

Reviews

Jean-Charles Ducène, L’Afrique dans le Uns al-Muhağ wa-Rawḍ al-Furağ d’al-Idrīsī. Leuven 2010. Peeters. LVI + 253 pp. = Lettres Orientales 15. ISBN: 978-90-429-2179-5.

Al-Idrīsī’s great ‘Geography’ Nuzhat al-muštāq known also as ‘Kitāb Roğer’ or simply as ‘Geography’ has eclipsed his second geographical treatise which is a fantastic mine of place names although, radically concentrating on itineraries, it is less interesting than al-Idrīsī’s *opus magnum*. So far this ‘smaller al-Idrīsī’ has been known only from fragments published here and there. Now we have a fundamental critical edition of the part dealing with African routes and places. There is a critical version of the Arabic text based on two extant manuscripts, there is a translation and a detailed commentary based on Oriental as well as European editions of source texts as well as of the existing studies. There are also facsimiles of the important original maps.

Prof. Ducène has done a great thing giving us not only well established text and a good translation but also a very big number of emendations and scholarly conjectures. The number of toponyms and ethnonyms is about 1100 and this means that, quite inevitably and fortunately for prospective researchers, there must be some problems. E.g. on map no. 14 I cannot find the place spelled as AN.H.lā’ī on p. 121 and corrected to ‘Allāqī. I do not think that such a conjecture would be reasonable but first of all on the map there is something that looks like al-‘Arlāqī which indeed shuld be identified with the famous ‘Allāqī. I do not think that ‘al-Buğğā’ should have geminated /ğ/ - the name was vocalized either as Buğa or as Biğa, the latter used also today and since there was also a variant Bāğa, the vowel /e/ in Bega found in Ge‘ez Axumite inscriptions as well as in modern Sudan is well confirmed. On the same map no. 14 there is also something like ‘Baħr al-N.‘am’ but where does the name Baħr al-Ta‘āmar (p. 121 of the commentary) come from ? On p. 112 the name Sardalīs is explained in French as Tuareg “petites sources” with only a general reference to Jacques Thiry but I cannot find a basis for such an interpretation in Tuareg dictionaries! Why not identify Itfū (p. 120) with Egyptian Edfu which appears elsewhere

(p. 60 and 64) as Atfū ? The use either of I- or A- confirms the pronunciation of Edfu. I do not think that the identification of ‘Baliyyūn’ (here actually recorded as B.l.yy.n) with Blemmyes and with the Beja (p. 99 and 100, cf. p. 16 and 60) is probable. On p. 15 (cf. p. 60) the Beja and al-B.līn (no gemination !) are listed separately. The spelling “Wārkalī” of Wargla contained in the quotation of de Slane’s translation (p. 157) could be explained as actual *Warkalā. Abār in Abār al-‘Abbās (p. 35 and 71) might be identified with Tuareg *aber* ‘way, route’ (see K.-G. Prasse, Ghoubēid Alojaly, Ghabdouane Mohamed, Dictionnaire Touareg-Français (Niger), Copenhagen 2003, p. 35. “T.N.rīt” (p. 68, 141, cf. p. xlix) can be either identified with Tuareg *tenere*, having *status annexus* form *tanere* ‘(desert) plain’ which occurs also in several toponyms (it can mean also ‘Sahara in general’, see Prasse et al. op.cit. p.622, see also H. Ritter, Wörterbuch zur Sprache und Kultur der Twareg, (vol.) II – Deutsch-Twareg, Wiesbaden 2009: 633) or, rather, it can be emendated to *Tizī-n ‘col/pass of’ (on Tuareg *teze* ‘col’, see Prasse et al., p. 871-2, and Ritter, op.cit., 569). The Somali spelling of the harbor town of Zeyla’ (in this text the spelling Zāla’ confirms [ē] in the first syllable) is indeed Seylac but it would be useful to explain that the final letter <c> stands for the ‘ayn consonant in the Somali alphabet.

In short: this is a real masterpiece of philological work ! All specialists in historical geography hope that publication of the rest of al-Idrīsī’s minor but still so important *opus* will follow.

Andrzej Zaborski

Peter Behnstedt, Manfred Woidich, Wortlatlas der arabischen Dialekte - Band I: Mensch, Natur, Fauna, Flora. Leiden - Boston 2011, XXVIII + 665 pp. = Handbook of Oriental Studies Section One: The Near and Middle East vol. 100. ISSN 0169-9423, ISBN 978 90 04 18664 4.

