

The Kariya Problem and Related Constructions

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Abstract. Given a point Q other than the incenter I of a reference triangle, we give a simple conic construction of a homothety mapping I into Q so that the image of the intouch triangle is perspective with the reference triangle. This is a generalization of the Kariya theorem in the case $Q = I$ that the homothety can be arbitrary. The ratio of the homothety (the Kariya factor) is a unique nonzero finite number except when Q lies on the Feuerbach hyperbola or the line joining the incenter to the orthocenter of the reference triangle. For each nonzero real number t , we show that the locus of Q with Kariya factor t is a rectangular hyperbola. We give two simple constructions of this hyperbola.

1. The Kariya problem

This note presents several constructions related to the Kariya problem. Given a triangle $\mathbf{T} := ABC$ with incenter I , let the incircle be tangent to the sides BC , CA , AB at A_1 , B_1 , C_1 respectively. $A_1B_1C_1$ is the *intouch triangle* of ABC . For a real number t , let $I_a(t)$, $I_b(t)$, $I_c(t)$ be points on the lines IA_1 , IB_1 , IC_1 respectively, such that as vectors,

$$\mathbf{II}_a(t) = t\mathbf{IA}_1, \quad \mathbf{II}_b(t) = t\mathbf{IB}_1, \quad \mathbf{II}_c(t) = t\mathbf{IC}_1.$$

Theorem (Kariya). *For every real number t , the triangle $\mathbf{T}_I(t) := I_a(t)I_b(t)I_c(t)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} at a point on the Feuerbach hyperbola, the rectangular circum-hyperbola through I and H , the orthocenter of \mathbf{T} (see Figure 1).*

The Kariya problem studies the case when the incenter is replaced by an arbitrary point. We begin with a sign convention for distances along lines perpendicular to the sidelines of \mathbf{T} . For two points Y and Z on a line perpendicular to BC , the distance YZ is reckoned positive or negative according as the vector \mathbf{YZ} is directly or oppositely parallel to \mathbf{IA}_1 ; similarly for points on lines perpendicular to CA and AB respectively. Given a point Q and a real number t , we denote by $Q_a(t)$, $Q_b(t)$, $Q_c(t)$ the unique points on the perpendiculars from Q to BC , CA , AB respectively with $QQ_a(t) = QQ_b(t) = QQ_c(t) = tr$, where r is the inradius of \mathbf{T} (see Figure 2). In absolute barycentric coordinates,

$$Q_a(t) = Q + t(A_1 - I), \quad Q_b(t) = Q + t(B_1 - I), \quad Q_c(t) = Q + t(C_1 - I).$$

Lemma 1. *Triangle $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is homothetic to the intouch triangle $\mathbf{T}_I(1) = A_1B_1C_1$.*

Proof. Let T be the point dividing QI in the ratio $QT : TI = -t : 1$. It is clear that

$$TQ_a(t) : TA_1 = TQ_b(t) : TB_1 = TQ_c(t) : TC_1 = TQ : TI = t : 1.$$

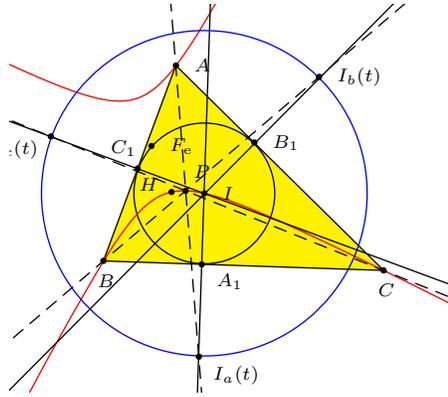


Figure 1

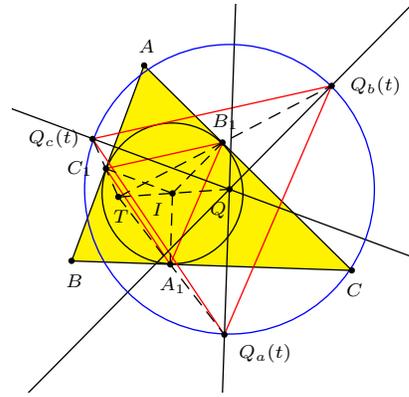


Figure 2

Triangle $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is the image of the intouch triangle under the homothety $h(T, t)$. □

