

BOOK REVIEWS

So, J. F. and BUNKER, E. C.: *Traders and Raiders on China's Northern Frontier*. Seattle – London, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, in association with the University of Washington Press 1996. 208 pp.

The publication under review was released on the occasion of the related exhibition shown at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, November 19, 1995 – September 2, 1996. The aim of the authors is to throw more light on the “long-misunderstood Asian cultural arena” (p. 7), i.e. on the complex cultural interaction between the Chinese population and the northern tribes in the territory of the so-called Gansu Corridor and the Ordos Desert (as shown on the map on pp. 18–19). Their interest is focused on the period between the second millennium B.C. and first century A.D. As we have at our disposal more comprehensive Chinese written sources on their northern neighbours only as late as the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) – but these sources mirror the Sinocentric attitude of the Chinese –, and in the absence of written records of the northern tribes, recently excavated material remains depicted in this publication are a valuable and primary source for documenting the existence of Sino-steppe relations and for interpreting the character of the manifold interrelationship between them.

The nicely illustrated publication (206 illus., 40 in colour) is divided in two parts. The first part consists of six chapters in which the authors make the reader acquainted with the cultural and historical background of this period. The more general introductory first chapter (“The People, the Land, the Economy”, pp. 17–32) examines the different ecological geographies of the Chinese habitat and the habitat of the northern tribes and briefly mentions the introduction of wheeled transport (in late second millennium B.C.) and horseback riding (late first millennium B.C.) to China via the north populated by various tribes. The following chapters two to five (pp. 32–75) focus in chronological order on the various artistic and cultural traits of the above-mentioned interaction as illustrated on belt plaques, yoke ornaments, knives, daggers, bronze vessels, personal ornaments, and other object excavated in today's northern China. These artifacts illustrate significant changes in the visual symbolism (e.g. the theme of predatory animals, p. 42). The cultural exchange was accelerated after the Zhou's takeover of Shang rule (around 1050 B.C.) and also with the emergence of the Xiongnu empire in the third century B.C. and the foundation of the Han Dynasty. The last chapter entitled “Belt Ornaments and Fasteners” (pp. 77–85) is focused on these artifacts which were not simple articles of clothing but indicators of the tribal affiliation, rank, or social status of their bearers and the authors show the various styles which have been discovered.

The second part of this publication is a catalogue (pp. 89–178) of 108 artifacts shown in the exhibition. As stated by the authors (p. 89) these fall into three categories: Chinese, non-Chinese, and hybrid. These hybrid artifacts with features of both cultures can be fur-

ther divided into three groups: those made by the northern tribes for themselves; those made by the Chinese specifically for non-Chinese consumption; and those made by the Chinese for themselves. Each artifact is shown on a black-and-white picture and briefly described. These artifacts also prove that metalworking techniques of granulation, twisted wire, mechanically linked chains, and lost-wax casting were introduced to ancient China as a result of contact with the Notherners.

The publication under review is wound up with a helpful “Glossary of Chinese Characters” (pp. 179–81), “References” (pp. 182–194), list of “Lenders to the Exhibition” (p. 195) – mainly from the United States, and Index (pp. 196–203). For the interested reader (historian, art historian, anthropologist) it illustrates the rich cultural exchange which took place in this part of the world. One can only agree with the authors “that ancient China’s relations with these tribes were more pragmatic and complex than commonly acknowledged” (p. 86, in this context, however, the title of the book – *Traders and Raiders...* – seems to be somehow misleading) and their unbiased presentation is a valuable contribution.

Martin Slobodnik

HARRELL, S. (ed.): *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*. Seattle – London, University of Washington Press 1995. 387 pp.

The publication under review is a collection of articles written by anthropologists focused on the on-going process of cultural interaction between the Han majority and various “peripheral peoples” (see p. 3, n. 2 for the definition), i.e. the *shaoshu minzu* (“minority nationalities”) in the PR of China. The volume is divided into two parts – “The Historiography of Ethnic Identity” (pp. 37–214) and “The History of Ethnic Identity” (pp. 215–328). The individual case-studies are preceded by the introductory essay (“Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them”, pp. 3–36) written by the editor of the volume which gives a general picture of the civilizing project and the rationale behind it in China, where the “periphery” underwent three different types of civilizing project: Confucian, Christian and communist. The characteristic features behind these respective projects, their different motivations are briefly mentioned. As stated by the author, the implementation of these projects has been more complicated than these theoretical differences would suggest (p. 24), but unfortunately the problems of the interrelationship between them are tackled only very briefly.

