

provides the results of the *Petrographic Analysis of Iron Age Pottery* (pp. 161–173). It shows that the Ashdod Ware vessels, which seem to be a Philistine cultural indicator, were not produced on the site, but imported from Philistia. Chapter 9 by Y. Garfinkel presents the *Stone and Metal Artifacts* (pp. 175–194), adding a special chapter on *The Standing Stone near the Western City Gate* (pp. 195–200). *The Faunal Assemblage* is examined in Chapter 11 by Ron Khatzi (pp. 201–208). The complete absence of pig bones at Khirbet Qeiyafa, contrary to the neighbouring Tell aš-Šafi, is a clear ethnic and cultural indicator of Semitic inhabitants.

*Finds of the Hellenistic Period* (pp. 209–230) are examined by Déborah Sandhaus with particular studies of the terracotta figurine of a horse by Adi Erlich (pp. 225–227) and of metal artifacts by Ravit Nenner-Soriano (pp. 227–229). Historians will certainly pay attention to this reoccupation of an ancient site, in a key strategic location, at a particular moment in the final decades of the Persian Empire. The “seven years” of the Persian oppression recorded by Josephus Flavius (*Jewish Antiquities* XI, 7, 1, §297–301; cf. *Against Apion* I, 22, §194) come here into one’s mind. Instead, the editors of the volume do not seem to be very interested by this period of Judah history. The twenty-three coins from the Late Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman times are then studied by Yoav Farhi (pp. 231–241).

*The Ostrakon* is presented by Haggai Misgav, epigraphist, and by the two editors (pp. 243–257). A photo, a drawing, a palaeographic chart of the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostrakon, and a comparative chart of letters from various inscriptions of the 11<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries are provided, as well as deciphering proposals. *Further Observations on the Ostrakon* are made by Ada Yardeni (pp. 259–260) with another drawing and a decipherment. Chapter 15, *Imaging the Ostrakon*, by Greg Bearman and William A. Christens Barry offers additional good quality images (pp. 261–270) with excellent photos produced at Megavision laboratory, Santa Barbara, CA (p. 268, figs. 15.12 and 15.13). A detailed account of the field observations during the 2007 and 2008 campaigns is provided in the final part of the volume (pp. 273–304).

The editors must be praised for the excellent presentation of the architectural remains and of the finds with colour photographs and appropriate legends. The high quality archaeological work they intend pursuing in the next years will undoubtedly shed new light on the Kingdom of Saul and possibly on the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic periods.

Edward Lipiński

E. Machut Mendekka, *Na szlakach Sindbada. Koncepcje współczesnej prozy arabskiej*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2009, 383 pp.

Professor Ewa Machut-Mendekka (University of Warsaw) is an outstanding Polish scholar in the field of contemporary Arabic literature. In the past she dealt firstly

with the Arabic Drama and theatre, but since some years ago she developed her interests in the Arabic Prose. Two works in English are of special interest among her books: *The Art of Arabic Drama* (Warsaw 1977) and *Studies in Arabic Theatre and Literature* (Warsaw 2000). The most recent book by E. Machut-Mendekka, titled *Na szlakach Sindbada. Koncepcje współczesnej prozy arabskiej* (“On the Paths of Sindbad. Concepts of Contemporary Arabic Prose”) is devoted to the newest issues in the Arabic prose literature.

Among recent interesting scientific projects in this field (but from the European theoretical point of view and by group of Authors) one can mention for example a volume by several authors edited by A. Neuwirth, A. Pflitsch and B. Winckler *Arabische Literatur, Postmodern* (2004). In “classical” manner wrote their books R. Allen (1982), M. Badawi (1993) and J. Oliverius (in Czech language, 1995). In Poland there exists a large history of contemporary Arabic literature in two volumes edited by J. Bielański (1978 and 1989).

