

David M. Goldstein, Dieter C. Gunkel, Stephanie W. Jamison, and Anthony D. Yates (eds.). 2025.

Proceedings of the 35th Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference.

Berkeley: eScholarship, University of California. 13–34.

<https://escholarship.org/uc/weciec>

Bad Hittite, Good Hattian: Linguistic Interference in the Old Hittite Oracle KBo 18.151*

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The establishment of the Hittite-speaking court in Hattusa in the 17th century BCE must have led to close contact of speakers of Hattian, Luwian, and newly introduced Hittite in and around Hattusa, if not beyond. In such a situation we would expect influence from Hattian on Hittite beyond borrowed lexemes. However, there is no evidence of Hattian interference with the grammar of Hittite that can be extracted from the documents of the court, our main source of Hittite. Nonetheless, a rare document, the oracle inquiry KBo 18.151, does exhibit such influence from Hattian. As has generally been accepted, this document, dated to Hattusili I's reign, contains orthographic anomalies pointing to Hattian phonetic interference reflecting the speech of a native speaker of Hattian, perhaps representing the general populace. But there is more interference. The current study reveals how the incorrect use of Hittite case endings is best explained as resulting from pattern imposition of the Hattian case system. The language of KBo 18.151 might thus reflect the type of Hittite that resulted from acquisition of Hittite as a second language. This implies that Old Hittite society was diglossic, with Hittite predominantly as the elite language, while Hattian and possibly Luwian were spoken by the general populace. KBo 18.151 provides an invaluable glimpse into

* I am most grateful to the editors for their comments and questions, the participants at the conference, and Jake Lauinger for discussing the oddities of the script and the tablet formatting. The usual disclaimer applies.

the initial phase of Hittite-Hattian language contact from the perspective of a native Hattian speaker.

1 Introduction

The arrival of the Hittite-speaking court in Hattusa in the 17th century BCE during its transformation into the capital brought Hittites and Hattians in close cooperation, perhaps at the court, but most certainly among commoners (Kloekhorst 2019:250).¹ After an initial awkward period of difficult communication, exposure of young children to a multilingual environment must have led to a first generation of bilinguals beside a substantial number of adults who never would have been able to learn either Hittite or Hattian well.

Assuming that Hattian-speaking commoners subsequently shifted to Hittite (Kloekhorst 2019:250), we would expect at least some influence from Hattian on Hittite beyond borrowed lexemes. Nevertheless, interference from Hattian on Hittite grammar is thus far non-existent. Perhaps this is to be expected given that the Hittite known to us represents the language of the upper echelons of society.

Because the palace and temple archives do not represent commoners and private archives are absent, we are in the dark about the grammars of the languages of the local population and the expected interactions of Hattian and Hittite. Yet, there is a unique Old Hittite document, the oracle inquiry KBo 18.151, that allows a glimpse into what “Hattianized” Hittite might have looked like. I argue that this document with bad Hittite grammar reflects good Hattian grammar, showing evidence of the imposition of Hattian morphological structure on Hittite.

To my knowledge KBo 18.151 is the only document of its type. It is still worthwhile to discuss KBo 18.151 both empirically—trying to explain the use of the case endings—and from a contact-linguistic perspective. The data set $n = 1$ requires that the following, with its conclusions about the contact-linguistic situation, should serve as an explanatory model that needs to be further tested: the garbled Hittite of KBo 18.151 represents the earliest stage of contact when the local population was not yet fluent in Hittite but had to learn it as adults. The language situation at the onset of the Old Hittite period is therefore best described as one of diglossia, with Hattian and a form of Luwian spoken by the population² and Hittite

1 On the status of Hattian in the Hittite period in general, see Rizza 2023.

2 See Goedegebuure 2008 for the claim that a form of Luwian interfered to such an extent with Hattian that it led to typological disruption of the latter. The population of Central Anatolia before the arrival of Hittite may thus have consisted of speakers of “Luwianized” Hattian, un-influenced Hattian (Rizza 2023:255), “Hattianized” Luwian, and uninfluenced Luwian, in

spoken mainly at the court, around Kültepe/Kanes, and presumably more widely in Hattusa.

2 Historical setting

The oracle tablet KBo 18.151 is one of the earliest contemporaneous Hittite language documents; it can safely be dated to the reign of Hattusili I (ca. 1650–1620 BCE) (Soysal 2000:107–13). In it, a Wise Woman from Hattusa reports the outcomes of a KIN (or symbol) oracle inquiry regarding a campaign against Hattusili’s enemies, the Hurrians. Though KIN oracles usually contain a question, a description of the oracle procedure, and the outcomes,³ this text only contains the procedures and the outcome “The Evil has gone” at the end (rev. 19). The tablet is therefore likely part of a correspondence where one letter contains the questions and another one the procedures with outcomes (Soysal 2000:86–7). Given that the tablet was found in Hattusa, there are two options. It could be a draft in response to questions received from the king, Hattusili I, on campaign, while the clean copy was sent back to the king (or just a messenger with the outcome?). Because the lines often run deeply onto the other side, KBo 18.151 is certainly not a clean copy, and could indeed be a draft. But perhaps it was sent, written quite sloppily, from the location of the army to Hattusa. That would imply that the Wise Woman from Hattusa traveled with the army, but it would also mean that the questions were sent out of Hattusa to the army. Since I assume that the king asked the questions, he would not be leading the campaign into northern Mesopotamia. Though this cannot be excluded, I find this less likely and opt for KBo 18.151 as a draft, written in Hattusa.

Originating in Hattusa, we need to ask whether KBo 18.151 reflects the language of the scribe or of the Wise Woman.

