

AFRICA, POETRY OF

I. English

II. French

III. Portuguese

IV. Indigenous. See EGYPT, POETRY OF; ETHIOPIA, POETRY OF; HAUSA POETRY; SOMALI POETRY; SWAHILI POETRY; XHOSA POETRY; ZULU POETRY.

I. English. With the end of the colonial period and the advance of literacy and higher education in Africa came a rapid efflorescence of Af. poetry written in Eng. This poetry displays the variety to be expected in so diverse a continent. Like other examples of postcolonial poetics, Af. poetry in Eng. develops out of the fusion of indigenous trads. with the literary inheritances transmitted through the colonial lang. It is responsive to local idioms, values, and hist. and at the same time remakes for Af. experience the forms and styles imported through Eng. from the Brit. Isles, America, and elsewhere. The adoption of the Eng. lang. for Af. purposes, while advantageous to writers who wish to be heard by an international audience, is fraught with political significance. Some Af. critics contend that poetry written in a historically imperialist lang. cannot be fully disassociated from colonialism's oppressive legacy.

Af. poetry written in Eng. is often seen as divided between poetry that is locally rooted and influenced by Af. oral trads. and cosmopolitan poetry, which is indebted primarily to Western literary trads. The work of Af. poets, however, complicates this distinction, since even the most cosmopolitan poets, such as the Nigerian poet Wole Soyinka, also draw on local oral trads., and even the most local, such as the Ugandan poet Okot p'Bitek (1931–82), also make use of Western literary models. In the wake of colonialism and under the influence of globalization, Af. poetry in Eng. is inextricable from Brit., Ir., Am., and other influences, even when in revolt against the West's values and cultural forms. Conversely, in the West, the descendants of enslaved Africans and economic migrants have fundamentally shaped poetry.

The first poem in the sequence "Heavensgate" (1962, rev. 1964) by Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo (1932–67) serves as an example of the enmeshment of Af. and Western poetics

in sub-Saharan Africa. The poet invokes the Igbo river goddess, near the village where he grew up: "Before you, mother Idoto / naked I stand." Reaffirming his affinity with native culture, Okigbo grounds his poem in local religion and flora (naked, he leans on the oilbean tree, sacred to Idoto, a totem for her worship). At the same time, his diction (referring to himself as "a prodigal" further in the poem) and rhet. ("Before you, mother Idoto") also recall the Christianity that missionaries imported into Igboland. The lyric is shaped by the Roman Catholicism in which Okigbo was brought up, incl. prayers to the Virgin Mary and the story of the prodigal son. The poem's final lines, which cry out to a native divinity, paradoxically echo Psalm 130 ("Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord") and Psalm 5 ("Give ear to my words, O Lord. . . . Hearken unto the voice of my cry").

Although Af. poets are indebted to religious, lyric, and other cultural forms from the West, they seldom lose their awareness of Africa's rich oral trads. A poem such as Okot p'Bitek's *Lawino* (1966) relies on Acholi songs, proverbs, repetitions, idioms, and oral address, even as it also draws on the model of the Western long poem (Okot has cited H. W. Longfellow's "Hiawatha" as a key influence). An aggrieved village woman inveighs against her husband for forsaking his local culture and being too enamored of Western ways: "Listen, Ocol, you are the son of a Chief, / Leave foolish behavior to little children." In her book-length complaint, *Lawino* repeatedly brandishes an Acholi proverb that warns against uprooting the pumpkin; in so doing, she emphasizes the importance of preserving the household, as well as the oral trads. that sustain it.

Between the poles marked out by Okigbo's highly literary, allusive, syntactically complex early poetry and Okot's orally based poetics of song, praise, and invective, Af. poetry has discovered a multitude of ways to mediate the oral and scribal, the local and global, the socially urgent protest and the private meditation. Indeed, as an Oxford-trained anthropologist influenced by Longfellow and the Bible, Okot cannot be reduced to simple nativism. And as a poet who absorbs drum rhythms and praise song into his later work, Okigbo—who died

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fighting for an independent Biafra—should not be seen as a Westernized sellout. Under the influence of intensified global communication, trade, education, and travel, younger poets work in ever-more deeply hybrid and transnational forms. The South Af. Lesego Rampolokeng (b. 1965), e.g., draws on a global array of influences, incl. rap musicians, the Af. Am. Last Poets, Jamaican dub poet Mutabaruka, and Jamaican-born Brit. reggae poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, to mount a vehement social critique of his country both before and after apartheid.

From the period of Af. decolonization, first formally achieved in anglophone Africa with Ghana's independence in 1957, to today's struggle against both external economic imperialism and the internalized colonialism of dictators and tyrants, oral and other traditional poetry has strongly influenced Af. Eng. poems. The imprint of Af. oral culture is visible in such fundamental elements as the poet's stance as defender of communal values; allusions to the hist., customs, and artifacts of the culture; and the architectonic features adapted from praise song, proverbial tale, epic, invective, and indigenous prayer. Experiments in the transmutation of traditional Af. poetic forms into Eng. vary with the culture represented.

Arising in the aftermath of modernism, much Af. Eng. poetry eschews meter and rhyme in favor of free verse, often ornamented by alliteration and assonance, although rap's influence has spawned intensely rhymed and rhythmic verse. Poems that are meant to speak to, or for, Af. communities avoid extended conceits unless they are buttressed by hard or sardonic reason or concrete imagery.

A. West Africa. West Africa, particularly Nigeria and Ghana, has the oldest and most influential trad. of sophisticated poetry in Eng. This lyric poetry combines audacious leaps of thought and individualized expression with social responsibility; it privileges the metaphysical, religious, and social concepts of its own society, although it also draws on concepts indigenous to Eur. cultural hist. When social protest is overt, it is usually presented with intellectual and artistic complexity rather than simplistic fervor. Exemplary Nigerian poets and their principal works include the country's oldest active poet Gabriel Okara (b. 1921; *The Fisherman's Invocation* [1978], written against the background of civil war); Christopher Okigbo (*Labyrinths* [1971], incl. the prophetic sequence "Path of Thunder"); J. P. Clark

(b. 1935; *Reed in the Tide* [1965], incl. autobiographical poems; *Casualties* [1970], concerning the war between Nigeria and Biafra; *A Decade of Tongues* [1981]; *State of the Union* [1981], about Nigeria's socioeconomic and political problems in an international context); the philosopher and polemicist Chinweizu (b. ca. 1935; *Invocations and Admonitions* [1986]); the Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka (b. 1934; *Idanre* [1967], based on Yoruba mythology; *Shuttle in the Crypt* [1971]; *Mandela's Earth and Other Poems* [1988]; and a number of plays that contain poetry); Odia Ofeimun (b. 1947; *The Poet Lied* [1989], *Dreams at Work* [2000]); Niyi Osundare (b. 1947; *Village Voices* [1984], *The Eye of the Earth* [1986], *Waiting Laughters* [1990], *The Word Is an Egg* [2004]); and Tanure Ojaide (b. 1948; *Labyrinths of the Delta* [1986], *The Endless Song* [1988], *In the House of Words* [2006]).

