

Aesthetic Employment Patterns of Historical Personality in the Poetry of Abi Firas Al-Hamdani

Prof. Dr. Layla Shaaban Radwan, Dr. Mashaal Bint Ali Al-Akli

Specialty: Ancient Arabic Criticism

Specialty: Ancient Literature

Department of Arabic Language Faculty of Arts Imam Abdul Rahman
Bin Faisal University

Corresponding author: Prof. Dr. Layla Shaaban Radwan,
Specialty: Ancient Arabic Criticism

ONOMÁZEIN 62 (December 2023): 2287-2303
ISSN: 0718-5758



Abstract

Abu Firas Al-Hamdani employed historical figures in his poetry in an artistic manner based on the principles of harmony and intent, taking into account the cohesion between the connotations of the character and the dimensions of his poetic experience. He integrated these figures into the structure of his text, loaded with intellectual and psychological implications that align with the overall semantic context of his work. This surpassed their limitations and uniqueness, creating a new vision, transforming the historical character from a state of inertia to a dynamic temporality, introducing it to the essence of humanity. He chose the characters based on their distinctiveness, effectiveness, and their ability to accommodate his experience, granting them interpretative dimensions to the extent that it liberates them from historicity while preserving the truth of their existence simultaneously. Thus, he subordinated the historical to the artistic, harmonizing the characters within his poetic fabric, becoming part of the meanings produced by the text.

The study addresses the patterns of employing historical characters in his poetry; he mentioned them by name, title, and nickname, and by the event and the situation they went through, transforming historical knowledge into symbols and cognitive connotations that needed to be uncovered to understand their implications and the mechanisms of their utilization in serving his poetic discourse and his poetic purposes.

Keywords: Historical Characters, Aesthetic Employment, Symbol, Poetic Experience, Connotation.

1. Introduction

Abu Firas lived a unique life experience in the shelter of a family whose father was killed. He was then taken under the protection and upbringing of Saif al-Dawla, before being captured and spending prolonged days in captivity, relying on poetry as his solace. He would send his verses to his mother as a sign of longing and endurance and to Saif al-Dawla, hoping to win over his heart and mind to ransom him. However, the prince was slow to act. The poet tried to awaken his historical sense by citing analogous events, hoping the prince would take heed. Hence, referring to history became his means of discourse, from which he drew characters capable of carrying his experiences and visions, transforming them into symbols representing specific meanings that encapsulate his sufferings after interpreting their events, characters, and experiences, which matured through tumultuous events. He crafted his symbols from them to express his desires, transcending the historicity of events and characters to their semantic depth and endowed them with humane dimensions, transitioning them from concept to the tangible embodiment of presumed behavior. His use of them was subjected to his poetic vision, artistic doctrine, culture, cognitive and social references, and the circumstances of his reality. Perhaps this outcome wouldn't have been possible without his brilliance in employing the historical to serve the artistic. In this study, we will illustrate the relationship between these symbols and the poet's intent through the act of transforming from the historical to the artistic.

Abu Firas mentioned characters by their names (name, title, and nickname), roles, and sayings, positioning them appropriately in his text, thus giving them legitimacy in his poetry. The names of the figures he mentioned interweaved with a certain value, serving as a symbol and an indicator of the value system upheld by the community or a specific meaning the poet desires. Mentioning the name is a great virtue in presenting the idea to the recipient in the context defined by the speaker. Poets and creatives usually "employ words, expressions, and names of figures with direct and indirect intentions, which may be understood explicitly or inferred through implication and allusion" (Hamdawi, 2015, p.31).

Our reading of Abu Firas's text assumes a listing of the characters he mentioned, categorizing them according to their nominal identifier, their roles, and sayings, and studying them as symbols representing what he wants to express. Then, examining the mechanisms of their aesthetic employment through invoking cultural elements and their semantic dimensions that conglomerate history, tales, stories, and characters, following the descriptive analytical method, which aids in analyzing the poems and examining the manifestations of their employment, along with utilizing the historical method to collect and study historical material.

2. Research Importance:

The importance of this research is highlighted by shedding light on Abu Firas's use of historical characters. He did not use them as a mask to hide behind but rather as his

means to confront the other. This importance is also manifested in the attempt to re-read the heritage as a dialogue and questioning, to indicate that the employment of heritage was not limited to the poets of the modern age. Our ancient poets, including Abu Firas Al-Hamdani, also employed it, aligning with the heritage that preceded him to serve the moment he lived through.

Previous Studies:

Despite the abundance of studies surrounding Abu Firas, no one has studied the employment of historical characters and events as a unique employment that does not stop at the point of evocation but goes beyond it to understand the semantic dimensions of each character, employing them to express his reality by finding commonalities between the past and the present. This goes beyond the name as a narrow identity of a character to its symbolic meaning of an idea associated with a specific value. Indeed, we found studies that addressed his historical references—characters and figures—in a historical context, showing the poet's stance on history and clarifying the meanings of historical evocation in his "Rumiyat" and its purposes. They limited their meaning to making decisions, the enforcement of judgment, and the stance from the other, and identified its purposes as content and artistic (Ibrahim, 2003), especially in the discourse addressed to his mother. Another researcher addressed the human experience in the Rumiyat of Abu Firas Al-Hamdani, presenting what Abu Firas said in poetry when he was captured, and what he said in overcoming his ordeal with the reclaimed enthusiasm, and with what God deposited in his heart of spiritual, faithful energies like hope, patience, and consideration by setting examples, and tracing the impact of some who went through ordeals that turned their lives. The research did not stop at the symbolism of events and characters and their role in forming the poet's intentionality and his departure from history and reporting to art (Mumini, 2010). There is also a study that examined the phenomenon of invoking pre-Islamic figures in Abbasid poetry until the end of the fourth Hijri century, and the extent to which poets interacted in employing them in their poems, and the effect that invocation adds to the literary work at the artistic level. However, the study was general and did not specialize in Abu Firas alone, but the conversation about him came among a group of Abbasid poets whom the researcher addressed. This study is related to the subject of our study in terms of its interest in employing characters in ancient Arabic poetry (Al-Qadi, 2014), with a difference in approach, and our study is limited to the poetry of Abu Firas Al-Hamdani.

