

REVIEWS

Desert Travel as a Form of Boasting. A Study of Ḍū r-Rumma's Poetry. (Arabische Studien, 4). By NEFELI PAPOUTSAKIS. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009. 169 p. ISSN 1860-5117, ISBN 978-3-447-06112-4.

The author rightly makes the claim that her penetrating and thorough study of the eighth century Bedouin poet of the Umayyad era, Ḍū r-Rumma, reveals a hitherto neglected form of *fahṛ* poetry and, as she states, “establishing the significance of travelling as a self-praise topic is, then a step forward in our understanding of the early Arabic ode, both in terms of its themes and if its structure”. In this way, she is not the first and not the last to reject the unlimited reliance on the ninth century philologist, Ibn Qutayba’s classification and schematic analysis of how a *qaṣīda* should be and what norms it should follow with the *raḥīl*, travelling theme being inserted as a mere link between the love-theme and the final part.

Papoutsakis conscientiously presents the *ḏīwān* of Ḍū r-Rumma trying to classify the poems according to six types: love poetry, self-praise, tribal praise, eulogy of famous men of the age, lampoons, and riddle poems. The author notes that even the *madīḥ* poems do not follow the so-called classical pattern described by Ibn Qutayba.

The following chapters make an in-depth analysis of the *aḡrād* or scopes of the travelling poems. Chapter Two deals with the topic of travel *fahṛ* in pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetry, then she gives a presentation of the travel *fahṛ* of her chosen poet, Ḍū r-Rumma. To illustrate Ḍū r-Rumma’s treatment of the desert theme, the author examines meticulously two of his longest scenery depictions, giving detailed commentaries on the meaning of the verses and some difficult words and expressions. Chapter Three deals with the desert motifs, Chapter Four gives a demonstration of how Ḍū r-Rumma writes about his travel companions, while the last, fifth Chapter treats the camel descriptions in Ḍū r-Rumma’s poetry.

Summing up, this kind of excellent, detailed and objective analysis of early Arabic poetry helps us to attain a better understanding of not only how and why the early Arab poets wrote their poems but also paint an authentic picture of the contemporaneous Arab society.

I would like to make only two critical remarks on the work under review. First, the long passages of the poems in transliteration cause two problems: It makes the reading and understanding of the text somewhat difficult to follow. The use Arabic script would have been much more convenient, all the more so because it would have

been possible to avoid several typos which are the natural consequences of long transliterated texts.

The second comment concerns the style and language of *Dū r-Rumma*, which might have been interesting to examine and compare with the language of earlier poets, mainly from the point of view of lexicography, since it is clear even at a short glance that it is more artificial than, for instance, the language of pre-Islamic poets.

Kinga Dévényi

The Lightning-Scene in Ancient Arabic Poetry. Function, Narration and Idiosyncrasy in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Poetry. (Arabische Studien, 3). By ALI AHMAD HUSSEIN. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009. 302 p. ISSN 1860-5117, ISBN 978-3-447-05902-2.

Ali Ahmad Hussein's study in the field of the functional narrative analysis of ancient Arabic poetry opened up a new way to a real understanding of what the poets of these early times felt, thought and wanted to express. His main merit lies in the fact that in contrast to the general view, he did not consider the poetic formulas as mere repetitive elements and schematic solutions to reach formal perfection and showed us how we should appreciate the slight differences of the customary formulas, their textual environments and places in the long poems. To reach his aim the author has not only prepared and equipped himself with new methods of poetic analysis full of inventions, but he has thoroughly examined the chosen poems instead of only casting a quick glance at them as was usual in earlier studies in which literary historians, Arabs and non-Arabs alike, simply stamped a formula as conventional and went on.

In his earlier article from 2005 "An Analytical Division of the Old Arabic Poem" Ali Hussein suggested a new method of dividing and analysing the old Arabic poem by applying it to a text by Ḥassān ibn Tābit. According to the method, new kinds of sections are highlighted in the text, these are the functional unit, the paragraph and the motif. This method aims to highlight the idiosyncrasies of each old Arabic poem and to understand the relationship between the different parts (sections, motifs, and the like) in the text itself. Now this new method is applied for the special motif of the lightning scene which occurs frequently in this kind of poetry.

Chapter one gives the definition of the lightning scene and presents the modern literary criticism regarding it, and the corpus of study. Chapter two shows the division of the ancient Arabic poem, from the traditional *ḡaraḍ šīrī* to functional unit, based on the notion of the function of the so called conventional elements. Chapter three deals with lightning as an expression of longing for a distant beloved or an expression of self-consolation, while chapter four points out the variations in the function of the lightning scene. Chapter five sums up the thematic, functional

and narrative idiosyncrasies in pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poems. Finally chapter six deals with the internal idiosyncrasy in lightning scenes: the lightning, the clouds, the rain, the thunder, the wind, the protagonist's wish prayer and his psychological state. At the end of the book the appendix includes the lightning scenes used in this study.