Among Ghanaians, experiments in the trans. and adaptation of indigenous poetic forms have been common, as in the works of Kofi Awoonor (1935–2013; *Rediscovery* [1964], in which Ewe funeral dirges are brought into Eng.; *Night of My Blood* [1971], both autobiographical and political; *Ride Me, Memory* [1973], in which a Ghanaian abroad reflects on his country; *The House by the Sea* [1978]; *Guardians of the Sacred Word* [1978], a collection of Ewe poetry); Kofi Anyidoho (b. 1947; *Elegy for the Revolution* [1978], *A Harvest of Our Dreams* [1985], *Ancestral Logic and Caribbean Blues* [1992]); and Atukwei (John) Okai (b. 1941; *The Oath of the Fantomfrom* [1971], whose title poem refers to a royal drum that beats out the hist. of a society; *Lorgorligi Logarithms* [1974]; *Freedom Symphony* [2008], love poems). Closer to Western trads. of sensibility and structure are others such as Kwesi Brew (1924–2007; *The Shadows of Laughter* [1968], *African Panorama* [1981], *Return of No Return* [1995], *The Clan of the Leopard* [1996]), A. W. Kayper-Mensah (1923–80; *The Dark Wanderer* [1970]; *The Drummer in Our Time* [1975], concerning Africa's view of Europe; *Sankofa: Adinkra Poems* [1976]; *Proverb Poems* [1976]), and Frank Kobina Parkes (1932–2004; *Songs from the Wilderness* [1965]).

A notable poet of Gambia was Lenrie Peters (1932–2009; *Satellites* [1967], poems about human rights in the broadest sense; *Katchikali* [1971], which takes its name from a sacred place in Bakau, where the coast of Gambia juts into the North Atlantic; *Selected Poetry* [1981]).

Prominent poets of Sierra Leone include Syl Cheney-Coker (b. 1945; *Concerto for an Exile*

[1973]; *The Graveyard Also Has Teeth* [1980]; *The Blood in the Desert's Eyes* [1990]) and Lemuel Johnson (1940–2002; *Highlife for Caliban* [1973]; *Hand on the Navel* [1978]).

B. East Africa. East Af. poetry is dominated by two styles. One originated in Okot p'Bitek's trans. and adaptation of his own Acholi poetry. Okot (*Song of Lawino*, the lament of a rural wife over encroaching Westernization; *Song of Ocol* [1970], her husband's reply; "Song of Prisoner" [1971], a commentary on Kenyan politics; "Song of Malaya" [1971], a critique of sexual morality) was probably the most widely read poet of Africa in the later 20th c. Through long rhetorical monologues usually narrated by a victim of modernization, these poems express social commentary with lucid, graphic imagery, humorous irony, and paradoxical common sense. Another Ugandan poet who makes extensive use of Af. proverbs and folk culture is Okello Oculi (b. 1942; *Orphan* [1968], an allegorical account of Af. culture's removal from traditional values; *Malak* [1976], a narrative poem about the dictator Idi Amin's Uganda; *Kookolem* [1978], about the intersection of social and domestic oppression; *Song for the Sun in Us* [2000]).

An alternative style, more obviously indebted to West Af. poetry, uses asyndeton, subtle imagery, and erudite allusions to convey a mordant and individualized vision of mod. life. It includes a wider range of subjects, tones, and frames of reference. Preeminent poets include the Kenyan Jared Angira (b. 1947; *Juices* [1970]; *Silent Voices* [1972]; *Soft Corals* [1973]; *Cascades* [1979]; *The Years Go By* [1980]), the Ugandan Richard Ntiru (b. 1946; *Tensions* [1971]), and the South Sudanese Taban lo Liyong (b. 1939; *Meditations in Limbo* [1970]; *Frantz Fanon's Uneven Ribs* [1971]; *Another Nigger Dead* [1972]; *Ballads of Underdevelopment* [1976]; *Another Last Word* [1990]).

C. Southern Africa. Before the abolition of apartheid, Eng.-lang. South Af. poetry was most concerned with subjugation, courage, poverty, prisons, revolt, and the private griefs of public injustice. South Af. poets writing in Eng. before the 1970s were often exiles, whose works, therefore, also reflected Brit. or Am. experience—e.g., Arthur Nortje (1942–70; *Dead Roots* [1973]), Cosmo Pieterse (b. 1930; *Echo and Choruses: "Ballad of the Cells"* [1974]), and esp. Dennis Brutus (1924–2009; *Sirens, Knuckles and Boots* [1963]; *Letters to Martha*

and Other Poems from a South African Prison [1968]; *Poems from Algiers* [1970]; *A Simple Lust* [1973], the collection that marked Brutus's turn from artifice toward a plain style; *China Poems* [1975]; *Stubborn Hope* [1978]; *Salutes and Censures* [1982]; *Leafdrift* [2005]). In Brutus's poetry, the speaker is often an observer combining passionate concern with reflective distance, and the imagery portrays monstrous abuse in natural and social settings of oblivious serenity. Even after the ending of apartheid, Brutus continued to write poetry that championed a more just social order than South Africa achieved as a new democracy.

The experimental adaptation of regional Af. forms to original poetry in the Eng. lang. is well represented by the work of Mazisi Kunene (1930–2006; *Zulu Poems* [1970]; *Emperor Shaka the Great: A Zulu Epic* [1979], an adaptation of a traditional epic; *Anthem of the Decades* [1981]; and *The Ancestors and the Sacred Mountain* [1982]).

Keroapetse Kgositsile (b. 1938; *Spirits Unchained* [1969]; *For Melba* [1970]; *My Name Is Afrika* [1971]; *The Present Is a Dangerous Place to Live* [1975]; *To the Bitter End* [1995]; *This Way I Salute You* [2004]) and the broadly popular Oswald Mtshali (b. 1940; *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* [1971]; *Fireflames* [1980]) are forerunners of the dramatic change in and copious output of Af. poetry after 1970. The influence of Af. Am. musical and poetic forms, esp. jazz, rap, blues, and the renaissance of the 1960s, looking back to the Harlem Ren., is often evident. Immediacy may be reinforced by incl. phrases from South Af. langs. or Afrikaans or by directly addressing the reader as a compatriot. Major writers include poets who wrote in solidarity with the Black Consciousness movement's emphasis on the affirmation of black cultural values in the face of state-based terror and oppression, such as Mongane Serote (b. 1944; *Yakhal'Inkomo* [1972]; *Tsetlo* [1974]; *No Baby Must Weep* [1975]; *Behold Mama, Flowers* [1978]; *The Night Keeps Winking* [1982]; *Freedom Lament and Song* [1997]; *History Is the Home Address* [2004]); Siphiso Sepamla (1932–2007; *Hurry Up to It!* [1975]; *The Soweto I Love* [1977]; *From Goré to Soweto* [1988]); Mafika Pascal Gwala (b. 1946; *Jol'iinkomo* [1977]; *No More Lullabies* [1982]); James Matthews (b. 1929; *Cry Rage* [1972]; *No Time for Dreams* [1977]; *Flames and Flowers* [2000]; *Age Is a Beautiful Phase* [2008]); Daniel P. Kunene (b. 1923; *Pirates Have Become Our*

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Kings [1978]; *A Seed Must Seem to Die* [1981]); and the jazz-influenced Wopko Pieter Jensa (b. 1939; *Sing for Our Execution* [1973]; *Where White Is the Colour Where Black Is the Number* [1974]; *I Must Show You My Clippings* [1977]).

Postapartheid poets in South Africa include Ingrid de Kok (b. 1951; *Familiar Ground* [1988], *Transfer* [1997], *Terrestrial Things* [2002]), Kelwyn Sole (b. 1951; *The Blood of Our Silence* [1988], *Projections in the Past Tense* [1992], *Love That Is Night* [1998], *Mirror and Water Gazing* [2001]), Gail Dendy (b. 1957; *Assault and the Moth* [1993]), Gabeba Baderoon (b. 1969; *The Dream in the Next Body* [2005], *The Museum of Ordinary Life* [2005], *A Hundred Silences* [2006]), and the performance poet Rampolokeng (*Horns for Hondo* [1990], *Rap Master Supreme—Word Bomber in the Extreme* [1997], *The Bavino Sermons* [1999]). See SOUTH AFRICA, POETRY OF.

