The Hittite Syllabification of PIE *CuR and *K’R

Alwin Kloekhorst (Leiden)

(1) Within the field of Hittite historical linguistics, it is quite commonly assumed that the PIE sequences *CuR and *K’R syllabify as Hitt. CuR in all circumstances (cf. Melchert 1994: 55; Kimball 1999: 249): *k’r-énti > kuranzi ‘they cut’, *g’n-énti > kunanzi ‘they kill’, *k’r’-rs-ent > kukuršant- ‘slandering’, etc.

Oettinger (1979: 119) proposes a different syllabification before a consonant, however, namely *K’RC > Hitt. KyarC. This proposal was based on forms such as kuyaraške/a-, the -ške/a-imperfective of the verb kuerni/kur- ‘to cut’, kuyaške/a-, the -ške/a-imperfective of kuerni/kun- ‘to kill’, and kuyakuyaraške/a-, the -ške/a-imperfective of kük(k)urš- ‘to mutilate’. Nevertheless, under pressure of e.g. Melchert (1984: 52), who explicitly states that “a sequence *CwRC does not syllabify as *CwRC (> Hitt. CwaRC), but as CuRC”, giving Hitt. hurki- ‘wheel’ < *h2urg-i- as an example, Oettinger has retracted this view in 1992: 218.

(2) The Hittite imperfectives in -ške/a- clearly go back to the PIE present formation in *-ške/o-. In PIE, this suffix is always attached to the zero-grade of the verbal root: PIE *g’m-šké/ó- ‘to go’ > Gk. βάπτω, Skt. tácchati, Av. jasaiti; PIE *prk-šké/o- ‘to ask’ > Skt. prcohati, Arm. harc’i, Lat. poscō, OHG forscho. In Hittite, we also find examples of this practice: e.g. zikke/a- (imperf. of dai’i- ‘to put’) < *d’h₁-šké/o-; appeške/a- (imperf. of eppni/app- ‘to take’) < *h₁pšké/ó-. Moreover, in Hittite it is still a synchronic rule that imperfectives in -ške/a- are derived from the weak stem of the verb 1.

(3) If indeed the sequences *CuR and *K’R always syllabify as Hitt. CuR (before vowel as well as consonant), the above-mentioned imperfectives kuyaraške/a-, kuyaske/a- and kuyakuyaraške/a- cannot go back to the morphologically expected formation *K’R-ške/o-. Nevertheless, it is also difficult to assume a secondary, analogical origin of these forms. If we look at the paradigm of kuerni ‘to kill’, for instance, we find three stems: kue(n)-, kun- and kuya(n)-. The stems kue(n)- and

1 This is the reason that besides kuyaraške/a- and kuyakuyaraške/a- we also find the imperfectives kurške/a-, kureške/a- and kukkanške/a-, kukkanške/a-, which are younger formations built on the synchronic weak stems kur- and kukkanš-.
kun- are common throughout the paradigm, whereas kuyâ(n) - can only be found in the imperfective. The same goes for the stems kuyâr- and kuyâkuyâr-: within their paradigms they occur in the imperfective only. This rules out the possibility that these forms have been secondarily introduced into the imperfective: there simply is no model on the analogy of which they could have been created. Scholars like Melchert (1994: 168), Oettinger (1992: 218) and Kimball (1999: 249) state that the imperfectives in CuâRške/a- must reflect *KëeRške/o-, i.e. forms in which the full-grade stem *KëeR- has been introduced. Although indeed in isolation a pre-form *KëeRske/o-by regular soundlaws would yield Hitt. *KqàRške/a- (showing *eRCC > aRCC, cf. Melchert 1994: 136-7), this would not have happened as part of the paradigm. For instance, in the verb kuenzi ‘to kill’, 2sg. *gëhënsi and 3sg. *gëhënti should regularly have yielded Hitt. **kuyâ(n)ši and **kuyânzi. Instead, we find kuesi and kuenzi in which the -e- was analogically restored. If the imperfective was indeed secondarily formed as *gëhënske/o-, I do not understand why this form would not have been restored to **kue(n)ške/a- either.