For the orthocenter H , it is clear that for every real number t , $\mathbf{T}_H(t)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} at H . If $Q \neq H, I$, and $t \neq 0$, the triangle $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is in general not perspective with \mathbf{T} . By the Kariya problem for Q , we mean the determination of t for which $\mathbf{T}_Q(t) := Q_a(t)Q_b(t)Q_c(t)$ and \mathbf{T} are perspective, and the location of the corresponding perspector. Here are some simple examples. Trivially, one may take $t = 0$, in which case $\mathbf{T}_Q(0)$ degenerates into the point Q , and is perspective with \mathbf{T} at Q . If we also allow $t = \infty$ and infinite points, then the perspector is the orthocenter H . If Q is the circumcenter O , the angle bisectors intersect the circumcircle at points lying on the perpendiculars from O to the sidelines. Thus, $\mathbf{T}_O\left(\frac{R}{r}\right)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} at the incenter I . On the other hand, it is well known that the excentral triangle has circumcenter at the reflection I' of I in O , and circumradius $2R$. This means that $\mathbf{T}_{I'}\left(\frac{2R}{r}\right)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} , also at I .

2. Solution of the Kariya problem

For a given $Q \neq H, I$, if the triangles $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ and \mathbf{T} are perspective, the location of the perspector is quite easy even without knowing the corresponding value of t (see Theorem 2 below). This is a simple application of Thébault’s proof of Sondat’s theorem on perspective orthologic triangles. We say that triangle XYZ is orthologic to triangle $X'Y'Z'$ if the perpendiculars from X, Y, Z to $Y'Z', Z'X', X'Y'$ respectively are concurrent (at a point which we call the orthology center from XYZ to $X'Y'Z'$). For nondegenerate triangles, XYZ is orthologic to $X'Y'Z'$ if and only if $X'Y'Z'$ is orthologic to XYZ . Therefore, there are two orthology centers.

Theorem (Sondat [5]). *If two nondegenerate orthologic triangles are also perspective, then the perspector and the orthology centers are collinear.*

In his proof of Sondat’s theorem in [6], Thébault also found the following remarkable result which leads to an easy solution of the Kariya problem.

Theorem (Thébault [6]). *If ABC and $A'B'C'$ are perspective at P and orthologic at Q' , i.e., the perpendiculars from A to $B'C'$, B to $C'A'$, and C to $A'B'$ intersect at Q' , then A, B, C, P, Q' lie on a rectangular hyperbola.*

For example, the Kiepert triangle $\mathcal{K}(\theta)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} at the Kiepert perspector $K(\theta)$. It is orthologic to \mathbf{T} at the circumcenter O . By Thébault’s theorem, the other orthology center Q' also lies on the Kiepert hyperbola. By Sondat’s theorem, it is the second intersection with the line $OK(\theta)$. This is the Kiepert perspector $K(\frac{\pi}{2} - \theta)$.

Now for the Kariya problem for an arbitrary point Q , we naturally expect that the Feuerbach hyperbola plays a key role.

Theorem 2. *For $Q \neq H, I$, if $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} , the perspector is the second intersection of the Feuerbach hyperbola of \mathbf{T} with the line IQ .*

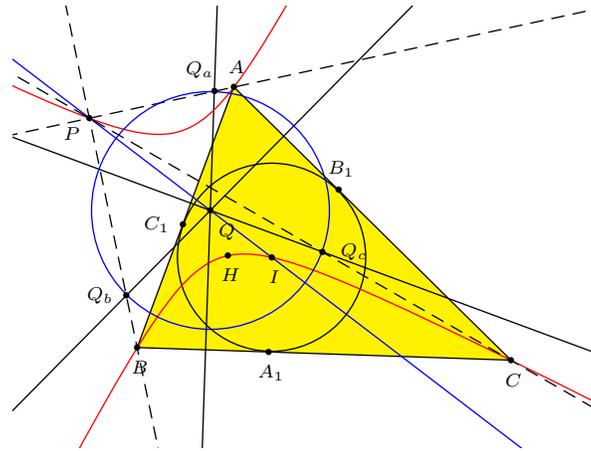


Figure 3.