Politics and economics have denied a wide international audience to the poetry of South Africa's anglophone neighbors. Malawian figures include David Rubadiri (b. 1930; *An African Thunderstorm* [2004]), Frank M. Chipasula (b. 1949; *Visions and Reflections* [1972]; *O Earth Wait for Me* [1984]; *Nightwatcher, Nighsong* [1986]; *Whispers in the Wings* [2001]), Jack Mapanje (b. 1944; *Of Chameleons and Gods* [1981], *Beasts of Nalunga* [2007]), and Steve Chimombo (b. 1945; *A Referendum of the Forest Creatures* [1993], *Napolo and Other Poems* [2009]).

Notable Zambian poets are Richard A. Chima (b. 1945; *The Loneliness of a Drunkard* [1973]) and Patu Simoko (b. 1951; *Africa Is Made of Clay* [1978]).

Zimbabwe has produced copious poetry reflecting both the price of liberating warfare and the consequences of victory. Preeminent poets include Samuel Chimisoro (b. 1949; *Smoke and Flames* [1978]), Musaemura Zimunya (b. 1949; *Thought Tracks* [1982], *Kingfisher, Jikinya and Other Poems* [1982], *Country Dawns and City Lights* [1985]), Mudereri Kadhani (b. 1952; *Quarantine Rhythms* [1976]), Chenjerai Hove (b. 1956; *Up in Arms* [1982], *Red Hills of Home* [1984], *Blind Moon* [2004]), and Freedom Nyamubaya (b. 1960; *On the Road Again* [1986]).

With important national and individual differences, the poetry of southern Africa still has an identifiable character. It is often premised on an intense affinity for the land and, through that, a close union between the spiritual and physical worlds. Nature is presented

as a manifestation of religious forces but is also treated with a more direct, nonsymbolic sensibility than in other Af. poetry. Poet and personae are more closely identified with their community through a diction that relies on direct address to the reader as putative interlocutor, conversational apostrophe, quiet humor, anaphora, and avoidance of strident effects. Esoteric lyricism and declamation are both rare. The stresses that urban cultures impose on rural life and on personal values and identity are common themes, as well as the systemic effects of colonial and postcolonial hegemony. In form and themes, the poetry of this region adapts Eng. to provide sophisticated but unaffected articulation of traditional Af. worldviews in a context of rapid social change.

Af. poetry in Eng. displays an immense cultural and personal variety. Sometimes written in an engaged and earnest tone, frequently leavened by humor, it maintains close identification with communal values and experience while conveying personal perceptions and global influences. Inventively hybridizing Eng. poetic forms with indigenous cultural resources, Af. poetry in Eng. is true to a mod. Af. experience that straddles Western and Af. metaphysical, ethical, and aesthetic visions.

II. French. The rise of Af. poetry in Fr. cannot be understood without reference to the slave trade and the subsequent colonization of Africa, the cultural politics France and Belgium imposed during their years of occupation, and multiple forms of resistance to these conditions.

It is no accident that New World writers are usually included in studies and anthols. of Af. poetry in Fr. Both Africans and Af. Americans had to confront the same racist oppression. They accordingly made common cause and sought out each other for inspiration and readership, despite real differences. Hence, the importance of Harlem Ren. figures such as Langston Hughes and Claude McKay to the founders of Negritude, the first coherent Af. literary and intellectual movement, which can be dated to the 1930s. Of the founders of the first important literary review, *L'Étudiant Noir* (The Black Student), Aimé Césaire (1913–2008) of Martinique, Léon G. Damas (1912–78) of French Guiana, and Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001) of Senegal, only the last was from Africa itself, and all three were students in Paris. This tendency toward cross-fertilization with other black lits. made Af. poetry in

Fr. intercontinental in scope. Though Césaire and Senghor and later poets repeatedly demonstrated their mastery of Fr. trad., they were drawn both to other lits. from what was then called the third world and to indigenous Af. lits. The desire to embrace and renew traditional Af. poetic practice, expressed rhetorically by the proponents of Negritude, has become increasingly important among subsequent generations, who are, however, aware of the difficulties such hybrid literary forms present.

There is no exhaustive definition for the term *Negritude*. Coined by Césaire in his 1939 *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*), it was, in his words, "the simple recognition of the fact that one is black, the acceptance of this fact and of our destiny as blacks, of our history and our culture." Yet there is nothing simple about this statement; its implications are manifold, and the poetry that sought to express it took many different forms, from Damas's explosive *Pigments* (1937) to Césaire's virulent defense of black culture in his *Cahier* to Senghor's lofty exaltation of Af. values beginning with his 1945 *Chants d'ombre* (*Shadow Songs*). The landmark anthol. of Negritude poetry came three years later, Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (*Anthology of New Black and Malagasy Poetry in the French Language*, 1948), with its influential preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, "Orphée noir" ("Black Orpheus").

In Sartre's view, Negritude was but an antithesis, a second phase of reaction to white racism that, while defending the specificity of black culture, did so in view of a final synthesis, the transition to a universal (in Sartre's version, proletarian) culture with no oppressors and, ultimately, no specificity. Sartre's perspective was at odds with that of Senghor himself, who had in mind a less politicized universality, but the former set the grounds for Frantz Fanon's typology of postcolonial cultures in *Les Damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961), one on which most interpretations of postcolonial lit. hist. implicitly repose: a dialectical movement from a colonial period of slavish imitation of Western models to a period of revolt, exemplified by Negritude, and then a postindependence period in which Africans have taken control of their own culture, though not without outside interference.

Damas died relatively young, but Senghor and Césaire lived until the 21st c., and the canonical status of their version of Negritude

has been confirmed by Senghor's weighty *Oeuvres complètes* (*Complete Works*, 2006) and the volumes that marked Césaire's 90th birthday in 2003. Yet, already in 1966, the anthol. by the publisher Présence Africaine, *Nouvelle somme de poésie du monde noir* (*A New Survey of the Poetry of the Black World*), can be seen as a more ambiguous and ambitious poetic project than those rooted in early Negritude. Foremost among the poets from that generation was Tchicaya U'Tamsi (1931–88), whose dense and difficult oeuvre combined contemp. techniques with an anguished concern for the Congo and the ravages of neocolonialism, esp. in his 1962 *Épitomé*. The number of retrospective eds. that followed his death is a mark of his influence, and it is often against the dominating figure of Tchicaya that later Af. Fr.-lang. poets are measured, not only his fellow Congolese (Brazzaville) J. B. Tati-Loutard (1938–2009, *Oeuvres poétiques* [2007]) and Sony Labou Tansi (1947–95), but, e.g. the Ivorian Jean-Marie Adiaffi (1941–99), and the Senegalese Amadou Lamine Sall (b. 1951) and Hamidou Dia (b. 1953).

