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BILINGUALISM AND “SIGNIFICANT GEOGRAPHIES” IN MOROCCAN COLONIAL JOURNALS: *AL-MOTAMID* AND *KETAMA*, MODERN ARABIC POETRY AND LITERARY HISTORY

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*This essay surveys two largely disregarded bilingual (Arabic–Spanish) literary journals from late-colonial northern Morocco: *Al-Motamid* (1947–1956) and *Ketama* (1953–1959). I trace the process which led to the consolidation of the centrality of contemporary Arabic poetry in both journals, the practices and the actors which enabled it. As such, the essay is concerned not only with the project of (re)writing Moroccan Arabic literary history, but also the larger literary history connecting the Maghreb and the Mashreq, as well as Europe and Spanish and Arab diasporas in the Mahjar (North and South America). The essay also complicates understandings of local colonised culture and literature as necessarily subaltern and of literary translation moving from the literary “centre” to the “periphery,” allowing us instead to grasp the ways in which the Moroccan and Arab authors influenced the Spaniards. I argue the collaboration of the former, first in *Al-Motamid* and later in *Ketama*, was decisive for the increasingly bilingual and Arabic orientation that the*

journals adopted. In fact, one of the main goals of both journals became making modern Arabic literature available in Spanish. The Moroccan and other Arab writers also enabled the reorientation of some Spanish orientalist towards contemporary Arabic literary production. The journals made visible and enabled the circulation of contemporary Arabic poetry between the Mashreq, the Maghreb and the Mahjar literary worlds; of contemporary poetry between Arabic, Spanish, and other European languages. Although their location was the seemingly provincial Moroccan Spanish Protectorate, these journals became small but significant world literary nodes.

Introduction

When in 1971 the Moroccan poet ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-La’bī (Laabi) launched *Anfās*, the Arabic sister journal of the French *Souffles*, he affirmed it “signaled a new era in Maghrebi culture: one of exchange and debate in progressive thought between Maghreb and Levant” (Laabi, *Souffles* 1971; cited in McManus [forthcoming](#), 4). Laabi (b. Fes 1944) had founded the avant-garde *Souffles* in 1966, and the journal brought into Morocco, and into French, contemporary Arabic poetry from the Levant or Mashreq. This undoubtedly important initiative marked less of a “new era” than Laabi declared, though, given that in Morocco such a literary exchange with the Mashreq and translation of Arabic avant-garde writings into a European language had already started two decades earlier, through the two bilingual literary journals under study in this essay, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama*. Only, in their case, the European language in question was Spanish, and the journals’ location was the seemingly provincial one of Tetouan, in the Moroccan Spanish Protectorate. As this essay argues, the collaboration between Spanish, Moroccan and other Arabic contributors made these two “minor” bilingual journals small but significant world literary nodes. The journals made visible and enabled the circulation of contemporary Arabic poetry between the Mashreq, the Maghreb *and* the Mahjar (i.e. North and South American) literary worlds; and of contemporary poetry between Arabic, Spanish, and other European languages. They also enabled the reorientation of some Spanish orientalist towards contemporary Arabic literary production.

Al-Motamid. Verso y Prosa was founded by the poet Trina Mercader (Alicante 1919–Granada 1984) and named after the eleventh-century ruler of the kingdom of Seville in al-Andalus, Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abbād al-Mu’tamid.¹ *Al-Motamid* saw the light in Larache in 1947, and in 1953 it moved to Tetouan, the capital of the Spanish Protectorate, where it ceased to be published in 1956, the year in which Morocco became an independent nation.

1 In this essay the name of the journal is shortened and maintained in its Hispanophone

calligraphy (*Al-Motamid*, followed by the number of the issue), whereas references to the poet-ruler are transcribed following the Arabic transliteration rules (al-Mu‘tamid). Al-Mu‘tamid has inspired a number of cultural events and products in the Iberian Peninsula and the Arab world. An annual music festival in the Portuguese region of Algarve carries the name of al-Mu‘tamid. For an analysis of the play on al-Mu‘tamid written by Blas Infante, a prominent advocate of Andalusian nationalism, see Nonell (2013); and for the discussion of a Syrian soap opera in which al-Mu‘tamid was one of the protagonists, see Calderwood (2015).

Ketama was founded in 1953 in Tetouan by the poet Jacinto López Gorjé (Alicante 1925–Madrid 2008), and bore the name of the northern Moroccan Riffian area and village where López Gorjé had worked as a teacher in the early 1950s; it continued publication until 1959. This essay focuses on the process which led to the consolidation of the centrality of Arabic poetry in both journals, and on the practices and the actors which enabled it. As such, it is concerned with the project of tracing a larger literary history connecting the Maghreb and the Mashreq, something Laabi’s well-known mission embodied.

Northern Morocco has tended to be overlooked or cast as a provincial hub in scholarship about Morocco and colonial Maghreb more in general because it fell under the tutelage of a minor colonial power such as Spain – unlike the rest of the country, which by and large became a French Protectorate, or an international zone, such as the nearby city of Tangiers. Yet despite their provincial location, neither *Ketama* nor *Al-Motamid* “dealt exclusively” with “what we would call Moroccan local or regional literature,” nor were they the platform for any sort of “reduced literary group of Moroccans and Spaniards living in the north of the country,” as *Ketama*’s editor would later emphasise (López Gorjé 2011, 31). Instead, both journals published and made known the works of great Arab and Spanish authors, provided pioneer translations and created a forum for literary exchange and dialogue stretching from Beirut to São Paulo, passing through Alicante and of course, Tetouan. Moreover, as we shall see, as *Al-Motamid* became more and more bilingual, the status of the Arabic language was raised, and the Arabic section acquired its own personality, agenda, and cultural identity. *Ketama* was bilingual from the very beginning.

Al-Motamid and *Ketama* “are sometimes seen nostalgically as exemplars of the joint work of Spanish and Moroccan authors,” Laura Casielles and Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla (2017, 666) have stated, “but are in fact typical colonial products.” As a matter of fact, the Franco regime implemented Arabisation policies in the Spanish zone, partly to distance itself from the French authorities by presenting itself as a defender of the Arabic language in the educational, cultural and political realms (Calderwood 2018). This essay argues the collaboration of Moroccans and other Arab writers, first in *Al-Motamid* and later in *Ketama*, was decisive for the increasingly bilingual and Arabic orientation that the journals adopted. This does not mean that colonially informed power relations were exempt from such collaborative relation – or from any aspect of colonial culture, for that matter. Rather, the approach this essay pursues aims at complicating understandings of local colonised culture and literature as necessarily subaltern. As I go on to show, one of the main goals of both journals became making modern Arabic literature available in Spanish. That, in turn, remedied the ignorance about contemporary Arabic poetry among Spanish literati – most of whom did not command written standard Arabic. More

importantly, I point out the ways in which the Moroccan and Arab authors influenced the Spaniards, in order to challenge the idea that the colonised were only receptors of (the colonisers’) influence, as it is commonly assumed to have happened in any colonial interaction. In fact, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* tend to be considered precursors of Spanish interest in Arabic modern literature (Fernández Parrilla 2018), but the Moroccan and other Arab writers who collaborated with these journals and were a key driving force of such interest are left unacknowledged. Their imprint is hardly visible unless one reads their texts in Arabic, something lacking in most postcolonial scholarship within and without Spain (Aboul-Ela 2010; Fernández Parrilla 2018; Hassan 2002). Even more, the influence of the Moroccan and Arab collaborators in these journals and on the Spanish directors can hardly be grasped unless one performs a *bilingual* analysis of the journals, something that, to my knowledge, has not been done so far. For that reason, I “read together” (Laachir 2016) the Arabic and Spanish texts and sections of these journals. Such bilingual reading is fundamental to a better grasp of the frictions, negotiations, and adaptations – in sum, the politics – that shaped *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama*, and literature in colonial Morocco more broadly.

