

SEEHER, Ulrich. *Der arabische Dialekt der Dörfer von Ramallah*. Unter Mitarbeit von Taḥsīn ʿAlāwnih [The Arabic Dialect of Ramallāh Villages. With the Cooperation of Taḥsīn ʿAlāwnih]. Vol. 1: Texts. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009. xi+479 p. ISBN 978-3-447-05836-0; Vol. 2: Glossary. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009. 287 p. ISBN 978-3-447-05836-0.

The present collection of dialectal texts of the Palestinian West Bank region of Ramalla is the result of protracted field work. The aim of this valuable project is to gather data and textual samples of the dialect spoken in the farmer villages scattered around Ramalla. In Ramalla, once a farming village, an urban-type dialect has recently appeared spoken especially by the younger generation and the genuine farmer dialect of earlier times is now hardly ever used. The project aims at contributing to the conservation of basic linguistic features of this original farmer dialect which is seriously threatened with extinction.

For this and various other reasons, it was extremely difficult to find suitable informants and narrators. The records of dialectal texts are due to 120 narrators with an average age of 66 years, including 34 women and 14 Christians.

The collection is edited in two separate volumes:

Vol. 1 includes: Contents (Inhaltsverzeichnis, vii); Index of Places (Ortsregister, x); Map of the Region with Text Numbers (Karte der Region mit Nummern der Texte, xii); Introduction (Einleitung, 1); Notes to Transcription (Hinweise zur Transkription, 4) and 118 dialectal textual samples with a German translation.

Each text is introduced by the name of the narrator, his/her age, name of the village and date of the record.

The thematic distribution of texts is well balanced. Apart from samples presenting various manifestations of popular wisdom, narrating and renarrating folk tales, children's stories and Ġuha adventures, we find here paraphrases of proverbs and witty sayings. From the opposite pole of the thematic circle, the reader is confronted with the surviving echo of the Dēr Yāsīn massacre.

Numerous footnotes explain ambiguous readings, draw attention to similar themes in several previous editions¹ and comment on discussible lexical and grammatical features.

The Glossary (*Glossar*) in Vol. 2, introduced by some suggestions concerning its use (*Hinweise zur Benutzung*, 5) and a list of quoted sources (*Zitierte Literatur*, 8), presents a relatively extensive number of alphabetically ordered lexical entries. The entries are arranged by extracted roots as far as morphemically segmentable lexical units are concerned. There are some substantially acceptable deviations from the strict root-entry system, like TRX, substituted for the etymological ʾRX, *lārīx*, where the substitution may be explained by the fact that the etymological root has no other representation either in the texts or accordingly in the Glossary. Some inconsistencies may be found in

¹ Bauer, Leonhard: *Das Palästinensische Arabisch. Die Dialekte des Städters und des Fellachen*. Leipzig, 1926. Schmidt, Hans & Kahle, Paul: *Volkserzählungen aus Palästina*. Göttingen, 1918/1930.

the presentation of items exceeding the quadriliteral limit (which is at the same time that of morphemic segmentability).

The non-segmentable *barlamān*, as a root-word, is introduced with a root-entry BRLM (22), which is likewise for *t(a)raktar*, and *t(a)raktōr*, with TRKT (34) or *mitrilyūz*, with MTRL. These root-entries can hardly imply a root-word nature of the units quoted. A full-consonant symbol as used in BRTQN (21), ʔTRMBL or ʔTML (14), might have been more appropriate. The undue quadriliteralization of these root-entries may suggest the double behaviour of the words concerned which is typical of the double-root units, like DKTR (1) non-segmentable root-word *daktōr*, *duktōr*, co-occurring with (2) the segmentable root in *dakātra* (84). The same holds for words like *tilifīzyōn*, *talafūn*, *ḥaylasūf*, at least in Standard Arabic, with some representation, no doubt, in Ramalla Arabic as well.

The Standard Arabic stem iv appears in two forms in the Glossary: (a) as a classicized *adḫal* / *yidḫil* (80), *aṣḥaḥ* / *yīṣḥiḥ* (141) or *aṣraf* *yīṣrif* (144), with only the imperfect morphophonologically modified, and (b) as the colloquial *ṣāb* *yṣīb* (146) or *qām* / *yqīm* (220).

The distance between conventional phonological symbols in the Glossary and their recommended reading in the Texts seems to be all too great as to be easily overcome by help of the few notes in *Hinweise – zur Transkription* (Vol. 1) and *– zur Benutzung* (Vol. 2). More ample phonological information would certainly facilitate the reading. The insertion of some introductory paragraphs with basic grammatical data would largely contribute to the self-sufficiency and independence of the final product.

This collection of Palestinian texts is a truly remarkable achievement in modern Arabic dialectology. Besides the immediate material importance to dialectological studies of the region, the textual evidence provided is a valuable contribution to the conservation of structural and lexical data defining the identity of this rapidly disappearing dialect. The vast lexical material collected in the Glossary might even become the core of an independent Palestinian Arabic lexicon, especially when completed with identifiable Palestinisms from the extant Levant Arabic lexicons and other sources.

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OLIVERIUS, Jaroslav and ONDRÁŠ, František: *Moderní spisovná arabštin. I. díl.* (Al-Lughā al-ʿarabīya al-fuṣḥā). Prague: SET OUT, 2007. 287 p. ISBN 80-86277-51-8. *II. díl.* Prague: setoutbooks.cz., s.r.o., 2009. 137 p. ISBN 978-80-86277-70-7. Both volumes in Czech.

This two-volume manual of Modern Standard Arabic, due to an initiative of the Institute of Near Eastern and African Studies, Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University in Prague, is the first comprehensive text book edited in Czech language to fully satisfy the