

## INTRODUCTION

Brahui (*brā'ūī*) is a Dravidian language. It is spoken in Pakistan—mainly in the Kalat and Hairpur regions, and to a lesser extent in the Quetta, Hyderabad and Karachi regions—as well as beyond Pakistan's borders—in Afghanistan and Iran.

The exact number of Brahui speakers is unknown. Since most Brahuīs are bilingual, they sometimes do not distinguish themselves from Baluchis, which results in incomplete estimates of their number at censuses, etc. According to the 1961 Census /70, IV-31, 117/<sup>1</sup>, some 366,000 people in Pakistan considered Brahui to be their mother tongue (151,000 of them inhabited the Kalat region, 108,000 the Hairpur region, 39,000 the Quetta region, 38,000 the Hyderabad region and 27,000 the Karachi region). Perhaps part of the Pakistanis (87,000) who entered Brahui as their second language should also be included in this number. In Afghanistan, Brahuīs inhabit the south-west of the country, wandering with their livestock in the area between Shorawak and Chakhansur /71, 446/. In Iran, Brahuīs are encountered mainly in the eastern regions of the country along its borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan (from Sabzawar to Bempur). The total number of the Brahuīs who inhabit these countries can be estimated but very approximately: it is generally assumed that from 25,000 to 100,000 Brahuīs live in Afghanistan and Iran /77, 754; 25, 438/. In the USSR, small groups of Brahuīs inhabit southern regions of Turkmenia /77, 754/. If the rapid growth of the Brahui population in Pakistan over the few last decades is taken into account (cf. 146,300 in 1911; 218,600 in 1951 and 365,800 in 1961), it is reasonable to assume that the total number of Brahui speakers at present is much in excess of 400,000 and is probably nearer 500,000.

All the Brahui tribes are divided into three large groups, and this is reflected in the three major divisions of their language into dialects. The groups are in fact three tribal alliances incorporating the so-called indigenous tribes (the Iltāzai, the Ahmadzai, the Gurnārī, the Kalandrārī, the Kambrārī, the Mīrwārī, the Rōdēnī and the Sumālārī), the Sarawan tribes (the Rastamzai, the Sātakzai, the Sarparra, the Raisānī, the

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<sup>1</sup> The first figure in the brackets stands for the number under which the work concerned is listed in the Bibliography, the next figure, separated from the first by a comma, stands for the page (when necessary); different works (by one and the same author or by different authors), which are entered under appropriate numbers, are separated by a semicolon.

Mādashāhī, the Kurds, the Laharī, the Zahrī-Mēngal, the Bangulzai, the Lāngav and the Shahwānī) and the Jhalawan tribes (the Nīchārī, the Hārūnī, the Pandrānī, the Sājdī, the Bīzanjav, the Māmasānī, the Zahrī and the Mēngal), respectively. The indigenous tribes inhabit mainly the Kalat valley, the Sarawan tribes live north of Kalat, and the Jhalawan tribes south of Kalat. At present a considerable part of Brahui tribes are engaged in agriculture and lead a settled life; however, even today there are many nomadic Brahui livestock breeders.

Brahui tribes are not associations of people based on blood relationship. In most cases they are administrative-economic and military-political organisations, formed comparatively recently by the association of different families and not infrequently including groups that originally spoken another language and had gradually assimilated Brahui.<sup>2</sup> As a rule, the names of the tribes are of later origin and are linked with the personal names of their first chiefs or the names given them by their neighbours. On the contrary, the ethnonym *brā'hūī* is of ancient and purely Dravidian origin and in this respect does not differ from the self-appellations of other Dravidian peoples and tribes,<sup>3</sup> with many of which it is connected etymologically. Thus, the second part of this ethnonym is identical with the self-appellations of some other Dravidian peoples: the Kui (*kūi*), the Kuvī (*kūvinga*), the Konda (*kūbi*), the Gondi (*koṭīōRRk, kōya*), which mean 'mountain people', 'mountaineers' (cf. the Tamil *kō* 'mountain').<sup>4</sup> The replacement of a velar stop by a glottal stop in an intervocal position in this case is quite possible.<sup>5</sup> The first part of the ethnonym contains an attribute of the second and tells which particular mountaineers speak this language. In words of Dravidian origin initial consonant clusters appear as a result of the dropping of the vowel which originally existed between them, the quality of the vowel that was dropped influencing the quality of the vowel in the second syllable (the latter becomes longer) in accordance with these rules: *a...a* > *ā*, *i...i* > *ī*, *u...u* > *ū*, *i/e...a* > *ē*, *u/o...a* > *ō*.<sup>6</sup> At the same time

