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This volume was published on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the chair of Arabic at Leiden University. It contains papers delivered at the colloquium held in November 2013 to celebrate this memorable occasion and therefore not only contains papers penned by staff working at Leiden University, but by prominent Arabists from other universities as well. The book starts with a foreword by the current holder of the chair, Professor Petra Stipesteijn, and a preface by the editor, Ahmad Al-Jallad. As the latter points out, the study of the Arabic language is in need of a wider, more interdisciplinary perspective. The volume therefore presents sixteen studies, divided into five sections, which write the history of the Arabic language by “looking beyond the traditional sources and methods” (p. x).

The book starts with the section What is Arabic? This is also the question that John Huehnergard attempts to answer in the first chapter (pp. 3–34). He argues that the innovations that (Proto-)Arabic does not share with the other Semitic languages, is what defines a language as Arabic. Huehnergard takes as his starting point the now commonly accepted division as described by Hetzron in the 1970s, which argues that Arabic is a separate branch within the Central Semitic subgroup. Huehnergard states that both Classical Arabic and the colloquial varieties must have a single common ancestor, labelled Proto-Arabic. He gives examples of innovations of Proto-Arabic that it did not inherit from its Central Semitic ancestor, as well as features that are found in the modern dialects but not in Classical Arabic. Huehnergard concludes that inscriptive Ancient North Arabian cannot be considered Arabic. Safaitic, however, does share a number of innovations with Arabic, and therefore they must share a common ancestor. Based on this evidence, he suggests a new subdivision, which instead of having Arabic directly branching off Central Semitic, has Proto-Arabic branching off Central Semitic and then branching into Arabic and Safaitic.

The question Andrzej Zaborski (who sadly passed away in 2014) tries to answer, is whether or not Classical Arabic is archaic (pp. 35–50). While earlier Semitists considered Classical Arabic to be the most conservative of the Old Semitic languages, this view later shifted, and it came to be seen as one of the most innovating. While Akkadian is considered by some to be the most archaic of the Semitic languages because Akkadian texts are the oldest we have, Zaborski points out that the old age of the records of a language does not necessarily mean that the structures of that language are archaic. Zaborski studies the verbal systems and their components, and demonstrates that Classical Arabic has conservative forms as well as innovations. His conclusion is that although he considers Classical Arabic and Akkadian to be the most archaic Old Semitic languages, “Classical Arabic is per saldo even a bit more conservative” than Akkadian (p. 45).

The section Arabic in its epigraphic context contains three chapters. The first of these, by Manfred Kropp (pp. 53–74), proposes a new reading and translation of the much-studied ʿAyn Ḥabada inscription, which was found in 1979 and first published in 1986. The inscription is written in two languages: the introductory formula and protocol are in Nabataean, and the remainder in Arabic. The text is an incantation to the god Obodas, written in highly formal speech. Kropp proposes a new reading of the Arabic text and provides a new translation. The chapter ends with the presentation of translations proposed by other scholars. The great variation in these translations shows just how difficult the text is to interpret, and Kropp concludes that a better drawing of the inscription is needed.

The next chapter, by Laïla Nehmé (pp. 75–98), deals with inscriptions from the 3rd–5th centuries, written in the transitional script between the Nabataean script and the Arabic one. These inscriptions were found in both northwest and southern Arabia. The texts are divided into two groups: those dated prior to AD 275, with evolved y, h, h, and g, and those from AD 275–475, which contain more evolved letters and letter combinations. Nehmé reserves the label Nabataeo-Arabic for the latter group. She explores Arabic influences on the Nabataean-Arabic texts by tracing phonological and grammatical features that are characteristic of Arabic, such as the use of the broken plural. Her conclusion is that the people who wrote the texts almost certainly spoke Arabic, although the area “was probably still characterised by a certain bilingualism” (p. 94).

