

## BOOK REVIEWS

LUTZ, Edzard and RETSÖ, Jan (Editors): *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon I*. Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 3rd-5th June 2004. Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft: Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes. Band LVI, 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005. 253 p. ISBN 3-447-05268-6.

LUTZ, Edzard and RETSÖ, Jan (Editors): *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II*. Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 4th-5th November 2005. Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft: Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes. Band LIX. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006. 225 p. ISBN 3-447-05441-7.

The collection of studies in *Current Issues I* results from the panel "Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon", which was held at the University of Oslo on June 3 and 4, 2004. The panel was organized and sponsored by the Oslo-Göteborg (Gothenburg) School of Asian and African Studies, established in 2003.

The papers collected in this volume are organized in three sections: i. Afroasiatic, comparative Semitic, and Arabic; ii. Native Arabic grammatical theory and modern linguistics, and literary theory applied to Arabic; and iii. Classical Hebrew and Aramaic.

Andrzej Zaborski (Jagellonian University of Cracow, "Tense, Aspect and Mood Categories of Proto-Semitic", p. 11-30) surveys tense, aspect, and mood categories in the Proto-Semitic language continuum from an Afroasiatic perspective. The amply documented study is introduced by a short account of Proto-Hamitosemitic and language typology.

Jan Retsö (University of Göteborg, "The number-gender-mood markers of the prefix conjugation in Arabic dialects. A preliminary consideration", p. 31-40) examines two basic types of number-gender-mood (ngm) markers in modern Arabic dialects: the A-group (long imperfects) is characterized by the presence, the B-group (short imperfects), by the absence of the final *-n* in the respective ngm-markers. The A/B dichotomy is related to the model system of Standard Arabic.

Amharic is the subject of the two contributions that follow: Kjell Magne Yri (University of Oslo, "Cleft sentences in Amharic, with special reference to reference", p. 41-58) and Lutz Edzard (Oslo, "Syntaktische und lexikalische Merkmale des

Amharischen als Sprache in modernen diplomatischen Dokumenten: Die amharische Version der OAU-Charta", p. 59-80).

Ramzi Baalbaki (American University of Beirut, "From burden to asset: morphological change in the Arabic tradition", p. 83-105) tries to answer the question of how the synchronically oriented medieval Arab grammarians explained morphological change in the study and description of their corpus of data. The chief aim of the article is to demonstrate how the grammarians managed to incorporate into their system a variety of forms and patterns able to account for morphological change.

The relationship between the consonantal root in Semitic linguistics (sometimes overshadowed even here by the notion of base or 'racine vocalisée') and the base-*mašdar* of the input verb, in the native approach to derivation, is examined in the contribution of Pierre Larcher (Université de Provence, "Que signifie 'dériver' en arabe classique ?", p. 106-124). Among the abundant data no trace can be found of the monomorphemic root-words (mot- racine), like *tarğumān* or *tilifūn*, *talifōn* and their relation to the multimorphemic *tarāğīma* (internal flexion), *tarğam*, *tarğama*; *talfan*, *talfana*, etc. (internal derivation), already segmentable along the morpheme boundaries into roots: \**t-r-ğ-m* , \* *t-l-f-n*, patterns {-*a-Ø-a*-}, and affixes (-*a* ). The reason for introducing 'the third element', *radical*, between the word and the root does not sound convincing. This element, identified with *lib-* in *talyīb* or *dawl-* in *tadwīl*, is said to play a part in the formation and interpretation of the output (118). The use of the term 'radical' is somewhat unusual: it denotes a segment identifiable with a 'base' and, at the same time, the consonantal constituents of the latter (ibid.). At any rate, the term seems to comply with the accepted convention in the latter case only.

The following two papers derive their topics from text linguistics. Rasoul al-Khafaji (University of Gothenburg, "Patterns of lexis in Arabic text types", p. 125-148) examines cohesive variability by way of lexical repetition on three texts which represent three different text types: legal, argumentative, and fictional narrative. Different textual preferences, observed in the three texts, are classified and statistically evaluated.

Heléne Kammensjö (University of Gothenburg, "Pre-topical elements in Formal Spoken Arabic", p. 149-165) offers an interesting survey of 'discourse connectives' operating as sentence- (or rather utterance-) starters in Formal Spoken Arabic. The corpus of data is based on recorded and transcribed university lectures (University of Jordan, Damascus University, Beirut Arab University and University of Khartoum). The discourse connectives are defined as 'utterance-initial words, phrases and clauses that share the primary function of linking utterances in discourse' (151). The diglossive background of FSA is reflected in the 'top-down' approach to the classification of connectives.

