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My interest in Zaki Konsol dates from the early eighties when I read my first books about the literature of the South American *Mahğar*. A more personal contact had to wait until 1987, when I met him at the guesthouse of my host, Dr. Horacio Munir Haddad, President of the Fundacion Los Cedros, in Buenos Aires. A second meeting took place in the consistory of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Buenos Aires, where an Arab literary circle met. This circle celebrated Zaki Konsol as their most outstanding poet writing in standard Arabic. During those meetings, Zaki Konsol gave me copies of his *dīwāns* and a large quantity of his unpublished poetry.

The aim of this paper is to establish the identity of the poet, and what and where he published. The literary quality or the absence of it is not my first concern. To establish either of them goes beyond my capacities. I am more interested to know if his fellow emigrants, for whom he was writing his poetry, appreciated his work, why he chose traditional poetry, what subjects he chose, and if he did innovate.

The biographers of Zaki Konsol do not agree about the year and his place of birth. This may be partly due to the reluctance of the poet to inform his biographers correctly. His biographer, ‘Abdallaṭīf Yūnus, writes in one of the opening phrases of his book, “I do not want to begin with mentioning his date of birth, because I do not want to expose myself to his enmity and anger” (Yūnus 1967:3).

Zaki Konsol’s volume of poetry, *Nūr wa-nār* (Konsol 1972), mentions in the introduction that the poet was born abroad (*fī diyāri l-ğurba*), in 1916 and that he went in 1922 to Yabrūd, the place of birth of his parents (*Masqat ra’s wālidayhi*) (Konsol 1972:5). The first part of his *Dīwān* (Konsol 1986), mentions that Zaki Konsol was born in 1916, *fī diyāri l-ğurba*, or somewhere outside Syria. The poet also mentioned Yabrūd as “*Masqat ra’sī*” (My place of birth) (Konsol 1974:41-44), expressing his emotional attachment to the place rather than presenting a fact. The line giving this information occurs on the left-hand side of the page in a small, bold type, just beneath the title of the poem. Many of the poems of Zaki Konsol have such a line, informing the reader of the occasion or the subject of the poem.

¹ The present paper is based on the material collected during a study visit to Argentina and Brasil, May-June 1991, for which the financial means were provided by the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO) and by the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO).

The poet uses the spelling Konsol on the Castellano backside of his Arabic books published in Buenos Aires. In our transcription system of Arabic, his name would be spelled as Zakī Qunṣul. We shall use the spelling Konsol throughout our text.

‘Īsā an-Nā‘ūrī (1977:579) mentions Yabrūd as the place of birth but does not mention the year of birth, and Ġurġ Ṣaydaḥ (1964:633) mentions the year 1919. One might conclude that he considered Yabrūd as the place of birth of the poet on the basis of his line, “When Zaki Konsol, coming from Yabrūd, arrived in Argentine, in 1929, he followed the road his brother Ilias had taken five years before.” The line, however, does not name Yabrūd as the place of birth.

The literary journal *at-Taqāfa* devoted its issue of Tišrīn I (October) 1992 to Zaki Konsol. Among the contributors are Yūsuf ‘Abdalaḥad, who is a mine of information in the field of modern Arabic literature, and Zaki’s brother Karam. The latter contributed an article to this volume in which he stated that Zaki was born in 1916, in Cordoba, Argentina (*at-Taqāfa*, October 1992:48-51).

In the same article, Karam Konsol writes that in 1922 the family went back to Yabrūd in Syria and Zaki went there to school until 1925. He adds that there was only one school in Yabrūd in those years and that the school closed its doors during the Syrian uprising against the French (1925-1926). However, the introductory essay in the first part of his *Dīwān* (Konsol 1986) reports that Zaki had to leave school in order to help his father to earn his share in the family income.

In 1929, Zaki and his father emigrated again and settled finally in Buenos Aires. There Zaki had to do the work most Syrian immigrants did, travelling around with a huge box with merchandise. Zaki, more than once returned with a book or a journal instead of the money he had earned that day (*at-Taqāfa* October, 1992:49).

From 1935-1939 Zaki became an editor of the Syrian-Lebanese Journal (*al-Ġarīda as-Sūriyya al-Lubnāniyya*), under the supervision of his brother Ilyās, who was the editor-in-chief. They both left the journal in 1939 because of a political difference of opinion with the owner of the paper. They returned to trade, but Zaki’s interests were laying in literature rather than in trade (Konsol 1972:5-6, *aš-Ša‘ir fī kalimāt*).

