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Christos Karvounis. Diglossie, Sprachideologie, Wertekonflikte. Zur Geschichte der neugriechischen Standardsprache (1780 bis 1930). Köln - Wien - Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2016 [Griechenland in Europa, Band 3], 383 pp. ISBN 978-3-412-50364-2.

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As it is well known, Greek is a language with a long tradition and, from the beginning of records, there has been a tendency towards variation and the employment of different forms or registers in different situations. Using this tradition as a backdrop, the present volume is an attempt to describe the genesis of a standardised Modern Greek language in the period after ca. 1780. Particular attention is paid to societal aspects of the process of standardisation, and to metalinguistic debate.

After a preface the book is divided into ten chapters. In chapter one (*Sprachliche Emanzipation, Standardisierung und Nationalsprachen* [Linguistic emancipation, standardisation and national languages], pp. 15–44), various points of methodology and the background are outlined, and (as it is expected for a publication in a series called *Greece in Europe*) the European context is stressed. In chapter two (*Das diglossische Erbe* [The diglossic heritage], pp. 45–110), linguistic diversity in Antiquity (almost exclusively, in Athens) and the Middle Ages (that is, in Byzantium and beyond) is discussed. In the short chapter three (*Neugriechische Diglossie, Versuch eines Phasenmodells* [Modern Greek diglossia, Attempt at a phase model], pp. 111–114), a preliminary discussion of earlier research as well as a tentative periodisation, for use in later discussion, are presented. After this, the main part of the book follows, consisting of chapter four (*Die Zeit von 1774 bis 1830* [The period from 1774 until 1830], pp. 115–168), chapter five (*Die Zeit von 1830 bis 1880* [The period from 1830 until 1880], pp. 169–248), and chapter six (*Die Zeit von 1880 bis ca. 1930* [The period from 1880 until approx. 1930], pp. 249–341). These are followed by a short *Epilogue* (Chapter 7, pp. 343–346), and chapters eight through ten, which contain different kinds of tables and a bibliography (pp. 347–383). The book is, especially considering the fact that it is a German *Habilitationsschrift* (and in many ways typical as such), not too difficult a read, and the author has well managed to make himself clear. It is mostly well produced, with fairly few errors and misprints (a spectacular exception is the title of chapter two: *Das diglossisches* (sic for *diglossische*) *Erbe*). However, minor errors detected by me do not in any way detract from the book's overall quality.

Chapter one contains, as already mentioned, a discussion of the problem as such, preliminaries of a methodological kind, as well as a short historical outline, in which a European dimension is underlined. An interesting feature is the comparison with the conditions in Medieval/Early Modern Western Europe, and the discussion of how the emancipation and standardisation of the Western vernaculars are, or are not, paralleled in the Greek-speaking East. In my opinion the whole outline is a remarkable achievement. It is recommended to anyone with an interest in Greek (or, indeed, any European) linguistic variation and standardisation – especially the discussion of the Early Modern period (which, arguably, is comparatively little known).

Chapter two commences with a discussion of Ferguson's definition of *diglossia*. Thereupon, the author turns to a couple of earlier investigations dealing with Antiquity and the Middle Ages respectively, investigations which in different ways make use of Ferguson's concept.

S.-T. Teodorsson's research on phonology (especially of the Attic dialect) as well as the same author's several, often short, papers referring in a more specific way to the concept of *diglossia* are discussed – and criticised. It has, probably rightly so, often been argued that Teodorsson reads too much into his own material, and that the orthographical variation observed by him cannot be taken as evidence of the kind of wide-spread phonological variation that he posits – in short, that he overstrains the evidence. However, here the severest criticism is directed against Teodorsson's employment of Ferguson's paradigm: Karvounis states that no results of an investigation of such a limited part of language as phonology could permit us to talk about *diglossia* at all.

In a similar way, J. Niehoff-Panagiotidis's doctoral dissertation on Koine and Diglossia is dealt with. Simply put, Karvounis argues that, although the positive evidence is (too) scarce, Niehoff-Panagiotidis projects backwards into Antiquity a linguistic reality which, in all probability, came into existence only much later.

Proceeding into a discussion of the Middle Ages proper (that is, of Byzantium and the world beyond its borders), the author expresses a similar scepticism towards any attempt to describe the linguistic situation of this age in what we may call Fergusonian terms, and he stresses that Medieval Greek *diglossia* can only be defined as such by keeping in mind that it is an elite phenomenon, concerning a very small part of society only.

