

Comparative Glossary of Cypriot Maronite Arabic (Arabic-English) with an Introductory Essay.

By ALEXANDER BORG. Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, Near and Middle East, Vol. 70. Pp. xxviii + 486.

This is the long-awaited comparative lexicon of Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) that Borg promised in his (1985) book Cypriot Arabic (Stuttgart: Deutsche morgenländische Gesellschaft, Franz Steiner). It is based on the author's fieldwork conducted in the early 1980s and in the summer of 2000 among CMA speakers living in Nicosia. CMA, or as native speakers call it – sanna 'our language' < lisānna (also arápika) – is an endangered Arabic dialect, to be sure, with 1,300 speakers. They all originally hail from the village of Kormakiti (Turkish Korucam since 1975). Comparative Arabic dialectology is grateful indeed to Borg because this dialect will soon succumb, since Maronites from villages other than Kormakiti have Greek as their mother tongue.

The foreword (pp. xvii-xxviii) presents information about the peripheral Arabic dialects that includes the author's native Maltese (sometimes erroneously referred to as Maltese Arabic), Anatolian Arabic, Afghan Arabic, Uzbeki Arabic, and Chadian/Nigerian/Cameroonian Arabic (this latter group has high mutual intelligibility). All of the aforementioned dialects are spoken outside of the Arab countries per se. Borg rightly points out that "speaker competence in peripheral Arabic [usually: ASK] entails some knowledge of foreign languages" (p. xix). As he illustrates with Maltese, many speakers have some knowledge of English, which has replaced Italian (ibid.).

Turning to Borg's "Introduction" (pp. 1-88), it is a splendid essay on the history and development of CMA, with an exhaustive bibliography (pp. 89-132). Among the most fascinating lexical retentions are the roots qš' and r'y 'see' (pp. 34-35). I agree with the author's conclusion that, since the former root is also found in Aleppine, some Lebanese dialects, and varieties of qəltu

Arabic of Anatolia and Iraq, it may antedate the split of Iraqi-Anatolian and Syro-Lebanese groups.

For the full comparative and historical story on the second root, see Alan S. Kaye, "The Verb 'see' in Arabic Dialects," in Joshua Fishman et al., Eds., The Fergusonian Impact, Vol. II, Berlin:

Mouton de Gruyter, 1986:211-21.

Relexification is another interesting diachronic trend discussed: Old Arabic (OA) sakana 'dwell' ⇒ ke'e < OA qa'ada 'sit', or rās 'head' ⇒ moxx < OA muxx 'brain' (p. 70). No reason is given for the loss of OA sakana, but I believe Borg is correct in positing Aramaic substratum for the second replacement (p. 71).

The dictionary is thorough and well-executed, with many useful comparisons and references (pp. 135-473). Many lexemes are instantaneously recognizable to any Arabist; e.g., ya rabbi sa'itna 'God help us!' (p. 472) < OA yā rabbī sā'idnā. Others are more difficult due to phonological developments; e. g., pa'a 'still; not yet' in pa'a má-ža k-kassís 'the priest has not yet come' = mā jā'a lqissīs ba'du (p. 161; the OA has been supplied by the reviewer). To be sure, there are many links between CMA and Maltese, as we have already seen with the preservation of the OA and common Semitic r'y 'see'. Consider župn 'cheese filling for kúlluri (rolls)' = OA jubn and Maltese gobon 'cheese'. All other Arabic dialects have /i/ or /ə/ for OA /u/. Hans Wehr's A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (ed. by J Milton Cowan, Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, 1974:111) cites this word only with /u/.

Let me take up some diachronic developments. The comparative dialectologist will especially be interested in semantic narrowing; e.g., šā'(a)r means 'hair' in OA (Wehr 1974:473), but it means 'pubic hair' in CMA (p. 291), and the rare root š'p 'hair (of head)' comes to mean 'hair' (šaxve 'hair [of head]') (p. 292). Another interesting development is gender switch; e.g., OA hisāb

'arithmetic' is masculine, but switches to feminine due to the influence of Greek feminine *logistiké* 'arithmetic' > CMA *xsepe* < OA *hisāba*. The fact that *b* > *p* may be seen in light of a general CMA devoicing of voiced stops, which may also be seen in Arabic dialects elsewhere, such as Cairene *nibīt* < OA *nabīḏ* 'wine' and *šahhāt* < OA *šahhāḏ* 'beggar'. This shift, however, of *ḏ* > *d* > *t* is very exceptional in Cairene.

One very striking lexeme relating CMA to the general Syro-Palestinian type is *iẓr* 'leg; foot' (p. 245). Concerning the doubt expressed regarding the relatedness of this word and OA *rijl* 'foot; leg', see Alan S. Kaye, "Etymology, Etymological Method, Phonological Evolution, and Comparative Semitics" in Alan S. Kaye, Ed., Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau on the Occasion of his Eighty-Fifth Birthday, Vol. I, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1991:826-49.

Although great care has been taken with this tome, there are a few errors to report. On p. 8, fn. 14, mention is made of Butters (2000), which however, is not listed in the bibliography. The reference to Alan S. Kaye, Ed., Phonologies of Asian and African Languages should be corrected to read Phonologies of Asia and Africa (Including the Caucasus) (twice on p. 95). An article by Jonas C. Greenfield published in 1958 is listed after one published in 1974 (p. 106). The listing for Mary R. Maas should read Haas (p. 115). The name Maria Tsiapera should read Mária (p. 129). On p. 242 one reads "retains only" twice in succession. These trivial matters notwithstanding, this volume constitutes an outstanding contribution to comparative Arabic dialectology and comparative Semitics.

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