

The Neoclassical Elements in Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī's Poetry

Mahmud Sâmi Bârûdî'nin Şiirlerinde Neoklasik Unsurlar

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the neoclassical elements in Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī's (d. 1322/1904) poetry, with an emphasis on the interplay between tradition and modernity in the development of Arabic literature. The investigation focuses on al-Bārūdī's innovative use of classical techniques and themes in a contemporary context, analyzing the significance of his work in shaping the neoclassical movement and its impact on subsequent generations of Arabic-language poets. The purpose of this research is to elucidate the role of al-Bārūdī's unique poetic vision in the ongoing dialogue between cultural heritage and contemporary concerns in the Arab world, ultimately highlighting the lasting relevance of his work in understanding the evolution of modern Arabic literature. Employing a combination of close textual analysis and historical contextualization, the study examines al-Bārūdī's poetry within the broader framework of neoclassical and modern Arabic literary trends. The methodology includes a comparative approach that assesses al-Bārūdī's work against that of his contemporaries and predecessors, as well as an examination of critical reception and scholarly discourse surrounding his poetry. Through this multifaceted approach, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the neoclassical elements in al-Bārūdī's poetry and their significance in the broader context of Arabic literary history.

Keywords: Arabic Language and Literature, Maḥmūd Sāmī Pasha al-Bārūdī, Modern Arabic Poetry, Neoclassicism, Modern Egyptian Literature

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Mahmud Sâmi Bârûdî'nin (öl. 1322/1904) şiirindeki neoklasik unsurları incelemekte ve Arap edebiyatının gelişiminde gelenek ve modernlik arasındaki etkileşime vurgu yapmaktadır. Araştırma, Bârûdî'nin klasik teknik ve temaları çağdaş bir bağlamda yenilikçi bir şekilde kullanımına odaklanarak, onun çalışmalarının neoklasik hareketin şekillenmesindeki önemini ve gelecek nesillere mensup Arap şairleri üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, Bârûdî'nin kendine özgü şairane vizyonunun, Arap dünyasındaki kültürel miras ile çağdaş meseleler arasında süregelen münakaşadaki rolünü açıklığa kavuşturmak ve sonuç

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olarak onun çalışmalarının modern Arap edebiyatının gelişimini anlamadaki kalıcı önemini vurgulamaktır. Yakın metin analizi ve tarihsel bağlamsallaştırma terkinini kullanarak çalışma, Bârûdî'nin şiirlerini neoklasik ve modern Arap edebiyatı temayülleri çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Yöntem, Bârûdî'nin eserlerini çağdaşları ve öncülleriyle karşılaştıran bir yaklaşımı içermekte olup aynı zamanda da onun şiiri etrafındaki eleştirel beyanları ve akademik söylemleri incelemektedir. Bu çok yönlü yaklaşım aracılığıyla araştırma, Bârûdî'nin şiirindeki neoklasik unsurları ve bu unsurların Arap edebiyat tarihi bağlamındaki önemini kapsamlı bir şekilde tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap Dili ve Edebiyatı, Maḥmūd Sāmī Paşa Bârûdî, Modern Arap Şiiri, Neoklasizm, Modern Mısır Edebiyatı

Introduction

Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī is widely recognized as one of the most prominent poets in the Arabic literary tradition. His literary works encompass a variety of genres and have been characterized by the presence of neoclassical elements. The neoclassical literary movement, which involved a renewed appreciation for the classical literary traditions of the Arab world, has had a significant impact on al-Bārūdī's poetic style. Indeed, his works are replete with references to classical forms, techniques, and themes, reflecting his deep engagement with the classical heritage of the Arabic literary tradition. This article will explore the neoclassical elements present in Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī's poetry and examine how they contribute to his distinctive literary style. Specifically, the article will examine the ways in which he incorporated classical elements into his works, the impact of the neoclassical movement on his poetic style, and the ways in which his poetry deviated from classical traditions. Furthermore, the broader cultural and historical context in which his poetry was produced will be considered, along with how this context influenced his neoclassical tendencies. Although the study of al-Bārūdī's neoclassical poetry has been the subject of much critical analysis, with scholars exploring various aspects of his works, there is still much to be discovered and examined. Therefore, this article aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the neoclassical elements in his poetry. By delving into the neoclassical features of his works, we hope to provide a more nuanced understanding of al-Bārūdī's poetry and its significance within the broader Arabic literary tradition.

1. al-Bārūdī's Life and the Influences that Guided Him towards Neoclassical Poetry

Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī, a distinguished figure in the realm of Arabic literature, is renowned for his pivotal role in establishing the foundations of modern Arabic literature and as a prominent neoclassical poet. Hailing from a family of Circassian origin, his full name is recorded as Maḥmūd Sāmī Pasha b. Ḥasan Ḥusnī b. 'Abdillah al-Bārūdī al-Miṣrī. al-Bārūdī is acknowledged for spearheading the revitalization of Arabic literature following a period of stagnation. Besides his literary contributions, he is also esteemed as a proficient commander within the Arab world. Historical accounts document that he is a descendant of the family of Nawrūz al-Atābakī, Barsbāy's brother, with the family lineage tracing back to the Mamluks.¹ Maḥmūd Sāmī's father held the position of an artillery officer in the Egyptian army before being appointed as an administrator in Berber and Dongola, Sudan, where he served until his passing. al-Bārūdī's grandfather, Abdullah, functioned as a government official during Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha's (1805-1848) reign. Amīr Murād b. Yūsuf, one of al-Bārūdī's paternal great-grandfathers, assumed the role of a "multazim" in the town of İtāy al-Bārūd, situated within the al-Buḥayra province during the Ottoman era. The "İltizām" system entailed the

1 Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lam* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 2002), 7/171.

allocation of a portion of the Ottoman state revenues to individuals in exchange for a specific fee. The term "Multazim" referred to those appointed under this arrangement. It is posited that individuals serving as Multazim during that period were identified by the locations where they executed their duties. Consequently, al-Bārūdī acquired the eponymous nickname, which was subsequently passed down through generations of his descendants.²

al-Bārūdī, as it is known, was born into an affluent and esteemed family. Nevertheless, in spite of this privilege, he experienced the loss of his father at the tender age of seven and was consequently confronted with the hardships of orphanhood early in life. This unfortunate circumstance left him bereft of paternal affection and guidance. Until the age of twelve, al-Bārūdī received his primary education at home. Subsequently, in accordance with the prevailing custom of the Turkish and Circassian families that comprised the ruling and elite stratum of Egyptian society during that period, he enrolled in a military academy. al-Bārūdī graduated from the military academy in 1854, while 'Abbās Ḥilmī I (1813-1854) still held power. It is reported that during Abbas' rule, the Egyptian army's heroic spirit waned, and a substantial portion of the armed forces was discharged from service. Furthermore, under the administration of Muḥammad Sa'īd Pasha (1854-1863), who succeeded Abbas, no improvements materialized for the Egyptian soldiers.³ Similar to numerous contemporaries, al-Bārūdī found it challenging to secure an appropriate occupation in his field of study upon graduation. In contrast, his contemporaries reveled in a lifestyle of opulence and leisure, delighting in their detachment from the battlefields. However, al-Bārūdī experienced a profound and enduring sense of anguish among them, as he did not engage in warfare like his ancestors. He aspired to attain lofty objectives and vast aspirations through military endeavors. This inner turmoil prompted him to seek solace for the lack of tangible combat by immersing himself in the vividly recounted battles chronicled in historical records. Consequently, he dedicated himself to the examination of the works of ancient scholars.⁴

In this period, al-Bārūdī seized the opportunity to augment his expertise in the domain of poetry, which he considered a fitting sphere for his talents. He swiftly cultivated his poetic aptitude, maintaining that it was an inherent artistic endowment bequeathed from his mother's ancestry, rather than a skill acquired through force or struggle. Nonetheless, al-Bārūdī recognized the necessity of undertaking preliminary groundwork to ascend to the zenith of poetic artistry and diligently pursued this objective. Disenchanted with the works of his contemporaries, he refocused his attention on closely examining the trailblazing poets of classical Arabic literature. His admiration amplified as he delved into their oeuvre. Despite the absence of formal training in grammar, al-Bārūdī was able to articulate his thoughts in a remarkably natural style. His zeal for learning the poetry of past epochs instigated a transformation in his milieu. Possessing

2 Nevzat Hafız Yanık, *Maḥmūd Sāmī Paşa el-Bārūdī: Hayatı, Edebî Kişiliği ve Eserleri* (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1991), 41.