In chapter 5, “Graeco-Arabica I: The Southern Levant”, with almost 90 pages by far the longest of this volume, Ahmad Al-Jallad discusses the linguistic features of Arabic written in the Greek script (pp. 99–186). This is the first article in a series of four, each covering a different geographic area. The chapter starts with a presentation of the criteria used to identify the Arabic material, after which follows the actual study, containing three sections, on the phonology of the consonants, the phonology of the vowels, and morphology. The phonology part discussing the consonants gives a very thorough study of all the possible ways of transcribing Arabic consonants in Greek, and their implications for the pronunciation of these sounds in that period of time. As for the phonology of the vowels, one of the advantages of the Greek script is its ability to represent the Arabic vowel system, which makes features such as the raising of *a and the syncope of unstressed short vowels visible. The section on morphology contains, among other topics, the feminine

Horta takes seriously some manuscript pages that are actually a spoof diary that Burton wrote to relieve the tedium of a transatlantic voyage. Horta, 296; Lovell, A Rage to Live, 343–46.
ending -at, the case endings, the definite article, the diminutives, the *afal* pattern of the elative, and the broken plurals. We are looking forward to the other three instalments of the “Graeco-Arabica” article series.

The third section, *Classical Arabic in Context*, starts with a chapter by Daniele Mascitelli (pp. 189–211), which discusses the Classical Arabic quadriliteral roots starting with *šin* or *šiṣ* that have triliteral roots as their counterparts. His hypothesis is that these quadriliteral roots may have been derived from triliteral ones by adding a causative prefix *š*- or *ṣ̌*-.

The roots are compared with the corresponding roots of Ancient South Arabian and Modern South Arabian, as both these languages have a productive causative *š*- prefix in their verbal system. The chapter provides a list with 78 roots beginning with *š*- and 90 beginning with *ṣ*-; discussing some of these in depth, such as *ṣuláh* ‘turtle’ which is linked to the triliteral root LHF ‘to cover’.

Lutz Edzard (pp. 212–226) discusses the phenomenon that the relative pronouns *allādī* and *illi* can be used as subordinating particles meaning ‘that; for that; because’. An example from Classical Arabic is *al-hamdu li-lāhī iladī qaṣāta min-nā dirhamun fa-‘awwada-nā lāhū dinārān* ‘Praise be to God that we lost a dirham and God compensated us with a dinar’. Earlier interpretations such as by Diem (2007), stated that the relative pronouns in these examples are reinterpreted as subordinating markers. Edzard proposes an alternative explanation, in which *alladī / illī* as subordinators are an archaic feature, as ‘the general direction in grammaticalization processes tends to lead from demonstrative elements that also serve as subordinators towards relative elements’ (p. 222). To reinforce his theory, he mentions parallels in Indo-European languages, such as the English demonstrative and relative markers *that*.

The next chapter, by Jordi Ferrer i Serra (pp. 227–270), discusses the translation of the word *’aṣfar*. Franciscus Raphelengius (1539–1597), Professor of Hebrew in Leiden, translated this colour term in his *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum* with ‘red, brown, orange’. He based this on Q 2:69, where he identified the ‘yellow’ cow mentioned as the red heifer in Num 19:2 and interpreted *’aṣfar* as a translation of Hebrew 𐤊𐤂𐤃. Thomas Erpenius (1584–1624), who wrote an addendum to Raphelengius’ dictionary, changed the translation into *flavus* ‘yellow, light brown’, which then established itself as the standard translation of *’aṣfar*. Ferrer i Serra discusses several old sources that indicate that *’aṣfar* should be seen as a shade closer to orange, red, or reddish brown. He discusses the appellation *Banū al-‘Aṣfar* for the Romans, which was related to Esau/Edom’s red skin colour, and must have referred to a darker, rather than a pale, complexion. He also refers to a 19th-century source that mentions that in the Sudan, *’aṣfar* was used to connote darker skin. I would like to add two references from contemporary Egyptian Arabic that support his theory, and both point to a more brownish/reddish interpretation of the colour *’aṣfar*. The first one is from the Western Delta: ‘*safra* hellbraun ohne Flecken (Kuh)’; the second *’aṣfar(i) iššams the moment before sunset* (when the sun is red). It would be a useful addition to Ferrer i Serra’s study to have a look at other modern Arabic dialects to see what range of colour *’aṣfar* could indicate there.

