

# Chapter 5

## 5. The Pronouns

### 5.1. Personal pronouns

The inflection of the pronouns shows some peculiarities which distinguish them from other nouns and therefore demand a special treatment.

#### 5.1.1. Accented personal pronouns

As in the other East Iranian languages, the personal pronouns of the 1st and 2nd person singular differentiate between the nominative and the genitive:

1st pers. sg. nom. I., D. *æz*, < \**azá(m)* or \**az*, IE \**eǵh₂-*; cf. Gath. *as-čit* “I myself, I for my part”, Y. 46.18, but see also Humbach’s (1991: II, 188) comment on this passage. – Gen. I., D. *mæn* < \**mana* (cp. IES: I, 225 f.).

2nd pers. sg. nom. I. *di*, D. *du* < \**tuvam* or \**tu*, cf. Av. (Gath., Y.Av.) *tū*. – Gen. I., D. *dæu* < \**tava*. The sonorisation of the initial *t-* must be due to the generalisation of a sandhi form (cp. IES: I, 378).

From the genitive, the other oblique cases are derived by means of the nominal case endings; cf. dat. *mæn-æn*, *dæu-æn*; all. *mæn-mæ* (*mæmmæ*), *dæu-mæ*; abl. *mæn-æi*, *dæu-æi*; adess. *mæn-il* / *mæn-bæl*, *dæu-il* / *dæu-bæl*; equ. *mæn-au*, *dæu-au*; com. (I.) *mæn-imæ*, *dæu-imæ* (or *me-mæ*, *de-mæ*, from the enclitic pronouns, cf. below; for the forms in general cf. Abaev 1964: 22 ff. and Isaev 1966: 57 ff.).

The declension of the plural pronouns for the 1st and 2nd person is based on the Old Iran. genitive:

1st pers.pl. *max* < \**ahmāxam*, 2nd. pers. pl. *simax* / *sumax* < \**yušmāxam* (or \**šmāxam*?). The *-x-* for ancient *-k-* (Av. *ahmākəm*, *yušmākəm*, Gath. *xšmākəm*) is an East Iranian inheritance shared by Old Pers. (*amāxam*), cf. Gauthiot/Benveniste 1914-29: II, 113, 115. For details cp. further IES: II, 77 f. and IES: III, 128 ff.

As in the singular, the oblique cases are derived from the genitive by the addition of the nominal case endings: dat. *max-æn*, *simax-æn* / *sumax-æn* etc.

In Axvlediani’s grammar (1963-69: I, 173) *mæn*, *dæu*, *max*, *simax* are given as inessive forms in Iron; these forms are not admitted by Abaev (1964: 22 ff.) nor as Digor forms by Isaev (1966: 57 ff.).

When the genitive of the plural pronouns denotes the direct object of transitive verbs (cf. also 4.13.4.3.7. above), the nominal genitive ending appears: *max-i* / *max-i* “us”, *simax-i* / *sumax-i* “you”. When the singular pronouns function as a direct object, the genitive is used.

To denote the third person, the demonstrative pronouns *uiti* / *ie* (*ieicæ*) “that” are used (cp., e.g. Abaev 1964: 23; cf. also below).

#### 5.1.2. Enclitic personal pronouns

In addition to the accented personal pronouns, Ossetic possesses enclitic pronouns in the genitive and the other oblique cases. These enclitics go evidently back to Old Iranian pronominal stems that have been refashioned in keeping with the development

of the case inflection. There is some discrepancy between the two dialects in the formation of cases, but structurally they are identical (cf. Abaev 1964: 23 f. and Isaev 1966: 58).

1st pers. sg. *m-*: gen. I., D. *mæ*, dat. *min / min*, all. *mæm / mæmæ*, iness.-abl. *mæ / mi*, adess. *mil / mæ-bæł*, com. I. *memæ* (< \**mæ-imæ*). Correspondingly, 2nd pers. sg. *d-*: Gen. I., D. *dæ*, dat. *din / din*, all. *dæm / dæmæ*, iness.-abl. *dæ / di*, adess. *dil / dæ-bæł*, com. I. *demæ*.

3rd pers. sg.: gen. I., D. *æi* (I. *iæ* after vowels), dat. (*i*)*in / iin*, all. (*i*)*æm / iimæ*, iness.-abl. *zi / zi*, *si*, adess. (*i*)*il / ii-bæł*, com. I. *iemæ*.

1st pers. pl. *n-*: gen. I., D. *næ*, dat. *nin / nin*, all. *næm / næmæ*. iness.-abl. *næ / ni*, adess. *nil / næ-bæł*, com. I. *nemæ*.

2nd pers. pl. *u-*: gen. I., D. *uæ*, dat. *uin / uin*, all. *uæm / uæmæ*, iness.-abl. *uæ / ui*, adess. *uil / uæ-bæł*, com. I. *uemæ*.

3rd pers. pl. *s-*: gen. I., D. *sæ*, dat. *sin / sin*, all. *sæm / sæmæ*, iness.-abl. *sæ / si* or *zi / zi*, adess. *sil / sæ-bæł*, com. I. *semæ*.

The comitative forms of Iron (*memæ* < \**mæ-imæ* etc., i.e. the gen. plus *-imæ*) are in essence no enclitics (cf. Abaev 1964: 133, notes).