The underlying subject of the first part (pp. 37–214) are the complex questions related to the ideological foundation of various *minzu* (mainly in southwest China), the dichotomy between official and popular histories, the process of constructing histories of these *minzu* as part of the identification work done by Chinese ethnographers after the foundation of the PR of China. The most recent stage, the communist civilizing project, is clearly the most systematic and the creators of these histories knew already before, in which way they should present the history of a certain *minzu*. Charles F. McKhann devoted the first part of his article to a helpful and instructive introduction into the nationality question in the PRC – above all the criteria (common territory, language, economy, national culture) which an ethnic group should fulfil to be recognized as a *minzu* by the state are mentioned. Not only his contribution (“The Naxi and the Nationalities Question”, pp. 39–62), but also the articles of S. Harrell (“The History of the History of the Yi”, pp. 63–91), N. Diamond (“Defining the Miao: Ming, Qing, and Contemporary Views”, pp. 92–117), and R. A. Litzinger (“Making Histories: Contending Conceptions of the Yao Past”, pp. 117–39) il-

lustrate the tension between the objective characteristics of an ethnic group set by the Chinese state and the subjective consciousness of these groups, i.e. the perception of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relations by the people themselves. A case worth mentioning would be an example of an ethnic group with a strong sense of historicity and ethnic consciousness, and in autochthonous sources well-documented past (e.g. Tibetans), and the intentional interpretation of their history by the Han majority of China, which is not a tool for constructing their history and identity but it is aimed to support and justify the historicity of the supranational *Zhonghua minzu*. Though S. Rigger analyses the process of the formation of Manchu identity (“Voices of Manchu Identity, 1635–1935”, pp. 186–214), the terminal point of her contribution is Manchukuo and the Manchu identity in contemporary China is omitted (although the recent recovery of their heritage would be worth mentioning). M. Byrne Swain is the sole contributor of this volume who focuses his/her interest mainly on the character of the Christian civilizing project in China (“Père Vial and the Gni-p’a”, pp. 140–85), some authors mention it only briefly (S. Harrell, Siu-woo Cheung: “Millenarianism, Christian Movements, and Ethnic Change among the Miao in Southwest China”, pp. 217–47), but most authors do not touch upon it, so this issue is the least addressed in the publication under review.

The second part (pp. 215–328) consists of four studies which are only very vaguely connected by their historical perspective in which they view cultural encounters in China. Two of these studies are focused on Mongols living in the PR of China. Almaz Khan (“Chinggis Khan: From Imperial Ancestor to Ethnic Hero”, pp. 248–277) deals with the cult of Chinggis Khan (as a case of a transformation of an ancient symbol) and its function for the purpose of national revival. He concentrates his interest on the *Chinggisiin Tahilga*, the Chinggis Khan Sacrificial Ceremony at the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum in Inner Mongolia. Wurlig Borchigud (“The Impact of Urban Ethnic Education on Modern Mongolian Ethnicity, 1949–66”, pp. 278–300) examines Mongol ethnicity through the institution of ethnic education in Inner Mongolia. She abandons the usual bipolar structure (minorities versus Han majority) and mentions not only Han chauvinism, which is not unique to Inner Mongolia, but analyses also the split between urban Mongols and Mongols from pastoral areas.

As the situation of *shaoshu minzu* in contemporary China is not only a question of cultural interaction but also a political problem, it would be worth seeing individual civilizing projects (not only the communist one) also in this context. The effect of the civilizing project on the civilizing centre (although briefly stated in the Introduction, pp. 6–7) is completely neglected and the cultural interaction is not perceived as a part of the Chinese and Han quest for national unity. The publication under review is an important contribution as it is focusing on a complex of question which are so far only little understood and researched. The individual studies do not – and cannot – give definite answers to it, but they show some interesting directions for future research.

Martin Slobodník

HOLES, Clive: *Modern Arabic. Structures, Functions and Varieties*. London and New York, Longman Linguistics Library 1995. XIV + 345 pp.

Holes’ monograph is a comprehensive curriculum vitae of Modern Written Arabic, its main linguistic structures and its interactions with modern colloquial varieties. Nearly three decades have passed since the appearance of A.F.L. Beeston’s *The Arabic Language*

Today (London 1970) and only a little less since W. Diem published his excellent *Hochsprache und Dialekt im Arabischen* (Wiesbaden 1974). The book is certainly more than a sound introduction to the basics of Modern Arabic to which advanced students have to be introduced. Arabic is conceived as an integrated whole, as a living entity struggling towards lexical and stylistic maturation and self-sufficiency in covering challenging needs of modern civilization. For Arabic, the ongoing process of linguistic updating in the sociolinguistic and generally cultural context of diglossia is not altogether easy since its progress is constantly hampered by never ceasing controversies between innovators and purists.

The Introduction (1–6) surveys the area where Arabic is spoken and offers preliminary information on its main linguistic varieties.

