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Mediopassives in **-s̄ke/o-* to Active Intransitives

Among the many contributions of our honorand to Indo-European linguistics is his demonstration of the crucial role played by lexical semantics (Verbalcharakter) in defining the morphosyntactic categories of the verb: see e.g. García Ramón (1994) and (2002). Characteristically, his analyses are always based on the meaning of verbs as determined by a very close reading of their textual occurrences, not merely on those given in the standard lexica. I regret that I cannot yet offer an explanation for the phenomenon described below, but hope that by properly defining it I have advanced the state of the question and offer this discussion to our honorand as a sincere sign of friendship and esteem.

Calvert Watkins (1969, 72) called attention to the striking fact that the base verbs Hittite *pai-* ‘go’ and *uwa-* ‘come’ are inflected exclusively in the active (Pres3Sg *paizzi* and *uezzi*), while their derivatives in *-ške/a-* are exclusively or almost exclusively mediopassive (Pres3Sg *paišketta* and *uēšketta*). This fact likewise did not escape the attention of Erich Neu (1968b, 86-9), who pointed out that the same pattern recurs with fientives in *-ešš-* (Pres3Sg *kallarešzi*, but *kallareškattari* ‘turns out unfavorably’). He also mentioned the similar pattern in ‘die’: Pres3Sg *aki*, but *akkiškettari*.

For Watkins these and other examples of mediopassive *-ške/a-* and *-ye/-ya-* in early Hittite reflected the middle origins of thematic inflection. But whatever the connection is between the thematic conjugation and the middle (see now Jasanoff 2003, 224-7 and *passim*), these two suffixes already entered Proto-Anatolian with robust active inflection in transitive function. Over two hundred Hittite transitive verbs are attested with the “marked imperfective” suffix *-ške/a-* (see Hoffner and Melchert 2002 on this characterization). Many are hapax or near hapax, but some are well attested, and they show exclusively active inflection: *akkuške-* ‘drink’ (50+x, since OS),¹ *anniške-* ‘treat, etc.’ (50+x, since OS), *azzikke-* ‘eat’ (100+x), *appiške-* ‘take; hold’ (30+x, since OS), *mēmiške-* ‘speak’ (100+x, since OS), *piške-* ‘give’ (often, since OS), *daške-* ‘take’ (100+x, since

¹ I use the standard sigla OH, MH, and NH to distinguish Old, Middle, and New Hittite texts and OS, MS, and NS to indicate Old, Middle, and New Hittite manuscripts.

OS), *zikke-* ‘put, place’ (100+x, since OS). All exceptions but one are easily motivated.

First, there is an expanding innovative passive use of the mediopassive to transitive verbs: e.g. *ariške-* ‘make the subject of an oracular inquiry’ (5x, only NH; thus with Neu 1968a, 19-20), *ešharwahhiške-* ‘make blood-red’ (1x, NS; Neu 1968a, 32), *halziške-* ‘call’ (1x, NS), *iktāiške-* ‘catch in a net’ (1x, MH/MS), *ilališke-* ‘desire’ (1x, MH/MS), *parhiške-* ‘chase, drive’ (1x, NS), *šahiške-* ‘clog, be-foul’ (3x, MH/NS), *dankuwahhiške-* ‘make dark’ (1x, NS), *daške-* ‘take’ (1x, NH).

Second, there are a few “middle reflexives” accompanied by the particle *-za* which refer to actions performed with reference to oneself (see Garrett 1996, 92 for the type): *āršiketta* ‘bathes’ (as in the base verb; Neu 1968a, 11-12), *ašeške/a-* ‘seat oneself’ (as in the base verb; Neu, 1968a, 19-20), *mūkeške-* ‘induce, bestir’ (1x Imv2SgM-P ‘let yourself be induced!’), *uške-* ‘see’ (1x Imv2SgM-P *ušgahhut* ‘watch out for yourself!’).

