

Tavet Tat Satyam

Studies in Honor of

Jared S. Klein

on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday

edited by

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Table of Contents

TAVET TAT SATYAM



Preface	vii
Bibliography of Jared S. Klein	ix
List of Contributors	xx
Gary Beckman , Aḥḥijawa und kein Ende: The Battle over Mycenaeans in Anatolia	1
Joel P. Brereton , Word Positioning in R̥gvedic Poetry	13
Jessica DeLisi , A Second Look at First- and Second-person Deictic Suffixes in Modern Eastern Armenian	22
Joseph F. Eska , On Pragmatic Information Structuring at Séracourt à Bourges (Cher) and Related Matters	34
Bernhard Forssman , Griechisch βούλομαι ἦ und προβέβουλα	45
José Luis García Ramón , <i>Anthroponymica Mycenaea</i> 9: Compound Names in ° <i>me-de</i> , ° <i>me-ta</i> and Pylian <i>me-ti-ja-no</i>	52
José Virgilio García Trabazo , Sobre indio antiguo <i>mygá-</i> ‘animal salvaje’ y el texto hitita KUB 43.60+ (‘El gran camino del alma’)	65
Toshifumi Gotō , <i>vi-leš/lis</i> , <i>vi-riš</i> und die Verstauchung des Opfers	76
Dag Trygve Truslew Haug , PIE * <i>k^wi-/k^wo-</i> : Interrogative, Indefinite or Both?	86
Hans Henrich Hock , Pāṇini’s Language: Real or Not?	101
Stephanie W. Jamison , Inter-hymnic Rhetorical Structure in R̥V I.68–70: Parāśara Śāktya’s Vaiśvānara Cycle	113
Jay H. Jasanoff , Toch. AB <i>ākl-</i> ‘learn’	123
Brian D. Joseph , Balkan, Indo-European, and Universal Perspectives on ‘be’ in Albanian	130
Götz Keydana , Kausative im Frühvedischen	138
Ronald I. Kim , Studies in Armenian Historical Phonology I: Aspiration and Spirantization of PIE Voiceless Stops	151
Masato Kobayashi , The Adnominal Locative in Indo-Aryan	168

Table of Contents

Martin Joachim Kümmel , * <i>syá-</i> im Indoiranischen: Zahlwort und Demonstrativum? ..	179
Melanie Malzahn , Vedic <i>ásáni-</i> : Another Stone from Heaven?	191
H. Craig Melchert , Hittite <i>kī</i> (<i>kuít</i>) and Vedic “ <i>sá-fjge</i> ”	204
Alan J. Nussbaum , A Note on Latin Syllables and Anaptyxis	214
Norbert Oettinger , Altindisch <i>Agní-</i> ‚Feuergott‘ und hethitisch ^d <i>Agni</i> / ^d <i>Akni-</i>	228
Birgit Anette Olsen , Zarathustra and the Needle’s Eye of Etymology	236
Georges-Jean Pinault , Reflecting the Divine Mansion: Vedic <i>amāti-</i>	246
Joseph Rhyne and Andrew Miles Byrd , Stressful Conversions: Internal Derivation within the Compositional Approach	258
Elisabeth Rieken , Repetition und Variation in den hethitischen Gebeten	269
Don Ringe , The Nature of the South Greek Dialect Group	278
Caley Charles Smith , The Kaṭhōpaniṣad and the Deconstruction of the Fire-Altar	284
Olga A. Thomason , Indicating Path: Evidence from New Testament Greek, Gothic, Classical Armenian, and Old Church Slavic	294
Elizabeth Tucker , Rigvedic Root-accented Neuters in <i>-ana-</i> and Animate Forms in <i>-ana-/-anī-</i>	309
Brent Vine , Latin <i>bēs/bessis</i> ‘two-thirds of an <i>as</i> ’	324
Michael Weiss , The Proto-Indo-European Laryngeals and the Name of Cilicia in the Iron Age	331
Chlodwig H. Werba , Ur(indo)arisches im Nūrīstānī: Zur historischen Phonologie des Indoiranischen	341
Kazuhiko Yoshida , Hittite <i>parḫattari</i> Reconsidered	360
Index Verborum	369

Hittite *kī* (*kuit*) and Vedic “*sá-figé*”

H. CRAIG MELCHERT



In recognition of Jared Klein’s many contributions to our discipline and our longstanding friendship I am pleased to offer the following ruminations on two difficult problems of pronominal morphosyntax, with the hope that he will find them worthy of interest despite their speculative component.

