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Hittite *man* and *nūman*[1]

J. Friedrich in both his grammar and dictionary[2] called Hittite *man*, *-man* a "Partikel des Irrealis and Potentialis". An optative usage was also detected by H. G. Güterbock in 1943,[3] who observed that, as in other Indo-European languages, the optative and potential were expressed in Hittite by a common morpheme.

The optative is commonly described as that mood of verbs which expresses wish or desire. It should be understood at the outset that in Hittite there can be no question of an optative mood of the verb. Hittite verbs show an indicative mood and an imperative, but no subjunctive or optative. When, therefore, we speak of an optative in Hittite, we merely mean that the wish is expressed by means of one or more particles.

Optative clauses in Hittite usually express the wish of the speaker, not that of the sentence's subject. Thus one may translate *aši=man=wa* URU-*aš ammel k[(išari)]*[4] as "I wish that city were mine." The statement affirms nothing about a wish of the city, which is the grammatical subject of the sentence, but about the speaker's wish. Similarly in the sentence *man=wa* ᵈUTU-*ŠI* TI-*ešzi*[5] one should translate "I hope His Majesty will recover." The utterance does not affirm that the king (the grammatical subject) wishes to recover. What is communicated is the speaker's wish. In a treaty from the reign of Šuppiluliuma II the king warns his vassal against thinking: *aši=man=wa=kan* ZAG [-*aš* GAM-*an*] *niyari našma= <m>an=wa=kan*[6] *uniuš* EN.MEŠ :*alla[lla]panzi uqqa=man=wa pehudanzi*[7] "I wish that province would 'turn' (i.e., change its allegiance), or that those lords would defect and take me away (with them)." This sentence too expresses the wish of the

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2 Hethitisches Elementarbuch, 1. Teil, 2. Auflage, 1960, S. 139sq; HW 134.

3 Or NS 12:154.

4 KUB XI 6 ii 11 (Tel. Procl., OH/NS) restored from dupl. KBo III 1 ii 64, ed. E. H. Sturtevant, Chrest. 190 f.

5 KUB XV 30 iii 5 (dreams and vows, NH).

6 The immediate context shows that a simple haplography has occurred here, resulting in *našmanwakan* instead of the correct *našmamanwakan*.

7 KBo IV 14 ii 78–80 (treaty of Šupp. II). On *kattan neya-* cf. F. Sommer, AU 348, E. Neu, StBoT 5:124.

speaker, not that of the province or the lords who are the grammatical subjects of the two clauses.

In sentences such as *man=wa=nnaš [i]šhanittarātar iyaweni*[8] "I wish we would make a blood relationship between us" the situation is not as clear, since, when the verb form is in the first person, the speaker is also the subject of the sentence.

Similarly in the example *iyami=man=pat=wa kuitki man=wa=mu arahzenuš* LU[GAL.MEŠ ... (a)pi(ya=ya=man=wa=mu uwanzi)] man=wa=za ŠUM-an kuitki iyami*[9] "I wish I could do something. If only the neighboring kings would [start war] with me, then they would come against me, and I could make some name for myself," the first *iyami=man=pat=wa kuitki* is the optative, while the other *man*'s are "Potentialis der Gegenwart" in Friedrich's terminology. But since the verb form is first person, one cannot draw the distinction between the wish of the speaker and the wish or intention of the subject of the sentence.

But there are also sentences in which *man* expresses a wish of someone other than the speaker. And since in these cases the wish is always that of the subject of the sentence, we shall provisionally refer to this second class of the optative[10] as the "subject optative", as opposed to the just discussed "speaker optative". In order to establish the existence of the subject optative a mode heretofore unrecognized in Hittite, it must be shown that the examples quoted cannot be understood in terms of the other usages of *man* already recognized, and that they make good sense when interpreted as optatives of this second type.

The first example is from the so-called "Palace Chronicle", an Old Hittite composition preserved for us in New Script copies:[11]

ma-na-an-kán (var. *ma-a-na-an-kán*) ᵐ*Aškaliyaš kuienzi šan* ANA É EN.NU.UN *daiš*
"Aškaliya intended (lit. intends; historical present?) to kill him (ᵐIšpudašinara), so he put him (I.) in prison."

