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the future course of anthropological studies in this part of the world. For despite the refinement of concepts and techniques, anthropologists working on the subcontinent seem continually to return to the same problems—the joint family, the solidary village, sanskritization, ranking of castes, and so on. Also, where new problems are beginning to be dealt with, there is evidence that they are being presented as peculiar to the Indian context and so isolated from related problems in other ethnographic areas. In this book, for example, two authors extol the virtues of using ‘family histories’ in the study of social change but ignore the literature on extended case studies written by Gluckman and others. Similarly, although South Asian anthropologists note a growing interest in the phenomenon of caste in urban areas, they have not yet apparently taken note of the growing number of studies of ‘tribalism’ in African towns, and the possibility of comparative work.

In the preface to this book one of the editors summarizes some of the important trends in South Asian social anthropology, and invites the anthropological community at large to take note. This is as it should be. But there is a danger that anthropologists working in South Asia, so long ignored by others, might refuse to take account of developments outside their area of interest.

LIONEL CAPLAN

TALÂT TEKIN: *A grammar of Orkhon Turkic*. (Indiana University Publications. Uralic and Altaic Series, Vol. 69.) [xv], 419 pp. Bloomington: Indiana University; The Hague: Mouton and Co., [1968]. \$10, guilders 36.

This book is both more and less than the title suggests. It is more in that it includes new editions and translations of the five great eighth-century inscriptions, and less in that it is a grammar only of those inscriptions and not of the other remains of the same language in paper documents written in the runic, Uyğur, and Manichaean alphabets.

The kindest thing that can be said about the book is that Dr. Tekin has made a brave try to perform a task well beyond his powers, and has not succeeded. Eight hundred years ago Kâşğari quoted a Turkish proverb, ‘the only marksman who never misses is the rain, the only scholar who never makes a mistake is the echo’. This is true, but he should have added that the echo reproduces previous scholars’ mistakes as faithfully as their true

statements. I am sorry to find that Dr. Tekin has reproduced one of my own worst howlers. In re-editing the Ongin inscription in 1957 I read a much-damaged word in l. 4 as **aymağlığ**. I now know that this cannot possibly be right; **aymağ** was a Mongolian word which was not borrowed by Turkish until 500 years later. The word was probably **bağlığ**, which would have much the same meaning, but as the inscription has now completely disintegrated we shall never know.

Most of the other mistakes in the earlier editions of the inscriptions are repeated, for example **sü** (**t**)**egisinte** ‘in hand to hand fighting’, instead of **süñügi sındı** ‘his lance broke’ (KT, N5), but some new ones are added. For example in l. 45 of the inscription of Toñukuk after the words **İnel Xağanka**: Radloff read *k¹r¹m* and did not attempt to translate it; Ramstedt, and after him Aalto, read **eñip** and tentatively translated it ‘following, subduing(?)’. Dr. Tekin, no longer tentatively, substitutes **añip**, translates it ‘fearing’, and connects it with Mongolian *ayu-* ‘to fear’. Dr. Tryjarski and I recently examined the new squeeze in the possession of the Polish Academy of Sciences and satisfied ourselves that the stone is so badly weathered at this point that the inscription has been completely obliterated. The plain fact is that it is useless, and indeed dangerous, to try to produce a simple text, translation, and vocabulary of these inscriptions. Even where the text is clear, and much more where it is severely damaged, there is a whole series of doubtful points which must be discussed in a careful commentary before a conclusion can be reached, and at the end of it all it may be no more than an ‘either-or’.

The worst feature in the book is the system of transcribing, or rather transliterating, the runic alphabet. When Thomsen deciphered it in 1897 he knew nothing of the phonetic structure of early Turkish since the principal texts in it had not been rediscovered. Nor had the Sogdian documents. He was therefore unable to do what everyone who tries to decipher a known language in an unknown alphabet must do, that is put himself in the position of the inventor of the alphabet and try to consider what sounds he had to reduce to writing and what equipment he had at his disposal for representing them. We now know that the backbone of the runic alphabet (but only the backbone, there were also other elements, a few late Greek letters and some invented ones) was a late, probably Sogdian, variety of the old Aramaic alphabet as it had been adapted to write various Iranian alphabets; we know that this was a very

