

The Interrogative Pronouns *kaṃ*, *kāni* and *kiṃti* in the Aśoka Edicts

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Introduction¹

The instances of the interrogative pronouns *kaṃ* and *kāni* in the Aśoka edicts,² as in RE IV (F) *putā [pi] ca kaṃ natāle ... pavaḍhayisaṃti yeva dharmaacalanam* and RE VI (L) *kiti bhūtānam ānaniyam yeham, hida ca kāni sukhāpayāmi*, have caused considerable embarrassment among scholars. From the translations which have been given so far it becomes clear that one did not really know what to do with these interrogative pronouns. In this article an attempt is made to define their function. I will argue that in both cases we seem to be dealing with dependent Why-sentences. As such, *kāni* is found twice side by side with *kiṃti ... [ti]* in functionally equivalent slots. On the other hand, the comparison of *kāni* and *kaṃ* with *kiṃti ... [ti]* brings out all the more clearly their exceptional nature. The form *kiṃti* is regular Sanskrit and the *kiṃti ... ti* construction is in agreement with the normal rules of Sanskrit. By contrast, an interrogative *kaṃ* is not found in Sanskrit and the use of *kāni* in the Aśoka inscriptions does not agree with that of Sanskrit *kāni* “which things?”. However, the most striking feature of *kaṃ/kāni*, when compared to *kiṃti* or other interrogative pronouns in Sanskrit, concerns their position in the sentence. Contrary to *kiṃti*, *kaṃ*

¹ I would like to thank Henk Bodewitz, Hans Henrich Hock and Tilmann Vetter for their comments and suggestions.

² Quotations of the Rock Edicts (RE) have been taken from Schneider’s reconstructed text (1978), quotations of the Pillar Edicts (PE) from Hultzsch (1925), and those of the so-called Separate Edicts (SE) from Alsdorf (1962). In the latter case, however, the alphabetical labels of the sentences introduced by Hultzsch have been maintained. Note that Alsdorf’s SE I corresponds to Hultzsch’s II and vice versa.

and *kāni* never occur at the head of the sentence but always in a second, a third or even a fourth position. In fact, these two interrogative pronouns do not behave like interrogative pronouns at all but rather like clitic particles.

As said, *kinīni* is regular Sanskrit material, and so is the *kinīni* ... [iti] construction (e.g. in RE XII [H] *kiṭi atapañāṇḍam dīpayema ti*). Nevertheless, we seem to be dealing with a construction peculiar to the Aśoka inscriptions. In any case, Sanskrit and Pali³ seem to favour dependent Why-questions here which are introduced by a relative pronoun such as *yena*. As we will see, this *yena* is found in the Aśoka inscriptions as well. However, on closer consideration, the few instances appear only in a particular set of edicts, which already stand apart from the majority of edicts by other characteristics than this (*y*)*yena*. On this point the present investigation elaborates on conclusions reached in an earlier study which dealt specifically with the compilation and dissemination of the Aśoka inscriptions (Tieken 2003). It now appears that the authors of the (*y*)*yena* documents followed linguistic or stylistic norms different from those of the authors of the other, possibly earlier, documents.

While the instances of *kāni* and *kāni* in the inscriptions are few in number, we seem to be dealing with a feature well entrenched in the language of the authors of the texts. What, to say the least, is peculiar then is their absence from the Buddhist Pali canon, which is generally believed to have its origin in virtually the same time and place as the Aśoka edicts.

The instances of *kāni*

As indicated, the instances of *kāni* in the Aśoka edicts have caused considerable embarrassment to the translators of the inscriptions so far. See for example the instance of *kāni* in RE VI (L):

*am ca kicchi palakamāmi hakamī ki(n)ṭi: bhūānāni ānanyāni
yeham, hida ca kāni sukḥāpayāmi palata ca svagam
alādhaya(m)ṭu.⁴*

The various interpretations of *kāni* available so far have been discussed by Schneider (1978: 131-2). For instance, according to Lüders (1940: 282-3) we are dealing with the accusative plural of the interrogative pronoun *ka* used in an indefinite meaning “some” (“einige”) (cf. *kaści*). Alsdorf (1968: 29 and 32-3) takes *kāni* as an abbreviation of *yāni kānicci* and translates it with “all” (“alle, sämtlich”). According to him it is impossible, as implied in Lüders’ interpretation, that Aśoka would have worked, or would have said he worked, for the happiness of some people only. Schneider himself, who like Alsdorf starts from *yāni kānicci*, does not agree with the latter interpretation. According to him Aśoka would have been enough of a realist to accept that one simply cannot work for all people. Schneider translates *kāni* with “as many as possible”:⁵

Und worum immer ich mich bemühe, das ist: ich möchte schuldfrei vor den Geschöpfen werden; einerseits will ich nieden *möglichst viele glücklich machen*, andererseits sollen sie im Jenseits den Himmel erreichen.

Falk (1996: 45), completely ignoring his predecessors’ discussions, translates *kāni* simply with “them”:

Wenn ich mich anstrengte, dann, um gegenüber den Lebewesen schuldlos zu werden; hier lasse ich *sie glücklich* werden und sie sollen den Himmel im Jenseits zufriedenstellen.

4. For *kāni* the versions from the north-west read *ṣe* (Mānsehrā) and *ṣa* (Shahbāzgarh). If I understand Norman correctly he takes this *ṣe/ṣa* to represent the emphatic particle *sa* (from *sma*) (Norman 1969: 225-226). Gimmār reads *nāni*, which Bloch connects with the particle *nani* (Bloch 1950: 109, n. 16). However, according to Norman *nāni* may also represent a misreading of *kāni* as in Brāhmi script the symbols for *ka* and *na* are very similar (Norman 1969: 226).

3. The construction is not mentioned in the *Pali-English Dictionary*. Norman has been able to collect only three examples from the Pali canon (Norman 1992: 77-80).

5. “Möglichst viele, welche irgend möglich, wenn welche vorhanden sind” (Schneider 1978: 132).

