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OBSAH — CONTENTS — INHALT — СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

STATI — ARTICLES — AUFSÄTZE — СТАТЬИ

KRONIKA — ANNIVERSARIES — CHRONIK — ХРОНИКА

RECENZE — REVIEWS — BESPRECHUNGEN — РЕЦЕНЗИИ

SUPPLEMENTUM – SUPPLEMENT – ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ

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QUESTION OF (RE)CLASSIFICATION OF EASTERN IRANIAN LANGUAGES

Abstract

The Eastern Iranian languages are traditionally divided into two subgroups: the South and the North Eastern Iranian languages. An important factor for the determination of the North Eastern and the South Eastern Iranian groups is the presence of isoglosses that appeared already in the Old Iranian period. According to an analysis of isoglosses that were used to distinguish the two branches, it appears that most likely there are only two certain isoglosses that can be used for the division of the Eastern Iranian languages into the two branches. Instead of the North-South division of the Eastern Iranian languages, it seems instead that there were approximately four dialect nuclei forming minor groups within the Eastern Iranian branch. Furthermore, there are some languages that genetically do not belong to these nuclei. In the New Iranian period, several features may be observed that link some of the languages together, but such links often have nothing in common with a so-called genetic relationship. The most interesting issue is the position of the so-called Pamir languages within the Eastern Iranian group. It appears that not all the Pamir languages are genetically related; their mutual proximity, therefore, may be more sufficiently explained by later contact phenomena.

Keywords

Eastern Iranian languages; Pamir languages; language classification; linguistic genealogy.

The Iranian languages are commonly divided into two main groups: the Eastern and Western Iranian languages. Each of the groups is subsequently divided in two other subgroups – the Northern and Southern[1]. Differences between the four (sub)groups

1 Problematic is classification of Avestan, recently Gernot Windfuhr classifies Avestan as a Central Iranian language (Windfuhr 2009, 12). Difficult is also classification of Parachi and Ormuri, variously classified as the EIr. or the WIr. languages. In the presented paper question of Ormuri and Parachi will not be discussed; Windfuhr established new Southeast (Eastern) Iranian branch for Parachi and Ormuri (ibid., 14).

of the Iranian branch of Indo-European languages may be fully observed starting with the Middle Iranian stage. In the Old Iranian period only the "Perside" group is observed (represented by Old Persian) i.e. languages that change IE **k̂*, **ĝ*, **k̂u̯* > **ϑ*, **d*, **s* and "Non-Perside" group (represented by Avestan, Median, Scythian) with change of IE **k̂*, **ĝ*, **k̂u̯* > **s*, **z*, **sp*. Within the "Non-Perside" group there are no other striking differences between NWIr. and EIr. The (N)WIr. and EIr. languages differed later by altered development of initial voiced stops: in EIr. the voiced stops changed to voiced fricatives however in WIr. the voiced stops are preserved word-initially but changed to voiced fricatives word-medially and word-finally. According to Džoj Iosifovič Èdeľman a distinctive feature between the Western and the Eastern Iranian languages already in the Old Iranian period may be EIr. presence of voiced clusters **ϑd*, **ɣd* vs. WIr. **ft*, **xt* (Эдельман 1984, 20–22).

The above presented classification of the EIr. language is commonly accepted, but I have not met many well-defined criteria which define each subgroup. Also the grouping of some individual EIr. languages differs, e.g. Khwarezmian is variously classified as a NEIr. language (Эдельман 2000, 95; ibid. 2008, 6) or as a SEIr. language (Эдельман 1986, 6). I am aware of only two works defining criteria of the Northern and Southern branches of the EIr. languages, first mentioned by Vera Sergeevna Rastorgueva: 1) nominal plural ending in **-t-* in NEIr., 2) preservation of Iranian post-vocalic **d* in NEIr., 3) NEIr. preservation of the Old Iranian word-initial cluster **du̯* and 4) SEIr. sonorization of the Old Iranian intervocalic **-š-* (Расторгуева 1966, 198). Another attempt to characterise the main isoglosses within the EIr. languages was outlined by Iosif Mihajlovič Oranskij, who states that the three main isoglosses that differentiate the NEIr. and SEIr. sub-branches: 1) SEIr. sonorization and further development of intervocalic **-š-*, 2) SEIr. emergence of cerebral consonants (chiefly from Ir. cluster **-rt-*) and 3) NEIr. emergence of plural ending in **-tă-* (Оранский 1979, 115–117). Oranskij furthermore mentions other interdialectal features within the NEIr. (ibid. 117–119) and in the SEIr. dialects and languages (ibid. 119–127).