Research Problematic

The research poses a problematic defined by the following question:

- What are the patterns of aesthetic employment for heritage characters as symbols in the poetry of Abu Firas?

This problematic raises a number of questions, including:

- What are the symbolic connotations derived from historical material?
- How did Abu Firas employ historical characters in confronting his world?
- What are the artistic and aesthetic dimensions that the text acquired from employing historical characters?

Historical Characters as Symbols

Historical characters in the poetry of Abu Firas have formed historical symbols, indicative of multiple meanings such as negligence, betrayal, patience, and other meanings that we will elucidate in the research. He has opted to address Sayf al-Dawla indirectly, invoking him to ransom him through a discourse in which he mentions the names of characters who have undergone the same experience. He presents them with all their intellectual and emotional implications, making the name a symbol for them, thereby providing his poem with a dramatic tendency, built on an objective vision of the self that found its depth in the past, becoming capable of transformation and transition. Through them, he transcended direct expression to symbolic expression, thus achieving two goals: the first is giving his experience a human character, and the second is enriching historical data with new meanings he added to them.

Therefore, we studied the historical character as a symbol based on that every character mentioned is to remind of what happened to it before, being parallel and equivalent to what happened or could happen to the poet, bringing the previous event as a warning of its consequences. Its function was to convey the interlocutor's intention to the recipient in a special style. Hence, the character acquired its symbolism, and the symbol became the intended meaning of mentioning the two similar events. The basic similarity is in the psychological arousal generated by the similarities, which is a tool to transcend the present through the past by invoking images extending to the same reference. This is what Ihsan Abbas meant when he defined the symbol as "the indication of what is beyond the apparent meaning while also considering the apparent meaning" (Abbas, 2011, p. 200). Perhaps the central value of the symbol carried by the character lies in the multiple meanings and concepts it arouses, tightly linked to the meaning; and the symbol takes its meaning and value from its expression and "psychological impressions, through enigma and allusion instead of the direct declarative style, as its proponents found that the mind is incapable of reaching the truths, and that knowledge does not satisfy human desire to know the secrets of the universe" (Al-Tunji, 1999, p. 488). Through enigma and allusion, the "semiotic function of those symbols is established as a tangible sign or symbol reminding of something not present" (Abd al-Nur, 1979, p. 123).

The symbol allows a margin for the poet to speak outside the text, meaning openness to the outside through the symbol; "a symbol only exists if it is a dense referral to contents not perceived by the naked eye, which means, in other words, searching for the overall cultural/civilizational elements that human experience hides in the things of the universe and its entities" (Ibn Karad, 2003, p. 88).

We can summarize the concept of the symbol, which we study the poetry of Abu Firas in its light, as a sign to something spiritual or a concept that refers to a relationship between the name and the event or story and what each of them can carry of aspects of similarity between two states: one ancient evoked by mention, and the other modern based on analogy and similarity, but it is possible to be attached to the ancient if the same objective conditions are available to it. The symbols are divided into general and special, and we are interested in this place in the special symbols, which express individual emotions and personal positions, and Abu Firas's symbols are special,

creative, expressed through them his experience, and this is what brought the symbol closer to the artistic use that the people of literature agreed upon, and it is what the concise philosophical dictionary referred to as being "one of the signaling mediums that man uses in the process of creating culture and knowing the objective world" (Yiberga, 1989, p. 239).

Employing Historical Characters (Symbols)

Abu Firas managed to use the symbol to express his stance regarding his surroundings. He loaded it with much of his suffering and emotions; thus, his symbols remained associated with him due to the difference of others in looking at them. Consequently, the connotation of the symbol for him is linked to interpretation, as he restricted it with his unique vision and allowed Sayf al-Dawla the freedom to deduce the connotation according to his cultural awareness.

Abu Firas turned to history to symbolically express his experience. His aim was not to retrieve history and inform about what happened, but to present a complete experience that can be repeated through another transformed character from a bygone time, which carried some of its details. For example, he made Ma'bad bin Zuhra an objective equivalent for himself, evoking his story with his family when they hesitated in his redemption, as if he would meet the same fate. He thus condensed the name into a story of suffering, turning it into a warning message to Sayf al-Dawla. This employment of the historical symbol prepared "a glow of performance and a momentum of giving to the poem when memory pours all the mementos of the gone event, and pours its sadness into the sea of the upcoming event" (Eid, 1985, p. 229).

Abu Firas's brilliance is evident in his ability to deal with these entities and then elevate their connotations to a symbolic one. He is a cultured poet who understood history and its events, selected specific characters and events, and used them as symbols indicative of what he wants to convey, opening the door to interpretation for the recipient. The symbol, due to its expressive nature, requires extensive knowledge and a high ability to condense; therefore, it constitutes the poet's uniqueness and individuality. Both characteristics come to Abu Firas after his captivity, as his talent matured and he had a special character in his poetry. Hence, his symbols cannot be understood except through these two characteristics.

Abu Firas returned to heritage to read his experiences for what can benefit in alerting Sayf al-Dawla to the danger of negligence in his redemption and to express other aspirations he harbors in himself. He says (Al-Hamdani, 1994, p. 253):

"I have browsed the sayings of men, and none reached
To other than a skeptic in time."

Digging into heritage was an intentional act for him; he searched in it for the similarity in others' experiences. This gave his experience a human dimension and allowed him to understand the human experience deeply. He leaned on real stories of historical characters, turning them into symbols, loading them with his sufferings with all their

implications and data. Thus, his symbol was special, forming a semantic focus from which all the meanings he wants to express dissolve.

