The Approaching End of the Relict Southeast Iranian Languages Örmuri and Paráčí in Afghanistan

INTRODUCTION

On the eastern edge of the Iranian plateau there is a linguistic area remarkable in many respects. It is not only marked by ancient and uninterrupted contacts with Iranian and Indo-Aryan languages and by a multiplicity of languages reflecting the multitude of ethnic groups, but also by the coexistence of three disparate linguistic levels: an ancient level, that of the Kafir and Dardic languages, scarcely noticed by the new arrivals; a second, of which today only two languages are flourishing, the Örmuri and the Paráčí; and a more recent level constituted by the last arrivals, the Paštó and the Persian languages.

As at numerous other points of the Iranian plateau, one is witnessing a progressive reduction in linguistic diversity. Economic growth and political unification are going hand in hand with the elimination of languages which have ceased to be or which did not succeed in becoming local, national, or official languages.

Here as elsewhere one invokes a number of evolutionary phenomena, planned or not. The strengthening of central power, the development of means of communication, the rise of mass media, making the population literate, the intermixing of the population, particularly by the required military service and by the moving of laborers indispensable for the works of public utility, the spontaneous or forced assimilation of the minorities, etc., are also factors of the economic, political, and social framework in which the authoritarian promotion of certain privileged languages and the elimination of others is manifested.

The confines of this article and the nature of our inquiry, essentially devoted to the eastern edge of the Iranian plateau, do not permit us to study this process in its entirety nor at all the points where it has
appeared in the past and where it manifests itself today. The Iranian world, which includes Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Paštunistan, and Soviet Tajikistan, covers, in fact, an immense area where about ten languages and about a hundred dialects were and are spoken. The problems brought up by the linguistic situation are such that it does not seem that a single man can master them: certain of these languages are attested by written documents in about thirty different writing systems and already have a history which goes back 2,500 years; the others in use today, have not yet been completely described.

In the framework of these studies on the theme “language death” we will be content with bringing a concrete testimony illustrating the sociocultural conditions in which two residual languages of the eastern edge of the Iranian plateau are heading toward disappearance, thus putting an end to the existence of the group of Iranian languages called the Southeast group. These two languages, the Ōrmuri and the Parāči are, in our present state of knowledge, both located south of the line of division of the waters of the Hindukuš. In contact with the large local and national languages, the Pašto and the Persian of Afghanistan or Dari they are doomed to disappear in the near future. This is at least the conclusion to which we have been led as a consequence of studies carried out on location during recent years. This near end which is already heralded by others as far as Ōrmuri is concerned, likewise threatens Parāči for other reasons and in other conditions.

We will thus try to describe and, insofar as possible, to analyze the respective situations of these two relict languages. G. Morgenstierne, their discoverer, gave a grammatical and lexicological description of them as early as 1929. But in the course of the last fifteen years we have had the occasion to follow his efforts, which permits us to present here, for each of these languages, on the one hand an analysis of its natural environment and of its sociocultural environment and, on the other hand, a study of the process of disappearance in which each of them is engaged in its own way.

For this we will examine all of the information known concerning their past, the essential traits characterizing their present situation, and finally, we will attempt to anticipate the future on the basis of current facts such as appear in the socioeconomic profile of the two multilingual groups doomed to lose their ethnic identity in the near future.

In reality Ōrmuri and Parāči are the only extant Southeast Iranian languages located south of the line of division of the waters of Hindukuš, to the west of the Kónar river, to the north of the Kábol river, and to the east of the valley of Súlang, of which the only residual representatives today are Ōrmuri (Orm.) and Parāči (Par.).

The two relict languages of the southeast, occupy two triangular zones with the apexes pointing to each other in the surroundings of Caboul, Par. to the north and Orm. to the south. It is probably there that the two conquering languages, Pašto and Persian, which have become large local and national languages, took them by surprise and displaced them little by little. There may have been other languages, but they are already dead and no traces of them have been preserved.

As we can speak of the death only of that which we know, in the case of that which exists, we will speak only of Ōrmuri and of Parāči while trying to describe their present situation in order to show better how they are dying.

**THE SITUATION OF ŌRMURI**

Ōrmuri is spoken at two points of the oriental edge of the Iranian plateau.

A) In Kánigrám, a village of Waziristan south of Pakistan, Orm. šor, literally “the city”, where the Wazir also live as well as the Mahṣud who all speak Pašto. The Ōrmuri speakers, who number a thousand, designate themselves Borki or Braki (Baraki). Some of them consider themselves as sádat, descendants of the Prophet. All the men are bilingual or trilingual (Ōrmuri, Pašto mahṣudi, and Hindko, which is a variant of Sindhi). Some girls speak only Ōrmuri, but later they all learn Pašto. Ōrmuri is the maternal and domestic language of an ethnic group which is relatively homogeneous and more important and richer than that of the Mahṣud, which is on an equal footing with its neighbors, the Wazir. This dialect Ōrmuri of Kánigrám, more archaic, firmly established in a prosperous community where it dominates the other languages, is not understood in Baraki-Barak, in Afghanistan. Moreover relations of the two linguistic groups established on both sides of a political border which is often contested, are practically non-existent. For the concern that interests us we will take into consideration only the language in use in Afghanistan, on the road to extinction.

B) Near Baraki-Barak, the government center of the province of Lógár, 160 km by air from Kánigrám, in several qala, fortified farms, like Cendáli, Sangtúv, and Nurolláh. In the village of Baraki-Barak itself Ōrmuri has almost disappeared already: only a few old people still understand it, a few children know a few words of it (the numbers from
1 to 10, father, mother, greetings), but the domestic language is in general a variant of rural Persian, more or less close to Kaboli, or sometimes Pashto when the father has married into a Pashtun tribe.

One thus only finds real Ormuri speaking in the nearby farms, but of the 300 or 400 Ormur who live there, less than about fifty still speak Ormuri, for the most part adult men or old people who, contrary to the majority, practice strict endogamy. Many of the middle-aged people spoke it in their youth, but scarcely use it any longer, except occasionally, as a secret language, when they do not want to be understood by the Persian or Pashto speakers. The young people, at least some of them, still understand it, but do not speak it. However one of my best informants, who was about twenty in 1968, was left without a father and had continued to speak his tribal language with his elderly mother.

In Baraki-Barak, Ormuri has thus reached the last stage of its resistance. All the Ormuri-speakers are at least bilingual and for the most part trilingual (Ormuri, Pashto, rural Persian or Kaboli) and their tribal language has no more than a weak function: it is not a local language, nor one of civilisation, it has no written or oral literature, and it no longer serves as a vehicle for any tradition. This suffices to doom it. As soon as the Ormur leaves his farm, his language no longer serves him for anything and on the farm itself, through the play of exogamic marriages, it suffers competition with Pashto and Persian.

