Concepts of "Freedom", "Power" and "Leadership" in the Arabic Folklore as an Archetypal Element in Political Culture of the Middle East

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Abstract
This article presents a critical analysis of such archetypal concepts as "freedom", "power" and "leadership" in the Arab-Muslim folklore.The authors of the article have conducted a structural and semantic analysis of proverbs using conceptual, comparative-historical and anthropological methods and studied significant fragments of Mağma 'al-'amṯāl (collection of proverbs dated back to the 12th century) compiled by the well-known Muslim linguist al-Maydānī. They have distinguished a special group of proverbs that reflect an attitude to power, personal freedom, the leader's authority and other social culture-bound concepts typical of the pre-Islamic and Arab-Muslim medieval civilization. This study is crucial since it enables to identify prototypes of the modern Arabic political culture based on archetypal elements of the collective mindset.
Keywords: The Arabic language; Proverbs; Folklore; Political anthropology; The middle east.

1. Introduction

The study of proverbs, sayings and other phraseological units reveals linguistic and extralinguistic sources of national values and their realization through the meaning and internal connection among elements of these structures. We have analyzed the sources of phraseological units, including a system of word pictures, moral-ethical norms and their lexical-semantic representation in the Arabic language, as well as specific conditions of its functioning. For instance, we considered the early Arab conquests of new regions, the spread of Islam in the period from the 7th to the 9th century A.D., social and other differences of the peoples inhabiting these regions. We tried to reveal the system of images and concepts, the structure and meaning of paroemia components describing subordinate relations between individuals, personal freedoms and criteria for the authority of leaders in the Arab-Muslim society. We also made an attempt to determine the hierarchical system of basic spiritual and moral-ethical values, factors of their development and change by analyzing lexical components of Arabic proverbs.

We took an interest in al-Maydānī because his essay Mağma' al-'amṯāl (the 12th century) is still being republished in many Arab countries, and most proverbs collected by the writer are widely used in everyday speech throughout the whole geolinguistic space of North Africa and the Middle East.

2. Methods

The research methodology is determined by the systemic approach to studying archetypes of the ethnic worldview in the modern Arab society. Within the framework of the systemic approach, we also used the structural-functional method, conceptual, historical-comparative and anthropological analysis. The structural-semantic analysis of proverbs has distinguished the target group of proverbs reflecting attitudes to power, personal freedom, the leader's authority and other social realities of the pre-Islamic and Arab-Muslim medieval civilization. The problem-based conceptual analysis was conducted with due regard to specific historical periods – the "pre-Islamic" and "early Islamic" (from the 5th to the 7th centuries A.D.). The logical method was used as a part of the systemic analysis. The systemic analysis explained the development of social systems, such as communal-clan and feudal, in the theocratic model of government.

3. Discussion

Phraseological units and aphoristic expressions are closely connected with the real life and psychology of any given nation. They reflect national ideas about life and serve as a figurative and concentrated projection of collective genetic memory expressed through language means. In other words, they represent the so-called ethnic worldview.

The above-mentioned worldview is defined as "a cognitive orientation which is actually ... the implicit (hidden, internal) understanding of the "rules for life" determined by social, natural and "supernatural" forces typical of any society (including ethnic community)" (Shapar *et al.,* 2009).

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The ethnic worldview is studied through the concept of "value" and "value-based orientation". A value means a series of assumptions about the world based on the fundamental ideas of good and evil, right and wrong, worthy and unworthy that stimulate and regulate the preferred type of human behavior, including one's communicative behavior. The concept of "national mindset" is connected with the ethnic worldview.

The national mindset does not have a clearly expressed logical form, possesses a certain systemic character and differs from legal consciousness and religious faith. This socio-political category reflects the subject's socio-psychological state (people, nation, nationality, social group, individual) developing as a result of the historically long and fairly stable influence of geographical, ethnic, socio-economic and cultural conditions and manifests itself in different activities (Anufriev, 1999).

Being a non-verbal form of consciousness and subconsciousness, the national mindset becomes a "linguistic" component regarding the meaning of individual lexical units and larger language constructions which denote concepts expressed through clichés and their elements. In addition, the national mindset is closely connected with the so-called background knowledge that is considered by some scholars as "a fragment of the cognitive component that directly interacts with the chosen communicative unit in verbal and intellectual activities but is not verbally expressed" (Shabes, 1989).

