

Cultural Identity and Religious Faith in Ten Selected Poems of the Abbasid Period

Anida Aulia¹, R. Myrna Nur Sakinah²

State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung^{1,2}

Author's Email: 1245030166@student.uinsgd.ac.id¹, myrnanursakinah@uinsgd.ac.id²

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between cultural identity and religious faith in selected Abbasid poems. Abbasid poetry represents a diverse literary tradition in which poets expressed personal experiences, social values, moral perspectives, and intellectual reflections. This study aims to identify the representations of cultural identity and religious faith and to analyze the relationship between these two aspects in ten selected poems by Abu Nuwas, Abu al-Atahiya, Al-Mutanabbi, Abu Tammam, Abu Firas al-Hamdani, and Al-Ma'arri. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a literary analysis approach. The findings show that cultural identity is represented through pleasure, urban life, courage, self-glorification, love, dignity, loyalty, and intellectual expression. Meanwhile, religious faith is represented through asceticism, awareness of death, divine guidance, humility, moral values, and philosophical reflection on fate, truth, and human existence. The study also finds that cultural identity and religious faith have a dynamic relationship characterized by interaction, contrast, and dialogue. Therefore, Abbasid poetry functions not only as an aesthetic expression but also as a cultural and intellectual space for negotiating identity, morality, spirituality, and human experience.

Keywords: Abbasid Poetry; Arabic Literature; Islamic Culture

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INTRODUCTION

The Abbasid period represents one of the most important eras in the development of Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual civilization. During this period, significant cultural, intellectual, and literary transformations contributed to the development of Arabic literary traditions and the formation of Islamic intellectual identity. The Abbasid dynasty provided a dynamic environment in which literary production developed alongside broader cultural and intellectual changes, making this period an important stage in the history of Arabic literature (Ratna et al., 2025). Intellectual and theological developments also contributed to processes of cultural evolution and identity formation, demonstrating the close relationship between intellectual discourse and the development of Abbasid society (Awad, 2019).

Abbasid society was characterized by cultural diversity and interactions among different linguistic, ethnic, and intellectual traditions. These interactions influenced the development of Arabic literature and created new possibilities for the expression and negotiation of identity. The relationship between Arabic and Persian traditions, for example, demonstrates how language and literary expression could become important spaces for identity politics and cultural interaction in Abbasid poetry (Harb, 2019). More broadly, Arabic language and literary expression play an important role in representing cultural values and constructing cultural identity (Aditya et al., 2025). Therefore, Abbasid poetry can be understood not only as an aesthetic form of expression but also as a medium through which cultural experiences, social values, and individual identities were represented and negotiated.

Poetry occupied a central position in Abbasid literary culture because it provided poets with a space to express personal experiences, social concerns, cultural values, and individual perspectives. Recent studies have demonstrated that Abbasid poetry reflected complex socio-cultural experiences, including alienation, social criticism, and individual consciousness (Yaseen, 2025; Sliman-Baraky, 2025). Through poetic language, Abbasid poets were able to respond to their social environments while simultaneously constructing distinctive individual and cultural identities. Thus, poetry functioned as a reflection of both collective cultural conditions and personal experiences.

Religious faith also constituted an important dimension of Abbasid cultural and intellectual life. Religious traditions and symbols contributed to processes of authority, collective identity, and cultural representation during the Abbasid period (El-Hibri, 2017). The relationship between religious values and literary expression can be observed in different forms, including moral reflection, asceticism, spiritual awareness, religious symbolism, and philosophical inquiry. Religious elements in poetry may therefore function as a means of expressing faith, ethical values, and responses to human and social experiences (Altabaa & Azmi, 2024). Within Abbasid poetry, religious faith was not represented through a single perspective but appeared through diverse poetic voices and literary approaches.

The diversity of cultural identity and religious faith in Abbasid poetry can be observed in the works of prominent poets such as Abu Nuwas, Abu al-Atahiya, Al-Mutanabbi, Abu Tammam, Abu Firas al-Hamdani, and Al-Ma'arri. These poets represent different responses to the cultural, social, and religious realities of their period. Abu Nuwas, for example, is particularly associated with *khamriya* or wine poetry, through which themes of pleasure, worldly experience, and urban life become significant aspects of poetic expression (Barakah, 2023). In contrast, Abu al-Atahiya emphasizes asceticism, mortality, moral reflection, and religious values in his poetry (Kouyate, 2021; Latif & Imam, 2024).