3 Orthography and phonetics

KBo 18.151 contains many unusual or unique spellings.⁴ Soysal (2000:113–4) argues that these spellings need to be attributed to the accent of the Wise Woman from Hattusa as a native speaker of Hattian.⁵ He points out especially the incorrect

addition to Palaic and likely other languages, such as the recently discovered Kalasmaic (Rieken, Yakubovich, and Schwemer 2024).

3 For KIN oracles in general see Warbinek 2020.

4 See the edition in the Appendix, and Kloekhorst 2014:240 n. 867, 360 n. 1396.

5 Not all features listed by Soysal qualify as Hattian influence. The Hittite split-genitive and the nasal loss in *ištarni(n)kaīn* (obv. 5, 12), *išta(n)zanaš* (rev. 14), and *utniya(n)tan* (rev. 15)—

use of theme vowels (*Zikiltu* instead of *Zikilta-*, *Inare-* instead of *Inara-*). As opposed to Hittite, Hattian nouns are overwhelmingly consonant stems. The incorrect use of theme vowels could thus betray non-native control of Hittite by a native speaker of Hattian. Regarding orthography, ⟨*pa*⟩ and ⟨*ba*⟩ alternate, as in Hattian. We find both *paīt* and *baīt* ‘sh/e went’ (and *baīš* ‘s/he gave’ instead of *paīš*) (Soysal 2000:113 with n. 59). Another conspicuous feature is the absence of all voiced signs (except ⟨*ba*⟩). Especially the absence of ⟨*da*⟩ leads to some unexpected spellings: the verbs ‘s/he took’ and ‘s/he placed’ are always written as *taš/tāš* and *taīš*, respectively, instead of *daš/dāš* and *daīš* (Soysal 2000:114; for OS spellings with ⟨*ta*⟩ or ⟨*da*⟩ see Kloekhorst 2010:202–7). These spellings might imply that the scribe did not adhere to Hittite standard scribal practice but simply used ⟨*ta*⟩ to represent generalized initial [T(:)] (Hoffner and Melchert 2024:79). But I would then also expect only spellings with ⟨*pa*⟩ for *paīt* and *paīš*. On the other hand, a tally of all Hattian words with initial ⟨*da*⟩ and ⟨*ta*⟩ in Soysal 2004 shows 18 instances of initial ⟨*da*⟩ and 526 instances of initial ⟨*ta*⟩, illustrating how Hattian non-medial consonants are voiceless (Simon 2012:91). Combined with the Hattian-type ⟨*pa*⟩/⟨*ba*⟩ alternation, I therefore consider the spellings with initial ⟨*ta*⟩ another feature that can be attributed to Hattian influence.

In my view Soysal has provided sufficient evidence that the orthography reflects Hattian phonetic interference.⁶ But the question is, whose Hattian, the Wise Woman’s or the scribe’s? If the scribe were a native speaker of Hittite, trained in writing Hittite, one could imagine that the scribe represented the words of the Wise Woman as spoken by her, with the wrong theme vowels and with erroneous case endings, but would the scribe go as far as to represent her pronunciation in writing, assuming that that is what the spelling indicates? We should at least entertain the idea that the scribe was not that well versed in “standard” Hittite and was either a native speaker of Hattian⁷ or of “Hattianized” Hittite himself. Either way, the observed phenomena indicate interference from Hattian.

though note *ḫenkan* without nasal loss (obv. 12, rev. 2, 7)—are Hittite phenomena (Hoffner and Melchert 2024:70–1; 330).

6 The unusual and consistent plene spelling of *i* in *-aī-* in closed syllables instead of expected *-āi-* (*araīš*, *ištarnikaīn*, *baīš*, *taīš*, *paīt*, *baīt*) could reflect a Hattian phenomenon. In Hattian words this sequence overwhelmingly presents as ⟨(C)*a-i-iC*⟩. Such spellings instead of expected ⟨(C)*a-a-iC*⟩ are found in ordinary Hittite texts too, e.g., ⟨*wa-aš-ta-i-iš*⟩ in KBo 4.3 i 33, but they are rather rare.

7 For this possibility see Simon 2012:11.

4 Case endings in Hittite and Hattian

4.1 Bad use of Hittite case endings

Besides the orthographic and phonetic peculiarities of KBo 18.151, the use of the case endings for common gender nouns does not comply with Hittite grammar. Most conspicuously, the dat.sg. and pl. endings, *-i* and *-aš* respectively, are always absent with persons and gods: *Zikiltu* (obv. 7), *Ḫur[la]* (obv. 13), DINGIR.MEŠ (obv. 4, 10, rev. 12, 17),⁸ yet are preserved with a city and a neuter noun: ^{URU}*Ḫaššui* (rev. 3), *italui* (rev. 6). But the city name ^{URU}*Kanniše* (rev. 4) does not show the nom.sg.c. ending *-š*, while all other common gender nouns do. Finally, the acc.sg.c. ending is absent in ^d*Halmašut* (rev. 9). On the other hand, the genitive is always consistently marked, and there are no issues with the case endings of the neuters either.

There does not seem to be any good reason why this speaker or scribe would have so many issues with the inflection of common gender nouns but treat the neuter nouns correctly and always correctly mark the genitive. Focusing on the dative, Ünal and Kammenhuber (1974:180) believed that its consistent non-expression was due to space considerations. This argument does not hold for two reasons: first, *A-NA* or the dat.-loc. ending is also absent when there is enough space (obv. 4, 7, 10, rev. 17); and second, in one case where the scribe is very much running out of space, he still uses a maximal orthography. If space had been a consideration, why write rev. 5 as *na-ak-ki-iš-še-et ta-aš Ḫur-la-aš ul-^rḫa¹-a[**l**-li-iš-š]e-et ta-aš* (with “superfluous” signs marked bold) instead of *na-ak-ki-še-et ta-aš Ḫur-la-aš ul-ḫa-[[i-š]e-et ta-aš*, running deep onto the other side of the tablet?

