

Newman, Paul. 2022. *Comprehensive Bibliography of Chadic and Hausa Linguistics*. 5th ed. Bloomington: IUScholarWorks. IV, 274 pp. DOI 10.5967/5q3g-t220.

Chadicists and others must thank the author for having ventured into this new effort to offer scholars a useful online tool which is now in its fifth edition. Since the first paper (Newman 1996), this bibliographic work has been an indispensable tool for professional Africanist scholars. I had already reviewed the first edition (Baldi 1997) and limit myself here to making some personal observations without any intention of criticising the enormous effort that the author has undertaken for years. *Absit iniuria verbis*, as the Romans used to say! Having been the first, as reported by the author, to prepare an extensive bibliography of the Hausa language in the form of a Master of Arts thesis, presented at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh in 1975 (Baldi 1975), I know very well how onerous it is to prepare such a work. Even today, the tools at our disposal, particularly the Internet, can make things more complex despite their greater convenience.

Compiling a bibliography means rendering a useful service which is indispensable to scholars, unfortunately though, it is also an easy subject of criticism for possible errors, omissions, or other mistakes. All of this is in its nature, and, in this short review of the work, I would like to discuss some points that I consider important for the future.

In primis, the various editions, published over time, have gradually become increasingly substantial due to the inclusion of information that had not been present in previous editions, such as the 'Book Review Author Index', a section which appeared in the third edition. This latest edition is also made even more captivating because of its graphics, thanks to the work of Newman's wife, Roxana Ma, who improved the cover.

The information provided in this work is manifold: publications, alphabetically ordered by author, a list of reviews received by various authors and finally a list of obituaries of various scholars, published by distinguished colleagues.

A new addition in this latest version is the inclusion of some theses, written in Nigeria, but which are unknown to most scholars: '[a]mong the theses are



quite a number presented at different universities in Nigeria, particularly Bayero University, Kano', on which I had the opportunity of advising the author by sending him a couple of files of Nigerian theses which I had received from Professor Hafizu Miko Yakasai on my trip to Kano. In fact, it is a real shame and a loss that these theses by Nigerian students—and not only those—are often completely unknown outside the local context, since they often contain first-hand information useful to international scholars. I had occasion sometimes to use them in my work on Arabic loans, thanks to some sent to me by the late Professor Conrad Max Benedict Brann.

In this regard, I hope that those in Nigerian universities who are reading these brief considerations of mine will be encouraged to disseminate the works written in their universities and can put them online, as is the case for most European and American universities.

The interest in the theses, however, should be all-round, including, systematically, also those discussed in European and American universities and available in the various repositories; to cite an example, one that is omitted in the current bibliography is Moore (1968).

Another aspect that should not be underestimated concerns online journals, which publish many articles, and which cannot be ignored in a bibliography, see Sambo (2016), which is not reported.

Another source to consult is undoubtedly the 'Index Islamicus', which often contains linguistic material not present in other resources.

A phrase that struck me in the introduction about obituaries (p. ii): 'A project for the future could be to expand the number and scope of these entries, ideally with the addition of photographs', which I fully agree with, thus making better use of the medium by inserting the photograph where possible next to the work cited in the bibliography. Where present the Internet link might also be inserted! It might sound like science fiction, but the achievements of recent years do not place limits on our imagination.

A final suggestion concerns my personal conception of a bibliography of such importance, *apertis verbis*, which should meet all the expectations of the scientific world. When I prepared my master's thesis I spent sleepless hours, fortunately during the exam period, in most of the libraries of American universities, which can also be used at night. I classified the material I consulted according to a certain thematic order which I had learned from an exceptional Swahili bibliography by Professor Alberto Mioni (1967). The alphabetical order of the authors often makes it impossible to find the material one is looking for.

Firstly, a bibliography should be a useful and practical instrument for all users: if all works are listed in alphabetical order according to author's names, a quick overview of special topics becomes difficult—why was a section not provided with a subject index of topics at the end (such as dialectology, grammars, orthography, phonology, proverbs, etc.)?

Going through this bibliography I realised that the work was essentially on Hausa and Chadic. But what is published in Hausa and Chadic, unless there are journals or proceedings of congresses, do not seem to be included (I may, though, not have understood the criteria adopted) as I wrote in my previous review (Baldi 1997). Sorry, but *repetita iuvant!* In fact, the author quotes, for example, Yusufu Yunusa, ‘Yanayin yaduwar Hausa a duniya’ (1993), but not his *Hausa a dunkule* (1977); Charles Whitting, *Hausa-English Sentences* (1929), but not *Hausa and Fulani Proverbs* (1940). For A. H. M. Kirk-Greene many of his works are mentioned, but not *Hausa ba dabo ba ne: A Collection of 500 Proverbs* (1966). The suspicion may arise that the author has a particular attitude towards proverbs!

Ending these brief considerations on the bibliography, I would like to stress once again the utility, the complexity and the carefulness of this work. I hope that someone might take over the responsibilities of keeping on with an up-to-date bibliography of Hausa linguistic and literary material including Chadic as a whole.

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