SOME NOTES ON MARAA: II

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Preliminary remarks

The first part of this paper appeared in LTBA 25.1:123-136. Some minor changes have been for this part. The earlier part speaks of "Maraa", though my analysis in the first part was based on Tlóusài Maràa only. As a matter of fact, this version of Maraa is now trying to establish itself as "standard Maraa", and may also succeed in doing so, since it is supported by Lorrain's dictionary and a bible translation revised by the Maraa themselves. But linguistically speaking there is little reason to accept this restricted view. This paper expands the earlier coverage, replacing many general "Maraa" by "T" (as a shorthand for Tlóusài). This "T" will be supplemented by two additional dialects ("F" and "Z") in the following text. Although all of them still can be subsumed under "Maraa", their vocabulary cannot be united in an undifferentiated dictionary. Their vowel systems have drifted far apart, and the only way to reunite them to some extend is by reconstructing the once common basis which I will call OM (short for Old Maraa).

This is not to say that my analysis or the comparisons with Lushai and Lai in the first part were faulty. Any comparison of two major lan-

guages, however important, in reality is nothing but a comparison of two minor dialects which for whatever reason may have come to be regarded as representing the standard. Thus, given enough material, I could have started with any other "dialect" of Maraa. The results, to be sure, would have looked a little bit different, because the vowel system of these dialects is different from that of Tlóusài. Would this difference have invalidated my conclusions based on one dialect only? Most probably not – as long as I refrain from stating more than that a certain phoneme here normally corresponds to some other (or the same) phoneme (or even a number of phonemes) there. But as soon as I try to state more than these superficial facts, for instance try to explain why this has come to be so, my guesses may easily go astray and might be contradicted by insights to be gained when starting from another dialect, at least as long as the data hitherto available lack historical depth.

Admittedly, when starting from Tlóusài only, a few times I was tempted to leave the superficial level and to venture some historical guesses, as for instance with respect to the development of the Lushai and Lai (LL) diphthong /ua/ in Maraa. Fortunately, when enlarging my view, nothing came to the fore to disprove me – it could have been different. Made a little bit foolhardy by this success, this time I'll try to be even bolder and not only develop the first outlines of how OM looked like, but also venture some guesses about the differential development. That is, I do not really leave Tlóusài for dealing with some other dialects, but I am trying to add some dynamism to the analysis presented in the first sections. The main intention of these was to facilitate as far as possible comparison between Maraa as documented in R. A. Lorrain's dictionary (with all the flaws it unfortunately contains) and other

languages of this area. The main intention of the following part is to advance our understanding of Maraa itself. The new approach, however, required yet another differentiation. The different authors used different spelling systems of unequal precision. In order to facilitate comparisons, I had to reduce them to a common standard especially with regard to the vowel system. In the first part I have already introduced this system of my own, and I'll continue to use it. It does not pretend to represent the actual pronunciation, but it tries to allot one or two graphs to each of the finals of Maraa depending on whether they are monophthongs or diphthongs. I order not to deviate too much from the spelling system used until now I deviated from my own principle and did not use the single graph /o/ but the digraph /aw/ for what in the IPA system would have been written /ɔ/. Moreover, I used another digraph /aa/ for |a| in order to distinguish it from |ə|, for which I used /a/.

Acceptable as this spelling system might have been for the superficial level, it was bound to soon reveal its limits as soon as I tried to add some historical depth to the analysis including changes in the composition of the vowel system implying changes in the conceptions of what the speakers of these former versions of the language may have regarded as constituting phonemes. In order to arrive at a clearer conception of them, I found it useful to make (a restricted) use of IPA symbols. This led to a triple set of markings: slashes (/.../) for spellings in my own system, square brackets ([...]) for spellings used by the different authors (and today partly also by the people writing their language

themselves) whenever they differ from mine, and vertical lines (|...|) for what I consider phonemes. In order not to overload my paper with these markings, I did not use them whenever I thought it possible to assign the words in question to a certain abstract stage like "old Maraa" (OM) or "common Chin" (CC).

Since the two parts of my paper are meant to be used together, the old numbering of the sections has been retained. This will allow me to refer to previous or following sections without introducing additional specifications.

4. The evidence of Fàbàu [:Fae:bau]

As already mentioned, the analysis presented in the first sections was based on what today in the "Mara Autonomous District" is considered standard Maraa, that is in first instance, but probably not exclusively, the Tlóusài dialect. As could already be seen from Parry's material published in 1932, other dialects developed differently. However, the scantiness of the available data basis (often suffering from inconsistencies in the spelling system) did not allow me an analysis similar to that of Tlóusài.[1] Still it was sufficient to show that even the words used for the same things were not always the same. From my own experience[2] I knew that further shifts in the standard vocabulary took place even in few decades after the publication of Lorrain's dictionary. There is a great readiness to accept new words. Educated people

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1.   It was only after analyzing besides the Tlóusài also the Fàbàu data that I could try to make a similar use of those given by Parry for Zàwhnái.

