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ABSTRACT

Lectures about the Literary Movement in Aleppo (1800-1950)

محاضرات عن الحركة الأدبية في حلب ١٨٠٠ - ١٩٥٠

This is a collection of essays that were delivered as lectures in 1956-1957 by Sami al-Kayyali (1898-1972), the Syrian scholar and literary historian. These lectures draw upon a long and active career in research.

The introductory chapter is an extensive historical account of the history of Aleppo, the major historians who wrote its history and their works, and the contribution of Aleppan intellectuals and literati to the Arab Cultural Renaissance.

The following five chapters are dedicated to seven prominent writers who lived and produced works in Aleppo during the nineteenth century. They comprise three entries about Francis, Mariana and 'Abdallah al-Marrash. These chapters combine biographical accounts with rigorous analysis of the works of these pioneers, highlighting their innovations, modernising enterprises, political activities and affiliations, and their contribution to the movement of

modern Arabic literature. In addition, they include substantial extracts from the works of these writers.

The following section moves the focus to the twentieth century, casting light on the biographies and works of a further ten writers and concluding with an intensive survey of the history and development of press and journalism in Aleppo (1800-1950).

The last chapter explores the literary life in Aleppo at the middle of the twentieth century and the prevailing trends of modern Arabic literature as they were mainly represented in the works of another eight writers, placing a special focus on the tension between modernists and traditionalists. The political and social functions of the literary text are given a prominence over the formal and aesthetic ones.

The book reconstructs the active cultural Aleppan scene during this period that witnessed the birth and progress of Arab Renaissance. It portrays a vibrant community that enjoys intimate interfaith relations, and a unique pioneering presence of women in the social and cultural life.

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