The neuter nominative-accusative singular form *kī* of the Hittite near-deictic pronoun *kā*- ‘this’ remains an anomaly without a satisfactory explanation. Kloekhorst (2008:426) regards it as an archaism, but this claim is not remotely credible. As for other PIE demonstrative-anaphoric stems, *i*-stem inflection is well attested for **kō*- (see Dunkel 2014:2.406–8), but there is no trace whatsoever of such inflection anywhere in Anatolian, and Kloekhorst gives no explanation for why such a form would not be †*kit*, like Hittite interrogative-relative *kuit*, Latin *id*, etc. (same objection in Dunkel 2014:2.397 n. 4). The stem is consistently *kā*- < **kō*- in Hittite, Palaic, and both forms of Luvian, where there is notably no evidence even for “*i*-mutation” (for the exclusively *o*-stem inflection in Luvian see Melchert 2009).¹ In fact, given the discrepancy between Hittite *apiya* ‘thither, there’ and *kā* ‘hither, here’, as well as the fixed Lydian *i*-stem *bi*- ‘he, she, it’, it is likely that the mostly *o*-stem inflection of Anatolian demonstrative and anaphoric **obhó*- ‘that; he, she, it’ is in fact analogical to **kó*- (differently Dunkel 2014:2.188–9).

For these reasons Dunkel (2014:2.397) follows Schmidt 1962:54–5 and Tischler 1983:457 in supposing that Hittite *kī* reflects a near-deictic *particle* that has been absorbed into the pronominal paradigm. However, neither Schmidt nor Tischler offers the slightest account of how and why such an incorporation of a particle into an inflectional paradigm might have occurred and precisely in the neuter nominative-accusative singular. Schmidt does cite as a forerunner Pedersen (1938:50), who cites an earlier 1905 study in which he argued that there was no near-deictic pronominal stem **kō*- in PIE, *only* a deictic adverb **kī*, and that all inflected forms are creations of the individual languages. Pedersen’s assumption of such an archaism faces the same objections as Kloekhorst’s and once again fails utterly to explain why the alleged archaism persisted in Hittite just in the one form of the paradigm.

I agree that Hittite *kī* represents a near-deictic adverb **kī* ‘here’ and propose that the key to its incorporation into the pronominal paradigm lies in the Hittite syntagm *kī kuit* (+ noun) ‘what (is) this (X) that . . .’ The expression typically has a nuance of shock or dis-

¹The term “*i*-mutation” refers to the phenomenon widespread in Luvian and Lycian and less common in Lydian by which an *-i-* is inserted into the stem just in the common gender nominative and accusative. See Rieken 2005 with references.

belief (see the examples cited below), but this appears to be contextual. The common denominator of all occurrences appears to be that the deixis is situational, not spatial or textual: that is, it always refers to something that has just happened in the immediate environment of the speaker.

Before setting forth my own account of the origin of this construction, I must refute an alternative analysis by Hackstein (2004a), who argues that Hittite *kī* *kuit* results from the grammaticalization of an original two-clause focus question: ‘what is this which . . .’ There is no doubt that such a process *is* the source of many compound interrogatives (see the broader cross-linguistic treatment in Hackstein 2004b), but Hackstein’s analysis of Hittite *kī* *kuit* is fatally flawed.

First of all, he confuses two quite distinct constructions. Contra Hackstein 2004a:348–9 the New Hittite expressions *kī* *kuit* ‘as to this fact that . . .’ and *eni* *kuit* ‘as to that fact that . . .’ do not arise from interrogatives at all. They are grammaticalizations of ordinary preposed correlative *relative* constructions. Compare:

- (1) KUB 26.1 iv 3–6 (CTH 255.2.A, Instructions for Courtiers; NH)²

našma kī *kuit* LÚ.MEŠ^{URU} *Hatti eššanzi* . . . *n-at* GAM NIŠ DINGIR-LIM
 or this which men of-Hatti do (iter.) CONJ=it under oath
kittaru
 shall-be-placed

“Or this thing that the men of Hatti are wont to do” (—“one secretly desires the lordship of someone else instead of the lordship of His Majesty”—) “let it be placed under oath.”

