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Hittite išpar- “to spread out” and išparre/a- “to kick”

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is decidedly modest: to offer a minor corrective to the presentation of the topic by Kloekhorst (2008: 406-410). Kloekhorst has proven that, contrary to previous analyses by me and others, Hittite had at all times two distinct verbs of the basic shape išpar(r)-, one meaning “to spread out, strew” and the other “to kick, trample,” reflecting two different PIE roots. However, his wrong assignment of one crucial Middle Hittite example results in a false picture of the inner-Hittite inflectional development of the two stems. Correcting this will be the main contribution of what follows. Unfortunately, the details of the prehistory of the verb “to kick, trample” remain impossible to determine with certainty.

2. Previous analyses

Oettinger (1979: 266-271) distinguished Hittite išparnu- “to spread out” (< PIE *sper- “spread, scatter, strew”) and only one other verb, with an original stem išparre/a- and mi-inflection, but later with a secondary yel/a-stem išparriye/a- and also secondary inflection as a hi-verb išpar(r)-, with the meanings “trundle; spread out (originally with the foot)” < PIE *sperh₁-. In Melchert (1984: 17-18; 1994: 80-81 and passim) I followed Oettinger in all points but one: I assumed that the hi-inflection of “kick, trample; spread out” was older.

Kloekhorst (2008: 406-410) has argued that we must distinguish a hi-verb išpär-/išpar- “spread out, strew” (< PIE *sper-), also the base of išparnu- “idem,” and a separate verb išparra- (also a hi-verb) “trample” < PIE *sperh₂-. For the same separation see already Watkins 1975: 377. The attempt of Puhvel (1984: 445-447) to unify the two roots at the PIE level is misguided. Kloekhorst’s claim of two distinct verbs “spread, strew” and “kick, trample” is clearly correct, but his assignment of the attested forms to the different verbs is not quite accurate, necessitating a new treatment of both the synchrony and diachrony.
3. Synchrony
3.1. išparnu-

Here I may be brief. Although the contextual sense of some examples is less than assured, there is a consensus that this verb means “to spread, strew, scatter” (thus with Oettinger 1979: 269, Kloekhorst 2008: 406, et al.):

(1) (KBo 20.10 i 11-12 and ii 8-9; OH/OS) ia LUGAL-un šuppadű išparnuzi

He purifies the king (in that) he strews water (over his hands) three times.

Likewise we find at KBo 8.102, 6 and 12 wātar išparnuzi “strews water” and at KUB 12.29 i 4-5 wātar ANA EN SISKUR [i]šparmūškezi “repeatedly strews water on the ritual client.”

(2) (KUB 7.57 i 8; OH/NS) MUNUS.ŠU.GI išparnumi

I will scatter the “old women.”

(3) (KUB 48.76 i 2-3; MH/NS) nu ēktan [...išpa]rnuzi nu=šmaš tazzu

He sprinkles out [...] a hunting net and says to them.

(4) (KBo 55.52 Ro? 13) [GIM-an ēktan išpašarumuzu nu ARNABU ēktet [apparant]]

As they spread out a hunting net and [catch] a hare with the hunting net.

In view of example (3) we should probably restore and read (4) thus with Puhvel (1984: 444) contra Hoffner (1977: 107). See also the example from KBo 17.61 Ro 17 cited below under NH išparru- “spread.” The objects of išparnu in KUB 19.9 iv 12 and [p]arā išparnumun “I spread out” (text uš-pār-nu-nu-un) in KUB 41.19 Vo 9 are uncertain.

3.2. išpar-/išpar- “to spread, strew”

This was originally a hi-verb of the class of ēr-/ar- “arrive,” as per Kloekhorst (2008: 406-407). As he correctly emphasized, the only examples in OS confirm that it had a single -r- in the weak stem:

(5) (KBo 25.31 iii 9-10; OH/OS) [11]5 lässigšarāma LÚMEŠ GISBANŠER udamiz ƙum [tɪŋhāp] (...[kattan]) išparanzi

The table-men bring fifteen bread rations. The ḫapiya-men spread (them) below under [...].

The restorations are from KBo 20.32 ii 2-3 (NS), with a spelling iš-pār-ra-an-zi (see below), but the formulation of the NS manuscript appears to be longer.
than that of KBo 25.31, so the precise relationship of the ḫapiya-men to the bread rations is unclear. See also KBo 20.27 Vo’3 ḫparagus(?i) (OH/OS) for the single -r-

(6) (KUB 12.44 ii 30; ?/NS) [ =š]an? par(a)šišun ḫsparḫi
   I spread sprigs on [ ]

Pace Kloekhorst (2008: 645) the word paršdu- clearly means “shoot(s), sprig(s).” The example par(a)štuiš in the Hurro-Hittite Bilingual (KBo 32.14 LEdge 4) refers to new shoots that grow from a pile of cut wood (see Neu 1997, correcting Neu 1996: 212).

