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Indo-Aryan -(a)ṣartanna in the Kikkuli treatise

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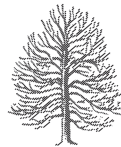
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Table of Contents

LYUKE WMER RA



Preface	ix
Bibliography of Georges-Jean Pinault	xi
List of Contributors	xxix
 Douglas Q. Adams , The dual endings of the verb in Tocharian B and their Proto-Indo-European background	 I
Émilie Aussant , The Vyākaraṇic descriptive model and the French grammars of Sanskrit	12
Nalini Balbir , À propos d'un lapidaire prakrit	26
Alain Blanc , L'histoire compliquée de l'adjectif grec ἀφαιρός	57
Václav Blažek , A hypothetical Tocharian contribution to Chinese astronomical terminology	70
Joel P. Brereton , How the Gāyatrī became the Gāyatrī	75
Gerd Carling , Flat mirror or well-shaped disc? Tocharian A <i>tāpaki</i> (B <i>tapākye</i>) and A <i>mukär</i> *	84
Adam Alvah Catt , A newly identified Tocharian fragment of the <i>Tridaṇḍisūtra</i> ..	90
Ching Chao-jung , He sat down on the grass under a Nyagrodha tree: On the Kuchean word <i>atiyo</i> * ~ <i>atiya</i> * in Kumtura mural painting captions ...	101
Éric Dieu , Accentuation récessive et accentuation columnale en grec ancien, avec quelques considérations sur la loi de limitation	114
Hannes A. Fellner , Polar life in the Tarim Basin	125
José Luis García Ramón , The development of the labiovelars in Greek: Sound change, areal diffusion, and the myth of the three phases.	138
Romain Garnier , The PIE word for 'name'	152
Laura Grestenberger , The <i>ín</i> -group: Indo-Iranian <i>ín</i> -stems and their Indo-European relatives	164
Olav Hackstein , On Latin <i>arbor</i> and why <i>tree</i> is grammatically feminine in PIE	183

Table of Contents

Jens-Uwe Hartmann, Dieter Maue, and Fang Wang , Der neugeborene Bodhisattva besucht das Śākya-Heiligtum: Zu den Bildern 5 und 6 der Treppenhöhle von Kizil	205
Athanasios Huard , “ <i>pattitrukālle karīṣkenta wārpanamane</i> ” ou comment honorer un moine tokharien	225
Stephanie W. Jamison , False segmentations and resegmentations in the Rigveda: Geminatio and degeminatio	236
Jay H. Jasanoff , Pre-Toch. <i>*h₁lud^h-néu-ti</i> ‘goes out’	243
Ronald I. Kim , Remarks on linguistic variation and change in Tocharian A	252
Jared S. Klein , The Old Church Slavonic background of Russian <i>a</i>	268
Bernhard Koller , Question particles and the left periphery within Tocharian syntax	281
Frederik Kortlandt , Tocharian B <i>ste, star</i> ‘is’, <i>skente, skentar</i> ‘are’	305
Jens Peter Laut and Ablet Semet , Neues zum 18. Kapitel des altuigurischen Maitreyasamiti-Sūtra (<i>Maitrisimit nom bitig</i>)	308
Claire Le Feuvre , Védique <i>vádhrī-</i> , <i>vīṣan-</i> , <i>dhārū-</i> , grec <i>*ἔθρις, ἄρσσην/ἔρσσην</i> et <i>θήλυς</i> : Conversion et dérivation	319
Alexander Lubotsky and Alwin Klockhorst , Indo-Aryan <i>°(a)uartaṇṇa</i> in the Kikkuli treatise	331
Melanie Malzahn , Back to an old, but not decrepit explanation of Homeric Greek <i>ἐγήρα</i>	337
Vincent Martzloff , Vestiges du participe parfait en <i>*-wos/-us-</i> en latin et dans les langues sabello-lyonnaises?	348
Audrey Mathys , Participes présents, noms d’agents et langue poétique dans <i>Beowulf</i>	361
H. Craig Melchert , Hittite neuter <i>i</i> -stems	379
Alan J. Nussbaum , Persephonology and Persemorphology: <i>Περσεφόνη/Περροφαττα</i> etc. ‘Sheaf Thresher’ reanalyzed	391
Norbert Oettinger , Die Bedeutung von vedisch <i>śvañc</i>	409
Hirotohi Ogiwara , Āgama texts transmitted to Kuchean Buddhism	414
Birgit Anette Olsen , Latin <i>-ll-</i> and gemination by laryngeal	426
Daniel Petit , On the secondary cases of Baltic and Tocharian	438
Michaël Peyrot , On a festive occasion: The inflection of Tocharian B <i>eksalye</i> and morphologically related words	450
Elisabeth Rieken , Anatolische Fruchtbarkeit, urindogermanische Männer und die Wurzel <i>*men-</i> ‘hervorragend’	462
Nicholas Sims-Williams , Chotano-Sogdica III: Old Khotanese <i>u, -u, -ū</i>	477