This “Word Atlas of the Arabic Dialects” is a milestone in the history of Arabic dialectology. It has been compiled by two great masters of dialectology and dialect geography with the help of over thirty Arabists (about a dozen of them being Arabs) whose names are listed on the title page. Although some enthusiasts have appealed for a prompt compilation of a comparative dictionary of Arabic dialects, nevertheless such an enterprise, if taken seriously, requires a lot of effort, time and money which makes it more or less unrealistic for the time being and a detailed systematic atlas of Arabic dialects including data on phonetics and phonology, morphology etc. is even more difficult. The authors have made a reasonable decision to concentrate on the lexicon and have drawn

the data from the great majority of the existing literature, from unpublished data in their possession (including data from recordings with Arabs living in Germany), from 50 questionnaires filled by them or by the colleagues in the field as well as from the internet. The last source is a bit surprising but we can only be happy that it has provided additional data. Altogether there are over 184 maps showing the distribution of the particular lexemes preceded by 9 maps showing the position of the places from which the data originate but with the exception of Egypt, Syria and Yemen which had been covered in the well known detailed atlases published by Behnsted and Woidich (Egypt) and by Behnstedt (Syria and North Yemen). The maps are accompanied by very important and frequently very detailed commentaries which are a mine of knowledge and a great show of analytical power. There is an index of the Arabic dialect words (pp.545-649), an index of words from Classical Arabic (pp. 651-657) as well as an index of words from other languages including Berber, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Kurdish Modern Semitic of Southern Arabia (usually called Modern South Arabian) , Persian and Tajik, English, French, Italian, Sicilian, Spanish, Turkish, Swahili and even Luganda (3 items), Wolof (2 items) and Hindustani (2 items). Indices cannot be trusted since in the commentaries we do find loan-words from other languages, e.g. Nilotic Bari (p. 117) , Kenuzi Nubian (p. 393) and Uzbek (p. 503). It is a bit surprising that Coptic (there is Coptic *pi-krur* 'frog' on p. 384 !), Syriac (but see p. 313 for Syriac *pa(r)rūgā* 'chick' > Arabic *farrūg* etc. 'hen/chicken', see also p. 316 and 310, which appears also as Berber *aberrūg* etc.; any connection with French *perroquet* , Spanish *periquito* etc., in English 'parakeet' as 'parrot?') and Neoaramaic words have not been found in the semantic fields which are covered by the first volume ! As far as the semantic groups are concerned, there are over 80 maps dealing with 'man and society' divided into kinship terms, other persons (e.g. guest, friend, beggar, thief), professions (butcher, shoemaker, hairdresser, doctor, chemist and tailor), parts of the human body (over 30 items), some human traits and features. The section on animals (over fifty items) is divided into domesticated (but there is no 'dog' !) and wild animals (except 'snake'/serpent' as well as 'scorpion' !) but only cultivated plants are dealt with. It is astonishing that in the section about the natural phenomena (altogether 12 items) there is no 'star' and no 'sea' !

Here I can add some minor remarks. Central Moroccan Berber *akidar* (p. 296) 'horse of inferior quality' is the source of Tanger *kyāder*; *kemmāra* 'face' occurring in North Moroccan Arabic goes back to Berber indeed as explained on p. 99 but the Tamazight form meaning 'face' is *akemmer*, pl. *ikemmaren* , see Milud Taifi, Dictionnaire Tamazight-français – parlars du Maroc central, Paris 1991, p. 337, so that perhaps *kemmāra* can be a secondary Arabic derivation; Kabyle has *akermus* and *lkermus* with the Arabic definite article (J.-M. Dallet, Dictionnaire kabyle-français, Paris 1982, p. 419, see also p. 418 for *akurbuz*) and the latter form shows that Maghribi Arabic *karmūs* is rather not a loan

from Berber against J. Madouni-La Payre although a secondary back borrowing cannot be excluded; concerning p. 515 'sweet melon': in Kabyle Berber there is *afeqqus* (Dallet, op.cit. p. 214 and also *abeṭṭih* (ibid., p. 57). Rif Berber *tašrumt* 'nape' (p. 124) has a cognate also in Tuareg *tejarḍamt*, see H. Ritter, op.cit., p. 815)

Kurmanji Kurdish 'cat' is *piši/piš*, in Sorani it is *p(i)šile* but in the Zaza dialect it is *psîng* (masc.) and *psîng-i* (fem.), in the Karakoçan dialect it is *pisîng* (see M.L. Chyet, Kurdish-English Dictionary, 2003, s.v.) with the enigmatic -ng and so the Kurdish origin of the Anatolian Arabic *pšenge*, *peşige*, see p. 329 is indeed well secured; Anatolian *žūžu* 'hedgehog' is indeed Kurmanji Kurdish *juju*, see p.401; Kurdish source of Anatolian Arabic *wafḍak-ē* 'duck' is *werdek*, see p. 319; Khorasan Arabic *kilikk* 'finger', p. 151, means also 'finger' in Sorani Kurdish, see K.K. Kurdoev, Z.A. Yusupova, Kurdsko-russkiy slovar (sorani), Moskva 1983, p. 507, Taufiq Wahby and C.J. Edmonds, A Kurdish-English Dictionary, Oxford 1971, p. 76 have *kilk*); Anatolian Arabic *bargîl* 'horse of inferior quality' is Kurdish *bargîn* 'packhorse' and/or *bargir* 'beast of burden' (Kurdoev, op.cit., p.61) but Wahby and Edmonds, op.cit., p. 7 explain it as 'horse' *tout court*.

