

uninflected stems, (though Haviland suggests that this might be an error). This wealth of material, the richness of the sentence inventory provides a possible check on historical linguistic methodology, not only in the more traditional field of lexicon, but also in morphology and syntax.

The Great Tzotzil Dictionary of Santo Domingo Zinacantán is an excellent reference work, a fine resource for linguists, ethnographers, historians, and speakers of modern Mayan languages endeavoring to enhance their current lexical inventories using indigenous sources. Laughlin once again demonstrates his considerable skill in linguistics and knowledge of Tzotzil. Both he and Haviland manage in their exposition and commentary to be at once instructive, interesting, and readable, a laudable and regrettably rare academic achievement.

*Dept. of Anthropology  
Tulane University  
New Orleans, LA 70118*

GERHARD DOERFER, *Grundwort und Sprachmischung: Eine Untersuchung an Hand von Körperteilbezeichnungen* (Münchener Ostasiatische Studien, Band 47). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 1988. VIII, 313 pp.

*Reviewed by* EUGENE HELIMSKY

In the first part of his new book, Gerhard Doerfer proves what has always been more or less evident to anybody interested in lexicology: abundant empirical data and calculations bring him to the conclusion that while all terms for body parts are basic words, only some of them really belong to the core of the vocabulary and are relatively stable in a language, and many others remain at the lexical periphery and are easily replaced or borrowed. The opposition 'basic words': 'cultural words' simplifies and partly distorts the real picture; within the first category at least two groups, 'nuclear basic words' (= Kerngrundwörter, KGW) and 'marginal basic words' (= Randgrundwörter, RGW), are to be distinguished (with a thin intermediate layer in between: Zwischengliedwörter, ZGW). In the second part of the book, Doerfer, renowned both as a leading expert on Altaic languages and as an ardent Anti-Altaicist, exploits this conclusion to support his claim

that the lexical parallels between the Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic languages are not of genetic origin.

Moving with the author from one region of the world to another and from one aspect of the problem under scrutiny to another, the reader finds out that:

In the Turkic dialects of Iran, which represent several languages (Khalaj, Khorasan-Turkic, Azerbaijani, Sonqorī) but are all under strong Persian influence (so that they must be qualified as mixed languages), there are words for body parts which are genuinely Turkic in all 30 examined dialects (e.g., the word for 'eye', Turk. \*kōz), and other elements of the anatomical terminology which are sometimes, often, or even always represented by Persian loanwords (e.g., the word for 'eyelash', Pers. *muža* - despite the fact that the thing itself and the word for it, Turk. \*kirpik, were well known to the Turks long before they came into contact with their present neighbors).

A similar picture can be observed in other situations of mass borrowing: into North Tajik from Uzbek; into Tat (an Iranian language in the Caucasus) from Azerbaijani; into Bukhara Arabic from Tajik and Uzbek; into Cheremis from Chuvash and Tatar; into Sayan Samoyedic (although I believe that it would be more reasonable to treat separately the data from two distantly related Sayan Samoyedic languages, Kamassian and Mator) from Siberian Turkic; into Yakut from Mongolic; into Solon (a Tungusic language in Manchuria) from Daghur Mongolian; into Daghur Mongolian from Solon and Manchu; into Manchu from Mongolic; into Romany (Gypsy); into Albanian; into Brahui; into Nubian from Arabic.

On the basis of their retainability/liability to borrowing in mixed languages, only 11 items can be qualified as KGW: 'eye', 'hand', 'head', 'foot', 'ear', 'nose', 'mouth', 'heart', 'hair', 'tongue', 'tooth'. After some minor modifications made throughout the study, 5 more are estimated by Doerfer as ZGW ('finger', 'lip', 'heard', 'knee', 'neck'), and the rest of the meanings go into the group of RGW (including 'face', 'back', 'shoulder', 'liver', 'body', 'cunnus', 'rib', 'penis', 'lung', 'brain' and many others; perhaps also 'belly', 'leg', 'cheek', 'elbow', 'breast' and others that were not taken into consideration in the book).

The list of 11 KGW hardly raises any doubts. Actually, the figures on p. 53, which indicate the frequencies of borrowing for the corresponding items, can be even "improved"—that is, reduced,—as long as:

(a) Alb. *krýe* 'head', which Doerfer takes as a borrowing from

Lat. **cerebrum** (the only loanword for 'head' in his materials!), probably goes back to IE \***k<sup>er</sup>**- etc. (~Gk. **krānion**, **kārā**), see Huld 1984: 83; Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1984: 113.

