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Volumes 21-22 of *al-Karmil* open with Basilius Ḥannā Bawārdī's article "The Literature of Lebanese-Phoenician Nationalism: *al-Taṣwīnī* - First Novel in Lebanese Language as a Textual Model" shows how the particularistic Lebanese-Phoenician ideology used literature as a tool adherent to help them disseminate both the ideology and its slogans through the cultural arena. The study traces the development of Lebanese-Phoenician nationalist movement and studies its influence on Arabic literature and the way it managed to create a new literature which then served to strengthen its national ideas. The article introduces the main representatives of Lebanese-Phoenician nationalism, especially Charl Qurm (1894-1963), Sa'id 'Aql (born 1912) and Morīs 'Awwād (born 1934). It deals with 'Aql's revolutionary statement to abandon classical Arabic and to use the colloquial Lebanese dialect, along with Latin letters. As for 'Awwād, the study focuses on his novel called *al-Taṣwīnī* (The Fence), as a textual model for the literary activity of this separatist ideology.

In his paper on the hunting poem, *ṭardiyya*, in early Arabic poetry, 'Alī Aḥmad Ḥussein concludes that the fully mature *ṭardiyya* exists both in pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry. Its many motifs can be traced in the *ṭardiyyas* that belong to Umayyad and Abbasid poetry, where hunting poetry was more popular. For an analysis of the motifs and structure that characterize the genre in those early periods, the author examined more than fifty *dīwāns*. Thirty-nine poems were found and constituted the basis for this study. The writer identified the following recurrent motifs of the *ṭardiyya* in pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry: the hunting scene, the horse of the hunter, the animals that were hunted, the hunting process itself, and finally the preparation of the meal with the hunted prey and the fun the hunters derive from their hunting experience. This is also the order that dictates the structure of most hunting poems. The author highlights the poem of al-

Dakhīl ibn Ḥarām; in contrast with other hunters, who were usually rich, the hunter here is poor, but still hunts, not in order to bring food for his children, but also mainly to have fun with his friends.

Mas'ūd Ḥamdan's article "Toward a New Concept of Aesthetics in Arabic Literature: Modernism as Seen by Adonis, E. al-Kharrāṭ and Birshīd" deals with dominant theoretical attempts to reach a new poetical perception of Arabic literature in its major forms. Main efforts in the fields of poetry, prose and theater began to develop since the 1970s. The author first compares the leading streams of change with the traditional Arabic poetics, and then assesses the most important influences - eastern as well as western - that directed and shaped the basic new poetical orientation. The article seeks to trace in particular the common philosophical background of recent theoretical challenges in the three types of expression. Thus, analysis concentrates on three of the most remarkable Arab creators/thinkers as representatives of a wide group: the Syrian poet Adonis ('Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd), the Egyptian novelist Idwār al-Kharrāṭ (b. 1926) and the contemporary Moroccan dramatist 'Abd al-Karīm Birshīd (b. ?). The author then uses his findings to shed light upon the main question the article raises: is it possible, by exploring the similarities between the poetical ideas of the three mentioned authors, to arrive at some general principles for a new poetic vision that may be seen as inspiring the current changing in the three modes of Arab literary art?

Khālīd Sindāwī writes about the sword of 'Alī, named *dhū al-faqār*, in Shī'ite and Sunnite Literature. According to the Shī'ite tradition, this sword was descended from Paradise together with Adam and was made of myrtle of Paradise. Adam used it against his enemies. The article compares the significance of this sword both in the Shī'ite and Sunnite sources. The Shī'ite sources attribute to it miracles and wonders, claiming that it was able to talk

to 'Alī in the same way the stick of Moses talked to him. Given this correlation between the sword of 'Alī and the stick of Moses, 'Alī in these sources is depicted as the heir of the Prophet Muḥammad, *waṣī*, endowed with the characteristics of the Prophet Moses and proceeds in the way of the prophets. In the Sunnite tradition the sword was one of nine swords which the Prophet Muḥammad seized as booty from 'Āṣ ibn Munabbih in the battle of Badr, and then presented it to his cousin 'Alī.

"Arabic Prosody", written by the late Prof. David Semah, was published in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, (ed. Preminger and Brogan, Princeton University Press 1993, pp. 91-94). The current edition of *al-Karmil* presents it here to our Arabic readers in an Arabic translation by 'Aṭallah 'Ūdi. In this article, Semah surveys the development of Arabic prosody and shows how short and long syllables give the intonation and help in forming the various classical meters. He shows the basic eight feet of the classical meters and demonstrates how different meters can be drawn from the five circles of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad. Semah points also to new forms in contemporary Arabic poetry which ignore the classical meters, and ends by stating that if this trend continues, then all these meters will be gradually forgotten and will certainly become a part of the classical Arabic heritage.

