

The root ablaut of Tocharian B /pər-/, A pār- ‘carry’ revisited

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ABSTRACT:

In a previous article (R. Kim 2010), it was claimed largely on the basis of Tocharian that PIE simple thematic presents originally alternated between full- and zero-grade of the root. This claim is hereby retracted, since the Tocharian facts can be explained starting from the generally accepted reconstruction of PIE verbal inflection. As argued persuasively by Peyrot (2013), Tocharian *s*-presents go back to PIE presents in $*-s\acute{k}e/_o-$, so the reflex of zero-grade root ablaut is entirely expected. As for TB /pər-^o/_e-/, TA pār(a)- ‘carry’, this present results from a merger of the PIE Narten present ($*b^h\acute{e}r- \sim *b^h\acute{e}r- \rightarrow *b^h\acute{e}r- \sim *b^h\acute{r}-$) and simple thematic $*b^h\acute{e}r-e/_o-$, with generalized zero-grade root from the former and thematic inflection from the latter.

KEYWORDS:

Proto-Indo-European; Tocharian; simple thematic presents; *s*-presents; Narten presents; ablaut; palatalization

In a recent paper (R. Kim 2010), I proposed that simple thematic presents in (post-) PIE did not have invariant full-grade root vocalism, as has been supposed since the 19th century, but originally alternated between full- and zero-grade. According to this hypothesis, the present of $*b^her-$ ‘bear, carry’ was therefore not $*b^h\acute{e}r-e/_o-$ with columnar root stress, but rather sg. $*b^h\acute{e}r-e/_o- \sim$ du./pl. $*b^hr-e/_o-$ ($*b^h\acute{r}-e/_o-$): hence 3sg. $*b^h\acute{e}r-e-ti$ vs. 3pl. $*b^hr-o-nti$ ($*b^h\acute{r}-o-nti$), with the same alternation of ablaut and stress as in athematic root presents. Following the separation of Tocharian, the Inner IE languages generalized the stress and ablaut of the strong stem, whence the familiar paradigm $*b^h\acute{e}r-e-ti$, $*b^h\acute{e}r-o-nti$.

As I admitted at the time, the evidence for an ablauting paradigm in simple thematic presents is meager at best, and virtually nonexistent outside of Tocharian. Within Tocharian itself, a zero-grade root may be set up on the basis of two facts:

1. the absence of root-initial palatalization in TB /pər-^o/_e-/ [TA pār(a)-] ‘carry, bear, take (away, up), wear’ < PT $*p\acute{a}r^{(y)}-a- \sim *p\acute{a}r-ē-$, as PIE $*b^h\acute{e}r-e/_o-$ should have become PT $*p^y\acute{a}r^{(y)}-a- \sim *p^y\acute{a}r-ē-$ and then TB $\text{†}pir\acute{a}m$, pl. $\text{†}pirem$;
2. the evidence of Class VIII presents, which likewise regularly lack root-initial palatalization: cf. TB $p\acute{a}lk\acute{s}\acute{a}m$, TA pl. $p\acute{a}lkse-\acute{n}i$ ‘burn, torment’ < PT $*p\acute{a}lk-s\acute{a}/_{s\acute{e}}-$, TB $ku\acute{s}\acute{a}m$, TA $ku\acute{s}^*$ (impf. $ku\acute{s}\acute{a}-m$) ‘pours’ < PT $*k\acute{a}w-s\acute{a}/_{s\acute{e}}-$, TB $luk\acute{s}\acute{a}m$, TA pl. $luk-se\acute{n}c$ ‘light (up), enlighten’ < PT $*l\acute{a}wk-s\acute{a}/_{s\acute{e}}-$.



These presents stand in contrast to Class II subjunctives such as TB *śamn=* (*śman-me*), TA *śmāš*, TB *plyañcān*, and TB *lyuštār* (respectively to TB /kəm-/ , TA *kum-* ‘come’, TB /plənk-/ ‘sell’, and TB /ləwk-/ ‘light up, illuminate’), which exhibit palatalized root-initial consonants. Although the prehistory of this type (and indeed of the Tocharian subjunctive as a whole) remains a topic of contentious debate, it is noteworthy that several examples appear to continue PIE subjunctives of root aorists, with expected full-grade of the root; the clearest example is TB 3 *śamn=*, TA *śmāš* < PT **śamʷ-ə-* ~ **śəm-ē-* < PIE subj. **gʷém-^e/-* (Ved. *gámat*, GAv. *jamaiti*) to aor. **gʷém-* ~ **gʷm-* (Ved. *ágan*, GAv. *jān*, Arm. *ekn*). To account for this difference, I suggested that the (post-)PIE formation ancestral to the Tocharian **-^e/-* and **-^s/-* presents leveled the zero-grade root of the nonsingular forms, e.g. **bʰér-e-ti* ~ **bʰr-ó-nti* → **bʰr-^e/-* > PT **pərʷ-ə-* ~ **pər-ē-* ‘carry’ or **ǵʰéw-s-e-ti* ~ **ǵʰu-s-ó-nti* → **ǵʰu-s-^e/-* → PT **kəw-^{sə}/-_{se}* ‘pour’, whereas root aorist subjunctives had invariant full-grade root and columnar root stress already in the protolanguage.

