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ORIGINAL STUDY

The Arabic Poems of Rumi: Thematic and Structural Features

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ABSTRACT

Mawlana Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi is one of the greatest poets, mystics, and thinkers of the Islamic world. His Persian works have been translated into Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, English, and many other languages, leaving a profound impact on both Islamic mysticism and world literature. Rumi attracted attention in the Arab world centuries ago and his poems were translated into Arabic several times.

Rumi composed the majority of his works in Persian. However, the Arabic poems included in his divan have also survived to our time. Rumi wrote nearly one thousand Arabic verses. These poems differ from his Persian poems in terms of artistic character and stylistic features. Some display high poetic beauty and technical skill, while others reveal variations in meter and linguistic expression. The influence of Arabic literary tradition is also observable in these works.

The present study analyzes the Arabic poems of Rumi in terms of their thematic and structural features, while also examining their similarities to and differences from his Persian works. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject, the study first explores Rumi's engagement with the Arabic cultural and literary milieu, as well as his reception in the Arab world. It then investigates the influence of Arabic literature on his oeuvre and provides a detailed analysis of the thematic and structural characteristics of his Arabic poetry.

Keywords: Jalal al-Din Balkhi, Rumi's Arabic poetry, Rumi in the Arab world, Sufism, Arabic mystical poetry

Introduction

Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi, widely known as Mawlana or Rumi, was born in 1207 in the city of Balkh, a prominent center that produced many distinguished scholars, jurists, and philosophers. He derived the *nisba* "Balkhi" from his birthplace. The *nisba* "Rumi," on the other hand, originates from the region of Rum in Anatolia, where he spent a significant portion of his life. His father, Baha al-Din Walad – often referred to as the "Sultan of scholars"– was a prominent religious scholar and a sheikh of the *Kubrawiyya*

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order. He was also a disciple of Najm al-Din Kubra, the eminent Sufi master and founder of this order. As a result of the Mongol invasions and their attack on the city of Balkh, the representatives of this order were forced to leave the city, and Baha al-Din Walad, together with his companions and family, also departed from his homeland. At that time, Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi was approximately five or six years old (Mumtahan, 2011, p. 127). His family initially traveled to major centers of Arab-Islamic culture and later, upon the invitation of Ala al-Din Kayqubad I, settled in Konya. It was during these journeys that Jalal al-Din became acquainted with the Arabic language and culture.

The Arabic language had a profound influence on the intellectual and philosophical development of Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi. He traveled to Damascus in pursuit of knowledge and resided for a period in both Aleppo and Damascus. From the age of twenty-five, he began to study Arabic language and philosophy, at a time when Damascus stood as one of the cultural and intellectual capitals that attracted seekers of knowledge, as well as eminent sheikhs and scholars. Scholars from al-Andalus, the Maghreb, and Anatolia gathered there, composing their most significant scientific and philosophical works, while engaging in scholarly debates and research within this vibrant intellectual environment. During his travels with his father, Baha al-Din Walad he passed through Damascus and became deeply captivated by the city.

Upon the advice of his teacher, Burhan al-Din Muhaqqiq al-Tirmizi, he settled there to pursue his studies, and later returned once again in search of his spiritual companion, Shams al-Din Tabrizi. He described Damascus as a paradise filled with angels and houris, expressing his profound love and admiration for this beautiful city:

أنا عاشق ومندهش ومجنون بدمشق روحي فداء لدمشق وقلبي أسير هوى دمشق

Anā ʻāshiqun wa mundahishun wa majnūnun bi-Dimashq
Rūḥī fidā’un li-Dimashq wa qalbī asīrun hawāa Dimashq

"I am in love with Damascus, amazed by it, and madly in love.
My soul is sacrificed to it, and my heart is captive to its love."

Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi studied for two years in Aleppo at the *Halawiyya* madrasa under the guidance of Kamal al-Din Ibn al-Adim. He later settled in Damascus to pursue studies in the religious sciences (sharīʿa) at various madrasas. Seven years of education proved sufficient for this distinguished scholar to return to Konya and reflect his acquired knowledge of Arabic language and culture in his sermons, narratives, and poetry.

