



## UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

### Some remarks on Judeo-Arabic poetical works: an Arabic poem by Moshe Dar'i (ca. 1180-ca. 1240)

Schippers, A.

**Publication date**  
2008

**Published in**  
Studies in medieval Jewish poetry: a message upon the garden

[Link to publication](#)

#### **Citation for published version (APA):**

Schippers, A. (2008). Some remarks on Judeo-Arabic poetical works: an Arabic poem by Moshe Dar'i (ca. 1180-ca. 1240). In A. Guetta, & M. Itzhaky (Eds.), *Studies in medieval Jewish poetry: a message upon the garden* (pp. 141-156). (Studies in Jewish history and culture; No. 18). Brill.

#### **General rights**

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

#### **Disclaimer/Complaints regulations**

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

SOME REMARKS ON JUDEO-ARABIC POETICAL WORKS:  
AN ARABIC POEM BY MOSHE DAR'I (CA. 1180–CA. 1240)

Arie Schippers  
University of Amsterdam

*Abstract*

In this article we discuss the Hebrew and Arabic poetry composed by Moshe Dar'i, a Karaite poet from Fatimid times who lived at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. His poetic *dīwān* contains equal amounts of religious and secular poetry. A recent edition of his Hebrew poetry was produced by Leon J. Weinberger, *Jewish Poet in Muslim Egypt: Moses Dar'i's Hebrew Collection* (Leiden, 2000). Unfortunately Weinberger, in his recent edition of Dar'i's poems, did not take into account the Arabic preface of Dar'i's *Dīwān*, nor some poems which were written in Arabic and sometimes mixed with Hebrew, Arabic, and Arab vernacular. We will discuss the poetic themes of the poems in the light of Dar'i's Arabic preface and analyze and translate one of his poems, which starts with a Hebrew section followed by mixed Hebrew-Arabic lines, whereas the last part of the poem is in Judeo-Arabic.

The *Dīwān* of Moshe Dar'i seems to be the only example of a poetic *dīwān* by a Karaite containing equal amounts of religious and secular poetry. The first printed selection of his poems appeared in S. Pinsker's *Liqqutei gadmoniyot*.<sup>1</sup> This publication raised the question of the chronology of the work: while some placed it in the ninth century, others placed it in the twelfth/thirteenth century because of the affinities that can be found between his oeuvre and the poems of the Hebrew Andalusian poets. But Pinsker's conclusion—dating it to the ninth century—was based on a spurious passage in a manuscript that contained the date 843. In his recent edition, Weinberger rightly indicates the influence of poets of the Spanish Golden Age, such as Judah Halevi.<sup>2</sup> Also, David

---

<sup>1</sup> S. Pinsker (1801–1864), *Liqqutei gadmoniyot: Zur Geschichte des Karaismus und der karäischen Literatur, nach handschriftlichen Quellen bearbeitet* (Wien, 1860 [5620]) = *Liqqutei gadmoniyot*.

<sup>2</sup> L. J. Weinberger, *Jewish Poet in Muslim Egypt: Moses Dar'i's Hebrew Collection, Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden, 2000), 2–3.

Kāhane showed that in a twenty-one-stanza *baqašah* (petition) by Dar‘i beginning with the words “Erase my sin and be merciful,” the refrains were taken from a *baqašah* by Judah Halevi (d. 1141), “O Lord, You are aware of all my desires.”

To date Dar‘i’s life, Weinberger refers to certain poems about the political situation of Jerusalem. In the first half of the thirteenth century, both Christians and Muslims ruled over Jerusalem. Two hymns by our poet suggesting that Muslims held power in Jerusalem must have been composed either before 1229—the year the Crusaders, under Frederick II, entered Jerusalem—or after 1247, when Jerusalem was again in the hands of Egyptian Muslims. In view of Dar‘i’s relationship with some Rabbanite leaders in Cairo before he became a Karaite (which, according to Davidson, he did only at a later stage), it may be assumed that Dar‘i was born in the later decades of the twelfth century and that his hymns about a Muslim occupation of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount were written before 1229 rather than after 1247.<sup>3</sup>

Weinberger lists several nineteenth-century manuscripts of the *Dīwān*. One, which originally belonged to the Karaite community in Cairo, is now in Ramleh at the Karaite community; one is in New York; and three are in St. Petersburg, namely two at the Oriental Institute (Ms. B 424 [=C], D 082 [=E], and EBP. II A 0203 [F]) and one at the National Library of Russia (EBP. I 802 [=D]).<sup>4</sup> The Ramleh manuscript was based on a St. Petersburg manuscript copied by Solomon b. Afida Hakohen in 1893 for Abraham b. Elijah Hakohen. With the exodus of the Jews from Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s, this manuscript arrived in Ramleh, Israel.

