



### Reviews

**Sergio Baldi, *Dictionnaire des emprunts arabes dans les langues de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et en swahili*, Paris: Karthala, 2008, 622 pp.**

The Author has become well known in the area of African studies through his numerous articles on language contact in the Sahel-Saharan zone, and especially on Arabic loans in African languages. Now, his long-term achievements have been summarized in a huge dictionary of Arabic loans in West African languages and in Swahili.

The importance of such work lies in documenting the manifestation of Arabic culture in many African countries in the domain of social organization, religion and economy. Arabic loans create morpho-phonologic subsystems within African languages and they are recognizable through their special phonemes and characteristic morphemes in word structure. However, many Arabic words became naturalized in African languages and are treated as native words (it is seen while coining new words in the process of modernization of lexicon) so that they are hardly identified as loans in present-day structures.

The book under review examines more than 3.000 Arabic words borrowed into nearly 130 languages (regarding alternative grouping such as Bambara and Mandingo, Zarma and Songhay, it is 133 target languages). They are mostly languages of West Africa; Swahili, the most important language of Eastern Africa, represents another contact area. Examples for some Central African languages, such as Lingala and Sango, are also noted.

The dictionary is preceded by the Bibliography of previous works on Arabic loanwords in African languages. The register is rich and it contains various bilingual dictionaries and works that mostly

document individual languages (it includes 30 Sergio Baldi's papers examining Arabic loans in particular languages).

The dictionary is organized according to the Arabic roots that are listed in the Arabic alphabetical order. Main entry is therefore an Arabic word, written in Latin script, that is followed by its equivalents (with all their possible modifications and semantic shifts) in African languages. The arrangement is not so clear for loans that came into the African languages in their contextual (grammatically modified) forms, such as the Hausa word *àrbà'in* and Swahili word *arobaini* 'forty' that are traced back to the original Arabic word *arba'ūn* in its Accusative case form *arba'in*. All items are listed under the Arabic letter *Rā'* where they follow the entry *rub'*, pl. *arba'* '(one) fourth' and later on the sub-entry *arba'a* 'four'. Separate entries under *Rā'* are also created with *rasūl* 'envoy', *risāla* 'message' and *mursal* 'messenger', as they are original Arabic words for Hausa *ràsūlù*, Swahili *risala* and Migama *mùrsállé* respectively.

With all complications related to the identification of entries and their sequence, it is to mention that the dictionary is well-organized in terms of cross-references. The main entries are numbered and they can be also identified through the indexes in which they are listed in Latin order: index of Arabic words, index of French equivalents, and index of scientific (mostly Latin) terms. However, the dictionary data are not fully transmitted to the indexes, therefore the above mentioned word *rub'* is put on the list of Arabic words, whereas *arba'a* not.

The dictionary is terminated with *Addenda* that contain "mots d'origine non arabe parfois donnés pour arabes". These are words that mostly have no etymological relation with the classic Arabic roots and they are not treated as direct borrowings, although they are indicated in context of Arabic influences in the sources. As the sources are not homogenous, Sergio Baldi denies the Arabic origin of some words (*aku* 'parrot', *ašana* 'matches') or gives explanations for a wide distribution of such words like *tumbâk* or *tibg* 'tobacco' and *ğemel* 'camel' across languages in which both Arabic and other African languages (Hausa, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Yoruba) were involved. Concerning the interpretation of origin, this part might be controver-

sial and not fully investigated (cf. three original words for ‘kolanut’, i.e. *gôro*, *gôrá*, *gôro*), but the distribution of some words (roots) clearly documents the common cultural area of West Africa, in which Arabic was not only the source of borrowings but also a ‘transmission belt’ for regional properties and values.

The dictionary is a significant achievement in collecting the data on implementing the Arabic words into African languages. The Author denies some statements of the source material and gives them his own interpretation. Therefore, the Hausa word *wàsíkā* and the Kanuri *wotíya* ‘letter’ are now placed with the Arabic word *waṭīqa* ‘document, paper’, not with *biṭāqa* ‘sheet (of paper)’, as it was stated in previous works. Also the Hausa word *kàsuwā* is traced back to the Arabic *sūq* ‘market’ and is not treated as a Kanuri loan, though it came to Hausa via Kanuri.

The sources of data are well documented and the arrangement of material is clear. The adopted methodology of presenting the data is innovative as it combines the lexicographic tradition of Arabic and African studies in making dictionaries. Comparative lists of reflexes of the Arabic words in different African languages are new source and inspiration for further research. However, the users have to possess at least basic knowledge of Arabic, as well as some experience in African linguistics.

The book is especially interesting for the specialists in African linguistics dealing with reconstruction and other aspects of historical development. It will be also a source of historical interpretations in other areas of African studies, mostly focused on contacts between Africa and Islamic world.

