Resurrecting an Etymology:

Greek (*w*)*ánax* 'king' and Tocharian A *nātäk* 'lord,'

and Possible Wider Connections

by
Douglas Q. Adams

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Greek *(w)ánax* 'king' and Tocharian A *nātäk* 'lord,'

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Douglas Q. Adams

University of Idaho

ABSTRACT

Examined here is the possible cognancy of Homeric Greek *(w)ánax* 'king' and Tocharian A *nātäk* 'lord' and their respective feminine derivatives *(w)ánassa* 'queen' and *nāśi* 'lady.' 'King/lord' may reflect a PIE *$wen\text{-}h_2\acute{g}\text{-}t$ 'warlord' or the like. Further afield is the possibility that a Proto-Tocharian *$wnātkä$ might have been the borrowed into Ancient Chinese and been the ancestor of Modern Chinese *wáng* 'king.'

Keywords: Greek, Tocharian, Chinese, loanwords, cognates.

PART I: INDO-EUROPEAN DATA

Neither Frisk (1960:102, with plentiful references to previous literature) nor Beeks (2010:98, without so comprehensive a review of previous literature) gives *ánax* (< Mycenean *wanaks*) an Indo-European etymology. For the former it is "unerklärt," for the latter it is "probably a substrate word." Certainly, *wánaks* does not look much like an Indo-European word. Mechanically we could reconstruct Proto-Indo-European *$w\underset{.}{n}h_2kt\text{-}$, *$w\underset{.}{n}h_2akt\text{-}$, *$wan(h_2)kt\text{-}$, or, if we consider the possibility of vowel assimilation across the two syllables, even *$wen(h_2)(a)kt\text{-}$. The *-*k*- of these conceivable reconstructions should probably be written *-*K*- as we can't tell if it was a palatal or a regular velar or even if it was voiced or

unvoiced underlyingly (thus *$\acute{k}$, *k, *$\acute{g}$, or *g would be possible). None of these formulations seems to tell us anything and it's no wonder that etymologists shrug their shoulders and move on to the next word.

But, if we stop thinking of this as a simple word and consider the possibility that we have an old compound or derivative, thus throwing, as it were, some hyphens into the mix, the story changes. There are, in theory, many, many ways we might divide this string of sounds into a compound, but we'll cut to the chase and suggest that we might have *$w(e)n$-$h_2(a)\acute{g}$-t- something along the line of 'fight' + 'leader' or, in more modern terms, 'warlord.'[1] We have three morphemes here: *wen- 'fight, struggle' (cf. New English *win*), *$h_2a\acute{g}$- 'lead' (cf. Latin *age/o*-, etc.), and -t-, an abstract noun-making suffix, specifically one often added to compounds in Indo-Iranian, productively in Sanskrit.[2] As is often the case, an abstract noun can become an animate one, witness English *youth*, in Old English only 'the fact/state of being young,' but since the thirteenth century also 'one who is young,' or, again, PIE *-ah_2-, notoriously an abstract noun deriving suffix, but one also found in agent noun creation, e.g., Latin *agricola* 'farmer,' *scrība* 'scribe,' Slavic *vojevoda* 'army-leader,' *sluga* 'servant,' etc.[3] Derivatives in *-t can also be adjectives,

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1 For the concept of 'warlord' in Indo-European culture, we have only to look at Latin *imperator*, Slavic *vojevoda*, Mycenean Greek *lāwāgetas* (Phrygian *lavagta*-). Greco-Phrygian *$lāw$-$āget\bar{a}$- 'leader of the people/host' also shows *h_2ag- as the second member of a similar compound with similar meaning.

2 In Sanskrit such abstract nouns are created only from monosyllabic roots otherwise ending in -i- (e.g., -jit 'conquering'), -u- (e.g., -$stut$ 'praising'), -$\underset{.}{r}$- (e.g., -$bh\underset{.}{r}t$ 'bearing') (Whitney, 1889:143, Burrow, 1973:122–123), or *-$\underset{.}{n}$- (e.g., -gat- [< *-$g^w\underset{.}{m}t$-] 'going'), most commonly as the second member of a compound. In other Indo-European groups t-stem compounds are clearly more residual than in Sanskrit, but appear in a wider set of environments, presumably the more original situation, e.g., Avestan *fraorə\underline{t}* 'willingly' (< *pra-$v\underset{.}{r}$-t), *paragə\underline{t}* 'with the exception of' (< *$parak$-t), Greek *agnṓs* 'unknown, not knowing' (< *$\underset{.}{n}$-$\acute{g}n(e)h_3$-t-), Latin *sacerdōs* 'priest, who has sacred endowments' (< *$sakro$-deh_3-t-), *comes* 'companion' (< *kom-i-t-) [note: the last two were abstracts which ended up as agent nouns], etc. (Brugmann, 1906:422–426). As is well-known, these "bare" t-stems were almost everywhere replaced by conglutinate suffixes -t-i- and -t-u-. In almost all cases, the second member of the compound is, in the strong forms, in the zero-grade while the first member of the compound is, in the strong forms, in the full-grade.

