

KEVIN TUIITE: *Svan*. Languages of the World/Materials 139. i, 58 pp., incl. 2 maps. Munich/Newcastle: Lincom Europa. 1997.

Svan is the most archaic of the four Kartvelian (South Caucasian) languages. Within the family it has the smallest number of native speakers (40-50 thousand), concentrated in the high valleys of N.W. Georgia, where, thanks to Soviet education-policy, all are bilingual in Georgian, which (along with Russian) they use for literary purposes. Svan is the most challenging member of the family thanks to both its variety of declensional patterns and, more especially, the complex nature of its verbal morphophonemics. The picture is further complicated by the existence of at least four dialects (Upper and Lower Bal in Upper Svanetia, Lashx and Lent'ex in Lower Svanetia), plus sub-dialectal particularities characterising seemingly every village-settlement, with varying vowel-systems and verbal patternings -- in 1982 I myself attempted to formalise some of the preradical morphophonemic rules in the Svan verbal complex. There being no common or standard Svan, descriptions have to encompass the spread of dialectal variation, and this short introduction is no exception. Tuite manages to pack into 45 pages an admirably full survey of the basic grammar, closing with the analysis and translation of a short Upper Bal text, a list of abbreviations and bibliography. Tuite's knowledge of, and accessibility to, Svan, added to his fluency in Georgian, leads one to hope that he might someday produce the first comprehensive grammar of this endangered language to complement the late Maksime Kaldani's unforgivably long delayed Svan-Georgian dictionary, the appearance of which in two volumes is now reported to be scheduled in Tbilisi for late 1998.

Some points, nevertheless, call for comment.

At the top of p.23 the first two 'inner' preverbs are given as an-, ad-/a- (often semantically distinguished as respectively signifying 'hither' vs 'thither'). However, comparison *æ-x-i-sq'* (<= an-x-i-sq') 'you did X for yourself' vs *æn-sq'-e* (<= an-i-sq'-e) 'X did Y for X'sself' in Lower Bal demonstrates that both these preverbs can be reduced to the same simple vowel -- indeed, **oxbinens** (p.35) shews this, as its underlying form is presented as *an-x-o-bin-en-s*. The morpho-syntax of the example illustrated in Fn.20 (p.25) cannot be so peculiar to Svan in view of the exact parallel in the Georgian translation (viz. *k'lde-s dal-i e-ms̈obiar-eb-a*) appended by Topuria (1967.180) to essentially this very example. The verb-form at the top of p.26 meaning 'the man hankers to mow hay' happens in Upper Bal to be homonymous with the actual causative ('X makes Y mow Z', as presented on p.35), and so to avoid any momentary confusion another dialectal form (e.g. Ecer *x-æ-c³m-un-i*) might have been selected. One problem I found recurring throughout this pamphlet relates to an

idiosyncrasy in the treatment of the 'version vowels' (which stand between agreement-prefix and verb-root to orientate the action in some way) -- *-a-* indicates both Neutral and Superessive version, and yet Fn.21 (p.26) without argumentation states that it also 'marks objective version in certain paradigms (present perfect, imperfective evidential, etc)'. I do not understand the justification for this assertion and suggest that all examples (pp.35, 40, 43, 44, 47) containing this versioniser preceded by an indirect object agreement-affix and glossed as 'ObV' be regarded as examples of Superessive -- there are even two cases of Superessive *-a-* glossed as Neutral version (middle of p.45 & p.46 l.8). Readers should be informed that the sentential example on p.30 is a form of speech-reporting to explain the (otherwise odd) pronominal reference. The form *ċa:r-s* (p.37) glossed 'horse-DAT' should be *ċ-a:r-s* 'horse-s-DAT', for it is plural (cf. item 12.3 in Hewitt 1985). The first example of quoted speech on p.40 is not pure *oratio recta*, as implied, given the presence of the complementiser *ere* 'that' (wrongly stated to be a relative pronoun with reference to the second example on p.43). I think the first embedded verb in the second example on p.40 contains two morphemes that combine to mark its causative status, and so I would gloss it 'O3-SupV-kill-CAUS-CAUS-S[eries]M[arker]'. A footnote might have been attached to the second example on p.44 pointing out that the Svan optative clitic *-v* (like Old Georgian *-mca*) regularly accompanies an indicative verb (cf. just such a collocation on p.41), whereas here it is pleonastically accompanied by the Aorist Subjunctive (glossed OPT[ative]). The underlying verb-form, which is usually given as basis for the morpheme-glosses, is omitted on p.45 l.3up and on p.48 l.14up. Topuria counsels against taking preradical *-ɸ(:)-* as a variant of the Neutral versioniser, as is done on p.48 l.13, presumably preferring to view it as some sort of root-prothesis. Is *-eċ-* in *l̘-eċ-xæn* 'from the water' (p.48 l.15) really the Genitive marker (rather than the demonstrative 'there'), for *eċ-xæn* means 'from there'? The *-a-* in *ċw-a-twæp* (p.48 l.17) is surely the inner preverb (*-a(d)-*), required to motivate the outer preverb *ċw-*, rather than the Neutral versioniser.

'Chikovani (1972)' finds no elucidation in the References -- it should be: *kartuli xalxuri p'oezia I* [Georgian Folk Poetry I]. Surprisingly, in the discussion of Svan's multiplicity of negatives no mention is made of the seminal work on this topic, namely Sharadzenidze (1946).

The following typographical slips were noted: p.6 l.8up: Chato; p.14 l.9up: existence; p.23 l.15: -SbV-weave-; p.31 l.18up: 162; p.33 l.6up: æd-k'æ:p-s; p.34 l.14up: CAUS;AOR; p.35 l.13: '?..which he should not have opened'; p.36 ll.10-11: re-align; l.18: ?li-šxb-**iyē:l-i**; p.37 l.1: in roughly; l.14: u-ċwil-a; p.40 l.14up: měči; p.41 ll.2-3: re-align; p.48 l.10: hok'er-d.

References

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- Hewitt, B.G. 1985. A Svan (Lašx) text: part 2, in *Revue des Etudes Géorgiennes et Caucasiennes 1*, 9-34.
- Sharadzenidze, T. 1946. uarq'opiti nac'ilak'ebi svanurši [Negative particles in Svan] in *iberiul-k'avk'asiuri enatmecniereba I* [Ibero-Caucasian Linguistics I], 289-328.
- Topuria, V. 1967. *š'romebi I. svanuri ena I. zmna* [Works I. The Svan Language I. The Verb]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

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