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THE OSSETIC CASE SYSTEM REVISITED

Introduction

The Ossetic case system has attracted some attention from Iranists, as it is the most elaborate of all declensional patterns found in any modern Iranian language. But this is quite deceptive, some of the endings are clearly not old: the adessive goes back to the postpositional use of *upari,* whereas the comitative -imæ is attested solely in Iron. Scholars in the past, notably Vsevolod Miller, and present, such as Dieter Weber, Roland Bielmeier, Alain Christol and Fridrik Thordarson attributed most (oblique) Ossetic endings to endings of various PIr. nominal classes. Recently, David Testen (1996: 371f.) made a crucial point, which was further elaborated by Roland Kim 2003[1], that this approach was methodologically flawed, as it failed to explain why a case ending from the less common nominal classes would have been generalized in Ossetic. Rather, one had to consider the historical development of the morphology of the language as a whole.

Testen argued that in pre-Oss. there were basically two cases, a nominative "direct" (zero-ending) and oblique (ending *-i), a situation that is still found in modern Yaghnobi. The subsequent rise of "secondary" cases (through the incorporation of postpositions) confined oblique *-i to its basic function of marking possessive relations, the definite direct object and the locative/inessive. This thesis proves to be untenable. Moreover, it must be said that in their efforts to explain the case endings Kim and Testen have resorted to solutions that go against the (morpho)phonology of Ossetic. It is in this light that I shall take yet another, systematic look into the puzzling history of the Ossetic case system. For a complete picture both the pronominal and the nominal case system shall be considered, since they have influenced each other, yet differ in several aspects.

1. Nominal forms

sǽr 'head', zǽrdǽ 'heart'

	singular		plural	
nom.	sǽr	zǽrdǽ	sǽr-tǽ	zǽrdǽ-tǽ
gen.	sǽr-y/sǽr-i	zǽrdy/zǽrdi	sǽr-t-y/sǽr-t-i	etc.
dat.	sǽr-ǽn	zǽrdǽ-j-ǽn	sǽr-t-ǽn	
allat.	sǽr-mǽ	zǽrdǽ-mǽ	sǽr-tǽ-m/sǽr-tǽ-mǽ	
abl.	sǽr-ǽj	zǽrdǽ-j-ǽ/zǽrdǽ-j-ǽj	sǽr-tǽj	
mess.	sǽr-y/sǽr-i	zǽrd(ǽ-j-)y/zǽrdǽ-i	sǽr-t-y/sǽr-t-i	
adess.	sǽr-yl/sǽr-bǽl	zǽrd(ǽ-j-)yl/zǽrdǽ-bǽl	sǽr-t-yl/sǽr- tǽ-bǽl	
equat.	sǽr~aw	zǽrdǽ-j-aw	sǽr-t-aw	
com.	sǽr-imǽ	zǽrdǽ-imǽ	sǽr-t-imǽ/-	

1.1. Nominative

The Ossetic so-called "nominative" derives from the nom. m. *-ah and/or the acc. m./n. -am. Traces of these endings can be inferred from palatalized forms such as alğ 'extremity, tip' (nom. sg. *agrah), calx 'wheel' (*čaxrah) and u-umlauted ǽmbyrd/ǽmburd 'meeting' (nom. acc. sg. n. *hambrtam), v. Cheung 2002: 58 f. The old feminine *-ā has not survived as a separate category. In forms like cyt/citǽ 'honouť' (Av. ciθā- f. 'punishment), jǽfs/ǽfsǽ 'mare' (Av. aspā-, Skt. áśvā- f. 'id.'), final *-ā has become POss. *-ǽ, which has been retained in Digoron, but disappeared in Iron. Traces of the nom. or acc. ending in other declensional classes (which all became thematized in due course) can be deduced as well, on which see further Bielmeier 1982: 59ff. and Cheung, I.c.: 59, 61f.

1.2. Genitive

Several suggestions have been made for the origin of the Ossetic genitive. The most obvious suggestion is to derive -y/-i directly from the PIr. thematic genitive *-ahi̯a. This was implicitly rejected by Miller 1903:43 f., who connected the Oss. genitive to the relational suffix *-ii̯a-, cf. OP armaniya 'Armenian' (armina- 'Armenia'), LAv. aspiia- 'equine' (aspa- 'horse') Semantically, this is not impossible: Gr. γυναικός, which is clearly adjectival 'female, pertaining to women', functions as the genitive of the noun γυνή 'woman'. Nevertheless, as Kim 2003:44f. pointed out, there are typological and syntactical objec-

tions against a suffixal provenance of the genitive. The genitive case has some fundamental functions in Ossetic: not only does it indicate possessive relations such as *lægty ʒwar* 'god of men (i.e. the god Wasterji)', but it also marks the direct object (definite/animate) in a transitive sentence. The Ossetic nominative and genitive correspond more or less to the direct and oblique in many other (Indo-)Iranian languages, such as Middle Persian, Sogdian (heavy stems) or modern Kurdish and Zazaki. In Miller's analysis the old genitive *-aḥịa* would have become the Oss, ablative, which was also accepted by Weber 1980: 130. Shortly after Weber's publication Bielmeier 19S2: 67 proposed to derive the genitive from the generalized relative (nom, sg. m.) pronoun *-ịah[3] taking his cue from Bailey 1946: 206 and others. Bouda 1934: 65 made the observation that in certain poetic texts some syntactically unusual phrases were found, where the adjective was placed after the noun (in the genitive): *mæ fydy zærond / mæ fidi zærond* 'my old father', Dig. *Sirdoni nalat* 'the cursed Sirdon', (collect.) *kizgi ræsuğd* 'beautiful girl(s)'. This prompted Bailey, I.c. to derive the apparently gen. ending *-y/-i* of *fydy* from the relative *ịa-*. In fact, the label "ezafet-construction" (NP *mard-i pīr* 'old man', etc.), attached to these phrases by Bielmeier, 1.c.: 67, is misleading. The use of the genitive in these cases is merely to emphasize, or rather "topicalize", the qualified noun: 'my father, the old one', etc., cf. Vogt 1944: 20[4]. Bielmeier's suggestion is therefore at variance with the fundamental functions of the Ossetic genitive. In his outline of Ossetic, Thordarson (1989: 470) considered the ending the reflex of *-ah*, the genitive of the consonant stem classes[5]. This ending should have disappeared though, cf. Bielmeier, 1.c.: 67, Cheung, I.e.: 56ff. Besides, as Kim, 1.c., rightly pointed out, it is *a priori* improbable that the inflection of (archaic) root or consonantal stem classes would have been generalized at the expense of the more ubiquitous thematic inflection. At this point, Kim sought an explanation for the Ossetic gen. *-y/-i* in the different stressing of Ossetic forms operating similarly along the lines of the Sogdian Rhythmic Law. The result would be that several endings merged in a single, oblique ending *i*. Without giving too many details it remains to be seen whether such a law has ever existed in the prehistory of Ossetic, on which see further Cheung: 122f. Due to the workings of the Rhythmic Law Sogdian distinguishes two main classes, "light" and "heavy", at a synchronic level, a result that is conspicuously lacking in Ossetic. Also its absence in the modern quasi-descendant of Sogdian, Yaghnobi, suggests that the Rhythmic Law might have been a relatively recent "phenomenon" in the history of Sogdian.

