INCONTRI
LINGUISTICI

ESTRATTO

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1. It is a famous principle of historical linguistics that we can and should exploit the evidence of forms which are irregular within their synchronic context to recover regular systems of prior linguistic stages. The validity and explanatory power of such a line of reasoning are unquestionable. However, irregularities are by their very nature typically isolated and few in number. In a given instance it can be hard to determine with assurance whether an irregular pattern is really a ‘precious archaism’ or merely the peculiar (even aberrant) development of a particular language, the details of which remain beyond our grasp.

The topic treated below is a case in point. I believe that the scattered examples I have collected constitute a genuine pattern and are not the coincidental result of different language-particular processes. If this is true, then they also are the remnants, direct and indirect, of an earlier regular system. The evidence, however, remains sparse and variable in quality. Some readers will legitimately doubt that the data can support the weight of the analysis I propose. I nevertheless present the evidence and hypothesis here, because if the latter is correct, it has profound implications for the much vexed question of the relationship of the Anatolian subfamily to Proto-Indo-European.

2. Hittite (respectively Anatolian) is famous for the fact that its verbal system is monothematic: every verb derives all its finite and non-finite forms from a single synchronic stem. The individual stems are often formed with suffixes cognate with those which carry aspectual value in other older Indo-European languages. Indeed, virtually every well-established PIE suffix and derivational process used to form imperfectives (‘presents’) is represented. We find stems corresponding to nu-presents (tępnu- ‘belittle’), velo-presents (veerij-i- ‘call’), transitives in -eye- (wassē/o- ‘clothe’), ‘acrostic’ (‘Narten’) root presents (ad- ‘eat’), and so on. There are also cognates of

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1. In Melchert, 1998 I have argued that virtually every Hittite verb may form a stem in -sēγe/o- (or one of its subtractive allomorphs -sēγa/- or -sēγa/-) which explicitly marks the action as ‘imperfective’ or having some value of ‘verbical plurality’. Although there is evidence for this system in other Anatolian languages, it clearly is an innovation and has nothing to do with any possible traces of inherited PIE aspect in Anatolian.
ordinary root presents (es/-as: ‘be’), and of root aorists (te- ‘say’ < *"put’). Crucially, whether there are traces of a characterized (schematic) aorist is a matter of dispute.

In some cases we find correspondents of different aspectual stems to the same root: *heuk/-buk- ‘slaughter’ and *bunit(n)k- ‘wound, injure’, both from *h1weg-, the former matching a root aorist, the latter a nasal-infix present (see Strunk, 1979, p. 254 ff.). In Anatolian, however, the different stems function as lexically distinct verbs. No one denies the obvious relationship of the suffixes to PIE aspectual markers, but there is a widespread view that these appear in Anatolian in a pre-reflective guise. They serve as derivational bases which modify the Aktsaart of the verbal roots (for one well-argued presentation of this general viewpoint see Strunk, 1979, p. 248 ff. and in more detail 1994). Cases of this sort, where Anatolian has generalized for a given verb a particular stem which has an aspectual value elsewhere, are not the object of discussion here.

3. I will claim that both Hittite and Luwian have verbs which show two distinct synchronic stems, specifically one in -ye/a/-(Luwian -i/-ya-) and one without. Furthermore, the general distribution is that the former marks the present (indicative) and the latter all other categories.

3.1. Some of the evidence I will present has been noticed by others. Jasanoff (1978, p. 40) cites Hitt. pres. ind. mid. parkey- ‘rise’ beside inv. mid. 3rd sg. parayak-taru. He compares Tocharian par- and Armenian ebarij and explicitly suggests that the first Hittite stem may reflect a *yor/epresent, and the second a root aorist. Compare also Oettinger, 1979, p. 356ff. Oettinger (1979, p. 350 and already 1976, p. 140) points to a phenomenon he correctly describes in synchronic terms as «Ausstellung des Je-Formans bei nu-Bildungen». He cites as examples tit(a)mu-nu- < tetti- ‘install’ and kارت(∂)mu- ‘make angry’ < kartimiy(-ie) ‘be angry’. The second example is especially striking, because in this case we are certainly dealing with a denominative formation (even if we do not fully understand the details of the base *karta|m(∂)μ). Starke (1990, pp. 259 & 551) has found an analogue in CLuwian, where there is likewise «Ausstellung» of -je- in the verbal noun: e.g. walluna(<<<∴|∂)- ‘of lifting’ vs. finite wallaly(∂).

