# Knygų recenzijos

## THOMAS OBERLIES. *A Grammar of Epic Sanskrit*

(Indian Philology and South Asian Studies, vol. 5), Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003, lvi + 632 pp. € 148.00.

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The book under review is published as volume 5 in the series *Indian Philology and South Asian Studies* (IPSAS). The series started in This series, edited by Albrecht Wezler and Michael Witzel, aims to replace the classical *Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde* (founded by Georg Bühler in 1896), thus providing a summary of our knowledge of the Old Indian philology and culture. 1995 with a volume of papers on the Ancient Indo-Aryans (Erdosy 1995), followed by two foundational descriptions of Pāli literature and language (Hinüber 1996 and Oberlies 2001) and a volume dealing with the Modern Hindi Prose (Sarma 2003). Now a grammar of the language of the two great Old Indian epics, Mahābhārata (Mbh) and Rāmāyaṇa (R), has been added to this impressive collection of handbooks.

The author of the present volume, Thomas Oberlies, one of the most authoritative German indologists, is a professor at Göttingen University (Seminar für Indologie und Buddhismuskunde).

There is no need to emphasize that such a study belongs to the most eagerly awaited-for *desiderata* in Sanskrit scholarship. Of course, the peculiarities of the Epic grammar have been the focus of research of many Sanskritists and form the subject of numerous papers dealing with anomalous (in the Indian tradition, 'un-Pāṇinian') forms attested in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa. Many of these articles are published in Indian journals which are somewhat difficult to access however. Monographic studies, such as van Daalen's (1980) study on the language of the Rāmāyaṇa, are the first steps towards the systematization of our knowledge of Epic Sanskrit. Yet there has been no exhaustive treatment of the features of the Epic language up to now. Now that the digital (computer) versions of both epic texts have become available to scholars, we are able to check any statement concerning the grammar of Epic Sanskrit against the full evidence. Consequently, we now have at our disposal a long-awaited, comprehensive description of the features of the Epic language as compared to the standard ('Pāṇinian') Sanskrit.

The book is clearly written and well-organized, which makes orientation in, and reference to the material particularly easy. It consists of an extensive introduction and 13 chapters.

The Introduction (pp. xxiii–lvi) summarizes the main changes between Vedic and post-Vedic (Classical) Sanskrit, focusing on the features which are relevant for the epic variety of Old Indo-Aryan. The author further concentrates on the peculiarities of Epic Sanskrit compared to the correct (Pāṇinian) post-Vedic Sanskrit, including features such as optional vocalic sandhi, substantival inflexion of pronominal adjectives and the confusion of the active and middle voice. Most of these features are said to be metrically conditioned: "metre surpasses grammar" (Hopkins). This conspectus, divided into two main sections, "Phonetics" (pp. xxxii–xxxvii) and "Morphology" (pp. xxxvii–xli), conveniently and uniformly presents the main mechanisms which have triggered numerous peculiarities and anomalies discussed at length in the main part of the book.

Section IV of the Introduction deals with the features shared by Epic Sanskrit and Middle and Late Vedic (i.e. the Mantra language, the language of the Saṃhita prose and Brāhmaṇas, and the Sūtra language), as opposed to the most archaic form of Vedic, the language of the Ṛgveda. The author further pinpoints those features which can be explained through the Middle Indo-Aryan (Prakrit) influence (shortening of long vowels, paradigmatic leveling, etc.). The concluding section of the Introduction, VI, summarizes the main sources of lexical innovation of Epic Sanskrit, such as Prakritisms, as well as borrowings from Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and some other languages.