In my opinion the most straightforward idea of deriving the Ossetic genitive from thematic PIr. *-aḥịa* is worth contemplating again. This derivation was discarded by Miller and more recently, Bielmeier 1982: 63, Thordarson, 1.c., on

the assumption that *-aḥịa* would rather yield Oss. -*æj*. The development *-aḥịa* >
> *-iịa* > (apocope) -*y/-i* may be less problematic than it appears, if we bear two
other developments in mind as well. In many East Iranian languages we find
frequent shortening of *ā* in front of *ị* (which is not a regular development). Ex-
amples in Ossetic are few, but pertinent: *fæjjaw* 'shepherd' (cf. Av. *pāiiu-*), *mæj/
mæjæ* 'moon, month' (cf. OP *māhyā*). Parallel to this shortening in front of *ị*
originally short *a* might have undergone some change in this position as well.
The alternative, more preferable solution is that since *-ah* in final position be-
came *-i* in Ossetic (in line with other East Iranian languages), this might also
have applied to *-ah* in *inlaut* position in front of *ị*, which made the segment
-ah- tautosyllabic as well. This development would be the same or similar in
Khotanese gen. sg. -*i*, -*ä* (doubted by Emmerick, 1968:256).

1.3. Dative

The ending -*æn* cannot reflect the old dative, neither nominal *-āi* nor pro-
nominal *ahmāi* (Miller 1903: 44). Thordarson (1989: 470) derived the ending
-*æn* from an Iranian suffix *-ana-*, which also continues as the suffix -*æn* 'des-
tined for, apt to' in Ossetic. The problem with this derivation is that the suffix
-ana- (and its Oss. continuation[6]) forms nouns or adjectives from *verbal* roots,
cf. Khot. *āljsana-* 'song' (*āljs-* 'to sing'), Skt. *cétana-* 'visible' (*cit-* 'to per-
ceive'), *vacaná-* 'speaking, eloquent' (*vac-* 'to speak'), Degener 1989: 24ff.,
AiGr. II/2: 180ff.. How would this suffix end up in the nominal declension as
well? Another suggestion is to derive it from the (pronominal) instrumental *-(a)na*,
which Weber, 1.c.: 131ff. put forward, citing similar forms in Khotanese (instr.-
abl. sg. -*ina*, -*äna*), Wakhi (predicate gen. -*ən*) and Vidgha-Munji ("obi." sg. -*an*,
-*ɛn*). Although the dative employment of the instrumental case is not without
parallels (cf. Gr. dat. pl. -οις < IE instr. pl. *-ōis*), the Oss. dative exclusively
expresses comparison, the goal or destination of a deed or action: *Dossanæjy
ræsuğdæn čyzg zyn ssaræn wyd* 'it was very hard to find a girl equal to Dossana
in beauty', *bæxæn xollag radt* 'give fodder to the horse'. The instrumental func-
tion is indicated by the ablative (1.5.)· The alternative put forward by Christol
1986: 32f. is even less attractive, -*æn* being abstracted from the (consonantal)
gen. sg. of *nama* 'name', *namanas*. Perhaps a more plausible suggestion is to
consider a postpositional origin for -*æn*, viz. *ana* (LA v. *ana* 'upon, over,
across') or *anu* (OP *anuv*, Av. *ann* 'along, after, according to')[7]. These postposi-
tions are governed by the accusative.

1.4. Allative

Weber 1980: 130ff. considered the pronominal dat. *ahmāi* the origin of the allative. The main problem is that it is somewhat arbitrary (cf. the arguments in the introduction above). Why should the dative end up as allative in Ossetic, rather than continuing the older situation? It is very well possible for the genitive and dative case to have functionally merged into one (gen.-dat.) case and retained the formal appearance of the older genitive, as it is the case in OP and Khotanese. But it would be odd that a particular ending of case A has "moved" to a different case B in order, so to speak, to make room for a new way of expressing case A, especially when the dative is a more fundamental case than the allative. Thordarson (1989: 471) hesitantly derived the allative ending from *hama-* ("instr. *hamā?*") 'connected with, together with'. Although it is conceivable to develop the comitative from the allative, it is not easy to envisage it the other way round. The Russian preposition *s* 'with, and; from; at, abouf seems to provide us with an example, but the situation is somewhat different, as the exhibited meaning depends on a particular case, 'from' with the genitive, 'at, about with the accusative and 'with, and' with the instrumental case. The suggested preform *hamā* would be even more emphatically *(as)sociative*, rather than *translational.* In fact, we do have a regular continuation of *hamā* in Oss., viz. the conjunction *(æ)mæ/(æ)ma* 'and'.