It depends on the objective needs (for example, the obligation to use the language of the Pashtun or Tajek conversational partner) or subjective needs (choice of words or expressions which are borrowed, more adapted to what is meant than those which his mother tongue offers him); the Ormur passes from one language to another, as from one register to another. It is thus inevitable that contact phenomena manifest themselves. We will point out a few to illustrate the linguistic conditions of the death of a language.

For the Ormur who is trilingual, neither consideration of aptitude nor of the norm generally intervenes. He is, properly speaking, a multilingual, fully active in all circumstances; he passes from one language to another to make communication efficient. On the farm he speaks Ormuri with his grandmother, when it concerns the needs of the children, Pashto with his Wardag wife about the field work, and Persian with his children who attend primary school in Baraki-Barak. But two minutes later, because he will have changed the subject, he will address his grandmother in Persian, his wife in Ormuri and his children in Pashto.

If his grandmother has only passive knowledge of Persian and his wife a passive knowledge of Ormuri, they will answer in their mother tongue. As for the children, they are forced only to speak Persian and Pashto because of the Persian-speaking school and the neighboring Pashtuns and have only a latent knowledge of Ormuri. Outside of the farm the Ormur will speak Persian or Pashto again depending on the ethnic origin of his conversation partner, but very rarely Ormuri, even with an Ormuri speaker, because at the bazaar, where one is never alone, it is a serious fault in manners to speak a language which no one understands, and that may only hide bad intentions.

The intrusion of the surrounding local languages into the hearth, the prestige which the radio and teaching gives them, the rapid evolution of the cultural milieu and the economic conditions of which the local languages are the vehicles and witnesses, all these facts converge toward the same result: the more and more restricted employment of the tribal language and, as obligatory corollary, the contamination of it by the local languages. We have not brought up a single example of lexical or syntactic borrowing from Persian or from Pashto to Ormuri, as the vocabulary of the latter is taken over by about 90% by borrowings from Persian and Pashto, and its morphosyntactic structure shows striking intrusions of the surrounding local languages.

The linguistic profile of Ormuri on the road of regression is characterized by a number of traits, of which we have given details elsewhere. Let us be content to recall the principal of these, introduced by the multilingualism.

a) The effects of multilingualism on the phonetic level

One may ascertain first a certain "wavering" in the realisation of several phonemes. Thus we found, with the same informant, for "cow": gøy, gøy and guy; for "ear": gøy and guy; for "excrement": guy. Now the oppositions /gøy/ cow: /gøy/ ear: /guy/ excrement were only obtained in the artificial context of an "explication". In fact, if our informants distinguish clearly three types of /ø/: 1. ò, 2. ö and 3. ø (erwólök "bring"), as soon as they stop observing themselves, they realize Orm. ò/ø as Persian õ and Orm. ò/ø as rural Persian ù = kaboli o. On the other hand they always distinguish røs "you" from tus "the ace (in cards)"; this opposition is explained by the fact that røs is originally Ormuri and of a very general usage, while tus is a borrowing from kaboli and appears
only in a very special context, that of an amusement which is somewhat looked down upon, and belongs to a technical terminology.

The Örmuri speaker thus has three or even four phonological registers at his disposal which interfere when he no longer observes his speech. The four vocalic systems present are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Örmuri</th>
<th>Paštò</th>
<th>Kaboli</th>
<th>Rural Persian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>/a/</td>
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<tr>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>/o/</td>
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<td>/æ/</td>
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<td>/a/</td>
<td>/a/</td>
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<td>/a/</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The perfect multilingualism of the majority of the Örmuri speakers permits them, when they observe their speech, to respect, for the words originally Örmuri or considered as such, the phonological system of Örmuri and to follow the system of Kaboli or rural Persian when it is a matter of borrowings. But when the speaker lets himself go, he passes from one register to another: thus goy “cow” pronounced with /ø/ Kaboli goy; but with the Paštò accent he would say *guy (ps /ø/ = ø/ø), which he immediately corrects into guy, which in rural Persian can be interpreted as *guy or *guy. As for the trilogy guy “cow”, guy “ear” and guy “excrement”, it is necessary to observe here the mark of rural palatalisation normally reserved for words of Persian origin.

This multiplicity of registers thus explains the differences which one may observe in the transcription of all those who studied Örmuri. In principle the Örmuri speaker passes from one register to the other to preserve the original phonetic cloak of each word. In fact, internal to the spoken chain, this “gymnastics” requires a great effort so that there are numerous “misfires” (intonation of Paštò, of Kaboli as spoken in the city or of rural Persian applied to Örmuri words). One could thus say that when they are not observing themselves, the Örmuri speakers speak Örmuri sometimes with a Kaboli accent, sometimes with a rural Persian accent, and sometimes with a Paštò accent. The retreating position of Örmuri in relation to other languages would seem very clear, when one observes that it also happens that the Örmur speaks Paštò with a Kaboli accent or Kaboli with a Paštò accent, but never either of these languages with an Örmuri accent.

The differences found in accentuation show exactly the same situation. But the coexistence of three systems of accent create only an apparent disorder. As soon as one says that the speaker of Örmuri has suddenly passed from the Paštò register to the Kaboli register, everything is in order again, in an order which is perhaps not that of the original Örmuri but that of the language today. Thus the plural guyi (accent on the last syllable) “the ears”, for guyi (accent on the penultimate), is explained by the attraction of Kaboli gu(h)i (accent on the last syllable) where the mark -i(h)i attracts the stress, whereas in Örmuri the mark -i is enclitic: the subject has passed to the Kaboli register.

Summing up, it is a matter of rather banal phenomena of linguistic interference at the level of secondary articulation. Changes in the realization of the phonemes occasionally lead to a certain perturbation in the phonological system or accentual system of the language with least functions. The characteristics particular to the Kaboli or Paštò systems of borrowing are found again in the Örmuri system of welcoming greetings and determine, when the Örmuri-speaking subject lets himself go, what one generally and informally calls a foreign accent; but as it appears in the maternal language, it assigns a dependent status to this language.

b) The effects of multilingualism on the lexicon

At first glance one recognizes in the Örmuri lexicon a considerable number of borrowings from Kaboli and a more restricted number from Paštò.

The lexicon particular to Örmuri

The Örmuri lexicon appears only in some zones of the maximum resistance, the zones which are the most conservative in vocabulary:
- the ordinal numerical adjectives to 900, to 70, to 17 or to 10, depending on the informants;
- the verbs: around 85 simple verbs with the corresponding causatives in -aw-, for example cfr-: cirók “graze” and ceraw-: cerawók “make graze”, lip-: lipók “sucke” and lapaw-: lapawók “make sucke”, etc.
- the grammatical morphemes: conjunction ka “that”; prepositions ta “of”, pa “by, with”; postpositions di “of (origin)”; ki “to”, (e-)né “in”, etc.; interrogative particle ké “why?”
the personal pronouns: 1. az, obl. mun, 2. tu, 4. máx, 5. tós.
- the directional pronouns: 1. er-, 2. dar-, 3. al-
- the demonstratives: of the object approached q-, k(i)ré, etc.: of the object moved away from afó, k(i)jó, etc.
- the reflexive pronoun xóy, xuy.
- the particles of determination: definite article az, indefinite article šé.
- the indefinites: éc “none”, hé “other”, ca “some”, cun “a certain quantity of”, perhaps az “each”.
- the verbal morphemes: desinences, mark of the causative, etc.

