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Some questions about *yád* in Vedic

Abstract: This paper considers two problems: the placement of the complementizer *yád* within the sentence and the functional value of *yád* in Vedic. As for the first point, it will be noted that the complementizer *yád*, like other subordinating conjunctions in some ancient and modern Indo-European languages, can be preceded by a topicalized or a focalized phrase in its clause. In particular, in the Ṛgveda there are many cases where *yád* is preceded by an element which seems to have moved from inside the sentence, and also cases where it is preceded by the inflected verb. With regard to the second point, some cases will be discussed showing the use of *yád* to introduce clauses governed by verbs of saying and knowing (not only in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad and the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad, but also in the Ṛgveda) and a possible syntactic analysis of these structures.

Keywords: Vedic syntax; Indo-European syntax; Vedic clausal Left Periphery; Indo-Aryan complementizers

1 Introduction

A century after Hermann's *Gab es im Indogermanischen nebensätze?* (Hermann 1985), Kiparsky (1995: 141) claims that: "On the evidence of Vedic, Greek, and Hittite, the Indo-European proto-language had two left-peripheral operator positions corresponding to those in Hale¹ [...] However, it lacked the category of complementizer and had no syntactically embedded sentences. Finite subordinate clauses, including relative clauses and sentential complements, were syntactically adjoined to the main clause, exhibiting "main-clause properties", such as topicalization of constituents to clause-initial position".

The idea that topicalization is only typical of main clauses can be considered superseded by Rizzi's *Left Periphery Theory* (Rizzi 1997), according to which topic and focus (and related projections) are no longer considered specific to main

¹ According to Hale (1987b: 40): "This "topicalization" process [i.e. fronting a constituent to bring it into special emphasis] can be formally represented as movement into a topicalization slot to the left of the COMP slot: [S2 TOP [S1 COMP [S ...k...]]]".

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clauses alone, but also to subordinate clauses. Hale’s observations (1987a, 1987b) about the old Indo-European languages can thus be seen as special cases of the articulation of the left periphery of the sentence. Vedic clauses introduced by *yád* (morphologically identical to the neuter singular of the relative pronoun) correspond semantically to propositions of several functions: *yád* seems to behave like an introducer of particular types of sentences which, on the basis of Delbrück (1900: 324), Hettrich (1988: 395) classifies as *Explikativsätze* of temporal, conditional, causal, final, concessive, explanatory value. This paper considers two problems: first, the placement of the complementizer *yád* within the sentence, and second, the functional value of *yád* in Vedic. In order to deal with the first question, let us first make a few remarks about the Left Periphery in the Vedic sentence.

2 The Left Periphery in the Vedic sentence

Hale (1987a, 1987b) considered examples like the following:

- (1) Ṛgveda 6.27.1b:
índraḥ kím asya sakhyé cakāra
 Indra.NOM what of.it fellowship.LOC made.PF.3SG
 ‘What did Indra create in the fellowship of it?’²
- (2) Ṛgveda 8.64.9c
ukthé ká u svid ántamaḥ
 recitation.LOC who PTC PTC closest.NOM
 ‘Who at the recitation is closest (to you)?’
- (3) Ṛgveda 4.12.2a
idhmāṃ yás te jabhārac chaśramāṇāḥ
 fuel REL.NOM to.you bring.PF.SBJV.3SG laboring.NOM.SG
 ‘Whoever will labor to bring fuel to you.’
- (4) Ṛgveda 2.23.7a
utá vā yó no marcáyād ánāgasah
 also or REL.NOM us harm.SBJV.3SG innocent.ACC.PL
 ‘Or who is about to injure us who are without offense.’

² Unless otherwise indicated, the translation of Ṛgvedic passages is from Jamison and Brereton (2014).

In (1)–(4) we see a placement of Wackernagel pronouns or particles that is linearly different from the second position. However, Wackernagel’s Law is still regularly applied if we admit that a topicalized initial constituent is “skipped” compared to an actual second position. This is also evident in other languages which use second position clitics; see also Krisch (1990: 71), Adams (1994: 106):

- (5) Odyssey 20.47-48
autàr egò theós eimi diamperès hế se
 but I god be.1SG continuously REL.NOM you.ACC
phulássō
 guard.1SG
 ‘But I am a god, that guard you to the end in all your toils.’

In (5) we see that the clitic *se* ‘you-ACC’ is in the second position after the relative *hế* (NOM.SG.F.), which is however preceded by the adverb *diamperés* ‘continuously’, and thus linearly placed in third position.

