

as *‘ilm al-adawāt*, “the science of grammatical instruments or particles”. The editor tells us that he first found an MS of this work in the Oriental Manuscript Collection in the University Library in Leipzig and having been impressed by its contents tried to locate other MSS of the same booklet. He succeeded in finding eleven different copies all over the Eastern and Western libraries and then he decided to edit the work on the basis of these MSS.

In his introduction, Arik Sadan first gives information about the most famous works of the *adawāt* genre based on Ḥāğğī Halīfa’s *Kašf az-ẓunūn*, then he sets out to present the eleven MSS of the *Tadkira*. Only after making the principles of the edition known to the reader speaks the editor about the author confessing that we know about him nothing, not even the century in which he lived, but perhaps it is nearer to the 13<sup>th</sup> century than to the 11<sup>th</sup>. The edition itself occupies 104 printed pages, the MS consisting of 12-15 folios differing according to the various copies. There is an Appendix containing chapters 1-32 as they appear in MSS, i.e., the MS found in the Manisa Library (ms D). The reason for this is that this manuscript is very different from the others, both in the order and the content of the chapters.

Sadan’s principles of edition are a bit outdated since he does not edit one of the MSS with references to the others, but instead he makes a super-text selecting places from each one according to his own judgement. Notwithstanding the text remains sometimes quite puzzling and incoherent.

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*The Structure of Mehri*. By JANET C. E. WATSON. (*Semitica Viva*, 52.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012. xxviii + 479 p. ISSN 0931, ISBN 978-3-447-06736-2

This work under review is a unique contribution to the study of the modern Mehri dialects and helps scholars to attain a better knowledge of the South-Arabian language on the whole. The book is based mainly on the author’s collection of data from some Mehri speakers of Oman and therefore lays emphasis on the description of the Mehreyet dialect spoken in Oman. The author, however, compares her data with those of the Mahriyōt, the dialect of Yemen, thus the book rightly bears the title “The Structure of Mehri”. Since about two thirds of the Modern South-Arabian speakers use Mehri, it is far the most important language in this branch of Semitic languages. Watson estimates their number between 100,000 and 180,000, while Soqotri is spoken by 60,000 and Šheret or Jibbali only by 10-30,000 according to her. This last data, however, may be an

underestimation of the real number of Jibbali speakers since they can be met all over in Oman, not only in Dhofar.

The book consists of four large chapters. The first (pp. 1-46) is an overview of phonetics and phonology, comprising sections not only on the classical phonological entities but also on what is called in modern linguistics morphonological phenomena like prosody, syllable structure, melodic processes, syncope and syllable contact. The description of Mehri consonants and vowels is not only thorough and sufficiently detailed but it also gives a summary of the results and problems presented by earlier writers on this theme. What one misses, however, in a grammar of such impressive size are precise definitions of the phonological terms used since these traditional denominations, like ‘voiced uvular fricative’ are not always unambiguously understood.

The second chapter (pp. 47-137) deals with the grammatical categories – the different types of nouns, pronouns, verbs, verbal aspect and mood, particles, etc. – always making comparisons between the various forms of the two main dialects of the Mehri, Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt. The nominal morphology is shown in its amazing abundance which is the clear characteristic of an unstandardized language state. The different formal clusters are presented in separate, lucidly arranged tables, which make them easy to survey for the reader. These tables, however, do not always reflect real morphological correlations between their elements, because owing to the descriptive linguistic principles followed by the author, lexical relations mingle with morphological ones. On page 59, for instance, we are informed that the plural of *wōz* (‘goat’), is *rawn*, and on page 60 that the plural of *nhūr* (‘day’) is *yōm*, although neither of these two couplets may form morphological pairs and thus could not have been put among other regular couplets like *bōkar* (‘young she-camel’) and *bkūr*. The above examples are important lexical data but have nothing to do with morphology.

The above two chapters seem to serve only the preparation for the greater structural units of the language, since they are followed by two main parts without decimation: Phrase Structure (pp. 138-228) and Clause Structure (pp. 229-405), though these large chapter headings are only mentioned in the table of contents and are lacking in the book itself. The phrase structure part contains chapter 3 on attribution (pp. 138-175), chapter 4 on annexion (pp. 176-196) and chapter 5 on complementation (pp. 197-228). The clause structure part contains chapter 6 on predication (pp. 229-270), chapter 7 on coordination (pp. 271-309), chapter 8 on negation (pp. 310-346) and chapter 9 on supplementation (pp. 347-405). This last chapter, contains both the supplements of simple sentences and subordinate clauses. Probably it would have been more fortunate to deal with these two types of supplementation separately. The grammar is supplemented

by chapter 10 (pp. 406-470) containing oral texts. The book ends with the references and (regarding the size of the grammar) a very short index.

All in all the Mehri grammar of Jane C.E. Watson may constitute a milestone and starting point for further research in the field of the Modern South Arabian language and is an important contribution to Semitic studies in general.

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*Textes en parler arabe des musulmanes de Meknès (Maroc)*. By ARSÈNE ROUX, ed. by HARRY STROOMER. (*Semitica Viva*, 42.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008. xix + 109 p. ISBN 978-3-447-05520-8

The Arabic texts in the Moroccan dialect of Meknes occupy the first 66 pages of the book written by the author's hand. The French translation of the texts is printed in 41 pages (pp. 69-109). There is a preface written by the editor of the book, Harry Stroomer (pp. ix-xv), followed by a very short introduction by the author, Arsène Roux (pp. xvii-xix). The texts have been found by the editor in the archives of the outstanding French scholar of Berber studies, Arsène Roux (1893-1971) in Aix-en-Provence. He was also an expert of the Moroccan Arabic dialects, having spent eight years in Meknes between 1919 and 1927. During this period he prepared his doctoral thesis in 1925 titled "*Le parler arabe des musulmanes de Meknès*", which remains in MS. In this thesis he analyzed the dialect of Meknes, laying special emphasis on the language use of the women speakers of the town. The original work, i.e., the doctoral paper, consists of 310 pages, divided into three sections: (i) Arabic texts with French translation (pp. 1-133), (ii) the phonetics and phonology of the dialect (pp. 134-193), (iii) the morphology – verbs, nouns, articles, demonstratives, pronouns, verbal and nominal pronominal affixes (pp. 194-309). According to the editor's opinion the second and third sections of the thesis have become outdated, but the first part, consisting of 28 texts, remained interesting and worth publishing. We can only regret this view, and can only hope that he might change his opinion in the future and make available for the scholarly public the remaining chapters, which it is quite hard to imagine in what way could have become outdated since they deal with the sounds and forms of a language in a given period of time. At the moment, however, let us content ourselves with what we have.

The editor lists some peculiarities of the language usage of the women recorded in the texts comparing them with the common Moroccan dialect. The main aim of Roux's thesis was to illustrate in his texts the three regular phonetic changes which have taken place in the women's language in Meknes: š → s,