

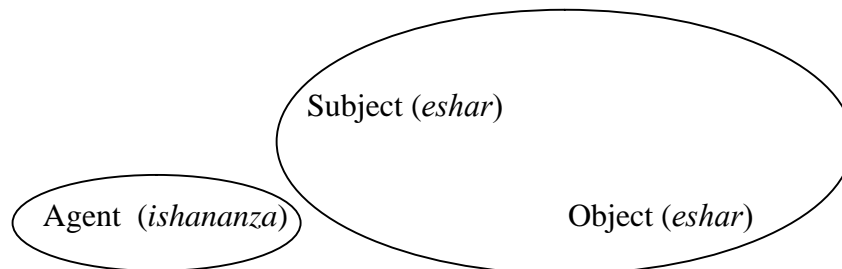
## Ergativity in Hittite

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### 1. Traditional analysis of *ēšhar* and *ishanant-* ‘blood’.

- (1) KUB 14.3 iv 52, CTH 181  
 nu apāt ēšhar kuwapi paizz[i]  
 CONN. that.NOM.SG.N. blood.NOM.SG.N where go.3SG.PRES  
 ‘When that **blood** flows...’
- (2) KBo 22.1 24-25, CTH 272  
 nu ŠA<sup>LÜ</sup> MAŠDA ēšhar=set natta sanhiskateni  
 CONN. GEN. poor-man blood=his.ACC.SG.N NEG seek.2PL.PRES  
 ‘You do not seek **blood** of a poor man’.
- (3) KUB 14.14 rev. 11, CTH 378  
 nu KUR<sup>URU</sup> Hatti=ya apās ishananza arha namma zinnesta  
 CONN. land Hattusa=and that.NOM.SG.C blood.NOM.SG.C away also finish.3SG.PRET  
 ‘The **blood**(shed) further finished off the land of Hattusa as well’.

### 2. Ergative alignment of neuter nouns in Hittite (SO ≠ A).



### 3. Forschungsgeschichte of Hittite ergativity.

Laroche 1962 established that a grammatically neuter noun cannot function in Hittite as the subject of a transitive verb, but must be replaced by a special form in *-anz(a)* (/ants/) in the singular and *-antes* in the plural. He saw that the distribution of these two markers is functionally similar to that of ergative case endings but nevertheless suggested that their primary function is syntactic. More specifically, he writes: “le suffix *-ant-* est le marque du transfert d’un inanimé dans la classe animée”.

Benveniste 1962 plead for the analysis of *-ant-* as a derivational morpheme that “animatizes” the base noun. The derivatives in *-ant-*, according to him, “designeront des notions matérielles transférées au rang de puissances actives”. He objected to the existence of the ergative construction in Hittite on the grounds that the ergatives prototypically denote animate agents (an outdated assumption). He also pointed out that the same suffix was occasionally attached to the common gender nouns and indicated in a general way that it is likely to be related to the other IE *\*-ont-* formations. Neu 1989 and Carruba 1992 developed the same line of thinking but opted for the “personifying” or “individualizing” function of the *-ant-* suffix.

Garrett 1990a was the first one to argue that the Anatolian “ergative” is a genuine ergative case. He rejected Laroche’s analysis of *-ant-* as a gender-switching suffix on the grounds that “a derivational suffix whose function is to permit nouns of a particular gender to stand in a particular syntactic function would ... have no parallel in Indo-European or elsewhere”. He advanced the derivation of Hitt. *-anz(a)* from the reconstructed instrumental marker \**-an-ti* and suggested that its plural counterpart *-antes* is due to the secondary accretion of nom.pl.c. *-es*.

Oettinger 2001 followed the synchronic analysis of Laroche 1962 but argued that the gender-switching *-ant-* could represent the grammaticalization of the derivational suffix *-ant-* (e.g. *hamesha-* (c.) and *hameshant* (c.) ‘spring’) to which he attributed “personifying” value. He rejected Garrett’s etymology of *-ant-* but did not discuss any of Garrett’s arguments in its support.