Chapter 1 presents a brief history of Arabic, defines its place in the Semitic language family and surveys the earliest epigraphic and written documents. The account of the spread of Arabic as a result of the great Arab conquests in the 7th and 8th centuries is one of the finest parts of this chapter. Holes' negative attitude towards the pidgin-creole (PC) hypothesis as related to the emergence of modern urban dialects is probably justified by an almost complete absence of creditable evidence. The hazardous and utterly hypothetical PC-scenario, as sketched by Versteegh (1984: 79–111, 129, etc.), would otherwise provide a highly elegant and integrated theory of the genesis of modern urban dialects, the true mother tongue of millions of speakers populating an immense geographical area. Have we here to do with a sudden and unexpected pidgin-like emergence with a subsequent evolution into nativized creoles, or rather the result of a natural development? The weakness of a PC-scenario is doubled by the necessity of positing another unattestable fact, namely that the process of creolization, exposed to a constant levelling impact of the prestigious Classical Arabic, was never completed or else, if completed, that it must have been followed by a reverse process of decreolization in favour of the classical norm that was, by that time, (since the 8th century A.D.), already being established by the first generation of Arab grammarians. Another, perhaps the most realistic interpretation of this evolutionary process, might perhaps be derived from the concurrence of both these factors: inherent evolutionary drift supported by incidental, directly unattestable, contact-motivated phenomena that may play, under certain circumstances, a quite decisive role.

In the case of the recent linguistic situation of Arabic, I cannot share the author's opinion that "the concept of Arabic as a 'diglossic' language, if it was ever accurate, is now a misleading oversimplification" (39). It is true, sure, that most communication in Arabophone areas oscillates between the two poles of diglossia without being fully identifiable with any of these cultural (high / low) and structural (synthetic / analytic) maxima. The process of hybridization may perhaps best be seen on the constitution of a fairly unified prestigious oral Arabic (Mitchell's ESA, Ryding's FSA, etc.) which is taking place before our eyes. This 'iʿrāb-less prestigious oral medium, for all its diffuseness and permeability, observable at all linguistic levels, is exactly the materialized product of diglossia and can best be defined in terms of the latter. This prestigious hybrid, the oral medium of the Arab intellectual elite, as well as other hybrids emerging at different cultural levels, are confined within the two poles of the diglossic space. Diglossia, then, seems to remain the best frame of reference for any recent linguistic variety of Arabic, no matter whether written or spoken, codified or not.

Chapters 2–9 deal more technically with various linguistic aspects of Arabic: phonology (2), verb morphology (3), noun morphology (4), pronouns and deictics (5), phrase structure (6), sentence structure (7), lexical and stylistic developments (8), and language level (9). The book further offers an appendix (Arabic Script), references (works consulted) and three indexes (i: General; ii: Arabic language; iii: Arabic dialects).

In dealing with the case inflection (141 f.), it would have been perhaps worth mentioning that besides triptotic and diptotic paradigms, there exists a mixed declension with some types of broken plurals ending in a semi-vowel, as in *ġawārin* (triptotic: nominative, genitive), *ġawāriya* (diptotic: accusative); the same for the definite *ġawārī* (nom., gen.), *ġawāriya* (accus.).

Now, some comments on noun-plus-pronominal suffix and noun-plus-noun construct phrases. In presenting the structural properties of these constructions (163), the author rightly points to the interpretational ambiguity observable in cases like *qatluhu* “his killing/being killed” or in, say, *qatlu l-wazīr* or *ġazwu l-‘irāq*. The agent/patient ambiguity can be cured by adding another modifier *ḵ* to the patient slot *ḵ* introduced by the particle *li-* that can be omitted in “older, and non-media styles of written Arabic” (ibid.). Here, it would probably have been worthwhile specifying that such directly appended noun stands in accusative, viz. *qatlu l-ḵalīfati ġa‘faran*.

Furthermore, the fact that Pattern I transitive verbs are not marked for voice (*qatl* “killing/being killed”) is unduly restricted to verbal nouns derived precisely from this verbal pattern (ibid.). As is evident, the agent/patient ambiguity extends far beyond this narrow limit. With the exception of some typically causative/transitive patterns (especially Pattern II, not so much Pattern IV, frequently intransitive) and some predominantly reflexive / intransitive and passive-like patterns (esp. IX and VII), the latter type of ambiguity, unless being semantically prevented, continues even with most medially featured reflexive patterns from the interval V – X, producing transitive verbs and related verbo-nominals, such as *iktašafa*, *istaḥaffa*, *ista‘mala*, etc.

Apart from this agent/patient ambiguity there is another one associated with some types of verbal nouns, such as *takwīn/takawwun* (e.g.: *al-‘izām* “osteogenesis”; *al-ġibāl* “oro-genesis”; *taḥwīl/taḥawwul ġiḍā‘ī* “metabolism”, etc.).

