

Shanfara the Tramp Between the Truth and Myth

Salahuddin Mohd. Shamsuddin / Prof. Dr.

Faculty of Arabic Language,
Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam

ABSTRACT

We chose this topic because the stories told about Shanfara do not always agree with his poems, but are closer to being a picture of the popular legends that abounded about the heroes of the pre-Islamic era than being some true news, but there are several narrations that shed light on this fact that Shanfara grew up outside his people, as he moved or was transferred as a young boy to the other people, namely Banu Shabana b. Fahm, then he moved or transferred from them to Banu Salāmān b. Mufarrij, who were from the tribe of 'Azd, and that his life in this mobility was not the life of pride that was enjoyed by the sons of the tribe and clan, but rather the life of intruders on the people, so he declared his revolution against the tribe and left them to the other people who were more honorable than them, the people who were not human, but were the beasts that he found to them what he lacked among his people. Hence, he chose the direction to the tramp, and cutting off the road. The aim of this study is to defend the existence of pre-Islamic poetry and respond to those who doubt the validity of the ratio of pre-Islamic poetry before Islam. The method used in this study is the historical descriptive method, which depends on the narrations of the narrators and the interpretation of heretical literary texts, which is always being useful in studying such topics.

Keywords: Shanfara the tramp, Myth or Historical truth, Pre-Islamic poetry, Mirror of Arab life in pre-Islamic era.

SHANFARA THE TRAMP AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

Author of the book: "Lamiyat al-Arab" has written about the environment of Shanfara, saying: "Shanfara grew up in the region of Al-Surat, and this region is a mountainous area between Mecca and Medina, and its most prominent features are the mountains, to the extent that it is called mountains of Al-Surāt, and the mountainous environment is one of the factors that facilitate the life of tramps for its inhabitants. This is for two reasons, the first is that the mountainous environment is always less fertile. The need usually controls most of its inhabitants, and this naturally leads some of them to thievery and blocking the road, who are psychologically and physically prepared for this life. The second is that the mountainous areas are the most suitable places for the trumps, with the means of protection and concealment that they provide for them, whether their folds, caves and peaks." (1)

Shanfara the tramp grew up in this environment, and the narrators did not specify and it was not in their power to determine the time of his birth, nor the time of his death, although it is likely that he was in the generation immediately preceding Islam. (2)

As for the social environment of Shanfara, it was very harsh, and this cruelty accompanied him from the time he recognized himself, until he died or rather, it was this cruelty that prompted him to choose the life of a tramp in which he must have to die.

Shanfara never knew a life of comfort and ease, and he never knew a life of stability and social affiliation. Some of the attackers attacked him in one of the raids, as some tribes were attacking against each other, which was common and familiar throughout the Arabian Peninsula before Islam.

Shanfara was a young boy at that time - as mentioned in the narrations - when they took him as a captive, and when he found himself a captive in that neighborhood of Bani Fahm. Some narrators mention that he was not taken as a prisoner, but his mother moved with him to Bani Fahm when his father was killed, so she did not find a supporter in his people who would take the revenge on her husband. Those who killed him - as mentioned in this narration - were his cousins from Bani Salāmān b. Mufarrij. Shanfara moved or was transferred from his family and his homeland to the strangers, and he was compelled and forced to this move, and his life in this transfer was neither dignified, nor cherished in both possibilities, as the life of the captive and the neighbor, both of them, did not enjoy the dignity and honor of the sons of the tribe. Rather, it was closer to servitude and humiliation. It was inevitable for the captive or the neighbor to accept from his masters that were the sons of the tribe, some images of transcendence and contempt that the proud soul must be harmed a little. Soul of Shanfara was very stubborn. We can imagine that what kind of the pain suffered by Sanfara since his youth in the captivity or something like the captivity. (3)

Undoubtedly, the resentment that Shanfara held for Bani Salāmān was not linked to a single cause. Rather, it was a pain that gathered in his soul, until it filled it with the malice and hatred for Bani Salāmān. (4) The narrations that show a relationship between Shanfara and a girl from Bani Salāmān or some of these narrations that indicate that Shanfara was in love with that girl who was called Qa'sūs, and he wanted to marry her, but she refused him. There is no doubt that Shanfara never brought upon Bani Salāmān any kindness, affection, or even contentment. It is known that all the narrations agreed that Shanfara swore to kill one hundred men of Bani Salāmān. So, it is not natural to say that the resentment that Shanfara held to Bani Salāmān is a natural result just for one of the previous reasons. The mere refusal of a girl to marry someone or even her slapping him for some reason, is enough to cause her people this overwhelming and destructive hatred.

'Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni mentioned two aspects of Shanfara's pain, the one of them is that Shanfara had not a soul as all the souls in her denial of grievance and her sense of humiliation, as he says about her:

A free soul does not reside in me in affliction, until I am changed (5)

The second aspect is that Bani Salāmān were relatives of Shanfara in lineage, as they were a branch of 'Azd as well, just as sons of al-Hajar were Shanfara's clan from 'Azd as well - as we shall see - and the abuse of the relative, especially the insult and exaltation from him, is more self-harm than if it comes from the strangers, as he says:

"The injustice of relatives is more disgraceful on the soul than the impact of Indian Sharp sword" (6)

Whatever the case, all the factors of resentment gathered in the soul of Shanfara against Bani Salāmān, especially some narrators mentioned that Bani Salāmān had killed his father, so, he demanded for the revenge on them, and what is the importance of revenge to the Arabs? It is known, because this incident changed Shanfara's life, until he lost his balance in the society in which he lived or loved to live, and his fate was turned upside down. As the Arab proverb says: "The clan participates in the crime". Arabs in the pre-Islamic era used the principle that says: "Help your brother in both situations, whether he is the oppressor or oppressed." (7)

HIS NAME AND LINEAGE

In fact, all the reports of Shanfara are few and disturbing, so that their narrators contradict each other, and hence the negative word "no" was repeated at the beginning of each report. It is right for Lyall to mention that the stories told about Shanfara do not always agree with his poems, but are closer to being a picture of the popular legends that abounded about the heroes of the pre-Islamic era than being true news. (8) Mystery surrounds his name, lineage and origin. All that is known about his name and lineage is that he is Shanfara b. 'Awās b. Al-Ḥajar b. Al-Hunayī' b. 'Azd as mentioned in the book: "The songs" authored by Asfahāni.

In a narration mentioned that he is Shanfara b. 'Aws b. Ghawth b. Zaid b. Kahlān - as mentioned by Al-Mubarrid in his definition - and in another narration mentioned that he is from Bani Al-Ḥarith b. Rabi'ah b. Al-'Aws from the 'Azd tribe from Yemen - as mentioned in the explanation of Al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt by Al-Mufaḍal Al-Ḍabi. (9)

The narrators did not stop in their narrations at this contradiction, nor they provided us with sufficient means to help us to eliminate this contradiction, because they did not mention any valuable thing about the family of Shanfara, neither about his father, nor about his mother, until some researchers noticed that Shanfara's origin and lineage are two very ambiguous issues. (10)

Shanfara is the name, and it was said that it is a title for Shanfara the poet, because it means a man with the thick lips, and thick lips is a feature of the black race according to ethnologists. Therefore, some researchers made evidence that "it is likely that the blood of an African, a Negro or an Abyssinian was flowing in his veins." (11)

There is no doubt that the branch of Shanfara is from 'Azd tribe in the narrations, which is 'Azd Shanu'ah settled in Al-Surāt region between Mecca and Medina. The narrations differ as to why they are described as ugly. Some of them make it a part of animosity, which is enmity, and for this they say events of animosity and hostility indicating the events related to Khuza'ah, for which they are called Shanu'ah. Some of them mentions that Shanu'ah was called Mikhlāf in Yemen, and this means that their attribution is to indicate their homeland in Yemen, while another narration states that their homeland is not in Yemen, but in 'Abidah. Whatever it is true that Shanfara is from 'Azd tribe, and his branch of 'Azd settled in Al-Surat region, and that is why they are sometimes called 'Azd of Al-Surāt, and that was not a short time before Islam. (12) There are some historical evidences that approximate the determination of the time of Shanfara saying that his friend Ta'abbata Sharra had a sister named 'Amina who married Nawfal b. 'Asad b. 'Abd Al-'Uzza b. Qusay, whose son 'Uday converted to Islam in the year 8 AH, as Brockelmann transmitted in the History of Arabic Literature Part 1, meaning that Ta'abbata Sharra was in the generation preceding Islam, and Shanfara was his friend even though he was older than him,

and he died before Ta'abbaṭa Sharra, and he lamented him in his poetry, therefore, Shanfara was also from the generation immediately preceding Islam. (13)

