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Adam Hyllested, Anders Richardt Jørgensen, Jenny Helena Larsson et Thomas Olander
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Tocharian B ęrkět [A *arkātī] and Related Phenomena1

Gerdi Carling
Land University

Re-interpretation of the medical manuscript IOL Toch 306

The Tocharian B manuscript IOL Toch 306 (Stein Ch.00316.a.2), preserved
in the British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, London,
was originally published in transliteration with translation and commentaries by
Couvreur (1955) and thereafter by Broomhead (1964: 46-8). Recently, the text
has been integrated with the material of the International Dunhuang Project
(http://dpd.bl.uk) Interactive Web Database, and a scanned copy of the manu-
script, of which the number is now IOL Toch 306, is available on the Internet.

The problem with this document has been the interpretation of lines b3-b6,
since their content seems to differ from the other part of the document (a1-
b2), which deals with variants of abdinal cancer and how to cure them. Two
types of cancer are mentioned in the text, cancer caused by gall, Stk. pittja-
jağalma (a1), and cancer caused by phlegm, Stk. kaphajağalma (a4). Thereafter
(a4-b2) follows a prescription for the curing of these diseases.

For a long time it has been suspected that the obscure part b3-b6 concerns
the sphere of sexuality and aphrodisiacs, because of phrases like “desire comes
up for her”, “it stands with blood” etc.

Recently I have examined this fragment in collaboration with Prof. Kenneth
Zysk, Copenhagen, and through Sanskrit medical equivalents we have found
that the described disease in this obscure part of the fragment, b3-b6, is some-
thing more to be expected in our context, namely Stk. rojajalma “uterine can-
cer”. Equivalents are found abundantly in the Sanskrit medical literature. The
descriptions of Śiddhārtha 9.5-9.7, Aṭṭāśaka Hṛdayam, Nidānasthāna 11.44b-47 and
Aṭṭāśa Sangrāhita, Nidānasthāna 11.38-41 seem to be closest to our text. Occa-
sional parallels are also found in Bheda-Sempāṭta, Nidānasthāna 3.9-27.

1 I thank Prof. Georges-Jean Pinault and Prof. Werner Winter for discussions and
important proposals. I also thank Prof. Folke Josephson for valuable remarks, and
Dr. Judith Josephson for correcting my English.

A rakügüluma is characterized by an obstruction of the regular menstruation (due to abortion of a foetus, birth of a child or aggravation of vitä). This results in a bloody tumour inside the uterus, which is painful, burning, and (after a long time) moving occasionally like a limbless foetus. The tumour produces signs of pregnancy for the woman: pallor, appearance of breast milk, particular cravings, vomiting etc.  

**B erkātsa “burning, hot”**

Adams (1999: 94) has a lemma B erkātsa “testiculate”. This meaning is based partly upon an interpretation of the passage b5 màntak no tso erkātsa sul[ta], where tso is identified as “penis”, partly upon a connection with IB *.Hug*- “testicle”.  

The occurrence of B erkātsa in b5 in this text is crucial for the understanding of this lexeme. B tso in this text corresponds to Skt. kuskā “abdomen” (see above) and B erkātsa can be identified as “boiling, burning, hot”, which is given as a characteristic of the abdomen or cavernous tumour inside the abdomen with this disease. The corresponding Sanskrit term is dāha-sūn “warm, burning” (Siddhārtha 9.7). The complete passage in b5 can be reconstructed as màntak no tso erkātsa sul[ta]” “further the abdomen burns hot”.  

**B erkātsa, erkātsa, erkasanta in other medical texts**

In other medical texts (Weber msx) we find the following forms: erkātsa, erkātsa and erkasanta, which are not dealt with by Adams (1999). They are all found in passages with enumerations of medical ingredients.  

Let us consider the individual passages (followed by discussion):  

W 5 a6 sāk sera[li]–rē ckēnta jasotē kremmũ tiślākana āsāy. Adams (1999: 487) identifies jasotē as “sap, decoction”, derived from the root A jār- “boil” B jār- “be excited” (CT *jār-*). This remains uncertain. Everything else is also uncertain except āsāy “flower” and probably also tiślākana “shoots of plants”.  

W 6 a5 yārēr kinn[ī] erkātsa sājaras šārpa. We can be relatively sure of kinn “the bulb of a small variety of the Nymphaea (Skt. ālihajā)”, sājaras “sap of

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2 For details and Sanskrit equivalents see Carling (forthcoming), cf. also Zyk (2001: 162).
5 For details see Carling (forthcoming).
6 Transliterations by Broomhead (1964).
7 See Adams (1999: 734).
9 See Adams (1999: 547).
B erkatte “scornful, hostile”

In Tocharian B we have erkatte “scornful, hostile, angry”, erkatatīne “anger, vexation”, erkatatiśitas “having anger, displeasure”. In Tocharian A there is a corresponding erkat “scornful, angry”, and erkata “anger, scorn”. These Tocharian A forms are obviously related to B erkatte, but they cannot be the corresponding forms, since the regular outcome of a Common Tocharian *arkt- is A arkt, as in A *arktīja above.10

Other B adjectives in -tte are so-called “privatives” that are formed through a negative prefix B a-, o-, or e- to a verbal stem, expressing an action that does not take place.12

B erkatte: can be put into this group, as a derivative of B *yärk-: A yärk- “honour, reverence”, B yärke “honour, reverence”. The semantic development would be something like “to honour” > “dishonour” > “dishonouring, scornful”.

