ed to draft a constitution. The constitution was signed by the ruler in November 1962, and in January 1963, Kuwait held a general election to the newly created 50-member National Assembly. All political parties were banned, and candidates ran on independent platforms. The tracing of the Iraq-Kuwait frontier demarcation dispute is also interesting. The last chapter entitled "From London to Washington" is a brief summary of events during the period from 1966 until 1996.

There are some irregularities in the transliteration of Arab names like Abdalla(h) Mulla(h). The compound proper names should be written in a unified form either in the scientific way: ᶜAbdullāh and ᶜAbdulkarīm (p. 100) and ᶜAbdulᶜazīz (p. 107) and Ḏūlfaqār (p. 107) or in the more common way, for example JamTl ᶜAbd an-Nāṣir. It is disturbing to see the erroneous writing of the name of the late Egyptian president (pp. 31, 101, 105).

The reader finishes this substantial book with a firm grasp of the main tendencies of the historical development. The impressive part of it is its comprehensiveness. The book is eminently readable and a significant contribution to Kuwaiti history. The author has put together a fascinating account of continuity and change and succeeded on every score.

Karol R. Sorby

LEDER, Stefan (ed.): *Story-telling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 1998. 528 pp. ISBN: 3-447-04034-3. Price: DM 148,00.

The predominant aim of this inspiring collection of studies is to identify elements of narrative art in texts of non-fictional Arabic literature. Preliminary versions of the contributions included were presented at the second Johann-Wilhelm-Fück colloqium "Fiction in non-fictional classical Arabic literature" held at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg from May 15 to 18, 1997.

The volume consists of five closely interwoven thematic parts:
A. Elements of Fictional Literature;
B. Story-telling in adab Literature and Theory.
C. Philologists' Narrative Art.
D. Narration in the Qur'ān, Tafsīr and Ḥadīth.
E. Facts and Fiction.

A.

The first three studies of this collection are discussing approaches to the definition of fictional literature within the theoretical framework suggested.

Is autobiography a piece of art or rather a mere historical account? This and related problems are examined by Susanne Enderwitz (*From curriculum vitae to self-narration. Fiction in Arabic autobiography*, 1-19). In spite of the fact that classical Arabic autobiography (*sīra / tarjama*) does not seem to be consistent with what is generally understood by autobiography in European cultural milieu, the classical texts do meet the requirements of the post-modern view of fiction. In the domain of modern literature, the most immediate attention was given to *Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's al-Ayyām*, classified as novelized

autobiography, and to its non-literary counterpart, represented by Aḥmad Amīn's Ḥayātī.

Renate Jacobi (*Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre in der klassischen arabischen Dichtung*, 20-33) is trying to show the transition from *fictive* to imaginary on two samples from archaic poetry: on a verse of *Ṭarafa's muʿallaqa*, and on the famous *Šanfarā's Lāmiyya*.

Stefan Leder's amply documented study (*Conventions of fictional narration in learned literature*, 34-60) claims that the fictional status of a narrative may only be reliably established on the ground of paratextual and cultural contexts.

B.

The effects of artistic recasting of several independently narrated stories of the same event are examined by Andras Hamori (*Tinkering with the text: Two variously related stories in the Faraj Baʿd al-Shidda*. 61-78).

Landscape, as a constituent of Abbasid literary aesthetics is the subject of Julia A. Bray's article (*Figures in a landscape: The inhabitants of the Silver Village*, 79-93).

The subtle relationship between 'factual' and 'fictional', backing, after all, all contributions to the present volume, is examined on *akhbāī* related to *Ashʿab*, the well-known character in the *adab* literature, by Hilary Kilpatrick (*The 'genuine' Ashʿab. The relativity of fact and fiction in early adab texts*, 94-117).