Zaki’s literary career began in 1933 when Salma Salāma Aṭlas published one of his poems in her journal *al-Karma* in São Paulo. al-Badawī al-Mulattam² gives the following summary of the published works of Zaki. He mentions a volume of poetry, *Ašwāk*, a volume of quatrains, *Awtār al-qalb*, a collection of patriotic and lyric poetry and *aš-Šazāyā*, a volume of patriotic poetry that appeared in 1939. ‘Īsā an-Nā‘ūrī writes that Zaki never mentioned this *dīwān* during the many years of correspondence between them from 1952 onward, and that he, therefore, doubts the existence of the volume. However, ‘Azīza Marīdan quotes from *aš-Šazāyā*³ and Karam Konsol mentions this *dīwān* in his above-mentioned article. He, however, writes that Zaki published this *dīwān* in the same year in which his brother and he published

² al-Badawī al-Mulattam (penname of Ya‘qūb al-‘Awdāt) 1956:420.

³ Marīdan 1966:369f. She quotes five lines of poetry which can be found, according to her footnote on p.369, on page 37 of Zaki’s *dīwān*.

the first issue of the journal *al-Manāhil* (the sources), (1936:49). On the other hand, Karam does not mention the other volumes listed by al-Badawī al-Mulattam, and neither does Yūsuf ʿAbdalaḥad in his bibliography (*at-Taqqāfa*, October, 1992:8-14).

The next volume to appear was the volume *Suʿād*, in commemoration of his daughter Suʿād who died at the age of 8 months (San Martín, B.A., 1953). It was followed by *Nūr wa-nār* (Light and Fire) (Konsol 1972). The third page of this volume carried the title and the words: "First part of the *dīwān* of the poet". On the first page of the volume the following message occurs: "New, augmented, corrected edition which annuls what preceded it". From this message and from the fact that this volume is indicated part one of the *dīwān* of the poet, one is led to believe that the poet meant to include the volume *aš-Šazāyā* in this annulment. A footnote on page 9 informs the reader that an earlier edition of *Nūr wa-nār* appeared at the end of 1970⁴.

I have not been able to trace that earlier edition or to find other information about it than that recorded in the edition of *Nūr wa-nār*, published in 1972 in Buenos Aires.

The title page of the volume *ʿAṭṣ wa-ḡūʿ* (Hunger and Thirst) (Konsol 1974), defines this volume as the second part of the *dīwān* of the poet. The volume *Alwān wa-alḥān* (Tinctures and Tunes) was published in Buenos Aires, 1978, and the volume *Fī matāḥāt at-ṭarīq* (In the Mazes of the Road), was published in Damascus, 1984. In 1986, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in Damascus published the first part of the *Dīwān* of Zaki Konsol, which consists of poems from all the collections so far mentioned and may be some unpublished poems, without any reference to the earlier *dīwāns*. For the sake of completeness, we have to mention, that Zaki Konsol wrote some plays in prose. The first play appeared in 1939 with the title *at-Tawra as-sūriyya*. The second play *Taḥta samāʾ al-Andalus* was published in Damascus in 1965. al-Badawī al-Mulattam mentions, without further details, the play *Ṭarīq ibn Ziyād*, not mentioned by anyone else (al-Badawī al-Mulattam 1956:420).

The first observations about the literary value of the poetry of Zaki Konsol can be found in the earlier mentioned works by ʿĪsā an-Nāʿūrī and by Ğurğ Şaydaḥ. ʿĪsā an-Nāʿūrī devoted ten pages (1977:570-579) to Zaki Konsol. He opens his description with the words: "I did not know the poetical significance of Zaki Konsol before the poet Ilyās Farḥāt made me aware of it ..." and "... I did not care to study him seriously until Ilyās Farḥāt had written me more than once praising his spirit and his art" (an-Nāʿūrī 1977:147). Şaydaḥ (1964:633-640) tells that he was very much impressed by the poem "the flower-girl" and that he then remembered what had

⁴ an-Nāʿūrī 1977:574f. mentions the publication of a small *dīwān* with the title *Nūr wa-nār* at the publishing house of the *Mağallat at-Taqqāfa* 1970, which, according to the poet was so riddled with mistakes that he ordered its reprint in Buenos Aires in 1972.

happened two years before. In 1948, on his way to Buenos Aires, he visited Ilyā Abū Mādī in New York and asked him if he knew any poets in Buenos Aires. Ilyā Abū Mādī mentioned four names and then added: "There is a young man (*tari al-'ūd*) named Zaki Konsol composing poetry, but he is not outstanding". Şaydah then relates that Ilyā Abū Mādī told that Zaki sent him his first *dīwān* asking him to write a foreword, but that he was hesitant about it. Ilyā Abū Mādī told, Şaydah writes, that the *dīwān* still was in his possession, and finally, asked Şaydah to take the *dīwān* with him and give it back to Zaki. Şaydah writes that the opinion of Abū Mādī influenced him until he read the above-mentioned poem⁵.

However, there is a notion that the poetry of the *Mahğar* and more specifically the poetry of the Southern *Mahğar* lack quality. This, at least is the opinion of Margot Scheffold (1993:30). She writes: "Moreover, it is precisely the striking quantity of Arabic poetical production, together with its obvious lack of quality, which made these works uninteresting for the theory of literature" (my translation). She refers in a footnote to Jayyusi (1977:67), but the only remark Jayyusi made was that: "The South remained more in the main stream of Arabic poetry and culture". Jayyusi's lack of appreciation for the Argentine *Mahğar* become evident when one realizes that she does not devote one single line to its poets.