Shanfara was one of those "strangers of Arab" who were extending the movement of the tramps with a large group, so Ibn Manzoor the writer of dictionary: "Tongue of Arab" quoting from Ibn Sayyidah on the authority of Ibn Al-Ā'rābi, placed him among "the strangers", as well as the owner of "The Crown of the Bride" put him, quoting from: Al-Tahḍīb and Lisān al-Arab, as well as Ibn Al-Ā'rābi in his book: "Anecdotes" put him among "the strangers of Arab" of the Pre-Islamic era", and Shanfara himself stated in some of his poems that he was a "hybrid". (14)

HIS MOTHER

His mother was a foreign slave, therefore, he was considered one of the strangers among the Arabs, whose fathers had rejected them for the shame of their birth, because they were not the sons of the free man. (15)

It is possible that the mother of Shanfara was born of a free father and mother as some believe. However, Shanfara's description of his mother as "the daughter of a free man" is not without an emotional expression that fits with the highly sensitive emotional atmosphere in which the verses of his poems were spoken. It is a loud claim from the sensitive same Shanfara in the face of his master's arrogant daughter, declaring to her that the slavery is a wrong social situation that is not acceptable to him, because God did not create the people as slaves, and if the unjust conditions made his mother a slave, then this does not change the divine position on which God created her, for she was the daughter of a free man before she was a slave in the social situation of people's lives. He follows by saying: "If you know her", it is as if he wanted to tell her that saying that 'Umar b. Al-Khaṭṭāb said to 'Amr b. Al-Āas later: "When did you enslave the people and their mothers gave birth to them free?" If this girl (the daughter of his master) sees his mother as a slave, he sees her as a daughter of a free man. (16)

HIS FIRST UPRISING

Ibn al-Ambāri, the author of "Sharh al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt" narrated three narrations related to his early upbringing, two of them from Ma'arij, one of them was narrated by al-Aṣfahāni on the authority of al-Nimri - which will be mentioned shortly - and he says in the other one: The reason for Shanfara's invasion and killing of 'Azd was that a man among them jumped on his father and killed him. Shanfara was young, and his father was in a weak position of his family, as he was in a few, so when the mother of Shanfara saw that no one would be asked for his blood, she traveled with him and his younger brother, until she became closer to the tribe of Bani Fahm, and she remained among them until Shanfara grew up, so she made her look like a wrath, and he began to hate on his side, he fell into the soul of Ta'abbaṭa Sharra, and he used to honor him, and bring him closer to himself, and he was changing with Ta'abbaṭa Sharra, until he became as no one can stand opposite side to his way.

The third narration is from an unknown narrator, in which he said: Al-'Azd killed a man of Bani Fahm, and the man was killed was called Al-Ḥārith b. Al-Sā'ib Al-Fahmy. So, they mortgaged to them Shanfara, his mother and his brother, and handed them over. Shanfara grew up among them, and he was very valiant and self-assured, and he was more understanding than Al-'Azd in killing and robbing. (17)

These three narrations that Asfahāni mentioned in his book: “Al-Aghāni” and Ibn Al-Ambāri in explaining “Al-Mufaḍḍaiyāt”, and they are contradictory, but - according to our conclusion - shed light on that Shanfara grew up in the other people, as he moved or was transferred as a young boy to the other people who were Banu Shabāna b. Fahm, then he moved or was transferred from them to Banu Salāmān b. Mufarrij, who were also from Al-ʿAzd, and that his life in this movement was not the life of pride that the tribe and clan members enjoyed, but rather the life of intruders on the people, because of the loss of social compatibility with his tribe: Al-ʿAzd, therefore, he declared his revolution against them, until he left them to the other people who were more honorable than them, people who were not from human beings, but from beasts, who found in them what he lacked in his people. Hence, he chose the direction to the tramp and cutting off the road. When he moved to the Fahm tribe that was a famous rebellious tribe for its thieves, then his contact to Taʿabbata Sharra and learnt the lessons of the tramp on his hands, as he found in him an excellent student, until he became a tramp that nobody can stand against him in his way, and Shanfara saw that the opportunity for revenge against his tribe: ʿAzd had come to him.

