

ABŪ 'UTHMĀN IBN BAḤR AL-JĀḤIẒ: *The book of misers. A translation of al-Bukhalā* by R. B. SERJEANT, reviewed by EZZEDDIN IBRAHIM. Readings 1997: Garnet Publishing Limited. XXVII, 259 S. (The great Books of Islamic Civilization) – £ 60.00

Avarice – *buhl* – is an important theme of medieval Arabic *adab* literature and *hiğā'* poetry. Both the known works about misers – *bukhalā'* – and the regular occurrence of chapters about *buhl* or *bukhalā'* in *adab* encyclopedias document the interest of medieval Muslim scholars in this form of human behaviour (for a list of medieval Arabic literature on *buhl* see FEDWA MALTI-DOUGLAS, *Structures of avarice. The bukhalā' in medieval Arabic literature*, Leiden 1985, p. 6f.). Among the preserved monographs on misers, the *Bukhalā'* by al-ĠāḥiẒ (around 776–868/869) is the oldest and probably the most famous. It has received considerable attention from modern Arabists. There are three critical editions of the Arabic text: G. VAN VLOTEN (Leiden 1900), AHMAD AL-'ĀWĀMIRĪ and 'ĀLĪ AL-ĠĀRIM (Cairo 1939), and ṬĀHĀ AL-ḤĀĠIRĪ (Cairo 1948). In addition, the *Bukhalā'* was translated into German (OSKAR RESCHER, Stuttgart 1931), French (CHARLES PELLAT, Paris 1951 – PELLAT's translation was later partially translated into German: *Arabische Geisteswelt*, Stuttgart/Zürich 1967), Spanish (SERAFÍN FANJUL GARCIA, Madrid 1984), and Russian (KH. K. BARANOV, Moscow 1985). However, until the publication of this translation there had been no English translation available. The British Arabist R. B. SERJEANT (1915–1993) began his enterprise of a *Bukhalā'*-translation, because al-ĠāḥiẒ' text provides for the non-Arab “an introduction to how an Arab conducts himself, the proprieties, table manners etc. The sort of food they eat and their delight in the Arabic language” (p. xxvi). Consequently, SERJEANT decided to write an annotated translation for “a Western reader, unacquainted with Arabic” (*ibid.*).

The volume contains two introductions, one by SERJEANT (p. xxv–xxvii) and an other by his former student EZZEDIN IBRAHIM (p. xiii–xv). The co-operation between a native speaker of English during the translation and revision processes is a declared working principle of the series *The great books of Islamic civilization* published by the *Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization* in Qatar (p. ix). A table of contents (p. v f.) and a detailed general index (p. 251–259) gives the reader independent access to the wealth of factual information in the volume. A selected bibliography (p. 246–250) compiled by WADĪ'AH NAJM and REX SMITH lists most of the sources which SERJEANT mentions in his comments (p. xvi). The reproduction of six illustrations from a medieval Arabic manuscript (p. xvii–xxiv) is certain to gain the reader's interest. The translation itself (p. 1–225) is enriched with 1145 footnotes, which contain references to the 62 appendices (p. 227–245). The footnotes and so-called appendices, which are in fact endnotes to the footnotes, are mixed because SERJEANT died before the annotations were completed. He had already finished the translation of the Arabic text, but a great number of comment were not incorporated into his translation. REX SMITH and JUDITH WILSON edited the comments and organized them into a coherent form of footnotes and appendices (p. xvi).

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SERJEANT used for his translation the two preserved manuscripts – Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, Arabe 6011, and Istanbul: Köprülü 1359 – and the three modern editions (p. xxvi f.). The translation shows two formal peculiarities for which no sufficient explanation is provided. First, the translation has numbers on the margins “which correspond to the original Arabic text” (p. xvi). But they are not presented as the designation of manuscript folios, and they also do not refer to AL-ḤĀĞIRĪ’s edition (AL-ĞĀḤIẒ, *Al-buḥalāʾ*, Ed. by ṬĀḤĀ AL-ḤĀĞIRĪ, Cairo<sup>6</sup> 1981), which is currently the best critical edition of the *Buḥalāʾ*. Second, the translation is divided into 26 sections (p. v f.), while AL-ḤĀĞIRĪ divided the text of his critical edition into 33 sections (*op. cit.*: p. vii f.). MALTI-DOUGLAS followed AL-ḤĀĞIRĪ’s structure of the *Buḥalāʾ*, since it is supported by the divisions in the two manuscripts (*op. cit.*: p. 45 note 18).