The tradition of the *Dīwān* of Moshe Dar‘i is more or less linear, because of the limited number of manuscripts known to us. His works were copied by a certain Abraham ben Ezra ben Moshe in 1474 and 1475 in two volumes, probably in Jerusalem, and in 1672 the work was in the possession of the Karaite Firuz family, which is mentioned in Dar‘i’s *Dīwān*. Moses b. al-’As’ad ibn Firuz is addressed in a poem on the occasion of his marriage to the daughter of his uncle ‘Abd al-Karīm. In 1810, the manuscript was still in the hands of the Firuz family. In 1843, it was bought by Abraham Firkovitch (1786–1874), the famous Karaite leader in Eastern Europe and a zealous enemy of

<sup>3</sup> Weinberger, *Jewish Poet*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–2.

the Rabbanites. It then ended up, along with the rest of this connoisseur's first collection, in the hands of the Imperial Public Library of St. Petersburg, which is now the National Library.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1890 and 1891, the manuscript was copied by Yehudah and Yefet Saruq, according to Giuliano Tamani.<sup>6</sup> According to Weinberger, however, it was Judah Seres who copied it, twice, for Elias Kazas, who wanted to publish a Russian translation of it. Upon Kazas's death in 1921, the manuscript passed into the possession of the Karaite library of Eupatoria, in Crimea.<sup>7</sup> The better copy of the two was then sent to Egypt, where it was acquired by J. Finkel, a representative of Israel Davidson, and ended up in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, in New York. In 1934, the other copy was taken from Eupatoria to the library of the Oriental Institute (formerly the Imperial Asiatic Museum) of St. Petersburg. Other manuscripts of the work that were in the possession of A. Geiger are also in St. Petersburg.

According to the first few pages of the two manuscripts—namely the one in St. Petersburg and the one in New York—Moshe Dar'i's *Dīwān* contains 561 pieces. Until the recent edition by Weinberger, only one hundred had been published; however, Weinberger's edition contains only Hebrew poems.<sup>8</sup> The Arabic poems and Arabic preface were not published by Weinberger, although Weinberger in his introduction mentions one of Dar'i's Arabic poems about Damascus, which is interesting not only for its *tajnīs* (paronomasia), but also because the poem provides an insight into the circumstances of the poet during his life. I shall deal briefly with the Arabic poem on Damascus. Poems about Damascus, such as this Arabic one, were mentioned in Pinsker's *Liqqutei qadmoniyot* and some were translated by Nemoj in his Karaite anthology.<sup>9</sup>

The poet's Arabic poem about Damascus is introduced by an Arabic heading: *mimma qultu-hu ayd.an dhammun fi ard in asā ba-nī bi-hā [bi-bi] amrud.* (To what I recited belonged also despising of the land in which

<sup>5</sup> G. Tamani, "La tradizione del Canzoniere di Moshe Dari," *Henoah* 6 (1984): 205–24; idem, "Questioni di storiografia letteraria ebraica: il Canzoniere di Moshe Dari," in *Atti del Congresso dell'AIISG 1983*, (Roma, 1987), 249–60.

<sup>6</sup> Tamani, "Questioni," 256.

<sup>7</sup> Weinberger, *Jewish Poet*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> See R. Scheindlin's in his review of this edition in *Hebrew Studies* 41 (2000): 343–47.

<sup>9</sup> L. Nemoj (1901–1997), *Karaite Anthology: Excerpts from the Early Literature, Translated from Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew Sources* (New Haven, 1952).

illness came over me). At first sight, the meter of the poem seemed to me to be *kāmil*, but this meter does not fit in the third line, where *kāmilah* should be read as *kāmilatun*.

