

Bibliographical Notes

Joseph M. Brincat. Maltese and Other Languages. A Linguistic History of Malta. Malta 2011. Midsea Books. Maltese Social Studies Series No. 19. XL + 496 pp. ISBN: 978-99932-7-343-1.

This is a monumental synthesis of the linguistic history of the Maltese people since the very beginning till the present moment. Internal history of the subject deals with the adoption of dialect Arabic (in its Western or Maghrebian variety or rather varieties) while the external history is a history of language and cultural contact with several languages, first of all Sicilian and Italian, then also English.

From a genetic point of view Maltese is a daughter-language of Arabic and not, as is still claimed erroneously, a dialect of Arabic. It does not really matter that Maltese lexical data appear in the 'Word Atlas of Arabic Dialects' by P. Behnstedt and M. Woidich (vol. 1 – 2011, vol. 2 – 2012). Since centuries Maltese has been an independent language (today it is one of the languages of the European Union!) and its relation to Arabic can be compared to the relation between Yiddish and German. Therefore I disagree with the genealogical tree showing Maltese among the Semitic languages on p. xxii in which Maltese is a continuation branch of 'Modern Arabic Dialects'. Maltese is an offshoot, i.e. an independent branch going back to spoken Medieval Arabic dialects, actually Early Maghrebian.

The author uses the term diglossia in one of its meanings, e.g. he speaks about Maltese-Italian diglossia. I prefer to use the term 'diglossia' for cases of complementary use of two genetically closely related languages, e.g. Modern Literary Arabic (culturally the most important dialect!) and modern spoken dialects of Arabic or in case of Standard German and Swiss German, Tuscan Italian and other Italian dialects till the second part of the 19th century, Greek *katharévousa* and Greek *demotiki* till 1976. For the relation like Maltese and Italian since the seventeenth century (after the period of interference with Sicilian) till the first decades of the 20th century when Italian was defended against English (!) with a kind of revival between 1957 and mid 60th due to the Italian TV, I prefer

the use of the term ‘exoglossia’. Original diglossia i.e. the complementary use of Classical, probably rather Middle Arabic and of spoken Arabic dialect(s) must have existed during the Arab period (870 or rather 1048 till the initial period of the Norman domination, perhaps the beginning of the 12th century) but it has left very few traces and the contact with Arabic has been quite minimal since that time. The author correctly says (p. 182) that Jewish Arabic used by the small Jewish community till the beginning of the Joannite rule did not play any special role in the development of Maltese.

The author gives us a very detailed panorama of the political and cultural history of Malta, the history of the use of different languages and their interference, history of Maltese language and literature, of the linguistic study of Maltese and of Maltese sociolinguistics. The book is a masterpiece of historical writing being very precise and with its vivid stylistics and clear and dynamic composition being also very attractive from a literary point of view. It should be recommended not only to specialists on languages, linguistics and professional historians but to everybody just interested in history, in the history of culture in the first place and in good entertainment as well.

Andrzej Zaborski

Veronika Ritt-Benmimoun, Texte im arabischen Beduinendialekt der Region Douz (Südtunesien). Wiesbaden 2011. Harrassowitz. 554 pp. + 15 photos. ISSN 0931-2811, ISBN 978-3-447-06530-6.

The book contains ethnographic texts and short stories collected between 2002 and 2010 among the members of the Marāzīg tribe in Southern Tunisia and especially in the Dūz oasis. The dialect has been known so far only thanks to two posthumously published books by Gilbert Boris, i.e. a short collection of texts and a dictionary. The authoress of the present collection has also published a series of articles with texts in different periodicals – they are listed on p. 31. This new collection contains altogether 82 transcribed shorter and longer texts with translations as well as linguistic and cultural commentaries. The variety of texts is really impressive – there are texts about history and modern life, traditional customs and other realms of material and spiritual culture as well as religion, there are folk tales and fairy tales. This is one of the largest and the best collections of modern Arabic dialect texts in general. It is a very good base for a descriptive grammar of the dialect.

Andrzej Zaborski

Orhan Elmaz, Studien zu den koranischen Hapaxlegomena unikaler Wurzeln. Wiesbaden 2011. Harrassowitz Verlag. 372 pp. ISSN 0949-6815; ISBN 978-3-447-06622-8.