Of the characteristics mentioned by Rastorgueva, only two may be confirmed – a typical NEIr. feature is formation of plural with originally abstract suffix **-tă-* (such suffix can be found also in some non-productive forms in Ishkashmi; on the other way the **-tă-* plural markers are not fully established in the NEIr. languages of the Middle Iranian period) and sonorization of intervocalic **-š-* in SEIr. Other presented features are not distinctive for both groups. Both of these features were observed also by Oranskij. Oranskij's isogloss **-rt-* > cerebral cannot be approved for Wakhi and Bactrian so the question is whether such a feature really divides the Southern branch from the Northern, as in the case of Wakhi and Bactrian also sonorization of intervocalic **-š-* does not take place.

Newer classification of the Iranian languages was presented by Sergej Evgen'evič Jahontov (Яхонтов 2006). Jahontov classifies the Iranian languages by lexicostatis-

tical methods and by glottochronology. According to Jahontov the Iranian languages appear to be divided into nine sub-branches, from which only one sub-branch constitutes all the WIr. languages (i.e. both NWIr. and SWIr.). Unfortunately Jahontov's study is based only on lexical study and he does not take in count the phonological and grammatical development of individual languages. In my opinion Jahontov's study has to be revisited with a stronger focus on grammatical structures and phonological development within the Iranian languages, study of the lexicon itself cannot solve all the problems related to language classification. Jahontov's study may be correct for the EIr. languages. If his study is also taken in account for the WIr. branch, then the older classification of Iranian languages shall be wrong as Jahontov does not consider Pre-Common Iranian development of "satem" consonants: IE **ḱ*, **ǵ* > **ʃ*, **ǵʰ* > *s* × *ϑ*, **ʒ* × *d* (< **ð?*) with different outputs in the NWIr. and the EIr. versus the SWIr. languages (see Яхонтов 2006). Similar to Jahontov, Václav Blažek applies the glottochronological method to classify the Middle Iranian languages. Blažek's representation of the Middle Iranian languages shows closer lexical affiliation of Middle Persian and Parthian as members of the Western branch, the EIr. languages show lexically further distinctions than does Middle Persian and Parthian[2] (Blažek 2013, 53).

Through a detailed study of individual features that reveal distinctions between the NEIr. and the SEIr. languages there appears to remain just one clear feature: the NEIr. plural marker **-tă̆-*, the other features (as mentioned by Расторгуева 1966, 198 and Оранский 1979, 115–117) are not applicable for Wakhi and Bactrian (and also for Khwarezmian if it was a SEIr. language)[3]. As the NEIr./SEIr. isoglosses do not fully work it is necessary to (re)examine the grouping of the EIr. languages anew. A crucial question is the position of the so-called Pamir languages within the (S)EIr. branch. This means focusing on whether the Pamir languages constitute an independent subgroup and/or which languages belong to this group. An attempt to classify the genetic relationship of the Pamir languages was partially solved by Valentina Stepanovna Sokolova in her two books on genetic relation of the Yazghulami language with the Shughni-Roshani group (Соколова 1967) and later on the genetic relationship of Munji with the languages of the Shughni-Yazghulami group (ibid. 1973). According to Sokolova (Соколова 1967) there may be set a smaller group constituting of languages of the Shughni-Roshani group, Yazghulami and

2 Lexical proximity of Middle Persian with Parthian may be caused by their intensive contact in the Sasanian period (AD 224–651).

3 Both Rastorgueva and Oranskij claim that Khwarezmian forms plural with a continuant of NEIr. pl. ending **-tă̆-* (Расторгуева 1966, 198; Оранский 1979, 117): i.e. **-tă̆-h* > **-ti* > *-c(i)*. However according to various descriptions of Khwarezmian grammar there is no such pl. ending (cf. Humbach 1989; Эдельман 2000; Эдельман 2008; Durkin-Meisterernst 2009). Those *-c* plurals belong to palatalized forms of *kă̆*-stems and occasionally to palatalized forms of nouns ending in *-t*, or *-d*. Examples *nikanc* 'stakes', *aβrāc* 'eyebrows' and *niɣōsic* 'listeners' given by Rastorgueva (Расторгуева 1966, 198) and Oranskij (Оранский 1979, 117) appear to be palatalized plurals of the *kă̆*-stems.

