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The Role of Female Poets in Modern Kurdish Literature

The Historical Background of Kurdish Women

The role of the Kurdish woman has not been less than that of the Kurdish man throughout history. She has played a great and important role in Kurdish society, culture and politics throughout history until the present day. It is not surprising to know that back in the 20th century social and cultural life for women in Kurdistan was very difficult. Women participated in social activities such as working at home, farming and looking after grazing sheep. The majority of Kurdish women could be regarded as unenlightened; indeed the rate of literacy amongst Kurdish women was very low at that time¹. The first journal for Kurdish women, *Dengi Afiret* (“Woman’s Voice”), was published in 1953. Following the Iraqi coup d’état that took place on 14 July 1958, the Union of Kurdish Women lobbied for legal reform in the civil law courts and succeeded in bringing marriage under civil control and abolishing honor killing².

Nonetheless in Kurdish modern history there have been several women whose names have been immortalized today such as: the Kurdish Princess Khanzadeh Khan, who ruled the states of Souran and was the commander of her army (1623-1640); ‘Adla Khanem (1859-1924) was a prominent figure from the Jaf trib, she was called the “Queen of Shahrzur” when she took the post of Qaimmakam Halabja from 1909 to 1924³. Layla Qasim (1952-1974) was a Kurdish activist politician born in Khanaqin, who is known as a national martyr among the Kurds because she was executed in Baghdad in 1974 by the Iraqi regime. Princess Sinam Badrakhan (b. 1938) is a writer and researcher of Kurdish grammar, and she is the first Kurdish woman to receive the French Medal of Honor, in 2013. Laila Zana (b. 1961) is a Kurdish figure in Turkey and a member of the Turkish

¹ S. Porgeyi, *Zanayani Kurd*, Sine 1991, p. 224.

² *Kurdish women*, *pukmedia*, http://www.pukmedia.com/EN/EN_Direje.aspx?Jimare=15692 [access on: 11.01.2018].

³ S. Handani, *Alttarikh yu’eid nafsah fi madinat halbja*, <http://www.niqash.org/ar/articles/politics/5276/> [access on: 12.01.2018].

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parliament who was sentenced to 10 years in prison for her political activism. She was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom and Human Rights in 1995.

The Women's Literary Movement in Kurdistan

Kurdish females have been producing important literary works in Kurdistan from the 19th century. During the 19th century Kurdish women who enjoyed royal patronage or who were themselves from a privileged class received the benefits of education and had the means and the opportunity to write and recite poetry. The only female author of Kurdish Classical poetry was Mastura-y Ardalani (1805-1848)⁴. Her works have played a great role in the Kurdish literary heritage and she had a great impact on classical Kurdish poetry. Her style of writing was typical of the male point of view. With her poetry she was trying to show to people that women can do everything, even activities that are usually considered appropriate for men – and if given the possibility are often able to do it even better. Her poems were characterized by an implicit poetical mode, elaborate language and a reduction of the Arabic and Persian word stock⁵. As economic development and political stability grew at the end of the twentieth century in Kurdistan, poetry and written works by women became more widespread there. From the 1990s generation of Kurdish women poets, as part of a broader revival of Kurdish literary arts and a rise in universal education and social movements influenced by the West, many more opportunities for women to write presented themselves. Since that time there has been a dramatic increase in the number of female poets and writers from Kurdistan who have given a voice to a woman's perspective. Today, the number of Kurdish women authors is growing day by day.

Characteristic features of Mastura's poems from the classic period

1. While composing her poems she used well-known poetical forms such as Ghazal and Qaside, which are widespread in classical poetry of the Iranian Kurdistan poets.
2. Her poetry abounds in descriptions of women's beauty, love, landscapes and the beloved motherland.

⁴ Mastura-y Ardalani (1805-1848), she was born in Sanandaj, in Iranian Kurdistan. Except for Kurdish language, she was speaking Arabic and Persian very well. She was the wife of Khasrew Khan (1800-1834), the prince of Ardalani duchy. Mastura is known as a poet and the first woman historiographer of the Middle East being a great example of Kurdish women's gifts and activity. After her husband's death, due to a war that was in progress when the Qajar state conquered the Ardalani territory in 19th century she had to leave a country. She went to Sulaymaniyah ruled by the Baban dynasty, where she died at age of 48, see: M. Ardalani (ed.), *Mêju-e Ardalani*, translation from Persian into Kurdish by M. Hazhar, Kurdistan-Erbil 2005, p. 23-24.

