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## THE CONVERSION OF LITERARY CRITICISM INTO SCIENCE FORM. IBN TABATABA AL-ALAWI

**Summary.** From the 4th century of Hijra, literary criticism began to develop in its own unique way. It is especially important to note the name of Ibn Tabataba, one of the famous critics of the Abbasid era, in this work. In order to develop the theory of literary criticism and turn it into a concrete science, Ibn Tabataba writes for this purpose his work *عيار الشعر*. Written on the basis of the question-answer principle, this book differs from other works of that period in its scientific significance and theoretical information on criticism and wisdom. In his literary work, he divides the work into two parts, scientific and theoretical, trying to direct those who begin to study the science of poetry and understand the artistic beauty of the structure of the ode. In his works, the author explains the poetry and style of prose, their similarities and differences, he writes about poetic culture, its quality, the advantages of using ancient poetic examples, literal relationships and their role in evaluating a poem, the importance of the rhyme and artistic structure of the ode and its external structure, about the artistic pleasure in the poem, explaining such topics, he is trying to figure out their theoretical foundations.

The emergence of “artistic” as has had a positive impact on the development of literary criticism in general, also has played a special role in defining the structure of the Arabian ode. Although this poetic innovation was primarily associated with the name of Bashar ibn Burd and Abu Nuwas, then it was further developed by Abu Thamam, who has attracted everyone by bringing innovations to poem both in form and in content. There has been some controversy when researchers have been analyzing Abu Tammam’s poems and this has caused to start a comparative study of Abu Tammam and al-Buhturi creativity. As the further stabilization of the theoretical foundations of literary criticism at that time required more extensive comparisons, Abu Thamam’s creations began to be studied in comparative with al-Mutanabi’s poetry. Arab philosophers obtained information on summarizing certain points of theory of literary criticism, and in other words, by influenced Aristotle’s Poetics about the artistic expression of the poem they made their contribution to the development of Arab literary criticism.

**Key words:** literary criticism, scientific approach, poetry, prose, meter and measurements of poetry.

**Intruduction.** Since the theoretical foundations, norms of rules and size of Arab literary criticism in the second and third centuries of the Hijra have been identified to some extent, literary criticism has began to develop in its unique way from 4th century of the Hijra [4, p. 121; 19, p. 64]. Over the past two centuries, literary criticism has a certain form both scientific and critics have identified the terms related to literary criticism and they have laid the basis for its future

development. As we have already mentioned, a number of factors contributed to the development of Arab literary criticism: a) Internal factors; b) External factors.

**Internal factors. The development of poetry.** The innovation movement, which has opened a large page in the history of Arabic literature, has played an important role in the development of Arab literary criticism. Belonging to the late II century and early III century of Hijri this movement had a great impact on the Arab literary criticism which began extensive development in the IV century of Hijri. It is thanks to this development was formed the term “artistic” and played an important role in distinguishing between old and new poems [16, p. 19]. The emergence of “artistic” as has had a positive impact on the development of literary criticism in general, also has played a special role in defining the structure of the Arabian ode. Although this poetic innovation was primarily associated with the name of Bashar ibn Burd and Abu Nuwas, then it was further developed by Abu Thamam, who has attracted everyone by bringing innovations to poem both in form and in content. As we have mentioned, there has been some controversy when researchers have been analyzing Abu Tammam’s poems and this has caused to start a comparative study of Abu Tammam and al-Buhturi creativity. As the further stabilization of the theoretical foundations of literary criticism at that time required more extensive comparisons, Abu Thamam’s creations began to be studied in comparative with al-Mutanabi’s poetry.