In Modern Semitic of Southern Arabia *rahmêt/rhâm* 'rain; vegetation after rain' is found not only in Mehri (p.412) but also in Jibbali (T.M. Johnstone, Jibbāli Lexicon, Oxford 1981, p. 210 as well as in Harsusi where there is *rehemét*, pl. *reḥāyem*, diminut. *reḥmān-ōt* 'rain (see T.M. Johnstone, Harsūsi Lexicon, London 1977, p. 103), and in the MSSA languages there is a verb 'to rain, to have rain in a dry period' derived with the causative *sV-, e.g. Harsūsi and Mehri *še-rhāwm*. It is possible that Mehri *šenab/šanab* is a loan from Arabic but in Jibbāli (op. cit. p 151, cf. p.263 for *šneb* !) there is also *meqşoş* and Socotri *mékşaş* derived from the verb *qaSS* 'to cut' (that occurs also in Arabic) and probably borrowed from Arabic as passive participle *maqSūs* which has not been recorded with the meaning 'moustache' as far as I can check .

A part of the lexemes included in this volume belong to the basic vocabulary, mainly those referring to human body and natural phenomena. In one of the two volumes that are to follow it would be good to have a special section (an appendix ?) showing the repartition of the basic vocabulary (including personal pronouns) limited to some 200 selected items. Few people believe today in glottochronology (although not so few provide dates for language prehistory taken *ex nihilo*) but the gradual differentiation of the lexicon of the dialects of every language is a fact and lexicostatistic investigating and comparison of the basic vocabulary does make sense notwithstanding borrowing due to contact.

Andrzej Zaborski

Eds. A.G. Belova, L.E. Kogan, S.V. Loesov, O.I. Romanova, Semitskiye yaziki – akkadskiy yazik, severozapadnosemitskiye yaziki, Moskva 2009, Academia. 825 pp.+ 13 maps. = Yaziki Mira (s.n.). ISBN 978-5-87444-284-2.

This is the first volume of the new great synthesis of Semitic linguistics authored by a group of younger Russian linguists led in a splendid way by Leonid E. Kogan. It must be emphasized that this is not a new edition of *Afraziyskiye Yaziki* – vol. 1 *Semitskiye Yaziki*, Moskva 1991 edited by I.M. Diakonoff but quite a new major synthesis by another generation of Semitists. This volume deals with Akkadian and with Northwest Semitic languages including Ugaritic, Canaanite languages and Aramaic languages, ancient and modern. This is the most ambitious project largely surpassing other ‘overviews’ of the languages of the Semitic subfamily of Afroasiatic which frequently are too elementary for specialists and too general for students as well as for specialists in other language families or in general linguistics. The second volume is to deal with the rest of Semitic.

The chapters dealing with particular branches and with particular languages have been written more or less according to the same model outlined on pp. 822-823. After a general Introduction (pp. 9-14) there is a very important chapter presenting the results (to a considerable extent *communis opinio*) of the comparative studies of the Semitic languages by Leonid Kogan (pp. 15-112). Then we have a section on Akkadian divided into a general chapter on this language by L. Kogan and S.V. Loesov (pp. 113-178), a chapter on Old Akkadian (Sargonic) by E.V. Markina (pp. 178-195) and on Old Assyrian by L.E. Kogan (pp. 195-204). Old Babylonian is treated in a comparative way in these chapters. Then starts the second part on Northwest Semitic. The first chapter is on Ugaritic by L.E. Kogan (pp.205-238) followed by a section on Canaanite languages divided into a general chapter on Canaanite by L.E. Kogan (pp. 239-278), on Phoenician by A.K. Lyavdanskiy (pp. 278-295), on Old Hebrew by L.E. Kogan and S.V. Loesov (pp. 2296-375) and on Modern Hebrew by L.M. Dreyer (pp. 275-413). Then comes the section on Aramaic. It starts with a general sketch of Aramaic languages and dialects by S.V. Loesov (414-496) followed by the same author’s chapter on ‘Imperial’ Aramaic (pp. 496-531). Here I must appeal to *Fachkollegen* to abandon this odd denomination as well as its even more pretentious German *Vorlage* ‘Reichsaramäisch’. Why not ‘Classical Aramaic’ or something else? By the way I cannot accept also the name ‘Epigraphic South Arabian Languages’ since there is nothing like an ‘epigraphic language’ – I propose ‘Ancient Semitic (Languages) of Southern Arabia’ (ASSA) as opposed to ‘Modern Semitic (Languages) of Southern Arabia’ (MSSA) instead of ‘Modern South Arabian’. Then come the chapters on Jewish-Palestinian Aramaic by A.V. Nemirovskaya