BEGINNING OF HIS LIFE AS THE HOMELESSNESS

As for his homelessness, the matter is completely ambiguous, and we find three conflicting narrations mentioned by Al-Aṣfahāni in his book: Al-Aghāni Part 21 in this regard. One of these narrations was on the authority of Muḥammad b. Hishām al-Nimri with his chain of narration that mentioned that Shanfara was captured by Banu Shabāna b. Fahm, and he was among them until Banu Salāmān b. Mufarrij of al-ʿAzd captured a man from Banu Shabana. So, Banu Shabānah gave them Shanfara as the ransom. Shanfara lived among the Banu Salāmān, as he was counted one of them. Then the daughter of the man who adopted him disputed him, Shanfara said to her: O, my sister! Wash my head. She denied that he was her brother and slapped him, so he went angry until he came to the man who bought him from Fahm tribe, and asked him: Tell me who I am? He said: You are from Al-ʿAwās b. Al-Ḥajar. He said: As for me, I will not leave you until I kill a hundred of you for what you have enslaved me.

As for the second narration, on the authority of an unknown narrator that denies previous narration and says: Al-ʿAzd killed Al-Ḥārith b. Al-Sāʾib Al-Fahmi, so they refused to kill him, but a man from among them called Ḥarām b. Jābir killed him. When Shanfara grew up, began to attack on Al-ʿAzd with the tribe of Fahm.

As for the third narration, on the authority of an unknown narrator who also denies the two previous narrations, and says: “Indeed, one of the reasons for Shanfara’s situation was that Bani Salāmān b. Mufrij insulted Shanfara when he was a boy. So, the one who had taken him captive made him to look after the animals with his daughter, and when he was alone with her, wanted to kiss her. Then she slapped his face, then went to her father and told him, so he went out to him to kill him. He found him singing verses in which he regretted that this girl did not know his lineage. When the man heard what he said, he asked him: Who is he? He replied him: I am Shanfara, the brother of Bani Al-Ḥārith b. Rabiʿah. He said to him: If I am not afraid that Banu Salāmān will kill me, I will marry you to my daughter, so he said, “If they kill you, I will kill one hundred of them because of you.” Then he married his daughter and let him go, so he took her to his people. So, Bani Salāmān fought against the man, and killed him. Then he began to fulfill his promise to the man, and invaded Banu Salāmān and killed them.

The second narration narrated by Ibn al-Ambāri on the authority of Mu'arraj, which talks about al-'Azd killing his father, is perhaps the closest narration to the truth, because Shanfara himself stated in some verses that his people had lost his father, and it is mentioned in a narration that he "came to Minā (In Mecca) and Ḥarām b. Jābir was there, and it was said to him: This is the murderer of your father, so he tightened his grip on him and killed him", as the author of the book: "The tramp poets" mentioned that Shanfara stated about this event in his poetry mentioned in "al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt" authored by al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabi. (18)

Shanfara's desire for revenge reached such an extent that he was keen on mastering it, so he used to make the arrow, making its head with the sharp horns and bones, as if he invaded them, they knew by the arrow's head in their dead men that it is done by Shanfara. If he wanted to throw an arrow towards a man among them, he would always say to him as a challenge: Shall I target your eye? Then he throws it targeting his eye, we mentioned this narration here according to Al-Aṣḥānī, the author of the book "The songs", and Ibn Al-Ambāri, the author of the book: "Explanation of al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt" by al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabi. (19)

It is agreed that his enmity was focused on Bani Salāmān, until he committed himself to killing one hundred of them, and that he remained determined in carrying out this threat, until he killed ninety-nine of them before death overtook him. There are two strange stories on which all narrations agree. One of them is that when he died, he did not complete the required number, which is one hundred, except for ninety-nine of the hundred whom he swore to kill from among Bani Salāmān. After his death at a time that the narrations did not specify, a man from Bani Salāmān passed by, and his leg hit the skull of Shanfara, and it became crippled, and he died. The second news is that the only will he gave when he died when his enemies were to kill him is not to bury him, but to leave his carcass in the open as a booty for the hyena, Shanfara formulated this will in one of the most famous poetry that the ancient Arabic books were keen to prove and circulate, in which he says:

Do not bury me, my grave is forbidden for you, but
It should be a glad tidings to 'Umm-e-'Amir (means a booty for the hyena),
They took my head and most of the feelings are in the head,
Forum columns perfidy first then all the body.
There I cannot wish for a life that pleases me,
As there are the nights will be covered with the crimes.