The 1st and 2nd personal enclitics are easily derivable from Old Iranian pronominal stems (cf. for the singular IES: II, 79 and I, 350; for the plural IES: II, 164 and IV, 62). The pronoun of the 3rd pers. sg. apparently derives from the Old Iranian demonstrative stems \**a-*, \**i-* (\**hi-?*; cp. IES: I, 23 and IV, 5), the plural forms from OIran. \**ša-*, \**ši-* (OAr. \**s-*; cp. IES: III, 50 f.).

The enclitics *zi / zi*, which in both dialects are used as inessive and ablative forms in the singular and the plural, are derived by Abaev from OIran. \**hacā* “from” (IES: I, 402). If this is correct, it is tempting to regard this as an oxytone instrumental \**hacā*; this is contradicted by OInd. *sácā* “with”, however (cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 418).

5.1.2.1. The enclitic pronouns, as well as the enclitic adverbs, can anticipate a following noun phrase. Cp. the following examples:

- (1) *Batraz æm ragæi mæsti uid soqquir uæiigmæ* “long ago Batradz was angry with the one-eyed giant” (“... at him (*æm*), the one-eyed giant”);
- (2) *biræ zi fædæ Mæskuiii?* “did you stay long in Moscow?” (with anticipatory *zi* “there”).

As this device is optional, it cannot be compared without further proof with the polypersonal verb of the Northwest Caucasian and Kartvelian languages. Similar devices are well-known in other languages outside the Caucasian linguistic area, e.g. in Modern Greek and other Balkan languages (it is even the rule in some Bulgarian dialects), where it is apparently due to internal developments.

5.1.2.2. In its function as a possessive pronoun, the genitive of the enclitic precedes its head; cp., e.g.:

- (3) *mæ Irmæ, mæ raiguiræn bæstæm* “to my Ossetia, to my native soil” (K’osta 1960: I, 44, the poem *Rakæs!*).

In other functions the enclitics appear after the first prosodic unit of the clause; cp. *uirni næ* “we believe” (but *max uirni*, with the full pronoun);

- (4) *max bar il kuid cæui, dæ bar dær il aftæ cod*  
*max bar il kuid cæui dæ bar dær il aftæ cod*  
 our will on-him (adess.) as goes your will also on-him (adess.) so shall-go (imp.)  
 “as our will concerns him, so your will shall concern him, too” IAS 1961: II, 416; a *Bæxfældisin* text);

- (5) *æz uin æi bafidžinæn aci mæstæimarin* “I shall pay you (for) this insult” (NK 1946: 155; *æi* anticipatory “it”).

## 5.2. Reflexive-emphatic pronouns

The reflexive-emphatic personal pronouns are formed from the genitive of the enclitic pronouns, in association with the reflexive element *xædæg* / *xuædæg* in the nominative, and with *xi* / *xe* in the genitive. The other oblique cases are derived from the genitive by means of the nominal case endings (cp. the declension of the personal pronouns). In the dative and the ablative, *-c-* is inserted in front of the case endings, probably as a hiatus filler. The absence of *-c-* in front of a vowel in the equative, the adessive and the comitative in Iron (*mæ-xi-i-au* / *mæ-xe-i-au*; I. *mæ-xi-uil*, *mæ-xi-imæ*), is apparently due to the recent inclusion of these forms into the case system.

Axvlediani’s grammar (1963-69: I, 177) gives an inessive form of the reflexive-emphatic pronoun which is admitted neither by Abaev 1964 (24) nor by Isaev 1966 (58). For the complete paradigms I refer to Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 276 ff.; Abaev 1964: 24; Isaev 1966: 58.

*xædæg* / *xuædæg* goes back to *\*x<sup>v</sup>ataka-*, an extension of ancient *\*x<sup>v</sup>ata-* (cf. Khwar. (*’*)*xd’k*; Benzinger-Taraf 1983: 667 ff.) and probably parallel to *\*ahmāka-* “our”, *\*yusmāka-* “your”; note, however, the short *-a-* of the Ossetic form.

The form *xæd* / *xuæd* “self, same” (IES: IV, 154; from the reflexive stem *\*x<sup>v</sup>a-*, Aryan *\*sva-*) is found as the prior member in a number of nominal compounds; cf. *xæd-tulgæ* “bicycle” (“self-rolling”, cf. IES: IV, 158; *tulgæ*, a substantivised gerund of *tulin* “to roll”); *xæd-ældar* “independent, autonomous” (IES: IV, 155).

To all appearances, the gen. *xi-* / *xe-* goes back to the ancient gen. *\*x<sup>v</sup>ahya* (from *\*x<sup>v</sup>a-*; cf. IES: IV, 196). The reflexive *xi* / *xe* is also used as the direct object with verbs (*xi dasin* “to have a shave”), as a nominal modifier (*xi qæui – dæ xæzar*, *ændær qæui – dæ daræes* “in your village (is) your home, in another village (are) your clothes” (a proverb; MF: III, 1557), and in nominal compounds such as *xi-bar* “independent, self-willed” (also *bar-xi* “id.”).

*xi* / *xe* is the derivational basis of the adjective *xicæn* / *xecæn* “separate”, probably a lexicalisation of the dative.<sup>134</sup>

## 5.3. Possessive pronouns

Substantival possessive pronouns are formed by adding the suffix *-on* (< *\*-āna-*) to the genitive of the personal pronouns: *mæn-on*, *dæuu-on*, *mæxon*, *simax-on* (plur. *mænon-tæ* or *mænuæl-tæ*, etc.). Similarly we have *uii-on*, *uidoni-on* (from the demonstrative pronoun of the distal deixis) “his”, “her”, “its”, “their” (plur. *uiiion-tæ* or *uiiuæl-tæ*, *uiidon-tæ* or *uiidoniuæl-tæ*; cf. Abaev 1964: 25). In a similar way, *mæ-xi-on*, *dæ-xi-on* etc. are formed from the reflexive pronouns (cf. Abaev 1964: 26).

