

VOLUME V 1984

AL-KARMIL

STUDIES IN ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

PUBLISHED BY THE INSTITUTE OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

Volume V of *AL-KARMIL*, Studies in Arabic Language and Literature (1984), contains six articles. The first is "On Two Novels by Jamāl al-Ḥusaynī" (pp. i-), by Shimon Ballas. Al-Ḥusaynī, better known as one of the leaders of the Palestinian national movement, wrote in the early 1930s two novels which have so far received little attention from literary historians and critics. It seems certain that the first novel *Alā Sikkat al-Ḥijāz* appeared in 1932, and the second *Thurayyā* in 1934. Both novels, each with its own eventful love story, are set against the background of the Arab-Israeli conflict, specifically the acquisition of Arab lands by the Zionists in Palestine. Ballas draws a comparison between the two novels in terms of the conceptual structure of the plot and the causal relationship between the various events, and describes the author's weakness in characterization. The heroes are idealistically portrayed and are often used as a mouthpiece for al-Ḥusaynī's own political convictions. For this reason they seem to lose their realistic dimension as persons with a convincing presence. Ballas concludes that the importance of the two works is more historical than artistic, as they represent faithfully the state of the Palestinian novel in the early 1930s.

Mattityahu Peled, in his article "The Concept of Aesthetics at Cross-Roads" (pp.15-20), deals with the opposition encountered by the early Arabic novel which began to appear towards the end of the nineteenth century. According to the author this opposition was due not only to aesthetic considerations but stemmed to a large extent also from the total rejection of the moral and social values inherent in the new literary genre. The treatment of love and the exact description of close contacts between the sexes, which had so far been restricted to "popular literature" only, constituted the main theme of these new novels. For this reason the novel was thought to

contravene the well-established social morality. This unfavourable attitude did not change even after the appearance of broadly educated writers such as Muḥammad Taymūr, Maḥmūd Thāhir I.ā-shīn and others, who established the "modern school" in Egypt after the First World War, with a view to creating a genuine Arabic fiction.

Peled examines the conflict between the two opposing camps, as reflected in an interesting argument that took place in 1945 between al-'Aqqād and Egypt's foremost novelist Najīb Mahfūz.

In her article on "Ulayya Bint al-Mahdī" Rosa Sim'ān tries to draw a clear sketch of the life of the Abbasid princess. She tackles the question of whether or not 'Ulayya was identical with al-'Abbāsa. Sim'ān collected the poetry of 'Ulayya, who was a singer as well, and used it to clarify certain biographical points, in addition to the benefit which lies in publishing her poetry in a special collection. The present volume of *AL-KARMIL* contains the first part of the article; the *Diwān* of 'Ulayya will be printed in Volume VI (1985).

In his article "Grammatical Thinking before Sībawayhi : Studies in the History of Grammatical Terminology", (pp. 37-53), Rafi Talmon examines the vestiges of early grammatical thinking prior to Sībawayhi, with special emphasis on the few remarks which can be collected from the chapters of the *Kitāb*. The well-known mute question whether early Arab grammarians were influenced by foreign ideas about grammar or were totally independent and original, is reconsidered following a detailed survey of the main arguments made by various scholars during the last 150 years. It is asserted that the evidence in Ibn al-Muqaffa's translation of *De Interpretatione* lends some credit to the claim that the theoretical premises of Sībawayhi's grammatical description as well as his terminology were not indifferent to the Peripathetic ideas about syntax, presumably already known in learned circles of that time.

Khaḥlīl 'Athāmina writes about "Exile as a Punishment in Early Islam" (pp. 55-80). Banishing people from their homes and towns was considered a severe punishment. During the life-time of the prophet Muḥammad some of the most dangerous enemies of the new religion were sent to exile. After his death this penalty became a measure of dealing with poets of frivolous behaviour, trouble-makers and political opponents. The right of condemning people to

exile was practised not only by the Caliphs but also by ministers and provincial rulers. The third Caliph 'Uthmān banished those who protested against his policy of favoritism towards his relatives and associates. 'Athāmina deals at some length with the banishment of Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī and its reason and significance.

George Kanazi writes about the Abbasid poet Ibrāhīm Ibn Harma (pp. 81-96). He concentrates on two major points: a) the question of the religio-political affiliation of the poet, and b) the poet's techniques, stressing the fields in which he proved to be an innovator. Basing himself on the available data, the writer tries to come to a more accurate evaluation of the poet.

Finally, in the section devoted to book reviews, David Semah writes on Sasson Somekh's book *Lughat al-Qiṣṣa fī Adab Yūsuf Idrīs* (pp. 99-104).