Josephson 2004 suggested that Hitt. *-ant-* was originally a singulative (cf. e.g. <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>*walwalla(n)za* built back from the collective <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>*walwalla* ‘lion-men’). With regard to the forms discussed in Laroche 1962 he stated: “The singulative and decollectivizing *-ant-* permits an agentive function, which allows for subjecthood and nominative case form”.

Patri 2007 suggested that Hittite neuter subjects take the synchronic ablative endings in transitive constructions in lieu of the nominative markers. Accepting Garrett’s diachronic analysis, he objected to the existence of a synchronic ergative ending *-anz(a)* in the class of neuter nouns on alleged typological grounds, stating that “ce sont pratiquement toujours les noms *animés* qui font preuve d’un alignement ergatif, très rarement l’inverse”. This assertion, in fact, contradicts Silverstein’s hierarchy, according to which nominative-accusative case marking correlates with higher animacy, while ergative case marking correlates with lower animacy (e.g. Silverstein 1976: 113).

Melchert, forthcoming, (presented as a talk in 2007) took an agnostic stance on the origin of the ergative ending *-anza* but defended its synchronic existence against both the derivational analysis of Benveniste 1962 etc. and the instrumental hypothesis of Patri 2007. Melchert’s main empirical argument for the proposed analysis was the resumption of ergative subjects by neuter clitics, which speaks against the view that nouns in *-anza* are underlyingly masculine. Hoffner and Melchert 2008 list *-anza* as ergative singular ending and *-antes* as ergative plural ending.

Dardano 2010 dwelled on the instances where forms in *-anza* derived from neuter nouns occur in intransitive constructions, which speaks against their ergative function. She supported the analysis of *-ant-* as an animatizing suffix along the line of Benveniste 1962. Rizza 2010 presented no new empirical material but subscribed to the analysis of Laroche 1962: “si potrebbe trovare, infine, spazio, per l’ergatività in eteo senza caso ergativo per la classe dei neutri” (Rizza 2010: 162). The same claim that the structure of the Hittite language features the ergative construction but not the ergative case is found in Shatskov 2011, with an emphasis on the coexistence of different strategies of gender-switching.

#### 4. Typology of previous views.

	Suffix <i>-ant-</i>	Ending <i>-anz(a)</i>
Ergative construction	Laroche 1962, Oettinger 2001, Rizza 2010, Shatskov 2010	Garrett 1990, Melchert, fthc.
No ergative construction	Benveniste 1962, Josephson 2004, Dardano 2010	Patri 2007

## 5. Untangling the issues.

- a) Whether Hittite neuter nouns take a case form in *-anz(a)* or alternate with common gender nouns in *-ant-* in the nominative case is a morphological and morphosyntactic question. It has to be resolved through structuralist analysis.
- b) Whether or not Hittite features an ergative construction is an issue concerned with the syntax-semantics interface. In the discussion of this issue functional parallels can be taken into account.
- c) Whether or not an ergative construction existed in Proto-Anatolian and Proto-Indo-Hittite can be answered only by applying the comparative method.

## 6. Agent forms of neuter nouns: Morphosyntax

### 6.1. Morphemic structure of agent forms (examples from Hoffner and Melchert 2008: 123-4).

	water (as agent)	word (as agent)	captive (c.)	all (c.)
nom.sg.	/widen-ant-s/	/uttan-ant-s/	/app-ant-s/	/homant-s/
nom.pl.	/widen-ant-es/	/uttan-ant-es/	/app-ant-es/	/homant-es/

The agent forms of neuter nouns and common gender nouns/adjectives in *-ant-* show identical nominative forms in *-s* (where *-anz(a) = /-ant-s/*), and nominative plural forms in *-es*. Both endings are restricted to the common gender.

### 6.1. Phrase agreement (examples from Patri 2007: 52-3).

- a) pronouns: always nom.c. in *-s*

*apā-s ishan-anz(a)* ‘this boodshed’, *kā-s tuppiy-anz(a)* ‘this tablet’,  
*kui-s witen-anz(a)* ‘which water’

- b) nouns: either nom.c. in *-s* or forms in *-anza*

*suppi-s A-anz(a)* ‘pure water’, *istarniya-s annasn-anz(a)* ‘internal \**annassar*’.  
*idalaw-anz(a)* *GIG-anz(a)* ‘evil illness’, *HUL-uw-anz(a)* *uddan-anz(a)* ‘evil word’.

