

Alosio Bombaci believed that Evliya may have acquired all information regarding Abyssinia from the *kāhyā* (steward¹¹⁴) of *Qara Nā'ib* of Arkiko.¹¹⁵ The *na'ibs* were descended from the 'Belew' aristocracy of Arkiko, whose leading family obtained appointment as local "deputy" of the Ottoman Turkish governor of Massawa sometime in the late sixteenth century.¹¹⁶ The leading Balaw families intermarried with the Turkish garrison in Massawa.¹¹⁷ Evliya claims to have been a guest of the *nā'ib* of Arkiko,¹¹⁸ whom he describes in some detail, and who spoke perfect Turkish.¹¹⁹

The aim of this paper is to draw attention to the Turkish traveller's vague and, some may say, suspect information. It is left to the scholars of the Sudan to interpret Evliya's data, and comment whether localisation of 'Alevistān' is plausible, in the light of historical events. Evliya Çelebi's "Book of Travels", being a rare early source, despite all its shortcomings, contains information not found in accounts left by the European visitors to the Sudan at the end of the 17th century and later. One would like to believe that Richard Hill was not mistaken when he referred to Evliya Çelebi's "tantalizing references which, if we could only interpret them, would greatly illuminate one of the darkest periods of Sudanese history".¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Bruce met "the Kaya of the Janizaries" i.e. lieutenant. James Bruce, *Travels To Discover the Source of The Nile*. Selected and edited by C.F. Beckingham. Edinburgh, 1964, p. 28.

¹¹⁵ Bombaci, op. cit., pp. 260, 264.

¹¹⁶ Tom Killion, *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea*, 1998, p. 320.

¹¹⁷ Crawford, *Fung*, p. 131; Killion, *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Seyahatname*, X, p. 948; Prokosch, op. cit., p. 259.

¹¹⁹ *Seyahatname*, X, p. 948; Prokosch, op. cit., p. 261.

¹²⁰ Richard Hill, *Pseudo Travellers. A catalogue of fraudulent and unauthenticated travel*. Cornmarket Press. N.d., p. 8.

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A NOTE ON THE TURKIC BACKGROUND OF A MATOR WORD FOR 'EASTERN'

Among Mator words of unknown or uncertain etymology there is one spelled *ирганъ* (? *irgən*) and attested in the phrase *ирганъ мерга* 'восточный вереп' (Helimski 255). There is no problem with Mator *мерга* 'wind' (*ibid.* 303) but no certain Uralic etymology of *ирганъ* could be found. Helimski's conjecture that it might be a Locative formation < Proto-Samoyed **ir-* 'das Vordere, Vorderraum' (Helimski 255) is not quite certain. The usual Locative suffix in Mator is *-gənä*. It is because of the suffix-final vowel which is lacking from four words only that Helimski 139 toys with the idea of a special adverbial function of what he calls "konsonantischer Lokativ", i.e. *-gən*. From among the words without the final vowel (*amgan* 'wozu, warum'; *hegen* 'außen, draußen'; *irgən* 'östlich'; *kagan* ~ *kägän* 'wann'; *ibid.* 140) two are provided with a question mark (*hegen* and *irgən*) and, besides, *irgən* is the only word in which the suffix vowel is not assimilated to the word-stem vowel (against the general rule in Helimski 139). Thus, there are two weak points (the phonetic value of *-ə-* and the lack of the final vowel of the suffix) in the interpretation of *ирганъ* as a Uralic Locative. No wonder then that Helimski 255 added the word "möglicherweise" to his explanation.

These facts make it legitimate to seek a foreign source for the given word. In view of the great amount of Turkic loan words in Mator, some of them being attested in a not really precise transcription, it seems quite natural to suppose a Turkic etymon of *ирганъ*. The word sounds, in fact, like a Turkic one; however, no concrete etymon could be found so far.