The actual spread of this idea of lack of quality is difficult to establish. We know that the poet heard about it and that he reacted to it. The title page of Zaki's *dīwān* "*Alwān wa-alḥān*" (Tinctures and Tunes) (Konsol 1978) carries next to the obligatory text the following sentence, *šī'r taqlīdī rağ'ī fīhi kullu 'uyūb aš-šī'r al-qadīm* (traditional, backward poetry with all the defects of the old poetry). The opening poem of this volume has the title, *Rağ'īyyun*. The twenty-four strophes of this poem all begin with the words: *Anā yā qaumu rağ'īyyun* (Dear people, I am backward) (Konsol 1978:17-22). The first strophe runs as follows:

I am backward, dear people	let the world testify!
I have cleansed the heart from mud	and from its lower lusts
I love people. No hatred	overcomes me against anyone
All human beings are my brothers	every place is my country

Strophe 13 is important because the poet speaks in it about his poetry. The strophe runs as follows:

I am backward, dear people	I love art for the sake of art
I am a <i>ğinn</i> among humans	and human among the <i>ğinn</i>
I poetise to relieve	the soul from pains
My foot stumbles and I do not grieve	but I do when my pen stumbles

⁵ We have to state here that Ilyā Abū Mādī is seen as the most important poet of the Northern *Mahğar*, enjoying a broad recognition in the Arab world and that Ilyās Farḥāt is one of the best poets of the Southern *Mahğar*. Jayyusi (1977:72) writes that he and the poet al-Qarāwī "are noted for their strength of style and virile, precise and effective diction".

Strophe 15 also deals with his ideas about poetry:

I am backward, dear people
 I reject indecency of thoughts
 How much poetry is there without meaning,
 and how much meaning is there outside poetry
 They who propagated meanness were consumed by fire;
 they died one after the other
 Their bareness is visible to people
 and they call their nakedness revolution.

The volume *Alwān wa-alḥān* is unique in the sense that the poet himself wrote an opening essay entitled *Fī šī'r* (On poetry). Not one of his other volumes of poetry has such an essay by the poet himself. The poet defines poetry as follows: "Poetry is what gives expression to the emotions of the soul and what lets the feelings of the heart speak. It dives into the depths of emotion in a true language free from stains, in a sound rendering with well-chosen words. It has a solid style without intricacies or obscurities, but for those required by the richness of the art and the dignity of the statement" (Konsol 1978:5). The poet then turns against the defenders of free poetry, saying that: "Poetry cannot do without metre and rhyme. It is a crime to set metre and rhyme afire, arguing that the internal music has taken their place and made them redundant. Internal music is a fable which does not hold out when examined ...". He continues this argument saying: "abiding by the fundamentals of poetry does not preclude the variation of rhyme and the changing from one metre to another. The poets of the *Mahğar* have made some exquisite inventions ...". It should be noted that the volume *Nūr wa-nār* opens with a poem in which the poet is addressing the propagandists of the "new poetry". The title of this poem is *Aḥfād Sayyāh*, *Sayyāh* being the name of a woman who claimed to be a prophetess in the first period of Islam (Konsol 1972:13-15). The relevant lines of this poem run as follows:

Do not say freedom of poetry ...
 the humbug of the inexperienced is nothing but calamity
 All poetry without metre and without
 meaning is idle talk, its root being foreign
 The glory of speech lies in being plain
 only the evil mind stammers⁶

Another poem expresses the same idea:

Brother abroad, we are a group of people
 who still are delighted in the metre of Halīl

⁶ *lā taqūlū ḥurriyata š-šī'ri ... laysat
 kullu šī'rin lā wazna fihi wa-lā
 šarfu l-qawli an yakūna faṣiḥan*

*turrahātu l-ağrāvi illā baliyya
 ma'nā hurā'un usūlubā ağnabiyya
 lam yulağliğ illā ḥabītu t-tawīyya*

We are not riding the wave of poetry
that spoils everything beautiful and glorious⁷

Continuing his argument, Zaki Konsol turns to the question for whom the poet writes his poetry: "Is it right that we exhaust the capacities of the reader with magic and riddles and then say that we are writing for the general public" (Konsol 1978:6). "Poetry does not live in dark caves, but it is in need of light and air. I do understand that it is veiled lightly (*wa-anā afhamu an yatabarqa'a bi-niqābin šafāfin*) because that has more impact on the soul and makes the brain more alert." He ends this part of the essay saying: "Therefore, obscurity is ugly when it is synonymous to blindfolding and when its purpose lies in itself".