Proof. Clearly, triangle $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is orthologic to \mathbf{T} at Q . Since $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is homothetic to the intouch triangle (Lemma 1), the perpendiculars from A, B, C to the sidelines of $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ are concurrent at the incenter I (see Figure 2). By Sondat’s theorem, if $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is also perspective with \mathbf{T} , the perspector P must lie on the line IQ . Furthermore, by Thébault’s theorem, A, B, C, P, I lie on a rectangular hyperbola. Now, the rectangular hyperbola through A, B, C, I must contain the orthocenter H , and is the Feuerbach hyperbola. It follows that P is the intersection (other than I) of the Feuerbach hyperbola and the line IQ (see Figure 3). \square

If Q lies on the Feuerbach hyperbola, and if $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} , the perspector must be Q , and the triangle degenerates to Q , corresponding to $t = 0$. On the other hand, if Q is a point on the line IH different from I and H , the second

intersection of IQ with the Feuerbach hyperbola is H . There is no finite value of t for which $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} at H .

Corollary 3. *For Q not on the Feuerbach hyperbola or the line IH , there is a unique nonzero $t = t(Q)$ for which $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ is perspective with \mathbf{T} .*

3. Kariya triangle $\mathbf{T}(Q)$ and the Kariya factor $t(Q)$

It follows from Corollary 3 that if Q is not on the Feuerbach hyperbola nor the line IH , then there is a unique triangle $\mathbf{T}(Q) = \mathbf{T}_Q(t(Q))$ perspective with \mathbf{T} at a point $P(Q)$ on the Feuerbach hyperbola. We call $\mathbf{T}(Q)$ the Kariya triangle of Q , $t(Q)$ the Kariya factor of Q , and the circle, center Q , radius $t(Q)r$, the Kariya circle at Q .

The construction the $\mathbf{T}(Q)$ is now very easy; see Figure 3. First construct $P = P(Q)$ as the second intersection of the line IQ with the Feuerbach hyperbola. Then the intersections of AP , BP , CP with the perpendiculars from Q to the corresponding sidelines of \mathbf{T} are the vertices Q_a , Q_b , Q_c of $\mathbf{T}(Q)$.

To determine the Kariya factor we work with homogeneous, and sometimes absolute, barycentric coordinates with reference to $\mathbf{T} = ABC$.

If Q has homogeneous coordinates $(u : v : w)$, the line IQ has equation

$$(cv - bw)x + (aw - cu)y + (bu - av)z = 0.$$

Apart from I , this line intersects the Feuerbach hyperbola

$$a(b - c)(b + c - a)yz + b(c - a)(c + a - b)zx + c(a - b)(a + b - c)xy = 0$$

at

$$P(Q) = \left(\frac{(b - c)(b + c - a)}{cv - bw} : \frac{(c - a)(c + a - b)}{aw - cu} : \frac{(a - b)(a + b - c)}{bu - cv} \right).$$

This is the perspector in Theorem 2 when $\mathbf{T}_Q(t)$ and \mathbf{T} are perspective.

To find the corresponding $t(Q)$, we note that in absolute barycentric coordinates,

$$Q_a = \frac{(u, v, w)}{u + v + w} + t(Q) \left(\frac{(0, a + b - c, c + a - b)}{2a} - \frac{(a, b, c)}{a + b + c} \right).$$

This also lies on the line AP :

$$(a - b)(a + b - c)(aw - cu)y - (c - a)(c + a - b)(bu - av)z = 0.$$

Therefore,

$$\frac{\frac{v}{u+v+w} + t(Q) \left(\frac{a+b-c}{2a} - \frac{b}{a+b+c} \right)}{\frac{w}{u+v+w} + t(Q) \left(\frac{c+a-b}{2a} - \frac{c}{a+b+c} \right)} = \frac{(c - a)(c + a - b)(bu - av)}{(a - b)(a + b - c)(aw - cu)}.$$

From this,

$$t(Q) = \frac{2(a + b + c) \left(\sum_{\text{cyclic}} a(b - c)(b + c - a)vw \right)}{(u + v + w) \left(\sum_{\text{cyclic}} (b - c)(b + c - a)(b^2 + c^2 - a^2)u \right)}, \quad (1)$$

provided that the denominator does not vanish.

Remarks. (1) The denominator $\sum_{\text{cyclic}} (b - c)(b + c - a)(b^2 + c^2 - a^2)u = 0$ if and only if Q lies on the line IH . In this case the perspector is H , and we shall put $t(Q) = \infty$.