All solutions suggested so far seem to show that scholars did indeed not know what to do with an interrogative pronoun in the sentences concerned. There is, however, a recurrent feature in the instances of *kāni*: this interrogative is invariably found in sentences which can be constructed as supplying the reason or purpose for which the action mentioned in the preceding sentence is undertaken. RE VI (L), quoted above, illustrates this most clearly, as we find the sentence with *kāni* side by side with one introduced by *kinīti*.⁶ As I see it, the passage should be translated as follows:

And when I exert myself, why do I do so? (*kinīti*): that I will fulfil my obligations towards the people and because (*kāni*) I want (them) to be happy here and want them to “please heaven”.⁷

Another clear instance of *kāni* introducing a dependent sentence is found in PE IV (L-N), the Delhi-Tōprā version of which reads as follows (note, however, that I have adopted *nijhapayitave* of Ararāī, Nandangarh and Rampurvā instead of *-yitā* of Delhi-Tōprā and Allahābād):⁸

[L] *ava ite pi ca me āvūti bañḍhanabadhānañ munisānañ
nīṭadāñḍānañ patavadhānañ tīni divasāni me yote dinne.*
[M] *nāṭikā va kāni nijhapayisāni jivīṭye tānañ nāsāntāni vā
nijhapayitave dānañ dāhanīti pālāitkañ upavāsāni va
kacāhīti.*
[N] *iccha hi me hevāni nīṭudhasi pi kalasi palātañ āḍadhayevū ti.*

6. See also RE XIII, discussed below, p. 44ff.

7. The implications of the *svagāni āḍāhayānītu* and similar expressions have been discussed by Falk (1996).

8. For a discussion of the variant readings *nijhapayitave* (an infinitive) and *nijhapayitā* (a *nomen agentis* and a past passive participle), see Norman (1975: 19-20). Norman's own interpretation of the passage is based on a cumulation of curious decisions. A case in point is his interpretation of *nāsāntāni* (*nāśā + anta*) as meaning “life” (from “that which has death as its end”). Furthermore, I fail to see why he rejected the regular meaning of *nijhāpēti* in Pali: “to make favourably disposed, to win someone's affection or favour, to gain over”. Finally, there is his interpretation of the genitive of the plural pronoun *tānañ* (with the dental nasal) as representing *trāna* (with the retroflex nasal).

However, before turning to *kāni* in M and to be able to provide a translation of the passage (see below, p. 44) it is necessary to have a closer look at the context, and in particular the words *āvūti* in L and *nāsāntāni* in M first. To begin with the word *āvūti* (also spelled *āvūti*), it is found here as well as in SE I, in the latter instance in the phrase (*sakalā*/*desāvūṭike* (Dhauṭi J (*desāvūṭike*), Jaugaḍa K (*sakalā*/*desāvūṭike*). In addition, we have *anāvūti* in SE II in a list of vices (Dhauṭi M, Jaugaḍa N). The most recent attempt at an interpretation of this word is by Alsdorf (1962: 14-17), who derives *āvūti* from **āvūkti*, for which, with reference to *āvōga* “occupation, devotion to, pursuit, exertion”, he postulates meanings like “hingebungsvolle Tätigkeit, Hingabe, Eifer”. Alsdorf's interpretation may account for *anāvūti* in SE II (Dhauṭi M, Jaugaḍa N; Alsdorf 1962: 34), where the term is found in a list of vices between *alasiya* “sloth” and *kīlāmātha* “weariness”. However, the interpretation does not do full justice to *āvūti* in the two other instances, where it seems to have been used in a very specific meaning. Take the Pillar Edict passage under discussion. The context is clear: the emperor has in principle left all matters of administration, including the administration of justice, to the discretion of the local authorities. Note, for instance, sentences J-K in Hultzsch's translation:

[J] In order that they [the local authorities, *lajikas* H.T.] should perform (their) duties, being fearless, confident, (and) unperturbed, for this (purpose) I have ordered that either rewards or punishments are left to the discretion of the *Lajikas*.
[K] For the following is to be desired, (viz.) that there should be both impartiality in judicial proceedings and impartiality in punishments.

The texts continues in L as follows:

*ava ite pi ca me āvūti bañḍhanabadhānañ munisānañ
nīṭadāñḍānañ patavadhānañ tīni divasāni me yote dinne.*

In this passage the emperor seems to be mentioning a specific measure which he wished to exclude from his policy of delegation:

[L] As far as this, moreover, goes my *āvūti*: to people who have been imprisoned, have gone through the judicial process and

have (finally) been convicted to death, three days are given by me as *yote* (?).

āvūti seems to be a term for “direct rule”, denoting a ruler’s direct and personal involvement in the administration of the realm. As I see it the same idea can be found in SE I (Dhauṭi J):

se hakani anūsāsitu chandani ca vedīnu tūphāka desāvūṭike ho-sāmi.

Having instructed you (the local authorities) and having informed you of my desires, I will (be able to) restrict my direct personal involvement to certain areas of the administration only.

Alsdorf offers a completely different interpretation of the passage, resulting from, among other things, the fact that he takes *desa* in *desāvūṭike* in the spatial meaning of “region” (Alsdorf 1962: 36):

So werde ich denn, nachdem ich euch meine Anweisungen erteilt und euch meinen Willen zu wissen getan habe, meiner Pflicht gegen mein ganzes Land Genüge getan haben.

However, with “ganzes Land” Alsdorf was probably translating *sakaladesā āvūṭike* found in the Jaugada version of the edict, treating the absence of *sakala* in Dhauṭi as due to a scribal oversight. However, if we restrict ourselves in the first place to *desāvūṭike*, it should be noted that *desa* by itself never means “the whole country or realm” but always only a part of it. Note RE XIV (E): *se sīyā ata kichi asamati likhite desanī va sanikhāya kalamani vā aloccayitu lipikalāpalādhena vā nī*, which Schneider translates as follows: “Es mag sein, daß hier oder dort irgendetwas unterschiedlich geschrieben wurde, entweder, weil die Region [= der betreffende Teil des Reiches] einzukalkulieren war oder weil ich an einem Anlaß [scil. das Betreffende da zu schreiben] keinen Gefallen gefunden hatte, oder infolge einer Nachlässigkeit des Schreibers”. In the other instances in the Aśoka edicts *desa* refers to a part of one’s duty. Thus, RE V (F) reads: *e cu hetā desanī pi hāpaysati se dikājanī kachani* “Wer aber hierin [d.h. in dieser Angelegenheit] auch nur einen Teil vernachlässigen sollte, der wird schlechtes Karma

ṭun”, and RE VII (D): *te savanī (vā) ekadesanī (vā) pi kachani* “Sie werden alles (order) auch nur einen Teil [scil. des von Aśoka Geforderten] tun”. If *desāvūṭike* indeed means “someone who as far as his direct involvement is concerned restricts himself to only a small part of the administration”, *sakaladesā āvūṭike* of Jaugada could be analysed as *sakala-desāvūṭike*, that is, “a complete *desāvūṭike*, a *desāvūṭike* in all respects”.

