

Hittite *šīye/a-mi* ‘to throw, shoot’ vs. *šai-^{hhi}* ‘to impress, seal’

I. Introduction

Per all handbooks, Hittite has synchronically a single averbo with both *šīye/a-mi* and *šai-^{hhi}* and a broad range of uses derived from either ‘to (im)press, seal’ or ‘to throw, shoot’: *CHD* Š (2002) 15–21, *EDHIL* (2008) 695, *GrHL*¹ (2008) §13.30, and still *GrHL*² (2024) §13.30, and *HED* 11: 49–59. *EDHIL* follows Kimball (1987: 163–81) in deriving the *mi*-verb from **h₁és-ye/o-*, while Oettinger (1979: 473–74) and Melchert, 1989: 37–38) start from a **sh₁-yé/ó-mi* to the root **seh₁(i)-* ‘to let go, release from the hand’. *LIV*²: 242–43 & 518 allows for both possibilities. All works cited except the *HED* assume that *šai-^{hhi}* reflects a separate root **seh₁(i)-* ‘to (im)press’, which by innovation in planting techniques appears as ‘to sow’ in Core IE (*LIV*²: 517). Puhvel in *HED* 11: 58 assumes that *all* Hittite forms reflect *šai-^{hhi}* from a root **seh₁(i)-* with a core sense ‘to propel forcefully’. He does not explain how one is to derive ‘to (im)press’ and derived senses from such a starting point.

II. Synchronic Evidence

A. Reexamination shows that *all* unambiguous *hi*-conjugation forms mean only ‘to (im)press’ or senses derived therefrom (seal, put on headgear or rarely shoes):

(1) KUB 54.85 obv. 10 (pre-NH/MS)

9 GI.ḪI.A *šāi* ‘inserts nine drinking straws’ (Pres3Sg)

Context of ritual offerings demands this sense, following Rüster (1992: 477) et al., contra *CHD* Š: 19 and Rieken et al., online edition (‘shoots nine arrows’).

(2) KUB 57.32 obv. 3 (pre-NH/NS)

[^{KU}]ŠESIR.ḪI.A-*uš=za=kan šāiš* ‘S/he put on her shoes’. (Pret3Sg)

But the usual verb for putting on shoes is *šarkuwe/a-* (later *šarkuwāi-*). See (5) below. This unique example seems to reflect a generalization from the use with headgear.

(3) KBo 2.9 i 29 (MH/NS)

n=uš MUNUS-nili weššiya nu=šmaš=kan ^{TUG}*kureššar šāi* (Imv2Sg)
 ‘Dress them like women and put a scarf/head-dress on them!’

(4) KUB 21.19+KBo 52.17+71.13(+)KUB 14.7 iv 6–8; (Prayer of Hattusili III and Puduhepa to the Sun-goddess of Arinna, NH)

nu=za=kan ^dUTU ^{URU}PÚ-na GAŠAN=YA KUR.KUR.HI.A ^{URU}Ḫatti ANA *daḫanga anda kariyašḫaš pedi :yašḫanduwanti ŠÀ-ta šāi* (Imv2Sg)

(‘For the gods the *d.* is a place of acceding (to wishes),) ‘oh Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, press the lands of Hattusha into your gracious heart in the *d.*, the place of acceding!’

Thus, modifying both Singer (2002: 100) and Rieken et al. online edition: ‘lands of Hattusha’ must be the direct object as per the latter, but *-za* forces reading ‘your heart’ with the former. The *d.* does not belong to the Sun-goddess. Quite false *CHD* Š: 17b: the adjective *:yašḫanduwanti* clearly modifies ‘heart’!

There is also one likely OH/OS example (see Neu 1980: 140 & Kimball 1987: 167):

(5) KBo 20.18+25.65 Vo[?] 3–5 (OH/OS)

[...t]amaīn wašše[zzi...t]amāe šāi [š^{KUŠ}E.SIR.ḪI.A-uš] tamāuš šark[u]-x[]
 ‘Dons another [garment], puts on other headgear, pu[ts on] other [shoes]’.

Other instances are unhelpful for assigning sense: KUB 39.9 obv. 15, KUB 57.105 iii 7–8 (pre-NH/NS), KUB 26.82: 9, KUB 31.74 ii 9 (OH/NS) (if *še-iš-te-en* even belongs to *šai-hhi*). Against *CHD Š*: 15 one cannot read Pret3Sg *ša-a-[iš]* in KUB 48.99: 3. See Melchert 2021–2022: xviii–xix. Against *CHD Š*: 15 read in KBo 3.34 i 23 (OH/NS) *kī-ma-zz kar¹da šišša¹* ‘Impress this into your heart!’, with Imv2Sg of the pluractional stem, not aberrant Pret2Sg †*šišša*.

