

Introduction to the Atlas of the Araxes-Iran (Outer Fertile Crescent) Linguistic Area

Don Stilo, MPI for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig

The *Atlas* presented at this talk is projected to cover a multitude of shared phonological, grammatical and lexical features in the languages within a wide expanse of the Middle East and the South Caucasus. The following languages and dialects will be covered in the *Atlas* (proceeding roughly from west to east):

- *KARTVELIAN*: Georgian, Georgian dialects; Laz; Mingrelian;
- *INDO-EUROPEAN*, Armenian: including widely variant dialects with low inter-intelligibility, e.g., Vaneci, Karabagh, Agulis, Salmas, Tbilisi, colloquial Yerevan, etc.;
- *ALTAIC*: Azerbaijani dialects of Azerbaijan and Iran; peripheral Azerbaijani dialects of west central Iran; Iraqi Turkmen; eastern Turkish dialects, e.g., Erzerum, Van, etc.;
- *SEMITIC*: Neo-Aramaic (a wide range of highly divergent dialects of different Christian and Jewish communities of Kurdistan; multilingual contact situations); Arabic dialects of Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan;
- *NORTHEAST CAUCASIAN*: Udi (outlier with disputed position within the Lezgian group).
- *INDO-EUROPEAN*, Iranian: (Northwestern Iranian) Northern, Central and Southern Tati, Northern, Central and Southern Talyshi, Northern Kurdish/Kurmanji (Erzerum, Zakho, Mush, Van, North Azerbaijan, etc.); various Central Kurdish/Sorani-Mukri (Iraq-Iran), Zazaki/Dimli (E. Turkey), Gurani/Hawrami (Iran-Iraq); (Southwestern Iranian) Caucasian Tat, spoken in Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities in N. Azerbaijan/Daghestan (Russia); colloquial Tehran Persian;

North Caucasian as well as languages of the above families that are outside the designated areas (e.g., Svan, Ossetic) are excluded for now but may be added in later stages of the project. All data come from published sources but may be supplemented by fieldwork by Stilo in poorly documented languages or on rare features.

The project, initiated in October 2005 at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS), has the ultimate goal of producing a linguistic atlas of shared phonological, grammatical and lexical features in the languages of the designated area in the form of isoglosses drawn onto geographic maps of the area, produced from a Filemaker database designed by Hans-Jörg Bibiko, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. Features are divided into domains of phonology, morphology, two sections of syntax (1: word order phenomena; 2: other syntactic phenomena) and lexicon. To date, I have isolated some 286 features to include in the *Atlas*, but with time, this number may be edited down or some features may be replaced by others not listed as yet. The projected date of completion is 2011.

The Powerpoint presentation will include a discussion of the proposed structure of the *Atlas*. The hard-copy *Atlas* will show each linguistic feature on a separate map along with an accompanying descriptive text explaining the more general issues of the given feature, providing only some examples that demonstrate the range of variation within that particular feature/isogloss or isogloss bundle. The maps consist of data points, color-coded according to family, where value responses (+, ±, -, N/A, etc.) for each of the ± 286 features in each language or dialect are entered. On the CD-ROM provided to accompany the *Atlas*, each point on each of the maps is then linked to the database of examples. The database on the planned CD-ROM will also provide additional discussion and multiple examples of each feature for each individual dialect included on the map. Most of these multiple examples will not be furnished with interlinear glossing. A certain number of core examples under each category, however, will be specially marked indicating that the user may click on those examples to open a link to pdf files where these examples are given with interlinear glosses and further discussion, where necessary.