Other Abbasid poets also demonstrate different forms of cultural and personal identity. Al-Mutanabbi constructs poetic identity through self-glorification, honor, power, and individual achievement, reflecting broader cultural values within Abbasid literary life (Laela & Sakinah, 2025). Abu Tammam's poetry

demonstrates the importance of cultural and emotional expression through themes of Arab identity, semantic creativity, and longing (Shakir, 2024; Abbas, 2025). Meanwhile, Abu Firas al-Hamdani's poetry reflects religious and cultural dimensions through its relationship with Qur'anic intertextuality and Islamic intellectual traditions (Khalifeh Shoushtari & Ahmadloo, 2017). The poetry of Al-Ma'arri further demonstrates the diversity of Abbasid literary expression through reflections on human experience and individual perspectives (Tasnimah, 2019).

Previous studies have examined various aspects of Abbasid literature, cultural identity, religious values, and individual poets. Harb (2019) investigates identity politics and cultural interaction in Arabic poetry, while Awad (2019) discusses cultural evolution and identity formation in the early Abbasid period. Ratna et al. (2025) examine the role of the Abbasid dynasty in shaping Arabic literature and Islamic intellectual identity. Other studies focus specifically on the literary characteristics of individual poets, such as Abu Nuwas's *khamriya* poetry (Barakah, 2023), Abu al-Atahiya's ascetic and religious perspectives (Kouyate, 2021; Latif & Imam, 2024), Al-Mutanabbi's self-glorifying odes (Laela & Sakinah, 2025), Abu Tammam's poetic expression (Shakir, 2024; Abbas, 2025), and Abu Firas al-Hamdani's religious intertextuality (Khalifeh Shoushtari & Ahmadloo, 2017). These studies provide valuable perspectives on individual themes and poets within Abbasid literary traditions.

However, previous studies generally focus on specific poets, individual literary themes, or particular aspects of Abbasid culture and society. Studies that examine cultural identity and religious faith simultaneously across several Abbasid poets remain limited. Moreover, a comparative literary analysis of different poetic voices may provide a broader understanding of how poets represented cultural values, personal identity, spirituality, morality, and religious beliefs within the same historical period. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing ten selected poems written by six prominent Abbasid poets: Abu Nuwas, Abu al-Atahiya, Al-Mutanabbi, Abu Tammam, Abu Firas al-Hamdani, and Al-Ma'arri.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the representations of cultural identity and religious faith in ten selected poems of the Abbasid period. Specifically, the study examines how the selected poets express cultural values, individual and collective identity, spirituality, morality, and religious beliefs through poetic language. It also explores the relationship between cultural identity and religious faith to provide a broader understanding of the cultural and intellectual dynamics reflected in Abbasid poetry.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to investigate the representations of cultural identity and religious faith in selected Abbasid poems. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focuses on interpreting meanings, themes, values, and cultural and religious representations expressed through poetic language rather than measuring numerical data.

The study applied a literary and cultural approach to examine how the selected poems represent cultural identity and religious faith within the context of Abbasid society. The literary approach was used to analyze poetic language, themes, imagery, and expressions, while the cultural approach was used to understand the relationship between the poems and the cultural, social, and intellectual environment of the Abbasid period. Through these approaches, the poems were examined as literary texts that reflect both individual perspectives and broader cultural values.

The data of this study consisted of ten selected poems written by six prominent Abbasid poets: Abu Nuwas, Abu al-Atahiya, Al-Mutanabbi, Abu Tammam, Abu Firas al-Hamdani, and Al-Ma'arri. The poems

were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research focus on cultural identity and religious faith. The selected poems contain themes related to cultural values, personal identity, social experience, morality, spirituality, religious belief, and philosophical reflection.

Data were collected through documentation by identifying and selecting the relevant poems and supporting academic sources related to Abbasid literature, cultural identity, religious faith, and the selected poets. The primary data consisted of the ten selected poems, while secondary data consisted of books and journal articles relevant to the historical, literary, cultural, and religious context of the study.