The statement made a thousand years ago about Al-Mutanabbi by the Lebanese-Iranian scholar Professor Dr. Victor al-Kik– “he filled the world and occupied people’s minds” (Arshadi, 2007, p. 5)– can, in our time, justifiably be applied to our master Jalal al-Din Balkhi Rumi. This is because translations of some of his works, selections from his poetry, and his rich mystical heritage have spread not only throughout the East but also in Europe, particularly in France, where they have gained wide circulation among followers of the Sufi spiritual path (*sayr wa sulūk*).

The works of Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi had attracted attention in the Arab world centuries ago and were translated into Arabic multiple times by various authors. Following their publication at the Bulaq Press in Cairo, the Arab world became widely acquainted with Rumi’s works. Among those who devoted their lives to studying his oeuvre are his disciple and follower Yusuf al-Mawlawi, Abd al-Wahhab Azzam, the renowned poet Abd al-Aziz Sahib al-Jawahir, the researcher Muhammad Abd al-Salam Kafafi, Ibrahim Desouqi, and others.

The influence of arabic literature on Rumi's works

Rumi was deeply devoted to Arabic poetry, particularly to Al-Mutanabbi. In the *Mathnawī*, there are verses that give the impression of being written as commentaries on al-Mutanabbi's poetry. His knowledge of the Arabic language enabled him to attain a deeper philosophical outlook, and he exercised considerable influence over his students, attracting a large circle of disciples and seekers of knowledge. Even during his early years of teaching in Konya, he showed an inclination toward Sufism and toward composing poetry in this vein. However, in order to preserve his reputation as a jurist and religious scholar, he initially kept this aspect of his inclination concealed (Mumtahan, 2011, p. 127). At the age of forty-four, following his encounter with Shams al-Din Tabrizi, he underwent a profound transformation, evolving from a jurist and religious scholar into a poet and Sufi.

An examination of Rumi's Arabic-language poetry reveals that he was primarily influenced by the literature of the Abbasid period. However, elements characteristic of *Jahiliyyah* poetry can also be observed in his work. He refers to the *aṭlāl* (deserted ruins) motif and speaks of shedding tears on the day of separation (*ghadāt al-bayn*), evoking themes typical of pre-Islamic poetic tradition.

بَكَت عَيني غَداةَ البَينِ دَمعاً وَأُخرى بِالبُكَى بَخِلَت عَلَينا
فَعاقَبتُ الَّتي بَخِلَت عَلَينا بِأَن غَمَّضتُها يَومَ اِلتَقَينا

(Moulavi sh.1378, gh.109)

Bakat ‘aynī ghadāt al-bayn dam‘an
Wa ukhrā bil-bukā’ bakhilat ‘alaynā

Fa‘āqabt allatī bakhilat ‘alaynā
Bi’anna ghammaḍtuhā yawm iltaqaynā

My eyes wept at the morning of separation,
Yet another withheld her tears from us.

I punished the one who was stingy toward us,
By closing her eyes on the day we met.

Persian literary figures have drawn on the poetry of Al-Mutanabbi in their narratives. One notable example is Saadi Shirazi, whose work in the history of Persian literature shows clear influence from al-Mutanabbi. Following al-Mutanabbi's visit to Iran in 354 AH, both Arab and non-Arab scholars and literary figures in Iran took a keen interest in him, considering the reading and memorization of his poetry as a literary norm (Rifat Jo. 1988, p. 395). Ahmad al-Katibi, who wrote the poet's life, reports that when he met Shams Tabrizi, he used to read Mutanabbi's divan every night. (Rifat Jo. 1988. p.395) Rumi was influenced by Mutanabbi's imagination and used it in his poems.

Jalal al-Din Rumi was also influenced by the great Islamic thinker Al-Ghazali (Al-Khafaji, 1988, p. 174) and cited passages from Al-Hariri's *Maqamat* (Yalouh, 2014, p. 215). Studies also indicate that the poet's work shows the influence of Abu Nuwas. This intertextual relationship was identified by Muhammad Abd al-Salam al-Kafafi (Khalid Abdu). Al-Kafafi noted that in the Mathnawī, some poems reflect structural influence from Abu Nuwas, and that certain Persian-language poems by Rumi display stylistic and thematic elements reminiscent of Abu Nuwas.

