

Hittite ‘water’

Although the honorand nowadays mainly occupies himself with Armenology, his linguistic career started with Hittite studies. Especially his contributions on the Old Hittite traces of a three member nominal classification system¹ are outstanding, although unfortunately their implications for the interpretation of the PIE gender system have not received the deserved attention yet. By dedicating this paper to him, I would like to express my gratitude to Jos Weitenberg for guiding my steps into Hittite studies.

The most important attestations of the paradigm of the Hittite word for ‘water’ can be found in Rieken (1999: 292):²

nom.-acc.sg.	<i>ṽa-a-tar</i> (OS), <i>ṽa-tar</i> (OS)
gen.sg.	<i>ú-ṽi₅-te-na-as</i> (MH/NS)
dat.-loc.sg.	<i>ú-i-te-e-ni</i> (MH/MS), <i>ú-e-te-ni</i> (MH/NS)
all.sg.	<i>ú-e-te-na</i> (MH/NS)
instr.	<i>ú-i-ta-an-ta</i> (OS), <i>ú-i-da-an-da</i> (OH/NS), <i>ú-e-da-an-da</i> (MH/NS), <i>ú-e-da-an-ta</i> (undat.), <i>ú-i-te-ni-it</i> (MH/NS)
erg.	<i>ú-e-ti-na-an-za(-)</i> (MH/NS)
nom.-acc.pl.	<i>ú-i-ta-a-ar</i> (OS), <i>ú-e-da-ar</i> (OS), <i>ú-e-da-a-ar</i> (NH)
dat.-loc.pl.	<i>ú-i-te-na-as</i> (MH/NS)

The fact that the Hittite paradigm shows nom.-acc.sg. *ṽātar* besides oblique *ṽe/iten-* has since Schindler (1975: 4-5) been explained as reflecting a PIE static paradigm. The idea is that the *ṽad- : ṽed-* ablaut must be old. Schindler states “il est impossible que l’alternance *wa- : we-* soit un développement interne en hittite” (1975: 4) and assumes it reflects PIE **ṽod-* : **ṽed-*. In his view, these full grades must have had the accent, which points to zero grades in the suffix and the ending. This leads to the reconstruction of an original static paradigm nom.-acc.sg. **ṽód-r*, gen.sg. **ṽéd-n-s*. The Hitt. nom.-acc.pl. *ṽe/ídār* is considered to reflect the old collective **ṽédōr*.³

According to this theory, the synchronic Hittite paradigm must be due to a pre-Hittite remodeling on the basis of the paradigm of ‘fire’ which has a proterodynamic inflection: in analogy to nom.sg. *pahhur*, gen.sg. *pahhuenas* (< **péh₂-ur*, **ph₂-ṽén-s*) the original paradigm **ṽód-r*, **ṽéd-n-s* was altered to attested *ṽa-a-tar*, *ú-ṽi₅-te-na-as*.

¹ Weitenberg 1987 and 1995.

² See l.c. for full attestation places.

³ Schindler 1975: 4.

There are some flaws in this theory. Firstly, the reconstruction of the static paradigm is based on the Hittite material only. Although nom.-acc.sg. **uód-r* is reflected in other IE languages as well (e.g. Goth. *watō* < **uod-ōr*), an *e*-grade form **ued-n* is not attested outside Hittite⁴.

Secondly, the thought that the paradigm of ‘water’ took over the inflection of ‘fire’ in pre-Hittite is not likely. Some facts cannot be explained by this assumption. For instance, in the paradigm of ‘water’ the archaic instr. *ue/idanta* (< **-én-t*) is often found (from OS onwards) whereas the younger form *uidenit* is found in NS texts only. The paradigm of ‘fire’⁵, however, only has instr. *pahhuenit* (oldest attestation MH/MS). It is difficult to explain how ‘water’ obtained the archaic instr.sg. *ue/idanta* if it took over its inflection from the word for ‘fire’, of which no ***pahhuanta* is attested.

Finally, Schindler’s remark that the *ua-* : *ue-* ablaut cannot be due to an inner-Hittite development, is incorrect, as we will see later on.

Let us first look critically at the Hittite forms themselves. We notice that the vowel of the stem is written *e* as well as *i* whereas the vowel of the suffix is written *e* almost throughout the attestations.⁶ Especially the spelling dat.-loc.sg. *ú-i-te-e-ni* indicates that the suffix syllable was accented: *ue/idén-*. This is generally accepted and used to explain the *e/i*-spelling of the stem vowel: unaccented (pretonic) **e* (sometimes) yields *i* (cf. Melchert 1994: 101). In this manner, *uitenas* is considered to reflect **uedénos*, and similarly *uidār* < **uedór*.

