

GSAS Workshop in Indo-European and Historical Linguistics
Lukas Kahl, Harvard University

The Old Hittite ninth case in areal and typological perspective

Old Hittite nominal declension is notable for a case of disputed origin in -a, variously designated "allative", "directive", or "terminative" in the literature. Given the general archaism of Hittite, this fact potentially has considerable relevance for the reconstruction of PIE nominal inflection, especially the question of how goal and direction were encoded in the PIE case system. Accordingly, historical interpretations of the origins of this "ninth case" abound.

Absent from most such discussions are considerations of language contact and typology. In my talk, after summarizing the Hittite situation and outlining the major proposals, I will see what light can be shed on this issue by areal facts (such as the existence of similar specialized cases in Sumerian, Akkadian, Eblaite, Hurrian, and Urartian) as well as typological data (such as the origin of functionally similar cases in various Uralic and Caucasian languages).