A verb B *yärk- is not attested in any finite forms, we only have the derivation yärke. A yärk- has a present VIII and a pretent III stems. A privative erkatte should have been derived from a subjunctive V stem, with accent on the root syllable: *yärk-, as other -tte privatives,11 with a prefix CT *ṣaN-, B ṣaN-: A ṣaN-.14 The transitivity of B erkatte A erkat “scornful” also indicates that the privative is formed from a subjunctive A stem. A privative formation based on the verbal root CT *ṣaN- would become *yärkalti > *yärkatte which would come out as A erkat B yärkatte. However, the B variant is erkatte, and there is no reason why *a should be monophthongized in this position. Therefore this solution is not completely satisfactory.

Then the question remains: can B erkatte and B erkatte, after all, be derivations from the same stem, CT *arkat “burning, boiling”?15

B erkat- A arkat-: “black”

B erkat: A arkat- is normally translated as “black, dark”. This seems to be relatively convincing: H.49.321 b5 /// erkatte pākṣyena metta ra(m) /// “as the moon in the second [i.e. dark] half of the lunar month”.16 The “dark half” has a paral-

11 Adams (1999: 94) proposes that A erkat, erkata might be borrowings from Tocharian B.

12 Krause & Thomas (1960) § 320-321, Hīmarsson (1991). This word is not mentioned in Hīmarsson except.


15 Prof. Pinault proposes an early *a formation to the causative of IE *h2r2H-, *h2r2H- > CT *arkat-. Still, A arkat is not solved, but it might be a borrowing from Tocharian B.


17 MWI 573.


19 A problem in this passage is the word ूरप occurs again in B 88 a1 (Araoçõesika:) nāvem(i) hirvijana daivikānām tvarakānām sthāyamāvam ihaṃ yasya ूरप =... (yu) maravi saṃvartamāvam vīrakānām sthāyamāvam in(TZB I: 251) ूरप is translated as “bowl”, because of this passage. Adams (1999: 663) translates by “sack”, because of the M 3 a7 passage. K.T. Schmidt (2001: 316), on the other hand, suggests “cap”, translating the passage as follows (with a reconstruction ूरप (yu) hirvijana of the lacuna): “Thereafter the Brahman Dārmaka da the knapsack (yu) he had carried with a Rohrleins. Now they see... Kapuze (yu) bis in (yu) Adjuga gegei (yu) lauten, bemorgen sie ihn hier laufen zu lassen.”

20 TZB II: 88.
B *erkas “cemetery”

There is no satisfactory explanation for B *erkas plur. arkesma “cemetery” and its A correspondent arkuwät adj.pl. “belonging to a cemetery”, from a CT *arks-main. Adams (1999: 95) proposes a connection with the IE root *h₂erg- “destroy, kill”. Hilmarsson (1991: 149-151) suggests a derivation from *h₂erg- “extend, direct, stretch (over a surface)”, which would indicate that the Tocharian graveyards were places where the dead were laid out to be devoured by birds.

With the new interpretation of B erka as “boiling, burning” CT *arks-main could be thought of as (secondarily) derived from a CT *ark(s)- “burning”, i.e. the place where bodies are burned. However, this solution is not completely satisfactory.

Another possibility which has not yet been proposed is to compare CT arks- with Latin orus “death realm, hell”, later “god of death”, for which there is no satisfactory etymology.\(^\text{21}\)

**Conclusion B erka etc.**

Evidence strongly suggests that we have to distinguish between at least two (perhaps three) different origins for these words, beginning with B erk. A arks. The first is B arks(-) A arks(-) CT *arks- meaning “black, dark.” The exact pre-form as well as the relation to B arks(-) A arks(-) is somewhat unclear (see above).

Second, we have a stem CT *ark(–) “burning, boiling” in B erka A *arkats “burning, boiling, hot” and B *arks “decoration” (5). As for the etymology the most probable root, which corresponds to CT *arks “hot, boiling, burning” is IE *h₂erg- “shake, irritate, tremble” (Skt. ṣṛghāt “tremble, storm”, Gk. ἥγεσις “dance, jump, tremble”).\(^\text{22}\) An IE post-stem formation, *h₂erg-₃-s would give CT *arks-, present in the nominal stem B erka and the (secondary) adjectival formation B erka A *arksats.

B erka “scornful, hostile” might be a privative formation based on the verbal root *yirk- “honour” or an archaic *to-form from the causative stem of IE *h₂erg-, also represented in B erka and B *erka.

Finally, we have CT *ark(s)- “graveyard”, of which the origin is uncertain, although a few possible etymological connections can be thought of.

\(^{21}\) Walde (1954: 221).

\(^{22}\) IEW 389.
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