The book is devoted to the study of *hapax legomena* in the Koran. The author has used a variety of statistical methods as well as a big secondary literature on the subject. The main chapters are devoted to: description of problems (pp. 11–122), excurses on the number of roots in the greatest Arabic lexica, on roots with five consonants, loan-words etc. (pp. 123–130), historical semantics (pp. 131–230), Koranic *hapax legomena* (pp. 231–269), Koranic VHLu (pp. 271–276), cooccurrence of root consonants (pp. 277–285), semantics of HLu (pp. 287–292), Koranic triradical roots (pp. 293–302), roots found in *Lisān* (pp. 303–317), a list of verses occurring twice (pp. 319–321), top-5 N-grams (pp. 323–326), data on *fawāṣil* lexemes (pp. 327–340) and the index of the fragments of the Koran mentioned in the book (pp. 341–347).

The book contains a big lot of textual and lexical data, various statistical results and semantic analyses. It is important for Koranic exegesis but it is of interest also for linguists working on Arabic root structure and derivation.

Andrzej Zaborski

Nader Al. Jallad. People from the Desert – Pre-Islamic Arabs in History and Culture. Selected Essays. Wiesbaden 2012. Reichert Verlag. 201 pp. ISBN: 978-3-895000-872-6. = Textualia: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Their Texts vol.2.

This is the second volume of the series which “is dedicated for the text-based study of the immensely rich culture of each of the three (monotheist – A.Z.) religions and the complex multiculturalism produced by the co-existence of these different yet similar religions through history” (p. 8). There are ten essays of which five deal with Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, three deal with Pre-Islamic history and two with Arab Christianity.

Hani Elayyan in “Pre-Islamic man of excess: Imru’l-Qays’ *Mu‘allaqah* and al-Shanfara’s ‘*Ode in L*’” (pp. 19–27) repeats the explanation that the rather bombastic and egocentric odes had a clear social function, i.e. personal boasting was used to exalt the poet’s own tribe and ridicule the enemies. In “The Image of women in Pre-Islamic poetry – evidence from the Seven Odes” (pp. 45–68) Jihad M. Hamdan and Yaser S. Natour compare images of women in

the most famous anthology of the Classical Pre-Islamic poems. Nader Al Jalad in 'Animal Symbolism in the Mu'allaqah of 'Antarah' (pp. 69-84) analyzes the functions of camel, horse and some other animals in similes and metaphors as applied by one of the greatest Arab poets. Wafa al-Khadra, Razan Ibrahim and Khaled al-Jabr in "Poetics of Elegy: the Dialogics of Life and Death in al-Khansā' " (pp. 85-105) analyze the elegiac poetry by the famous poetess called al-Khansā', i.e. 'Gazelle' (c. 575-646 A.D.). José Ramírez del Río concentrates in his 'Translation and Orientalism' on the first line of 'Antara's *Mu'allāqa* (pp. 185-201) comparing different versions and translations into several languages. His question is: "Did the poets spare their invectives to anyone? – or would you be able to recognize the attacked house through their verses?". This is one of the most interesting papers in the collection.

Vassilos Christides' paper is entitled "Once again the 'Narration of Nilus Sinaiticus: The nomad Arabs of Sinai in Pre-Islamic times – Myth and reality' (pp. 9-18) and it contains a series of comments concerning the anonymous "Narrations of Nilus Sinaiticus", especially as translated and commented by D.F. Caner in his 'History and Hagiography from the Late Antique Sinai', Liverpool 2010. Theresia Hainthaler in 'Christian Arabs before Islam – a short overview' (pp. 29-44) presents the main topics discussed in her book 'Christliche Araber vor dem Islam, Verbreitung und konfessionelle Zugehörigkeit' (Louvain 2007, Peeters) and gives some additional remarks. The different names given to Arab populations as well as the spread of Christianity among Arabs in Palestine, in al-Hira at the Euphrate in the Persian empire and in South Arabia are discussed.

Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala in "The martyrdom of Aretha's wife – rewriting hagiographies in the Melkite Arabic tradition" (pp. 129-154) presents the Arabic (actually Christian Middle Arabic) text of a fragment of the *Martyrium Arethae* (on the basis of the last of the four MSS from St. Catherine's, i.e. Sin. Ar. 535) comparing it with its Greek *Vorlage* (plus a Latin version) and three Syriac versions. This is a masterpiece of the science of philology.

The paper by Magdel Le Roux 'Pre-Islamic Arabic trade and religion on the East Coast of Africa' (published also in *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 92, 2010, N.S. 21, pp. 88-108) discusses navigation in the Red Sea and in the very Eastern part of the Indian Ocean since the beginning of history as well as the religious situation (mainly Jewish and Christian expansion) in Southern Arabia (pp. 107-127). The subchapter on 'Religious pluralism on the East Coast of Africa' deals at first with the origin of the Falasha. Unfortunately al-Mas'ūdī's text is quite misinterpreted (pp. 121-122) as it (as well as the fragment of Cosmas Indicopleustes!) does not refer to Zimbabwe at all. Also the discussion of the origin of the Lemba people is most unreliable.