Carmen Spiers , La malédiction de l'observateur (<i>upadrastár-</i>) dans l'Atharvaveda	487
Brent Vine , <i>biass biítam</i> , <i>valetudinem vitam</i> : On alliteration in Italic curse texts	501
Michael Weiss , Barley in Anatolian, Tocharian, and elsewhere: A fine-grained analysis	513
Jens Wilkens and Hans Nugteren , Notes on Old Uyghur lexicography and etymology	527
Kazuhiko Yoshida , The Hittite 3 pl. preterites in <i>-ar</i> revisited	538
Peter Zieme , Das letzte Blatt der Sängimer Einleitung zum <i>Maitrisimit nom bitig</i> und ein tocharisches Wort	546
Stefan Zimmer , Le suffixe gaulois <i>*-ēto-</i>	554
Index Verborum	563

náva- ‘nine’.⁹ Although this connection is no doubt correct, a few remarks are in order.

Two minor formal deviations can be resolved relatively easily. The compound *nāyartanna* instead of **naya-yartanna* is likely to be due to haplology,¹⁰ whereas *šatta-yartanna* instead of **šapta-*¹¹ can be explained by assimilation of the cluster **-pt-* to *-tt-*,¹¹ either in the Indo-Aryan dialect from which this term derives or in the Hurrian language that borrowed it.

Nevertheless, there are two problems which, in our view, have not been sufficiently accounted for, namely, the origin of the second member of all these compounds, and the relationship between the Hittite spelling *tier(a)-* and Indo-Aryan *tri-* ‘three’. Although these two issues may at first sight look unrelated, they may have the same source, as we shall presently see.

2. The first problem we will treat is the form and meaning of the second member of these compounds. There are essentially two different approaches to the meaning of the *°yartanna* compounds. One operates with the meaning ‘one, three, five, etc. rounds’ (Kammenhuber 1961), while the other favors the meaning ‘one, three, five, etc. turns’ (Starke 1995). For an overview of different viewpoints on this matter, cf. Raulwing 2006. Since the viewpoints strongly depend on the intricacies of horse training, of which we cannot form an independent judgment, we refrain from taking sides in this issue. For the following discussion it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that *°yartanna* must mean either ‘round’ or ‘turn’.

As far as the etymological proposals for *°yartanna* are concerned, the literature up to 1964 has been summarized by Mayrhofer (1965), to which we refer the reader, and since that article no new insights have been proposed, as far as we know.¹² At first, *°yartanna* was usually taken at face value and compared to Sanskrit *varṭana-*, a derivative in *-ana-* from the root *ṛt-* ‘to turn’. This Sanskrit neuter noun is attested only fairly late, however (the oldest attestation seems to be *Kāṭyāyana Śrautasūtra* 8.4.2, which is a late Vedic text), and has the meaning of an action noun, ‘the act of rolling on, moving forward’. This does not seem suitable for the compounds in *°yartanna*.

Another etymological proposal connected Skt. *varṭanī-* f. ‘wheel edge’ (RV), ‘turning of the wheel, track, course, trail of the wind’ (RV+), but this proposal was not generally accepted because of the formal difference between the *i*-stem in Sanskrit vs. the *a*-stem of *°yartanna*. In his 1965 article, Mayrhofer pointed to a few parallel cases in Indo-Iranian, where an *i*-stem simplex corresponds to an *a*-stem compound:

⁹Note that Hitt. *z* = [ts] and *š* = [s], cf. e.g. Kloekhorst 2019.

¹⁰Thus already Kronasser 1956:223 (“*nawartanna* dissimiliert aus *nava-varṭana-*”).

¹¹Thus already, e.g., Kronasser 1956:223. The alternative view that **šapta-* would have been changed to *šatta-* in analogy to the Hurrian word for ‘seven’, *šitta* (thus, e.g., Kammenhuber 1961:19–20, cf. also HEG 2.956), seems less likely to us: we would then expect a form ***šittayartanna*.

¹²Cf. the treatment in HEG 4.173–4.

Skt. *aṅgūri-* (RV), *aṅgūli-* (VS+) f. ‘finger’ vs. *daśaṅgulá-* n. ‘length of ten fingers’ (RV), or Plr. **Hanguri-* (> Oss. *engwylʒ*, *engulʒə* ‘finger’) vs. YAv. *zairimiiaṇura-* m. ‘turtle, i.e. whose toes are in a house’. Nevertheless, this phenomenon (*i*-stem simplex vs. *a*-stem compound) is very rare in Indo-Iranian,¹³ and the R̥gvedic compound *dvi-vartanī-* ‘having a double track’ (10.61.20) shows that *vartanī-* did not necessarily change its stem in compounds with numerals. Furthermore, there are semantic problems: in Sanskrit, *vartanī-* clearly refers to the turning of the wheel and to the track it leaves behind, so that we then have to assume that Kikkuli used the word in the sense ‘round’ < ‘track’, which is possible, but is not supported by any evidence.