3 In Greek, and Phrygian, we also have the conglutinate suffix -t-$\bar{a}$- which regularly forms masculine agent nouns (e.g., Buck and Petersen, 1949). In this context we might compare Mycenean *lāwāgetās* and Phrygian *lavageta*-. (Interestingly, in Mycenean, *wanakt*- and *lāwāgetā*- refer to two different people, the king and ± commander-in-chief, while in Phrygian, *vanagt*- and *lavageta*- are two different titles for the same person, the king.) One might note, as Buck and Peterson do (p.

providing an even easier starting point for the creation of a noun. Following Szemerényi (1979), closely but not exactly,[4] and anticipating the discussion below, I'm going to suggest further that we have old proterokinetic $*wén-h_2\acute{g}-t-s$ nominative ~ $w\eta-h_2\acute{a}\acute{g}-t-os$ genitive. In Greek the accent has been generalized from the strong forms (such as the nominative singular) but the ablaut from the weak forms (such as the genitive singular). Alternatively, we have the strong form throughout but with assimilation of the first vowel to the second.[5]

The only generally recognized extra-Greek cognate is in Old Phrygian (800–330 BC) *vanaktei* (dative) 'king,' New Phrygian (200–499 AD) ουαναχταν (acc.) 'king.' Frisk (1960) takes the Phrygian word to be a Greek borrowing without question; Beekes (2010) merely wonders if it is a Greek loanword (presumably the other, unstated, possibility for him is that both languages borrowed it from the same non-Indo-European source). Brixhe (1990:75), however, opts for the Greek and Phrygian words being related by common inheritance. Note that, if the Phrygian were borrowed from Greek, it would have to be an early borrowing—of the Mycenean or early sub-Mycenean age—as witnessed by the preservation of the initial *w-*. And that is chronologically problematic in ways not brought up in the etymological discussions of the word. Phrygians appear in northwest Anatolia about 800 BC, at approximately the same time the Homeric poems were taking their "monumental composition" shapes (Kirk, 1965). But in

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545), the relationship of *parikṣit-* 'dwelling around' (adj.) (< PIE $*peri-k\acute{p}i-t-$) and Greek (Homeric) *periktitā-* (used only in the plural) 'neighbors.'

4 Szemerényi is the first to suggest that we have an old compound here (1979:217) in an article of which I became aware only lately. It is always reassuring that one is on the right track to find someone of Szemerényi's stature has already blazed a path (and I am indebted to Alessandro del Tomba for tracking down an actual copy of Szemerényi's article). However, he takes the first member of the compound to be $*wen-$ 'kin, tribe' as in Germanic, i.e., Old English *wine* 'friend,' Latin *vindex* 'surety, defender,' Old Irish *fine* 'kinship.' One cannot rule out Szemerényi's suggestion, but I think 'warlord' is the more likely choice. Suggesting that we have in this word an old compound is a definite improvement on Winter's earlier discussion (1976), on which see below, one that Szemerényi does not mention.

5 As in *thánatos* 'death' (if < pre-Greek $*thénatos,$ PIE $*d^h\acute{e}nh_2to$-) beside *thnā́tos* 'dead' (< PIE $*d^h\eta h_2t\acute{o}$-) (cf. Cowgill, 1965:150; differently Beekes, 2010:533–534, who apparently would reconstruct 'death' as $*d^h\eta h_2-e-to$- though such a reconstruction doesn't explain the accent). Alternatively, our word might be an acrostatic compound $*w\eta-h_2\acute{a}\acute{g}-t-s$ like, say, Greek *Agamémnōn* (< $*\eta gh_2-mén-mon$-), though that is less satisfactory as far as explaining the accent. Szemerényi offers both possibilities (1979:217) as options.

the Ionic dialect of the Homeric poems (as well as many other varieties of Greek), the digamma had been lost perhaps some two hundred years before. In Anatolian Aeolic (Lesbos and the adjacent mainland) the digamma was preserved longer but it was gone by the early fourth century BC when the first inscriptions in that part of the Greek world appear,[6] but the in-coming Phrygians would almost certainly have been culturally attracted to the thriving Ionian cities rather than to the relative backwater of Aeolic Anatolia.

Moreover, in any case, neither in Ionia or Anatolian Aeolic or anywhere else in the Greek-speaking world, was the current designation at the beginning of the first millennium BC for 'king' *(w)ánax*.[7] Instead it was *basileús*, as it has been for the following three thousand years. In Classical Greek *(w)ánax* was remembered as 'king' for certain Homeric personages, notably Nestor and Agamemnon himself, but otherwise it was restricted to use as a divine epithet.[8] All in all, these considerations give great strength to Brixhe's conclusion that the Greek and Phrygian words are inherited *cognates* rather than the result of borrowing from Greek to Phrygian.[9] There is something of a consensus that Greek is the Indo-European language most closely related to Phrygian. The hypothesis of this word's being a common inheritance puts it back probably to the beginning of the second millennium BC and surely to somewhere in the central Balkans, if not further north.[10]

Greek has derivatives of *(w)ánaks* lacking *-t-*. The *Dioscouroi* (the divine twins, Castor and

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6 The digamma survived, at least in some instances, in the poetry of both Sappho and Alcaeus, which was composed at the beginning of the sixth century BC.

7 Only in far off Cyprus did *wánax* retain its secular meaning but there, paradoxically, it meant 'sons/brothers of the king' rather than 'king' himself. The suggestion (Leumann, 1950:43) that Cypriot *wánax* had been borrowed from Homer as a courtesy title has little to recommend it. (One point: if it was borrowed from Homer, why was it not *ánax*?)

8 This too has been true for the last three thousand years. *Pantánassa* 'Queen of all' is one of the traditional Greek Orthodox epithets of the Virgin Mary (the equivalent of 'Queen of Heaven' in the Roman Catholic west).

9 I know of no reason the Phrygian word could not be a regular development from a PIE *$wn̥-h_2ág̑-t-$* (there is evidence for both *$n̥ > an$*, *$a > a$*).

10 See Ruppenstein (2015) for a substantial review of the linguistic, historical, and archeological evidence concerning the relationship of Greek and Phrygian. He is strongly of the opinion that Greek *ánax* and Phrygian *vanakt-* are cognates, not borrowings from one language to the other.

Pollux) may be referred to in Homer (and later poetry) as the *(w)ánakes*, and the feminine pendant of *(w)ánaks* is *(w)ánassa* 'queen.' It is easy to see how, once the nominative singular **wánakts* had become *wánaks* by cluster simplification, a nominative plural *wánakes* might arise analogically. *Wánassa* is a bit more complicated. It might have come from *wának-ya-* in the same fashion as *wánakes*, or from an original Proto-Greek **wának-ya-*, which never had the *-t*,[11] or, with a little phonological *leger de main*, from **wának-t-ya-*.

