Primary and secondary functions

of the Tocharian middle voice

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Tocharian middle

- Clearly marked with dedicated endings throughout the finite verb (A & B)

- Fairly frequent, around 1/3 of the finite forms

- Analysis of function and relationship between different functions not fully clear

- Reference work:

  Klaus T. Schmidt. 1974. *Die Gebrauchsweisen des Mediums im Tocharischen.*

- Patterns of contrastiveness intricate

→ Which functions of contrastive middles can be distinguished?

Die Gebrauchsweisen des Mediums im Tocharischen

- Almost exhaustive treatment of passages with middle forms (at the time)

  → coverage remains impressive, and is still representative

- Exhaustive categorisation: eventiv, passiv, reflexiv, intensiv, kausativ, Deponens

  → attribution to eventiv or intensiv difficult to falsify

- Inclusion of contrastive and non-contrastive middles

  → leads to blurring of synchronic and diachronic levels

E.g. B 3sg.pres.mid. *kaltär* 's/he stands': intransitive middle like *sich befinden*

  → no synchronic explanation of the middle here is possible:

  the subj. and pret. are active: 3sg.subj.act. *stāmaṃ*, 3sg.pret.act. *ścama*

  → reason for middle inflexion is etymological; to be kept out of description

Patterns of contrastiveness

- Nonfinite forms no middle inflexion

  → not disputed for e.g. infinitive, preterite participle, gerundive

  → discussion about possible active B *-eñca* vs. middle B *-mane*

  → in any case not 1-to-1 as in finites, and noun/adj. vs. adv./adj.

- Many verbs only active forms

- Many verbs only middle forms

- Medio-actives with some active forms (e.g. subjunctive and preterite)

  next to some middle forms (present), but no contrast

- Some phrasal verbs (with a fixed object or adverb) have their "own" diathesis, e.g. B *kəm-* act. 'come', *ṣesa kəm-* mid. 'come together'

Interesting topics

- Frequent causatives (as types) often middle and contrastive

  → Here excluded, often few tokens, smart approach would be needed

- Medio-actives

  → relatively well researched: present classes 3 and 4, subjunctive class 3, etc., often anti-causative (see e.g. Malzahn, *The Tocharian verbal system*)

- Middle only verbs

  → require an etymological analysis

- *yam-* 'do'

  → in phrasal verbs mostly middle

  → exception: *yarke yam-* 'to honour' (act.)

  → as 'to make (smth.)' mostly middle too

Passive

- No special marking, only a function of the middle

- Frequently attested in A & B

- Clearly recognisable

- Good and clear description in Schmidt

- Problems:

  → Especially frequent in calques

  → Not a property of the verb: other middle functions may be found besides

  → Middle-only and medio-active verbs may form a zero-passive

Passive: calques

B *kälpāsträ* 3sg.pres.mid. 'is found' ~ Skt. *vidyate*

  → This form attested both in clear calque contexts and narrative contexts

  → Narrative nevertheless technical in:

  PK AS 12I b4 *te mäṃt ñem kälpāsträ* 'such a name is obtained'

B *klyauṣträ* 3sg.pres.mid. 'is heard' ~ Skt. *śrūyate*

  → Likewise attested both in clear calque contexts and narrative contexts

B *kärsanatär* 3sg.pres.mid. 'is known' ~ Skt. *prajñāyate* (bil. THT 543 b2)

  → Only calque contexts

B *westrä* 3sg.pres.mid. 'is called' ~ Skt. *ucyate* (A *träṅkträ*)

  → Only calque contexts

Passive: calques

- All are larger categories:

  clear calques (e.g. bilinguals), normal narratives, technical terms in non-technical texts, etc.

Passive: non-exclusive

IOL Toch 109 b5   *piś*   *känte*   *cmelane*   *kauṣträ*   *ālyauce*

                    five   hundred   birth.LOC.PL   kill.PRS.MID.2PL   each.other.OBL

'In five-hundred [re]births you are killing each other.'

vs. 3sg.pres.mid. *kauṣträ* 'is killed' (PK AS 7N a1)

3sg.pres-subj.mid. *lkāträ* 'sees; is seen'

     (the present-subjunctive middle can certainly be passive;

     perhaps the present middle *lkāsträ* is not passive)

Passive: zero-passive

B 3sg.pres.subj. *eṅkasträ* 'takes; is taken'

→ similar to *lkäträ* 'sees; is seen', *kauṣträ* 'kill; is killed'

→ but *lkāträ* and *kauṣträ* stand next to act. *lkāṣṣäṃ* and *kauṣäṃ*

→ type *eṅkasträ* is a "true" zero-passive

Passive

- High frequency certainly due to calquing and Sanskrit influence more generally

- Non-exclusive passive and zero-passive suggest a secondary overlay

(• Present middle *lkāsträ* and plausibly more archaic passive present-subjunctive middle *lkāträ* to be investigated further)

- Difficult to prove that passive function of the middle is old

  (if not inherited, could also have developed independently in Tocharian)

- If passive developed entirely under Indic influence, perhaps Middle Indic?