3 'Umar al-Dasūqī, *Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī* (s.l.: Dār al-Ma'ārif bi-Miṣr, n.d.), 22.

4 al-Dasūqī, *Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī*, 22.

fluency in Turkish, al-Bārūdī journeyed to Istanbul to seek employment, briefly serving in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his tenure, he immersed himself in Persian and Turkish literary traditions, crafting poetry in both languages while persisting in his composition of Arabic verse. During his stay in Istanbul, al-Bārūdī was provided with many opportunities to explore various dīwāns containing classical Arabic poetry within the city’s libraries.⁵

Coinciding with this period, Khedive Ismā‘īl traveled to Istanbul to convey his gratitude to the officials responsible for his appointment as the governor of Egypt. He encountered al-Bārūdī in 1862/1863, and the latter’s successful efforts to gain his favor resulted in their joint return to Egypt. The poet subsequently attained a distinguished role within Khedive Ismā‘īl’s administration, marking the onset of his improving fortunes. Following a period of military service, al-Bārūdī, accompanied by several officers, voyaged to France to witness the annual exhibitions of French troops. He traversed the English Channel to London, where he observed British military operations. It is surmised that his literary competence advanced further during this phase. Upon his return to Egypt, al-Bārūdī commenced the portrayal of his life experiences and Egypt’s natural splendors in his poetry. Concurrently, he articulated his intrinsic military ethos, prowess, and heroism in his verse. In 1866, he was deployed to Crete with a division of soldiers to quell the ongoing Cretan insurrection. His exceptional accomplishments in this mission earned him recognition and commendation from the Ottoman Empire.⁶

In 1877, when Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire, Egypt offered its support in the form of military aid. al-Bārūdī was among the most prominent individuals to provide assistance, garnering numerous awards and distinctions for his service. During this period, his poetry was imbued with an intense longing and yearning for his homeland. Upon his return to Egypt, al-Bārūdī’s reputation soared, leading to his appointment as the director of the Sharqīyya province and later as governor of the capital. Concurrently, a nationalist movement was gaining momentum, propelled by the press and a cadre of reformers who denounced Ismā‘īl’s corrupt fiscal policies, the permissive attitude towards foreign intervention in governmental affairs, and his acceptance of the debt fund and dual control. al-Bārūdī extended his support to the leaders of this movement, his ambition driving him to envisage a revival of his Mamluk ancestors’ prestige embodied in his own persona.⁷

When Ismā‘īl was succeeded by his son Tawfīq (1879-1892), the latter initially attempted to comply with the reformers’ demands. Tawfīq vowed to institute a representative government and appointed al-Bārūdī as the Minister of War. However, Tawfīq reneged on his commitment to the nation, failing to establish the anticipated Consultative Council. As a result, al-Bārūdī

5 Atilla Yargıcı, “Mahmud Sami el-Bārūdī’nin Hayatı, Edebî Kişiliği ve Şiirlerinden Örnekler”, *Doğu Araştırmaları* 1 (2008), 140-141.

6 Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt, *Tārīkh al-adab al-‘Arabī lil-madāris al-thānawīyya wa al-‘ulyā* (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa Mişr lil-Ṭab’ wa al-Naşr, n.d.), 492; Yargıcı, “Mahmud Sami el-Bārūdī’nin Hayatı, Edebî Kişiliği ve Şiirlerinden Örnekler”, 140-141.

7 Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Adab al-‘Arabī al-mu‘āşir fī Mişr* (s.l.: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, n.d.), 85-86.

resigned, only to return to serve in a new administration. Nonetheless, Tawfīq persisted in neglecting the populace's requests, causing the situation to worsen. al-Bārūdī was then tasked with forming a new ministry, but the army, under 'Urābī's (1841-1911) leadership, initiated the 1882 revolution. Tawfīq sought British intervention against his own nation and military. Amidst these circumstances, al-Bārūdī aligned himself with the revolution. Though his poetry reveals initial hesitancy, he ultimately resolved to stand firm in his decision. In the aftermath of the revolution's failure, al-Bārūdī faced trial and received a sentence of exile to Serendip (i.e., Sri Lanka). He spent seventeen years and a few months there, composing poetry that expressed his anguish, estrangement, and emotional scars. During his exile, he learned English and started compiling selections of ancient poetry, assembling the best poems and verses from thirty poets. In 1900, al-Bārūdī was pardoned and returned to his homeland. He transformed his residence into a hub for writers and poets. Regrettably, his life did not extend much further, as he passed away in 1904 before his personal anthology and his curated selections were published. It was his widow who ultimately published these two exceptional treasures, bequeathing them to future generations as a testament to al-Bārūdī's poetic genius and his discerning compilation of esteemed poets' works.⁸ In 1915, two volumes of al-Bārūdī's dīwān were released after his death, although some of his poems have yet to be published. The dīwān's preface is particularly intriguing, as it presents the author's thoughts on the essence of a poet and the artistic process, foreshadowing future developments in Romantic poetry.⁹

2. al-Bārūdī's Neoclassical Poetics

al-Bārūdī demonstrated an innate aptitude for both writing and reading poetry. Although he did not receive a comprehensive formal education in linguistics, he acquired a mastery of Arabic through his immersion in classical poetry collections. His extensive reading of renowned classical Arab poets enabled him to effortlessly memorize numerous poems and hone his discernment between exceptional and mediocre works. Consequently, al-Bārūdī acquired his poetic skills directly from primary sources, devoid of any intermediary influences. His fervent interest and meticulous study of classical poetry played a significant role in rejuvenating Arab poetry. Drawing inspiration from the anthologies *al-Ḥamāsa* by Abū Tammām (d. 231/846) and al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897), he compiled an anthology of poems he had read and committed to memory, culminating in the four-volume *al-Mukhtārāt*.¹⁰

Various factors contributed to shaping al-Bārūdī's literary persona. Some left profound marks on his psyche, while others merely grazed the surface without leaving a lasting impact on his personality or poetry. A notable aspect of his identity was his Circassian heritage. Circassia had occasionally governed Egypt, bestowing upon him a keen temperament, ambitious aspirations,

8 Dayf, *al-Adab al-'Arabī al-mu'āšir fī Miṣr*, 85-86.

9 R. C. Ostle, "al-Bārūdī, Maḥmūd Sāmī", *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J. S. Meisami et al. (London - New York: Routledge, 1998), 1/137-138.

