

Recenzje / Reviews

Carles Múrcia Sàncnes, *La llengua amaziga a l'antiguitat a partir de les fonts gregues i llatines I–II* (Collecció Cum Laude 4), Promocions i Publicacions Universitàries, Barcelona 2011, vol. I, XXXIX + 669 pp.; vol. II, 633 pp., maps.

A monumental work dealing with the Amazigh language appeared a few years ago in Catalan. It collects all the ancient information concerning the Berber dialects and attempts to offer a grammatical reconstruction of the proto-language, which belongs to the Afro-Asiatic phylum. Since the qualification 'Berber' probably derives from Latin *barbarus*, distinguishing from the Byzantine period on the population following the indigenous culture from the Romans and the Latin speaking Christians, several scholars think that it is appropriate to gradually change our terminology and to write about the Amazigh language instead of using the term 'Berber'. In present-day Morocco, the second official language is called *Tamazigt*, a feminine noun based on *Amazig*.

C. Múrcia's work deals mainly with the geographic determination of the regions where the Proto-Berber language is attested in Greek and Latin literary sources, as well as in epigraphic documents, inscriptions as well as ostraca and graffiti. Chapters I–VIII thus present a cartography showing the immense territory from Egypt to Morocco, examined according to the Roman provinces and the ethnic affinities. The linguistic analysis, dealing with phonology, morphology, and lexicography, is concentrated in Chapter IX, which deserves further studies, using also Afro-Asiatic comparative data. A long appendix (pp. 389–487) contains the corpus of Greek and Latin literary sources, followed by a bibliography and by seven indices. A linguistic cartography is presented in the second volume. A detailed examination of that work and a critical analysis of its contents are hampered by Múrcia's use of the Catalan language, poorly known outside Catalonia.

Fortunately, the linguistic cartography is in part presented by the Author also in an article written in French, *Que sait-on de la langue des Maures? Distribution géographique et situation sociolinguistique des langues en Afrique proconsulaire*, edited by C. Ruiz Darasse and E.R. Lújan in *Contacts linguistiques dans l'Occident méditerranéen antique* (Collection de la Casa de Velázquez 126), Madrid 2011, pp. 103–126.

In this article, the author draws a linguistic map of North Africa, basing himself not only on literary sources, but also on palaeo-Amazigh lexical items, which he discovers in the ostraca and graffiti of Bu Nğem, in Tripolitania, dating from the mid-3rd century A.D., and in the so-called Albertini Tablets, discovered in 1928 about 65 km west of Gafsa, in Tunisia. These Latin juridical documents, dated between 493 and 496 A.D., preserve some traces of Phoenician-Punic juridical tradition, while several personal names reveal their partly Amazigh background, qualified as ‘Numidian’.

According to C. Múrcia, two notions seem to be important for the understanding of the linguistic and tribal cartography of North Africa. The tribal segmentation may explain why the name of the tribe can be replaced at a certain moment by the name of one of its clans, assuming a leading role in the life of the tribe. However, there is another possibility, viz. the integration of a tribe in another group, whose tribal name may also imply an association of several tribes assuming the name of a supposed common ancestor. Information is lacking to reach a firm conclusion in concrete cases and we do not know, for instance, why the *Nasamones* in the area of the Greater Syrtis are called *Laguatan* from a certain period on.

The appearance of the same ethnical name in various regions implies instead that segments of a tribe, not forming distinct entities with a proper name, migrate to other areas, keeping their original tribal name. The reasons why they go to another habitat can be different, overpopulation being one of the possibilities.

The basic meaning of *Amaziġ* might be somehow related to these questions. Considering the occurring phonetic changes of the sibilants *z/s/š/ś* in Egyptian and in Semitic, as well as the regular correspondence of /š/ to northern /z/ in the southern Tuareg dialect of Adrar in Mali, as noticed by S. Chaker, *Linguistique berbère. Études de syntaxe et de diachronie* (Paris-Louvain 1995, pp. 125–133), one can surmise that the Arabicized root *mzġ* of Amazigh is related to Old Egyptian *mš*‘, ‘army, crowd, multitude’. Demotic preserves *mš*‘ and Coptic often reads *miše*. This does not mean, of course, that the word was borrowed from Egyptian, but it may go back to the same Afro-Asiatic basis. One should also remember that Egyptologists do not reckon with the existence of a hieroglyphic or hieratic *ġayin*, while Arabic *ġayin* often corresponds to a West Semitic ‘*ayin*. The initial meaning of *mzġ* could have been close to ‘tribe’, a large ethnic entity including several clans. A tribal ancestor was issued from the name of the tribe and the latter became a personal name, mainly attested in Latin inscriptions.

The earliest Greek attestation of Amazigh is provided by Hecataeus of Miletus (6th–5th century B.C.), quoted in the *Ethnica* of Stephanus Byzantinus: Μάζυες, οἱ Λιβύης νόμαδες, ‘the nomads of Libya’. The passage can be found already in C. Müller (ed.), *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* I (Paris 1841, p. 23, n^o 304). The spelling Μάζυες seems to imply the presence of ‘*ayin*, not transcribed in Greek between υ and ε. Instead, the Μάζυες placed by Herodotus, *History* IV, 191, to the West of the Triton lake or river, in Tunisia, or in Central Libya, could be the Maces of the Latin inscriptions, unless one assumes a later scribal confusion of ζ with ξ.

The weakening of ‘*ayin*’ in Punic, which sometimes uses this letter to indicate the vowel *a*, suggests referring here to the name *Ms*’ in a Punic inscription from Carthage (*CIS* I, 2131, 1). The ‘*aleph*’ could possibly hide the original ‘*ayin*’ of **Ms*’. Latin transcriptions seem to offer a better basis for the Roman period, at least if one assumes that Latin *c*, *k*, and *g* hide a fricative velar. One could then refer to the personal names *Masac*, *Masag*, *Masic*, *Masik*, *Massic*, *Mazacus*, *Mazic*, *Mazics*, *Mazix*, *Mazzic*. References can be found in K. Jongeling, *North African Names from Latin Sources* (Leiden 1994, pp. 83, 85, 87, 90–91).

Notwithstanding the use of the Catalan language in the book, the maps and the sources collected by Carles Múrcia Sàncies will help any scholar seriously approaching the problem of the Amazigh language family in Antiquity.

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