

BOOK REVIEWS

Martin R. Zammit, *A Comparative Lexical Study of Qur'anic Arabic*. Leiden—Boston—Köln. Brill: 2002, 652 p. (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Sec. 1. The Near and Middle East. Bd. 61).

In 2002 Arabic linguistics and semitology were enriched with a new study accomplished in English, Italian and Maltese research centres with consultations with Israeli and Maltese scholars. The author of the book — Martin R. Zammit — is a Doctor of Philosophy (since 1998) in Arabic studies and semitology, and a teacher of the Arabic language of the Department of Arabic and Near East studies of the University of Malta.

It is well-known that the study of the Qur'an has a centuries-long history and is represented with extensive multifold scientific literature in the East as well as in the West. But even in such sphere as the language of the Qur'an, where, as it seems, "everything has been studied", the appearance of the concerned work is not at all a common event. The author of the book opens a new aspect of linguistic study of the largest and, in many respects, initial monument of the Arabic language. By attracting comparative lexical material of eight Semitic languages, M. Zammit aims at determining quantitative relation between Arabic vocabulary of the Qur'an which traces to the panto-Semitic fund and truly Arabic vocabulary, i. e. vocabulary which does not have correspondences in the Semitic languages involved in this comparative analysis. By determining different amounts of common lexemes between the Qur'anic Arabic (hereinafter QA) and each of the Semitic languages involved in the study, the researcher intends to determine not so much the degree of genetic closeness of the QA and the concerned Semitic language, as the degree of their "cultural-historical closeness", the level of socio-cultural inter-Semitic ties (p. 1).

The book is supplied with full reference data. The appendix at the end of the book includes: bibliography (pp. 617—27), containing 223 items; an index of Arabic root stems in the Arabic alphabetical order (pp. 629—45); a common index of personal names and terms (pp. 646—52).

The research part of the book consists of: an introduction (pp. 1—16), six chapters (pp. 17—590) and notes (pp. 591—616). In the Introduction the aims and the program of the study are formulated. Chapter 1 (pp. 17—28) is dedicated to an analytical review of works on Arabic and Semitic lexicology. Chapter 2 (pp. 29—63) is dedicated to the history of formation of the QA, to the problem of

adopted words and semantic classification of the concerned QA vocabulary. In chapter 3 (pp. 64—513) tables of lexical composition of QA are presented in comparison with correspondences in each of the eight Semitic languages. If there are no such correspondences, there is a blank space before each language. Chapter 4 (pp. 514—60) is dedicated to semantic analysis of the QA vocabulary in historical aspect. Tables of statistical calculations and estimations of comparison results are given in chapter 5 (pp. 561—77). In chapter 6 (pp. 578—90) the author sums up the study and presents his main inferences and conclusions.

In the Introduction (pp. 1—16) an account of the author's starting points is given. The material of the study is vocabulary of the Qur'an as the most trustworthy and reliable monument of the Arabic language of the 7th c. AD. 1717 lexical units are selected from the text of the Qur'an which correspond to 1504 roots. Taking into account the latest calculations of the root fund of the Arabic language (3775 units), the QA roots form about 40% of all Arabic roots (p. 2). Adopted words and proper names found in the Qur'an are not ranked among these 1717 lexical units.

In the comparison with the QA vocabulary the material of eight Semitic languages is involved. In the order of their permanent arrangement in tables and schemes: Geez, epigraphical South-Arabic languages (indiscrete), Syrian, Aramaic (indiscrete), Hebrew, Phoenician, Ugarit and Akkadian.

The first chapter (pp. 17—28) is a historical review of literature dedicated to the study of Arabic vocabulary beginning from national philological schools of the first centuries of Islam. Then the author looks at the main research trends: (i) comparative-historical study of the Arabic language and its vocabulary in the West and in the East, the first attempts to define and reconstruct the common vocabulary of Semitic languages and, broader, — Afrasian (Semito-Hamitic) languages; (ii) lexical-statistical methods which allow to determine the degree of genetic closeness between related languages and the chronology of their division.

M. Zammit in detail reviews the results of lexical-statistical research in the sphere of Semitic languages and Arabic dialects in the works of D. Koen, H. Rabin and some other western arabists and semitologists of the second half of the 20th c. However, he does not mention the latest glottochronological classification of Semitic languages suggested by A. Iu. Militarev in the *Semitic etymological*

*dictionary*¹ although the name of this book is included in the bibliography and is mentioned regarding other issues.