⁵ R. Sabir, K. Mirawdeli, S. Watts, *Modern Kurdish Poetry An Anthology & Introduction*, Uppsala 2006, p. 16.

3. She wrote poems in the Hawrami dialect the official language of the Ardalán Emirate⁶ and in Persian as well.
4. A considerable part of her poetry also expressed love for her husband Khasrow Khan and the sorrow she experienced after his death.
5. Her style of writing is considered similar to Besarani (1642-1701) and Moulawi (1806-1882) in the Hewrami dialect.

Below is an example of Masture's verse, in which the poet expresses her love to her husband Khasrow Xan;

Captive in your eyes glimpses

*I am captive in your drowsy eyes
Your arrow eyelashes, Wounded my heart
Curls of your hair makes me shackled
My heart occurred in the prison of your cheeks
Today has provided lovers to perform hypotheses adoration
I'm coming to presenting myself as an oblation for you⁷.*

Diya Ciwan was born in 1953; she is a poet who comes from an intellectual family. She married in 1966 in the city of Qamishlo and moved to Damascus with her family in 1975. Diya Ciwan began writing in 1977, and published her poems and stories in Kurdish and Arabic newspapers and magazines. Most of her poems have been translated into Arabic and some into Turkish, Russian and European languages. She is a member of the organization of the Support Committee of Syrian Women; also she is a member of the Kurdish poetry festival committee in Syria, and a member of the jury committee writer Osman Sabri⁸.

In an interview held on the 23rd May 2012 in Altaakhi press, Diya asked some questions about her entry into the world of poetry and her poetic motives. She answered as follows: At the start of her poetry writing career, she started to write officially when some poems were published in 1977. Her poetic motives were influenced by more than one issue, and the most pressing motivation was the issue of calling for the freedom of human rights in general and for the individual Kurdish, and the motivation to establish the rights of the child and women's rights issues, with issues of discrimination in the world and issues of poverty and unemployment. What is arguably the most important aspect that prompted her to write is the inability of the Kurdish people to gain their rights and freedom⁹.

⁶ The literary movement of Ardalán School developed in the shadow of the Ardalán Emirate (1169-1867), a Kurdish emirate centered in north-western Iran and the capital Sanandaj became its centre.

⁷ M.M. Ruhani, *Diwan Masture*, Kurdistan-Erbil 2005, p. 309.

⁸ *Diya Ciwan*, https://ku.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diya_Ciwan [access on: 11.01.2018].

⁹ T. Muhamad, D. Ciwan, *fi liqa' mae altakhi: kuurdistan talbus thawba jadidan kula yawm*, <http://altaakhipress.com/printart.php?art=13378> [access on: 12.01.2018].

Her published works

- *Wave of sea my sadness*, poem *Pêlek ji deryayê kovanên min*, Damascus 1992.
- *The Veil, Story*, Bazbend, Damascus 1997.
- *Hêsrênziwa*, poem, Damascus 1998
- *Kurdish stories, section 1*, Çîrokênkurda, beşê 1, 2004.
- *Kurdish stories, section 2*, Çîrokênkurda, beşê 2, 2007.
- *Old popular sayings*, Gotinên pêşiya, Duhok 2007.

The poet and the issue of women

- Diya Ciwan presents the poem in simple language with her poems about daily life, and the background Kurdish situation.
- Diya Ciwan has been able to truly embody the map of the Kurdish pain in her femininity. She expressed her concern and the instability and the insecurity she feels in this life.
- The pain pours into her poetry. The talent of Diya Ciwan is to be able to wipe out this pain in the spirit of creativity; to give this pain her best opportunity to express herself, and to prove creativity¹⁰.
- Her works talk about alienation, indeed this problem has extensive coverage in the texts of Diya Ciwan.

Here follows some verses of Diya Ciwan's poetic collection:

Life and death
Human is born
Once...
It comes,
To this world
Everyone knows that...
But!!
None of us know,
How many times
The man dies
in this life...

Ideas
Kindergarten ideas
Begins her door
night
And its gates...
Feeling
Springs

¹⁰ M.A. Alhuseni, *Al-shier al-kurdi al-nisayi al-mu'asir*, <http://www.jehat.com/ar/Antolojya/shearAlaalam/Pages/afifi.aspx> [access on: 14.01.2018].

