INDO-EUROPEAN ‘LARYNGEALS’ AND HITTITE HINIK-, HEU-: SOME CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

Referring to ‘lex Eichner’1 certain scholars2 teach that the he- of Hittite heu- ‘rain’ (heu-/he-aw-3) goes back ultimately to the lengthened e-grade (*H₂ey-) of a root


I see little point in discussing recent ad hoc fabrics allegedly involving a preserved IE. lengthened e-grade in the vicinity of *H₂ or *H₂. It is perhaps worth noticing, however, that the *asz- attested by Skt. āśa- ‘ash’, OLat. āsa ‘fire-altar’, Oscan (loc. sing.) aasai ‘in ara’, if from a lengthened grade *[H₂as]- seen in Toch. AB ās-, ‘dry up’ (pres. iv asatār, B osotār), would be a particularly convincing piece of evidence against ‘lex Eichner’: if, prior to the rise of the lengthened grade in Indo-European, normal grade */H₂es/- was realized phonetically as *[H₂as]-, it follows that the lengthened grade of *[H₂as]- must have been *[H₂as]-, whence non-Anatolian *ās-. See my remarks in Hethitisch und Indogermanisch, 1979, p. 153, note 6. For Hitt. hassa- ‘fire-place’, see Puhvel, HED. 3, p. 224.


Cowgill, Kratylos 29, 1984[85], p. 8, taking heu- to come from pre-Hitt. *he-yu-, *he-yaw-, or *hey-u-, *hey-aw-, offers no comment on the origin of his pre- Hitt. root *he(-y)-. See also my Introduction to the ‘Laryngeal Theory’, 1988, p. 110.

*H₂ey-, the zero-grade of which is attested by the Hittite nasal infix verb stem hinik- ‘to rain’ < *H₂inek- (cf. heus hinikta, Laroche, RHA. 23, 1965, p. 68f.); a variant form of the stem *H₂inek- is *sH₂in(e)k- (with s-mobile) allegedly underlying Vedic *siṃcāti ‘pour, sprinkle’, Avest. hinčāti ‘id.’. Hence, the basic verbal theme from which these nasal infix presents are all ultimately derived, must be reconstructed as IE. *(s)H₂ey-k-. However, the assumption that Hitt. hinik- and Vedic *siṃcāti reflect an orig. IE. nasal infix present of the shape *(s)H₂in- can be shown to be unfounded.

As is well known⁴, Vedic *siṃcāti has a cognate in Proto-Germanic *sejhw- ‘filter’, seen in OE. séon, pret. sēh, ptc. siwen, OHG. sīhan, pret. sēh, ptc. siwan, etc. Since Proto-Gmc. *sejhw- cannot be the regular phonetic reflex of a full-grade *saykw- (< *sH₂eykw- with an a-colouring ‘laryngeal’), the only course⁵ open to those who want to uphold the assumption of an etymological connection of hinik- < *H₂inek- with Vedic *siṃcāti would be to resort to ‘lex Eichner’ and account for the shape of Gmc. *sejhw- by assuming an IE. lengthened grade *(s)H₂eykw- (with e preserved in the vicinity of *H₂) > non-Anatolian IE. *(s)eykw-, whence (with regular shortening of preconsonantal *ēy to *ej according to Osthoff’s Law), Proto-Gmc. *sejhw-.

Obviously, this reasoning being entirely circular can have no probative force whatever: a strictly ad hoc postulated lengthened grade *H₂ey- in the preform of Hitt. heu- ‘rain’ (< IE. *H₂eyu-) forms the basis for the reconstruction of an IE. stem form *sH₂ey-k- (> Proto-Gmc. *sejhw-), the *e of which has no other linguistic justifications than precisely the strictly ad hoc postulated lengthened grade in the preform of Hitt. heu-. Non liquet.

Puhvel, HED. vol. 3, 1991, p. 315f., explicitly rejecting the proposed etymological connection of heu- with hinik-, takes the latter verb form and vedic *siṃcāti to reflect an orig. nasal infix present *(s)H₂in(e)k- (with s-mobile) to a base *(s)H₂eykw-. seen in Proto-Gmc. *sejhw- ‘filter’. However, the proposed reconstruction of a basic stem of the shape *(s)H₂eykw- as the source of Hitt. hinik-, Vedic *siṃcāti and Proto-Gmc. *sejhw-, although phonologically possible, remains questionable as it rests on two unverifiable ad hoc assumptions, i.e. 1) that the s- of Vedic *siṃcāti is in fact an s-mobile, and 2) that the h- of hinik- does reflect a voiced e-colouring ‘laryngeal’? rather than *H₂ or *H₃: we do not dispose of any linguistic material that could