Still, the pronominal explanation of the allative is an attractive one. Rather than the dative I suggest a somewhat different provenance, viz. the locative *ahmi* to which the directional particle *ā* has been added: *$\textit{i}$a-ahmi-ā*[8]. The continuation of *$\textit{i}$a-ahmi-ā,* with its nuance of direction, can be found in Avestan: V 3.7... *yaṯ ahmiia daēuua handuuarənti* 'whereto the daeva's come/crawl together', Y 60.5f. *vainīṯ ahmi nmāne s*raošó asruštīm āxštiš ... *yaθa ahmiia aməšå spənta sraosäδa ašiiäδa paitišąn vaŋhūš yasnąsca* 'May obedience triumph over disobedience within this house ... whereto the Immortal Blessed Ones seek for good praises from the truthful Obedience'. This "enlarged locative" form *$\textit{i}$a-ahmi-ā* gave rise to a new case in the pronominal class, the allative *a-mæ*. Subsequently this spread to the nominal declensional system, *-mæ*. The incorporation of the allative in the case system appears to be relative late, as it has not undergone the Iron apocope in the singular. The ending *-mæ* may still have behaved like a postposition (of direction) in the POss. period. The loss of the final vowel in the plural is not necessarily regular, as it could have been removed analogically under the influence of the dative (pl.).

1.5 Ablative

None of the proposed solutions is satisfactory. Miller 1903: 44 connected the Oss. ablative with the old thematic gen. *-*ah̥a* (accepted by Weber 1980:130), whereas Thordarson (1989: 471) suggested that -*æj* was from the gen.-abl. of the *ā*-stems (*~*āi̥āh*) or a conflation of this and the instr. in *-*ai̥ā*. It is simply inconceivable that an ending either from the consonantal or the feminine vocalic declinations would have been generalized (cf. Kim., I.e.: 45, especially fn. 7): the declination of Sogdian, the closest (documented) sister-language of Ossetic, is a case in point. The common ablative – goes back to, as expected, the *masculine-neuter vocalic* ending *-*āt*. The suggestion of Testen (1997: 370, n. 18) and adopted by Kim, 1.c.: 46 to derive the Ossetic ablative -*æj* from *ha̅čā* is impossible for the following main reason[9]. Not only do we have the Ossetic reflex (*ʒy/ʒi* 'from him'), old *č* would have been preserved as ʒ in both Ossetic dialects, in *all* positions. Only the secondarily arisen affricate *-ʒ' (from postvocalic PIr. *-*ti*) would result in final -*j* in *Digoron* only (cf. Cheung 2002: 98 f., Miller, I.e.). When we look at the ending purely formally, it looks as if it goes back to *-*āi̥V* (-*V* is a short vowel). However, the sequence *-*āi̥V* would rather yield -*æj/-æjæ*, compare *mæj/mæjæ* 'moon, month' < loc. s. *māhi-ā[10]* (Cheung, 1.c.: 203), while *-*ai̥V* should have become -*æ* in both dialects, cf. *ærtæ* 'three' *(*θrai̥ah)*, *zærdæ* 'heart' *(*zrdai̥a-)*. Hence, the segment -*æj* can only be secondary in nature, being the result of an "amalgamation" of two different elements: POss./pre-Oss. *æ + *i*. POss./pre-Oss. *æ* may reflect the old thematic abl. *-*āt*. Final *-*t* had to disappear before the contraction with the second element *i,* but there are indications that the loss of the final dental is relatively late, cf. 3sg. fut. subj. -*a* < athem. *-*āt* (Cheung, 1.c.: 140). The short vowel, -*æ-,* perhaps points to influence from the pronominal ablative, *-*at*, cf. Av. *mat̠* 'from me', *ahmat̠* 'from this', etc. Meanwhile, the old instr. ending *-*ā* (Av., OP, Skt. Vedic -*ā*) would have become regularly POss./pre-Oss. *-*æ*. No doubt, at a certain point in the POss./pre-Oss. period the formally identical abl, and instr. endings merged, cf. Christol 1986: 32. This would therefore account for the instrumental function of the modern Ossetic ablative (besides comparison, separation, etc.). Now, we have to address the problem of the final element, We can dismiss two possibilities of its origin beforehand. The first one is that °*j* reflected an enclitic particle *i* (with a presumably ablativistic value). For the latter there is little or no evidence: the Av. correspondence *ī(t̠)* is merely a particle of emphasis. Alternatively, assuming that *i* might have been compounded with the characteristic abl. adv. suff. -*tah* (cf. Skt. *á-tas* 'hence') would create more phonological complications. Perhaps, it has been imported from *ʒy/ʒi (demonstrative,* q.v.). Incidentally, without this marking the abl. pi. would have been formally identical to the nom. pl. -*tæ*.

1.6. Inessive

For the origin of the Ossetic inessive *-y/-i,* Miller, 1.c.: 45, suggested two possibilities: either it was imported from the pronominal system (Dig. *mi* 'in me', Dig. *di* 'in you', etc.) or it continued the (variant) loc. ending **i̯a, ya* (sic), loe. sg. OP *māhyā,* Av. *kəhrpiia,* etc., which was accepted by Thordarson, 1.c.: 471 (corrected to **-i̯ā).* Both suggestions are problematic. The former does not account for the fact that the corresponding Iron forms are different (*mæ, dæ,* etc.) nor can the Dig. forms go back to the expected (enclitic) PIr. forms **mai, *tai,* etc. The latter possibility is phonologically impossible, as the "enlarged" loc. ending would be rather **-i̯ā,* which would have yielded *-/-æ* in Ossetic, cf. Oss. *mæj / mæjæ* 'moon, month' (= OP *māhyā*). Kim, 1.c.: 45f. assumed that the inessive had the same origin as the genitive. The distinction made in the pronominal system suggests otherwise. The *nominal* genitive and inessive case may have been formally different at an earlier stage as well. The preform preceding *-y/-i* goes back to **-i̯V* (*V* is **a, *i* or **u*). It is tempting to consider the relational suffix **-ī̯a-* as the ultimate source, as implicitly suggested by Miller, 1.c.: 46. In both Khotanese and Skt. this suffix displays a broad range of meanings and usages, cf. Degener 1989: 153ff., *AiGr.* II/2: 435 ff., of which the following is relevant here. The Skt. suffix *-īya-* attached to locational designations has the meaning of 'being there, originating from there': *parvatī́ya-* 'growing in the mountains' (*párvata-*), *āvasathī́ya-* 'being in the house' (*āvasathá-* 'dwelling'), *samāna-grāmīya-* 'living in the same village' (*grāma-* 'village'). Also the corresponding Khotanese *-īya-* displays this usage: *ttarandarīya-* 'situated in the body' (*ttarandara-*). The Ossetic inessive case probably reflected this specialization of **-ī̯a-.* Another usage of the same suffix can be observed in Oss. *dæsny/ dæsni* 'clever, expert; wizard' *(*dašin-ī̯a-,* from **dašina-* 'right').