Thus, Abu Firas saw his source in heritage, drawing from it the names of characters, making them symbols, presenting his vision of reality through allusion, brevity, and condensation. It is known that heritage is "a latent power that connects the poet's work to the works of his ancestors, considering that man is a cultural and psychological value closely related to the image of the past and its superior models. Therefore, the facts of reality surpass it in effectiveness and impact, considering these facts are the first thing human senses encounter, and the most prominent factors that he contacts directly" (Fatouh, 1984, p. 327).

Thus, the symbol is not exclusive to the contemporary poet, who benefitted "from past experiences in forming new concepts" (Ismail, n.d., p. 15). History was a repository of shared experiences for the ancients as well. The decisive factor between the two groups is in properly benefiting from it in expressing the current moment, allowing the poet to link the past to the present through an image, a saying, or a lesson extracted from specific situations of historical events. The poet, in any era, can evoke historical situations and try to benefit from past experiences in solving the problems of his current reality. The relationship of the Arab poet with his heritage is ancient, and while it may have weakened in some eras or its forms and nature changed from one era to another, it has never been severed, where the Arab poet in any era continued to draw from his heritage and be inspired by it in any form of drawing and inspiration (Zayed, 1997, p. 256).

Patterns of Employing Historical Characters

The patterns of employing heritage characters (the symbol) in Abu Firas's poetry are diverse. He mentions the name of the character, indicative of the event, (name, title, and nickname), associated with the event and saying.

The Name

The benefit of mentioning the name lies in distinguishing "among the notable persons. Wisdom necessitates the assignment of names, as sometimes a category is exclusively characterized by a judgment and needs to be reported about with that specific judgment. It is known that this specification is not possible unless after specifically mentioning the informant about it, necessitating the assignment of names" (Al-Razi, 1999, 1/48). Knowledge is one of the types of "knowledge characterized by identifying its names and clarifying its reality, making it as if it is a spectacle for the observers" (Mujahid, 1998, p.21). The name refers to the self alone without additional description, representing a designation signal only.

Abu Firas evoked some historical characters by their names and incorporated them into his poetry to create a pattern of positive interaction required by his captivity conditions and his discourse conditions to Sayf al-Dawla. He realized the importance of employing historical events and characters in constructing the poetic text in terms of condensing its connotations, through the surplus of meaning that those characters grant to the text and

awaken in the recipient a parallel meaning to it. The name as a feature or sign is a linguistic phenomenon indicating the individual's identity and his identity within the group. Through it, humans achieve their communication and interaction in society, and names represent "icons and linguistic symbols with personal and social connotations; with them, the world is portrayed into a symbolic indicative image of the aspects of life in its different aspects; and with them, knowledge in its main doors –names, titles, and nicknames– turns into cognizant, distinctive, concentrated knowledge overflowing with expressions indicating our selves" (Brahmi, 2016, p.255).

Mentioning the name is not just recalling the character or reporting about it, but rather conscious knowledge related to that character, serving the poet's stance or what he experiences in his real life, making the name have a symbolic dimension after transitioning from the normal use of the name as a sign to the symbolic indication when associated with a certain incident. Thus, the transition is from specificity to a generalization transcending time. The name of a person as a symbol induces a kind of thinking and behavior different from the thinking and behavior induced by the name of the person itself as a sign. Our behavior towards the symbol is often indicative of imagination and imagery, while our behavior towards the sign is usually based on the existence of reality (Al-Basyuni, 1961, pp.259-262).

Abu Firas mentioned the names to summarize a complete life experience, making them symbols and giving them semantic dimensions. Thus, the symbol was an expression of his desire to deposit abstract judgments in embodied entities through tangible things or behaviors (Ibn Karad, 2003, p.89), and his way to approximate the meaning based on the similarity between two states. Thus, Arab history was a tributary of his poetic experience, and poets usually draw characters from heritage, "borrowing them from their context in the past and incorporating them into his poetry explicitly or implicitly, verbally or meaningfully, and in that context, they carry new connotations and other meanings (...) added to the richness of the original connotation in heritage, thus the historical symbol -then- reveals a wide, present, and eternal human experience, according to the poet's expressive capacity and his rhetorical ability" (Yousfi, 2017, p.108). The ancients paid attention to the issue of the name provided by the poet "when he begins a purpose and comes to complete and affirm it with examples in words that are a title for advanced news and past stories" (Al-Masri, p.2/257).

In the poetry of Abu Firas, a major symbolism is formed, encompassing the details of partial symbols, transforming them into a comprehensive symbol rich in meaning. Here, meanings gather from the scattered symbols within the text to form an overall significance, determining the purpose of the text, thus positioning it in confrontation with its destiny, resonating with others. He, embodying a stance of sorrow and despair through the characters he mentioned, says (Al-Hamdani, 1994, p.101):

This translation aims to maintain the professional and literary style of the original Arabic text, and it implies that the author is discussing the rich symbolism and deep meanings found within Abu Firas' poetry, expressing sorrow, despair, and confrontation with destiny through various characters.

If, besides God, one has a refuge,	Tragedies strike from the faces of gains.
The pious dragged to his demise, Hudhaifah,	Saw it as refuge in times of pains.
Manaya dragged Malik bin Nuwaira,	His beautiful wife, in the days of Khalid.
And killed Zu'aba in the houses of Utaiba,	His father and his kin, by the sharpness of verses.

The poet constructed his meaning by employing multiple characters, uniting them through a shared destiny and a tragic end. This represented the concept he aimed to convey to the audience: the coming of death from the source of life. He presented a meaning capable of arousing emotions in Sayf al-Dawla on one hand and achieving his goal on the other. He chose names of historical figures, incorporated them into his text, imbued them with the spirit of his era, and made them adaptable and renewable in every time and place, aligning with the meaning he intends to deliver to the audience. These names became the intellectual reservoir of his experience, making them a part of the general human experience.

