

Al - Karmil

Studies in Arabic Language and Literature

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Volume I of *AL-KARMIL, Studies in Arabic Language and Literature* was published a year ago, following a period of preparations during which many difficulties had to be overcome. Scholars in Israel and abroad responded to the invitation of the Editorial Board and contributed articles on various subjects.

The inaugural volume of *AL-KARMIL* included the following articles:

Fahid Abū-Khadra, "Diversification in al-Hamadhānī's Maqāmāt".

Shimon Ballas, "On *Maḥaṭṭat al-Sikka al-Ḥadīd* by Edward al-Kharrāt".

Ibrāhīm Geris, "Al-Jāhiz's Concept of Writing and Books".

Sami Hanna, "*Ighāthat al-Umma* by al-Maqrīzī".

Sasson Somekh, "The Language of Interior Monologue in Yūsuf Idrīs's Stories".

David Semah, "Perpetuity and Impossibility: on Modes of Expression in Ancient Arabic Poetry".

George Kanazi, "Organic Unity between Criticism and Rhetoric".

Murād Mikhael, "Poetic Expressions based on Morphological and Syntactical Terms".

Now Volume II of *AL-KARMIL* is in the reader's hands. The following is a brief description of the articles it contains:

Shimon Ballas devotes his contribution (pp.1-29) to *al-Sudd*, a play by the Tunisian writer Maḥmūd al-Mas'adī. He draws attention to the existential elements found in the conceptual structure of the play. While analysing its symbolic significance, he argues with various critics, including Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, who offered different interpretations. The author concludes that al-Mas'adī, who represents Man in confrontation with God, has written a literary work with an essentially atheistic and anti-clerical content. This feature gives the play its unique position in modern Arabic literature.

Mattityahu Peled's study (pp.31-46) examines the problem of Western literary influence as reflected in three modern Arabic poems. It is not concerned with the aesthetic achievement of the works examined, but with the psychology of the creative process. Basing himself on two recent European studies on the subject of literary influence as a critical concept, Peled is anxious to distinguish between superficial parallels and similarities resulting from shared cultural assets, and real influence that constitutes a generic factor participating in the production of a given work of literature.

Joseph Dana (pp.47-57) writes on a special form of plagiarism, that is the translation of an Arabic poem or part of it into Hebrew, thus producing a "new" work of art. To clarify this point, Dana gives a short survey of the concept of plagiarism in Arabic literature as it influenced Jewish authors in Spain. He reaches the conclusion that Jewish medieval critics and poets in Spain did not actually consider translating a poem into another language as plagiarism, but rather as a new work of art to be evaluated as such.

Sasson Somekh (pp.59-80) deals with the relationship between language and content in modern Arabic poetry. He gives a detailed analysis of the language, form and structure of two different translations of Shelley's "Love's Philosophy". Somekh concludes that classical forms, with their inherited structures of rhythm and language, are incapable of conveying new poetic concepts, which can only be realised by creating a new style and a new poetic language. He also concludes that concentration on the "changing content" obscures the development of poetry from one stage to another and may lead literary historians to confuse the poet's intentions with his real achievements.

In David Semah's article (pp.81-116) there is a critical analysis of the content of *'Arūḍ al-Andalusī*, commonly known as *al-Risāla al-Andalusīyya*, in the light of commentaries preserved in manuscripts. Special emphasis is laid on a number of controversial issues, such as the number of feet and metres and, more important, the structure and rhythmical nature of the *fāṣila suḡhrā*. The article ends with an annotated edition of the yet unpublished text of the *Risāla ft 'Ilm al-'Arūḍ* by Abū al-Qāsim al-Khānī (died 1109 H./1697 A.D.), a short epistle on Arabic metrics based on one of the commentaries on *al-Andalusīyya*.

In his article on *Mudhakkirāt Dajāja* (Memoirs of a Hen) by Ishāq Mūsā al-Ḥusaynī, George Kanazi (pp.117-136) tries to prove that this book does not deal with the Arab-Jewish dispute over Palestine, as

many critics have interpreted it. He holds that Dr. Ḥusaynī was advocating a Utopian kind of existence by calling upon people to reject the present values, which depend mostly on a materialistic approach to life, and to adopt new values that safeguard the spirit and call for relationships based on equality, justice and respect for others. Thus, *Mudhakkirāt Dajāja* actually represents Dr. Ḥusaynī's views concerning life as it is and as it should be. These views reflect a universal approach without prejudice.

From a purely personal point of view, Fahid Abū-Khadra (pp. 139-152) enumerates the deficiencies and shortcomings of the style and technical devices adopted by the representatives of the most recent trend in modern Arabic poetry, specifically those associated with the Lebanese periodical *Shiʿr*.

Finally, there is a section devoted to book reviews (pp.153-164). Ibrāhīm Geris writes on Fahid Abū-Khadra's *Ibn al-Muʿtazz: al-Rajul wa Intājuhu al-Adabī* (Acre 1981); David Semah on Rina Drori's *The Poetics of Classical Arabic Rhyme* (Tel Aviv 1980), and Shimon Ballas on Mattityahu Peled's *al-Uqṣūṣa al-Taymūriyya bayna Marḥalatayn* (Tel Aviv 1977).