REVIEW ARTICLE

Untersuchungen zu den eignatmischen Präsentstammbildungen des Tocharischen.

Reviewed by

H. Craig Melchert

The present work is a revised version of the author's 1993 Freiburg dissertation. A brief introduction presents the topic and anticipates the principal results, and a short chapter on "preliminaries" oriente readers to the author's views on key issues of Tocharian historical grammar. The heart of the book consists of two large sections, the first on present stems in *-tei-", the second on those in *-aka/-", organized into chapters according to the synchronic inflectional classes in Tocharian. An impressive bibliography and very useful indices complete the volume.

The overall quality of the presentation is excellent. Hackstein commands the latest developments in Tocharian studies, and his working assumptions are in the mainstream of current thinking. The preliminary section on the development of roots with and without final laryngeal will be useful for purposes well beyond his current topic. I personally was persuaded by his arguments for the development of *-aka/-" in Tocharian, but not by those dealing with initial laryngeal plus nasal.

An outstanding strength is that Hackstein fully controls the primary Tocharian texts. His analyses are not based on data slavishly lifted from the standard handbooks. On the contrary, he critically sifts all the relevant material and is able to offer new, original interpretations of some lexical items and to correct the synchronic analysis and assignment of various verbal forms. I cite as merely one example his explanation of Tocharian B /*ak=\", resembling and A /*akə\"\", resembling as forms of /tak\"\", 'put, place' (p. 56ff. and p. 189ff.). In exemplary fashion, he provides generous textual citations supporting the semantic interpretation for every verbal stem, so that readers may judge each case for themselves.

Predictably, one cannot follow the author in his assessment of the Proto-Indo-European status of every verbal stem, nor in all of his etymological assignments. In many of these cases the disagreement stems from very different views on larger issues of PIE grammar. These do not for the most part affect Hackstein's major claims about the Tocharian stems under discussion.

In only two instances do I find that an inadequate recognition of facts outside Tocharian seriously undermines his treatment. First, having shown the inadequacy of most alternative accounts of the prehistory of the Tocharian s-pretases (see below), Hackstein too readily dismisses the possibility that they are
developed from a PIE class of thematic s-presents (see p. 178, note 22, e.g.). One misses in this connection any mention of the seminal work of Kraemer. I do not claim that such a derivation is necessarily correct, but it certainly deserves explicit and thorough recognition.

A second problem is Hackstein's historical analysis of Tocharian A stekti (= stekti) and other forms of the copula (p. 272ff.). Puzzled by the use of historically "secondary" endings with a present value, he claims that the PIE present *s₁(2)s-ekti/o- had an inchoative function, allegedly shown by Palaeoimperative 2nd singular ils and Old Latin accedere. This entire analysis is based on a false notion of copula vs. substantive verb. As I have argued, the Palaeoimperative verb is not a copula, but the substantive verb in construction with the dative expressing possession. Likewise, Old Latin accedere does not express future tense, despite the assurances of the handbooks, but in all six instances in the Laws of the Twelve Tables expresses existence, four times in the possessive construction as in Palaei! All available evidence points to a durative value for PIE *s₁(2)s-ekti/o-, as Hackstein himself concedes for Greek. The use of stekti with secondary endings for the present may simply reflect an old subjunctive, as already seen by others.

These two criticisms in no way affect the validity or value of Hackstein's major conclusions about the thematic presents in Tocharian. He shown beyond doubt that the presumed parallelism of s- and st-presentes is a mirage. No genuine s-presentes (i.e., excluding r-presentes in Tocharian A descending from st-presentes due to sound change and analogy) show causative value. Nor do they have any iterative function: a parallel with similar formations in Anatolian, as long entertained by me and others, simply does not exist. The s-suffix transitivizes roots with inherently intransitive meaning, but has no effect on transitive roots. For the Tocharian s-presentes as they truly are (with zero-grade root and accented thematic suffix), no account offered thus far is remotely satisfactory. He also demonstrates that the *stekti/o- suffix enters Tocharian only with the meanings that are traditionally assigned to it for PIE. The causative function is clearly a secondary development and in any case probably resides in the accent of the given stems, not in the suffix itself.

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3 See Calvert Watkins, in To honor Romain Jakobsen ... (1967) 3.2192, following already Eduard Fraenkel, Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philosophie II.444-445. Fraenkel shows that the example in 1.3 is not a copula, and adjectiv in that is X.4. "(sic) whoever has teeth fastened with gold."
Hackstein has provided the sorely needed foundation for all future analysis of the sigmatic prefixes in Tocharian, and we are indebted to him for this significant accomplishment.

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