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Many contributions consist of the first publications of recent archaeological work. Some of them quite extensive. To mention only two: Y. Magen and M. Dadon publish the later strata of the excavations at Nebi Samwil (to them biblical Mizpah), from the Persian period up to the Crusaders, and R. Avner “the recovery of the Kathisma Church and its influence on octagonal buildings”. This publication is very important. The Kathisma (just to the South of Jerusalem on the way to Bethlem, where the pregnant Mary is supposed to have rested on a big stone) proved to be an octagonal church. The plan consisted of three concentric octagons, roofed over with a dome; the smallest inner one constituted the actual church. This octagon was created by a low octogonal wall supporting pillars and between the pillars and a second octagon was an empty ambulatory. Between the second and the third octagon were rooms and four rectangular chapels with rounded apses and doors opening to the ambulatory. The four apses and the main apsis of the inner church are oriented to the east. The Kathisma was one of the largest churches of the 5th century in the environment of Jerusalem. It was devoted to the Holy Mother (Theotokos) and not to events of the life of Jesus Christ like the big churches of the 4th century built by Constantine. The Kathisma church has a strong resemblance to the Theotokos Church on the Gerizim, built by the emperor Zeno, ca. 484 AD (cf publication by Y. Magen in the Corbo-Volume, mentioned above). Avner stresses the fact that at the time when the octogonal Dome of the Rock was built in Jerusalem the only other octogonal building around Jerusalem was the Kathisma on the road to Bethlem.

E. Netzer writes about Synagogues from the Second Temple Period and compares archaeological and written sources. Netzer enters an interesting discussion with L. I. Levine (The Ancient Synagogue, Yale UP 2000) on the possible role of city gates in the origin of the synagogue. This view was adopted by myself in my Towns in Ancient Israel and in the Southern Levant (Louvain 2003). Y. Magen publishes a new investigation on Mamre: a cultic site from the reign of Herod. Magen concludes that both Mamre and Machpela were built to accommodate recently converted Edomites.

To my surprise and joy Z. T. Fiema publishes results of an investigation of the Byzantine Monastic Centre of St. Aaron near Petra and includes results of a survey of the Petra hinterland. Among those results terraced and irrigated fields are also mentioned. I also discovered these during a stay at Petra of a week in 1978 but I was never able to come back for proper research, as I intended.

It will be obvious that such a volume is full of surprises, even for colleagues not working in this specific field and period. It is amazing to realize how much work has been done lately on ancient churches, monasteries, lauras enz. The volume shows beyond doubt that the Franciscans are still very serious about their assignment to be the keepers of the Holy Land and its past.
role. In this respect, the cultural centre of Ripoll is of importance, as are the school of translators of Toledo and other translation centres. Mozarabic immigration is studied in relation to the Francs in Spain, along with the importance of the towns of Toledo, Sahagun and Tudela. In this connection, Galmes describes the impact of commerce and merchants and the importance of al-Andalus in relation to Roman art in France; further, he discusses jugglers and other causes of literary influence and the connection of the Carolingian epics with the pilgrims’ route to Santiago. He also relates the French chansons de geste to Spanish and Andalusian themes and emphasizes the traditionality of the epics and the Arabic narrative (p. 130).

Chapter 3 deals with the themes, motifs and formulas of the Arabic narrative, which are reflected in the Romance epics (p. 141). Galmes emphasizes that many of the features of both Arabic and Christian epics are polygenetic, but that others cannot be explained without supposing a chain of causality. He then speaks about epic nicknames such as Ghalib, Sayyidji al-Battal and mio Cid Campeador. Also weapons can have proper names, such as Hauteclaire and Brunadant in French, and Muşammin and Dhu-l-Fiqâr in Arabic. Galmes gives several instances of the hyperbolic blow during sword fighting (p. 158). One of his quotations goes (here I translate from the Old French La Chanson de Roland lines 1324-1334, because Galmes quotes the text in Old French): ‘Then he bares Durendal, his good sword, spurs on his horse, and went to strike Chemubé/it breaks the helmet, [...] slices the cap and shears the locks in two, it slices the eyes and the features, and his white cuirass whose mail was close and tight/he cuts through all the body [...] to the saddle, which was beaten with silver and gold. The sword was a moment arrested upon the horse but then it sliced its spine and slaughtered its joints to dead in the field in the thick grass.’ Other quotations also speak about slicing the body, cutting off heads and slicing the spines of horses (cf. lines 1370-1375). Similar Arabic examples are drawn from Tabari’s History and from Maghâzi literature.