- (2) KUB 5.4 i 33–4 (CTH 563.2, Oracular Inquiry; NH)

kī *kuit* NU.SIG₅-*ta* BAL *andurza kuiški* DÜ-*yazi nu* KIN
 this that was-unfavorable rebellion inside someone makes CONJ oracle
 NU.SIG₅-*du*
 let-be-unfavorable

“(Seeing) that this (the preceding oracle) was unfavorable, will someone make rebellion internally? Let the oracle be unfavorable.”³

In example (1) the *kī* *kuit* may be analyzed as a regular preposed relative noun phrase ‘this which’, which is regularly resumed in the main clause by *=at* ‘it’. However, example (2) shows *kuit* grammaticalized as a subordinating conjunction ‘(as to the fact) that’, with *kī* ‘this’ specifying the event being referred to.

²I cite Hittite passages in the usual format, by the column and line numbers of the published cuneiform autographs, giving also the text number and conventional label in the *Catalogue des textes hittites* (CTH) and finally the respective dating of the composition (OH, MH, NH = Old, Middle, New Hittite) and the manuscript (OS, MS, NS = Old, Middle, New Script). NH compositions are naturally NS. For further information on Hittite texts see <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/HPM/index.html>.

³Contra Ünal 1978:104–5 and Coticelli-Kurras 1992:124–5, *kī* *kuit* does *not* introduce something previously unnamed. It is used entirely interchangeably with *eni* *kuit* to refer to the result of a previous oracular question. Whereas *eni* in this case has its usual text-anaphoric sense ‘the aforementioned’, *kī* is used in a situational deictic sense, referring to the oracular action just performed by the questioner, resulting in effectively the same meaning.

One finds the same double syntax with the matching far-deictic pronoun:

- (3) KUB 5.1 iii 19–20 (CTH 561.1, Oracular Inquiry; NH)

eni kue ḪUL-*uwa* SI×SĀ-*ri* *arḫa-at* *arānzi* SIG₅-*ru*
 those which evils are-determined PREVERB=them they-stop let-be-favorable
 “Those evils which are determined, shall they put a stop to them? Let it be favorable.”

- (4) *ibid.* ii 22–3

eni-kan *kuit* ^{URU}Talmaliya^ḫ ^{HUR.SAG}Ḫaharwaza GAM NU.SIG₅-*ri*
 that=PARTICLE that Talmaliya from-Mount-Haharwa down is-unfavorable
 DINGIR-LIM¹-*za* TUKU-*za* NU.SIG₅-*du*
 god=REFL angry let-be-unfavorable
 “As to that fact that (the route via) Talmaliya down from Mount Haharwa is unfavorable, are you the god angry (about that)? Let it be unfavorable.”

Once again, in example (3) *eni kue* ḪUL-*uwa* “those evils which” clearly is a relative structure, properly resumed by *-at* ‘them’, but in (4) *eni kuit* has been grammaticalized to “as to that fact that . . .”

The grammaticalization of *kī kuit* ‘as to this fact that . . .’ and *eni kuit* ‘as to that fact that . . .’ from preposed relative structures is merely part of the more general grammaticalization of *kuit* (*uttar*) from ‘the matter which’ to ‘as to the matter that’. As elucidated by Holland (2011), one can observe this grammaticalization taking place in the Middle Hittite Maṣat Letters. Compare again:

- (5) HKM 3:3–4 (Maṣat Letter; MH/MS)

ŠA LÚ.KÚR=*mu* *kuit* *uttar* ḫatrāeš^ḫ *n-at* AŠME
 of enemy=to-me which matter you-wrote CONJ=it I-heard
 “I heard the matter of the enemy that you wrote to me about.”

- (6) HKM 2:4–8 (Maṣat Letter; MH/MS)

ŠA ANŠE.KUR.RA.ḪI.A=*mu* *kuit* *uttar* ḫatrāeš^ḫ *n-ašta* *kāšma*
 of horses=to-me which matter you-wrote CONJ=PARTICLE ADV
 ANŠE.KUR.RA.ḪI.A *karū* *parā* *nehhun*
 horses already out I-sent
 “As to the matter of the horses that you wrote to me about, I have already sent horses out.”

