

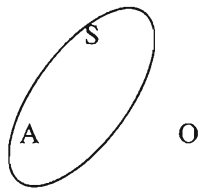
The Old Hurrian verb

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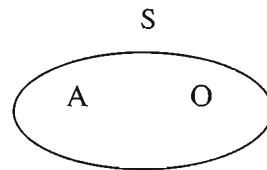
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It is well established that Hurrian is an ergative language¹. An ergative language is one in which the subject of an intransitive verb is as the direct object of a transitive, while the agent of the transitive is in the “ergative”. This is in contrast to nominative-accusative languages which mark both the subjects of intransitive and transitive verbs in the same way. The core constituents of Hurrian will be abbreviated as follows: S for the subject of an intransitive or antipassive verb, and A and O for the agent and patient of transitive verbs respectively. These are standard linguistic abbreviations for these core arguments². The difference between ergative and nominative accusative verbs can be diagrammed as follows in (1):

(1)



nominative-accusative



ergative

Hurrian has a very rich case marking system³. The majority of the thirteen identified cases are oblique. The three structural cases are the ergative, absolutive and essive:

¹ See most recently the grammars of M. Giorgieri, “Schizzo grammaticale della lingua hurrica”, *La Parola del Passato (PP)* 55 (2000), p. 175 and I. Wegner, *Hurritisch: eine Einführung*. Wiesbaden 2000, pp. 34-36. I would like to thank I. Yakubovich, O. Soysal, C. Woods, and K. Mineck for their comments on earlier versions of this paper. The paper has benefited much from their observations, but in the end, all errors are, of course, the responsibility of the author.

² R. Dixon, *Ergativity* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 69). Cambridge 1994, pp. 6-8 and C. Manning *Ergativity: Argument Structure and Grammatical Relations*. Stanford 1996, pp. 3-4.

³ M. Giorgieri, “Die hurritischen Kasusendungen”, *Nuzi at Seventy-Five* (SCCNH 10), D. Owens and G. Wilhelm eds. Bethesda 1999, pp. 223-256.

(2) Case	SG	PL
absolutive	Ø	=na
ergative	=•	(=n(a))=a•=u• ⁴
essive	=a	(=n(a))=a•=a

The ergative is used to mark the agent (A) of transitive verbs while the absolutive marks the subject (S) of intransitives and antipassives and the patients (O) of transitives. The essive is typically oblique⁵, but one important function of this case is as the indicator of the demoted O NPs in antipassive constructions⁶.

The focus of this paper is on the indicative verbal forms in Old Hurrian. I assume here a rather broad definition of "Old Hurrian." For the purpose of this study, I include all texts that display "old" verbal features as Old Hurrian. Texts displaying later period verbal forms are considered to belong to Mittani Hurrian (i.e. those texts displaying features best known from the Mittani Letter EA 24). By "old" verbal features, I mean indicative verbs which display an optional =b agreement marker with intransitive and antipassive verbs and the valence marker =o(=) with transitive ones⁷. These forms are the subject of this study. Issues of dialects beyond Old Hurrian and Mittani Hurrian are not considered here⁸.

=b

Forms in =b are restricted to the intransitive and antipassive in Old Hurrian⁹. The intransitive and antipassive verbs are marked by the valence markers =a and =i respectively in both Old Hurrian and Mittani Hurrian. The intransitive verb is one that allows for only one argument, namely the S noun phrase (NP). The antipassive verb allows for either one or two arguments,

⁴ Non-absolutive plural NPs are typically given as =a•+Case in the various grammars. There is, however, little doubt that =na= must play some role in pluralizing the cases. One never finds a plural form given as R=a•=Case. It is always R=n(a)=a•=Case, often with a long a in =ā•=.

⁵ For the various functions of the essive, see Giorgieri, *PP* 55, pp. 254-256.

⁶ G. Wilhelm, "Die Absolutiv-Essiv-Konstruktion des Hurritischen", *Europa et Asia Polyglotta-Sprachen und Kulturen: Festschrift für Robert Schmitt-Brandt zum 70. Geburtstag*, Y. Nishina ed. Dettelbach 2000, pp. 199-208.

⁷ As will be demonstrated below, the appearance of =b on intransitive/antipassive verbs is not enough to consider the text Old Hurrian. The presence of the =o= transitive marker is required.

⁸ For work on dialects in Hurrian, see I. Diakonoff, "Evidence on the Ethnic Division of the Hurrians", *SCCNH* (1): *In Honor of Ernest R. Lacheman*, M. Morrison and D. Owen eds. Winona Lake 1981, pp. 77-89; M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55 (2000), pp. 179-180; M. Khačikyan, "Dialektnoje členenije khurritskogo jazyka", *Drevnij Vostok* 3 (1978), pp. 39-46; I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, pp. 26-27.

⁹ For references to this morpheme prior to 1992, see G. Wilhelm, "Hurritische Lexikographie und Grammatik: die hurritisch-hethitische Bilingue aus Boğazköy", *OrNS* 61 (1992), p. 138.

with S as subject and the optional patient appearing in the oblique essive¹⁰. Unlike the intransitive, the antipassive is a derived form that promotes the A NP of a transitive verb to an S NP (i.e. promotes an NP from the ergative case to the absolutive)¹¹. The motivation for such a derived form is manifold¹². The two primary functions of the antipassive in Hurrian (both Old Hurrian and Mittani) are as follows: 1) to allow the agent of the transitive sentence to function in certain syntactic operations such as relativization¹³, and 2) to detransitivize the verb by moving the focus of the sentence from O to the verb itself, marginalizing O¹⁴. Despite their differences in grammatical function, the two verbal forms share one very important characteristic: they both take a subject in the absolutive. In Mittani Hurrian these verbal forms do not contain agreement markers. Agreement between subject and verb is only indicated through the optional use of free enclitic pronouns appended to the verb. The enclitic pronouns in Hurrian only occur in the absolutive¹⁵.

In Old Hurrian, the intransitive and antipassive valence markers are typically, but not always, followed by the morpheme *=b*. This morpheme has been analyzed as an agreement marker, but these earlier conclusions about the morpheme require modification¹⁶. The origin of this morpheme is not clear. It does not appear to be related to any other known morphemes. As will be demonstrated below, *=b* does not agree with either person or number. While likely originating as a specific agreement marker, it has undergone a high degree of grammaticalization.

¹⁰ C. Girbal, "Das hurritische Antipassiv", *SMEA* 29 (1992), pp. 171-182; F. Plank, "Das Hurritische und die Sprachwissenschaft", *Hurriter und Hurritisch* (Xenia 21), V. Haas ed. Konstanz 1988, p. 202.

¹¹ F. Palmer, *Grammatical Roles and Relations*. 1994, pp. 176-178.

¹² On the antipassive, see A. Cooreman, "A Functional Typology of Antipassives", *Voice: Form and Function* (Typological Studies in Language 2), B. Fox and P. Hopper eds. Philadelphia 1994, pp. 49-88; R. Dixon, *Ergativity*, pp. 146-152; Palmer, *Grammatical Roles*, pp. 176-200.

