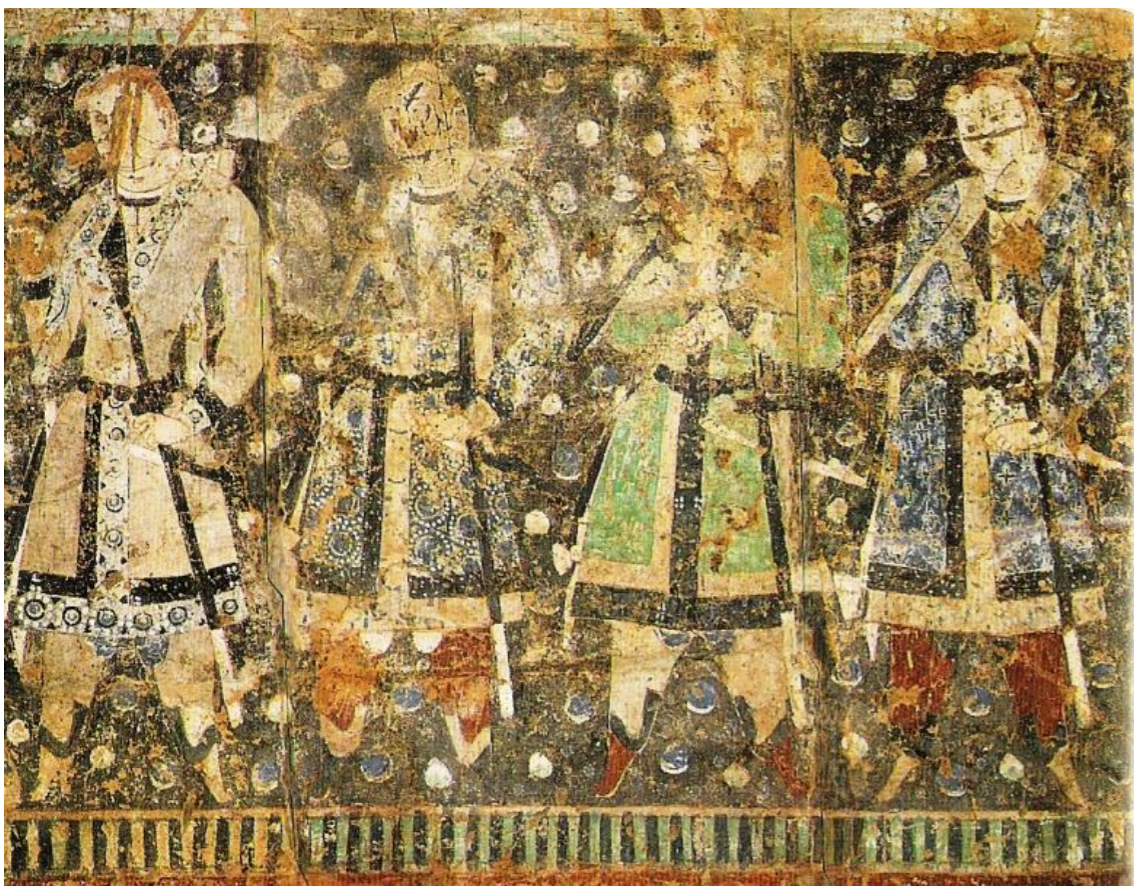


Subjecthood in Tocharian (and some other Eastern Indo- European languages)



Leonid Kulikov

Outline of the talk

- Two types of the evolution of the IE syntax
 - West vs. East (Tocharian, Indo-Iranian, and ...)
- Tocharian: general information and some relevant grammatical features
- Constructions with nominative and **non-nominative** subjects in Tocharian and a few other Eastern IE languages
 - Standard (canonical) case-marking
 - Few examples of non-canonical case-marking
- Subjecthood criteria to be used for Tocharian / East. IE and subjecthood-related features in verbal morphology
- Some concluding remarks on the binary (?) classification East/West IE

Two types of the syntactic evolution of Indo-European

Non-canonical (= non-nominative, oblique) subject
marking in (most) Western IE languages

– **Germanic:**

(1) a. (Icelandic) *Mér er kalt.*

me.DAT is cold

b. (German) *Mir ist kalt.*

me.DAT is cold

‘I’m freezing.’

– **Italic/Romance:**

(2) Latin *mihi caligae eius [...] non placebant* (Cic.)

I:DAT boot:NOM.PL his not please:IMPF:3PL

‘I did not like his boots.’

– **Slavic ...**

Two types of the syntactic evolution of Indo-European

Canonical (= nominative) subject marking : Eastern IE

– Indo-Iranian, Tocharian:

(3) (ToB) ka[w]āññenträ śuke
 desire:PRS:3PL.MID nectar:NOM/OBL.SG

‘**They** desired the nectar...’ (THT 24)

(4) (ToB) [mä]rseträ nauṣāññana wāntarwā po pāst
 forget:PRS.3SG.MID previous:OBL.PL.F thing:OBL.PL all away

‘**He** forgets completely all previous things.’ (THT 121a7E)

(5) (Vedic) sā yamī bhrātaraṃ mṛtaṃ na- amṛṣyata
 that:NOM.SG.F Yamī:NOM brother:ACC.SG dead:ACC.SG.M not forget:IMPF:3SG.MID

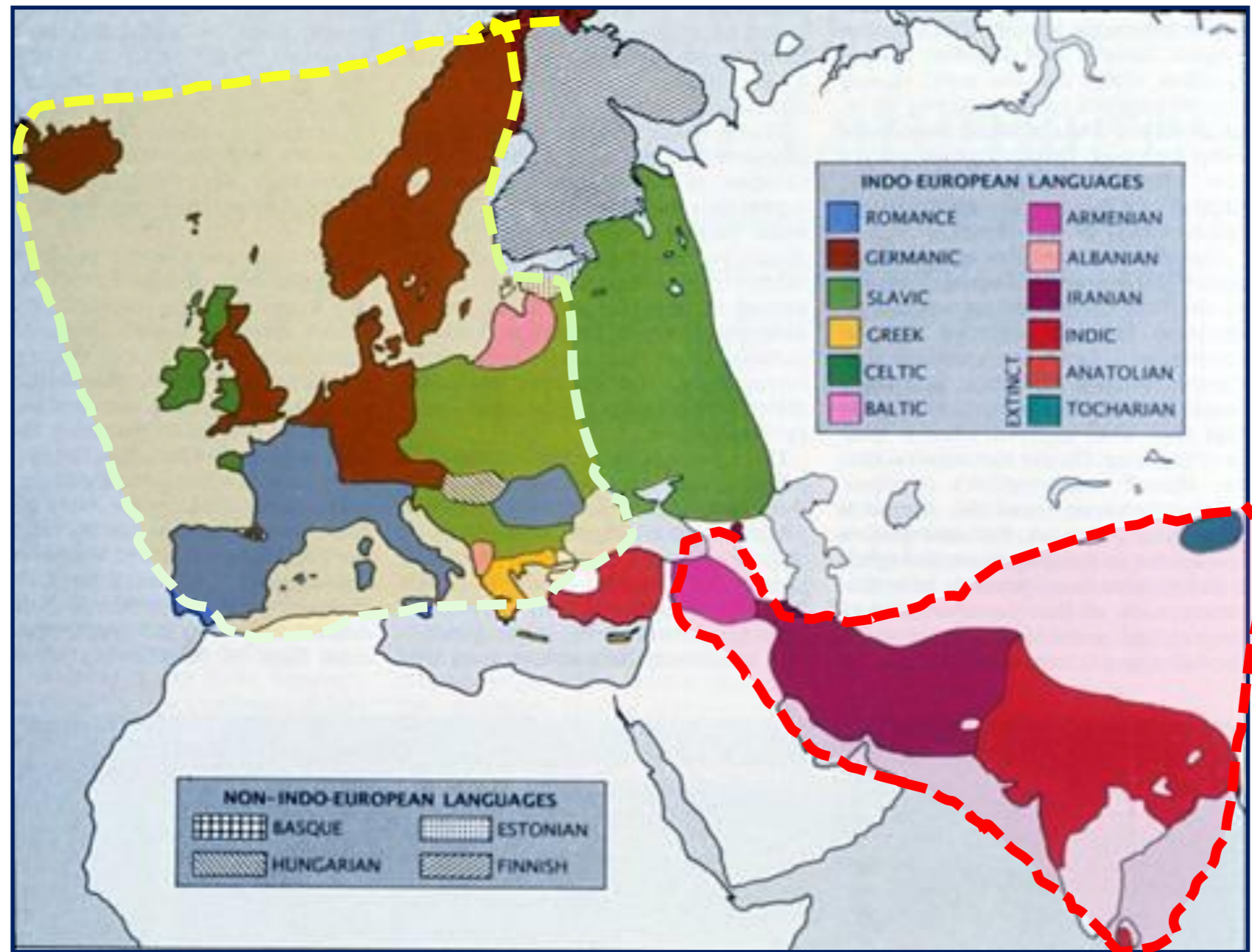
‘**Yamī** did not forget [her] dead brother (= Yama).’ (KS^p 7.10:71.19 = KpS^p 5.9:57.7)

