In Search of Kentum Indo-Europeans in the Himalayas

In 1988 and 1989 Claus Peter Zoller reported the astonishing discovery of what appeared to be the remnants of an ancient Kentum Indo-European tongue in the Western Himalayas in a modern language known as Baṅgāṇī. Zoller's Baṅgāṇī findings not only had far-reaching implications for our understanding of the prehistoric migrations of ancient Indo-Europeans, they also appeared to violate much of what is received knowledge in historical linguistics. In 1994 we conducted fieldwork in order to verify these remarkable findings. The results of our investigation are presented here. On the basis of these results, it is our contention that no Kentum Indo-European remnants exist in the Baṅgāṇī language. We also discuss the implications of our findings for the historical linguistic and methodological issues raised by Zoller's work.

We have normalized Zoller's phonetic transcriptions with our own in the following way. We indicate the velar nasal (ŋ) and the retroflex sounds (ɭ̥, ḵ, ṇ, r̥, l̥) in accordance with Indological tradition rather than with the newer International Phonetic Association symbols. Likewise, we indicate the so-called long vowels with a macron (ā, ī, u̯). Baṅgāṇī low tone is indicated by a grave accent. In Baṅgāṇī, as in Hindi, the sibilants ṣ and ṡ have merged to yield a single modern phoneme, which we transcribe as ʂ, which has remained distinct from s. We represent the unvoiced palatal consonants in the conventional manner (c, ch), but we represent the voiced palatal as (z) because of its fricative character. The palatal occlusives have become affricates in Baṅgāṇī, but the voiced palatal tends strongly towards a fricative realization. The phonetic realization of Baṅgāṇī /c/ varies [ts ~ tc], as does that of Baṅgāṇī /z/ [z ~ dz] (seldom [dz] e.g. in place names). For the former Zoller's notation is 'ts' or 'tS', and he notes that latter phoneme variously as 'z', 'dz' or 'dʒ'. Our transcriptions assume a tentative phonological analysis, outlined in Van Driem & Sharmā (forthcoming). Baṅgāṇī toponyms are transliterated as they would be written in Hindi, with some additional phonological details on local pronunciation provided in square brackets. Written Hindi and Nepālī are translit-
erated in conventional Indological notation except that mute \textit{hrasva} 'a' is left untransliterated. Reconstructed Indo-European forms and their glosses are cited as given by Zoller, whereby the acute accent marking consonants of the palatalo-velar series has replaced his older notation with a superscript 'rounded circumflex' diacritic. The Indo-European forms cited by Zoller are evidently taken from Pokorny (1959) and in some cases no longer represent the state of the art.

1. 

Baṅgāṇ

Baṅgāṇ is an Indo-Aryan language spoken by an estimated 12,000 people in the area known as Baṅgāṇ and belonging to the group of languages traditionally known as 'Western Pahāṛi'. Baṅgāṇ is located in Uttarkāśi district in Uttarārkhand, the alpine portion of the Indian state of Uttar Pradeś aspiring for separate statehood within the Indian Union. Baṅgāṇ roughly comprises the area between the Tons and the Pābar rivers at opposite extremes of which lie the towns of Morī and Tyūṇi [tiūṇi]. The nearest revenue office is located in Purolā.

There is some dialect diversity within Baṅgāṇ itself, according to informants, but all forms of Baṅgāṇi are reported to be completely mutually intelligible. Harpāl Simha, who has been to Kirojī many times, claims that the dialect spoken in Kirojī, the village of Zoller's principal informant Gabar Simha, is the same as the dialect spoken in his own village of Jātjā, where most of our informants come from. Although Baṅgāṇ lies within the area traditionally known as Garhvāl, the language is not of the Garhvāli or 'Central Pahāṛi' type, but shows greater affinity with the Indo-Aryan dialects spoken in neighbouring parts of Himācal Pradeś, such as Mahāsūī. The distinct Western Pahāṛi language spoken south of the Tons River, in Jaunsār and Bāvar, appears to be the language most closely related to Baṅgāṇi. One of us, Sharma, is a native speaker of Kāṛgī, a Western Pahāṛi language of Himācal Pradeś with a three-way pitch accent distinction, e.g. kōrā 'whip', kōrā 'leper', kōrā 'horse'; lāṛī 'bride', lāṛī 'kitchen garden', lāṛī 'handle of plough'. Both of us speak Hindi. Sharma speaks Paṅjābī, Marāṭhī and Baṅgālī, and Van Driem speaks Nepālī.

Baṅgāṇ consists mainly of three paṭṭīs Māṃṣūr, Pīṅgalaṅṭī and Koṭhīgāṛ [−gāṛ] and comprises about 35 villages and hamlets. The Baṅgāṇi villages of Māṃṣūr Pāṭṭī include Sarās, Udāthā, Petri, Bāmsū, Thālī and Deutī. The villages of Pīṅgalaṅṭī include Thādiyār, Bankhuvār, Kukrērā, Begaḷa, Kirojī, Maṉjōṇī, Bhūṭāṇu [bū-], Dāmthī, Kalič, Ārākoṭ, Mākōli, Daguḷi and Thunārā. The Baṅgāṇi villages of the populous Koṭhīgāṛ Pāṭṭī include Kervānuke [ker-wāṇuке], Dūcānuke [-ke], Jātga [-tẹ], Ciṅke [-ks], Māođ [-dẹ], Balāʊt, Joṭuvāḍi, Māgāṛ, Talle [tollı] Gokule and Bornālī. There are also Baṅgāṇi villages in a fourth paṭṭī by the name of Gaṛuguṛā [−gāṛ], which straddles the Tons River near Morī. These include Biṅgāṛi, Bāgi, Motār, Khārsārī and Doṇāl Gāv, all located north of the Tons River. The rest of Gaṛuguṛā Pāṭṭī, which is located south of the Tons, is non-Baṅgāṇi speaking area.

Our main informant was the 52-year-old Rosān Simha Cauhān, better known simply as Rosān Bhāi. Rosān Bhāi is from the village Jātjā in Koṭhīgāṛ. He also owns land at Morī-Vālī on the Tons River near Morī proper. Rosān Bhāi has a large extended family with relatives throughout Baṅgāṇ. His wife, sons and many of his relatives, including daughters-in-law with their children, live with him at his residences in Jātjā and Morī-Vālī. From the 16th to the 20th of December, 1994, we stayed with Rosān Bhāi at Morī-Vālī, where the 78th eastern meridian intersects the 31st parallel. During our stay, we also visited the nearby Baṅgāṇi village of Motār, to which we were escorted by Rosān Bhāi’s son, Harpāl Simha. We worked not only with Rosān Bhāi but also with some of his family members and visiting relatives, such as his wife’s paternal uncle Ananda Simha, Rosān’s younger brother Jay Simha, and several relatives from Bhūṭāṇu related to Rosān through his father’s maternal uncles. We also worked with lads and elderly men of the neighbouring Baṅgāṇi village of Motār, as well as with sexagenarian Baṅgāṇi men from Talle Gokule and other parts of Baṅgāṇ who stopped by in Rosān Bhāi’s house at Morī-Vālī. Rosān Bhāi would...

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1. The suffix appears to be related to \textit{-gāṛ} (m.) 'pit, ditch, hollow' in toponyms like that of nearby Devgāṛ, which is related to Hindi \textit{gadhā} ~ \textit{gaddhā} (m.) 'pit, ditch, hollow'; \textit{gāṛ} (m.) 'ditch, pit, e.g. for grain storage' and \textit{gadd} (m.) 'cavity, pit, cavern, recess'. Relationship to \textit{gadh} (m.) 'fort, stronghold' or to \textit{gad} (m.) 'enclosure, compound; hillock, mound; hindrance' would seem less likely.
also consult his wife to assist in identifying some of the Baṅgāṅi forms and meanings.

2. An astonishing discovery

Zoller (1988: 175) writes that the 'Grammatik und Wortschatz des Bangani' representieren somit zum weitaus überwiegenden Teil eine moderne indoarische Sprache, genauer, einen Vertreter des Western Pahari'. Yet Zoller also claims that Baṅgāṅi preserves two types of non-Pahārī elements, which he calls a Kentum layer (Kentum-Schicht) and a Sanskritic layer (sanskritische Schicht). He refers to the main Pahārī component of the language as the Prakrit layer (prakritische Schicht). Zoller first reported these findings in an oral presentation entitled 'On the vestiges of an old Kentum language in Garhwal (Indian Himalayas)' made at the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference at Leiden University in 1987. Subsequently, two articles written in German were published in 1988 and 1989. These contain all the Baṅgāṅi data which Zoller has made public to date. Finally, in 1993 a curious three-page report written in English was published in Pune, which claims that Zoller's findings have been 'confirmed' by a panel of Indian linguists.

The preservation of an ancient Kentum Indo-European tongue in the Western Himalayas would have serious implications for our understanding of the prehistoric migrations of Indo-European peoples. The Kentum Indo-European language area closest to Baṅgāṅ is that of the extinct Tocharian languages Turfanian (Tocharian A) and Kuchián (Tocharian B), spoken as late as the 8th century in what today is Chinese Turkestan, by Buddhist peoples who wrote in an Indic script. The most likely archaeological correlate for the Proto-Tocharians is represented by the Afanasievo culture, a fringe of the Andronovo culture, which in the main is of course taken to represent the ancient Indo-Iranians. Although Mallory describes the Afanasievo culture as representing a neater archaeological correlate for the Tocharians, he also believes it to be 'entirely possible that the ancestors of the Tocharians lurked behind some of those Andronovo variants that appear in the southeastern area of its distribution' (1989: 62), i.e. in modern Tajikistan and Kirgizstan.

