

Marek Stachowski. *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch der türkischen Sprache*. Kraków: Księgarina Akademicka, 2019. 379 p., ISBN: 9788381381581.

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The publication of an etymological dictionary of a major language is always a milestone in every linguistic discipline, and Stachowski's work is no exception to this. Its author presents us, over 379 pages, the fruits of decades of etymological research. As the title *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch der türkischen Sprache* (KEWTS) implies, we should expect – and get – a *concise* etymological dictionary. This dictionary, contrary to such huge endeavors as, to mention just one example, Frisk¹ (the very scope, not to speak of the depth, of which certainly goes beyond the capabilities and possibilities of a single author today) first of all has to carefully choose which lexical items of the target language are to be discussed at all, and, second, to reduce the size of the individual lexical articles in a reasonable way. *Türk Dilinin Etimolojik Sözlüğü* by Hasan Eren,² though slightly more voluminous, had to face the same constraints, and Stachowski's dictionary invites comparison with this book in many respects: many readers will certainly wish to use both books side by side. Without detailed counts, it seems safe to say that KEWTS is definitely more complete in terms of words covered, so it gives full credit to the plethora of loanwords modern Turkish owes to Arabic and their semantic history (which may be trivial at times, but often also quite intricate and interesting). Eren, however, treats only a certain – and certainly very subjectively chosen – subset of these. Eren's selectiveness also extends to the Turkic core of the language, so that one searches in vain for fairly basic lemmata like *dağ*, *ağaç* or *el*; KEWTS, on the other hand is free from such – or, then, any blatantly visible – lacunae).

Readers who are familiar with Stachowski's scholarship and his writings know that this author is, despite all the controversies which have been surrounding this concept for many decades, sympathetic to the hypothesis that Turkic belongs, together with (at least) Mongolic and Tungusic, to a deeper language family which usually goes by the designation of "Altaic." Nevertheless, he chose to keep the pages of his dictionary free from demonstrations of this conviction (it shines through very occasionally, and then only mildly, as e.g., under *ant*), which adherents and critics of "Altaic" alike will certainly greet as a wise decision (cf. p. 7 "Rekonstruktionstiefe" [depth of reconstruction]). The discussion on the possible wider genealogical connections of Turkic should and certainly will go on, but a practical dictionary like this should remain within the boundaries of what is reasonably clear. This means that, for genuinely Turkic words, *Proto-Turkic* should be respected as, for this purpose, the upper

1 Hjalmar Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 3 vol. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter 1973-1979).

2 Hasan Eren, *Türk Dilinin Etimolojik Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1999).

limit of all reconstructions. Actually, Stachowski goes even further (p. 7) and restricts the depth of his reconstruction to the *Common Turkic* level (i.e., all of Turkic without Bulgharic/Chuvash); though some readers (i.e., those for whom Turkic etymology begins to be really interesting, where Chuvash enters the picture) might find this at least a little disappointing. But this is, again, certainly a commendable decision since it helps to base all etymological statements (and discussions) on as firm a ground as possible. Again, some of the author's opinions on matters beyond Common Turkic, namely the reconstruction of *-*r* instead of *-*z*, are visible, but in very few lexical entries only, e.g., *boz*, *semiz* and a few more.

When Frisk writes (op. cit., VII) that “Ein etymologisches Wörterbuch zu schreiben ist nie ein sehr erfreuliches Unternehmen (Writing an etymological dictionary is never a truly pleasant undertaking),” then one might imagine that similar thoughts may have crossed Stachowski's mind as well – maybe not while writing it, but when reading some reviews of the finished work (which is also what Frisk had in his mind, of course). Since KWETS has now been in print for a while, such reviews have come forth. While every scholar who goes public with such a work will and must face disagreement(s) of various kinds and degrees, it has to be mentioned that one of these reviews went as far as calling Stachowski's book something “uninitiated users” should be “warned” against. The present reviewer most positively does not follow: KWETS is a generally well-informed, sober, fair, balanced, well-argued, well-documented and mature work from the pen of a leading expert on (not only Turkic) linguistics and language history, and, being an etymological dictionary, it is a book to live with, to consult, to browse, to learn from – and, at times, to disagree with, which should go without saying. Stachowski took the trouble to publish a lengthy reply to that diatribe, which I only want to allude to,³ and of which all users of KWETS should be aware.

Having lived with KWETS for a while himself, this reviewer certainly feels enriched every time he opens it, has turned many a page in the scholarly literature, which otherwise may have remained unturned (and unfound) by him, and, yes, also found details to disagree with, to sharpen his own thinking on some etymological matters (data and methods), to reevaluate old convictions (or own ideas, published or not), to write, sometimes, “no!” in the margin, but also, often, “yes!” which is exactly what an etymological dictionary is and should be about.

3 Marek Stachowski, “Two Approaches to Etymological Research in Turkic Linguistics,” *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis*, no. 139 (2022): 383-390.

I will, thus, refrain from trying to enumerate anything which might be constructed as "shortcomings" of (or possible "errors" in) KWETS and will only mention one short observation – not entirely unselfishly, as I have to admit.

Under the entry *tanrı*, Stachowski mentions my attempt⁴ to give this famous word a *Yeniseian* pedigree, not failing to point out some weaknesses of this proposal. These are to be accepted, by and large, and – though I take the liberty to maintain that there still may remain some strengths left, and that, given some parallels of the development "high" → "sky" → "numen" from Northern Asia, the semantics is not necessarily an unsurmountable barrier here – I am now willing to put this idea in fine-print at best and maybe to give up on it altogether, especially, since recent decades saw a, hopefully only ephemeral, fashion of what could be referred to as "Pan-Yeniseianism." Followers of this practice tend to use this still enigmatic Palaeoasiatic language family of Northern Asia as the "key" to (for this reviewer's taste) way too many problems of Inner and East Asian historical linguistics (needless to say, the elusive "language of the *Xiong-nu*" is among these problems, which has now been "solved" as being (some kind of) *Pumpokol!* I take the liberty not to follow, but on this, I should (and intend to) elaborate elsewhere. Stachowski's sober skepticism on this is, here and elsewhere, certainly welcome).

The book is concluded by two indices, one of German, and one of Polish words – these list only those lexical items from these languages, which play some role in the etymological discussion of Turkish words (and not as mere translations of them). A full index of all words discussed and mentioned from all languages is not given, and it certainly would mean to ask unduly much from an author of Stachowski's caliber to sit down and produce such a thing, but for a possible translation of KWETS into Turkish potential editors should definitely consider directing some efforts to such an appendix. At the time of writing, I am not aware of whether such plans are underway, but I might use this opportunity to recommend, quite emphatically, that this work should definitely be made widely available to the Turkish-reading public and should by no means remain only accessible to those who can handle German.

4 Stefan Georg. "Türkisch/mongolisch *tengri* 'Himmel, Gott' und seine Herkunft," *SEC*, no. 6 (2001): 83-100.