10 Kemal Tuzcu, "Mısırlı Neo-Klâsik Şairler", *Nüsha: Şarkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2/5 (2002), 111-112.

and a predilection for martial and chivalric pursuits. This genetic element was supplemented by an acquired Arab influence gained through his study of ancient poetry, enriched by exposure to Turkish, Persian, and, eventually, English literature. His military career afforded him the opportunity to travel to Europe and experience European life, drawing parallels between him and the Abbasid poets who were well-versed in the foreign cultures of their time. Although it is clear that his poetry was not profoundly impacted by non-Arab cultures, these experiences added a unique dimension to his persona, distinguishing him from his Egyptian contemporaries.¹¹ During the latter half of the nineteenth century, amid the questioning of prevailing cultural identity and in conjunction with new exploratory endeavors, al-Bārūdī pursued two primary objectives in literature: first, to extricate the post-classical poetic tradition of his time from contrived and obsolete practices; and second, in cultivating authentic poetic sensibilities, he opted for classical Arab literature as a model, rather than the modern European literature. As a result, it is posited that al-Bārūdī, akin to numerous other Arab poets of his era who traced his footsteps, did not introduce substantial innovations to contemporary Arab literature. Nevertheless, given that a considerable number of Arab poets during that period persisted in adhering to the traditions of post-classical Arab literature, the emulation of esteemed figures from classical literature by al-Bārūdī and those who followed his lead is deemed a notable breakthrough.¹² A number of poets, particularly from Egypt and Iraq, succeeded al-Bārūdī in the neoclassical tradition. Throughout the interwar period, neoclassical poetry maintained a competitive presence alongside the Romantic style in the pursuit of public admiration.¹³

al-Bārūdī's intimate involvement with classical Arab poetry proved to be highly advantageous as he championed neoclassicism in the realm of Arab poetry. In crafting his verse, he eschewed a style that obscured meaning through excessive literary embellishments and affectation. al-Bārūdī surpassed the constraints of contemporary poetry by delving into the distinguished epochs of classical poetry, incorporating their brilliance into his era and motivating a multitude of poets to emulate his approach. Consequently, he emerged as the leading figure in the neoclassical movement, which became closely associated with his name. In terms of thematic content and style, al-Bārūdī adhered closely to the subjects explored by classical period poets. His poems feature expressions, idiomatic phrases, and even words seldom used or absent from dictionaries, all evocative of that era. He maintained this approach in his use of meter and rhyme, emulating Abū Nuwās (d. 198/813 [?]) and Abū Firās (d. 357/968) by utilizing the same metrical and rhyming patterns.¹⁴

Integrating his personal style with classical poetry, al-Bārūdī established a distinguished position within the annals of Arab literature. His poetic works offer vivid portrayals of Egyptian landscapes, his familial surroundings, wars he actively engaged in, political incidents he

11 Dayf, *al-Adab al-'Arabī al-mu'āşir fī Mişr*, 86-87.

12 Rahmi Er, *Çağdaş Arap Edebiyatı Seçkisi* (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 2012), 13-14.

13 Ostle, "al-Bārūdī, Maḥmūd Sāmī", 1/137-138.

14 Tuzcu, "Mısırlı Neo-Klâsik Şairler", 111-112.

encountered, and the time he endured in exile - all expressed with sincerity. The poems' gentleness, serenity, subtlety, and effortlessness are immediately discernible. Among his most poignant compositions are those penned in Serendip [i.e., Sri Lanka], far removed from his homeland and dear ones, imbued with a yearning for his native country. His extensive knowledge of Arab literature, familiarity with Turkish and Persian languages, acquaintance with French and English literature, and half a century's worth of military and political experience collectively enriched his poetry's content. al-Bārūdī rejuvenated the classical poetic styles of the Abbasid period and prior epochs, infusing them with nineteenth-century sensibilities, thereby paving the way for future poets such as Ḥāfiẓ İbrāhīm (d. 1932) and Aḥmad Shawqī (d. 1932).¹⁵

The exile period significantly influenced much of al-Bārūdī's finest poetry, primarily focusing on relatable themes such as homesickness, nostalgia, and sorrow over the loss of friends and family members. In these works, the intensity of his emotions takes on a prominent role, thereby altering the typical notion of the neoclassical style's impersonal nature. The elegies composed following the passing of his wife and his friend 'Abd Allah Fikrī are especially remarkable. Longing for his homeland inspired numerous captivating poems about the picturesque Egyptian landscape. Before his exile, al-Bārūdī also penned political poetry, often criticizing the tyranny of Ismā'īl and Tawfīq while advocating for increased democracy and a more representative government.¹⁶ Attaining the apex of state administration and persevering through a life replete with challenges prior to his exile, al-Bārūdī bore an intense melancholy that pervaded his spirit during his years away from home. Grappling with his predicament, al-Bārūdī found himself in a depressive mental state, his being wholly immersed in the pessimism engendered by emotions of grief, suffering, and yearning. His seclusion in distant, unfamiliar territories far from his native land incited the poet to embark on a personal journey. In these circumstances, poetry, a passion that began in his childhood, served as his exclusive sanctuary. The severe conditions of his exile, the solitude he confronted, and the despondency and nostalgia for his homeland that permeated his spirit furnished the emotional depth required for his poetic creations. As al-Bārūdī commenced conveying his inner experiences via poetry, he succeeded in capturing the same level of expressiveness in illustrating his inner world and emotional condition as he did in rendering the tangible aspects observed in the external environment. As can be inferred from his poems, the most potent emotion enveloping the poet's inner realm during the seventeen years spent in Serendip was a profound longing. This emotional intensity has been described as the most momentous emotional occurrence in the poet's life. It can be posited that the sensation of longing in al-Bārūdī's poems coalesces around four primary themes. These poems can be classified, according to intensity, as yearning for the homeland, yearning for family and friends, yearning for the past, and yearning for a romantic partner.¹⁷

15 Nasuhi Ünal Karaarslan, "Bārūdī, Mahmud Sāmī Paşa", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1992), 5/90-91.

16 Ostle, "al-Bārūdī, Maḥmūd Sāmī", 1/137-138.

17 Yakup Göçemen, "Maḥmūd Sāmī el-Bārūdī'nin Şiirinde Özlem", *KSÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 36 (2020),

al-Bārūdī's poems, written during his years of exile, have garnered praise for their literary merit. Nonetheless, some of these works have been subject to criticism due to their ethnocentric content.¹⁸ The basis for al-Bārūdī's critique can be attributed to the social attitudes prevalent during his era. Ethnocentrism, however, is regarded as incompatible with contemporary values. In his poetry, al-Bārūdī portrays the people of Serendip in a negative light, and his perception of their culture is reflective of the ethnocentric tendencies that were prevalent in medieval Arab society:

1. إِنَّ سَرَندِيبَ عَلَى حُسْنِهَا
يَسْكُنُهَا قَوْمٌ قَبَاحُ الوُجُوهِ
2. مِنْ كُلِّ فِدْمٍ لِأَيْكٍ مُصْنَعَةٌ
يُمَجُّهَا كَالدِّمِ فِي الأَرْضِ فُوهُ
3. تَحْسَبُهُ مِنْ نَضْحِ أَشْدَاقِهِ
رُكِيَّةٌ تَجْرِي دَمًا أَوْ ثَمُوهُ
4. لَا يُشْبِهُ الوَالِدَ مَوْلُودَهُ
مِنْهُمْ وَلَا المَوْلُودَ مِنْهُمْ أَبُوهُ
5. يَغْلُظُ طَبِيعَ مِنْهُمْ فَاقِدٌ
مَرْيَّةَ العِلْمِ وَوَجْهَهُ يَبْشُوهُ
6. مَنْ أَيْنَ يَدْرِي الفُضْلَ مَعْدُومُهُ
لَا يَغْرِفُ المَعْرُوفَ إِلَّا دُوهُ
7. لَا تَلْبَثُ الحِكْمَةُ مَا بَيْنَهُمْ
وَلَا يَرِيثُ الفُضْلَ حَتَّى يَبْثُوهُ
8. تَنْظُنُّ بَعْضُ القَوْمِ عِلْمَةً
وَهُوَ إِذَا يَنْطِقُ هَامٌ يَبْثُوهُ
9. لَا تَعْرِفُ المَرْءَ بِأَخْلَاقِهِ
فِي عَمْرَةٍ العَالِمِ حَتَّى يَبْثُوهُ“

- “1. Indeed, despite its beauty, Serendip is inhabited by people with hideous countenances.
2. With every foolish man, as they chew a piece, they spit it out like blood on the ground. [i.e. The people of Serendip chewed tobacco and spat it on the ground, resembling blood.]
3. You might mistake someone from Serendip as a well that spurts or overflows with blood due to their jaw's expulsion.
4. Among them, the father doesn't resemble his offspring, nor does the child resemble his father. [For they have illegitimate children as a result of their adulterous affairs.]
5. A harsh nature among them lacks the grace of knowledge, and their faces are disfigured.
6. In a place where virtue is absent, who can recognize virtue? Only those who are familiar with goodness can know it.
7. Wisdom does not linger among them, and virtue does not waste time until it is squandered.
8. You might assume some of them to be scholars, but when they speak, they are merely screeching owls, lifting their heads and screaming.
9. You cannot recognize the true character of a person amidst the throngs of people until he speaks.”¹⁹

181-182.

