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*Review*

**On the Thesis of Dr. Guram Chikovani 'Qashqa-Darya Arabic dialects of Central  
Asia'**

**For the Academic Degree of the Doctor in Philological Sciences**

The work of Dr. Guram Chikovani is devoted to the study of an important problem of Arabic linguistics, namely Arabic dialectology – the linguistic phenomenon of Central Asian Qashqa-darya Arabic dialect (hereinafter – the QAD), little known to the scientific community. Similar to Central Asian Arabic, the dialects of the border zone of Turkey and Syria, Cypriot Arabic, the old Arabic dialect of Andalusia, Arabic of Iran's Khuzistan (Khorramshahr speech) etc, belong to *peripheral Arabic dialects*.

The aim of the work is to carry out a phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical study of the Central Asian QAD, to disclose fully its linguistic essence. Linguistic peculiarities of the QAD constitute a system characterized by features, which are similar to and different from those of the literary Arabic language and other Arabic dialects. Attention in the work is mainly focused on the different features, for dialect as a speech fact is not restricted from the viewpoint of change. This should not be interpreted as though the QAD does not have its own norms. The QAD forms as a result of laws of inner development of language over the centuries, functions with its own linguistic features. It undergoes modifications even at present. The work also deals with the cases of description of the clear-cut grammatical system of the language.

Century-old isolation from the Arabic world is an important peculiarity of Central Asian Arabic dialects. The Bukhara and QAD dialects developed independently of the Arabic world, torn from their native linguistic environment, over a long period of time. A significant linguistic picture has resulted from the development of Arabic dialects in the non-identical linguistic environment, when they co-existed, being in linguistic contact with the Indo-European (Tajik, Afghan) and Turkish (Uzbek, Turkmen) languages over centuries.

The credit should go to George Tsereteli for demonstrating the existence of two different dialects – Bukhara and Qashqa-darya, as a result of his first scholarly mission to Central Asia in 1935. The scholar wrote in the preliminary publication in 1937: "It was

established that the language of the Arabs living in the North (Bukhara region) differs considerably from the speech of the Arabs of the South (Qashqa-darya region). The difference is so great, that it was possible to distinguish with confidence two independent dialects”.

Acad. G. Tsereteli and Prof. I. Vinnikov laid the foundation for the study of the QAD. In 1954 G. Tsereteli and in 1963 I. Vinnikov published examples of speech of the Qashqa-darya Arabs. Materials of the Grammar of the Qashqa-darya dialect by I. Vinnikov were published in Bratislava in 1965. In spite of this, the QAD is little known in scholarly circles. I can confirm that materials of this dialect have not been published to an extent that would enable specialists to carry out thorough linguistic analysis of the dialect.

The present work aims at filling this gap. Dialectological material was obtained during the scholarly missions of G. Chikovani in Central Asia in the qishlaqs Jainau and Qamashi, the city of Qarshi, Qashqa-darya region, in 1980, 1986, 2000. The work is the first attempt to present a comprehensive linguistic analysis of the Central Asian QAD – Description of the language on the phonological, morphological and syntactic levels, characterization of the vocabulary of the dialect is given. Linguistic date of the Bukhara dialect is presented abundantly in the work.

The work of Dr. Guram Chikovani is an important contribution in Arabic dialectology. The scientist is well-known in the European centers of Arabic studies as a specialist of central Asian dialects. He is the active member of our association, AIDA (International Association of Arabic dialectology). The scientific articles of Dr. Guram Chikovani are published in the proceedings of the Third and Fourth International Conferences of AIDA and other scientific journals, and the proceedings of our recent conference, this September, will also be published.

I want to stress publicly here that the work of Dr. Guram Chikovani *deserves to be awarded the Academic Degree of the Doctor in Philological Sciences.*

Paris, October 9, 2002  
Prof. Dr. Dominique Caubet



