

Zurück zur Wurzel

Struktur, Funktion und Semantik der Wurzel im Indogermanischen

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The root **h₁au-* ‘perceive’ and Indo-European ‘bird’

Nicholas Zair

Auhtorities such as IEW (78), CHANTRAINE (1968–1980: 41–42), MAYRHOFER (1986–2001: 177), DE VAAN (2008: 61) and BEEKES (2010: 43, 1059–1060) consider all or most of the following forms to belong to a single root, to be reconstructed for now as **Hou-* or **Hau-*. Direct root-derivatives are Hittite *auⁱ-* (2sg. *a-ut-ti*, 1pl. *ú-me-e-ni*) ‘see, look’, the Cuneiform Luwian interjection *a-a-wa* ‘behold, look here’ < **Hou-/*Hu-*, Vedic *uvé* ‘I see’ < **Hu-e/o-*, and Old Church Slavonic *umъ* ‘mind’ < **Hau-mo-* or **Hou-mo-* and Lithuanian *aumuo* ‘understanding, intellect’ < **Hau-mōn* or **Hou-mōn* (DERKSEN 2008: 508–509).¹ Remaining forms point to the existence of a ‘stem’ **Hāuis* and **Hōuis*, probably derived from an old adverb found in Vedic *āvīh* ‘apparently, noticeably’, Old Avestan *āuuīš* ‘apparently, evidently’, and Old Church Slavonic *avě, javě* ‘clearly’ (with secondary *-ě*).² While the Indo-Iranian forms could come from **Houis* by Brugmann’s law, Slavic requires either **Hāui-* or **Hōui-*.³ Old Lithuanian *ovyje* ‘in reality’ could be cognate with *avě* (which would prove **Hā-* rather than **Hō-*) or be a borrowing from Slavic (SADNIK & AITZETMÜLLER 1975: 37–40; DERKSEN 2008: 30). A derived verb appears in Greek *ἄϊον* ‘heard’ < **Hauis-e/o-*, and a phrasal formation **Hauis dh₁-* gives the Greek aorist *ἠσθόμην* ‘perceived’ and Latin *audiō* ‘hear’, with *o*-grade formations in Homeric Greek *δοῖμαι* ‘forebode, presage’ < **Houis-je/o-*, Latin *oboedio* ‘obey’ if from **-Houis dh₁-* (thus DUNKEL 2014: 2.107, but cf. MEIER-BRÜGGER 1980: 291; DE VAAN 2008: 61; WEISS 2009: 119–120 fn. 14), and *ōmen* ‘omen’ if from **Houis-mṇ* (but note the many other possible etymologies: WALDE and HOFMANN 1938–1954: 2.208; DE VAAN 2008: 427–428; VINE 2015: 151–152).⁴

LIV (243, 288), however, reconstructs two separate roots, with Hittite *auⁱ-* and Vedic *uvé* from **h₁ey-* ‘sehen, erblicken’, and Greek *ἄϊον* and Latin *audiō* from **h₂uejs-* ‘hören’. This distinction has two arguments in its favour: the absence of an initial laryngeal in Hittite, which argues against the **h₂-* implied by the Greek and Latin forms (more on this below); and SCHULZE’s (1888: 249–255) evidence for an original present **ἄεῖω* < **h₂uejs-e/o-*, subsequently adjusted to *ἄϊω* to match the aorist. This evidence is, however, very weak. A varia lectio of Hesiod, *Works and Days* 213 gives *ἄϊε* for *ἄκουε*, which is claimed to be a replacement of original **ἄεε*. But it could instead be metrical lengthening, since *ἄϊε* would not otherwise scan

¹ Conceivably also Middle Irish *af* < **a₁et-*, Middle Welsh *awen* ‘poetic inspiration’ (for the semantics, cf. Old Irish *fili* ‘prophet, poet’, lit. ‘seer’; WATKINS 1995: 117); but for an alternative etymology see MATASOVIĆ (2009: 47).

² On the adverbial ending **-is* see JASANOFF (2009: 141–143); DUNKEL (2014: 1.172–173).

³ Old Church Slavonic *javiti, aviti* ‘show, reveal’ is derived from *avě*.

⁴ For a further array of compounds possibly involving this root in Slavic, see LE FEUVRE (2010).

