IN MEMORIAM: VICTOR PORKHOMOVSKY (1945–2022)

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It is with great sorrow, we learned that Victor Porkhomovsky passed away on October 10, 2022 at the age of 77. Victor was one of worldwide known leading scholars of African and Oriental philology and linguistics. Moreover, in his generation of Soviet / Russian scholars working in this field he was perhaps the one most integrated into international science and had great authority in this field. His research interests were exceptionally varied, and he has contributed significantly in particular to such areas as sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, Chadic, Semitic and Afroasiatic studies, ethnolinguistics, and also medieval studies

Having finished a francophone school in Moscow (his French has always been brilliant!), Victor became a student of the first Hausa group in the Institute of Oriental Languages (nowadays Institute of Asian and African Studies) at Moscow State University. His lecturer in Hausa was Yury Shcheglov, later known as a specialist in Russian literature and culture. Victor graduated from Moscow University in 1968 and became a doctoral student at the Institute of Linguistics, Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union (nowadays Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences). His research supervisor was a prominent historical linguist Aharon Dolgopolsky. At the same time, Victor was greatly influenced by the famous historian and linguist focused in Oriental studies Igor M. Diakonoff. One more linguist that Victor always named as his teacher was a prominent Indo-Europeanist Enver Makaev.

Both the Institute of Linguistics RAS and the Institute of Asian and African Studies MSU were the institutions Victor Porkhomovsky was related to in the course of his professional life. He became a junior research fellow of the Department of African languages of the Institute of Linguistics in 1971 and was affiliated with the same department until his last day, having been promoted to further ranks of Russian academic hierarchy. At the same time, he was a part-time professor of the Chair of African Studies at the Institute of Asian and African Studies for dozens of years.

Afroasiatic historical linguistics was the first field of Victor Porkhomovsky's work. First he focused on the Kotoko languages and conducted the first historical study of this underinvestigated group of Chadic languages. This study was published as a short monograph (Porkhomovsky 1972) and defended as Victor's doctoral dissertation ("candidate dissertation" in Soviet / Russian system) (Porkhomovsky 1973). Later he worked and played a very significant role in a collective project led by Diakonoff aimed at compiling an etymological dictionary of Afroasiatic languages, which was presented in a series of publications (Diakonoff & Porkhomovsky 1979; Belova et al. 1981; 1982; 1986; Diakonoff et al. 1987; Diakonoff et al. 1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1995a; 1995b; 1997). Having conducted fieldwork on Soqotri, a relict South

Arabian Semitic language, Porkhomovsky introduced its data into the context of Semitic historical studies, and this brought significant change to the modern views on the Semitic language family history. While Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic, being languages with a long written tradition, had influenced Semitic tradition a lot, Porkhomovsky (1997; 2000; 2001) has shown that Soqotri, being isolated from contact influence, retained the most archaic Semitic features, in particular in its verbal system. Later Victor focused on the reconstruction of Semitic verbal system as a whole and developed its four-stage evolution model (Porkhomovsky 2003; 2008; 2018a). He also conducted a case study of Arabic as a Semitic language in the context of this model (Porkhomovsky 2016a), as well as showed Hausa parallels to the Semitic verbal system in the Afroasiatic context (Porkhomovsky 2016b). Issues in Afroasiatic historical linguistics were discussed in Porkhomovsky's habilitation thesis (1993; "doctoral dissertation" in Russian system), and his expertise in this field led him to be invited to overview Afroasiatic and Ethio-semitic language families in the "Oxford Handbook of African languages" (Porkhomovsky 2020a; 2020b). At the same time, Victor developed methodological issues related to African historical linguistics, dealing with many hundreds of unwritten and underdocumented languages (in particular, Porkhomovsky 1982; 1989; 2014; 2018b).

While Porkhomovsky's work on Soqotri has influenced Semitic and Afroasiatic studies, his main interest in his work on this language was documenting and analyzing its ethnolinguistic side. Being isolated for long, speakers of Soqotri not only kept an archaic linguistic system, but also retained their archaic culture, which is much more ephemeral than the language, and which is reflected in Soqotri lexicon and folklore texts. While the documentary part of this research appeared as (Naumkin & Porkhomovsky 1981; 1997), more publications provided ethnolinguistic analysis of Soqotri folklore (in particular, Naumkin & Porkhomovsky 1995; 2003; 2016).