Ibrāhīm Ṭaha, in his article "Flow of Significance Procreation in the Motive of Infertility: The Limits of Interpretation in Yūsuf al-Qa'īd's *Khadd al-Jamīl*", deals with the process of interpretation through *Khadd al-Jamīl*, a novella by Yūsuf al-Qa'īd. In his article, Ṭaha suggests a semiotic model of literary interpretation compound of four stages: 1) First reading: abridging the text. In this stage, his or her first contact with the text, the reader reduces the text by leaving out all the "irrelevant" textual data, and keeps in mind only those, which are needed for the next stages. 2) Second reading: from text to meaning. The reader ascribes textual meaning/s to the abridged text,

going by what has been remained in his/her mind. 3) Limits of interpretation: from meaning to significance. In this stage, the reader becomes more involved in the process of interpretation by generalizing the meanings she or he has gleaned from the text in this way and turning them into general significance. 4) Space of writing: from significance to intention. In the final stage, the reader then attributes those significances to the author him/herself, and refers to them as the original intention of the actual author. Introducing his semiotic model, Ṭaha makes intensive use of well-known terminology suggested by E.D. Hirsch: meaning, significance and intention, which are precisely paralleled by text, reader and author.

Khalīl 'Athamina's article, "Notes on the Biography and Poetry of al-Farazdaq in the Light of Balāthuri's *akhbār* in his *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*", attempts to shed new light on the biography of al-Farazdaq (110/728), the well-known poet of the early Islamic period. Through a re-reading of the sources in general, and using fresh data produced in al-Balāthuri's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* manuscript in particular, the author sets out to illuminate some of the vague reports concerning the life of the poet, for which modern research has failed to produce a plausible interpretation. The author also clarifies some of the public prejudices and false impressions that influenced contemporary generations of the students in Arabic literature, about certain intimate issues in al-Farazdaq's personal life, his religious conduct, his tribal background, his political relations with the Umayyad regime and his problematic pro-Alidi stand. He thereby highlights some aspects of the socio-political situation prevalent in Iraq during the early stages of the formation of Islamic society in the seventh and the early decades of the eighth century.

George Kanazi writes about the book titled *Durar al-Simṭ fi Khabar al-Sibṭ* by the Andalusian author Ibn al-Abbār (595-658/1198-1260). Ibn al-Abbār wrote another book titled *Ma'din al-Lujayn fi Marāthī al-Ḥussein*, which

seems to have included elegies written on Ḥussein death, but it is difficult to tell whether these elegies were written by Ibn al-Abbār himself or whether he simply compiled an anthology on this topic, as the book did not survive. The *Durar al-Simṭ fi Khabar al-Sibt* deals with the killing of Ḥussein ibn ‘Alī in Karbalā’ in the year 60/681. It reflects Shī’ite sympathies, which seem somewhat strange, as writing about Shī’ite issues was not part of the main stream of the Andalusian literature. In addition, there is nothing in the poetry of Ibn al-Abbār and in his other writings to suggest that he was a Shī’ite. Kanazi surveys the contents of the book, which covers a very long period of time, and concludes that it does not reflect deep sympathy with the Shī’ite cause. It seems that the aim of the author was to show his wide knowledge of the historical events, to expose his full command of the Arabic language, and the various devices widely known as *badī’* figures of speech, and finally, to ask for the *shafā’a*, the mediation, as many authors believed, having written a book on the *maqtal* of Ḥussein ibn ‘Alī entitles the author to receive the mediation of the Prophet Muḥammad on doomsday and thus secure his place in Heaven.

In his article “Telling Modernism, a Study in the Artistic Form in al-Kharrāṭ’s Novel: *Turābuhā Za’farān*”, Yāsīn Kattānī follows the new style of writing used by the author for enabling him to deal with a damaged reality. The novel *The City of Saffron* by E. al-Kharrāṭ is based on a major dichotomy of construction and destruction. The destruction elements can be illustrated by a few examples as follows: The novelist derives the plot of his novel from the objective historical events which, to a large extent, match Edward al-Kharrāṭ’s autobiography. Therefore, this style creates an illusion that this kind of writing may belong to the genre of autobiography. However, this assumption rapidly disappears the moment al-Kharrāṭ breaks the rules of the conventional genre of autobiography. The author also destroys the common

and familiar temporality when he forms memories from the early days of childhood into events occurring in the present, and thus, abolishes the far distances between the past and present. In addition, this technique of timelessness serves the narrator's aim in saving these memories from loss and also in overcoming death, by intertwining events that took place in the past with what is happening at the time of narration. This novel relies on dreams, myths and imagination as means of hiding and ignoring a reality that is full of frustration, loneliness and loss. Therefore, the destruction of the conventional modes of writing results from the irrationality of a reality that does not deserve representation. On this damaged world the author establishes a new style of writing which contains different genres whose fiber is made of dreams and imagination. This technique is used by the author, on the one hand, in order to defeat death, poverty and other unhuman conditions and, on the other hand, to enable him to overcome the existentialistic crisis and to seek immortality.

In our book reviews section, Ibrāhīm Ṭaha writes on *The experimental Arabic Novel: Postcolonial Literary Modernism in the Levant* by Stefan G. Meyer.