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Habib Borjian

- The Oldest Known Texts in New Tabari:
The Collection of Aleksander Chodźko153–171

This article transcribes, translates, analyzes, and identifies a set of seventeen poems and songs collected in the 1830s by the pioneering Orientalist and folklorist Aleksander Chodźko, who published the songs using Perso-Arabic characters. The verses are the oldest known documents in the Māzandarāni language, also known as New or Modern Tabari, which has some three million speakers in the Persian province of Māzandarān, located south of the Caspian Sea. The texts were collected from various locations in Māzandarān and hence represent more than one dialect of New Tabari. Linguistic analysis shows that Tabari has not undergone fundamental change in the last two centuries, though certain words and grammatical traits have already ceased to be used in the language. While comparing the texts with other surviving Tabari documents from the 19th Century does yield some answers, a number of questions remain.

J. Duncan M. Derrett

- Two more Homeric Scenes in India173–181

That early Buddhists were acquainted with the Homeric Hymns is vehemently suspected. That Homer's epics were used by them has not been suspected. Buddhists of perhaps the third to fourth centuries clearly used two episodes, the Pyre of Patroclus and Odysseus' Bow. Adaptations and variations lead to a suspicion that the stories, admired by Buddhist authors, were worked over more than once. That the Greek text of the original epics was used at that relatively late period has not been established.

Jaroslav Vacek

- Dravidian and Altaic 'to bow, bend, stoop, incline, curve'183–202

This paper discusses the etymological nest of Dravidian and Altaic lexemes with the meaning "to bow, bend, stoop, incline, curve." The paper is divided into two parts according to the formal structure of the root. The first part deals with etyma, whose roots have initial labial *p-/b-/v-/m-* (variants with initial *n-*!) in the *CVC-* root, medial velar stops, and nasals or nasal-stop groups. The second part adds the *VC-* roots, i.e. those in which the initial labial consonant is missing while the medial is a velar or labial consonant of the same structure (a stop, a nasal, or the respective nasal-stop group). It concludes with a note on the borrowings in IA related to this group of Dravidian lexemes.

Karl-Heinz Best, Jinyang Zhu

Sprachwandel im Chinesischen 203–214

Using Quantitative Linguistics as its theoretical context, this paper recognizes that every language in a speech community is subject to permanent diachronic alteration. Special language changes need to be investigated as if they abide by one of the established linguistic laws. The present paper demonstrates that three different processes in Chinese (substitution of voiced obstruents in the Shuang-feng dialect, increase of Chinese characters, increase of word lengths in the history of the Chinese language) follow the so-called logistic law, also known in linguistics as “Piotrowski’s law,” which once again appears to be universal.

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