(2) The numerator $\sum_{\text{cyclic}} a(b - c)(b + c - a)vw = 0$ if and only if Q lies on the Feuerbach hyperbola. In this case, we put $t(Q) = 0$.

4. Examples of Kariya factors

4.1. *The line IG.* The line IG intersects the Feuerbach hyperbola at the Nagel point N_a . The cevian AN_a contains the antipode of A'_1 on the incircle. From this we conclude that for every point $Q \neq I$ on the line IN_a , $P(Q) = N_a$, and $t(Q) = -t$ if $N_aQ : QI = t : 1 - t$. In particular, for the centroid G , $t(G) = -\frac{2}{3}$ (see Figure 4).

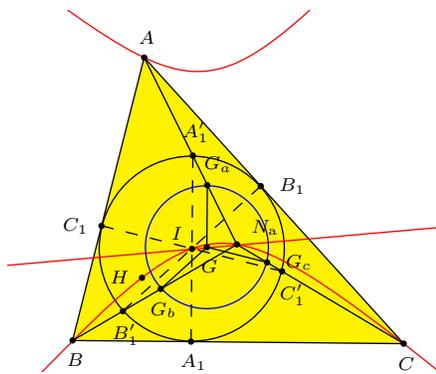


Figure 4

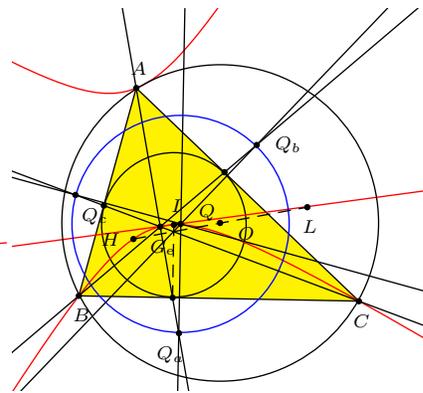


Figure 5

4.2. *The line joining I to the Gergonne point G_e.* Since the Gergonne point G_e lies on the Feuerbach hyperbola, for every point $Q \neq I$ on the line IG_e , $P(Q) = G_e$, and $t(Q) = t$ if $G_eQ : QI = t : 1 - t$ (see Figure 5).

The line IG_e is called the Soddy line. It is well known that it contains the deLongchamps point L , the reflection of H in O ([7]), and $G_eL : LI = 4R + 2r : -(4R + r)$. In this case, $t = \frac{4R+2r}{r}$. Therefore, the Gergonne cevians intersect the perpendiculars from L to the sidelines at points which are at equal distances $4R + 2r$ from L . Note that $4R + 2r$ is the sum of the radii of the incircle and the three excircles.

Remark. The coordinates of the points are quite simple:

$$L_a = (-a(a + b + c) : (b + c)(a + b - c) : (b + c)(c + a - b)),$$

$$L_b = ((c + a)(a + b - c) : -b(a + b + c) : (c + a)(b + c - a)),$$

$$L_c = ((a + b)(c + a - b) : (a + b)(b + c - a) : -c(a + b + c)).$$

The circle containing them has equation

$$a^2yz + b^2zx + c^2xy + (x + y + z) \left(\sum_{\text{cyclic}} (b + c)(2a + b + c)x \right) = 0.$$

4.3. *The line joining I to the Feuerbach center.* The Feuerbach center F_e is the point of tangency of the nine-point circle with the incircle. It is also the center of the Feuerbach hyperbola. The second intersection of the hyperbola with IF_e is the antipode of I , the triangle center

$$I^\dagger = \left(\frac{1}{a^2 - b^2 - c^2 + bc} : \frac{1}{b^2 - c^2 - a^2 + ca} : \frac{1}{c^2 - a^2 - b^2 + ab} \right).$$

