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Indo-Iranian and Indo-European Studies

in Honor of

Sasha Lubotsky
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Semantics and Etymology of Hittite *takš-

H. CRAIG MELCHERT

It is an honor and a pleasure to take part in this well-deserved tribute to Alexander Lubotsky. I regret that the topic of this contribution is only tangentially related to Sasha’s own research.¹

The Hittite verb *takš- was derived by Sturtevant (1930:214 and 1933:81) from PIE *tekʰ- (sic!) ‘make, create’ and compared with Skt. *taks- ‘make, fashion (especially of wood)’. This etymology was rightly rejected on phonological grounds by Oettinger (1979:219), LIV² 619–20, and Kloekhorst (2008:814) in favor of derivation from *tek-s- ‘weave, put together’ seen in Lat. texō ‘weave’ and putatively OP ham-taxša- *sput together’ (attested only in the mediopassive as ‘cooperate’ or similar; see Kent 1950:186 and LIV² 619) and Arm. i’ek’em ‘plait, twist’ (sic!). Laroche (1963:69–71) proposed rather that Hitt. *takš- reflects a preform *dek-s- to the root *dek- ‘receive, accept’ (via a causative *cause to receive, accept’), an alternative followed by several scholars. See Tischler 1991:42–3 for further clearly unconvincing proposals and dubious or unproven cognates within Anatolian.

There is a broad consensus regarding the morphology of the verb. The attested Hittite paradigm showing predominantly an allomorph *takkiš- before endings beginning with a consonant and *takš- before those with an initial vowel is derivable from a standard root present *tek-s-ti, *tek-s-ěnti leading to takkišzi, takšanzi. In a sequence *CeT-s-C- the change of short *e to a before three consonants may be regular (contra Lipp apud LIV² 620 n. 2), as is the anaptyxis of posttonic -i- (Melchert 1984:108 modifying Oettinger 1979:218–9). With the loss of anaptyxis as a synchronic rule, the verb was occasionally influenced from Middle Hittite onward by the type of *g(a)nešš- ‘recognize’, whence New Hittite takkēšzi. The prevo-calic strong stem *takš- (PretSg takšun, Pret3Pl takšer) for phonologically regular *tekš- is due to leveling from the rest of the strong forms (see for a similar account with differing details Kloekhorst 2008:814). As per Kloekhorst, occasional New Hittite *takš- before consonant and takkešš- before vowel are analogical, no doubt reflecting efforts to create an invariant stem.

While the verb’s morphology is reasonably clear, its semantics most certainly are not. The handbooks present a broad and bewildering palette of alleged meanings. Tischler (1991:40) lists *zusammenfügen, unternehmen (Feldzug); zuteil werden lassen, zuteilen, zufügen,

¹I am indebted to members of the Leiden workshop audience, especially Birgit Olsen and Michael Weiss, for valuable references. All remaining infelicities are my responsibility.

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vereinbaren (Frieden, MP dann sich vertragen); mischen (Flüssigkeiten); zücken (Waffen).” Kloekhorst (2008:813) gives ‘to devise, to unify, undertake, to mingle’. Nominal derivatives further complicate the picture: they include not only alleged takšan- ‘joint, center’ (as an adverb ‘together’), but also takšatar ‘plain, level ground’ and the derived verb takšatniya- ‘to make level’. Uncertainty about its core meaning is surely the principal reason for the lack of a consensus regarding the etymology of takš-, and a new survey of its usage is called for.

One difficulty in determining the meaning(s) of Hitt. takš- is that in a number of occurrences either a concrete, physical sense or a more abstract one is compatible with the context. I therefore begin with instances where a concrete meaning seems undeniable. In at least one case, our verb clearly means ‘fashion, make, construct’:

(1) KBo 22.6 + 6.2 iii 21–2 (CTH 291; Laws; OH/OS)

eki BÀD-ni LUGAL-aš KASKAL-š-a takšanzi GISKIR, GEŠTIN-aš tubhušanzi [ŠA LUTIBI] RA natta kuški arawaš

‘None of the coppersmiths is exempt from fashioning ice, a fortification, and the king’s roads (or) from harvesting vineyards.’

