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HITT. *NININK-* AND LAT. *NĪTOR*

It is argued that the original meaning of Hittite *ninink-* is 'to move, approach'. The Hittite verb is related to Lith. *ap-nìkti* 'to assault, beset', *į-nìkti* 'to get down to, engage, attack', OCS *po-niknǫti* 'to droop' and Greek νεῖκος 'quarrel, strife, feud' and goes back to PIE **neik-*, meaning 'to approach energetically' or similar. Since Lat. *nītor* is semantically quite close to the Balto-Slavic verbs and is formally comparable, it is very likely that *nītor* also belongs to this root.

Keywords: etymology, Hittite, Lithuanian, Old Church Slavonic, Latin.

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Хет. *ninink-* и лат. *nītor*

Данная статья посвящена уточнению значения хеттского глагола *ninink-* и его этимологическим связям. В имеющихся словарях и изданиях текстов *ninink-* часто интерпретируется как 'мобилизовывать', 'поднимать', 'двигать', причем предлагаемые переводы одних и тех же контекстов с *ninink-* нередко противоречат друг другу. Подробный обзор примеров сужает количество значений этого глагола и показывает, что исходным значением корня было, скорое всего, 'двигаться, приближаться'. Этимологически хетт. *ninink-* восходит к корню **neik-*, к которому также относятся ст.-слав. (*vъz*)-*niknǫti*, *po-niknǫti,* лит. *ap-nìkti* 'обступить, овладеть, напасть', *į-nìkti* 'налечь на (работу), увлечься', др.-гр. νεῖκος 'брань, ссора, вражда'. К этому же корню следует также возводить и лат. *nītor* 'опираться, напрягаться, стараться', которое семантически достаточно близко литовским и славянским глаголам и может быть формально сопоставлено с ними.

Ключевые слова: этимология, хеттский язык, латинский язык, литовский язык, старославянский язык.

Even though Hittite *ninink-* is very well attested throughout all periods of Hittite, its semantic interpretation is not always clear. CHD L-N: 438 gives the following translations: 'to mobilize, set (people) in motion; to move, remove, transfer (something or someone)' as well as 'to behave in a disorderly manner (middle)', 'to disturb, agitate', 'to break open' and 'to loosen, detach'. Puhvel's translations are 'to move, stir, start', 'to soak', 'to engage', 'to rally' (HED N: 110). According to Tischler (HEG N: 328), *ninink-* means

'in Bewegung setzen, antreiben; bewegen; in Aufruhr versetzen, stören; lösen, erbrechen; sich aufrührerisch benehmen, sich erheben'. Alternatively, *ninink-* is interpreted as 'to raise' (Oettinger 2009, LIV: 451). Yet differently, Ünal (1996: 34f.) suggests that the basic meaning for this verb is 'to disturb'. Therefore it is not surprising that there is a significant difference in interpreting some passages with *ninink-*, e.g.:

n=at namma ŪL kuiski ninikzi (KBo 11.14 IV 19) is translated as 'nobody accesses it [viz. sealed building] further' in HED N: 111 and 'No one shall break it open again' in CHD L-N: 442, sim. Ünal 1996: 32. The latter interpretation is clearly based on *kinuzi* in the duplicate KUB 43.57 IV 17.

n=us nininker (KUB 14.1 obv. 72) is traslated as 'and they (the enemy) threw them into confusion. (They killed Kišnapili and Partahulla)' in CHD L-N: 442 and '(they came, blocked the path of our troops,) and engaged them' in HED N: 114.