We owe to Oettinger (1979, p. 345) the insight that in Old Hittite the principal stem of ‘lift’ is karp(∂)ye-, replaced in Middle Hittite by karp(∂)p-.

He cites this as a case where the -ye/a- stem is older than the athematic, against the usual pattern whereby -ye/a- is the expanding, innovative form. He does not answer the question of why an otherwise productive formation should be replaced in this verb by a recessive one.

If we look at all the evidence for the verb ‘lift’, we find that in fact all (seven) examples of karp(∂)ye- in OH manuscripts are in the present indicative. Of the instances in later manuscripts, 13 are in the present, 15 are non-present, but fully half of the latter are in a single manuscript (KBo XVII 88 + XX 67). Beginning with Middle Hittite, we find more than 80 examples of karp(∂)p- outside the present indicative. It is true, of course, that we also find present forms of karp(∂)p-, beginning already in OH manuscripts (e.g. KBo XVII 43 iv 7). As Oettinger concluded, the latter has become the only stem for this verb in Middle and Neo-Hittite. Unfortunately, to my knowledge we have no non-present finite examples from OH manuscripts (we do find the participle karpant-, KBo XXV 31 II 4 et aliter).

The highly skewed attested distribution seems to me, however, suggestive enough: the stem karp(∂)ye- is effectively restricted to the present indicative, and there is no evidence for its use outside the present in original compositions from any period. I therefore propose that the pre-Hittite distribution was: pres. ind. karp(y)ye-, elsewhere karp(a)p-. This would also make the later development much more comprehensible. The athematic stem karp(∂)p- did not have to be created (on what model?) – the language merely leveled the synchronically unmotivated allomorphy in favor of the non-present stem, beginning already in Old Hittite. By the later language the verb conformed to the productive Hittite pattern of one stem per verb.

Lehman (1985, p. 62 ff.) had also noticed the restriction of OH karp(∂)ye- to the present indicative and seen its potential importance for the question of the value of -ye/a- in Hittite. Following the line of reasoning cited earlier, however, he argues that the suffix has its ‘pre-aspectual’ function of modifying the lexical content of the verb (see his general summary, 1985, p. 241 ff.). Specifically, he suggests that in the expression lujni karp(y)ye- ‘carry out/perform lujni’ (KBo VI 2 ii 29ff [§46] and passim in the Hittite Laws), the force of the ye-suffix is to mark the aetetic, processual meaning of this idiom, versus ordinary karp(a)p- ‘lift’. His account is quite plausible for this particular usage, but we also now find press. 3rd pl. karp(a)pianzi in the OH manuscripts KBo XVII 30 ii 3 (= StBoT 25,72) and KBo XXV 128 LC 3 (= StBoT 25,128). Despite the badly broken contexts, it is clear that we are dealing with concrete ritual activities, and the meaning is surely ‘lift’.


3. parkey[a] and par(a)ktem cooccur in a single passage KUB XXXIII 68 i1 ff, confirming that they do belong to a single synchronic verb with no discernible semantic differentiation.

4. The standard restoration karp[∂]pi-e-e] in KBo VI 2 ii 14 (Laws, §54) is, of course, non-probable, being based simply on the NH copy KBo VI 6 i23, which may have falsely generalized the present-tense stem from the other examples in the Laws (see below).
(cf. karpanzi ‘they lift’ in KBo XVII 11+ i 46 [=StBoT 25,25] and KBo XVII 43 iv 7 [=StBoT 25,43]). In any case, Lehrman’s account does not work for the other examples of stems with and without -ye-, where there is not an iota of evidence for any functional contrast.

Other Hittite active verbs showing coexisting stems with and without -ye- have too few attestations to be useful. As per Lehrman (1985, p. 65 f.), we find in the Laws OH kar(a)ššiyezezi (KBO VI 2 i 8 [86]) vs. kar(a)šši (ibid. iv 22 [890]), but there is not enough evidence to show either a functional contrast or the original present vs. non-present distribution claimed here. That the case is parallel to that of karp(i)ye- vs. kar(a)p- remains likely, but unprovable. Similarly, the hapax inv. 2nd pl. karušteš to regular karuššye- ‘be silent’ fits my prediction, but obviously little can be made of a solitary example. I would point out, however, that the stem karuššye- is almost certainly distinctive. Hence, karušteš does show descriptively «deletion» of the ye-suffix for which there is no apparent motivation.

