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Indo-European origins of Anatolian morphology and semantics: innovations and archaisms in Hittite, Luwian and Lycian

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CHAPTER 7

The etymology of IE **deh₃-* ‘to give’

Abstract: In this chapter it is argued that the verb **deh₃-* did not mean ‘to give’ in PIE, but ‘to take’, as in Anatolian. Although the verb did not survive in any evident way in Tocharian and Germanic, the semantic shift to ‘to give’ is likely to be an innovation of post-Anatolian IE.¹

The PIE verb **deh₃-* / **dh₃-* is continued in most Indo-European languages as the main expression of ‘to give’, e.g. Skt. *dā-* ‘to give’, Gr. *δω-* ‘to give’, Lat. *da-* ‘to give’, Lith. *duo-* ‘to give’, Arm. *ta-* ‘to give’, and derivatives meaning ‘gift’, etc., are ubiquitous, e.g. OIr. *dán*, Lat. *dōnum*, Gr. *δῶρον*, Arm. *tur*, etc. There can be no doubt that the common ancestor of these languages expressed ‘to give’ with **deh₃-* / **dh₃-*. We find different principal verbs for ‘to give’ in Hitt. *pai-* < **h₁p-Vi-*, ToB *ay-*, ToA *āy-* < **h₂ei-* (?), PGm. **geban-* < **g^heb^h-* (?), **kó(m)-h₁ep-* (?), OAlb. *ep* ‘gives’ < **h₁op-eie-* (?). OAlb. *dhae* ‘gave’ shows that the verb for ‘to give’ used to be **deh₃-* in Albanian as well. Although the formal details are unclear, the ToB imperative *pete* ‘give!’ < **-deh₃* (?) may be a last trace in Tocharian (cf. Adams 2013: s.v. *ai-*). The verb has left no evident traces in Germanic.

Anatolian also has a direct continuation of **deh₃-* / **dh₃-*, which is indeed very frequent. However, its meaning is ‘to take’: Hitt. *dā-*ⁱ / *d-* ‘to take’, CLuw. *lā-* / *l-* ‘to take’, HLuw. *la-* ‘to take’ < (pre-)PAnat.² **doH-* /

¹ I would like to thank David Sasseville for stimulating conversation, and Alwin Kloekhorst, Sasha Lubotsky, Xander Vertegaal and Chams Bernard for comments on earlier drafts.

² The Hittite evidence points to a generalization of a monophonemic outcome of **dH-* throughout the paradigm (Kloekhorst 2013). I suspect that the rather unexpected Luwian outcome *l-* may be explained by the same development, which suggests that it had already happened by Proto-Anatolian (which then had something like **d^hō-* / **d^h-*).

**dH-* ‘to take’.³ In Hittite we also find the (post-PAnat.) preverbed instantiations *pēda*⁻ⁱ ‘to bring (away)’ < **h₁pVi-deh₃-* and *uda*⁻ⁱ ‘to bring (here)’ < **h₂ou-deh₃-*. Its formal identity and appurtenance to the same semantic realm leave no doubt that this is the same etymon. However, it has been unclear how we should account for the difference in meaning.