Comparing unwritten and long-time written Afroasiatic languages from both cultural and linguistic points of view led Victor to gain broader interest in formation and development of written traditions, as well as in differences between oral and written speech. He analyzed these phenomena based on a single language (see, for instance, Porkhomovsky & Suetina 1999), in a wide perspective of African languages (in particular Porkhomovsky 2015; 2017a) and in general (Porkhomovsky 2017b). The publication (Porkhomovsky 2016c) is worth a special mention, as it is based on Victor's honorable invited lecture in Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in France. In this lecture, he combined a synchronic and a diachronic perspective.

At the same time, having started his ethnolinguistic studies with Soqotri, Porkhomovsky continued researching a broader perspective of ethnolinguistic issues of Afroasiatic languages. His favorite topic was analyzing systems of kinship terms. He analyzed them in a general Afroasiatic perspective (Ibriszimow & Porkhomovsky 2001; 2005a; 2005b; 2006; Ibriszimow et al. 2009), but also conducted case studies of Soqotri (Naumkin & Porkhomovsky 2004) and Somali (Kapchits & Porkhomovsky 2008).

For several decades, Porkhomovsky has also been dealing with sociolinguistic issues. He described the sociolinguistic situation in Nigeria (Porkhomovsky 1977; Herms & Porkhomovsky 1982) focusing more precisely on sociolinguistic perspective of Hausa (in particular, Porkhomovsky & Suetina 2001), as well as conducted comparative sociolinguistic research (Porkhomovsky 1994). But the most influential outcome in this domain is a typology of West African sociolinguistic situations, which resulted from Victor's joint research project with Viktor Vinogradov and Antonina Koval. This study was summarized in a long book chapter (Koval et al. 1982) and in a monograph (Vinogradov et al. 1984); the latter was reprinted several times and is widely cited.

Finally, during his recent years, Victor became interested in philological and linguistic issues of Bible translations in collaboration with a prominent Semitologist Philippe Cassuto. Having started this work with comparing existing versions of Bible translations into Hausa and thus having combined his expertise in Chadic and in Semitic (Cassuto & Porkhomovsky 2009; 2014; 2019a; 2019b), Porkhomovsky proposed a typology of translation strategies for canonic texts and applied it to Bantu (Cassuto et al. 2020; Porkhomovsky & Ryabova 2020), as well as to Romance languages (Porkhomovsky & Chelysheva 2019; Porkhomovsky & Romanova 2021) and the earliest Bible translations (Vdovichenko et al. 2021).

In fact, Victor Porkhomovsky authored hundreds of publications, so it would not be possible even to mention them all here; his selected works were reprinted in a two-volume collection (Porkhomovsky 2018c). Moreover, research is not at all the only thing Victor did. As mentioned, he also was a university professor, and his manner of teaching was brilliant. Besides Moscow State University, where he had a long-term part-time employment, Porkhomovsky taught a number of invited courses in universities of France, Germany and Italy. He edited numerous publication volumes and was an editorial board member of several journals (including "Language in Africa"). He supervised several doctoral dissertations and numerous Master projects. Apart from his own research papers, he published several dozens of articles in encyclopedias. Together with a prominent Celtologist Andrey Korolev, he translated into English the fundamental book by Diakonoff (1988). At the same time, he translated various kinds of literature from French into Russian (and for many years, he used to be a simultaneous interpreter from French as a side-job).

While Victor's research interests were significantly different from those of his close colleagues (more historical linguistics than synchronic studies; more philological than purely linguistic; finally, Afroasiatic, not Niger-Congo), he always exercised much influence on all those who had a privilege to communicate with him. Both his deep and expansive knowledge in humanities and his bright personality fascinated everyone who knew him. One can hardly find a better connoisseur of European art and museums. Being maybe the most Westernized and internationally oriented person in his generation of Russian linguists and Africanists, he permanently taught us European style and European culture. He has always been the soul of any informal company of colleagues and a brilliant

story-teller. His favorite expression was *joie de vivre*, and indeed, he really enjoyed his life and encouraged everyone to do so.

Victor is survived by his mother, his brother, his son and three grandchildren. We deeply condole with his family. We will miss him a lot.

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