modern persons, titles of books, and localities, also specific information can be easily found and the book becomes a useful reference work on such themes as instrumentation and Islamic astronomical handbooks. The 200 pages of appendices with editions and analyses of many relevant geographical tables from manuscripts and instruments form an extremely useful addition to E. S. & M.-H. Kennedy, *Geographical Coordinates of Localities from Islamic Sources* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987).

Among only few minor points of criticism, it may be mentioned that the mathematical explanations in the book are not as extensive as this reviewer would have deemed desirable. For methods of calculating the *qibla* the reader is referred to other publications that use different notations. The final steps of the construction of the grid on the two *qibla* indicators are extremely difficult to follow, whereas the provided reference Charette, ''*Procedure*'' is missing from the bibliography. Confusion also arises in Section 6.7 at the bottom of p. 249 (the reference to Fig. 6.7.2 should probably be to Fig. 6.7.3) when the actual, accurate and reconstructed grids are compared: the actual and accurate grids turn out to ''agree', and the reconstructed grid is ''barely discernible from the accurate one'', although Figures 6.7.1 and 6.7.2 show obvious differences between the accurate and reconstructed grids. The omission of some symbols from Figures (D from Fig. 2.4.1, W from Fig. 2.4.2, G′ and T from Fig. 6.6.1) may have been deliberate, but the references in the text to a grid constant k that, except on p. 339, does not occur in the formulas concerned (see pp. 239, 240, and 245) seems to have been simply forgotten. The reference to Fig. 6.6.3b on p. 236 should be to Fig. 6.7.2.

The reviewer also had some problems with King's use of footnotes. Three notes in a single sentence are no exception and often the text of the notes takes up more than half of the page. The information in some very long footnotes could better have been given its own place in a separate section or an appendix. Furthermore, many of the footnotes contain (occasionally circular) references to other footnotes, rather than directly to sections of the text, page numbers, or bibliography entries. In general, King has his own very ''personal'' style of writing with a copious, not always obvious use of citations, occasional bold face text and exclamation marks, and frequent anecdotes unrelated to the text. This style will appeal to some readers but will probably irritate others.

Since the publication of King's book, a third instrument of the same type has surfaced in the United States. It is as refined as the one discovered in 1989 and as complete as the one that showed up in 1995. Alas, even though this third example is signed with a different common name, it does not solve the remaining problems of the *qibla* indicators. It seems that only a Safavid manuscript, possibly hidden in an obscure Iranian library, may some day shed more light on the construction of the three instruments and allow us to fully appreciate their historical context. In the meantime, King has written a fascinating, beautifully illustrated book that should be read by any person interested in Islamic science or the history of mathematical geography.

Benno van Dalen

Description of Egypt. By Edward William Lane. Edited and with an introduction by Jason Thompson, pp. xxxii, 588. Cairo, The American University in Cairo Press, 2000.

Edward Lane has meant much to the present reviewer, who was early on encouraged, as so many students have been, to read his *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, and who has gratefully consulted his *Arabic Lexicon* on myriad occasions, despite the unfinished nature of its final parts. It is possible that, had Lane's *Description of Egypt* been published when he was still quite a young man, as he desperately longed for it to be, his many-sided interest in Egypt might have settled on the newly developing discipline of Egyptology. Accounts of Egypt's ancient civilization take up the bulk of the work and it is with regret that this reviewer acknowledges that he is completely incapable of judging

the value of Lane's contribution to Egyptology, whether in terms of early nineteenth-century knowledge or more broadly. I take it on good authority that his reputation would have been high. Nevertheless, Lane's subsequent career as an Arabist and student of the Egyptian society of his day should not be seen as somehow second-best, since Lane himself made it very clear that his interest in contemporary Egypt was very important to him when he wrote in his original introduction that he was motivated by "a zealous attachment to the study of oriental literature, and a particular desire to render myself familiar with the language of the Arabs" (p. 1) and also when he further stated that he came to Egypt "chiefly for the purpose of studying the language and literature of its modern inhabitants etc." (p. 5)

The present editor's Introduction (pp. ix–xxv) sets out clearly and sympathetically the sad story of Lane's attempts, through three drafts, to get his work published and his eventual disappointment. However, at various times material from the unpublished book appeared in altered form, sometimes expanded, sometimes transmogrified, as *Manners and Customs etc.*, *The Englishwoman in Egypt* (under his sister Sophia's name) and *Cairo Fifty Years Ago* (edited by his great-nephew Stanley Lane-Poole). Now at last the full text and the illustrations have appeared and one likes to imagine that Lane is rejoicing somewhere at this happy conclusion.

I am sure that he would be grateful for the efforts of his modern editor, Jason Thompson, who has punctiliously striven to put out the text in the way that Lane might have wished. His editorial approach and practice are carefully explained in an extended note (pp. xxvi–xxxii). Lane's system of transliteration of Arabic words and toponyms, which was experimental and worked well enough, has been quite rightly retained. It does give the text a rather quaint air with its double vowels and double consonants, producing delightfully strange results such as *Ckoor-a'n* or *El-Ack'a'lee'm el-Bahhree'yeh*. The "sharply curved apostrophe", used to represent *'ayn*, is also used to denote the colloquial suppression of a vowel (as it would be in *k'beer*) but not always a *fatḥa* (*pace* the editor). However, since Lane's time too much ink has been wasted on the topic of transliteration.