(7) (KUB 9.28 i 25-27; pre-NH/NS) 7 GUNNI nu-ššan GIŠḪAḪA ḫandaizzi EĞIR
GUNNIḪAḪA nomma 7 GUNNI iyazzi nu-ššan GIḪAḪA-an [i]špāri
   (There are) seven braziers. He arranges pieces of wood thereon. Behind the braziers he makes another seven braziers, and thereon he spreads reeds.

(8) (KBo 10.45 ii 19-20; MH/NS) nu-us GIRMEŠ-uš DŬ-zi nu-us KI-an ispāri
   nu-ššan kāš DINIRMEŠ aššaši
   He makes them as into daggers and spreads them on the ground and seats these deities thereon.

(9) (KUB 20.46 ii 5-8; OH/NS) nu GAL DUMUMES Š.GAL ilanais Ḫoppurriyan
    ispāri
   The chief of the palace officials spreads greenery in front of the stairs.

(10) (KUB 30.29 Ro 5; MH/MS) [1]-EN KUŠšarpasšiš(sic!)=a=kan ašḫuppišnaš
    ištarna [i]tagan ḫsparanzī
    They spread out one cushion on the ground between the stools.

(11) (VBoT 24 ii 31-32; MH/NS) šA ašḪAḪUR.KUR.RA laḫḫuṣu-la išparanzī
    They spread out foliage/boughs of the mountain apple tree.

Likewise HT 1 iv 22 (?/NS), and this is also the likely spelling in KUB 30.32 i 21 with KUŠNIG.BÂR “pelt” as the object.

(12) (KUB 15.34 i 40-41; MH/?) DINIRMEŠ LÚMEŠ ĠE.RIN-aš kāša-šmaš
    KASKALMEŠ tūgkušiyaš tūgkurešnit ḫsparḫun nu-šmaš=aš BA.BA.ZA ı.DŬG.
    GA ḫsparḫun
    Male gods of the cedar, I have spread the paths for you with gown-fabric. I have spread them for you with gruel and fine oil.

(13) (KUB 7.5 ii 17-19; MH/NS) ANA NINDA.EŘINMEŠ=ya-ššan šer kue TŬG.
    BAR.D.UŠMEŠ n[ašmaš TŬG.GUḪA.Ḫ.A klita n=ša[t=zi]a ḫsparanz ūtāa ḫsparazkezi
    Also the kuslu-garments or shirt which are lying on the troop-bread he spreads down for himself each night. (translation with Hoffner 1987: 274 and 278)
The first singular forms išparḫi and išparḫun, the third singular present išpāri and crucially the OH/OS third plural present forms išparanzi with single -r- taken together confirm Kloeckhorst's analysis of an original athematic ḫi-verb of the type of ār-ār- “arrive” (ārḫi, ārḫun, āri, aranzi). Note also that the meaning of all examples is “spread (out), strew.” There is no role of the feet in any of them.

This verb is subject in later Hittite to a variety of secondary developments, all of which have clear parallels for members of this class.

First, there is a secondary NH inflection as a ḫi-verb išparra-/išparr- after the type of ḫarra-ḫarr- “to crush, destroy” (P3Sg ḫarrarai, but infinitive ḫarrwanzi). For this athematic weak stem in our verb note the supine išparruwan (K.Bo 14.45, 4; NH). The strong stem išparra- appears in (14):

(14) (KUB 7.60 iii 27; ?NS) KASKALMEŠʷYAR=WAŠMAŠ IŠTU TŬG BABBAR TŬG SAŠ, TŬG ZA.GIN kattan išparraḫḫun

I have also spread the paths below you with white, red, and blue cloth(s). (or perhaps “under-spread the paths for you”).