The core of the book, chapters I–X, deals with the grammar proper, and divides into four large parts, dealing with sandhi (chapter I), noun, pronoun and numerals (chapters II–V), verb (chapters VI–IX) and syntax (chapter X). The type of description can be determined as a contrastive grammar *par excellence*. That is, the author does not aim to offer a complete description of the phonological, morphological and syntactic system of the language of the Old Indian epics, but rather catalogues the features which distinguish Epic Sanskrit from the standard (Pāṇinian) variety of Sanskrit and, in this perspective, can be qualified as anomalies and irregularities. The features shared with standard Sanskrit are not systematically treated, although they are of course mentioned on several occasions. Thus, the author skips some traditional parts of grammar, such as the phonological system and morphophonological alternations (where Epic Sanskrit barely reveals any important peculiarities) and proceeds to the phonotactics, i.e. to the sandhi system. Chapter I represents a comprehensive survey of the types of violations of sandhi rules attested in the epics; the absence of sandhi (e.g. the non-coalescence of similar vowels: *-a/ā a/ā-* for *-ā-*, *-i/ī i/ī-* for *-ī-*, etc.); special or unusual sandhis (for instance, *-as ā-* → *-o '-* for *-as ā-* – which betrays the preceding shortening of the initial *ā-*, particularly common in *ātman-* 'self', as well as in *āśrama-*, *ājñā-* and some other words where *ā-* is followed by a consonant cluster). Yet another irregularity which is already attested in Vedic Sanskrit is the double sandhi of the type *-ās a-* → *-ā a-* → *-ā-*.

Chapters II–III deal with the nominal system. Chapter II summarizes the peculiarities attested in the nominal declension, arranged by declension types. Chapter III is a catalogue of

the types of transfer of stems (such as, for instance, *i-* ↔ *ī-*, which is one of the most common types of the stem changes).

A short Chapter IV focuses on the peculiarities of pronouns, foremost the 1st and 2nd person pronouns. Chapter V deals with all kinds of irregularities in the system of numerals, including stem transfer (e.g., *śata-* for *śat(ī)-*), unusual compound numerals, and irregularities in declension.

For well-founded reasons, the author decided to leave out the issues of nominal word formation, which are comprehensively treated in volume II/2 of the seminal Wackernagel and Debrunner's *Altindische Grammatik* (1954).

The largest part of the book, which consists of chapters VI through to IX (pp. 129–288), is devoted to the verb. Quite naturally, the author pays most attention to the largest tense system, that of present. Chapter VI concentrates on two main topics: (1) the use of grammatical categories (voice, mood and tense) and (2) the morphological peculiarities within the present system.

After a short sketch of the use of voices, which, in particular, deals with the common confusion of the active (*parasmaipada*) and middle (*ātmanepada*), Oberlies proceeds to the discussion of the semantics of the moods (modes)[1] and tenses. The author offers a very useful catalogue of differences in the semantics and use of moods (modes) between Vedic, standard (Pāṇinian) Epic and 'colloquial' Epic Sanskrit, illustrating the differences with numerous examples. Two next sections deal with the irregularities in the use of endings and augment, such as the 1sg. optative in *-e* instead of *-eyam*, as in Mbh 4.34.4-5 *jaye* ... *labheyam* (for *\*jayeyam* ... *labheyam*),[2] or numerous augmentless imperfects. A special section deals with transfers between present classes, foremost from the athematic type to the productive thematic classes I, IV and VI. The author rightly points out that the I → IV transfer is mostly triggered by the influence of some semantically parallel *-ya*-presents, cf. *kṣamyati* 'to be patient' (~ *śamyati* 'to be quiet'), *kṣubhyati* 'to tremble, to be agitated' (~ *muhyati* 'to be confused'[3]). Note, furthermore, that most of them belong to a semantically homogeneous group of verbs denoting emotional and physical states. Already in Vedic this class of (active) *-ya*-presents was productive and attracted new verbs (for details, see Kulikov 2001: 544–546). Apparently,

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[1] The author uses the less common term 'mode' when referring to the members of this grammatical category ('indicative', 'optative', 'imperative', etc.). The more traditional term, 'mood', seems to have been reserved for the meanings of 'modes' ('reality', 'volition', 'possibility', etc.).

[2] For the sequences of several optative forms of which only the last one ends in *-eyam*, while the preceding one(s) is/are in *-e*, Oberlies suggests an explanation in terms of 'distant haplology' (p. 175, fn. 4). Interestingly, such cases can be regarded as examples of 'Gruppenflexion'.