There is a temptation to write only about the history of the text, which is certainly a fascinating story, and about the modern task of editing, but what about the contents themselves, always bearing in mind the reviewer's inability to comment on the technicalities of the Egyptology involved? What we have now is a splendidly comprehensive nineteenth-century account of ancient and modern Egypt. The totality of the description at which it aims produces a work which has many aspects. It is part guide-book, part travel narrative and part academic monograph covering matters historical, political, economic, social and topographical, and is graced by Lane's own delicate and accurate drawings, which owe a lot to his use of the *camera lucida*.

The guide-book aspect appears in the practical hints for travelling by boat on the Nile (p. 216) and by Lane's envisaging that his book might be a traveller's companion (rather a bulky one!) on a visit to Cairo (p. 85). The book's age shows in some of the medical comments and advice. See for example, the monthly dietary hints (pp. 44–47) and the suggestion that "plague" and ophthalmia arise from the dampness of the inundation period and that, for a sleeper in the open, "moonlight is said to have an injurious effect upon the eyes" (p. 220). It is a pity that Lane did not give a much more detailed description of the ruins of al-Qaṣr al-Ablaq (soon to be demolished), especially as he does appear to have visited the Cairo citadel (pp. 91–92), or of the remnants of the palace of al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb on Roda Island (p. 95).

It is a delight to read Lane's rather old-fashioned, careful prose. The vividness of the narrative and the precision of his descriptions of places, processes and objects etc. are striking. There is a special interest in those sections with some personal touches, giving the author's own thoughts, actions and reactions. His comments on security of travel in Egypt are a little contradictory (p. 220) but I liked his encounter on the Great Pyramid with a Bedouin armed with a pistol (p. 169) and the threat from two armed Turkish soldiers intent on robbery and worse at Aswan (pp. 426–427).

Lane gave precise references very sparsely. The editor has put together a list of the sources used by Lane (pp. 580–588), without updating the bibliographical information that was given and without adding modern details for the Arabic material, most of which was consulted by Lane in manuscript. No index has been added. There are very few misprints, although, when I hesitated at ''amadon'' (p. 216), I discovered a word new to me, ''amadou''.

To review a work written in the first half of the nineteenth century, which has appeared in print only at the beginning of the twenty first century, is a disorientating task. It can only be viewed as an historical document and a splendid monument to the scholarship of its period.

D. S. Richards

Identification and Identity in Classical Arabic Poetry. By M. C. Lyons. pp. 366. Warminster, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1999.

This is a forbidding book. The ''Contents'' page confronts the reader with a stark landscape distressingly free of signposts: ''Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, etc. . . .''. As the book progresses, the chapter subheadings (''Time'', ''Space'', ''Poetry'', ''Identity'', etc) are gradually replaced by lines across the page. Generally, the prose consists of descriptive strings of translated verses of Arabic poetry organized topically. From a stylistic point of view, the book seems an exercise in what a premodern Arab writer would have called ''*nathr al-naẓm*'' (prosification of verse).

I have taken the liberty of offering the following expanded Table of Contents for potential readers.

Introduction: Identification and Identity in Arabic poetry
I Pre-Islamic poetry
II The *Mukhaḍramūn*: Arabic poetry and the Emergence of Islam
III Early Umayyad poetry – Dhū 'l-Rumma, Miskīn al-Dārimī, al-Ṭirimmāḥ, and Abū 'l-Hindī
IV The Great Triad – Jarīr, Farazdaq, and al-Akhṭal
V Early Abbasid poetry: Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīk al-Jinn al-Ḥimṣī, and Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī
VI Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī
VII Abū Nuwās
VIII al-Mutanabbī and Abū Firās al-Hamdānī
IX Majnūn, Jamīl and ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa
X The *Muwashshaḥ*
XI The *Kāna wa-kān*
Conclusion: Poets and Storytellers

Despite the difficulties it presents, the book offers valuable insights to students of medieval Arabic literature. While he does not claim to have addressed a complete corpus of premodern Arabic poetry, Lyons has sifted through a sample that is extensive in chronological scope, poets represented, and sheer quantity of verse. This book seems to represent the notes Lyons recorded along the way. As such it can be used in a variety of ways, some more effective than others (more on this below).

The problem Lyons seeks to address is the predominance of the first person in Arabic poetry. Readers interested in pursuing this topic are advised to read the Introduction, sections marked ''Identity'' and ''Poetry'' (the last sections in unmarked chapters) and the Conclusion. Lyons suggests that poets presented ''challenges to identification'' that their audiences had to recognize. Such challenges included the identification of the specific role the poet had assumed: the hero (and lover/drinker), wise man, traveller, or ''perceiver'' (*shāʿir*). In the last role the poet offered his perspective on reality. His imagery challenged the audience to recognize its background in the literary tradition as