A close reading of Rumi's Diwan shows that he sometimes quoted passages from Abu Nuwas. In some cases, he even adapted one of his qasidas from two of Abu Nuwas's qasidas, incorporating phrases exactly as they appear in Abu Nuwas's poetry. One example of a poem that mirrors Abu Nuwas in structure is:

يا صغير السن يا رطب البدن يا قريب العهد من شرب اللبن
هاشمي الوجه تركي القفا ديلمي الشعر رومي الذقن
روحه روحي و روحي روحه من رآى روحين عاشا في بدن
صح عند الناس اني عاشق غير ان لم يعرفوا عشقي به من
اقطعوا شملي و ان شئتم صلوا ل شيء منم عندي حسن

(Moulavi, sh.2127)

Yā ṣaghīr as-sinn, yā raṭb al-badan
Yā qarīb al-'ahd min shurb al-laban

Hāshimī al-wajh, Turkī al-qafā
Dailamī al-sha'r, Rūmī al-dhaqan

Rūḥuhu rūḥī wa rūḥī rūḥuhu
Man ra'ā rūḥayn 'āshā fī al-badan

Ṣaḥḥa 'inda an-nās annī 'āshiq
Ghayr anna lam ya'rifū 'ishqī bihi man

Aqta'ū shumuli wa in shi'tum ṣallū
Kullu shay'in minkum 'indī ḥusn

O young one, O tender-bodied, O recently weaned,
Hashimi-faced, Turkish at the nape, Dailami-haired, Roman-bearded at the chin.
His soul is my soul, and my soul is his;
Whoever has seen two souls in one body would know.
Among people, it is known that I am a lover – true,
But they do not know to whom my love belongs.
Cut my bonds, or unite them if you wish;
Everything from you is beautiful and pleasing to me.

In these couplets, Rumi reflects on the manifestation of the Creator in the beauty of human beings and in nature. Drawing inspiration from the ghazal of the Arab poet, he composed a spiritual ghazal addressed to the exalted Beloved. It is highly likely that the poet here depicts the divine manifestation he perceived in Shams al-Din Tabrizi.

There are two ghazals in Abu Nuwas's divan with the same expression, the same words, the same meter and rhyme. One of these:

يا صغير السن يا رخص المحتضن وقريب العهد من شرب اللب

Yā ṣaghīr as-sinn, yā rukhṣ al-muḥtaḍin
Wa qarīb al-'ahd min sharb al-laban

O young one, O protected and cared for,
O just-weaned from milk.

the poem that begins with this line. The other one is about the description of the beloved, which is almost identical to Rumi's ghazal: (Khalid 'Abduh)

سابري الوجه قوهي البدن حاذق طب تهيج الفتن
برمكي الصدغ خرسي القفا قد حكت مكة عنه و عدن

Sābiriyy al-wajh, quhīyy al-badan
Ḥādhiq al-ṭibb, tahij al-fitan

Barmakī al-ṣadgh, khursī al-qafā
Qad ḥakkat Makka ‘anhu wa ‘Adan

Sabiry-faced, Quhi-bodied
A skilled physician, cause of dispute.

Barmaki-headed, Khorsa-brained,
Whose story was told in Mecca and Aden.

In the poem that incorporates passages from Abu Nuwas’s ghazal, Rumi’s aim is not, as Abu Nuwas’s poetry often was, to praise the beauty of beloveds embodying the traits of renowned regions of his time. Rather, his purpose is to reveal the manifestation of the greatest true Beloved against the backdrop of the beauty found in humans and nature.

The symbol that Rumi uses most often is "Shams". In one sense, this is understood as Shams Tabrizi, but in another sense it is related to Sufi literature. Thus, the Qur’anic expression “wa al-ḍuḥā” (“by the morning brightness”) became one of the most frequently used terms among the early Sufi poets, and it came to signify the radiant face of the Prophet of Islam, carrying a symbolic meaning rooted in the Qur’an (Arshadi, 2007, p. 32). Undoubtedly, all of Rumi’s life was devoted to praising the greatness and majesty of Allahu-Taala, and as a Sufi poet, his verses reflect a constant supplication to the eternal Creator of the worlds. Sufi philosophy constitutes the central theme of Rumi’s works. Among poems on this theme, there is also a quotation from the famous poem of Hallaj Mansur. From Hallaj Mansur’s poem: (Khalid ‘Abduh).