## 5.4. Reciprocal pronoun

There is also the reciprocal pronoun *kæræzi* / *kæræze* “each other”. In Iron it is inflected like a vowel stem noun: gen. *kæræzi-(i-i)*, dat. *kæræzi-i-æn* etc. (for the

<sup>134</sup> Or from *\*x<sup>v</sup>aidžiiana-*, cf. Gath. *x<sup>v</sup>aidžiia-* “in person”, hap. leg. in Y. 33.7; but the text is not certain, cf. Kellens / Pirart 1988-91: III, 102.

complete paradigm cf. Abaev 1964: 25 and Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 180). In Digor the pronominal *-m-* (cf. 5.5.4. below) is inserted in the dative, allative, ablative and inessive, between the final *-e* and the case ending: *kæræze-m-aen* etc. (gen. *kæræze-i*; cf. Isaev 1966: 59).

No Iranian etymology has been put forward for this pronoun as far as I know. Abaev (IES: I, 581) suggests a borrowing from Turkic *qar(i)š(i)* “mutually” (OTurk. *qarši qarši bol-* “to take one’s stand against”). If this is correct, the rendering of Turk. *q-* by Oss. *k-* indicates that the borrowing took place at an early time.

## 5.5. Demonstrative pronouns

The demonstrative pronouns distinguish between two degrees of proximity. In both dialects *a-* refers to an object close to the speaker and the addressee (“this”). In Iron *u-* signifies remoteness (“that”). In Digor, the latter meaning is expressed by *ie-* in the nom. (sg., pl.) and *uo-* in the oblique cases. It is worthy of note that both dialects distinguish only two degrees of deixis, but partly in different ways.

The East Iranian sister languages distinguish three degrees of proximity, viz. “hic“, “iste“, and “ille“. This is the situation in both the Pamir languages and Pashto. As to this rule, Yaghnōbi represents an exception: there we have a dir. case *iš* (< \**aiša-*), an obl. case *it(i)* (< \**aita-*), a pl. dir. case *ištīt*, an obl. case *ititi* “this” as opposed to a dir. case *ax* (cp. Sogd. *’gw*), an obl. case *aw(i)* (cp. Sogd. *’w*), a pl. dir. case *axtit*, and an obl. case *awtiti* “that” (Bielmeier in Schmitt 1989b: 483; cp. also Xromov 1972: 26).

To all evidence, Avestan is also characterised by a three-term deixis of the demonstrative pronouns, with the stems *a-* “hic“, *ima-* “iste“, and *auua-* (*hāu*) “ille“ (unfortunately, Reichelt, 1909: 279 ff. is not clear in his treatment of the demonstrative pronouns). The same system applies to Khotanese (cf. Emmerick 1989: 220). Three degrees of proximity are to all appearances the rule in Sogdian, although this is not explicitly said by Gershevitch in his detailed treatment of the demonstrative pronouns (1961: 206 ff.).<sup>135</sup>

In all Caucasian neighbour languages of Ossetic the demonstrative pronouns distinguish three degrees of deixis. The same rule applies in general to the Turkic languages; cf. OTurk. *bu / bo, šu, ol*, Anat. Turkish *bu, şu, o* “hic, iste, ille“, etc. It is therefore of some interest that Karachay-Balkar, which is spoken on a previously Ossetic territory, shows a two-term deixis of the same type as Ossetic with *bu* “this” and *ol* “that” (but note Noghay *bul, ol, sol*, Kum. *bu, šo, o* “hic, iste, ille“)

In view of these facts I find it natural to presume that the different pronominal elements used by the two Ossetic dialects to form the pronoun of the distal deixis reflect an earlier three-term deictic system and that the typological similarities between Ossetic and Karachay-Balkar are not coincidental. We cannot but guess which cause gave rise to this change. I do not know how Yaghnōbi and Ossetic might fit together in this respect. As the reduction of the deictic system is common to both Ossetic dialects (and is therefore comparatively old), contacts with Russian are highly unlikely to be responsible for it.

5.5.1. As already mentioned, *a-* expresses proximity, “this”, in both dialects of Ossetic. It evidently goes back to OIran. \**a-*, which also expresses proximity (cf. Bartholomae 1904: 1 ff.); cp. the following examples:

<sup>135</sup> Dieter Weber (Göttingen), in a private communication (letter of 4th May 1982).

(1) Av. *aṭ čā ahmāi varənāi* “to this belief (of ours), to orthodoxy” (Y. 49.3, opposed to *ṭkaēšāi* “heresy” in the following line);

(2) OPers. *ava ahyāyā dipiyā nay nipištam* “that has not been written in this inscription” (DB IV, 47, Kent 1953: 129);

OInd. *ayām* (m.) “this”, dat. *a-smāi*, gen. *a-syā* etc. (cf. Mayrhofer, EWAlA: I, 35).

The pronominal stem *a-* is used as the basis of a number of derivatives (adjectives, adverbs); cf. *a-xæm* / *a-uæxæn* “such”, *ai-as* / *ai-asæ* “so big”, *ai-bærc* / *ai-bærcæ* “so much”, I. *aftæ* (*\*a-utæ*) “so, in this way” (cf. IES: I, 23, Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 171, 183).