*Qālū hajaw / ta 'l-sha'ma? Qul / tu na'am, fa-in // na 'l-sha'ma shu' / mun lī bi-yaw / mi liqā'-hā //*

*Qālū a-lay / sa 'l-ismu sha' / mu wa-innamā / Dimashqu huw / wa, nādaytu dā / ma shaqā'-hā //*

*Qalu: wa-kay / fa n-nāsu tu / šāfu ḥusnu-hā / yad'ū 'il ā L / lāhi yudī / mu baqā'-hā //*

*Fa-ajabtu-hum: / laysa 'l-malīḥatu kāmilah / ḥattā yaquṣ / ṣa ma'a-'l-jamā / li tīqā'-hā //*

*Wa-'l-sha'mu tal / qā duyūfa-hā / bi-ṣudūdi-hā / wa-taṣil bi-ḥus / ni jamāli-hā / rufaḳā'-hā //*

*Tukhrab wa-tuḏ / lam 'an qarī / bin. Qudsū-nā / ta'mur wa-yas / bi 'l-khalqu nū / ra naqā'-hā //*

They said to me: “Is it you who reproaches al-Sham?” /

Yes, I replied: “Al-Sham was for me an unfortunate experience [*shu'm*] the day I arrived.” /

But they said: “The name of the town is not Sham but Dimashq.” /

Thereupon I cried: “May its misery persist!” [*Dāma shaqā'-hā*] /

They said: “How is it that people praise the city's charm /

And thank God for her consistent honesty?” /

I replied: “Not all who are charming are free from flaws; they would do well to combine their beauty with compassion, /

May Damascus receive her visitors with disdain and lead astray her friends with her good looks. /

Would that she be speedily violated and destroyed, and our Holy City Jerusalem be rebuilt and God's people inherit its pure lustre.”

It might be that Weinberger's text is superior, since Pinsker misses the word *duyūfa-nā*; he has *ṣūf* or something similar. Still, I have to make some corrections in order to fit the *kāmil* meter.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See Weinberger, *Jewish Poet*, 16–17. Dmitry Frolov, whom I consulted about this poem, said to me that there was no *kamil* in this poem. Perhaps it must be considered non-metrical.

Moshe Dar'i's poetic production can be elegiac as well as frivolous. We have seen some elegiac verses, but the poet likes light verses about women as well, as Weinberger shows in the introduction to the edition of his *Dīwān*.

Thus, in the poet's *Dīwān* we see the combination of sad and frivolous subjects. The poet does not arrange his *Dīwān* into chapters devoted to certain themes: he likes the mixture of all kinds of themes. Only by reading the Arabic superscriptions can one see what the themes are in a given poem. In the Arabic introduction to his *Dīwān*, the poet dwells on his presentation of his poems.<sup>11</sup> There we read the following text in Classical Arabic rhymed prose:

[*wa-qāla aydan*]: [*wa-‘alā annanī fi ṭa’līfi li-muqaddamatī hādhihi kuntu tābi‘an li-dalīli al-sādah al-shu‘arā / fi ij‘āli-him li-kulli dīwān min shi‘ri-him ṣadrā / mutaḍammīn tilāwat fuḍā’il dhālika ta’līf wa- ‘an-hu mukhbirā*] /

And in spite of the fact that I am here in the preface of my own work, I followed as my guide the leading poets in the way they put in every *Dīwān* of their poetry a beginning which includes an enumeration of the eminent qualities of that work and gives information about it.

[*Li-yakūna ni zām al-qawel bi-dhālika ka-nujūmin zāhirah / wa- ‘uqūdi durari-him al-ghawālī ghayr munbatirah*] /

In order that its word order would be like splendid stars and the necklaces of their pearls would not be left aside (cast/flung away).

[*Thumma anni rasamtu li-kulli shi‘rin ‘unwān, / munabbihun ‘alā mā fi-hi min al-ma‘ān / li-yakūna dhālika sababan li-bayān / kulla mā ḥawā-hu hādha al-dīwān / wa-ja‘altu l-‘unwān bi-lughati-l-‘arab / li-yakūna dhālika al-wāqif ‘alā dhālika, fa-ḥāza min al-lughatayn bi-l-‘arab / wa-tayassara la-hu fahm al-ma‘aniyyayn bi-ghayri ta‘ab*] /

Then I assigned to every poem a title which points at what themes are in it so that it might be a means of clarification about everything which the poem contains. I composed the title in the Arabic language in order that it would be an informant about this so that it

<sup>11</sup> As far as I know, the Arabic introduction of Dar'i's *Dīwān* has not been edited yet. For the following fragments I based myself in an eclectic manner on several St. Petersburg manuscripts. My purpose is only to show the ideas of Moshe Dar'i, not to produce a textual edition. Weinberger made me aware of an unpublished textual edition by Leon Nemoy and Raymond Scheindlin i.e., Uri Melammed.

would embrace the persecuted aim in both languages and facilitate comprehension of the themes of both without any difficulty.