18 See Isaac Donoso Jiménez, “al-Bārūdī en Ceilán (1883-1899): La Reescritura de la Poesía Árabe”, *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid* 47 (2019), 107-108.

19 Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī, *Dīwān al-Bārūdī*, Critical ed. 'Alī al-Jārim – Muḥammad Shafīq Ma' rūf (Beirut: Dār al-'Awda, 1998), 707-708.

The poem authored by al-Bārūdī portrays the people of Serendip, providing a vivid description of the author's experience and observations. The poet employs the use of vivid imagery and metaphor to highlight the inhabitants of Serendip's unsavory behavior and moral depravity. Despite the beauty of Serendip, al-Bārūdī portrays its inhabitants as having hideous faces. In subsequent verses, al-Bārūdī illustrates the people's abhorrent conduct in detail. For instance, he compares the act of chewing tobacco and spitting it out to blood. This repugnant image serves to emphasize the author's condemnation of the people's behavior. Moreover, al-Bārūdī employs the metaphor of a well overflowing with blood to describe someone from Serendip, further reinforcing the people's unsavory reputation. Furthermore, the poet elaborates on the illegitimate children born among the people of Serendip, highlighting their moral degeneracy. Additionally, the inhabitants of Serendip are depicted as lacking virtue and having disfigured faces. The author highlights how the harsh nature of the inhabitants makes it challenging for them to recognize virtue and goodness. al-Bārūdī conveys the message that wisdom is not prevalent among the people of Serendip, and their lack of virtue frequently leads to squandering opportunities for progress. Even though some of the inhabitants may appear to be scholars, their speech and behavior reveal their true nature, which is unpleasant and likened to screeching owls. Finally, the author emphasizes the importance of effective communication to understand a person's true character. Only when an individual speaks can their true nature be revealed, and they can be known for who they are. In conclusion, the poem reflects al-Bārūdī's ethnocentric views, shaping his perception of the people of Serendip. It can be viewed as a reflection of the medieval Arab world's perception of other cultures, which were often regarded with suspicion and disdain. The poet's use of vivid imagery and metaphor underscores his message, which is ultimately a critique of the people of Serendip and an assertion of the superiority of his culture.

In the poetry of al-Bārūdī, the influence of the classical tradition is unmistakably prominent. Nevertheless, some elements that reflect the sentiments of modern individuals can also be discerned in his poetic works. For instance, al-Bārūdī composed an elegy as a young man in Istanbul in 1860, after losing his father at an early age. While the elegy adheres to the detailed depiction of the virtues of the deceased person that is typical of classical Arabic poetry, it also conveys the sorrow and anxieties of a young child who lost his father at the age of seven:

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| طَاحَ الرَّذَى بِشِهَابِ الْخَرْبِ وَالنَّادِي | 1. لَا فَارَسَ الْيَوْمَ يَحْمِي السَّرْحَ بِالْوَادِي |
| وَيَبْقِي بَأْسَهُ الصِّرَاحُ غَامَةً الْعَادِي | 2. مَاتَ الَّذِي نَزَّ هَبُّ الْأَقْرَانِ صَوْلَتَهُ |
| فَرَطُ الْأَسَى بَعْدَهُ فِي الْمَاءِ وَالرَّادِ | 3. هَانَتْ لِمَيْتَتِهِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَزَّ هَدْنَا |
| أُمٌّ لِلصَّلَالَةِ بَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ مِنْ هَادِي | 4. هَلْ لِلْمَكَارِمِ مَنْ يُحْيِي مَنَاسِكَهَا؟ |
| حُكْمُ الرَّذَى بَيْنَ أَرْوَاحِ وَأَجْسَادِ | 5. جَفَّتْ لِلنَّدَى وَانْقَضَى عُمْرُ الْجَدَا وَسَرَى |

6. فَلْتَمَرَحِ الْخَيْلُ لَهْوًا فِي مَقَاوِدِهَا
وَأُتْصَدِّدِ الْبَيْضُ مُلْقَاءَ بَأْغَمَادِ
7. مَضَى وَخَلْفَتِي فِي سِنِّ سَابِعَةٍ
لَا يَزُ هَبُ الْخَصْمِ إِبْرَاقِي وَإِزْ عَادِي
8. إِذَا تَلَفْتُ لَمْ أَلْمَحْ أَحَا تِقَةٍ
يَأْوِي إِلَيَّ وَلَا يَسْعَى لِإِنْجَادِي
9. فَالْعَيْنُ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دَمْعِهَا وَزْرٌ
وَالْقَلْبُ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ حُزْنِهِ قَادِي

- “1. There is no warrior today to guard the flock roaming free in the valley, destruction has taken away the meteor of war and gatherings.
2. The one died, at whose assault his peers would flee in fear, and by whose courage even the lions would take caution.
3. The world cared little for his passing, and after him, our sorrow was so great that we abandoned water and provisions.
4. Is there anyone to revive the rituals of nobility, or is there a guide after today to lead us away from misguidance?
5. The dew has dried up, the age of generosity has passed, and the decree of destruction moves among souls and bodies.
6. Let the horses frolic playfully in their reins, and let the swords lie sheathed within their covers.
7. He left me in my seventh year; my lightning and thundering do not scare my opponents.
8. When I look around, I see no trustworthy brother in whom I can take refuge and who would strive for my rescue.
9. The eye has no fortress to escape from its tears, and the heart has no one to pay the ransom to relieve its sorrow.”²⁰

In this elegiac poem, the poet mourns the loss of his father, a distinguished warrior and a leader in both combat and social gatherings. The poet emphasizes the consequences of his father's absence on the community, his personal life, and the broader world. The poem begins with the lamentation of the absence of a warrior to safeguard the flock wandering in the valley, symbolizing the community's vulnerability following the loss of their respected defender. The father's prowess is compared to a meteor, illuminating battlefields and social events alike. However, this guiding light has been extinguished by destruction. In the second verse, the father's bravery and strength are underscored, causing his peers to flee in fear while even lions exercise caution in his presence. The father's passing has left a void in the community, which the poet conveys through his immense sorrow and forsaking of basic necessities, such as water and provisions. The poem continues with the poet questioning if anyone can revive the noble rituals and provide guidance away from misguidance, highlighting the crucial role the father played in upholding ethical values and leading his people. In the fifth and sixth verses, the poet reflects on the decline of virtues such as generosity and chivalry and the widespread presence of destruction among souls and bodies. The poet suggests that the era of heroism has ended, allowing horses to frolic playfully and swords to remain sheathed. The seventh verse reveals that the father's death occurred when the poet was only seven years old, leaving him

20 al-Bārūdī, *Dīwān al-Bārūdī*, 161-162.

without protection or guidance. He acknowledges his inability to intimidate adversaries with his father's powerful influence, employing metaphors of lightning and thunder to stress this loss. As the poem unfolds, the poet expresses his feelings of isolation, noting the absence of a reliable brother in whom he can seek refuge and who would endeavor for his rescue. This line underscores the poet's desire for support and guidance in a world without his father. In the ninth verse, the poet utilizes poignant metaphors to convey his grief, stating that his tears are inescapable and his heart has no one to pay the ransom to alleviate its sorrow. This evocative imagery accentuates the profound sense of loss and seemingly unceasing pain experienced due to his father's passing.

