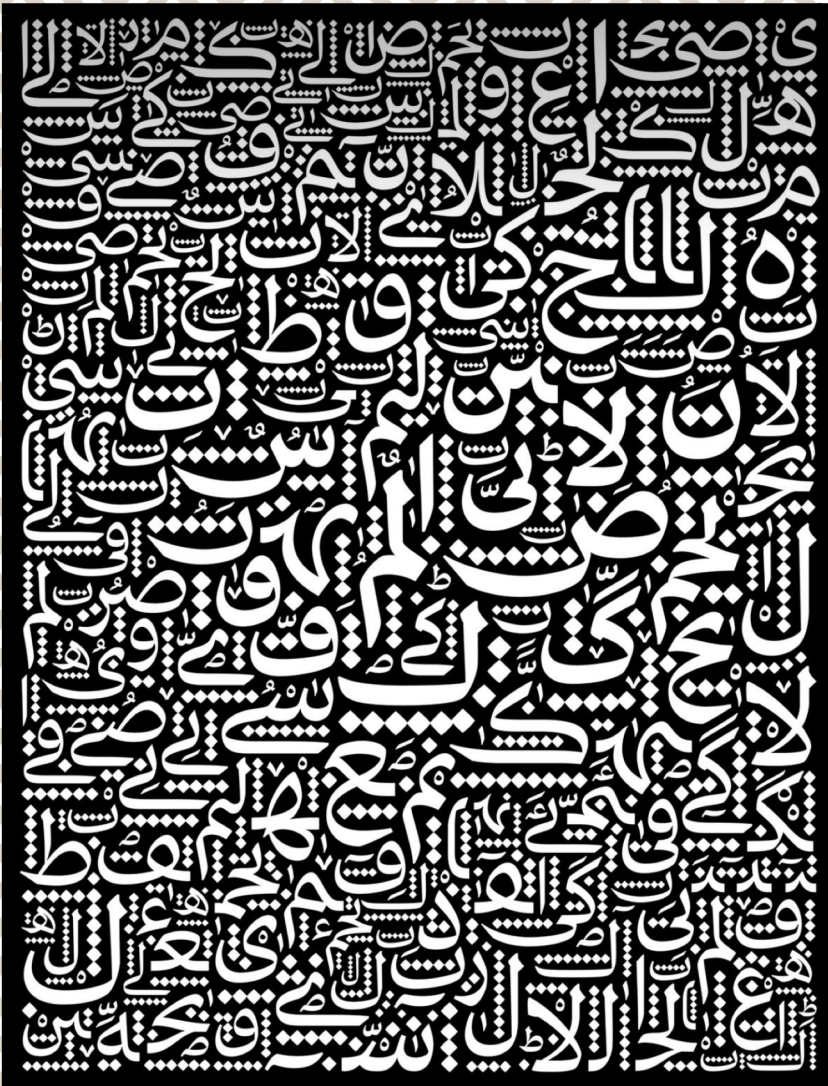


Dželila Babović



# ARABIC LITERATURE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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ARABIC LITERATURE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL RECEPTION

Dželila Babović  
Arabic Literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Translation and Critical Reception

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UNIVERZITET U SARAJEVU – ORIJENTALNI INSTITUT

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## INTRODUCTION

As the title of this book, *Arabic Literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Translation and Critical Reception*, suggests, it was written as an introduction to translations of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to shed light on and evaluate the complex layering of factors and forms that have influenced the reception of Arabic literary works by and their popularity with the reading public and critics there, under conditions of social and historical change. The preparatory research for this study focused on answering questions related to the selection, production, and distribution of translations of Arabic literature, how works in Arabic came to the attention of Bosnian and Herzegovinian publishers and translators, what political, economic, and cultural factors may have influenced the circulation of texts, the role of mediation [translators, publishing houses, libraries, festivals, academia] in literary communication, the publishing of multiple translations of the same works, which genres have dominated the body of translated works, to what extent, if at all, the translations stress cultural diversity and gender parity, the ratio of classic to contemporary texts within the corpus of translated works, whether literary awards and recognition have influenced the choice of titles for translation, and whether Arabic literature has retained the symbolic capital and canonical status it enjoyed in Bosnia and Herzegovina while within the framework of Islamic civilization.

Preparing a comprehensive review and fruitful research into the reception of and approach to Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines comparative literature, cultural history, poetics, and sociology. This study takes as its theoretical and methodological starting point the reception aesthetics of Hans Robert Jauss, who viewed the literary work in terms of its intended readership and its realization in the process of being read, a process at whose core is thus the active dialogical relationship of work and reader. With works from the past, this is equally a dialogue between epochs. Various social institutions have served as material and ideological intermediaries between work and



reader, of course, from publishers and bookshops to literary critics and the teaching of literature. In this book we touch on various aspects of the reception of Arabic literature, taking into account not just the literary text but the author and the cultural and historical context in which literary texts appear and operate – from the work’s impact on readers and literary critics to the importance of such extratextual elements as the author’s biography, the cultural and historical situation in which it was written, the public’s expectations, and so forth.

The sources used for this study include published translations of Arabic folk, oral, and written literature and of modern Arabic literary novels, short stories, plays, and poetry, scholarly and critical works, and essays and reviews published in established Bosnian and Herzegovinian journals with a consistent history of publication and that regularly cover literary and critical topics. These translations of literary works, essays, and reviews – whether surveys or critiques – and other texts indicative of the reception and interpretation of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina are presented chronologically. This allows us to follow the processes of concretization and interpretation in translation, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, over the time periods and changing cultural and historical circumstances in question.

Given the research tasks, academic goals, and methodology chosen, we will not be including all Bosnian and Herzegovinian scholars, academics, translators, and critics who have engaged with Arabic literature in some way over the period covered by the study. Rather, we have limited our investigation to authors who have contributed materially to the historical and critical evaluation of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina and offered a synthesis of the works they have done this in. In line with this, where possible, we have included translations and texts by Bosnian and Herzegovinian translators and orientalists published outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including in Serbian or Croatian. After all, it was long a quite usual and even common practice for Bosnian and Herzegovinian translators to work with publishing houses in the other republics of the former Yugoslavia, especially Serbia and Croatia, given the integrated nature of publishing in the former Yugoslavia.

To ensure as accurate a picture as possible of the reception of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we also look at the role of Arabic literature in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian educational system – beginning with schooling during the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian periods, moving through modern primary and secondary education and the introduction of learning through the active reading of set texts and use of student assignments, and ending with tertiary education and a review of the syllabi, curricula, and required reading for the various courses and study programs offered at universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This study builds significantly on my previously book, *Recepcija arapske književnosti u Bosni i Hercegovini u periodu 1950-2005*. [*The Reception of Arabic Literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1950 to 2005*], which offers both an overview and a selected bibliography of works translated from Arabic into Bosnian during the period indicated in the title. It was the fruits of research conducted in preparing that earlier book that prompted the writing of this study to offer a more detailed and complete assessment of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina from a more literary critical and theoretical perspective. In that regard, these two books are closely connected and communicate intensively with each other.



## A CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECEPTION OF ARABIC LITERATURE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina's historical and cultural links and relations with Arab culture and traditions were established and subsequently developed thanks to the arrival of the Ottoman Empire and Oriental and Islamic traditions in the region during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. That section of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina that accepted Islam in order to integrate into and actively participate in the mainstream of cultural and historical life within the Empire began to pursue its education by reading and writing works in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. This gave rise to a Bosniak literature in these oriental languages that today represents an important segment of the cultural heritage not just of Bosnia but of the wider Oriental and Islamic world. Ottoman rule lasted in these parts from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that period is considered one of intense scholarly and creative literary production in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. What is more, it is a period in Bosnia and Herzegovina's literary history that was not passively inherited so much as achieved through hard work and then actively formed and reshaped by successive generations of writers.

As Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged from the period of Ottoman decadence and decline, it found itself in a very different position, under new socio-political circumstances, with the establishment of Austro-Hungarian government and legal writ. The country's previously very strong cultural and literary ties with the Islamic and Arabic world and their traditions were significantly undermined and weakened. Interest in the broader reception of literary work in Arabic, Turkish, or Persian fell off sharply, regardless of whether that work was by Bosniak authors or authors from cultural environments in which one of those languages was the vernacular, environments which had, up until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, been constituent parts of the Ottoman Empire and so represented a single cultural space. The prevailing atmosphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina was

such that neither literacy nor literary work in Arabic, Turkish, or Persian were particularly valued, being restricted largely to religious writings.

Nonetheless, one can hardly ignore the engagement at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of Ibrahim and Safvet-beg Bašagić, Teufik and Tajib Okić, Mehmed Handžić, Fehim Spaho, and other scholars and orientalists who published biographical and bibliographical notes on Bosniak authors who had written in the Oriental languages or made translations of verse and prose from Arabic literature or written their own poetry and short prose pieces in Arabic, Turkish, or Persian in the Bosnian journals *Salname*, *Vatan*, *Nada*, *Prosvjeta*, *Behar* and *Gajret*. In this way, in addition to contributing to the preservation of Bosniak cultural identity, these authors were significantly contributing to building and maintaining cultural links with the Arabic world.<sup>1</sup> These scholars and academics were thus pioneers in the field of translating Arabic, Turkish, and Persian literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Safvet-beg Bašagić, Mehmed-beg Kapetanović Ljubušak, Tajib Okić, Musa Ćazim Ćatić, Muhamed Seid Serdarević, Osman Nuri Hadžić, Fehim Spaho, Fehim Bajraktarević, and others published short excerpts from Arabic, mainly from pre-Islamic and classical Arabic poetry, in *Bošnjak*, *Nada*, *Salname*, *Behar*, *Gajret*, and *Biser*.<sup>2</sup> For all its indisputable significance, one should note that the publication of these translations from the Arabic in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was largely a matter of the enthusiasm and interests of individuals concerned to contribute to the preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's connections with the Islamic world and even more to the establishment, valorization, and promotion of a specific Bosniak national identity, through their engagement as writers and translators.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the atmosphere in social and cultural life in Bosnia and Herzegovina was such that literary currents and trends, largely predicated on the sociopolitical environment and needs,

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<sup>1</sup>For more on the development of literary history and criticism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see: Esad Duraković, *Prolegomena za historiju književnosti orijentalno-islamskoga kruga*, Connectum, Sarajevo, 2005, 38-120.

<sup>2</sup>See: Džemaludin Latić, "Arapaska književnost u preporodnim časopisima", *Anali GHB*, no. XIX-XX, Sarajevo, 2001, 47-53.

focused primarily on the creation and promotion of a domestic national literature and the translation of Russian, French, and English literature. In 1956, in *Pregled*, a literary journal, Enver Redžić pointed out the disorganized situation in translation and related activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the lack of any developed approach to publishing works by foreign authors, and the prevalence of translations without critical forwards or studies. For example, even under conditions where 70% of all books published were by foreign authors and just 30% by domestic ones, the literary heritage of India, China, Japan, Egypt, and a slew of other countries remained almost entirely outside the purview of Bosnian and Herzegovinian publishing houses.<sup>3</sup>

The Oriental Institute in Sarajevo and the Chair of Oriental Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo were both founded in 1950 and would prove of decisive importance for work on Arabic, Turkish, and Persian literature, cultures, and traditions and the development of Oriental Studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina more generally. Thanks to the work of these two institutions, the number of people who knew Oriental languages increased, as did interest in translating literary works from modern Arabic, Turkish, and Persian and indeed in the study of Bosniak cultural heritage in the Oriental languages, which began to be approached through research by professionals trained within a properly organized system. The approach to Arabic culture, traditions, and literature developed by Bosnian and Herzegovinian researchers and Orientalists in these institutions and outside them was in large part determined and delimited by the historical relations and connections fostered and preserved between Bosnian and Herzegovinian and Arabic culture. As a result, Oriental studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina have followed a very different trajectory to Eurocentric and Orientalizing studies in the West, in both methodological and theoretical terms.<sup>4</sup> This specific “Bosnian and Herzegovinian School of Oriental

<sup>3</sup> Enver Redžić, “Povodom savjetovanja o prevodnoj literaturi”, *Pregled*, no. 6, Sarajevo, 1956, 390.

<sup>4</sup> For more on Oriental Studies as a discipline, its development, trends within it, its philosophy, and major figures in the field, see: Ahmed Smajlović, *Filozofija orijentalistike i njen utjecaj na savremenu arapsku književnost*, translated from Arabic by Mehmed Kico, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2012.

Studies” has received scholarly affirmation and systematic form in the scholarly thought and views of Esad Duraković, who built on the approach of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Orientalist tradition of the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century to establish “a new departure”, which he called “Orientalology”. His concept of orientology entails “a non-Eurocentric academic method of approaching the field of research in question on the basis of immanent analysis and value judgement.” In this way, Duraković distanced himself decisively from the terms “orientalism” and “Oriental studies” alike.<sup>5</sup>

A major factor in this increased interest in and broader appreciation of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was the then Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia’s membership and standing within the Non-aligned Movement. In 1961, Yugoslavia was a founding member of the movement, in which several Arab countries and particularly Egypt also played a very important role. Yugoslavia’s membership led to various forms of cooperation and the establishment of bilateral relations with other country-members, which offered at least one reason for publishers across Yugoslavia evincing an increased interest in publishing translations from modern Arabic literature, especially during the period when the non-aligned movement was being founded and was most active. It was noticeable that more space on the pages of literary magazines was also being given to translations of Arabic prose and poetry than previously. It would be too much to describe this process as keeping pace in any real qualitative or quantitative sense with the voluminous literary production of the Arab world, but it did represent a stepping up of and improvement on previous practice regarding translations of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, it was also true that far more translations were being published in other Yugoslav republics than in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, where publishing was fragmented and lacked clear direction, so that publishers there were somewhat behind their colleagues elsewhere in their selection of Arabic literary works and the reading public still generally had to rely on translations published in Serbia

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<sup>5</sup> Esad Duraković, *Orijentologija: univerzum sakralnoga teksta*, Tugra, Sarajevo, 2007, 8. and: *Orientalology: The Universe of Sacred Text*, translated by Amila Karahasanović, Filozofski fakultet, Sarajevo, 2012, 9.

or Croatia. On the other hand, those tended to be indirect translations, by way of some other European language, so that the works suffered a concomitant loss in literary value. Moreover, the selection of works for translation often depended on the preferences of individuals – those who had themselves searched out a given work and offered it to the publishers. During this period, Orientalists were themselves pointing out that literary works were too frequently being translated indirectly from Arabic via some other language, without real access to the original text. This practice led to an unfortunate situation whereby a culture was being indirectly represented in ways largely determined by the choices of non-experts and their tastes, motives, and ideas, which naturally had a significant impact on the reception of the works themselves and of Arabic literature more generally.<sup>6</sup>

A new developmental phase in the reception of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be discerned beginning in the 1990s. This phase too was significantly shaped by historical and socio-political circumstances and concomitant changes in how the reading public and literary critics approached Arabic literature. It is important to note that this was one of the most significant periods in Bosnia and Herzegovina's history, a fact reflected in its strong impact on various spheres of social and cultural life in the country. It was during this period that Bosnia and Herzegovina gained its independence as a sovereign state, but it was also one of Serb aggression against the country – from 1992 to 1995. Analysis of publishing activity and of the approach and contents of literary magazines and journals reveals an increase in the number of articles and academic studies being published by well-informed expert authors expressing scholarly views on the value and significance of Arabic literature and of translations from Arabic of literary works that were potentially "relatable" to the reading public of Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of their themes and subject matter. It is worth noting how much attention was also being paid at that time to the formation and articulation of academically grounded views on the value and significance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's own

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<sup>6</sup>Sulejman Grozdanić, "Arabistika u Socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji 1945-1975", *Pregled*, no. 4, Sarajevo, 1976, 393-403.



literary heritage in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. Students of heritage and Orientalists were oriented primarily towards the appropriate evaluation or re-evaluation of the country's literary heritage in those languages with a view to defining and reinforcing the national identity of the Bosniak cultural group. Institutions that dealt with heritage and others whose work focused on studying cultural and general history organized important gatherings of scholars and specialists, at which eminent scholars and Orientalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina busied themselves with the re-evaluation of their cultural and literary heritage in the Oriental languages and so with the historical relations and connections between the Bosnian and the Arabic, Turkish, and Persian cultural traditions. The Oriental Institute in Sarajevo organized an academic meeting in 1989 on "The Literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Oriental Languages – Results and Prospects". In their papers from the conference, published in *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* [*Contributions to Oriental Philology*] authors like Muhsin Rizvić, Muhamed and Nenad Filipović, Fehim Nametak, Sulejman Grozdanić, Ismet Kasumović, and others, wrote on the problem of what to call Bosniak literary heritage in the Oriental languages, on comparative studies, and on the relationship of that heritage to European Oriental Studies, and similar topics.<sup>7</sup> The Gazi Husrev-bey library in Sarajevo also organized a conference on "The Age of Bosnian Muslim Literary Cultural Revival" in 1991, whose proceedings were however published only ten years later in *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke* [*The Annals of the Gazi Husrev-bey Library*]. In those texts, the authors discussed literary translations from Arabic, the reception of Arab literature in the magazines or journals of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian cultural and national renaissance, and current themes related to the development of cultural and national identity.<sup>8</sup> Academic papers dedicated to analyzing the characteristics and phenomena of "autochthonous" Arabic cultural and literary traditions discussed how and to what degree Bosnian and Herzegovinian and Arabic cultural and literary traditions have influenced each other. Nonetheless, we are here dealing with a very sensitive and one might even say pivotal period in

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<sup>7</sup> See: *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 39/1989, Sarajevo, 1990, 11-286.

<sup>8</sup> See: *Anali GHB*, no. XIX-XX, Sarajevo, 2001, 9-56.

the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina – a period of the search for and establishment of a national identity – something in turn reflected in the approach taken by researchers into literary heritage and literary translation from the Arabic, so that the research methods and studies were largely focused on affirming and re-valorizing Bosniak identity itself.

These incipient processes of the re-valorization of literary heritage and the associated analytically and academically based approaches to studying the links between the Bosnian and Herzegovinian and the Arabic, Turkish, and Persian literary traditions and the intensification of translation work on works from those traditions were briefly halted by the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the first year of the war, 1992, not a single translation or paper of significance related to Arab literature was published, but interest in the area increased modestly in the years that followed. One should stress that a lack of published translations during the war against Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly at the beginning, did not entail an absence of translation work. On the contrary, according to statements by translators themselves, intensive work was being done at the time on translating some of the most important works of the Arab literary tradition, but they would only be published once conditions allowed, after the end of the armed conflict. This included translations of such works as *The Thousand and One Nights*, the *Mu‘allaqat*, and the *Qur’an*, of which we shall have more to say later.

The final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century marked a turning point and the beginning of a new phase of consolidation in the translation, reception, understanding, and scholarly evaluation of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During this period, there was a sensible increase in the number of translations of literary works from Arabic into Bosnian and a better selection of works being translated. The most significant improvement in this regard came about in 2008, when 55 Arabic literary works were published.<sup>9</sup> In a relatively short period, a

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<sup>9</sup> *Translations from Arabic in Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1990-2010*, by Amina Isanović and Mirnes Duranović, Next Page Foundation series, November, 2010. <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/50883112/translation-activity-from-arabic-to-bosnian-1989-2010> (last visited: 20. 11. 2023).

number of highly regarded and well-received translations into Bosnian was published of Arabic literary classics, as well as of important works of modern Arabic literature. What is more, these were translations which allowed the individual works to be experienced appropriately, disclosing their characteristic structures and allowing their internal consistency to be understood and their specific characteristics and uniqueness to be recognized, along with a whole series of other characteristics that could guide their reception, impact, and evaluation. Alongside this intensive translation work, a body of knowledge and familiarity with Arabic literature of the sort academic discourse produces was being developed, promoted, and furthered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the basis of inevitable historical objectivism and positivism. Important Arabic works and literary genres were thus increasingly being introduced to take their place within the horizon of interests of the reading public and of literary critics, with literary works being approached through the lenses of poetics, literary theory, and literary history.

# ARABIC LITERATURE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: FROM TRANSLATION TO LITERARY CRITICISM

## ARABIC PRE-ISLAMIC LITERATURE

We meet with the first translations of pre-Islamic Arabic literature published in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in *Bošnjak*, *Behar*, and *Gajret*. It was there that Safvet-beg Bašagić, Ibrahim Repovac, and Musa Ćazim Ćatić published their translations of Arabic folk tales set on the Arabian Peninsula during that period and excerpts from the Arab poet ‘Antara Ibn Šaddād’s qasida (*qaṣīda*). A more extensive translation was Alija Kadić’s selection of 62 songs by poets from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods published in 1913 as *Izbor iz arapskog pjesništva [A Selection of Arabic Poetry]*.<sup>10</sup> Fehim Bajraktarević translated parts of the diwan of the renowned Arabic poet Imru’ al-Qays, bringing to it, as Džemaludin Latić has noted, a “fresh” choice of language and a new spontaneous rhyme, which distinguish it from other translations of Arabic poetry with its new and original rhythm and avoidance of the stereotypical inertia.<sup>11</sup> There was then a significant “lull” in the production of translations of pre-Islamic literature that lasted to the 1960s. In 1967 Sulejman Grozdanić published “Pjesnička nadmetanja u starih Arapa” [Poetic competition amongst the ancient Arabs] in *Odjek*, introducing a broader Bosnian and Herzegovinian readership to pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and offering insight into the lives of the pre-Islamic Arabs and so the cultural and historical context in which this poetry was composed.<sup>12</sup> Grozdanić went on to publish several more texts, with translations and

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<sup>10</sup> Alija Kadić, *Izbor iz arapskog pjesništva*, compiled with a glossary and additional interpretations by Alija Kadić, Zemaljska štamparija, Sarajevo, 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Džemaludin Latić, “Arapska književnost u preporodnim časopisima”, *Anali GHB*, no. XIX-XX, Sarajevo, 2001, 47-50.

<sup>12</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Pjesnička nadmetanja u starih Arapa”, *Odjek*, no. 6, Sarajevo, 1967, 10.

analyses of pre-Islamic poetry,<sup>13</sup> presenting the poetics of the form and its formal and thematic features with concision.<sup>14</sup> In 1970, he published *Stara arapska poezija [Old Arabic Poetry]*, which contains a selection of translated poems from the most important pre-Islamic Arabic poets.<sup>15</sup> The collection presented the poets in chronological order, offering readers an introduction into the historical development of the poetry. In considering Grozdanić's translations of Arabic pre-Islamic poetry, one should also note his translations and adaptations in 1977 of two qasida by 'Amr Ibn Kulṭūm and Nābīga al-Ġa'dī, which were included in the first anthology of Arabic poetry published in what was then still Yugoslavia and which included Arabic poets and poetry from the pre-Islamic to the contemporary period.<sup>16</sup>

These translations and Grozdanić's texts on pre-Islamic Arabic poetry did not, however, succeed in engaging a wider readership or even literary critics in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Interest in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry was practically non-existent up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Jusuf Ramić published his *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti [The horizons of Arabic-Islamic literature]* in 1999, in which he tackled the topic of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetry in some detail. The first chapter of the book is dedicated to six of the poets who wrote the most important pre-Islamic qasidas, known as the *Mu'allaqat (Mu'allaqāt)*.<sup>17</sup> Ramić quotes the initial stanzas of the *Mu'allaqat* and discusses themes and motifs that appear frequently in them, like women and wine,<sup>18</sup> the psalms, the gospels,

<sup>13</sup> "Čovjek i žena – fragmenti iz stare arapske poezije", commentary and translation from the Arabic by Sulejman Grozdanić, *Odjek*, no. 3, Sarajevo, 1969, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, "Stara arapska poezija", *Izraz*, no. 8-9, Sarajevo, 1970, 180-196.

<sup>15</sup> *Stara arapska poezija*, selected and translated by Sulejman Grozdanić, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1970.

<sup>16</sup> *Arapska poezija*, selection by Darko Tanasković, translation by Fehim Bajraktarević et al., Rad, Belgrade, 1977.

<sup>17</sup> The collection known as the *Mu'allaqāt* was compiled in the 8<sup>th</sup> century by the famous Arab philologist Ḥammād al-Rāwī and it contains *qasidas* or odes by the following pre-Islamic poets: Imru' al-Qays, Ṭarafa Ibn al-'Abd al-Bakrī, Zuhayr Ibn Abī Sulmā, Labīd Ibn Rabī' al-'Āmirī, 'Amr Ibn Kulṭūm, 'Antara Ibn Šaddād and al-Ḥārīṭ Ibn Ḥilliza.

<sup>18</sup> Neither women nor wine are mentioned in the *Mu'allaqat* of Zuhayr Ibn Abī Sulmā and al-Ḥārīṭ Ibn Ḥilliza, whose poetry is markedly sententious and moralising in character.

the character of David (Davud) as a smith of armor, that of Solomon (Sulejman) and his powers over demons, and that of Noah (Nuh) as an example of devotion to God, amongst others.<sup>19</sup>

The following year, 2000, Esad Duraković published a piece in *Odjek* that included salient information on the *Mu‘allaqat* and presented the underlying principles of the poetics of pre-Islamic Arabic literature, as well as his own translation and a version of Imru‘ al-Qays’ qasida.<sup>20</sup> As an associate fellow of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, Duraković had been working intensively on a research project that involved a complete treatment of the seven *Mu‘allaqat* poems, with both a philological translation and a poetic version in Bosnian, as well as penning an academic study of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. The final fruits of Duraković’s years of research were published in 2004 in his book *Muallaqe – sedam zlatnih arabljanskih oda* [*The Mu‘allaqat – seven golden Arabian odes*]<sup>21</sup> in which the *Mu‘allaqat* were given in typewritten Arabic script, accompanied by a phonetic transcription of the Arabic text, and then both in his philological translation and in his excellent literary version in Bosnian. In a detailed study published alongside his translation of the *Mu‘allaqat*, Duraković paid particular attention to the questions of authenticity and of pre-Islamic oral traditions, the establishment of poetic norms in this literary tradition, and the consequences of this relatively “early” form of standardization for later literary production, and similar questions. It is interesting that Duraković pointed out the *Mu‘allaqat*’s great significance at the supra-national level, so that the postulates of ancient Arabic poetry remained discernible in the rich Bosniak heritage of cultural creativity in the Oriental languages over hundreds of years. Having established this historical vector from Arabic, Turkish, and Persian to Bosniak literature, Duraković suggests that one can discern a large number of shared literary topoi and commonplaces of

<sup>19</sup> Jusuf Ramić, *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 1999, 9-35.

<sup>20</sup> Esad Duraković, “Najstariji autoritet u arapskoj književnosti”, *Odjek*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 2000, 62.

<sup>21</sup> *Muallaqe – sedam zlatnih arabljanskih oda*, translated from the Arabic by Esad Duraković, Sarajevo Publishing, Sarajevo, 2004.

the sort Oriental and Islamic literature is replete with, so that the influence of Arabic literature becomes quite evident.<sup>22</sup>

What sets Duraković's translation apart is how closely he has modelled his artistic translation on the original text of the *Mu'allaqat*, so that its poetic form in Bosnian corresponds functionally to that of the original, with abundant respect for the ideas and aesthetic qualities of the poetry itself. This and his abundant translator's notes and commentary allow readers unfamiliar with Arabic to "feel" the beauty of the rhymes and rhythms of the source text. Taking creative freedom as a translator, Duraković gave each qasida or ode a title, even if there were none in the original, which allowed him to adapt the work even further for Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers, who are not used to works without titles, which can be very useful in foregrounding a text's thematic characteristics. These characteristics of his translation ensured the *Mu'allaqat* a broad and comprehensive reception with various types of reader in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the "common" reader to literary critics.

Though Duraković's translation and interpretation, and his analysis and the parallels that he draws both within and outside the framework of the Arabic literary tradition, could have allowed the *Mu'allaqat* to be situated in a new context within the Bosnian and Herzegovinian environment, producing a more dynamic relationship on the part of Bosnian literary criticism and tradition towards classical Arabic works of literature, unfortunately this did not happen. A number of essentially informative reviews were nonetheless published of the book, including one by Lejla Gazić in *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*. In it she mentions that this was part of an important project realized under the auspices of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo.<sup>23</sup> In Marina Katnić-Bakaršić's review, published in *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta [The Proceedings of the Faculty of Philosophy]*, the author draws attention to the permanent and enduring literary significance of this poetry, not just as aesthetic facts but as expressions of the intertwining of literature and life and as acknowledgement of the Culture of the Other

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<sup>22</sup> Esad Duraković, "Predgovor" in: *Muallaqe – sedam zlatnih arabljanskih oda*, 7-38.

<sup>23</sup> Lejla Gazić, "Esad Duraković, Muallaqe – sedam zlatnih arabljanskih oda", (book review), *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 54/2004, Sarajevo, 2005, 245-247.

and of our encounters with that Culture. In her introductory study to Esad Duraković's book, Katnić-Bakaršić stresses that it offers a good starting point for a whole string of issues in the study of Arabic literature and goes on to say that "the author writes in a distinctive style which elucidates even the most obscure theoretical questions."<sup>24</sup> Turning to the poetic and literary reception of the *Mu'allaqat*, a number of publications, mainly by Arabists, analyzed their themes and motifs in the light of modern literary critical theory. Dženita Karić has presented the motifs of transience and impermanence, which recur constantly in the *Mu'allaqat*, pointing out the contrast to Western European criteria and its dominant divisions into material and spiritual and transient and eternal. Karić treats the motif of death as an experience that involves nothing beyond our human senses and that awakens exclusively this-worldly concerns, such as for the good reputation and a worthy send-off for the poet.<sup>25</sup> Focusing on the qasida of the pre-Islamic poet al-Ḥārīṭ Ibn Ḥilizza, Munir Mujić has examined the scope for employing narratological approaches to analyze the *Mu'allaqat*. Mujić approaches the narrative character of the qasida through the prisms of sequentiality, which is to say the temporal articulation and connection of individual events and "narrative" sequences in a coherent order, and of mediation, i.e. through the selection and presentation of those sequences from a given perspective. Mujić also deals very interestingly with the relationship between the lyric "I" and the voice of the community, the coincidence of voice and focalization, and the relationship between fictionality and factuality in Ibn Ḥilizza's qasida.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, "Nesvakidašnje prevodilačko i znanstveno pregnuće", *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta*, vol. XIII, Sarajevo, 2004, 409.

<sup>25</sup> Dženita Karić, "Motivi prolaznosti i smrti u *Muallaqama*", *Odjek*, no. 1, Sarajevo, 2008, 86-92.

<sup>26</sup> Munir Mujić, "Pričanje pjesme i pjevanje priče: Narativni karakter muallake al-Harisa ibn Hillize", *Bosanski jezik*, no. 15, Tuzla, 2018, 93-112.



## ARABIC LITERATURE OF THE EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD

Following the revelation of Islam, most of the pre-Islamic Arabic poets abandoned the writing of verse because of the explicit condemnation of poets and poetry in the Qur'an, even though, according to credible traditions, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was in favour of didactic poetry, especially if written in the service of Islam and in praise of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and of Muslims. Poets who continued writing verse in accordance with those postulates, after having accepted Islam, are referred to *al-muḥaḍramūn* in the Islamic tradition.

In *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, Jusuf Ramić discusses the biographies of a few of the most important poets from the period immediately after the advent of Islam. He also presents the dominant themes and motifs of their poetry. Ramić points out that these poets drew their artistic inspiration primarily from the Qur'an and the hadith and secondarily from Arabic tradition. From the Qur'an, they adopted the stylistic tool of repetition for emphasis and to reinforce ideas and messages, using oaths for persuasion, emphasis, and the reinforcement of certain statements, and reference to Qur'anic stories of peoples from the past. Arabic qasida of the early Islamic period differ from those of the pre-Islamic in that they have freed themselves from the conventional introductory section (*nasīb*), with its characteristic invocation and description of the remains of their camp and the desert. From the perspective of reception aesthetics, this poetry involves a highly intense ethical aspect and a call to moral anticipation and reflection.<sup>27</sup> Ramić pays particular attention to the poetry of Ḥassān Ibn Tābit (d. 674), who was preeminent amongst the early Muslim poets. Ibn Tābit's most famous work is the so-called *Hamziyya* ode, the first part of which displays all the characteristics of pre-Islamic poetry, while its second part already has the characteristics of Islamic poetry. The poem and its contents allow one to reconstruct not just the history of Islam during

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<sup>27</sup> J. Ramić, *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, 39-62.

in the period from the first to the eighth year of the Hijrah, but also the condition of Muslim society during that period.<sup>28</sup>

The most significant Arabic poetry of the early Islamic period, other than that of Ḥassān Ibn Tābit, was by Ka‘b Ibn Zuhayr (d. 662), especially his famous *Qaṣīda al-burda* [*The Poem of the Mantle*],<sup>29</sup> written in honor of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the Quraysh clan. According to credible hadith, after the Prophet, peace be upon him, had heard Ka‘b’s qasida he stood up, took off his cloak, and draped it over the poet. In Islamic tradition this gesture was understood as a public commendation and acknowledgement of poetry as affirming Islam and its values. As with Ibn Tābit’s qasida, the first part of Ka‘b’s ode includes elements from pre-Islamic poetry in which the author writes about a unfaithful and unavailable girl, Su‘ād, and the inevitable journey across a burning desert, while the second part has the poet directly addressing the Prophet, peace be upon him, and asking for his blessing and forgiveness. There have been many commentaries and glosses of this qasida in the Islamic literary tradition and it has been translated into and published in many languages. One of the best known qasida, often compared to Ka‘b’s, was written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by an Egyptian poet, Muḥammad al-Buṣīrī (1212-1296), who also entitled it *Qaṣīda al-burda*. There are two known translations of this ode into Bosnian. The first is by Halil ibn Ali from Stolac and remains in manuscript only. The second, by Hifzija Suljkić, was published in 1973.<sup>30</sup>

Research and analysis into published translations and overviews of Arabic poetry from the early Islamic period show that the reception of these early Islamic poets, and especially Ḥassān Ibn Tābit and Ka‘b Ibn Zuhayr, was restricted to small academic and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Poems and excerpts from poetry were sometimes published in the journals of the Islamic community of Bosnia and Herzegovina – *Glasnik VIZ*, *Preporod*, *Takvim*, and *Muallim*. Not to diminish the importance of

<sup>28</sup> J. Ramić, *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, 63-102.

<sup>29</sup> This *qasida* is also known in the Islamic tradition under the following titles: *Burda*, *Lāmiyya Ka‘b Ibn Zuhayr*, and *Bānat Su‘ād*

<sup>30</sup> J. Ramić, *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, 104.

the translations published in these journals, it is important to note that their focus was on the religious aspects of the poetry, with a concomitant neglect of their poetic and literary value. Things started to improve in this respect only at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when a number of interesting texts began to be published in which the authors analyzed the works from a poetic and literary historical perspective as well as through the religious lens. In his article “Poetske i društveno-historijske osobenosti pjesme pohvalnice poslaniku Muhammedu, a.s.” [Poetic and socio-historical characteristics of poems of praise of the messenger Muhammad, peace be upon him] published in 2013, Berin Bajrić deployed a comparative approach to show the diachronic development, characteristics, and important role of poetry in Islamic culture, starting with the first praise poems of Ḥassān Ibn Ṭābit and Ka‘b Ibn Zuhayr in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and ending with Muḥammad al-Buṣīri in the 13<sup>th</sup>. Semir Rebronja has also published works in which he has broached the influence of the Qur’an on the poetry of the first Islamic poets through the lens of the poet’s relationships to tribe and community and the links between the Qur’anic text and Arabic poetry through various means and forms of intertextuality.<sup>31</sup> He has paid particular attention to the oeuvre of Ḥassān Ibn Ṭābit in his studies, ultimately publishing a book in 2020 in which he elaborates on that poet’s approach to the personality and life of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in his poetry. In addition to its academic value, the book also represents an important contribution to literary translation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it contains a collection of Ibn Ṭābit’s poetry translated and adapted into Bosnia.<sup>32</sup> These works show that while Arabic poetry from the early Islamic period is still widely considered and evaluated in terms of its religious content, its poetic and literary and aesthetic characteristics are increasingly attracting attention from the perspective of literary criticism.

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<sup>31</sup> Semir Rebronja, “Utjecaj Kur’ana na poeziju ranoislamskog perioda na primjeru poezije Ḥassāna Ibn Ṭābita”, *Zbornik radova Islamskog pedagoškog fakulteta u Bihaću*, Bihać, 2018, 221-234; S. Rebronja, “Poezija Ḥassana bin Ṭābita kao izvor Poslanikovog životopisa”, *Cultura Balkanica*, 1/2017, Novi Pazar, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Semir Rebronja, *Poslanikova ličnost u poeziji Hassana ibn Sabita*, Centar za proučavanje orijentalne civilizacije i kulture, Novi Pazar, 2020.

## CLASSICAL ARABIC LITERATURE

### Folk Literature

#### *The Thousand and One Nights*

The first stories from *The Thousand and One Nights* published in Bosnia and Herzegovina were translated by Fehim Spaho, who published 111 of them in the journal *Behar* between 1901 and 1908. Of the stories published up until 1903, 21 were translated in collaboration with Osman Nuri Hadžić, while another 20 were Spaho's independent work.<sup>33</sup> In 1925, the Islamska dioničarska štamparija [Islamic Printing Company] reprinted and published the stories in an amended and expanded edition in four volumes.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, Spaho's translation both remained relatively unknown to a wider readership and has been overlooked in academic circles. Finding information on it in the available literature has proven difficult, but the publishing house "Vrijeme" breathed 'new life' into by reprinting Spaho's translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* in 2019.<sup>35</sup> They announced their intention of making the prose available to modern generations of readers and so of preserving it for future generations. The collection includes 27 of the nights. Considerable attention was paid to the design of the book, which is embellished with illustrations by the renowned Bosnian and Herzegovinian artist Gabrijel Jurkić. Even though Spaho's translation being in dialect and used a non-standard structure, the text was only minimally adapted for modern audiences so as not to disrupt the spirit of the translation and to preserve it for future generations.<sup>36</sup> In his review of the book in the Sarajevo daily *Oslobođenje* Enes Karić was extremely

<sup>33</sup> See: *Behar: List za pouku i zabavu god. I – XI (1900-1911)*, Mešihat Islamske zajednice BiH - El-Kalem - Gazi Husrev-begova biblioteka, Sarajevo, 1990.

