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# AL-KARMIL

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Volume 20 of *al-Karmil* opens with the article of Muhammad Barrada, writer and Professor of Arabic Literature at the University of Rabat. In his article “Moroccan Literature in Arabic”, Barrada reviews novels published in Morocco after the independence, dwelling especially upon works depicting the protagonist as a young man in search of his identity.

Moshe Piamenta’s article “On the Etiquette of Hospitality and the Table manners among Negev Bedouins” is a translation from Hebrew of the beginning of section (a) the Negev Bedouin verbal etiquette system, and (b) its linguistic description, based on his 1971 ethnolinguistic field-work in the Negev published in *Studia Orientalia Memoriae D.H. Baneth Dedicata* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, the Hebrew University). As an indigenous speaker of local Arabic and dialectologist, Piamenta’s primary Bedouin sources relate to the subject, in their dialect, in a pre-Western acculturation framework prior to the overflowing of Western Hebrew culture in their environs.

Christian Szyska, in his article “On Islamic Concept of Literature engagée”, focuses on how Egyptian Islamist intellectuals and literati like Sayyid Quṭb, his brother Muhammad Quṭb, and others attempted to develop an Islamic concept of “literature engagée” in the fifties of the 20th century. After presenting the relevant discussions about the relation of literature and Islam in periodicals of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the article analyses the emerging concept’s aesthetic and political background. Important facets are the relation between the Coleridgean concept of imagination and Quṭb’s thought as well as the position of the Qur’ān as a reference text for “Islamic literature.” It is shown how Islamist intellectuals develop and employ the Qutbian concept of Islamist committed literature in order to establish a

distinct Islamic literary discourse as well as to re-canonize Arabic literature in accordance with their Islamist ideology.

Mas'ūd Ḥamdān's article "Carnivaalesque Strategy in the Theatre of D. Laḥḥām and M. al-Maghūṭ" is an attempt at critical review of the two contemporary Syrian playwrights Durayd Laḥḥām (b. 1934) and Muḥammad al-Māghūṭ (b. 1934). His main contention is that popular culture and carnivalesque sources function as modular elements that constitute the genre in which both authors create. Hamdan discuss five plays that were written during the past twenty five years that manifest another layer in the generic coherent sequence in the laughing folk Arabic literature, and express primarily an aesthetic means of substitute mass communication. Being the only media available that reflects the "second life" of the public, he concludes that they represent the ideology of the informal. Parodization of the official ideology, folk multilinguality as an antithesis to the formal speech or a recite and the breaking of the conventional boundaries of speech, are all major identifying marks of the Laḥḥāmian-Maghūṭian Language.

In his article, "On Popular Song: Yā Zārīf al-Ṭūl", Jiries Khouri discuss the structure of a famous Palestinian popular song entitled *Zārīf al-Ṭūl* in the framework of his investigations into the popular Palestinian poetry. Similarity between the structure of *Zārīf al-Ṭūl* and the structure of the 'Atāba, Mējana and Ḥudā', regarding the four verses of rhyme (AAAB) has led him to assume that there is an old structure for the song in question. It has been confirmed by the similarity he has found with the song *Yā Ḥnayyina*, which contains similar opening and verses, from which he concludes that the later is the original form of *Zārīf al-Ṭūl*, especially after he found that *Sīrat banī Hilāl* contains *Zārīf al-Ṭūl* song, composed of openings and verses.

Sarah Stroumsa, in her article "Compassion Towards Wisdom: On the Attitude of Some Medieval Arab Philosophers to the Codification of Philosophy," deals with the medieval philosophers' attitude towards writing. In studying it scholars have concentrated on the philosophers' esoteric tendencies and on their reticence to write down philosophy. But the basic attitude of medieval philosophers to the decision to commit to writing, whether taken by the prophets, the sages, or the medieval philosophers themselves, is on the whole positive. Stroumsa examines the sources, both religious and philosophical, from which the philosophers could have drawn this attitude, and then examines its manifestations in the writings of three medieval philosophers: Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, Abū Barakāt al-Baghdādī and Maimonides.

Joseph Sadan's article "Aladdin and His Lamp Recover Their Origin" is aimed at exposing an Arabic story in manuscript form which may be considered, in a way, to lie at the root of the Aladdin story from *Arabian Nights*. Sadan provides a synopsis of the story, which contains several elements which have parallels in the story of Aladdin, despite differing from it in every other respect, with comments of a literary nature and a discussion of the probable history of its development, and also the full original text as it appears in the manuscript, with no changes, in a way which reflects the language of the author, which has, of course, some of the characteristics of the language of story-tellers, even if at times it also has in it some aspects of the vernacular. The story contains authentic elements of Damascene topography, terms connected with lodging in that city and even the name (only slightly corrupted) of a fourteenth-century Mamluk ruler of Damascus (Tankiz, deformed by the storytellers: Dankuz); it even contains a term which apparently refers to the relations between a Mamluk and his former

master (a situation which changed in the Ottoman period). Still, the story was presumably composed during the Ottoman period at a time when in the domain of story-telling there still persisted perhaps some memories of Damascus as it was in the days of the Mamluks.

In his article, Rafi Talmon presents two grammatical traits in which the two earliest works in Arabic linguistics, Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* and Khalīl's *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, mention elements which are important for the study of the origins of the dichotomy of the Basran-Kufan schools of grammar. So far the view expressed by Baalbaki (1981) is prevalent, that Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 244/858) is our first source who mentions expressly this dichotomy. Two items of *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, namely the controversy of *al-Baṣriyyūn* and *al-kūfiyyūn* over the analysis of *-n-* of *qaṭṭnī*, and the two views regarding the etymology of *insān*, are checked against the evidence of Sibawayhi's *Kitāb*, in order to examine the authenticity of the allegedly 2nd/8th century information in it about the school dichotomy. The details of the first item are partly corroborated by this comparison, whereas the study of the second item remains inconclusive, because of the too scant points of reference in the comparison between the two early sources.

In the final article, "Opening Verses of Aḥmad Shawqī between imitation and innovation", Gālib 'Anābsa analyzes the opening verses of Aḥmad Shawqī's poems from two aspects: first, the interaction and relationship with classical poetry, especially how he was inspired by the great poets of the Abbasid period; and second, Shawqī's insistence on inserting some sort of innovation in the opening line of the *qaṣīda*. However, the innovation cannot be but limited due to his adherence to the classical poetics. Therefore, the grip of the classical patterns known from the poets of the past, is so strong that any

innovation cannot change the overall effect of the framework of the classical poetics.

In our book reviews section, Christian Szyska writes on two novels in English by Sa'd Elkhadem, and on *Memoirs of Hen* by Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, translated from Arabic with a critical introduction by George Kanazi; Shimon Ballas writes on *Banipal*, a magazine of Modern Arab Literature edited in London, and on *Le Poeme arabe moderne*, an Anthology in French by Abdul Kader Al-Janabi.