

THE EAST TOCHARIAN
PERSONAL PRONOUN 1ST PERSON
SINGULAR MASCULINE: A CASE
OF PRONOMINAL BORROWING

I

THE system of personal pronouns of the 1st person in West Tocharian, Tocharian B, is as follows:

SINGULAR	PARAL	PLURAL
<i>ñäs</i>	<i>wene</i>	<i>wes</i>

The East Tocharian, Tocharian A, system, on the other hand, may be set out in the following way:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
MASC.	<i>ñäṣ</i>	<i>wäṣ</i>
FEM.	<i>ñuk</i>	

Historically, the singular and plural forms have been explained as follows:¹

(a) West Tocharian *wes*, East Tocharian *was*. The forms represent an IE 1st p. pl. nom., cf., e.g., Got. *weis*.

(b) West Tocharian *ñäs* and East Tocharian *ñuk* can both be derived from **ne-kw(e)* < **me-kwe*, cf. Got. *mik*, Venet. *mexo*.²

Gratitude is due to Jón Gunnarsson mag. art. for constructive criticism, and to Dr Andrew Dennis for improving the English version.

¹ Wolfgang Krause und Werner Thomas, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch I*, Heidelberg 1960, 162, Holger Pedersen, *Tocharisch vom Gesichtspunkt der indoeuropäischen Sprachvergleichung*, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskaberne Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser XXVIII, 1, København 1941, 134-139.

² Recently Jochem Schindler has attempted a different approach: 'M. E. könnte man für B *ñäs* von **mene-kwe* oder **mene-kwis* > **m(ä)ñäs* ausgehen, wozu in A

(c) East Tocharian *nāy* is of uncertain origin, but is sometimes considered to represent an IE 1st p. pl. obl. form, cf., e.g., Lat. *nōs*.³

If the derivation in (c) is correct it follows that Proto-Tocharian has preserved both the IE nom. and obl. forms. The function of the obl. form has subsequently been changed in East Tocharian, in all probability as follows: pl. obl. > honorific sg. > masc. In West Tocharian the form has accordingly been lost. It is, no doubt, possible to envisage such a development, but this explanation has not met with much approval.

II

It may be worth while trying a different approach to this problem. It is not unreasonable to assume that at an earlier stage the system of pronouns was the same in both West and East Tocharian:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
W.T. <i>ñäš</i>	W.T. <i>wes</i>
E.T. <i>ñuk</i>	E.T. <i>was</i>

This system would represent the situation in Proto-Tocharian and agrees with the etymology set forth in I (b) above.

The development leading from the Proto-Tocharian system to the East Tocharian one may be explained in two slightly different ways, as follows:

(1) The distinction between ordinary and honorific usage was introduced into East Tocharian. In other languages where this has happened the new honorific forms have developed along different lines:⁴

ein f. **mene-kwä* zu *ñuk* führen konnte; A *nāy* bleibt schwierig.' Jochem Schindler, 'Lane, George S.: On the Interrelationship of the Tocharian Dialects, in *Ancient Indo-European Dialects*, ed. by Henrik Birnbaum and Jaan Puhvel, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966, *Die Sprache* XIII (1967), 94-95. [Review]. It may not be advisable to postulate three-syllable forms for these pronouns, although some parallels can be found, e.g. Gr. *ἑγώγε*, Greenlandic *ivanga*.

³ Walter Petersen, 'Tocharian Pronominal Declension,' *Language* XI (1935), 204.

⁴ For some examples see Helgi Guðmundsson, *The Pronominal Dual in Icelandic*, University of Iceland Publications in Linguistics 2, Reykjavik 1972, 99-105.

(a) Within the language in question. This is brought about on the one hand by changing or extending the function of an extant form and on the other hand by developing a new form.

(b) By borrowing.

Here it is worth noting that this is a question of the 1st person. From the point of view of the modern European languages where honorific usage occurs mainly in the 2nd person this may seem strange. But honorific usage is also well known in the 1st person and there are in fact indications that it may have originated in the 1st person.⁵

Mention was made above of the theory that *nāš* had developed within East Tocharian as an honorific form. But it is also possible that it was borrowed, viz. from West Tocharian *nāš*. At first it may have been used as an honorific form in East Tocharian, changing its function later in that the opposition ordinary/honorific was replaced by the opposition feminine/masculine.

(2) The second possibility is that the distinction between masculine and feminine was introduced into the 1st p. sg. in East Tocharian. This distinction is rarely encountered in the 2nd p. sg., but it occurs in the Semitic languages, in the West Caucasian Abchaz and Abaza, and, e.g., in Khasi, a language of Assam. But in the 1st p. sg. it is very uncommon indeed.⁶

It is, however, found in Andi, an East Caucasian language of

⁵ According to É. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris 1966, 234-236, the semantic complexity of especially the 1st person plural was instrumental in bringing about the use of plural for one person; see also *The Pronominal Dual in Icelandic*, 15-16, 34-35 etc. On the occurrence of the honorific 1st person in Sanskrit, see Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik* III, Göttingen 1930, 453, and in Chinese, R. A. D. Forrest, *The Chinese Language*, London 1948, 189.