- (6) Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 7.2.6
de triumpho autem//nulla me cupiditas umquam tenuit
 about triumph.ABL but no me desire.NOM ever held.3SG
 ‘But as far as the triumph is concerned, no-**me**-desire ever held.’ (Adams 1994: 106).

Similarly, in (6) *me* is in the second position after *nulla*, which is preceded by the topicalized constituent *de triumpho autem*.

Independently from Hale, Rizzi (1997) proposed an analysis of the initial part of the sentence (*Left Periphery*) in terms of general comparative syntax, and several subsequent studies have confirmed this theory also for genealogically different languages. Rizzi (1997) proposes an articulation of the initial part of the sentence as shown in the following structure:

- (7) [ForceP [TopP* [FocP [TopP* [FinP]]]]]

According to Rizzi, the Force of the sentence is encoded in the leftmost projection; as Rizzi suggests, it “looks outside”, connecting the sentence with the context or marking it with respect to its clausal type. The rightmost projection looks inside, towards the content of the IP (the choice of the complementizer, for example, has to do with the modality and tense in IP). Thematized and focused phrases are hosted in dedicated functional projections labeled TopP and FocP. Benincà

(2001) proposes a different scheme, claiming that Topics can only be inserted to the left of FocP. She suggests the following structure:

- (8) [ForceP [FrameP [TopP [FocP [FinP]]]]]

Hale's observations (1987a, 1987b) can thus be seen as special cases of the articulation of the left periphery of the sentence, see e.g.:

- (9) Ṛgveda 6.47.15

kā im stavat káḥ pṛṇāt kó yajāte
 who him praise.SBJV.3SG who fill.SBJV.3SG who sacrifice.SBJV.3SG
yád ugrám in maghāvā viśvāḥ āvet
 if strong.ACC PTC bounteous.NOM always help.OP.3SG

'Who will praise him, who will fill him, who will sacrifice to him, if the bounteous one would always help only the strong?'

- (10) Ṛgveda 1.168.8

āva smayanta vidyútaḥ pṛthivyám
 down smile.INJ.3PL lightning.flashes.NOM earth.LOC
yádi gḥṛtám marútaḥ pruṣṇuvánti
 when ghee.ACC Marut.NOM.PL sprinkle.3PL

'The lightning-flashes smile down on the earth, when the Maruts sprinkle ghee upon her.'

(9) and (10) show that after *yád, yádi*, focused constituents appear in the Left Periphery, in a different order from the expected SOV (*ugrám in maghāvā, gḥṛtám marútaḥ*), which should imply a syntactic space in which these elements can be placed. Some Indo-European languages also allow the placement of some elements of the sentence on the left of the complementizer (see Fortson 2004: 145):

- (11) [XP_i [C° [...t_i...]]

Danckaert (2012: 95) called this phenomenon *Left Edge Fronting* (LEF); it is attested in a range of Indo-European languages. For instance, it is quite frequent in Latin, as illustrated in examples (12) and (13):

- (12) Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 9.15.1

[*Eum*_i[*cum t*_i*uidero*]], *Arpinum pergam*.

'When I have seen him, I'll proceed to Arpinum.'

- (13) Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 8.15.1
 [Quod_i [cum t_i scies]], *facies utsciamus*
 ‘When you know this, you will make sure that we know it (as well).’

3 The placement of *yád* in the Vedic sentence

On the basis of Krapova (2010: 1257), Danckaert (2015: 267) analyzes (12)–(13) by hypothesizing that a subordinating conjunction can be merged below ForceP, e.g. in FinP (see also Hsu 2015 for analogous placements of complementizer *je* in Bangla, which can be preceded by a topicalized or focalized phrase in its clause).³ In the *Ṛgveda* there are many cases where *yád* is preceded by an element which seems to have moved from inside the sentence, e.g.:

- (14) *Ṛgveda* 3.2.7
á ródasī aprṇad á svàr maháj
 PTC two.worlds.ACC fill.IMPF.3SG PTC sun.ACC great.ACC
jātám yád enam apáso ádhārayan
 born.ACC when him workers.NOM support.IMPF.3PL
 ‘He filled both world-halves, he filled the great sun, when the (ritual) workers supported him (when he was) just born.’
- (15) *Ṛgveda* 4.30.13
utá śuṣṇasya dhṛṣṇuyá prá mṛkṣo abhí védanam
 and Śuṣṇa.GEN boldly PTC seize.INJ.2SG PTC possessions.ACC
púro yád asya sampiṇák
 fortresses.ACC when his crush.INJ.2SG
 ‘And you boldly seized the possessions of Śuṣṇa, when you completely crushed his fortresses.’
- (16) *Ṛgveda* 1.158.5c
śíro yád asya traitanó vitákṣat
 head.ACC when of.him Traitana.NOM cut.off.INJ.3SG
svayám dāsá úro áṃsāv ápi gdha
 himself Dāsa.NOM chest shoulders PTC eat.INJ.MID.3SG

³ Cases of two cooccurring complementizers in the same clause in some Romance varieties also suggest that there can be more than one projection dedicated to the placement of the complementizer (see Paoli 2007).

