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Hittite *harp(p)*- and Derivatives*

H. Craig Melchert

1 Previous Analyses

Neu (1968: 49) defines *harp(p)*- as ‘gesondert aufhäufen, gesondert hinstellen’, following Kümmel (1967: 78–79), while recognizing further meanings for medio-passive instances of the verb such as ‘sich absondern; sich jemandem beigesellen, hinüberwechseln’ (cf. already Friedrich 1952: 58). Neu explicitly treats *harp*- and *harpīya*- as belonging to a single verb, with no mention of a third stem *harpā(i)*-, but Kümmel adds the latter as a third stem variant.

On the other hand, Oettinger (1979: 524–525) argues that the only old stem is medial *harp*- ‘sich absondern, sich aufteilen, sich beigesellen’. In Middle Hittite this is joined by an oppositional active *harp*- ‘absondern (und anderswo beigesellen)’. Neo-Hittite shows also active and medial *harpīya*- equivalent to *harp*-. Originally separate for Oettinger is denominative *harpā(i)*- ‘aufhäufen’ < *harpa*- ‘Haufe’, though he does concede some confusion of *harpā(i)*- with active *harp*- due to the ambiguous iterative stem *harpe/iške*-.

Puhvel (1991: 176) lists *har(a)p*-, *harapp*-, *harpīya*- and *harpai*- as variants of a single verb with the translations: “(trans.) ‘take to, begin (+ supine like *dai-/tiya*-); take in hand, set (up), assemble, add (up), stash, pile up, stack, heap’; (intrans. and midd.) ‘betake oneself to, rally to, hew to, join (up with), side with, stand by (+ dat.-loc.); take a stand, stack up, join up, act together, (make a) settle(ment)’.”

It seems clear that there is no consensus on either the meaning of *harp*- or the relationship between it and the stems *harpīya*- and *harpā(i)*- as well as several putative nominal derivatives such as *harpa*- and *harpanalli*-. Unsurprisingly, opinions also diverge radically on the etymology of *harp*- (see further below). Under these circumstances we must critically reexamine the total philological evidence with full attention to contextual meaning, stem form, diathesis, and relative chronology of the texts and manuscripts. Only then can we turn again to the question of a possible etymology.

* I am indebted to Harry Hoffner for invaluable corrections and suggestions. Remaining infelicities are my own.

2 Evidence for *harp-*

2.1 Medial intransitive

The oldest attested example of *harp-* appears in the Hittite Laws § 66 (KBo 6.2 iii 47–50; OH/OS):¹ *takku* GU₄.APIN.LÁ *takku* A[(NŠE.KUR.R)]A *tūriyauaš takku* ^{GU4}ÁB *takku* ANŠE.KUR.RA MUNUS.AL-*aš hāliyaš harapta t[(akk)]u* MÁŠ.GAL *enanza takku* UDU.U₈ *takku* UDU.NÍTA *ašauni harapta išhaš=* (š)*iš=an wemiezzi n=an=za šakuaššara[(n=pat d)]āi* ^{LÚ}NÍ.ZŪ-*an natta ēpzi* ‘If a plow-ox, a draft-horse, a cow or a mare strays into (another) corral, or if an *e.* he-goat or a ewe or a wether strays into (another) fold, and its owner finds it, he shall take it in full value. He shall not take (him) as a thief’. I adopt here the translation of Hoffner (1997: 77), in agreement with Friedrich (1959: 39) ‘zu (anderen) Hürden hinüberwechselt’ and Imparati (1964: 79, 256²) ‘in ⟨altre⟩ stalle si trasferisce’. The alternative interpretation of Starke (1977: 51f.) ‘in den Hürden sich absondert’, followed by Oettinger (1979: 524), is patently false. It would make no sense for the text to speak of the possibility of the owner taking someone else as a thief if the animal had stayed in its own pen. What is crucial in this oldest example is the complex meaning ‘separate oneself from one herd and join another’, as reflected in Friedrich’s rendering ‘hinüberwechseln’.

