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Two New Educational Publications for Chad in Arabic, with Onomastic Remarks[1]

Ta'rīḫ Tašād ka-mā narwī-hā li-aṭfāli-nā. Min ʿaṣr mā qabl at-ta'rīḫ wa-ḥattá ayyāmi-nā hàḍihi [History of Chad as we tell it to our children. From pre-history up to our days], Les Éditions du Jaguar, Paris 2013, 80 pp., ills., map. Hbk. *Aṭlas Tašād* [Atlas of Chad], Ṭabʿaᵗ ǧadīdaᵗ [New impression], Les Éditions du Jaguar, Paris 2013, 136 pp., maps, ills. *"Aṭālis Afrīqiyā"* ["Atlases of Africa"]. Pbk.

Chad and Arabic

The Republic of Chad rarely associated with the Arab World and is not even a member of the League of the Arab States. However, Arabic is one of the two official languages of the country, along with French, and its use in Chad cannot be overlooked. It is one of the countries in Central Africa where Islam had been introduced almost a millennium ago, from the 11th c., by legendary Yemeni invaders coming from the East. This traditional and oral information may be well substantiated by what is already known about arrival of the Arabian tribes from across the Red Sea and their religious and cultural impact in the areas that nowadays constitute the Republic of Sudan, an immediate eastern neighbour of Chad. Chad is a natural historical-geographical extension of Sudan to the west. Islam together with Arabic culture has exerted a major influence on the population of Chad for centuries and, a rare phenomenon, its current development in Chad may be observed with our own eyes. The permanent and continuous progress of Islamisation of the ethnically diversified Chadian population, which – paradoxically – obtained a new impetus during the colonial times in spite of Christian missionary activities supported by the French administration, is accompanied by a growing proportion of inhabitants who accept the local Arabic as their second, and subsequently their mother tongue (a decisive shift

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from a *vehicular* to a *vernacular* function of the language). Leaving apart any political considerations, it should be concluded that pedagogical tools in Arabic are becoming more and more necessary in this country belonging to a group of the least developed nations of our globe in terms of economy and education. These school manuals, prepared outside the country within the framework of international aid actions (or commercial activities) are of utmost importance because any Arabic texts about Chad are a rarity.

Description of the books

The two publications under review are Arabicized variants of their prototypes in French that had been released earlier.

The *Atlas* in Arabic appears in its new (apparently second) printing and that shows how much it is in demand. It is a collective work of a large team of listed forty four French and African experts connected with universities of Abéché, N'Djaména, Ngaoundéré, Paris Ouest Nanterre (X), Reims and Rouen, CNRS, EHESS and other learned institutions. A bibliography at the end has forty two publications: books, articles and specialised reports. All the titles are in Arabic translation only and therefore their usefulness cannot be tested.

History is a well planned presentation, although obviously brief and simple, of a long chain of events starting in deep prehistory, prepared by an unspecified team of authors (*ǧamāʿī*). It is preceded with two important graphic elements.

First of all, there is a map of the country within its present borders, with inscribed in different colours borders of historical states that once occupied a bigger or a smaller part of its territory: Kanem-Bornou, Ouadai and Baguirmi. Baguirmi occupied an important but comparatively small section in the south-west, but each of the remaining two, with natural differences between them, encompassed a majority of the present national territory. From the beginning of the book school children are therefore confronted with an easily conceivable idea of historical and territorial continuity of their motherland. That idea is not strange to other nations of post-colonial Africa with artificial international frontiers resulting from administrative divisions dictated by the necessities of European powers. Thus we have countries which after independence adopted old historical names, like Mali, Ghana and Dahomey, although it is not always easy to associate their present population and locality with those centuries-old names – but is important from the point of view of nation building process. Even if the name of Chad took its origin from colonial times, its historical-geographical shape receives a clearly visible argument.

After the map we see a chronological linear chart starting 7,000,000 years ago and ending today. This nicely illustrated diagram presents the country's history in a very sketchy way, in less than 20 easy-to-memorize points. Apart from the three historical kingdoms mentioned above it shows also the much earlier Sao culture, starting in the first millennium before our era and persisting until the 7th–8th c. (others say until the 16th c.). French colonialism, independence, rebellions and military governments are followed to present times under the presidency of Idriss Déby Itno. These two

graphic elements – the map and the chart – are the basis on which a logical structure of the book is built.