2.   Though at that time the area had been declared off-limits for foreigners, generous local support allowed me to visit Siaha for a few days and to initiate further cooperation by mail.

of today do not speak just standard Maraa. In Siaha they not only know Lushai but some English as well, and some even claim to be able to speak all Maraa "dialects" (the expression they use when speaking English).

However, claims in this respect are rather common in the whole area, and are not necessarily true in every aspect. I therefore thought it wiser to refrain from any attempt to burden my dictionary materials with sporadic references to the other "dialects". Thus, the preceding text was written without any further knowledge about them. In the meantime, however, I came into contact with a Maraa informant[3] who maintained that he could understand, but not read Tlóusài. He used his own spelling system, not only indicating all three tones but also occasional sandhi effects resulting in contour tones. In view of the difficulties my informants from Siaha experienced in providing me with tone marks, I was glad to find a most reliable informant. His contributions enabled me to add the fourth section to my paper. The new data now at my disposal also provided me with a rather reliable basis for a comparison of Tlóusài and Fàbàu (Parry's "Sabeu"; Lorrain's "Saby"), at the same time throwing additional light on the development of Maraa.

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3.   John Mangtling Cinzah, born 1930, a refugee from Burma, who tried to make a living in the US, until most regrettably he died in poor circumstances in 2001. As can be seen, he wrote his name in a reconstructed Lai form. Parry (1932, p. 3) mentions the Cinzah (he writes "Changza") as the chiefly family of the "Sabeu" on both sides of the border which now separates Mizoram (India) from the Chin State (Burma). Today, both areas are off-limits for foreigners.

When, nearly 50 years ago, I learned from the Bawm of the Chittagong Hill Tracts that there was a tribe they called "Bong" in the East, I had no idea to whom this term might refer. So far no "Bong" had been mentioned in the previous literature. Nevertheless, they did and still do exist, since "Bong" is nothing but the Bawm version of what I shall call now, following J. M. Cinzah, but using my own spelling, "Fàbàu". To simplify the presentation, henceforth I'll abbreviate Fàbàu as F and (as mentioned above) Tlóusài as T. Since I used the same tone marks for Lushai, Lai, and Tlóusài, I'll do so for Fàbàu as well. I'll also deviate from my informant's spelling system in that I continue to use /a/ (T a, F ae) for the raised central /a/ of Maraa, but /aa/ (T â, F a) for the full sounding /a/. Though written differently in the two dialects, they have the same value and the same derivation – with a few differences, especially the fact that the irregularity of Tlóusài regarding initial h- (*ha > haa) does not exist in Fàbàu. Another difference results from nothing but the spelling system: CC *tr- > Maraa c- (T spelling ch-, F spelling c-).

The different forms of the name for the "Bong", however, are not just due to different forms of spelling. That F (as the only dialect of Maraa) has preserved CC f- had already been noted by Parry.[4] As Parry still wrote (T) "Sabeu", the difference to (F) ":Fae:bau" may not look

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4.   The correlation F f- = CC f-, however, is not perfect. Fàbàu at times has f- even when CC has s-. This is the case especially with the so-called animal prefix sa-, the uniformity of which may not represent the original state of affairs. As to the ethnonym itself, the correspondence seems regular within Maraa, while on a CC basis there is little reason to assume that Bawm dropped a first syllable "fa" – prefixed "sa", on the other hand, can be dropped easily. Hence we should reconstruct CC *Sa-Bong, but when doing so keep in mind that F prefix "fa" is a special feature of unknown historical depth.

very great, but with Lorrain's "Saby" it becomes much more apparent. The difference will become clearer once we take a look at the development of all CC (common Chin) vowels (whether long or short) with final nasal. In square brackets the local spelling whenever different from mine.

iN, uaN	> F ei, but	T ay [o]
eN, iaN	> F ai =	T ai
aN	> F aa [a] =	T aa [â]
oN	> F au, but	T y
uN	> F ou [o] =	T ou [ô]

Result: The development of uaN > iN and of iaN > eN predates the split of T and F. The same is true for the development of *ua > i in general, confirming my hypothesis expounded above. Moreover, F shows a completely regular development in conformity with schoolbook assumptions, T does not: *iN and *oN show irregular developments. Let's now have a look at syllables formerly closed by a final occlusive or glottal and their equivalents with open final. Here too LL vowel length left no different traces on Maraa.

i°, ua°	> F i =	T i
e°, ia°	> F ie =	T ie
a°	> F a [ae] =	T a
o°	> F ao =	T ao
u°	> F u =	T u

Both dialects show the same development which, however, introduced a certain disharmony. One might expect either /ie/ : /uo/ (whereby the old CC couple /ia/ : /ua/ would have been revived) or /ao/

: /ae/ (which seems less plausible, since there is also /au/ : /ai/). Nevertheless, the F spelling uses both /ao/ and /au/, but the latter most probably stands for what J. M. Cinzah might have written [aeu] instead, sincne his [au] is in fact approximating /eu/ as used by Savidge (for T) and inconsistently by Parry for F in the beginning of last century. [ao] and [au] would merge in actual pronunciation, but the sound values of the finals have to be kept apart, as otherwise their actual merger will result in an increase of homonyms (see below).