In al-Bārūdī's poetic composition addressing mortality, the hallmarks of his neoclassical methodology are distinctly discernible. Intrinsically, the subsequent verse by the poet adheres to a paradigm that has sustained ubiquity since the pre-Islamic epoch. This paradigm frequently underscores the ephemerality of human existence and the transitory nature of the world within the domain of poetic discourse:

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| لَيْسَ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُبُوتٌ | 1. كُلُّ حَيٍّ سَيَمُوتُ |
| ثُمَّ يَبْتَلُوهَا خُفُوتٌ | 2. حَرَكَاتٌ سَوَفَ تَقْنَى |
| بَعْدَهُ إِلَّا السُّكُوتُ | 3. وَكَلَامٌ لَيْسَ يَخْلُو |
| أَيْنَ ذَاكَ الْجَبْرُوتُ | 4. أَيُّهَا السَّادِرُ قُلْ لِي |
| قِ فَمَا هَذَا الصُّمُوتُ | 5. كُنْتُ مَطْبُوعاً عَلَى النُّطْ |
| مَا أَرَاهُ أَمْ قُفُوتُ | 6. لَيْتَ شِعْرِي أَهْمُودٌ |
| كُلِّ أُنْفَى مَلَكُوتُ | 7. أَيْنَ أَمْلَاكٌ لَهُمْ فِي |
| وَخَلَّتْ تِلْكَ التُّخُوتُ | 8. زَالَتِ التَّيْجَانُ عَنْهُمْ |
| بَعْدَهُمْ وَهِيَ خُبُوتُ | 9. أَصْبَحَتْ أَوْطَانُهُمْ مِنْ |
| لَ وَلَا حَيٍّ يَصُوتُ | 10. لَا سَمِيعٌ يَفْقَهُ الْقَوُ |
| وَخَلَّتْ مِنْهُمْ بَيُوتُ | 11. عَمَرَتْ مِنْهُمْ قُبُورُ |
| هَرُ إِذْ خَانَتْ بُحُوتُ | 12. لَمْ تَدُدْ عَنْهُمْ لُحُوسَ الدَّ |
| وَانْقَضَتْ تِلْكَ النُّعُوتُ | 13. خَمَدَتْ تِلْكَ الْمَسَاعِي |
| بَاطِلٌ سَوَفَ يَفُوتُ | 14. إِنَّمَا الدُّنْيَا خَيَالٌ |
| غَيْرُ تَقْوَى لِلَّهِ قُوتُ | 15. لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ فِيهَا |

“1. Every living creature shall die; there is no permanence in this world.

2. Actions will eventually fade, followed by silence.

3. And words do not become pleasant after it, except silence.

4. O perplexed man, tell me, where is that erstwhile tyranny?

5. *I was accustomed to speech, so what is this silence?*
6. *I wish I knew, is it a death or silence?*
7. *Where are the kingdoms that ruled every horizon?*
8. *Their crowns have fallen, and those thrones have been emptied.*
9. *Their lands, after them, have become ruins.*
10. *There is no listener who understands speech, and no living creature to make a sound.*
11. *Their graves have become populous, and their houses have been emptied.*
12. *No defense could save them from the inevitable blows of time.*
13. *Those endeavors have been extinguished, and those calls have ended.*
14. *Indeed, the world is but a vain illusion that will soon pass.*
15. *In it, man has nothing except the piety of God as sustenance.*²¹

This poem elucidates a profound reflection on mortality, the impermanence of worldly affairs, and the ultimate surrender to divine providence. Its overarching thematic exploration is underscored by an awareness of the transient nature of life, coupled with a theological perspective rooted in Islamic teachings on life's ephemeral nature and the eternal aspect of divine presence. Beginning with a universal axiom, the poem immediately foregrounds its primary theme: the inevitability of death and the transient nature of worldly existence. The verse reinforces the notion that, despite all worldly achievements and endeavors, everything is destined to fade into silence and oblivion. This theme is further emphasized in subsequent verses, where the poet's introspection on the ephemeral nature of words and actions presents a stark contrast to the eternal silence that follows death. The repeated invocation of "silence" serves as a poignant metaphor for death, underscoring its permanence and inevitability. The middle verses of the poem encompass a reflective and rhetorical enquiry into the fate of the powerful and the tyrannical. The poet questions the whereabouts of the once mighty, the rulers whose power and influence seemed unassailable. Here, the transient nature of power and dominance is strikingly portrayed through the depiction of fallen crowns, empty thrones, and ruined lands. This sobering portrait of faded glory serves as a memento mori, a stark reminder of the futility of worldly power and material wealth in the face of death.

As the poem advances, the desolate imagery of populated graves and empty houses underscores the melancholic inevitability of death. The poet's depiction of a world where no one is left to understand speech or make a sound amplifies the eerie silence of oblivion. The relentless passage of time, represented as inevitable blows, is portrayed as an undefeated adversary, against which no earthly defense stands a chance. The concluding verses of the poem encapsulate a philosophical perspective on life, characterizing the world as a vain illusion destined to pass. This concept reflects the Islamic philosophy of *Dunyā*, a term for the temporal world contrasted with the eternal life hereafter. The final verse brings the divine element into focus, asserting that, amidst the transitory worldly existence, the only enduring sustenance for man is the piety or fear of God. This verse encapsulates the poem's profound message: the recognition of our transient existence and the ultimate significance of spiritual

21 al-Bārūdī, *Dīwān al-Bārūdī*, 95-96

devotion in the face of life's ephemeral reality. In summary, the poem provides a profound meditation on life's transience, the futility of worldly power and wealth, and the ultimate reality of death. Through its somber imagery and contemplative tone, the poem underscores the significance of divine providence and the importance of spiritual devotion in navigating the ephemeral nature of worldly existence. This is accomplished with a level of depth and sophistication that reveals the poet's deep engagement with both philosophical and theological perspectives on life and death.

The ghazals composed by al-Bārūdī exhibit significant congruence with the traditional norms of classical Arabic poetry. Evidently, the ensuing poem provides a lucid demonstration of this assertion:

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| 1. غَلَبَ الْوَجْدُ عَلَيْهِ فَبِكَى | وَتَوَلَّى الصَّبْرُ عَنْهُ فَشَكَا |
| 2. وَتَمَنَّى نَظْرَةً يَشْفِي بِهَا | عَلَّةَ السُّوقِ فَكَانَتْ مَهْلِكَا |
| 3. يَا لَهَا مِنْ نَظْرَةٍ مَا قَارَبَتْ | مَهْيَطَ الْجُكْمَةِ حَتَّى انْهَتَكَا |
| 4. نَظْرَةً صَمَّ عَلَيْهَا هُدْبُهُ | ثُمَّ أَعْرَاهَا فَكَانَتْ شَرَكَا |
| 5. عَرَسَتْ فِي الْقَلْبِ مِثِّي حُبُّهُ | وَسَقَتْهُ أَدْمَعِي حَتَّى زَكَا |
| 6. أِهْ مِنْ بَرَحِ الْهَوَى إِنْ لَهُ | بَيْنَ جَنَبِي مِنَ النَّارِ ذَكَا |
| 7. كَانَ أَبْقَى الْوَجْدُ مِثِّي رَمَقًا | فَاحْتَوَى النُّبْنَ عَلَى مَا تَرَكََا |
| 8. إِنْ طَرَفِي عَرَّ قَلْبِي فَمَضَى | فِي سَبِيلِ السُّوقِ حَتَّى هَلَكَا |
| 9. فَذُو تَوَلَّى إِتْرَ غَزَلَانَ النَّقَا | لَيْتَ شِعْرِي أَيَّ وَادٍ سَلَكََا |
| 10. لَمْ يَعْذُ بَعْدُ وَطَيْتُ أَنَّهُ | لَحَّ فِي نَيْلِ الْمُنَى فَارْتَبَكَا |
| 11. وَيَحُ قَلْبِي مِنْ غَرِيمِ مَا طَلِبُ | كُلَّمَا جَدَّدَ وَغَدَا أَفَكََا |
| 12. ظَنَّ بِي سُوءًا وَقَدْ سَاوَمْتُهُ | فُقْبَلَةً فَازُورَ حَتَّى فَرَكَا |
| 13. فَاعْتَفَوْهَا زَلَّةً مِنْ خَاطِي | لَمْ يَكُنْ بِاللَّهِ يَوْمًا أَشْرَكََا |
| 14. يَا عَزَا لَأَنْصَبْتَ أَهْدَابُهُ | بِيَدِ السِّحْرِ لِصَمِّي شَبَكَا |
| 15. فَذُ مَلَكْتَ الْقَلْبَ فَاسْتَوْصِ بِهِ | إِنَّهُ حَقٌّ عَلَى مَنْ مَلَكََا |
| 16. لَا تُعَذِّبُهُ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ | بَعْدَ مَا تَيَمَّمْتَهُ فَهَوَ لَكََا |
| 17. غَلَبَ الْبِئْسَ عَلَى حُسْنِ الْمُنَى | فِيكَ وَاسْتَوَلَى عَلَى الصِّحْكِ الْبُكََا |
| 18. فِإِلَى مَنْ أَشْتَكِي مَا شَفَنِي | مِنْ عَزَامِ وَإِلَيْكَ الْمُشْتَكِي |
| 19. سَلَكْتَ نَفْسِي سَبِيلًا فِي الْهَوَى | لَمْ تَدْعُ فِيهِ لِغَيْرِي مَسَلَكَا“ |