Over the past three decades, Af. poetry in Fr., while still continental in scope, has become more self-consciously local, more often related to the national trads. of the individual poets. Starting with Tati-Loutard's 1976 *Anthologie de la littérature congolaise d'expression française* (*Anthology of Congolese Literature in French*), there began to appear critical works and collections of poetry representing the increasingly self-defining national lits. of Benin (1984), Cameroon (1982), Gabon (1978), the Ivory Coast (1983), and Togo (1980), among others. This parceling up of a subcontinent into national lits. reflects the rise of distinct national identities across Africa and inevitably points to conflicts among them. In time, *African literature* will seem as broad and as vague a concept as *European literature*, the internal differences within Africa nuancing the abstract and often racially defined concept of a single continental-wide identity.

One prominent thematic thread of contemp. Af. poetry in Fr. is the experience of exile or emigration, which has affected not only the intellectual elite that write and read poetry in Fr. but Africans of all origins from across the continent. This contemp. state of exile can readily be related back to the original diasporic displacement brought about by the slave trade, hence, the continuing relevance of Césaire's *Cahier* and the preoccupation with Af. cultural identity

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both at home and in the growing Af. communities around the world, in Europe but also in the Americas. It is, thus, not at all uncommon for a Congolese poet like Alain Mabanckou (b. 1966) to find inspiration not only in his homeland but in the large Af. community in Paris, and thereafter among Af.-Americans in Los Angeles. Similarly, Véronique Tadjo (b. 1955) was born in Paris but was raised in the Ivory Coast, which continues to inspire her poetry. Rare in fact is the Af. poet writing in Fr. who does not have a foothold on two continents: the Senegalese Babacar Sall (Dakar/Paris), Léopold Congo Mbemba (Brazzaville/Paris), and Amadu Elimane Kane (Senegal/Paris). This is as much the case for female as for male poets, Tanella Boni (Abidjan/Toulouse) and Clémentine Faïk-Nzuji (Kinshasa/Brussels) being additional salient cases among the former.

Many observers think that, despite the continuing hegemony of Paris as a cultural center, writing in Fr. outside France is destined to assume as important a role as writing in Eng. beyond the U.S. and Britain. Af. poetry in Fr. is arguably one of the richest sources of this *littérature-monde* (lit. of the world in Fr.). This is a less categorical claim perhaps than that made by Sartre in 1948—that Af. and Antillean poetries were the only true “revolutionary” poetries of those times. But the variety of poetic experience conveyed by Af. poets in Fr. confirms that Af. cultures can speak universally with force and authenticity (see CARIBBEAN, POETRY OF THE [French]; FRANCE, POETRY OF).

III. Portuguese. Af. poetry in Port. is often known as Lusophone Af. poetry, although some resist the term *Lusophone*, claiming it contains colonial overtones. This was arguably the first Af. poetry in a Eur. lang. to be published. Some facetious critics claim the 16th-c. Port. national bard Luís de Camões as the first Port. Af. poet, pointing to his descriptions of the continent in his literary epic *The Lusíads* (1572). The question of who qualifies as an Af. poet of Port. expression became contentious in the period immediately following the independence of the former colonies (1973–75), when the newly formed nations sought to define their own literary canons and claim historical roots that contested Port. cultural hegemony.

It is generally accepted that José da Silva Maia Ferreira (1827–81?), born in Angola and of Port. heritage, was the first poet published in Port.-speaking Africa when he released his

Esportaneidades da minha alma (Outpourings from My Soul) in 1849. The work is probably the first collection of poems printed in the sub-Saharan region. With the independence of Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé e Príncipe, five increasingly diverse national poetries were born, written mainly in Port. but also, in the case of Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé, in local Port.-based creoles.

Precursors of these national poetries, such as Silva Maia Ferreira; Joaquim Cordeiro da Matta (1857–94), a black Angolan poet; and Caetano da Costa Alegre (1864–90) from the island of São Tomé, wrote verse modeled on Eur. styles and themes, though often informed by an Af. consciousness. Some wrote verse reflecting their sense of social reformism and dedication to Port. liberalism. They did not propose independence for the colonies so much as a more progressive Port. empire. Beginning in the 1930s in the Cape Verde Islands and in the 1950s in Angola and Mozambique, however, poems of cultural legitimization and growing social protest, fanned by the winds of nationalism, characterized the literary movements initiated by members of an emerging black and *mestiço* (mixed-race) intelligentsia and their Af.-born or -raised white allies.

On the largely *mestiço* Cape Verde Islands, a trio of poets—Jorge Barbosa (1902–71), Oswaldo Alcântara (pseud. of Baltasar Lopes da Silva, 1907–89), and Manuel Lopes (1907–2005)—founded in 1936 what became known as the *Claridade* movement, named after the group's arts and culture jour. Under the influence of Brazilian modernism and northeast regionalism, they codified the islands' Creole ethos, giving artistic expression to the prevailing Cape Verdean themes of solitude, the sea, drought, and emigration. This generation reacted to the universalism of poets such as José Lopes (1871–1962), who as well as publishing poetry in Port., wrote poems in Fr. and Eng. and defended the concept of a global Port. nation.

In the Angolan cities of Benguela and esp. Luanda, a thinly veiled nationalist poetics emerged (censorship and police repression precluded outspoken militancy) among black, *mestiço*, and a few white poets, some of whom would form the nucleus of the Movement of the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), founded in 1956. Poets like Agostinho Neto (1922–79), who was Angola's first president; Viriato da Cruz (1928–73); António Jacinto (1924–91);

Fernando Costa Andrade (1936–2009); and Mário António Fernandes de Oliveira (1934–89) produced poems that called for an independent Angola. Many militant poets, in Mozambique as well as Angola, were also guerrilla fighters. Others fled into exile or paid for their militancy with imprisonment.

Throughout the 1960s until the 1974 military coup that toppled the colonial government in Lisbon, much Af. poetry in Port. was produced underground. Militants distributed their poems clandestinely or published them abroad. Neto wrote surreptitiously in his prison cell in Portugal and managed to smuggle his poems out of the Aljube prison in Kinshasa, Dar es Salaam, Milan, and Belgrade, where they were published in bilingual eds. Only after independence did these poets emerge from secrecy and “return” legitimately to Angola.

In Mozambique, during the two decades before national independence, a few Europeans produced poetry that was a conscious part more of Port. lit. than of Mozambique’s incipient cultural expression. Starting in the 1960s, these Euro-Mozambicans, most notably Rui Knopfli (1933–97), born and raised in the colonial city of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo), sought to represent the essence of an Afro-Eur. experience. After Mozambican independence, a debate raged within the new nation’s cultural elite as to whether the work of poets like Knopfli belonged in an emerging national canon, with most considering him Port. rather than Mozambican, a position he contested. As might be expected, a poetry of Af. cultural and racial essentialism, whether by black or mixed-race Mozambicans, coincided with the rise of nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s. The mestiço poets José Craveirinha (1922–2003) and Noémia de Sousa (1926–2003) both wrote a number of memorable poems of cultural revindication. Many of the arguments used to exclude Knopfli from the Mozambican canon, most notably his absence from postindependence Mozambique, could equally well apply to de Sousa, who spent much of her life in Europe. However, few readers contest her place in the poetic canon of Mozambique.

Craveirinha, Mozambique’s most celebrated writer, is considered one of the greatest Port.-lang. poets of the 20th c. In 2001, he won the Prémio Camões, the highest award granted for lifetime literary contributions to the Port. lang. Unlike many Mozambican poets of his generation, who allowed their political dogmas

to dictate their aesthetic programs, Craveirinha repeatedly demonstrated how a profound lyricism could serve the political causes he supported. He was capable of exceptionally moving love poetry as well as political demands to address inequalities and social injustice.

