

Minstrel Tradition among the Berber-speaking People in Morocco: Examples of poem-song of “Rāis” in Sous region.

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1. Introduction

Rāis (pl. *Ruways*) is a term that refers to a poem-singer whose mother tongue is Tashlhit. And the term also indicates his/her work. Tashlhit is one of three major dialects of Berber language spoken in Morocco. Each of the three is Tarifit of northern Rifian mountains, Tamazight of central High Atlas region and lastly Tashlhit of southwestern region called “Sous.” High Atlas mountains in north and Anti Atlas mountains in south surround the heartland of Sous. Present capital city of Sous is Agadir located on the Atlantic coast. There are other towns in this region such as Taroudant, Tiznit, Taliwiin and Tafraut, but most of the people live in local villages spreading over mountainous hills and a plain along Wad (river) Sous. *Ruways* have wandered about these villages and towns since a long time with their original poem-songs to be performed at various occasions. I suppose it appropriate to call them “minstrels.”

These minstrels, along with religious leaders called “*fqih*,” sustained a principal role as transmitter of religious and cultural knowledge in this basically non-literate society. Though these two categories of intelligentsia are clearly divided into distinct professions in present days, they can be supposed to have been merged into one entity in former days. Minstrels combined a person to a person, a village to a village and a village to a town in sociological context, and they also brought rural people into a vast Islamic religious realm. When we consider the basic nature of Berber culture, especially that of the Sous, thorough comprehension of this minstrel tradition becomes indispensable. *Rāis* reflects the sentiment of the people, and the people, in reverse, acquire an aesthetic sense and religious wisdom from *Rāis*, even though the relation between them has been subjected to a considerable change throughout the history. In order to understand this reciprocal interrelationship, we would have to specify sociological and historical context of them in detail. But at the same time, we, the outsiders, should comprehend the rough meaning of their poems at least. Hence in this article, after making a brief sketch on cultural categories or vocabularies that surround *Rāis* tradition in the next chapter, I shall introduce three examples of well known *Rāis*

poems by offering them in English translation together with original Berber texts. They characterize three chronological stages of development of the tradition respectively.

2. What is Rāis?

(1) *Amarg*, *Amarīr*, *Andāmm* and *Rāis*:

There are some interrelated vocabularies that are used ambiguously by people when they speak of their oral tradition centered on *Rāis*. One of them is a word “*Amarg*,” which now indicates all kinds of musical activities of *Swāsa* (= people of Sous) including poems, songs and dances. But this overall application of the term is not archaic. People say that this term originally meant a poem that was to be read with rhythm and melody. Another term “*Imarirn*” (pl. *Amarīr*) is closely related to it in this context. *Imarirn* is a composer of poems, who exposes his own poems to the public only by his voice without using any musical instruments. I suppose it a prototype that an *Imarirn* composed an *Amarg*. This combination supposedly expressed a rather religious and pedantic character. That is because, in spite of composing their poems in the native language Tashlhit, *Amarīr* were alleged to have even a least knowledge of Arabic, and they were often believed to have some master-disciple relationships with *fqih*-s who were professionals of Arabic and Islamic learning. We can observe a reverse phenomenon, even today, that a *fqih* gives his religious lecture accompanied with melody and rhythm when he speaks in Tashlhit. Al-Mazigi Brahim, for example, puts some melodious phrases into emphasized parts of his religious lecture recorded in his videotape. He is a famous *fqih* from Sous and his voice message in the video is conveyed to migrated *Swasa* living in big cities like Casablanca and Rabat, or even in France and Belgium.

This kind of connection between religious message and song-like poem is characterized by soberness that does not accompany instruments. Musical instruments sometimes breach the solemnity of faith, though the solemnity is just one aspect among a variety of religious communication styles. The tendency to avoid musical instruments is also attributed to another term “*Andāmm*” (pl. *Indāmm*). I, frankly speaking, cannot draw a sharp line between this word and *Amarīr*. *Andāmm* is also a person who composes poems and reads them openly in front of the public without using any

instruments, just the same as *Amarīr*. He is, and has been so far, invited by villagers to celebrations such as Mousem (festival of saints), Ma‘ruf (collective gatherings of village) and ‘Īd (Islamic feasts) to offer them his poems. He is required to sing his poem alone by himself and loudly so that people could comprehend it. The only thing that differs from *Amarīr* is, to my impression, that *Andāmm* sometimes performs a dialogical competition of poem with other *Andāmm* by using improvised phrases. He must invent a more elegant and witty expression than that of the partner. Subsequently, I suppose that *Imarirn* is a text-maker while *Andāmm* is an improvisator.

Interesting, though, is the naming of the poem made by *Andāmm*. It is called “*tandammt*” (f. of *Andāmm*), but is sometimes called *Amarg*. We find a pretty wide range of overlapping of the meaning of *Andāmm* and *Imarirn* in this respect. Lahcen Ajmmaa and Ihya Bouqdir are said to be outstanding examples of contemporary *Andāmm*, but their poems are accepted as *Amarg*, not *tandammt*.

There was, in early days, a special place named “*abaraz*” in every village to invite these *Andāmm* and *Imarirn* asking for their performance. This place was, in many cases, adjacent to a Mosque or situated in the center of the village. Consequently, it is possible to imagine that they were regarded as official guests to the village backed by religious moral and knowledge, considering that the place was originally used for village (or tribal) meeting to discuss collective community problems.

In contrast to this solemn tradition, *Rāis* has a rather secular nature. *Rāis* has been invited to private celebrations as marriage party, seventh day of newborn baby and returning party from pilgrimage etc., Although *Rāis* sings poems just like *Andāmm* or *Imarirn*, there are some distinctive features that divide them. For example, people say that *Rāis* sings a poem composed by other person while *Imarirn* (or *Andāmm*) sings his own original poem. I am not certain whether this is convincing or not. Really we can confirm that some *Ruwais* certainly sing works made by others in some cases, and they are allowed to do so. But most *Ruwais* are proud of exhibiting their original poem-song. I cannot find any differences between them regarding to the composing process of poems and the way of exhibition, except the following two points. One is the occasion of performance, namely official or private, as mentioned above. And the other is the use of musical instruments. The prominent feature of *Rāis* tradition is that they introduced a stringed instrument called “*rubāb*.” When they sing their poem, they hold their own fiddle-like *rubāb* without exception. And their singing voice and the sound of *rubāb*

appear alternately throughout their performance. The use of musical instruments separates the *Rāis* tradition, together with *Aḥwāš* (coming next), from the poem-reciting tradition of *Andāmm* and *Imarirn*. A specific term “*Ihadart*” (=entertainment) is ready to be given to these instrumental performances.

