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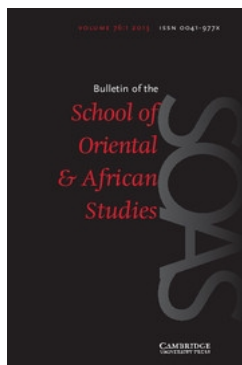
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Mark Turin: *A Grammar of the Thangmi Language: with an Ethnolinguistic Introduction to the Speakers and Their Culture.* (Brill's Tibetan Studies Library. Languages of the Greater Himalayan Region.) xxxvii, 958 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012. €169. ISBN 978 90 04 15526 8.

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reference. The criteria for dating are unclear; the dates are often simply incorrect. There are numerous misprints and mistranslations: *hamara mulk* (our country) is translated as “U.P.” (p. 54); *padr* means father, not son (p. 61). The translators have been unable to decipher English names written in Urdu script or make sense of Sayyid Ahmad’s efforts to develop a new, more colloquial, style of Urdu prose and to coin new terminology. A single example will have to suffice: “Sir William Mill’s house in Vermont” (p. 203) should be Sir William Miles’ mansion and parkland, *makān va ramna* (Asghar Abbas, p. 140). A revised edition of the translation, making due use of the new Urdu one, would be a worthy undertaking.

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MARK TURIN:

A Grammar of the Thangmi Language: with an Ethnolinguistic Introduction to the Speakers and Their Culture.

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This is the first, and sobriety compels one to fear the last, book-length study of Thangmi grammar. The tiny preceding literature on this language is here fully reviewed, incorporated and stunningly surpassed. The grammar covers the two dialects of Dolakhā and Sindhupālcok, ubiquitously distinguishing which information pertains to which dialect. The structure of the work is the usual: discussion of Stammbaum, contextualization of the people and their homeland, phonology, the noun, the verb, sentence level morpho-syntax, a selection of texts, a comprehensive lexicon.

Turin argues that Thangmi and Newar are members of the same sub-branch; he bases this suggestion on cognates shared by Thangmi and Newar, but lacking in other languages (pp. 25–8). This hypothesis may prove true, but for some of Turin’s comparisons cognates also exist in Chinese (Chi.), Tibetan (Tib.), or Burmese (Bur.). Thus, to the comparison of Thangmi *gui* ~ *gwi* ‘thief’ to Classical Newar *khu* ‘thief’ one can add Chi. 寇 *k^hos ‘steal’, Tib. *rku* ‘steal’, and Old Bur. *khuiv* ‘steal’. Similarly, to Thangmi *cime* ‘hair (on the scalp)’ and Classical Newar *cimū* ‘hair (of the body)’ one can add Chi. 髮 *s^hram ‘long hair’, Tib. *ag-tshom* ‘beard’, and Bur. *cham-* ‘hair’; to Thangmi *thoŋ* ‘home-made beer’ and Classical Newar *thvam* ‘beer’ one can add Tib. *chanñ* ‘barely beer’ and Chi. 漿 *tsaŋ ‘rice-water drink’; to Thangmi *duŋ bisa* ‘to enter (inside)’ and Classical Newar *dumbiya* ‘to enter, to offer’ one can add Tib. *donñ* ‘hole, pit’; to Thangmi *priŋ* ‘outside’ and Classical Newar *pi* ~ *pim* ‘outside’ one can add Tib. *phyi* ‘outside’. In his discussions of Tibeto-Burman etymology Turin uses the reconstructions of Benedict and Matisoff; this is an unfortunate decision. These two authors do not use the comparative method and their reconstructions are useless to predict attested

forms. The comparison of Thangmi *naru* ‘horn’ to Tibetan *ru* ‘horn’ is more informative and persuasive than comparison to “*krew = krəw or *ruŋ = rwanj” (p. 20).