Many of the Port. Af. poets who wrote in the years leading to independence spent some of their formative years in Lisbon. Not surprisingly, Lusophone Negritude poetry appeared there, where these poets shared ideas and influences. Most notably, Francisco José Tenreiro (1921–63), a mestiço from the island of São Tomé who lived most of his life in the Port. capital, emerged as the greatest writer of Negritude poetry in Port. Under the influence of the Harlem Ren., Afro-Cuban Negrism, and francophone poets such as Senghor and Césaire, Tenreiro wrote the poems published posthumously as *Coração em África* (*My Heart in Africa*, 1964).

Some Angolan writers have proclaimed that their poetry was born in the struggle for liberation, while Negritude was conceived in defeat as a Eur.-based phenomenon that had little to do with Africa. During the decade of anticolonialist wars in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, poetry became increasingly combative and tendentious. Marcelino dos Santos (b. 1929), a high-ranking member of the Mozambique Liberation Movement (Frelimo), who became its vice president, was at the forefront of militant poets who wrote pamphletary verse that, during the protracted war, served as a didactic instrument as well as a goad to political mobilization. Not noted for its aestheticism, the poetry of this generation is a valuable historical document tracing the ideological concerns of the liberation movement.

In the early years after independence, a multiracial array of poets began seeking new ways to capture poetically the changed realities of their nations. In Angola, Manuel Rui (b. 1941) emerged as one of the most important poetic voices of his generation, writing the verses of the Angolan national anthem. He later concentrated on prose but always in a highly poeticized way. Similarly, Mia Couto (b. 1955) of Mozambique is a poet who became more famous for his extremely lyrical prose. His ling. innovation is so profound and celebrated that it is difficult to categorize him as anything other than a poet. Alda do Espírito Santo (1926–2010), like Rui in Angola, provided the lyrics of the national anthem of São Tomé e Príncipe and became

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a major literary and political presence in her nation, rising to become the speaker of São Tomé's parliament. In most of the newly independent nations, poetry and politics went hand in hand. This politicized poetry had been born of the independence struggles and continued in the early years of independence in the service of the state. However, it soon became obvious to the practitioners of poetry that the new realities of independence demanded a different kind of poetics, and the next generation of poets became less aligned with, or compromised by, the failings of the liberation movements now in power.

The imperative of new poetic discourses reflecting a changed political reality led Rui, along with fellow Angolans such as Arlindo Barbeitos (b. 1940), Rui Duarte de Carvalho (1941–2010), Jofre Rocha (b. 1941), and David Mestre (1948–97), to experiment with new styles of poetry, which followed political prescriptions less and challenged aesthetic boundaries more. Two of these poets, Duarte de Carvalho and Mestre, were born in Portugal, where Mestre died. In Mozambique, Rui Nogar (1933–93) and Luis Carlos Patraquim (b. 1953); in Cape Verde, Corsino Fortes (b. 1933), Oswaldo Osório (b. 1937), and Arménio Vieira (b. 1941); in Guinea-Bissau, Helder Proença (b. 1956); and in São Tomé, Frederico Gustavo dos Anjos (b. 1954) have all attempted, with varying degrees of success, to shift poetic boundaries away from a collective voice of protest to a more introspective interrogation of the poetic self. In Angola, Duarte de Carvalho has experimented with an integrated form of Af. oral expression and Brazilian concrete poetry, as well as repeatedly playing with the boundaries between literary genres.

Since independence, a number of poets have emerged in each of the five Port.-speaking Af. countries, inflecting the Port. lang. in ways that are often indebted to oral trads. local to their nations. At the same time, from the 1980s onward, and perhaps in response to a nascent questioning of the failure to realize the promises of independence, poetry from Port.-speaking Africa has taken a decidedly self-interrogating turn. Salient practitioners of this different type of poetics, which owes much to Af. and Eur. heritages but also to the political failures and civil strife, include the following: from Angola, Rui Augusto (b. 1958), Ana Paula Tavares (b. 1952), José Luís Mendonça (b. 1955), and Ana de Santana (b. 1960); from Mozambique, Luís Carlos Patraquim, Hélder Muteia (b. 1960), Armando

Artur (b. 1962), and Eduardo White (b. 1964); and from Cape Verde, José L. Hopffer Almada (b. 1960), who organized *Mirabilis*, an anthol. of work by some 60 island poets (pub. 1991). Tavares's work has become increasingly popular and more sophisticated. Alongside Conceição Lima (b. 1961) from São Tomé, Vera Duarte (b. 1952) and Dina Salústia (b. 1941) from Cape Verde, and Odete Costa Semedo (b. 1959) from Guinea-Bissau, Tavares has demonstrated that successful and popular poetry in Port.-speaking Africa is no longer the preserve of men. Indeed, women have produced some of the most innovative poetry in the Port. lang. in recent years.

See BRAZIL, POETRY OF; PORTUGAL, POETRY OF.

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D. F. DORSEY, J. RAMAZANI (ENG.);

G. LANG (FR.);

R. G. HAMILTON, P. ROTHWELL (PORT.)

AFRIKAANS POETRY. See SOUTH AFRICA, POETRY OF

AKKADIAN POETRY. See ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA, POETRY OF

AL-ANDALUS, POETRY OF. Opinions are divided as to whether the Ar. poetry of the Iberian peninsula is truly distinctive within the general field of Ar. poetry. Some scholars point to the prominence of specific themes, such as nature and descriptions of flowers and gardens, as well as to the two types of strophic poem that originated in Al-Andalus, as evidence of the distinctiveness of Ar. poetry; some (Péres, García Gómez [1946], Armistead [1980], Monroe) claim that it reflects a native Iberian trad. preserved continuously from the Roman period and reemerging later in the poetry of Spain and Portugal. Others point to the continuity of the forms, rhetorical patterns, and themes prevailing in Al-Andalus with those of the Abbasid Empire (750–1258): most poems are monorhymed, are set in quantitative meter according to certain canonical patterns, are phrased in cl. Ar., and employ the rhetorical figures associated with neoclassical Abbasid verse.

The literary dependence of Al-Andalus on Abbasid Baghdad is epitomized in the career of Abū al-Ḥassan ‘Alī ibn Nafayni (known as Ziryāb), a 9th-c. CE Iranian polymath who,

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arriving in Córdoba, used the prestige of his origins to set the court fashions in poetry, music, and manners in accordance with those of Baghdad. By the time of the establishment of the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba in ca. 930 CE, the strophic *muwashshah* had emerged as a distinctive local contribution to Ar. poetry, the only strophic form ever to be cultivated to any great extent by poets writing in cl. Ar. The originator of the genre is thought to be either Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Qabrī (ca. 900 CE) or Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī (ca. 860–940 CE).

The *muwashshah* consists of five to seven strophes, each in two parts (*ghuṣn* [pl. *aghṣān*] and *simṭ* [pl. *asmāṭ*]). The *aghṣān* all have the same metrical and rhyming patterns, but the rhyme sound changes from strophe to strophe; the *asmāṭ* are uniform in meter and in rhyme sound throughout the poem. The poem tends to begin with an opening *simṭ*. The final *simṭ*, around which the whole poem was probably composed, is the much-discussed *kharja*. The *kharja* is written either in vernacular Ar., in Ibero-Romance, or in some combination of the two; and it is generally believed to be a quotation from vernacular songs otherwise lost. Of great interest to Romance philologists as the earliest attestations of lyric poetry in any Ibero-Romance lang., the *kharjas* are thought by some to point to the existence of Iberian popular poetry predating the Muslim conquest (711 CE), supporting the theory of a continuous Iberian element in Andalusī poetry; but aside from the *kharjas* themselves, no such poetry is extant.