Another subject of this essay is the function of poetry. The poet writes: "Poetry is not a mouthpiece for propaganda and jesting, or a vehicle drawn by the horses of custom and tradition, nor a means to solve political, social and economical problems. In the history of literature there are numberless proofs that freedom is the natural abode for poetry. It cannot breathe except in total freedom." This view is not limited to political poetry but it applies to all sorts of poetry. The poet continues with saying that poetry does not need to have a link with virtue although he himself is a propagandist of such virtues. He loves nationalistic poetry, he says, but he believes that poetry is not required to side with nationalistic movements. "The quintessence is that poetry came into being as a basis for enjoyment – meaning that singing is a necessity since primordial times and that it will remain its companion to eternity – then political and social factors came upon it adding the element of utility. It can do without it whenever it wants to, but it can never do without its basic function. Who is able to combine the two and joins purpose and means, his merit is double and includes honour from both sides" (*Ibid.*, 7f).

Summarising we may say that Zaki Konsol wants poetry to be poetical before anything else and secondly that poetry may carry a message. To combine the two, the poem being poetical and carrying a message, is meritorious in his view and that means that we may expect him to bring a message in each of his poems.

Zaki's poetry comprises the following categories: *ğazal*, love-poetry, the *wataniyyāt*, or political poetry, the *hanīn* poems of longing for the homeland, the *insāniyyāt*, in which category come his poems about various trades and crafts, and the long poem *Su'ād*, which he composed after the death of his eight months old daughter. Within the category of the *ğazal* comes the series about *Ġalwā'*, a name the poet possibly

⁷ Konsol 1984:30-38: *Luğat al-ğanna*, which poem has the following lines:
yā abā l-ğurba innā mā šarun lam nazal naṭrabu li-l-wazni l-ḥalīlī
mā rakibnā mawğata š-š'ri llatī šarwahat kulla ġamīlin wa-ğalīlī

borrowed from Abū Šabaka. The latter's collection of poems titled *Ġalwā'*, came out in Beirut in 1945⁸.

Zaki Konsol wrote ten poems devoted to *Ġalwā'* and in 27 other poems out of the 300 poems he published, he mentions the name of *Ġalwā'*. The inserts in these 27 poems vary in length between a few words to six lines, "what shall I say to *Ġalwā'*?", or "*Ġalwā'*'s approval suffices for me" being the shortest inserts¹⁰. Most of these inserts occur in occasional poetry. Since such poems were meant to be recited before a life audience, one may assume that the poet used the inserts as a stratagem to hold or to recapture the attention of his audience, or to say indirectly what he could not or would not say directly.

The ten poems devoted to *Ġalwā'* tell the story of a relationship developing from the first feelings of love for *Ġalwā'* from afar to accusations of his infidelity and to the expression of anxiety for the wellbeing of *Ġalwā'*. The story ends in a poem in which the poet mentions *Ġalwā'*, his grandson and his son, in that order.

The first poem, *Ahlā darārīhi* (His prettiest star), tells about an amorous young man who suffers from being in love (Konsol 1984:39-41). The poem opens with the line:

Wherever I go, her spectre follows me,
What can I do about her, and what about it¹¹?

The last sentence is:

If my wish does not come true, that is bad luck
Alas for my heart, how shall I console it¹²?

There is no indication that *Ġalwā'* knew about the feelings of the young man.

The poem, *Ḍalāl al-harwā'* (The error of love)¹³, follows the same line.

⁸ Ilyās Abū Šabaka informs the reader in the introduction that he wrote the poems between 1926 and 1932 and that there is only a small part from the poet's early youth in them. As a whole they are the product of fantasy not of reality. *Ġalwā'* is a metathesis of Olga, the fiancée of the poet who finally married her after ten years (Meisami & Starkey 1998:44f). The name of Zaki's wife was Warda 'Azzāz (*at-Taqāfa*, October 1992:49).

⁹ *mādā aqūl li-Ġalwā'?* (Konsol 1972:75).

¹⁰ *ḥasbī riḍā li-Ġalwā'* (Konsol 1972:96; 1974:14).

¹¹ *yurāfiqunī annā dahabtu ḥayāluḥā
fa-mā ḥilati fihā wa-mā ḥilati fihī?*

¹² *fa-in ḥāba mā arġū fa-yā sū'a tālī'i
wa-yā wayḥa ḥādīhi l-qalbi, kayfa u'azzīhi*

¹³ Konsol 1978:159. This poem tells about an amorous man haunted by his love for *Ġalwā'*. How much I debate with him (my heart), how much I turn him away from her, he swears that he does not long for anything but for her.

The third poem, *Yā ḥulwata t-tuḡri* (You sweet mouth) shows a development in the relation. In good classical fashion, the poet exclaims:

Do you remember paradise, during our evening,
while we were unaware of the evil of an informer and a slanderer?
We flew to it and ecstasy was our third companion
A guest tending the wounds of our bleeding heart
The night wrapped us in the folds of its cloak
A thirsty person withholding her drink from a thirsty person¹⁴

However, it is not Ḡalwā' withholding her drink, but the poet withholding his. The devil, he says, was trying to persuade him to take the presents of beauty, but on the other hand a reproach, spelled out in detail, held him back from committing a crime.