The reasons for which we felt compelled to make the journey to Baṅgāṅ to check Zoller's findings were threefold. The first reason was the extraordinary significance of the discovery demanded that it be corroborated by independent investigations. The second reason was the sheer oddity of the reported historical linguistic phenomenon and of Zoller's implicit hypothesis to explain it. Zoller's obscurative explanations strongly aroused our suspicions and constituted the third reason for our journey to Baṅgāṅ.

We are both descriptive linguists with years of fieldwork experience, primarily in Tibeto-Burman language communities of the Himalayas, and it struck us as odd that Indo-European scholars expressed no serious doubt in print regarding these highly interesting
but singularly peculiar findings. The first reason for our investigations requires no explanation, and in the following we shall elucidate the second and third reason for investigating the Bangani data, in the course of which we shall more than once have occasion to quote Zoller in extenso.

Our initial reaction to the phenomenon described in Bangani was that it appeared to be at variance with our understanding of historical linguistic processes. In fact, Zoller makes the following claims:

Die geringe Kohärente des Bangani wird wieder bei der Betrachtung seines Lautsystems sichtbar. Wenn nun die lautlichen Besonderheiten des Bangani mit Bezug auf das Sanskrit vorgestellt werden, so zeigt es sich als notwendig, zwischen allgemein gültigen Lautveränderungen und solchen, die nur für bestimmte Teilbereiche des Bangani Gültigkeit haben, zu unterscheiden. Diese Tatsache erweist den Begriff "Lautgesetz" als anachronistisch, und sie verdeutlicht, daß es im Bangani keine einheitlichen Lautentwicklungen gegeben hat.

... Bekanntlich wurde und wird dieser Begriff, mit dem zumeist historische Lautregeln gemeint sind, als physikalischen Gesetzen ähnlich zuvor aufgefaßt. Dies ist unzulässig. Die mit Naturgesetzen verbundenen Begriffe "Notwendigkeit/Voraussagbarkeit" und "Reversibilität" sind auf historische phonologische Prozesse nicht übertragbar. Die Datenbelege im Bangani sind somit zwar ungewöhnlich, aber nicht unmöglich; die vorgestellten Archaismen erfüllen alle für das Bangani gültigen Silbenstrukturbedingungen, und sie fügen sich in den sozialen und kulturellen Kontext der Region.

(Zoller 1988: 177, 198)

The fact that in terms of their phonological structure the purported archaisms do not violate modern Bangani syllable structure, which indeed they could not do, and the contention that the purported archaisms fit into the social and cultural context of the region provide no clarification for the supposed immunity of this portion of the lexicon from the historical sound laws which helped shape the Bangani language. Recently, Zoller (1993: 113) stated: ‘It is interesting, however, that the normal development of loss of aspiration into a tone did not happen in the group of those Bangani words under discussion here [i.e. the so-called ‘Kentum words’]. This may be taken as an additional argument in favour of an Indo-European, non-Indo-Aryan origin of these words. The second statement is a non sequitur unless we interpret it in light of Zoller’s implicit hypothesis, to which we shall now turn and which does not appear to require positing the immunity of any portion of the Bangani lexicon from historical sound laws, of which Zoller is so critical. Zoller (1988: 199) cautions us: ‘Zu den Bangani-Archaismen sei noch angemerkt, daß durch die dazugestellten Sanskrit-Wörter und indogermanischen Wörter natürlich nicht der Schluß eines ganz direkten Ableitungsverhältnisses gezogen werden darf. Ebensowendig empfiehlt es sich, zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt schon detaillierte Hypothesen zur Bangani-Sprachgeschichte zu entwerfen’. Nonetheless Zoller does put forth a hypothesis about the origin of the archaisms he claims to observe in Bangani.

Some items in Zoller’s data such as dakru ‘Träne’, kurcu ‘Held, ein Mutiger’, gumbo ~ gumbo ‘Backenzahn’ and gimo ‘Winter’ show starting similarity to Greek, e.g. δάκρυος ‘tear’, κύριος ‘powerful, having authority’, γομφός ‘molar’ and γόμφος ‘bolt’, χειμών ‘winter’, and dissimilarity to Tocharian, the only truly Asian Kentum languages, e.g. Turfanian dakür ‘tear’, pl. akrunt ‘tears’, kam ‘tooth’, Kuchean akrīna ‘tears’, keme ‘tooth’. This resemblance would be compatible with the hypothesis that the Kentum elements in Bangani were a legacy of the Yavanas or Greeks, having entered the language sometime after Alexander of Macedon crossed the Indus in 326 BC, and before the extinction of the last Greco-Bactrian kingdoms in northwest India and Afghanistan, late offshoots of the Seleucid Empire, in the second half of the 1st century BC. But Zoller (1989: 204) explicitly rejects what he calls the “Alexanderhypothese” as being “ohne Grundlage” for the following two reasons: ‘Erstens ist der Umfang der Daten aus der Kentumssicht im Vergleich zur sankritischen Schicht relativ gering, und zweitens weisen alle Indizien auf ein hohes Alter auch der Kentumssicht.’ In fact, if Zoller’s data and etymologies were to be true, we ourselves should also have rejected the “Alexanderhypothese” because a large number of the Kentum items in Zoller’s material look decidedly unGreek. Yet it remains obscure why the marginal nature of the Kentum layer in modern Bangani should to Zoller’s mind constitute an indication of antiquity, and it is also unclear which indices of antiquity Zoller has in mind.

The provenance of the Kentum words, according to Zoller, is more grandiose. The Kentum archaisms purportedly represent ‘die Überreste einer alten indogermanischen Sprache … , die vermutlich weder zum Indoiranischen noch zu einer anderen Satem-Sprache gehörte’. What then is the exact historical relationship between what Zoller calls the Prakrit layer, the Sanskrit layer and the Kentum
The traces of the original Kentum Indo-European language spoken by the progenitors of the modern Bāṅgāṁī and almost wholly obliterated by massive ‘Entlehnung’ and ‘Überlagerung’ ostensibly consist of ‘mehrere Dutzend als “sicher” einzustufende sogenannte Kentum-Wörter’ (Zoller 1988: 185). In point of fact, Zoller presents fifteen Kentum words and a smaller number of other ‘archaic words’ like ‘lokta’, allegedly ‘milk’, said to represent the traces of the original Kentum language. In the next section we present the results of our investigation of these Kentum words in Bāṅgāṁī.

Beforehand, we shall demonstrate why we found Zoller’s explanations to be obscuratory, as this constitutes the third reason for our journey to Bāṅgāṁī. Zoller gives what he believes to be the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors which account for the Bāṅgāṁī archaisms.

The gewiß ungewöhnliche Tatsache der Existenz solcher Archaismen in einer modernen indoarischen Sprache findet Erklärung im günstigen Zusammenwirken einer Reihe von sprachlichen und außersprachlichen Umständen. Wegen der besonderen Bedeutung dieser Archaismen sei auf diese Umstände kurz hingewiesen.

Die mündlichen Literaturen sowie verschiedene andere Hinweise machen es - trotz unserer fast völligen Unkenntnis der Geschichte Bangans - wahrscheinlich, daß aufgrund bestimmter, aber nur noch bruchstückhaft rekonstruierbarer historischer Gegebenheiten Bangan, wenn überhaupt, höchstens nominal von größe­ren Königreichen des Himalaya abhängig war und damit bis in die jüngste Vergangenheit einer Buddhisisierung oder Hinduisisierung eingegangen. Die Banganis waren und sind sehr fremdenfeindlich (wobei schon die unmittelbaren Nachbarn in Himachal Pradesh und Garhwal als Fremde angesehen werden) und davon überzeugt, ihre kulturellen Überlieferungen vor den Augen der Fremden verbergen zu müssen.

Die mündlichen Überlieferungen sind stark familienbezogen (selbst bei den professionellen Barden), ihre Tradierung somit vielmehr. Der Großteil ihrer nicht-profanden Überlieferungen wird zu freibleibenden Zeiten durch einen Gott mittels “besessenen” Mediums artikuliert; deren Tradierung ist somit auf Erhaltung des Alten konzentriert. Vielsträngigkeit und Konservativismus spiegeln sich auch in der diachronen Perspektive; unter ihr erscheinen die Überlieferungen der Banganis vielschichtig und altertümlich.

Für die verschiedenen auch auf soziologischer Ebene - gemeint sind hier die Kastratenstrukturen und Familienengelen - beobachtbaren Idiosynkrasien sei hier nur ein Beispiel angeführt: die zwischen Kaschmir und Nepal im Himalaya überall zu findenden zwei alten Grundbesitzklassen - nämlich die Rana- und Thakur-Kshatriyas - fehlen in Bāṅgāṁī.

The idea that Sanskrit tr and dr have gone to /c/ and /z/ in Bāṅgāṁī, whereas ‘die übrigen Verbindungen von Verschlußlaut und r sind in der prakritischen Schicht behalten, während in den älteren Schichten ALLE Verbindungen von Verschlußlaut und r als solche erhalten sind’ leads Zoller (1988: 178, 198) to hypothesize ‘daß die Prakritismen irgendwann ins Bangani entlehnt wurden, die Region also nicht an den Lautverschiebungen vom Alt- zum Mittelindischen teilhatte’. This then is Zoller’s explanation for the discrepancy between the effects of historical sound laws in the three layers of Bāṅgāṁī. He makes explicit mention of seven historical phonological differences, and he hints at the existence of more such differences when he lists the six ‘wichtigsten für die einzelnen sprachlichen Schichten gültigen Lautveränderungen’ (Zoller 1988: 178–179) and mentions the tonogenetic loss of aspiration in voiced aspirates affecting words of the Prakrit layer but not Kentum words (Zoller 1993: 113).