<sup>34</sup> *Hiljadu i jedna noć*, selection and translation by Fehim Spaho, Islamska dioničarska štamparija, Sarajevo, 1925.

<sup>35</sup> *Hiljadu i jedna noć (izbor)*, Vrijeme, Zenica, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> <https://ikvrijeme.ba/recenzije/1001-noc/3582/> (last visited: 10.10.2023).

laudatory, touching on the origins and reception of *The Thousand and One Nights* within the canon of world literature.<sup>37</sup>

The most popular and most widely read translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* in Bosnia and Herzegovina is that of Besim Korkut, whose selected stories from the work have been published in a number of editions and have formed part of the required reading for primary and secondary school children throughout the history of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian school system.<sup>38</sup> Korkut adapted the stories for a young readership. He also avoided a full version of all the verses, leaving out the erotic scenes from the stories. Editions containing translations of stories from *The Thousand and One Nights* were intended mainly for an audience of schoolchildren, so that the translator's interventions are understandable and justified, as such editions cannot be expected to be fully faithful to the source material. Given how *The Thousand and One Nights* was introduced to a wider readership in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it gained a reputation as children's literature. This resulted in a lack of any serious literary critical awareness of the work, with critical analyses carried out by the translators themselves or by Orientalists dealing with the themes of the stories and the characters. Interesting parallels have, nonetheless, been drawn by some scholars between *The Thousand and One Nights* and motifs from the Balkans and Balkan traditions, including the mentions of Zadar and its inhabitants<sup>39</sup> and

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/magazin/kultura/knjizevnost/tajne-prica-hiljadu-i-jedne-noci-492831> (last visited: 10.10.2023).

<sup>38</sup> On translations of *The Thousand and One Nights* see: Bisera Nurudinović: *Bibliografija jugoslovenske orijentalistike 1918-1945*, Sarajevo, 1986; *Bibliografija jugoslovenske orijentalistike 1945-1960*, Sarajevo, 1968; *Bibliografija jugoslovenske orijentalistike 1961-1965*, Sarajevo, 1981; "Naši noviji prevodi iz klasične arapske književnosti", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, VIII-IX/1958-9, Sarajevo, 1960, 253-256; Dželila Babović, "Selektivna bibliografija prijevodne književnosti u BiH 1965-2005" in: *Recepcija arapske književnosti u Bosni i Hercegovini u periodu 1950-2005*, Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, Posebna izdanja XXXV, Sarajevo, 2011, 125-132.

<sup>39</sup> Besim Korkut, "Da li se Zadrani spominju u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, VIII-IX/1958-9, Sarajevo, 1960, 203-206. Fehim Bajraktarević, "Odgovor na napis 'Da li se Zadrani spominju u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*'", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, X-XI/1960-61, Sarajevo, 1962, 273-277.

similarities between motifs from *The Thousand and One Nights* and the folk songs of Vuk Karadžić.<sup>40</sup>

Sulejman Grozdanić cites the journey as a key motif in *The Thousand and One Nights* that “engulfs” the work as a whole in a metaphorical sense, because it is itself a great planetary journey across geographical space, both in terms of its own destiny and of its rich and diverse contents. Grozdanić notes the unrivalled influence of the stories from the nights in all kinds of art all around the world, compared to the influence of other literary works, as the themes of the stories have been used across various forms of artistic expression, from music, the ballet, and the theater to painting, sculpture, and poetry.<sup>41</sup> Grozdanić has also analyzed the influence of *The Thousand and One Nights* on modern Arabic literature, drawing examples from the intellectual drama of the Arabic writer Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm,<sup>42</sup> which Emina Memija has also written about in her analysis of al-Ḥakīm’s drama *Scheherazade*.<sup>43</sup>

Esad Duraković published his complete translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* from Arabic into Bosnian in 1999.<sup>44</sup> This translation came at a turning point for literary processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was a period of intensification of the standardization of Bosnian after the dissolution of the formerly common Serbo-Croatian language and a fateful time for the Bosnian state and the Bosniak people. Public opinion acclaimed the publication of Duraković’s translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* as a “capital achievement for contemporary Bosnian publishing, translation, literature and culture.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Nevena Krstić, “Zajednički motivi u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći* i u Vukovoj zbirci narodnih pripovedaka i pesama”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, XVIII-XIX/1968-69, Sarajevo, 1973, 121-204.

<sup>41</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Neuhvatljivi put bajke”, *Odjek*, no. 21, Sarajevo, 1989, 7.

<sup>42</sup> S. Grozdanić, “Misaone drame Tawfiqa al-Ḥakīma” in: S. Grozdanić, *Na horizontima arapske književnosti*, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 109-142.

<sup>43</sup> Emina Memija, “O *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*”, *Putevi*, no. 3, Banja Luka, 1964, 245-252.

<sup>44</sup> *Hiljadu i jedna noć*, trans. Esad Duraković, vols. I-IV, Ljiljan, Sarajevo, 1999.

<sup>45</sup> “Šta bi Zapad bez Alibabe i Aladina”, an interview with Esad Duraković, by Nerzuk Ćurak, *Nezavisni magazin DANI*, no. 113, Sarajevo, 30. juli/srpanj, 1999.

While it is a full translation, what really sets Duraković's edition apart from earlier translations of *The Thousand and One Nights* is its adaptive translation of the over eight thousand verses that renders them aesthetically relevant and of interest for various kinds of literary analysis. Duraković also published a separate book entitled *1001 noć – ljubavna i erotska lirika [1001 Nights – Erotic and Love Poetry]*, which contains all the verses from *The Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>46</sup> Earlier translators shied away from tackling the rhyme and rhythm of the verses, whether they considered them an unnecessary encumbrance to their prose text or because they did not want to get involved in translating Arabic poetry, which is an incredibly demanding and difficult task, given Arabic poetry's love of technique and perfectionism. In her review of Duraković's translation, Marina Katnić-Bakaršić highlights the excellence of the translation and adaptation of the verses from "Priče o Harunu ar-Rašidu" [The Stories of Harun ar-Rashid] in which the poet changes the rhyming scheme of the verses in the original text four times, while retaining their meaning, so that the form and poetry of each version leaves the reader breathless. This has also been achieved in the Bosnian translation, but only through "the happy coupling of the original text and a truly inspired translator."<sup>47</sup> Vedad Mulalić has made an interesting comparative analysis of Bosnian translations of *The Thousand and One Nights*, comparing Duraković's and Spaho's translations to highlight those characteristics that testify to the wealth of expression deployed in the Bosnian, the nuances of meaning, the use of lexical systems and of different grammatical forms of the same lexeme to express a given meaning. Mulalić considers the stylistic capacity of these works one of their most interesting qualities, as it shows off the translators' talents as stylists and writers.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *1001 noć - ljubavna i erotska lirika*, translated and edited by Esad Duraković, V.B.Z., Sarajevo, 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, "Narativne čarolije u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*", *Novi izraz*, no. 7, Sarajevo, 2000, 105.

<sup>48</sup> Vedad Mulalić, "Jedno poređenje prevoda *Hiljadu i jedne noći* na bosanski jezik", *Književni jezik*, 26/1-2, Sarajevo, 2015, 49-71.



Comparative analyses and research have shown that published literary criticism on and analyses of *The Thousand and One Nights*, which started to appear more regularly in Bosnian literary journals following the publication of Duraković's translation, have mainly focused on the characters, recurring motifs, and principles of narration as a galvanizing motif in each story in *The Thousand and One Nights*. Katnić-Bakaršić points out that the strength of the narration is underlined by the sparing of Scheherazade's life in gratitude for her stories and by the King of kings Shahryar's rekindled faith in love and people. The metaphor of the strength of narration is developed throughout *The Thousand and One Nights* and the backbone of this metaphor is the relationship between the storyteller (author) and the listener (reader), as figured for us through the relationship between Shahryar and Scheherazade.<sup>49</sup>

The starting point for most scholarly approaches to *The Thousand and One Nights* is its structure based on the principle of the arabesque, which allows reading for enjoyment and directs readers to take pleasure in the story rather than rush towards its conclusion. Duraković and Katnić-Bakaršić pay special attention to *The Thousand and One Nights* in their study of the poetics of the arabesque in the Arabic tradition, concluding that "as they get used to the circular and concentric expansion of stories, the structural principle of the work gradually takes over the readers' awareness and they temporarily, but with increasing frequency, forget Scheherazade's fate – because of the unending series of other fates."<sup>50</sup>

The arabesque motif, in visual art and in literature, induces yearning and curiosity in its audience, whether they are viewing a painted or reading a literary arabesque. Looking at yearning in the context of the reader's experience of *The Thousand and One Nights*, Peter Brooks had proposed that it involves work that simultaneously arouses yearning and uses it as a driving force for meaning. Yearning manifests as a longing for an end, for

<sup>49</sup> Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, "Narativne čarolije u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*", *Novi izraz*, no. 7, Sarajevo, 2000, 105.

<sup>50</sup> Esad Duraković and Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, "Poetika arabeske", *Novi izraz*, no. 27-28, Sarajevo, 2005, 178.



a gratification that must be delayed in order to be understood in relation to its origin and to yearning itself.<sup>51</sup>

There is a specific subset of works on *The Thousand and One Nights* dealing with its reception in the West. Not long after publication of Duraković's translation *The Thousand and One Nights* into Bosnian, a major academic work on the reception of *The Thousand and One Nights* in Western culture was also published, Robert Irwin's *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*.<sup>52</sup> Enes Karić, who translated this book, also published a translation of Chapter IX from it separately, titled "Formalna čitanja Hiljadu i jedne noći" [Formal Readings<sup>53</sup>], on the themes and motifs of *The Thousand and One Nights* and how it fits into the typology of stories and indices of motifs compiled by European folklorists and researchers.<sup>54</sup> The Bosnian and Herzegovinian edition of his book includes an essay by the prominent Bosnian writer Dževad Karahasan on "Jezik i govor vrta u Hiljadu i jednoj noći" [Language and the Discourse of Gardens in *The Thousand and One Nights*].<sup>55</sup>

Taking their cue from the postmodern interpretations of literature, some authors stress the characterization and role of Scheherazade in *The Thousand and One Nights*. Analyzing her development, Ivo Svetina concludes that she evolves from an ordinary woman into a despot, a master of language and words, as they offered her, as a woman of that time, the only way to resist the Sultan's physical despotism.<sup>56</sup> Marc Soriano has suggested that Scheherazade's voice in *The Thousand and One Nights* is in fact that of a woman who is telling of a distorted world which only men understand and where she has, at first, accepted the profile of a woman posited by Shahryar, while at the same time rehabilitating the woman she

<sup>51</sup> Peter Brooks, "Narativna žudnja u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*", *Odjek*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 1999, 110-112.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Irwin, *Hiljadu i jedna noć na Zapadu*, trans. Enes Karić, Ljiljan, Sarajevo, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, Allen Lane, London, 1994, 151-165.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Irwin, "Formula čitanja Hiljadu i jedne noći", trans. Enes Karić, *Odjek*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 1999, 94-105.

<sup>55</sup> Dževad Karahasan, "Jezik i govor vrta u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*", *Odjek*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 1999, 431-466.

<sup>56</sup> Ivo Svetina, "Šeherezada", *Odjek*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 1999, 106-109.

clearly is on the basis of her behavior, one who has no need for whatever Shahryar supposes to be the model of woman. Soriano considers the stories which liken women to promiscuous animals uniquely foundational to *The Thousand and One Nights* and to the Arab society it depicts.<sup>57</sup> Jasmina Čaušević has also approached the work in the terms of modern Eurocentric ideologies regarding the position of women, but she has forced the themes, motifs, and characters of *The Thousand and One Nights* into stereotypes and theoretical models that belong to a completely different time period, location, culture, and tradition than the work was written in.<sup>58</sup> Duraković considers this kind of interpretation of the work an “Orientalist reading” precisely because the student is consciously ignoring the integrity of the literary work and has proceeded to pick and choose evidence based upon the generalizations they wish to make about the work overall. She also only chose examples of negative motifs and characters for analysis through a primarily ideological lens. Unlike Čaušević, Duraković believes that a longitudinal study of *The Thousand and One Nights*’ reception has the best prospect of showing that it actually affirms women and their virtues and in fact represents a literary monument to woman’s loyalty, wisdom, and honor.<sup>59</sup> Mirza Sarajkić’s work “O Šeherzadinim čarima: Analiza okvirne priče *Hiljadu i jedne noći*” [On Scheherazade’s charms: Analysis of the framework tale of *The Thousand and One Nights*] continues in the same vein, comparing Scheherazade’s character to those of other female characters in the work and that of Shahryar, while taking the text as a whole rather than just parts of it. He looks at the poetic principles of the arabesque in the framing narrative, the status of women, and verbal vulgarity in Arabic culture and literature, ultimately disclosing Scheherazade’s charms as mistress of the greatest oral tradition in Oriental and Islamic civilization and as something that can only be understood properly by getting to know

<sup>57</sup> Marc Sorion, “Šta još kaže Šeherzada”, translated from the French by Rešid Hafizović, *Odjek*, no. 2, Sarajevo, 1995, 14 and 15.

<sup>58</sup> Jasmina Čaušević, “Rodno uslovljeni motivski krugovi u *Hiljadu i jednoj noći*”, *Novi izraz*, no. 43-44, Sarajevo, 2009, 37-47.

<sup>59</sup> Esad Duraković, “Orientalističko čitanje *Hiljadu i jedne noći*”, *Novi izraz*, no. 45-46, Sarajevo, 2009, 156-165.

and acknowledging the uniqueness of the culture the story and its heroine come from and inhabit, as well as, of course, the spirit and tradition of the Arabs.<sup>60</sup>

Besides Shahryar and Scheherazade, who seem to have enraptured the attention of readers and critics alike, *The Thousand and One Nights* features many other characters, historical and imaginary, whose stories intertwine through Scheherazade's tales. Though many of these characters are archetypal and can be classified based on their key traits, Selma Fazlić has been able to identify a number of characters based on real historical figures from a selection of the stories. She has investigated the extent to which they have retained the characteristics of their historical counterparts and to what extent they have been adapted to the world of Scheherazade's imagination.<sup>61</sup> Berin Bajrić has drawn parallels between the narratives of the Qur'an and those of *The Thousand and One Nights*, based on the story of Asaf and the Ifrit in the tale of King Suleiman the Messenger and Queen Belkisa. Bajrić uses their story both to illustrate the relationship between the Qur'an and *The Thousand and One Nights* and all the other literary texts whose existence is supported by Qur'an so long as they refrain from claiming that they bear a Revelation from God.<sup>62</sup>

Moving on from the critical reception of *The Thousand and One Nights* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we may now turn to analysis of its artistic reception, which reveals itself, in the passage from the reception of the work's history to an event-based history of literature, as a process whereby its passive reception by readers and critics is transformed into active reception and new forms of creation.<sup>63</sup> *The Thousand and One Nights* have inspired works by a number of Bosnian and Herzegovinian writers, both directly and indirectly, as reflected in some way in their ideas or the form and style of their work. Its strongest influence may perhaps be seen in the

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<sup>60</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, "O Šeherezadinim čarima: Analiza okvirne priče *Hiljadu i jedne noći*", *Pismo*, V/I, Sarajevo, 2007, 256-265.

<sup>61</sup> Selma Fazlić, "Od ličnosti do lika: Historijski zasnovani junaci 1001 noći", *Znakovi vremena*, vol. 12, no. 43/44, Sarajevo, 2009, 266-276.

<sup>62</sup> Berin Bajrić, "Asaf čudotvorac Stvarnosti", *Odjek*, no. 2, Sarajevo, 2009, 7-13.

<sup>63</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, "Književna istorija kao izazov nauci o književnosti" in: *Teorija recepcije u nauci o književnosti*, ed. Dušanka Maricki, Nolit, Belgrade, 1978, 61.

work of writer, dramatist and essayist Dževad Karahasan, whose entire prose oeuvre is interwoven with the symbols and qualities of oriental literary expression: the Arabesque narrative style, the themes, characters, and setting of action in Oriental and Islamic environments. Perhaps the crowning achievement of this orientalization of Karahasan's creative work is his *Knjiga vrtova [The Book of Gardens]* (2002).<sup>64</sup> Its central theme is the garden, which is also the central theme of Islamic literature and culture, as evident in a series of works of Islamic Arabic literature, most prominent among them *The Thousand and One Nights*. Analyzing the symbol of the garden in literature generally, Karahasan points out that *The Thousand and One Nights* uses the garden as a dominant node that in practice determines its composition, not only because there is mention of a garden in every story and a part of the action is almost always set in a garden, but because of the way the gardens function in the stories and their significance for construction of the plot.<sup>65</sup> Karahasan brings every discussion of the garden back to *The Thousand and One Nights*, convinced as he is that no other book in world literature deals so exhaustively and from so many different perspectives with the topic and that no other book speaks so convincingly of the inevitability of human happiness, so long as one avoids oblivion.<sup>66</sup> Karahasan dedicates the chapter on “Žena kao vrt (Šeherzadina škola ljubavi)” [Woman as garden (Scheherazade's school of love)] to all the female characters in *The Thousand and One Nights* who he sees as “bearers of a secret” ingrained into their very being that separates them from a world reduced to society and its laws and ties them to forms and spheres of existence that are inaccessible to the human eye. As their leader, Scheherazade, through her storytelling, shows Shahryar how to love and enjoy women and so brings him, at the level of meaning, into the garden, having shown him that women and the garden are overlapping symbols.<sup>67</sup> Karahasan's earlier novel *Šahrijarov prsten [Shahryar's Ring]* was also highly influenced by *The Thousand and One Nights*. We see an allusion

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<sup>64</sup> Dževad Karahasan, *Knjiga vrtova*, Connectum, Sarajevo, 2004.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 79.

to the King of Kings Shahryar in the title. The structure of the novel has also been influenced by *The Thousand and One Nights*, keeping to the logic of the refrain, like Scheherazade's stories. Except that her stories are tied together by the narrative of delaying death, whereas, according to Enver Kazaz, *Shahryar's Ring* "as a novel embodies a dramatic internal struggle, at the heart of which lie Faruk's attempts to replace life, which has disappeared irrevocably or been cut short by the advent of tragic circumstances, with story, and the idea of sacrifice as an act on which to ground existential meaning."<sup>68</sup>

As the impact of a literary work is not limited to readers and critics but often extends to areas outside of literature, where it may no longer be identifiable using the usual resources of reception theory, such as the reader's experience, critical and peer reviews, or literary criticism. This wider sphere of influence is an important part of an artist's impact on other artists or of one art form's impact on another.<sup>69</sup> In that sense, the character of Scheherazade under siege in Sarajevo in 1994 during the war against Bosnia and Herzegovina represents an important form of reception and artistic interpretation. The director Haris Pašović initiated an international project he called "Scheherazade 2001", whose guiding idea was to get thirty famous writers from around the world each to write a story to be read aloud after theatre performances in a number of European theatres, including theatres in Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Zenica.<sup>70</sup> The theme of Scheherazade's delaying of death through the strength of her storytelling and her interlinked stories was one of the wider themes of this project. In Pašović's artistic interpretation this theme was reflective of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war, as people continuously balanced their expectation of and delaying of their deaths.

One more contemporary stage interpretation of *The Thousand and One Nights* worth mentioning is *The last night: Scheherazade*, a ballet based

<sup>68</sup> Enver Kazaz, "Priča/tekst/svijet – romani Dževada Karahasana", in: Dževad Karahasan, *Istočni diwan*, Preporod, Sarajevo, 2002, 25.

<sup>69</sup> See: Karl R. Mandelkov, "Problemi istorije djelovanja", in: *Teorija recepcije u nauci o književnosti*, 127.

<sup>70</sup> Cited in: *Odjek*, wartime edition, no. 1, Sarajevo, 1994, 9.

on the stories and inspired by its themes of love, deceit, betrayal, hatred, violence, revenge, and death. It premiered on the stage of the National Theater in Sarajevo in 2022.<sup>71</sup>

### *Kalila and Dimna*

*Kalila and Dimna* [*Kalila wa Dimna*] is a collection of fables that entered the Arabic literary canon by way of ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (died 760). They were originally a collection of Indian fables called the *Panchatantra*, which al-Muqaffa‘ translated from Sanskrit into Arabic, adapting the work to Islamic Arabic culture and tradition so that it was adopted into the Arabic literary tradition. *Kalila and Dimna* was introduced to a Bosnian and Herzegovinian audience in a translation from the Arabic by Besim Korkut.<sup>72</sup> Within the Bosnian and Herzegovinian system of literary values, *Kalila and Dimna* has been identified as a work that both has aesthetic value and imparts moral lessons. It was the ethical educational component that promoted its wider cultural reception and resulted in its inclusion on lists of required reading for primary school children. The dominance of moral education in the pragmatics of the text means that for modern readers *Kalila and Dimna* transcends its role as an account of a given historical period and answers ethical questions for modern readers from various backgrounds.<sup>73</sup>

Al-Muqaffa‘ was famous in his own time for his revolutionary ideas and opinions, not only in the realm of literature but about the social order too. He lays out his advice on friendships and politics in his work *al-Adab al-Kabīr* [*Secular Wisdom – The Great Education*], fragments of which have been published in a Bosnian translation by Sulejman Grozdanić.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> <https://nps.ba/predstave/posljednja-noc-scherzada/32> (last visited: 17. 12. 2023).

<sup>72</sup> *Kelila i Dimna*, translated from the Arabic by Besim Korkut, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1953. Same: Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1997.

<sup>73</sup> See: Hans R. Jauss, *Estetika recepcije*, trans. Drinka Gojković, Nolit, Belgrade, 1978, 362.

<sup>74</sup> “‘Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa – Savjeti o prijateljstvu”, selected and translated with commentary by Sulejman Grozdanić, *Odjek*, no. 5-6, Sarajevo, 1970, 23.

Dževad Karahasan offered his interpretation of the character of Abdullāh Ibn al-Muqaffa' in his novel *Istočni diwan* [*Eastern Divan*], the first part of which is subtitled "Al-Muqaffa" and tells the real story of the writer. Later on, Karahasan expands on the historical story, developing a sort of epistolary confessional. He successfully establishes a dialogue with Islamic Arabic literary heritage by drawing on historical events as the narrative frame and to establish the tone for the plot of his own novel. Against a background of communication between the cultures of East and West, Karahasan goes back to the origins of the Persian and Arabic mode of culture and literature with a view to combining it with the spiritual modes of modern Western civilization. As a supplement to the historical references in his work, Karahasan offers a glossary of names and terms, which acts as an encyclopedic annex to the story, and his attempt to present the contingency of the historical image of the world and its insufficiency compared to artistic constructions.<sup>75</sup> Beyond the depiction of him in *Istočni diwan*, Karahasan also offers us a literary interpretation of Ibn al-Muqaffa's character in a play called "*Al Mukaffa*", inspired by his real life and the intertwining of social environments and their pasts and presents and of the spiritual and the material worlds, elevating human life above historical facts and factors with his characteristic facility of literary and artistic expression.<sup>76</sup>

## Adab

In a predominantly poetic literary tradition like the classical Arabic, works written in prose were mainly academic or religious in character. Those that may be considered at least to some extent to display the features of fine or literary writing are largely moral and didactic in character and heavy with sententious sentences and messages. It was from this that the Adab form developed as literary expression whose main aim was moral and pedagogical in nature. Such writers often availed of humor as the best means

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<sup>75</sup> Enver Kazaz, op. cit., 5-29.

<sup>76</sup> Dževad Karahasan, *Al-Mukaffa*, theater "Arbos", Celovec – Salzburg – Vienna, 1995.



of attaining their goal. By making fun of certain types of human vice, they wanted to bring about improvement in the morals and development of the reader. One of the most famous works of this kind was the *Kitāb al-buḥalā'* [*The Book of Misers*] by 'Amr Ibn Baḥr al-Ġāḥiẓ (777-869) which is considered the most splendid satire of its time. It played an important role in the development of Arabic prose, not least because it was composed at a time when Arabic literary prose was taking its first steps. Al-Ġāḥiẓ marked a century of Islamic Arabic history as a writer and he has a high place in the value system of the classical Arabic literary tradition thanks to his rich literary oeuvre, while his role in the development of Arabic prose can be compared with that of Molière in European literature. His stories feature historical personalities as their protagonists, while their content is drawn from both the historical and literary tradition. Aiša Đulizarević-Simić has worked on the analysis of the historical and cultural context and the literary values of the *Kitāb al-buḥalā'* in a number of essays published in *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*. She suggests that, while the book's importance is evident from the literary, social, cultural, and historical points of view, the work is also an important source for studying cultural opportunities in Arabic society in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The *Kitāb al-buḥalā'* is considered al-Ġāḥiẓ's greatest achievement and one in which his rational and realistic spirit builds on tradition while looking to the present. His need to share his observations and discoveries with others is clear and what allows later readers of the work to penetrate into the psychology, morality, and ethics of Arabic culture in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>77</sup> Đulizarević-Simić has used al-Ġāḥiẓ's work to present the literary form of the Adab on a diachronic axis. She considers it a sort of compromise between two different understandings of the function of literature, combining the idea of literature as an instrument of religion, on the one hand, with the idea of literature as a pastime on the other.<sup>78</sup> Through comparative analyses of the works of Molière and Sterija [Jovan Sterija Popović], on the one hand, and al-Ġāḥiẓ, on the other, Đulizarević-Simić has discovered common elements and connections

<sup>77</sup> Aiša Đulizarević-Simić, "Društveno-istorijska uslovljenost Džahizovog djela *Kitāb al-buḥalā'*", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, XXII-XXIII/1972-73, Sarajevo, 1976, 257-267.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.



between European and Arabic literature. Characteristic of all three authors are their observations of society and realistic depictions, while their heroes are hucksters involved in sharp-practice and with a major dose of pettiness in their mentality. She also points out, however that, despite these many shared elements, the *Kitāb al-buḥalā'* is primarily a product of its Arab environment and Arabic literary idiom, independently of any similar work on the same theme.<sup>79</sup> The literary and artistic value of the *Kitāb al-buḥalā'* may be seen mainly in the detailed realistic description sets by the author's main goals: to educate and to entertain. Đulizarević-Simić points out that al-Ġāḥiẓ succeeded in presenting standard prose forms in a way that was highly unusual for his time and environment, with the result that the *Kitāb al-buḥalā'* does not have a unified structure and there are no solid internal connections to unify it other than the themes shared by the anecdotes, stories, and sayings.<sup>80</sup>

## Autobiography

Autobiography is a relatively rare literary form in classical Arabic literature, but one work of that type to reach Bosnia and Herzegovina, thanks to the translations and analyses of Darko Tanasković published in the *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* and the *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva*, is the *Kitāb al-i'tibār* [*The Book of Lessons*]. Its author 'Usāma Ibn Munqiz (1095-1188) tells us about his personal life and shares a wealth of information on Arabic political and cultural history, having himself been involved in a number of important events in Arabic history.

Tanasković's essay "Autobiografija Usame ibn Munkiza – jedinstveni jezički spomenik" [The Autobiography of 'Usāma Ibn Munqiz – a singular linguistic monument] is derived from his Master's thesis of the same name, which outlined the temporal and spatial context Ibn Munqiz was active within, as well offering a linguistic and stylistic analysis of the linguistic,

<sup>79</sup> A. Đulizarević-Simić, op.cit., 259.

<sup>80</sup> Aiša Đulizarević-Simić, "Književno-umjetnička vrijednost Džahizove *Knjige o tvrđicama*", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 28-29/1978-79, Sarajevo, 1980, 135-146.

mainly phonological, morphological, and syntactic, characteristics of the work. Tanasković points to various options in the linguistic processing of the text that distinguish it from more normal forms of writing, while at the same time rendering it closer to spoken idiom.<sup>81</sup> Tanasković has published an excerpt from the work in the *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva*, along with short account of the plot of the work which highlights the spiritual components woven into the work, which includes constant reflection on and study of problems of life and religion, situated within his basic themes of the crusades and the hunt.<sup>82</sup>

Ranko Risojević has written an interesting essay on Ibn Munqiz as a personality and on his work. He approaches the topic through the lens of his own experience and understanding of the Arabic literary tradition, which began with his collection of materials for writing a history of mathematics. Risojević touches on the characteristic understanding of originality in the Arabic tradition and the important role of the Arabs in the development of various academic fields. Information on this and many other things is to be found in Ibn Munqiz's *Kitāb al-i'tibār*, which is a worthy source text for studying both Arabic and world history.<sup>83</sup>

## Poetry

The literary corpus of Classical Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes poetry alongside the works of prose and prose poetry considered above. The most important works are translations of and scholarly studies of the works of Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mutanabbī (915-965), Abū al-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī (973-1057) and Abū Muḥammad ‘Ālī Ibn al-Andalusī Ibn Ḥazm (994-1064). In addition to translations of fragments of their poetry and their complete works, these authors have been the subject

<sup>81</sup> Darko Tanasković, “Autobiografija Usame Ibn Munkiza – jedinstveni jezički spomenik”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, XXVI/1976, Sarajevo, 1978, 233-269.

<sup>82</sup> Aziz Kadribegović, “Pouka knjige Usame Ibn Munkiza”, *Glasnik VIS*, no. 1, Sarajevo, 1987, 107-121.

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.jergovic.com/ajfelov-most/moje-knjige-36> (last visited: 20. 10. 2023).

of significant critical studies that deal with their works, their contents, and translations of them published in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

One of the first published translations of classical Arabic poetry was of fragments of songs by the Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Waḍḍāḥ al-Yaman, Qays Lubnā, Abū al-‘Atāhiya and al-Mutanabbī by Sulejman Grozdanić in *Odjek*. The translator’s stated intention was to offer a brief presentation of and so popularize Arabic poetry.<sup>84</sup> A few excerpts from al-Mutanabbī’s poetry have also been published by Ranko Risojević in *Putevi*.<sup>85</sup> Though the original was in verse, Risojević’s translation is in prose – in the form of sayings. Though one can occasionally glimpse the rhythm of the original in the translation, the full and consistent rhyming scheme and rhythm are missing. As a result, the translation deviates from the poetic tradition the work originated in. One should take into consideration, however, that this is an indirect translation from the French which reduced the translator’s ability to understand the structure and formal intentions of the original. In addition to the translation, Risojević also wrote a short essay on al-Mutanabbī’s life and work, with an emphasis on the cosmopolitanism he expressed so strongly in his works, which brings him closer to the present age both as an artist and a poet regardless of the great distance in time.<sup>86</sup>

One often finds verses or short sayings of al-Mutanabbī in works by Bosnian and Herzegovinian authors on religious and philosophical topics published in various journals, largely representing his ruminations on the topic they were discussed in their essays. There are, however, very few critical or literary analyses of al-Mutanabbī’s poetry. The work of Munir Mujić has proven significant in that regard, as it offers an analysis of gnomic and ironic discourse in al-Mutanabbī’s poetry. Mujić has noted that al-Mutanabbī deploys universal gnomic language to express his personal feelings and convictions and to bring the gnomic poetic idiom closer to life. One may discern the tones of pessimism, relativism, and the will to power in his poetry, while irony of the sort met with in the mocking satires

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<sup>84</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Od vina do pitanja”, *Odjek*, no. 1, Sarajevo, 1976, 20.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Mutanabbi, “Miruju uhode za tvojih noćnih obilazaka”, translated from the French by Ranko Risojević, *Putevi*, no. 1, Banja Luka, 1971, 238-240.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

of the classical Arabic poets undergoes a sort of genre-based makeover in al-Mutanabbī's verse.<sup>87</sup>

The work of Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī has been afforded significantly more attention than that of al-Mutanabbī. Al-Ma'arrī was a poet and writer whom critics of Arabic Literature have dubbed the greatest philosopher among the poets and the greatest poet among the philosophers. Because of his pronounced criticism of feudal society and religion and his explicit rejection of every form of external manifestation of religion, including ritual, prayer, and fasting, he is also rightly considered the most radical critic of the Islamic Arabic society of his time. According to Sulejman Grozdanić, al-Ma'arrī's main creative drive was his characteristic rational scepticism, directed by his ethical and humanitarian pessimism.<sup>88</sup> Al-Ma'arrī was a poet much loved in Bosnia, not least by Safvet-beg Bašagić, Musa Ćazim Ćatić, and more recently Muhammed Seid Serdarević, who all published translations of his poetry and excerpts from his work *Luzūm mā lā yalzam* [Unnecessary Necessity] in the journal *Behar*. In 1983, fragments of his poetry were published in *Islamska misao* in translations made at an earlier date by Musa Ćazim Ćatić and Safvet-beg Bašagić, along with a short informative essay titled "Ebu-l-alā el-Me'arrī" by Muhamed Serdarević, which was itself taken over from the journal *Behar*.<sup>89</sup>

As well as these excerpts, the *Luzūm mā lā yalzam* has been published in full in a translation by Daniel Bučan.<sup>90</sup> In his foreword, Bučan tells us that it is unique in form and content in the realm of Arabic poetry because al-Ma'arrī was following a much more rigid rhyming scheme than the traditional norms of classical Arabic poetry. He adds an additional element to the rhyming structure, by rhyming not just last but the penultimate syllable of each verse. Bučan takes care to introduce readers to the characteristic elements of classical Arabic poetry to let them determine for themselves

<sup>87</sup> Munir Mujić, "Gnomički i ironijski diskurs u poeziji Abū Ṭayyiba al-Mutanabbīja", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 62/2012, Sarajevo, 2013, 75-98.

<sup>88</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, "Ma'arri i čovjek viđen kroz smrt", *Odjek*, no. 13-14, Sarajevo, 1971, 25.

<sup>89</sup> See: *Islamska misao*, no. 50, Sarajevo, 1983, 35-40.

<sup>90</sup> Abu 'Ala al-Ma'arri, *Obvezivanje neobveznim*, translated from the Arabic by Daniel Bučan, Glas, Banja Luka, 1984.

how far al-Ma‘arrī went in his introduction of the revolutionary ideas of didactic literature into Arabic poetry. Al-Ma‘arrī considered his poetry to be reflective and moralistic rather than rhetorical and formal: poetry with the aim of imparting the moral and philosophical truth.<sup>91</sup>

In her review of *Luzūm mā lā yalzam*, amongst the novelties that he introduced into Arabic literature, Anđelka Mitrović focuses on the themes of poems in which al-Ma‘arrī expresses, without prejudice, his thoughts and judgements on existential issues, society, and culture, which were radical, critical, and liberal for his time.<sup>92</sup> Hadžem Hajdarević published a short but informative review in *Islamska misao* exalting the literary value of *Luzūm mā lā yalzam*, a work he states has been given insufficient attention by Bosnian and Herzegovinian literary critics. Hajdarević also reminds the reader of the first Bosnian and Herzegovinian translators of Arabic literature, Musa Ćazim Ćatić and Safvet-beg Bašagić, whose work, as we have seen, included translations of al-Ma‘arrī’s poetry.<sup>93</sup> In an essay “Prikazivanje neprikazivog – poimanje smrti i tuge u al-Ma‘arrījevim elegijama” [“Presenting the Unpresentable: Understanding of Death and Mourning in the Elegies of al-Ma‘arrī”] Munir Mujić investigates the ways in which al-Ma‘arrī undermines and ironizes the phenomena of death and grief in his elegies. He analyses his individualistic and relativistic outlook on the concepts of life and death, unmasking and ironizing the so-called conservatism of sensibility, i.e., conventional and formal conceptions of death and expressions of grief for the dead.<sup>94</sup>

The poetics of al-Ma‘arrī’s creative work are best reflected in his work *Risāla al-gufrān [Epistle on leave taking]* which is considered a forerunner to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. *Risāla al-gufrān* has been published in a translation by Sulejman Grozdanić, who abridged it, as was usual for

<sup>91</sup> Daniel Bučan, “Al-Ma‘arri ili osamljenost moraliste”, in: Abu ‘Ala al-Ma‘arri, *Obvezivanje neobveznim*, translated from the Arabic by Daniel Bučan, 5-18.

<sup>92</sup> Anđelka Mitrović, “Al-Ma‘ari: *Obvezivanje neobveznim*”, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 51, Sarajevo, 1986, 344.

<sup>93</sup> Hadžem Hajdarević, “Izbor iz el-Me‘arijevih *Luzumijjata*”, *Islamska misao*, no. 87, Sarajevo, 1986, 30.

<sup>94</sup> Munir Mujić, “Prikazivanje neprikazivog – poimanje smrti i tuge u al-Ma‘arrījevim elegijama”, *Pismo*, XI, Sarajevo, 2013, 100-118.

translators of this work into European languages, cutting out the extensive discussions of Arabic linguistics and poetics which he though would not interest non-Arabic readers.<sup>95</sup> It is important to note that in his translation Grozdanić paid special attention to conveying the rhyme and rhythm of the original, and not just interpreting the text, striving for a translation that conveys the spirit of the original's prose poetry. In her review of his translation, Jasna Šamić declares Grozdanić's blending of formal elements of the translation with those of the original a success. Šamić concludes that the translator achieves the effect of rhymed prose in his Bosnian by using inversion – changing the order of words at the level of the sentence and the syntagm.<sup>96</sup> Naida Sušić-Mehmedagić praised Grozdanić's proven skill as a translator and the effort he invested into maintaining the rhythm and rhyme of al-Ma'arrī's original. She also considers Grozdanić's focus on presenting al-Ma'arrī's style, that is his prose poetry, comes at the expense of his own freedom as a translator, which comes to the fore in his other translations of Arabic literature.<sup>97</sup>

Abū Muḥammad 'Ālī Ibn al-Andalusī Ibn Ḥazm is one of the most significant figures in the spiritual life of Islamic Spain and Andalusia in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and his works are a significant contribution to the development of Arabic literature. His *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* [*The Ring of the Dove*] is considered the most beautiful treatise on love in Arabic literature and is the author's best-known work outside the Arabic-speaking world, having been translated into almost all world languages. The manuscript was found at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the University Library in Leiden and was immediately accepted by European Orientalists as the most beautiful tractate on love and the understanding of love in Islamic culture and tradition. The first translation in the region of the former

<sup>95</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, in: Abu al-Alā al-Ma'arrī, *Poslanica o oproštenju*, edited and translated, with notes and an afterword by Sulejman Grozdanić, Matica srpska et al., Novi Sad, 1979, 6.