[*Wā-yakūna dhālika l-'unwān al-'arabi li-ijhām al-adhhān al-bālidah / ma'nā 'ibrāniyyi-hi sabāb / fa-inna kulla nāzir li-zahrayn / wa-nāšit li-nāyayn / min al-surūr aqrab / wa-li-l-balāghah ansab*]

And that Arabic title will be a means to make clear the meaning of the Hebrew to the most stupid brains, so that everyone who looks at two kinds of flowers, and who listens silently at two reed pipes, is closer to pleasure and more fit to grasp the stylistics.

[*Wā-bi-l-lughat-l-'arabiyyah al-madhkūrah / ahkamtu alghāzan wa-ash'āran 'iddatu-ha yasīrah / wa-hajaytu bi-ha biqā 'an ramat-nī bi-hā l-'irādah wa-l-qudrah / wa-ntaşartu li-ba'di-l-ma'ākil al-dani'ah ghāyata-l-nusrah /*]

And in the mentioned Arabic language I made solid riddles and poems whose number is few, and I satirized with them the hilly swamps where Will and Destiny had thrown me, and I overcame some noxious food with a great victory.

[*Wā-jama'tu fi 'ibrāniyyi-hi mā bayna jiddi-hi wa'l-hazli-hi / wa-hāzili-hi wa-'abli-hi / wa-muwashshahī-hi wa-ghazali-hi / wa-jināsan tashābaha fi-hi al-lafz bi-mithli-hi / wa-madh al-karīm li-fadli-hi / wa-dhamma-l-la'īm li-bukhli-hi wa-tawbikh al-jāhil 'alā sū' fi'li-hi*]

And in the Hebrew I combined seriousness with playfulness, thinness with thickness, and *muwashshahs* with *ghazals*, and I used paronomasia in which the form of the words look like other words with a similar form [but with different meaning], and I made laudatory poems on the generous man because of his excellence, while I condemned the miser because of his avarice, and I reproached the ignoramus because of his bad habits.

[*Wā-lam aj'al li-nizām al-dīwān zimāmam bi-'iddat abwābi-hi mu'talif / bal rakkabtu-hu ka-zahr rab ī'i-hi mukhtalif / wa-akhlattu fi-hi al-hazl bi'l-jidd wa'l-taqš bi'l-itālah wa'l-madd / wa-sayyartu šārim nizāmi-hi dārib / tāratān šafhan wa-tāratān hadd /*]

And I did not put bridles on the system of the *Dīwān* by composing it with a number of chapters; on the contrary, I combined it as roses of the garden of its spring and I mingled earnestness with jest and brevity with expansion and extension, and made the sword of its order at one time flat and at another time sharp.

[*Wa-atla'tu fi falak ma'ānī-hi ahyānan shamsan mushriqatan wa-alyānan burūqan wa-ra'd / wa-fi fuṣūl maqālati-hi ḥarūran wa-samūman wa-luṭfi dhālika tarāwah wa-bard / wa-nashsha'tu nasīm riyādi-hi waqtan fā'ihata rīh shimāl al-dhamm wa-waqtan bi'l-shukr wa'l-thanā' 'abīran wa-nadd /*]

And I appeared in the sky of its themes at times as a splendid sun, at times as lightning and thunder, and in the chapters of its speech I appeared as a hot wind at night and a seasonal wind, and my goodwill in it was freshness and cold, and at times I produced the breeze of its gardens with the smell of the reproaching northern wind, and at times with my thanksgiving and praise I produced amber and ambergris.