On the other hand islands of lexemes are preserved, referring to the family, the house, the human body, nature, the stars, rural life, the animal kingdom, time divisions, various utensils, colors, religion and moral feelings.

If all these words are not originally Ormuri, they are in any case characteristic of the Ormuri lexicon in relation to that of the surrounding languages. It is the same with the word qalýet; considered typically Ormuri by an informant, it presents particular features which make one think of a borrowing: q- would indicate a Kábolí borrowing or a Turkish borrowing, and -t either a borrowing from Indian via Paštò, or a borrowing from hazāragí Persian, which would seem inconsistent; although in itself it appears indeed to “belong” to the language.

The borrowings are made either from prs, kb, or from ps. The choice between the prs borrowing or the ps borrowing with the same individual essentially depends on the mother. In fact, the most numerous borrowings are prs or ps depending on whether the mother is Persian-speaking or Paštun-speaking. If the mother is Ormuri-speaking, of the Ormú tribe or of a dependent tribe (hamsá) living in symbiosis with the Ormúrs, the prs borrowings are in preponderance. It has not been possible for us to make statistical research because of the difficulties of coming into contact with the women (we have, in eight years, been received only in a single Ormí family, that of our informant Sufi Sér Mómad, where we met his late mother in 1967, his wife, and his daughters), but our explication is confirmed by our informant Xálilullah.

A written language selects, chooses, and rejects, that is to say, creates a norm in unique terms of which the spoken language today is no longer able to abstract from (compare the phenomenon of dialectal levelling of language following alphabetisation of the rural masses). On the contrary, a language like Ormuri shows the symbiosis of disparate terms, of parallel series of borrowed words, of pronunciations, of different forms and structures, of which the concurrent usage is subject to but one condition – which suffices to harmonise the system – that of mutual comprehension. This superabundance even has the tendency to snowball, for one also needs substitutes to preserve in all circumstances, in all contexts, this mutual comprehension, which is the raison d'être of the language. Hence we may ascertain the coexistence in Ormuri of two terms to designate the wife or spouse: Ormí nák (< náva-ká) and kb zan; on the other hand that of the homonyms nák “the wife”, and nák “pear”. This homonym is not embarrassing for the speaker – the situations and contexts being in general quite different – nák “wife” is not about to give way to zan, for it is part of the pair máli-nák husband-wife and zan far from being on the way of supplanting it is only an occasional substitute, appearing only:
- with speakers rarely speaking Ormuri with whom the original lexical stock is becoming hazier and hazier;
- in the compound borrowed from kb pir-zan.
- it remains finally to the disposition of the Ormúri speaker to permit him to escape the wife-pear ambiguity; now these cases are extremely rare, all the more so since there are scarcely pear trees in Lógar. Finally, in spite of the entries zan “wife” and nák “pear” which figure in our lexicon by force of circumstances – because we heard them! – these words don’t have any real existence in the Ormúri language, but only in the latent vocabulary of the multilingual Ormúr. Contrary to what we thought at first, the Ormúri speakers are in general perfectly conscious of the differing status which they assign to different elements of their vocabulary: thus zan “wife”, and nák “pear” are declared to be Persian.

Putting aside the list which we gave above, all the rest of the vocabulary is constituted of words belonging to the lexicon of Paštò and still more of Persian. If one will admit the distinction between borrowing and lexical substitution, we must note that native borrowing is relatively rare. In fact, it is more often a matter of procedure of lexical substitution; substitution, which is typically the case for multilinguals, presents a lesser adaptation, and the substitute, as we confirmed, conserves the phonological system and the accentuation of the original language. This is confirmed by the fact that the Ormúri speaker is conscious of employing a word of another language and of introducing into the spoken utterance a heterogeneous element of which he in general knows the origin. The case of qalýet cited above is revealing in this regard: Ormúri
is all that is neither Persian nor Paštō; the rule is valid in the majority of cases.

Mechanism of borrowing and of loan translating nominal phrase. As far as the facts of contact due to multilingualism are concerned, another distinction is more interesting, that of borrowing and of calquing above all. One is neither

Let us take the case of “black pepper” in very popular use. We have three expressions:

a) morč-e siyā, a pure and simple borrowing of the Kāboli phrase;
b) morč-e yras, a hybrid calque, which preserves the syntactic structure of its source (determined substantive + ezāfe + determining adjective), which borrows the term morč for which there is no Ōrmūrī equivalent, and which translates the adjective “black”;
c) yras morč, a perfect calque, which presents the syntactic structure peculiar to Ōrmūrī (determining adjective – determined substantive), which borrows the term morč.

We are observing here the intrusion of ezāfe in Ōrmūrī where it however remains “outside of the system”.

The case of the expression “holiday” will confirm this, by the incoherence of even form b):

a) ruz-e id, pure and simple borrowing of the Kāboli phrase;
b) ta-īd-e ruz, incoherent calque, where the mark of connection peculiar to Ōrmūrī (preposition ta de) coexists with that which is peculiar to Persian (ezāfe -e);
c) ta īd a-ruz, phrase peculiar to Ōrmūrī which there is no reason to consider as a calque, where a- represents the actualizer (a sort of definite article) = “the holiday”; it is the key to phrase b).

In fact, in the phrase b) the speaker who is influenced by the Kāboli phrase a) which is present in his mind at the same time as the phrase c) which is peculiar to Ōrmūrī, makes a kind of a syntactic error of combination (pataqēs) which is not far from being a lapse; a lapse revealing, however, the pressure which the common language exerts on the domestic language, and of the foreign character of the Persian ezāfe, to which even the structure of Ōrmūrī is refractory.

The following five variants are attested for example for “stick”:

a) čub-e dest, pure and simple borrowing from kb, literally handstick; prs order: determined-determining;
b) gon-e dest, hybrid calque: translation of the first element, preservation of ezāfe and of the second element; prs order: determined-determining;
c) ta dest e čub, aberrant calque, a true syntactic error of combination (pataqēs), due to the introduction of Ōrmūrī order: preposition of the genitive ta – determining – aberrant and redundant preservation of ezāfe – determined (rare);
d) ta dest-e gon, aberrant calque, translation of the first element; Ōrmūrī order as in c) (frequent);
e) ta dest a-gon, perfect calque; Ōrmūrī order: determined-determining: Preposition (gen-) + substantive1 + art. + subst.2

In c) and d) it is the confusion of ezāfe-e and of the article a- of Ōrmūrī, the one an enclitic and the other a proclitic, both placed at the junction of two elements (determining-determined) of the phrase, which favors the syntactic error of combination (pataqēs); the speaker, as happens frequently with the multilinguals, has not completely adopted the register of either one or the other language. It is a psychological problem (with one’s attention insufficiently fixed) or sometimes even a pathological problem (a slowdown in mental function in people with arteriosclerosis): it is generally sufficient to get the attention of the subject for him to correct himself. However, if one asks for explanations about his “error”, he is generally disturbed; in fact, he is not clearly aware of the diverse structures of the nominal phrase in prs and in Ōrmūrī and quite naturally trusts to his linguistic habits which he would not be able to analyze.