Two diachronic types of the evolution of transitivity oppositions in Indo-European

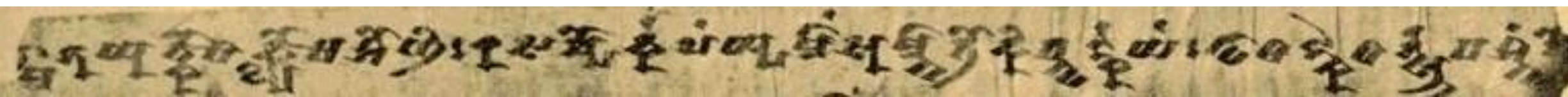
	middle voice	morphological valency-changing categories (caus.)	labiality	oblique subjects
Germanic	++ (new)	–	++	+
Romance	++ (new)	–	+(+)	+
Slavic	++ (new)	–	0(+)	+
Greek	+	0/+	++	+
Tocharian	+	+	–	–
Indo-Iranian	–	++	–	–
Turkic / Altaic	0/–	+(+)	0/–	0
Dravidian	0	+(+)	0/–	0

++ increasing (in productivity, frequency etc.) + present (+) rarely
 – decreasing/disappearing 0 lacking

Two diachronic types of syntactic evolution in Indo-European



Tocharian: location



Tocharian: Historical context and chronology

Toch. B (Kuchean): West ::::: Toch.A (Agnean): East

5th – 7th cent. AD

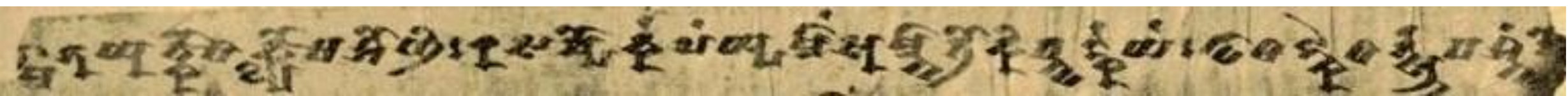
different languages (not dialects!)

split at least 1st cent. AD

(after c. 630 AD assimilated by Chinese empire)

Toch. C? (South, in borrowings in a Middle Indo-Aryan (Prakrit) language, Kröran)

c. 3rd cent. AD



Tocharian: relevant grammatical information

Cases

PRIMARY cases (directly ← PIE)

Toch. A Toch. B

Nominative

-∅ etc.

Oblique

-ṃ etc.

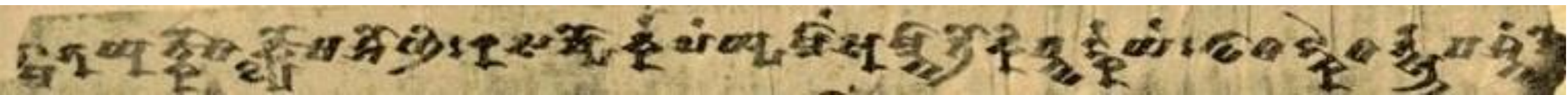
(← PIE Acc.)

Genitive

-s, -i etc.

-(ṃ)tse, -i etc.

(← PIE Gen. + Dat.)



Tocharian: relevant grammatical information

Cases

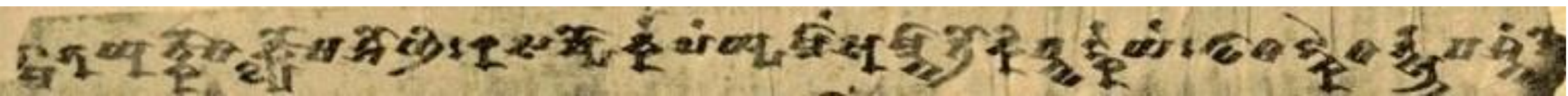
SECONDARY cases

Toch. A Toch. B

Oblique + :

Instrumental	-yo	-	
Perlative	-ā	-sa	(< PT *-ā)
Allative	-ac	-ś(c)	(< PT *-cā)
Ablative	-äṣ	-meṃ	
Locative	-aṃ	-ne	(< PT *-nǎ)

.....



Tocharian: relevant grammatical information

Word order

Free word order

Neutral word order:

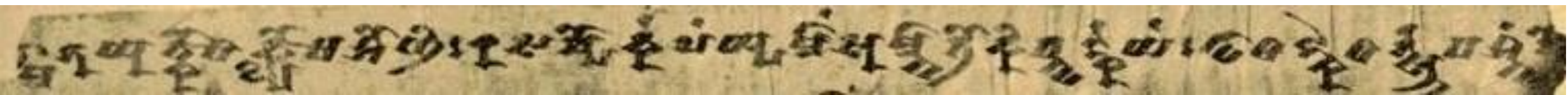
SOV

Other possible word orders (especially in poetry):

VSO

OSV (in votive texts?)

(SVO? – very rare)



Canonical vs. non-canonical case-marking in transitive constructions

Canonical :

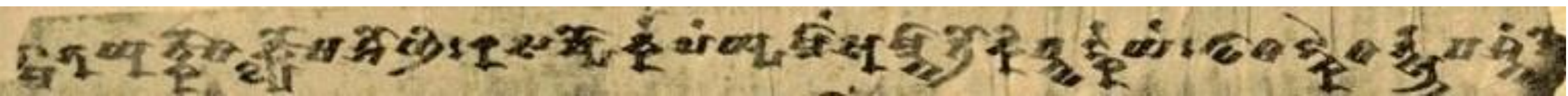
S: **NOM** + DO: OBL

Non-canonical subject marking:

S(Exp): **GEN** + Obj (Stimulus): NOM

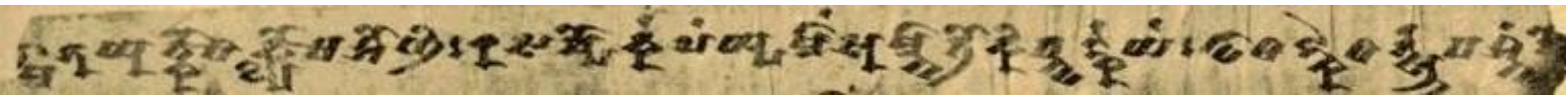
Non-canonical object marking:

S: NOM + DO: **PERL, LOC** ...





