



REDARD, GEORGES

REDARD, GEORGES (b. 1922 in Neuchâtel, d. 2005 in Kirchlindach), Swiss scholar of comparative grammar of the Indo-European languages and Iranian dialectology.

Georges Redard was born in Switzerland, close to the French border. He studied classics at Neuchâtel University, where he also studied Russian, Lithuanian, Sanskrit, and Persian. He was a pupil of Max Niedermann, who guided his doctoral research on Greek morphology. At the age of 20, Redard had already demonstrated the main trends of what would be his scholarly life: a great expertise in both German-language and French-language scientific methods, a major interest for comparative grammar and specially Ancient Greek, and an evident liking for Modern Persian. In 1944-48 he studied the same subjects in Paris with great scholars whom he greatly respected until the end of his life. He always pronounced with veneration the names of these masters, among them G. Dumézil, E. Benveniste, and H. Massé, under whose supervision he completed his knowledge of Persian language and literature.

Back in Neuchâtel, in 1948 he defended his dissertation, published as *Les noms grecs en -της, -τις* (Paris, 1949). He became Professor of general linguistics (that is, comparative grammar of the Indo-European languages) at Neuchâtel University in 1951, and in 1954 he was given A. Debrunner's chair at Bern University. He soon became burdened with honors and duties, including Bern University's Rector (1971-72) and President of the Société suisse de Linguistique (1953-57). He taught at Teheran University in 1951-52, at UCLA in 1966, and at the Collège de France in 1986. He was editor of several journals



and series, including *Kratylos* (1956-72), *Iranische Texte* (Wiesbaden, 1962-94), *Beiträge zur Iranistik* (Wiesbaden, 1962-64), and several festschrifts of his teachers and friends (A. Debrunner, M. Niedermann, G. Morgenstierne, etc.).

Many of his papers and books are devoted to comparative grammar (Ancient Latin and Greek, Swiss-French dialectology), but his main interest was Iranian dialectology. Following the steps of eminent Swiss (J. Jud, K. Jaberg, R. Hotzenköcherle) and French (E. Benveniste, J. Bloch) linguists, he launched in 1957 the project of a Linguistic Atlas of Iran, which failed for political reasons; he completed no more than 43 questionnaires. Assisted by ‘Abd-al-Ġafur Farhādi (a Persian-language linguist, former student of E. Benveniste, and at that time a very influential official in Kabul), he shifted to Afghanistan and started in 1962 both to set up an Afghan Institute of Linguistics for training Afghan linguists, with scholars such as N. A. Shaker, M. A. Zyar, and A. R. Palwal, and to fill in, in well chosen localities, linguistic questionnaires which he himself had devised. There were 1,887 items in the long questionnaire, 568 in the short one, bearing on words, morphology, syntax, as well as ethnography. Many drawings and pictures were made on the spot, for instance, to show the shape of utensils or tools whose name was given by the informant. A total of 269 questionnaires were filled in.

In the last years of his life, being helped by Ch.-M. Kieffer and S. Sana, Redard, was busy making linguistic maps from these varied and often difficult materials. Burdened by his many duties and hindered by bad health, he could only publish a sample of them as “L’Atlas de l’Afghanistan: État des travaux et publications” (in *Arbeitspapier des Instituts für Sprachwissenschaft* 13, Bern, 1974, pp. 1-50, maps and drawings).

A copy of the questionnaires was stored at the Afghan Institute of Linguistics, Kabul. The originals are in Bern University’s Institute of Linguistics, where they wait to be studied and published by a team of scholars. They give a very good picture, and are now the only witness, of the linguistic diversity of Afghanistan in the 1960s, when many languages and dialects were still extant, some spoken only by a few. Some of the photographs taken by Redard and his team are also preserved at the Institute of Indian Studies at the Collège de France in Paris, and they available to any interested scholar.



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