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LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS IN GRAECO-BACTRIA AND THE SAKA KINGDOMS[*]

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Contents

Old Persian, Imperial Aramaic, Old Bactrian

Script and writing appeared in eastern Iran long before the Yüeh-chih conquest of Bactria. Under Darius I, Old Persian administration and chancellery practice had probably been introduced into the eastern Achaemenid satrapies. This involved the use of the Old Persian language and cuneiform script, and the adoption of the Aramaic language and script as intermediary instruments of communication between administrative centres. The royal weight inscribed with an Old Persian cuneiform text from Bost (modern Qal'ǎ-i Bist in Afghanistan) shows this development, even though it was prepared at the royal court in western Iran; and the borrowing by the Prakrit languages of such important terms as Old Persian *dipi-* (document), *nipis-* (to write) and *nipistaṃ* (inscription) clearly proves the use of Old Persian in the Indus territories belonging to the Achaemenid Empire at that time.

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[*] See Map 3.

The introduction and use of Aramaic chancellery practice was, however, of much greater importance for the spread of literacy in the Middle East. Although not a single Aramaic document from the Achaemenid period has so far come to light in eastern Iran, indirect evidence exists. Kharoṣṭhī script came into being under the influence of the Aramaic alphabet. Consequently, the creation of Kharoṣṭhī indirectly attests to the use of Imperial Aramaic in the royal chancelleries of the eastern satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire on the borders of India.

The use of Aramaic as an intermediary language did not come to an end when the Old Persian Empire fell. As in other satrapies, the administration and the Aramaic chancelleries still continued to function under the Hellenistic rulers who succeeded them, and Greek could not immediately replace Aramaic as the chancellery language in Bactria and Gandhāra. There is abundant evidence for the survival of Aramaic in these territories in the rock and pillar inscriptions set up by Aśoka, the Mauryan king. Six have been discovered so far: (a) the pillar edict of Taxila; (b) the stone inscription of Pul-i Darunta; (c) the rock edict of Kandahar (Kandahar I); (d) the second inscription from Kandahar (Kandahar II); (e) the first rock inscription (milestone) from Laghman (Laghman I); and (f) the second rock inscription (milestone) from Laghman (Laghman II). As a sample of these texts, the rock edict of Kandahar (Kandahar I) (Fig. 1) may be quoted here (Iranian terms are italicized):

1. šnn X *ptyty* 'byd zy mr'n prydrś mlk' qšyṭ' mhqšṭ

   For ten years *penitence* was made by Our Lord, Priyardarś, the king, enforcing the truth.

2. mn 'dyn z'yr mr'' lklhm 'nšn wklhm *'dbšy*' hwbd

   Since that time evil decreased for all men and he made disappear the *quarrelsome*.

3. wbkl 'rq' r'm *šty* w'p zy znh bm'kl' lmr'n mlk' z'yr

   And *happiness* arose on the whole earth. And besides, this [is] concerning the food: for Our Lord, the King, little

4. qṭln znh lmḥzh klhm'nšn'thḥsynn wzy *zwny'* 'ḥdn

   is slaughtered. Seeing this all men have ceased [to do it]. And those men who were catching *living beings*,

5. 'lk'nšn *ptyzbt* knm zy *prbst* hwyn'lk'thḥsynn mn

   have been *forbidden* [to do it]. Thus, who *were bound* [by their passions], those ceased to

FIG. 1. The bilingual inscription of Aśoka from Kandahar (Kandahar I). Third century B.C.

6. *prbsty whwptysty* l'mwhy wl'bwhy wl*mzyšty'* 'nšn

   be bound. And *good obedience* [is observed] to his mother and to his father and to the elder men

7. 'yk 'srhy ḥlqwt' wl' 'yty dyn' lklhm 'nšy' ḥsyn

   as destiny imposed upon him. And legal proceeding does not exist against anyone who is pious [literally: all pious men].

8. znh hwtyr lklhm 'nšn w'*wsp* yhwtr

   This benefited all men and will *in all* benefit [them].

Without doubt, the language of this text is Aramaic, but it contains a number of Iranian terms and some errors from the strict viewpoint of Aramaic linguistic usage. This fact has led philological research to assume that what we are dealing with here is an Iranian text written by Aramaic heterography.

As, however, the inscription contains inflected Aramaic nominal and verbal forms, there can be little doubt that the author of the text still intended to write Aramaic. Accordingly, the linguistic features, unusual from the viewpoint of Aramaic, are to be explained by the character of Aramaic as an intermediary language, permanently exposed to the interferences of the mediated languages.

In the Aramaic of Aśoka's rock and pillar edicts we must reckon with the interferences of three languages – Old Persian, Old Bactrian and Prakrit. For Old Persian influence on Aramaic, we have abundant evidence in the Aršāma letters and the Aramaic documents of Elephantine. In the Aramaic inscriptions of Aśoka Old Persian interference is limited to some important administrative terms: *hwnštwn* – Old Persian *hu-ništāvan-* 'good document', Biblical Aramaic *nštwn*, Imperial Aramaic *nštwn'* – and *krpty* = Old Persian *kāra-paθī-* 'army road' (from Old Persian *kāra-* 'army', unknown in Avestan, and Old Persian *paθī-* 'road' as against Avestan *paθa-*, *pantay-*, *paθ-* 'road').

The interference with Aramaic of 'Old Bactrian', that is, the language of ancient Bactria, was obviously very important and is therefore given a detailed separate analysis in a subsequent part of this chapter.

The interference of Prakrit is mainly felt on a semantic and syntactic level. The texts were translations of Prakrit originals, full of religious terms, which had no exact equivalents in Aramaic. The translators had to resort to semantic borrowings, as, for example, Prakrit *dhaṃma-* 'piety' = Aramaic *qšyṭ'* 'truth', Prakrit *pāpa-* 'evil' = Aramaic *mr''* 'malady', Prakrit *porānā pakiti* 'according to ancient rule' = Aramaic *'yk 'srhy ḥlqwt'* 'as destiny imposed', etc., or to the religious vocabulary of another Iranian language, different from Old Persian, as, for example, Prakrit *sacce* 'veracity' = Avestan *∂r∂zušā-* (original meaning, 'veracity'), Prakrit *guru-* 'master' = Avestan *mazišta-* 'the greatest', etc. There are simple transcriptions in Aramaic letters of Prakrit passages and Prakrit interference can be observed even on a syntactic level. The word order *b'lwl m'h* 'in the month Elul' cannot be explained either by Aramaic or by Iranian linguistic usage because the correct order of words would be *yrḥ 'lwl* in Aramaic and *m'h 'lwl* in Iranian. In Sanskrit and Prakrit, however, the word order is inverted, for example, *Māghamāse* 'in the month Māgha', *Pauṣamāsa-* 'in the month Pauṣa', etc. Consequently the phrase *b'lwl m'h* owes its word order to Indian Sanskrit or Prakrit interference.

The survival of Aramaic

The use of Aramaic script and language for administrative and economic records apparently survived up to the middle of the second century B.C. An Aramaic ostracon found at Ay Khanum (hitherto undeciphered) reads:

Column 1	Column 2
Line x + 1]*IIII*	Line x + 1 *zbyn XII kwnywk II*
x + 2]*šbwk X IIIII*	Line x + 2 *kwrkln ś XII ḥmwk [XX]X̱X̱*

Note: = faint letters (except *ḥ*, being the transcription of *ḥēθ*), [ ]= disappeared letters.