The role of the cousin relationship in the Romance epics is to a certain extent comparable with that of cousins in the social structure of the Arab world. Although the word for cousin can sometimes mean other familiar connections too, we come across Roland as a cousin of Charlemagne. Cousins have an epic meaning also in connection with the honour of the family. Important in this respect are blood revenge, the accumulation of adjudications, the epic lament and other noisy expressions of grief (p. 188).

Galmes then mentions stories of trickery, for instance, the story of the two Jews of Burgos, which refers to a passage in the epos of El Cid. The hero gives two usurers sacks of sand instead of gold, treachery which occurs also in a story in Petrus Alphonsi’s Disciplina Clericalis. The theme of the cart full of merchandise with which the soldiers of William of Orange conquer the city of Nîmes from the Saracens is another trickery theme: the soldiers are hidden under the merchandise and smuggled into the town of the enemies. Other tricks, stratagems and deceits of war are dealt with in the following passages, for example the ‘tornafuy’ (‘simulating to flee’). Other deceits of war were sometimes not accepted by Christian chevaliers as they considered them to be contrary to their code. Pretending to eat the bodies of their enemies was another stratagem to induce terror — a stratagem the Muslim general Tariq employed when he landed in Spain. Another trick in epics is disguise and exchanging clothes to escape from prison (p. 253).

The other side of treachery in both cultures was the sense of honour and the consciousness that one had to keep one’s promise and stick to one’s word. In this connection, Galmes discusses the theme of ‘Anseis de Carthago’, the young ruler to whom Charlemagne handed over the reins of power in Spain, but who lost Spain because of his infidelity towards his counsellor; afterwards, Charlemagne restores Christian rule in Spain. In another story, a broken sense of loyalty of Rodrigo, King of Toledo, was the reason that Julian (the governor of Ceuta and Algeciras) introduced Tariq (the commander of the Muslims) into Spain. There are several stories in Arabic and Latin about this.

In Arabic literature, eloquence and the magic value of the word are equally as important as bravery, and in Christian epics there are sometimes cases in which eloquence is seen as very important, as appears from descriptions of heroes such as the Count of Monfort quoted on page 291 (‘Lo coms de Monfort qui es avinens parliers’, Croisade v. 6876). Another important feature is the invocation of the hero himself, such as ‘I am ‘Ali’ or ‘I am Rui Díaz’, a kind of self-praise occurring in both Arabic and Romance poetry.

Galmes also compares the duel between the champions in both literatures and dwells upon gallantries in the war, such as saving lives on the battlefield. The mythical theme of the lions is dealt with in Arabic and Romance literature and occurs even in Homer, the lion being a famous symbol of bravery. According to a legend, El Cid won a battle after his death against the ‘More’ Búcar; Galmes found a parallel in a story of the Ayyām al-‘Arab. Another important topic is the presence of women in the war and of the female warrior, and the presence of the woman of high descent, who consoles the captives. The counterpart of this is the perfidious recommendation: this means that the letter which is delivered to the addressee is not a recommendation for its bearer but rather a malediction against him.

Galmes deals successively with the famous motifs of being enamoured by hearing alone; the Holy War; rejoicing and screaming within sight of the enemy; the stealing and sharing of the booty; the apparition of the angel Gabriel; the foretelling dream; the presage of birds; and magic (p. 511). The role of musical ‘machines’ to provoke noise in the battle is discussed. Other elements which are mentioned are extraordinary signs at the birth of heroic persons, and the prediction of fairies.

Another facet of the battle is the weeping over the cut-off heads, but also examples of chess playing and its dramatic implications as a stratagem of the battle are given in both literatures, for instance as used by Ibn ‘Ammar against King Alphonse. The sacred office of kingship as an institution of divine character is mentioned in both literatures. Galmes then moves on to the question of love lyrics in both Arabic and Romance literature, and discusses lyrical elements proceeding from Arabic erotic poetry in Romance epics with such motifs as the evocation of spring, the theme of the albadan and the wind as the bringer of news.

Other common traits between Arabic narrative and Romance epic are the city as a beloved, beautiful virgin whose hand is desired, the apple as the symbol of the reign and the display of luxury before ambassadors. In both literatures, itineraries of travels are frequent. Galmes deals with some geographical terms which refer to the reign of Charlemagne and
are perhaps a tracing of the Arabic; the expression 'ports' refers to the Pyrenees (p. 593). Then follow excursus on praise and invective in epic literature and on the term 'nuevas', which often means the same as the Arabic 'akhbār' in the sense of 'stories' (p. 607).

Finally, Galmes dwells upon the external structure of Romance epics and features, such as linear narration and direct dialogue. Important here is the minstrel and the way he introduces his public to the narration. Galmes then discusses the metrics of the old Castilian epic poetry, the internal conditioning of the Arabic epic and its reflection in the Castilian; its realism and historicity. Both epics contain ideals of tolerance and measure, as well as democratic ideals.