*Nina Pawlak*

**Wilhelm J. G. Möhlig, Jekura U. Kavari, *Reference Grammar of Herero (Otjiherero)*. “Southern African Languages and Cultures” 3, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2008, 371 pp.**

Herero (Otjiherero), spoken in Namibia by almost two hundred thousand people, belongs to these fortunate Bantu languages whose lexicon and grammar started to be documented in the mid nineteenth century and have been gradually updated until now. Most recently, before the publication of the present book, two small

grammatical sketches of Herero appeared, one by Ohly (1999) and the other one by Möhlig, Marten and Kavari (2002). The latter has been developed by Möhlig and Kavari into a comprehensive reference grammar of the volume, larger than all previous publications, which constitutes thus the most detailed description of Herero. Apart from a brief introductory chapter, the book consists of four parts divided into smaller sections: “Phonology and Prosodology” (chapters 2-4, pp. 19-79), “Morphology” (chapters 5-7, pp. 81-206), “Syntax” (chapters 8-12, pp. 207-287) and “Texts” (pp. 289-308). “Bibliography” (pp. 309-314) covers mostly the previous works on Herero and some additional references on other Bantu languages. There is also an Otjherero-English and English-Otjherero glossary (pp. 315-347), an index of topics (pp. 349-353) and an appendix of tables illustrating nominal concords and verbal tense/aspect markers (pp. 357-371).

Part one of the book is divided into three major chapters (2-4) out of which the first two (“Phonology” and “Prosodology”) provide a synchronic description, while the third one (“Historical Phonology and Prosodology”) deals with similar issues treated from the diachronic perspective. The synchronic account of the phonemic inventory and morphophonological processes is rather sketchy, while more explanation is provided by the historical analysis in the latter chapter. Hence, an existence of a remarkable series of dental coronals, contrasting in Herero with alveolars, is attributed to a historical loss of the vowel contrasts and a change from a seven-vowel system to the present five-vowel system, whose effect was also, as in other Bantu languages, an emergence of fricatives (p. 61f.). Synchronically observed interesting tonal contrasts correlate with an earlier stage vowel length contrast (lost in contemporary Herero) and the rule of tonal doubling on the subsequent mora. In general, the historical analyses are convincing as to the internal facts of Herero, as well as to its relation to other Bantu languages. The authors use a comparative method based on dialectometrical computations to argue that Herero shares fewer features with the neighbouring languages (Owambo cluster) than could be expected, while exhibiting considerable closeness to the geographically remote languages of

Savannah Eastern Bantu or even Swahili, which sheds light on the language's history and its present status of an "island" among other Namibian languages. The chapter also contains regular sound correspondences between Herero and Guthrie's Common Bantu taken by the authors as a proto-language.

Given the complexity of Bantu morphology, the second part of the book is the most extended one, divided into chapters on nouns (ch. 5, pp. 81-114), determiners, qualifiers and quantifiers (ch. 6, pp. 115-144) and verbs (ch. 7, pp. 145-206). The chapter on nouns begins with the discussion of noun class system, which in Möhlig and Kavari's analysis consists of twenty noun classes covering the basic classes 1-15, with additional 1a/2a (for kinship terms) and 15a (for paired body parts), class 19 (abstract concepts) and locative classes 16-18. It is a little surprising that the abstracts with the prefix *ou* are treated as a separate class 19 and not as class 14 (reserved in the book for plurals of class 13), which would have better complied with the general Bantuist tradition and which was previously proposed for Herero by Ohly (1999). The next issue in this chapter receives a rather unusual heading of "nominal inflection" and covers diversified processes of prefixation and tonal changes involved (among others) in the augmented nouns and vocatives, as well as in copulative, predicated, connective and possessive constructions. The chapter ends with a detailed discussion of nominal derivation. The next chapter 6 is devoted to the discussion of adjectives, numerals, various kinds of pronouns and nouns used as qualifiers. The chapter on verbs begins with the presentation of the morphology and basic functions of verbal extensions and their combinations, which are in Herero very similar to Swahili and other Bantu languages. After that, the structure of the verbal complex is discussed, compound tenses and defective 'be' and 'have' – all these also parallel the facts known from other Bantu.

The syntax part of the book is very elaborated, too. The authors organize the data using the traditional descriptive notions such as, for example, direct/indirect object, as well as some terminology and diagrams reminiscent of a simple version of a phrase structure grammar. This makes the discussion generally clear and accessible to

any reader. In the opening chapter (“Basic Sentences”, pp. 208-234), after explaining the structure of the main syntactic units (NPs, VPs), the basic types of simple clauses are discussed. This is followed by a small chapter called “Short Predications” (pp. 237-242) which encompasses copulative and predicative expressions, imperatives, optatives, vocatives etc., and next, by a chapter on interrogative sentences (pp. 243-254). “Compound Sentences” (pp. 255-278) are discussed in their many types in great detail, but the presentation of the material is sometimes a little obscured by the inclusion of transformational account (the derivation of compound sentences from simple clauses in particular steps, as e.g. on p. 263) which is perhaps not necessary in the book of this kind, especially since no commitment to a particular syntactic theory is explicitly made. A brief chapter on different kinds of focus (pp. 279-287) closes the syntax part of the book.

The “Texts” part of the book consists of two short narratives and two fragments from school books, providing samples of four different literary genres. Each piece is followed by an English translation and also by a detailed interlinear glosses.