<sup>96</sup> Jasna Šamić, "Abū-l Alā al-Ma'arrī: *Poslanica o oproštenju*", *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 29, Sarajevo, 1980, 603-605.

<sup>97</sup> Naida Sušić-Mehmedagić, "Abū al-'Alā al-Ma'arrī: *Poslanica o oproštenju*", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 28-29/1978-79, Sarajevo, 198, 494-495.

Yugoslavia was by the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Arabist Teufik Muftić.<sup>98</sup> In the afterword to Muftić's translation, Daniel Bučan offers a detailed cultural and historical description of the context in which the work was created, explaining the profundity of Ibn Ḥazm's conception of Platonic love as an ideal to strive for. Bučan emphasized the depths of Ibn Ḥazm's understanding of the psychology of love, appropriate evaluation of which would make *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* one of the first Arabic works in the field of psychology. Shifting to the perspective of comparative literature, Bučan's compares Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* and Stendhal's *On Love*, which is so similar in its literary form to an Adab that one might mistakenly assume Stendhal's essay had been made to fit the form. Bučan then compares two more European writers who have written on the phenomenon of love with Ibn Ḥazm: José Ortega y Gasset and Denis de Rougemont. Their thoughts on love and being in love were very close to Ibn Ḥazm's, while they themselves admitted and continuously pointed out the undisputable influence of Arabic and especially Spanish poetry on European poetic creativity.<sup>99</sup> In his review of the Bosnian translation, Hilmo Neimarlija points to interesting comparative studies of this work dedicated to investigating the connections between Arabic and Provençal literature. Its artistic value to one side, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* offers an authentic account of life and conditions in Muslim Spain during the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Its translation into European languages ignited interest both in the work itself and in the historical and temporal context it came from.<sup>100</sup> The strong Spanish influence and elements of Spanish culture in Ibn Ḥazm's work were pointed out by Ṭāhir Aḥmad Makkī in his essay "Ibn Hazm – vrh Endelusa" [Ibn Hazm – the peak of Andalusia]. He emphasized that Muslims in Spain had neglected neither the Arabic nor the Spanish

<sup>98</sup> Ibn Hazm, *Golubičina ogrlica*, translated from the Arabic by Teufik Muftić, SNL, Zagreb, 1987.

<sup>99</sup> Daniel Bučan, "Golubičina ogrlica: Izvori i kulturno ozračje", in: Ibn Hazm, *Golubičina ogrlica*, translated from the Arabic by Teufik Muftić, 281.

<sup>100</sup> Hilmo Neimarlija, "Ibn Hazm El-Endelusi", *Islamska misao*, no. 116, Sarajevo, 1988, 18-21.



elements of their cultural heritage, so that Ibn Ḥazm reveals his typical Spanish spirit to us in his works.<sup>101</sup>

Another work by Ibn Ḥazm his *Mudāwāt al-nufūs* [*The Healing of the Soul*], has also been published in a Bosnian translation by Mehmedalija Hadžić.<sup>102</sup> The work describes Spanish culture of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to us, revealing their morals and interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, the translation was published with no foreword or afterword and, beyond providing basic biographical information about Ibn Ḥazm, lacks even a brief overview to introduce Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers to the author and the work. The publication of a book *Ibn Hazm: život i djelo španskog genija* [*Ibn Hazm: the life and work of a Spanish genius*] provided significant help in this regard, offering as it did a comprehensive study of the life, work, and philosophical and artistic reflections of Ibn Ḥazm. The book's author, Syed Nooruzuha Barmaver, focuses on Ibn Ḥazm's life, his study and pursuit of knowledge, what lead him to asceticism, the problems he faced as a Muslim, and finally uses the fact to discredit entrenched myths about Ibn Ḥazm's character.<sup>103</sup> It is undoubtedly true that the insights the book offers are an important correction of our understanding and for a comprehensive reception of Ibn Ḥazm's oeuvre.

Jusuf Ramić has written on Ibn Ḥazm and the literature of Islamic Spain more generally on a number of occasions. His published observations have been gathered in book form as *Arapski jezik i književnost: Klasična i moderna* [*The Arabic Language and Arabic Literature: Classical and Modern*]. Ramić presents the poetics of Andalusian literature and introduces its major poets with short biographies. In addition to Ibn Ḥazm, he focuses particularly on the poetic work of 'Abd al-Wālid Ibn Zaydūnī al-Mahzūmi (1004-1070), a leader amongst the Andalusian poets who

<sup>101</sup> Tahir Ahmed Mekki, "Ibn Hazm – vrh Endelusa", translated from the Arabic by Mustafa Prljača, *Islamska misao*, no. 116, Sarajevo, 1988, 22-24.

<sup>102</sup> Ibn Hazm, *Liječenje duša – odgajanje duša i suzdržavanje od poroka*, translated from the Arabic by Mehmedalija Hadžić, Oko, Sarajevo, 1997.

<sup>103</sup> Syed Nooruzuha Barmaver, *Ibn Hazm: život i djelo španskog genija*, translated by Resul Mehmedović and Almedina Avdić, UG „Multi“, Tuzla, 2020.



strove to free themselves of the norms and chains of tradition, so that their poetry is descriptive, honest, and based in lived experience.<sup>104</sup>

## MODERN ARABIC LITERATURE

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new poetic turn was developing in Arabic literature that was directed more at artistic production and literary criticism as new modern literary developments. The denial and rejection of normative poetics with its dichotomy of form and content and its system of values was becoming increasingly common. Literature was becoming a public forum in which writers and poets could “engage in struggle” and make their contribution to a better, more democratic, moral, educated, and modern Arab society. This new direction was due in large part to “contact” between two cultures and civilizations, the West and the Oriental and Islamic, and especially to the influence of romanticism, symbolism, and, to a certain extent, Russian realism. These Western literary movements affected Arabic literature through writers who were introduced to them by their education in Western countries or some other means. Arab authors interpreted these new literary movements through the prism of their own feelings, their national identity as Arabs, and the colonial position of most Arab lands. One of the first countries to “open” up to the “values” of the West was Egypt, with the development of modern ideas and styles not just in the literary sphere but in all parts of the culture. Many Arab writers moved to Egypt for the freedom of thought it afforded or in search of a wider reception for their work. They hoped to publish their essays, stories, or poems in one of the journals there, which were famous and influential across the Arabic world. A comprehensive review of the foundational characteristics of modern Egyptian literature may be found in essays by Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr, which were translated for Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers by Sulejman Grozdanić. Al-Ṣabūr

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<sup>104</sup> Jusuf Ramić, *Arapski jezik i književnost: Klasična i moderna*, Connectum, Sarajevo, 2017, 201-238.

(1931-1981) was a respected Arabic poet, critic, and essayist and he occupies a significant place in modern Arabic literature. His essays are considered some of the most interesting critical reads in modern Arabic literature, not least for their immediacy, liveliness, the author's skill at synthesis and analysis, and his handling of big questions related to the development of modern Arabic literature.<sup>105</sup> They are devoted to authors who have come to symbolize modern Egyptian and Arabic literature – Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, ‘Abbās al-‘Aqqād, Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm and Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī – and their role in initiating the rebirth and development of literary life amongst the Arabs. Al-Ṣabūr presents the changes that came over Egyptian and Arabic literary life in terms of the spread of modern ideas in the work of Arabic writers.<sup>106</sup>

Members of the well-regarded Egyptian al-Muwayliḥī family were among the first to contribute actively to the development of modern ideas in Egyptian literature and so to the overall cultural development of the Arabic world. Their political and cultural activities may serve as an introduction to the development of Egyptian society over the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In *Moderna arapska književnost – porodica Al-Muwayliḥī i njeni uticaji u književnosti* [*Modern Arabic Literature – the al-Muwayliḥī family and their influence on literature*], Jusuf Ramić has contributed to uncovering and evaluating their influence, not just in Bosnia but across the Arabic world. The book was first published in Arabic and then in Bosnian translation.<sup>107</sup> Džemaludin Latić, one of the peer reviewers of Ramić's work, attests to its importance: “For our linguistic region, this academic research project by Prof. Ramić is significant not only because of the profound introduction it offers to Arabic literature and the culture of one of the most dynamic Arab peoples but also for the peculiar type of

<sup>105</sup> Mirza Sarajkić published a short biography of Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr and a translation of his poems “Winter Poem” and “Chronicle of a defeated prophet” in: *Odjek*, no. 3-4, Sarajevo, 2006, 153-155.

<sup>106</sup> Salah Abdassabur, “Šta su ostavili istoriji”, translated and edited with notes by Sulejman Grozdanić, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 45, Sarajevo, 1984, 101-156.

<sup>107</sup> Jusuf Ramić, *Moderna arapska književnost – porodica al-Muwayliḥī i njeni uticaji u književnosti*, translated into Bosnian by Mehmed Kico, Fakultet islamskih nauka, Sarajevo, 2003.

experience that this book brings us.”<sup>108</sup> In his review of the book, Ismet Kasumović suggests that it represents the first comprehensive attempt to present and appropriately evaluate the aspirations of the al-Muwayliḥī family, the period, and their context. As such, Ramić’s work is of great significance for both the broader Arabic and the narrower Bosnian and Herzegovinian context, insofar as it offers a synthesis of the life, work, and connections between members of the al-Muwayliḥī family and their cultural and historical environment and their role in the development of modern Arabic culture.<sup>109</sup>

In his introduction, Ramić highlights the strong connection that members of the family had with the Arab patriotic movement and makes clear their important role in the processes of Arab national and political awakening. Their participation in the patriotic movement may be ascribed to their desire to create a national Egyptian representative council.<sup>110</sup> Ramić does not limit himself to discussing the al-Muwayliḥī family’s influence on just Arabic literature, however, as he also looks at their role in the Arabic national and literary movement, journalism, and the poetics of the short article and of letter-writing. He pays special attention to the two most significant members of the family - Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī, who left their mark on modern Arabic literature, especially through their work on linguistics, translation, history, society, culture, and literature.<sup>111</sup>

In the early days of the modern Arabic revival, writers generally followed and adopted Western literary trends as their own. With time they grew bolder and freed themselves from those “shackles” and wrote increasingly about themselves, their situation, their unhappiness, and the emotions of the average Arab. Arabic writers brought life to the history

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 524.

<sup>109</sup> Ismet Kasumović, “Porodica el-Muwejlīhi u modernoj arapskoj književnosti”, *Islamska misao*, no. 68, Sarajevo, 1984, 45. I. Kasumović: “Jusuf Ramić – ‘Usratu al-Muwayliḥī wa ātāruha fī al-adab al-‘arabiyy al-ḥadī’”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 32-33/1982-83, Sarajevo, 1984, 302-305.

<sup>110</sup> J. Ramić, *Moderna arapska književnost – porodica al-Muwaylihi i njeni uticaji u književnosti*, 15.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 408-490.

of their culture and to some extent even shaped that history. Questions of colonial exploitation, disappointment in the new movement, and collusion with a Western culture whose values were often blindly accepted are reflected in almost every literary work of that time.<sup>112</sup>

Because of the constant ferment of new and old literary movements and schools in modern Arabic literature, all of which happened over a relatively short time period, so that most Arab writers participated as creators in multiple different literary movements and genres at once, there has never been a valid poetic or literary historical periodization of modern Arabic literature, just a purely historical one. Given that all modern Arabic literature is based on Arabic heritage, that it has all passed through almost identical phases of development and adjustment, and it is generally written in Arabic, we have decided to classify the works being explored by genre and will now present the Arabic novel, short story, drama, and poetry in terms of their translation into Bosnian and literary critical works about them by Bosnian and Herzegovinian Arabists and literary theorists.

## The Novel

Generally considered the first modern Arabic novel, *Zaynab* by Egyptian writer Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (1888-1956) was published in 1914. Though never translated into Bosnian, Azra Kapetanović has presented some of the most significant views on the novel of both Arabic and Western critics in her work “Roman *Zaynab* između arapskog tradicionalizma i evropskog romantizma” [The novel *Zaynab* between Arabic traditionalism and European romanticism]. She pays particular attention to the relationship between and cross-fertilization of elements of ancient and classical Arabic literature and of European Romanticism.<sup>113</sup> The novel is widely thought

<sup>112</sup> Edward Said, *Kultura i imperijalizam*, trans. Vesna Bogojević, Belgrade, 2002, 14.

<sup>113</sup> Azra Kapetanović, “Roman *Zaynab* između arapskog tradicionalizma i evropskog romantizma”, *Zbornik radova Islamskog pedagoškog fakulteta u Zenici*, yr. 17. no. 17, Zenica, 2019, 453-470.

to showcase the author's astounding artistic abilities and sensibilities, but the work is nonetheless virtually unknown in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Haykal himself known mainly as an author in the field of Islamic studies. His books are used as textbooks in the most famous departments of religion and Oriental studies around the world. In "Islamijati Muhammeda Huseina Hejkela" [The Islamiyat of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal], Ahmed Smajlović offers an overview of Haykal's literary oeuvre, before discussing his work on Islamic themes in more detail. Smajlović dedicates particular attention to *Ḥayāt Muḥammad*, which contains his biography of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, mentioning that there is a translation of the work from Arabic into Bosnian in manuscript by Ibrahim Trebinjac.<sup>114</sup> Haykal's biography of the Prophet was published in Bosnian in 2004 under the title *Život Muhammeda, a.s.* [The Life of Muhammad, p.b.u.h.]. It is an indirect translation from English, but was published with Haykal's foreword to the third and fourth editions of the book in Arabic, as well as the foreword to the first edition, which was written by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāgī.<sup>115</sup> Unfortunately, despite being in Bosnian, the edition was still published with no afterword by a Bosnian and Herzegovinian historian, Arabist, literary critic, or Islamic theologian, who might have contributed to a broader appreciation of the work in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Al-Ayyām* [Days] by Egyptian writer Ṭāhā Ḥusayn (1889-1973) is counted among the most popular Arabic novels, both in the Arabic world and in the West. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn is also known for his literary histories of the Arabs, his literary criticism, and his many journalistic works. *Al-Ayyām* was published in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a translation by Nijaz Dizdarević in 1979<sup>116</sup> and then in one by Esad Duraković in 1998.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Ahmed Smajlović, "Islamijati Muhammeda Huseina Hejkela", *Islamska misao*, no. 59-60, Sarajevo, 1983, 4-14.

<sup>115</sup> Muhammed Husejn Hejkel, *Život Muhammeda, a. s.*, translated from English by Murat Dizdarević, Muhamed Pašanbegović, Azra Saračević, Hamza Karčić, Ahmet Alibašić and Azra Arnautović, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2004.

<sup>116</sup> Taha Husein, *Dani*, translated with an introduction, notes, foreword, and afterword, by Nijaz Dizdarević, Matica srpska, Novi Sad, 1979. *Idem*: Ljiljan, Sarajevo, 2000.

<sup>117</sup> Taha Husein, *Dani*, translated from the Arabic by Esad Duraković, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1998.

Just before he published his translation of *al-Ayyām*, Nijaz Dizdarević discussed Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's never-ending search for shared values in the Islamic tradition and modern Arabic thought in "Taha Husein i njegovi Dani" [Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and his *Days*]. It was this search that made Ḥusayn an author of "modern" prose in the sense that his prose works, and especially his novels, are not easily classified. Dizdarević considers them a "hybrid" literary form consisting of real events, in which the imaginary plays a minimal role. As for Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's changeable relationship towards the Qur'an, Dizdarević argues that there is a distinctly negative attitude towards the Qur'an expressed through demystifying and satirical statements in his works written before 1945. The reverse can be felt after 1945, when the Qur'an becomes a subject of contemplation for him and he makes his social and political views explicit through reference to Qur'anic verses.<sup>118</sup> Dizdarević examines two literary aspects of *al-Ayyām*: its documentary side, expressed in the author's filtering of the external world through the perceptual abilities of a someone with disabilities (the protagonist is blind), which he supplements, while at the same time stripping the text of the quality of pure or neutral witness and adding a creative dimension; and its literariness, which, thanks to both his education and tradition, was the lens through which he interpreted the world. Dizdarević points out that his connection to language, in particular to listening and to hearing, is all the stronger because of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's own blindness, which has resulted in a narrative subjectivity that is "not strictly chronological, but is consecutive. Not overly descriptive but alive. Not scenic but memorable. Not situational but rhythmic..."<sup>119</sup>

As we have said, a second translation of *al-Ayyām* into Bosnian was published by Esad Duraković in 1998, to which he added a significant study on the poetics of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's work, in which Duraković affirms the genius of the writer and expresses his appreciation for both the author's creative strength and the spiritual context within which the work was written. Duraković's deliberations foreground Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's personality

<sup>118</sup> Nijaz Dizdarević, "Taha Husein i njegovi dani", *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 24, Sarajevo, 1979, 424.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 430.

as spiritual to the core and as his own cohesive force. Duraković directs attention to the gloomy atmosphere of the work, which is devoid of warmth and light, as a consequence of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's blindness, which forced him to experience the world through his other senses. His experience was strongly expressed in *al-Ayyam* and it creates a novel dimension that enriches the reader's experience. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's literary work had received enormous publicity, which added significantly to the mounting interest in his autobiography, which, as Duraković says, was expected to be an informative document on the life of one of the most significant literary phenomena in the modern Arabic world, as well as an account of the period through which he lived. That is the reason for the popularity of the autobiographical *al-Ayyām* in both Arabic and Western environments.<sup>120</sup>

Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr has used the plots of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's novels to present the ideas and messages woven into his creative work as a whole, whether those he has made explicit or those he has left to the reader to decipher. Al-Ṣabūr devotes special attention to *Mustaqbal al-taqāfa fī Miṣr* [*The Future of Culture in Egypt*] as a representation of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's own vacillation between the two national identities that, in his view, should dominate Egyptian society – an Islamic identity and a European one. Interestingly Ṭāhā Ḥusayn does not seem to have considered the existence of a third form – a modern Arabic national identity, which, according to al-Ṣabūr, should have been able to accept religion and classic Arabic civilization as inalienable parts of Egyptian heritage, while at the same time aspiring towards the ideals of modern world culture.<sup>121</sup>

Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's famous attempts to write a history of Arabic literature are discussed by Esad Duraković in his "Značajan pokušaj istorije književnosti kod Arapa" [A significant attempt at a history of literature amongst the Arabs], in which he sets out a diachronic analysis of the relationship between modern and classical Arabic literature. The view

<sup>120</sup> Esad Duraković, "Taha Husein – Put između tradicionalizma i tradicije", in: Esad Duraković, *Prolegomena za historiju...*, 425-439. Idem in: Taha Husein, *Dani*, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1998, 5-14.

<sup>121</sup> Salah Abdassabur, "Taha Husain", *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 45, Sarajevo, 1984, 101-113.



widespread in the modern Arabic world of classical literature as a tradition that one should not even attempt to surpass is, Duraković thinks, particularly indicative of the relationship of classical to modern Arabic literature, while also speaking of other important traditionalist forms of spiritual life, which have contributed to this way of thinking about tradition. Duraković reminds us that the period in which most of these creative works were composed coincided with the period of the most complete affirmation of Islam, but that classical Arabic literature nonetheless does not bear the marks of Islam as a religion, as is often falsely alleged. Rather it produced its greatest achievements when the Arabic Islamic Empire had reached its greatest extent. His writing a history of Arabic literature was a product of the needs of the time and the place in which Ṭāhā Ḥusayn lived, for which the literary past and general history had a sacred status that manifested itself in a ban on using modern research methods to approach them, in case one damaged the established “truth”. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn advocated for a revision of general history through the history of literature, in order to shift the understanding of tradition as static towards a “dynamic vision” of the past.<sup>122</sup>

In “Književnost umajadskog perioda u delu *Razgovori srijedom Taha Huseina*” [The literature of the Umayyad period in Ṭāhā Ḥusayn’s *Wednesday Conversations*] Duraković briefly sets out the state of literary criticism and the history of Arabic literature, knowledge of which is crucial for a correct understanding of the significance of the methodological approach he deployed in *Wednesday Conversations*. Duraković presents a virtuoso critical analysis of Ḥusayn’s interpretation of the general and historical context of literature in the Umayyad period through a comparative analysis of the urban and Udhri ghazals, analysis of love stories as products of the “popular imagination,” and poetic innovation in the Umayyad period as inseparable from Udhri love poetry. Duraković then emphasizes the important place that Umayyad poetry had for Ḥusayn’s understanding of the causal relationship between society and literature,

<sup>122</sup> Esad Duraković, “Značajan pokušaj istorije književnosti kod Arapa”, *Izraz*, no. 5, Sarajevo, 1978, 699-713.



as it was the complexity of that relationship that led him to question the authenticity of one form of Arabic poetry – the Udhri ghazal.<sup>123</sup>

Jusuf Ramić included a chapter on “Islamijati Taha Huseina” [The Islamiyat of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn] in his *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti* and in it he discusses *Alā hāmiš al-sīra* [On the margins of biography], a literary transposition of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in which Ḥusayn takes care to avoid distorting established historical facts and personalities. In his introduction to the book, Ḥusayn notes that his intention was not to write a history in the traditional sense but to paint a picture that had impressed itself upon his soul on reading the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.<sup>124</sup> One could say that this work is an emotional reflection on and representation of the Prophet’s biography that, based on historical fact and legends, has nonetheless sprung from the creative imagination of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn. It is another example of the influence of personalities and events from the history of Islam on modern Arabic literature.

There are no noteworthy published translations of the works of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in Bosnia and Herzegovina or critical reflections on his work, for that matter. One exception is Mirza Sarajkić’s examination of the influence of religion on the modern Arabic novel, published in 2021. It contextualizes the religious element in the modern Arabic novel at its ideological turning point through the prism of religious characters in the works of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Naḡīb Maḥfūz. Sarajkić expertly locates established topoi of the religious in the modern novel as an extremely influential cultural narrative, while problematizing the changeability of such representations of the religious, deconstructing secular stereotypes, and analyzing the cultural and societal consequences for novel narratives.<sup>125</sup>

Another very important work for the development of the modern Arabic novel is *Ibrāhīm al-Kātib* [Ibrahim the Writer] by Ibrāhīm al-

<sup>123</sup> E. Duraković, “Književnost umajadskog perioda u delu *Razgovori sredom Taha Huseina*”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 27/1977, Sarajevo, 1979, 197-224.

<sup>124</sup> J. Ramić, *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, 179-185.

<sup>125</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, “Slika religije u savremenom arapskom romanu”, *Context*, yr. 8. no. 1, Sarajevo, 2021, 33-64.

Māzinī (1889-1949), one of a generation of Arabic writers whose works faithfully reflected social life in Egypt at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, the novel has not been published in translation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but al-Māzinī's biography and work have been presented in outline in an essay by Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr. As his starting point in approaching the author's literary work overall, al-Ṣabūr takes his subjective ideas about literature, which express his subjective conception of a life in which literature, with all its inherent seriousness, can and should sometimes be based upon irony, including both sublime and ordinary moments, so as to develop an individual outlook on what surrounds one.<sup>126</sup> Interestingly al-Māzinī offers a solution to the eternal problem in Arabic literature of the relationship between two forms of linguistic idiom in Arabic, suggesting that the writer or poet must chose for themselves the most suitable language that best expresses their meaning, regardless of whether it is a folk idiom or an authentically ancient word that comes from the inner reaches of the Arabian peninsula. Al-Ṣabūr notes the role and significance of the novel *Ibrāhīm al-Kātib*, which he considers worthy of being singled out amongst modern Arabic novels, despite the indifference adopted by critics and readers towards the novel in the Arab world, as a result of al-Māzinī's modernity of thought, as expressed in the novel, and the peculiar nature of the plot, which is made up of three interconnected stories rather than just one.<sup>127</sup>

Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm's (1898-1987) novel *'Awda al-rūḥ* [*The Return of the Spirit*] is considered a turning point in the development of the Arabic novel, marking the transition from romanticism to realism. Al-Ṣabūr considers this the true inception of the authentic Arabic novel, not just for its ideas and artistic composition, but its language and style. A realist novel, it is nonetheless free of the direct influence of translations and adaptations of Western literature and radically developed the Arabic narrative idiom by abandoning kitschy style and excessive imagination and adopting a simple

<sup>126</sup> Salah Abdassabur, "Ibrahim al-Mazini", trans. Sulejman Grozdanić, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 45, Sarajevo, 1984, 144-156.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

and direct form of expression.<sup>128</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić points out that, in addition to his association with a new, mature, developed, committed literature amongst the Arabs, al-Ḥakīm also introduced reforms to the language – to the Arabic literary idiom. Al-Ḥakīm tried to use both literary and common Arabic in his works, rendering literary Arabic more pragmatic and open to certain phonetic, morphological, lexical, syntactical, and stylistic aspects of ordinary speech. Grozdanić has defined al-Ḥakīm’s language as literary, but a modern literary language that is in tune with the spoken language and with modernity.<sup>129</sup> Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm’s literary oeuvre is truly diverse and includes a number of dramas and plays, novels, short stories, letters, essays, and literary criticism. Translations of his essays, short stories, and excerpts from his novels and dramas have occasionally been published on the pages of Bosnian and Herzegovinian journals, but the only complete work published in Bosnian is his novel *Aṣfūr min al-šarq* [*Sparrow from the East*] in a translation by Suad Smailhodžić. It is a unique autobiographical novel that contains a wealth of information about al-Ḥakīm’s own life.<sup>130</sup>

The first Arabic writer to elevate the modern Arabic novel to the highest level of quality and aesthetic value was Naḡīb Maḥfūz (1911-2006). Before him the Arabic novel was weighed down by the moral didactic function and its role as cultural and nationalist propaganda. Despite his prominent role in the rebirth of Arabic literature, Maḥfūz gained international recognition after winning the Nobel prize for literature in 1988, which opened the doors of the world literary scene to him. *Al-Talāṭīyya* (*The Trilogy*) is the work for which Maḥfūz was awarded the Nobel prize. It represents an artistic projection of the changes and crises that affected Egyptian society between the two World Wars, viewed through the intertwining destinies of three generations of a middle-class family.

<sup>128</sup> Salah Abdassabur, op.cit., 156.

<sup>129</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Između prošlog i budućeg – nad književnim djelom Taufika al-Hakima”, *Odjek*, no. 18, Sarajevo, 1987, 8.

<sup>130</sup> Tawfiq al-Hakim, *Vrabac s Istoka*, trans. Suad Smailhodžić, Dobra knjiga, Sarajevo, 2008.

His sudden international popularity was also felt in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Maḥfūz and his work has been known mostly to Orientalists and small circles of admirers of Arabic literature. The same year he won the Nobel prize, the journal *Odjek* aptly published short articles by Sulejman Grozdanić, “Egipatski Balzac dvadesetog vijeka” [An Egyptian Balzac for the Twentieth century], and Srđan Janković, “Sufijska odanost pisanju – nad tekstem jednog davnašnjeg intervjuja sa Nagibom Mahfuzom u kairskoj Gumhuriji” [A Sufi commitment to writing – on the text of a long past interview with Naḡīb Maḥfūz in Cairo’s *Ġumhūriyya*], as well as a translation of one of Maḥfūz’s short stories.<sup>131</sup> The title of Grozdanić’s text reveals the comparative approach he took in the analysis of Maḥfūz’s work, rooted in the fact that many of those familiar with his literary oeuvre are of the view that he deserves the title of Egypt’s Balzac of the 20<sup>th</sup> century thanks to this thematic breadth and depth, his subtle and knowing analysis of social, spiritual, and moral developments in Egyptian society, and his generally humane attitude and engagement as well as for his literary prosody. Reflecting on an old interview with Maḥfūz he had read recently in the Egyptian newspaper *Ġumhūriyya*, Srđan Janković briefly presents Maḥfūz’s literary work and his contribution to development of the aesthetics and the communicational function of Arabic, as well as to the evolution of the modern Arabic linguistic idiom in literary prose. Janković draws our attention to Maḥfūz’s dialogues, written in literary Arabic, in contrast to other Arabic writers, who tend to use colloquial Arabic. Maḥfūz’s use of literary Arabic has earned him the title of the most read modern Arabic writer, because all his works are written in a language accessible to all Arabs. This important fact was also brought up by Mehmed Kico in “Nedžib Mahfuz i odbrana književnog jezika” [Naḡīb Maḥfūz and the defense of literary language], where he analyses the different periods of Maḥfūz’s life and the events that influenced his innate

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<sup>131</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Egipatski Balzac dvadesetog vijeka”; Srđan Janković, “Sufijska odanost pisanju – nad tekstem jednog davnašnjeg intervjuja sa Nagibom Mahfuzom u kairskoj gumhuriji”; Nagib Mahfuz, “Udes”, from the Arabic by Sulejman Grozdanić, *Odjek*, no. 21, Sarajevo, 1988, 13-15.

devotion to the Arabic language and his aspiration to identify the shared elements in Arabic culture, while prioritizing Arabic itself.<sup>132</sup>

An interesting piece by Anton Shammas, simply titled “Nagib Mahfuz” and published in *Odjek*, starts with a quote from one of his speeches, sent in written form to the Nobel Committee in lieu of attendance at the award ceremony. This excerpt from Maḥfūz’s speech, in which he describes his work as a meeting of two great civilizations – the Islamic and the Pharaonic, offered Shammas his starting-off point in discussing the relationship and historical connections between two other great civilizations – the Islamic and the European. Shammas points out that Maḥfūz’s books and the films he has written screenplays for, as well as films based on his works, are banned in most Arab countries. One possible reason for this is Maḥfūz’s views, which he has expressed to the Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahrām*, where he stated that Arabs need to find a way to live peacefully with Israel. This was the first time an Arab intellectual of Maḥfūz’s status had broken with the conspiracy of consensus in Arab politics.<sup>133</sup>

Up until the year 2000 only two of Maḥfūz novels has been published in Bosnian translation – *al-Karnak* [*Karnak*] translated by Halil Bjelak<sup>134</sup> and *Bayn al-qaṣrayn* [*Palace Walk*] translated by Sulejman Grozdanić.<sup>135</sup> *Bayn al-qaṣrayn* is the first part of *Trilogy*, which “represents the most complete, illustrative, compelling, and extensive portrayal of the wider intellectual, moral, and socio-political developments and reform in Egypt between the two wars.”<sup>136</sup> It should be noted that Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers also had access to translations of Maḥfūz’s novels published in Serbia. The translation of *al-Malḥama al-ḥarāfiš* [*The Harafish*] is of particular significance because Maḥfūz himself recommended it for translation in

<sup>132</sup> Mehmed Kico: “Nedžib Mahfuz i odbrana književnog jezika”, *Zbornik radova Fakulteta islamskih nauka*, no. 10, Sarajevo, 2005, 333-352.

<sup>133</sup> Anton Šamas, “Nagib Mahfuz”, translated from the English by Jadranka Arsenić, *Odjek*, no. 10, Sarajevo, 1989, 14.

<sup>134</sup> Nagib Mahfuz, *Karnak*, trans. Halil Bjelak, Univerzal, Tuzla, 1989.

<sup>135</sup> Nedžib Mahfuz, *Put između dva dvorca*, translated from the Arabic by Sulejman Grozdanić, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1990.

<sup>136</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Nedžib Mahfuz i njegova trilogija” in: *Put između dva dvorca*, 711.

Yugoslavia to the translator Rade Božović.<sup>137</sup> Svetlana Milić has given a detailed overview of translations of Maḥfūz's works published in Yugoslavia before 1990 in *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*.<sup>138</sup>

Access to Maḥfūz's creative work in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been significantly enriched recently by the translations of Mehmed Kico, who has published the following: *Tartara fawq al-Nīl* [*Adrift on the Nile*], *Layālī alf layl* [*Arabian Nights and Days*], *Ḥān al-Ḥalīlī* [*Khan al-Khalili*], *Mīrāmār* [*Miramar*], *al-Liṣṣ wa al-kalāb* [*The Thief and the Dogs*], *al-Qāhira al-ḡadīd* [*Cairo Modern*], *al-Ḥubb taḥt al-maṭar* [*Love in the Rain*], *al-Marāyā* [*Mirrors*] and *Ḥaḍr al-muḥtaram* [*Respected Sir*].<sup>139</sup>

In addition to these translations, Kico has also written and published two books on the evaluation of Maḥfūz's oeuvre. These are a reflection of Kico's own deliberations and personal impressions from time spent reading and translating Maḥfūz's work, as well as conversations with Maḥfūz himself. Kico has also published an overview of Maḥfūz's works and letters along with original critiques of the work.<sup>140</sup> These essays represent a very important contribution to the adoption and understanding of the poetics of Maḥfūz's literary oeuvre in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reception of his work here to date has shown that concretization through translations is more effective than the manifestation of literary critical opinion. Immanent treatments of his work, whether stylistic or linguistic treatments of the text or cultural and historical accounts, remain rare and the work of Mehmed Kico stands out amongst them, as does his work as a translator of Maḥfūz's work. In some of his texts, Kico has written about Maḥfūz's immeasurable contribution and that of his work to the

<sup>137</sup> Cited in: Ejub Todorovac, "Maḥfuz i njegov roman *Saga o bijednicima*", *Islamska misao*, no. 138, Sarajevo, 1990, 61-62.

<sup>138</sup> Svetlana Milić, "Povodom prevoda romana Nedžiba Maḥfuzi na srpskohrvatski jezik", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 39/1989, Sarajevo, 1990, 287-292.

<sup>139</sup> See: Zehra Alispahić, Amira Trnka Uznović, Vedad Hurić, "Bibliografija radova prof. Mehmeda Kice", *Zbornik radova Fakulteta islamskih nauka*, no. 26, Sarajevo, 2022, 349-351.

<sup>140</sup> Mehmed Kico, *Pogled u život i djelo Nedžiba Maḥfuzi*, Fakultet islamskih nauka, Sarajevo, 2006; Mehmed Kico, *Kosmopolitizam Nedžiba Maḥfuzi – u svjetlu translatologije i komunikologije*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2016.

affirmation of literary Arabic,<sup>141</sup> his analyses of female characters and of the position of women in a transitional period of Egyptian society,<sup>142</sup> and the tragedies unique to Egyptian society as depicted in his novels.<sup>143</sup>

When Maḥfūz died in 2006, Mirza Sarajkić published essays on his literary orientation in *Odjek* and *Novi izraz*. In his text, “In memoriam Nedžibu Mahfuzu”, he offered first a brief biography of the author and then excerpts from the “literary remains” that Maḥfūz had left behind him, which speak of the unjust division between the quantity and the quality of literary works, stressing faith as what gives meaning to each individual’s life, and of the Qur’an as a primary concept in Maḥfūz’s novels.<sup>144</sup> Sarajkić also sees Maḥfūz’s literary legacy as characterized by a transition from the historical to the realist novel in which the central themes at play are those of the depressing life, the political oppression of women, and the waning of all moral norms, followed by the nature of religion, science, and secular ideology.<sup>145</sup>

The condition of modernity and its challenges, faced by all layers of Egyptian society, are “reflected” in Yūsuf Idrīs’ novel *al-Ḥarām [Sin]*, translated into Bosnian and published by Esad Duraković.<sup>146</sup> It is interesting that the translation has retained the original Arabic title. The word *ḥarām* is so familiar and entrenched in Bosnian tradition that even people who do not know Arabic can understand the meaning and connotations of the title as referring to something forbidden or sinful. This practice of retaining words from the Arabic, which is to say the original language, in a translation is indicative of the cultural kinship and connection between

<sup>141</sup> M. Kico, “Kosmopolitizam Nedžiba Mahfuzi u ogledalu prevodenja”, *Znakovi vremena*, no. 65/66, Sarajevo, 2014, 261–270.

<sup>142</sup> M. Kico, “Žena u romanima Nedžiba Mahfuzi”, *Znakovi vremena*, no. 57–58, Sarajevo, 2012, 323–344.

<sup>143</sup> M. Kico, “Naravi tragedije u romanima Nedžiba Mahfuzi”, *Novi Muallim*, no. 57, Sarajevo, 2014, 95–100.

<sup>144</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, “In memoriam Nedžibu Mahfuzu”, *Odjek*, no. 3-4, Sarajevo, 2006, 116-119.

<sup>145</sup> M. Sarajkić, “Utihnula su čavrljanja na Nilu”, *Novi izraz*, no. 33-34, Sarajevo, 2006, 189-199.

<sup>146</sup> Jusuf Idris, *Haram*, trans. Esad Duraković, Tugra, Sarajevo, 2015.



the two environments and allows the Bosnian and Herzegovinian reader to place the novel more easily in its context, time, and place. In a short review of Duraković's translation of *Harām*, Munir Mujić describes the novel as a reflection on the conflict between different forms of justice and morals in Egyptian society and he points out Idrīs' passion for multilayered portrayals and analyzing people's character.<sup>147</sup>

The development and affirmation of the modern Arabic novel and of Arabic literature overall received a significant boost from the Iraqi-Palestinian writer Ğabrā Ibrāhīm Ğabrā (1919-1994). Through his novels, stories, prose poems, essays, and literary criticism, Ğabrā strove to overcome the dominant classicism of Arabic literature. His most famous work is the novel *al-Baḥt 'an Walīd Mas'ūd [In search of Walīd Mas'ūd]*, which has been published in a Bosnian translation by Esad Duraković.<sup>148</sup> In it Ğabrā problematizes two major challenges facing Palestinian society – the armed conflict and the refugee experience. The exceptional afterword to the translation by Duraković faithfully conveys the narrative and linguistic characteristics of the novel and offers a wealth of interesting information, including the author's biography, a poetological analysis and interpretation of his work, and a literary critique to help the reader's reception and understanding of the novel's complex structure.<sup>149</sup> Duraković points out that Ğabrā was wont to stress his intention of rendering the engaged nature of his work less obvious and so more valuable, but Arab critics have nonetheless often questioned how well his novels jibe with Arab reality and whether one can even talk about their engagement in so markedly literary a work. In this context, Duraković notes that it is precisely in this novel that one can see the story's message being carried by the expertly

<sup>147</sup> Munir Mujić, "Roman o sukobu različitih vrsta pravde i morala" (a review of the translation of the novel *Haram* by Jusuf Idris, translated by Esad Duraković), *Preporod*, no. 18, Sarajevo, 15. sept. 2015, 40.