In the Middle and New Hittite texts *ninink-* refers to an initial stage of military campaigns. When *ninink-* is transitive, its object is usually troops, and in the following sentence the leader sets out for a campaign. In such contexts *ninink-* is often interpreted as 'to mobilize', e.g. KBo 16.14 II 14–15 + KBo 16.8 II 29–30 *nu* GIM-*an hameshanza ki[sat] [n]u* ERÍN^{MEŠ} ANŠE.KUR.RA^{MEŠ} *nininkun nu INA* ^{URU}*Tum[anna]* [*p*]*āun* 'when spring came I mobilized infantry and chariotry' (HED : 113, sim. CHD L-N: 439). Since this passage is followed by *nu INA* ^{URU}*Tum[anna]* [*p*]*āun* 'and I went to Tumanna', *ninink-* cannot mean 'to move' or 'to set in motion' here. Cf. also KBo 5.6 II 26–27 *nu=za ABU=YA* ERÍN^{MEŠ} ANŠE.KUR.RA^{MEŠ} *ninikta n=as* L[Ú^{ME}]^{Š} *Hurri iyannis* 'My father mobilized (his) infantry and chariotry and marched [toward] Hurri' (CHD L-N 439) or HKM 20 6–9 *nu annin* 1 *LIM* 7 *ME* 60 ÉRIN^{MEŠ} ^{URU}*Ishupitta lilihuwanzi ninikten n=an MAHAR* ^{D}UTU-*ŠI INA* UD.2^{K}[^{AM} ^{URU}*Š*]*apinuwa lilihuwanzi uwatten* '(As soon as this tablet reaches you (pl.)), quickly mobilize (pl.) that 1760-man troop of Ishupitta and lead (pl.) it to My Majesty in Sapinuwa in two days' (Hoffner 2009: 132).

In the latter example it is clear that *ninink-* refers to an already existing unit, therefore at least in some passages *ninink-* does not imply raising new troops. Some further examples are KUB 19.37 III 8–9 *nu=mu* KARAŠ$^{HI.A}$ *kue kattan* [*ēsta*] [*n=a*]*t nininkun* 'the armies which were with me I rallied' (HED N: 113) and HKM 79 11–14 [*nu k*]*inuna mān* EGIR-*pa* [ERÍN^{MEŠ} *k*]*uiēska uwanzi* [*n*]=*as*

namma lē [*ku*]*watka niniksi* 'And now, if any troops[?] come back, do not mobilize them at all again' (Hoffner 2009: 238).

In HKM 72 9–13 *ninink-* is used in a non-military context: *n=asta* GIŠ*murta tuel=ma karassandu<s[?]> karsten ŠA* KUR[TIM] x[] *ninikten nu=war=at pedandu* 'Cut down (pl.) *murta*-trees, but (only) your own cut pieces, and muster the …-people of the land. And let them transport them (i.e., the timbers)!' (Hoffner 2009: 231). A similar meaning could be found in KUB 21.38 23–4: m*Pihasdu̬s=ma kuedani mēhuni āras nu karū* S[ÈD-*anza*   ] NAM.RA[MEŠ] *pedi* {erasure} *ŪL namma nininkun* 'At the moment that Pi̬hašdu did arrive, it was already winter, and I did not transfer the civilian captives again', for the translation see Hoffner 2009: 284.

In my opinion, in these passages *ninink-* is better to be interpreted in a more general sense, something like 'to gather', 'to get ready' rather than more specific 'to mobilize'.

Middle forms of *ninink-* in historical accounts and treaties are also often interpreted as 'to mobilize', e.g. KBo 5.8 I 32–33 LÚKÚR URU*Kabbubba=*[*ma*] KUR.KUR[MEŠ] URU*Gasga=ya hūmanda niniktat* '(While I was going through the land of Ištalubba), the Kabbubban enemy and all the Kaška lands mobilized (and came against me up on the mountain at Kabbubba)' (CHD L-N: 440), KBo 10.12 II 29–30 [*nu mā*]*n* m*Aziras* [*sakuw*]*assarit* ZI-*nit* [*IŠTU* ERÍN[M]]EŠ ANŠE.KUR.RA[MEŠ] *UL neniktari* '[I]f (you) Aziru do not get going [with (your) troop]s and horses with [loy]al intent (and do not attack that enemy)'[1] (CHD L-N: 439) or KUB 21.1 III 46 *nu mān* LÚKÚR *kuiski niniktari* 'If some enemy mobilizes (and goes to strike those border territories)' (CHD L-N: 440, sim. HED N: 112). In my opinion, a less specific interpretation, for instance, 'to gather', 'to line up' or, perhaps, 'to get ready' is more appropriate in these passages as well.

