

Unlike the exoteric Śaiva scriptures that preceded them, these esoteric works were, in the main, non-dualist and deeply invested in the “culture of the cremation ground,” subordinating forms of the male Śiva to all-powerful goddesses whose entourages were dominated by circles of yoginīs and elevating transactions in sexual emissions to the forefront of their ritual programs. This new religion—Tantra—whose traditions are recorded in the Vidyāpīṭha scriptures nonetheless acknowledged its (mainly) Mantramārgic foundation. This does not, however, authorize a teleological projection, back onto those earlier Śaiva ritual works, of the tantric moniker. A close analogy to this is the canon of the Christian Bible, whose “Old Testament” is none other than the scripture of another religion, Judaism—yet no responsible historian would claim the Jewish Bible to be a work of early Christianity.

Another scholarly convention to which Hatley subscribes, yet for which there is no hard data, concerns the “elusive Atimārga Kāpālikas” (pp. 248, 274), “whose texts are almost entirely lost” (p. 215) and for which there exists virtually no inscriptional evidence. To be sure, human and divine skull-bearers abound in Śaiva mythology and iconography (the subject of Hatley’s chap. 4), but these data do not constitute proof for the existence of the Kāpālikas as an “ascetic order” (p. 215). In my judgment, the tradition of the skull-bearing ascetic was a literary trope and, perhaps, the reflection of a period in the ritual life of the individual tantric practitioner, in which he followed a specific “great vow” (*mahāvratā*) in imitation of the great god Bhairava. This notwithstanding, Hatley’s treatment of the mythology of the origins of the skull and skull-staff is, from the standpoint of literary criticism, exemplary. The same may be said of the topical studies comprising Hatley’s chapters 5 and 6, devoted to the origin myth and description of another signal element of the regalia of tantric gods and practitioners, the skull-topped staff known as the *khaṭvāṅga*. Of especial interest in these chapters are Hatley’s hypothetical model of the staff (p. 293, fig. 6.1), which he bases on textual sources, the visual record, material culture (pp. 287–92), and “a degree of speculation” (p. 280).

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Zur Didaktik mittelindischer Sprachen. By KLAUS MYLIUS. Beiträge zur Kenntnis südasiatischer Sprachen und Literaturen, vol. 23. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ, 2013. Pp. 100. €24.

In the same series, with the same author and publisher:

Lehrbuch der Ardhamāgadhī. . . . , vol. 24. . . . , 2014. Pp. 110. €29.

Māhārāṣṭrī: Grammatischer Abriss und Wörterbuch. . . . , vol. 25. . . . , 2016. Pp. 131. €29.90.

Śaurasenī: Grammatik und Glossar. . . . , vol. 27. . . . , 2018. Pp. 89. €29.90.

Māgadhī: Grammatik, Textproben und Glossar. . . . , vol. 29. . . . , 2019. Pp. 74. €29.

The linguistic, literary, and religious riches of the various Middle Indo-Aryan languages are difficult of access for beginners, once they detour off the well-trodden path of Pāli. Although these languages have attracted scholars of remarkable skill—just to mention a few of the early giants like Jacobi, Pischel, and Weber and their worthy successors such as Alsdorf, Bloch, Caillat, von Hinüber, Lüders, Norman, again naming just a few. But tools that will allow a tyro to make a start on the study of these vernaculars, even a tyro with solid Sanskrit and Pāli, are harder to find. The still standard grammar, that of Richard Pischel (*Grammatik der Prakrit-Sprachen*, 1900), though packed full with matter, is extremely difficult to use; Mylius refers to it several times as “antididaktisch” (e.g., 2013: 5; 2018: 3), an assessment with which I wholeheartedly concur. Among other things, the word index in its original German version is barely over ten pages, despite the thousands of forms treated in the dense volume: one essentially has to know what the form is and what phonological changes it exemplifies to find it—rather defeating the purpose. Only in the English translation of Subhadra Jha (1957) do we find an adequate—or at least considerably better—index of approximately 150 pages. Oskar von Hinüber’s *Das ältere Mittelindisch im Überblick* (1985, 2nd enl. and rev. ed. 2001) is invaluable—and much easier to navigate than Pischel—but it is not, nor was it intended to be, a primary pedagogical tool.

Individual languages do have versions of Elementarbücher, such as Hermann Jacobi's *Ausgewählte Erzählungen in Māhārāṣṭrī* (1886), which contains a sketch grammar in addition to reading selections and a full glossary to them. And English is better served than German, by Alfred C. Woolner's *Introduction to Prakrit* (1917, 2nd ed. 1928, 3rd rev. ed. 1939), which gives a general introduction to the shared linguistic features of the Prakrits, as well as brief treatments of the grammars of individual languages, with short reading selections.

The territory we are addressing here is what might be called "Prakrits proper," taking into account neither the relatively archaic Middle Indic of the Aśokan inscriptions and Pāli nor the late Apabhraṃśa, but concentrating on the language forms of (roughly) the first millennium CE, comprising both early Jaina materials and secular literary compositions. The term "Prakrits proper" also excludes Gāndhārī, primarily because it became known to scholars only after the work of Pischel et al. was completed, and the somewhat amorphous linguistic continuum treated under the heading Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

A useful introduction to Prakrit(s) needs to balance two types of approaches. On the one hand, much of the phonology and even much of the morphology can and should be treated holistically: the same kinds of sound changes have happened in all the languages, though with some languages obviously going further along the path of development than others. Similarly, the same types of morphological simplifications have taken place in most of the languages. A language-by-language survey, treating each language by itself, will fail to capture the general trends in linguistic development. On the other hand, they are indeed independent languages, with somewhat different solutions to the problems of phonological development and morphological decay—not to mention very different textual corpora, characterized by different literary styles, different lexica, and different accommodations to the Sanskrit that still exercises a magnetic attraction.