It is clearly impossible without violating the obvious sense of the passage to translate "I wish that A. would kill him" (speaker optative). To translate "A. would/could have killed him" (potential or contrary to fact) ignores the tense of *kuienzi*. The contrary to fact construction ("would have ... but ...") in Hittite always contains the preterite tense. The subject-optative interpretation allows us to translate this as a declarative sentence which simply reports an intention without indicating whether or not it was fulfilled. Such a usage, existing already in Old

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8 VBoT 2 (=EA 32): 2–3 (letter, MH/MS), ed. L. Jakob-Rost, MIO 4:328 ff.

9 KUB XXIII 103 rev. 13–14 with dupl. KUB XXIII 92 rev. 12–13 (royal letter to Assyria, NH), ed. H. Otten, AfO 19:42 f., cf. already H. G. Güterbock, Or NS 12 (1943) 154.

10 Since Hittite shows no evidence of a distinct subjunctive or optative mood in the verb itself, we use the term optative here only in the sence of a construction which expresses a wish by means of the particle *man* (or *-man*).

11 KBo III 34 (BoTU 12A) ii 17 (OH/NS) with dupl. KBo III 36 (BoTU 12B) obv. 22 (NS).

Hittite, provided the basis for the development of the potential use, in which it is stated that someone would/could have done something, but something happened to deter him. The subject-optative construction, when it is phrased in the past tense, differs formally from the potential only in the absence of the "but" clause which follows and describes what deterred the action.

The second example of the subject-optative use of *man* is found in a NH text: (The grandees of ^{URU}Athulišša had decided to rebel against Hatti. Muršili II captured these nobles, and their people denounced them, saying:) BAL=*man=wa ier man=war=at INA* [^{URU}*Kaška*] EGIR-*pa pair*[12] "They wanted to rebel. They wanted to return to [the Kaška]" (The quoted speech ends here). *man=war=at* must contain the optative-potential particle, for "if" and "when" make no sense. The other possible interpretation would be Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate's "They would have made a rebellion! They would have gone back [to Gasga]!" This translation differs from "They wanted to rebel. They wanted to return to [the Kaška]" only in the implication that they were prevented from doing so. But unlike the other examples of the "would have" construction this passage fails to continue with the statement of what deterred them. Furthermore, in an accusation it is more important to state what the accused has actually done than what he might have done, if he had been given the opportunity. In view of the other evidence for the *man* constructions it is preferable to translate this "they wanted" or "they intended", implying that they sought the cooperation of their compatriots as well.

It should be kept in mind that our proposed translation "wanted to" instead of "would have" only makes explicit in modern English what is implicit in the meaning of earlier English "would" and "will". English "will" and "would" together with their cognates in other Indo-European languages (e. g., German *will, wollte*, Latin *vult*) basically express wish or desire.

Now the two types of *man* clause expressing wish or intention (speaker optative and subject optative) are negated differently. Speaker-optative clauses are expressed in the negative be means of *lē* + (–)*man*. Indeed all *lē* clauses with the exception of the categorical negative assertion[13] express the speaker's wish that an action not be done. But it has been observed that the specific negative of the optative is expressed by *lē* + (–)*man* (cf. CHD sub *lē* b). Subject-optative clauses, on the other hand, are expressed in the negative by *nūman* (*nūwan*).

J. Friedrich[14] advanced for *nūman/nūwan* the translation "nicht mehr, niemals, keineswegs, gar nicht", and others have followed him without exception. But it would appear that in all cases a translation "will not/would not" better satisfies the requirements of the contexts.

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12 KBo XIV 19 ii 18–19 (annals of Muršili II), ed. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, JNES 25:174, 182.

13 On this construction see H. A. Hoffner, JCS 29 (1977) 151 f. and CHD sub *lē*, usage e.

14 HW 152, 153.

In the OH Illuyanka legend the goddess Inara gets the serpent and his brood drunk at a party. After this the text reads [*n*]*e namma hattešnaš kattant*[*a*] *nu-u-ma-a-an* (var. *n*[*u*]-*u-ma-an*) *pānzi*[15] "They (the serpents) don't want to go back down into (their) hole(s)." Thoroughly intoxicated, they are content to remain above ground, where Inara and Hupašiya take advantage of their stupor to bind and kill them. To translate "they no longer go . . ." misses to point, and draws no distinction between *nūman pānzi* and *UL* (*natta*) *namma pānzi*.