*Which you narrate are:
The eyes.*

Introduction

*Our house is...
In the heart of the village
And our village
In the heart of the mountain
And our mountain
In the heart of Kurdistan
And Kurdistan
In our heart¹¹.*

Kazhal Ahmed is a famous Kurdish contemporary poet. She was born in 1967, in Kirkuk. She started writing poetry at the age of nineteen. The poetic biography of Kazhal indicates that she is from the 1990s generation of Kurdish female poets. Kazhal can be grouped here with a number of other Kurdish poets such as Nezend Begikhanî (b. 1964) Mahabad Qaradaghi (b. 1966). Çinûr Namîq Hamîqağî (b.1966)) Vinos Fayeq (b. 1969) and others.

Kazhal Ahmed is mostly concerned with the position of women especially Kurdish women, in society. She presented a novel voice in literature; by taking advantage of different literary techniques she symbolizes the condition of women in societies although her poems indicate that she does not limit herself to feminism.

She has worked as a journalist and her essays about women's were created in her mother tongue of the Kurdish language. Her four collections of poetry are:

- *Bermuda Harbor (Benderî Bermoda)*, 1999.
- *Proverbs of Saying (Wutekanî Wutin)*, 1999.
- *A Cup of coffee with Him (Qaweyek le gel aw da)*, 2001.
- *I Broke the Mirror (Awênemşikand)*, 2004.

Also she published a critical work on women's problems in Kurdish society. Her work has been translated into Norwegian, Swedish, German, French, Persian, Arabic and Turkish¹². She writes of her dreams in a dim yet lively way, in her poetry selections which are published in Arabic under the title of "Poems of Raining Narcissi" by Dar Al-Mada Damascus – 2008¹³.

Kazhal is one of the leading women poets in Kurdistan, she can simply be deemed as one of the most active members of the feminist awakening in Kurdistan. She is a poet

¹¹ Translation: from Arabic to Kurdish by Farhang Muzaffar Muhamad.

¹² *Workshop on Kurdish Poetry: Kajal Ahmad, 30th April*, <http://www.poetrytranslation.org/events/workshop-on-kurdish-poetry-kajal-ahmad-30th-april> [access on: 18.01.2018].

¹³ I.H. Eabdyl, *kzhal Ahmad fi qasaed Tamtru narjsan , Tfla dayemat alshaghb*, Hayat Newspaper No16510, Date of publication: 17/6/2008, p. 18.

who criticizes the oppressors and is persistently engaged in a battle of confrontation with the patriarchy in her poetry¹⁴.

The poet and the issue of women

1. Her work talks about honor killing. The poem *In the Homeland of Assassinations*, shows how much Kazhal is concerned with the oppression of women in Kurdistan and attempts through her poetic voice to put a radical end to it¹⁵. The poet listens to the whining of the oppressed woman, and she says:

*I love the street more than the man,
The street does not tell me,
hey! You crazy girl,
where do you come from?
Where are you going?*

She provides disclosures of injustices to women, women who have become broken, for example when a woman passes through a dark alley for the love of narcissistic and ignorant man¹⁶.

2. Her works express a strong feminist view towards the situation of women in her society. The situation of women in the society is strongly reflected in her works due to the author boldly expressing her feminist views.
3. She is the most rebellious Kurdish woman poet to have allocated all her personal and poetic life to the fighting of male dominance over the general lifestyle of Kurdish society¹⁷. The life style of Kurdish society and male dominance have made her devote her life (both personal and poetic) to oppose these views, which made her the most rebellious Kurdish woman poet.
4. A characteristic that clearly distinguishes her from all other female poets. The distinctive trace of her personality that differentiates her from all other female poets¹⁸. She shows no fear of being attacked by male society for the honesty she expresses at the heart of her poetic texts. In her poems, she expresses honesty that makes her vulnerable for the attacks from the male part of the society but she shows now fear and continues her work¹⁹.

¹⁴ S.S. Hassan, *Women and Literature: A Feminist Reading of Kurdish Women's Poetry*, the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, January 2013, p. 185.