[*Katīran mā wujida fi-hi ba'da 'l-ḥajwi madh / wa-ba'd al-ikrām wa'l-tafkhīm isā'ah wa-qadh / wa-'a'qaba fi-hi'l-mujūn araban wa-wa'ad / wa-aradda fi-hi bi-ḥadd al-kalām ru'ūs fātirin al-shi'r ashadda radd /, wa-aghrastu fi jinan niẓāmi-hi shajar al-dasūmah wa'l-ḥalāwah thumma ghurūs al-murūrah wa-'l-ḥamd / ḥattā adḥa ward shi'ri-hi shāriq al-shu'ā' wa-narjis rayyānan wa-ghadd. / wa-sūq al-kiyāsah bi-maḥāsini-hi maḥbūkan, wa-jam' al-sumājah min-hu munfadd /*]

Often you can find encomium after satire, and after generous acceptance and after a kindly welcome and magnification you will find ill treatment and slander, and in this collection shamelessness follows skilfulness and promise [...], and I planted in the gardens of its arrangement trees of dirt and sweetness, and then a planting of bitterness and sourness so that the roses of its poetry became splendid of rays and the narcissus [daffodil] of its recitation became copiously watered and fresh green [...].

These ideas about mixtures of themes of different inspiration were derived from Arabic *adab* variety ideals, and we find with later poets—such as Ibn Khafājah—similar ideas about variety: in *adab* literature, there is an interplay between order and variety; sometimes a work is well ordered according to well-defined chapters, and sometimes the variety is ideal. In the poem that follows, I wish to illustrate Dar'i's theories about the succession of themes and the importance of the Arabic superscriptions in understanding this. The form of the poem has some of the characteristics of later developments in Arabic, for instance the internal rhyme called *murabba'*, inspired by the girdle poetry. It must be said, however, that the Hebrew Andalusian poetry presents example of

*merubba'* from as early as Dunash ibn Labrat, although it does not seem to be an original development traceable to earlier Hebrew *piyyutim*. Or, as Schoeler puts it:<sup>12</sup>

The attempt to assume a genuinely Hebrew development of the *merubba'* in the older liturgical poetry [*piyyutim*] [as done by Ezra Fleischer] is doomed to failure by the fact that none of the Hebrew *merubba'*'s composed before the contacts of Jewish poets with Arabic poetry shows a true common rhyme; they all have a fixed recurrent word in its stead [*aaa w bbb w*]. It is only after the contact with the Arabs, and doubtless under their influence, that the Jews have composed true *musammaṣ*s. At the most, one might assume that the existence of a similar type of stanza in the genuine Hebrew tradition facilitated the adoption of the Arabic *musammaṣ*.

The Arabic title of the poem that I am now going to deal with, as an illustration of the preceding passages, reads as follows:<sup>13</sup>

*Mimmā qultu-hu aydan fī 'l-taghazzul wazn raqīṣ bi-luḡhat al-'arab / wa-ḥtiqār shi'r man kāna la-hu fī munāzarati arab.*

Belonging to what I also said about making love poems in the “dancing meter” and about despising the poetry of someone who wants to compete with me.

The rhyme structure *aaab* makes the poem a *merubba'*.

The poem has a varied rhyme, but not a strict meter as the term “dancing meter” implies. Its rhyme is on *-bi*. But every verse has three internal rhymes, according to which the main part of the first half-verse (eight syllables) and the last part of the first half-verse (five syllables) rhymes with the first part of the second half-verse (eight syllables); only the last part of the second hemistich (four or five syllables) has the main rhyme on *-bi*. In the first verse, the internal rhyme is *-bi*, in the second *-kha*, in the third *-reb*, in the fourth *-fi*, the fifth *-rosh*, and so forth. The poem consists of eight purely Hebrew verses, followed by six verses in Hebrew of which the two last words—the second part of the second half-verse—are in Arabic, followed by another twenty-one verses which are completely in Arabic with the same rhyme *-bi*,

<sup>12</sup> G. Schoeler, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, 7:660b.