In (5) ŠA LÚ.KÚR *kuit* *uttar* “the matter of the enemy which” is part of a regular preposed relative resumed by *-at* ‘it’, but in (6) ŠA ANŠE.KUR.RA.ḪI.A *kuit* *uttar* cannot be so analyzed, since it is never resumed in the main clause: it has become part of a subordinate clause to which the following clause merely refers.

Suppression of the contextually redundant *uttar* ‘matter’ leads to a fully grammaticalized subordinating conjunction *kuit* ‘as to the fact that’:

- (7) HKM 7:3–10 (Maṣat Letter; MH/MS)

kiššan=mu kuit hatrāeš kāša-wa LÚ.MEŠšapašalliēš piyenuun . . . nu-ššan
 thus=to-me that you-wrote ADV=QUOT spies I-have-sent CONJ=PARTICLE
apēdani uddanī weranza-pat ēš
 to-that matter called=EMPH be!

“As to the fact that you wrote to me as follows: ‘I have sent spies’ (further quoted speech), be fully attentive (*lit.* called) to that matter!”

The use of *kī kuit* and *eni kuit* to mean ‘as to this fact . . .’ and ‘as to that fact that . . .’ thus developed out of ordinary preposed relative structures (as confirmed by the occasional similar use of other case forms, such as common gender nominative singular *aši kuis* at KUB 5.22:19 and KBo 2.2 iii 30), as a sub-class of *kuit* ‘as to the fact that’. They have nothing at all to do with the compound interrogative *kī kuit* (+ noun), to which we will now turn. I am aware of the following examples of interrogative *kī kuit*:

- (8) KBo 22.2 Ro 2–3 (CTH 3, A Tale of Zalpa; OH/OS)

[k]ī-wa kuit walkuan hāšhyn
 this=QUOT what monstrosity I-gave-birth

“What (kind of) monstrosity have I given birth to?”

This passage describes the shocked reaction of the Queen of Kanish upon giving birth to thirty sons at once. This is a clear example of the *kī kuit* syntagm type, not an ordinary question *kī-wa kuit* “What is this?” (contra Hackstein 2004a:351). A further Old Hittite example in Old Script (KBo 17.23 Ro 9) is in a context too fragmentary to be of use.

- (9) KUB 31.4 + KBo 3.41 Vo 15–6 (CTH 16, Puḫanu-Text; OH/NS)

[kī k]uit walkuwan [išham]ai[šte]ni
 this what monstrosity you-are-singing

“What (kind of) monstrosity are you singing?”

This is the response of the narrator to the famous “Song of Nesa” sung by two fighters, suggesting that he did not understand the text and regarded it as gibberish (see Melchert 1986:102–4 with n. 4 on the sense ‘monstrosity’ for *walkuwan*).

- (10) KBo 3.1 i 40 (CTH 19, Edict of Telipinu; OH/NS)

[k]ī-wa iyanun kuit
 this=QUOT I-did what

“What (is) this (that) have I done?”

Despite the unusual order of the verb, this is surely another example of our syntagm. The speaker Hantili, having become frightened about his part in a regicide, expresses his remorse at having committed the deed.

- (11) VBoT 58 i 16 (CTH 323, Myth of Disappearance of the Sun; OH/NS)

apaš-a pait 4IM-ni tet kī kuit kišat
 he=CONJ went to-Storm-god said this what happened

“He proceeded to say to the Storm-god: ‘What (is) this (that) has happened?’”

I translate thus with Hoffner 1995:95 contra Hoffner 1998:28. The speaker, the Wind, is dismayed by the general paralysis caused by the Frost (*habhima-*).