In other words, the inherited component of the language is the Kentum Indo-European language which the progenitors of the Bāṅgāṁī originally must have spoken and of which today only ‘marginal’ traces remain. The Sanskrit layer constitutes what chronologically is the first borrowed component of the language. The fact that sound laws did not affect either the inherited Kentum component of the language or the Sanskrit, early borrowed component is because the ancient speakers of this language apparently adopted the ‘quantitativ dominante’ Prakrit layer in relatively recent historical times. Zoller (1988: 177) describes this process as follows: ‘Da überdies die drei obengenannten sprachlichen Schichten in keinem Ableitungsverhältnis zueinander zu stehen scheinen, werden zukünftige Erörterungen Begriffe wie “Entleh­nung” und “Überlagerung” in den Mittelpunkt stellen müssen und deren historische Wirksamkeit betonen’. Zoller’s hypothesis in a nutshell, therefore, is that ancient Kentum Indo-Europeans entered the Indian Subcontinent ultimately to settle in the Western Himalayas, adopted a vast amount of Sanskrit loans after the advent of the Indo-Aryans, and subsequently continued to speak their ancient Kentum language largely unchanged until the time that they integrally borrowed both the lexicon and the grammar of a Western Pahāri language at some date posterior to that of the Old and Middle Indian sound laws.
These explanations did not strike us as particularly elucidating, and in a footnote to this section Zoller himself mitigates, saying 'Damit ist gemeint, daß diese Faktoren nicht auf kausale Weise formativ auf das Bangani gewirkt haben, sondern daß sie einen optimalen Hintergrund abgaben, vor dem Bangani seinen archaischen Charakter fast bis in die Gegenwart bewahren konnte'.

Above Zoller describes the Baṅganī as ‘sehr fremdenfeindlich’, and he was also careful to drive this point home at the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference in Leiden in 1987 because the extreme xenophobia and utter inaccessibility of the Baṅganī is one of the most lasting impressions which Zoller left on quite a number of the scholars who attended his talk. We found the Baṅganī to be hospitable, friendly, sociable and forthcoming. Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility that they might have radically changed their ways within the course of a few years. In this passage, Zoller also claims that the Baṅganī are convinced of the necessity of concealing their cultural traditions from outsiders, that Baṅganī oral traditions, even in the case of professional bards, are strongly family-oriented, describes the transmission of Baṅganī oral traditions as ‘vielsträngig’, and maintains that most Baṅganī non-secular oral traditions are only ever uttered by deities through possessed Baṅganī mediums. With the exception of the latter, which sounds no more credible than glossolalia, these claims are not implausible as such and could very well be true. These claims create the impression that the Kentum layer in Baṅganī is a highly esoteric phenomenon not readily accessible to the scholar in the field, but they fail to provide any explanation for the retention of archaisms of the type Zoller claims to have observed. In fact, they distinctly give the impression of mystification, and this impression is enhanced in Zoller’s second installment, where he elaborates on the esoteric nature of the archaisms:

Demgegenüber aber möchte ich um so mehr betonen, daß ... Bangan kein Fremdkörper in einer ansonsten homogenen Lebenswelt ist, sondern sich fast nahtlos in seine Umgebung einfügt – mit einem sprachlich-kulturellen ‘Kern’ allerdings, der nicht nur außergewöhnlich, sondern überdies schwer zugänglich ist.

Neben vermutlich vielen geschichtlichen Zufälligkeiten und neben mehreren signifikanten linguistischen Eigenschaften des Baṅganī, die das Überleben dieser Archaismen zwar nicht erklären, aber plausibel machen können, gibt es noch einen weiteren wichtigen Aspekt in der Kultur der Banganis, der ganz gewiß förderlich für das Überleben dieser Wörter gewirkt hat: In Bangan, aber auch teilweise in den umliegenden Regionen (z.B. in Baur oder in Deogar), ist für die Bevölkerung die Opposition “innen” vs. “außen” ganz zentral. Auf soziologischer Ebene heißt “innen”: “‘wir Familienangehörigen oder wir Banganis sind unter uns”, auf religiöser Ebene heißt dies: “in diesem Moment und an diesem Ort manifestiert sich Reinheit/Heiligkeit, die jetzt alles durchdringt und lenkt”.


Entscheidend nun ist, daß die Banganis einen Großteil ihrer mündlichen Überlieferungen, aber auch bestimmte Arten von Humor als gewissermaßen in diesem “Unsichtbaren gespeichert bzw. aufbewahrt” sehen. Diese sind auch die wichtigsten Quellen für die Archaismen. Im Zustand dieses “Innen” lassen die Banganis, so sagen sie, sozusagen sich sprechen.


(Zoller 1989: 159–160, 202)

This description of Baṅganī behaviour depicts the Baṅganī as being basically not any different from other people, but the Kentum substrate words purportedly preserved in the language are now enshrouded in a veil of mystique known as ‘arś’. The utterly xenophobic Baṅganī, who even view their immediate neighbours in Himācal Pradeś und Garhval as strangers, who speak secretively in the presence of outsiders, and who are convinced of the necessity of
concealing their cultural traditions from the eyes of strangers, have lifted this veil of ‘arśō’ for Zoller’s benefit alone.


Zoller (1988: 199) takes it upon himself to prescribe a methodology to field linguists interested in this phenomenon: ‘Bei einer zukünftigen Überprüfung der hier vorgestellten Daten durch Dritte müssen diese Bedingungen erfüllt werden. Weitere Minimalvoraussetzungen sind: Hindikenntnisse sowie genügend Zeit und Einfühlungsvermögen’. In his second installment, Zoller elaborates on the fieldwork methodology he prescribes specifically for Bangānī.

In Anmerkung 14 des 1. Berichtes (S.198f) wird knapp der “linguistische Versuchsauflauf” skizziert, der unabdingbare Voraussetzung für ein erfolgreiches Überprüfen der vorgestellten Daten durch Dritte ist. Dazu noch folgende Ergänzungen:

Meine Mitarbeiter und ich haben im Laufe der Zeit ein ganzes Repertoire an Vorgehensweisen zur Überprüfung der Daten entwickelt, das natürlich ganz unserem spezifischen Stil angepaßt ist. Wie aber Dritte vorgehen wollen, hängt von deren Zielsetzungen und Voraussetzungen ab. Immer aber gilt: vergeht nicht wenig Zeit, bis man die ausgeprägten Strukturierungen Bangans erkennt: für manche


Die erste Grundvoraussetzung jedoch bleibt immer, daß man mit den Banganis in einer ihrer sozialen Traditionen angepaßten Weise umgeht. Auf keinen Fall darf man versuchen, gewissermaßen an ihnen vorbei in der Region Forschung betreiben zu wollen.

Naturlich kann ich kein Patentrezept geben, wie man sich am besten an die sozialen Traditionen der Banganis anpaßt, dafür aber ein paar kleine Beispiele … Es gab dann noch verschiedene andere Erlebnisse, die ich nicht beschreiben will, durch die ich aber bei den Banganis Anerkennung fand, die ich für den Fortgang der Arbeit gut brauchen konnte.


Um in Bangan als Linguist erfolgreich zu sein, genügt also nicht die Beherrschung des gelernten ‘Handwerks’: genauso notwendig sind verschiedene sogenannte nichtwissenschaftlichen Qualitäten. Und zuletzt: wissenschaftlicher Erfolg in Bangan wäre auch gefährdet, wenn man als größere Gruppe auftritt. Mir scheinen diese Bemerkungen nicht nur praktisch notwendig, sondern auch gerechtfertigt in dem Sinn, daß auch anderen wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen der Erfolg eines Versuchs vollständig vom richtigen Aufbau aller notwendigen Einrichtungen, Geräte usw. abhängt.

(Zoller 1989: 200–201)

The fieldwork methodology which Zoller proposes impresses us as further mystification, for in order to be a successful linguist in Bangān one must possess a magic touch. In this passage Zoller appears carefully reticent about just how he managed to become initiated in such a way as to be able to penetrate behind the veil of ‘arśō’.

It is opportune at this point that we stress the methodological inadequacy of collecting a corpus of texts without also completing a rigorous analysis of the phonology and grammar of the language. Although the direct elicitation of simple forms should be complemented by a corpus of analysed natural text, the collection and translation of a text corpus is not enough. The elicitation of basic paradigms constitutes an essential component of the description of
living languages. Baṅgāṇi informants described Zoller’s field methodology as consisting mainly of making audio-recordings of texts which he subsequently translated with the assistance of Gabar Siṃha. Rośan Bhai and our other Baṅgāṇi informants, who know Zoller well and refer to him affectionately as [piːtəɾ], tell us that Zoller was not wont to ask the type of probing questions we did. In other words, Zoller evidently applied largely the same methodology in Baṅgāṇ as he did whilst working on the Tibeto-Burman language Raṅpo, spoken in northeastern Gaṅhāl.

Zoller’s (1983) Raṅpo description is a valuable contribution to Tibeto-Burman linguistics. It consists primarily of a collection of texts with a glossary but contains only a very sketchy outline of some features of the language’s grammar, consisting of what can be gleaned from the texts and what one might have to ascertain in order to provide a rough German translation thereof. There is no interlinear grammatical analysis of the texts. Raṅpo, although reportedly ‘keine pronominalisierte Sprache’ and ‘keine Tonsprache’ (Zoller 1983: xxix), exhibits verbal agreement, e.g. the ending (-n-) in the first person, as opposed to non-first person (-nī) (Zoller 1983: 63). Although valuable, the insight which Zoller’s contribution provides into Raṅpo grammar is meagre. Any little known language like Raṅpo or Baṅgāṇi is worth describing for its own sake. To this end the collection and superficial analysis of a natural text corpus alone is inadequate.