<sup>13</sup> The poem is to be found in Pinsker's *Liqqutei qadmoniyot*, 103-4, as far as lines 1-20 are concerned; for lines 21-35 I followed a copy of the fifteenth-century manuscript EBP. 1. 802 [=D]. I thank Uri Melammed and Joachim Yeshaya for providing this photocopy.

and the internal rhymes are in the same places. As in other poems in which Arabic and Hebrew are mixed, one can ask oneself how the *-bi* rhyme is pronounced in Hebrew: are all the /b/s pronounced *dageš*, or are they sometimes pronounced *rafēh*? If we compare this with the Karaite transliteration of Hebrew Bible verses into Arabic script, we can only conclude that they are never pronounced *rafēh*, because the likeness with the Arabic would not be complete.<sup>14</sup>

The first eight lines are all about the poet's love, and end by praising his poetry, which is an introduction to the second theme of the poem, namely "despising the poetry of someone who wants to compete with me."

The poem has an acrostic: *Ani Moshe Rofē Hazāq*. Although the poem is apparently mentioned in the alphabetical index of Weinberger's edition under number 209, under this number another poem is given, and I could not find the former poem in his book.

1. O my lover and wish of my soul: Hear my words, / discard thy fury,  
and be content of mine / in spite of the anger of my enemies. //

*Ahubi we-ta'awat libbi / haqsheb nibi / haser za'ame-kha u-rṣeh bi / 'al af  
oyebi //*

2. I am suffering because of your wanderings, / and my separation  
from you and your being far away / weighs upon the heart of your  
servant / with all the strength of a lion. //

*Me'oneh ani li-ndude-kha / u-l-ṣerud-kha gam roḥqe-kha / 'ale leb 'abde-kha /  
kol on ha-labi' //*

3. The blackness of your hair is like a raven / who was lying in ambush /  
for me on your cheeks, / which burn by the fire of my heart. //

*Shaharut sa'are-kha ke-'oreb / hayah 'oreb / li 'al leh i-kha gam ṣoreb / be-esh  
qirbi //*

<sup>14</sup> See S. Butbul in her edition of Yefet ben 'Eli's commentary on Ruth, *Sefunoth* n.s. 8 (2003): 459–571; the same occurs in the texts by the prophet that Zechariah Cees de Vreugd (University of Amsterdam) is working upon. Saadia Gaon contrasts the Iraqi rendering of /b/ with the Palestinian one: see A. Dotan, *The Dawn of Hebrew Linguistics: The Book of Elegance of the Language of the Hebrews by Saadia Gaon*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1997), 444–45.

4. The one who is asking the name of my friend, / my mouth will answer him: / he is named between the sons of beauty, / a gazelle and a fawn. //

*Ha-sho'el le-shem alufi / yashib lo fi / niqra ben bene ha-yofi / 'ofer u-šbi //*

5. His rank is high above the supreme / of the beautiful like a cypress, and in my heart I look for my beloved / and in my thought. //

*Ramah ma'alto 'al rosh / yafim ki-brosh / u-be-libbi yeqaro edrosh / u-be-mahashabi //*

6. God has placed him above all his lovers, / he is as elevated as a terebinth; / they are like a ram compared with him / but he is a lion. //

*we-'ale hosheqaw sam-o El / nissa ke-el / ki hemah le-mulo ka-el / akh hu labi' //*

7. In his mouth is balsam of Gilead, / food for the heart. / I wish if alone he would climb by his feet, / even to have him on my back. //

*Piw 'od bo šori mi-Gil'ad / le-leb mis'ad / ebhar lu bi-rgalaw yis'ad / 'od 'al gabbi //*

8. This poem is as mighty as the moon / and like a pure fountain / it screams against my adversaries: "Hasten / to conceal your poem!" //

*Eleh shir ke-'ošem sahar / we-ka-'ayin toher / yiqra el meribi : maher / shire-kha hah [a]bi //*

This was the last line of the poem in pure Hebrew. In the following six lines—and especially in the last part of second hemistich—Hebrew is blended with Arabic.

9. Your rope is too short to raise a poem, / and making poetry is banned from you / when you are weighing the adversary with a meter of the Arabs. //

*Hable-kha middalot shir qasar / wa-ye'ašer / mimmekha, 'et sheqalto has-šar / wazna'l-'arabi //*

10. You attacked the rear of the army of the poetry of the sick / and the weak, / but my battle is always continuing / with the vigorous words. //

*Ẓenabta be-ḥel shir holim / gam nahshalim / wa-ani milḥamot 'oz millim / dāyim arbī //*

11. Go strengthening the forces of your poetry / to try to become like *geonim*, / because the one who is weak of themes / is to be blamed [*huwewa-l-ma'ūbi*]. //