(4) Since the imperfectives ku̯aRške/a-, ku̯aške/a- and ku̯aku̯aRške/a- cannot be explained as secondary formations within their paradigms, I conclude that they must be archaic and that they therefore must show the phonetic outcomes of *këRške/o-, *gëhënske/o- and *Kë-o-këRske/o-, respectively. The difference in syllabification between these forms and e.g. ʰurki- is in my view explained by the fact that in the imperfectives the sequence *KëR is followed by two consonants, whereas in ʰurki- only one consonant is following. I would therefore like to propose the following rules of syllabification for Hittite: the PIE sequences *CuRV/*KëRV and *CuRCV/*KëRCV syllabify as Hitt. CuRV and CuRCV, respectively, but the PIE sequence *CuRCC/*KëRCC syllabifies as Hitt. Cu̯aRCC. It should be noted that this distribution nicely fits the fact that PIE *eRV and *eRCV yield Hitt. eRV and eRCV, whereas PIE *eRCC > Hitt. aRCC (cf. Melchert 1994: 136-7).

(5) This solution also gives a new insight into the problem of du̯arni-ci/du̯arn- ‘to break’. This verb is generally connected with Skt. dhvar- ‘to damage, to hurt’ but the exact reconstruction is unclear: Eichner’s reconstruction *d̄yornejé- (1973: 75-6) should have yielded **tartne- (cf. tân ‘for the second time’ < *dyoom for the loss of *y in *Tyô), whereas Melchert’s reconstruction *d̄yornejé/o- (1984: 36) should have yielded **tyerne- (cf. e.g. *këermi > Hitt. kuermi ‘I cut’ for the retention of *e in *erCV). A better approach is Oettinger’s (1979: 151), who reconstructs du̯arnizzi/du̯arznizi as a nasal-infixed formation *d̄ur-né-h₁-ti, *d̄ur-n-h₁-énti. According to the above proposed syllabification rules, these forms
would regularly result in **duɾnezzi/duṙarnanzi. If we assume that the stem of the plural spread throughout the paradigm (compare e.g. šunna/i/sunnanzi ‘to fill’ < *su-nó-H-ei/*su-n-H-énti, or zinnizzi/zinnanzi < *ti-né-h₁-ti / *ti-n-h₁-énti, where the geminate -nn- from the plural spread throughout the paradigm), we arrive at the situation as attested, namely duṙarnizzi/duṙarnanzi.

(6) There is one verb that seemingly contradicts the development *KᵢRCC > Hitt. CyaRCC, namely gulš-zi ‘to carve, to engrave’, which is generally derived from the root *k₁/sls- (Gk. τῆλον ‘furrow’, Skt. karṣati ‘to plow’). Its singular forms, 1. sg. pres. gulši (gul-aš-mi), 3. sg. pres. gulšzi (gul-aš-zí) go back to virtual *k₁/sls-mi and *k₁/sls-ti and therefore seem to show a syllabification *KᵢRCC > CuRCC. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that this verb, like any mi-inflecting verb, must have had c/O-ablaut originally: *k₁/sls-ti/*k₁/sls-énti. The 3.pl.-form regularly yielded Hitt. gulšanzi, the stem of which must have spread throughout the paradigm, replacing expected **kualšzi by gulšzi. Since the forms showing gulšCC are of secondary origin, they do not contradict the development *KᵢRCC > CyaRCC as un-ravelled above.

References

Eichner, Heiner

Kimball, Sarah E.
1999 Hittite Historical Phonology, Innsbruck.

Melchert, H. Craig
1994 Anatolian Historical Phonology, Amsterdam/Atlanta.

Oettinger, Norbert
1979 Die Stammbildung des hethitischen Verbums, Nürnberg.