

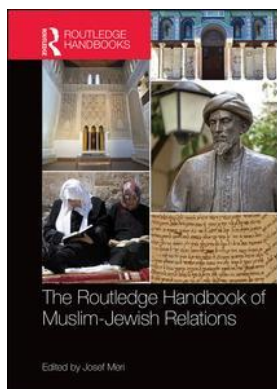
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## The Routledge Handbook of Muslim–Jewish Relations

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### Modern literature

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# Modern literature

## Common themes and intersections

*Masha Itzhaki and Sobhi Boustani*

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### The historic and linguistic context

#### *Medieval period*

It is quite well-known that Hebrew poetry in Spain constitutes a perfect example of cultural cohabitation between Arabic and Hebrew. It was established in Al-Andalus at Córdoba in the tenth century under the reign of the Caliph ‘Abd al-Rahmān III (r. 929–961). It was the product of two extremely powerful cultural sources: classical Arabic poetry on the one hand and the language of the Bible on the other. Biblical Hebrew was the primary material used by Jewish poets in Al-Andalus who searched, quite consciously, the linguistic tools for their poems. At the same time, from its first appearance, Hebrew Andalusī poetry used the full variety of thematic frameworks and prosodic structures from Arabic poetry.

This poetry is therefore already situated in a well-established normative framework, such as that which concerns prosody (rhythm and rhyme), as well as the distribution of thematic styles and ornamentation of the language (*badī’*), a framework borrowed directly from the art of contemporary Arabic poetry. The Hebrew poet in Muslim Spain worked within the prosodic forms and the thematic domains as well as the given rhetorical structures, consciously adopting Arabic poetry, in which he played on the talents and secrets of the biblical language. Under the influence of the surrounding cultural context, the poetic text is conceived as a work of art given that beauty resides in the language. Every verse is judged separately, and literary criticism is focused on formal perfection.

For both profane medieval Hebrew poetry – that is, that of the court – and for sacred medieval Hebrew poetry – that is, the poetry that accompanies the prayers of the synagogue – the Bible was the only linguistic source, considered at the time as comparable in beauty and grandeur to the Qur’an. It is in this new innovative perspective that the Bible also becomes, just like poetic verse, an aesthetic object: The verse is equivalent to a line of poetry, and it is from this very modern concept that Hebrew poets engaged in a kind of competition with their contemporary Arab colleagues. Taking advantage of the antiquity of the Bible compared to the Qur’an, they wanted to show that the beauty of Arabic rhetoric was already present

in it. Moshe Ibn Ezra, who was born in Granada in approximately 1055 and who died in northern Spain after 1135, was a poet and philosopher as well as a great admirer of Arabic poetry and devoted an important chapter of his textbook on poetic art (written in Arabic), *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa'l-Mudhākara* (“Treaty of Studies and Debates”), to the demonstration of Hebrew rhetoric taken from the Bible as compared to that of Arabic poetry drawn from the Qur’an. In this, he recognizes Arabic as the language that gave rise to poetic genius and speaks of Arabic as being “among the languages like spring among the seasons.”

Ever since it first appeared, Andalusī Hebrew poetry has used the full range of thematic and prosodic frameworks of Arabic poetry, first that of the pre-Islamic period, then that of the ‘Abbāsīd period and, finally, that characteristic of Al-Andalus. To illustrate this poetic opening, we have chosen to present here the two basic structures typical of this flowering cultural universe: the *qaṣīda* and the *muwashshah*.

The *qaṣīda*, a long mono-rhymed and mono-rhythmic poem, is the form known as the most absolute and most perfect of Arabic poetry. Its origin seems to be the beautiful collection of pre-Islamic poetry, the Mu‘allaqāt, a collection of three well-known Arab poets: al-A‘shā, ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm, and Imru’ l-Qays (d. ca. 530 CE). This flagship genre of Arabic poetry finds its place with Andalusī Hebrew poets. Thus, one can find long poems in biblical Hebrew that strictly respect the uniqueness of meter and rhyme found in classical Arabic poetry, containing erotic introductions in the spirit of the Bedouin *naṣīb*, where the story is about the search for a loved one. When the poet is sure to have gained attention and the audience is listening to him, he continues with a short poetic transition of one or two verses leading to the main part of the poem that, in most cases, is a eulogy (*madīḥ*) to the sheikh, king, or patron.

For example, Samuel ha-Nagīd ibn Naghrīla (d. 1056), the grand vizier and army chief of Granada, was the subject of such praise by Joseph Ibn Ḥasdai in one of the first Hebrew *qaṣīdas*, entitled *Shira Yetoma* (“A Single Poem”); Solomon Ibn Gabirol (d. 1057), in another *qaṣīda*, also dedicated to Ibn Naghrīla, wrote a loving introduction in the style of the Song of Songs. A “Mistress of All Charm” is at the heart of a panegyric by Yehuda Halevi (d. 1141), dedicated to Solomon Ibn Proutziel, his friend and patron, while Moshe Ibn Ezra describes in detail the desert landscape and the remains (*al-wuqūf ‘alā al-atlāl*) as the introductory background to his personal poems of wandering in northern Spain.

The Hebrew *qaṣīda* does not have the mimetic character of the old Arabic poem that allows us to retrace time. The desert nights, the missing beloved, the ruins, while being present in Andalusī Hebrew texts, are no longer part of everyday life and obviously belong to a tradition of poetic fiction that is to be respected. This raises several questions that require further research: How is it that these long poems by desert nomads from the pre-Islamic epoch – with, on the one hand, a single rhyme and meter and, on the other, images and stories taken from this distant landscape – emerge even in the courts of the Jewish aristocracy of the Andalusī party kingdoms<sup>1</sup> during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in biblical Hebrew?

The *muwashshah* (*shir ezor* in Hebrew), known in the West as *strophic poetry*, is an original part of medieval western Muslim literary production. Appearing in tenth-century Muslim Spain, it brought about a rupture with the past in terms of both meter and language. Long ignored by scholars of Arabic poetry, *muwashshah* was rediscovered by Orientalists thanks to the final verses called *kharja*, generally borrowed from the spoken language, which constitute the oldest written record of the spoken medieval Iberian language. Moreover, as it was orally transmitted by generations of musicians and singers in North Africa and the Middle East, Andalusī strophic poetry was saved from oblivion despite the anonymity of many of its creators.

In principle, such a poem consists of four to seven stanzas, each divided into two parts: The first is longer and contains a rhyme that changes from one verse to another, and the second is very short (one or two verses) and rhyme and meter do not change throughout the poem. This structure allows for a much richer musical variety than does classical *qaṣīda*. In medieval Andalusi poetry, both Arab and Hebrew, the strophic structure was used mainly for drinking songs and love poems and was put to music at banquets given by the notables. The first Hebrew poet to compose a *muwashshaḥ* was Samuel ibn Naghrīla, but it was Moshe Ibn Ezra and Yehuda Halevi who perfected this structure in its Hebrew version, further improving the system of versification.

