

REVIEWS

KLAUS MYLIUS: *Māhārāṣṭrī. Grammatischer Abriss und Wörterbuch*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016 (Beiträge zur Kenntnis südasiatischer Sprachen und Literaturen, 25) 131 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-106643-6

This book forms part of a series of aids used in teaching Prakrit languages. Together with the previous volumes it has grown out of the courses held by Professor Mylius at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main for several years.

It is no accident that the traditional Indian grammarians and Daṇḍin, the poet and aesthete, call Māhārāṣṭrī the best Prakrit (*prakṛṣṭam prākṛtam*): it has very rich and old literature; the high-born ladies speak in Māhārāṣṭrī in the Sanskrit dramas; very valuable pieces of literature have come down to us in Jaina-Māhārāṣṭrī; it is the predecessor of the Marāṭhī, a New Indo-Aryan language spoken in the union state of Mahārāṣṭra. The fact that it was subject to the strongest phonological changes as opposed to Sanskrit has also some serious consequences: this is the most difficult Prakrit language. Due to the eliding of consonants, there is a relative abundance of vowels in this language, which lends it a sound that is pleasing the ear. From

this follows that the establishing of the correct Sanskrit *chāyās* is often not without doubt. I can but subscribe to the author's treatment of them insofar as he simply dispenses with giving the doubtful *chāyās*. There is no doubt that the Māhārāṣṭrī form together with the Sanskrit *chāyā* will be of great help for those who strive to become absorbed in the history of the Indo-Aryan from the Old Indo-Aryan to the Middle Indo-Aryan.

The volume consists of two parts: a grammatical sketch and a vocabulary.

Part One (pp. 11–35) gives room for a prompt survey of Māhārāṣṭrī phonetics, morphology and syntax. This can be taken as a short introduction to this peculiar language indispensable for the effective use of the vocabulary.

The bulk of the book is made up of Part Two entitled *Wörterbuch Māhārāṣṭrī – Deutsch* (Māhārāṣṭrī – German) (pp. 37–130). Neither the sources of the vocabulary entries, nor the consideration of their selection have been indicated by the author in the Introduction. I was informed by the author that the main source of it was the *Ausgewählte Erzählungen in Māhārāṣṭrī* by Hermann Jacobi (Leipzig, 1880, reprint: Darmstadt, 1967). Beside that, part two of

the *Mudrārākṣasa* edited by Alfred Hillebrandt (Breslau, 1912) was also exploited.¹

Being so, it is not a comprehensive dictionary of the Māhārāṣṭrī, which would make us able to read all the works written in Māhārāṣṭrī enlisted in the Introduction, but rather a textbook cum vocabulary which may facilitate the learning of this beautiful language. It is hoped that it will serve the task set by the author and so it will be of great advantage for not only the students of Māhārāṣṭrī, but also the students of Indo-Aryan language history in the German speaking countries.

I congratulate Mylius who is still filled with untiring enthusiasm for undertaking a compilation of this type of works. Great merits should also go to the Harrassowitz Verlag for accepting this work for publication.

Gyula Wojtilla

ANASTASIIA ZHERDIEVA: *Крымские легенды как часть мировой культуры* [Crimean legends as a part of world culture]. Simferopol', Tavrida, 2017. 248 pp. ISBN 978-5-9500280-7-6

The picturesque Crimean legends had often been published in the Russian Empire and mentioned by every traveller and scholar who happened to visit the Crimea in the 19th century. They became even more popular in the Soviet Union, especially after the war: starting from 1957 the stereotypical collection of Crimean legends was published almost every year and received large circulation in the country. This tendency continued after 1991 as well. The monograph under review analyses the Crimean legends that were published in the Russian and Crimean Tatar languages in the 19th and 20th centuries. The legends are interpreted and understood here in the general context of world folklore. The first part of the book is devoted to the general understanding of legends as a part of the folk heritage (pp. 12–50). Then the author analyses various types of legends with special emphasis on the Crimean-

related legends (pp. 51–96). The third part is dedicated to the history of the collection and publication of the Crimean legends in the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine (after 1991; pp. 97–152). Among the main collectors and publishers of Crimean folklore one should mention such famous names as Vasilij Kondaraki, Wilhelm Radloff, Nikandr Marks, Osman Akchokrakly, Nikolai Ernst and Maria Kustova. The author distinguished the following types of Crimean sacred geography: water resources (sources, rivers, and seas); rocks and stones; mountains and caves; plants (trees, bushes, flowers); cities and villages; religious and lay buildings; graves and monuments (pp. 114–135). Special attention was given by Anastasija Zherdeva to the transformation and corruption of original fairy tales and legends by postwar editors who “Russified” original folk topoi and made them look more atheist and less nationalist (pp. 136–152). The last part of the book analyses the legend about the golden cradle which is present in the folklore heritage of several Crimean peoples: Greeks, Crimean Tatars, Karaites and Armenians; furthermore, direct parallel to this legend (Turk. *altın beşik*) also exists in the Turkish folklore (pp. 153–181). There are several important appendices at the end of the book. Maps present us the geographic distribution of the most important legendary objects, toponyms, trees, flowers, buildings, graves, roads and many more (pp. 206–215). The bibliographic part provides a bibliography of publications of the legends in chronological and alphabetic orders (pp. 216–234). Even more important is the alphabetised list of the legends with reference to the places where they were published (pp. 235–247). This book is the first attempt at analysing Crimean legends as a separate phenomenon and as a part of the world folklore culture. It is to be hoped that more studies dedicated to the analysis of the Crimean folklore heritage will appear in the future.

Mikhail Kizilov

¹ Personal communication in a letter dated 6th August 2016.