Over fifty years ago now, Winter (1970) suggested a geographically more distant connection to **wánaks* and *wánassa* in Tocharian A, namely TchA *nātäk* 'lord' and *nāśi* 'lady.'[12] For the former the nominative singular and plural and genitive singular are attested: *nātäk*, *nācki*, and *nātkis* respectively. For the latter we have the nominative singular and the nominative plural: *nāśi* and *nāśśāñ*. The two words reconstruct to a pre-TchA stage noncontroversially: **nātkä* (**nātkäntse* [gen. sg.])[13] and **nāś(ä)yā* (**nāś(ä)yāñä* [nom. pl.]) respectively.[14] We can further reconstruct an earlier initial **wn̥h₂-* with an early loss of the laryngeal and resyllabification (**wn̥a-* > **wna-*). An initial **wn-* > *n-*, as **wl-* gives *l-*, witness the oblique form of 'king' **wl̥h₂ánt-* giving, in both languages, *lānt-*.[15]

In his etymological discussion Winter starts from the word for 'queen/lady,' deriving both

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11 But where a more original underlying **-ǵ-* had been replaced by the positionally devoiced **-k-* of the masculine. At an early date this word had ceased to be a recognized as a compound and had been reanalyzed as a monomorphemic word, having no synchronic relationship to PIE **h₂aǵ-*.

12 This paper does not attempt to review the (few) responses to Winter's etymological connection. But, with Szemerényi having provided a possible PIE morphology for it (something Winter was unable to do), I simply accept it and outline some possible consequences of accepting it.

13 The declensional pattern shown by *nātäk* (and others) reflects a mixed Proto-Indo-European heritage, being an amalgam of old *o*-stems, *i*-stems, and athematic stems. The declensional pattern of these nouns was almost surely athematic. The *o*-stem and *i*-stem segments were analogical additions.

14 The *-ck-* of the nominative masculine plural is morphologically regular but phonologically innovative. We might have expected a more original **-t't'-*, with regular palatalization before either the **-es* of the athematic nominative plural or the **-eyes* of the *i*-stems, to have given ***-cc-* (see below, fn. 16, for *nācci* 'lady').

15 There is one word in attested Tocharian A with an initial *wn-*, namely *wnisk-* 'press.' However, at the time when the **wn-* of 'lord' and 'lady' became *n-*, *wnisk-* was probably still **wä-nisk-* or the like with a prefix **wä-* (< PIE **wi-*).

wánassa and *nāśi* from a PIE **wnh̥₂k-yh̥₂-* (substituting the symbols used here for the equivalent ones Winter used). That will certainly work for Greek but might not for Tocharian, since we would expect **wn̥h̥₂k-yh̥₂-* and that, in turn, should have given ***wänkya-*.[16] However, if we were to start from **wnh̥₂akyh̥₂-* the attested form arises regularly: thus **wnaćya-* > **naćya-* > *nāćäyā-* (insertion of an epenthetic vowel between consonant and resonant) > *nāśi*.[17]

Winter reconstructed a **wnh̥₂kt-* as the ancestor of Greek *wánaks* and TchA *nātäk-*, assuming that the order of the cluster at the end of the word was originally that of Tocharian, *-*tk*-. But this, I think, is where Winter went astray. He defended his choice by pointing out that there was evidence in Greek for a metathesis of -*tk*- to -*kt*-, e.g., the reduplicated **ti-tke/o-* 'give birth to; beget' had become *tikte/o-* because -*kt*- was phonotactically preferred in Greek over -*tk*-. So, it was. But just the opposite was true in Tocharian, as an original *-*tk*- was a very common cluster in Proto-Tocharian, since it was the outcome of the cluster reduction of PIE *-*t-sḱ*- so very common in verbs, and *-*kt*-, relatively rare.[18] Thus the metathesis of the less common *-*kt*- to the much more common, phonotactically preferred, *-

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16 As in Germanic, in the combination *-*R̥H̥ₓC*- the laryngeal is simply lost: *palle-* 'full' (in *palleu* 'full moon') < **pl̥h̥₁no-*, *karse* 'stag' < **kr̥h̥₂so-* 'horned (one),' *parwe* 'first' < **pr̥h̥₃wo-*. However, in both Germanic and Tocharian the evidence for this development comes heavily from where the resonant + laryngeal precedes a single consonant followed by a vowel. Really good examples of resonant + laryngeal followed by more than one consonant are essentially non-existent.

17 The change of *ć to *ś* is a later change, apparently happening independently (or by areal influence) in both Tocharian A and Tocharian B. The earliest foreign transcriptions, both Sanskrit and Chinese, transcribe the sound as some sort of affricate. Witness Sanskrit *kuci* and Early Middle Chinese (beginning of the eighth century AD) *kuwdzi (modern reading *qiūcí* [Pulleyblank, 1991]) for attested TchB *kuśi* 'Kuqa.' The *kuwdzi of Early Middle Chinese is probably little changed from its pronunciation in Han times. *Kuwdzi remains more archaic in some respects than the then current Kuchean pronunciation, where -*ć*- had become -*ś*- several centuries earlier. Compare English *Paris* with its preserved final -*s* with French *Paris* where the final -*s* disappeared several centuries ago, or English *Florence* with its preserved -*l*- as opposed to the Italian *Firenze*.

There is also once in Tocharian A a form *nācci* 'lady,' a title prefixed to a woman with a Uyghur name. Carling and Pinault (2023:246–247) reasonably suggest that this is the Tocharian B equivalent of *nāśi*. In Tocharian B *-*ś* or its predecessor had been analogically replaced by the *-*tk*- of its masculine counterpart which, when palatalized, gave -*cc*-.