Soysal’s suggestion (2000:102) that the speaker/scribe treated the divine throne *Halmaššut* as neuter, even though the lexeme is a common gender consonant stem in Hittite, is in my view correct. Hittite neuters are overwhelmingly semantically inanimate. I suggest that the speaker/scribe of KBo 18.151 did not control the common/neuter gender system in Hittite, but instead approached the grammatical gender of nouns based on the real-world animacy of their referents, treating real-world inanimates as neuter gender and real-world animates (or perhaps agents) as common gender.

8 Though indirect objects in Hittite-language texts may be expressed by formally case-unmarked Sumerograms, this seems to be quite rare (Cajnko 2017:196). In KBo 18.151 the lack of case marking for indirect objects seems to be the standard. I therefore treat it as aberrant enough that it warrants a different explanation.

Indeed, closer examination of the Hittite case endings provides evidence for Hattian grammatical influence. I argue in section 4.3 that the speaker/scribe pasted the case-ending patterns of Hattian (described in section 4.2) onto Hittite, taking animacy into account: if Hattian did not have an ending for a certain case role, the Hittite noun did not receive it either, except for the nom.sg.c.

4.2 Hattian case marking

A few preliminary remarks are in order. I consider Hattian a head-marking language (Goedegebuure 2008:159), with marking of the Agent, Patient, and other roles such as Goal, but not Recipient (Goedegebuure 2010:956), on the verb.⁹ Head-marking languages sometimes mark roles on dependents, as also happens in Hattian. Here I only discuss those nominal affixes expressing syntactic and semantic functions that are relevant for KBo 18.151, namely the subject, object, possessor (which is one of the functions of the Hattian genitive), and recipient (Indirect Object). Finally, since I argue that real-world animacy plays a role in the grammar of Hattian, I differentiate between animate and inanimate referents.

I propose the following limited paradigm for Hattian nouns and provide justifications in the next sections.

Table 1. Hattian case marking in selected roles

	Animate		Inanimate
sg. subject	-∅		-∅
sg. object	- <i>tu/-šū</i>	rarely -∅	-∅
sg. indirect object	(LOC-...)-∅	-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i>	LOC-...-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i> / <i>tu</i>
sg. genitive	-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i>		-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i>
pl. indirect object	LOC-PL-...-∅ (?)		?
pl. genitive	PL-...-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i>		?

4.2.1 Singular subject marking

There is unanimous agreement that the singular subject is unmarked. This is also the only type of marking of nominals that has received such unanimity (Simon 2012:117):

⁹ I maintain that Hattian shows semantic alignment as based on the verbal system (see Goedegebuure 2010, with discussion of previous views of Hattian as showing accusative or ergative alignment). Simon (2012:179–84) again argues for accusative alignment, while Schrijver (2018:213) opts for a split tripartite system.

- (1) Or. 90/1663+ i 1' (MS), dupl. Or. 90/1335 i 3 (MS)¹⁰
Eštān-Ø ^{UR}[(^U*Lāhzan-Ø* *lē-wē_el-Ø* *ān-Ø-teh-Ø*)]
 Estan-S/A ^{city}Lahzan-LOC his-house-PAT 3SG.A-3SG.P-build-PST
 Estan built her(!) house in Lahzan.
- (2) KUB 28.75 ii 14 (OS)
kātte-Ø *te-Ø-kunkuhū-a*
 king-S/P OPT-3SG.P-live-OPT
 May the king live!
- (3) KBo 19.162 obv. 11 (MS)
pīp-Ø *a-šah-Ø* *taš-te-Ø-ḥ-ka-ziy-^ra¹*
 stone-S/P DET²-evil-S/P NEG-OPT-3SG.P-LOC-on-lie-OPT
 An evil stone shall not be placed into it (i.e., the house of the king)

4.2.2 Possessor marking

The analysis of *-(V)n* as the case ending of the possessor is relatively uncontroversial, though Soysal (2004:185; 2010:1043) notes that in one instance it expresses the recipient of *yay* ‘to give’. Simon (2012:118), on the other hand, argues that this verb *yay* controls the genitive (further see section 4.2.4).

Possessors overwhelmingly occur in constructions such as *wā_a-šāh-in ḥa-lē-kkiš* ‘of COLL²-evil-GEN to-his-head’ in (4). The head noun *kkiš* hosts a possessive prefix and is in this case preceded by the local prefix *ḥa-* indicating the function of *ḥa-lē-kkiš* in the clause.

- (4) KBo 37.1 iv 13-14 (NS), dupl. Or. 90/627 i 7' (MS)
āš-ḥaš-tur [(*wā_a-š*)]*āh-in ḥa-lē-kkiš*
 3PL.A-to-hit COLL²-evil-GEN to-his-head
 They hit at the head of Evil (with the copper hammers and pegs).

10 I collated all passages against the photographs on the Konkordanz (<https://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/>) and in Soysal and Süel 2016. I provided my own glosses and translations. For editions and previous treatments, one should consult the Konkordanz. The glosses follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Additional glosses: C = common; COLL = collective; ETHN = ethnicon; INDV = individuation; OPT = optative; S/A = subject-agent marking; S/P = subject-patient marking.

marked at all, as a tally of the non-*lē*-marked Objects in two of the best-preserved bilinguals, KUB 2.2 + KUB 48.1 and KBo 37.1 show (see table 2). Moreover, (4) contains *ḫa-lē-kkiš* ‘on *lē* head’. If *lē* were the object marker, the combination with the local prefix *ḫa-* should not be possible or at least very unlikely.