In the report of the Egyptian queen's offer of marriage to a son of Šuppiluliuma I: "My husband died. I have no son, but they say you have many sons. If you were to give me one of your sons, he would become my husband." IR-*YA-mawa nu-u-wa-a-an* (var. *nu-u-wa-an*) *parā dahhi nuwaranzakan* ^{LÚ}*MUTIYA iyami*[16] "I don't want to take one of my subjects and make him my husband." And in another part of the same composition, reporting the same speech: IR-*YA-mawa nu-u-ma-an dahhi*[17]. Translations such as "never", "not at all", or "under no circumstances" add extraneous temporal considerations (distant future, etc.) to what is the essential point, namely, the desire or intention of the queen not to take a servant as her husband. Furthermore the word "will" in English "I will never take . . ." introduces the volitional aspect (which is central to *nūman*) in the guise of the future tense. To translate "I cannot take . . ." implies that such a step by the queen would be against the law, or at least impossible of fulfilment. I am advised by Egyptologist colleagues George Hughes and Edward Wente that the Egyptian queen could have married one of her own subjects, had she wished to. Therefore, in this case I would prefer "do not wish to" to "cannot". Either of these would be preferable to "never" or "under no circumstances".

A passage from the story of the hunter Kešši relates an unsuccessful hunting trip in the mountains: (Kešši wandered about in the mountains for three months,) EGIR-*pamaššan* URU-*ZU šannapiliš nu-u-ma-an paizzi kāšti kaninti*[18] "He doesn't want to return to his city empty-handed, in hunger and thirst." A translation "he cannot return" would be permissible in English in the sense of "cannot bring himself to return empty-handed (to face ridicule)". But "cannot bring himself to" is equivalent to "doesn't want to" or "isn't willing to". The impossibility lies within Kešši and is not externally imposed. Again, "won't" is to be preferred to "never", "no longer", or "under no circumstances".

In a fragment of the annals of Muršili which describes campaigns in regions to the Northwest of Hattuša we read: [*nu IN*]*A* ŠA ^{URU}*HATTI kuit* UŠ-*kan ešta*

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15 KUB XVII 5 i 13–14 with dupl. KUB XVII 6 i 9 (OH/NS).

16 KBo V 6 iii 14–15 with dupl. KBo XIV 9 iii 3–4 (DŠ frag. 28), ed. JCS 10:94.

17 KBo V 6 iv 6, ed. JCS 10:96.

18 KUB XXXIII 121 ii 15–16 (Kešši tale, NH), ed. J. Friedrich, ZA 49:234 f. It is revealing that J. Friedrich felt the need of the volitional here, translating: „Zurück aber in seine Stadt (wollte) er mit leeren Händen doch nicht gehen – in Hunger (und) Durst." He could have removed the parentheses from „wollte" and placed them around „doch". The aspect was missed by F. Sommer, HAB 77, and A. Goetze, JCS 17:100, both translating "no longer".

nu nu-u-ma-an manqa iyanun [nušm]aš lahhiyaua[nz]i UL paūn nu hingani kuit [pir]an arha tarnah[hun] nuza INA URU*Harziuna ešun*[19] (Although certain Kaškans have instigated a rebellion against the Hittites,) "Since there was a plague in the midst of Hatti, I didn't want to do anything (i. e., undertake any expedition); I did not set out to campaign against them. And because I retreated before the plague, I stayed in Harziuna." Here for the first time we find *nūman* with a preterite. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate translated *nūman manqa* "nothing at all". Such a translation is certainly permissible for *UL manqa*, but not for *nūman manqa.* A translation "I no longer did anything at all" is not impossible in the context, but such a translation does not satisfy the other contexts in which *nūman* occurs. If we translate "would not" or "didn't want to", we satisfy this and the other contexts. Apparently the king felt it an unacceptable risk to undertake further military operations with the plague raging in his land. The phrase "didn't want to" expresses his decision not to launch a new offensive.

nūman occurs four times in the Hittite translations of entries in the Sumero-Akkadian lexical text Erimhuš: (Sum.) [A?.G]A.BI[20] = (Akkad.) *a-hu-[ru]-u* = (Hitt.) *nu-u-ma-a[n]* DÙ*-an-za,* [A?.[20].GA].BI.RI.A = *a-hu-ru-u-[t]im* = SAL*-za nu-u-ma-an* DÙ*-an-za,* [. . .].[ZI.x] = *a-hu-ru-u* = *nu-u-ma-an* DÙ*-an-za,* [. . .].RI.A = *a-hu-ur-tù* = SAL*-za nu-u-ma-an* D[Ù*-a]n-za.*[21]