18 At least that phonotactic situation was true in Tocharian until the fall of unstressed -*ä*- between a -*k*- and a -*t*- created many new clusters of -*kt*- (e.g., *anaikte* < *anaikätte-* 'unknown' [the longer *anaikätte* is also attested] and probably *ñäkte 'god' [> B *ñakte*, A *ñkät*] from an older **ñäkäte-*, etc.).

tk- does not seem an over-bold suggestion. And, if we assume it was Tocharian that was innovative and Greek conservative regarding the original order of the cluster, we have an etymology for these words. Again, if we start from a proterokinetic PIE *wén-h₂ǵ-t-s nominative ~ *wn̥-h₂áǵ-t-os* genitive, the Tocharian form can be derived by known rules from the weak form: *wn̥-h₂áǵ-t-* > **wnakt-* (loss of laryngeal and resyllabification) > **(w)nākt-* (loss of initial *w- before a consonant) > **nātk-*; again, just as *lānt* 'king' [acc. sg.] < a putative PIE **wl̥h_ₓéntm̥*.[19]

Winter's suggestion of a connection between Greek *wánaks/wánassa* and Tocharian A *nātäk/nāśi* did not generate much follow-on. It is not even mentioned by Beekes as something to be rejected. The reasons for this neglect are several but two are paramount. When Winter wrote his article there were relatively few Indo-Europeanists who felt they were competent to judge Tocharian data; secondly, Winter left the why of the Greco-Tocharian resemblance unresolved. In his view it was not Indo-European but, if not, what non-Indo-European language could be its source? Given the vast geographical distance between Greek and Tocharian, what kind of non-Indo-European language could they have both been in contact with prehistorically? Moreover, it would have to have been a prestige language to have provided a word for 'king.' But there is no cultural, archaeological, or (pre)historical evidence for such a non-Indo-European prestige group. Admittedly, there is the certain existence for more than one historically known group that has left no clear cultural or archaeological evidence to attest to their presence, so the absence of data does not prove absence, but still that absence of data does not allow us to infer presence either. But things are different if, following Szemerényi's clue (1979) that there is a compound involved, we can give the word a reasonable Indo-European etymology, such as suggested above, *wén-h₂ǵ-t-s [nom.] ~ *wn̥-h₂áǵ-t-os* [gen.].

If we have here an inherited Proto-Indo-European word, then its appearance in Greek and Tocharian does not force us to speculate about some hypothetical non-Indo-European language in the

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19 The nominative singular of this word is *wäl* in Tocharian A and *walo* in Tocharian B. These reflect a PIE **wl̥h_ₓṓnts* with the stress moved from a final syllable, as usual in Tocharian, to produce a Proto-Tocharian *wálō beside the accusative *wlántän with the stress remaining in its original position (on a non-final syllable). **wl̥h_ₓ*- appears in Latin *valē* 'be strong,' and extended by *-*dʰ*- in Germanic *waldan- 'rule, have power over, wield' (> English *wield*) and OCS *vlade/o*- 'rule' (both < *wolh_ₓ-dʰ-). For the PIE root, cf. further Pokorny, 1959:1111–1112, Derksen, 2008:524, de Vaan, 2008:651–652, Kroonen, 2013:569. All agree on the relationship, but all show different reconstructions. I follow Derksen.

fifth millennium BC. We have Meillet's dictum that we must have three non-adjacent Indo-European groups attesting to the existence of some feature (e.g., a word) before we can impute that feature to the proto-language. But such an imputation has been made and accepted on the basis of two non-adjacent languages, witness a word for 'fir' found only in Germanic (e.g., *Tannenbaum*) and Anatolian (Hittite *tanau-*[20]). And it remains that Phrygian would be Meillet's third group. Building on Winter's initial insight, it seems considerably more probable than not that Proto-Indo-European had a word *$w(e)n$-$h_2(a)\acute{g}$-t-* 'warlord' (more literally 'fight-leader') attested in Greek, Phrygian, and Tocharian.[21] That a PIE word should remain in the far eastern part of Indo-European territory and in the Balkans while dying out elsewhere would be no great surprise.[22]

PART II: EXTRA-INDO-EUROPEAN DATA

But the possibilities do not stop there. There is to my mind also the possibility that the Proto-Tocharian word *$wn\bar{a}tk\ddot{a}$* shows up in Chinese. Now, borrowing a non-Chinese word into Chinese has always presented problems, both for the Chinese speaker and for the historical linguist trying to figure out what happened. Chinese has always had rigid phonotactic structures concerning length of word,

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20 Presuming this word does mean 'fir.' See Kloekhorst, 2008:827.

21 In the same article Winter proposes a second Greco-Tocharian correspondence in the case of another title, Greek *tāgós* '[in Thessaly] civic magistrate with military responsibilities; commander [of the gods (i.e., Zeus), of troops], [of Thebes] head of state' and Tocharian B *tās* '±commander' (further discussion, Adams 2013), Tocharian A *tāśśi* [pl.] 'leaders, chiefs.' The Tocharian forms might most easily reconstruct to *$t\bar{a}gyu$-*. These two, 'warlord' and 'commander,' offer significant cultural cognates whose worth is still obscure.