inadequate alphabet in which a number of letters represented more than one sound, and in particular that the letters which represented plosives, *b*, *d*, etc. also represented fricatives, *v*, *ğ*, etc.; we know that so far as the consonantal sounds are concerned there was very little difference between the phonetic structure of early Turkish and the neighbouring Iranian languages, and we know that there is great confusion and inconsistency in the representation of the dental and palatal sibilants, *s* and *ş*, in the inscriptions. All this laboriously accumulated knowledge has gone clean over Dr. Tekin's head. In his preface he states that 'the basic assumptions which guided my re-evaluation of the old Turkic script were (1) any given sign with the exception of the vocalic and syllabic signs, represents only one and the same sound whenever it occurs . . .'. By p. 23 this has become '20 are double "consonant characters" (syllabic characters) which designate syllables beginning with *a* or *ä* and ending in this characteristic consonant. They can also represent the consonants alone', and on p. 30 'The old Turkic system of writing is a mixture of syllabic and alphabetic systems of writing. . . Judging from this we can say that the old Turkic script was on the verge of becoming an alphabetic system of writing'.

All this is of course nonsense; nearly all languages are rich in consonantal and vocalic sounds, and until the first true phonetic alphabets were invented in the nineteenth century, all alphabets were inadequate to represent them, even though some letters were used, singly or in combinations, to represent more than one sound. The inventor of the runic alphabet was fortunate in the fact that in the script with which he was most familiar, probably Sogdian, several consonants represented both plosives and fricatives, but unfortunate in the fact that nearly all short vowels were left to be supplied by the reader. He saw that this would not do for Turkish, and used vowel letters in the first syllable to represent both short and long vowels other than *a/e*, one for *é*, *ı*, *ı*, one for *o*, *u*, and one for *ö*, *ü*; but he saw no reason to do this later in the word. If he had to write, say, *öürüp* (or more probably *ölöröp*), *sünüş* or *bermiş*, he was quite happy to write *ö l r p s ü ŋ ş*, or *b r m ş* and leave the reader to supply the other vowels.

The actual grammar is less open to objection. It does of course contain some mistakes; for example, by disregarding the fact that no Turkish words begin with *m-* except loan-words and words in which *b-* has become *m-* by regressive assimilation to adjacent nasals (e.g. *men* from *ben* 'I'), it has added two ghost words to the vocabulary, *matı* 'loyal,

faithful(?)', a mistranscription of *amti*: 'now', and *mağ* 'glory, honour(?)' taken from a damaged passage of which the true reading seems to be *jküm ağı* . . . But its chief fault is its intolerable prolixity, which is reflected in the high price (£4 3s. 4d.). Dr. Tekin is obviously a skilled punched card sorter, but surely it was unnecessary to quote 119, 36, 8, 21, 41, and 8 words respectively to prove that *t* can occur initially, intervocalically, before medial consonants, after medial consonants, finally after vowels, and finally after certain consonants? Imagination boggles at the number of illustrations which would have emerged if the raw material had been more than 20 pp. of text.

Finally, a word about the title. In English the language talked by Turks is, and always has been, called 'Turkish', qualified, if necessary, by an adjective (early, eastern, Ottoman, Republican, etc.), just as we call our own language 'English', and the languages spoken by Danes, Flemings, Poles, Spaniards, and Swedes 'Danish, Flemish, Polish, Spanish, and Swedish' respectively. Scholars who accept such neologisms as 'Turkic' will have only themselves to blame if they are confronted with a monograph on the differences between English, American, and United Nations 'Englie'.

GERARD CLAUSON

YE. I. KYCHANOV: *Ocherk istorii tangut'skogo gosudarstva*. (Akademiya Nauk SSSR. Institut Narodov Azii.) 355 pp. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka', 1968. Rbls. 1.65.

M. V. SOFRONOV: *Grammatika tangut'skogo yazyka*. (Akademiya Nauk SSSR. Institut Narodov Azii.) 2 vols.: 275 pp.; 404 pp. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka', 1968. Rbls. 3.13.

It is odd that a people speaking a Sino-Tibetan language, who called themselves, and were called by the Tibetans, *Mi-nag*, and in the tenth century founded a kingdom called by the Chinese *Hsi Hsia* 'Western Hsia', for no better reason than that it occupied territory which had supposedly been the homeland of the first, probably mythical, Chinese dynasty, Hsia, some 3,000 years earlier, should have become known to European scholars first as Hsi Hsia and more recently as Tangut. This name first appears as *Tayut* in a Türkü inscription erected in the second quarter of the eighth century, when the Tangut were still a loose confederation of