

JADWIGA PSTRUSIŃSKA, *Old Celtic Cultures from the Hindukush Perspective*. Kraków: "Universitas" Publishers, 1999. 194 p.

The author of the book studied Iranian languages at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (Kraków) and spent several years in Asia, mainly in Afghanistan (1973–76), specializing in sociolinguistics and the cultures of the Hindukush region. Later on she spent four years (1985–89) at Oxford where she continued her research. Now Ms Jadwiga Pstrusińska works at the Iranian Department of her native Jagiellonian University (as does the author of the present review).

The aim of the book, as the author states in the foreword, is to give evidence to the premise "that in the formation of Old Celtic cultures ... a crucial role was played by so-called Iranian (in the broadest meaning of this word) people ... the relatives and descendants of whom abide at present mainly in the Hindukush region and related areas, including Pamir and Nuristan" (p. 11, cf. also p. 24, *passim*). This book does not appear to have undergone any preliminary review.

The book consists of four chapters. The title of the first ("Why the Celto-Asiatic Seminar? Celtic versus Indo-Iranian", pages 15–33) hints at the seminar held by the author at her native University in Cracow for the last five years. This chapter has an introductory character.

Then follow "Ethno-Historical Considerations" (pp. 35–78) and the chapter entitled "Pre-Islamic Cultures of the Hindukush Region as a Source of Parallel Data for Old Celtic Studies" (pp. 79–95). The last and the longest (pp. 97–164) chapter touches "On Some Ethnic and Geographical Names". Its subdivision will be presented later.

The bibliography (p. 167–194) is impressive. It contains more than 500 (!) titles in several languages. Two authors, E. J. W. Barber (quoted on p. 64) and J. Pokorný (p. 145), are not included in that list.

The book represents an interdisciplinary approach which is probably the only possible and right way to make real progress in certain areas of human knowledge. The author has made use of data from such academic subjects as: "first of all archaeology, history, linguistics and last but not least molecular genetics" (p. 35) which may throw new light on some difficult problems unsolved to date.

However, in taking up interdisciplinary studies one cannot be too careful as regards various details of the subjects one does not master perfectly. It is sometimes difficult to evaluate facts of another branch: are they really sensational or rather banal? Similarities between elements of cultures remote in time and space may have a universal character (e.g. some fabulous plots known all over the world as universal metaphors). They not always testify to the material identity or influence of one culture upon another.

The author made strenuous efforts to gather rich material and I pay tribute to her for that arduous work. She has honestly presented a wide range of various opinions, sometimes contradictory and not always confirming her own views. She has reached some sources difficult to obtain