

muchos de los aspectos, todavía abiertos, que el autor plantea con su inteligente indagación de las ideas teológico-filosóficas de Ibn Ḥazm.

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BROWNE, G.M., *Old Nubian Grammar*, Languages of the World, Materials, München: Lincom Europa, 2002; 111 pp.

Knowledge of the Old Nubian language is becoming increasingly important for the study of Oriental Christianity, especially since ongoing excavations are continually bringing new texts to light. The corpus of Old Nubian occupies fewer than one hundred pages of printed text, and mainly consists of translations of religious texts and various types of documents.

Revising critically all previous work, G. M. Browne starts from a new point of view to write his grammar based on the extant texts. Author of an *Introduction to Old Nubian* (Meroitica 11, Berlin, 1989), Browne now revises his former views and completes this *Introduction* with the knowledge of new texts that have come to light since 1989, mainly edited by himself. This handbook, arranged as a traditional descriptive grammar, begins with a description of the script and phonology of Old Nubian, as opposed and in relation to the Greek and Coptic antecedents, with assessment of their influence. This study also includes analysis of the Greek and Coptic loan words and their adaptation to the Old Nubian system. The problems of transcription and orthography are viewed against the background of post-classical Greek. The author thus presupposes, not only here, but in later explanations, a knowledge of Greek.

The section on morphology thoroughly analyzes all phenomena, further explained with examples of the extant texts and sometimes compared with their Vorlage.

The complicated verbal system, already studied by Browne in his "The Old Nubian Verbal System", *BASP*, 19 (1982), pp. 9-38, has been here revised and updated. A section on Syntax, as is the case with morphology, includes numerous examples from the known texts.

A section of Sample texts follows, with a passage of the Gospel of John and of Psalm 103 with an interlinear translation, a full analysis word by word, with the Greek text of the Vorlage provided as a means of comparison. The Bibliography collects all basic studies and editions of texts edited in Old Nubian, by the author himself and the small

group of scholars working on this language in the twentieth century.

This is a very accurate linguistic description of the Old Nubian language, which presupposes a good knowledge of at least Greek, and also Coptic and general linguistics. As the only representative access to this particular language, it is a perfect instrument for an approach and full understanding of its intricacies. The collection in which this Grammar appears is perhaps responsible for the concision of the work. The volume would however benefit from a glossary in order to follow all the examples in the morphology and syntax sections (but see Browne's *Old Nubian Dictionary*, Louvain, 1996, with *Appendices*, Louvain, 1997). Also useful would be an *index locorum*.

SOFÍA TORALLAS TOVAR

CURZON, Robert, Jr., *Ancient Monasteries of the East or Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*, Picataway (New Jersey): Gorgias Press, 2001, xxiii + 390; ilustr.

Publicado por vez primera en el año 1849 (*A Visit to the Monasteries of the Levant*), y luego con cambio de título en 1854 (*Ancient Monasteries of the East*), la presente obra es el fruto de un largo viaje de cuatro años, entre 1834 y 1937, a diversos centros monásticos situados en Egipto, Siria, Albania y el Monte Athos. El interés que motivó estos viajes fue el de consultar y adquirir manuscritos antiguos y libros, material que –junto con sus vivencias y recuerdos– serviría para conformar el relato de este libro, un clásico de la literatura de viajes del XIX por tierras orientales.

El autor de esta y otras célebres obras de viajes, Sir Robert Curzon (1810-1873), además de ser conocido como el 14º barón Zouche de Harringworth, es una de las figuras más relevantes en el ámbito libresco inglés del XIX, pues dedicó buena parte de su vida y no poco esfuerzo a la búsqueda y adquisición de libros, lo que le llevó a formar una riquísima colección que gozó de gran fama durante sus días.

De los avatares y circunstancias que le llevaron a realizar el viaje y a poner por escrito todo lo sucedido y experimentado da cuenta el autor en el “Prefacio” que abre la obra (pp. iii-iv). El motivo principal de este viajero inglés era visitar los monasterios orientales, para reflejar la estética de los lugares idílicos en los que se hallaban enclavados, describir los caminos y parajes que conducían a ellos, enumerar a los personajes y las prácticas en la que se empleaban sus