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HITTITE *i*-STEMS REVISITED – FROM HROZNÝ TO THE PRESENT DAY. PRELIMINARY STUDY

Abstract

Though the Hittite i-stems were examined by several scholars in the last and in the beginning of this century, the available material calls for revision of the provisional conclusions. While the basic features were recognized by Hrozný in 1917 and elaborated later by others, generalizations were based on restricted data sets which from then are being enlarged almost every year by new word forms found on cuneiform tablets. The i-stem class is the Hittite second largest nominal class, with over a thousand recorded lexemes. It is unique for the high number of borrowings and words of unknown origin, as shown in comparison with the u-stem class. Its reassessment is necessary, as pointed out by the discrepancies between what is expected to be known about this class and what seems to be an outcome of data analysis.

Keywords

Hittite morphology; i-stems; nominal class

1 Introduction

Hittite *i*-stems were first discussed by Hrozný (1917) and elaborated by others in the later decades of the 20th century, the main extensive studies being Kronasser (1956, 99), Berman (1972), Zucha (1988) and Rössle (2002). Though the conclusions of the former works are now known to require a revision, the *i*-stems have not yet been treated in detail.

2 Research background

As the number of deciphered Hittite tablets is gradually rising, so is also the number of *i*-stem forms in focus. While Hrozný lists all (to him) available forms of over twenty lemmas, the current list exceeds one thousand. Based on the forms[1] (*ḫu-ub-ru-uš-ḫi-iš* 'Opfergegenstand', *ḫalkiš* 'Ackerfrucht, Getreide, Grünes, Futter', *šar-kán-ti-iš* '?' ^{amel}*ḫat-ti-li-iš* 'der Hattäer', *še-ḫi-el-li-iš-ki* 'Brett (?)', ^{is}*ḫu-lu-ga-an-ni-iš* 'Wagen (?)', *ḫu-u-uš-ti-in* (acc.sg.) 'eine Spetzerei, Holzart', *za-aḫ-ḫi-in* (acc.sg.) 'Schlacht', *li-in-ki-ia-az* (loc.sg.) 'Schwur'', NINDA.MUR-*ši-in* (acc.sg.) 'Aschenbrot' etc.), Hrozný presented inflectional paradigm of the *i*-stems (24–25). While he properly identified the case forms of the structural cases[2], the assignation of the spatial cases soon received revision. As the then encountered forms happened to be of commune gender, the neuters are represented by adjectives (with a single exception, ^{KAM}*šá-am-bu-uk-ki-ia-aš* 'šampukki-meal' (=^{TU7}*ša-am-pu-uk-ki-ia-aš* (KBo 5.1 Rs. I 10; STRAUS 2006, 291). There is no discussion of the ablaut or origin of the words.

Virtually forty years later, Kronasser devoted five pages of his *Vergleichende Laut- und Formenlehre des Hethitischen* (KRONASSER 1956, 109) to description of *i*-stem nominals, which he lists after the "largest group" of *a*-stems; he mainly focuses on their PIE affinities. Kronasser reminds the reader of the origin of the *i*-stems, that is, PIE *-*ei*-, and compares the shift between *e* and *i* in Latin (e.g. -*ē*(*i*)- in *rūpēs* and -*is* in nom.sg.), comparing that to Hittite *ki-iš-ri-eš* = *kešreš*, later *ki-iš-ri-iš* = *kišriš* or *kešriš*. The other mentioned type is the lengthened-grade stems *-*ōi* > Hittite -*ai*+š in nom.sg (and also -*iš* in zero-grade stems) (*ḫur-ta-(a-)iš* 'curse'). The *ai*-stems were first differentiated from the *i*-stems by Sturtevant in his article of 1937 (STURTE-VANT 1937, 57). In 2006, Rössle provides an overview of the heterogenous origin of the –*ai*- in Hittite *ai*-stems (RÖSSLE 2006, 326), listing sixteen possible origins, separated into even more subgroups (-*āi* < Anatolian -*a*- + Anatolian -*i*-, -*āi* < Hittite -*a*- and Hittite -*i*-, -*āi* < Hurrian -*a*- + Hittitite -*i*- etc.).

Six years after his previous book, Kronasser (1962) continues to divide the *i*-stems by their origin: primary and derived. Following Friedrich (1935, 122–128), he shows parallels with Hurrian and also attempts for semantic grouping of *i*-stem lemmas: types of bread, oracle birds, clothes, furniture etc. Kronasser concludes that Hittite contains more foreign (in this case, Hurrian) words than its IE sister languages, being therefore "die Mischsprache par excellence".