Constructions with canonical subjects



Constructions with nominative subjects

- *lāk^(ā)*- ‘see’ (ToB)

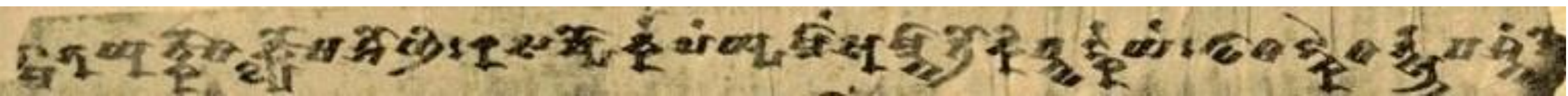
stām ñor cau

tree:OBL.SG under he:OBL.SG.M

Imoṣ lyakāre

seat:PTCP.PRET:OBL.M.SG see:PRET:3PL

‘**They** saw him seated under a tree.’ (THT 107, 17)



Constructions with nominative subjects

- *kārs^(ā)* - ‘know’ (ToB)

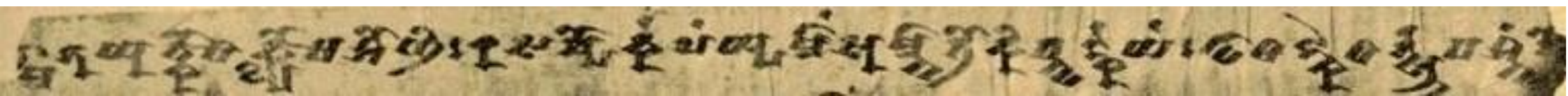
yāmor-ñīkte *še* *cau* *ñī*

Karma-god:NOM one:NOM this:OBL.M.SG I:GEN

palskañe *śarsa*

thought:OBL.SG know:PRET.3SG

‘Only *the Karma-god* has known this thought of mine’ (THT 496, 3b)



Constructions with nominative subjects

- *märs*^(ā)- ‘forget’ (ToB)

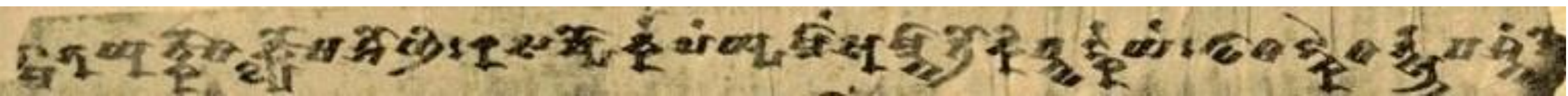
[mä]rseträ nauṣāññana

forget:PRS.3SG.MID previous:OBL.PL.F

wāntarwā po pāst

thing:OBL.PL all away

‘He forgets completely all previous things.’ (THT
121a7E)



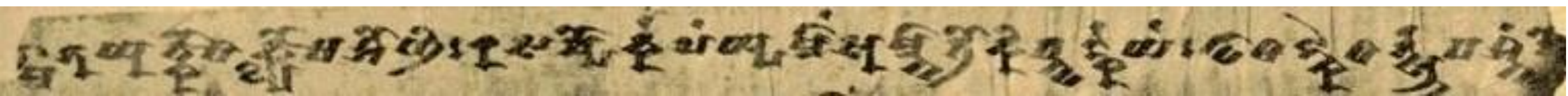
Constructions with nominative subjects

- *kātk-* ‘rejoice’ (ToA)

mar cmolac kākäc ////

NEG birth:ALL.PL rejoice:PRS:2PL

‘Do not rejoice at (your) birth.’ (A 31 a3)



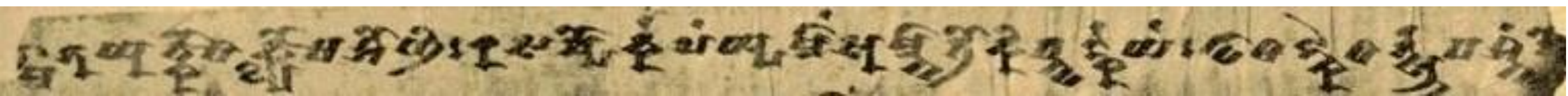
Constructions with nominative subjects

- *plānt-* ‘rejoice, be glad’ (ToA)

plāntac k_uleñciṃ ñemiyo
rejoice:CONJ:2PL female:OBL.SG jewel:INS

‘**You** will take delight in the jewel of women.’

(A 66 b5)

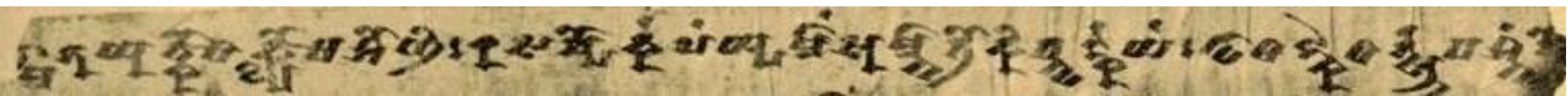


Constructions with nominative subjects

- *plānt^(ā)* - ‘rejoice, be glad’ (ToB)

cesa plontotär śilimuk [r]a
it:INS.SG.M rejoice:PRS:**3SG**.MID bee:NOM.SG like
p[y]āpyaiṃn(e):LOC.PL

‘**He** rejoices at it [= the beauty] like the bee among the flowers.’ (B PK AS 171 a6)

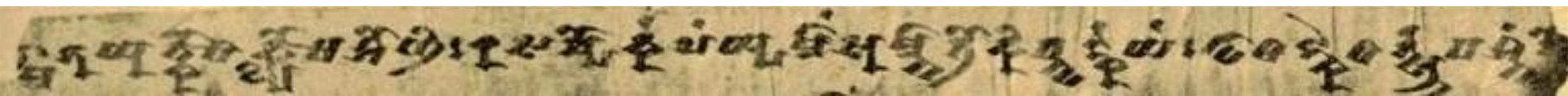


Constructions with nominative subjects

- *win-āññ-* ‘enjoy’ (ToB)

kwri war tā[kaṃ] yolmene
if water:NOM/OBL be:CONJ:3SG pond:LOC
wināññenträ omp *lwāsa*
rejoice:PRS:**3PL.MID** there **animal:NOM/OBL.PL**
lakṣām warñai
fish:NOM/OBL.PL starting.with

‘If there is water in the pond, **the animals, the fishes,**
and so on will like (to be) there.’ (B 11 b4)