Kinga Dévényi

Proceedings of the Oslo–Austin Workshop in Semitic Linguistics. Oslo, May 23 and 24, 2013. (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 88). Edited by LUTZ EDZARD and JOHN HUEHNERGARD. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014. 162 p. ISSN 0567-4980, ISBN 978-3-447-10227-8.

The present volume is based on papers delivered at the workshop mentioned in the title. As the editors' preface points out "the workshop was conceived as a meeting of scholars working in Semitic linguistics and neighboring disciplines". This last phrase explains the presence of the last paper by SILJE SUSANNE ALVESTAD on a 17th century manuscript which cannot only be considered the first Bosnian dictionary but the first in any of the South Slavic languages. In addition to presenting the manuscript and its author, Muhamed Hevai Uskufi Bosnevi, the paper deals with the Turkish, Arabic and Persian elements in the Bosnian dictionary.

Irrespective of this article, the scope of the volume is also very large and comprises articles on Akkadian, Arabic, Hebrew and Amharic languages and comparative linguistic studies in the field of Semitic and Cushitic.

JOHN HUEHNERGARD in his "Reanalysis and new roots: an Akkadian perspective" considers how the process of reanalysis resulted in changes in the structure of many Akkadian verbal roots. These are old roots that wear new morphology. My only remark refers to the – in my view – unfortunate choice of the word "reanalysis", a term which suggests conscious altering by the speakers of a language. The older term "secondary roots", secondary formation seems more objective to me.

NA'AMA PAT-EL deals with the morphosyntax of nominal antecedents in Semitic in general and an innovation in Arabic in particular, that is, non-construct heads with unmarked relatives, depending on the indefiniteness of the antecedent.

ØYVIND BJØRU treats the case of transitivity in Semitic in general, while Jan Retsö speaks about the *b*-imperfect in modern spoken Arabic from a typological and diachronic perspective. Be Isaksson's aim in his article is to achieve an understanding of how the Biblical Hebrew storyline works and how two perfective verbal grammatical morphemes are utilized to achieve a structure in the text.

KJELL MAGNE YRI's article deals with the connection of finiteness with grounding and deixis in the Semitic Amharic and the Cushitic Sidaama, while Lutz

Edzard treats Hebrew and Hebrew–Yiddish terms and expressions in contemporary German.

The two editors made a fine job managing to overcome the difficulties of organizing the workshop and more importantly of editing the multifaceted volume.

Kinga Dévényi

From Tur Abdin to Hadramawt. Semitic Studies. Festschrift in Honour of Bo Isaksson on the occasion of his retirement. Edited by TAL DAVIDOVICH, ABLAHAD LAHDO, and TORHEL LINDQUIST. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014. 207 p. ISBN: 978-3-447-10265-0

The volume under review contains papers collected in honour of Bo Isaksson, professor in Semitic languages at the University of Uppsala on the occasion of his retirement. The papers comprise a wide range of topics in the field of Semitic studies: Arabic dialectology, neo-Aramaic studies, classical Arabic grammar, Hebrew language, Semitic linguistics, Modern Standard Arabic and Modern Hebrew, while one paper GAIL RAMSAY even deals with ecocritical writing in an Arabic novel.

Most papers, however, deal with various aspects of Arabic dialectology. WERNER ARNOLD published a small text in the dialect of the city of Lydda (Israel), recorded in 2001 by a 67 years old Christian. It is an interesting testimonial of the dialect being the only text published so far from that city. It is only to be regretted that the publication does not contain any analysis of the salient features of this dialect, or a brief comparison with other Arabic dialects of the area. JOSEPH SAOUK published a narrative fragment from the Anatolian Arabic Dialect of Qıllıf (Turkey, county of Mardin). The dialect of this Christian village, which is a variety of Mhallami, is especially worth recording because of the massive exodus of its inhabitants. The author accompanied the text with excellent annotations.

MARIA PERSSON's case study explores the verb form switch as a marker of discourse hierarchy in Syrian Arabic on the basis of earlier texts collected by Bloch and Grotzfeld. Her results confirm the role of gram switching as a marker of discourse hierarchy. STEPHAN PROCHÁZKA wrote a comparative study on the feminine and masculine plural pronouns in modern Arabic dialects as a supplement to Bo Isaksson's two earlier studies in this, otherwise quite neglected, field. He deals only with those Arabic dialects which exhibit the feature of gender distinction in plural forms, and limits his investigation to the analysis of independent and suffixed pronouns of the 2nd and 3rd persons plural. SHABO TALAY presents the idea of an Arabic dialect continuum in the northern part of the Fertile Crescent which he calls the Mesopotamian–Levantine dialect continuum. He draws the interesting conclusion that the dialect of Sine acts as a link between these two major dialect

areas. His article sheds light on how much work remains to be done in the field of Arabic dialectology. In his article, AZIZ TEZEL gives a few examples of the quadriradical verbal formation with the pharyngeal phoneme /ʕ/ as secondary in some Arabic dialects. In his analysis of the examples, the author also aims to explain the reasons behind this phenomenon. HELÉNE KAMMENSJÖ contributed an article on asyndesis and verb chaining in Egyptian Arabic.