3. It seems therefore better to return to the first solution, albeit in an improved fashion. As mentioned above, Sanskrit *vartana-* is attested only late and does not have a suitable meaning, but if we assume that the °uartaṇna compounds contain the noun *ā-vartana-*, with the preverb *ā*, both problems disappear.

The oldest attestation of *ā-vartana-* is RV 10.19.4–5, in a hymn where cows are asked to come home:

yān niyānam nyāyanam, samjñānam yāt parāyanam |
āvartanam nivartanam, yó gopā āpi tām huve ||
yā udānaḥ vyāyanam, yā udānaḥ parāyanam |
āvartanam nivartanam, āpi gopā nī vartatām ||

‘Also the one who is the cowherd—I call him to the journeying back, the coming back, the bringing to agreement, and the going away, to the turning here and the turning back.

He who has managed the dispersal, who has managed the going away, the turning here, and the turning back—let the cowherd also turn back.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

The expression *āvartanam nivartanam* ‘turning back, turning home’ is repeated (sometimes with slight variations) in RV-Khila 3.15.8; ŚS 6.77.2 = PS 19.16.2, TS 3.3.10.1, SāmavidhānaBr. 2.5.9, TBr. 3.7.9.8. The action noun *āvartana-* is a productive derivative of a very frequent Vedic combination *ā-√vrt-* ‘to turn, turn back, return’. Because of the productivity of the suffix *-ana-*, we cannot ascertain the age of *āvartana-*, but nothing precludes it from being of Proto-Indo-Iranian date. Also in some of the Iranian languages, **ā-√vart-* shows the meaning ‘to return’, cf. Buddh. Sogd. ʾwʾrt, Man. Sogd. ʾwrt /āwart/ ‘to (re)turn’ (cf. also Man.Sogd. ʾwrt nwrtyy /āwart-niwartē/ ‘to go to and fro’), Khwar. m|ʾwrd- ‘to turn back, return’, so at least the meaning seems to be well established for Indo-Iranian.

¹³Apart from the word for ‘finger’, most other examples given by Wackernagel (1905:118f.), Debrunner (1954:140), and Debrunner (1957:37) concern post-Vedic forms or those only mentioned by the grammarians (e.g., Pāṇini 5.4.102 *tryaṅjala-* ‘three handfuls’ vs. ŚBr. + *aṅjalī-* m. ‘open hands folded together’). The situation with Skt. *ṣyonā-* /*ṣyona-*/ ‘pleasant, agreeable’ (< **su-yonā-*), YAv. *hu-iaona-* ‘comfortable’ vs. Skt. *yóni-* m. ‘seat, place, home, residence, womb, lap’, YAv. *yaona-* m. ‘way, course’ is too complicated to serve as a good illustration of the phenomenon.

4. We would expect that in the compounds with **aika-*, **panča-*, **sapta-*, and **naya-*, the final *-a* of the numerals would fuse with the initial *ā-* of **āuarta-*, yielding forms with a long **-ā-*. However, in the attested forms, no vowel length of the **-ā-* seems to be expressed in writing. We may therefore assume that at some moment in the process of the borrowing of these compounds into Hurrian vowel length was lost.¹⁴ The result is, however, that in these forms there is no formal way to distinguish between the interpretations **^ouarta-* and **^oāuarta-*. This is not the case for the compound with **tri-*, however. Thus far, it was difficult to explain why an Indo-Aryan compound **tri-^uarta-* or **tri-^uartani-* would end up in Hittite as *tiera^uartanna*, with an *-a-* before the *u*.¹⁵ With our identification of the second part of the compound as reflecting Indo-Aryan **^oāuarta-*, this problem vanishes.

5. The remaining problem regarding *tiera^uartanna* is the relationship between the element that in Hittite is spelled *tier-* and the Indo-Aryan numeral **tri-*. According to HEG 4.373, the remarkable spelling of the Hittite form expresses the “Schwierigkeit, die anlautende Doppelkonsonanz /tr/ adäquat wiederzugeben.” This can hardly be correct, however: an initial sequence [tri-] would in Hittite be spelled ***ta-ri-*, without any problems. Another solution is suggested by Benveniste (1962:86), referred to by Mayrhofer (1965:II n. 2), who argues that the element spelled *ti-e-ra-* can be interpreted as /tera-/, which to his mind is reminiscent of the stem of the numeral ‘3’ as attested in Hittite, *teri-* (gen.pl. *teri^aš*, but cf. also derivatives like *teri^an* adv. ‘the third time’). He therefore proposes that /tera-/ be explained “par une adaptation à la forme hittite” (1962:87).

