Frolov’s book: Д.В.Фролов, Классический арабский стих. История и теория аръя [D.V.Frolov, The classical Arabic verse. History and theory of the ‘arýj], Moscow 1991, was published later than Stoetzer’s study, but it contains similar reappraisal of Al-Ḥalli’s system although this work is based on different premises.
drama structures in Al-Hamaðâni’s and Al-Ḥarîrî’s maqâmât, showing that the idea of theatre was not thoroughly alien to the classical Arabic culture (Dramatische Strukturen in den Maqâmên al-Hamaðânis und al-Ḥarîris, pp.87-100).

However, it is the modern drama which is of chief interest to the authors. Hartmut Fähndrich is keen to detect and to describe dramatic background in Naḍîb Maḥfûz’s novels (Beschleunigung durch Reden: Zur Dialogverwendung bei Naḍîb Maḥfûz, pp.101-110), while As’ad E.Khairallah analyses poetical drama by Ṣâlāḥ ‘Abd as-Ṣâbûr (The Individual and Society: Ṣâlāḥ ‘Abdaṣṣabûr’s Laylâ wal-Majnûn, pp. 161-177). The same drama is analysed by Angelika Neuworth in her contribution entitled Idealität und Verwirklichungsängste: Zu einer modernen Bearbeitung des Maḏnûn-Laylâ-Stoffes bei Ṣâlāḥ ‘Abdaṣṣabûr, pp.205-234). W. Wälther turns her attention to the modern Syrian drama, and in particular Sa’d Allâh Wânîs’s theatre (Machtspiele: Von Humoreske zum masrah at-tasîfis. Die Geschichte vom erwachten Schläfer” und Sa’dallah Wannis’ Al-Malik huwa l-malik (pp. 281-295).

The Turkish drama is also very well represented in this book. There is an article devoted to the classical Ottoman shadow theatre (Erika Glassen, Das türkische Schattentheater: ein Spiegel der spätopmanischen Gesellschaft, pp.121-137), but, again, it is the modern Turkish theatre which is described in detail. Petra de Bruijn’s Turkish Verse Drama: the impact of verse on Turkish drama (pp.23-37) covers the period between classical literature and modernity, while J.Ch. Bürgel in his reflections concentrates on the way politics is reflected in modern Turkish drama (Gesichter „heiliger” Macht in modernen türkischen Dramen, pp. 39-64). Priska Furrer turns her attention to the ever actual problem of woman’s role in modernizing society (Geschlechterkampf auf der Venus: Zu einem unveröffentlichten Stück der türkischen Autorin Sevgin Soysal, pp. 111-120), while Zehra İşıpoğlu shows how borrowed and local traditions are intertwined in Turkish drama (Neue Formen und Tendenzen im türkischen Gegenwartsdrama: Haldun Taner—Sermet Çağan—Ferhan Şensoy, pp. 149-160)

The Persian drama is described in four articles: Peter Chelkowski’s reflections pertain to the Persian theatre in exile, and in particular to the work of the famous playwright Parwiz Şayyâd (Parviz Sayyad and the Persian Theatre Far from Home, pp. 65-85). Also Milla Riggio presents Persian theatre outside Iran, and in her contribution gives a vivid picture of ta’ziyas produced and presented by Mohammed Ǧaffâri in the United States and elsewhere (Ta’ziyah in Exile: Transformations in a Persian tradition, pp. 235-258). For Gisèle Kapuscinski the work of the Persian playwright Ǧolām Ḥūsâyñ Șa’idi forms the background against which she attempts to
give an analysis of realism and surrealism and their meaning in discussing political problems (The Real and the Surreal: Two Approaches to social criticism in the plays of Gholam-Hosayn Sa’edi, pp. 149-160). Isabel Stümpel-Hatami shows how a politically neutral subject—the Adventures of Sindbad the Sailor could serve social and political critique („Sindbads achte Reise”: Geschichte und Gegenwart im Werk Bahrām Ba‘z’s am Beispiel eines frühens Dramas, pp. 259-280)

One article is devoted to Urdu drama, it is presented by the well-known Czech specialist on Urdu literature Jan Marek (Social Change in Modern Urdu Drama, pp. 191-203).

In sum, this an insightful collection of seventeen papers, which despite their differentiated subjects give us a vivid picture of the Muslim theatre. One would agree with the editor—J.Ch.Bürgel—that it is the political factor which occupies a really prominent place in Muslim drama. The reasons might be manifold, but no doubt the close relationship between drama and the modern society makes it politically functional. There is a point which is often noted by the authors namely that a thorough study as this in this collection allows us also to belie the common belief that there never existed original theatre in the Muslim world, and that all forms of drama are nothing but a direct borrowing from Europe.

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