The only other exception is *ušneškatta* ‘is selling’ (OH/OS; Laws §146a etc.), versus active *ušneške-* elsewhere in the sense ‘pledge, weigh out’ (see Melchert 2015, 413-4). See Melchert (1984, 36-7), revising Oettinger (1979, 355), for the stem of the base verb as **ušne/a-* < **w(e/o)sneyé/ó-* vs. renewed *uš(ša)niye-*. Since selling something, as opposed to pledging or weighing out, implies that the act is performed for the subject’s benefit, I conclude that this represents the only assured Hittite example of the mediopassive used alone to mark the so-called “indirect reflexive” (of the type of Skt. *yájate* ‘worships for oneself’ vs. *yájati* ‘worships’). Elsewhere in Hittite the reflexive particle is required in this usage, with an active or mediopassive verb.

Watkins’ account of the mediopassive forms in *-ške-* thus cannot explain their appearance just with certain **intransitive** verbs. Neu, loc. cit., proposes different and in part self-contradictory explanations for the three types. For *pai-* and *uwa-*, he says that since *-ške-* is not added to stative verbs (including the medium tantum *iya-* ‘be walking’), it must itself contain a stative element, by which it gains a point of contact with the stative middle. For the fientives in *-ešš-* he states that such verbs are close in meaning to change of state media tantum (e.g. *kištanziya-* ‘become hungry’). Since the *-ešš-* suffix itself contains the change of state sense, verbs in *-ešš-* inflect as actives, but addition of *-ške-* disturbs the close connection between the suffix and active inflection, so that the suffix is no longer perceived as the bearer of the change of state meaning, and medial inflection steps in “gleichsam abundierend.” As for *akkiškettari*, it is an event middle: ‘dying happens’. Aside from the fact that it is quite unclear what the two directed motion verbs ‘go’ and ‘come’ should have to do with the stative

middle, it is also egregiously inconsistent to appeal to a stative value of the middle for these verbs, but to a change of state value for the fientives. The mere label “event middle” for *akkiškettari* is also unenlightening.

Equally unsatisfactory was my own proposal in Melchert (2012, 4), where I pointed out that Tocharian Class III/IV media tantum in *-sk-* and *-tk-* have a change of state meaning (B *musketär* ‘disappear’, A *mloskatär* ‘escape’, A *sätkatär*/B *sätkentär* ‘spread out’, B *mlutketär* ‘escape’). I claimed that this sense is older than the synchronic iterative-durative sense of Hittite *paiške-/ueške-*, *akkiškettari*, *kallereškattari*, etc. This formulation falsely implies that the change of state sense in the Tocharian verbs lies in the *-*skē/o-* suffix. But in the cases with clear etymologies, the change of state sense in the Tocharian examples is **inherent** in the root. So the inflection is mediopassive because a given verb has change of state lexical semantics, not because the suffix marks change of state.

A new unified account is called for. All the types of examples cited are intransitives with active inflection in the base verb. Furthermore, change of state verbs, including those meaning ‘become X’ and ‘die, perish’, as well as verbs of “directed motion” (‘go’, ‘come’) are all prototypical “unaccusative” verbs. See Levin and Rappaport-Hovav (1995, passim) and Garrett (1996, 111). I therefore suggest a new hypothesis: only Hittite unaccusative intransitive verbs with active inflection appear in the mediopassive when marked with the *-ške/a-* suffix, while unergatives do not. This is a testable hypothesis because, as shown by Garrett 1996, Hittite unaccusatives regularly take subject clitic pronouns and the auxiliary *ēš-* in the periphrastic perfect, while unergatives do not take subject pronouns and take the auxiliary *hark-* in the periphrastic perfect construction. Like other unaccusative vs. unergative diagnostics, these are not foolproof (see the discussion by Garrett 1996, 101-2 and 108-11), but they are reasonably robust and **independent**.