Our Baṅgāṇi informants reported that it was Zoller’s habit to lavish alcohol on his informants and make tape recordings. The non-linguist friend of one of the authors, the young Narendra Bahāḍur Bogaṭ (Krṣṇa Bahāḍur) of Nepal, accompanied us to Baṅgāṇ and spent his days fraternizing with the Baṅgāṇi friends he made there and traipsing about Baṅgāṇ. Bogaṭ was told the same reports of extravagant liquor consumption during Zoller’s fieldwork investigations, although the very hospitable Baṅgāṇi people showed no inclination toward excessive alcohol consumption during our stay there.

Finally, Rośan Bhai reports that Zoller has an active command of Baṅgāṇi but that his pronunciation is unclear. It is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that the efforts of foreigners attempting to master a language are variously appreciated in different language communities. Whereas France presents a celebrated example of the under-appreciation by members of a language community of the efforts of outsiders to learn their language, South Asia, including Baṅgāṇ, appears to represent the opposite end of the spectrum, where members of most language communities shower adulations on outsiders attempting to speak their language, politely describing even a modest command as great fluency. These remarks are relevant to our observation, in Section 6, that Zoller fails to recognize a regular Baṅgāṇi pronominal form and instead identifies the word as una-dulterated Sanskrit.

4. Kentum Indo-European traces in the Himalayas

Here we discuss all fifteen Kentum words adduced by Zoller. We checked all items from this Kentum list repeatedly. We have corrected errors in Zoller’s phonetic transcriptions of Baṅgāṇi words, but we do not here belabour each and every error in his transcription. Suffice it to say that these errors in transcription are numerous. The samples of Kentum words are numbered as in Zoller (1988).

1. In the following Baṅgāṇi saying, Zoller glosses ākṇa as ‘essen, fressen’ and identifies the word with Indo-European *ak- ~ *akō ‘eat’.

\[ \text{roṇdi-rō ākṇa, bāri-rō boled} \]

husbandless.woman-GEN ox

\[ \text{gore-ri thōr, no pāre bēd} \]

house-at wait not get inside.information

*translation*

The ākṇa of a husbandless woman, the ox of a potter
Waiting at home, not getting any inside information

The gist of this saying is ‘something useless, waiting for nothing, without knowing why’.

The form ākṇa appears to be an infinitive form because it ends in the infinitival suffix (-ṇā). Baṅgāṇi infinitives are treated as masculine nouns in (-ṣ), as ākṇa is in the expression roṇdi-rō ākṇa, where the genitive suffix (-rō) shows agreement with a masculine singular head noun. None of our informants could give a satisfactory de-
scription of the meaning of ākpo in the above saying, although Rosan Bhai knew the saying and in fact spontaneously recited the second line of the saying upon hearing the first line narrated to him. He and the other Baṅgāṇī informants use the expression ṛṇḍi-rō ākpo as an abusive term directed at farm animals (not at humans), in the meaning ‘good-for-nothing animal’. The Baṅgāṇī term ṛṇḍi means ‘husbandless woman’ and not ‘Eheweib’. This derogatory Baṅgāṇī term may denote a widow but also a whore, and in this respect differs from the Nepāli term ṛṇḍi, which means ‘whore’ and nothing else. A potter’s ox would be an example of such an animal because potters do not till land, and a potter would only keep an ox as a beast of burden.

Zoller’s translation for ākpo as ‘essen, fressen’ is rejected by Baṅgāṇī informants, and his speculations about a husbandless woman connoting a witch who might eat her own children were considered ludicrous by informants. Indeed, Zoller’s explication struck us as bizarre even before we set out for Baṅgāṇ. ‘... ein stark idiomatisches Sprichwort: mit dem ‘Essen’ ist der übelgeratene Sohn der Frau gemeint, von dem man nie weiß, wo er steckt. Das er als ‘Essen’ bezeichnet wird, ist gleichzeitig eine Anspielung auf die Frau, die hier als Hexe verstanden wird, denn Hexen fressen ihre eigenen Kinder’ (Zoller 1989: 186). We received an inkling as to what might be the source of Zoller’s speculation about the meaning of ākpo when Rosan Bhai said that the expression ṛṇḍi-rō ākpo could, for example, be directed at a cow or buffalo which had been found surreptitiously eating from fodder which had been stored for later use. However, Rosan Bhai stressed that the meaning of the expression contained no implicit reference to the consumption of fodder or food but simply meant ‘good-for-nothing animal’ and could be used, for example, to upbraid a cow which will not calve.

2. The following couplet is from a hunting song familiar to Rosan Bhai, who sang the song for us. Zoller identifies kọṭṭia with Indo-European *kẹntom [recte *kẹntōm] ‘hundred’. The word, in fact, is kṣi ‘how many, how much’, related to Nepāli kati ‘how many, how much’. Rosan Bhai suspected that the form kọṭṭia might correspond to the word for ‘how many’ in another dialect than that of Baṅgāṇ, e.g. the related but distinct dialect of Bāvar or Jaunsār; cf. Hindi kīne.

kṣi māñuch ble, kṣi gōṛc
how many men will there be how many horses

3. In the following line from an āruñ song, well known to Rosan Bhai, who sang the song for us, Zoller identifies kōṭṭa with Indo-European *kẹntom [recte *kẹntōm] ‘hundred’. The word, in fact, is kṣi ‘how many, how much’, related to Nepāli kati ‘how many, how much’. Rosan Bhai suspected that the form kọṭṭia might correspond to the word for ‘how many’ in another dialect than that of Baṅgāṇ, e.g. the related but distinct dialect of Bāvar or Jaunsār; cf. Hindi kīne.

kṣi māñuch ble, kṣi gōṛc
how many men will there be how many horses

4. In the following Baṅgāṇ proverb, Zoller identifies the word kare, which he inaccurately records as kuṛr and glosses as ‘Held, ein Mutiger, stark, hart’, with Indo-European *kā-rovers ‘geschwollen, stark; Held’. The Baṅgāṇ word kare means ‘handsome, well-built’. In fact, Rosan Bhai initially failed to recognize the pronunciation kuṛre, saying that this was not a Baṅgāṇi word and offering the form āche ‘good’ (masculine plural of āche ‘good’) instead; cf. Hindi acchā.

beṭā ki bākro duśā cāi kars iū-khi kā läges ber
son or billy-goat both should be handsome them-for what apply time/delay
Whether son or billy-goat, both ought to be handsome. What does time mean for them? (What delay will they incur?)

The highly questionable etymology which Zoller assumes for this word appears to have affected his interpretation of the Bangâni proverb itself. Zoller misinterprets the meaning of the proverb, saying 'für den Helden und für den Ziegenbock hat die Zeit einen besonderen Wert, denn für beide kommt der Tod plötzlich'. The actual meaning of the proverb is straightforward and sensible: A handsome and well-built son will suffer no delay in finding a bride. A handsome and well-built goat will incur no delay in going to slaughter or in finding a buyer.

5. The fifth set of Kentum words are instances of what Zoller believes to be the Bangâni reflexes of Indo-European *gen- 'erzeugen' and *gena-ter- 'Erzeuger, Vater'. The first instance is found in the following Bangâni saying.

bândi-re gdr gomne-ri thor
infertile.woman-GEN house augurings-for wait

Waiting for the augurings [of a pañdist] in the house of a childless woman.

This Bangâni saying refers to an effort performed in vain or to an exercise in futility. If one hopes for a son but the woman is infertile, what use will it be to call a pañdist to the house to perform augury? The Bangâni verb 
gomn\textsuperscript{a} means 'to calculate' and is cognate with Nepâli gannu 'count' and Hindî ginnâ 'count' and, in this context, has the implicit meaning of performing astrological calculations. Zoller glosses the form gomn\textsuperscript{a} as 'gebären, erzeugen', but this was rejected by our Bangâni informants as incorrect.

The next alleged Bangâni reflex of the Indo-European roots in question involves the word  
gn\textsuperscript{a} 'before, previously', which is cognate with Kâñghi agē 'before', Hindî âge 'before' and Nepâli agâdi 'before'. In this example, the Bangâni word occurs with the emphatic marker \textit{i} (cf. H. \textit{hi}) and means 'already', just like the cognate Kâñghi combination agē 'already'. Zoller (1988: 187) gives the form  
gn\textsuperscript{a}i', which he glosses as 'ungeboren, fehlgeboren'. He describes the situation in which the following Bangâni sentence was uttered as 'wenn bei der Geburt von Zwillingen das zweite Kind erst etliche Stunden nach dem ersten auf die Welt kommt, dann ist der Gebrauch des folgenden Satzes typisch'.

\begin{verbatim}
  ek bo ni tetroi. ek-ro bo agn\textsuperscript{a}i.
  one became PART at.that.time one-GEN became previously-EMPH
  seu bo duze-pe.
  he[invisible] became other-one
\end{verbatim}

Waiting for the augurings [of a pañdist] in the house of a childless woman.

One [came] at that time. The other's had already come. He came the other [day].

It is our contention and that of our informants that this is not a proverb or saying, but a Bangâni utterance which must have been used once in a given situation. The fact that Zoller heard this utterance in the specific situation of a twin childbirth explains why he was inclined to think that the Bangâni form  
gn\textsuperscript{a}i 'already' had something to do with birth.