¹⁵ S.S. Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

¹⁶ I.H. Eabdyl, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁷ S.S. Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

¹⁸ I.H. Eabdyl, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ S.S. Hassan, *op. cit.*

The Characteristic features of her poems

Her poems carry some characteristic features. They can be summarized as follows:

1. Early poems of Kazhal are strong defense to the phenomenon of men's domination over women. In Kurdistan, pointing Kazhal is usually correlated to hate of patriarchy and gender inequality spreading out²⁰.
2. Kazhal Ahmed was the one, among other women poets, who was daring to describe reality straight from the shoulder, without euphemisms. She apposes her oppression as woman and conquest as a Kurd in Iraq with details. With delicious hum our she describes desires and wishes of woman's body in the society grounded in patriarchy²¹.
3. The main attribute of Kazhal's poems is simplicity and plain language in expression women's oppression in the society she belongs to. Her poetic texts consist of real examples of women and their life experiences. Kazhal highlight brutal men's behavior towards women. For her, women who share their stories, live in a grotesque between various punishments and exploitation protruding from the surface²².
4. Details of Kurdish culture as well as women's treatment is typical for Kazhal poetic texts. She raises the issue of marriage and not being a virgin meaning.
5. To Kazhal Ahmed, confessional poetry is the artistic way to express feminist struggle by women.

She says in her beautiful poem *A short red skirt* and metaphorically:

*My poem
Revealing her legs,
Simulates narcissus and Joy
In a short red skirt.*

To say:

You will not believe the extent of my passion for life'.

The audacity of Kazhal Ahmed's texts is an expression of what goes on in the depths of women who have been deprived of their rights. She invites girls who spend their time in front of the mirror to follow her, as the poet is almost dying of rage and she sees all these valuable books abandoned and covered with dust:

*I get so angry
those mirrors
that occupy the girls
for hours*

²⁰ S.S. Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

²¹ *Ibidem.*

²² *Ibidem.*, p. 186.

*while all those beautiful books are waiting for them,
the streets of despair have been scattered!!*²³

Mahabad Qaradaghi, Kurdish poet and writer was born in 1966 in Kifri. Her journey with poetry began at High School and continued even when she was imprisoned for a year in 1980, at the age of 14. The memoirs and diary in which she wrote revolutionary poems were the reason why she was held by the Ba'athist regime. In isolation she continued writing poems about peace, freedom and love. She told about her imprisonment in the interview:

(They tortured me, burned me with cigarettes and threatened to cut off my tongue. But I continued to write- even in prison, I wrote on napkins. Once, when my dad came and greeted me, he had one pen in the breast pocket and I took it when he hugged me without him or anyone else noticing it²⁴.) Her uncle Mahabad Qaradaghi helped her to publish a book 'A year in hell', in which she described in detail the tortures she experienced, and also included her memoirs written in Iraqi prisons. The book was published in Kurdish and translated to Arabic. She was a demonstrator in the uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan in March 1991. As one of the first people, she went to the street for seeking revolutionary poems to get the masses out of their hands and protest against repression.

According to her biography, before migrating to Sweden in 1993 she spent long periods outside her home country. Being outside Kurdistan, she continued to write and published almost half of her books. Currently, she is Prime Minister's adviser in Women Issues and equality in the KRG. Although some of her books are written in Kurdish, she also speaks Arabic, Turkish, Swedish and English.

Her works include poetry books, novels, sociological research, hundreds of articles, research in newspapers and magazines, as well as dozens of TV interviews²⁵.

The effects of her poetry on Kurdish modern society

The effects of her literary output on Kurdish modern society is very noticeable as even now the readers may find themselves in her words. Starting with the poetry reflecting pains and hopes of all the societies; through describing the struggle of Kurds for self-determination in the story of Anfal and Halabja; finishing with raising the issue of feminists' struggle and gender equality. The emotional impact her poetry has on Kurds and the society is indescribable. The written masterpieces raise a subject of morality and existential pains, also focusing on sorrows and pains.

²³ I.H. Eabdyl, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²⁴ "Män tycker ofta om svaga kvinnor", *Intervju med Mahabad Qaradaghi, Artiklar från paraply projektet.se*, Karlskrona 2005, p. 97.

²⁵ *nabdhat hawl alsha'er: Mahabad Qaradaghi*, <http://www.adab.com/world/modules.php?name=Sh3er&doWhat=ssd&shid=1136> [access on: 19.01.2018].

*My wounds are the
Homeland of thousands of disappeared Anfal victims
Place of the secret of hundreds of Halabja and Badinan martyrs*

*My wounds are the
wounds of Kirkuk's head and Diyarbakir's back
Mahabad's shoulder and Qamishli's forehead²⁶*

(Qeredagî 1999: p. 83)

The messages hidden in her poems

In her poems, she hid the messages of positive energy, love, liberty, human rights, gender equality, honesty, patriotism as well as hope for freedom and establishing Kurdistan as a state. As for her favourite poets in Kurdistan were Mastore Ardalany as classic poetry and Latif Halmat and Sherko Bekas in modern Kurdish poetry²⁷.

