



## BARR, KAJ

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**BARR, KAJ**, Danish orientalist (b. 26 June 1896 in Copenhagen, d. 4 January 1970). Kaj Barr began his studies at the Technical High School of Denmark in 1914, but gradually turned to foreign languages. In order to study the history of the natural sciences and mathematics, he taught himself Greek and Latin, but also interested himself in Oriental languages, especially Arabic, and linguistics. In 1917 he passed the entrance examinations to the University of Copenhagen and obtained his M.A. in classical languages in 1925. He earned a living as an assistant on the new edition of Hesych being prepared at the Royal Danish Academy, while concentrating more and more on the study of Iranian philology. His teachers were Arthur Christensen in Copenhagen and [C. F. Andreas](#) in Göttingen. In 1935 he was appointed lecturer (associate professor) of classical philology and in 1945 professor of Iranian philology at the University of Copenhagen as the successor of A. Christensen. The same year he became a member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.

By that time Barr was already recognized as one of the leading Iranian scholars in Europe, and in 1933 he undertook the publication of an edition of the fragments of a Pahlavi Psalter discovered at Turfan from F. C. Andreas's papers (see [ANDREAS iii](#)). The published edition is in every respect exemplary and bears the stamp of Barr's original contribution in the glossary with its detailed commentary (F. C. Andreas and Kaj Barr, *Bruchstücke einer Pehlevi-Übersetzung der Psalmen*, SPAW, 1933, pp. 91-152).

He then collaborated with A. Christensen and W. B. Henning to publish Andreas's notes on Iranian dialects. Barr's responsibility was the editing of the



notes on a series of Kurdish dialects (from Garrūs, Senna, Kermānšāh, Korūn, and Kalūn-Abdū). To this part of the book Barr contributed important independent research, notably on the development of intervocalic *m* to *w* in Kurdish dialects, the Iranian passive construction of the past tenses (on which see also his important remarks in *Lingvistikredsen i København's Aarsberetning for 1934*, pp. 13-14, where he emphasized the importance of the opposition “intransitive: transitive” in the verbal systems of Iranian languages) and the plural suffix *-gāl*. The book was published in 1939 (A. Christensen, K. Barr, and W. B. Henning, *Iranische Dialektaufzeichnungen aus dem Nachlass von C. F. Andreas*, Abh. der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil-hist. Kl., 3rd ser., 11, Berlin, 1939).

In 1936 Barr published a manuscript fragment from Turfan containing a Pahlavi glossary, which is important for the understanding of the graphic development of the so-called phonetic complements of Aramaic heterograms in Book Pahlavi (“Remarks on the Pahlavi Ligatures [x<sub>1</sub>] and [x<sub>2</sub>],” *BSOAS* 8, 1936, pp. 391-403). From 1937 he edited vols. VII-XII of the *Codices Avestici et Pahlavici Bibliothecae Universitatis Hafniensis*. In 1943 he published his “Bidrag til sigøjnerdialekternes grammatik” (Contributions to the grammar of Gypsy dialects, in *In Memoriam Kr. Sandfeld*, Copenhagen, 1943, pp. 31-46), which discusses the conjunction *te* in Gypsy dialects and its possible connection with Sogdian *ʿty* and *-ty* “and” and Iranian elements in the Nūrī dialect.

In 1945 Barr left the exclusively linguistic field, turning to the history of Iranian religion. One of his objectives was to determine the exact import and contents of such Zoroastrian terms and concepts as *aša* (“Principia Zarathustriaca,” in *Øst og Vest, Afhandlinger tilegnede Professor Dr. Phil. Arthur Christensen*, Copenhagen, 1945, pp. 130-39) and *drəgu-*, *driyu-* (in *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen Dicata*, Copenhagen, 1953, pp. 21-40). He also discussed the presence of the three divine gifts *xvarr*, *fravahr*, and *tan gōhr* in Zarathustra (in *Festskrift til L. L. Hammerich*, Copenhagen, 1952, pp. 26-36), influenced by Dumézil’s tripartition thesis.

His excellent translation of parts of the Avesta for the Danish series of *Verdensreligionernes Hovedværker* (The chief works of the world’s religions): *Avesta*, Copenhagen, 1954), being in Danish, unfortunately remains inaccessible to most students of the Avesta. Here and in the introduction to his unfinished contribution on Zoroastrianism (“Zarathustrismen I”) for the Danish *Illustreret Religionshistorie*, Barr summed up his views on the history and nature of Zoroastrianism (*Illustrated History of Religions*, ed. J. P.



Asmussen and J. Laessøe, vol. 2, Copenhagen, 1968, pp. 233-77; Germ. tr., “Die Religion der alten Iranier,” in *Handbuch der Religionsgeschichte II*, ed. idem with C. Colpe, Göttingen, 1972, pp. 265-318).

From 1964 Barr was president of the Union Internationale des Orientalistes, and in 1969 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Copenhagen.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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