(pp.531-562), on Classical Syriac by S.V.Loosov (pp. 562-660), on Classical Mandaic by A.V. Nemirovskaya (pp. 626-660), on Neoaramic in general by A.K. Lyavdanskiy (pp. 660-693), on Neomandaic by the same author (pp. 693-704), on Ma'lūla by L.E. Kogan and S.V. Loosov (pp. 705-751) and by the same authors on Turoyo (pp. 751-805). There is also an Appendix 'On the origin and early stages of the development of West Semitic alphabet' by A.K. Lyavdanskiy (pp. 811-817) and the tables showing examples of these alphabets (pp. 818-821). Finally we have 13 very detailed, quite unique maps showing the distribution of the relevant languages and the finds of their records in different periods.

The authors have a very good knowledge of the subject and of the great majority of existing studies although there is no mention, e.g. of the small but really interesting short synthesis by Reinhard Stempel – „Abriß einer historischen Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen“, Frankfurt am Main 1999, Peter Lang. Quite a minor flaw: pages of the articles published in scholarly journals and collections of papers are not indicated ! Inevitably every specialist can find some lacunae and controversial opinions. E.g. there is a controversy on the Akkadian subordinative/"subjunctive" forms – in my opinion they preserve the original ending -u of the Indicative because they appear not before a pause (unfortunately not whole sentences but only separated dependent clauses are usually quoted) and iprus-u is the Common Semitic Imperfect shifted to dependent clauses; Akkadian 'ventive' is an example of a misinterpretation by the great Landsberger – this is Energetic surviving not only thanks to verbs of motion; it is a question whether the Akkadian Present i-parrVs-u had always the second root consonant geminated – the cuneiform writing does not make the assumption of this gemination obligatory in every particular form and the whole problem should be revised by Assyriologist without prejudice. Narrative Imperfect of Hebrew (pp. 347-348) has been explained independently by myself and by D.Testen as *wa-la-yiqtol > *wa-l-yiqtol > wayyiqtol. A thorough review of the book would amount to a booklet if not another book. E.g. there is too little on Urmi Neoaramaic which deserves a chapter; there is very little reference to other archaic Afroasiatic languages (e.g. the endings -u, -a and -an of the prefix conjugation in 'Afar-Saho should be mentioned); it is good that there are always subsections on the lexicon of the particular branches and languages but usually there is no reference to Afroasiatic lexica which are of very different value but nevertheless should be referred to. But the fact is that we get a big wealth of facts and we have nothing comparable - this is actually by far the best general presentation of the Semitic languages ! The authors have done a tremendous work indeed. Although publishing such a voluminous thing is a challenge for every publisher, nevertheless I would strongly suggest a publication of an updated English version. But first of all let us have the second volume.

Andrzej Zaborski

Il-Qoran Imqaddes, maqlub mill-Gharbi min Martin R. Zammit, Muhammad El-Sadi, Tripli – Libja 2008. L-Ghaqda Dinjija ghas-Sejha Islamika. LIX + 634 pp. ISBN 978-9959-28-150-0.

This is the second translation of the Koran into Maltese after the translation by the Franciscan Father Edmund Teuma (*il-Qur'ân*, with an introductory study by Father Joseph Ellul, Malta 2000, Provincja Maltija O.F.M. Conv., 768 pp.). The first translation was made primarily for Catholic Christian readers to be confronted with Islamic faith and it is accompanied by numerous ample footnotes largely illustrating the similarities and differences between the Christian and Muslim interpretation of Biblical themes. Father Teuma has also tried, successfully enough as far as I can judge not being a speaker of Maltese, to do justice to the artistic or poetic flavor of the original although some critics (see Ranier Fsadni, *Flesh Made Word*, Times of Malta, Saturday, August 16th, 2008, internet version read on June 25th 2011) said that the translation using classical or classicist Maltese rhetoric 'required very close reading, not to say a dictionary'. I do not think this reproach is really serious since understanding such an old and complicate text even in the original requires intellectual effort, even a lot of effort. The second translation by a renown Arabist and Semitist and a collaborating imam concentrates on the meanings (*ma'ānī*) of the Holy Koran and is to be used mainly by Maltese Muslims. Since the Arabic original is reproduced on each opposite page, it may also help the Muslims without a knowledge of Maltese to learn the language. By the way, we do not know how many native speakers of Maltese are Muslim today. In any case the need of such a Muslim oriented translation is well justified. For Arabists it is another chance to see how the most important Classical Arabic (here it does not matter that some specialists call it rather Pre-Classical which is quite controversial) text is rendered in Maltese which is of Arabic origin but which has become an independent language, the closest relative of Arabic and not just a dialect of Arabic since centuries. Zammit's translation is largely amplified following, e.g. Rudi Paret's German translation which is highly appreciated for its semantic depth and exactitude although it is lacking, due mainly to the number of commentaries inserted in brackets, aesthetic impact which is one of the great powers of the Koran. Practically every verse contains bracketed commentaries or 'additions' which help to understand the text. This technique (with very few footnotes !) makes understanding much easier but inevitably the translation loses some of its charm and laymen may ask, not necessarily with a good reason, whether the translation does not offer something that does not actually appear in the original. Actually we do find controversial commentaries, e.g. in the famous verse 34 of the Chapter 4 men are advised to beat women only in a last resort, 'lightly and in a symbolic way' (*hafif u b'mod simboliku*), see p. 84. On the other hand the