(LFGRE 334).⁵ The Hesychian forms ἄει and ἄετε are also inconclusive: while **ἄείει* < **h₂uejs-e/o-* would become **ἄει* and then **ἄει* in Attic, the same is true of ἄει < **Ha₁uis-e/o-*, which would become **ἄει* and then ἄει (cf. αἰεῖ ‘always’ > ἄει; THREATTE 1980–1996: 1.270–294).⁶ Trisyllabic ἐπάειν ‘understand, give ear to’ (Euripides *Hercules Furens* 773) could be contracted from **-αείειν*. But a variant of (ἐπ)ᾄω with long initial vowel is found already in early epic (LFGRE 331) and also the tragedians (BJÖRCK 1950: 149–150),⁷ so ἐπάειν may be an artificial poetic form with the long vowel of Homer and the subsequent Attic desyllabification of *-ι*.⁸ Full-grade **h₂uejs-* is also problematic since it requires an unmotivated *Schwebeblaut* to explain Latin *audiō* < **h₂e₁uis-* (**h₂uis-* would not give **a₁uis-*; SCHRIJVER 1991: 25–31) and Greek ὄϊομαι < **h₂ou₁is-*.

Therefore, we should set up a single root for all these forms, meaning ‘perceive (by ear or eye)’. Only **h₁au-* is possible, unless we accept KLOEKHORST’S (2006a) claim that **h₂-* and **h₃-* fell together with **h₁-* before **-o-* in Anatolian, which would allow us to reconstruct **h₂e₁u-*. Kloekhorst suggests that in the Hittite verb the strong stem **h₂ou-* became **h₁ou-* > *a-ut-ti*, whose consonantism was then levelled to the weak stem **h₂u-* → **h₁u-* > *u-me-e-ni*. However, the evidence for loss of **h₂-* before **-o-* is extremely limited, and there are several instances of *h₁-* verbs like *au-ⁱ* which retain *h₁-* before **-o-*, such as *h₁ān-ⁱ* ‘draw water’ < **h₂on-*. These must, according to Kloekhorst, have lost **h₂-* in the strong forms of the paradigm, but retained it in the weak forms and then generalised *h₁-* from these, while *au-ⁱ* has done the opposite.

Kloekhorst proposes three positive examples of **h₂o-* > **h₁o-*. One is the pair *āns-ⁱ* ‘wipe’, *h₁ane/išš-^{zi}* ‘wipes, plasters’, which KLOEKHORST (2009) analyses as from strong and weak stems **h₂omh₁-s-* and **h₂ḡ₁H-s-* respectively of an original *s*-extension of the root of Greek ἄμω ‘reap, cut’, Old High German *māen* ‘mow’. The semantic connection between the Hittite and other forms is problematic (MELCHERT 1988: 212 fn. 3), but even without the root etymology, the claim of a split paradigm for the two Hittite verbs is somewhat attractive.

The remaining evidence is weaker. Hittite *āra* ‘right, properly’ could come from **h₂ór-ō*, with **h₂-* on the basis of Greek ἀραρίσκω ‘join, fit together’. Kloekhorst presents the Lycian hapax *erawazije-* > *arawazije-* ‘monument’ as evidence for *o*-grade, with old Lycian *e-* < **o-* before

⁵ Alternatively, DUNKEL (2014: 2.108) reconstructs **a₁uis-₁e/o-* > **a₁ui₁e/o-* > **a₁ui₁e/o-*, which gives the form ἄω found in Hesiod, which then shortens in hiatus to give ἄω. For arguments against other proposed readings involving this verb see LFGRE loc. cit.

⁶ Loss of *-ι-* seems to cause lengthening of the preceding *α-* only sporadically (SCHWYZER 1959–1971: 1.265–266; THREATTE 1980–1996: 1.266, 275–276). The same set of developments may also have taken place in at least some dialects of Ionic: BECHTEL (1921–1924: 3.41, 49, 57, 60, 62, 63); THUMB, KIECKERS & SCHERER (1932–1959: 2.253). The absence of ἄω in the *Koine* is probably the reason for its presence in Hesychius.

⁷ I have not found any discussion of the origin of the long vowel. Since original **ā-* should have given *ā-* in Homer, it must be secondary – due to metrical lengthening?