In general, Möhlig and Kavari’s study constitutes a valuable source to examine intricacies of various aspects of Herero and contains a considerable amount of novel material, too (e.g. on tone, focus). The presentation of the data is usually clear and it is particularly noteworthy that all Herero examples are marked for tone. In some cases, however, a reader may become a little confused due to various inaccuracies or errors; they occur above all in the first two chapters on phonology which constitute the weakest part of the whole book. One problem is the use of many *ad hoc* expressions which appear in place of widely accepted terminology, e.g. *syllable centre* (p. 20) instead of *syllable nucleus* (or *peak*), *prenasal consonants* (p. 24) instead of *prenasalized consonants*, *amalgamated* (p. 29) instead of *fused*, *tonetic* (p.30) instead of *tonal*. Quite unnecessary seem the made-up terms as *prosodology*, *prosodological*, *prosodemes*, while what is really meant has the tradition in the Bantu literature as *tonology*, *tonal*, (*underlying* or *phonemic*) *tones*. Unconventional notations do not help, either. For example, a special

dash is used for a downstep (p. 41) and not an exclamation mark, which is a typically used symbol for this purpose; on the other hand, the exclamation mark is used in the book to note an extra high tone (p. 40), which is typically indicated in the literature by a quotation mark, but that sign is used in the book as a notation of the primary stress (p. 41). The text is full of confusing mistakes of various kinds. For example, the explanation on the bottom of page 27 concerning the gliding of the high vowels is contradicted by the examples on the following page; similarly, the statement about the behaviour of the dental nasal on page 38 is immediately contradicted by the examples on the same page. Some of the analyses and explanations are unclear as, for example, the discussion of the glides *y* and *w* in some contexts; the reader is not sure, whether words as *-pya* ‘be burning’ and similar ones contain a rising diphthong or a complex onset, since it is first said: “high vowels *i* and *u* lose their syllabicity”, but then that “they must not be confused with the consonants” (p. 20). Tonal analyses sometimes seem unconvincing and *ad hoc*; it would have been much better if the substantial corpus of literature on Bantu tonology were more acknowledged and used as inspiration as, for example, in the case of the floating low tone assumed to be present in the underlying representation (p. 42f.), while its occurrence seems to be surface-driven, since it serves to separate two adjacent high tones, a phenomenon well-known in Bantu tonology (the so-called “buffer low”). But these critical remarks should not undermine the value of the book and its importance for Herero and Bantu studies.

### **References**

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**Anja Oed, Uta Reuster-Jahn (eds), *Beyond the Language Issue. The Production, Mediation and Reception of Creative Writing in African Languages*, „Meizner Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung” 19, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2008, 293 pp.**

The book contains 26 articles, most of which are based on papers presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Jahnheinz Jahn Symposium on African Literatures at the University of Mainz, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> November 2004. Jahnheinz Jahn (1918-1973) symposia, inaugurated in the year of the library's foundation based on his personal collection in 1975, are meant to provide a platform for international scholars of African literatures and to enhance dialogue between them. The 8<sup>th</sup> International Jahnheinz Jahn Symposium in 2004 was dealing with the production, mediation and reception of creative writing in African languages. Some 40 scholars from 20 countries in Africa, Europe and USA discussed the problems connected with the literature in more than 20 African languages.

The Symposium was able to acknowledge that the creative writing in African languages is by no means a marginal phenomenon. According to Anja Oed, the author of an introduction (pp. 9-32), it is time to recognise that the literature in African languages „[...] forms an integral, vital and exciting part of African literatures and, accordingly, deserves a much informed critical attention as literary texts written in English, French, or Portuguese” (p. 11). In 1982, 40% of all literary titles in the Jahnheinz Jahn Library were written in one of 31 African languages. In 2008, the Library was holding literary works in 69 African languages.

This collection of papers has been divided into five sections: literary production, publishing, mediation, readership, and readings. All those phenomena are briefly discussed in the introduction. The distribution of the articles between the five sections is quite arbitrary as they are rather heterogeneous in character.

The section dealing with the „Literary production” contains six articles. Christine Glanz in „The production, mediation and reception of creative writing in Luganda: a challenging endeavour” (pp. 25-32) deals with about 130 years writing in Luganda, which for decades had much better status than any other Ugandan indigenous

language but its position was weakened by the political changes after independence. It is only since the beginning of the 1990s that professional writing in Luganda and the book industry started to recover. Crispin Maalu-Bungi in his contribution titled „Written literature in Congolese languages” (pp. 33-40) is concerned with the origin and principal genres of written literature in Kiluba, Kikoongo and Lingala. He admits that the written literature in French is today more developed and better known by the speakers of some 212 native languages in Congo. In „Kimbundu literature: origins and continuity” (pp. 41-51) Kiba-Mwenyu aims at elucidation of the origin of the Kimbundu native literature, which is the only literary language in Angola. Farouk Topan, the well-known Tanzanian playwright and scholar, in his essay titled „The expanding world of the Swahili writer” (pp. 53-59) attempts to explore some aspects of mediation in relation to the Swahili writer and his world. Problems of the Swahili literature are also raised by Mikhail D. Gromov in his article titled „The Swahili novel on the turn of the centuries: recent trends and perspectives” (pp. 61-66). The author claims that the pulse of creative writing in Swahili seems to have shifted to Kenya. Nowadays even the majority of Tanzanian books are printed by Kenyan publishing houses. Young novelists represent an experimental trend: their point of anxiety is the future of the entire humankind. Thomas Geider in „A survey of world literature translated into Swahili” (pp. 67-84) aims at drawing attention to works regarded as „world literature”, which were translated into Swahili. Apart from Shakespeare the geopolitical constellation brought into Tanzania the translations of Russian humanist classics. Translations of the growing number of African literary texts into Swahili are also taken into account.