Neo-Aramaic is represented by three papers. GEOFFREY KHAN examines infinitives and verbal nouns in the Christian Urmi dialect of neo-Aramaic, while ABLAHAD LAHDO presents annotated texts from the village of Bequsyone in the heart of Tur Abdin. In addition to being linguistic specimens, they are of high cultural value since many of the traditional handicrafts mentioned in them are in danger of extinction. ERAN COHEN's paper on the presentative in Biblical Hebrew and neo-Aramaic is a remarkable, although somewhat strange comparison considering the time gap between the two languages. This paper leads us to others dealing with different varieties of Hebrew. STIG NORIN examines some Hebrew documents from the Bar Koseva era (2nd century AD). TAL DAVIDOVICH treats a very interesting linguistic situation which prevailed in the Jewish community of Yemen, whose members used a sociolect with features from varieties of Hebrew (Biblical, Mishnaic and Talmudic), Aramaic, classical and colloquial Arabic. A feature of this language is described in the article entitled "On vocalization and case ending in Judeo Yemenite". Modern Hebrew and Arabic political (or media) language is compared by TORDEL LINDQUIST from the point of view of circumstantial qualifiers.

LUTZ EDZARD's article takes us to Semitic linguistics. From this broad field he chose to examine the exegetical genitive, paying special attention to the *sūra* titles in the Qur'ān. SINA TEZEL's article ends the volume dealing with the "comparative method as applied to the Semitic cognate sets with phonological correspondences".

The papers are arranged in alphabetic order according to the name of the authors, a not too helpful method which is, however, understandable in this case because of the diverse contents of the volume.

Kinga Dévényi

Sabäische Inschriften nach Ären datiert: Bibliographie, Texte und Glossar. (Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission, 53). By WALTER W. MÜLLER. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010. xv, 241 p. ISSN 0568-4447, ISBN 9783447062862.

Walter W. Müller is considered as one of the most significant scholars, researchers and teachers in the field of the Sabaic language. The present volume sums up the results of forty years of teaching South-Arabian Inscriptions at the Universities of Tübingen and Marburg. It can be best characterised as a modern version of the traditional chrestomathies, the difference lying mainly in the well attested bibliographical references in which the epigraphs can be found. This is indispensable for a student of Sabaic language since the inscriptions themselves are not contained in the original script in this book only their transcribed versions, which are, however, sufficient for teaching purposes. For the same reason it also does not contain the translation of the inscriptions but it does contain a very useful and thorough glossary of all the words occurring in the texts together with their meanings and places of occurrences.

The specialty of W.W. Müller's work is that it contains the 77 selected inscriptions in chronological order from the Middle Sabaic period, i.e., from the 3rd century BC until the end of the 3rd century AD, the best documented period of this language with more than 6,000 inscriptions. The above mentioned 77 inscriptions come from three eras of this period: first, the so called Himyaric or Mabḥaḍ era beginning from about 115 BC, second, the Ab'alay era from 69 AD and third, the Nabatuṃ era from the second half of the first century BC.

All in all, this excellent text book means a great step forward in teaching South Arabian language in universities all over the world.

Kinga Dévényi

Vom Status pendens zum Satzsubjekt. Studien zur Topikalisierung in neueren semitischen Sprachen. By WERNER DIEM. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012. viii, 120 p. ISBN: 978-3-447-06829-1.

Werner Diem chose as the subject of this interesting linguistic work the formal aspect of the so called topicalisation in some modern Semitic languages and dialects. The author handles briefly some Arabic dialects, the dialects of the Central Neo-Aramaic Ṭuroyo and some other dialects of the same language group, then he turns to the Amharic language, the study of which occupies more than half of the book. The main term used by Diem seems to be an unusual and unheard of expression, "status pendens", applied for a widely known and central linguistic aspect of the Semitic

languages, most of all of the Arabic dialects. Although the similar terms “nominativus pendens” and “nominativus absolutus” have been used in connection with Latin syntax, and sometimes Biblical Hebrew, but never in Arabic and modern Semitic linguistics. I think that terminology must serve easy understanding not to hamper it. The justification of this term, according to the introduction, lies in that the author intended to separate the formal, descriptive, as he puts it, aspect of this kind of the so called extraposition from the topicalisation or theme-rhema structure, which he considers its meaningful feature. By the way, there is a formal category, well rooted in the German tradition of Arabic linguistics, “Isolierung”. Nor can one agree with Diem’s definition of the “status pendens”.