The other significant Hittite evidence in my view consists of cases where we find a medial stem in -ye- for verbs which otherwise have an athematic (root) inflection (see Neu, 1968, p. 42). For ‘perish’ the active stem is bar(a)k- from Old Hittite onward, but in the middle we find only bar(a)kikye- (2x). The verb ‘make smooth’ has an active (transitive) stem štalk- (also secondary štalk(i)-), but medial štalk(i)ye- (with passive value). Beside active transitive mar(a)k- ‘divide’ there is one attestation of medial markuška-dat ‘were divided’. The root walk- of uncertain meaning shows active transitive wai(a)k- (and also wa(t)aq-nu-) vs. medial intransitive (or passive) present walkiyanada – but medial preterite walki(y)akat. Here belongs also, of course, our first citation above: medial present parikiyar(ta) vs. imperative par(a)ktar.

The examples just cited are selective, and I will not conceal the fact that the distributional pattern of the few other medial stems in -ye- cited by Neu seems more or less random. Since the total number of «tokens» for all such stems is very small, their evidentiary value must be regarded as suggestive, not compelling. Nevertheless, there is in my view a genuine and unmistakable contrast: some Hittite verbs which in the active have athematic root inflection form distinct intransitive/passive middles in -ye-. In some cases (walk-/walkiye- and park-/parkiye-) there is evidence to suggest that the ye-stem was confined to the present indicative middle.

Such a distribution inevitably recalls the use of *ye/o- elsewhere in Indo-European to form intransitive or passive present stems. I cite here merely Sanskrit intransitive presents in unaccented -ya- (e.g. bīdhya’te/i ‘awaken’, yidhyate/i ‘fight’, mśyate/i ‘forgets’, etc.) and accented -yā- which comes to be the productive Sanskrit marker of the present passive (Whitney, 1879, p. 248 ff.).

3.2. The admittedly very sparse Hittite evidence presented above can be augmented by similar material from CLuvian. The latter is predictably also fragmentary, but its very existence offers support for the reality of the patterns described for Hittite. The CLuvian verb ‘wipe’ shows precisely a contrast between present am(ma)ššiši(ya)- (am(ma)ššiti, am(ma)ššanti) vs. preterite am(ma)šša(š)atam(ma)ššanda. The Hittite cognate an(as)s-, an athematic bi-verb5, shows that the ye-stem in the CLuvian verb is secondary, but this does not detract from its value in establishing the contrast of present stem in -ye- vs. non-present athematic stem. When this verb took on ye-inflection, it did so only in the present indicative. This formal contrast, otherwise totally unmotivated – there is no evidence for any semantic distinction – can only have been modeled on such a contrast in pre-existing verbs in -ye-.

The CLuvian verb kup- ‘plot, scheme’ is attested only in the preterite third singular kupita. Indirect evidence for a present stem kupi(y)u- is furnished by the derived action noun kupiyat(‘i)- ‘scheme’. The latter is a deverbal action noun in *-t-: the halved stop of the suffix would be phonologically regular from a root-accented *kupyeo- (see Morpurgo Davies, 1982/83). Derivation of the action noun from the marked present stem is not unexpected: cf. Hitt. aniyat- < aniyela- ‘carry out, accomplish’ from a similar present *énh-yel-o- (vs. the usual «deletion» in the surely related nu-verb annanu- ‘train’). The interest of this example is that CLuvian *kupi(y)a- is likely to form a direct word equation with Skt. kāpya- ‘be angry’ and Lat. cupido ‘desire’.

Of eighteen attestations of the CLuvian verb tapar- ‘rule’, all but one are non-presents. Most of these are finite preterites (1st sg. taparba, 3rd sg. taparta). As per Starke (1990, p. 259), a present stem *tapataryə - is attested in Huvian ta-pa-reš-ia- and indirectly in the Hittite loanword tapara-ye. 6

6. For the meaning of the CLuvian verb and its etymology with the Hittite see MELCHERT, 1988, p. 211 ff. Cf. also probably Pal. ṭtkei, which would confirm original bi-inflection. The long š of the Hittite verb definitively precludes the speculative PIE etymology I offered then. A PIE etymon for an Anatolian *šms-la- (or *šms-le-) remains to be found.

7. See for this comparison OTTE, 1979, p. 204, following Pedersen and many others. The likely word equation tips the balance in favor of this etymology against the otherwise attractive comparison by COR, 1956, p. 146 with Gen. *hip- seen in English ‘hope’ and so forth. For the unexpected single -p- < PIE, *p see section 4 below.

