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**IRAN'S FADAYAN 1971-1988:  
A CASE STUDY IN IRANIAN MARXISM**

*Maziar Behrooz*

**TRENDS IN THE STUDY OF THE RELIGION OF ISLAM:  
RECENT WORKS IN ENGLISH**

*Jane I. Smith*

**INTERVIEWS**

**ELIAS KHOURY ON POLITICS AND CULTURE  
UNDER CIVIL WAR: AN INTERVIEW ESSAY**

*Elie Chalala and Iskander Mansour*

**FILM AND VIDEO REVIEWS**

**CINEMA UNDER THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC**

*Hamid Naficy*

**SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE IRANIAN FILM FESTIVAL:  
A DECADE OF IRANIAN CINEMA, 1980-1990**

*Peter Bloom*

**BACK TO ARARAT: A REVIEW**

*Nigol Bezjian*

**REVIEW ARTICLES**

**THE LEBANESE CATASTROPHE: FACTS AND FACTIONS**

*Samy Swead Shavit*

**BOOK REVIEWS**

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speaker of Arabic and of having spent over two years in the Sudan. It is important to note that her methods are based on field anthropology (case study, and situational and transactive analysis) and economics. Because of this emphasis, the author provides little historical background to the resettlement and I would not recommend her book by itself for a reader with no background regarding the Halfawi displacement. However, Salem-Murdock does recommend books by Abdalla (Isma'il Hussein Abdalla, "The Choice of Khashm Al-Girba Area for the Resettlement of the Halfawis" [*Sudan Notes and Records* 51 (1970): 56-74]) and Dafalla (Hassan Dafalla, *The Nubian Exodus* [Khartoum, Sudan: Khartoum University Press, 1975]) for historic summaries.

Dafalla's book is a first-hand account written by the Sudanese minister who was in charge of the resettlement project at that time. It deals strictly with Nubian displacement and their initial resettlement and I would recommend it highly as background reading to Salem-Murdock's work.

Keeping with the author's anthropological methods, Salem-Murdock conducted in depth socioeconomic interviews (individual case studies combined with life histories) with two to six households at each Halfawi and Shukriya study site. She also conducted statistically valid surveys. Having a background in statistics, I was impressed with the author's methods and with the enormity of conducting such surveys with large enough samples to be statistically valid and reliable (100% of the inhabitants of village 18, more than 50 percent of households in the Arab villages on the Butana, etc.).

I have no real criticisms of this book but do make one observation. While the book was printed in 1989, the date is misleading as Salem-Murdock's studies in the Sudan took place from September to December 1978 and from June 1980 to December 1981. None of her many charts and observations go past 1982. It is a pity that the author took so long (7-8 years) to produce this fine book, which now leaves me even more anxious for more up-to-date information, comparisons, and analyses. I hope that she produces an update soon.

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GHAZI A. ALGOSAIBI, ed. and trans., *Lyrics from Arabia*. Urdu text from Arabic by Qazi Saleem (Washington, D.C. Three Continents Press, 1986). Pp. 109. \$7.95.

An elegant mauve cover graced by an equally elegant arabesque belies the quality of the translations in this collection of individual lines from Arabic poetry. All told, there are 89 selections taken from the works of 48 poets

(up to 51 if we allow that the three anonymous lines are by different poets) who span approximately a thousand years. Each line, *bayt*, of classical Arabic poetry is provided in Arabic followed by an Urdu translation by Qazi Saleem and then by an English translation by Ghazi Algosaiabi, on pages adorned with the artwork of Kamal Boullata. The addition of the Urdu translations in this reissue of the 1983 printing is unusual. Perhaps the publishers, from whom we have seen work of a generally high standard, have identified a particular trilingual readership; perhaps the lure of the subcontinental tradition of interlacing Qur'anic text and commentary with Urdu translations has appealed to the editors; or perhaps they are complying with the wishes of Algosaiabi, whom I take to be the principal translator. Although my purpose here is to evaluate the collection as a contribution to the English-reading public, I should like to make a brief observation about the Urdu. In general, the translations into Urdu are faithful to the meaning of the Arabic though Saleem often takes liberties, sometimes even expanding considerably upon the thought expressed in the *bayt* so that it sounds more lyrical in Urdu. The best example of this is with the following line of Qays b. al-Mulawwah (d. 688):

fa-in tamna'ū laylā wa-tahmū bilādahā  
 'alayya fa-lan tahmū 'alayya 'l-qawāfiyā (88)

which I translate as

Even if Layla forbids and closes her world  
 to me, the world of verse will never be closed to me  
 and which he has as

mujhko malum hai layla seh nah mil paunga  
 tum magar qayd nahi kar saktē  
 mere khwabōko khyalō-ko meri sherō-ko (88)

[I know it is impossible for me to meet Layla  
 but you cannot imprison  
 my dreams, my thoughts, my verses]

There are also cases where he introduces a superfluous line in the Urdu: his translation of al-'Abbās ibn al-Ahnaf's *bayt* on page 89 for instance.