The second Old Hittite example of medial intransitive *harp-* also appears in the Hittite Laws, § 31 (KBo 6.3 ii 17–19; OH/NS) ... *nu=za É-er Ū DUMU.MEŠ ienzi appezziann=at=kan naššu idālawēššanzi našma=at=kan harpantari nu=za É-er takšan šarranzi* ... ‘... and they make a house and children, but afterwards they either become estranged or they each find a new marriage partner, they shall divide the house equally ...’ (translation with Hoffner 1997: 40, 184–185). Friedrich (1959: 39) and Imparati (1964: 53) translate this instance of *harp-* simply as ‘von einander wegziehen’ and ‘separarsi’ respectively. While this interpretation is compatible with the context, Hoffner argues cogently that other uses of *harp-* in the Laws suggest rather that the full meaning is ‘(separate from each other) and reassociate with someone else’. We would thus have the same complex meaning as in the case of the straying animal.²

In all other examples of medial intransitive *harp-* the focus is entirely on the element of ‘associating oneself with’. This usage is attested in historical, mythical, and ritual contexts. Historical: *CTH* 13 (KBo 3.53 + 19.90 Ro 9–11; OH/NS; restorations after KBo 3.46 Ro 35–41) ^{URU}*Lakkurišši=ma* 3 *LIM ÉRIN.MEŠ* ^{LÚ.MEŠ}*hapi[(riš LÚ-ann=a ÌR.M)]Eš harpanteš* LUGAL-*uš kuiuš¹ taruppun š=uš* [(*ašandulaš*) ...] *nu=ššan haraptati ta ku[(ttar=šet kišati)]* ‘The 3000 combined

¹ I adopt here the conventions of the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary* in indicating the date of a composition with the sigla O(ld) H(ittite), M(iddle) H(ittite), and N(eo-)H(ittite) and the date of a manuscript by the matching OS, MS, and NS.

² Puhvel (1991: 178) understands *harpantari* rather as ‘make a [divorce] settlement’. While this sense certainly fits the context, it appears egregiously ad hoc in the absence of any explanation of how such a meaning can be derived from the overall usage of the verb.

h.-troops and servants of freemen that I the king assembled in L., I [made] them garrison [troops?]. They banded together and (that) became its strength.’³ Mythical: Illuyanka, *CTH* 321 (KBo 3.7 i 23; OH/NS) *nu=wa=mu=ššan ziqq=a haraphut* ‘May you also ally yourself with me!’⁴ Ritual: *CTH* 401 (KUB 30.34 iii 6–7; pre-NH/NS) *kāša ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ-ušš=a uwate[r²] nu=šmaš=(š)an apē harpandari* ‘They (the primeval gods) have brought also the mountains, and the latter will join with them.’ (similarly Puhvel 1991: 178) and Ritual for Infernal Deities, *CTH* 446 (KUB 41.8 iv 11; pre-NH/NS) *nu=za uwatten <ezzatten> ekutten nu=mu=ššan harapdumati* ‘Come, eat and drink! Ally yourselves with me!’⁵

2.2 Active Intransitive

In Neo-Hittite manuscripts of older compositions one finds active forms of *harp*- with the same intransitive meaning ‘to join, associate oneself with’. The most important example is once again from the Laws, § 112 (KBo 6.10 i 24–26; OH/NS) [*takku ANA NAM.RA.ḪI.(A A.ŠÀ-LAM Š)*] *A LÚ GIS¹⁸TUKUL ḪALQIM pianzi* [MU.3.KAM *šahḫa(n ŪL iy)*] *azi INA MU.4.KAM=ma [(ša)h-ḫan (ēššūwan dāi IT)] TI LÚ.MEŠ GIS¹⁸TUKUL harapzi* ‘If they give to a transplantee the field of a T.-man who has disappeared, he will not perform *s*. for three years, but in the fourth year he begins to perform *s*. (and) he joins/ranks with the T.-men.’ I follow here the restoration and interpretation of Imparati (1964: 277) and Hoffner (1997: 107–108, 202) after Güterbock & Goetze. Friedrich (1959: 106) unnecessarily assumes that *harapzi* is an error for *karapzi*. More importantly, Puhvel (1991: 176) falsely restores the text so as to imply the use of *harp*- with the supine *ēššūwan*. This mistaken restoration is the only basis for the alleged use of *harp*- with the supine, and the latter is to be stricken, pace Puhvel.