It is interesting to note the very rapid development of *muwashshaḥ* in the field of synagogue poetry. It became one of the most widespread forms of Spanish liturgical poetry. Its strophic structure and musical character led to its proliferation by enabling the division of roles between both the celebrant and the congregation, on the one hand, and the inclusion of biblical verses and putting the poem to music with a chorus, on the other. With this particular feature of *piyyuṭim* (sacred poems), the Spanish Jews demonstrated a unique juncture between both Arabic and Hebrew and the profane and the sacred.

These two major examples clearly demonstrate the importance of the Arab cultural contribution, which played a vital role in the affirmation of Jewish culture in medieval Spain. It is obvious that the themes also reflect the subjects and characteristic images of the Arab world. In love poetry, for example, we find the nostalgia for a beloved woman who wanders; the man who sighs, a prisoner of his love; the cruel beloved who coats lips with the blood of her lovers and whose eyes launch arrows that pierce the heart of those who desire her; the disease of love; the fire of love; the beauty of the young girl who outshines the sun and the moon; and many others. The poems of Hebrew love, the *shirei ḥesheq*, a term that automatically recalls the Arabic *‘ishq*, are so closely related to Arabic poetry that we can even find some that evoke love between men – for example, in the works of Samuel HaNagid Ibn Naghrīla or Moses Ibn Ezra. Another poetic genre that had a special place in medieval Al-Andalus is, without doubt, the poetry of the garden and of flowers. It is related to the evocation of spring rains in late winter and especially notable feasts surrounded by the scents and colors of the gardens.

In this sense, this poetry is an important chapter of courtly poetry through which the poet, as part of a contractual dependence, praised his patron through the perfect image of his palace. The poetic text expresses what the plastic arts could not do because of the religious prohibition: It illustrates a reality captured with the senses, like a painting constructed with words. This verbal drawing, where the sensual occupies a primordial place, follows a very specific style of Arabic poetic art, *al-waṣf* (“description”) and borrows heavily from it its metaphorical fabric. Perfection is not only the result of the resumption of the same themes but also of the ability of the Hebrew poets to take the treasures of Arabic poetry in their original form and use them differently from their original point of view.

### **Contemporary period**

This cross-cultural encounter is probably unique of its kind. An interesting result, although different in its nature, is emerging in current Arab and Hebrew poetry.<sup>2</sup>

A quick review of several twentieth-century sociopolitical landmarks seems inescapable in order to address the theme of Muslim–Jewish relations. In continuity with centuries of coexistence between Jews and Muslims in Arab-Islamic countries, at the beginning of the twentieth century multiple Jewish minority groups of varying sizes lived in complete harmony

with fellow Muslim and Christian citizens. A portion of the population of the Arab countries was thus made up of a Jewish community, whose members were naturally referred to as *Arab Jews* or *Eastern Jews*, (*Mizraḥim*, sing. *Mizraḥi*) as opposed to *Ashkenazi Jews*. Although it is sometimes contested, this appellation reveals a great deal about the relations between the different communities. Numerous Jewish scholars – Ella Shohat,<sup>3</sup> David Shasha,<sup>4</sup> Amiel Alcalay,<sup>5</sup> and many others – perfectly master the Arabic language (teaching in it) and affirm a dual identity, at once Jewish and Arab.<sup>6</sup> The tumultuous history of the twentieth century, especially in the first half, the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the successive wars between Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries – all totally modified the demographic landscape of the region. Indeed, the Jewish communities, though not themselves taking a direct part in the events that led to their displacement, were expelled, forced to leave their countries, either to Israel or to the West. The Jewish community of Iraq, one of the oldest and most significant, most active and productive, which numbered more than 200,000 at the beginning of the twentieth century, did not exceed 100 in 2008.<sup>7</sup> Currently, it numbers between seven and 30 (see Chapter 2, this volume).<sup>8</sup> This distressing situation, rather than marking a final rupture, on the contrary revealed the depth of the relations connecting the various communities. The distancing caused by politics did not affect the personal side. In his work *The Jews and Arabs in Israel*, published in German in 2009, Omar Kamel stresses the particularity of these Jews and their constant struggle to confirm their status as both Jews and Arabs. The interviews and writings of one member of the community, Shmuel Moreh (b. 1932 in Baghdad), formerly named Sami Mu'alem, convey this kind of remarkable cultural and sentimental relationship with the Arab world and Islam in particular. In his book *Baghdad My Love: Iraq's Jews: Memories and Sorrows*,<sup>9</sup> he recounts (p. 346) a vision in which he sees the Prophet of Islam at the head of a great army on white horses, coming toward him and asking to meet him. The Prophet dismounts from his horse and shakes his hand, the sign of reconciliation and a rediscovered peace.<sup>10</sup> Baghdad serves as a backdrop for several Hebrew novels, such as *Victoria* (1993) and *Aida* (2008), by the famous Israeli writer Sami Mikhael, also born there, in 1926. "I consider Iraq," he says, "to be my first home, a society that is different from Israel, a vital source of inspiration in my career as a writer."<sup>11</sup> Even for Ronny Someck, a younger poet, who was born in Baghdad in 1951 and grew up in Israel from the age of two, the city plays an important role and is a key element of his identity. In 1991, he published a poem entitled "Baghdad, February 1991":

In these bombed-out streets they pushed my stroller  
 The daughters of Babel pinched my cheeks and shook palm boughs  
 Above my blonde velvet.  
 What is left from then has become much blacker  
 Like Baghdad  
 And like the stroller that we took out of the shelter  
 While waiting for another war.  
 O Tigris, O Euphrates, snakes of pleasure on my life's first map,  
 How you have become vipers.<sup>12</sup>

Thus it is clear that any approach to the conception of the "other" in the Arab-Jewish relationship must, of necessity, evoke language (or rather, languages) as an important cultural factor of rapprochement. The Jewish community that lived for centuries in the Arab countries maintained, upon moving to Israel in the middle of the twentieth century, the whole of its linguistic heritage. The Jewish community of Iraq clearly distinguished

itself in this context with its dynamism and major contribution to Arab studies and Arabic literature. With their mastery of Arabic, Hebrew, and other languages, several authors have become inescapable in university and scholarly circles. Shmuel Moreh, professor emeritus at the Hebrew University, has published several English-language studies of Arabic theatre and modern Arabic poetry, including *Modern Arabic Poetry (1800–1970)*. This important work has been translated into Arabic. In contrast, he composes his literary works in Arabic, stating that the Hebrew language has not succeeded in taking hold of his heart and his feelings in a manner that would replace Arabic, his mother tongue. It is for this reason that he publishes his scholarly works in Hebrew and English, reserving Arabic for his literary writings. “I write with the blood of my heart when I write in Arabic,” he says.<sup>13</sup>

Sasson Somekh (b. 1933 in Baghdad), currently professor emeritus at the University of Tel Aviv and a specialist in Arabic literature, has translated into Hebrew a broad anthology of Arabic poetry as well as the trilogy of Naguib Mahfouz (Nobel Prize for Literature 1988), with whom he shared a very close friendship. His studies on the Arabic-language short stories and, in particular, those by Egyptian author Yusuf Idris, remain crucial references for researchers. In 2007, he was among the founders of the Academy of the Arabic Language in Israel (in Haifa).

