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## Abstracts

### Again on *taḍmīn* in Arabic theoretical discourse

AMIDU SANNI

A familiar pattern in Arabic theoretical lore is the application of a single technical term to a variety of phenomena. An eloquent illustration is the term *taḍmīn*. In the technical glossary of the prosodists, it is applied to the running over of lines of poetry, i.e. enjambment. The rhetoricians applied the term to the practice of borrowing from an older composition into a new work or adapting a familiar treatment identified with a given motif to a new composition, i.e. quotational borrowing. The grammarians, specifically those who were interested in enriching philological and hermeneutical studies with philosophical standards, employed the term to characterize an expression which contains the thought content of an unexpressed idea, i.e. semantic entailment. All three phenomena to which the term was applied are examined in this paper in the context of their historical and theoretical categorizations and variations.

### Tamīm al-Dārī

DAVID COOK

Tamīm al-Dārī is one of the most enigmatic of the Prophet's companions. The stories of his conversion are mutually irreconcilable, but there is a minute fragment of historical information about him preserved in the exegetical tradition which, together with other fragments, helps us to connect this figure with the Prophet even before the beginning of Islam. This helps to explain the unique land-deed by which Tamīm supposedly received the area of Hebron in Palestine, a number of years before its conquest by the Muslims. This land-deed has been the focus of a continuing controversy in the Muslim legal literature, in which the Hanīfites, speaking in the name of the Turk-Mamluk overlords, were pitted against the Shāfītes.

### *Ribāṭs* in Mecca during the medieval period: a descriptive study based on literary sources

RICHARD T. MORTEL

The period prior to the Ottoman annexation of the Hijaz in 923/1517 witnessed a remarkable level of activity in the construction and endowment of *ribāṭs*, or hospices offering cost-free accommodation to needy Muslims in Mecca. Due to the nearly total lack of physical vestiges of the 59 *ribāṭs* known to have been founded in Mecca during the medieval period, it is only through a thorough study of the primary literary sources available that the present-day historian is able to form any idea of their character, physical appearance, location, conditions of endowment, purpose and function. This article represents an attempt to present as complete a picture of these institutions as possible, given the often laconic nature of the source material.

### Case and proto-Arabic

JONATHAN OWENS

That proto-Arabic had morphological case is an assumption which has hardly generated debate. Like all assumptions, however, it rests on concrete arguments. The two most important of these are probably (1), the existence of case in Classical Arabic and (2), the existence of case elsewhere in Semitic, particularly in Akkadian. However, applying standard comparative and philological methodology, one is equally led to the opposite conclusion, that proto-Arabic did not have case. Relevant arguments to support this position are: (1) most Semitic languages do/did not have case, nor probably did proto-Afroasiatic; (2) the oldest Arabic epigraphic record probably does not show case; (3) there are various problematic issues in the Arabic grammatical and *maʿāniy* tradition

which suggest the existence of caseless varieties parallel to Classical Arabic; (4) modern Arabic dialects do not have case. The present paper will expand upon points 1–3 in Part I, and in Part II, incorporate point 4 and go on to develop a model for the development of a case-based Classical Arabic out of an original caseless variety.

### Sati: a review article

WERNER MENSKI

The author here reviews a recent collection of conference articles edited by John Stratton Hawley (*Sati, the blessing and the curse: the burning of widows in India*, New York and Oxford, 1994) and presents an overview of modern scholarly writing on this topic. He argues that greater attention needs to be paid to the older Hindu literature and tradition for a fuller understanding of the sati phenomenon.

### Marco Polo and his 'Travels'

PETER JACKSON

The failure of Marco Polo's 'Travels' to mention important matters such as footbinding has prompted people to question whether he was ever in China. But we should not attach too much significance to such omissions, given the uncertainty surrounding the original text, the extreme complexity of the manuscript tradition, and the book's often-ignored assertion that much of Marco's time in the service of the *qaghan* Qubilai was taken up with sea voyages between China and India. The book aims to be a description of 'the diverse parts of the world', and seeks to distinguish the places Marco visited from those he did not see; it does not claim to be an itinerary or even a travelogue. It is not the journeys attributed to Marco or the three Polos that are suspect, but the claims made for their status, especially the repeated assertions that they served as ambassadors on Qubilai's behalf; at most it is likely that they were occasionally attached to some of his numerous embassies.

### Fire and rain: a look at Shen Nung 神農 (the Divine Farmer) and his ties with Yen Ti 炎帝 (the 'Flaming Emperor' or 'Flaming God')

ROBERT G. HENRICKS

Though scholars have argued that the Han identification of Shen Nung and Yen Ti is forged and invalid, this article reaches a different conclusion. It argues that Shen Nung and Yen Ti both stem from a complex of agricultural legends and rites we can trace back to Shang dynasty times. Of special importance is the rite known as *ch'ih*, in which female shamans were burned or exposed to the sun while invoking their gods and praying for rain, all done to the beating of bells and drums. In building this case, the paper examines relevant passages in Warring States and early Han texts concerning Shen Nung, Lieh Shan shih, Nung (Farmer), Keng-fu (Plough Father), T'ien-tsu (Field Ancestor), Yen Ti, Chu Jung, and Yen Ti's descendants and daughters.