

side the monastery compound and reflect the state either before the destruction or the current state. This only increases the high documentary value of Bělka's monograph. Other monasteries (e.g. pp. 237-238) are treated only very briefly and represent a challenge for the author or other researchers following in his footsteps. The descriptive part raises some questions which remain so far unanswered as they were outside the scope of the author's interest. For example it seems that in Buryat monasteries (pp. 143, 147, 155, 164, 204-205, 219) models of Buddha Amitābha's Western paradise Sukhāvātī (Tib. *bde ba can*) were quite popular – which is, so far I know, not the case in Tibet – and one wonders what place had Amitābha and Sukhāvātī occupied in the system of beliefs of Buryat Buddhists. In his concluding remarks (pp. 263-266) the author treats briefly the issue of religious (dis-)continuity in Buryatiya. He perceives the continuity mainly in the realm of the laity where, in the hearts of the commoners, Buddhism has survived also the long persecution during the socialist period. However the institutionalized aspect of Buddhism, the monasteries and their inhabitants, was more vulnerable to the ferocious attacks by Soviet (not only Russian but also Buryat) authorities and therefore there the author sees the discontinuity of an almost lost tradition which has been recently revived.

The text is supplemented with numerous photographs (some of which were found in the Russian public and private archives, and others taken by the author) and a map (p. 127), which helps the reader to locate the monasteries described in the second part of the book. While dealing with this topic the author had to solve various philological problems as the Buryat Buddhist terminology, which he uses throughout the book, has Tibetan and Mongolian roots. A glossary of terms regularly appearing would certainly help the reader with the understanding. It is a pity that a longer English summary is missing as this publication is intended not only for the Czech reader.

The publication under review is a valuable contribution from a researcher from a post-socialist country, where the discipline of the study of religions (*Religionswissenschaft*) has – due to ideological reasons – established itself at the universities as late as in 1990. L. Bělka's monograph is an interesting read for all those who are interested in the history and current religious situation in Buryatiya as such, or approach this issue in a broader comparative perspective – either in its historical and religious relations with adjacent “Buddhist” regions, that is Mongolia and Tibet, or in the context of the policy towards religions and minority nationalities in Tzarist Russia, the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia.

*Martin Slobodník*

DROZDÍK, Ladislav: *Modern Written Arabic*. Bratislava, Veda Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences 2001. 227 pp.

In this scholarly book Professor Drozdík provides linguistic description of some grammatical and lexical aspects of 19th and 20th century codified Arabic, known as Modern Written Arabic or Modern Standard or even Modern Literary Arabic. The work comprises twelve studies dealing with different aspects of Arabic. The study “Functional variations of the so-called feminine marker in Arabic” proposes a short synchronic survey of the most out-standing functional variations of the suffix *-a/ -at/* in a number of linguistic systems of Modern Written Arabic and some of its colloquial varieties. The

study "Definiteness Patterning in Arabic" gives a tentative statement of the category of definiteness in Arabic, both synthetic and analytic, in the whole set of its deictic, grammatical and generic manifestations. The study "The Dual Number in Arabic Nouns" besides synchronic description of means used to mark duality in Arabic, provides some evidence of the gradual loss of this numeric category in modern analytic varieties. The study "The 3-10 Cardinal Numbers in Arabic" analyses the main evolutionary changes observable in the critical interval of those numbers in Standard Arabic. The study "Grammatical, Derivational and Lexical Dimensions of Transitivity in Arabic" examines a variety of phenomena related to transitivity and related categories in Arabic. Transitivity is primarily conceived as a property of the verb, minimally extending over an actor and an undergoer, some of its manifestations, however, are found relevant even to smaller sub-clausal units, represented by verbs and some types of verb-related nominals. The study "Agreement as a Lexicon-Formative factor in Arabic" examines agreement in number as a lexically relevant factor in Modern Written Arabic. The most immediate attention is paid to the concord-signalled process of lexicalization in anexion-type attributive constructions and to various linguistic and extralinguistic constraints preventing its formal manifestation.

The study "Compounding as a Marginal Word-Formational Procedure in Arabic" surveys a number of traditional approaches to the treatment of compounds and proposes some methodological issues for their definition and classification. The study "The Derivational System of Collective and Unit Nouns in the Process of Inter-Systemic Restatement" centred around the derivational system of collective and unit nouns, provides documentary evidence for the study of interactions between various linguistic systems and some significant cases of reclassification resulting from them. The study "Root Reconstruction in the Arabic Word-Formation and Inflection" surveys a number of root reconstructions in the Arabic grammar and lexicon and proposes criteria for their classification. The study "Arabic Multiword Terms in Lexical Classification" is an attempt at classifying multiword lexical units of 20th century Arabic in terms of lexical compatibility of their constituents. The study "Prestigious Oral Arabic in Structural Classification" provides a tentative clue to the identification and classification of its main varieties by means of formal criteria restricted to the category of case and verbal mood (*'i'rāb*, in the wording of the Arab grammarians). The study "Arabic-Based Pidgins and Creoles" shows that the study of Arabic in the conceptual frame of creolistics is in many respects problematic. The author aims at up-dating and reformulating some questions and gives attention to the genesis of modern Arabic dialects.

This book is vital reading for anyone interested in the subject it addresses. It is written with imagination, understanding, profound insights, and scholarly detachment. This book should be read and studied by all those interested in this field, especially the students of Arabic.

*Karol Sorby*