

## Grammatical Traditions

There are two main linguistic traditions, the Tepatic and the Glindesan systems. The Glindesan tradition was developed by speakers of Classical Arajan,<sup>1</sup> a synthetic language, and is morphologically-oriented, with an elaborate classification of words and roots into hierarchical, usually paired, classes. The Tepatic tradition, developed by speakers of the isolating language Yuktepat, is syntactically-oriented, and at most it occasionally distinguishes content and function morphemes.

### Linguistics in Glindesa

In ancient Glindesa, linguistics was closely entwined with religion. This is reflected in the use of dualistic categories throughout Arajan linguistics, mirroring the dualism of the forces of (yin) and (yang) and the dual worship of the gods (Apollo) and (Dionysus). Language was very important, and religious texts and ritual speech had to be reproduced perfectly, down to details of pronunciation, lest their magical efficacy be impaired. Thus priests were trained rigorously in proper manners of speech before they were allowed to take any role, other than completely silent and motionless, in ceremonies. Philology arose out of the practice of writing commentaries on religious texts to explain their meaning, after centuries of cultural evolution had obscured once transparent allusions or styles of speaking (or alternatively, when the powers-that-be needed to use scriptures for purposes they were not originally intended for.) The scholars realized that all things changed, not least of all language. Given that speech patterns deviated with each successive generation, how was a pristine form of Classical Arajan to be maintained in the temples? By studying the texts to determine the rules according to which words were used and combined.

The Glindesan tradition proceeds in three general steps: (1) the organization of morphemes into classes, (2) the combination of appropriate morphemes to form words, (3) the application of *sandhi* rules, which operates with an implicit understanding of underlying and surface forms. Thus inflection of words was explained by the addition of morphemes in a sequence, and the idiosyncrasies occurring in inflections as the result of *sandhi* processes which were applied to the strings. Beginning with words, which are the product of the last step, a similar process is applied: (1) the organization of words into classes, (2) the pairing of appropriate words, (3) the application of agreement rules. The Grammarians recognized the morpheme, which they defined as the smallest meaningful unit, and they defined the word as the unit, consisting of one or more morphemes, which was the largest unit to which *sandhi* phenomena applied.

Nouns could be either primitive or derived, in which case the derived noun was said to bear the “insignia (derivational affix) of the noun” to identify itself when its identity would not be obvious. The Glindesor recognized three grammatical categories of nouns, given as *quantity*, *essence* (or *nature*), and *rank*, corresponding to “number,” “gender,” and “case.” The last instance has to do with one of the few treatments given to word order in traditional grammar. Given the pragmatically neutral order of Verb – Subject – Direct Object – Indirect Object – Instrument – Temporal or Locative Expression, linguistics had ruled that all other things being equal, “nouns followed the verb in declining degree of their intimacy with the activity of the verb.” This gave rise to the notion that nouns (or noun phrases) had a “natural order” of degree determined by syntactic

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning “the true word,” the language spoken by the people of Glindesa.

or thematic role and thus could be “ranked” by that role. For that reason cases were often designated by numbers as well as names, e.g. the nominative was the “first” case, the accusative was “second,” etc. However, the Grammarians had little to say about word order, which was extremely flexible in Obic languages. In fact since word order was largely pragmatically determined, no distinction was officially made between syntax and pragmatics.

## Linguistics in Tepat

Grammar in Tepat developed out of the study of argumentation that produced formal logical and mathematics. Grammar was in fact considered a branch of logic. Syntax was treated as a branch of logic (logic being dealing with words as mathematics deals with numbers), and syntax and logic were referred to by the same term, XXX.

The Tepatic tradition also had a conception of the morpheme, although it did not really have a concept of the word. The spoken language was known as *yuk*, while the written language was *mwen*. The smallest meaningful unit of the *yuk* was known as a *hoq* (approximately, a morpheme), while the smallest meaningful unit of the *mwen* was the logographic character or *kl#*. Usually (and ideally), one monosyllabic *hoq* corresponded to one *kl#*. Some which were known as “extended *hoq*” had two syllables. The *Association for the Rationalization of Language* advocated for the replacement of such words, bringing the language into conformity with the one-syllable-one-morpheme-one-character ideal.

There was no single expression for linguistic expressions above the level of morpheme which corresponds to our word “word.” There is XXX, often translated as “word-association” or more accurately “morphemic association,” referring to any combination of two or more *hoq*, which could be either compound words or syntactic phrases from our perspective – *dvandva* compounds, noun-modifier, verb-object, etc. Some grammarians distinguished informally between “fixed” or “strong” associations, which had more established use, and “weak” or “convenient” associations, which were singular / incidental. XXX called these “incorporated” and “unincorporated” associations, respectively, with the added observation that “incorporated associations” had meanings that were “more than the sum of their parts.”