In the „Publishing” section five contributions have been inserted. Walter Bgoya in his article titled „The endeavour of publishing: its limits of success with Swahili readers” (pp. 87-94) admits that over the last decade publishing in East Africa has made considerable progress. However, financial returns from the Kiswahili language book trade are not, except for the text books, big enough to guarantee vitality of the industry. According to the author, reading Kiswahili creative works has been dwarfed by promotion of English

to the detriment of the native language. „Publishing and market for African-language books in the diaspora” (pp. 95-103) by B. Akin-tunde Oyetade is a short account of the author’s personal experience in writing, publishing and marketing African languages and literatures books in London. The paper by Uta Reuster-Jahn titled „The choice of new generation: Swahili entertainment literature from Ndanda Mission Press 1990-2005” (pp. 105-117) is based on the reading of books that had been published within an entertainment programme of the Ndanda Mission Press (a publishing unit of the Benedictine Abbey in Mtwara Region) as well as on information obtained in interviews. During 1990 some 160 titles were published but the high output of the Swahili literature books was not matched by sales figures. Jeff Oppland in his sketch „The newspaper as empowering medium of Xhosa literature” (pp. 119-129) points out that the creative literature written in Xhosa by adults for adult readers, in genres and on subjects of their own choosing, first emerged from mission presses in 1837. Xhosa authors could express themselves more freely in newspapers than in books. One of them was an outstanding poetess Nontsizi Mqgwetho. Her literary output numbers over 90 poems that are briefly presented in the contribution. „Creative writing in Kinyarwanda” (pp. 131-142) is discussed by Jean Chrysostome Nkejabahizi who draws readers’ attention to three points: why the major part of Rwandan literature is written in Kinyarwanda, why creative writing in Kinyarwanda is relatively little known, and why creative writing in Kinyarwanda is not taught at schools.

The third section of the book is named „Mediation”, which „[...] is concerned with introducing and attracting readerships (as well as book buyers) to creative writing in African languages in various ways and for different reasons” (p. 17). It opens with an article by Alain Ricard titled „Creative writing in African languages: writers, scholars, translators” (pp. 145-151), which was presented at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> Jahnheinz Jahn Symposium. He insists on creation of the literary milieu in African languages, and on opening up the languages to the rest of the world literature. In „Attitudes towards African languages and African-language literatures in edu-

cation: the case of Malawi” (pp. 153-162) Francis Moto critically examines views and reactions of parents, teachers, educationists, Ministry of Education officials and the Malawian society at large regarding the question of African-language literature in education. He shows that the views and reactions of educational stakeholders towards Malawian languages and Malawian literatures written in indigenous languages are largely negative. Among strategies to promote African-language literature he suggests translation of the internationally acclaimed works into local languages. The title of an article by Dinah K. Itumelang is self-explanatory: „Teaching Setswana literature in post colonial-Botswana: past, present and future” (pp. 163-170). The author realises that because emphasis has always been on Setswana as a communication language, the newly written literary texts tend to be of low quality. Akinwumi Işola in his article „A key to Africa’s own ‘bank of images’” (pp. 171-178) discusses the problems faced by the African-language literature, giving the example of Nigeria. He concludes: „What writers in African languages need now is a holistic approach to the problem of Africa’s endangered cultural heritage” (p. 178). His creative writing is discussed by Anja Oed in her article „Expanding readerships: Akinwumi Işola novel *O Le Ku* and its video film adaptation” (pp. 179-188). She is concerned with video film adaptations as a strategy to expand the audience of creative writing in Yoruba.

The section of „Readership” contains five articles. The first one by Euphrase Kezilahabi, the well-known Tanzanian novelist and poet, is titled „The house of everydayness: Swahili poetry in Tanzanian newspapers” (pp. 191-199). The author points out that one basic characteristic of Swahili poetry is its quotidian nature that connects it to the daily lives of the people. To prove it he selects a poem „Maji ya Kifuu” (Water in coconut shell) composed by a poet bearing Mimi (Me) pseudonym. Alina N. Rinkanya in her article „Sheng in Kenya: an alternative medium for indigenous creative writing” (pp. 201-208) casts a look at the attempts to create literary works in Sheng and English – two versions of an urban tongue, which have existed in the major cities of Kenya for a few decades. In the late 1980s attempts were made to write full-length literary pieces in