Pointing out to the inaccuracies and contradictions in lexical-statistical works on Semitic languages and Arabic dialects based on limited lists of the so-called "basic vocabulary", M. Zammit believes that such limited lists of words are not enough to establish real genetic relations between languages. Instead of such limited lists of basic vocabulary he suggests a new approach — to consider full lexical make-up of the QA and to determine what correspondences it has in other Semitic languages and the amount of such correspondences (p. 28).

The second chapter (pp. 29—63) is a detailed account of the "outside" history of the Arabic language in connection with the history of its native speakers. M. Zammit uses all known sources and studies dedicated to the pre-Islamic history of Arabs and the Arabic language, gives a short characteristics of its first monuments and touches upon the old discussion about the authenticity of pre-Islamic poetry, the question of possible diglossia as early as in the pre-Islamic period and formation of supra-dialectal forms of the language. In this connection the author considers the question of the place of the Qur'anic language in the system of contemporary tribal dialects and supra-dialectal forms of verbal poetry and *koinē*. A special section is dedicated to the issue of adopted words in the Qur'an, their statistical estimation, semantic classification and the percentage ratio of thematic groups with the total amount of adopted words. The given lexical data and figures may be of great interest for arabists and researchers of the Qur'an.

I shall point to some cases when the etymological interpretation of adopted words should be made more exact. Thus, in the author's opinion, original Arabic words *drs* "to be erased, vanished"; *qr'* "to be going to" take in the QA alien "technical" (apparently "cultural" — *A. B.*) meanings: "to study, to read"; "to call, to retell" accordingly (p. 60). However, at a closer study of comparative Semitic material one should point out that the original meanings of the mentioned Arabic verbal roots are not only all-Semitic, but trace to an older, Afrasian period. Compare the data of Afrasian reconstruction: Arabic *drs* "to be erased, covered with dust (about footprints on the ground)" > "to winnow, to thrash" Syrian *drs* / *š* Hebrew Aramaic *drs* Akkadian *drs* / *sh* "to pound, to trample", all from Afrasian *dVrs* / *dVrc* "to thresh, to pound, to trample"². In such situation we can assume that a direct adoption penetrates into the QA from the north-west Semitic verbal root *drs* "to learn, to study", and as a result two homonymous roots appeared. The same can be said about the etymology of the verbal stem *qr'* which has the meaning "to be going to, to invite, to call guests to a feast" not only in the Arabic language but also in a number of Semitic languages. From there we can assume the following semantic development: "to call, shout, pronounce, "recite" > "to read". While in the latter case we can assume the semantic development of one initial root, in the first case a direct semantic connection is not traced and one can surmise the existence of two homonymous roots as early as in ancient Semitic languages.

M. Zammit completes the second chapter with a classification of the QA vocabulary in seven semantic fields: the

universe, physical being, soul-intellect, human being as a social organism, social structure, man and the universe, grammatical categories (i. e. subordinate parts of speech).

On the whole, according to the plentifulness of documentary data and the fullness of the most important sources and scientific literature, the second chapter of M. Zammit's book is an important section which is of interest to all arabists, historians of the Arabic language and semitologists. Analysis of historical data allows the author to reject conclusively the traditional and outdated idea that during the long pre-Islamic period the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula and the Arabic language were isolated from the surrounding world of ancient Semitic and non-Semitic civilizations (pp. 50—1).

In chapter three (pp. 64—446) tables of the QA vocabulary are presented in the Arabic alphabet order. To each unit of the Arabic language correspondences from the abovementioned Semitic languages are given. If there are no such correspondences, a blank space is left. Arabic words are given in the following form: noun stem in singular, perfect verbal stem in singular, 3rd person, masculine. The correspondences from the Semitic languages are presented in forms given in the corresponding dictionaries or in the form of the consonant root. M. Zammit justifies the choice of the Semitic languages with the fact that they are represented in the most reliable sources and studies.

In the last part of the third chapter (pp. 447—513) the so-called "lexical grates" are presented — tables in which the presence or absence of a lexical correspondence between a QA unit and each of the Semitic languages is fixed. The lexical grate is represented with nineteen positions. All 1717 units of the QA are included in such grates. Among these positions are semantic characteristics (according to field numbers) and areal geographical characteristics.