The record is written in two columns of which the upper parts are missing. The beginnings of lines x + 1 and x + 2 of Column 1 are also broken off but the contents can be restored. The text consists of an enumeration of names and quantities of grain. The keyword of the record is abbreviated in the form *ś*, which must represent Aramaic *ś‘rn* 'barley'. The text of the ostracon can thus be interpreted:

Column 1	Column 2
Line x + 1 [N.N.] *IIII*	Line x + 1 *Zbēn XII Kav Nēvak II*
x + 2 [*Ux*]*šebovak X VIIII*	x + 2 *Kur Kalān b(arley) XII equal to [XX]XX*

The measure for grain might have been the *’eφā* (36.44 l) which was probably mentioned in the lost first line. The indication *ś* 'barley' in line x + 2 of Column 2 suggests that another sort of grain (wheat, millet?) was mentioned earlier. The ostracon therefore represents a notice of the quantities of grain delivered by the enumerated proprietors to the treasury of Ay Khanum. The Iranian word *ḥmwk *hamōk* 'equal, like' introduces the total of the delivered grain.

The names of the proprietors deserve particular attention. *Zbēn* may be explained by Parthian *zbyn* 'attractive'. *Kav Nēvak* means 'Lord Brave', *kav* being the Eastern Iranian title *kavi-*, while the first component of the name *Kur Kalān* may be the Eastern Iranian *kur* 'youth, boy' and the second one may be compared to Parthian *kalān* 'great, big'. The restored name [*Ux*]*šebovak* also occurs on the Greek ostraca of Ay Khanum in the spelling *Oxeboakos* going back to Old Eastern Iranian **Uxšya-bavaka-* 'grain growing' (cf. Parthian *b’wg*, 'seed, grain, fruit') With the help of these names and of the word *hamōk* we gain a modest insight into the language spoken by the Iranian population of Ay Khanum just before the Yüeh-chih invasion.

The language of ancient Bactria

The exact character of the Iranian language spoken by the ordinary population of ancient Bactria has long been a tantalizing problem for linguistic research. In the fifth and the thirteenth rock edicts of Aśoka, the *Yoṇ a Kaṃ boja* are mentioned as neighbours of Gandhāra living within the borders of the Mauryan Empire. As the name *Yoṇ a* denotes the Bactrian Greeks, linguistic research has presumed that the Iranian elements in the Aramaic inscriptions found at Taxila, Laghman and Kandahar must represent the language of the Kaṃ bojas. However, this logical conclusion only defers a solution of the problem, because the language of the Kaṃ bojas is not known either. It is useless to guess that the language of the Kaṃ bojas (i.e the language spoken by the Iranian population of ancient Bactria) might have been some minor Eastern Iranian language like Ōrmuṛī or Parāčī, because the language, which provided the Iranian basis for Imperial Aramaic in the satrap's chancellery, could only be an important, widely spread language of Bactria. For this language of ancient Bactria, we have as evidence the following:

1. *The testimony of Yāska*

śavatir 'to go' ∼ Avestan *šav-* 'to go' as against Old Persian *šiyav-*, Old Indian *cyavate*.

2. *Iranian terms in the Aramaic inscriptions of Aśoka*

*'dbš-y' *∂dβeš-* 'quarrelsome' ∼ Avestan *d∂baēš-*, *ṭbaēš-*, *dvaēš-* 'to quarrel', *ṭ baēšah-*, *dvaēšah-* 'quarrel', *ṭ bišyant-* 'quarrelsome'.

*'rzwš *∂rzuš* ∼ Avestan *∂r∂zav-* (Nom. *∂r∂zūš*) 'true, right', *∂r∂zušā-* 'majority' – original meaning: 'veracity, truthfulness'.

*'wsp < *ā vispai* ∼ Avestan *ā* 'in', *vispa-* 'all'.

*bg < *baga-* ∼ Old Persian *baga-*, Avestan ∼ *bara-* 'lord, god'.

*dmydt-y < *dāmidāta-* ∼ Avestan *dāmi.dāta-* 'creature'.

*ḥmwk < *hama-vak-/*hama-uk-* 'equal, like < saying the same'.

*hwnštwn < *hu-nistāvan-* ∼ Old Persian **hu-ništāvan-* 'good document', represented by Biblical Aramaic *nštwn* Imperial Aramaic *nštwn*' 'document'.

*hwptysty *hu-paθyasti* 'good obedience' ∼ Avestan *paiti.a-stay-* 'obedience'.

*hwwrdh < *hu-vardaθa-* 'good growth' ∼ Avestan *var∂daθa-* 'growth, increase'.

*hww[yšt-y'] < *hvōišta-* 'elder' ∼ Avestan *hvōišta-* 'supreme, first, eldest'.

*m'h *māh-* 'month' ∼ Old Persian, Avestan *māh-* 'moon, month'.

*krpty *kāra-paθī* 'army road' ∼ Old Persian *kāra-* 'armed people, army', Old Persian *paθī-* 'road'.

*mzyšt-y' *mazišta-* 'elder' ∼ Avestan *mazišta-* 'the greatest'.

prbst **pari-basta-* 'bound' ∼ Avestan *band-* 'to bind', Pahlavi *parvastan*, *parvand-* (< **pari-band-*) 'to surround, enclose'.

prbsty **pari-bastay-* 'constraint'; see above.

ptyty **patitay-* ∼ Avestan *paititay-* 'discharge, expiation'.

ptyzbt **pati-zbāta-* 'forbidden' ∼ Avestan *zbā-* 'to call', PPfP *zbāta-*, Old Persian *patiy-zbā-* 'to prohibit, forbid'

shyty *sahyatai ∼ Avestan *sá͇ h-*, Old Persian *θah-* Pass 'to be called'.

šty **šātay-* ∼ Avestan *šātay-* 'happiness, joy', Old Persian *šiyātay-*.

trḥ'trh **θri-hāθra-* 'tripartite pinfold, caravanserai' ∼ Avestan */θray-θri-* 'three', *hāθra-* 'section, pinfold'.

zwn-y' **žīvana-* 'living being' ∼ Avestan *ǰva-* (Avestan spelling for *ǰīva-* 'living'), Avestan *ǰvana-* (Avestan spelling for *ǰīvana-* 'living').

3. *Bactrian names*

(In Greek transcription: (*ē* = ēta (η), *ō* = ōmega (ω), *y* = ypsilon (υ), *ou* = omicron + ypsilon (oυ)):

Aitatēs *Ētāt, by haplology from **Aitatāt-* 'glitter, lustre' ∼ Avestan *aēta-* 'glittering'.

Apama *Apamā 'supreme' < **Upamā-* ∼ Avestan *upəma-* 'highest'.

Artabazos **Arta-bāzu-* 'whose stay is Arta' ∼ Avestan *arəta-* 'right, law, holy right' and Avestan *bāzu-* 'arm, stay.'

Artanēs (read *Aryandēs* formerly) **Artāna-* 'righteous' (cf. Avestan *arəta-* above).

Artasouras **Arta-sūra-* 'mighty by Arta' ∼ Avestan *arəta-* 'holy right' and Avestan *sūra-* 'mighty'.

Atrosōkēs **Ātrə-sauka-* ∼ Avestan *ātrə.saoka-* 'firebrand'.

Barzandēs **Barzand-* ∼ Avestan *bərəzant-* 'high'.

Dataphernēs **Dāta-farnah-* 'who has glory by right' ∼ Avestan, Old Persian *dāta* 'right', Old Persian (from Median) *farnah-* 'glory'.