  → Middle is being lost in Middle Indic, but passive remains used

  → E.g. Niya Prakrit only artificial middles, few passives,

  like *śruyati* 'is heard', *vucati* 'is said'

Direct reflexive

- Normal expression is "transitive verb + B *ṣañ āñm* / A *ṣñi āñcäm*"

  A *ppāṣār* 'watch!' vs. *ppāṣār* 'watch yourself!'

- Extremely rare for the middle, best example is *nəm-* 'bow'

Direct reflexive: *nəm-* 'bow'

THT 107 b4   *ñakti*   *arjuṃ-stām*   *nemar-neś*

        god.NOM.PL   arjuna.tree.[OBL].SG   bend.PRT.ACT.3PL-3SG.OBJ.ALL

'The gods bent down an *arjuna* tree towards him.'

PK AS 13B b2   *tumeṃ*   *sā*   *keṃ-ñäkte*   *nmeträ*

        thereupon   DEM.NOM.SG.F   earth-godess:NOM.SG   bend:3SG.SBJV.MID

paine   *ys(ape)*

foot.[OBL].DU   close

'Thereupon this earth-goddess will bow close to [their] feet.'

= will bow herself?

Zero-direct reflexive

PK AS 6B a6 *kektsenne*   *ṣai*   *olypotse*   *tetreṅku*
              body.LOC.SG   be.IPF.ACT.3SG   very   attach.PRT.PTCP.NOM.SG.M

yatäṣṣ(i)tär-ne꞉   *sonopitär*   *likṣītär*
adorn.IPF.MID.3SG-3SG.OBJ   anoint.IPF.MID.3SG   wash.IPF.MID.3SG

wästsanma   *krenta*   *yäṣṣītär*꞉
garment.[OBL].PL   good.[OBL].PL.F   wear.IPF.MID.3SG

'He was very attached to [his] body [and] adorned it; he anointed himself, washed himself, [and] wore good garments.'

PK NS 111 a3 *kᵤse* *po* *yolaiññe* *likṣtär-ne*   *weskeṃ*   *ṣemi*
              who   all   evil   wash.PRS.MID.3SG-3SG.OBJ   say.PRS.ACT.3PL   some

'who washes all evil off him (?), some say'

Indirect reflexive

- Strikingly, also fairly rare.

  → Good example:

  er- act. 'evoke (for someone else)' mid. 'evoke (for oneself)'

IOL Toch 25 b2 *(se)*   *ṣamāne*   *ṣamānentse*   *sklok*
              REL.NOM   monk.NOM.SG   monk.GEN.SG   doubt.[OBL].SG

erṣäṃ   *pā(yti)*
cause.PRS.ACT.3SG   *pātayantikā*.[NOM].SG

'Which monk evokes doubt to [another] monk, [this is a] *pātayantikā* [offence].'

Indirect reflexive

THT 400 b1–2 *krasā-ñ*   *klaiññe*

                 be.annoyed:PRT.ACT.3SG-1SG.OBJ woman.ADJS.[NOM].SG.M

camel   *poyśiṃne*   *takarṣkñe*   *maiyyānt*

birth.[NOM].SG omniscient:LOC.SG faith.[OBL].SG strong.OBL.SG.M

ersamai ꞉   *klaiññe*   *cau*   *āśrai*

cause.PRT.MID.1SG woman.ADJS.[NOM].SG.M DEM.OBL.SG.M concerning

omteṃ   *wteṃtstse*   *eṅkwe*   *ta(kāwa)*

there   again   man.NOM.SG be.PRT.ACT.1SG

'The birth as a woman annoyed me, and I evoked strong faith in the omniscient concerning the birth as a woman (?). Then I became again a man.'

Indirect reflexive

A similar case:

PK AS 15C a5 *taur* *āṣsa* *ktāte*

dust.[OBL].SG head.PERL.SG strew.PRT.MID.3SG

'She strewed dust over her head.'

