

(iv) *Bishr Fāris (1907?-1963) : a Symbolist experiment in Egypt*

In his definition of the creative function, Bishr Fāris laid the emphasis on feeling and intuition. He was writing in 1938, at a time when Romantic poetry in Egypt had reached its most decadent point, being characterized by dilution, verbosity and too much insistence on emotional exhibitionism. It had become, moreover, a melancholic expression of a generation of poets brought up under similar social, emotional, cultural and political conditions. In a very short time, 'Ali Maḥmūd Tāhā's joyous lyricism was to dominate the poetic scene, but in 1938 the general atmosphere seemed gloomy, and the poetic situation was getting desperately out of hand.

It does seem a loss for poetry in Egypt that Bishr Fāris's special qualities were not capable of being exploited in a poetry rich enough and abundant enough to dominate the poetic scene. His production was sparse and intermittent and of an elitist nature, never meant for the general public. Fāris is the most aristocratic of modern Arab poets, if the term can still convey what is meant here: a man who was not preoccupied with achieving quick and laudatory victories with a large reading public. But this commendable quality was not free, perhaps, of a certain desire to surprise his contemporaries with a novel invention.

Bishr Fāris was a man well versed in Western literature. He did his post-graduate studies at the Sorbonne where he received his Ph. D. in 1932. He started his career in 1936 by writing articles in French for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, and throughout his life he did, among other things, research in Islamic art, writing both in French and Arabic. His scholarly and original work was published by the French Institute for Oriental Antiquities in both Damascus and Cairo.<sup>173</sup> He was also a poet, a dramatist and a story writer.<sup>174</sup> His literary output was of a highly Symbolical nature and, like Sa'īd 'Aql, he based his Symbolist theory on nineteenth century French Symbolism. In Egypt he was an isolated figure, unique in his way of life,<sup>175</sup> in his interests, in the kind of literature he wrote. Of Lebanese origin, his presence in Egypt did not seem to blend with the general literary atmosphere there although he was born in Egypt and lived there most of his life.

Aside from his great and active interest in Islamic art, Fāris was very interested in the Arabic language of which he had a firm grasp. This is why he was able to apply his theory of Symbolism to his work, because Symbolism demands a profound knowledge of the language in which the author writes. Like other Symbolists, Symbolism to

Fāris is the discovery of the subconscious, the exposition of hidden feelings and impulses which are revealed when the author turns his back on the actual world.<sup>176</sup> What makes literature to him is the ability to record our own reactions to things, not to describe the logic of the external world. Literature is therefore a record of the inner self by the artist whose eyes are well trained to see inner visions. The emphasis on feeling is prominent in his writings, and Fāris insists that the artist cares little for logic, which is a rational process employing the mind as a tool. He differentiates, rather sharply, between the process of drawing conclusions from several facts, which is a rational process, and the artistic realization of things ("*taḥqīq*") which cannot be achieved except through feeling and intuition. For truth to the artist is not that which he arrives at by a rational process, but that which he feels by his intuition. To Fāris, ordinary language is connected with the mental exercise of the mind and is therefore foreign to the substance of the subconscious, and completely inadequate to express its spontaneous creations. The only way to do that is by abandoning the oratorical style. The act of creativity, moreover, depends on both the intelligence which perfects the created piece of work, and feeling which, even before the work of creation has begun, aspires to an ideal which is difficult to realize through ordinary speech. But by the above mentioned process in which both the intelligence, ("*al-ḥidḥq*" as he calls it), and feeling have co-operated, a finer artistic creation is achieved characterized by conciseness and an abhorrence of inflation and verbosity. The deeper the ideas, the more difficult and ambiguous the style will be, so that there is a fine veil over the words, which must never be stereotyped, nor ever become stock expressions.

Bishr Fāris's poetry is very distilled, and his choice of words is deliberate and original. Unfortunately, his poetry lacked the spark of creative genius. His two Symbolic prose plays, *Maḥraq al-Ṭarīq* (1938) and *Jabhat al-Ghaib* (1960),<sup>177</sup> however, are more suited to the expression of his talent. Yet, for all his knowledge and love of the Arabic language, he did not succeed in imposing a new poetic diction on his generation of poets or on the generation that came after him. Whereas Sa'īd 'Aql inspired and stimulated the poets who followed him, the poetry of Bishr Fāris seems now, in retrospect, to have been an experiment as isolated as the poet himself. Its role was not so much to help the development of poetry as to test the readiness and capacity of the poetry of his time to assimilate diverse poetic experiences.