In testing this hypothesis, we must deal with an important confound: transitives (*hatta* ‘pierces’), unaccusative intransitives (*hinga* ‘bows’), and unergative intransitives (*šaliga* ‘comes in contact with’) are all attested from Old Hittite with mediopassive inflection, but all these types are replaced by actives in later Hittite (*haddai*, *hinkzi*, *šalikzi*), as mediopassive inflection is increasingly restricted in Hittite to marking the passive with transitive verbs. Ergo: (1) active *-ške-* forms from unaccusative intransitives that appear only in NH or NS (i.e., New Hittite copies of older texts) are not probative counterexamples (see further below); (2) mediopassive *-ške-* forms from unaccusative intransitives whose **base** verbs are **ever** attested with mediopassive inflection are not probative as positive examples; (3) active *-ške-* forms from unergative intransitives whose base verbs are attested only from MH onward are likewise not probative

as positive examples. In sum: we must be sure that we are dealing with **originally active** unaccusative and unergative intransitives.

A review of available evidence amply confirms the observations by Watkins and Neu regarding the examples cited above. As for verbs of directed motion, *pai-* ‘go’ in the older language shows exclusively mediopassive inflection in the *-ške-* form: Pret1Sg *paišgaḥat* KBo 17.1 iv 13, Pret2Pl *paiškattumāt* KBo 8.42 Ro 9.10, Imv3Sg [(*paišk*)]*attaru* KBo 25.107:3, Imv3Pl *paiškantaru* KBo 20.31:9 (all OH/OS); also in MH/MS (Pres3Sg *paišketta* IBoT 1.36 i 63, *paiškant/da* ibid. i 60.61.63, KUB 23.77:72); and some examples in NS copies. However, as intimated above, in New Hittite this pattern breaks down, and we also find innovative actives: [*pai*]š*kezzi* KBo 4.8 iii 2 (NH), *paiškewen* KUB 18.24:4 (NH), *paiškanzi* VBoT 74:5 and Imv2Pl *paišketten* KUB 33.60 Vo 13 (both OH/NS). For *uwa-* ‘come’ we find thus far only mediopassive inflection of *uweške-*: 10x in total; 5x in OH/NS, 2x in MH/NS (all historical texts); 3x in MH/MS (instructions for the royal bodyguard, the Madduwatta “indictment”, and a protocol). The marked imperfective of *ak(k)-* ‘die’ is robustly medio-passive in the plague prayers of Muršili et alibi (45x): Pres3Sg *akkiškettari*, Pret3Sg *akkiškettat*. We also find *akkiškettari* in KUB 9.31 i 2 and ii 41 and duplicate HT 1 ii 15 (ritual of Zarpaya; MH/NS), but the colophon shows active *akkiškezzi* (KUB 9.31 iv 45). All four attested active examples are NS.

Fientives in *-ešš-* also clearly once had the same pattern. It is important to stress that the base verbs are exclusively active. The single exception of hapax Pret3Sg *nakkeštat* ‘began to weigh upon’ in NH is manifestly an innovation like NH hapax *nekuttat* ‘became twilight’ and *tamaštat* ‘oppressed’.² Of the seventeen fientives for which we have *-ške-* forms attested we find mediopassive inflection for nine of them. The most significant example is that of *parkešš-* ‘grow tall’, for which in the Myth of Ullikummi (MH/NS) we find twice *parkiškattari* vs. active simplex *parkišta* in the same passage (see CHD P: 160). One may cite also mediopassive Pres3Pl *ašiwanteškantari* (1x NH) to the base verb *ašiwant-ešš-* (3x active), the previously mentioned Pres3Sg *kallareškattari* (1x NH) beside active Pret3Pl *gallareške[r]* (also 1x NH) to *kallarešš-* ‘turn out unfavorably’ (3x active), Imv3Sg *makkiškattaru* in KUB 57.63 ii 41 (1x OH/NS) to *makkešš-* ‘become abundant’ (12x active from OH/MS), also the Pres3Sg *marl(a)išketta* in KUB 34.49 i 9.10 (MH/MS), which clearly belongs to *marlešš-* ‘become crazed’ despite the false resolution of **marlešketta* to *marlaišketta* in the one instance (contra Neu 1968a: 113 and CHD L-N: 191), Pres3Sg *nakkieškattari* and Pret3Pl *nakkiškantat* (1x each NH) beside active Pret3Sg *nakkiēšket* (1x NH) to *nak-*