The relation has undergone a change in the poem *Ba'da l-'āsifa* (After the storm). The poet defends himself against the accusation of infidelity by Ḡalwā'¹⁵. An altercation between the poet and Ḡalwā', be it an imaginative one, is the subject of the six-line insert in the poem commemorating the political leader, Fāris al-Hūrī (Konsol 1972:73-80):

"What shall I say to Ḡalwā' when she shouts,
Did you not turn your golden voice against us,
poet of Syria? The heart of Syria is afire
by emotion and your heart is playing with wine

...
Does her tear for the evil events not shake you?
Are you made of stone, of wood?"

"Stop your reproach, Ḡalwā'..."¹⁶

The poet then continues saying that he is doing everything for Syria and that Ḡalwā' does not need to reproach him for inactivity. In this case, the insert serves a rhetorical purpose to wrap his self-praise in an imaginative altercation between the poet and his beloved.

¹⁴ Konsol 1974:98-101. The quoted lines occur on p. 99.

*hal taḍkurīna 'alā «l-firdūsi» sahratanā
tīrnā ilayhi wa-kāna l-waḡdu tālītanā
yaluffunā l-laylu fī d-'āfi burdatibi*

*fī ḡaflatin min adā wāšin wa-nammāmī
ḍayfan tarwassada ḡurḥay qalbinā d-dāmī
zam'a taḍunnu bi-saḡyāhā 'alā zāmī*

¹⁵ Konsol 1974:63-67. This poem is with 40 lines the longest Ḡalwā' poem by the poet.

¹⁶ Lines 14-15:

*mādā aḡulu li-Ḡalwā'ī idā hatafat
yā šā'ira š-šāmi qalbu š-šāmi muḍḍaramun*

*hallā adarta 'alaynā sawtaka d-dahabī
waḡḍan wa-qalbuka lāhin b-ibnati l-'anabī*

And lines 18-19:

*alā tahuzzuka fī l-aḥḍāti dam'atubā
kuffī malāmaki yā Ḡalwā'...*

hal anta min ḥaḡarin, hal anta min ḥašabī?

A new element is the anxiety expressed by the poet about the health and safety of Ġalwā'. In the poem *Salamat yadāka* (Your hands healed), the poet thanked Dr. Ḥaddād, director and owner of the clinic Los Cedros in Buenos Aires, for curing Ġalwā' (Konsol 1984:164-167).

In *Qā'id ar-rakb* (Leader of the caravan), the poet expresses his concern for the safety of Ġalwā' imploring the captain of the ship (or plane) to bring Ġalwā' safely to Syria (Konsol 1974:190-192).

The poem *Durrat aš-šarqayn* (Pearl of the two Easts = Damascus) (Konsol 1986: 81-88), is a poem composed in Damascus about the city ending with three lines in which he mentions Ġalwā', his grandson and his son.

Ġalwā', after tomorrow our ship will leave
 Shall I turn my ear away from its hooters?
 If my grandson and my son were not on my eyelashes
 and in my heart and brain
 I would never use a rhyme other than *dād*
 and not spread a wing outside my country! (Konsol 1986:88)

There are two lines about the use of the name of Ġalwā'. The first one runs, *bi-smihā a'nī watanī*¹⁷. The other line is, *bi-smihā uḡannī watanī*¹⁸. They occur in two versions of the same poem, the first of which does not suit the metre but the second does. We may assume therefore that the first line is wrong. The second line gives a better meaning also: "In her name I sing the praise of my country".

The *wataniyyāt* is another important group of poems in Zaki's oeuvre. They deal with the important political events in the Arab countries and especially with Palestine. The treatment of the subject of Palestine comes close to the treatment of the Ġalwā' motif. The poet composed a great number of poems on this subject and he inserted this motif into other poems on a variety of subjects.

The first volume of poetry, *Nūr wa-nār* (Konsol 1972), abounds with poems dealing with the fate of Palestine. The poet has dated most of his poems in this volume and so we know that he composed them between 1946 and 1971. He selected nine poems of the year 1967, which he dated by mentioning the month of composition next to the year. Six of the nine poems, composed in June, July and August, deal with the aftermath of the June war. The titles of these poems reflect the poet's feelings about this war.

The first poem after the war is *Kifāḥ wa-amal* (Struggle and hope) The opening line runs as follows:

"My people has not died and hope has not been lost

¹⁷ Konsol 1984:30-38, especially p. 34 third line.

¹⁸ Konsol 1986:215-220, especially p. 217 last line.