اقْتُلُوني يا ثقاتي إنّ في قتلي حياتي
ومماتي في حياتي وحياتي في مماتي
أنّ عندي محْو ذاتي من أجّل المكرمات
وبقائي في صفاتي من قبيح السّيّئات

Uqtulūnī yā thiqātī, inna fī qatli ḥayātī
Wa mamātī fī ḥayātī, wa ḥayātī fī mamātī
Anna ‘indī maḥw dhātī, min ajl-i al-mukarramāt
Wa baqā’ī fī ṣifātī, min qabīḥi al-sayyi’āt

Kill me, O my trusted ones, for in my being killed lies my life.
My death is within my life, and my life is within my death.
Indeed, I have the annihilation of myself for the sake of noble deeds.
And my permanence is in my virtues, far from ugly faults.

Unlike Hallaj Mansur, whose poetry possesses a somewhat revolutionary spirit, Rumi’s poetry is characterized by a more artistic and aesthetic tone. The poet expresses his longing for divine union through a more powerful and evocative style:

اقتلونی یا ثقاتی ان فی قتلی حیاتی
و مماتی فی حیاتی و حیاتی فی ممات
اقتلونی ذاب جسمی قدح القهوه قسمی
هله بشن قفس ای جان و طلبار نجاتی

(Moulavi, sh2813)

Uqtulūnī yā thiqātī, inna fī qatlī ḥayātī
Wa mamātī fī ḥayātī, wa ḥayātī fī mamātī
Uqtulūnī dhāba jismī, qadaḥ al-qahwa qismī
Halla bishkan qafas ay jān chu talabkār-e najātī

Kill me, O my trusted friends - for in my being slain is my life.
My death is within my life, and my life is within my death.

Kill me - my body has melted away; my portion is but a cup of coffee.
Come, break the cage, O soul, since you seek liberation.

Unlike traditional poetry, in which the rhymes of the entire poem are uniform, these lines from the Mathnawī represent a form of poetry in which each couplet maintains its own rhyme.

Arabic verses also appear in Rumi's prose works. This is largely due to the fact that many of the stories in the Mathnawī are rooted in Arabic sources. These verses often take the form of single-couplet or double-couplet poems. For example, in Fīhi Mā Fīhi, one encounters such a verse within the narrative of Layla and Majnun:

خَيَالُ فِي عَيْنِيْ وَاِسْمُ فِي فَمِيْ
وَذِر فِي قَلْبِيْ اِلَى اَيْنَ اَتبُ

(Rumi, 2004, p. 59)

Khayāluka fī 'aynī wa ismuka fī famī
Wa zikruka fī qalbī ilā ayna aktub

Your image is in my eyes, your name upon my lips,
Your remembrance in my heart – where else could I write?

Arabic verses are frequently encountered in Rumi's prose and poetry. Humayi notes that "subsequent generations of Arabs, in addition to their own language, also studied Arabic and considered it superior to other languages" (Taqih, Taqih, p. 507). Because Arabic is not only the language of the Arabs but also the eternal language of Islam and the divine scripture of Muslims, scholars and literary figures sought to compose their works in Arabic, thereby granting them a form of immortality. However, Rumi's works have achieved immortality not merely due to their language, but through the depth of their meaning and ideas. His Mathnawī has even been honored with the title "the Quran in Persian," reflecting its spiritual and literary significance.

Thematic and structural features of Rumi's arabic poetry

In the *Divān-i Kabīr*, also known as the *Shams Collection* (کلیات شمس), there are a large number of purely Arabic ghazals– nearly a thousand couplets. Some of these poems are interspersed with Persian couplets or combined with Persian or Turkish expressions and

lines. These Arabic poems constitute only about two percent of Rumi's entire oeuvre. Nevertheless, his thousand-couplet Sufi ghazals are noteworthy pieces, demonstrating that Rumi was not only familiar with the Arabic cultural and literary heritage of both the classical and contemporary periods, but also possessed the ability to express himself in Arabic on the poetic stage.