⁸ Similarly, though vague, CHANTRAINE (1968–1980: 42).

a-affection.⁹ Vedic *āra-* ‘ready, fit’ is more clearly related, but cannot go back to **h₂oro-*, which would have given **āra-* by Brugmann’s law (POOTH 2015). Therefore LIV’s (270) reconstruction **h₁ar-* seems preferable. Hittite *aruwae-zi* ‘prostrate oneself, bow’ may be cognate with Greek ἀρή ‘prayer’ < **h₂(e)r-ueh₂* (RIX 1993: 331–335), but there is no direct, non-circular, evidence for *o*-grade,¹⁰ and in principle the root could also be **h₁ar-*.

A parallel treatment of **h₃o-* > **h₁o-*, as argued by KLOEKHORST (2006a), might support **h₂o-* > **h₁o-*. However, here the evidence is extremely messy, since it is very difficult to distinguish **h₃o-* from **h₃e-* or **h_{1/2}o-* on the basis of extra-Anatolian evidence. The reflexes of initial **h₃-* in Hittite have recently been reconsidered by OLSEN (2010: 105–119), who argues that **h₃-* gave *h-* except before **-u-* and syllabic sonorants.¹¹ I think this analysis is largely correct,¹² but would make some alterations to her analyses of individual items.¹³

Olsen explains *ārki* ‘mounts, covers’ (only once in the active) < **h₃orġ^h-* as back-formed from the weak active and middle stems **h₃rġ^h-*, but, as Kloekhorst points out, it is surprising that the stem of the middle is then not generalised. Following WATKINS (1975, not mentioned by Kloekhorst or Olsen), I prefer **h₁orġ^h-*. All derivatives with *o*-vocalism are likely to be *o*-grade formations. Hittite *arki-*, Greek ὄρχις, Middle Irish *uirghi* ‘testicle’, Armenian *orjik*, Albanian *herdhë* ‘testicles’ can go back to an old acrostic *i*-stem **h₁orġ^h-i-*/**h₁erġ^h-i-*.¹⁴ Old Norse *argr*

⁹ For doubts that *erawazije-* belongs with *āra-* see RIEKEN & SASSEVILLE (2014: 305 fn. 5), POOTH (2015).

¹⁰ The suffix **-uo-* seems to be added to all ablaut grades (WEISS 2009: 297–298; RIEKEN & SASSEVILLE 2014: 302–303).

¹¹ Evidence for loss before syllabic sonorants consists of: Hittite *arta* ‘stands (by); is present’ from **h₃r-to*, according to KLOEKHORST (2008) and OETTINGER (2004), but compare LIV 238 and JASANOFF (2003: 212) who reconstruct **h₁er-*; and *aniya-* ‘carry out’, which plausibly comes from **h₃r-je/o-* (cf. Latin *onus* ‘burden’), but cf. YAKUBOVICH (2010). Since we expect *e*-grade in *s*-stems, *onus* points to **h₃en-o/es-* (against a root **h₁ien-* see OLSEN 2010: 95–100). On the other hand, *harganau-* ‘palm, sole’, compared with Greek ὀρέγω ‘stretch out’ (WEITENBERG 1984: 223), points to **h₃rġ-nou-*. OLSEN (2010: 110–111) convincingly argues against KLOEKHORST’s (2006a: 94) connection with the root for ‘white’, which would allow **h₂erġ-nou-*, but has to explain *harganau-* as the result of contamination between the strong stem **h₃reġ-nu-* (> **h₁raganu-*) and the weak stem **h₃rġ-nou-* > **arganau-* to get attested *harganau-*.

¹² The only evidence for loss before **-u-* is *utnē-* ‘land’ < **h₃ud-*, with the laryngeal being guaranteed by Greek οὔδας ‘ground, floor’, which shows the zero grade beside full grade **h₃ued-* in Armenian *getin* ‘ground’. But *getin* could be derived from an old locative, with regular *Schwebeablaut*, or not belong here at all (NIKOLAEV 2009: 469–470 fn. 24, with the further comments of COHEN & HYLLESTED 2012: 60–63).