¹³ Take for example the relative construction in Tiš-atal lines 11-14: *e=me=ni(n) tašp=i 'ālli*^d *Lubadaga=• tašp=o=in* "The one who destroys (the temple), may Lubadaga destroy that one!" The agent of the relative clause is the patient in the main clause. This results in a situation where we have an equation A=P, where A is the agent of the relative sentence and P is the coreferential NP in the main phrase. The only way to form such a relative in a language as ergative as Hurrian is to promote the agent to the absolutive.

¹⁴ See (3) below for an example. This function of the antipassive has been studied in Cooreman 1994, p. 60 and Palmer, *Grammatical Roles*, pp. 181-186. At the same time, the use of the antipassive can indicate that the action of the verb is incomplete, imparting either an imperfect aspect to the verb (A. Cooreman, *Voice*, p. 70) or even the sense of an iterative action (Palmer, *Grammatical Roles*, p. 183).

¹⁵ Giorgieri, *PP* 55 (2000), p. 219; Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 66; G. Wilhelm, "Hurrian", *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*, R. Woodard ed. Cambridge 2004, p. 108.

¹⁶ Early works have analyzed this *=b* morpheme as a third person singular/plural agreement marker; cf. Giorgieri, *PP* 55 (2000), p. 229; M. Khačikyan, "The Hurrian Verb Revisited", *SCCNH* 10: *Nuzi at Seventy-Five*, D. Owen and G. Wilhelm eds. Bethesda 1999, p. 258 (takes *-b* as belonging only with the third person singular); E. Neu, *Das hurritische: eine altorientalische Sprache in neuem Licht*. Mainz 1988, p. 6; I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, pp. 109-110; Wilhelm *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 111 amongst others.

Through this process it lost its specific semantic content. In the end, it can be said to have developed into a simple intransitive, and by extension antipassive, class marker. As will be seen, in the written material this class marker is used inconsistently, likely indicating that the morpheme as a whole was being phased out of the language.

The most common examples of verbal forms with this marker have a third person singular or plural subject. This is due in large part to the nature of the preserved text material. The vast majority of passages involve third person subjects and are therefore less likely to preserve other grammatical forms. The following example from the Hurro-Hittite Bilingual shows an antipassive verb with third singular subject (the morphemes in question are given in bold in each example):

- (3) *el(i)=a fağr=o=•(e)=a tăn=d=i=**b** negri e•e=ne=ve ^dAllāni*
 “Allani, the bolt of the earth, prepared a bounteous/beautiful feast” (KBo 32.13 i 12-13)¹⁷.

In this example, the subject *Allāni* is in the absolutive while the patient *ela fağro•a* is in the essive. The focus of the phrase is not on the patient, but rather on either the act of preparing the feast, or even on the goddess who is doing the preparation.

Third person plural subjects are also represented in the texts. Again from the Hurro-Hittite Bilingual:

- (4) *tapš=ā=ge=na sugm=ušt=**a=b***
 “(and) the cupbearers came in” (KBo 32.13 i 21)¹⁸.

The subject is clearly the absolutive plural *tapšāgena*. The same *=b* marker is found on the verb.

¹⁷ The corresponding Hittite reads: *nu ša-ni-iz-zi-in EZEN₄-an i-e-et tāk-na-a-aš ḥa-at-tal-wa-aš tāk-na-a-aš* ^dUTU-uš “The Sun Goddess of the earth, the bolt of the earth (lit: the one of the bolt of the earth) prepared a magnificent feast” (KBo 32.13 ii 13-14). The Hittite *taknas hattalwas* has been analyzed as a pl. dat.-loc. (H. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths 2nd edition* (SBL 2). Atlanta 1998, p. 73 “at the Bolts of the Netherworld”; V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (HdO I.15). New York 1994, p. 130¹²⁴ “an den Riegeln der Erde”). According to Neu, “der Absolutiv *nekri* steht also hier auf die Frage „Wo?“” (E. Neu, *Das hurritische Epos der Freilassung I*. (StBoT 32). Wiesbaden 1996, p. 253). The analysis of the absolute case as a locative expression is not likely. Instead of forcing the Hurrian to match one possible analysis of the Hittite, it would be better to base our reading of the Hittite on the Hurrian. The form *negri* is clearly absolute singular. It is therefore to be taken in apposition to the DN Allani. An alternate analysis of the Hittite is available. If *hattalwas* is taken as a free standing genitive, then we have a form “(the one) of the bolt of the earth” which could function as an epithet for the Sun Goddess of the Earth (cf. I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 185).

¹⁸ The corresponding Hittite reads: *LÜ.MEŠ SAGI-ia an-da a-ri-ir* “The cupbearers came in” (KBo 32.13 ii 21-22).

While less frequent, examples with first and second person subjects can also be found in the text corpus. I know of one clear example with a first person singular subject:

- (5) *zul(i?)=ā=d zul=ud=i=b*
 “I release(d) the bindings” (ChS I/5 2 rev. 69’).

We have an antipassive construction here with the agent in the absolutive (the enclitic personal pronoun =*d*) and the patient in the essive (*zulā*). A verb with first person plural subject is found in two examples from ChS I/5 40:

- (6) *kašša=va=dil arārē[-ni ašt(e)=a] firfir=išt=i=b*
 “We released [the woman from] sorcery at the gate” (ChS I/5 40 rev. 41’-42’) ¹⁹

and:

- (7) *kašša=v[ā=di]l arārē=ni taḡ(e)=a’(text: taḡe) firfir=išt=i=b*
 “[W]e released the man from sorcery [a]t the gate” (ChS I/5 40 rev. 42’-43’) ²⁰

As with (5), we have here two antipassive constructions with the agent (=dil) in the absolutive.

All examples of second person Old Hurrian verbal forms are found in the “Prayer to Teššob of Ḫalab” (KUB 47.78). ²¹ In this text, we find a number of antipassive constructions. We find agreement marked by either a Ø suffix or by the morpheme =*b*:

- (8) *tī•(=)uv?ar=ḡ(e)=ā-mma²² fōr=i kapp=a•=i=b*
mu•=o=n(i)=ā=-m tēl=i=b²³
 “You (Teššob) recognize ... and fill. You increase fairness” (KUB 47.78 i 7’-8’) ²⁴

¹⁹ The phrase is repeated in rev. 47’-48’: *ka[-aš-ša-pa-a-ti-il] a-ra-a<-ri>-e-ni aš-ta wi_i-ir-wi_i[-ri-iš-ti-ib]*

²⁰ The Hittite equivalents for (6) and (7) are *a-aš-ki-kán an-«da» al-wa-an-za-aḡ-ḫa-an-da-an MUNUS-an la-a-nu-un* “At the gate I released the bewitched woman (from the spell)” (ChS I/5 40 rev. 41’-42’) and *a-aš-ki-kán an-da al-wa-an-za-aḡ-ḫa-an-da-an LÚ-an la-a-nu-un* “At the gate I released the bewitched man (from the spell)” (ChS I/5 40 rev. 42’-43’) respectively. The *taḡe* of (7) is likely to be a scribal error for the expected essive form *taḡ(e)=a*, especially based on the passage in note 19. The patient is incorrectly given in rev. 43’ as an absolutive NP while an essive is required according to proper grammar.