**External factors. Studies of the Koran and especially field of the Koran’s miracle** [17, p. 165]. The philological analysis of the Koran, its style and expression have had a great influence on the development of Arabic literary criticism. Scholars, who make an effort to investigate such a serious issue, have committed themselves to the defense of the Koran, and they worked tirelessly to protect the word of God from distortions; compares the language of Arabic folklore and poetry examples with the expressions of the Koran and thus promotes the wider development of Arabic literary criticism. [16; 18; 19]. **Traces of Greek Philosophy** [5; 9]. A number of external factors, including Greek philosophy, and especially the translation of Aristotle’s works into Arabic, have had a significant impact on the development of Arab literary criticism. Under these factors, Arab philosophers obtained information on summarizing certain points of theory of literary criticism, and in other words, by influenced Aristotle’s Poetics about the artistic expression of the poem they made their contribution to the development of Arab literary criticism. **Scientific and theoretical features of literary criticism.** Ancient philosophers looked at the analysis of poetic examples from a new

prism by identifying factors influencing the development of literary criticism. The deepening of the theoretical foundations of literary criticism has led to transformation of this field to an independent science, and to forming a new form in literary criticism – the “scientific form in poetry” (صيغة العلم بالشعر). This form has come to a specific form of term, that is, traditional knowledge is combined with Arabic linguistics, and non-traditional knowledge with philosophy [6, p. 21]. These two compounds, which formed from science laid the foundations for the theory of Arabic literary criticism. Thus, scholars who lived in the 4th century of the Hijri established literary criticism as an independent science by defining critical terms and specific criteria. Critics have penetrated into the depths of poetic specimens during this period, trying to analyze the texts of the poem in terms of meaning and form in particular and in detail [11, p. 68].

Thus, the writing of the first fundamental critical works on poetry, and especially poem with regards to structure of ode, coincide to the fourth century of the Hijri. Among these books, Ibn Tabataba al-Alawi's work "عيار الشعر" has a particular importance [6, p. 19–88]. This is the first time in the work of the author the theory of Arabic literary criticism was elaborated on scientific grounds and the basic provisions of the concept of “scientific form” in poetry were defined.

**Life and creativity of Ibn Tabataba.** Family tree of Ibn Tabataba, whose true name was Abul-Hasan Mohammed ibn Ahmad is related to Ali ibn Abi Talib. Ibn Tabataba, whose birth date is unknown, as recorded have been born in Isfahan, where he spent his entire life and died in 322 Hijri [1, p. 151; 7, p. 5, 308; 14, p. 244; 20, p. 427; 21, p. 2, 101; 23, p. 5, 97]. Ibn Tabataba, one of the most widely known scholars of the period, has been constantly studying the Qur'an, analyzing the language features of the Prophet's (pbuh) hadith, and devoted much of his life to exploring the more sophisticated words of Imam Ali (AS). Ibn Tabataba, one of the classical scholars of the Middle Ages, has been an example for many, in both accurate and humanities fields of science, especially he has a deep knowledge in the field of logic and philosophy. It is possible to witness about above mentioned by reading his literary work "عيار الشعر" [1, p. 44–48]. Poet Yaqut al-Hamawi, talking about the literary level and artistic taste of the writer in his work "معجم الادياء": Ibn Tabataba is a distinguished scientist with precision and extraordinary memory, he is a talented poet who has the ability to write impromptu poetry [23]. Al-Amidi and al-Marzubani, who investigated Ibn Tabataba's creativity, speaks about his ability in poetry and prose: “Ibn Tabataba is one of the sheikhs of literature” [20, p. 427]. An analysis of the views of the medieval famous writers and historians we cited, and the serious research we have made above, give us the impression to say that Ibn Tabataba is a well-known figure in both poetry and prose and literary theory.

**The most important critical works of the author.** Ibn Tabataba left behind a great scientific and literary heritage. Unfortunately, most of the writer's scientific heritage has been lost, only a small part has reached our days. The scholars who quoted Ibn Tabataba's biography stated that the writer had the following works:

1. ديوان الشعر – Divan of the poem
2. رسالة في استخراج المعنى – Treatise about getting meaning
3. عيار الشعر – Criteria of the poem
4. تقرير النفاثر – Comments to the articles

5. تهذيب الطبع – Improvement of nature

6. كتاب الشعر والشعراء – A book about poems and poets

7. كتاب العروض – A book about Aruz [12, p. 58–68; 22, p. 254–256].

The "عيار الشعر" book, in which the author brought together expressiveness with criticism, is distinguished from others in terms of its scientific value and theoretical information [18, p. 87]. It is in this work that the author's ideas about literary criticism are widely contains [22, p. 255].

**Criticism style.** While examining Ibn Tabataba's creativity, we are witnesses that in contrast with Ibn Qutayba, the criticism and the dimensions of beauty is take a little part in his works, but from time to time he penetrates the depths of the theory of criticism and he is trying to formd this field as an independent science [12, p. 118].

