

Ludwig Karničar, *Der Obir-Dialekt in Kärnten. Die Mundart von Ebriach/Obirsko im Vergleich mit den Nachbarmundarten von Zell/Sele und Trögern/Korte*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990 [= Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 551. Band]. 420 pages. ISBN 3-7001-1708-6.

Fran Ramovš, the eminent Slovene dialectologist, wrote (1935: 18) that the Slovene dialects of Obirsko/Ebriach, Lobnik/Lobnig, Lepena/Leppen, Koprivna/Kopriuna and Remšenik/Remschenig and those along the upper course of the River Bela should be considered a special dialect unit, the Obir dialect, although they showed numerous correspondences with the Podjuna and the Rož dialects. There followed Ramovš's description of the Obir dialect, consisting of only two pages. — This is all that was ever published about this dialect group before Karničar. If we compare Ramovš's description with Karničar's, we realize how essential is the latter's contribution to Slovene dialectology. Karničar himself stems from Obirsko and is a native speaker of the Slovene dialect spoken there. He has been involved in Carinthian Slovene dialectological research projects for many years (see Hafner & Prunč 1980, Prunč, Hafner & alii 1982a, 1982b, 1987), and he knows the neighboring dialects of Korte/Trögern and Sele/Zell very well too.

It is characteristic of the Slovene dialect groups that their geographical areas are usually very small, and this is confirmed by the dialects under investigation; thus, in 1986 Obirsko had about 350 and Korte had only some 30 inhabitants (19). The area is bounded by the Yugoslav (Upper Carniolan) border in the south and east, by the village of Sele in the west, and by the Podjuna valley in the north.

The Carinthian dialects have been considered a separate group since the very beginning of Slovene literature in the 16th century. Urban Jarnik (1842) was the first to classify them, and Ramovš first described their common articulatory and grammatical features. It was Karničar, however, who first stated that the Korte dialect, although situated in Carinthia, does not belong to the Carinthian dialect group but to the Upper Carniolan one (68-69).

In his introduction (11-23) Karničar describes the Obir dialect area geographically, speaks about the linguistic relations between this dialect and its neighbouring dialects, reports on the 'state of the art,' and gives some facts about the history of the area. The Obir dialects can be divided into two parts, Eastern and Western; there are however only minor linguistic differences between the two; the subject of the book reviewed here is the Western part. According to Karničar, Slovene is still the only language used in everyday life in this area, which can be considered "one of the last homogeneous Slovene language territories in Carinthia."

The first main section (I: Phonology, Prosody and Morphology, 25-70)¹ deals with the synchronic and diachronic descriptions of the dialect. A remarkable feature of the vowel system is the fact that there are no diphthongs of the type *iə*, *uə*, hence, e.g., *snè:x*, *bò:x* (29). Short and unstressed vowels are restricted in their distribution. The long vowel phonemes are, wherever possible, illustrated in minimal pairs (27-28). Most but not all of these particular examples are also glossed. In this connection I would like to draw the reader's attention to one disadvantage of the book, viz., that the Slovene examples can often hardly be identified, even by those who know Standard Slovene, to say nothing of the general Slavist. Most of the examples in Part I as a whole are not translated, and in my opinion the intelligibility of this part of the book is restricted to a very small number of native speakers of Slovene (those acquainted with phonetic transcription) and, maybe, a handful of dialectologists.

One of the remarkable features of the dialect is the tonemic opposition on long as well as on short syllables. The reason for this phenomenon is the fact that desinences are often truncated. Examples of minimal pairs are found on pp. 33-35 (where glosses are provided), e.g., *jéə:z* A.sg.f. *jeza* : *jèə:z* 3.sg. *jeziti*. Karničar's material is sometimes arranged unsystematically. Thus, data concerning the synchronic prosodic system can also be found in the diachronic section, and also in Chapter 4 ("Prosody," 56-61). Here we learn that real tonemic minimal pairs can be found only on schwa, whereas on other short vowels tonemic oppositions are connected with qualitative differences. Moreover, in the chapter dealing with "modern vowel reduction" (40-44) we learn about another toneme opposition in polysyllabic word forms, one caused by the truncation of desinential vowels, e.g., *qú:pəm* 1.sg. : *qú:pəm* 1.pl. ("buy"), *pwà:wam* 1.sg. : *pwà:wám* 1.pl. ("swim"). This means that an opposition of pitch may be relevant also in posttonic syllables. It would have been feasible—and it is still possible—to carry out an experimental phonetic investigation to shed some light on this phenomenon, one that is hitherto unknown in Slavic accentology.