François Grande’s (very technical) chapter on terminative-adverbial and locative-adverbial endings (pp. 271–316) investigates the declensional paradigms of pre- Classical Arabic and Akkadian, the two Semitic languages with fully productive case systems, as well as Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew. Grande reconstructs a ‘dualist’ system of case endings in Early Semitic based on internal structural clues. With regard to pre-Classical Arabic, Grande concludes that two relic forms of locative-adverbial endings existed side by side: those that ended in *u* as in *qablu* ‘before’, and those that ended in *un* or *um* as in *ladun* ‘at’ or *dalikum* ‘that’, which are older than their counterpart with *u*. He also finds evidence for some relics of terminative-adverbial endings.

The last contribution in the section on Classical Arabic is Johnny Cheung’s chapter on Middle Iranian borrowings in the Qur’ān (pp. 317–333). He discusses the Qur’ānic words of probable Iranian origin found in Arthur Jeffery’s *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān* (1938), explaining their etymology, as well as the phonological and morphological changes that the words have gone through in the borrowing process. Some of the words have not been borrowed directly from Iranian, but have come into Arabic via another language, most often Aramaic. Cheung sometimes offers alternative etymologies, such as for *araḏik* ‘couches’, which might have been borrowed from Greek rather than Iranian. It is interesting to note that most borrowings mentioned are related to the description of paradise, or, as Cheung summarises it: “items & products related to luxury and refinement” and “intangible (spiritual, religious) ideas” (p. 332).

The section on Qur’ānic Arabic in Context contains two articles. The first of these, by Guillaume Dye, presents some data evidencing bilingualism or even multilingualism in Qur’ānic Arabic (pp. 337–371). He points out that it is not unlikely that both the audience and author(s) of the Qur’ān were bilingual or multilingual to a certain extent, especially having a command of Aramaic. Dye presents cases of phrases in the Qur’ān that are literal translations of Bible texts. He also looks at the use of foreign words, loanwords, and syntactic structures and concludes that some stylistic peculiarities of the Qur’ān could be explained by taking into account interference of the style of other, Jewish and Christian, religious works. He also stresses the role of scribes, who were highly literate in both Arabic and Aramaic, in the composition and transmission of the Qur’ān.

Martin Baasten’s chapter (pp. 372–392) takes as its starting point Luxenberg’s *Die Syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran* (2000), and looks specifically at *Sūrat al-Kawṯar*, which has baffled both medieval and modern exegetes. Baasten analyses Luxenberg’s proposed new reading of this verse word by word. For instance, the word *kawṯar*, which is traditionally translated with ‘abundance’ or, alternatively, explained as one of the rivers in Paradise, is identified by Luxenberg as the Syriac *kuttārā* ‘persistence’. Baasten finds this theory plausible, but does not exclude the possibility that *kawṯar* could come from another Arabic dialect rather than from Syriac. In other cases, such as the noun *sānī* ‘adversary’, Baasten shows that there is no reason to assume influence from Syriac. Baasten therefore rejects Luxenberg’s conclusion that *Sūrat al-Kawṯar* was the first piece of evidence for Christian epistolary literature in the Koran.