Table 2. \emptyset -marking of Hattian objects in KUB 2.2 + KUB 48.1 and KBo 37.1¹²

Hattian form	#	Hittite form
\emptyset	9	Singular
\emptyset	3	No Hittite equivalent or not preserved
\emptyset	4	Plural

I follow Soysal’s view that *-tu/-šu* without local prefix occurs suffixed to nouns that function as Direct Objects,¹³ but I suggest another explanation for its distribution. Instead of indicating that the object is emphatic, in the bilinguals “bare” *-tu/-šu* only occurs on nouns with animate referents. In other words, Hattian shows differential object marking based on animacy, which is typologically common (Haspelmath 2021:134):

<u>Hattian <i>-tu/-šu</i></u>	~	<u>Hittite accusative</u>
^d <i>Kataḫziwuwē-šu</i>	~	^d <i>kamrušepa-n</i> ¹⁴
<i>urē-š ḫuzzaššāi-šu</i>	~	LÚ SIMUG.A <i>innarauwand-an</i> ¹⁵ ‘powerful blacksmith’
[<i>ai-</i>]pparāiu- <i>šu</i> ¹⁶	~	[^{LÚ}]SANGA- <i>an</i> ¹⁷ ‘priest’
<i>zār-du</i>	~	UDU- <i>u-n</i> ¹⁸ ‘sheep’

A review of those words in Soysal 2004 ending in *-tu/-šu* with reasonably well-established meanings confirms that this ending overwhelmingly occurs with animates. It appears in *takiḫā-šu* ‘lion’ > ‘hero’ (e.g., KBo 37.11 i 15), *Eštān-tu* ‘the deity Estan’ (KUB 28.48 obv.1.col. 12), *wa_a-zarī-š-tu* ‘humans’ (KBo 37.39 obv. 4’), ^d*U-tu* ‘Stormgod’ (KUB 40.85 obv. 15), *Tāru-ttu* ‘the deity Taru’ (KBo 37.21

patient markers for some intransitive subjects is to be expected. The occurrence of *lē* as marker of the intransitive subject therefore does not serve as a counterargument against Simon’s view.

12 From these texts Simon lists, among others, the following examples with zero-marked Objects: #5 (2012:118), 24 (p. 137), 29 (p. 140). Since the examples are not glossed, I do not know how Simon understands these forms.

13 With prefix the morpheme may mark the ablative and at least the locative.

14 KBo 37.1 i 8 ~ ii 7.

15 KBo 37.1 i 12 ~ ii 11.

16 KBo 37.9 obv. 6’.

17 KUB 28.1 iv 7’.

18 KUB 24.14 iv 19’a ~ 19’b.

rev. 18), *wa_awa_aḫ-du* ‘eagle?’ (KUB 28.19 obv.l.col. 3’). *KUR-tu* in KUB 28.75 ii 12 is ambiguous because it could mean either ‘country’ or ‘population’. Similarly ambiguous is *lē-we_l-tu* ‘his house’ in KUB 28.82 ii 20’. Given its concluding position in the series *lē-zuwā*[...] ‘his wife’ and *lē-pīnu* ‘his child(ren)’ *we_l* might also refer to ‘household’.¹⁹ The phrase *lē-pīnu* ‘his child(ren)’ in KUB 28.82 shows that not all animate entities in object function show *-tu/-šu*.

In one case a nominal with *-tu/-šu* seems to occur in intransitive subject function. This would further support both *-tu/-šu*’s function as marker of the object in transitive clauses and my analysis of Hattian as a language with active alignment (Goedegebuure 2010): [*t*]akkiḫa-*šu* ‘hero’ (KUB 28.6 obv.l.col. 19’) ~ UR.SAG-išš_za_zaš “Also, he is a hero” (KUB 28.6 obv.r.col. 19’).

4.2.4 Recipient and beneficiary marking

Hattian has a rather elaborate system of marking dimensional cases, using combinations of the local prefixes *fē-*, *ḫa-*, *zi-*, *ka-* and the suffixes *-∅*, *-tu/-šu*, *-(V)n*, and *-ī/ē* (Soysal 2010:1043–7; Simon 2012:97–100). Though this requires more study, it seems that arguments of two-place verbs tend to take *-∅*, while satellites (i.e., adjuncts) need to be marked by *-n* or *-ī/ē*.²⁰ For example, a nominal clause “you are NP” does not require anything else for it to be grammatical. The additional beneficiary and company expressions in (5) (*ḫa-pi-punā-n*, *ḫa-wa_a-šḫaw-i*) are therefore satellites. But arguments of two-place verbs, even if they can be construed as the recipient of the action, as in (4) (*ḫa-lē-kkiš*), do not always receive a suffix. This is relevant for the discussion of the verbs that could be the equivalents of the three-place verbs *pai-* ‘to give (to)’ and *peda-* ‘to take (somewhere)’ in the oracle. We would expect the third argument to have no suffix either. This is partially borne out, with again a distinction between animate and inanimate nouns.

I could identify three Hattian three-place verbs (see table 3). Animate recipients may or may not receive marking ($2 \times -n$ vs. $5 \times -\emptyset$),²¹ while again, inanimates seem to be treated differently. For example, the third argument of (*n*)eš ‘to place

19 Too much is unclear in the Hittite translation to be able to make any claims about the function of *ú-uk-šu*(*spa*) in KBo 37.1 i 10. Another unclear instance is *ziš-du* (KBo 21.109 i 12’), which might mean ‘mountain’.

20 To complicate matters, place names indicating the location where the state of affairs takes place are not marked, see (1).