² These are all surely hypercorrections resulting from the replacement of all mediopassives except in passive function cited above.

kiēšš- ‘become burdensome’, Imv3Sg *palḫiškattaru* in KUB 57.63 ii 15 and duplicate 57.60 ii 10 (OH/NS) to *palḫešš-* ‘become wide, expand’ (base verb unattested), Imv3Sg *pargawēškdaru* (2x in KUB 33.98 iii 15.16, MH/NS) to *pargawešš-* ‘grow tall’ (base verb unattested), Pres1Sg *tepawēškeḫḫāri* (1x in KUB 33.105 i 2, pre-NH/NS) to *tepawešš-* ‘become small/ less’ (23x active since MH/MS).

In view of these facts it is of no significance that other fientives thus far show only active *-ške-* forms simply because by accident they are attested only in NH or NS: Pret3Sg *ḫaḫlešket* (1x in KUB 12.58 ii 23, MH[?]/NS) to *ḫaḫlešš-* ‘become green/yellow’, Pret3Sg *in[naraw]esket* (1x in KUB 19.2 Ro 43, NH) to *innaraweš-* ‘become vigorous’, Pret3Pl *paprešker* (1x OH/NS) to *papre(šš)-* ‘commit an impurity’, Pres3Sg *šalli(e)škezzi* (3x, pre-NH/NS) to *šallešš-* ‘grow large’, Pres3Pl *šaraz<z>ieškanzi* (1x, late NH) to *šarazziešš-* ‘win (in court)’ (base verb unattested), Pret3Pl *dankuišker* (1x, pre-NH, NS) to *dankuešš-* ‘become dark’, Pres3Sg *wanteškezzi* (1x, pre-NH/NS) to *wantešš-* ‘become glowing’ (but this example could also belong to the stem *wantā(i)-* ‘glow’), and Pres3Sg *weriteškezzi*, Pres3Pl *weriteškanzi* (2x NS) to *weritešš-* ‘become frightened’.

Likewise, the well established shift in later Hittite from mediopassive to active inflection of *-ške-* forms in cases like *pai-* ‘go’ (see above) means that it is unproblematic that other unaccusative intransitives with the semantics of change of state or directed motion happen to be attested only with active *-ške-* inflection in New Hittite or New Script copies (even in multiple examples): *ār-* ‘arrive’ (9x; 3x MH/NS and 6x NH–texts of Muršili II and Hattušili III), *arai-* ‘rise’ (probably 1x Pres3Pl *araiškanzi* in KUB 24.7 iv 25, pre-NH/NS), *ḫuwai-* ‘run’ (3x all NS), *išḫarwiya-* ‘become blood-red’ or ‘bleed’⁷ (1x in KUB 28.6 ii 11, OH/NS), *katkattiya-* ‘tremble’ (2x NS), *naḫḫ-* ‘be afraid’ (2x NH), *piddai-* ‘flee’ (6x in NH, 2x in pre-NH/NS), *tiya-* ‘step, stand up’ (19x in OH and pre-NH/NS and NH).

What is crucial to confirming the claim that mediopassive inflection of *-ške-* forms is limited to unaccusative intransitives is to show that this contrasts with unergative intransitives. The evidence is not as robust as we might like, for several reasons. First, there are not as many unergatives in Hittite as unaccusatives. Second, only some of them are attested with the *-ške-* suffix. Third, for the reasons indicated above, examples of active inflection attested only from New Hittite or New Script are not probative, since by that time all intransitive *-ške-* forms were taking on active inflection. The evidence that we have does support the proposed contrast. Five base verbs are assuredly inflected as active unergatives from OH/OS: *arkuwe-* ‘make a plea’, *aruwā(i)-* ‘bow’, *link-* ‘swear an oath’ (this verb is not detransitive, contra Garrett 1996, 99), *palwā(i)-* ‘clap’ or ‘recite’, and *tarku-/taruk-* ‘twist, dance’. Most significant of these is *palwā(i)-* ‘clap’ or

