»sô manag uuîslîk uuord«

Studien zum Spannungsfeld von Synchronie und Diachronie

Herausgegeben von Maria Kozianka, Roland Schuhmann
und Susanne Zeilfelder



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Postposed Relative Clauses in Hittite

H. Craig Melchert

I Introduction

I am most grateful to the editors for their kind invitation to take part in this tribute celebrating Rosemarie Lühr's eightieth birthday. Having passed that milestone myself, I offer the following very modest but sincere token of friendship and esteem that pursues one aspect of the topic that I treated in her first Festschrift. My focus in Melchert 2016 was on calling attention to types of relative clauses in Hittite whose existence had been ignored, underappreciated, or even denied.

As conceded in Hoffner-Melchert 2024 (§ 30.83 and following), while much progress has been made in delineating the multifarious types of Hittite RCs, many points regarding their formal structure and discourse functions remain to be elucidated (and passage of a decade has required significant correctives to my previous summary account). Readers should accordingly regard the following treatment of postposed RCs as merely provisional.

II The Corpus

A complete survey of Hittite relative clauses with enough preserved context to provide useful information has shown that RCs postposed to an independent clause are by no means rare in our extant corpus (more than sixty in total).[1] While their number pales in comparison with that of preposed correlative RCs, there can be no doubt that postposed RCs are an established type within Hittite grammar. Interestingly, even when we make allowance for the marked differences in the size of our corpora for certain genres, postposed RCs as defined here are manifestly not evenly distributed across textual types.

Their rarity in historical narratives, treaties, and instructions – genres that constitute a major part of our corpus – is particularly striking and can hardly be attributed to chance. Such RCs are well represented in prayers (9x), the narrative portions of festivals and rituals (13x and 10x respectively), and in translation literature based on Hurrian and Akkadian models (25x). Some of the examples in translation literature may be parsed as grammatical Hittite, but others display clear features of translationese: non-Hittite use of proleptic pronouns and quite ungrammatical word orders. Since the latter are unusable as evidence for native Hittite grammar, and the former tell us nothing about postposed RCs that we cannot learn from assuredly native examples, I omit all evidence from translation contexts in what

[1] Various factors have delayed my posting a complete data base of Hittite RCs online, but it is still my intention to do so within the near future. Due to space limitations, I deal here only with postposed RCs as usually defined, those following and dependent on a preceding independent clause. However, Hittite also attests a respectable number (more than two dozen) of sentence-internal RCs postposed to and dependent on (1) subordinate clauses, (2) preposed correlative RCs, (3) left-dislocated "hanging topics", and (4) nominal phrases within clauses of various types. See for one example of each respectively KUB 13.20 i 12 (Instructions of Tuthaliya I, MH/NS), KUB 13.4 ii 46–47 (Instructions for Priests and Temple Personnel, MH/NS), KUB 1.1 iv 50–51 (Autobiography of Hattusili III, NH), and KBo 6.2 iii 5–6 (Laws § 52, OH/OS).

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follows.[2] I naturally also do not use as illustrations examples with less than complete contexts or whose parsing I regard as arguable.

III Formal Features of Postposed Relative Clauses

Relative clauses postposed to independent clauses share two features with other Hittite relative clauses: they may be restrictive or non-restrictive and definite or indefinite (aka "determinate" or "indeterminate"). They differ from most other Hittite RCs in being externally headed (I will discuss a handful of apparent exceptions in section IV).

I follow what I regard as the standard view of the difference between restrictive and non-restrictive RCs: the first limit the referent of the antecedent ("domain noun") to a subgroup of potential referents, and omitting the RC changes the antecedent's identity and the meaning of the sentence:

(1) KBo 3.34 ii 5–6 (CTH 8 Palace Chronicle, OH/NS)
natta apūn GEŠTIN-*an piyēr* LUGAL-*uš kuin aušta*
"They did not give that wine that the king saw."

