

## RECENT BOOKS

### THE NUBIAN LANGUAGES. AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*The Nubian Languages. An Annotated Bibliography*, compiled by Angelika Jakobi and Tanja Kümmerle with a foreword by Peter L. Shinnie. African Linguistic Bibliographies, vol. 5. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag 1993, pp. x, 138.

When Richard Lepsius published his *Nubische Grammatik* in 1880, he regretted not having given priority to the Beja language and its greater structural affinities with ancient Egyptian. His regrets have not been widely shared. Over the past century fascination with the history of the Nubian languages has not abated, and there is now a cultural renaissance, especially among Nubians who lost their original homes beneath the waters of the High Dam.

The present bibliography demonstrates how the study of Nubian languages has flourished, especially over the past thirty years. It is an excellent compilation and an indispensable reference work for anyone working in the field. Annotations for each item form the basis of a convenient subject index.

The bibliography covers the whole group of Nubian languages including the texts of the mediaeval period. These languages are classified here according to the system of Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst which is significantly different from earlier schemes of classification and which will stimulate critical discussion.

The compilers consulted other scholars in the field extensively, but clearly tried to check each reference themselves and indicated wherever they were not able to do so. They have made substantial improvements on previous bibliographies, including my *Place Names in the Belly of Stones* (1970).

Occasionally there are omissions. The dictionary of colloquial Sudanese Arabic by °Awn al-Sharīf Qāsim, for example, is

far more significant than his two articles which are cited in the bibliography. The dictionary gives extensive and precise details on the debt of Sudanese Arabic to Nobīn and Dungulāwī and also provides representations of Nubian sounds in Arabic script, see his *Qāmūs al-laḥja al-°ammiyya fī 'l-Sūdān* (2 edn, Cairo: al-Maktab al-Miṣrī al-ḥadīth 1405/1985, pp. 1251).

The bibliography includes Nubian texts in translation such as A. and W. Kronenberg, *Nubische Märchen* (1978). Therefore it should also include *Stories of Serra East* by the late Jamāl Muḥammad Aḥmad (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1985, pp. ix, 89). These stories come from a place of some significance. Serra was the home of ḥājj Ḥasan who was the principal Nubian collaborator with Lepsius on the *Nubische Grammatik* (1880). The preface of that grammar acknowledges that it was ḥājj Ḥasan who originally translated the Gospel of Mark from Arabic into Nobīn; consequently he deserves mention in the bibliography along with the entry *Inḡil Yesu...*

A major Nubian scholar of the early twentieth century was Samuel °Alī Ḥussain who translated the Gospels into Kanzī, but the full range of his work cannot be appreciated without reference to his articles in the journal *Der Sudan-Pionier*, founded in 1900. Although the journal may be difficult to locate, the complete series is available at the Evangelische Mission in Oberägypten, Walkmühlstraße 8, 6200 Wiesbaden, Germany. There should be a reference to it.

A useful feature of the present bibliography is that it links publications with their relevant review articles. Reviews are notoriously scattered in the literature. It is therefore possible to suggest a number of addenda, for instance:

Lepsius, *Nubische Grammatik* (1880): reviewed by Adolf Erman, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, Jahrgang 1880, ii, 33, 1043-56.

Griffith, *Christian Documents* (1928): reviewed by Enno Littmann, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, xlvii, 1928, 574-7; also reviewed by F.C. Burkitt, *Journal of Theological Studies*, xxxi, 1930, 209-11.

Reinisch, *Die sprachliche Stellung des Nuba* (1911): reviewed by

George William Murray, *The Cairo Scientific Journal*, v, 1911, 131-2.

The bibliography provides a convenient list of Nubian language names for identifying the multitude of terms and spellings scattered through the literature. A note should be added to the effect that the language name 'Daier' could be ambiguous. In one study it does not refer to Dair Nubian, but to another language of the Jabal Dair region (see P. Daniel Kauczor and Albert Drexel, 'Die Daiersprache in Kordofan', *Bibliotheca Africana*, Innsbruck, iv, 1, 1930-31, 67-78 and iv, 2, 42-53). The non-Nubian 'Daier' language of this study is known elsewhere in the literature as Afitti; Roland Stevenson preferred to call it Dinik as a result of his fieldwork in the late 1970s. However, the study by Kauczor and Drexel is not exclusively devoted to Dinik. It also includes several comments on the Nubian language of Dair. It is arguable therefore that this study should be cited in the bibliography. It records impressions of the neighbouring Nubian dialects by a speaker of Dinik (p. 67). There is a brief tonal characterization of Dilling and Ghulfān Nubian (pp. 42-3). Furthermore, it challenges Junker and Czermak for referring to the Nubian language of their *Kordofān-Texte* (1913) as Dair rather than Ghulfān (p. 68 note).