The data were analyzed using close reading. Each poem was read repeatedly to identify significant words, expressions, images, and themes related to cultural identity and religious faith. The identified data were then classified into relevant categories, including cultural identity, personal identity, social values, religious faith, spirituality, morality, and philosophical reflection. After the classification process, the findings were interpreted by considering both the literary characteristics of the poems and their cultural and religious context.

Finally, the findings from the ten poems were compared to identify similarities and differences in the representation of cultural identity and religious faith among the selected poets. This comparative process was used to examine the relationship between individual poetic expression and broader cultural and religious values during the Abbasid period. The analysis therefore aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural identity and religious faith were represented and interconnected in the selected Abbasid poems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Cultural Identity in the Selected Abbasid Poems

The analysis of the selected poems shows that cultural identity in Abbasid poetry is represented through various forms of individual expression, including pleasure, courage, self-glorification, love, dignity, loyalty, and intellectual achievement. The poets construct different identities based on their personal experiences and social values. Therefore, cultural identity in Abbasid poetry is not represented as a single and uniform concept but as a diverse literary expression shaped by individual perspectives and cultural experiences (Sliman-Baraky, 2025).

Abu Nuwas represents cultural identity through wine, pleasure, and individual freedom. In *O Málik! I Pray Thee Go for the Wine Full Early*, he writes:

*O Málik! I pray thee go for the wine full early,
And if it be dear to buy, then buy it dearly!
Bethink thee how once a grizzled old tavern-keeper,
Whose whiskers were black with blowing the tarry wineskin,
I called, as he lay where slumber had stolen o'er him —
His head sunk low, the left hand's palm his pillow;
And he at my cry arose with a start of terror,
And hastened to light the wick, and it flared, and straightway
His terror was flown: he had gotten a look of gladness
And gaily haha'd—a clatter of idle laughter.
When now by the flame my features were lit, he gave me*

*The greeting of love, asked many a courteous question;
And into his hand I counted a thousand dirhems
To lodge me a month, with freedom for either party.
I found in his pleasure-domes two noble virgins
Of family high and proud, and became their bridegroom.
'Tis thus I have ever lived and am living ever,
Away my religion goes and my wealth in armfuls.
As oft as we meet, I like what the law forbiddeth,
And never can bear to like what the law hath hallowed.*

The poem constructs a cultural identity associated with urban pleasure, wealth, wine, and personal freedom. The speaker deliberately positions himself against conventional moral restrictions. The statement that he prefers what "the law forbiddeth" demonstrates that his identity is constructed through opposition to established norms. Abu Nuwas's poetry therefore represents a distinctive form of individualism within Abbasid literary culture. Wine poetry also became an important characteristic of his literary identity and poetic expression (Barakah, 2023).

Another representation of cultural identity appears in *The Doctor's Prescription*:

*I asked my brother Abu 'Isa
Jibreel; a man who's rational
I said, 'Wine amazes me'
He said, 'Too much is lethal'
I said, 'Quantify it, then'
He said – and his word's final:
'I've found that Man's natures
At root are quadruple
Therefore, four for every four;
Each nature gets a cupful
Never exceed that number
For therein lies trouble'*

Unlike the previous poem, this poem combines pleasure with rational and intellectual discourse. Wine is discussed through measurement and the concept of human nature. This representation demonstrates that Abu Nuwas's poetry is not limited to hedonistic expression but also reflects an intellectual environment in which humor, rationality, and literary creativity interact. Abbasid literature developed within a complex cultural environment that encouraged various forms of intellectual and literary expression (Ratna et al., 2025).

The construction of cultural identity through courage and self-glorification is strongly represented in Al-Mutanabbi's poetry. In the following verses, he writes:

الْحَيْلُ وَاللَّيْلُ وَالْبَيْدَاءُ تُعْرِفُنِي
وَالسَّيْفُ وَالرُّمْحُ وَالْقِرَاطُ وَالْقَلَمُ

أَنَا الَّذِي نَظَرَ الْأَعْمَى إِلَى أَدَبِي
وَأَسْمَعْتُ كَلِمَاتِي مَنْ بِهِ صَمَمٌ

These verses construct the identity of Al-Mutanabbi through two important dimensions. Horses, the desert, the sword, and the spear symbolize courage and heroic experience, while paper and the pen symbolize intellectual and literary authority. The poet therefore presents himself as both a warrior and a poet.