(2) *Aḥwāš* and *Rāis*:

There is a peculiar folk tradition of singing and dancing in Sous. It is deeply rooted in local tribal life. This tradition, called “*Aḥwāš*,” is basically performed in groups, and it has a distinctive feature that it is characterized by self-exhibition. It means that performers need no audience at all. To sing and to dance by themselves is the final objective.

Aḥwāš can be divided into two kinds in respect to the occasion for performance. One is the official occasion in which villagers, especially younger generation, participate energetically in summer festivals, harvest feasts and festivals for saints. Another occasion is marriage ceremony in which tribal members celebrate the marriage by their song and dance. In both cases, participants compose the phrase of dance-song. But they are amateur composers in the end. They often borrow excellent phrases from *Andāmm-Imarirn* tradition. And it is even not uncommon that *Andāmm* is invited and introduced to the playground of *Aḥwāš*, where *tandammt* (or *amarg*) is inserted into the main body of *Aḥwāš* song intermittently by a solo cantata of *Andāmm*. This part shows a remarkable contrast to the main body because the latter is constituted by collective chorus, excessive repetition of simple phrases, dialogical exchange of songs between groups, short and strong rhythm made by *tallunt* (=tambourine) and *ganga* (=big drum), marching back and forth with trembling steps and a noisy crowd, while the former is characterized by a prosaic solo recitation, monologic phrases, exclusion of instruments and motionless recital in silent atmosphere.

Thus, *Aḥwāš* and *Andāmm-Imarirn* tradition complement each other and the relation between them is close and intimate. On the other hand, *Aḥwāš* does not require *Rāis* at all. This is because the *Rāis* tradition is relatively new and it has been developed in towns and cities, not rooted in countryside. Village life does not always have an affinity with town-born culture. And the modern transformation of *Rāis* into show-upped entertainment probably produced a conflict with the feeling of villagers to keep their activities within a “pure” Islamic life. This means that the ancient tradition of

Rāis was not clearly divided from that of *Andāmm-Imarirn* tradition and both of them provided villagers with a natural religious sentiment in a sober way. But in later days, as *Ruways* adopted a variety of musical instruments and organized professional dancing teams so that they could appeal to the newborn media audience, they lost a naïve religious odor and increased the discrepancy. And they were conversely urged to emphasize religious messages more directly and clumsily than ever. But, here, we must note that not a least villager has already migrated to towns and cities for work, and they became new supporter for *Rāis*. Such process will be discussed later in the following chapters. Anyway, although *Aḥwāš* and *Rāis* belong to the same “*Ihadart*” (=entertainment) category, they have quite different, contrastive and even complementary character. ⁽¹⁾

3. Mythical Star of *Rāis* in the early days: Hajj Bel ‘īd and his poem.

The origin of *Rāis* tradition cannot be traced back so long in history. This is due to the lack of written sources in part, but the fact that it had been merged into an oral tradition of *Amarīr* (and *fqih*) is more important reason. *Amarīr* tradition itself is not new but has a long genealogy back to some centuries. ⁽²⁾ Considering this situation, it would be appropriate to recognize that Hajj Bel ‘īd was the first and the most renowned star of *Rāis*. It is not too much to say that he provided with an excellent model and established a basic style of *Rāis* performance. His name has become a synonym of this tradition.

Hajj Bel ‘īd was born at Wijjān sub-tribe in Asaka region, east from Tiznit city. His date and year of birth is not clear but according to a chronicle-like commentary of Umar Amarir, he was reported to be approximately sixty in his age at 1933. And he died after 1945[Amarir 1975 p.151]. ⁽³⁾ We cannot obtain a detailed information on his life today, but many disciples attested that he wandered about not only his land Sous but also the whole Morocco bringing his disciples with him as his assistants and back players. Because some old disks of his that I obtained in Tiznit shows that the recording was done in Paris, he must have visited France. He recorded more than sixty poem-songs on phonogram during his lifetime, and thirteen among which are re-recorded in cassette tapes in later days after his death.

Heyday of his activity is supposed to be in 1920’s and 30’s when the French

colonial power was invading deep into Sous mountains. Many *Swāsa*, including Hajj Bel ‘īd, were pushed out to big cities like Marrakech, Casablanca, Rabat and northern coastal cities in this period. And they had contact with European powers both in their land and outside world. Some of them had already established their colonies even in France at the beginning of twentieth century. This situation made him possible to make minstrel tours throughout Morocco and France. And encounter with European powers gave him an ambivalent feeling, namely admiration and aversion. This feeling was probably shared with his comrades at that time, and it is also expressed in a poem cited below (phrase no.38).

His poems seem to be divided into two genres in respect to the style. One is perceptive story and the other is allegory. This division was presumably influenced by a popular narrative style of folktales, where these two styles are distinguished by the opening phrase. The former begins with “nnan willi zrinīn” (ancient people said), and the latter with “wayindi wayindi” (a long time ago). On the other hand, we can also classify his poems in respect to the content of the story. Roughly speaking, *Ruwais* in his age and their juniors succeeded a tradition of epic poems in composing their works. It sometimes took a style of perceptive story and sometimes allegory. But in his case, these epics went to paean-like poems for his country and people on one way, and to poems with political connotation on another way. His next generation developed the latter tendency lastly to resistant songs due to the age of struggle against colonial power.