However, there are contexts where *ninink-* likely implies some kind of physical contact or engagement. One of the clearest example is *n=us nininker* (KUB 14.1 obv. 72) '(They came and seized the road (before) our troops,) and they attacked/engaged them. (They killed Kišnapili and Partahulla)', cf. HED N: 114 and CHD L-N: 442[2] for the translation. In my opinion, the meaning of *ninink-* is

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[1] An Akkadian parallel to this phrase is *šumma* m*Tette ištu* ERÍN[MEŠ]-*šu* GIŠGIGIR[MEŠ]-*šu u ina* ŠÀ-*šu ul inamuš* 'If Tette wholeheartedly does not get moving with his troops and chariotry' KBo 1.4 II 17–18, cf. CHD L-N: 439.

[2] The translation 'threw in confusion' in CHD is dubious, since there are no other unambiguous examples for this meaning.

similar in KUB 14.1 obv. 44–45 [ᵐ*Maḍḍu*]*wattas=a* [KUR-*e*] *hūman* [*IṢ*]*BAT namm*[*a=a*]*t IŠTU* ERÍNᴹᴱˢ *pa*[*nga*]*rit ninik*[*ta nu ANA* ᵐ*Ku*]*panta*-ᴰLAMMA [*zahhiya pa*]*it*[3] 'Madduwatta seized the whole [land]. Then he harassed it with the main body of his army and went [to fight] Kupanta-Kurunta'. The meaning 'to mobilize' is hardly appropriate here, since in that case one would expect the army to be in Accusative. Some further likely examples for the meaning 'to engage' or 'to harass' are KUB 50.79 obv? 6 *nu* ZAG*ᵀᵁ̄ᴹ ninikzi* NU.ŠE-*du* '([If] he harasses/attacks the border, let (the oracle) be unfavorable'; KBo 2.6 II 55–56 *nu* DUMUᴹᴱˢ-*ŠU=ma* EME *ēssanzi nu* GIDIM *nininkiskanzi* 'Or are his children slandering? Are they disturbing the dead? (If so, let the lots be unfavorable)' (CHD L-N: 442. sim. HED N: 115) and KUB 50.6 III 43–44 […] *apez* INIM-*za* HUL-*lu UL nininkueni* 'by that matter will we not disturb[?] trouble for ourselves?' (cf. HED N: 112, who translate *nininkweni* as 'stir up').

Similarly, middle forms of *ninink-* may indicate harassing behavior, cf. the examples in CHD L-N: 441: KUB 31.86 IV 1–3 [(DINGIRᴹᴱˢ-*y*)]*a kuwapi ēssanzi nu ANA PANI* DINGIRᴹᴱˢ *lē kuiski niniktari*[4] *INA* É.EZEN=*ya lē kuiski niniktari* 'When they are worshipping the gods, let no one become disorderly before the gods, and let no one become disorderly in the festival house (but let the reverence be observed toward all classes of priests)'; KUB 13.4 III 36–8 ŠÀ É DINGIR*ᴸᴵᴹ nasma tamēdani* ᴱ*karimme kuiski nikzi n=as=kan mān* ŠÀ É DINGIR*ᴸᴵᴹ niniktari nu hallūwāin iyazi n=asta* EZEN₄ *zahzi*. '(If) in a temple or other sacred building some… -person gets drunk(?), if he becomes disorderly inside the temple, so that he causes a quarrel, and disrupts a festival'.

In some contexts *ninink-* seems to mean 'to move' or 'to remove', cf. e.g. KUB 30.56 III 15 *mān=kan* DINGIRᴹᴱˢ *pēdaz nininkanzi* 'When they move the gods from (their) place', or KBo 5.3 IV 35–41 *dankuwayaz=ma=s<mas>=k*[*an takn*]*az ser arha nininkandu* '(If you, Mariya and the men of Hayasa do not keep these oaths, may these oaths (destroy) you with your wives, children

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[3] The restorations are according to Götze 1968: 10ff. Note though that neither the restoration of the active voice ending nor the restoration of the enclitic =*at* after *namma* is certain. The middle form of *ninink-* would make a smoother interpretation of this passage: «Madduwatta seized the whole [land]. Then he gathered/lined up with the main body of his army and went [to fight] Kupanta-Kurunta».