In the last two decades, “distant reading” (Moretti 2015) has emerged as an innovative approach to investigate literary history on a broad scale and “map” texts and genres within/onto world literature. Such a quantitative approach, however, relies on systemic perspectives based on and reinforcing Eurocentric meta-narratives (Ascari 2014; Kristal 2002; Orsini 2002). By contrast, in this essay I trace the orientation of these journals in relation to the cultural framework from which they emerged and which they, at the same time, shaped. The notions of “location” (Orsini and Zecchini 2019) and of “significant geographies” (Laachir, Marzagora, and Orsini 2018) are useful to highlight the specific location, orientation, and the spaces and traditions that mattered to the writers and texts of *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama*. In relation to “location,” I argue it is *because* their location was the seemingly provincial Moroccan Spanish Protectorate that these journals became small but significant world literary nodes. The nodes (“significant geographies”) which constituted the literary world of *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* and their contributors included Beirut, São Paulo, Alicante and Tetouan – rather than Cairo and Paris, the two usual coordinates of modern Arabic–European literary exchange. In examining the centrality of contemporary Arabic poetics and the broader Arabic literary circuits, two main world geographies emerge as particularly significant to the journals: the Mashreq – mainly Lebanon, and Palestine, Irak, Egypt and Syria – and the Mahjar – constituted by the diaspora of Mashreqi authors who fled to North and South America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The larger network included cities in Spain, and in South America where many Spaniards were exiled, as well as a few journal exchanges with

Italian and French journals – which then *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* also made news or sections about.

What *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* accomplished in the late 1940s and early 1950s was certainly unusual and unprecedented in many respects, though because of their location their enterprise has largely gone unnoticed in the genealogy of modern Arabic and Moroccan literary histories.² Both the connection with Spain and with Arab writers settled in South America enabled a different kind of “world-making” from that of intellectuals within the French Protectorate, and the production of a somewhat different literary configuration. Al-Andalus, albeit often romanticized as the history shared by Spaniards and Moroccans, enabled the conception of modern Hispano-Arabic literary relations within a long historical genealogy. Throughout the bilingual journals, not only was al-Andalus appropriated by Spaniards and Moroccans in not too different ways, but also its existence and continuous evocation configured a way of thinking about history that differs from the so-called “modern historical thinking,” which endows Moroccan literary history with an important distinctiveness within the common Arabic literary historical narrative (Goikolea-Amiano *forthcoming*). Related to the Spanish colonial policies promoting the so-called Hispano-Arab culture (within a cultural genealogy tracing back to al-Andalus), this essay focuses on the shift the journals performed as they became increasingly oriented toward the contemporary Mashreqi and the Mahjari literary avant-gardes. Besides, whereas North American Mahjari authors have received more attention than South American ones, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* also translated the poetry of the latter. As such, this essay is less concerned with the success and legacy of the two journals and more with how their particular location and of the “significant geographies” of their network of contributors enabled the production of a particular literary imagination of the world and of the place of modern Arabic and Moroccan literature in it.

Perhaps collaborative and geographically expansive literary projects such as those of these journals could not have been possible in other formats. This essay therefore also highlights the importance of journals as sources for literary and intellectual history – a genre and medium that is so far under-represented in the fields of Moroccan, Maghrebi and “world literature,” and the critical importance of which several Arab and Moroccan scholars have long urged (Sabry 2012; Tenkoul 1988).

Situating the colonial literary journals *al-Motamid* and *Ketama*

Tetouan, where *Ketama* was born and *Al-Motamid* expanded, was the political and cultural capital of the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco (1912–1956). Although it was a small city of around eighty thousand inhabitants,

2 *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* are mentioned only in passing in Pérez Beltrán (2007, 12); Abrighach (2009, 34); Casielles and Fernández Parrilla (2017, 666–667); Calderwood (2018, 138). For a remarkable work that focuses on *Al-Motamid* and on Trina Mercader, although only on the Spanish-language texts, see Fernández Hoyos (2006).

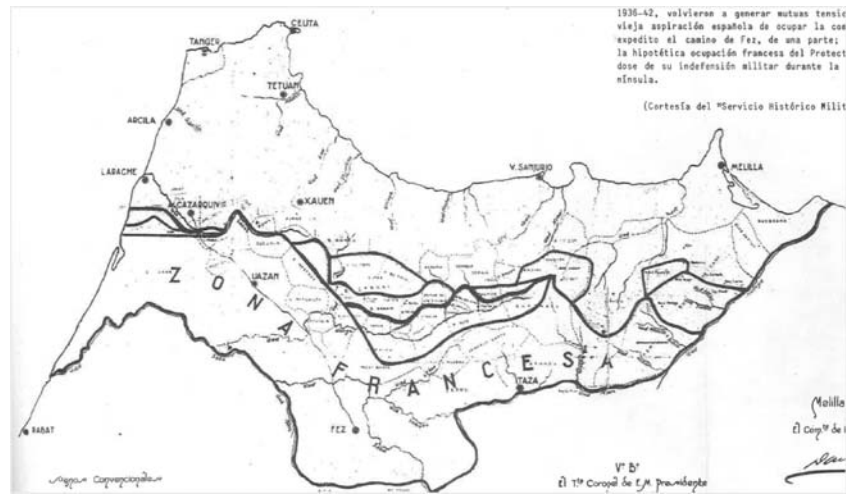


Figure 1 Northern Morocco between the Atlantic (left), the Strait of Gibraltar (north) and the western Mediterranean Alboran sea (right). The map signals some of the major cities of the Spanish Protectorate, i.e. Tetouan, Larache, Ksar el Kebir (Alcazalquivir), Chefchaouen (Xauen) and Asilah (Arcila), in addition to cities in the Rif such as Al Hoceima (V. Sanjurjo), as well as the city of Tangier, and Ceuta and Melilla (currently under Spanish sovereignty and under Iberian control since the 15th century). Source: Morales Lezcano (1984).