The prefatory remarks, entitled "A Few Prosaic Words" are brief and somewhat simplistic. After suggestion that in "classical Arabic poetry . . . it is no exaggeration to say that the line is a semi-autonomous poem within the poem," (5) Algosaiabi goes on to assert, to my mind not entirely defensibly, that "Arabs rarely admire whole poems; they admire single lines" (5).<sup>1</sup> Further, he writes that, in translating these lines, he has allowed himself "a fair measure of freedom. Some of the lines were molested; none were ravished" (5). Perhaps we are expected to look on

molestation with charity: I find that I cannot. In what is surely a genuine desire to share the beauty of the poetry of his tradition, Alghosaibi has ventured boldly into the jungle of literary translation and has fallen victim to its many dangers. The title alone, *Lyrics from Arabia*, is grossly misleading. Arabia has certainly produced a number of great poets, among whom number the pre-Islamic poets known for the *Mu'allaqāt*, but it has never been taken to mean other than the Arabian peninsula. Of Alghosaibi's forty-eight named poets, seventeen are not from that region: al-Mutanabbī and al-Ma'arri are both Syrians, Ibn Zaydūn is a Spaniard, Bashshār a Persian, and so on. This may not seem too crucial a point but Alghosaibi does manage to perpetuate unfortunate misconceptions and confusion about the distinction between things Arab (the ethnic designation), things Arabian (i.e. of the peninsula), and things Arabic (characterized by the language, the literature, the food, and not particular to the peninsula alone).<sup>2</sup> He goes on mistakenly to call the Arabic poetic tradition the "Arab poetic tradition" (5), implying the absence of non-Arab writers. A charitable reading of the translations would find all but fifteen of them acceptable as rendering of the Arabic. A careful reading, however, made possible by virtue of the brevity of the selections, must find fault with as many as forty of them. Infelicitous transposition of themes, needless alteration of style, and outright mistranslation interfere with the form, the meaning and the cadence of the originals.

The first *bayt*, by the Iraqi al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d.1015), which treats one of the stock themes of the Arabic *qaṣīda*, is successfully translated: "My eyes turned back,/the camp was no longer visible/my heart turned back" (7). Though a little terse, the sense of detachment and removal the poet feels upon leaving his beloved's camp and of the near-impotence of the heart's longing to return are well conveyed. These motifs are found at the beginning of a great many *qaṣīdas* and remain stock themes throughout the tradition. The second *bayt* of the collection, however, is "ravished." The Arabic expresses a simple thought that captures the transformation of a mundane world into a testimony to the restorative powers of Nature. The beautiful:

dunyā ma'āshun li 'l-warā ḥatta idhā  
jā'a 'r-rabī'u fa-innamā hiya manzaru (8)

is mutilated into "Earth every spring turns into a painting," whereas it could more faithfully have read:

This world is but a livelihood for mankind till  
Spring appears and turns it into a lovely canvas.

The line is by Abū Tammām (d. 846). Five other lines from his poetry are included: they are well rendered except for the last two where the challenge of the difficult and elliptical Arabic has daunted the translator. Thus, we

have a much-abbreviated "Deaths of lovers/are decreed/through beautiful eyes" (91) for

inna li 'llāhi fi 'l-ṣibādi manāyā  
sallatathā 'ala 'l-qulūbi 'l-uyūnu

when it might more profitably have read:

Man's fate may be to return to God  
But beautiful eyes inflict such fate upon his heart!  
And we read "Farewell" they said,/Farewell whispered/my soul to the world" (93) for:

qāḷū 'r-rahīlu fa-mā shakaktu bi-annahā  
rūḥi 'ani 'd-dunyā turīdu raḥlā

which might instead read:

When they bade farewell, I had no doubt that  
my spirit, too, wished to bid this world farewell.