Ibn Tabataba, whose aim is to develop literary criticism theory differing from his predecessors wrote his "عيار الشعر" work based on the question-and-answer principle, "فهمت؟" – Do you understand? "ما سألت أن أصفه لك من علم الشعر"; "اللهم احطك" – I bring clarity to their asked about the science of poetry, "التأني لتيسير ما عسر منه عليك" – Do not hurry to explain difficult things to you; "عنه سألت ما لك مد بين أنا" – I clarify what they asked, etc. by using like this phrases he trying to give to this poem a teaching character [18, p. 3]. The author in his mentioned work, gives a livelihood to the learning process, trying to guide those who begin to learn the science of poetry and understand the artistic beauty of the ode structure. Ibn Tabataba avoids using scientific and complicated terms and expressions to convey his thoughts in an easy language, and avoids philosophical ideas for keeping readers from falling into deeper thoughts and tearing down.

Ibn Tabataba has divided his work into two parts, scientific and theoretical [12, p. 119].

The author focuses on the following points in the first part of his work:

1. Determine the size of a poem, identify its differences from the prose, and demonstrate the importance of aruz science in the poem's order.
2. Determine the peculiarities of the poet's creative style.
3. The need for an analysis of the internal structure of the ode and its regulation.
4. To analyze the attitude of the new poets to the old meanings of ancient poetry.
5. Determine the basis for distinguishing between good and bad poems.
6. Indication of the degree of influence of external factors to the ode.
7. Demonstrate logical interrelation of the parts of ode (presentation, topic, result) [18, p. 3–40].

In the second part of the literary work, he investigate different poems sample (ode, piece, couplet), compares them, and tries to distinguish good poems from bad poems, and group both poems under different headings [18, p. 45]:

1. Bad Poems – "الأبيات المستكرهه التي يجب الاحتراز منها" – (The bad couplets from which a person should keep away) [18, p. 40];
2. Good Poems – "الأبيات التي أغرق قائلوها في معانيها" – (amazement of speaker to the meanings of couplet) [18, p. 45];
3. Better poems – "الأشعر المتقنة المحكمة المستوفاة المعاني" – (with deeper meaning and wise) [18, p. 48];

4. Only poems with good meanings "الأبيات التي تجلب معانيها للطفة القول فيها" (Attractive poems with using beautiful words) [18, p. 49];

5. The remaining poems – "المعرض الحسن الذي ابتذل على ما لا يشاكله من المعاني" (Poems with a good external structure, despite their meanings) [18, p. 85].

It is important to note that when Ibn Tabataba talking about existing deficiency in poetry samples, sometimes he adds some color to his ideas to overcome the weight and thus reduces readers' fatigue [12, p. 120].

By carefully reading Ibn Tabataba's "عيار الشعر" book we can conclude that his literary work, unlike other critical books, he does not compile this book in a logical order, and while he talked about a subject there, he also gave, a wide coverage to other issues and thus, in the composition of the work violated the general regulation. For example, when the author talking about structure of the ode [16, p. 7] under the heading "طريقة نظم القصيدة" which is third subject of the work, at the same time talked about others subject and then explain this subject in the seven part of the poem which name is "ربط أجزاء القصيدة" [18, p. 174]. Ihsan Abbas, who takes into account all the peculiarities and essences of the work, says about the book: "despite Ibn Tabataba's work was irregularly but it written with great pleasure" [4, p. 133]. Other philologists, who have analyzed the work of the author, says about its subject and structure: "Indeed, the author goes beyond the subject, when he speaks about the fine features of poetry [18, p. 32], its divisions [16, p. 40], the stability of its structure [16, p. 48] and then in other parts it returns to the same subject" [18, p. 67]. "While Ibn Tabataba speaks about fake poems, he immediately move on to the subject of good poems without giving any introduction" [18, p. 89]. However, despite all this, when author speaks about the different topics in his work he does not allow to length, prefers to express more meanings in less words. The author says about it: "We were satisfied with just giving one example for each subject in the book and trying to clarify the issues in that area by this example, otherwise would have allowed to length" [18, p. 83]. Sharif Allawani says about it: "The rules in the work have been interpreted on the basis of examples" [8, p. 19].