[3] I would mention here yet another *-ya*-present which is both semantically and phonologically parallel to *kṣubhyati*, *lubhyati* 'to be/become disturbed, confused'.

Epic Sanskrit continues the same tendency. Interestingly, we find very few examples of verbs abandoning class IV.[4]

A short Chapter VII (pp. 206–215) contains a useful catalogue of the aberrant forms found in the individual present classes. Some of these irregularities can be traced back as early as late Vedic. Consider, for example, the secondary root *ī* in *adhi-ī* 'to learn, to study', which appears, e.g., in the passive *adhīyante* (3pl.), already attested in late Vedic in the Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa and Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa (see Gotō 1990: 1002f.; Kulikov 2001: 262f.).

Chapter VIII deals with irregular formations outside the present system. These include (1) perfects (in particular, the non-reduplicated forms);[5] (2) aorists (which include, next to morphologically aberrant forms and innovations, several reduplicated formations with non-causative meaning); (3) precatives; (4) futures (of special interest are the haplologized forms where the initial part of the future suffix, *-iṣ(ya)-*, drops after some roots in *-ṣ*: *īkṣ[iṣ]yati*, etc.); (5) periphrastic futures; and (6) conditionals. The next three sections deal with the secondary derivatives, including (7) passives (where the most common anomaly is the use of the active inflexion); (8) causatives (here two main irregularities are non-standard stems[6] and the use of *-aya*-causatives in the non-causative sense); (9) desideratives (two most interesting irregularities are athematic forms, such as 3pl. *bubhūṣate*, and futures with the reduced marker *-sya-* instead of *-siṣya-*, as in *jijñāsyati* for *jijñāsiṣyati*); and (10) intensives. The last section, (11), deals with denominatives.

Chapter IX surveys the abnormal non-finite forms, present, future and perfect participles, verbal adjectives in *-ta*, gerundives, infinitives and absolutives. One of the most typical irregularities here is the confusion of the *aniṭ* and *seṭ* types, i.e. the presence or lack of the connecting vowel *-i-* as against the corresponding Vedic form, sometimes accompanied by the abnormal root vowel grade. Cf. *añcita-* (~ Ved. *akna-*), *krudhita-* (~ Ved. *kruddha-*), *cartavya-* and *cartum* (~ Ved. *caritavya-* and *caritum*), etc.

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[4] The class IX present *puṣṇāti* 'to make prosper, to make grow' does not in fact exemplify the IV → IX transfer, since the class IV present *puṣyati*, as the author rightly notes himself (p. 198), can only be used intransitively. Rather, since *puṣṇāti* is synonymous with the causative *poṣayati*, this formation might be qualified as an (equally rare) example of the X (*-aya*-causative) → IX transfer, perhaps created (as Oberlies notes) on the tripartite model *kliśyate : kliśnāti ~ kleśayati*.

[5] Note that nearly half of these non-reduplicated forms are 3pl. middles in *-ire* (*kāśire, vartire*, etc.). Can they perhaps be regarded as residues of the early Vedic statives in *-ire*, such as *arhire* '(they) are worth', *śere* '(they) lie' (see Kümmel 1996), surviving into Epic Sanskrit?

[6] In particular, Oberlies quotes (p. 246–247) a few causatives based on present stems: *siñcayati, dhūnayati* and *rundhayati*. In fact, these formations can be treated as derived from secondary roots *siñc-, dhūn-* and *rundh-*. Note that the earliest evidence for the root *rundh-* can be found already in late Vedic, cf. passive optative *-rundhyeran* attested at Āpastambaśrautasūtra 21.22.5 (see Kulikov 2001: 153, fn. 450). As for the causative *-kīrayati* (*kṝ* 'to straw'), which Oberlies takes as based on the verbal adjective *kīra-* (p. 247), I would rather assume that it is created as the transitive-causative counterpart of the (non-passive) *-ya*-present *-kīryate* (on which see p. 244, fn. 3) on the model *pūryate : pūrayati*.