Comparing the differential development of T and F, it seems that F is, not only with respect to f-, but also as regards the development of final nasals, the more conservative dialect. But we cannot generalize this judgment, since F indeed lost two distinctions which were kept in T. F /ao/ stands for both T /ao/ and /yu/, and F /ie/ stands for both T /ie/ and /ei/. Syllables with T /yu/ (< *CC ou) are not very numerous; the F merger therefore led to a comparatively slight increase in homonyms. T /ei/, however, in itself already contains CC ei, oi, and uai, while T /ie/ contains all CC e, eK, er: this time the increase of homonyms for F was considerable. Both mergers taken together outweigh that of T *f- > s-.[5] To preserve or revive the old differences in the spelling system was ruled out by the mere fact of the late introduction of these systems. The ingenious author of the Fàbàu system, however, thought it useful to

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5.   Due to the depletion of finals in a large number of verbs LL form I and form II inevitably merged in Maraa. However, where the distinction could be preserved it still exists in T, while, as far as transitive verbs are concerned, the data available to me suggest that form II ousted form I in F. Most remarkably, the same process happened in Bawm which deviates from standard Lai in that it not only lost the third tone, but also dropped the aspiration in initial nasals and laterals and merged initial ch- and s-. It reacted by using but one form for transitive verbs, thereby reducing the number of homonyms increased by the other processes.

keep all three tones apart (even marking sandhi contours) instead of merging (though in spelling only) two of them, as in the Tlóusài system devised in Siaha. There is a subtle reason behind this difference: the more distinction the language loses in its finals, the more important the tonal system becomes. Seen this way, Fàbàu is the more progressive dialect. And it did not refrain from "irregular" changes. I mentioned above that in T some (CC open) final -a, for no discernible reason, changed to final -aw. In F the number of these crossovers is even larger. One of the examples even derives from CC -aak/-aq[6] (> F -áw/-aw-) showing that this process must have continued after the loss of the final stops.

For a fuller understanding of the mergers in F, let me present a synopsis of the development of the finals with CC final glides and laterals.[7]

ei, el, ial	> F ie,	T ei
ai, al	> F e[8] >	T ia
oi, ol	> F ie,	T ei
ui, ul, ual	> F i =	T i
au, ar	> F aw =	T aw
ou	> F au,	T yu
uar, ir	> F y >	T ua
iar, er > e	> F ie	T ie

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6.   By now I prefer to use the otherwise unused letter q for the final glottal of LL, since unlike other signs for this glottal, it is available even on simple typewriters.

7.   This table admittedly contains a little bit more than a mere comparison, since instead of just juxtaposing the T and F forms, I sometimes connected them by the sign ">" implying a development.

8.   Parry writes -ia more often than -e.

ur, or > o   > F ao =   T ao

Apparently, like CC -ua- > -i-, CC -l > -i and -ui > -i preceded the split into F and T. Also common to both F and T were (besides -ia- > –e–) *-ur > -or (and onwards). Equally preceding the split were two special developments for the sake of simplicity not mentioned above: 1) short medial -a- in a dental/palatal environment, that is, Tan, Tar, Tal > -e-, and hence Tal > Tel > F Tie, T Tei. 2) Initial m- had a special effect, viz. *mi > *miN, *mu > *muN, but both *mul and *mui > mi. The same again for final *-un > *-iN after labial initials. Some of these changes in the meantime also appear in LL: we find a tendency to contract (under special conditions) -ia- to -e- in both Lushai and Bawm, while ur- (but not -uur) > -or, like the change of medial -a- to -e- in a dental/palatal environment, can be regarded as quite a common tendency in Haka (but not all dialects of) Lai.[9] Though these latter regionally restricted developments in LL seem to be much more recent than those in Maraa, my assumed common stratum for Maraa, called OM, already here tends to lose a clear-cut identity. Its speakers probably

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9. For the latter, one may suppose a former Maraa influence. This, however, may not be true for -ur > -or, since this change finds its parallel in a much more pronounced tendency of Haka Lai to shift -ir (but not -iir) > -er. As far as I know, this development seems to be rather recent as it did not infect the Bawm dialect of Lai, which may have branched off from Falam Lai some 200 years ago. Still, even this assumption (based on Bawm information) will need confirmation by more detailed data on Falam Lai which are not yet available to me. But they can be expected in the near future.

never existed without differential contact with the neighboring groups for which, however, until now only standard Lushai and standard (Haka) Lai became documented in detail. There can be little doubt that the "Matu" (Khumi/Khami) played a major a well. Yet it is beyond my present possibilities to evaluate their participation.

Still I am rather sure that the diverging development of the Maraa dialects started after the developments mentioned above, that is, when the nasalized (and at that time in F and T already diphthongized) finals lost their nasalization.[10] If a language has both -ei~ and -ei, -ai~ and -ai, -au~ and -au, -ou~ and -ou, then, in order to prevent a vast increase in homonyms, the nasalization cannot be dropped without further shifts in the pronunciation of the diphthongs.