We should note that the origin of proverbs is often known only by a certain group of people who actively use these sayings in their everyday speech and preserve oral traditions inherited from the primary source. While studying Moroccan proverbs, Edward Westermarck, emphasized that "proverbs can only throw rays of light, never full light, upon national characteristics "…" In order to gain reliable information about a people from its proverbs, it is necessary to possess intimate knowledge of it derived from other sources, for most of which is personal experience" (Westermarck, 1930).

There are many disputes regarding the legal capacity of using such terms as "the Arabic folklore", "the Arabic literature", "the Arab mindset", etc. in relation to the ethnically and racially heterogeneous region of the Middle East, North Africa, Caucasus, South-Western Europe and Central Asia at the time locals started adopting Islam. To determine its ethnic composition, it is necessary to define the term "ethnos" or "ethnic group". We use the well-known definition of Max Weber in relation to ethnic groups:

"…those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relation exists" (Weber, 1968).

Based on this argument, we could have concluded that the common history, ideological and civilizational experience forming the so-called "Arab mindset" of modern inhabitants of the Middle East and North Africa are reflected in the Arabic folklore. Nevertheless, a detailed study of the Arabic folklore, including its proverbs, proves that values and ideals common to the pre-Islamic society of Bedouin nomads and non-migratory Arabs do not always coincide with the archetypal mindset of the conquered ethnic groups. In this regard, religion and its corresponding sociopolitical dogma are represented as the core layer of the "Arab-Muslim mindset" which accumulated and adopted civilizational and cultural achievements of the ethnic groups or peoples it had conquered. Thus, the assumption that the Bedouin folklore partially or completely reflects the ethnic composition of the so-called Arab world is very doubtful. It is proved by the fact that the use of the literary Arabic language was initially limited since it did not correspond with the ethnic and psychological frame of the conquered peoples living in the regions of Northern Africa, Spain and Central Asia that were once part of the Caliphate. The current dominance of ethnic languages and folk traditions in these territories also serves as a proof. It is known that the functioning of the Arabic literary language based on Arabian dialects and used to write the Quran was steadily reducing because of the formation of the Caliphate in the 7th century A.D., the resettlement of Arabian conquerors and their cultural intermingling with the predominant ethnic groups. It happened despite the instilment of the Arabic oral and written language in the conquered territories, certain attempts to record folklore and generate literary works, including poetry giving a tribute to pre-Islamic poetic genres. In this connection, A.B. Khalidov rightly noted that the Arabic literary language turned into a form of written communication and the language of religious cults during the decline of the Arab-Muslim empire (starting from the 9th century A.D.) (Khalidov, 1984). Therefore, the collection of proverbs and sayings mainly was aimed to preserve and separate the Arabic language from languages of the conquered ethnic groups (Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913-1936, Vol. 1, p. 408) and did not strive to form the common Arab mindset. The tendency to separate ethnic "Arabs" and "non-Arabs" persisted for quite a long time in the early Islamic period. However, the division between "Arabs" and "Muslims" was conditionally erased and the Arab-Muslim identity began to develop in the Abbasid era (750 A.D.).

While analyzing the plane of content (theme and situationality) and the plane of expression, researchers highlight the similarity and universality of different proverbs and sayings common to different peoples. In general, these conclusions can be explained by linguistic universals within the framework of anthropological linguistics (H. et al., 1963). It is obvious that the ethnic similarity and linguistic kinship of peoples are the main reasons behind loan words caused by economic and cultural contacts. At the same time, similar historical experience and homogeneous ideology at the same level of historical (social) development also contributed to the formation of paroemiological universals. According to ethnopsychology, archetypes (collective representations) were created in different cultures at different stages of their development and are currently kept in one's subconsciousness. Jung C.G. believed that archetypes correspond to typical life situations and are reproduced not as images filled with content but as meaningless forms enabling certain perceptions and actions (Jung, 1996).

The study of Arabic proverbs and sayings began approximately in the 9th century A.D. The famous German researcher Carl Brockelmann described them in the following manner, "Proverbs and sayings drew the attention of many scholars from the very formation of the Arabic literature. Historians and philologists competed with each other collecting and explaining phraseological units" (The Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913-1936, p. 408). The active movement of Arab philologists sought to protect the Arabic language from non-Arab influence and preserve its lexical heritage by writing down all the ancient samples of the language they could find, including proverbs. V.A. Zvegintsev noted that "the Bedouins [...] were revered by Arab philologists as speakers of the purest Arabic language" (Zvegintsev, 1958). In addition, the Bedouin language is characterized by specific and truly unique imagery. The Arab nomads regarded the world around them as an inexhaustible source of artistic images that defined their aesthetic and ethical views.