END OF HIS LIFE

The narrators agreed that when he left Bani Salāmān angrily and threatened, he was able to attack them with his successive raids. He monitored them to kill ninety-nine men of them, as it is mentioned previously. They also tried more than once to get hold of him in ambushes and observatories, but he escaped from them with his extraordinary speed in the running, (20) his vigilance and his delicate sense of alertness to the danger, then he got rid of the danger until he set an example in the cleverness and cunning. When the death of Shanfara came, his enemies were destined to win him, as three of his enemies spotted him one night, they are Khāzim Al-Fahmy, 'Usayd b. Jābir Al-Salāmi and a nephew of whom the narrations did not mention his name. Shanfara passed by them, and he sensed them, and he did not feel the danger, and did not see a blackness except that he threw his arrow towards them. So, the arm of the nephew of 'Usayd stuck to his upper arm, so he won't groan. Shanfara said: "If you are something, I have injured you, and if you are nothing, I have secured you". He continued in his walking until he

was at the top of the monitor, and they were lying on the ground, when he approached them 'Usayd said to Khāzim: Draw your sword, but Shanfara was faster at his sword, so he drew it to Khāzim, but he only hit two fingers of his hand. At that time, they had closed in on him, but Shanfara was able to kill two of them under him, namely Khāzim and the nephew of 'Usayd, then 'Usayd came and disarmed Shanfara. When they arrested Shanfara, they took him to their people, and they wanted to heal their souls that were burning with the resentment against him, so they began to torture him psychologically and physically, then they asked him to sing for them, they wanted to listen some lines from his poetry. He said: "The anthem is for joy."... Then they hit his hand, but the hit could not separate his hand from his arm. He said about that a poem that laments his hand, and is proud of the greatness and sights that this hand has performed. (21) Then someone said to him: Can I target your eye? Shanfara said: This is what we used to do, as if he wanted to kill someone of them, he would say to him: Can I target your eye? Then he casts his eye. When they wanted to kill him, they said to him: Where do we bury you? He refused to be buried by them, as he knew that they would have to cut through his head, so he said to them in what seemed to be a deep irony in terms of meaning: What remains after his head is not important and does not deserve the attention. As it is seen in his saying, which can be considered his will:

Do not bury me, my grave is forbidden for you, but

It should be a glad tiding to 'Umm-e-ʿAmir (means a booty for the hyena), (22)

They took my head and most of the feelings are in the head,

Forum columns perfidy first then all the body. (23)

There I cannot wish for a life that pleases me,

As there are the nights will be covered with the crimes. (24)

LAMENTATION OF TA'BBAṬA SHARRA AFTER HIS DEATH

After they killed Shanfara, his comrade and friend Ta'abbāṭa Sharra lamented him, and enumerated some of Shanfara's exploits and traces of his bravery, and promised him that he would remain loyal to him and the tramp life and its raids, and he would not forget his revenge against him. (25)

Thus, the life of Shanfara the tramp ended, but all the narrators agreed not to be convinced that the death extinguished that flame, and calmed that storm that was in the soul of Shanfara, so a later period was added to Shanfara after his death, as if it was an extension of his life. Rather, some narrators spoke about Shanfara after his death as if he was still alive, waiting or looking for a suitable time to fulfill his oath, as we see a narration mentioned in "Al-'Aghāni" authored by Al-Aṣḥāḥāni.

There is no doubt that this incident is a strange and interesting story, as it could be a legend or an invented story or an attempt by someone to dress up the story of an inventor as the truth. It is true that the unanimity of the narrators does not lead to the certainty of the authenticity of this incident, except that there is nothing that would clash with the reason, or that would fall under the category of impossible. There is nothing to prevent the stumbling of a man with the bones of a dead man, and the dead being Shanfara, especially since he recommended that they not bury him, and there is no narration indicating that they violated his will and buried him.

HIS POETRY

It is said that he was a poet since his childhood, as the narrators mentioned two stanzas of his poetry with the different narrations in which he addressed his mother after the death of his father and brother (26), the strength of his soul and the first buds of his rebellion appear in these stanzas.

When the girl of Bani Salāmān hit him, he recorded in his poetry as a far-reaching incident in his life, and he recorded his regret that this arrogant girl did not know anything about his lineage.