1.7. Adessive

The origin of the adessive ending is clear, the derivation from **upari* has been universally accepted, Miller 1903: 46, etc. Somewhat puzzling is the Iron form *-yl* as opposed to the transparent Dig. *-bæl.* The Iron form has apparently been contaminated with the inessive (rather than reflecting a shortened, "allegro" pronunciation).

1.8. Equative

The equative ending was not considered to be part of the case system by Miller, 1.c.: 92ff., who treated -*aw* as a mere adverbial suffix. Miller suggested to connect the suffix with Skt. -*vat,* -*vant,* citing Skt. *mā́vant-* 'like me', *índra-vat-* 'like Indra', *pūrvavat-* 'according tradition'. According, to Weber 1980:129 and Thordarson (1989: 471), it would reflect **-āu̯an-,* on which also the so-called "language"-suffix in Oss. and other East Iranian languages may be based, e.g. Sogd. *'w,* Khot. -*au,* Khz. -*'w* (Degener 1989:172ff., Gershevitch 1954: 249). I would separate equat. -*aw* from the language suff. -*aw,* on account of their semantic differences. The derivation of the equative form **-āu̯an-* is rather fraught with problems: the function and meaning of -*aw* does not agree well with those conveyed by the suffix **-u̯an-,* cf. *AiGr.* II/2: 894ff. Although Skt. -*vat-,* -*vant-,* with or without a preceding long -*ā-,* displays an extraordinary range of functions and matching meanings, in most instances the most frequent meaning is 'provided with, rich in, full of', which applies to the corresponding Iranian formations as well. The meaning that also the Ossetic equative conveys, i.e. 'like to, resembling', is chiefly found in pronominal formations: OAv. *mauuaṇt-,* Skt. *mā́vant-* 'like me', OAv. *θßāutiaṇt-,* Skt. *tvā́vant-* 'like you' etc. *(AiGr.* II/2: 876, III: 876). This is even more so in Iranian (Avestan), cf. Jackson 1892: 236, n. 2. The Ossetic equative -*aw* seems most likely to have been abstracted from these pronominal formations. These originally adjectival forms probably go back to the nominative sg., on which see Cheung 2002:62.

1.9. Comitative

The comitative -*imæ* is only known in Iron. In Digoron, the meaning of this ending 'with, together' is conveyed by the postp. *xæccæ* preceded by the noun in the genitive. It is tempting to relate the Iron ending to Av. *maṭ,* Skt. *smát* 'together, jointly' or Av. *hama-,* Skt. *samá-* 'same, equal', cf. Miller 1903: 46, also Weber 1980:129, fn. 20, Christol 1986: 33. Although it is possible that Dig. has lost this ending, one would need to look for an internal Iron origin in the first place. Abaev (1949: 101) drew//attention to *iwmæ/ewmæ* 'together', which he derived from the allative of the number *iw/ew* 'one'. *Iwmæ/ewmæ* would literally mean 'towards one' (> 'in union, united'). It is this form/which would be the base of the Iron comitative, an explanation that has also been accepted by Thordarson (1989: 471). A minor, yet quite troubling point is why the bilabial has disappeared in the ending -*imæ*.

2. Pronominal forms

	first person		second person	
nom.	*æz*	-	*dy/du*	-
gen.	*mæ*	*mæ*	*dæw*	*dæ*
dat	*mænæn*	*myn/min*	*dæwæn*	*dyn/din*
allat.	*mænmæ*	*mæm/mæmæ*	*dæwmæ*	*dæm/dæmæ*
abl.	*mænæj*	*mæ/mi*	*dæwæj*	*dæ/di*
iness.	-	*mæ/mi*	-	*dæ/di*
adess.	*mænyl/mænbæl*	*myl/mæbæl*	*dæwyl/dæwbæl*	*dyl/dæbæl*
equat.	*mænaw*	-	*dæwaw*	-
com.	*memæ/-*	*memæ/-*	*demæ/-*	*demæ/-*
plural				
nom.	*max*		*symax/sumax*	
gen.	*max*	*næ*	*symax/sumax*	*wæ*
dat.	*maxæn*	*nyn/nin*	*symaxæn/sumaxæn*	*wyn/win*
allat.	*maxmæ*	*næm/næmæ*	*symaxmæ/sumaxmæ*	*wæm/wimæ*
abl.	*maxæj*	*næ/ni*	*symaxæj/sumaxæj*	*wæ/wi*
iness.	-	*næ/ni*	-	*wæ/wi*
adess.	*maxyl/maxbæl*	*nyl/næbæl*	*symaxyl/sumaxbæl*	*wyl/wæbæl*
equat.	*maxaw*	-	*symaxaw/sumaxaw*	-
com.	*maximæ/-*	*nemæ/-*	*symaximæ/-*	*wemæ/-*

2.1 Personal

The first and second person singular forms are pretty obvious: the nominative and genitive continue PIr. nom. **azam, *tuṷam* and gen. **mana, *taṷa* respectively, cf. Miller 1903: 50, etc. The voiced *d-* in the second person sg. is due to sandhi. The remaining cases have the genitive ending as base.

The corresponding plural forms, on the other hand, have an identical nominative and genitive ending which go back to the gen. **ahmāxam* and *xšmāxam*. The first person *max* has lost the initial vowel, reflecting an old development, cf. Cheung 2002: 88.