Other examples of active intransitive *harp*- in NS merely repeat the usage ‘join with’ in the sense of ‘ally oneself with’: *CTH* 401 (KUB 30.36 ii 7–9; pre-NH/NS) *nu=mu=ššan šumešš=a ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ harapten UMMA ḪUR.SAG. MEŠ lē=ta nāḫi w(i)ēš=ta harappuweni* ‘May also you mountains ally yourselves with me. The mountains say: “Do not be afraid! We will ally ourselves with you!”’⁶ Likewise *CTH* 447 (KBo 11.72 ii 38–40 + 11.10 ii 36; pre-NH/NS) *mān=at=kan taknaš* ^dUTU-*uš šarratta=ma nu=ššan LUGAL-i*

³ Thus essentially with Puhvel (1991: 178–179) contra Neu (1968: 49) ‘sie verteilten sich in Gruppen’. It is the *massing* of the troops together that is the point of the passage.

⁴ Harry Hoffner (pers. comm.) suggests that since Inara is asking Hupasiya to leave his family to become her consort, this example actually shows the complex meaning cited above.

⁵ See Otten (1961: 137): ‘gesellt euch zu mir’. NB the equivalent active form of *harpiya*- in the duplicate KBo 10.45 iv 12 . . . *nu=mu=kan ḫa[rpi]yatten*.

⁶ Similarly Puhvel (1991: 177) ‘rally to me’. NB the use of *harpiya*- in the parallel KUB 30.33 i 15 *harpiya[weni]*! Cf. footnote 5.

MUNUS.LUGAL-*i* *ḥarapši nu=tta uettu kēl ŠA SÍSKUR linkiyanza ēpdu* ‘But if you, the Sun-goddess of Earth, violate it, and side with the king and queen, then let the oath of this ritual come and seize you.’

3 Evidence for *ḥarpiya-*

3.1 Medial Intransitive

As noted by Neu (1968: 501) and Oettinger (1979: 524), in Neo-Hittite manuscripts (including what are likely Neo-Hittite compositions) one finds medial *ḥarpiya-* with the same intransitive sense as *ḥarp-*: Prayer of Muwattalli, *CTH* 381 (KUB 6.45 iii 71–72//6.46 iv 39–40; NH/NS) *nu=mu ZAG-ni GÉŠPU katta iyanni nu=mu=kan GU4-i GIM-an ḥuittiyauwanzi ḥarpiyahḥut* ‘Walk together with me at my right hand. Team up with me as with an ox for pulling.’ (see Singer 1996: 42, 68). Likewise in the Prayer of Puduḥepa, *CTH* 384 (KUB 21.27 iv 42–43; NH/NS): *nu=kan ziqq=a DINGIR-LUM [GAŠAN=Y]A⁷ ANA ḥattušili IR=KA aššuli ḥarp[iy]ahḥut* ‘May you also, oh goddess [my lady?], ally yourself with your servant H. for good.’

3.2 Active Intransitive

As in the case of *ḥarp-* itself, the stem *ḥarpiya-* also appears in NS with active inflection but with the same intransitive meaning as shown by the medial inflection. In addition to the two examples cited in footnotes 5 and 6 above see also the following from the Instructions for the ^{LÚ.MEŠ}SAG; *CTH* 255 (KUB 26.12 iv 46–47; NH/NS) [... *āš]šuwanni UL ḥarpiyanun [...]* [*U*]L *ḥarpiyami* ‘I did not ally myself in friendship ... I do not ally myself’.⁷

4 Evidence for Active Transitive *ḥarp-*

There is secure data to support the claim of Oettinger (1979: 524) that beginning in Middle Hittite there appears a transitive use of active *ḥarp-*, which must be distinguished from the intransitive active use for the medio-passive. The only example from a Middle Hittite manuscript shows the meaning ‘associate with’, thus the transitive counterpart of the well-established intransitive sense ‘join, associate oneself with’: Prayer of Kantuzzili, *CTH* 371 (KUB 30.10 Ro 7–8; pre-NH/MS) *nu=mu=kan āššauaš antuḥšaš anda zik=pat [(DINGIR-LUM=YA)] ḥarapta* ‘You, my god, associated me with good men’ (for the restoration see KUB 31.127 + FHG 1 ii 19).