Samir Naccache (d. 2004), born in Baghdad in 1938, wrote a dozen works ranging from short story collections to plays and novels. He made the Arabic language his first home. Loyal to his language and heritage, he affirmed being profoundly Iraqi. Despite leaving his birth country in 1951 at the age of 13, his only culture, he said, was Iraqi culture. Several months before his death, while in Great Britain, he declared that “I arrived in Israel at age 13, an Iraqi foreigner, and I left fifty years later, as my father left, a true Arab. Though I will be obliged to return there, I will always be an Iraqi Arab, loyal to his language and heritage.”<sup>14</sup>

Shimon Ballas, born in Baghdad in 1930, like the majority of coreligionists, emigrated to Israel in 1951. He taught Arabic literature at the universities of Tel Aviv and Haifa and published roughly fifteen works of fiction in Hebrew, several important studies on contemporary Arabic literature, and numerous translations from Arabic.

The list of these intellectuals and literary figures is very long. They embody, through their writings and translations, a rapprochement between two cultures and two languages and, above all, an openness to knowledge of the other.

For Jewish writers and poets of European origin, on the other hand, the question of the “other” has been more complex, not only when the other is Arab but also when the other is an “Arab” Jew, that is, an Eastern Jew. Only at the end of the 1980s did the relationships between literature, memory, history, and society become of greater interest in cultural studies. Nowadays in Israeli society, identity is no longer a wishful ideology that avoids the past as the elementary basis of collective memory. It is, rather, a multicultural matter, dealing with ethnic authenticity, fighting the slogans of Eastern European Zionism, and proposing an alternative to mainstream Israeli culture: the acceptance of the other and his (hi)story as an essential composite of a multicultural post-modernist society in the process of self-making. However, in the first half of the twentieth century, before the establishment of the state of Israel, the figure of the Arab played a stereotypical role of noble savage, being used as a model for imitation, an antithesis to the ghetto-like diaspora Jew. After 1948, he became a kind of victim-enemy – *victim* because of being a minority in a Jewish state, yet *enemy* because of the political situation – and, in both cases, always a stereotype, never an individual.

As a result of the current multicultural tendency, he (or she) is turning, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, into a real character, an individual, in Israeli Jewish literature.



Two major examples of this are *The Liberating Bride* by A. B. Yehoshua, published in 2001 and, even more so, *The House of Rajani* (2008). This novel by Alon Hilu takes place in Jaffa at the end of the nineteenth century and records the diaries of Salah Rajani, a 12-year-old Muslim child cursed with prophetic powers who foresees the rise of the Jewish State, and of a 27-year-old Jewish pioneer and agronomist who is new to the city of Jaffa and wishes to turn the ruins of Rajani's manor into a flourishing paradise.

In the field of poetry, a key figure is Avot Yeshurun (Yehiel Perlemuter, d. 1992). Immediately upon his arrival in Palestine in 1925, he described the Bedouin in an idyllic and romantic manner, as a subject for imitation.<sup>15</sup> As early as 1948, his view shifted to one of empathy and culpability. Like his prose homologue S. Yizhar (d. 2006), who, in 1949(!), published his story *Khirbet Khizeh* depicting the expulsion of a fictional village's population, representing virtually all Arab villages in 1948,<sup>16</sup> Yeshurun too was affected by the destruction of Arab villages during Israel's War of Independence and even more so by the Palestinians' subsequent suffering. As an expression of multiculturalism, a key concept in his vision of the region,<sup>17</sup> he created his own language, a mixture of modern Hebrew, biblical Hebrew, Yiddish, and Arabic.

In an opposite manner, bilingualism has also affected the Christian and Muslim Palestinian Arabs living in Israel. Atallah Mansour (b. 1934 in Al-Jish) published a novel in Hebrew in 1966 entitled *A New Light*. In his novel *Arabesques*, written originally in Hebrew, the Palestinian poet and novelist Anton Shammas (b. 1950 in Fassuta), author of several collections of poetry published in Hebrew and Arabic, defends the idea that harmonious cohabitation is possible in a land where so many ancestors of differing origins have lived. His choice of language reflects a desire for sharedness: "Yes, it is difficult to compose in a language in which orders have been given to expel Palestinians," he says, but he insists that "language is empty of good or bad intentions."<sup>18</sup> To these two must obviously be added the famous author Sayed Kashua, a Hebrew-language journalist<sup>19</sup> and scenarist of Arab-Islamic origins, born in Tira in 1975; Eyman Siksek, born into a Muslim family in Jaffa in 1984, whose first novel, *Toward Jaffa*, was published in Hebrew in 2010; and Naim 'Arydi, a Druze poet born in 1950 who writes in both Arabic and Hebrew and who served as Israel's ambassador to Norway.<sup>20</sup>

A portion of Nidaa Khoury's poetry can be situated in this same frame. A Palestinian born in Fassūṭa in 1959 and a lecturer at Ben Gurion University in the Negev, she publishes poems in Hebrew. Her most recent collection, *Book of Sins*, was published in 2011 as a bilingual Arabic-Hebrew edition. "To those who accuse her of betrayal for having adopted the language of the 'enemy', she responds that language transcends political conflicts; as much as it is a threat, it is also path to knowledge of the other."<sup>21</sup> Writing in the language of the other, she says, "allows for establishing a form of communication in which military supremacy effaces itself in favour of cultural exchange." "Language" is in fact the title of one of the poems in the collection *Book of Defect* (Haifa, 2011). It is "our high house, our indestructible house," she says, a "fortified" house that protects against "racism and all extremist religious movements" (p. 11).

Based on the idea that language is an important factor for the establishment or resumption of harmonious relations, "initiatives have recently been set in place to create bilingual schools (three so far, in Jerusalem, Kfar Qara [Kafr Qar'], and Séguev) where Arabs and Jews can study together. Classes are to be given simultaneously in Hebrew and Arabic."<sup>22</sup> To similar ends, a number of associations have been attempting to introduce Arabic classes into Jewish schools.

## Literature and the Arab-Israeli relationship

For several decades, the field of literature has brought together Arab Palestinian authors – Muslims, Christians – and Hebrew-language Jewish authors around a single object. The Union of Jewish and Arab Writers was created in the 1950s. A bilingual review with an evocative title, *liqā'-mifgash* (“Encounter”), was the fruit of this union. Under the editorship of Mordekhai Tabib, a Yemeni Jewish writer, it was published between 1964 and 1970; then, from 1984 Mahmud ‘Abassi, an author and translator born in Haifa in 1935, took over.