The enclitic forms have evidently been adapted to the main pronominal pronouns. There are basically two "stems": *mæ – ⁽*⁾mi, dæ – ⁽*⁾di, næ/⁽*⁾ni, wæ/⁽*⁾wi*. The number of distinctive enclitic forms were also in PIr. rather limited. For the first person we may posit, on the basis of Avestan and Sanskrit, sg. acc. **mā,* gen.-dat. **mai,* abl. **mat,* and pi. acc. **nāh* (OAv. *nå*, gen.-dat. **nah*. The second person PIr. forms can be reconstructed as sg. acc.-instr. **θβā,* gen.-dat. **tai,* abl. **θβat,* pl. acc. **ṷāh,* gen.-dat. **ṷah*. When we follow the developments

up to Ossetic, the first person singular would end up with only one form, viz. *mæ*, whereas the plural forms would regularly yield *(*)ni* and, if the acc. form has not merged with the gen.-dat. (as it is the case in LAv. and Skt,), possibly also *næ*. The situation also applies to the second person. In an agglutinative case system such as the Ossetic one, this proves to be unstable, since there is a strong tendency to develop distinctive forms for each case (see above). The gen, *mæ* and *dæ* can regularly derive from **mai* (OAv. *mōi,* OP *-maty*) and **tai* (OAv. *tōi,* OP *-taiy)* respectively. All the other endings derive from the genitive form (as it is the case with the regular non-enclitic pronouns). The different vocalism of the (modern) dative singular ending is due to the addition of the nasal (i.e. the postp. **ana* or **anu*): **mai* + *-n>* pre-Oss. **main >* TOss. **min* (cf. material suff. *-yn/-in < *-aina-),* cf. Testen 1996; 370. The plural counterparts, the old gen.-dat. forms **nah* and **u̯ah,* would have yielded Oss. gen. **ni* and **wi,* which became subsequently the base of the other plural endings. However, afterwards, the gen. pi, **ni* and **wi* were remodelled after the singular, giving rise to *næ* and *wæ*. These newly arisen genitive forms have managed to influence the other endings of the dialects, differently and only partially. The characteristic '**Ч* from the plural forms has even crept into the singular forms.

	demonstrative			interrogative-relative	
nom.	a, aj/a	wyj/je	-	či/ka	cy/ci
gen.	aj	wyj/woj	jæ,æj/æj	kaj/ke	cæj
dat	amæn	wymæn/womæn	(j)yn/jin	kæmæn	cæmæn
allat.	amæ	wymæ/womæ	(j)æm/jimæ	kæmæ	cæmæ
abl.	amæj	wymæj/womæj	ʒy/si, ʒi	kæmæj	cæmæj
iness.	am/ami	wym/womi	ʒy/si, ʒi	kæm/kæmi	cæm/cæmi
adess.	awyl/abæl	uwyl/wobæl	(j)yl/jibæl	kæwy/kæbæl	cæwy/cæbæl
equat.	ajaw	wyjaw/wojaw	-	kæjaw	cæjaw
com.	aimæ/-	wyjmæ/-	jemæl-	kæimæ/-	cæimæ/-
plural					
nom.	adon/atæ	wydon/jetæ	-	čitæ/katæ	cytæ/citæ
gen.	adon(y)/ani	wydon(y)/woni	sæ	kæjty/keti	cæjty/cæjti
dat.	adonæn/anæn	wydonæn/wonæn	syn/sin	kæmænty/ kæmænti	cæmænty/ cæmænti
allat.	adonmæ/	wydonmæ/	sæm/sæmæ	kæmæty/kæmæti	cæmæty/cæmæti
abl.	adonæj/anæj	wydonæj/womæj	sæm, ʒy/si, ʒi	kæmæjty/ kæmæjti	cæmæjty/ cæmæjti
iness.	adony/anæmi	wydony/wonæmi	sæ, ʒy/si, ʒi	kæmyty/	cæmyty/
adess.	adony/anæbæl	wydony/wonæbæl	syl/sibæl	kæwylty/	cæwylty/
equat.	adonaw/ anijaw	wydonaw/ woniaw	-	-	-
com.	adonimæ/-	wydonimæ/-	semæ/-	kæimæty/-	cæimæty/-

2.2. Demonstrative

The demonstrative pronouns were less transparent, having a complicated set of endings for each gender, masculine, feminine and neuter. The pronouns also have a set of corresponding clitic forms, which will be treated hereafter.

The 'this' pronoun is also used as the third person pronoun. It has as its core element *a-* and it is tempting to derive it from the feminine form of the personal-demonstrative **hā* (Bielmeier 1982: 63) or the relative pronoun **i̯ā* (Bailey 1946: 205), which is surprising. Feminine endings are rarely generalized, see also above. The originally long *a-* may be the outcome of contraction of two pronouns, one could think of a blend of **i̯a-* and **ha-* (**ta-*): > **i̯ā-* (cf. OP *h(a)ya-* 'which'). The initial **i̯-* then disappeared, in front of the long vowel, cf. *udyn/odun* 'to exert, put effort into' (< **i̯auda-*). The nominative *a* could go back to **i̯a-ha(h)*[11] > **(i̯)ā*. It is unclear whether the I. variant *aj* has an old *-j*, which may be imported from *wyj*. On the other hand, we cannot discount the possibility either that *aj* derived from **i̯a-* + **ai̯am* 'this here': > **i̯āi̯u* > (apocope and loss of initial **i̯-*) POss. **aj*. Final *-j* could have been lost analogically (to avoid convergence with the genitive).

The pronoun for 'that' appears to be different in the two Ossetic dialects, in Iron the stem is *wy-,* but in Digoron the nominative has *je* and in oblique cases we find the stem *wo-*. Thordarson derived Dig. nom. *je* from (nom.) **ai̯am,* which is difficult. The pronoun **ai̯am* rather refers to the close proximity to the speaker, which does not agree with the oblique stem *wo-* (< **au̯a-* 'that, yonder'). Dig. *je* actually goes back to earlier (*)we, cf. *widag/wedagæ, jedagæ* 'root' (< **u̯aitākā-,* Sogd. *wyt'k* 'cord'), the loss *of w-* in front of a front vowel is a frequent development in Dig., reflecting palatalization. Also for the Iron nom. form *wyj* we may assume earlier **we: > **wi*. This early form **wi* is realized as *uj, wi, wyj*, depending on the (sub-)dialect or individual utterance. For the vocalism, see 2.3.