The person speaking charges that someone improperly substituted wine other than that which the king had seen and approved.

On the other hand, non-restrictive (also termed "appositional") RCs merely add additional information about the referent of the antecedent, whose identity would not change if the RC were omitted:

(2) KUB 31.121+48.111 i 21–22 (CTH 379 Prayer of Muršili II, NH)
tuliyaš AŠRU AŠAR DINI DINGIR.MEŠ *kue*[*dani*] *p*[*edi t*]*u*[*l*]*iya* [*t*]*iškanzi*
"(Oh) place of assembly, the place of legal proceedings, the place into which the gods (regularly) enter into assembly!"

As is not infrequent in New Hittite prayers, a nominative functioning as a vocative whose unique referent is already established is accompanied by an appositional non-restrictive RC that merely adds ancillary information.[3]

As first established by Warren Held (1957), Hittite distinguishes two types of relative clauses that he termed "determinate" and "indeterminate" (now labeled "definite" and "indefinite"). The "definite" type takes the existence of the referent of the antecedent as established, while the "indefinite" type may or may not do so (Held 1957: 13). It is now long since clear that one cannot distinguish the two types formally merely on the basis of surface word order. Nevertheless, in indefinite RCs the relative pronoun is in "identification-information focus" and typically does stand first in its surface clause (preceded only by unaccented sen-

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[2] I cite one illustration for each of the two types found in translation literature: KUB 33.106+ iii 52–53 (Ullikummi, MH/NS) *nu=kan karuwiliya* ^{URUDU}*ardāla* [*par*]*ā tiyandu nepiš tekann=a kuēz arḫa kuerer* "Let them present the ancient saw(s)(,) with which they cut apart heaven and earth!"; KUB 17.7+ iv 14–15 (Ullikummi, MH/NS) *kuiš=war=aš aši* DUMU-*aš ku*[*in*] *namma šallanuēr* ^{d}*Gulšuš* ^{d}MAḪ.MEŠ-*uš* "Who is he, that child whom the Fate-Goddesses (and) Mother-Goddesses have raised in turn?"

[3] The same structure appears in a prayer of Muwattalli: KUB 6.45 iii 11–12 (CTH 381, NH) *tuliyaš pēdaš* DINGIR.MEŠ *kuedani pedi tuliya tiškanzi*. See Goedegebuure 2018: 87–91 on the correct analysis of the common gender suffixes *-a-* and *-ant-* as individuating and 2018: 94 for arguments that their appearance in the context of direct address does *not* justify interpreting either as "personifying".

tence connectives with or without enclitics): see Hoffner-Melchert 2024: 567 (§ 30.103) following Goedegebuure 2009 and Huggard 2011: 88–91. However, it has now been shown that other constituents may be topicalized or focused to the left of a relative pronoun even when it is clearly indefinite and in identification-information focus (see Hoffner-Melchert 2024: 568 with references). We shall see a likely instance of this below in example (9), an indefinite postposed RC.

On the contrary, there is now strong evidence that relative pronouns in definite RCs are not in focus and are prosodically deficient, requiring the presence of at least one accented constituent (a single word or a phonological phrase) to their left to serve as host in the surface phonological order (Hoffner-Melchert 2024: 561 § 30.87).[4]

The referent of the antecedent in most instances of definite relative clauses is also specific, as in the examples of the wine and the place of divine assembly in (1) and (2) above. I note that in both instances a full nominal subject in its usual clause-initial position serves as host for the non-focused relative pronoun. These two examples also show that the parameters of restrictive versus non-restrictive RCs and definite versus indefinite RCs are independent of each other.

Indefinite postposed relative clauses confirm the points just made:

(3) IBoT 1.36 iv 20–21 (CTH 262 Instruction for the Royal Bodyguard, MH/MS)
mān ta[*m*]*aiš=ma kuiški BELU*«*LUM*» *ḫandāitta kuiš ḫantezzi*[*a*]*nni arta nu apaš UŠKEN*
"But if some other lord is available who is standing in the front rank, he bows."

