

# SOUND LAW AND ANALOGY

Papers in honor of Robert S.P. Beekes  
on the occasion of his 60th birthday

Edited by  
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## Syncope and anaptyxis in Hittite

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Syncope and anaptyxis are undeniably genuine and widespread synchronic and diachronic processes.<sup>1</sup> However, it is often difficult to determine the precise conditioning of their occurrence in ancient languages available only in written records. This task is especially challenging in the case of Hittite, where the syllabic script makes it hard to discriminate between alternate spellings of consonant clusters (involving “empty” vowels) and real anaptyxis or syncope. In my recent monograph I was able to offer little that was new on this topic. I also took what I still believe is a properly minimalist stance (Melchert 1994: 29ff): spelling variants should be taken as merely graphic unless compelling evidence is presented for their linguistic reality. As I indicated then, all claims about specific cases are subject to revision at any time. Reexamination of certain data that I had overlooked now leads me to reconsider some aspects of the problem.

We find in the Ritual of Zuwi (CTH 412) a dialogue passage (unfortunately in a partially broken context) which involves among other things a certain bull. In connection with this bull we find two hapax legomena as epithets. I cite after the main manuscript KUB XII 63 + XXXVI 70 Ro 9 & 16, with restorations from the duplicate KBo XXII 118 ii 2 & 16: *nu=z=apa KASKAL-ši kün GU<sub>4</sub>.MAḪ-an taryandan wa[(rkantan)...]* (seven lines) ... [(GU<sub>4</sub>.M)AḪ ...] *ŪL tarpaššāššiš malulit etaryandan šāḫiš* ‘And on the path/for the journey [...] this *taryant-*, fat bull (acc. sg.)’ ... ‘The bull [...] is not a ritual substitute. You sought(?) one *etaryant-* with soft flesh.’<sup>2</sup>

Much in this episode remains obscure, at least to me, but it seems clear that certain men seize a robust bull, who protests that he is not the one they want and suggests someone else with the right qualities instead. As noted by Hoffner (1976: 337), the contextually already unlikely interpretation of *taryandan* in Ro 9 as the participle of *tariya-* ‘exert oneself, become exhausted/tired’ is now totally excluded by the evidence of the duplicate for the companion epithet *warkantan* ‘fat’. Hoffner himself suggests ‘healthy, sleek, robust’, and Eichner

<sup>1</sup>In citing Hittite texts I use the standard sigla as found in Emmanuel Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (CTH). Paris: Klincksieck, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Since the noun (GIS)šāḫi- makes no sense in the context, I tentatively take šāḫiš as preterite second singular of ša(n)ḫ- ‘seek’. Such a form could in fact have been the (more or less) regular outcome of a pre-Hittite \*sānh<sub>2</sub>-s (< PIE \*sénh<sub>2</sub>-s): loss of -n<sub>1</sub>, probably with compensatory lengthening, seen elsewhere in this root (cf. Melchert 1994: 126, with refs.) and anaptyxis of an unaccented vowel in a word-final cluster of obstruent plus s (Melchert 1994: 174). We would expect the vowel to have been colored to a by the ḫ, but in cases with stops the vowel regularly appears as -i- (cf. *akkīš* ‘died’), whence by analogy šāḫiš. That this synchronically very irregular form was in turn analogically replaced by šānhāš or šānhāta is hardly surprising. I concede that I would have expected second plural in the context, not singular, but it is by no means clear just who all the participants in the dialogue are.

(1978: 65 & 1988: 142<sup>64</sup>) explicitly takes *taryant-* as 'powerful', from a stem *tariya-* < \**trh<sub>2</sub>yé-* to the same root as Hittite *tarḫ-* 'be strong; conquer' and *tarra-* 'be strong, able'. The derivation is impeccable phonologically,<sup>3</sup> but there is to my knowledge no other evidence anywhere in Hittite for the putative stem \**tariye/a-* 'be strong'.<sup>4</sup> It also seems suspect to separate the hapax *taryandan* from the equally unique and even more obscure *etaryandan* of a few lines later. The latter clearly is the *lectio difficilior*.

I am not aware of any explanation advanced for *etaryandan*. The evidence of the duplicate for *warkantan* 'fat' as one epithet of the bull suggests to me the following solution: *etaryandan* is a by-form of the known stem *ētriye/a-* 'to feed, fatten'. A participle *ētriyandan* '(well-)fed, fattened' would be a virtual synonym of *warkantan*. The instrumental *malulit* 'with soft flesh' is not the means by which the person/animal was fattened, but rather an instrumental of quality: using Hoffner's apt English rendering for the adjective we have 'robust/sleek with soft flesh'. Justifying this proposal requires me to explain several formal details.