Wanji – i.e. the Shughni-Yazghulami group. Sokolova also claims proximity of the Shughni-Yazghulami languages with Munji and Yidgha (ibid. 1973); contrary to Sokolova's opinion Aleksandr Leonovič Grjunberg states that Munji and Yidgha are rather related to Pashto than to the Shughni-Yazghulami languages (Грюнберг 1987, 158–160).

The question of the position of the Pamir languages requires careful examination. Taťjana Nikolaevna Pahalina proposed a *Proto-Pamiri language from which all the Pamir languages developed (Пахалина 1983). She based her opinion on observation of several similar features, namely the emergence of *i*- and *ā*-Umlaut and a similar development in morphology and syntax. Pahalina's *Proto-Pamiri protolanguage seems not to work, mainly according to observations of Sokolova (Соколова 1967 and 1973). Within the Pamir group there may rather be several dialectal nuclei that later on formed a linguistic area or areas. Some of the Pamir languages show affiliations with some of the languages attested in the Middle Iranian period. Munji shows similarities with Bactrian (Sims-Williams 1989, 170; Skjærvø 1989, 376), and Wakhi shows quite archaic features similar to Saka dialects (Skjærvø 1989, 375; Kümmel 2008, 1). Wakhi also differs most from the other languages of the Pamirs (Edelman – Dodykhudoeva 2009, 773, 775–777). Ishkashmi-Sanglechi constitute an isolated group within the Pamir languages, but with some relations to Munji-Yidgha (Соколова 1973, 6–8). The affiliation of poorly attested Sarghulami is more questionable (cf. Novák 2013, 44).

Wakhi and Saka appear very archaic in many features; they may be labelled as "Peripheral Iranian" as they preserve Proto-Iranian aspirated stops *p^h, *t^h, *k^h (> Wakhi *p*, *t*, *k*) which are rendered as *f, *ϑ, *x in "Common (or Core) Iranian" (Kümmel pers. comm.), independent development may be observed in the cluster *$ťs̯u̯$ (IE *$\hat{k}u̯$) > Khotanese (Saka) /ś/, Wakhi *š* (e.g. Ir. *$aťs̯u̯a$- 'horse' > Khot. *aśśa*-, Wakhi *yaš* × Ave. *aspa*-, Sogd. *'sp*-, Bactr. *ασπο* × OPers. *asa*-). Both presented archaisms demonstrate that Wakhi and Saka dialects split earlier from "Proto-Iranian" and surely they may be considered as independent members within the (E)Ir. language branch. According to Martin Kümmel Wakhi may be classified as a Western Saka dialect, the other attested Saka dialects such as Khotanese, Tumshuqese etc. are members of Eastern Saka dialects (Kümmel 2008, 1).

Interrelation of Bactrian with Munji-Yidgha (and distantly with Pashto-Wanetsi, probably also with Sarghulami) is based mainly on a shared development Ir. *d > *l*. There are however other shared innovations in Munji-Yidgha and Bactrian, e.g. shift *ϑ > Bactr. *h* (later > Ø), Munji-Yidgha *x̌* (× Pashto *l*); innovations in the verbal system through the use of the originally causative *-*(a)i̯a*-endings. In Bactrian there are two sets of the 3rd pers. personal endings – Class B continues from *a*-thematic conjugation, class A from *(a)i̯a*-conjugation. In Munji the *(a)i̯a*-endings appear only with intransitive verbs of the 3rd pers. sg.; in Yidgha these endings have been later lost (cf. Соколова 1973, 65–79). In Pashto the *(a)i̯a*-endings spread wider

into the verbal paradigm. Development of postalveolar **č*, **ǰ* towards alveolars in Bactrian (and Pashto) but only partially in Munji-Yidgha is a later independent phenomenon comparable to preservation of continuants of **č*, **ǰ* as postalveolars in Yazghulami contrary to alveolar reflexes in Shughni-Roshani.

