

WOIDICH, M. *Das Kairenisch-Arabische. Eine Grammatik*. Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006.

GRALLA, Sabine: *Der arabische Dialekt von Nabk (Syrien)*. Semitica Viva, Band 37 (Otto Jastrow, Ed.). Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006. p. 191. ISBN 13: 978-3-447-05449-2.

Vol. 37 of the *Semitica Viva* edition presents an interesting description of the Syrian dialect spoken in Nabk or inNibik, in the native speakers's language. The city with its 44,000 Sunni Muslim and Christian citizens, is situated in the mountain region of Qalamūn, some 80 km North of Damascus.

The monograph provides an expertly written linguistic description of the local dialect (based on data gathered on the site) and a short, but well-selected and highly instructive collection of Nabk-Arabic texts followed by a German translation.

The descriptive part of the monograph (7-149) has three main sections: Phonology, Morphology and Syntax. The textual part (Textbeispiele, 151-183) consists of transcribed tape recordings of narratives given mostly by women of various ages and religions, and by some men as well.

The phonemic status of both consonants and vowels is confirmed by carefully selected minimum and near minimum pairs. With glottals, the author was careful enough to distinguish between etymological (Aar. ') and nonetymological (*q* >') glottal stop to attribute the feature of instability to the former only (10).

In this section the reader will appreciate rules showing the functioning of the cluster-preventing epenthetic vowel (Sproßvokal, 23) which is, jointly with the elision of short vowels (16) and word stress (25), an important factor in marking the morphophonemic contours of any colloquial variety of Arabic.

Precise definitions and transparent arrangement of data in the morphological section of the book will largely help the reader to find the information needed. Basic categories of nominal morphology are represented by what might be called definition or determination, actually Nomen mit Artikel, by gender (Genus), state (Status), and number (Numerus) (33-39).

The examples illustrating the singular-plural relationship (Numerus, 36-7) are to some degree misleading. The actually quoted pairs, like *battīx* - *battīxa* are linked together by a derivational and not inflectional relationship. In other words, we have to do with two autonomous words instead of two members of an inflectional paradigm. Apart from the collective noun - units noun opposition, operative in the latter case, the singular-plural relationship is improperly supplanted by that of verbal and instance nouns, as in *darb-darbi*, or by that of verbal nouns and the corresponding nouns of manner (nomina speciei), as in *māt* - *mīt*. The same holds for the human-related collectives and the corresponding unit nouns marked by the nisba suffix *-e*, as in *‘arab* - *‘arabe* (*r* stands here for a pharyngealized *r*). The term 'singulativ' instead of 'singular' does not cure the incompatibility between the derivational nisba suffix *-e* in *arabe* and, say, the inflectional dual marker *-ān* in *yāmān* (37).

There is still another serious argument against marking inflectional categories by derivational markers which touches the marking technique itself. In the collective noun - unit noun (CN-UN) and verbal noun - instance noun (VN-IN) pairs, the plural-said CNs and VNs are unmarked in contrast to the marked singulativ-said UNs and INs. On the other hand, the singular-plural relationship yields a quite opposite picture: the marked plural contrasts with the unmarked singular.

The apparent closeness of plurality and collectivity sometimes leads to a unified plural classification of both collectives and noncollectives in Arabic lexicons and will help the user of the present text to grasp the author's intention, as well.

For all its unpredictability, the broken plural (innerer Plural, 39) should have been represented in the 2.2.4.3.2 paragraph by a couple of the most common patterns, at the very least. The reference to 'Nominalformen' (ibid.) will hardly fill the disturbing gap.

The description of the 1-10 derivational system in verbal morphology (Verbalstämme, 65 - 98) is really good and well organized. The reader will certainly appreciate the author's decision to treat the weak and other atypical verbal stems together with their strong counterparts at each stem level separately.

The classification of the doubled verbs with the 2nd and 3rd radical identical (*verba mediae geminatae*) is somewhat inconsistent. In Form I (I Stamm), the doubled verbs like *dall*, *laff* or *haṭṭ* (74-6) are classified independently of the weak verbs and at the same hierarchical level while, in Form VII (VII Stamm), the verbs like *nğur* (88-9) are, surprisingly enough, members of a subclass of weak verbs. The paradigmatical reconstruction of geminated verbs on the model of *verba tertiae infirmae* is, of course, in both cases the same.

The characterization of Form VII as 'a stem generating passive-reflexives relatively to the groundstem'<sup>1</sup> is, in principle, true of both Standard and Colloquial Arabic. Nevertheless, in Colloquial Arabic, inclusive of the variant described in the present monograph, a Form-VII-like *n-stem*, apparently unrelated to the classical 1-10 derivational system, substitutes for the missing internal KuKiK passive and, moreover, it does so independently of the connotation of reflexivity, like *nğur* 'to be drawn', *n'aṭa* 'to be given', *nbōc* 'to be sold' (88-9). Some of these passives, however, are recorded as Form VII verbs in Standard Arabic lexicons.

The syntactic part (110-149) despite its concise nature, managed to cover all major syntactic issues of the dialect.

Regardless of our remarks, concerning marginalities of arrangement which fall into the domain of options and alternative solutions, the fact remains that there is no other single source that will offer the reader a more reliable and more lucid systematic description of this unique colloquial variety of Arabic. The reader will certainly be pleased to go through the nice textual samples to test and refresh his newly acquired knowledge. The excellent German translation will make up for the missing glossary.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Der VII. Stamm bildet die Passiva-Reflexiva zum Grundstamm'... *nbaṣōt* 'to be glad, be delighted', p. 87.