Itanēs **Vitana-* 'corpulent' ∼ Avestan *tan-* 'to extend'.

Katanēs **Kātana-* 'honourable' ∼ Avestan *kāta-* 'honoured'.

Mithroaxos **Miθra-vaxša-* 'advancing by Mithra' ∼ Avestan *vaxš-* 'to grow, rise, advance'.

Oxyartēs **Vaxšu-varta-* 'chosen by Vaxšu' ∼ Avestan *var-* 'to choose'.

Oxēboakos < **Uxšya-bavaka-* 'grain growing'; cf. above.

Oxydatēs < **Vaxšu-dāta-* 'begotten by Vaxšu'.

Orsodatēs < **Ṛšva-dāta-* 'legitimately begotten' ∼ Avestan *ərəšva-* 'legal, legitimate'.

Oumanēs < **Vohu-manah-* ∼ Avestan *Vohu-manah-*.

Xaranos < **Xšarana-* 'seedy' ∼ Saka *ṣara* 'seed', Ossetic *äxsär* 'nut'.

Parzos *Parza- < *Parča- 'donor'; cf. Old Indian *parc-* 'to mix, fill, increase, etc.', *parka-* 'mixture, gift'.

Rōxanē *Rōxšanā 'brightness'; cf. Avestan *raoxšnā-* 'light'.

Sinokratēs (Hellenized from *Sinochratēs) *Čina-xratu- 'who has wish for wisdom' ∼ Avestan *činah-* 'desire, wish', *xratu-* 'wisdom'.

Sōchrakēs (on a potsherd found at Dushanbe) *Suxrak 'red' ∼ Avestan *suxra-* 'red'.

Spitamenēs *Spita-manah- 'of splendid intelligence'.

[*Te*]*irixarēs* *Tīri-xšara- 'progeny [seed] of Tīr'; cf. above.

Hyspasinēs *Hu-spas-ina- 'keen observer, spy' or *Hispas-ina- ∼ Avestan *spas-*, Pres. *hispas-* 'to watch'.

In Aramaic transcription:

'*hwty* *Āhuti- 'press-hill, offering-hill' ∼ Avestan *ā* + *hūtay-* '*haoma*-pressing'.

['*ḥ*]*šbwk* *Uxšebovak < *Uxšya-bavaka-; cf. above.

zbyn < *Zbayana- 'calling, inviting, attractive'; cf. Man. Parthian *zbēn* 'attractive'.

kw *Kav 'valiant, prince' ∼ Avestan *Kavi-*.

kwr *Kur 'youth' ∼ Eastern Iranian *kuru-* 'youth, boy'.

kln *Kalān 'big' cf. Man. Parthian *kalān* 'big'.

nywk *Nēvak 'valiant, brave'; cf. Middle Persian *nēv* 'brave, valiant', *nēvak* 'good'.

trmd *Tarmād < *Tara-māda- 'oversized, great [hill]' ∼ Avestan *tarō* 'beyond, over', *mad-* 'to measure'.

w'šw *W̌ āšava < *Varta-van- 'charioteer' ∼ Avestan *vāša-* 'chariot'.

wḥšwprt * Vaxšu-frita- 'favoured by Vaxšu' ∼ Avestan *frāy-*, PPfP *frita-* 'to win the favour of a god'.

From among the fifty-six items of linguistic data discussed above, there are only some terms and names, namely: *huništāvan- 'good document', *kārapaθī- 'army road', *pati-zbā- 'to prohibit, forbid' – being a 'Median' loan-word in Old Persian itself – *Nēvak (Old Iranian *naiba- 'good, brave' is only attested in Old Persian so far), *Kalān (Parthian) which seem to be borrowings from Old Persian or Parthian, and a few others, such as *pari-basta- 'bound', *pari-bastay- 'constraint', *māh- 'month', which might also be of Old Persian origin.

The overwhelming majority (forty-eight out of fifty-six) reflect another Iranian language, different from Old Persian. On the testimony of Yāska, this Iranian language can be ascribed to the Kaṃ bojas living in the neighbourhood of Gandhāra. In Sanskrit and Pālī literature, the Kaṃ bojas were one of the sixteen great peoples of Indian geography. They killed worms, insects, moths, snakes and frogs and thought that they acquired religious merit by this activity. This clearly characterized them as Zoroastrians. They were ruled by

kings and became famous for their horse-breeding. Kauṭilya mentions the Kaṃ boja horse as one of the best breeds for war and speaks of the Kaṃ bojas' military organization and their warlike way of life. All elements of this description concerning the Kaṃ bojas fit excellently the ancient Bactrians.

Moreover, among the linguistic data quoted above, there are a series of special Avestan terms such as *∂rzušā- 'veracity', *dāmidāta- 'creature', *hupaθyasti- 'good obedience', *huvardaθa- 'good growth', *hvōišta- 'elder', *patitay- 'discharge, expiation', *sahyatai 'it is called', *šāti- 'happiness, joy', *hāθra-, in *θri-hāθra-, 'pinfold', *žīvana- 'living being'. The other part of the linguistic evidence (terms and names) similarly coincides with the language of the *Avesta*: šav- 'to go', *∂dβaiša- 'quarrelsome', *ā vispai 'in all', *baga- 'lord, god', *mazišta- 'elder', *Ētāt-, *Upamā-, *Artabāzu-, *Artasūra-, *Artāna-, *Barzand-, *Dātafarnah-, *Vitana-, *Kātana-, *Miθravaxša-, *Vaxšuvarta-, *Vaxšubāzu-, *Vaxšudāta-, *Uxšyabavaka-, *Ṛ švadāta-, *Vohumanah-, *Rauxšanā-, *Činaxratu-, *Suxraka-, *Spitamanah-, *Huspasina-, *Āhūti-, *Zbayana-, *Kavi-, *Kuru-, *Taramāda-, *Vāšavan-, *Vaxšufrita-. Perhaps the names *Xšarana-* and [*T*]*īrixšara-* represent another Eastern Iranian language.

The testimony of this linguistic data is unambiguous. The overwhelming majority of Iranian terms and names occurring in Aramaic and Greek documents of ancient Graeco-Bactria or mentioned as Bactrian in ancient Greek literature represent a language essentially identical to Avestan. Not even a dialectal difference can be observed between this linguistic evidence and the language of the *Avesta*; the two main dialects of Avestan are both reflected by the material.

On the basis of the linguistic evidence available at present, it therefore seems very likely that Avestan was the language spoken (perhaps in several variants or dialects) and used for administration in Graeco-Bactria and other eastern Iranian countries (such as later Sistan) and the Middle Iranian development of Avestan must have been the most important language in eastern Iran on the eve of the Saka and Yüch-chih invasion.

Greek language and script in Central Asia

Greek language and script had appeared in Central Asia long before the conquests of Alexander the Great. According to Herodotus, Darius I took the surviving Milesians to Susa after the capture of Miletus, and later settled them near the mouth of the Tigris, while the inhabitants of Barke were transferred to Bactria. Earlier historical research presumed that Hellenism was introduced into Central Asia by these earlier Greek settlers. The presence of Greeks in Central Asia of the Achaemenid period can hardly be denied, but the

general spread and use of Greek script and language and the rise of Greek culture were only the result of Hellenistic colonization. In the course of his military expedition against Spitamenes, by order of Alexander, Hephaestion settled Greek and Macedonian soldiers in the villages and cities of northern Bactria and Sogdiana (Arrian IV.16.3; 17.4). As a consequence of this colonization large territories of Central Asia became Hellenized and by way of Graeco-Iranian symbiosis the use of Greek script and language spread among the Bactrian aristocracy.