‘When Traitana cut off the head, the Dāsa himself ate his own chest and shoulders.’

(17) Ṛgveda 1.164.4

kó dadarśa prathamám jāyamānam
 who see.PF.3SG first.ACC born.PRES.PTCP.ACC

asthanvántaṃ yád anasthá bíbharti
 having.bones.ACC when boneless.NOM carry.3SG

‘Who has seen the first one as he is being born, when his boneless (mother) carries the one having bones?’

In (14)–(17), *jātám*, *púro*, *śíro*, and *ast^hanvántaṃ* are objects placed on the left of *yád* which are governed by verbs introduced by *yád*. If we do not accept the idea of a movement from within CP (extraction), it is difficult to understand which element of the sentence assigns case to the element external to the complementizer. If it had been placed before the subordinate clause then it should have received a default case at the beginning of the derivation of the sentence, see e.g. cases of *nominativus pendens* in Vedic observed by Oertel (1926):

(18) Āśvalāyana-Śrautasūtra 10.7.1

manur vaivasvatas tasya manuṣyā viśas
 Manu.NOM Vaivasvata.NOM of.him men.NOM people.NOM.PL
 ‘Manu Vivasvat’s son, his people are men.’

(19) Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 4.4.5.1

āth_aitác chārīraṃ tāsmin ná ráso ’sti
 now that.NOM body.NOM in.it NEG sap is
 ‘Now that body, there is no sap in it.’

On the contrary, in the cases present in the Ṛgveda, the element to the left of the complementizer is assigned case by a head which is inside the subordinate clause, e.g.:

(20) Ṛgveda 1.32.14

áher yātāraṃ kám apaśya indra
 serpent.GEN avenger.ACC who.ACC see.IMP.2SG Indra.VOC
hṛdí yát te jaghnúšo bhír ágachat
 heart.LOC when of.you smash.PF.PTCP.GEN fear.NOM come.IMP.3SG

‘Whom did you see, Indra, as the avenger of the serpent when fear came into your heart after you smashed him?’

(21) Ṛgveda 1.52.10

Vṛtrásya yád badbadhānásya rodasī

Vṛtra.GEN when press.INT.PTCP.GEN two.worlds.ACC

máde sutásyaśávas_ábhinac chiráḥ

exhilaration.LOC pressed.GENpower.INSTR split.IMPF.2SG head.ACC

‘...when, in the exhilaration of the pressed soma, with your vast power you split the head of Vṛtra, who was pressing harder and harder upon the two world-halves.’

(22) Ṛgveda 1.52.6c

Vṛtrásya yát pravaṇé durgḥbhiśvano

Vṛtra.GEN when torrent.LOC hard.to.grasp.GEN

Nijaghántha hánvor indra tanyatúm

struck.PF.2SG jaws.LOC Indra.VOC thunder.ACC

‘When you, Indra, struck your thunder down upon the jaws of Vṛtra, Hard-to-Grasp, in the (waters’) torrent.’

In (20)–(22), *hṛdí* “heart” and *vṛtrásya* “of Vṛtra” are governed by heads which are placed to the right of *yád*.⁴ There is also another explanation for this particular placement of *yád*. Lowe (2014: 24–26), on the basis of Hettrich (1988: 760–762), assumes that the relative pronoun *yá-* may behave like a syntactic clitic in some contexts. In fact, in Vedic the relative pronoun *yá-* is placed either at the beginning of the relative clause or in a similar position to a Wackernagel clitic, e.g.:

(23) Ṛgveda 3.6.8

uraú vā yé antárikṣe mādanti

broad.LOC or REL.NOM.PL midspace.LOC rejoice.3PL

divó vā yé rocané sánti deváḥ

heaven.GEN or REL.NOM.PL light.LOC be.3PL gods.NOM

‘Whether (they be) the gods who rejoice in the broad mid-space or those who are in the luminous realm of heaven, ...’