²¹ Edited by H.-J. Thiel and I. Wegner, “Eine Anrufung an den Gott Teshup von Halab in hurritischer Sprache”, *SMEA* 24 (1984), pp. 187-213.

²² The normalization of this form follows M. Giorgieri, “Hurritisch *te-li-(i)-ip-pa* / hethitisch *nu... ma-ak-nu-ut* in der hurritisch-hethitischen Bilingue aus Boğazköy”, *Kulturgeschichte. Altorientalische Studien für Volkert Haas zum 65. Geburtstag*, T. Richter, D. Prechel and J. Klinger eds. Saarbrücken 2001, p. 134.

²³ The format of this example is meant to roughly approximate the text on the original tablet.

²⁴ 7’ *ti-i-šu-wa-ar-ḫa-a(over erasure)-am-ma wu_i-u-ri kap-pa-ši-ib*
 8’ *mu-šu-na-a(over erasure)-am te-e-li-ib*

That the agent of the antipassive verbs is the second person is clear from the use of the enclitic pronoun *=mma* (i 7') and *=m* (i 8'). Even though we already have the subject indicated by the enclitic pronouns, one might think that the agreement on the verb should mirror this by using an enclitic pronoun following examples found in texts containing Mittani forms. For this reason, an emendation of the forms to *kapp=a•=i=m¹* and *tēl=i=m¹* has been postulated²⁵. The text displays older verbal forms, however, and not Mittani ones (cf. example (12) below), and therefore one would expect the verbs to conform to the grammar of Old Hurrian and not Mittani. Given that *=b* is found not only with third person singular/plural but also first person singular/plural, there is no reason not to suspect that this morpheme would not also be found with the second person. I suggest that the forms in the text are correct as they stand and require no emendation.

The morpheme *=b* functions as a verbal class marker, occurring on intransitive and antipassive verbs with all persons and numbers. The origin of the morpheme is far from clear. It is likely that it originally functioned as an agreement marker for a specific person and number. As time passed, the class marker lost much of its semantic content until it came to be used on all intransitive and antipassive verbs regardless of the person or number of the S NP. This could have occurred as the direct result of contact with other languages or simply through obsolescence.

As we shall see below, the Old Hurrian transitive verb completely disappears in a later period and is replaced by the Mittani transitive construction. It does not appear, however, that the Old Hurrian *=b* was replaced by a \emptyset marker in Mittani Hurrian. We have examples from Boğazköy of Hurrian texts showing younger transitive forms and older intransitive and antipassive ones²⁶. All of the evidence points to *=b* being phased out already in the early second millennium (note the lack of *=b* in the Tiš-atal inscription!)²⁷. By the time of the Mittani Letter, it was apparently completely phased out of use, at least in the official language of the Mittani court. The evidence from Boğazköy suggests that this morpheme persisted as a class marker into the middle of the second millennium. While *=b* is not used in the Mittani letter, the form of the intransitive and antipassive remains unchanged from Old Hurrian, requiring the thematic markers *=a* and *=i* respectively.

²⁵ M. Giorgieri, *Fs. Haas*, pp. 134-135.

²⁶ A perfect example of such a text is the prayer ChS I/1 41. All examples of indicative transitive verbs found in this text are Mittani. Some examples are: *ga-a-da-a-ú-ul* (*kād=āū=l*) "I speak them" (iii 49); *ga-ti-«ú»* (*kād=i=o*) "you speak" (iv 25); *ga-a-ti-i[a-aš]-ši ... ḫa-a-ši-ia-an* (*kād=i=[a=aš]še ... ḫā•=i=a=n*) "that which he speaks (my ears) hear" (i 24-25). Intransitive and antipassive verbs often occur with the *=b* agreement marker: e.g. *ú-du-ra-ap* (*ud=ur=a=b*) "?" (i 20) and *pa-la-aš-ta-ap* (*pal=ašt=a=b*) "he knows?" (iii 66).

²⁷ See note 13.

=o

The situation with transitive indicative verbal forms is much more complex. Unlike the intransitive and antipassive, there is no genetic link between the Old Hurrian and Mittani forms. In fact, the Mittani dialect shows a completely revamped transitive, bearing absolutely no similarity to the older dialect. The reason for this difference is difficult to determine, but it is likely due in part to the idiosyncrasies within the Old Hurrian verb and contact with other language groups (especially the proto-Indo-Aryans who so clearly influenced the Mittani Hurrians).

Before beginning the examination of the older forms, it is perhaps best to summarize how the transitive verb is formed in Mittani. The transitive verb in Mittani shows complete agreement with the A NP. The patient is optionally indicated on the verb through the affixation of the free enclitic pronouns.²⁸ The paradigm is as follows:

(9)

Agent	singular	plural
1	=av	=av=•(a)
2	(=i)=o	=ašš=o
3	(=i)=a	(=i)=a=•

paradigm of Mittani transitive verb²⁹

A valence marker =i= is used with second singular and third singular/plural agents, although in the texts from Boğazköy, it is used inconsistently³⁰. A final important feature of the

²⁸ For example: *for=ō•=ā=ll(a)=ān* (Mitt. i 72); *tān=ill=ēd=a=ll(a) =ān* (Mitt. i 109).

²⁹ Adapted from M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55 (2000), p. 231; see also I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 78.

³⁰ Some examples of this have already been noted (cf. M. Giorgieri, “Zu den hurritischen Verbformen auf -i=a: eine Berichtigung”, *SMEA* 45 (2003), p. 128). A few more examples can be added to this. A series of difficult passages are found in ChS I/1 6 which include transitive verbs with third person agents that do not display this =i=valence marker. In the first example we find a series of three transitive verbs. The first is in the expected -i-a while the other two simply have =a. The verbs are given in bold: *ḥanumbazḥe tupp=e šīe=n(a)=a•=a tar•uwanzi šīe=ne=• zāz=ol=i=a tēg=oll=a talm=ol=a* “Fertility is collected in the waters. The water nourishes, raises and makes strong humanity” (ChS I/1 6 iii 43’-44’). Haas interprets this passage differently, taking *te-e-ḥu-ul-la* and *tal-mu-u-la* as nominal forms (V. Haas, “Ein Preis auf Wasser in hurritischer Sprache”, *ZA* 79 (1989), p. 268). He runs into difficulties with his analysis of the latter form, parsing it as *talm+uli=na*?. He takes these two words as objects of *ši-ia* which he tentatively associates with Urartian *ši-* “to bring”, but this analysis seems unlikely here. Against Haas, I prefer to see in *ši-ia* an essive of *šiye* “water” (*ši(e)=a*), and I prefer to take this as the first element of a new sentence: *ši(e)=a tar•uwanni=va šēgurninni poššinni \ e•ilenni* “In water is life?, *poššinni* and *e•enni* for humanity” (ChS I/1 6 iii 44’-45’). The nominal forms in -nni here are unclear, although *šēgurninni* is clearly built off of the root *šēgurni* “life”. A second example of a transitive verb without =i= is also found in this text: *šīe=ne=• a•=ōl=a mōr(i)=ri(<ni) ḥā=x[* “The water washes [...] in/with the *mōri*” (ChS I/1 6 iii 13’). The verb *a•-* is translated here as “to wash” based on context.

transitive verb in Mittani is that this dialect distinguishes tenses (\emptyset present, $=o\bullet$ = preterite, $=ed$ = future)³¹.