<sup>148</sup> Ibrahim Džebra, *U potrazi za Velidom Mesudom*, trans. Esad Duraković, Zid, Sarajevo, 1995.

<sup>149</sup> Esad Duraković, "Ibrahim Džebra ili stasanje arapske proze", in: E. Duraković, *Prolegomena za historiju književnosti...*, 440-455.



crafted characters and situations and not through the author's fiat or by moralizing or similar writing.<sup>150</sup>

Unfortunately, the reception of Ğabrā's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been on a par with his reception in the Arab world. A short but informative review by Amir Ljubović of the novel *al-Baḥt 'an Walīd Mas 'ūd*, published when it was translated into Bosnian, draws attention to the fact that this was the work that earned Ğabrā his reputation as a leading Arab novelist and that it is considered the best work of modern Arabic prose, in intense communication with the Western literary tradition.<sup>151</sup> Mirza Sarajkić has noted that despite its great significance for the Arab world, there has been a lack of critical or public attention to this novel in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also briefly summarizes the plot and selects a few of its leading messages, like the superhuman battle for Palestine and the search for a meaning to life outside of Palestine, as well as Ğabrā's knowing depiction of blind nationalism and of the West's misunderstanding of and suspicion towards Easterners.<sup>152</sup>

In *Palestinski postkolonijalni roman i novela u djelima Ğabre 'Ibrāhīma Ğabre i Ğassāna Kanafānīja* [*The Palestinian postcolonial novel and novella in the works of Ğabrā Ibrahim Ğabrā and Ğassān Kanafānī*]<sup>153</sup> Dženita Karić uses the works of these two authors to examine themes of space and identity, the role of the female element, and the meaning of the *Nakba* in Palestinian prose literature. Karić deals extensively with post-colonial Palestinian literature, approaching it from a broader perspective, revealing how overlooked and neglected this literature is in the wider field of post-colonial studies. One of the key reasons the author offers for this is the source language of Palestinian literature – Arabic. Insofar as the mainstream of postcolonial criticism is focused on postcolonial literature

<sup>150</sup> E. Duraković, *Prologomena za historiju književnosti ...*, 455.

<sup>151</sup> Amir Ljubović, "U potrazi za Velidom Mesudom", (book review), *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 44-45/1994-95, Sarajevo, 1996, 458-459.

<sup>152</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, "Pred vjetrenjačama Bliskog istoka", *Odjek*, no. 3-4, Sarajevo, 2006, 156-158.

<sup>153</sup> Dženita Karić, *Palestinski postkolonijalni roman i novela u djelima Ğabre 'Ibrāhīma Ğabre i Ğassāna Kanafānīja*, Orijentalni institut, Posebna izdanja XXXVI, Sarajevo, 2011.

written in English and created in Anglophone areas, Arabic Palestinian literature represents a meeting point of countervailing and ambivalent relations and contradictions.

The second author mentioned by Karić in her study, Gassān Kanafānī (1936-1972) also belongs to the circle of Palestinian authors in exile, whose works were created outside of the brutal reality of everyday life in Palestine. One of the first texts published in a Bosnian journal presenting Kanafānī's literary work was "Književnost otpora Palestine" [The Literature of Resistance in Palestine] by Nağāḥ al-‘Attār, who characterised Kanafānī and his work *Adab al-muqāwama fī Filasṭīn al-muḥtalla* [*The Literature of Resistance in occupied Palestine*] as one in a series of proofs of the uniqueness of Palestine literature.<sup>154</sup> Kanafānī's best-known novel, *Riğāl fī al-šams* [*Men in the Sun*] was published in a Bosnian translation by Munir Mujić. In addition to the excellent translation, the Bosnian edition of the novel contains a foreword that covers both Kanafānī's biography and Mujić's reflections on his role as an author in developing the Arabic novel.<sup>155</sup> A text by Esad Duraković given as an afterword to the novel drew attention to the generally unsatisfactory reception of Arabic literary works in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian environment and provided an outline of the overall development of Arabic prose and Kanafānī's place in it.<sup>156</sup> Aside from the novel, *Riğāl fī al-šams*, which he described as more of a novella than a novel,<sup>157</sup> Duraković also stressed Kanafānī's work in the field of journalism and his studies in the field of literary theory. In a short review in *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* Tatjana Paić-Vukić outlined the basic characteristics of his literary prose, the dominant one

<sup>154</sup> Nedžah Al-Attar, "Književnost otpora Palestine", *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 151, Sarajevo, 1976, 252.

<sup>155</sup> Munir Mujić, "Predgovor", in: Gassan Kanafani, *Ljudi na suncu*, translated from the Arabic by Munir Mujić, Connectum, Sarajevo, 2006, 5-13.

<sup>156</sup> Esad Duraković, "Ljudi na suncu – metafora stradanja", in: Gassan Kanafani, *Ljudi na suncu*, 89-98.

<sup>157</sup> According to Duraković, the textual space of *Riğāl fī al-šams* is not wide nor are the characters profiled as one would expect in a novel, the temporal dimension of the text lacks novelistic depth, and the scope of the work does not achieve novelistic proportions either.

being his activism over the Palestinian problem, which lay at the heart of his political activity as an author.<sup>158</sup> In addition to dealing with Kanafānī's authorship as one of the main themes in her book, Dženita Karić has also published a text in which she presents a possible reading of the work in question, *Riğāl fī al-šams*. In addition to all of its specific features as a Palestinian novel, Karić gives due recognition to and analyses the work's postcolonial aspects, primarily the "ambiguity" or "double nature" and the "stripped back nature" of the characters, which speak to the layered complexity of Palestinian identity, and the motifs of the road, the desert, and the boundary, which speak to the powerful symbolism in Kanafānī's work.<sup>159</sup>

In 2012, *Gassan Kanafani: Iz zemlje tužnih narandži [Ghassān Kanafānī: From the land of sad oranges]*, edited by Hajrudin Somun, was published to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the author's death.<sup>160</sup> The book takes its title from one of his short stories and contains details of his life, his political activity, his work as an author, and his private life, as well as selections from his works, in which, by interweaving narrative with brutal realities from the rich past of Palestine, the writer describes the problems that the country and its inhabitants have passed through and are still facing.

Another member of the group of Arab authors who have bravely embarked upon this new phase in the development of the modern Arabic novel and thereby taken a significant place in modern Arabic literature is the Sudanese author al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ (1929-2009). His work has had a very widespread reception at the global level, with his collection of short stories and three novels going through multiple editions in very short order, with translations into a number of world languages. The novel *Mawsim al-ḥiğra ilā al-šimāl [The Time of Migration to the North]* is generally considered one of his most important works and it was published in a full

<sup>158</sup> Tatjana Paić-Vukić, "Ljudi na suncu Gasana Kanafanija", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 46/1996, Sarajevo, 1997, 87-88.

<sup>159</sup> Dženita Karić, "Postkolonijalni aspekti novele *Ljudi na suncu* Gassana Kanafanija", *Novi izraz*, no. 45-46, Sarajevo, 2009, 128-139.

<sup>160</sup> Gassan Kanafani, *Iz zemlje tužnih narandži*, translated by Hajrudin Somun, Dobra knjiga, Sarajevo, 2012.

Bosnian translation by Delila Dizdarević in 1995 under the title *Vrijeme seobe na sjever*. She also wrote an afterword in which she set out her own understanding and a possible reading of the novel.<sup>161</sup> Esad Duraković responded to some of the conclusions she drew in this afterword, expressing disagreement with her, as she had, amongst other things, stated that the novel was primarily about colonialism. Duraković offered a different “reading” of the novel, in which he singled out as its basic theme its psychological and moral portraiture of characters who had been forever displaced from the values of their homeland by their education in the West, but nonetheless never managed to fit into the system of Western values. Presenting the polyphonic structure of the novel, Duraković pointed out its fundamentally engaged nature, as it uses the resources of the modern novel form to interpret the conflict in self-awareness within the framework of the characters’ own social and cultural determinants. At the conceptual level, the novel is a literary treatment of the overarching contemporary encounter of values between East and West, presented through the characters of the protagonists and their destinies.<sup>162</sup>

A second edition of the novel *Mawsim al-hiğra ilā al-šimāl* was published in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2006 in a translation by Ahmed Zildžić, under the title *Sezona seobe na sjever [The Season of Migration to the North]*.<sup>163</sup> In addition to his translation, Zildžić also published a short literary critical reflection on the novel in *Odjek*, identifying the theoretical framework and postulates of postcolonial literature, which are evident in the work itself.<sup>164</sup> In addition to the change in the translation of the title, in which the lexeme *mawsim* is given in its meaning of “season”, as against Dizdarević’s translation of it as “time”, it is noticeable that Zildžić also offers a number of different translation solutions to those preferred

<sup>161</sup> Tajib Salih, *Vrijeme seobe na sjever*, translated by Delila Dizdarević, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1995.

<sup>162</sup> Esad Duraković, “Ka modernom strukturiranju arapskog romana”, *Odjek*, no. 4, Sarajevo, 1996, 29.

<sup>163</sup> Tajib Salih, *Sezona seobe na sjever*, translated by Ahmed Zildžić, Vrijeme, Zenica, 2006.

<sup>164</sup> Ahmed Zildžić, “Sezona seobe na sjever kao postkolonijalno štivo”, *Odjek*, no. 1, Sarajevo, 2007, 68-72.

by Dizdarević in the text of the novel itself, with the effect of enriching the degree of concretization his translation of the novel into Bosnian achieves, while also opening up room for a possible comparative study of the translations.

The generation of authors that appeared in the Arab world in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century would initiate the creation of a new literature, generally referred to as the “literature of the 60s”, whose major characteristics were withdrawal from the social realism of the 1950s and a powerful emphasis on the internal aspects of their works. One of the members of this “new generation” was *Bahā’ Ṭāhir* (1935-2022), a respected Egyptian novelist and short story writer. His novels *Hāla Ṣafīyya wa dayr* [*Aunt Safīyya and the monastery*],<sup>165</sup> *Wāḥa al-gurūb* [*Sunset Oasis*]<sup>166</sup> and *al-Ḥubb fī al-manfiyy* [*Love in exile*]<sup>167</sup> were all published in Bosnian translations during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In her reflection on the novel *Hāla Ṣafīyya wa dayr*, Zehra Alispahić points out that Ṭāhir found himself, after the period of major revolutionary changes in Egypt, one of a group of Egyptian writers who, after an initial expression of support for Nasser’s pan-Arabism, later turned their literary activity against the totalitarian character of his regime. These authors’ stories and novels became a stage for presenting their internal rebellion and protest. Alispahić also drew attention to the general shortfall in translation from Arabic to Bosnian of works that could inform the Bosnian public of contemporary events on the Arabic literary scene. The publication of Ṭāhir’s novel is significant for multiple reasons, in this regard. Regarding the actual translation of the work into Bosnian, Alispahić stresses the importance of the translator Marijana Kavčić’s competence and her own predilection for a literary turn of phrase, powerfully expressed in certain of her translation solutions.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Bahaa Taher, *Tetka Safija i manastir*, translated from the Arabic by Marijana Kavčić, Šahinpašić, Sarajevo, 2004.

<sup>166</sup> Bahaa Taher, *Oaza zalazećeg sunca*, translated from the Arabic by Nedim Ćatović, Buybook, Sarajevo, 2008.

<sup>167</sup> Bahaa Taher, *Ljubav u izgnanstvu*, translated from the Arabic by Zehra Alispahić, Tugra, Sarajevo, 2010.

<sup>168</sup> Zehra Alispahić, “Tetka Safija i manastir – Priča o jednostavnoj ljudskosti”, *Novi muallim*, no. 21, Sarajevo, 2005, 82-84.

Ṭāhir's second novel, *Wāḥa al-gurūb*, was published in a Bosnian translation immediately after Ṭāhir received a prestigious literary award, the "International Prize for Arabic Fiction", in 2007, and it seems likely that the award served as a sort of stimulus for production of the translation. In a text written to mark its publication in Bosnian, the translator, Nedim Ćatović, notes that Ṭāhir is one of the leading Egyptian and Arabic authors to bring together, successfully, in his novels the dilemmas of the region they come from with others that are not determined by geographical boundaries.<sup>169</sup>

Research has shown that modern Arabic novels that can be characterized as so-called "women's writing", given that they were written by women and that they are largely occupied with themes of the role and situation of women in Arab society, have proven particularly interesting to both the broader reading public in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to academic circles. One of the first Arabic novels written by a woman to provide a powerful depiction of the role of women in Arab society is *Ḥikāya Zahra [The Story of Zahra]* by the Lebanese author Ḥannān al-Šayḥ (born 1945). *Ḥikāya Zahra* is considered one of the most important works of Arabic "women's writing", and it was published in a Bosnian translation by Esad Duraković.<sup>170</sup> In her works Ḥannān al-Šayḥ generally focuses on the artistic transposition of the problematic of women's unenviable position and role in Arab society. In *Ḥikāya Zahra*, she bravely tears down the taboos of Arab society, which principally entail the constant emotional and physical subordination of women, which is not discussed in public, and the powerfully expressed sexuality involved in the plot of the novel. These are also the reasons why Ḥannān al-Šayḥ couldn't find a publisher for her novel in the Arab world and had to self-publish it. As with most of Duraković's translations of Arabic literature this novel is accompanied by a rich afterword in which *Ḥikāya Zahra* is presented as an authentic and artistic work of literature that communicates intensively with the Arabic literary tradition, not least

<sup>169</sup> <https://radiosarajevo.ba/magazin/tech/taher-oaza-zalazecceg-sunca/7835> (last visited: 23. 10. 2023)

<sup>170</sup> Hanan el-Šejh, *Zehrina priča*, translated from Arabic by Esad Duraković, Arabica ZID, Sarajevo, 1998.

through its own difference from and as a supplement to it. As such, the novel has been well received by readers, while modern literary criticism has placed it within its own value system as one of the leading works of novelistic prose in all of Arabic literature.<sup>171</sup> Nirman Moranjak-Bamburać has offered her own theoretical reflections on *Ḥikāya Zahra* in her paper, “Trijumf smrti ili Zehrina priča” [The Triumph of Death or The Story of Zahra], in which she stresses the scope for recognizing “women’s writing” in this novel. This is, however, writing that is realized in a very different way than one might have expected, insofar as what is foregrounded is not the adoption of a specific form of linguistic expression so much as a type of “unpeeling” of the story from its family and societal reality and so from the spoken idiom of the characters, Māğid and Hāšim, and from wartime discourse. Moranjak-Bamburać concludes that the novel is mediated by the techniques of focalization, internal monologue, and a free style, which is to say techniques for revealing stream of consciousness and “voiceless speech”, which facilitate a “mimetic illusion of the merging and interweaving of verbal and non-verbal layers of consciousness”.<sup>172</sup>

Turning to the reception of *Ḥikāya Zahra* beyond the literary sphere, one should mention that it was turned into a five-episode radio drama by Radio Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of a project of cooperation and cultural exchange between Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries. The half-hour episodes were broadcast during the evenings.<sup>173</sup>

Another novel that interestingly transposes postcolonial and feminist forms of resistance in the Arab world through an artistic vision is *Sindrillāt Masqaṭ* [*Muscat Cinderellas*] by Hudā Ḥamad (born 1981), a contemporary writer from Oman. Munir Mujić has published excerpts from this novel in translation. He has also written a short paper on the development and dominant themes and motives of the Omani novel,<sup>174</sup> as

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 210-205.

<sup>172</sup> Nirman Moranjak-Bamburać, “Trijumf smrti ili Zehrina priča”, *Novi izraz*, no. 8, Sarajevo, 2000, 44-50.

<sup>173</sup> <https://federalna.ba/hanan-al-sejh-zehrina-prica-peta-epizoda-5kch5> (last visited: 13. 10. 2023)

<sup>174</sup> See: “Savremena književnost iz Omana I (roman)”, *Život*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 2018, 390-401.



well as an essay that deals with the reconstruction of the novel and the complex and carnivalesque world of contemporary women in Oman. This novel presents a multitude of worlds, including the fantastic world of a female djinn, the brutal everyday reality of the ordinary Omani woman, the varied destinies of various Cinderellas from Muscat, and utopian moments at times of carnival magic. The author also reconstructs in her own unique way Bakhtin's ideas of the carnivalesque, dethroning, and polyphony, so that, as Sarajkić argues, the nature of the worlds presented to us can be deciphered with the help of Bakhtin's ideas, whose meaning Hudā Ḥamad multiplies within the context of Arabic culture and literature.<sup>175</sup> One should also note that both Mujić and Sarajkić make a considerable contribution in these texts, with their analysis of the novel and the literary techniques of Hudā Ḥamad, to recognizing and understanding the position and role of Omani writers and their works in the intra-national Arab essence.

The so-called literature of the Maghreb is an important part of complex Arab culture, as it includes literary works by Arab writers who have written their works in a quest for national identity and literary personality not just in Arabic but also in French. On the one hand, works written in French have the prospect of a wider reception abroad, but, on the other, problems appear with their reception in the Arab world, because a relationship of alienation is created between the works and their Arab readership.<sup>176</sup> In a paper on "Kuda ide marokanska književnost" [Where is Moroccan literature headed] Muḥammad Barād offers an analysis of literary currents and sentiment in Morocco, which have arisen as a consequence of social change in society there since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and draws attention to the excessive privileging of French at the expense of the vernacular and how it has reduced the reach of Maghrebi Arabic literature and hindered the relationship between authors and their readers.<sup>177</sup> Ḥadiġa

<sup>175</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, "Višeznačnost karnevalizacije u romanu Hude Hamad *Pepeljuge Maskata*", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 68/2018, Sarajevo, 2019, 67-90.

<sup>176</sup> See further: *Antologija alžirske poezije francuskog izraza*, selected and translated by V. Smiljanić-Đikić, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1975.

<sup>177</sup> Mohamed Berada, "Kuda ide marokanska književnost", translated from the French by Jelena Krstić, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 30, Sarajevo, 1980, 453-457.



Mahdī Bolfek points out, in a paper on “Magrebski roman (1954-1967) – od revolta do revolucije” [The Maghrebi novel (1954–1967) – from revolt to revolution] that the use of French as a form of literary expression has broadened the circle of readers, on the one hand, while at the same time leaving these works inaccessible to the very people of the environment they come from, namely most of the inhabitants of the countries of the Maghreb, who don’t speak French, just Arabic or one of its dialects, on the other.<sup>178</sup> Mahdī Bolfek stresses that the development of the novel form in Maghrebi literature is closely related to more organized work on raising national consciousness in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. In the initial phase, the Maghrebi novel was under considerable influence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French novel, so that it featured linear narrative and a functional organization of both time and space. As an “imported” literary form imposed wholesale on the Maghrebi writer, the novel brought with it its own structure and models, which were dependent on the time and place where the form first developed. In the next stage, Maghrebi novelists expressed their desire for autonomy increasingly forcefully in terms of their thematic schemata, with the appearance of a stark distancing from the aesthetic norms of the French novel. As a consequence of all this effort, there developed the two major characteristics of the Maghreb novel of political engagement, namely a thematic preoccupation with the anticolonial struggle and an orientation towards new aesthetic projects.<sup>179</sup> Important novels in this regard include *Qui se souvient de la mer* [Who remembers the sea]<sup>180</sup> by the Algerian writer Muḥammad Dīb (1920-2003), who up until the publication of this novel had been considered a powerful and inspired realist, while critics had described his works as interesting results of experimentation and a certain thematic and formal restlessness. The novel, *Qui se souvient de la mer*, represents a sort of turning point in Dīb’s writing and it is reasonable to say that after it was published he gave pride of place in his understanding

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<sup>178</sup> Hadidža Mahdi Bolfek, “Magrebski roman (1954-1967) – od revolta do revolucije”, *Izraz*, no. 10, Sarajevo, 1975, 305-324.

<sup>179</sup> Hadidža Mahdi Bolfek op. cit., 324.

<sup>180</sup> Mohamed Dib, *Ko se sjeća mora*, translated by Vojka Smiljanić and Osman Đikić, Prosveta, Belgrade, 1977.

of literature to the “symbolic” and “fantastical”. In a review of the novel published in *Izraz*, Darko Tanasković has drawn attention to Dīb’s basic literary orientation, for which, because of his acceptance of a new and more complex understanding of the writer’s mission, he is now to be included amongst a series of experimental and investigative writers who have taken an active approach to tradition which they consider more productive. These writers make use of ancient poetic and mythological traditions, images, and figures, through which, depending on the work and the author, the concrete functions of the traditional elements are distinguished and take on individualised directions.<sup>181</sup> It is worth noting that *Third Program* (Radio Sarajevo) published a text by Muḥammad Dīb in which he presented the cultural and historical links between Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco and described the powerful connections between the destinies of these three countries across history. Dīb particularly stressed that the connection in literature between these countries is visible through their literary affinities and the similar position of Maghrebi writers around the world.<sup>182</sup>

Another member of this generation of Algerian writers, intellectuals, and poets, with their focus on the future and refusal to avoid looking back at the past critically, is Aḥmad Ṭālib Ibrāhīm (born 1932), the author of the novel *Lettres de prison* [*Letters from prison*], which was translated into Serbo-Croatian back in the day. Jasna Bakšić has characterized this work as an authentic witness of its time which describes social ferment as processed through the artistic temperament and stands witness to the cross-fertilization of spiritual parallels, East and West.<sup>183</sup> It is worth noting that the publication of a Yugoslav translation of the novel, *Lettres de prison*,<sup>184</sup> was prompted primarily by a visit of Aḥmad Ṭālib Ibrāhīm in his role as Algeria’s Minister of foreign affairs. That is how this valuable literary work

<sup>181</sup> Darko Tanasković, “Alžirski lavirint i žudnja za morem”, *Izraz*, no. 11-12, Sarajevo, 1977, 1520.

<sup>182</sup> Mohamed Dīb, “Nekoliko aspekata magrebske književnosti”, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 39, Sarajevo, 1982, 656-659.

<sup>183</sup> Jasna Bakšić, “Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim: *Pisma iz zatvora*”, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 53-54, Sarajevo, 1986, 572.

<sup>184</sup> Ahmad Talib Ibrahim, *Pisma iz zatvora*, translated by Jasenka Tomašević, Gornji Milanovac, 1985.

became available to readers in the former Yugoslavia, largely as a result of non-literary needs and interests, primarily social and political ones. Darko Tanasković considers *Lettres de prison* a significant achievement in epistolary literature and an authentic document from the years in which the foundations of Algerian independence and cultural self-awareness were laid. Aḥmad Ṭālib Ibrāhīm tackles certain aspects of the complex issues affecting Arab societies in the novel, including finding the best way to establish a national cultural identity, namely by affirming the positive traditional values of Arabic as a language and of Arabic and Islamic cultural heritage and of Islam itself.<sup>185</sup> Ejub Todorovac has also described *Lettres de prison* as a model document on the course and outcome of a revolution seen from inside and from the perspective of an original and authentically Islamic mindset, which has much to say about the struggle of the Algerian people through its sublimation. He has also called attention to Aḥmad Ṭālib Ibrāhīm's premonitions regarding possible ideological conflict and doubts about the future leaders of contemporary Algerian society.<sup>186</sup>

‘Asya Ğabbār (born 1936) is one of the rare Arab female writers, particularly when it comes to literature in French. Her best-known work is the novel *Les alouettes naives [Naive Larks]*, in which she uses war as a framework for reflecting on the psychological condition and conflicts of individual characters, as she unfolds events from the past and the present in parallel, experienced from three perspectives.<sup>187</sup> Asya Ğabbār visited Bosnia and Herzegovina as a guest lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo and was present at the promotion of the Bosnian translation of her book *Oran, langue morte [The Tongue's Blood Does Not Run Dry: Algerian Stories]*.<sup>188</sup> Another work of hers, *Loin de Médine [Far from Medina]*, has also been translated into Bosnian. In it Ğabbār uses her artistic imagination to set out the destinies of women from the early

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<sup>185</sup> Darko Tanasković, “Mišlju kroz rešetke”, *Odjek*, no. 17, Sarajevo, 1985, 22.

<sup>186</sup> Ejub Todorovac, “Svjedočenje o jednoj generaciji”, *Islamska misao*, no. 96, Sarajevo, 1986, 36.

<sup>187</sup> Hadidža Mahdi Bolfek, op. cit., 323.

<sup>188</sup> Assia Djebar, *Oran, mrtvi jezik*, translated by Nermina Štraus, Jež, Sarajevo, 2000.

history of Islam history.<sup>189</sup> In her works, ‘Asya Ğabbār gives the leading role to the destinies and emotions of women who, regardless of their very significant place and role in the history of Islam, Islamic historians have relegated to the background. Instead of resenting and attacking the dominant male image of history, Ğabbār has focused on seeking lost, forgotten, or marginalized expressions of female experience and, drawing light from contemporary interpretations of literature, has offered a form of feminist reading of the history of Islam. Hanifa Kapidžić-Osmanagić points out that, with her approach to literary work from the perspective of women oppressed by men but also by other women, Ğabbār has taken a stand against cultural dictatorship, while at the same time trying to break down the fear “of another language”, insisting on the advantages of multilingualism. Kapidžić-Osmanagić links the biography and powerful literary engagement and linguistic expressiveness of ‘Asya Ğabbār as paradigmatic for the destinies of many Bosnian and Herzegovinian authors, regardless of their gender, who were forced into exile and emigration during a turbulent and particularly difficult period in history Bosnia and Herzegovina, the war against this country.<sup>190</sup>

## Short Stories

The developmental trend for Arabic short stories, from their first appearance to the present day, has been one of attempting to express various preoccupations and yearnings of the Arab national spirit. This is why the first Arab short stories rather resembled newspaper reports than stories in the modern sense of the form, and they were generally rounded off with a moral or some advice, which is entirely in line with the Arab mentality, which has traditionally liked the saying and the wise saw in its literature. Šabrī Ḥāfiẓ has presented the beginnings and development

<sup>189</sup> Assia Djebar, *Daleko od Medine*, translated by Nermina Štraus, Sejtarija, Sarajevo, 2003.

<sup>190</sup> Hanifa Kapidžić-Osmanagić, “Assia Djebar, žena arapsko-berberska, francuskog pisanog izraza”, *Novi izraz*, no. 10-11, Sarajevo, Winter 2000/Spring 2001, 46-57.

of the Arab short story in his work “Arapska pripovijetka i revolucija” [The Arab Short Story and Revolution], which uses the short stories of a number of important Arab authors to illustrate the literary and conceptual battles and revolt of Arab writers. Concluding that the Arab short story has succeeded in becoming the story of the modern Arab revolution, responding dialectically to the demands for necessary change as they impose themselves on modern Arab society, Ṣabrī Ḥāfiẓ singles out Yūsuf Idrīs as the writer who achieved the greatest reach and greatest artistic and maturity in this realm.<sup>191</sup> Yūsuf Idrīs (1927-1991) is one of the authors who has contributed most to the development of the short story in modern Arabic literature and its strong connection to the sociopolitical situation and ongoing ferment in Arab societies. In an interview given to *Odjek* in 1977, Idrīs stated that his works had a local and more specifically an Egyptian character, but that that was precisely the reason why they also had a universal significance. Yūsuf Idrīs expressed the author’s impact on society and social thought in two ways: “An author achieves direct impact through what he has himself experienced and on account of which he writes, and indirect influence, which is not necessarily fast, by what he treats of... In brief, the writer is the creator of the conscience of his time. The more capable he is of penetrating those areas of consciousness that create reflection, procedures, that shape wishes and hopes, or more precisely the extent to which his works insist on awakening awareness, adding new layers, switching themes, offering examples, the better he succeeds.”<sup>192</sup>

A collection of stories by Yūsuf Idrīs, selected by Sulejman Grozdanić, appeared in 1977, under the title *Šejh baba i druge pripovijetke [Sheikh Baba and other stories]*.<sup>193</sup> It is worth noting that Grozdanić received clear recommendations personally from Yūsuf Idrīs of what stories to include

<sup>191</sup> Sabri Hafiz, “Arapska pripovijetka i revolucija”, translated from the Arabic by Sulejman Grozdanić, *Život*, no. 5, Sarajevo, 1975, 494-502.

<sup>192</sup> Jusuf Idris, “Svaki pisac kontinent za sebe”, an interview with Jusuf Idris by Minka Memija, *Odjek*, no. 9, Sarajevo, 1977, 5.

<sup>193</sup> Jusuf Idris, *Šejh baba i druge pripovijetke*, selected by Sulejman Grozdanić, translated by Sulejman Grozdanić, Nada Bojanić, Jasna Šamić, and Hatidža Čar, Udruženi izdavači Jugoslavije, Belgrade, 1977.

in the collection. Nonetheless, on the basis of his own experience as a translator and assessment of the taste and interests of the local reading public, Grozdanić finally settled on a different selection of stories than was suggested by Idrīs. On publication of the book, Grozdanić presented Idrīs' literary oeuvre in *Odjek*, making clear that as a writer he had been responsible for establishing the modern Arabic and Egyptian short story in terms of form, expression, theme, and message. Grozdanić described the stories as modern, economical, and organized so that the structure bears the meaning without superfluity. Each story is an entire image, while they are expressed in an idiom that is at once elusive and magical in its simplicity.<sup>194</sup> Stories by Idrīs have appeared periodically in *Odjek* and *Život* in translations by Jasna Šamić, Hatidža Čar-Drnda, and Sulejman Grozdanić.<sup>195</sup> In discussing them, one should also mention the work of Elma Dizdar, who has analyzed them through the lens of syntactical analysis. She has shown, with her analysis of the syntactical procedures he uses in four of his stories, that his use of syntax and various syntactical procedures means that his language is not just a way of transmitting a content but itself establishes a new approach to meaning at the level of narrative figures. The elliptical, ambiguous, metaphorical, and overall unusual nature of his sentences in the stories “draws in” the reader to his world and forces them to seek for meaning and sense for themselves.<sup>196</sup>

The Arabic story is also represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina by a short selection of the tales of al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ as translated by Zihnija Imamović and published in *Odjek*. The works chosen include excerpts from the novel *Mawsim al-ḥiğra ilā al-šimāl* and some short stories. In a brief reflection published alongside the translations, Imamović states that the stories of al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ bring together in an original and fertile way the author's own experience and knowing appropriation of the achievements

<sup>194</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Između apsurda i nade”, *Odjek*, no. 21, Sarajevo, 1977, 7.

<sup>195</sup> See: Dž. Babović, *Recepcija arapske književnosti...* 127.

<sup>196</sup> Elma Dizdar, “O specifičnostima sintakse književnoumjetničkog stila: *slikanje sintaksom* u kratkim pričama Jusufa Idrisa”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 69/2019, Sarajevo, 2020, 1-22.

and values of Western literature, as well as sources from the rich Arabic literary tradition, with a highly marked sense for language.<sup>197</sup>

## The Drama

The first dramas of Arabic literature appear at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and amongst the pioneers in this form of literature were Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr and Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, who in any case belong to the pleiad of Arab authors who have promoted and themselves followed modern currents in Arabic literature and whose works were known in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Amongst his other works, al-Ṣabūr was known as the author of poetic dramas in which he reinterpreted the Arabic literary tradition, resituating it in the contemporary political and social context. So, in one of his dramas, *Layla wa al-Mağnūn* [*Layla and Majnun*], published in Bosnian in 2008, he provides a portrait of the shortcomings and hypocrisy of the time in which he lived, in which the political regime was supreme authority and the individual reduced to the lowest level of existence, through a framing story of two lovers.<sup>198</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, who translated the drama into Bosnian, stresses as its message that the most profound reserves of human intimacy are under threat in a world of political rulemaking and that love becomes impossible in a world so constituted.<sup>199</sup> Al-Ṣabūr’s most significant and best known work is generally considered to be his play *Ma’sāt al-Ḥallāğ* [*The Tragedy of Hallaj*]. Munir Mujić has published the plot and a translation of certain sequences from the play along with a brief analysis, pointing out that it is a work whose heterotopicality of meaning places the reader before a dilemma as to whether he is reading a social drama or a drama that speaks of the tragedy of a mystic. Mujić also points

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<sup>197</sup> Tajib Salih, “Dum drvo Wad Hamida”, translated from the Arabic by Z. Imamović, *Život*, no. 11-12, Sarajevo, 1977, 674.

<sup>198</sup> Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Ṣabūr, *Lejla i Medžnun*, translated from the Arabic by Mirza Sarajkić, Dobra knjiga, Sarajevo, 2008.

<sup>199</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, “Medžnun i Lejla pred oltarom politike”, *Pismo*, no. 4, Sarajevo, 2006, 213-219.



out that there is a powerful reverberation throughout the drama of the ideas of T.S. Eliot, who had a major influence on al-Šabūr and his literary work.<sup>200</sup>

Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm is another author who has left a significant mark on the Arabic drama. His play *Nahr al-ḡunūn* [*The River of Madness*] was published in *Život* in a translation by Darko Tanasković. Tanasković also published a biography of al-Ḥakīm alongside the translation, with a short notice on the drama in which he stressed that it was a philosophical tale and that the basic ideas from which it had been crafted were derived from al-Ḥakīm's views regarding the necessity of individual freedom and the tragic suppression of individual judgement under pressure from the social environment. Reflecting on al-Ḥakīm's early literary works, Tanasković noted that one could find in works of that period a mixing together of the author's penchant for philosophical meditation and the symbolic and abstract treatment of questions of human destiny, on the one hand, and his sense for everyday life and the realistic representation of social realities and the observation of immediate societal needs, on the other.<sup>201</sup>

Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm also wrote a large number of pieces for the theatre in which a range of movements are represented with a broad spectrum of themes, from contemporary life to legend, from the countryside to the city, from the present to the past, with a great deal of variety in their artistic elaboration and approach to their themes: from symbolism to irony, from dense dialogue reminiscent of poetry to dialogue expressive of everyday speech. For all their broad dramatic scope and artistic variety, al-Ḥakīm's theatrical works were not given a positive reception in the Arab world, and remained, as al-Šabūr notes, generally unattractive to the broader theatrical public so that publication in book form remains their only medium of dissemination.<sup>202</sup>

In his book, *Na horizontima arapske književnosti*, Sulejman Grozdanić has provided a studious and systematic study of al-Ḥakīm's intellectual dramas from the stylistic, thematic, and comparative literature perspectives.

<sup>200</sup> Munir Mujić, "Posezanje za arhetipom: *Halladžova tragedija* Šalāḥa 'abd al-Šabūra", *Pismo*, V/I, Sarajevo, 2007, 266-273.

<sup>201</sup> Taufīq al-Hakīm, "Reka ludila", *Život*, no. 2, Sarajevo, 1978, 200.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.



By analysing the plots and providing a literary critical reflection on *Ahl al-Kahf* [*The people of the cave*], *Šaharzād* [*Scheherazade*], *Sulaymān al-Ḥakīm* [*Soloman the Wise*], *al-Malik Udīb* [*King Oedipus*] and *Pigmalion* [*Pygmalion*] Grozdanić offers us an interpretation of al-Ḥakīm's mindset and understanding of the "intellectual and moral" condition of modern Arab society.<sup>203</sup> Grozdanić points out that al-Ḥakīm has a dual approach to his intellectually complex problematic. In his essays and popular works, he reflects in a way that is full of consideration for his sociopolitical and intellectual and moral situation both in history and geographically, while in his intellectual dramas certain intellectual and moral forces and structures in his own consciousness speak through the author, so that a fundamental thread running through al-Ḥakīm's intellectual dramas is a call for a rationally historical and dialectical way of thinking, against the dogmatic and idealist form of understanding. Unfortunately, most of al-Ḥakīm's critics have failed to reveal this "hinterland" to his artistic work, and Grozdanić thinks that this has prevented a better understanding of the essential question that al-Ḥakīm is broaching, which is whether human beings are doomed to think and understand their own times and their position within history in a dogmatic and idealist and irrational theological way, or something else as possible.<sup>204</sup> Grozdanić uses an interesting comparison to connect the heroes of Greek tragedy with the heroes of al-Ḥakīm's dramas, drawing attention less to their similarities than to the differences in their characters. While the tragic powerlessness of the Greek heroes is determined by something different, the tragic futility of al-Ḥakīm's heroes comes from within themselves, so that their callousness is a result of their own understanding of things and of the situation they find themselves in. In al-Ḥakīm's dramas, conflict does not have an emotional character, because his heroes lack a sense of responsibility, sin, and guilt in contrast to the classical European understanding of tragedy.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> S. Grozdanić, "Misaone drame Tawfīqa al-Hakīma", in: *Na horizontima arapske književnosti*, 109-142.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-137.

In *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, Jusuf Ramić dedicates a chapter entitled “Islamijjati Teufika el-Hakima” [The Islamiyyat of Teufik al-Ḥakīm] to al-Ḥakīm’s works in the field of Islamic studies,<sup>206</sup> the most important of which is his biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, written in the form of a drama. The work is structured in five chapters and covers the period of the Prophet’s birth, the struggle of the first Muslims, and the Hijrah or flight from Mecca to Medina; the life of the converts and helpers (the Ansar) in Medina; the slander which some of companions laid against the Prophet’s wife, Aisha, and the final days of the life of the Prophet of God, peace be upon him. It is important to note that al-Ḥakīm approached the Prophet’s biography as an artist, in much the same way as his countryman Tāhā Ḥusayn, and not as a historian or theologian. The sources he drew on for his drama are generally the classical Arabic biographies of the Prophet, peace be upon him, which abound not just in reliable historical facts but also in a large number of legends, which suited al-Ḥakīm perfectly as an artist.<sup>207</sup> Al-Ḥakīm not infrequently found artistic inspiration in the Qur’an and in Arabic cultural and literary tradition. He took over the plot for his drama *Ahl al-Kahf* from the Qur’an and the plot for *Scheherazade* from *The Thousand and One Nights*, which incidentally speaks to and confirms the timeless significance of these works and their literary and aesthetic value, while highlighting that al-Ḥakīm succeeded in mediating between forms of art by focusing on the historical reception and appropriation of works from the past.<sup>208</sup>

Our next stop on the path of dramaturgy inspired by Arabic cultural and literary tradition is the drama *al-Gufrān – Risāla maṣraḥiyya* [*Taking leave – A theatrical epistle*] by the novelist and playwright ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Madanī (born 1938). The play represents al-Madanī’s contemporary reworking of al-Ma‘arrī’s *Risāla al-gufrān*. Darko Tanasković has an extensive and comprehensive essay on the drama and its author in *Prilozi*

<sup>206</sup> Jusuf Ramić, “Islamijjati Teufika el-Hakima”, *Islamska misao*, no. 6, Sarajevo, 1979, 6-7. Idem in: J. Ramić, *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, 192-202.