Sheng. In „Breaking out, speaking out: youth, Islam and the production of indigenous Hausa literature in northern Nigeria” (pp. 209-217) Abdalla Uba Adamu tries to analyse the development of Hausa literature as part of global media flows. He distinguishes four generations of creative writing in Hausa and then concentrates on the fourth one focusing on love stories. Memory Chirere in his essay „Ignatius Mabasa’s *Mapenzi* and innovation in the Shona novel: the Zimbabwean response” (pp. 221-225) sets out to explore the innovativeness of a recent piece of the Shona literature. It strays across various genres – prose, poetry, epistle, dream, song – as it unfolds. „African-language writing comes of age: the dawning of an era” (pp. 227-232) by Daniel P. Kunene shows the political turbulence in South Africa after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990. It was captured by Nhlanhla Maake who has taken bold steps to turn the Sesotho literature into modern settings, both geographically and politically.

At the beginning of the last section titled „Readings” an article by Ernest N. Emenyonu has been placed: „The dynamics of creativity and reception: the Igbo language novel from Pita Nwana to Toni Ubesie” (pp. 235-241). The article focuses on various stimulating dynamics of creativity in the Igbo-language novel in 1933 by the legendary Pita Nwana (father of the Igbo-language novel) to the present. An analysis of the well-known Shona novel is proposed by Maurice Taonezvi and Flora Veit-Wild in their paper titled „Rereading *Feso*: the first Shona novel as a nation builder” (pp. 241-251). The novel by Solomon Mutswairo is part of the national memory of Zimbabwe. Together with some other Shona literary works it is mentioned once more in the next paper by Maurice Taonezvi Vambe titled „Shona literature and the creation of an alternative reading ‘public’ in Zimbabwe” (pp. 253-261). A survey and analysis of Shona literature reveals the richness and diversity of the themes treated. In „The horns of my thoughts are fastened together in a knot’: transformations of ‘humanity’ in Swahili and Shona literature” (pp. 263-274) Alena Rettová shows how the concept of ‘humanity’ has been reflected in contemporary written literature in those two African languages. The volume closes with an article by Lutz

Diegner titled „Answers to ‘glocalisation’ in Swahili fiction: Chachage’s *Makuadwa Soko Huria* and Wamitila’s *Bina-Adamu!*” (pp. 275-282).

In an appendix the reader will find the programme of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Jahnheinz Jahn Symposium. At the end of the book there are short notes on contributors. It is visible from them that the authors from Africa are very well represented: articles of seventeen Africans have been published in the book. Works cited by them enlarge our knowledge of trends in the literary study in Africa. It is only a pity that the contributions of scholars from outside Africa are rather scarcely taken into account and quoted by the African contributors to the volume.

*Stanisław Piłaszewicz*

**Herrmann Jungraithmayr, Philibus I. Diyakal, *Lyang lu. One Thousand and One Proverbs, Idioms and Sayings in Mushere (N. Nigeria). With Grammatical Outline and Vocabulary, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008, 326 pp.***

*Lyang lu*, the first words of the book in the Mushere language might be rendered in English by „Poetic speech of the house”. Mushere has been classified in the Sura-Gerka or Angas-Sura group of the West Chadic languages. Both Sura from Panyam and Angas from Pankshin region were the first Chadic languages which began to be studied by Prof. H. Jungraithmayr as early as in 1962. The Mushere people, some 37.000 souls in number, inhabit today eleven villages in a hilly area some 30 km north-west of Pankshin, which is the capital of the Pankshin Local Government in the Plateau State of Nigeria.

In his further research activities H. Jungraithmayr made an effort to collect data on Chadic languages of the Republic of Chad, and it was only in 1996, after a long passage of time that he returned to Pankshin. In this town he made the acquaintance with Mr. Philibus Diyakal, a native speaker of Mushere, who was „[...] fully aware of the importance and necessity of documenting and preserving his mother tongue in which he clearly recognizes embodied the historical, cultural and spiritual heritage of his people” (p. 13). Mr. Diyakal

was a praiseworthy, very dedicated and engaged informant and collaborator. On Prof. Jungraithmayr's request he passionately engaged in collecting proverbs, idioms and sayings among elders from his own village (the name of which is not mentioned) and from speakers of Mushere living in Pankshin. Thanks to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Goethe Universität Stiftung and financial support of the former governor of Plateau State, Mr. Philibus Diyakal was able to come twice (in 2004 and 2006) to Frankfurt am Main in order to complete the basic editorial work on the publication.

Until the publication of the book Mushere had not been reduced to writing: no grammatical study existed before. Therefore the authors decided to precede the main bulk of their work by a grammatical outline (pp. 21-54), which contains observations and remarks on the grammatical structure of the language. The main purpose of the outline[...] is to assist those readers who wish to comprehend the linguistic structuring of the proverbial sayings" (p. 21).

Mushere has six short and five long vowel phonemes, four phonemic tone levels, and as many as 53 consonants, which – according to Prof. Jungraithmayr's hypothesis – should classify it among the innovative Central Chadic languages. Still it is situated linguistically between Sura/Mwaghavul and Mupun on the one hand, and Angas on the other, all belonging to the West Chadic languages. Besides the remarks on phonology, the grammatical outline provides condensed notes on morphology, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, negation and numerals.