Given the meaning ‘to give’ in all other branches, it is commonly assumed that ‘to give’ developed into ‘to take’ in Anatolian. Several routes and parallels have been adduced to underpin this assumption. Tischler (HEG: s.v.) sees the essence of the development as a shift in the goal of the action (‘vorstellungsmäßigen Änderung des Zielpunktes’, after Kronasser 1956: 156), and lists parallels that have been adduced in earlier literature: Gr. φέρω ‘to carry away’ and ‘to bring here’; PGm. **geban-* ‘to give’ ~ OIr. *gaibid* ‘to take’; Gr. νέμω ‘to deal out, distribute’ ~ PGm. **neman-* ‘to take’; ToB *ay-* act. ‘to give’, med. ‘to take for oneself’ ~ Gr. αἰνυμαι ‘to take’; PGm. **fanhan-* ‘to fetch, get’ (Goth. *fahan* ‘to take’) ~ Old Norse *fá* ‘to take’ and ‘to give’; Skt. *ā-dā-* (med.) ‘to receive, get’, a preverbed version of *dā-* ‘to give’. Unfortunately, on close inspection, none of these parallels helps the case for an Anatolian development ‘to take’ > ‘to give’; quite the contrary. The basic meaning of φέρω is ‘to carry’, and so it does not have the inherent direction to another participant present in ‘to give’. PGm. **geban-* (< **g^heb^h-?* **ko-h₁ep-?*)⁴ and OIr. *gaibid* (< **g^hHb^h-*) cannot be formally united. The connection between Gr. νέμω ‘to distribute’ and PGm. **neman-* ‘to take’ is possible, but there is a rivaling etymology (Kortlandt 1992: 104, Kroonen 2013: s.v.) by which **neman-* was metanalyzed from **ganeman-*, from **kom* + **h₁em-* (Lat. *em-* ‘to buy, acquire’). Those who accept the connection between Gr. νέμω and PGm. **neman-* assume that ‘to take’ developed from a middle voice counterpart with the meaning ‘to distribute to oneself’ (LIV²: s.v.). Two complicating factors for this scenario are the fact that PGm. **neman-* is active rather than middle, and that Gr. νέμεσθαι means ‘to have and hold as one’s portion, to possess; to enjoy’, also ‘to graze, consume’ (the middle counterpart of νέμω ‘to pasture’) (LSJ: s.v.), rather than ‘to take’. Moreover, if the two are related, it is not evident which of the two

³ On the secondary *hi*-inflection see below.

⁴ For the latter reconstruction see Kortlandt (1992: 104-105), Kroonen (2013: s.v.).

meanings ‘to have as one’s portion’ and ‘to distribute’ is primary. In any case, if ‘to distribute’ is primary, the change to ‘to have as one’s portion’ is to be attributed to the middle voice. Similarly, for the pair ToB *ay-* ‘to give’ ~ Gr. αἶνυμαι ‘to take’ it is not clear whether the original meaning is ‘to take’ or ‘to give’. If the latter, the development to ‘to take’ also took place in a middle. Skt. *ā-dā-* (med.) ‘to receive, get’ is again middle, and likewise typically understood as having developed from ‘to give to oneself’ (LIV²: s.v. n. 1). The remaining example is alarming. Since ‘to catch, get, take’ is the meaning of its PGm. predecessor (cf. Goth. *fahan* ‘to take’, Germ. *fangen* ‘to catch’, *entfangen* ‘to receive, get’), Old Norse *fá* ‘to take; to give’ is evidence for the exact opposite development, from ‘to take’ to ‘to give’ (more on this below).⁵

So far, then, the only development without any extra morphology that finds support in the parallels is one of ‘to take’ to ‘to give’. If any of the examples evidences the route from ‘to give’ to ‘to take’ at all, this seems at least to require a middle voice, which may turn the direction of the action towards the subject.

The communis opinio, going back to Eichner (1975: 93-94) and followed by e.g. Oettinger (1979: 500-501) and LIV² (s.v. **deh₃-*), is indeed that the Anatolian meaning ‘to take’ is due to a middle. However, it is of course problematic that Hitt. *dā-* is not middle. Eichner (1975: 93-94) tries to solve this by assuming that the *hi*-inflection somehow goes back to middle inflection in this particular case. This is not only ad hoc, but indeed runs completely counter to expectation, with the middle surviving as such in Hittite (for this point, as well as formal criticism, see Kloekhorst 2008: s.v. *dā-*).⁶ Rather, the verb was transferred from the *mi*- to the *hi*-conjugation due to its *o*-vocalism caused by **h₃* (Kloekhorst 2018: 99, and Chapter 4). The discovery of this mechanism is one of the

⁵ Compare also those IE languages in which **deh₃-* is not the main expression of ‘to give’ (see above): most of these are based on PIE **h₁ep-* ‘to take’ (cf. Hitt. *epp-^{zi}* / *app-* ‘to take’), albeit through derivation rather than through a semantic shift of the base lexeme.