One also finds the combination *anda ḥarp-* used to mean merely ‘combine, join together’, used of mass worship of the gods: Festival of Ishtar, *CTH* 716 (KUB 27.16 iv 25–27; pre-NH/NS) *nu mān ANA MUNUS.LUGAL ZI-anza nu*

⁷ Thus with Puhvel (1991: 176) contra Oettinger (1979: 525) ‘ich machte abtrünnig’.

DINGIR.MEŠ *anda* [ḥar]piškezzi *n=uš* DINGIR.MEŠ *ḥarpanduš* [ak]kuškezzi ‘If it is the queen’s will, she may combine the gods and drink the gods in combination.’ Likewise Festival of Ishtar of Šamuḥa (KUB 27.1 iv 11; pre-NH/NS) *nu mān* LUGAL-*i* *āššu nu* 3 DINGIR.MEŠ 4 5 DINGIR.MEŠ *anda ḥarpanda akkuškezzi* ‘If it please the king, he may drink jointly three, four (or) five gods.’ For the sense see Puhvel (1991:179), who for the first example contrasts *ibid.* iv 28 *ḥanti ḥanti* ‘separately’.⁸ Contra Kümmel (1967:78–79 with footnote 10) there is no justification for supposing a meaning ‘*sondert jewels* in Gruppen’.⁹ Indeed, I know of no passage anywhere that requires or justifies the specification ‘gesondert hinstellen/aufhäufen’ claimed by Friedrich, Kümmel, and Neu.

5 Evidence for *ḥarpā(i)*-

There is ample evidence for the use of an active stem *ḥarpā(i)*- in the meaning ‘heap/pile (up)’: *CTH* 434 (KUB 17.27 ii 25; OH/NS) *nu=kan* ^{MUNUS}ŠU.GI ^dUTU-*i* IGI-*anda* 3 GIR₄.ḪI.A *anda ḥarpāizzi* ‘The “old woman” stacks together three fired-clay tiles facing the sun.’ Likewise in the ritual KUB 10.15 iii 17–19 (?/NS) *nu=kan* ZAG.GAR.RA-*ni* 3 NINDA.GUR₄.RA *ḥarpānzi* GUNNI-*i* 2 NINDA.GUR₄.RA *ḥarpānzi* ‘They pile three boules on the offering table; they pile two boules on the hearth’ and in KUB 7.22 Ro 16 (?/NS) with a figura etymologica: *ta* NINDA.ḪI.A *ḥarpuš ḥarpānzi* ‘They heap the loaves of bread in heaps.’ I cite here only selected examples; for further instances see Puhvel (1991:176–179).

There is no evidence for the use of the stem *ḥarpā(i)*- to mean anything except ‘heap/pile (up)’, contra Puhvel. In English one can construe the verb ‘heap/pile’ not only with the object that is heaped up, but also with the object on which something is heaped: ‘He heaped his plate with food’. There is no reason not to suppose the same variable syntax for the Hittite verb:¹⁰ Ritual of “mouth-washing”, *CTH* 777 (KUB 29.8 i 4–5; ?/NS) *nu IŠTU ŠA* ^dIŠKUR *kuiēš* GUNNI.MEŠ *ḥarpānteš n=aš* EGIR GUNNI.MEŠ *apāšila tiškezzi* ‘He himself steps behind the hearths that are piled up (with offerings) on the side

⁸ But correct his reading and interpretation of the second example, where the text has “4 5”, not “45” (my thanks to Harry Hoffner for this correction). The attested forms *ḥarpiškezzi*, *ḥarpanduš* and *ḥarpanda* are formally ambiguous and could in principle belong to *ḥarpā(i)*- instead of to *ḥarp*-. I find it unlikely, however, that the Hittites carried out the mass worship of the gods by ‘heaping/piling’ them together!

