Petrified PAN Morphology in PAN Reconstructions

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Many of the reconstructible monosyllabic roots of PAn are attested in the currently spoken An languages not as monosyllabic roots but as disyllabic roots with petrified affixation. In many cases this morphology also occurs productively in currently spoken An languages. For example, the prefixes pa-, ka-, is- (the instrumental passive prefix) and the suffix -an are found added to numerous monosyllabic roots to form new disyllabic roots in languages across the range of the An area. There are other petrified prefixes, however, which only occur in a few languages or perhaps are nowhere attested as part of the productive morphology of a currently spoken language. It is these prefixes that I will focus on. The crux of the paper is a discussion of the evidence that identifies these elements as petrified morphology as opposed to sequences that developed by processes of sound symbolism or other kinds of analogical formation (that is, forms that developed under the influence of other existing forms similar in sound and meaning). The importance of petrified morphology is the evidence it provides for the reconstruction of the morphology of the protolanguage.

The published version of the paper will present the evidence in its entirety. The presentation will concentrate on selected forms that illustrate the principles involved.