22 Dialect geologists normally take an item found only on opposite peripheries of a language or language group as evidence that that item is old and been replaced by an innovation in the center. Examples are many in the Romance languages where we know both the ancestor and the descendants. Thus, Spanish and Romanian preserve Latin *arēna* 'sand' (as *arena* and *arină* respectively), a word replaced by the ancestor of French *sable* and Italian *sabia* in the center. Likewise Latin *fervīre* 'boil' remains in Spanish *hervir*, Romanian *fierbe*, while replaced in French and Italian by *bouilir* and *bollire* respectively, and there are others. An older example is provided by Sanskrit *śrad dhā-*, on the eastern periphery of the Indo-European world, and Latin *crēde/o-*, Old Irish *cretim*, all 'believe,' on the western periphery, with nothing in between. (All from PIE *$\acute{k}red$-d^heh_1-*, literally 'put [one's] heart.')

syllable structure, etc.[23] The very largely monosyllabic Chinese would surely have reduced *wnātkä by ignoring the final unstressed *-ä. An initial cluster wn- was also impossible but could be fixed by metathesizing *wnā- to *wān-. Further, the resultant final cluster, *-ntk, also impossible, would surely have been simplified to *-ŋk and further to -ŋ. The reader will already have anticipated the ultimate result of these adjustments done to fit the Proto-Tocharian word into the appropriate Old Chinese form, namely the ancestor of Modern Chinese's wáng 'king.'[24] Obviously, this origin for wáng is only a possibility, and far from a certainty.

As far as I am aware, this Indo-European (via Tocharian) etymology of wáng is new. But it is clearly not alone. In support of it we can adduce further evidence of Tocharian > Old Chinese borrowings. Indeed, the "tradition," if you will, of seeing Indo-European words borrowed into Chinese is rather an old one. Already in 1916 Polivanov had seen that the origin of the Chinese word for 'honey' was PIE *médʰu.[25] A third possibility (in addition to mí and wáng), considerably more provocative (more on the order of 'king'), is seen in the possible equation of TchB riye (TchA ri) 'city' and Chinese lǐ 'village' (Lubotsky, 1998:386). The Tocharian word's Indo-European provenance is established by its

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23 Compounding the problem is the "inscrutable" nature of the Chinese writing system: Chinese characters offer far less phonetic information than even the most deficient Near Eastern cuneiform, Greek-derived, or Indian syllabaries/alphabets/abugidas.

24 Another, relatively old, example (Han era) of the phonological reformation in Chinese of a word borrowed from a foreign language, in this case a Tocharian language, TchB ṣecake or TchA śiśäk, is the Chinese word for 'lion,' shīzi (Middle Chinese srij-tsix [Baxter, 1992:323] < Old Chinese *srjij-tsjiʔ [Baxter, 1992:323]). Note the last syllable of the original foreign word has disappeared. It is hard not to see in it a (putative) PIE *sih₂tekó- 'maned (one),' a zero-grade derivative, with regular laryngeal metathesis, from *seh₂ito/eh₂- as seen in Latin saeta 'bristle, rough hair [including that of the mane]' (see fuller discussion in Adams 2013:723).

A modern, or nineteenth-century, example of the same sort, is pidgin, an English reborrowing of the Chinese rendition of "business" where the first syllable of the Chinese borrowing recapitulates the first syllable of the English original (one might have expected *bi- but the unaspirated voiceless Chinese p- [written as <b> in pinyin] might have been heard by English ears as a voiceless aspirated bilabial /p/ rather than a semi-voiced unaspirated bilabial /b/), the /dź/ (pinyin <j>) was as close to English /z/ as was possible in Chinese and that phoneme had to be followed by a vowel, so the second /i/, then the /n/ of both languages, and finally the last English syllable was simply dropped.

25 Though at that point in time Tocharian itself was hardly in the picture.

Thracian cognate βρία (probably [βría]) 'city' and its Proto-Tocharian shape would have been *wriye (for the Thraco-Tocharian side of this possible Sino-Tocharian etymology, see Adams, 2013:582).[26] A hundred years after Polivanov, Blažek and Schwartz (2017)[27] have amassed a list of twenty-four other proposed Tocharian > Chinese lexical items, expanding on those already suggested by Lubotsky (1998).[28] As Lubotsky had noted, there are several words of presumed Tocharian origin in Chinese that refer to chariots and chariotry: e.g., *shèng* 'chariot with four horses, quadriga' = B *kleṅke* 'vehicle,' *gū* 'nave of a wheel' = B *kokale* 'chariot,' *fú* 'spoke' = B *puwe*' 'spoke,' *zhōu* 'carriage pole' = A *turs-ko* 'draft-ox.'[29] To these Blažek and Schwartz would add Chinese *jū* 'colt, young horse' as ultimately a borrowing from the Proto-Tocharian ancestor of TchB *yakwe* 'horse,' TchA *yuk* 'id.' These words are a significant

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26 A possible Greek cognate is *rhíon* 'mountain, foothill.' Beekes (2010:1287) is not altogether enthusiastic about the connection of *hríon* with the Thracian word because of the distance in meaning. However, considering the connection of, say, German *Berg* and *Burg*, English *barrow* and *borough*, the semantic distance is probably acceptable. If so, one might see this word as a derivative of Pokorny's (1959:1152) *wer-²* 'erhöhte Stelle."

27 This book, *Early Indo-Europeans in Central Asia and China: Cultural relations as reflected in language*, is a compendium of linguistic data on linguistic borrowings, or possible borrowings, among Chinese, (Turkic!), Tocharian, and Iranian. There is a wealth of data and complex analyses. It is difficult material to work with and I don't always come to the same conclusions as they do (see fn. 28 below), but it is surely required reading for anyone interested in understanding the linguistic interactions of prehistoric Inner Asia.

28 Though they do not include Chinese *lǐ* and Tocharian *riye* in this list, they take it up elsewhere as (p. 59) as a "problematic connection." Problematic because they see *rhíon* and *bría* as having had initial *sr-* rather than* wr-*. For *rhíon* that alternative is quite possible but for *bría* it is very speculative indeed. A change of *sr-* to *br-* or *βr-* is very rare, though found in Latin. There is no other evidence in the, admittedly scanty, Thracian corpus for such a change.

