

ASMĀ' AL-KUTUB. By 'ABD AL-LATĪF B. MUHAMMAD RIYĀDĪZĀDA. Edited by Muhammad al-Tūnjī. 2nd edition, Damascus, Dār al-Fikr, 1983. 398pp. US \$6.00.

'Abd al-Latīf b. Muḥammad Riyāḏīzāda, the author of this alphabetically arranged list of book-titles, was a contemporary of Ḥājī Khalīfa. He lived in Istanbul and other cities (Üsküdar, Edirne) in the Ottoman empire. He was employed there as a teacher, and at some stage also as a judge. He died in 1087/1676-7 and the present bibliography, which was compiled independently of the *Kashf al-Zunūn*, was according to the colophon completed in 1054/1644-5.

The editor has subjected the Arabic text to the following, rather radical treatment. First he transcribed the unique manuscript, which is the autograph, now kept in the collection of the University of Benghazi: then he consistently rearranged the order of the entries, which were originally arranged alphabetically on the first letter of the title only; then he put the section of the *hā'* in its place in the Arabic alphabetic order (before the *wāw*). The layout of the manuscript suggests that the text was not definitively completed in 1054 AH, but that the author continued to add titles in the margins. Those titles that the present book has in common with Ḥājī Khalīfa's *Kashf al-Zunūn* are graphically indicated by the editor. As the MS bears no title, the editor provided this as well. The edition is preceded by a short introduction on the life and work of the author with some illustrations from the MS, and it is concluded with four extensive indexes (on authors' names, book-titles, geographical names and bibliographical sources). The edited text is given with a modest amount of explanatory notes from the editor. As far as I can judge by comparing the printed text with the text of the illustrations, the editor has performed his task satisfactorily. The MS is written in a far from easily readable script with features of *ta'līq* and defective punctuation, and the compact writing in the margins and on the page makes difficult reading. After having rearranged the material so drastically, the editor did not, however, give for each title the reference to its original location in the manuscript. Nor did he spend much energy in identifying the more obscure titles.

In all, the text gives some 1600 titles of Arabic books, together with a few Persian and Turkish titles. About half of these are indicated as mentioned by Ḥājī Khalīfa. The author was apparently not aware of Ḥājī Khalīfa's simultaneous efforts, and generally speaking, the present work cannot be compared with such a monumental work as the *Kashf al-Zunūn*. Riyāḏīzāda gives only scanty information on the contents of the works he mentions: one or two words usually suffice. For example, on p. 241 the *Kitāb al-Hayawān* by al-Jāhiz is categorized as: 'fī al-bayān', on style, while the subject-matter of the *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk* by al-Ghazzālī (p. 308) is indicated as: 'fī al-ḥyā', whatever that may mean. Such indications are by no means exceptional. The author's information on the authors of the books is somewhat more extensive, but does not contribute to our present-day bibliographical knowledge.

On the whole, the present text is not an impressive source of bibliography and one wonders what the author's purpose was in compiling it. It could have been intended as a catalogue of some private or public collection or as a personal notebook, but to the twentieth-century reader it does no more than illustrate the ready availability of a certain bibliographical expertise in the milieu of Ottoman scholarship. Rather than anything else, it is this fact which the book documents eloquently. In my opinion, the editor should have elaborated on this subject in his introduction by placing the author in an intellectual environment, but he has preferred to leave his readers in the lurch. The accurate and extensive indexes which he has added, however, make good many of these disadvantages, and it is thanks to these that the present text can become an object of future research.

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JAN JUST WITKAM

MODERN ARABIC LITERATURE. Compiled and edited by ROGER ALLEN. (A Library of Literary Criticism.) New York, Ungar, 1987. xxxiv, 370pp. US\$75.00.

This volume comprises a selection of critical extracts, by both Arabs and non-Arabs, about some 90 modern Arab writers. The extracts have been selected from Arabic and Western-language periodicals and other sources, and a large proportion have been translated into English by Roger