Processes of lexical substitution. Lexical substitution is very different from borrowing which is more or less phonetically adapted and integrated into the language to the point that the speaker considers it like an original word. It has the following characteristics:

1) the phonetic and accentual adaptation is less than in borrowing; very often it is even non-existent: the form preserves the features of the phonological and accentual systems of the language of origin and, in the case of a phrase, its syntactic structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substitution</th>
<th>Borrowing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kb lōla</td>
<td>'tube'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pš monj</td>
<td>'dwarf palm'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kb mobā</td>
<td>'cholera'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lōla</td>
<td>lōla (óry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>munj</td>
<td>munj (uóry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mobā</td>
<td>mobā (uóry)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) The speaker is immediately conscious of employing a word of another language, he is conscious of carrying out a substitution and, in general, inclined to give a form or an equivalent phrase in Orm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORM</th>
<th>ORM: by substitution</th>
<th>ORM: original</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ruz-e id/t</td>
<td>ruz-e id/t</td>
<td>ruz-e it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morc-e siyā</td>
<td>morc-e siyā</td>
<td>morc-e siyā, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several intermediary stages are possible, depending on the register adopted by the speaker:

kb ruz-e id/t > rural Dari = pure and simple Ormuri borrowing ruz-e id/t > Ormuri hybrid calque ta id-a-ruz/rız/röz

orm regular structure ta id-a-ruz/rız/röz the determined being realised by the particle a, sometimes confused with ezaf-e.)

3) Lexical substitution is done by multilingual subjects, at least at the beginning. Later it may be propagated by groups which are not multilingual. It is then that the process of borrowing is introduced: the word or the phrase is pronounced with an Ormuri accent and intonation and it then undergoes phonetic and accentual adaptation which makes a borrowing of it.

4) This adaptation is not necessarily the same at the level of the word and of the phrase, it is not strictly parallel: sometimes the word is already perfectly adapted, whereas the syntactic structure of the phrase remains hybrid:

ex. ta id-e rız (where rız is orm)

sometimes the syntactic structure of the phrase is perfectly regular, whereas, on the phonetic level, the determined remains a pure and simple borrowing:

ex. ta id-a-ruz (where ruz is a borrowing not adapted from rural Dari)

5) The determination of the register adopted by the speaker does not belong to the task of the linguist, properly speaking. As in all cases where
b) orm. az čāku alalgost = pš mà čāku wewor  
   cf. kb man čāku bord-am

c) orm. čāku algost-kam = kb čāku bord-am

Paštō gives us the key to the semantic difference between a) "I took a knife" and b) "me, I took a knife", and also to the difference in structure between the possessive construction in Paštō and in Ōrμuri:

a) orm. = pš: object + personal enclitic + verb in the past  
b) orm.: personal pronoun subject case + object + verb in the past  
pš: personal pronoun object case + object + verb in the past

The structure is the same in Ōrμuri and in Paštō, except for one point: Paštō preserves the agentitive (oblique case of the personal pronoun) while Ōrμuri has replaced it by the direct case (subject case of the personal pronoun). We thus remain in the norm of the possessive construction, except as concerns the abandonment of the agentitive by Ōrμuri.

The construction c), on the other hand, is "monstrous" with reference at least to the possessive construction as it is provided to us by the tradition of Iranian languages of the Oriental group. But the identity of the structures of the Ōrμuri sentence and of the same Kāboli sentence: object + radical past of the verb + personal desinence, shows clearly the process of syntactic caque in which Ōrμuri is engaged.

However, it is now necessary to make clear that this aberrant construction is relatively rare, that it is more a bilingual lapse, than a living structure established in the language, and that our informants often recognized it as an "error".

These few examples of contamination of Ōrμuri by the surrounding koinēs show first of all that the true language of communication of the multilingual Ōrμurs – and they are all multilingual – is above all Kāboli Persian, and secondarily Paštō. They indicate contact then, at least in the course of the past centuries, more important with Persian than with Paštō, for the deepest contaminations, those that even touch the syntax, show the Persian structural model; but they also confirm that the grammatical mechanism of a language on the path to extinction, if it is touched by the contamination, is not, properly speaking, perturbed, since the communication is completely preserved. The facts of contact of languages are not then involved in the process if one wants to analyze the reasons for which Ōrμuri is on the point of being no longer spoken: neither the borrowed vocabulary, nor the phonological or accentual perturbations, nor even the syntactic contaminations obscure comprehension; on the other hand, Ōrμuri is not disappearing as a consequence of a phenomenon of mixing of languages to the extent that the multilingual Ōrμurs would basically only know one language in two or three modes of expression. They are not speaking a language mixed three ways, of which they use sometimes the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes the third. They are speaking three languages, their own, Kāboli and Paštō, and if the young people generally have already or are going to abandon Ōrμuri, it is simply because it serves no purpose for them any longer.

d) Survival of Ōrμuri and the ethnic identity of the Ōrμurs

If the impending disappearance of Ōrμuri does not leave any room for doubt, its survival, on the other hand, poses a problem which has perhaps not been emphasized enough. It is, indeed, extraordinary. At first glance there is indeed no reason for this language to have survived.

The geographic situation of Baraki-Barak,16 far from being an isolated area, cut off from large through-roads of communication and from agglomerations of Paštō speakers and Persian speakers by natural obstacles, would favor on the contrary contacts with the large common languages and in this way favor the disappearance of Ōrμuri. Baraki-Barak is an agglomeration established in an open valley, situated on an important connection road uniting the large through-roads Caboul-Ghazni and Caboul-Gardez, at the beginning of a passable road which, through Patxao-e Rōjani and Baraki-Rōjan, permits one to reach directly either Gardêz, or Čarx-e Lōgar and even Ghazni. It therefore cannot be a matter of a hidden linguistic pocket as is the case for example in Šotal where the Parācè language (v. infra) is in danger only since 1969, i.e., since the construction of a road broke its isolation.

The situation of the Ōrμur clan in the tribal hierarchy of the region of Baraki-Barak does not permit one to assume it to be a prestige language either. The Ōrμurs occupy only a modest third rank after the Paštun and the Tājek, just before the Hazāra and, of course, the Hendu and the Jat. Very often, depending on their matrimonial arrangements or depending on the ethnic origin of the speaker, they declare themselves at first to be either Paštun or Tājek, an assimilation rendered plausible by their trilingualism. On the other hand, numerically, these few hundreds of Ōrμurs have no weight beside the thousands of Paštuns and the
Tajeks who surround them on all sides. Thus, neither the numerical significance of the speakers, nor the tribal prestige, nor its geographic location can explain the survival of a language which is— is it necessary to say it?— neither national nor official nor common. Moreover, with its vocabulary taken over by about 90% borrowings, with a syntax bearing the stigma of foreign contact, it is obviously engaged in an irreversible process of contamination.