He has a long poem called: "Lamiyat al-Shanfara". This poem is called also "Lamiyat al-Arab". It is said that this poem is unique to the other Arab poems in terms of artistic advantages in presenting the life of Arabs in the pre-Islamic era. The bulk of his poetry revolves around the conflict between him and Bani Salāmān, and the rest of it is about the news of his misfortune, his poverty, his homelessness, and his raids on non-Bani Salāmān.

CONCLUSION

If we suppose that there was a pre-Islamic poetry that was impersonated by Ḥammād Al-Rāwiya and Khalf Al-Ahmar and the others like them, but behind their plagiarism must be a true poetry, we should be guided to know that poetry by the documented narration and its distinctive personality and stylistic quality.

Then we see Lyell dealing with this subject in his introduction to the Diwan of 'Ubad b. al-'Abraṣ, confirming that the narration of this poetry continued alive and active from the pre-Islamic era until it was finally written down in the Abbasid era. Whoever refers to "the mu'allaqāt", for example, finds that each has its own distinct personality, which proves that it belongs to its author, and he repeated what he said in the first introduction that the traditions of poetry of the first century AH obligate the existence of pre-Islamic poetry that shares with it the same traditions, and also that there are some strange words in it that were not used in the era of those narrators who wrote it, which indicates as a conclusive evidence that it is true in its essence.

Margolioth has also dealt with the approach of the ancient Arabic poems, and said: It is a false approach made to match what the Qur'an criticized. So, the steady spinning at its beginning was set up for the interpretation of the Almighty's verse: "Do you not see that they (means: poets) wander in every valley?" The description of the journey and the camels came to explain the words of God Almighty: "The poets will be followed by the deceivers". There was a purpose to mention their exploits to explain the Almighty's saying: "They (poets) say what they do not do." (27)

We do not need to respond to these ridiculous opinions that call us to say that these thoughts indicate a defect in the brain of Margolioth, so he cannot accept the presence of any positive element in the formation of the pre-Islamic Arab society, and he wants to pretend behind these false interpretations that he does not say these words, but the Qur'an has dealt with the statement of these poets, and the pre-Islamic society was devoid of the exploits of the pre-Islamic people, and it was a false society, because they used to say the opposite of what they used to do in their lives. How true were these questions that were brought by (Shakib Arslan)

in response to this kind of strange thinking: "Who was that gang that undertook all this comprehensive forgery? Why doesn't Margolioth or Ṭāhā Ḥusain tell us who is the genius who did all this huge literary work after Islam? Who composed these thousands of poems and gave them the tinge of pre-Islamic era? and who invented these names for hundreds of pre-Islamic poets?

As this organized academic work needs to coordinate and organize the efforts of a group of poets and writers, and Ḥammād al-Rāwīya or Khalf al-Aḥmar alone cannot perform this great work. Then where is the balanced justice of criticism? Doesn't Margolioth know the meaning of justice? If Ḥammād or Khalf al-Aḥmar said to some of his students: I wrote this poem (*Lamiyat al-Arab*), it is not authored by Shanfara, for example, and why does he ignore that the blogging and codification took place under Persian populism, and the sensitivity between the school of Basra and Kufic school, and Khalf al-Aḥmar was a Persian, is it not possible that it was behind the issue of Persian revenge?

We see that the issue was not a matter of Persian revenge against the Arabs, and the manipulation of their national heritage, when the Persian loyalists were suffering from the oppression and persecution with the policy of discrimination in the Umayyad era, and it can be the issue of showing the muscles of knowledge in Arabic sciences and Arabic poetry or the literary theft or plagiarism, so why do we reject this possibility that Khalf al-Aḥmar knew that this long poem and brilliant literary jewel is not equal to another Arab poem in its artistic depiction of Arab life in the pre-Islamic era, and when he became sure, according to his thinking that there was no memorizer of this poem: (*Lamiyat al-Arab*) except he alone, he attributed it to himself, and this is called the impersonation or plagiarism, and this phenomenon was common in the environments of poetry and poets and still is.