As can be seen from the spelling system of Savidge as well as by Lorrain's description and internal evidence, in T at least, the nasalization did not disappear for all diphthongs at the same time. It survived longest with what had been CC -iN and -uN. CC -aN > OM a~ > T -aa doesn't pose any special problem, though for CC -a° this process may have induced a period of uncertainty of how to keep it distinct. A few members of this group shifted to phoneme |ɔ|, but the vast majority to |ə|. Phonetically, /ə/ was already present in CC (as an allophone of short /a/), but it was not accepted as a phoneme of its own. Though I cannot prove it, I assume it had to be accepted as such, the more so, as it also

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10.   In order to avoid typographical difficulties, I use /~/ after the vowel or diphthong to indicate nasalization.

appeared in two diphthongs |əi| (< CC -ei and -oi) and |əu| (< CC -ou)
as well, even though the modern spelling (T a, ei, yu) does not in the
least reflect what phonetically is still obvious.

Let me add here that CC -ei/-ai and CC -ou/-au in their quality as
phonemes are more correctly to be analyzed as CC *-ay/*-a:y and CC
-aw/-a:w. Hence, with the substitution of (CC short) /*a/ by its allo-
phone /ə/, on the phoneme level we have *ay [written /ei/] = *əy = |əi|,
and *aw [here written /ou/] = *əw = |əu|. The fact that in Maraa pho-
nemes |əi| and |ɔi| merged, may now be seen to be related to the other
fact that some (CC short) *a, instead of joining |ə|, crossed over to |ɔ|. If
the process (towards |ɔ|, |ɔi|, |ɔu| for /a/, /ei/, /ou/) would have contin-
ued, it would have alleviated the problem of accommodating the
frontvowel diphthongs perfectly, but at the same time it would have
caused a real jam among backvowel diphthongs, where the situation, as
we'll see later on, was more complicated anyhow.

CC -eN > OM -ai~ took the place of CC=OM -ai, which in its turn
had to move. Where? F suggests |ɛ|. But this slot was not available as
long as it was occupied by OM *-e° (comprising CC -e° and -ia°). Since
it seems implausible that the smaller group of OM -ai could oust the
larger one of OM *-e° (more on this type of argument below), I assume
that the latter had already changed its quality. In the beginning it com-
prised CC -e and -eq, -ia and -iaq. In order to explain their change, we
could assume that the diphthong never lost its old quality and/or that
the waning glottal stop triggered a diphthongization of the old monoph-
thong /e/. At any rate, both T and F ended up with a new diphthong now
written [ie].

One might expect a parallel development on the part of the back-vowel diphthongs, i. e. CC -o° and -ua° > OM -uo, CC -oN > OM -au~ > -au, CC -au > OM -o (= |ɔ|). But this became true only partially. CC -au did become [aw] (= |ɔ|), (but not on to [uo]): CC -oN > OM -au was realized in Chinzah's spelling system only. In reality OM -au~ became more fronted and was written [eu] by Savidge (1912). The reason must be seen in the development of CC -o°. Since all CC ua (whether medial[11] or final) had become OM i, OM -o° contained nothing which could induce a joint change to *-uo. Instead, both T and F developed into what today is written [ao]. Since, despite the use of [ao] and [au] in F spelling, in the long run both cannot really be kept apart in case their phonetic value is what the spelling suggests, there can be no doubt that this [ao] factually took the place of CC -au, which in its turn became [aw]. As a result, in the backvowel system it was CC -au and CC -o° which exchanged their places, while in the frontvowel system it was CC -ai and CC -eN. The only reason discernible so far is the early disappearance of CC -ua.

Despite Cinzah's spelling system of F, this development was true for F as well. The spelling reflects more what should have happened on the systemic basis of CC, but in fact could not happen. Parry's first

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11.   There is but one exception: CC -uai which behaved like CC -oi (and -ooi) and hence joined OM -ei. This reduction of -uai > -oi must have happened before final -l was replaced by -i, as otherwise CC -ual > OM -i would have become impossible. Similarly CC -iau may have merged with CC -eu (or -eeu) which most probably (though unexpectedly) joined OM -ei as well.

notations of "Sabeu" are full of inconsistencies. He does not distinguish
between [aw] and [ao] (neither for F nor for T), and for F < CC   -oN
three times he writes [eu], two times [o] (English value), but there are
also single [e], [aw], [au], [ong] (which otherwise stands for |ou| < ~).
The evidence is all but clear, yet it speaks against /au/ (as used by Cin-
zah) and, if anything, in favor of /eu/.[12]

OM had yet another problem to solve, namely the possible merger
of CC -iN > OM -ei~ and CC = OM -ei on the one hand, and of CC -uN
> OM -ou~ and CC = OM -ou on the other. Both T and F left the place
of /ou/ to the formerly nasalized final, shifting original -ou. T (and most
probably F as well) intensified the diphthongization (as English speak-
ers might do with their negation particle "no" – I mention this because
the resulting diphthong is exactly the same in T as in English). This
new /eu/ (< CC -ou), now written [yu] in T, came dangerously close to
the other -eu < *-eu~ (< CC -oN). In fact both went undistinguished in
the [eu] as used by Savidge (and Parry). This old /eu/ < CC -oN, how-
ever, at least in Lorrain's time, no longer was a diphthong but had
moved on once more. For Lorrain this old /eu/ had the French value
(my Siaha informants found this acceptable, but as a somewhat peculiar
allophone only), and he wrote [y] instead.[13] F, on the other hand,

