

## BOOK REVIEWS

SORBY, Karol Jr.: *Arabi, islám a výzvy modernej doby*. (The Arabs, Islam and the Challenges of Modern Times). Bratislava: Slovak Academic Press Publishing House, 2007. 234 p. (In Slovak). ISBN 978-90-8095-009-5.

Historical works treating themes of Eastern countries were always rare in Czech and Slovak scientific production and this claim is still more valid for the field of modern history.

The book under review is a slightly amended text of a PhD thesis. Dr. Karol Sorby, Jr. in this book is dealing with a very sensitive topic, the development of classical pan-Arabism and its key figure and ideologue Abū Khaldūn Sāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī (1880-1966). In his general methodological approach to the theme the author identifies pan-Arabism with Arab nationalism and that indicates a relative independence of the so-called local nationalisms (Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian) of pan-Arabism. Because of the wide attention paid at present to research into contemporary Arab nationalism the book can be placed into the wider historical context of research relative to the Middle East. The concentration on the problem of classical pan-Arabism is particularly valuable as most of the studies so far are oriented rather to the more recent varieties of pan-Arabism like the ba'ṯist ideology in Syria and Iraq and the nāṣirist ideology in Egypt.

The structure of the book has a clear conception which is visible in the division of the chapters and in their overall balance and proportionality. In the preface and introduction the author made a profound analysis of the used sources and literature. The heuristic base is rich and representative. As far as the sources are concerned, the author exploits both the works of Sāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī and memoirs of other leading personalities of the classical pan-Arabism like 'Izzat Darwaza. The bibliography is wide-ranging and includes works both in European languages and key works in Arabic.

The first chapter gives a comprehensive account of the relationship between Islam and the nation state. The second chapter is dedicated to the genesis of pan-Arabism before the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, especially to the so called period of national revival and formation of the modern Arab nation. In the third chapter the author is dealing with the pan-Arab movement after the Young Turks were unable to fulfil the hopes which had arisen. So before the First World War a number of political organizations, mostly clandestine, occurred aiming at Arab autonomy and even independence from the Turks. This pan-Arabism took as an example the Italian Risorgimento ('Abdarrahmān al-Kawākibī) and partially also the model of Austro-

Hungarian dualism (al-Qaḥṭānīya). The fourth chapter covers the development of the Arab national movement during the war. Because of the unrest among the Arabs previous to the war the movement staked on the "British card" and Sharif Ḥusayn ruler of al-Ḥijāz proclaimed the Arab revolt against the Turks. The Arabs who effectively supported the Allenby's Palestinian campaign believed in the British word of establishing an independent Arab kingdom in the Middle East. The Arab kingdom in Syria (1918-1920) which is analysed in the fifth chapter became the "swan song" of the early pan-Arabism. It is necessary to stress that the early pan-Arabism included only Asian Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Ottoman provinces of Syria and Iraq. The sixth chapter shows the real development of the classical pan-Arabism in the inter-war period (the Palestinian uprising, the Blūdān conference) and after the Second World War (the establishment of the League of Arab States) until the victory of the Egyptian revolution in 1952. That revolution together with the development in Syria heralded the beginning of modern pan-Arabism in its ba'ṭhist and nāṣirist form.

The book is a valuable contribution to the historiography of the Arab national movement for Czech and Slovak specialists and students as well as for the general reader interested in the development of the modern Arab world.

*Eduard Gombár*

GOMBÁR, Eduard: *Kmeny a klany v arabské politice*. (Tribes and Clans in Arab Politics). Prague: Charles' University, Karolinum Publishing House 2004. 273 p. (In Czech). ISBN 80-246-0895-2.

The number of scientific works dealing with the history of Asian and African countries is still insufficient in Czech and Slovak historiography. Therefore this original work by a well-known Czech Arabist and historian, expert on Arab and Islamic history, Professor in the Institute of Near East and Africa at the Faculty of Philosophy in the Charles' University in Prague must be especially welcome.

In recent years historians and political scientists together with genealogists and anthropologists have discovered fruitful opportunities for intellectual exchange and even collaboration in their efforts to understand continuity and change in different societies. The Islamic era represents profound continuities and equally profound changes. In this era the basic institutional framework of past Middle Eastern civilizations were wholly taken over. At the same time that Middle Eastern societies were acquiring their Islamic identity, the twin processes of Islamization and state formation spread from the Middle East proper into the peripheral regions of Arabia, North Africa and others.

The focus on tribes, clans and state formation in a Middle Eastern context is significant for at least two reasons. First, for long periods of history large parts of the Middle East were not effectively dominated by the imperial states that otherwise ruled the region. Although tribes played a significant role in the creation of such Islamic empires as the Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid and Ottoman states, they also populated and