

Hasan al-Alami (1925–2007), Abdelmalik Belgiti (1906–2010) and others. Abdellatif La‘abi and Mustafa Nissaburi are known mostly as literary critics; they are considered pioneers of modern literary criticism in Morocco. In 1966, they founded the *Souffles* literary review, which has become a reference point for many young poets and writers.

### Conclusion

The development of modern Moroccan Arabic poetry can be divided into five periods: from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the 1930s of and the period of “An-Nahda” in Morocco; from the 1940s to 1960s of 20<sup>th</sup> and the intensification of contacts with Mashriq poets; the 1960s (the early post-colonial period); and, finally, the modern period that continues from the 1980s till now.

After Morocco gained its independence in 1956, Moroccan poets divided into two camps: those who were unhappy with the changes and missed European past, and those who welcomed new developments, developing a sense of belonging to the Ummah – the Arab-Muslim community. The defeat of Arabs in the Six Day War with Israel in 1967 caused a new wave of pessimism in Moroccan poetry, suggesting new themes and images. Analogical themes and poetic images existed in the poetry of Mashriq authors.

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century did not bring any radical changes to Moroccan poetry: at this time, the authors continued to write on a range of topics proposed by previous generations of Maghrebi poets. Significant changes in the art of versification starts a decade later – from 2010, when the spread of scientific and technical progress opens up new ways of creative expression for men of letters. Thanks to the internet connection and globalization, the process of cultural exchange is developing at high speed; many poets begin their careers, while posting their art on YouTube and social networks. But this phenomenon should be analyzed elsewhere.

### **WSPÓŁCZESNA ARABSKOJĘZYCZNA POEZJA MAROKAŃSKA: NARODZINY I ROZWÓJ**

**Streszczenie:** Artykuł opisuje historię formowania się arabskojęzycznej poezji marokańskiej od końca XIX w. do czasów obecnych. Na podstawie analizy fragmentów twórczości najbardziej charakterystycznych autorów tego okresu przekonujemy się, że w procesie rozwoju współczesnej marokańskiej poezji, pisanej w języku arabskim, ważną rolę odegrali poeci Mashriq, przede wszystkim przedstawiciele szkoły egipskiego odrodzenia, szkoły Diwana i Apolla, a także wydarzenia o charakterze społeczno-politycznym, które uwarunkowały określony wybór tematów i motywów poszczególnych utworów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Algieria, Maghreb, Mashriq, Maroko, kasyda.

### **СОВРЕМЕННАЯ МАРОККАНСКАЯ АРАБОЯЗЫЧНАЯ ПОЭЗИЯ: СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ И ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ**

**Аннотация:** В статье описывается история становления марокканской арабоязычной поэзии с конца XIX в. до наших дней. На основании анализа отрывков из творчества наиболее знаковых авторов этого периода обосновывается утверждение, что в процессе развития современной марокканской поэзии на арабском языке важную роль сыграли поэты Машрика, прежде всего представители египетской школы Возрождения, школ Дивана и Аполлон; а также события социально-политического характера, что обусловило выбор авторами тем и сюжетов для своих стихов.

**Ключевые слова:** Алжир, Магриб, Марокко, Машрик, касыда.