One must insist on this interpretation with Hoffner (1997:68, 193). Only this meaning makes sense for the original Old Hittite, which was wholly misunderstood and wrongly altered by the New Hittite copyist. Note that all three activities expressed by takšanzi require not only cutting (hence coppersmiths), but also fitting together (ice was kept in icehouses, É ŠURIRI—see Hoffner 1971—and royal roads were surely paved). There is no basis for the widely presumed ‘to undertake (a campaign)’.

In several examples takš- refers to blending various materials, with a particular emphasis on unifying them in a harmonious fashion:

(2) KUB 33.6(+)7 iii 8–9 (with dupl. 33.3) (CTH 324; Telipinu Myth; OH/NS)

[kāša]-ta K[I.MIN (BAPPIR DIM, kī)]ta nu BAPPIR DIM,-š-a [mabhā]n is[tan(zanit takšand)]ari nu ZI-ŠUNU [ŠA-ŠUNU (1-iš kisari)]

‘Look, here are likewise placed beer bread and malt for you. As the beer bread and malt are united in their soul, so that their soul and innards become one . . .’

(3) KUB 17.10 ii 23–4 (CTH 324; Telipinu Myth; OH/NS)

DIM, BAPPIR ZI-it māhān takšant[ar]i U ŠA “Telipinu” ZI-KA ŠA DUMU.LU.Uv, LU uddanāš QATAMMA takšanza šdu

‘As malt and beer bread are united in their soul, so also may your, Telipinu’s, soul become united with the words of the mortals.’

(4) KBo 15.37 iv 43–7 (CTH 628; ḫišua-Festival; pre-NH/NS)

EGIR-ŠU-ša GIR.KÁN KÚ.BABBAR ANA PANI DINGIR-LIM tianzi n-ašta DUG.haniššān GEŠTIN anda lähišwanzı namma-at’ witenit takšanzi

‘Afterwards they place a silver vessel before the deity and pour in a pitcher of wine. Then they blend it with water.’

The Telipinu passages show that the sense is not merely ‘mix’ or ‘mingle’ (for which Hittite uses (anda) immiya-), but ‘blend’ together so as to unite in a harmonious and seamless fashion.
In one instance a variant in a duplicate shows that takš- means ‘to make smooth, level’, with reference to floors:

(5) KBo 12.114 Vo 4 (?/NS)

    [ ]KI.HI.A-ši takšanzi
    ‘They make smooth the floors.’

The duplicate KUB 9.15 iii 24 has rather [daganz]ipuš ṭattarānzi ‘they make smooth the floors’. See Tischler 1993:273, who plausibly argues for a basic meaning of ‘fit together’ for takšanzi (that is, pieces, tiles of a floor). It is important to note in contrast to what follows that none of these examples referring to fitting together, blending, or constructing show the use of a local particle with takš-.

We turn now to the much larger number of examples that seem to permit not only ‘fashion, devise’ (easily an extension of ‘fit together’), but also ‘do (to), inflict (upon)’ or rather ‘decree, ordain’. The most widely attested collocation for takš- is (Dative) idālu/aššu takš- ‘to do evil/good to’:

(6) KBo 3.1 Ro 7–8 (CTH 1; Anitta; OH/OS)

    U DUMU. MEŠ uruNēš[a id]ālu natta ṭuedanikki ṭakkišta
    ‘But he fashioned/decree evil for (or inflicted evil on) none of the sons of Neša.’
    Neu (1974:11) renders ‘von den Einwohnern Nešas aber fügte er keinem Böses zu.’