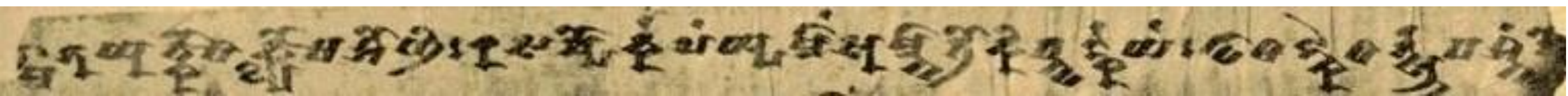
Constructions with nominative subjects

- *kāw^(ā)* - ‘desire’ (ToB)

ka[w]āññenträ śuke

desire:PRS:3PL.MID nectar:NOM/OBL.SG

‘**They** desired the nectar...’ (THT 24)



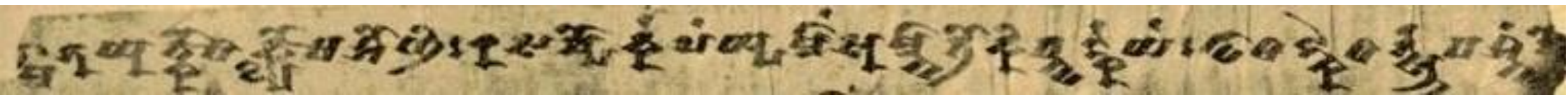
Constructions

with

non-canonical

(non-nominative)

subjects



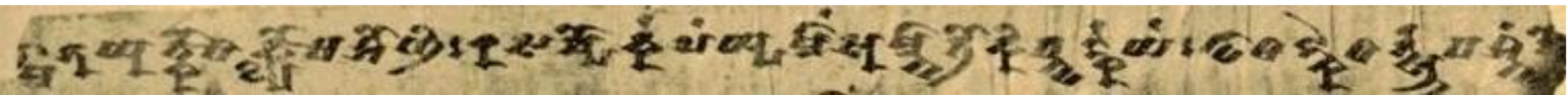
Constructions with non-nominative subjects

- *cäñk-* ‘like’ (ToB)

[*ku*]s(e) *ñi* *cäñśä(m)* / / / / [...]

what/who:NOM **I:GEN** like:PRS:3SG

‘What/Whom **I** like...’ (B 139 b5)



Constructions with non-nominative subjects

- *cäñk-* ‘like’ (ToB)

entsesa attsaik ešne wawālaṣ

greed:PERL completely eye:NOM.DU covered:PTCP.PRET

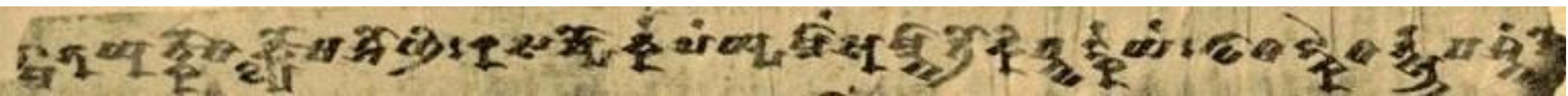
mā cāñcan-me āyor aitsi

NEG like:PRS.3SG-**they**:OBL/GEN gift:OBL.SG give:INF

olypotse šateñ no

very rich:NOM.PL however

‘Through greed (their) eyes (are) completely covered;
they do not like to give a gift, although they (are) very
rich.’ (K-6a2/PK-AS-7Fa2c)



Constructions with non-nominative subjects

- *cäñk-* ‘like’ (ToB)

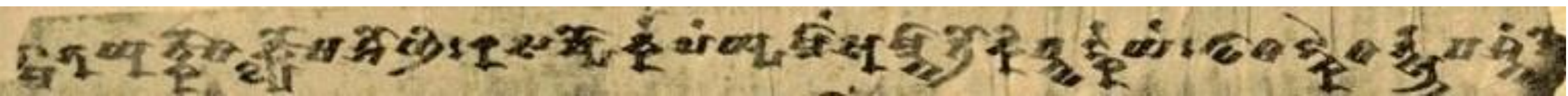
//// mā **ket ra** cãñśä(m) <.>

NEG **someone:GEN** like:PRS:3SG

tom // [..]

these:NOM(?).PL.F

‘...nobody likes [it?] <.> These...’ (B 117 b3)



Constructions with non-nominative subjects

- *cäñk-* ‘like’ (ToB)

//// p[i]lko mā cãñca(n-**ne**) ////

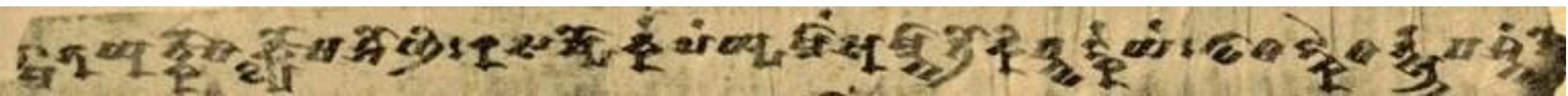
view:NOM NEG like:PRS:3SG-**s/he:OBL/GEN**

‘...**he** does not like the (wrong) view (≈ heresy).’
(IOL Toch 479 b3)

Source: [http://www.univie.ac.at/tocharian/?IOL Toch 479](http://www.univie.ac.at/tocharian/?IOL%20Toch%20479) ;

See: Peyrot, M. (2007) *An edition of the Tocharian fragments IOL Toch 1 – IOL Toch 822 in the India Office Library*. IDP: London;

Peyrot, M. (2008) More Sanskrit – Tocharian B bilingual Udānavarga fragments. *Indogerm. Forschungen* 113: 83-125



Constructions with non-nominative subjects

- *cäñk-* ‘like’ (ToB)

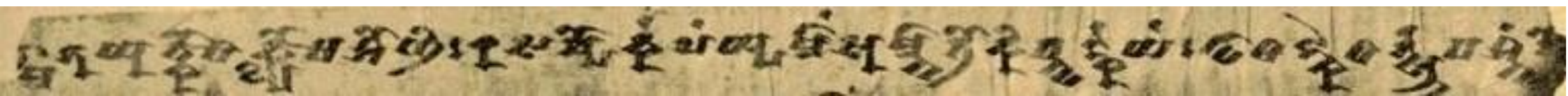
//// (ra)pe śarka[m]

music:NOM song:NOM.PL

cäñcaṃ-**ne**

like:PRS:3SG-**s/he:OBL/GEN**

‘...**he** likes music (and) songs.’ (IOL Toch 116 a1)



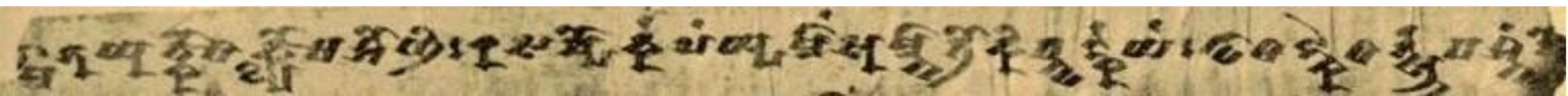
Constructions with non-nominative subjects

- *mānk*- ‘lack’ (ToB)

śātre lauke mānke-tār=**me**

crops large/far/wide lack-3SG.PRS.MID=**you.OBL**

‘**You** lack crops to a large extent..’ (THT 1574 a 2)



Constructions with non-nominative subjects

- *māñk-* ‘lack’ (ToB)