¹³ Supporting Olsen over KLOEKHORST (2006a), the initial laryngeal of *hāstai-* ‘bone’ is certainly **h₂-* rather than **h₃-*, as demonstrated by Middle Cornish *asow* ‘ribs’, Middle Welsh *asen* ‘rib’ (ZAIR 2012: 54). Tocharian B *āuw* ‘ewe’ comes from **aui-* (KIM 2000), and hence proves **h₂-* for Hittite *hāwi-* ‘sheep’, which probably reflects the acrostic weak stem **h₂ēu-i-* (on the basis of Lycian *χawa-* ‘sheep’ < **h₂ayo-* ← *h₂ai-*, not **h₂oyo-*; YOSHIDA 2013).

¹⁴ Which subsequently became a (semi-) proterodynamic stem with weak **h₁rġ^h-ej-* in Avestan *ərəzi* ‘testicles’. Hittite *arki-* ‘testicle’ could reflect *o*-grade **h₁orġ^h-i-*, although with a secondary accent on the suffix or ending, since accented **-o-* gives *-ā-* in Hittite (KIMBALL 1999: 129–131), or the secondary zero

‘unmanly, cowardly, lewd’ can come from **h₁orǵ^h-o-*, while Armenian *orj* ‘male’ reflects a *τομός*-formation **h₁orǵ^h-ó-* ‘he who mounts’ (OLSEN 1999: 195). Lithuanian *aržùs* ‘lustful’ < **h₁orǵ^h-u-* has the *o*-grade common to *u*-stems in Baltic (PETIT 2006: 355–360). Also reflecting an *o*-grade is the iterative formation Greek *ὀρχέομαι* ‘dance’, also used in sexual contexts (WATKINS 1975: 18–19). Direct evidence for **h₁-* comes from WATKINS’ (1975: 19–20) connection to the Middle Irish imperative *eirgg* ‘go’, for which he provides an example in a ritual sexual insult.¹⁵ For the semantics compare also the parallel of the sexual senses of ‘go’ and ‘come’ in English,¹⁶ and Middle Persian *gāy-* ‘copulate with’ beside Old Avestan *gāf* ‘go to, move’.

For *aru-* ‘high’ Olsen reconstructs **h₃r(r)-u-*, to the root **h₃er-* ‘sich in (Fort-)Bewegung setzen’ (LIV 299–301), cf. Greek *ὄρω* ‘stirred oneself, got up’, Vedic *ārta* ‘set oneself in motion’ and Latin *orior* ‘rise’, while Kloekhorst reconstructs **h₃r-u-* or **h₃or-u-*. I am sceptical of Lindeman variants, especially involving sonorants (see SIHLER 2006, and more cautiously, BARBER 2012), so I would avoid **h₃r(r)-u-*. Nor do I believe that **h₃R-* gives **R-* in Anatolian, for which the only evidence is Hittite *lāman-* ‘name’, whose initial laryngeal may be **h₁-* (for discussion and references see BEEKES 1987 and NERI 2005: 20 fn. 29), and *arai-* ‘rise, raise’, reconstructed as **h₃r-oj-* by Kloekhorst and **(h₃re)h₃roj-*, with an *i*-extended root, by OETTINGER (2004), in both of which the laryngeal could have been lost by sound law in the sequence **HRo-* (the converse of Saussure’s rule),¹⁷ and then by analogy throughout the rest of the paradigm.¹⁸ WEITENBERG’S (1984: 90–91) connection of *aru-* to Greek *ἐρι-* in compounds such as *ἐρι(γ)δουπος* ‘thundering

grade **h₁rǵ^h-ej-* seen in Avestan. It probably cannot come from **h₁erǵ^h-i-* since lowering of **-e-* to *-a-* before **-r-* seems to occur only when two consonants follow **-r-* (MELCHERT 1994: 134–137; KLOEKHORST 2008: 95; *pace* KIMBALL 1999: 160–163). One might add the Tocharian B adjective *erkatstse*, which means ‘testiculate’ according to ADAMS (1987: 4–5), implying *erk** ‘testicle’ < **Horǵ^h-i-*. CARLING (2003: 89–90, 93; 2004) argues for the meaning ‘burning, hot’, but connects it to *ὀρχέομαι*, reconstructing a root **h₃erǵ^h-*. It is supposed here that *ὀρχέομαι* belongs to the same root as the ‘testicle’ words anyway.