The five chapters which follow, titled 1. *Origins of Chad*; 2. *Period of Great Kingdoms*; 3. *Arrival of Europeans*; 4. *Period of Colonialism*; and 5. *The Republic of Chad*, are divided into twenty six subchapters, each with its own subtitle. The book ends with a selective glossary of specialized terms and important historical names of persons, peoples and places. The whole text of *History* is lavishly illustrated with photographs and drawings, either historical or new, what definitely adds to its aesthetic attractiveness and will help young pupils to develop their imagination and memorize the material.

The *Atlas of Chad* is divided into two main parts: the first, pp. 7–73, referring to the whole of Africa, and the second, pp. 74–133, confined to Chad.

Africa is covered by forty one coloured thematic maps, of all kinds (physiography, climate, history, political, culture, economy etc.), which are accompanied by explanatory texts and illustrated with important features (photographs, drawings and diagrams) in relation to a particular map subject. Maps are on various scales, ranging from 1:83,000,000 to 1:48,000,000[2]. Each subject set of cartographic, graphic and text materials also includes an inset box with the essential information highlighted for easier memorization.

There are thirty two coloured thematic maps of Chad, on scales mainly 1:10,000,000 or 1:9,000,000, but occasionally up to 1:3,400,000 and 1:2,900,000, or even 1:38,000 for some details of urban settings.

The Chadian part ends with an index of one hundred thirty geographical names, but only those found on a general map of Chad on p. 77. Other maps of Africa and Chad are not indexed, obviously to the detriment of the information values of the *Atlas*.

The rich variety of subject matters in the *Atlas* widely covers all possible educational programs, definitely above the level of grammar school requirements. In fact, in the situation of *faute de mieux*, this atlas could serve as a first hand cartographic information source on all issues pertaining to Chad, until a better national atlas of Chad could be produced one day, in unforeseeable future.

In the meantime, a new careful editorial glance at the whole material in the *Atlas* is necessary because there are many inaccuracies that need to be improved by the publisher. To name only a few, as a signal of such a necessity. The map of transportation, p. 59, shows no existing motorways in Northern Algeria and too few in Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. The map of religions, p. 63, shows 731 million of protestants and Anglicans in Africa – a number obviously mistaken due to reversing of the order of figures (perhaps under false influence of Arabic); it should read 137 million. Map of the peoples on the same page distinguishes Semites, Chamites and Ethiopians – a classification that was abandoned more than 50 years ago, and furthermore – who were Ethiopians in that strange tripartite scheme if neither Semites nor Chamites (hachures indicating Ethiopians cover both Ethiopians and Somalis)? The map of languages on p. 65 displays Afro-Asiatic

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languages with their six subdivisions. One of them is Semitic (Arabic), and that's it – the Ethiopian (also Semitic) disappeared. (Old) Egyptian is also one of those subdivisions and is displayed as a living language in contemporary Egypt, without information that it vanished from practical usage more than 300 years ago. And so on.

Dating of many historical events and entities and their mutual relationship in time and space in Central Africa is often debatable and the international academic research still leaves a lot of question marks unanswered. But even in this context a basic information in *History*, glossary, p. 77, that the Masālīt country lies east of Dārfūr and along the Chadian borders (a contradiction in itself), is entirely wrong. In reality it is located in Eastern Chad, to the west of Dārfūr and along the Chadian-Sudanese border.

For many users interested in Chad social conditions these two books may become a unique source of information – and that entails a high level of responsibility for their appropriateness.

Names

The main problem of the two publications lies, however, in the Arabicized forms of their names. As far as it is known, there are no naming standards set in Chad for names in Arabic and the country does not participate in the works of UNGEGN (United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names) or ADEGN (Arabic Division of Experts on Geographical Names). No Arab naming administration is known to exist and function in Chad. That creates enormous problems of application when, practically, everyone may have his subjective say. The problems with the two books lie definitely there where there is no onomastic standardization and the work in setting the names in order is like ploughing in a bare fallow (following a Polish proverb)[3].