As a result, scientists compiled a comprehensive list of literature on classical Arabic proverbs comprising hundreds of volumes and containing a lot of significant information. Thus, a large part of these linguistic units originated in the Bedouin tribes of Arabia who led mostly a nomadic way of life and then spread throughout the territory conquered by the Arabs. The oldest philological treatise on Arabic proverbs that has survived to this day is a book by the Iraqi philologist (the Kufan school) and expert in the pre-Islamic poetry al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabī (died around the year 786 A.D.) entitled "amṯāl al-ʻarab" ("Arabic proverbs"), written in the 8th century and published in Istanbul in 1882. This literary work is one of the most famous collections of Arabic classical proverbs. The German researcher Ignaz Goldziher (The Encyclopedia of Islam, 1971) noted that all al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabī's works are devoted to proverbs and sayings. It is known that the prominent Arab author ʻUbayd bin Šarriya al-Ğurhumī (died around the 7th century) wrote the first book "kitāb al-amṯāl" (the book of proverbs) in the beginning of the 8th century (Maksudov, 2012). Researchers mention another valuable essay "The book of proverbs and sayings" written by Muaʼrriğ al-Sidūsī and preserved to this day. It was the second work in the series after al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabī's book. Such scholars as ʻAlāqa bin kuršum al-Kalābī and Ṣuhhār bin ʻIyyāš al-ʻAbdī collected Arabic proverbs and sayings before al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabī did but unfortunately their works have not survived to the present day. The above-mentioned authors (who were the first to compile a collection of proverbs and sayings before al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabī) are mentioned by Abū ʻubayd al-Bakrī in the book "faṣl al-maqāl fī šarḥ kitāb al-amṯāl". Abū ʻUbayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām al-Harawī (died around the year 838 A.D.) is known as the author of "kitāb al-amṯāl", whose 2nd and 17th parts were translated into Latin and published by Professor Petro Guta in 1836. Later a complete version of this work was published in Istanbul. Abū ʻUbayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām al-Harawī preserved the first book "al-faḫir fī al-amṯāl" that belonged to al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabī. The latter collected only literary proverbs of that time. In this regard, the famous Russian scientist I.Yu. Krachkovskii wrote, "He managed to assemble not only an ordinary collection of proverbs known from other sources, but also a whole series of apt expressions, greetings, popular poems, etc." (Krachkovski, 1955-1960). I.Yu. Krachkovskii also mentioned, "Undoubtedly, al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabī's work is a desk companion for every Arabist, a researcher of Arabic proverbs and sayings. It provides so many valuable materials that it should be brought into line with the well-known collection written by al-Maydānī" (ibid, p. 196). Hamza al-ʼAṣfahānī (died after 961 A.D.) was a Persian scholar and writer who traveled a lot, lived in Baghdad and Isfahan, studied the Persian language and compared it with Arabic. His book "al-durra al-fāḫira fī al-amṯāl al-sāʼira" is an extensive collection of Arabic proverbs. Renowned Abū al-Fadl al-Maydānī of the Persian origin (died in 1124 A.D.) included the part of this work "al-ʼAṣfahānī" in his "Mağmaʻ al-ʼamṯāl". al-Maydānī became known for studying the Arabs and their proverbs. Obviously, the author tried to combine the content of all books on Arabic proverbs and sayings. The original book and its translation are kept in all the libraries of the world (The Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913-1936, p. 409). Mağma 'al-'amṯāl was published in three parts with the Latin translation of each proverb in Bonn in 1838 and in Bulaq (Cairo) in 1869. In 1982, the book was republished in two parts in Egypt accompanied by "ğamhara al-'amṯāl" written by Abū hilāl al-'askarī (died around the year 1005 A.D.). He was one of the best Arabic-speaking philologists of the 10th century. Finally, renowned Abū al-Qāsim al-Zamaḫšarī (died in 1144 A.D.) used poems from different periods and excerpts from the book "Kalila and Dimna" containing samples of the Indian folklore while compiling his "al-mustaqṣa fi 'amṯāl al-' arab" on Arabic proverbs.

4. Results

Abū al-Fadl ʼAḥmad bin Muḥammad al-Nīsbūrī al-Maydānī was born in the city of Neyşabur in the Maydān district. His exact birthdate has not been established. Al-Maydānī died in the year 518 A.H. that corresponds to 1142 A.D.