This capability was likely facilitated by his family's journey to Konya, during which they settled for a time in the region of Damascus, followed by a period of residence in Aleppo and Damascus. It is possible that he composed Sufi and spiritual poetry in Arabic in order to reach an Arab audience. Arabic, as the language of revelation, faith, and the Qur'an, carries an intrinsic sanctity that attracts the human mind even before conscious comprehension. It is worth noting that perhaps for this reason, Rumi sometimes began certain Persian ghazals with an Arabic couplet, before continuing in Persian until the conclusion. For example:

يا مَلِ الْمَغْرِبِ وَالْمَشْرِقِ مِثْلُ فِي الْعالَمِ لَمْ يُخْلَقِي
باده ده ای ساقی هر متقی بادهٔ شاهنشهی راوقی

(Moulavi, p.3168)

Yā malika al-maghribi wal-mashriqi
Mithluka fī al-'ālami lam yukhlaqī

Bādeh de ey sāqī har muttaqī
Bāde-ye shāhanshahī rāwaqī

O King of the West and the East,
None like you has ever been created in this world.

Pour the wine, O cupbearer, for every devout soul–
The clear, royal wine of the sovereign.

As in his Persian poetry, the central theme of Rumi's Arabic works is divine love. Love, as the core of both spiritual insight (irfān) and literature, is regarded as the universal language spoken by Islamic mystics and all schools of Sufism. In this sense, it is not surprising that love constitutes the primary message of Rumi's Divan. He regarded divine love as the foundation of life, believing that a person devoid of love possesses nothing in this world.

يا من لواء عشقك لا زال عاليا
قد خاب من يكون من العشق خاليا
الحب الغرام اصول حياتكم
قد خاب من يظل من الحب ساليا

(Moulavi, p. 282)

Yā man liwā'u 'ishqika lā zāla 'āliyan
Qad khāba man yakūnu min al-'ishqi khāliyan
Al-ḥubbu wal-ghurām uṣūlu ḥayātikum
Qad khāba man yaẓallu min al-ḥubbi sāliyan

O you whose banner of love still flies high,
Lost indeed is the one who lives devoid of love.

Love and passion are the very roots of life;
Lost indeed is the one who remains untouched by love.

The theme of love has manifested in Persian poetry since ancient times. Human love was celebrated in the masnavis of Rudaki, Ansari, and Nizami. Divine love, which first appeared in the masnavis of Sana'i and Attar, reached its zenith in the poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi. Rumi perceived the world in a new light; wherever he turned, he discerned traces of God's grandeur and mercy, grasped the essence of creation, and expressed it in poetic form. In his works, he reminded his disciples that true life is attainable only through surrender to love.

قد أشرقت الدنيا من نور حميّانا البدر غدا الساقي والكأس ثريّانا
الصبوة إيماني والخلوة بستاني والمشجر ندماني والورد محيّانا
من كان له عشق فالمجلس مثواه من كان له عقل إيّاه وإيّانا
من ضاق به دار أو أعطشه نار نهديه إلى عين يسترجع ريّانا
من ليس له عينٌ يستبصر عن غيب فليأت على شوق في خدمة مولانا
يا دهر سوى صدر شمسِ الحقِ تبريزي هل أبصر في الدنيا إنسانُك إنسانا
طوبى لك يا مهدي قد ذبت من الجهد أعرضت عن الصورة كي تدرك معنانا
من كان له همّ يفنيه ويرديه فليشرب وليسكر من قهوة مولانا

(Moulavi, p. 267)

Qad ashraqat ad-dunyā min nūri-ḥimayyānā
Al-badru ghadā as-sāqī wal-ka'su thurayyānā

Aṣ-ṣabwatu īmānī wal-khalwatu bustānī
Wal-masjaru nadmānī wal-wirdu muḥayyānā

Man kāna lahu 'ishqun fa-l-majlis mathwāh
Man kāna lahu 'aqlun iyyāhu wa iyyānā

Man ḍāqa bihi dār aw a'ṭashahu nār
Nahdīhi ilā 'aynin yastarji' rayyānā

Man laysa lahu 'aynun yastabṣiru 'an ghayb
Fal-ya'ti 'alā shawqin fī khidmat mawlānā

Yā dahr siwā ṣadr Shams al-Ḥaqq Tabrīzī
Hal abṣara fī ad-dunyā insānuka insānā

Ṭūbā laka yā Mahdī qad dhubta min al-jahdi
A'raḍta 'an aṣ-ṣūrah key tadrika ma'nānā

Man kāna lahu hammun yufnīhi wa yurdīh
Fal-yashrab wal-yaskar min qahwati mawlāna

The world has been born from the light of our Beloved.
The moon has become the cupbearer, and the cup overflows with the Star (Surayya).
The zeal of youth – my passion and daring – is my faith,
Seclusion and solitude have been my garden.
The trees are my companions and confidants, and the flowers enliven and illuminate my life.
For those who possess love, this assembly is their dwelling.
For those who possess reason, it belongs to them and to us.