- (12) KBo 17.105 ii 17–8 (CTH 433, Ritual for 4LAMMA ^{KUŠ}*kuršaš*; pre-NH/NS)

nu-tta mān DINGIR.MEŠ kišan punušanzi kī-wa kuit ieššer
 CONJ=you if gods thus ask this=QUOT what they-were-doing
 4LAMMA ^{KUŠ}*kuršaš-wa* 4IMIN.IMIN.BI=*ya mukišker*
 tutelary-deity of-hunting-bag=QUOT Heptad-and they-were-rousing

“If the gods ask you: ‘What is this that they have been doing? They have been rousing/inciting the Tutelary Deity of the Hunting Bag and the Heptad.’” (“You, the hearth, impart well to the Tutelary Deity of the Hunting Bag, the Heptad and all the gods: ‘Turn for well-being to the king, queen, and princes! Give them life and health!’”)

The hearth, with whom the gods are believed to commune at night (as per the immediately preceding clause), is asked to explain to the relevant deities and all the gods why humans have been trying repeatedly to incite them to action. The *kī kuit* clause may or may not imply impatience on the part of the gods.

- (13) HKM 70:4–12 (Mašat Letter; MH/MS)

kī kuit iyaš n-ašta kāša ÉRIN.MEŠ.Ī.A parā tuk-pat ēšzi
 this what you-did CONJ=PARTICLE ADV troops forth you=EMPH is
kāša=za peran dameidani ANA ÉRIN.MEŠ lamniyanza nu lilivalhyuwanzi
 ADV=REFL before to-other to troops named CONJ with-haste
ūnni
 drive-hither!

“What is this that you have done? *You* have troops waiting (?). You have previously been assigned to other troops (*lit.* named). Drive hither with haste!”

With Güterbock and Hoffner 1995:118 and Hackstein 2004a:351, contra Hoffner 2009:226–7, I regard this entire passage as a reprimand. While the sense of the second clause is not entirely certain, the drift is clear: the addressee has been reassigned and has been dilatory in showing up at his new post.

- (14) KUB 14.12 Ro 1–2 (CTH 378.3, Third Plague Prayer of Muršili; NH)

[^d]UTU ^{URU}Arinna BELTI=YA Û DINGIR.MEŠ EN.MEŠ=YA *kī* *kuit*
 Sun-goddess-of-A. my-lady and gods my-lords this what
 D[Û-atten] *nu-kan* INA ŠA KUR ^{URU}Hatti *hinkan tarnatten*
 you-did CONJ=PARTICLE into land of-Hatti plague you-let

“Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, and gods, my lords, what is this that you have done? You have let a plague into the land of Hatti.”

The use of *kī* *kuit* in the opening of this version of Muršili’s plague prayer certainly conveys a tone of anguish; it may or may not imply a reproach.

Derivation of the compound interrogative *kī* *kuit* from an abbreviated focus structure “What is it that . . .,” as suggested by Hackstein (2004a:350–3), is not inherently implausible. We do not know whether Hittite formed such questions, but based on our knowledge of Hittite relative and interrogative syntax, we can be reasonably sure that the full structure of “What is this that you have done?” would have been:

- (15) *kī* *kuit* *iyas̄* *n-at* *kuit* (or *nu* *apāt* *kuit*)
 this which you-did CONJ=it what (or CONJ that what)
 “This that you have done, what is it/that?”

For the structure of the preposed relative see example (1) above. If the relative was resumed in the interrogative clause by enclitic *-at* ‘it’, the interrogative could only have followed. If the resumption was by the stressed anaphoric pronoun *apāt* the order would have been as given. This is shown by examples like *kī-wa* *kuit* “What is this?” (KBo 6.34 i 30 and passim; CTH 427, Military Oath; MH/NS). As already recognized by Hackstein (2004a:351 with n. 7), the order demonstrative followed by interrogative in sentences with ‘be’ (overtly expressed or not) is normal for so-called “*wh*-in situ languages,” i.e., those without overt “*wh*-movement.” In 2004 he and everyone else assumed that Hittite had *wh*-movement, but we now know that it actually does not, so the attested word order in such interrogative sentences is in fact the typologically expected one (on Hittite as a *wh*-in-situ language see Goedegebuure 2009 and Huggard 2011).

Suppression of the resumptive interrogative clause (not shocking in the context of emotionally charged spoken language, see Hackstein 2004a:352 n. 9) would result in an expression formally identical with a relative, but functionally with an interrogative force inherited from the complete biclausal structure.