¹⁵ To the same root, according to Watkins, belongs Vedic *ṛghāyā-* ‘be in a state of sexual excitement’. He connects Greek *ἐρχομαι* ‘come, go’ to Vedic *ṛchāti* ‘reaches’, Hittite *ār-* ‘come, arrive at’.

¹⁶ Definitions from OED online (oed.com). ‘Go’: 10.e. (slang) ‘of a woman: to engage in sexual intercourse, esp. readily and without inhibition’. ‘Come’: I.17 ‘to experience sexual orgasm’. Accessed 22/06/2015.

¹⁷ This rule has been attacked by VAN BEEK (2011: 136–143) and PRONK (2011: 178–179); it must be admitted that there is not a great amount of strong evidence for it, but I do not think they have succeeded in demolishing all the examples (see PIWOWARCZYK 2012 for a defence of Greek *μοιχός* ‘adulterer’ < **h₃moijǵhos*). Note that VAN BEEK’S (2011: 142) proposed counterexamples Greek *ἐρωή* ‘impulse’ < **h₁roh₁s-eh₂* and *ἐρωή* ‘rest’ < **h₁roh₁-ueh₂* do not in fact provide evidence against the rule because initial **-r-* in Greek may well have developed regularly into *ἐ-* (ZAIR 2012: 9–10). So they might in fact be the result of a development **Hro-* > **ro-* > **ero-* by Greek prothesis.

¹⁸ LIV 252 attributes this verb to a different root **h₁rej-* ‘sich erheben’, the other evidence for which consists of the Armenian imperative *ari* ‘stand up’ and preterite *y-areay* ‘I stood up’, from a zero-grade of the root aorist, and Germanic forms such as Gothic *urreisan* ‘stand up’, which LIV traces back to an old desiderative **h₁rej-s-*. As far as I can see, none of these forms is inconsistent with Oettinger’s idea of an *i*-extended root **h₃rej-*, nor, although they are not mentioned by Kloekhorst in his discussions of *arai-* (KLOEKHORST 2006a: 88–89, 2008: 200, or, at slightly greater length, 2006b: 115–116), with Kloekhorst’s system of *i*-presents.

on high’ would imply **h₁-*, but $\epsilon\rho\iota$ - is reconstructed by WILLI (1999) as the locative of a root-noun **sēr* found in Hittite *šēr* ‘above, on top’.¹⁹ I think the most plausible explanation is that *aru-* is simply an inner-Anatolian derivation from (or is remodelled by analogy with) *arai-ⁱ*.

I conclude that a development of **h₂o- > *h₁o-* in Anatolian is not proven, since the evidence is too slight, and that **h₃o- > *h₁o-* cannot act as a supporting parallel case.²⁰ Consequently I prefer to reconstruct a root **h₁au-* for Hittite *au-ⁱ* ‘see, look’ and the forms in other languages.

The existence of a unitary root **h₁au-* ‘perceive (by ear or eye)’ is relevant to the Indo-European word for ‘bird’, which I have previously reconstructed as an acrostatic *i*-stem with a strong stem **h₂ou-ⁱ* and weak **h₂eu-ⁱ* (ZAIR 2011), from the latter of which came Latin *avis* and Armenian *haw*. In Indo-Iranian a ‘semi-proterodynamic’ paradigm developed, with strong **h₂ou-ⁱ*, weak **h₂u-^{ej}*- (cf. Vedic *dāru* ‘wood’ < **doru*, gen. sg. *dróh* < **dr-^{eu}-s*), the allomorphy of which was resolved by equating it with an original proterodynamic *i*-stem to give Vedic *víh*, or by treating it as an acrostatic root noun with strong stem **h₂uoj-*, which gave the relic form *véh*. The *o*-grade forms of the stem, while not directly preserved as the word for ‘bird’ in any Indo-European language, were the basis for a *vřddhi* formation **h₂oujo-*, which gave forms like Greek $\acute{\omega}\nu$ ‘egg’.²¹ I did not make any suggestions about the root of this word and its meaning. I propose that the word for ‘bird’ originally meant ‘omen’. The semantic shift must have taken place by the time of ‘core’ Indo-European, since **Hou-^{jo}*- ‘egg’ ← ‘what belongs to the bird’ by *vřddhi* derivation, which is not attested in Anatolian or Tocharian, requires ‘bird’ as the primary meaning.²²