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12.   Parry's [e], which he uses more often in T than in F, may seem enigmatic, but
this use only reflects the local tendency to reduce the labial off-glide of /eu/ (see foot-
note 13), and there can be no doubt that this tendency is also responsible for the
numerous mistakes in Lorrain's distinction between [y] and [yu]. Parry's [e] stands for
Lorrain's [y], and is insofar more consistent as he also writes, like after him Lorrain,
[ei] for what I would (in accordance with the actual pronunciation) analyze as |əi|, and
as such it is the counterpart of |əu| = [yu].

accepted the merger of the two /eu/ (< CC -oN and CC -ou), in the meantime written [au] by Cinzah, but in fact pronounced more like /eu/. On the fronted part of the diphthongs, we have to deal with the competition of OM *-ei~ (< CC -iN) versus the already existing -ei. Unlike -ou, the latter comprised a rather large number of words, since it contained both CC -ei and CC -oi (including former -uai and unexpectedly even CC -eu). Here again, T and F choose different ways. F merged *-ei and *-e (onward to [ie]), As a result, -ei~ could become denasalized and take the place of -ei. T, however, kept *-ei and *-e apart, changing the latter onward to [ie] and preserving the former. As a result, *-ei~ had to move on. One might expect it to have taken the place of former CC *-oi (*-iN > -oi~ or -ui~ is common with the Marma of the Chittagong Hill Tracts), but this apparently was impossible, once CC -ei and -oi had merged in OM |əi|. It finally reached its position quite down in the throat with the very peculiar diphthong described in section 2, and which now, since phonetically describable as |ʌə|, can be considered the frontvowel counterpart of /ao/ (= |ʌɔ|).

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13.   What might appear here as an odyssey of CC -oN in Tlóusài Maraa, may in reality have been less dramatic. Around 1960 Khumi speakers used two forms of CC -oN side by side: either the old (but now nasalized) monophthong or a very open /e/ (equally nasalized) followed by a rather weak labial off-glide. All it needs to pass from this diphthongized Khumi allophone to the Tlóusài value of it as described by Lorrain, is denasalization and remonophthongization by labialization (rounding) of the by now fronted vowel. Whether Tlóusài in this fronting process was influenced by Khumi (where also -u- is diphthongized via fronting, viz. to -iw-) or vice versa remains an open question. The actual T pronunciation, at any rate, tends not to take to Lorrain's French [eu] value, but to do just the opposite: delabialize a rather high medial vowel, which when fronted would result in a narrow (closed) |e|.

Remains T /ua/, finally reintroduced and derived from an OM final
which united CC -ir and CC -uar > -ir. When -r disappeared, the final
changed its sound to a high central vowel, now written [y] in F. But in T
it had to move on because this place was, as shown above, occupied by
what formerly was CC -oN. Admittedly, T /y/ and F /y/ need not (pho-
netically) represent the same vowel. Still, they probably should be con-
sidered the same phoneme, since (as we'll see) it is difficult for the
speakers of a language to accept allophones as distinct new phonemes.
At any rate, the by now revived /ua/ seems to have called for a counter-
part in T, and CC *ai > OM *-e moved on to T -ia, thereby (one might
say quite unnecessarily) vacating the /e/ slot, now meagerly refilled by
the few exceptions listed in section 2.

5. Zàwhnái

The language recorded by Parry under "Hawthai" is very much the
same as Tlóusài. This leaves us with a third group, Parry's "Zeu-
hnang".[14] In remarkable contrast to the muddle in Parry's data on Fàbàu
(an example has been given above), his "Zeuhnang" data are fairly con-
sistent and as such allow and deserve a closer examination.[15] Still, the
material is rather limited, and the development of some finals (espe-
cially CC -ou) cannot really be traced. From what is available the fol-
lowing conclusions can be drawn:

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14.   There may exist yet another "dialect", spoken by a group south of the Zàw-
hnái, called "Heima" by Parry and the first group of the Maraa to find special men-
tioning in the literature: in 1852 Tickell called them "Heuma". In Parry's map, how-
ever, "Heima" and yet another group, the "Lialai", are entered as villages only, and
both were ruled over by Cinzah Chiefs, that is, the chiefly family of the Fàbàu.

