

The long *seṭ* vowel of Skt. *gra(b)h̄i* ‘seize’

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Introduction

The Problem

The Vedic root *gra(b)h^{ī}* ‘seize’ shows a long *-ī-* in those positions where other *seṭ* roots show *-ĩ-* (cf. Aṣṭh. VII 2,37).

A few examples from the Saṁhitās:

- ▶ aor. 3sg. act. *ágra(b)h^{ī}t* (RV, AV[P], MS, KS); mid. *grah^{ī}ṣṭa* (KS, KpS)
- ▶ fut. *grah^{ī}ṣyáte* (MS, KS, KpS)
- ▶ v.a. *gr̥bh^{ī}tá-* (RV+)
- ▶ abs. *gr̥(b)h^{ī}tvá* (Khil., AV[P], TS, MS, KS, KpS)
- ▶ Nominal forms: *sám̐gr̥h^{ī}tar-* (RV), *gr̥bh^{ī}tátāti-* (RV), *gr̥bh^{ī}tha-* (AVP), *-gr̥h^{ī}ti-* (KS, TS)

This special feature of *grabh^{ī}* will be the topic of this talk.

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Three Types of Roots in Sanskrit

iṭ = ‘preceded by -i-’

I *aniṭ*:

ad ‘eat’; inf. *át-tave*, abs. *at-tvā*

II *seṭ*:

manthⁱ ‘churn’; v.a. *math-i-tá-*, ger. *manth-i-tavya-*

III *veṭ^a*:

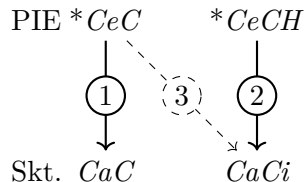
gup⁽ⁱ⁾ ‘protect’; v.a. *gup-tá-* and *gup-i-tá-*

^aThe term *veṭ* goes back to Kātyāyana’s Vārttikasūtra VII 2,70,1 (see VIA I: 144)

Two Root Shapes in PIE

Laryngeal-final roots regularly appear as *set* roots in Sanskrit.

1. *at-tum* ‘to eat’
2. *math-i-tum* ‘to churned’
3. *vet-tum* / *ved-i-tum* ‘to know’



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Skt. $grabh^{\bar{i}} < \text{PIE } *g^hreb^hh_2$

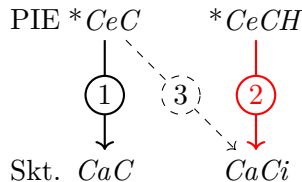
Most authorities reconstruct a *seṭ* root
 $*g^hreb^hh_2$ (vel sim.) for the protolanguage.

Phonological considerations:

- ▶ “*seṭ*” forms in Sanskrit, viz. $grbh\bar{i}-tá-$ etc.
- ▶ RV $Pád-grbhi-$ (NP), AV $dur-gṛbhi-$
‘difficult to grasp’ $< *grbhH-$

Morphological considerations:

- ▶ nasal-infix present $*g^hṛbh-né-h_2-$
 - ▶ Skt. $gṛbhnāti$ [= YAv. $gərəβnā^iti$] ‘seizes’
 - ▶ Skt. $gṛbhāyāti$ [= YAv. $gə^uruuaiie^iti$] ‘seizes’
 - ▶ cf. Lith. $su/iš-grambiù$ ‘devour’, $grabnùs$ ‘grasping, adroit’



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The sequence *CHC* in Indic

Since Jamison 1988, the general consensus has been that the following developments obtained (cf. Lipp 2009 II:239ff., Kümmel 2016):

- ▶ $*CHC\# > C\bar{i}C\#$
 $*(a-)mra\bar{u}Ht > abrav\bar{i}t$ ‘said’
- ▶ $*CHC^o > CiC^o$
 $*mathH-t\acute{a}- > mathi-t\acute{a}-$ ‘churned’

Deviations from this pattern can generally be motivated through transparent analogies or explained as instances of metrical lengthening.