The Köprülü manuscript, which is the only complete manuscript of al-Ğāḥiẓ’ *Buḥalāʾ*, ends with a section which is not preserved by the incomplete manuscript in Paris. In AL-ḤĀĞIRĪ’s edition, this section has the title “aṭrāf min ‘ilm al-‘Arab fī aṭ-ṭa‘ām” (*op. cit.*: p. 213). It is devoted to Arab foods among the bedouins and begins with the words “qāla ‘Amr al-Ğāḥiẓ” (*ibid.*). PELLAT contested that this section belongs to the *Buḥalāʾ* and published its translation separately (Ğāḥiẓiana II., Le dernier chapitre des Avars de Ğāḥiẓ, in: *Arabica*, 2 (1955), p. 322–352). His main argument was that neither content nor tone corresponded with the rest of the text (*op. cit.*: p. 322). With regard to other translations of the *Buḥalāʾ* BARANOV’S did not include the disputed section in his Russian translation, while SANJUL retained it in her Spanish translation. The literary critic MALTI-DOUGLAS agreed with PELLAT’S point of view and excluded this section from her analysis of the *Buḥalāʾ* (*op. cit.*: p. 42–45). She adduced the formal argument that no other section of the *Buḥalāʾ* opens with the words “qāla ‘Amr al-Ğāḥiẓ” (*op. cit.*: p. 45). SERJEANT, however, decided that this section is a part of al-Ğāḥiẓ’ *Buḥalāʾ*. In this context SERJEANT’S different organization of the text becomes important, since in his translation the disputed section (p. 190–225) is presented as a part of the previous section “A miscellany of eccentricities” (p. 171–225). Thus, the disputed section is not even formally separated as a new section with its own title (p. 190). Although the question of the actual extent of a text is not mere philological penny-pinching, SERJEANT’S disagreement with PELLAT is neither stated nor explained, either in the two introductions or footnotes and appendices.

The classification of al-Ğāḥiẓ’ *Buḥalāʾ* as *adab* does not pose a problem. What poses a problem in its classification as monograph or anthology. Since in the *Buḥalāʾ* al-Ğāḥiẓ collected just texts about the single topic avarice, the work has been largely understood as a monograph about misers, although it is equally valid to argue that al-Ğāḥiẓ’ compilation of diverse materials – *šīʿr*, Qurʾān, *ḥabar*, and *ḥadīṭ* – is an anthology about misers. The question of monograph versus anthology is important, because an answer implies already an assumption about the use to which written texts have been put by their medieval Arabic readers. Due to our modern reading habits monographs are read, at least in theory, from cover to cover, while anthologies are consulted as reference works. The assumption about the text’s function is crucial, because this assumption determines how the text is pres-

ented in print. A monograph's layout is very different from an anthology's layout. In the case of SERJEANT's translation the *Buḥalā'* is clearly presented as a monograph. The 26 sections form visually cohesive units organized by paragraphs, while quotes from poetry are always inserted.

SERJEANT wrote a very readable translation. The series *The Great Books of Islamic Civilization* has the objective "to acquaint non-Muslims with the contributions Islam has given to human civilization as a whole" (p. vii). But this book about misers is only going to reach very generous readers, because £ 60.00 is rather expensive for a hardcover not even printed on acidfree paper.

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MANFRED ULLMANN: *Das Motiv der Kreuzigung in der arabischen Poesie des Mittelalters*. Wiesbaden 1995: Harrassowitz. 267 S. ISBN 3-447-03747-4.

Seit seiner 1976 in Bd. 68 der *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* erschienenen Studie über das Sagenmotiv des Werwolfs hat sich MANFRED ULLMANN immer wieder mit motivgeschichtlichen Fragen befasst. Der hier vorzustellende Band versammelt 107 Zitate von insgesamt 60 arabischen Dichtern, darunter einer Dichterin (Sakan, Nr. 8 und 9). Neun Zitate sind anonym. Die behandelten Verse, meist Teile längerer Gedichte, haben gemeinsam, dass sie in irgendeiner Weise mit dem Motiv der Kreuzigung zu tun haben. Zeitlich umfassen die Beispiele von Ġarīr (gest. um 111/729) bis Ibn Dāniyāl (gest. 710/1310) eine Spanne von mehreren hundert Jahren. In Anmerkungen kommentiert der Verf. die behandelten Verse, stellt sie, wenn möglich, in ihren historischen Zusammenhang und weist auf sprachlich-stilistische Besonderheiten hin.

Der Verf. zeichnet zunächst die Geschichte der Kreuzigung als Strafverfahren in knappen und präzisen Zügen nach (Einleitung, S. 15–23). Die Strafe der Kreuzigung kam durch das provinzialrömische Recht nach Palästina. Für die Christenheit zum Kernpunkt ihres Glaubens an die Erlösung wurde die Kreuzigung Jesu, ein Ereignis, das sich auch in den Offenbarungen, die dem Propheten Moḥammad zuteilwurden, niederschlug. Nach dem Glauben Moḥammads und der überwiegenden Zahl der Muslime in späterer Zeit ist Jesus jedoch nicht gekreuzigt worden. Daraus erklärt sich auch, warum in den behandelten Kreuzigungsgedichten der arabischen Dichter nie auf Jesu Kreuzestod Bezug genommen wird.

Den Anfang der Sammlung bilden Verse, in denen die Dichter auf historische Fälle einer Kreuzigung anspielen. Besonderen Widerhall fand offenbar die Kreuzigung Bābaks (gest. 223/837), des Führers der Ḥurramīya. Nicht weniger als sechs Gedichte sind diesem Ereignis gewidmet (Nr. 4–9). Vergegenwärtigt man sich weitere berühmte historische Fälle von Kreuzigung, so erstaunt etwas, dass die Hinrichtung des Mystikers al-Ḥusayn b. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāġ, der im *Dū l-qa'da* 309/März 922 in Bagdad vor seiner Enthauptung am Kreuz (*ṣalīb*) zur Schau