Judith Josephson (University of Gothenburg, "The multicultural background of the *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* by °Abdallāh Ibn al-Muqaffa<sup>c</sup>", p. 166-192) advances the hypothesis that *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* or "Comprehensive Book of Rules of Conduct" 'is a carefully structured work which reproduces a late Hellenistic ethical system with a definite Stoic tinge mixed with Iranian political thought'(166). Besides literary and ethical analysis of the work, the paper pays due attention to the language of Ibn al-Muqaffa<sup>c</sup>.

Werner Diem (University of Cologne, "Even if you died a small /child/, the grief is not small." Arabic Epitaphs of Children and Other Prematurely Deceased", p. 193-202) presents partial results of the prepared monograph on Arabic epitaphs. The author describes the method of how to know that a person with a preserved epitaph was a child or a young man or woman. The analysis accounts for possible chronological and regional peculiarities.

Rolf Furuli (University of Oslo, "The verbal system of Classical Hebrew. An attempt to distinguish between semantic and pragmatic factors", p. 205-231) tries to apply the distinction between semantic and pragmatic factors to two different Hebrew conjugations, the prefix- and the suffix-forms. The focus of the study lies on tense and aspect.

Hallvard Hagelia (Ansgar Teologiske Høgskole, Kristiansand, "Philological issues in the Tel Dan Inscription", p. 232-253) surveys the debate on philological issues in the Aramaic Tel Dan or The House of David Inscription (Fragment A was found in 1993, Fragment B, in 1994). The Tel Dan inscription, probably the most important archaeological find since the appearance of the Dead Sea scrolls half a century ago, is mostly dated to the second half of the 9th century.

The articles collected in *Current Issues II* result from the panel "Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II", held at the Swedish Institute in Istanbul on November 4 and 5, 2005. The panel was organized by the Oslo-Gothenburg School of Asian and African Studies. In general, the contributions deal with theoretical perspectives on comparative Semitic, Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ethio-Semitic linguistics, and with topics connected with Arabic literature.

The articles are organized into two methodologically and thematically distinct sections: i. Topics in Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ethio-Semitic linguistics, and ii. Linguistic and cultural topics in connection with Arabic literature.

The contribution of Michael G. Carter (Sydney University, *The Qur'an and the Authority of Arab-Islamic Linguistics*, p. 11-22) reflects the author's belief that medieval Arabic linguistics cannot be successfully studied and properly understood out of its relationship to speculative theology and legal theory. The starting issue of the discussion is the duality between (1) the speech of the pagan Bedouin, subsequently described and codified by the early Arab grammarians (8th and 9th centuries) and recognized as the ultimate authority for linguistic correctness, and (2) the 'God-inspired' language of the Qur'an, taken for the highest form of expression in Arabic, confirmed by the dogma of *i'ğāz al-qur'an*. Carter examines the reasons why the Qur'an could not have served as a data-provider for Arab grammarians working on the normative grammar of Classical Arabic.

The commonly accepted explanation that the predominantly analytic languages, like Hebrew, Aramaic and Ethio-Semitic, typologically commensurable with modern Arabic vernaculars, have developed from a common Proto-Semitic, sharing basic typological features with an °Arabīya-like synthetic language, is confronted with an entirely new theory by Jan Retsö (Göteborg University, *Thoughts about the Diversity of Arabic*, p. 23-33). The analysis of a number of structural features, like the verb-marked 'passive subject' (pattern-marked with °Arabīya / affix-marked with Aramaic-type languages and Arabic vernaculars); the dual/plural distribution, the relative-clause syntax

(juxtaposition/annexation), makes the author assume a so-far name-less and largely unspecified origin for the Aramaic-type agglomeration inclusive of Arabic vernaculars, different from the unified Protosemitic. The author's perhaps too daring arguments cast doubts about the spread of case-inflection through the whole Semitic agglomeration of languages from the historical beginning.

Werner Arnold (University of Heidelberg, *Arabic Village and City Dialects in the Tel Aviv Area*, p.34-39) describes some linguistic features of the Arabic dialects in the Tel Aviv area, and Janet Watson et al. (Salford, *Two Texts from Jabal Rāziḥ, Northwest Yemen*, p. 40-63) offer a linguistic sketch of the dialect spoken on Jabal Rāziḥ on the basis of two oral texts.