famous Chapter 47, verse 4 concerning the infidels which appeals to ‘smite their necks’ (so translated by A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, London 1964, p. 526) is amplified by the bracketed ‘and kill them’ (u oqtluhom” , p. 506; several translation render the phrase by ‘strike them with a sword on their necks’ without brackets) to make everything clear ! Apart from insertions there are general introductions to particular chapters, a detailed glossary of the Islamic terms, ideas and persons (pp. 605-619), a glossary of Arabic terms which are either unknown or little known in today’s Maltese (pp. 620-622), a list of al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā (God’s epithets; pp. 623-628) and simplified Indices (pp. 629-634). This is a mine of data for a contrastive study of Maltese and Classical Arabic although we have to remember that the translators have been trying to use the syntactic and lexical similarities between the two languages using, e.g. Maltese archaisms (altogether more than eighty) explained in the Glossary on the basis of Erin Serracino-Inglott’s ‘*Il-Miklem Malti*’, Valetta 1979-1989. E.g. it is notable that in the *Fātiḥa* Arabic is translated as “It-tifhir lil Alla, Sid il-holqien” while in Teuma’s translation it is “Is-sebħ lil Alla, is-Sid tal-holqien” and in the anonymous translation offered by the Maltese Wikipedia under ‘al-Fatiḥa’ it is “Il Glorija la-Alla Mulej ta id-dinja”) and then (repectively !): “is-Sultan ta’ Jum il-Haqq”, “il-Hakkiem ta’ jum id-din”, “Sultan ta’ il-ġiudizzju universali”. It has to be emphasized that the number of Maltese words of Italian/Sicilian origin is very small so that long passages can be read without finding them.

In its category of amplified translations this translation is really good. It is both a serious scholarly achievement and a practical tool both for the religious use as well as for linguistic research on modern archaized Maltese and its use for a translation of a Classical Arabic text which must be first of all comprehensible in spite of all the challenges.

Andrzej Zaborski

Der Koran. Aus dem Arabischen neu übertragen von Hartmut Bobzin unter Mitarbeit von Katharina Bobzin. München 2010 C.H. Beck. 827 pp. ISBN 978 3 406 58044 4.

There have been more than a dozen modern German translations of the Koran by German Orientalists as well as by several Muslim scholars and practitioners. Is the number of translations due to the fact that according to Muslim orthodox view the Holy Koran is untranslatable and the existing translation unsatisfactory ? Only incomprehensible texts are untranslatable and I believe that no Muslim would accept the idea that the Book is incomprehensible. It is a well known fact that there are words and fragments of its text which, for various reasons, are either

incomprehensible or very difficult to understand and consequently very difficult to translate or to translate adequately but the great, great majority is comprehensible and thus translatable into any language. The myth of the untranslatability of the Koran is largely due to the fact that its translators usually lacked necessary knowledge (of the Koran and/or of the science of translating) as well as literary talent and translation skill. Usually they have been, like Bible translators, dominated by the prestige of the Holy Text and they strived for a more or less literal translation which, by definition, cannot make English, German etc. be the same as Arabic but it must result in more or less bad English, bad German etc. Allegedly faithful 'philological' translation is not really faithful when it does not equal the artistic or 'poetic' value and function of the original, i.e. when it is not as beautiful as the original. To combine the art of philology, that is the method of establishing, analyzing and commenting texts with literary intuition and translation skill is quite difficult and many great philologists have been actually poor translators in spite of the fact that they were masters of textual interpretation. This newest translation into German has been done by Prof. Bobzin (with a collaboration of his wife who also is an Arabist !) who really combines both faculties and his translation is a great achievement both from a philological and artistic point of view – it is both scholarly precise (but accessible also for a well educated layman !) and literary in the best sense of the word. Prof. Bobzin has made a very good decision to revive the tradition of Friedrich Rückert (1788-1886) who translated the Koran being not only a poet but also Bobzin's predecessor as professor of Oriental languages at the same university of Erlangen – a translation must transmit the same meaning but it also must be as artistic as the original ! R. Paret's well known translation will be still consulted by Islamologists due to the depth of its interpretation of the various meanings but it will never be much read by non-specialists because of its overloaded and from a literary point of view clumsy character. Bobzin's translation will also be consulted by specialists all over the world but it will also be read by non-specialists with pleasure which does not exclude effort and good will which is always necessary when someone wants to cope with that kind of a text. Quite inevitably the commentaries as well as a glossary of the most important words, things and ideas which follow the translation are rather long but they do not exceed reasonable limits in order not to frighten a general reader. It must be emphasized that we must praise the translator who has not given up to the terror of political correctness and, e.g. he translates jihād either as 'fight' or 'war' since the original meaning was just 'war effort' whereas simple 'effort' used by some ideologists is anachronistic in the relevant contexts, its use being a mistake known as 'etymological fallacy'. Some people may object that the translator has mitigated the famous verse "Men are protectors of women having prerogatives over them" (my interpretation) translating it as something like 'Men are responsible for women' ("Die Männer stehen für die Frauen ein", p. 74) but at least he has preserved the order to beat the disobedient women which has disappeared altogether from some