In his conclusions, Galmes speaks about how traditional literary genres propagate in different variants and versions, thus seeing traditional literature as a dynamic production. One finds in traditional epics both imitation and polygenesis, and sometimes also the assimilation of foreign material. Galmes gives some examples of influences found in the development of the epic (p. 629).

There are many black and white plates in the middle of the book, as well as some colour plates at the end. The good quality of the paper provides a suitable surface on which to reproduce the images. The images are from medieval European Christian illustrations as well as Oriental illuminations in Persian and Arabic literature. At the end there is an index of the abbreviations used in chivalric literary works in Romance languages; there are even some Latin and German sources. In total, Galmes has drawn from over 120 works, of which La chanson de Roland is the most prominent. He used the standard editions every medievalist or specialist in medieval Romance literature knows of. Although for such scholars these editions need not be further specified, this does not apply to specialists in Arabic literature. The Arab sources have not been listed, probably because Galmes went indiscriminately through the whole Arabic literature and uses every piece of a source he could grasp in order to establish similarities. He uses historians such as Tabari, geographic authors such as Yaqut, early battle stories such as the Ayyām al-'Arab, sometimes taken from Ibn 'Abd Rabbihī's Iṣq al-Farīd, the Maghāzi literature, and the Kitāb al-Aghānī. From the Siyar literature dealt with on p. 24 he gives us relatively few quotations, perhaps because this literature is in dialect and not so easy to render in translation.

Galmes considers it unnecessary to translate the Latin and Romance quotations, many of which are in Old French: his primary readership must comprise medievalists who are familiar with these kinds of texts but apparently less familiar with Arabic and with Konrad's German version of La Chanson de Roland.

The book has no register, which is a pity since one of the primary reasons to use this work might be to verify how some motifs are dealt with in both literatures. Nevertheless, we should be grateful that at the end of his scholarly career Galmes took the trouble to put all this material together. Although on the whole the book gives the impression of being a juxtaposition of motifs from both literatures, without much elaboration, the huge amount of material investigated by Galmes provides us and future researchers a useful tool to work with and a treasure to draw from when verifying and establishing likenesses between the two medieval literatures. In this book, Galmes limits himself to medieval literature. More sophisticated chivalric entertainment—such as Tasso's Gerusalemme liberata, Ariosto's Orlando furioso and, for instance, some Hebrew chivalric magāma by Jacob ben Elaazar (1180-1240)—is not dealt with, as Galmes confines himself to the primordial medieval genre. However, we should be grateful that the book he finished just two years before his death has reached us in time.

Amsterdam, January 2004

Arie Schippers


The author of this book, Reinhard Weipert, is professor of Semitic philology at the University of Munich. His activities as a compiler of Arabic philology are well known. He has written supplements to vols. II, VIII and IX of Sezgin's Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums and to the Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie, and he is a contributor for Arabic and Berber to the yearly Bibliographie Linguistique. According to the title and subtitle, the present work is a bibliographical handbook of important editions from 1960 to 2000 in the domains of classical Arabic philology and poetry. More explicitly, the compiler defines its scope in the introduction as follows:

... recommendable editions or good prints from 1960 onwards of kaddib or majallat (written between the 12*/18* and the 13*/19* century, roughly from al-Sabawaih to al-Zabih; on lexography, grammar, poetry; Ibn al-ardār mgarb, bihar ibn al-ardār, kaddib, azdar, bokhari, abu al-hasān, bihar 'alam al-dīn, fiqāh, tasavufs, fēqu, tābqāts — and historical works (p. 8).

The book is in four parts (authors of philological works; anonymous or collective philological works, poets, and anonymous or collective poetry with 706, 58, 594 and 53 entries respectively) and a supplement of 20 entries. In addition, there are over 50 pages of indices of titles, transmitters and commentators, and editors.

A single entry may refer to several titles. In Part I, for instance, the entry al-Asma'ī lists 16 titles, several of which are represented by two editions, and in one case three, albeit two by the same editor. Poets in Part II are often represented by more than one edition of their entire work, or several partial editions. The total number of text editions mentioned is said to be in excess of 4,000. Still, this compendium does not purport to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject, but a list of those publications which 'deserve it to be known' to Arabists working in the field.

Some help would indeed not come amiss to modern Arabists if the portrayal of recent developments given in the introduction has any relation with reality. We read that Middle Eastern book production has grown exponentially and that it is plagued by a multitude of unreliable editions (in a footnote, one publishing house is singled out for naming and shaming in this respect); that Arab M.A. and Ph.D. theses and other disdrels are often of 'modest scholarly value', and