Before proceeding to this next stage, we shall touch on his disciples in his epoch. Among many, Bu Bakr Inšād and Muhammad Bu Dra‘ are the conspicuous. Everyone in Sous knows their names until today. Both of them were born in Shutūka, a region between Agadir and Tiznit. Disciples in this epoch, in general, were said to have followed his master during his tour in order to help and assist his activities both on stage and in everyday life. This tour gave the disciple a chance for training of composing and playing poems. When he finally got permission from his master, he could set out on his own independent journey, though he often joined in his master’s tour again in case of need afterwards. This kind of master-disciple relation is quite similar to that of Sufi tradition. I am not sure if there had existed direct connection between them or not, but it is sometimes said that a disciple could get a permission from a dead master in a dream at the grave. This is what the Sufis are said to have done. ⁽⁴⁾

In this respect, Hammū Tālib is one of the most famous dead masters. He is

alleged to have lived in seventeenth century, and is respected by both *Amarīr* and *Ruwais*. Even the participants to *Ahwāš* consider an elegant expression of their song to be coming from Hammū Tālib's poem when they find it out from other group's song. This phenomenon shows us that a variety of modern oral traditions would be branches of an old poet tradition.

Next is an example of poem-song of the great master Hajj Bel 'īd (Note that the early works of *Rāis* were not entitled in many cases):

[Translation]

1) [Calling phrase] 2) This is a story of a man. 3) He wants to go east (= pilgrimage to Mecca) because he has got enough money. 4) He desires to visit the Messenger-Prophet who intermediates his family and neighbors to the God and makes permission from him (on the day of the last judgment) 5) But his wife wept and kissed on his foot. He felt sad and felt a pain in his heart. 6) Pain in his heart. [2 repeats] 7) She said to Hajj (= her husband; this title is given to a man who makes or made the pilgrimage to Mecca), "I want the visit with you, too." He told her, "Let's make a visit. Follow me." 8) She carried a small baby. [2 repeats] 9) Besides them, more than 700 pilgrims are conveyed on a ship, each of them is a believer of their God. 10) (They) want to visit the Messenger-Prophet who intermediates them. 11) The ship proceeded for a long time and the weather changed bad. The captain (of the ship) was in a flurry and lost the right way. He did not realize it until arriving at an island. 12) He lowered a sail and kept it in order on the board. The ship arrived and stopped. 13) {I shall repeat my story, my first talk. Do you understand it?} 14) Here is an important story. This wife told her husband that she wanted to see around the island to make her head cool, though her heart was still fearful. 15) He consulted with the captain, who gave them permission. They got off the board in a moment and arrived at the heart of the island. He left her there with her embracing a small baby, and went away. 16) She said she was tired (because she embraced her baby). It is better to leave him (= the baby) sitting here and to walk around the island to come back to him. This is her word. Then she left the small (baby). 17) While she covered the baby with a blanket, he slept. Then she left for inland. He (= the husband) said, "Let's go to such a vast land." 18) {Foot leads to the goal which everyone possesses respectively.} 19) Her husband, he sat in the center of the ship. Moderate wind blew.

The captain raised a sail again firmly. 20) The captain said, "Raise a sail firmly."
 He (= the husband) called his wife to come up on the ship. 21) {Calling phrase}
 22) The miserable (= his wife) wept with her heart broken. [2 repeats] 23) He said
 to her, "What is on you? What has happened to you?" 24) She told Hajj (= husband),
 "What worries me is my baby." She said that she left the baby in the island. 25)
 May the God tell the captain that he can take all my money if he wishes. 26) Oh my
 baby! I cannot bear any more. 27) The husband told the story to the captain.
 28) The captain does not accept. 29) The two grieved and wept again and again
 until they left for the visit (= pilgrimage). 30) {Now I shall go back to the story of
 the little youngster (= baby).} 31) There, one gazelle brought up him. 32)
 Wherever it may go (for searching food), it knew the time to be back to him (= baby).
 33) Wherever it may go, it knew the time of suckling. 34) A gazelle helped the little
 youngster. Our Lord, a wolf and a lion brought up him. 35) A hyena brought up him.
 Our Lord brought up him. 36) {Now I shall go back to the story of two parents
 whom the God and his prophet Muhammad brought to the (same) land (= island).}
 37) Having visited all (= After finishing the pilgrimage), he (= the husband) came to
 meet a person who had become an adult man (= the baby). 38) They got on a ship
 that was strong, stout and excellent. It was a British ship. The forbidden (ship) knew the
 center of water (= ocean) just like the pupil (or eye) knew friends. 39) Even in the
 depth, the rationality thinks of it. (=Parents always think of their child even in a far
 place) 40) That woman got down on the island of pigeon (=her baby). She received
 her son just like a son of pigeon. 41) Oh, my son! Welcome, oh, my lad! I ate
 (=suffered) a lot of pain and grief. 42) On that day our Lord ordered, I wept in the
 island with my two eyes. 43) My rationality was occupied with grief. Oh my son,
 your father wept in night and day. 44) Let's go to the mosque at madrasa (=Islamic
 school) to stay there (=to learn there), because our Lord did not order you to make a
 pilgrimage. 45) A gazelle helped the little youngster. 46) The little youngster
 met his family. That is what the God wished and had decided. The God never breaks his
 words regardless of Jews or Muslims. 47) I will offer you a good thing. The
 prophet's hood [=a kind of interlude phrase]. 48) May the God and the parents bless
 him. Without the blessing, there is no profit at all (=the life is meaningless). [repetition]
 49) Oh the God, please protect us so that we may not suffer a lot of calamity.
 [repetition] 50) Ah, my head becomes tired. Time has come (to take a rest).

[Original Berber text (in Latin transcription)]