Another, more significant collaboration emerged in the 1990s through the creation of the General Union of Writers in Israel. In contrast to the old Hebrew Writers Association in Israel, established by the poet Hayim Bialik (d. 1934) in Tel Aviv in 1926 to encourage writing in Hebrew, which was at the time a minority language in a Palestine under British mandate, the new union gathers together all writers living in Israel, whose language may, of course, be Hebrew but might also be Arabic, Russian, Yiddish, and so on. Its noteworthy members are among Israel’s most famous Hebrew-language writers, such as Nathan Zach, A. B. Yehoshua, and Amos Oz, and some of its founders worthy of mention are Dalia Rabikovitz (1936–2005), Haim Nagid, and David Grossman. At least 20 per cent of its members are Arab (such as Faruq Muwassi, Siham Daoud, and Nidaa Khoury). Currently led by a Jewish president, Gad Keinar, and an Arab vice president, Faruq Muwassi, it undertakes, in addition to the publication of the journal *Gag* (“Roof”), a number of initiatives promoting cultural exchange between the two communities. For instance, issue number 11 of *Gag* is entirely devoted to contemporary Palestinian literature, translated into Hebrew. Indeed, translations of literary works from one language into the other have become very common. The meeting held in Nazareth in 2011 to pay homage to the Muslim poet Taha Muḥammad Ali (d. 2011), for example, in which a number of writers of all faiths participated, evinces the union’s sincerity and solidity. The various literary prizes in Israel have been distributed since 1987 to Jewish and Arab Palestinian writers without distinction.<sup>23</sup>

### The other in Palestinian poetry: Nidaa Khoury and Mahmoud Darwish

In the context of Palestinian-Israeli relations in literature, this section discusses the conception of the “other” of two Palestinian poets, each of whom followed a different path and was subject to a different context: Nidaa Khoury, a female Christian poet who lives, works, and publishes in Israel, and Mahmoud Darwish (d. 2008), a Muslim male poet, who wrote four collections of poems inside the state of Israel and then continued his career in exile after 1970.

#### *Nidaa Khoury: love as a feature of union between the “self” and the “other”*

The other is present in all of Nidaa Khoury’s work. The vast majority of her poems are addressed to a recipient, such that her “self” reveals itself only through her interlocutor. How does this other, particularly when Jewish, appear in her poems?

In responding to the question, “As a Palestinian woman of Israeli nationality living in Israel, how do you experience your relationship to the other,” Nidaa Khoury emphasizes that the problem cannot be limited to the duality “me”/ “him” and “us”/ “them.” She does not see in the other the enemy but the human being, only the human being. The boundaries between the hero (strong) and the victim (weak) are illusory. He who uses force is also



victim since he is then obliged to use force and weapons for everything in his life.<sup>24</sup> Much of Khoury's poetry revolves around this conception of her rapport with the other.

Heavily inspired by the dogmas, rituals, and lexicon of Christianity, Khoury makes love and sacrifice, in their spiritual dimension, the foundation of any relationship with the other. Her body is at once the altar, the place of sacrifice, and the sacrifice itself. She sacrifices herself for justice on earth, she says in her collection *Zunnār al-Rīḥ* (The Belt of Wind) (Acre, 1992):

The odour of my flesh blended with that of incense  
An altar on which I present a piece of the sky  
An offering for justice on earth

(p.28)

Love was her credo from the time she opened her eyes on the world, which is why she does not hide her surprise when she says in the collection *Book of Sins* (2011):<sup>25</sup>

Addressing love since my birth  
Don't know how the land breaks free

(p. 19/245)

Redemption, in large part inspired by the Christian religion, constitutes the essence of practically all the poems in the collection *Jiddīlat al-Ra'd* (Braid of Thunder) (1989).<sup>26</sup>

Focused on her "me," the poet addresses a male interlocutor whose identity remains imprecise. This interlocutor, designated in the second-person singular, seems to have several referents in the texts. However, the "You" in the poem "Braid of Thunder" without a doubt refers to the Israeli. In this confrontation between the "You" and the "I," Khoury denounces, with a subtlety that is omnipresent in her poetry, an exitless cycle of violence. She reproaches the Israeli – who, more than anyone, knows the meaning of death and fear – for passing fear on, in turn, to the poet herself, to this "Me/I" that he feigns to ignore and whose presence he does not recognize. Unfortunately, this union in fear engenders only "the rifle," "death," people "crazy for revolution," and "all the fear of history," she says. The poet longs deeply for a union, one without arms or violence. In the final part of the poem, she hails the other, the Jewish victim, to unambiguously express her compassion. When she was little, she was told the story of the "madmen" and cried at length over this fate:

You for whom one day I cried  
I was small  
I heard the story about ovens  
I hated bread<sup>27</sup>

She hated bread because the oven was associated in her mind and imagination with the Holocaust. The "You" is replaced with "Man," with "Human Being" at the end of the poem. Nidaa Khoury expresses her love and passion for this human being, this victim like her, purified of all violence. She holds him in her arms. She even desires a blending together with him to overcome fear and death and to bring about only life and freedom. Love, transcending differences and diversity, triumphing over arms and violence, is clearly the ideal frame in which the encounter with the other has to take place.

### ***The conception of the other in Mahmoud Darwish: the human, source of hope***

While the image of the other, particularly the Israeli, often remains hazy in the poetry of Khouury, it is, on the other hand, clear and repeated in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. In response to the question, “What about the image of the Other, the Israeli? Of ‘the enemy’,” he says in *Palestine as a Metaphor*: “[I]t was, from the beginning, human. Multiple and varied. There exists for me no single and definitive vision of the Other. The one who educated me was Jewish, the one who persecuted me was also. The woman who loved me was Jewish. The one who hated me was too.”<sup>28</sup> Precisely because of this multiplicity, it would be fastidious to trace the image of the Israeli other in all of the twenty-seven collections and works written by Darwish and published over a period of 42 years. We will limit ourselves to the poems that are most significant and most capable of showing the principal characteristics of that image. It is not without good reason that Darwish, in answering the preceding question, began with the term “human.” Convinced that “poetry is the voice that brings human beings together,”<sup>29</sup> he attempted, despite the bloody conflict opposing Israelis and Palestinians, to keep the human in view in all of his poetry. Cain kills Abel, it is true, but they remain brothers despite it all and are both victims. The poem “The Raven’s Ink,” from the collection *Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?* (1995),<sup>30</sup> despite being a fratricidal drama of biblical and Qur’anic inspiration, ends on an optimistic note, assured of the brothers’ resurrection:

I am Abel. Earth brings me back  
 as a carob tree, for you to sit upon, oh raven  
 I am you in words. A single book  
 joins us. I carry the ashes you carry. In the  
 shade we were two witnesses, two victims  
 two  
 short  
 poems  
 about nature  
 waiting for destruction to finish its feast  
 [...]  
 Search for our resurrection, and hover, oh raven!

(pp. 56–58)

Evoking a relationship between “me” and “the other,” Darwish says in *Palestine as a Metaphor* that “I need for the human in me to be recognized, in exchange for my recognition of the human in the Other. Then might we, he and I, truly be reconciled” (p. 32). This is indeed the vision that dominates the collection *State of Siege*, for example, published in 2002 following the siege of Ramallah.<sup>31</sup> Through violence, war, and conflict, the poet searches for the human. Although the other, the Israeli soldier carrying out the siege, is hailed by a variety of terms of address with negative connotations that arouse animosity – “assassin,” “guard” – the poem closes on a note of reconciliation. He says, for example, in this collection that is but one poem:

Hey, you, on the doorstep—come in,  
 and drink Arab coffee with us,

then maybe you'll feel you are human, like us.  
You on the doorstep—  
please get out of our mornings,  
then maybe we'll feel we are human, like you.