5.5.2. Iron *ui-*, (*u-*), designating the distal deixis, has to be derived either from OIran. *\*ava-* “that” (cp. Bartholomae 1904: 163 ff.) or from a conflation of *ava-* with *hauv* (cp. OInd. *a-sāu*?). Cp. the following examples:

(3) Av. (Gath.): *auuā maθrā yō rāθmō ašāt hacā* “with that formula which (is) depending on truth” (Y. 44.17; Humbach’s (1991) translation).

(4) Y. Av.: *yaθa hāu maza mərəyō saēnō yaθa auue abrā upāpā masitō* “as that great eagle, as those rain clouds veil the great mountains” (Yt. 14.41);

(5) OPers.: *baga vazraka Auramazdā hya imām būmim adā hya avam asmānam adā* “a great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created that heaven” (DNa 1-2; Kent 1953: 137);

(6) OPers.: *I martiya maguš āha Gaumāta nāma hauv udapatatā* “there was one man, a Magian, Gaumata by name, that one (the above-mentioned) rose up” (DB I, 36; Kent 1953: 117).

Digor *o-* (*uo-*), which in the oblique cases of both singular and plural signifies the distal deixis, also goes back to OIran. *\*ava-* (cp. IES: IV, 5). The stem *u-* / *uo-* is the basis of a number of derivatives; cf. D. *uæ-xæn* (*a-uæ-xæn*) “such” (I. *u-xæm* “id.” is rare; cf. IES: IV, 100); *ui-as* / *uoi-asæ* “so big, equal” (IES: IV, 13); I., D. *uæd* “then” (< *\*avada*; cp. IES: IV, 63), D. (*u*)*otæ* (< *\*ava-θa*) “thus” (IES: II, 231 f.), etc.

5.5.3. The Digor nom. *ie* (*e*, (*i*)*eiæ*), pl. *ie-tæ*, seems to go back to OIran. *\*ay-*, Av. *aiiəm*, *aēm* (m. nom. sg.), Y. Av. *īm* < *iiəm*, OInd. *ayām*, *iyām*, *idām* (cf. IES: I, 410), the vowel (*i*)*e-* apparently being due to umlaut. However, in OInd. as well as in OIran. this pronoun expresses proximity (Wackernagel-Debrunner: III, 509: “Ich-Deixis”); cf. expressions such as OInd. *iyām prthivī* vs. *asāu dyáuh*, “the earth here” vs. “the heaven yonder”, or OPers. *imām būmim*, Y. Av. *imaṃ zāṃ* vs. OPers. *avam asmānam*, Y. Av. *aom asmānam*; cp. also OInd. *imām* = *terram*, *amūm* = *caelum*. In Sogdian *y-* / *m-* < *\*ayam*, *\*ima-* expresses proximity as well, apart from functioning as a definite article (cf. Sims-Williams in Schmidt 1989: 186).

The same pronominal stem is probably the basis of I. *ibon(-ti)*, D. *ieu-bon* (*ieubon(æ)*, *ieubontæ*) “recently” (lit. “these days”, cf. IES: I, 539; a remnant of a former meaning “this”?), rather than *iu* / *eu* “one”.

5.5.4. In both dialects, the stems *a-* and *ui-* (or *u-*) / *o-* (or *uo-*) form the basis of the singular declension. Between the stem and the case ending, an *-m-* (< *\*-hm-* < *\*-sm-*) is inserted in the dative, ablative and inessive: *a-m-æn*, *a-m-æi am* / *a-m-i*; I. *ui-m-æn*, *ui-m-æi*, *ui-m*, D. *o-m-æn*, *o-m-æi*, *o-m-i*. On the other hand we have I. all. *a-mæ*, *ui-mæ*, adess. *a-uil*, *u-uil*; D. *o-mæ*, *o-bæł*, and gen. *a-i*, *u-i* / *o-i* < *\*a-hya*, *\*ava-hya*.

In Iron, *a-don* “these” and *ui-don* “those, they” form the basis of the plural declension. To this stem, the nominal case endings are added in the agglutinative way: dat. *a-don-æn*, *ui-don-æn* etc. The forms *adon*, *uidon* function both as the nominative and the genitive; when used as a genitive, the nominal case ending *-i* can be added

(complete paradigms will be found in Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 184; Abaev 1964: 27; cf. also Isaev 1966: 59).

The Iron plural form is enigmatic. Abaev (IES: I, 30; cf. also Édél'man 1990: 217) explains the *-d-* as a sonorised form of the plural ending *-t-*; *-on* apparently derives from the ancient gen. plur. *\*-ānām*. But in the nominal declension, the plural *-t-* has resisted sonorisation due to its morphological independence (cf. 4.13.3.1. above). Should *-d-* rather be traced back to a deictic particle of some sort, or, perhaps, to a pronominal stem such as *\*ta-*, *\*aita-*?

The pluraliser *-t-* can further be added to the plural forms (as a double characterisation): *adættæ*, *uidættæ* (< *adon-tæ*, *uidon-tæ*) “these, those and their like”. I. *a-tæ*, *ui-tæ* are found in the expressions *atæ-ppæt* “all these”, *uitæ-ppæt* “all those (of a larger group)” (cf. IES: I, 81; IV, 22; for *æppæt* / *ænk(k)æt* “all” cf. IES: I, 170). The pluraliser is also added to the genitive in the expression *aitæ-uitæ kænin* “to hesitate”, as well as the inessive forms *am* / *ami*, *uim* / *omi* used as adverbs in the meaning “here”, “there” with an amplifying meaning: *ami-ti*, *uimi-ti* “in these, those parts”.