What happened to Hudhayfah bin Badr al-Fazari and Malik bin Nuwaira, and the circumstances surrounding their demise, were utilized by the poet to establish an imaginative relationship between the name and the event's significance, then generalized the character, making it potentially existent in every time and place. Thus, the mention of the name transcends the individual character to symbolize similar situations.

Hudhayfah's horse, al-Hanfaa, had uniquely large hooves. On the day of al-Habaa, Hudhayfah was defeated on it, and it didn't know where to turn. Qays bin Zuhair said, "Follow the traces of al-Hanfaa," and they followed until they found him by the water of al-Habaa, where he and a group of his people were killed, with al-Hanfaa being the cause of his death.

Similarly, the character of Malik bin Nuwaira is coupled with his wife, who bestowed upon him both love and death. Death came to him suddenly from a supposed place of safety, leaving him unable to avoid it.

The poet also narrated the tale of Dhu'ab bin Rabi'ah, the killer of 'Utaibah bin al-Harith al-Yarbu'i. The Banu Yarbu' captured Dhu'ab, unaware that he was 'Utaibah's killer, and sold him from his father to Waqt. When his father came, the Yarbu'ites stayed behind due to an obstacle. Dhu'ab's father thought they had killed him over 'Utaibah.

This translation aims to maintain the essence and the intricate details of the original Arabic text, reflecting on the various layers of meaning and the multifaceted nature of the characters and their fates. The poet's utilization of these historical figures is not merely a retelling of their stories, but a reimagining and a reinterpretation, linking them to the universal human experience and making them symbolic representations of broader themes and concepts.

If they slay you, their thrones are adorned,	With 'Utaibah bin al-Harith bin Shahab.
---	--

The poet conveys meaning through the narration of poetry, expressing the tension between love and death to intensify the significance of suffering and the paradoxes experienced in a family, caught in the self-struggle with the 'other'—capable of granting both love and life together, yet refrains. Consequently, his text is enveloped in a compounded tragedy of contrasting images. This approach allows his experience to approach real human experiences, as "disparity and contradiction are suitable means to achieve proximity to experience" (Bal'ali, 1995, p.56).

The poet sought a parallel in Arabic history for his relationship with Sayf al-Dawla and found it in the mentioned characters after liberating their meanings to harmonize with his contemporary experience. He transformed them into personal symbols and, therefore, did not concern himself with the reality of the Ridda Wars nor found the presentation of the historical incident's reality beneficial in explaining his relationship with Sayf al-Dawla. Thus, he focused on the passionate relationships between Hudhayfa and his horse, Malik bin Nuwaira and his wife, and Dhu'ab and his father, introducing each pair in a tense relationship with the other, where one party destroys the other, who was thought to be a pleasure in life, adding a dramatic dimension to the story that can embody his vision towards the universe and life. The characters became symbolic energy, enriching his poetry with depth and richness.

Abu Firas' ability is manifested in his imbuing the names he used with emotional meanings, removing them from the historical domain and introducing them into the realm of sensation and emotion, granting them high intellectual value. He elevated the emotional side by analyzing reality and elevating it to the symbolic level. It is essential to note that employing historical and traditional names possesses a unique sensitivity as these names inherently carry complex implications connected to historical or mythical stories, referring to heroes and places belonging to diverse cultures in time and space (Kendi, 2003, p. 65). Abu Firas was aware of this and thus excelled in utilizing them.

The poet evokes other images from Islamic history, symbolizing betrayal, abandonment, and treachery, attempting to encompass all conceivable endings of human relations with considerable harshness. He mentions that treachery is a human behavior, driven by the allurements of the world; a brother betrays his brother seeking the luxuries of life. To convey this meaning, Abu Firas employed historical stories, as stated (al-Hamadani, 1994, p. 253):

This translation strives to convey the intricate interplay of themes, philosophical reflections, and historical references within the text, maintaining the depth and the richness of the original Arabic prose. The utilization of historical narratives and symbolic representation enriches the text, providing a nuanced exploration of human relations, life, and the universe. The poet's insight into human nature and his thoughtful deployment of historical and symbolic elements create a multifaceted tapestry of human

experience, resonating with universal themes of love, death, betrayal, and existential contemplation.

Indeed, the world invited betrayal in a beckoning, A summon answered by the learned and the fool. Amro bin Al-Zubair parted from his aggrieved brother, And Aqil deserted the Commander of the Faithful!

The poet symbolizes treachery by establishing an artistic correspondence between his internal world, filled with feelings of disappointment and despair, and the external world, represented by the tales of predecessors who experienced betrayal by their kin, individuals who were swept and enticed by life, thus betraying. Perhaps, Abu Firas intended this correspondence, which came as a reflection of the impact of these external elements on his soul and his interaction with them. He mentioned names associated with betrayal, like 'Amro bin Al-Zubair, who parted from his brother Abdullah, and likewise Aqil bin Abi Talib, who abandoned his brother Ali bin Abi Talib - may Allah be pleased with him - seeking worldly pleasures.

He positioned 'Amro bin Al-Zubair, Aqil, and Sayf al-Dawla on one side, and Abdullah bin Al-Zubair, Ali bin Abi Talib - may Allah be pleased with him - and Abu Firas on the other, representing two opposing sides, embodying the greatest paradox in history. Each side represents values contradicting the other. From their contradiction, Abu Firas birthed his vision of a world based on betrayal, submitting to the will of God and realizing that betrayal has been present in the world since ancient times.

The mention of the name Aqil evoked the characteristic he was distinguished by when he left his brother in the most complex circumstances. His behavior towards him was based on imagination as he did not fear his mention. When a person becomes a symbol, it signifies the completion of his life experience. Consequently, his mention becomes a form of thought built on imagination and forms a voice from the past. Poets usually select voices "that resonate with them and that have once gone through the same experience and suffered it as the poet himself did" (Ismail, n.d., p.307).