(p. 18)

If war begins with “It’s either me or him,” we read at another point in the poem, “it ends with the painful recognition / of him and me, together” (p. 64).

In a style not lacking in irony, Darwish reminds the Israeli that the politically exploited differences that supposedly exist between the two of them in fact go no deeper than appearances. Everything brings them together. He calls out in these terms to one of the siege’s guards:

If we swapped names you’d discover  
a certain resemblance between us—  
you may have a “mom,”  
but I have a mother,  
we’re soaked by identical rain,  
we dream of only one moon,  
and we’re only a short distance away from the same table.

(p. 70)

In the Arabic text, “mother” is designated by two different terms, two synonyms, in order to underscore that the difference is in form, not in substance: “You may have an *Umm* / but I have a *wālidā*.”

In another of the poem’s passages, speaking to a “pseudo-Orientalist,” the poet strips away false appearances until only the human bedrock is left visible. This human sentiment is sufficient to ensure a rapprochement between Palestinian and Israeli. The poet employs intertextuality, invoking Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*:

Let’s just assume you are right:  
Let’s assume I’m a dim, moronic, half-wit,  
[...]  
If I were someone else,  
if you were someone else,  
we could have been friends,  
both of us admitting how silly we are.  
Don’t the stupid, like Shylock,  
have hearts, need sustenance,  
have eyes filled with tears?

(p. 73)

Darwish invokes the Jewish moneylender in Shakespeare’s play whose portrait has given rise to conflicting interpretations: on the one hand greedy, on the other, victim and scapegoat. Darwish transcends these interpretations, liberating the centuries-old image of the “Jewish

moneylender” by seeing in him only the human being, a human being with a heart and two eyes that cry, both elements that unite him with the Palestinian “me.”

### *When the other is a Jewish soldier*

The poet, who is the victim in *State of Siege*, reminds the other, the Israeli Jewish soldier, that he is also a victim: “If you had looked your victim in the eye, / perhaps you’d have remembered your mother in the gas chamber” (p. 29). This is reason enough for the latter to set himself free of “the rifle,” symbol of violence. In the poem “Nothing Makes Me Happy” from the collection *Don’t Apologize for What You Did*,<sup>32</sup> the soldier is himself besieged. The Palestinian is so physically, the other morally. It reads: “The soldier says, me too. Nothing makes me happy. / I attack a ghost who attacks me” (p. 86).<sup>33</sup>

The resemblance between the Palestinian me and the Israeli other emphasized by Darwish is present in several domains. They live through the same situation. The fear of the other that they both feel makes them at once assassins and victims. The poem “He Is Calm, Me Too” from the collection *Don’t Apologize for What You Did* begins with an ironic parallel between the two, evoking banal and insignificant differences:

He is calm, me too  
He drinks tea with orange,  
I drink coffee  
That is what distinguishes the two of us

(p. 87)

The poem continues to unfold according to the same parallelism, without concealing its ironic tone – “I move my left foot / he moves his right foot,” – and ends with an observation supporting the commonality of their situation:

I think: is he the mirror in which I see myself?  
[...]  
I think: perhaps he is an assassin, or perhaps  
He is a passenger who thought I was an assassin  
He is afraid and I am too

(p. 88)

While it is true that the victim/enemy opposition is recurrent in his poetry, the enemy, the Israeli soldier, is often described as someone who has been forced, in spite of himself, to play his role. The animosity or violence he produces is anathema to his humanism. The “rifle,” tool and symbol of war that imposes a separation between the “me” and the “other,” is always treated, from the poem “Rita and the Rifle” in the collection *The End of Night* (1967) (to which we return later) and onward – as an introduced element, which deforms the two protagonists’ normal reality. In the last poem of the collection *Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?* entitled “As He Draws Away,” Darwish describes with great subtlety and finesse this triangular relationship between the Israeli enemy and soldier, the Israeli victim, and the Palestinian victim. Darwish describes the complexity of the situation in which this other lives:

In our shack the enemy takes a rest from his gun,  
leaving it on my grandfather's chair. He eats our bread  
like a guest, dozes on  
the wicker chair, caresses our cat's  
fur. He always says to us:  
Don't blame the victim!  
Who is the victim? We ask him  
He answers: Blood that the night will never dry..

(p. 192)<sup>34</sup>

Inside the shack, the other expresses his humanity, whereas outside he puts back on his mask as an enemy and warrior, represented in the poem by the uniform and shiny buttons: "The buttons on his uniform sparkle as he draws away." The shack is therefore a place of understanding between the two victims, the place where all the points of resemblance between the two emerge, a place of union and peace, far from the tool of violence:

So why does he visit the victim every evening?  
And memorize our proverbs, like us?  
And repeat our songs of  
our own appointments in the holy place?  
Were it not for the gun  
the flute would pass into the flute...

(p.194)<sup>35</sup>

The first collections published by Darwish during the period when he was living in Israel contained several poems expressing intense anger. The term itself is repeated dozens of times. While it is true that the Israeli is considered an enemy, an occupier, a murderer, a jailer, a torturer, he is "never reified into a diabolized entity." At no time does he dehumanize the adversary in order to activate a desire to kill him. At no time does the poet call for the physical elimination of the adversary. This contrast between murderous violence and human tenderness comes through clearly in his poem "A Soldier Dreams of White Lilies," first published in the collection *The End of the Night* (1967). The soldier/torturer, at the poet's request, describes with impressive *sang-froid* the cadaver of a Palestinian he has killed: "He shifted in his seat, fiddled with the folded newspaper, / then said, as if breaking into song." This same soldier removes his mask of war and shows his true face in the final part of the poem: "He told me about his first love, and later, about distant streets," the poet says, of his need for "a child to cherish a day of laughter, not a weapon of war."<sup>36</sup>

### *When the other is the beloved*

It seems judicious, before concluding this section, to evoke the concept of the other as the beloved in Darwish's poetry. This other is, of course, incarnated in the character of Rita, the Jewish Israeli woman with whom the Palestinian poet is madly in love. While the poem mentioned above seals their parting in its final paragraph – "And the city swept away Rita / And all the poets / Between Rita and my eyes / A rifle" – this does not mark the end of hope. Indeed, in the collection *Birds are Dying in Galilee* (1970), published three

years after the war of 1967, the poet explicitly dedicates two poems to Rita. The first, in lending the volume its title, acquires special importance. Rita surges forth powerfully laden with memory in this poem. She bears the weight of the new social and political situation. Despite the separation, love fans the flame of hope that they might be reunited. Another encounter is inevitable:

We shall meet in a while  
 In a year, or two  
 And a generation.

