EAST COAST LANGUAGES

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Proto-Nas

The Nasic languages are a small language family spoken along the central and northern East Coast of Suidira. The term 'Nasic' comes from the word *nas*, meaning "nation," which forms the basis of the ethnonyms used by speakers of these languages, such as *Koƛnas*, "*Koƛ* nation" and *Ħuqnnas*, "the *Ħuqn* nation." (These entities will henceforth be referred to as *Kotlinas* and *Ogennas* (Swíra-ized versions of the names *Koƛnas* and *Ħuqnnas* (which probably look less intimidating to English speakers (which I'm assuming the majority of people reading this are.)))) (⇐How many nested parenthetical phrases can I fit in there?)

At some distant time, Nasic may have been related to Swíra, as suggested by people who have noted similarities in basic vocabulary. However it wandered over to the East Coast and became part of that milieu, converging with the other City-States in language and culture. The two major languages (the ones with navies) are Kotliseu and Ogenseu, but some other tiny relatives of exist among ethnic minorities in the high mountains. In one of them, Kotliseu nasals sometimes

appear as voiceless obstruents, and glottalized nasals appear as voiced implosives /ɓ ɗ ɠ/. Some suspect a connection between Swíra nasal + voiced stop combos, those implosives, and the Ogennas voiced stops.

Random historical note: Proto-Nas had a labiovelar glide */w/ which largely disappeared in Kotlnas. First,

1. w > (C)ʷ / [DORSAL]_
   After dorsal sounds – velars and uvulars like /k x q χ/ – /w/ is reduced to a secondary articulation on the preceding consonant. Thus, */kw/ > /kʷ/, */qw/ > /qʷ/, etc.

2. w > Ø / [LABIAL]
   After labial sounds, /w/ simply disappears. Thus, */pw/ > /p/.

3. w > v
   In all other remaining cases – that is, word-initially, after a vowel, and after coronal consonants, */w/ becomes a voiced labial or labiovelar fricative /v/.

   Remember though that [v] from *[w] could have ended up adjacent to some consonants later on for other reasons. E.g.,
   *-kəwap > *-kəvap > -kvap, "a kind of alcohol"

Kotlinas

Phonology

Consonants

Kotlnas has a lot of consonants.

Kotlnas Consonants												
			labiodental	coronal			palatal	velar		uvular		
		labial		dental	lateral	sibilant		plain	labial-ized	plain	labial-ized	glottal
	nasal	m		n								
stopfricate	plain	p		t	ƛ	c		k	kʷ	q	qʷ	ʔ
	ejective			tʔ	ƛʔ	cʔ		kʔ	kwʔ	qʔ	qwʔ	
fricative	voiceless			θ / ɬ		s		x	xʷ	χ	χʷ	h
	voiced		v									
	approximant				l		y					

Following the sacred principle of "whatever is most convenient for me," the above sounds have been represented in a perverse mixture of IPA and Americanist symbols. Therefore /c/ = /ts/, /ƛ/ = /tˡ/, etc. So the single phoneme /ts/ is represented by a single symbol, /c/, which is great since the tie diacritic never works for me. It just seems so much easier this way. Like most of my consonant charts, the stops and affricates are in the same row, but they pretty much pattern together anyway so it's fine. They're not technically stops, so I guess I can't just call them stops, but I'll need to refer to refer to stops and affricates together, so maybe I'll call them stopfricates. It's better than repeating "obstruents that aren't fricatives" all the time.

By the way, in some dialects, the plain velar series has turned into a palatal or postalveolar series:
- x > [ʃ], [ç] ‹š›
- k > [tʃ], [tç] ‹č›
- kʔ > [tʃʔ], [tçʔ] ‹čʔ›

For some other dialects even this wasn't enough, and they turned the remaining labiovelars into plain velars.
- xʷ > [x]
- kʷ > [k]
- kwʔ > [kʔ]

In some places, you get all kinds of mixtures of velars, labiovelars, and palatals. Those crazy dialects.

