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.
Anatolian neuter nouns receive a special suffix when subjects in transitive sentences (agents);

E.g. Hittite *mahḫan=ta kāš tuppianza anda ṣemiğiæzi* ‘When this tablet reaches you’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hitt.</td>
<td>-anza</td>
<td>-anteš</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLuw.</td>
<td>-a-ti-sa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLuw.</td>
<td>-antiš</td>
<td>-antinzi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-êti, -eti</td>
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</table>

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

<table>
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<tr>
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- 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’.
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 suffix or an inflectional case we expect:

- No semantic value of the suffix;
- Morphological/syntactical distribution of its use;
- Only nominative/ergative.
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’)
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 construction works as follows in the Anatolian languages (see Goedegebuure [2013] for Hittite):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Hittite</td>
<td>derivational/inflectional suffix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Hittite</td>
<td>inflectional suffix/ergative case</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neo-Hittite</td>
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<td>Hieroglyphic Luwian</td>
<td>derivational suffix</td>
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<tr>
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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.
We can reconstruct the following for Proto-Anatolian and Proto-CIE:

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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 occurred 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.
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?
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

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- 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.