‘modern’ translations. The second volume containing detailed commentaries is to appear and this will greatly enhance the scientific value of the publication

Any text can be well translated in many alternative, equal (!) ways. In other words: superficially different but practically equivalent translations of the same text are a reality. But a new translation should not be written only to be different. E.g. some new Bible translations are produced only to be different from their predecessors and this approach results rather frequently in a failure. In my opinion a kind of reasonable eclecticism is a good thing and really well translated fragments could be inserted as quotations with their sources indicated. I have known some philologists who said that they never read translations, only originals. They were either lying or were simply wrong – every philologist should have a good knowledge of all the pertinent translations, i.e. interpretations of every text he is using. We cannot forget other translations which may be read for different purposes (e.g. religious or aesthetic) but Bobzins both scholarly and highly artistic translation is now the best in German and among the best in general.

Andrzej Zaborski

Jan Henrik Holst, Armenische Studien, Wiesbaden 2009. Harrassowitz Verlag. 320 p. ISBN 978-3-447-06117-9.

Jan Henrik Holst, auteur d’une admirable érudition (dont témoignent les titres de ses livres : *Lettische Grammatik*, 2001, *Einführung in die eskimo-aleutischen Sprachen*, 2005, *Reconstructing the mutation system of Atlantic*, 2008) a publié un livre très intéressant sur l’arménien. Il résume le contenu de son livre (p. 5) de la façon suivante:

Die Arbeit ist zu kleineren Teilen [...] synchroner Natur. Vorwiegend ist sie aber sprachgeschichtlich ausgerichtet. Perspektive und Arbeitsweise sind dann indogermanistisch. Hierbei wird jedoch beständig Wissen aus anderen Sprachwissenschaften hinzugezogen: Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Phonetik, Kaukasistik u. a.; gerade die Integration des Forschungsstands anderer Fächer ermöglichte etliche Einsichten. Im Mittelpunkt des Interesses stehen Themen der Entwicklung der armenischen Sprache zwischen ihrer Loslösung von den verwandten Sprachen und dem Einsetzen der Überlieferung.

Voici quelques remarques qui se sont imposées à nous lors de la lecture de ce livre.

P. 5 l’auteur parle de “Hübschmanns zuvor erfolgter bahnbrechender Beweisführung, daß das Armenische ein eigenständiger Zweig der indogermanischen Sprachfamilie ist”. Mais Bolognesi (1990) a attiré l’attention

sur “le fait que dès le début du XVIII^e siècle l’orientaliste allemand Johann Joachim Schröder, dans son [...] *Thesaurus linguae Armenicae* [...] avait clairement et exactement considéré l’arménien comme une langue autonome et indépendante de l’iranien”. En outre, le linguiste italien signale

l’étonnante analogie entre l’ouvrage de Schröder et celui de Hübschmann, non seulement sur le plan du contenu, mais aussi sur le plan de la forme. On sait que l’*Armenische Grammatik* de Hübschmann est structurée en quatre sections fondamentales [...] Et bien, la disposition de la matière est la même dans le *Thesaurus* de Schröder [...] A tout cela il faut encore ajouter le parfait parallélisme des titres mêmes chez Schröder et chez Hübschmann.

P. 270 Holst, à juste titre, s’oppose à l’opinion selon laquelle “es gebe *konsonantische* Reflexe von Laryngalen im Armenischen”, pourtant il passe sous silence le fait que Tischler, auteur d’un dictionnaire étymologique du hittite, a confronté la théorie des laryngales avec 420 mots hittites et est arrivé à la conclusion suivante:

Die Zahl der Gegenbeispiele ist demnach in den verschiedenen Bereichen verschieden hoch; insgesamt *halten sie sich in etwa die Waage*. Daß die große Zahl der Fälle mit Kurzvokal *e* dabei nicht berücksichtigt werden darf, ist klar, da die Existenz von Lauten, die spurlos schwinden, weder bewiesen noch widerlegt werden kann. Eine Theorie jedoch, die allenfalls für die eine Hälfte aller beobachteten Fälle zutrifft, durch die andere Hälfte jedoch glatt widerlegt wird, kann bei bestem Willen nicht als zutreffend angesehen werden, zumal die Gegenbeispiele auch nicht durch die Annahme *sekundärer Lautveränderungen* aus der Welt geschafft werden können.