(7) KUB 19.29 iv 3–4 (CTH 145; Protocol, probably of Suppilliliuma II; NH)

    [. . .] × ANA NUMUN =Šuppliliu[ma . . . šekkante]tī ZI-it aššu takkeški
    ‘Fashion/decree good with a [know]ing soul (i.e., intentionally) for the seed of Sup-

We also find the following variation on the same theme:

(8) KBo 3.28 ii 15 (CTH 9; Palace Chronicle Fragment; OH/NS)

    idālu-ma-an lē iyāši ṭenkan-še lē takkišši
    ‘But you shall not treat him (a sinful prince) badly. You shall not fashion/decree
    death for him.’

For pragmatic reasons it is the negative version idālu takš- that is by far the most common expression, being found in a variety of genres in compositions dating from Old, Middle, and New Hittite.4 The ambiguity of the sense of takš- in this collocation is reflected in

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4We likely find the same expression ibid. Vo 45, also without local particle, and probably likewise in KUB 36.106 Vo 4 (OH–MH/OS–MS).

4We surely find the positive variant also in the protocol KUB 26.22 ii 8–9 (NH?): ‘As you fashion/decree [good] for your sons, fashion/decree [good] for those gods.’

4For idālu takš- see also KBo 3.1 ii 54.56.60 (second + ššān) and KUB 11.6 ii 12 (+ ššān) (Telipinu Edict), KUB 36.127 Vo 13 (CTH 41; Šunaššura Treaty; MH/MS), KUB 23.77 Ro 22.24 and 23.77a Vo 12 (last with ššān) (CTH 138.1; Kaška Treaty; MH/MS), KUB 26.41 Ro 15 (CTH 113; Ismerika Treaty; MH/NS), KBo 5.3 iv 43 (CTH 42; Hukkana Treaty; MH/NS); KBo 3.9 ii 37 (CTH 62; Treaty with Tuppī-Teššub; NH) (idālu uttar + ššān), KBo 3.3 ii 23.27.32 and KUB 19.41+31.12 ii 27 (+ ššān) (CTH 63; Perge Decree; NH), KUB 14.5 ii 64 (+ ššān), KUB 21.8 ii 3.9 (CTH 90.1; Decree about Nerik; NH), KUB 14.3 ii 63 (CTH 181; Tawagalawa Letter; NH), KBo 6.34 ii 23.46.8 iii 6 and KUB 7.59 ii 12.iii 8 (all with ššān or ššān) (CTH 427; Military Oath; ?/NS); KUB 36.114:11 (protocol; pre-NH/NS), KBo 16.56:11 (CTH 428; protocol; ?/NS); KBo 38.234:5 (CTH 470; Ritual Fragment; ?/NS); KBo 13.244 Vo 18.21 (+ ššān) (CTH 767; Ritual Fragments with Luvianisms), KUB 25.37 iv 24 (+ ššān) (CTH 771; Lallupiya Ritual; ?/NS).
the varying translations: Beckman (1996:57) chooses ‘undertakes an evil word’ for KBo 5.9 ii 37, but (1996:157) ‘engineer evil’ for KBo 3.3 ii 23, etc. Oettinger (1976:11 and passim) consistently opts for ‘Böses zufügt’ for KBo 6.34 ii 25, etc., while Hoffmann (1984:35, 37) chooses ‘unternimmt’ for KBo 3.1 ii 54, etc.

Some clarity is brought to the issue by two further examples from rituals where ‘evil’ or ‘harm’ is merely subtextual:

(9) KBo 15.10 ii 25–6 (CTH 443; Ritual placating Sun-god “of blood” and Storm-god; pre-NH/MS)

\[\text{nu-ššan ANA ŠEŠ-ŠU [EME.H˘I].A takišket} \]
‘She (Ziplantawiiya) has fashioned/devised (evil) tongues for (or inflicted on) her brother.’

(10) ibid. ii 20–1 (likewise ibid. iii 16–7 and 22 in an incomplete context)

\[\text{nu-ššan kuit Zi ANA BELI [tak]kitišet n-at-šan EGRID-pa apêdani takšan ēšdu} \]
‘And may that which Ziplantawiiya inflicted on our lord be inflicted back on her.’