5.5.5. It is tempting to regard the forms *atæ*, *uitæ* as older plurals, and *adon*, *uidon* as secondary generalisations of the genitive in the function of both the subject and the object case.

In Digor, the nominative plural is formed by adding the plural suffix *-tæ* to the nominative singular: *a-tæ*, *ie-tæ* “these, those” (cf. Isaev 1966: 59). The oblique cases are formed from the stems *an-*, *on-*: gen. *an-i*, *on-i*, dat. *an-æn*, *on-æn*, etc. It seems natural to derive these stems from ancient genitive plural forms: *\*ānām*, *\*(w)onām*. In that case Digor would retain the earlier structure, with the nominative plural ending in *-tæ* and the genitive forming the basis of the oblique cases.

D. *an-* (not *\*on-!*) < *\*ān-* is probably due to an analogy with the nominative and the singular forms.

5.5.6. The nominative singular of *a-* “this” is *a* or *ai* in Iron and *a* or *a-ia* in Digor (with a deictic particle, cf. *ie-ia* “that”). In Iron, the latter form is synonymous, and originally identical, with the genitive (*\*ā-hya*). It is used as a substantive only: *ai ændær dune u* “this is another world (... another matter)”. When it is used as a modifier, the particle *-ci* / *ci* (< *\*čid*, indef. pron., neutr.) is normally added to it. The markers of number and case follow the noun phrase as a whole: nom. *a-ci læg*, dat. *a-ci læg-æn*, gen. *a-ci læž-i*, etc.; D. nom. *a-ci bon* “(on) this day” (cp. IES: I, 27 and 319).

Similarly, I. *uui* (*ui*) stands for both the nominative and the genitive (< *\*ava-hya*). When it is used as a modifier, *-ci* is regularly added as well: *u-ci bonæi fæstæmæ* “after that day”. The same applies to the Digor nominative *ie(ia)*: *ie-ci ræstæg* “at that time” (cf. IES: IV, 5 f.).

Cp. the following examples:

- (7) I. *abon bærægbon kæi u, uui zonis ...?* “do you know that it is a holiday today?” (“that it is a holiday today, do you know that?”; Gædiati Comaq 1959: 160, *Fidælti namis*);
- (8) *ci xuicaucæn dæ fændi, uimæn kuv* “pray to the god you wish” (“which god you will, pray to him”; Gædiati Comaq 1959: 139).
- (9) D. *ietæ ba in zaxtonæ* “and they said to him”;
- (10) D. *mænæn mæ sabiitæ æstongæi niuuxaxton æma uonæn i nantixuari k'oxizag lasun.*

<i>mænæn</i>	<i>mæ sabiitæ</i>	<i>æstongæi</i>	<i>niuuxaxton æma uonæn</i>
for-me (dat.)	my children (nom.pl.)	hungry (abl.sg.)	I-left and to-them (dat.)
<i>i</i>	<i>nantixuari</i>	<i>k'oxizag lasun</i>	
the	of-maize (gen.)	handful	I-bring

“I left my children hungry and am bringing them a handful of maize” (Isaev 1966: 154).

In a number of fixed expressions *a-*, and in part also *ui-* / (*u*)*o-*, precede a noun without adding *-ci* / *ci*. In these cases, both words constitute a lexical unit; cf. *urdæm* / *ordæmæ* “in that direction”, *urđigæi* / *ordigæi* “from that direction”, D. *ordæg* “in that direction”; *ardæm* / *ardæmæ* “in this direction”, *ardigæi* / *ardigæi*, *ardægæi* “from here”; etc. (*ærdæg* < \**arda-ka-* “a half, side”; cp. 4.14.4. above); *a-bon* / *a-boni* “today” (IES: I, 24), *a-bæst-ag* “(inhabitant) of this place” (cp. MF: I, 343 s.v. *bæstag*), *a-qæugkag* / *a-γæugkag* “(inhabitant) of this village” (cp. MF: I, 446, s.v. *qæugkag*), *a-zær* / *a-izæri* “tonight” (MF: I, 16), *a-zimæži* / *a-zumægi* “this winter” (MF: I, 17, 18), *a-koimag* “(inhabitant) of this glen (*kom*)” (MF: I, 22).

The use of the demonstrative pronouns without *-ci* / *ci* no doubt represents an older stage of development than the normal use of the modern language.

## 5.6. Interrogative pronouns

The Aryan interrogative stem \**ka-* / \**ča-*, \**či-* (IE \**k<sup>h</sup>e/o-*, cf. Mayrhofer, EWAIA: I, 284 f., resp. \**k<sup>h</sup>i-*) forms the basis of the Ossetic interrogative pronouns, which are also used as relative pronouns.

In both dialects, a distinction is made between animate and inanimate (perhaps rather personal and non-personal) interrogatives “who” and “what”, but the inflectional forms are in part different.

5.6.1. The inanimate interrogative is the same in both dialects. The nom. sg. is I. *ci*, D. *ci* < \**čid*, gen. sg. *cæi* < \**čahya* (cp. IES: I, 319). A stem *cæ-* forms the basis of the other oblique cases. As in the inflection of the demonstrative pronouns (cp. 5.5.1. above), an *-m-* is inserted between the stem and the case endings in the dative, ablative and inessive: dat. I., D. *cæ-m-æn*, abl. I., D. *cæ-m-æi*, ines. *cæ-m* / *cæ-m-i*.