Abu Firas mobilizes characters in his poem that embodied his vision of the reality of his family. Therefore, he aimed to liberate them from their essence to harmonize with what he wants. He says (al-Hamadani, 1994, p.54):

This translation aims to reflect the deep philosophical musings, the intricate interplay between internal and external worlds, and the profound reflections on betrayal, values, and historical paradoxes embodied in the original Arabic prose. The poet's strategic use of historical figures and his artful intertwining of personal experiences and broader human conditions enrich the narrative, providing a multifaceted exploration of human nature, morality, and existential contemplations, resonating with timeless and universal themes.

I've braved the gravest steps for fear of dishonor, And hoped for a victory that was far from near. For dishonor, the Lord of Ghassan abandoned his reign, And parted from God's religion, far from the right.

Yet, 'Isa bin Mus'ab did not long for life, Nor did the heart of Habib fear the dread of war. Abu Firas deliberately chose characters who took decisive stances that changed the course of their lives. The poet may disagree with them fundamentally, but he presents them to show how he could have taken steps that would have disgraced the Banu Hamdan and saved him from captivity, but he faced danger and became a captive to avoid disgrace. To accurately illustrate his stance, he had to embody it by mentioning individuals who had positions in life regarding the fate that awaits them. He brings up the stance of Jabalah bin Al-Aiham who abandoned his religion—despite its incorrectness—to avoid the punishment that was the consequence of his assault on a Bedouin during Tawaf. Similarly, the stance of 'Isa bin Mus'ab, whose boldness led to his death, despite his father advising him to save himself when doom seemed inevitable, but he advanced and was killed, as well as the stance of Habib bin Al-Muhallab when he rebelled against Yazid bin Abdul Malik and was killed.

The contrasting situations suggested by the names "Ghassan," "'Isa bin Mus'ab," and "Habib bin Al-Muhallab" created a dramatic movement deepening the poetic implications. He did not mention the name just to inform but brought it after understanding its symbolic dimensions to compare two states, showing in one of them the human in his struggle with the principle, not to divert one from his principle, but to say that beneath the principle a price must be paid. In using the names of those characters, he wanted to convey to Sayf al-Dawla the idea that he sacrificed his freedom when he did not flee and preferred captivity to resume the struggle again. For him, historical characters were a means he used to convey his purpose embodied in a historical given, from which he derived models and images to express his experiences. He benefited from the interpretative potential of history and historical characters in a way that is consistent with his experience and accurately expresses it.

Perhaps the enforced isolation that Abu Firas experienced in his captivity made him reflect on himself and take refuge in the past to find a character whose symbolic charge he could exploit, employing it as a symbol using the property of condensation in symbolic formulation, to express his perception of the results of not being ransomed. So, when he says (al-Hamadani, 1994, p.97):

This translation aims to preserve the profound introspection, historical references, and symbolic nuances of the original text, reflecting the intricate interplay between personal experiences, historical exemplars, and moral principles. It seeks to encapsulate Abu Firas' meditations on sacrifice, principle, and the human condition, providing a nuanced portrayal of his philosophical contemplations and the enduring themes of human struggle, sacrifice, and moral choices within the broader tapestry of history and individual existence.

If I perish after this day, my perishing shames you, Along with the Nizariyyin, the demise of Ma'bad shames.

They refrained from his ransom, so they became, Striking the ends of the intended poem.

His perishing wasn't in vain, but they are blamed, When ransom is mentioned, and he wasn't ransomed.

Abu Firas empathetically intertwines his fate with that of Ma'bad bin Zararah, creating a poignant core for his poetic experience. Ma'bad, a symbol around which the poem's events revolve, intensifies the experience, setting the stage for Abu Firas's internal debate and his dialogues with Sayf al-Dawla. Ma'bad's brothers failed to ransom him in the past, leading to his demise. Similarly, Abu Firas, entangled in a ransom dilemma, fears a similar fate. Thus, he places Sayf al-Dawla before the tribunal of history, reflecting on the shame associated with Ma'bad's people due to their reluctance to pay the ransom and their unwillingness to exchange wealth for freedom.

The poet then transitions to painful realities, questioning the compassion of the Romans in redeeming their prisoners and wondering if they could be more merciful than Sayf al-Dawla. The poem continues to resonate with the sorrows, fractures, and pains of Arab history. There is a symbolic parallel between the states of Ma'bad bin Zararah and Abu Firas, with the underlying generalized meaning of the mentioned story being the primary aim of this explicit comparison.

Ma'bad bin Zararah was captured during the day of Rahrahan and died in captivity. His story became a lasting reproach for his tribe, depicting the consequences of their reluctance to ransom him. Abu Firas assumes that the prince (Sayf al-Dawla) is aware of Ma'bad's story. The name "Ma'bad" in the poem serves as a symbol, representing both expressive and suggestive significances, reflecting the similarities between him and Ma'bad concerning the dilemma of ransom. Thus, Abu Firas transforms the name "Ma'bad bin Zararah" into a symbol to depict the human condition as a victim of unfaithfulness and betrayal.

The symbolic value of Ma'bad's name is derived from linking the name directly to the core meaning of the entire story, turning the name into a tool to form a persuasive force to Sayf al-Dawla. The poet is not a historian but presents foundational statements through the mention of a name symbolizing a historical event. The symbols in Abu Firas's poetry revolve around the meaning of loyalty, and this is elucidated by the symbols of characters, events, and places.

The poet is pained by captivity, and this pain extends and lingers in his poetry. He tries to find a universal equation of life based on betrayal, unfaithfulness, and disloyalty. The present is an extension of the past, and it is up to Sayf al-Dawla to present a brighter image where the values of humanity and heroism triumph over the shame and reproach that the people of Ma'bad have inherited throughout history.