All remains of the Greek language discovered so far in Central Asia date from the Hellenistic age and represent the *koine*, the standard Hellenistic language. The Greeks of Central Asia must therefore have maintained their close relations with the Hellenistic kingdoms of the Near East until the rise of Parthia and the Roman conquest. The Greek texts found in Central Asia certainly reflect the same cultural level as was achieved in the great centres of Greek civilization. The best evidence for the high culture of the Bactrian Greeks is seen in the Greek translation of Rock Edicts 12 and 13 of Aśoka:

[.εὐ]σέβεια καὶ ἐγκράτεια κατὰ πάσας τὰς διατριβάς ·ἐγκρατὴς δὲ μάλιστά ἐστιν
ὃς ἄγ γλώσης ἐγκρατὴς ἦι. Καὶ μήτε ἑαυτοὺς ἐπα[ι]νῶσιν, μήτε τῶν πέλας
ψέγωσιν περὶ μηδενός· κενὸγ γάρ ἐστιν· καὶ πειρᾶσθαι μᾶλλον τοὺς πέλας ἐπαι-
νεῖν καὶ μὴ ψέψειν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. Ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς αὔξουσι
καὶ τοὺς πέλας ἀνακτῶνται· παραβαίνοντες δὲ ταῦτα ἀκλεέστεροί τε γίνονται
καὶ τοῖς πέλας ἀπέχθονται. Ὅ῀ δ'ἂν ἑαυτοὺς ἐπαινῶσιν, τοὺς δὲ πέλας ψέγωσιν
φιλοτιμότερον διαπράτονται, βουλόμενοι παρὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἐγλάμψαι, πολὺ δὲ
μᾶλλον βλάπτου[σι] ἑαυτούς. Πρέπει δὲ ἀλλήλους θαυμάζειν καὶ τὰ ἀλλήλων
διδάγματα παραδέχεσθα[ι]. Ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες πολυμαθέστεροι ἔσονται,
παραδιδόντες ἀλλήλοις ὅσα ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐπίσταται. Καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα
ἐπ[α]σκοῦσι ταῦτα μὴ ὀκνεῖν λέγειν ἵγα διαμείνωσιν διὰ παντὸς εὐσεβοῦντες.
Ὀγδόωι ἔτει βασιλεύοντος Πιοδάσσου κατέστρεπται τὴν Καλίγγην. Ἦν
ἐζωγρημένα καὶ ἐξηγμένα ἐκεῖθεν σωμάτων μυριάδες δεκαπέντε καὶ ἀναι-
ρέθησαν ἄλλαι μυριάδες δέκα καὶ σχεδὸν ἄλλοι τοσοῦτοι ἐτελεύτησαν. Ἀπ'
ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου ἔλεος καὶ οἶκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν· καὶ βαρέως ἤνεγκεν· δι' οὗ
τρόπου ἐκέλευεν ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἐμψύχων σπουδήν τε καὶ σύνταξιν πεποίηται
περὶ εὐσεβείας. Καὶ τοῦτο ἔτι δυσχερέστερον ὑπείληφε ὁ βασιλεύς· καὶ ὅσοι
ἐκεῖ ὥἴκουν βραμεναι ἢ σραμεναι ἢ καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς οἱ περὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν διατρί-
βοντες, τοὺς ἐκεῖ οἰκοῦντας ἔδει τὰ τοῦ βασιλέως συμφέροντα νοεῖν, καὶ διδάσ-
καλον καὶ πατέρα καὶ μητέρα ἐπαισχύνεσθαι καὶ θαυμάζειν, φίλους καὶ ἑταί-
ρους ἀγαπᾶν καὶ μὴ διαψεύδεσθαι, δούλοις καὶ μισθωτοῖς ὡς κουφότατα χρᾶ-
σθαι, τούτων ἐκεῖ τῶν τοιαῦτα διαπρασσομένων ἔί τις τέθνηκεν ἢ ἐξῆκται, καὶ
τοῦτο ἐμ παραδρομῆι οἱ λοιποὶ ἡγεῖνται, ὁ δὲ [β]ασιλεὺς σφόδρα ἐπὶ τούτοις
ἐδυσχέραινεν. Καὶ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσίν εἰσιν[

Translation of Rock Edict 12:

> . . . piety and self-control in all philosophical schools. But mostly self-possessed is that [man] who is master of his tongue. And they do neither praise themselves nor belittle their fellows in any respect. This is, namely, a vain thing. It is better to praise their fellows and not to belittle them in any way. Doing this they aggrandize themselves and captivate their fellows; transgressing this, however, they will be discredited and become odious in the eye of their fellows.

Who praise themselves and belittle their fellows, those behave too ambitiously: wanting to excel more than the others, the more they do harm to themselves. It is the correct thing to respect one another and to accept the lessons of each other. Doing this they enlarge their knowledge as far as they share with one another that which anyone knows. And one docs not hesitate about saying these to those who arc practising these in order that they do persist in exercising piety at all times.

Translation of Rock Edict 13:

In the eighth year of his reign Piodasss [= Priyadarśin = Aśoka] conquered Kaliṅga. A hundred and fifty thousand individuals were taken prisoner and deported from there and another hundred thousand were killed and almost the same number of individuals died. From that time on pity and repentance overcame him and he was heavily distressed. Therefore, he gave an order to abstain from [killing] the living beings and made endeavour and effort to exercise piety And the King considered even more grievous the following: as many *brāhmaṇas* and *śramaṇas* are living there, they have to recognize what is useful to the King and to respect and to honour their master, their father and their mother, to like their friends and fellows and not to deceive them, to use their slaves and servants as kindly as possible – if anybody died or was deported from among those who are living under such conditions there, and the others regard this as a matter of secondary importance, the King, however, was hotly angry with these. And that there are . . . with the other peoples . . .

On the basis of some stylistic features it is easy to see that Rock Edicts 12 and 13 of Aśoka were translated into Greek by two different translators. Both of them were profoundly erudite and used Greek philosophical terms in their translations. Thus, the phrase $ἀπέχέ\ σθαι\ τῶν\ ἐμφύχων$ 'to abstain from [killing] the living beings' reflects Pythagorean philosophy, while the terms $ἐγκράτεια$ 'self-control' and $γλώσης\ ἐγκρατής$ 'master of his tongue' go back to the Platonic school. Other expressions such as, for example, $δίδαγμα$ 'lesson', $πολυμθία$ 'polymathy', $ἐκλάμπειν$ 'to excel', $ἐμ\ παραδρομῆι\ ἐγεῖσθαι$ 'to consider a matter of secondary importance' characterize the vocabulary of Plato, Xenophon, Isocrates and Aristotle. The phrase o$πουδή$ $καì$ (written $σύνταξις$) occurs in Plato's *Symposium*.

Being well educated and widely read and both writing in *koine*, the two translators differed from each other in their stylistic ambitions. The translator of Rock Edict 12 claimed to be considered an erudite person, therefore he used the Attic form $διαπράτονται$(they behave) because the Attic forms in a text written in *koine* always reflected the writer's claim to erudition.

The other translator, trying to write pure *koine*, used the *koine* form $διαπράσσω$ instead of the Attic $διαπράττω$ and he created a verbal form $χατέστρεπται$, a hyperkoinism for $χατέστραπται$. The Greek text of Rock Edicts 12 and 13 of Aśoka shows the

importance of the Greek population living in Central Asia and permits a remarkable insight into their intellectual life, erudition and literary ambitions.

