affected writing. Egyptian scribes in Antiquity sat on the ground using their tunic stretched across their knees as a support. The introduction of oblique writing boards and desks in medieval Europe facilitated the growth of Gothic script, in which straight strokes predominate.

In the final section of her lengthy monograph, Sirat turns from writing as a social phenomenon to an examination of how individuals wrote, distinguishing controlled or careful writing from personal or more haphazard examples. She devotes the longest chapter to colophons, which, although they occur in only about 5 per cent of medieval manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew, tell us about the way a particular exemplar was produced and hence its individuality. They presuppose that the scribe enjoyed sufficient status, but they also add details about the scribe's personality and the circumstances under which he wrote.

In sum, this engaging book has much to offer that is new and thought provoking. It raised all sorts of questions for me, a historian of Islamic calligraphy, and I think that it will do the same for others, for it puts our individual fields into a wider context. It turns the topic of writing from subject matter to process and shows how studying writers and their writings can illuminate the history of civilization in the West.

Sheila S. Blair

GERALD DE GAURY (ed. Bruce Ingham):
Review of the ʿAnizah Tribe.
xvii, 92 pp. Beirut: Kutub, 2005. $40. ISBN 9953 417 97 0.

This short, beautifully produced book is a carefully edited version of a previously unpublished typed notebook. Gerald de Gaury, a British army intelligence officer and diplomat, compiled the *Review* in Baghdad in 1932. De Gaury, who died in 1984, had a long career in Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and published five books on the region. This notebook was evidently sold with his estate and was only recently discovered by Ingham in an oriental bookshop in London.

The *Review* focuses on the otherwise virtually undescribed Iraqi branch of the ʿAnizah Bedouin tribe, the ʿAmārāt, under Ibn Hadhdhāl. The *Review* is slight in comparison with the stunningly rich sources on other branches of the ʿAnizah, such as Musil's *Manners and Customs of the Rwalah Beduin* (New York, 1928), but it adds precious details to our knowledge of a way of life which has long since disappeared.

The *Review* has the style and character of a British imperial gazetteer. There are maps, genealogies and a diagram of Ibn Hadhdhāl's camp. Tribal names and divisions are carefully documented, brief notes on the pastoral economy, religion, the institution of the feud, domestic customs and household budgets are included, as is a glossary of the ʿAnizah dialect. The latter is treated with considerable care by Ingham, himself a linguist and scholar of Arabic dialects.

Iraq was under British Mandatory Government at the time de Gaury wrote his *Review*. It was a time when the tribal sheikhs lived in goat-hair tents, were served by slaves, hunted gazelle and ostrich and recognized only gold coins as having any permanent monetary value. Much of de Gaury's description of ʿAnizah social life has a timeless character, yet a few passages anticipate the rapidity of the changes the tribespeople would shortly experience. In his informative introduction, Ingham suggests that the purpose of the report was

to evaluate and provide information about the ʿAnizah as potential allies in the event of war. De Gaury writes of the main tribal area of the ʿAnizah as one which allows them to dominate the trade routes between Syria and Iraq and the lines of communication which follow the "Oil Pipe-Lines, now under construction from ʿIraq to the ports of Ḥaifa and Tripoli" (p. 9). Protection money gained by ensuring safe passage for pilgrim caravans to Mecca, the "first and greatest source of income" (p. 38) of the ʿAnizah, had ceased by the early 1930s, and camel raiding too was no longer a reliable source of wealth. Young men, though they avoided joining the Iraqi army, were signing up in the Desert Legions of France.

Since the time of de Gaury, Ingham notes, "The exact fortunes of the Iraq ʿAnizah … are difficult to trace" (p. ix). Based in part on his own personal travels, Ingham is able to follow the personal histories of some tribal leaders, particularly those who chose to leave Iraq and settle under the more traditional regime in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s. Other tribespeople, however, clearly remained in Iraq. The only completely contemporary note in Ingham's introduction is his telling throwaway observation: "More recently (2003) I note that the American occupation forces in Baghdad had detained a member of the Āl Hadhdhāl in Iraq but quickly released him, presumably having discovered the importance of his family" (xi).

Nancy Lindisfarne

ELISABETH KENDALL:
Literature, Journalism and the Avant-Garde: Intersection in Egypt.
(Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures.) viii, 279 pp.
London and New York: Routledge, 2006. £65. ISBN 0 415 38561 X.

Arabic literature has come a long way since the 1950s when Naguib Mahfouz and his social realism were at the forefront of the developing genre of the Arabic novel. Mahfouz was a populist as well as a popular writer who, although critical of Gamal Abdel-Nasser's revolutionary Egypt, remained decidedly mainstream. However, new developments were underway in literature which reflected the new realities of Egyptian society of the time. The question addressed by this book was where would they find the outlets to express their ideas and develop in a tightly controlled political environment like that of Egypt in the 1960s and 1970s?

This study covers new ground in laying out the history of the avant-garde literature that emerged during this period and examining the literary and political context that allowed it the time and the space to breathe. It demonstrates how the specialized genre of literary journalism provided the forum for this literature through a series of independent literary journals where a new generation of writers could operate somewhere in between the powerful mainstream formed by the state's formidable media organs – newspaper, radio and television – and dissident and opposition activity. In the restrictive, authoritarian atmosphere of the time, writers, like journalists, were very often political players, and those outside the state-owned mainstream constantly ran the risk, if indeed they did not deliberately flirt with it, of being associated with political groups and ideologies that challenged the nervous and jealous Egyptian state with Nasser, and after 1970 Anwar Sadat, at its head. Communists and Islamists in particular were pursued with a vengeance