It is suitable to mention here the words of ‘Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni, who is one of those who studied “*Lamiyat al-Arab*” by al-Shanfara: “In fact, there should not have been arisen a dispute about it, as it is a purely Arabic poem by a certain famous poet, Shanfara, but because of its unique literary value, it was subjected to an attempt to strip it from the Arab lineage in the form of questioning about its ancestry to Shanfara, and claiming its affiliation to Khalf al-Aḥmar. He also says, “The attribution of “*Lamiyat al-Arab*” to Shanfara continued without any doubt or dust around it for about four centuries, (about a century before Islam and about three centuries after Islam), then a faint whisper was heard that its author was Khalf al-Aḥmar, not Shanfara. (28)

Is it permissible for the Arabs to give up their literary heritage with this claim that aims to be skeptical or to go to those who are familiar with the old Arab critics with the knowledge of falsifiers and skeptics, and how can we ignore the advantages that characterize the pre-Islamic poetry such as describing the human subjective experiences with the descriptions of identity, describing the animals with their habits, and the landscapes represented in the mountains, valleys, and deserts, standing on the ruins and monuments, and the other advantages that were addressed by the pre-Islamic poets, and that were studied by the writers and critics. Here, we do not forget what the Russian Orientalist “Krakchkovsky” mentioned in his book: “*Geography to the Arabs*” that the pre-Islamic poetry abounded with the realism and correctness in the field of geographical material. It is because the pre-Islamic poet who lived in the desert and there were these things: The stars, the sun, the moon, the night, the day, the celestial bodies, the mountains, the valleys, the neighbors, the wells, the trenches, and the other things that

constitute this geographical material, adhered to him and were closer to his Bedouin life, as he was looking from the bays of the tent, and he saw these things clear and exposed in front of him, not obscured by anything, and the matter is little or much different for the urban... In any case, the correctness and realism in the field of geographical material means the pre-Islamic poetry depicting the pre-Islamic life in this field, and it contradicts what Margoloth and Ṭāhā Ḥusain said that the pre-Islamic poetry does not represent the life of the pre-Islamic people, nor does it represent the dialects of the Arab tribes. (29)

References and Footnotes

- [1] ‘Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni. Lamiyatul Al-Arab. P. 58
- [2] Ibid. p. 58
- [3] Ibid. p. 58
- [4] Ibid. P. 60
- [5] Ibid. (Diwan of Lamiyat al-Arab)
- [6] Ibid. P. 64
- [7] Sa’d Zalām Artistic phenomena in the pre-Islamic poetry. P. 31
- [8] Yusuf Khulaif. The tramp poets. P. 332
- [9] Ṭāhā Mustafa Abu Karishah. From the pre-Islamic poetry. P. 4
- [10] The tramp Poets (their news and poems). P. 132
- [11] Ibid. P. 331
- [12] ‘Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni. Lamiyatul Al-Arab. P. 54
- [13] Ibid. p. 54
- [14] The tramps in the pre-Islamic era p. 132, and see also: The tramp Poets. P. 331
- [15] Ṭāhā Mustafa Abu Karishah. From the pre-Islamic poetry. P. 4, See also: Shawqi Ḍaif. The Pre-Islamic Era. p. 375
- [16] The tramp poets. p. 333
- [17] Ibid. p. 335, quoting from the book: Explanation of “al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt” by Ibn al-Amnbari. P. 196 and also: P. 198.
- [18] The tramps in the pre-Islamic era. P. 137 See: The tramp poets. P. 336
- [19] The tramp poets. p. 336 and see Al-Asfahani. The songs. Part 21
- [20] Until the proverb struck the enemy, and Al-Isfahani transmits in his book Al-Aghani a picture of Al-Shanfara’s ability in the enemy, saying: “Shanfara’s step was taken on the night of his killing, and he found the first whim he fought twenty-one steps and the second seventeen steps.”
- [21] ‘Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni. Lamiyat ul Arab. P. 77
- [22] He means by the saying: (Sajis Al-Layali and Samir Al-Layali) the whole night, driven by grievances and dependent on crimes.
- [23] ‘Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni. Lamiyatul Arab. P. 80
- [24] In the head more: My mind.
- [25] Sajis Al-Layali, it means all night, driven by crimes and dependent on crimes. ‘Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni. Lamiyat Al-Arab. P. 80

[26] Yousuf Khulaif. The tramp Poets. P. 337 Quoted from the author of "The songs" authored by Al-Asfahani and Ibn Al-Ambari with the different narrations.

[27] Orientalist studies. P. 122.

[28] 'Abdul Ḥalim Ḥifni. (no date). *Lameyat al-Arab*. P. 49.

[29] The artistic phenomena in pre-Islamic poetry. P. 134.