As we shall see the transitive verb in Old Hurrian is completely different from its younger counterpart. Determining the structure of the transitive verb in Old Hurrian is far more difficult than it is in Mittani. For Mittani Hurrian, we have a complete paradigm for all persons and numbers³². In Old Hurrian, however, we are truly suffering from a deficiency of forms. All of the known Old Hurrian verbal forms have a third person agent. The only transitive verbs with an agent *not* in the third person are found in the Hurro-Hittite Bilingual, but these forms are all “Mittanian”³³. That being said, the “Song of Release” and its related texts exhibit a number of Mittani verbal forms. The language of the preserved versions of the myth and associated parables is quite interesting in and of itself. The forms in the text demonstrate that already by the Middle Hittite period Mittani Hurrian was exerting a strong influence over the language. This would explain the mixing of features from both dialects in this text. The parables which are only loosely related to the myth exhibit the most consistent use of older forms.

Virtually every Old Hurrian transitive verb has both a third person agent as well as a third person patient. In fact, for the majority of verbs both the agent and the patient are in the singular. Occurring less frequently are forms in which the agent is in the plural and the patient is singular. Forms with both agent and the patient in the plural are extremely rare in the preserved text corpus. There is one example of a form with the patient in the second person. I know of no Old Hurrian transitive verbs with a first person argument.

The transitive valence in Old Hurrian is indicated by the morpheme $=o(=)$. It has been clearly established that the transitive verb with third singular agent and third singular patient is indicated by the combination $=o+m$. Note the following examples:

- (10) *nāli ... faban(i) =ne=• mel=aḥḥ=o=m*
 “The mountain expelled a deer (from within it)” (KBo 32.14 i 1-2)³⁴

- (11) *aī=mma urḡ(i)=a ur(i)=iya^d Teššoba=• tiv=āḡ=ō=m*
 “When Teššob spoke *his uri-* as truth ...” (ChS I/1 52 obv. 10)

Since the function of $=o=$ as a valence marker is virtually assured, we are left with $=m$. A number of theories exist concerning the function of this morpheme.

³¹ See M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55, pp. 225-226; I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 77.

³² With the exception of the second person plural form which is only found in KBo 32.19 i 11, 13 (cf. G. Wilhelm, *OrNS* 61, p. 138), all forms are well represented in both the Mittani Letter and the texts from Boğazköy.

³³ E.g. *qa-ti-ia* (*kad=i=a*) “he speaks” (KBo 32.15 iv 13); *ú-ri-u* (*ur=i=o*) “you desire” (KBo 32.15 iv 2); and *ti-lu-lu-u-uš-tab* (*til=ol=ōšt=av*) “I will break down”.

³⁴ Note too the parallel passage: *kāzi tabal(i)=le(<ne)=• ... tev=ašt=ō=m* “the smith case the beaker (for greatness)” (KBo 32.14 i 42-43).

Some have chosen to analyze $=m$ as a marker of “subject” agreement³⁵, comparable to the agreement marker $=b$ in intransitive and antipassive verbs³⁶. In fact, some have even gone so far as to state that $=m$ and $=b$ are one and the same³⁷. In nominative-accusative languages it is typical for S and A to share the same agreement marker while O is cross-referenced (if at all) by a different morpheme. In languages displaying ergative agreement, however, S and O are usually cross-referenced on the verb by the same morpheme. There are certain ergative languages that do not cross-reference A at all³⁸. As we have seen above, $=b$ is the S agreement marker in the intransitive and antipassive. If $=m$ is to be taken as a subject/agent marker, then it would have to indicate agreement with the ergative NP. It is highly doubtful that in Hurrian a morpheme $=m/b$ would be used to indicate A and S agreement. Wegner bases her analysis on the form $=o=b$ which appears parallel to verbs in $=o=m$ in the Hurro-Hittite bilingual³⁹. I follow Giorgieri and Wilhelm in seeing these forms as occurring so rarely as to be statistically negligible⁴⁰. There are a number of possible explanations for these forms and no reason to see $=o=m$ as anything but the typical form⁴¹.

³⁵ Presumably “agent” is meant.

³⁶ See M. Khačikyan, SCCNH 10, p. 259; I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 110

³⁷ E. Neu, “Varia Hurritica: Sprachliche Beobachtungen an der hurritisch-hethitischen Bilingue aus Ḫattuša”, *Documentum Asiae Minoris Antiquae: Festschrift für Heinrich Otten zum 75. Geburtstag*. E. Neu and C. Rüster eds. Wiesbaden 1988, p. 238 “In diesen transitiven Bildungen dürfte geschriebenes $-m$ am Wortende morphologisch $-b$ repräsentieren”. M. Khačikyan, SCCNH 10, p. 259 goes even further, analyzing this $=m/b$ morpheme “as an originally singular pronoun, which was neutralized [i.e. optional] in certain positions”. While this holds for the intransitive and antipassive $=b$, the evidence for $=m$ simply does not hold up under scrutiny. First of all, $=m$ never occurs with any other combination than third person singular agent with third person singular patient. $=b$ on the other hand is neutral as to number (as well as person). Secondly, none of Khačikyan’s examples of transitive forms with deleted $=m$ hold up. She cites the form $šeḫl=o$ (her normalization) as such a form, but the phrase is to be read: (^d*Teššob*) $šeḫl=u$ [*h*]aikal(i)=le(<ne) (KBo 32.13 i 1-2). This verb here is intransitive. The accompanying Hittite translation reads: *na-aš-kán ták-na-a-aš* ^dUTU-aš ^ē*ḫa-le-en-tu-u-wa-aš an-da-an i-ia-an-ni-iš* “he went into the palace of the Sun Goddess of the Earth” (ii 1-3) (cf. E. Neu, StBoT 32, p. 230). While difficult, the Hurrian form $šeḫl=u$ must be an intransitive or stative in $=u$. Her other examples, *kiwud-o* and *naḫed-o* (both her normalization) do not fair any better. The former is to be analyzed as an intransitive or stative in $=u$ (E. Neu, StBoT 32, pp. 233-234) while the latter is to be analyzed as a transitive verb with third plural agent. As we shall see below, these forms inflect differently from those with third singular agents.

³⁸ R. Dixon, *Ergativity*, p. 44 cites Canelo-Krahô of Central Brazil and the Northeast Caucasian language Avar as examples of such languages.

³⁹ I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 110.