Whoever feels constrained in their home, or scorched by fire,
We offer them a spring to quench their thirst.
Whoever has no eye to perceive the unseen,
Let them come with longing to serve our Mawlana.
O Time, apart from the chest of the Sun of Truth, Tabrizi,
Has anyone in this world ever seen a human like him?
Blessed are you, O Mahdi, who have melted through effort,
Turning away from the image to grasp our meaning.
If someone carries grief that consumes or destroys them,
Let them drink and become intoxicated with the coffee of our Mawlana.

In the Masnavi, Rumi devoted the content of certain Arabic poems to the expression of specific mystical concepts, highlighting those points that he considered worthy of being articulated in Arabic within a theological context. This sometimes indicates, for example, that mystical meanings in the interpretation and commentary of Qur'anic verses are better and more suitable when expressed in Arabic, whereas in cases where the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadiths are not strictly required, the expression of meaning continues in Persian.

When reading Rumi's Arabic poems, one observes that although he was well-versed in Arabic, he seems to have cast thoughts originally conceived in Persian into the mold of Arabic. It is as if he wrote Persian poetry using Arabic words. This may have been motivated by a desire to convey what passed through his heart to an Arab reader who did not know Persian.

Rumi's ghazals composed in Arabic, when compared with the standards, characteristics, and known meters of Arabic poetry, lack a distinct Arab identity, since their poetics follow Persian metrical rules (Arshadi, 2007, p. 133). It is known that when Persians began producing Persian poetry during the Islamic period, they restructured and adapted the meters (bahr) codified by Khalil ibn Ahmad to suit Persian expressions and stylistic forms.

His Arabic poems differ from his Persian ones in both artistic and stylistic aspects. While some of them are beautiful, others display irregularities in meter and linguistic style. He composed his Arabic poems in the ramal meter, which did not restrict him from using its metrical feet (fāʿilātun, faʿilātun) in an irregular manner– something that is not characteristic of Persian prosody. Despite all this, these works remain a valuable part of the poet's mystical heritage. Alongside the stylistic features of Arabic poetry, its musical richness and thematic diversity elevate the Masnavi to a realm of aesthetic excellence.

One of Jalal al-Din Rumi's contributions is his integration of Arabic and Persian in his literary works. In this regard, his exquisite verses on divine love can be cited, in which, as the soul expresses its longing, the barriers between the two languages disappear:

انجیر فروش را ه بهتر انجیر فروشي اي برادر
يا ساقي! عشقنا تذكر فالعيش بلا نداك ابتر
مارا سر صنعت و دكان نيست اي ساقي جان! كجا است صاغر
لا تتركنا سدى ضحايا الخير ينال لا يؤخر

(Moulavi, p. 1175)

Anjir forush rā che behtar
Anjir forushi ey barādar

Yā sāqi! ‘eshqanā tazakkar
Fal-‘aysh bilā nidāka abtar

Mārā sar-e san‘at o dokkān nist
Ey sāqi jān! kojāst sāghar

Lā tatruknā sadā dahāyā
Al-khayr yanāl lā yu’akhkhar

How beautiful it is to sell grapes – O seller of grapes, O brother!
O cupbearer, remember our love; life is incomplete without your generosity.

We have no mind for trade or shopkeeping; O dear cupbearer, where is the cup?
Do not leave us abandoned and lost;Goodness comes – it is not delayed.

This poetic experiment merges two artistic temperaments. It deliberately encourages linguistic intervention and seeks to realize the resulting effect both semantically and spiritually. Jalal al-Din Rumi’s most distinctive and aesthetically remarkable works are those poems in which Arabic and Persian couplets are combined. In all of these verses, the meaning is harmonious and coherent. Even if the Persian lines were removed, the poem would retain the unity and integrity noted above. Conversely, if the Arabic line endings were removed, the poem would lose its sequential flow and thematic coherence. This indicates that the foundation of the poem is its Arabic component, which constitutes half of its structure; the Persian portion is subordinate to it, serving to adorn and complement it. This linguistic and aesthetic choice in Rumi’s work can be understood only within the framework of his mystical thought and his perspective on Arabic culture. It represents a bridge he constructed to achieve his aim– a bridge leading to divine love.

