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WHY *parḫu-* IS NOT THE HITTITE WORD FOR “FISH”

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In Hittite, “fish” is usually written with the ideogram KU₆, which takes the phonetic complements of a *u*-stem noun.¹ In the Inhaltsübersicht to KBo 10, Heinrich Otten compared KBo 10 36 iii 4: ARNABI MUŠEN.ḪI.A *pár-ḫu*[- and KBo 10 52:10: [A]RNABI MUŠEN.ḪI.A KU₆.ḪI.A and suggested that *pár-ḫu*[- was perhaps the Hittite word for “fish.” In StBoT 2 p. 24, Onofrio Carruba cited Rost to the effect that the Hittite word underlying KU₆, “fish,” was a *u*-stem and called Otten’s suggestion that it was *parḫu*(-) “possible” (möglich). The form *parḫu*[- was also cited in Friedrich, Hethitisches Wörterbuch Erg. 2 and in Hoffner, An English-Hittite Glossary. The only dissenting opinion has been that of Hans Güterbock, who in his review of StBoT 2 in Or NS 39 (1970) 578 pointed out that KBo 10 36 and KBo 10 52 were not closely parallel and that the equation of KU₆ with *pár-ḫu*[- was therefore unwarranted. In this note we will demonstrate that *pár-ḫu*[- is to be restored *pár-ḫu-u-wa-ya-aš*, which is the genitive of a noun *parḫūwaya-* or *parḫūwai-*. It is the name of an animal whose meat was dried and eaten, but it is not the Hittite reading of the ideogram KU₆, “fish.”

The two passages which Otten compared read as follows:

KBo 10 36 iii 3’-4’:

[U]ZU.*i-ku-na-an* UZU.*ku-za-ni-y[a-an*
[U]ZU AR-NA-[B]I MUŠEN.ḪI.A *pár-ḫu*[-

KBo 10 52:9’-10’:

[. . . UZU.*i-ku-na-a*]n UZU.*ku-uz-za-ni-an* U[ZU
[. . . UZU A]R-NA-BI MUŠEN.ḪI.A KU₆.ḪI.A U[ZU?
(paragraph continues)

1. Liane Rost, MIO 1 (1953) 371.

Let us compare the first of these passages with the following section of the KI.LAM festival:

KBo 10.28 + 33 v 1-2:

UZU.GU[D] UZU.UDU UZU.EDIN.NA MUŠE[N.ḪI.A]

UZU.[UD.]DU.A *pár-ḫu-u-wa-ya-aš*

"beef, mutton, hare meat,² bird[s]

"dried meat of the *parḫūwaya*.³

The occurrence of *pár-ḫu-u-wa-ya-aš* in a list of creatures which provide edible meat is good evidence that this word is to be restored in KBo 10 36 iii 4'. The phrase "dried meat of the *parḫūwayaš*" requires that *parḫūwayaš* be in the genitive case. The underlying stem must be *parḫūwaya-* or *parḫūwai-*.

Can *parḫūway(a)-* be the Hittite word for "fish"? As noted above, it has long been known that KU₆ takes the phonetic complements of a *u*-stem noun. Since *parḫūway(a)-* is an *a*-stem or *ai*-stem noun, we must rule it out as a possible reading of KU₆.⁴

Unfortunately we cannot determine more about *parḫūway(a)-* than the immediate context reveals. It was some sort of creature whose meat was dried and presumably eaten.

2. The translation "hare meat" for UZU.AM.QA.BUR.NA requires comment. AM.QA.BUR.NA, to be read EDIN.NA, is also found in KUB 3 94 ii 4, where according to the copy it is written GA.QA.BUR.NA and is translated by Akkadian *še-e-[ru]*, "steppe." Note that the form of QA with only two wedges is the same as in KUB 3 94 ii 4 and KBo 10 28+33 v 1, and contrasts with the form of QA in KUB 3 94 ii 5, where DUG.QA.BUR is to be read BAḪÁR and is translated by Akkadian *pa-a-ḫa-[ru]*, "potter." In the lists of meats assembled here [U]ZU AR-NA-[B]I MUŠEN.ḪI.A in KBo 10 36 iii 4' and [UZU A]R-NA-BI MUŠEN.ḪI.A in KBo 10 52:10', when confronted with UZU.EDIN.NA MUŠE[N.ḪI.A] in KBo 10 28+33 v 1, suggests that EDIN.NA here is a Sumerogram meaning "hare." Since the Sumerian equivalents for Akkadian *arnabu* known from Sumero-Akkadian lexical texts, KA.edin.na, a.gú.edin.na, A.GÁR.edin.na, all contain EDIN.NA as a second component, it is likely that the scribe of KBo 10 28+33 either accidentally omitted a sign (such as KA) before EDIN.NA or employed an abbreviated form of the normal Sumerogram for "hare." This Sumerogram is also found in KBo 10 30 ii 3: AM?.Q]A.BUR.NA

3. A genitive may follow the noun it modifies when the modified noun is written with an ideogram. See Friedrich Hethitisches Elementarbuch 1 122 sec. 209b.

4. To forestall the objection that *parḫūway(a)-* may be an adjective based on **parḫu-*, "fish," we wish to point out that Hittite has no adjectival suffix *-ai-* or *-aya-*.