The next instance involves the noun 
gord\textsuperscript{n} 'back of the neck' occurring in a portion of a Bangâni prayer. Zoller records the word as 
g\textsuperscript{a}ter, which he glosses as 'Erzeuger, Erschaffer' and which he posits to be a reflex of Indo-European *gena-ter- 'Erzeuger, Vater'.

\begin{verbatim}
  bo\textsuperscript{o}-palo, la\textsuperscript{t}-ka\textsuperscript{t}, ze\textsuperscript{\textacute{a}} bi bi.
  good-nice, lame-black however also may.be[pl.]
  nordei \textit{\textacute{a}}me, gord\textsuperscript{n} te-teri, dewo.
  people we back.of.the.neck your-yours, deity
\end{verbatim}

Whether good and nice or lame and black, however [we] may be, we people. [Our] heads are yours, Oh deity.

(literally: 'the backs of [our] necks', as in an animal for slaughter or sacrifice)

Because of his wilful translation of a word which he had misheard, Zoller's own translation of the entire Bangâni utterance, not surprisingly, makes little sense: 'die Guten mit den Ihrigen, die Einfältigen, die Sanftmütigen; was für [Menschen] es immer auch gibt, wir [sind] Katuren; [o] Erschaffer, deine, o Gott'. Zoller's transla-
tion furthermore leaves no explanation for the feminine form te-teri ‘your-yours’, which in fact agrees with the feminine substantive gordan ‘back of the neck’.

6. The next series of ‘Kentum words’ involves alleged Bangal:ii reflexes of Indo-European *gheu- ‘gieBen’ and *gheu-mp ‘Opfergul3’. The first instance concerns the Bangal:ii word g:J6 ‘pal)~it, augurer’, which Zoller erroneously transcribed as an infinitival form g:Yi!J:Y, allegedly ‘opfern’. The utterance which Zoller recorded was used in the following situation: ‘Haus und Hof haben durch Dämonen Schaden genommen. Der Gott hat dann zwar Hilfe versprochen, doch ist diese nicht eingetreten ... ’, and Zoller adds the interpretation that ‘... und weiterhin sterben Mensch und Tier als “Opfer” für die Dämonen’.

e:J no kor-ir, dew. like.this not do-IMP deity

bauri-koi obre-za5 bi, g:J6 nir:J bi de-nya first.floor-from ground.floor-until also augurer decision too give-INF

translation

Don’t act in this way, Oh deity!
From the first floor (where the family lives) down to the ground floor (where livestock is kept underneath the house), may the augurer also give some solace! (literally translated into Hindi as faist:u den:u, i.e. niray den:u ‘make a decision, pass a verdict’, but informants also offered the interpretation labh den:u ‘give benefit’)

This utterance was recognized by our informants as part of a plea to the deity to alleviate calamities of some sort. The use of the Bangal:ii infinitive in an optative sense is like that of Kängri, Hindi or Nepali. Here the speaker evidently expressed the hope that the pañ:it would provide some just solution to alleviate the calamities caused by supernatural forces where previous attempts at appeasement of these forces had failed. Zoller appears to have accurately described the situation in which the utterance occurred, but he incorrectly interpreted both a key word and the syntax of the sentence, wrongly putting a comma after g:J6 (read: g:J6:J pañ:it, augurer’), whereas it should be placed before this word.

The next instance involves the Bangal:ii word gompun:u ‘suffer a loss, tolerate, put up with, forbear’ (H. sahan karn:u), which Zoller

interprets as g:mn:ti ‘opfern’. The corrected Bañgâni utterance is as follows.

zimi bi pori gompun:u chewer bi bági: land also must put.up.with wife/woman also chase.away

translation

[One] has had to suffer not only the loss of one’s land, but [one’s] wife has also been chased away.

Here Zoller again accurately reports that ‘dies[es] Sprichwort wird dann gebraucht, wenn jemand von zwei Unglücken gleichzeitig heimgesucht wird’, but his transcription is faulty, and his translation appears to be inspired by his vain search for Kentum reflexes in modern Bangal:ii: ‘[er] muft:e zuerst sein land opfern (d. h. weg­ben­), dann haben [sie ihm] auch noch sein Weib verjagt’.

7. The following saying, familiar to our informants, contains the word g:Jm:J ‘grief, woe, tolerance, forborne pain’, which is cognate to Hind! gam, which has the same meaning.

g:Jm:J-ri d:á, chewer:ri-ro bekh. woe-GEN pain woman/wife-GEN caprices

translation

The pain of woe forborne, a woman’s caprices.

Zoller misheard the Bangal:ii form gome ‘anxiety’ as g:mb:u, which he interprets as ‘[gumbo], [gumbo]m Backen­zahn’, which appears to him to be a reflex of Indo-European *gombho-s ‘Zahn’. Zoller misinterprets the meaning of the saying as a comparison of a wife’s nagging (Bañgâni bekh correctly translates into Hindi as nakhare ‘coquetry, airs, caprices’) with an aching molar: ‘der Schmerz im Backenzahn [ist genauso unangenehm wie] die schmeichlerischen Worte des Eheweibs’. In point of fact, the modern Bañgâni word for ‘molar’ is dä:r, and the word for ‘tooth’ is dä:nd. Note that the Bañgâni word for ‘pain’, dä, appears to be related to Hindi dâ:h and Nepali dâ:h, which both mean ‘jealousy’, a painful emotion to be sure.

8. The following is our corrected version of an utterance recorded by Zoller.

ti:ni sungrei zeşi náI dekhi muk: seu he/ERG swine/ERG just.as rifle saw me/ACC he/that[invisible]
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As soon as the pig saw me with [my] rifle, he [not visible at the moment of speaking] froze in his tracks over there by the rock perimeter of the field.

The significance of this statement to a Bangâni listener is greater than it is for an outsider because, according to Bangâni lore, a wild boar should be shot either when it is in retreat or when it does not suspect the hunter's presence. When a wild boar notices the hunter and freezes in its tracks, a shot from gun or bow which might otherwise have been lethal will, it is believed, only prompt a vigorous onslaught by the creature, endangering life and limb. An etymological curiosity is the Bangâni word *piichu* 'in front, over there' which is cognate with Nepali *pachi* 'after', *pachiri* 'behind' and Hindi *pîche* but has undergone a semantic shift. Zoller wrongly transcribes *g3:rzil}J* 'freeze in one's track, assume a threatening stance (of animals)' as *gJrsil}J*, allegedly 'vor Schreck die Haare, Borsten etc. aufgerichtet haben', for which he posits an etymological relationship with Indo-European *ghers-* 'starren'. We suspect that Zoller might be equally content to posit a relationship between *g3:rzil}J* 'freeze in one's track, assume a threatening stance' and this Indo-European root. To our minds, however, it might stretch the imagination far less to speculate on an etymological relationship with Hindî *garjîni* 'to roar, bellow, thunder'. Certainly it would be prudent to study the lexicons of related Indo-Aryan languages in Himacal and Gadhvîl before positing a Kentum reflex from Indo-European somehow strangely preserved in a modern Indo-Aryan tongue like Bangâni.

9. There are three instances of Bangâni words which Zoller proposes reflect Indo-European *gn-* 'erkennen, kennen'. The first such word occurs in the following saying.

\[
\text{apri beru-ro, āpri goniti.}
\]

one's.own cares-GEN one's own accounting

Your fame should be [spread] throughout the whole world. Here Zoller records *g3:to* with the meaning 'Ruhm, "Name"; berühmt'. However, the reading [*g3:to*] is rejected by our informants.
Zoller also gives the transcription götti in the following utterance, where the correct word is Bangāni gōṇi 'close-knit, thick or dense, compact, close, numerous', unrelated to the other forms which Zoller recorded as gōtti ~ götti. The Bangāni adjective gōṇa (f. gōṇi) is cognate with Kāṅgī kāṇā (f. kāṇi) and Hindi ghanā (f. ghanī), both of which have the same meaning. These adjectives may be said of dense crowds or groups of people, clumps of vegetation, forests or groves, dense undergrowth and the like, and the Bangāni adjective has the distinct connotation 'close-knit'.

Our own preference his heart why will speak

He has his own preference. Why will his heart speak for our morning and evening meal?

For Bangāni gusti Zoller gives the meaning 'Geschmack (auch übertragen), genießen; Verlangen: Absicht', which is partially correct. Bangāni gusti was translated into Hindi by our informants as marzī 'wish, desire, preference' and as ris. In Kāṅgī ris has the meaning 'indulging, giving into temptation', and in Bangāni 'Hindi' the word ris seems to have the same meaning. The Bangāni word for 'taste' is swād. Bangāni gusti does not mean 'taste'. Of course, whether Bangāni gusti 'preference, indulging, desire' is a reflex of Indo-European *gěus- 'kosten, genießen, schmecken' and of the corresponding substantive *gěus-ti-s, as Zoller maintains, is a matter best left to the judgement of Indo-European historical linguists who are critical enough to recognize that German Kopf 'head' and haben 'have' and Latin caput 'head' and habère 'have' are unrelated even though both languages have genuinely been established to represent Kentum Indo-European.

11. Zoller cites the following couplet from a Bangāni song. We have recorded this couplet as sung by Rośan Bhai. It is just one of the many Bangāni songs Rośan knows by heart.

minā əo ṁoś-rə, bāi, neṛī-nṛē
mouth has come Pauṣa-GEN brother nearby

plant.species will eat[f.] plant.species your[f.] goat sheep

He has his own preference. Why will his heart speak for our morning and evening meal?

