

# *Elia Abu Madi*

**Elia Abu Madi** (also known as **Elia D. Madey**; Arabic: إيليا أبو ماضي *Īlyā Abū Mādī* <sup>[note 1]</sup>) (May 15, 1890 – November 23, 1957) was a Lebanese poet.

# Elia Abu Madi

## Born

إيليا أبو ماضي  
(*Īlyā Abū Mādī*)  
May 15, 1890  
Mount Lebanon  
Mutasarrifate

## Died

November 23, 1957  
(aged 67)

## Occupation

poet, journalist,  
publisher

## Nationality

Lebanese

## Genre

poetry.

## Literary movement

Mahjar (The Pen League), New York City.

## Relatives

Marmorstein, Emile (October 1964

"Rāshid Husain: Portrait of an Anglo-Young Arab". *Middle Eastern Studies* (1): 3–20.  
[doi:10.1080/00263206408700002](https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206408700002)

## Early life

Abu Madi was born in the village of Al-Muhaydithah, now part of Bikfaya, Lebanon, on May 15, 1890 to a Christian family. At the age of 11 he moved to Alexandria, Egypt where he worked with his uncle.

## Career and Works

In 1911, Elia Abu Madi published his first collection of poems, *Tazkar al-Madi*. Shortly after, he was exiled by the Ottoman Turkish authorities<sup>[1]</sup> and he left Egypt for the United States, where he settled in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1916 he moved to New York and began a career in journalism. In New York Abu Madi met and worked with a number of Arab-American poets including Kahlil Gibran. He married the daughter of Najeeb Diab, editor of the Arabic-language magazine Meraat-ul-Gharb, and became the chief editor of that publication in 1918. His

second poetry collection, *Diwan Iliya Abu Madi*, was published in New York in 1919; his third and most important collection, *Al-Jadawil* ("The Streams"), appeared in 1927. His other books were *Al-Khama'il* ("The Tickets")<sup>[2]</sup>(1940) and *Tibr wa Turab* (posthumous, 1960).

In 1929 Abu Madi founded his own periodical, *Al-Samir*, in Brooklyn. It began as a monthly but after a few years appeared five times a week.

His poems are very well known among Arabs; poet, author, and journalist

Gregory Orfalea wrote that "his poetry is as commonplace and memorized in the Arab world as that of Robert Frost is in ours."[note 2]

See also a photo of Elia Abu Madi as a member of al-Rabita (Pen League).

See also

- New York Pen League

Notes

1. *Lebanese Arabic Transliteration: Īlya Abu Māḍi, pronounced [ʔi:lja (ʔa)bu*

*'ma:di].*

2. *In A Community of Many Worlds: Arab Americans in New York City*, ed. Kathleen Benson, Syracuse University Press, 2002, page 62.

## Scholarly criticism

1. Ahmad, Imtyaz. "Abu Madi: A Voice of Modernity in Contemporary Arabic Poetry" (PDF). Retrieved July 30, 2016.
2. Alawi, Nabil. "Arab American Poets: The Politics of Exclusion and Assimilation" (PDF).

3. Boullata, Issa J. "Iliya Abu Madi and the Riddle of Life in His Poetry"  
*Journal of Arabic Literature*, 1986;  
17: 69-81. (journal article)
4. Nijland, Cornelis. "Religious Motifs and Themes in North American Mahjar Poetry" pp. 161–81 IN: Borg, Gert (ed. and introd.); De Moor, Ed (ed.); *Representations of the Divine in Arabic Poetry*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi; 2001. 239 pp. (book article)
5. Romy, Cynthia Johnson. *Diwan Al-Jadawil of Iliya Abu Madi* (Master's

thesis, University of Arizona).

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## Sources

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- *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Brill, 1980.
- *The New Anthology of American Poetry*, eds. Steven Gould Axelrod, Camille Roman, Thomas J. Travisano, Rutgers University Press, 2005.

- Orfalea, Gregory; Elmusa, Sharif, eds. (1999). *Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab-American Poetry*. New York: Interlink. pp. 65–82. ISBN 1566563380.
- *Poeti arabi a New York. Il circolo di Gibran*, introduzione e traduzione di F. Medici, prefazione di A. Salem, Palomar, Bari 2009. ISBN 88-7600-340-1. ISBN 978-88-7600-340-0.
  1. Orfalea, Gregory (2002). Benson, Kathleen; Kayal, Philip (eds.). *My Mother's Zither* . New York: Syracuse

*University Press. p. 63.*

*ISBN 0815607393.*

2. *Ahmad, Imtyaz. "Abu Madi: A Voice of Modernity in Contemporary Arabic Poetry" (PDF). Retrieved July 30, 2016.*

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