According to Lowe’s hypothesis, the relative pronoun behaves as if it were an element of a clitic cluster *vā yé* which seems to interrupt the phrases [*uraú antárikṣe*] “in the broad midspace” and [*divó rocané*] “in the light of heaven”. This

⁴ Interestingly, Viti (2015: 328–329) thinks that the interpretation of a syntactic movement and an extraction from CP for this kind of topicalizations is incorrect, because she considers old subordinating conjunctions as still being frozen forms of relative pronouns: further research should prove useful in this direction.

behavior, together with the fact that the relative pronoun is frequently preceded by preverbs in tmesis (while this never happens e.g. to the interrogative pronoun *ká*⁵), leads Lowe to think that Vedic relative pronouns can behave like Wackernagel clitics, even though they are accented. This clearly resembles the same situation found e.g. in Old Irish, as already assumed in Watkins (1963: 29). It seems reasonable to adopt the same explanation in cases where the inflected verb is immediately followed by the complementizer *yád*, which can be analyzed as a syntactically clitic complementizer, e.g.:

(24) Ṛgveda 1.138.2

huvé yát tvā mayobhúvaṃ
 call.1SG when you.ACC refreshment.being.ACC
deváṃ sakhyáya mártyaḥ
 god.ACC fellowship.DAT mortal.NOM

‘When I, a mortal, call upon you, a god, who are refreshment itself, for fellowship ...’

(25) Ṛgveda 1.153.3

hinóti yád vāṃ vidáthe saparyán
 spur.3SG when you.two.ACC ceremony.LOC serve.PTCP.NOM.SG
 ‘when serving you at the ceremony, he spurs you two on.’

(26) Ṛgveda 4.15.7a

bódhad yán mā háribhyāṃ kumārāḥ sāhadevyāḥ
 awaken.INJ.3SG if me two.bays.INSTR prince.NOM Sāhadevyā.NOM
 ‘If Prince Sāhadevyā will awaken me with two fallow bays.’

(27) Ṛgveda 4.44.2

yuvór vāpur abhí p̄kṣaḥ sacante
 you.two.GEN beauty PTC nourishments.NOM escort.3PL
vāhanti yát kakuháso ráthe vām
 convey.3PL when humped.NOM.PL chariot.LOC you.two.ACC
 ‘Nourishments escort your wondrous form when the humped horses [?] convey you on the chariot.’

Perhaps these uses of *yád* are comparable with some relative forms which we find in Celtic, where relative clauses can be realized by means of a relative particle

5 Lowe (2014: 30).

**iod* cliticized to the verb:⁶ Gaulish *dugiontiio* < **dugionti-jo* and *toncsiiontio* < **tonc-sjo-nt-jo* (see e.g. Thurneysen, Binchy and Bergin 1946: 323; Ziegler 1992: 254; Holland 1996: 324; Delamarre 2003: 153, 298; *contra* Dunkel 2014, II: 385). Moreover, Old Irish relative verb forms are analyzed in the same way, with a clitic relative particle *e* < PIE **jo-*, e.g.: *bertae* “who bear” < **beronti-jo*, 3pl.rel. of *beirid* “bear”; *imm-e-chuirethar* “who carry” 3pl.rel. of *imm-cuirethar* “carry (around)” < PIE **ṛbhí-korH-éje-*, where the relative particle is preceded by the preverb in tmesis, like *yád* in Vedic, e.g.:

(28) Ṛgveda 1.39.1

prá yád itth- āparāvataḥ śocír ná mānam ásyatha

PTC when so distance.ABL flame.NOM like measure?.ACC cast.2PL

‘When from the far distance you cast your measure [/your bellowing], like a flame, just so.’

4 Syntactic category of Vedic *yád*

As we have already seen, according to Kiparsky (1995: 141) “[...] the Indo-European proto-language [...] lacked the category of complementizer and had no syntactically embedded sentences”. Krisch disagrees with this conclusion (1998: 359) and claims that, since subordination and subordinating conjunction structures appear everywhere in the Indo-European languages, there is no problem in accepting this structure for the Protolanguage as well: this would also bypass the problem of having to explain why the CP structure came into existence. Lühr (2008: 154–155)⁷ suggests that the evolution of the relative pronoun into the conjunction ‘that’ must be considered part of the Proto-Indo-European language, because of the many explicative clauses documented in older Indo-European languages. In her opinion, however, *that*-clauses in Proto-Indo-European, just like adverbial clauses, were adjoined and not embedded, since they occurred in a subcategorization frame where verbs could subcategorize for nominal/pronominal reference + *that*-clause, that is to say for NPs, but not for CPs.

⁶ Ziegler (1992: 254): “Es handelt sich um Relativsatzkonstruktionen mit einem unselbständigen Relativaffix, das auf die alte Form des Neutrums **iod* mit Abfall des auslautenden *-d* zurückzuführen ist”.