The genitive continues the older situation, albeit with some (slight) modifications. The 'this' form goes back to **i̯a-ahi̯a: > **(i̯)āi̯a > **(i̯)āi̯* (apocope) > *aj*. The 'that' ending *wyj/woj* may be the result of the following developments: **au̯ahi̯a > **au̯ii̯a > **au̯i̯i̯* (apocope) > *au̯i̯i̯* (regular?, influenced by the 'this' form?) > POss. **oj* (monophthongization).

The endings with *-m-*, dat., allat., abl. and iness., derive from the PIr. acc., abl. and loc. forms of the demonstrative **a-*. The Oss. dative has been secondarily created with the postposition **ana* or **anu:* dat. **i̯a-* + **ahmāi* >> acc. **i̯āmu* + postp. **an^a/_u* >(>) Oss. *amæn*, **au̯āi* (?) >> acc. **au̯u* + postp. **an^a/_u* >> Oss. *wymæn/womæn*. As discussed in 1.4., the allat. ending probably does not continue the old dat. (as postulated by Weber 1980:131), but it rather goes back to

the loc. ending to which the postposition *ā has been added, hence *i̯a-ahmi-ā and *au̯(a)mi-ā. The Oss. abl. forms *amæj* and *wymæj/womæj* on the other hand may indeed derive from the old abl.: *i̯a-ahmāt > *āmā + *i >(>) amæj, *au̯āt > *au̯ā + *i >> wymæj/womæj.* The inessive forms apparently continue the old loc.: *am/ami < *i̯a-ahmi, wym/womi <(<) *au̯(a)mi.* Since final *-i was apocopated at a certain pre-Oss. stage, Dig. *ami* and *womi* must have acquired *-i* only recently, being imported from the nominal iness. ending. *Mutatis mutandis,* this treatment also applies to fhe interrogative-relative dat., allat., abl. and iness. endings.

The plural stems have an element *-on* in I., which prompted Miller 1903: 42f. (accepted by Thordarson, 1989: 469) to derive from (nominal) Gpl. *-ānām.* This is unlikely, since the old Gpl. *-ānām* has completely disappeared from the nominal inflectional system (having evolved into the relational suffix *-on*) and it would be very odd to see it resurface again in the pronominal system. Besides, how should the dental be explained? The element *-don* rather goes back to the acc. pi. *tān* (voiced *d* is due to sandhi). This may well be the POss. pi. ending: *don.* In the dialects this undoubtedly peculiar form has been "regularized" differently: Iron has added *a* and *wy-* before *don,* while Digoron has opted to replace the initial segment with *a-* and *w-* respectively. Just as with the personal pronouns, the nominative and genitive pi. were *not* formally distinguished, but the dialects have attempted to differentiate the forms: Iron has an optional *-y* in the genitive, but Digoron has gone a step further, by not only adding *-i* to the genitive, but also re-analysing fhe nominative as *a-tæ* and *je-tæ.*

The enclitic forms *jæ, æj/æj,* show strong influences from the other personal and demonstrative pronouns. Again, we need to start from the genitive as the base: Iron genitive *jæ* probably derives from PIr. *hai* (OAv. *hōi,* LAv. *hē*), cf. Testen 1996: 363f. The variant *æj* seems to be influenced by the non-enclitic forms *aj* or *wyj/woj.* The s-forms go back to the *ruki*-variants with *š- (cf. gen.-dat. sg, LAv. *še,* OP *-šaiy*): the gen. pl. form *sæ* may derive from a preform *šām (OP *-šām*), with loss of the final labial nasal.

The form *ʒy/ʒi* is used for the abl, and iness. It is usually connected to the pre-/postposition OP *hačā,* OAv. *hacā,* LAv. *haca,* etc, to which presumably a pronominal form has been added (Abaev 1958: 402), Testen, I.e. pointed out though that in order to arrive at this result this would involve not only the loss of one syllable, but also an accentual "demotion" to the status of a clitic[12]. A survey of the Iranian cognate forms reveals the following,

West Iranian: Bal. *ač, aš, či, š-,* NP *az, zi,* Kurd. *ji* (dial, *až*), Hawr. *ǰa,* Parth. *'c, 'ž*;

Eastern Iranian: Shugh. *az, as,* Rosh., Bart., Sariq. *az,* Bactr. ασο, Psh. *j, c-, s-* 'of', Yazgh. *ž-,* Yi, *ži, žo,* M. *žo, ža,* Sogd. *cn* 'from that', Khz. prep. *c* (with gen.) 'from, out of', adv. *c'* 'out, off', Khot. "postp." *jsa, jsä, jsi* 'from'.

The loss of the initial vowel in Oss. ӡy/ӡi merely reflects a very ancient development, which occurred in many East Iranian languages, too. Its cause is precisely this "demotion" to the status of a clitic. In my work, Cheung 2002: 86ff., I suggested that in the forms *max (*ahmāxa-), dæl- (*adari), ta (*iθā), wa (*au̯āt), wæd (*au̯ada), wædæ (*au̯adā), wæl- (*au̯ari), wærtæ (*au̯aθrā)* the aphaeresis was connected to their clitic character.