The description of definiteness in the structural domain of construct phrases is kept in traditional lines: “The first, ‘annexed’ noun must always be grammatically indefinite (i.e. lacking a proclitic (*‘a*)/- or an enclitic pronoun); the amplifying noun may be definite or indefinite” (167). As far as identifying ‘grammatical indefiniteness’ with constraints enclosed in brackets is concerned, no objections can be raised to the introductory statement. Unfortunately, however, the latter fails to account for the fact that the first, or better, the nonfinal term of an annexion is *always* paradigmatically definite irrespective of the definiteness state of the final term: *masāġīd-u, -i, -a madīnatin/al-madīnati* (triptotizing of diptota as a formal proof of what we call paradigmatical definiteness). Syntagmatically, of course, the definiteness state of the nonfinal term of an annexion follows that of the final term: *baytu raġulin kabīrun, baytu r-raġuli l-kabīru*.

The description of the annexion-type phrases failed to account for two different number-concord patterns of the modifier:

(1) individual constituents of an annexion maintain their lexical autonomy and can be quantified independently of each other: *sayyāratu l-mudīr* “the director’s car”: *sayyārāt al-mudīr*, etc.

(2) in lexicalized constructions, viz. the construct phrase operates as a single lexical unit, number concord is formal indicator of the lexicalization process: *sā‘iqu s-sayyāra* “car driver”, *sā‘iqū / suwwāqu s-sayyārāt*, or *rabbatu l-bayt* “housewife”, *rabbātu l-buyūt*, etc.

Holes’ Modern Arabic is a valuable source of information based on exact and well-attested data. Impressionistic guesses (or perhaps only oversights) are few in number. At least one of them, at the very first page of the monograph: Sudan and the Bantu languages. If there are any Bantu speakers in (southern) Sudan, their number is certainly not worth mentioning besides the incomparably more numerous (though not mentioned) non-Arab

speakers of the Cushitic Bedawiye / Beja, as well as speakers of the Nilo-Saharan Nuba, Nuer or Shilluk, or those using the Niger-Congo Azande, Banda, and still other (non-Bantu) languages.

Of course, most of these comments tend to add what seems to have been omitted. Nevertheless, the primary aim of the Holes' monograph was to provide an outline of the linguistic structure of modern Arabic, not a reference grammar, and this goal has been successfully achieved. Some minor oversights cannot lower the value of this highly useful and interesting scholarly work.

We believe that the advanced students of Arabic and ambitious general linguists will rightly appreciate Holes' monograph as a valuable source of useful and exciting information.

Ladislav Drozdik

HOLT, P. M.: *Early Mamluk Diplomacy (1260 – 1290), Treaties of Baybars and Qalawun with Christian Rulers*. Leiden, New York, Köln, E. J. Brill 1995, viii + 161 pp., ISBN 90 04 10246 9

Volume 12 of *Islamic History and Civilization – Studies and Texts* series presents treaties between the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, Baybars (1260–77) and Qalawun (1279–90), and Christian rulers. As the state archives of the Mamluk sultanate have not survived, the translated documents are from the archives of European powers. All the documents were originally written between the 13th and 15th centuries by four Arabic authors.

The general introduction of the work looks at truces in Islamic law and diplomatic practice, procedures in the negotiation of truces and the Mamluk-Frankish diplomatic relations between 1260 and 1290. With the help of Arabic literary sources, especially of *Subh al-a sha* of al-Qalqashandi, the author describes the status of these treaties and various negotiation procedures. The treaties reveal some of the facts concerning the contacts between Muslims and Christians in the Syro-Palestinian region during the last decades of the Crusader states as well as information on relations between the Mamluks and the Christian powers – the Byzantine empire, Aragon or Genoa.

The book contains translations of eleven treaties: the treaty of al-Zahir Baybars with the Hospitallers (665/1267), the treaty of al-Zahir Baybars with the Lady Isabel of Beirut (667/1269), the treaty of al-Zahir Baybars with the Hospitallers (669/1271), the treaty of al-Mansur Qalawun with Bohemond VII of Tripoli (680/1281), the treaty of al-Mansur Qalawun with the Templars (681/1282), the treaty of al-Mansur Qalawun with the Latin Kingdom (682/1283), the treaty of al-Mansur Qalawun with King Leon III of Lesser Armenia (684/1285), the treaty of al-Mansur Qalawun with the Lady Margaret of Tyre (684/1285), the treaty between al-Mansur Qalawun and Michael VIII Palaeologus (680/1281), the treaty of al-Mansur Qalawun with King Alfonso II of Aragon (689/1290) and the treaty of al-Mansur Qalawun with Genoa (689/1290). Each treaty has an introduction giving its historical background. This volume will therefore become a valuable source of information for both historians interested in Islam and European medievalists.

Gabriel Pirický