### 6.2. Clause agreement

- (4) 473/t obv. 11, CTH 449  
 [SA]G.DU-ann=a      ishisan**tes**                      appan**zi**  
 head.ACC.SG.C=and      binding.NOM.PL.C.              seize.3PL.PRES  
 ‘And the bindings will seize the head’

Note that neuter plural subjects normally take singular predicates in Hittite (8.2).

### 6.4. Conclusion.

There are three independent pieces of evidence for the fact that the agent forms of (underlying) neuter gender nouns belong to the common gender. After the segmentation of common gender endings *-s* and *-es*, we are left with the suffix *-ant-*. In the case of nouns, it must be taken as a marker of gender-switch, in the case of adjectives (*idalaw-ant-* etc.) it appears to carry no grammatical function.

## 7. The agentive suffix: derivation or inflection?

### 7.1. Methodological stance of Hittitologists.

“Ist *-anza* als *-ant-s* zu erklären (d.h. *-(a)nt-* ist als derivationelles Suffix zu analysieren plus die Endung des Nominativs Singular) oder ist *-anza* als flexionale Endung zu erklären?” (Dardano 2010: 175).

“Credo si debba scegliere: o è un fenomeno flessivo y allora il sistema è ergativo, o è un fenomeno derivazionale (di mozione, sostanzialmente), o al limite entrambi (flessivo y derivazionale: metaplasmo di genere per ragioni sintattiche) e allora è comunque riducibile a derivazionale, per quanto concerne la classe nominale (metaplasmo) e le conseguenze per l'accordo con nominali retti” (Rizza 2010: 150).

### 7.2. Theoretical distinctions relevant for the case.

Derivation	Inflection
Affects the lexical meaning	May not affect the lexical meaning
May not affect syntactic features	Affects syntactic features
May apply to select members of a grammatical class for which it is defined	Applies to all or most members of a grammatical class for which it is defined

### 7.3. “Ergative” suffix usually does not affect lexical meaning.

“[They have give]n compensation for the **bloodshed** (*ēšhar*). That **bloodshed** (*ishananza*) further finished off the Land of Hattusa as well so that the Land of Hattusa too made compensation for it (KUB 14.14 rev. 10 ff.).

“When this **tablet** (*tuppianza*) reaches you, hurry up to Kasebura... I have also sent you the **tablet** (*tuppi*) of Piseni (HKM 25 11-14, 22-23).

### 7.4. “Ergative” suffix affects the feature of gender (see 6.4 above).

### 7.5. “Ergative” gender-switching applies to all the neuter nouns.

There are no neuter nouns attested as subjects of transitive verbs, although different suffixes (*-ant-*, *-a-*, *-zipa-*) may be used for gender-switching in this position. The only alleged counterexample, *handais* in (6), is not probative, as per Dardano 2010: 177, since the common gender of this noun cannot be disproved.

- (5) KBo 3.23 i 5-6, CTH 24  
 mān[=an]                      handais                      walahzi  
 when=it.ACC.SG.C    heat.NOM.SG.C.    strike.3SG.PRES.  
 ‘When the heat strikes it...’.

### 7.6. Conclusion:

*-ant-* is an inflectional gender-switching nominal suffix (not a case marker).

Secondary masculine forms in *-ant-* functioning as agents can be called “ergative forms”.

E.g. *ishananza* is the ergative singular form of *ēšhar* ‘blood’.

Clauses containing ergative forms can be called ergative constructions.

## 8. Formal property of the Hittite ergative construction: pronominal agreement with the underlying neuter gender of the agent.

### 8.1. The two attested examples (Melchert, forthcoming).

a) “[They have give]n compensation for the **bloodshed** (*ēšhar*). That **bloodshed** (*ishananza*) further finished off the Land of Hattusa as well so that the Land of Hattusa has already made compensation for **it** (=at) (KUB 14.14 rev. 10 ff.).

b) “**Water** (A-az) washes the roof and **it** (=at) flows down the drain”.

