

On the origin of the dual ending Tocharian A $-(e)m$, B $-ne$

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Abstract

Tocharian has three dual endings: 1) B $-i$, traditionally derived from the Proto-Indo-European neuter dual $*-ih_3$, although alternative reconstructions have been proposed. 2) B $*-'ä$ (palatalizing schwa, which is regularly lost), which reflects PIE non-neuter dual $*-h_3e$ or neuter dual $*-i$. 3) A $-(e)m$, B $-ne$, gen.sg. $-naisän$. It is the latter ending we are concerned with during this lecture.

The ending is unlike any dual ending elsewhere in Indo-European and its origin is disputed. First there is the controversy whether the suffix characterizes number category which characterized natural pairs (Krause 1954) or an ordinary dual (Winter 2005: 69-92). Although Winter has shown that we are not dealing with a 'paral number', equal to singular, dual and plural, it can be argued that the suffix has paral semantics.

Theories regarding the etymology of the suffix can be divided into two groups. The first, starting with Pedersen (1941) and followed by Winter, Hilmarsson, Kortlandt, Pinault (2008), views the ending as a particle or pronoun that was added to the original dual ending. The second, starting with Duchesne (1941) and followed by Couvreur, van Windekens, Adams, Pinault (1989), derives the Tocharian form from an Indo-European n -stem.

During the lecture, these two theories will be critically examined. One of the questions that will be addressed is to what extent it can be determined whether the forms in A $-m$, B $-ne$ contain an inherited dual form. It will be argued that the nasal in the ending eventually reflects an Indo-European n -stem, as argued by Duchesne and others. It will further be argued that the *paral* use is due to recharacterization of the inherited *singulative* n -stems (cf. Pronk forthc.).

Selected literature

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