The RC is clearly indefinite, since it is not established that anyone fitting the description is in fact available. It is restrictive, since the context argues that the lord in question must be in the front rank to properly perform the obeisance to the king (see Güterbock-van den Hout 1991: 35 and Garrett 1994: 48).

We predictably also find indefinite non-restrictive postposed relative clauses:

(4) KUB 6.45 iii 4–9 (CTH 381 Prayer of Muwattalli, NH)
[(DINGIR.LÚ.MEŠ)] DINGIR.MUNUS.MEŠ *ŠA* LUGAL-*RI U ŠA* MUNUS.LUGAL-*TI kuiēš daranteš kuiēš ŪL daranteš kuetaš ANA* É.MEŠ DINGIR.MEŠ LUGAL MUNUS.LUGAL *peran* EGIR-*pa iyantari kuetaš*=*a*[(*t*)] *ANA* É.MEŠ DINGIR.MEŠ *peran* EGIR-*pa ŪL iyantari n*=*aš* LÚ.MEŠSANGA *šippanz(a)kanzi*
"Male deities and female deities of the king and the queen, whichever are named, whichever are not named, to whichever temples the king and queen attend (lit. go back and forth before), to whichever they do not attend, and the priests consecrate them."[5]

However, the distinction between definite and indefinite is not always as clearcut as we might anticipate. It is not unusual in Hittite, especially but by no means exclusively in instructions, to find "establishing definites" (see for the concept Motter 2023: 256, following Becker 2021: 70), where we find a definite formulation that is in real-world terms effectively equivalent to an indefinite one:

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[4] I am constrained to emphasize that not all the details of what determines the position of the relative pronoun in a definite RC have been fully worked out, but the examples of postposed RCs known to me in assuredly native Hittite compositions conform to what we find elsewhere, most notably in the better-studied preposed correlative RCs. I will confine myself here to making explicit what the host is in all relevant examples.

[5] My understanding of the last clause as part of a multiclausal RC follows Singer (2002: 91) against Daues-Rieken (2018: 405), whose interpretation as a resumptive clause is quite impossible, since it would interrupt the list of vocatives (in NH identical with nominatives) that continues on for three more lines. Restorations are from KUB 6.46 iii 42–47, whose text is the same with minor spelling variations.

(5) IBoT 1.36 i 23–24 (CTH 262 Instruction for the Royal Bodyguard, MH/MS)
nu kuiš LÚ *MEŠEDI* GAL *nu=šši=kan* ^{GIŠ}GIDRU *arḫa dāi*
"Which(ever) bodyguard is in charge (lit. great) takes the spear away from him (the chief of the bodyguard)."

(6) ibid. i 72–73
nu LÚ *MEŠEDI kuiš* ^{GIŠ}G[U.Z]A ^{GIŠ}*ḫulugann*[*i*] *ḫ*[*arz*]*i n=ašta anda=ya ŪL kuinki tarnai parā=ya=kan ŪL kuinki tarna*[*i*]
"And the bodyguard who holds the footstool for the carriage, he neither lets anyone in nor lets anyone out."

The situations are entirely the same. The specific identity of the bodyguard in question is unknown, since the reference is to whoever might be on duty. The author in the second instance expects his readers to know that there will be some individual fulfilling the role on a given occasion and expects them to accommodate to his formulation.[6]

The point of the preceding excursus is that we find the same competing formulations in postposed relative clauses:

(7) KBo 15.25 Vo 24–25 (CTH 396 Ritual for *Wišuriyant-*, MH/MS)
n=ašta DINGIR-*LAM* [^{É}*karimmi*] *anda* [*pēd*]*aḫḫi kuit=ši AŠRU*
"And I bring the goddess into a [sacred precinct], whichever is her place."[7]