⁷ See also Hettrich (1988: 407–408).

4.1 Vedic clauses introduced by *yád*

Vedic clauses introduced by *yád* (morphologically identical to relative neuter pronouns) correspond semantically to propositions with several functions. However, unlike the homophonic pronoun *yád*, this kind of *yád* does not take the place of the argument of the clause in which it occurs, as happens in the following example (see Hettrich 1988: 541; Davison 2009: 227–8):

- (29) Ṛgveda 1.179.3
ná mṛṣā śrāntám yád ávanti devāḥ
 not useless pain REL.ACC help.3PL gods.NOM
 ‘Not in vain is the labor that the gods help.’

In (29) *yád* is co-referent with the subject *śrāntám*, but it functions as the object of *ávanti*. However, in the case of *yád* as the introducer of sentences, *yád* is not an argument of the proposition. This is similar to Italian (*il fatto*) *che* (“the fact that”) which can introduce sentences in which the arguments of the verbs are already completely saturated, e.g.:

- (30a) *il fatto che Gianni ha mangiato la pizza mi rallegra*
 Lit.: ‘the fact that Gianni ate the pizza makes me happy.’

As opposed to:

- (30b) *il fatto che Gianni mi ha raccontato mi rallegra.*
 Lit.: ‘the fact that Gianni told me makes me happy.’

We can also find analogous cases in Vedic, where what formally appears as the neuter of the relative *yá-* is not an argument of the verb:

- (31) Ṛgveda 1.93.4
ágnīsomā cēti tád vīryàmvām
 Agni.and.Soma.VOC be.conspicuous.AOR.PS.3SG this deed of.you.two
yád ámuṣṇitam avasám pañim gāḥ
 that steal.IMP.2DU food niggard/Paṇi.ACC cows.ACC
 ‘Agni and Soma, this heroic deed of you two has become conspicuous, that you two stole the food from the niggard/Paṇi, the cows.’
- (32) Ṛgveda 2.13.11
supravācanām táva vīra vīryam
 good.to.praise of.you hero.VOC heroism

yád ékena krátunā vindāse vásu
 that one.INSTR power.INSTR obtain.2SG goods.ACC

‘Your heroism, o hero, is good to proclaim: that with your power alone you take possession of goods.’

In (31) and (32), *yád* introduces a proposition of which it is not an argument: *yád* here seems to behave like an introducer of particular types of sentences which Hettrich (1988: 395), on the basis of Delbrück (1900: 324), classifies as *Explikativsätze* of a temporal, conditional, causal, final, concessive, explanatory value. As we have already seen in (31) and (32), these sentences may depend on a noun, for which they constitute an explanation;⁸ see also e.g.:

(33) Ṛgveda 1.94.14

tát te bhadrām yát sámiddhaḥ své dáme
 this of.you benefit that kindle.PP own.LOC house.LOC
sómāhuto járase mṛlayáttamaḥ
 soma.offered.NOM be.awake.PRES.2SG⁹ most.merciful.NOM

‘This is your benefit, that, kindled in your own house and be poured with soma, you remain wakeful as the most merciful.’

According to Delbrück (1900: 324), this value of *yád* has developed from temporal sentences, hence: “this is your grace (/ benefit / gift), when ...”. Chantraine (1953: 288) instead thinks that “Les propositions déclaratives sont issues de propositions complétives de cause”. In any case, they can be introduced by the neuter *hó* < **H̥iōd* also in Greek, *hó* being formally identical to Vedic *yád* (see Delbrück 1900: 319, 326). Delbrück’s opinion¹⁰ is that “*yád* erscheint bereits im RV als fertige Conjunction, so dass wir ihre Entwicklung aus dem Neutrum des Relativums in dem überlieferten Sanskrit nicht mehr verfolgen können”. Lühr (2008: 154) proposes this formal description of the process (which, according to her, must be considered part of the Proto-Indo-European language): the *wh*-phrase originally occupies the specifier position of a CP; following the disappearance of the *wh*-feature, the original relative pronoun would then occupy the previously empty complementizer position and thus become the head of the CP.

⁸ See Axel-Tober (2017: 41–42) and quoted literature for several proposals of theoretical analysis of the explicative clauses.

⁹ Lubotsky (1997: 492); LIV2 (245–246); Grassmann (1996: 478). *vjar* “rauschen, knistern”.

¹⁰ Delbrück (1888: 572).