There are, however, two features of the Hittite compound interrogative *kī* *kuit* that cannot be accounted for by this derivation. Readers will have noticed that all examples are limited to: (1) the neuter nominative-accusative singular; (2) the near-deictic pronoun *ka-*. Neither of these restrictions applies to the compound interrogatives formed from reduced clauses in Greek, Hebrew, Tocharian, and other languages described by Hackstein (2004b:270–83). More crucially, neither applies to the relative structures that would by this scenario have been the source of the compound interrogative. For the far-deictic pronoun we may cite nom. sg. comm. *aši* *kuiš̄* (KUB 5.22:19 and KBo 2.2 iii 30), acc. sg. comm. *uni* *kuin* (KBo 5.8 iii 24), nom. pl. comm. *uniuš̄* *kuiēš̄* (KUB 14.20 i 7), and nom.-acc. pl. neut. *eni*

kue (KUB 5.1 iii 19); for the near-deictic pronoun see acc. sg. comm. *kūn kuin* (KUB 21.36:11 et alibi), nom. pl. comm. *kūš kuiēš* (KBo 2.5 ii 4), and acc. pl. comm. *kūš kuiēš* (KUB 19.6 iv 38). We would therefore expect to find at least one example like: †*kūn kuin antuļšan ūlyhi* “Who is this person I see?” or “What kind of person do I see?” (perhaps with an implication that the person appears strange or frightening).

On the other hand, I assert that both of these restrictions are immediately explained if we assume that *kī kuit* originated as a near-deictic adverb **kī* ‘here’ plus the interrogative *kuit* ‘what?’ As already indicated above, the deictic force of *kī* in all of the examples cited is not local in the sense of proximal versus distal, nor is it cataphoric in the sense of textual deixis. It is rather situational: it underscores that the event or action described took place in spatial proximity to the speaker *and* temporal proximity to the time of the utterance. Furthermore, the reference is not to a person or object, but to an event or action, whence the limitation to neuter nominative-accusative singular.⁴

One can in fact felicitously translate all occurrences of *kī kuit* rendering *kī* as ‘here’. Hackstein (2004a:351) quite reasonably renders example (13) as: “Was hast du da nur getan!” Likewise: “What monstrosity have I given birth to here?!” (8); “What monstrosity are you singing here?!” (9); “What have I done here?!” (10); “What has happened here?!” (11); “What have they been doing here?” (12); “What have you (plural) done here?!” (14).

I do not, of course, remotely mean to suggest that ‘here’ could have been the synchronic analysis of the *kī* of *kī kuit* by a Hittite native speaker. The incorporation of *kī* into the pronominal paradigm as the neuter nominative-accusative singular had long since taken place by our oldest attested Hittite, and ‘here’ was expressed by *kā*, both ‘here’ and ‘hither’. For Hittite speakers *kī kuit* was a fixed phrase used to form questions, often but not always rhetorical, that usually expressed puzzlement, shock, or dismay at some recent or current event.⁵

While my proposed derivation accounts for the meaning and restricted form of *kī kuit*, one may in the face of a grand total of eight examples from the entire Hittite corpus legitimately question whether its token frequency was high enough to motivate incorporation of *kī* into the pronominal paradigm at the expense of **kāt* inherited from Proto-Anatolian.

I believe that the rarity of *kī kuit* is misleading, an artifact of the nature of our available evidence. I point out first that the contexts in which it is attested are all dialogic, directly so in five instances with complete context. In the case of (8) and (10) we may speak of inner dialogue—the speaker is commenting to her- or himself on the event referred to. However, our attested Hittite texts from the state bureaucracy are mostly either narrative (annals, *res gestae*, the historical preambles of treaties, and myths) or prescriptive (laws, edicts, instructions for officials, the provision portions of treaties, and outlines of how to perform the state cult or therapeutic rituals). Opportunities for dialogue in Hittite texts are few. It is not accidental that examples (8) and (11) are drawn from myths, and (9) and (10) from Old

⁴One could object that in examples (8) and (9) the reference is to an object, the sons and the song respectively, but these are merely the results of the action referred to. It may also not be coincidental that these are precisely the two examples where *kī kuit* has been extended by the pejorative noun *walku(w)an*, which unavoidably concretizes the reference.