⁹ The force of the *ške*-form *ḥarpiškezzi* is distributive only in the sense that it underscores that the action is being performed on multiple deities (see Dressler 1968:174ff.), not that it is being done to separate groups. On the contrary, the provision is that all the gods are to be treated en masse, as per Puhvel and Laroche.

¹⁰ For similar variable syntax with various Hittite verbs such as *šipand*- ‘sacrifice/worship’ or *šer arḫa waḥnu*- ‘brandish over’ see my discussion in Melchert (1981).

of the Storm-god.’ It is quite unnecessary to assume with Puhvel (1991: 179) a further meaning ‘set up’.

The same argument applies to the example from the festival text KUB 10.88 i 5–14 (pre-NH/NS) ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR.ĪI.A DINGIR.MEŠ=*ya tianzi ŠA LUGAL MUNUS.LUGAL DUMU.MEŠ.LUGAL ^{LÚ.MEŠ}DUGUD 18 ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR *tianzi paḥḥurr=a pariyanzi* 43 ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR.ĪI.A ŠA KUR.KUR.MEŠ*ḥarpānzi paḥḥur ŪL pariyanzi* ^{NINDA}šaramma GIM-an ŠA LUGAL MUNUS.LUGAL Ū ŠA DUMU.MEŠ.LUGAL ^{LÚ.MEŠ}DUGUD *n=at QATAMMA ḥandānzi* ‘They set up the tables and the gods. They set up 18 tables of/for the king, queen, princes and dignitaries, and they fan a fire. They heap 43 tables of/for the lands, (but) they do not fan a fire. They arrange *s*-bread in the same way as for the king, queen, princes and dignitaries.’ Contra Puhvel (1991: 177) the action of ‘setting (up)’ the tables is expressed here as usual by the verb *dāi*-. The verb *ḥarpā(i)*- refers to the subsequent heaping of the tables with offerings.*

The context of offerings is also present in the example from the “King lists”, CTH 661 (KUB 11.8+9 iii 8–9; ?/NS) [(^{GIŠ}BA)]NŠUR AD.KID ^mZidanza [(QATA)]MMA *ḥarpanzi* ‘They likewise heap the wicker table of Z.’ The text clearly refers to offerings to the manes, not to “inventorying”, as claimed by Puhvel (1991: 177), and there is thus no basis for his alleged meaning ‘add’. I repeat: the *only* attested meaning for (*anda*) *ḥarpā(i)*- (sic!) is ‘pile/heap (up)’.

We do also find *one* example each of *ḥarp*- and *ḥarpiya*- with the meaning ‘pile/heap (up)’: ritual (KUB 10.54; pre-NH/NS) *nu UGULA LÚ.MEŠ ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR NINDA.GUR₄. RA.ĪI.A *ḥūmanduš paršiya n=aš=kan* ^{LÚ} ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR-*i* *ḥarapzi* ‘The chief of the table-men breaks all the boules, and a table-man piles them on the table.’ Likewise in the Hedammu-Myth, CTH 348 (KBo 19.109a iv 17; pre-NH/NS): [...] *ḥarpuš* SAG.DU-*aš* [...] *ḥarpiya*[*t*] ‘piled up ... piles of heads’ (see Siegelová 1971: 61, 76). It is worth noting that both of these examples appear in Neo-Hittite copies of older compositions. In view of the consistent contrast elsewhere between the meanings of *ḥarp*-/*ḥarpiya*- on the one hand and that of *ḥarpā(i)*- on the other, we should follow Oettinger (1979: 524) in attributing these rare exceptions to confusion caused by the formal ambiguity of several forms of the respective paradigms of *ḥarp*- and *ḥarpā(i)*-.¹¹*

6 Synchronic Analysis

Our reexamination of the primary data has reconfirmed the fundamental analysis of Oettinger (1979: 524–525) against that of all others. As generally assumed, the stems *ḥarp*- and *ḥarpiya*- are functionally equivalent. The current pattern