1){anayni di lay li} 2) lqist n yen urgaz 3) iran yamudduns inuwwa y ššarq
ishayas lmāl yggutni 4) akunzorn an-nabi arsle išafa‘ gisn insamah day ddars wala
adjār dinsi 5) abla tawtamt llila tdda ar-afudns ar-talla nttan miskīn iharg l-qulbnsi
6) iharg lqulbnsi [2 repeats] 7) nnassawl l-ḥajji rīx addiwn nzūr innās a bunti arwāh
atzurt sasizuwras 8) tarba arraw damzziyn [2 repeats] 9) yikkūti sub‘miyya
l-ḥajji ngi sūl išidi attusi sfint kuyen iga rrajans ḡarubbinsi 10) akunzūr annabi
arsle išafa‘ gisni 11) illiḡ nhawuln iggrūd lmanzl ur ‘dalnsi itlf aflān rrays ngaran
dmnadns ur itfaq ayllīḡ nīt l kamn yattgziṛt 12) iks lql‘ans idlsis aḡarrabuns tust
sfint tbiḍ 13){urriḡ dilhāditi awal lisnnīḡ izwar aya fihim ifhamtn} 14) lqistns
slfaida tamḡart dans atnnās a sidi rad n barrum itgziṛti agḡis nstāra hal‘aql lxōf
lqalbinwi 15) išawr ḡowalli rrays ikfayas lquḍnsi issakit dlhīn išha tzzumt n tgzirt
axas irzam trba ukan arraw da mzziyn 16) issarmit tna yufnīt attajḡ iggawri
adnsutl y tgzirt nurrīḍ ilmma sdarsi awalna kattna tasik ašbāb mzzīn 17) issaw kān
ign a sidi ukan tddltni xkudan ilmma tkfan y tgzirti ḡar innās ruwāh iban dak iḡikan a
sidi 18){adar idfār lḡard yen iran imnadids} 19) lhasol walli ttilan nttan
isiggawr ammās ogorrahwayawado ishlasn ijddīḍ daḡ rrays igan lqlu‘a idusni 20)
isawl ḡ walli rrays igan lqlu‘ idusni iḡrad g walli waflanta ḡawl attḡlimt 21){alayli
day li} 22) ukan artalla mskint iharg lqlbunsi [repetition] 23) innayās abnti
makmyaḡn mafthult 24) tnnayās l-ḥajji madaxn urihuln arraw-inu itnnās ntuttin ḡ
tgziṛti 25) arubbi inyāt rrays iḡira l-māl adawi attn kullu awi 26) arraw-inu uras
sbīrxi 27) išawar ḡ walli rrays igissas lmjriyt 28) uras iqbīl rrays 29)
isiwin tawingimt wuran arallan ddun ayllīḡ dzorni 30){urriḡ dilmma swwal nšbāb
mzziyn} 31) ha yen uzankḍ iqabiltnt 32) mqqār iksa issun lqt littruḥ darsn
33) mqqār iksa issun lqt nnisarda‘ani 34) a sidi šbāb mzziyn hān azankḍ ijnjmtni,
injjat mūlānā iwuššn wala agrzam 35) injjatn iyifīs, mūlānā aygan ḍḍamn
36){urriḡ dilmma swwal lwālidīn iwitnd rubbi n-nabi Muḥammad ar dzayr} 37)
zurnd kullu mund gin irjliyn 38) ssudun yawwanaw išha bahra idūsni iga weninglīz
l-haram ixald ḡ tuzzumt waman ḡmkad itxalad izri amḍḍakl 39) maqqār iga
xignuwās l‘aql idda dars 40) ataki l-bnt lli dar itbirni ḡ tagziṛti tassi arrawns zund
arraw ntatbirti 41) iwa mraḥbabik ašbāb ayarrawn šix ingazn dlhmum walalhul
ggutni 42) aslli ḡyūmar mūlānā asixik ḡ tagziṛti ar allax sini tit 43) hān

la‘qlinu heln babak ayiwi ar yalla ġ yid wala zal 44) arwāh ar timzgida ġlmdarst yili
gisni llīġ or yūmar mūlānā ġil slhujjank 45) a sidi šbāb mzzīn hān aznkd ijinjmtn
46) a sidi šbāb mzzīn immaggār day ddarsi aynna yra rrubbi syan ar sīs ggarn igit udayn
nuġamūmn han rrubbi ur ar tġdarn 47) qddm ġakn afulkī anbbi abu ‘amāma 48)
nnafrdan rrubbi dlwālidīn amma walli furdan muhāl ursar rbihn [repetition] 49)
adax istar rrubbi ukan amma laxbār ggutn [repetition] 50) ayixfinu ishān nnarmī
tiwiyaxd ukan lqt

4. Transformation into popular Rāis: song and dance of Hajj Mohamed Demsiri and his band.

The golden age of Hajj Bel ‘īd and his comrades was followed by a big wave of resistance movement against French colonialism. Many *Ruways* suffered bitter experiences during their youth and accordingly they produced a lot of patriotic poems and resistance songs. When we remember that the oral tradition of Sous, may it be *Imarirn* or *Rāis*, had been deeply embedded in political and social arena as well as religious field, such new development becomes easily comprehensible. Bu Bakr Az‘ari was one of these patriot-resistances and his poem “Irbā‘īya” (=a rifle) gained a big popularity.

Lhseyñ Jōnti was also a forerunner of resistance poets. He was born in Shutūka in 1900, then went out to Rabat where he worked under a French woman who gave him a nickname “Gentil” [Amarir op.cit., p.114]. This nickname became his stage name in later days. He made frequent tours from *sūq* (weekly market) to *sūq*, from *mousem* (saint festival) to *mousem*, with a *rubāb* in his hand. French authority threw him into prison some times for fear of his appeal. He returned to his native village in the end but he had a great influence upon the junior comrades. Some people say that he was an *Imarirn* because he did not sing so much in his last years.

Ahmad Amntāg was a younger representative of *Rāis* at the time of patriotism. He is now called as Big Amntāg because we have another Amntāg in our days. His most famous poem is “Allah lwatan” (God’s country). He was born in 1927 at a village near Troudant that was a center of Islamic sciences and a cradle of Arabic *zajal* (=strophic poem) in southern Morocco. He encountered with many *Ruways* through his life and developed his own poem under their influences [al-Jama‘īya 1990 pp.77-9].

Some *Ruways* had contacts with other kinds of musical or literal traditions of Morocco. Hajj ‘Umar Wāhrūš was one of such figures. He was born in 1933 at a village near Marrakech and trained under the guid of a big poet Moulay ‘Ali. Because his master Moulay ‘Ali had already been acquainted with Andalusian music of northern Morocco, Wāhrūš was also influenced by this tradition of classic music of Arabs. He introduced a *wūd*, a basic instrument of Arabic music, into his *Rāis*. Wāhrūš had an experience of life in jail too but he wandered about many towns and cities seeking for his own poem. He sometimes sang poems of his another master, ‘Umar ‘Ijūwī, for his master had lost his own voice. In 1960’s, after the independence of his country, Wāhrūš frequently visited European cities for his concert. Mahdi Mbarak and Muhammad Ba ‘Umrān were his colleagues at that time. He died in 1995.