The Greek stone inscriptions of Ay Khanum and Takht-i Sangin are another interesting group. The Takht-i Sangin inscription was set up by an Iranian in honour of the god Oxos. Its text runs: (1) Εὐ χήν (2) ἀυέθηϰεν (3) ᾿Ατροσώϰης (4) ᾿῾Οωι 'Atrosokes dedicated his votive present to Oxos'.

While Greek inscriptions can be taken for granted in the Greek cities of Central Asia such as Ay Khanum, the votive inscription from Takht-i Sangin is surprising because the donor bears an Iranian name and dedicates his votive present to an Iranian deity but does so in Greek script and language. The peculiarity of this attitude becomes clear when we compare the dedication of Takht-i Sangin with the Besnagar pillar inscription of Heliodorus, the ambassador of King Antialcidas. Heliodorus was a Greek who became a worshipper of Vishnu and obviously had a good knowledge of Brāhmī script and Prakrit language as he was sent to negotiate with King Kosiputra Bhāgabhadra. Thus, as a half-Indianized Greek, he erected the Garuda pillar inscribed with a text written in Brāhmī script and Prakrit language.

A Prakrit inscription in honour of an Indian deity prepared by a Greek worshipper of the Indian god can be taken for granted. But in Takht-i Sangin it was an Iranian who used Greek script and language for the dedication of his votive present to the Iranian god Vaxšu. He kept his own native religious ideas and was not Hellenized in this respect; but he probably had some knowledge of Greek and, for lack of a Bactrian written language, used Greek for his dedication, which must also have been understandable to the priests of the sanctuary of Vaxšu. This single inscription clearly attests the spread of Greek script and language among the Bactrian aristocracy and priesthood.

The use of Greek script and language was, however, not limited to the public life of the Greek cities and to the needs of the Iranian sanctuaries. Greek was also introduced into the administration as we can see from the ostraca found in the treasury at Ay Khanum. Its occurrence on the ostraca of Iranian subaltern treasurers as, for example, Artanes, Barzandes, Oxeboakos and Oxy-bazos proves that Iranians working as officers in the Graeco-Bactrian administration were well acquainted with the Greek script and language. If the fragmentary name *]šbwk* on the Aramaic ostracon discussed above is correctly restored as *['ḥ]šbwk < *Uxšya-bavaka-*, then the person mentioned might have been identical with *Oxēboakos* occurring on the Greek ostraca as one of the subaltern treasurers at Ay Khanum. In that case, we can assume that the Iranian treasury officers were acquainted with both Aramaic and Greek chancellery practice, and the two scripts and languages were used in parallel in the Graeco-Bactrian administration.

Recent finds of inscribed potsherds at Birkot and Udegram (Swat, Pakistan) prove that Greek language and script were still being used there in the second and first centuries B.C. The Birkot inscription consists of two names which may be restored as (1) Eεν θυ]δή[μωι] (2) [᾽Αμ]ύντα[ς] (1) To [Euthy]de[mos] – (2) Am]ynta[s], that is, it qualifies the pot as a present given by [Am]ynta[s] to [Euthy]de[mos]. On the Udegram potsherd the genitive case of the Greek word νοῦς has been preserved, forming the second part of a compound name like [᾽Αντι]νόου and indicating the owner of the pot.

There are some indications that the use of Greek survived the fall of the Graeco-Bactrians. At Dilberjin, two inscribed amphorae were found in Room 20. They belong to the fourth building period of the room, which seems to belong to the age of the Great Kushans, since the abandonment of the room between the second and third building periods reflects the events of the Kushan conquest. The inscriptions written in Greek run as follows:

(1) φβροχνδιπσσ (2) φβροχνσσ.

They can only be interpreted on the assumption that they consist of abbreviations:

(1) φ[ορά] βροχ[ίδος] ν διπ[λᾶ] σ[η]σ[άμου]

(2) φ[ορά] βροχ[ίδος] ν [διπλᾶ] σ[η]σ[άμου]

'The load of the vessel: 50 *diploun* sesame [oil]'.

After the rise of the Kushan Empire, the Greek scribes, masons and artisans were working for the new Iranian aristocracy. A Greek architect or mason is still mentioned with the Greek phrase δία Π αλαμήδου 'by Palamedes' in one of the Bactrian inscriptions from Surkh Kotal – a phrase that provides evidence for the survival of the Greeks and their language in the Kushan Empire up to the end of the second century A.D.

The language of the Southern Sakas

In the course of the ethnic movements caused by the rise of the Hsiung-nu nomadic empire, four Saka tribal groups settled on the territory of Parthia and the Later Kushan Kingdom, namely, the Sakas of Sistan, the Sakas of Gandhāra and the Panjab, the Sakas ruling in Mathura and the Sakas of Surashtra and Malwa. For the language of Saka groups, we have only the scattered evidence of names and terms occurring in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī inscriptions. Relatively abundant are the data for the Sakas of Mathura, while for the Sakas of Sistan we only have very scanty evidence.

The Sakas who invaded Bactria appear in the sources under different names, namely, Indian *Śaka-muruṇḍa-*, Chinese *Sai-wang* Greek **Sakarau-kai* Latin **Sa < ca > raucae*. Of these both Indian *Śaka-muruṇḍa-* and Chinese *Sai-wang* mean 'Saka king' and 'Saka

kings', respectively, in so far as *muruṇḍa-* can be regarded as the Saka title for 'lord, king' and Chinese *wang* as the translation of it. As both the Chinese and the Graeco-Latin sources mention the same peoples as conquerors of Bactria, we have to regard the *Sakaraukai* as identical with the *Śaka-muruṇḍa-* and the *Sai-wang* respectively. Accordingly, the element *-rauk-* in the name *Sakaraukai* must have the same meaning as Saka *muruṇḍa-* and Chinese *wang*. In fact, the word can be compared to Khotanese Saka *rūkya-* 'commander, lord', going back to **rau-kya-*. Saka *muruṇḍa-*, too, has an equivalent in Khotanese Saka: *rrund-* 'possessing power, lord, king'. As it is proved by Saka *muruṇḍa-*, both Khotanese terms *rrund-* and *rūkya-* derive from the root **mrav-/*mru-* 'to declare, to order' as **mrav-ant-* and **mrav-aka-/*mrau-ka-* respectively. Old Iranian **mr-* was reduced to *r-* in Khotanese Saka, while in the language of the Sakas of Gandhāra the initial *mr-* was preserved. It is a remarkable fact that the outcome of Old Iranian **mrav-ant-* and **mrav-aka-* was different in the Western and the Eastern Saka tribal groups. This phenomenon clearly supports the theory according to which the **Sakā mravakā* (> **Sakā raukā*) and the **Sakā Mravantah* (> **Sakā murunda*) – both meaning 'Saka lords' or 'Saka kings' – invaded Bactria and Gandhāra separately. The name 'Saka lords/Saka kings' originally denoted the Saka tribal aristocracy who were alone able to wander away from their territory while the common people remained at home.

Beside the term **rauka-* 'lord, king', the language of the Sakas, settled in Sistan, seems to be represented by the following names, or titles:

Aya (Gāndhārī form), *Azēs* (in Greek script) < **Aza-* 'leader', Kroraina *hinajha-* (**hīnāza-*) 'commander of army' title of the King of Khotan.

