Variation and change in the voice morphology of Indo-European reflexives

The older Indo-European languages with an active/middle voice distinction employ several reflexivization strategies, which fall in three broader and cross-linguistically well-attested categories: (1), reflexivization through middle/non-active voice morphology only, possible for a restricted class of verbs (body action verbs, "inherent reflexives"), (2), middle morphology on the verb + a "weak" reflexive pronoun or particle (Cardinaletti & Starke 1999), and (3) active morphology + a (weak/strong) reflexive pronoun.

(1) a. Vedic: *śumbháti* 'adorns, makes beautiful': *śúmbhate* 'adorns oneself'
     b. Greek: λούω 'wash sth.': λούομαι 'wash myself, bathe', κοσμέω 'arrange, adorn': κοσμοῦμαι 'adorn myself'

(2) a. Vedic, RV 1.147.2: **tanvàṃ** *vande* 'I praise myself'
     b. Hittite, KUB 33.120 i 38: *n=aš=**za** munnaittat* 'And he hid himself.'

(3) a. Vedic, RV 8.96.15b:

    *ádha drapsó   ... -**ádhārayat**   tanvàṃ ...*
    Then Drapsa.NOM   sustain.3SG.IPF.ACT self.ACC

    "Then Drapsa (...) asserted himself ..."
     b. Hittite, KUB 16.34 i 8-9:

    ***warpanzi**=ma=wa=**z**   ŪL*
    wash.3PL.ACT-but-QUOT-REFL not

    "But they do not wash themselves"

In the literature on the development of (weak) reflexive pronouns, in particular PIE *su̯e- (e.g., Petit 1999, 2001, Cotticelli Kurras & Rizza 2013, etc.) and the development of middle voice morphology in the IE languages, the variation in voice morphology in (2) and (3) is usually explained as syntactic or semantic "weakening" of the reflexive function of middle morphology, resulting in "strengthening" by means of an emphatic or reflexive pronoun and, eventually, the replacement of the middle morphology in reflexives by active morphology. However, such an explanation is contradicted by the fact that these different reflexivization strategies co-occur synchronically, differ according to predicate type, and that middle morphology was never completely replaced in languages in which the active/middle distinction was preserved (cf. the development of reflexives on the way to Modern Greek).

The aim of this paper is to compare the reflexivization strategies discussed above in selected Indo-European languages, including the understudied Tocharian branch, from a theoretical and typological perspective, and to reevaluate their reconstruction. Specifically, I argue that (1) was not possible for all verbs in PIE, and that at least (2) must also be reconstructed.