Pour plus de détails et d’autres arguments, voir Mańczak 2008: 73–85. Selon Holst (p. 267),

das junggrammatische Schwa wäre in Relation zur Laryngaltheorie die bessere Wahl. Dieses Schwa ist jedoch ebenfalls mit Problemen behaftet, die nicht verschwiegen werden dürfen. Denn z. B. scheinen ja die griechischen Partizipien *thetós*, *statós*, *dotós* nicht auf eine Entwicklung aus **a*, sondern auf eine ursprüngliche Dreiheit zu weisen. Was die Sprecher des Indogermanischen tatsächlich in ihrer Sprache hatten, wird daher wahrscheinlich weder von der Laryngaltheorie noch vom junggrammatischen Schwa getroffen. In einem Gespräch mit Michael Meier-Brügger habe ich 2004 einmal den Ausspruch *tertium datur* getan. Eine solche dritte Rekonstruktionstheorie ist zu entwickeln.

Holst s’occupe également de la théorie des glottales, qui, à notre avis, est erronée (Mańczak 1990).

L’auteur (p. 205) affirme que “das Pluralsuffix *-k* ist aus dem Wort für ‘zwei’, belegt als *erk’ow*, entstanden”. A notre avis, cette désinence provient de l’i.-e. **-s* (Mańczak 1995).

P. 228 l'auteur considère que lit. *rankà* et v. slave *rqka* sont "ein Deminutiv zum indogermanischen Wort für 'Arm' [...] Vor dem -k- fand Assimilation des Nasals in der Artikulationsstelle statt. Im Anlaut läßt sich eine Metathese von *a and *r annehmen. Dies ist jedoch nicht die lautgesetzliche slawische Liquidametathese, da das Resultat auch im Baltischen auftritt". Cette étymologie est invraisemblable aussi pour la raison qu'en v. slave le suffixe diminutif est *-ьka*, jamais *-ka*.

Holst (p. 174) estime que le v. slave *bogъ* est d'origine iranienne. Nous ne partageons pas son opinion (Mańczak 2009).

Depuis de longues années, nous affirmons que, dans toutes les langues, la forme des mots dépend de trois facteurs principaux: non seulement du développement phonétique régulier et du développement analogique, mais aussi de ce que nous appelons un développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence (Mańczak 2008: 19–27). Il se manifeste de différentes manières. P. 284 l'auteur mentionne "das unter dem Modewort 'Grammatikalisierung' heute an Sprachen aus Afrika und anderen Gegenden der Welt viel behandelte Univerbieren". En réalité, il s'agit d'un développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence. Ce n'est pas le hasard, mais la fréquence d'emploi qui décide si un groupe de mots se soude ou non en un seul mot: seules les combinaisons de mots les plus utilisées subissent l'univerbation. P. 276 l'auteur parle de "Auslautgesetze". En réalité, ils n'existent pas et les anomalies que l'on observe dans les désinences s'expliquent par un développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence (Mańczak 1969). En ce qui concerne la désinence dans gr. *pherei* (p. 179), voir Mańczak 1992.

A côté du développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence, il existe une autre évolution irrégulière: assimilations, dissimilations, métathèses, haplogogies, formes hypercorrectes ou expressives. Toute cette évolution se caractérise par le fait qu'elle a lieu, dans des langues diverses, dans les mots les plus divers. *Faible* < *flebilem* présente une dissimilation, mais il serait difficile de trouver, dans une autre langue indo-européenne, un mot signifiant 'faible' avec une dissimilation. En revanche, le développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence a lieu, dans des langues diverses, d'une manière plus ou moins parallèle, ce qui s'explique par le fait que les mots les plus fréquents sont partout plus ou moins les mêmes. Par exemple, les *verba dicendi* présentent dans beaucoup de langues des réductions irrégulières, cf. fr. *parler*, it. *parlare* < *parabolare*, des formes de *narrare* devenu en sarde *nàrrere* (*nau*, *nas*, *nat*, etc.), lat. *ajo* < **agiō* (en face du régulier *adagium*), angl. *says*, *said* (en regard du régulier *lays*, *laid*), russe dial. *gvt* < *gryt* < *govorit*, etc. P. 235 Holst explique le gr. *hekatón* < **hén katón* par une dissimilation, mais nous admettons ici un développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence parce que le numéral '100' présente partout des réductions irrégulières. A en juger par le fait que, dans la majorité des langues indo-européennes, les numéraux '20–90' sont du type lat. *viginti*, *triginta*, etc., *nonaginta*, il est évident que le numéral proto-indo-