Possible lexicalisations from indirect reflexive

B *aun-* act. 'hit' mid. 'start' < 'hit for oneself; get onto something'? (= A)

B *ay-* act. 'give' mid. 'take' (suppletive to *par-*) < 'give to oneself'

B *kəl-* act. 'bear' mid. 'goad' < 'bear for oneself' ?? [perhaps not a genuine pair]

B *rəma-* act. 'bow down to' mid. 'bow down, bow down for' ??

Possible refunctionalisation from indirect reflexive

- B *kəla-* 'bring': active and middle well attested

  Schmidt: "Verben des Führens und Bringens" that use "Aktiv und Medium unterschiedslos nebeneinander"

- Apparently: act. 'go and bring' (away from the speaker) vs.

  mid. 'come and bring' (towards the speaker)

Possible refunctionalisation from indirect reflexive: 3sg.

THT 88 b3 *makte*   *pācer*   *walo*   *cwi*
           INT.NOM.SG.M father.NOM.SG king.NOM.SG DEM.GEN.SG.M

comp   *lakle*   *śala*
DEM.OBL.SG.M sorrow.[OBL].SG bring.PRT.ACT.3SG

'The father, the king, himself has brought to him that suffering.'

→   cf. the distal demonstrative *comp* 'that'

THT 91 b4 *tswai(ññe)* *tane* *cärkenta*   *klāsträ*
           towards   here garland.[OBL].PL bring.PRS.MID.3SG

'He is bringing garlands here.'

→   cf. *tane* 'here'

Possible refunctionalisation from indirect reflexive: 1sg.

IOL Toch 307 b1 *k_ucesa*   *alyekepi*   *kaloym*   *wat* *mīyäṣṣälyñe* ꞉
                REL.PERL other.GEN.SG.M   bring.OPT.ACT.1SG or   harm.[OBL].SG

'or by which I [...] might bring harm upon someone else.'

→   cf. *alyekepi* 'upon someone else'

PK AS 12J a3 *tusāksa*   *ecce*   *kälamār*   *cau*   *ñäke*
          therefore.EMPH hither bring.SBJV.MID.1SG DEM.OBL.SG.M now

'Therefore indeed I will bring it here now.'

→   cf. *ecce* 'here, hither'; apparently the speaker is leaving and then returning to
      bring it

Possible refunctionalisation from indirect reflexive: ipv.

THT 107 b6 *cwim*   *nai*   *tāṃ*   *oṅkorñai*   *kalas*

            DEM.GEN.SG.M PTCL DEM.OBL.SG.F porridge.[OBL].SG bring.IPV.ACT.2PL

'bring the porridge to him'

→   cf. distal *cwim* 'to him, to him over there'

PK AS 12B a2 *rämer*   *ecce*   *pkälar-ne*

              quickly   hither   bring.IPV.MID.2SG-3SG.OBJ

'bring him quickly here!'

→   cf. *ecce* 'here, hither'; *-ne* is here direct object

Possible refunctionalisation from indirect reflexive: problem?

PK NS 398 a2–3 *pkāla ///*   *mäkcau*   *smāṃ tākat*   *anaiśai*
           bring.IMP.ACT.2SG   which.OBL.SG.M   test   be.SBJV.ACT.2SG   carefully

yayātau   *ce$_u$*   *oṅkolmai*   *pkāla-ñ*
tame.PRT.PTCP.NOM.SG.M   DEM.OBL.SG.M   elephant.OBL.SG   bring.IMP.ACT.2SG-1SG.OBJ

'Bring (the elephant)! ... Which one you have proven [to be] carefully tamed, bring this elephant for me!'

→ apparently the elephant is to be brought away, perhaps to a place where the king can mount it, for the benefit of the king (and not towards the king)

→ directionality is *not* a generalisable function of the middle, but the function of the middle in precisely this pair. Possibly from a reanalysis from "for the benefit of the subject" to "for the benefit of the speaker" >> "towards the speaker".

Conclusion

In Tocharian contrastive middles:

- Direct reflexive use is remarkably rare; usually the reflexive pronoun *ṣañ āñm / ṣñi āñcäm* is used

- Passive use is very frequent, but to a large extent secondary for sure, and perhaps completely secondary due to Indic influence

- Indirect reflexive use is also rare, but less so, and may be at the origin of more diverse contrasts

- Some contrasts have been lexicalised, e.g. act. 'hit', mid. 'start'

- Some contrasts have been refunctionalised, notably *kəla-*

- Indirect reflexive use appears archaic, but is bleached / degrammaticalised

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THANK YOU

yarke yamaskau
[only active]