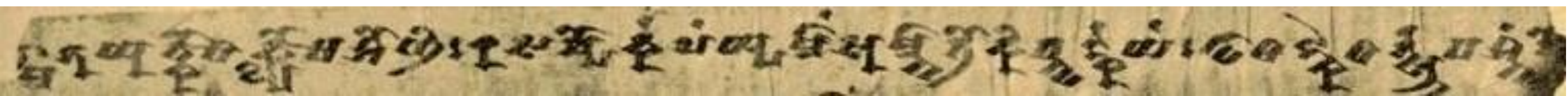
kektseñts= ekñinta mā

body:GEN.SG possession:NOM.PL not

(mä)ñ(k)ā-n(tä)r=**me** ...

lack-3PL.SUBJ-MID-**them.OBL**

‘...if **they** do not lack the possessions somehow..’
(THT 24 b3)



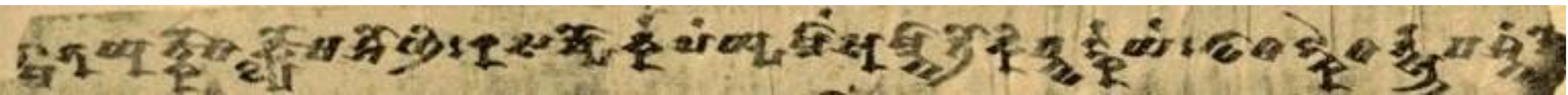
Constructions with non-nominative subjects (abstract noun + light verb)

- *prosko* ‘fear’ + *nesām* ‘is’ (ToB)

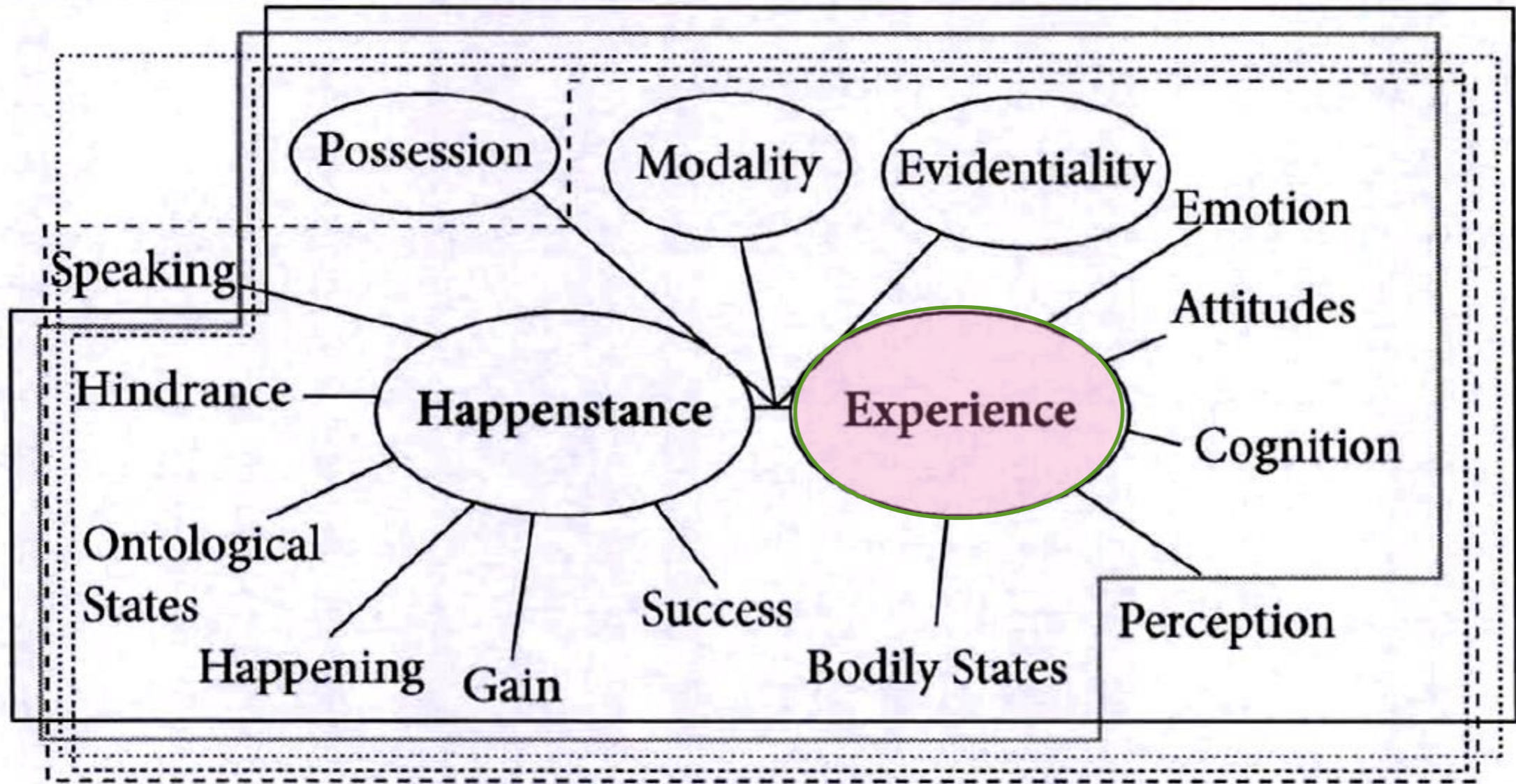
prosko ket mā nesām

fear:NOM.SG who:GEN NEG be:PRS.3SG

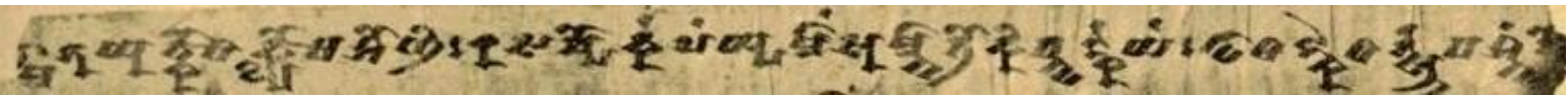
‘Who has no fear?’ (Krause & Thomas 1960:82)



