

Middle Persian *tanwār* ‘body’ and its cognates

Nicholas Sims-Williams

SOAS University of London
London, UK
ns5@soas.ac.uk

An analysis of the etymology of Iranian words for ‘body’ (Middle Persian *tanwār*, Parthian *tnb’r*, Sogdian *tnp’r*, Khotanese *ttarandara-*) and ‘animate, living being’ (Khot. *uysnora-*, Tumshuqese *usanāvāra-*, Sogd. *w’tδ’r*, Parth. *gy’nbr*, New Persian *jānvār*, *jāndār*) leads to a discussion of some unusual features of compounds in Sogdian and Khotanese. The unexpected phonology of Sogd. *tnp’r*, *tmb’r*, later *tm’r*, is explained as exemplifying a type of compound with a first element in the accusative governed by a second element derived from a transitive verb, as attested in both languages by examples such as Sogd. *šyr’nk’r’k*, Khot. *śāraṅgāra-* ‘beneficent, spiritual friend’ and its antonym Sogd. *δryw’nk’r’k*, Khot. *dīraṅgāra-* ‘evil-doing’ as well as by Khot. *ttarandara-* ‘body’.

Khot. *dīra-* ‘weak, bad’ was originally a *-u*-stem **drigu-*, while the first element of *ttarandara-* was originally a *-ū*-stem **tanū-*. Thus these compounds illustrate a morphological rule whereby the compound vowel *-a-* replaces an earlier *-u-* or *-ū-*, while other Khot. compounds demonstrate that the compound vowel *-a-* can also replace an earlier *-ā-* or *-i-*.

Keywords: Iranian words for ‘body’, Iranian etymology, Middle Iranian compounds

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Среднеперсидское *tanwār* «тело» и его когнаты

Николас Симс-Уильямс

Лондонский университет SOAS

Лондон, Великобритания

ns5@soas.ac.uk

Анализ этимологии иранских слов, означающих «тело» (среднеперсидское *tanwār*, парфянского *tnb'r*, согдийское *tnp'r*, хотаносакское *ttarandara-*) и «одушевленное, живое существо» (хот.-сак. *uysnora-*, тумшукское *usanāvāra-*, согдийское *w'tδ'r*, парфянского *gy'nbr*, новоперсидское *ĵānvār*, *ĵāndār*), подводит к обсуждению некоторых необычных особенностей сложных слов в согдийском и хотаносакском языках. Неожиданная фонология согдийского языка. *tnp'r*, *tmb'r*, позднее *tm'r*, объясняется как пример типа сложно-слово, в котором первый элемент в винительном падеже управляет вторым элементом, полученным от переходного глагола, что подтверждается в обоих языках такими примерами, как согд. *šyr'nk'r'k*, хот.-сак. *śāraṅgāra-* 'благодетельный, духовный друг' и его антоним согд. *δr'w'nk'r'k*, хот.-сак. *dīraṅgāra-* 'злотворящий', а также хот.-сак. *ttarandara-* 'тело'.

Хотаносакское *dīra-* 'слабый, плохой' изначально имело основу *-u* – **drigu-*, в то время как первый элемент *ttarandara-* изначально имел основу *-ū* – **tanū-*. Таким образом, эти сложные слова иллюстрируют морфологическое правило, согласно которому гласный *-a-* заменяет более ранний *-u-* или *-ū-*, в то время как другие сложные слова хотаносакского демонстрируют, что гласный *-a-* может заменять также и более ранний *-ā-* или *-i-*.

Ключевые слова: иранские слова со значением 'тело', иранская этимология, среднеиранские сложные слова-композиции

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The Middle Persian word *tnw'r* [tanwār] 'body' seems to be attested only in Manichaean texts. It is not found in the MP inscriptions or the Pahlavi Psalter, nor in Zoroastrian Pahlavi so

far as I am aware; nor does it survive into New Persian. MP *tnwʾr* has an exact cognate in Manichaean Parthian *tnbʾr*, with a probable variant spelling *ʧm(b)[r]* in one glossary fragment.¹ The Parthian spellings may be read either as [tamvār] or as [tambār].

