Press Release

The King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature for 1989

Riyadh, 14 Jan. 1989: The Selection Committee of the 1989 King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature (Biographies of Literary Figures of Prose and Poetry towards the End of 3rd century AH) has announced today that it has awarded the Prize jointly to: Dr. Shakir Al-Fahham (Syria), Vice-Chairman of the Academy of Arabic Language in Damascus, and Dr. Yousef A. Khulaif (Egypt), Professor of Arabic language at Cairo University.

Dr. Al-Fahham’s academic pursuit focused on Arabic heritage. He published several literary studies in this field in peer-reviewed journals, while his book on the renowned ancient Arab poet “Al-Farazdaq” is regarded as one of the best known literary biographies. In this book, Al-Fahham combines historical perspectives, investigating the poet’s environment and his life, to the technical study based on thorough appreciation of various areas of distinction of this great poet. The book, in its comprehensiveness, methodology and style, stands out as evidence of the author’s outstanding scholarly standard. It is a literary approach grounded in detailed knowledge of Arabic heritage and a vast expertise in the methodology of editing and verifying manuscripts as well as to comprehension of modern literary criticism.

Dr. Khulaif, on the other hand, has an intimacy to Arabic heritage since his publication of his book on Poet-Paupers in the pre-Islam Era. His book on the ancient Arab poet Dhul Rumma is a deep and comprehensive elaboration on the life and poetry of a poet who had been unique in his poetic experience, his style and imageries. In reality, the author succeeded in depicting the psychological, literary and aesthetic aspects of the poet’s work through exposition of the nature of the desert, and through discussion of the poet’s emotional life. Dr. Khulaif has also succeeded in selecting examples of poetry that were key to the psychological and literary study of this poet. Overall, the book is a distinguished work, characterized by its interesting style and richness in pretty poetic touches that are not any far from the dictates of the literary method in terms of rigor, balance and objectivity.

The Selection Committee has decided that next year’s prize shall be dedicated to, “Short story – collection”.