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binary phrase have a relation based on a particular remark being subsequently linked to a general remark, which is almost a proverb, e.g. "Recognize to your client his right: it is the noble man who recognizes the right of others." Some verses can be described in the same manner as the amthdl ("Do not do X, doubled") such as "Do not mix yourself in the affairs from which you are exempted/ and do not give advice except only to someone who will accept that advice." 

As earlier, the types of verses are listed in a scheme (p. 154). The main text is followed by the corpus of amthdl and their translation (Appendix II); the corpus of verses and their translation (Appendix III); a survey of amthdl and verses in which the same proverbial expressions occur (Appendix III); and frequent word couples, sometimes two opposites, which are word groups that also crop up elsewhere (Appendix IV). The book ends with a bibliography and a summary in English.

On the whole, the book is an interesting contribution to the study of early Arabic literature and language: no one has ever made such a detailed analysis of early Arabic amthdl as proverbs. The formal characteristics which can be distinguished in the amthdl indicate a general principle, namely that of repetition, especially in its binary function. This has a mechanism comparable with Grimm's question-response and Schmiedlin's anticipation-resolution whose main tension is to give a completeness to the sentence and a sense of definite closure. We live, in a time in which there is more and more interest in throwing light on the nature of the very formal characteristics of Semitic languages, such as Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic, which were more artificial constructions than living languages. Staying early Arabic verse and early Arabic amthdl may give us more insight into the archaic linguistic construction that literary Arabic was. Therefore, this study by Anna Pagnini should be welcomed amidst the other recent books on proverbs (Kassim[13] and Sagiv/Landau[14]) and the book on Classical Arabic verse and metre by Frolov.[15]

Amsterdam, December 2000

Arie Schippers


This is the first ever comprehensive dictionary of Andalusian Arabic. It is rather surprising that until recently very little was known about Andalusian Arabic. The dictionaries and grammatical sketch of the Andalusian Arabic language and other literary documents of this vernacular, published earlier by Corriente, already showed us the richness of Andalusian Arabic, about which we have more data than any other medieval Arabic vernacular (cf. e.g. F. Corriente, El lexico arabe andalusi segun P. de Alcala, ordenado por raíces, corregido, anotado y fonemicamente interpretado, Madrid, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Filosofía y Letra (Departamento de Estudios Arabes e Islámicos, Universidad Complutense de Madrid) 1988. — X, 259 pp.; F. Corriente, El lexico arabe estandar y andalusi del "glosario de Leiden", Madrid, Departamento de Estudios Arabes e Islámicos, 3, Universidad Complutense, 1991. — 184 pp.; F. Corriente, Lexico estandar y andalusi del Diwan de Ibn Quzman, Zaragoza, Universidad de Zaragoza (Area de estudios arabes e islamicos; 1), 1993. — 164 pp.)

The sources of the present dictionary are manifold: testimonies of the vernacular in Arabic script as well as in Latin script, from dialectal poetry as well as from scientific treatises. Books about the 'errors of the people' (the so-called lahn al-'amna literature) and Andalusi Judaico-Arabic sources in Hebrew script have not generally been included, except occasionally from the Granadine Jewish author Saadya ibn Danan (15th century). And rightly so, I think, because many Judeo-Arabic texts from Andalusia are not in vernacular, but in Classical Arabic since the Arabic writings by important Jewish authors such as Moses ibn Ezra (1055-1138) and Yehudah ha-Levi (1065-1140) do not contain Andalusian Arabic at all. But as far as Judaeo-Arabic is concerned, Corriente leaves the final decision to Blau in view of the comprehensive Judaico-Arabic dictionary the latter is undertaking.

In his dictionary, Corriente is right to use a single, standardized Latin transliteration system, except for Arabic materials that were already in Latin script, as in the case of Alcala's work. It is of course impossible to get an impression of the Andalusian Arabic vernacular by reading a dictionary. If we want to get to know the grammar of the vernacular and its affiliations with other Arabic dialects and tribal vernaculars, we need to look at Corriente's earlier publication A grammatical sketch of the Spanish Arabic dialect bundle (Madrid, Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1977).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to have an overview of the lexical possibilities of the dialect. The dictionary is arranged by Arabic roots represented by Latin symbols. In case of verbs, some data of the verbal scheme are given. Many loci refer to Ibn Quzman's Diwan (referred to by IQ).

I hope this compilation of words and expressions of the Andalusian Arabic dialect will attract the attention it deserves. It will be of great use to all those who specialize in Andalusian Arabic, or even Spanish Hebrew or medieval Castilian literature.

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Antoine Galland (1646-1715) is best known as a pioneering translator/editator, and perhaps partly author, of the Arabian Nights Stories, but he did more than that: he made a translation of the Koran and wrote learned essays on,