Tetouan was a thriving cultural centre throughout the 1940s and 1950s (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 1951, 40). Larache, where *Al-Motamid* was conceived in 1947, was an even smaller town, albeit one of the five major urban sites in the Spanish zone (see Figure 1). While the more mountainous eastern region of the Rif was largely Tarifti (Berber)-speaking, the journals under study here emerged in the Arabophone western region of Jbāla, where most Spaniards in Morocco lived.³

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s Tetouan was also one of the main capitals of the Moroccan anticolonial movement, from which nationalist activists smuggled letters, gifts, and journals and books into the French zone and elsewhere in the Arab world, especially into Egypt, where the Cairo-based *Maktab al-Maghrib al-'Arabī* (Office of the Arab Maghreb, established in 1947) assembled Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan nationalists advocating for the independence of their countries.⁴ In the words of the Spanish colonial official Tomás García Figueras, “Tet[o]uan was the distributing center of all kinds of pamphlets, books, newspapers and Arab journals sent from Cairo via London, Lausanne, Manchester or Gibraltar ... to Casablanca, Salé, Kenitra, Meknes and Fez, and occasionally even ... Marrakesh” (cited in Stenner 2016, 449). Yet *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* rarely included authors of the French-controlled zone of Morocco. This suggests that whereas the more politically oriented writings in colonial Morocco circulated from the Spanish to the French zone, the literary ones did not cross the border as

3 The native languages of the inhabitants of the northwestern Moroccan region of Jbāla were either Darija (Moroccan Arabic) or Hakitia (Hispano-Jewish). For a better understanding of the Tamazight/Berber linguistic diversity in northern Morocco, see González Vázquez (2015). According to Salafranca Ortega (2001, 251), by 1954 there were some one

hundred thousand Spanish officers and soldiers, and ninety thousand Spanish civilians living in northern Morocco. 4 The Office of the Arab Maghreb was funded in Berlin in 1943, where the bilingual (Arabic and German) journal *al-Maghrib al-'Arabī* was launched. See Khatib (1996).

5 For more on the participation of Moroccans in the Spanish civil war, see de Madariaga (2002) and Balfour (2002).

6 For more on Idrīs Diyūrī, see Chakor and Macías (1996); Ágreda (2011).

much – although toward 1954 *Al-Motamid* did establish links with the Rabat-based *Rabat-based Risālat al-Maghrib*, directed by the journalist, critic and novelist ‘Abd al-Karīm Ghallāb and a vital platform for poetry and new prose genres. The scarcity of literary links between the two Protectorates seems to have continued in postcolonial times. Apart from the collaboration of the Tangiers-based ‘Abd Allāh Kannūn –one of the intellectuals involved in the amalgam of patriotism, religiosity, journalism and literature of the time – northern Moroccan literature is fairly absent in post-independence literary magazines such as *Risālat al-Adīb* (1958–1959), published in Marrakech and a platform for young and women writers (Fernández Parrilla 2014, 114).

The Francoist coup that led to the Spanish civil war can be seen as one of the many historical events that contributed to the founding of *Al-Motamid*, given that Trina Mercader decided to remain in Larache, where she was visiting relatives, after Franco’s troops advanced from Morocco in the Spanish peninsula in 1936.⁵ In an article written *post facto*, Mercader described the cultural initiatives that the Spanish authorities in northern Morocco promoted in the 1930s and 1940s as “praising the superiority of the protecting country over that of the protected one” (Mercader 1981, 76). *Al-Motamid* arguably began at the initiative of a group of Spanish and Moroccan writers who aimed at somehow challenging such a paradigm. Among the latter were the poet ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Muqaddam and the professor of Arabic literature Ibrāhīm al-Ilghī, who translated their own Arabic poems into Spanish. The playwright and translator from Larache, Idrīs Diyūrī, also contributed to the magazine from the very beginning.⁶ The Spanish poet Carmen Conde, who had lived in Melilla as a child, praised the “exceptional” initiative for its “Moroccanness” (*su rareza se apoyará en su marroquismo*) (Mercader 1981, 77). Soon, a handful of poets living in the northeastern Spanish enclave of Melilla likewise joined *Al-Motamid*: among them, the future founder and editor of *Ketama*, Jacinto López Gorjé, as well as Pío Gómez Nisa and Eladio Sos, the editors of a radio magazine in Melilla who in 1949 founded a literary magazine called *Manantial* (Mercader 1981, 77).

In 1953 the publication of *Al-Motamid* moved to Tetouan, where *Ketama* saw the light a few months later. The move to the capital entailed significant changes for both journals. In an unsigned note probably written by Mercader, the move to the capital of the Spanish Protectorate was said to have been invigorating because it enabled the Spanish editors and collaborators to “discover” the Moroccan literary youth (*Al-Motamid* 25, see Figure 2). Among the most inquisitive of the young poets was Muḥammad al-Ṣabbāgh (Tetouan 1929–Rabat 2013), the “legitimate father of [Moroccan literary] modernity,” according to Laâbi (2005, 233). Al-Ṣabbāgh was pivotal in expanding the Arabic scope of both journals: he was the most prolific translator of Arabic poetry into Spanish and established a wide network



Figure 2 López Gorjé, Mercader and al-Şabbāgh in Tetouan (n.d.). Source: Barce (2015).

with Arab writers and journals. Before, during and after his involvement in *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama*, al-Ṣabbāgh maintained an extensive correspondence with Mashreqī and Mahjarī writers such as Mikhā’il Nu’ayma, Būlus Salāma, Īlīyā Abū Mādī and Shafīq Ma’lūf, among others (Figure 2) (‘Abbās 1972).

7 For al-Ṣabbāgh, see Wadghīrī (1977); Qāsimī (2002); Burillo de Ágreda (2012). Al-Ṣabbāgh was also one of the most important mentors of Muḥammad Shūkrī (Choukri); see ‘Hadha Huwwa: Muhammad Choukri’ (1994).

8 This is the case for the well-known Tetouani al-Tuhāmī al-Wazzānī, the editor of *al-Rīf*, and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Khatīb, co-editor of *al-Anwār*.

Al-Ṣabbāgh is the best-known contemporary Tetouani poet.⁷ Born in 1929, he was home-schooled by his father, who taught him jurisprudence, linguistics and religious studies. He enrolled into a local school in the late 1930s, and in 1947 he started publishing in the Tetouani newspapers and journals *al-Ānis*, *al-Anwār*, *al-Rīf*, *al-Miṣbāḥ*, and *al-Nahār*, which other frequent collaborators of the journals under study here were involved with.⁸ Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, al-Ṣabbāgh also published in literary journals from Tunisia, Lebanon, and the Mahjar, and corresponded with Mashreqī as well as Spanish authors. Al-Ṣabbāgh was probably the Moroccan author whose work was more recognized at the time both within and beyond northern Morocco. His poetic anthology *al-’Abīr al-multahab* (*Passionate Scent*, 1953), prefaced by the Lebanese Būlus Salāma, became very well known in the Mashreq (Wadghīrī 1977, 24). His literary works were published in many Spanish literary journals in the 1950s, and the prologue of an anthology edited by López Gorjé was written by the 1977 Nobel laureate Vicente Aleixandre, whom al-Ṣabbāgh met in Tetouan in 1953 (Aleixandre 1992). Al-Ṣabbāgh’s literary corpus includes stories, children’s literature and literary criticism, in addition to poetry, which he cultivated most when he was the editor of the Arabic section of *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama*.