Vowels

There are four vowel phonemes, /i e a o/. In most environments they are probably more precisely transcribed as [i ɛ ɑ o]. However, in the interest of not having to use the special symbols for [ɛ] and [ɑ] over and over again, I'm going to use a fairly broad transcription and represent them as [e] and

[a]. It's easier that way, and as my brother would say, "Close enough." (Or as my father would say, "Same difference.") The symbols [ɛ] and [ɑ] (and others) may still pop up in some phonetic transcriptions when I want to be perfectly sure you understand how something is pronounced in a particular environment. Also, /o/ can show up fairly randomly as [u] or [ʊ]. As long as you make it in the back of the mouth, they will be happy. Schwa occurs as an allophone of /a/ in unstressed syllables. Schwa also occurs as an allophone of /e o/ in unstressed syllables in some other dialects.

There are two diphthongs, /aj/ and /av/. In phonetically reduced syllables, they become [i] and [o]. There's also [əj], although this may not really count, as it's just an allophone of /i/.

Rules

Rules, rules, rules. Here you go:

Consonant Clusters

1. **Glottalization.** Whenever you get a glottal stop next to a another consonant, that consonant gets glottalized, e.g. /t + ʔ/ → [tˀ].

   This even applies to consonants that are not stopfricates. On the phonetic level, Kotliseu *does* have glottalized resonants, although it does not have glottalized resonant *phonemes* on the phonemic level (the Platonic Idea of language sounds, waiting to be theorized by philosopher-linguist-kings). That's why you didn't see them in the table of consonants

2. **Glottal Spreading.** Glottalization is basically a feature of the last consonant in the onset / coda / whatever. Only one consonant in a cluster – the last one – gets to be an ejective. So, when you get two consonants together, and the first one is glottalized, the glottalization switches sides to the next consonant.
   a. /C + C/ → [CC]
   b. /C + Cˀ/ → [CCˀ]
   c. /Cˀ + Cˀ/ → [CCˀ]
   d. /Cˀ + C/ → [CCˀ]

3. **Frication.** When two homorganic (i.e., when they have exactly the same point of articulation) stopfricates occur together – a situation not permitted in Kotliseu – the first of the two is fricated. Thus,
   - p > v
   - t, ƛ > ɬ
   - c > s
   - k > x
   - kʷ > xʷ
   - q > χ
   - qʷ > χʷ

This happens after the glottalization rule.

- /q + ocˀ + cˀom/ → [qoscˀom]
  our (individual) lands
- /q + ek + kˀec/ → [qɜxkˀec]
  our (jointly held) wife[1]

That sort of stuff doesn't happen to continuants. (What's it going to do, become a meta-fricative?) They just make a long continuant: /xx/ → [x:].

Uvulars

Certain types of consonants and vowels don't like each other. They just don't get along. This is the case with uvular consonants, high vowels, and front vowels. Uvular consonants cannot be adjacent to front vowels or high vowels, or to the glide /j/ (because it is essentially a variation of the high front vowel /i/). When such vowels come into contact with a uvular, they are lowered and / or backed. A very short vowel is inserted between a uvular and /j/. Examples:

/q + jetˀ/   →   [qᵊjɛtˀ]
"my house"

/qʷˀivl/   →   [qʷˀəjv̩l]
"squid"

/q + ek + kˀec/ →   [qɜxkˀec]
"our (jointly held) wife"

Miscellaneous

Vowels cannot begin words; when they do, a glottal stop automatically appears.

Syllables

What makes a Kotliseu syllable? Basically anything you want. Syllables seem to consist of at minimum a nucleus, and at most a nucleus and about six other consonants. The nucleus consists a continuant sound, and since continuant sounds include vowels, glides, liquids, nasals, and spirants, that can be anything except a stopfricate. If I add that up correctly, that equals seven consonants in a row.

Anyway, whenever a sonorant ends up in the middle of a bunch of other consonants with no vowels around, it becomes a syllable nucleus.

- p > v

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[1] Kotlinas does not have polyandry, so I doubt anyone ever says this, but hey, I needed an example. And grammars only have to care about what's grammatical anyway, not what's realistic.