The metrics of the *muwashshah* may also point to Romance origin. Though the poems can be scanned in conformity with the quantitative principles of Ar. poetry (*ʾarūd*), the metrical patterns only rarely correspond to the canonical ones, and the *kharja* often resists quantitative analysis altogether. The metrical principle underlying the *muwashshah* is believed by many to be syllabic (García Gómez 1975, Monroe), though others maintain that it is quantitative, having arisen through the evolution of the *qaṣīda*. Both Hartmann and Stern pointed out that Eastern poets occasionally varied the *qaṣīda*'s monorhyme by subdividing each of the two hemistichs with internal rhyme; the result was the pattern *bbba*, with *a* representing the constant rhyme. When a whole poem has the *bbba* pattern, each line is a miniature stanza. Thus, a subtype of the *qaṣīda* may have developed into an entirely new verse type. This shift may have occurred under the

influence of Romance verse forms reflected in the *villancico* and the *rondeau*, for unlike cl. Ar. verse, the *muwashshah* was sung, and Romance musical patterns seem to have played at least some part in shaping it. Another possible source is the stanzaic *musammaʿ* form, which is first attested to in the poetry of Abū Nuwās (d. 815 CE).

Another class of poems thought to be derived from earlier Romance models has survived in the *urjūza* poems on historical themes developed by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihī and others; these are long poems composed of rhyming distichs in a nonclassical quantitative meter known as *rajaz*. Neither the form nor the theme was an Andalusī invention, however; they were, instead, a direct imitation of an Abbasid model, and these 9th- and 10th-c. poems do not seem to have created a lasting genre.

Though poetry is reported to have been an important feature of Andalusī culture, esp. in the Cordoban court, as it was throughout the Ar.-speaking world, little has survived from the 8th and 9th cs., and what remains is conventional in terms of theme, imagery, and verse patterns. Under the caliphate, however, Córdoba flourished as a literary center, and Andalusī poetry began to outshine even that of the East. The bulk of the poetry was courtly panegyric and lampoon in *qaṣīda* form, but love poetry was extremely popular, as were descriptions of wine and wine drinking, gardens, and ascetic verse. Great poets include Ibn Hānī (ca. 937–73), Ibn Darrāj al-Qaṣṭallī (fl. ca. 980), and al-Sharīf al-Ṭāliq (d. 1009). The latter two cultivated flower poetry, which was to become a specialty of later Andalusī poets. They employ an increasingly ornate rhetorical style (*badiʿ*) that originated in the East and is associated with the Abbasid master Abū Tammām (788–845).

The decline of the Cordoban caliphate (1009–31) and the period of the Ṭāʾifa kingdoms (1031–91) saw the greatest achievements of Andalusī poetry. Ibn Shuhayd (fl. ca. 1035) composed a body of passionate and pessimistic verse, as well as an unusual treatise on the nature of poetry in which the narrator visits and converses with the familiar spirits of dead poets. In contrast to the prevailing doctrine of poetry as a learned craft of rhetorically ornamented speech, he propounds an idea of individual poetic inspiration. The theologian and legist Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064) wrote mostly short love verses, more conventional in style, but embodying a spiritual ideal of love closely resembling

that of the troubadours and worked out in detail in his prose treatise. Their younger contemporary Ibn Zaydūn (1003–71) composed a body of very individual poetry, esp. the odes arising out of his celebrated love affair with the princess Walāda bint al-Mustakfi (1001–80; also an accomplished poet) that reflect the spiritual ideals of love developed by Ibn Ḥazm. It is from this period, the late 11th c., that muwashshah texts are preserved.

Under the Ṭāʾifa kings, the city states of Al-Andalus vied with each other for preeminence in the arts, esp. poetry. Seville became the city of poets par excellence, boasting the presence of the mature Ibn Zaydūn, Ibn ʿAmmār (1031–86), Ibn al-Labbana (d. 1113), and Ibn Hamdīs (ca. 1056–1133); its last Arab ruler, al-Muʿtamid Ibn ʿAbbād (1040–95), the patron of all these, was himself a gifted poet. This efflorescence of poetry was partly made possible by a policy of relative religious tolerance common at the Ṭāʾifa courts, but the Almoravids (1091–1145) introduced a fundamentalist regime that suppressed secular arts. A few great poets, trained in the earlier period, flourished, such as the nostalgic nature poet Ibn Khafāja (1058–1138), Ibn ʿAbdūn (d. 1134) of Évora, the muwashshah poet Abū al-Abbas al-Amā al-Tutīlī (d. 1126), and the opaque Ibn al-Zaqqāq (1100–33); but it was also an age of anthologists. Nevertheless, the period saw the invention, probably by Ibn Bājja (early 12th c.), of the *zajal* and its full flowering in the works of Ibn Quzmān (1078–1160). These are strophic poems, similar to muwashshah in that the strophes have one element whose rhyme changes from strophe to strophe and another with constant rhyme, but the lang. is colloquial Andalusī Ar., the final simṭ is not different from the rest of the poem, and there may be more than seven strophes; the asmāt also have only half the number of lines in the opening simṭ. The vulgar lang. of the *zajal* complements its theme, the bawdy, colorful life of taverns and streets, observed and turned into lit. by sophisticated poets of aristocratic origin who mock the conventions of courtly love and courtly poetry. The form was probably adapted from vulgar poetry. Apparently as a secondary devel., a type of *zajal* arose resembling the muwashshah in everything but lang. Both types are already present in the works of Ibn Quzmān.

Under the Almohads (1145–1223), there was a revival of poetry: the great poets were al-Ruṣāfi (d. 1177); the converted Jew Abū Ishāq

Ibrahīm ibn Sahl of Seville (1212–52); Ḥāzīm al-Qarṭājannī (1211–85), whose work on the theory of poetry was also influential; and a famous woman poet, Ḥafsa bint al-Ḥajj al-Rakuniyya (1135–91). The most original devel., however, was the mystical poetry of Ibn ʿArabī (1165–1240), which derived its imagery from secular love poetry and its diction from the highly metaphorical style of the age. The final political phase of Al-Andalus, the Kingdom of Granada (1248–1492), produced a few important poets, incl. Ibn al-Khaṭīb (1313–74) and Ibn Zamrak (1333–93), whose poems embellish the Alhambra.

The similarity of some of the strophic patterns of Arabo-Andalusī poetry and the notions of love sung by Andalusī poets to those of the troubadours has led some to see Ar. poetry as the inspiration of the troubadours (Nykl). The exact relationship of Andalusī poetry to the troubadour lyric continues to be the subject of intense scholarly debate (Boase, Menocal 1987), as also is the problem of the *zajal*'s influence on the Galician-Port. *cantigas*.

See ARABIC POETRY; PORTUGAL, POETRY OF; SPAIN, POETRY OF.

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R. P. SCHEINDLIN; V. BARLETTA

ALBANIA, POETRY OF. Albanian is an IE lang. spoken in Albania, Kosovo, and surrounding areas in the southwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Albania attained its independence in 1912 after five centuries as part of the Ottoman Empire.