Chrzanowska (2012), following Goetze (1968–1969: 117), correctly parses the RC as postposed, against Carruba (1966: 7 and 43), whose attempt to construe it with what follows is badly forced. The word order of the RC with the relative pronoun in initial position and thus necessarily focused requires that it be taken as indefinite, but Chrzanowska's reading as definite is in real terms entirely equivalent. Readers of the text would have known that the goddess had her own sacred abode, and I am confident that the author could have chosen *AŠRU=ši kuit* "And I bring the goddess into [the sacred precinct/temple] that is her place." I base this contention on examples like the following:

(8) KUB 45.47 i 29–30 (CTH 494 Ritual for NIN.GAL, MH/MS)
EGIR *ḫuprušḫi=ma* ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR AD.KID *dāi* SÍSKUR-*aš=ššan kuedani katta ḫandān*
"But behind the incense-burner one places the wicker table down on which the ritual offerings are arranged."

See Bawanypeck-Görke 2016, whom I follow in reading SÍSKUR-*aš* as a freestanding genitive 'that of the ritual' (see their note 4). The table behind the incense burner has not been mentioned in the previous context, but once again readers may be expected to accommodate to the definite formulation.[8]

However, an "establishing definite" reading seems forced for the following example:

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[6] This strategy is not uncommon in modern languages. Compare English "The doorman who is on duty decides who is allowed to enter" for "Whichever doorman is on duty…".

[7] Tentative restoration with Carruba (1966: 6), but since the generic term for 'temple' is neuter, [*INA* É.DINGIR-*LIM*] is also possible.

[8] This unmistakably definite postposed RC formulation also permits the same analysis of the passage in KUB 45.24 i 1–3 (CTH 490 Ritual of Aštu, MH/NS): [KÁ.G]AL$^{!}$-*TIM*$^{!}$ *ḫatalkišnaš ANA* ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR AD.KID*=ma* [GÙB-*l*]*az* ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR AD.KID *artari NAMMANTUM* KÙ.BABBAR*=šan kuwapi kittari* "(At) the [ga]te of hawthorn to the left of the wicker table stands the wicker table where a silver measuring vessel lies/is placed." Neither wicker table has been previously mentioned, but we have once again a definite formulation, where the relative pronoun has been replaced by the relative adverb. See for a similar analysis Görke 2010: 115.

(9) KUB 9.31 ii 9–10 (CTH 757 Ritual of Zarpiya, MH/NS)
nu 8 DUMU.MEŠ-*uš uwadanzi* MUNUS-*ni=ššan kuiēš nāui pānzi*
"And they bring eight boys who have not yet gone to a woman."

It seems better to assume with Garrett (1994: 48) an indefinite restrictive postposed RC in which the locatival nominal phrase "to a woman," a salient referent in the context, has been topicalized to the left of the focused relative pronoun.

IV Other Postposed Relative Clauses

A very few relative clauses postposed to an independent clause cannot be analyzed as belonging to the types illustrated in the preceding: externally headed restrictive and non-restrictive definite and indefinite RCs.

One is the following:

(10) KUB 16.32(+)KUB 50.6 ii 12–13 (CTH 569 Oracular Inquiry, NH)
^{LÚ}SANGA-*UTTA=ya apiy*[*a t*]*iyanzi kuiš* SIxSÁ-*ri*
"And they will also install in the priesthood there whoever is determined by oracle."

The parsing by van den Hout (1998: 405) assumes a dubious use of *dai-* 'to place' to mean 'to found' a priesthood and forces him to supply "to install" in the relative clause. We should rather suppose the phraseology found in all other similar passages (CHD Š: 200b–201a): a person is installed in an established priesthood, whose fitness was sometimes determined by an oracle.[9] We thus have a rare example of a postposed free relative in Hittite.[10]

Of more problematic status are a very few instances of relative clauses following an independent clause that repeat the referent noun of the latter and thus appear to be internally headed:

(11) KUB 9.31 iv 28–31 (CTH 394 Ritual of Ašḫella, ?/NS)
INA UD.4.KAM *mān lukkatta karūwariwar ḫūdāk* 1 GU$_4$.MAḪ 1 UDU.'SÍG+MUNUS" 3 UDU.NÍTA *ūnniyanzi ANA* UDU.'SÍG+MUNUS' *=ma=ššan kuedani* UDU.*ŠIR nāwi pānza*
"On the fourth day when it dawns, at once early in the morning they drive (hither) a bull, a ewe (and) three male sheep, a ewe to which a ram has not yet gone."