What made Tepat linguistics particularly interesting, and distinguished it from every other linguistic tradition, was not in the *way* it was conducted, but in the reason *why* it was conducted. In every other culture, including the Swira who succeeded the Tepat, linguistics arose out of efforts to describe in final and “pristine” form the proper way of speaking and writing the language, to preserve ancient knowledge in languages nobody used anymore, or to reconstruct ancestral languages. Implicit in all of these was the hope of stalling, stopping, or even reversing language change. By contrast, in Tepat, language change was actively pursued. It was taken for granted that language would change, and should change. Other cultures of course recognized language change but treated it as a tragedy. The Tepat culture was infused with a spirit of progress, which in later times reached a revolutionary pitch. Like every other part of life, the degree of development of the language was taken as an index of the progress of the entire civilization. Nothing was ever good enough as it is, but should be, and inevitably would be, improved. Language was believed to be the avenue by which clear thinking could be enforced, automatically correcting fallacious thought. Reformers were enthusiastic about identifying “flaws” in language as it existed which could be corrected to bring grammatical rules in line with logical and mathematical ones. It was with this in mind that the Association for the Rationalization of Language was formed. Their goal was to make Yuktepat perfectly logical. This generally consisted of three main courses of action: to remove

every form of irregularity and suppletion in the language; to bring the language into conformity with the one-syllable-one-morpheme-one-character rule; and the (completely fruitless) effort to remove every form of ambiguity from the language.

In each case the linguistic traditions were well-suited to the languages they were originally designed to describe but for the same reasons were problematic to the inheritors of said traditions. The Glindesan paradigm only accounted for the fusional inflectional paradigms of Tricontic and Aipuric languages with the addition of complicated qualifications of the rules. Maybe an approach based on paradigms and tables would have been better, but by then the Arajan achievements in linguistics had been recognized as supreme and it was assumed the Arajan system was the only valid way to describe languages. The fact that the system fit better with Arajan than anything else helped to perpetuate for centuries the idea that Arajan was a more logical language than ones to come later, if not the most perfect language ever committed to writing. The Tepatic tradition was even more poorly fitted to Old Swíra: it had almost no framework for describing inflectional morphology, which was truly the heart and soul of a polysynthetic language like Old Swíra. Old Swíra could only be described in this tradition via gross distortions in the conception of how the language worked.

## The History of Glindesan Linguistics

Arajan Panini<sup>2</sup> was probably not the first person to take up the Arajan language itself as the object of his study. The Glindesor<sup>3</sup> have long been fascinated with their language, which has at times and in certain milieus been claimed to have special, magical attributes when used in certain ways. Fragments of previous writings make reference to aspects of the Arajan language and to the supposed “true” meaning of particular Arajan words. Arajan Panini was the first person to attempt a complete account of the language and produce a satisfactory answer, and did so in a highly original and innovative way. His grammar was lost to the world for a long time but was still widely known because it was quoted so extensively by subsequent scholars both inside and outside linguistics. It was furthermore largely duplicated, in abridged form, by Arajan Panini II in his “total account” which consisted of a dictionary with a supplementary grammar. Magickus also depended on Arajan Panini for his treatise on the language, which was concerned with the magical use of the language and explained its sorcerous properties by reference to the categories and systems of Arajan Panini’s grammar.

Arajan Panini lived during the first dynastic period of Glindesa, when it was a smaller country but still unified under the reign of the Soga<sup>4</sup> kings which had descended from the gods. The country was broken up later during the feudal period, and it remained for Zir Marina<sup>5</sup> to reunify the city-states into an empire – or rather a kingdom, since though it was joined from different elements they were ethnically homogenous – and repel the first attempt at invasion by the Artinaih. Zir Marina rejected the feudal state as unnatural and also rejected the authority of the last few scions of the enervated Soga line, because the gods had revoked their “mandate” and given it to Zir Marina instead. His source for this announcement was the oracle of the god (Apollo), under whose sign he ruled. The prophecy is recounted in the epic poem *The Tale of Zir Marina* which appeared not long after Marina’s death. It also set the pattern ever since then for the transfer of the

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<sup>2</sup> Father of Glindesan linguistics, an as yet unnamed linguist

<sup>3</sup> Collective noun for people of Glindesa

<sup>4</sup> The first dynasty of Glindesa

<sup>5</sup> The national hero of Glindesa. *Zir*, “king.”

mandate of heaven from one dynasty to the next, and to study the dynastic cycle as the unit of history.

One of the programs instituted during Zir Marina's short but epic life was the creation of an Academy of Language as part of his patronage of education. The Academy was a department of the University of Glindesa at Anonimusa, and aside from its teaching function was that of codifying and standardizing the Arajan language. The first major project commissioned of it was the creation of a standard dictionary, which was completed during the reign of Marina's successor. The Academy reaffirmed the statements of previous grammarians like Arajan Panini, adding evidence in the form of quotations from literary and historical works. The dictionary essentially updated and revised Arajan Panini II's dictionary, adding many more words – mostly academic jargon coined by the reinvigorated educational institutions, including some coinages that were never again to appear in the literature except in comprehensive dictionaries. After this from time to time new rulers would commission new editions of the dictionary to account for items the older ones had "missed" – actually new terms and usages which had not existed when the older ones were compiled. After historical linguistics had emerged and reconstruction of Proto-Obic begun, dictionaries began to include etymologies as well.