The pluraliser *-t-* is attached to the case forms of the singular, the endings being *-tæ* in the nominative, and *-ti* / *-ti* in the oblique cases: nom. *ci-tæ* / *ci-tæ*, gen. *cæi-ti* / *cæi-ti*, dat. *cæmæn-ti* / *cæmæn-ti*, etc. In the equative, the case ending follows the pluraliser: *cæi-t-au*. In Iron, however, the order of the inflectional suffixes in the plural comitative is optional, *cæ-ima-ti* (*cemæ-*) existing along with *cæi-t-ima*.

5.6.2. The nominative singular of the animate interrogative pronoun is *či* in Iron and *ka* in Digor, the genitive singular being I. *kæi*, D. *ke*. The inflection is based on a stem *kæ-* in both dialects.

D. *ka* may go back to the Aryan fem. nom. \**kā* (Av., OInd. *kā*). The long *-ā* has been retained in monosyllables, cp. OInd. *mā* “that not” (the prohibitive negation; cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: II, 614). Ancient \**kah* (O. Av. *kā*, Y. Av. *kō*, *kas-tē* “who for you”; cp. Bartholomae 1904: 422 ff.) would probably have resulted in \**ki* (cp. 4.13.4.3. above). The Digor gen. *ke* is to all appearances a contracted form of *kæi* < \**ka-hya*. The reason for this contraction is not clear, but a monophthongisation *æi* > *e* is also found in D. *ke-i-au* (equative “as who”, but *cæ-i-au* “as what”; the *-i-* is a glide), I. *čemæ* beside *kæ-ima*, *cemæ* beside *cæ-ima* (com. “with whom, what”).

The Iron nom. *či* seems to be identical with the Digor gen. *ke* (cf. IES: I, 595). If that is correct, the actual Iron gen. *kæi* is an innovation (by analogy with *cæi*, the genitive of the inanimate interrogative?).

The inflection of the animate interrogative is parallel with that of *ci / ci*, with the nom. plur. *či-tæ / ka-tæ*, gen. plur. *kæi-ti / ke-ti*, dat. sg. *kæ-m-æn*, plur. *kæmæn-ti / kæmæn-ti*, etc. (cf. the complete paradigms in Axvlediani 1963-69: 186 f.; Abaev 1964: 28; Isaev 1966: 60).

Quite like the inessive forms of the demonstrative pronouns, the inessive singular of *či / ka*, *kæm / kæmi*, is used as an adverb “where”.

Unlike Axvlediani, Abaev does not admit a plural of the equative of either the animate or the inanimate interrogative.

In both dialects, the gen. sg. *kæi / ke* is used as a conjunction in the sense of “that”, corresponding with the demonstrative *uui / ie: kæi ... uui tixxæi* “because of that ... therefore”.

5.6.3. The interrogative stem *c(i/i)-* forms the basis of a number of pronominal adjectives; cp.:

I., D. *cal* “how many” (combined with the gen.: *cal azi?* “how many years?”), *cas / cæi-asæ* “how much” (combined with the nom.: *cas ræstæg racidi?* “how much time passed?”);

*cavær / ci-uavær* “of what kind” (*cavær bæstæ u ai?* “what kind of a land is this?”);

I., D. *caxæm* “of what kind” (*caxæm činig dīn radta?* “what kind of a book did he give you?”).

With the suffix of the ordinal numbers, we have *cal-æm / cal-æimag* “who (of a group)” (in counting): *calæmti axuīr kænīs?* “in which form do you study?”.

With the distributive suffix *-gai*: I., D. *cal-gai, cas-gai* “at how much each”, often in the abl. plur. *cal-gættæi, cas-gættæi: calgæittæ uin radton* “how many shall I give to each of you?”.<sup>136</sup>

5.6.4. The interrogative *kæ-ci / -ci* “who, which” (IES: I, 574) is used as a substantive as well as a modifier; when used as a substantive, it is inflected for case and number: *kæci dæ?* “who are you?”; D. *kæcæi ba razdaxtæ?* “from where did you return?”; *kæci læppu dīn radta činig?* “which boy gave you the book?”

A substantival possessive is formed by means of the suffix *-on*: *kæcon dæ?* “where are you from, of which family are you?”;

*mæ us kæcon i, uīrdigon* (Russ. “тамошний”) “where my wife comes from, there (I belong)”.

## 5.7. Indefinite pronouns and adverbs

Indefinite pronouns and adverbs are derived from the interrogative stems by means of suffixes or prefixes. Common to both the interrogatives and the indefinites is their reference to something unknown (cp. Abaev 1964: 29 ff.). Cp., e.g.:

*is-kæci / (i)es-kæci, is-či / (i)es-ke* “somebody, something” (expresses ignorance and indifference; cp. Georg. *vin-me, ra-me*, Lat. *aliquid*);

*či-dær / ka-dær, ci-dær / ci-dær, kæci-dær / kæci-dær* “something” (the referent can be identified, cp. Georg. *vi-γac, ra-γac*, Lat. *quidam, quiddam*).