The *e/i*-spelling in Hittite, however, is not only used to denote unaccented (pretonic) **e*, but is used to write the anaptyctic vowel /ə/ as well.⁷ We shall return to this point later.

It is important to mention that within Hittite no initial alternations are allowed: all forms within a paradigm had to start with the same consonant. All pre-Hittite sound laws that were about to cause initial alternation were blocked. The participle **lg^hént-*, for instance, should regularly have given Hitt. ***alkant-* in isolation. As a part of the paradigm of *lāki* ‘to fell’ (**lóg^h-e*), however, it yielded *lagant-* [l₃gánt-]. In 3pl.pres. **h₁sénti* ‘they are’, the preconsonantal **h₁* should regularly have dropped (cf. **h₁leng^h-* > Hitt. *link-* ‘to swear’ ~ Gk. ἐλέγχω ‘to accuse’).⁸ In analogy to 3sg.pres. **h₁és-ti* the laryngeal was restored, after which /l^hésti/ : /l^hsénti/ yielded Hitt. *e-es-zi* : *a-sa-an-zi*.

In my view, this tendency to avoid initial alternation causes the fact that in Hittite (consonantal) #*u-* never alternates with (vocalic) #*u-*.⁹ This indicates that forms with original ablaut

⁴ Arm. *get* ‘river’ is sometimes considered to reflect **uedō* from **uedōr*; but must reflect an *s*-stem **uéd-os-* (cf. e.g. Olsen 1999: 45-6).

⁵ Cf. CHD.

⁶ Erg. *ú-e-ti-na-an-za(-)* probably bore its accent on the ending *-anz*, which caused pretonic weakening of the **e* of the suffix to *i*. Instr. *ue/idanta* shows *a* because of the sound law **eNT* > Hitt. *aNT* (cf. Melchert 1994: 134-5).

⁷ Cf. Kimball 1999: 193-9.

⁸ Cf. Melchert 1994: 66-7.

⁹ The seemingly alternation #*u-* : #*u-* in the verbs *uas(ija)-* ‘to buy’ and *us(sa)nija-* ‘to put up for sale’ cannot be used as an argument, as these forms do not belong to one paradigm. The verb *uas(ija)-* reflects

#ue/oC-* : **#uC-* must have undergone analogic reshaping. For instance, 3pl.pres.act. **ulh₂énti* ‘they hit’ should regularly have yielded Hitt. *ulhanzi*. As part of the paradigm of *u₃alh-* (**uelh₂-*), however, it developed to *u₃alhanzi* /u₃lhánzi/. The same goes for 3pl.pres.act. *u₃arpanzi* ‘they wash’ /u₃rpánzi/ from **urpénti*. In isolation it should have become Hitt. ***urpanzi*, but was secondarily changed to *u₃arpanzi* in analogy to 3sg. *u₃arpzi* < **u₃érp-ti*.

The schwa that emerges between *u* and the following consonant is spelled *a* in these verbs because the latter consonant is a resonant. Whenever the second consonant is a stop, however, we find the *e/i*-schwa. For instance, Hittite *uekzi* : *uekanzi* ‘to wish’ must reflect the PIE root **uek-*.¹⁰ In order to explain the *e*-grade in 3pl. *uekanzi*, it is generally assumed that the Hittite paradigm reflects acrostic inflection **uek-* : **uek-*.¹¹ This is contradicted, however, by the fact that all other IE languages point to an original root present¹². It is therefore a priori more desirable to assume that also Hitt. *uekzi* : *uekanzi* ultimately stem from **uek-ti* : **uk-énti*. In the case of the singular form, the equation is clear: PIE **uek-ti* > Hitt. *uekzi*. The development of the plural form must be explained as follows. At the time that the difference between *u* and *u* became phonemic, 3pl. **ukénti* was altered to **uekenti* in analogy to 3sg. **uekti* in order to avoid initial paradigmatical alternation. This **uekenti* automatically developed a schwa between *u* and *k*, yielding attested *uekanzi* /u₃əkanzi/.

Let us now return to the paradigm of ‘water’. We saw that Schindler’s most important argument for reconstructing **uód-r*, **ued-n-s* is the fact that in his view the *uad-* : *ued-* alternation cannot be an inner-Hittite development. This argument now has become valueless as we have seen that in the form **uk-énti* an *e/i*-schwa emerged in order to avoid initial alternation, giving Hitt. *uekanzi*. In my view, this scenario is possible for the oblique forms of ‘water’ as well: Hitt. *ued-* actually denotes /u₃əd-/ < **ud-* in which form the *e/i*-schwa emerged in order to avoid initial paradigmatical alternation with nom.-acc.sg. **uódr* > Hitt. *uātar*. This interpretation fits in well with the observation that the vowel of the stem syllable of these forms is written *e* as well as *i*, which spelling alternation is typical for the *e/i*-schwa.