Ayiliśa (Gāndhārī form), *Azilisēs* (in Greek script) < **Azalīźa-* 'commander-in-chief; literally: leading commander'; **līźa-* represents a variant of *rīźa-* 'desiring, commanding'.

Śpalagadama 'commander of army': *spala* (*śpala* is a Gāndhārī form) is obviously borrowed from Parthian **spāδa* 'army', *gadama* < **kātama-* 'commander' from kā- 'to desire'.

Śpalahora 'commander of army': *spala* 'army' < Parthian **spāδa* 'army', Khotanese Saka *spātā* 'military official' may also be an adoption of Parthian **spāδa-pati-* 'commander of army'. *Hora* < **haura* is the same word as Khotanese Saka *haura-* 'leader, commander'.

Śpaliriśa 'in command of army': *riśa* spelling for *rīźa-* 'desiring, commanding', Khotanese Saka *rriś-* 'to desire'; for the meaning cf. Sogdian *ryz-kr'k* 'sovereign'.

For the language of the Sakas of Gandhāra and the Panjab the following names and terms may be quoted:

Muruṇḍa 'lord, king'.

Kṣaharāta is not a name but a title as is proved by its joint use together with *kṣatrapa*: Liaka Kusulaka is styled as *kṣaharatasa cukṣasa cạ kṣatrapasa* in the Taxila copper plate, *Bhūmaka* is named *kṣaharātasa kṣatrapasa* on his coins, similarly Nahapāna bears the titles *rāño kṣaharātasa kṣatrapasa* in the Nāsik inscriptions. *Kṣaharāta* may go back to Old Iranian **xšaθra-pati-* 'lord of the country', the phonetic development of which was similar to that of Khotanese Saka *spātā* 'military official' < **spāδa-pati-*. Both elements of the term survived in Khotanese Saka: *kṣāra-* 'power, dominion' (< **kṣahra-* < **xšaθra-*) and *-vata-* 'lord' in *pharṣavata-* 'judge' < **fraša-pati-*. *Kṣaharāta-* (< **kṣahra-vata-*) may be the Saka synonym of Old Indian *kṣatrapa-* 'protector of the country'. This would best explain the joint use of the two terms on coins and in inscriptions.

Moga, *Moa* (in Prakrit inscriptions), *Maues* (in Greek script) < **mava-*, **mauka-* 'tiger, hero', Khotanese Saka *mauya-*, *muyi-* 'tiger', Sogdian *myw* 'tiger' < **mavya-*.

Liaka < **rya-ka-* 'youth', Khotanese Saka *rya-* 'youth'.

Kusulaka < **Kuzula-ka-* 'striving, ambitious, energetic', Khotanese Saka *kūys-* 'to seek, search'.

Patika Gāndhārī spelling for Saka **Padika* 'leader', Khotanese Saka *patä*, *patäna* 'before, in front of'.

Jihoṇika < **Jihonyaka-* 'benefactor', Khotanese Saka *jehuñ* a-, *gyehāñ* a- future participle, to *jeh-*, *jih-* 'to heal'.

Manigula < **Mānya-kula-* 'delightful progeny', Khotanese Saka *mānya* 'delighted' and *-kula-* 'progeny' in *ysarkula-*.

Arajhaṃ da < * *āra-zāta-* 'noble-born', Khotanese Saka *āra-* 'worthy, noble', *ysātä* 'born'.

Denipa < **Daina-pavā* 'protector of the religion', Khotanese Saka *pā-* 'to protect', Avestan *daēnā-* 'religion'.

Horaṣada 'rejoicing, rich in gift', Khotanese Saka *hora-*, *haura-* 'gift', *tsāta-* 'rich'. Gandhāra Saka *ṣada* 'rejoicing, rich' may also be a borrowing from Parthian or Bactrian *šād*. The joint use of the two terms also occurs in Khotanese Saka: *haura tsāttāña yanāka* 'maker of gifts, riches'.

Jhaṃ danama < **Zāta-nāman-* 'famous by birth', Khotanese Saka *ysā-* (< **ysāta-* cf. Sanskrit *jātam* 'birth, origin'), and *nāma-* 'name', *nāma-tsuta-* 'famous'.

Damijada < **Dāmi-zāta-* 'begotten by the creator', Avestan *dāmay-* 'creator', Khotanese Saka *ysāta-* 'born'.

Veśpasi < * *Vayaspasi* < **Baga-spasa-* 'servant of the Lord/God'; Khotanese Saka *υυūυ-* < **baga-* in *υυūvayau* 'of royal origin', *spaśś-* 'to look', *spaśa* 'observer'.

Veśpasia < **Vayaspasika-* < **Baga-spas-ika-* 'servant of the Lord/God'.

Hiye (former reading *hipe)* 'master, *svāmin-*', Khotanese Saka *hiye* 'master, *svāmin-*'.

Achia (former reading *Adhia*) < *$\bar{A}\hat{c}ayaka$- 'observant, reverent', Khotanese Saka *ācyavaṃ dë* 'observant, reverent' (< *$\bar{a}caya$-vant-).

Horamurta 'lord of gifts, *dānapati-*', Khotanese Saka *horahaura* 'gift', *murta* < *$mraut\bar{a}$ < *mrau-tar- 'lord, ruler', Khotanese Saka *rautcū* (< *mrauta- čauna- 'commandant, ruler').

Recently Saka names and words have been discovered in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of Chilas, which may be connected with the linguistic remains of the Sakas of Gandhāra. In this new material we find the name of the Saka king Moga (see above) and the terms *śaa* (or *śao* 'king') < *śaha- with the palatalization characteristic of Saka, going back to Old Iranian *xšayaθiya-, and *śae* 'royal' (< *śāhiya-).

The language of the third Saka group ruling at Mathura can be characterized by the following linguistic data:

Saγasthana- 'Saka-land' < *Saka- ethnic name and Gāndhārī *sthana-* 'home, land'.

Horamurṇḍaga < *Hora-mrunda-ka- 'lord of gifts, *dānapati-*', Khotanese Saka *hora-*, *haura-* 'gift', *rrund-* (< *mrund-) 'lord, king'.

Horaka-, shortened form of *hora-mrunda* 'lord of gifts, *dānapati-*', Khotanese Saka *haurāka* 'donor, giving'.

Kṣaharāta- < *xšaθra-pati- 'lord of the country'.

Viśvasika, *υiśυ aśika* (a title, only borne by persons of foreign, non-Indian, descent) < *Baga-spas-ika- 'servant of the Lord/God'; cf.*Veśpasi* above.*Viśυasika* represents a hyper-Sanskritized form.

Ulāna 'high-born', Khotanese Saka *ula* 'up' + the suffix *-āna-*.

Rǎjūvula, Sanskritized form of *Rajūla* < *Rāzūla < *Rāza-vara- 'ruling king', *rāza- 'directing, ruling, ruler', Khotanese Saka *rrays-* 'to direct, rule', *rraysaa-* 'official title', *razaka-* 'ruling, ruler', *vara-* 'excellent, strong'; for the meaning cf. Tocharian B *walo* 'ruler'.

Śuḍasa, *Śoḍāsa* 'who kept the good acts in memory' < *śuḍa- < *śuratāti- 'goodness, good acts', Khotanese Saka *śśuru*, *śuru* 'good', beside *śśära-* 'good', *śśäḍe* 'goodness, good acts' (< *śśäratāti-*) and *āsā* 'kept in memory'.

