The Anatolian 'ergative'

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The precursors of Proto-Indo-European
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How to prove 'Indo-Hittite'

- Find a language feature in which Anatolian differs from 'Classical IE' (CIE);
- Determine the 'PIH' (= ancestor of all Indo-European languages incl. Anatolian) situation;
- See whether CIE has undergone a common innovation.

The Anatolian 'ergative'

- Anatolian neuter nouns receive a special suffix when subjects in transitive sentences (agents);
- Eg. Hittite *maḫḫan=ta kāš tuppianza anda u̯emii̯azzi* 'When this tablet reaches you'.

	sg.	pl.
Hitt.	*-anza*	*-anteš*
HLuw.	*-a-ti-sa*	
CLuw.	*-antiš*	*-antinzi*
Lyc.		*-ẽti*, *-eti*

- Note: in all languages this looks like *-ont+ nom.c. ending.

Anatolian and CIE

	CIE		PA		PIH	
	c.	n.	c.	n.	c.	n.
Agent	*-os*	*-om*	*-os*	$?_1$	*-os*	$?_2$
Subject	*-os*	*-om*	*-os*	*-on*	*-os*	*-om*
Patiens	*-om*	*-om*	*-on*	*-on*	*-om*	*-om*

- To see whether CIE has a shared innovation, we need to know $?_2$;
- To determine $?_2$, we need to know $?_1$;
- To determine $?_1$, we need to know the grammatical role of the 'ergative'.

The Anatolian 'ergative'

Three theories about the grammatical role of this construction:

- A semantic derivational suffix *-ant-* making inanimate nouns into animate ones, e.g. *nepiš* 'sky (n.)' → *nepišant-* 'the Sky God (c.)';
- A syntactic inflectional suffix *-ant-* making neuter nouns into common gender nouns (because neuter nouns cannot be agents), e.g. *nepiš* 'sky (n.)' → *nepišant-* 'sky (c.)';
- A genuine ergative case, with endings *-anza/-anteš*.

These are synchronical descriptions, and we should investigate all languages and language stages separately.

To avoid confusion, I will use the term *agentive* for the construction and reserve *ergative* for the last explanation.

Distinguishing between explanations

If *-ant-* is a derivational suffix we expect:

- A semantic value of the suffix *-ant-*;
- A semantic distribution of its use (e.g. semantic animacy rather than morphological gender);
- Usage of the derivation in multiple cases.

If the construction is a syntactic suffic or an inflectional case we expect:

- No semantic value of the suffix;
- Morphological/syntactical distribution of its use;
- Only nominative/ergative.

Distinguishing between explanations

- Anatolian has a suffix *-ant-* of various uses, among which a individuating/personifying/deifying use.
- A derivational agentive could be a specific function of this suffix.

Distinguishing between explanations

If *-ant-* is an inflectional suffix, *X-anza* is a nominative common word, so we expect:

- demonstratives and adjectives in the nominative common singular;
- common gender resumptive pronouns.

If *-anza* is an ergative ending, *X-anza* is an ergative neuter word, so we expect:

- demonstratives and adjectives in the ergative neuter singular;
- neuter gender resumptive pronouns.

Hieroglyphic Luwian

1 instance of the agentive in Hieroglyphic Luwian:

("CAELUM")*ti-pa-sa-ti-sa*=*pa*=*wa/i*=*tu-u* ("TERRA")*ta-sà*-REL+*ra/i-ti-sa*=*ha* ‖
CAELUM-*sa*=*ha* TERRA-REL+*ra/i-sa*=*ha* DEUS-*ni-i-zi* LIS-*tà-ti* ‖ CUM-*ni* X-*tu*
'The sky, the earth, and the gods of the sky and the earth must … him
with ligitation.'

- ("TERRA")*ta-sà*-REL+*ra/i-* is common gender, but receives the suffix
  -*ant-*;
- The two agentives appear in a summation of gods;
- So the suffix is used semantically here ('the Sky God and the Earth
  God')

Lycian

2 instances in Lycian:

1. *s=ene teseti: tubeiti: trm̃mili*
   'And the Lycian oaths will strike him.'
2. *s=ẽne: tesẽti: qãñti: trm̃milijẽti*
   'And the Lycian oaths will seize him.'