A false step of the rider does not mean failure"¹⁹

The following poem, *Laylu l-^ʿurūba* (Night of Arabism), declares,
 Patience is the best refuge when afflicted
 After increasing hardship relief will come²⁰

The other poems of this series are *Arḍu š-šubadā'i* (Soil of martyrs), 15 July 1967 (Konsol 1972:152-156); *Sa'abnuqu ḡurhī* (I will suppress my injuries), which poem has the subtitle, "From a Palestinian refugee to the thieves of his country" (*Ibid.*, 157-160); *aṭ-Ta'ru l-muqaddas* (The sacred revenge), August 1967, (*Ibid.*, 161-167).

Revenge is also the main theme of the *Waṣīyyatu t-ta'r* (The admonition to take revenge). 'Abdallaṭif Yūnus considered this poem as the best poem ever written by Zaki Konsol, that is until 1967, the year Yūnus published his book. He writes: "No Arab poet, myself not excepted, can describe the painful tragedy of Palestine as this masterpiece describes it" (Konsol 1972:29-31, Yūnus 1967:71-75). The poem dates from 1950. It consists of three strophes, the first of which deserves our attention. The poem opens with three adverbial clauses indicating the place, followed by six relative clauses describing the place before coming to two coordinate main phrases, the second of which is followed by two subordinate ones and a third coordinate phrase. This last phrase opens with an adverbial clause with a subordinate phrase and then comes to the main verb and its subject. The logical subject of these phrases is an old refugee, whose eyes, hand and sighs are the subjects of the three main phrases. The two last words of this strophe reveal this logical subject.

The adjectives of the form *maf^ʿūlatin* at the beginning of the lines three to eight emphasize, through meaning and sonority, the horror of the place. To give a taste of this sonority, the usual order of translation with a transcription of the Arabic text in the footnotes is abandoned. The Arabic transcription comes first followed by its translation:

ʿabra t-tariqi l-ʿābisi l-hālī

ʿabra l-madā l-marwāri bi-l-ālī

*fī haymatin saudā'a ka-l-qabri
 mansūbatin fī mahmahi l-qafri
 manhūkatin mahtūkati s-satri
 maftūḥatin li-l-waḥši wa-t-tayri
 makšūfatin li-l-ḥarri wa-l-qarri
 mafrūšatin bi-r-ramli wa-l-faqri*

¹⁹ Konsol 1972:143-146, dated 18 *Hazirān* (June), 1967:
*lam yamut qawmī wa-lā dā'a l-amal
 kabwatu l-fārisi lā ta'nī l-fašal*

²⁰ Konsol 1972: 147-151, dated 2 *Tammūz* (July), 1967:
*aṣ-ṣabru hayru malādin fī l-balā'i fa-qad
 yaḡī'u ba'da štidādi l-miḥmati l-faraḡū*

<p> <i>magmūratin bi-d-dulli wa-l-qabri</i> ʿaynāni taʿtaliḡāni bi-n-nāri al-ḥaḡdu yūḡihā wa-ʿalā l-ḥurūfi r-rāʿifati damā tanzū hušāṣatu </p>	<p> <i>wa-yadun taḡuttu waṣiyyata t-taʿri</i> wa-l-ḡurḡu yumliḡhā al-ḡadirāti taḡālulḡa humamā lāḡiʿi bālī </p>
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After a road, dreary and black

After a spectre ridden track

In a tent deathly black

Disposed of in an arid waste

Decomposed and worn the cloth

Exposed to birds and beasts

Open to cold and heat

Clothed with sand and need

Enclosed with humiliation and the rule of might

Two eyes tremble ablaze

A hand writes an order to retaliate
wounds dictate

Feelings of hate instigate

And, on the bleeding, burning characters

which one might think lava to be
of the ageing refugee

Jumps the last sigh

ʿAbdallaṡif Yūnus is exultant about these lines. I translate: "They are above the level of the pen – any pen, and ability – any ability – it is on a level to which nothing rises except the innermost heart (*damīr*)..."

Other poems about Palestine give vent to feelings of frustration, anger, hate and aggression.

Hurāfatu s-salām (The legend of peace) (Konsol 1972:19-24), reads:

The abominable armistice, the source of our affliction

The neck of him who agreed to it, is sprinkled with blood

Without its strings, our sword would have smashed the den of vice

And Israel would have come to an end.

The poem *Mulūku l-kalām* (Kings of talk) (Konsol 1972:25-28) makes its title clear with the lines:

Your sons did not hesitate to fight

God is witness that they did not abandon you

The leaders alone were criminals

Ask them about their degraded honour.

The Palestine question plays a prominent role in the poem commemorating the battle of Maysalūn in 1920, when the French invaded Syria to establish the mandate government²¹. The same goes for the poem *Abū l-fawāris* (The headman of the caval-

²¹ *Fī mawkibi š-šahīd* (In the procession of the martyr), Konsol 1972:198-200.

ry), which celebrates the Druze leader of the 1925-26 insurrection against the French rulers. The poem *Kafartu bi-l-īd* (I did not celebrate) (Konsol 1972:67-70) tells why the poet did not take part in the fifth year celebration of the French withdrawal from Syria in 1946. This poem counts 24 lines and it is only in line 19 that the poet mentions Palestine as the cause for his abstention. The coming to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt in 1955 is another opportunity to mention the ongoing struggle²².