⁴⁰ M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55, p. 230¹⁷⁴ and G. Wilhelm, “Die Inschrift des Tišatal von Urkeš”, *Urkesh and the Hurrians: Studies in Honor of Lloyd Cotsen* (Urkesh/Mozan Studies 3). G. Buccellati and M. Kelly-Buccellati eds. Malibu 1998, p. 131.

⁴¹ One possible analysis is a change $-m > -b$ due to interference from the following word. Two such forms are known: *pu-ú-zi-ḫu-ub* (KBo 32.14 rev. 24) and *a-le-e-u-ub* (KBo 32.14 rev. 36). Both forms are immediately followed by NPs with initial *ḫ-* (*ḫa-a-šar-ri* rev. 24 and *ḫa-wu_u-ru-u-un-ni* rev. 36). As noted

An alternate theory has been put forward stating that this $=m$ morpheme is a “bipolar” or binary morpheme agreeing with both A and O⁴². Such binary agreement markers do exist in some modern languages⁴³. Binary agreement markers are formed through fusion or merger of two distinct agreement markers “into a single portmanteau form which is not synchronically analyzable”⁴⁴. If we are to follow this definition, then $=m$ must be the end result of the collusion of two separate morphemes, one marking agent agreement and one marking patient agreement. This theory also assumes that an agent agreement marker is mandatory. An alternate theory is available. It is possible that $=m$, regardless of its origin, came to be generalized as a marker of a third person agent acting on a third person patient. In other words, $=m$ did not develop into a bipolar agreement marker through the fusion of agent and patient agreement markers but rather through grammaticalization of an original (patient?) agreement marker $=m$. Given that it appears only with forms with third singular agents and third singular patients, this is attractive from a synchronic standpoint.

From a diachronic perspective, is it possible to locate the origin of this morpheme? A viable candidate exists in the form of the third singular enclitic pronoun $=ma/e=$ found in the Mittani Letter. The typical third singular enclitic pronoun is $=nna$ or simply $=n$. In certain phrase initial constructions such as $inu/\bar{u}=m\bar{a}/\bar{e}=n\bar{n}$ ⁴⁵ and $inn\bar{a}=m\bar{a}/\bar{e}=n\bar{n}$ ⁴⁶, however, the morpheme $=m\bar{a}/\bar{e}=$ can only be interpreted as a third person singular enclitic.⁴⁷ This morpheme is also found in similar constructions in Hurrian texts from Boğazköy⁴⁸. It appears that $=ma/e=$ in these contexts is an archaic feature that has been preserved only in certain frozen expressions. If the $=m$ agreement marker is indeed related to this enclitic pronoun, then it would clearly function as an agreement marker for third person absolutive forms. Therefore it would stand formally as an O agreement marker rather than as the fusion of both A and O markers⁴⁹.

by G. Wilhelm, *Studies Cotsen*, p. 131, there is simply not enough statistical evidence to show that the sound combination $-m\#h- > -b\#h-$.

⁴² G. Wilhelm, “Zum hurritischen Verbalsystem”, *Texte, Sätze, Wörter und Moneme: Festschrift für Klaus Heger zum 65. Geburtstag*. S. Anschütz ed. Heidelberg 1992, p. 666; *ibid.*, *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 111; followed in M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55, pp. 229-230.

⁴³ Take for example the polypersonal agreement marker $-a$ (3sg./3sg.) in West Greenlandic Eskimo.

⁴⁴ R. Dixon, *Ergativity*, p. 44.

⁴⁵ Mitt. i 12, 75, ii 123, 125, iii 97

⁴⁶ Mitt. ii 6, 14, 16, iii 12, 21, 22, 29

⁴⁷ This idea dates back as far as the pioneering work of F. Bork, “Studien zum Mitani”, *AfO* 35.6 (1932-1933), p. 310. The idea was refuted by A. Goetze, “Enclitic Pronouns in Hurrian”, *JCS* 2 (1948), pp. 257-258 (followed by F. Bush, *A Grammar of the Hurrian Language*, Ph.D. Diss. Brandeis University 1964, p. 255). Since Goetze, there has been a tendency to analyze the morpheme as an enclitic pronoun, even if tentatively (cf. G. Wilhelm, *Fs. Heger*, pp. 666-667 with citations; M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55, p. 220; I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 68).

⁴⁸ Take for example: $inu=m\bar{e} u\check{s}h\bar{o}ni \check{s}eg=al=\bar{a}$ (and: $\check{s}eh=\bar{a}l=a$) “as silver is pure ...” (ChS I/1 9 iv 8, 27).

⁴⁹ Note the situation in modern Hindi. In transitive/ergative constructions in this language, agreement is with the patient and not with the agent (or combination of both). In the following example, agreement is

One example of a transitive verb with third person singular agent and a second singular patient is known. The example comes from the “Prayer to Teššob of Ḫalab” (cf. (7) above):

- (12) *nera=v=ū(•)=mma* ^d*Kumarbi=ne=• un=ō=b/v* (= *ú-nu-u-ub*)⁵⁰
 “Your mother Kumarbi brought you (Teššob) (into the world)” (KUB 47.78 i 13’-14’)⁵¹.

The agent is the NP *nera=v=ū(•)* ^d*Kumarbi=ne=•* and the patient is the second person singular enclitic pronoun *=mma*. Giorgieri opts to take the verbal form *un=ō=b* as an aberrant writing of “expected” *un=ō=m*⁵². As seen above, he also takes the antipassive forms in *=i=b* found in this text as an error for expected *=i=m*⁵³. According to Giorgieri, it appears “daß der Schreiber dieses Textes anscheinend die Verwendung von Zeichen mit auslautendem bilabialen Okklusiv zur Wiedergabe des bilabialen Nasals /m/ bevorzugte”⁵⁴. It has been postulated that a change *m > b* may result when the verb is followed by a word with initial *h*-⁵⁵. In this case, *un=ō=b* is immediately followed by the GN ^{URU}*ḫal-pa-w[a]_a-an*.

If we follow Giorgieri in taking the *=b* of *un=ō=b* as coming from the *=m* known otherwise only from forms with third singular agent and patient, then this morpheme would mark agreement with not only third person singular patients, but second singular ones as well.

with the *roḫi* “bread”, the feminine patient. The ergative is marked by the morpheme *=ne* on the masculine personal name *Rām*: *Rām-ne roḫi khāyī thī* “Rām(masc.) had eaten the bread(fem.)”. The verbal construction *khāyī thī* is to be analyzed as: eat+PERF+FEM be+PAST+FEM, clearly indicating agreement with the feminine patient and not with the masculine agent.

⁵⁰ The exact phonetic shape of this morpheme is unclear. It will be given simply as *=b* for the remainder of this paper.