⁶ Ed. Hermann thought that the East Tocharian distinction was due to Tibetan influence. According to him the Tibetan 1st p. sg. is *bdag*, but alternative forms masc. *kho vo*, fem. *kho mo*. It seems rather doubtful whether the masc. and fem. forms are pronouns at all; it is more likely that they are honorifics as commonly found in several oriental languages, e.g. Japanese. In any case such an influence is also doubtful for historical reasons as pointed out by W. Krause. See Eduard Hermann, 'Sieg, Siegling, Tocharische Sprachreste, I. Band, Die Texte,' *KZ L* (1922), 309-310. [Review], W. Krause, 'Zur Frage nach dem nichtindogermanischen Substrat des Tocharischen,' *KZ LXIX* (1951), 191-192.

Daghestan. Andi is spoken in nine villages, each village showing some dialectal peculiarities. The pronouns in eight of the villages are as follows: 1st p. sg. *den*, 2nd p. sg. *men*. But in the village of Andi itself the pronouns are: in the speech of men *din*, *min*, but in the speech of women *den*, *men*.⁷

Thus in the village of Andi it is the masculine form, or better the form used by men, which is apparently an innovation. If it is possible to look at the Tocharian pronouns in the same way it is the masculine form that should represent the innovation.

In II (1) above, it was mentioned that the honorific form could have developed along different lines. This is also the case here, and again one of the possibilities is borrowing.

III

In order to pursue this further it will be necessary to examine the whole paradigm in question, viz. the three primary cases; the secondary cases which are formed with monofunctional suffixes do not matter in this context. The paradigms are as follows:

	West Tocharian	East Tocharian	
		MASC.	FEM.
NOM.	<i>ñäs</i>	<i>näs</i>	<i>ñuk</i>
OBL.	<i>ñäs</i>	<i>näs</i>	<i>ñuk</i>
GEN.	<i>ñi</i>	<i>ñi</i>	<i>näñi</i>

The similarity of the West Tocharian and the East Tocharian masculine paradigms is so great that it is difficult to ascribe it to pure coincidence.⁸

⁷ I. I. Cercvadze, *Andiuri ena - Andijskij jazyk*, Tbilisi 1965, 346. The development of the pronouns in the village of Andi may be due to the interplay of two linguistic features, together with possible concomitant social reasons. On the one hand there is a certain fluctuation between *i* and *e* in the corresponding pronouns in several related languages also spoken in the Andi Valley. And on the other hand a distinction by class indicators between masc., fem., lifeless etc., is made in numerous finite as well as infinite verb forms in Andi, as, e.g., in the related and better known Avar.

⁸ It is, however, quite probable that *ñi* was found in both dialects and this could have facilitated the borrowing; cf. the occurrence of the suffixed personal pronoun of the 1st p. sg., often in possessive function, West Tocharian *-ñ*, East Toch-

In order to examine whether borrowing is at all possible in this case it will be necessary to look at some further aspects of the problem:

(1) The borrowing of pronouns is, no doubt, very rare and it may be assumed that three prerequisites are necessary to make such a borrowing possible:

(a) Closely related languages or dialects.

(b) A considerable number of bilinguals.

(c) One of the languages or dialects enjoys a higher prestige and this language or dialect provides the pronouns.

In this connection it is of interest to look at Norwegian. Until about 1400 the 2nd p. pl. pronouns *þér*, *yðer*, *yðers* etc. were used in honorific address to one person in Norwegian. But from that time onwards the pronouns *I*, *Er*, *Ers* are found in honorific address, gradually superseding *þér* etc. in this function.⁹ The latter pronouns are, no doubt, borrowed from Danish or Swedish and this is in complete agreement with the three prerequisites set out above.

It is, of course, of primary importance to note that in Norwegian not only the nom. but also the obl. and gen. forms are borrowed.

Another example is also of interest here. The English pronouns *they*, *them*, *their* are, as is well known, loan-words from Scandinavian, dating from the time of Scandinavian settlement in England.¹⁰ Again nom., obl. and gen. are all borrowed.¹¹

arian -*ai*, without difference in gender, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch* I, 162-163. In that case the East Tocharian fem. gen. *nāi* would be secondary, formed after the introduction of the distinction feminine/masculine.

⁹ *The Pronominal Dual in Icelandic*, 121, with references.

¹⁰ Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language*, London 1968, 120.

¹¹ There are more cases of borrowed pronouns, some rather surprising, as Albanian '*unc* "ich". Aus lat. *ego* + *ne*,' Gustav Meyer, *Kurzgefasste albanesische Grammatik*, Leipzig 1888, 103. The Modern Icelandic pers. pron. 1st p. sg. *Jeg*, in modern orthography *ég*, shows an irregular development when compared with the Old Icel. *ek* which has a short vowel; the modern form dates from the sixteenth century, see Björn K. Þórólfsson, *Um íslenskar orðmyndir*, Reykjavík 1925, 41. It seems therefore possible that the form in question has developed under influence from the corresponding Danish *Jeg*. Similarly, Danish influence is considered to account for the East Norwegian *Jeg*, see Einar Haugen, 'Norwegische

These instances of borrowed pronouns may not be as singular as they appear at first sight. An example of a case in point may be the relatively recent expansion of the German pronouns *Sie*, *Ihnen* etc. in honorific use, superseding the older *Ihr*, *Euch* etc.

