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*Al-Karmil* Volume 13 (1992) contains five articles. In the first, 'The Oil in the Lamp will never Dry up: the Dialectic of Ivory Tower / Lighthouse in the Mirror of Committed Poetry', Reuven Snir examines the issue of *iltizām* (commitment) in Arabic poetry in the 1960s, as reflected in the poetry of the Iraqi poet 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyātī (born 1926), and especially in his long 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). Concentrating on its allusions to the Ṣūfī doctrine and Kierkegaard's Existentialism, Snir offers a detailed study of the poem, in which the poet uses the mask of the famous mystic martyr crucified in 309/922. Based on analogies between the committed poet and the committed mystic al-Ḥallāj, as well as Abraham, 'the father of faith' (Kierkegaard), Snir presents al-Bayyātī's conviction in the sixties that commitment is not only beneficial for society but also indispensable for poetry. The changes that occurred in al-Bayyātī's views in the 1970s, and their metapoetic reflection in his poetry, will be studied in a second article in our next volume.

Khālid Ṣafadī's article deals with Sa'd al-Dīn Wahba's play *Yā Salām Sallim* (The Walls Are Talking), which was published in 1971. The play is based on an old tale from the period of the Mamluks in Egypt. Though it draws inspiration from the remote past, the play expresses the author's views on contemporary government, and the relationship between rulers and their subjects. Ṣafadī tries to highlight and analyse these views, while explaining the reasons which made the author turn to history and legend. An attempt is further made to trace the origins of the strange incidents that permeate the plot in historical sources on the Mamluk era.

In the third article, 'Colloquial Lebanese and Palestinian Poetry and the Problem of Metre' David Semah discusses the controversy over the nature of prosody upon which vernacular poets in Lebanon and Palestine have been composing

their poetry. After presenting in separate sections the formal characteristics of the various types of colloquial poetry, such as *shrūqī*, *mawwāl* and other kinds related to it, *m'annā*, *'atāba*, *mējanā*, *qarrādī* and Bedouin poetry of Sinai and the Negev, he provides a metric analysis of selected pieces showing that with the exception of *qarrādī*, all types mentioned are in perfect harmony with the traditional, quantitative metres of classical Arabic poetry. Metrical regularity often requires a set of well-defined adjustments in syllabification and vowel-length. Unlike the other types, *qarrādī* is based on syllabic metrics in which all syllables, short or long, are considered metrically equal.

The fourth article is Amikam Marbach's 'The Meaning of the Term 'Arab According to the Dictionaries, the Qur'ān, Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* and Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima*'. In most classical dictionaries, the adjective 'Arab applies to those having the qualities of genuine Arabs, or those who speak good Arabic, whereas *A'rābī* usually refers to a Bedouin Arab. As opposed to the term *A'rāb*, which signifies the Arabs of the desert, the word 'Arab never occurs in the Qur'ān. Marbach examines the denotations of *A'rāb*, which often have negative sense. He then studies the meaning of the term 'Arab as it appears in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* and in Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima*. At the end of discussion, the author draws a number of conclusions.

In his article on 'Karbālā' in the Shiite literature', George Kanazi dwells first on the etymology of the word Karbalā', then he examines the attitude of the Shiite poets to this city. Being the place in which Ḥusayn b. 'Alī was massacred in 61/684, under the caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya, the first reaction to it reflected hostility and deep anger. Yet, being also the cite of the tomb of Ḥusayn, Karbalā' soon came to be a holy place, highly venerated in Shiite traditions. This soon brought about a change of attitude in Shiite literature, in which Karbalā' is depicted as the holiest spot on earth. Kanazi's article touches also on the *al-mushtaqq* figure of speech, because in Shiite literature, poetry and prose alike, reference was often made to Karbalā' as the cite of *karb* (disaster) and *balā'* (calamity).

In our book review section Ibrāhīm Geries reviews David Pinault's *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, Sadok Masliyah *al-'Arabiyya li'l-Ḥayāt* by Maḥmūd 'Ismā'īl Ṣīnī and others, while Georges Kanazi writes on *The Composition of Mutanabbi's Panegyrics of Sayf al-Dawla* by Andras Hamori.