5. There is a single active form *parikiyanda in KUR XVII 10 i 18, a MH copy of an OH composition. Given the general tendency to replace intransitive middles with actives in the history of Hittite, I believe this example is a remodeled *parikiyanda.
4. I have made at least a prima facie case for the existence in Hittite and
Luvian of a set of verbs with *two* synchronic stems, one with the suffix
*-ye/o- and one without (the latter is in fact usually athematic, in non-
denominative typically the bare root). In view of the general productive
rule by which the Anatolian verb derives all of its forms from a single stem,
I see no plausible way to motivate this class as a whole as an innovation.
The suffixless stem of the denominative examples obviously is an innova-
tion, but it is especially hard to see how the well-established denominative
suffix *-ye/o- would have come to be deleted just in certain forms of
the verb, except upon the model of a pre-existing primary (or at least deverb-
ative) class with a homophonous suffix.

The observed distributional pattern by which the original locus of the
*-ye/o- suffix appears to be the present tense, in some cases specifically the
present middle, argues that this suffix should be identified with the PIE
present-stem forming (i.e. imperfective) suffix of the same form. The
restriction of *-ye/o- to the present and the absence of any observable func-
tional distinction between the stems with and without it suggests that we are
dealing not with the *pre-aspectual* form of the suffix, but rather with its
post-aspectual *incarnation*.14 That is, in Anatolian as elsewhere, with the
breakdown of the inherited aspectual system of imperfective/perfective and
stative (*present/oristic* and *perfect*), the suffix *-ye/o- lost its aspectual
value and became simply a (redundant) formal marker of the present tense.
As one would predict, this purely formal distinction was eventually elimi-
nated—hence the heavily recessive status of the type in the attested
languages.

Specifically, I claim that Anatolian inherited a contrast between an
imperfective stem (*present* ) *kærpiei (Hitt. karpyezi* and Lyd. *fa-kar-fu*)
and a perfective stem (*root* or *oristic*) *kærpt (Hitt. kar(a)pta*) for
the verb ‘lift’. Likewise, the verb *wish for* inherited an imperfective stem
*kúpiye- (CLuvian *kapiya*)- in the action noun kupi(ya)(i) (‘plot’) be-
side a perfective stem *kúptc reflected in kupqa ‘plot’. The latter stem
with accented full-grade (hence diplongh) is the source of the *lentited*
form with single *p- (for the rule see Eichner, 1973). As already suggested

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8. For Hittite stems in -ινα(ι) as remodeled Luvian stems in -ινα(ι) see OETTINGER, 1979, p. 382 ff.
9. For the likely source of the attested shape tapar < *dhab(h)ro- see MELCHERT, 1993, p. 107. For
an alternative account see EHMNE, loc. cit.
10. Sterke, loc. cit., already says explicitly that tapar- must be secondary to tapar(ya)-, but he
gives no account of how this could have taken place. As per OETTINGER, 1979, p. 198, the
descriptively atheletic form of Hitt. kommara- ‘deceitful’ vs. Clavian kaimar(ya)- is surely to be
explained in the same way, starting from a denominative in *-ye/o-. The source of the *-r in
the nominal base *ghot-m(r)- remains unclear.
11. Nor can it be equated directly with the Hittite ṭ-verb in *-i: baltali(ə)-. We do not have a certain
Luvian example of such a stem, but HLVian pr.yar-i ‘gives’ and Luvo-Hittite verbs in -yar- (cf.
ote 8) make it very unlikely that all traces of the *-i-ya- would be lost in Luvian: expect *balta(ya)-
or *balta(yu)-. Likewise, Clavian ayor ‘is made, becomes’ and byar(i) ‘lies’ argue against taking
baltar(i) as a mere renewal of the stem seen in Hittite balta(ya).
12. For the tentative semantic interpretation and derivation see Sterke, 1990, p. 290 f. with note
987.
13. An additional indirect Luvian example may be present in Hittite mekiw(i) (‘he see, appear’,
reflecting a remade Luvian *‘-ya-*, as per OETTINGER, 1979, pp. 380 and 468, whether or not attes-
ted Clavian wettar(i) (with syllabified *-y-ya-*) directly represents said stem.