For Bangāni gusti Zoller gives the meaning 'Geschmack (auch übertragen), genießen; Verlangen: Absicht', which is partially correct. Bangāni gusti was translated into Hindi by our informants as marzī 'wish, desire, preference' and as ris. In Kāṅgī ris has the meaning 'indulging, giving into temptation', and in Bangāni 'Hindi' the word ris seems to have the same meaning. The Bangāni word for 'taste' is swād. Bangāni gusti does not mean 'taste'. Of course, whether Bangāni gusti 'preference, indulging, desire' is a reflex of Indo-European *gěus- 'kosten, genießen, schmecken' and of the corresponding substantive *gěus-ti-s, as Zoller maintains, is a matter best left to the judgement of Indo-European historical linguists who are critical enough to recognize that German Kopf 'head' and haben 'have' and Latin caput 'head' and habère 'have' are unrelated even though both languages have genuinely been established to represent Kentum Indo-European.
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no lägi zārāi gīm, 
no apply Yamarāja/GEN pity
bāro-bōrilo, gīm, e bāgwān.
master-well-built.youth oh in.this.way has.taken.away, oh god
zeō kṣiū-kāi ā bāi, riṅ.
as.if someone-from alas brother loan

translation
Oh Mother, my tale of woe is that
[Even] the Grim Reaper had no pity.
Oh God, He has taken away my husband in the blossoming of his manhood,
As if [exacting repayment] of a loan from someone, oh brother.

13. The next alleged Kentum word is pārko ‘question’, which Zoller relates to Indo-European *perK- ‘fragen, bitten’. The Baṅgāṇī word pārko is in fact an adjectival form meaning ‘last year’s’, derived from Baṅgāṇī pār ‘last year’. Baṅgāṇī pārko is related to Kangri parka ‘last year’s’ (vs. Kangri parii ‘last year’) and Nepāli pohor-ko ‘last year’s’. The couplet of the ārul song in question is presented here in corrected form:

khundē soiāne tini pārko pāo re 
Khund elder/sage that/ERG last.year’s won/got PART

śāti-di pāsi-di puchhē lāo re 
Śāti-in Pāsi-in ask begin PART

translation
That Khund elder won last year’s [competition].
They have begun to ask questions, on the Śāti side and on the Pāsi side.

Zoller correctly reports that there are annual disputes characterized by ‘provozierende Fragen’ in which the wise elders of Baṅgāṇ, which lies on the Pāsi side or right bank of the Tons River, compete with the wise elders of Bāvar and Jaunsār, which are located on the Śāti side or left bank of the Tons. Zoller’s translation of tīnī pārko pāo as ‘er gab eine Frage auf’ is incorrect. The Baṅgāṇī past tense from pāo means ‘got’ or ‘won’, and our Baṅgāṇī informants insist that there is no Baṅgāṇī word, ceremonial or otherwise, with the form pārko in the meaning ‘question’. Note that the Baṅgāṇī particle re resembles the Nepāli clause-final hearsay evidential re, which marks sentences the contents of which constitute reported speech and which therefore is peppered throughout narrative texts. It seems likely that Baṅgāṇī re serves a similar function.

14. The next Kentum word is ‘barga’, purportedly ‘(hoher), steiler Berg’, which Zoller (1994: 112) more recently gives as ‘barga’, allegedly a survival of Indo-European *bherghos ‘mountain’. The word occurs in the following utterance, which our informants corrected in the following way.

sāro gorīe-naṇī māndo, bēr-e ro barga bī no milo 
all gorīe-naṇī searched, sheep-GEN tail also not found

translation
[I] have sought all over Gorīe-Naṇī, but did not even find the tail of that sheep. (Alternatively: ... bēr-e ro barga bī no mile ‘... not even find the tails of the sheep [obl. pl.]).

In Baṅgāṇ, as elsewhere throughout the Himalayas, every meadow, jungle and even small terraced field has a locally known proper name. We have personally visited the gently sloping area known as Gorīe-Naṇī. Zoller records the sentence with the incorrect word order sāro gorīe-naṇī-ru barga māndo par bēr-e na mīl, which he translates ‘bin den ganzen steilen Berg [namens] Gorie-Naoni abgelaufen, hab aber die Schafe nicht gefunden’. The Baṅgāṇī word barga means ‘tail’, especially of a goat or sheep. The Baṅgāṇī word for ‘mountain’ is rjā. Our informants insist that there is no such Baṅgāṇī word as rjā - barga in the meaning ‘mountain’ or ‘steep slope’. When hard pressed by us, our informants obligingly said that it might be possible to conceive of a mountain slope as a nearly vertical line which could be interpreted as being reminiscent of a hanging tail, and that the usage – if the utterance had indeed been correctly recorded, which they very much doubted – would have to have been metaphorical. The attitude of our informants to this word is reflected in Section 5 below.

15. The next ‘Kentum word’ is from the following utterance.

īu suīū gāiū-kē koi nuṇṭo lai-goī. 
these having.calved cows-ACC some block.of.salt proffered
Instead of the form *laɪɡːiː* in the above utterance, Zoller gives the form *laɪɡːiːni,* which he describes as a causative form of the verb *[loɡ(e)-]* lecken (nur Tiere), which he alleges is a reflex of Indo-European *[leɪɡʰ-]* lecken. Our informants report that no such form as *laɪɡːiːni* exists. The form *laɪɡːoi,* on the other hand, is a regular form of *laɪŋ-,* put, adorn, proffer, apply, which translates into Hindi as lagā diyā, roughly 'proffer' or, in the given context, most aptly translated as 'give to lick.' The verb is used in widely different contexts in this meaning, e.g. *to muke mālā laɪɡːoi* 'you adorned me with a garland.' The form is distinct from the Bangāni verb 'to lick,' *cāṁja,* and its causative counterpart, *cājānā* 'cause or give to lick.'

5. An instructive encounter

The preceding section sums up our findings regarding the fifteen 'Kentum words' adduced by Zoller. Before we go on to discuss the so-called Sanskrit layer and other archaisms in Bangāni (Section 6), it is highly relevant to our investigation to describe a brief but informative encounter with Gabar Simha Cauhān. Gabar Simha is Zoller’s Bangāni native-speaker interpreter and main Bangāni informant to whom Zoller (1988: 196) directly attributes the discovery of archaisms in Bangāni: 'Ich fühle tiefen Dank gegenüber meinem Bangāni-Mitarbeiter, Herrn Gabbar Singh Chauhan [i.e. Gabar Simha Cauhān], ohne den das alte Bangāni nicht hätte entdeckt werden können.' Gabar Simha is from the village Kiroli in Pingalpatti.

Our encounter with Gabar Simha took place on the morning of 18 December 1994. As background information, it should be noted that the word *bɔɾɡɔ,* discussed above, in the meaning 'mountain' had very quickly become the subject of ridicule and banter amongst the Bangāni at Mori-Vālṭī. People found it amusing to call a 'mountain' a *bɔɾɡɔ* and to talk of walking up a *bɔɾɡɔ,* and so forth. On the morning of 18 December 1994, Rosān Bhāi’s son Harpāl Simha by fortunate chance happened to run into Gabar Simha, whom he knew we were anxious to meet and whom he therefore kindly escorted to Rosān Bhāi’s house at Mori-Vālṭī to meet us. On the way, Harpāl Simha had already discussed the word *bɔɾɡɔ* with Gabar Simha. When Gabar Simha made his entry, we were in the house working together with Rosān Bhāi. Most interesting were both the information which Gabar Simha volunteered before we began to ask him questions as well as his exchanges with Rosān Bhāi.

Gabar Simha entered the room apologizing about the word *bɔɾɡɔ.* Next, he volunteered information on two words, neither of which we had yet even gotten around to mentioning to our informants. These were Zoller's *lkktɔ* 'milk' (1988: 194, 1989: 198) and *mɪntɔ* 'hand' (1988: 194). Regarding *lkktɔ* Gabar Simha said that the form had been incorrectly recorded by Zoller and that there was no such form. He then immediately contradicted himself, saying that if the form *lkktɔ* existed, it would now only be recognized by very few old men. The correct form, he went on to say, was not *lkktɔ,* but *lɪtɔ-kɪstɔ,* for which he gave the meaning 'milk and ghee' ("dudh-ghi"). After his departure, our informants explained that *lɪtɔ-kɪstɔ* meant 'oil, grease, ghee' in the specific sense of Hindi tārī, i.e. oil or ghee floating on some liquid dish, such as dāl or a vegetable curry, and distinct from the Bangāni word *bɔ* 'fat, grease.' Our informants stressed that the word *lɪtɔ-kɪstɔ* never referred to milk, nor does it refer specifically to ghee.

The second piece of information which Gabar Simha volunteered concerned Zoller’s *mɪntɔ* 'hand.' The form *mɪntɔ,* he said, does not exist as a separate word in Bangāni in the meaning 'hand,' which implied that Zoller’s (1988: 194, ex. 6) example containing *mɪntɔ* 'Hand' was incorrect. The form occurs only as a part of the verb *mɪntɔdʒɔŋɔ* 'to slap,' which Gabar Simha stressed definitely existed in Bangāni. At this point, we had still hardly said a thing to Gabar Simha ourselves and certainly had not begun to ask him questions yet. It will therefore not surprise the reader that both of us had the impression that Gabar Simha’s manner was apologetic.

Accordingly, when we did begin to ask questions, we were careful to do so in a gentle manner. We first asked about the word *laɪɡːiːni* (Kentum item 15). Gabar Simha stated flatly that there existed a rare verb in Bangāni, *laɪɡːiːni,* which meant 'to give to lick to an animal.' At once Rosān Bhāi countered emphatically that no such word existed in Bangāni.
We then asked Gabar Simha about *gimzo* ourselves, and he responded that *gimzo* meant 'tail' and could metaphorically denote any vertical thing like a tail.