The lengthiest chapter, X, deals with irregularities in syntax. It begins with a short discussion of the use of numbers, and is followed by the section on syntactic irregularities, which mostly amount to the lack of agreement (for which Oberlies uses the term 'concord'), specifically, the lack of agreement in gender, case and number controlled by substantives (noun phrases) on adjectives and participles[7] and the lack of subject agreement in number and person.

Section 10.3 is devoted to case syntax. As the author notices, a "characteristic feature of Epic syntax is the wide latitude of meanings in which the cases are employed" (p. 304). Thus, "[t]he instrumental is used in ablatival functions, the genitive in those of the dative and the ablative, and the locative may be employed where the dative and the instrumental would be appropriate" (ibid).

The next section is an excursus on nominal composition. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the use of pre- and postpositions, as well as absolutives used as postpositions, such as *ādāya* '(together) with' (lit. 'having taken'), *āsādya* 'to(wards), on' (lit. 'having sit'), etc.[8]

Some syntactic issues are also treated in other chapters. Thus, in section 9.7 the author notices that "[t]he agent of the absolutive is not always the same as that of the main verb" (p. 287). Here it would be quite in place to mention that this phenomenon can be traced back as early as the language of the Vedic prose and to refer the reader to the seminal study by Tikkanen (1987: 147–152) where this issue is treated at length.

Of course, there are some syntactic problems which have remained outside the scope of the book under review. Thus, much has to be done in the research of the rise of the first features of ergativity. Such a research should include, in particular, the analysis of the subject properties exhibited by the instrumental noun phrase in constructions with *-ta-/-na*-participles (verbal adjectives), which subsequently tends to behave as the ergative subject.[9] However, this and other syntactic issues should rather become topics of a separate volume in the series, which would treat Old Indo-Aryan syntax in its development from Vedic to late Sanskrit.

The 'grammatical' part of the book is followed by Chapter XI, which is a detailed catalogue of verbal roots and forms specific to Epic Sanskrit in the format of Whitney's seminal verbal dictionary (Whitney 1885). The author has carefully checked all of Whitney's records related to Epic Sanskrit, and where deemed necessary, supplemented them with his own additions. These additions include "all forms that are first attested in the Epics, whether regular or not, but whose existence had escaped Whitney's attention" (p. 383). Altogether,

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[7] It is interesting to note that a good deal of the quoted examples of this type are nominative singular masculine forms of present active participles constructed with non-masculine and/or non-singular subjects; cf. Mbh 5.88.2 *sā ... pṛthā pārthān anusmaran* 'Pṛthā, remembering the Pārthās ...' (p. 292); R 6.App.26.33 *vānarā ... diśaḥ śabdena pūrayan* 'The monkeys [shouted], ... filling the quarters with noise' (p. 295). This may point to a (weak) tendency to use present participles as converbs (gerunds, absolutives), i.e. in the function of the (very rare) gerunds in *-am*.

[8] On this phenomenon, see, in particular, Andersen 1979.

[9] For Pāli, this topic is treated in the recent monograph Peterson 1998.

this laudable chapter represents a valuable contribution to the study of the verbal dictionary of Old Indo-Aryan.

The book concludes with an extensive bibliography, three indices (a subject index, an index of passages from Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, as well as some other texts that were quoted in the body of the book, and an index of forms). Also included are two useful concordances which cross-reference the present grammar with the corresponding sections of Kielhorn's *Grammatik der Sanskrit-Sprache*, Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar*, Oberlies' *Pāli Grammar*, as well as with those of three monographs on syntax, Speyer's *Sanskrit Syntax* and *Vedische und Sanskrit- Syntax* and Meenakshi's *Epic Syntax*.

Oberlies' excellent handbook represents an impressive academic achievement. The volume not only contains a comprehensive and (almost) exhaustive catalogue of anomalies and irregularities, but also offers explanations for most of the discussed phenomena in a historical perspective. Thus, the volume is rich both in detailed discussions and in terms of new evidence and argumentation. It also conveniently summarizes all the literature relevant for the study of Epic Sanskrit. The book is highly recommended for linguists and Indologists and should be considered 'a must have' for any Sanskritist.

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