Sven Olaf Dahlgren (Göteborg University, *Sentential Negation in Arabic*, p. 64-78) deals with the distribution of sentential negatives *lam* and *mā*.

The stylistic figure *hendiadys*, used as an interpretational tool in the Hebrew Bible, is examined by Rosmari Lillas-Schuil (Göteborg University, *A Survey of Syntagms in the Hebrew Bible Classified as Hendiadys*, p. 79-100).

Geoffrey Khan (University of Cambridge, *Remarks on Compound Verbal Forms in North Eastern Neo-Aramaic*, p. 101-115) examines structural and functional developments of the North Eastern Neo-Aramaic compound constructions with copula elements. The two types analyzed are: infinitive + copula, and *qtila* + copula. In view of the great dialectal diversity in the region, linguistic features of the dialects spoken by Christian and Jewish communities are taken into account as well.

The grammaticalization of nouns as postpositions in the Ethio-Semitic linguistic area, represented by Sidaamú ?afó and Amharic, is studied by Kjell Magne Yri (University of Oslo, *Decategorialization of Nouns as Postpositions in Sidaamú ?afó and Amharic*, p. 116-131). The shift from nouns to postpositions is described in terms of generalization or weakening of semantic content. The data analysed for Sidaamú ?afó are those of the author's collection, while those related to Amharic are borrowed from Leslau's *Reference Grammar of Amharic*, Wiesbaden 1995. The author's treatment is predominantly synchronic with the aim to capture the contemporary linguistic usage.

The word-formational procedure of compounding, substantially incompatible with the root-and-pattern system of Semitic, is the topic of a highly interesting and well-documented study by Lutz Edzard (University of Oslo, *Some Aspects of Compound Formations in Modern Semitic*, p. 132-154). Inferring from the introductory English examples: *keyboard*, *six-pack*, and *post office*, compounds are identified with two, or more, words (it would be perhaps more appropriate to speak about roots) put together to form one word (it would be apparently more realistic to postulate for the final product 'one concept' instead). Furthermore, the compound nature of the output structure should be confirmed by a sort of distributional evidence to keep it apart from syntactic constructions. Some examples, quoted for Arabic, do not seem to satisfy this delimitation, not even in its modified version. Let us consider *ra's(-)māl* (139), for instance, rewritten in *ra's-māl* and *ra'smāl*, the former having to be classified as a syntactic construction (viz., det. *ra's al-māl*, plur. *ru'ūs al-'ammwāl*), the latter as a compound unit (*ar-ra'smāl*, *ra'smāl-ī*, *-īya*; no plural of its own); *rasāmīl* (ibid.), the plural of *rasmāl*, both forms are regular one-word non-compound constructions with merely a compound etymology, and are fully compatible with the internal (pattern-

marked) flexion and derivation of Arabic (Semitic), the latter co-occurring with external (affix-marked) derivational processes; that is: flexion: singular-plural (see above); derivation: *rasmālī*, - *īya*; *rasmāl*, *rasmala*, *murasmīl*, *murasmāl*;. The distributional evidence, adduced by the author, in terms of *ar-rasāmīl* (ibid.) has nothing to prove, since the feature of one-wordness is already confirmed by the broken-plural identity of the construction itself.

The list of comparative data, collected in Edzard's article, is really impressive and so is their classification, provided that the notion of compounding will be conceived liberally enough as to include various types of blends (144) and acronyms (145), as well as numerous terms of very various structure, actually non-compound units with merely a compound background.

Perilla Myrne (Göteborg University, *°Arīb, Women's Speech and the Language of Sexual Relations in Early Arabic Literature*, p.157-174), in the first article of section two, examines the gender-specific women's use of sexual vocabulary in Arabic literature. The analysis is based on an anecdote centered on °Arīb, a well-known Abbasid woman singer, whose speech reflects independence and self-confidence even in the sexual sphere (viz., the use of the partnership-implying verbal stem *tanāyaknā*), contrasting with the vocabulary derived from the male-dominated sexual relationships (*nākahā*, *ḡāma°ahā*, *waqa° alayhā*, *waḡi°ahā*, etc.). The male sex-related vocabulary is presented in a fine socio-cultural classification.