1. *Passion overwhelmed him causing him to weep, as patience deserted him leading him to complain.*
2. *He ardently yearned for a glance, hoping it might be the cure to the ailment of his longing. However, it turned out to be his demise.*
3. *What an astonishing glance it was, never nearing the landing place of wisdom [i.e., heart], but ended up shattering him.*
4. *A gaze that initially held his attention, subsequently lured him in, and then ensnared him as though he was entangled in the hunting nets.*
5. *Her love was sown within my heart and was nourished by my tears until it thrived.*
6. *Oh, the agony of love! There lies within my chest an undeniable flame, ever intensifying.*
7. *Love took the last breath of life from me; separation then encompassed what was left.*
8. *Indeed, my glance deceived my heart, then embarked on the path of longing until it perished.*
9. *He followed in the footsteps of the gazelles of the sand dunes; oh, if only I knew which path he had taken.*
10. *He never returned afterwards, and I presume he immersed himself in attaining his desires and was consequently bewildered.*
11. *Alas, my heart suffers under the relentless debtor who, each time he renews a promise, deceives.*
12. *She held a negative perception of me, despite the fact that I had attempted to negotiate for just a single kiss. This misinterpretation induced her displeasure, leading her to foster an intense aversion.*
13. *Hence, forgive it as an error from a sinner who never associated anything with God.*
14. *O gazelle, your eyelashes have been drawn by the hand of enchantment, forming a net ensnaring my affection.*
15. *You have possessed the heart, so manage it conscientiously, as it is the right of the one who rules.*
16. *Do not torment it for its obedience, after you have enslaved it and made it submissive to you.*
17. *In your case, despair has triumphed over hopeful expectations, and crying has taken the place of laughter.*
18. *To whom shall I complain about what weakened me of love, when it is to you that I yearn.*
19. *My soul embarked on a journey in love, leaving no path for anyone else.”²²*

The poem exhibits a profound exploration of the tortuous aspects of passionate love, embodying the classic elements of love, longing, and despair. It presents an intimate portrait of the poet's internal emotional turmoil, reflecting the universal human experience of overwhelming love. The poem begins with a vivid depiction of the protagonist's emotional tumult. He is portrayed as being besieged by his passions, shedding tears and lamenting his predicament, as his endurance abandons him. The poet further accentuates the protagonist's profound longing, a yearning so intense that he seeks solace in the merest glance from his beloved. However, far from proving to be a balm to his emotional wounds, this glance instead serves as his undoing, demonstrating the destructive power of unrequited love. The poet then extends the metaphor of the glance, describing it as a powerful and all-consuming force, void of wisdom or restraint.

22 al-Bārūdī, *Dīwān al-Bārūdī*, 392-393.

This gaze captivates the protagonist, drawing him in and entrapping him, like a helpless creature caught in a hunter's snare. The depiction of the gaze's captivating power continues as the poet speaks from a first-person perspective, depicting the beloved's love being planted in his heart, nurtured by his tears until it flourishes.

A shift in the poem's tone occurs as the poet dramatically exclaims about the agony of love, personifying it as a ceaseless, ever-intensifying flame within his chest. This potent metaphor serves to underscore the tormenting nature of unrequited love. The destructive power of love is further reinforced when it is said to have seized the protagonist's life-force, with separation consuming what is left of it. The poet then delves into the theme of deceit, using the metaphor of a deceiving glance. The protagonist's glance is depicted as betraying his heart, propelling it on a path of longing that culminates in its demise. Thereafter, the protagonist is likened to a wanderer, trailing behind his beloved like a tracker following the footprints of gazelles in the sand dunes. This poignant imagery paints a picture of lost hope and desperation, as the protagonist appears to be endlessly searching, unsure of the path his beloved has taken. This sense of despair deepens as the poet portrays the beloved as being beyond reach, presumably immersed in her own desires, leaving the protagonist in a state of bewilderment. The heart's predicament intensifies further as it is burdened by a relentless debtor who promises only to deceive.

Moving forward, the poet introduces the theme of misinterpretation and resultant aversion. Despite the protagonist's attempt at amicability, a single kiss, the beloved misconstrues his intentions, leading to her disdain and intense aversion towards him. The protagonist acknowledges his transgressions and seeks forgiveness, asserting his unwavering monotheism. In the final sections, the poet returns to the metaphor of the gazelle, casting the beloved in this role. Her enchanting eyelashes are depicted as nets that ensnare the protagonist's affection. The beloved is ascribed with the power to command the heart, and is urged to govern it with care, reflecting her dominion over it. However, there is also a plea to refrain from causing torment to the heart for its obedience. The tragic inversion of emotions comes to the fore, as despair surpasses hopeful expectations, and weeping usurps laughter in the beloved's case. The protagonist is left in a state of longing, weakened by his love, with no one to appeal to but the object of his yearning. The poem concludes with the depiction of a soul embarked on a journey of love, traversing a path exclusive to the protagonist, thus encapsulating the poet's solitary pursuit of his beloved. The final lines of the poem encapsulate the enduring struggle of a heart entrapped in the throes of unfulfilled love. Overall, the poem provides a compelling exploration of passionate love's consuming power and its capacity to invoke both profound longing and despair.

1. "أدر الكأس يا نديم وهات
واسقنيها على جبين الغداة
ر وسج الطيور في العذبات
س مدار على بساط نبات
بشمالي مسكبية النفحات
قطر واني الصبا غليل المهاة
نفس الريح بين ماض وآت
فرصة الدهر قبل وشك الفوات
يل ذات النجيل والتمرات
ومزاح المني ومسرى الحياة
من أليم الأشواق في حسرات
من فؤاد الحزين كل شكاة
ورعايب كالدمى خفرات
هي كالشمس في قميص إياة
حذر الفتك من صياح البزاة
فة يرضعهن كالأمهات
بسماع أو هائم بقناة
أرضن ظلت تدور بالقلوات
يقتن الغيد داخل الخجرات
غض منه استدار بين اللهاة
ربة الحزن لوعة الذكرات
م الأمان في عالم الخطرات"
1. أدر الكأس يا نديم وهات
2. شاق سمعي العناء في روثق الفج
3. أي شيء أشهى إلى النفس من كأ
4. هو يوم تعطر طرفاه
5. باسم الزهر عاطر النشر هامي ال
6. مسرح للعبون يمتد فيه
7. فامتثل دعوة الصبوح وبادر
8. وتدرج معي إلى روضة المن
9. فهي مرعى الهوى ومعنى التصابي
10. ألفتها النفوس فهي إليها
11. تبعث اللهو والسرور وتمحو
12. بين ندمان كالكواكب حسناً
13. يتساقون بالكؤوس مداماً
14. في أباريق كالطيور اثترأبت
15. حنايات على الكؤوس من الرأ
16. لا ترى العين بينهم غير صب
17. ومعن إذا شدا خلّت أن ال
18. ملك السمع والفؤاد بلحن
19. تبعث الصوت مرسلاً فإذا ما
20. عرد يبطل الحديث ويئسي
21. تلك والله لذة العيش لا سو