The beginnings of written verse in Albania are strongly linked to the Catholic Church. Pjetër Budi (1566–1622), from the Mati area, trained for the priesthood at the Illyrian College of Loreto, south of Ancona in Italy, and was later bishop of Sapa and Sarda in the Zadrima region. His major publication, a catechism titled *Dottrina Christiana* (Christian Doctrine, 1618), has an appendix of 53 pages of religious poetry in Albanian, some 3,000 lines. This

verse, incl. both trans. from Lat. and original Albanian poems in quatrain form, is octosyllabic, which is the standard in Albanian folk verse. Budi prefers biblical themes, eulogies, and universal motifs such as the inevitability of death. Though his rhymes are not always elegant, his verse evinces an authenticity of feeling and genuine human concern for the sufferings of a misguided world.

The Ottoman invasion and occupation of Albania, starting in the late 14th c., brought about the gradual demise of this early Catholic poetry. It was replaced by *aljamiado* verse, written in Ar. script and strongly influenced by Islamic culture. Muslim poets wrote initially in Ottoman Turkish, but by the mid-18th c., they were experimenting in Albanian as well. Among the leading literary figures of this period was Nezim Frakulla (ca. 1680–1760), from the Fier region. Nezim writes proudly that he was the first person to compose a *divan* in Albanian: "Who bade the divan speak Albanian? / Nezim has made it known, / Who bade clarity speak in Albanian? / Nezim has made it human." About 110 of his poems are preserved, all replete with vocabulary of Turkish and Persian origin.

Leaving aside the Italo-Albanian poets of southern Italy, such as Giulio Variboba (1724–88), Nicola Chetta (ca. 1740–1803), Girolamo De Rada (1814–1903), and Giuseppe Serembe (1844–1901), who all made substantial contributions to the evolution of Albanian verse, we first note a revival of verse in Albania itself in the late 19th c., during the *Rilindja* period of national renaissance. Among the leading figures of this movement for national identity and political autonomy were Pashko Vasa (1825–92) of Shkodra, whose poem *O moj Shqypni, e mjera Shqypni* (O Albania, Poor Albania), a stirring appeal for national awakening, was written in the dramatic years of the League of Prizren, 1878–80; and Naim Frashëri (1846–1900), now widely regarded as Albania's national poet. Frashëri's verse, published for the most part while he was living in Constantinople and very popular among Albanians at the time, included pastoral lyrics in the trad. of Virgil, heavily laden with the imagery of his mountain homeland; historical epics; and Bektashi religious verse.

A qualitative step forward occurred in the early decades of the 20th c., when the Albanian lang. first became widespread in education and publishing. Though the romantic nationalism of the *Rilindja* period was still popular, other themes were introduced, incl. love

poetry, which initially caused quite a scandal. Among the leading poets of the early decades were Anton Zako Çajupi (1866–1930), who was active in Egypt; Ndre Mjeda (1866–1937) of Shkodra, whose collection *Juvenilia* (1917), influenced by the 19th-c. It. classics, included sonnets and other verse in refined meters; and Asdreni (1872–1947), from the southeastern Korça region, whose first three verse collections were well received.

The greatest figure of Albanian verse before World War II was Gjergj Fishta (1871–1940), whose 15,000-line verse epic of Albanian history, *Labuta e Malcís* (*The Highland Lute*, 1937), caused him to be revered as the Albanian Homer. When the Communists took power in 1944, his work was swiftly repressed, and the very mention of his name was taboo for 46 years.

Two poets, entirely different from one another, may be regarded as the vanguards of modernity in Albanian lit. The messianic Migjeni (1911–38) of Shkodra turned away from the beauty of the Albanian mountains and the sacred trads. of the nation to devote his verse to the social realities of despair and ubiquitous squalor, against which he rose in defiance. His slender collection *Vargjet e Lira* (*Free Verse*, 1944), published posthumously, represented a literary revolution and a breath of fresh air that did away with the trads. of romantic nationalism for good. Lasgush Poradeci (1899–1987), a pantheistic poet from Pogradec on Lake Ohrid, studied the ever-changing moods of the lake to offer crystalline verse in southern Albanian folk style.

Albanian written culture and verse reached a zenith in the 1930s and early 1940s. A mod. lit. had been created, and the nation had come of age. However, it was a brief blossoming in the shadow of an apocalypse. The Stalinist takeover and purges under dictator Enver Hoxha (1908–85) caused terror in intellectual circles and snuffed out imaginative writing in the country for almost 20 years. Only Martin Camaj (1925–92), in Bavarian exile, and the unfettered poets of Kosovo were left to build on established trads.

By the early 1960s, a new generation of poets in Albania, led by Fatos Arapi (b. 1930), Dritëro Agolli (b. 1931), and Ismail Kadare (b. 1936), managed to slip elements of aesthetic finesse into their volumes of obligatory and otherwise stale partisan poetry. There was no thaw in Albanian verse during the Communist period (1944–89); but cautious openings, ever so slight, enabled some verse of quality to be

published, and it immediately caught the imagination of the beleaguered public.

Ideological restrictions vanished when the Stalinist regime imploded in 1989–90, and chaos reigned in the little Balkan country for a decade. Yet, despite the harsh conditions of a free-market economy, contemp. poetry lost none of its fundamental importance in Albanian national culture. Well into the 21st c., verse collections still account for more than 50% of literary output. Albania is and remains a land of poets.

■ G. Schirò, *Storia della letteratura albanese* (1959); A. Pipa, *Albanian Literature: Social Perspectives* (1978) and *Contemporary Albanian Literature* (1991); *An Elusive Eagle Soars: Anthology of Modern Albanian Poetry*, ed. R. Elsie (1993); R. Elsie, *History of Albanian Literature* (1995) and *Studies in Modern Albanian Literature and Culture* (1996); A. Zotos, *Anthologie de la poésie albanaise* (1998); R. Elsie, *Albanian Literature: A Short History* (2005); *Songs of the Frontier Warriors, Këngë Kreshnikësh: Albanian Epic Verse* (2004) and *Lightning from the Depths: An Anthology of Albanian Poetry* (2008) ed. and trans. R. Elsie and J. Mathie-Heck.

R. ELSIE

AMERICAN INDIAN POETRY. See INDIGENOUS AMERICAS, POETRY OF THE; INUIT POETRY; NAVAJO POETRY

AMERICAN POETRY. See UNITED STATES, POETRY OF THE

AMERIND POETRY. See INDIGENOUS AMERICAS, POETRY OF THE

AMHARIC POETRY. See ETHIOPIA, POETRY OF

ARABIC POETICS

I. Classical

II. Modern

I. Classical. The first Ar. works on poetics were composed at the end of the 9th and beginning of the 10th c. Four groups of scholars were in varying degrees instrumental in shaping this new literary genre: the experts on ancient poetry, the poets and critics of mod. poetry (for ancient versus mod., see below), the Qur'anic scholars, and the (Aristotelian) logicians. Earlier, the pre-Islamic poets very likely had had a professional lang. for technical features of their

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poetry, and there are reports about comparative evaluation of poets, but none of this amounts to an explicit *ars poetica*.

In the field of poetry, two levels are noteworthy. First, ancient, (i.e., pre- and early Islamic) poetry became canonized as a corpus of cl. texts. This meant that ancient poetry was considered a repository of correct and authoritative speech. As such, it became the domain of the philologists, who, around the middle of the 8th c., began to collect the extant poetry into *diwāns* and anthols.; to these they later added interlinear glosses on lexical and grammatical matters. Once the task of editing and writing commentaries had been mostly achieved, we do find one book that may be called a grammarian's poetics: the *Qawā'id al-shi'r* (Foundations of Poetry) ascribed to the Kufan grammarian Tha'lab (d. 291/904—dates refer to the Muslim and the Common eras, respectively). This is a logically arranged collection of technical terms often provided with definitions and always exemplified with a number of *shawāhid* (evidentiary verses). Significantly, it starts with an enumeration of four basic types of sentences (command, prohibition, report, question) that are introduced as the "foundations of poetry," and it ends with a verse typology based on the syntactic independence or interdependence of the two hemistichs of the line in which the highest aesthetic value is accorded those lines that have two independently meaningful hemistichs. This atomistic approach to the study and evaluation of poetry prevails in most of the theoretical lit.