The consonant system is rather simple. Its most remarkable features are the changes of *g* to *h* and of *k* to the glottal stop, transcribed with the letter "q," in which usage Karničar follows most Slovene scholars. Voiced obstruents remain voiced in prepausal position. The Rož palatalization of the velars *k x* does not exist, but can be observed in a few examples with *g*, which changed to *j*. The most important features of the Obir dialect, as compared with the S.E. Podjuna and the Sele dialects, are listed on pp. 14-16.

In any case, Part I enriches our knowledge of the Carinthian Slovene dialects and is of great value. Unfortunately, sometimes the author is inconsistent with German linguistic terminology, and sometimes even with general linguistic notions. A few examples: The variants *dor*, *dro* are not lexical variants (14). It is unclear what the following sentence means (26): "Der artikulatorische Schwerpunkt bei den Vokalen liegt im Bereiche der mittleren Artikulationsbasis"— what is meant by "central basis of articulation"? Instead of "mittel-mittlerer Laut" (26) it would have been more appropriate to talk of a "zentraler Vokal;" this term, or the term "schwa," should also have been used rather than "Halbvokal" or "Halblaut" (31, 41, etc.), which are loan translations of Slovene *polglasnik* but not admitted German linguistic terms. The glide *h* cannot be considered compact (45). *w* is not a "Vorderzungenskonsonant" (45) but a bilabial glide. If *r* is "hinterzungen" it cannot at the same time be "dentokoronal" (46). "Nichtsonanten" (48) is a loan translation of Slovene *nezvočniki*, normally termed "Obstruenten" in German.

Chapter 5 ("Comments on Morphology," 62-67) is extremely important for the understanding of the texts at the end of the book. A common Carinthian feature of declension is the loss of the neuter, e.g., *néb* "nebo," *wóq* "oko," etc.; as a result of the truncation of the desinences *-i* and *-o* many forms have become homophonous (although sometimes tonemic oppositions can be found). This chapter is maybe too concise. The reader will expect information about morphophonemic alternations, especially about the role of movable stress and pitch, i.e., tonemic oppositions in inflection.

Part II of the book (71-110) deals with "Microtoponymy and Homestead Names." In chapter 7, general topographic names (72-76) are followed by field names (77-98). The field names are divided into various categories. To the first category belong names connected with the soil, e.g., derivations (in the locative case) of words like *bezenik*, *breg*, *capinovec*, *dol*, *drča*, *dolina*, etc.. In my opinion the name *Na Fel* (78) cannot be explained by *fela* = *vrsta*, because *fela* is a Hungarian word, and there is no evidence of Hungarian influence in Carinthia. More likely it derives from German *Feld* "field," an explanation which is admitted by Karničar himself. In the second category are field names "referring

to an object", consisting of a preposition such as *na, pri, pod, za*, plus a noun such as *jama, lipa, mlinjak, baba* (the name of a rock), etc.; and in the third category we find names referring to states or activities, deriving from nouns such as *basaga, brbučevce, kopišče, kraguljevišče*, etc.. It is hard to believe that the name *Na Karà:wəl* is derived from the Turkish *karavla* "frontier-guard"; but unfortunately I cannot offer a better explanation. In the fourth category Karničar lists names referring to animals and birds; names like *jastranica, kačjak, kozjak, kurja peč* etc. belong here. In the fifth category we find names referring to plants and trees, e.g., *brezje, ajdovice, kladje, lešje, mah, mladje*, etc.; and in the sixth, field-names derived from first and last personal names, such as *Barbara, Božičeve kere, Janezov travnik*, etc..

Chapter 8 (98-110) deals with the names of homesteads. For this purpose Karničar uses the church register of the parish of St. Johann in Obirsko from 1825. The standardized names are listed in alphabetical order, e.g., *Bistričnik, Brumnik, Furjan, Gradišnik, Grintovčnik*, etc.; the 57 names are explained with reference to the topography of Obirsko.