J. Catsanos, BSL. LXXIX, 1984, 2, p. 147, heu-, heaw- is characterized by a mobile accent.
⁵ Hoenigswald’s assumptions (‘Laryngeals and s movable’, Language 28, p. 172f.), that prevocalic ‘laryngeals’ were lost in the Indo-Hittite period before the difference of e and a had become distinctive, being unfounded, gives no support to the idea that a non-Anatolian IE. stem form *(s)eykw- (> Proto-Gmc. *sejhw-) may reflect orig. *(s)H₂eykw-. For Hoenigswald’s hypothesis see Introduction to the ‘Laryngeal Theory’, p. 49.
⁶ Or, more precisely, *(s)eykw- in order to account for the ‘pure’ velar of Hitt. hinik-, cf. Puhvel, HED. 3, p. 315.
prove that Proto-Gmc. *sejhw-a- and Vedic siṅcāti do not simply go back to an IE. verbal stem of the shape *sey-kw- (without any internal ‘laryngeal’) - a *-kw-extension of an original root *sey- (the s- of which is not an s-mobile). From a structural point of view, it should be stressed that judging by the etymologically clear cases, the present stem of Germanic strong verbs of the 1. ablautseries presupposes without exception the Indo-European normal grade, cf. e.g. Gmc. *lejhwa/e- (in Goth. leihwan) < IE. *leykWo/e- = Gk. leipō.

To posit (with Puhvel, HED. 3, p. 303) a stem *(s)H₁ew-H₂- (with s-mobile) as the source of Hitt. heu-, heaw- and of Toch. AB su-, swā-s- ‘to rain’ (e.g. B present V suwām, subjunctive V swāsəm < *suwāsəm), OPruss. suge, Alb. shi ‘rain’8, Gk. hūei ‘rains’ is equally ad hoc: to my knowledge there exists no linguistic material that could prove a) that the root underlying non-Anatolian IE. *sū- < *su-H- is not simply orig. *sew- (with no s-mobile), and b) that the initial h- in Puhvel’s “basic stem” *hew(a)-9 is not a reflex of *H₂ (or *H₄)10 rather than of an e- colouring ‘laryngeal’. Further, the idea that the -a- in heaw- (< *hef[w]aw by dissimilation) reflects a ‘vocalized’ *H₂ is disputable on phonological grounds: since, in the Indo-European sound system, *H r represents a consonantal element inherently less sonorous than the resonants *y, *w, *r, *l, *n, *m, it follows that what we write phonemically */H₁ewH₂wo-/ must be interpreted phonetically as *[H₁ewH₂uo-] (according to Sievers’ Law), see the discussion in my Introduction p. 104. An illustrative example is */g’énH₁yo-/ (i.e. stem *g’enH₁- ‘beget’ plus suffix *-yo-) = phonetically *[g’énH₁jo-], a form that survives in Vedic jāniya- ‘belonging to the race’. Cf. Lindeman, IF. 91, p. 79ff. It should also be stressed that there does not seem to exist any non-ambiguous evidence for a ‘vocalization’ (> a) of the IE. ‘laryngeals’ in Anatolian, see Introduction, p. 106 (with further references), and cf. H. Craig Melchert, Sprache 33, 1987, p. 19f., note 3, who argues that internal cases like HLuw. tuwatri- ‘daughter’ < *dhugH₂tr- “may show anaptyxis rather than vocalization.”

Not surprisingly, ‘laryngeal’ speculations, however imaginative, thus offer little help to the linguist who sets out to establish the original formation and prehistory of the noun heu-, heaw-. The obvious reason for this is to be found in our insufficient knowledge of Hittite ‘laryngeal’ reflexes and of Hittite phonology on the whole. Also, such ‘laryngeal’ speculations do not offer any clear answer to the question whether

---

7 In Puhvel’s system, the symbol *H₁ denotes a voiced e-colouring ‘laryngeal’, see HED. vol. 1 and 2, p. x with further references.
8 Since initial IE. *s- before a stressed syllable normally yields Alb. gj-, the proposed etymological connection of shi with non-Anatolian IE. *sū- remains uncertain.
9 See HED. 3, p. 303. Puhvel posits an orig. nom. sg. *hewus for Hittite, which, however, would probably have been written *hemus, cf. acc. plur. heamus (with -wu- written -mu- as in idalamus, acc. pl. of idale-), and see E. Neu’s discussion in StBoT. 18, p. 12lf.
10 Theoretically, *hew- in Puhvel’s stem *hew(a)- might come from *H₄seyw-.
heu-, heaw- is to be etymologically connected with the Hittite verb hinik-, the preform of which likewise remains uncertain.

Povzetek

INDOEVROPSKI 'LARINGALI' IN HETITSKO HINIK-, HEU-: NEKAJ OPAZK

Ko natančno pretehta predpostavke nekaterih sodobnih fonoloških podmen, pride pisec do sklepa, da indoevropska etimologija hetitskega heu-/heaw- 'dež' nima opore v 'laringalni' teoriji ali v anatolskem in neanatolskem jezikovnem gradivu. Povezava te besede z glagolom hinik- 'deževati' se s formalnimi sredstvi ne da dokazati.