BOOK REVIEWS


Here is another monograph which is related to Friedrich II and his epoch.

It is peculiar that Messogio publishing house in Messina published the Italian translation of Laura Sciacia in 2001, while the announced simultaneous publication of the original French text in a Paris publishing house Bouscette only took place in 2002.

Arabic-speaking Jews of al-Andalus are well-known as they left an extremely rich literary heritage. Sicilian Jews were in the concerned period (from 1290 till the proscription year of 1492) mostly craftsmen and merchants and did not leave any such written heritage.

The book consists of the introduction and four large sections: school (ch. I—3), home (ch. 4—7), market (ch. 8—10), assembly (ch. 11—12).

In the introduction H. Brece marks that the present research cannot be called fully Hebraistic as there have been discovered no Hebrew books on Sicily dating to these centuries and the researcher only possesses mediated materials: all documents exist only in translation supplied for affirma- tion to Corona siciliana. Originally the author only planned to present subsidiary material from notarial funds for arch- itects studying Jewish quarters of Sicily.

The previous two centuries are documented by Hebrew materials preserved at the Firenze genica which have been published. This is what the first chapter called “To the Sources of the Sicilian Jews Origin: Sicily in Genoa” begins with. Merchant correspondence, judging by the type of calligraphy, was kept by some penmen, although the spelling while transcribing an Arabic text in Jewish letters was irregular, which is typical of all small Judaeic languages. There is an interesting observation about the role of the Arabic language among Sicilian Jews: in the Muslim epoch it served to the integration of the Jewish community, while after the Norman Conquest it, on the contrary, be- came a means of preservation of the community’s particular features. In the Muslim world they were an integrated mi-

Illustrations:

Fig. 1. Christus Martin Joahim v. Fraechi, ca. 1830 (Archiv der Hansestädte Rostock, Inv. Nr. 8647).
Fig. 2. First page of the curriculum vitae, 1805 (Universitätsarchiv Rostock, Prezessionstheorie des Chronik-Martin Fraechi, phil. Fak. 61804).

1 See review by J. Wojewöldl to M. D. Gloening, Die Falkensteinkante des “Maunus” im Spiegel ihrer vulgarisierung: Studien zur Romanistik Arabica in: Manuscripta Orientalia, V/2, pp. 71—2; and review by idem to B. Pabel, Gregor von Montevecchio und die geistige Kultur Stildienangen unter Frederick II in: ibid., T/2, pp. 71—2.

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point out, if there is no misleading homonymy while interpreting them in Christian reality.

In the eighth chapter called "Technical Basis" (we should remind that it refers to the "Market" section) the occupations of Sicily Jews are considered. In fact, they were involved in all kinds of occupations and if this or that occupation is not fixed, this is most likely due to the lack of sources.

The title of the ninth chapter "Commercial Activities" fully corresponds to its contents. Here all aspects of commerce are considered in detail, including such ticklish from the modern point of view questions as participation of Sicilian Jews in slave-trade.

The tenth chapter called "Jews' Activities on Sicily Territory" views the geographical aspect of this activity. The author suggests a "typology which other researchers might deepen or criticize basing on more precise documentation", as there is one question which arises in each chapter: does the absence of a phenomenon mean lack of documentation or does it correspond to reality?

In the eleventh chapter called "Community" different aspects of self-government, class and property division and functioning of Synagogue and rabbinate are viewed.

In the last, twelfth chapter called "The Crisis of 1474—1475" H. Brese writes that the proscription of Jews from Sicily was only an "echo from the West" taking into account the lack of local autonomy, and did not have the inner-Sicilian motivation; for example, the suspicions about the Hafizis' secret sources of information has no grounds.

We can assume that Arabophones as well as Arabophiles feared the Jews after the fall of Constantinople (by analogy with the fear of Moriscos in Spain). The author gives examples of contradictions between the solutions of the royal and church powers regarding the Jews. However, the unexpected "cessus" (massacres) turned to be "in the end under control".

The book ends with 1476th year and a bibliography which is not too extensive, but, as we can assume from the author's meticulousness, is exhaustive.

The book lacks an index of Arabisms / Hebrewisms in the used texts as well as an index of "deciphering" of Arabic names carried out in the text of the book and sometimes unexpected: thus, for example, Nachari is not all Nabiwīs, as one could assume, but Nabiwīs, and so on.

Naturally, we have limited ourselves with general presentation of the book's contents and pointed out to its high-light, however, its every chapter is overloaded with extremely interesting factual material. Despite the "secondariness" of sources, H. Brese managed to extract the most from them and the results of his work are impressive, although not all of his assumptions may seem indisputable. It is no surprise that the Italians got a move on with the publication of the book and outran the French. The author is right saying that the book is not strictly Hafizian: the range of its readers is much wider.

I. Wojewódzki

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Notes to Contributors

Manuscripts must be written in English.

Manuscripts must be clearly typewritten with numbered pages, double linespacing and wide margins throughout. Italics and boldface should be avoided. Use underlining where text is to be italicised. The title should be as brief and informative as possible. The institute at which the work has been done should be indicated at the head of each paper. Authors are requested to include their e-mail address if one is available.

Submissions

Manuscripts should be sent in duplicate to the Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Efim A. Rezvan, Peter the Great Museum of Anthro- pology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, 3 Universitetskaya nab., 199034, Saint-Petersburg, 1а, e-mail: rezvan@kunstkamera.ru.
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