⁵¹ H.-J. Thiel and I. Wegner, *SMEA* 24, pp. 199-200, 203-204, 205 “(und) Dich (hat) Deine ‘Mutter’ Kumarbi in den Zustand des Angekommenseins versetzt (=Dich [zur Welt] gebracht)”; M. Giorgieri, *Fs. Haas*, p. 135 “(Kumbarbi) ließ dich kommen (= gebiert dich)”; M. Khačikyan, “Sur la caractéristique typologique de l’Hourrite et l’Ourartéen”, *SCCNH 5: General Studies and Excavations at Nuzi 9/3*, D. Owens and E. Lacheman eds. Winona Lake 1995, p. 26 “(le dieu) Kumarvə(t’) a mis à jour;” G. Wilhelm, “König Silber und König Ḫidam”, *Hittite Studies in Honor of Harry A. Hoffner Jr*, G. Beckman, R. Beal and G. McMahon eds. Winona Lake 2003, p. 39 “Deine Mutter Kumarbi hat dich zu Welt gebracht”.

⁵² M. Giorgieri, *Fs. Haas*, p. 135; it is unclear whether or not Giorgieri takes the *=m* in this form as a short form of the second person enclitic pronoun or simply as the *=m* typically found on the verb in third singular agent/third singular patient clauses.

⁵³ M. Giorgieri, *Fs. Haas*, p. 135 and note 39. Based on the evidence provided above, *=b* is perfectly acceptable as an agreement marker in this text.

⁵⁴ M. Giorgieri, *Fs. Haas*, p. 135

⁵⁵ See note 37 above. Note however, that there is at least one form in which a combination *-m+h-*, though word internal, can be found. The adverbial form *emanamḫa* “tenfold” is based on the root *eman* “ten” + *am* (factive) + *h* + *a* (essive?). Here the presence of a morpheme *=h* does not trigger the change of *m > b* with a resulting form ***emanabḫa*.

Unlike $=b$, however, $=m$ would be relegated to marking agreement *only* with singular patients. There are no examples of this morpheme being used when the patient is in the plural.

It is possible, that the $=b$ in this form is a scribal error based on the use of $=b$ to mark agreement with the second person agents of the two antipassive verbs $kapp=a\bullet=i=b$ and $t\bar{e}l=i=b$ (i 7', 8'). If this is the case then the correct agreement marker for a second person agent in a transitive construction is something other than $=b$. As a result, the form of the correct agreement marker must remain unknown until other examples are found. The simplest solution at the present time is to accept $=b$, if tentatively, as the agreement marker for second person singular agents.

In summary, verbs with third singular agents and third singular patients make up the largest percentage of Old Hurrian transitive forms. In every case they are marked by the morphemes $=o=m$. The one example of a transitive verb and a non-third person patient is found in a prayer to Teššob. Here, the patient is in the second person singular. The verb contains not $=o=m$, but rather $=o=b$. As demonstrated above, we cannot tacitly assume that this is an error for $=o=m$.⁵⁶ Until more examples are found, we must take this form as it is given. As it stands, we find different agreement markers for different patients. This makes taking $=m$ as resulting from the fusion of both agent and patient agreement morphemes unlikely.⁵⁶ The evidence available, as meager as it is, indicates that in Old Hurrian, when the agent was in the singular, agreement was with the patient.

Evidence for forms with a third singular agent and third plural patient is scanty at best. One possible example has been cited for such a form. The example comes from the so-called "Feast of Allani" section of the Hurro-Hittite bilingual. The goddess of Allani, after preparing a feast for Teššob, seats the guests:

- (13) *amatti=na ēn(i)=na^dTeššop=pa=lla nahḫō•o fandi=ni*
 "(Allani) sat the primeval deities to the right of Teššob" (KBo 32.13 i 25-26)⁵⁷

The verbal form *nahḫō•o* has been analyzed as *nahḫ=ō=•o* with $=ō=$ as the transitive valence marker and $=•o$ as the third plural patient agreement marker⁵⁸. This analysis has not been universally excepted. There are problems with this parsing that need to be addressed. First of all, it is impossible to trace this agreement back to an earlier pronominal form. While the

⁵⁶ While this implies that $=m$ and $=b$ are not the result of fusion, it does not mean that they are not "bipolar". As will be explored below, it is quite possible that $=m$ and $=b$ are "bipolar" in the sense that they came to be realized as markers of verbs in which a third singular agent acting on a third singular patient and a third singular agent acting on a second singular agent respectively.

⁵⁷ The corresponding Hittite reads: *ka-ru-ū-li-uš-ma-za* DINGIR.MEŠ-uš / ^dIM-aš ZAG-az a-ša-aš-ta "She sat the primeval deities to the right of Teššob" (KBo 32.13 ii 26-27).

⁵⁸ G. Wilhelm, *OrNS* 61, p. 137; *ibid.*, *Fs. Heger*, p. 666; followed by M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55, p. 230. Alternatively, Wilhelm also analyzes the form as *nahḫ=ō•o* (*Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 112). E. Neu, *StBoT* 32, p. 263 analyzes the form as *nahḫ=uš=u*.

singular $=m$ is likely related to the enclitic pronoun $=ma/e=$, no sources for $=\bullet o$ exist. This problem is not, in and of itself, insurmountable. It is possible that $=\bullet o$ goes back to a form that had ceased to exist by the time Hurrian came to be a written language. For example, the origin for the agreement marker $=b$ remain unknown. A more difficult problem is in how the morpheme itself is to be interpreted. The \bullet of the morpheme has been interpreted as a plural marker. While we have a morpheme $=a\bullet$ use to pluralize nominal forms, it is *never* used to pluralize absolutes⁵⁹. As a plural marker, it is only found with ergatives and oblique NPs⁶⁰. Another problem is that this would be the only occurrence of a vowel u/o used in a third person form.

An alternative analysis has been offered by Wegner. In her grammar, she treats this form as a scribal error for $nahh=o\bullet=a'$ ⁶¹, taking $-šu$ as a mistake for expected $-ša$ ⁶². This results in a Mittani verbal form. $nahh=o\bullet=a'$ is a third person preterite form and is translated simply as “she sat (them).” Using “scribal error” to explain unexpected forms is never desirable. While the resulting $nahh=\bar{o}\bullet=a'$ is a far more satisfying form than $nahh=\bar{o}(=)\bullet o$, an alternate explanation not requiring us to fall back on “scribal error” would be best.

I would like to suggest here a parsing $nahh=\bar{o}\bullet=o$. $=\bar{o}\bullet=$ can be seen as functioning here as a derivational morpheme⁶³, and $=o$ would be the transitive valence marker. In this analysis, agreement with the patient would be indicated by a \emptyset morpheme. It is possible that plural patients were originally marked on the verb but over time this was lost. The result of this analysis is that while verbs with third singular agents acting on third singular patients are marked with $=m$, those with third singular agents acting on third plural patients are marked by \emptyset .

Transitive forms with plural agents are problematic in their own right. Instead of the expected agreement with the patient, these forms agree only with the agent. The patient agreement marker $=m$ does not appear if the agent is in the plural⁶⁴. Plural forms are indicated by the combination $=id=o$ where $=o$ remains the transitive valence marker and $=id=$ is a third

⁵⁹ The one exception of this is the use of $=\bullet$ to pluralize possessive pronouns, even if the NP is singular (e.g. *at-ta-a-ar-ti-iw-wa-aš* (*att(a)=ārd(i)=iff(e)=a\bullet*) “our forefathers”).