Although the status of "Sievers' Law" in Hittite remains debatable (see Melchert 1994: 57f, with refs.), it seems likely on typological grounds that the stem *ētriye/a-* was trisyllabic, with a real vowel [-i-]: [e.dri(y)ant-]. Syncope of the [-i-] would have produced a difficult sequence [e.dryant-]. One solution to this would be syllabification of the [-r-], leading to Hittite [-ar-], or direct anaptyxis to [-ar-]: [edaryant-]. There is at least one other example suggesting that such a scenario may be real (cited by Oettinger 1982: 164): *ku-tar-ú-e-ni-eš* 'witnesses,' to the stem *kutruwe(n)-* (usually *ku-ut-ru-(ú)-e+*). In Melchert (1994: 29) I followed Oettinger in treating this as a mere case of alternate spelling, but I now suspect that I paid too little attention to the particulars of the phonotactics, which match those of *ētriyant-*. Once again, we may reasonably suppose trisyllabic [ku.druwe-], where syncope of [-u-] would lead to [ku.drwe-] and again syllabification/anaptyxis to [kudarwe-].

One question which I cannot fully answer is why the original high vowels in these two examples would have been syncopated in the first place. In other examples with what appear to be very similar sequences it is usually the vowel following the glide which is (sporadically) syncopated: *tīnzi* beside *tiyanzi* 'they step' or *šanḫunzi* beside *šanḫuwanzī* 'they roast' (see Melchert 1984: 52f & 58f, for further examples). I can offer only as a tentative suggestion for this contrast a difference in accent: loss of the [-a-] in the latter examples argues that the accent was on the first syllable, while in *ētriyant-* and *kutruwe(n)-* it is possible (though by no means provable) that the accent was on the third syllable.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Hittite *šūniye-* 'immerse' < \**sun-h<sub>3</sub>ye-* vs. *šunna-* 'fill' < \**su-n-h<sub>3</sub>+ and see Melchert (1994: 73).*

<sup>4</sup>Despite Eichner's contention, there is no reason why a stem \**tariye/a-* 'be strong' should have been replaced by attested *tarra-*. Nothing excludes there having been a \**ye/o-*stem \**tariye/a-* in Hittite, but its existence remains purely hypothetical.

<sup>5</sup>The long first [e:] of *ētriye/a-* is not a compelling argument for accent on the first syllable, since it may easily be due to analogy with the base noun *ēdri-*.

In any case, the parallel of *kutarwe(n)-* makes a *prima facie* case that *etaryant-* is a linguistically real alternate of *ētriyant-*. The verb *ētriye/a-* 'feed' is a transparent derivative of *ētri-* 'food', and analogical restoration of the trisyllabic stem [edriye/a-] would be trivial, including in the participle. I submit, in fact, that the stem *etaryant-* with syncope and anaptyxis owes its survival to its having been lexicalized as an adjective '(well-)fed, sleek, robust', as the context of its occurrence had already suggested. Preservation of the older, but synchronically irregular form in a secondary function would be, of course, yet another example of Kuryłowicz's "fourth law" of analogy. One may compare famous examples like English 'sodden' beside 'seethed'.

Despite its transparent relationship to *ēdri-*, the verb *ēdriye/a-* is quite rare (see Friedrich – Kammenhuber 1988: 140, or Puhvel 1984: 39). It is attested to my knowledge only of animals, and it may have been a term largely the province of those charged with caring for livestock. It does not seem to me far-fetched to suppose the same of its lexicalized variant *etaryant-*. The latter might then have been quite opaque to the copyist of the Zuwi text (as opposed to the more common *warkant-* 'fat'), and in its first occurrence he "corrected" *etaryandan* into the more familiar *taryandan*, despite the inappropriateness of the latter in the context. I would emend to <e>*taryandan warkantan* 'sleek and fat' in the first occurrence, with the not uncommon pairing of near synonyms as epithets. The later *malulit etaryandan* 'sleek with soft flesh' then becomes an appropriate stylistic variant to the paired adjectives: the noun *maluli-* 'soft flesh', the major constituent of being *warkant-* 'fat', stands in for the latter.<sup>6</sup>

Further confirmatory evidence for the successive syncope and anaptyxis assumed here for *etaryant-* and *kutarwe(n)-* obviously would be welcome. Experience suggests, however, that we will have to look for it in isolated places. If my interpretation and derivation of *etaryant-* are correct, this case illustrates once again the pervasive effects of analogy in eliminating or at least obscuring the effects of sound change. It is no wonder that we historical linguists place such high value on fossilized relics which appear to others to be mere curiosities!

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<sup>6</sup>An alternative to emendation would be to assume that *taryandan* is indeed the unique occurrence of the \**tariye/a-* 'be strong' posited by Eichner. The author of this archaic passage would have used two rare words for artistic effect, playing on the formal similarity of *taryant-* and *etaryant-*. I do not reject this out of hand, but I personally find the assumption of an extra stem \**tarye/a-* based solely on this passage uneconomical and imprudent. In any case, the decision on *taryandan* does not affect the status of *etaryandan*.

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