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[3] In the discussion of geographical names I will occasionally refer, for the purpose of comparison, to another Arabic description of Chad by Al-Aṣam ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad al-Aṣam: *Tšād*, [in:] *Al-Mawsūʿaᵗ al-ǧuġrāfiyyaᵗ li-al-ʿālam al-islāmī* [*The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*]. Ǧāmiʿaᵗ al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Suʿūd al-Islāmiyyaᵗ [Al-Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University], Ar-Riyāḍ 1419/1999, Vol. 11, pp. 93–296 (my warmest gratitude is due to Mr. Ali Yusuf Khoja of Ǧuddaᵗ for kindly helping me to obtain the *Enclopedia* against all odds). Other sources that can be additionally useful in the verification, comparison and standardization of geographical names in Chad include the old but detailed travel reports by Heinrich (Henry, Henri) Barth (original German version as well as English and French translations), Gustav Nachtigal (German original and then a model English edition; recently the latter was also translated into Arabic by Sayyid ʿAlī Muḥammad Daydān – I thank Mr. Habib Adam Bahradin of Ar-Riyāḍ for this information), *Missions to the Niger* edited by Edward William Bovill, and *Voyage au Ouaday* by Muḥammad Ibn ʿUmar at-Tūnisī (Mohammed Ibn-Omar el-Tounsy), of which unfortunately the original Arabic version has not been preserved – see R.S. O'Fahey: *The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa to ca. 1900*, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1994; local historical documents published by Herbert Richmond Palmer and Jean-Claude Zeltner; and last, *Czad*, a list of tentatively standardized geographical names by B.R. Zagórski, in: M. Zych e.a. (eds.): *Nazewnictwo geograficzne świata*, 3, *Afryka*, Warsaw 2004, pp. 42–45.

Names of the country and its capital

Chad/Tchad is a non-Arabic name. The French *tch* and English *ch* letter clusters which begin the name represent the sound *č*, which exists in some Arabic dialects, including the Chadian one. Here, however, contrary to Middle Eastern counterpart dialects, it seems to be mainly originating from borrowed African words and there is no standard way of noting it down in common Arabic letters[4]. The country name is therefore retranscribed (or rather retransliterated) from French with the replacement of the French letter cluster *tch* with an Arabic cluster *tš*. The next problem is: literary Arabic does not allow for sound clusters at the beginning of a word. In the past, borrowed names like Ġarnāṭaᵗ, Ṭarābulus or Ṣafāqis, pronounced according to an earlier original source language without a vowel after the first consonant in the first syllable, were receiving in Arabic script a prosthetic *alif* supporting a *hamza* with an additional vowel, either *a*, *i* or *u*. The result was: Iġranāṭaᵗ, Aṭrābulus or Aṣfāqis. Only at a later date was the initial vowel relocated inside the name to separate two first consonants of the cluster and the initial prosthetic *alif* disappeared as no longer necessary.

The name Chad, with an initial Arabic letter cluster *tš*, could either receive a vowel at the beginning or in between the first two consonants. Both operations occurred in fact. Among the Arabic-speaking Chadians it is pronounced and spelled Itšād, as results from this author's private conversations with Chadians met with in Agadez (Niger). In print this form was not noticed, while in a number of international publications the cluster is divided by an *a*, giving Tašād. In the official *UNGEGN list of country names* (*Working Paper* No. 54, 2011) the country name is cited as Tšād, and in Arabic script a *sukūn*, a special sign marking the absence of a vowel, is placed above the initial letter *tā'*. This is contrary to basic orthographic rules of literary Arabic and to Arabic naming tradition.

Another problem is with a definite article. Certain Arabic names do have it, others do not. The names like Al-ʿIrāq, Al-Ġazā'ir or As-Sūdān cannot function without an article, while Miṣr, Filasṭīn, Qaṭar, Sūriyaᵗ or ʿUmān do not have it (and adding one would be a mistake). Should Chad have an article or not? In both of these publications it usually does not, but in *Atlas*, p. 7, on a general map of Africa, the name is ornated with a definite article: At-Tašād. Of course, in this situation a *sukūn* on the first consonant is even more inappropriate. At-Tšād could not be read even in Moroccan dialects famous for dropping vowels – but they substitute additional vowels in place of missing (dropped) ones, like in Al-ʿUyūn –> Laʿyūn, Al-Quraynī - Lagrīnī. On other maps of *Atlas* and in *History* the name appears simply as Tšād and its pronunciation remains unsettled.