*Qum hazzeq le-shirekha onim / 'ad ki-g'onim / tihyeh ki rafeh 'inyonim / huwewa'l-ma'ūbi //*

12. Your poetry is born like a premature birth / which falls on the earth; / when you plaster it with untempered mortar, / it will become destroyed [*ṣāra makhnūbi*]. //

*Yeled shirekha ke-nefel / arṣah nofel / 'et tahto be-taht tafel / ṣāra makhnūbi //*

13. To my faults and to my critics / my eye is opened / by my Rock, and my mouth and tongue, may God preserve them. //

*El mumay we-el shinyonay / yifqah 'eni / suri u-le-fi u-lshoni / yahfaza rabbi //*

14. Because every man is saved by his Rock, / He will keep His word, / so that my poetry / is beautiful and wonderful [*rā'iq 'ajabi*]. //

*Kī kol ish shenaro Šuro / 'et ma'maro / yishmor wa-yihyeh shiro / rā'iq 'ajabi //*

There then follows the Arabic part of the poem, whose *murabba's* contain more syllables.

15. A poem that engendered two robes of honor / belonging to two vestments, / which the tongue has molded from two languages, / just as gold is molded. //

*[Qaṣīdah anjalat khil'atayni / min ḥullatayni / sabaka-hā'l-lisān min lughatayni / sabka 'l-dhahabi]*

16. I leveled for it the Hebrew / so that the composition of its Arabic, the second language, / came to me / while composing the Hebrew. //

*[Wa-qad waṭaytu la-hā 'l-'ibrānī / ḥattā jā-ni / tarkīb 'arabī-hā 'l-thānī / dhā-l-tarkībī //*

17. I am a wise man, o You who are present, / day and night, / who dives for pearls of literature in the oceans of thoughts. //

[*Hakīmūn ana, yā Hiṣār / layl wa-nahār / ighṭaṣṣa min biḥār al-afkār / durra ‘l-adabi*]

18. My origin is Moroccan Andalusian, / the best species; / I was banned from the holy places / during the time of the Crusades [the violence]. //

[*Aṣṭī maghribī andulsi / khayr al-jinsi / yljūtu min bilād al-quḍsi / waqt al-ghasbi*]

19. But I was promised that my Lord would return / to assemble / the dispersed together: and as for the enemies I will kill them, / and rob them, and take them prisoner. //

[*Lakā’inī wu’idtu an yarji’ / rabbi yaǰma’ / shamḷī wa-l’a’ādī aqṭa’ / wa-aghnam wa-asbi*]

20. O God, remember your covenant / and fulfil your promise, / and show together with your Anointed one your servant / the Tisbite. //

[*Udhkur yā ilāhī ‘ahda-k / wa-anjiz wa’da-k / wa-zhar ma’ masīḥi-ka ‘abd(ak) / ish ha-tisbi*]

21. Your poetry in reality is a weak one / which does not really hit, / you decided to be a winner, / but you came out as someone who was overpowered. //

[*Wā-shi’ru-ka fi-l-ḥaqīqati ka-’ayib / mā la-hu ṣāyib / qarrarta an takūn bi-hi ghālib / ji’ta maghlūbi*]

22. And only in your perception was your melody first-class; your grandeur lies in killing it, because it takes two thousand vices. //

[*wa-nagham bas huwa fi ḥassa-k / quddam jinsa-k / wa-‘alutaw-ka fi -ntihāri-hi yamsak / alfayn ‘aybi*]

23. Strong poetry fills the earth in length, in spite of the breadth of what you have forged for your sake, so memorize what is in the books. //

[*Al-shi’r al-qawwi mali’a al-arḍ / ṭūlan ma’a ‘arḍ / mā laffaḡta amra-ka wa-ahfaz / mā fi-l-kutubi /*]

24. A poem, say: it has a word pattern / and a theme; / were we not afraid to say it, we would say: / it is the disclosure of hidden things. //

[*Shi'run qul huwa ma' maghnā / wazn wa-ma'nā / lawla -l-khawf 'anna-hu qulnā / fathu ghaybi*]

25. Who stands up to struggle with my art / or wants to pursue me, / say to him, let him go away from me / so that he will not be destroyed. //