Closely related to the *waṭaniyyāt* are the poems in which the poet describes his longing, *ḥanīn*, to the country where he feels his roots lie. Just like the other themes, Zaki Konsol composed complete poems devoted to it and he inserted short episodes into poems devoted to another subject. In the volume *ʿAtš wa-ḡūc* one finds the telling titles, *Yā ḡannata d-dunyā* (Paradise of the world) (Konsol 1974:44) and *Yabrūd*, the city of his parents where the poet lived from 1922 to 1929, and where he went to school. Here follows a translation of the last of the eight strophes of the poem *Yabrūd*,

Girls of the quarter, do you remember a child,
 Who stayed in the nest for a while and then went away
 I was that child, but I am now a middle-aged man
 My absence made me lose root and branch
 I have not earned glory and I made no family happy
 Be nice to my orphan tears
 Greetings to you, paradise of the world, greetings²³

Nostalgia is a natural part of the *Mahd ahlāmi* (Cradle of my dreams), written shortly before the June war, in April 1967. Nostalgia also appears in poems which seem to give little reason for it. One of these poems is the elegy for Fāris al-Hūrī in 1962 (Konsol 1972:73-80).

After six lines praising Fāris al-Hūrī, the poet addresses his muse:

O muse of my poetry, in the middle of your confidential words you leave me
 My self-esteem withholds me from running off
 Do not dismiss the singing string when hoarseness

²² *Yā šiblu Miṣr* (Young man from Egypt), Konsol 1972:34-37.

²³ Konsol 1974:44:

*yā ṣabāyā l-ḥayyi hal tadkurna tiḡlā
 lazama l-īšša zamānan tumma aḡlā
 anā dāka ṭ-ṭiḡlu lākin širtu kablā
 dayyaʿatnī ḡurbatī ašlan wa-ḡaslā
 lam ašib maḡdan wa-lā aš adtu ablā
 fa-taraffaḡna bi-damʿāti l-yaṭāmā
 wa-salāman ḡannata d-dunyā salāmā*

Falls upon the voice of one who in tiredness resigns
 Nostalgia broke my wing and hope died out
 like daybreak. I let it drink from my heart and eyes
 Alas, for the stranger whose bed is made of thorns,
 whose bread is baked from the dough of worry and hardship.

He lives physically in exile and his heart and longing are not exiled²⁴.

After this nostalgia episode comes a Ġalwā' episode and after nineteen lines in total the poet returns to the *Šayhu l-urūba*.

‘Īsā an-Nā‘ūrī (1977:575) describes the so-called *insāniyyāt* as follows: “The reader of Zaki Konsol’s poetry discovers that he has a great interest in social poetry and a deep feeling for the toiling class of the nation. He wrote me in a letter dated February 17th, 1953, that he had a volume of poetry titled ‘*Alā qārī‘ati t-tarīq* (Along the streets), devoted to this forgotten group of people with their humble professions”. an-Nā‘ūrī tells that the volume counted twenty poems, some of which Zaki Konsol had published and others not. Ten of the poems found their way to the volumes *Nūr wa-nār*, *Fī matāhāt at-tarīq* and *Dīwān*. The jobs vary between the flower girl, the compositor, the builder’s labourer, the postal worker (*Nūr wa-nār*), the shepherd, the teacher, the waiter and the seller of liquorice water (*Fī matāhāt at-tarīq*), the baker (*Dīwān*).

‘Īsā an-Nā‘ūrī (1977:575) included one strophe of the poem “The maid” (*al-Āmila*) and ten lines of the poem “The newspaper vendor” (*Bayyā‘u l-ġarā‘id*) in the entry about Zaki Konsol. Ġurġ Šaydah (1964:634-636) admires the poem *Bā‘atu z-zahr* (The flower-girl) and ‘Abdallaṭīf Yūnus writes that this type of poetry describes the toiling classes and their circumstances and awakens sympathy for them. It is, he says, the type of poetry most deserving of immortality (Yūnus 1967:130).