N'Djaména (to remain with just this one form in French where we find several versions in interchangeable use) is also of non-Arabic origin and its Arabic renderings are various.

a. The first option is a direct rewriting of the French form with Arabic letters as Nǧāmīnā, with a cluster *nǧ* or an unspecified separating vowel between the two letters. This name

4 See Arlette Roth-Laly: *Lexique des parlers arabes tchado-soudanais*. 1. CNRS, Paris 1969, pp. 105–106.

form appears in *History*. In publications which use Roman characters for transliterating Arabic names, that separating vowel is given as *a*, sometimes as *i* (Nağāmīnā or Niğāmīnā).

b. Another option appearing in print is Nīğāmīnā with a long *ī* in between *n* and *ğ*; see *Atlas*, p. 55, 59.

c. The third option used throughout the *Atlas* is Inğāmīnā, with a *hamza*[t] under the initial prosthetic *alif*.

d. Still another possibility, learned about from my Chadians interlocutors in Agadez, was Inğāmīna[t], apparently the most Arabicized (formally) version with a *tā' marbūṭa*[t] instead of an *alif* at the end.

e. The fifth possibility, found in the *Encyclopedia*, is Anğamīnā, with a *hamza*[t] above the *alif* and a short *a* after *ğ*.

Two most important geographical names in Chad, those of the country and of its capital, remain as non-standardized in both national and international use. The final choice could either be very subjective or based on a word structure best fitting with the Arabic linguistic tradition. In any case, the necessity of using one and the same name on all pages of the same publication is obvious. We do not know what is the most common and/or official use of these two names in Chad, but apparently the author/editor did not know it either.

A brief study of toponyms, or geographical names, in the two books reveals a very much disturbed picture.

Other geographical names in Chad

A 79 Abīšī; *Encycl*. Abbaša[t]; Fr. Abéché; also: Abbéché, Abechr *e.a.*, allegedly coming from Abū Šahr;

A 77 Arādā; possible *var*. Arāda[t];

A 77 Awādāy, 79, 93 Awadāy, unnecessary *alif* added at the beginning of a name well known in Arabic; *Encycl*. Waddāy; (*var*. Wādāy);

A 31 Awarā, A 87 Awārā, unnecessary *alif* added at the beginning; *Encycl*. Wārā; *var*. Wāra[t];

H 28, 73 Bāġirmī, 93 Bāğirmī; also known as Bāqirmī and other similar forms;

A 77, 79, 81 Bārdāy, 79, 83 Bardāy; *Encycl*. Bardāya[t]; another *var*. Bardāʿī, seemingly the most correct of these;

A 111 Bāṭā; *Encycl*. Al-Baṭḥā'; common Arabic geographic (generic) term meaning *garrigue* or *scrubland*;

A 93 Bāṭā al-Ġarbī –> Al-Baṭḥā' al-Ġarbiyya[t]; Arabic generic term baṭḥā' means *plain*, *flatland*;

A 93 Bāṭā aš-Šarqī –> Al-Baṭḥā' aš-Šarqīyya[t];

A 77, 121 Bībīdğā; French cluster *dj* representing *ğ* was wrongly transliterated as two Arabic letters;

A93 Bīdǧūndū; French cluster *dj* representing *ǧ* was wrongly transliterated as two Arabic letters;

A 77 Bīltīn; *Encycl.* Biltin; unnecessary long wowel in both syllables;

H 32, 73 Būrkū; *Encycl.* Burkū/Būrkū; first syllable should historically have a short vowel *u*;

H 38 Burnū, Būrnū; first syllable should historically have a short vowel, either *a* or *u*;

A 119 Dǧārmāyā, 115 Dǧīrmāyā; and: A 77, 109 Dǧīdā; French cluster *dj* representing *ǧ* was in both names wrongly transliterated as two Arabic letters;

A 93 Dǧūrūf al-Ahmār; French cluster *dj* representing *ǧ* was wrongly transliterated as two Arabic letters, and a common Arabic word for red colour was not understood; it should read Ǧurūf al-Aḥmar;

A 77 Fāyā-Lārǧū, 79, 83 Fāyā-Lārġū; *g* in French name Largeau should be more correctly rendered by *ǧ* according to its true pronunciation, not by *ġ*;

A 79, 93 Al-Ǧīra^h, 115 Al-Ǧīra^h (wrong localisation); *Encycl.* Qīrā; should read Quwayra^t, a common Arabic generic term in diminutive meaning an *elevation* or a *heap* (Fr. Guéra);

A 93, 95 Ǧūz Baydā; *Encycl.* Qawz Baydạ^h; correctly Qawz Baydạ' (Fr. Goz Beida);

A 119 Hūdǧāǧ; French cluster *dj* representing *ǧ* was wrongly transliterated as two Arabic letters in a very popular Arabic word Ḥuǧǧāǧ;

A 77 ʿIrq d Ǧūrāb; a French article *de*, whose function corresponds to Arabic *iḍāfa^t* in compound name structures, was negligently transliterated into Arabic; should be ʿIrq Ǧūrāb;