The contexts of most occurrences would permit ‘fashion, devise’, but also ‘decree, ordain’, or ‘allot’ (see Tischler’s ‘zuteil werden lassen, zuteilen’), as well as ‘do to, inflict on’. The widespread though inconsistent use of local particles and the last example argue for the last meaning, more generally ‘apply to, bring to bear on’. It is hard to totally exclude ‘ordain, decree’, but the notion ‘be decreed/ordained back for’ seems odd, and the motivation for local particles with ‘decree, ordain’ is weak. Certainly unnecessary is ‘undertake’/‘unternehmen’.

On the basis of examples like the following, a sense ‘to brandish’ has also been suggested:

(11) KBo 3.1 ii 34–5 (CTH 19; Telipinu Edict; OH/NS)

\[\text{kitpadalaz URU H˘ attuši h˘aššannaš DUMU-an idalu le iyazi nu-šši-ššan GÍR-an takkešzi} \]
‘Henceforth in Hattuša let no one treat a son of the family badly or fashion/devise (or brandish) a dagger for him /inflict a dagger on him.’

Hoffmann (1984:31) translates ‘…ein Dolch zücken.’ However, the following example speaks against a sense ‘brandish’ or ‘draw’ (a weapon):

(12) KUB 59.65 ii 9 (CTH 820; OH/NS)

\[
\text{[ ANÁ NAM’]RA.MES gis̆SUKET gis̆PAN HUL-lu UH₃-tar takkišzi} \]
‘[…] fashions/devises a spear, bow, or evil witchcraft [for the deportees]/inflicts a spear, bow, or evil witchcraft [on the deportees].’

It is hard to see how one would brandish or draw ‘evil witchcraft’. The local particle in (11) points again to ‘inflict on, apply to, bring to bear on’.

Two further examples without a local particle do suggest a possible meaning ‘decree, ordain’:

\[\text{\footnote{Likewise KUB 36.113:7 (CTH 271; Protocol; pre-NH/NS), also with -ššan.}}\]

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(13) KBo 3.1 ii 13–5 (CTH 19; Telipinu Edict; OH/NS)
5 ŠEŠ.MEŠ-SU nu-smāš Ė.MEŠ taggaša pāndu-wa-z ašandu nu-wa-[z]a azzikkandu akkuškandu idālu-na-smāš-kan lē ku[tki] taggaši
‘As for his five brothers, he built/decreed houses for (or allotted houses to) them (saying): “Let them proceed to settle (there). Let them eat and drink, and you shall not inflict evil on them.”’

(14) KUB 36.108 Ro 1–3 (CTH 25; Zidanza/Pilliya Treaty; OH/OS)
4 UTU-ŠI LUGAL.GAL “Zidanza LUGAL KUR UKU Ha[tti U “Pilliya] LUGAL KUR ŠEŠ.MEŠ Zidanza/Pilliya Treaty, Zidanza/Pilliya Treaty
‘His Majesty the Great King Zidanza, King of Hatti, and [Pilliya], King of Kizzuwatna, made a treaty/agreement. […] They agreed/decreed as follows.’

Hoffmann (1984:29) quite reasonably renders (13) as: ‘teilte er Häuser zu . . . Böses . . . zufliegen’. However, given the evidence of example (1) for ‘fashion, make’, one may also interpret (13) as ‘built houses’. Obviously, Telipinu did not personally build houses for his brothers, but he certainly may have had them built. The sense of takšul- ‘agreement, (peace) treaty’ (NB not ‘decree’) suggests an absolute use of takš- in (14): ‘joined together’, hence ‘agreed’. Once again, then, a meaning ‘ordain, decree’ certainly cannot be excluded, but no evidence strictly requires it.