When we asked about the word *gimzo*, Gabar Simha without a moment's hesitation began to explain that this was a rare Bangâni word which meant 'winter'. Rośan Bhâí intervened, stating that there was no such word in the Bangâni language, emphasizing that *gimzo* was not Bangâni at all and that the word was wrong. Then Gabar Simha carefully asked Rośan Bhâí whether the word *gimzo* did not then mean 'winter'. Rośan Bhâí said that this was decidedly not the case and that the word in the song was *minzo* 'month'.

Then we asked about *porko* (item 13), and Gabar Simha immediately responded that it meant 'question'. When we said that Rośan Bhâí had told us that it meant 'last year's', Gabar Simha said that there was a difference in pronunciation between *porko* 'question' and *porko* 'last year's'. Rośan Bhâí said that such a distinction was entirely fictitious, and that *porko* meant 'last year's', that the word still meant the same thing no matter how much you drew out the pronunciation, and that there was no word such as *porko* in the meaning 'question' in the Bangâni language.

During this brief session, it was plainly obvious that Rośan Bhâí was astonished and incredulous at some of the things Gabar Simha said. When we then asked Gabar Simha about the items *kopp* 'hoof', *kóttia* 'hundred' and *dokru* 'tear' (items 2, 3 and 12), he said nothing definite about them. At this point, Gabar Simha told us that Rośan Bhâí was the best possible informant we could have for learning the Bangâni language and also the most reliable source. We later learnt that our elderly informant Rośan Bhâí had also served as one of Zoller's principal informants and had even travelled together with him in Bangâni on at least one occasion. As Gabar Simha left, he said that he would be highly interested in our research findings and cordially invited us to visit him at the New Delhi office of the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg, where he had taken employment some years after he had become Zoller's interpreter. This invitation echoed the kind offer with which Zoller (1993: 114) concludes his recent note about his 'small colloquium' on Bangâni: '... more linguists should take up research on this language. The branch office of the South Asia Institute in New Delhi would certainly be glad if it could offer assistance to linguists interested in this task.'

6. The Sanskrit layer and other archaisms

Our attempts at verification of the 'Kentum words' in Bangâni revealed the unreliability of Zoller's material and analysis. We found that this was likewise the case with the 'Sanskrit words', which Zoller alleges are neither *tatsama* nor *semi-tatsama*. Zoller (1988: 192-5) also lists separately archaic words which are 'teilweise im Sanskrit belegt' but which have 'keinen Bezug zur Kentum-Satem-Unterscheidung'. After thoroughly going through Zoller's Kentum list with the results described in Sections 4 and 5, we felt disinclined to conduct an exhaustive verification of the 'Sanskrit' and other 'archaic' words. Our probing nevertheless proved to be highly illuminating. We checked eight out of Zoller's twenty-two 'Sanskrit' items and seven out of Zoller's eleven other 'archaic' words.

To begin with, the existence in Bangâni of a word 'monst' meaning 'hand' is denied by Zoller's principal informant Gabar Simha, as described in Section 5. Zoller (1988: 194, ex. 6) relates this item in his corpus of transcriptions to Indo-European *mntos*- 'hand' [recte *mntōs*].

An example of a 'Sanskrit word' in Bangâni, according to Zoller (1988: 192, ex. 2), is *[kros(i)-]* sich reiben, kratzen, schaben' from Indo-European *kars- 'kratzen, striegeln, krämpeln'. The example Zoller gives, in our corrected form, is as follows.

riki ti khoruki-khoruki lekā luā. bear/ERG scrape-a-scraping hide shed

*translation*

The bear shed his hide [i.e. winter coat], a-scraping and a-scraping.

Instead of the form khoruki-khoruki 'a-scraping and a-scraping', Zoller has *korsu-korsu*, which was immediately recognized as a transcription error by informants, who cried in chorus that the form was wrong and were for some reason struck by the hilarity of the mistake. Informants offered the alternative konāi-konāi 'scratch a-
scratching' but specifically rejected *kursi-*kursiu as incorrect. For *lekše* 'hide' informants offered the possible alternative *lotro* 'skin' to collocate with the verb *luana* 'moult, shed one's winter coat'. Although the bear must have scraped his hide against some surface, probably a tree, informants suggested that Zoller's translation ('der Bär kratzte und kratzte sich [und] riß [dadurch] die Rinde [des Baumes] ab') was improbable because the Bangāni word for 'bark of a tree' is *sepšu*

Zoller (1988: 179, 199) records what he believes to be the preterite form of the Bangāni verb 'eat', which has 'die freien Morphemalternationen [aːdː]/[oːbː] and is said to represent 'ein grammatisches Überlebssel' of Sanskrit *ad* ~ *āda* 'eat'. Our Bangāni informants could not understand the utterance Zoller records containing this form. Rośan Bhai said that the form was in error and that the utterance was unrecognizable because it contained this erroneous form. The form *adita*, purportedly 'Vielfresser, Dämon; vielfressend', which Zoller relates to Sanskrit *adhiti* 'Verschlinger' likewise made no sense to our informants, and neither did it make sense in the otherwise recognizable fragment of an utterance of which Zoller recorded it as being part.

Another error in transcription to receive a Sanskrit etymology is *gosti* 'acquaintance', which Zoller (1988: 193) gives as *[gːsti]*, glosses as 'Gast, Ehrengast, Fremder' and relates to Indo-European *ghosti*-s 'Fremder, Gast'. The corrected stanza from the chorii song is given below. Note that Zoller's erroneous form upsets the rhyme scheme of the song.

cārśu poruksa gostā, 
verandah seated acquaintance
   eu zānīš botia-kō bài, 
   he appears brother's.wife-GEN brother
othu-uri-māti-le kākirotā, 
   lips-upon-at splits.in.the.lips.from.chapping
   ini koliaro no khāi. 
   he/ERG breakfast not ate

translation

The acquaintance seated on the verandah,
He looks just like the brother of our brother's wife.

Errors in translation also receive Sanskrit etymologies. Zoller glosses Baṅgaṇī *borsu* 'year' as 'Mehl' and relates it to Indo-European *bhares-* 'Gerste'. The corrected 'Sprichwort' in which the form occurs is as follows.

ogle-ro borsu cōtairo läo, 
next-GEN year having.licked has.been.taken
   zeti piśo teti khāo. 
   as.much.as has.been.ground that.much has.been.eaten

translation

Next year's has been all licked up, 
As much has been eaten as has been ground.

Zoller's translation is 'Mehl aus (blaublühendem) Oglia-(Getreide), Gries aus Hirse, mahle (von denen nur) soviel, wie du iBt' whereby he records the form *ogle* 'next' as *[oːglɛ]*, for which form he evidently later elicited the gloss 'Oglia-(Getreide)'. In fact, the Ogía plant has green leaves and red stems and bears white flowers and black seeds. The Baṅgaṇī phrase for '*ogle flour' is *ogle-ru pidvan.*

At one point Rośan Bhai expressed the opinion that the material we were checking was apparently largely faulty. For example, informants refused to accept as correct Baṅgaṇī the utterances which Zoller (1988: 193-4) recorded for the alleged Baṅgaṇī verb *

His lips all chapped, 
He has eaten no breakfast.

Jaunsār, Devgār and Bāvār ('Jaunsār, Devgār, Bāvār kī bhāśā'), but at any rate did not represent their own Baṅgaṇī language, e.g. the utterance ostensibly containing the form */lokta*, *Milch* (<< Indo-European *glak* 'Milch', Zoller 1988: 194, ex. 8), the utterance containing *[saːɡ-* 'suchen, (be-)fragen (meist religiöse Sphäre)' (< Indo-European *sag-* 'witternd nachspüren' [recte *siːɡ-*, Zoller 1988: 195, ex. 10). Some utterances were recognized as either representing the Jaunsār dialect or deformed corpus specimens (literally 'raped' forms, i.e. 'Jaunsār kī bhāśā bhi yo yā balatkār huā bhi...
ho), e.g. the utterance ostensibly containing the form ‘[pobost]a in Welt, Weltall’ (< ‘pavasta’ (RV, AV) Decke, Hülle; Dual: Himmel und Erde’, Zoller 1988: 181–2, ex. 10). Our Baṅgāṇi informants believed pobost to be the name of some deity.

Our Baṅgāṇi informants identified the utterance containing the form niktə: as Jaunsār dialect (‘Jaunsār ki bhāṣā’) but said that it was close enough to Baṅgāṇi that they could confidently identify the words.

māli āśiga. niktə kori guśoṇ cūl.

shaman has.come well doing clean fireplace

**translation**

The shaman has come. Clean the fireplace well.

Baṅgāṇi cūl ‘fireplace, hearth’ is evidently cognate with Nepāli cuhlo, cūlo ‘fireplace, hearth’. Our informants report that niktə means ‘well’ (H. ‘acchi tarah se’) and that the gloss ‘gesäubert, gereinigt’ is incorrect. Zoller (1988: 181, ex. 9) identifies the word in this meaning with ‘niktə’ (RV, SB) gewaschen, gereinigt’.

In one example, Zoller has, according to our informants, even wrongly identified the Baṅgāṇi form of a person’s proper name Dar­śan as an adjective ‘dorśnə’ with the purported meaning of ‘mutig, dreist’ and etymologically related to Sanskrit dhṛṣṇu- ‘kühn, mutig, stark’.

bābe-bāsi pūch bī, Dorśnə-ro zōmi.

father-like son too Darśan-GEN has.become

**translation**

Like father like son. So too has Darśan’s [son] become.