14. The observed pattern fits the picture sketched by LUSHMAN himself (1985, p. 241) for a post-
aspectual system: ‘The two stems would become synonymous, and one of them would disappear,
giving way to the other; or, they would coexist in the same meaning, perhaps as dialectal or register
variants; or, the erstwhile imperfective stem would be associated with and generalized for the tense
in which it was typically used, namely the present and the erstwhile perfective stem would be
generalized as the pretector stem.’
15. As per MELCHERT, 1992, p. 47 ff. the Lydian verb even preserves the regularly *lentited* ending
*-ye/o- expected in a root-accented present, while Hittite has as usual generalized the unaccented
form.
by Jasanoff, Hittite parpyiva/ta/ rises continues an imperfective middle
*bhrigvyavor, while inv. 3rd sg. par(a)ktarara reflects a perfective (root aorist)
*bh(e)rgEd/ta. 16

Based on these and other inherited examples, the contrast was spread to
new secondary examples of *-ye/o- inflection (such as CLuvian
am(ma)s$ya/-: am(ma)s$a/- and even to cases of denominative
*-ye/o-(e.g. taparnia/-: tapar/-, kartinniya/-: kartunn/-). 17 In fact, it is surely not
coincidental that *-ye/o- is the only present-forming (imperfective) suffix
for which we have any traces of this contrast. It is only the productivity of
both deverbal and denominative *-ye/o- in Anatolian that allowed rem-
nants of this system to survive into the historical period. Note that in half
the cases presented for Luvian the contrast must be secondary and
analogue, not inherited.

If the system I have reconstructed from the attested disiecta membra is
correct (and it is unmistakably a reconstruction, not a manifest fact), then
Anatolian must have inherited at least the imperfective/perfective portion
of the aspectual system traditionally reconstructed for PIE on the basis
chiefly of Greek and Indo-Iranian, at least in some of its manifestations.
This renews the question of the status of the other well-known formations
attested in Anatolian which correspond to aspectual stems elsewhere, cited
in section 2 above. I believe that a proper response must address each indi-
vidual case on its own merits.

I certainly do not wish to propose that every suffix which forms verbal
stems in Anatolian necessarily reflects a PIE formation with aspectual val-

16. The prehistoric source of the root vowel in parajak-parpyiva- cannot be directly determined.
The ablaut grade of the former depends on one’s views of the origins of the root aorist middle
and the attendant relative chronology. This point, which I cannot pursue here, is not crucial for my
purposes. The stem parpyiva- is ambiguous in terms of both accent and ablaut: it may reflect *bhhrig-
vyar/-, *bhhrig-vye/-, or *bhrig-ye-/1. I assume zero grade based on the dominant pattern of the intras-
itive/mediopassive type. In Luvian kip/yia(-)/- the ‘denison’ of the suffix suggests a root accent
*kip/ye/- One assumes for PIE on systemic grounds an original pattern with R(3)-ye/o- but R(0)-
ye/o-. In Sanskrit the latter type underwent a polarization whereby suffixal accent came to mark
the passive, while intrasitives retracted the accent onto the root after the original root-accented
full-grade type (see e.g. Thibeau-Hauschild, 1959, p. 333 ff. with refs., and Strunke, 1967, p. 78). We
do not have enough evidence for passive use to know if there was a similar development in Anatol-
ian, but generalization of root accent from the enyme-type (*h/brig-vye-) to intrasitives like *kyp/y-
ve/- seems unproblematic. As Jay Jasanoff reminds me, it cannot be excluded that the analogy extended
to the ablaut grade as well, hence PA *kip/yve/- > kip/bvye/- > kip/yi-. The lack of plane spelling in
the first syllable argues mildly against this assumption.

17. In the latter case, we are probably not facing a mere formal analogy. As elsewhere, there was a
need to provide denominative stems, which had formed only imperfective (present) stems in PIE,
with a full inflection. A contrast of present vs. non-present was achieved by creating forms without
*-ye/o- outside the present (on the model of the *korp/ye/- type). Compare the situation in Greek, as
described by Rix (1976, p. 201).

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ue. I personally doubt very seriously that the contrast between *heuk- ‘slaugh-
ter’ and *hu-nin-k- ‘wound’ or between *ihat/ajk- ‘sicken’ (construed person-
ally and impersonally) and *ihat-nin-k- ‘cause to be sick’ reflects directly
the use of the nasal infix *-n(e)- to form a (present) imperfective stem
contrasting with a root aorist. On the other hand, I am prepared to consider
the possibility that Anatolian inherited a *ye/o-present *bhrig-vye/- behind root
aorist *s(h)ekte/- ‘release from the hand’, seen respectively in Hitt. S$ez$i ‘throw,
shoot’ and Lycian haddi, _hati ‘lay down, let go’. Compare mutatis mutan-
dis Skt. present syati vs. aorist dant ‘bind’. This is not the place to rehearse
the history of the relevant suffixes. If I am correct about the inheritance
in Anatolian of the PIE suffix *-ye/o- in its function as a marker of imper-
fective aspect, the entire topic does deserve to be reexamined.

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18. See on these forms Melchert 1989, p. 37 ff.
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