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Origins and Migrations in the Extended Eastern Himalayas. **Edited by Toni Huber and Stuart Blackburn. Leiden, Brill, 2012.**

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281 and 295. This feature also decorated the backs of the so-called “Dilmun” seals from the Persian Gulf (H. Crawford: *Early Dilmun Seals from Saar*, Ludlow 2001, p. 17, Figs 10–11) and features in many of the seal designs at Saar and Failaka – particularly the eyes of animals (e.g. Crawford, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–73; P. Kjaerum: *Failaka/Dilmun 1:1. The Stamp and Cylinder Seals*, Aarhus 1983, p. 15 nos. 1–3 and *passim*). We know there was trade between the Gulf and the Indus in the late third millennium BCE and early second, but where the centre-dot circle originated is not clear. This feature was only used much later in Mesopotamia, in the Late Bronze Age glyptic of the Mitannian period in the north. Interestingly enough, H-1703 on p. 237 looks like a copy of a Dilmun seal without the decoration, but the quadripartite division on its base also exists on a seal from Failaka where the design is cruder (Kjaerum, *op. cit.*, p. 133, no. 324).

This third volume of the CISI is therefore full of potential for those examining contacts between the Indus and the Gulf, and beyond. The use of a similar and distinctive technique and motif – namely the centre-dot circle – also has important implications for those working on relative chronologies between the two areas. All those who put the volume together, and particularly Asko Parpola, the editor, are to be congratulated and thanked. d.p.m@collon.demon.co.uk

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ORIGINS AND MIGRATIONS IN THE EXTENDED EASTERN HIMALAYAS. Edited by TONI HUBER and STUART BLACKBURN. Leiden, Brill, 2012.

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A great deal is known about the Indo-Europeans; a tale of a hero who **éǵʰent óǵʰim* ‘slew the serpent’ was central to their mythology; their poets sang songs of heroic deeds to gain their patrons and themselves **méǵʰh₂ kéléyos* ‘great fame’; a royal sacrifice of theirs involved copulation with a horse.¹ These feats of knowledge bear witness to the labors of generations of linguistics and philologists working directly with traditional literature in its original tongues. Far less is known about the speakers of the Trans-Himalayan proto-language. The current volume, proceedings of a conference held in Berlin (May 2008) offers 14 studies of what Himalayan groups say of their origins and what modern scholarship currently offers on the same topic.

Although a Euhemerist approach to mythology and an ahistorical hypostasized *ethnos* overshadow any investigation of such themes, the papers in this book avoid these dangers. In particular, the essays of Robbins Burling (pp. 49–62) and F. K. L. Chit Hlaing (pp. 239–251) warn that “one cannot in general ask usefully where such and such a people in their current identity and under their present ethnonym were very far back in time” (Chit Hlaing, p. 239). Burling recounts how occidental researchers bring their naïveté into the field and spread it among their informants; he traces the *Denkfehler* of asking ‘where do they come from?’ from Sir William Jones, through the colonial officers of Northeast India, right up to a 2001 essay by Randy LaPolla (p. 58). Chit Hlaing draws attention to the emergence of the Red Karen as an ethnic identity from the late eighteenth century amid the vicissitudes of the international teak trade and describes the development of Chin and Kachin identity through reactions with low land peoples.

¹C. Watkins, *How to kill a dragon: aspects of Indo-European poetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 154

to Watkins' discovery that Rig Vedic *kaprthám úd dadhātana* 'raise high the phallus' and Lyric Greek *anáget'*, *euruchōlan* (... *poiéte*) 'stand back (make) plenty of room' have the same scansion, are both second plural imperatives, and both occur during the presentation of a phallus (1995: 160), are not possible until the texts that contain these passages are published in full in the original.

With the achievements of Indo-European linguistics still in mind, it is disappointing that linguists contribute the least to the book under review. Nothing in the contributions of George van Driem (pp. 187–211) or Mark Post (pp. 153–186) is here published for the first time. Although unoriginal, van Driem's essay is un-problematic. In contrast, Post's paper presents problems. Post's proto-Tani-forms are nowhere explained or defended (p. 174 et passim). He postulates the erstwhile influence of a *lingua franca* in the history of the Tani language family without evidence (p. 164). He is likewise over-eager to see a substrate at work in Tani and Milang. Obvious cognates are at hand for many of the words he says "have scarce or non-occurring cognates elsewhere" (p. 179): Milang *ɲot-* 'bite', Lashi *ɲa:tʰ¹*, Risianku Tamang *ʰɲat* 'chew', etc.; Milang *m-* 'request', Tib. ལྷུ་ *zu* < *rju (cf. Tib. ལྷག་ *zag* 'day', Bur. ལྷོད་ *ryak*); proto-Tani *rjap 'door', Bur. ལྷོད་ *ryap* 'to stand, stop'; pTani *puk 'arrow', Tib. √pug 'pierce' (pres. ལྷེག་ *hbigs*). When one considers both that Tani at times has *r-* where other languages have *l-* (e.g. pTani *pri 'four' versus Tib. ལྷོ་ *bzi* < *bli, OBur. ལྷོ་ *liy*, Chi. 四 *sijH* < *.lij-s) and that as yet unaccounted for variation between -ik and -ij reoccurs in cognates across the family (e.g. Tib. ལྷོ་ *sñin* 'heart', Lashi *nəkʰʰ⁵⁵-*), Post is mistaken to claim that proto-Tani *rik 'field' is not cognate with *liŋ (cf. Tib. ལྷོ་ *zin* < *liŋ 'field', Kurtöp *Lley*, and Chi. 田 *den* < *liŋ, etc.). Post discusses the *Wörter und Sachen* method, but refrains from engaging in it himself, with the contradictory explanations that "data published to date is [sic] insufficient" (p. 165) and "space prevents me from providing large lists of such forms here" (p. 166). He devotes ten pages (pp. 169–179) to a discussion of whether the Tani languages are more Indo-spheric or Sino-spheric, despite himself concluding in a previous paper that Matisoff's theorization of languages into a Sino-sphere and Indo-sphere is erroneous.⁷ Why invite readers to relive this *Irrweg*? Despite these many oddities, it is Post's vision of the boundaries between disciplines that most shocks; he suggests that preparing "large compendia of well-transcribed, analysed and translated legends/folktales" (p. 182) is a task for others, not linguists like himself. If descriptive linguists hold themselves aloof from the documentation of traditional literature the future of comparative research on the languages of this family is bleak. nh36@soas.ac.uk

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TAMBORA: THE ERUPTION THAT CHANGED THE WORLD. By GILLEN D'ARCY WOOD. pp. 293. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2014.

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The eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, for all its worldwide fame as the destroyer of Pompeii and Herculaneum, had no lasting impact on the Roman empire. The equally famous eruption of Krakatau, west of Java, in 1883 ejected enough volcanic dust to produce a dramatic impact on the earth's atmosphere and on the developing science of volcanology, but had no significant effect on international

⁷M. W. Post, "Prosody and typological drift in Austroasiatic and Tibeto-Burman: Against 'Indosphere' and 'Sinosphere.'" In S. Srichampa, P. Sidwell and K. J. Gregerson, Eds., *Austroasiatic Studies: Papers from ICAAL4*. Canberra, Pacific Linguistics, 2011: 198 – 211.