15.   My spelling of the name of this group (Zàwhnái < *zò~hní~) is based on this
evidence.

*-i° > -i,   *-iN > -ai
*-e° > -ia,   *-eN > -e
*-ei > -ei,   *-ai > -e
*-a° > -a,   *-aN > -e
*-ou > eu?,   *-au > -eu (= -y?)
*-o° > -ua,   *-oN > -aw (= |ɔ|)
*-u° > -u,   *-uN > -ou

The uniform /-e/ for former *-eN, *-ai, and *-aN may be doubted. For *-eN there is once -ei, and for *-ai there are some -ia (as in T). For *-aN, however, there are no exceptions, though at first sight there seem to be, since e- is also used as a common prefix to some nouns, where both T and F, in Parry's list, show a- instead. But this evidence is deceptive, since Parry uses [a] both for /a/ and /aa/. There exists a difference between T and F which I did not yet mention. This prefix /a-/ is short in T, but long in F (aa-). Based on the evidence of Z (Zàwhnái) we may conclude that the shortening in T is secondary and that the original form of the prefix must have been *aN-. Neither Lai nor Lushai show a similar prefix (they lost all prefixes anyhow), but it is to be found in Khumi (though not with the same words as in Maraa).[16]

What distinguishes Z from both T and F is the fact (not to be read from the chart given above) that *-ar > -a[17] and that no *-a° seems to

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16.   F /aa-/ against T /a-/ (no data for Z) is also used as reflexive particle and here Paangkhua has /an-/ as well. Lushai has /in-/, old Lai had /i-/, which in modern Lai mostly gave way to /a-/.

17.   Correspondingly *er > e > ia; *or > o > ua; examples for *ur and *ir are not available.

have been changed to [aw]. This clearly shows that T and F must still have been united at the time when Z took to a development of its own. Any claim to the end that Z is nothing but a subdialect of F must be discarded, at least on the evidence of Zàwhnái phonology. F, however, remained closer to Z, as it retained the reflex of the nasal final in prefixed /a-/.

Z also took an independent development by that both *-eN and *-oN apparently did not diphthongize but just dropped the final nasal, while (again quite distinct from T and F) both *-e° and *-o° diphthongized in a completely parallel way, resulting in /-ia/ and /-ua/. Perhaps also the denasalization of *-iN and *-uN could be completed earlier than in T and F. For *-uN Parry uses both [o] (= ou) and [ong] (= əu), the latter for T in any case, for F in most cases, but rarely for Z. For what once had been *-iN, in a few instances the [ang], as used by Parry for T, recur for Z as well, otherwise Parry writes [ai] – which, on exception, also crops up in Lorrain instead of his misleading [o]. Hence the pronunciation in Z and T may not be so far apart as it would appear on the basis of the spelling system used.

The evidence for the original diphthongs remains insufficient. *-ei stayed put, but *-au for no apparent reason was (according to Parry) fronted to [eu]. But maybe the latter combination stands for the monophthong, for which Lorrain introduced his [y] instead of Savidge's [eu] – Parry as a rule used Savidge's system. This interpretation would make sense insofar as the Z value for the fronted counterpart of *-au, viz. *-ai, is consistently given by Parry as /-e/. This leaves us with *-ou, for which there is no example in Parry's list. Since (as has been shown above) it was the back vowel counterpart of *-ei, I am inclined to

assume that it was preserved as a diphthong and indeed stayed put too (|əu|), pronounced the same way as in T, that is [yu], for which we might write [eu] as well. For *ir evidence is lacking.[18]

A last question is what happened to *f-. Following Parry it neither became s- as in T, nor remained f- as in F. Parry writes [hr-] instead, but this graph, in my view, should not be taken at face value. In Lai, /hr-/ tends to be pronounced as a retroflex spirant, and Parry apparently used it as an approximation for an alveolar spirant |χ|, for which one might prefer [hs-] and which may have preceded T initial s for LL f.

6. Final remarks

The outline sketched above is rather silent on differences between T and F in the field of grammar. The tidbits at my disposal do not allow any sure inferences.[19] Some differences might be expected, but more apparent are those in the vocabulary. These must exist, for the following reason:

It is obvious that a depletion of final consonants (and simplification of initials) will produce an enormous amount of homonymous sylla-

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18.   There is only one word in Parry's list which might be a candidate (that for loincloth), and for this he writes [dua] in all three dialects, a fact which indicates a loan. A possible source for this may be Lushai /diar/ (puggery) – the same cloth did serve both purposes, even though successively only. Apart from this somewhat questionable case, there is, until now, little reason to expect that in Z former *-ir and *-oᶜ ended up in the same slot.

19.   All I could elucitate, was a complete survey of the system of pronominal particles in F, consistent in itself but much more complicated than anything so far reported for a Chin language (including T).

bles. In order to regain some differentiation a first step can be an
increased use of prefixes. The latter probably came to be used as a kind
of compensation when final laterals disappeared, when occlusives were
reduced to a mere glottal stop and final nasals lost their individuality in
being reduced to a nasalization of the vowel. At any rate this must have
happened before the split of OM into T and F: there is no major differ-
ence between them regarding prefixes.

Since the possibilities of differentiation by means of prefixes were
limited, there still remained an abundance of homonyms, part of which
had to be eliminated or transformed by creating compound expressions,
that is, by adding another syllable (a near synonym or even an other-
wise meaningless element) to quite a number of those syllables which
became equivocal. Unless there is a high degree of communication
between all speakers of this language, this process will produce local
conventions by which the language will be split up into regional group-
ings which, however, need not remain stable.

Since communication was not strong enough to prevent differential
phonological development, it could even less ensure a common solu-
tion in the restructuring of the vocabulary. Complete dictionaries from
different areas will be needed to document this in detail. As these are
not yet available, my argument was triggered by preliminary impres-
sions gained while uselessly trying to unite T and F in one dictionary.