A graver error is that Zoller (1988: 180, ex. 3) identifies the regular Baṅgāṇi pronominal form isro ‘his’ (m. sg. visible) incorrectly as an adjective ‘isrə’ with the purported meaning ‘frisch und kräftig und reichlich entstehend, blühend (Blumen), reif (Getreide)’. This word, for which Zoller posits an etymological relationship with Sanskrit iṣrā- ‘erfrischend, frisch, gedeihend etc.’, occurs in the following sentence fragment.

isro dinwālo māgē-ri diṇ ... his milch.cow Māgh-GEN married.female.relatives

**translation**

His milch cow ... the married female relatives of the month Māgh ...

To understand this specimen, which is but a sentence fragment, one must keep in mind that in South Asia generally – the Lhokpu of southwestern Bhutan are just one exception –, married sisters and daughters of the household (in Baṅgāṇi collectively referred to by the term diṇ, cf. Kāṅgri tīn) through marriage become members of the households of their respective husbands. In Baṅgāṇi the diṇ return to their paternal household in the Hindu month of Māgh, at which time they are presented with gifts and regaled by the kindred menfolk which they have left behind. Baṅgāṇi dinwālo is cognate with Hindi dinevālā and specifically denotes a milch cow. Zoller translates this sentence fragment as: ‘die frisch und reichlich entstehenden (Milch-)Produkte des Tages (und) die verheiratete Schwester, (die) im (Monat) mārgaśīra (ins Elternhaus zurückkommt, diese beiden sind erfreulich)’. Note that Zoller even gives the wrong Hindu month in this translation.

In two cases, an alleged Baṅgāṇi ‘Sanskrit’ form is correctly or almost correctly recorded and glossed, e.g. the form birapā ‘überreich, übervoll’ (Zoller 1988: 183, ex. 14), for which our informants give the Hindi translation zyādā ‘too much, too many’, and the verb gisnā (Zoller has gisnə) ‘schrubben, reiben’ (Zoller 1988: 180: ex. 5), for which our informants provide the Hindi translations lipnā ‘daub, smear’, pūchna ‘wipe, rub’ as well as ragānā ‘rub, scrub, grate’. However, even if the Sanskrit etymologies which Zoller posits (viz. virapā- ‘srotzen, überfließen’ and ghṛṣ- ‘reiben, polieren’) are correct, it remains unclear why such a form could not be a tatsama or a semi-tatsama, for tatsamas and semi-tatsamas are known to be used to express the most everyday concepts in Nepāli and other Indo-Aryan languages, both those with and without literary traditions. If we assume Zoller’s ‘Etymologisierungen’ to be correct, the Sanskrit etymology ghṛṣ- ‘reiben, polieren’, posited for Baṅgāṇi gisnə, would likewise have to be posited for Hindi ghisnā ‘scrub, rub’, with which it is evidently cognate.

On the other hand, in cases where the gloss is inaccurate, this does not necessarily invalidate the Sanskrit etymology which Zoller proposes. For example, the word duśñasa ‘bad old woman, can-
tankerous elderly woman', inaccurately glossed as 'übel oder böse redend' (Zoller 1988: 181, ex. 8), is just one of several incorrect glosses in the lyrics of a chorā song,

mera bāgu-di, e Masu Dew
my fate-in oh Mahāsu Deva
tu deś piṭhāī lāī
you gave tīkā put
no cāī duḥsamsa-girīn
not want bad.old.woman-woman
no deś pochotro bāī
not give younger brother

translation

In my fate, Oh Mahāsu Deva!
You anointed me with tīkā powder.
I don’t want a cantankerous old woman.
You didn’t give me a younger brother.

Both of the nouns which combine to form the compound duḥsamsa-girīn exist as free morphs in Baṅgānī. The latter form girīn denotes any woman in general towards which the speaker feels no special relationship, in contrast, for example, to Baṅgānī chewer, which means both 'woman' and 'wife', and bālī, a specific Baṅgānī term of reference for one’s own wife. All this need not preclude the possibility of an etymological relationship between Baṅgānī duḥsamsa 'bad old woman, cantankerous elderly woman' and Sanskrit duḥsamsa-'übelwollend, drohend, schmähend'.

The major portion of Zoller’s 'Sanskrit' and other 'archaic' words, however, like all of the ‘Kentum words’, are evidently based on semi-tatsamas and semi-tatsamas even more so than Indo-Aryan languages are in general. The more peculiar 'Sanskrit' words, e.g. adhō ~ ads 'hat gegessen' and ədītu 'Vieflresser, Dämon; vieflressend', are certainly mistakes in interpretation and transcription. In conclusion, we disbelieve the existence in Baṅgānī of ‘300 bis 400 Wörtern ..., von denen mit großer Sicherheit gesagt werden kann, daß sie weder Tatsamas noch Semi-Tatsamas darstellen’ (Zoller 1988: 178).

7. Conclusions and considerations

All field linguists make mistakes in their field notes. Good field linguists go back to recheck the material again and again to weed out errors of all types. When checking Zoller’s corpus specimens in Baṅgānī, particularly his ‘Kentum words’ gave both of us, as field linguists, the all too familiar impression of misunderstood and unchecked corpus specimens. If Zoller’s approach to the Baṅgānī language were to have been more analytical and if his knowledge of Indo-European reconstructions were to have been less elaborate, he might not have fallen prey to so much hineininterpretieren, for we cannot but conclude that Zoller etymologized a Kentum Indo-European or Sanskrit root into any Baṅgānī item which he had either inaccurately transcribed or improperly understood.

On March 31st, 1993, Zoller organized a ‘small colloquium’ at the New Delhi office of the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg in order ‘to offer an opportunity to Indian linguists to meet and discuss issues with native speakers from Baṅgānī’. Zoller (1993) mentions the names of six Baṅgānis, first of which is his principal informant Gabar Simha. The four linguists attending were Candru J. Dāsvānī, Dhanē Jain, Suresh Kumār and Prem Simha. Dāsvānī is a linguist specialised in modern English, currently in charge of non-formal education at the National Council for Educational Research and Training at New Delhi. Jain is an American-trained Indian sociolinguist who currently manages a publishing house. Kumār is professor of applied linguistics at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan at Āgrā, whose many publications focus on Hindi, Hindi stylistics, Indian bilingualism and other topics related to Hindi. Prem Simha is professor of linguistics at Delhi University and the only person to attend Zoller’s colloquium who has worked in the field of historical linguistics. It is fair to point out that none of these scholars read German, in which Zoller’s Baṅgānī findings were reported, or have any fieldwork experience working with informants of living languages. Zoller (1993: 112–3) reports their findings as follows:

Right from the beginning the experimental character of the meeting was underlined. Several of the informants had come to Delhi for the first time, and the colloquium took place in a location and surroundings somewhat alien to them. Moreover, it was not predictable how they would react to the very direct 'examin-
Zoller's purported discovery either presumes the impossible or entails a highly interesting substrate residue. It is an impossible or, at least, a hitherto unreported linguistic phenomenon that an identifiable portion of the lexicon remain immune from the historical sound changes which shape the language. In Section 3, we saw that although Zoller denounces the idea that sound laws represent 'allgemein gültige Lautveränderungen', his hypothesis does not in fact require any such criticism of the 'Ausnahmslosigkeit der Lautgesetze'. He hypothesizes that an ancient Kentum language was spoken for millennia virtually unchanged by a secluded population group which only in very recent times, purportedly through 'Überlagerung', adopted a Western Pahari language so entirely that their original language survives only as esoteric traces. This hypothesis is not impossible a priori, although we have disproved it on the basis of the data, for it is conceivable that the set of words which Zoller identified as 'Kentum words' could represent the residue of a substrate language. The Gaulish substrate in French represents just such a curious set of words (Lambert 1994), although these words have of course undergone the same historical developments in phonology as other French words.

If the mystification and reconditeness in Zoller's writings, illustrated above in Section 3, were not enough to arouse suspicion, Zoller ends his second installment with the following observations and remarks:

Erst kürzlich ist mir aufgefallen, daß bei Witzen und Späßen, ironischen Wendungen u. ä. die Banganis auffallend oft archaische Wörter gebrauchen - und zwar auch dann, wenn keine [arö]-Atmosphäre da ist. Das Wort klingt dann auch nicht mehr 'rein', sondern bloß noch altdömesch. So mag man vor einem lüsternen 'Biedermann' bissig äußern: [lokte ri: la:]c le i' aia:] Wort-für-Wort-Übersetzung: "Milch PIPa:, sabbernde Speichel-he-sie-kommen!" - "He, dem läuft die Milchspucke (aus dem Mund)", mit [loktla:], 'Milch', zu IG glek-'Milch'.

Das Ironische des Ausdrucks wird durch [lokt:] intensiviert, das in dieser Situation für die Banganis altdömeschs klingt als [dud:] 'Milch'. Dem beflissenen Leser dürfte Ähnliches aus deutscher Poetery wohlbekannt sein. Diese Entwicklung deutet an, was irgendwann einmal das letzte Lebenszeichen der alten Schichten des [bangani] sein könnte: ein Witz, vielleicht.

Certainly, the phenomenon of archaisms in jokes amongst gypsies is a well-known phenomenon, but in view of the serious and far-reaching implications of Zoller's purported discovery, these closing lines struck us from our first reading of them as a peculiar way to con-
clude a scholarly piece of writing on a topic of this nature. In this article, we have presented the facts as we know them. In view of our findings and in view of the manner in which Zoller presented his, the question which remains for the reader to resolve in his own mind is whether Zoller has fallen prey to the wishful etymologizing of transcriptional errors or whether he has deliberately perpetrated a hoax upon the academic community. In other words, was the joke on Zoller, or was the joke on us? That is the pørko ‘Frage’.

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