

their souls the Hades swallows where it is darkest*². However, their father, God, inflicts on the descendants punishment with respect to the insolent of the fathers*³."

*¹ Literally: "whose hands raged against themselves (the persons)". This passage has been taken by others to relate to suicides. So H. St. J. Thackeray (*Josephus...The Jewish War, Books I-III* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1927, repr. 1976 [cited]) p. 681) has "those who have laid mad hands upon themselves", and Michel - Bauernfeind vol. I p. 373 offers "Wer aber im Wahn selbst Hand an sich legt, ...". Cf., however, the use of כִּיד רַמָּה in 1QS V 12 et al. with WidHell vol. I n. 78.

*² See Schwyzer GrGr II p. 185, Blass - Debrunner pp. 47 f. [§ 60].

*³ Of no relevance for the matter of concern in the context of this treatise is the variant θάτερον for τῶν πατέρων.

REVIEWS

А. В. П а й к о в а (А. V. P а у к о в а), *Легенды и сказания в памятниках сирийской агиографии* [*Legends and Tales in the Monuments of Syriac Hagiographic Literature*], Nauka, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Palestinskij Sbornik, Vol. 30 (93), Leningrad 1990, pp. 142.

The monograph by A.V. Paykova (1932-1984), published posthumously in *Палестинский сборник - The Palestinian Anthology* 30 (1990) deserves close attention for the mere fact that the author shows that several hagiographies popular in the Middle Ages were originally written in Syriac and not in Greek. Although their writers were educated in Greek and knew that language perfectly, they were able to work out their own quality characterised by minute descriptions of facts and detailed documentary precision (p. 9).

The work consists of two basic parts: the first representing the introduction (pp. 5-15), the evolution of the hagiographic genre in Syriac literature (pp. 16-34), the outline of the culture and everyday life in the monuments of Syriac literature (pp. 35-65) and the Syriac sources of traditional hagiographic literature (pp. 66-91) - all the above-mentioned chapters accompanied by their own endnotes.

The second part is mainly composed of the Russian translations of the four hagiographic texts chosen by A.V. Paykova (pp. 95-118).

The author justifies her choice by four main reasons (p. 12):

1. They are examples of the best hagiographic literature in Syriac,
2. They prove that Syriac was their original language,
3. They influenced Old Russian literature of the genre.
4. They show the evolution of the genre.

The first chapters give a valuable analysis of the principal hagiographic texts in Syriac along with the scholars occupied with their translation and elaboration. The special value comes from the whole range of the Russian scientists, often accessible mainly in their native language (pp. 10-11).

There are also interesting examples of archetypes of the lives of saints and martyrs of eastern churches at the time of Roman and Persian (Sassanian) Rule (pp. 6-8).

Another point worth reading is the appendix containing the annals of the Leningrad division of the Russian-Palestinian Society for the years 1987-1988 (pp. 136-141).

The only serious inconvenience I have noticed is the lack of bibliography, but it may be easily compensated by the editorial information found in the endnotes.

The monograph seems to be a remarkable contribution to the research in the field of the history of eastern Christianity and its influence on mediaeval Russia, at the same time describing a lot of picturesque scenes of everyday life in the Middle East on the eve of the ascension of Islam, all the more because the author draws the line until the Muslim period.

ADAM BIENIEK

Barbara Michalak-Pikulska *The Contemporary Kuwaiti Short Story in Peace Time and War, 1929-1995*, The Enigma Press, Kraków 1998, big 8°, pp. 192, 8 col. plates. Bound. Price: \$ 40.00. ISBN 83-86110-32-5.

One can get to know the life of another country and another people in various ways. But there is one way, available to any person, even one who lives far away from the country in question. That way is through the writer's word, capable of overcoming any long distance. In our time, when the aspiration of peoples for universal contact is not only a reality but a necessity of life, literature is acquiring great significance, because it reflects the past and present of the people, their history and their current life.

The Enigma Press accomplished a praiseworthy mission with their publication of Dr. Barbara Michalak-Pikulska's book, *The Contemporary Kuwaiti Short Story in Peace Time and War, 1929-1995*. In this work, Dr. Michalak-Pikulska has tackled the aim of investigating Kuwaiti prose, and through it introducing the present-day life of Kuwait not only to Polish readers but to all those interested in Arabic literature. The unique actuality of her book stems from the fact that Kuwaiti literature has still yet to become an object of careful analysis in European Oriental Studies. And it is precisely this fact which explains the originality and purpose of this monograph.

The composition of the book is logical and simple. It is prefaced by the Introduction, in which the aims and tasks of the investigation are laid out, as well as the main methodological principles, the criteria used in the selection of short stories and the key sources on which Dr. Michalak-Pikulska relied in writing her monograph. There follow two chapters analyzing the dynamics of the development of the contemporary Kuwaiti short story, and a detailed summary.

It is known that the short story is one of the most widespread literary forms in the hierarchy of narrative genres in Kuwait. Therefore, in the first chapter, 'The Representation of Kuwaiti Short Story writing in the years 1929-1990', Dr. Michalak-Pikulska has retraced the sources of the beginnings of the short story, the external and internal motives that stimulated this phenomenon, and the national basis that served as the foundation of the new genre in Kuwaiti literature. In addition, she has outlined the main stages of its formation and development.

In its earliest periods, Kuwaiti narrative literature, like Arabic literature on the whole, was connected with national periodical publications. The first Kuwaiti magazine, "al-Kuwait", was founded by the prominent historian and writer Abd al-Aziz ar-Rashid in Iraq, in 1928. A year later, it was on the pages of this magazine that Halid al-Faraj published his work "Munira", considered the first Kuwaiti short story, giving impetus to the activation of the literary life of the 1930s and '40s. By theoretical substantiation, Dr. Michalak-Pikulska has traced the subsequent development of the nation's prose, which was growing more intensively connected with the important events in the Kuwaiti reality. At that time there appeared on the artistic horizon such as Fahd Yusuf, Ya'qub ar-Rashid, Abd ar-Rahman ar-Rahmani, Isma'il Fahd Isma'il, Sulayman ash-Shatti, Abd al-Aziz as-Surayy, and others.

Some of the writers' creative works, analysed by Dr. Michalak-Pikulska in this monograph, are evidence of the coexistence of the different artistic tendencies in their creation. At the same time, the literary type and trend of new narrative genres in the period of their origination and formation is rather difficult to determine. The absolute purity of the trends is complicated to discern, even in the most mature writings.

It is not easy to describe artistic phenomena that have not yet become stabilized in time, which are happening before our eyes and have not fallen into the convenient critical formulas. This inner, productive in essence resistance of literature to critical analysis is perfectly observed by Dr. Michalak-Pikulska. There are appraisals in her monograph, but no final verdicts. The sensation of the internal reserves, which the artistic process