

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

possesses even at its less-than-best moments, remains. There is that trust in the writer's word, without which any criticism is impossible.

That trust is brightly displayed in the second chapter, *Iraqi Aggression on Kuwait: A literary Vision of War in Kuwaiti Short Stories* in the years 1990-1995, offering a systematization of short stories about the Gulf War on the basis of the characterization of the writers' most significant creative individualities and artistic comprehension, as well as an analysis of the main tendencies in the sphere of poetics. One can note that Dr. Michalak-Pikulska is not distracted by the individual peculiarities of the writers and their works from her goal of representing the general panorama of the evolution of the Kuwaiti short story.

Dr. Michalak-Pikulska's strength as a literary critic is discovered within her perfect and capacious interpretation of the original texts. It is obvious in the creative portraits of Surayya al-Baqami, Layla Muhammad Salih, Walid ar-Rujayyib, Layla al-Uthman, Talib ar-Rifai and others. The short stories analyzed by Dr. Michalak-Pikulska differ in terms of their artistic aspects but serve to give a realistic idea of the contemporary state of the Kuwaiti short story, and Kuwaiti prose on the whole.

This monograph is the result of years of laborious work by Dr. Michalak-Pikulska. Its theoretical conception is based on many historical and literary facts, with considered objectivity and without tendentiousness. Besides which, the work distinguishes itself in its exact wording, its concise, as well as the significance of the place their short stories occupy in the dynamic of the development of contemporary Kuwaiti prose.

Dr. Michalak-Pikulska's work is notable for its precise gaze at the artistic process in Kuwait, and has not only provided important material for more profound study of the specific national character of modern Kuwaiti literature, but also for defining its place in the scheme among the other Arabic national literatures and ascertaining the common character of the literary development of Arab countries as a whole. Thus the appearance of such a book is opportune.

BAIAN RAYHANOVA

Hartmut Walravens, *Julius Klaproth (1783-1835). Leben und Werk* (= Orientalistik-Bibliographien und Dokumentationen, Bd. 3), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 1999, XI + 230 S., ISBN: 3-447-04124-2.

Dem Leben und Werk Julius Klaproths – wenn sein Name auch jedem Orientalisten bekannt ist – wurde bisher keine Monographie gewidmet. Auch die Zahl der Zeitschriftenbeiträge über J. Klaproth ist nicht besonders imposant. Ein erstaunlicher und trauriger Umstand, wenn man bedenkt, daß eine Buchmonographie über seinen Vater, den berühmten Chemiker schon vor 45 Jahren erschien (G. E. Dann, *Martin Heinrich Klaproth (1743-1817). Ein deutscher Apotheker und Chemiker. Sein Weg und seine Leistung*, Berlin 1958). Daß H. Walravens diese Aufgabe nun auf sich genommen hat, ist daher ein sehr gutes Zeichen, und besonders erfreulich ist dabei die Tatsache, daß es gerade Walravens ist, der ja vor zehn Jahren schon das Werk von Władysław Kotwicz *Die russische Gesandtschaftsreise nach China 1805. Zu Leben und Werk des Grafen Potocki* (Berlin 1991) herausgegeben und sich somit in die Epoche und diesen Orientalistenkreis wohl eingearbeitet hat, da der Graf Potocki Klaproths Mentor war.

Das Buch ist zwar ein in sich abgeschlossenes Ganzes, doch es bildet *de facto* den ersten Band einer geplanten dreibändigen Serie. Die vorliegende Bibliographie beinhaltet Biographisches und Bibliographisches (von und über Klaproth). Die weiteren Bände sollen Klaproths Briefwechsel sowie "Informationen über andere Sinologen, die im Umkreis Klaproths tätig waren" (S. IX), enthalten. Im Vorwort lesen wir aber auch, daß damit immer noch nicht alle einschlägigen Archivmaterialien ausgewertet worden sind, da an denen in den St. Petersburger Sammlungen Peter Kornicki (Cambridge) und an denen in der Société asiatique in Paris ein(e) Magistrand(in) arbeitet. Es sieht also danach aus, daß uns bald – wenn alles gut geht – fünf Bände über Klaproths Leben und Werk zur Verfügung stehen werden. Das wäre in der Tat ein großer Fortschritt nach der Flaute der vergangenen Jahrzehnte.

In diesem Kontext könnte man sich fragen, inwieweit Klaproths Werk, heute zum Teil ja 200 Jahre alt, den Fachorientalisten immer noch von Interesse sein kann. Eine Zusammenfassung mit einer Analyse dieser Art fehlt leider in diesem Buch, das kaum Kommentare, sondern in erster Linie Archivadokumente anbietet, und im Subkapitel "Ausgewählte Urteile über J. Klaproth" (S. 12) findet der Leser nur zwei Zitate, die insgesamt nicht einmal eine halbe Buchseite füllen. Es ist zu bedauern, daß der Autor keine weiteren Urteile ausgewählt hat, zumal das Buch nicht so dick ist, daß die