Although they are often treated as equivalent, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* were substantially different. *Al-Motamid* served as a precedent for *Ketama*, which was more systematic and completely bilingual from the very beginning, as we shall see. *Ketama* also had institutional funding and the support of the Spanish Office of Education and Culture, and it was the literary supplement of the scientific journal *Tamuda* – which merged with the French-zone homologue *Hesperis* after independence and still runs under the name *Hesperis-Tamuda* (Martínez Montávez 2011, 11). In contrast, *Al-Motamid* was financially precarious and managed to survive only due to the relentless determination of Mercader and her collaborators. Yet, as we shall see, when *Al-Motamid* ended its trajectory, nine years after it first saw the light, it had acquired some degree of prestige and circulation in the Arab world, the Spanish peninsula and Europe, as well as South and North America; a circuit which its successor *Ketama* expanded until 1959 and which the exchanges with journals in different world locations attest – from the mid-1950s on, Tetouani *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* travelled to Beirut, Cairo, Rabat, Tunis, Caracas, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Madrid, Alicante, Córdoba, Las Palmas, Brussels and Rome, among others, and received journals from therein.

9 For example, the Spanish poet Juan José Domenchina, exiled in Mexico, sent fragments of his book *El diván de Abz-ul-Agrib* (1945) to *Ketama*, and the journal (13–14) published in the original Spanish as well as Arabic translation. The 1956 Nobel laureate Juan Ramón Jiménez also sent unpublished poems to Mercader, published in *Al-Motamid* (28).

10 For example, *Al-Motamid* (28) reported a piece of news from the Egyptian press that, in turn, the Tetouani literary journal *al-Ānis* had reproduced regarding the announcement of the publication of Vicente Aleixandre's *Historia del Corazón* (*History of the Heart*, 1954), called after “the prince of contemporary Spanish poetry.” *Ketama* (13–14) reproduced Moroccan critic ‘Abd al-Karīm Ghallāb’s

Most of the literary pieces printed in the two journals were previously unpublished. Occasionally, well-known as well as unknown writers sent their writings to be published in *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* first.⁹ Poetry, the genre cultivated by the three most engaged and prolific writers of the journals – Mercader, López Gorjé and al-Ṣabbāgh – was privileged, though prose, essays, and short stories were also published – such as, for example, the Arabic stories by the renowned al-Tuhāmī al-Wazzānī (*Ketama* 1, 12) or the Spanish ones of Dora Bacaicoa Arnáiz (*Al-Motamid* 31, *Ketama* 1, 3), “the storyteller of the Protectorate,” according to Mohamed Abrighach (2013, 287). In other words, the journals were instrumental to the discovery of new talent in both Arabic and Spanish. Besides, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* provided general overviews and assessments of literary activities and trends, detailed translations of particular authors and their aesthetics, and book reviews: the literary knowledge they produced combined what Francesca Orsini (2002), in relation to Indian magazines, has called “thin” and “thick” knowledge. According to Orsini, thin knowledge is one that infuses the readers with familiarity with literary works and traditions through a few notions and generalizations, or through uncontextualised textual fragments, while thick knowledge consists of detailed essays and commented translations. While in *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* some of the sections concerning both Spanish and Arabic literature were thorough, they also tended to publish scattered fragments, often taken from other journals.¹⁰

Although this essay focuses on the incremental orientation of *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* toward contemporary Arabic poetry, literary journals and personalities, it is important to signal that the centrality of Arabic avant-garde did not entail the complete sidelining of Spanish or European literature. Equally importantly, the journals reflected the multilingual nature of Spanish culture and literature: texts were published in Catalan and Valencian, which would subsequently be banned by the Francoist regime (ruled 1939–1975), and these, too, were translated into Arabic. At the same time, not all the Moroccan collaborators wrote in Arabic. Indeed, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* constituted important platforms for the first generation of Moroccans who wrote in Spanish, the so-called “builders” (Rekab 1997) or “founders” (Limami 2007) of Hispanophone Moroccan literature, such as the Rifian Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām al-Timsamānī and the Tetouani ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Khaṭīb.

The discovery of contemporary Arabic poetry

piece *Islamic Literature* (*Adab islāmī*), to be

The centrality which Arabic poetry achieved in both journals in the early 1950s was the result of a multifaceted process. Questions and discussions

published in the journal *al-'Ilm* (issue 3998) in January 1960.

concerning Moroccan literature had arisen in *Al-Motamid* from an early stage, and for the most part the Spaniards declared or implied that Moroccan literature lacked the newness of literary modernity that was assumed to exist in Spanish letters. Some Spaniards, including López Gorjé, displayed paternalistic colonial views of Moroccan and Arabic contemporary literature (*Al-Motamid* 13, 20, 24). *Al-Motamid* was proclaimed as the means for Morocco to access critical and literary enquiry brought from Spain (*Al-Motamid ha venido siendo el único brazo que lleva y trae de España a Marruecos la inquietud – poema, crítica, polémica – de su momento actual*) (*Al-Motamid* 18). Several Moroccan scholars and writers intervened in the discussions and questioned the colonisers’ assumptions, however. I argue they were so successful in their questioning that contemporary Arabic poetics gained centrality in *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* as a result. These Moroccan scholars steadily introduced contemporary Arabic authors and translated excerpts of their works into Spanish; at the same time, they worked to establish a broader literary network with Arab authors that led to an increase of Arabic texts in both journals.

One of the first Moroccans to engage with the enquiry on the state of contemporary Moroccan literature in *Al-Motamid* was ‘Abd Allāh Kannūn (Fes 1908–Tangier 1989), who is commonly regarded as the father of modern literary criticism in Morocco. A decade before his first collaboration with *Al-Motamid*, Kannūn had published the pathbreaking *Al-Nubūgh al-Maghribī fi al-Adab al-‘Arabī* (*Moroccan Genius in Arabic Literature*, 1938), a book that was partially translated into Spanish the following year by the Centro de estudios marroquíes (Centre for Moroccan Studies) in Tetouan (Calderwood 2018, 279). In 1948 Trina Mercader commissioned Kannūn to write a critical piece; the article was written in Arabic and translated into Spanish. In it the scholar praised the “wave of renewal” (*al-mawja al-tajdīdiyya*) that the literature of the Mashreq had undergone since the beginning of the twentieth century (*Al-Motamid* 12).

Kannūn, an intellectual invested with charismatic legitimacy, was a precursor in directing the colonial journals toward contemporary Arabic literature. His essay entitled “The awakening of poetry in Morocco” suggested that *Al-Motamid* offer its Hispanophone readers translations of Tunisian poet Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbī, who exemplified the best model of the new modern Arabic poetry from the Maghreb. The Moroccan scholar subsequently recommended other prominent Mashreqi authors of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century *Nabḍa*, such as the Egyptians Aḥmad Shawqī, the so-called prince of the poets and reputed as the greatest neoclassical poet in modern Arabic literature, the prolific ‘Abbās Maḥmud al-‘Aqqād, who advocated for a change in poetic sensibility and creativity, ‘Alī Maḥmud Ṭaha, known as the most avant-garde and rebellious romantic poet of the 1930s and 1940s, the romantic Syrian poet Anwār al-‘Aṭṭār, and the

Lebanese Mahjari poet Mikhā'il Nu'ayma (*Al-Motamid* 20). Many of these authors were published by, and circulated thanks to, literary journals such as the Egyptian *Apollo*, which Kannūn probably read. Kannūn's advice was followed by the editors of *Al-Motamid*, and a number of these writers' poems was published in the journal, and later in *Ketama*.

