

Ethnographical Texts in Moroccan Berber
(Dialect of Anti-Atlas), Collected by Aki'o Nakano,
Translated and Annotated by John Cooper, Berber Studies,
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One of the main objectives of the Berber Studies series is to publish linguistic and text-oriented studies. Many volumes are indeed dedicated to folktales collections, prose texts, included ethnographic and narrative material. The series also intends to publish data collected in the past, integrating them with translations or with further linguistic analysis.

The book under review contains the translation of ethnographical texts collected by Aki'o Nakano and published in three volumes in 1994, 1995 and 1998 (by *Studia Berberi I, II, III* – Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), *Studia Culturae Islamicae*, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, Japan).

In addition to the PDF of this volume, the CD-rom that comes with it also contains the original files of the three books by Nakano and a list of contents.

The texts transcribed are in Tashelhiyt Berber, a variety spoken in several regions in South Morocco (High Atlas, Anti-Atlas and Sous plains). Other collections of texts from Morocco exist, some of which were published in the Berber Studies series, as the *Textes berbères des Ait Áyyache* by Lemkaden and Stroomer (2017) or *Textes berbères des Ait Izdeg (Moyen Atlas marocain)* by Mercier (2013), just to cite a few. The latter contains a translation that was not in the original, so its aim is very similar to the volume reviewed here.

The book opens with a foreword by the translator John Cooper, where he explains how he conducted his work by undertaking four visits to the Tafraout - Tinzggit area from 2012 to 2015, two of them with David Sudlow, a linguist also known for his grammar and dictionary of the Tuareg variety (Tamasheq) spoken in Burkina Faso. The foreword is also an acknowledgement to the five Moroccan consultants who worked with the translator in revising Nakano's texts. Moreover, Cooper explains how he supplemented Nakano's thirty photographs, adding some pictures he took during his visits to the site. They are all grouped together at the end of the book (pp. 306-365). The photographs are followed by two maps of the Tinzggit/Tassriit area, where these texts were collected.

Nakano's preface to the 1994 edition is included in this book. The author explains that all the texts were collected from the same speaker, Mr. Afouche, and that the

medium language chosen between them was Arabic (Moroccan and modern literary).

The main part of the book is composed of the translation of the ethnographic texts, organised in twenty-four main sections. Each section is dedicated to a specific topic and divided into sub-sections. Furthermore, the translation maintains the line numbering of the original. The first three sections, as well as the photographs, correspond to Nakano's first volume. Nakano's second volume corresponds to sections 4-11, while the third one includes sections 12-24. Although it is very easy to match the original texts with their translation, the fact that the Tashelhiyt texts are absent from the volume obliges the reader to always refer to the digital format.

Topics covered by the speaker concern many aspects of the community life and give detailed information about the people's food tradition, their clothes, the tools used in the kitchen, the plants that grow in the region, children's education, religion, people's main occupations and animals. The volume ends with some sections containing notes on the history of the region, where the speaker mainly focuses on the differences between the past and the present (the years when the texts were collected). The volume concludes with some songs and poems.

The work John Cooper has carried out is not limited to the translation. As mentioned in the foreword, his fieldwork trips and the collaborative work with the speakers allowed him to verify the transcriptions by Nakano, correct typos or any misinterpretation and error that could have been caused by the fact that Nakano only consulted one person. Cooper's footnotes also contain supplementary information given by his consultants, and cross-references to other texts (where the topic mentioned is analysed in more detail) or to photographs.

In conclusion, the volume is a valuable contribution to the study of the language and culture of the area. Through the translation, researchers who are not specialists in Berber can finally access these texts. The translation follows the Berber version as closely as possible, allowing for further linguistic analysis, even by those who are not specialists in Tashelhiyt. In addition, the accuracy of Afouche's descriptions and the details he provides are invaluable for those interested in different cultural aspects of the area, also for those who want to compare it with similar data available from different Moroccan or North African Berber regions.

References

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