

**COURTLY LOVE : THE INFLUENCE OF THE
ANDALOSIAN MAWASHSHAH ON MEDIEVAL
AND RENAISSANCE SONGS AND SONNETS**

Najwa Rahal

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Submitted

in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

to the



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY , DELHI
HAUS KHAS , NEW DELHI - 110016**

DECEMBER , 2001

Arabic Poetry - Criticism
TM
892.7-1:8.09
RAH-C
2

I. I. T. DELHI.
LIBRARY
Acc. No. TH-28.82

I. I. T. DELHI
LIBRARY

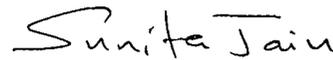
28.12.2001

Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, *Courtly Love: The Influence of the Andalusian Mawashshah on Medieval and Renaissance Songs and Sonnets* being submitted by Ms Najwa Rahal to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*, is a record of bona fide research work carried out under our guidance and supervision. The results contained in this thesis have not been submitted to any other university or institute for award of any degree or diploma.



Prof S.N.H. Jafri
Department of English
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi



Prof Sunita Jain
Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology
Delhi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my deep sense of gratitude for Prof. Sunita Jain and Prof. S.N.H. Jafri of Jamia Millia Islamia . I also thank Prof. Anuradha Sharma of IIT Delhi for her help , the English Department at Tishreen University , and my family. They have been a great support for me throughout my work without which it would have been difficult for me to complete my Ph D thesis. *I thank also the head of the English department at Tishreen university - Dr. Abeer Zahra.*

Najwa Rahal

An Abstract

My objective is to study the influence of Andalusian love poetry on songs of troubadours and sonnets of the English Renaissance. The tradition of love poetry comes to Europe very likely through the Arabic occupation of Spain and the development of a new artistic form called mawashshah during the period between the eleventh and seventh centuries. Life in Spain during this span of time was full of luxury, nature was beautiful and there was great love for art and poetry. The person who brought about this change in poetry was called Zeriab- a lute player from Baghdad who came to Spain and poets started to write verse according to musical pieces. So, al-mawashshah is a poetical form written according to music and each poem would contain seven stanzas. The poets which I studied are Al-Ama Attatili (1089-1130), Ibn Al-kazzaz (P-1095), Ibn Azokak Al-Balansi (1096-1134), Ibn Bajjah (1082-1138), Ibn Sharaf (1058-1140), Abo Bakr Ibn Al-Abiad (P-1145), and Lesan Addeen Bno Al- Khateeb (1313-1375). In order to know about origins of love poetry in Europe I studied C.S.Lewis' Allegory of Love and the texts of Arabic mawashshah I took from a book called Andalusian Mawashshahat which is a collection of poems from Al-Andalos. Arabs in Spain mixed with the natives and there was a chance that such an art got spread in Spain. The vocabulary was simple, which was another reason why this new form of poetry spread, the third reason is that this poetry was sung. A mawashshah would usually start with a description of natural beauty which is followed by an account of the suffering of the lover because of unrequited love. One part of mawashshahat is devoted to wine and these are called wine-songs. They are celebrations of requited love and warnings about shortness of life and how it should be used before old age

comes. Thus, mawashshah celebrates love in both *forms*: the happy moments as well as the sad ones. The founder of this form of poetry is Mohammad Bno Moafa Al-Kabari. The imagery in mawashshah is partly traditional. That is, a poet would, like the composers of traditional Arabic poetry of love, compare the beloved to a deer, her eyes to the stars and her fairness to the sun. Black hair is likened to the night and red lips to red roses. There is another Arabic book which seems to have played a role in shaping the poetics of Europe in love; the book is called The Ring of the Dove by Ibn Hazm. This book speaks about birds and modes of love. It also gives examples of people who fell prey to unrequited love and shows how the best kind of love is the loyal and sincere one. Mawashshahat are characterized by sincere passion. They are true depictions of situations of happy or helpless lovers. Their music is soft and enchanting and old Andalusian songs are still sung these days. Both the theme and imagery of mawashshah come from old Arabic poetry. In poetry before Islam there was celebration of love.