The thematic analysis of her poems

The matters she discusses in her works while in diaspora, are more related to those raised by diasporic Kurdish woman poets, for example Nazand Bagikhani. As a Kurdish émigré in the West, the similarities can be found in writing about nostalgia and love of homeland.

Looking at the analysis of Qeredagî's poetry, two different major experiences stand out: One in the diaspora, where she describes her longing for 'sweet home' and the second about her life in the community, with the daily struggles of people having opposite points of view to hers, particularly in regards to being a woman in Kurdish society.

Political issues, national and patriotic discourses as well as calamities are strongly correlated with her being the witness of tragedies such as Halabja and Anfal; with all of these heavily reflecting in her poems. Her style of writing has changed after her civil engagement in society and government affairs in the wake of the collapse of the Iraqi Ba'ath regime in 2003.

Similar to Nazand Begixani, experiencing the national tragedies from a young age give a political and nationalistic form to her works noticeable from the beginning of her journey. Even though Qeredagî has been considered as one of the 1990s generation of Kurdish women poets, her literary output pushes her even further back to 1979 and 1980.

Also, due to above experiences of national conflicts and living abroad, her works are a mixture of clear influences from Kurdish literature and Western literature combined. She focused on gender inequality as well as women's killing of honour in southern Kurdistan.

At the same time, the poetry also hints the reader of her familiarity to writers and critics, which is a legacy of the social status she holds in Southern Kurdistan. Overall,

²⁶ S.S. Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

²⁷ H.G. Hassan, *Mahabad Qaradaghi, Interview with The Kurdish Globe*, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Mahabad+Qaradaghi+Interview.-a0356797179> [access on: 21.01.2018].

Qeredagî is a rebellious secular poet who is against the social, cultural and Islamic religious structures of the society she lives in; being in opposition to any rules of social style or behaviour imposed by religion.

This is a distinctive feature of her poetry, which is carried by two massive wings- the wing of rebellion and another, the wing of defiance.

It is this poetic stance that sometimes causes problems for her to propagate her works easily among the readers in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Since the beginning, the Kurdish poetry including woman's poetry; has mostly been created to praise and promote the religious subjects. Therefore, the antireligious poetry in a nation that is in general Muslim; is a new feature in the Kurdish literature. Most – if not all – of pioneer Kurdish poets have been known as God-fearing religious figures. Thus, the contradictory themes and the radical style in Qeredagi's poetry that has never been used before not only is a turning point in Kurdish women's poetry but she also has been the one to introduce them.

The poem 'Hewir' (Cloud) is understood as Qeredagi's limitless love for her homeland and its incredible nature, full of natural springs and green high mountains.

The following interpretation brings the poet very close to the relation between women and the nature, by highlighting their biological essentialism:

*Cloud slept a night with mountain
He made her pregnant with a spring
Spring now is the legal daughter of mountain and cloud!
How about the bottomless and big sea?!
Whose duet is it?*

Nazand Bagikhani

She is born in 1964 in Kurdistan. She is one of the prominent Kurdish writer and academic scholars of gender and an active advocate of human rights, living in Europe since 1987²⁸. She published nine books (including six poetry collections) in English, Kurdish and French. She conducted several researches on many aspects of gender, about honor killings, rape and violence in Kurdish sociality and in Kurdistan region. sexuality in Iraq and Syria, as well as is also researching about sexual violence and slavery in war with ISIS²⁹.

She herself has focused on the healing and cathartic aspects of creativity: "You can only overcome your pain and anger through artistic creation, through poetry". Nazand explores the experience of being an exiled Kurdish woman in visionary poems of po-

²⁸ *The home page of Nazand Begikhani*, <http://www.nazandbegikhani.com/bio.html> [access on: 21.01.2018].

²⁹ *University of Bristolweb, Dr Nazand Begikhani*, <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/people/nazand-begikhani/research.html> [access on: 19.01.2018].

litical and spiritual depth. Their lines are ‘bell-like’ clear, musical and, penetrating. Fully aware of that “thin line between life and death” they are poignant but ultimately life-enhancing³⁰.

Her published works

- *Yesterday of Tomorrow*, Association of Kurdish Artists in France, Paris 1995.
- *Celebrations*, Arras, Kurdistan 2004.
- *Colour of Sand*, Arras, Kurdistan 2005.
- *Bells of Speech*, Ambit Books, London 2006.