⁶⁰ A morpheme $-\bullet$ is also used along with the agreement markers on Mittani transitive verbs to indicate plural agents. The possible connection between this Mittani morpheme and the \bullet in $=o(=)\bullet o$ is mentioned in G. Wilhelm, *OrNS* 61, p. 137.

⁶¹ While the preterite marker $=o\bullet-$ is not typically written plene, examples do exist (cf. the hyper-plene writing *am-mu-u-u-ša* (*amm=\bar{o}\bullet=a*) Mitt. i 95).

⁶² I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 191.

⁶³ This $=\bar{o}\bullet=$ may be a derivational morpheme that developed into the preterite marker $=o\bullet=$ found in Mittani Hurrian.

⁶⁴ This is one of the prime reasons for Wilhelm to take this $=m$ as a “bipolar” agreement marker. Since $=m$ does not appear in third plural/third singular forms, he has concluded that $=m$ cannot have stood for just the patient.

plural agreement marker⁶⁵. In stark contrast with all other agreement markers from both the Old Hurrian and Mittani dialects, this *=id=* morpheme occurs to the left of the valence marker. All other agreement markers appear to the right of it.

The majority of examples of forms with plural agents involve singular patients. In such examples agreement is only with the agent. Take for example the following example:

- (14) *kib=id=o egi=da šekli ušhōni=ma*
 “They place within (it) a silver shekel” (ChS I/1 65 ii² 26’-27’)

This phrase is immediately followed by another with a third plural agent:

- (15) *kukkubi=n(a)=a•=a⁶⁶ kīb=id=o ši[kli[?]] ušhōni=ma*
 “In/For the *kukkubi*[?] they place a silver shekel” (ChS I/1 65 ii² 27’-28’).

The text is extremely difficult. It is not entirely certain, but the verbal forms used in it appear to all be Old Hurrian⁶⁷. It is unclear who the agents are. As a result, the verbs here may be best translated as the impersonal third person “one.” Another example of a verb with third plural agent and a third singular patient comes from the parables included in the Hurro-Hittite bilingual:

- (16) *[āk]k(i)=a-n(i)=ni ḫalzē=ni ḫalzoğl(i)=a [naḫ(h)=id=o⁶⁸*
 “They (or: “one”), [sat] him within [o]ne⁶⁹ district as commander” (KBo 32.14 i 33-34).

⁶⁵ G. Wilhelm, *OrNS* 61, p. 138; *ibid.*, *Fs. Heger*, p. 666 and note 7; M. Giorgieri, *PP* 55, p. 227; I. Wegner, *Hurritisch*, p. 110.

⁶⁶ Perhaps to be taken as a genitive *kukku=ve=* with Suffixaufnahme. Note the form *ku-uk-ku-pa* in ii² 26’ which is likely to be a dative locative form *kukku=va*. If such an analysis is correct, we still have to deal with the problem that we would have a *u*-class verb here and not the typical *-i/e* or *-a*. It is possible that we are dealing with a noun *kukkubi*.

⁶⁷ Difficult is the phrase *ḫa-a-i-al ku-uk-ku-pa pa-an-za-ar-ḫi bi-ri-ia-aš* in ii² 26’. It is set off from surrounding phrases through the use of gloss marks. The first form looks a lot like a Mittani verbal form *ḫā=i=a=l* “he takes them”. Both *ḫa-a-i-al* and *bi-ri-ia-aš* could be either Mittani verbal forms or nominal forms with third person plural possessive morphemes *=ia=•*. In the case of *ḫa-a-i-al*, the plural *=•* would be elided before the third plural enclitic *=l*. The other verbal forms that can be identified in the text are either antipassive (e.g. *ú-ni-ib* ii² 3’, 4’, 6’, 9’, 10’, 12’, 15’, 16’, 17’, 20’) or non-indicative. The second person singular future form in Mittani, *=ed=o* is written in a similar manner to the Old Hurrian plural in *=id=o*.

⁶⁸ Written: *[na-aḫ-ḫe]-e-du* (or: *[na-ḫe]-*)

⁶⁹ Not literally the numeral “one”, but rather part of a contrastive pair “one or the other”. G. Wilhelm, *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 109 terms this as “Alternative, proximity”.

As with (14) and (15), the agent here may be a plural “they” or an impersonal “one.” In both cases, agreement is only with the agent.

There are two examples of verbal forms with third plural agents and third plural patients. In both cases, the verb occurs in sentence initial position. Affixed to each verbal form is the abbreviated or short form of the third plural enclitic pronoun *=l*. The examples are as follows:

- (17) (They bring (*un=i=b*) the oil into the pure⁷ house for ...) *pug=uld=id=o=l*
fori=na ki=ta=a=[x=a]l=la
 “They *puguld*-ed the eyes⁷ ...” (ChS I/1 65 ii⁷ 20’)

- (18) ^d*Šauška(=•)=l tīve=na tar•ē=n(a)=aš=t=[l alumain kad=i=a] ... § hā•=īd=ō¹⁷⁰*
=l tīvi=na x[
 “Šauška [spoke/speaks] the words to the people ... § They heard the words ...” (ChS I/6 26 obv. 8-13).

While (17) is a clear example of a verb with plural agent and plural patient, it is difficult to decipher its meaning. Example (18), however, is quite clear. In the first paragraph, Šauška speaks to the people of a certain city. After her speech, a new paragraph begins by stating that the people “heard the words”⁷¹. The *=l* clearly indicates the plural patient, but it is *not* an agreement morpheme. *=l* is to be taken here as a free enclitic occurring in Wackernagel’s position. These forms are further evidence against interpreting *naḫḫo•o* as *naḫḫ=o=•o*. If *=•o* were a third plural patient agreement marker, then we would expect ***pug=uld=id=o=•o* and ***hā•=īd=ō=•o* in (17) and (18) respectively.

Based on the examples given above, a paradigm can be given for the Old Hurrian transitive verb. The paradigm in (19) is for verbs with third person agent and third person patient:

(19)

	3 sg. O	3 pl. O
3 sg. A	<i>=o=m</i>	<i>=o=Ø</i>
3 pl. A	<i>=id=o=Ø</i>	<i>=id=o=Ø</i>

Synchronically, *=m* is a “bipolar” agreement marker, marking verbs that have third singular agents and third singular patients. This *=m* is incompatible with either third plural agents or third plural patients. In the same way, the *=b* of *un=ō=b* may be a “bipolar” marker indicating that the verb has a third singular agent and second plural patient. While *=m* may not

⁷⁰ Written *-tu-ú-ul-*; the scribes in Boğazköy were not as careful as the scribe of the Mittani letter in distinguishing between /u/ and /o/ in the orthography.

⁷¹ This pattern is repeated throughout the Hurrian myths found at Boğazköy.

result from the fusion of two different morphemes, it still functions syntactically as a “bipolar” agreement marker.