The method of tables and the "grate" used by the author allows readers to see full characteristic of each lexeme they are interested in, at least within the limits placed by the author himself.

The fourth chapter (pp. 514—60) is dedicated to an interesting and complicated question of semantic changes and their direction in the lexical system of a language and in the QA vocabulary in particular. M. Zammit traces this process by the example of 210 lexemes selected from the vocabulary concerned in the third chapter — from the 1717 lexical units. By comparing the meaning of a lexeme from the QA with the meanings of its correspondences in other Semitic languages, the author attempts to identify the tendencies (or directions) of its semantic changes. He considers three main processes established in general linguistics: (i) preservation of the original meaning; (ii) narrowing of the original meaning ("specialization"); (iii) widening of the original meaning. As a criterion of the antecedence of a lexeme's meaning, the author accepts the identity or the closeness of meanings of the corresponding lexemes found on the opposite peripheries ("East—South") of the Semitic areal (p. 515).

The semantic analysis carried out by M. Zammit according to these criteria leads him to the conclusion that in the considered lexemes of the QA the preservation of the archaic (or initial) all-Semitic semantics prevails (pp. 559—60).

¹ A. Militarev, L. Kogan, *Semitic Etymological Dictionary*, i (Münster, 2000), pp. XXXIX—XLII (hereinafter referred to as SED).

² I. Diakonoff & Co., "Historical comparative vocabulary of Afrasian", *St. Petersburg Journal of African Studies*, II—VI (1994—7), No. 305, (hereinafter HCVA).

Undoubtedly, this part of the book presents to the reader a visual picture of one of the possible approaches to defining historical processes of formation of the lexical system of the Arabic language. However, in my opinion, while solving the question of the antecedence / secondariness of a meaning, changes of a meaning, etc., it is not enough to just compare an Arabic lexeme with vocabulary data of other Semitic languages. In many cases the meaning of a lexeme in the QA is determined by the context, while in the Arabic language, outside the realm of the QA such lexeme can have other meanings, including homonymous ones. However, this is shown in some examples of the author's analysis. Besides, the question of identification of the initial meaning, the division of homonyms and contamination of meanings of homonymous roots could have been, if not solved completely, at least defined more exactly if M. Zammit had involved in his analysis the data of already known Semitic reconstructions (for example, from SED) or deeper (and, accordingly, older) Afrasian reconstructions (for example, from HCVA). Thus, for the root *brm* (p. 517) "to twist, to be variegated" one should take into account the contamination of the meanings of two homonymous roots which are divided in the Afrasian reconstruction³. Examining an Arabic root *rjm* (in the QA "to beat with stones"), M. Zammit identifies its meaning (p. 545) as a result of "narrowing" of a more general semantics of the root "to speak, to speak against, to damn". In this case he does not take into account the contamination of homonymous roots: (i) *rjm* "a stone, a heap of stones", compare with Safaitic inscriptions⁴ and (ii) *rjm* "to call, to blame, to damn"⁵. We can also assume the contamination of meanings for the roots *krm* (p. 538) "to be generous" and *krm* "rain, winter season" and some other.

It is difficult to agree with such comparison as *nshr*⁶ "to stretch, to expand (oneself)" and *nshr / nsr* "to saw, to cut" (p. 401 and comment p. 525). The compared units trace to two different roots: pra-Semitic *n-šr* "to cut, to saw" (i. e. to a biconsonantal root with a prepositional complement *n-*⁷) and Arabic *nshr* which is possibly a phonetic variant of Arabic *ntr* "to disperse, to scatter"⁸.