Moreover, the poet intentionally parallels his situation to similar events involving religious figures, urging his mother to show patience and find solace in the example of Safiyyah, who could not avert Hamzah's death through her tears.

Be as Safiyya was on the day of "Uhud", Her tears didn't heal her profound grief.
Had the good Hamza ever relieved her sorrow, No wailing or lamentation would have overcome her.

The mention of the names Safiyyah and Hamzah integrates the text with the concept of empathetic sorrow, grounded in their relationship and the tragic end Hamzah met. This is to alleviate the pain of his mother. Safiyyah was devastated by the sight of Hamzah's corpse, but she persevered and sought reward in patience (Ibn Hisham, 1990, p. 3/33). Abu Firas is anxious about his fate and desires to console his mother, guiding her to remember Safiyyah's experience as a source of solace and emulation. He addresses her with this poignant and sorrowful appeal, positioning himself analogous to Hamzah who met a painful fate. In doing so, he manages to reflect his mother's worries, fears, and anxieties, inviting her to find solace in Safiyyah's story.

On the surface, the poet seems to be pushing his mother towards empathetic sorrow, but his intention is to express the sense of individual despair from Sayf al-Dawla. He has no choice but to consider the lives and symbolic significance of those who came before, as what's important in them are the "channels of implicit meanings inhabiting the idea" (Nasif, 1981, pp. 132-133). The poet deliberately uses historical symbolism to convey his message, allowing the idea to resonate through the subtle undercurrents of implicit meanings, reflecting a profound interweaving of emotions, history, and poetic expression.

Epithet:

It is a name by which a person is referred to, following his proper name, consisting of words indicating either praise or blame according to the meanings they hold. (Al-Jurjani, n.d., p. 247). Grammarians propose that while the proper name signifies the entity alone, the title conveys both the entity and a characteristic of praise or blame. However, it has predominantly been applied to contexts meant for blame. Thus, a title serves as a distinctive indicator, a mode of characterization and designation. This semantic foundation can be considered as a primary strategy to differentiate between proper names (Mujahid, 1998, p. 28).

Abu Firas employed the concept of the title to articulate his cognitive and intellectual frameworks and his stance towards the antagonist in his poem responding to Al-Damastiq. In this poetic dialogue, Al-Damastiq had disparaged the Arabs, denying their understanding of the nuances of war and its virtues. Abu Firas articulates (Al-Hamdani, 1994, p. 30):

Abu Firas strategically utilized the title to project his intellectual paradigms and his interactions with the adversary, constructing a poetic rebuttal against Al-Damastiq's critique of the Arabs and their profound acquaintance with the attributes and merits of

war. The title, in Abu Firas's articulate representation, intertwines elements of admiration and condemnation, serving as a nuanced reflection of individual and collective identities, and offering an intricate depiction of his perspectives on the adversary and the underlying intellectual and cognitive paradigms.

"Do you presume, O you of vast falsehoods, that we, While we are the lions of war, do not know warfare?"

Here, the address uses a nickname to mock Al-Damstiq, who represents the enemy, and therefore it is not for humane communication; hence, he didn't address him by name or by his kunya as a sign pointing to him. The nickname here opens up to many interpretations that contradict the attribute of a warrior. He is fat, bulky, incapable of war, so why would he reproach the Arabs by saying they are not people of wars? And why would he impose his own attributes upon them?

This manner of address clarifies the nature of the communicators and the standing based on the challenge to encompass all aspects of the verbal event between them. The nickname is a means of communication linked to the traditions and habits of the communicative group. Therefore, linguistic behavior is linked to social behavior within a symbolic, interactive framework. However, it is not within the framework of congeniality, but rather within the framework of confrontations, disputes, and argument exchanges, making the nickname a characteristic of a defeated identity, the identity of Al-Damstiq, and a sign of the disintegration of the relationship between two conflicting parties.

We may wonder what the nickname provides as a symbol; is it merely a sign or a mark on someone?

As we see, the nickname has achieved communication based on conflict between two parties, as it is an indicator of a personal stance, based on a characteristic that encompasses personal traits, reflecting a diminution of his value.

Abu Firas succeeded in attributing this nickname to Al-Damstiq, and it became indicative of him, a trait of his, and a symbol of a history of enmity between the Arabs and the Romans, not just with the Hamdanids. Also, Abu Firas employed the nickname with the intention of praise, making it indicative of the value system represented by the Arab in his struggle with the principle. Therefore, the significance of the nickname differed in his words addressing his mother (Al-Hamdan, 1994, pp. 253-254):

"Do you not see in 'The Lady of the Two Girdles' a model, In 'Mecca', while the hostile wars do roam?

Her son sought sanctuary, yet she did not respond, Knowing with certainty that he was destined to fall."

In contrast to the previous poem, here, the title comes to aggrandize its bearer due to an action he is known for, and it signifies more than the actual name. When the poet

wanted to explore a paragon of patience to present to his mother as an example to emulate, he mentioned the ordeal of "The Lady of the Two Girdles", Asma bint Abi Bakr (may God be pleased with them), who propelled her son to death for the sake of a principle she sacrificed her followers for (Al-Tabari, 1964, pp. 188-189). The mention of the title, conjoined with his personal experience for consideration and emulation, transcends its specific significance to a general one, establishing a communicative action within the community. The title "The Lady of the Two Girdles" is rich in meanings, laden with historical knowledge and religious values, bestowed upon her by the noble Prophet (peace be upon him) (Al-Asqalani, 1995, pp. 8-14).

The deliberate invocation of the name along with the title aims to bridge two phases of her life; one witnessed by the noble Prophet (peace be upon him) and another, the most painful one in her life, the phase of loss. At a time when people, including her sons, abandoned her son, and the closest ones betrayed him, he consulted his mother about continuing the fight. She advised him to persist in fighting as long as he was right, so he fought until he was killed. Thus, the title becomes a comprehensive name for the meanings of patience. Abu Firas was profound when he set an example for emulation in Safiyyah and for patience in "The Lady of the Two Girdles", the latter being the one characterized by patience.