Another important actor in placing Arabic poetry at the centre of *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* was Jamīl a.k.a. Benedicto Shuwāqī (Homs 1895–Santiago de Chile 1970), a Syrian poet who had settled in Chile as a child. Shuwāqī, as recorded in *Al-Motamid* (23), wrote stories, novels, poetry and critical essays, and was the translator into Spanish of prominent authors such as Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān. In 1951, after Shuwāqī started to collaborate with *Al-Motamid* as a writer and a translator, Mercader affirmed: "It is overwhelming to acknowledge the lack of our knowledge about contemporary Arabic literature" (*Al-Motamid* 23). The founder of the journal blamed such ignorance on the lack of Spanish translations of Arabic literature which Shuwāqī's critical pieces helped to bridge. Mercader highlighted that filling that gap was the mission of *Al-Motamid*, although she did not reflect upon the imperial conditions that shaped the biased and colonially informed notion of literary modernity that the journal she directed conveyed – including the above-signalled idea whereby *Al-Motamid* enabled Spain to bring literary and critical inquisitiveness to Morocco.

In one of the pieces Shuwāqī wrote for the journal under the title "Contemporary Arabic Poetry," he highlighted the work of Mayy Ziyāda, the Syrio-Lebanese poet and translator who had joined many of his intellectual peers in migrating to Egypt in the early twentieth century (*Al-Motamid* 25). He also translated excerpts of poems by Ilīyās Fayāḍ, a romantic and admirer of 'Abbasid poetry, and Naṣīb 'Ariḍa, the founder of *al-Funūn* (New York, 1913–1918), the first journal of the North American Mahjar, as examples of the "shattered, abandoned mood that [prevails] in the contemporary Arabic lyric" (*Al-Motamid* 25). More importantly, Shuwāqī's essay introduced a new section in August 1953, entitled "Anthology of Great Contemporary Arab Poets" (*Al-Motamid* 26, see [Figure 3](#)). The section, which celebrated the works of Mashreqi and Mahjari poets, consisted of poetic excerpts translated into Spanish by Shuwāqī himself. The poems were sometimes, but not always, also reproduced in Arabic. In other words, their main goal was making modern Arabic literature available in Spanish, to remedy the ignorance about contemporary Arabic poetry among Spanish literati. Subsequently, this became one of the main goals not only of *Al-Motamid*, but also of *Ketama*. The latter also created an analogous section to Shuwāqī's "Contemporary Arabic Poetry" in December 1955 ([Figure 3](#)).

Perhaps it was also through Shuwāqī that some of the early links with several great Arab poets of the time were made. In March 1953 *Al-Motamid* published a letter to its founder, Trina Mercader, by the renowned

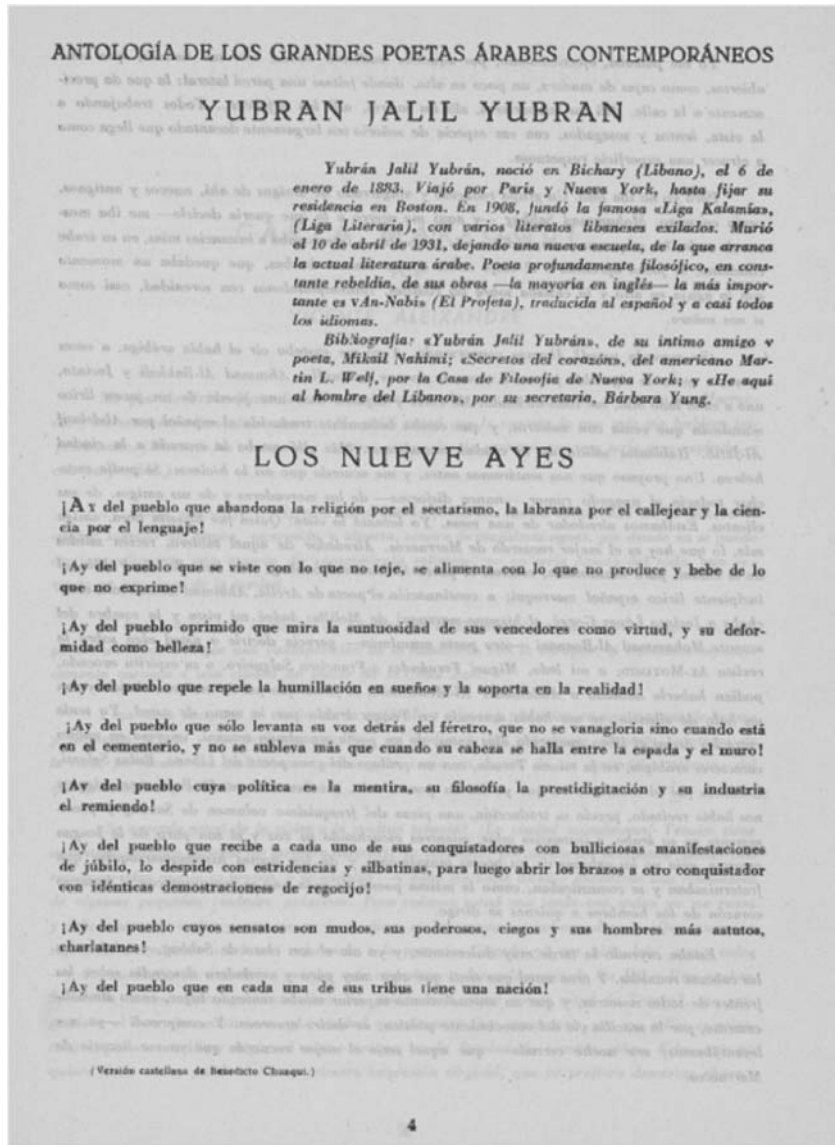


Figure 3 Issue 26 of *Al-Motamid* (Tetouan, August 1953), bearing the section “Anthology of Great Contemporary Arab Poets,” which featured a short biography of Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān, three bibliographic references on the author, and a literary excerpt translated into Spanish by Shuwāqī. Source: Spanish National Library.

poet Fadwā Ṭūqān (Nablus 1917–2003). Ṭūqān’s letter was signed in her Palestinian birthplace in 1951, and her tone was very affectionate. The Palestinian poet explained that she had received Mercader’s letter through the Lebanese poet Albert Adīb, felt “proud” that Mercader had liked her poems, and was “extremely delighted” with her translation of one of them

into Spanish (*Al-Motamid* 25). Most likely, the translation was a joint endeavour between Mercader and al-Ṣabbāgh. Ṭūqān also expressed her joy for “this new literary bond which has united our souls by means of poetry and affection” (*hadhīhi al-ṣīla al-adabīyya al-jadīda allatī rabaṭat rūḥayna bi-ribāṭ al-shi’r wa al-maḥabba*) (*Al-Motamid* 25). Some of Ṭūqān’s poems appeared in *Al-Motamid* (28 and 32) as well as in *Ketama* (6). *Ketama* (8) also published a poem by her brother, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān.

