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Mogamat Alexander, *The Cape Muslim Vernacular*. Publisher: Cape Town: XMD Books (Pty) Ltd, 2023, 247 pages. ISBN # 9780796103659.

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Before reflecting on Mogamat Alexander's significant contribution, the reviewer wishes to remind readers that one of the individuals who undertook pioneering research regarding the Cape Muslims' vernacular, which is the title of this work, was Achmat Davids (d. 1998). The latter's name is included here as he has done sterling research that resulted in a University of KwaZulu-Natal MA thesis titled *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims from 1815 to 1915*. The latter text was later edited in 2011 by Professors Hein Willemsse and Suleman Dangor respectively and aptly retitled *The Arabic–Afrikaans Writing Tradition, 1815-1915*, with a reprint in 2024. Before Achmat Davids' research work, Prof. Adrinanus van Selms, Dr. Friz Ponelis, and others explored this unique genre. Additionally, Dr. Ernst Kotze, Prof. Kees Versteegh, Prof. Gerald Stell, and Prof. Hein Willemsse added their voices to the discussion, enriching it with their studies and assessments.

The purpose of this preface to the review is to highlight that linguistic scholarship regarding Arabic-Afrikaans has indeed expanded; as a result of this, fresh understandings of the evolution and transformation of the Afrikaans language have been underway. Bearing these in mind and turning to Mogamat Alexander's text, it may be argued that Davids' research output has indeed impacted the works of scholars and researchers, with Alexander being one of them. Mogamat Alexander's significant publication has helped linguists and related researchers to obtain a better perspective of the Cape Muslim Vernacular (CMV); the author, in fact, contends (p. 242) that CMV is an issue that continues to be unknown. He is indeed on point in this regard since it remains an understudied area. Factoring in these thoughts, it may be argued that Alexander embarked on – what may be described as – a longitudinal study; one that began long before October 2014 when he had compiled an incomplete word list of Arabic–Afrikaans words and phrases (see p. 243).

It seems, from Alexander's list of 'References' (pp. 245-247), that he did not come across Ernst Kotze's unpublished word list that circulated in the late 1980s. Speaking of Alexander's 'References,' it is revealed that he threw his linguistic net wide; in other words, he consulted bilingual dictionaries and other sources to ensure that the meanings given were more or less accurate. Relatedly, it should be noted that the author did not observe the standard format of

referencing; though important, it may be viewed as a minor shortcoming. Turning to the contents, the author divided the text into twelve uneven chapters; they are uneven because of the themes/topics that were covered. Before dipping into selected contents and offering brief comments, the author prefaced the publication with a poem titled 'My Kaapse Moesliem Afrikaans' that he composed to capture the book's basic ideas; he then included a 'dedication' page and an 'acknowledgment' page respectively. The 'contents' page (without including the page numbers) was followed by a two-page 'introduction' to contextualize this publication.

The first chapter (pp. 1-17) reflected on the 'Varieties of Afrikaans,' and it then turned to the second chapter (pp. 18-13) that focused on the 'Cape Muslim Afrikaans.' The third chapter (pp. 14-15) shifted its attention to the 'Malay influence on the Cape Muslims' vernacular,' and the fourth chapter (pp. 16-24) jumped to 'The Cape Muslims inherited Kaaps pronunciation.' The fifth chapter (pp. 25-29) and the sixth chapter (pp. 30-36) respectively addressed the 'Two Varieties of Kaaps' and 'Foreign Loanwords in the Malay Language.'

Browsing through these 'chapters,' one noted that the author had plenty of footnotes clarifying some points, but he had no references to indicate from where he sourced some of the information or data; the first two chapters, for example, did not cite or make mention of any publication to support the presented arguments. One would have liked him to have quoted Michael Cordeur's 'Die variëteite van Afrikaans as draers van identiteit: 'n Sosiokulturele perspektief,' or for him to have referred to Davids' work that was mentioned earlier. The brief chapter on 'Malay influence on the Cape Muslims' vernacular would have benefitted from Witton's 2000 essay that explored the African-Indonesian connection.

Moving on to the seventh chapter (pp. 37-55) and eighth chapter (pp. 56-59) respectively, the author tackled 'The Language Culture of the Cape Muslims,' and then presented 'A Typical Cape Malay Conversation in Cape Muslim Afrikaans.' In the ninth chapter (pp. 60-77), he provided a list of 'Idiomatic expressions and typical statements' before he shared a 'Dictionary of Loanwords in the CMV' in the tenth chapter (pp. 78-159). In the penultimate chapter (pp. 160-216), he reflected on 'Arabic-Afrikaans,' and he thereafter shared his thoughts on 'Lest it evaporates in the mists of History' in the final chapter (pp. 217-248).

This set of chapters brought interesting information to the fore; the chapter on Cape Muslims' linguistic culture demonstrated their creativity and use of words within their specific religio-cultural context. The author's construction of a 'Cape Malay' conversation makes fascinating reading and underlines the fact that they undertook linguistic engineering to another level. Whenever Alexander gave a public lecture, he would present a typical conversation, and, in this manner, he gave the audience a taste of how the language was used. Chapters ten and eleven were understandably long; this may be attributed to the fact that the author

wanted to cover as many loanwords to prove that the Cape Muslims' vernacular was heavily influenced by various socio-linguistic developments over a long historical period. The author appropriately pointed out (p. 78) that if one perused the South African dictionaries, then one would not find them listed; for this reason, the list of words that he catalogued should be considered a useful overview.

Anyone who scanned Alexander's catalogue of words would note that he not only identified the word as it appeared in the Cape Muslim vocabulary, but he also inserted the linguistic equivalent to ensure that one pronounced it correctly. On top of that, he gave the dictionary meaning (see the word 'Adat' on p. 79); below it, he mentioned the other languages such as Javanese that also made use of the same word. Alexander should be commended for this noteworthy catalogue. In conclusion, though one may wish to quibble about the book's shortcomings, such as not having included an index and the missing ISBN number, one would like to laud Alexander for making a significant contribution. He engaged with a topic that a few scholars have investigated over the years and has tangibly demonstrated the creative spirit among the Cape Muslims. Alexander's study offered readers insight and appreciation of the Cape Muslims' vernacular.

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