The second verse strengthens this identity through hyperbole. The claim that even the blind can see his literary achievement and the deaf can hear his words emphasizes the extraordinary power of his poetry. Self-glorification functions as a strategy for constructing an exceptional poetic persona. This representation is consistent with Laela and Sakinah's (2025) discussion of Al-Mutanabbi's poetry as an expression of self-glorification and poetic identity.

A similar construction of identity appears in *Courage to Reason Second Place Must Take*:

*Courage to reason second place must take.
For valour should not balanced judgment shake.
But if both in a hard soul united are,
Then Glory's realms their own demesne shall make.*

The poem presents courage and reason as complementary qualities. Heroic identity is not based solely on physical strength but also on balanced judgment and wisdom. Through this representation, Al-Mutanabbi constructs an ideal identity based on courage, intellectual ability, and personal greatness.

Cultural identity is represented differently in Abu Tammam's *Perhaps I'll See You*:

*Perhaps I'll see you, so shall I see you with rapture
While living is tender and Time is still a boy?
They were years of love, their length made to be forgotten
By reminiscing distance, as if they were days.
Then days of separation set out, following
Passion with grief, as if they were years.
Then those years passed, so did their folk
As if they both were dreams.*

The poem constructs identity through love, memory, and the emotional experience of time. Years of love appear short like days, while days of separation become long like years. This contrast demonstrates how emotional experience shapes the individual's perception of life.

The final image of the past as a dream also emphasizes the temporary nature of human experience. Abu Tammam's poetic identity is therefore associated with longing and reflection. The theme of longing represents an important dimension of his poetic expression and contributes to the emotional complexity of Arabic poetry (Abbas, 2025).

Another important representation of cultural identity appears in the poetry of Abu Firas al-Hamdani:

أَرَاكَ عَصِيَّ الدَّمْعِ شَيْمَتُكَ الصَّبْرُ
أَمَّا لِلْهَوَى نَهْيٌ عَلَيْكَ وَلَا أَمْرُ
بَلَى أَنَا مُشْتَاقٌ وَعِنْدِي لَوْعَةٌ
وَلَكِنْ مِثْلِي لَا يُدَاخِلُهُ سِرٌّ
إِذَا اللَّيْلُ أَضْوَانِي تَسْتَطِثُ يَدَ الْهَوَى
وَأَذَلَّتْ دَمْعًا مِنْ خَلَايِقِهِ الْكِبَرُ
تَكَادُ تُضِيءُ النَّارُ بَيْنَ جَوَانِحِي
إِذَا هِيَ أَذَكَّتْهَا الصَّبَابَةُ وَالْفَكْرُ
مُعَلَّلَتِي بِالْوَصْلِ وَالْمَوْتِ دُونَهُ
إِذَا مِتَّ ظَمَانًا فَلَا نَزَلَ الْقَطْرُ
حَفِظْتُ وَصْنَيْعَتِ الْمَوَدَّةِ بَيْنَنَا
وَأَحْسَنَ مِنْ بَعْضِ الْوَفَاءِ لَكَ الْغَدْرُ

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامُ إِلَّا صَحَائِفُ
لَا حَرْفُهَا مِنْ كَفَتِ كَاتِبِهَا بَشَرُ
يَنْفَسِي مِنَ الْغَادِينَ فِي الْحَيِّ غَاذَةً
هُوَ أَيْ لَهَا ذَنْبٌ وَبَهْجَتُهَا غَدْرُ
تَرْوَعُ إِلَى الْوَاشِينَ فِيَّ وَإِنَّ لِي
لَأُذْنَا بِهَا عَنْ كُلِّ وَاشِيَةٍ وَقَرُ
بَدَوْتُ وَأَهْلِي حَاضِرُونَ لِأَتْنِي
أَرَى أَنَّ دَارًا لَسْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا قَفْرُ
وَحَارِبْتُ قَوْمِي فِي هَوَاكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ
وَإِيَّايَ لَوْلَا حَنَّاكَ الْمَاءُ وَالْخَمْرُ
فَإِنْ يَكُ مَاقَالَ الْوُشَاةُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ
فَقَدْ يَهْدِمُ الْإِيمَانُ مَا شَبَّهَ الْكُفْرُ
وَقَبِثُ وَفِي بَعْضِ الْوَفَاءِ مَذَلَّةُ
لِلْإِنْسَانَةِ فِي الْحَيِّ شَيْمَتُهَا الْغَدْرُ