In sum, up till this point at least, the book has a somewhat negative tenor: it is a lot about what is not correct in earlier research (especially as far as this research is concerned with Antiquity and the Middle Ages), and about the shortcomings of the relevant scholarship (including that of Ferguson himself). It is

tempting to suspect that, according to the author, it is impossible to compare different epochs to each other (therefore, the reader may ask himself occasionally: why so much focus upon ages which cannot be compared with the purported main focus of the book?).

After this, we arrive at the main part of the book. First, in chapter three, a chronology is established and, p. 114, the linguistic history from the late 18th century until 1976 is divided into phases. This is intended as a foundation for the following discussion. However, it is somewhat confusing that the periodisation introduced is not the same as the one actually used in the following chapters: thus, in chapter three, the starting date of the first phase is given as 1783, whereas chapter four reckons 1774 as its starting date. Although these discrepancies are minor and no doubt explainable, they should have been avoided.

Also, chapter three may be read as a convenient summary of the main points of the book as a whole. Of these just one may be singled out and mentioned already here: that only the period between approx. 1830 and 1880 can be considered diglossic in a strict sense.

Chapter four deals with the period between 1774 and 1830, that is, with the period immediately preceding the establishment of the Kingdom of Greece. Attempts at using a linguistic form close to the vernacular are discussed (for instance, in the writings of Katartzis). The discussion of contemporary discourses is one of the great strengths of this dissertation, whereas, in my opinion, the linguistic analysis of texts referred to should have been more thorough and specific. See for example p. 149–151, where, without analysis, a number of short texts are claimed to be of a vernacular kind (I should, perhaps, stress here that I do not necessarily disagree with the author's opinion; I just object on principle when claims are put forward without any kind of argumentation).

Chapter five deals with the period from the establishment of the Kingdom of Greece until approx. 1880. This is, in the author's view, the age in which it is possible to talk about *diglossia* in a proper sense – unlike earlier periods, where evidence of the employment of different linguistic varieties and reflections upon language can only be found within a small elite. The development of institutions affecting more or less everyone, such as schools, is described. Further, it is discussed why the heritage of the Cretan renaissance was never exploited to the full, and why it was not used as a foundation for the creation of a national language. Also, in a somewhat similar vein, the integration of the United States of the Ionian Islands into the Kingdom of Greece and the subsequent fate of the well-established, (more) vernacular forms of written Greek known from the United States are discussed. All this reads like a story of lost opportunities, and it is probably right to suspect that what happened instead of a victory of

the vernacular (the spread of *katharevousa*, the idealisation of Ancient Greek, and the restigmatisation of demotic forms of the language) is viewed with some regret by the author.

Finally, chapter six deals with the period between 1880 and 1930 and how the diglossic situation was overcome and *dimotiki* won the day. I consider it a great pity that the narrative is not carried beyond this point, in fact, until 1976 or even the present. By ending as he does, the author somehow implies that the matter of Greek *diglossia* ends around 1930, and that the variation and the debate on language in more recent times are an altogether different story.

To sum up, this is an excellent book. It offers an admirable synthesis as well as a wealth of interesting details, and it demonstrates the need for further research. A definite strength is the author's ability to consider the societal context, and to relate language to discourse. The book is well written and, on the whole, offers a sober account of problems which most scholars have discussed with less detachment. All the same, it is hardly unfair to think that the author reveals a positive bias towards *dimotiki* – a bias perhaps more universally typical of our days than of the age treated of in the book. Preferences aside, why should we deny the fact that the use of conservative forms of language constituted the only realistic alternative in many Greek societies of the past? And why is it still so difficult to say anything positive about *katharevousa* (for instance, that, for the very reason that it draws on the richness of the Ancient language, it sometimes has been the medium of great literature)?

For anyone not comfortable with almost 400 pages of academic German, a translation of this book into English (or Modern Greek) would be welcome. If such a translation should be undertaken, it is to be hoped that the author will avail himself of the opportunity to rework certain aspects of the narrative (including trimming the footnotes and skipping the excursions, which, to be frank, are seldom strictly necessary). In any case, it is to be hoped that a wide readership will take notice of the book, and that it may further the knowledge of its subject.