The present bibliography ought to have included several articles from *Sudan Notes and Records* (SNR) which my *Place Names* had earlier listed as references for Nubian linguistics. One of these is an article which deals primarily with another language (Daju), but which has a list of 37 Hill Nubian words with variants from an outlying area ('Tabag, Abu Ġanuk, Kuġūrīa', see S. Hillelson, 'Notes on the Dago', *SNR*, viii, 1925, 59-73). Another article describes a particular Hill Nubian area with data on clans and their geographical position together with comments on language and some Nubian terminology (see S.F. Nadel, 'The Hill Tribes of Kadero', *SNR*, xxv, 1942, 37-79). A third article deals primarily with the Afitti, but has numerous references to Hill Nubian terms (see P. Daniel Kauczor, 'The Afitti Nuba of Gebel Dair and Their Relation to the Nuba Proper', *SNR*, vi, 1923, 1-34). Other articles, such as A.J.

Arkell, 'The Baza Festival in Jebel Meidob' (*SNR*, xxviii, 1947, 127-34) are marginally relevant since they describe social events with only occasional reference to Nubian terminology.

Several unpublished theses are cited in the bibliography, e.g. Muḥammad (Mohamed) Yūsuf Sīd Aḥmad, 'An Analysis of the Nuba Mountain Language Survey' (1979) and °Ushārī Aḥmad Maḥmūd, 'The Phonology of a Dying Nubian Language: Birgid' (1974). There is considerable scope here for additions, e.g. Ḥamad Sulaiman Muḥammad, 'A History of the Northern Kordofan Nūba in the Light of Linguistic Evidence' (Unpublished thesis, Diploma of African and Asian Studies, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum 1974, pp. 39). In a search for relevant theses it would be advisable to give particular attention to the universities of Egypt and the Sudan.

In 1979 Tindil Sakrān produced an excellent phonology of the Kwashi dialect of Dilling Nubian, but died before he submitted the final version as his thesis for an M.A. in Sudanese and African Languages at the Institute of African and Asian Studies in Khartoum. One of his chapters is in my possession; it merits publication and inclusion in the next edition of the Nubian bibliography. Perhaps we shall also see the vocabularies of Debi, Kadaru and Ghulfān from the *Nachlaß* of Roland Stevenson.

A cooperative effort should be made to record and preserve studies which are published in places where they may be neglected. The following addenda may fall into that category:

Zetterstéen, K.V., Review of Reinisch, *Das persönliche Führerwort* (1909), *Le Monde Oriental* [=MO], iv, fasc. 1, 1910: both sides of back cover after p. 88.

Leander, P., Review of Reinisch, *Die sprachliche Stellung des Nuba* (1911), *MO* iv, fasc. 3, 1910: inner front cover after p. 185 and inner back cover after p. 256 [intended to be bound at end of volume. Reinisch (1911) was available for review in 1910, as Leander explained: 'tatsächlich schon 1910 erschienen'.]

Lang, Karl, 'Barea und Nuba', *Folia Ethno-Glossica* (Hamburg: Henschel & Müller, Exportbuchhandlung und Antiquariat), ii, 2, April 1926, 21-6.

A renewed search of the Russian sources might produce further addenda, for example I. Katsnel'son, and F. Mendel'son, *Skazki Narodov Sudana* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Khudozhestvennaya Literatura' 1968, pp. 343) with translations of Nubian stories, see pp. 7-108.

Both the dissertation (1951-52) and the publication (1968) of *The Verbal System* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ayyūb are cited in the bibliography, but here an annotation might be provided to the effect that the large number of typographical errors in the latter, especially in the representation of Nubian texts, can be corrected by reference to the former.

The bibliography maintains a high standard of accuracy, but the rare slip does occur, e.g. the title of Scharff (1928) should be 'Storchjagd in Nubien' [not 'Storchenjagd...'].

A parallel bibliography of Nubian songs would be desirable. There are numerous collections such as the Dungulāwī songs recorded by Artur Simon of Berlin, or the recordings by Hamza al-Dīn, not to mention the vast repertoire of Muḥammad Wardī. Linguists would be particularly interested in a transcription and analysis of the lyrics.

In the future we may expect a greater number of publications in Arabic as Nubians increasingly demonstrate an involvement in the renaissance of their languages. It is recommended that there be a network of correspondents contributing information from their own areas of specialization, e.g. Egyptian or Sudanese sources in Arabic, and that the present work become the foundation for an on-line bibliography.

The present bibliography is a substantial contribution to the study of Nubian languages and has been compiled with industry and care. Angelika Jakobi and Tanja Kümmerle have a major achievement to their credit.

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