KharapallānaCharobalano (in Greek script) < *xāra-valāna- 'splendid youth', Khotanese Saka *khāra-* (in *khārāva-* 'shining'), *vala-ka* 'young'.

Hagāna < *Frakāna- 'leader, chief', Avestan *fraka-* 'forward, adjective' + *-āna-*, Khotanese Saka *hā* < *frāk 'forward'.

Hagāmaṣa < *Fraka-amaxša- 'whose chariot proceeds in front', *Haga- < *fraka-* 'forward, adjective', Khotanese Saka *hā < *frāk* 'forward', *-amaṣa- < *amaxša-* 'chariot', Khotanese Saka *maśpa* 'road, way' *< *amaxšya-pāda-* 'cart-path'.

Arṭa < *Arθya- 'pious', Avestan *ašya-* (*< *arθya-*) 'pious'.

Piśpasri w. *< *Vēspasi- < *Baga-spasi-* 'servant-girl of the Lord/God'; cf. *Veśpasi.*

Abuhola w. *< *Abva-hora-* 'giving abundant gift', Khotanese Saka *abvātta* 'abundant', *hora-*, *haura-* 'gift'.

Kharaosta, Charahostei (in Greek script, genitive) *< *Xāra-hōsta-* 'splendid, mighty', *hosta- < *hauvasta-*, Khotanese Saka *hauvasta-* 'powerful'.

Kamuia w. *< *Kāma-uya-* 'who looks down upon the lust', Khotanese Saka *uy-* 'to survey, look down upon'.

Khalamasa < *Xāra-masah- 'splendid greatness', Khotanese Saka *mase < *masāh* 'greatness'.

Maja 'delightful', Khotanese Saka *māja* 'delightful'.

Hayuara < *Hadabāra- 'helper, companion' (literally: 'riding together'), Khotanese Saka *bār-* 'to ride'.

Hana w. *< *Xana-* 'smiling', Khotanese Saka *khan-* 'to laugh, smile'.

Ayasi (*Kamuia*) w. *< *Azazi* 'lady', Khotanese Saka *aysāṃ je* 'girl', *eysāja* 'daughter of a minister'.

Nada 'leader', Khotanese Saka *nada-* 'leader'.

Diaka < *Diyāka- 'supervisor', Khotanese Saka *dai-/ di-* 'to see', inf. *diyāna-*.

Nauluda < *Nama-rauda- 'worship-heightening', Khotanese Saka *nauda* 'obeisance, worship' *< *nama-ta-*, *rruv-* 'to grow' (*< *raud-*).

Kalui < *Kaluka- 'noble', Khotanese Saka *kala-* 'excellent'.

Kusulua Patika cf. above.

Mevaki < *Mavya-ka- 'tiger, hero', Khotanese Saka *mauya-*, *muyi* 'tiger'.

Miyika < *Mayaka- 'prosperous', Khotanese Saka *ggumai* 'at will' *< *vi-m-ÇŐy-ÇŐ-* 'pleased'.

Khardaa < *Xrata-ka- 'wise', Old Iranian *xratu-* 'wisdom', Khotanese Saka *gratä* 'instruction, advice' *< *xrata-* (replacing *xratu-*).

Khalaśamuśa < *Xāra-śāma-ča- 'of shining face', Khotanese Saka **khāra-* 'in *khārāva-* 'shining'), *śśāman-* 'face'.

Muki < *Mava-ka- 'tiger, hero', Khotanese Saka *mauya-*, *muyi* 'tiger'.

The linguistic evidence for the Sakas of Malwa (Ujjayinī) is again modest:

Kṣaharāta < *xšaθra-pati- 'lord of the country'.

Ysamotika < *Zama-pati-ka- 'landlord', Khotanese Saka *ysama-* 'earth'.

*Dāmaysada < *Dāmi-zāta-* 'begotten by the Creator', Avestan *dāmay-* 'Creator',Khotanese Saka *ysāta-* 'born'.

Nahapāna 'protector of the clan', Khotanese Saka **nāha-* 'navel' (genitive singular *nehä*), *-pānä* 'keeper', *pā-* 'to protect'.

CaṣṭanaTiastanes (in Greek script) 'master', Khotanese Saka *caṣṭeṃ* (< **caṣṭana-*) 'master as a proper name'.

*Uṣavadāta- < *Ṛ śva-dāta-* 'rightly created', Avestan *∂r∂šva-* 'right', Khotanese Saka *dāta-* 'placed, established; law'.

*Āḍuthuma < *Artava-tauxma-* 'offspring of a righteous man', Khotanese Saka *ttīma-* (< **tauxman-*) 'seed'.

Scanty as it is, this evidence does permit us to form some idea about the language of the Saka groups settled on the territory between Sistan and Malwa. The language of the Sakas of Sistan was apparently influenced by Parthian as the borrowing of the Parthian term *spāε a* 'army' testifies. During the reigns of Azes I, Azilises and Azes II the power and influence of this Saka group extended eastwards as far as Taxila, and there were obviously some linguistic contacts between the Saka groups of Sistan and Gandhāra. Notwithstanding, the differences between them are also apparent. Such terms as *muruṇḍa*, *kṣaharāta*, *hiye*, *veśpasika*, *horamurta*, *horamurṇḍaga*, *caṣṭana*, etc. never appear to the west of Gandhāra.

On the other hand, from the evidence of the names and terms used on the territory of both Gandhāra and Mathura, the close ties between the Saka groups of these two countries are evident. Even though linguistic evidence for the Sakas of Malwa is very limited, it nevertheless becomes clear that they were related to the Saka groups of Gandhāra and Mathura. It follows that even if the four Saka groups of Sistan, Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa were in contact with each other, they represented two different Saka dialects – the dialect of Sistan and that of Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa. Established on the basis of names and terms, this division corresponds exactly to the distribution of the titles **rauka-* (in *Sakā raukā)* and *muruṇḍa-* (in *Sakā mrunda*) and probably reflects two waves of Saka immigration, proceeding by two different routes to the south.

Similarly significant is the comparison of Southern Saka vocabulary with northern, Khotanese Saka (S = Sistan, G = Gandhāra, M = Mathura, U = Ujjayinī and Malwa):