In general, *yád*-clauses are propositions that can have different values, for example the value of a subject, as in (34):

- (34) = (31) Ṛgveda 1.93.4
ágnīṣomā cēti tād vīryāṃvāṃ
 Agni.and.Soma.VOC be.conspicuous.AOR.PS.3SG this deed of.you.two
yád ámuṣṇitam avasám paṇīṃ gāḥ
 that steal.IMPF.2DU food niggard/Paṇi.ACC cows.ACC
 ‘Agni and Soma, this heroic deed of you two has become conspicuous, that you two stole the food from the niggard/Paṇi, the cows.’

However, they may also have the value of an object, e.g.:

- (35) Ṛgveda 1.131.4
vidúṣ ṭe asyá vīryāsyā pūrāvaḥ
 know-PF.3PL of.you this.GEN deed.GEN Pūru.NOM.PL
pūro yád indra śárādīr avátiraḥ
 stronghold.ACC that Indra.VOC autumnal.ACC bring.down.IMPF.2SG
sāśahānó avátiraḥ
 be.victorious.PTCP.PF.NOM bring.down.IMPF.2SG
 ‘The Pūrus know of this deed of yours, o Indra, that you brought down the autumnal strongholds, being victorious you brought (them) down.’

In (35) the arguments that saturate the verb *ava-vṛt-* “bring down” are: the 2SG agent (i.e., *Indra*) and the patient *pur-* “stronghold”; in any case, *yád* is not an argument of the sentence: it has an explanatory value with respect to *vīryāsyā* “of the deed”.

According to Hettrich (1988), the explanatory proposition can appear without a nominal head in the main clause: in this case, only a demonstrative pronoun can occur in the main clause, which indicates the syntactic function of the explanatory proposition, of a subject or of an object or even of an adverbial function (cf. Hettrich 1988: 398–400):

- (36) Ṛgveda 5.31.7
tād ín nú te káraṇaṃ dasma vipra_āhiṃ
 this PTC now of.you deed wondrous.VOC poet.VOC_serpent.ACC
yád ghnánn ójo átr_ānimīthāḥ
 yád smash.PTCP.PR.NOM strength there_measure.IMPF.2SG

‘Just this now is your deed, wondrous poet: that smashing the serpent, you measured your strength there.’

- (37) Ṛgveda 1.116.5 (according to Hettrich’s analysis)

anārambhaṇé tād avīrayethām
 unsupported.LOC this √vīray.IMP.2DU
anāsthāné agrabhaṇé samudré
 unstable.LOC ungraspable.LOC sea.LOC
yád aśvinā ūhāthur bhujyúm ástaṃ
 that Aśvins.VOC carry.PF.2DU Bhujyu.ACC home.ACC

‘You two have accomplished this as heroic feat, on the unsupported, unstable and ungraspable sea, that you Aśvins carried Bhujyu home.’

- (38) Ṛgveda 1.164.23

yád gāyatré ádhi gāyatrám áhitam
 that *gāyatrī*.hymn.LOC PTC *gāyatrī*.line based.PP
trīṣṭubhād vā trīṣṭubham nirátakṣata
trīṣṭubh.hymn.ABL or *trīṣṭubh*.line fashion.IMP.MID.3SG

yád vā jágaj jágaty áhitam padám
 that or *jagatī jagatī*.hymn.LOC based.PP line

yá ít tād vidús té amṛtatvám ānaśuḥ
 who PTC this know.PF.3PL those.NOM immortality.ACC reach.PF.3PL

‘(The fact) that the *gāyatrī* line is based upon a *gāyatrī* hymn or that a *trīṣṭubh* line was fashioned out of a *trīṣṭubh* hymn, or that the *jagatī* line is based on the *jagatī* hymn, only those who know this have reached immortality.’


In (38), the arguments of *ā-vdhā-* and *nis-vtakṣ-* are the *gayatrī*, *tristubh*, *jagatī* lines and the corresponding hymns composed in those meters: in this case *yád* is not an argument of the sentence, but it introduces the propositions whose content is resumed with *tād* in the main clause.¹¹ We find the same construction also in Homeric Greek (see Chantraine 1953: 289), e.g.:

¹¹ (38) shows that explicative clauses can occur also preposed to the matrix clause, contrary to what Axel-Tober (2017: 56) claims: “... even in Vedic, a language where relative clauses could be pre-, intra-, or postposed, explicative clauses always occurred in postposed position.”

- (39) Iliad.1.120
leússete gâr tó ge pántes hó moi géras érkhetai állēi
 see.2PL in.fact this PTC all.NOM.PL that to.me prize goes elsewhere
 ‘For you all see this, that my prize goes elsewhere.’
- (40) Iliad 9.493
tà phronéōn hó moi óúti theoi gónon
 this.ACC thinking that to.me not.at.all gods.NOM son
exetéleion
 accomplish.IMPF.3PL
 ‘Thinking this, that the gods did not grant me a son.’