- t, ƛ > ɬ
- j > i
- v > o
- m > m̩
- n > n̩
- l > l̩

This is not too weird, because English has some sonorants like this in *button* and *bottom* and *bottle*. But Kotliseu goes a step further and lets voiceless fricatives do this. The Anglophones now are probably saying, "but, but, you need *vowels*!" Well frankly my dear, Kotliseu doesn't give a damn. That's why you get words like *hqsk*, meaning "one small round object." It draws the line at stopfricates though. Then it sticks a schwa ([ə]) in. I know I should formulate a precise rule for when and where this schwa appears, but I honestly haven't decided yet. Er, I mean, my field research isn't complete.

The result of not having to put vowels everywhere is to make words more direct and time-efficient, as the Kotlim view it, which is great since time is money. To outsiders the effect is more like, as one astute Glindesan put it, gargling with unshelled chestnuts. So are there no syllables, or is everything a syllable? Professional linguists are hard at work figuring it out as we speak.

Nouns

Nouns are words that are inflected for case and which are not inflected for mood, voice, and certain other verbal categories.

Noun declension

Nouns are declined for five cases. There is only one declensional pattern.
1. Nominative   -Ø
2. Ablative   -aq
3. Dative   -i
4. Comitative   -t
5. Instrumental   -tˀi

The **Nominative** is the form used for the subjects of intransitive verbs and the agents and patients of transitive verbs. It has no suffix at all. No marking is necessary to distinguish agents and patients, because pronominal marking on the verb indicates who the agent is.

The **Ablative** is used to mark a source or origin. With certain verbs like XXX "receive" it marks an agent. It is also used to mark the standard of comparison.
qyet ˀaq   "from / out of my house"

The **Comitative** is largely reduced to the function of joining one noun phrase to another in a coordinate relationship. Thus it is generally translatable by the English conjunction "and." In the past this case had a wide range of uses corresponding to many different English prepositions. This

can still be glimpsed in certain fossilized expressions. For the most part its usefulness has been usurped by the dative.

qpamt   "with my friend"
qayt qpam   "my friend and I"[2]

The **Dative** marks the indirect object of a verb, the goal, the direction or endpoint of motion, and static location. It has also been used to mark a transformation, a use it took over from the Comitative.

T-q ʷíʌvl-i-k q-vl-yaɬ-l. "I will turn into a squid."[3]

The **Instrumental** is used to mark an instrument, a means, and the location or area where the action of a non-motion verb occurs.

Classes of Nouns

Nouns form two broad classes, possessed and unpossessed. Unpossessed, or "free" nouns, which include pronouns, proper names, and many other words referring to humans, are distinguished by the fact that they do not take pronominal possession markers.[4] Pronouns and proper names cannot be modified by relative clauses, although human common nouns can be.

qay   I, me
may   we, us
ƛay   you (singular)
vay   y'all
say   he, she, it
ʔocay   they
tay   who
ʔíln   a man
Koƛnas   Kotlinas

Since this class is distinguished by what does *not* happen to them, we don't have much to say, so we'll move on.

As you may expect, the possessed class contains many words for different kinds of demons. But that's not all. This class includes everything that's not in the first class, which is 99% of everything. Basically everything that can be perceived by the five senses and is not a fellow human being belongs to this class, as do some fellow humans and some things that cannot be directly perceived by the senses. The Kotlim, like most East-coastites, live in a very mercantile society where possession is 11/10 of the law. Everything belongs to someone, and it is of utmost importance to know who that someone is. Possessed nouns must be prefixed by a possession marker. Shall I repeat the "must" part? You can't leave the prefix off any more than you can just dump a definite or indefinite article in English. If you run around saying "Sun is shining today" or "I shot mammoth" you will sound like a caveman, as you will if you just say *yet* "house" without saying *whose* house. The Kotlim will shake their heads at you and wonder what kind of barbarian

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[2] Literally "I and my-friend." Kotlim aren't as polite as English speakers.
[3] More correctly, "I will turn into *someone's* squid."
[4] But, see <u>below</u>.

you are that your culture has not invented property rights.