The key to this interpretation is the well-attested status of the bird as an omen in Indo-European cultures, for which I give just a few examples. Late second millennium BC Hittite texts demonstrate a well-developed divinatory system involving observing a range of birds and drawing conclusions based on “die Art ihres Fluges im Orakelfeld, ihres Anfliegens und Wegfliegens, das sich Setzen, das Auffliegen, das sich Begegnen, die Körperhaltung, die Richtung des Schnabels und ihre Rufe” (HAAS 2008: 28). This use of birds is also attested in

¹⁹ For an alternative etymology see POOTH (2015).

²⁰ Ultimately, the value of the Anatolian evidence will depend on one’s presuppositions regarding shibboleths in the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European such as the existence of **-a-* or Saussure’s law (neither of which are accepted by KLOEKHORST 2008: 15 fn.11 and p.c.).

²¹ Compare SCHINDLER (1969), who reconstructs a root noun **Huoj-*, **Huej-*, which cannot, however, satisfactorily explain the Italic or Armenian evidence pointing to **Hau-ⁱ*, and also produces a highly implausible etymology of ‘egg’.

²² The only other suggestion which I know of for an etymology of ‘bird’ is that of POOTH (2015: 8), who connects it to a root **h₂eu(H)-* ‘(sich) (etw.) anziehen, angezogen sein, (etw.) anhaben; Kleidungsstück’ (cf. LIV 275). This root would then give both **h₂o/^{eu}-ⁱ* ‘sheep’ and **h₂eu-ⁱ/^{h₂u-^{ej}}* ‘bird’, which for Pooth is proterodynamic. The explanation for the same root being used for both creatures is: “weil das Schaf ja ein Tier ist, das zur Wollproduktion genutzt und wohl entsprechend bezeichnet wurde”, while the bird can be considered “als ‘der (etw., sc. ein Federkleid) anhat”’.

our earliest Greek literature. The omen may be divined from the position of the bird relative to the watcher (e.g. *Iliad* 24.314–321), the behaviour of the birds (e.g. *Iliad* 12.200–209), or from the song of the bird (e.g. *Iliad* 10.274–277). Divination by birds is one of the skills urged on farmers by Hesiod (*Works and Days* 826–828), and continued to be important, and is well-attested, in Classical Greece (DILLON 1996; COLLINS 2002; JOHNSTON 2008: 128–130).

In ancient Italy, the sixth Iguvine Table begins *este. persclo. aueis. aseriater. enetu. parfa. cumnase. derua. peiqu. peica. merstu.* ‘he shall commence this ceremony by observing the birds, the *parra* and crow in the west, the woodpecker and magpie in the east’ (translation after POULTNEY 1959: 228–230).²³ A similar process was also part of the Roman public religious apparatus (RASMUSSEN 2003: 149–153; LINDERSKI 1986), and in Roman literature there are plenty of examples of birds acting as omens (for some examples, see BEARD/NORTH/PRICE 1998: 2.167, 174).

In a late second or early first century BC description of Celtic druids by Poseidonios, we are told that one of their functions is *οἰωνοσκοπία* ‘watching birds’ (HOFENEDER 2005–2011: 1.149; further examples from classical sources can be found by following the references to ‘Vogelschau’ in the indices of the individual volumes). Although divination by birds is not strongly emphasised in mediaeval Celtic literature, there is evidence for its existence, for example in the entry for *driis* in the *Sanas Cormaic* (Y Add. 475),²⁴ which includes the words *dreaan .i. .i. der 7 en .i. en bec deroil, no drui-en .i. en doni faitsine* ‘wren. i.e. “small” and “bird” i.e. an insignificant small bird, or “druid-bird” i.e. a bird which makes a prophecy’. The wren is assumed to be ‘that bird which is called the mage of birds, because it provides augury to some’, referred to in the Life of Saint Moling (section 22, PLUMMER 1910: 2.200). Both the wren and the raven are treated in two brief Middle Irish texts in which the varying type of call and position of the birds signal a dizzying array of portents (BEST 1916).²⁵ For Germanic speakers, Tacitus mentions consultation of the calls and flight of birds (*Germania* 11) and ornithomancy is frequent in Norse sources, especially involving the crow, less frequently the eagle (DEROLEZ 1968: 290–292); on divination from the behaviour of birds in Russia see RYAN (1999: 124–126). In Armenian, the word *margarē* ‘prophet’ is borrowed from an Iranian language in which it is a compound with the meaning ‘bird-watcher’ (KORN 2013: 77).²⁶