A 77, 93 Kūmra^t, 97, 99 Kūmrā; better reading Kūmara^t;

H 73 Lūġūn, A 77 Lūǧūn; could be also spelled Lūqūn;

A 77 Māsāǧīh; read as in French (omitting the ending) and transliterated without seeking proper meaning of the word, should be Masāqiṭ (Fr. Massaguet);

A 77, 89 Māsinyā, 87 Māsīnyā; variability;

A 77, 82 Mūnǧū, 83 Mūnġū; also spelled Mūnqū;

H 20 Nadīǧīmī , 77 Naǧīmīnī, East of Chad Lake; two deformations of an important dynasty and place name Njimi, tentatively located North of Chad Lake;

A 77 Sālāl; better Salāl;

A 81, 92 Sarḥ; *Encycl.* Sār; to be verified;

A 77, 81, 85 Tībīstī, 79, 83 Tībistī; *Encycl.* Tibistī; too much variability.

A 93 Umm Dǧras –> Umm Ǧaras, the same wrong treatment of the French cluster *dj*.

A 77, 93 Umm Ḥādǧar; French cluster *dj* representing *ǧ* was wrongly transliterated as two Arabic letters in a non-understood very common Arabic generic term for *stone* or *rock*, should be Umm Ḥaǧar.

A 87 Ūnyānġā, 101 Ūnyānġā; also known as Wananqā.

Geographical names of the Arab World

Arabic names of Arab places lying outside the borders of Chad were in most cases uncritically transcribed directly from French – just like the Chadian ones – without regard to their original pronunciation and spelling. Correct forms of selected names below follow the citations.

A 11, 73 Adāmāwā –> Ādamāwaᵗ;

A 51, 59 Assāb –>ʿAṣab;

A 59 Atbarā –> ʿAṭbaraᵗ;

A 59 Awāw –> Wāw;

H72 Awīġ al-Kabīr –> Wīġ al-Kabīr;

A 59 Ayū al-ʿAtrūs –> ʿUyūn al-ʿAṭrūs;

A 59 Bīġāyā –> Biġayaᵗ;

A 31, 59 Bīrbīrā –> Barbaraᵗ;

A55 Bīrǧā –> Barqaᵗ;

A 59 Bīšār –> Baššār;

A 21, 55 Burǧ Mīlālā –> Burǧ Mallālaᵗ;

A 51, 74, H 38 Dīkwā (wrong localisation: it lies in Nigeria, not in Central African Republic) –> Dikwaᵗ;

A 71 Fīlāy –> Fīlaᵗ;

H 21 (not 20, as cited in index), 75 Fīzān –> Fazzān;

A 21 Ǧabal Īrhūd –> Ǧabal Iġūd;

A 11 Ǧabal Marrā –> Ǧabal Marraᵗ;

A 27 Ġadāmīs –> Ġadāmis;

A 27 Ġānā –> Ġānaᵗ;

A 11 Ǧūf –> Al-Ǧawf;

A 55 Ḥāsī Raml –> Ḥasy ar-Raml;

A 11 Al-Irġ al-Kabīr aš-Šarqiyyaᵗ –> Al-ʿIrq al-Kabīr aš-Šarqī; unrecognized common Arabic generic term ᶜirq means *erg* or a *dune*;

A 11 Al-Irġ al-Kabīr al-Ġarbiyyaᵗ –> Al-ʿIrq al-Kabīr al-Ġarbī;

A 19 Īškūl –> Al-Aškal;

A 27 Kīlwā –> Kilwaᵗ;

A 51 Kūfrā –> Al-Kufraᵗ;

A 51 Kūsīrī –> Quṣayrī;

A 53 Marsā al-Brīḫā / 55 Marsá al-Brīġā –> Marsá al-Burayqaᵗ;

A 27 Māsāwwā, 27, 55 Māsāwā –> Muṣawwaʿ;

A 31 Fāšūdā, H 49, 75 Fašūdaᵗ –> Fāšūdaᵗ;

A 51, 59 Mīnāʾ Sūdān –> Būr Sūdān;

A 21, 25 Mīruwīh, 23 Mīruwī –> Marawī;

A 27, 51, 53 Mūmbāsā, 27 Mūmbāzā –> Munbasaᵗ;

A 37, 51, 53 Mūqdīšū –> Maqdīšū;

A 31, 55 Mūrzūk, 59 Mūrzūq –> Murzuq;