It would have required an enormous acceleration in the process of
semantic restructuring to avoid a breakdown of the language once
nasalization disappeared, unless it would have been largely compen-
sated by a reorganization of the phonemic system (including the recog-

nition of new phonemes). The dynamics of this process have been sketched in the section on Fàbàu. Let me return to it in order to try a more general conclusion. Though (apart from the few instances in which I used the vertical strokes to indicate phonemes) I refrained from an endeavor to·analyze the deep structure of the system, two antagonistic tendencies appeared. The one seems to be concerned with keeping up the order (or internal logic) of the phoneme system, the other tends to disturb the harmony by introducing a power play. Which finally will stay in or move into an existing slot will depend on its relative strength. Example: T /-ei/ stays put, OM -ei~ which by the logic of the system should take over its place (as it did in F) is send astray. Remarkably enough, even numerically rather weak finals may (temporarily) maintain themselves in their slot against a superior competitor, this time not by their own force but by allying themselves with their counterpart in the system. Example: T /-ou/. On the surface it at first had to move to the /-eu/ slot in order to give way to more powerful OM -ou~ favored by the system. In the deep structure, however, it stayed put (|əu|) and thus could maintain itself against the much more powerful OM -o~ > /-eu~/ only because it had the backing of the system according to which it still was the counterpart of (powerful) T /-ei/ (= |əi|). Though comparatively strong, the /-eu~/ in the end had to fend for itself, since it had lost its counterpart in the system (OM -ei~ > T /-ai/ = |ai|). It had not been able to occupy its predestined slot in the system (|au|), even though this had been vacated by its original owner (CC -au). Instead the slot was used to accommo-

date OM -o > T /-ao/. The reason for this irregularity, however, remains obscure.

Moreover, until now there is no obvious reason why Fàbàu kept "law and order", not allowing an individual power play of the finals (paying for it with an increased number of homonyms due to mergers which became unavoidable), while Tlóusài chose the other way: it avoided the increase in homonyms by allowing an individual power play of the finals which in the end ruined the formerly systematic order of the phonemes. This cannot be explained by an inherent tendency of Tlóusài to avoid homonyms, since the latter created its own additional amount of them by (so to say "unnecessarily") fusing initial f- with s-. Probably the two processes (initial versus final mergers) are interrelated, but we are not yet in a position to determine their sequence.

In the processes described above, the three subgroups ("dialects") of Maraa had to face the same problem: to modify the structure of their system of phonemes by accepting new members to it or to revive old members which had lost their identity in OM because formerly separate phonemes became to be regarded as mere allophones. Cases in question are CC -ei and -oi (more exactly: LL |ai|, |oi|, |o:i|, |uai|) on the one hand, which were merged, and CC -ou and -eu (more exactly LL |au|, |eu|, |e:u|, |iau|) on the other, which did not merge, but (at least in T) became split, since LL |eu|, |e:u|, |iau| crossed over to the more numerous and powerful group of -ei and -oi.[20] I used the simplification here called "CC", because until now there is no proof that OM (which had preserved old prefixes) in the beginning really and in every detail possessed the same phoneme differentiation as Lushai and Lai. A more assertive statement will require a better knowledge of the by now

largely neglected languages and the history of the Southern and Western neighbors of the former Miràm (> Maràa). Before we can take them into account, our view must remain biased. The fact that in the long run the Northern and Eastern neighbors proved politically more important need not necessarily have been true for the languages as well.

In this connection I have to admit that while writing the last sections of this paper I gradually blurred the initially given clear-cut definition of what I meant by "old Maraa". Though OM is still meant to designate the situation before the three groups became separated, this period in itself was not a stable one but contained successive changes from a stage when the former Miràm still spoke a language quite close to LL, then started to reduce their finals, until the time when first of all the southerly Zàwhnái devised their own way to cope with the nasalizations appearing during the time of common development.

Trying to identify the changes as they occurred after the first split in term of phonemes, I realized that most probably I underrated the

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20.   Perhaps the process started with a shift [similar to what happened in German, where what still is written -eu or -äu meanwhile is pronounced -oi] from CC -eu (in its three variations) to -oi before the latter in its turn merged with -ei. Admittedly we cannot really exclude the possibility that the former -eu survived, until it was ousted and merged with -ei, when the phoneme became replenished in T by the competing shifts from CC –ou > -eu and CC -oN > -eu, finally decided in favor of former -ou by allotting the former -oN to a new phoneme written [y] by Lorrain. In this case, however, one may really wonder why the very small number of CC -eu surviving in T (as reported by Lorrain) did not merge with the -eu < CC -ou. Still, we cannot try to answer the question before we know for sure what happened to OC -eu in F. Whatever the solution, we can state (at least for T) a continuing tendency to front or rise complex backvowels, a tendency lately completely reverted for former *i~.