The Thangmi lexicon is of great interest to historical linguistics. In many cases a Thangmi word has more morphological material than cognate languages evince. Such cases divide into two types. In the first type, other languages have what looks like a reduced version of the Thangmi cognate: Th. *cawah* ‘walk’ (Bur. *swā*), Th. *kili* ‘excrement’ (Chi. 屎 *q^hijʔ, Tib. *l̥ci* < *ḥḷi, Old Bur. *khliy*); Th. *calaʔ-uni* ‘moon’ (Tib. *sla* ~ *zla*, Bur. *la*, in Thangmi *-uni* is the word for ‘day’); Th. *kerep* ‘cry’ (Chi. 泣 *k-rəp ‘weep’, Tib. *khṛab-khṛab* ‘a person prone to weep’); Th. *sirik* ‘louse’ (Chi. 虱 *srik, Tib. *śig*); Th. *suwa* ‘tooth’ (Tib. *so*, Bur. *swāḥ*). In the second type Thangmi has an extra syllable before or after the material cognate to other languages. Th. *aŋil* ‘gums’ (Chi. 齧 *ŋən, Tib. *rñil* ~ *sñil*); Th. *alman* ‘dream’ (Chi. 夢 *C.məŋs, Tib. *rmanñ-*, Bur. *mak*); Th. *ulam* ‘path’ (Chi. 尢 *ləm ‘walk’, Tib. *lam* ‘path’, Bur. *lamḥ*); Th. *olon* ‘milk, yoghurt’ (Tib. *zo* < *ʋo ‘yoghurt’, Japhug Rgyalrong *ts-lu* ‘milk’); Th. *naŋa* ‘fish’ (Chi. 魚 *ŋa, Tib. *ña*, Bur. *nñāḥ*); Th. *naru* ‘horn’ (Tib. *ru*); Th. *narek* ‘pheasant’ (Tib. *sreg* ‘partridge’, Bur. *rac* ‘pheasant’); Th. *catok-* ‘torch’ (Chi. 燭 *tok ‘torch’, Tib. *dugs* ‘light, kindle’, Bur. *tok* < *tuk ‘blaze, flame’). Because the *a-*, *u-*, *o-*, *na-*, and *ca-* are unpredictable, it is tempting to suggest that the disyllabic form of the word in Thangmi represents an archaism. In some cases, however, another lexical item in Thangmi containing the same lexical stem demonstrates that the monosyllabic form is probably original. The correspondence of Thangmi *thapu* ‘hearth’ with Tibetan *thab* ‘hearth’, might make one think that the *-u* is original and lost in Tibetan, but Thangmi *me-thap* ‘fire-place’ confirms that the *-u* is some kind of suffix. Similarly, in the Thangmi word *moro* ‘corpse’, compared to Tibetan *ro* ‘corpse’, the element *mo-* can be seen to be a prefix as soon as one recognizes that the morpheme *-ro-* ‘corpse’ also occurs in the word *rojeme* ‘the fire on which a corpse is burnt’.

I offer here a few Tibeto-Burman comparisons which Turin omits: Th. *chyou* ‘fat’ (Tib. *tsho-ba*, Bur. *chū*), Th. *loŋsek* ‘heart’ (Bur. *nha-lomḥ*), Th. *mus* ‘body hair’ (Chi. 毛 *C.m^haw, Bur. *muyḥ*), Th. *mut* ‘blow’ (Bur. *mhut*), Th. *nip* ‘set (of the sun)’ (Chi. 入 *nup ‘enter’, Tib. *nub* ‘to sink, set’, Bur. *nñup* ‘to dive, go beneath’), Th. *nunu* ‘milk, breast’ (Chi. 乳 *noʔ ‘milk, nipple’, Tib. *nu-ma* ‘breast’, Bur. *nuiwʔ* ‘breast’), Th. *ŋah* ‘say’ (Chi. 語 *ŋaʔ ‘speak’, Tib. *nñag* ‘speech’), Th. *pleŋ-* ‘fill’ (Old Bur. *plaññʔ* < *pliŋʔ), Th. *sat-* ‘kill’ (Chi. 殺 *srat, Tib. *√sad*, Bur. *sat*), Th. *tak-* ‘weave’ (Chi. 織 *tək, Tib. *√tag*, Bur. *rak*), Th. *waŋ* ‘come’ (Ch. 往 *G^waŋʔ ‘go’, Tib. *hoññ/yoññ* ‘come’, Bur. *waññ* ‘go, come’), Th. *min* ‘ripen’ (Tib. *smin*, Bur. *mhaññʔ*), Th. *cuk* ‘insert’ (Tib. *√tsug*). For two words the comparison is problematic, but perhaps still compelling: Th. *thaŋ* ‘be well’ (Ch. 臧 *ts^haŋ ‘good’, Tib. *bzaññ* < *bdzaŋ), Th. *nem* ‘home’ (Chi. 窖 *qəms ‘subterranean room’, Tib. *khyim* ‘home’, Bur. *im*). Finally, the sequence *-pra* in *mumpra* ‘funeral’ might be cognate to Tib. *bla* ‘soul’, Bur. *prā*, Chi. 魄 *p^hrak.