The pedagogical challenges of introducing the Prakrits have clearly long preoccupied the author of this series of volumes, which collectively serve as his answer to these challenges. In the past six years he has produced five such answers, the last four each devoted to a single language (Ardhamāgadhī 2013, Māhārāṣṭrī 2016, Śaurasenī 2018, Māgadhī 2019), while the first of the series, *Zur Didaktik mittelindischer Sprachen* (2013), though promising in its title an overview of the issues and problems, actually contains four separate sketches of individual languages, Pāli, Ardhamāgadhī, Śaurasenī, and Māhārāṣṭrī, the last three of which are also subjects of later separate volumes. These are all in addition to his series of dictionaries: Pāli – German (1997), Ardhamāgadhī – German (2003), *Wörterbuch des kanonischen Jinismus* (2005), and German – Pāli (2008).

Although one might expect that each of the language treatments in the books under review would follow a set pattern, there is actually considerable variation between them, as the variation in their titles implies. For example, the volume on Māhārāṣṭrī, the longest so far, consists primarily of a lexicon (pp. 37–130); the treatment of grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax) is confined to slightly over twenty pages (pp. 11–35), and there are no text selections. Indeed, he introduces the book as "Mit dem hier vorgelegten Wörterbuch Māhārāṣṭrī-Deutsch . . ." (p. 3), and somewhat later in this same intro. states that he is adding "ein kurzer Abriss der Māhārāṣṭrī-Grammatik." Of course, Māhārāṣṭrī also figured in the first volume, and in the eighteen pages devoted to it there (pp. 80–97), there was a half-page of text and five pages of notes on it. The Śaurasenī and Māgadhī volumes are better balanced, with about equal numbers of pages devoted to grammar and lexicon, with text selections and notes sandwiched between. The Ardhamāgadhī volume has approximately thirty pages of grammar and twenty pages of text and notes, with the remaining forty pages divided between two lexica: Ardhamāgadhī – German, German – Ardhamāgadhī (the utility of the latter not being clear to me). Because each of the languages is treated separately, much of the general information about Prakritic developments has to be repeated in each volume.

In evaluating this series with regard to its primary purpose, pedagogy, I find myself of two minds. On the one hand, the treatment of grammar, stripped down to its essence, avoids the serious "can't see the forest for the trees" problem presented by Pischel's treatment. The author notes that his didactic aim is to distinguish the important from the less important: "Die Trennung von Wichtigem und weniger Wichtigem ist ein grundlegendes Prinzip der Didaktik . . ." (2018: 3), with which I am in full agreement. But the problem is that the material is *so* bare-bones that it would leave an unaided student at sea.

Only the most standard paradigms are given, and many of the lexical items in the reading selections are not even found in the relevant glossaries, though the notes somewhat bridge that gap. Moreover, students have no way to link whatever form they find in the text with the lemma in the glossary if the inflected form has undergone any phonological or morphological processes. Again the notes help, but in a few experiments I often found it difficult or impossible to locate the relevant forms in the glossary. So as stand-alone primers, I can only see these volumes as sources of frustration for the beginning student. However, with a helpfully supervising teacher (like the author himself) or for students with the patience (and the knowledge) to use supplementary materials like von Hinüber and Pischel, they could provide students with a valuable, quick “sample-and-move-on” survey of Middle Indo-Aryan.

In fact the supervising teacher seems to be the model the author is aiming at, to judge from the first volume, *Zur Didaktik*, which is addressed not to students but to their teacher. Mylius states what the students should be told, what they should be led through, what level they will have reached, and what they should be able to do next. He gives such suggestions not only about grammar and text but also about what topics of general interest might be introduced and where. For example, apropos the word *dhamma* in the Ardhamāgadhī text selection from the *Dasaveyāliya* he interjects, “Der Lehrende sollte hier einen Exkurs über *ahiṃsā* und deren Rolle in den ethischen Vorstellungen M. K. Gandhis einschalten” (2013: 51). After citing a verse from the *Sattasaī* to illustrate the “Wohlklang” of Māhārāṣṭrī, he says that the students don’t need a translation of the verse at this point in their study, but if they clamor for one, the teacher should produce something (2013: 82). And, rather touchingly, at the end of the grammar section of Māhārāṣṭrī, the last and chronologically latest of the four languages treated in *Zur Didaktik*, he advises the teacher to distribute some praise: “Es ist jetzt an der Zeit, den Studierenden ein Lob anzusprechen. Sie haben zusammen mit ihrer Lehrperson 1500 Jahre Sprachgeschichte durchmessen” (2013: 91; how the 1500 years is calculated he doesn’t say: perhaps reckoning Pāli around 500 BCE and late Māhārāṣṭrī around 1000 CE?).

Reading through these volumes, one can see how they could work in the hands of a master teacher and scholar—the author himself: a sketch grammar that could easily be amplified in the classroom, well-chosen reading selections with notes painstakingly treating each word in order, a glossary for exploration, and even the well-timed praise for the students’ perseverance. But without his animating spirit and broad knowledge available to be tapped, I doubt that this experience could be replicated based on these publications alone. I am happy to have these volumes, especially for the point of view and the insights of this master MIA scholar, but for the purposes of learning MIA, being in a classroom with him would be far superior to what small part of that experience can be captured on the page.

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