Bilingualism, literary networks and the centrality of avant-garde Arabic poetry

When *Al-Motamid* moved to Tetouan in 1953, its content became organised according to the language in which the texts were written. Before shifting to the capital, the organising category of *Al-Motamid* had been thematic, with all the content arranged from left to right regardless of the language in which it was written, and with Arabic subordinated to Spanish. After 1953 the formal organising principle of Tetouani *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* became language, and both journals were divided into two main linguistically determined sections: an Arabic one, from right to left, and a Spanish one, from left to right (Figures 4 and 5). This new organisation along linguistic lines had the effect of raising the status of Arabic. For one thing, it formalised the double cover on equal terms. The first issues of *Al-Motamid* had no Arabic cover, and even when the cover appeared it did not have an illustration, unlike the Spanish one. Only as the journal became more and more bilingual did an Arabic cover with the illustration and the Arabic table of contents appear. Moreover, whereas earlier in *Al-Motamid* the Arabic content had mainly been translations of the Spanish texts, as the journal became more and more bilingual the Arabic section also acquired its own personality, agenda, and cultural identity.

This Arabic–Spanish bilingualism was being formalised in other cultural and literary realms in the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco. Arabic had steadily been established as a language of official cultural institutions in the previous decades. Whereas until the early 1920s the audience in the theatres of urban northern Morocco had been overwhelmingly European, in 1923 an Egyptian company performed for the first time in Arabic in Tetouan (Mateo Dieste 2012, 206). A decade later, nationalist leaders began to write Arabic plays for performance, and after World War II play-scripts were broadcast on the radio in Darija as well as in Tarifit (Mateo Dieste 2012, 202, 206). The Berber *dahir* issued by the French Protectorate authorities in 1930 led to the politicisation of identity related issues and especially the categories of “Arab” and “Berber,” and paved the way for popular mobilisations and the foundation of Moroccan anticolonial



Figure 4 The 25th issue of *Al-Motamid*, published in March 1953 in Tetouan, was the first to have the same cover for the Arabic and the Spanish versions. Source: Spanish National Library.



Figure 5 The first issue of *Ketama*, published in June 1953 in Tetouan. Unlike *Al-Motamid*, *Ketama* was completely bilingual from the beginning. Source: Fundación Jorge Guillén (2011).

nationalist groups (Wyrzten 2016, 136–178). In this context, Spain presented itself as an advocate of the cultural and religious unity of Moroccans, bolstering the “Arab-Islamic” culture in Morocco. Under Francoism, as Eric Calderwood has shown, the Spanish authorities countenanced Moroccan nationalism and pan-Arab and pan-Islamic consciousness as a means to weaken France, and construct a discourse of Spanish exceptionalism through the so-called Hispano-Arab culture (Calderwood 2018, 167–207). In the cultural and literary realm the Spanish authorities established in 1953 a twofold literary award for Moroccan literature, called *al-Maghrib* (Morocco, in Arabic) for works in Arabic and *Marruecos* (Morocco, in Spanish) for works in Spanish. Frequent collaborators of both journals were awarded in the first contest: Ibrāhīm al-Ighī and Trina Mercader won the poetic awards in Arabic and Spanish, respectively, whereas Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Salām al-Baqqālī and Dora Bacaicoa Arnáiz obtained those for prose.

As language became the central organising category of the journals, the Arabic section started to echo more issues related to literature and politics that were being discussed more widely in the Arab intellectual and cultural field and in the Mahjar. As editor of the Arabic section for both journals, al-Sabbāgh contributed to the expansion and consolidation of a modern Arabic literary and cultural identity. His 1957 statement in *Ketama* (9) that the “denunciation of [colonial] oppression” was one of the roles of literature, for example, resonates with the “committed literature” (*adab multazim*) that was so debated in Arabic literary circles and periodicals in the 1950s and 1960s (Verena Klemm 2000, 54). Almost three decades later, Mercader defined the move to Tetouan as “a moment so long awaited in which Moroccans and Spaniards shared the same level of intellectual equality” (*momento tan largamente esperado en que marroquíes y españoles convivimos en un mismo plano de igualdad intelectual*) (Mercader 1981, 78). As we have seen, the consolidation of such “intellectual equality” and the collaborative nature that characterised the Tetouani era had begun with the writings of scholars such as the Tangier-based literary historian pioneer and charismatic figure Kannūn and the Syria-born writer and translator Shuwāqī established in Santiago de Chile, and it was nourished by the literary exchange with authors such as the Palestinian Ṭūqān, all of which owed much to al-Ṣabbāgh and the other Moroccan translators and writers (see Figure 6).

Al-Ṣabbāgh also facilitated the collaboration of the Arabist and university professor Leonor Martínez Martín (Barcelona 1930–2013), who between 1955 and 1959 selected and translated into Spanish the literary excerpts of Mashreqī and Mahjari authors in the central pages of *Ketama* (see Figure 7). It was some of these versions that she used for her influential *Antología de poesía árabe contemporánea* (*Anthology of Contemporary Arabic Poetry*, 1972). This *Ketama* section, entitled “Contemporary Arab Poetry:



Figure 6 The handwritten capture reads: “Photograph of Jacinto López Gorjé: from left to right Jacinto López Gorjé, Trina Mercader, Pío Gómez Nisa, and the poet ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Muqaddam, Tetouan (Morocco), May 1949 (wedding of the Khalifa)”. In the Protectorate system, the Khalifa was the deputy of the Sultan, who was the sovereign legally, in the northern Spanish zone. Note also that the only one who’s not referred to only by the name is ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Muqaddam, “the poet.” Source: Fernández Gomá (2014).

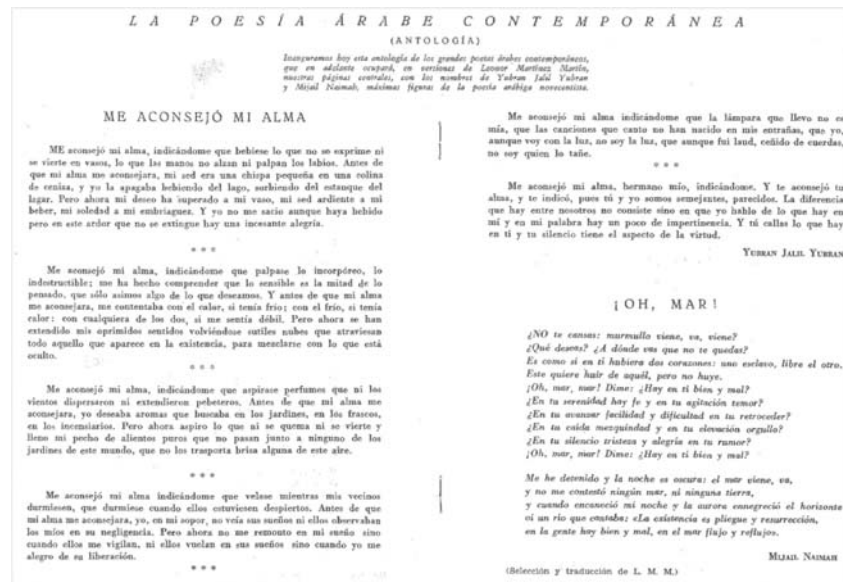


Figure 7 Issue 6 of *Ketama*, published in Tetouan in December 1955, inaugurated the section “Contemporary Arab Poetry: an Anthology,” coordinated by Martínez Martín, and featured excerpts of Jubrān and Nu’ayma. Source: Fundación Jorge Guillén (2011).