<sup>207</sup> J. Ramić, *Obzorja arapsko-islamske književnosti*, 7.

<sup>208</sup> See: H. R. Jauss, *Estetika recepcije*, 57.

za orijentalnu filologiju.<sup>209</sup> For all al-Madanī's attempts to bring about a radical turnaround in Tunisian literature through the experimental novel and novella, Tanasković consider him primarily a dramatic author. Drawing upon historical events and personalities, al-Madanī constructed dramas of a simple structure, with no real plot or tension, that rely on the resources of parody, allegory, the grotesque, and shock. A major "advantage" of the Arabic theatre that "favored" al-Madanī is the lack of an Arab dramatic tradition, so that the Arab stage was unencumbered by the vices of a past or of a theatrical tradition. Al-Madanī's artistic approach in *al-Gufrān* proved aggressive and destructive in relation to the established system of dominant religious and social values of Arab Islamic civilization. Tanasković believes that his goal was radical demystification, a clearing of the ground for a new type of rationality at the heart of which lay the motive power of positive doubt, which is limited by the corrosive mechanism of skepticism. When it comes to Arabic literary criticism's views of him, two quite opposite schools of thought seem to have developed. On the one hand were those who shared al-Madanī's views and gave their full support to and piled praise on him and his work, while on the other side were the critics who looked with disfavor on his experimentalism and the great dollops of nihilism and destructiveness in his drama *al-Gufrān*. Tanasković singles out the view of Abū Zayān al-Sa'dī, the major opponent of experimental literature, who described al-Madanī's work as destructive and directed towards the degeneration of the social conscience. Al-Sa'dī went so far in his critique as to declare al-Madanī's *al-Gufrān* plagiarism.<sup>210</sup> In the view of Ṭāhar al-Bakrī, al-Madanī's avant-garde-ism is deeply rooted in the Arab Islamic heritage on which he drew for his very ancient narrative forms so as to draw attention to current themes in Arab society. Al-Bakrī interpreted al-Madanī's highly popular essay on experimental literature as a call to new departures in Arabic literature, but also as a severe criticism of conformist and conservative rhetoric.<sup>211</sup> One should also note that one of

<sup>209</sup> Darko Tanasković, "Da li bi al-Ma'arrī 'oprostio' al-Madanīju", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 28-29/1978-9, Sarajevo, 1980, 147-168.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>211</sup> Tahar Bekri, "Postoji li tuniska književnost", *Život*, no. 7-8, Sarajevo, 1987, 170.

al-Madanī's short stories was published in *Život*, with a short critical note by the translator, Nadežda Obradović, who stressed its marked rejection of the codes of both ancient Arabic literature and modern Westernizing poetry – the former as survivals from feudal ideology, the latter as a foreign body within the Arab environment.<sup>212</sup>

One of the few Arab dramas to be presented in theatrical performance in this region is *Palestine trahie* [*Palestine betrayed*] by Kātib Yāsīn, which was included in the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) in 1985. An interview was published in *Odjek* for the occasion, in which Yāsīn briefly presented *Palestine trahie* and its message. In the interview, Yāsīn reflected on the inevitable problem of language in the literary work of Maghrebi writers, which is, again, directly related to the national identity of people in that region. A basic theme of *Palestine trahie* is a critique of the misuse of religion as a weapon against the further adoption of socialism. Yāsīn claims that this is where the need to stand against all forms of dogma, including religious, that threaten and undermine revolution, comes from.<sup>213</sup> Even though he achieved fame as a writer in the French literary idiom, Yāsīn wrote *Palestine trahie* in the Arabic vernacular. The play is written in the genre of comedy and behind the protagonist Muḥammad one can discern the figure of Juha, better known in this region as Nasrudin-hodža. Jasmina Musabegović has translated an excerpt from the play in *Odjek* under the title *Iznevjerena Palestina – dvohiljadugodišnji rat* [*Palestine betrayed – the 2000 year war*].<sup>214</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Ezedin Madani, "Smrt od gušenja", translated by Nadežda Obradović, *Život*, no. 10, Sarajevo, 1986, 351.

<sup>213</sup> "Na izvorima narodnog", J. Musabegović in conversation with Kātib Yāsīn, *Odjek*, no. 17, Sarajevo, 1985, 15.

<sup>214</sup> Kateb Jasin, *Iznevjerena Palestina – dvohiljadugodišnji rat*, translated by J. Musabegović, *Odjek*, no. 17, Sarajevo, 1985, 14.

## Poetry

The best way to follow the beginnings and development of modern Arabic poetry, its permeation by European or Western poetry and poetics, and the succession of various literary movements is through anthologies or collections which appear as documents in their own right to the thoughts and feelings of a given generation. They are therefore of particular importance to the study of literary history. In this regard, very significant collections of modern Arabic poetry have been published in or around the former Yugoslavia that rely on the aesthetic judgement and judicious evaluation of competent translators and editors. In the period from 1982 to 1984, the publisher “Bagdala” from Kruševac issued a series of collections of Arabic poetry from Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, and Syria. The collections were edited by Muḥammad Mūfaqu, while the translation, foreword and afterword for each book was by Esad Duraković.<sup>215</sup> Duraković, in cooperation with Rade Božović, also published a translation of a collection of poetry entitled *Savremena poezija arapskog Zapada [Modern Poetry of the Arab West]*, edited by Aḥmad Suwaylam, which contained works by Arab poets from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, the Sudan, and Tunisia,<sup>216</sup> followed in 1994 by another collection, *Poezija arapskog Istoka XX vijeka [Poetry of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arab East]*, which brought together in one place the poetry of Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian poets.<sup>217</sup> One can therefore state that during the 1980s Duraković made a noteworthy contribution to bringing contemporary Arab poetry to a readership across the former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his selection of Arab poets and their poetry, Duraković was led by aesthetic principles, but also by the reception he expected

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<sup>215</sup> *Savremena poezija Palestine*, Bagdala, Kruševac, 1979; *Savremena poezija Jordana*, Bagdala, Kruševac, 1982; *Savremena poezija Kuvajta*, Bagdala, Kruševac, 1982; *Savremena poezija Sirije*, Bagdala, Kruševac, 1983.

<sup>216</sup> *Savremena poezija arapskog Zapada*, edited by Ahmed Suvaylam, translated by Rade Božović and Esad Duraković, Bagdala, Kruševac, 1980.

<sup>217</sup> *Poezija arapskog Istoka XX vijeka*, selection, translation from the Arabic, and notes on the poets by Esad Duraković, Bosanska knjiga, Sarajevo, 1994.

the poems to be given by Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers, with, as Amir Ljubović has pointed out, a concomitant change in the evaluative relationship to the poetry, naturally in a positive sense.<sup>218</sup> Minka Memija has also offered a general conclusion in her review of *Savremena poezija Kuvajta [Modern Kuwaiti Poetry]* that also applies to the other collections, which is that they not only offer insight into modern Arabic poetry but can also serve as a very eloquent illustration of the major societal and cultural changes in Kuwaiti and, more broadly, Arab society overall.<sup>219</sup> It is worth noting that Duraković made room in his collection of poetry for poets from Arab countries that were unjustly neglected in most anthologies of Arab or Arabic poetry or at best represented by only a few poets, such as Kuwait or Jordan. Each of these collections is accompanied by valuable studies in which Duraković presents the development of contemporary Arabic poetry and the socio-historical conditions under which it appeared, with competent interpretations of its poetics. While the collections of poetry may at first glance seem to have been put together on a regional division of the Arab world, the actual selection of poets and works makes clear the real differences between the poetry of the different Arab peoples, which are neither insignificant nor negligible. Accordingly, in reading this poetry, one encounters and can analyze the constant ferment of old and new literary movements, from neoclassicism, romanticism, and symbolism all the way to modernism and the avant-garde. Here one should note that these collections do not merely enrich translated Arabic literature in Bosnia in Herzegovina with valuable new literary and artistic translations. They also allow for the evaluation of an entire segment of Arabic literature – poetry, which has developed over the centuries as an integral part of the Arab mentality and tradition.

Of the Arabic poets who endeavored at the beginning of the period of Renaissance in Arabic poetry to move away from intellectual vacuity, forced style, and thematic limitations, it was Ḥalīl Muṭrān (1870-1949), known as the poet “from two homelands” – he was born in Lebanon with

<sup>218</sup> Amir Ljubović, “Poezija arapskog istoka XX vijeka”, (book review), *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 44-45/1994-95, Sarajevo, 1996, 460-462.

<sup>219</sup> Minka Memija, “Poezija mijena”, *Odjek*, no. 7, Sarajevo, 1983, 23.

which he remained connected throughout his life to his work, even though he lived and died in Egypt – who went furthest. Muṭrān’s poetry represents a period of transformation and experimentation in Arabic poetry, and he chose a measured form of expression, while at the same time retaining a degree of dependence on the poetic tradition and acceptance and adaptation to contemporary currents in literature. The collection of Muṭrān’s poems was published in Bosnian in 2010 during the 12<sup>th</sup> International Summit of Culture and the Dialogue of Civilizations organized by the al-Babtin foundation, which was entitled “Halil Mutran and Mehmedalija Mak Dizdar” and was held that year in Sarajevo. The book *Izbor iz poezije Halila Mutrana [A Selection from the Poetry of Halil Mutran]*, edited and translated by Amra Mulović and Munir Mujić, was a bilingual edition, in both Arabic and Bosnian, and contains 43 of his poems. In the introduction to the selection, M. Mujić places Muṭrān’s poetry as on the boundary between neoclassicism and romanticism, concluding that Muṭrān in fact links these two movements, bringing the old and the new in Arabic literature together in his own poetry.<sup>220</sup> In her review of this newly published selection of Muṭrān’s poetry, Elma Dizdar pointed out that the selected poems reflected one of the poet’s major contributions to the development of Arabic poetry, his promotion of thematic unity, on the one hand, while, on the other, they illustrate the variety of themes and influences that permeate poetry produced on the hinge of tradition and the new, East and West, neoclassicism and romanticism.<sup>221</sup> The holding of the aforementioned summit in Sarajevo was also the occasion for publication of a number of further translations from Arabic literature, including the book *Bosna u savremenoj arapskoj poeziji: Izbor pjesama i studija [Bosnia in contemporary Arabic poetry: a selection of poems and studies]*, which was edited and selected by Muḥammad al-Mašāyih and translated from the Arabic by Elma Dizdar and Mirza Sarajkić.<sup>222</sup> The book is thematically

<sup>220</sup> Munir Mujić and Amra Mulović, *Izbor iz poezije Halila Mutrana*, The Abdulaziz Saud al-Babtin Foundation for the Promotion of Poetry, Kuwait, 2010.

<sup>221</sup> Elma Dizdar, Munir Mujić and Amra Mulović, “Izbor iz poezije Halila Mutrana”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 60/2010, Sarajevo, 2011, 489-490.

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.albaptainlibrary.org/pdf/34.pdf> (last visited: 23.11.2023)



divided into two sections, the first of which contains a study setting out a cross-section of cultural and historical links between Bosnia and the Arab world, while the second section gives an integral translation and poetic version of the selected Arabic poems on Bosnia. One senses in the translated poetry the exceptionally lyrical, warm, and compassionate attitude of the Arab poets as they lament over the destiny of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Bosniak people during the aggression of 1992-1995.

There can be little doubt as to the significant contribution made to the renewal of Arabic literature and particularly poetry by the homogenous migration of authors, mostly Arab Christians, from Syria, the Lebanon, and Palestine to the United States of America. Amongst the characteristics of the émigrés' poetic work are a much freer use of language, the breaking up of mono-rhymes, and, particularly significant, the introduction of drama and prose poetry into Arabic literature.<sup>223</sup> The leading representative of Mahjar literature and also the best-known Arab poet in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Ḥalīl Ğubrān (1883-1931). The number of published translations, whether from Arabic or English, speaks to the widespread reception of the works of this author in our region. One of the first translations from Ḥalīl Ğubrān's literary corpus to be published in the region of the former Yugoslavia was his *Duhovne izreke [Spiritual Sayings]*, in a translation by Jasmina Puljo.<sup>224</sup> Given the shortage of translations from Arabic literature, this work would always have been welcome, but there were a number of significant shortcomings in the translation itself, to which Esad Duraković reacted in his critique.<sup>225</sup> In fact, as Duraković pointed out, there is no book with this title in Ğubrān's oeuvre, but the editor and translator of the book failed to note anywhere that the title and the form of the book were the result of their and not of Ğubrān's choice. Moreover, the title of the original or the language it is translated from are not noted anywhere in the book. Further,

<sup>223</sup> For more on the first appearance, development, and poetics of Mahjar literature, see: E. Duraković, "Okviri i pretpostavke književnosti mahdžera", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 34/1984, Sarajevo, 1985, 45-77.

<sup>224</sup> Kahlil Gibran, *Duhovne izreke*, translated by Jasmina Puljo, Grafos, Belgrade, 1981.

<sup>225</sup> Esad Duraković, "O jednom manjkavom prevodu", *Odjek*, no. 2, Sarajevo, 1983, 20-21.



comparison with the text of the originals, viz. the Arabic text, reveals an inconsistent transferral of Ğubrān's fault, the omission of certain sentences and names, and the inappropriate translation of certain Arabic words of broader meaning. In the end, Duraković nonetheless took the view that the translation, for all its faults, represented a significant contribution to the process of acquainting the public in Bosnia and Herzegovina with Arabic literature, though, as he insisted, it would have been much better if the translator and publisher had shown a somewhat greater sense of responsibility.<sup>226</sup>

In 1986 Esad Duraković published a selection of Ğubrān's literary work in his book, *Mirisni plodovi duše* [*The scented fruits of the soul*]. On this occasion, Darko Tanasković presented the book in *Odjek*, with his own thoughts on the reception of Ğubrān's works in the various parts of what was then still Yugoslavia. Tanasković pointed out that Ğubrān was the favorite and best-represented Oriental poet in the Yugoslav environment, which was largely a reflection of the widespread and lasting acceptance of his works in the West as a whole but especially in English-speaking areas. There was however also a favorable constellation for the reception of his works in terms of the horizon of expectations and the literary climate in the Yugoslav spiritual area.<sup>227</sup> Tanasković evaluated Duraković's interpretative translation as: "a masterly selection, a surefooted translation, and an informative afterword to the book, *Mirisni plodovi duše* shows that Esad Duraković knows well not just Ğubrān's work but all of Mahjar literature too."<sup>228</sup>

One of the best known of his works is *The Prophet*, which he began writing in Arabic but finished in English, while the finished work was translated into Arabic by Mīhāil Nu'ayma.<sup>229</sup> Marko Grčić translated *The Prophet* from English in 1982 and it was his exceptional translation that introduced the work to our cultural environment in all its glory. Enes Karić published a short text on the occasion, expressing, amongst other things,

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>227</sup> Darko Tanasković, "Fenomen Džubran", *Odjek*, no. 7, Sarajevo, 1987, 22-23.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>229</sup> Halil Džubran, *Prorok*, translated from English by Marko Grčić, Grafički zavod Hrvatske, Zagreb, 1982.

the assessment of most literary critics that the tradition of the immediate cultural milieu of the author and the ancient traditions of East and West had been “brought to language” in *The Prophet*. Karić also stressed that as a literary work *The Prophet* had enjoyed a particularly broad and fertile reception amongst readers during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is confirmed by the fact that the work has gone through around 40 editions in the English-speaking world alone.<sup>230</sup>

Following the publication in 1987 of the book *Izabrana djela – Prorok, Suze i osmijeh, Mirisni plodovi duše, Isus – sin čovječiji* [*Selected works – the Prophet, Tears and laughter, The scented fruit of the soul, Jesus – Son of Man*]<sup>231</sup> Rade Božović pointed out in *Odjek* the ever broader and more informed reception of Ğubrān’s works, drawing on Jauss’ reception aesthetics, according to which a literary work first powerfully captures a closed circle of aesthetic and literary critics and then passes far beyond that circle. Božović pointed out Ğubrān’s role as an advocate of a new religion, the religion of freedom and love, which achieved its spiritual fulfilment in his works. The reasons why Ğubrān’s works so continuously attract such large numbers of readers are “his cosmopolitan fervor, the harshness of his language, his bold spirit, which fights against the institutionalized violence that (every) religion exerts over the freedom-loving drive of the intellectual, his courage in standing up against his own Marionite church”.<sup>232</sup> One of the features of his poetic work is reflected in his bilingualism, so that some of his works were composed in Arabic and then translated into English, others the reverse. In this way Ğubrān broke down linguistic and cultural barriers and expanded the territory he would take over through his works and made them accessible to a broader reading public.

Thanks to Esad Duraković’s pensive commitment and contribution as a translator the following works by Ğubrān became available in translation in the former Yugoslavia: *‘Arā’is al-murūğ* [*Nymphs of the Valley*], *al-Arwāḥ al-mutamarrid* [*Spirits Rebelious*], *al-Ağniḥa al-mutakassira* [*Broken*

<sup>230</sup> Enes Karić, “Arabeske riječi Halila Džubrana”, *Glasnik VIS*, Sarajevo, 1980, 457-459.

<sup>231</sup> Halil Džubran, *Izabrana djela – Prorok, Suze i osmijeh, Mirisni plodovi duše, Isus – sin čovječiji*, Grafički zavod Hrvatske, Zagreb, 1987.

<sup>232</sup> Rade Božović, “Plodovi duše”, *Odjek*, no. 8, Sarajevo, 1988, 25.

*Wings*] and *Dam‘ wa ibtisām [A Tear and a Smile]*. Translations of his lyrical notes from English and Arabic, for which this true artist in words was particularly known, have also frequently been published in magazines in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Another pioneer of modern Arabic poetry was ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī (1926-1999), a writer who introduced classical Arabic literature into the modern mainstream through innovations in expression, language, rhythm, rhyme, and composition, in line with modern trends in world literature. Sulejman Grozdanić has worked most intensively on concretely rendering al-Bayātī’s poetic work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, publishing amongst others a selection of the poet’s verse to which he gave the title *Ljubavno pismo ženi [A love letter to a woman]*.<sup>233</sup> A more complete understanding of al-Bayātī’s poetic idiom requires a knowledge of the social and political situation of the world in which the poet sang, and in a text dedicated to his life and work Grozdanić sets out certain the general characteristics of modern Arabic literature, which was dominated, up until the transformations that took place in the Arab world with the revolutionary movement in 1952, by a certain pessimistic romanticism which is recognizable in al-Bayātī’s collection of poetry, *Malā’ika wa šayaṭīn [Angels and Devils]*. After the revolution, various changes took place in Arab society and therefore also in literature, where the revolution manifested itself through a transformation of grief, suffering, pain, and alienation as a passive sense of being lost, hopelessness, and decadence, into an active, healthy, almost aggressive experience and expression of those same sentiments. One can discern the manifestation of these elements in al-Bayātī’s collection of poems, *Abārīq Muhaššama [Beaten Pots]*. It was through artistic prose and classical Arabic poetry that al-Bayātī came to philosophy, and the works of Sartre and Camus played a significant role in his spiritual development. Nor was he cut off from the influence of Islamic mysticism. One might say that al-Bayātī was in fact following the path of the creative encounter of two cultures, East and West, which is precisely what some Arab critics objected to in him, taking the view that he

<sup>233</sup> ‘Abdulwahhāb al-Bayātī, *Ljubavno pismo ženi*, selected, translated, and with a foreword by Sulejman Grozdanić, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1975.

was too much under the influence of Western European poets.<sup>234</sup> In 1971, al-Bayātī visited Sarajevo to attend the Sarajevo Poetry Festival and gave an interview to *Odjek* on the occasion, in which he expressed regret that the Yugoslav public was not sufficiently acquainted with his work, given that only 5% of what he had written up to that point had been translated into what was then called Serbo-Croatian. At the time, al-Bayātī had already published 15 collections of poems of which 10 had been translated into foreign languages, while 10 books by Arab and European authors had been published on his poetry alone. In spite of the poor reception of his poetry in the Yugoslav region, al-Bayātī nonetheless concluded that the three of his poems that had been translated by Sulejman Grozdanić, with whose selection the poet had himself agreed, had found a way to their audience.<sup>235</sup>

In a text entitled “Poezija bunta” [The poetry of rebellion], in response to the publication of the poetry collection *Ljubavno pismo ženi*, Jasna Šamić described al-Bayātī’s verse as a poetry of contrasts that was simultaneously lyrical and combative and powerful. Šamić also pointed out that al-Bayātī was recognized for how the authenticity of his life transferred to simple but stimulating verse, in which his biography and poems became one. Acclaiming Sulejman Grozdanić’s interpretive translation of al-Bayātī’s verse an exceptional success, Šamić stressed his marked sense for rhythm and image and his nice turn of phrase, which complemented the imagery in the poetry, including that, in spite of any potential objections to the translator’s choice of idiom, which is in any case a matter of personal linguistic taste, the translation represented a significant contribution to the practice of translation theretofore in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>236</sup> Darko Tanasković also published a paper in *Izraz* on “Al-Bejati – pjesnik ljubavi i tragalačkog nemira” [al-Bayātī - poet of love and of questing unquiet], in which he claimed that al-Bayātī had of all Arabic poets penetrated most deeply into our literary and cultural reality, because his poetry is so very

<sup>234</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Pjesnik, borac, prognanik Abdal Vahab al-Bajati”, *Putevi*, no. 4, Banja Luka, 1966, 389.

<sup>235</sup> “U vrhu savremene svjetske poezije”, interview by Dževad Lutvi, *Odjek*, no. 11, Sarajevo, 1971, 18.

<sup>236</sup> Jasna Šamić, “Poezija bunta”, *Odjek*, no. 11, Sarajevo, 1975, 21.

close to European literary taste. The outpourings of passionate but painful lyricism had made al-Bayātī's name and ensconced him in the family of poets of contemporary engaged and progressive poetry. Tanasković also reflected on Grozdanić's translation of al-Bayātī's verse, stressing his equal care in translation for the poem as a whole, for how it sounds in our language, and for the overall artistic effect and impression, and that with this end in view he behaved quite freely with particular phrases and verses, yielding positive results.<sup>237</sup>

In his book *Na horizontima arapske književnosti* Sulejman Grozdanić devotes an entire chapter, entitled "Poezija i revolucija 'Abdulwahhāb al-Bayātī'" [Poetry and revolution 'Abdulwahhāb al-Bayātī] to al-Bayātī's poetry and particularly to his poetic style, his descriptive idiom, and the poetic techniques which mark him out from other Arabic poets. While al-Bayātī was an advocate of freeing modern Arabic poetry from its traditional fetters, when it came to poetic form, Grozdanić points out that he did try at the same time to master the tradition and to improve it, establishing a dialectical relationship with classical Arabic poetry. In his poetry, Al-Bayātī demonstrated that poetic form and norms do not make verses into poetry, but that a reasonable degree of respect for certain poetic norms will not undermine the beauty of the poems. It is important to note that al-Bayātī succeeded in bringing together two important characteristics of engaged literature: timeliness or relevance with regard to the political or social moment in the Arab world and a permanent relevance with regard to a higher function of art as an aesthetic and humane phenomenon without temporal or geographical limitations. As Grozdanić puts it, nationalist enthusiasm, class hatred, and anger against both the colonist and the native reactionaries had led this poet at times to utter verses of no real poetic value, full of exclamations, invocations, slogans, and programmatic declarations. Turning to his poems dedicated to celebrated individuals from world culture, like Hemingway, Aragon, and Rumi, Grozdanić points out that these poems should not be taken as odes to the personalities in the titles so much as an expression of the poet's feelings and thoughts inspired by a

<sup>237</sup> Darko Tanasković, "Al-Bejati – pjesnik ljubavi i tragalačkog nemira", *Izraz*, no. 8-9, Sarajevo, 1975, 239-242.

certain form of humanist activity and the significance of these personalities, their views, and of certain moments of spiritual encounter between the poet and them and their works.<sup>238</sup> Şabāḥ Ḥasan ‘Ālī published fragments of al-Bayātī’s poetry in his work “Ka teoriji poezije” [Towards a theory of poetry], where, commenting on contemporary literary theories, which generally place poetry on one of two diametrically opposed sides, either viewing it as a resource for entertainment or seeing the basic purpose of its existence in its message, he used verses from two of al-Bayātī’s poems as an example to show that poetry can simultaneously “stimulate our understanding or awareness, it can enlighten our lives, show the meaning or purpose within the complexity of existence.”<sup>239</sup>

The broadest reception in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been extended to poetry related in one way or another to the so-called “Palestinian question”, which is to say to Palestinian poetry, which is almost entirely an expression of the resistance and revolution of the Palestinian people and generally represents one of the most significant and most translated segments of modern Arabic literature. This poetry bears within itself the profound historical tragedy of the Palestinian people and is in constant motion between tragic creativity, the analysis of reality, and a call to struggle, all in relation to the Palestinian and the general Arab national question.<sup>240</sup> A major contribution to acquainting the public of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Palestinian literature and its literary and aesthetic characteristics was made during the 1970s on the pages of the *Third Program* (Radio Sarajevo), which published a number of influential essays by critics from Bosnia and Herzegovina, alongside translations of critical works by Arab authors that dealt with the Palestinian poetry of resistance. These included an essay by Nağāḥ al-‘Aṭār on “Književnost otpora Palestine” [The Palestinian literature of resistance] dedicated to Palestinian literature

<sup>238</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, “Poezija i revolucija ‘Abdulwahhab al Bayati’”, in: *Na horizontima arapske književnosti*, Sarajevo, 1975, 143-162.

<sup>239</sup> Sabah Hassan Ali, “Ka teoriji poezije”, translated by P. Aleksijev-Mikulić, *Odjek*, no. 19, Sarajevo, 1978, 17.

<sup>240</sup> Mustafa Halladž, “Slušajući palestinske pjesme”, translated from the Arabic and edited by Sulejman Grozdanić, *Odjek*, no. 15-16, Sarajevo, 1976, 6.

produced after June 1967, when a somewhat different approach to the crisis of Arabic literature was initiated in the Arab countries. Al-‘Aṭār pointed out that the poets of the resistance had taken a significant step forward in shattering the fetters of traditionalist poetry and had used the elasticity of their poetry without restraint to change the framework so that they could grasp at the content. The most developed form in Palestinian literature came to be poetry of the sort that one may say reaches the masses most quickly while processing the brutal reality through art at the same time. Hajrudin Somun has provided a comprehensive presentation of the temporal and geographical frameworks and conditions that produced this Palestinian literature, accompanying it with the publication in translation of a number of poems by the most significant poets of Palestinian poetry, including Maḥmūd Darwīš, Aḥmad Dahbūr, Sāmiḥ al-Qāsim and ‘Ā’iša ‘Arnāut.<sup>241</sup> Somun singles out as the dominant feature of Palestinian poetry the attempts to unify form and content, which emerges from Palestinian reality itself. Some Palestinian poems, according to Somun, are collections of individual images, with the structure of a poetic drama, abrupt changes of image, information from everyday life, and the stream of consciousness. One can also recognize in them densely distributed symbols from history and religion, particularly from the Qur’an and the Old Testament but also from the ancient cultures and civilizations of the region. Thanks to this approach to poetry, the Palestinian poets have succeeded in their search for a new form to establish a relationship with reality and to write poems which will long remain a staple of anthologies of the poetry of resistance outside of Arab lands.<sup>242</sup>

In his essay “Uz palestinsku poeziju otpora” [With the Palestinian poetry of resistance] Esad Duraković stresses how important it is for a proper reception and understanding of Palestinian poetry to make clear that the term “the poetry of resistance” or “the literature of resistance” should not be associated with the politicization of that poetry, as it relates primarily to the lived relationship of Palestinian poets to their reality,

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<sup>241</sup> Hajrudin Somun, “Predgovor”, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 53-54, Sarajevo, 1986, 659.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 667.



where they process their brutal reality through the prism of the artistic spirit. To those who do not know it well enough, the poetry of resistance could seem politicized because of its engagement and quite possibly as a result artistically inferior. However, this poetry's engaged nature should not, as Duraković makes clear, be understood in terms of biographical truthfulness, but as a comprehensive concept closely connected to other constitutive elements of the poetry resistance. The poetics of the Palestinian poets is itself implicit and only partially explicated in interviews or in the few brief introductions to poetry collections.<sup>243</sup>

The best-known Palestinian poet, both in the Arab world and further afield, who has been accorded the unofficial status of the national poet of Palestine, is Maḥmūd Darwīš (1941-2008). Amongst the first Arabists in Bosnia and Herzegovina take up the translation and evaluation of Darwīš' poetic output was Esad Duraković, who published a selection of his poetry in translation in 1984, in a collection entitled *Otpori [Resistances]*.<sup>244</sup> The translation is accompanied by an extensive introduction which sets out the information required to understand Palestinian literature. Duraković points out that Maḥmūd Darwīš approached the Arabic poetic tradition by rejecting poetry that fostered the cult of form and preferring a "sincere" creative approach to the poet's lived reality, which did not however throw out so much as expand the significance of form. In his poetry, Darwīš preferred free verse with internal rhythm, while from the point of view of content his poetry is an expression of his own psychic reality informed by the impact of reality in the broader sense.<sup>245</sup>

With the appearance of the collection *Otpori*, in a text in *Odjek* he entitled "Drugo stradanje Mahmuda Derviša" [The Second Martyrdom of Mahmud Darwīš] Darko Tanasković set out a harsh critique of Duraković's views and the conclusions he had expressed in the aforementioned

<sup>243</sup> Esad Duraković, "Palestinska poezija otpora", in: E. Duraković, *Prolegomena za historiju književnosti...*, 372-390.

<sup>244</sup> Mahmud Derviš, *Otpori*, selection and translation by Esad Duraković, Bagdala, Kruševac, 1984.

<sup>245</sup> Esad Duraković, "Palestinska poezija otpora" in: E. Duraković, *Prolegomena za historiju književnosti...*, 372-390. Idem in: Mahmud Derviš, *Otpori*, 5-16.



introduction, glancing only superficially at the work itself, which is to say the translation of Darwīš' poetry.<sup>246</sup> Duraković's argument and response to Tanasković's objections, both to the actual translation of the poetry and to the introduction to the book, which was in fact the main theme of his criticism, followed quickly after, also in *Odjek*. Duraković characterized Tanasković's text as uncreative and unfounded criticism, which had avoided, on the one hand, a properly argued assessment, while, on the other, Tanasković had attempted to leave an impression of his own unassailability in the area in question.<sup>247</sup>

Aside from *Otpori*, fragments of Maḥmūd Darwīš' work as a poet have appeared from time to time in journals and magazines in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We may note that Hajrudin Somun published a translation of Darwīš' famous poem dedicated to Beirut, *Qaṣīda Bayrūt*, in which a number of poetic symbols are interwoven so that the poem seems in a certain way to have been derived from all of Darwīš' previous poems put together. In a text published with the translation, Somun points out that the poem contains entirely new realistic imagery, but with an underlying rumble of ancient romantic tones, and that the poet has not shied away in the least from combining a variety of poetic idioms, prose elements, and poetic dialogue with unconcealed allusions to political trends in the outside world.<sup>248</sup>

In 2008, Mirza Sarajkić published a collection of Darwīš' poetry entitled *Beskraj od trnja* [*No end of thorns*].<sup>249</sup> It is important to stress that the poems included in this collection were chosen personally by Darwīš in conversation with the translator, during a stay in Sarajevo to attend the Sarajevo Poetry Festival as the laureate and recipient of the "Bosanski stećak" award. In addition to his translation, Sarajkić also included a short essay as an introduction in which he set out the basic requirements for reading and understanding Darwīš' poetic work as a whole and gave an

<sup>246</sup> Darko Tanasković, "Drugo stradanje Mahmuda Derviša", *Odjek*, no. 2, Sarajevo, 1985, 22.

<sup>247</sup> Esad Duraković, "Stradanje jednog prikaza", *Odjek*, no. 6, Sarajevo, 1985, 10.

<sup>248</sup> Hajrudin Somun, "Uz Poemu Bejrut", *Odjek*, no. 18, Sarajevo, 1982, 9.

<sup>249</sup> Mahmud Derviš, *Beskraj od trnja*, translated from the Arabic by Mirza Sarajkić, Zalihica, Sarajevo, 2008.

overview of the poet's bibliography.<sup>250</sup> The afterword contains excerpts from the peer reviews by Esad Duraković, Almir Zalihić and Munir Mujić, who both praised Sarajkić's highly successful interpretive translation of Darwīš' verse and offered certain interesting literary critical remarks and reflections on Palestinian poetry of resistance and the reception of Maḥmūd Darwīš' work.<sup>251</sup> Sarajkić published a second collection of Darwīš' poetry with the title *Stanje opsade [State of siege]* in 2022.<sup>252</sup> This collection, which represents the essence of Darwīš' work as a poet, contains verses the poet wrote during 2001 and 2002 in Ramallah, at the time of the second intifada, recording the long months of the Israeli siege and the suffering of the Palestinians. In addition to these collections, Sarajkić has published successive translations from Darwīš' poetry in various magazines and journals interested in culture and literature both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad.

In addition to this translation work, Sarajkić has also published a large number of literary critical works in which he has approached the analysis of Darwīš' poetry in terms both of literary aesthetics and poetics. In his essay "Poezija otpora Mahmuda Derviša kao kulturalno pamćenje" [Mahmud Darwīš' poetry of resistance as cultural memory] Sarajkić analyses the mimetic view of memory in the poetry of resistance which realizes itself through a reconstructive approach to re-presenting the "chronotope" of the real Palestine, reconstruction of its geography, and remembering the tragedy of the Palestinian people. Sarajkić accordingly concludes that poetic martyrology or remembering the shahids has a special place and role in the poetry of resistance.<sup>253</sup> Sarajkić uses his study of the contrapuntal construction of otherness in the poetry of Maḥmūd Darwīš to analyze the phenomenon as one of the more interesting poetic defining features of the poetry of resistance. In Sarajkić's view, the position of the other in this poetry is assigned to the colonial subject in an inversion of the

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 7-18.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 125-132.

<sup>252</sup> Maḥmūd Darwīš, *Stanje opsade*, translated by Mirza Sarajkić, Buybook, Sarajevo, 2022.

<sup>253</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, "Poezija otpora Mahmuda Derviša kao kulturalno pamćenje", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 63/2012, Sarajevo, 2013, 155-168.

matrix of the symbolic simulacrum and a shifting of the predetermined positioning of center and periphery. In this context, Darwīš quite clearly emphasizes this confrontational alter ego as ethical and epistemological difference, but he does not conceive of this difference and otherness as static, as is the case in the Orientalist Canon.<sup>254</sup> Through his analysis of the dual existential subordination of the Palestinian through the poems of Maḥmūd Darwīš in which the poet demonstrates Palestinian oppression and the mythologization of their tragedy within the context of the Arab world, Sarajkić concludes that Darwīš' poetry presents his subaltern as complex and polyvalent and not a monolithic entity.<sup>255</sup>

In his book *Poetika otpora u djelu Mahmuda Derviša [The poetics of resistance in the works of Mahmud Darwīš]*, published in 2019, Sarajkić offers a comprehensive poetological analysis and valorization of the poetry of resistance, based on his scholarly and theoretically grounded insight into Maḥmūd Darwīš' poetry.<sup>256</sup> As Munir Mujić points out in his review of the book, Sarajkić has decided on a polyvalent analytical approach, skillfully avoiding a focus on the poetry of resistance through the prism of either a positivist or Marxist approach, of the sort usually found in the literature dedicated to the issue. Sarajkić has succeeded in demonstrating that Maḥmūd Darwīš' poetry of resistance possesses poetic characteristics thanks to which it can be considered a poetic creation with a certain recognizable distinctiveness compared to other similar poetic tendencies in contemporary Arabic literature or literature more generally.<sup>257</sup> Esad Duraković also stressed as a particular virtue of Sarajkić's study the fact that the author is a connoisseur of modern Arabic poetry and has "grasped" Darwīš' poetic corpus with a high degree of expertise in poetics, achieving

<sup>254</sup> M. Sarajkić, "Kontrapunktalna konstrukcija drugosti u poeziji Mahmude Derviša", *Pismo*. yr. 14, Sarajevo, 2016, 180-195.

<sup>255</sup> M. Sarajkić, "Dekolonizacija palestinskog subaltera u poeziji otpora Mahmuda Derviša", *Sarajevski filološki susreti*, Zbornik radova, vol. II, Sarajevo, 2018, 129-139.

<sup>256</sup> M. Sarajkić, *Poetika otpora u djelu Mahmude Derviša*, Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Orijentalni institut, Posebna izdanja LVI, Sarajevo, 2019.

