

## BOOK REVIEWS

G.B. PELLEGRINI. — *Gli Arabismi nelle Lingue Neolatine*, Paideia Editrice, Brescia 1972. Vol. I 400p. Vol. II 358p. Price: 20,000 lire for the two volumes.

THESE two volumes contain a useful, informative and most readable collection of a number of linguistic studies and communications which the author has published in learned reviews over the last 25 years. Though the papers in the collection are written in different years, they are homogeneous because all the chapters deal with the diffusion of Arabic loan-words in the Romance languages with special reference to Italy. Malta is also included as a term of reference and comparison largely on the evidence provided by my two books *Papers in Maltese Linguistics* and *Structure of Maltese*, which the author includes in his extensive bibliography. The publication of these two books had the blessing, so to say, of the late Semitic scholar Prof. Georgio Levi della Vida, who on the 10th December 1966 wrote him a letter encouraging him to collect his linguistic contributions on Arabo-Romance loan-words and publish them in book form. No one more than the author of these two volumes has pursued this line of fruitful linguistic enquiry with such scholarly thoroughness over a number of years. The net result is now a well-produced, clearly printed collection of scholarly studies which together fill more than 1,000 pages.

Vol. I contains studies of special interest also to students of Maltese. These form four chapters, the first of which deals with the Arabic element in the neo-Latin languages with special reference to Italy; Chapter II deals with words of Arabic origin occurring in Sicily and Southern Italy; Chapter III with the Arabic terminology of Sicily; and Chapter IV with the contribution to the study of Arabic influences in Liguria. Vol. II contains eleven chapters. I consider of particular interest Chapter VII which proposes an Arabic origin for the Italian word *ragazzo*, 'boy'. William Denis Elcock in his book *The Romance Language* (London, 1960) describes as obscure the origin of the words which replaced the Latin word *puer* in the Romance languages. Such are Sp. *muchacho*, It. *ragazzo* and Port. *rapaz*. The proposed origin of It. *ragazzo* is Arabic رَجُل. Other interesting chapters are VI including annotations on Arabo-Italian phonetics and XIV dealing with Arabo-Venetian linguistic contacts.

The second volume carries a very extensive bibliography which shows the width of reading done by Prof. Pellegrini, an index of Italian and

other European words of Arabic origin, an onomastic index of personal names and place names and Oriental words (*voci orientali*) being words which crept into Italian and Other Romance languages.

The students of the Maltese language will find that many of these Arabic loan-words have their equivalent in Semitic Maltese. A few examples from the list of words beginning with the letter *A* are Sp. *addebaran* (could this word be in any way associated with the name of a hill in Gozo *Id-Dabran*?), Sp. *aduana*, *adoana*, M. *dwana* from Sic. *duana* and therefore only indirectly Arabic; Sic. *abbalatari*, M. *ballat*, 'to pave'; Sp. *albardan*, M. *il-Bardan*, 'the cold place' (toponymy); Sp. *albarrada*, M. *barrada*, 'the cooling jar'; Sp. and Fr. *alcade*, M. *il-qadi*; 'the governor'; Sp. *alcolla*, M. *il-Qolla*, name of a hillock in Gozo; Sp. *arraba*, *arrobo*, M. *ir-robbu*, 'one fourth of a carcass'. Other examples of Arabic loan-words are *zzibula* (dialect of Pantelleria), M. *żibel*, 'dirt', 'rubbish'; *catusu*, M. *katusa*, 'drain pipe'; *dammusu*, M. *demus*, 'rock-hewn tomb'; *maramma*, M. *mramma*, 'a strong or thick wall' *succhiaru*, M. *sukkara*, 'pedlock'; *ticchiena*, M. *dikkiena*, 'stone bench', *zamema* (dialect of Pantelleria), M. *samm*, 'very hard stone'.

These are only a few examples which prove the importance of Prof. G.B. Pellegrini's scholarly work not only for linguists who chase Arabic lexical migration to, and absorption into, Romance languages, but also for the students of the Maltese language.

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