An Anthology,” can be seen as a successor of Shuwāqī’s “Anthology of Great Contemporary Arab Poets,” published in *Al-Motamid* two years earlier. The first anthology, in fact, published a few poems by Jubrān Khalīl Jūbrān and Mīkhā’il Nu’ayma (*Ketama* 6), just as *Al-Motamid* (26) had done. Over five consecutive issues, the central pages of *Ketama* featured Arabic avant-garde poetry in both Arabic and Spanish translation (*Ketama* 6–10). Among others, Arabist Martínez Martín chose poems by the reputed Lebanese symbolist poet Sa’īd ‘Aql, the well-known Albert Adīb, and the Mahjari poet and editor of several Arabic periodicals in the United States, Ilīyā Abū Maḍī. She also featured the Tunisian Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbī, whose work had already been translated into Italian and French and of which *Ketama* provided a translation into Spanish, as well as the Syrian ‘Umar Abū Rīsha and the Egyptian romantic Aḥmad Abū Shādī, whose poems had also earlier been translated into French and Italian.

The Mahjari community, scholars have noted, was made up of “usually Christian, often unschooled, typically poor” migrants, some of whom produced a literature which had a strong influence in Arabic letters (Shakir 1996, 4). The Arabic poetry of the first wave of Mahjaris such as Amīn al-Rihānī, the aforementioned Jūbrān, Nu’ayma and Abū Māḍī, as well as Naṣīb ‘Arīḍa, Nudra al-Ḥaddād, and Rashīd Ayyūb, all of whose texts were published in *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama*, represented, in the words of Wail Hassan (2017, 39), “a minor literature that revolutionized modern Arabic poetry. These poets pioneered a movement that rebelled against the time-honored conventions of Arabic poetry.” Whereas North American Mahjari authors have received more attention than South American ones, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* also translated the poetry of the latter into Spanish. That was the case of the Argentina-based Asīs Fāris, the Brazil-based brothers Shafīq and Fawzī Ma’lūf, and Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī.¹¹ *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* received journals published in Buenos Aires, Caracas, Puerto Rico and São Paulo, in addition to New York. The long Spanish imperial involvement in Central and South America was clearly central in the establishment of such a “significant geography,” as were, yet again, al-Sabbāgh’s relentless networking activities. The Tetouani poet corresponded with Shafīq Ma’lūf, who was involved in the literary group and journal of the Andalusī League (*al-’uṣba al-andalūsiyya*), established in 1932 in São Paulo, in which the Tetouani poet also published his work.

Modern and especially avant-garde Arabic literature from the Mashreq and the Mahjar came to occupy a central position in *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* and, as such, disproved earlier assumptions about the absence of Arabic literary modernity. The Spanish collaborators’ disdainful attitude diminished as a consequence. Decades later, in the prologue to the Spanish anthology of al-Sabbāgh’s poems he compiled, López Gorjé, the editor of *Ketama*, affirmed that the Tetouani poet “was the one who, in a global and

11 On the Brazilian Mahjar, see Vargas, Briman and Hassan’s articles in Amar (2014).

12 Well-known Spanish Arabists such as Emilio García Gómez, Soledad Gilbert, Ángel González Palencia, Fernando de la Granja, Miguel Cruz Hernández, Enrique Perpiñá, José María Casciaro and Pedro Martínez Montávez wrote in *Al-Motamid*.

detailed manner, brought [the Spaniards] closer to the barely known great Arabic poetry of the twentieth century” (*fue quien fue acercándonos, de una manera global y pormenorizada, a la gran poesía árabe del Novecientos, escasamente conocida en España*) (López Gorjé 1990, 12). Indeed, it was thanks to al-Sabbāgh – and Martínez Martín – that contemporary Arabic poetry and literature entered the realm of Spanish Arabism, which had until then almost exclusively been focused on al-Andalus and Andalusí history – an orientation which the early issues of *Al-Motamid* attest to very well.¹² Moreover, the fact that these colonial journals produced a larger volume of translations of Arabic into Spanish than the other way round challenges customary understandings of colonial culture as systematically excluding the colonised and their production, and of literary translation moving from the literary “centre” to the “periphery” and from “more endowed” to “less endowed” languages and literatures (Sapiro 2011). Often, the translations of contemporary Arabic poems were the result of collaborative work – especially between al-Şabbāgh and Martínez Martín, al-Şabbāgh and Mercader, and al-Şabbāgh and López Gorjé. Collaborations took place beyond the realm of the journals as well. Al-Şabbāgh and Martínez Martín jointly worked on translating the Mahjari poet Nu’ayma’s *Hams al-Jufūn* (*The Eyelid Whisperings*), which became *El susurro de los párpados*, commissioned by the Spanish publisher Adonais, which specialised in translating world literature into Spanish (Siles 1993). Al-Şabbāgh also worked, together with Martínez Martín and López Gorjé, on the Spanish translations of his own poetic anthologies (Ricci 2015, 324–325). And yet translation was mostly the realm of the Moroccan collaborators, whose command of both written standard Arabic and Spanish tended to outclass by far that of the Spaniards. Idrīs Diyūrī, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Khatīb, Āmina al-Lūh or the Tetouan-based Lebanese Najīb Abū Malham provided translations in addition to their literary pieces.

Yet it would be misleading to present the centrality of Arabic poetics in the journals as exclusively motivated by Moroccans’ will to counter Spanish colonial paternalism. Indeed, the Moroccan authors and collaborators themselves read, appreciated and – to an extent – produced such innovative literature. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Ṭabbāl (b. Chefchaouen 1931), for example, found inspiration in Syrian and Mahjari poets while studying at the Qarawīyyīn university in Fes in the early 1950s (Sánchez Sandoval and García 2001, 70). *Ketama* (4) emphasised the “new style” of the barely known Ja’far al-Kittānī and Muḥammad Nasīm al-Sarghīnī, a Tetouani émigré who lived in Paris and who published under the pen-name *al-Gharīb* (the Stranger). Moreover, al-Şabbāgh’s review of the second collection of poems of the Iraqi champion of free verse Nazik al-Malā’ika, *Şaḏāyā wa Ramād* (*Sparks and Ashes*, 1949), which he described as “a courageous step in the new Arabic poetry which she urges for” (*ya’ud bi-ḥaqq khatwa jari’a fi al-*

shi'r al-jadīd al-ladhī tunādī bihi) (*Ketama* 5), was only published in Arabic, which means that its main intended audience were Arabic readers. As already stated, al-Sabbāgh himself led a new generation of Moroccan poets, including the collaborators Aḥmad al-Baqqālī and Muḥammad Bū'anānī, who revolted against the old form constraining Arabic poetry and experimented with new poetic forms. Al-Sabbāgh can be considered “a ‘student’ of the Mahjari school” as far as his prose poetry is concerned, and yet he already had a predisposition to develop innovative poetry, according to Iḥsān ‘Abbās (1972, 7). One of his poems, translated by Martínez Martín as *Yo soy la libertad* (*I am freedom*), is a moving chant about “the sorrow of [his] people” seeking freedom (*Ketama* 8). Most of al-Sabbāgh’s poems are profoundly symbolic and abstract, revolving around universal notions of love, light, beauty, and natural elements, as well as metaphors.