Hajj Mohamed Demsiri, whose poem is cited below, was a contemporary of Wāhrūš. I consider him as a revolutionist for new *Rāis*, who introduced many factors into the style of performance. Demsiri was born in 1939 and spent his younger days in Europe, visiting many poets there coming from Maghreb [Amarir op.cit., p.132]. His most conspicuous revolutionary contribution to new *Rāis* is that he transformed *Rāis* performance into a stage art, or a music show in other words. He certainly recognized the changing situation of communication media in post-independence days. In addition to radio that had got popularity since 1950’s, radio-cassette players found their way into almost all homes even in the mountain areas later in 1970’s. And from early 1980’s on, television sets with video players pervaded the town dwellers. Demsiri found his stage not in private plaza but on these new media and in theaters in cities. His voice was conveyed on cassette tapes, videotapes and the wave of radio and TV. In order to make an effective representation on these media communications, a group of female dancers backed his performance. They were dressed in typical Berber costumes and danced in a line marching back and forth with trembling steps. And they repeated his phrases in high tone voices. These features are clearly that of *Ahwāš*. But we should remember that the performance of *Ahwāš* is a self-objective activity, while the dance group of Demsiri aimed at an effective appearance to the audience. Relatively new invention of using *naqqūs* (=metal castanet) and *tal’wād* (=flute) also assisted the stage making.

Along with such a visual effect, Demsiri had also changed auditory aspects of *Rāis* poems by introducing excessive repetitions and exchange of phrases, which were specific features of *Ahwāš*. He had to cut his phrase at short pause in order to allow the

back group to repeat the same phrase. Although this manner was convenient for them to reproduce the dialogical exchange of phrases of *Aḥwāš* on their stage, this show up strategy sacrificed a prosaic flow of story that Hajji Belīd had used as a weapon (see the cited poem below).

Thus Demsiri created a new tradition both in performance style and in form of poem. This work was accomplished by connecting two different and contradictory traditions, namely *Aḥwāš* and *Rāis*. We must admit his contribution that *Rāis* came to gain a great popularity among Moroccans in whole, but, at the same time, it would be possible to say that the spectacle-making process of *Rāis* and its musicalization (or theatricalization) brought the minstrel tradition to a rather remote place from the ancient solemn tradition. The reason that Demsiri had to put some clumsy religious expressions and didactic phrases in his poems would be that he unconsciously wanted to compensate such a dilemma.

He died in 1989. Among his contemporaries, Sa‘īd Aštūk and Bu Bakr Marrākšī are conspicuous.

[Translation]

* = repetition of the phrase {makrīx a ya margi}(What poem do you want?) in a chorus of female dancers.

1) There is a horse remaining there by your control of its bridle. What poem do you want? [repetition in solo] * 2) There is a horse remaining there by your control of its bridle. [repetition in solo] * 3) I swear that your younger days would disappear soon if you do not get rid of head. * 4) You bought a colt. It brought you a profit. * (=A fine colt is fine because the buyer or owner is fine) 5) You bought a colt. It brought you a profit. 6) If the colt is separated from its owner, it does not produce silver. * 7) If the colt is separated from its owner, it does not produce silver. 8) Henna (=a kind of dyestuff used for ritual decoration) is good. Why? (Because) the branch of it is good. * 9) When being cut off (from a branch), it becomes worth nothing and ugly. * 10) There is a tray on which there are cups. * 11) If there isn't a pot on it, you (=a tray) are (just like) an orphan. * 12) The tray can never rob me of my rationality (=I don't mind) even if it shakes furiously. * 13) The eyes thrown on it (=the tray) are fascinated. * 14) A pretty marriage ring being put on a finger is beautiful. * 15) Being put off, then, there is no worth. * 16) If a white

horse is tied to a stake (out of the market), * 17) all dealers are caught by deep
 sorrow. * 18) They cannot buy nor sell the horse. * 19) If the horse is in the
 center of the market, * 20) people put their hands on it and throw their feet on it
 (=examine for purchase) * 21) People try to examine until leaving it back to the
 owner. * 22) (A man may say) "It is bad" after riding on it. * 23) Everyone who
 always purchases beans in the center of the market, * 24) does eat no honey, no
 meat. * (=beans eater cannot appreciate the value of honey and meat: beans symbolize
 valueless things) 25) Everyone living in a small alley is eager to go out. * 26) A
 horse may cut (a chain of) its bridle (to go out). Then the owner pursues it. * 27)
 Everyone who wants (to attain) his purpose pursues it. * 28) Evil befalls the hands
 and feet. * 29) May God cure a disease. * 30) When the world becomes tired,
 the people become tired. * 31) Even your brothers or parents, * 32) when the
 health abandons you, they abandon your purse. * (=Nobody helps you in the tired
 world) 33) A man who points (at a person) (=who meddles in a person's affairs) sits
 with us. * 34) He avoids you just like avoiding a disease. * 35) Money makes
 one a man of good (status). * 36) Even when the health (has a problem), if the purse
 increases, * 37) everyone carries (your load) on his shoulder. * (=they gather to
 help you) 38) Money makes an arrogant man submissive. * (=an arrogant man
 would approach you when you show your money to him) 39) (coming even from a
 distant place) like a moon far above me. * 40) Avarice bends iron, bends friends.
 [repetition]* 41) One who has no purpose is worth no money (=nothing). * 42)
 Just like Azkkīf (=pasty soup made by barley) left until mid-day (=nasty smelled
 Azkkīf) * 43) He loses words with meaning. * 44) Even if he speaks truth, no
 one accepts it as reliable. * 45) Only thinking and sitting there. * 46) There is
 nothing delicious there. Time passes. * 47) When a pleasant song appeared, I shall
 buy it. * 48) Gratitude passes away only to be unimportant. [repetition in solo]
 49) When I see pigeons (=women), they pass by. * 50) I choose one among whom I
 saw. * 51) (Because) the God created her like moon, I take her and sit (=I shall
 marry her). 52) If she remains (as she is) for an hour, she becomes like a wolf.
 [repetition in solo] 53) If I bring my desire into whom I have been looking for, *
 54) when we encounter, a quarrel arises between us. * 55) I and she make a cause
 of quarrel. * 56) There are neither beautiful words nor beautiful life. * 57)
 Without delicious mint leaves, Atay (=Moroccan mint tea) is unsavory. * 58) She