Fāris never published his poems in book form, but they are to be

Fāris m. Bishr (Tark)

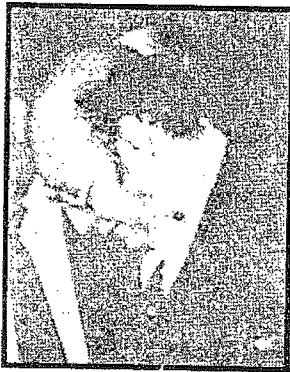
16 NISAN 1998

ولحمود تيمور رأي في (مباحث عربية) جاء فيه :  
(فاذا هو سفر قد لا نغالي اذا قلنا أنه في طليعة  
الاثار العلمية التي تمخض عنها العصر الحديث من  
حيث الدقة، واستيعاب الموضوع، وحسن الصياغة،  
والبراعة في التنسيق والتنسيق ..).

ر. عيد الله الجبوري



بشير فارس  
(١٩٠٧-١٩٦٣)



البشير بن سلامة  
(١٩٣١ - )

قاص، مصنف، أديب، سياسي أدى دورا في  
الصحافة التونسية، درس في المدرسة الصادقية  
بتونس العاصمة حيث الدراسة باللغتين العربية  
والفرنسية ثم بدار المعلمين العليا، نال الاجازة في  
اللغة والاداب العربية .

كان له نشاط سياسي في الحزب الدستوري  
الاشتراكي (حزب بورقيبة) ونشاط برلماني . ورأس  
تحرير مجلة ((الفكر)) التونسية مدة طويلة وبرز في  
القطاع الثقافي . وفي الثمانينات غدا وزيرا للشؤون  
الثقافية بتونس .

كتب القصة ومن أثاره المطبوعة في هذا الصدد:  
قصة (عائشة) - ١٩٨٢ ومجموعة عنوانها -  
لوحات قصصية (١٩٨٤) .

وصنف كتابا عنوانه، الشخصية التونسية:  
مقوماتها وخصائصها (١٩٧٤) وعالج مشاكل الكتابة  
العربية في كتاب برأسه عنوانه : النهضة العربية  
ومشاكل الكتابة (١٩٧١) .

أديب متأنق في أدبه. مس موضوعات مبتكرة من  
الجددة والطرافة من تاريخ العرب .. متعدد المواهب،  
شاعر، مسرحي، باحث، ناقد، قاص. ولد في  
(بكفيا) في لبنان، وكان اسمه : (ادوار)، بارحها الى  
مصر وفي القاهرة تلقى علومه وابدل اسمه الى : (بشير)  
سافر الى باريس، فنال منها شهادة الدكتوراه  
(١٩٣٢)، وكان موضوع رسالته : (العرض عند عرب  
الجاهلية) .. عاد الى القاهرة ليعمل في الجامعة  
المصرية .. مدرسا فأستاذا، وأخذ ينشر أفانين من  
أدبه .. باللغتين العربية والفرنسية .. في اللغة والادب  
والمرح، وفنون حضارية جديدة .. منها:

مباحث عربية في اللغة والاجتماع، (القاهرة  
١٩٣٩) وفيه نظرات جديدة في الحضارة العربية،  
من مواده: مكارم الاخلاق، المروءة، تاريخ لفظة  
الشرف، البناء الاجتماعي عند عرب الجاهلية ..  
ومطالب نافعة أخرى (١٥٠ص). في مقدمته (شيء  
مهم من تاريخ حياته) ..

كلمة الشاعر (١٩٤٥)، سر الزخرفة الاسلامية  
(١٩٥٢)، اصطلاحات عربية لفن التصوير (١٩٤٨)،  
وفي المسرحية والقصص: جبهة الغيب، سوء تفاهم.  
مفروق طريق، وله بالفرنسية مؤلفات أخرى ..

وله عطاء فكري متنوع، بثه في مجالات  
عربية، .. توفي فجأة في القاهرة (٢١ شباط /  
فبراير) .. درس أدبه رهط من الادباء والنقاد ..

the caliph al-Ma'mūn. The book was criticised by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 548/1153–4; see appendix 3 in the edition of his treatise *On the astrolabe* (2005)).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