In the years since, however, I have become convinced that Class VIII presents do not go back to an ill-supported *voreinzelsprachlich* present formation characterized by the suffix **-s-^e/-*, nor to subjunctives of PIE (pre)sigmatic aorists,¹ but instead ultimately reflect PIE presents in **-sḱ^é/-*, with zero-grade root and stress on the suffix. Peyrot (2013: 515–524) has persuasively argued that pre-PT forms such as **nək-sk-* ‘destroy’, **ləwk-sk-* ‘light up’ underwent cluster simplification to **nəks-*, **ləwks-*; the latter were reanalyzed as containing a suffix **-s-*, which was then extended to several roots not ending in a velar, e.g. **kəw-* ‘pour’, **ǵərp-* ‘observe, heed’. The synchronically regular *sk-*presents to velar-final roots were created later, at a time when the change of **ksk* > **ks* was no longer operative: hence such TB doublets as *wikāššām* ‘makes disappear, removes’ beside the semantically less transparent *wikšām* ‘avoids’, both to the root /wəyk-/ ‘disappear’.

If the zero-grade root vocalism of TB *pälkšām*, *luksām*, and other Class VIII presents ultimately reflects that of PIE presents in **-sḱ^é/-*, the Tocharian evidence for the ablaut of simple thematic presents is effectively reduced to the single verb TB /pər-/ , TA *pār-* ‘carry, etc.’ — obviously an insufficient basis for the formulation of far-reaching revisions to PIE verbal morphology. I therefore explicitly withdraw my hypothesis of an accent-ablaut alternation in simple thematic presents, and accept the traditional reconstruction of columnar root stress and full-grade root for the type of PIE **bʰér-^e/-*.

Nevertheless, the problem remains: why does the TB verb not show the expected reflex of root-initial palatalization, namely *†pir-* < PT **pʷər^(y)-* < PIE **bʰér-^e/-*? I stress that simple analogy to other verbs with root-internal /ə/ cannot account for the initial consonant; even if one prefers not to derive TB *śamn=*, TA *śmāš* ‘will/may come’ and the other Class II subjunctives from PIE root aorist subjunctives (see above), it is clear that neither Tocharian language had a problem at any stage with palatalized initial consonants in thematic formations.² All other things being equal, it would be

1 E.g. **dʰég^{wh}-s-^e/-* ‘may burn’, itself a replacement for earlier **dʰég^{wh}-^e/-* (Jasanoff 2003: 195, 226–227).

2 In fact, TB may attest an example of initial /pʷ-/ in a Class II subjunctive, if the hapax TB *piltār* (THT 1543 frg. g a2) belongs to a verb /pəl-/ ‘listen closely’. Note however that Pey-



preferable to explain the Tocharian forms of ‘carry’ in terms of the present formations reconstructed for the PIE root **b^her-* on the basis of the other IE languages.³

Building on the insights of Watkins (1969), Jasanoff (1998: 301–307; 2003: 148–149, 224–225) has argued that the simple thematic present **b^hér-^e/o-* arose from the *h₂e*-conjugation protomiddle **b^hér-h₂e*, **-th₂e*, **-e* corresponding to the original Narten present **b^hér-^e - *b^hér-*. The reconstruction of the latter is supported by TA impf. *pārat* < PT **p^har-a-* < **p^her-a-* ← PIE impf. **b^hér-t* and possibly Av. pres. mid. *bairiia-* < **b^hér-^h/o-*, as well as nominal derivatives such as Ved. *bhārman-* ‘offering’, SCr. *brēme* ‘burden’ < **b^hér-m^h* (with lengthened grade for usual full grade) and MidIr. *birit* ‘sow’ < PIE **b^hér-nt-ih₂* (with full grade for usual zero-grade).⁴ Unlike simple thematic presents associated with sigmatic aorists such as **d^hég^{wh-e}/o-* ‘burn’ or **wég^{h-e}/o-* ‘convey’, which are not attested in Tocharian, the subtype represented by **b^hér-^e/o-* ‘carry’, **h₂ég^{h-e}/o-* ‘lead’, and **lég^e/o-* ‘gather’ must have been present in the last common ancestor of all the non-Anatolian branches.