The manuscript of al-Maydānī is a "collection of popular Arabic proverbs in alphabetical order. Each proverb is given a more or less comprehensible explanation (individual words, grammatical structures, the origin and use of any given proverb). The collection is prefaced by the author and consists of twenty-eight chapters in accordance with the number of letters in the Arabic alphabet. There is also Chapter 29 listing the days (battles) of the Arabs and the days (battles) of Islam, and Chapter 30 that contains the sayings of Muhammad and prominent Islamic figures. The correspondence period is the 17th century" (Khalidov, 1960).

This book consisting of two volumes has more than 6,000 proverbs and sayings and reflects the life of the Arabs in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods.

The medieval Muslim scholar Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī wrote about al-Maydānī, "He (al-Maydānī) is an excellent scholar, grammarian and linguist. He died in 518 and was buried in the city of Maydān. He is the author of Al-ğāmi ʻfī al-ʼamṯāl (the collection of proverbs) which is a prominent work" (Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, 1993).

Al-Maydānī was educated by outstanding scholars of that time, one of whom was the famous Quran commentator Abū al-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī. The disciples of al-Maydānī include the well-known philosopher Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bayhaqī and al-Maydānī's son – Saʿīd.

The essay of al-Maydānī under consideration is known under different titles. ʼIbn Hallikān (famous Arab writer and lawyer) called al-Maydānī's work *Kitāb al-ʼamṯāl (the book of proverbs)* (Ibn Hallikān, 1972). At the same time, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī called it *Ǧāmiʿ al-ʼamṯāl (all proverbs).* There is also the third title that is more used at the present time – *Maǧmaʿ al-ʼamṯāl (the collection of proverbs).* In addition, scribes could independently change the titles of the books they were to copy (Yafia and Jamil, 2013).

The authors should also note that the above-mentioned manuscript was probably copied by the famous Egyptian philologist aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī who worked at Saint Petersburg State University from 1840 to 1861, which is mentioned by Krachkovskii (1929), Belyaev and Bulgakov (1958).

Each chapter in the manuscript begins with common proverbs and then presents proverbs classified in the conformity with their use of the *ʼafʿal* form.

The section entitled *ʼamṯāl al-muwalladīn* comes next and covers proverbs made up by peoples using Arabic as the second language. Proverbs from the section *ʼamṯāl al-muwalladīn* containing the *ʼafʿal* form were borrowed by al-Maydānī from the work "al-durra al-fāḫira" (The perfect pearl) written by al-ʼAsfahānī. However, al-Maydānī made a reference to al-ʼAsfahānī's grammatical comment without mentioning the initial author.

According to al-Maydānī's records, his book mentions more than fifty different sources of proverbs he used during the study (Rayess, 1969).

While analyzing 4,766 proverbs and metaphorical expressions from the structural and semantic perspective, we have distinguished a group of proverbs that reflect the Arab ideas about personal freedoms, subordinate relations, characteristics of leaders and authorities in pre-Islamic and medieval Islamic societies. Despite the didactic nature of these proverbs, the pre-Islamic ideas about the person's freedom and authority criteria went through certain changes during the following Arab conquests. Before the adoption of Islam, tribal social relations governed the Bedouin life. Thus, they valued the individual's independence, nobility, courage and other attributes of patrimonial heroism "*muruwwa*" (Gryaznevich, 1984a). However, the Arabic folklore of the Islamic period presented ideas about central government and a strong leader in more complex social and political conditions.

We consider the following group of proverbs relating to the pre-Islamic period:

1) Al- ḥurr hurr wa ʼin maššahu al- ḍurr;
A free man is a free man, even if he is in trouble.
2) Al-ʿabd yuqraʿ bi al-ʿaṣā wa al-hurr takfīh al-ʼišāra;
A slave is taught reason with a stick, and a free man needs only a hint.
3) ʼAnǧaz hurr ma waʿad;
A free man fulfills what he promised.