1. Hand me the wine, dear companion, and serve it upon the brow of early dawn.

2. My ear delights in the harmony at the dawn's beauty and the birds' rhythmic chirping amidst the tender branches.

3. What is more enticing to the soul than a wine glass passed around on a lush carpet of vegetation?

4. This is a day whose extremities are perfumed with a musk-like northern breeze.

5. The flowers exude a pleasant fragrance; the dew is abundant, and the mild eastern wind brings a faint sun.

6. A feast for the eyes where the breath of wind spans between what has passed and what is to come.

7. *Heed the call of early morning wine and seize the fleeting moment before it slips away.*
8. *Progress with me slowly and gently to the garden on the Manial Island, abundant with palms and fruits.*
9. *It is a sanctuary for love, a refuge for nightingales, a pasture for desires, and the course of life.*
10. *Souls have familiarized themselves with it; to it, they turn in profound longing and sorrow.*
11. *It stirs merriment and joy and expels every grievance from the sorrowful heart.*
12. *Between companions as splendid as stars, beautiful girls akin to dolls illuminate our gathering.*
13. *They pour the wine continuously, radiant as the sun in its resplendent halo.*
14. *Pitchers, resembling birds, raise their heads, apprehensive of the falcon's shriek.*
15. *They gently lean over the cups, nurturing them as mothers would.*
16. *One only sees among them love-struck youths either engrossed in the melody or enamored by a maiden.*
17. *And the singer, once he begins, makes you feel as though the earth is revolving amidst the deserts.*
18. *He captivates the ear and heart with a melody that could beguile the gentle, delicate women within their chambers.*
19. *He sends forth his voice in mellifluous tones, and when it ebbs away, it lingers on tongues.*
20. *A melody that silences the chatter and helps one forget the lady of sorrow and the sting of past memories.*
21. *That, by God, is the pleasure of life, not the hollow promises in a world fraught with danger.*²³

The poem, filled with expressive sensory language and deeply romantic sentiments, is an elaborate ode to the joy of shared companionship, beauty of nature, and the transformative power of music and wine. The opening stanza sets the tone for a celebration of life, marked by the serving of wine in the early dawn, symbolizing a communion in the euphoria of a new day's promise. The auditory imagery of harmonious dawn and birds' rhythmic chirping amidst tender branches engages the reader's sense of hearing and establishes a peaceful, joyous atmosphere that reflects the overarching theme of shared pleasure and communal harmony. The poet continues to engage the senses as he entices the soul with the visual image of a wine glass passed around on a lush carpet of vegetation. This symbolizes shared pleasure, camaraderie, and mirth, reinforcing the themes of communal joy and celebration. The reference to the musk-like northern breeze and the mild eastern wind carrying a faint sun infuses the poem with an aromatic and atmospheric ambience, invoking a sense of nature's nurturing beauty and calm serenity. The poet then progresses to the description of a feast for the eyes, where the breath of the wind spans between what has passed and what is to come. This imagery serves to emphasize the significance of the present moment and the transient nature of time, suggesting a sense of urgency in the enjoyment of life's fleeting pleasures. The call of early morning wine is presented as a plea to seize the fleeting moment, reinforcing this

23 al-Bārūdī, *Dīwān al-Bārūdī*, 91-93.

theme of transience and the *carpe diem* philosophy. The poet then transports the reader to the lush garden of Manial Island, a haven abundant with palms and fruits. This locale signifies a place of natural beauty and tranquility and is depicted as a sanctuary for love, a refuge for nightingales, and a pasture for desires, symbolizing love, music, and longing respectively. This underpins the themes of romance, music, and yearning, underscoring the intrinsic links between these facets of human experience.

The poem delves deeper into the emotional landscape as it mentions the profound longing and sorrow that souls experience, and the refuge that the sanctuary provides. The ability of the sanctuary to stir merriment and joy and dispel grievances highlights the therapeutic and transformative power of nature and shared experiences. The poet continues his celebration of communal pleasure and harmony through the imagery of companions as splendid as stars and beautiful girls akin to dolls illuminating the gathering. This imagery heightens the sense of beauty, joy, and harmony in the communal gathering. The continuous pouring of wine, radiant as the sun in its resplendent halo, further enhances this joyful and festive atmosphere. One of the striking images in the poem is that of pitchers resembling birds, raising their heads, apprehensive of the falcon's shriek. This vivid and dynamic visual imagery serves to create tension and anticipation, contributing to the emotional depth of the poem. The singers in the poem are portrayed as essential contributors to the enchanting atmosphere. Their songs, powerful enough to make one feel as though the earth is revolving amidst the deserts, highlight the transformative and transcendental power of music. This captivating melody beguiles even the gentle, delicate women within their chambers, indicating its universal appeal and mesmerizing quality. The poem concludes with a declaration that the pleasures described – the shared companionship, the beauty of nature, the wine, and the music – are indeed the true pleasure of life, as opposed to hollow promises in a world fraught with danger. This conclusion underscores the theme of *carpe diem*, reiterating the importance of cherishing and enjoying the present moment's joys, rather than being swayed by uncertain future promises.

In the realm of contemporary Arabic poetry, it is discernible that al-Bārūdī predominantly embodies the stylistic nuances of the ancient Arab poets while deftly incorporating the pervasive themes intrinsic to classical poetic traditions. His discourse on love invokes a potent sentimentality, akin to the emotional intensity exhibited by Bedouin poets from the pre-Islamic era. His reflections on valor and warfare evoke the grandeur of the eloquent utterances of the ancient Arab knights. When articulating on the subject of wine, al-Bārūdī manifests an adeptness in verse composition that is strikingly reminiscent of Arab poets during the Abbasid epoch. The depth of al-Bārūdī's immersion into the literary heritage of the Abbasids and their forebears is underscored by Shawqī Ḍayf (1910-2005). Ḍayf postulates that within the circle of modern poets, al-Bārūdī distinguishes himself as the most comprehensive scholar of the Abbasid-era poets and their antecedents. In Ḍayf's estimation, al-Bārūdī's meticulous examinations have culminated in the adoption of the sophisticated style that was the hallmark of these poets. This

has led to al-Bārūdī's mastery of the complexities inherent in the Arabic language, and the successful reinvigoration of this erstwhile wisdom during an epoch when contemporary Arab poets appear to have severed their ties with the traditional conventions of classical poetry.²⁴

In al-Bārūdī's verse, he consistently utilized a range of poetic techniques characteristic of pre-Islamic and Umayyad poets, specifically in his depictions of clouds, light, camels, and horses. Consequently, it is not unexpected that al-Bārūdī has faced allegations of plagiarism, hyperbole, and contrived expression. Nevertheless, his appropriation pertained not to content but to form, style, and rhetorical prowess. More accurately, he assimilated the structure of ancient poetry and imbued it with his distinctive essence and persona. Through this approach, he established his merited place in contemporary Arabic poetry and provided a striking illustration of verse that not only revived its historical sturdiness but also adeptly represented his nation and its populace. Al-Bārūdī can be characterized as an aficionado of the fine arts. As a man of refined taste, he was proficient in both martial and literary pursuits, taking pride in his aptitudes and predilections in these domains. Within his collected works, he thoroughly explored diverse facets of his existence, encompassing a multitude of contemporaneous events. His poetry attests to his deliberate choice of words and introspective nature. In his *divan*, he portrayed his life of affluence, enjoyment, amusement, and happiness prior to his alliance with 'Urābī Pasha, while also articulately expressing Egypt's scenic landscapes. In his narrations of the battles in which he partook, al-Bārūdī demonstrated an expansive imagination and subtly communicated his fervent sense of heroism. By doing so, he revitalized the waning notion of heroism, ultimately restoring it to the realm of Arabic poetry.²⁵