Possessed nouns can be modified by relative clauses. In addition to the various inflected forms, possessed nouns have an additional phonologically reduced form, the construct state, which unpossessed nouns do not have. Furthermore, they often can take tense markers. Both types of nouns are declined for case. The pronominal prefixes that attach to possessed nouns (and verbs, as we shall see) are:

	Singular	Inclusive / Collective	Exclusive / Distributive
1st Person	q-	m-(ek-)[5] q-ek-	m-oc²- q-oc²-
2nd Person	ƛ-	ƛ-ek- v-(ek-)	ƛ-oc²- ʔ-oc²-
3rd Person	s-	s-ek-	s-oc²-
Interrogative / Indefinite	t-	t-ek-	t-oc²-

Examples:

qnas   my country
qc²om   my land
qeknas   our country
qoc²has   our countries
qosc²om   our lands

Nouns referring to humans, but which are words for relationships, are also possessed nouns and must have pronominal prefixes, such as –*k²ec*, "wife." You can say *qk²ec* "my wife" or *ƛk²ec* "your wife" but never just **k²ec*.

The Fuzzy Line Between Possessed and Non-possessed

While the explanations above make it sound like it is pretty clear whether a noun belongs to the "possessed" or "non-possessed" class, grammar, like life, is not quite that simple. Some nouns can belong to either, and many proper names are shuffled into the possessed category as people see fit. Words for free human beings are "unpossessed," but a speaker can put a prefix on them to emphasize that free human being's relationship with the speaker or someone else. For example, a plumber doesn't generally belong to anyone, but sometimes someone will say, say XXX, "my plumber," to specify that he is talking about the plumber he himself uses.

Sometimes the meaning of the word changes depending on the presence or absence of pronominal preffixes. Take the word *vep*. By itself, it just means "woman," or "a woman,"

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[5] This form, as well as *moc²*, *v(ek-)*, and *ʔoc²*, are nearly archaic. Using them conveys the same sort of tone as quoting Shakespeare or the Bible and saying *thou*. They have largely been replaced by newer forms like *qek-*, which have been formed more regularly from a combination of a person prefix and a collective/distributive prefix.

basically any old woman. In olde tymes, with a prefix it implied a female slave, e.g. *qvep*, "my female slave." This usage ended with the abolition of slavery. However, later hip young people revived the practice of sticking prefixes on it in an affectionate way. Now you hear *qvep* "my woman" with the meaning of "my girlfriend." Stick some other stuff on, and you can get *nalmt(ek)op*[6], "everyone's woman," i.e., "slut." The same thing has happened with the word for "man, male," *ƛln*. A girl can call her boyfriend *qƛln* [qˀəjln]. A guy can also call his friends *qƛln*, in the same way a WASP can call someone "my good man," although the attitude expressed makes "dude" a better translation. (Unlike some places, the Kotlim are not on constant lookout for evidence of closeted homosexuality, so it is unlikely to be interpreted as "boyfriend" unless the person saying it is absolutely flaming.)

Possessive prefixes can even be a political issue. Let us take the name of the country of these speakers, Kotlinas itself. The powers that be like to think of Kotlinas as a fully independent thing that owns other things, so in official government documents it never gets a prefix. Those who would like to see more involvement in the government and national life on the part of the people, often refer to *Qexkoƛnas*, "Our Kotlinas," with a first-person collective prefix to emphasize that the country belongs to everyone altogether. Some radicals contrast this with *Sexkoƛnas* "Their Kotlinas," meaning the government (the Kotlinas of those other people who aren't one of us). Those who tend toward the very conservative, traditionalist side may say, *Mkoƛnas*, using the archaic prefix.

The Construct State

The construct state is a phonetically reduced form taken by a possessed noun when the possessor is mentioned explicitly. While most nouns are automatically marked for pronominal possession, possession by another noun is more complicated. The possessor noun is placed directly in front of the possessed noun, with no case marking. Then the possessed noun follows. The possessed noun is reduced to the construct state and it is prefixed with the appropriate pronominal possession marker.

The basic rule of the construct state is that every vowel is reduced to schwa. However, when this leaves /j/ or /v/ in a syllabic position, they become the full vowels /i/ and /o/. Refer back to the syllable rules.

q-pam   *s-kc ˀ*
my-friend   his-wife
"my friend's wife"

qpam sit ˀ   "my friend's house"
skvap   "his alcohol"
qpam skop   "my friend's alcohol"

Interrogatives

There are two basic interrogative stems in Nasic languages, the *n*-interrogatives and the *t*-interrogatives. The *n*-interrogatives have stems beginning with the sound /n/. The *t*-interrogatives

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[6] /nal/ "who" + /-m/ universalizing clitic + /t/ third person prefix + /ek/ collective prefix + /vep/ (→ [op] in the construct state) "woman." See the sections on interrogatives and the construct state.

have stems beginning with the sound /t/.