This appears to be the dominant mode of inflection in New Hittite, very frequent in the third plural present or the participle in NS: [(gšNÁ)] IŠTU TŬG MAŠLI išparranda “a bed spread with bedding” (K.Bo 15.2 Ro 10); likewise of a bed išparranzi and išparranadaš (KUB 39.11 Ro 48 and 49); išparanzi of a bed (ABOT 1.34: 6 and 16 and KUB 7.8 iii 15, the last with katta); šaštan išparranzi “they spread bedding” (K.Bo 13.106 i 3); išparranza of TŬG MAŠLI “bedding” (KUB 17.31:4 and 24, K.Bo 15.2 Vo 2); of garments (KUB 7.8 iii 19 and K.Bo 22.111 iii 7, the latter with arḫi); of gšlahḫummaš(z)i “foliage, cut boughs” (KUB 41.17 iii 11 with katta, also iv 9 and 22; a duplicate to HT 1 cited above; likewise in the duplicates KUB 9.31 iii 63, iv 17, 36 and KUB 9.32 Ro 38 and Vo 27); ēkza išparranza “a spread hunting net” (K.Bo 17.61 Ro 17; pre-NH/NS).

Second, there was a much less common secondary weak stem išper- after the ḫi-verb type k(a)rēp-/k(a)rēp- “devour” (Imv2Pl špertet K.Bo 21.14 Ro 8 and Pret3Pl šperet K.Bo 21.22 Ro 6). For this change compare likewise innovative P2Pl ĕrteni and Pret3Pl erer for older ērteni and arer “arrive.”

Finally, as for very many Hittite verbs of all types, there was also secondary inflection as a ye/a-stem and mi-inflection:

(15) (KUB 7.60 ii 9-10; ?NS) ŠAŠ ANA DINGIRMEŠ UŠKŬR KASKALMEŠ kattan išparriyašši

And he spreads them (the colored cloths) down as paths for the gods of the enemy.
3.3. ḫaat- “to kick, trample, mit dem Fuß treten”

(17) (KUB 14.1 Vo 91; MH/MS) aliya₁ = wa īL wāi īL = ma = wa wākii īL = ma = wa īsparrezi

The deer does not cry out, does not bite, does not kick.

This is the crucial example for this verb, since it is the oldest attestation. Its assignment to the verb “to spread” by Kloekhorst (2008: 406) is quite impossible. The correct attribution was made by Lehrman (1991-1993: 131). Contra Puhvel (1984: 35 and 441) the passage cannot refer to the bird alliya₁, which has consistent geminate -ll-. See rather Beckman 1996: 151: “stagn.” We now know thanks to the Hurro-Hittite Bilingual that the animate n-stem aliya(n)- with single 1 means “deer.” The reference is to the deer as a proverbially gentle animal. The spelling ḫ-ḍ-r-ṛ-ez-zi of the verb is technically ambiguous, but a stem ḫarr- is assured by the weak stem ḫarr- of the following examples:

(18) (KBo 6.34 iii 24-28; MH/NS) n[u=šmaš ALA]M parā ṝpāzi n=an IGIḤA=-wa katt[la ḫuwep]pāzi n=an GĪR=it ḫsparanzi...nu uwandu apel URU-a[n DINGIRMES URU]ḪATTI QATAMMA GĪR=it ḫsparandu

He holds out [the figurine to them] and throws it face down, and they kick/trample it with (their) feet...let the gods of Hatti proceed to kick/ trample his city likewise with (their) feet.

(19) (ibid. iii 30-32) [wāl]ulan pariyanzi n=an GĪR=it [ WINAPI] [تعريف] n=aša parāš parā tornattari

They blow (up) a bladder, and they kick/trample it with (their) feet, so that the air is released.

See Oettinger 1976: 12-13. Note that “to spread out/scatter (with the foot)” makes little sense for (19), since the size of the deflated bladder will be very little larger than when inflated.

There is for this verb a later secondary inflection as ḫi-verb in -a- (thus with Oettinger 1979: 267 contra Kloekhorst 2008: 409), with the same change as in hulle/a- “fight” of the same class (new P3Sg ḫullat):

(20) (KUB 21.27 iii 29-30, NH) nu kē ḫUL-u [wa AWATIMES GĪRIMES-i[t] ḫsparatti

You shall kick/trample these evil [words with (your) feet].

1 Whether this piece of folk wisdom is strictly true is not at issue (grown deer may well kick in fighting). The cliché stands.
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(21) (KUB 17.27 ii 10-12; MH/NS) [kāš]a? 2-e=pat UH₂-naš UH₂-tar peššiyamu
[mu=šm]aš=kan šer allapaḫḫu n=at anda [GIR-]t išparraḫḫu

I have thrown away both the sorceries of the sorcerer. I have spit on them. I have kicked/trampled them with (my) feet.