The survival of a reflex of Narten inflection in TA *pārat* raises the possibility that the Narten present may also have played a role in the creation of the Tocharian present of ‘carry’, but this immediately runs up against a formal obstacle. In Tocharian, all athematic presents inherited from PIE have generalized the vocalism of the weak stem:

root presents: TB *yaṃ*, TA *yäṣ* ‘goes’ < PT **yǝ-* < PIE (**h₁éy-* ~) **h₁i-*’;

reduplicated presents: TB subj. *tattaṃ* ‘will/may put, set’ < PT **tǝta-* ← PIE (**d^he-d^héh₁-* ~) **d^he-d^hh₁-*’;

Class VI nasal presents to roots ending in **-a-*: TB /-(ə)n-a-/, TA *-nā-* ~ *-na-* ~ *-n(ä)-* < PT **-n-a-* < **-n-H-* ← PIE (**-né-H-* ~) **-n-H-*’; and

Class VII nasal presents to roots not ending in **-a-*: TB *pinkäm* ‘writes, paints’ < PT **pǝynk-* ← PIE (**pi-né-ǵ-* ~) **pi-n-ǵ-*’.⁵

rot (2013: 773fn.433) sets up this root as /pǝyl-/ on the basis of the deverbal agent noun *klausu-pilši* ‘± perking up one’s ears’, i.e. ‘listening closely, eavesdropping’ (IOL Toch 246 = H 149.X.3 = HMR 1 a4) to an unattested Class VIII present *pišām**, beside the uncertain (*klaut*)*sa-pälsi* (B16 b2).

- 3 I.e. the “Inner IE” languages, since the root **b^her-* has left no secure reflexes in Anatolian.
- 4 On the TA imperfect, see Weiss 1993: 178–181, Jasanoff 2003: 148; on Av. *bairiia-*, see R. Kim 2005: 142fn.47. Contrary to my earlier belief (R. Kim 2013: 81–82; cf. Schindler 1994: 398–399), I no longer assume that Narten inflection was in all cases a lexical property of specific roots, at least in reconstructible PIE; see Kümmel 1998 and now Melchert 2014. However, the sheer concentration of formations with *Aufstufung* (i.e. full grade for expected zero grade, or lengthened grade for expected full grade) to roots such as **b^her-* does suggest that this may have been the case in pre-PIE, i.e. certain verbs originally formed only a Narten present and Narten-like nominal derivatives.
- 5 The only exception to my knowledge is the small group of TB thematic presents with root vowel /e/ apparently reflecting PIE **ē*: *klyeñ[k]trā*, *klye[n]trā* to /klǝnk-/ ‘doubt’; *cešām*, pl. *ceken-ne* to /tǝk-/ ‘touch’; pl. *ceñkem*, mid. *ceñstār* to /tǝnk-/ ‘hinder’; and ptcp. *plyetkemanē* to /plǝtk-/ ‘emerge, arise’. The reason for their aberrant morphology is unclear; see Peyrot 2013: 568–570 for discussion.



The PIE Narten present of ‘carry’ should thus have been leveled to $*b^her-$ > PT $*p^ər-$, which leaves unexplained the vocalism of TB /pər-/.

However, cases such as PIE $*stēw-ti$, $*stēw-nti$ → Vedic *stāuti*, pl. *stuvanti* ‘praise’ show that Narten presents could replace the inherited ablaut alternation $*ē \sim *é$ with $*ē \sim *∅$, by introducing the zero-grade root and stressed endings typical of ordinary root presents into the forms of the weak stem (cf. Jasanoff 2003: 42 and passim). In Anatolian as well, Narten presents were largely assimilated to the regular ablaut pattern: cf. PIE $*h_1ēd-$ ~ $*h_1éd-$ → Hitt. *ēzz(a)zzi*, pl. *adanzi* ‘eat’.⁶ If the same restructuring took place in Tocharian, the present of ‘carry’ would have become $*b^hēr-$ ~ $*b^hṛ-$, whence with generalization of the weak stem $*b^hṛ-$ > pre-PT $*pər-$.