The book of Ewa Machut-Mendekka is not a simple “history of contemporary Arabic prose”, not a description compiled of a number of biographical sketches of Arab writers and summaries of their novels or stories. It is an interesting analysis with the use of a new and original attempt and look to the contemporary production of Arab speaking writers, most of them coming from the East of the Arab World.

The theoretical attempt to the contemporary Literature is sketched by Ewa Machut-Mendekka in the “Introduction” to her books. Of great importance is the statement that although in the Arabic prose one can find some phenomena similar to the literary experience of the Western world, and in spite of literary contacts between Arabic and European or American literature, the circumstances and inspirations in both cases are different. For this it is better not to call the similar issues the same way. In my opinion it is a very important statement, which additionally finds its excellent confirmation in the reviewed study of Ewa Machut-Mendekka.

I think this Author’s statement in the context of prose has its sources in earlier studies by the scholar showed in her abovementioned book about the Arabic drama (first edition in Polish 1992). Instead of copying the European or Western categories of description of Arabic drama the Polish scholar invented three main notions: Neoclassicism, Realism and Creationism. The last one was and is of great importance in Ewa Machut-Mendekka’s thinking about the Arabic contemporary literature. She transposes his way of thinking to the field of Prose, abandoning such terms like for example “postmodernism” or “magical realism” and so on. The Arabic literature is not a mirror of Western one; it has its own characteristics and historical experiences going back to the rich Arabic literary traditions. A careful reader and scholar can easily find clear traces of these traditions.

Apart from the theoretical frames of description and analysis of the Arabs’ prose Ewa Machut-Mendekka focuses her literary studies on the problem of identity and various forms of alienation (*ḡurba*) as core themes of nearly all literary output. These problems are analysed in a wide perspective of the creativity of Arab writers living both

in Arab countries and in exile, writers of Arabic origin and coming from minorities living in Arab countries (all of them writing in Arabic – the analysis omits those writers, who are writing in other languages). The tools of cultural psychology and anthropology, taken into account through the book, are very useful in this context.

Additionally, Professor Machut-Mendekka finds some important and deep similarities between issues in prose and drama and she shows these similarities on concrete examples. In this way, one can say, the book is a continuation and extension of the picture of contemporary Arabic writing based on drama into prose. This attempt seems to be successful.

The literary material analysed by Ewa Machut-Mendekka is very extensive and diverse, and this is to be seen in following detailed presentation of contents of this book.

In the “Introduction” (pp. 11–29) the Author explains her concept of main periods and issues of development of Arabic prose from the *Nahḍa* period to our days, pointing out the problem of identity. Then follows:

Part I “The Ethnographing Realism. The Prose from the sing of *Mimesis*” (pp. 31–172) is divided into six chapters. I. “The Picture of Reality in writings of Egyptian Nesters of Prose” (Maḥmūd Taymūr, Yūsuf Idrīs, Nağīb Maḥfūz); II. “Between his Kind and Strangers. Concepts of Realistic Iraqi Prose on the Example of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Mağīd ar-Rubay’ī”; III. “Stormy World of Great Syria; the Motive of Struggle and Emigration” (Ḥannā Mīnā, Ġāda as-Sammān, Ḥaydar Ḥaydar, Ġassān Kanafānī); IV. “The Anthropology of New Arabic Reality in the Prose of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Munīf”; V. “Realism and Islam”; VI. “Realism and New Arabic Culture”.

Part II. „Subjective Issue. The Imagined World (pp. 173–264). I. “From the Inspirations by the Psychological Reality”; “From Psychological to Natural Reality. The Concept of the Literary Autobiography in Arabic Literature”; III. “On the Border of Realism and Subjectivism (the Writing of Mağīd Ṭubayā)”; IV. Salīm Barakāt: The Concept of ‘Insular’ Identity”; V. “Ibrāhīm al-Konī: the Magic of the Desert”.