<sup>257</sup> Munir Mujić, "Poetika otpora u djelu Mahmuda Derviša", (book review), *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 68/2018, Sarajevo, 2019, 308-310.

in this way a more than successful articulation of the body of the poetry and his own scholarly and academic treatment of it.<sup>258</sup>

Beyond the Palestinian poetry of resistance, Sarajkić has also made an exceptional contribution to contemporary literary critical thought by his presentation and valorization of yet another highly significant segment of Arabic poetry, the so-called poetry of Tammuz. This is poetry that is from a poetological perspective entirely opposite to classical traditional Arabic poetry which it opposes resolutely both in style and form. The term the poetry of Tammuz comes from the preference of its authors for myths and ancient beliefs, the foundation myth on which they relied being that of Tammuz, a Semitic deity from Babylon and ancient Syria. As a personification of life and force, Tammuz would die each year and descend into the underground, and after his departure, there would appear on earth or in the upper world a wasteland, violence, and hopelessness, while his return from the underworld would bring blessings and happiness. The poets of Tammuz engineered a poetic re-actualization of the myth of Tammuz that represents the paradigm for their poetic work. Translations and poetological treatments of the poetry of Tammuz have only recently attracted the attention of the professional and the broader reading public in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with one of the first published works being "Poezija Halila Havija kao filozofija kulture" [The Poetry of Halil Havi as a philosophy of culture], in which Sarajkić presents the poetry of the Lebanese poet Ḥalīl Ḥāwī (1919-1982) within the context of his contribution to the reform of Arabic literature and culture. Ḥāwī's poetry is marked by his poetic re-actualization of the myth of Tammuz, a re-semanticization of the journeys of Sindbad, an intertextual relationship with the poetry of T.S. Eliot, and, finally, the dominant symbol of the bridge as the most important motif through which Ḥāwī speaks, of the (im)possibility of transcultural openness and absolute freedom. Sarajkić has equipped his analysis with a selection of examples from Ḥāwī's poetry and in this way has made an additional contribution to the concretization of Ḥāwī's poetry in Bosnian

<sup>258</sup> Esad Duraković, "Mirza Sarajkić: Poetika otpora u djelu Mahmuda Derviša", (book review), *Anali GHB*, no. 40, Sarajevo, 2019, 366-368.

translation.<sup>259</sup> Sarajkić has also dealt with the motif of Tammuz in Arabic poetry through the poetic oeuvre of Badr Šākir al-Sayyāb (1926-1964), an Iraqi poet known for his characteristic literary and artistic prosody and for the themes and content he treats in his works. In an essay published in *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* entitled “Mitopoetika u pjesništvu Badra Šakira al-Sayyaba” [Mythopoetics in the poetry of Badr Šākir al-Sayyāb] Sarajkić notes that while al-Sayyāb’s poetry is thematically dispersed over a number of myths from the near East, at its heart lies the poetical reconstruction of the myth of Tammuz, which is used as a “mythological podium” to illuminate the decadence of contemporary Arab humanity, but also his hope in an imminent spiritual revolution. To this pithy analysis of al-Sayyab’s poetic mythology or mythopoetics one must also associate the engaged nature of the literature and the complex attempt to “arabify” the myth of Tammuz, which, as Sarajkić points out, has made of al-Sayyāb the most developed figure of a poet of Tammuz during the formative phase of this poetic movement.<sup>260</sup> Esad Duraković published translations of some of al-Sayyāb’s poems in his book *Poezija arapskog Istoka XX vijeka [The poetry of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arab East]*<sup>261</sup> and Mirza Sarajkić has published others in *Život*.<sup>262</sup> The essence of Sarajkić’s interest in, research into, knowledge of, and evaluation of the so-called poetry of Tammuz is contained in his book *Pjesnici Temmuza: Uvod u savremenu arapsku poeziju [The poets of Tammuz: an introduction into contemporary Arabic poetry]*<sup>263</sup> in which he uses the poetry of Yūsuf al-Hāl (Lebanon), Ḥalīl Ḥawī (Syria), Badr Šākir al-Sayyāb (Iraq), Ğabra ’Ibrāhīm Ğabra (Iraq and Palestine) and ‘Alī Aḥmad Sa‘īd – Adūnīs (Syria and Lebanon) to interpret and set down poetic road markings and make a direct contribution to the

<sup>259</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, “Poezija Halila Havija kao filozofija kulture”, *Radovi*, vol. 22, Sarajevo, 2019, 133-156.

<sup>260</sup> M. Sarajkić, “Mikropoetika u pjesništvu Badra Šakira al-Sayyaba”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 67/2017, Sarajevo, 2018, 111-137.

<sup>261</sup> E. Duraković, *Poezija arapskog Istoka XX vijeka*, 64-81.

<sup>262</sup> “Bedr Škir al-Sayyab: Pjesme”, translated by Mirza Sarajkić, *Život*, 5-8, Sarajevo, 2020, 373-375.

<sup>263</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, *Pjesnici Temmuza: Uvod u savremenu arapsku poeziju*, Centar za napredne studije – Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2020.

vision of Tammuzism and the prophetic-poetic mission of these literary figures. While one might characterize certain of the themes and even the literary oeuvre of some of the authors Sarajkić is writing about as fairly well researched and represented in earlier translations, studies, or critical treatments, the value of Sarajkić's study lies in his methodologically innovative approach to this body of Arabic poetry, with a view to its stark poetic contrast to classical Arabic poetry.

Poetry from the countries of the Arab West (the Maghreb) is represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina through translations from French, English, and Arabic. In addition to the above-mentioned collection put together by Esad Duraković, *Poezija arapskog zapada [The poetry of the Arab West]*, Darko Tanasković has also made a valuable contribution to the translation and presentation of this poetry, by regularly publishing translations of verse and informed literary critical reviews or reflections on the poets and poetry of the Maghreb and the pages of magazines and journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of his first works was dedicated to Abū al-Qāsim al-Šābbī (1909-1934), a poet whom Arab critics often refer to as “a rebellious spirit”, because his activity and approach to life exude exceptional dynamism. Tanasković has described al-Šābbī's work as a precious document for studying the history of modern Tunisian and Arabic literature overall, insofar as the poet was also present, through his ideas and poetry, in literary publications outside of Tunis. In a lecture given in 1929 at a club of young Tunisian writers, al-Šābbī set out his own poetic vision and his analysis of the development of Arabic literature with the literary heritage of the West. Al-Šābbī achieved fame as a poet by publishing his verse in the well-known Egyptian magazine *Apolo*. His collection of poems *Songs of life* is considered one of the major pleasures of modern Tunisian literature, while his literary output, taken in the round, represents a pillar whose strength and solidity have afforded Tunisian literature a certain independence and autonomy in relation to the Arab East.<sup>264</sup> Ṭāhar al-Bakrī points out that it was precisely the struggle for modernity during the 1930s that made of al-Šābbī the poet of the Tunisian national awakening. Al-Šābbī's revolt broadened against fatalism, submission to destiny or fate, to

<sup>264</sup> Darko Tanasković, “Pjesme života”, *Odjek*, no. 15-16, Sarajevo, 1975, 16.

the weight of tradition, ignorance, and lethargy. Al-Bakrī mentions a study *al-Hayāl al-ši'r 'inda al-'Arab [Poetic imagination amongst the Arabs]*, in which al-Šābbī put forward a very severe critique of classical Arabic literature and called for a new imaginary that would elevate the status and position of women, love, and beauty. He even goes so far as to state perfectly openly the poverty or even the absence of an Arab mythology.<sup>265</sup> It is noteworthy that Esad Duraković is quite critical of al-Šābbī's work *al-Hayāl al-ši'r 'inda al-'Arab [Poetic imagination amongst the Arabs]* in his book *Orientalogy: The Universe of the Sacred Text* citing him as one of the Arab sources in which methodologically unsound and ethically problematic judgements are expressed on ancient Arabic literature.<sup>266</sup>

In the selection of Tunisian poetry that Darko Tanasković compiled for *Odjek* and *The Third Program* (Radio Sarajevo), he includes poems by the writer Fāḍila al-Šābī (born 1946). In addition to his translation, Tanasković also gave a short account of her poetic idiom, stating that she was unable to achieve recognition in Arab society as a female poet, primarily because lip-service to women's equality remained at the practical level in a system whose norms ran contrary to such equality. One can sense in the poetry of this female poet something of the literary orientation of the Tunis literary circle, which is to some degree a prisoner of the Bedouin love for the Arabic language as a living inheritance of centuries of Arabic grandeur.<sup>267</sup> Tanasković has also published a translation of certain poems by Šalāḥ Garmādī (1933-1982), a poet, writer, translator, literary critic, and historian who wrote poetry in both Arabic and French, in free verse, with frequent use of colloquial and idiomatic expressions. In his Arabic poetry, one finds Garmādī looking for forms appropriate to avant-garde Tunisian poetry, including an inventive use of the rich resources of Arabic. The fabric of his poetry has woven from threads of surrealist inspiration,

<sup>265</sup> Tahar Bekri, "Postoji li tuniska književnosti", *Život*, no. 7-8, Sarajevo, 1987, 169.

<sup>266</sup> See: Esad Duraković, *Orientalogy: The Universe of the Sacred Text*, 133.

<sup>267</sup> Fadila Šabi, "Sećam se"; "Palestina"; "Muhamedu, pioniru velike revolucije"; "Prvi ples"; "Miris zemlje i gneva"; "Dva sužnja"; "Tumarača"; "Pismena na krilima katastrofe"; "Rađanje života"; "Ko će vratiti mejdanima njegove kamenitosti", selection and translation by Darko Tanasković, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 23, Sarajevo, 1978, 619-628.



and one notes a predilection for the fantastic, which comes to particular expression in certain of his short stories.<sup>268</sup> In the aforementioned article on Tunisian literature, Ṭāhar al-Bakrī stresses the role of crude humor and social realism in Garmādī's surrealist writing of authors and his denigration of "literary conformism".<sup>269</sup>

Tanasković published a translation of a poem dedicated to Sarajevo by 'Ālī Dīb, a reflective lyricist whose complex and, by general consensus, difficult and even chaotic poetry joins the ranks of noteworthy attempts in the shared effort to find authenticity of expression. 'Ālī Dīb is at once a poet who neither rejects the classical heritage nor bows down slavishly to its canons, open to the world and possessed of explicit awareness of his own values.<sup>270</sup> It is important to note that Dīb is a poet of the younger generation who represented Tunisia at the 15<sup>th</sup> Sarajevo Poetry Festival and was thus introduced to the Bosnian public. Finally, we will mention that Tanasković has also published a translation of several poems by Nūr al-Dīn Ṣamad, a poet known for his advocacy of "gentle" and "sensitive" poetry, for which he is often accused of standing by traditional Arabic poetry. The translation of the poems was accompanied by a biographical note and a short overview of his work. Tanasković describes Ṣamad's poetry as neoclassical, true to the prosodic rules of classical Arabic poetry, deeply lyrical and focused on themes of love and beauty. His poems are marked by clarity, simplicity of expression, without complex symbolism or reliance on metaphor that could result in unintelligibility and hermeticism.<sup>271</sup>

In the present day, thanks to Mirza Sarajkić and Munir Mujić, the reading public in Bosnia and Herzegovina has also been able to make closer acquaintance with the poetry of the contemporary generation of poets from Oman. Mujić and Sarajkić published a translation in 2018 of a collection of poetry, *Tamo gdje se čarobnjaci dozivaju pozajmljenim imenima* [*Where*

<sup>268</sup> Darko Tanasković, "Pjesnik i naučnik Salah Garmadi", *Odjek*, no. 7, 1977, Sarajevo, 14.

<sup>269</sup> Tahar Bekri, op. cit., 167.

<sup>270</sup> Darko Tanasković, "Pjesma posvećena Sarajevu – tuniski odjeci sarajevskih dana poezije", *Odjek*, no. 13-14, 1977, Sarajevo, 16.

<sup>271</sup> Darko Tanasković, "Nuredin Samed – zaneti vajar stiha", *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 23, Sarajevo, 1978, 597-600.



*the wizards are called by borrowed names*<sup>272</sup> by the Omani poet Šayf al-Raḥbī (born 1956), who took part in the Sarajevo Poetry Festival that same year. Šayf al-Raḥbī tries to overcome traditional poetic norms in an avant-garde fashion and so to reinvigorate and modernize the poetic idiom and theme book. According to Sarajkić, the book *Tamo gdje se čarobnjaci dozivaju pozajmljenim imenima* presents a disparate poetic space over which numerous “floating signifiers” are scattered through which al-Raḥbī leads us from the depths of poetic introspection to hymnic tones, so that the book can be considered a sublime text of poetic decolonization.<sup>273</sup> Aside from al-Raḥbī’s poetry, Sarajkić has also published a short selection of poetry from Oman in *Život*, with particular attention to the marked use of polyphony in contemporary poetry.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Šayf al-Raḥbī, *Tamo gdje se čarobnjaci dozivaju pozajmljenim imenima*, translated by Mirza Sarajkić and Munir Mujić, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2018.

<sup>273</sup> Šayf al-Raḥbī, *Tamo gdje se čarobnjaci dozivaju pozajmljenim imenima*, 12

<sup>274</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, “Polifonija savremene poezije Omana”, *Život*, 3-4, Sarajevo, 2018, 312-314.

# ARABIC LITERATURE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## Schools in Bosnia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

Under Ottoman rule, Arabic was an integral element at all levels and phases of institutional education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the language of scholarship, culture, religion and the repository of a rich literary heritage in the areas of religion, literature, language, logic, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and other fields of academic study. The linguistic and literary study of Arabic therefore unfolded over a number of institutional levels. First was the *maktab*, where students attained a basic level of literacy and education, followed by the *muallimhana* or schools offering an elementary form of secondary education. At this level, students learned to read and to write Arabic script and calligraphic or artistic penmanship. At the primary level of education, students had not yet officially embarked on the study or analysis of Arabic literature, but a look at the textbooks from the period reveals that, during their Arabic lessons, maktab and muallimhana students were nonetheless introduced to excerpts of pre-Islamic and classical Arabic poetry and the text of the Qur'an via the examples used to explain grammatical rules.

After the maktab and the muallimhana, students transferred to the next level of the educational process, the *madrassah*, equivalent to today's secondary or middle schools, where considerable attention was dedicated to the study of Arabic. It is, however, difficult to determine how thoroughly or long particular "secular" subjects, including literature, were studied. As at lower levels of education, students were certainly introduced to excerpts from pre-Islamic and classical Arabic literature in their linguistic studies and exercises and studied them more thoroughly again in their Arabic stylistics and rhetoric classes. Insofar as maktab, muallimhanas, and madrassahs were primarily religious educational institutions, they offered

an essentially Islamic religious education and the study of Arabic in them served that purpose.<sup>275</sup>

During the period of Austro-Hungarian rule, a phase of “modernization” of the education system began, with a trend towards forming and establishing a unified approach to education. Initially, Muslim children continued to be educated in a segregated school system that was largely similar to that of the Ottoman period. Teaching took place in *sibyan maktab*s, *ibtidaiya* or reformed maktab and madrassahs, though new schools were opened for the education of Muslim girls, as well as a number of vocational or technical schools.<sup>276</sup> During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, state or secular schools began to open, the so-called *ruždije*, which were equivalent to the lower section of secondary schools today, in terms of the education they offered their pupils. Entry to these schools was open to children who had completed the so-called *sibyan maktab* and knew how to read and write in Arabic. Again, as in the madrassahs, when it came to learning Arabic and studying Arabic literature, the students studied grammar and basic stylistics, while getting some introduction to the literature through the examples used for their linguistic training, which were mostly from pre-Islamic and classical poetry and the Qur’an.<sup>277</sup> The First Gymnasium, as it is now called, was founded in Sarajevo in 1879. The study of Oriental languages – Turkish, Arabic, and Persian – was introduced as a compulsory subject, with an hour per day of each language. Starting with the 1889/90 school year, Muslim students at the First Gymnasium were offered Arabic as an alternative compulsory subject from the third grade on, as they could then choose between Arabic and Greek. This curriculum was in place up until the 1919/20 school year, when the study of Arabic was done away with entirely. Arabic was taught under similar curricula at the other classical gymnasia across Bosnia and Herzegovina,

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<sup>275</sup> See: Ismet Kasumović, *Školstvo i obrazovanje u bosanskom ejaletu za vrijeme osmanske uprave*, Islamski kulturni centar Mostar, Mostar, 1999, 21-35.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 189-201.

<sup>277</sup> See: Hajrudin Ćurić, *Muslimansko školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918. godine*, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1983, 135. and 153.

in Mostar, Tuzla, and Bihać.<sup>278</sup> Again, students were given a superficial introduction to Arabic literature through the examples offered them within the framework of learning Arabic. From 1913, when Alija Kadić compiled his *Izbor iz arapskog pjesništva [Selection of Arabic poetry]*, it was set in the gymnasias as required reading for teaching Arabic.<sup>279</sup>

## Modern elementary and secondary education

Starting in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the focus in the literary education of students at primary level in Bosnia and Herzegovina and so in the syllabi and curricula for teaching the local vernacular, Serbo-Croatian, was largely on works from the national literary canon and so of Yugoslav writers. The curricular recommendation was occasionally made that lessons teaching the vernacular should cover work with students on works of world literature, with a tendency to favor Russian or English.<sup>280</sup> In the 1980s, a selection of stories from *The Thousand and One Nights* was included in primary school curricula amongst the set texts for seventh grade.<sup>281</sup> This was incorporated in all subsequent syllabi. Another classic work of Arabic literature, *Kalila and Dimna* was also included at this primary level. The 2018 outline syllabus for Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language and literature contains no works of Arabic literature, however, amongst the set readings.<sup>282</sup> In the actual syllabi in use, a selection from *The Thousand and One Nights* and *Kalila and Dimna* remain mandatory reading.<sup>283</sup>

<sup>278</sup> Jusuf Ramić, "Izučavanje arapskog jezika kod nas", *Zbornik radova*, Islamski teološki fakultet, u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 1987, 239-243.

<sup>279</sup> See: Mehmed Handžić, *Književni rad bosansko-hercegovačkih muslimana*, Državna štamparija, Sarajevo, 1933, 78-80.

<sup>280</sup> Arhiv BiH: Inv. br. 68/1951-1961, "Izvještaji i nastavni planovi", 26/141. – Inv. br. 58/1964, "Nastavni planovi i programi", 43/571 (Sekreterijat za prosvjetu NR BiH 1951-1963).

<sup>281</sup> *Nastavni plan i program za osnovno obrazovanje i vaspitanje*, Republički prosvjetno-pedagoški zavod, Sarajevo, 1980, 53.

<sup>282</sup> [www.mo.ks.gov.ba](http://www.mo.ks.gov.ba) i [www.skolegijum.ba](http://www.skolegijum.ba) (last visited: 16.10.2023)

<sup>283</sup> [www.mojalektira.com](http://www.mojalektira.com) (last visited: 10.11.2023)

Turning to secondary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as at primary level, we find no works of Arabic literature envisaged under the curricular and syllabi of the 1950s through the 1980s. In spite of claiming that the program of literature for middle schools was based on the principles of the unity of literary creativity at a world or global level and that literary, aesthetic, and societal aspects should be taken into account in teaching children their mother tongue, in addition to more purely literary historical aspects, the responsible educational authorities did not include any works of Arabic literature in the teaching process.<sup>284</sup>

Since the 1990s, middle or secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina have included works of Arabic literature in their teaching of literature, all the way through, from first to fourth grade, so that there has clearly been a certain improvement in the reception of Arabic literature at this level, even though it still is not anywhere close to representing the full significance of Arabic literature. The syllabus from 1994 for first grade in the middle schools envisaged an introduction to ancient Eastern literatures: Assyrian, Arabic, and Persian; ancient Arabic poetry from the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods; Arabic Islamic prose, including: *The Thousand and One Nights* (“The tale of the birds and other fables” from book one and “The voyages of Sinbad” from book three).<sup>285</sup> Under the plans in place since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the study of Arabic literature in the first grade of secondary education also includes introducing the students to the full diversity of literary traditions across various cultures; Eurocentrism as the ideological closing off of Western European culture; “Orientalism” as a Eurocentric perspective on the “Orient”; the need to recognize and accept different cultural patterns within the modern world and the presence of oriental literatures as a part of Bosnia cultural tradition. There has also been progress in broadening their understanding of the reception of *The Thousand and One Nights*, and so introducing students to basic forms of narrative discourse; to narrative as a way of shaping lived experience,

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<sup>284</sup> *Nastavni plan i program zajedničke vaspitno-obrazovne osnove za srednje usmjereno obrazovanje i vaspitanje*, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1980, 45.

<sup>285</sup> *Nastavni plan i program – Opća gimnazija, Učiteljska škola, Srednja umjetnička škola, Zenica*, 1994, 21.

entertainment, and resistance to forgetting and decline; the internal narrator and Scheherazade as paradigmatic narrator; framing narratives and ring composition, or rather stories within a story.<sup>286</sup> During the second grade of middle school, the syllabi do not envisage reading any works from Arabic literature. It is worth noting, however, that students are introduced during this year to Bosniak literary works in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, with an accent on the fact that by accepting Islam Bosniaks also accepted the oriental model of culture and with it the medium of oriental literature.<sup>287</sup> Given that the significance of literary work in the oriental languages was for a considerable period marginalized in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so that its role in the cultural development of the country was almost entirely neglected, it is hugely important that the study of this segment of Bosnia and Herzegovina's cultural history has finally been introduced into the national school curriculum. Under the curriculum from 1994, during their third year in secondary school, the teacher and students were to dedicate a single class to Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and his work *Days*, while two classes were to be given over in fourth grade for discussion of Naḡīb Maḥfūz and his work, *Adrift on the Nile*.<sup>288</sup> Under the revised curriculum from 2003, the teacher was to choose between two of Maḥfūz's novels and to spend a single class discussing it with the children. The novels in question were *Adrift on the Nile* and *Palace Walk*.<sup>289</sup>

Under the current syllabus, the students in the first grade of secondary school must read and do class work on a selection of stories from *The Thousand and One Nights*, as set literature, while they study the Bosniak literature in the oriental languages and major representatives in second grade as part of their Bosnian lessons. Students read a selection of poems by Bosniak authors as part of their set texts. This selection includes poetry by these poets in Turkish and Persian, but not in Arabic.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>286</sup> *Nastavni plan i program za srednje škole*, Pedagoški zavod, Sarajevo, 2003, 88-92.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>288</sup> *Nastavni plan i program – Opća gimnazija, Učiteljska škola, Srednja umjetnička škola*, Zenica, 1994, 35-40.

<sup>289</sup> *Nastavni plan i program za srednje škole*, Pedagoški zavod, Sarajevo, 2003, 92.

<sup>290</sup> [www.mo.ks.gov.ba](http://www.mo.ks.gov.ba) (last visited: 13.11.2023)

The madrassahs are a special section of secondary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as Islamic-oriented middle schools where Arabic is taught from first through fourth grade. The oldest madrassah, which has been active continuously since its founding in 1537 to the present day, is the Gazi Husrev-bey Madrassah. After reforms conducted in this educational establishment in 1925, a rulebook was adopted which restructured the educational process into lower, middle, and senior courses. Over a period of 12 years of schooling, students had Arabic as a compulsory subject, which offered them an opportunity to familiarize themselves with Arabic literature as well.<sup>291</sup> Nowadays, students at all the active madrassahs in Bosnia and Herzegovina have a chance during their four years of schooling to get to know Arabic literature, naturally through their Arabic language lessons, in the form of prose and poetry excerpts used as examples of the application of various grammatical rules, but also in their Bosnian lessons on the basis of their teachers' selections of works to be read as set texts. The selection of works to be used with or presented to students is largely left to the subject teachers, rather than set out in a specific syllabus or teaching plan.

## University Education

Arabic literature is present at tertiary level in Bosnia and Herzegovina as Arabic literature in university courses at both the undergraduate and the postgraduate levels, which is to say during both the first and second cycles of university studies, including successfully defended master's and doctoral theses in Arabic literature proper and as academic and scholarly research and works in the field. The most important institutions in the country in this regard are the Department for Oriental philology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo, the Faculty of Islamic Studies of the University of Sarajevo, and the Department for Arabic and Arabic literature at the Islamic Pedagogical Faculty of the University in Zenica.

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<sup>291</sup> J. Ramić, "Izučavanje arapskog jezika kod nas", 251-255.



## The Department of Oriental philology of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo <sup>292</sup>

Under the curricula and syllabuses created on the founding of the Chair for Oriental Philology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo during the 1950s and 60s, the plan was for Arabic literature to be studied from the fifth to the seventh semesters, so essentially in the third and fourth years of study. During the fifth semester, students studied the history of Arab literature, including: the general characteristics of ancient Arabic poetry, the transmission of and sources for ancient Arabic poetry, the six best known pre-Islamic poets of the Mu‘allaqat, and introduction to Arabic meter. During the sixth semester, students continued their study of pre-Islamic literature, as well as the beginnings of Arabic prose, the poets of the early Islamic period, and poets from the period of the Umayyad dynasty, including Ğarīr, al-Farazdaq, al-Aḥṭal, and ‘Umar Ibn Rabī‘a, as well as the most significant poets from the period of the Abbasid dynasty, including: Ibn ‘Iyās, Baššār Ibn Burd, Abū Nuwās, Abū al-‘Atāhiya, Abū al-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī, and others. During the seventh and eighth semesters, they studied classical Arabic literature and the new literary directions that appeared within its framework.<sup>293</sup>

A novelty introduced in the curricula of the 1970s and 80s, compared to the earlier period, was that students now started their study of Arabic literature in the fourth rather than the fifth semester, with an introduction to the historical roots and first traces of literature, the Semitic peoples and cultures, developmental phases, periodization, and the systematization of Arabic literature, the appearance of poetry, the language of ancient Arabic literature, the sources, and their authenticity, the development of qasida, poetic competition, the Mu‘allaqat, and its cultural and historical significance, and ancient Arabic prose. During the fifth and sixth semesters,

<sup>292</sup> The Department was founded in 1950 as the Chair and renamed in 1971 as the Department of Oriental languages and literature. Since 2003, it has been the Department of Oriental philology. See: *Spomenica 60. godišnjice Filozofskog fakulteta u Sarajevu 1950-2005*, Filozofski fakultet u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2010, 201-203.

<sup>293</sup> *Nastavni plan i program 1959/60*, Filozofski fakultet, Sarajevo, 1960, 12-15.

they studied the Islamic literature of the Umayyad period, the Qur'an, the three schools of poetry (urban and Bedouin lyric, political satire, and patriotic poetry) and new independent forms, poets of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods of Arabic literature, literary prose, the first literary critical and reforming works, and popular literature – *The Thousand and One Nights*, Arabic literature in Spain, medieval criticism and the history of literature, and encyclopedic works.

During the seventh and the eighth semesters the idea was to study modern Arabic literature under the following teaching blocs: cultural and literary renewal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and European influences, the heritage revival, the first newspapers and printing houses, the historical novel and Ğurġī Zaydān, traditionalist poetry, contemporary prose, the first attempts at theatre, the penetration of modern thought and science, prominent prose writers like Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, Maḥmūd Taymūr, Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, Naġīb Maḥfūz, and Yūsuf Idrīs, Modern Arabic poetry and its representatives, the Palestinian poetic resistance and the literature of the Mahjara or US Arab diaspora.

One should note that the curricula and syllabi of the 1970s and 80s also envisaged the study of Bosniak literature in Oriental languages, including: Bosniak literature in Oriental languages under Ottoman rule and its literary forms, fields, and contents, from the sociopolitical, ethical, philosophical, logical, dogmatic, legal and juristic, to the practical and ethical, historiographical, travel-related, literary historical, critical, linguistic, geographical, astronomical and astrological, medical and botanical, and the mathematical, as well as the most significant cultural centers, Sarajevo, Mostar, and Prusac, and the most significant authors, namely Ali-Dede Bošnjak, Muhammed Musić Allamek, Hasan Kafi Pruščak, Mahmud Damad, Mustafa Ejubović – Šejh Jujo, Ibrahim Opijač, Mustafa Pruščak, Muhamed Skejo Prozorac and Ali Fehmi Džabić.<sup>294</sup>

A glance at the syllabus and curriculum put in place at the Faculty of Philosophy in 1990 makes clear that there were no significant changes

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<sup>294</sup> *Nastavni plan i program za 1977/78*, Filozofski fakultet, Sarajevo, 1978, 75-83; *Nastavni plan i program za 1981/82*, Filozofski fakultet, Sarajevo, 1982, 59-67.

against earlier plans.<sup>295</sup> At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, changes were made to the systematization of how teaching blocs were approached in the syllabus of what was at that stage already the Department for Oriental Philology (and not just in the Department's name), so that modern Arabic literature was now studied in the second,<sup>296</sup> ancient Arabic literature in the third, and classical Arabic literature in the fourth year. During the fourth year of studies, lectures on literature included Arabic stylistics with meter. Modern Arabic literature, which was studied in the third and fourth semesters, was considerably expanded compared to earlier syllabuses and curricula, applying a more comprehensive approach to specific literary phenomena. Within the framework of modern Arabic literature, students studied: the period of the Arabic Awakening (the awakening of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Ālī and his opening up to European influences, the first printing presses and newspapers, Rifa'a bay Ṭaḥṭawī, and the first production of the opera *Aida* in Cairo); Arab émigré writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the awakening of the Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine; the Arabic theatre in Beirut during the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭi and Ḥalīl Muṭrān; the neo-classicists Aḥmad Ṣawqī and Ma'rūf al-Ruṣāfi; the poetic innovations of Ḥāfiz Ibrāhīm; the literature of the Arab diaspora in the United States, and the gradual spread of Western literary influence and the poetic response; the literary schools of Diwan and Apollo; modern Arabic prose (the development of the Arabic short story and authors who excelled in this genre); the Arabic novel and romances; Arabic drama; contemporary Arabic poetry (Abū Mādī, al-Bayātī, al-Sayyāb, al-Ṣabūr, Qabbānī, Adūnīs); the Palestinian poetic resistance – Maḥmūd Darwīš. During the fifth and sixth semesters, students studied ancient Arabic literature under the following teaching blocks: the problem of periodization in the history of literature generally; the periodization of Arabic literature and the problems of its non-immanence; the concept of *Adab* and its polyfunctionality; pre-Islamic Arabian poetry and the *Mu'allaqat*, as a corpus of exemplary pre-Islamic odes (the authors of the *Mu'allaqat* and

<sup>295</sup> *Nastavni plan i program 1989/1990*, Filozofski fakultet, Sarajevo, 1990, 65-72.

<sup>296</sup> The earlier title of Contemporary Arabic Literature was reformulated as Modern Arabic Literature.

their poems, various redactions, their poetics and questions of normativity); the Arabian days (Ayyām al-‘Arab); the Qur’an (the influence of the Qur’an on literary tradition, the encounter of the Qur’an with already existing poetic traditions and the condemnation of poetry, the competition of the Qur’an with poetry in the area of literary form, the Qur’anic poetic response, overcoming the dichotomy of content and form, “the cunning” of literary tradition, the renunciation of ideological pretensions and giving into the charms of poetic form); poetry of the transitional period (the period of the Revelation and the first four caliphs), the temporary stagnation of poetry; poetry of the Umayyad epoch (urban and Bedouin love lyric, satirical and political lyrics, and representative authors); the basic forms of prose (the oratorical genre and its characteristics and representative authors, the epistolary genre). During the seventh and eighth semesters students turned to the following themes from classical Arabic literature: the social and historical framework of the Abbasid empire and the golden age of Arabic literature; classical literature (the movement of renewal and the poets Baššār Ibn Burd, Abū Nuwās, and Abū al-‘Atāhiyya); the Genesis of literary prose (original and translated literary prose, the influence of Persian literature, ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Muqaffa’, al-Ġāhiz, al-Ma‘arrī); the development of philology and philological criticism: the most important authors and their works, the authority of philological criticism and its influence in reinforcing traditionalism; the bases of mediaeval poetics (the absence of Aristotelian influence, the reach of the Qur’anic view of poetry, tradition as a reservoir of motives, the imitation of ancient Arabic models, the poetic legitimacy of literary borrowings, poetry and truth, the question of inspiration, and the techniques of poetic creativity, topoi, and the conception of originality).<sup>297</sup>

Curricula and syllabi from 2008 to the present have been largely consistent with those that preceded them, with minor changes and additions regarding the themes to be dealt with in greater detail and additional recommendations regarding books to be read as mandatory or supplementary literature. It is clear that the teaching staff follow and take into account in their recommendations literary activity and new work

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<sup>297</sup> *Nastavni plan i program 2004/2005*, Filozofski fakultet u Sarajevu, 2005, 26-46.

appearing on the Arabic literary scene. The study of Arabic literature still begins in the third semester, with pre-Islamic literature. Students are introduced to ancient Arabic literature (the pre-Islamic period) later literary periods/epochs in the Arabic tradition. As the dominant form of literary creativity, poetry put forth a specific relationship towards poetizing on the part of the Qur'an. The exemplary corpus of the Mu'allaqat remains the focus, followed by the love lyric of the Umayyad epoch, with its poetic dependence both on pre-Islamic poetry and on the literary and aesthetic values of the Qur'an. During the fourth semester, students learn about the literature of the so-called "golden age" of Arabic Islamic culture. This is the most important period in the history of this culture particularly for literature, and it is referred to as classical both in a temporal sense and in terms of value. Given that we are dealing here with a period that is quite extensive in temporal and spatial terms, students have a chance to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the most important literary phenomena of the classical age, from the "movement of renewal" to the age of decadence. Students are accordingly introduced to the bodies of work of the major poets of the epoch. At the same time, they gain a basic grounding in the genesis and development of Arabic literary prose, which appears for the first time during this classical period, under significant influence from Persian literature. As part of their study of classical Arabic literature, they also analyze the role of philology in the field of literary criticism and poetics and learn about Arabic literature in Spain, as the most significant achievement of that tradition in its resistance to traditionalism and enrichment by contact with the popular literature of Spain. During the fifth semester, they study the most important currents of Arabic literature from the period of the Arabic enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Using works by the most important representatives of neoclassicism, romanticism, and the Literature of the Mahjar students are presented with the basic features and differences between these literary movements and their characteristic stylistic formations. They are also introduced to how modern prose literature began to develop amongst the Arabs through the first collections of short stories and the first novels and dramas, reaching its full affirmation and maturity after the Second World

War. In the sixth and final semester, they cover modern Arabic literature from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the present, and students are introduced to the rich pleiad of poets who have dealt with the problematic of modern life under Arab skies in distinctive and original ways, including Nağīb Maħfūz, Yūsuf 'Idrīs, 'Ibrāhīm Ğabra, Maħmūd Darwīš, and the al-Tammūz poets. They study the literary heritage of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish as part of the courses on “Introduction to Oriental Philology” and “Oriental Philology”.<sup>298</sup>

Successfully defended undergraduate and master’s theses and doctoral dissertations represent an important contribution to research into, the study of, and the academic valorization of Arabic literature, as candidates address themes in the field guidance of their mentors. Before 2010, relatively few dissertations from the field of Arabic literature proper were defended at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo. Nonetheless, according to data available in the COBISS database, one can see that there has been significant progress in this regard in the recent past and current periods. Students in the Department of Oriental philology increasingly deal with themes like the narratological analysis of Arabic novels, archetypal motifs in the dramas of Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, didactic elements in *Kalila and Dimna*, and the portrayal of characters in *The Thousand and One Nights*, et cetera, in their final undergraduate, masters, and doctoral theses.<sup>299</sup>

## The Faculty of Islamic studies of the University of Sarajevo<sup>300</sup>

With the creation of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo in 1977, the position of Arabic literature in university education was significantly

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<sup>298</sup> [https://www.ff.unsa.ba/files/trajno/npp/orijentalna\\_filologija/Akademski\\_2013\\_14.pdf](https://www.ff.unsa.ba/files/trajno/npp/orijentalna_filologija/Akademski_2013_14.pdf) (last visited: 13.11.2023)

<sup>299</sup> <https://bh.cobiss.net/> (last visited: 13. 12. 2023)

<sup>300</sup> Officially called the Islamic Theological Faculty from its foundation in 1977, it was renamed the Faculty of Islamic Studies in 1991, and as of 2004, when it became a constituent body of the University of Sarajevo, it was officially renamed the Faculty of Islamic Studies of the University of Sarajevo.

“strengthened”. While the primary orientation of the Faculty was theological education, Arabic literature and language were studied across all four years of the undergraduate degree, albeit with a view to Islamic education and tradition. Learning Arabic was primarily undertaken to aid understanding and interpretation of the Qur’an, the Hadith, and Islamic tradition, and secondarily to assist in the other fields of academic study present within Oriental and Islamic civilization.<sup>301</sup> On the other hand, Arabic pre-Islamic and Islamic literature was closely connected with the development of Qur’anic studies and acquaintance with it was an integral part of taking up Islamic studies. Moreover, a knowledge of Arabic literature ensures a level of general education and roundedness, which is again a precondition for a broader understanding of Islamic studies overall.<sup>302</sup>

Under its original syllabus and curriculum, the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo envisaged the introduction of the following classes in Arabic literature during the first year: Arabic pre-Islamic literature (its genesis, roots, first traces, development, and the periodization of Arabic literature; the transmission of pre-Islamic poetry and professional transmitters, how it was recorded and collected, and the question of authenticity; sources for the study of Arabic pre-Islamic poetry; the characteristics of Arabic pre-Islamic poetry: lyric, drama, and epic poetry; the verse as basic unit, the organic unity of qasida, and linguistic and thematic features; Arabic prosody – meter; Arabic pre-Islamic prose (sayings, oratory, narrative, the basic characteristics of Arabic pre-Islamic prose). During the second year, students tackled Arabic literature of the Islamic period: sources for studying Arabic literature from this period (the Qur’an, the Hadith, pre-Islamic poetry, and foreign literature); poetry during the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and representative figures; the poetic trinity of the Umayyads, and other poets of the transition between the Umayyad and the Abbasid periods. During the third year, classical Arabic literature was

<sup>301</sup> *Nastavni plan i program Islamskog teološkog fakulteta*, Islamski teološki fakultet, Sarajevo, 1977, 129.

<sup>302</sup> For more on the history and significance of literary and linguistic Arabic studies at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, see: Jusuf Ramić, “Fakultet islamskih nauka u Sarajevu: prošlost – sadašnjost - budućnost”, *Zbornik radova Fakulteta islamskih nauka*, 18/2014, Sarajevo, 2015, 9-19.



studied: Persian and Greek influences on Arab literature; new directions in poetry, characteristics and major representatives; Arabic prose: oratory, sayings, prose poems, characteristics and major representatives. The fourth year was given over to the study of “more recent” Arabic literature, which took place over the following teaching units: stagnation in the development of Arabic literature; imitation and mannerism; the exclusion of classical Arabic from use and Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt; the beginnings of a renaissance; the appearance of printing and the development of journalism; the influence of French and English literature; translation and independent creation; the historical novel and dramaturgy; the revival of Arabic lyric poetry; the traditional school; didactic lyric; and the poetry of the Mahjar. During the fourth year, students were also introduced to the genesis, division, and characteristics of classical Arabic stylistics, as part of their Arabic language courses.<sup>303</sup>

Under the present curriculum, the study of Arabic literature starts in the third semester. Teaching units that were studied over four years in the previous plan have been reduced to just one semester and cover the following themes: the appearance, roots, and first traces of Arabic literature; periodization; pre-Islamic literature; the oral tradition of poetry; recording and the question of authenticity; sources and characteristics; Arabic literature of the Islamic period; the Umayyad poetic trinity; the decentralization of literature; the classical period and modern Arabic literature. During the fourth semester, students are introduced to classical Arabic stylistics and meter, and during the fifth they work on the translation of Arabic texts, which entails: an introduction into translation; processes of translation; the literary style of translation; translation as a literary historical problem; a selection of texts from Arabic literature.