In summing up my view of Werner Diem’s book under review I must say I was disappointed by his short and not really significant presentation of the Arabic dialect of Cairo, and his even shorter touching upon the topicalisation in the so called Levantine dialects of Lebanon and Damascus, these being well known dialects with a large literature on them. However, the more detailed study of this linguistic phenomenon in the Amharic language made worth reading this book.

In his studies on topicalization in modern Semitic languages – topicalization meaning parts of sentences moved from their original position to a more prominent one for practical reasons in discourse – Werner Diem focuses on the status pendens. Status pendens is the term for the position of a noun extracted from its sentence, placed at the beginning of the sentence and substituted by a personal pronoun at its original spot. The status pendens is a common phenomenon in Semitic languages, and is regarded as a linguistically sophisticated device when used in writing. Given that the status pendens in Semitic languages has already been generally well covered, Diem now takes a closer look at the previously little-noticed phenomenon of the generalization of the status pendens, typical in newer Semitic languages.

Kinga Dévényi

Die Risāla fī l-Ḥawāṣṣ des Ibn al-Ġazzār. Die arabische Vorlage des Albertus Magnus zugeschriebenen Traktats De mirabilibus mundi. Edited, translated and commented by FABIAN KÄS. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012. x, 120 p. ISSN 0567-4980, ISBN 978-3-447-06679-2.

The book under review is the work of the renowned 10th century Arab physician of Qayrawān, Aḥmad Ibn Ġazzār, who became famous for his writings on Islamic medicine. The present treatise, however, has not previously been edited. No wonder, since its theme differs greatly from the so called “serious” sciences. It deals mainly with the magical and marvelous attributes of the things of the nature – animals, plants and minerals – useful for sympathetic magic. According to the editor Ibn al-Ġazzār’s

treatise served as a model for *The book of the marvels of the world* (*De mirabilibus mundi*) generally considered as falsely attributed to Albertus Magnus or Saint Albert the Great who lived in the 13th century. The edition is based on a seemingly unique copy dated 825/1422 which survived in a collected volume in the Ṣan‘ā’ library al-Maktaba al-Ġarbiyya bi-l-Ġāmi‘ al-Kabīr, and even that is a fragmented one. The treatise goes back partly to Greek works, like the *Book of minerals* mentioned and falsely attributed to Aristotle by Ibn al-Ġazzār, or earlier Arabic works like ar-Rāzī’s *Kitāb al-Ḥawāṣṣ*. The text is full of scholarly references from not only the Greek (Aristotle and Galen) but also from the Arabic literature and mentions even aṭ-Ṭabarī’s opinion on many subjects, from an unidentifiable work of his, quoting ar-Rāzī and others. The editor and translator fulfilled his difficult task thoroughly. Thanks to his efforts, this work which was famous in the Middle Ages not only in the Islamic world but also in Europe has become available in English and studied in the original Arabic, together with plentiful commentaries.

Kinga Dévényi

Der arabische Dialekt der Dörfer um Ramallah: Teil 3: Grammatik. (*Semitica Viva*, 44,3). By ULRICH SEEGER. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013. xxx, 263 p. ISSN 0931-2811, ISBN-13: 978-3-447-06893-2

The book under review is the third part of a series the first of which contained texts from the Arabic dialect of the villages around Ramallah, or, as the author defines, the dialect of central Palestine. The second part was a glossary to the texts, and now we have here a thoroughly written grammar, or more precisely, the phonology, morphonology and morphology of some rural Palestinian dialects. This third part contains a detailed and reliable phonological section, with a very good presentation of the syllable structure, in many similar studies a neglected area. After this the author gives a very long exposition of the morphology of this dialectal group, but there is no section in this grammar dealing with syntax. Other similar works of Arabic dialectal description also often lack an essential summary of syntax but they at least speak on some pages about what they conceive as syntax, but a complete non-existence of syntax is astounding. The detailed morphology seems very useful the only drawback being that the contents is not detailed enough and it does not help the reader who does not want to read the whole book nor a whole section but would like to receive knowledge of a special morphological question. The book contains useful tables of verbal paradigms and a comprehensive bibliography.

Kinga Dévényi

Der arabische Dialekt von Mḥarde (Zentralsyrien) (Semitica Viva, 51). By JEAN YOSEPH. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012. xvii, 244 p. ISSN 0931-2811, ISBN-978-3-447-06751-5.