There could remain a religious motivation. At first glance this hypothesis would appear difficult to maintain: the Órmurs consider themselves and are considered by the other clans as irreproachable Sunnites; moreover, we can testify that they observe more rigorously than most of their Pāšun or Tajek neighbors the religious rules concerning prayer, fasting, and the prohibition of alcoholic beverages. In fact nothing distinguishes them from the Moslems practicing strict observance who live in the surrounding area. At first glance it would thus appear that the Órmurs, not constituting a sect by themselves, do not have any religious reason for preserving their clan language.

However as early as 1927, G. Morgenstierne17 had put forth the hypothesis that they had remained Zoroastrian until a relatively recent epoch: in fact, Órmuri is the only Iranian dialect which has preserved in its dialect a technical term of Zoroastrianism for “study, read”: in Baraki-Barak (h)āyw-: (h)āyów, in Kānigrānaw-: īštāk (cf. av. aivā-ah). On the other hand, it is very possible that the heretical tendencies of Bāyazid Ansārī (1525–1572),18 an Órmur, may have found a support in the religious traditions and the religious practices of his clan, unless Bāyazid inspired them.

For a long time our quest remained in vain. However, after many years one of our informants gave us his impression that “earlier the Órmurs had been the adepts of a different sect”. Which one? “Perhaps they were Shiites ... or sayyed-e xās19 (true descendents of the Prophet).” As or Bāyazid Ansārī, overcoming apparent embarrassment, he confessed to us: “All the Órmurs know and revere the Pir-e Rōšān (“the saint of the light”) and Pir-e Rōštān az roʿasā-ye maḏḥabi-ye māst (“Pir-e Rōštān is one of the chiefs of our religion”).

On the other hand, a certain number of popular beliefs make the Órmurs a different clan than the others, without their being able to support positively the hypothesis of an ancient acceptance of the rōsāniyya heresy:20

- it is ʃuṁ, “of bad sign”, to let eggs be hatched by their chickens;
- it is ʃuṁ to wear clothing of the green clover ʃaftali color

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17 The situation of Parāčī

Parāčī is spoken in three valleys on the South slope of the Hindukūsh:

a) in the valley of Šotol
b) in the valley of Göčulân, region of Nejrāo (-āb)
c) in the valley of Pāćayān, region of Nejrāo (-āb).
Linguistic situation

At first glance one has the impression of great stability. Parači seems solidly stuck to the ethnic group which speaks it, and the Parači seem very attached to it. They all understand and speak their tribal language, which is not always the case in a multi-national country: the Örmurs of the very village of Baraki-Barak (Loğar), many of the Nurzi Paštuns of West Afghanistan, the Balûc emigrated to the North, much of the nãqênî population displaced for various reasons, etc., have adopted a neighboring koîné. The Parači speak their language fluently and employ it not only at home, but also in their relations with the other Paračis. In the valley of Pačayân they speak Parači even with the Pašais of whom they never learn the language although the opposite is often the case.

This puts us on the track of the place occupied by Parači in the hierarchy of languages. Šôtol, Goçulân, and Pačayân are “closed” valleys, that is to say occupied by the Parači, all of them bilingual in Parači Persian (of the köhestâni type), and by Persians speakers (of the Köhestâni type), who are used to an ancient coexistence to the point that their social structure in clans and sub-clans is strictly identical, the second being only in part the Parači who have abandoned their tribal language for reasons not yet well understood. The only regular relations they have outside of their valley are commercial ones, first of all with Persian-speakers (Köhestan, Andarâb, Sâlân and Panšêr for the Parači of Šôtol, valley of Ghayn and Bâzâr-e Badaxši for those of Pačayân). Their perfect bilingualism excludes on both sides all value judgement on the language of the ones or the others and all recourse to a linguistic hierarchy. Then, when they have relationships with the linguistic groups other than the Persian-speakers, with the Paštuns present in Köhdamân, in Golbâhâr, Šôxî, the low valley of Pačayân, Tagao, etc., it is a matter of episodic contacts, commercial interests, interests on both sides, and not of ethnic contacts: each one makes an effort to speak badly the language of the other, the rest being done with the language of gestures; when the business is concluded, each returns to his side. As for the Pašai and the Kaîr above all, the moving apart of their established places is such that the question of an ethnic or linguistic hierarchy has no current meaning for the Parači-speakers of Šôtol and of Goçulân.

In the valley of Pačayân on the other hand, the situation is completely different. There the Parači are in direct and constant contact with two ethnic groups, two linguistic communities which are very unlike, with whom they are forced to establish a modus vivendi, and with whom they are forced to compromise daily. At the bottom of the valley, they border on the Paš Khánh, who take away a few furrows of land from their neighbors every year: they have to defend themselves and as the Paštuns do not think about learning Parači, it is the Parači-speakers who learn Paštun, recognizing in this way a linguistic and ethnic superiority, by which they try to limit the economic and political consequences as much as possible.

Higher in the valley, the Parači-speaking area is interrupted by the Pašai establishments of Gawrûkasât, Kandî, etc. As often happens, the Pašais are established in the narrowest part and consequently the most difficult part of the valley to cultivate; downstream, the Parači have larger and more numerous terraces; upstream they occupy, beyond the moraine deposits, the large and flat bottom of the glacial valley which offers them not only real fields, but also prairies which permit them to carry on animal husbandry. This economically privileged situation favors, as an obligatory corollary, the position of the Parači relative to the Pašais: the Pašais are forced to speak, outside of their tribal language, Parači, Persian and Paštun, whereas the Parači, not having any need to know Pašái, learn only Paštun. As for Persian, they speak it, like all the other Parači, from birth, concurrently with their mother tongue.

Study of the environment

The very diversity of the economic conditions which characterise the Parači-speaking valleys, leads us, in order to judge the future of Parači, to analyse the natural and social environment of each one among them.

In Šôtol agriculture is predominant, so that these are the difficulties which mark the fate of Parači. Up to 1960 meter altitude they practice two annual cultures, very often that of the grain ganom, then that of the rice zitâyî, but also of other grains yalâbâb; then the oil-rich xirâkâbâb, above all the colza šäršam. They make very little feed here: a little clover šâvâtal, contending themselves with gathering wild herbs, in particular a variety of heracleum estuf. Higher up, there is annual alternation, generally, grain one year and corn the following year. In 1973, in Estufâlô for example, they harvested corn.

These cultures are made on terraces, yanir, contained inside stone
walls (*a-wanta,-*, cf. av. *awa-antara-*). But these terraces are often too small, always threatened by mountain torrents *sét* which destroy everything in their path, and, in a general way, offer a cultivable surface which is at best very insufficient. Of course, there are almost non-arable plots of land, *bòra*. Summing up, the valley of *Sótol*, which does not even produce enough grain and rice, is also short of feed, milk, and meat. To alleviate these shortcomings, the *Sótolís* have dangerously developed the raising of goats. As there is not enough pasture, they send them into the mountains, *dhár*, where they eat all the young scions and contribute to deforestation. Furthermore, the *sét* mountain torrents are more and more numerous and destroy more and more terraces, ever lessening the surface of cultivable land.