According to Sokolova the proximity of the Shughni-Yazghulami languages with Munji-Yidgha may be seen as comparable to the development of vowels, also Proto-Shughni-Yazghulami-Munji fronted **ă* > **æ̆* causes secondary palatalization of velars: **k*, **g*, **x* > **ǩ-/*-ǵ-*, **ɣ́*, **x́* (see Witczak – Novák [in print]). The completion of palatalization of velars was surely finished as late as the 15th century AD as it is attested in Parisinus Graecus' gloss *τζαβάρς ισχχιντί · κέχρος ἰνδικός*. *Τζαβάρς* is a Mediaeval Greek rendering of a "Pamiri" **ǰ/žæwærs* < **ɣ́æwærs(æ)-* < Ir. **gau̯arʛa-* 'millet' (cf. Khuf. *ǰawōwc*, Rosh. *ǰäwaws*, Rshrv. *ǰäwāwsk*, Baj. *ǰuwōx̌c/č* etc.; ibid.).

As may be observed from the information given above, Wakhi appear to share quite striking archaisms with the Saka dialects, on the other hands Munji-Yidgha shares some innovations with the Shughni-Yazghulami group and some other features with Pashto and Bactrian. There is a quite clear line dividing Saka-Wakhi branch from a group consisting of the Shughni-Yazghulami group, Munji-Yidgha and Pashto-Wanetsi. Apart from both of the above mentioned nuclei, are Ishkashmi, Sanglechi and Zebaki. The Ishkashmi-Sanglechi languages form a quite independent nucleus which differs from both the above mentioned nuclei by dissimilar development both in phonology and morphology. The most striking features, as observed by Sokolova, is the merger of Ir. **d*, **t* > *d/δ* and the development of **št* > *t*, which is not attested in other Pamir languages (Соколова 1973, 19)[4]. In morphology Ishkashmi shows different endings of the 3rd person sg. (ending *-u* probably comes from the form of conjunctive middle ending **-ă-ta*), a loss of plural ending based on Ir. *a*-stem dat.-abl. pl. ending **-aiu̯biah* and loss of preposition/postposition **anta-ra-* (Соколова 1973, 24).

Within the Eastern Iranian languages a special attention should be paid for development of the so-called *kă*-stems (i.e. stems that developed from Iranian denominal abstract suffixes in **-kă-*). While the *kă*-stems are usually contracted in Sogdian and Yaghnobi, they are completely contracted in Khotanese and Yidgha, and in Pashto and Munji the velar changes to *γ*. In Ossetic, Wakhi, Ishkashmi-Sanglechi, Yazghulami and Shughni-Roshani (and in Sarghulami?) the velar sound is preserved (see Novák 2013, 105–107). Bactrian shows progressive development of the *kă*-stems: in older texts, the ending *-α/η/ιγο* is recorded that later changes to *-ιιο*. The earliest occurrence of the *-ιιο* form appears in AD 711, but the latest occurrence of the *-Vγο* forms appears in AD 760 (Лурье 2004, 56)[5]. Likewise, in Sogdian we can observe

4 But comparable to Bactrian or Pashto: Ishk. *ot*, Sngl. *ōt* 'eight', Bactr. *αταο* or Psht. *atə́* × Khot. *haṣṭa-*, Shugh. *waxt*, Mnj. *ōśḱă* etc. < Ir. **ašta-*. Wakhi *at* 'eight' is probably a borrowing.

5 Question is whether Bactrian development *-α/η/ιγο* > *-ιιο* is equivalent to (Proto-)Munji develop-

a similar process of gradual development of the *kă*-stems according to attested texts (see Novák 2013, 70).

It is evident that the Pamir languages do not constitute a separate genetic group within the (S)EIr. languages. The SEIr. languages probably form several nuclei (i.e. Saka-Wakhi; Ishkashmi-Sanglechi; Shughni-Yazghulami; Munji-Yidgha and Bactrian; Pashto-Wanetsi) which most likely mutually influenced one another. If we would like to use the term "Pamir languages" the label should only apply to the Shughni-Yazghulami languages together with Munji-Yidgha (most probably excluding Bactrian). The other languages of the Pamirs originally had little in common with the "Pamir core", i.e. the Shughni-Yazghulami(-Munji) languages. Instead of the above mentioned conception of Proto-Pamiri, the matter may be better explained as a contact phenomena or as a Sprachbund. As Munji-Yidgha show affiliation to Bactrian and Wakhi to Saka there is no need to speak of Bactrian and Saka as of (Middle Iranian) Pamir languages. In case of Bactrian-Munji interrelations it may be probable that Bactrian split before specific development in Shughni-Yazghulami-Munji appeared (or the orthography in Greco-Bactrian script cannot represent some peculiar phenomena such as opposition of plain vs. palatalized velars).