29 I refer the reader to Lubotsky and Blažek and Schwartz for discussions of the exact Proto-Tocharian and intermediate Chinese shapes. Precisely because of the phonological strictures Chinese places on borrowings, and the ambiguities they create, Lubotsky (p. 381) establishes certain useful criteria for inclusion on his list: (a) the putative Chinese borrowings from Tocharian must agree in both phonology and semantics, (b) the Chinese word must be isolated within Sino-Tibetan and the Tocharian word must have a good PIE etymology, (c) the Chinese word must belong to a lexical field wherein borrowing is likely to occur. Not all these etymologies may be compelling to everyone, but there are probably others not listed—like *jū* 'young horse, colt' discussed immediately below.

"cultural package" in themselves.[30] So would the pair 'king' and 'village' be a part of another, even more provocative, cultural package.[31]

All this borrowing implies some kind of physical propinquity. It seems fairly certain that Tocharian-type speakers ("Tocharian D"?[32]), called the Yuèzhī by the Chinese, lived in the grasslands of the Gansu Corridor (Adams, 2000). It is a priori possible that similar ethnic groups lived even further east. The Jié people lived in Shanxi in the fourth century AD and are described as having high noses, deep-set eyes, and full beards. Most scholars have taken these characteristics as describing a Caucasian

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30 A possibility long raised is that the Chinese word for 'horse,' namely *mǎ* (< Old Chinese **mrah* or **mraʔ* or the like) might be related to the Proto-Germanic **marha-* 'horse,' **marhjōn-* 'mare' (whence English *mare*) or Proto-Celtic **marko-* 'horse.' Certainly, a Proto-Tocharian ***mārke* or the like might be expected to eventuate in an Old Chinese **mrah* or **mraʔ* but such a scenario is made dubious by the absence of any attested Tocharian antecedent. Dubious but perhaps not impossible, given that we have so incomplete a knowledge of the Tocharian vocabulary. Still, it cannot be added to our list of Tocharian > Chinese borrowings. See Blažek and Schwarz, 2017:75–77 for the history and discussion of this suggestion. (There is some likelihood that the Tocharian B word for 'mare' underlies the adjective *peliye*, which probably means 'pertaining to a mare' [it's a hapax in the phrase *malkwer peliye* 'mare's (?) milk' cf. Adams, 2013]. One might compare *kewiye … aṣiye malkwersa* 'with cow's [milk] and goat's milk' [translation certain] found elsewhere. The root would be the same as in English *foal* or Greek *pôlos* 'foal,' Albanian *pelë* 'mare.')

31 Lubotsky (pp. 385–387) adds some more "town building" words that he takes to be borrowings from Tocharian. The two most convincing in my mind are *jí* 'masonry' from the ancestor of TchAB *tsik-* 'build, form' and *chéng* 'city wall, fortified wall' from the ancestor of AB *tänk-* 'hinder, impede.' Again, I refer the reader to the original author for the etymological details.

There are of course even more Chinese > Tocharian borrowings. Blažek and Schwarz (2017) adduce thirty-six possibilities. Most of these reflect later Chinese economic and political influence on the Tarim Basin. There are words for various measures ('foot,' 'pound,' 'bushel,' etc.) or administrative/military ranks ('vice-commissioner,' 'adjutant/assistant,' 'major-general,' 'general'), and the like. One very early word, borrowed by the end of the first half of the first millennium BC, is *klu* 'rice' the Modern Chinese cognate of which is *dào* 'rice plant' (< Ancient Chinese, something like **tlhu*? [cf. Blažek and Schwartz, 2017:39]). The Silk Road, even before it became such, was always a two-way street.

32 Tocharian A and Tocharian B are Agnean and Kuchean respectively (natively *ārśi and kuśiññe* respectively). "Tocharian C" is the presumed native language of the kingdom of Loulan (aka Kroraina) in the east and southeast in the Tarim Basin, the official language of which was a form of Middle Indian Prakrit (the "Latin" of the Tarim Basin). The latter, however, shows borrowings from a language much like Tocharian A and B which presumably was the native language of the area. That leaves us with "Tocharian D," etc., for proposed additional languages of this family.

people. Could they have been speakers of another Tocharian language ("Tocharian E," or a later form of "Tocharian D"?)? Various scholars have suggested that the Jié were Turkic, Iranian, or Yeniseian.[33] See the Appendix for the various attempted Turkic translations and my attempt at a "Tocharian D/E" translation. The Tocharian > Old Chinese borrowings would seem to give weight to the notion that the "pre-Jié" (or some other group in their vicinity) were para-Tocharians who were of considerable cultural importance to the nascent Chinese state.[34]

Possible and *possibility* are used or implied often in Part II,[35] and those qualifications should be remembered and given full weight, but, when all is said and done, this information, as Poirot would say, "gives one furiously to think."

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33 The last identification would not meet the physical description of the speakers very well. Moreover, Yeneseians were geographically and culturally quite isolated from China. I think the Yeneseian hypothesis need not detain us. It is disappointing that the Ancient Chinese were just as incurious about the "barbarian" languages that surrounded them as the Ancient Greeks were incurious about the languages of their neighbors.

34 There are apparently some Chinese sources (non vidi) that link the Jié to the Lesser Yuèzhī (those Yuèzhī who had not fled west). (See Wikipedia, s.v. Jié [accessed 05-24-2024].) If this connection is true, then there is a strengthened case that (part of) the Jié spoke "Tocharian D."

35 And, of course, in Part I.

APPENDIX: THE JIÉ LANGUAGE

Only a single sentence of the Jié language is known, recorded in the book of Jin, that might possibly be relevant here, so I will add it to the discussion, though that discussion will be inconclusive. The sentence in question apparently had to do with Shi Le's fight with Liu Yao in AD 328. It was provided with a Chinese translation by a fourth-century Kuchean monk *Buddhaciṃga* (putative TchB *Puttaciṅke*, Modern Chinese *Fotuceng*).[36] Below we have the Jié sentence transliterated into Chinese characters, the Chinese characters presumed pronunciation in Middle Chinese, and Buddhaciṃga's Chinese gloss. Data from Wikipedia (accessed May 24, 2024).