4.2 *yád*-clauses without correlative in the matrix clauses

Interestingly, Speyer (1896: 87) observes that the demonstrative in the main clause is often lacking with verbs of knowing, thinking, believing, etc., where *yád* introduces an object clause, e.g.:

- (41) Chāndogya-Upaniṣad 4.10.5
vijānāmy ahaṃ yat prāṇo brahma
 understand.1SG I that breath.NOM Brahman
kaṃ ca tu khaṃ ca na vijānāmi iti
ka and but *kha* and NEG understand.1SG QUOT
 ‘I understand that Brahman is breath. But I do not understand [that Brahman is] *ka* and *kha*.’¹²
- (42) Kaṭha-Upaniṣad 1.1.22
devair atr_āpi vicikitsitaṃ a
 gods.INSTR here_also doubted.PPPT 
tvaṃ ca mṛtyo yan na sujñeyam āttha
 you and death.VOC thatNEG well.understandable say.PF.2SG
 ‘Even the gods had doubt, indeed, as to this, and you said, O Death, that it is not easy to understand.’¹³

With reference to (39) and (40), Haudry (2012: 22–23) claims that: “La proposition complétive conjonctive régime d’un verbe de ce genre [scil. “say” and “know”]

¹² Radhakrishnan (1994: 413): “I understand that life is Brahman. But joy and ether I do not understand”.

¹³ Radhakrishnan (1994: 604).

est totalement inconnue en védique, y compris dans la prose, et n'apparaît pas avant les *Upaniṣad*... Le védique n'a pas d'équivalent pour les tours *dire que, savoir que, etc.*"¹⁴ Haudry thinks that competition with *iti*-clauses hindered the development from a case like (43): *gṛṇé tād... yád...* to a true completive: **gṛṇé... yád dhāṃsi vṛtrām* "je chante que tu frappes a mort Vṛtra" (according to Haudry, Ch. Up. 4.10.5 *vijānāmy ahaṃ yat prāṇo brahma* would be not a good example of completive, because it is a nominal clause).

(43) Ṛgveda 8.62.8

gṛṇé tād indra te śáva upamám
sing.MID.1SG this Indra.VOC of.you strength.ACC highest.ACC
devātātaye yád dhāṃsi vṛtrām ójasā
divine.assembly.DAT that smash.2SG Vṛtra.ACC might.INSTR

'I sing that utmost strength of yours, Indra, for the divine assembly, that you smash Vṛtra with your might, o lord of ability.'

However, Haudry also quotes this example "tout près d'une complétive en dépendance d'un verbe déclaratif":

(44) Ṛgveda 1.132.4

nú itthā te pūrváthā ca pravācyam
now especially of.you previously and to.be.proclaimed.NOM.SG.N
yád āṅgīrobhyó ṽṛṇor āpa vṛjám
that Aṅgīrases.DAT uncover.IMPF.2SG PTC enclosure.ACC

'Now as well as it is to be proclaimed of you, that you opened up the enclosure for the Aṅgīrases.'

Haudry quotes this (Renou's) translation: "maintenant comme autrefois il faut proclamer *cet (acte) de toi*, (à savoir que) pour les Angiras tu as découvert l'enclos", where a noun with the meaning "deed" is understood. On the contrary,

¹⁴ See also Viti (2007: 218–219) : "In the Rig-Veda, explicative clauses are adjoined clauses [...] A path of increasing grammaticalization such as lexical antecedent > grammatical antecedent > zero antecedent can be reconstructed, taking into account the frequency of these three types of clause linkage in the Rig-Veda [...] Differently, in Classical Sanskrit, explicative clauses show a higher degree of syntacticization: the antecedent noun is canceled, and the subordinate clause is embedded as the main clause object [...] or as the main clause subject".

according to Lühr (2008: 154) this may be a kind of structure which could be reanalyzed as a “genuine *that*-clause in the function of an object”.¹⁵

According to Lühr (2014: 233), it can be assumed that the clauses introduced by *yád* could occur in a correlative construction associated with a correlative element realized through a dummy NP or a null pronoun.¹⁶ Moreover, Axel-Tober (2017: 54–55) claims that the declarative complement clause developed out of a reanalysis of the correlative construction in the variant with a silent correlative. Interestingly, once the existence of a silent correlative has been posed, Axel-Tober wonders at what stage we can be sure that the structure emerged in which the *that*-clause (in Germanic languages, but we can argue analogously for *yád* clauses in Indo-Aryan) was really a complement of the superordinate verb and not associated with a silent correlative.