Death has come between the poet and the beloved, but this death is nothing but the poet's second face. He dies as an offering so that the other might live; death is a source of life:

Why do you now flee  
 What makes the wheat the earth's eyelashes  
 What makes the volcano the Jasmine's other face.<sup>37</sup>

The second poem, entitled "Rita... Love Me", appears to be the continuation of the first. The two lovers are in a new space: Athens, where "love is prohibited" and the police officer, *al-shurfi*, symbol of political and military authority, wants to enforce this prohibition. Despite the presence of death, hope and the forceful resolve to unite with the other, the beloved, surge forth from sadness's depths:

Your body full of summer and death so beautiful,  
 No matter how much you fill up the impossible space  
 I will wait for you at the end of the world.

(p. 276)

The image of Rita returns in 1992, twenty-five years later, in the collection *Eleven Planets*, in which a long poem, "Rita's Winter,"<sup>38</sup> is devoted to Rita, who has now become, we guess, the symbol of the other, the Jewish woman. The poem opens with the encounter between the two lovers – Rita and the poet – at a specified time, "night," and in a space belonging to the two of them, "our room." The intimate setting of this encounter does not protect the lovers from the world around them, however. The "... two dreams on the pillow, they intersect and escape so one draws out a dagger and another entrusts the commandments to the flute" (p. 89). In this poem, made up of numerous dialogues between Rita and the poet, the ties between the two partners seem indissoluble. The two assure each other that they are made for one another. "Are you mine?" Rita asks, to which the poet replies immediately: "I am yours, I say, if you leave the door open to my past, mine / is a past I see born out of your absence" (p. 91). Three times in the poem Rita says, "I was born to love you." Both celebrate a fusional relationship in which each becomes the other. However, this fusion does not put an end to distressing questions about the path to be taken and the future of two beings who are foreign to one another yet united. Here, too, the role of the victim is shared: "a small joy / they haven't killed us yet, not yet, O Rita... Rita, this winter is heavy and cold" (p. 93). As in the beautiful and impossible stories dreamed of in the ancient tragedies, the me and the other appear cursed and condemned:



There is no land for two bodies in one, no exile for exile  
We sing between two chasms in vain . . . we should depart and clarify the path.

(p. 93)

However, the response of the two partners to this seemingly inescapable destiny defies violence and resignation and obstructs departure: “yet I can’t and you can’t . . . she used to say and not say” (p. 93). Emanating naturally from two lovers, this answer confirms that they are condemned to live together, despite all the obstacles that lay before them.

### **The image of the other in Israeli poetry: Dalia Rabikovitz and Nathan Zach**

Beginning in the 1960s, Yehuda Amichai (d. 2000), an Israeli poet known the world over, modified the trend in contemporary Hebrew poetry, until then dedicated to the causes of the nation and the public. He is perhaps the first to have consciously chosen to underscore individual daily life, the intimate, and love. In his second collection, published in 1958,<sup>39</sup> ten years after Israel’s War of Independence, he included a poem “I Want to Die in My Bed.” This wish, which constitutes the poem’s refrain, is repeatedly opposed to war. The idealization of “natural” death, “in my bed,” marked a turning point in Israeli poetry, which until then had extolled heroism.

Nathan Zach, who was familiar with existentialism, also opposed any form of lyric expression devoid of the concrete and the immediate. His texts go beyond theoretical discourse. His second poetic collection, *Shirim Shonim (Other Poems)*, published in 1960, constitutes a different sort of poetry, of an individual, rationalist, pessimistic, and ironic kind, reflecting the progressive decline of the human state. On the formal level, he succeeds in creating a magnificent musicality through the play of internal rhymes and repetitions. This new tendency in his work had a decisive influence on his contemporaries. It appears that following the new approach of these two key figures of the Israeli literary universe, the weight of the “us” as a people, as an identity, began to give way, in a post-modern spirit of liberation, to personal, more intimate expression. Over time, especially after the 1973 war, the amalgamation of the “me” and the “we”, the individual and the public, re-emerged, this time in a different context, that of the Near East and the Israeli-Arab conflict. It was precisely those poets who emphasized the personal and the concrete in the fifties and sixties, with Nathan Zach playing a leading role, who began generating a poetry of protest, defending peace. This poetry developed in the wake of two major events: after the first war in Lebanon in the 1980s and then after the year 2000, in protest against Israeli politics during the Intifada. Poets of all generations (such as T. Rivner, M. Wieseltier, and D. Rabikovitch as well as younger ones, such as Ronny Someck, Rami Diztani, and Yitzhak Laor) expressed a sympathetic view toward the Palestinians, sharing in their human suffering. The Bible serves as a source of inspiration in this context as well, but this time to defend the Palestinian cause.<sup>40</sup>

Dalia Rabikovitz (d. 2006) is without a doubt the most salient female Israeli poet of the second half of the twentieth century. From her first collection, *The Love of an Orange* (1959), she revealed a universe shaken from the inside, doing so in a style with immediate emotional impact. Although her intimate and lyrical poetry is not religious as such, it draws on the Bible and prayers for its images and symbols. After the war in Lebanon in 1982, she adopted a new political and moral vision denouncing all human suffering. Her

position manifested itself on the practical level through her support for the “Peace Now” movement and the creation of the General Union of Writers in Israel and, on the literary level, through singular and particularly strong writing. Thus, she was the first to apply the biblical myth of the sacrifice of Abraham not only to the young Israelis killed in the wars but also to suffering Palestinians. This idea appears in a poem entitled “The Tale of the Arab Who Died by Fire,” from the collection *Mother and Child* (1992), where she makes precise use of the terms “bound and fettered” (*qashur ve-‘aqud*), making clear the intertextual reference.

These poems propose two main themes: The first, inspired by her personal situation as a mother of an only son, evokes the suffering of mothers, all mothers. She is convinced that the recognition of mutual suffering and universal human nature might contribute to taking a few steps on the road to peace. She evokes this theme in a direct and fearless manner in the following lines:

A mother walks around with a child dead in her belly.  
 This child hasn’t been born yet.  
 When his time is up the dead child will be born  
 head first, then trunk and buttocks  
 and he won’t wave his arms about or cry his first cry  
 [...]
   
 He will not resemble a living child.  
 His mother will not be calm and proud after giving birth  
 and she won’t be troubled about his future,  
 won’t worry how in the world to support him  
 and does she have enough milk  
 and does she have enough clothing  
 and how will she ever fit one more cradle into the room.  
 The child is a perfect ‘azazel<sup>41</sup> already,  
 unmade ere he was ever made.  
 [...]
   
 These are the chronicles of the child  
 who was killed in his mother’s belly  
 in the month of January, in the year 1988,  
 “under circumstances relating to state security.”<sup>42</sup>

Ruth Karton-Bloom<sup>43</sup> speaks of “mothers’ poetry” as a subgenre of women’s poetry. She observes that for women writers the biblical myth of Abraham’s sacrifice is nothing but a betrayal, by the family, by the father, and that the key dimension of feminine protest is anchored in the maternal ethic, the maternal worry common to all mothers. The Ravikovitch poems cited previously come from a collection that appeared in 1992 under the simple title *Mother and Child*. In her poem entitled “Stones,” she expresses her love for children and her compassion for the stolen childhood of the Palestinians:

stones, stones, stones, stones  
 children, children, children, children.  
 Go home, children  
 How will you live without rest?<sup>44</sup>

The second theme is that of love of the country. There is no doubt that it is a sincere love, but it does not hide an ironic view of its countryside – peaceful and magnificent for some, threatening for others:

Associations<sup>45</sup>  
[...]  
Our country's beautiful landscape  
Vineyards hung on the mountain,  
The shadow of clouds on the plain,  
The light  
And a fenced parcel;  
And also, three lines of olive trees  
Uprooted, a punishment.  
And three old women, without teeth,  
Because of their age, of course.  
[...]