21 A review of all animates in Soysal 2004 with the ending *-(V)n* in preserved context did not yield further forms in *-(V)n* that could be identified as indirect object/recipient. Most occurred in possessive NPs, though a few seemingly did not. The near-impossibility of understanding monolingual texts does not help in those cases.

(on)', the inanimate throne, shows the ending $-(V)n$, in addition to the local prefix $kā-$, also attested with animates; see, e.g., $kā-tarū$ 'to Taru' (KUB 28.7 obv.l.col. 1). $kā-tarū$ is another instance of a recipient/indirect object without suffix.

Table 3. Hattian three-place verbs

Hattian verb	Third argument	Marking
yay 'to give'	$tabarna$ 'to $tabarna$ ' ^a ~ Hitt. $[(laba)]rna-∅$ ^b $tabarna-n$ ^c ~ Hitt. $[(la)]barna-∅$ ^d	$-∅$ $-n$
pa/wa_a 'to place'	$ḫa-lē-we_n$ 'to/at his child' ^e ^d $Kataḫziwu_nri$ 'to/at Kataḫzifuri' ~ Hitt. ^d $Kamrušepa-∅$ ^f	$ḫa-...-∅$ $-∅$
$(n)eš$ 'to place'	$kā-ḫanwa_ašuiitt-ūn$ 'on the throne' ^g ~ Hitt. $GIŠDAG-ti$ ^h	$ka-...-n$
$(w)a_aḫ$ 'to place'	^d $Šulinkatti$ 'to Sulinkatte' ~ Hitt. ^d $U.GUR-∅$ ⁱ $pi-ḫ[a]uḫalū-tu$ 'on the doorbolt' ~ Hitt. $ḫattalwaš GIŠ-ru$ ^k	$-∅$ ^j $pi-...-tu$

a Or. 90/1839 i 6' (MS); KUB 2.2+ iii 27 (NS).

b Or. 90/1362 ii 4' (MS). The dupl. KUB 2.2+ iii 9 has $labarnai$.

c Or. 90/1839 i 8'; KBo 21.110 obv. 11' (MS), dupl. of KUB 2.2+ iii 27. The syntax of the sentence in which the form ^t $tawananna-n$ in KBo 21.110 obv. 12' occurs, does not correspond to the syntax of the Hittite version. This makes comparison too problematic for inclusion here. For further discussion of the problems see Simon 2012:123 n. 275.

d Or. 90/1362 ii 7'.

e KBo 37.21 obv. 4.

f KBo 37.1 i 10 ~ ii 9.

g Or. 90/1839 i 14'.

h KUB 2.2+ iii 25.

i KUB 2.2+ iii 34 ~ iii 38.

j This verb is never attested with forms in $-n$.

k KUB 2.2+ iii 47 ~ iii 50.

Furthermore, it is potentially relevant that the Hittite equivalents $labarna$, ^d $U.GUR$, and $Kamrušepa$, which should have received dative marking, are unmarked. These mistakes might be inspired by the zero marking of the animate third argument in Hattian.

There are a few attestations of $ḫa-wa_a-šḫap$ 'to the gods' without suffix, unfortunately all without context;²² it cannot be established whether this expression is the third argument of a three-place verb. But since in my model of Hattian grammar suffixless forms are expected to function as core arguments, I tentatively consider

22 KUB 28.100 iii? 8'; KUB 28.63 l.col.15'; VBoT 126+ ii? 8'.

animate LOC-PL-noun- \emptyset as the plural counterpart of the animate “dative” singular (LOC-)noun- \emptyset .

4.3 Pattern copying in KBo 18.151

Hattian and Hittite have different grammatical gender systems. Hattian does not seem to have neuter gender but distinguishes between masculine and feminine gender (Soysal 2004:182–4; Simon 2012:100–8). For example, masculine nouns are unmarked (*katte* ‘king’),²³ feminine nouns end in *-t* or *-ḫ* (*takeḫat* ‘lioness’ > ‘heroin’, *kattah* ‘queen’). As I argued above, animacy also seems to play a role. How far grammatical gender and semantic animacy are reflected throughout Hattian grammar is a topic for further study, but masculine and feminine gender is at least visible in nominal derivational morphology, and semantic animacy in differential object and indirect object marking.

In Hittite, animacy interacts in a skewed way with grammatical gender. Neuter gender nouns are overwhelmingly inanimate, while common gender nouns are animate or inanimate. As mentioned in section 4.1, there are no problems with the case endings of neuter nouns in KBo 18.151, which is unexpected given that Hattian does not have neuter gender.

Table 4. Hattian and Hittite inanimate case endings

	Hattian, inanimate	Hittite, neuter	Hittite, common inanimate
sg. subject	- \emptyset	<i>italu-\emptyset</i>	^{URU} <i>Kanniše-\emptyset</i>
sg. object	- \emptyset	<i>nakki-\emptyset</i> <i>ulḫali-\emptyset</i> <i>ḫenkan-\emptyset</i> <i>āššu-\emptyset</i> <i>uštul-\emptyset</i>	^d <i>Ḫalmašut-\emptyset</i> <i>MÈ-\emptyset</i> ^a
sg. indir. obj.	LOC-...-(<i>V</i>) <i>n/-tu</i>	<i>italu-i</i>	^{URU} <i>Ḫaššu-i</i>
sg. possessive	-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i>	<i>nipiš-aš</i>	^{URU} <i>Ḫattuš-aš</i>

a Sumerograms in subject and object function are frequently unmarked for case (Cajnko 2017:196, 199–200). The absence of the ending might therefore not be the result of Hattian interference.

23 For a thorough discussion of the function of the morpheme *-l*, attested on some nouns with male referents, see Simon 2012:105–8.