"Indefinite" or "universal" meanings are conveyed by a combination of interrogative words or prefixes and the enclitics *k* and *m*. N = noun, V = verb.

t-N	"whose N"
t-N-*k*	"someone's N"
t-N-*k* V.NEG	"not everybody's N"
t-N-*m*	"everyone's N"
t-N-*m* V.NEG	"noone's N" ("not anyone's N")
t-N V-*t*-*m*	"whoever's N"

Notice the negative sense and the "whoever" sense do not work unless you have a verb in there.

Noun tense

A noun may optionally take the same [tense markers](#) present on verbs, no pun intended.[7] A thing that once existed but does not any longer may take the same past tense suffix found on verbs. For example, the noun *–k^{ʔ}ec*, meaning "wife." Because it requires a pronominal prefix (you can't be a wife without having a relationship with someone else!), we can say *qk^{ʔ}ec*, "my wife." But, you can also say *qntk^{ʔ}ec* 1SG.PAST.wife "my ex-wife," and *qvlk^{ʔ}ec* 1SG.FUT.wife "my wife-to-be (fiancée)." Similarly, the noun *-yet^{ʔ}* may become *qyet^{ʔ}* "my house," *qntyet^{ʔ}* "the house I used to live in," *qvlyet^{ʔ}* "the house I bought but haven't moved into yet."

Numbers and Classifiers

Numbers were mostly borrowed from Yuktepat with the introduction of classifiers.

0	lum
1	hq
2	noy
3	tam
4	sey
5	ʔoŋ
6	loq
7	set
8	hat
9	qo
10	col
11	pel
12	tyap

There is a less common set of native numerals:

1	pit

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[7] I usually hate it when people say "no pun intended" because it's quite obvious that they made the pun deliberately and are trying to draw attention to the fact they made a pun *by* saying "no pun intended." But this case, I actually didn't notice the double meaning of *present* until after I had typed it.

2	qot
3	mi
4	in
5	so
6	soqt; qtim
7	nit
8	i; qtin
9	qo
10	to

In order to count objects, the numerals must be combined with a classifier. The resulting compound word is placed directly in front of the noun to be counted.

> *tam-* *sk* *s-* *spexk*
> three ROUND-OBJECT 3SG apple
> "his three apples"

However, it may also be moved to directly in front of the verb. This is very common, and only context can be used to determine which noun in a multi-argument sentence is being counted.

> *tam-* *sk* *s-* *spexk* *q-* *nt-* *-kv-c^2- -l*
> three ROUND-OBJECT 3SG apple 1SG PAST buy FINAL
> "I bought three of his apples."

> *s-* *spexk* *tam-* *sk* *q-* *nt-* *-kv-c^2- -l*
> 3SG apple three ROUND-OBJECT 1SG PAST buy FINAL
> "I bought three of his apples."

Verbs

Verbs are distinguished from nouns in that they do not decline for case, but they are conjugated for a variety of peculiarly verbal categories including mood and voice. The line between nouns and verbs in Kotlinas is pretty weak. In fact, many roots may be used as nouns *or* verbs, and only the context, including the affixes to which they are attached, can determine the interpretation as verb or noun. Depending on your criteria for what constitutes a verb, verbs can be considered an open class with infinitely many members, or a closed class of very few members. This is because many verbs (or "verbs") are composed of a noun in combination with a bona fide verb stem. Or, we can distinguish between free-standing **basic verbs**, and **compound verbs** which are formed from a basic verb stem and another stem.

So here are the basic verbs

-(o)k-	to come, to go: the motion verb
-ił-, -yał-	to become: the change-of-state verb
-(a)ł-	to be there: the existential verb
-iλ-, -yaλ-	to be: the copula

-c^ʔ-   to do, to make: the general-purpose verb

They count as verbs because they can all occur independently (that is, not attached to any other roots or stems, because they *have* to have personal prefixes and things attached to them). But, they can all occur with other roots as the second element in "compound" verbs. Every other "verb" in the whole language has some sort of "suffix" which is quite transparently one of these verbs. They differ in their productivity; *-k-* "go" is only found inside path verbs like "enter" and "exit," but *-c* ^ʔ appears in almost every transitive verb in the whole language.