**uos(ejé)-*, whereas *us(sa)nija-* is derived from a noun **us-no-* ‘sale’ (Neu 1980: 87-8). This **usno-jé-* is very archaic, as is clear by the fact that after the splitting off of Anatolian from PIE, the word was innovated to **uosno-jé-*, which yielded Skt. *vasnayáti* ‘to higgie’ and Gk. *ὠνέομαι* ‘to buy’ (through **uosn-eje-*, cf. Beekes 1995: 230).

The #*u-* : #*u-* alternations in *urāni* besides *u₃arāni* ‘burns’, *ustul-* besides *u₃astul-* ‘sin’ and *urrir* beside *u₃arrir* ‘they helped’ are of another category (cf. Neu 1980: 87). For instance, the occasional spelling of 3sg.pres. *u₃arāni* ‘burns’ as *urāni* is due to the fact that the verb *u₃ar-* is a middle with zero grade-inflection: 3sg. **u₃rH-ó*, 3pl. *u₃rH-ént-o*. The form *u₃arāni* (dissimilatory from **u₃arār*) is therefore to be interpreted as /u₃rāni/. The alternation *u₃arāni* : *urāni* does not reflect zero vs. full grade, but rather shows different ways of spelling /u₃(ə)rāni/.

¹⁰ In Kloekhorst fthc. this verb is treated in more detail.

¹¹ E.g. Oettinger 1979: 17.

¹² E.g. Skt. 3sg. *váṣṭi* : 1pl. *usmási* ‘to wish, to want’, GAv. 3sg. *vaštī* : 1pl. *usmahī* ‘to wish’.

To sum up: at the (Pre-Hittite) time that *u* and *ū* became phonemically distinct, the original proterodynamic paradigm **uód-r*, **ud-én-s* was changed to **uódr*, **udéns* in order to avoid initial paradigmatical alternation.¹³ These latter forms regularly yielded Hitt. *uātar*, *ūitenas*: /*uāt₃r*/, /*uədenas*/.¹⁴

We now rather reinterpret the Hittite material as follows, considering the stem vowel *e/i* to reflect /*ə*/:

nom.-acc.sg.	<i>ua-a-tar</i>	= / <i>uād₃r</i> /	< * <i>uód-r</i>
gen.sg.	<i>ú-ūi₅-te-na-as</i>	= / <i>uədenas</i> /	< * <i>ud-én-(o)s</i>
dat.-loc.sg.	<i>ú-i-te-e-ni</i>	= / <i>uədəni</i> /	< * <i>ud-én-i</i>
all.sg.	<i>ú-e-te-na</i>	= / <i>uədəna</i> /	
instr.	<i>ú-i-ta-an-ta</i>	= / <i>uədəánta</i> /	< * <i>ud-én-t</i>
erg.	<i>ú-e-ti-na-an-za(-)</i>	= / <i>uədenánt_s</i> /	< * <i>ud-en-ónt-s</i>
nom.-acc.pl.	<i>ú-i-ta-a-ar</i>	= / <i>uədár</i> /	< * <i>ud-ór</i>
dat.-loc.pl.	<i>ú-i-te-na-as</i>	= / <i>uədenas</i> /	

My interpretation has a few advantages over Schindler's analysis. First, it explains why no traces can be found of an oblique form **ued-n* in any other IE language. Secondly, it makes the awkward assumption that in pre-Hittite times the paradigm of 'water' must have taken over the inflection of 'fire' unnecessary. Finally, my interpretation opens the way to compare gen.sg. *ú-ūi₅-te-na-as* (< proterodynamic **ud-én-(o)s*) with Goth. gen.sg. *watins* < **uod-en-(o)s*. Nom.-acc.pl. *ú-i-ta-a-ar* now can be equated with Gk. nom.sg. *ὕδωρ* 'water', both from **ud-ór*.

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¹³ Note that if Hitt. *utnē* 'land' indeed is a derivative of the stem **ued-* 'water', this form must reflect **ud-nēi*. The fact that here **ud-* did not become **ud-* is explained by the very early separation of **uód-r* and **ud-nēi*. That the separation must have taken place very early can be seen semantically by the fact the word developed the meaning 'land', and formally by the fact that the formation is very archaic within Hittite (*utnē* is the only **-ēi*-stem that survived in Hittite).

¹⁴ The replacement of the proterodynamic genitive ending *-s by hysterodynamic *-os > Hitt. -as can be widely observed throughout the Hittite material.

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