The characterization of *Festschrift* as the “intellectual graffiti” of those who “commemorate, preserve, and interpret the (living) past”¹, is a graphic summation of the natures of felicitation volumes. The title under review confirms this characterization. It contains twenty-four contributions, six of which are written in the English Language. Beside his special fascination with the textual history of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, a fascination which he shares with his wife, Grotzfeld has, over the last four decades, exhibited a strong *métier* in dialectology and in all aspects of routine and material culture of the Arabic-Islamic world. All these are reflected in the contributions to this volume.

The projection of the binaries of life, namely, life and death, time and space, love and hatred, war and peace, among others, into the classical and medieval literary culture of the Arabic Islamic world represents the underlying feature of the essays in this work.

Three contributions deal with culinary culture, Otto Jastrow discusses the cooking recipes of the Jewish-Arabs of Mosul (pp. 223-32), Biesterfeldt, analyzes the chapter on drinks in Abû Zayd al-Balkhî’s (d. 322/934) *K. Maşâlih al-abdân wa-l-anfus* and discusses the healing and dietary ethic of wine (pp. 89-103), while Hämeen-Antrila examines the recommendations of Ibn Waḥshiyya, as stated in his *al-Filâha al-nabatiyya*, concerning substitute feeding formulae during drought or famine (pp. 211-22). Wolfdietrich Fischer discusses the significance of the veil in pristine Arab society as illustrated in the classical poetry, especially in *al-Ḥamāsa* of Abû Tammâm (pp. 173-84). Whereas the *khimâr* (headcover) was used by women of whatever social class, the *qināʿ*, which covered the face, was exclusively used by aristocratic women, concludes Fischer.² Ewald Wagner, drawing on the poetry of Abû Nuwâs, examines the Arabic script, the art of writing and the writer (pp. 341-56). Drawing on a number of literary materials, Osigus discusses the uses and dangers of scorpions (pp. 251-74). Thomas Bauer analyses a *zajal* (strophic poem) by the Mamlûk Ibrâhîm al-Miʿmâr on the overflow of River Nile (*wafâʾ al-nil*), it should be said that Bauer fails to correct, or at least point to, the inadequacy of Friedrich Rückert’s translation of a two-line epigram on the Nile (p. 73). Dorpmüller analyses a homily by Ibn Nubâta al-Khaṭīb (d. 768/1366) on the same subject (pp. 137-61). In both essays, the overflow of the river Nile is used as an entry point to the intended themes. Abû Miʿmâr’s main object is to chide the hoarder of grains who seeks to maximize profits in consequence of the overflow.


Ibn Nubāta on the other hand is projected into establishing the importance of public preacher in Medieval Islam.

The sphere of influence of religion and religious scholars in the 12th–14th-century Damascus is the theme of Stefan Leder’s essay (pp. 233-50). Here, the specific contributions of Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) in giving the city its enviable intellectual and religious status are documented. Alexander Flores analyses the sanctification of the tombs of Muslim and Jewish holy men in the context of the tragedies arising from Palestinian-Israeli conflicts (pp. 185-99). The importance of Friday in the mythology of Islam and the functional life of the Muslims is discussed by Wild, drawing on materials from Islamic literature. The use of the khuṭba and Friday mosques for political purposes, especially in contemporary Muslim societies, is also discussed (pp. 399-409). An inscription at the gate of the al-Hambra Mosque in Muslim Spain is the template for Diem’s investigation into the meaning of sharīʿa, the basic denotation of which is divine law as it must be sustained by the sovereign and the state (pp. 105-36). Stowasser discusses the issue of time and the fixing of Muslim religious rites and events through time stick (shākhsī) technology and modern electronic means of determining differentials in regional timings (pp. 201-210). Abu Hasha, juxtaposing Christoph Heins Der fremde Freund (The Strange Friend) and Yūsuf Idrīs’ al-Bayḍāʾ (The White), illustrates the continuous conflict between ideology and tradition, between society and the individual (pp. 19-47). The protagonists in the two stories, Claudia in the former, and Yahyā in the latter, resort to monologue in order to illustrate the absence or impossibility of dialogue with a society that thrives on time hallowed institutional values and has no nose for feelings of individuals. Ramzi Baalbaki’s extensive discussion (pp. 9-68) on taqdīr (suppletive insertion) as one of the analytical tools handed down by Sībawayhi is intended to show that the native grammarians were more interested in demonstrating “the coherence of the ‘basic’ rules” than in the pedagogical values of their interpretations.

Some other contributions in this volume deal with local narratives in dialects or with issues relating to sociolects. The essays by Woidich, (pp. 411-31); Palvas, (pp. 275-90), and W. Walther (pp. 357-80) fall under this category. A 16th-century Malay mystical poem by the Sumatran Hamza Pansuri, illustrating artistic dexterity with Arabic loan words and verbal jugglery with Arabic and Malay words, is the subject matter of Wieringa’s essay (pp. 391-98). Stefan Reichmuth, one of the murīd of Grotzfeld, examines Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī’s (d. 1205/1791) note on Jazāir al-suʿādāʾ (the Islands of the Blessed) often identified with Canary Islands as contained in his encyclopaedic lexicon Tāj al-ʿarūs (pp. 291-308). Here al-Zabīdī’s remarkable familiarity with natural sciences and indeed with Greek geographical materials is demonstrated as a testimony to his intellectualism. This is a general run down of the contributions.

Some of the essays in this Festschrift are bereft of the methodological, systematic and analytical rigor of recent discussions on the subjects as found in the humanities and interdisciplinary discourses. To expect uniformity of style and quality in an academic collage, which a celebration volume is meant to be, will be a negation of the