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed historical and ethnographic characterisation of the Brahuīs, see works by D. Bray and M.G. Pikulin /69; 12; 78/.

<sup>3</sup> Tracing *brā'hūī* to the proper name Ibrahim, so popular among the Brahuīs themselves, is merely a case of folk etymology linked with the adoption of Islam. The Iranian etymology of this ethnonym, *barōhī* 'mountaineer', is debatable for a number of reasons (vagueness of phonetic correspondences, unusualness of adopting a foreign word as a self-appellation, etc.). However, it is possible that *barōhī* was an Iranian translation loan word copying the Dravidian name.

<sup>4</sup> Also cf. the synonymous self-appellations of other Dravidian peoples and tribes: *kur'ava* 'Korava', 'mountaineer', *maleh* 'Malto', 'mountaineer', *malayālī* 'Malayali', 'inhabitant of a mountainous country'.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., for instance, *tākā* 'wind' in Kurukh, *tāke* 'wind' in Malto, *ta'ō* 'wind' in Brahui.

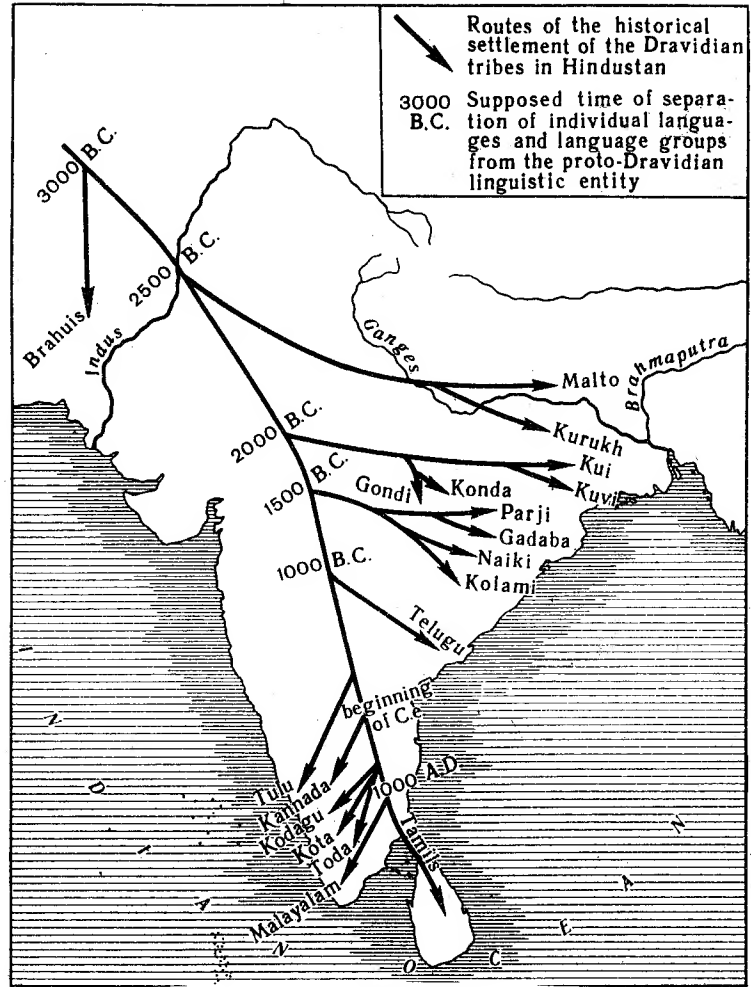
<sup>6</sup> For a detailed analysis of these phonetic processes, see A. Maslov /64, 340-362/.