#### **"عيار الشعر" Critical topics discussed in the book.**

Ibn Tabataba's book "عيار الشعر" contains the following important critical topics:

1. Poems and prose styles, their similarities and differences.
2. The degree of influence of the naturalness and falsity on meaning of poetry.
3. Poetry culture, its quality and benefits of using ancient poetry examples.
4. Word-meaning relations and its role in the evaluation of poetry.
5. The degree of poetry subject relations with life and the living world.
6. The importance of metre and rhyme and their role in poetry.
7. The artistic structure of ode and its external structure.
8. Artistic pleasure in poetry.
9. Old and new themes in the poem.

With the aim of distinguishing between good and bad poetry, Ibn Tabataba purified the poetry of both ancient and modern examples of poetry written by contemporary writer and by taking as evidence

whole seven hundred and seventy-seven couplets tried to clarify the subject [8, p. 19–20]. With such an approach, the writer also was able to determine the rules of poetry of the epoch Sadrul-Islam, the Amavis and the Abbasids. He based his analysis on the following methods:

1) Determine the most rigid rules in the poem based on traditional Arabic poetry and the pre-existing critics' views;

2) To rely on their scientific potential and artistic pleasure in solving the problem.

During analyzing Ibn Tabataba's "عيار الشعر" book, it is possible to witness that he focuses more on the study of the "Arabian ode structure" [8, p. 21]. In contrast his predecessors, he laid the foundations for the third phase of the literary criticism of Arab literary criticism, namely the "special precise scientific approach and literary theory" (تخصص العلمي الدقيق والنظرية الأدبية).

#### **Ibn Tabataba's artistic creativity and theory of creation of ode.**

While explaining the general theory of criticism of Ibn Tabataba related with the way of creation in artistic creativity, we can say that the theory of the creation of ode begins with the creation of words, which is called "poetry". Ibn Tabataba who notes that the poem is a scientific concept says: "Poetry is a word, and people have taken it from the prose that they used to communicate with each other. If these words are not pleasant they are considered to be blamable". Its regulation should be clear, and its rhyme must be true not depending of whether it fits the reader's taste and character or not. Because it is considered the scales in the size of the poem. If the poem does not delight, then the poet knows aruz should try to fix and reinforce the poem, and should not allow fraud in this case [8, p. 19–20].

The meetings of Ibn Tabataba regarding the stages of the ode are as follows:

The first is called the stage of thought and implementation (مرحلة الفكرة والانفعال). Here, appropriate words, rhymes and measure are selected, and the prose in the ideas is turning into poetry.

The second stage is called the "The stage of irregular expression of the couplets" (أبيات متفرقة في غير نظام). Here, the poet aligns couplet with each other by their meaning, and the fact that the previous one is consistent with the last one is not very important.

The third stage is called "Staging and compiling stage" (مرحلة التنسيق والترتيب). At this stage, retailers couplet are beginning to line up in a particular order and interconnected form. The fourth stage is called the "Development and definition stage" (مرحلة التنقيف والتهذيب). At this stage, the poet begins to cleanse the collected couplets, and eventually succeeds in creating the correct, ode [8, p. 32–33].

This theory, created by Ibn Tabataba, shows that the precise scientific formation of the ode depends directly on the poet's inner will and his feelings. Thus, the poet fully understands the ode written by him, carefully considers every detail of it, and determines its order by his own accord. Ihsan Abbas says about depending of ode on the will of the poet: "The theory of the formation ode by Ibn Tabataba was far from the poet's lustful feelings, and only related with his precise scientific activity" [4, p. 30]. But Shukri Iyad, dislikes the theory created by Ibn Tabataba and says: "Ibn Tabataba was a middle-class poet. The stages of the theory that he has made about the structure of the ode are derived from his own experience. Therefore, we will put aside his personal thoughts and try to justify the peculiarities of the ode"