[4] In duplicates: *ninikzi* in KUB 13.2 III 17, *ni-ni-i*[*n-*] in KUB 40.56 II 25.

… and) may they remove you from the dark earth'[5]. A meaning 'to remove' fits also the contexts when a seal is the object, e.g. KBo 39.8 31 *kī=y[a=w]a* ^NA4^KIŠIB *apiyakku niniktaru* 'When the ancient kings return and examine the lands and the customs, only then shall this seal be removed'[6].

When *peda-* is in Dative-Locative, the interpretation of *pedi ninink-* as 'to remove' is more complicated, since Dative-Locative does not usually designates separation or origin of movement. Note however that according to CHD L-N 441 *pedi ninink-* is parallel to *sarā da-* 'to take up' or just 'to take'[7], though they are not necessarily synonymous. One could speculate that the use of Dative-Locative in *pedi ninink-* is perhaps similar to Dative of disadvantage[8]. However, since the Dative of disadvantage refers to living beings (Hoffner, Melchert 2008: 258f.), it is better to interpret *ninink-* as simply 'to move' in such phrases, e.g. KUB 1.1 II 52–3 *namma=kan* DINGIR^MEŠ ^URU^*Hatti* GIDIM^HI.A^=*ya pedi ninikta n=as* INA ^URU.D^U-*assa katta pēdas* – 'then he moved the gods of Hatti and the deceased to (one) place and brought to Tarhuntassa'; KUB 24.13 I 19–20 *nu* ^DUG^*KUKŪB A suppi pedi nini[kz]i n=a[t šarā(?)] karpzi* 'He moves a *k.*-vessel of water to (its) consecrated place and lifts it [up]'; KBo 24.4+ rev! 7–10 *ped[e]=ssi=ya=at=kan lē niniktari* '(I have fixed in place (*tarmānun*) the king's oath, curse, blood (and) tears. Let it not come up). Let it not be moved[?] in its place'.

Some kind of displacement is also likely for *nininkan* in KBo 16.97 rev. 5, 16 ^UZU^ZÉ ZAG-*az nininkan* 'The gallbladder was pulled[?] on the right'. Schuol (1994: 296f.) points out that *ninink-* is used in oracle inquiries similarly to Akkadian *nāsahu* 'to remove, to pull out', and *nasāhu* is often used in contrast to *kânu* 'to remain stationery'. Based on these parallels, *nininkan* in KBo 16.97 must mean something like 'displaced' or 'pulled'.

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[5] CHD L-N: 442 translates *ninink-* here as 'to stir up'.
[6] 'Broken' in Miller 2004: 105f., 'loosened/detached' in CHD L-N: 442, 'be accessed' in HED N: 114. One of the duplicates, KBo 2.3 iv 13, has *kinuttaru* 'be opened' instead of *niniktaru*. A similar variation is attested in the Hantitassu ritual, with *ninikzi* in KBo 11.14 IV 19 and *kinuzi* in KUB 43.57 IV 17 (see Ünal 1996: 25). Such an alternation does not indicate, however, that *ninink-* means 'to open', only that both *kinu-* and *ninink-* could be used in such contexts. Besides, there are other discrepancies between the texts, for instance, LUGAL-*us* in KUB 43.57 IV 13 vs. EN.SISKUR in KBo 11.14 IV 15.
[7] See Shatskov forthcoming.
[8] See Brosch 2014: 67 for examples where Dative-Locative denotes separation.

Puhvel (HED N: 112) translates *ninink-* in e.g. KBo VIII 47 obv. 10 *karittiyas nininkanta* as 'floods will soak in'. However, this interpretation seems to be based on presumed connection of *ninink-* with *nink-* 'to satisfy one's thirst', 'to get drunk'. In Akkadian omens verbs like *alāku* 'to come' or *ṭeḫû* 'to come near, approach' are used in similar contexts.