[*Wa-li-man qāma yu'ānī fannī / aw yatba'u-ni / qūlū la-hu yu'āwid 'annī / lā yan'aṭabi*] //

26. Between the ugly and the devil / it is only a short distance: / clear truth does not spring from barbarous people. //

[*Mā bayna al-samaj wa-l-fattān / illā shattān / wal-l-ḥaqq al-mubīn li-l-buhmān / lā yantasibi*]

27. The one who weighs the flowers of the garden / by scales of fishes / is like the one who uses fibres of a rope / to repair a piece of linen. //

[*Wa-l-wāzīn bi-qushr al-hūtān / zahr al-bustān / bi-l-qā'im li-qalb al-kitān / līf al-salabi*]

28. Weak poetry, its manners / and its authors are vile, / but the worms of the firewood are not the fault of the master wood. //

[*Al-shi'r al-rakīb wa-ādābu-hu / wa-khaṣṣa arbābu-hu / wa'l-'ūdu al-rabbu mā 'aybu-hu / sūs al-ḥaṭabi*]

29. From the poetry of a man and his verses / appears his insight, and from his knowledge / you can foretell his poetic composition. //

[*Min shi'r al-raḡul aw nazmī-h / yazhar fahmu-h / wa-ta'līfu-h 'an 'ilmi-h tajīdu-h manbi*]

30. He laid down what was in his mind so that it will go continuously between the learned and the ignorant: the learned one takes it into account and reflects on it. //

[*Waḍa'a mā bi-'aqli-hi dā'im / bayna 'l- 'ālim / wa-l-jāhil yaṣīr wa-l-'ālim / fi-hi yataḥassabi*]

31. Bring your thought back to the rhymes / and make your prose strong; / perhaps then one would say about your poetry: / "That is what we want." //

[*Wā-rudda li-l-qawāfi fikra-k / wa-ahkim nathra-k / ‘asā an yuqāl ‘an shi‘ri-k / huwa-l-maṭṭūbi*]

32. [Poetry] will become useful / for you after your death as children / brought to life by it / since the mention of your name will appear / with it like perfume. //

[*Yaṣīr ba ‘da mawti-k ajdā / la-k ka-l-wildān tulyā / bi-hi wa-dhikru-k abdā / bi-hi ka-l-ṭībi*]

33. When poetry is something inappropriate / or is not superior, / you look like an invalid child who lives creepingly. //

[*In kāna shi‘r mā huwa lā‘iq / aw laysa fā‘iq / tushbihu li-walad ‘ā‘iq / ‘āsha mā dabbi*].

34. And for everyone the family [of such an invalid poet] loses prestige / because of his ignorance; / they say: “If his excellence had appeared clearly, he would have belonged to an excellent family.” //

[*Wā-li-l-nāsi tūkas ahlu-h / min sha‘ni jahlu-h / yaqūlūna: law bāna faḍlu-h / kāna dhū nasabi*]

35. If you like poetry [in order to survive] after your death, / then do your best / to raise it to dignity and it will elevate you / above every rank. //

[*In kalīfa shi‘r ba‘da-k / ibdhil jahda-k / an ta‘luwa bi-hi wa-yasūda-k / fawqa-l-rutbi*].

This poem is also interesting because of the poet’s personal remarks about his own origin—namely Morocco and even Andalusia—and because he states that he is banned from Jerusalem because of the Crusades, which leads him to express his longing for the Messiah and to mention Elijah. That is part of the *fakhr* belonging to the *ihtiqar* or “despising” of his adversary. The poem is important for another reason, namely because the Hebrew part of the poem seems to be metrical, in the sense that the number of syllables of every verse is more or less the same. In the Arabic part, the poet says that the Arabic verses are modeled on the Hebrew. For this part, we should probably make a kind of syllable count, because it is quite impossible to discover any proper Arabic meter here.

We can deduce from the preface that the poet preferred to combine two or three non-related topics in one poem in order to create

variety. The poet's Arabic superscriptions above the poems are useful for detecting the intentions of the poet. I think that it is important for any further research on Moshe Dar'i's poetry to take into account his preface, his Arabic superscriptions, and his Arabic poems. Following the important achievements by Weinberger in his momentous edition of the Hebrew poems, we should investigate the relevance for his poetic oeuvre of the Arabic poems, the preface, and the Arabic superscriptions to the poems.