But if we assume that a Hattian speaker could easily observe the connection between neuter gender and inanimates, then the correct use of neuter case endings in Hittite is explained. The pattern of marking neuters in Hittite is the same as the Hattian inanimate pattern: no endings for the subject and object, but endings for the possessor and indirect object. Adding the common gender inanimates shows that they too behave like neuters, namely, without case endings for the nominative and accusative. The new inanimate paradigm means that only animates are left in the Hittite common gender paradigm. Since the neuter > inanimate paradigm did not lead to changes to the case endings, this might imply that common > animate would not involve changes either. The animate paradigm shows that this implication is unwarranted. The indirect objects would otherwise have kept their case endings, yet they are consistently absent. We are not merely dealing with a redistribution of animates and inanimates among common and neuter gender nouns.

Table 5. Hattian and Hittite animate case endings

	Hattian, animate	Hittite, common animate
sg. subject	-∅	^{URU} <i>Hattušuma-š</i> MUNUS ^{ŠU.GI} -∅ ^a <i>Ziki(l)tu-š</i> ^ḫ IŠKUR-∅ <i>Hurla-š</i> <i>Inare-š</i> ^{URU} Š[<i>erašš</i>] ^a <i>tuma-š</i> ^f <i>Āškilia-š</i>
sg. object	- <i>tu/-šu</i>	<i>ištarnikaṯ-n</i> ^b <i>ḫarka-n</i> <i>pituliya-n</i> <i>arši-n</i>
sg. possessive	-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i>	LUGL- <i>aš</i> <i>Hurla-aš</i> MUNUS.LUGAL-∅ ^c
sg. indirect object	(LOC-)...-∅ - <i>n</i>	<i>Zikiltu-∅</i> <i>Hur[la-∅]</i>
pl. possessive	PL-...-(<i>V</i>) <i>n</i>	<i>ištazan-aš</i> <i>utniyat-an</i>
pl. indirect object	LOC-PL-...-∅ (?)	DINGIR.MEŠ-∅

Table 5 continued

- a See table 4 n. a.
- b The accusatives *ištarnikaīn* ‘disease’ etc. are clearly not human. They should still be listed as animate, or perhaps better as prototypical agents, given the propensity of diseases and other negative concepts to kill, find, or otherwise burden people. The decipherment of Hattian has not progressed enough to determine whether case marking is based on animacy or agentivity. The equivalent lexemes in Hattian have not yet been detected, but Hittite words for disease regularly occur as transitive subjects (requiring *-ant-* if it concerns a neuter noun, e.g., GIG-*anza*, KUB 43.4 i 2). The worry word *pittuliya-* is also attested as transitive subject (KUB 8.35 obv. 7). Though I would not want to call them animate, these concepts certainly act as agents. This could furthermore mean that *henkan* should be placed in the animate paradigm, but since it formally fits both paradigms, I have kept it as neuter inanimate.
- c MUNUS.LUGAL depends on the postposition *peran*, which in Old Hittite always governs the genitive. As such, MUNUS.LUGAL should not be considered unmarked for case (Cajko 2017:195–6 with ex. 5).

Once we abstract over the endings of Hattian and KBo 18.151 and only mark the presence or absence of endings, comparison shows that KBo 18.151 fully adheres to the pattern of Hattian case marking, except for the animate subject.

Table 6. Comparison of Hattian and Hittite case marking

	Animate		Inanimate	
	Hattian	KBo 18.151	Hattian	KBo 18.151
sg. subject	–	+	–	–
sg. object	+	+	–	–
sg. possessive	+	+	+	+
sg. indirect object	–	–	+	+
pl. possessive	+	+	n/a	n/a
pl. indirect object	–	–	n/a	n/a

That the nom.sg.c. *-š* was used, even though Hattian does not mark the nominative, is likely because it is the most distinctive feature of common gender as opposed to neuter gender. Moreover, L1 and L2 acquisition studies of languages with case show that after a case-less phase, the nominative is acquired first (Baten 2013:285).

The pattern copying in KBo 18.151 could be the result of different types of situations; see the next section.

5 Explaining the pattern

Contact-induced language change is both a linguistic and socio-cultural phenomenon. To understand the nature of the pattern copying in KBo 18.151 we need information on extra-linguistic factors such as the degree of bilingualism, duration and intensity of contact, and socio-economic and cultural standing of the languages involved. Knowledge of these factors would help us determine whether the pattern copying should be considered *borrowing* as the result of recipient-language (RL) agentivity, i.e., the speaker is native in Hittite, or *imposition* as the result of source-language (SL) agentivity, i.e., the speaker is native in Hattian.²⁴

The only extra-linguistic factor that is reasonably certain is the status of Hittite—the language of state and provincial secular and religious administration and of the court—as the language of prestige. This limits the scenarios that could have led to the Hittite of KBo 18.151.

The following scenarios are highly unlikely because both require that Hattian was the socially dominant language instead of Hittite: 1) RL agentivity with a speaker of Hittite borrowing the Hattian case marking pattern, and 2) SL agentivity with a speaker of Hittite imposing Hattian features after having become bilingual and then more proficient in Hattian.

This leaves us with SL agentivity with a speaker of Hattian imposing Hattian features on Hittite. This imposition can be explained through 1) language shift from Hattian to Hittite (with attrition of Hattian), 2) language maintenance of Hattian with heavy substratum influence on Hittite among bilingual speakers with Hattian as the dominant language, or 3) Hittite acquired as a second language.