Most difficult to interpret are contexts when *ninink-* denotes some physical action, when its objects are people, golden objects etc. The passage KBo 26.64 II 9–11 ^{GIŠ}[BA]LAG.DI=*ma galgal*[*turi*] GUL-*ahta* KÙ.GI^{HI.A}=*ma* n[*i*]*nikta nu=za=kan* [*iš*h]*amain dās* is translated as '(Ishtar) struck the BALAG.DI- and *galgalturi*-instruments, she shook[?] the 'gold things' and took up a song' in CHD L-N: 441. Alternatively, Hoffner (1998: 60f.) and Rieken (the electronic editon of this text at HPM) interpret this form as 'set in motion', and according to Puhvel (HED N: 113) *ninikta* here means 'stirred'. Another unclear passage is KUB 58.48 IV 7–8: GAL LÚ^{MEŠ} ^{URU}*Tissaruliya* LUGAL-*i menahhanda* SAG.DU-*SU ninikzi.* CHD L-N: 441 gives the following translation: '(After the king asks an official why he has come to do battle, when everything is fine,) the chief of the men of Tiššaruliya shakes(?)/nods(?) his head facing the king'. HED N: 111 also translates *ninink-* as 'shakes'.

In the examples already discussed above *ninink-* usually corresponds to Akkadian verbs denoting motion or displacement: *alāku* 'to go, to come', *namāsu* 'to set out, move; to defect' and *nāsahu* 'to remove, to pull out'. A further Akkadian comparison for *ninink-* is *sākanu* 'to place, put; establish', also 'to inflict defeat', in the expression *šākinat n*[*u?-k*]*urati / šākinat tuqunti* '(She who) instigates hostilities' parallel to Hittite *kurur=ma nininkiskizzi* '(She) instigates hostility' (KUB 31.141 obv. 6), see Reiner, Güterbock 1967: 258 and CHD L-N: 439.

Summing up, in some contexts the meaning of *ninink-* is quite clear – 'to gather/ get ready troops', 'to get ready' (mid.), 'to remove', 'to attack/harass' or 'to behave harassingly'. However, in other contexts it can only be guessed at. Unfortunately, many of these contexts are severely damaged.

Oettinger (2009) argued that all the contextual meanings of *ninink-* can go back to 'to lift', 'to raise'. While he is correct that the basic meaning of this verb must denote some kind of motion, the meaning 'to lift' in my opinion is not appropriate in many contexts. Besides, there is no unambiguous context with *ninink-* denoting physical lifting. Moreover, Akkadian verbs in parallel contexts mean

'to go', 'to come', 'to remove'. The basic meaning 'to move', 'to approach', similar to what is given in the CHD and HED, seems to be the most fitting, even though some contexts are still not entirely clear.

The etymology of *ninink-* is well established: it goes back to **neik-* or, less likely, **niek-* (cf. Oettinger 1979: 143). On the assumption that *ninink-* means 'to rise', Benveniste (1954 : 40) suggested the following cognates for this verb: Lith. *su-nìkti* 'to become involved, assault', OCS *vъz-niknǫti* 'to rise, appear' with aor. *nikъ* (see Hock 2015: 704f. for more Baltic cognates). LIV: 451 also assigns the meaning 'to rise' to this root and adds Greek νεῖκος 'quarrel, strife, feud' as a nominal derivative.

The Etymological Dictionary of the Slavic Languages (ESSJa 25: 110, 114–5) connects OCS (*vъz*)-*niknǫti*, Lith. *su-nìkti* etc. to OCS *po-niknǫti* 'to droop', Old Polish *niknąć* 'disappear', Lith. *nykti* 'disappear' and further to Old Russian *nicь* 'down', Latv. *nīca* 'down the river', Skt. *nīcā́* 'below'. It is argued that the semantic difference between these words is due to the preverbs (cf. Bulg. *nikna* that means both 'to grow' and 'to bow', as well as Czech *niknouti* 'disappear' and 'to sprout'). The dictionary gives the following basic meanings for this root: 'to fall on, run against', 'to rise, grow' and 'to come down, disappear'. Formally, however, the connection with Skt. *nīcā́* (< **ni-h₃k-*, cf. Skt. *ni* 'downwards') is impossible, since the Lith. *nìkti* and its derivatives did not have laryngeal in the root and are therefore not related, see Derksen 2008: 352f.

