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Indo-Aryan -(a)ṣartanna in the Kikkuli treatise

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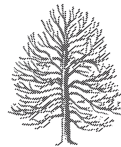
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náva- ‘nine’.⁹ Although this connection is no doubt correct, a few remarks are in order.

Two minor formal deviations can be resolved relatively easily. The compound *nāyartanna* instead of **naya-yartanna* is likely to be due to haplology,¹⁰ whereas *šatta-yartanna* instead of **šapta-*¹¹ can be explained by assimilation of the cluster **-pt-* to *-tt-*,¹¹ either in the Indo-Aryan dialect from which this term derives or in the Hurrian language that borrowed it.

Nevertheless, there are two problems which, in our view, have not been sufficiently accounted for, namely, the origin of the second member of all these compounds, and the relationship between the Hittite spelling *tier(a)-* and Indo-Aryan *tri-* ‘three’. Although these two issues may at first sight look unrelated, they may have the same source, as we shall presently see.

2. The first problem we will treat is the form and meaning of the second member of these compounds. There are essentially two different approaches to the meaning of the *°yartanna* compounds. One operates with the meaning ‘one, three, five, etc. rounds’ (Kammenhuber 1961), while the other favors the meaning ‘one, three, five, etc. turns’ (Starke 1995). For an overview of different viewpoints on this matter, cf. Raulwing 2006. Since the viewpoints strongly depend on the intricacies of horse training, of which we cannot form an independent judgment, we refrain from taking sides in this issue. For the following discussion it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that *°yartanna* must mean either ‘round’ or ‘turn’.

As far as the etymological proposals for *°yartanna* are concerned, the literature up to 1964 has been summarized by Mayrhofer (1965), to which we refer the reader, and since that article no new insights have been proposed, as far as we know.¹² At first, *°yartanna* was usually taken at face value and compared to Sanskrit *varṭana-*, a derivative in *-ana-* from the root *ṛt-* ‘to turn’. This Sanskrit neuter noun is attested only fairly late, however (the oldest attestation seems to be *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra* 8.4.2, which is a late Vedic text), and has the meaning of an action noun, ‘the act of rolling on, moving forward’. This does not seem suitable for the compounds in *°yartanna*.

Another etymological proposal connected Skt. *varṭanī-* f. ‘wheel edge’ (RV), ‘turning of the wheel, track, course, trail of the wind’ (RV+), but this proposal was not generally accepted because of the formal difference between the *i*-stem in Sanskrit vs. the *a*-stem of *°yartanna*. In his 1965 article, Mayrhofer pointed to a few parallel cases in Indo-Iranian, where an *i*-stem simplex corresponds to an *a*-stem compound:

⁹Note that Hitt. *z* = [ts] and *š* = [s], cf. e.g. Kloekhorst 2019.

¹⁰Thus already Kronasser 1956:223 (“*nawartanna* dissimiliert aus *nava-varṭana-*”).

¹¹Thus already, e.g., Kronasser 1956:223. The alternative view that **šapta-* would have been changed to *šatta-* in analogy to the Hurrian word for ‘seven’, *šitta* (thus, e.g., Kammenhuber 1961:19–20, cf. also HEG 2.956), seems less likely to us: we would then expect a form ***šittayartanna*.

¹²Cf. the treatment in HEG 4.173–4.

Skt. *aṅgūri-* (RV), *aṅgūli-* (VS+) f. ‘finger’ vs. *daśaṅgulá-* n. ‘length of ten fingers’ (RV), or Plr. **Hanguri-* (> Oss. *engwylʒ*, *engulʒə* ‘finger’) vs. YAv. *zairimiiaṇura-* m. ‘turtle, i.e. whose toes are in a house’. Nevertheless, this phenomenon (*i*-stem simplex vs. *a*-stem compound) is very rare in Indo-Iranian,¹³ and the R̥gvedic compound *dvi-vartanī-* ‘having a double track’ (10.61.20) shows that *vartanī-* did not necessarily change its stem in compounds with numerals. Furthermore, there are semantic problems: in Sanskrit, *vartanī-* clearly refers to the turning of the wheel and to the track it leaves behind, so that we then have to assume that Kikkuli used the word in the sense ‘round’ < ‘track’, which is possible, but is not supported by any evidence.

3. It seems therefore better to return to the first solution, albeit in an improved fashion. As mentioned above, Sanskrit *vartana-* is attested only late and does not have a suitable meaning, but if we assume that the °uartaṇna compounds contain the noun *ā-vartana-*, with the preverb *ā*, both problems disappear.