With reduplication of *-dær*, we find: *či-dær-iddær* “whoever (it is), *ci-dær-iddær* “whatever (it is)”, *kæci-dær-iddær* “every (kind of)”; with *al(l)i-* / *al(l)i-* (< \**harvya-* rather than \**harva-*, cf. IES: I, 48, cf. O.Av. *paouruiia-*, Y.Av. *pa(o)uruua-* etc., OPers.

<sup>136</sup> For details cf. Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 187 ff.; Abaev 1964: 30 (also for the demonstrative correlatives).



*paruviya-*, OInd. *pūrvyā-* “first” beside *pūrva-* “first”, Mayrhofer, EWAIA: II, 157): *al-ċi / al-ke* “each”, *al-ci / al-ci* “every” (of things), *al-kæci / al-kæci* “every” (subst., adj.; cp. Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 19 ff.; Abaev 1964: 30). Indefinite adverbs are formed in the same way: from *kuid / kud* “how”, *kuid-dær / kud-dær* “somehow” (Lat. *quodam modo*), *kuid-dær-iddær / kud-dær-iddær* “however” (it is)”: *kædæm-dær-iddær-iu acidi* “wherever he went” (Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 211 ff.).

The prefix *is-* / (*i*)*es-* is identical with the 3rd person singular of the copula, cp. I. *is*, D. (*i*)*es* in the expression *ci-ies* “property” (“what is”; otherwise D. *æi* “is”).

The element *-dær* evidently goes back to the contrastive-comparative suffix *\*-tara-*; cf. OInd. *katarā-* “which of the two”, Av. *katāra-* (with an unexpected *-ā-*, cf. IES: I, 356 and Beekes 1988: 141), *kataras-ċit* “uterque” (indef.), OInd. *yatarā-*, Av. *yatāra-* “who of the two” (relative; cf. Mayrhofer, EWAIA: II, 395 f.), OInd. *ántara-*, Av. *aṅtara-* “other” (cf. Mayrhofer, EWAIA: I, 76 f.), Oss. (I., D.) *ændær* “another” (indef.; *annæ*, *innæ* < *\*anyā-* “the other”, def.). As to the use of IE *\*-tero-*, *\*-toro-* for pronominal derivation cf. Brugmann, Grundr. II, 1: 564 ff.

5.7.1. Negative pronouns and adverbs are formed by prefixing the negations *ni-* / *ne-* (< *\*nai-*, cp. Av. *naē-kai-* “nobody”; cf. IES: II, 178 and Bartholomae 1904: 1033) and *ma-* “that not” (O. Ar. prohibitive *\*mā-*; cf. IES: II, 60 f.) to the interrogatives: *ni-ċi / ne-ke* “nobody”, *ni-ci / ne-ci* “nothing”, *ni-kæci / ne-kæci* “none at all”; *ma-ċi / ma-ke* “that nobody”, *ma-ci / ma-ci* “that nothing”. Correspondingly we have the adverbs *ni-kæd / ne-kæd* “never”, *ni-kuid / ne-kud* “by no means”, *ma-kæd* “that never”, etc.

5.7.2. In the singular, the indefinite suffix *-dær* is added to the case forms, gen. *kæi-dær / ke-dær*, dat. I., D. *kæmæn-dær*, etc. except in the equative, where the case ending follows the indefinite stem: *kæi-dær-au* (cf. Abaev 1964: 29).

In the plural, the pluraliser *-tæ*, *-ti* / *-ti* (oblique cases) as a rule follows the case form of the singular: nom. *ċi-dær-tæ / ka-dær-tæ* “some people”, gen. *kæi-dær-ti / ke-dær-ti*, dat. *kæmæn-dær-ti / kæmæn-dær-ti*, etc. The equative is an exception again; here the case ending follows the pluraliser: *kæi-dær-t-au*.

In the Iron comitative, the order of the case and number markers is optional: *kæ-imæ-dær* or *kæi-dær-imæ*, *cæ-imæ-dær* or *cæi-dær-imæ*, plur. *kæ-imæ-dær-ti* or *kæi-dær-t-imæ*, *cæ-imæ-dær-ti* or *cæi-dær-t-imæ* (for the complete paradigms cf. Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 196 f.).

5.7.3. The infix *-m-* (O. Ir. *\*-hm-* < Aryan *\*-sm-*), which in the dative, ablative and inessive of the demonstrative and interrogative pronouns is inserted between the stem and the case ending, is also found in the inflection of *innæ*, *annæ* “the other”: dat. *innæ-m-æn*, abl. *innæ-m-æi*, but iness. *innæ-i-i*, adess. *innæ-uil*, all. *innæ-mæ*. Cp. also *aftæ-m-æi* “thus” (abl. of *aftæ* “id.”).

In Digor this infix has been introduced into the inflection of the numerals, the secondary derivatives of the interrogative pronouns, and other pronominal nouns when they are used as substantives. Thus we have *ieu* “one” with gen. *ieu-ei*, dat. *ieu-e-m-æn*, abl. *ieu-e-m-æi*, iness. *ieu-e-m-i* (with *-e-* from the gen.); *caldær* “several, a few” with dat. *caldær-e-m-æn*, abl. *caldær-e-m-æi*, iness. *cal-dær-e-m-i*.

When a numeral is used as a modifier, *-m-* is inserted in the head noun; cf. *dæs-bæxi* “10 horses”, dat. *dæs bæx-e-m-æn*, abl. *bæx-e-m-æi*, iness. *bæx-e-m-i*. In Digor, this infix is also found with the distributive *fæinæ* “each separately”, (*dæ fæinæ fars-e-m-æi* “on each side of you”), and in the pronominal adjectives *ægas* “whole, entire”, *ieu-gær* “whole, undivided”, *ieuæi-ieu* “certain, some” (cf. Isaev 1966: 50 f., 61 f.).