‘recite’, with eighteen active *-ške-* forms attested since OH/OS (KBo 17.28 LCol 9). Also noteworthy are the six active *-ške-* forms of *link-* ‘swear an oath’, from MH/MS, and the four of *tarku-/taruk-* ‘twist, dance’, from MH/MS (plus nine of *tarwiške-* ‘idem’). Less probative for the reasons given above are the seven active *-ške-* forms of *arkuwe-* ‘make a plea’ and ten of *aruwā(i)-* ‘bow’. Of no value due to late attestation are the active *-ške-* forms of *ḫē(ya)waniya-* ‘rain’ (5x), *ḫuwapp-* ‘be evil to’ (2x), *genuššariya-* ‘kneel’ (1x), *kūruriyahḫ-* ‘become hostile’ (2x), *lēliwahḫ-* ‘hasten’ (1x), *mald-* ‘recite, make a vow’ (6x), *wašt(a)-* ‘sin’ (3x, 1x MH/MS), *wiyai-* ‘cry out, wail’ (21x active, since MS, but with Kloekhorst 2008, 938 this is a secondary stem to a *hi-*verb *wai-*).

The only Hittite verb that presents any apparent counterexamples to our generalization is *šeš-*, which has a very complex history. Contra Garrett (1996, 95) after Bechtel, Hittite *šeš-* primarily means ‘sleep’, but by at least New Hittite it has also come to mean more generally ‘rest’ and ‘spend the night’ and with the particle *-za* has also acquired the change of state sense ‘go to sleep’, gradually replacing older *šupp-* (see Barton 1985, 28-32 after Goetze and now CHD Š 439-445). In the latter innovative senses the verb is clearly unaccusative in New Hittite. Unfortunately, no diagnostic examples of the base verb are attested in OH/OS. Hypercharacterized *šeškeške-* is active ten times from MH/MS. The stem *šeške-* is mediopassive four times in NS copies of older texts, but only in the sense ‘go to sleep’! Otherwise it is always active, mostly in MH and NH/NS, but also once in the Pres3PI *šeškanzi* in OH/OS (KUB 29.35 iv 6.7, the Laws). I regard the latter as an archaism pointing to an original unergative ‘sleep’ (cf. German *hat geschlafen*, French *a dormi*), which turned into an unaccusative in its later use as a stative ‘rest, spend the night’ and change of state ‘go to sleep’. The expected mediopassive inflection of the *-ške-* stem in its change of state sense, attested in a few NS copies of older texts, was renewed as usual by the active.

I conclude that the contrast proposed above is genuine for Old Hittite: unaccusative intransitive verbs with active inflection for some reason acquired mediopassive inflection in the derived “marked imperfective” form with the *-ške-* suffix, while unergative actives did not. This peculiar pattern broke down in later Hittite as part of the general elimination of mediopassive inflection for any function other than the passive.

Is this contrast in behavior of unaccusative and unergative intransitives unique to Hittite? A pan-Indo-European survey obviously is not possible here, but I will briefly explore the issue for Tocharian. I must begin with a disclaimer: there are no readily available direct tests of the unaccusative vs. unergative contrast in Tocharian. Thus any conclusions will necessarily be tentative. Table 1 shows the distribution of intransitive verb stems in *-sk-* and *-tk-* in Tocharian (for

-tk- as derived from -sk- see Melchert 1977 contra Hartmann 2001). The assignment to classes follows Malzahn (2010).

● marks cases not only where the lexical semantics are compatible with the predicted unergative/unaccusative opposition, but also where the base verb was almost certainly active in PIE.

✓ marks cases where the lexical semantics are compatible with the predicted unergative/unaccusative opposition, but the PIE inflection or even etymology is unknown.

x marks cases where the lexical semantics would suggest unaccusative, but the inflection of the -sk-/-tk- stem is against the prediction active.

Active

B *ā^āsk-* ‘be sick’ (IXa) probably < Skt. *alasa-* ‘inactive, tired’ (Malzahn 2010, 532 w/refs.)