Part III. “Narrative Issue. The Narrated World” (pp. 265–332); I. “The Narrator Convention” (‘Izz ad-Dīn Madanī, Ġamāl al-Ġiṭānī); II. “Archetypal World of the South in the Writings of Yaḥyā Ṭāhir ‘Abd Allāh”; III. The Dynamics of the Word and Reality in the prose of Aṭ-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ”.

From the Writers not mentioned in the titles of abovementioned paragraphs one should add Ġubran Ḥalīl Ġubrān, Ṭaha Ḥusayn, Rašīd aḍ-Ḍa’īf and Idwār al-Ḥarrāṭ. On the ground of this short presentation we see, that the analyses of Polish scholar includes the Prose of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia (the only one Maghreb Country), both Muslims and Christians, Arabs and one Kurdish writer, among them one Woman. Thus, more or less proportionally to the religious and ethnic divisions in the Middle East. In this way the monograph gives the reader a vast panorama of the contemporary Arabic Prose.

As far as I know, the study by Ewa Machut-Mendekka provides the attempt first in Arabic studies to present the comprehensive picture of contemporary Arabic

Literature without the implementation of purely Western tools of analysis and theoretical description. The book of the eminent Polish scholar is, without doubt, an example of new way of thinking about the literature of the Arab world.

Marek M. Dziekan

فاضل بيات خالد أرن، بغداد من خلال وثائق الأرشيف العثماني [Fadil Bayat, Halit Eren, “Baghdad in the Light of Ottoman Archive Documents”, Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul 2008, 142 pp.

The history and culture of the Arabic countries during the Ottoman period in common view of Orientalists dealing with this part of the world is treated as a period of decline (*inhiṭāf*), and – consequently, because of this view, it is till now neglected by most of the Arabists dealing with the political history as well as the history of culture or literature. A growing interest in this half of millennium is – one should say that the old paradigm of “decline” is to change.

One of the manifestations of this issue is the reviewed book, edited by IRCICA expert Dr. Fadil Bayat and Dr. Halit Eren, the Director General of this institution. The book is edited in Arabic, and for this reason it is addressed above all to Arabic-speaking reader, but it is also very important for Arabists, because it is dealing with documents written in Ottoman-Turkish. This is a fact which has a great importance for the study of Ottoman period – these studies demand the cooperation of Arabists and Turcologists (or Turks). The reviewed book is an extraordinary example of such a work.

Apart from the “Introduction” (*Taqdīm*, pp. 7–8) by H. Eren and a general presentation of the book and its purpose “This Book” (*Haḍā al-kitāb*, pp. 9–10) it consists of three main chapters. [1] “Some Observations on the History of Baghdad in Ottoman Times” (*Malāmiḥ Tārīḥ Baġdād fī al-‘Ahd al-‘Uṭmānī*, pp. 11–16). This chapter is not extensive, but very substantial. The Author presents main points of the Ottoman history of Baghdad and characterizes this period from the political and social point of view, basing on the documents from Ottoman archives and a book in Arabic written by F. Bayat, edited in 2007 by *Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-‘Arabiyya* (Centre for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut).

[2] “Facsimiles of Documents and Their Translations” (*Uṣūl al-Waṭā‘iq wa-Tarġamātuḥā*, pp. 17–123). This part contains 51 documents – their colored photographs and translations. The facsimiles are of very good quality. We are faced with hand written documents, sometimes in very beautiful calligraphy, and some printed documents, especially statistical tables. Every document is provided with precise bibliographical and archival information concerning the place of storage, its number and daily date in Islamic and Christian Calendar. All the documents are arranged chronologically. The oldest one (pp. 18–19) is *Al-Iblāġ ‘an Istiḫbāb al-Aman wa-an-Niẓām fī Wilāyat Baġdād wa-al-Amr bi-Irsāl Ğawāsīs ilā Arġā’ ad-Dawla aṣ-Ṣafawīyya li-al-Istiḫlā’* [“Notification on Stabilization of the Security