

FRANK MOORE CROSS and SHEMARYAHU TALMON (ed.): *Qumran and the history of the Biblical text*. [ix], 415 pp. Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1975. \$16.50, £11.25; \$5.95, £4.10 (paper).

It has been repeatedly—and correctly—asserted that the discovery of the Qumran manuscripts has opened a new epoch in the textual criticism of the Old Testament. Two leading scholars in that field, F. M. Cross of Harvard and S. Talmon of the Hebrew University, have now assembled a representative collection of 17 studies to serve as an introduction to the present state of scholarship. All the essays, apart from the last three, are unrevised photostatic reprints. They include general surveys and articles propounding new theories on the Old Testament text (Talmon); Hebrew Biblical manuscripts (Goshen-Gottstein); early recensions of the Bible (Albright); the history of the Biblical text and the Qumran contribution to its study (Cross, Skehan). Among individual manuscripts, 1QIs<sup>a</sup> and 4QSam are examined by Talmon and Cross, and problems pertaining to the Greek versions are discussed by Ziegler (Isaiah), Barthélemy (Minor Prophets), and Tov (Lucian and Proto-Lucian). Each editor offers a fresh evaluation of his theories. Cross maintains that the diversity of text-types is due to their three-fold geographical origin (Palestinian, Egyptian, and Babylonian). Talmon, by contrast, attributes the differences to the variety of the traditions prevailing in the socio-religious circles from which they originate, and argues that in addition to insufficiently controlled copying, a number of Qumran variants are due to 'the impact of ongoing literary processes of an intra-biblical nature' (stylistic interchange of words, etc.). These essays are reproduced from a typescript. The volume is concluded with a typewritten bibliographical article, 'Palestinian manuscripts 1947-1972', compiled by J. A. Sanders, which is curiously less complete than its earlier printed version (cf. *Journal of Jewish Studies*, xxiv, 1, 1973, 74-83).

The editors have rendered a genuine service to students of textual criticism. However, as long as the bulk of the Biblical fragments from Cave 4 continues to be kept inaccessible by those to whom they were entrusted in 1953, all the exciting new theories must be accompanied by large question marks.

G. VERMES

MEHDI MOHAGHEGH and TOSHIHIKO IZUTSU (tr.): *The Metaphysics of Sabzavāri*. (Wisdom of Persia Series. Texts and Studies published by Tehran Branch, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, x.) x, 235 pp. Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1977.

This is, in fact, a translation (with a most

useful introduction) of the metaphysical section of a vast poem, plus commentaries, the ensemble of which is known as *Ghurur al-farā'id* or simply *Sharh-i manzūma-yi hikmat*, by the greatest exponent of Persian *hikmat* philosophy, Hājji Mullā Hādī b. Mahdī Sabzavāri (1212-95/1797-8-1878). The translators have also published an edition of the original Arabic text in the same series, as well as a separate commentary by M. M. Āshtiyāni.

The writings of the philosophers of this school are comparatively little known in the West, even among Orientalists. These volumes should help to remedy this state of affairs, since the work is apparently used as a textbook by students of Islamic philosophy throughout the *madāris* of Iran. The translators are to be congratulated on producing a most competent and, as far as that is possible, lucid version of a text that they modestly admit to be 'by no means easy reading'. It should be of particular interest to those seriously concerned with Šūfiism.

J. N. MATTOCK

ṬĀHĀ ḤUSAIN: *A passage to France: the third volume of the autobiography*. Translated from the Arabic by Kenneth Cragg. (Arabic Translation Series of the *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Vol. 4.) xv, 165 pp. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976. Guilders 18.

The fourth volume of the Translation Series of the *Journal of Arabic Literature* makes available to English readers the final part of what may well be the best-known work in modern Arabic, the autobiography of Ṭāhā Ḥusain. The initial volume was first translated in 1932, and the second in 1948, but the author did not actually publish the third part until shortly before his death in 1973. In view of this lengthy intervening period, it is hardly surprising that this final volume should differ substantially from its predecessors. The first two books presented scenes from life in an Egyptian village, and described the transition of the author, as a schoolboy and student, from the village to Cairo and al-Azhar. They were noteworthy for the richness of their external detail, considering the blindness of the author. This third part is much more obviously the reminiscences of an old man, re-living the struggles and traumas of being a blind Egyptian student in France. It is true that this is a remarkable story of tenacity and fortitude in the most adverse circumstances, but there are times when the general egocentricity becomes tedious. It seems unlikely that this late sequel will command the same popularity as the earlier volumes, but it is satisfying to have the complete work available in translation.

R. C. OSTLE

SASSON SOMEKH (ed.): *The world of Yusuf Idris: an anthology of short*

stories. 205 pp. Tel-Aviv: [Arabic Publishing House], 1976. [In Arabic.]