[9, p. 65]. In spite of all these conflicting views about the structure of ode created by Ibn Tabataba, we can see that he was persistent in his statements and appreciated the poem only as a result of the poet's accurate scientific opinion. He states that the poet's natural poetic ability plays a special role in this work [18, p. 151]. The last stage of the book (مرحلة التثقيب والتهديب) proves to the extent the poet's value in writing the ode. Such theoretical considerations in the book "عيار الشعر" significantly facilitated the work of philologists and critics. The author states that the nature of the poet plays a major role in the theory of criticism in the structure of ode. We have been able to witness this once again when study the ode, and we have seen that the order and the writing of the ode are directly based on the poet's own thinking. The writer first bring it to literature with the term "خلق صناعي". Speaking about poet's choice and expression, Ibn Tabataba described it as "النساج" ("weavers"), "النقّاش" ("ornaments"), "ناظم الجواهر" ("jeweler"). Izzaddin Ismail, speaking about Ibn Tabataba's creation of ode theory, says, "The views of Ibn Tabataba about the writing of the ode were known in Arabic literature, still in the period of the II Abbasi. But then, unlike Ibn Tabataba, they give more attention to the shape of the ode than its contents" [13, p. 218–220]. Shukri Iyad again criticizes the poet's thoughts about the structure of the ode and says, "Ibn Tabataba spoke about the theory of the creation of the ode and explained in detail the term "عملية خلق صناعي" (artificial creative operation). From this we can conclude that the work of the poet who wrote the ode is to simply assemble the couplets and make them one after another" [9, p. 65]. Supporting this view, Mohammad Mustafa also says after studying Ibn Tabataba's theory of "صناعيخلق" says, "When an ordinary reader is first acquainted with the aforementioned theory of Ibn Tabataba, he understands that this is a well-known concept. It is possible that Ibn Tabataba has given the word "خلق" in a exaggeratedly manner" [19, p. 174]. He goes on to say, "Ibn Tabataba has not brought anything new to the ode creation theory" [19, p. 174].

But, from the investigations it was obvious that Ibn Tabataba in his theory of ode writing he compared ode and brochure from artistic and scientific point of view and as a result, he clearly explained the differences between them.

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#### Мамедова К. Трансформація літературознавства у наукову форму. Ібн Табатаб аль-Алаві

**Анотація.** З IV століття Хіджі літературна критика почала розвиватися по-своєму унікальним чином. Особливо важливо відзначити ім'я Ібн Табатаба, одного з відомих критиків епохи Аббасидів, у цьому творі. Щоб розробити теорію літературознавства і перетворити її на конкретну науку, Ібн Табатаба пише для цього свою працю *عيار الشعر*. Написана на основі принципу питання-відповідь, ця книга відрізняється від інших творів того періоду своїм науковим значенням та теоретичною інформацією про критику та мудрість. У своєму літературному творі він ділить його на дві частини, наукову та теоретичну, намагаючись направити тих, хто починає вивчати науку про поезію та розуміти художню красу будови оди. У своїх творах автор пояснює поезію та стиль прози, їх схожість та відмінності, він пише про поетичну культуру, її якість, переваги використання давніх поетичних прикладів, буквальні зв'язки та їх роль у оцінці поеми, важливість рими та художню структуру оди та її зовнішню структуру, про художню насолоду в поемі, пояснюючи такі теми, він намагається з'ясувати їх теоретичні основи. Поява «художнього» як позитивного впливу на розвиток літературної критики загалом також відіграла особливу роль у визначенні структури арабської оди. Хоча це поетичне нововведення насамперед було пов'язане з іменами Башара ібн Бурда та Абу Нуваса, його в подальшому розвинув Абу Тахама, який привернув усіх, привносячи нововведення у вірш як за формою, так і за змістом. Були певні суперечки, коли дослідники аналізували вірші Абу Таммама, і це спричинило початок порівняльного дослідження творчості Абу-Таммама та творчості Аль-Бухтурі. Оскільки подальша стабілізація теоретичних основ літературної критики тоді вимагала більш широких порівнянь, творіння Абу-Таммама почали вивчатися порівняно з поезією Аль-Муганабі. Арабські філософи отримали інформацію про узагальнення певних моментів теорії літературознавства, інакше кажучи, вплинувши на поетику Арістотеля щодо художнього вираження поеми, вони зробили свій внесок у розвиток арабського літературознавства.

**Ключові слова:** літературна критика, науковий підхід, поезія, проза, метр та вимірювання поезії.