européen ‘100’ était **dek̄m̄ dek̄mtōm*, mais une continuation régulière de cette expression n’a persisté dans aucune langue indo-européenne. Et cela s’applique aux numéraux en général, par exemple non seulement *vatsown* (p. 165) ou *jisown* (p. 276), mais aussi all. *fünfzig*, *sechzig*, angl. *fifty*, *sixty*, fr. *cinquante*, *soixante*, esp. *cincuenta*, *sesenta* ou lat. *quingquaginta*, *sexaginta* ont subi des réductions irrégulières. Les noms de parenté, eux aussi, sont très employés, et cela explique pourquoi *nēr* ‘Schwägerin’ (p. 180) a subi un abrègement irrégulier. Il en de même pour *ê* ‘er ist’ (p. 179), étant donné que, dans la grande majorité des langues indo-européennes, le verbe ‘être’ est le plus employé et, de ce fait, présente partout des réductions irrégulières. Le verbe *owt’em* ‘ich esse’ (p. 246) a également subi un développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence, comme en témoigne le fait que nous avons affaire à des réductions irrégulières dans all. *fressen*, roum. *mînca* ou pol. *jeść* (Mańczak 2008a). A notre avis, la sonorisation de la consonne initiale dans *dow* s’explique par un développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence, alors que Holst (p. 119) estime que “wenn [...] das Wort für ‘du’ hinter die Fragepartikel **ar* zu stehen kam und demnach in der Sandhivariante mit *d-* erschien, bot dies eine gute Grundlage zum Verallgemeinern dieser Sandhivariante”. L’all. *du* a deux “Sandhivarianten”: l’une dans les formes verbales du type *hast* et l’autre dans la prononciation peu soignée du type *hast du* [hastə]. Pourtant la forme *du* se maintient telle quelle. Voilà pourquoi nous affirmons que *dow* est comparable à angl. *thou*, où la prononciation sonore de *th-* s’explique par la fréquence: la fréquence moyenne des mots en *th-* sourd (tel *think*) est d’environ 300, tandis que celle des mots en *th-* sonore (tel *that*) est d’environ 9000 (Mańczak 1987: 37–38). Et des sonorisations irrégulières ont eu lieu non seulement en arménien et en anglais, mais aussi dans d’autres langues (Mańczak 1981–1982). Selon Holst (p. 119), “überhaupt erklärt Mańczak zu viele Phänomene durch frequenzbedingten unregelmäßigen Lautwandel”. Ce reproche résulte d’une connaissance très superficielle de notre théorie. Et il faut regretter que Holst s’intéresse beaucoup plus à des problèmes microscopiques comme la règle de Winter (qui concerne une seule langue, le balto-slave) qu’à de grands problèmes comme le développement phonétique irrégulier dû à la fréquence (qui s’applique à toutes les langues du monde).

Holst (p. 96) essaie de justifier l’existence d’un “Balkanindogermanisch” (albanais, grec, macédonien, phrygien et arménien) en s’appuyant sur des données de la phonétique, de la morphologie, de la syntaxe, du vocabulaire et de la sémantique. A notre avis, pour établir le degré de parenté des langues, il faut tenir compte uniquement du vocabulaire dans des textes parallèles (Mańczak 2008: 28–47).

Voici un fragment de la conclusion du livre (p. 279) qui mérite d’être cité:

Archaismen sind ein interessantes Thema. Die vorliegende Arbeit hat hier und da Archaismen ans Tageslicht gebracht. Daß überhaupt welche zutage gefördert

werden, liegt in der Natur der Sache. Indogermanistische Forschung stellt eben bevorzugt diese fest. Einige auffällige Übereinstimmungen zeigten sich mit dem Balto-Slawischen: die Vorliebe für Deminutivsuffixe oder das Präfix *po- [...] Das Balto-Slawische weist tatsächlich viele ganz archaische Züge auf, und zwar möglicherweise Slawisch mehr als Baltisch. Dies hängt m. E. mit der Urheimat zusammen, die vermutlich in der Ukraine und dem südlichen Rußland zu lokalisieren ist.

Depuis de longues années, nous affirmons que l'habitat primitif des Indo-Européens était identique à celui des Slaves, à ceci près que le berceau des Slaves se trouvait dans le bassin de l'Oder et de la Vistule, et non en Ukraine (Mańczak 1992a).

Somme toute, il faut constater que l'ouvrage recensé est très intéressant, mais en même temps un peu écrit à la hâte. On y trouve des propositions attrayantes comme celle de ramener à un dénominateur commun des formes aussi disparates que lat. *senex*, *senis*, gr. *gynḗ*, *gynaikós* et pol. *ślodki*, *ślodszy* ("teildeminutive Paradigmen"), mais d'autre part il est impossible d'approuver, par exemple, la proposition de remplacer le *chva* et les laryngales par d'autres sons.

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