

Reviews:

- A. Dubinski, T. Majda, eds., *Caraimica; Studia Orientalia Thaddaeo Lewicki Oblata* (by Marzanna Pomorska) 239
- Uwe Bläsing, *Armenisch-Türkisch; Dutch Studies on Near Eastern Languages and Literatures* (by S. Stachowski) 245
- P.M. Kurpershoek, *Oral Poetry and Narratives from Central Arabia, vol. II* (by Barbara Ostafin) 251
- B.N. Bell, H.M. Bell, H.C. Bell — *Archaeologist of Ceylon and the Maldives* (by Tomasz Marszewski) 253



PROFESSOR ROMAN STOPA (1895—1995)

Roman Stopa was born on Aug. 8, 1895 at Wola Batorska, a little village close to Bochnia, not far from Cracow, in the part of Poland which was then under Austrian rule. He first attended the village school and then went to Bochnia for his secondary education. In 1914 he was drafted as a so called "one-year volunteer" and was released a year later for reasons of health. He then entered Cracow's Jagiellonian University to study classical philology. This was his daytime occupation; at night, he had to earn his living by working at the Wieliczka salt mine. After completing the undergraduate program, he took employment as a teacher and tutor and started working on his doctoral thesis under the direction of Professor Jan Rozwadowski. In 1927 he was awarded his Ph. D. for a dissertation on the "Meaningfulness of the sounds of Common Proto-Indo-European as an example of speech making process" (in Polish).

With his Ph. D., Stopa continued to teach in schools in Southern Poland, but, spurred on by Rozwadowski, he found time to study clicks and was therefore granted a fellowship to work in Hamburg, under Professor Meinhoff. The results of his research led to the publication of "Die Schnalze ihre Natur, Entwicklung und Ursprung" (Cracow, 1935). In the meantime, he had spent a year in South Africa (1930), studying local dialects and interviewing simple people, including prison inmates. In 1935, he was awarded his "habilitation" in Lwów on the "Hotentot Texts". From 1937 to 1939, he travelled through Europe as a visiting scholar (Berlin, London, Leiden, Paris) where his ideas drew great interest and received acceptance, and he was in Brussels when World War II broke out. Back in Poland, he taught languages and wrote on peoples and cultures of South Western Africa. In 1945 he was appointed "docent" at the Jagiellonian University to give lectures on Suahili, Hausa, Eve, and their ethnography and ethnology, as well as their musicology (he himself was a gifted

violinist). He also recorded a set of 18 Hotentot songs, sung by himself. In 1957 he was appointed professor at the Jagiellonian University. Though he retired in 1965, he never stopped his scholarly activities, and he was still lecturing at home at the age of 99! In 1985 he was appointed honorary president of the Language Origins Society, of which he was one of the founders. Active till the end of his life, Roman Stopa died in Cracow on April 15, 1995.

Stopa's complete bibliography is being printed. It displays a huge variety of interests pursued with a deep knowledge of the subjects, from linguistics, through ethnology, to the origins of speech. In his lifetime, had become a "monument", today he leaves behind a scholarly monument "aere perennius", and he goes on living in the hearts of all those who had chance to meet him and discover his warm and charismatic personality.

Przemysław PIEKARSKI

GEORGE L. BATA

COMMENTS ON A CONTRIBUTION TO THE TRANSLATION OF IBN FADLĀN

The only extant transcript of Ibn Fadlān's *Risāla* on his travel to the King of Volga-Bulghar, *alias dictus* the King of the Ṣaḡāliba (ملك الصقالية) in 921/922 AD, is either a copy of the original MS, or a copy of a previous copy of the original. There exist also extracts preserved by Yāqūt. They are all subject to the usual copyists' errors, requiring appropriate editing and emendations. This makes the translation of the text particularly difficult at places, and an erroneous translation leads easily to additional errors and to unjustified conjectures.

A typical source of error in Islamic MSS is often a native Persian copyist, writing and misunderstanding Arabic. There are many loanwords between the two languages, and many homophones and homonyms. Nevertheless, if handled with sufficient caution, the recognition and emendation of such errors may lead to new knowledge³. The sentence in the *Risāla* we are analyzing here is a good example

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² We are referring to A. K m i e t o w i c z, Contribution à la traduction d'Ibn Fadlān, "Folia Orientalia" 28(1991)79

³ Other examples in Greek and Persian copyists may be found in G.L. B a t a, The Personal Names of the Early Árpáds, "Journal of Turkish Studies" 13(1989)15; *I d e m*, Lebedia Revisited, *i b i d.* 16(1992)1.; *I d e m*, The Turks who were Called Σαβαρτοι Ασφαλοι, subm. for publ.; P. B. G o l d e n, The Byzantine Greek Elements in the