In a number of etymologies the turn to Afrasian material and Afrasian reconstructions would have helped to make more exact and reliable judgments about the antecedence or secondariness of meaning of a concrete lexeme. Consideration of the latest studies on the structure of Semitic and Afrasian roots would have helped to distinguish the complement (a later consonant format of a root) in some cases and to discover an older "initial" (or "archaic") meaning of an Arabic lexeme. Thus, numerous meanings of the Aramic *far* (p. 521—2) on the Afrasian level are represented with reconstructions of various roots⁹. The author of the book traces the meaning of the QA lexeme *wābil* "pouring rain" (p. 553) to the initial meaning "to bring, to deliver". However, it is with the meaning "rain, to pour" that this lexeme traces to the pra-Semitic, and deeper to the Afrasian biconsonantal root *bul / bvl* "rain; to moisten, to flow"¹⁰. From the lexeme *t'm* ("to taste" in the QA and its correspondences in other Semitic languages (pp. 269—70 and p. 536) the initial meaning could have been confirmed basing on the Afrasian reconstruction *t'm*¹¹. In the light of new conceptions about possible structure of a Semitic / Afrasian root with an additional complement, the etymology of the Arabic *nfr*¹² "to come forward" (p. 541) which (with a reference to V. Leslau's opinion) implies the direction of development from "to jump, to fly" towards "to boil, bubble", seems incorrect. The polysemy of the Arabic *nfr* "to run, to run away" and "to boil, to bubble" traces to two different biconsonantal roots which can be distinguished as early as on the pra-Semitic level: *pr* "to raun, to run away"¹³, Afrasian *pVr* II "to come out"¹⁴, *pVr* IV "to run away, to fly away"¹⁵ and Semitic *fur* "to boil"¹⁶.

M. Zammit explains the irregular inter-Semitic correspondences between the Arabic *bst* and the west-Semitic and Akkadian *psht* "to widen, to stretch" (pp. 94, 528—9) as a case of vocalization of the labial consonant in the Arabic language, although we can not trace any phonetic conditions in the Arabic root that could have caused such vocalization. At the same time, the hypothesis about the possible existence of an emphatic labial *b* or *p*¹⁷ has long been discussed in modern semitology.

³ HCVA, Nos. 120—1.

⁴ F. W. Winnet, G. L. Harding, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns* (Toronto—London, 1978), Nos. 234, 329, 410, 421, 636, 929, 938.

⁵ S. S. Maizel, *Puti razvitiia kornevogo fonda semitskikh iazykov* (The Ways of Development of the Semitic Languages Root Fund), exec. ed., comp., suppl. A. Iu. Militarev (Moscow, 1983), p. 201, where the reverse semantic process is shown.

⁶ Qur'an 18:16; 81:10.

⁷ A. Zaborski, "Biconsonantal verbal roots in Semitic", *Zeszyty Naukowe Univ. Jagiellońskiego. CCLXIX. Prace językownawcze*, Z. 35 (1971), p. 87, No. 229.

⁸ Maizel, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁹ HCVA, Nos. 33, 35, 64, 66.

¹⁰ Zaborski, *op. cit.*, p. 56, No. 15; HCVA, No. 131; V. E. Orël, O. V. Stolbova, *Hamito-Semitic Etymological Dictionary: Materials for Reconstruction* (Leiden, 1994), Nos. 312, 329, 331, 334.

¹¹ HCVA, No. 244.

¹² Qur'an, 9:133.

¹³ Zaborski, *op. cit.*, p. 80, No. 174.

¹⁴ HCVA, No. 31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 33.

¹⁶ A. G. Belova, "K voprosu o strukture semitskogo kornia (komplementy i foneticheskie rasshiriteli)" ("To the question of the structure of Semitic root (complements and phonetic widenings)", *Istoriia i iazyki Drevnego Vostoka. Pamiati I. M. D'iaconova* (St. Petersburg, 2002), p. 32.

¹⁷ For example, see N. V. Yushmanov, "Struktura semitskogo kornia" ("The structure of Semitic root"), *Izbrannye trudy. Raboty po obschei fonetike, semitologii i arabskoj klassicheskoj morfologii* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 145—6, 194, n. 30; J. Cantineau, *Etudes de linguistique arabe* (Paris, 1960), pp. 15—7, 280; A. Iu. Militarev, "O predpolagaemom prasemitskom 'p'" ("About the probable Semitic 'p'"), *Istoriia i filologija Drevnego Vostoka* (Moscow, 1976), No. 20; and also — Afrasian reconstructions in HCVA, Nos. 43—51.

Concerning some semantic interpretations of Arabic and Semitic lexemes connected with anatomy, it could have been appropriate to take into account reconstructions and comments to them from SED which was included by M. Zammit into the bibliography and some rare notes. For example, he could have turned to SED concerning the Arabic *ghawf* "body, inside" (pp. 531—2)¹⁸, concerning the Arabic *qarn* (p. 538) "horn"¹⁹, concerning the Arabic *'azm* (p. 536) "bone"²⁰.