In sentence 1, the adjective *trm̃mili* is common nominative plural; in sentence 2, *trm̃milijẽti* is neuter ergative plural.

In Lycian the agentive can be both an inflectional suffix and an ergative case.

The agentive in different Anatolian languages

The agentive construction works as follows in the Anatolian languages (see Goedegebuure [2013] for Hittite):

Old Hittite	derivational/inflectional suffix
Middle Hittite	inflectional suffix/ergative case
Neo-Hittite	ergative case
Hieroglyphic Luwian	derivational suffix
Cuneiform Luwian	derivational/inflectional suffix
Lycian	inflectional suffix/ergative case

Development of the agentive in Hittite

In Hittite we can see an ergative case developing:

- In Old-Hittite already, the personifying suffix *-ant-* was grammaticalised to an inflectional suffix;
- This suffix could only appear in the nominative *-ant-š/-ant-eš*;
- In Middle Hittite, (*X-ant*)-*š* was reanalysed as *X-anza*, with *-anza* an ergative ending of the underlying neuter word;
- This reanalysis was completed in Neo-Hittite.

The agentive in Proto-Anatolian

- We can posit the same development in all Anatolian languages;
- The forming of a full ergative case was complete only in Neo-Hittite and (partially) in Lycian;
- In Proto-Anatolian, the derivational suffix was already grammaticalised into an inflectional suffix;
- In Proto-Anatolian, as in all the older Anatolian languages, neuter nouns could not be (syntactical) agents;
- semantic agents were expressed using the inflectional suffix.

PIE reconstruction

We can reconstruct the following for Proto-Anatolian and Proto-CIE:

	CIE		PA		PIH	
	c.	n.	c.	n.	c.	n.
Agent	*-os	*-om	*-os	×	*-os	?
Subject	*-os	*-om	*-os	*-on	*-os	*-om
Patiens	*-om	*-om	*-on	*-on	*-om	*-om

How do we fill in the ? ?

- PA does not show any signs of an earlier CIE system and vice versa;
- If PIH had a CIE system, we would have to explain why the neuter agent *-om was lost in Anatolian;
- If PIH had a PA system, we can explain the CIE system by a simple analogy.

PIH neuter agent *-om*?

- One possible scenario:
  - PIH neuter agent was *-om*;
  - In practice, many inanimate nouns only occured in the agent position through individuating/personifying *-ont-*;
  - This was grammaticalised in Proto-Anatolian for neuter nouns.
- Problem:
  - Correspondence between neuter and inanimate is not perfect in Anatolian;
  - In general, how can we explain a semantic suffix generalised in a morphological category?
  - The further we go back, the stronger the correlation between neuter and inanimate.

No PIH neuter agents?

- The other scenario:
  - PIH, like PA, did not allow neuter nouns in the agent position;
  - CIE generalised neuter Subject *-om* to Agent position (because Subject = Agent everywhere else);
  - the personifying suffix was grammaticalised at least in PA.
- Problem:
  - How did PIH express neuter *semantic* agents?

Neuter semantic agents in PIH

- The PA semantic suffix *-ant-* existed in PIH already [Oettinger, 2001], but we find no evidence of its grammaticalisation in CIE.
- Probably PIH could describe neuter semantic agents by means of the semantic suffix *-ont-*, or possibly via a mediopassive construction.
- It is also possible that the suffix *-ont-* was grammaticalised in PIH already;
- This would still allow CIE to generalise Subject *-om* to the Agent position, and we would expect no trace of inflectional *-ont-* in CIE.

Conclusion

	CIE		PA		PIH	
	c.	n.	c.	n.	c.	n.
Agent	*-os*	*-om*	*-os*	×	*-os*	×
Subject	*-os*	*-om*	*-os*	*-on*	*-os*	*-om*
Patiens	*-om*	*-om*	*-on*	*-on*	*-om*	*-om*

- PIH did not allow neuter agents;
- PA 'fixed' this by grammaticalising the personifying suffix *-ont-*;
- CIE 'fixed' this by extending S/P *-om* to the Agent;
- CIE shares a common innovation, which is an argument in favour of the Indo-Hittite hypothesis;
- The innovation is quite trivial, so the evidence is not very strong.