Jamison (226) calls special attention to the unexpected length of the *set* vowel of *grabhⁱ* but leaves the question of its origin open.

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An analogical source?

If *grabh̄* cannot be explained phonologically, can it be explained via analogy?

Scenario:

1. root aorist **grabhH-t > ágrabhīt*
2. The *ī* was generalized throughout the paradigm in a way similar to *ábravīt → brávīti* (for **brávīti*)

Contra:

1. Why didn't this happen to any other *seṭ* verbs of similar shape:
 - ▶ e.g. *máthīt* 'churned' but v.a. *mathītá-*
2. The case of *brávīti* itself is highly circumscribed:
 - ▶ strong systemic pressure for present and imperfect stem to match
 - ▶ levelling never went beyond this stem (viz. no *bravītá-**)

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The pragmatics of language change: politeness

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It is common for speakers to attempt to modify their style of speech in order to accommodate the feelings of interlocutors.

Characteristics of politeness:

- ▶ Situationally-specific
- ▶ Dynamic negotiation involving both speaker and listener
- ▶ Relies on formulaity
- ▶ Failure to invoke politeness protocols can be interpreted as rudeness

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Example 1: formal pronouns

Many languages elevate one or more pronouns for use in formal address.

English *ye/you*:

- ▶ 13th c. *ye/you* starts to be used as a form of respect under the influence of French and Latin. Likely spread from higher to lower classes.
- ▶ 15th-16th c. *you* becomes the neutral form and *thou/thee* the marked form.
- ▶ 17th c. *thou/thee* falls largely out of use.

Sanskrit *bhávant-*:

- ▶ Br.+ *bhávant-* ‘you’ (allegro form of *bhá[ga]vant-*) with 3rd or more rarely 2nd person agreement.

Example 2: WGmc. 2sg. pret.

In West Germanic, the 2sg. pret. continues the PGmc. optative:

Table: Gothic strong pret.

	sg.	pl.
1	<i>nam</i>	<i>nemum</i>
2	<i>namt</i>	<i>nemub</i>
3	<i>nam</i>	<i>nemun</i>

Table: PWGmc. strong pret.

	sg.	pl.
1	* <i>nam</i>	* <i>nāmum</i>
2	* <i>nāmī</i>	* <i>nāmud</i>
3	* <i>nam</i>	* <i>nāmun</i>

PWGmc. **nāmī* > OEng. *nōme*, OHG *nāmi*

The only plausible historical interpretation of these forms is as epistemic modals that served as cautiously polite alternatives to the indicative (cf. Schröder 1921; Ringe and Taylor 2014:67-69).

The source of Skt. \bar{i}

Since an approach starting from phonology has proven unsatisfactory, we will today approach this problem starting from morphology.

Core Proposal

1. act. *grabh- \bar{i} -t*, mid. *grabh \bar{i} [\bar{s}]/ \bar{t} a* etc. reflect inherited optatives with $-\bar{i}- < *-ih_1-$.
2. 2-3sg. $(*)grábh- \bar{i} -s$, $-\bar{i}-t$ were a point of formal overlap between the optative and indicative.
3. Semantic bleaching of the optative in politeness contexts led to confusion between the forms, so that the optative was reinterpreted as an indicative and the long $-\bar{i}-$ as a special morpho-lexical variant of *set* $-\bar{i}$.
4. $-\bar{i}-$ was leveled to other *set* contexts, replacing $-\bar{i}$.