We turn finally to the use of takšan. This word is most frequently attested as an adverb ‘jointly, together’ with various verbal predicates, as in (15):

(15) KBo 6.2 iii 7 (CTH 291; Laws; OH/OS)
[i] akku LÚ ÇU TUKUL U LÚ.HÁ LA-SU takšan ašanzi
‘If a TUKUL-man and his partner are/dwell together . . . ’

See further takšan plus: aniya- ‘treat (ritually)’ (KUB 32.123 ii 34), (ariya) ariya- ‘(continue to) inquire about by oracle’ (KBO 16.63 Ro 15), aššan (ēš-) ‘belong to’ (KBO 4.10 Ro 26), ēpp- ‘seize; hold’ (KBO 20.67 iii 30), handant- ‘lined up’ (IBOT 1.36 ii 35), harnink- ‘destroy’ (KBO 5.3 ii 8), anda immiya- ‘mix’ (KUB 9.6 i 6), iya- ‘walk’ (IBOT 1.36 ii 45), gangatai- ‘treat with the g.-plant’ (KUB 29.7 Ro 9, etc.), ki- ‘lie, be laid’ (KBO 13.13 Vo 8), kūrar ēš- ‘be hostile’ (KBO 19.70:28), takšulāi- ‘make peace’ (KBO 22.34 (+) 19.72), tarwiške- ‘dance’ (KUB 25.37 ii 18), anda ittanu- ‘bring together’ (KBO 2.3 i 3.iv 16), tiya- ‘step’ (KBO 3.3 iv 8), katta upna- ‘come down’ (KBO 13.58 ii 25), wahu- ‘turn’ (KUB 45.20 ii 14–25), wešiya- ‘graze’ (KUB 26.19 ii 18.33), zahhiya- ‘fight’ (KBO 5.4 Vo 12), and absolutely with recipients ‘for X and Y together’ (KUB 15.31 i 5).

With the verb šarra- ‘to divide’ the adverb takšan means ‘equally, (in) half, in the middle’:

(16) KBo 6.3 ii 19 (CTH 291; Laws; OH/NS)
nu-za Ŗ-er takšan šarranzi
‘They (the separating marriage couple) shall divide the house equally.’

(17) KUB 25.3 ii 22 (CTH 634; Grand Festival of Arinna; OH/NS) (and often)
TU.Z.ḪÍ.A takšan šarrattari
‘The stews/soups are divided equally.’

From this use with the verb is derived the adnominal use with the noun šarra- ‘share’:
I took a half share of it for myself, but I gave a half share back to Arma-Tarhunta.

See further on takšan šarra- ‘half part, half’ CHD Š: 229–30. Note also takšan šarr[iyä] ‘a half file’ (IBoT 1.36 iv 8), as per Güterbock and van den Hout (1991:32, 58). Finally, since ‘equally’ means ‘in the middle’, we also find the following temporal use:

When it becomes midday . . . ’ (‘the day steps to the middle’)

The adverb takšan ‘jointly, together’ may be easily derived from the neuter nominative-accusative singular of the participle ‘joined’ to takš- ‘join, fit together’. The sense ‘equally, in half, in the middle’ is due to the pragmatics of the use with šarra- ‘divide’, where a joint dividing means an equal one, whence also the extended use as ‘in the middle’ spatially (KBo 14.20 ii 19 takšan ištarna ped[i] ‘in the center’) and temporally. There is no compelling evidence for an n-stem noun ‘middle’ or ‘joint, seam’ (“Fuge”), pace Laroche (1963:65).

We may conclude from our survey that all attested uses of Hitt. takš- are derivable from a core meaning ‘to fit together, unite’ (frequently with the nuance of harmoniously bringing together). From this basic meaning are derived: (1) ‘to fashion/make’ (ice, fortifications, roads, houses); (2) ‘to make smooth/even’ (floors), whence by an extension from man-made level surfaces to natural surfaces also takšatar ‘plain’ and derivatives; (3) ‘to unite, blend’ (ingredients and by extension minds and wills, hence ‘to make an agreement/peace’, whence takšul- ‘peace’); (4) with local particles ‘to bring to bear on, apply to’, pragmatically usually in a negative sense ‘to inflict on’; (5) via the neuter singular of the participle ‘joined’ an adverb ‘jointly, together’, which with šarra- ‘to divide’ leads to ‘equally, in half, in the middle’, extended to space and time. A meaning ‘to ordain, decree’ or ‘allot’ certainly is possible, but is not strictly required.