Another consequence of this impoverishment of an ethnic group which is above all agricultural touches the forest economy. In this essentially mountainous region, the wooded vegetation played a predominant role, at least as long as the deforestation was not an important factor. As far as the past is concerned, the preserving of the names of trees in *Pàràcî* bears witness to this preponderance of wooded vegetation, wild as well as cultivated: the walnut tree, *dèzh*, the mulberry tree, *ti* (with its numerous varieties), the willow, *yī*, the hackberry, *tòq*, the oak (*Quercus Ballota*), *yan*, and above all the wild almond tree, *bátum-e dhár*, are utilised from the top to the roots. Unfortunately the abuse of their exploitation has led to a thinning out which borders on deforestation and finally contributes to the incessant nibbling away of cultivable land.

One cannot expect otherwise. Thirty years ago, hundreds of riding horses, *òsp*, pack-horses, *yàbu*, and donkeys, *kòhr*, still assured communication with the valleys and the adjacent regions of *Khéstán*, *Penjísár*, *Añdaráb*, and *Sàláng*. We have heard the extraordinary narration of the *bozkáśi* calvary battles, for the possession of a goat, which one organised on the occasion of a wedding, *túv*, or other festivities. Today one no longer finds a single horse, and only a small and diminishing number of donkeys assure transport to the inside of the village or the valley. Earlier they went shopping where it was the least expensive for the food and fodder which they needed, in *Añdaráb* or in *Golbahár*. Today everyone is dependent on the transporters and traders of *Càrikár*, of Kaboul, or elsewhere, and the traders' system of credit causes one to buy the most expensive products, alienating by debt most of the *Sótoli* and eliminating bit by bit the last small proprietors. Thus more and more a rural proletariat develops, most often a true "Lumpenproletariat" of which the subsistence minimum is no longer assured.

If the old people accept this situation — they are forced to, indeed, what else could they do? — the young react by fleeing to the city, to *Golbahár*, *Càrikár*, *Bagrám*, Kaboul, etc., where the factories, the large public works (dams, airports), the army, administration, or small commerce offer to each the chance to carve out his own future.

On the psychological level this process of fleeing — for one flees *Sótol* like a sinking ship — naturally has a significant counterpart: the young despise the old people stupidly holding on to their crumbling terraces, and refuse to continue speaking *Pàràcî*. It is the language of a homeland which they abhor. It is also the language for which they are mocked in the city. Elsewhere they show the same horror of speaking *Khéstáni* Persian, as soon as they approach Kaboul, as soon as they work somewhere where it is in good taste to speak *Kaboli*. This attitude has multiple consequences. First of all the family cell as well as the large family are considerably shaken, the old virtue of respect towards one's parents and old people disappears. *Sótol* is the only place in Afghanistan where I saw a son hit his father to force him to give him a jacket received as a gift. On the other hand, these young emigrants often leave their wives and their children at the village, but when they return "for a visit", their arrogance knows no bounds. Above all they refuse all that is tradition and so too the language: "Your linguistic research in this valley is completely stupid," one of them told me. "Listen, *Místar*, 'Mister', there are only three languages in Afghanistan: *Paštò* which the *Paštuns* speak, Persian of Kaboul which all the other Afghans must speak, and *lázemí* (a sort of pidgin which the merchants, the artisans and all those in contact with foreigners speak and are spoken to by the foreigners) which the foreigners speak." Indeed, he never consented to speaking to me in *Kaboli* Persian, the language in which I conversed with all the other inhabitants of the village.

This dislocation of institutions, customs, and traditional values is going to accelerate among the young and still younger established outside of their valley of origin. They want "everything and immediately" and establish a system of dispute limited to immediate betterment of their standard of living. But insufficiently brought up and educated, they are moving rapidly into the "Lumpenproletariat" of the urban society, of which only the most negative aspects are important to them.

What is then the fate of *Pàràcî* in *Sótol*? The tribal language of *Pàràcî* seems indeed condemned. Those who have emigrated refuse to speak it, and, living scattered in the midst of Persian-speakers and of *Paštò*- speakers, their children will soon have ceased understanding it. Those
who remain, for the most part old people, will disappear faster and faster. With the departure of the young, the restoration of the terraces is becoming more and more difficult and rare; their number is diminishing, they are going to nourish less and less Paräci farmers and sedentary people. But in the vicious circle of impoverishment, there are always people poorer than oneself: Sotol will soon see those famished nágelin appear with their herds of sheep or goats to destroy the last clumps of greenery, perhaps practicing here or there some rain culture, lalmi. If they become sedentary someday and succeed in restoring, with the faith of new sedentary people, the best exposed terraces, then one will hear Paštö spoken.

In Goçulan and in Pačayän the situation is still different. In these two valleys we were struck by an aspect which we were not able to study elsewhere in Afghanistan, that of a system practically self-sufficient from an agricultural and economic point of view: the Paräci, following an ancient tradition, at least it seems so to us, produce all that they need, grain and rice, substances containing oil, flax for weaving, and the ground berries of the mulberry tree (talsän in Kaboul) replace sugar in their diet. The nuts, dežé, which one sells only when the currency rate is favorable, suffice for the purchase of luxury products which one uses by way of exception on the occasion of celebrations or at the homes of the richest proprietors. But this is an unstable equilibrium: a drought, an economic collapse at the national level, a few bad harvests, a sinking of currency rates, could suddenly knock down their standard of living and accentuate their needs. Then a process will take place similar to that in process in Sotol. A complete reversal will occur sooner or later in a country developing like Afghanistan: the most outlying and self-sufficient valleys are touched only by a more or less important delay. It would perhaps be up to the economists to collaborate with the dialectologists to foresee and prepare a reconversion and prevent a decay.

The cultural environment of the Paräci, like that of the Kafirs and the Pašaš, their neighbors, has been subjected to two types of upheavals which have affected the very roots of their traditions and their original mode of life. These are islamisation and technological evolution.

Islamisation is already rather ancient in the Western part of that geographic and cultural entity which constitutes “Grand Nurestan”. We know for example that in 1582 Darwëš Mohammad Khán-e Gházi conducted a Mohammedanian crusade against the pagan population of the “66 valleys”, going from Darunta (near Jalálábád), to Laymän and

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Alingär, Tagáb, Nejrāb and Pačaghán. It is more recent in its Oriental part where Emir Abdur Rahman introduced islam only in 1895–96, transforming Káferestán into Nurestan by fire and sword. It is there, moreover, that one can better study the process of islamisation.