The fifth chapter of the book (pp. 561—77) presents tables and the results of statistical, quantitative and percentage estimations of the distribution of the QA and other Semitic languages' vocabulary. According to M. Zammit's calculations, the biggest percentage of the QA vocabulary correspondences falls at north-western Semitic languages — 40, 44%; at south-Semitic — 30.26% (pp. 562—3). The Akkadian, Ugarit, and Phoenician languages show a smaller percentage. For 535 out of 1717 lexical units of the Qur'an no correspondences have been found in the eight Semitic languages (p. 575). According to the author of the book, the origin of these exclusively Arabic lexemes is hard to define today. One can only assume that: (i) some of them have preserved from an older pra-Semitic period (and have not preserved in other Semitic languages); (ii) some of them represent re-interpretation of all-Semitic roots; (iii) some of them represent lexical innovations; (iv) for some lexemes the meaning is determined by the context (pp. 576—7).

Not calling in question the valuable results of laborious statistical estimations carried out by the author, I would like to point out to the fact that attraction of a wider range of Semitic languages could have slightly changed the current picture. Thus, for the lexeme *muzzamil*²¹ "rolled (in a garb)" the author finds no correspondences in the concerned eight languages (pp. 209—10). However, in the Mahrī language there is a verbal stem *zemūl* "to pull saddle-girth of a camel" and its derivations²². The same can be said about the QA lexeme *shajara* "a tree, a plant" that has no correspondences in any of the eight languages (p. 235), however in Mahrī one can find a lexeme *šagēr* "plants, trees"²³. Also compare the QA lexeme *'a'jam* "alien, speaking Arabic badly" (p. 282) given without correspondences in the Semitic languages involved in the study. However, in Mahrī there is a root *'jm* and its derivations "to be dumb, speechless"²⁴. For the QA lexeme *janah* "a hand, a wing" identified only as Arabic (p. 127) one can find additional material in SED²⁵ supported by Afrasian material.

In the final part of the book (chapter six, pp. 578—90) M. Zammit touches upon the main question: to what extent can the results of the lexical-statistical analysis of the QA define the place of the Arabic language in the family of Semitic languages. To answer this question M. Zammit

presents to the reader a detailed review of studies and discussions on the history of division of Semitic languages, on localization of their pra-homeland, mentions the "Amorite hypothesis", according to which it was the Amorite language (or group of dialects) that was the centre of innovational development of west-Semitic languages; touches upon the unalleviating discussion about the genetic classification of Semitic languages and the criteria of this classification²⁶. Eventually, despite the divergence of approaches, positions, criteria and principles of classification, it seems that the Arabic language most often occupies an intermediate, middle position between the main areals of Semitic languages "west-south" (the east with the Akkadian language are less often involved in classification debates).

Taking into account the fact that the considered QA vocabulary forms about 40% of the whole of the roots' composition of the Arabic language (p. 586), M. Zammit believes that the determined lexical correlation between the nine Semitic languages is quite indicative. In relation to Semitic language groups "North—West—South" the Arabic language is in an equidistant position from each of the groups (p. 587). At the same time the likeness in the sphere of semantic fields between the QA and the concerned Semitic languages testify to a greater semantic differentiation on certain themes (table on p. 588). In the question of the degree of semantic variability and the stability of the initial root M. Zammit comes to the conclusion about a certain stable balance of archaic semantics as well as of the "specialization" of ancient meanings (p. 589).

As a result the author connects all typological and lexical peculiarities of the Arabic language with the historical-geographical conditions of its formation and functioning (pp. 589—90).

Forestalling the general assessment, I would like to emphasize that all statistical data, the tables of lexical correspondences and semantic fields present us a picture of only one, although the most important, monument of the Arabic language. Its lexical composition and the character of its semantic fields are in many respects determined by the genre and the purpose of the monument.

The comparative material is limited to eight languages. Aside was left the vocabulary (it is not all adopted from the Arabic language!) of such an important group of Semitic languages as modern south-Arabic (Mahrī, *Shahri*, *Suqūṭrī*) and many Ethio-Semitic languages.