The poem represents an identity based on patience, dignity, love, and loyalty. Although the speaker openly expresses longing, he also emphasizes *sabr* and emotional restraint. The statement that "one such as I does not reveal his secret" demonstrates the importance of honor in the construction of his identity.

The poem also presents a contrast between pride and vulnerability. The speaker experiences intense emotion but attempts to preserve his dignity. This tension between personal emotion and social identity creates a complex representation of the individual. The values of patience and loyalty are therefore central to Abu Firas's poetic identity. His poetry also developed within a broader Arabic and Islamic intellectual tradition that influenced its literary expression (Khalifeh Shoushtari & Ahmadloo, 2017).

Overall, cultural identity in the selected poems is represented through diverse experiences. Abu Nuwas emphasizes pleasure and individual freedom, Al-Mutanabbi constructs heroic and intellectual authority, Abu Tammam represents emotional identity through longing and memory, and Abu Firas emphasizes dignity and loyalty. These findings demonstrate that Abbasid poetry provided a cultural space in which poets could construct distinctive individual identities (Sliman-Baraky, 2025; Yaseen, 2025).

2. Religious Faith in the Selected Abbasid Poems

Religious faith in the selected poems is represented through asceticism, mortality, divine guidance, humility, philosophical reflection, and the search for truth. The poems of Abu al-Atahiya provide the clearest representation of direct religious and moral expression.

In his poem on death, Abu al-Atahiya writes:

إِنَّ ذَا الْمَوْتِ مَا عَلَيْهِ مُجِيرُ
يَهْلِكُ الْمُسْتَجَارُ وَالْمُسْتَجِيرُ
إِنْ تَكُنْ لَسْتَ خَابِراً بِاللَّيَالِي
وَبِأَحْدَاثِهَا فَإِنِّي خَبِيرُ
هُنَّ يُدْنِينَنَا مِنَ الْمَوْتِ قَدِماً
فَسَوَاءٌ صَغِيرُنَا وَالْكَبِيرُ
أَيُّهَا الطَّالِبُ الْكَثِيرَ لِيَغْنَى
كُلُّ مَنْ يَطْلُبُ الْكَثِيرَ فَقِيرُ
وَأَقْلُ الْقَلِيلِ يُغْنِي وَيَكْفِي
لَيْسَ يُغْنِي وَلَيْسَ يَكْفِي الْكَثِيرُ
كَيْفَ تَعْمَى عَنِ الْهُدَى كَيْفَ تَعْمَى
عَجَباً وَالْهُدَى سِرَاجٌ مُنِيرُ
قَدْ أَتَاكَ الْهُدَى مِنَ اللَّهِ نُصْحاً
وَبِهِ جَاءَكَ الْبَشِيرُ النَّذِيرُ
وَمَعَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَ مَا دُمْتَ حَيّاً

The poem emphasizes the inevitability of death and the temporary nature of human life. Death does not distinguish between the young and the old, the protected and those who seek protection. This awareness of mortality becomes the foundation of moral reflection.

The poem also criticizes excessive desire for wealth. The poet suggests that even those who seek abundance remain spiritually poor, while a small amount may be sufficient. This perspective represents the ascetic principle of reducing attachment to worldly possessions. Kouyate (2021) identifies mortality and detachment from worldly life as important characteristics of ascetic poetry associated with Abu al-Atahiya.

The final lines introduce divine guidance as the answer to human uncertainty. Guidance is compared to a shining lamp, while God is presented as the source of direction. Religious faith therefore functions as a moral framework through which death, wealth, and human life are understood. This is consistent with Latif and Imam's (2024) discussion of ethical and religious values in Abu al-Atahiya's poetry.

