

Introduction

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**A Historical Syntax of Late Middle Indo-Aryan
(Apabhraṃśa)**

Vit Bubenik

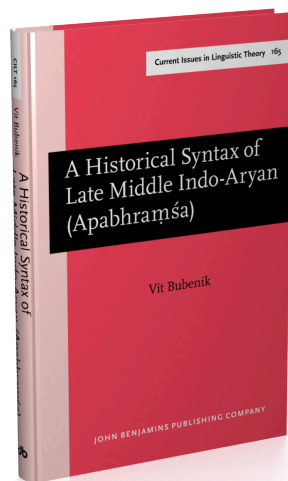
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INTRODUCTION

My previous monograph, *The Structure and Development of Middle Indo-Aryan Dialects* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996), was a systematic treatment of the most likely historical processes that were responsible for the variation and change found in phonology, morphology and syntax of Middle Indo-Aryan dialects during the successive periods of their development. The upper limit of that study was the middle of the 1st millennium B.C. and its lower limit the end of the 1st millennium A.D.:

Old period: represented by Aśokan inscriptions, Pāli and Ardha-Māgadhi literary corpora

Middle period: stage Prākṛits (used in Sanskrit plays), Māhārāṣṭrī literary corpus (lyric poetry and Jaina narratives)

Late period: represented by the Apabhraṃśa literary corpus.

In the sections dealing with phonology and morphology I devoted my attention to the best documented varieties of MIA (Aśokan Prākṛits, Pāli, Ardha-Māgadhi, Māhārāṣṭrī and Apabhraṃśa). The limits of space prevented the legitimate inclusion of the three types of non-Classical Sanskrit (Jain, Buddhist and Epic Sanskrit) into the chapters dealing with phonology and morphology. However, in the section dealing with syntax it proved necessary to draw on data from late Classical Sanskrit for the sake of statistical accounts and comparisons with Prākṛits. Only a few topics deemed to be of fundamental importance were examined in the section dealing with syntax: word order, cliticization of pronominal objects, epistemic and deontic modality, evolution of aspect, passive and the emergence of the ergative construction, and causativization. The emphasis was placed on the transition from the OIA stage to the MIA stage, with only casual remarks regarding the late MIA stage. The present monograph takes over where the previous one stopped: all the above and some additional topics are explored on the basis of the Apabhraṃśa literary corpus (6th – 12th c.) in a unified theoretical framework of Functional Grammar. The following volume will be devoted to the early NIA period (11th – 16th c.)