The new faith imposed upon the new converts a model of Mohammedian life of the urban kind, such as conceived in Caboul. It is characterised by the strict observance of various prohibitions concerning food, women, the whole domain of harám,24 and, as an obligatory corollary, by the adoption of beliefs and new practices: jen(d), “evil spirit”, róza, “fasting”, némaz, “ritual prayer”, and paráda,25 “curtain suspended in front of a door or a window”, which symbolizes all the secret means of all sexual ethic, both liberal in its principles and rigorous in social reality.

This forced acculturisation dissociated itself from a traditional cultural base, but the beliefs recently adopted are always difficult to analyze by a believer of a more or less recent time, for he remains a neophyte, whereas the others remember his pre-Mohammedian religious past. In the end he can only assume this past in renouncing it and is thus not in the process of directly giving valuable information.

On the contrary the analysis of the Paräci vocabulary (but one could also do it for the Dardé or the Kafír), always brings all sorts of interesting evidence. The Persian origin, and more exactly Kaboli origin, of recent borrowings is also that of islamisation. This testifies to the socionu-cultural status of the very process of acculturation: the Jacobian and centralised path by which the spiritual masters in Kaboul, by the mediation of their language (Persian), and in the name of their faith (islam), without worrying about their aspirations, impose on the paräci prose­lytes their own “Weltanschauung”. From this process of one-way accultura­tion these lexical islands have come forth ceaselessly growing, completely Persian, the analysis of which reveals the continuous progression of an extraneous influence in the domain of the spiritual culture as well as the material culture. We will restrict ourselves to a few examples.

a) The three compound words 1) ruýgír, 2) ruýpòs, and 3) ruýpot seem, at first glance, to constitute a triad of which the function would be to rank women – for it is only to women that these words can apply – into three social groups according to criteria of decency or increasing prudery. Indeed, undeniably formal characteristics suggest their coming together; they are all three formed from ruý, face – a suffixed determi­ner:
Charles Kieffer

1. ruy- + -gir < gereftan "take away" = lit. "he who uncovers his face",
2. ruy- + -pos < pôsîdan "cover" = lit. "he who covers his face",
3. ruy- + -pot < kb pot/î kadan 26 "hide" = lit. "he who hides his face".

If we would stop with the analysis of this triad at this level, one could justly assume a state of society where a certain amount of initiative is left, if not to the women, then at least to the heads of the family. Thus certain women would be able to uncover or to hide their face, or, at least, certain heads of the family would be able to grant to the wives of their household a more or less extensive liberty in their apparel and bearing. Of course it is not so.

A first indication appears on the formal level: the suffixed element -pot, an adjective and element of the compound verb pot kadan, is opposed to -gir and -pos, radicals of the simple verbs gereftan and pôsîdan. Ruypot would seem to be nothing other than an analogical formation created on the model of the two other terms.

In fact only an analysis of the social classes existing within the Parâçi linguistic group and their economic situation can give us hints about the exact sense of these three terms.

The first two contrast two social groups which one finds everywhere in the Afghan countryside:

1) that where the woman has her face uncovered, ruygir, at home, that is, before the members of the family authorised to see her: all the women, those in her direct line of descent, the uncles, likewise the cousins received at home, the servants, and some friends associated with the master of the house by relations of respect like those which unite children to parents (apprentices, pupils, disciples), sisters and brothers (friends), etc. Before all others, at home and outside the home, the woman wears the type of veil in use in the ethnic group to which she belongs;

2) that where the woman has her face covered, ruypôs, even at home, except before her husband and her children. This is the case in very traditional families because of the position or the functions of the head of the family. It is in particular the case of the religious personages, molâ, the qâzî judges, and of a few fanatics who find it to be in good taste to adopt a more strict attitude than that recommended by traditional Islam. This attitude, without being criticised openly, is scarcely appreciated by the largest number of tolerant peasants.

The third term, which is a recent creation, is not at all on the same level as the preceding ones and bears witness to a new fact connected to the new socioeconomic conditions which found their origin in Kaboul only about fifteen years ago. For reasons connected essentially to the economic development encouraged by the authorities,27 the women were authorised to go into the street with a bare face, ruyloč, that is, without wearing the large veil, çâdari ABD 162 which covers them from head to foot. In the following years this measure had as a consequence a considerable increase of the number of çâdari on sale as bargains in the bazars of Kaboul and has caused their prices to fall. Important categories of urban and rural Afghans have thus been able to acquire a çâdari at a good price (50 Afghanis = less than a dollar, instead of 500 Afghanis), although the social or ethnic group to which they belong had not had the custom of wearing them (Hazâra, Köhestani, Lôgari, and, in general, many of the rural inhabitants and even the nomads). It is the same in Sotol as elsewhere: the women have received from their husbands a çâdari, the wearing of which is less the sign of a conservative attitude than that of a social condition above middle class. It is thus natural that one felt the need to give a designation to this new group of women, who, leaving the house where they are either ruygir, unveiled, or ruypôs, wearing a head-veil, put on a çâdari; for this a new term was necessary: it is thus that one formed analogically the word ruypot, with a hidden face. This term is not opposed to the other two, it expresses very simply a new reality: in place of wearing the head-veil, ruypard, costing from 20 to 50 Afghanis, which every woman has for leaving the house and that a few even put on at home (the ruypôs women), this new category of ruypot women wear, when leaving, the complete veil, çâdari, costing from 100 to 500 Afghanis. Thus, whether one is ruygir or ruypôs at home, one is often ruypot when leaving the house to go visiting, to go on a trip, but never when going to work, assuming, of course, that the financial situation of their husbands permits this.

It follows from this that the Parâçi speakers like the Persian-speakers of the valley of Sotol are following the destiny (normal from a certain viewpoint) of the Afghan countryside which, for the moment, is going to become sunken in a "related" tradition at the very moment when the capital is evolving towards a new norm marked by modern tendencies. Thus the difference of the attitude of the city and of the countryside towards "progress" is inscribed in words.

b) Sometimes minor peculiarities of vocabulary carry interesting
information about the material culture. This is the case with the two words meaning both "gloves": deskaš and dezbela.

Deskaš (= *dest- “hand” + -kaš, radical of the verb kašidan “draw”, kb and prs id.) is woolen. par. pōčt. prs. pašmi “knitted”. It guarantees protection against cold; thus one always has a pair.

Dezbela (= *dest- “hand” + -bel- “spade” + derivational suffix -a) is in leather, par. and prs. čarnmi. One only wears it on the left hand, for the harvest, to protect it against thorns, while the right hand holds the sickle. This word is not known either in kb. or in prs.

The use of the latter glove is revealing of a state of things which is not unrelated to the impending disappearance of par. It indicates that the grain is overloaded with thorns, which sometimes considerably lessen the yield of the already thankless land and are added to diverse factors causing serious difficulties for the mountainous agriculture of the Pārači (lack of labor, destruction of the terrasses, price of seed, of feed, etc.).