After systematization and the introduction of these changes into the curriculum and syllabus, the Faculty of Islamic Studies has thus reprofiled itself as an educational institution with a focus on Islamic theology and the study of Arabic literature in the proper sense is now quite limited within the teaching process, with attention given to Arabic literary creation as part

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<sup>303</sup> *Nastavni plan i program Islamskog teološkog fakulteta*, Islamski teološki fakultet, Sarajevo, 1977, 129-137.

of courses in the fields of Islamic philosophy, theology, and other kindred disciplines. Some segments of Arabic literature and literary heritage in Arabic are therefore dealt with for the most part as part of contextualization within subjects in the fields of Islamic philosophy and cultural history. For example, the philosophical novel of Ibn ʿUfayr and the theological and literary rationalism of Ibn Ḥazm and similar works are now dealt with under the rubric of Islamic philosophy. The stylistics of the Qurʾanic text are dealt with within the framework of courses on the analysis of various aspects of the Qurʾan itself.<sup>304</sup>

### The Department for Arabic language and Arabic literature at the Islamic Pedagogical Faculty of the University in Zenica

The establishment of a Department for Arabic language and Arabic literature at the Islamic Pedagogical Faculty of the University in Zenica in 2012 was the result of the development plans of the Faculty and its then Chair for Oriental Languages and Literatures. The primary motive in creating this department was the view of the academic staff of the Chair that introduction of the nine-year school program under the new framework curriculum of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina including the teaching and interpretation of Arabic from years three through six, in accordance with certain optional criteria, had opened up realistic scope for the employment of graduates from such a subject program as teachers of Arabic.<sup>305</sup>

While learning, getting to know, and improving their Arabic language skills is the primary goal of this course of studies at both the undergraduate and master's level, students are also introduced to important themes in the field of Arabic literature, in addition to Arabic as a language, as part of the syllabus, and they receive significant instruction in this regard. According

<sup>304</sup> <https://fin.unsa.ba/prvi-ciklus/> (last visited: 13.11.2023)

<sup>305</sup> Mejra Softić, "O opravdanosti osnivanja novih odsjeka za arapski jezik u BiH", *Novi Muallim*, no. 60, 2014, 22-26.

to the initial curriculum and syllabus for the undergraduate studies in the Department, themes dealt with during the third semester include: conditions for the appearance, types, genres, and various developmental phases from the pre-Islamic to the contemporary period; fundamental sociopolitical, social, and other factors affecting the development of literature; core literary types; major authors; the Abbasid period in literature; literature and literary genres in the Spanish period; the Ayyubid and Mamluk states and their reflections in literature. The course on Aljamiado literature includes a review of Bosniak literature during the period of Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the fourth semester, contemporary Arabic literature is studied under the following thematic units: the historical and societal context of the literary and cultural awakening of the Arabs; the renaissance of Arabic literature and the neoclassical movement in modern Arab literary thought; romanticism in Arabic poetry (Ḥalīl Muṭrān); the literary movement of Diwan and Apollo and the authors of the diaspora; the beginnings of prose writing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the most important prose genres. It is important to note that students are offered an introduction to the rich and various literary heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Oriental languages from the period of Ottoman rule and the various scholarly fields, literary genres, authors, and works of the period during the fourth semester under the module “Literary Heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Oriental languages”. During the fifth semester, they work on Arabic poetry with an overview of its developmental phases, basic forms and genres. The focus is on the study of pre-Islamic poetry, the Mu‘allaqat, the love lyric of the Umayyad period, and Arabic poetry up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>306</sup>

The current syllabus of the Department for Arabic Language and Arabic Literature reflects to a certain degree and is an indicator of the experience and knowledge gained by associates of the Department when it comes to organizing the teaching process and selecting themes to cover. The themes related to Arabic literature are quite broad, comprehensive, and

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<sup>306</sup> <https://www.ipf.unze.ba/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/LOGO-...NPP-ODSJEKA-ZA-ARAPSKI-JEZIK-I-KNJI%C5%BDEVNOST-%E2%80%93-kopija-converted.pdf> (last visited: 13.11.2023)

offer a better introduction to its origins and development. As previously, the study of Arabic literature begins in the third semester, which is to say the second year of studies. Under the module on “The Theory of Arabic Literature”, students are introduced to the terminology of literary theory, basic categories and concepts of Arabic classical and modern rhetoric, stylistics, poetics, nature, and narratology; style and stylistics; the types of Arabic poetry; narrative poetry; Arabic prose; Arabic dramaturgy and literary Arabic studies in the Balkans. During the fourth semester, students are introduced to the conditions under which Arabic literature first appeared, its types and genres, and the various developmental phases from the pre-Islamic to the contemporary, as well as with the literary heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Arabic. During the fifth semester, they are introduced to the major currents of modern Arabic literature, from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and major Arabic representatives of neoclassicism, romanticism, and the literature of the diaspora. During the sixth semester, they deal with Arabic poetry.<sup>307</sup>

During the postgraduate cycle, students are introduced in their ninth semester to the origins, development, and achievements of Arabic literary criticism and the analysis of its impact on literary activity. Some of the themes dealt with include: Arabic literary criticism after the end of the second century after the Hijrah; the role of rhapsodes in literature; al-Nāšī’ and his role in the development of criticism; Muḥammad bin Sallām al-Ġumahī; the *Ṭabaqāt al-šū‘arā’* and the problem of plagiarism; literary criticism and Greek influence; Arabic literary criticism in North Africa and Andalusia; Ibn Haldūn – literary criticism and the theory of poetry; Oriental studies – basic views and its influence on Arabic literary criticism; Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and ‘Abbās al-‘Aqqād; Arabic literary criticism in Arabic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, et cetera.<sup>308</sup>

<sup>307</sup> <https://www.ipf.unze.ba/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AJK-Inovirani-NPP-2020.-god-04.10.2023..pdf> (last visited: 22.11.2023)

<sup>308</sup> <https://www.ipf.unze.ba/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/NPP-OAJIK-II-ciklus-2021-22.-god.-04.10.2023..pdf> (last visited: 22.11.2023)

## BOSNIAN TRANSLATIONS OF THE QUR'AN AND IMMANENT APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE QUR'AN

The poetic and literary values expressed in the language and style of the Qur'an – which is characterized by harmony, musicality, rhyme, the use of tropes, and other stylistic devices – entail a need for reception that includes not only its religious dimension but also the literary one. While reception of the Qur'an has necessarily been focused on its ideological dimension, there can be no doubt that it requires multilayered reading – and that implies a multilayered reception of the Text – whence so many translations of the Qur'an, including multiple translations within a single language. Such efforts, which are so often the first step in the reception of the Qur'an in environments in which Arabic is not spoken, always aim to retain as much of the Original as possible while leaving as little as possible “untranslated”.

There have been seven full translations of the Qur'an into Bosnian to date. In chronological order, they are the translation by Ali Riza Karabeg (Mostar, 1937), followed by those of Muhamed Pandžo and Džemaludin Čaušević (Sarajevo, 1937),<sup>309</sup> Besim Korkut (Sarajevo, 1977), Mustafa Mlivo (Bugojno, 1994), Enes Karić (Sarajevo, 1995), Ramo Atajić (Munich, 2001), Esad Duraković (Sarajevo, 2004), and Nurko Karaman (Sarajevo, 2018). The translations by Besim Korkut, Enes Karić and Esad Duraković are particularly important for literary history and the analysis of the reception of the literary values of the text of the Qur'an in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is because they initiated the inexorable processes of the multilayered reception of the Qur'anic text there, creating new opportunities to move beyond the limited traditionalist approach to the Qur'an.

Korkut's translation was welcomed as an event of general cultural significance immediately upon publication. Linguists, Orientalists, and

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<sup>309</sup> The most recent edition of this translation was printed in 2012. See: *Kur'an Časni*, translated and edited by Muhamed Pandžo and Džemaludin Čaušević, Libris, Sarajevo, 2012.

scholars of Oriental and Islamic literature from across the entire former Yugoslavia regarded it as exceptionally sensitive and balanced, marked by a recognition of parallels and contrasts, economy of expression, rhythmic sentence structure, and a vocabulary that is archaic in places and contains associations to the cultural and historical milieu of the Qur'an, so overall a successful stylistic adaptation to the Qur'anic text.

It highlighted a series of well-founded and reasoned compliments for Besim Korkut as a translator. Despite the pronounced incommensurability of the linguistic material of the Original and the translation, Korkut had offered an interpretation of the Qur'anic text that remained aesthetically and conceptually faithful to the Original. Analyzing the complexities of the Qur'an's language, style, and esoteric meanings, Grozdanić stressed the intricate nature of the task facing any Qur'anic translator. Evaluating Korkut's translation as "the best work that can be achieved by us in this field," Grozdanić highlighted his near-perfect translation of Arabic sentences, his consistent avoidance of Western-derived foreign words, and his necessary use of terms of Islamic Arabic origin.<sup>310</sup> However, Grozdanić also expressed some completely unfounded opinions inconsistent with the purpose and meaning of the Qur'an in the Islamic tradition and so with the beliefs of the Muslim community within Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this foreword, as in some of his earlier published articles, Grozdanić took a stance aligned with that of Eurocentric orientalist studies, which view the Qur'an as a poorly structured and undistinguished literary work by the prophet Muhammad. Hence in the foreword, which also appeared in *Odjek* as an independent text, Grozdanić stated "The text of the Qur'an represents a collection of sermons and speeches by a prominent historical figure who marked an epoch, a visionary who predicted more and further into the future than others..."<sup>311</sup> Grozdanić's right to his own opinion cannot be denied under any circumstances, but the publisher and the editor of Korkut's translation of the Qur'an should have realized how

<sup>310</sup> Sulejman Grozdanić, "Značajan poduhvat – uz Korkutov prevod Kur'ana sa arapskog", *Odjek*, no. 17, Sarajevo, 1977, 11. Idem in: *Kur'an*, translated by Besim Korkut, Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 1977, 707-715.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 708.

inappropriate it was to publish a text of such subject matter alongside the translation itself. Some sections of Grozdanić's text deeply offended the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for whom the publication of a Qur'anic translation in their native language was an event of immense importance. Due to the negative responses from the public to Grozdanić's foreword, it was left out of all subsequent editions of Korkut's translation.

Before the publication of Enes Karić's and Esad Duraković's translations, it was widely believed that studying the text of the Qur'an involved exclusively theological interpretation and the interpretation of its core messages for the faithful. As a result, the reception of the Qur'an was essentially reduced to its ideological (religious) dimension. Although the Qur'an does deploy the full range of its argumentation to convey the Truth, it is equally undeniable that the force of its expression and arguments are revealed in its content – which is characterized by high literary and aesthetic values. These values are so clearly evident that they practically draw attention to themselves, calling for meaningful explication.<sup>312</sup> The translators, Karić and Duraković, indicated that they had such intentions when they took up the translation of the Qur'an. Karić, taking a form of synthetic approach that combines theological, legal, linguistic, and Sufi readings of the Qur'anic text, does place the other interpretations in the service of the theological, while nonetheless still acknowledging their importance for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the text. When it comes to the relationship between linguistic and theological readings of the Qur'an, Karić is clear that this text is not a chronologically organized work, is not bound by the logic of time, contains no dates, lacks a singular protagonist, and is mostly conveyed in a general manner. Consequently, linguistic readings of the Qur'an cannot be entirely separate from theological ones; rather, they complement and serve each other.<sup>313</sup> On the other hand, in the foreword to his translation of the Qur'an, Esad Duraković emphasized his personal desire and struggle to “include as many

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<sup>312</sup> For more on this: Berin Bajrić, “Problem čitanja sakralnog teksta – primjer *Kur'ana* svete knjige muslimana”, *Odjek*, no. 3, Sarajevo, 2009, 101-106.

<sup>313</sup> Enes Karić, “Kur'anski univerzum”, in: *Kur'an s prijevodom na bosanski jezik*, translated by Enes Karić, Bosanska knjiga, Sarajevo, 1995, 1231-1269.



of the disciplined and sonorous rhymes of the Original text as possible, and the exuberance of its refrains, doing my best to preserve the stylistic features of the Original text, within reason.”<sup>314</sup>

Karić’s and Duraković’s translational interpretation of the Qur’anic text, with an eye both to the present and to its historical context, was a novel contribution in their Bosnian and Herzegovinian setting. Their translations significantly influenced the horizon of expectations of recipients of the Qur’anic text and provoked a response in literary critical awareness that manifested itself in the production and publication of a series of high-quality texts on the literary value of the Qur’an, of a sort that had been rare or non-existent in Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to this.<sup>315</sup>

On publication of Karić’s translation, a number of reviews appeared immediately in *Odjek*, accompanied by a short text from the translator himself in which he drew attention to some of the circumstances under which the translation had been made. The editor of the issue, Alija Isaković, stressed that the translation evinced a unity of prose and poetry, was transparent, clear, and easy to understand, which and that this had been achieved thanks to the translator’s use of a large number of notes taken from various commentaries on the Qur’an. In the conclusion of his address, Isaković said that “Karić’s translation has shown, I think intentionally, that the Qur’an can always be approached from a fresh perspective and that one may, in fact, need to re-examine it afresh each time.”<sup>316</sup>

Džemaludin Latić characterized Karić’s version of the Qur’an as a “the translation of a generation”, given that it marked the transition to a completely new phase in the translation of the Qur’an in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He noted that Karić had achieved the unique style of his

<sup>314</sup> Esad Duraković, “Zapis prevodioca” in: *Kur’an s prijevodom na bosanski jezik*, translated by Esad Duraković, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 2004, 644-648.

<sup>315</sup> In the corpus of texts used in preparing this study, I found only one essay by Hasan Kaleši from 1967, in which the author presents the contents and sources of the Qur’an, the attitude of the Qur’an to Christianity and Judaism, and the recensions and language, divisions, and style of the Qur’an. See: H. Kaleši, “Kur’an – remek delo arapske književnosti”, *Izraz*, no. 2, Sarajevo, 1967, 183-203.

<sup>316</sup> Enes Karić, “Riječ prevodioca”; Alija Isaković, “Riječ urednika”, *Odjek*, no. 4, Sarajevo, 1995, 19.

version by avoiding reduction and through a heightened deployment of the connotative and narrative functions of language. In contrast to Korkut's version – whose sentences were referential and followed a fixed word order – Karić “introduces dialectical syntax and stylistically semanticizes the pause (at the end of āyah); his future is an ungrammatical and unusual form that is determined by the shortened dative form of the pronoun ‘they’”.<sup>317</sup> In his essay “The Voices of the Holy Book”, Tvrško Kulenović uses the intertextual dialogue between Karić's translation and the commentaries on the Qur'an to, as he put it, “say something about this sacred matter”.<sup>318</sup> He presents the relationship between the Qur'an as the word of God and the Bible as Holy Scripture on the diachronic level, as having given rise to various relations towards the world that surrounds us – ranging from water and its symbolic role in both the Islamic and Christian traditions, to architecture, conceptions of nature, mysticism and philosophy. Hilmo Neimarlija has identified Karić's and Duraković's versions as fully self-aware translations and that this is what fundamentally defines them and simultaneously differentiates them from previous translations. In particular, he described the publication of Duraković's translation as not just a significant event for the region and the language but as the opening up of something eventful, as an intervention in the unfolding of faith, consciousness, and culture.<sup>319</sup> Other notable Bosnian and Herzegovinian linguists have also offered their academic judgement on Duraković's translation of the Qur'an. For example, Marina Katnić-Bakaršić called the translation a “qualitative leap” on the level of language and style, as for the first time in the history of the translation of the Qur'an into Bosnian a translator had attempted to preserve characteristics of the original that were normally considered untranslatable. These were primarily the aesthetic and poetic qualities of the Qur'an, and accordingly the stylistic and rhetorical

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<sup>317</sup> Džemaludin Latić, “Prevođenje ‘Najljepšeg govora’”, *Život*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 1995, 97.

<sup>318</sup> Tvrško Kulenović, “Glasovi Svete Knjige”, *Odjek*, no. 4, Sarajevo, 1995, 20.

<sup>319</sup> Hilmo Neimarlija, “Prijevod sa punom prevodilačkom sviješću”, *Novi Muallim*, no. 21, Sarajevo, 2005, 81.

devices which served strong persuasive or argumentative functions.<sup>320</sup> In her essay “Retorički efekti kumulativnosti figura u kur’anskom tekstu” [The rhetorical impact of the cumulative use of figures in the text of the Qur’an] Katnić-Bakaršić used stylistic analysis of the chapter *al-Ġāšiya* (Suffering) in Duraković’s translation to demonstrate the stylistic effects achieved in the Qur’an by the use of various figures. Despite the short length of the chapter, Katnić-Bakaršić demonstrated the exceptional use of style and that the quality of the translation made it possible to see the simultaneous presence of rhyme, rhythmic timing, assonance, inversion, anaphora, contrast, rhetorical questions and metaphor. Katnić-Bakaršić points out that nearly every part of the text of the Qur’an carries exceptional stylistic potential, and that transposing “the stylistic procedures and aesthetic values of the original” into Bosnian opens up the possibility of various stylistic interpretations of the Text even for those who do not know Arabic.<sup>321</sup>

Hasnija Muratagić-Tuna has called Duraković’s translation an “authentic work of linguistic art”, emphasizing particularly the importance that the translator gives to the aesthetic content – foregrounding the aesthetic dimension. In this way, he has demonstrated that a synthesis of local and foreign elements can allow the forging of new breakthroughs that enrich linguistic expression overall and so contribute to the development of one’s own language. Muratagić-Tuna also points out Duraković’s explicit sense of responsibility towards the recipients of his translation, as in these cases the translator is not simply a passive “transformer of one code into another”; he is the key factor mediating between the Original and the recipient in the target language.<sup>322</sup>

Entirely expectedly a “modernizing” or simply alternative approach to understanding the Qur’anic text than the prevailing one necessarily called forth resistance in some circles, resulting in a certain degree of

<sup>320</sup> Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, “Nad stranicama prijevoda *Kur’ana* Esada Durakovića”, *Dijalog*, no. 3, Sarajevo, 2004, 199-203.

<sup>321</sup> Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, „Retorički efekti kumulativnosti figura u kur’anskom tekstu“, *Ostrvo*, no. 2, Tuzla, 2004, 4-10.

<sup>322</sup> Hasnija Muratagić Tuna, “Novi prijevod *Kur’ana*”, *Znakovi vremena*, no. 25, Sarajevo, 2004, 206-212.

polemic. Duraković himself, conscious of the reactions that his translation of the Qur'an would likely provoke, indicated in an interview published in *Preporod*, prior to its publication, that there existed a certain fear and reluctance in Bosnian and Herzegovinian tradition about attempting to transfer the literary qualities of the Qur'an, which was why, in most cases, even when acknowledging its literary value, orientalist nonetheless tended to refer to the text as the work of the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Duraković clearly distanced himself from any such stance, emphasizing that although the Qur'an remains immutable as a work and a structure, it is at the same time an open, elliptical, polyvalent, and timeless structure, which entails that it will be interpreted, understood, and translated differently in different times.<sup>323</sup>

Jusuf Ramić also offered a critique of Duraković's approach to the Qur'anic text and his translation methodology, in which he focused on how well the translator had captured the literary and aesthetic aspect of the Qur'an. Ramić's fundamental criticisms were that Duraković paid little or no attention to the stylistic organization of the sentence, his translation of metaphors, transposition of the characteristic Qur'anic use of the plural for the singular and vice versa, and his approach to the translation of Islamic Arabic terms that have already been assimilated into Bosnian in their original forms. Ramić also warned that Duraković had added text not to be found in the Original in parts of his translation, while in other parts he had omitted words or parts of certain Qur'anic verses, which Ramić termed a falsification of the contents of the Qur'an.<sup>324</sup>

In his answer to Ramić's critiques, Duraković pointed out the differences which exist between the translation and interpretation of a text. He also pointed out that it is not possible to transfer the syntax of Arabic sentences into another language directly. Duraković equated Ramić's opinion that the Original's plural should be translated by the singular and vice versa to violence against the text, saying "...the divine use of the plural and singular

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<sup>323</sup> Esad Duraković, "Za prijevod Kur'ana nisu nužni teolozi", *Preporod*, no. 21/791, Sarajevo, 2004, 28.

<sup>324</sup> Jusuf Ramić, "Prijevod Kur'ana od Esada Durakovića", *Preporod*, no. 22/792, Sarajevo, 2004, 27.

for Himself, the use of one person or number instead of another, is in fact a splendid stylistic feature of the Original, and such stylistic elements can only be interpreted, never translated, because that would do away with such stylistic devices as rhetorical deixis, the commutation of persons, and so forth.”<sup>325</sup> Interestingly Ramić had expressed the same criticisms previously regarding Karić’s translation of the Qur’an as he was now objecting to in Duraković’s translation, including the “incorrect” use of the singular or the plural throughout the translation and the translations of specific words. Despite noting in his review of Karić’s translation how truly difficult and complex the work of translation is, particularly in cases where it is simply impossible to find a word in the target language that corresponds fully to the original Arabic word, Ramić reflected on the “positive elements of the translation” only briefly before proceeding to spend the remainder of his text detailing the “serious omissions that Enes Karić has made.”<sup>326</sup> Ramić has collected his reflections on and critiques of all of the published translations of the Qur’an in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a book named *Kako prevoditi Kur’an [How to Translate the Qur’an]*, with, however, a focus on those by Korkut, Mlivo, Duraković and Karić.<sup>327</sup> The criticisms and conclusions he divulges in his book are based on classical approaches to translation of the Qur’an which insist on a contextual understanding of the lexicon and the unavoidable role of the discipline of Tafsir in the process of translation.

Ramić has set out some of the features of the Arabic stylistics characteristic of the Qur’an in his book *Arapska stilistika u svjetlu Kur’ana i hadisa Allahova poslanika [Arabic stylistics in the light of the Qur’an and the hadith of Allah’s messenger]*.<sup>328</sup> The first chapter of the book is dedicated to the linguistic analysis of sentences from the Qur’an, the second to a comparison of the Qur’an and the hadith of the Messenger

<sup>325</sup> Esad Duraković, “Ramićeva nekompetentna kritika”, *Preporod*, no. 1/795, Sarajevo, 2005, 23.

<sup>326</sup> Jusuf Ramić, “Kur’an sa prijevodom na bosanski jezik”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 44-45/1994-95, Sarajevo, 1996, 453-457.

<sup>327</sup> Jusuf Ramić, *Kako prevoditi Kur’an*, FF Bihac, Bihac, 2007.

<sup>328</sup> Jusuf Ramić, *Arapska stilistika u svjetlu Kur’ana i hadisa Allahova poslanika*, Fakultet islamskih nauka, Sarajevo, 2004.

of Allah, peace be upon him, and the third covers the remaining stylistic devices found in the Qur'an. It should be said that in this book Ramić enters into dialogue and shows his acquaintance with some of the most notable authors and works in the field of Arabic stylistics and of stylistics more generally published in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including such authors as Teufik Muftić (*Klasična arapska stilistika [Classical Arabic Stylistics]*, 1995), Sulejman Grozdanić (*Stara arapska poezija [Old Arabic Poetry]*, 1971), Esad Duraković (*Arapska stilistika u Bosni: Ahmed sin Hasanov Bošnjak o metafori [Arabic Stylistics in Bosnia: Ahmed son of Hasan Bosniak on metaphor]*, 2000), Džemaludin Latić (*Stil kur'anskog izraza [The Style of Qur'anic Expression]*, 2001) and Marina Katnić-Bakaršić (*Stilistika [Stylistics]*, 2001).

It is certain that no translation, however good, can transfer all the literary, stylistic, and poetic qualities contained within the Qur'an. At the same time, every translation of the Qur'an inevitably involves a reduction of its meanings, condemned in advance to being stripped of a good part of their aesthetic quality. In this regard, Muhamad Asad has already pointed out some of the difficulties that translators of the Qur'an necessarily encounter and that make it literally untranslatable, in his work "Problem prevođenja Kur'ana" [The Problem with translating the Qur'an], published in *Islamska misao*. As major challenges translators of the Qur'an meet with, Asad identified the placement of individual words within the sentence, the rhythm and sound of the Qur'anic phrases, their syntactic structure, the way in which metaphor passes over unnoticed into pragmatic statement, and the use of acoustic accents – employed not only for rhetorical purposes, but also as to hint at unstated yet clearly implied ideas.<sup>329</sup> In his work "Prevođenje Najljepšeg govora" [Translating the Most Beautiful Discourse], published in *Život*, Džemaludin Latić has also addressed questions of the translation and reception of the Qur'an in Europe. Latić argued that the most common obstacles to the reception of the Qur'anic text stem primarily from the European literary experience, which is tied to the reception of literary works that are evocative, involve

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<sup>329</sup> Muhamad Asad, "Problem prevođenja Kur'ana", translated from the English by Sabina Berberović, *Islamska misao*, no. 63, Sarajevo, 1984, 40-46.

lengthy description and contain a narrative thread, whereas the narratives in the Qur'an can appear loose at first glance and contain allusions to micro and macro worlds and to historical and apocalyptic events. Conversely, the Islamic literary world has taken the Qur'an as its model, as can be seen in the relatively loose composition of literary works produced in that world, their imitation of the rhythmic sentences of the Qur'an, their poetics of the arabesque, and adoption of the lexicon and frequent use of quotes from the Qur'an.<sup>330</sup>

Džemaludin Latić is also the author of *Stil kur'anskoga izraza* [*The Style of Qur'anic expression*],<sup>331</sup> one of the first books in Bosnian to deal exclusively with Qur'anic stylistics, in which he elevates dialogue with the Qur'anic text to the sphere of intertextual dialogue with contemporary and past interpreters of the Qur'an in interesting ways. Latić himself admits that the conclusions he reaches in the fields of the phono-stylistics, morpho-stylistics, and syntactic stylistics of the Qur'anic idiom have not produced any original or previously unheard of theories, and has stated that this was because he came to the realization during the course of his research that every one of his postulates had already been documented by some Islamic interpreter of the Qur'anic text. The importance of his study for the Bosnian and Herzegovinian scene therefore is as a pioneering departure in this field in Bosnian.<sup>332</sup> Later, Latić returned to the subject of the Qur'an's language in his books *Sedam harfova Kur'ana* [*The Seven Harps of the Qur'an*]<sup>333</sup> and *Jezik Kur'ana* [*The Language of the Qur'an*].<sup>334</sup>

In his book *Kako tumačiti Kur'an: Uvod u komentatorske teorije klasičnog perioda* [*How to Interpret the Qur'an: An Introduction to the Commentators of the Classical Period and their Theories*], Enes Karić set out and analyzed key issues that arise in the interpretation of the Qur'an, drawing a parallel between reception theory, textual interpretation, and

<sup>330</sup> Džemaludin Latić, "Prevođenje 'Najljepšeg govora'", *Život*, no. 1-2, Sarajevo, 1995, 82-97.

<sup>331</sup> Dž. Latić, *Jezik Kur'ana*, Biljeg, Sarajevo, 2012.

<sup>332</sup> Dž. Latić, *Stil kur'anskog izraza*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2001.

<sup>333</sup> Dž. Latić, *Sedam harfova Kur'ana*, Biljeg, Sarajevo, 2012.

<sup>334</sup> Dž. Latić, *Jezik Kur'ana*, Biljeg, Sarajevo, 2012.



Qur'anic hermeneutics, on one hand, and Islamic interpretations, on the other. In this context, the chapter on "Classical and contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics in the light of new reception theories," ["Klasična i savremena hermeneutika Kur'ana u svjetlu novih teorija recepcije"] stands out, as in it Karić presents the theoretical premises of certain contemporary approaches to the Qur'anic text, including literary analysis, approaches that draw on linguistic theory, mythology, the comparative analysis of semantic fields, and so forth. Considering that the Qur'an does not impose any particular interpretation on the reader, due to its blending of and the complexity of its ductus and its varied reception, contemporary interpretations of the Qur'anic text's intentionality can aid in understanding the major trends of contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics.<sup>335</sup> Karić's essay on "Pjesništvo komentara Kur'ana" [The Poetry of Commentaries on the Qur'an] also deserves mention, as in it he draws attention to the considerable power of the poetry that holds so prominent a place in commentaries on the Qur'an. He cites some of the commentators who give considerable space to poetry that affirms the signs of God's unity, including 'Abū al-Razzāk al-Qašānī, who quotes the verses of Ibn 'Arabī in his Qur'anic commentary. It is also common to come across the poetry of 'Umar Ḥayyām in the commentaries, of course, and one of the best known commentators, Ibn Kaṭīr, was renowned for his use of verses rich with didactic content in his commentaries.<sup>336</sup> Karić has also published a book called *Semantika Kur'ana* [The Semantics of the Qur'an], in which he has selected and compiled texts on the language of the Qur'an from the field of linguistics, in the tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and other linguists and philosophers of analytical and linguistic philosophy. Thanks to his selection of appropriate texts Karić offers a broad overview of contemporary structuralist studies of the Qur'an as a holy text, as well as of the Qur'anic word, speech, and language.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Enes Karić, *Kako tumačiti Kur'an: uvod u komentatorske teorije klasičnog perioda*, Tugra, Sarajevo, 2005, 239-268.

<sup>336</sup> E. Karić, "Pjesništvo komentara Kur'ana", *Takvim za 1999. godinu*, Sarajevo, 1999, 33-45.

<sup>337</sup> E. Karić, *Semantika Kur'ana*, Bemust, Sarajevo, 1999.

Almir Fatić has also worked intensively in recent years on the semantics of the Qur'an. While he approaches the Qur'anic text primarily as a theologian and Tafsir scholar, he has supplemented his theological analysis by incorporating reference to the stylistics and semantics of the Qur'an. His book *Kur'anski semantički kontekst [The Qur'anic Semantic Context]*, published in 2014, is particularly relevant in this regard, as it includes Fatić's research into the contextual meaning of the Qur'anic lexicon, i.e. the phenomena of polysemy and synonyms.<sup>338</sup> He has also published a number of interesting works on the semantic features of frequently used words in the Qur'an, e.g. *rūh*, *ḥarb*, *qitāl*, etc.<sup>339</sup>

Based on these works and the themes they address we can now conclude that the relationship between its Bosnian and Herzegovinian recipients and the Qur'an has been elevated both in the recent past and the present to the diachronic level by facilitating the encounter and integrating the Qur'an into the system of contemporary literary values and trends. Various analytical models of the Qur'anic text have also been developed. These models start from the stylistic premises of the text itself, explore its cultural and historic context, and end with semantic aspects, including questions of etymology, linguistics, and the structural and philosophical semantics of the Qur'an. Certain works by Esad Duraković are of immense importance in this conversation, as they serve as a kind of prolegomenon to his translation of the Qur'an, having been published over a number of years in *Takvim*, an annual publication of the Riyasat of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although they are primarily studies of language and style, a common thread can be observed running throughout all of them: his deep reverence for the Qur'an and its recipients. In each of them, Duraković states, directly or indirectly, that it is the responsibility of the translator

<sup>338</sup> Almir Fatić, *Kur'anski semantički kontekst*, Fakultet islamskih nauka i El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2014.

<sup>339</sup> See: Almir Fatić, "Semantika riječi rūh u Kur'anu i komentarima Kur'ana", *Glasnik Rijaseta*, LXXI, 11- 12, 2009, 1089-1102; A. Fatić, "Semantička obilježja kur'anskih riječi: džihād, harb i qitāl", *Zbornik radova Fakulteta islamskih nauka*, 19/2015, Sarajevo, 2016, 31-50; A. Fatić, "Semantika riječi *al-fitna* u Kur'anu, *Novi Muallim*, yr. XIX, no. 74, ljetno 2018, 66-75; A. Fatić, "Semantičko polje riječi ḡahiliyya u Kur'anu", *Znakovi vremena*, no. 80/81, Sarajevo, ljetno/jesen 2018, 47-65.

to convey the form of the Qur'an to the reader, particularly given the attention paid to form in the Original. Of the Bosnian translations available when he was writing, Duraković singles out Karić's, which conveyed much of the Original's rhythm, but he believes that rhyme was not at the heart of his interests, any more than for other translators.<sup>340</sup> In his work "O nekim značajnim prevodilačkim pogreškama" [On some significant translation mistakes], Duraković gives his analysis of particular linguistic deficiencies present in the translations of Besim Korkut, Mustafa Mlivo and Enes Karić. For example, he points out their different interpretations of the text with reference to the first, invocational sentence of the Qur'an (*bismillah*). In Mlivo's and Korkut's translations the divine adjective *al-Raḥmān* is rendered as "Merciful", even if the adjective's meaning is noticeably more intense in Arabic, so much so that it approaches the status of a noun. The semantic value of the epithet comes from its denotation of universality, of mercy towards all creation, which cannot be seen in their translations. Duraković believes it to be more in the spirit of the fluid and homogeneous Original and more correct to write the noun and adjectives without separation by comma and that the adjectives do not need to be capitalized, insofar as they are there as adjectives denoting attributes of the noun Allah. Duraković suggests the following translation as closest to the Original: *In the name of all-merciful and all-compassionate Allah (U ime Allaha svemilosnoga i samilosnog)*.<sup>341</sup> Duraković also examines the stylistic characteristics of the Qur'anic text in more detail, using the chapters *al-Fātiḥa* and *al-Raḥmān*. In his work "Prilog stilističkoj analizi el-Fatihe" [A contribution to the stylistic analysis of al-Fātiḥa], he points out the implicit relation between the Qur'anic style and the established Arabic literary tradition, highlighting the universality and polyvalence of the Qur'anic text, and, drawing on personal experience, he discusses the literary virtues of the Qur'anic style in general. At the conclusion of

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<sup>340</sup> In fact Korkut rhymed the ayats for the most part in the shorter chapters at the end of the Qur'an, but even then one cannot really speak of a programmatic or consistent translation strategy.

<sup>341</sup> Esad Duraković, "O nekim značajnim prevodilačkim pogreškama", *Takvim za 1997. godinu*, Sarajevo, 1997, 33-42.

the work, Duraković offers his own translation of the chapter *al-Fātiḥa*.<sup>342</sup> He regards the Qur'anic chapter *al-Raḥmān* as the most beautiful in the Qur'an, especially for its sense of wonder, which he considers a fundamental aesthetic value and congruent with the meaning of the text, so that it results in a unique and profoundly powerful expression. In his essay "Stilske vrednote poglavlja *al-Raḥmān*" [Stylistic values of the chapter *al-Raḥmān*] Duraković emphasizes the marked argumentative function of the Qur'anic style in this chapter, highlighting the difference between the Qur'an and literary works whose function tends to be aesthetic rather than argumentative. It is precisely this argumentative element that Duraković sees as one of the fundamental differences between the Qur'an and pre-Islamic literature.

In his work "Ogled o Časnome" [Essay on the Honorable], Duraković steers clear of any exclusivity in discussing the Qur'an as either a purely literary or non-literary text. He emphasizes that the Qur'an cannot, under any circumstances, be classified as a work of art or literature, even though it does, in its style and structure, affirm literary values and builds upon the established tradition. On the other hand, by condemning poetry within its broader context and its own "ideological layer," rather than in the sense of the specific and extraordinary use of language and style, the Qur'an did establish an intense relationship and dialogue with the Arabic literary tradition.<sup>343</sup> Duraković continues his linguistic and stylistic analysis of the Qur'anic text with an analysis of the stylistic potential of the elative, emphasizing the specificity of the Arabic compared to the Bosnian elative and focusing on the stylistic capacity offered by the Arabic elative in the Qur'an, which is frequently used in the same sense as the superlative, as the distancing of the eschatological from the worldly is also achieved by using the elative rather than the standard superlative form. Ordinary comparison, whether genitive or attributive, relies on relation and gradation, while the use of the elative eliminates any possibility of arriving in some kind

<sup>342</sup> E. Duraković, "Prilog stilističkoj analizi el-Fatihe", *Takvim za 1998. godinu*, Sarajevo, 1998, 43-53.

<sup>343</sup> E. Duraković, "Ogled o Časnome", *Takvim za 1999. godinu*, Sarajevo, 1999, 9-22.

of relationship of gradation with God.<sup>344</sup> In his essay “Stilsko stasanje superlativa u Kur’anu” [The Stylistic Profiling of the Superlative in the Qur’an], Duraković looks at the phrase *’arḥam al-rāḥimīn* to illustrate the characteristic superlative by which other “possessors of attributes” are presented and with whom God seems to be being compared. Offering a purely provisional translation of the phrase as “most merciful,” he seeks to show the inability of translation to express the full wealth of meaning and the stylistic power of the original phrase.<sup>345</sup> In his essay “Božanska upotreba ličnih zamjenica u Kur’anu” [The divine use of personal pronouns in the Qur’an], Duraković compares the functioning of personal pronouns in the Qur’an with various uses of them in Western and Oriental and Islamic environments, noting that the Qur’an abounds with the switching of pronouns and their nouns, which achieves an effect of surprising the reader and making the text appear unusual.<sup>346</sup> In the essay “Ogled o metafori Džennet” [An Essay on the Metaphor of Jannah], Duraković employs literary resources in the interpretation of the Qur’an in a unique way. Having presented the possible philosophical meanings of the word Jannah (*ḡannat*) in Arabic, he transfers the most common use of this word as garden or orchard onto the eschatological level, emphasizing that in the Qur’an Jannah does not literally mean garden, “but that it is effectively a literary technique used to present the sum of those pleasures/rewards successfully. In other words, Qur’anic eschatological metaphors – in this case Jannah – represent a conscious abandonment of presenting something completely unknown to our experience and senses in scientific language or via some kind of rational explanation.”<sup>347</sup>

Duraković’s racking up of stylistic interpretations of the Qur’an culminated in the publication of his books *Orijentologija – univerzum*

<sup>344</sup>E. Duraković, “Stilski potencijali elativa u Kur’anu”, *Takvim za 2002. godinu*, Sarajevo, 2002, 73-90.

<sup>345</sup>E. Duraković, “Stilsko stasanje superlativa u Kur’anu”, *Takvim za 2003. godinu*, Sarajevo, 2003, 31-43.