(2) To assume that a loan-word was brought from West into East Tocharian is apparently in agreement with what is known about these peoples. For example writing was first developed for West Tocharian and was later adopted for East Tocharian, indicating the direction of cultural influence.¹² The usual direction for loan-words is in fact from West into East Tocharian.¹³

(3) Another aspect of the problem is whether the distinction ordinary/honorific preceded the distinction feminine/masculine, cf. II (1) and (2) above. *A priori* this may seem likely because the former distinction is very common in the world's languages whereas the latter is extremely rare.

It is, however, possible that another feature of Tocharian grammar may throw some light on this. In the Tocharian noun flexion a distinction is made between animate and inanimate; thus in East Tocharian the gen. sg. in *-āp* and a certain obl. sg. are reserved for the animate, or higher, class. An exception is, e.g., *šūṃ* 'wife', pl. nom. *šnu*, showing an ending otherwise reserved for the inanimate, or lower, class.¹⁴ It is possible that this feature is connected with the origin of the distinction in the pronouns, which accordingly should have been between feminine and masculine from the outset.¹⁵

Sprachgeschichte. By Didrik Arup Seip, revised and extended by Laurits Saltveit, Berlin 1971, *Language* 50 (1974), 577. [Review].

¹² W. Krause, *Tocharisch*, Handbuch der Orientalistik IV, 3, Leiden 1955, 7.

¹³ Holger Pedersen, *Zur tocharischen Sprachgeschichte*, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser XXX, 2, København 1944, 31.

¹⁴ W. Krause, 'Zur Frage nach dem nichtindogermanischen Substrat des Tocharischen,' 193.

¹⁵ It has been assumed here that the distinction is in fact between feminine/masculine and not between ordinary/honorific. The lack of texts precludes any certainty in this matter, and, besides, it is possible that the texts do not represent accurately the colloquial usage. In this context it would of course be an advantage to know the social conventions which prevailed among the East Tocharians. But leaving this aside, the dividing line between the two possibilities may not be very

(4) The last aspect of the problem to be considered here is of the sound form, viz. $\bar{n}\bar{a}\bar{s} > n\bar{a}s$. It is clear that the forms do not fit completely, especially as West Tocharian \bar{n} should apparently have been taken up in East Tocharian as \bar{n} . If the borrowing has, however, gone through the intermediate stage $*\bar{n}\bar{a}s$ it seems possible that some kind of palatal dissimilation has been at work here.¹⁶ In fact, pronouns are well known for presenting irregular forms, sometimes attributed to development in unaccentuated position. But relatively little is known about Tocharian sound systems and dialects and it seems at least possible from this point of view as well that this is a question of borrowing.

clear as it is easy to envisage a distinction ordinary, feminine/honorific, masculine. Cf. the distinction in Khasi, mentioned above: 'However, . . . in the 2nd pers. the distinction is not, or no longer, one between m. and f., but me is given as "thou" (to man, rude) and pha as "thou" (famīl.),' H. J. Pinnow, 'Personal Pronouns in the Austroasiatic Languages: A Historical Study,' *Lingua* 14 (1965), 6. Yet another, and apparently fluctuating, distinction is described by A. D. Haudricourt, 'La première personne inclusive du singulier en Polynésie,' *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris* 54 (1959), 130-135; see also G. B. Milner, 'Notes on the Comparison of two Languages (with and without a Genetic Hypothesis),' *Linguistic Comparison in South East Asia and the Pacific*, London 1963, 39-40.

¹⁶ Cf. East Tocharian $s\bar{a}\bar{n}$ 'art', but West Tocharian $s\bar{a}\bar{n}$ and $s\bar{a}\bar{n}$, Werner Thomas, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, Heidelberg 1964, 148, 249, 253. On n , \bar{n} , cf. West Tocharian $\bar{n}\bar{a}ka\bar{n}\bar{c}\bar{e}$ 'silvery', $\bar{n}\bar{u}mka$ 'ninety', East Tocharian $n\bar{k}\bar{a}\bar{n}\bar{c}\bar{i}$, $n\bar{m}uk$, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, 195, but these are hardly loan-words; cf. also Sanskrit $niraya >$ West Tocharian $nrai$, East Tocharian $\bar{n}are$, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, 206. As for \bar{s} and s , cf. Sanskrit $\bar{s}l\bar{o}ka >$ West Tocharian $\bar{s}l\bar{o}k$, East Tocharian $\bar{s}l\bar{o}k$ and $s\bar{y}ok$, *Tocharisches Elementarbuch II*, 148, 248. Holger Pedersen, *Tocharisch vom Gesichtspunkt der indoeuropäischen Sprachvergleichung*, 238, mentions 'Zahlreiche Verschiebungen zwischen intakten und palatalisierten Lauten.'