Nathan Zach (b. 1930 in Berlin, but living in Israel since 1935) is considered, with Yehuda Amichai and David Avidan, to be one of the pillars of contemporary Hebrew poetry. An individualist and an existentialist, Zach has led a movement of poetic revolution against the “founding fathers” of modern Hebrew poetry, such as Altermann and Schlonsky. At the beginning of the 1980s, during the first war in Lebanon, he became a spokesperson for the movement of poetic protest, saying that:

It is not by chance that more and more political voices are being heard on the literary scene today. It is the product of an urgent reality that even the most immured and the most dignified can no longer ignore [...]. This may be the sign of our literature's maturity, which is, so it seems, quite capable of transgressing the lines so recently defined by grave reality. [...] We can write about other things, and differently.<sup>46</sup>

Later, in response to a call for him to leave politics to journalists and poetics to poets,<sup>47</sup> he added in no uncertain terms that for him politics is an experience of a simultaneously moral and personal kind, an experience that enriches poetic creation and leads above all to a kind of writing that does not need to be justified.<sup>48</sup> A close friend of Emile Habibi (d. 1996), the novelist and Palestinian *Knesset* member, as well as of the Syrian poet Adonis, Zach took part in several peace marches and, on several occasions, was a member of literary delegations aimed at advancing the peace process.

In 1996, he published a collection entitled *Because I'm Around*, in which he openly criticizes politicians for their opportunism and their obsession with power. He goes so far as to refer in ironic terms to the city of Jerusalem, which he evokes in a poem entitled “A Song for Sion,” an allusion to the famous poem “Sion” by the medieval poet Yehuda Halevi. He says:

There, where the hill of screams is,  
There is no poetry, only blows  
Falling from the sky here and there,  
To remind us that no one has yet transformed his sword into a spade  
And that neither the Synagogues nor the Mosques or Churches can help  
The poor people who look for war.<sup>49</sup>

Without losing any of its finesse and subtlety, the irony of the young poet he was in the 1960s takes on a hard and denunciatory tone in the sociopolitical context of the 1990s. The poem “A Little Poem of Dead Soldiers” provides a good example:

Oh, it's great to get rid of you,  
 Of your complaints  
 Of your howling demands,  
 Of your incessant harassment,  
 You, the virtuous one,  
 Who know only yourself,  
 Who always thinks she's right,  
 Who justifies herself  
 Always  
 And then, once again,  
 Even in the years to come, when I won't be here,  
 Even in the years to come, when I will no longer be alive,  
 When there won't be anyone anymore  
 That I knew  
 Nor a woman  
 Whose body knew mine.  
 You, in your throat the glory of the future,  
 You ask and you answer at the same time,  
 The anxieties of the past at your feet,  
 Upward look your eyes,  
 Demanding consolation,  
 For help crying,  
 Crushing with a steel foot  
 Everything that is on the road,  
 Everything that crosses the path,  
 Everything that is her child,  
 Oh, it's wonderful to get rid of you, homeland.<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusion

Dealing with the other through narrative writing seems to be an easy and readily admitted endeavour, but still few studies of that kind have been made of the poetic field. Approaching the topic through poetry runs the risk of engaging only with the politically “activist” dimension, to the detriment of the lyrical and aesthetic.

The choices in this article were made with care. It examines texts of great poetic value, authored by recognized poets. It is helpful in this regard to recall the words of Nathan Zach when interviewed by Israeli journalists in 2001.<sup>51</sup> He insisted in a clear manner on the depth and authenticity of his so-called “political” poetry, considering that it is as personal and lyrical as his poetry in the 1960s. “If we were to transform all poetry into journalism,” he said, “that would help no one. [...P]oetry is not for transmitting current events, it is the work of imagination,” adding that “a good poet remains a good poet, the journalist has his own field to work in.”<sup>52</sup>

We have also tried to throw new light on a reality that is not well-known and that is often neglected by the media. Constructive links and bold initiatives exist between members of the

different communities. This study has shown the evolution and plurality of views taken of the other. The other, while remaining a political rival in a very complicated context, is above all else a human being. The human sentiment underscored in the poetry of these four poets – Darwish, Khoury, Rabikovitz and Zach – is a means for accepting the other and uniting oneself with him.

Be that as it may, one must also avoid the pitfall of naive optimism. This opening toward the other and this willingness to knit promising relationships cannot hide another reality, one of conflict, which is unfortunately still dominant. Without touching on the domain of politics directly, all of these initiatives for cultural and intellectual rapprochement have been and continue to be fought and boycotted by a certain number of intellectuals and writers on both sides. However, the fact that this flame has persisted and is developing is an encouraging sign for the future.

## Notes

- 1 Kingdoms appearing in al-Andalus during the eleventh century and characterized by great political instability and much infighting.
- 2 See, for instance, Sobhi Boustani, “Jewish Figures in Modern Arabic Literature,” in *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations: From the Origins to the Present Day*, eds. Benjamin Stora and Abdelwahab Meddeb, trans. Jane Marie Todd and Michael B. Smith. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 566–572.
- 3 Professor of Cultural Studies and Women’s Studies at City University of New York.
- 4 Director of the Center for Sephardic Heritage in Brooklyn, NY.
- 5 Poet, translator, and American scholar, of Sephardic origin.
- 6 In the contemporary Israeli discourse, the appellation “Arab Jew” replaces the appellation “Oriental Jew” or Jew originating in an Arab country. Ella Shohat and Yehuda Schenhav are originators of this appellation, conceived of in contradistinction to “European Jew.”
- 7 135 in 1976.
- 8 The Farhūd (riots of 1941) and the expulsions of 1951 were decisive moments for the Jews of Iraq.
- 9 Shmuel Moreh, *Baghdad My Love: Iraq’s Jews: Memories and Sorrows* (Haifa: Maktabat Kull Shay’, 2012), 426 pages.
- 10 The author reveals his convictions in an interview with Iman Bustani given on 8 September 2012, <http://www.algardenia.com/fanjanqahwa/296-2012-09-08-18-45-45.html>. (Accessed: 15 October 2013.)
- 11 See interview published in September 2008 by the Israeli Ministry of Education: <http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/TelAviv/MarkazMachkarVmayda/baolam.htm>
- 12 Translated from the Hebrew by Masha Itzhaki [M. I.]. A bilingual Nepali/English edition proposes a translation of this poem by D. Yuyutsu: *Baghdad, February 1991, and Other Poems* (New Delhi: Nirala Publications, 2009). See also Ronny Someck and Abdul Kader El Janabi, *Nés a Bagdad*, (Paris: Stavit, 1998).
- 13 In ‘Ali Adīb, Nahr Dījla Yajrī fī Tel Aviv, “The Tigris Runs in Tel Aviv,” *Rašīf*, 16 April 2015, <http://raseef22.com/life>. (Accessed: 30 April 2016.)
- 14 Mohammad Ali Atassi, “Samir Naccache al-Yahūdī, al-‘Arabī al-Ṭā’ih,” <http://hem.bredband.net/b155908/m254.htm>. (Accessed: 15 May 2015.)
- 15 See “On the Wisdom of Roads,” *Al Ḥokhmot Drakhim* (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuḥad, 1942).
- 16 English translation by Nicholas de Lange and Yaacob Dweck, *Khirbet Khizeh* (London: IBIS Editions, 1986; reprint New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014). The story was made into a TV drama on Israeli Channel 1 in 1978.
- 17 A work on the subject: H. Rogani, *Facing the Ruined Village: Hebrew Poetry and Jewish Arab Conflict 1929–1967* [in Hebrew, with abstract in English] (Haifa: Pardes, 2005).
- 18 Quoted in *Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-Filīsīniyya (Journal of Palestine Studies)*, 96, Autumn 2013, p. 21–29. He expresses similar views about language in Anton Shammas, “The Drowned Library (Reflections on Found, Lost, and Translated Books and Languages)” in *Lives in Translation*:

- Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity*, ed. Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 112, 126.
- 19 Among his works (all in Hebrew): *Dancing Arabs* (2002) (translated into English by Miriam Shlesinger [New York: Grove Press, 2004]), *Let It Be Morning* (2006) (translated into English by Miriam Shlesinger [New York: Black Cat, 2006]).
  - 20 Since 1972, he has published nine literary works in Hebrew, of which the majority are poetry.
  - 21 Katia Ghosn, "Nidaa Khoury, une voix contre les loups," *L'Orient le jour littéraire*, September 2013. [http://www.lorientlitteraire.com/article\\_details.php?cid=7&mid=4311](http://www.lorientlitteraire.com/article_details.php?cid=7&mid=4311). (Accessed: 15 May 2015.)
  - 22 Denis Charbit, "Les Associations Judéo-Arabes en Israël," in *Histoire des relations entre juifs et musulmans des origines à nos jours* (pp. 475–476 of the English edition).
  - 23 Emile Habibi received the Israel Prize for Literature in 1992, and in 2013 a square was inaugurated in his name in Haifa. Sayed Kashua received the Prime Minister's Prize in 2005, and Naim 'Araydi in 2008.
  - 24 Interview with the author of the present chapter in Paris, 17 June 2013.
  - 25 *Kitāb al-Khaṭāyā, Book of Sins* (Philipsburg: House of Nehesi Publishers, 2011). This collection is published in three languages: Arabic, Hebrew, and English.
  - 26 Shafā' Amr: *Dār al-Mashriq*, 1989.
  - 27 *Braid of Thunder*, p. 86.
  - 28 Translated into French from the Arabic by Elias Sanbar and into Hebrew by Simone Bitton (Paris: Actes Sud, 1997), p. 13.
  - 29 *Nouvel Observateur*, no. 2154, 16 February 2006.
  - 30 Translation by Jeffrey Sacks (New York: Archipelago Books, 2006).
  - 31 Translated into English from the Arabic by Munir Akash and Daniel Abdal-Hayy Moore, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010). Translated into French from the Arabic by Elias Sambar (Paris: Actes Sud/Sindbad, 2004).
  - 32 Translated into the French by Elias Sambar (Paris: Sindbad/Actes Sud, 2006).
  - 33 Page reference to Arabic edition; this translation by Fanny Howe, Zahi Khamis, and Kim Jensen, as it appeared in *EZRA: An Online Journal of Translation*, 1:2 (Fall 2007). [http://www.ezrtranslation.com/uploads/Ezra\\_Fall07\\_Arch.pdf](http://www.ezrtranslation.com/uploads/Ezra_Fall07_Arch.pdf). (English, p. 4).
  - 34 Translation by Jeffrey Sacks, page reference to English version.
  - 35 Translation by Jeffrey Sacks, page reference to English version
  - 36 *Complete Works*, ed. Sinan Antoon and Amira El-Zein (Beirut: Dār al-'Awda, 1989), pp. 198–200. This particular poem has been translated into English by Munir Akash and Carolyn Forché, *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise Selected Poems* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 165–168.
  - 37 *Op. cit.*, pp. 261–262.
  - 38 Page 77 of the original. Translated into English by Fady Joudah, *If I Were Another* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), pp. 88–93. Page numbers in this section refer to the English version.
  - 39 *Be-Merḥaq Shtei Tikvot* [Between Two Hopes] (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, 1958). See also *Shirim* [Poems] (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1967), p. 95.
  - 40 Three anthologies in Hebrew are worth mentioning: *Vē-ein Tikhla la-Keravot ou-la-Hereg* [There is No End to the Battles and Slaughter], eds. H. Hever and M. Ron (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, 1983); *Hatzayat Gvoul* [While Crossing the Border], ed. Y. Kafri, (Tel Aviv: Şifriat Po'alim, 1983), both about the war in Lebanon; and *Be-et Barzel 1984–2004* [With a Pen of Iron: Hebrew Protest Poetry 1984–2004], ed. T. Nitzan (Tel Aviv: Hargol, 2005).
  - 41 A term from the Hebrew Bible generally understood as meaning a scapegoat; also sometimes a fallen angel or demon.
  - 42 As edited and translated by Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld in *Hovering at a Low Altitude: The Collected Poetry of Dalia Rabikovitz* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009).
  - 43 In her book *Le récit comme un coutelât* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 2013).
  - 44 As translated by Yvette Neisser, "The Dialogue of Poetry: Palestinian and Israeli Poets Writing through Conflict and Peace," *The Palestine-Israel Journal*, 7:1 (2000). <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=996>
  - 45 Poem appearing in the same book, p. 296, translation by M. I.
  - 46 Comments published in the daily newspaper *Yedi'ot Aḥaronot*, 19 August 1983.
  - 47 M. Perri, *Şiman Kerī'ah*, 1983, pp. 9–10.



48 Yedi'ot Alḥaronot, 19 August 1983.

49 Extract from *Keivan she-Ani ba-Šviva* (Since I Am Not Far) (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1996), p. 250, translated by M. I.

50 Ibid., p. 258.

51 *Haaretz*, 23 November 2001.

52 Ibid.

## Further reading

### **Major texts in English treating Israeli and Palestinian literature in general**

Bouskila, A. E., *Modern Palestinian Literature and Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999).

Neisser, Y., "The dialogue of poetry: Palestinian mid-Israeli poets writing through conflict and peace," *The Palestine-Israel Journal*, 7:1 (2000).

Ramras-Raouch, G., *The Arab in Israeli Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989).

### **A fundamental work about relationships between Jews and Muslims throughout history**

Stora, Benjamin, and Abdelwahab, Meddeb (eds.), *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations: From the Origins to the Present Day*, English ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

### **Literary translations into English**

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