	Southern Saka	*Khotanese Saka*
G	*achia* (**āčayaka-*) 'observant, reverent'	*ācya-vaṃ d*'observant, reverent'
M	*abu* (< **abva-*) 'abundant'	*abvātta* 'abundant'
M	*amaṣa* 'chariot'	*maś-* (< **amaṣya-*) 'chariot'
S	*aya* (< **aza-*) 'leader'	**-aza* (Kharoṣṭhī *-ajha*) 'leader'
M	*ayasi* (< **azazi*) 'lady'	*ᵃysāṃ je, eysāja-* 'noble girl'
S	*ayiliśa* (< **aziliźa-*) 'commander-in-chief'	–
G	*ara* (< **āra*) 'noble'	*āra* 'worthy, noble'
M	*arṭa* (< **arθya-*) 'pious'	–
U	*āḍu-* (< **artava-*) 'righteous'	–
M	*-uia* 'looking down upon'	*uy-* 'to look down upon'
M	*ulāna* 'high-born'	*ula* 'up'
U	*uṣava-* 'right'	–
M	**-hosta* 'mighty'	*hauvasta* 'powerful'
M	*kam-* (< **kāma-*) 'lust'	–
M	*kalui* (< **kaluka-*) 'noble'	*kala-* 'excellent'
GM	*kusuluka, kusulua* (**kuzuluka*) 'energetic'	*kūys-* 'to seek, search'
GMU	*kṣahar-* (**xšahr-*) 'country'	*kṣāra-* 'power, dominion'
GMU	*kṣaharāta-* (< **xšahra-vata-*) 'lord of the country'	–
M	*khara-* (**xāra-*) 'splendid'	*khārāva-* 'shining'
M	*khardaa-* (**xrataka-*) 'wise'	*gratä* (**xrata-*) 'wisdom'
M	*khala-* (**xāla-*) 'splendid'	*khārāva-* 'shining'
G	*-gula* 'progeny'	*-kula* 'progeny'
S	*-gadama* (**kātama-*) 'commander'	–
U	*caṣṭana* 'master'	*caṣṭeṃ* 'master'
M	*-jada* (**zāta-*) 'begotten'	*ysāta-* 'born'
G	*jihoṇika* 'benefactor'	*jeh-, jih-, jehuña-* 'to heal'
G	¹*jhaṃ da* (**zāta-*) 'born'	*ysāta-* 'born'
G	²*jhaṃ da-* (**zāta-*) 'birth'	*ysā-* (< **ysāta-*) 'birth'
U	*-thuma* (**thūma- < tauxma-*) 'offspring'	*ttīma-* (< **tūma- < *tauxma-*) 'seed'
G	*dami-* 'Creator'	–
U	*-dāta* 'created'	*dāta-* 'established'
U	*dāma-* 'Creator'	–
M	*diaka*'supervisor'	*dai-/di-, diyāna-* 'to see'
G	*deni-* 'religion'	–
M	*nada* 'leader'	*nada-* 'leader'
G	*nama* (**nāma*) 'name'	*nāma* 'name'
U	*naha-* (**nāha-*) 'navel, clan'	**nāha-* 'navel'
M	*nau-* 'worship'	*nau-da* 'obeisance, worship'
G	*-pa* (< **pavā*) 'protector'	*pā-* 'to protect'
GM	*patika-* 'leader'	*patä, patāna* 'before, in front of'
M	*-pallāna -balano* (**valāna-*) 'youth'	*valaka* 'young'
U	*-pāna* 'protector'	*-pānä* 'keeper'; *pā-* 'to protect'
M	*maja* (**māja*) 'delightful'	*māja* 'delightful'

G	*mani* (< **mānya-*) 'delightful'	*mānya* 'delighted'
G	*mava-* 'tiger, hero'	*mauya-* 'tiger'
M	*-masa* 'greatness'	*mase* 'greatness'
M	*muki* (< **mava-ka-*) 'tiger, hero'	*muyi* (< **mavya-*) 'tiger'
GM	*muruṇḍamurṇḍaga* 'lord, king'	*rrund-* 'lord, king'
G	*-murta* (< **mrautā*) 'lord, ruler'	*rautcū* (< **mrauta-ča-una-*) 'commandant, ruler'
G	*moga, moa* (< **mavaka-*), 'tiger, hero'	*muyi* (< **mavya-*) 'tiger'
M	*miyika* (< **mayaka-*) 'prosperous'	*ggu-mai* 'at will'
M	*mevaki* (< **mavyaka-*) 'tiger, hero'	*muyi* (< **mavya-*) 'tiger'
U	*-ysada* (< **zāta-*) 'begotten; cf. G *-jada*'	*ysatä* 'born'
U	*ysam-* 'earth'	*ysama-* 'earth'
M	*raj-* (**rāza-*) 'ruling, ruler'	*rraysaa-* 'official title'
S	*-riśa-* (**riźa-*) 'commanding'	*rriś-* 'to desire'
S	*-rauka-* 'lord, ruler'	*rūkya-* 'commander, lord'
G	*liaka* 'youth'	*rya* 'youth'
S	*-liśa* (**liźa-*) 'commanding'	*rris-* 'to desire'
M	*-luda* (**lūda- < *rauda-*) 'heightening'	*rruv-* 'to grow'
M	*-vula* (< **vara-*) 'ruler, king'	*vara-* 'excellent, string'
GM	*ve-* (< **vaya- *baga-*) 'lord, god'	*vvūva-* (< **vava- < *baga-*) 'lord'
M	*-śamu-* (< **śāma-*) 'face'	*śśāman-* 'face'
M	*śuḍ-/śoḍ-* 'goodness'	*śśäḍe* 'goodness'
S	*śpalagadama* 'commander of army'	–
S	*śpalahora* 'commander of army'	–
S	*śpaliriśa* 'in command of *army*'	–
G	*ṣada* 'rejoicing, rich'	*tsāta-* 'rich'
GM	*-spasika* 'servant'	*spaśa* 'observer'
M	*haga-* 'forward'	*hā* (< **hāk*) 'forward'
M	*hagāna-* 'leader'	–
M	*hana* (**xana*) 'smiling'	*khan-* 'to laugh, smile'
M	*hayuara* 'helper, companion'	–
G	*hiye* 'master'	*hiye* 'master'
GM	[1]*hora-* 'gift'	*hora-, haura-* 'gift'
SM	[2]*hora-* 'lord, commander'	*haura-* 'commander'
M	*horaka* 'lord of gifts'	*haurāka* 'donor, giving'
M	*horamurṇḍaga* 'lord of gifts'	–
G	*horamurta* 'lord of gifts'	–
M	*-hola* 'gift'	*hora-* 'gift'

On the basis of this comparison it becomes clear that the Saka groups of Sistan, Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa on the one hand, and the population of Khotan (and Tumšuq) on the other hand, spoke closely related dialects of the same language. The Southern Sakas preserved the common Saka social terminology well: *thuma* 'offspring', *hora* 'lord', *-gula* 'progeny', *nāha* 'clan', *nada* 'leader', **azazi* 'lady', *hiye* 'lord', *rāza* 'ruler', *caṣṭana* 'master', *kalui* 'noble', *aza* 'leader', *muruṇḍa* 'lord, king', *rauka-* 'lord, ruler', *murta* 'lord', *xšahr* 'country' and *ve-*'lord, god'. It is a remarkable fact that they also maintained the ancient religious vocabulary as, for example, *arṭa* 'pious', *āḍu* 'righteous', *uṣava* 'right', *dami* 'Creator', *den* 'religion', *ve* 'god', which was replaced by Buddhist terminology in Khotanese Saka. Other archaic features in Gandhāra and Mathura Saka may be the retaining of initial *mr-* in contrast to the Saka dialects of Sistan and Khotan where initial *m* of this consonant cluster disappeared as well as the development *-aux- > -ū-*, while in Khotanese Saka a further shift *ū > ī* took place.

However, there are also some innovations in sound system and vocabulary of the Southern Saka dialects. They borrowed some important terms like *spala* 'army', *spasa* 'servant' and *śada* 'happy' from Parthian or Bactrian and created a new terminology to denote the ruling aristocracy as, for example, *kṣ aharāta*, *hayuara*, *horaka*, *horamurta*, *horamurṇḍaga*, *aziliśa*, *spalahora*, *spalagadama*, *spaliriśa*. A further striking phenomenon is the phonetic change *r > l* which often occurs (cf. *-luda liaka -liśa - hola khala-*, *-vula*). Perhaps the strengthening of the role of *l* in the phonemic system of Southern Saka is due to the influence of Bactrian and Indian languages in which the phoneme *l* was rather frequent. Thus, however scanty they may be, the linguistic remains of the Sakas settled in Sistan, Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa furnish valuable information about the Southern Saka dialects and their relations to Khotanese Saka.