(12) KBo 29.55(+)KUB 35.43(+)35.56 ii 32–33 (CTH 761.3.8 *šalli aniur*, MH/NS)
[*namma=ka*]*n* UDU *parā ḫilamni pennai ŠA* GI [*ANA* ^{GIŠ}]ZA.LAM.GAR.ḪI.A *kuit ḫilammar peran*
"[Next,] she drives the sheep out into the gatehouse, the gatehouse that is in front of the reed huts."[11]

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[9] For the omission of expected *ANA* before ^{LÚ}SANGA-*UTTA* compare IBoT 1.29 Ro 16 ^{d}LAMMA.LUGAL *kuiuš paršiyan*[(*zi*)] "that they break for the Tutelary Deity of the king" vs. ibid. Ro 60: *ANA* ^{d}LAMMA.LUGAL *kuiuš paršiya*[*nzi*] "that they break for the Tutelary Deity of the king". See for the text Mouton 2011: 4 and 8, but *kuiuš* cannot be analyzed as "every" (Mouton 2011: 12 with n. 33 and 15). Compare also the omission of *INA/ANA* before 'gate' in the example cited in note 8 above (thus with Görke, loc. cit., based on space).

[10] While the discourse relationship is clear, there is syntactically no antecedent in the first clause in KBo 17.65 Vo 64 (CTH 489 Birth Ritual, MH/MS): [*nu šipa*]*nti kuiš n=an* EN.SÍSKUR *piyanāizzi kuit=ši āššu* "The ritual client rewards the one who libates – whatever pleases him/her." We have another postposed free RC. See for further similar examples with *piyanāi-* CHD P: 250b.

[11] Compare the identical postposed RC with a similar independent clause ibid. iii 38–39 (see for both passages Yakubovich-Mouton 2023: 300–01 and 304–05).

One might suspect that in (11) the repetition of the "domain noun" of the first clause is motivated by the need to select it from the three nouns of that clause, leading also to the contrastive focus and word order of the indefinite RC (for which cf. (9) above). However, it is less clear, at least to me, that hosting of the non-focused relative pronoun by topicalization of the noun phrase of the postpositional phrase would require repetition of *ḫilammar*. I limit myself to calling attention to these examples (the first of which contradicts the claim in Garrett 1994: 48) and leave their formal analysis to others more qualified.

V Conclusions

Hittite relative clauses postposed to independent clauses are more robustly attested than previously acknowledged, including both restrictive and non-restrictive RCs, as well as both definite and indefinite types. I tentatively suggested in Melchert 2016: 294 that the extremely rare type of RC that splits an independent clause is the source of the type with the RC postposed beyond the clause. I now follow rather the illuminating suggestion of Thomas Motter (p.c.) that the feature that all four types of RCs cited in note 1 above share is that they are underlyingly *adnominal* RCs. In a few instances they remain postnominal, producing rare examples like those cited in Melchert 2016: 294 and that from the Laws § 52 cited here in note 1. For reasons that call for further study, in all other cases the RC is "displaced" rightward to a position outside the larger constituent of which it is a part, be that a hanging topic, a preposed correlative RC, or a clause – subordinate or independent. Whether "postposition" is the optimal term for this phenomenon I must leave open – and likewise the question of whether it is in fact unitary.

I forgo here speculations on the distribution of postposed RCs across genres, due not only to space limitations, but also to the fact that any such analysis would need to take into account the other types of postposed RCs cited in note 1.

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