B. Limited evidence under A. fully confirmed by evidence that *šišša-*, formally clearly the pluractional stem to *šai-hhi*, is likewise used only of ‘press’ into the heart (2x), ‘pitch’ a tent, ‘seal’ documents, and once in the mediopassive of stars colliding. Sense of last example thus with Neu (1968: 156), but despite his cavil the geminate assures the pluractional stem, not reduplication.

C. Only in NH (or NS copies) are unambiguous forms of *šiya-hhi* and *šiya-mi* used for ‘to seal’ (see *CHD Š* sub **šai- B**, **šiyē-** 1.a–f); likewise ‘to put on (headgear)’ sub 2; ‘to press’ sub 9. This is fully expected for a *hi*-verb in *-i-*. We find the same backformation in NH and NS from the weak stem of the Pres3Pl and participle for *halzai-*, *huwai-*, *išhai-*, *išpai-*, and *tarai-* (see Melchert 2022: 219).

• There is *no* evidence that *šai-hhi* ‘to (im)press’ (and uses patently derived from this sense) was ever confused with *šiyē/a-mi* ‘to throw, hurl’ (and derived senses) before NH!

D. Conversely, *šiyē/a-mi* ‘to throw, hurl’ never shows unambiguous *hi*-inflection: *CHD Š* sub **šai- B**, **šiyē-** sub 5–6; on the false interpretation of KUB 54.85 obv. 10 see A. (1) above. Use of the mediopassive in the autocausative sense ‘to spurt, sprout, spring forth’ (*CHD Š* sub **šai- B**, **šiyē-** 7–8) must also belong here. See on both points Kimball 1987: 164, but the active Pret3Sg in VBoT 58 iv 1 is clearly *šiēt* followed by a space, and *šiēta* in KUB 33.22+23 i 21 (OH/NS) must be parsed as *šiētt=a*, whether the placement of ‘also’ is correct or not. Eventual replacement by active *šiyē(z)zi* is predictable. Only the status of ‘to sting’ remains debatable (see III.E below).

III. Diachrony

A. The geminate *-šš-* of the prefixed *pēššiyē/a-* ‘to throw (away)’ and *ūššiyē/a-* ‘throw back (a curtain)’ must with Kimball (1987: 176) reflect immediate preforms with a sequence **-Vh₁sy-*. In a preform **sh₁-yé/ó-mi*, as per Oettinger (1979: 473–74) and Melchert (1989: 37–38), the laryngeal would already have been lost in PIE by Pinault’s Law (Pinault 1982), and there would be no source for the geminate in the prefixed stems. Furthermore, the Luvian and Lycian evidence for the root **seh₁(i)-* ‘to let go, release from the hand’ matches Hittite *tarna-* semantically, and no Luvic reflexes remotely justify a sense ‘to throw, hurl, shoot’.

B. However, one cannot assume root ablaut **h₁és-ye/o-/h₁s-ye/o-* (Kimball 1987: 178), and to suppose that the latter is original and that Vedic *ásyati* shows “analogischer R(e) zur Verdeutlichung der Wurzel” (*LIV*²: 243, note 4) is ad hoc. Deradical **-ye/o-* stems show *either* R(é)-ye/o- *or* R(zero)-yé/ó- (cf. *LIV*²: 716–17), and Luvian preserves the difference: see Sasseville 2020: 320ff. and 132ff. respectively (even if not all cited examples are assured). The plene spellings of the two prefixes show that the Hittite accent lies on them (Kimball, loc. cit.), and this may easily have conditioned zero grade of the root: the consistently short diphthong of OH/OS *pai-* ‘to go’ before endings with initial consonant (*pa-i-mi*, *pa-i-ši*, *pa-iz-zi*, *pa-i-wa-ni*, *pa-it*, *pa-it-tu*) requires that the root be in the zero grade (Melchert 2020: 269 vs. Melchert

1984: 73 et passim). Whether this is mere syncope or morphologically conditioned may be left open. It is the Hittite simplex that has unsurprisingly been reshaped from **ēš(i)ye/a-* after the two prefixed stems. While *ūššīye/a-* is relatively rare due to its specialized usage, *pēššīye/a-* is a very high-token verb, and *šīye/a-* may even have been extracted from *pē-ššīye/a-*.