The numbered proverbs, idioms and sayings spread over 179 pages (pp. 55-233). Each of them is presented in four shapes: 1. presentation in Mushere, 2. interlinear, word-by-word translation into English, 3. literal English translation, and 4. free English rendering of the underlying meaning. As it was stated in an introduction (pp. 17f.) speaking with and in proverbs is a deep-rooted characteristic of African mentality and behaviour. Nobody utters criticism or critical admonition in a direct manner, but rather makes use of a figurative language and enigmatic sayings, which refer to events and social features well-known to the particular ethnic groups but not to

the readers from outside. Therefore, free English rendering of the underling meaning is absolutely necessary. Even this free rendering sometimes requires additional elucidation, which can be found under 998 „Explanatory notes” (pp. 235-241).

The book is provided with a Mushere-English (pp.244-290) and English-Mushere (pp. 291-326) vocabularies. Besides their primal destination, they fulfil still another role: thanks to them each proverb, idiom and saying can be easily located through its keyword(s).

Mushere is an endangered language. The old generation is still familiar with the tongue, using it in everyday life. It is not the case with the young people who tend to dilute the genuine Mushere by also using Hausa and English, and even sometimes mixing all the three. The authors are right when saying that quite a number of proverbs and sayings may well derive directly from Hausa, which is the *lingua franca* of Northern Nigeria. Here are few examples: entry 49. „What old men see while sitting, surpasses what young men see even when they climb a tree” has its Hausa equivalent *Abin da babba ya gani yana kasa, yaro ko ya hau rimi ba zai gan shi ba*; entry 86. „Lack of knowing surpasses night darkness” – *Rashin sani ya fi dare duhu*; entry 234. „If fire has caught the beard of your brother, you will rub water on it” – *In ka ga gemun danuwanka ya kama wuta, zuba wa naka ruwa*; entry 246. „Leaving faeces inside the stomach does not drive away the hunger” – *Barin kashi a ciki ba ya maganin yunwa*; entry 292. „Only God knows how to quench fire which started in the water” – *Gobara daga kogi magani nata Allah*, etc.

The further search and presentation of such Mushere-Hausa equivalents would be an exciting and illuminating exercise, which the authors have left for a future generation. What they have done is an excellent and urgent work: they have carefully collected and reduced to writing proverbial and idiomatic wisdom of the Mushere people which might otherwise fall into oblivion.

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**Sergio Baldi, *Devinettes Masa*, „Studi Africanistici. Serie Ciado-Sudanese” 2, Napoli, Università degli Studi di Napoli „L’Orientale”, 2008, 89 pp.**

The booklet contains 58 riddles of the Masa people who occupy today both riversides of the Logone river. They live on the right Cameroon bank, and spread towards the Chari river on the Chadic bank. They speak the Masa language, *vùn màsàna*, known also as Massa, Masana and Banana: there are some 109.000 speakers in the Republic of Chad and 103.000 speakers in the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

In an introductory part (pp. 11-26) the author refers, in a concise way, to the language name, presents the geographical situation of the Masa people and that of their neighbours, and gives an outline of the Masa history. Few paragraphs deal with the Masa language and reflect a long-lasting discussion on its classification as belonging to a group of languages in the Biu-Mandara branch or constituting a separate branch of the Chadic languages. Sergio Baldi proposes a classification of the northern sub-group of the Masa languages but the question of their status on a higher level seems to remain unsettled. In the further part of the introduction the reader will find some superficial information on the syllabic structure, vowels, consonants and tones of Masa.

The riddles occupy an important place in African oral literature. This is also the case of Masa, although one is rather surprised when learning that in this language there is no special word designating this literary genre: the riddles are recognised by some initial formulae. All the riddles presented in the booklet have been gathered by the author in Cameroon. He was assisted by a number of native speakers: their names and professions are indicated on p. 20f. but the dates of interviews are not given. One can guess that it was in 2005: this date is mentioned in *avant-propos* on p. 9. The introductory part closes with an exhaustive bibliography (pp. 21-26).

The essential part of the work contains 59 riddles recorded in Yagoua. The Masa version of each riddle is followed by an interlinear word-to-word translation into French and then by its literary version. The proverbs which are deeply plunged in the Masa meta-

phoric thought are given cultural explications. Peculiarities of the Masa environment, the local species of flora and fauna, customs and social institution of the people are explained in the footnotes. They are both the author's observations as well as knowledge coming from the earlier works on Masa.

The booklet is provided with an index of key-words (p. 72-74), a Masa-French index (p. 75-80), a French-Masa index (p. 81-86), and an index of scientific names for plants and animals (p. 87). In an easy way it allows the reader to make acquaintance with the elements of Masa culture and their life style.