the Brahui consonant *b-* is a reflection of the initial *v-* /47, 99/. Finally, *-r-* may be either the original sonant *-r-* or a reflection of the proto-Dravidian noise consonants *-R-* and *-r<sup>f</sup>-* or the sonant *-Z-* /16, XIII/. The meaning of the word shows that in this case *-r-* apparently comes from the proto-Dravidian *-R-*, i.e. *brā<sup>h</sup>ūt* < \**vaRa + kō + ī*, the entire word meaning 'northern mountaineers' or 'people of the northern mountains'.

During the historical migration of the forebears of the modern Dravidians into India, the ancestors of the Brahuīs were the first to separate from the bulk of the proto-Dravidian tribes moving to the south and south-east and, having settled more to the north than all the other kindred tribes, received their name. The separation of the ancestors of the Brahuīs, as well as the beginning of the migration of the Dravidians into India, dates back to hoary antiquity and, as testified by archaeological data /79, 65-66; 80, 72/, could not have taken place later than the 4th-3rd millennia B.C. Lexico-statistical research /56, 170-186/ shows conclusively that the separation of the Brahui from the common Dravidian stock began between the 4th and 3rd millennia or even at the very end of the 4th millennium B.C. The separation of the forebears of the other modern peoples and tribes from the common proto-Dravidian stock took place after the separation of the ancestors of the Brahuīs: as the Dravidian tribes pushed southwards, they separated from them and stayed behind the ancestors of the modern Malto and the Kurukh (first half of the 3rd millennium B.C.), the Kui, the Kuvi, the Konda and the Gondi (second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.), the Parji, the Gadaba, the Naiki and the Kolami (15th-11th centuries B.C.), the Telugu (10th-9th centuries B.C.), etc. /56, 170-186/.

The character of the disintegration of the common proto-Dravidian entity had predetermined the further relations between its members and found its expression in the classification of the modern Dravidian languages, having determined, in particular, the place of Brahui among the other languages. According to the modern conception, Brahui belongs to the north-western group of the Dravidian languages. It is apparently most closely related to the north-eastern group of these languages, which includes Malto and Kurukh. Brahui is related more distantly to the Gondwana group, which includes Kui, Kuvi, Manda, Pengo, Konda and Gondi, and still more distantly to the central group, which includes Parji, Gadaba, Kolami and Naiki. The languages of the south-eastern group (Telugu), those of the south-western group (Koraga, Bellari and Tulu) and those of the southern group (Kuruba, Kannada, Kodagu, Kota, Toda, Kurru, Malayalam and Tamil) are most distantly related to Brahui.

The historical process of the Dravidians' settlement of the Indian Subcontinent, accompanied by the disintegration of the proto-Dravidian linguistic entity and the formation of the modern languages and language groups, resembles, speaking metaphorically, a head of cabbage which shed its leaves one after another as it moved southwards, rather than the traditional genealogical tree from whose trunk grew the individual branch languages. Schematically, with the factors of time, place and language affinity taken into account, this process may be represented by the map on the following page.



The extremely early isolation of Brahui had determined the character of its links with the other Dravidian languages, with none of which it has an affinity that would justify their inclusion into a single group. The main features of Brahui phonetics and grammar for the most part either reflect only the general links between this language and the other Dravidian languages as a whole or oppose it, to the same extent, to all the cognate languages (the formants of the dative and objective cases or the reflections of all vowels with the exception of *e* and *o* may provide examples of the former features, and the reflection of the proto-Dravidian root vowels \**e* and \**o*, the reflection of \**c* before *u/ū*, *e/ē* as *k* or the development of a complicated system of locative cases may provide examples of the latter features). Innovations having parallels only in some of the cognate languages do not produce isoglossic lines; these innovations are probably a result of an