Text	Middle Chinese[c]	Gloss
秀支	[sˠiu-cie]	軍 'army'
替戾岡	[tʰei-let/lei-kɑŋ]	出 'go out'
僕穀	[bok/buk-kuk/yok]	劉曜胡位 'Liu Yao's barbarian title'
劬禿當	[gi̯uo-tʰuk-tɑŋ]	捉 'capture'

36 Some context may be helpful to non-sinological readers. Shi Le (posthumous imperial name Ming) was an important player in the sanguinary Sixteen-Kingdoms period of Chinese history. He was member of the Jié ethnos, rising from a position as a minor chieftain among the Jié to be successively a slave and then a successful general in the army of the previous dynasty. He was the founder of a dynasty himself after defeating his chief rival, Liu Yao. He was a patron of Buddhism and more particularly a patron of the Kuchean monk, Fotuceng/Buddhaciṃga. This dynasty was short-lived. Only some twenty years later the dynasty ended with the Fourth Century's Chinese equivalent of the Holocaust wherein some 200,000 "barbarians" (those with the high noses and full beards, including the Jié), whose loyalty was suspect, were hunted down and massacred (350–352 AD). Thus, the Jié language sentence discussed here was both the first and last example of the language. The "culling" was ordered by the last emperor of this dynasty, Shi Min a Han Chinese whose father had been adopted into the Shi clan by the third Shi emperor, Shi Hu (Shi Le's distant cousin and adoptive brother, and Henry VII-like in his elimination of all dynastic rivals, including all the descendants of Shi Le). As emperor Shi Min renamed himself Ran Min, a reversion to the Han Chinese name of his pre-adoption ancestors. In 352 Ran Min was captured in battle and executed, ending the dynasty. It is interesting to wonder of Shi Le's ancestors, or some of them, had been of the Xiao Yuezhi portion of the Jié and thus perhaps speakers of "Tocharian D."

A number of scholars have tried to turn these words into Turkic, and, once into Yeneseian. None of their translations seem at all likely and by and large the Turkish/Yeneseian words they come up with do not match very well the presumed Middle Chinese pronunciations. Here are the various published Turkic renditions:[37]

Ramstedt (1922)	Bazin (1948)	von Gabain (1950)	Shervashidze (1986)	Shimunek (2015)
Sükä talıqın	Süg tägti ıdqaŋ	Särig tılıtqan	Sükâ tol'iqtin	su-Ø kete-r erkan
bügüg tutun!	boquɣıɣ tutqaŋ!	buɣuɣ kötürkän	buɣuɣ qodigo(d)tin	boklug-gu tukta-ŋ
Go with a war	Send the army to	You'd put forth the	You came to the	When/as the army goes
[and] capture	attack,	army,	army	out,
bügü!	capture the	you'd take the deer	Deposed buɣuɣ	capture the Boklug!
	commander!			

So, I thought I'd give it a go and see if Tocharian might be viable. Some initial assumptions: (1) Liu Yao's barbarian title is probably from a different language (this assumption is made by almost all would-be translators) and (2) the word for 'army' is also likely to be a borrowing—an assumption that several would-be translators also make (cf. English *army* and *commander*, etc., which are all non-Germanic). These assumptions have the effect of reducing the translational text by about half. Another assumption: the text would reflect neither Tocharian A nor B, but would be "Tocharian D." Thus, the text would look "Tocharianish" (i.e., would have recognizable Tocharian lexical and morphological items) but would be differently assembled from what is seen in Tocharian A or B, as Tocharian A and B are different from one another.[38]

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37 As noted above (fn. 31), I take no account in the Yeneseian hypothesis.

38 It may be suggestive, or merely a "straw in the wind," that it was a Kuchean monk, i.e., a native speaker of Tocharian B, who was able to provide a translation. Perhaps he was able to because he was a native speaker of a related language (e.g., like a Spanish-speaker being able to make sense of Italian and vice versa and likewise a Polish-speaker and a Ukrainian). However, there is no reason why a Kuchean monk could not have known one or more foreign and unrelated languages.

So, to line 2: I read the Middle Chinese as *thei-let-kaŋ*, which might reflect TchD **te lätkāṃ* 'let it, the army [from the previous line], be sent out.' *Te* = third person singular pronoun, *lät-* = 'go out,' *-k-* = causative marker (from *-sk-* but the cluster **-tsk-* is reduced to *-tk-* in both A and B—presumably a Proto-Tocharian development[39]), *-ā-* subjunctive marker (hence the *let* of the English translation; *may* would work as well), *-ṃ* = third person singular or plural marker (in both A and B the Brahmi symbol, transliterated as <ṃ>, would seem to be a way of marking a syllable-final /n/, but in "TchD" the ending may have become simple nasalization [notoriously heard as -ŋ in languages without nasalization, witness English pronunciation of recent borrowings from French] or been subject to a rule which turned final -n into -ŋ). So, again, 'the army, let it be sent out.'