All this does not of course rule out a derivation of *āvūti* from **āvūkti* or, as was suggested before Alsdorf by Bühler, Hultzsich and Bloch, from *āvṛtti* (see Alsdorf 1962: 14). However, while, as indicated, the problem with the derivation from *āvūkti* is that the latter word has not been attested, a derivation from *āvṛtti* is not without complications either. One problem concerns the meaning of *āvṛtti*, which ranges between two complete opposites, “turning towards, application” and “turning back, retreat, flight”.

While sentence L thus refers to a three-day period of respite between the conviction of a criminal and the actual execution, in the following sentence M the emperor explains his intentions behind the institution of this delay. However, before presenting my translation of M (and N) the meaning of *nāsānitani* has to be dealt with, as well as the construction in which this word appears. Hultzsich seems to follow Lüders (1940: 308), who interprets it as the present participle of *nāthi* (Skt *nāstī*) used absolutely:

(In this way) either (their) relatives will persuade those (*Lajukas*) to (grant) their life, or, if there is none who persuades (*them*), they will bestow gifts ...⁹

However, instead we seem to be dealing with the present participle of Skt *naśyati*, meaning “to be unsuccessful” here, which combines with the infinitive *nijhāpaysitave*, “being unsuccessful in providing (convincing) arguments”. The subject of *nāsānitani* are the same relatives (*nāntikā*) mentioned in the preceding sentence. As already shown by Lüders (1940: 296-301), *nāsānitani* is indeed a fixed, multivalent form. For in-

⁹ Cp. Lüders (1940: 312):

Entweder werden ihre Verwandten, wenn solche vorhanden sind [*Kani*], ihre Begnadigung erwirken, um ihr Leben zu retten, oder wenn niemand da ist, um die Begnadigung zu erwirken, so werden sie Gaben geben ...

stance, in PE IV (J) *asvatha sanītan avimānā kamīmāni pavatayevū ti* and SE I (Dhauī L) *hevān ca kalānītan tūphe svaganī ālādhyasatha* the nominative (or accusative)¹⁰ singular of the present participle is found together with a plural, as would be the case in the passage under consideration. Another point is the question of what the subject of *dānānī dāhanīti* and *upavāsānī kacchānī si*. With Lüders I think it is the convicts themselves, who are the subject of *ālādhyevū* in sentence N as well (see Lüders 1940: 303 and 311-2).¹¹ If so, we seem to have to do with a “loose” construction (Lüders 1940: 301), which may be compared with the ones in RE VI (F) *tāye aṭhāye vivāde nījhati vā sanītanī ... pativedatāyī*, SE I (Jaugada) (Q) *khāne sanītanī ekena pi sotāvīyā*, and PE VII (PP) *hevān hi anupatījanītanī hidatāpalāte ālādhe hoī*.

The passage PE IV (L-N) may now be translated as follows:

[L] As far as this, moreover, goes my *avūti*: to people who have been imprisoned, have gone through the judicial process and have (finally) been convicted to death, three days are given by me as *yote*,

[M] (I) have stipulated thus in order that (*kānī*) (their) relatives will be able to provide arguments for saving the convicts’ lives, or, when the relatives fail to convince the judges, that the convicts for their part show liberality or will undertake fasts for the sake of the life hereafter.

[N] For it is my desire that even though time is almost up they will be able “to please heaven”.¹²

In the remaining instances of *kānī* the dependent nature of the sentences is unfortunately not always immediately obvious. A case in point is *kānī* in RE XIII (Z). In order to clarify the situation I will quote the entire final part of the edict (X-AA):

10. For a discussion of whether we are dealing with a nominative or an accusative absolute construction, see Norman (1975: 22-24).

11. The context requires *tānānī* to be linked to *jivīṭāyī*: the relatives are fighting for the lives “of them” (the convicts), not for their own lives. Otherwise one might have considered the possibility of a genitive absolute construction *tānānī nāsānītanī*.

12. For the present translation of the expression *pālānānī ālādhyevū*, see Falk (1996: esp. p. 36). See also above, n. 7.

[X] *eṭāye ca aṭhāye iyaṅ dhānīmalipi lkhītā kiī: putāpapotā me anīnanī navānī vijāyaṅ mā vijetāvīyaṅ manīnisu, soyakasi yeva vijāyasi khānīti ca lahadānīdatānī ca loccyānītu, tānī eva ca vijāyaṅ manīnanītu e dhānīnavijāye.*

[Y] *se [hi] hidalokikāpālalokīke.*

[Z] *savā ca kānī lati hoī ā dhānīmalati.*

[AA] *sā hi hidalokikāpālalokikā.*

As I see it, the sentence *savā ca kānī lati hoī ā dhānīmalati* is to be linked directly to *eṭāye ca aṭhāye iyaṅ dhānīmalipi lkhītā* and would be in the same position as the sentence beginning with *kiī (kiī putāpapotā me)* and in particular with the final part of that sentence, namely *tānī eva ca vijāyaṅ manīnanītu e dhānīnavijāye*.¹³ Note the parallelism between *tānī eva ca vijāyaṅ manīnanītu e dhānīnavijāye*, *se [hi] hidalokikāpālalokīke* and *savā ca kānī lati hoī ā dhānīmalati*, *sā hi hidalokikāpālalokikā*. The passage as a whole may accordingly be translated as follows:

[X] For this purpose this *dhārma*-letter has been written, that my sons and grandsons will not consider a new conquest, that they will practise forbearance and mildness in punishment in their own realm, and that they will consider the *dhārma*-conquest as a conquest in itself,

[Y] for this (*dhārma*-conquest) is good for this life as well as the life hereafter;

[Z] and (I) have done so because I want (*kānī*) them to experience that complete (*savā*) pleasure, which is *dhārma*-pleasure, [AA] for that (*dhārma*-pleasure) is good for this life as well as for the life hereafter.