Example:
-sin- "death" +
…*-iⱡ* = "to die"
…*-iƛ-* = "to be dead"
…*-c* ^ʔ = "to kill"

More *-c* ^ʔ:
task-c ^ʔ: to put down
t ʔant-c ^ʔ: to read [tʔɑns.tˢer]
ʔalv-c ^ʔ: to touch
taʔ-c ^ʔ: to eat

mvlstokl
"We will go out."

The basic order of elements within a verb is:
agreement-(tense)-(ROOT)-BASIC VERB ROOT-(mood)-(negation)-final-(enclitic)

When a suffix beginning with a vowel is added to a stem ending in a vowel, then the initial vowel of the suffix is deleted. Notice that the minimum number of morphemes necessary to create a correctly conjugated verb is three: the pronominal prefix, the basic verb root, and the final.

Agreement
Verbs mark the person of the subject (or the agent, for transitive verbs). The markers are exactly the same as the [possessive markers on nouns](#).

Tense
Kotliseu has three tenses, past, present, and future. Their meaning should be fairly obvious to English speakers. They occur as prefixes on the verb stem – the very first affixes directly in front of the verb root.

PAST: nt-; [ns-] before coronal stopfricates (t, tʔ, ƛ, ƛʔ, c, cʔ)
PRESENT: Ø-
FUTURE: vl-

Negation

NEGATIVE: *-āx*

Finals

The purpose of "finals" is mostly to let you know if the sentence has ended or if it is going to keep going. There are four main finals:

-l: suffix on a main clause verb, and therefore the final verb, and final word, in the sentence. A bit like a period you can hear. (< *-ƚ)

-xak: suffix on a main clause verb, and therefore the final verb, and final word, in the sentence – *but* while *-l* is added to declarative sentences, *-xak* is added to questions. A bit like a question mark you can hear.

-t: suffix on a verb indicating that it is merely one in a sequence of actions, and the sentence is going to keep going. The copula *-yaƛ-* has a special suppletive stem, *-tˀi̓*.[8]
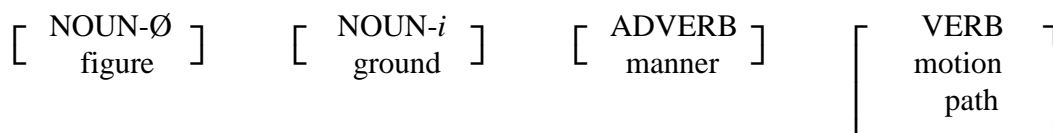
-ns: relativizing suffix, when the following word is a noun which is described by the verb getting the *–ns* suffix. Once again, the copula has a suppletive form: *-ni*.

More final forms:

purpose:	*-i*	"in order to…"[9]
suppositive:	*-knc*	"it is possible that…" or "suppose that…"
"because"	*-opt*	"because…"
"so"	*-cˀok*	"so…" or "therefore…"
"before"	*-tˀam*	"before…"

Adverb(ial)s

Adverbs are a class of words which usually indicate the manner in which an action was done. For motion verbs, which largely indicate path, adverbs may be used to indicate the manner of motion, such as walking, hurrying, etc. Adverbs occur directly in front of a verb and do not take any mood, tense, case, or pronominal inflections.[10] Many adverbs show reduplication and some are onomatopoeic.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{NOUN-Ø} \\ \text{figure} \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{bmatrix} \text{NOUN-}i \\ \text{ground} \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{bmatrix} \text{ADVERB} \\ \text{manner} \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{bmatrix} \text{VERB} \\ \text{motion} \\ \text{path} \end{bmatrix}$$

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[8] Yes, it's the same as the instrumental case suffix.

[9] And yes, this would be the same as the verb stem used as a noun in the dative case.

[10] However, many adverbs end in *–t*, like the comitative case. This may be a relic, marking adverbs that etymologically come from nouns.