of Greek origin for -*itsa*. Whether his other arguments hold up is a different question, one that can be debated further, but the force of his first argument is less compelling in the light of this example from Megarian Greek.

Received May 7, 1985.

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AN ARCHAIC POETIC STATEMENT

'Ω ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις, ὅτι τῇδε
κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.

This famous distich, though doubtless a fresh and original composition in Greek, contains some archaic features of syntax and semantics that are remarkably faithful to what must have been Indo-European structures. Let us schematize the sentence: Vocative +SAY [imperative] +TO L. +((T)HERE+ *we-lie* -*we*-πειθ +*the*-ῥηματ +OF L.).

There is, of course, nothing surprising or special about a vocative or an imperative (infinitival = verbal noun) of REPORT. But τῇδε is a locatival which in pronominal structure replicates **i-dhe*. parallel to the manner anaphora **i-tH*. 1 Now the syntax of τῇδε κείμεθα becomes important, since I have shown (references in footnote 1) that the natural position for **i-tH* (and for Welsh **i-dhe* > *yd*) was the initial of the clause. Thus τῇδε κείμεθα reproduces the structure of Welsh *Na wir, yd ym wyrda* W. M. 458 „No, indeed, we are noblemen" (*yd ym* < **idhe esme(s)*). Therefore we have **#*PRONOUN + LOC + ADVERB-CLITIC + VERB. Thus we have an exactly conserved Indo-European clause initial, with locatival pronominal + verb in Wackernagel's (i.e. second) position.

Let us now turn to the semantics of the embedded predication *we*- πειθ + *the* — ῥηματ. A somewhat literal or prosaic interpreta-

tion of this predicate within the conventional framework of Classical Greek might yield the version „we obey (their) commands", or even „we believe, are persuaded/constrained by (their) orders". Such a mechanical soldierly imputation of imposed obedience, e.g. to an arbitrary ephemeral general or even to a parliamentary edict, trivializes the eternal social truth (as the Lacedaemonians saw it) which this simple predicate states in its spare grandeur.

The full force of πειθ [MIDDLE] + ῥηματ can be grasped most clearly by comparing the Albanian equivalent *besë*, "assurance of safety in blood feuding, treaty between clans (*u lidh besa* „besë was bound"), plighted word (*ham dhënë besën*" I have given my word"), protection by a friend, loyalty, good repute, faith". The adjective (*i*) *pabesë*, which can be glossed *që s'ka besë* "who hasn't besë", i.e. „without besë", is a quintessentially detracting and damning characterization. To say that a man has *besë*, is to say that he has all that socially matters. *Besë* is the essence of one's relation to society. Note also that in Albanian semantics *besë* is susceptible of utterance, as with our *promise* and *giving one's word*. So *më dolli nga fjala = më dolli besës* „he broke his word (*fjalë*) to me".

I have shown[2] that Alb. *besë* is derived from the same base as πειθω, i.e. **bhidh-tā* → **bhittā* > *bhit^{s}tā* > **bęćā* > *besë*. At that time I derived **bęćā* from a morphological formation to be equated with the feminine of πιστός. I am now inclined to trace it rather to the normal Albanian *ā-* stem feminization of the *-ti-* verbal noun seen reflected in Greek πίστις; hence **bhit^{s}ti- > *bhit^{s}tā*[3].

I would therefore claim that the ancestor of *besë* = πίστις, **bhidh-ti-*, meant not simply „intellectual conviction" or „spiritual faith" or „superstitious belief" or „submissive obedience", but rather „socially based trust" or „trustworthiness" or „staunchness upon which one's honour rests". Thus the base **bheidh*-meant „inspire trust, keep trust"[4] and hence to fulfill one's social obligation. It was a pledged word that could be uttered, as the gloss „treaty" for *besë* and Latin *foedus* implies and as the presence of ῥηματ in the locution under discussion makes appropriate.

We arrive, then, at the conclusion that a reading of πειθ [MIDDLE] + ῥηματ is consonant with „keep trust/faith with expressed social institution(s)", i e. „be loyal, observe the social contract".

I therefore read this conservative distich:

"O passer-by, tell the Lacedaemonians that here
we lie true to what is right by their custom".

The last clause might go in Albanian: *Këtu rrimë, kemi besë* (*e mbajmë fjalën*).

Received 6. IX 1984.

[1] See on these last E. P. Hamp, „Celtica Indogermanica", *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 37, 1979, 167—8, on Welsh *yt^L*, *yd*.; [2] *KZ* 77, 1961, 252 — 3. [3] E. P. Hamp, *Sprachwissenschaftliche Forschungen: Festschrift für Johann Knobloch*, Innsbruck, 1985, p. 145.
[4] See most appositely LSJ *Lexicon*, senses B II and III s.v. πειθω.