The pre-Islamic proverbs above distinguish the concepts of *al-ḥurr* "a free or freeborn man" and *al-ʿabd* "slave", i.e. "a person held in servitude". Different forms of slavery existed in ancient Arabia before the adoption of Islam and after the formation of the Arab Caliphate (Negrya, 1981). It is obvious that the Arabs knew various forms of slavery before their conviction to Islam due to the influence of neighboring developed civilizations of Western Asia, Mesopotamia and Yemen (Bolshakov, 1986, p. 424). Islam did not eradicate the Arab slavery system. Even if slaves adopted Islam, they remained in servitude. Nevertheless, Islam encouraged landlords to take care of their slaves and liberate them according to the Muslim's goodwill (ibid., pp. 425-426). In conformity with the above-mentioned proverbs and sayings, the word "slave" should be understood not only as the subordination of one individual to another but also a weak-willed person with insufficient intelligence and independence. This notion is proved by the practice of using force in relation to slaves (proverb No. 2). However, pre-Islamic sources cannot always distinguish the criteria of slavery and debt bondage for Arab farmers and determine the extent to which slave labor was used among nomads (Negrya, 1981).

The concept of personal freedom dates back to the Bedouin way of life in the pre-Islamic period when Arabian tribes were independent and each clan defended its political and economic stance. At the same time, a tribal leader *"ra'īs"*, *"sayyid"* or *"šayḫ"* was elected by common consent and tribesmen could voluntarily obey his will. Thus, the concept of democratic self-government developed both among nomadic and settled tribes (Gryaznevich, 1984a). In this context, the pre-Islamic proverbs collected by al-Maydānī proclaim such collective values as group decision making, equality in Allah's eyes, responsibility to fellow tribesmen, decency and modesty in relations with others, etc.:

4) al-mušāwara qabla al-muṯāwara;
Advice (consultation) is more preferable than enmity.
5) al-nās ka asnān al-mušṭ ay mutasāwūn fī al-nisb ay kulluhum banū ādam;
People are like the teeth of a comb, they are equal by birth since they are all children of Adam.
6) al-tawāḍuʿ šabaka al-šaraf;
Modesty is a trap for honor.
7) man ʿāšar al-nās bi al-makr kāfuʼuhu bi al- ġadr;
Whoever builds relationships with other people based on a lie will be answered with betrayal.
8) āfa al-muruwwa ḫulf al-mawʿid.
A broken promise is a serious blow to one's authority.

According to the Bedouins, a free man has the following strengths: intelligence, wit, initiative, courage, nobility, hospitality and independence. If a free man gets in trouble, he is left to himself. The Bedouin nomads were free in

difficult living conditions of a desert when they needed to make independent decisions in order to survive. The following pre-Islamic proverbs emphasize the individualistic concept of Bedouin freedom, including personal independence, high self-esteem, self-sufficiency and contentment with available resources.

9) ‘azz al-raǧul ’istiġnāhu ‘an al-nās;

The man's greatness lies in his independence from other people.

10) man qani‘ bimā huwa fīhi qarrat ‘aynayhi;

Those who are thankful for small favors are the happiest.

11) lan yahlik amru’ ‘araf qadrahu;

The man who knows his own worth will be all right.

12) mā ḥakka ẓahrī miṯla yaddī;

No one will scratch my back better than my own hand.

While considering al-Maydānī's proverbs reflecting an attitude towards slaves, we have not found the following terms: *"’amma"* – bondwoman, *"‘abd mamlūk"* – bought slave, *"muwallad"* – born slave and other forms of slavery in the medieval Muslim society.

Taking into account the historical development of the Arabs and their sociocultural environment which later formed the Arab-Muslim folklore and, in particular, ideas about personal freedom, the authors have analyzed the concepts of "Arabs", "Bedouins", "Muslims" and "the Arab-Muslim civilization".

When the Caliphate was formed, the Arab-Muslim elite in the conquered territories became estranged from the Arab-Muslims who continued to lead a semi-nomadic way of life and lagged behind culturally developed areas despite the consolidation of Mecca and Medina as two religious capitals of the empire. The Bedouin descendants converted to Islam still roam deserts of Arabia, Jordan and Sinai, and do not recognize any power defending their independence and self-sufficiency. The fact that medieval Muslim philologists, lexicographers and grammarians (not Arabs by birth) received materials from the descendants of Arab tribes who had conquered Persia, Egypt, Syria and some regions of Asia right up to northern Spain proves that the concept of "the Bedouin freedom in a desert" was familiar to the inhabitants of all the conquered lands. Nevertheless, features of medieval societies acquainted with slavery and feudalism were universal across the established Caliphate. Furthermore, the Arab elite as a religiously and politically superior ethnos encouraged this kind of linguistic activity and appeal to native speakers of Arabic that is the language of the Quran.

We have considered the leader's role among the Bedouin nomads and settled tribes in the pre-Islamic period.