An interesting instance of *kānī* is found in PE V (Delhi-Tōprā) (C):

... *eḷakā cā sūkālī cā gabhīnī vā pāyāmīnā vā avadhīlīyā potājke pi ca kānī āsāmīnāsīke.*

Hultzsch translates the passage as follows: “Those ... ewes, and sows (which are) either with young or in milk, are inviolable, and also those (of their) young ones (which are) less than six months old”. However,

13. For another instance of the sequence *kiīnī ... kānī*, see RE VI (L) discussed above, p. 2.

the ban instituted here does not include the slaughtering of young animals as such but their accidental death caused when the mother is slaughtered.¹⁴ Thus, after *gabhini* and *payamina* the sentence *potake pi ca kāni āsanimasike* would provide a third reason for abstaining from slaughtering the animals concerned:

... ewes and sows which are with young or in milk are not to be slaughtered, and also because (*kāni*) the young one is still younger than six months (and dependent on its mother).¹⁵

The final instance of *kāni* to be discussed here¹⁶ forms a highly problematical case. It is found in PE IV (F-H), which in the Delhi-Tōprā version reads as follows:

[F] *lajūkā pi laghaniti paticalitave man*
 [G] *pulisāni pi me chandāmanani paticalisāniti*
 [H] *te pi ca kāni viṇovadisāniti yena man lajūkā caghaniti aladhayitave.*

In the available translations the interrogative nature of *kāni* is generally ignored. See, for instance, Hultzsch:

[F] The *Lajūkas* also must obey me.
 [G] They will also obey the agents who know (my) wishes.
 [H] And these (agents [*pulisāni*]) will also exhort those (people [*kāni*]), in order that the *Lajūkas* may be able to please me.

¹⁴ Cp. Kautilya's *Arthasāstra* 13.5.13: *yonibālavadhani punnistvopaghātāni ca praiti-sedhayer*, "He forbids the slaughtering of a young animal which is still in the womb (i.e. the slaughtering of an animal with young) and the castration of male animals".

¹⁵ The castration of cocks mentioned next is of the same category as the acts referred to here, as it involves the killing of potential life.

¹⁶ The instances of *kāni* in PE VI (C) and PE VII (H) do not properly belong here. PE VI (Delhi-Tōprā) (C):
kinī ani kāni sukhanī avahāni itī talhā ca vidahāni,
 And knowing how I can bring happiness to whom, I arrange things accordingly.

(For a translation of the complete text of PE VI, see Tieken: 2003: 17-8). PE VII (Delhi-Tōprā) (H):
kināsū kāni abhyūnāmāyehāni dhānīnavadhīyā,
 (With regard to the question) how I could elevate whom by the promotion of morality (the following occurred to me).

The passage is problematical even without *kāni*. Take, for instance, *la(n)ghaniti*, for which the most far-fetched derivations have been suggested. In this connection I would like to draw attention to Hultzsch, who, following Kern, takes it as a synonym of *arhāni* (Hultzsch 1925: 124, n. 7) and to Bloch, who queries the possibility of a derivation from Skt *rañh-* "to hasten" (Bloch 1950: 164, n. 5). It is not clear to me why the possibility of a regular derivation from Skt *lanḡhayati* "to jump, to avoid" has not been explored for *la(n)ghaniti*. Another problem is formed by *patical-*. The verb *patical-* is not otherwise attested, and Hultzsch's translation of this verb with "to obey" seems to be a mere guess. Is it not, however, possible as in the case of *la(n)ghaniti* from *lanḡhayanti*, that *patical-* is simply derived from Pāli *paīcar-* "to wander about, to evade (questions)"? The question then is if these meanings of *lanḡhay-* and *paīcar-* can somehow be fitted into this passage. Let us consider the context (for the complete text of which, see below pp. 51-52). In what precedes, Aśoka said that he had authorised the *lajūkas* to act according to their own devices. The *lajūkas* should not be held back by thoughts as to what Aśoka might think of their actions. In a passage which follows the one under consideration Aśoka compares his *lajūkas* with trustworthy nurses, who can think for themselves and to whom one can safely entrust one's children. Passage F-H might accordingly be translated as follows:

[F] The *lajūkas*, for their part, "jump" (the other way when they see me) in order to evade me.
 [G] They will also evade my agents (if I send them), who know exactly what I desire.

As I see it, the *kāni* sentence may be construed as expressing a second consideration beside *chandāmanāni*: "They will also evade my agents, because these agents will tell them exactly the same things which I would have told them myself."

[H] and (*ca*) because (*kāni*) these (agents) will exhort the *lajūkas*, in order that the latter do their best to please me.¹⁷

¹⁷ The derivation of the word *caghaniti* is unknown. As *caghaniti* clearly refers back to *lanḡhaniti* we should in the quest for a derivation most probably start from a form *caṅghaniti*.

The instances of *kāni*

After the above discussion of the instances of *kāni* I will now take a closer look at the two instances in the Aśoka inscriptions of another interrogative pronoun, namely *kāni*, as it occurs in REs IV and XI. In the available translations this pronoun is generally ignored, which testifies to its problematical nature. What I should like to draw attention to instead here is that, like *kāni*, *kāni* seems to be found in sentences expressing the reason why the action mentioned in the main sentence has been undertaken. The first instance of *kāni* to be discussed is RE XI E:

[A] *devānāpīye piyadasi lajja hevān āhā:*

[B] *nāhi heḍise dāne āḍise dhammadāne dhammasānīthave dhammasānībhāge dhammasānībhāde.*

[C] *tata esa dāsabhataḥakasi samyapātipati māṭṭpiiusu sususa mīasānīhutanāṅkānaṅ samānābhānānaṅ dāne pānānaṅ anālāmbhe.*

[D] *esa vaṭaviye piṭinā pi putena pi bhāṭinā pi suvānikena pi mīasānīhutenā pi āva paṭivesiyenā [pi]: iyaṅ sādhu iyaṅ kāvaṅiye.*

[E] *se tathā kalānīnaṅ hīdaloke ca kāni ālāḍhe hoī palata ca anānīnaṅ pūnīnaṅ paṣavati tena dhammadānena.*¹⁸

[A] The King, D.P., speaks thus:

[B] *dharmma*-liberality is the best form of liberality, (the same applies to) *dharmma*-intimacy, *dharmma*-distribution, and *dharmma*-relation.¹⁹

[C] This involves correct behaviour towards slaves and servants, obedience to one's father and mother, liberality towards friends and acquaintances, and to śramaṇas and brāhmaṇas, and refraining from killing living beings.

[D] About this a father, a son, a brother, a master, a friend or ac-

¹⁸ *kāni* is absent from Shahbazgarhi and Girnār. The latter reads *iloka ca sa āradho*. For a discussion of the reading of Girnār, see Norman (1969: 225-227).

¹⁹ The list *dhammadāne dhammasānīthave dhammasānībhāge dhammasānībhā(ṅ)the* reads like a synoptic table suggesting a matrix text such as *nāhi heḍise ... āḍise dhamma-... or nāhi heḍise ... vā ... vā ... vā āḍise dhamma-... vā dhamma-... vā dhamma-... vā dhamma-... vā*. Compare RE IX (p1 version) (J): (*na tu se (heḍise) nāhi (aṅhi) dāne (vā) anuḅgehe vā āḍise dhammadāne (vā) dhammānāḅgehe (vā)*).

quaintance, and, finally, a neighbour have to say: this (ceremony) is good, this ceremony is to be performed.