A similar representation appears in another poem by Abu al-Atahiya:

لَعَمْرُكَ مَا الدُّنْيَا بِدَارِ بَقَاءٍ
كَفَاكَ بِدَارِ الْمَوْتِ دَارَ فَنَاءٍ
فَلَا تَعَشِقْ الدُّنْيَا أَخِي فَإِنَّمَا
يَرَى عَاشِقُ الدُّنْيَا بِجُحْدٍ بَلَاءٍ
حَلَاوُثُهَا مَمْرُوجَةٌ بِمَرَارَةٍ
وَرَاخُهَا مَمْرُوجَةٌ بِغَنَاءٍ
فَلَا تَمْشِ يَوْماً فِي ثِيَابِ مُحَيَّلَةٍ
فَإِنَّكَ مِنْ طِينٍ خُلِقْتَ وَمَاءٍ

The poem directly rejects the idea that worldly life is permanent. Its pleasures are described as mixed with bitterness, while comfort is mixed with hardship. The speaker therefore encourages the reader to avoid excessive attachment to worldly life.

The final lines emphasize humility by reminding human beings of their origin from clay and water. Religious faith is represented not only through belief but also through ethical behavior. The rejection of arrogance and excessive worldly attachment becomes an important part of spiritual awareness.

A more philosophical representation of religious faith appears in Al-Ma'arri's *Creator of Wrongs*:

*If criminals are fated,
It's wrong to punish crime.
When God earth's ores created,
He knew that on a time
They would become the sources
For sword blades dripping blood
To flash across the manes of horses
Iron-curbed, iron-shod.*

The poem raises questions about fate, divine knowledge, and human responsibility. If human actions are determined by fate, the speaker questions whether punishment can be considered just. The reference to iron becoming a weapon also introduces the problem of violence and responsibility.

Unlike Abu al-Atahiya, Al-Ma'arri does not provide direct moral instruction. Instead, he approaches religious and existential questions through philosophical inquiry. The poem demonstrates that religious thought may also involve questioning and reflection. Levi (2023) similarly identifies suffering, life, and death as important themes in understanding Al-Ma'arri's intellectual and literary perspective.

Another philosophical reflection appears in *The Luzumiyat of Abu'l-Ala, XXIX*:

*By fearing whom I trust I find my way
To truth; by trusting wholly I betray
The trust of wisdom; better far is doubt
Which brings the false into the light of day.*

The poem presents doubt as part of the process of discovering truth. Complete trust without reflection is associated with the loss of wisdom, whereas doubt can expose falsehood. Religious and philosophical understanding therefore requires intellectual responsibility.

This perspective contrasts with Abu al-Atahiya's direct representation of divine guidance. While Abu al-Atahiya presents guidance as a clear moral direction, Al-Ma'arri emphasizes questioning as a way of approaching truth. Nevertheless, both poets are concerned with the same fundamental issue: how human beings should understand truth and existence.

The selected poems therefore reveal two major representations of religious faith. Abu al-Atahiya emphasizes asceticism, death, divine guidance, and humility, while Al-Ma'arri emphasizes fate, justice, truth, and philosophical inquiry. This diversity reflects the complex intellectual environment of Arabic literary culture and the Abbasid period (Awad, 2019).

3. The Relationship between Cultural Identity and Religious Faith

The findings demonstrate that cultural identity and religious faith are closely interconnected in the selected Abbasid poems. However, this relationship is not always expressed through direct religious statements. In some poems, religious values shape the poet's identity through moral principles, while in others, religious norms become a framework against which poets construct unconventional or critical identities.

The contrast between Abu Nuwas and Abu al-Atahiya provides the clearest example. Abu Nuwas constructs his identity through wine, pleasure, wealth, and individual freedom, while Abu al-Atahiya emphasizes detachment from worldly life, humility, and awareness of death. These opposing perspectives represent different responses to the same question of how human beings should live. Cultural identity and religious faith therefore interact through contrast and dialogue rather than existing as completely separate concepts.

Al-Mutanabbi demonstrates another form of relationship between identity and moral values. His poetic identity is constructed through courage, wisdom, literary authority, and self-glorification. Although his poems do not explicitly discuss religious doctrine, values such as wisdom, courage, and balanced judgment contribute to the ethical construction of his identity. Similarly, Abu Firas constructs his identity through patience, dignity, and loyalty. These values demonstrate that cultural identity may be connected with moral principles even when religious faith is not directly mentioned.