● B *ān^(ā)sk-* ‘inhale’ (IXa) < virtual **h₂enh₁-skē/o-*

● A *trisk-* ‘(re)sound’ (VIII) < virtual *(*s*)*trig-skē/o-* (Malzahn 2010, 672 after Hackstein)

● B *nāsk-* ‘bathe, swim’ (II) < virtual **sph₂-skē/o-*

● AB *pālsk-* ‘think’ (VII/VI) < virtual **bh₁g-skē/o-*

B *sāt^āsk-* ‘exhale’ (IXa) < ?

✓ AB *kātk-* ‘rejoice’ (II) < virtual **gh₂dh-skē/o-* (contra *LIV*²: 184 et al., no evidence for a telic root)

x A *kātk-* ‘arise’ (VII) < virtual **ghad-skē/o-* (cf. Hilmarsson 1996, 110)

AB *kātk-* ‘cross, pass’ (VI&VII/VII) < ?

x B *rātk-* ‘(a)rise’ (VII) < virtual **h₃riH-T-skē/o-*

A *lotk-* ‘turn, become’ (VII) = B *klautk-* (see below)!

Mediopassive

✓ A *pārsk-* ‘be afraid’ (III) < virtual **prg/k-skō-* (B active *prāsk-* V is evidently originally a subjunctive)

● AB *māsk-* ‘be, become’ (III) < virtual **m_ṛ-skō-*

● AB *musk-* ‘disappear’ (III) < virtual **m(y)uH-skō-*

✓ A *mrosk-/Bmrausk-* ‘become disgusted’ (VII/VI) < ?

✓ A *mlusk-/Bmlutk-* ‘escape’ (III) < virtual **mluT-skō-*

● AB *wāsk-* ‘move’ (VII/XII) < virtual **ugh-skō-* (on vocalism cf. Malzahn 2010, 875)

✓ B *klutk-* ‘turn, become’ (VII) < ? (cf. Malzahn 2010, 628 vs. Hilmarsson 1996, 145)

✓ B *klautk-* ‘turn, become’ (IV) < ? (cf. Malzahn 2010, 631 vs. Hilmarsson 1996: 145)

✓ B *prutk-* ‘be shut, filled’ (III) < ? (cf. Malzahn 2010, 738 w/refs.)

● A *yutk-* ‘become agitated’ (III) < virtual **Hyudh-skō-*

✓ A *wātk-* ‘separate (intr.)’ (III) < virtual **wi-dhh₁-skō-*

● AB *sātk-* ‘spread (intr.)’ (III) < virtual **(h₂)sut-s^hko-* (cf. Malzahn 2010, 939 w/refs.)

A *spāltk-/Bspālk-* ‘strive for(?)’ (VII/IXa) (see discussion in Malzahn 2010, 966)

Table 1: Inflection of Tocharian Intransitive Stems in *-sk-/tk-*

The Tocharian evidence is largely compatible with the contrast established for Old Hittite, but the two counterexamples and the very large number of cases where the PIE inflection or even source of the base verb is indeterminate make the case less than compelling.

If we tentatively accept that the contrast shown by at least Old Hittite is inherited, the question becomes: what is its significance? For this I have no immediate answer. As per Malzahn (2010, 86-87), virtually **all** intransitive verbs in Tocharian are either *activa* or *media tantum* – exceptions are extremely rare. It is thus tempting to assume a correlation of active vs. mediopassive diathesis in intransitive verbs with the unergative vs. unaccusative opposition. The latter has in fact been proposed for PIE by Benedetti (2002, 28-29) and Lazzeroni (2004, 144 et alibi). But as stressed by Malzahn, this analysis is hardly workable for Tocharian, and a cursory survey of *LIV*² shows exceptions for PIE. Recall that the base verbs of all bulleted examples above are **active** in PIE, and all the unaccusative intransitives cited for Hittite are as well. Thus the implications of the pattern observed just for intransitive stems in **-s^hke/o-* for the pre-PIE origin of the “proto-middle” remain to be discovered.

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