The Sobriquet (Kunyah):

According to grammarians, a sobriquet (kunyah) is a form of a nickname in Arabic culture which often starts with "Abu" meaning "father of" or "Umm" meaning "mother of" (Ibn Aqeel, n.d., 2/121). Some individuals are more famously known by their sobriquets than their real names due to incidents they are associated with, making the sobriquet a substitute for the real name. Abu Firas found in some sobriquets the ultimate expression of a mother's intuition. He resorted to them to demonstrate that a mother, with her deep sense for her child, can sense what fate may conceal for him. He made "Umm Shabeeb" a symbol of a mother's deep connection and concern for her son.

Typically, a poet resorts to using a name, charging it with human experience when "he finds no other means to express a sentimental state against a certain situation; he chooses a sensory form capable of expressing or transferring the state from the inside to the outside, or creating an objective alternative to equate it" (Al-Yafi, 2008, p. 226). The poet thus turns it into a symbol, starting from reality, then transcending and reshaping it to embody his relationship with the sufferings he experiences in terms of preparing the self for what is happening. Hence, the symbol becomes a condensation of human experience. Characters might not have any impact on history except through their human experience, and this is evident when he uses the sobriquet Umm Shabeeb (Al-Hamdani, 1994, p. 54).

This analysis underscores the interplay between the specific and the universal in the use of sobriquets, revealing deeper cultural, social, and psychological dimensions inherent in the Arabic poetic tradition, emphasizing the human experience and its intricate relationship with names and sobriquets.

My mother has known that my fate is destined
By the edge of a sword or by the stroke of a rod,

Just as, before her son would drown,
Umm Shabeeb knew of his demise in the water.

Abu Firas tried to confront reality by presenting a comprehensive experience to expand his vision and form a conception about his fate. In his use of "Umm Shabeeb" as a symbol, he indicates his awareness of what his fate will lead to. He established an intimate relationship between the symbol and what it symbolizes, moving beyond the name to the fate. Hence, it can be said that the value of the symbol exceeds the semantic value to the suggestive value.

However, the reader might find it challenging to interpret the relationship between the name and the poet's intentionality, as he is accepting the fact of his captivity, knowing his fate, that his death will be in battle according to his mother's vision, not in captivity. To deepen the meaning, he brings up the name of Umm Shabeeb Al-Shaybaniyah, who saw in her dream a meteor emerging from a fire between heaven and earth, then falling into the water and drowning. The interpretation of her vision was the birth of her son, a brave and strong man, Shabeeb Al-Khariji, and his rise and fame spread due to his fierce fighting against the Umayyad state during the reign of Abdul Malik bin Marwan. His life ended when he tried to cross a bridge over the Dujail River in Al-Ahwaz, and his horse suddenly panicked, dropping him into the river where he drowned. Umm Shabeeb, knowing her son's fate, did not believe anyone who brought news of his death until she heard he drowned, confirming her dream (Ibn Khallikan, 1972, p. 2/457). Therefore, Umm Shabeeb's name alone suffices its meaning, hence it didn't require other symbols to acquire the feature of historical and artistic symbolism, summarizing the awareness of human's tragic end.

So, was Abu Firas subject to the constraints of historical truth? And what is available to the creator when he chooses history as his field?

When an artist chooses history as his field, he subjects himself to the chains of historical truth in its general frame but is free from the strict constraints imposed by the historian on himself. The artist, in his creation, is far from using a method but sees historical truth as something akin to a skeletal structure, which he cloaks with his artistic imagination and infuses with his creative spirit. Thus, the historical event becomes a living being that comes to us through the ages, not in its exact historical image but within the general frame of historical truth. The history, with its characters and events, lives with us in our present and expresses this present, thanks to the artist who has built a bridge with his art, making the past and the present intertwine in a way that makes it difficult to determine its extent (Qasim, 1983, p. 236).

3. Conclusion and Results:

Through our study, we conclude that Abu Firas utilized historical characters in his poetry as symbols representing events. These served as artistic means to achieve poetic discourse and a mechanism for transcending the present through the past by invoking similar images. In his poetry, the symbol has two dimensions: the personal poetic experience and the specific context. The sentimental experience the poet lived through

necessitated the portrayal of a similar incident in terms of the psychological impact it left on the soul and the moral effect caused by the event. This is what turned the incident into a symbol for Abu Firas, acknowledging his success in linking it to his present and breathing life into it, hence deriving its value.

The heritage contributed to deepening the uniqueness of his experiences, enhancing their intensity and granting them uniqueness through his interaction with them. The characters he mentioned reflected the essence of the poet's psychological state, revealing the inclinations of the soul and the experiences of the prince searching for his freedom.

The study arrived at the following results:

1. **Firstly:** Abu Firas excellently employed heritage characters artistically in terms of semantic and intentional harmony, based on his understanding of the character's features and its role in society and the impact it left on the mind. The features of the character disappeared, and its story, lesson, and intentions of its creator and recipient were present. He interpreted it to align with the nature of the experience the poet was living through.
2. **Secondly:** The symbol in Abu Firas's poetry is built upon mentioning historical figures and then developing them into symbols charged with meanings, not to hide behind their masks, but to grant himself a larger space of freedom to express what he wants. The symbol was his tool to express his sufferings that he wanted to convey to others and to communicate his intentions.
3. **Thirdly:** Abu Firas managed to turn the history of the character into a condensed symbol of what he wanted to express. While in captivity, historical experiences fermented in his mind, and he presented names laden with meanings, using them as markers for stories filled with details framing his situation. Therefore, he resorted to summarizing the lives of characters, embodying their emotions and thoughts, and endowing them with meanings and interpretations he wanted to convey in a condensed form, carrying the same charge that characterized their experiences. He accumulates the historical event associated with him, adding his experience to comprehend the essence.
4. **Fourthly:** Abu Firas achieved a fusion between his past and his present in dealing with specific characters and events, aiding him in establishing a vision for his present and future from an interpretative perspective.
5. **Fifthly:** Most of his characters carried a tragic self-awareness. Their employment was linked to his troubled relationship with his social reality.