⁶ Indeed, it is used in this very verb as well: 3sg.med. pres. *dattari* ‘is taken’, pret. *dattat* ‘was taken’.

main merits of the same article by Eichner.⁷ He does not apply it in this case only because of the meaning.

Another analysis is found in Benveniste (1948: 8-9), who assumed that **deh₃-* meant both ‘to take’ and ‘to give’ according to the construction it was used in, with each language generalizing one of the two meanings. This further led him to ideas about an intertwined conception of giving and taking in Indo-European society.⁸ His main typological parallel is English *to take*, which in the construction *to take from* means ‘to take’, but in the construction *to take to* means ‘to bring, deliver’, whose semantic relatedness to ‘to give’ is unmistakable.

Although the relevance of the parallel cannot be doubted, the same cannot be said about Benveniste’s interpretation. His assumption of some ten innovations, namely one in each individual Indo-European branch, is not very economic, and can hardly be correct. Neither does the very skewed distribution of the semantics (‘to give’ everywhere except in one branch) find an explanation in this scenario.⁹ Moreover, Benveniste’s assumption that **deh₃-* meant both ‘to take’ and ‘to give’ does not appreciate the fact that in the English parallel ‘to take’ is the original and most basic meaning of the verb. In the most basic construction, *A takes B*, the verb only means ‘to take’, not ‘to bring’. The latter meaning is only brought about through the addition of a Goal or Recipient constituent: *A takes B to C*. Similar states of affairs are found with various comparable

⁷ Cf. similarly e.g. **peh₃-s-* > *pāš⁻ⁱ* ‘to gulp down’, **su-ne-h₃-* > *šunna⁻ⁱ* ‘to fill’, **molH-* > *mall⁻ⁱ* ‘to mill’, **log^h-eie/o-* > *lāk⁻ⁱ* ‘to fell’. See Chapter 4 for an elaborate treatment of the phenomenon of transfers from the *mi-* to the *hi-* conjugation based on form.

⁸ Following Benveniste’s analysis, Householder & Nagy (1979: 774) even paraphrase the meaning of the verb as ‘seize in order to engage in a social interaction’.

⁹ An improvement of this aspect of such a scenario can be found in Boley (2007: 84-85), who assumes a shared non-Anatolian semantic narrowing from ‘to give; to take’ to ‘to give’, and a parallel Anatolian narrowing to ‘to take’. Unfortunately, her arguments in favor of the existence of both meanings in PIE are not sound: she underpins her claim with a supposed “propensity of PIE ... to express opposites by the same form” (Boley 2007: 84) and a derivation of **deh₃-* from a directionally ambivalent particle reconstructed on the basis of Latin *dē* ‘from’ and Greek *-δε* ‘to’ (Boley 2007: 85). Her additional belief (Boley 2007: 85-86) that *dā-*’s *hi-* inflection originally had middle value rather seems to echo Eichner’s scenario by which ‘to take’ developed secondarily in the middle.

verbs in English,¹⁰ and in numerous other languages.¹¹ Notably, one such language is Hittite, in which the directional preverbs *pē*- and *u*- were combined with *dā*- ‘to take’ to create verbs of conveyance: *pē-da*- ‘to take (somewhere), carry, transport’, *u-da*- ‘to bring (here)’.¹² When something is brought to a person, the semantics of these verbs come very close to ‘to give’, cf. e.g.:

nu EGIR-pa ^dUTU-*i* *ḫalukan pēdaš*
 ‘he brought the message back to the Sungod’
 (KUB 17.10+ i 27-28)

kuiš=ma=šši uwāi pēdāi
 ‘whoever brings him woe/harm’
 (KBo 4.10+ rev. 25)

nu=ua namma ḪUR.SAG^{MEŠ}-*aš ḫurnuṽanzi ŪL pāi<ši>*
nu=ua=mu ŪL kuitki udatti
 ‘you do not go hunting in the mountains anymore,
 and do not bring me anything’
 (KUB 33.121+ ii 10-11)

šu=mu 1 ^{GIŠ}ŠÚ.A AN.BAR 1 PA.GAM AN.BAR *ḫengur udaš*
 ‘he brought me one iron throne and one iron scepter as a gift’
 (KBo 3.22:75 // KUB 26.71 obv. 17 // KUB 36.98b+ rev. 4)

¹⁰ Such as *to get*, *to fetch*, *to grab*, e.g. *could you ~ me that bag?*. This construction does not even require the preposition *to* to get the same meaning ‘to bring, hand’; in this case the directional element leading to this meaning is *me*.