⁵For this pragmatic force of ‘here’ in questions one may compare English “What is going on here?” or “What is *he* doing here?”

Hittite narratives that also contain dramatic episodes. Example (13) is from a letter sent to a subordinate by a commander who permitted himself to use the *kī kuit* construction as a reprimand, but such rhetoric would likely not have been considered optimal in letters between officials.

We have many Hittite prayers, which represent dialogue, though a one-sided one, since they represent only the words directed towards the gods, not their response. However, most Hittite prayers are either hymns of praise or are supplicatory pleas and thus are again not appropriate for the use of *kī kuit*. The sometimes argumentative and complaining tone of Muršili’s plague prayers is famously exceptional, whence our one example from a prayer, (14).

I assert, however, that Hittite children did not learn their native language from written bureaucratic documents, but rather from live informal dialogue, and I do not think it is too far-fetched to suppose that sentences like *kī kuit iyaš* “What have you done here?!” were not rare in the speech of Hittite caregivers. Genuine informational questions such as *kī kuit (kišrī) ħarmi* “What am I holding here (in my hand)?” or *kī kuit autti* “What do you see here?” would also have been open to reanalysis as “What (is) this I am holding (in my hand)?” and “What (is) this (that) you see?” I therefore find credible the reanalysis of *kī* as neuter nominative-accusative singular ‘this’ and its incorporation into the pronominal paradigm at the expense of **kāt*.

I believe that the so-called “*sá-figé*” construction of Vedic illustrated in (16) provides a parallel for the development that I have claimed for Hittite *kī kuit*:

(16) RV 6.21.12a

sá no bodhi puraetá sugesu
 PART us become leader on-easy-paths
 “Become a leader for us on easy paths . . .”

Jamison (1992) convincingly refuted the claim that *sá* in this construction reflected an archaic uninflected sentence connective **só* or an ordinary anaphoric use of the *sá-/tá-* pronoun and suggested a “here and now” deictic value (1992:227). In Klein 1996 our honorand argued based on evidence assembled from half a dozen Indo-European traditions that Vedic *sá-figé* represents a deep archaism, reflecting that **só-/tó-* originally marked *second-person* deixis in a three-way deictic system like that of Latin *hic*, *iste*, and *ille*. In the “*sá-figé*” usage its function was attention-getting: *sá tvám* ‘you there!’ and simple *sá* ‘hey there!’ (ignoring the inappropriate register of the English renderings). Its more widespread use as an anaphoric pronoun was a secondary development of a typologically trivial type (although it is surely already PIE in date).

I find his proposal entirely convincing. There are two points, however, that he does not explicitly address: why is *sá* in this archaic deictic use endingless, and why was it incorporated into the pronominal paradigm precisely as the masculine nominative singular (beside or instead of expected **sós*)? I suggest that the answers are *mutatis mutandis* the same as for Hittite *kī kuit*. The second-person deictic **só* that accompanied and reinforced the second-person pronoun (which could of course be omitted, since the associated verb also marked second person) was a deictic adverb or particle and thus endingless. Since the typical addressee in Vedic hymns is a male deity, reanalysis of the particle **só* when standing alone

as a subject pronoun ‘(you) the one over there’ would naturally have been as masculine nominative singular.

It is true, of course, that this reanalysis must have taken place long before Vedic, since not only the secondary development to an anaphoric pronoun, but also the incorporation of endless **só* into the pronominal paradigm is clearly already Proto-Indo-European. And we may hardly suppose that PIE speakers preferentially addressed male deities in their daily speech. However, since in modern European languages that retained grammatical gender the masculine gender remained the “default” gender well into the twentieth century, I believe we may reasonably assume that it was the default gender in PIE. In any case, an appropriate feminine pendant **seh₂* was created by at least “Core Indo-European.”

I am well aware that the account just proposed for the origin of Hittite neuter nominative-accusative *kī* ‘this’ and PIE masculine nominative singular **só* ‘that’ (originally ‘that by you’) depends on several unverifiable steps and therefore cannot be strictly proven. However, I do maintain that the scenarios presented here are plausible, if we bear in mind the highly restricted nature of the evidence we depend on from ancient corpus languages and remember that the data we have reflects only very imperfectly the spoken language of real speakers that lies behind the texts that have come down to us.

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