A 23 Qartāǧ –> Qartāǧanna\(^t\);
A 59 Qusṭanṭīn –> Qusanṭīna\(^t\);
A 59 Rīġan –> Raqqān;
A 51 Sīdī Īfnī –> Sīdī Ifnī;
A 55 Sīdrā –> Surt;
A55 Sukaykidā –> Sukaykida\(^t\);
A 27 Sūfālā –> Sufāla\(^t\);
A 27 Sūnġāy –> Sunġāy;
A 71 Aṣ-Ṣuwayra\(^t\) –> As-Suwayra\(^t\);
A 59 Tāmanrāsat –> Tamanġast;
A 51 Ṭanṭān –> Ṭanṭān;
A 11 Tasīlī Aǧrīs, 71 Ṭasīlī Nāǧir –> Tasīlī n-Azǧār;
A 23 Tībāsā, 71 Tībāzā –> Tībāza\(^t\);
A 71 Tībis –> Ṭība;
A 25 Tīġāza, 27 Tīġaza\(^t\) –> Taġāzá;
A 59 Tūġūrt –> Tuqqurt;
A 31 Tumbuktū, 59 Tūmbūktū –> Tinbuktū;
A 59 Tīndūf –> Tindūf;
A 55 Tūbrūk –> Ṭubruq;
A 59 Al-ʿUbayd –>Al-Ubayyiḍ;
A 59 Ūndurmān –> Umm Durmān;
A 53 Wād Mīdānī –> Wadd Madanī;
A27 Zanzībār –> Zanǧibār;
A 25 Zāylā –> Zaylaʿ.

There are all kinds of possible orthographical mistakes in these names. The letter *e* from French exonymic renderings is usually transcribed as long *ī*; long vowels are also added wherever possible to Arabic names in order to fix the pronunciation of words unvocalized in normal script (an interesting innovation in Arabic orthography); the *tā' marbūṭa\(^t\)* and *ʿayn* are neglected and replaced with a long *ā* (*alif*) at the end of words; another prosthetic *alif* is gladly added at the beginning of all names starting with a consonant letter *wāw* for unknown reason; French *r* and *rh*, reflecting the old colonial way of transcribing *ġayn*, are retained in re-transcribed names; there are also misunderstood common geographical terms, cases of false etymology and other occasional faults.

Peoples and groups of people

H 20, 74 Dūġuwās; it is the Dugu Dynasty;
H 20, 76 al-māys; French *mais*, plural of *mai/may*, a title of a ruler;
H 20 Safawās / 75 Sayfāwās; it is Sayfāwa\(^t\) dynasty;
H 73 Tīdā / At-Tīdās; tribal name Teda.

In all of the above examples the French plural ending –s was inappropriately included in the Arabic.

A 63 At-Tawārīġ, should be Aṭ-Ṭawāriq – a wrong retranscription of an Arabic name back from French into Arabic language.

H 23, 73 At-Tīġāniyyaᵗ – an unnecessarily prolonged ī in the first syllable, should be At-Tiġāniyyaᵗ.

Language

There are also other occasional language errors, for example:

H 73 Al-Barbariyyūn – what can it mean lexically in this context? Barbarians? However, this name in the glossary refers to p. 21 where in the text itself we find a correct form Al-Barbar, the Berbers.

H 21 maʿ Al-Muwaḥḥidūn, meaning: with Almohades – it should read maʿ Al-Muwaḥḥidīn, in the second case of the Arabic declention.

To sum up

There is no proof of any research and reflection aimed at the identification of correct spelling of the Chadian and non-Chadian names in Arabic. The reader's impression is that of a a hasty off-hand translation by an occasional and unspecialized interpreter, which – without verifying, editing or proofreading – was by mistake directly sent to printers.

Facts in the two books are not always correct and the treatment of proper names raises serious suspicions about the competency and credibility of respective authors and/or editors. The idea behind elaboration of both the *History* and the *Atlas* is of utmost praiseworthiness. However, the abundant mistakes undermine the noble tradition of French Orientalist expertise and are a real danger of creating a linguistically twisted and deformed picture of the world in the minds of young readers of little experience.

The books have every chance to become good standard text books for the Arab speaking Chadian students and also a useful reading material for other Arabic speaking users beyond the borders of Chad. The overwhelming need is a careful verification of the language, presented facts and, above all, the total reediting of the geographical names and their mutual coordination in both books – page by page, from one page to another and between the two publications. Comprehensive indices would be a welcome addition (also for the editors' own use).