¹¹ For example Italian *prendere* (e.g. *vai a prendermi gli occhiali* ‘go and get me my glasses’) and Biblical Hebrew *lāqah* ‘to take’ (e.g. *qāḥem-nā ’ēlay wa’ābārākēm* ‘bring them to me so I may bless them’, Genesis 48:9; I owe this parallel to Benjamin Suchard (p.c.)). The examples can easily be multiplied.

¹² Similarly, the simplex is occasionally combined with directional expressions, with a similar effect on its meaning, e.g. *anda dā*- ‘to take (something) into (a location)’ (~ *anda pēda*-, *pēḫute*-) and *appa dā*- ‘to take (something) back to (a location)’ (~ *appa pēda*-, *appa pēḫute*-); see Tjerckstra (1999: 108, 117). It should be stressed that, like with *pēda*- and *uda*-, the directional elements *bring about* the different meaning. These constructions therefore do not preserve a more original meaning of *dā*-.

Old Norse *fá* ‘to take; to give’ has the same background. It normally means ‘to take, fetch, get’ (e.g. *hón hefir fengit einn stein* ‘she has fetched a stone’), as still in the modern Scandinavian languages (e.g. Sw. *få* ‘to get’), but takes on the meaning ‘to give, deliver to one, put into one’s hands’ with a dative or directional constituent (e.g. *nú er hér eitt sverð, er ek vil fá þér* ‘now here is a sword, that I want to give to you’, *fá mér leppa tvá ór hári þínu* ‘give me two locks of your hair’, *var sá sveinn fenginn í hendr okkr* ‘the boy was delivered into our hands’).¹³

If the parallels offered by *to take to* and its equivalents are indeed the key to unraveling the semantic variation seen in **deh₃-* – and this is much more straightforward than the assumption of a development ‘to give to oneself’ > ‘to take’ in a lost middle voice –, this rather suggests the following scenario. The original meaning of the verb must have been ‘to take’. The addition of a Goal or Beneficiary constituent could alter this meaning to ‘to bring, convey, deliver’. When this constituent was animate, the meaning of the verb (‘to bring something to someone’) was very close to ‘to hand, to give’, and it could easily develop into this meaning by losing the idea of having to cross a distance before handing over the object.

The IE languages show different stages of this development. Anatolian only has the original meaning ‘to take’. This means that Anatolian split off from the parent language before the development started. All other languages only show evidence for the secondary meaning ‘to give’, which must have been the result of the quite substantial development ‘to take’ > ‘to bring’ > ‘to give’, even to the extent that the original meaning ‘to take’ was completely ousted, and only ‘to give’ was left. Since it cannot be true that all languages underwent this development individually, it must have been part of a phase of development between PIE and the common ancestor of the non-Anatolian languages.¹⁴ The verb **deh₃-* therefore provides additional evidence for the Indo-Anatolian hypothesis.

¹³ Meanings of *fá* and examples from IED (s.v.).

¹⁴ Strictly speaking, there is no evidence that Germanic also underwent the development, and we may even entertain the possibility that PGm. **takan-* ‘to take’ somehow goes back to **deh₃-* / **dh₃-* (perhaps we could also identify **tōma-* ‘empty’ < **doH-mo-* as **doh₃-mo-* ‘bereft, deprived’?). However, Germanic has so far not given us any reason to believe that it split off particularly early, and the safest assumption would therefore be that Germanic also descends from the post-change

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subnode, but lost the lexeme on the way to Proto-Germanic. Although Tocharian is usually seen as the second branch to have split off, it remains to be seen whether it is so different from the rest that its departure may have predated this substantial development, and the possibility that the imperative *pete* ‘give!’ contains **deh₃*- is considerable.

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