The hypothesis that the ablaut of Narten presents was altered to $*ē \sim *∅$ thus provides a source for the absence of root-initial palatalization in TB /pər-/. It cannot however explain the thematic inflection of the Tocharian present, since there is no evidence for thematization of athematic present (or subjunctive) paradigms in the prehistory of Tocharian. While TB does attest a minor tendency to replace the 1sg., 1pl., and 3pl. with the corresponding “o-forms”, i.e. *-u*, *-ām*, *-ām* → *-au*, *-em*, *-em*,⁷ there are no good examples of secondarily thematized “e-forms” in either TA or TB. Forms such as TB *palkām*, TA *palkāš*, pl. *pālkiñc* ‘shine’ < PT $*palk-$ ← PIE $*b^hlég/g-$ ~ $*b^hlǵ/g-$ demonstrate that root presents with normal $*e \sim *∅$ ablaut retained their inflection intact except for generalization of zero-grade root; there is no reason to suppose that Narten presents would have behaved any differently.

I therefore suggest that PT $*pər^{(v)}-ə-$ ~ $*pər-ē-$ represents a crossing of ($*b^hēr-$ ~ $*b^hṛ-$ → $*b^hṛ-$ with the simple thematic present $*b^hēr-^{e}/-$; the former underlies the zero-grade root, the latter the thematic inflection. The two competing present formations must have coexisted until the last stage ancestral to the non-Anatolian languages, which is not surprising in view of the survival of relics of Narten inflection across numerous IE branches (see above and fn. 5). It is reasonable to suppose a similar multiple origin for the other old inherited simple thematic present in Tocharian, TB /ak-/, TA *āk-* < PT $*ak-$ ‘lead’, although on formal grounds nothing stands in the way of a direct derivation from (post-)PIE $*h_2éǵ-^{e}/-$.⁸

6 The weak stem of Hitt. *eš-* ~ *aš-* ‘be’, *ed-* ~ *ad-* ‘eat’, and *eku-* ~ *aku-* ‘drink’ has been explained in various ways, e.g. $*h_1C-$ > $*C-$, with *aC-* analogical to *šēš-* ~ *šaš-* ‘sleep’ (Melchert 1994: 66–67); $*h_1T-$ > $*aT-$ vs. $*h_1s-$ > $*s-$, with *aš-* analogical to *ad-*, *aku-* (Kimball 1999: 390–391 with refs.); $*h_1C-$ → [?C-] < *aC-*, analogical to full-grade $*h_1eC-$ > [?eC-] (Kloekhorst 2006: 77–81, 2008 s.vv.); or $*h_1T-$ > $*h_1əT-$ > *aT-* by a change in sonority sequencing constraints (Yates 2014).

7 Mainly in Class VII nasal-infixed presents: cf. archaic pl. *piñkām* ‘they write’ (Or. 8212/163 b6) vs. classical ptcp. *piñkemanē* (B605 b3), as well as the Class I subjunctive of ‘do, make’: 1pl. *yamem*, 3 *yāmēm*. In the presents of ‘be’ and ‘go’, thematized *o*-forms are attested from the beginning of our TB records: 1sg. *nese*, 1pl. *nesem* (but ptcp. *nesamane*); 1pl. *ynem*, 3 *yanēm*, ptcp. *ynemane*. See Schmidt 1985: 425–431, Peyrot 2008: 136–138, Malzahn 2010: 274–275, 357–358, 418–420.

8 A preform $*h_2ǵ-$ would have given PT $*k-$ by sound change, with regular loss of the laryngeal (Ringe 1996: 13–14), but this would almost certainly have been replaced by an analogical zero-grade $*ak-$ after full-grade $*h_2éǵ-$ > PT $*ak-$. The problem of analogical ablaut in

To conclude, the zero-grade root presupposed by TB /pər-/ , TA pār- ‘carry’ need not be projected back to PIE, but can instead continue the generalized weak stem of the Narten present $*b^h\acute{e}r-$ ~ $*b^h\grave{r}-$, itself a remodeling of earlier $*b^h\acute{e}r-$ ~ $*b^h\acute{e}r-$. The Tocharian present reflects a mutual contamination of this present and simple thematic $*b^h\acute{e}r-$, whose traditional reconstruction with columnar root stress and full-grade root may be considered assured for the last common ancestor of the non-Anatolian IE languages. How exactly presents such as $*b^h\acute{e}r-$ and $*h_2\acute{e}g-$ are related to thematic subjunctives of the type of $*g^w\acute{e}m-$, which have apparently also left direct reflexes in Tocharian, is another matter entirely, which is likely to engage research on the IE verb for years to come.

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Tocharian verbs continuing PIE roots of the shape *HeT* and *TeHT* remains to be investigated in detail.



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