This does mean that in New Hittite there would have been some homophony of the verbs “to spread” and “to kick, trample” for at least some speakers (a ḫi-verb with a singular stem išparra- and prevocalic weak stem išparr- in išparranzi and išparrant-). There is no positive evidence, however, that there was any semantic confusion for the Hittites. The notion that the act of trampling with the feet resulted in “spreading” or “scattering” of the object affected cannot be strictly excluded, but on the basis of current data it is purely a supposition of modern scholarship. None of the examples where the object spread is bedding, foliage, or a net – things that can truly be spread – indicates that the Hittites used their feet to do the spreading.

3.4. CLuvian parr(i)ya- “to spread, apply (medicine)”

I adduce also for the sake of completeness the CLuvian verb parr(i)ya- whose very limited attestation suggests a sense “spread,” as in the application of medicine:

(22) (KUB 22.61 i 16-19; NH) nu ÛHL.A kuit meggaya n=at=za ariyami kuit=nu Ū
SxŠA=ri LE.MES.A.ZU=ya ariyami kuiš=nu LI.A.ZU SxŠA=ri nu=kán Ū ANA *UTU²
ŠÁ IG².A apāt :parritti

Because there are many (medicinal) plants, I will make an oracular inquiry about them for myself, and which plant is determined for me – I will also make an oracular inquiry about the physicians, and which physician is determined for me, he shall spread that plant onto the eyes of His Majesty. (translation after Burde 1974: 4).

4. Diachronic analysis

4.1. The verb išpär-/išpar- “to spread, stew, scatter” is to be derived with Klockhorst (2008: 406) from *spör-ei, *spr-enti to a PIE root *spēr* without final laryngeal. It is cognate with Greek σπέρω “scatter, stew, sow” and (contra LIV 580) also Armenian sp’rem “strew, scatter.” Only in New Hittite are created secondary patterns of a ḫi-verb with weak stem in -e- (after the type of k(a)rāp-/k(a)rēp- “to devour” etc.), a more widespread ḫi-verb išparra-/išparr- (perhaps via an intermediate stage of išpār-/išparr- after the type of ištāp-/ištēpp- “block up” etc.), and a mi-verb in -ye/a- after the most productive class in Hittite. CLuvian parr(i)ya- (note with “unlenited” ending parritti) reflects a matching -ye/a- stem.
Hittite ḫ parallels “to spread out” and ḫ- “to kick”

4.2. Hittite ḫ- “spread, strew, scatter” could reflect an inherited *ṣpēn-, but far more likely is an inner-Hittite creation, renewing ḫ-: compare laknu- “knock over” etc. beside lāg-/lāg- “idem” (Oettinger 1979: 425) and more generally karš- and karšnu- “cut off,” pāḥs- and pāḥšmu- “protect” etc.

4.3. Hittite ḫ- “to kick, trample” reflects PIE *spēH- “strike with the foot.” Evidence for the quality of the final laryngeal is conflicting: Latin sprēnī “I rejected” points to *h₁ (thus Schrijver 1991: 140 and passim), but Old Norse spenn/sparra and Old English spēn “reject” require *h₂ (thus Kloekhorst 2008: 410; LIV2 585-6 leaves the question open). The contribution of Hittite to the question is open to debate. If the stem ḫ- matches directly Sanskrit sphaṇāti “pushes away” < *ṣpēn-ē-ti, Hittite proves *h₁, but the presumed phonology (that after loss of *h₁ the syllabic sonorant followed by hiatus would yield a geminate) is merely possible, not proven, and the entire status of the "tuddāti-type" in Anatolian is hotly debated. On the case of Hittite ḫwe- “push away” and Sanskrit svaṇāti “idem” contrast Oettinger 1979: 297 (both from *ṣuḥ₁-ē-ti) with Kloekhorst 2008: 798 (the Hittite rather from *sHu-yē-ti). Similarly, Melchert (1994: 16 and passim) takes the Hittite from *ṣuḥ₁-yē-ti. Since the true outcome of *VCyV in Hittite remains unknown (see Melchert 1994: 157-158), an old *ye/o-stem is also possible for ḫwe-a-: *spēH-yē/o- with regular loss of any laryngeal before yod and assimilation *-ṛ- > -rr-. Finally, also possible is an iterative, as per Lehrman (1991-1993: 132): *spér₁-yē/o-. Lehrman assumes specifically *h₁, but coloring of the following vowel by *h₂ could have been undone by analogy to other iteratives of the type: *loukēye/o- > lukke/a- “set on fire,” *wsēye/o- > waššē/a- “clothe.” I see at present no basis for choosing from among this embarrassment of possibilities. All that is clear is that we must begin with the mi-verb ḫ- for “to strike with the foot.”

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