The oldest attestation of *ā-vartana-* is RV 10.19.4–5, in a hymn where cows are asked to come home:

yān niyānam nyāyanam, samjñānam yāt parāyanam |
āvartanam nivartanam, yó gopā āpi tām huve ||
yā udānaḥ vyāyanam, yā udānaḥ parāyanam |
āvartanam nivartanam, āpi gopā nī vartatām ||

‘Also the one who is the cowherd—I call him to the journeying back, the coming back, the bringing to agreement, and the going away, to the turning here and the turning back.

He who has managed the dispersal, who has managed the going away, the turning here, and the turning back—let the cowherd also turn back.’ (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

The expression *āvartanam nivartanam* ‘turning back, turning home’ is repeated (sometimes with slight variations) in RV-Khila 3.15.8; ŚS 6.77.2 = PS 19.16.2, TS 3.3.10.1, SāmavidhānaBr. 2.5.9, TBr. 3.7.9.8. The action noun *āvartana-* is a productive derivative of a very frequent Vedic combination *ā-√vrt-* ‘to turn, turn back, return’. Because of the productivity of the suffix *-ana-*, we cannot ascertain the age of *āvartana-*, but nothing precludes it from being of Proto-Indo-Iranian date. Also in some of the Iranian languages, **ā-√vart-* shows the meaning ‘to return’, cf. Buddh. Sogd. 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥, Man. Sogd. 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 /*āwart-* ‘to (re)turn’ (cf. also Man. Sogd. 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 *nwrtyy* /*āwart-niwartē-* ‘to go to and fro’), Khwar. *m|ṣwrd-* ‘to turn back, return’, so at least the meaning seems to be well established for Indo-Iranian.

¹³Apart from the word for ‘finger’, most other examples given by Wackernagel (1905:118f.), Debrunner (1954:140), and Debrunner (1957:37) concern post-Vedic forms or those only mentioned by the grammarians (e.g., Pāṇini 5.4.102 *tryaṅjala-* ‘three handfuls’ vs. ŚBr. + *aṅjalī-* m. ‘open hands folded together’). The situation with Skt. *ṣyonā-* /*ṣyona-* ‘pleasant, agreeable’ (< **su-yonā-*), YAv. *hu-iaona-* ‘comfortable’ vs. Skt. *yóni-* m. ‘seat, place, home, residence, womb, lap’, YAv. *yaona-* m. ‘way, course’ is too complicated to serve as a good illustration of the phenomenon.

4. We would expect that in the compounds with **aika-*, **panča-*, **sapta-*, and **naya-*, the final *-a* of the numerals would fuse with the initial *ā-* of **āuarta-*, yielding forms with a long **-ā-*. However, in the attested forms, no vowel length of the **-ā-* seems to be expressed in writing. We may therefore assume that at some moment in the process of the borrowing of these compounds into Hurrian vowel length was lost.¹⁴ The result is, however, that in these forms there is no formal way to distinguish between the interpretations **^ouarta-* and **^oāuarta-*. This is not the case for the compound with **tri-*, however. Thus far, it was difficult to explain why an Indo-Aryan compound **tri-^uarta-* or **tri-^uartani-* would end up in Hittite as *tiera^uartanna*, with an *-a-* before the *u*.¹⁵ With our identification of the second part of the compound as reflecting Indo-Aryan **^oāuarta-*, this problem vanishes.

5. The remaining problem regarding *tiera^uartanna* is the relationship between the element that in Hittite is spelled *tier-* and the Indo-Aryan numeral **tri-*. According to HEG 4.373, the remarkable spelling of the Hittite form expresses the “Schwierigkeit, die anlautende Doppelkonsonanz /tr/ adäquat wiederzugeben.” This can hardly be correct, however: an initial sequence [tri-] would in Hittite be spelled ***ta-ri-*, without any problems. Another solution is suggested by Benveniste (1962:86), referred to by Mayrhofer (1965:II n. 2), who argues that the element spelled *ti-e-ra-* can be interpreted as /tera-/, which to his mind is reminiscent of the stem of the numeral ‘3’ as attested in Hittite, *teri-* (gen.pl. *teriāš*, but cf. also derivatives like *teriān* adv. ‘the third time’). He therefore proposes that /tera-/ be explained “par une adaptation à la forme hittite” (1962:87).