*Stanisław Piłaszewicz*

**Mermier F., Morin D., Rouaud A., *Eros en mer Rouge*. “Pount. Cahiers d'études. Corne de l'Afrique – Arabie du Sud” 2, Bièvres: Les Éthiopiens Associés, 2008, 163 p.**

The *Pount* is a new yearly periodical specializing in humanities issued in France in cooperation with l'Institute national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO) which focuses on the cultures of the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia) and Southern Arabia (Oman, Yemen). It is a seemingly new publication; however, its publishers *Les Éthiopiens Associés* claim continuity with the periodical of the same title founded by Robert Ferry which circulated in Djibouti in 1966-1986. *Les Éthiopiens Associés* itself is a non-profit association founded in 1992 in Debre Markos, Ethiopia, to promote the scientific knowledge of the countries situated in the Red Sea basin. It encourages publications in the field of human science such as archeology, art, biography, ethnology, geography, history, linguistics, literature, philology, religion and sociology. Apart from the *Pount* it publishes a gazette *La Lorgnette du Bab el-Mandeb* where one can find news about interesting books and other publications that focus on this part of the world.

The first issue of the *Pount* appeared in 2007 and was fully dedicated to the history of Djibouti and in particular that of Robert Ferry. In the second issue bearing the intriguing title “Eros en mer Rouge” all articles concern the subject of love, affection and sexuality in the Red Sea basin seen from various perspectives.

Frédéric Martel is the author of the first contribution entitled *Citron mon amour* (pp. 9-19). While looking for cultural representations of the romantic associations in the Ethiopian folk songs he found an interesting metaphorical figure of “lemon” which is used among the Amhara people in a whole variety of amorous contexts. The second article, *Charmate charmouta* (pp. 20-53), focuses on the topic of prostitution in Ethiopia from a philological angle and traces the practice to the times of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Alain Rouaud analyzes various Amharic terms to define a prostitute but the greatest emphasis is given to the term *šarmuta*, of which a comprehensive etymology is given with the scrutiny of its Arabic or even French roots. The number of dictionaries consulted by the author in the course of writing is rather impressive. In the third article *Quand un Afar parle de sexe* (pp. 55-67) Didier Morin explores oral poetry of the Afar people pointing to the extrovert ways in which they express their sexuality. Next is Franck Mermier’s socio-anthropological study based on a survey carried out in Yemen in 1983-86 *L’éducation sentimentale à Sanaa: une evocation* (pp. 68-83). It depicts a sexual consciousness among the young people in the urban environment of Sanaa taking into consideration various cultural aspects of the Muslim society including that of chewing *qat* – a plant of desire. The fifth contribution by Susanne Dahlgren *Sexualités et espace public à Aden* (pp. 85-107) belongs to a current research trend on the subject of public sphere in the modern-day Islamic world and in particular it discusses the problem of sexual segregation in Aden – past and present

There follows a short document (pp. 109-113) found in the archives of French consulate in Dire Dawa written on 20 April 1937 by the then consul André Pâris. It contains an interesting comment on the law forbidding interracial relationships which was introduced by the Italian occupants in Ethiopia.

The only article the topic of which is neither love nor sexuality is *Täfäri and Mohamedally: a picture and its history* (pp. 114-125) written in English by Wolbert Smidt. It is a historical inquiry regarding the involvement of India, in particular that of an Indian Muslim

merchant Mohamedally, in Ethiopia based on an unknown photograph dated 1905 found in a private Hulton-Deutsch collection.

The last part of the *Pount* includes literary proposals and reviews. The first recommendation by Alain Rouaud (pp. 127-137) is very well suited for this publication as it is the translation of the book *Letum aynägaləñ* (2000/2001) by Səbhat Gäbrä-Əgziabher, the author famous for his scandalizing writings. *Les nuits d'Addis Abéba* (2004) was translated into French by the writer himself and Francis Falceto. The second book, suggested by Didier Morin (pp. 139-147), is a biography written by Colette Dubois and Jean-Dominique Pénel of a prominent entrepreneur and politician Saïd Ali Coubèche who played an important role in the colonial Djibouti, *Saïd Ali Coubèche – la passion d'entreprendre*. This is followed by reviews of five books (pp. 149-163): Shelagh Weir's *A Tribal Order. Politics and Law in the Mountains of Yemen* (2007), Steven C. Caton's *Yemen Chronicle. An Anthropology of War and Meditation* (2005) (by F. Mermier), Gabriele vom Bruck's *Islam, Memory and Morality in Yemen: Ruling Families in Transition* (2005) (by S. Camelin), Fasil Giorghis's & Denis Gérard's *The City and Its Architectural Heritage. Addis Ababa 1886-1941* (2007) (by A. Gascon) and Alain Leterrier's *Treize jours de soleil* (1999) (by A. Rouaud).

In 2009 the third issue of the *Pount* appeared with the title *Étranger (1)* which is dedicated to the broad subject of 'outsiders' in the area of the Red Sea basin. The enterprise of the French scholars is certainly worth taking note of, as it provides a fresh insight on a highly scientific level into the diverse issues concerning the cultures of the Horn of Africa and Southern Arabia.