Semantic map of predicates with canonical vs. non-canonical subject marking



- - - - Old Norse-Icelandic ······ Ancient Greek - · - · - · Latin
 ~~~~~ Old Russian            ——— Old Lithuanian





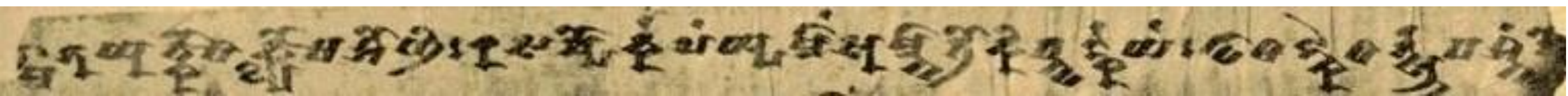
**Parallels: other (Eastern) IE  
languages with predominantly  
nominative subjects**

**Tocharian**

(Old) Indo-Aryan (Vedic)

(Old) Iranian (?)

...?





# Parallels: Eastern IE

predominantly **nominative subjects** in Vedic

- *kā* 'long (for), yearn, desire'

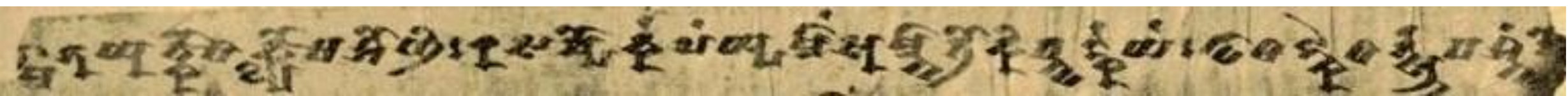
*kāyamāno*

*vanā*

*t<sub>u</sub>vám*

long:PRS.PRTC:NOM.SG.M wood:ACC.PL *you:NOM*

'...*you* (= Agni), longing for wood...' (RV 3.9.2)



# Parallels: Eastern IE

predominantly **nominative subjects** in Vedic

- *mṛṣ* ‘forget’ (~ Toch. *mārs*<sup>(ā)</sup>- ‘forget’)

*sā*                      *yamī*                      bhrātaraṃ

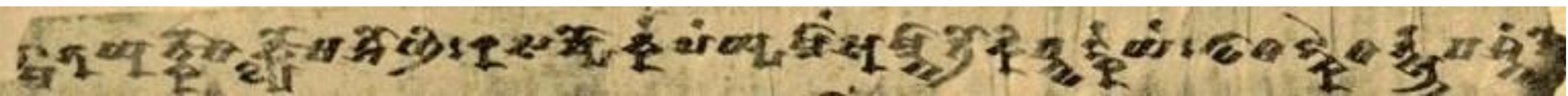
that:NOM.SG.F    Yamī:NOM    brother:ACC.SG

*mṛtaṃ*                      na- amṛṣyata

dead:ACC.SG.M    not forget:IMPF:3SG.MID

‘*Yamī* did not forget [her] dead brother (= Yama).’

(KS<sup>p</sup> 7.10:71.19 = KpS<sup>p</sup> 5.9:57.7)



# Parallels: Eastern IE

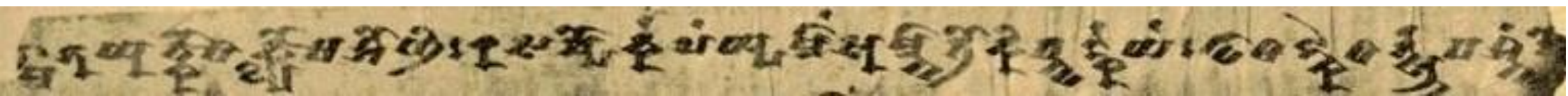
## rare non-nominative subjects in Vedic

- *rādh* ‘be successful, favorable’

pr̥thivī́ [...] rādhyatām naḥ

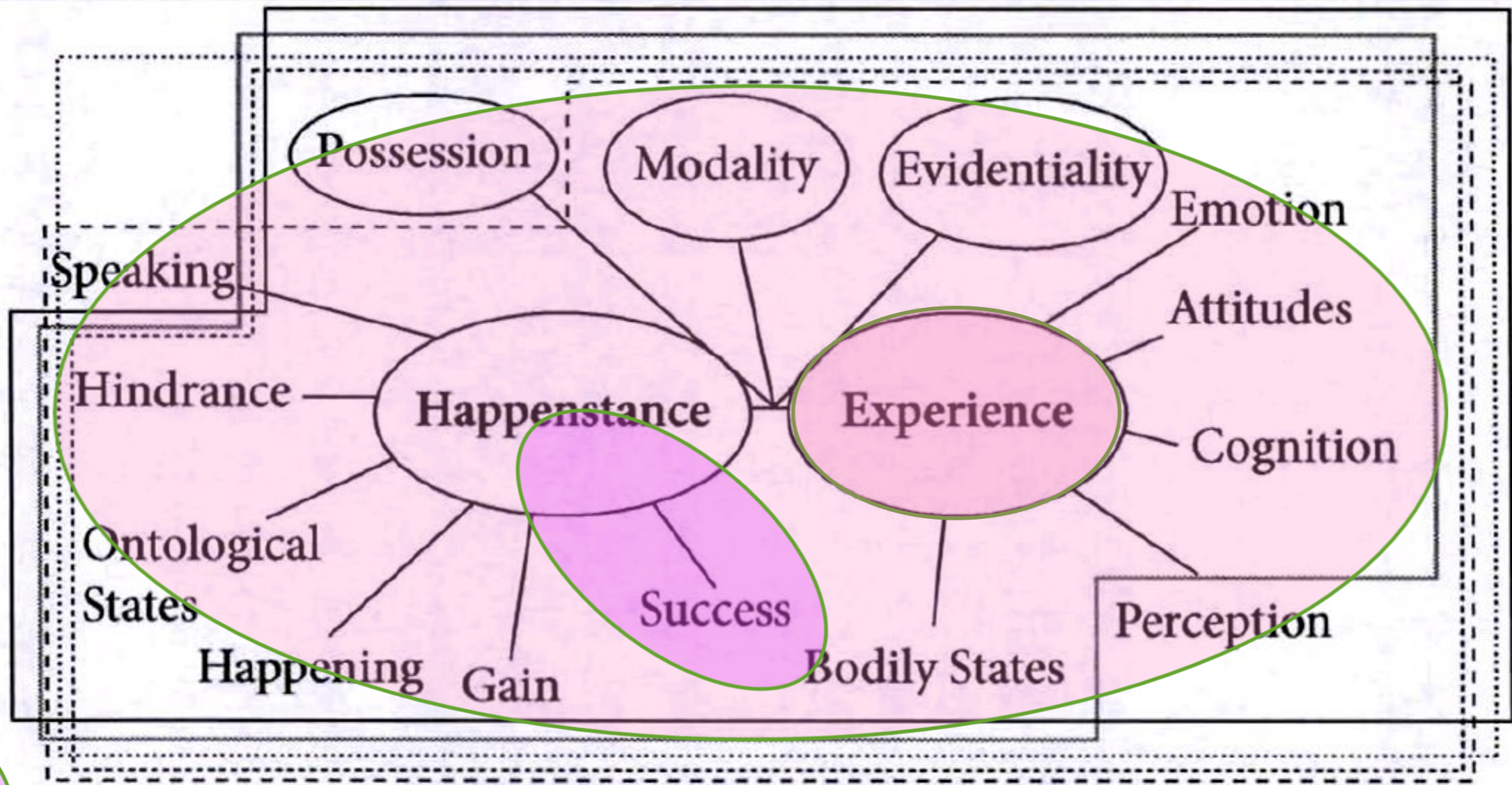
earth:NOM.SG be.favorable:3SG.MID.IMPER we:DAT

‘Let the earth [...] be favorable for us.’ (AV 12.1.2d  
= MS 4.14.11:233.11)

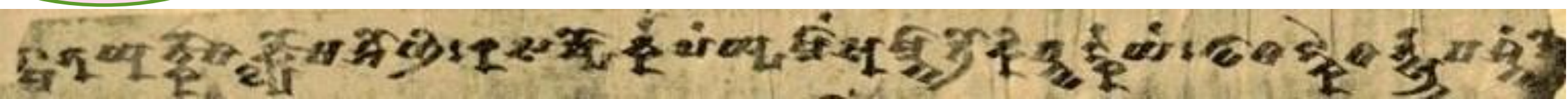




# Semantic map of predicates with canonical vs. non-canonical subject marking: **Eastern IE**



Indo-Iran.  
Tochar.

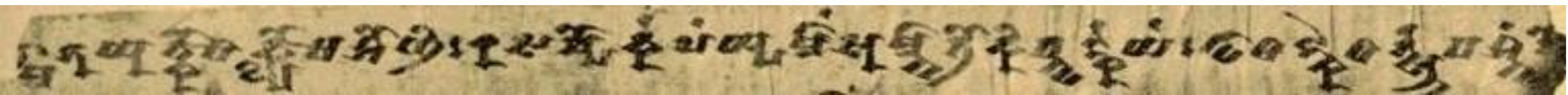


# Subjecthood criteria

## in Tocharian (and Eastern Indo-European)

**(Should we dig deeper?)**

- **WORD ORDER**
  - SOV
- **CONTROL CONVERBS?**





# Subjecthood criteria: Control converbs?

- normally the subject of converbis coreferential with the subject of the main clause (and is omitted)
- rare exceptions (s. Krause & Thomas 168):

*tmāṣ pekant śla tuṅk yantārṣi(nāṃ) (śo)mine tsarā*

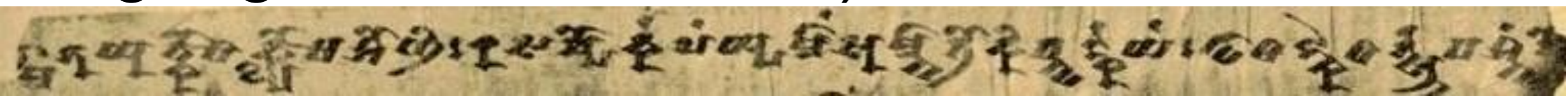
then painter:NOM.SG with love:OBL.SG mechanical:OBL girl:GEN hand:PERL.SG

*eṃtsurāṣ tmä-k säm yam-tär wekat*

**seize:CONV** this:OBL.SG.N this:NOM.SG.N mechanism:NOM.SG fall.apart:PRET:3SG

“When the painter then, full of love, reached for the hand of the artificial girl, this one immediately broke asunder” (THT 640, A7)