As to pronominal adjectives that are inflected as ordinary substantives in Iron; cf. Abaev 1964: 30; Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 191 ff.

## 5.8. Conclusions

From the proceeding paragraphs the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The pronominal forms where the prefix *-m-*, an Aryan inheritance, is inserted between the stem and the case ending, belong to the ancient core of the pronoun inflection. As this infix is found not only in the ablative and in the inessive (the ancient locative) but also in the dative, we must conclude that this case was added to the system comparatively early, i.e. prior to the allative, adessive, equative and (in Iron) the comitative. This is, of course, only a relative chronology.

2. As we have seen, certain pronominal forms that are used in a nominative function derive from Proto-Iran. genitives. There is some discrepancy between the dialects. In both of them, this applies to the nominatives of the first and second person plural pronouns, in Iron also to both the singular and plural nominatives of the demonstrative pronouns and to the nominative singular of the interrogative-relative pronoun. We conclude from this that there was a period in the history of the language when these pronouns had an ergative marking of the subject, which no doubt originated with transitive verbs in the past tense; cp. the Old Persian perfect *mana kṛtam* “done by me” > “I did” – the well-known passive-to-ergative change.<sup>137</sup> The genitive was then generalised as the subject marker in both tenses, regardless of transitivity.

The only remaining traces of ergativity in Ossetic are thus found in the pronominal morphology; in the nominal inflection we have no evidence for a genitive subject (note that expressions such as *fændi, qœui mæ* “I will, must”, where the genitive is used as a general oblique case, do not belong here; cf. 4.13.4.2.2. above).

It is also worthy of note that Digor has retained as such ancient nominatives of the demonstrative and interrogative pronouns (*ā, ie, kā*). As the dialects are closely related, ergativity must be assumed for the pronominal systems of the Old Ossetic (Alanic) ancestor language. If this reasoning is correct, the nominative must have been generalised as the subject marker in Digor, similarly to the generalisation of the genitive in Iron. The retention of the nominatives of the first and second person singular pronouns *æz, di / du* “I, you” – instead of a generalisation of the genitives *mæn, dœu* as nominatives can be explained in a similar way.

We may thus conclude that the ancestor dialect of Ossetic shared the Iranian drift from passive to ergative syntax with the past tenses of the transitive verbs. It is, however, worth noting that as far as the synchronic data show, ergativity seems to have been confined to pronouns.

In the later history of the language, there must then have been a shift from the ergative type to a specific nominative-accusative system where the same case regularly serves as the subject of both transitive and intransitive verbs, regardless of tense, as

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<sup>137</sup> This explanation of the respective development seems to be preferable to Benveniste’s (1952) possessive explanation (cf. Skjærnø 1985 and Dixon 1994). Cp. also the survey given by Schmitt under the title “Neoperfekt des Typs *manākṛtam*” (in: Schmitt 1989, 79 f.).

well as the object of transitive verbs, unless it is felt necessary for pragmatic reasons to morphologically distinguish between the object and the subject.<sup>138</sup>

This shift to a nominative-accusative system where all subjects are expressed by a single case marker, is in agreement with the development of most Iranian languages and is thus evidently a general typological trend within this language family. It is therefore unnecessary to look for external causes for this typological change.

The question about the etymology of the past tense of transitive verbs can be regarded as a corollary of the preceding comments. For phonetic reasons, the inflection of the past tense of the verb “to do, make” (*kodton, kodtai, kodta, kodtam, kodtat, kodtoi* “I, you ... etc. did”) cannot be derived from the *\*mana krtam* type (cp. Kent 1953: 88). On the surface, the transitive past is derived from the past participle, but its exact formation is obscure. The personal endings coincide with those of the subjunctive, except in the 1st person plural (subj. *-æm / -æn*, past *-am / -anæ*; cf., e.g., Abaev 1949: 412). Apart from this formal difference it is hard to see how the subjunctive, a mood expressing futurity (with or without the notion of will) might have developed into a past tense.

In the formation of the past (perfect) of transitive verbs there is great variation between the East Middle Iranian languages, whereas in the West Middle Iranian languages the *\*mana krtam* type predominates. In Sogdian, the perfect is formed by means of *dar-* “to have, hold” plus the neuter past participle. As to the Khotanese transitive perfect there seems still to be no agreement about its origin (1st sg. masc. *-tāimā*, fem. *-tāmā*, plur. *-tāndā mā*, etc.; cf. Emmerick 1989: 222). Weber (1982, reviving a previous explanation by Konow) suggests a derivation from the past participle in *\*-ta-* plus the present participle of *\*ah-* “to be” plus the present tense of the same verb, scil. masc. sg. 1st pers. *\*krtah hants ahmi* “ich bin ein mit der Handlung von X Versehener”, etc. Whatever the value of this explanation might be, it is not applicable to the Ossetic transitive past. Nevertheless, it might be tempting to follow Weber’s line of thought and look out for a derivation from a periphrasis consisting of the past participle followed by a sandhi form of the verb *\*ah-* “to be”. But at present this is mere speculation.

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<sup>138</sup> This structure is, by the way, not very different from that of, e.g., modern English and Scandinavian where the same functions are usually distinguished by means of word order alone.