Abu Tammam's poetry also shows that emotional experience can contribute to a broader understanding of human existence. His representation of love, separation, memory, and the passage of time emphasizes the temporary nature of life. Meanwhile, Al-Ma'arri represents a more critical relationship between cultural identity and faith through philosophical reflection. His identity as a poet is connected with questioning fate, truth, suffering, and human responsibility.

The comparison of all ten poems demonstrates that there is no single representation of cultural identity or religious faith in Abbasid poetry. Abu Nuwas represents unconventional individualism, Abu al-Atahiya emphasizes spiritual and moral awareness, Al-Mutanabbi constructs heroic and intellectual identity, Abu Firas emphasizes dignity and loyalty, Abu Tammam represents emotional reflection, and Al-Ma'arri develops an identity based on philosophical inquiry.

These findings support the view that Abbasid poetry functioned as an important cultural and intellectual space. Poetry allowed individuals to express social experiences, personal values, moral concerns, and philosophical questions (Sliman-Baraky, 2025; Yaseen, 2025). Cultural identity and religious faith consequently interact through several patterns, including support, contrast, moral influence, and intellectual questioning.

Therefore, the relationship between cultural identity and religious faith in the selected poems is best understood as dynamic. Religious values may strengthen cultural identity through ethical principles such as patience, humility, wisdom, and responsibility. At the same time, religious norms may also become objects of resistance or philosophical questioning. The selected poems ultimately demonstrate the richness of Abbasid poetry as a literary tradition in which identity, morality, spirituality, and human experience continuously interact.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between cultural identity and religious faith in ten selected poems from the Abbasid literary tradition. The findings demonstrate that Abbasid poetry represents cultural identity and religious faith through diverse poetic perspectives, including pleasure, asceticism, heroism, love, loyalty, intellectual reflection, and philosophical inquiry. Rather than presenting a single cultural or religious identity, the selected poems reveal the diversity of individual experiences and intellectual orientations within Arabic literary culture.

The analysis of cultural identity shows that each poet constructs a distinctive poetic persona. Abu Nuwas represents identity through wine, pleasure, urban life, and individual freedom, while Al-Mutanabbi emphasizes courage, wisdom, self-glorification, and literary authority. Abu Firas al-Hamdani constructs identity through patience, dignity, and loyalty, whereas Abu Tammam represents emotional identity through love, longing, memory, and the experience of time. These findings indicate that Abbasid poetry served as an important cultural space through which poets expressed their personal experiences and negotiated their positions within society.

The analysis of religious faith reveals two major patterns. Abu al-Atahiya represents faith through asceticism, awareness of death, divine guidance, humility, and the impermanence of worldly life. In contrast, Al-Ma'arri approaches religious and existential issues through philosophical reflection on fate, justice, suffering, truth, and doubt. These different perspectives demonstrate that religious faith in Abbasid poetry was not expressed only through direct devotion or religious instruction but could also appear through ethical values, intellectual inquiry, and critical reflection.

The findings further demonstrate that cultural identity and religious faith are interconnected dimensions of Abbasid poetry. Religious values may shape individual identity through moral principles such as patience, humility, wisdom, and responsibility. At the same time, religious norms can also become a framework against which poets construct unconventional or critical identities. Therefore, the relationship between cultural identity and religious faith is characterized by interaction, contrast, and dialogue rather than complete separation.

In conclusion, the ten selected poems demonstrate that Abbasid poetry functioned not only as an aesthetic literary expression but also as an intellectual and cultural space for negotiating identity, morality, spirituality, and human existence. The diversity of the selected poets confirms that the Abbasid literary tradition contains multiple perspectives on the relationship between worldly experience and religious thought. This study contributes to the understanding of Abbasid poetry by showing that cultural identity and religious faith can be examined together to reveal the complexity and richness of individual expression within the Abbasid literary tradition. Future studies may expand the corpus by analyzing a larger number of poems or comparing Abbasid poetry with Arabic poetry from other historical periods.

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