Ewa Wołk

**Jerzy Zdanowski, *Slavery in the Gulf in the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Study Based on Records from the British Archives*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Askon, 2008, 231 pp.**

Jerzy Zdanowski has written a study on one of the most important problems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly slavery. He deals with the first half of the century and focuses on the area of the Persian Gulf. The source material comes from the British Archives, which

provide rich material covering many aspects of the history of the British dominated area. The socio-economic system of the area was based on slavery, thus the introduction of the British anti-slavery policy resulted in changes within the system. The main topic of the study is the problem of the manumission of the slaves, the procedures that followed a request for obtaining freedom and the options available for those who were granted it. The author also delves into the question of the advantages and disadvantages of being a slave *vis-a-vis* a free person.

The book contains an introduction describing the history of slavery within the Persian Gulf and the situation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> cent.: “Slaves, pearls and the British in the Persian Gulf at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”, three chapters: I: “Manumission certificates” (pp. 45-84), II: “The slaves” (pp. 85-136), III: “The British” (pp. 137-180), conclusions (pp. 181-183), a bibliography (pp. 184-190) and annex: “The list of slaves whose statements were recorded at the British Agencies” (pp. 191-231). The book also includes a two-page (pp.9f.) glossary which explains some Arabic terms, in most cases those related to slaves and pearl-diving, as well as various political terms (such as *the Majlis* – the Persian Parliament) and geographical terms (like *the Swahili coast*). Additionally, it contains some photographs – among them a picture presenting a manumission certificate (p. 75). A map of the Arabian Sea region is included on p. 35, and some tables presenting data concerning, among other things, the sex and origin of slaves or the number of statements applying for manumission in various years between 1921 and 1949. The tables are detailed and provide data for those who seek more detailed information regarding the topic. The same can be said about the material presented in the annex: the list of statements, names of slaves who made the statements with information about their place of their birth, where they came from, age, the date and reason for making an application. All this information can hardly be considered interesting for most of those who read the book; however, it presents very detailed source material for scholars interested in the topic.

In historical monographs dealing with non-European regions and cultures the problem of transcription, including the transcription

of local names, seems to remain a difficult issue. This is especially true if the source material was written in languages different to those spoken locally. Jerzy Zdanowski was also faced with this problem and solved it by preserving the original forms as they are to be found in the British documents. An exception is made for the most widely known and common names, which occur in the book in their commonly accepted form in English. This decision, which may provoke objections from philologists, seems to have been the optimal one.

The weakest point of the book is its editorial part with a number of printing errors.

The topic discussed by the author is a complex one. The detailed documentation of the slaves seeking manumission allows for the observation of varied images of human fate which brought these people to lose their freedom. The differences based on sex or origin are obvious. Other differences are related to the manner of the slaves being purchased by their masters: they were either captured within their homelands – the Horn of Africa or the interior of the Arabian Peninsula, or even as far away as in Georgia or Armenia – and sold, but also sold by their families or even born into slavery. Even the slaves who had already been granted their freedom could be sold again, or else re-slaved by the heir of the master who had freed his servants. Some of the stories do not accommodate the generally accepted image of slavery. Zdanowski mentions the example of a slave who sold other slaves (p. 97).

The work done by slaves was related mainly to pearl-diving which was the main industry in the Gulf. Another large group of slaves were house servants. Jerzy Zdanowski provides information concerning the rules regulating both the work and lives of the slaves.

The British had dealings with the politically fragmented and vast area of the Persian Gulf and this is another problem presented in the book, i.e. the political relations between the British and local rulers. They resulted in treaties regulating slavery and the slave trade. (The first agreement which partially related to slavery and the slave trade was signed with the sheikhs of Trucial Oman. It stated that the signatories would restrain from taking coastal slaves of Africa or elsewhere and was signed in 1820 (p.31), i.e. thirteen years

before the Slavery Abolition Act was introduced by the British Parliament in 1833).

The author comes to the conclusion that the anti-slavery policy introduced by the Great Britain was highly effective (p. 181). At the same time, he emphasizes the “serious repercussions” (p. 182) caused by such an approach of the British towards the issue of slavery. Zdanowski mentions the disruption of the pearl business or re-enslavement of freed Africans, as well as the kidnapping of children with the view of using them for pearl-diving, abandoned by those who had obtained their freedom. The most important conclusion, however, seems to be the statement that the “common opinion of the soft nature of slavery in the Muslim world can hardly be shared after reading the statements [while applying for manumission – H.R.]” It seems that such an opinion, often expressed also in reference to slavery in Africa, should be reconsidered.

Another vital conclusion made by the author states that slaves though “being formally freed, [...] had a long way to go to achieve social emancipation” (p. 183).

Jerzy Zdanowski’s book makes an important contribution to our historical knowledge. It deals with problems which we consider “global” when speaking about contemporary matters. The problem of slavery and the socio-economics of the Persian Gulf at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> cent. influenced a much wider area than only the Persian Gulf itself. The problem had an impact on many levels: on political or cultural aspects (e.g. British domination) but also ideological ones (e.g. the perception of slavery in different cultures). Jerzy Zdanowski provides us with documents and opinions which are important sources of information about the world at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> cent.

*Hanna Rubinkowska*