For $Q \neq I$ on the line IF_e , $P(Q) = I^\dagger$.¹

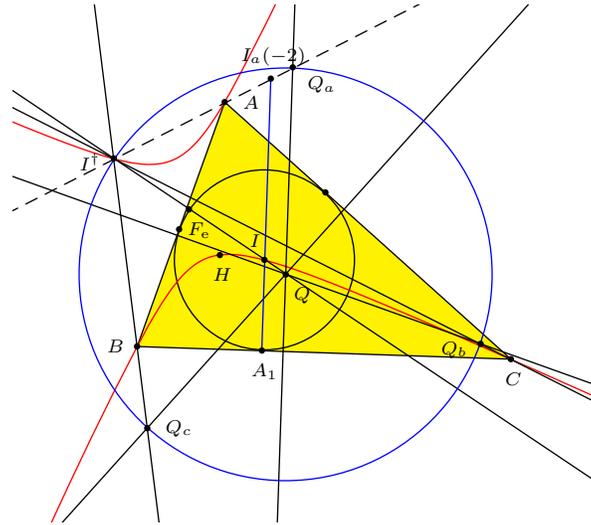


Figure 6.

Now, the lines AI^\dagger and IA_1 intersect at

$$(3a^2 : c^2 - a^2 - b^2 + ab : b^2 - c^2 - a^2 + ca),$$

which divides IA_1 in the ratio $-2 : 3$. Therefore, this is the point $I_a(-2)$. Since $II^\dagger = 2r$, the circumcircle of $\mathbf{T}_I(-2)$ contains I^\dagger . More generally, for every point Q on the line IF_e , $t(Q) = -\frac{|QI^\dagger|}{r}$, and the circumcircle of $\mathbf{T}(Q)$ contains I^\dagger . In particular,

$$t(F_e) = -1, \quad t(N) = -\frac{R + 2r}{2r}$$

for the nine-point center N .

¹ I^\dagger is the triangle center $X(80)$ in [3]; henceforth referred to as ETC. The notation adopted here indicates that it is the reflection conjugate of I . In the notations of §1, $I_a(2)$, $I_b(2)$, $I_c(2)$ are the reflections of I in the sidelines of \mathbf{T} . The circles $I_a(2)BC$, $I_b(2)CA$, and $I_c(2)AB$ are concurrent at I^\dagger .

5.1. *The line of centers.* The centers of these hyperbolas lie on a line, which clearly contains the Feuerbach center F_e . To identify this line, it is enough to note that in §4.4, we have obtained $t(M') = t(O') = -\frac{R}{r}$. The four points I, M', H, O' are all on the hyperbola $\mathcal{H}(-\frac{R}{r})$. Since they are also vertices of a parallelogram, the common midpoint of their diagonals is the center of the hyperbola. Therefore, the line of centers of $\mathcal{H}(t)$ is the line joining the Feuerbach center F_e to the midpoint M of IH ; ⁴ see Figure 7.

Note that NM is parallel to OI . If OI intersects the line of centers F_eM at a point J , then $\frac{F_eJ}{F_eM} = \frac{F_eI}{F_eN} = \frac{2r}{R}$. Since M is the center of $\mathcal{H}(-\frac{R}{r})$, we conclude that J is the center of $\mathcal{H}(-2)$. ⁵

Theorem 4. *Let J be the intersection of OI and the line joining the Feuerbach center to the midpoint M of IH . The center of the hyperbola $\mathcal{H}(t)$ is the point dividing F_eJ in the ratio $-t : t + 2$.*

This leads to a simple construction of the center of $\mathcal{H}(t)$. Let F'_e be the antipode of the Feuerbach center on the incircle. Then $F'_eF_e = 2r$. If K'_t is a point on the line $F_eF'_e$ such that $F_eK'_t = tr$, the common radius of the Kariya circles, construct a parallel through K'_t to F'_eJ to intersect the line of center at K_t . This intersection is the center of $\mathcal{H}(t)$.

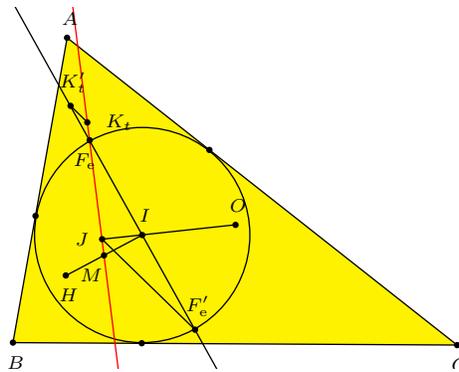


Figure 8.