[E] because (*kāni*) by acting in that way one's obligations in this life on earth are fulfilled and at the same time one produces a great amount of merit for the hereafter by this *dhammadāna*.

The other instance of *kāni* is found in RE IV (F):

[C] *āḍise bahūhi vasasatehi no hutpūluve tāḍise aḅā vaḍhiṭe devānāpīyasa piyadasine lajine dhammānusāhīya: anālāmbhe pānānaṅ avīhīsā bhūṭānaṅ nāṭīnaṅ saṅpātipati*

samanābhānīhanānaṅ saṅpātipati māṭṭpiiususāsā vaḍhasusāsā.

[D] *esa aṅne ca bahūvithe dhammacalane vaḍhiṭe.*

[E] *vaḍhāyīsati ceva devānāpīye piyadasi lajja dhammacalanaṅ imāni.*

[F] *pūā [pi] ca kāni naitale ca panāṭikā ca devānāpīyasa piyadasine lajine pavāḍhāyīsānti yeva dhammacalanaṅ imāni āvakapaṅ; dhammasi sīlasi ca cīḅhiṭu dhammaṅ anusāsīsaṅhi.*²⁰

Schneider (1978: 107) was obviously embarrassed by *kāni*, which he left untranslated:

[C] Was in vielen Jahrhunderten früher nicht geschehen ist, solches ist heute gefördert worden durch die Dharma-Unterweisung des Königs D.P.: das Nicht-Töten von Tieren, das Nicht-Verteilen von Lebewesen, (ferner) gegen Verwandte anständiges Benehmen, gegen Śramaṇas und Brāhmaṇas anständiges Benehmen, Gehorsam gegen die Eltern, Gehorsam gegen die Alten.

[D] Dieser und anderer vielfältiger Dharma-Wandel ist gefördert worden.

[E] Der König D.P. wird den Dharma-Wandel hier [d.h. den hier, in dieser Inschrift, behandelten Dharma-Wandel] noch weiterhin fördern.

[F] Und auch die Söhne und die Enkel und die Urenkel des Königs D.P. werden den Dharma-Wandel hier immer weiter för-

²⁰ *kāni* is absent from Girnār and Dhauḷī. The text of Jaugādā is no longer readable.

dem, bis ans (Ende des) Kalpa; sie werden in Dhainma und Pfllichterfüllung verharrend, den Dhainma lehren.

As I see it, the passage should be divided into two parts, the first consisting of C-D and the second of E-F. In C-D the emperor describes how through the instruction in the Dharmma he has promoted many good things, ranging from the abstention from killing living beings to respect towards the elders. In E he mentions that he will go on doing this,

[F] with the idea that (*kāni*) the sons of King D.P., his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren will continue to foster the Dharmma way of life up to the very end of the Kalpa; and that, abiding by the Dharmma and living a virtuous life, they will continue to instruct the people.

The origin of the use of *kāni* and *kāni*

How can we explain the origin of the use of *kāni* and *kāni* in sentences supplying the reason why the action mentioned in the preceding sentence is undertaken? It is tempting to assume an original direct question with the loss of the particle *ti*. Or, to quote the instance in RE VI (L): *añ ca kicchi palakamāni hakañ ki(ñ)ti: bhūānañ anāyāñ yehañ, hida ca kāni sukhlāpāyāni palata ca svaganā ālāhaya(ñ)tu*, “why am I doing this? [I am doing this with the idea, *scil. ti:*] ‘which *bhūāni* will I be able to make happy?’” > “[I am doing this with the idea] that I will be able to make some *bhūāni* happy”. However, on closer consideration the agreement in number, gender and case of *kāni* with *bhūāni* is accidental. Thus, it is absent from, among other instances, PE IV (M) (*natikā ... kāni*) and RE XIII (Z) (*savā ... kāni latī*). A similar situation is met with in the case of *kāñ*, *kāñ* in RE IV (F) does not agree with the nominatives plural *putā*, *natāle*, etc. This lack of agreement suggests that both *kāni* and *kāni* are frozen forms which function as interrogative particles. As such, *kāni* (if indeed neuter singular) may be compared to Skt *kim*, and *kāni* to Apabhrañśa *kāinī* respectively. It would appear that plural *kāni* and singular *kāni* are functionally interchangeable. In any case, there does not seem to be any significant difference between the respective contexts. However, with all this the enigma of the origin of the construction is not solved. In my view, the most intriguing problem of *kāni* and *kāni* involves their position in the sentence. For contrary to interrogative

pronouns as well as interrogative particles (*kinī*), which are usually found at the head of the sentence, neither *kāni* nor *kāni* is ever found in that position; instead, they behave like clitics. In fact, the curious nature of the *kāni/kāni*-construction will become even clearer if we compare it to another construction involving an interrogative, namely the one with *kinīti*.

kinīti and *ena*

In two instances *kāni* is found side by side with *kinīti* (in RE VI (L) and RE XIII (X-Z); see above, p. 2 and 6ff. respectively). It is as if *kāni* functions here as a kind of abbreviation of *kinīti*, which in both instances precedes *kāni*. On the other hand, we seem to be dealing with two entirely different constructions. Thus, contrary to *kāni* and *kāni*, which are never found at the head of a sentence, *kinīti* is always found in that position. In addition, in some instances the *kinīti* sentences are concluded by the quotative particle (*i)ti*: e.g. RE X (C): *kiñi sakale apapalsave siyā ti*. In the case of *kinīti* ... *ti* we seem to be dealing with a direct question (“Why am I doing this? [I am doing this] with the idea that ... [it]”). This is indeed the way the sentences concerned have been generally interpreted. See, for instance, Schneider, who consistently inserts a colon after *kinīti*. See also Norman (1992: 77-80) and Bloch (1965: 312), according to whom “in Asokan and in Pali, *kinīti* states an intention, but can be translated simply ‘saying to oneself, what, why?’” (Bloch 1965: 312).²¹ We seem indeed to be dealing with a stylistic or pragmatic feature here.²²