Moallaqat were basically written to celebrate the passion of love, they would start with an image of the lover weeping for the loss of his loved one, then a description of a mistress' beauty is given as well as of the adventures of hunting. The difference is that mawashshahat are sung and they are shorter. A moallaqa would run into three or four pages where as a mawashshah would not exceed one page, generally speaking. Mawashshah found its way to France and a new form of poetry emerged there and was known as songs of the Troubadours.

Troubadour songs are also about unrequited passion. They were sung in the courts as well as in streets and each poet or jongleur had a patron. They are influenced by mawashshah regarding theme and imagery. Before these songs started we have only religious hymns and it is not likely that

love songs between man and woman came from the songs of the church, nor is it likely that they came from Ovid because they dealt with sincere passion. They like mawashshah open with a description of the beauty of nature and end with salutation and thanks to patrons and they speak of unrequited love. I read Songs of Troubadours by Antony Bonner and it is about Troubadour verse and it contains a collection of the songs of Troubadours. From this book I selected poets Jaufrè Rudel, Pierre d' Alvernhe, The Countess of Die, Bertran de Born, and Floquet de Marseille.

I read Petrarch's sonnets and noticed the influence of Troubadour Songs on his love poetry. Petrarch visited Provence and stayed there for a long time. There he got in touch with the poetry of Troubadours and the theme of his sonnets was unrequited love for a woman he knew—named Laura. The sonnets of Petrarch have a passionate tone about them, and they have references to the beauty of nature. This I noticed from reading Thomas Campbell's Sonnets, Triumphs and other poems of Petrarch. In my thesis I tried to draw a link between the theme and imagery of Petrarch and those of the Troubadours and found a big similarity. The influence of Petrarch extends outside Italy through Chaucer's visit to Italy. Chaucer got the opportunity to read some of Petrarch's works and he also translated French love poems which are parts of The Romance of the Rose. This enabled him to find new themes for his poetry and he became the first English poet to write a love poem, which he entitled Troilus and Criseyde. I read this poem and saw how it is about unrequited love. The poem yet goes back in origin to Boccaccio's Il Filostrato, however, there is difference between Chaucer's Troilus and Boccaccio's in the sense that Chaucer's is more passionate and sincere in his love for Criseyde, whereas Boccaccio's Troilus is older and not as serious in love. Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde as

a story of love influenced Shakespeare who wrote a play and gave it the same title. The love trend extends to Dryden and Wordsworth who also wrote stanzas about Troilus and Criesyde's love but left them incomplete. What I want to say is that the love poetry did not have a strong and consistent tradition in English poetry before Chaucer and one of the possible sources through which it drew sustenance could be from the Troubadour tradition which has been directly influenced by the Andalusian love tradition.

The Elizabethan poets which I studied are William Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sidney, John Donne, Marvell, Wyatt and Daniel. I traced their treatment of unrequited love and the imagery which they employed and found both the theme and imagery inspired by Petrarch and Troubadour songs. Samuel Daniel (1562- 1619) was the son of a musician and this influenced his taste and made his poetry the most tranquil in the period. Michael Drayton lived in the same period as Samuel Daniel. His love poetry is characterized by sincerity and warmth. He wrote poems like "The Owl" (1604) and "The Man in the Moon" (1605). Shakespeare wrote narrative poetry such as Venus and Adonis in addition to love sonnets. Donne stands for the metaphysical trend. He speaks of love poetry in metaphysical conceits, and Sidney's sonnets are all about his love for Penelope which was not rewarded.

Contents:

1-39 Chapter 1:

Characteristic features of Arabic Love poetry from the pre – Islamic period till the eighth century Spain moallaqat to mawashshahat.

41-72 Chapter 2:

Influence of Troubadour Songs on English Songs of Medieval Times.

73-105 Chapter 3: Petrarch's Canzone and Sonnet - Andalusian Echoes

107-126 Chapter 4: Petrarch's Influence on Renaissance Sonnets

127- 191 Arabic mawashshahat

192-261 Translations of Arabic mawashshahat into English.