

Distinguishing Proto-Iranian loanwords in Finno-Ugric

Researchers of Indo-Iranian loanwords in the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) languages have until recently been unable to properly distinguish different layers of loanwords based on sound substitution rules. The most elaborate view on the stratigraphy of various Indo-Iranian loanwords so far has been presented by Koivulehto (2001), who distinguishes Proto-Iranian loans on the basis of the substitutions of Proto-Iranian dental affricates **ts* and **dz*.

The aim of this contribution is to critically evaluate the various arguments that have been presented by earlier scholars to distinguish the *Proto-Iranian* loanwords in various Finno-Ugric branches. I intend to show that although the material is often difficult to interpret, the loanwords still provide valuable evidence for the study of Iranian linguistic prehistory. Especially the stratigraphy of Iranian loans in the less-well studied Ugric branch will be investigated; Koivulehto's work concentrated on the westernmost Finno-Ugric languages, and while it is well-known that in the eastern Ugric languages there are many Iranian loans (such as Proto-Ugric **saraña* 'gold, metal' ← Iranian **zaranya-* < PI **dzrHanya-* 'gold', see Korenchy 1972), the stratigraphy of these loans is poorly understood and needs an update based on modern views on Iranian and Finno-Ugric historical phonology.

As several early daughter languages of Proto-Finno-Ugric were in contact with Iranian languages at roughly simultaneously, evidence of the loanwords can help to track diffusion of phonological innovations within Iranian: for instance, Hock (2016) states that some Iranian innovations, such as the dentalization of PII **ć*, **j* diffused through early dialects of Iranian, leaving some varieties unaffected. This issue is closely connected to Koivulehto's idea of substitution of PI dental affricates by Uralic affricates, an issue that will be critically investigated in this presentation.

Some examples of the various problems connected to the interpretation of Iranian loans are shown here:

Udmurt *už*, Komi *už* 'stallion' < PFU **oč(w)a* ← PI **acva-* 'horse' (Koivulehto 2001)

Here the PFU reconstruction can point also to a form without **w*, and since the PII cluster **ćw* is reflected by *śś* in Khotan Saka *aśśa* (Hock 2016), it is dubious whether PI **acva* was the source of the FU word.

Saami *doaris*, Mordvin *troks* 'through', Mari *toreš* 'across' < PFU **toras* ← PI **taras* < PII **trHas* 'through, over' (Aikio 2015)

There are also other examples of the substitution of PI **ar* (< *rH* > Indo-Aryan **ir*), but this can also be interpreted as a substitution of PII **rH* by **Vr* due to Finno-Ugric phonotactics.

References

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