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A Grammar and Dictionary of Indus Kohistani. Vol. I. Dictionary.

by Zoller, Claus Peter

Trends in Linguistics. Documentation 21-1.

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Reviewed by Elena Bashir

Indus Kohistani is spoken by about 220,000 people, who live mainly in District Kohistan of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, along the west bank of the Indus and its side valleys. This is an area very difficult to access and to work in, and the field research and analysis represented in this dictionary is an immense contribution to Indo-Aryan historical, areal and typological linguistics. The dictionary (Vol. I of a projected two-volume publication) contains, in addition to approximately 8000 lemmata, a valuable introduction (20 pp.) and a discussion of the pitch accent system of Kohistani Shina. All this material is new, and represents important steps forward not only in documenting and understanding Indus Kohistani but also its relationships with neighboring languages. Since areal interactions among the numerous languages of northern Pakistan are so multilateral and pervasive, this sort of research is essential for piecing together a picture of the historical and linguistic development of the region.

Chapter 1, the introduction, contains several sections: (i) various names for Indus Kohistani found in the literature and used by various groups of speakers; (ii) the term "Dardic"; (iii) the dialects of Indus Kohistani; (iv) a review of previous research on the language; (v) a description of the author's research methodology; (vi) the linguistic environment and neighbors of Indus Kohistani; (vii) "a diachronical sketch"; (viii) "a diatopical sketch"; (ix) the relationship between Dardic and Nuristani; (x) borrowings and substrata; (xi) place names. The content is dense, and the conclusions pointed, in some cases introducing new opinions on previously discussed issues.

Section 1.3 begins by introducing two main dialects (Duber and Khandia Valley; and Indus Valley), (p. 3) whose distinguishing feature is the different development of the Old Indo-Aryan affricates. Zoller gives the example of Vedic *catúraḥ* 'four', which has the reflexes *čōr* (palatal affricate) in the Duber/Khandia Valley, and *čλr* (dental affricate) in the Indus Valley. However, the terms and abbreviations for local speech varieties identified in the dictionary are Jijālī (J), Gabār (=Gowro) (G), Šaṭoṭī (Š), and Bhaṭīse (= Baṭera) (B), and it is not immediately clear to the reader how these local terms correlate with the two main dialects mentioned at the beginning of this section.

In section 1.7, "A Diachronical Sketch", Zoller states (p. 10) that the Dardic languages "are the modern successors of Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA) Gāndhārī and other unknown MIA languages more or less closely related with Gāndhārī." This statement carries an assumption of a unitary Gāndhārī language and introduces what may be Zoller's most controversial assertion. Zoller appears to disagree with Morgenstierne's well-known statement (1961: 139) about the

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Dardic languages that: "The [Dardic] languages... contain absolutely no features which cannot be derived from Old IA. They have simply retained a number of striking archaisms, which had already disappeared in most Prākṛit dialects.... There is not a single common feature distinguishing Dardic, as a whole, from the rest of the Indo-Aryan languages... Dardic is simply a convenient cover term to denote a bundle of aberrant Indo-Aryan hill languages, which in their relative isolation ... have been in a varying degree sheltered against the expanding influences of IA Midland (Madhyadesha) innovations, being left free to develop on their own." Strand (2001:251) goes further, calling the designation "Dardic" "a linguistically baseless classification that should be discarded." When Zoller says that "the common feature distinguishing the Dardic languages from the other New Indo Aryan (NIA) languages is the preservation of the three OIA sibilants, *s*, *ś*, and *ṣ*" (p. 10), he appears to be arguing for the existence of a distinct Dardic subgroup based on the presence of shared archaisms rather than the shared innovations which are usually agreed to be diagnostic for subgrouping. This is problematic. In order for a subgroup to be definitively established, its putative members must share a period of common development independent of the rest of the family, i.e. must share an innovation (analogous to a copying error in textual history studies or a biological mutation). Hock (1986: 579) states this principle as follows: "... only common innovations are indicative of such a special relationship. Common archaisms (or inheritances) can be found between any two members of a larger language family." Shared retentions are not incompatible with subgrouping, but they can also result from the kind of intense sub-areal interactions which Zoller himself discusses. It may be that Zoller has further reasons for positing Dardic as a unitary subgroup; if so, scholars of these languages look forward to hearing them.

Regarding the relationship between Dardic and Nuristani, Zoller re-affirms the position articulated by Morgenstierne (e.g. 1961) that Nuristani is a separate branch of Indo-Iranian. He summarizes his argument as follows (p. 15): "[Nuristani] differs from both [Iranian and Indic] in its treatment of PIE **k'* and of the PIE **ks*, *k's* and related clusters, in the way of how it lost aspiration, and in a probably particular way of treatment of PIE *ǵ*, *ǵh*, *ǵw*, *ǵwh*."