This is a valuable anthology in that it permits the reader to follow the development of one of the leading short story writers of the Arab world through the most important stages of his creative career. While the anthology to suit all tastes has yet to be compiled, this is a most comprehensive selection of stories extending up to Idris's most recent publications. Thus the reader may begin with the stark social realism which burst upon the Arab literary scene in the early 1950's (see *Arkhas layālī*), and proceed to the suffocating world of communal deception and dissimulation in *Bayt min laḥm*, published in 1971. The introduction is a sensitive study of Idris and the short story, and is of the standard which one has come to expect of Somekh. Not the least valuable part of the book is the final bibliography on Idris, consisting of both primary and secondary sources; nor is this limited to the short story, but it also encompasses Idris's dramas as well as his less successful excursions into the novel form.

R. C. OSTLE

J. D. PEARSON (comp.): *Index Islamicus: fourth supplement, 1971-1975*. xlii, 429 pp. London: Mansell, [1977]. £20.

This fourth supplement cumulates the five annual volumes which have already been published, with the addition of a thousand new entries. Like the previous supplement, the text is provided by a photographic reproduction of typed cards, but an improvement in the quality of the production is happily observable. The work continues to be, as in the past, an indispensable tool of scholarship and research, and the thanks of all engaged in Islamic studies are due to the compiler for his perseverance in this Herculean project.

P. M. H.

JULIUS ASSFALG and PAUL KRÜGER (ed.): *Kleines Wörterbuch des Christlichen Orients*. xxxiii, 460 pp., 16 plates, 6 maps. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975. DM 64.

The patronizing attitude towards the ancient Churches of the Near East, so prevalent among British and American missionaries during the nineteenth century, has given way in recent years to a new respect for and deepening interest in their cultural heritage. Thanks to the worldwide ecumenical movement, to exhibitions in many lands of icons and other art treasures, also to goodwill journeys by successive Archbishops of Canterbury, the Greek, Russian, Armenian, Ethiopian, Bulgarian, and Romanian Churches now seem to us scarcely more remote than the Vatican did a few decades ago.

In this country, we have been well served by Professor Aziz S. Atiya's *History of Eastern Christianity* (1968), which gave a panoramic view of the Oriental Churches in the stricter sense: Copts, Jacobites, Nestorians, Armenians, St. Thomas Christians of South India, Maronites. Much the same ground is now covered by this well-planned dictionary of the Christian Orient, compiled and partly written by Professor Julius Assfalg of Munich University, in collaboration with the late Dr. Paul Krüger. The Georgian Orthodox Church, relegated by Atiya to a rather inaccurate footnote, blossoms forth in the present handbook, as Assfalg is a world-famous expert in Georgian patristic studies.

For ready reference, the compendium could hardly be bettered. Chronological tables, bibliographies, specimens of alphabets, maps showing leading churches and monasteries, diagrams and plans of church buildings, photographs of selected masterpieces in textile, manuscript illumination, and icon and mosaic work, combine to guide and enlighten. The book measures only 10 × 17 centimetres, and should be slipped into the pocket of any traveller wishing to emulate Robert Curzon and Evelyn Waugh in visiting the monasteries of the Levant, Ethiopia, and also the Caucasus.

D. M. LANG

SHELDON IVAN POLLOCK: *Aspects of versification in Sanskrit lyric poetry*. (American Oriental Series, Vol. 61.) x, 335 pp. New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1977. \$11.

This is a new and fundamental study of caesura and ictus in Sanskrit poetry. In part 1, the Sanskrit theoretical literature, notably the delightfully named *Yatayupadesopaniṣad* (attributed, once, to Dattila), is translated and examined. In part 2, there is a statistical study of the coincidence of prosodic and syntactic caesura in lyric poetry. This study is rather staggeringly successful in establishing a correlation between coincidence and relative antiquity: thus *Lalitavistara* and *Saundarananda* show coincidence in excess of 90 per cent of sample lines, while the later *Murāri* and *Bilhana* approach a proportion as low as 25 per cent (p. 229 f.).

This is an important complement to the statistical work of Trautmann and others (apparently ignored here, p. 4: 'Not the slightest interest has been shown...'). Unfortunately, it is embedded in a great deal of unattractive prose. This indigestible matrix has been explained (humorously?) as a pursuit of the 'conventions of dissertation style' (p. ix), but it is suspiciously reminiscent of jargon (p. 14 'typological overview of the prosodical infrastructure'), name-dropping (p. 123 'Leo, followed by Norden, Heyken, Fraenkel, Wifstrand, Büchner, and more recently, Drexler, Patzer, Pearce and Conrad'), photolitho-misprinting, and an absence of any index. It is to be hoped that the material will also be made available in a version that