Akk. *ahurû* is translated by W. von Soden "Mindergeachteter", while the Hittite is translated by H. Otten as "einer, der (or: eine, die) keineswegs gemacht ist" bzw. "der/die nicht mehr gemacht ist". It is interesting to compare the entry in lines i 57—58 (SAL*-za) UL tar-ah-ha-an-za* "(s)he who is unable" (i. e., the inept), the Sum. and Akk. equivalents of which are broken. The Akk. *ahurrû* would lead one to think that the Hitt. translater was trying to indicate one who doesn't have any

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19 KBo XIV 20 i 19—21, ed. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, JNES 25:169, 178. Cf. [. . .] *nu nu-u-ma-an manqa* [. . .] *nu-u-ma-an piran ar[ha . . .*]KBo IV 4 i 34—36, ed. AM 110—111 („nicht mehr").

20 The traces of the first sign in the Sum. entry of line 53, which might provide a basis of restoring the Sum. of lines 54—56, are not reconcilable with SIG, which was the reading proposed by W. von Soden in StBoT 7:17. Trace might fit E, or, if the scribe used a marker wedge pair, :A.GA. The readings [:A].GA = 1-*EN* = 1-*aš,* [A.G]A.BI! (or [A.G.]A.GA) = *E-DE₄-NU* = 1-*e-la-aš* in lines 53—54 might be explicable on the basis of the a-ga and a-ga-bi underlying a-ga-ba, translated by Akkad. *ahamma, edeššu* and *ediššišu* "separately, alone" (cf. F. Delitzsch, SGl. 7, CAD sub *ahamma, edeššu* and *edu.* The Sum. column of lines 55 and 56 could also have contained [A.G]A.BI and [A.GA].BI.RI.A with the Akkadian translations *ahurrû* and *ahurrû[t]im* reflecting (through the inner-Akkadian partial equivalence of *ahurrû = arkû*) the lexical equations A.GA = *arkatu(m),* A.GA.NA/A.GA.BI.ŠE = *ana arkišu.*

21 KBo XIII 1 i 55—56, 59—60 (Erimhuš Boğazköy version, NS), ed. StBoT 7:11, 17 f.

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initiative.[22] Since there is no attested example of *nūman* with a middle or passive verb, I would be reluctant to translate DÙ*-anza* (= *iyanza*) as a passive here. Active participles of transitive verbs are, of course, attested (*adanza* "one who has eaten", *akuwanza* "one who has drunk").

The other occurrences of *nūman* (*nūwan*) are in broken contexts, which yield nothing certain.[23] It has been claimed[24] in spite of an atypical spelling and word spacing[25] that *nūman* also occurs in the introduction to the Illuyanka myth: "Thus (says) Killa, the Anointed One of the Stormgod of Nerik . . ." *purulliyaš uttar nu <-u>-ma-a-an kiššan taranzi*[26] "The cult legend of the *p.*-festival; they no longer tell (this version)". Apart from the objections of spelling (*nūman* always has *nu-u-.* .) and sign spacing (word space exists between *nu* and *ma-a-an*) we may add still another objection to interpreting this as *nūman.* The translation "no longer", which was proposed by A. Goetze for this passage, does not fit the other contexts where *nūman* occurs. If one must understand *nu ma-a-an* here as a faulty writing of *nūman,* it would have to be translated "they do not wish to tell (this version)" or "they cannot tell (this version)". The optative and potential nuances of *nūman,* which fit elsewhere, do not fit here. Goetze's "they no longer tell" would require Hittite *UL namma taranzi.*

I am unable to advance an etymological explanation of *nūman/nūwan.* I have presented the evidence in favor of translating *nūman* as "will/would not" or "can/could not" to this circle of readers in the hope that, if my interpretation convinces others, someone with a better knowledge of Indo-European linguistics than I may be able to relate it to etyma. Since it functions as a negation of *man* (*-man*) clauses, one might suspect that the last part of the word contains *-man.* But how can one