The Flower girl

In the hustle of dreams, I saw her confusion
 As if she were reading the tales of illusion
 She went like drunk in the march of the days
 And made flowers dance with the following lays:

Flowers, o lovers – for flowers do come,

²⁴ Konsol 1972:74, lines 1-5:

‘arūsu šīri fī naġwāki tabdilunī
 lā tāzila l-watara aš-šādī idā intašarat
 hāda l-ħanīnu ġanāhī wa-ntafā amalū
 wayħa l-ġarībi ‘alā lašwāki madġā‘ihī
 ya ‘ayšu ‘an rabīhi bi-l-ġismi muġtaribā

wa-‘izzatu n-nafsi taṭnīnī ‘ani l-ħarabī
 fī šawtihi buħħatu l-mustaslimi t-tā‘abī
 ka-l-faġri asqīhi min qalbi wa-min hudubī
 wa-ħubzuhu min ‘aġīni l-ħammi wa-n-nasabī
 wa-qalbuhu wa-ħawāhu ġayra muġtaribī

Proud among leaves in their sweet-smelling dress
 A present of lovers for cheek and for neck
 Richer than gold, an adornment for necks

Praise him who graced them
 With a beautiful face
 And modelled their paints
 To God I say grace²⁵

The long poem *Su'ād* occupies a place of its own in the oeuvre of Zaki Konsol. It is his only long poem and its subject, the death of his eight months old daughter, sets it apart from his other poems. an-Nā'ūrī, in his entry about Zaki Konsol, quotes 19 lines from this poem and Ğurğ Şaydağ quotes fifteen lines. 'Abdallatīf Yūnus devoted a special chapter to the poem quoting 44 lines (Yūnus 1967:144-151). He writes that Zaki Konsol had a name as a poet before he wrote this poem, but that his fame had not yet spread. After people had read this poem, they realised that they had a new poet. Yūnus quotes 11 strophes of the poem beginning with the second strophe. He dropped the first strophe, which, in his view, did not have the same quality as the others. In order to keep the quotation within manageable limits, we have translated the second, the fifth, the seventh and the eighth strophes, which give a fair impression of the poem.

Su'ād, is there a name sweeter than yours among human names?
 It is like a song on the edge of a string
 It is like the words of a breeze rocking the twigs of a tree
 It is like kisses of moisture flowing between flowers

²⁵ Konsol 1978:161-164, and Sayda 1964:634-636. The translation does not always follow the Arabic original strictly.

*ra'aytuhā ḥayrā
 ka'annahā taqrā
 tasi'ru ka-s-sakrā
 wa-turqīšu z-zahrā*

*fī zaḥmati l-ahlām
 ustūrata l-awḥām
 fī mawḳibi l-ayyām
 bi-ḥādīhi l-aṅgām*

*az-zahrū yā 'uṣṣāq
 yazhu minā l-awrāq
 ḥadiyyatu l-muṣṭāq
 wa-ḥilyatu l'anāq*

*ḥuyya 'alā z-zahrī
 fī ṭawbihi l-'itrī
 li-l-ḥaddi wa-n-naḥri
 azḥā minā t-tibri*

*subḥāna man zānah
 bi-wiṣṣihi z-zāhī
 wa-ṣāga alwānah
 āmantu bi-llāhī*

Did you not sing with the nightingales, morning and night?
 Did you not leave the songs of pessimism and distress to the crows?
 The hand of the merciful paved your path, my hope narcissus,
 And clad you every day in clothes made of happiness.

Sleep on my eyelashes when you cannot stay in bed
 I ransom you from the changes of times with everything a hand can hold
 Without you, my life was not pleasant and no resort was nice
 You made my hope bloom and the desert smiled on my path

I read on your brow the book of my distant past
 I see in your eyes two flashes of my roaming dream
 The world laughed to me. How happy I was with your coming!
 Today I rose from the grave. Today I am reborn!²⁶

As we have demonstrated above, Zaki Konsol's poetry covers a variety of fields. He showed his originality in incorporating the Ġalwā' theme and other themes as well in his poetry and in describing the humbler professions. He chose for simple language to make his poetry accessible to a broad audience. Even if his fame would be limited to his closest audience, the Arabs in the Southern *Mabğar*, we must conclude that he is a poet well deserving our attention.

²⁶ *a-Su'ād hal ahlā min ismiki bayna asmā'i l-bašar
 la-ka'annahu uhzuġatun našwā 'alā šafati l-watar
 la-ka'annahu naġwā n-nasimi yahuzzu a'tāfa š-šāġar
 la-ka'annahu qubalu n-nidā tansābu mā bayna z-zabar*

*hallā šadawti ma'a l-balābila fī s-šabāhi wa-fī l-masā
 wa-taraketi li-l-ġurbāni alhāna t-tašā'umi wa-l-asā
 farasāt yadu r-rahmāni darbaki yā raġā'i narġisā
 wa-kašāki min ħulali s-sā'adati kulla jawmin burnusā*

*nāmī 'alā ahdābi 'aynī in nabā bi-ki marqadū
 afīki min nawabi z-zamāni bi-kulli mā malakat yadū
 lawlāki lam tahlū l-ħayātu wa-lam yatib lī mawridū
 naddarti āmalī fa-bašša 'alā tariqi l-fadfadū*

*innī la-aqrā fī ġabīniki sifra mādiyyī l-ba'id
 wa-arā 'alā 'aynayki bāriqatayni min ħulmī š-šarīd
 dahikat liyya d-dunyā fa-wā farħī bi-maqdamiki s-sa'id
 al-jawma ub'atu min darīhī al-jawma ūladu min ġadīd*

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