independent parallel development, in a number of languages, of one and the same feature—a feature that does not presuppose a previous affinity between this group of languages traceable to an intermediate parent language; or they may be a result of a chance coincidence. Such, for example, is the reflection of the initial \*v- as b- in Brahui, Malto, Kurukh, Kannada, Kodagu and Tulu, the reflection of \*/ as a voiceless /h in some positions in Brahui and Toda, the formant of the Past tense -k- in Brahui, Malto, Kurukh, Kota, etc. Isolated features which coincide in Brahui and the languages of the north-eastern group (the reflection of \*k- as x- in some positions in Brahui, Malto and Kurukh, etc.) may testify to a somewhat closer relation between Brahui and the languages of the north-eastern group than between the former and the languages of the other groups, but they do not provide sufficient reasons for their inclusion into a single group.<sup>7</sup> It is most likely that these common features testify to the existence in proto-Dravidian of various dialects, from one of which they may have been inherited by languages of both the north-western and north-eastern groups. The fact that these groups had nothing in common after Brahui had separated from proto-Dravidian is graphically demonstrated, in particular, by the analysis of the common vocabulary preserved in Brahui and other languages. Thus, out of 202 instances in which Brahui material is used in *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* by T. Burrow and M.B. Emeneau, only in seven there exist etymologies common to Brahui, Malto and Kurukh; in 108 instances there exist etymologies common to Brahui and other languages, and in 87 instances Brahui is represented in common Dravidian etymologies /26, 63/.

Brahui is known to scholars only in its present-day state. Until recently it was believed that there existed no literature whatsoever in Brahui, except for folklore. According to D. Bray, "Brahui is not only devoid of literature, it is never reduced to writing except as an artificial feat of skill. The great mass of the people who speak Brahui are in fact illiterate, and the few who can read and write have acquired their accomplishments through the medium of a foreign language, and have as yet made no real attempt to apply them to their mother tongue"/11, 23/.

However, according to the Pakistani scholars S.M. Kamil-al-Qadri /72/ and Ch.B. Khan Raisani /74/, literature in Brahui has existed for no less than three centuries. They consider the poem *Tohfatul Ajaib* by Malik Dad, the court poet of Kalat's khan Naseer I, to be the first work of Brahui literature. The same scholars also give the names of a number of other authors who wrote in Brahui, and describe the activities of the bookpublisher Muhammad Fazil, who printed books in Brahui in the community of Durkhani /73, 167-170/.

Be it as it may, the problem of Brahui becoming a real literary language still awaits its solution. Besides the fact that, by general admission, the Arabic-Persian alphabet is poorly suited to Brahui writing /11, 23; 26, 45/, the negligible percentage of literacy (3,600 people in 1961),

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<sup>7</sup> Arguments in favour of such inclusion are cited, for example, by M.B. Emeneau /26, 62-70/.

the absence of grammars and textbooks in Brahui, the absence of schools where teaching would be conducted in Brahui, the absence of regularly published books<sup>8</sup> and periodicals<sup>9</sup> in this language, and also many other similar reasons make it impossible at present to include Brahui in the number of languages which have a writing and a developed literature.

The first references to Brahui tribes appeared in literature comparatively recently; only after the 16th century, when a confederation of Brahui tribes had taken shape in Baluchistan, did some Persian chronicles occasionally mention the Brahuists and their chiefs /78, 30/. Acquaintance with the Brahui language took place even more recently, in the mid-19th century, when the English traveller R. Leech published the first Brahui grammar /38, 538-556/ in his series of short grammars and dictionaries, known under the general title *Epitome of the Grammars of the Brahuiky, the Balochky and the Panjabi Languages, with Vocabularies of the Baraky, the Pashi, the Laghmani, the Cashgari, the Teerhai and the Deer Dialects*. One more short Brahui grammar was published in 1874 by another English traveller, H.W. Belew, in a supplement to his description of his journey from Multan to Teheran /8, 473-493/. The linguistic analysis of the published materials made by Ch. Lassen /37, 337-409/ and R. Caldwell /18/ did not yield any conclusive results and merely indicated the need of a more detailed study of Brahui and its relations with other languages, particularly those of the Deccan. Soon afterwards the Indian linguist A. Bux published a comprehensive description of Brahui /17/, and the well-known German linguist E. Trumpp put out a detailed comparative-historical analysis of that language, based on A. Bux's data and proving the affinity between Brahui and the Dravidian family of languages /53/<sup>10</sup>. In their characterisation of Brahui in the fourth volume of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, G.A. Grierson and S. Konow mainly proceeded from the works by A. Bux and E. Trumpp, and were the first to suggest that Brahui had separated from proto-Dravidian at a very early stage, when the differences between its various dialects were insignificant.