takes off a bracelet from her arm because she feels it tiresome, and she takes off a head-ring from her head because she feels it tiresome. * (=she is reluctant to keep the tradition) 59) Peasants say the seeds are tired (=no good) so that the land is angry. * 60) Whoever cultivates, no harvest comes. [repetition in solo]* 61) The Koran is tired so that I do not find out its holders (=religious men). [repetition in solo] 62) The God strikes his believers with a stick. * 63) Satan leads us. People follow him in the forest (=a place filled with evils). * 64) He (=Satan) utilizes us to cultivate and to reap. People follow him. [repetition in solo]* [repeat 62-64 in solo] 65) He (=Satan) shows us wheat while putting it on beans (=he deceives us as if a heap of beans, valueless thing, were that of wheat, valuable thing). * 66) We can do nothing but silence and patience, against our will. * 67) Even when we find a place to be bad, we must go there on foot. * 68) And the people are still living by lies. * 69) The prophet admonished them of divine guidance and faith. * 70) There is no longer a person who wishes them (=guidance and faith). All (of them) destroyed them (=guidance and faith). * [repeat 70 in solo] 71) Just only a few people still do the prayer and the fast. I shall visit them. * [repeat 71 in solo] 72) Avarice does not let good people slip (=There is no avaricious man who is good). [repetition in solo] * 73) Stars, turning around, will disappear (=Many people are gathering at a person who has influence now, but they will disappear as time goes by). [repetition in solo] * 74) Ah, the God! Please decrease infidels among us. 75) Ah, the God! Please decrease the evilness of infidels among us. * 76) Decrease the infidel and increase the virtuous in subordination to you. * 77) Please do not extinguish us because of our deed. * 78) Ah, the God! Please forgive us our deviation from your boundary. * 79) I am looking for your light so that I would be your slave. [repetition in solo] * 80) I welcome all that is written on me (=all that is decided by the God). I like it. * 81) Praise be to the God! All the dead are equal. [repetition in solo] 82) Both the poor and the rich will not remain as they are (in this world). * 83) When time (of death) comes, they must go regardless of their will. * 84) What do you want? Oh, people who built big houses! Oh, brave people! * 85) Soil on you (in the graveyard) will eat you. * 86) Virtuous men build small houses just enough to sit (=live) in them. 87) Where is the foundation of this world? It is people who pray and fast. [repetition in solo] 88) There is no reprehensibility in a pure heart. * 89) The God forgives a person who wishes benefits of brothers (= people in general). * 90)

Whoever gives sincere advice, a man who wants a wrong road goes that road. * 91)
 The prophet gives a suggestion as such in Hadith (=Prophetic tradition). * 92) A
 man to whom our Lord gives rationality is satisfied with it. * 93) What does he
 want more? It (=rationality) is better than all that belongs to him. [repetition in solo]
 94) Ah, the God! Please tie the ambition by a rope (lest the ambition should expand
 endlessly). * 95) Do not bring us to a place where we fall down and perish.
 [repetition in solo] * 96) Though the God tests our faith, we go to the forest
 (looking) for pigeons (=women), * 97) to catch them for eating. And we go (there)
 again. 98) I do not want to avert my eyes from them (=pigeons) yet. * 99) I
 am still making a small calculation (=I still think myself to be young) * 100) I do
 not want to know that my head laughs at me (=I do not want to think of the truth that I
 am no longer young) [repetition] * 101) When I sit at the place for songs, I see no
 people of the same generation as mine. * 102) My eyes and hands do not want to
 take a rest yet (=I still want to see many things and to do many things) * [repetition]
 103) Time for the harvest of corn has approached. [repetition in solo] 104) It is no
 use only to put a sickle on it (=corn). * 105) If the health becomes tired, there are
 no feet of him (=if a person becomes sick, he cannot walk any more). * 106) Teeth
 are broken. Time of death has approached. * 107) We ask forgiveness of people
 whom we have met (=to apologize them for our bad deeds to them so far) * 108)
 The grave is really our lover forever. * 109) This world completes its goal (and
 finishes). * 110) You weep because you did not pray nor fast. * 111) Your living
 (condition) and your money are valueless. * 112) On the (last) day (of the
 Judgment), our Lord will calculate what we have gained (=the God will assess the
 virtuous points and vicious points that were gained during their lifetime)

[Original Berber text (in Latin transcription)]

* = repetition of the phrase {makrīx a ya margi} in a chorus of female dancers.

- 1) ajda‘ ilan ljam amz lhudednki makrīx a ya margi [repetition in solo] * 2)
 ajda‘ ilan ljam amz lhudednki [repetition in solo]* 3) akkunu rikknād ixfank ijlu
 šbānki* 4) amnay lli kisgān awni gan lhibti* 5) amnay lli kisgān awni gan
 lhibti 6) ixdik ngaran ur tswīt tamuzunti* 7) ixdik ngaran ur tswīt tamuzunti
 8) may gan zin lhenna abla akšdinsi* 9) ixtindi ffūg ur sul issuwi yāti ibasli*
 10) ttabla ixtllamt ilin lkissān igginmi* 11) ix gim ur illa lbarrād tgitm tigiilti*