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The last section, *Middle and Modern Arabic in Context*, contains four chapters. The first of these, by Geoffrey Khan (pp. 395–404), deals with vocalised Judaeo-Arabic texts (Arabic written by Jews in Hebrew script), which are an important source for the history of the Arabic language. He compares the Judaeo-Arabic reading tradition with two non-Jewish texts: a Greek transcription of the Arabic translation of Psalm 77, dated to the 9th–10th century, and a Coptic transcription dated to the 13th century. The Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts discussed are from the Cairo Genizah and date from the High Middle Ages. The texts are written in Classical Judaeo-Arabic orthography with Tiberian Hebrew vowel signs, which provide important information on the phonology of the language. Some features of modern Arabic dialects found in these texts are pronominal suffixes without case inflection, the raising of the vowel a, and the prefix yi- with kasra in the verbs. The texts also exhibit pseudo-Classical features, such as treating initial hamzatu l-waṣl as hamzatu l-qat’ā. Most of these characteristics are found not only in the Judaeo-Arabic texts, but also in those in Greek and Coptic script.

Alexander Magidow’s chapter (pp. 405–440) addresses the problem of applying a traditional tree-based model for a genealogical reconstruction of the Arabic dialects, as it is difficult to address the merger of dialects and language contact in such a model. As an alternative strategy, he proposes reconstructing information about speech communities, which he defines as “a group of people bound by social network ties as well as a sense of social allegiance, and having at least some part of their linguistic repertoires in common” (p. 416). He combines linguistic data from modern Arabic dialects and historical data about the Arab migrations to reconstruct the Arabicisation process. As a case study he takes the demonstratives and uses these, in combination with information about historical events, to reconstruct the Arabicisation of the Nile Valley and of the Levant.

Na’ama Pat-El (pp. 441–475) takes the features discussed by Huehnergard in the first chapter to demonstrate that some archaic features of the modern Arabic dialects are not found in Classical Arabic, and therefore preserve a linguistic state earlier than Old Arabic. One of the features she discusses is the definite article, giving examples of dialects in which only the adjective, and not the noun, takes the article, such as *si’ al-‘aṭīr* ‘the old market’. There are also examples from pre-Islamic Arabic, the Qur’an, and other Central Semitic languages, which makes her conclude that it is an old feature. She points out that the “existence of a certain feature in Classical Arabic cannot by itself serve as a proof that it is archaic” (p. 470) and that Classical Arabic is not necessarily conservative, while the dialects may have preserved archaic features that cannot be found in Classical Arabic.

The last article in the collection, by Marijn van Putten and Adam Benkato, looks at traces of Arabic in the Berber language of the Libyan oasis of Awjila (pp. 476–502). One of the phonological features investigated is the reflex *q* of *qāf* in some Arabic loanwords, a reflex not encountered in the Arabic dialects of Libya today, where it is realised as *g*. Another feature is that of loanwords in which the *‘āyn* is missing, such as in *lāfīt* ‘health’ (from *al-‘āfiyya*), which points to an early borrowing from Arabic. Other features discussed are the morphology of loan verbs and the structure of Arabic nouns. There are indications that the language of Awjila was influenced by Arabic varieties not found in Libya today, which must have come from a stratum other than the current North-African Arabic dialects.

Generally, the volume has been carefully edited, except for some typos and minor errors (e.g. p. 462, ex. 42: ‘water’ should be ‘hundred’; p. 377 *naḥara* should be *naqara*). However, Kropp’s chapter would have benefited from more careful proofreading (see, e.g., p. 54 “they developed till to a stage”; p. 63, fn. 15 “the verb […] fits well into the context and fives a required meaning”). On p. 79, Laila Nehmé refers to the inscription of *‘En ‘Avdat* (‘Ayin ‘Abada), stating that the most recent publication about it is Macdonald (2015); it would have been useful if she had referred to the chapter about the inscription by Kropp that precedes hers in this book. Apart from these minor points, this is an excellent collection of articles, which contains a wealth of information and shows a high level of scholarship. The book does exactly what it promises on the cover: to look at Arabic from an interdisciplinary point of view, combining methodology from the fields of historical linguistics, epigraphy, dialectology, and history. This book is a must-read for everyone interested in the history of the Arabic language.

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