13) Al-nās bi al-ḫayr mā tabayyanu. Ay mā dāmā fīhi al-ra’īs wa al-ru’ūs wa iḏa tasāwu halaku;

People are blessed while they differ, i.e. as long as there are governors and controlled ones. If they violate this order, they will die.

Al-Maydānī's explanation of this proverb relating to the pre-Islamic period (it is possible that al-Maydānī only dated this proverb to the pre-Islamic period) indicates a common medieval stereotype that people are doomed to misfortunes, including death. Perhaps it is the sole author's interpretation. Since the *"tabayyan"* verb means "to differ" or "to be different" this proverb can denote the difference between people by the type of activity, origin, race, etc.

In the pre-Islamic period, the Arabs used the "al-ra’īs" term to denote a person to whom some community delegated the role of a "combat leader" during military campaigns (Piotrovskii, 1984). The pre-Islamic proverbs recorded by al-Maydānī do not contain the terms *"šayḫ", "mukabbir"* and other definitions of authorities and leaders used by the Bedouins and settled people, and known from other sources, including the Quran.

We have analyzed the following proverb of the pre-Islamic period:

14) taldaġ al-‘aqrab wa taṣī‘;

A scorpion stings and squeaks.

This saying describes a tyrant who pretends to be a victim.

The proverb conveys the image of an unworthy and unjust person – a tyrant. The "ṣā’" verb referring to the squeak of chickens, piglets, mice and scorpions describes a tyrant who pretends to be innocent (Al-Maydānī Abū al-Fadl and Aḥmad bin Muḥammad al-Nīsbūrī, 1966). The criticism of ethical and moral qualities of people oppressing collectives indicates the existence of specific moral behavior obligatory for all members of the collective. Consequently, the behavior of such a person is evaluated in terms of its compliance with common moral standards. The moral conduct of tribes with no stratification into leaders and subordinates reveals itself in collective relations characterized by respect for each other, mutual assistance and other attributes of the pre-Islamic collective thinking:

15) Kamā tudīn tudān;

As you judge, you will be judged.

16) a‘in aḫāk wa law bi al-ṣawt;

Help your brother even if all you have is a kind word.

Like other medieval sources, these proverbs collected by al-Maydānī reflect the pre-Islamic ideas of nobility, honor, dignity, self-esteem and the Bedouin authority, which are denoted by the term *"muruwwa"*. Within the framework of this study, we will not analyze the relevant material in detail but emphasize that special attention in pre-Islamic proverbs revealing collective mindset is paid to the predestination and fear of Allah's punishment:

17) šāwir fī ’amrik al-laḏīn yaḫšawna allāh;

Counsel with those who fear Allah.

18) lā yanfa‘ ḥaḏar min qadar;

Caution will not save one from predestination (Allah).

We have further analyzed a group of proverbs reflecting the transition to power-subordinate feudal relationships in the Arab society of the Islamic period. The consolidation of different Arab clans and tribes, the advance of the Muslim army into new regions and the formation of central government gave rise to ideas about a certain state order, strong leader and the need for strong-willed leadership to manage the growing Muslim state. The following proverbs belonging to the *"al-muwalladīn"* category express the ideas about power and the sovereign's rule over the conquered peoples:

19) Sulṭān ġašum ḫayr min fitna tadūm;

A tyrant ruler is better than never-ending anarchy.

20) Man 'akal maraqa al-sulṭān 'iḫtaraqat šafatāhu wa law ba'ad ḥīn.

Whoever has eaten the sultan's soup will burn his lips even with the passage of time.

21) Sūsū al-šafil bi al-maḫafa;

Rule common people with fear.

These sayings reflect the legitimacy of even the most unjust power in the name of order. On the one hand, it testifies to the obvious insecurity of people from arbitrary rule. On the other hand, it indicates that a political leader has the right to control the fate of people. The second proverb promotes the inviolability of both the sultan's personality and his property, i.e. it prohibits violating hierarchical and authoritative in the Arab state. This proverb can also be interpreted in a different way: whoever has the sultan's disposition may be endangered by his envious opponents or the ruler himself, i.e. any relations with the sultan can negatively affect the fate of a person. The last proverb demonstrates the practice of authoritarian governance in the Arab-Muslim state where the need to preserve the elite power was opposed to the opinion of common people.