At the same time as more and more Arab and Moroccan authors featured on the pages of both journals, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* also published contemporary Spanish and European literature. Some Arabic sections, such as “Great Spanish twentieth-century poets” (*Al-Motamid* 26–28), offered contemporary Spanish poetry in Arabic translation.¹³ The most celebrated Spanish authors were liberals, some were political prisoners and others exiles of the Franco regime. Some of them, such as the 1956 Nobel laureate Juan Ramón Jiménez (Moguer 1881–San Juan de Puerto Rico 1958) sent their unpublished poems to Trina Mercader; she published excerpts from Jiménez’s letters, as she did with those by Fadwā Ṭūqān and other Arab pen-friends. Tellingly, the short biographies of Spanish authors and the translation of their poetry into Arabic were similar to the anthologies of the Mashreqi and Mahjari authors (*Al-Motamid* 26–28, *Ketama* 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12). It is perhaps here that a bilingual “reading together” becomes more clearly fruitful: it sheds light on the increasingly “egalitarian” approach to Spanish/European and Arabic literatures and writers, including the layout, length and content of the linguistically divided sections in these two late-colonial journals (see [Figure 8](#)).

Such egalitarian spirit was also embedded in López Gorjé’s proposal to render *Ketama* an independent journal on and of itself, rather than the literary supplement of the scientific *Tamuda*, as had been the case hitherto. Sometime in late 1957 or early 1958, *Ketama*’s editor addressed the Spanish Ministry of Education with his proposal of a new project – “a bilingual journal with a life of its own” – for the new era in which Morocco had become an independent nation (López Gorjé 2011). The new journal, which never saw the light of day, aimed at expanding the range of published authors and literature and continuing to translate Arabic texts into Spanish and vice versa. It also aimed at including journalistic pieces with interviews of authors and discussions of artistic endeavours, especially related to theatre and film. The proposal established that the editorship of the new journal would be

13 Some of the featured poets were Miguel Hernández (Orihuela 1910–Alicante 1942), Juan Ramón Jiménez (Moguer 1881–San Juan de Puerto Rico 1958), who won the 1956 Nobel Prize, and Vicente Aleixandre (Seville 1898–Madrid 1984), who won the 1977 Nobel Prize.



Figure 8 The central pages of the 13-14th and last issue of *Ketama*, published in Tetouan in December 1959, included a short biography of the Italian 1959 Prize Nobel Salvatore Quasimodo and two of his poems in the original Italian version and the translations into both Spanish and Arabic. Source: Fundación Jorge Guillén (2011).

shared between al-Sabbāgh and López Gorjé, with equal budgets for the Arabic and Spanish sections and equal remuneration for Arabic and Spanish authors.

Conclusions

14 For more on Āmina al-Lūh and her activism, see Baker (1998, 136–149); on her literary work, see ‘Azūzī (2016).

In the penultimate issue of *Al-Motamid* in 1955, Āmina al-Lūh (Al-Hoceima 1926–Tetouan 2015), who that year took over the role of the editor of the Arabic section of *Al-Motamid*, published an essay entitled “We need a Moroccan Literature” (*Al-Motamid* 32).¹⁴ The title echoed the common motto used by the Moroccan intellectuals of the time (Fernández Parrilla 2006, 52), which, like al-Lūh’s essay, urged people of letters to reunite, discuss, and create “a purely Moroccan literary tradition” that would contribute to Morocco’s “own literary awakening (*nahḍa*).” Al-Lūh advocated the creation of a modern Moroccan literature with a personality of its own, in relation to the literary traditions which had influenced Moroccan literature, such as the Lebanese, Mahjari, Egyptian, European or Andalusí, but not restricted to them. Al-Lūh’s was also a radical call in favour of literary innovation, though framed within the long genealogy of Arabic literature: “Let us

make a revolution on current literature and establish the pillars of a strong and firm literature that unites the charming qualities of [the old and the modern literary traditions] and thus constitutes an Arab Moroccan literature in both soul and spirit.”

The search for a specifically Moroccan literature open to the richness of the plurality of Moroccan traditions beyond the Mashreq Arabic literary space and aesthetics signals a new era and set of inquiries which could probably only come after the appraisal of Arabic poetics had been achieved. As I have shown, that was the result of a complex process involving a variety of multilingual people operating across several world “significant geographies.” Throughout their trajectory, *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama* underwent transformations that were historically and spatially located. Especially from 1953, when both journals were published in the capital of the Spanish zone, Tetouan, Arabic language gained more prominence and literary excerpts and news from across the Arabic-speaking world became more numerous, a process which went hand in hand with the strengthening of literary networks stretching from Beirut to Buenos Aires, Tetouan and Alicante. Although the journals did not sideline Spanish or European literatures, this essay has focused on the centrality that Arabic poetry gained in *Al-Motamid* and *Ketama*. Translating contemporary Arabic literature, and especially avant-garde poetry, became one of the main goals of these two journals.

We tend to think of local colonised culture and literature as necessarily subaltern, and of cultural influence as travelling from the colonial centres to the peripheries. The survey of these two late-colonial bilingual journals shows that such notions are simply too restrictive to describe accurately the dynamics underlying colonial literary culture in northern Morocco. I have chosen to focus on the gradual process whereby Arabic poetry became central to these two journals because the colonially informed ignorance and paternalism which the Spaniards showed at the outset was visibly transformed thanks to the Moroccan and Arab collaborators’ introduction of contemporary Arabic literature to them. This process reflected the Moroccans’ increasingly unapologetic attitude characteristic of the ongoing anticolonial struggle. And yet, rather than confrontational, the most common feature of the relationship between Moroccans and Spaniards was collaboration, exchange, and joint work.

This essay has also emphasised the importance of journals as sources for literary history, in general as well as in the particular Moroccan case. It is worth recalling that *Al-Zāwiya*, which is now commonly considered the first Moroccan novel, was only appreciated as “one of the most precious fruits of the *Nabḍa* and the precursor of modern Moroccan literature” in the 1980s (Fernández Parrilla 2006, 108–109). Written by the Tetouani al-Tuhāmī al-Wazzānī, who collaborated with *Ketama* from the very first issue, *Al-Zāwiya* was published as a book in 1942, but had appeared

serialised in the Tetouani journal *al-Rīf* before. Journals, moreover, are better suited to illustrate processes of negotiation and transformation such as the ones traced in the previous pages, unlike the static pictures conveyed in the abstract as well as normative macro-narratives and “world literary mapping.”

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