¹¹ In addition to the case of the iterative stem *ḥarpiške*- cited by Oettinger, there also would have been frequent graphic ambiguity in the commonly occurring forms of the present third plural and the participle (*ḥarpanzi* and *ḥarpant*-), since the long stem-vowel in the respective forms of *ḥarpā(i)*- would not have been indicated with any regularity.

of the attestations suggests that the stem *harpīya-* is an innovation, part of the general spread of stems in *-ye/a-* within the historical period (see Oettinger 1979: 5–6).¹² On the other hand, since the only established meaning for *harpā(i)-* is ‘pile/heap (up)’, we must with Oettinger view it as a distinct denominative stem from the noun *harpa-* ‘pile, heap’. The latter is an animate action/result noun from *harp-* whose original sense would have been *‘association, bringing together’. The attested specialization must reflect an original frequent use of the transitive verb with certain kinds of inanimate objects. Note that since the noun *harpa-* is already attested in Old Hittite, the transitive use of the base verb must also be older than its direct attestation beginning in Middle Hittite.¹³

The oldest directly attested usage of *harp-* is as a medial intransitive verb with the complex meaning ‘separate oneself and (re)associate oneself elsewhere’ (of people thus ‘change sides/allegiance’), although in most instances the first element is lost and the sense is reduced to ‘join with, take the side of’. Important confirmation for the original more complex meaning comes from the CLuvian derivative *harpanalla/i-*. As a noun, this word means not merely ‘enemy’ (contra Puhvel 1991: 182, with a false derivation), but rather ‘rebel, turncoat’ < *‘one who has gone over to the other side’ (see already Gusmani 1968: 3). The same specific sense is reflected in the adverbial usage of the underlying adjective in the “Protocol of Ukkura” (CTH 293, KUB 13.35+ i 11–13; NH/NS) *UNUT LUGAL=wa kuit harkun nu=wa ANA UNUT LUGAL 4harpanalla ŪL kuwapikki iyanniyanun nu=wa=za ŪL kuitki dahhun* ‘I did not in any way behave disloyally towards the equipment of the king that I had. I took nothing for myself.’ It makes no sense to say that one behaved ‘hostilely’ towards an inanimate object (Puhvel 1991: 182) or ‘mutwillig’ (Werner 1967: 5). The point is that the speaker did not betray a trust: see the arguments of Starke (1990: 232) who aptly renders ‘pflichtwidrig’.¹⁴

7 Etymology

We may summarily reject the derivation from PIE **h₁erp-* and comparison with Latin *rapiō* ‘seize and remove, snatch’ proposed by Puhvel (1991: 182–183), since the alleged synchronic meaning ‘take in hand, take to’ for *harp-* on which

¹² There is no evidence in this case for an archaism in the sense proposed in Melchert (1997).

¹³ I stress that ‘associate, bring together’ is the *only* transitive sense justified by the available data. We have already refuted the arguments of Puhvel for the assigned meanings ‘take to, begin; set (up), add (up)’. He himself offers no evidence at all for the supposed sense ‘take in hand’, and we have found none in our review.

¹⁴ Other derivatives add nothing further to our understanding of the basic verb. The noun *harpali-* ‘heap, pile, stack’ appears to be synonymous with *harpa-* (for the formation Puhvel 1991: 181, aptly compares *hulali-*). The word *harpu-* (only in the set expression *harpu šarūpa*) is probably best understood not as ‘hostile’ (Tischler 1977: 182, et al.) but rather with Puhvel (1991: 180) as something like ‘pell-mell, helter-skelter’ < *‘in heaps’ (cf. Italian *alla rinfusa*). ^{NINDA}*harpanušša-* is surely Luvian, but neither the formal structure nor the precise meaning is clear (see Kümmel 1967: 78).

it is based is patently false. The correct etymon is $*h_3erb^h-$, as already seen by Polomé (1954: 159–160), and Benveniste (1962: 11–12).¹⁵ Contra Puhvel (1991: 182) the geminate $-pp-$ of $har(ap)p-$ does not preclude derivation from a PIE root with a final voiced (aspirated) stop: cf. $par(ak)kiye-$ ‘rise, raise’ < $*bherǵ^h-$ and see Melchert (1994: 153 with references) and Oettinger (1979: 197).