The same relationship between 'fact' and 'fiction', as observable in *adab* text, is further discussed in the articles by Ulrich Marzolph (*"Focusees" of jocular fiction in classical Arabic literature*, 118-129); Joseph Sadan (*Death of a princesse: Episodes of the Barmakid legend in its late evolution*, 130-157); Mohsen Zakeri (*Arabic reports on the fall of Hatra to the Sasanids. History or legend?* 158-167); Ibrahim Geries (*L'adab et le genre narratif fictif*, 168- 195); Abdallah Sheikh-Moussa (*Réalité et fiction dans Le livre des avares d'al-Ǧāḥiẓ*, 196-223); Lakhdar Souami (*Fictionnel et non-fictionnel dans l'œuvre de Ǧāḥiẓ*, 224-264);

C.

The controlled use of fiction in the *dīwān*-compilers' texts is examined by Ewald Wagner (*Die Aḫbār Abī Nuwās in den Dīwānen*, 265-281); Wolfhart Heinrichs (*Al-Sharqī b. al-Quṭāmi and his etiologies of proverbs*, 282-308); Kathrin Müller (*Die Sprache der indischen Teufels. Anekdoten zwischen sprachlicher Realität und Fiktion*, 309-344).

D.

Narrative elements in the Qur'ān, tafsīr treatises and ḥadīt collections are analyzed by Jane D. McAuliffe (*Assessing the Isrāʾ īliyyāı. An exegetic conundrum,* 345-369); Raif G. Khoury (*Geschichte oder Fiktion. Zur erzählerischen Gattung der ältesten Bücher über Arabien*, 370-387); Angelika Neuwirth (*Qur'ānic literary structure revisited: Sūrat al-Raḥmān between mythic account and decodation of myth* ... 388-420); Wim Raven (*The biography of the Prophet and its structural basis*, 421-432), and Sebastian Günther (*Fictional narration and imagination within an authoritative framework. Towards a new understanding of Ḥadīth*, 433-471).

The 'fictional' is viewed from the angle of a historian in Albrecht Noth's contribution (*Fiktion als historische Quelle*, 472-487). The pandemic plague, as reflected in popular thought and traditions in early Islamic society, is examined by Lawrence I. Conrad (*ʿUmaʔ at Sargh: the evolution of an Umayyad tradition on flight from the plague*, 488-528).

Highly stimulative studies of this collection embrace a wide range of literary branches, both in classical and modern Arabic literature, examined within the common methodological framework suggested by the colloqium. The volume will be read with profit by all serious students and researchers working in the domain of Arabic literature.

Ladislav Drozdík

SORBY, Karol R.: *Moderná spisovná arabčina. Diel II.* (Modern Written Arabic. Part II). Banská Bystrica, Filologická fakulta UMB 1998. 394 pp.

Modern Written Arabic. Part 1 is a carefully revised and innovated version of its previous Slovak edition *Moderná spisovná arabčina I.A – I.B*, Ústav jazykové a odborné přípravy zahraničních studentů Univerzity Karlovy, Praha 1989. The substantially completed and thoroughly revised textual and lexical material of both volumes was brought together into a harmonious whole constituting material basis of the present edition.

The manual, backed by long experience of the college level teaching of Arabic, presents a comprehensive basic course for beginner students with no previous knowledge of the language. It consists of 28 graded lessons subdivided into grammatical, textual and drilling sections with well-balanced and highly efficient exercises. Several initial lessons pay due attention to the graphical and phonological systems of Arabic.

A typical lesson consists of an introductory text accompanied by grammatical basics. Each grammatical topic is projected into various types of exercises (transformation, substitution, translation exercises and conversation drills, etc.). The repetition exercises deal with topics explained and drilled several lessons previously.

The student is confronted with a limited number of carefully selected grammatical topics at a time and these are presented in a well-tried arrangement. Each grammatical topic, introduced with preliminary information, is presented in a simple context and is further handled in related exercises and is finally formulated as a systemized rule forming part of the basic grammatical data-base.

The grammatical part of each lesson works with a limited number of lexical items (and even here a relatively severe recurrence-based selection has been imposed on the lexical units to be included) to allow the students a more thorough concentration on the grammatical features just analyzed. The accompanying texts with progressively graded complexity include a variety of themes ranging from simple essays that reflect situations from daily life, as well as adapted texts offering basic information on the Arab social life, folklore, history and geography. As far as the theoretical part of the lesson allows it, a corresponding thematic orientation tends to reappear in related exercises and conversational drills.