(b) Alb. **kēmbē** 'foot, leg' is clearly connected with Vulgar Lat. **camba** 'leg', but the direction of borrowing is not clear (Huld 1984: 80).

(c) Both words for 'hair' in Sayan Samoyedic, \***eptā** 'hair (on head)'; and \***tār** 'hair (on body)', should be safely viewed as inherited from Proto-Samoyedic (Janhunen 1977: 21, 149); the second of these words may ultimately be a Mongolic loan (Joki 1952:312-3), but then the borrowing occurred long before Kamassian and Mator became exposed to massive Altaic influence.

The following several chapters are devoted to establishing additional distinctions between KGW and RGW (with ZGW occupying in many cases an intermediate position). From the semantic viewpoint, KGW denote easily perceivable objects with important and obvious physical functions; they are neither too specific (as 'heel' or 'canine tooth') nor too general (as 'body' or 'muscle'); the list of KGW does not include the (potentially) obscene terms. On the whole, KGW occur more frequently (in texts, in idiomatic units, in short vocabularies compiled by field linguists, etc.). They make longer entries in dictionaries. They are learned very early by infants—in fact, earlier than the particles and other grammatical words with the highest absolute frequency, and this gives Doerfer occasion for an interesting discussion of the relationship between pragmatic values, "disponibilities", and frequencies of words. They are evaluated or experimentally singled out as psychologically more relevant (some of the corresponding psycholinguistic tests look, however, a bit amateurish). Their meanings are relatively stable, while those of RGW are labile and often interchangeable ('eyelash' > < 'eyebrow', 'chin' > < 'jaw'). In field studies KGW are produced by informants (as reactions to questions) with shorter delay and with fewer mistakes. Morphologically they are usually simple and opaque. They are less variable within a language family (e.g., C.D. Buck's dictionary of IE synonyms lists, on the average, 6.9 etymological types for the 11 KGW and 11.75 types for 12 RGW). Surely, no one of these assertions contradicts the intuition of a linguist (even if sometimes Doerfer fails to distinguish between the relevance of a notion, which must be universal at least within a certain cultural area, and of a word for this notion, which may be specific for an individual language).

The statistical evidence on the distinctions between KGW and RGW, taken from different angles, is basically the same, so that the numerous tables in the book mostly repeat each other and seem somewhat boring. All calculable results are then summarized in the tables on pp. 135-44.

A special section is devoted to the glottochronological method. Repeating much of the long-known criticism concerning this method (directed, however, against the original model by M. Swadesh rather than against its modern improvements—cf. Embleton 1986, Starostin 1989) and stressing, in particular, that the method takes the 'basic vocabulary' as a single whole, without distinguishing between KGW and RGW<sup>1</sup>, Doerfer claims that "die Glottochronologie nicht durchführbar ist" (p. 153). No less severe is his attitude towards the theory of the Nostratic distant relationship, which attitude I had an earlier opportunity to analyse (see Helimskij, 1986:247-53—a response to Doerfer 1973).

The biggest section of the book is devoted to "A special problem: The Altaic question" (pp. 153-283). Doerfer's main idea is that the Altaic lexical parallels are due to borrowing, not to genetic affinity, even in cases where actually a case of borrowing cannot be proven. Cf. the following typical remark on pp. 161-2: "Natürlich erhebt sich folgende Frage: Wenn es ca. 80 nachweislich entlehnte KTB [= Körperteilbezeichnungen] im Tungusischen gibt, warum sollen dann die ca. angeblich verwandten KTB nicht ebenfalls entlehnt sein, nur eben einer älteren Lehnsschicht angehören?". In order not to leave this question in a state of a mere rhetoric allegation<sup>2</sup>, Doerfer states his intention to approach it in the light of what has been said earlier on the relationship between KGW and RGW.

It is true that there are many Altaic lexical parallels from the domain of RGW. It is also true that for many such parallels the borrowing can be proven or strongly suspected (even if they were erroneously treated as genetic cognates in Poppe 1960). The treatment of the corresponding etymologies is undoubtedly one of the most useful sections of the book under review.

If etymologically related words were present only among RGW and completely absent among KGW, the situation would seriously contradict what we expect to find in a genetic unity of languages and what is actually observed in Indo-European, Uralic, Bantu or Austro-nesian (pp. 273-81)<sup>3</sup>, and would therefore confirm the opinion of Doerfer on the resolute decision of the participants of the Altaic panel

at Stanford in 1987, who "found Proto-Altaic, at best, a premature hypothesis and a pragmatically poor foundation on which to build a sustained research program" (Unger 1990: 479).