Puhvel is correct, however, in rejecting the standard account by which the core meaning of $*h_3erb^h-$ was ‘be separated’ (whence the meaning ‘orphan’ of Greek ὀρφανός etc. as ‘separated from one’s parents’). We should adopt rather the illuminating suggestion of Calvert Watkins that the root $*h_3erb^h-$ had a complex meaning still reflected in the oldest usage of the Hittite verb: ‘change membership from one group/social class to another’.¹⁶ Used of a voluntary action by an animal, the meaning amounts to ‘change herds’ (Friedrich’s ‘hinüberwecheln’). Said of a voluntary action by people, the sense is ‘change sides, change allegiance’.¹⁷

However, a change in social status/group identity may also be involuntary, and it is this usage that is reflected in other derivatives of the root in various languages. It is well-established that in early Indo-European society one’s position was defined primarily in terms of kinship. Under these circumstances loss of one’s parents (in particular of one’s father) resulted inevitably in a change of social status, hence the words for ‘orphan’ in some languages (Armenian *orb*, Latin *orbis*, Greek ὀρφανός) and for ‘heir, inheritance’ in others (Gothic *arbi* ‘inheritance’, Old Irish *orb(b)* ‘heir; inheritance’).¹⁸ As emphasized by Benveniste (1969: 84), the positive/negative contrast of ‘orphan’ and ‘heir’ is secondary and modern: for the Indo-Europeans there was no fundamental distinction: the $*h_3orb^h-$ was one who underwent such a change in status. We also know that in Indo-European society one was not typically born a slave. One became a slave by being captured in war (see Benveniste 1969: 355–56)—once again an involuntary change in one’s social status. Hence the pan-Slavic designation for ‘slave’ (OCS *rabŭ* etc.), also to be derived from $*h_3erb^h-$. We may thus conclude with Watkins that behind the homely use of Hittite $harp(p)-$ to refer

¹⁵ The root may also be reconstructed as $*h_2erb^h-$, as per Weiss (2006: 259).

¹⁶ I first heard this suggestion in class instruction in 1968. The core idea summarized here is now published in brief in Watkins 2000: 60.

¹⁷ Upon my presentation of this paper in a lecture at the Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Mr. Hisashi Miyakawa raised the possibility that Sanskrit *ṛbhú-* also is derived from $*h_3erb^h-$, the original sense being *‘one who has left humankind and joined the gods’. I cannot pursue this intriguing suggestion here, nor the much-debated connection of *ṛbhú-* with Greek ὀρφανός, most recently defended by Estell (1999). I am indebted to Norbert Oettinger for this last reference.

¹⁸ I should add explicitly that by this derivation the wider use of Latin *orbis* to mean ‘bereft of’ (sight, e. g.) must be regarded as a secondary development, contrary to the view of the standard handbooks. I see no difficulty in assuming that with the loss of the traditional PIE social structure there was in the prehistory of Latin a reanalysis of *orbis* by which the ‘orphan’ (or ‘widow’) was viewed as being ‘bereft’ of parent (respectively husband), whence the attested usage of the word. In deciding the direction of the semantic change we must give more weight to the evidence of the Hittite primary verb.

to a straying animal lies a complex PIE notion of change of group membership with rich associations in the vocabulary of social institutions.¹⁹

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¹⁹ For a very different analysis of the words for ‘orphan’ and ‘heir’ see McCone (1999), who derives them from a root **h₁erb^h-* seen in Old Irish *erbaid* ‘entrusts’. Weiss (2006) has now made attractive arguments for assuming that the original sense of the root **h_{2/3}erb^h-* that is the source of all the words discussed here was ‘turn’, also ‘turn over to, transfer’, with inheritances, orphans, and slaves all being things that are transferred into the power of another.

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