In (a) the neuter anaphoric pronoun =at resumes the common gender ergative form *ishananz(a)* derived from the neuter base form *ēšhar* ‘blood’. In (b) the same pronoun resumes the common gender ergative form A-az (*\*witenanz*) derived from the neuter base form *watar* ‘water’.

### 8.2. Hittite neuter plural subjects with singular predicates (Hoffner and Melchert 2008: 240).

- (7) KBo 3.34 ii 18, CTH 8  
<sup>m</sup>Āskali=ma                      uddār                      arāiš  
 Askali.DAT.SG.=but word.NOM.PL.N. rise.3SG.PRET.SG  
 ‘But accusations arose against Askali’.

## 9. Ergative construction as Anatolian innovation.

### 9.1. Luwian cognates of Hittite gender-switching -ant-.

- (8) KUB 9.6+ ii 14-15, CTH 759  
 as=sa=ti    elhadu                      tappasantis                      tiyammantis  
 mouth.ACC.SG.N=his.ACC.SG.N.=REFL wash.3SG.IMPV sky.NOM.SG.C earth.NOM.SG.C  
 ‘Let heaven and earth wash their own mouths’.

But cf. also distributive<sup>?</sup> plurals *assanda* ‘all the mouths one by one<sup>?</sup>’, IGI.HI.A-*wanda* ‘all the eyes one by one<sup>?</sup>’, ŠU.MEŠ-*anda* ‘all the hands one by one<sup>?</sup>’ (KUB 35.88 ii 5-7).

### 9.2. Formal irregularities in the Hittite ergative forms (Kloekhorst 2008).

	‘water’	‘land’	‘sky’
A	<i>witenanza</i>	→ <i>taganzipas</i>	<i>nēpisanza</i> , → <i>nēpisas</i>
S	<i>wātar</i>	<i>tēkan</i>	<i>nēpis</i>
O			

### 9.3. Some ergative forms appear to be personified (cf. Garrett 1990a: 288).

- (9) KBo 6.34 iii 16-17, CTH 427  
 n=an                      linkiyantes                      eppir  
 CONN=he.ACC.SG.C. oath.NOM.PL.C seize.3PL.PRET  
 ‘The oath-(god)s seized him’.

- (10) KUB 44.4 ii 2, CTH 520  
 [nep]isas                      GE<sub>6</sub>-i                      wasiyat  
 sky.NOM.SG.C black.ACC.SG.N wear.3SG.PRET.MED  
 ‘The sky dressed himself in black’.

#### 9.4. Parallel paradigms of neuter and common genders (Kloekhorst 2008).

	country (n.)	country (c.)	land (n.)	land (c.)
<b>Acc. sg.</b>	<i>udnē</i>	<i>udniyandan</i>	<i>tēkan</i>	<i>taganzipan</i>
<b>Gen. sg.</b>	<i>udnīyas</i>	∅	<i>taknas</i>	<i>taganzipas</i>
<b>Dat. sg.</b>	<i>udniya</i>	<i>udniyanti</i>	<i>taknī</i>	<i>taganzipi</i>

#### 9.5. Mind the gap!

“The view that the ‘ergatives’ somehow originated as derived *ant*-stems requires ... the proposal that a constraint against A-function neuters somehow developed in Anatolian, and that somehow a derivational suffix with a specific semantic value was pressed into service to ‘animate’ neuters just in A function” (Garrett 1990a: 278-9).

No proposals are required if one assumes that neuter nouns originally could not be used in A-function but were replaced there with lexical synonyms or syntactic paraphrases. Then the derived stems were simply recruited to complete the paradigm.

#### 9.6. Privative ergativity.

While the derivational (personifying) suffix *-ant-* can be reconstructed for Proto-Anatolian, its grammaticalization in the ergative construction is an areal phenomenon rather than Proto-Anatolian archaism. This follows mismatches between Hittite and Luwian data and Hittite internal reconstruction.