Although ingenious at first sight, this explanation cannot withstand scrutiny. First, the compounds in **^ouarta-* are technical terms that belong to the vocabulary of Kikkuli, who was a native speaker of Hurrian. Also the scribe(s) who wrote down the physical tablets that contain these terms were very likely native speakers of Hurrian (cf. Kammenhuber 1961:42, who proposes that the tablets are produced as a team effort of “Kikkuli mit einem Stab von hurrischen Mitarbeiter”). This means that *tiera^uartanna* could hardly have undergone influence by the Hittite word for the numeral ‘3’.

Second, and more importantly, the Hurrian term is *tiera^uartanna*, not *tera^uartanna*. Although at the time that Benveniste formulated his explanation of *tiera^uartanna* it was still possible to interpret a spelling *ti-e-ra-* as representing *tera-* (or *tēra-*,

¹⁴This is confirmed by, e.g., the Indo-Aryan theonym *nāsatya-* that in the Šattiya² treaty is rendered in cuneiform as ^{DINGIR.MEŠ}na-ša-at-ti-ia-an-na (e.g. Kammenhuber 1968:149), without any sign of the original length of the word’s first vowel.

¹⁵It is true that not all attestations of this word show an *a* before the *u*, but in these forms there is no *a* after the *u* either: *ti-e-ru[-ur-t]a-an-na* (KBo 3.2 lower edge 2), *ti-e-ru-u-ur-ta-an-na* (KBo 3.5 iii 17). Since these forms are attested on tablets that also contain the form *tiera^uartanna*, with *-a-*, it is difficult to view them as *sprachwirklich*. Benveniste’s proposal that the *-a-* in *tiera^uartanna* is “normalisée sur *panza- šatta- nawa-*” (1962:87) does not seem attractive to us.

as is sometimes encountered as well),¹⁶ it has nowadays become clear that the sign TI practically never had the value /te/ (for which the Hittite scribes used the sign TE). Since *tieraṇartaṇna* in all five of its attestations is spelled *ti-e-r°*, and not ***te-e-r°* or **te-r°*, it can be ruled out that this word started in [ter-]. The spelling *ti-e-r°* rather points to [tier-] or [tyer-].¹⁷ This contrasts with the Hittite numeral ‘3’, which shows the consistent spelling *te-ri-*, and therefore must have had the shape [teri-].¹⁸ Benveniste’s hypothesis that the initial part of *tieraṇartaṇna* was adapted from Hitt. *teri-* ‘three’ cannot therefore be upheld anymore.

6. To our mind, the form *tieraṇartaṇna* must go back to the Indo-Aryan preform of this word, which, on the basis of the discussion above, can now be assumed to have consisted of a compound of **tri-* + **°āṇartaṇa*. We propose that the development of the preform **tri-āṇartaṇa* to the attested form *tieraṇartaṇna* with an initial sequence /tiera-/ or /tyera-/ must have been due to phonological processes that took place either in the Indo-Aryan dialect to which the **°āṇartaṇa* compounds originally belong, or in the prehistory of Mittanni-Hurrian as spoken by Kikkuli, or in the process of the transfer of this word from Indo-Aryan into Hurrian. One possible pathway of phonological development that might be envisaged is that in **triāṇartaṇa* the **i* had become consonantal because of the following **ā*, **triā°*, and that this caused palatalization of the entire initial cluster, **tʳiā°*. If then an anaptyctic *e* developed in the cluster **tʳiā°*, with subsequent loss of the palatalization of the **r*, we would arrive at **tʳerā-*, spelled in Hittite as *ti-e-ra-*. Perhaps alternative pathways to get from **tri-āṇartaṇa* to *tieraṇartaṇna* are possible as well.

7. Although the exact phonological development of *tieraṇartaṇna* < **tri-āṇartaṇa* must remain open for now, we do believe that our proposal that the second member of the compound was **°āṇartaṇa* brings a final solution to this form much closer. Furthermore, although we are not in the position to judge the respective merits of various proposals concerning the horse training program as described in the Kikkulitext, our analysis of the compounds *aikaṇartaṇna*, *tieraṇartaṇna*, etc., as containing Indo-Aryan **°āṇartaṇa* suggests that they had the meaning ‘one/three/five/seven/nine turns’.

Abbreviations

HEG = Tischler, Johann. 1977–2016. *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar*. 4 vols. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck.

¹⁶Note that also in more modern times a reading “*tieraṇartaṇna*” can be found, cf. e.g. Starke 1995, Raulwing 2006, Puhvel 2007:73, HEG 3.318–20, 4.373.

¹⁷Thus already Kloekhorst 2008:878.

¹⁸This is supported by CLuw. *tarri-*, which goes back to PAnat. **tēri-*.

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