The "sulṭān" term denoting an authoritative person was firstly introduced not in the pre-Islamic Bedouin culture but in the second half of the 9th century, after the formation of the Arab Caliphate and the assertion of the caliph's role as a central political figure in the Arab state to whom sultans (governors) and emirs (military commanders) were subordinate (Bartold, 1966). It should be noted that this word denoted only an abstract concept of power in the Quran and the first centuries of Islam. The sulṭān word was used in this meaning later but also began to denote the sole representative of secular power in contrast to the imam, a representative of religious authority (ibid.). The proverbs listed by al-Maydānī do not include the components *"ḫalifa"* (the prophet's successor) and *"nabiyy"* (prophet). We suppose that the discussion of the Messenger of Allah and a clergyman who became the head of the Muslim community after the prophet's death (Caliph) in proverbs contradicted the ethical views of al-Maydānī or the environment where samples of folk art were made and replicated.

Regarding the criticism of a state leader, we have recorded a number of proverbs adopted from other territories conquered by the Arabs and reflecting the criticism of a flawed leader, for instance:

22) mā ta'man al-'amīr 'iḏa ġašal al-wazīr;

Do not believe the head (emir) whose vizier deceived you.

This proverb expresses the mistrust of a political leader who surrounds himself with unscrupulous officials. The Arabic saying creates the image of a governor (emir) who consciously appoints one or another functionary in his political structures. Therefore, locals can distrust this political leader and his entourage.

When the Muslim-Arabs arrived in Persia they faced a developed political system that influenced the structure of their Muslim state. According to some experts, the wazīr term has the Arabic etymology (*wzr* – "to endure difficulties, to be an assistant") and probably has the Middle-Persian origin (Sprenling, 1939).

The following proverbs belonging to the *"al-muwalladīn"* category demonstrate the dependence of people on their rulers not only from the position of strength and power but also in a religious and ideological sense:

23) Al-nās 'ittaba'u man ġalaba;

People follow the winner.

24) Al-nās 'ala dīn al-mulūk;

People adopt the religion of their rulers.

The Arabs used the terms *"malik"* (king) and *"mulk"* (power) before their convertion to Islam. The Bedouin nomads gave these sayings a negative connotation because they assumed the pressure of one person over other people (Gryaznevich, 1984b).

Some proverbs in the *"al-muwalladīn"* category are characterized by compassion for rulers and authoritative personalities since the first have a great responsibility and cannot win the favor of all people, and the latter can be absolved from mistakes and delusions as their authority and respect permits leniency.

25) Sayyid al-qawm 'ašqāhum;

The head of people is the most miserable of them.

Al-Maydānī explained the meaning of the proverb in the following manner: Li'annahu yumāris al-šadā'id dūna al-'ašīda – "Unlike his fellow tribesmen, he has to overcome various difficulties".

26) 'Aqīlu ḏawi al-hay'āt 'aṯarātihim.

Forgive decent (respected) people some mistakes.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, the *"sayyid"* word denoted a tribal leader who led negotiations for the satisfaction of claims and blood feuds, treated guests and cared for poor tribesmen (Piotrovskii, 1984). In the Islamic period, the same term was used to denote authority in the Muslim community. Prophet Muhammad fulfilled the functions of *"sayyid"* and *"al-ra'īs"* or *"'aqīd"* (a combat leader) (ibid.).

Proverbs in the *"al-muwalladīn"* category also highlight a number of external factors that do not directly criticize the political leader's activities but reveal insufficient ethical qualities of his subordinates and people's attitudes towards standards and prohibitions:

27) Li kul ğeyš 'arāt wa 'arām;
There is corruption and evil in every army.
28) Kul mamnū' matbū';
Everything prohibited has its own followers.
29) tafriq bayn al-muslimīn al-darāhim;
Dirhams disunite the Muslims.

Traditional and feudal societies have vague boundaries between economic and political relations (Kradin, 2010). The last proverb criticizes financial relations in the Muslim society. Monetary disputes often caused hostility between the Muslims – citizens, rural residents, public officials. Sometimes governors declared war in certain areas of the large Arab-Muslim state. In turn, monetary disputes among the state or military elite resulted in takeovers.

5. Conclusion

After analyzing the concepts of "freedom", "power" and "leadership" in the Arabic folklore as exemplified by the proverbs collected by al-Maydānī, the authors of the article have concluded that the Arab-Muslim folklore was influenced by the cultures of conquered lands and represented a unique synthesis of ancient mental archetypes of the following ethnic groups: the Bedouin nomads who converted to Islam and more developed peoples of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, Western Asia and Persia. There were scientific schools, libraries and observatories in Persia. In Syria, Christian and Judaical communities retained their identity. Thanks to the work of Syrian monks and translators, the Arab-Muslim culture adopted achievements of the ancient Greeks and spread this knowledge throughout Europe. A critical study of the Arabic folklore lets scholars analyze terminal cognitive processes in the public consciousness of the Middle East and North Africa inhabitants and interpret the behavior of collectives in conditions of a power crisis. To thoroughly study archetypes of collective consciousness and the modern Arab political culture, we propose to distinguish archetypal ethno-confessional layers of the pre-Islamic period and superethnic socio-psychological elements of the Arab-Muslim mindset.