In his poetry, al-Bārūdī demonstrated a predilection for the language and style characteristic of the Bedouin Arabs, which significantly influenced classical Arabic poetry. Alongside these conventional expressions, he intermittently incorporated references to ancient Egyptian civilization. al-Bārūdī's occasional adoption of the practice of commencing a poem with the *nasīb* section, a highly formulaic technique in classical Arabic poetry, further attests to his adherence to tradition.²⁶ al-Bārūdī's utilization of the Arabic meter, the composition of poems about fictitious lovers with conventional names such as Asmā' and Laylā, lamenting over the remnants of abandoned camps known as *aṭlāl*, and addressing women suggest his deep-rooted influence by the poetic style that has been present since the pre-Islamic era. In his poems, subsequent to mentioning his imaginary lovers' names, he expounds upon the desolate remains of their forsaken campsite. Analogous to classical Arabic poetry, these vestiges are subject to destruction by the direct impact of winds and rains. al-Bārūdī recounts the transformation of these lands, which were once the dwellings of enchanting women, into

24 Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Bārūdī: Rā'id al-shi'r al-ḥadīth* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), 140.

25 Ahmet Savran, *19. YY. Osmanlı Döneminde Yeni Arap Edebiyatı* (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayını, 1991), 96-97.

26 Terri Deyoung, *Mahmud Sami al-Barudi: Reconfiguring Society and the Self* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 69.

pastures for feral creatures. Emulating the practices of ancient Arab poets who customarily addressed a pair of individuals at the outset of their poems, al-Bārūdī, despite living in a modern epoch, communicates with his two friends, embodying the spirit of a desert-dwelling Bedouin. Occasionally, al-Bārūdī acknowledged the eminent poets of the classical period within his poems, lauding their achievements, and did not shy away from asserting his own superiority over them.²⁷

At the dawn of modern Arabic literature, pioneering poets and critics did not explicitly advocate for alterations in the subject matter of poetry. However, some literary figures, including al-Bārūdī, one of the earliest and most prominent neoclassicists, occasionally alluded to the necessity for change. In the introduction to his *divan* and in several of his poems, al-Bārūdī proposed a fresh perspective on the function and topics explored in poetry. Nonetheless, al-Bārūdī and his contemporaries continued to adhere to traditional themes, known as *aghrād*. Throughout this period, Arab poets inevitably confronted the demands for transformation dictated by the zeitgeist. Simultaneously, their readership evolved, with the written press' followers progressively supplanting the audiences of earlier eras. Naturally, these readers demanded that neoclassical poets address contemporary subjects through traditional modes of expression.²⁸

To rephrase, al-Bārūdī is recognized within the academic sphere as a trailblazing poet, despite his emulation of classical-era verse, due to his role as a nexus between the traditional and contemporary. Indeed, the designation of the literary movement spearheaded by al-Bārūdī as *al-Ihyā' wa al-Ba'th*, representing revival and resurgence in the Arab world in conjunction with neoclassicism, serves as a salient manifestation of this circumstance. Among these poets, who assiduously maintain the archaic Arab *qaṣīda* structure, the impact of newspapers and contemporary scholarly investigations is discernible. Consequently, this influence has facilitated the extension of poetry, once restricted to the domain of the ruling elite and their intellectual circles, to a wider demographic. Critics perceive al-Bārūdī's poetry to be suffused with Islamic, Arab, and Oriental sentiments and affectivity. As a result, his poetic bequest has proven substantial and enduring within the Egyptian context. Moreover, al-Bārūdī has been accorded the epithet *rā'id*, signifying *leader*, in recognition of his inspirational and avant-garde contributions to the poetic arts for those who derived creative stimulus from his work. al-Bārūdī has served as an exponent of the emotions and thoughts of the Egyptian populace. Notably, certain literary historians, such as al-Zayyāt, have drawn parallels between al-Bārūdī and figures like Imru' al-Qays (d. 540 [?]) and Bashshār b. Burd (d. 167/783-84), due to his distinguished attributes during his era, and have even posited that the quintessential qualities of rejuvenating and revitalizing poetry are epitomized in al-Bārūdī.²⁹

27 Ahmet Yıldız, "Modern Arap Edebiyatında Tenâs: Mahmûd Sâmî el-Bârûdî Örneği", *Marife* 21/1 (2021), 471-470.

28 S. Somekh, "The Neo-classical Arabic Poets", *Modern Arabic Literature*, ed. M. M. Badawi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 39.

29 Hatice Arslan Sözüdoğru, "Benzer Yönleri ve Farklılıklarıyla Modern Arap Şiirinin Zirvesinde Üç Şair",

A multitude of critics, among them ‘Abbās Maḥmūd al-‘Aqqād (d. 1964), perceive al-Bārūdī as the unequivocal forerunner of contemporary Egyptian poetry, owing to the innovative poetic style he pioneered, characterized by the absence of artificiality and ostentation. Additionally, he is regarded as the inaugural step in asserting Arab identity within a global context menaced by external forces. It is postulated that the advent of a figure akin to al-Bārūdī would have been postponed had the excellence of classical Arab poetry and its precise representation of its corresponding epoch remained unacknowledged. In al-‘Aqqād’s view, al-Bārūdī enjoyed a conspicuous preeminence over his contemporaries, attained by infusing the frail and coarse poetic comprehension of his period with a vigorous approach. Arab literary historians and readers have devised diverse discourses to pay homage to al-Bārūdī, who is widely esteemed. One manifestation of such tributes is the conferral of the sobriquet “Rabb al-Sayf wa al-Qalam”, signifying “Lord of the Sword and the Pen”.³⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has thoroughly examined the neoclassical elements present in Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī’s poetry, providing a comprehensive understanding of his role as a bridge between classical and modern Arabic literature. By critically analyzing al-Bārūdī’s poetic style, themes, and adherence to tradition, we have highlighted the ways in which he innovatively combined classical elements with contemporary issues and sensibilities. This approach allowed him to resonate with a diverse range of audiences and significantly contribute to the development of modern Arabic poetry. Throughout the paper, we have discussed al-Bārūdī’s affinity for the Bedouin Arabic language and style, his intermittent incorporation of ancient Egyptian civilization references, and his use of classical Arabic poetic techniques. By maintaining a connection to the past, al-Bārūdī paid homage to the rich heritage of Arabic poetry while simultaneously adapting his work to address modern subjects and concerns. Furthermore, we have explored how al-Bārūdī’s poetic legacy was shaped by his unique position as a nexus between the traditional and the contemporary. This position granted him recognition as a trailblazing poet and a leader in the field, influencing subsequent generations of poets and helping to define the neoclassical movement in Arabic literature.

Critics have long appreciated al-Bārūdī’s ability to imbue his poetry with Islamic, Arab, and Eastern sensibilities while addressing contemporary issues using traditional expression. This delicate balance allowed him to remain relevant and appealing to both traditional and modern audiences, solidifying his reputation as a significant figure in the literary world. Lastly, the paper has also demonstrated the enduring impact of al-Bārūdī’s work on the evolution of Arabic poetry. By effectively merging classical and modern elements, he paved the way for a more diverse and dynamic range of poetic styles and themes, ultimately leaving an indelible

Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi 8/101 (February 2020), 65-67.

30 Ahmet Kâzım Ürün, *Modern Arap Edebiyatı* (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi Yayınları, 2015), 31.

mark on the literary landscape. In summary, the examination of neoclassical elements in Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī's poetry has revealed the poet's mastery of blending traditional and contemporary aspects, enriching the Arabic literary tradition and influencing future generations of poets. His work stands as a testament to the power of poetry to bridge the past and the present, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the rich cultural heritage that underpins the Arabic literary tradition.

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