12) ur tiwit l'aql iyyen waxxa ttrigiti* 13) ix fllam iluħ tiṭ artn tshbalti* 14) ix tillit atalxatimt xodade izini* 15) ix tnt foğnt hān ur flās lhebti* 16) ix tillit aya jda' umlil xtagusti* 17) ar kull ttawīn ismsarn ankkidnki* 18) llīx ur fan aggīk sğin wala zunzunki* 19) ajda' ixilla xtzzumt nssūq ibasli* 20) yen flās iluħn ifassn ilūh idarni* 21) artn tarmn arkīx iflt ibabnsi* 22) ginās l'ibb aškw lix dikka fgginsi* 23) kull nma imyarn xtzzumt nsūq ibawni atnissāğ* 24) ur sul iħ tammunt di zimri* 25) kullši mddn ġar tasūkt asa ttazzalni* 26) ibbi wa yiyās ljam idfartn bābnsi* 27) kuyan dinnas ira lğard itaba'ti* 28) iggrayid l'ṭb ġifasn wala idarni* 29) hrma rrubbi gitma itmadnti* 30) imma ddunīt istrmi rmīn id bābnsi* 31) waxxa iga tagmat ig xlwādayni* 32) ix ktfl ssahtnk iflk ljjbnki* 33) ar kit n'āt argaz ixditn iggiwri* 34) argīk itsuxxōr zund kusūd tamadnti* 35) lflūs assiga lxlq argaz ix iziyini* 36) imma hatta ssaht ix isha lmjibnsi* 37) illa maratka yasi xğar tğradnsi* 38) lflūs yen ikabbrn id'aki* 39) mqqār iga zund ayyūr yili gigginki* 40) tma' ayknan uzal ekkunu amdakli [repetition in solo]* 41) yen diffūx lğard ur isuwi tamuzunti* 42) zund azkkīf uzal adgan ix ggiwri* 43) iska ijla laxbārns ix artndagni* 44) mqqār inna saht ur ar zraynt tuggansi* 45) arka sul nki txammims innāx nggiwri* 46) ur sul mim amya luqt aytbāddalni 47) līx diffōğ umarg nfarħasis attid nsği* 48) atkanzri slğa sul ur iħulni [repetition in solo] 49) ix dax zrīx itbirn zrin jnbinwi* 50) arntxtar arkīx nzra walli gisni* 51) inša rrubbi zund ayyūr nawit iggawri 52) iğdids nkka sa'a igi zund ušni [repetition in solo] 53) ixki diwix arja dar walli sigilği* 54) ar kīx nmaqār tili l'adāwa ngranxi* 55) nskar sibāb ar kīx nzi nkkīn didis* 56) ur sul immīm ujmū' ur immīm iggiwri* 57) ur sul aliqamt immīm watay ibasli* 58) irmi dblij afūs irmi lqutīb ixfi* 59) irmi wamud ayflaħni akal iza'fi* 60) yen gis ikrzn kra laħasnt addifği [repetition in solo]* 61) yirmi lqrā ur sul nzra idbabnsi [repetition in solo] 62) ardikkat rrubbi l'ibadns ssulabnsi* 63) yzwraxka iblis ndfart staganti* 64) ar sarx ikkarz isrūt ukan ntaba'ti [repetition in solo]* [repeat 62-64 in solo] 65) arāx immal irdn sarsnid ibawni* 66) laħ manskar anfis nsbr bzīz inwi* 67) muqqar zrīx arwas nfkas afudinwi* 68) aškw mddan 'iħn sul ġar stkndawti* 69) lhdu wala lamant llifax yussa nbbi* 70) ur sul illi māt niran kullu nrzatni* [repeat 70 in solo] 71) yen ka sul izzuln ya zunni ratn zurxi* [repeat 71 in solo] 72) aškw ṭma' addr yujjin yen ig iziyini [repetition in solo]* 73) itrān lli mitsutuln ratnhlknī [repetition in solo]* 74)

sidi rrubbi naqs lkfr llingiḡi 75) sidi rrubbi naqs l'ār lkfr llingiḡi [repetition in solo]* 76) naqs lkfr zeyd lxēr fl'ibadnki 77) anḡor thlkm slaf'āl dlli gingi* 78) sidi rrubbi samhāḡ nffūḡ lhududnki* 79) kiy aḡ rjīx tifawt ng isamgnki [repetition in solo]* 80) marḡba skra dityaran flli nhbbixti* 81) ḡmdxi rrubbi lliḡ kullu lmūt tsgadanḡi [repetition in solo] 82) lmskīn wala tajri wladḡamani igiwri* 83) yen mi tlkm lqtns yftu bzziznsi* 84) ma trīt ayan ibnan ryād tašj'ti [repetition in solo] 85) līḡ rak ukan iḡ wakal ili ḡigginki* 86) yuf yen ibnān aḡšūš ikšmt iggawri 87) maftarsa ddunit yen itzallan azmni [repetition in solo] 88) isfu lqalbans aggis ur tlli lkrhiyti* 89) ya iran lxēr igmas irḡudan srubbi* 90) arti tnsaḡiḡ ran arwas izaydisni* 91) aḡk ḡikan afyussa nbi ḡlḡadit* 92) yen mi fka mūlānā l'ql yudatni* 93) ma sul isigil yufas kullu maddarsi [repetition in solo] 94) ay krf rrubbi ḡahwanu igasnt izikr* 95) anḡōr tawi ḡḡilli nra dndar nhlki [repetition in solo]* 96) iblayāx rrbbi stbirn nfki itaganti* 97) waddiwīx arkīx tnša ardax tazzalxi 98) ur tas jurīx adrarak tit gisni* 99) arka sūl nskar lḡsāb is mzzīḡi [repetition in solo] 100) ur taju snḡ is ḡīx idsa ifxdinuwi [repetition in solo]* 101) iḡnbīd ḡseys ur nzri tagaddamwi* 102) ur taju tnwamt atet defūs igiwri [repetition in solo] 103) ardi tlkam lqt ntmgra tasngarti [repetition in solo] 104) ur darm ḡār assmmawdi adnk igginsi* 105) ix trmīt asaḡt yen darn ifaddnsi* 106) ar tarzan uxsansi ilkam omuddnsi* 107) ḡalbat lmsāmiḡt yen dik imaqqarni* 108) lqbar ḡaqqan ayigan lḡbīb akiduwmi* 109) imma dunit ikmml lḡardnsi* 110) artallat ayawri zoln ula yazumi* 111) mḡna tudart wala lmal lidarki* 112) man tiwit assan rakit ḡasab rbbingi*

5.Modern development of Rāis: Crossover music of Amouri Ambarak.

(1) Successors of Demsiri:

Most of the present *Ruways* play their “music” activities through cassette tapes, videotapes and mass media. And they are often offered chances to participate in events, such as folk festivals and TV programs, organized by local or central authorities. They really seem to be entertainers as well as musicians.

Stimulated by such modern situation, female singers come to play an active role. They are called “*Rāisa*” (f. of *Rāis*). Rqīya Demsīriya, Fātima Taba “Umrānt and Fātima

Tihīhīt are only prominent stars among them. They sometimes release cover versions of their predecessors as Fātima Tagramt, Suḥfīya Utlwāt and Fātima Talguršt for example. Even foreign *Rāisa*, as French girl Killi and Belgian girl Natali, are preferred to some extent.