There is another problem, which was not noticed by Testen, I.e., lurking in the generally accepted reconstruction *hačā* for these Iranian forms. How do we explain the fact that the final *-ā* has not survived in Ossetic (and many other Iranian languages)? Although in languages such as Persian, the loss of final long *-ā,* which merged with short *-a,* is perfectly regular, this development is not applicable in Ossetic. Assuming that the disappearance may be the result of elision does not solve anything: one would expect something along the line of (P) Oss. *ӡaj, ӡæi* (or +*ӡe,* if *i* was added later on), from POss. +*ӡa,* +*ӡæ í* (*i* < pron. gen. sg. *ahi̯a).* This development would have been parallel to Khz. *cy³.* The Sanskrit correspondences of the Iranian forms may give us a clue. Although the formal correspondence between Skt. (adv.) *sácā* and OP *hačā,* OAv. *hacā,* LAv. *haca,* etc. has sometimes been doubted, cf. *KEWA* III: 418, s.v. *sácā,* Thieme 1971: 298, the arguments against have failed to convince most scholars, cf. *EWAia* II: 688. Since in Old Avestan the (Sanskrit) meaning '(together) with' is preserved next to 'from, off, as attested in other Iranian languages, there is no particular reason not to consider the latter meaning as secondary. The meaning might have been "attracted" from the noun in the ablative case and reassigned to the preposition (or postposition) *hačā.* As it happens, Skt. also has *sáci,* the locative variant of (originally instr.) *sácā,* with almost the same meaning: 'together, along with'. Consequently, it seems not unreasonable to assume that there was an Iranian cognate form as well: *hači.* This form may have been the base of Oss. *ӡy/ӡi* (and NP *zi,* Kurd, *ji* et al.), hence: *hači + *ahi̯a.*

2.3. Interrogative-relative

Bielmeier 1982: 62 ff. has treated this pronominal category in some detail. The nom. endings *či/ka,* Dig. *ke* have always been problematic, for which earlier Miller 1903: 54 could not find a solution. Bielmeier suggested that Dig. *ka* derived from the feminine ending *kā,* which possibly provided the base *kæ-* in the other cases as well. As mentioned above, this does not seem very plausible: feminine endings are not likely to be generalized. Moreover, it is telling that in the derivational forms *jes-ke* 'anybody', *al-ke* 'each, every' this *-a* is absent. The *-a* is probably secondary, being imported from the demonstrative

a. The original form is no doubt *(*)ke*. The nominative ending would therefore be **ke* in POss.

We can now see that the nom. of both the demonstrative and the interrogative-relative has an ending with final POss. **°e* (= Dig. *°e*). How do we account for this puzzling vocalism? On the one hand, POss. **°e* reflects older diphthongal **-ai,* but on the other hand, final **-ai* (whether from older PIr. **-ai̯ah* or PIr. **-ai*) would have regularly yielded *-æ* (with seemingly lost **-i*). In this case, the apparent "loss" of the semi-vowel **i̯* would not have been very old, i.e. of the Common-Ossetic period, as the loss of *-æ* in Iron applies solely to old **-ā(h),* but not to **-ai, *-ai̯a(h).* We have to bear in mind that the monophthongization of **ai* is of a much earlier, pre-Oss. stage. The only solution I can think of to resolve this apparent problem, is that there was indeed a general monophthongization of **ai,* thus also in *final* position: > **-e#.* After the apocope of **-æ* (< **-ā(h)*) in Iron, final **-e* became *-æ* in Iron, but in Digoron it merged with the reflex of final **-ā(h)* to become *-æ*[13]. In fact, the loss of this semivowel **i̯* has never taken place in Ossetic, as attested by the existence of final *-aj, - oj, -uj* in the modern dialects. The subsequent development of final **e > æ* would not have applied to monosyllabic (and non-enclitic !) forms, such as *či/-ke, wyj/je,* though.

As for the *ultimate* origin of **ke,* this is another vexing problem. Since the genitive is formally identical to the nominative, it would be not too fanciful to consider it as the genitive ending **kahi̯a,* cf. Bielmeier I.e. This is difficult, one may expect the result *+čy/ki,* cf. *genitive.* Deriving it straight from the nominative is equally (if not more) difficult: nom. **kah > * pre-Oss. **ki.* At this point, I have to mention *innæ* 'the other (of two)', which is identical in both I. and Dig. In Cheung 2002: 641 explained it as a re-interpreted form, reflecting older nom. pl. m. **ani̯ai,* cf. Dig, pl. *innetæ.* The explanation may also apply to **ke,* which would derive from the nom. pl. m. **kai,* and demonstrative *wyj/je < * nom. pl. **au̯ai* (initial **a-* was lost through aphaeresis).

The emergence of *(*)ke* in the genitive reflects another complication. It may have started in the genitive plural **keti,* which adopted the nomin, (i.e. "unmarked") case with only the plural suffix being inflected ("marked"). The POss. situation was probably as follows:

nom. **ke*   Pl. **ke-tæ* (< PIr. **kai* + pl. suff. **tā*)
gen. **kæj*   **ke-ti*

The paradigmatic pressure to create a transparent system yielded different outcomes in Iron and Digoron. In Iron the genitive singular form affected the corresponding plural, thus giving rise to *kxjty,* In Digoron the shift started in the nom. sg., when **ke* adopted the vowel from the demonstrative. The new nom. sg.

*ka influenced the nom. pl.: >> ka-tæ. In return, the gen. plural affected sg. *kæj, yielding (through re-interpretation) ke.

The genitive *kæj probably goes back to earlier *kæji, but since pronouns such as the interrogative/relative tend to form one accentual unit with the following word(s), *kæji has been shortened to *kæj (and subsequently generalized), cf. the prefigated verbs with initial (*)i-: bajqusyn/bajǧosun 'to listen to' (qusyn/ iǧosun 'to listen'). The form *kæji may reflect *ka- to which the genitive (*)-i has been added. It cannot be excluded either that *kæji derived from *kaiạhiạ, an extended ending, similar or parallel to Skt. RV káyasya cit 'of whomsoever' (AiGr. Ill: 563). The (bare) stem *ka- from which kæ- would have derived was perhaps frequent enough (e.g. also used for derivation and composition) to become the base of the remaining endings, but I have to admit that deriving notably iness. кзет straight from PIr. *kahmi is a more attractive and elegant proposal. The development of *ah > *i may then have been quite specific: in final position or in front of *ị (cf. 1.2.).