All of this vocabulary is in large part Kaboli and thus shows an external origin. “foreign” like the object or the custom. In wearing a čidari, a complete veil, the Pārači ladies are imitating the v. to-do bourgeoisie of Čarikär and of Kaboul. If the gloves against the cold or against the thorns bear the kāboli or, in any case, Persian names, it is because they are not or are no longer made in the valley of Šotol. But here and there an authentic Pārači word emerges, which puts us on the path of antique traditions for the most part extinguished.

CONCLUSIONS

In a general way, true mutations or, at least, disruptions of equilibrium taking place in the sociocultural situation, are in the process of causing an upheaval with respect to the status of the tribal language of the Ormurs and the Parāči so that its yield is regressing to the point that its very existence is called into question. Now this fact has as a corollary the threatening of the ethnic identity of these multilingual groups. When one speaks the language of another, one ends up, in Afghanistan, letting oneself be assimilated and even taking back the “nationality” of the other. We know quite well these Paštun, these Torkmen, and these Arabs speaking Persian who are on the way to dissolving into an ethnic group of adoption. But each time an important change was necessary, an upheaval had taken place in their conditions of living and of work. To continue to speak his tribal language and not identify himself with the Persian speakers or the Paštō speakers in the neighboring area, it is necessary for one to be motivated when one is only a minority group. The best motivation to remember, to remain what one is, still rests in the immediate interest of the majority. When one is interested in speaking another language, clearly more profitable economically and intellectually, one is also interested in becoming someone else and in finding more advantageous living space. It is thus vain to defend a language and an ethnic status which would only be old-fashioned folklore.

The Ormurs have forgotten their geographic origin, the region which at one moment of their history constituted the epicenter from which their ethnic group propagated itself, or which formed a domain where their tribal language had the status of a common language. They renounced the religious traditions which distinguished them from the neighboring ethnic groups and gave their idiom the prerogative of a secret language. Finally, attacked by the imperatives of economic and industrial development, they had no choice but to rejoin the ranks of the Paštun or the Tajik who possess the land, control the bazaars, and occupy the key posts in administration.

Among the Parāči the changes which took place in the ideological order of religious beliefs and of ethnics as a result of Islamisation, affected the language without it being, for a long time, truly placed in danger. The isolation which protected them from the intrusion of the common languages has, however, been nibbled away to the extent that political unification of the country undertaken by Emir < Abdur Rahman (1885-1901) progressed. The construction of roads and required military service have recently struck a fatal blow to this refuge area: one entered among the Parāči and they left their valleys open from then on. The economic and industrial development did the rest: not only did it create new needs, disturb the traditional net of points of selling and buying, break the equilibrium of the prices of agricultural and industrial products, but it also dismantled once and for all the self-sufficiency and the mountain economy in drawing into the factories and the towns an irreplaceable labor.

The Ormurs, in forgetting their own interests, and the Parāčis, in leaving their valleys, try to resolve, each in their own way, the problem which "progress" poses for them. They are doing it at the price of their identity, but would there be any other end?
SUMMARY

On the Iranian plateau, as at numerous other points of the globe, we are today witnessing a progressive reduction of linguistic diversity. Economic growth, political unification and various concomitant evolutionary phenomena bring about the elimination of languages which have ceased being or have not succeeded in becoming common, national, or official languages.

The confines of this article do not permit studying this process as a whole, nor in all the points at which it manifests itself. We content ourselves with describing and in so far as possible analyzing the situation of Ormuri and of Parāči, the two relict languages of the Southeast Iranian plateau to which we have dedicated numerous investigations and voluminous studies in the course of the last ten years. G. Morgenstierne, their discoverer, had made a grammatical description of them as early as 1929 (Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages, Vol. I). We have pursued his efforts and present here on the one hand the sociocultural framework of each of these languages and on the other hand an analysis of the process of disappearance in which each of them is engaged in its own way. For this we have brought together all the information known concerning their past, their present situation and their probable future as indicated by the sociocultural profile of the two plurilingual groups destined to lose their ethnic identity in the near future.

The reasons for the approaching death of these two languages are analyzed very concretely in each of the points where they are still spoken. On the other hand, on the dialectological level we bring out the "marks" heralding this disappearance.

NOTES

We are indebted to G. Fussman (Strasbourg) and to G. Redard (Berne) for reading over our manuscript and for giving us useful comments. English translation by L. Jenkins (Vienna).


7. From the historical point of view it would be convenient to add Turan or "Outer Iran", see La civilisation iraniene (Perse, Afghanistan, Iran exterieur) Paris 1952: 326-330.

8. V. G. Redard, op. cit. (s. note 5).


10. Afghan University authorities adhere to the appellation Dari lit. ‘(language) of the court’, which one calls the Persian in use in Afghanistan, in order to distinguish it from the Persian of Iran. This appellation can suit us for the literary Persian (Publications and official letters), and for the Persian used at the University (courses ex cathedra), and on the radio (academic or conventional broadcasts). The problem is completely different, however, for the dialectologist: it is necessary to distinguish the numerous local dialects which are very diverse and all popular (Kaboli, Herati, Mazari, Badaxxi, Logari, Kohestani, Haziraqi, the dialect of Ghur, etc), which are exceedingly different from this Dari! (Cf. also note 3).

11. See notes 3 and 4.


14. nàk wàman: cf. ps. nàwɛ ‘the bride’; nàk ‘pear’ < kb. cf. Turner s.v. 7037 ‘nàkkà-in the shape of a nose’: many plants, fruits, vegetables, and mushrooms acquire their name from a resemblance to a part of the body.


16. Baraki-Barak, administrative seat of the province of Lûgar (in the 19th century it was Baraki-Rañ, 3 Km away), is located 80 Km to the South of Kabul. Itinerary: Kabul 5 km: Binsar 11 km: Pol-e Sang-e Nawištä, 16 km: Carāyā 39 km: Mādiya (< Mohammad Ave), 39 km: Kâlangar (bazar) 79 km: Baraki-Barak (bazar).


19. But not sayyêd-e bâ-yâjma lit. “Sayyêd of the evening before Friday”, which is a derogatory surname which the Sunnites give to the Shiites. In fact, with the latter, a popular belief is current according to which the children of a family not sayyêd which are born the evening before a Friday are likewise sayyêd. It is a way of making fun of them and those who claim to be sayyêd without their genealogy supporting this claim, are not at all rare.


23. The definition is first of all geographic: bordered on the north by the crest of the Hindukush, and on the West by the rift of the Arândâb, and on the South by the Kâboli river and on the East by the Kònar river, it is also cultural: mountain agriculture, on terraces in the narrow part of the valley; fields and prairies in the high glacial valleys, permitting both agriculture and animal husbandry.


25. ABD 80 – the word means also modesty, bashfulness, virtue. See also L. Dupree: _Afghanistan_, Princeton 1973: 460, 463, 531–533, 554.

26. ABD 72 pot-; pà pê Prob. from Indian.

27. See L. Dupree, op. cit., pp. 530–533 (excellent analysis of the process of suppression of the veil and of its consequences).

This paper has been shortened and translated from French into English without any possibility for the author to check the final text.