21. Elsewhere, Bloch (1950: 168, n. 1) compared the use of *kinīti* with that of the isolated instance of *kathani* in PE VII (B and E). Sentence B reads as follows: *ye atikanāni antalanī laiane husu hevani ichisu kathani jane dhāminavahīyā vadheyā* “Les rois du temps passé cherchaient comment faire progresser le peuple du progrès de la Loi”. In this connection it should be noted that *ti* in *kinīti* ... (*ti*) is apparently not obligatory. In fact, the instances without *ti* outnumber those with *ti* by seven to five. With *ti*: PE IV (E): *kiñi hīdalani ca pālani ca ālāhayañ ti*, RE X (C): *kiñi sakale apapalsave siyā ti* (already quoted above. For *siyā ti* rather than *siyāti*, see von Hinüber 2001: 285, § 437), RE XII (H): *kiñi atupāsānīdani dipayena ti*, RE XII (J): *hevani hi devānānīpiyasa ichā kiñi savapāsānīdā bahusutā ca (huveyu) kayānāgamā ca huveyu ti* and RE XII (L): *kiñi sālavahī siyā savapāsānīdānāñ ti*; without *ti*: RE VI (L), XII (B, D, J), XIII (N, X) and Rpnāth (H). At the same time, however, we see *ti* appearing again in the alternative construction with (*y)ena*, as in *ena papunevā ti*, *ena mahānāta ... yujeyu ti*, *ena ... no siyā ti* in SE I and II. For the *yena*-construction, see below.

Whatever is exactly the case here, the *kinīni* ... *ti*-construction is otherwise rare. For introducing dependent Why-sentences, Sanskrit as well as the Middle-Indic dialects seem to favour relative pronouns such as *yathā* or *yena*.²³ On the other hand, as indicated, in the Aśoka inscriptions several instances of (y)*yena* are found as well. However, the distribution of *yena* in the inscriptions is peculiar, as the instances are found almost exclusively in the so-called later inscriptions.

In connection with the distinction between earlier and later edicts I would like to refer to Tieken 2003, in which I have argued that the inscriptions are monuments erected for a legendary ruler from the past. The Rock Edict series as well as the Pillar Edict series are neatly arranged compilations pieced together from old letters which this ruler used to send to the local authorities. However, of some edicts the authenticity cannot be taken for granted. That is to say, we cannot be certain that they are old letters. Instead, we may have to do with texts which have been drawn up for the occasion by the compilers of the two series. This may be the case with, for instance, RE XIV, which functions much like a colophon to the Rock Edict series as a whole. Another instance may be formed by the two so-called Separate Edicts of Dhauī and Jaugaḍa, which have been inserted later in an existing series. A special case is formed by the Seventh Pillar Edict, an isolated edict found only at Delhi-Toprā.²⁴ It was engraved on the pillar in ques-

23. Unfortunately, exact evidence on the distribution of the two basic types of quotative constructions is not available. For the situation in Sanskrit, see Speijer (1886: § 462ff. and in particular § 468). For Pali, see Norman (1992). Professor Hans Henrich Hock has kindly put at my disposal a preliminary inventory he had made of such constructions in the pre-modern Indian languages. While his material does not claim to be exhaustive and is mainly exemplary, it does confirm the impression that in the earlier stages of the Indo-Aryan languages the construction involving a relative pronoun is the favoured one. At first sight it may be tempting to compare the alternation between *yena* and *kinīni* with the one between *je* and *kīke* in modern Indo-Aryan (for which constructions, see Masiica 1991: 403-4). However, as already suggested by Bloch (1965: 316-7), *kīke* is most likely borrowed from Persian, though he adds that “the success of this particle (which has penetrated as far as Malto, a Dravidian language) must be due in part to confusion with the interrogative, Skt. *kinī*”. The latter point has been elaborated upon by Patrick Marlow, *Origin and development of the Indo-Aryan quotatives and complementizers: An areal approach*. Urbana: University of Illinois Ph.D. dissertation linguistics. Urbana 1997. I should like to thank Professor Hock for drawing my attention to this publication. Unfortunately I have not been able so far to see this work personally.

24. In addition, a fragment of PE VII has been found in Kandahar; see Benveniste (1966) and Shaked (1969).

tion below the texts of Pillar Edicts I-VI only after the pillar had already been erected. It is striking that three of the five instances of the *yena*-construction are found in precisely this category of edicts. Interestingly, the remaining two instances are found in one and the same edict, namely PE IV. In addition, they appear to be special cases, as I will proceed to show.

The first example of *ena* which may be discussed is PE VII (SS):

*iyani dhanimalibi ata ahi silathanbhāni vā silāphalakāni vā
tata kataviyā ena esa cīlāhīke siyā.*

This rescript on morality must be engraved there, where either stone pillars or stone slabs are (available), in order that [ena] this may be of long duration (Hultzsch 1925: 137).

As already pointed out by me elsewhere (Tieken 2003), the Seventh Pillar Edict is not an old missive which had once been dispatched by one of the ruling monarch's predecessors. Instead, it appears to consist of a number of brief individual “edicts”. It looks like a miniature edict series or an imitation of such a series, in particular the Pillar Edict series. PE VII, which as such presupposes the activity of the compilation of the edict series, is thus most likely a text written only at the time of the compilation of the edict series or, what in this case is even more likely, later still.

In the Separate Edicts of Dhauī and Jaugaḍa several instances of the *yena*-construction are found. See SE I (Dhauī) (I-M):

*se hevāni kaju kamme calitaviye asvāsaniyāni ca tāni, ena pā-
punevū iti ... etāye ca aṭhāye iyani lipi likhītiā hida ena mahā-
mātā sasvatāni samayan̄ yujisan̄ti,*

Dies euch sagend müßt ihr also eure Arbeit tun und jenen (Grenznachbarn) Vertrauen einflößen, damit sie die Übergung gewinnen ... Und zu folgendem Zwecke ist diese Inschrift hier angeschrieben: auf daß [ena] die Mahāmātras unabhängig bemüht seien ... (Alsdorf 1962: 36-7);

and SE II (Jaugada) (Z):

*etāye ca aṭhāye ṛyaṇi likhita lipī ena mahamāta nagalaka
sasvatāni samāyaṇi etāni yujeyu ti ena munisānaṇi akasmā
bañdhane palikīlese va no siyā ti,*

Zu folgendem Zweck ist diese Inschrift hier angeschrieben: auf daß die Städtische Mahamātras unablässig bemüht seien, daß [ena] die Menschen nicht ohne Grund in Fesseln gelegt oder ohne Grund gefoltert werden (Alsdorf 1962: 38).