Mḥarde is situated 23 km from Hama in the Middle of Syria and so its dialect represents a typical rural spoken Arabic in the Syro-Palestinian region. According to the author its significance lies in the fact that its linguistic-geographical position is between the Alavite and Sunnite villages but all of its inhabitants are Christians. The author mainly focuses his interest on the morphology of the dialect. He gives exhausting details of the nominal and verbal forms and variants. He unfortunately follows a widely spread misbelief among those dealing with Arabic dialects, namely, that Classical Arabic is equal to Old Arabic and the modern dialects are the offsprings of Classical Arabic. However, one must acknowledge the thorough and detailed formal analysis of the dialect of Mḥarde, even if some variants seem to be nothing else than slight differences between informants of the village and cannot be considered as signs of essential differences between, for instance, older speakers and younger ones. A good example of this seems to be the ‘simple conjunction’ on p. 68: ʾaza/ʾəza /ʾiza “when” which the author calls “Syrian koiné” but in reality it can be called either a modern Arabic koiné or a literary loan word, the three vowels in the beginning of the word being only momentary variations which can be found in other dialects as well. The syntax, as has become customary in the modern day’s dialectal descriptions, is very short and is partly a repetition of the material already found in the morphological part. The small section dealing with the negation shows a good example of what has been said above: it is very short and almost exclusively repeats what is available in the morphology. All in all, however, this does not mean that we have not a good description in our hands, the section of the texts is especially interesting and precisely presented, and the transcribed and translated texts are in harmony with the morphological description.

Kinga Dévényi

Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf at-Tīfāšīs „Buch der königlichen Steine“: Eine Mineralienkunde für die arabischen Herrscher des 7./13. Jahrhunderts. (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 92). Introduction, translation with notes by ARMIN SCHOPEN and KARL W. STRAUB. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014. xxvii, 205 p. ISSN 0567-4980, ISBN 978-3-447-10224-7

Aḥmad b. Yūsuf at-Tīfāšī (1184–1253) was a Berber poet, writer, and anthologist. He is, however, primarily known for his work on minerals and gemstones entitled

Azhār al-afkār fī ḡawāhir al-aḥḡār, which he finished in the year 1242. There were numerous mineralogical texts written in Arabic during the Middle Ages, but at-Tifāšī's work is by far the most informative of them all. It was the most famous and most comprehensive medieval Arabic treatise on the use of minerals. It covers 25 gems and minerals in great detail, supplying medicinal and magical uses for each, as is usual in Arabic mineralogical texts, as well as some Persian etymologies of the names. It is preserved in numerous manuscript copies. Ullmann records more than fifty manuscripts of the work in his *Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*. at-Tifāšī's book also served as a model for later authors in the same field and was translated into the Persian and Turkish languages. After a Latin (1784) and an Italian (1906) translation, it was translated in 1998 into English by Samar Najm Abul Huda under the title *Arab Roots of Gemology: Ahmad ibn Yusuf al Tifashi's Best Thoughts on the Best of Stones*.

As has already been said, at-Tifāšī described in this book altogether 25, highly estimated stones found in the upper layer of the earth, including pearls and corals. During the presentation he follows a predetermined pattern, dividing the description of the jewels into five subsections: 1. formation, 2. locality, 3. quality – falsified or not, 4. magical or medicinal effect, 5. value and price. At the same time he hands down for us well known fables and sagas, e.g., about the Alexander treasure in the basins of Alexandria. His sources of information were partly some specialized works on stones, like Aristotle's stone-book, while partly he obtained it from merchants, jewel handlers and miners. However, he sometimes put in his book the results of his own experience with minerals.

The book under review is an excellent example of today's specialized studies in the field of mediaeval scientific writings. What really distinguishes this translation from its predecessors is the vast material inserted in the end notes of each chapter. The two translators did everything to fulfil their task and to give the readers comprehensive knowledge of the theme dealt with by at-Tifāšī.

Kinga Dévényi

Arabic and Semitic Linguistics Contextualized. A Festschrift for Jan Retsö. Edited by LUTZ EDZARD. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015. 576 p. ISBN 978-3-447-10422-7.

This huge volume contains 29 articles of which 23 are in harmony with the first part of the title "Arabic and Semitic Linguistics", while six are of other literary and linguistic fields. Perhaps they were meant in a strange way to represent the "contextualization" in the title although the term 'contextualization' should mean the use of language and discourse to signal relevant aspects of an interactive or

communicative situation within one study and this requirement is not fulfilled in this book.