Both MP *tnwʾr* and Parth. *tnbʾr* are clearly derived from *tn*, which is well-attested in both languages in the sense ‘body, person’ and which also occurs in Middle Persian in many compounds and derivatives such as *tan-bahr* ‘physique’, *tan-drust* ‘healthy, whole’, *tanīg* ‘bodily, corporeal’, *tanīgard*, *tanīgardīg* and *tanōmand*, all meaning ‘corporeal’, *tanīhā* ‘alone’ and *xwēš-tan* ‘self’. Both concrete and abstract meanings, as well as the reflexive usage, are already attested in Vedic *tan-* and Avestan *tanū-* ‘body, person, self’ [Mayrhofer 1992: 621–622]. MP *tnwʾr* and Parth. *tnbʾr* can be straightforwardly derived from a compound **tanū-bāra-*, lit. ‘that which bears the *tanū*’, a term more specific than *tanū-* or *tan*, referring to the body as the physical object which acts as a ‘bearer’ or ‘container’ for the non-physical ‘person’ or ‘self’. The formation of *tnwʾr* and *tnbʾr* may be compared with that of Khotanese *uysnora-*, Tumshuqese *usanā-vara-*, Parth. *gyʾnbr*, NP *ǰānvār*, *ǰāndār*, Sogd. *wʾtδr* ‘animate, living being’, lit. ‘having or bearing breath’, in all of which a noun referring to ‘breath’ as the principle of life is compounded with a form derived either from the root BAR ‘to bear’ or from the root DAR ‘to hold’. The prior elements of these compounds are attested by Khot. *uysanā-* ‘breath’ < **uz-anā-*, MP/Parth. *gyʾn* ‘soul’, NP *ǰān* ‘soul, life’ < **wi-āna-*, Av. *viīana-* ‘*spirit’, both to the root AN ‘to breathe’, and Sogd. *wʾt* ‘wind, spirit’ < **waHata-*, Av. *vāta-* ‘wind’ [Maggi 2016: 71–72].

The Sogdian word for ‘body’ is generally spelt *tnpʾr* in Sogdian script, *tmbʾr* in Manichaean script and *tmpʾr* or *tmbʾr* in the adapted Syriac script used by the Sogdian Christians, all of

¹ [Henning 1940: 47–48], fragment p, R2. Durkin-Meisterernst [2004: 324b] restores the same form in another glossary fragment [Henning 1940: 53, fragment u, R3], but this must be a form of the Sogdian word *tmbʾr*, translating some derivative of MP *tnwʾr* or Parth. *tnbʾr*, since it appears in a section where the MP/Parth. lemmata are words beginning with *tn-*.

which represent [tambār].² Such a form cannot be derived from Old Iranian **tanū-bāra-*, which would have resulted in a form with [v]. Gershevitch [1954: 68, §449] therefore proposed to reconstruct **tanu-pāra-*. Though phonologically satisfactory for Sogdian, this reconstruction is hardly compatible with MP *tnw'r*, and Gershevitch provided no explanation of the meaning or etymology of the second part of the compound. It is therefore necessary to look for an alternative solution.

One possibility worth considering is to interpret Sogd. *tambār* as a loanword from Parthian (or a closely related language). Since its MP and Parth. cognates seem to be restricted to Manichaean texts, one might suspect that this word originally denoted a specifically Manichaean concept.³ In that case a Sogdian borrowing from Parthian would be quite natural, while its use also by Christian Sogdians would be paralleled by their adoption of the term *marḏāspand* 'element', which also seems likely to have reached Sogdian via Parthian [Sims-Williams 2025]. However, since *tambār* also occurs in Buddhist texts and seems to belong to the Sogdian basic vocabulary, this solution is not very satisfactory.

The alternative explanation which I would prefer is to derive Sogd. *tambār* from a compound with the prior element in the accusative singular form as in the case of the Khot. word for 'body', *ttarandara-*, which Emmerick derived from **tanūm-dara-* or **tanam-dara-* (with dissimilation of *n...n* to *r...n*) [Emmerick *apud* Degener 1987: 39; see also Maggi 2016: 78]. In the same way, one can reconstruct **tanūm-bāra-* or **tanam-bāra-* as the etymon of Sogd. *tambār*, with regular preservation of *b* in direct contact with the preceding nasal.⁴ While archaic

² See [Sims-Williams 2021: 191]. One Christian Sogdian text (E24c3.8) attests a later form *tm'r*, which shows assimilation of [mb] to [mm] or [m].

³ On the significance of the body in the Manichaean world-view see [BeDuhn 2002].

⁴ It is also possible (though not necessary) to derive MP *tnw'r* and Parth. *tnb'r* from a similar form, on the assumption that the final **-m* of the first element was treated as word-final and therefore lost.

compounds of this type, with a first element in the accusative governed by a second element derived from a transitive verb, are not common, examples are attested both in Khotanese and in Sogdian. Emmerick has drawn attention to several such forms which survive in both of these languages, namely, Sogd. *šyr`nk`r`k*, Khot. *šāraṅgāra*- ‘beneficent, spiritual friend’ < **šrīram-kāra(ka)*- and its antonyms Sogd. *δryw`nk`r`k*, Khot. *dīraṅgāra*- ‘evil-doing’ and Sogd. *βjng`ry*, Khot. *baśdamggāra*- ‘sinner’, where the prior elements are cognate with Sogd. *δryw-/jyw*- ‘harsh, cruel’, Khot. *dīra*- ‘weak, bad’ < **drigu-*, Sogd. *βj*- ‘evil’, Khot. *baśdaā*- ‘sin’ < **bazdyā(kā)*- [Emmerick & Skjærvø 1982: 55–6, 117–18; Emmerick 1989: 227, §3.2.3.4.6.3].