al-Farghānī, *Jawāmi' ʿilm al-nujūm wa-uṣūl al-ḥarakāt al-samāwiyya*, ed. and trans. Jacob Golius, Amsterdam 1669, repr. (without Golius's commentary) Frankfurt am Main 1986; al-Farghānī, *Brevīs ac perutilis compilatio Alfragani astronomorum peritissimi totum id continens quod ad rudimenta astronomica est opportunum*, trans. Johannes Hispalensis, Ferrara 1493; al-Farghānī, *Rudimenta astronomica Alfragani. Item Albategnius astronomus peritissimus de motu stellarum*, Nuremberg 1537; al-Farghānī, *Alfragani astronomorum peritissimi compendium... Ioanne Hispalensi interprete*, Paris 1546, ed. Francis J. Carmody, *Differentie scientie astronomi*, Berkeley 1943; Gerard of Cremona, trans. and ed. Romeo Campani, *Alfragano, Il "Libro dell'aggregazione delle stelle,"* Città di Castello 1910; al-Farghānī, *Muhamedis Alfragani Arabis chronologica et astronomica elementa*, trans. Jacob Christmann, Frankfurt am Main 1590, repr. Frankfurt am Main 1618; al-Farghānī, *On the astrolabe*, Arabic text ed. and trans. Richard Lorch, Stuttgart 2005; al-Bīrūnī, *Istikhrāj al-awtār fī l-dā'ira*, in *Rasā'il al-Bīrūnī*, 4 vols. in 1, Hyderabad 1367/1948; Romeo Campani, Il "Kitāb al-Farghānī" nel testo arabo e nelle versioni, *RSO* 3 (1910), 205–52; François Charette, al-Farghani's tables for constructing astrolabes. Their mathematical structure and their importance for the history of astronomical instrumentation, unpub. paper presented at the conference Ahmad al-Fargani and His Contribution to the Development of World Science (Samarkand and Fergana, October 1998), Tashkent 1998; David A. King, *A survey of the scientific manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library*, Winona Lake, IN 1986; E. Knobloch, La connaissance des mathématiques arabes par Clavius, *ASP* 12/2 (2002), 257–84; Abdelhamid I. Sabra, al-Farghānī, *Dictionary of scientific biography*, New York 1971, 4:541–5; *GAS*, 5:259–60, 6:149–51.

RICHARD LORCH AND PAUL KUNITZSCH

## Fāris, Bishr

21 Eylül 2014

**Bishr Fāris** (born Idwār Fāris, 1907–63) was a poet, playwright, short-story writer, and scholar of Islam. It is not clear whether he was born in Lebanon or Egypt, but we know that he spent most of his life in Egypt. He earned his doctorate at the Sorbonne in 1932, for his dissertation entitled "L'honneur chez les Arabes avant l'Islam. Étude de sociologie" ("Honour among the pre-Islamic Arabs. A sociological study"). His literary output was primarily in Arabic, but he wrote his scholarly essays and books in a combination of French and Arabic.

He was considered a symbolist poet in the sense of the late-nineteenth-century French school of literature, although he and others were keen to stress the school's native, specifically Ṣūfī, roots. In the introduction to his first play, which he considered a sort of personal manifesto, he defines symbolism as "the discovery of what is behind the senses, in order to display that which is hidden." His poems were published in various magazines during his life and compiled only posthumously into a volume. They did not seem to gain him a wide following.

He wrote two plays in both Arabic and French, *Mafriq ṭarīq* ("The fork in a road") in 1938, and *Jabhat al-ghayb* ("The front lines of the transcendental") in 1960. He is said to have adapted his first play from a work by the Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck (d. 1949). His 1942 short-story collection, written in Arabic, is *Sū' tafāhum* ("A misunderstanding").

His scholarly activities focused on sociology, Islamic art, and the modernisation of Arabic academic terminology, examples of which can be found in the bibliography and which also include entries

La Revue ARABICA, organe des arabisants français, largement ouverte à la collaboration extérieure, paraît trois fois par an (février, juin, octobre). Elle publie des études, des documents et des notes sur la langue, la littérature, l'histoire et la civilisation du monde arabe, ainsi que sur l'influence de la culture arabe sur la culture occidentale; un bulletin critique; une chronique du monde arabisant.

\* \* \*

Directeur: M. G. LECOMTE.

Comité de Rédaction: MM. R. BRUNSCHVIG, CL. CAHEN, M. COLOMBE, N. ELISSÉEFF, H. LAOUST, J. LECERF, Y. MARQUET, CH. PELLAT, D. SOURDEL, Mme J. SOURDEL-THOMINE, MM. G. TROUPEAU, G. VAJDA et G. WIET.

Secrétaire de Rédaction: M. C. DUMONT.

\* \* \*

Les opinions émises dans les articles de la Revue n'engagent que la responsabilité des auteurs de ces articles.

\* \* \*

Les périodiques admis à l'échange, les publications et ouvrages envoyés pour rendre compte, ainsi que la correspondance concernant la rédaction et l'impression (manuscrits et épreuves), doivent être adressés à la

RÉDACTION D'ARABICA, 13, RUE DU FOUR, PARIS 6<sup>e</sup>

PRIX DE L'ABONNEMENT ANNUEL

(3 fascicules d'environ 112 pages chacun) :

36 florins hollandais ou 50 francs.