The articles are distributed in five chapters the first of which consists of two contributions in the field of Slavic linguistics. The second chapter with eleven papers forms the most important part of the book dealing with Arabic linguistics and philology. Here WERNER ARNOLD published a short Palestinian Arabic text and its translation from Jaffa. This text, recorded in 2003 is an interesting example of a 70 year old person still preserving features of his original village dialect of Ġabalīye despite the fact that he nearly all his life in Jaffa. The text is also interesting from the point of view of its contents since it contains reminiscences of the speaker on life in Jaffa before 1948. RUDOLF DE JONG presented texts in transcription and translation recorded from speakers of two different Bedouin dialects in the Sinai: the Awlād Saīd and the Tayāha. One of the author's intentions was to highlight the differences between the dialects in Sinai. The texts are abundantly supplied with informative footnotes necessary to the evaluation of the texts. The transcription of the texts sometimes seems unusual, but a detailed note explains its main features and one can get easily accustomed to it. WERNER DIEM edited, translated and commented on a short cover letter to decrees from late 15th century Egypt of the Mamlūk era (P.Vind. A.Ch. 36.580). The longest and perhaps most significant article in this section was written by MELANIE HANITSCH under the title "*Doppelte*" *Tempus- und Aspektmarkierung im Neuarabischen. Versuch einer Typisierung*. In respect to the title I should like to note that the denomination of modern Arabic dialects as "new-Arabic" may be questioned since we do not know whether the peculiarities presented as those of the modern dialects are really "new" or they are a thousand year old ones. Another comment seems also necessary on the first sentence of the study: an overall statement like in all modern Arabic dialects there are "verbal modifiers" is very daring since we do not have enough information on several hundreds of Arabic dialects. The author, however, makes a good job of having collected the information found in a large number of Arabic dialect studies thus offering a good overview of this important phenomenon which is completely missing from the (literary) Arabic language, the *'arabiyya*. BARRY HESELWOOD and JANET C. E. WATSON give a very peculiar analysis of the Arabic definite article refusing the assimilation of the "l" of the article on phonetic grounds and supposing instead a phonetic allomorph. Without intending to enter into a detailed discussion of the problem two comments seem necessary. First, the article is never *al-* morphologically, and it was common knowledge of the Arab grammarians of the Middle Ages, it is only the Classical Arabic syllabic structure which makes the insertion of "*a*" compulsory at the beginning of a new utterance. Second, the authors mix phonetics and morphonology. The former reflects the physical realities of speech while the latter is based on systematic analyses. The assimilation theory belongs to the realm of morphonology while the allomorph theory is perhaps more suitable for phonetics. The following

article by PIERRE LARCHER expresses an opinion shared and taught by me for several decades, i.e., “rather than segmenting Arabic grammar into a grammar of Classical Arabic and one of Modern Standard Arabic, it would be wiser to build a historical grammar of written Arabic”. He makes this statement in relation to the seemingly modern innovation of the *kāna sa-yafʿalu* expression which he has found in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb*. I should like to mention here that many so called ‘modern innovations’ listed in Vincent Monteil’s well-known *L’arabe moderne* can be found in texts as early as pre-Islamic poetry. There are two articles dealing with Arabic dialects in Turkey: OTTO JASTROW’s Mardin Arabic and ABLAHAD LABDO’s Tillo Arabic. GUNVOR MEJDELL investigates the question of what can be considered the mother tongue in connection with Arab speakers, ideologically and in reality. MARIA PERSSON’s contribution is called “Verb form switch as a marker of clausal hierarchies in urban Gulf Arabic”. Finally, ORI SHACHMON wrote about the agglutinated verb forms in the Northern province of Yemen.

Chapter three contains four articles on Arabic literature, science, and history of ideas, though it is hard to place GEORGES TAMER’s article on memory and identity formation in the Koran under any of these categories. As for STEPHAN GUTH’s paper with the witty title of “Aesthetics of generosity – generous aesthetics”, its contents strike me as rather confusing. Therefore I would only like to make one addition to the article, that in my view, even today the best characterization of *murūʿa* (or *muruwwa*) is still that of Goldziher’s classical interpretation in Chapter One of his *Muhammedanische Studien* (*Muruwwa* und *Dīn*), published in 1889, to which the author did not make a reference in his article. PERNILLA MYRNE wrote about Ḥubbā al-Madīniyya, the literary creation of a quasi-historical character and its variation across genres. FEDWA MALTI-DOUGLAS wrote about her in her book *Women’s Body, Women’s Word – Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic , Writings*. However, Malti-Douglas not only considers Ḥubbā, “first and foremost, a body with ‘uncontrollable sexuality’” (a quotation from Malti-Douglas), but also as the source of knowledge for other Medinese women, and as such, her sexuality does not express itself only through actions but also through words. It means that she is represented in the classical *adab* literature as a more versatile figure than Myrne seems to accept.

Chapter Four contains articles in the field of Hebrew linguistics. S. S. ALVESTAD and L. EDZARD compare the usage of aspect in the Slavic and the Biblical Hebrew imperative. MATS ESKULT writes on the Biblical Hebrew relative pronoun, while S. E. FASSBERG’s article is on linguistic variation and textual emendation in the Book of Judges 4:20. The other papers in this chapter are those of BO ISAKSSON’s, NA’AMA PAT-EL’s and O. TIROSH-BECKER’s.

The six articles in the last chapter deal with other Semitic languages: neo-Aramaic, Ethiopic, and comparative Semitic linguistics.

Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honour of Ján Pauliny. Edited by ZUZANA GAŽÁKOVÁ and JAROSLAV DROBNÝ. Bratislava: Comenius University, 2016. 383 p. ISBN 978-80-223-4225-4.