problems unavoidable once the former distinction between long and short /a/ became obsolete. Quite apart from the obvious fact that short but not long /a/ shifted to /e/ in a dental environment, phoneme |a| survived (though CC -a° was reinterpreted as |ə|, backed by the accompanying diphthongs |əi| and |əu|), since all CC -aN were reinterpreted as /a/. But other /a/ still existed in the diphthongs /ai/ (formerly |aːi|) and /au/ (formerly |aːu|), and I am inclined to assume that both monophthongs, |aː| (> /a/) and |a| (> /ə/), did survive in OM, until the depletion of nasalization caused |a| (in T and F) to be allotted to former OM -a~, while OM /ə/ < CC -a° and OM /a/ < CC -aa° by now had to be merged under /ə/. (Whether, as suggested by Parry's spelling, in Z the latter became /a/ while OM -a~ was shifted to /e/ (or /æ/) cannot be affirmed without further research.) Yet until final -r disappeared (and it did so later than final -l, as otherwise the merger of -ur and -or would not have been possible), there was still another /a/, in LL both long and short, which in the end was preserved in Z only, while in T and F it ended up, like CC -au, as |ɔ|.

These assumptions allow me to set up the following chart of OM phonemes and their subsequent fate in the three dialects. In these, new phonemes will be marked /⁺/, revived phonemes, i. e. those present in CC but lost in OM, will be marked /°/ (in square brackets the spelling used by the different authors when different from mine).

OM	Z	F	T
i	i	i	i
i~	ai	əi [ei]	⁺ay [o]
e	°ia	⁺ie	⁺ie
e~	e	ai	ai

əi	əi [ei]	⁺ie	əi [ei]
ai	e	e	°ia
ɔ, a	a	⁺ə [ae]	⁺ə [a]
a~²¹	e	a	a [â]
au	[eu]	o [aw]	o [aw]
əu	əu (?)	əu [au]	əu [yu]
o~	o [aw]	əu [au]	⁺y
o	°ua	au [ao]	au [ao]
u~	⁺ou [o]	⁺ou [o]	⁺ou [ô]
u	u	u	u
ir (> y)	?	⁺y	°ua
ar	a	o [aw]	o [aw]

Although some of the identifications remain doubtful, this survey reveals the reason for the comparatively long retention of nasalization in OM u~ and i~: for both a new phoneme had to be created, a fact veiled by my simplifying use of /ou/ (and /ei/) for |əu| (and |əi|). Phonetically /ou/ may still have existed as an allophone, but not as a phoneme of its own, since its place was occupied by CC /ou/ (< |au|). If this new |ou| < CC -uN had been a revival, we might expect a similar process with the fronted diphthongs, but in T at least this did not happen, leading to the introduction of a completely new phoneme (here written /ay/) for OM i~. F evaded the problem by vacating the slot of OM -ei by

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21.   I once more left apart short /a/ in a dental/palatal environment. There is no example for Z in Parry; but in case something like *Tan had been there, it most probably could not have told us anything, since according to Parry all *-aN and *-eN, whatever the vowel length in CC, became [e] in Z. More helpful would have been CC far (sister), did it become χa or χia in Z? And how about CC sal (servant) > Z se or sei?

accepting a merger and shifting the latter to -ie. But even Z, though breaking away at first, did not achieve a completely parallel development for OM i~ and u~, as otherwise it would have had to accept a merger of OM -ei and -i~. It allotted OM i~ to /-ai/, as T might have done as well if the slot in the meantime had not been taken over by OM e~.

In F, on the other hand, OM i~ did conquer the place of |əi|. This might have been avoided by reviving CC /oi/, but this did not happen in any Maraa dialect. Thus, in order to accommodate OM i~, the latter was merged with OM e, ending up once more in the new phoneme |ie| which remained unidentified by both Savidge and Lorrain. If CC ia had survived as an allophone of OM e, this might help us to understand why OM e shifted to this peculiar phoneme. Still, only Z did revive °ia by diphthongizing OM e and correspondingly diphthongizing OM o to °ua, and this most probably long before these diphthongs reappeared in T. Also T °ia derives from /e/, but the latter is not OM e, but OM ai.

In F, on the other hand, J. M. Cinzah mentioned neither -ia nor -ua,[22] and this despite the fact that a revival would have helped to avoid the merger of OM -o and -əu, and despite the fact that, as mentioned by Parry, part of the Fàbàu ("Sabeu") live in close contact with the Lai in whose language /ua/ (as well as /ia/) is well preserved. Perhaps it was just this close (but traditionally not amicable) contact which prevented it. The Zàwhnái, separated from the Lai by the Fàbàu, and in their turn not on too good footing with the latter, were less reluctant to revive *ia

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22.   But both are to be found in Parry. He also used -e, but more often -ia for Cinzah's -e. In the same syllables -ia is used in T as well. Also Parry's -ua (one example only) is the same for F and T.

and *ua, and one may even wonder whether the latter had really been lost in the Zàwhnái version of OM as well. Whatever the answer, the available data allow the conclusion that for the Maràa it proved definitely easier to reduce their phonemes than to revive what their forefathers had abolished — or even to accept new phonemes though phonetically the corresponding sounds persisted or were easily created as allophones.

Still, in order to deepen or to correct this preliminary analysis, we need more data on Fàbàu and Zàwhnái as well as a full survey of the allophones in all "dialects".

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