The inanimate correspondence 'what' is quite straightforward, as it has only retained the nominative from PIr., viz. *čid (LAv, cit, Skt. cit), but all the other endings have been modeled after the animate interrogative-relative pronoun. The genitive cæj, identical in both I. and Dig., also supports the original character of I. kæj.

Concluding remarks

The Ossetic case system is rooted in the thematic masculine-neuter declension. Although we can conclude that the elaborate case system in modern Ossetic is not old, it would be an oversimplification to assume that following a large-scale collapse of the Iranian eight-case system the Ossetic case system was based on two cases, "direct" and "oblique", as suggested by Testen 1996 and Kim 2003. Before the loss of final short vowels, pre-Ossetic probably possessed a case system similar to that of Eastern Middle Iranian languages, such as Sogdian, Khotanese or Khwarezmian. Perhaps already at this stage the indirect object was conveyed by a periphrastic construction with a postposition. It was no longer expressed by the old Ir. dative ending, which disappeared from the nominal and pronominal case system entirely.

In both the nominal and the pronominal system traces of the old minor endings can still be deduced, despite the fact that after the apocope, new endings evolved from constructions with postpositions/suffixes, thus becoming an integral part of the whole case system. No doubt, this was under the influence of neighbouring Caucasian languages. The Old Iranian ablative *-at and

instrumental *-ā are the two lesser cases that have survived as Oss. -æj, after a merger. The Ossetic pronouns appear to have preserved the Plr. endings relatively better than their nominal counterparts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Av. = Avestan; Bact, = Bactrian; Bal. = Balochi; Bart. = Bartangi; Dig. = Digoron dialect; Gr. = Greek; Hawr. = Hawramani; I. = Iron dialect; IE = Indo-European; Khot. = Khotanese; Khz. = Khwarezmian; Kurd. = Kurdish; LAv. = Late Avestan; M. = Munji; NP = New Persian; OAv. = Old Avestan; OP = Old Persian; Oss. = Ossetic; Parth. = Parthian; PIr. = Proto-Iranian; pre-Oss. = pre-Ossetic.; POss. = Proto-Ossetic; Psh. = Pashto; Rosh. = Roshani; Sariq. = Sariqoli; Shugh. = Shughni; Skt. = Sanskrit; Sogd. = Sogdian; Yazgh. = Yazghulami; Yi. = Yidgha.

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NOTES

[1] This study is to some extent a response to Kim 2003, who addressed the Ossetic case system as part of a more comprehensive overview of the Ossetic historical phonology. I broadly agree with his phonological treatment, despite differences on many points. An important

difference in opinion between us is the treatment of the Ossetic (historical) accent, for which I argued initial stress (CHEUNG 2002:121 ff.), whereas Kim called for a Sogdian-like stress based on heavy and light stems. His quite elaborate argument in favour of this type of accent has failed to convince me, as it would not explain why not only **all** the final vowels, except *-ā(h) and *-ai (and subsequently, short vowels in certain *inlaut* position) in the pre-Oss, period were lost, but right down to common Ossetic, we see, in Iron, the loss of the final -æ that derives from *-ā(h). The "rhythmic-like" accent, being determined by the quantity/quality of the vowels, which we see in modern Ossetic cannot be but of secondary origin• An annoyance in his article is that he sometimes represented the arguments of his sources rather inaccurately or imprecisely.

The Ossetic forms are cited as follows: the Iron and Digoron forms are quoted with a slash mark (/) between them, Iron being mentioned first. If only one form is mentioned, this means that the Iron and Digoron forms are identical. If a form is marked by "I." or "Dig.", it is generally meant that only the Iron or Digoron form is attested.

[2] Kim, l.c.: 44 argued that this "presupposes merger of abl. with gen. in thematic nouns on the analogy of other stem classes, and subsequent replacement of the reflex of *-ahya by that of *-r̥ya- in genitival function".

[3] Kim apparently misunderstood Bielmeier's argument, claiming Bielmeier "takes the Ossetic gen./iness. from the PIr. gen. sg. *-ah of the consonant stems". On the contrary, Bielmeier, l.c., explicitly states: "Spuren der Suffix-Nullstufe beim Genitiv der alten *r*- Stämme finden sich nirgends. Es ist deshalb nicht möglich, die Bildung des nominalen Genitivs auf -*i* (-*i*) mit dem Genitiv auf *-ah in Verbindung zu bringen".

[4] It may be noted that in fact there is no formal distinction between "nouns" and "adjectives" in Ossetic, cf. Thordarson, *CLI*: 467. The genitive case is also used to topicalize the indefinite, animate object, "qui rend possible sa position emphatique au commencement de la phrase", e.g. *iw k̥yrm læ̆y iw k'æbila racæjk̥ydta* 'Einen blinden Mann führte ein Hündchen' (Vogt, l.c.: 36).

[5] Not as depicted by Kim: "Similarly, Thordarson ... sees in this ending a merger of gen. sg. *-ah and loc. sg. *-yā of PIr. root nouns...". This "merger" is nowhere mentioned nor implied in Thordarson's treatment.

[6] Cf. Miller, l.c.: 91f., §15.

[7] This may also apply to Wakhi -ən: *yi δāyən tu yi pərnəc* 'a man had a churn' (lit. 'to a man there was a churn').

[8] For the preform *ia̯-ahmi-ā see 2.2.

[9] Testen, l.c. revived a very early idea of Lerch, which was cited and discarded by Miller, l.c.

[10] With shortening of the long *ā- in front of *i̯, a frequent East Iranian development.

[11] Perhaps rather *ia̯-ha: in PIr. there was also a variant *ha in the nominative, without final -h, cf. LAv. (m.!) *hā* (Skt. *sá*), besides LAv. *hō* (< *hah).

[12] His alternative solution, viz. from end. *di-, with an *ad hoc* affrication of the voiced dental, is phonologically not admissable, cf. *mid-/med-* 'in, inside, internal' < *mad̮ia-, LAv. *maiδiia-* (CHEUNG 2002:103).

[13] The assumption of "weakening" of final POss. *-e > -æ is in line with my arguments of initial stress in (pre-)Oss. and again suggests the secondary character of voweldependent accent in modern Oss.