The fundamental work on Brahui, the three-volume *The Brahui Language* by D. Bray, was a result of its author's four-year contact with native Brahui speakers in Baluchistan. It is based entirely on original material collected by D. Bray and consists of three parts: *Grammar* (Volume I), *The Brahui Problem* (Volume II) and *An Etymological Vocabulary* (Volume III). The main attention in D. Bray's *Grammar* is paid

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<sup>8</sup> The first printed book in Brahui appeared ninety years ago. It consisted of translations of various British authors: M. Nicolson, Meanee, &c., *A Compilation of Extracts from Napier's Conquest of Scinde, Grant Duff's Mahratta History, &c., &c., translated into the Biroohi language*, Karachi, 1877. Later on other translated works, mainly on religious subjects, were published. A useful aid to Brahui studies is J. Mayer's reader (J. Mayer, *A Brahui Reading Book*, Ludhiana, 1906).

<sup>9</sup> Until quite recently there existed no periodicals in Brahui /75; 76/. According to M.G. Pikulin /78, 36/, a monthly magazine in Brahui is published in Pakistan.

<sup>10</sup> An abridged translation of E. Trumpp's work has been made and published by T. Duka /21/.

to the characterisation of the Kalat dialect, which is generally considered to be the principal one. Now and again D. Bray also speaks about peculiarities of other dialects and vernaculars: for example, about the peculiarities of the Jhalawan dialect and the vernacular of the Mengal tribe. *The Brahui Problem* contains chiefly historical and ethnographic material; in it some forms of Brahui are also considered in the comparative-contrastive (with the other Dravidian languages) aspect. In compiling *An Etymological Vocabulary* D. Bray took into account all previously published material on Brahui and once more verified that material. As Bray himself pointed out in the preface to the *Vocabulary*, "Any words or forms which they (i.e. other works.—M.A.) include and I omit may safely, I think, be ascribed to casual slips of ear or pen or printer, and cease to figure as evidence for some surprising phonological development" /13, 1-11/. The Brahui texts recorded by D. Bray are also of great interest /14, 65-88/<sup>11</sup>

After D. Bray, original observations of some specific aspects of Brahui, made during brief sessions of field work with informants, were published only by G. Morgenstierne /39, 5-9/ and M.B. Emeneau /22, 981-983/.

The most important among the comparative works on Brahui and the cognate languages are those by L.V. Ramaswami Aiyar, T. Burrow and M.B. Emeneau,<sup>12</sup> in particular the latter's *Brahui and Dravidian Comparative Grammar*, which contains a convincing analysis of problems of Brahui vocalism, the etymology of some multistem Brahui verbs, the Iranian and Indo-Aryan influence on Brahui, and a number of other problems.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> All illustrative examples given in this work have been taken from D. Bray.

<sup>12</sup> For a list of works by these authors, see Bibliography.

<sup>13</sup> We find less convincing M.B. Emeneau's interpretation of problems of the classification of Brahui and other languages, particularly his insufficiently argued attempt to prove that Brahui, Malto and Kurukh constitute a single subgroup of Dravidian languages and have developed from one and the same intermediate parent language.

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# THE BRAHUI LANGUAGE



«NAUKA» PUBLISHING HOUSE  
Central Department of Oriental Literature  
Moscow 1980



4И  
А66

Translated from the Russian  
by *V. Korotky*

Editorial Board:

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This monograph is a systematic description of Brahui, one of the poorly studied Dravidian languages.

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70104-110  
A 013(02)-79 225-80 . 4602010000

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издательства "Наука", 1980.