Judith Josephson (Göteborg University, *The Hellenistic Heritage of the zanādiqa*, p. 175-194) deals with the intriguing question of who were the Muslim heretics known as *zindīqs* (*zanādiqa*), persecuted by the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī (775-785). At that time, the term *zindīq* was used to designate members of certain gnostic sects, mainly the Manichaeans. Nevertheless, no evidence of Manichaean beliefs may be found in writings of the Muslim converts actually accused of *zandaqa*. Several recent studies claim that most potential *zandaqa*-labelled ideas should be sought among the Muslim converts of Aramaean and Persian origin in southern Mesopotamia.

The relation between literary works in *°arabīya fuṣḥā* and those written in Egyptian colloquial Arabic is examined by Gunvor Mejdell (University of Oslo, *The Use of Colloquial in Modern Egyptian Literature - a Survey*, p. 195-213). The study surveys the rich variety of relevant opinions about 'language choice' for use in literary production. Apart from the exclusive use of *fuṣḥā* (Nagīb Maḥfūz, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn) and a culturally controlled use of *fuṣḥā* in the author's language, and that of *°ammīya*, in the protagonists' dialogs (Yūsuf Isrīl, Iḥsān °Abdalquddūs), other operative strategies are taken into account as well: 'magic fusion' of the two varieties (Salwā Bakr), *fuṣḥ°ammīya* (208) or any earlier attempts at bridging the gap between them in a unified graphic form (Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm, 197).

Finally, Tetz Rooke (Göteborg University, *Translation of Arabic Literature: A Mission Impossible?*, p. 214-225) examines, from a cross-cultural perspective, the problems possibly emerging in translating Arabic literary texts into European languages. The relative possibility of translating is said to depend on how the process of translation is perceived: 'If we understand the translation as a form of imitation and believe in the notion of the perfect copy, then all translation is truly a mission

impossible. But if we approach translation less idealistically and admit, yes, even celebrate difference, then the task becomes a world of possibilities' (224).

Both volumes are pregnant with fruitful and inspiring ideas and will be appreciated by all those seriously interested in Semitic and Arabic linguistics, and Arabic literature.

Ladislav Drozdik

BOUDELAA, Sami (Ed.): *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics XVI*. Papers from the Sixteenth Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics. Cambridge, March 2002. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006. p. 181. ISBN 90 272 4780 3.

The eight papers, selected for publication in the present volume, were presented at the sixteenth annual symposium on Arabic linguistics which took place in March 2002, in Cambridge University. Except one article, dealing with Maltese, the contributions cover a variety of interesting linguistic issues in Arabic.

Georges Bohas (École Normal Supérieure, Lyon, 'The organization of the lexicon in Arabic and other Semitic languages', p. 1-37), starting from the assumption that the (trilateral) root fails to account for phonetic and semantic relationships between lexical units, examines the problem of lexical organization in Arabic from a really vast and impressive perspective. The nearly synonymous group of words, labelled 'paradigm i', such as *matā*, *mata'a* (2x), *matana*, with a general meaning 'stretching and/or lengthening', is related to three different roots:  $\sqrt{mty}$ ,  $\sqrt{mt}$  (2x), and  $\sqrt{mtn}$ . To cure the discrepancy between the identity of meaning and the diversity of roots, a competitive notion of *etymon* is introduced. The latter denotes a binary composition of consonantal phonemes shared by all members of the group, in this case *mt* (p. 4). In what the author calls paradigm ii, the binary etymon is subsequently reduced to one-consonant common to a markedly larger group linked to the 'semic nucleus', in this case *m*. The paradigm i units, reappearing in paradigm ii, are completed by *madda*, *maṭṭa*, *maṭala* and *maṭā* (p. 5). The semantic contours of the semic nucleus are markedly mistier here and their features of identity are less convincing. At the root level, the author argues, these phonetico-semantic generalizations cannot be obtained (*ibid.*).

For all the innovative ideas emanating from this highly interesting reinvestigation and further elaboration of the time-honoured theories of biliteralism (Mayer Lambert, Gesenius, Philippi - to mention only some of their 19th century pioneers), it is hardly possible to accept the author's characterization of the (consonantal) root in terms of an 'obsolete grammatical tool ... invented by Arab grammarians and used by them to describe their language' (p. 6). Ousting the root from the inventory of basic concepts in all branches of Semitic linguistics is thoroughly unacceptable:

- the root, and only the root, may be unambiguously distinguished from the ablaut-marking intra-root morpheme, mostly referred to as *pattern*, which is operative in internal processes of inflection and derivation; the IE ablaut is a one-morpheme internal process involving the root alone, while the Semitic ablaut, at the minimum stem level, is a matter of two autonomous morphemes: roots and patterns;