Although ingenious at first sight, this explanation cannot withstand scrutiny. First, the compounds in **^ouarta-* are technical terms that belong to the vocabulary of Kikkuli, who was a native speaker of Hurrian. Also the scribe(s) who wrote down the physical tablets that contain these terms were very likely native speakers of Hurrian (cf. Kammenhuber 1961:42, who proposes that the tablets are produced as a team effort of “Kikkuli mit einem Stab von hurrischen Mitarbeiter”). This means that *tiera^uartanna* could hardly have undergone influence by the Hittite word for the numeral ‘3’.

Second, and more importantly, the Hurrian term is *tiera^uartanna*, not *tera^uartanna*. Although at the time that Benveniste formulated his explanation of *tiera^uartanna* it was still possible to interpret a spelling *ti-e-ra-* as representing *tera-* (or *tēra-*,

¹⁴This is confirmed by, e.g., the Indo-Aryan theonym *nāsatya-* that in the Šattiyaazza treaty is rendered in cuneiform as ^{DINGIR.MEŠ}na-ša-at-ti-ia-an-na (e.g. Kammenhuber 1968:149), without any sign of the original length of the word’s first vowel.

¹⁵It is true that not all attestations of this word show an *a* before the *u*, but in these forms there is no *a* after the *u* either: *ti-e-ru[-ur-t]a-an-na* (KBo 3.2 lower edge 2), *ti-e-ru-u-ur-ta-an-na* (KBo 3.5 iii 17). Since these forms are attested on tablets that also contain the form *tiera^uartanna*, with *-a-*, it is difficult to view them as *sprachwirklich*. Benveniste’s proposal that the *-a-* in *tiera^uartanna* is “normalisée sur *panza- šatta- nawa-*” (1962:87) does not seem attractive to us.

as is sometimes encountered as well),¹⁶ it has nowadays become clear that the sign TI practically never had the value /te/ (for which the Hittite scribes used the sign TE). Since *tieraṇartaṇna* in all five of its attestations is spelled *ti-e-r°*, and not ***te-e-r°* or **te-r°*, it can be ruled out that this word started in [ter-]. The spelling *ti-e-r°* rather points to [tier-] or [tyer-].¹⁷ This contrasts with the Hittite numeral ‘3’, which shows the consistent spelling *te-ri-*, and therefore must have had the shape [teri-].¹⁸ Benveniste’s hypothesis that the initial part of *tieraṇartaṇna* was adapted from Hitt. *teri-* ‘three’ cannot therefore be upheld anymore.

6. To our mind, the form *tieraṇartaṇna* must go back to the Indo-Aryan preform of this word, which, on the basis of the discussion above, can now be assumed to have consisted of a compound of **tri-* + **°āṇartaṇna*. We propose that the development of the preform **tri-āṇartaṇna* to the attested form *tieraṇartaṇna* with an initial sequence /tiera-/ or /tyera-/ must have been due to phonological processes that took place either in the Indo-Aryan dialect to which the **°āṇartaṇna* compounds originally belong, or in the prehistory of Mittanni-Hurrian as spoken by Kikkuli, or in the process of the transfer of this word from Indo-Aryan into Hurrian. One possible pathway of phonological development that might be envisaged is that in **triāṇartaṇna* the **i* had become consonantal because of the following **ā*, **triā°*, and that this caused palatalization of the entire initial cluster, **tʳiā°*. If then an anaptyctic *e* developed in the cluster **tʳiā°*, with subsequent loss of the palatalization of the **r*, we would arrive at **tʳerā-*, spelled in Hittite as *ti-e-ra-*. Perhaps alternative pathways to get from **tri-āṇartaṇna* to *tieraṇartaṇna* are possible as well.

7. Although the exact phonological development of *tieraṇartaṇna* < **tri-āṇartaṇna* must remain open for now, we do believe that our proposal that the second member of the compound was **°āṇartaṇna* brings a final solution to this form much closer. Furthermore, although we are not in the position to judge the respective merits of various proposals concerning the horse training program as described in the Kikkulitext, our analysis of the compounds *aikaṇartaṇna*, *tieraṇartaṇna*, etc., as containing Indo-Aryan **°āṇartaṇna* suggests that they had the meaning ‘one/three/five/seven/nine turns’.

Abbreviations

HEG = Tischler, Johann. 1977–2016. *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar*. 4 vols. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck.

¹⁶Note that also in more modern times a reading “*tieraṇartaṇna*” can be found, cf. e.g. Starke 1995, Raulwing 2006, Puhvel 2007:73, HEG 3.318–20, 4.373.

¹⁷Thus already Kloekhorst 2008:878.

¹⁸This is supported by CLuw. *tarri-*, which goes back to PAnat. **tēri-*.

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