The crux of the matter is, however, that—contrary to what Doerfer believes—it is possible to trace the Proto-Altaic origin of 10 (out of 11) KGW in his list. This result has been demonstrated in a recent study by Sergei Starostin. While Starostin's book, published in 1991, certainly could not be taken into consideration by Doerfer<sup>4</sup>, the majority of the etymologies presented there are by no means new<sup>5</sup> (as distinct from the Proto-Altaic reconstructions suggested by Starostin and marking a considerable step forward—or maybe even the decisive breakthrough—in Altaic historical phonology, as well as from the additional Japanese members of these etymologies, which are omitted here).

**EYE:** Alt. \**niā* > Mong. *ni-dün* 'eye' (the same root in *ni-l-musun* 'tear'), Tung. \**niā-sa* 'eye' (the same root in \**niā-ru-* 'to look'), MidKor. *nū-n* 'eye', probably preserved also in Turk. *jāš* < \**niā-l* 'tear' (KW 281; SKE 172; TMS 1, 292; St 30–1). Doerfer disregards (p. 172) the comparison from TMS, citing for Proto-Tungus \**ja:sa* (in the notation of St: \**iā-sa*), a reconstruction that does not account for Nanai *nasa-l* 'eye'.

**HAND:** Alt. \**ḡālā* > Turk. \**äl(ig)* 'hand', Tung. \**ḡāla* id. (St 47). Doerfer (pp. 186–7) did not notice the possibility of this new comparison, investigating instead the old erroneous comparison of *ḡāla* with Turk. *qarī* 'arm', Mong. *ḡar* 'hand, arm'.

**HEAD:** Alt. \**mal'V* > Turk. *baš* (< \**bal'(č)*) 'head', MidKor. *məri* id. (SKE 146; St 31–2). The etymology seems somewhat problematic: both the Turkic and the Korean forms can each go to a great number of different proto-forms, so is it not just chance that the two back-projected beams meet at \**mal'V*? Doerfer does not take the Korean data into consideration; in connection with Turk. *baš* he mentions (p. 170) Mong. –*balji* in *tar-balji* 'sparrow hawk; tawny eagle' (\*'bald-head?'), which, if the semantic reconstruction is correct, may be a Turkic loanword.

**FOOT:** Alt. \**pal'kV* > Tung. \**palga-n* 'foot', MidKor. *pár* id., probably preserved also in Turk. *bašmaq* < \**bal'mak* 'footwear' (SKE 184–5; IS 3, 66–70; St 43). It would not be any worse to reconstruct the "main" Proto-Altaic term for 'foot' as \**p'agdV* > Turk. *adaq* 'foot', Mong. \**fadag* 'end, extremity', Tung. \**pagdi(-kī)* 'foot, sole' (Poppe 1960: 52; VEWT 5; St 282); this etymology is discussed also by Doerfer on pp. 187–9 (strangely enough, Mong. *adaγ* is interpreted as a late borrowing from Turkic).

**EAR:** Alt. \**k'ūjlu* (~\**k'ūlju*) > Turk. \**kul-kak*/\**kul-gak* 'ear',

MidKor. *kūi* id., preserved also in Mong. *qulki* 'earwax' (KW 196; IS Mat. 366; St 52–3). On pp. 172–3, Doerfer mentions the Mong.-Turk. comparison (without considering the Korean form, as also otherwise), but indicates that only the Turkic counterpart is a KGW.

**NOSE:** Alt. \**k'u/aŋa* > Mong. \**qaŋ* in \**qaŋ-bar* (> *qabar* ~ *qamar*) 'nose', *qaŋ-siyar* 'bridge of the nose', *qoŋ-sijar* 'muzzle, beak, snout, nose', Tung. \**xoŋa* 'the bows', \**xoŋa-hta* 'nose', MidKor. *kó(h-)* id., probably preserved also in Turkic (Teleut *koŋir* 'saddle of the nose', etc.) (Illič-Svityč 1965: 343; Kolesnikova 1972: 283–4; St 43–4). Doerfer disregards this comparison (pp. 173–4), erroneously citing Tung. \**oŋa-hta* (while initial \**x-* in the protoform is clearly indicated by Nanai *xoŋko* 'the bows').