Tarek M. Muhammad writes about 'Al-Fākihī and the religious life at pre-islamic Makka' (pp. 155-183). I do not think that the use of the strict transcription instead of the common variants Mecca or Mekka is felicitous. The essay

summarizes and comments a part of al-Fākihī's *Axbār Makka fī qadīm al-dahr wa ḥadīthihī* (edited by 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Dhaysh, 5 vols., Mekka 2003, Maktabat al-'Asadī), i.e. the second oldest history of Mecca.

The collection is interesting for historians and philologists.

Andrzej Zaborski

M. Chłodnicki, K.M. Ciałowicz, A. Mączyńska (eds), *Tell el-Farkha I. Excavations 1998-2011*, Poznań-Kraków 2012, ISBN 978-83-60109-21-2

Tell el-Farkha site is located in Eastern Nile Delta, around 120 km north-east from Cairo, Egypt. Polish archaeological excavations in this area were preceded by few small test trenches dug up by the Italian mission. Since 1998, when the Polish team was introduced, the research has been carried out by the Polish Expedition to the Eastern Nile Delta, founded by Poznań Archaeological Museum and the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. Since the very beginning, Tell el-Farkha mission has been conducted by two co-directors: M. Chłodnicki (PAM) and K. M. Ciałowicz (IAJU). The site itself poses one of the most important Predynastic and Protodynastic settlements and cemetery in the Nile Delta. Tell el-Farkha have already become famous for such extraordinary findings and structures discovered as: two golden male figurines, many beautifully made bone figurines, probably the world oldest mastabas and breweries.

The long-awaited volume 1 of Tell el-Farkha scientific description was published in the late 2012 under the project "Nile Delta as a centre of cultural interactions between Upper Egypt and South Levant in 4th millennium BC". The volume is to be a summary of 14 years of archaeological fieldwork on the site. The monograph is a jointed work of 22 authors of particular small chapters.

In the study discussed here the short preface and the description of the history of research are followed by four essential parts. The first three of them are descriptions and interpretations of structures and other archaeological features, which have been so far found within excavated areas. The fourth part has been planned as the set of selected case studies.

Tell el-Farkha site consists of three anthropogenic mounds (tells), which here are called Koms. Each of the over mentioned 'site describing' parts of the monograph is dedicated to the excavations carried out on the one of the Koms: Eastern, Central or Western. All three parts have been composed in the same scheme: the settlement or/and cemetery description is followed by the presentation of the pottery analysis.

In the first two chapters of the first part of the volume the Lower Egyptian, Protodynastic and Early Dynastic settlement located on northern part of Eastern Kom is described. The cemetery, which covers southern part of this area, together with pottery from graves are the topic of the next two chapters. The second part of the study consists of three chapters dedicated to the features from Lower Egyptian, Protodynastic, Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom periods, which were discovered in the settlement area on the Central Kom. Analogically, in the third part of the monograph the settlement and ceramic material from Lower Egyptian, Protodynastic and Early Dynastic phases from Western Kom is considered. The three presented parts of 'Tell el-Farkha I' volume are arranged in logical (chronological) and consequent order, that together with straightforward narration and generally clear descriptions makes the research team's interpretation of both particular features and general layout of the site quite easy to comprehend. Photographs, tables, drawings and maps are complementing the text, however more amount of detailed plans would do well in cases of often complicated structures.

The fourth part of the monograph contains fifteen smaller chapters, each of which is to be a case study on one selected topic. Most of these studies present specific groups of finds. There are chapters about: objects of art (including figurines), imports and imitations, tokens, stones tools, stone vessels, cosmetic palettes, lithic tools, copper tools and bone implements. The five remaining chapters are dealing with the reconstruction of ancient landscape (geology, sedimentology and mineralogy; magnetic survey) and biological remains from the past (anthropological, animal, fish and plant remains). Presentations of the topics are complemented by large amount of illustrations and charts. The levels of detail in particular chapters differs to each other. Some of the presented cases deserve more rigorous studies and perhaps could be elaborated into separate volumes in the near future.

Despite some abridgements, the monograph "Tell el-Farkha I. Excavations 1998-2011" should be regarded as one of the most relevant publications for all Predynastic and Early Dynastic studies in Egypt. The monograph collects the pieces of information from numerous preliminary reports and articles and presents them in one volume in comprehensible way, thereby gives the reader an opportunity to get a quite clear vision about site itself and the interpretation of its role. The publication shows the processes leading to the establishment of Egyptian state in a new view, proving that the role of the Nile Delta region in Predynastic and Early Dynastic Period was completely different than previously thought.

Bartosz Adamski