## **Historical Linguistics**

Historical or diachronic linguistics also developed differently in both civilizations. Its development in Glindesa was ancient, emerging directly from the philological and commentarial tradition of Arajan, and stimulated by the recognition of the quite obvious similarities among the Obic languages. The Glindesor soon figured that the forebear of the Obic languages was not any one of the Obic languages themselves, but rather some no-longer-spoken predecessor. Once it was proposed that laws of sound change operate with regularity, work on the reconstruction of Proto-Obic proceeded rapidly. The protolanguage was already reconstructed fairly completely by the time the Artinaicanu invaded – when Glindesa was a civilization about on the level of ancient Greece in overall "progress."

Arajan was supposed to be the most divine and magical of earthly languages, and for centuries Classical Arajan was used as a language by magicians, priests and philosophers for this reason. Historical linguistics took on a philosophical, religious dimension when the reconstruction of Proto-Obic began in earnest as a way of rediscovering it for actual use. Just as other languages were considered to be inferior and less ideal and perfect than Arajan, so Arajan was assumed to be inferior to its predecessor Proto-Obic. That language as it was originally spoken – originally created – was believed to be the most ideal, the nearest to the divine language. That is, in Middle Civilization philosophical idealism, there was assumed to be an eternal perfect Platonic idea of a language, and that Proto-Obic was the human language nearest that ideal. Such a language was so potent, that it interacted causally with the world. (Normal languages merely released something from the mind of the speaker, or possibly exchanged data between humans. The ideal language itself was presumably what the gods spoke, a language so potent that whatever was spoken was, or became, an act in itself – that by the mere fact of saying something, it became real.). Possibly, this language could not be spoken, understood, or known by humans. As reconstructions in Proto-Obic advanced, it was believed it would represent a breakthrough in magical technology. Failures to this point were accredited to imperfect reconstruction. In the Aipurán Dark Ages though, the alchemist XXX achieved some success by applying a reconstruction of Proto-Obic to his magical practices and successfully created magical energy by speaking it. Another philosopher, XXX2, however,

denied that we could achieve linguistic perfection in these traditional ways. In his belief, language itself was a human construct, and the gods themselves did not need it and could think well enough outside of and beyond it. Language was invented by humans as a way of understanding and thinking about and organizing a world whose ultimate reality was beyond their perception or comprehension. Therefore there was no language which was or could be identified perfectly with the ontologically real, or things-in-themselves. All languages were approximations of the extralinguistic / nonlinguistic universe and inherently limited.

Historical linguistics among the Swíra<sup>6</sup> appeared only after a long interval of temporal separation from the main body of work in the traditional of classical Tepatic grammar. Swiric historical linguistics had an overwhelming political goal: winning back the “true” culture that had been corrupted after the nomadic Swíra cut their hair, built permanent houses, and began studying the Tepatic classics in their bid to effectively administer their new empire. It was primarily geared toward a reconstruction of the “pristine” state of pre-civilized Swíra culture, which was itself due to an interest in Swíra nationalism and a reaction against the influence of Tepat culture (even though this course of study was indebted to previous Tepatic developments in historical research). Because the nomadic Swíra did not have a written language, being able to reconstruct the unwritten language was of prime importance.

As Swiric historical linguistics had a very late development, it has often been questioned whether it was really invented or had been borrowed from Glindesan traditions which had filtered into Swíra. There is really no evidence for this possibility though. Although it is likely that some of the most educated of the *Kogunambu* movement were aware of Glindesan reconstructions of Proto-Obic, or Glindesan-inspired reconstructions of Proto-Aipuric, they were almost certainly unaware of the contents of those reconstructions. In short, they may have known *of* them, but did not really *know* them. None of the classics of Glindesan linguistics appear to have existed in Swíra of that period, whether in original form or translation. Few or none of the contemporary scholars would have had any familiarity with Classical Arajan commensurate with the task of translating any original versions that did exist, if they had existed. (We would also like to think that had such texts been available the Swíra would have recognized the morphological Glindesan approach to grammar was more suitable to polysynthetic Old Swíra than the analytical Tepatic approach was.) Swíra developments would largely come to coincide with Glindesan methodologies, but they were developed in almost trial-and-error fashion from crude older Swiric ideas. Thus they were an example of convergent or parallel development. Glindesan and Swiric scholars happened to agree on methods because those methods worked. At most, Glindesan models could be credited with inspiring the idea that lost languages could be uncovered from modern materials.

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<sup>6</sup> After the Tepat League went into decline, they were overrun by the “Five Invading Tribes” of nomadic cattle-herding barbarians from the north, which included the Swíra.