The archetype of a theocratic political culture has been consolidated throughout the centuries-long Arab-Muslim history and is currently manifested in the state structure of Iran and Saudi Arabia. The archetype of sacral power is realized in Saudi Arabia where the monarch's official title in parliamentary monarchy should preserve Muslim values and serve Muslim shrines, literally *ḥādim al-šarafayn al-ḥaramayn* "the keeper of two shrines" (Mecca and Medina). The monarch's functions combine a number of powers and exclusive prerogatives that are enshrined in the state constitution. In fact, it is the influence of traditional hereditary monarchy originating in the medieval Muslim state.

Indeed, the modern Middle Eastern political mindset and ideas about the ruler's functions differ from medieval beliefs due to the following factors: relative democratization of society (Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt), the overthrow of authoritarian rule in several Arab states (Iraq, Libya), the strengthening of civil rights and weakening of clan unions due to economic imperatives of regional elites. Nevertheless, respect for the personality of a political leader is manifested in national and mobilization symbols: national anthems, public references to the merits of state leaders, their clan affiliation, hereditary monarchy (Jordan, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates). While giving speeches in the League of Arab States, political leaders emphasize the Arab idealized identity. When opposition sentiments in the public discourse of the pro-state political elite intensify, the archetype of maintaining stability and national unity becomes more prominent. The influence of the centuries-long medieval self-censorship among scientists and art community can be still traced in the work of contemporary journalists in the Middle East and North Africa. They slightly criticize the activities of their political leader and bash various authorities and foreign enemies.

The concepts of the individual's freedom and independence typical of the pre-Islamic Bedouin culture were complemented by the concepts of power and leadership with the adoption of Islam. Obviously, these changes are due to the transition from traditional tribal community to charismatic feudal society.

In this regard, the question arises about the validity of the freedom concept expressed in the Bedouin folklore and applied to the formal archetype of the Arab national mindset. All areas of the former Caliphate are characterized by complex archetypal layers of collective consciousness. However, modern geolinguistic clusters and forms of government in the Middle East and North Africa reflect the kinship of different ethnic mindsets better than attempts to summarize ideological and didactic ideas of medieval Arabic proverbs with the idealized Arab mindset.

The concept of "a free person" in modern Arab society has a rather polar interpretation: 1) freedom within the interests of all members of the Muslim community regarding one's spiritual life in a religious and ideological environment; 2) freedom in the framework of the Western concept of democracy where freedom is a personal affair as long as an individual does not violate the standards and laws provided for all citizens regardless of their political, religious, gender, racial, ideological and other affiliations; 3) the freedom of speech and will (in particular, after the Arab Spring in Egypt); 4) the individualized freedom of the Bedouin nomads who do not recognize any authority but adhere to Islam.

The concept of central government in the Muslim society is also ambiguous: Ayatollah in Iran follows a theocratic principle of power distribution, Jordan has a constitutional monarchy, Syria is a presidential republic, and Turkey is a presidential power with pro-Islamist sentiments. Clans or parties in the listed countries fight either for maximum influence on the head or for the appointment of their representative to the presidency. The distribution of power and resources reflects clan interests of elites. The election of power and rational distribution of power and resources typical of the Western civilization oppose archetypes of the Arab-Muslim collective mindset as evidenced by the Islamic folklore.

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Appendix

Appendix-1. Transcription table

Letter spelling	Transcription sign	Letter spelling	Transcription sign
ا	[ā]	ض	[ḍ]
ب	[b]	ط	[ṭ]
ت	[t]	ظ	[ẓ]
ث	[ṯ]	ع	[ʿ]
ج	[ǧ]	غ	[ġ]
ح	[ḥ]	ف	[f]
خ	[ḫ]	ق	[q]
د	[d]	ك	[k]
ذ	[ḏ]	ل	[l]
ر	[r]	م	[m]
ز	[z]	ن	[n]
س	[s]	ه	[h]
ش	[š]	و	[w][ū]
ص	[ṣ]	ي	[y] [ī]