This excellent collection of articles, written in honour of Ján Pauliny, the doyen of Slovak Arabists, deserves reading and close studying. The sixteen articles – reflecting the diverse fields of Pauliny’s scholarly interests – are distributed among three main parts the first of which, containing seven papers, deals with Arabic popular and modern literature. KATARÍNA BEŠKOVÁ writes about the friendship and rivalry between Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm. GIOVANNI CANOVA’s “Hand-mill women’s songs from Upper Egypt” is at the same time anthropological and linguistic in nature, since, besides outlining the ancient and popular culture behind these songs, he publishes them in careful and reliable transcription and translation. It is especially interesting as the author presents step by step the way bread, called “sunny life” (*ʿeš šamsī*) in Upper Egypt, is prepared. HERBERT EISENSTEIN remarkable article presents us the description of not less than 15 legendary and fabulous birds collected from various works of Arabic literature. He could not endeavour, of course, to reach completeness in this vast field within the framework of a short paper, the author, an acknowledged expert in the field of Arabic zoology, nevertheless succeeded in giving an interesting panorama of these wonderful birds: the *ruhḥ*, the *sīmurḡ*, the *ʿanqā*, the so called “pseudo-griff”, the *ḥutūw*, the *būqīr*, the *kāsīr al-ʿizām*, the *ṭāʾir al-baḥr*, the barnacle-goose, the *ḥāḍinat al-afā*, the *karkar*, the “k-k-m” bird that lived in Tabaristan, the “salamander bird”, the *ḥaṭaq*, and the *zāḡ*. Other articles in this section are those of ZUZANNA GAŽÁKOVÁ: “Major Female Characters in *Sīrat Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan*”, MÁRIA LACINÁKOVÁ: “The Marvels of the World and the Otherworld in Islamic Tradition according to al-Kisāʾī”, FRANTIŠEK ONDRÁŠ: “The Contemporary Literary (Re)lection of Ancient Egypt”, and STEPHAN PROCHÁZKA: “The Story of Sālim az-Zīr Abū Laylā al-Muhalhil in Cilician Arabic (Southern Turkey)”.

The second part is devoted to Arab History and Islam. The articles speak about various interesting topics: EMENUEL BEŠKA wrote about anti-zionist attitudes in the beginning of the 20th century in Palestine, YAROSLAV DROBNÝ on the description of Hungaria (i.e. the historical Kingdom of Hungary) by the 13th century scholar, Ibn Saʿīd al-Maḡribī, GABRIEL PRICKÝ on a modern Turkish political problem, the Gülen movement. RAIF GEORGES KHOURY in his article “L’importance de l’histoire des prophètes dans la constitution d’une histoire universelle au début de la culture islamique” surveys the Arabic history books of mainly the first two centuries of Islam from the point of view of the prophetic stories.

The third part of the book bears the title: Codicology, Papyrology and Linguistics. It contains five articles: SLAVOMIR ČEPLŮ’s “On Herod and John the Baptist: An Edition and Translation of a Previously Unknown New Testament Apocryphon”,

PAOLO LA SPISA's "The Dissolution of Libraries: Two Case Studies about Christian-Arabic Manuscript Collections", HARRY T. NORRIS's "A Recent Document from the Library in the Camp of Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Aghlālī, Republic of Niger", VIERA PAWLIKOVÁ-VILHANOVÁ: "Kiswahili – Language and Culture, Then and Now", and finally LUCIAN REINFANDT: "(Versuchte) Einflussnahme auf einen behördlichen Entscheidungsträger", which is the edition of the 2nd/8th century P. Vind. Inv. A. P. 15228 from among the Arabic Papyri held in the National Library of Austria.

Kinga Dévényi

Der verstohlene Blick. Zur Metaphorik des Diebstahls in der arabischen Sprache und Literatur. By MANFRED ULLMANN. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. 292 p. ISBN 978-3-447-10852-2.

Here we have in our hands another testimony of the excellent lexicographic and rhetoric research of Professor Ullmann, who, for evading the difficulties of mixing Arabic and Latin letters on one and the same page, or even in the same line, which would be full of pitfalls and printing errors, uses his own clear and readable handwriting. This time his starting point is an interesting sentence, misunderstood by the editor of a neo-Platonic text in 1971: "*wa-kāna rubba-mā sāraqanī n-naẓara ilayhā*". Ullmann discovered at that time the rhetoric nature of the sentence and in a publication corrected Daiber, the original translator of this sentence, giving other similar examples. In the next 45 years, as it is stated by the author, he collected almost 900 hundred similar examples, published, translated and discussed in the present volume. Ullmann did not restrict his interest to the phrase "stolen, furtive glance", but also presents other phrases reflecting behaviours metaphorically connected with stealing by hearing, sleeping, kissing, greeting, smiling, etc. Besides the rhetoric interest satisfied by this book, it gives us a broad lexicographic knowledge of such words of the category of "theft" as *sarāqa*, *ḥalasa*, *salaba*, *ḥaṭifa*, *bazza*, *salla*, *ḥaraba*. The book also contains excursuses and remarks in connection with important lexemes and phrases like *nazaba maṭ'abun*, *mala'a 'aynahu minhu*, *waqa'a bi-qurrin*, *qaliqa wišāḥuhā*, and many others. The researchers of the Arabic language and literature can also be greatly indebted to the publishers for the publication of the lexicographical series of Manfred Ullmann in the last decade.