We owe the attestation of *ирганъ* to Grigorij Ivanovič Spasski (1806). It is noteworthy, however, that his cyrillic transcription of Mator words was anything but precise. His <a> can also stay for ä, and his <н> may also be read ŋ (Helimski 128, 129) so that the notation <ирганъ> can be read *irgan*,

irgän, irgaŋ or *irgäŋ*. Now, if we (somewhat arbitrarily) assume a slip of the pen and read cyrillic <т> instead of <т> we have to choose between *irtan, irtän, irtaŋ* and *irtäŋ*. And these forms can easily be associated with such Turkic words as Kirghiz *ertäŋ* ~ *ärtäŋ* 'morgen' (Radloff I 792), Oïrot, Teleut, Küärik *ärtän* 'früh am Morgen, morgen' (ibid.), Šor *irtän* 'früh am Morgen' (ibid. 1469), Khak. *irtän* 'in the morning' ~ Tatar *irtän* 'the next morning' (ĖSTJa I 305) and so on. Moreover, if one accepts the etymology of Turkic *ertäŋ* as a compound <*er (? *ēr) 'early' + *taŋ 'dawn' (ĖSTJa I 305) one may suppose an archaic Turkic form *er-taŋ 'dawn, daybreak' to be the direct etymon of Mator *irtaŋ*. The other etymological possibility was proposed in VEWT 46a s.v. *ēr: Turkic *ärtän* <"Abl. är-tän" (? *ēr-tän); actually, it is not phonetically perfect (how should then the Kirghiz -ŋ be explained?); nevertheless, formations like *ärtän* ~ *ērtän* could also be etymons of the Mator word, esp. when read *irtän*.

The semantic discrepancy between the Turkic meaning 'dawn, morning' and the Mator meaning 'eastern' does not appear insurmountable. Since examples of words which show both meanings are known to us from some other languages like Vogul *xoli* 'Frühe, Morgen, Osten', Ostiak *hola* id., Zyrian *asyv* id. (Beöthy 212) we would like to assume the same semantic process (i.e. the change of a name of time of day into a name of a cardinal point) in the case of Turkic *er-taŋ ~ *ir-tän 'dawn, daybreak' > Mator *irtaŋ* ~ *irtän* 'eastern'.

The Turkic origin of the Mator word seems to us all the more probable as another Turkic derivative of the same stem, i.e. *ärtä* ~ *irtä* 'early' was also borrowed by some Samoyed languages (for this word, see Joki 127sq.).

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DIE SEEKÄMPFE ZWISCHEN ARABERN UND BYZANTINERN IM OSTMITTELMEER IN JAHREN 649 – 717

Nach dem Tode von Muḥammad (632) wurde Abū Bakr zu seinem Nachfolger. Die arabischen Stämme fühlten sich nicht verpflichtet ihm zu huldigen und im islamischen Herrschaftsbereich zu verbleiben. Das führte zu Abfall – Kriegen, die anders Ridda – Kriege genannt werden. Als die Kriege im Jahre 633 beendet wurden, begann die Ära der großen arabischen Expansion.

Als erste wurden östliche byzantinische Provinzen – Palästina und Syrien erobert. Ḥālid ibn al-Walīd, der gewandte Führer der moslemischen Armee besiegte am 30. Juli 634 bei Aġnādayn in Palästina die byzantinische Armee unter der Anführung von Theodor, dem Bruder des damaligen Kaisers Heraklius. Anfang September 635 ergab sich Damaskus den Arabern, die die Stadt belagerten. Am 20. August 636 wurden die Byzantiner in der Schlacht am Fluss Yarmūk geschlagen, was das Ende der byzantinischen Macht in Syrien bedeutete. Es verteidigten sich noch zwei völlig hellenisierte Städte: Jerusalem bis 638 und Cesarea bis 640. Cesarea wurde von der byzantinischen Kriegsflotte unterstützt. Dagegen konnten die Araber nichts unternehmen, denn sie selbst besaßen damals noch keine Flotte. Die Eroberung von dem Irak begann Ḥālid ibn al-Walīd im Jahre 634. Sein Werk setzte Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāš fort. Schon beim ersten Kampf bei Qādisiya (nicht weit von al-Ḥira), im Mai 637, besiegten die Araber die persische Armee. Die persische Hauptstadt Ktezifon¹ fiel an die Araber im Juni 637.

Während Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāš Persien eroberte, zog 'Amr ibn al-'Āš mit seinem Heer zum Kampf gegen Ägypten aus. Im Dezember 639 er-

¹ Ktezifon = arab. Al-Madā'in. Ph. K. Hitti, *Dzieje Arabów*, Warszawa 1969, S. 133.