Les abonnements sont reçus par MM. E. J. BRILL, LEIDEN (Hollande), éditeurs d'ARABICA (compte postal 13921), et par les Editions G. P. MAISONNEUVE, 198, boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris, (7<sup>e</sup> C. C. Postal Paris, no. 16-119-89), dépositaire pour la France

SOMMAIRE DU BULLETIN CRITIQUE

du présent fascicule:

'ALĪ ĠAWĀD AL-ŤĀHIR, *al-Ši'r al-'arabi fi l-'Irāq wa-bilād al-'Aġam fi l-'ašr al-salġūqī* (R. Blachère), p. 211 — LEON ZOLONDEK, *Di'bil b. 'Alī, the Life and Writings of an early 'abbāsīd Poet* (R. Blachère), p. 211. — F. GABRIELI, *Tribu e Stato nell'antica poesia araba*, p. 212. — *al-Adab al-'arabi al-mu'āšir* (C. Vial), p. 213. — J. M. S. BALJON, *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation (1880-1960)* (A. S. Bazmee Ansari), p. 214. — H. R. IDRIS, *La Berbérie Orientale sous les Zirides, X<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (M. Talbi), p. 216. — S. LLOYD, *Twin rivers. A brief history of Iraq from the earliest times to the present day* (R. Le Tourneau), p. 219. — *Averroes on the Harmony and Philosophy* (G. Vajda), p. 220. — B. ALLŪS, *al-Ṭuyūr al-'irāqīyya* (R. Blachère), p. 222. — G. C. ANAWĀTI, *Textes arabes anciens édités en Égypte au cours des années 1959-60* (R. Blachère), p. 222.

HOMMAGE À BICHR FARÈS (1906-1963)

PAR

C. VIAL

JE ne pensais certes pas, en rédigeant, voici quelques mois, le compte-rendu de lecture qui suit, que la mort frapperait si tôt Bišr Fārīs (Bichr Farès): le grand écrivain égyptien s'est éteint en février 1963 à l'âge de cinquante-sept ans. C'est une figure prestigieuse et attachante qui quitte brutalement la scène des lettres arabes. Si l'attention des spécialistes devait être attirée très tôt par sa compétence et sa rigueur de chercheur lors de la publication de sa thèse soutenue en Sorbonne *L'honneur chez les Arabes* (1932), le public lettré retiendra plutôt sa contribution au développement du théâtre arabe. En écrivant *Mafriq al-ṭariq* « Quand les chemins divergent », il se montrait moins intéressé par les problèmes de la vie quotidienne que par le combat que se livrent dans l'homme ses forces fondamentales. Or, malgré le succès du réalisme dans la littérature arabe actuelle, il serait faux de prétendre que cette tendance à une stylisation métaphysique est exceptionnelle chez les auteurs modernes. Sans remonter aux pièces de Ġabrān Ḥalīl Ġabrān, il faudrait rappeler les différents aspects du symbolisme chez un Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm : dans *Šahrzād*, bien sûr, mais aussi dans tout son *Théâtre multicolore*, dans maintes pièces du *Théâtre de la société* et même, récemment, dans cet étonnant *Yā ṭālī'a l-ġabal*.

La véritable originalité de Bišr Fārīs nous paraît avoir surtout résidé dans le fait qu'il a mené sa recherche de l'essentiel aussi bien dans le domaine du langage que dans celui des sentiments. Sa langue manifeste un souci de concision et de pureté qui rend malaisée la compréhension de ses drames — et en tout cas leur représentation — et confère à ses nombreuses poésies un cachet d'ésotérisme qui l'apparente à Mallarmé. L'un de ses *Diwāns* ne porte-t-il pas le titre de *Sū' tafāhum* : « Malentendu »? S'il demandait beaucoup à la langue arabe c'est parce qu'il la connaissait bien, et ceux qui ont approché ce savant s'accordent à reconnaître la profondeur et l'ampleur de sa culture classique. Aussi fut-il tout naturellement porté par ses pairs au Secrétariat de l'Institut d'Égypte (*al-Maġma' al-'Ilmī al-Miṣrī*).

L'une des dernières manifestations publiques de Bišr Fārīs, et la plus spectaculaire, devait se produire non pas à propos de théâtre ou de linguistique mais au sujet de la peinture. Le 19 décembre 1962, il publiait dans la revue égyptienne *Dernière heure* une lettre ouverte à M. Khrouchtchev en réponse à sa condamnation de l'art abstrait. Ce plaidoyer intéressant et habile montre que ce toujours jeune artiste d'avant-garde, ce farouche partisan de l'art pour l'art, savait lui aussi « s'engager ».

Il est encore trop tôt pour mesurer exactement la place occupée par Bišr Fārīs et donc le vide causé par sa disparition. Mais on peut poser la question de sa popularité. Son art étant assez hermétique, Bišr Fārīs ne s'est jamais adressé qu'à une élite et, de ce fait, le mot « popularité » peut sembler un peu fort. Mais il faut pourtant admettre que cet écrivain difficile avait une audience plus vaste que celle à laquelle on aurait pu s'attendre. En effet, la presse (*al-Adīb*, fév. 1956) nous apprend quel accueil chaleureux il reçut des milieux les plus divers durant son séjour au Liban de l'été 1955. A cette