Zoller applies Dixon's (1997) punctuated equilibrium model, which integrates the family tree and the linguistic area (wave) models, to the history of the Dardic languages. In this model, languages undergo periods of rapid divergence and differentiation ("punctuation") followed by periods of equilibrium during which areal interactions between the previously differentiated languages introduce a new layer of similarities among them. Zoller's thesis is that the Dardic languages have diversified (split) under conditions of maintaining geographic contiguity, and offers the large numbers of lexical items shared between Indus Kohistani and Burushaski (pp. 16-17), for example, as one piece of evidence that speakers of Indus Kohistani "must have had knowledge also in the more distant past about the Northern Areas" (p. 11).

In his "diatopical analysis" (section 1.8), Zoller presents a description of the spatial distribution of the areal changes that continue to diffuse in the region. According to this analysis, linguistic traits in the Dardic region are distributed as follows (p. 12): (1) language boundaries and isoglosses are frequently different; (2) within Dardic, central (progressive) and a peripheral (conservative) areas can be distinguished. He bases this argument on the distribution of aspirated stops, vowel palatalization, and two different vigesimal systems. He envisages a three-dimensional sort of dialect space, with a peak of innovation in the Dir and Kalam Kohistani area,

and gradients of decreasing innovation/increasing conservatism sloping both eastward and westward from this peak. Based on this, he postulates a "fairly early separation of the Proto-Kohistani languages from the other Proto-Dardic languages" (p. 13).

A substantial section (1.10) discusses borrowings, shared vocabulary and substrata. About two-thirds of Indus Kohistani's inherited vocabulary is shared with Kalam Kohistani and one-third with Shina. Today, about 15% of the vocabulary is of Perso-Arabic origin, largely shared with Pashto. Also, approximately 10% of the vocabulary is shared with Burushaski. Zoller devotes considerable discussion to Tikkanen's (1988) treatment of (possible) substratal influences in the languages of this area, particularly his discussion of the possibility of an Austroasiatic substratum.

Chapter 2, besides describing the structure and organization of the dictionary, contains entirely new material and analysis of the phonology of Indus Kohistani, in which comparison is made with the pitch accent system of Shina (see Radloff 1999) and the tonal systems of other north Pakistan languages (see Baart 2003, 2004). Zoller finds that Indus Kohistani has a pitch accent system with two pitch accents—one rising and one falling—whereas Kalam Kohistani has a tonal system with five tones (Baart 2003, 2004). Zoller's choice of notation, which is different from that used by Berger and Buddruss for Burushaski and Radloff and Schmidt for Shina, is based on this analysis. Zoller uses the acute accent <^> to mark rising pitch accent and the grave accent <`> to mark the falling pitch accent (p. 26). A new feature of this work is that (p. 22) the analysis of the pitch accent (tonal) system has been made with the aid of speech analysis software. Unfortunately I have not been able to locate the name of the speech analyzer used. Hopefully, further details on this will appear in the projected grammar.

Sections 2.1 (Introductory remarks) and 2.4 (Further technical details) discuss the structure of the dictionary entries, and will require close reading for optimal use of the dictionary. Mainly for reasons of space, the notation is very dense, with maximal elimination of redundancy. Section 2.5 on the verbal paradigms explains the treatment of the various (essential) forms of verbs. Complete lists of finite and non-finite forms of the verbs occurring in the first third of the dictionary are given, thereafter only irregular forms or those deemed necessary. Present tense forms are always given since the occurrence of rising or falling pitch is not predictable. Similarly, aorist forms are consistently given since they are not always predictable from the present tense form.

Some comment on Zoller's terminology for the grammatical categories of the verb is in order. First, his use of the term "mood" is highly idiosyncratic. Under this category, he includes "habilitative", "transitive", "causative", and "passive". "Habilitative" seems to suggest a category often called "habitual", since "[these forms] basically express a typical habit of the subject, although this meaning tends to fade away now." (p. 32) However, Zoller's explanation that these verbs are contracted forms of old conjunct verbs consisting of an adjective and the verbalizer (light verb) *ho-* 'be' suggests that perhaps "intransitive" might better describe the category. If this is the case, then the four categories intransitive, transitive, causative, and passive would seem to be transitivity or valence states. Similarly, the use of the term "aorist" in the names for forms including "aorist habitual" and "aorist transitive" may be problematic for some readers. In the example paradigm for the verb *bicháṽ* v.t. 'to weave (cloth); to pull (newly sheared or old) wool flocks apart' (p. 31), the form *sūḥ bichōl* or *bicháṽ* is labelled "Aorist habitual masculine" and

glossed as 'he wove (s.th.)'. *sūḥ bīḥōēl'* is labelled "Aorist habitual feminine" and glossed as 'she wove (s.th.)'. A third form *sāỹ bīḥē* or *bīḥil'* is labelled "Aorist transitive" and glossed 'he wove (s.th.)'. In his list of abbreviations, "aor." is listed as abbreviating "aorist tense". From this it appears that Zoller is using "aorist" in a way synonymous with "preterite" or "past", as in Trask's sense (1) below. I make this comment because of the multiple meanings in which the term "aorist" has been used. To illustrate, Trask (1993:17) has the following entry for "aorist".