Although Thangmi phonology is not exotic, it yields up facets of considerable historical or typological interest. The presence of the medial *-w-* only after velars potentially supports the reconstruction of labio-velar consonants in Tibeto-Burman. Medial *-l-* occurs only after *b-* *g-*, *p-*, *k-* perhaps suggesting that as in Tibetan etymologically *-l-* is not a medial, but rather phonetic material preceding *-l-* originated as morphological prefixes. Although Thangmi has the voiceless nasal *ŋ-* it lacks both *m̥-* and *ŋ̥-*. Whereas many Tibeto-Burman languages including Chinese and Burmese obscure inherited *-r* and *-l-*, Thangmi like Tibetan preserves them intact (e.g. Th. *sarma* ‘young, fresh’, Chi. 鮮 *ser ‘fresh’, Tib. *gsar* ‘new’, Bur. *sa* ‘titivate’; Th. *per* ‘fly’, Chi. 飛 *Cə.pər, Tib. *ḥphur*; Thangmi *aŋil*

'gums', Chi. 齧 *ŋən, Tib. *rñil* ~ *sñil*; Th. *rul* 'snake', Chi. 虺 *mrujʔ, Tib. *sbrul* < *smrul, Bur. *mruiy*). An intriguing phenomenon which requires further clarification is the appearance of a glottal stop final in the Sindhupālcok dialect, where Dolakhā sometimes has a glottal stop but other times has -k (p. 188). If this state of affairs originated from a merger in Sindhupālcok, it is possibly of great consequence for etymological research.

Roughly speaking the Thangmi verb occupies a level of complexity in its agreement system midway between the Kiranti languages, to which Turin makes frequent comparison, and the Dolakhā dialect of Newar as described by Carol Genetti. Highlights of inherited morphology include a third person patient morpheme -u (p. 366) and an imperative suffix -o (p. 430). Guillaume Jacques and Robert Shafer respectively argued that fragmentary evidence of these same morphemes occurs in Tibetan. Another striking Thangmi–Tibetan parallel is that 'eat' is among the more irregular of verbs in both languages. Filling in the overall picture of verbal morphology in the family, Thangmi provides further evidence against LaPolla's theory that agreement is everywhere an innovation.

Thangmi word order is not always what one would expect for a language of this region. Adjectives precede the nouns they modify (p. 309) and compound verbs of motion are prefixing, *ya-cya* 'go to eat', *ya-yo* 'go to look' (p. 462).

In addition to a comprehensive description of Thangmi grammar, the work under review contains an ethnographic survey of the Thangmi. The detail and clarity of presentation far exceeds the level of cultural description found in most grammars. A short review cannot do justice to the wide array of observations on family structure, diet, clothing, religion, etc., many of which may be of great import for the comparative study of Himalayan anthropology. By way of example, the Thangmi have three death rites, respectively on the day of death, shortly after (three days), and up to a year after (pp. 153–4). These three stages in interment may help to shed light on the three stages in the burial of Tibetan emperors as reported in the *Old Tibetan Annals*.

The grammar is of course not without blemishes. Too little is said about word classes, in particular the reasons for distinguishing adjectives from nouns (p. 250). The gerunds and the participles are similarly insufficiently distinguished (pp. 464–8). The proposal that the non-preterite tense marker -*du* is cognate with Dzongka Tibetan *dū*~*du* (spelled *hdug*) is dubious (p. 399); there is quite a literature on Tibetan *hdug* and this proposal cannot be accepted without reference to this work. When Ramble says that Bonpos fled Khri-sroññ-lde-brtsan, this reflects a well-known Tibetan tale, but not the current state of scholarship on Bon (p. 67, note 50). A distinction between elicited and naturally occurring examples would have added value. Such minor objections do not detract from the overall value of the work.

In other respects Turin's grammar reflects a methodological high water mark, e.g. he includes longitudes and latitudes for villages (p. 75). Turin commendably includes close comparisons with Nepali, the contact language and regional *lingua franca*, throughout; not only does he identify loans, but he elucidates Nepali influence in calques, fixed expressions and syntax. By laying bare the mediated nature of his own acquisition of the language Turin achieves an honesty and explicitness that few linguists attempt. The importance of this excellent description of an endangered Himalayan language is difficult to overstate; the book is a triumph.

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Due to a typesetting error \dot{n} is doubled to $\dot{n}\dot{n}$ throughout this review.