The second notable event that had a decisive (indeed, greater) effect on the devel. of poetics and literary theory was the rise, around the middle of the 8th c., of a new school of poetry: the *muhdathūn* (moderns). By contrasting them with their forebears, the *qudamā'* (ancients), critics and theorists became aware of some of the basic dichotomies in poetry. It should be noted, however, that the model of ancient poetry was never seriously challenged, which meant that the innovations of the moderns leaned toward mannerism and relied heavily on earlier poetry. Critical discussions focused on a phenomenon called *badī'*—literally, "new, original, newly invented." The earliest attestations of the word suggest that it was originally used to refer to a special type of metaphor (imaginary ascriptions such as "the *claus* of death") that played an important role in the poetic technique of the moderns, who created some

outrageous—and severely criticized—specimens (e.g., "the eyes of religion were cooled," meaning that the Islamic armies were victorious). However, the term soon spread to other figures of speech. The poet Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296/908), who devoted the first monograph to this topic, *Kitāb al-Badī'* (The Book of the Novel [Style]), proposed five figures to be covered by the term—metaphors of the kind just mentioned, paronomasia, antithesis, epanalepsis (or epanadiplosis), and playful dialectics imitating theological jargon. The main goal of his book is to demonstrate that the *badī'* phenomena are not new but can be found already in ancient poetry as well as in the Qur'an and in wisdom aphorisms; it is only their exaggerated use that is truly new.

Coming from one of the foremost poets of his time, this line of argument obviously served to legitimize the use of *badī'*. Ibn al-Mu'tazz's book became influential in several ways: (1) the discipline dealing with rhetorical figures was named "the science of *badī'*" after the title of his book; (2) the discovery of legitimizing precedent in ancient texts, esp. the Qur'an, became commonplace, and as a result, the system of the rhetorical figures came to be considered an integral and static part of the lang.: their proliferation in later rhetorical works was thus thought to be due to closer analysis rather than new invention; (3) the emphasis on figures of speech as the central concern of literary theory originated here; and (4) the difference between poetry and prose in most respects, save the purely formal one, was considered unimportant.

The result of factor (4) in particular meant that, although works on literary theory—mostly rhetorical in outlook—continued to be produced, works on poetics proper tended to become the exception. Two of them were composed by younger contemporaries of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, one by the poet Ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 322/934), titled *ʿYār al-shi'r* (The Standard of Poetry), the other by the state scribe and logician Qudāma ibn Ja'far (d. after 320/932). Although Ibn Ṭabāṭabā did not use the word *badī'* in its technical sense, he is well aware of the predicament of the moderns, who can no longer simply utter truths, as did the ancients, but have to display their wits in a subtle treatment of well-known motifs. He is also remarkable for giving a step-by-step description of the production of a poem; this is quite rare because works on poetics usually offer theories of poetic crit. rather than *artes poeticae* in the strict sense.

This characterization is esp. true of Qudāma's poetics, which the author describes as the first book on the "science of the good and the bad in poetry" and aptly titles *Naqd al-shi'r* (The Assaying of Poetry). His work is at the same time the first representative of the third approach to literary theory (besides the grammatical and the poetic already mentioned), namely, that of the logician in the Aristotelian trad. This characterization refers, however, less to the content than to the structure and presentation of his work: he starts with a definition ("Poetry is metrical, rhymed utterance pointing to a meaning") that yields the four constitutive elements: meter, rhyme, wording, and meaning. He then discusses first the good qualities of these elements and their combinations, followed by the bad. Although Qudāma was much quoted by later authors, his "foreign" method did not find followers.

The controversies about the mod. poets' use of *badī'*, though reflected in theory, can more accurately be gauged from works of applied crit. such as the books devoted to the controversial "rhetorical" poets Abū Tammām (d. 231/845) and al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965). The major topics that emerge are the following: (1) The relationship between *ṭab'* (natural talent) and *ṣan'a* (artful or artificial crafting). The latter term came to mean the application of *badī'* to the motif at hand. According to taste and predilection, some considered this *takalluf* (constraint, artificiality), while others pointed to the element of *tā'jīb* (causing amazement) that it imparted to well-known motifs. Given the general drift toward mannerism, this was a much sought-after effect. (2) The role of *lafẓ* (wording) versus *ma'nā* (meaning) in poetry. Already at the end of the 8th c., a consensus had been reached that poetry was to be judged by its wording, since the meaning was nothing but the material to be shaped. Some authorities are said to have given precedence to the meaning, but on closer inspection, it appears that they intended the *ma'nā al-ṣan'a* (the special meaning created by the application of a figure of speech; this comes close to the conceit in Western mannerist poetry and thus did not undermine the priority of the wording). (3) The relationship between poetry and reality, whether *ṣidq* (truth) or *kadhib* (falsehood). In general, poetry is presumed to depict reality mimetically. Obvious "falsehoods" such as imaginary metaphors and hyperboles, therefore, tended to provoke objections on the part

of the critics. Such figures became so predominant in later Abbasid poetry, however, that some theorists (Ibn Fāris, Ibn Ḥazm) posited falsehood as one of the constituent elements of poetry. (4) Regarding the question of *sariqa* (plagiarism), although this word means "theft" and originally denoted flagrant literary larceny, with the increasing tendency toward mannerism in mod. poetry, *sariqa* became a way of life, and the disreputable connotation of the term gave way to the more neutral one of "taking over" (an earlier motif); critics even began to talk of "good *sariqas*." Taking over an earlier poet's motif and improving on it, mostly by the application of *badī'*, constituted an *istiḥqāq* (better claim [to that motif]), for which the poet earned high praise.

Ar. poetics, fostered by the rise of mod. poetry, soon experienced something like arrested growth. The work of the Qur'anic scholar and grammarian al-Rummānī (d. 384/994), *al-Nukat fi i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (Thoughtful Remarks on the Inimitability of the Qur'an), in which he undertook to prove this dogma on the basis of the Qur'an's *balāgha* (eloquence), soon began to influence works on poetics and rhetorical figures. The first major compilation that resulted, the *Kitāb al-ṣinā'atayn* (Book of the Two Crafts [i.e., poetry and prose]) by Abū Hilāl al-Askarī (d. 395/1004), expressly mentions proving the inimitability of the Qur'an as its main goal and makes extensive use of al-Rummānī's work. The confluence of the two different technical terminologies, *Qur'anic* and *poetic*, at first created a notable confusion that was only gradually eliminated, esp. by the greatest of all Ar. literary theorists, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078). In his *Asrār al-balāgha* (The Mysteries of Eloquence), he tried to establish a clear and unambiguous taxonomy for the theory of imagery (simile, analogy, metaphor based on simile, metaphor based on analogy); and for the first time, he finds, designates, and describes the phenomenon of *takhyīl* (fantastic interpretation, i.e., inventing imaginary causes, effects, and proofs, often on the basis of metaphors taken literally)—which is so characteristic of later Abbasid poetry. Although not a comprehensive work on poetics, the "Mysteries" certainly is the most sustained effort to reach to the core of Ar. poetry.

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