In short, the association of birds and omens is well-established in a number of Indo-European cultures. Divination by means of bird-omens is often seen as being due to influence from elsewhere, for example Luwian on Hittite and Etruscan on Roman (MOUTON & RUTHERFORD

²³ For more on this passage and the ceremony see POULTNEY (1959: 228–238), ANCILLOTTI & CERRI (1996: 130–138).

²⁴ Text from the Early Irish Glossaries Database, created by Paul Russell, Sharon Arbuthnot and Pádraic Moran and online at <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/>. Accessed 10/07/2015

²⁵ On divination by birds by the Celts see also ETTLINGER (1943: 12–13) and, briefly, LE ROUX (1968: 251).

²⁶ I am grateful to Agnes Korn for informing me of this.

2013), Hittite on Greek (HÖGEMANN & OETTINGER 2008), Mesopotamian on Greek (SMITH 2013). Certainly, speakers of Indo-European languages had no monopoly on the idea of birds as omens, which are attested in the Near East prior to our earliest Hittite documents, and it is quite possible that both the Hittites and the Greeks may have been influenced by other peoples in their divinatory practices. I would not want to make any strong claims about the exact details of bird-divination among speakers of Proto-Indo-European; nonetheless, given the frequency of bird-omens among later speakers of Indo-European cultures, and indeed the very common existence of them in other cultures around the world (MOUTON & RUTHERFORD 2013: 329–330), it seems highly likely that speakers of Proto-Indo-European would have thought of birds as signs of the will of the gods. Indeed, birds may well have been the omen *par excellence*, as suggested by the fact that words for ‘bird’ in Greek also often mean ‘omen’ more generally, e.g. in Iliad 12.243 and 24.218–219.²⁷ Consequently, I suggest that **h₁ou-i-* ‘bird’ originally meant ‘omen’;²⁸ the meaning ‘bird’ was secondary, but due to semantic shift eventually came to be the primary meaning, without necessarily referring to a bird of omen (although this may have continued as a secondary meaning, as in Latin *avis*). As Alwin Kloekhorst (p.c.) points out to me, the original word for ‘bird’ may have been something else, e.g. **h₃erō*, which was then specialised as the word for ‘eagle’ in Hittite *ḫāraš*, Gothic *ara*, but has a derived form in Greek ὄρνις ‘bird’.

In conclusion, we should reconstruct an acrostatic *i*-stem **h₁ou-i-*, **h₁au-i-*.²⁹ Deverbative acrostatic *i*-stems “made agentive, patientive/resultative and (somewhat rarely) action nouns” according to RAU (2009: 181), who gives the example of Greek πόρις ‘calf, young heifer’ to the root **per-* ‘give birth’.³⁰ Thus the original noun was a patientive formation meaning ‘that which is perceived, omen’ with a subsequent shift to refer to the omen *par excellence*, the bird.³¹

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²⁷ Norbert Oettinger (p.c.) points out to me that birds are particularly suitable animals for omens since their flight can be easily observed for a great distance, whereas earth-bound animals can easily go out of sight. The sky is also the source of another major type of omen, the weather.

²⁸ A possible retention of the original meaning can perhaps be found in Greek οἰωνός ‘large bird, bird of augury’ < **h₁oui-h₃n-o-* ‘the one which has the omen’, with the Hoffmann suffix added to the word for ‘omen’, if OLSEN’s (2009) explanation of ‘laryngeal breaking’ is correct.

²⁹ An advantage of the reconstruction **h₁ou-i-*/**h₁au-i-* is that it avoids the awkward homophony with **h₂ou-i-*/**h₂eu-i-* ‘sheep’.

³⁰ See also GRESTENBERGER (2014: 90).

³¹ Latin *ōmen* is an exact semantic parallel of the original formation, if from **h₃ek^u-s-mŋ* or **ouis-mŋ* ‘thing seen’.

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