Options 1 and 2 require the existence of imperfectly learned or heavily influenced Hittite that is not reflected in the Hittite archives, though if speakers of Hattian only made up a small percentage of the population, I assume no influence on Hittite would have occurred. Still, if options 1 and 2 describe the situation “on the ground” but not at the court, then the absence of interference from Hattian in attested Hittite is to be expected. To explain Hattian interference on Hittite among commoners and no interference at the court, we would have to imagine two separate tracks for the evolution of Hittite among the population and at the court. Under this scenario the Hittite of the population would probably look like KBo 18.151.

The main problem with “Hattianized” Hittite as vernacular is that court Hittite betrays influence from Luwian. Starting already in prehistory, Luwian influence ranges from the borrowing of function words such as enclitic pronouns to lexemes

24 For the approach to language contact followed here, see Winford 2020.

by the end the Hittite period. Luwian must have been spoken by the population to achieve this, ultimately influencing the language at the court (Yakubovich 2023: 308–12; Pisaniello and Giusfredi 2023a:381–94; Pisaniello and Giusfredi 2023b: 416–23). This situation finds a parallel at the Anglo-Norman speaking English court after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Initially the Norman baronial class spoke Continental French. Once the connections with mainland Europe had become weaker as of the early 13th century, children of the aristocracy were more likely to be exposed to the French of English speakers, resulting in a bilingual court with increasing influence of English on Anglo-Norman (Ingham 2012:160–2).

Currently, option 3 therefore best explains the features of KBo 18.151: the Wise Woman (or the scribe) was a native speaker of Hattian who had to communicate at the court in Hittite, not as a bilingual but as an adult learner. This supports diglossia in the Old Hittite period, as already argued for by Archi (2015:8–9), when the population may not (yet) have been bilingual in Hittite: Hattian, and probably a form of Luwian, were spoken by the population, while Hittite was the language of the court and the administration. In my view, KBo 18.151 is a rare and invaluable witness of “first contact,” when Hittite still had to be learned as a foreign language.

Appendix

The text of KBo 18.151 is collated against the photographs in the Konkordanz; see Mainzer Fotoarchiv, Photoauswahl zu 806/w (CTH 827). Forms with aberrant case endings are highlighted. Rare spellings are boldface, spellings unique for this document are boldface and underlined.

Obverse

- (1) ^[UR]U Hattuš-uma-š MUNUSŠU.GI-Ø
Hattus(a)-ETHN-NOM.SG.C Wise.Woman-Ø
- (2) ^mZi[k]i(l)tu-š araṯ-š
Z.-NOM.SG.C arise-3SG.PST
- (3) LUGAL-aš nakki *šet*
King-GEN.SG difficulty:NOM-ACC.SG.N *3SG.POSS.NOM-ACC.SG.N*
- tā-š
take-3SG.PST
- (4) DINGIR.MEŠ-Ø parā petā-š
gods-Ø out carry-3SG.PST

The Wise Woman from Hattus(a):
 Ziki(l)tu arose.
 He took the king's Difficulty.
 He carried (it) out (to) the gods.

- (5) *nipiš-aš* ^dİŠKUR-Ø *araī-š* *ištarnikaī-n*
 Heaven-GEN.SG Weathergod-Ø arise-3SG.PST sickness-ACC.SG.C

ta-š
 take-3SG.PST

- (6) LUGAL-*aš* *nakki* *šet*
 King-GEN.SG difficulty:NOM-ACC.SG.N 3SG.POSS.NOM-ACC.SG.N

ta-š
 take-3SG.PST

- (7) ^mZikiltu-Ø *baī-š*
 Zikiltu-Ø give-3SG.PST

The Weathergod of Heaven arose.
 He took Sickness.
 He took the king's Difficulty.
 He gave (them) (to) Zikiltu.

- (8) *Ḫurla-š* *araī-š* *nakki*
 Hurrian-NOM.SG.C arise-3SG.PST difficulty:NOM-ACC.SG.N

šet *ta-š*
 3SG.POSS.NOM-ACC.SG.N take-3SG.PST

- (9) *ḫarka-n* *ta-š* *ulḫali*
 destruction-ACC.SG.C take-3SG.PST attack?:NOM-ACC.SG.N

ššet *ta-š*
 3SG.POSS.NOM-ACC.SG.N take-3SG.PST

- (10) DINGIR.MEŠ-Ø *parā* *peta¹-š*
 gods-Ø out carry-3SG.PST

The Hurrian arose.
 He took his Difficulty.
 He took Destruction.
 He took his Attack?
 He carried (them) out (to) the gods.

- (11) ^{URU}*Ḫattuš-aš* ^d*Inare-š* *araṯ-š*
 Hattus(a)-GEN.SG Inare-NOM.SG.C arise-3SG.PRT
- (12) *ištarnikaṯ-n* *ta-š* *ḫenkan-Ø* *ta-š*
 ailment-ACC.SG.C take-3SG.PST plague-NOM-ACC.SG.C take-3SG.PST
- (13) *ḫarka-n* *ta-š* *Ḫu[rla²⁵-Ø]* *baṯ-š*
 destruction-ACC.SG.C take-3SG.PST Hurrian-NOM.SG.C give-3SG.PST

Inare of Ḫattuš(a) arose.
 She took Sickness.
 She took Plague.
 She took Destruction.
 She gave (them) (to) the Hurrian.