**MOUTH:** Alt. \**am/a/-* > Mong. *aman* 'mouth', Tung. \**am-ŋa* id., (?) Turk. \**am* 'vulva' (Poppe 1960: 40, 68; Kolesnikova 1972: 288–9; St 46–7). Another possible approach is represented in IS 1, 244–5, where the Proto-Altaic form is reconstructed as \**aŋma* 'mouth' and viewed as a derivative of Alt. \**aŋ(a)* 'hole, fissure' (> Turk. \**aŋ-/\*aŋ-* 'to be wide open', Mong. *aŋ* 'hole, fissure', Tung. \**aŋa* 'fissure, hole; (wide) open'). The variants of this etymology are discussed—with emphasis on the weakpoints of each—also by Doerfer on pp. 174–6.

**HEART:** Alt. \**miānV-m* > Tung. \**miāwan* ~ \**niāman* 'heart', MidKor. *mānām* id. (SKE 136; St 48). The comparison from G.J. Ramstedt's SKE is not mentioned by Doerfer. The well-known comparison of Turk. *jüräk* 'heart' with Mong. *žirūken*, *žuruken* id. (KW 483–4) may also reflect a Proto-Altaic item or be explained as a result of borrowing (St 282), but Doerfer's idea of accidental coincidence (p. 185) is hardly felicitous.

**HAIR I:** Alt. \**k'iIV* > Turk. *qıl* 'hair', Tung. \**xiŋŋa* (> \**xil-ŋa*) id., MidKor. *kārki* 'mane', cf. also Mong. *kil-ya-sun* 'hair of the mane and tail, horse hair' (VEWT 262: IS 1, 351–2; St 29). For an unclear reason Tung. \**xiŋŋa* (see TMS 1, 317) is not even mentioned by Doerfer. Mong. *kilyasun* is considered (p. 184) to be a Turkic loan, which seems quite possible.

**HAIR II:** Alt. \**p'ünV* > Mong. \**füsün* (> \**p'ün-sün*) 'hair', Tung. \**püñe-* (Machu *fuñexe* 'hair, fur') (KW 460; St 29–30). Doerfer (184) qualifies this etymology as possible.

**TONGUE:** Alt. \**k'äliä* > Mong. *kele(n)* 'tongue', Tung. \**xil-ŋü* id., MidKor. *hjá*, probably preserved also in Turkic (Old Uighur *kälä-čü* 'word', etc.) (IS 1, 346; St 57–8). Doerfer (176–7) mentions both the Mongolian and the Tungusic forms without, however, seeing their resemblance and comparability. As for the phonetic side of this

etymology, cf. Turk. *kämik* 'bone' ~ Mong. *kemi* 'marrow of bones' ~ Tung. \**ximü-ŋkse* 'melted fat' (St 281).

In my opinion the majority of the above-cited etymologies fit the highest standards of comparative linguistics. It is certainly everybody's right to agree or to disagree on this point. In many cases the compared forms are not as similar in their phonetic shape and derivational structure as those "Altaic" parallels which are really due to mutual borrowings; but this is exactly what must be expected, if the loanwords are often quite recent, while the real cognates had at least 7 or 8 millennia to undergo changes and, very often, to be lost and replaced.

Regretfully, Doerfer—as well as many of his Anti-Altaistic adherents—tends to disregard the factor of time depth, demanding that the Altaic family, if it constitutes a genetic unity, should display all the features of such families as Indo-European and Uralic (which are substantially younger). On the other hand, he seems to have the idea that, if the Altaic languages are related, the phonetic correspondences between them must strictly follow the patterns suggested by G.J. Ramstedt and N. Poppe (Poppe 1960, where, as mentioned above, the cognates and the loanwords were not duly distinguished). How else can we interpret his remark (165) in connection with Turk. *judruq*, Mong. *nudurga*, Manchu *nužan* 'fist' that "Bei Urverwandtschaft wäre ev. \**nudurka*, ma. \**nučan* zu erwarten"? Incidentally, this remark makes a curious impression: there are, according to Doerfer, no genetic cognates in the different branches of Altaic, but there are strict phonetic correspondences between these non-existent cognates.

The more remote a genetic relationship of languages is, the more difficult is the establishing and the investigation of it and the less consensus can be expected to be found among the scholars. As Doerfer states (p. 267), "als 'verwandt' bezeichne ich alle Sprachen, die durchgehend von allen (oder fast allen) Spezialisten als verwandt bezeichnet worden sind".

This is a very democratic procedure for finding out whether the languages are related. But in science, as probably also elsewhere, even the most exact and democratic counting of votes cannot make up for the prejudices of the voters.

*Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies  
The USSR Academy of Sciences  
Leningradskiy Prospekt 32<sup>a</sup> V-902  
117334 Moscow  
Russia*

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This is hardly justified: M. Swadesh's 100-word test-list includes all 11 KGW, and only few of the innumerable RGW.

