

“The Origin of Comitative Case in Tocharian A”

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Alongside its inherited case endings, Tocharian is famous for displaying a whole a set of new endings synchronically added to the “oblique” stem (viz. the old accusative). It is commonplace to assume that the Tocharian nominal paradigm underwent a further restructuring after the split of A and B, since the declensions do not match for these secondary spatial cases: ^A*yuk-a* [perlative singular of the name for ‘horse’], coined after the perl.pl. ^A*yukas-a* (< Proto-Toch. **yāk^wænszā* < [virtual] Post-IE **h₁ék-uo-ns* **h₂ad*) reflects the oblique singular ^A*yuk*, whereas ^B*yakwe-sa* [perl.sg.] is due to a regimentation of its plural **yakwents-a* as *yakwent-sa*, with a “new” perlativ ending *-sa* routinely added to the oblique singular (^B*yakwe* [obl.sg.] → ^B*yakwe-sa* [perl.sg.]).

For the so-called “comitative”, the situation is even worse, since the morphemes involved are not even the same, as is clear from ^B*yakwe-mpa* [comit.sg.] ‘with a horse’, pl. ^B*yakwem-mpa* ‘with horses’ vs. ^A*yuk-aśśäl* [comit.sg.] and ^A*yukas-aśśäl* [comit.pl.]. I think that ^A*yuk-aśśäl* is the actual reflex of an old Toch. A comitative plural (viz. ^A*yukaśśäl* < **yukas-śäl* with assimilation), repaired according to the pattern of the perlativ. One may assume an archaic formation of comitative which would not distinguish singular and plural. Typologically, this would be reminiscent of the Anatolian state of affairs, cf. Lycian *esbedi* [abl./instr.sg./pl.] ‘with horse(s)’ (< PA **ʔék-wo-di* [abl./instr.]). Similarly, ablative and instrumental do not distinguish plural and singular in Hittite.

Interestingly, the etymologically related adverb and preposition is well attested in Tocharian: ^A*śla* (reinforced *śla-k*) and ^B*śale/śle* (reinforced *śle-k*) ‘together; with [governing the oblique]’. I consider that the proto-dialectal innovation surfacing as a grammaticalized perlativ ending in Tocharian A is a good example of “flagging”. The etymon of this postposition reanalyzed as a case-ending would be Proto-Toch. **śälæ* (reinforced **śälæ-k*), which points to a lexeme used as an adverb: PIE **k^wélh₁-e/os-* [nt.] ‘action of going around’; [adv.] ‘around’ (PIE **k^welh₁-* ‘to go around’). This combination cannot be assigned to PIE, since the “comitative” was expressed by the instrumental: it developed within Tocharian, once the old accusative was eventually reanalyzed as an “oblique” stem.