In 1972, Berman (p. 6) states that "the two largest groups of nouns and adjectives in Hittite are the *a*-stems and the *i*-stems. It is not certain which is larger. In their respective lists the *i*-stems exceed the *a*-stems 334 to 314, but this is an accident of

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1   The forms here, transliterated (/transcribed) by Hrozný, reflect the way of transmitting cunei-form texts in his day and also his authentic translations (thus, in German).

2   Though Hrozný held the view of three genders in Hittite, masculine, feminine and neuter, an idea soon refuted by Friedrich (1922, 159).

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the available material". He identifies not only Hurrian, but also Luwian loanwords and scarce loanwords from other languages – Hattic and other (p. 8). He, too, ascribes the high frequency of the *i*-stems mainly to borrowings.

Zucha's (1988, 275) treatment of Hittite nominal stems includes about 150 examples of *i*-stem nouns and adjectives (including the *ai*-stems); their division follows the form alternations within paradigms: ablauting (36 examples) and non-ablauting (115 examples) nouns and adjectives. With such reduced material, conclusions may only be provisional (e.g., concerning the root ablaut, p. 330). In his conlucsions, Zucha divides the lexemes to three groups, a) *šagaiš, lingain, linkiaš, linkia, ḫaštai, ḫaštiyaš* with a suffix ablaut *-ai-*, oblique *-i-* and tendency to generalize to *-ai-*. No root ablaut in this group except *maḫrai-/muḫri-*, b) words with ablauting suffix nom./acc. *-i-*, oblique **-ay-* and c) *ḫalkiš* and other with no ablaut in the suffix.

A summary of almost one century of study of the *i*-stems was provided by Hoffner and Melchert in their Grammar of the Hittite Language (2008, 86). Although inaccurately stating that there are 10 times more common gender *i*-stems than neuters, they provided a sketch of the origin of the *i*-stems, dividing them to inherited and secondary (formed by productive suffixes *-alli-, -ašti-, -ili-, -ri-, -ulli-, -uzzi-*, p. 86), and singling out both the Luwian and Hurrian (and Akkadian via Hurrian) loanwords, as well as the influence of the Luwian so called *i*-mutation. The *i*-mutation (earlier called *i*-motion), first extensively described by Starke (1990, 44–85), is a phenomenon of Luwian origin, which within a single paradigm of common gender noun replaces in some positions the thematic vowel *-a-* by *-i-* or adds the *-i-* vowel to a (consonantal) stem.

3 Observations based on modern data

As obvious from the previous text, current overall knowledge of the *i*-stems is based on insufficient data and is not able to confirm the generalizations that have been done so far. From Hrozný´s twenty lexemes (N.B., his work is greatly appreciated and valuable with regards to the material and lack of other background on Hittite he was working with), to Kronasser's understanding of the derivation and origin of many lexemes, to Berman's list of 313 *i*-stems, to Zucha's treatment of 151 words, none of these works match the size of the presently known list of *i*-stem nominals. The class of *i*-stems requires a new overall review and only than comparison to the other stem classes of Hittite can be based on reliable grounds. Though Rössle (2002, 326) opposed extensive studies, they are still needed to cover the whole theme as a starting point of deductive research.

Based on their gender, the *i*-stem lemmas must be sorted into four (/five) categories – commune, neuter, indeterminate, adjectives and the controversial class of commune/neuter. The evidence for the latter is so far understudied. The possibility

that most alleged cases of "alternating gender" do not exist cannot be ruled out at present. Some of the words usually listed within this class involve collective plurals to common-gender nouns (or count plurals to neuters); some reflect a misunderstanding of "pseudo-Akkadographic" spellings (that is, stem forms) with numerals and in combinations with logograms.

The words in the category of indeterminate gender obviously fall into one of the first three categories; mainly for the scarcity of their attestations, their gender remains unknown. Also, as some words are attested only in a specific environment, this may provide insufficient hints about their morphology.

Today, there are over 600 recorded lemmas of common gender and 160 neuter; gender of another about 150 of them cannot be determined. The adjectives so far recorded in discovered tablets number over 150. This leaves us with approximately 900 nouns and 150+ adjectives. It has been said (Berman 1972, 9) that the i-stem class is extensive due to the many i-stem loanwords from Hurrian. What may surprise the reader is that in his count, out of his 332 Hittite i-stems, only 13 are (supposedly) of Hurrian origin. More are understood as Luwian, Akkadian and some as Hattic.