The attraction of more diverse and different in genres monuments of the Arabic language and a more complete comparative Semitic material can sufficiently alter the statistical position of the Arabic vocabulary in the Semitic area.

What concerns semantic analysis of a Semitic root, the occurrence of archaisms or innovations in this system can

¹⁸ Compare SED, No. 100.

¹⁹ Compare *ibid.*, No. 168.

²⁰ Compare *ibid.*, No. 25.

²¹ Qur'an, 73:1.

²² T. M. Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon and English-Mehri Word-List* (London, 1987), p. 468.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁵ SED, No. 86.

²⁶ In my opinion, while considering different genetic classifications of Semitic languages one should clearly distinguish the glottochronological principle of classification based on a completely different criterion. See, in particular, the suggested classification by A. Iu. Militarev given in SED, pp. XXXIX—XLII.

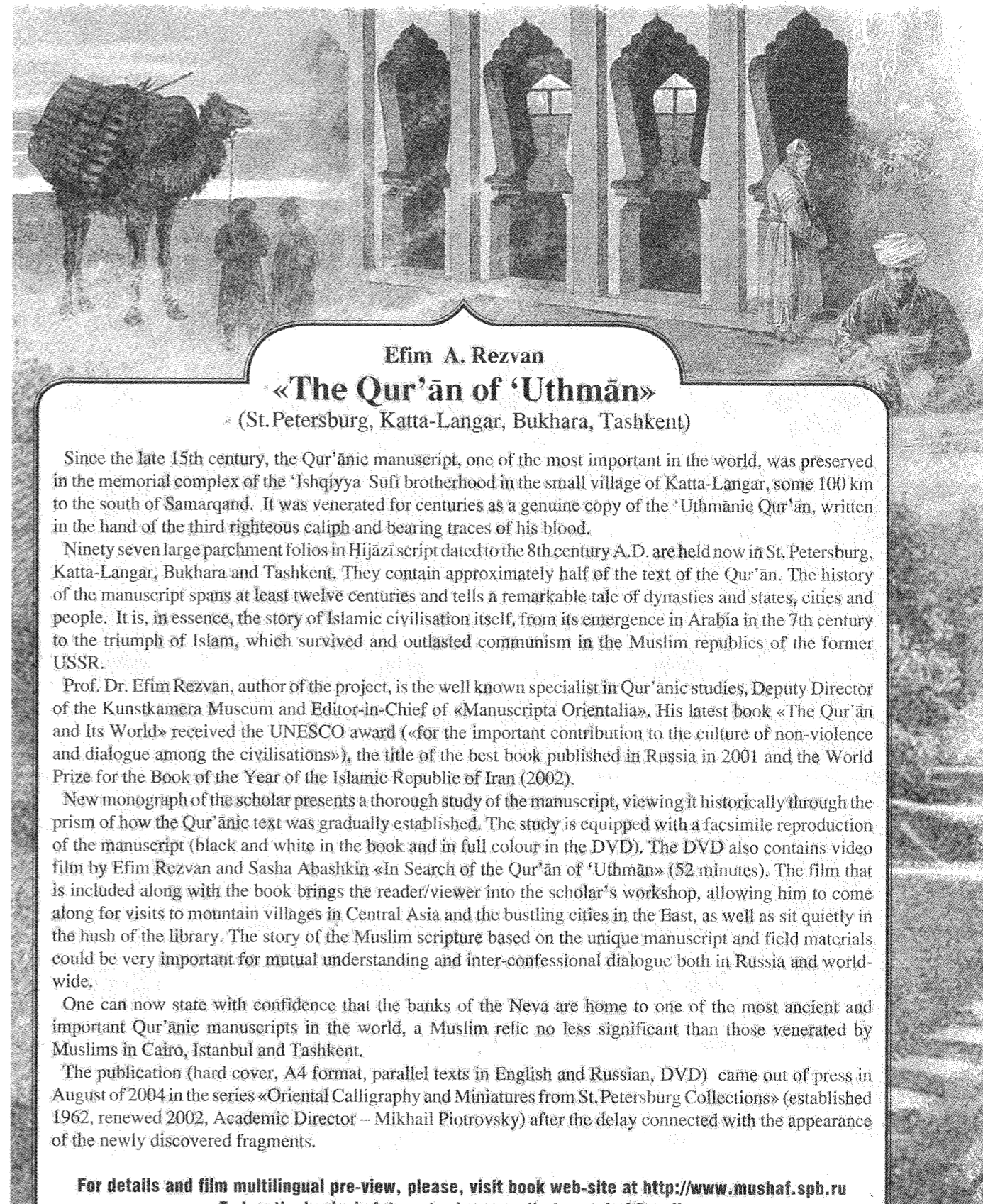
be identified more exactly through attraction of comparative material of other Afrasian languages, on which there is a number of researches in the world science and which were not fully taken into account by the author.

