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R. N. Cust

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland / Volume 20 / Issue 03 / July 1888, pp 413 - 418

DOI: 10.1017/S0035869X00020165, Published online: 15 March 2011

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0035869X00020165

How to cite this article:

R. N. Cust (1888). Art. X.—The Languages spoken in the Zarafshan Valley in Russian Turkistan. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, 20, pp 413-418
doi:10.1017/S0035869X00020165

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ART. X.—*The Languages spoken in the Zarafshan Valley in Russian Turkistan.* By R. N. CUST, LL.D., M.R.A.S.

IN the course of my reading preparatory to my proposed trip in September next to Orenberg and the Steppes of Central Asia, I came upon the valuable book by Dr. Radloff, "*Aus Siberien*," Leipzig, 1884. His account of the languages spoken in the Zarafshan Valley, of which the famous city of Samarkand is the capital, seems so important, that I have had it translated from the German for publication in the Journal. In Vol. XVIII. of the Journal, 1886, pp. 177–195, I communicated a paper on the Geographical Distribution of the Túrki Languages, but some points required elucidation, which are cleared up by Dr. Radloff's remarks. His statements with regard to the Tájik or Persian portion of the population of the Valley is very important, as being fresh, and no doubt accurate.

ROBERT N. CUST, Hon. Secretary.

May 10th, 1888.

The population of the Zarafshan Valley may be divided into two groups, according to its languages: 1stly, races speaking Túrki languages, and 2ndly, races speaking Persian. The former constitute the largest portion of the population, while the latter are scattered about in various parts. The Persian-speaking inhabitants as a rule go by the name of Tájik; even the uncultured country people and nomad tribes call the Persian language Tájik-til (Tájik language).

The Tájik generally only inhabit the towns, and only busy themselves with commerce and handicraft. They have

their origin partly from very old Persian emigrants or freed Persian slaves, who were sold in great numbers every year, by the Turkomans in the Khanates. The newer Persian inhabitants are generally called Iran, and are partly, although perhaps secretly, Shiah.

The chief seats of the Tájik (by which general name I here comprise all the Persians) are the cities of Khojend on the Syr Daria (which separates the Tájik town from the Uzbek town, inhabited nearly wholly by Tájik) and Samarkand. The inner town of Samarkand is almost solely inhabited by Tájik, and Persian is the prevailing language there. The Tájik fill the western gardens and the neighbourhood of Samarkand almost exclusively as well; however there are a few Iran villages, which make the silk-worm their chief industry. I have in vain endeavoured to find from the Tájik their tribal names, neither do they know anything about their early history.

As a remnant of the former population, I may mention the so-called Mountain-Tájik or Galcha, who inhabit districts more or less extensive. It seems as if these ancient inhabitants had saved themselves from the stream of new-comers by keeping to these high-lying districts. As far as I could tell, these great Tájik settlements are situated as follows: 1) one day's journey from Kokand on the way to Dauan, the following villages were pointed out to me, Schaidan, Babadurchan, and Yangas; 2) in the south-west mountains of Tashkend; 3) on the north border of the Kara-Tag; 4) along the upper course of the Zarafshan, east of Pentshikend, where the population was called Galcha and Kara Tegin. Unfortunately I could not visit any of these Persian settlements, so I cannot give any further details about them. However, as far as I can know, these people differ very little from the other inhabitants in their customs and ways of living.

The Túrki inhabitants of the Zarafshan Valley consist for the most part of Uzbek, with the exception of a few places on the Nurpai, where there are several important Arab settlements, but which have long succumbed to Túrki influence, and even speak their language.

The chief Uzbek tribes are by no means strictly separate from one another, but are considerably intermixed, always keeping together as a race. A fact of this is, that a great number of the Kiptchak names, which often, as one clearly sees, have been given after the names of small tribal fractions. However, I consider it superfluous to discuss this fictitious genealogy further; one thing I will yet mention. The Khan of Bokhara, who came from the Mangyt tribe, is said to sit on a felt cloth every time he ascends his throne, the four corners of which are held by delegates from the four branch tribes.