The Old Hurrian transitive verb is clearly related to the later Urartian transitive forms⁷². This is not the place to examine the Urartian verb in full, but certain characteristics require mention here. Transitivity in Urartian, as in Old Hurrian, is indicated by a valence marker *=o=*.

The transitive verb with third singular agent and patient in Urartian is *V=o=nə*⁷³. The morpheme *=nə* is clearly related to the third singular enclitic pronoun *-nna* in Hurrian. The third plural agent and third singular patient form is *V=it=o=nə*, and the third plural agent and third plural patient form is *V=it=o=lə*. In both cases, we find an agent agreement marker *=it=* and a patient marker *=nə* and *=lə* respectively. There are no examples of a transitive verb without patient agreement in Urartian. The patient markers, as given above, are not optional as they are in Hurrian, but rather required⁷⁴.

The plural agent agreement marker in Urartian is *=it=*. This is clearly the same morpheme as the Old Hurrian *=id=*. Just as in Hurrian, the plural agent marker appears to the left of the valence marker. When the agent is plural, the verb in Urartian is polysynthetic in that it indicates agreement with both the plural agent (through the morpheme *=it=*) and with the patient (third singular *=nə* and third plural *=lə*). With singular agents, the Urartian transitive verb shows only patient agreement while with plural agents, it shows both agent and patient agreement. All forms show patient agreement, regardless of the number of the agent.

With this information in hand, a tentative reconstruction of the development of the verb in Hurrian and Urartian can be attempted. I would argue that proto-Hurro-Urartian originally displayed agreement solely with absolutive NPs. Although different agreement morphemes were used according to the valence of the verb, the proto-language marked agreement *only* with absolutive NPs, be they subjects or patients. This was accomplished through the use of *=b* for intransitive and antipassive verbs and *=m* for third singular patients of transitive verbs

⁷² For the most recent treatment of Urartian, see G. Wilhelm, “Urartian”, *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, pp. 119-137.

⁷³ Also preserved in the texts are forms with first person singular agents and third singular/plural patients. These verbs are formed *V=o=bə* for singular and plural patients. An alternate form *V=o=lə* also exists for third plural patients. The *=bə* agreement marker is likely related to the Hurrian agreement marker *=b* that was examined above (see G. Wilhelm, *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 131). Why an agreement marker *=bə* is preserved for forms with first person agents while verbs with third person agents use the agreement marker *=nə* is unclear. It is possible that *=bə* as an absolutive NP agreement marker that is ambivalent to person and number was being phased out in Urartian in favor of the enclitic pronouns which carry much more inherent information than *=b* does.

⁷⁴ A possible path of development can be traced for Urartian. At an older period, in phrases that began with a verb, the enclitic pronoun would be affixed to the verbal form, much like the Hurrian examples (16) and (17). Eventually these free enclitic pronouns came to be reanalyzed as agreement markers and appeared on the verb even when it occurred at the end of the phrase. This would give rise to forms *=it=o=nə* and *=it=o=lə*.

(presumably also $=b/v$ for second person singular patients as well). This is demonstrated in (20). Such a system where agreement is only with the patient of transitive verbs is not unknown amongst the world's languages⁷⁵.

- (20)
- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| | <u>NP=Ø</u> | <u>V_{INTRAN/AP}=<i>b</i></u> | (intransitive) |
| | └──────────────────┘ | | |
| | S _{SG/PL} | | |
| | | | |
| NP-ERG | <u>NP=Ø</u> | <u>V_{TRAN}=<i>m</i></u> | (transitive) |
| | └──────────────────┘ | | |
| A _{3SG/PL} | O _{3SG} | | |
| | | | |
| NP-ERG | <u>NP=<i>na</i></u> | <u>V_{TRAN}=?</u> | (transitive) |
| | └──────────────────┘ | | |
| A _{3SG/PL} | O _{3PL} | | |

A derivational morpheme $=id=$ functioned as an indicator of some sort of verbal plurality, perhaps operating as an iterative or pluractional marker⁷⁶. Either through independent innovation or through contact⁷⁷, this particular morpheme lost its derivational characteristics and came to indicate not verbal plurality but rather a plurality of agents. Agreement with the patient was lost when the $=id=$ marker was present. In Urtian, the empty slot where patient agreement had been marked was eventually filled by the enclitic pronoun which in turn became a required element of the verb. In Old Hurrian it remained Ø.

This results in a split-agreement system in Proto-Hurro-Urtian that persisted into Old Hurrian. When the agent is singular, agreement is with the patient and when the agent is plural, agreement is with the agent. The proposed situation in the proto-language would have been agreement with only the patient (i.e. the absolutive NP). The development of $=id=$ into an agent agreement marker and subsequent loss of the patient agreement marker created an “unstable” paradigm. Since no derivational morpheme existed to indicate singularity of the verb or agent, agreement with the patient remained salient when the agent was singular. In Urtian, the paradigm was stabilized by requiring absolutive NPs to be cross-referenced on every verb by an

⁷⁵ See note 34 for examples of such languages.

⁷⁶ M. Khačikyan, SCCNH 5, p. 25 takes a similar approach when she states: “[i]l est probable, si l’on juge de la place du suffixe $= (i)d=$, $= (i)t=-$ dans la forme verbale ..., que ce suffixe exprimait originellement la pluralité de l’action”. She uses this, however, as further evidence that Hurrian was originally an active language before developing into an ergative one. I am not convinced that the evidence exists to demonstrate such a path of development.

⁷⁷ All of the known languages from the Ancient Near East (including Anatolia) mark agreement with the agent on transitive verbs. Sumerian shows agreement with both agent and patient in the transitive. It is possible that $=id=$ developed into an agent agreement marker in Proto-Hurro-Urtian under the influence of neighboring languages.

agreement marker regardless of its valence. This was accomplished through the mandatory use of enclitic pronouns.

We find a different series of events in Hurrian. As early as the Tiš-atal inscription, the S agreement marker *=b* was no longer obligatory on antipassive (and by extension intransitive) verbs⁷⁸. By the time of the Mittani Letter, this agreement marker was obsolete and S NPs were optionally cross-referenced on the verb through free enclitic pronouns. The split-agreement system in the transitive persisted even as *=b* was being phased out. By the time of the Hurro-Hittite Bilingual, the Mittani system was beginning to be used in place of the older system. At first the Mittani forms appear to have been aspectually differentiated from the Old Hurrian ones. In the bilingual, Old Hurrian forms are invariably translated into Hittite as preterit verbs, while Mittani forms are translated by present/future forms. By the time of the Mittani Letter, transitive forms in *=o=* were all but obsolete, their use relegated to occasional archaic non-indicative forms. The Mittani transitive verb, as seen above, consistently cross-references for A NPs. O NPs are only optionally cross-referenced on the verb through free enclitic pronouns. So while in Urartian all verbs show agreement with absolutive NPs, in Mittani Hurrian, verbs agree only with ergative NPs. Absolutive NPs are cross-referenced by optional free enclitic pronouns.

⁷⁸ C.f. the example given in note 10.