- rather a rare example of the DS (different subject) pattern (areal borrowing from some South Asian language / late Sanskrit?)



# Subjecthood criteria

(and subjecthood-related features)  
in Tocharian (and Eastern Indo-European)

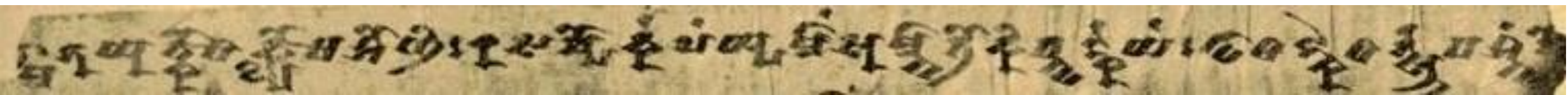
- **WORD ORDER**

SOV

- (• **CONTROL CONVERBS**)

- **VERBAL MORPHOLOGY:**

- certain grammatical features of the verbal forms that indicate non-canonical transitivity = non-canonical character of subjects



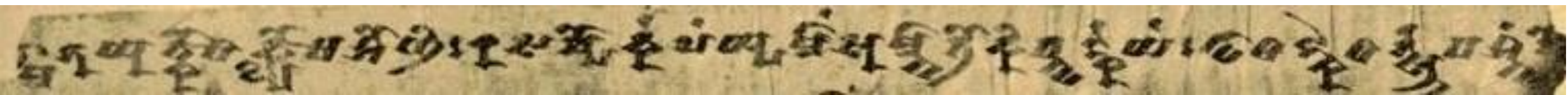


# Further (indirect) traces of oblique/non-canonical subjects in Eastern Indo-European?

- **Non-canonical character of some apparently canonical (nominative-subject) constructions**

C. Viti: “We imply a certain “division of labour” between non-nominative case marking and non-active verbal voice in signalling the low transitivity of experience predicate.”

- Middle forms of (some) experiencer predicates as indirect traces of the (PIE) non-canonical subjects?



# Further (indirect) traces of oblique/non-canonical subjects in Eastern Indo-European?

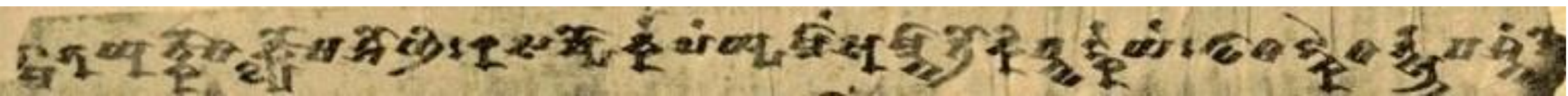
- **What is canonical subject?**
  - canonical subject suggests canonical transitivity
  - canonical transitivity suggests
    - two arguments: S + DO
    - canonical Direct Object = DO-objecthood criteria:

- word order :

DO is normally closer to the verbal than other, indirect and oblique, objects

- passivization :

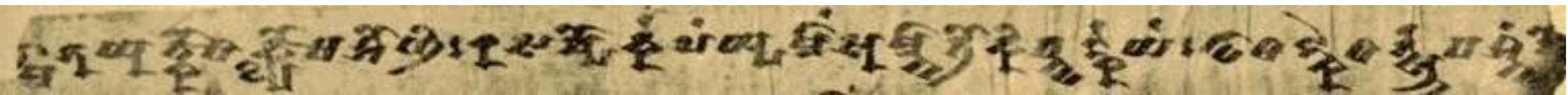
only DOs can be promoted to the subject position in passive constructions



# Indirect traces

## of oblique/non-canonical subjects in Eastern Indo-European: Vedic/OIA

- **Deponent -ya-presents (media tantum)**
  - Mental activities (cognition and perception)  
verbs (+ ACC): passivization test  
*mánya-te* ‘thinks, believe; respect’, *mṛṣya-te* ‘forgets’ ...  
*mānye tvā jātāvedasam*  
believe you to be Jātavedas  
‘I believe you to be Jātavedas.’ (RV 5.9.1c)
    - non-passivizable in Vedic (only from late Skt. on)  
\**tvám manyase* ... ‘you are believed...’





## of oblique/non-canonical subjects in Eastern Indo-European: Vedic / OIA

- **(Some) deponent verbs (*media tantum*)**

= reflexes of verbs originally construed with oblique subjects?

Middle *-ya*-presents (class IV) with root accentuation:

- Change of state and success verbs

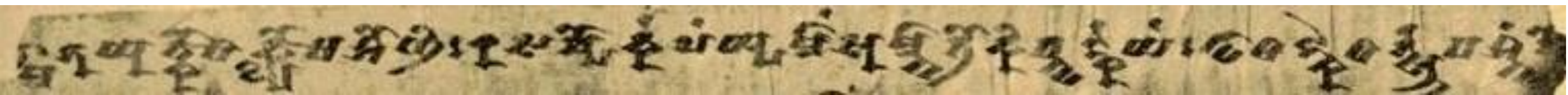
*búdhya-te* ‘awakes’, *rādhya-te* ‘succeeds’, *sphāya-te* ‘swells’ ...

- Motion and body posture verbs

*pádyā-te* ‘falls’, *rīyā-te* ‘whirls’ ...

- Mental activities (cognition and perception) verbs (+ACC)

*mānya-te* ‘thinks, believe’, *mṛṣya-te* ‘forgets’ ...



## of oblique/non-canonical subjects in Eastern Indo-European: Tocharian

- (Some) deponent verbs (*media tantum*)

= reflexes of verbs originally construed with oblique subjects?

Middle forms of *some* verbs typically construed with oblique subjects:

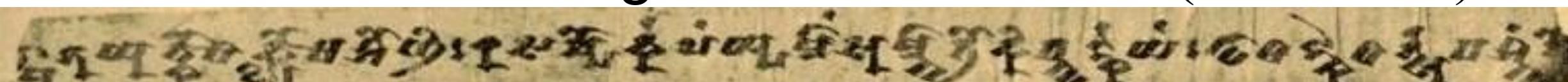
- Verbs of perception :

*plānt(ā)- (plonto-**tär**)* ‘rejoice’, *wināññ-* ‘enjoy’ (*-**nträ*** etc.), ...

- Verbs of cognition and perception) verbs (+ACC)

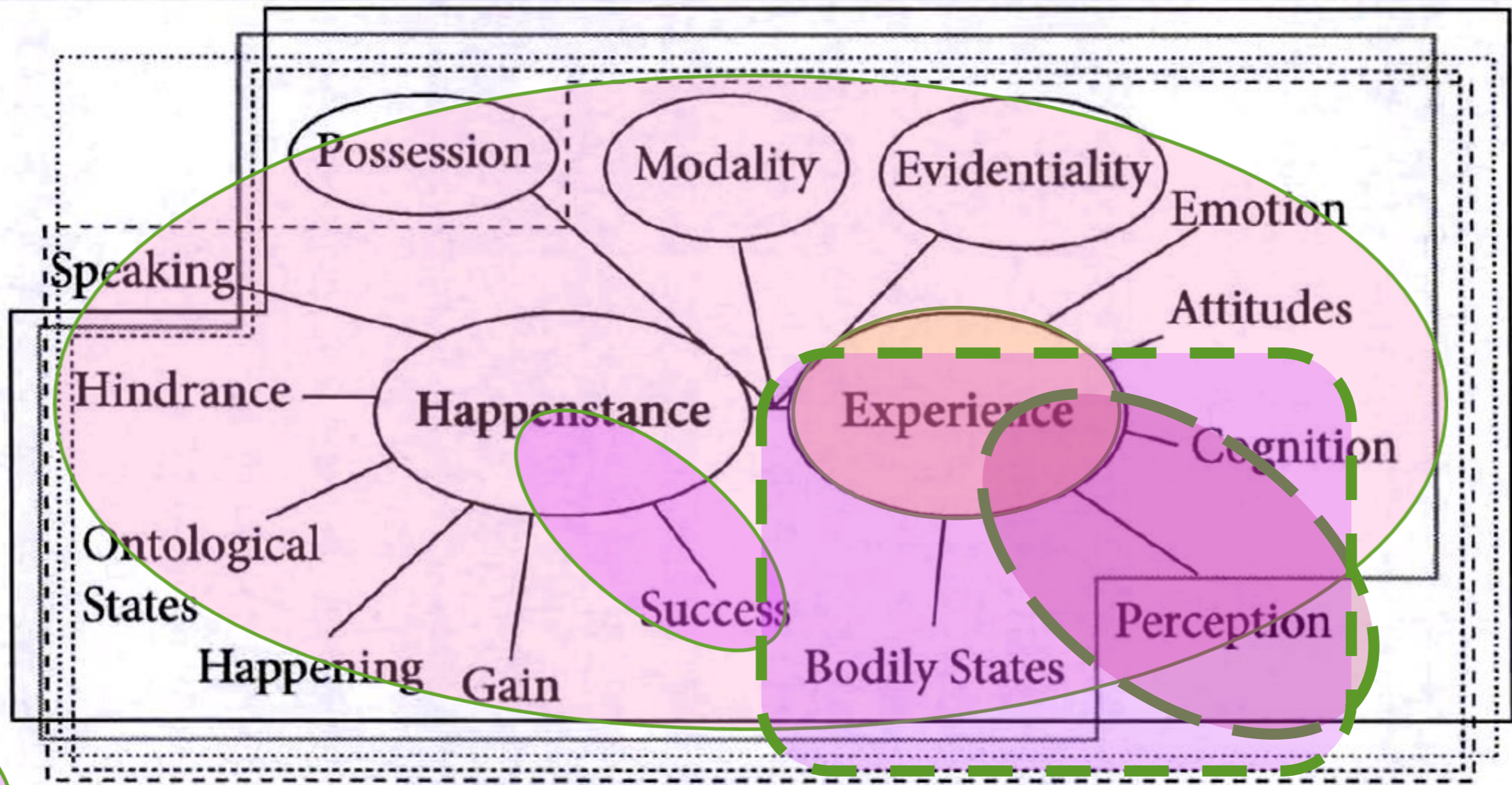
*kāw(ā)-* ‘desire’ (*-**nträ*** etc.), *cänk-* ‘like’, *märs(ā)- (märs-**trä*** etc.) ‘forget’, ...

- Verbs of ontological states : *mänk-* (*mänke-**tär***) ‘lack’



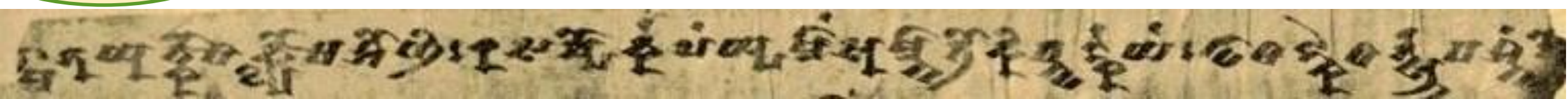


# Semantic map of predicates with canonical vs. non-canonical subject marking: **Eastern IE**



- - - - Old Norse-Icelandic    ······ Ancient Greek    ······ Latin  
 - - - - Old Russian            ——— Old Lithuanian

Indo-Iran.  
Tochar.





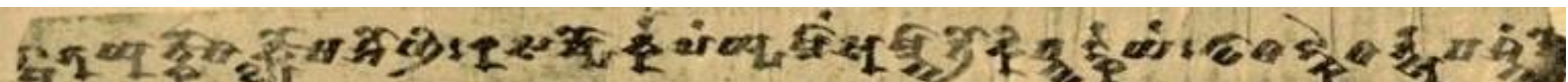
# (Indirect) evidence from Slavic?

- **Indirect support** of this analysis of constructions with middle verbs as originating from involuntary state constructions with middle (“reflexive”) verbs and dative (quirky) subjects:
  - Slavic (Russian, Polish etc.) productive pattern : middle verb (in *-sja* = new West-IE middle < \*REFL) + oblique (DAT) subject

Russ. *Mne* *ne* *spit-sja*

**I:DAT** not sleep:PRES:3SG-**MID**

‘I don’t feel like sleeping / I cannot fall asleep’



# Slavic involuntary state constructions with middle (“reflexive”) verbs and dative (quirky) subjects

Russ. *Tolstomu* *xorosho rabotalo-s'* *v etoj kvartire*  
**T.:DAT** well work:PAST:SG.N-**MID** in this apartment  
'Tolstoj felt like working well [it was easy to work...] in this apartment.'

Polish *Jankowi czytało się tę książkę z przyjemnością.*  
Jan:DAT read:PAST:SG.N **MID** this book:ACC with pleasure  
'Jan read this book with pleasure.'

# (Eastern) Slavic as an intermediary subtype between two major types of syntactic evolution in Indo-European

