

VOLUME 14 1993

AL-KARMIL

STUDIES IN ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

PUBLISHED BY THE GUSTAV HEINEMANN INSTITUTE
OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

Al-Karmil Volume 14 (1993) contains four articles. In the first, 'The *Khārijī* Sermon — Subjects, Style and Structure' (pp. 7–48), Aḥmad Badrān examines some representative formal orations made by famous leaders of the *khawārij* on public occasions. The article opens with a general survey of the ideology and the political aims of the sect. Emphasis is laid on the importance they attached to the addresses delivered in public and their impact on the continuous struggle against the authorities. Badrān supplies a list of famous *khārijī* orators, followed by a detailed analysis of some of their typical speeches in terms of subject matter, structure and the most characteristic features of style.

Reuven Snir's article 'Why are the Words Exiled? The Poet and his Rock in the Mirror of Committed Poetry' (pp. 49–94) is the second part of a study on the issue of *iltizām* (commitment) in Arabic poetry, as reflected in the work of the Iraqi poet 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyātī (born 1926). The first part of this study (see *Al-Karmil* 14, pp. 7–54) examined al-Bayyātī's position on this issue in the 1960s, especially as reflected in the poem 'Adhāb al-Ḥallāj' (The Suffering of al-Ḥallāj), which appeared in *Sifr al-Faqr wa-l-Thawra* (The Book of Poverty and Revolution) (1965). The present article traces the gradual changes that occurred in the poet's view in the late 1960s and 1970s and their metapoetic reflection in his poetry, particularly in 'al-Qurbān' (The Sacrifice), which was published in *Sīra Dhātiyya li-Sāriq al-Nār* (Autobiography of the Fire Stealer) (1974) and 'Qirā'a fī Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn li-l-Ḥallāj' (A Reading of *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn* by al-Ḥallāj), which appeared in *Qamar Shīrāz* (The Moon of Shīrāz) (1975). Snir offers a detailed study of the two poems and presents the intertextual allusions to ancient Sūfī poetry and leftist poetry, particularly that of Pablo Neruda (1904–1973), as well as the intratextual allusions. In addition, he discusses al-Bayyātī's attitude to Sartre's views on the role of poetry in society. In the 1960s al-Bayyātī's work reflects the poet's conviction that commitment is beneficial for society and indispensable for poetry. On the basis of analogies he draws between the committed poet and the mystic martyr al-Ḥallāj (crucified in 309/922), Snir shows that that position changes in the

1970s, i.e., the poet reaches the conclusion that commitment is by no means beneficial for society, even though for the poet it remains inescapable.

Ibrāhīm Ṭāhā, in his article 'The System of Gap Making and the Dialectics of Reading' (pp. 95–130), discriminates between two categories of gaps: text gaps (writable gaps) and reader gaps (readable gaps). The first category contains five techniques (types) of gaps: digression, flash back, stair case, misleading and obstruction. Employed in a narrative text, these techniques enable the author to transfer various textual data from their 'original' places in the level of the fabula; these places then seem vacant to the reader. In other words, these techniques delay the motion of the reading process, particularly on its *sensational* level, the first contact between text and reader.

The second category also includes five techniques: omission, symbolization, defamiliarization / making strange, intertextuality and contradiction. However, unlike text gaps, which both create gaps and fill gaps, reader gaps are based on a definite separation between these actions. That is to say, in readable gaps the reader fills in the gaps which the text has made. Making gaps creates questions through *eliminating* various textual data, while filling in gaps is the reader's response to these questions. This interaction of *questioning* and *answering* assures the author of very tight interrelations between text and reader. The focal point of these interrelations is the *conceptual* nature of the *final* contact between text and reader. Ṭāhā uses various texts of modern Arabic narrative fiction as illustrations.

The fourth article in Volume 14 is 'Folkloristic Elements in Arabic Literature,' by Victor Lebedev (pp. 131–146). According to the author, the study of Arabic folklore has become an autonomic branch of all Arabic scholarship, not only in Arab countries but in various part of the world. Since the study of the history of this folklore is a prerequisite for a sound understanding of contemporary Arabic folklore, Lebedev sets out to identify and characterize the various sources — in print or in manuscript — in which compositions of a folkloristic nature are to be found. They include stories in the Qur'ān and Qur'ānic commentaries, the *ḥadīth*, tales about prophets, collections of proverbs, books of history and geography, *adab* literature as well as all types of popular literature. Elements of Arabic folklore are also found in compositions written in Syrian and in Judeo-Arabic.

The book review section of the present volume contains Reuven Snir's review of Professor S. Moreh's recent book *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World* (pp. 149–170), and David Semah's review of Ḥabīb al-Ḥusaynī's *Dirāsāt 'Awzānī al-Muwashshahāt al-'Arabiyya* (pp. 171–176).