It is, however possible to reconstruct a paradigmatic gap for neuter agents in Proto-Anatolian and project it into Proto-Indo-Hittite. This can be called “privative ergativity”. There was no ergative case in PIH, but there may well have been absolutive case.

		IH. ‘water’ (n.)	IH. ‘land’ (n.)	IH. ‘sky’ (n.)
<b>A</b>	Erg.	∅	∅	∅
<b>S</b>	Abs.	<i>*wodor</i>	<i>*dheghom</i>	<i>*nebhos</i>
<b>O</b>				

#### 9.7. Opposition between masculine/feminine and neuter quasi-synonyms in PIE (cf. Schmidt 2010: 247-50 with ref.)

<i>*dyēu-</i> ‘(clear) sky’ (m.)	<i>*ngni-</i> ‘fire’ (m.)	<i>*xap-</i> ( <i>h<sub>2</sub>ep-</i> ) ‘(flowing) water’ (f.)
<i>*nebhos</i> (cloudy) ‘sky’ (n.)	<i>*paxur</i> ( <i>peh<sub>2</sub>ur</i> ) ‘fire’ (n.)	<i>*wodor</i> ‘(still) water’ (n.)

It is possible that the paradigmatic gap in 9.6 was filled in (in part) through lexical suppletion.

## 10. Hittite clitic pronouns and privative ergativity.

### 10.1. Paradigmatic gaps in the system of singular pronominal clitics.

	1sg.	2sg.	3sg.c.	3sg.n.	1pl.	2pl.	3pl.c.	3pl.n.
A	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅
S	∅	∅	=as	=at	∅	∅	=e, =at	=at
O	=mu	=ta	=an	=at	=nas	=smas	=as	=at

### 10.2. Example illustrating common gender third person clitics.

(11) KUB 33.96 i 7, CTH 345  
 nu <sup>d</sup>X-ni IGI-anda idalawatar san[hiskizzi]  
 CONN Storm-god.DAT.SG. against evil.ACC.SG.C. seek.3SG.PRES  
 ‘(He) seeks evil against the Storm-god’.

(12) KBo 3.4 i 11, CTH 61  
 nu=war=as=za DINGIR.LIM-is DÙ-at  
 CONN=QUOT=he.NOM.SG.C=REFL god.NOM.SG.C become.3SG.PRET.MED  
 ‘He became a god’.

(13) KBo 32.14 ii 7, CTH 789  
 mān=an pahhuenanza arha warnuzzi  
 OPT=he.ACC.SG.C fire.NOM.SG.C. away burn.3SG.PRES  
 ‘Would the fire burn **him** up!’

### 10.3. Garrett on the origin of Hittite (and Anatolian) subject clitics.

“Most languages of the Anatolian branch of Indo-European have subject clitics cognate to those of Hittite, which must be inherited from Proto-Anatolian, but none of the other early Indo-European languages have such forms, although all have enclitic object pronouns... [O]bject pronouns encode information which was otherwise linguistically unavailable, whereas subject pronouns are mostly redundant in sentences with inflected verbs. One problem raised by the enclitic subjects is thus essentially functional: given their relative inutility, why were they created in Proto-Anatolian at all? This problem will not be addressed here” (Garret 1990b: 227-8).

### 10.4. Alternative explanation.

If the third person subject clitic pronouns are indeed secondary, the easiest explanation for their distribution is the alignment to the pattern of the Proto-Anatolian neuter nouns. Presumably, this process was triggered by the neuter clitic \*=od > =at, which came to be associated with the same core thematic roles (i.e. with the same position in the Silverstein’s hierarchy) as the neuter nouns it can stand for. Alternatively, Anatolian third person subject clitic pronouns may be regarded as archaisms.

## 11. Perspectives for future research.

Garrett 1997 has demonstrated that not all the intransitive verbs are compatible with third person subject clitics in Hittite. Thus, this fragment of Hittite grammar can be more accurately described as split-S rather than ergative. It remains to be seen whether any traces of split-S alignment can be reconstructed for Anatolian neuter nouns.

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