

“Tocharian verb roots with internal **a*”

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There is general agreement that Tocharian verb roots may be classified along two dimensions, into those ending or not ending in Proto-Tocharian **-a-* (TB */-a-/*, TA *-ā-*); and into those containing a root vowel **ə* (TB */ə/*, TA *ä ~ Ø*), which mostly undergo paradigmatic ablaut, and those containing another root vowel, usually **a*, which with rare exceptions do not. Whereas most scholars agree in deriving roots with final **-a-* from PIE roots ultimae laryngalis, there is still uncertainty as to the origin of verb roots with internal vowel **a*. Based on an exhaustive list of roots with established or probable PIE etymologies, it is shown that Tocharian verb roots with internal **a* have three sources. The largest group continue PIE roots of the shape *C(C)eHC*, in which the zero-grade **C(C)HC-* usually gave Proto-Tocharian **C(C)aC*, e.g. PT **t^saka-* ‘pierce, bite’ ← **t^sak^w-* < PIE **d^hyeh₂g^w-* ‘stick in, prick’. A smaller number go back to PIE roots of the shape *C(C)eH* which have secondarily received a consonantal extension, e.g. PT **(s)taka-* ‘be’ ← **(s)tak-* ← PIE **steh₂-* ‘stand’. Finally, a handful of roots appear to continue a generalized strong ablaut grade **o*, e.g. **pata-* ‘dig’ ← PIE **b^hód^hh₂-* (~ **b^héd^hh₂-*). The rest of the paper treats analogical remodeling in reflexes of PIE roots of the shape **(C)ReHC*, and revisits the question whether the near-total absence of ablaut in roots with internal **a* may be explained in entirely phonological terms or reflects the elimination of certain ablaut patterns in pre-Proto-Tocharian, specifically **a ~ *o*.