"1. A verb form marked for past tense but unmarked for aspect. 2. A verb form marked for both past tense and perfective aspect. 3. A verb form marked for perfective aspect. 4. A conventional label used in a highly variable manner among specialists in particular languages to denote some particular verb form or set of verb forms. For example, Lewis (1967) uses the term to label those Turkish verb forms marked for durative/habitual aspect, while the aorist of Ancient Greek represents a set of morphologically related forms exhibiting complex tense/aspect behaviour. ..."

Since Zoller's terminology, particularly the use of "mood" and "aorist", is unexpected, the reader will have to master it before proceeding. We look forward to further discussion of these categories in the grammar.

As an illustration of his treatment of verbal paradigms (section 2.5), Zoller gives and explicates a sample entry for *bīḥāỹ* (4m) v.t. 'to weave (cloth); to pull (newly sheared or old) wool flocks apart'. However this reader immediately faced a problem in deciding what phonetic value *ỹ* has. The symbol *ỹ* [v with tilde above] is not listed on p. 36 under consonants. At one point on p. 37 there is a note that sometimes a tilde <~> indicating nasalization of a vowel has had to be displaced to the right for typographical reasons, but the example given involved four stacked diacritics and the understandable technical problem, whereas the infinitive forms ending in *-āỹ* involve only two diacritics and would not seem to present this problem. Also, a word containing three stacked diacritics, two of which are the acute accent and the tilde occurs on p. 35, so the reader is left puzzled. One can only guess that the tilde above the <v> is intended to indicate nasalization of the preceding <a> or <ʌ>. Since the infinitive form is so basic, a note about its phonetic realization and its representation would have been most welcome. Hopefully this will be discussed in the grammar.

Lists of symbols and abbreviations for grammatical terms and languages and dialects are provided in Chapter 2, section 10.

Chapter 3 (pp. 45-59) consists of the references and bibliography. Since this work is basically a dictionary, and the matter covered in the introductory chapters is listed in detail in the table of contents, the absence of a subject index should not present a problem.

The dictionary itself is Chapter 4 (pp. 61-416), the main body of the volume. Zoller adopts and argues for (p. 33) the alphabetical order of Sanskrit, with some special discussion of the various short vowels found in Kohistani (detailed on p. 35); also, he places nasalized vowels after rather than before their non-nasalized counterparts. Kohistani words are represented in a roman transcription which "largely corresponds to the conventions found in the works of R.L.

Turner" (p. 35), and attempts to "follow a middle way between the level of phonetic transcription and the abstract systematic levels." (p. 34) The headwords in italic type and are flush with the left-hand margin of the page or column; each entry continues as a slightly indented hanging paragraph. Only entries for basic verbs are in boldface type. The approximately 8000 lemmata are arranged in two columns, with the first and last words of each page appearing as a centered header at the top of the page.

In general, in addition to phonetic representations of the words, essential grammatical information about them is given. For nouns, gender, plural forms, and irregular oblique endings (if present) are provided. For adjectives, both masculine and feminine forms are given. The definitions of spatial adverbs are particularly interesting. They include rich information on parameters which are proving to be grammaticized in many of the Dardic-area languages, and about which information is only slowly becoming systematically available. These parameters include, for example, exact vs. non-exact position, visible vs. non-visible, direction or location downward or upward from speaker, etc.

Cross-references to forms in other Indus Kohistani dialects are given when such information is available. Whenever it is available, etymological information and/or references to related words in neighboring languages are provided. Zoller differentiates historical derivation from OIA (indicated by <) from synchronic derivation/borrowing from another Kohistani dialect or different language (indicated by ←). Many entries, especially of nouns, also contain cultural information relevant to the item.

The dictionary proper is followed by an English-Indus Kohistani index, Chapter 5 (pp. 417-475), which contains approximately 4200 entries. Often single English entries point to more than one Kohistani word, e.g. the entry for 'accusation' gives *ilzâṁ*, *gilâ*, *tân*; or multiple words for the adverb 'there', which vary with the adverbial parameters alluded to above.

Chapter 6 is an Old Indo-Aryan - Indus Kohistani index. This index, in addition to forms from Turner (1966), includes some original OIA reconstructions by the author, indicated by ** preceding the reconstructed form. However, cross-references to Turner (1966), are not given in this index. References to Turner numbers can be accessed in the dictionary proper, but this requires a reader who approaches a word through the OIA-Kohistani index to look back and forth in the volume . For example, the OIA entry for *tr̥syā* 'thirst' with a cross reference to Kohistani *çĩṣĩ* 'thirst' is found on p. 487. We find *çĩṣĩ* on p. 188, along with the Turner reference T5943. Ideally, the Turner reference would also be listed along with the OIA forms in the OIA-Kohistani index.

Appendices giving selected numerals, the days of the week, months of the year, place names and, importantly, place and clan names follow the OIA-Kohistani index. Place and clan names are especially important in reconstructing the cultural history of the immediate and the wider region.

The foregoing comments on terminology and typography apply to the interface between the content and the reader, and should be construed as matters of "user friendliness" rather than as detracting from the immense overall value of the work. This dictionary is an invaluable and indispensable resource for all scholars of Dardic and Nuristani languages as well as Indo-Aryan as a whole. It will become and remain an indispensable reference book for all scholars of the region and research libraries.

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