The most voluminous part of the book is Part III, "Man, his environment, and relationships with neighboring villages, in the mirror of language." This chapter is divided into two parts. The first, chapter 9, deals with lexicon (111-276); this chapter is most precious for the Slavist and the dialectologist; the material is also easily accessible since the entries are listed in standardized form and in alphabetical order. In the entries one finds the dialect forms, their origins, and their German translations. In many cases examples of their usage are added (these are however not translated); and sometimes the reader will find ethnological comments (see *baba, gonitev, križevnik, žgajnarji*, and others). The most interesting conclusion, looking at the vocabulary as a whole, is that—as the author himself puts it—"the dialect abounds in expressive synonyms" (113). According to Karničar the majority of lexical entries cannot be found in Pleteršnik's dictionary of 1894. Many of the lexical entries cannot be found in the Prunč-Hafner *Thesaurus* either, and are here placed on record by Karničar for the first time. Examples: *acatar, ajati, almožen, aškerica, babela, bahač, bajsrati, bakance, bališ, ta bela, belica, belina, belka, betva, bezen, bezgovljica, bezovec, bikač, binglje, blazinka, bliska, boklar, boklati, branjak, brecelj, bregaziti, brežina, brkati, brlacija, brljica, brsale, brsara, brsati, bubati, caklja, cambuh, capinovec, cimraka, coklanica, čemeren, čmerika, črbeževati, črnoba, čuk, čveter, decara*, and some others. At the end of the chapter, a glossary of bee-keeping is added (273-76).

In chapter 10 the author quotes Obirsko terms for inhabitants of neighboring villages and regions, and their attributes.

In Part IV, "Texts" (293-367), are presented forty texts, most of them transcribed in the Obirsko dialect. They show how the phonetic, phonological and grammatical systems, which are described earlier, work. The texts are divided into eight chapters: 12, adventures and experiences; 13, memoirs; 14, oral traditions; 15, nursery rhymes; 16, songs; 17, parodies of prayers; 18, prayers; and 19, incantations. These texts are provided with commentaries, but are not translated. Unfortunately, I could not understand everything; and I doubt that even native speakers of Slovene will be able to understand everything, in spite of the word index (373-420)—because only standard forms are listed there. Readers have therefore first to transform words they do not understand into Standard Slovene, and only then can they look them up in the dictionary. The index may, on the other hand, be very useful for searching for dialect equivalents of standard words.

In spite of some shortcomings, which are especially noticeable in Part I, Karničar's book is not only an enlargement of our knowledge of Slovene and Slavic dialectology, but also an enrichment of Slovene and Slavic lexicography, since many lexical items are noted by

the author for the first time. Among all the monographs and papers dealing with the Slovene dialects of Carinthia, Karničar's description of the Obirsko dialect is not only the most extensive, but also the most original.

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NOTE

1. Titles of sections, chapters, etc. are here all translated into English.

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Abbreviation: ÖAW = Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.

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Heinz-Dieter Pohl, *Kleine Kärntner Mundartkunde mit Wörterbuch*. Klagenfurt: Heyn, 1989. 174 pages; maps, tables. ISBN 3-85366-545-4.

Heinz-Dieter Pohl's *Concise Carinthian Dialect Study with Dictionary* is of interest to scholars concerned with the Slovene language for three reasons. First, the historical development of Slovene (as spoken in most of the Slovene lands) has necessarily, because of the political and social circumstances, been a history involving contact with, influence from and reaction to varieties of Germanic, and especially the Bavarian dialects which have Kärntnerisch (Carinthian German) as one of their modern offshoots: the better we know how these dialects' history and structure, the better we can assess the contact, the influence and the reaction. More important, second, linguists working in Carinthia must necessarily face the complex results of the much more extreme forms of this linguistic contact that have been imposed, especially in recent times, on the Slovene dialects there, and for this an understanding of Kärntnerisch is essential; and the literature on this dialect has not been extensive, and additions to it are welcome. Third, there are two sections in the book of direct relevance to Slovene linguistics. This review will discuss those sections only.

In section 1.4 (pp. 16-22), "Exkurs: Zum Kärntner Slowenischen," Pohl treats three aspects of Carinthian Slovene.

First, he discusses the territorial extent of Slovene, both in former times and today, and describes the extent to which German has replaced Slovene in the province. His presentation is clear, his data well-chosen, his map of the historical extent of Slovene striking (if