Since *ninink-* does mean 'to move, approach; harass' rather than to 'to lift', it can be compared directly to Lith. *ap-nìkti* 'to assault, beset', *į-nìkti* 'to get down to, engage, attack', Lith. *su-nìkti* 'to become involved, assault', and also to synchronically homonymous *ap-nìkti* and *į-nìkti* 'to pester, bother'[9]. The specific spatial meanings of OCS *vъz-niknǫti* 'to rise, appear', *po-niknǫti* 'to droop' could be explained by the semantics of the prefixes. All in all, the root **neik-* seems to denote some kind of energetic approaching (cf. Beekes 2010: 1002).

Maria Kazanskaya has pointed out to me the semantic similarities between Lithuanian descendants of the root **neik-* and Lat.

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[9] See the entries in the electronic version of the *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas* (http://lkzd.lki.lt).

nītor 'to lean (on), to be supported, to rely on, to struggle, move with effort, to direct one's effort towards a specified goal' (see OLD: 1181). Indeed, some of the meanings are very close, cf. Latin *Nos cum maxime consilio studio labore gratia de causa regia niteremur* 'While I was striving my utmost in the king's matter, by dint of thought, zeal, hard work, and personal influence' (Cic. Fam. I 5a, 2) and Lith. *Ninkù į̃ dárbą pasilìkęs* 'remaining behind (after work), I put my utmost into my work' or *postisque sub ipsos nituntur gradibus* 'before the very doors they press forward step by step' (Verg. A. 2, 441–2) and *Dar blogiau, kai velniai žmogų apnyksta* 'It is even worse when a man is beset by demons (devils)' or *Tuoiaus kayp ſžunis apnikta* 'He immediately attacked like a dog' (Hock 2015: 704).

The meaning 'to rely on' is not attested for Lithuaninan verbs, but it may be similar to OCS (*po-*)*niknǫti* 'to droop, wilt', Russ. *приникнуть* 'to press oneself close to, cling to'.

Formally, *nītor* (ppp. *nīxus/nīsus*) may well go back to PIE **neik-*, even though the provenience of *-t-* is not certain, cf. de Vaan 2008: 410f. However, it is often connected to Lat. *cōnīveō* 'to be tightly closed' and further to PIE **kneig^{wh}-*, since the variants *gnitus* and *gnixus* are attested in Paul's epitome of Festus' *De verborum significatu*[10]. The loss of a velar before a nasal in initial clusters occurred in the 2nd century BCE (see Meiser 1998: 112f., Kazansky 2017: 25), before the composition of Festus' and Varrius' lexica; nevertheless, the forms *gnitor* and *gnixus* could be archaisms, since the lexicon is known to have preserved some very early forms. Note, however, that the velar is missing in prefixed verbs, e.g. *cōnītor* (*cōnīsus* Pl. *Mil*. 29), *ēnītor* (Pl. *Ps*. 1279) or *renītor*. In view of a strong semantic similarity between *nītor* and Baltic and Slavic verbs, it is more likely that *gnitor* and *gnixus* are secondary, perhaps formed in analogy to *nōscō/gnōscō* or other words with etymological **#Kn-*.

Summing up, the underlying meaning of Hittite *ninink-* is 'to move, approach', even though some contexts with *ninink-* remain unclear. Hitt. *ninink-* has cognates in Baltic (Lith. *ap-ninkù, -nìkti* 'to assault, beset', *į-nìkti* 'to get down to, engage, attack'), Slavic (OCS *po-niknǫti* 'to droop') and Greek (νεῖκος 'quarrel, strife, feud'), all going back to PIE **neik-* with the tentative meaning 'to approach energetically'. Due to the semantic similarities between the Balto-Slavic verbs and Lat. *nītor* 'to lean (on), to struggle, to

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[10] *Gnitus et gnixus a genibus prisci dixerunt* (Paul. *Fest*. p. 96. M).

move with effort', it is very likely that the Latin verb also belongs to this root.

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