- (14) x-x-x *araṯ-š* *nak[ki* *šef]*
 ? arise-3SG.PRT difficulty:NOM-ACC.SG.N =3SG.POSS.NOM-ACC.SG.N

ta-š
 take-3SG.PST

- (15) [DINGIR.MEŠ-Ø *parā*] *petā-š* x[.....]
 Gods-Ø out carry-3SG.PST

[...] arose.
 (S)he took [his] Dif[ficulty].
 (S)he carried (it) [out (to) the gods?].

ca. two/three lines missing

Reverse

- (1) [.....]x x[...]
- (2) [*ḫ*]*enka[n-Ø* [*ta-š*]
 plague-NOM-ACC.SG.C take-3SG.PRT
- (3) ^{URU}*Ḫaššu-i* [*baṯ-š*²⁶]
 Hassu-DAT.SG give-3SG.PST

-
- 25 Restoration with Soysal (2000:90, 97). Pace Soysal *Ḫurla* should not be an allative; allatives only occur with inanimates (Hoffner and Melchert 2024:343).
- 26 Soysal's (2000:90, 98) restoration *ba-i-iš* is to be preferred over Ünal and Kammenhuber's (1974:164) and Warbinek's (2020:155) *pa-ra-a pé-ta-aš*. The large space after ^{URU}*Ḫa-aš-šu-i* indicates that only one word is following toward the right edge.

[...]x x[...]
 [(S)he took] Plague.
 [(S)he took]
 [(S)he gave] (it) to the city of Hassu.

- (4) *natta* ^{URU}*Kanni*^f *še*^{27-Ø}¹ *ara*^t-[š]
 not ^{city}Kannise-Ø arise-3SG.PST

- (5) *nakki* *šš*^{et} *ta*^{-š}
 difficulty:NOM-ACC.SG.N ≠3SG.POSS.NOM-ACC.SG.N take-3SG.PST

Hurla-aš *ul*^{ha}[*lli* *šš*]^{et}
 Hurrian-GEN.SG attack?:NOM-ACC.SG.N ≠3SG.POSS.NOM-ACC.SG.N

ta^{-š}
 take-3SG.PST

- (6) *italu*-i[*par*^a²⁸ *pet*]^a-š
 evil-DAT.SG out carry-3SG.PST

The city of Kannise did *not* arise.
 She took his Difficulty.
 She took the Attack² of the Hurrian.
 She carried (them) out to Evil.

- (7) [*i*]^t[*al*]^{[u}-Ø *ara*^t-š²⁹] [*h*]^{en}*kan*-Ø *ta*^{-š}
 evil-NOM-ACC.SG.N arise-3SG.PST plague-NOM-ACC.SG.N take-3SG.PST

- (8) [*ha*]^r[*ka*-n *t*]^a-š *aš*^{šu}-Ø *ar*^{ha} *tu*^h*še*-*t*
 destruction-ACC.SG.C take-3SG.PST good-NOM-ACC.SG.N off cut-3SG.PST

Evil [arose.]
 It took Plague.
 It took Destruction.
 It cut off Good.

27 At the bottom there are two clearly visible wedges. The only sign compatible with two bottom wedges is ŠE, with Ünal and Kammenhuber (1974:164). Soysal's (2000:90, 98–9) emendation to EŠ is based on his proposal that this city name should represent *Kaneš*. He explains the lack of the third wedge necessary for EŠ as the result of hasty writing. Warbinek's IŠ[?] is unwarranted (2020:155).

28 Restoration follows Ünal and Kammenhuber 1974:164.

29 Restoration follows Ünal and Kammenhuber 1974:164.

- (9) LUGA[L] K[UR[?]] U^[RU]³⁰ *Aršinī* ^{d1} *halmašut-Ø* *ta-š*
king land city Arsini Throne-Ø take-3SG.PST
- (10) LUGAL-*aš* *p[er]an piṭuliya-n* *taī-š*
king-GEN.SG before anguish-ACC.SG.C place-3SG.PST
- (11) MUNUS.LUGAL-Ø *p[e³¹ra]n piṭuliya-n* *taī-š*
Queen-Ø before anguish-ACC.SG.C place-3SG.PST
- (12) **DINGIR.MEŠ-Ø** *ša^{š32} par]ā paī-t*
gods-Ø 3NOM.SG.C forth go-3SG.PRT

The king of the l[and[?]] of Arsini took the Divine Throne.
He placed Anguish before the king.
He placed Anguish before the queen.
He went forward (to) the gods.

- (13) URUŠ[*erašš*] *a[?]tuma-š* *araī-š*
Serassata-ETHN-NOM.SG.C arise-3SG.PST
- (14) *ita[lu-Ø* *i]štazan-aš^{ME.EŠ 33}* *ta-š*
Evil-NOM-ACC.SG.N soul-GEN.PL take-3SG.PST
- (15) LUGAL-*aš* [M]Ē-Ø³⁴ *ta-š* *utniyat-an* *uštul-Ø*
King-GEN.SG battle-Ø take-3SG.PST land:INDV-GEN.PL sin-NOM-ACC.SG.N
- ta-š*
take-3SG.PST
- (16) *arši-n* *ta-š*
?-ACC.SG.C take-3SG.PST
- (17) **DINGIR.MEŠ-Ø** *parā peta-š*
Gods-Ø out carry-3SG.PST

The Serassataean arose.
He took the Evil of the people.
He took the Battle of the king.

30 Ünal and Kammenhuber (1974:164) and Warbinek (2020:155) only read KU]R[?]. Soysal (2000:90) does not propose a reading.

31 Reading with Soysal 2000:90.

32 Reading with Soysal 2000:90.

33 Reading and translation follow Warbinek 2020:155.

34 Reading with Soysal 2000:90.

He took the Sin(s) of the lands/populations.

He took the *a*.

He carried (them) out (to) the gods.

(18) $\text{ḫ} \bar{a} \check{s} k i l i a - \check{s} \quad a r a \bar{a} - \check{s}$
A.-NOM.SG.C arise-3SG.PST

(19) *italu*-Ø $\neq w a$ *ba* \bar{a} -*t*
evil-NOM-ACC.SG.N \neq QUOT go-3SG.PST

Ms. Askilia arose:

“The Evil has gone”

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