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Two types of optatives in Indo-Iranian

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Jasanoff (1991), building on Narten (1984) and others, argues that the internal evidence from Indo-Iranian necessitates the reconstruction of two types of aorist optative:

Table: Type I ('put')

	sg.	pl.
1	* <i>dh(i)yǎm</i>	* <i>dháH-īma</i>
2	* <i>dh(i)yǎs</i>	* <i>dháH-īta</i>
3	* <i>dh(i)yǎt</i>	* <i>dh(i)yánt</i>

Table: Type II ('overcome')

	sg.	pl.
1	* <i>vánīm</i>	* <i>vánīma</i>
2	* <i>vánīs</i>	* <i>vánīta</i>
3	* <i>vánīt</i>	* <i>vániHṛš</i>

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Type I (hystero-kinetic)

Table: Indo-Iranian I

	sg.	pl.
1	* $R(z)$ - $y\acute{a}$ - m	* $R(\acute{a})$ - \bar{i} - ma
2	* $R(z)$ - $y\acute{a}$ - s	* $R(\acute{a})$ - \bar{i} - ta
3	* $R(z)$ - $y\acute{a}$ - t	* $R(z)$ - $y\acute{a}nt$

Table: Sanskrit Ia ('prosper' tr.)

	sg.	pl.
1	$\check{r}dhy\acute{a}m$	$\check{r}dhy\acute{a}ma$
2	$\check{r}dhy\acute{a}s$	(—)
3	$\check{r}dhy\acute{a}[s]$	$\check{r}dhyur$

Table: Sanskrit Ib ('put')

	sg.	pl.
1	$dhey\bar{a}m$	$dhey\bar{a}ma$
2	$dhey\bar{a}s$	(—)
3	$dh\acute{e}y\bar{a}[s]$	$dheyur$

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Type II (protero-kinetic)

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Table: Indo-Iranian II

	sg.	pl.
1	* <i>vánīm</i>	* <i>vánīma</i>
2	* <i>vánīs</i>	* <i>vánīta</i>
3	* <i>vánīt</i>	* <i>vániHrš</i>

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Notes:

- ▶ Y 60,5 *vainūt ahmi nmāne sraošō asruštīm* ‘In this house, may obedience overcome disobedience’
- ▶ Morphologically parallel to optatives of “Narten” presents: **uélh₁-ih₁-m*, **uélh₁-ih₁-s*, **uélh₁-ih₁-t* etc.
- ▶ **iHrš* source of optative ending *-yur*.
- ▶ Suggestive of a correlated acrostatic indicative, viz. **uón-*/**uén-* or **uén[-s]-*/**uén[-s]-*

Hitt. *karāp-/karep(p)-* ‘devour’ (← ‘take [for oneself]’)

According to the standard etymology (Sturtevant and Hahn 1951:31, Risch 1975:253, Kloekhorst 2008) *g^hreb^hh₂* appears in Hittite as an ablauting *hi*-conjugation verb:

- ▶ 3sg. *ka-ra-a-pí* /k^arāb-i/ (OH):
 - ▶ Laws §75
na-aš-ma-an UR.BAR.RA-*aš ka-ra-a-pí*
‘or if a wolf nabs it (a domestic animal)’
 - ▶ Note: the occasional spelling *ka-a-ra-pí* reflects metathesis and/or contamination with *karp(iie)-zi* ‘lift, take away’
- ▶ 3pl. *ka-ra-pa-an-zi* /k^arāb-anzi/ (OH) and *ka-re-pa-an-zi* /k^areb-anzi/ (OH)
 - ▶ KUB 8.1
na-pa ḫal-ki-in ka-ra-pa-an-zi
‘(animals come out of the soil and) they consume the crop’
- ▶ 2pl. ipv. *ka-ri-ip-tén* /k^arep-ten/
 - ▶ KBo 12.4
UZ]U KA×UD-*it ka-ri-ip-tén* ‘devour it with your teeth!’