C. The identification of CLuvian *tī(ya)-* ‘to take a step’ (Sasseville 2020: 325–26), with Pret3Sg *tīta* with lenited ending, compels reconstruction of a deradical **(s)th₂-yé/o-*, with secondary syllabification as **(s)tiye/o-* and default accentuation **(s)tīye/o-* (cf. for both CLuvian *pīya-* ‘to give’). Hittite *tiye/a-* ‘idem’ is surely a direct cognate, but the lack of plene spellings *tīya-* in OH/OS suggests the Hittite verb directly continues **(s)th₂-yé/o-^{mi}* (later spellings *tīya-* may well be due to Luvian influence). The claim of Jasanoff (2003: 111–12, 115) that the Hittite is a remade *hi*-verb in *-i-* must be rejected. The antiquity of Pres3Sg *tiyari* in the unreliable ms. KUB 31.127 i 42 may be doubted, but even if it is old, it may belong to **(s)th₂-yé/o-^{mi}* just like *šiyāri* etc. to *šīye/a-* ‘to throw, hurl, shoot’. The attested CLuvian/HLuvian root *hi*-present *tā-ⁱ* ‘to (take a) stand’ must be taken at face value with Sasseville (2020: 360–61, 547). Reshaping of a putative **(s)téh₂-i-^{hhi}* (Jasanoff, loc. cit.) contradicts the standard development of such a present in Luvian (cf. again *pīya-ⁱ* ‘to give’). That Lycian *stta-^{ti}* ‘stand’ is a reshaped variant of the root *hi*-present (Sasseville 2020: 360 et passim, Melchert 2018: 31) is very doubtful, since it requires that Lycian preserved initial **st-* (cf. *tub(e)i-^{di}* ‘to strike’ < **(s)teubh-*). It is more likely a loanword from Greek (Melchert, loc. cit., after Morpurgo Davies). Note that the reflex of a root aorist **(s)téh₂-t(i)* matching *ta-^{di}* ‘to put, place’ < **dhéh₁-t(i)* may well have resulted in an homophonous Lycian **ta-^{di}* ‘to stand’ (cf. Luvian *m(a)nā-^{ti}* ‘to see’ < **mnéh₂-ti* (Starke 1980: 147 pace Melchert 1994: 236 et alibi).

D. However, Sasseville’s analysis (2020: 543 et passim) of Lycian *ha-^{di}* and CLuvian/HLuvian *šā-/sa-ⁱ* ‘to release, let go (from the hand)’ is not credible. First, there is *no* Lycian stem *†ha-^{ti}* (2020: 60). The example *hhati* in N320,41 is clearly Pres3Pl of *ha-^{di}*, and those in a very obscure and disputed expression in TL 106,2 and 131,5 cannot be used as the basis for an otherwise unattested verb. See Neumann 2007: 370 with references. Second, Sasseville offers no motivation for how two closely related Luvic languages created root presents with both *mi*-inflection and *hi*-inflection. Lycian *ha-^{di}* is clearly inherited, a word equation with the Vedic root aorist (*áva, ví*) *sāt* (*LIV*²: 518 with refs.). We would expect beside this a characterized present, most likely a **h₂e*-present in *-i-* as in Hittite *dai-^{hhi}* ‘to put, place’ beside Lyc. *ta-^{di}* < **dhéh₁-t(i)*.

E. Supporting evidence for an original Luvian **h₂e*-present in *-i-* ‘to release, let go’ is found in Hittite context in Imv2Sg *šiyā* (KUB 33.5 ii 6, OH/MS) and *[š]iyā* (KUB 33.9 ii 4, OH/NS). In the context of the Telipinu Myth, there is a broad consensus that this means ‘sting!’ (my attempt to take forms of Hittite *šīye/a-* as ‘to prod’, Melchert 1984: 25–26, is refuted by the facts cited above that in older Hittite ‘to press’ belongs only to *šai-^{hhi}*). For the same reason one cannot derive the special sense ‘to sting’ < ‘to press, push in’. Since a honey bee leaves its stinger behind, it is more reasonable to derive ‘to sting’ from ‘to release, let go’. Both long vowels in *šiyā* argue decisively for a Luvianism: for the first compare again *pīya-* ‘to give’. For the second I cite CLuvian Imv2Sg *hannā, iyā, lilūwā, nannā, tūwā*. On morphological grounds, all but *iyā* are likely *hi*-verbs. I therefore venture to claim that Luvian *šā-ⁱ/sa-ⁱ* ‘to release, let go’ reflects a *hi*-verb in *-i-* reshaped after the root *hi*-verbs *lā-ⁱ* ‘to take’ and *tā-ⁱ* ‘to stand’. We may in fact be facing a paradigm split comparable to Hittite *išhu-^{hhi}* and *šuhha-^{hhi}* ‘to sprinkle, pour (dry materials): see *GrHL*² 288–89 and 290–91 with note 43.

F. Laroche (1963: 73) and *LIV*²: 517 suggest that Core IE words for ‘to sow’ reflect the root **seh₁(i)-* ‘to press’ by a case of “subreption” (maintenance of a core meaning despite a technological renewal). While this is entirely possible, one must also consider the alternative

that **seh₁(i)-* ‘to release from the hand’ is rather the source of ‘to plant (seeds)’, either singly or by sowing. This would leave **seh₁(i)-* ‘to press’ without cognates outside Hittite, but both *weh-/wahh-* ‘to turn’ and *mēma/i-* ‘to speak’ waited decades for convincing cognates to be identified.

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