They are backed by an orchestra composed of male instrumental players and women dancers as a rule. Organizing principle of the team is rather flexible. Though some singers have their own team, most orchestra are said to be organized temporarily according to the situation at the time. But the members of orchestra are independent professionals and they form, so to speak, a pool of musicians. We find among them some prominent families that offer a lot of such musicians. Bu Nsīr family is an example. It has produced a number of *lutār* (=guitar) players, *rubāb* players and *Ruways*.

(2) Crossover Rāis:

Younger generation has produced a quite different kind of *Rāis* since 1970's. They have been sensitively influenced by new music trends of outside world. Jazz, American country, rock'n'roll, French pops and Latin music fascinated them and they actively introduced some features of those western sounds into their style of performance. They put on blue jeans and T-shirts on their stage. Banjo, country guitar, keyboard, electric guitar, drum set, piano and maracas were in their hands. They kept their stage in small theater halls, nightclubs, resort restaurants and so forth, where they could offer their music directly to the audience of the same young generation. Enthusiastic support of those young audiences enabled them to make concert tours not only in Moroccan cities but also in overseas bases of *Swasa* in Europe.

Most of these musicians formed a *taribbūt* (=group) of 5-6 members. This style is similar to that of new music trend derived from Moroccan Arabic music, which Schuyler named 'new wave.' Group Jil Jilala and Nas el-Ghiwan were forerunners [Schuyler 1993 p.288]. I am not certain whether the new *Rāis* groups communicated directly with these new wave groups or not. But we find a great similarity in their manifestation.

I can pick up some present popular Rāis groups: Iznarn, Ijddign, Udādñ, Aršāš, Isaggn, Lariyāš and Iḥya d-Ujmma'. The only point that differentiates them from new wave groups is their language. In spite of their westernized costumes and modern

instruments, they always keep Tashlhit firmly within their songs.

Amouri Ambarak is a vocalist who has played a leading role since the beginning of this new movement. He was once a member of a group “Osman,” that was a big name as a pioneer group of this movement. Then he left the group and is now singing in solo. His most favorite instrument is an American country guitar and consequently his songs are fused with country melody. As can be seen from the poem cited below, which represents his artistic tendency quite well, his phrases are lyric and simple. And the songs come to an end within a few minutes, as is the custom of western popular songs. Though these features are contrary to those of the *Ruwais* in former ages, he is quite conscious that he has always been a *Rāis* in nature. This identification is shown in a CD, released by the Moroccan Ministry of Culture as an anthology of *Ruwais*, in which he sings six poems of Hajj Bel’īd. Respecting their identification, we can regard them as one development of *Rāis*, the minstrel tradition.

[Translation]

1) What has happened to the flowers in the forest? 2) A gazelle climbs fearing nothing at all. 3) A bee says it will alight on a bud of a wild rose. 4) A refreshing breeze comes and goes. The air is filled with fragrance. 5) A horseman does not know what happens in this world. 6) Our place for song and dance, our place with a plenty of plants, have no longer their life. 7) Brides (=queen bees) do not want to give honey to bridegrooms (= worker bees) while leaving them carrying it. 8) Grief (and anger) is coming out of them. I heard their arising grievance. 9) Brides are near a fountain. And they are pouring water on each other. 10) Children are running around and are pouring water on each other. 11) Children are laughing and are sucking their thumbs. 12) One day when I met them, they told me that I had changed (I had been aged). [repetition]

[Original Berber text (in Latin transcription)]

1) madfan ijddign ksan xtaganini 2) iznkad ar tšantarni ur ksudn yati 3) tizwa nan ansuddu ajjig ummerni 4) azzuzwu iğ yyiwi yawit ismsar tjjuti 5) gass amnay ur issin atnnīt addunit 6) disūyās diğolidn ndarnnğ ur drni 7) amma tislatin ugint adfkin tammnti ajjant iyislan adagumn 8) tagūdi duggani sllğ arsmummyin sugasum tnnīt 9) tislatin dar usagm mağntka amani 10) iħšmiyīn

ar sutuln artwāšnīti 11) tadsa lḥsum issumumn ḡi dodansnti 12) assunna tnd
nmaggarx nnān niyyi tbadlmi [repetition]

6. Conclusion.

We have observed a rough history of minstrel tradition of Rāis. Rāis has now gained popularity and got a citizenship in a recent Moroccan music scene by having adapted itself to the modern development of communication media. But, to my impression, the result is that it comes to be dwarfed and enclosed within a finite category of ‘music’ or ‘entertainment,’ though its forefather had a multi-functional ability in social, political and religious domain as an undivided entity, namely *Amarg*. Even if the recent *Ruwais* would be called ‘artist,’ they seem to have lost the ancient dynamic energy on a way to musicalization, in exchange for market popularity.

On the other hand, it is obvious that *Andāmm-Imarirn* tradition has declined under a modern circumstance of villagers’ migration to cities and a rapid development of media tools. It has become difficult for villagers, whose life has long been animated by self-objective activities like *Aḥwāš*, to be offered religious and cultural messages as their own. *Rāis*, I suppose, will not take this place as long as it plays the role of music or entertainment. I fear that vacant space is invading the place of ancient *Amarg*.

Notes

- (1) I presented a detailed examination of the contrast between *Aḥwāš* and *Rāis*, depending on my analytical concept ‘segmentation and de-segmentation.’ [Horiuchi 1997]
- (2) Lakhsassi investigated some raw materials of this tradition by his own fieldwork [Lakhsassi 1986, 1989, 2000. K.Brown and Lakhsassi, A 1980, 1987]. His analysis of the poems of Sous is quite precious and insightful. I anticipate his critique on this article of mine, basing on our friendship. He may find a discrepancy between his opinion and my perspective, but I wish for our dialogical discussions on the topic, regardlessly our position as outsider and insider.
- (3) Lakhsassi indicated the year of birth as 1874 and the year of death as 1944.

[Lakhsassi 1988 p.59]

- (4) Hammoudi insists a pervasiveness of such master-disciple relationship throughout Morocco since centuries. [Hammoudi 1997]

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