The main themes of Her poetry

Begikhani belongs to the generation of Kurdish women poets who emerged in the early 1990s. The most painful history of her nation when Anfal and the chemical attacks on Halabja happened, is also the time when she starts writing poetry.

These national tragedies are very often the main themes of Kurdish poetry in general. Begikhani’s works are not an exception – the horrendous history has shaped the majority of her poems for more than a decade to come. In her writings she doesn’t bring up any topics that have not already been raised by other poets, whether male or female. However, her personal involvement in the tragic events, allows her to create a heart-breaking narrative of her own nation and family. This is a distinctive factor that differentiates her from many other poets. Nonetheless, this aspect changes in her latest poems where the gender-based violence towards women replaces the topics of love and fight. The life outside the home country; the feeling of being away from the family, land and birthplace changes her into an emotional, romantic and melancholic poet. In addition, the reader is enchanted by the tone of her poems in which she laments her past and brutal tragedies she experienced³¹.

Another innovative aspect to her work that has never been approached before in Kurdish poetry, is the gender discourse of ‘women as the honour of the nation.’ She points out that the virgin status of a girl gives her respect, protects her honour in the eyes of man and is closely watched over by a mother. Contrarily, fathers pass to their sons the feeling of superiority and pride in their virility.

In her poems, Begikhani paints a picture of women who unwillingly have to surrender to their fates from the real life experiences of her female friends and extended family. This reflects the unfair gender-based code of life that has remained largely unchanged in the society and has resulted in further violations of women’s rights³².

³⁰ *Poetry International web, Nazand Begikhani*, <http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/9763/29/Nazand-Begikhani> [access on: 23.01.2018].

³¹ S.S. Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 115.

AT A HAPPINESS SYMPOSIUM IN WALES

*A psychologist said
Graveyards may help you feel happier,
visit a graveyard when you are depressed*

*There is a thin line between life and death, my friend
and I am a graveyard*

*I am happy to be alive, my friend
After Halabja and Anfal
I am happy to become the voice
of a land
that contains the mass graves of our brothers*

*There is a thin line between life and death, my friend
There is a thin line between life and death³³*

Conclusion

The Kurdish female poems consists of protest, exclamations and repentance. Kazhal Ahmad, Mahabad Qaradaghi and Nezend Begîxanî, these poets are active and visible in the literary circles. In this research the different poetic generations have been highlighted - most of the names were new except for the name of Mastura-y Ardalani.

We have noticed at a glance that the majority of poets share similar topics, and that has become apparent during my literature review and survey, as well as through the analytical articles which are written on their poetry. The state of alienation which the poets suffered revealed that attention to the content is stronger than the interest in the form of most other poets.

There was no naming of the female poets until 1992 when the first collection of poems in Kurdish by Diya Ciwan was published, after the 1991 uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan. But it seems completely different in Iran's Kurdistan: Mah Sharaf Khan wrote two centuries ago. In Turkish Kurdistan, there were poets such as Bukiy Zmin, Zahal Bekem, Fatima Safagi, and Clare Arswei. They were the mouthpiece of Kurdish women poets in the vast Kurdish territory in Turkey.

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³³ N. Begikhani, *Bells of Speech*, London 2006, <http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poem/item/9772/auto/0/0/Nazand-Begikhani/AT-A-HAPPINESS-SYMPOSIUM-IN-WALES> [access on: 24.01.2018].

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Abstract: This paper focuses upon some of the female poets in Kurdish literature who have played a major role in establishing Kurdish women's poetry and their poetic texts, and how their voices become deeper and more feminine. The study will encompass the earliest Kurdish female poet from the classic period - Masture-y Ardalani (1805 - 1848), one of the most prominent Kurdish poets - and four poets from the modern period, namely Diya Ciwan (b. 1953), Kazhal Ahmed (b. 1967), Nezend Begikhani (b. 1964), and Mahabad Qaradaghi (b. 1966). The existence of feminine poetry in Kurdish literature is considered new born, but in fact the real emergence of women's poetry in Kurdish literature dates back to the early 1990s, after the liberation of southern Kurdistan from the Saddam Hussein regime. Additionally, it is important to note that the Kurdish political and creative history is not without women's presence. **Keywords:** female poets, kurdish literature, Diya Ciwan, Kazhal Ahmed, Nezend Begikhani, Mahabad Qaradaghi

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