In Khotanese, the *-u*-stems have in general merged with the *-a*-stems, as exemplified by *dīra*- < **drigu-*. Nevertheless, the treatment of *dīra*- as an *-a*-stem in an archaic and evidently inherited compound such as *dīraṅgāra*- is at first sight surprising, while the similar treatment of the f. *-ū*-stem **tanū*- in *ttarandara*- is even more so. Old stems in *-ā*- and perhaps *-i*- seem to be treated similarly in *baśdamggāra*-, cf. the f. noun *baśdaā*-, and in *hāvaṅgāra*- ‘benefactor’, if Gershevitch’s etymology of Khot. *hāva*- ‘benefit’ < **frāwi*-, Av. *frauii*- ‘prosperity’ is correct.⁵ The *-a*- which consistently appears before the final nasal of the prior element in these compounds does not seem to have a phonological basis but rather to be the result of a morphological rule whereby **-am* replaces other acc. forms (**-um*, **-ūm* and perhaps **-ām* and **-im*). A similar rule is attested in other types of Khotanese compounds, where the final *-ā*- or *-i*- of a first element is systematically replaced by the compound vowel *-a*-, e. g. *ṣṭakula-jsera*- ‘worthy of reproach’ < *ṣṭakulā*- ‘reproach’, *cā`ya-nārmāta*- ‘produced by magic’ < *cā`yi*- ‘magic’ [Emmerick 1989: 227, §3.2.3.4.6.8], *salya-bāyaa*- ‘president of the year’ < *salii*- ‘year’ [Sims-Williams 1991: 292]. To judge from *δryw`nk`r`k* and perhaps *βjng`ry*, a parallel

⁵ [Gershevitch 1959: 250]. But a connection with Parth. *frg`w*, Sogd. *prγ`w*, Graeco-Bactrian *φρογαοο* (*frogaoo*), Manichaean Bactr. *frγ`w* ‘profit’ < **fra-gāwa*-, as implied by Skjærvø [2004: 367a], seems at least equally likely.

replacement may have occurred at some point in the history of Sogdian, but the evidence is minimal. The spelling of *δρυw'nk'r'k* might suggest that the **-um* of **drigum* was not replaced by **-am* as in Khotanese but by **-uam*. However, it is quite possible that *δρυw'nk'r'k* is a pseudo-historical spelling for [žuyangārē], with *u*-umlaut of the first syllable, cf. Manichaean Sogd. *jwγ-*, Christian žwγ- beside *jγw-*, žγw-. In that case one could assume that the replacement of **-um* by **-am* took place after the operation of the *u*-umlaut. Alternatively, a form such as [žəyangārē] could have been adapted to [žəywan-gārē] or [žuyangārē] under the influence of the related forms.

A well-known parallel to the morphological replacement rules described in the preceding paragraph is found in Avestan, where the *a*-stem nom. sg. m. ending *-ō* < **-ah* has become a standardized compound-vowel for stems belonging to other declensions, e. g. the *ā*-stem *daēnā-* in *daēnō.dis-* ‘teaching the religion’ or the *n*-stem *karapan-* in *karapō.tāt-* ‘priesthood’ [Bartholomae 1901: 150]. Similarly in Sogdian, the plural ending *-t*, in origin the collective suffix **-tā-*, seems to be added to the nom. sg. m. form in **-i* < **-ah* not only in the case of the m. stems in **-aka-* (e. g. *zātēt* ‘sons’ < **zātaki-tā-* < **zātakah + tā-*) but also in the f. stems in **-ākā-* (e. g. *xānēt* ‘houses’ < **xānāki-tā-* replacing expected ***xānākā + tā-*) [Sims-Williams 1989: 183, 190].

In conclusion, I should like to congratulate our dedicatee on her ninety-fifth birthday and to wish her many more years in which to complete her Etymological dictionary of the Iranian languages [Rastorgueva & Èdel'man 2000–2007; Èdel'man 2011–2020].

I hope my short contribution will prove useful when she reaches the words beginning with *t*-!

List of abbreviations

- Av. — Avesta
- Khot. — Khotanese
- MP — Middle Persian
- NP — New Persian
- Parth. — Parthian
- Sogd. — Sogdian

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