

Notes

1. Wyatt 2007: 764.
2. Hoffner 1998: 58 i.e. §12 (A iii).
3. Perhaps the variant passages in Ugaritic may similarly be abbreviated forms.
4. In commenting on this note, Nick Wyatt suggested that Ilmilku's listing of seven actions, instead of the six catalogued in the Hurrian text (unless the suppression in line 2 is included), may have been his personal contribution to the trope.
5. Wyatt 2007: 768-771.

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WYATT, N. 2007: "Making Sense of the Senseless. Correcting Scribal Errors in Ugaritic", Ugarit-Forschungen 39: 757-772.

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106) Ugaritic *hrb*, Old Babylonian *harbu*, Luwian *harpa-* and Greek ἄρπη? — One of the words mentioned by Grimme (1925, 17) as loanwords from "Hittite" to "Greek" is ἄρπη, f., translated by him as "Sichelschwert". Simon (2018, 384) rejects the hypothesis, because of the lack of a comparable form in Anatolian, and suggests that the Greek word is probably inherited. While Greek contains a number of words that appear to be related, their etymologies are also problematic, so a few further observations are in order. The word ἄρπη in Greek cannot be simply translated as "sickle". It seems to be also the designation of a type of bird of prey, and this is the actual meaning that occurs in Iliad (XIX 350). The meaning "sickle" can be found, however, as early as Hesiod (Works, 573), while the meaning "sword" is employed in the late Argonautica (IV 987). Discussing whether we should consider Iliad to predate Hesiod linguistically would not be productive. In any case, regarding ἄρπη we may be dealing with two different homophonic words, or more likely with a single word that had different meanings developed by semantic extension. I will proceed assuming that the second hypothesis is correct.

The first problem with assuming inheritance of ἄρπη in Greek is that, as I mentioned, its etymology and those of the related words are quite problematic. Beekes (2009, 137) very cautiously mentions the root **serp* for the verb ἀρπάζω ("snatch away, seize"), which is very likely to be related, but of course **serp* regularly yields Greek ἔρπω ("creep, crawl"), and there is no available laryngeal that would explain the *a*-vowel in ἀρπάζω, ἄρπη and in all other related words. From a traditional perspective, a zero-grade would not work either, but recently Van Beek (2013) argued for the possibility that a sonorant /r/ would indeed yield /ar/ in Greek (I am thankful to Zs. Simon, *pers. comm.*, for passing me this reference). This would make inheritance from **srp-* possible, but while the examples for the change in word-medial position are quite a few, cases in which the /sr/ cluster is initial are not numerous enough.

Furthermore, in Greek, ἀρπάζω, ἄρπαξ ("rapacious") and the other derived words (which are quite obviously related for formal *and* semantic reasons), exhibit, with Beekes, a suffix *-ag-*, which is difficult to explain. Van Beek (2013, 276 with references) renounces to etymologize them, so ἄρπη remains quite isolated as the only form that does not contain the suffix.

Now, Grimme's choice to consider ἄρπη as an Eastern loanword mediated by Hittite is in part ill-advised. While the discussion is quite brief, his idea was to look for a Semitic comparandum, which he characterizes as containing a consonant /b/ in medial position (he quotes it as br), and to explain the /p/ in Greek because of the involvement of Hittite, but there is no reason to assume that such devoicing would occur in non-initial position, either in Hittite or in any other Anatolian languages. Interestingly, however, the Eastern hypothesis is not entirely to discard, because the Akkadian word *harbu* (exhibiting, apparently, a Semitic **hrb*) has a semantic behavior that is similar to that of Greek ἄρπη. It generally means "plough", but it also indicates a bird in a couple of occurrences (cf. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* H, 98), giving the impression that an areal word is not completely out of the picture.

Let us now move to the problem of whether *harbu* can be an inherited word in Akkadian. This may appear to be the case. In Ugaritic *hrb* means "knife" or "sword" (cf. del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2015, 363). In Canaanite, the same noun also exists in Hebrew, and in Northwest Semitic it also appears in Aramaic, where a verb (possibly denominal?) is also attested, with the apparent meaning "to slay". Ge'ez probably borrowed

the word from Aramaic (Leslau 1987, 241), and so did other Semitic languages from late antiquity onwards. However, all West Semitic languages exhibit a consonant *h*. This should not correspond to an *h* in Akkadian, which means that probably Akkadian borrowed the word from West Semitic and adapted it to its own synchronic phonology. It should be added that the earliest occurrences are Old Babylonian, so the loan must have happened during the Middle Bronze Age, making it impossible to identify the model language. In any case, this is an indication that we may be dealing with an areal word. This impression becomes even stronger when we consider that the word also emerges in Egyptian (Hoch 1994, no. 324).

In the Eastern world, other languages may appear to be involved in this highly complicated picture. Two cases require to be mentioned: the Median personal name that the Greeks rendered as Harpagos, and the Iron Age Luwian word *harpa-*.

The Median name is only superficially similar. Neo-Assyrian sources report it in the form ^m*ar-ba-ku* (with voiced consonant, but without rendering of the initial aspiration); furthermore, in Lycian the form is Arppaxu (Schmitt 1982, no. 2). All in all, the evidence indicates that the original form contained no initial aspiration, so the classical rendering Harpagos must indeed be the result of a folk-etymological connection to the very adjective ἄρπαξ. Hence, the name should simply be left out of the equation (cf. Schmitt 1982, no. 2, for a tentative analysis and etymology of it).

As for Anatolian, Hittite contains no synchronically comparable word (although it does contain a cognate to Greek ἔρπω, *sarpa-* “point, harrow”, going back to **serp-*). Luwian, however, does. In the hieroglyphic inscription TOPADA §26, the word (*219)*harpanzi*, normally translated as “rebels”, is actually opposed to (ANIMAL)EQUUS-*sas*, meaning “cavalry”. If the meaning of *harpa-*, instead of “rebel”, was “blade”, this could be a metonymic way to indicate the “infantry” (which typically occurs as opposed to mounted troops both in the Anatolian sources and in the Greek ones). If a word *harpa-* in Luwian existed and, at some point, it meant “blade” or “sword”, it could also belong to the same group of words. Luwian could not, however, be the language that mediated an alleged borrowing from a Semitic language to Greek, because most of the evidence available indicates that the graphic adaptation of a Luwian initial */h/* was *not* a Greek aspiration, but a velar stop or a *χ* (see the several case studies presented by Simon 2018).

In conclusion, I have collected a number of similar words with similar (or even very similar) semantics in a group of languages that were areally contiguous. Of those languages, Greek *might* provide an etymology, but only a partial one, indicating that some obscure morphological developments took place. West Semitic would also admit an etymology, capable of explaining the occurrences in Ugaritic, Aramaic and Canaanite, but not the Akkadian *harbu*, which would have been borrowed. In Anatolian, it is possible, although by no means assured, that the Luwian word *harpa-* also belonged to the picture. While the language of origin and the ultimate etymology remain, for the moment, beyond our reach, I believe that the arguments presented here indicate that the possibility of a Wanderwort should not be dismissed too hastily.

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