In a description of the Pamir languages John Payne mentions three linguistic areas: Pamir Sprachbund, Pamir-Hindukush Sprachbund and Central Asian (or Himalayan) Sprachbund. The Pamir linguistic area consists of the Shughni-Yazghulami languages, Ishkashmi-Sanglechi and Wakhi (i.e. languages commonly understood as the Pamir languages). The Pamir-Hindukush linguistic area includes the Pamir languages together with Munji-Yidgha and the Nuristani-Dardic languages. The third, rather wide, Central Asian linguistic area consist of all the above mentioned languages of the Pamir-Hindukush Sprachbund and of some other Iranian languages (Pashto, Wanetsi, Parachi, Ormuri and Balochi), some Indo-Aryan languages (Domaki, Western Pahari, Punjabi and maybe Lahnda and Sindhi), several Sino-Tibetan languages (Balti, Ladakhi, West Himalayish languages), Dravidan Brahui and a language isolate Burushaski (Payne 1989, 422–423). The constitution of these linguistic areas may explain similarities in the lexicon, grammar and syntax of the languages in question.

As mentioned above, the Pamir languages share several similarities in language plans, there are many shared lexical items, similarities in syntax (mainly in use of demonstrative pronouns, which develop into the definite article which became one of the most important part of speech since it determines gender) and other points of grammar. Areal phenomena may also explain emergence of the change **d* > *l* in several Iranian languages (Bactrian, Munji-Yidgha, Pashto-Wanetsi, Sarghu-

ment of intervocalic **-k-* prior to Ir. **ă*: **-ḱ-* > **-ǵ-* > *(*)-y-* or whether the palatalization of a velar in the *kă*-stems in Bactrian is comparable to development in Pashto.

lami?) and in Nuristani Prasuni (cf. Эдельман 1984, 18) as well as development of Wakhi which appears to have been strongly superstrated or "Pamirized" – in Wakhi there can be observed several layers that differ from inherited Western Saka core (Стеблин-Каменский 1976; ibid. 1999, 17–40; Payne 1989, 421–423) and that bring Wakhi nearer to Shughni-Roshani and to Ishkashmi. In Wakhi and Ishkashmi-Sanglechi there are also many substrate (?) words that show the (areal) variation *δ (d)* ~ *l* (Morgenstierne 1938, 294, 455).

To establish inner classification of the EIr. languages it is necessary to find crucial isoglosses that define each group. The emergence of such isoglosses must have taken place by start of the Old Iranian period. As mentioned above, there are two (three) isoglosses observed by Rastorgueva (Расторгуева 1966, 198) and Oranskij (Оранский 1979, 115–117): plural ending in **-tă-* for the NEIr. languages and sonorization of intervocalic **-š-* for the SEIr. languages, possibly also the emergence of cerebral sound(s) from a cluster **rt* in the SEIr. languages. However, only the NEIr. plural ending in **-tă-* is attested by the Old Iranian period, and we do not have sufficient data in the case of the other isoglosses. I outlined the question of (re)classification of the EIr. languages in my dissertation (Novák 2013, 60–65). In the Table 23 (ibid., 64–65) I set several isoglosses that may define the split between the NEIr. and the SEIr. branches. The results of this work are that few of the isoglosses define the difference between individual EIr. sub-branches as nearly all of the features are of a later stage. Two other isoglosses may have occurred in the Old Iranian period: 1) development **ϑu̯* > **ś/*š* × **sp* and 2) simplification of a cluster **šm* > **m*. The first feature is surely Proto-Iranian and it probably is connected with "Peripheral Iranian" preservation of voiceless aspirated stops – both characteristics appear in "peripheral" languages such as Wakhi and Saka.

The simplification of the cluster **šm* > **m* appears to be typical for the SEIr. languages, unfortunately there are not many examples to prove the change. I will demonstrate the change using the following examples:

**čašman-* 'eye' > Sogd. BM *c(š)m-*, C *c(y)m-*, *cšm-*; Oss. *cæst* 'eye' (*casm* || *cans* 'window-opening'); Khot. *tse'iman-*; Wakh. *čə̣m* (Western dialect) || *čə̣žm* (Eastern and Central dialect); Ishk. *com*; Zeb. *cōm*; Sngl. *cāṃ*; Mnj. *čōm*; Yid. *čam*; Shugh./Baj. *cēm*; Rosh./Khuf. *cām*; Bart. *cēm*; Rshrv. *cīm*; Sarq. *cem*; Yzgh. *čăm*; Khwar. *cm-*, *cm̄-*; Ave. *čašman-*;

**pašman-* 'wool' > Yagh. *pašm*; Oss. *fæsm* || *fans*; Khot. *pe'ma-*; Ishk. *pom*; Sngl. *pām*; Mnj. *pā/ōm*; Bactr. παμανο; Ave. *pašman-*.