The nineteen selections between pages 9 and 27 are of varying merit. We are taken from a mediocre and unlyrical rendition of al-'Abbās ibn al-Aḥnaf (d. 808), "Like a candle/I glow/while burning away" (12), rather than "I have become like a dying wick/giving people light yet burning away," to this pithy and successfully translated line of al-'Abbās ibn Mir-dās (d. 808): "From the cup of peace/drink your fill;/but from the cup of war/a sip will suffice" (19). It is regrettable that Alghosaibi saw fit to render Bashshār ibn Burd's (d. 764) "anā wa 'llāhi ashtahī sihra 'aynayki" (24) "By God! I am fond of your eyes" when "I, by God, crave the magic of your eyes" is what the uncomplicated Arabic in fact says. And surely Ibn Zaydūn's lovers, cloaked in darkness, are better served by "divulged by the whisper of dawn" than by the translator's lacklustre and inaccurate "revealed by morning" (23). All but five of the twenty-three selections between pages 28 and 50 are sound translations where there has been an attempt to retain the music of the Arabic: Abū Nuwās' (d.814) "You wonder about my sickness? My health is the wonder!" (30) for "ta'jabina min saqamī/sihhafī hiya 'l-'ajabu", for example.

Alghosaibi does a good job of selecting lines with a wide range of different themes. The legendary valor of the tribe is juxtaposed with its susceptibility to charms in Abū Firās' (d.968) "We can melt steel/but are easily melted/by beautiful eyes" (29). The very same valour will interrogate the oppressor in Bashshār's "When a King/turns into a tyrant/we talk to him/through our swords" (42). It is a shame that the fluency of the readings you and I/to die in the dame day,/please be last" (al-Aqra' ibn Hābis, d. 651).

A note about the *bayt* on page 50 by 'Ishriqa al-Muḥāribiyya: this poet is not mentioned in the useful "Poets' Biographical Summaries" compiled by Bassam Frangieh which is provided in the back of the book. I myself have not been able to find 'Ishriqa's name in any of the compendia of Arabic poetry.

The eleven selections that constitute pages 51 to 61 are not of a high standard. The one Imrū 'l-Qays (d. 545) selection is as bland in English as it is in Arabic: "Here we are/both strangers;/strangers are relatives" (53). And this *bayt* by al-Ma'arri (d. 1058) cannot count as one of the pithy pieces for which he is widely known and praised: "It is not May/but the roses of May/that people love" (56). Maybe this is made up for somewhat a few pages later by a more characteristic "Life be damned/You pretty,/ancient virgin" (63). As for the last thirty-five pages, excluding five abominable translations (pages 68, 73, 77, 87 and 93), Alghosaibi is faithful to the Arabic. (Throughout, he has not tried to duplicate the distich form of the *bayt*, opting for a less artificial shape in the English.)

The three poetesses included in the collection are all in this latter part of the book. Rābi'a al-Adawiyya's (d. 752) "I love you twice:/because I am so passionate/because/you are so perfect" (74) is a good effort to render an unwieldy Arabic:

uḥibbuki ḥubbayni ḥubba 'l-hawā  
wa ḥubban li-annaka ahlun lidhākā

Al-Sulaka Umm As-Sulayk (d.?), dealing with the issue of fate and of inevitable death, is as terse and summary as her translator has made her out to be: "Everything is deadly/when your time has come" (81). The last of the women poets, Ṣafiyya al-Bāhiliyya (d.?), is not successfully translated.

Her

kunnā ka-anjumi laylin baynahā qamarun  
yajju 'd-dujā fa-hawā min baynihā 'l-qamaru

is more at:

We were like stars around a moon  
that shone in gloom; and we were left in gloom  
when the moon was felled

than the lacklustre "He was the moon,/we were the stars;/the moon was struck down./the night is dark" (87).

All told, this is an uneven collection, coloured by the translator's tastes and his belief that it represents "almost all of the traditional themes of the classical Arab [Arabic-speaking?] poets" (5). The best of the lines are little gems, ably conveyed in English by the translator; the worst of them are violations of the spirit and the meaning of the Arabic. In between these

two extremes are a number of well translated lines that bespeak the translator's love of his language and tradition. The English reader is treated to a shimmer of centuries-old Arabic poetry in an attractive and affordable volume. Shortcomings aside, this is a step in the right direction.

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#### NOTES

1. See in this connection, G.J.H. Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line: Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982).
2. On the literature of the Arabian peninsula, see Salma al-Jayyusi, *The Literature of Modern Arabia* (London and New York City: Kegan, Paul International, 1988).