Kinga Dévényi

Syntax des ʿuroyo. (Semitica Viva, 55). By MICHAEL WALTISBERG. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016. 401 p. ISSN 0931-2811, ISBN 978-3-447-10731-0.

ʿuroyo (also called ʃurayt and Siryoyo) is a Central neo-Aramaic language traditionally spoken in Southeastern Turkey and Northeastern Syria by Syriac Christians. Most speakers use the Classical Syriac language for literature and worship. However, in our days, this language is mainly spoken in exile in the Far-East, Europe, and America. Many ʿuroyo-speakers who have left their villages now speak a mixed dialect of their village dialect with the Midyat dialect.

In the last half century many descriptive studies came into being mainly by German scholars and a considerable amount of data and texts have become available for those who are interested in neo-Aramaic languages. Notwithstanding, there was a significant gap in the field of syntactic studies for the ʿuroyo language. This gap is now filled in by this excellent study.

The book has a clear division into chapters and several sub-chapters which makes it easily searchable. There are three main chapters: the noun phrases, the simple sentences, and the complex sentences. The nearly 400 pages are full of examples (their number is nearly 3000!), which greatly contributes to the comprehension of the syntactic rules, subrules and exceptions.

Kinga Dévényi

A Traitor among us. The Story of Father Yusuf Akbulut. A Text in the ʿuroyo Dialect of ʿwardo. (Semitica Viva, 56). By ABLAHAD LAHDO. 109 p. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. 109 p. ISSN 0931-2811, ISBN 978-3-447-10857-7.

The first part of the title reflects the political sentiments and the well justifiable anger of the author, although – after the introduction – we have a purely linguistic work in our hands. This book contains the story of the ordeal of a Syriac priest from Diyarbakir, Yusuf Akbulut, a native of the village ʿwardo. Beyond the interest generated by their contents, the texts – recorded in 2004 and 2014 – are valuable specimens of the neo-Aramaic dialect of ʿuroyo. In the first one, father Akbulut relates what happened to him during his trial at the end of 2000 after the publication of a newspaper report on the genocide of Syriac and Armenian peoples in Turkey in 1915, the second about his life and the life of his family after this negative publicity. His words have been formulated in two texts accordingly, in each containing the original modern Syriac versions together with the English translations. After the Introduction the second chapter contains some grammatical remarks in ten pages, mainly verbal paradigms recorded from two other informants living in Sweden. After

the texts the author put in a small list of special idioms and an exhaustive glossary which may be the most precious part of the book.

Kinga Dévényi

Der arabische Dialekt von Hasankeyf am Tigris (Osttürkei). Geschichte – Grammatik – Texte – Glossar. (Semitica Viva, 57). By ANDREAS FINK. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. 353 p. ISSN 0931-2811, ISBN 978-3-447-10898-0.

The book under review is one of the remarkable series of studies on the very small Arabic dialects still spoken in the Southern provinces of Turkey. One would wish similar range of study volumes in connection with larger Arabic dialectal areas which are sorrowfully missing, except for the research work carried out in Egypt by Peter Behnstedt and Manfred Woidich.

Andreas Fink introduces his book with a perhaps too detailed study of the history and present state of the village of Hasankeyf. Phonology and syntax occupy about the same amount of pages, 20–20 each, the main attention being paid to the morphology of the dialect with about a hundred pages. Syntax is generally a neglected area in Arabic dialectology, thus even this meagre extent may be considered a rare phenomenon, since there are otherwise excellent studies not having a word on syntax. The grammatical description is followed by texts recorded from different informants, amounting to about 70 pages, while the final part is a glossary of about 1400 words occurring in the texts. The principles of the transcription are not clarified, as is regrettably usual in similar books on Arabic dialects. We are told, for instance (p. 74), that the suffixed form of the third person singular feminine pronoun after *-i* and *-u* is simply *-a*, without the *-h-*, but the author is silent on the actual pronunciation of the phrases with two subsequent vowels, impossible in Arabic. If a diphthongisation happens, it should have been noted.

The morphological description of this dialect, however, is very exact and detailed and the transcribed texts follow precisely this description which shows the author's thorough approach. The glossary also seems very useful. All in all, this volume of the *Semitica Viva* series is worth scrutinizing for the benefit of our better understanding the vast quantities of Arabic dialectal varieties.

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