To compare the quality of stem classes based on the etymologies of their members, the principle requirement is obtaining corresponding data for at least two such classes. Out of the roughly one thousand attested i-stems, about six hundred have not received any formal (and thus etymological) connections so far. It is not surprising that many i-stems receive no etymology at all. This is due to the character of their attestation – some are hapax legomena without reliable translation, some preserved only in specific cases in specific environment. Many i-stems designate terms for objects used in Hittite rituals and as such may be used more frequently within a specific range of texts while are not found elsewhere. In the table below, see the overview of the origin of the other four hundred. I take into account etymological opinions provided by the major dictionaries (EDHIL, HED, HW2, CHD) and several other sources. Where the sources disagree, one of the opinions was chosen. As this may influence the count and without the possibility to present the list of the words and etymological reasoning in this place, the numbers are approximated.

Table 1. Statistics of i-stems of different (traceable) origin

Source of the lexeme	Number of lexemes
Luwian (+ one Palaic)	110
Hurrian	70
Inherited (of Indo-European origin)	70
Akkadian	40
Hattic	20
Other, of non-Indo-European origin	30
Sum	**340**

As we can see, of the etymologized words, most seem to be Anatolian loanwords. Although this fact does not tell us whether they are Indo-European or accepted into Luwian from other non-IE neighbouring language, they must be understood as "foreign" – on the synchronic level, when they entered Hittite as loanwords, their origin was irrelevant. Of Hurrian origin is the same number of words as receives IE etymology. More than half of the amount are Akkadian loanwords (mediated through Hurrian but still recognized as Akkadian) and again half are of Hattic and of undetermined, but clearly non-IE origin. So, of the 340 words, about one fifth receives IE etymology. Whether this fact is striking, with regards to other stem classes, must be confirmed through comparison. While the largest Hittite class, the *a*-class, has not received a thorough treatment (definitely mainly due to its size), the *u*-stems were treated in-depth by Weitenberg (1984).

Following etymological proposals of other scientists, Weitenberg remains fairly cautious concerning previous etymologies (p. 157, 183, 236 etc.), and even so, he agrees with half of the *u*-stems to have originated in Proto-Indo-European. Another quarter of lemmas can be traced to Hattic (7 occurrences), Hurrian (6), Akkadian (5) and other (unknown) non-Indo-European source (1). For the last quarter, etymological relations could not have been established, major reason being insufficient understanding of the semantics of the corresponding words.

The *i*-stem and the *u*-stem class differ with regards to origin of the words to a great extent. Although the i-stems twice outnumber the u-stems if we compare only the inherited formations, the comparison still supports the view that the size of the *i*-stem class is mainly due to loanwords and to words of unknown origin.

4 Conclusion

The aim of this article is to tackle the discrepancies in the knowledge of the *i*-stems which arise from the fact that the material available today greatly exceeds that in the times when books devoted to Hittite morphology and vocabulary treated also the *i*-stems. Several claims were refuted to prove the need for up-to-date examination. Contra Kronasser (1962, 202), it cannot be said that the *i*-stems confirm Hittite as a "Mischsprache par excellence". While over nine tenth of the *i*-stems have no convincing IE etymology, when another nominal class is treated (the *u*-stems), the situation is very different. While many foreignisms made their way to Hittite using the *i*-stem-ending, this does not speak for the whole lexicon. Contra Hoffner and Melchert (2008, 86), there are not ten times more common gender nouns than neuters – the ratio is in fact one to four. Contra Berman (1972, 6), it is clear now that the *a*-stem class is larger than the *i*-stem class. Since his times, the numbers of words for both classes have substantially grown. Contra Berman (1972, 9), it can only partly be agreed that the great frequency of *i*-stems is due to the loanwords.

We can only comment on those the etymology of which is known. Contra Zucha and his claim of *maḫrai-/muḫri-* being the only lexeme with root ablaut found within the *i*-stem group. In fact, this word may show a secondary "Luvoid" modification *a/u* in contact with *ḫ*; in fact, in Indo-European languages, root ablaut of *a* and *u* is not found at all (on anaptyxis of *a/u* next to *ḫ* Rieken (2016, 267f.)).

Further study will focus on quantitative descriptive research, examining specific features of different groups of *i*-stems, such as distinctions among the loanwords from different languages, inherited words, words of different morphological origins and other.

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Abbreviations

PIE   Proto-Indo-European (designation of a reconstructed language understood as the original language from which the Indo-European language family developed)

HED   Puhvel, Jaan. 1984–. *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*. Berlin: Mouton.

CHD   Güterbock, Hans Gustav – Hoffner, Harry A. Jr. – van den Hout, Theo P. J. 1989–. *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

EDHIL   Kloekhorst, Alwin. 2008. *Etymological dictionary of the Hittit inherited lexicon*. Leiden – Boston: Brill.

HW2   Friedrich, Johannes – Kammenhuber, Annelise. 1984–2014. *Hethitisches Wörterbuch, I-IV*. Indogermanische Bibliothek: Zweite Reihe, Wörterbücher. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.

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