On the whole, the big and complicated task carried out by M. Zammit can be evaluated as a serious pioneer work on examination of the boundless ocean of Arabic vocabulary. Owing to special cultural-historical circumstances it is the Arabic vocabulary that can serve as the most extensive

source of many roots and words which have not preserved in other Semitic languages.

The reviewed book by M. Zammit is, in a way, a prologue of the long impending task of compiling an etymological vocabulary of the Arabic language, which, undoubtedly, will require collective effort of a big group of scholars.

A. Belova



Efim A. Rezvan

«The Qur'ān of 'Uthmān»

(St. Petersburg, Katta-Langar, Bukhara, Tashkent)

Since the late 15th century, the Qur'ānic manuscript, one of the most important in the world, was preserved in the memorial complex of the 'Ishqiyya Sūfī brotherhood in the small village of Katta-Langar, some 100 km to the south of Samarqand. It was venerated for centuries as a genuine copy of the 'Uthmānic Qur'ān, written in the hand of the third righteous caliph and bearing traces of his blood.

Ninety seven large parchment folios in Hijāzī script dated to the 8th century A.D. are held now in St. Petersburg, Katta-Langar, Bukhara and Tashkent. They contain approximately half of the text of the Qur'ān. The history of the manuscript spans at least twelve centuries and tells a remarkable tale of dynasties and states, cities and people. It is, in essence, the story of Islamic civilisation itself, from its emergence in Arabia in the 7th century to the triumph of Islam, which survived and outlasted communism in the Muslim republics of the former USSR.

Prof. Dr. Efim Rezvan, author of the project, is the well known specialist in Qur'ānic studies, Deputy Director of the Kunstkamera Museum and Editor-in-Chief of «Manuscripta Orientalia». His latest book «The Qur'ān and Its World» received the UNESCO award («for the important contribution to the culture of non-violence and dialogue among the civilisations»), the title of the best book published in Russia in 2001 and the World Prize for the Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2002).

New monograph of the scholar presents a thorough study of the manuscript, viewing it historically through the prism of how the Qur'ānic text was gradually established. The study is equipped with a facsimile reproduction of the manuscript (black and white in the book and in full colour in the DVD). The DVD also contains video film by Efim Rezvan and Sasha Abashkin «In Search of the Qur'ān of 'Uthmān» (52 minutes). The film that is included along with the book brings the reader/viewer into the scholar's workshop, allowing him to come along for visits to mountain villages in Central Asia and the bustling cities in the East, as well as sit quietly in the hush of the library. The story of the Muslim scripture based on the unique manuscript and field materials could be very important for mutual understanding and inter-confessional dialogue both in Russia and worldwide.

One can now state with confidence that the banks of the Neva are home to one of the most ancient and important Qur'ānic manuscripts in the world, a Muslim relic no less significant than those venerated by Muslims in Cairo, Istanbul and Tashkent.

The publication (hard cover, A4 format, parallel texts in English and Russian, DVD) came out of press in August of 2004 in the series «Oriental Calligraphy and Miniatures from St. Petersburg Collections» (established 1962, renewed 2002, Academic Director – Mikhail Piotrovsky) after the delay connected with the appearance of the newly discovered fragments.

**For details and film multilingual pre-view, please, visit book web-site at <http://www.mushaf.spb.ru>
To buy the book via Internet, please, write to mushaf@mail.ru**

Efim Rezvan's book not only brings us close to an understanding of how the Sacred Text was established, it also gives us all, Muslims and non-Muslims, a chance to brush up against the History that is recorded in this remarkable copy of the Qur'ān. I welcome the publication of this book and congratulate its author on the scholarly coup that it is his right to claim.

*Mikhail Piotrovskiy,
Director,
State Hermitage Museum*