Both examples suffer from inadequacy. In Sogdian there are attested examples of both forms with *šm* and with *m* in case of the *'eye'* but there is no attested continuant of Ir. *pašman-*. In Yaghnobi the word *pašm* may be a Tajik loan. Also Central and Eastern Wakhi *čə̣žm* may be a Persian loan or Western Wakhi *čə̣m* may have been influenced by Ishkashmi and/or Shughni. Unfortunately I have not found equivalents in Pashto.

Another example of development of **šm* > **m* in the SEIr. languages show forms of personal pronoun of the second person plural. In the NEIr. languages there are attested continuants of Ir. **i̯ušmāxam* 'you': Sogd. B *(')šm'γw*, *'šm'γh* M *'šm'x(w)* MC *šm'x*, Yagh. *šᵘmőx*, Oss. *sъmax* ‖ *sumax*. In the languages which show the change **šm* > **m* the forms of the personal pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons pl. coalesced: **ahmāxam* 'we' > **(ə)mắxa(m)* < **i̯ūšmāxam* 'you'. As the 1st and 2nd pers. pl. personal pronouns merged, later a new form of the 2nd pers. pl. developed – the "merged" 1st/2nd pers. pl. form was augmented by a 2nd pers. sg. pronoun in form of a prefix **ta/u-*: Ishk. *tъmъx*; Sngl. *təməx*; Shugh./Rosh./Khuf. *tama*; Bart./Rshrv. *tamāš*; Sarq. *tamaš*; Bactr. *τω/ο/αμαχο*; and slightly different forms Psht. *tắsē/ō*; Wan. *tās(i)* and Wakh. *sắ(y)išt*[6]. Munji and Yidgha forms *mōf* ‖ *mắ/ōf* are based on dative of the 2nd (or 1st) pers. pl. personal pronoun **i̯ūšmabi̯a* (eventually **ahmabi̯a*). Completely different are the 2nd pers. pl. personal pronouns in Khwarezmian (*hβy*) and in Khotanese (*uhu*, *umắ/ä*).

As may be seen from the above data, the question of inner division of the EIr. languages is problematic. When compared to inner classification of the WIr. branch, there are not many convincing isoglosses for the EIr. branch with the exception of the very archaic "Peripheral Iranian" isoglosses (i.e. preservation of voiceless aspirated stops and change **ʁu̯* > **ś*) there are just two other isoglosses that may have occurred by the Old Iranian period – the NEIr. emergence of plural in **-tắ-* and SEIr. simplification of the cluster **šm* > **m*. The second feature is also linked with the innovation of forms of the personal pronoun of the 2nd pers. pl.[7]. Each of these isoglosses most likely emerged during the Old Iranian period and was consolidated in the Middle Iranian period. Other SEIr. isoglosses do not work for all languages, these changes probably started to develop in the Middle Iranian period – Bactrian, Wakhi and Khwarezmian do not show cerebral outcome of the cluster **rt*, in Wakhi there is no sonorization of **-š-* as well as in Khwarezmian and Bactrian. On the other hand, Khwarezmian and Bactrian show analogous development of **-š-*: Bactr. **-š-* > *š*, *h*; Khwar. **-š-* > *x*, *h*, *f*, *s*, *y*.

According to relevant EIr. isoglosses, the question remains whether those features may be sufficient to establish two different sub-branches. The "peripheral" Saka-Wakhi languages certainly show the most archaic features, the question

6 The Pashto-Wanetsi forms were probably influenced by Indo-Aryan languages. Pashto *tắsē* (pl.), *tắsō* (honorific) and Wanetsi *tās(i)* are derived either from **ta-smā-* 'thou-we' or from **tā-sai̯a-* 'thy shadow > thy appearance' or influenced by Lahnda etc. *tus* (Morgenstierne 2003, 84).