The morphological class of Hitt. *karāp-/karep(p)-*

Jasanoff (2003) points out that *šākk-/šekk-* ‘know’, *karāp-/karep-* ‘devour’ and *šarap-/šarip-* ‘sip’ pattern together in their Indo-European averbo:

- ▶ *e*-grade in Anatolian preterit and imperative but *ā* in present plural:
 - ▶ 3pl. pr. *šakkanzi*, 2pl. ipv. *šekten* ‘know’
 - ▶ 3pl. pr. *karapanzi*, 2pl. ipv. *karepten* ‘eat’
- ▶ Absence of attested “*molō*-presents” outside of Anatolian.
- ▶ Possible evidence for root aorists:
 - ▶ Lat. *secuī* ‘cut’
 - ▶ RV *agr̥bh̥ran* ‘they took’(!), ŠB *gr̥hāṇá-* ‘taken’
 - ▶ Arm. *arb* ‘drank’ < **sṛb^h-e-t*
- ▶ Narten present in Balto-Slavic:
 - ▶ OCS *sěkŏ* ‘chop’
 - ▶ Lith. *grėbiu* ‘grab, rake in’
 - ▶ Lith. *serbiù*, inf. *srėbti* ‘drink up’

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PIE aor. $*g^h rób^h h_2-e \sim g^h réb^h h_2-rs$

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Ved. *grabh-ī-*, then, forms a neat word-equation with the aorist-derived
Hitt. *karāp-/karep-*.

Table: Indicative

	sg.	pl.
1	$*g^h rób^h h_2-h_2e$	$*g^h réb^h h_2-me$
2	$*g^h rób^h h_2-th_2e$	$*g^h réb^h h_2-te$
3	$*g^h rób^h h_2-e$	$*g^h réb^h h_2-rs$

Table: Optative

	sg.	pl.
1	$*g^h réb^h h_2-ih_1-m$	$*g^h réb^h h_2-ih_1-me$
2	$*g^h réb^h h_2-ih_1-s$	$*g^h réb^h h_2-ih_1-te$
3	$*g^h réb^h h_2-ih_1-t$	$*g^h réb^h h_2-ih_1-rs$

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Contamination of opt. and ind.

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Table: Active indicative

	sg.	pl.
1	* <i>grábham</i>	* <i>grábhima</i>
2	* <i>grábhīṣ</i>	* <i>grábhita</i>
3	* <i>grábhīt</i>	* <i>grábhān</i>

Table: Optative

	sg.	pl.
1	* <i>grábhīm</i>	* <i>grábhīma</i>
2	* <i>grábhīṣ</i>	* <i>grábhīta</i>
3	* <i>grábhīt</i>	* <i>grábhīyur</i>

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Politeness forms

Some likely starting points:

- ▶ Polite questions (Delbrück 1888:336f.):
 - ▶ RV VII 37,5 = VIII 97,15
kadā na indra rāyá ādaśasyeh
‘Wann möchtest du uns, o Indra, Reichthümer spenden?’
 - ▶ ŚB IV 1,3,4
sá hovāca: kím me tátah syād íti
‘Er sprach, was würde ich denn dann bekommen?’
- ▶ Polite commands (ibid. 332f.):
 - ▶ RV I 165,3
vocés tán no harivo yát te asmé
‘You should tell us what you have for us, o master of the fallow bays.’
(Jamison and Brereton 2014)
- ▶ Wishes (as opposed to statements):
 - ▶ RV I 129,7
vanéma rayīm rayivah
‘might we win wealth, o wealthy one’ (ibid.)

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Narrow conclusions:

- ▶ The \bar{i} of $gra(b)h^{\bar{i}}$ was the result of contamination between the *set* vowel in $grabh\bar{i}-t$ and the old optative $(*)grabh-\bar{i}-t$.
- ▶ opt. $*grábh-\bar{i}-t$ had the same shape as YAv. $vain\bar{u}t < *uán-\bar{i}-t$, implying an acrostatic indicative.
- ▶ The indicative in question $(*g^hrób^hh_2-e : *g^hréb^h-rs)$ is directly attested in Hitt. $karāp-/karep(p)-$ ‘consume’

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Broad conclusions:

- ▶ Methodological — word equations are a powerful tool for understanding historical morphology.
- ▶ Morphological — the full implications of our recasting of the Indo-European verbal system in light of evidence from Hittite and Tocharian has yet to be fully explored at the level of the daughter languages.

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Thank you for
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