These instances of *ena* are found side by side with those of *kinīti*. For the latter, see e.g. SE II (Dhauri) (B): *an kici dakhāni hakani tani ichāni kinti kammaṇa paipādayehani duvālate ca ālabhehāni*, “Alles, was ich (als richtig) betrachte, das wünsche ich (selbst) praktisch zu verwirklichen und durch (indirekte) Mittel durchzuführen” (Alsdorf 1962: 37).

The two so-called Separate Rock Edicts are found only in the Orissa versions of the Rock Edict series. They have been inserted into an existing compilation, replacing, besides REs XI and XII, RE XIII. While the latter describes Aśoka’s bloody conquest of Kalinga, a subject which may have been considered too painful for the local people, the question of why REs XI and XII were removed as well is not immediately clear.²⁵ Whatever is exactly the case here, it is striking that the special status of the two Separate Rock Edicts within the series is accompanied by the presence of the rare *yena*-construction.

In fact, the same applies to the third instance of the *yena*-construction found in RE XIV (D). Its occurrence is restricted to Schneider’s so-called p² version of Erraguḍi, Kālsī, Shahbāzgarhī and Mānsehrā, the p¹ version of Gīrnār, Dhauri and Jaugada reading *kinīti* instead:

[D] *atthi cu heta puna puna lapite (vute) tasa tasa aṭhasa
maddhuliyāye ena (p¹ kinīti ca) jāne tathā paipajeyā.*

The exact meaning of this sentence has been discussed by me in detail elsewhere.²⁶ For the present purpose Schneider’s translation suffices:

[D] Es ist aber schon in dieser Hinsicht immer wieder gesagt worden, wegen der Unwiderstehlichkeit (wörtlich: “Süßigkeit”) der verschiedenen Themen (und) damit die Leute sich entschuldend verhalten.

As to RE XIV reading *ena* rather than *kinīti*, it should be noted that RE XIV need not be an old letter like the ones which constitute the core of the series, but could well be a text which had been composed only for the occasion by the very same persons responsible for the compilation of the series.²⁷ For one thing, RE XIV seems to serve as a colophon to the series as a whole, which is an anthology of edicts. Thus, in RE XIV an apology is made for aspects which might annoy or confuse the reader of the edicts.²⁸ In this connection I would also like to draw attention to two peculiarities, which would expose the author of the text as a clumsy scribe and set him apart from those of the other “original” edicts. The first peculiarity concerns the occurrence of the word *mahalaka* “old” (see RE V (L)) in C in the sense of “great, large”. We seem to be dealing with a Middle Indic word used in its Sanskrit meaning here. The second peculiarity concerns the word *nikāya*, if this is indeed what the text reads. In sentence C this word, which normally means “group” (see RE XII (M)), seems for once to be used in the meaning “much, a lot”: ... *bahu ca likhite likhāpayaśāmi ceva nikāyaṇi*, “I have written much and also in the future I will write much (or: a pile).” In both cases we seem to be dealing with *ad hoc* synonyms

²⁵ As to XI, it should be noted that part of it was found incorporated into Schneider’s so-called p¹ version of IX, as a result of which XI may have come to be considered a repetition. In RE XII, however, the emperor advertises his support of all religious groups in the realm, which can hardly have been threatening to the people of Orissa.

In fact, in Sannathi fragments of the Separate Rock Edicts are found together with XII (and XIV) (Ramesh 1990).

²⁶ In a paper, called “The Aśoka Inscriptions and the Original Milieu of the Kāyva Poetic Tradition”, presented at the Second International Conference on Indian Studies, held from 19 to 23 September 2001 at the Jagiellonian University at Krakow, Poland. A revised version of this paper will appear in *ZDMG*.

²⁷ This does not imply that the ideas expressed in the edict are not those of the ruler responsible for the original edicts.

²⁸ The opening words, *yaṇi dharmalipi*, do not necessarily refer to the fourteenth Rock edict itself but could instead also refer to the series as a whole, formed by the preceding thirteen edicts.

based on etymological speculations. If so, one may ask if the fact that the two words occur elsewhere in the corpus is a coincidence or if the author of the edict in his search for synonyms restricted himself to the vocabulary of the edicts themselves. In any case, on final analysis the impression made by the words *mahālakā* and *nikāya* is one of clumsiness, a characteristic which might in fact also be applied to the use of the instrumentals such as *saṅkhitena* in sentence B: *abhi yeva saṅkhitena abhi majhmena abhi vihatena*, “Sie [this edict] existiert schon, sei es in mehr oder weniger abgekürzter, sei es in ausführlicher (Form)” (Schneider 1978: 119).

Given these peculiarities it is tempting to conclude that the fourteenth Rock Edict is indeed a text composed only by the compiler of the edict series and did not belong to the set of old edicts which form the bulk of the two series. Another problem, however, is which of the two versions, p¹ or p², actually represents the original text here. If we follow Schneider (1978: 9–19), according to whom the p² version with *ena* generally is the more original one, the text would originally have read *ena*. This scenario has the merit that it seems to agree with the influence of Sanskrit which we may otherwise see in the edict (*mahālakā* and *nikāya*). On the other hand, it forces us to assume that *kinīti* in the p² version is the result of an attempt secondarily to adapt the language of the edict to that of the other edicts, which in the present context indeed appears to favour *kinīti*. Unfortunately, other evidence of this type of emendation does not seem to be available.

In the “original” edicts only two instances of the *yena*-construction are found. Both occur in one and the same edict, namely PE IV (Delhi-Toprā), in a passage part of which (F-H) has already been discussed above (p. 45ff.):

[D] *tesaṃ ye abhihāle vā danḍe vā atapatīye me kate kinīti lajūkā asvatha abhīta kammani pavatayevū janasa jānapadasa hiiasukhāni upadahevū anugahinevu cā.*

[E] *sukhyānadukhīyaṇāni jānisaṇṇi dhanimayutena ca vīyovadisāṇi janāni jānapadaṇi kinīti hidatāni ca pālatāni ca āladhaye vū ti,*

[F] *lajūkā pi laghaṇi paicalīhāve maṇi*

[G] *pulisāni pi me chaṇḍaṇṇāni paicalisaṇṇi*

[H] *te pi ca kāni vīyovadisāṇi yena maṇi lajūkā caghaṇi āladhāyitāve.*

[I] *athā hi pajāni vīyatāye dhātīye nisītiyu asvathe hoti vīyata dhātī caghaṇi me pajāni sukhaṇi palīhaṭāve hevaṇi maṇā lajūkā kaṭā jānapadasa hiiasukhāye.*

[J] *yena ete abhīta asvatha saṇṇāni avīmaṇā kammani pavatayevū ti etena me lajūkānaṇi abhihāle vā danḍe vā atapatīye kate.*

yena in H (vīyovadisāṇi *yena*) is found in the same position as *kinīti* in E (vīyovadisāṇi *kinīti*). The difference is that *yena* ... *caghaṇi* in H is itself a dependent sentence introduced by *kāni: te pi ca kāni vīyovadisāṇi yena*. On the basis of this instance it is tempting to conclude that it was regarded stylistically unacceptable to embed a *kinīti* sentence within a sentence which itself had already been introduced by *kāni* or *kaṇi*, or, for that matter, by *kinīti*.