Line 4 is more difficult. I have no idea what *gi̯u̯o* is (but no one else does either). *Tuk-taŋ* should be another third person subjunctive in *-āṃ*. As for some of the others above *tukt-* is difficult. From the Tocharianist's perspective it would be preferable to see this as a graphic metathesis in the Chinese of an original **tutk-*[40] where the *-k-* is the the causative morpheme (as above), or simply the second half of the verb's final cluster *-tk-*.[41] *Tutk-* or perhaps *gi̯u̯o tutk-* should mean 'be captured/submit' or the like (thus, 'let [him] be captured'). There's a *tätk-* 'prolong' in TchA and B and a *tsätkw-* which seems to mean 'be erroneous' or the like in Tocharian B. The latter would earlier have been **tsutk-* (cf. *sakw* 'good fortune' from Sanskrit *sukham*) and could be an ablaut cousin of a "TchD" *tutk-*, but neither *tsätk-* nor *tsätkw-* is helpful semantically. It should be noted, however, that verbs, or verb phrases, for neither 'submit' nor 'capture' are attested in either Tocharian A or B. A verb root *tutk-* looks <u>very</u> Tocharian-

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Buddhaciṃga certainly knew Chinese.

39 A causative made from the root, *lät-* 'go out, emerge,' as suggested here, is historically the expected mode of causative making in Tocharian. Tocharian A does not attest a causative from this verb while Tocharian B has *länt-äsk-*, an innovative causative shape built to an old present stem (of Proto-Tocharian, indeed, Proto-Indo-European age), one with an infixed *-n-*.

40 Note that that is Bazin's (1948) Turkic solution as well.

41 There are many such verbs in Tocharian A and B (see Melchert, 1977); roughly one out of twenty Tocharian verb roots ends in *-tk-*.

like.[42] Indeed, if we are correct in seeing *lätk-* and *tutk-* as verb roots, it is all but certain that we are dealing with a Tocharian language.

So, all in all, I give myself a B+ for the first part but a D for the second half (but the latter grade might be considerably higher if our Tocharian data were more complete).

It is only fair to give a contemporary Turkicist's rejoinder to this Tocharian proposal. Marcel Erdal (p.c.) who is a linguist and turkologist, professor and head of the Department of Turcology at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, suggests the following (all forms in reconstructed Proto-Turkic):

Proto-Turkic	English gloss
Sükä	'army, military campaign' (-*kä* = dative)
Tılıkaŋ	'exit, go out' [-*aŋ* = plural imperative (> attested Turkic -*ıŋ* after high back vowel[43])]
Bokok han	'Uighur ruler and founder of a Uighur dynasty'
Yütür-t-äŋ	'load' (-*t*- = causative, -*äŋ* = plural imperative)

The first two lines would be translated something as 'go out/leave for a military campaign!' The third line's *bokok* is probably correct, though we might expect more fully *bokok han*. As for everyone else

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42 There is a PIE root **(s)teud-* 'push, shove, hit' that appears in Proto-Germanic **stautan-* (< an originally iterative PIE **stoude/o-*) 'push, shove, hit,' Proto-Germanic **stuttōn-* (< another PIE iterative, **studnah₂-*) 'shove, bump, stop,' English *stutter*, Latin *tunde/o-* 'strike, beat,' Latin iterative *tuditāre* 'strike repeatedly with a hammer,' Sanskrit *tudáti ~ tundate* 'thrust, crush,' Albanian *shtyj* (< PIE **studnye/o-*) 'push.' One notes that this verb attracts iterative-intensive derivatives. A Proto-Tocharian (originally) iterative formation might have been, with the iterative formation in **-śke/o-* (homophonous with the causative formation discussed above), **täut-(s)kʹä/e-*, with regular loss of the **-s-* in the cluster **-tsk-* and rebuilt ablaut, from a putative PIE **tud-śke/o-*. The meaning might have been something like 'beat into submission,' 'strike [down],' or the like. This analysis is of course speculative.

43 As I understand it, only -*ıŋ* is attested as the vowel-harmony variant of this suffix when following a high back unrounded vowel, but some would reconstruct an older, Proto-Turkic, "pre-harmonic" **-aŋ* here.

(including me), the fourth line is least satisfactory. As a transliteration of Proto-Turkish *$y\ddot{u}$ I suppose $gi\llcorner{u}o$ is possible, though Middle Chinese might have done better, but *tutkaŋ* for *türtäŋ* seems a bit of a phonological stretch (and the semantics are stretched as well ['cause to load' > 'capture'?]).

If I put on my professorial grade-giving hat, I think I would be giving this newest Turkic reconstruction about the same grade I would give my "Tocharian D" one above. Certainly, the first line is better accounted for in the Turkic rendition, but the vowels of the second line seem better accounted for in the proposed Tocharian rendition (Middle Chinese -*e*- better reflect proposed "Tocharian D" -*e*- and -*ä*- than Turkic -*ɪ*), particularly if there was no *-*aŋ* or if the proposed *-*aŋ* was real but had already become -*ɪŋ* by the fourth century AD. We are agreed about the third line while the proposed Turkic of the fourth line seems questionable of both phonological and semantic grounds, but I can offer only a hypothetical solution for the proposed Tocharian. Linguistically then, something of a tie. Circumstantially, however, the Xiao Yuezhi, who almost certainly spoke some Tocharian language, are said to be at least a part of the Jié people while (Proto-)Turkish does not appear to be anywhere in the vicinity of Shanxi so early as the fourth century AD (still in the Altai-western Mongolia area?). To my mind the advantage lies with "Tocharian D" (not all will agree—Professor Erdal does not [p.c.]), but the skimpiness of data will certainly not allow any conclusive decision. If it is Tocharian of some sort, it will be the earliest Tocharian we have a record of; likewise, if Turkish, it is the earliest Turkish we have any record of. In my opinion we cannot be sure it was either.

Ultimately, of course, the language(s) of the Jié are irrelevant to my major theme that the most anciently attested Chinese, that of the Shang dynasty, contains loanwords from the ancestor of Tocharian A and B: 'honey,' 'quadriga,' etc., and possibly even 'village,' and 'king.' If our much-contested Jié sentence should be Tocharian of some sort, it tells something about the linguistic landscape of northern China in the fourth century AD, not a period perhaps 1,500 years before, or more, when the proposed Tocharian loanwords were borrowed into pre-literate Chinese.

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