From what I have said, two languages, the Persian and Túrki, are spoken in the Zarafshan Valley, and in Transoxiana generally. I do not venture to give any decided opinion about the Persian; however it seems that the Persian spoken here differs very little from the written Persian. As to the Túrki languages, there are four here: the Kirghíz, the Kara-Kalpak, the Turkoman, and the Jagatai or Uzbek. The three former are closely related, while the Uzbek differs considerably from them; the latter alone is a literary language. Of course, throughout the large area which the Uzbek inhabit, there must be some variety in the dialects; however, generally speaking, this language may be taken as a whole; at any rate, the inhabitants of Bokhara and the Sarts of Turkistan understand each other well enough, which is not to be surprised at, when one considers the long and constant intercourse between the towns of Central Asia.

As to the purity of the Túrki language, it is in the steppes that it is the most purely spoken, where it has not yet been permeated by the civilization of Islam, the destroyer of language and of national spirit. The language of the Kirghíz is the least poisoned with Arabic and Persian words, and whatever foreign elements they may have taken up, they have completely assimilated. However, they have been invaded in many parts by foreigners, which fact is proved by the fact of the Kirghíz living in close proximity to the Sart.

As regards purity of language, next to the language of

the Kirghíz stands that of the Kara-Kalpak, and the Turkoman in the Nurata mountains, although the tribes have succumbed considerably to the Uzbek in all their social intercourse, and have therefore incorporated many loan-words.

The language of the Uzbek residents of the Zarafshan Valley is not nearly as pure as those which I have just mentioned. Arabic and Persian expressions are used a great deal, even by the non-educated. In the towns this language is the most disfigured, as it is considered good style to borrow foreign expressions. The higher the society, the more does the language get debased, so that to an outsider it sounds like a different language. Not only are an innumerable amount of foreign expressions used here, but the grammatical structure is changed. The harmony of names has been quite destroyed, and changed to please the foreigners. It seems as if learning itself had required this unnatural course, for the Mulla forces upon the reading scholars pronunciation contrary to that of Túrki, and severely denounces the correct intonation. Thus it comes about that the less learned people read according to the Mulla's instruction.

It seems as if learning had the object of eradicating the language of the people. The ordinary man, who reads and writes without being learned, does so in Túrki. However, as soon as he knows more, he turns his back in disgust on these reputed signs of ignorance, and gives himself up to the study of Persian. This half-educated man still writes in Túrki, as he is not yet sufficient master of the Persian. He only reads the Korán in Arabic, learns prayers, and works through a few Arabic books, provided with a translation. However, if he gets as far as the Arabic Grammar, and gets to know a little of Arabic, he then neglects the Persian, and gives all his time to Arabic, the aim of every learned man. The greater scholars generally only write in Persian, troubling themselves very little if the receiver of the epistle understands Persian or not. Very often this unfortunate man is obliged to find a Mulla first to translate the writing of his correspondent. All the official business

in documents, decrees, etc., of the government are transacted in Persian, even in Kokand. The reason of this is that every official always has a Mulla, who of course writes Persian. I have often had occasion to see these official documents written. The official just gives the Mulla the substance of the writing, and only seals it, while the other does all the rest.

Under these circumstances, the continual inroad of foreigners is not to be surprised at. But what helps to break up the language more is, that the foreign words continue their independent existence, as was the case with the interlarding of French phrases among the German aristocrats of the last century. Only here the confusion increases, because there is no reaction by which the language should be purified.

Although, generally speaking, people are not slow to see that such occupations as investigating and learning are good for the mind and strengthen the judgment, it is unfortunately just the opposite here. Only the uneducated seem to have a sound judgment and a certain acuteness.

The language of the Kirghíz is pleasing and eloquent; they are witty and sarcastic in questioning and answering, and often even very sharp, and even the least educated Kirghíz is complete master of his language. A Kirghíz story-teller has a fresh and fascinating way of relating. The Kara-Kalpak, the Turkoman, and the Uzbek resident of the Zarafshan Valley is even more helpless than the uneducated nomad, but the educated classes among the townspeople are very heavy in their conversation, devoid of expression, and exceptionally wearisome in their talk. How could it be different? They occupy themselves mostly with what they cannot understand from a linguistic point of view. The Kirghíz hears his fairy tales, myths, and songs in his own language, and so he gets impressions which remain, and incite to imitate. The Uzbek, on the contrary, listens to the simplest stories in a language the greater part of which he only half understands, and the more he studies, the thicker becomes the mist around him. They get used to guessing

the sense of what they have read or heard, and learn the jingle of words by heart, like a parrot. Through this only one function of the mind, the memory, is practised, while the other functions are not called upon at all. The scholar requires from fifteen to twenty years to master the difficulties of the language, a victory which is the aim of every student. There are very few who have been fortunate enough to carry off the victory.