<sup>346</sup>E. Duraković, “Božanska upotreba ličnih zamjenica u Kur’anu”, *Takvim za 2004. godinu*, Sarajevo, 2004, 83-96.

<sup>347</sup>E. Duraković, “Ogled o metafori džennet”, *Izraz*, no. 6, Sarajevo, 1999, 98.

*sakralnoga teksta [Orientalology: The Universe of the Sacred Text]*<sup>348</sup> and *Stil kao argument – nad tekstom Kur’ana [Style as Argument – on the Text of the Qur’an]*.<sup>349</sup> *Orientalology: The Universe of the Sacred Text* contains an interpretation of the immanent poetic postulates, on the one hand, and an interpretation of the poetry of the Qur’an, on the other, and how they are related to each other. Duraković channels different approaches to the Qur’anic text into a unified approach, emphasizing that one is not dealing with a total rejection of poetry and that what is being discussed is actually a kind of mastering of the poetic tradition. Duraković offers a scholarly demonstration of the indisputable influence of the Qur’an on Arabic tradition, lyrical poetry and the development of philology, drawing support from the views of distinguished Arab philologists. He thus expands the perspective to offer a more complete understanding of the various dimensions of the Qur’anic text. The book *Stil kao argument – nad tekstom Kur’ana* contains, amongst other things, all of Duraković’s essays from *Takvim*, which combine with the other texts to form a cohesive whole, through which the author goes beyond the traditional methods of approach and opens up new horizons in the stylistic exploration of a Text that has reigned over an entire culture and civilization. Duraković does not just identify specific stylistic questions and problems that arise in translating the Qur’anic text. He analyses them and proposes concrete and, from a stylistic perspective, high-quality solutions, opening up possibilities for new studies and discoveries.

Duraković published the book *Kur’an – stilsko i matematičko čudo [The Qur’an – A Miracle of Style and Mathematics]* together with Lutvo Kurić. In it he conducts a poetic and stylistic interpretation of the Qur’anic text, while Kurić carries out a mathematical analysis of consonantal clusters found at the beginnings of twenty-nine chapters of the Qur’an, utilizing the language of mathematics. Occupying themselves with the relationship between literary and mathematical poetics, so seemingly opposite, the authors demonstrate that in the case of the Qur’anic text “these two poetics allow for parallel concepts, coming from opposing poles and building on

<sup>348</sup> E. Duraković, *Orijentologija – univerzum sakralnog teksta*, Tugra, Sarajevo, 2007.

<sup>349</sup> E. Duraković, *Stil kao argument – nad tekstom Kur’ana*, Tugra, Sarajevo, 2009.

the Text's own desire to affirm its exceptional order and the order of the world it presents."<sup>350</sup>

Among the under-researched and neglected modalities of the Qur'anic text are its literariness and its creative reception. Although the influence of the Qur'an is clearly reflected in the works of Bosnian and Herzegovinian writers, such as Meša Selimović, Dževad Karahasan, Ćamil Sijarić and many others, very few relevant critical studies have been published that delve into the issues or provide detailed analysis of them. In an essay "Kur'an kao literarna inspiracija" [The Qur'an as literary inspiration], Rizah Durumbašić outlines in brief the foundation upon which a spiritual superstructure has developed within Bosnia and Herzegovina that Qur'anic thought comprehends within its context. Durumbašić focuses particularly on Meša Selimović, who made explicit use of the Qur'anic text as epigraphs for chapters in his novels and, through authentic creative transposition, conveyed an entire world of human destinies in his novel *Derviš i smrt* [Death and the Dervish]. Naturally, the Qur'an and Islamic tradition are there to be recognized in his constitution of a certain type of metaphysical thinking that is given literal embodiment in the structure of the dervish mentality of Ahmed Nurudin, the protagonist of *Derviš i smrt*.<sup>351</sup> While it may be hard for the reader to determine how Selimović's interpretation lines up with the Original's or with one of the translations of the Qur'an into Bosnian, as Selimović did not note anywhere which chapters of the Qur'an he took the verses or passages from. On the other hand, some of the verses that he quotes in the novel take on new connotations and meaning when removed from the whole, so that, even though they are being used in a creative text, which in truth does carry an inherently different understanding of what citation means, it ultimately implies a warped reception of the Qur'anic text. Thus, for example, the epigraph to the fourth chapter of *Derviš i smrt* is "Do you believe that man

<sup>350</sup> Esad Duraković, Lutvo Kurić, *Kur'an: stilsko i matematičko čudo*, Svjetlostkomerc, Sarajevo, 2006; Esad Duraković, Lutvo Kurić, *Kur'an – sinteza estetskog i matematičkog*, Tugra, Sarajevo, 2010.

<sup>351</sup> Rizah Durumbašić, "Kur'an kao literarna inspiracija", *Takvim za 1974. godinu*, Sarajevo, 1974, 27-36.



will achieve that which he seeks”,<sup>352</sup> which is closest in its interpretation to the verse “Or shall man have whatsoever he longs for?!”<sup>353</sup> The text that Selimović appears to be citing cannot be read or understood at all without the verse that follows, “when both this and that world belong only to God?” The first half of a whole, the verse which Selimović “made use of”, is phrased as part of a rhetorical question in the Qur’an. This is not visible in his interpretation, as the verse seems more like a statement expressing that man has no prospect of fulfilling his desires on this earth. Quite to the contrary, in many places the Qur’an provides an answer to the question of human desires, “We are your protectors in the life of this world and in the Hereafter; therein you shall have whatsoever your souls desire, and therein you shall have whatsoever you call for.”,<sup>354</sup> “...Yet whosoever desires the reward of this world, We shall give him of it; and whosoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We shall give him of it. And We shall reward the thankful.”,<sup>355</sup> “...And whosoever desires the harvest of this world, We shall give him some thereof, but he will have no share in the Hereafter.”<sup>356</sup> Esad Duraković has also conducted detailed analyses of Selimović’s use of the Qur’anic text as an epigraph to chapters of his novel *Derviš i smrt*, focusing on the antithetical as the poetic principle of the novel and demonstrating how this principle operates, amongst other things, through the defamiliarization of the epigraph itself.<sup>357</sup> Duraković considers the placing of Qur’anic text as epigraph to be a poetic technique that significantly contributes to the poetic coherence of the novel, emphasizing in the process that Selimović’s method of quoting the reinterpreted text establishes a reciprocal relationship that is then developed in the novel itself. Thus the act in question is not a blasphemy against a sacred text, but “demanded by the structure of the art

<sup>352</sup> Meša Selimović, *Derviš i smrt*, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1991, 101.

<sup>353</sup> Qur’an, 53:24.

<sup>354</sup> Qur’an, 41:31.

<sup>355</sup> Qur’an, 3:145.

<sup>356</sup> Qur’an, 42:20.

<sup>357</sup> Esad Duraković, “Poetičke i stilske funkcije mota/epigrafa u romanu *Derviš i smrt* Meše Selimovića”, *Pregled*, no. 2, Sarajevo, 2010, 63-85.

work and serves the extreme discipline of his poetics.”<sup>358</sup> Duraković pays particular attention to analyzing Selimović’s use of *bismillah* as a motto, in the original Arabic, which allows the writer to mark out as real his textual space and to signify most effectively the religious or religio-cultural space he has modelled in his novel. Berin Bajrić, in his analysis of Selimović’s methods of integrating the Qur’anic text into his own text, has also tried to present the pattern according to which Selimović adapted Qur’anic motifs to his own idea, stressing that this was frequently done at the expense of the ideas of the Original text and with a view to highlighting the message of the novel. Classifying motifs common to the Qur’an and the novel, Bajrić highlights feathers, the name Ahmed, the times, the number forty, death and self-destruction.<sup>359</sup> Presenting how these motifs are given in the Qur’an and an analysis of Selimović’s translation or adaptation of them, Bajrić investigates the stylistic functions the Qur’an serves both in the novel, *Derviš i smrt*, and in any works that take creative inspiration from the Qur’an or the Islamic literary tradition.

Although the Qur’an clearly distances and protects itself from being equated with any kind of artwork, consistently emphasizing that its purpose is to convey the Truth and to warn people, its influence on all facets of art in Oriental and Islamic culture are undeniable. In his essay “Estetička i poetička pozicija Kur’ana u orijentalno-islamskoj kulturi” [The Aesthetics and Poetic Positioning of the Qur’an in Oriental and Islamic Culture], Esad Duraković exhaustively presents and analyzes the continuous process of contextualization of the Qur’an, which has been based on the principle of poetic and aesthetic contrast to all other texts in the broader sense. In the realm of poetology, the Qur’an affirms a deductive poetics in which the Idea/Content is constantly in search of an appropriate form—one that, while significant, is not essential. In terms of aesthetics, the Qur’an affirms the beautiful by designating it one of the greatest values of human life and also

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>359</sup> Berin Bajrić, “O transpozicioniranju kur’anskih motiva u romanu *Derviš i smrt* Meše Selimovića”, *Godišnjak BKZ Preporod*, Sarajevo, 2009, 341-362.

as its own being, thus affirming the principle of *iğāz* – the supernatural beauty of the Qur’anic text.<sup>360</sup>

Research and parallel analyses have demonstrated that, after a long period during which the reception of the Qur’an was limited to its ideological dimension, there have more recently been positive developments in Bosnian and Herzegovinian literary, critical, and theological circles. One might say that a time has come for challenges and an opening up of pathways to other dimensions of understanding of the Qur’anic text, not just for those who have already concerned themselves with it, but also for literary theorists, critics, and historians. The pushing of boundaries in approach to and reception of the Qur’anic text has been enriching and has allowed for more adequate insight into the Text, which itself functions on the aesthetic principle of the unity of Content and Form – encompassing all elements of human life.

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<sup>360</sup> Esad Duraković, “Estetička i poetska pozicija *Kur’ana* u orijentalno-islamskoj kulturi”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 58/2008, Sarajevo, 2009, 33-71.

## TRANSLATED ARABIC LITERATURE AS EXPERIENCED BY THE READING PUBLIC AND LITERARY CRITICAL CIRCLES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The existence of translations of a literary work into foreign languages, is the first, and one of the most important, steps towards its further and more comprehensive reception. A translation allows for a particular work to be perceived correctly, for its unique structure to be discovered, its internal consistency to be understood, its particular features to be seen, for the author's overarching intentions, birthed from the circumstances and socio-cultural context in which the work was created, to be understood, and for a whole list of other characteristics that contain indicators as to how it operates and for its evaluation to be discerned. In discussing translations of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an important – in fact the most important – role in successful communication between a work and its readers is played by the translator. It is they who present us with the “tools” for understanding the work and provide us important guidance for its reception, because they are frequently the ones who have done the poetological and critical analyses of Arabic literary works, whether in pieces published in Bosnian and Herzegovinian journals and magazines or in their own book-length studies and monographs. The path towards the translation of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been considerably constrained by historical and socio-political circumstances, the dominant ideological norms, and the status of Arabic itself – which was long perceived as a *lingua sacra* in Bosnian culture and tradition. During the first phase in the reception of Arabic literature, which began towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and lasted to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, works translated from Arabic were for the most part staunchly moralizing and didactic, motivational, grounded in Islamic intellectualism and ethics, and almost always served an proselytizing function. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the reception of the Qur'an was limited, for a long time, primarily to its ideological and religious dimensions. This implied a primarily theological approach to it, with translators acting as theologians

and offering theological interpretations of the Qur'anic text, despite its numerous other values and meanings – which include literary and poetic values. The Qur'anic translations of Enes Karić and Esad Duraković, published towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were the first concretized translations of the Qur'anic text into Bosnian and also the first in which the aesthetic aspects of the Original were cultivated. Thanks to Karić's and Duraković's translations, the Qur'anic text has become the subject of stylistic analyses and increased focus has been placed on its literary, aesthetic, and poetic qualities, enriching and deepening its reception. This has encouraged a more comprehensive reception and fostered a different attitude towards translators from Arabic to Bosnian.

One of the first works of Arabic literature whose reception “went beyond” the religious and moral-didactic framework was *The Thousand and One Nights*. Already with the first translations, published at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this world-renowned collection of folktales was incorporated into the Bosnian and Herzegovinian cultural tradition as a work that, while belonging to Arabic popular literature, also represents an important part of the history of world literature in terms of its literary and artistic value. Although “perceptions” of *The Thousand and One Nights* have undergone constant change in Bosnia and Herzegovina, depending on shifts in linguistic norms, new literary perspectives, and a shifting hierarchy of values and changes in literary and aesthetic norms, it has remained a work that has always captured the attention of various types of readers. *The Thousand and One Nights* has therefore been re-evaluated multiple times in Bosnia and Herzegovina under different socio-historical conditions and various methods. The publication of Esad Duraković's translation marked the fullest and highest-quality concretization in the history of its reception in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This event was rightly regarded by the Bosnian and Herzegovinian public as a significant and even monumental project, from the perspectives of Arabic literary history, literary theory, comparative literature, phonology and similar studies, and enrichment of the literary tradition there.

Alongside the growing interest in classical Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there emerged a parallel interest in modern

Arabic literature, to the extent that one could claim that the reception of modern literature has overtaken the classical, in both quantitative and the qualitative terms, for the moment. The development, intensity and nature of the reception of modern Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina both began with and have been closely related to the receipt of the Nobel prize for literature by the Egyptian writer Nağīb Maḥfūz in 1988, which was followed by an intensification of global interest in both his works and in Arabic literature as a whole. In line with global trends and certainly compared to the period before Maḥfūz received his award, Bosnian and Herzegovinian translators and orientalists have significantly increased their output of reviews, literary critiques, and translations of modern Arabic literature. Naturally, this has also greatly influenced the broader reception of modern Arabic literature outside of narrow academic circles, paving the way for these works to reach a wider circle of readers and their integration into the educational system of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The actualization of the Palestinian question has also played an important role in the psychological, cultural, and socio-political processes of literary Arabic's reception and is reflected especially in the reception of Palestinian literature. In fact, the Palestinian question has acted as a unifying theme for artists, writers, and musicians who otherwise generally differ in their individual visions and opinions. The relationship of Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers to Palestinian literature was given flesh both in the sensual realm as a stimulus for aesthetic perception and that of the ethical as a call to moral reflection and social activism – as Palestinian literary works package moral consequences within their aesthetic form. The socio-historical conditioning of Palestinian literature means that the works that make it up, both prose and poetry, engage with pressing questions and so drive social action under prevailing social norms as expressed through public opinion, religious sentiments, public morality, customs, and traditions. As regards the reception of Palestinian literature and particularly poetry, we see at work the social function of literature, whereby the reader's literary experience is assimilated within the horizon of expectations of their daily life and preforms their understanding of the world, which in turn affects their social interaction and understanding.

Bosnian translations of Palestinian literary works have contributed to the expression of ideas about Palestinian society and reveal certain regular features of the Palestinian community across history.<sup>361</sup> It is of note that Bosnian and Herzegovinian translations of Palestinian literature are dominated by works written by authors from the occupied territories, with prose and poetry equally well represented. While on the one hand, the Palestinian poetry of resistance plays a vital role in affirming humane and revolutionary ideals through its nurturing of moral heroism, its impact on the occupied territories, and its important contribution to the global affirmation of the Palestinian revolution, on the other, Palestinian literary novels, stories and dramas have, as Muṣṭafā Ḥallāḡ has pointed out, unlike the poetry, played an important role in building awareness, given their more thoroughly but consequently slower-acting didactic character.<sup>362</sup> According to Duraković, the difference in the creativity of two types of Palestinian authors, those who create from the occupied territories and those who create from the diaspora, may be seen “primarily in the range of their thematic preoccupations, but also to a certain extent in the aesthetic features that arise from the specific nature of their experience.” Arab national unity emerges as a common goal of both types of Palestinian literature, which is at the same time one of the fundamental reasons for the great resistance to this literature shown by Israelis and the Zionist regime and anyone else actively trying to fragment the Arab people.<sup>363</sup>

The complexity of the socio-political, historical, and national questions that have marked the historic ferment of Arab communities generally are reflected in the reception of the literature of the Arab diaspora and the work of Arabic authors in English and French. The Bosnian and Herzegovinian environment has proven open to how this literary idiom has been positioned within the Arab cultural world and has been equally receptive of works in Arabic, French, and English, which have received a broad reception even

<sup>361</sup> Nedžah Al-Attar, “Književnost otpora Palestine”, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 151, Sarajevo, 1976, 249-263.

<sup>362</sup> Mustafa Halladž, “Svijest i estetski izraz palestinskog naroda”, *Treći program*, Radio Sarajevo, no. 151, Sarajevo, 1976, 264-270.

<sup>363</sup> Esad Duraković, “Uz palestinsku poeziju otpora”, *Odjek*, no. 9, Sarajevo, 1983, 6.



outside of oriental studies. In this sense, attitudes about French Maghrebi literature are interesting, which, given its engagement with the Arab national question, is approached in Bosnia and Herzegovina in much the same way as Arabic literature proper. In fact, when it comes to translated Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole, it has had the widest reception amongst contemporary comparativists and literary theorists.

The so-called Mahjar literature has also made a significant contribution to the development and modernization of Arabic literature. It includes works by Arab Christians from the Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine who emigrated to the USA between the two world wars and established a literary movement there. Mahjar authors were familiar with the Arab literary tradition, but also with European and American literature.<sup>364</sup> Esad Duraković has made great contributions to the presentation and promotion of Mahjar literature both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and across the former Yugoslavia. As well as having published several translations from the literary oeuvre of the most noteworthy author of this literary school, Ḥalīl Ġubrān, Duraković did his doctoral dissertation at the Philology Department of the University of Belgrade in 1982 on the topic. It was subsequently published in 1989 by the Association of Pan-Arab Writers as a monograph in Arabic and then in 1997 in Bosnian under the title *Poetika arapske književnosti u SAD [The poetics of Arab literature in the USA]*.<sup>365</sup> In a short notice of the Arab publication of this book, Haris Silajdžić describes Duraković's systematic account of the poetics of Mahjar literature and his analytical approach to interpreting the literary traditions it has assimilated.<sup>366</sup> Thanks to Duraković's dedication, in the spheres of literary translation and poetics and literary criticism, the poetics of Mahjar literature – or rather of the literature of the Arabic diaspora – has received a comprehensive presentation to Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers, with its various types, its most significant representatives, and their contributions to the development of Arab literature as a whole. Duraković

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<sup>364</sup> E. Duraković, "Okviri i pretpostavke književnosti mahdžera", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 34/1984, Sarajevo, 1985, 75.

<sup>365</sup> E. Duraković, *Poetika arapske književnosti u SAD*, Arabica Zid, Sarajevo, 1997.

<sup>366</sup> Haris Silajdžić, "Poetika mahdžera", *Odjek*, no. 21, Sarajevo, 1989, 22-23.

has presented the social and historical circumstances that facilitated its development, setting out its poetic postulates, creative individuality, and its sloughing off of established forms and norms, which is particularly true of the poetry. In considering the foundational sources of Mahjar poetics, Duraković stresses the individualism of the American transcendentalist Emerson—whose fervent individualism has been assumed by all the Mahjar authors, but particularly Ḥalīl Ğubrān and Mīhāil Nu‘ayma; he also notes the role of the teachings of Ibn Sīna, particularly his influential poem *Silazak duše* [*The Descent of the Soul*], which had an impact through the appearance of metempsychosis in Nu‘aym’s essays and in Ğubrān’s prose; and finally the influence of Russian realism, which is most clearly visible in the work of Nu‘ayma’s. The considerable contribution of the poetics of Mahjar Arab literature is, Duraković says, reflected in an authentic form of literary criticism conceived so that it is driven equally by aesthetic and ethical principles of evaluation. In both the Arab and the global literary contexts, Mahjar poetics has thus established channels of communication with the literary experiences of different cultures and built on both the Arabic and the European literary tradition, synthesizing literary experience and affirming the principle of spiritual unity, in ways that transcend the boundaries of its own tradition. The two most noteworthy and most popular Mahjar authors are Ḥalīl Ğubrān and Mīhāil Nu‘ayma (1889-1988). Unlike Ğubrān, whose literary oeuvre is well-known and has been well received in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nu‘ayma and his works have not had a broad reception. For this reason Duraković’s text “Zalog budućnosti – nad književnim djelom Mihaila Nuajme” [Warrant for the future – on the literary work of Mīhāil Nu‘ayma] is of particular importance. It was published on the occasion of Nu‘ayma’s death in 1988 and contains a detailed presentation of the fundamental postulates of his poetics – based in artistic sincerity, the unity of form and contents, an inherent aspiration for the constant overcoming of the traditional, and stepping outside of the confines established by the order of past literary works.<sup>367</sup>

<sup>367</sup> Esad Duraković, “Zalog budućnosti – nad književnim djelom Mihaila Nuajme”, *Odjek*, no. 11, Sarajevo, 1988, 14.

The most significant progress in and contribution to the reception of modern Arabic literature in recent times has been due to the translations and literary criticisms of Mirza Sarajkić. In addition to his active commitment to bridging the gap between Palestinian poetry and Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers through translation, academic works and monographs – discussed earlier in the book – Sarajkić has, very knowledgeably and laudably, taken a poetological and literary historical approach to modern Arabic literature, taking both the prose and poetry together, and has thus found a unifying base for the seemingly fragmented or divided Arabic world in its literature.

In discussing Arab prose, Sarajkić has focused on the development and presence of the essay and novel as forms in Arabic literature and the influence of contemporary socio-political and cultural events in the Arab world on the written works that have taken these forms. Sarajkić has examined the dominant themes, motives, and topoi of the Arabic novel at different stages of its development, noting the generally subordinate position of prose to poetry in Arabic literature. In an attempt to trace the roots of the modern essay back to earlier forms of prose, for example in al-Manfalūṭī's literary oeuvre, Sarajkić states that Arabic essays are not alive with deep, philosophical phrases, capturing the attention instead with their simplicity, directness, and sincerity of emotion.<sup>368</sup> In his analysis of the narratives of the Arabic novel of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – seen through the abandonment of identity issues and boundaries – Sarajkić confirms that many of these novels focus less on re-actualization of questions of the threats to personal and/or national identity than on marginalized fragments that cause unease in official cultural communication but nonetheless contain the essential experience of the contemporary Arab. Analyzing the novels of several authors, Sarajkić makes clear the high level of cultural resistance found in the Arabic novel, as the authors abandon established and homogenous forms of cultural communication in their narratives.<sup>369</sup> In a subjective assessment – which, it is important to note, is grounded

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<sup>368</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, "Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti i počeci arapske esejistike", *Pismo*, yr. 3, no. 1, Sarajevo, 2005, 279-292.

<sup>369</sup> M. Sarajkić, "Identitarne metamorfoze u arapskom romanu XXI stoljeća", *Pismo*, no. 16, Sarajevo, 2018, 142-151.

in the beliefs of the Arab readership and contemporary literary critics – Sarajkić presents us with the Arabic novels that defined the year 2019 in the Arab world. According to him the fundamental shared characteristic of the novels published in that period and which captured the attention of Arab critics and the public is the unbearable weight of the present. In their own ways, various authors foreground the unsolvable puzzle of the present moment in the narratives of their novels. Some have confirmed the “eternity of the present”, while others see materials for weaving new hopes in the ruins of the modern Arab world, and yet a third group has resorted to ironic, satirical, and dystopian approaches.<sup>370</sup>

Sarajkić has paid particular attention to the important role that religion plays in Arab society, reflected in the characters and motifs of Arabic novels. His focus is on the perception of religious characters and motifs and the ways they are presented in contemporary Arabic novels. Beginning with the formative phase of the novel, where *homo religious* was presented as a symbol of regression and moral corruption, he traces how this relationship had changed, to some extent, by the end of the 1960s. Sarajkić demonstrates, using the example of characters from Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ’s novels *Zejnova svadba* [*The Wedding of Zein*] and *Vrijeme seobe na sjever* [*The Season of Migration to the North*], that Ṣāliḥ had opened up room for *homo religious* to be like others, showcasing the diversity and depth of a world inhabited by characters of religious provenance. Ṣāliḥ’s concept of “the opening up of worlds,” as Sarajkić puts it, is maximalized by the Egyptian author Yūsuf Zaydān, whose novel *Azazeel* is about the maturation and upbringing of a religious protagonist from a Christian background.<sup>371</sup> By contextualizing the domain of the religious within the fractured ideological age of the Arab novel, Sarajkić also situates established religious topoi in the contemporary novel as an influential form of cultural narrative. He interprets the genesis of fixation, otherness, and stereotypes as depicted in the religious characters of Naḡīb Maḥfūz’s

<sup>370</sup> M. Sarajkić, “Prostrana tjeskoba sadašnjosti: arapski roman u 2019. godini”, *Život*, yr. 67, no. 1-4, Sarajevo, 2019, 36-43.

<sup>371</sup> M. Sarajkić, “Dekonstruiranje mita o invalidnosti: pluralistički prikazi *homo religiousa* u arapskom romanu”, *Context*, yr. 9. no. 1., Sarajevo, 2022, 7-34.

and Ṭāha Ḥusayn's novels, within a framework of literary criticism and theoretical models.<sup>372</sup> Sarajkić also discusses important historical events in the contemporary Arab world which are reflected in all aspects of Arab life, including artistic expression – for example the Arab Spring. In his analysis of novelizations of the Arab Spring he notes that the revolution had become a narrative of numerous disciplines and so an important theme for Arabic literature, proceeding to analyze narratives written directly prior, during, and after it.<sup>373</sup> Looking at this relationship between the actual events in the Arab world and literature, Sarajkić provides insight into the literary representation of conditions and life in Iraq following the American invasion of the country, with special focus on topoi of death. He notes that the destruction of the land and society there has nonetheless resulted in an affirmation of the novel, a literary genre that was previously under a kind of embargo in Iraq or created in exile. Through his analysis of Aḥmad Sa'dawī's (born 1973) *Frānkaštāyn fī Bagdād* [*Frankenstein in Baghdad*] and Šākir Nūrī's (born 1959) *Mağānīn „Būkā“* [*The Madmen of Boca*], Sarajkić observes that these authors deserve our attention for their efforts continuously to question the nature, structure, and consequences of the politics that engulfed their homeland during the third millennium. They persuasively present Iraqi syntax as a fragment that has been written off, questioning the fractures in their homeland through a Foucauldian lens of narrative and formal heterotopias of power, and through Agamben's conceptual framework of bare life.<sup>374</sup>

Moving on to Arabic poetry, in addition to the translations and academic works mentioned previously, Sarajkić has contributed greatly to its study and bridging the gap between the poetics of contemporary Arabic poetry and its Bosnian and Herzegovinian readership. In five critical “essays” from his book *Pjesnici Temmuza: uvod u savremenu arapsku poeziju*

<sup>372</sup> M. Sarajkić, “Slika religije u savremenom arapskom romanu”, *Context*, yr. 8, no. 1, Sarajevo, 2021, 33-64.

<sup>373</sup> M. Sarajkić, “Savremena revolucija u arapskom romanu: tužni tropi arapskog proljeća”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 71/2021, Sarajevo, 2022, 51-76.

<sup>374</sup> M. Sarajkić, “Toposi smrti u savremenom iračkom romanu”, *Pismo*, yr. 18, Sarajevo, 2020, 112-129.

[*The Poets of Tammuz: An Introduction to Contemporary Arabic Poetry*] Sarajkić analyses and evaluates the movements and poetic practices that have emerged from the concurrence of the myth of Tammuz and revaluation of the Arabic poetic tradition, the Western literary tradition, and the current state of the world. These poets have experienced the Arab world as a spiritual and existential desert that needed to change and so engaged on both the poetic and the social level. The goal of this “new” language, or poetry, has been the de-automatization of social communication. In this regard, Esad Duraković has emphasized the importance of Sarajkić, as a first-rate academic authority in the field of modern Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, deciding to engage with the study of this literary phenomenon and so contribute immensely to the study of Arabic poetry as the most important corpus within modern Arabic literature.<sup>375</sup> Sarajkić’s study is one of just a few monographs, not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but the broader area of the Balkans – as emphasized by Meysun Gharaibeh Simonović – to consider the poetics of the modern generation of Arabic poets holistically and as such it is a reliable source and starting point for further studies of Arabic poetry.<sup>376</sup> One of the originators and most significant representatives of Tammuz poetry, considered to have brought the re-semanticization of the myth of Tammuz to a peak, was the renowned Syrian poet Adonis (born 1930). Sarajkić has published a short study on Adonis’s poetry and his insistence on continuous re-education, in which he explores and examines the semantic core of Adonis’s poetry.<sup>377</sup> *Arapska poetika [Arabic Poetics]*, a translation into Bosnian by Mirza Sarajkić, is a collection of Adonis’s lectures at the Collège de France in Paris in 1984. The work presents the essence of Adonis’ reflections and inquiries into

<sup>375</sup> Esad Duraković “Mirza Sarajkić: *Pjesnici Temmuza: Uvod u savremenu arapsku poeziju*”, (book review), *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 70/2020, Sarajevo, 2021, 247-249.

<sup>376</sup> Meysun Gharaibeh Simonović, “Nova poezija pesnika Temuza: Tranzicija iz receptivnog u perceptivni kontekst”, *Društvene i humanističke studije*, no. 4 (17), Tuzla, 2021, 577-582.

<sup>377</sup> Mirza Sarajkić, “Poetika preobraženja u Adonisovom pjesništvu”, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 69/2020, Sarajevo, 2020, 131-162.

the vast poetic riches of the Arabs, as well as the complex role of the poet within the Arab cultural world.<sup>378</sup>

It is important to note that, Sarajkić “gives a voice” and “visibility” to women Arab writers with his poetological approach to contemporary Arab literature. In most of his works, in the context of the representative nature of certain literary phenomena and techniques, he cites fragments from the works of female authors, like the Jordanian prose writer Samīḥa Ḥarīs (born 1956), the Palestinian poet Ḥuzzāma Ḥabāyib (born 1965), and the Omani prose writer Huda Ḥamad (born 1981), among others. Sarajkić has also translated a poetry collection *U dubinama poetskih mora [In deep poetic waters]*<sup>379</sup> by Su‘ād al-Ṣabāḥ (born 1942), whose poetic idiom involves a markedly critical relationship towards Arab tradition – particularly its attitudes about women. With this in mind, it is important when discussing the reception of so called “women’s writing” in Arabic literature, to note that only works by female authors who are outspokenly against the cultural dictatorship, established societal norms, and the oppressed position of women in Arab society have been translated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is important to emphasize that such works have drawn the attention of and become an object of interest to that part of the academic community that concerns itself with comparative literary studies and investigating the role of women in literature and who have published noteworthy works and reflection on these subjects.

Sarajkić and Munir Mujić co-authored the book *Savremena književnost Omana: Izbor iz poezije, romana i kratke price [Contemporary Omani Literature: A Selection from Poetry, the Novel, and Short Stories]* in 2017.<sup>380</sup> The translation of the selected prose and poetry by Omani authors is preceded by an extensive study into the history and stages of development of modern literature in Oman, in which Mujić and Sarajkić set out the

<sup>378</sup> Adūnīs, *Arapaska poetika*, translated by Mirza Sarajkić, Centar za napredne studije (CNS), 2022.

<sup>379</sup> Su‘ād al-Ṣabāḥ, *U dubinama poetskih mora*, translated from the Arabic and versified by Mirza Sarajkić, Dobra knjiga, Sarajevo, 2012.

<sup>380</sup> *Savremena književnost Omana: Izbor iz poezije, romana i kratke priče*, selected and translated by Munir Mujić and Mirza Sarajkić, Centar za napredne studije (CNS), Sarajevo, 2017.



trends that have marked contemporary Omani literature and illuminate the various poetics of the authors and their other features, listening attentively to Omani literary voices and conveying them in all their plurality and diversity. By truthfully conveying Omani written and lived experience, the authors of this collection have brought a slice of this literary powerhouse from an inspiring but relatively inaccessible and poorly known culture to the Bosnian and Herzegovinian public.<sup>381</sup>

Sarajkić understands all the works of Arabic literature he deals with, whether through translations or in his academic publications, within the framework of historical, sociological and personal perspectives. His literary-critical works have contributed significantly to a deeper understanding of the social foundations of and role of literature in Arab society and they have been very influential in connecting the Bosnian and Herzegovinian context to the national and societal aspirations of Arab society. He has carried out a significant shift in and enhanced the study of literary and poetic phenomena, drawn from modern Arabic literature as a whole. In his studies and analyses of the poetic qualities of Arabic literary prose he provides an overview of the dominant themes, motifs, topoi, and narratives, contextualizing them both in the present and in the socio-historical context in which they were created and current. By virtue of the type of approach and findings Sarajkić offers in his observations, the conditions are being created for a wider reception and valorization of translated Arabic literature, from the “common” reader to critics and literary theorists. It is also very important to mention that this discussion concerns a translator of marked literary gifts himself, who has expertly and successfully translated from both Arabic and English.

In addition to his work on translation and literary-critical reception, Sarajkić has continuously made a significant contribution to the public promotion of Arabic literature and in the social and cultural life of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He has actively participated several times at the International “Bookstan” literary festival, the Sarajevo Poetry Festival, and at the International Book Fair in Sarajevo, organized annually and

<sup>381</sup> Mirza Sarajkić and Munir Mujić, “Panorama savremene omanske književnosti”, in: *Savremena književnost Omana...*, 9-28.

during which the best and most popular works and translations in Bosnia and Herzegovina are recognized. He was crowned the best translator in 2009. Generally speaking, these events have played a very important role historically in the overall promotion and reception of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whether through the active participation of Arab authors or the popularization of translations of Arabic literature by way of awards to the authors and book promotions. The Sarajevo Poetry Festival is the oldest such event in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond and has for decades gathered and hosted poets from around the world, including many Arab authors. Previous participants include some of the most notable Arab authors, as mentioned above, and younger and less established authors, to whom it has offered an opportunity to present themselves to the broader reading public in our country.

A typology of Bosnian and Herzegovinian readers of Arabic literature is necessarily related in many ways to the context of the various historical epochs that determine it, starting with readers who read in their free time, then students who are assigned readings based on a canon of set authors and literary phenomena, all the way to critics who “experience the text”, literary historians who “categorize” it, and philologists who explain it word by word. The equipped reader is not always a contemporary of the work. They can belong to a social group in which detailed knowledge of an author and their work is regarded as a fundamental element of education, and, in many historical situations, this is the path that leads to an educated citizenry.<sup>382</sup> Readers are those who turn a work into a tool for discovery, gaining knowledge and information, introspection, education, and broadening their intellectual and spiritual horizons. The breadth and variety of the potential reading public of Arabic literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina is evident from the fact that some at least of these works are available in digital editions or in Braille at the “Public Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired in BiH”. Amongst such works are *Hiljadu i jedna noć: iz pera i mašte [One Thousand and One Nights: A Retelling]* by Ḥannān al-Šayh, *Prorok [The Prophet]* by Ḥalīl Ğubrān, *Novi Kairo*

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<sup>382</sup> See: Harald Vajnrih, “U prilog jednoj istoriji književnosti za čitaoca” in: *Teorija recepcije u nauci o književnosti*, 84-90.

*[Cairo Modern]*, *Pansion Miramar [Miramar]*, *Razgovori na Nilu [Adrift on the Nile]*, and *Saga o bijednicima [The Beggar]* by Nağib Maħfūz and other works.<sup>383</sup>

Some works of Arabic literature have been chosen by social institutions for promotion, based on their evaluation of their ideological, aesthetic, economic, and other values, and included into educational processes in Bosnia and Hercegovina as part of language and literature teaching and as set texts. School lessons on literature are, after publishers, bookshops and libraries, one of the most important mechanisms for the reception of works of Arabic literature – insofar as their job is the evaluation of literary production and passing on of literary heritage through the study of select literary works and phenomena and set reading.<sup>384</sup>

In discussing the study and reception of Arabic literature at the academic level, the Department of Oriental Philology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo and the Oriental Institute of Sarajevo have, since their inception in 1950, also been very important for both the institutionalization of research in and studies of Arabic literature and their academic valorization. A similar and important contribution has been made by the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo and more recently the Department of Arabic Language and Arabic Literature at the Islamic Pedagogical Faculty of the University of Zenica. In considering

<sup>383</sup> <https://bibsis.org.ba/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/katalog-knjiga-u-digitalnoj-tehnici-1.pdf> (last visited: 24.11.2023)

<sup>384</sup> In discussing the study of the reception of heritage and of Arabic literature in translation in schooling in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we must point out the problems we encountered while researching the reception of Arabic literature in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian educational system. Because of wartime events during the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina a significant body of documentation was destroyed and lost that could have served to determine precisely the presence of Arabic literature in primary and secondary education and at the academic level in the country. Unfortunately, some of that documentation was also inaccessible because of the lack of care on the part of the responsible institutions, so that some curricula and teaching plans have been moved from institution to institution and lost in the process. Nonetheless, on the basis of the available information, it has been possible to overcome some of these problems and present more or less the reception or rather the situation and representation of literary heritage and Arabic literature in Bosnian and Herzegovinian education at the various periods.

the important role that these institutions have played in academic life, we must note that the most important Bosnian and Herzegovinian translators, Arabists and students of Arabic literature – including Esad Duraković, Mehmed Kico, Sulejman Grozdanić, Enes Karić, Munir Mujić, Mirza Sarajkić, and others – have all been deeply involved in these institutions throughout their professional lives.

These authors deft and expert literary-critical and literary-theoretical reflections and their increasing use of poetological approaches to the study of Arabic literature have been immensely important to the promotion and appropriate reception of that literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Contemporary approaches to it have been characterized by the validation of creative freedom and to the work as an autonomous whole, awareness of history as continuously changing values and the rejection of any form of idealization of aesthetic value, and a focus on questioning and analyzing the characteristics of that literature and literary works with a view to affirming their literary, cultural, and spiritual values and significance. As a result, in Bosnia and Herzegovina not a single work of Arabic literature, classical or contemporary, has imposed itself as a work of unquestionable eternal wisdom, whose beauty and value is to be taken for granted, without being put to the text. The methodology, approaches, and academic orientation of works published by Bosnian and Herzegovinian researchers and Arabists to date serve as a good indicator and a recommendation for an approach to works of Arabic literature that is open, consistent and unburdened by the canons of European literature.

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