However, we know that some languages allow both structures, i.e. a complementizer with or without a correlative in the matrix clause, e.g. in Italian:

dico che... / dico questo, che... (lit. “I say that.../ I say this, that...).

If we admit the existence of *that*-clauses associated with a silent correlative, then we could argue that not even in Italian we have genuine complement clauses, because we could reanalyze *dico che* “I say that” as “I say \emptyset , that” with a null pronoun, which seems unnecessary.

Therefore, it is difficult to argue that there must be a null pronoun where there are no independent reasons requiring it: there are no independent reasons to think that (44) – quoted by Haudry and Lühr – must contain a silent correlative and could not be considered a case of “genuine *that*-clause”, as stated by Lühr. Thus, there seems to be no reason to think that *yád* in this case is not yet a complementizer in the literal sense of the term. Therefore, we can conclude that Vedic had embedded sentences.

5 Questions about minimality

If we assume that *yád* can behave like a complementizer¹⁷ and occupy the position of a head, we can also resolve a case of apparent violation of minimality, which

¹⁵ Lühr (2014: 233), quoting the same example: “Den Wandel zur reinen Konjunktion ‚dass‘ in Komplementsätzen bezeugen im Altindoiranischen nur wenige Sätze”.

¹⁶ See Lühr (2014), quoting Keydana, for the existence of null pronouns in Vedic.

¹⁷ See Lühr (2008: 154).

otherwise would characterize the syntax of Vedic in contrast to modern Indo-Aryan languages.

Davison (2009: 235) quotes a sentence reported by Delbrück (1888: 550) which, according to her, should constitute a case of minimality violation:

(54) Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 4.1.5.4

*yāt kīm ākaraṃ tasmād idám āpadi*¹⁸
yād INTER.ACC did.AOR.1SG for.this.reason.ABL this.NOM befall.AOR.3SG

Eggeling: ‘This has come to pass for something or other I have done!’

(lit.: ‘because I do what?, therefore this happened’)

It should be noticed that, according to Speyer (1896: 87): “*yad* hat ganz die Bedeutung des causalen “weil”. Hier ist *tasmād*, *tena*, in B. auch *etad* correlative”, e.g. in the same episode narrated in Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa:

(55) Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 4.1.5.7

yān n_āvedīṣaṃ tēnā_hiṃsiṣam
yād NEG_knew.AOR.1SG this.INSTR injure.AOR.1SG

Eggeling: ‘Because I knew thee not, therefore have I offended thee.’

According to Davison (2009: 233) minimality in Hindi/Urdu (and in other languages like English and Italian), entails that a questioned phrase cannot be extracted from a relative clause, because of minimality violation: *yād_i kīm_j...t_i t_j*. As is known, minimality concerns the good formation of chains between displaced elements and respective traces (or silent copies). Rizzi (1990, 2001) formally defines minimality in these terms:

Y is in a Minimal Configuration (MC) with X if there is no Z such that:

- (i) Z is of the same structural type as X, and
- (ii) Z intervenes between X and Y

According to Rizzi’s *Relativized Minimality*, the intervening element violating minimality should be of the “same structural type”: thus, if we admit that *yād* introducing a subordinate clause were a complementizer that is a head, then there should be no minimality violation in case of an intervening phrase (in this case, the interrogative pronoun *kīm*).

¹⁸ *āpadi* in Mādhyandina recension (and Delbrück). In Kāṇva recension 5.1.5.3: *yat kim akaraṃ tata idṛg āpad iti*.

6 Conclusion

As already claimed by Delbrück (1888: 572), Vedic *yád* already occurs with the value of a subordinating conjunction with the meaning of ‘(the fact) that’, ‘when’, ‘if’, and thus its development cannot be followed starting from the neuter of the relative pronoun within the history of Sanskrit.

As regard to the placement in the sentence, the complementizer *yád*, like other subordinating conjunctions in some ancient and modern Indo-European languages, can be preceded by a topicalized or a focalized phrase in its clause; interestingly, Vedic *yád* can sometimes be preceded by the verb of its sentence: this fact could be explained also by the feature of enclisis which seems to characterize also Vedic relative pronouns.

As regards its syntactic category, *yád* can behave as a head: this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that there seems to be no minimality violation in case of extraction of an interrogative phrase.

Vedic finite subordinate clauses introduced by *yád* could be not only adjoined, but also embedded: this is shown by few examples, which however demonstrate that this structure is grammatical in Vedic.

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