(De)Coding Hodgson’s Kiranti Grammars and Verbal Paradigms

Aimée Lahaussois
Université Paris Cité and Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, CNRS, Laboratoire d’histoire des théories linguistiques, F-75013 Paris, France

Abstract This article presents the process, challenges and results of reconstructing hierarchised tables of contents for two grammar sketches written by B.H. Hodgson of the Vayu (1857) and Bahing (1858) languages. The process has involved making sense of the ontological systems used by Hodgson in organising his materials and analyses, and has been complicated by the dual factors of occasionally opaque terminological choices and of inconsistent physical presentation of the materials. The resulting tables of contents, presented in the appendix, make it possible to compare these sketches to others from the same time period and/or linguistic area.

Keywords Kiranti language descriptions. 19th century grammaticography. Describing a language ‘on its own terms’. Hierarchised tables of contents. Verbal paradigms.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Types of Interpretational Difficulties. – 2.1 Content. – 2.2 Physical Presentation of Materials. – 3 Discussion of Reconstructed Organisational Schemes. – 4 Conclusion.