

AFGHANICA - THE AFGHANISTAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Institute of Oriental Philology
Jagiellonian University
Al. Mickiewicza 9/11
31-120 Kraków, Poland

The idea of an Afghanistan studies newsletter emerged in April 1987 at a workshop "*The future of Afghan Studies*" organized by an international group of scholars during the symposium "*The Crisis of Migration from Afghanistan - Domestic and Foreign Implications*" held at Oxford University. The most important objective of **Afghanica** is to publish short articles and to create an effective way for communication and facilitate cooperation among scholars interested in Afghanistan, both foreign and Afghan. The list of disciplines represented includes: humanistic studies and in particular linguistics, literature, culture, anthropology, sociology and history. The newsletter publishes also announcements and short reports of conferences, notices and short reviews of scholars' books and articles, calls for scholarly assistance and papers, notices of individuals' work in progress and reports on the activities of study centres, libraries, and long-term projects. The first issue appeared in September 1987 in Oxford. In 1990 **Afghanica** was moved to Kraków, Poland. Since then 17 nos of newsletter have been prepared by the Polish editorial board. The last double issue is: nos 16-17 (March/September 1995). All the back issues are available directly from **Afghanica**.

Material for inclusion and enquiries should be sent to the Managing Editor, **Afghanica**, Institute of Oriental Philology, Jagellonian University, Al. Mickiewicza 9/11, 31-120 Kraków, Poland. We invite any relevant materials for publication.

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ANDRZEJ PISOWICZ

FREQUENCY AND IRREGULAR SOUND CHANGE
IN COLLOQUIAL PERSIAN

The problem of irregular sound change has drawn linguists' attention for a long time. One of the explanations of such irregularities points to the special role of word frequency (cf. many works of Prof. Witold Mańczak, some of them listed in the bibliography below). Words particularly frequent in texts often reveal, in diachrony, a faster development than it is in case of the majority of words showing no particular frequency. There are numerous examples of this tendency in many languages. Let us quote here e.g., the French *monsieur* with its reduced pronunciation.

The Persian language makes no exception to this rule. In its modern colloquial variant we find many forms where the irregular phonetic development can easily be explained by high frequency of their occurrence in texts.

For instance, the 3rd sg. present tense ending *-ad* (official form inherited from the classical Persian) is pronounced *-e* in the colloquial language based on the dialect of Tehran (Lazard 130, Pejsikov 63, Vahidyân 66). On the other hand in words like *navad* "ninety" or *gombad* "dome" the final *-ad* is maintained without any change. The difference can be explained by the particularly frequent occurrence of the verb ending which has been subject to the "accelerated" reduction: *-ad>-a>-e*.

It seems that the reduction of the 3rd pl. verb ending *-and>-an* in colloquial Persian and the development of the 3rd sg. copula *ast>e* are also due to frequency, cf. the maintained final group *-nd* in *kamarband* "belt".

Some verbs show reduced present stems, e.g., *šodan* "to become": pres. stem *š-<šav-*, *raftan* "to go": pres. stem *r-<rav-*. The reason of this irregularity is to be seen in high frequency of these words. A similar reduction has not taken place in the verbs *šenidan* "to hear" (pres. stem *šnāv-*, cf. *mi-šnāv-e* "he hears", with *-av-* maintained) as well as in *davidan* "to run" (pres. stem *dav-*, *mi-dav-e* "he runs"). In the first verb the reduction affected the vowel *e* only (*šnāv-<šenāv-*). In the second case a possible development *dav->*d-* has been blocked, as it seems, by the presence of the verb *dādan* "to give" which shows a reduced pres. stem *d-* (*mi-d-e* "he gives" *<mi-deh-ah*).

The greater frequency accounts probably for the reduction of the present stem *nešin->šin-* of the verb *nešastan* "to sit down". A similar but very likely

less frequent verb *neveštan* "to write", pres. stem *nevis-*, has not lost its initial prefix *ne-*.

In a similar way we should explain the shortened imperative form *be-ze* "let!" of the verb *gozâštan* "to let, to leave, to put" used to emphasize the imperative meaning of the subjunctive, cf. *be-ze be-r-e* "let him go!" as opposed to the less reduced *be-zâr* "leave! put!" (official form *be-gozâr*).

In some words of particularly high frequency final *-r* is dropped, e.g., *age* "if", *mage* (interrogative particle), *âxe* "after all", cf. official forms: *agar*, *magar*, *âxer*. In other words final *-r* is maintained: *tabar* "axe", *honar* "art", *mâher* "master".

The numeral *yek* "one" is pronounced, in colloquial Persian, *ye* without final *-k*. It should be attributed to the high frequency of this word used as indefinite article as well.

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DARIUSZ ROZMUS
MAREK SKOCZEK

SULH

L'objet de cet article est de comparer la signification culturelle de la racine sémite "slh" (1. en hébreu סלח). Cette comparaison concernera les anciennes cultures juive et arabe.

Dans le cas de la langue hébraïque le mot formé à partir de cette racine signifie avant tout "pardonner" et aussi, moins souvent, "s'excuser tout en attendant le pardon". Le terme (2. סליחה) formé à partir de ce verbe signifie "le pardon".¹ Le nouveau dictionnaire "hébreu-polonais et polonais-hébreu" édité en 1993 cite un verbe formé à partir de cette racine: "lisloach" (3. לסלח) qui veut dire "pardonner" et le mot "selicha" (4. סליחה) – le pardon – mentionné ci-dessus.²

Quant à la langue arabe, les verbes suivants se forment à partir de la racine "slh": "salaha", "saluha" – être convenable, convenir, être adéquat, pratique, utile, mais aussi: croyant, pieux. Le nom formé à partir de cette racine signifie la paix, l'accord, l'alliance, le cessez-le-feu.³ Pourtant il vaut mieux souligner que ce mot ne se trouve pas parmi les mots employés le plus souvent pour dire "la paix".

En s'appuyant sur l'Encyclopédie de l'Islam, on conclut que ce terme est lié à l'application de la loi basée sur la loi coutumière. Parfois il porte sur l'objet d'une vente et sur un accord conclu à cette occasion. Il devient aussi un moyen pour réconcilier deux parties opposées. La situation où une mutilation ou même un meurtre provoque une controverse, est l'exemple flagrant d'un cas où on conclut "un sulh". Les juristes médiévaux distinguaient quelques façons de conclure "un sulh" mais cela concernait des crimes graves. Dans les

¹ voir *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* based upon the lexical work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner by William Holladay, Leiden, E. Brill 1972, p. 257, les équivalents anglais – practice forbearance, pardon forgive.

² A. Klugman, *Nouveau dictionnaire polonais-hébreu, hébreu-polonais*, Warszawa – Tel Awiw 1993.

³ voir J. Danecki, J. Kozłowska, *Dictionnaire arabe-polonais*, Warszawa 1996, d'autres dictionnaires populaires, par exemple celui de H. K. Baranow donnent des significations similaires. Les dictionnaires de la langue classique arabe comme tag al arus ou bien muhit al muhit traduisent ce terme par "la paix".