Compare in general for this range of meanings, from a base meaning ‘to fit together’, German fügen ‘fit together, join, unite’ (also ‘ordain, will’), sich fügen ‘accommodate oneself to’, and zufügen ‘do something to someone, inflict’ (where the prefix zu- fills the same function as the local particles in the similar use of Hittite takš-). Reviving and improving upon an idea of Van Windekens, Michael Weiss has recently persuasively argued (2015:190–4) for another PIE root *(h₁)reith₂- with the sense ‘join, blend, unite’ reflected in Tocharian A rittivar, B rittetar ‘be attached to’ and Proto-Iranian *(h₁)raib- ‘join, mix, combine’ with reflexes in Avestan and Middle Iranian.

Given derivatives referring to bodily joints (Latin artus ‘joint; limb’ etc.), it is likely that PIE *(h₁)ar- was fundamentally intransitive and referred to one thing fitting into another. Just how the original senses of *(h₁)reith₂- and *(h₁)tek- differed is probably not recoverable. Hittite offers no support for supposing an exclusive PIE meaning ‘to weave, braid’ for *(h₁)tek-

If the noun /ta(s)akʷarr(i)-/ ‘earth; territory’ appearing in hieroglyphic Luwian as (TERRA)ta₄i₄u-REL+ra/i- represents a compound of a *ta₄a- < (virtual) *takₜu- ‘leveling; plain’ plus *(h₁)arr(i)- ‘ground, territory’ (= Hitt. AŠÀ kuera- ‘field’), then the sense ‘to make level’ is shared at least with Luwian, but this is hardly the only possible analysis of the Luwian word.
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(contra LIV² 619). Nothing excludes that this sense was among the range of uses of the root, but Arm. ḫek‘em cannot be used to support this. As per Olsen 2017, both the earliest textual evidence and the standard dictionaries point unequivocally to a meaning ‘forge, hammer into shape, whet’ in the context of metallurgy, along with a metaphorical use ‘educate’. In modern use the sense is ‘bend, incline, bow, turn’: e.g., Baghdasarian and Zorc (1995:329) list an adjective ḫek‘ ‘oblique; declined (of a word)’ and verbs ḫek‘el ‘bend, curve (tr.)’ and ḫek‘vel ‘bow (down), turn’, while Asmangulian and Hovhannisian (1984:89) give ḫek‘(v)el as ‘bend’ and likewise (1984:636) ḫek‘ as ‘oblique’. There is no trace of its being used in either the older or modern language in the context of textiles or weaving. Whatever the source of this Armenian root, its real attested usage cannot be plausibly derived from ‘fit together’.

There are also alternative derivations for OP ham-taxša- (see LIV² 620 n. 3 and the entry for *tag-). Thus, as Olsen (2017) suggests, there is no compelling evidence for a distinct root *tekh- with a velar as the basis of Lat. texō and Hitt. takš-, and we may operate with a single root *tekh- ‘fit together, unite’, whence ‘produce’ (Grk. τικτω ‘beget, produce’ and τεκνω ‘child’), also the base of *tekh-s- ‘fit together, unite’ seen in Lat. texō and Hitt. takš-, and an old reduplicated form *te-tekh- ‘to build, fashion, make’, with special reference to carpentry, continued in Skt. taks- ‘idem’, etc. (see LIV² 638). Neither Hittite nor Latin provides any basis for taking *tekh-s- as a desiderative (contra LIV² 619–20). Whether we are dealing with a root enlargement or an s-present is part of a very large and complex question that cannot be addressed here. I also forgo any attempt to pursue the very interesting but complex question of the relative chronology and dialectal distribution of the various specialized meanings. I believe that the attested usage of the Hittite verb does assure its derivation from the same base as Latin texō, versus all alternative accounts.

Abbreviations


References