Wakhi form *sắ(y)išt* (oblique *sav)* originates from **təsa* (< **tu/asã* < Middle Indo-Aryan **tusma-*) + Wakh. direct pl. suffix *-išt* or oblique pl. *-əv*. Also Wakhi pronoun of the 1st pers. pl. *sak* shows Indo-Aryan influence < **asma-* (gen.; Пахалина 1976, 80) or it may be a Khowar loan (Стеблин-Каменский 1999, 310).

7 Analogous innovated forms of personal pronouns of the 2nd pers. pl. appear in many other languages in the Hindukush area, mainly in some Indo-Aryan languages, in Burushaski, Dravidan and in some Himalayish language (cf. Пахалина 1976; Грюнберг – Эдельман 1987, 75).

is whether such archaisms may suit to establish independent EIr. subgroup, see NWIr. Balochi which also preserves aspirated voiceless stops instead of fricatives, but shares many similarities with Kurdish. Also the presence of isoglosses **-tă-* × **šm* > **m* (regardless of innovated forms of personal pronouns of the 2nd pers. pl.) seems not to be enough to establish crucial differences between the NEIr. and SEIr. branches. Instead of the traditional North-South division of the EIr. languages there are four nuclei: **I** Northern (*Sogdo-Scythian*) nucleus (i.e. Scythian, Sarmatian, Alanic, Ossetic, Sogdian, Yaghnobi); **II** North-eastern (*Saka-Wakhi*) nucleus (i.e. Wakhi, Khotanese, Tumshuqese etc.), **III** Central (*Pamir*) nucleus (i.e. Shughni-Yazghulami, Munji-Yidgha) and **IV** Southern (*Pathan*) nucleus (i.e. Pashto-Wanetsi). Outside of those nuclei are Ishkashmi-Sanglechi and Khwarezmian, complicated is position of Bactrian, which shows affiliations with the Central group and also with the Pathan group. Also the position of Munji-Yidgha may be associated with the Pathan group. These nuclei interrelated with each other, so some isoglosses spread variously from one group to another. In contrast to my previous view of five EIr. groups (in this case judging Parachi-Ormuri as members of the EIr. languages) presented in my dissertation (Novák 2013, 60–65), I would rather treat the EIr. languages as a dialect continuum rather than as a two or four/five member model.

The question of reclassification of the EIr. languages should be carefully examined by a thorough study of historical phonology, grammar and lexicon. The four EIr. nuclei presented above are groups that show quite unambiguous affiliations, and anew classification of the EIr. languages depends on the careful study of the languages that do not show clear genetic affiliation. For example, Ishkashmi-Sanglechi may be considered as a member of the Pamir group, but such a connection appears to be areal rather than genetic. The crucial problem is the position of Bactrian and its relation with Munji-Yidgha (and even with Shughni-Yazghulami) on one side and with Pashto-Wanetsi on the other side. Another essential issue lies in the mutual relation of Wakhi with the languages of the Saka: Wakhi has been strongly superstrated by neighbouring languages, but in fact its core appears to be quite archaic, even more archaic than Middle Iranian Khotanese. If the existing two-fold model of NEIr. and SEIr. languages should be maintained, it is quite clear that Khwarezmian should be classified as a SEIr. language, regardless of some characteristics that link it more closely to Ossetic and Sogdian.

This paper opens further discussion whether the twofold EIr. model should be maintained or whether it should be replaced by another model based on a detailed study of mutual genetic relations of individual EIr. languages.

Abbreviations: Ave. *Avestan*, Bactr. *Bactrian*, Baj. *Bajui*, Bart. *Bartangi*, EIr. *Eastern Iranian*, IE *Indo-European*, Ishk. *Ishkashmi*, Khot. *Khotanese*, Khuf. *Khufi*, Khwar. *Khwarezmian*, Mnj. *Munji*, NEIr. *North Eastern Iranian*, NWIr. *North Western Iranian*, OPers. *Old Persian*, Oss. *Ossetic*, Psht. *Pashto*, Rshrv. *Rasharvi*, Rosh. *Roshani*, Sngl. *Sanglechi*, Sarq. *Sariqoli*, SEIr.

South Eastern Iranian, Shugh. *Shughni*, Shugh.-Rosh. *Shughni-Roshani group*, Sogd. *Sogdian* (B *Buddhist,* M *Manichaean,* C *Christian)*, SWIr. *South Western Iranian*, Wakh. *Wakhi*, Wan. *Wanetsi*, WIr. *Western Iranian*, Yagh. *Yaghnobi*, Yzgh. *Yazghulami*, Yid. *Yidgha*, Zeb. *Zebaki*.

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