<sup>2</sup>Which can be easily rejected already through reference to English, where the number of French loanwords is several times as high as the number of genetic cognates preserved both in English and in French—but this fact certainly does not abrogate the IE origin of the English language.

<sup>3</sup>I have two minor corrections to the Samoyedic material on pp. 274–5: Nenets *ňami*, *ňamtu* "tongue" is a compound and does not go back to \**ňalmä* "tongue" (see Hajdú 1962: 53–4); the word *taja-m* 'finger' is not "tavg." (= tavgisch, Tavgi, Nganasan), but belongs to the Taigi dialect of the Mator language.

<sup>4</sup>Cf., however, the preliminary publication of essentially the same materials in the Papers from the Permanent International Altaistic Conference (Starostin 1986).

<sup>5</sup>Regretfully, in Doerfer's book they are often disregarded, though such an approach contradicts the author's explicit intention: "... bei weitem nicht alle bisher von den Altaisten angestellten Vergleiche makellos sind, aber man darf sie nicht beiseitelassen" (p. 156).

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JOHN M. LIPSKI, *The language of the Isleños. Vestigial Spanish in Louisiana*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990. xii, 148 pp. cloth, \$22.50.

Reviewed by GLENN G. GILBERT

My impression of this book is mixed. Its positive features include: 1) that which has now become Lipski's hallmark—the application of his impressive comparative knowledge of dialectal (uncreolized) Spanish, as well as of creolized Spanish, to the description and explanation of the development of various kinds of Spanish spoken in the New World and elsewhere (in this case, Isleño Spanish and Sabine River Spanish); 2) the book's very large, wide-ranging bibliography, many of the items being sufficiently rare as not to be widely known or easy to obtain; and 3) the distinct contribution the book makes in adding to our knowledge of the historical development and contemporary use of the Spanish language in both St. Bernard Parish (south of New Orleans) and in the Sabine river valley in northwestern Louisiana and northeastern Texas. Beyond this, the book is reasonably priced (at least compared to expensive European publications), physically attractive, and printed on durable paper, with typographical errors kept to a minimum.

On the negative side is an almost total lack of information on how Lipski's field data on both the Isleños and the Sabines was obtained. We know nothing of his Isleño consultants, their number, or their social/biological characteristics. One can only deduce the relative chronology of the work from his observation that "Hurricane Juan,

which caused the levy at Delacroix to rupture in late 1985, scattered this community after most of the present fieldwork had been completed . . ." And buried in a footnote on p. 51 is his statement that "I personally collected and verified all contemporary Spanish examples given in the present work." The source of the examples is not further identified, nor are the methods used to elicit them (although he seems to have used a combination of participant observation, language questionnaire, and/or audio/video taping).

Lacking information to the contrary, one must assume that the Spanish speakers in the Isleño area of southern Louisiana are all regarded as white, although Lipski's major predecessor in its linguistic description, Raymond MacCurdy (1950:21–22), cites a description of the Isleños from an article in the Oct. 22, 1838 *Weekly Picayune* to the effect that some of those who came to the markets in New Orleans from the Isleño area of Terre aux Boeufs were Spanish-speaking negroes: ". . . the vendors are both negro and white, with their women and children with them. All speak Spanish." MacCurdy goes on to observe:

These Spanish-speaking negroes were probably former slaves who had accompanied their masters from Santo Domingo. Although there are still a large number of negroes living along the northern end of Bayou Terre aux Boeufs, principally in the town of Verette, Spanish is no longer current among them.

Lipski is less cryptic about the racial make-up of the Sabine River Spanish speakers, whose enclaves on both sides of the river have all the hallmarks of the linguistically interesting triracial isolates that have been identified on the East Coast (Berry 1963, Gilbert 1987): "[They] are of varied racial backgrounds, but particularly in Louisiana, a significant number are of Native American extraction" (p. 103).

Lipski's twenty-page, 346-item reference list (including thirty separate entries for his own work) is a mixed blessing. He has gone far beyond MacCurdy, Armistead (e.g., 1978), or any other previous writers on the Louisiana Spanish colonial settlements in giving us a wide, comparative perspective for attempting to explain the origin and development of this type of Spanish, and to assess its importance in the understanding of New World Spanish as a whole. On the other hand, most of the references are needlessly repeated in the form of full bibliographical footnotes, taking up an inordinate amount of space in an already disappointingly short book.

Another problem seems to be one of the spin-offs of the use of word processors to compose scientific prose of this type; in the electronic cutting and pasting that this technology now allows, sections of