References:

1. Ibrahim, Yusra Ismail. (2003). Historical Invocation in the Rumiyyat of Abu Firas. *Adab Al-Rafidayn Journal*, (37), (273-290).doi: 10.33899/radab.2003.164992
2. Ismail, Az al-Din. (n.d.). *Contemporary Arabic Poetry: Its Issues, Artistic and Moral Phenomena*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi.
3. Altongy, Muhammad. (1999). *The Detailed Lexicon in Literature* (2nd ed.). Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.

4. Brahmi, Ibrahim. (2016). Semiotics of Personal Titles: Kunya as a Model. *University of Laghouat Journal of Studies*, (42), (255-270).
5. Al-Basiouni, Ahmed. (1961). *Foundations of Art Education*. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif.
6. Belali, Amina. (1995). *The Impact of the Symbol in the Structure of Contemporary Arabic Poem*. Algeria: University Publications Bureau.
7. Al-Tanukhi, Abu Ali Al-Muhsin. (1994). *Al-Faraj Ba'd Al-Shidda* (2nd ed.). Cairo: Maktaba Al-Khanji.
8. Al-Hamdani, Abu Firas. (1994). *Diwan Abi Firas Al-Hamdani*. Edited by: Khalil Al-Duweihy (2nd ed.). Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi.
9. Hamdawi, Jamil. (2015). *Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis* (1st ed.). Al-Mothaqqaf Library. almothaqqaf.com
10. Ibn Khallikan, Abu al-Abbas Shams al-Din Ahmed. (1972). *Deaths of Eminent Men and Histories of the Sons of the Epoch*. Edited by: Ihsan Abbas (1st ed.). Beirut: Dar Sader.
11. Zayed, Ali Ashry. (1997). *Summoning Heritage Characters in Contemporary Arabic Poetry*. Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi.
12. Al-Zamakhshari, Mahmoud. (2001). *Sharh Al-Mufasssal by Al-Zamakhshari*. Introduced, annotated, and indexed by: Emil Badi Yacoub. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
13. Al-Tabari, Muhammad bin Jarir. (1964). *History of Al-Tabari* (2nd ed.). Edited by: Ibrahim, Muhammad Abu al-Fadl. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif.
14. Abbas, Ihsan. (2011). *The Art of Poetry* (2nd ed.). Amman: Dar Al-Shorouk.
15. Abdunour, Jabbour. (1079). *Literary Lexicon*. Lebanon: Dar Al-'Ilm Lilmalayin.
16. Al-Asqalani, Ahmed bin Ali bin Hajar. (1995). *Al-Isaba Fi Tamyiz Al-Sahaba* (1st ed.). Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
17. Ibn Aqeel. (n.d.). *Explanation of Ibn Aqeel on Alfiyya Ibn Malik*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' Al-Turath Al-Arabi.
18. Eid, Rajaa. (1995). *The Language of Poetry: A Reading in Modern Poetry*. Alexandria: Maaref Establishment.
19. Fetouh, Ahmed Mohamed. (1984). *Symbol and Symbolism in Contemporary Arabic Poetry* (3rd ed.). Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif.
20. Qasem, Abdou. (1983). *Poetry and History*. *Fosoul Literary Criticism Journal*, Volume 3 (2). (235-245).
21. Al-Qadi, Muhammad Rafi'. (2014). *The summoning of pre-Islamic characters in Abbasid poetry until the end of the fourth Hijri century*. Master's thesis. Al al-Bayt University.
22. Al-Qayrawani, Ibn Rashi. (2000). *The Umdah in the Craft of Poetry and Its Criticism*. Cairo: Maktaba Al-Khanji.
23. Ibn Karad, Sa'id. (2003). *Political Symbolism and Visual Identity*. *Alamatt Journal*, (19), (87-102).
24. Karam, Ghattas. (1949). *Symbolism and Modern Arabic Literature*. Beirut: Dar Al-Kashaf.
25. Kindi, Mohamed Ali. (2003). *Symbol and Mask in Modern Arabic Poetry (Al-Sayyab, Nazik, and Al-Bayati)* (1st ed.) Lebanon: Al-Kitab.
26. Mujahid, Ahmed. (1998). *Forms of Poetic Allusion: A Study in Employing Heritage Characters*. Egypt: The Egyptian Book Organization.

27. Al-Madani, Masoum. (1966). *Anwar Al-Rabee Fi Anwa Al-Badee*. Iraq: Al-Naaman Printing House.
28. Al-Misri, Ibn Abi Al-Asbaa. (n.d.). *The Aesthetics of the Quran*. Egypt: Nahdat Misr.
29. Al-Momani, Abdelmalik. (2010). *The Human Experience in the Rumiyyat of Abu Firas Al-Hamdani*. Oujda: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
30. Nassif, Mustafa. (1981). *Study of Arabic Literature* (3rd ed.). Beirut: Dar Al-Andalus.
31. Al-Naaman, Al-Qadi. (n.d.). *Abu Firas: The Stance and Artistic Formation*. Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa.
32. Al-Yafi, Naim. (2008). *The Evolution of the Artistic Image in Modern Arabic Poetry*. Syria: Pages for Studies and Publishing.
33. Yaberga, Blaa. (1986). *The Concise Philosophical Lexicon*. Moscow: Progress House.
34. Youssefi, Souhaila. (2017). *The Symbol and Its Meaning in the Contemporary Arabic Poem, a Reading in the Shape, Khalil Hawi as a Model*.