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22 Cf. CAD A/1 216: "Two meanings have been differentiated for *ahurrû:* one referring to a coarse, boorish fellow, a barbarian, an uneducated and bungling person . . .; the other . . . corresponding Akk . . . . *arkû*". If the Hittite scribe connected *ahurrû* with *arkû* (and perhaps by the consonantal skeleton with *uhhuru*?), the Hittite translation "he who doesn't want to do something" may have sought to describe the procrastinator. In KBo XIII 1 iv 5, if we restore [HU.RU] = [*A-HU-RU-U*] = EGIR[*-zi]-aš* EGIR*-iš* after Erimhuš II 306—09, 314—17, the Hittite "last of the last" could also reflect this understanding of Akkad. *ahurrû.*

23 KBo IV 4 i 35, 36 (AM 110 f.), KBo XII 62:3 (NH letter), KBo XVIII 6:25 (NH letter), KUB XXI 2 + XLVIII 95 i 10 (Alakš.) (or read [*nu m]a-a-an*?), KUB XXXIII 58 i 8 (missing god myth, OH/NS), KUB XXXIV 63:14.

24 J. Friedrich, SV II (1930) 86: „Ist auch *nu-?ma-a-an* KBo III 7 i 3 hierher zu stellen?" A. Goetze in ANET 125 "(the version which) they no longer tell", Kleinasien (2. Aufl.) 139 note 4. As recently as 1975 by C. Kühne in Beyerlin, Religionsgeschichtliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament, 179.

25 For the other reading, *nu ma-a-an,* see H. G. Güterbock, Or NS 20:331 note 1; cf. idem in S. N. Kramer, Mythologies of the Ancient World 151.

26 KBo III 7 i 3—4.

explain the *w* in *nūwan* and *nūwān*?[27] And why in the last syllable is the *a*-vowel occasionally written plene?

While the etymology is problematic, the fully-preserved contexts of *nūman/ nūwan* indicate that it is the negative of *man* in clauses which express the intention of the grammatical subject. The following table proposes to show how various modes of speech are expressed in the affirmative and the negative in Hittite.

	Affirmative	Negative
Declarative	*paizzi/pait* "he goes/went"	*natta paizzi/pait* "he isn't going/didn't go"
Action in Process	*nuwa paizzi* "he is still going"	*natta namma paizzi* "he is no longer going"
Anticipatory	*karū paizzi/pait* "he has/had already gone"	*nawi paizzi/pait* "he has/had not yet gone"
Imperative	*īt* (pl. *itten*) "go!"	*lē paiši/paitteni* "don't go!"
Speaker Optative	*man paizzi* "I wish he would go"	*lē=man paizzi* "I wish he would not go"
Subject Optative	*man paizzi/pait* "he wants/wanted to go"	*nūman paizzi/pait* "he doesn't/didn't want to go"

To translate *nūman* as "no longer" or "never" ignores the existence of the construction *natta namma*, which performs that semantic function in Hittite. One must seek to understand how each construction fits into the entire structure of Hittite syntax. I suggest that the best place for *nūman/nūwan* in the pattern of Hittite sentence types is as the negative of subject optative clauses, which in the affirmative are expressed by *man*.

It may have been noted above in the discussion of certain passages containing *nūman* (KUB XVII 5 i 13–14 [Illuyanka], KBo XIV 20 i 19–21 [Muršili annals]) that a translation "cannot" or "could not" would be equally appropriate to "won't" or "would not". I have argued for the strict optative interpretation in those cases. But I freely admit that in the aforementioned two cases the translation "cannot"/ "could not" may be preferred. If so, this need not contradict the assumption that *nūman* expresses the negative of positive clauses using *man*. For aside from its optative uses, *man* also occurs in potential clauses. In some of these clauses *man*

27 From Old Hittite on the word is regularly written with *m*. The spelling *nu-u-wa(-a)-an* is confined to one passage, KBo V 6 iii 14 with dupl. KBo XIV 9 iii 3, in which words of the Egyptian queen are being reported.

must be translated "would have" (i. e., wanted to . . ., but was prevented).[28] But in others[29] it must be translated "could have" (i. e., was able to . . ., but chose not to). In these latter examples *man* clearly expresses capability. Therefore, it would be only proper that the negative *nūman* be able to express the negative of this use of *man* (ability or capability) as well as the subject-optative use.

28 KBo III 1 ii 11 (Tel. Procl., OH), KBo IV 4 iii 22–23 (AM), etc.
29 KUB VI 41 iv 30 continued by KUB VI 44 iv 13–14 and dupls. (Kup.), ed. SV 1:136 f.