A similar type of parallelism and variation as seen between E (vīyovadisāṇi ... *kinīti* ... *āladhaye vū*) and H (vīyovadisāṇi *yena* ... *caghaṇi āladhāyitāve*) is found between D (*tesaṃ ye abhihāle vā danḍe vā atapatīye me kate kinīti lajūkā asvatha abhīta kammani pavatayevū*) and J (*yena ete abhīta asvatha saṇṇāni avīmaṇā kammani pavatayevū ti etena me lajūkānaṇi abhihāle vā danḍe vā atapatīye kate*). In J instead of *kinīti* we find the elaborate construction *yena* ... *ti etena*. In addition, compared to D, the order of the sentences has been reversed in J, the dependent sentence coming first. On closer consideration the order in J is curious and does not agree with what is generally found in the case of causal clauses introduced by *yena*. Instead, the order seems to agree with that of “ordinary” relative clauses, which indeed generally precede the main clause. It is tempting to see in *yena* ... *ti etena* in J the outcome of an attempt to vary on the *kinīti*-construction used in D. However, given the distribution of (y)*yena* in the Aśoka inscriptions, the question arises if we might not have to do with a change which has been introduced only by the compilers of the series here.

As said, the core of the two edict series has been compiled on the basis of old edicts from a legendary emperor from the past. However, some edicts seem to belong to a later textual layer. A case in point is PE VII, which is almost certainly a later fabrication. In the light of its function as an epilogue in combination with certain other peculiarities another clear case seems to be RE XIV. The two Separate Edicts were inserted into an existing Rock Edict series. It is peculiar that the majority of the instances of *ena* are found precisely in this latter group of edicts.

Given this situation it is tempting to conclude that, while the original letters had only *kini*, side by side with *kāni* and *kāni*, the instances of *ena* actually belonged to the language of the compilers. That is to say, when the compilers had to compose an edict themselves or piece one together from fragments from old letters, they tended to introduce the *ena*-construction rather than the supposedly more solemn one involving *kini*. Apparently this may also have happened when they copied and adapted an authentic letter, an example of which may be PE IV. At the same time, the emendation of *ena* with *kini* in the p¹ versions of RE XIV in Gīṃār, Dhauī and Jaugaḍa would show that at least some authors, or the scribes, still knew how the texts should read in order to appear authentic.

Concluding remarks

As far as I know, the *kāni/kāni*-construction is found exclusively in the Aśoka inscriptions. The *kini* ... [*ti*]-construction is likewise rare. In this construction, however, we may see the outcome of an attempt with regular Sanskrit means to create a solemn or stilted style. This does not apply to *kāni/kāni*, which cannot just like that be traced back directly to Sanskrit. What is particularly striking, however, is that the *kāni/kāni*-construction, which is relatively frequent in the Aśoka inscriptions, is completely absent from the Buddhist Pāli canon.²⁹ For, Pāli is generally believed to be based on the spoken language of approximately the same period and approximately the same region as the Aśoka inscriptions (see e.g. Norman 1980).

The absence in Pāli of anything like the Why-questions introduced by *kāni/kāni* will no doubt be added to the already long list of items which are supposed to have been lost in the “translation” of the original Buddhist canon into a western dialect. Alternatively, it will be argued that the fragments of Buddha’s own words on the basis of which the canon has been pieced together happened not to contain the construction. However, one may seriously ask how long the list of lost items should grow before this scenario is to be reconsidered or altogether abandoned. Or, to put it in another way, why would the situation of Pāli be different from that of the literary Prakrits including Apabhraṃśa.

which have their origin in the Sanskrit Kāvya tradition and which on final analysis are merely forms of Sanskrit coloured by regional (*deśī* words) and social factors (lenition)?³⁰

In order to explain the mixed nature of Pāli it is generally assumed that we are dealing with an eastern dialect, which had been transformed by influences such as those of the spoken language, or languages, from the West of India. Though many of these western features could equally well pass for Sanskritisms, the direct influence from Sanskrit on the origin of Pāli (as distinct from its subsequent development) is hardly ever considered. It should be asked, however, if the Buddhists’ rejection of orthodoxy may be projected just like that on the language of the canon. Or, if the decision by the Buddhists to compose and compile a canon and their choice of language could really have taken place independently of the textual and linguistic tradition of Sanskrit. The canon was after all compiled in India, not on the North Pole! One of the questions then is how much Sanskrit there is in Pāli and if the eastern features could not be mere snibboleths introduced to give the language an eastern appearance. While the absence of the *kāni/kāni*-construction in Pāli does not of course suffice to overthrow the current interpretation of the origin and nature of that language, I think it should at least serve as a reminder of the fact that the translation or transformation scenario is merely a temporary working hypothesis.

²⁹ In the case of the so-called dramatic dialects (e.g. Saurasenī), their origin in the Kāvya Sanskrit tradition is obvious. As to Apabhraṃśa, elsewhere I have tried to show that this literary dialect is attested for the first time in the dramatic tradition as well (Tijcken 2001: 178-82). In the same study I have argued that the *gāthās* of the *Sattasaī* in the so-called Māhātāṣṭī Prakrit are not, as is often assumed, the folk songs of the people of Mahārāṣṭra but are poems about those people. The *gāthās* were composed by learned poets who were well-acquainted with the *Kāmasūtra* (Tijcken 2001: 54ff). While all these dialects show features of the spoken languages, we may assume that they do so only to the extent to which the Sanskrit authors deemed this necessary to give a local or primitive colour to the dialects concerned. Or, to put it more concretely, in the literary Prakrits we are ultimately dealing with imitations of the spoken languages through Sanskrit. Incidentally, while the exact function of Sanskrit as a primer for the Prakrits still needs a close investigation, it should be clear that it is extremely hazardous to conclude from the absence in the literary dialects of the interrogative constructions under investigation that they did not exist in the contemporary spoken languages.

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