The use of Arabic and Persian together in poetry is known in Persian literature as mulamma (المعات). A poem qualifies as mulamma when the poet composes the second hemistich – or the first hemistich in Persian, or the meter and rhyme of the couplet – in Arabic. The first poet in Persian literary history known to have composed mulamma was Abu Hasan Shahid Balkhi (d. 325 AH) (Ahmad Musa, p. 3). Later, in the 4th century AH, Rabia bint Ka’ab Qazdari emerged as a prominent figure, skilled in composing both Persian and Arabic poetry. This tradition was subsequently continued by Manuchehr Dameghani (d. 432 AH), the Sufi and mystic Abu Said Abul-Khayr (d. 440 AH), the eminent poet and mystic Sana’i Ghaznavi (d. 535 AH), Amir Ma’izi (d. 542 AH), and Sayyid Hasan Ghaznavi (d. 556 AH).

In the 6th century AH, many poets continued this tradition. Among them were Azerbaijani poets Mujir al-Din Baylaqani (d. 586 AH) and Khaghani Shirvani (d. 595 AH). In the 7th and 8th centuries AH, poets increasingly inclined toward serving the Qur’an and Arabic culture. As a result, the mulamma (المعم) form of poetry gained greater popularity than in previous periods. Poets writing in this genre were able to express themselves more vividly. Notable figures include Farid al-Din Ahval, Qazi Nizam al-Din Isfahani, Amir Khusraw Dehlavi, Sayf Fargani, Khaje Kirmani, Sa’di Shirazi, Hafiz Shirazi, and others. Jalal al-Din Rumi holds a distinctive place among these poets and is among the last to follow this path.

As it appears, during the time of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, the interaction between Arabic and Persian had already become quite strong, with each enriching the other through its spiritual contribution. As a result, it became difficult to draw a clear comparison

between the two languages. When we look at Rumi's approximately one thousand Arabic verses, we see that nearly five hundred of them belong to the *mulamma* style of poetry. Arabic words and stylistic expressions even permeate his other works. He employed the *mulamma* style in three structural forms. First, Persian is used initially, followed by Arabic, or vice versa. Second, Persian verses accompany Arabic verses throughout to the end. In the third form, Arabic narratives are used alongside Persian without any specific structural arrangement.

However, his mystical logic compels him to transcend this distinction. The poet writes in one of his couplets: (Yalouh, 2014, p. 217)

"Although Arabic is superior, I write in Persian.

Love has a hundred other languages."

Conclusion

Jalal al-Din Rumi's works in Arabic, like his Persian works, constitute a valuable part of the poet's mystical legacy. It can even be argued that Rumi's spiritual and philosophical ideas are expressed more powerfully through the eloquence of the Arabic language.

In Rumi's Arabic-language compositions, the influence of the Arab milieu in which he resided for a certain period is evident. Like other Persian poets, Rumi studied Mutanabbi. In his religious-themed ghazals, the influence of Abu Nuwas can also be observed.

Stylistically, Rumi differs from other poets in that he largely avoids the technique of ornamenting words, favoring a freer, more liberated use of language. In the majority of his Arabic poems, Arabic is employed alongside Persian. In some poems, he uses Persian in the final line. In certain passages, Arabic, Persian, and Kurdish are combined, adding a distinctive color to those poetic sections. Rumi is considered one of the Persian poets who wrote the most mulamma poetry. Other Persian poets who employed the mulamma style, such as Sa'di Shirazi, Hafiz Shirazi, and Abdurrahman Jami, along with Jalal al-Din Rumi, contributed to the enrichment of the Persian language through the incorporation of Arabic vocabulary. In his works, Arabic imagery was embodied within a Persian structural framework. This characteristic granted epistemic authority to their literary experiments, thereby adding significantly to the Arabic cultural heritage within the Persian-speaking milieu.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data availability

No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Author contribution

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work, conducting the research, analysis, and writing independently, and approved it for publication.

AI usage statement

The author declares that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the conception, writing, analysis, interpretation, or preparation of this manuscript.

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