5.2. *Construction of $\mathcal{H}(t)$.* Knowing the center of $\mathcal{H}(t)$, it is easy to construct the conic by choosing five distinct points on it. Two of them being I and H , their antipodes (reflections in K_t) contribute two more, provided $K_t \neq M$, the midpoint of IH . Since the hyperbola is rectangular, it also contains the orthocenter of the triangle formed by three of these points.

If $K_t = M$, the hyperbola is $\mathcal{H}(-\frac{R}{r})$ containing I, M', H, O' (see Figure 7), and the orthocenter of any triangle formed by three of these points.

⁴ M is the triangle center $X(946)$ in ETC.

⁵ J is the triangle center $X(65)$ in ETC.

6. A simpler construction of $\mathcal{H}(t)$

Let A', B', C' as the second intersections of the Feuerbach hyperbola with the lines IA_1, IB_1, IC_1 respectively. Consider the point $A'_a(-t)$. We show that in Proposition 5 below that this lies on the hyperbola $\mathcal{H}(t)$. The same reasoning shows that $B'_b(-t)$ and $C'_c(-t)$ are also on the same hyperbola. This leads to a simpler construction of the hyperbola $\mathcal{H}(t)$ as the conic containing the five points $I, H, A'_a(-t), B'_b(-t), C'_c(-t)$ (see Figure 9).

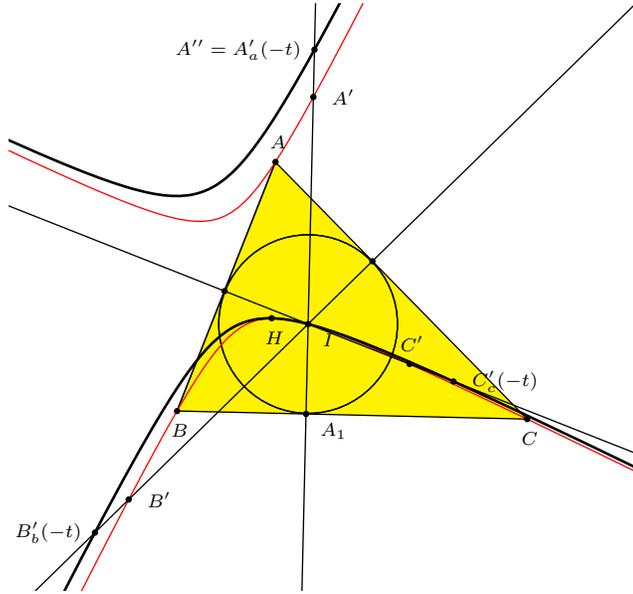


Figure 9.

Proposition 5. *The point $A'_a(-t)$ lies on the rectangular hyperbola $\mathcal{H}(t)$.*

Proof. The line IA_1 intersects the Feuerbach hyperbola at $A' := (a : c - a : b - a)$. For brevity, we denote $A'_a(-t)$ by A'' . Clearly, $A''_a(t) = A'$. In absolute barycentric coordinates,

$$A'' = \frac{(a, c - a, b - a)}{b + c - a} - t \left(\frac{(0, a + b - c, c + a - b)}{2a} - \frac{(a, b, c)}{a + b + c} \right).$$

With this, we compute the coordinates of $A''_b(t)$.

$$\begin{aligned} A''_b(t) &= A'' + t \left(\frac{(a + b - c, 0, b + c - a)}{2b} - \frac{(a, b, c)}{a + b + c} \right) \\ &= \frac{(a, c - a, b - a)}{b + c - a} + t \left(\frac{(a + b - c, 0, b + c - a)}{2b} - \frac{(0, a + b - c, c + a - b)}{2a} \right). \end{aligned}$$

In homogeneous coordinates, this is

$$\begin{aligned} A''_b(t) &= (a(2ab + t(a + b - c)(b + c - a)) \\ &: b(2a(c - a) - t(a + b - c)(b + c - a)) \\ &: -(a - b)(2ab + t(a + b - c)(b + c - a))). \end{aligned}$$

From these homogeneous coordinates, it is easy to see that both A' and $A''_b(t)$ lie on the line $(a - b)x + az = 0$, which clearly passes through the vertex B . Similarly, $A''_c(t) = A'' + t \left(\frac{(c+a-b, b+c-a, 0)}{2c} - \frac{(a, b, c)}{a+b+c} \right)$ is such that the line $A'A''_c(t)$ passes through the vertex C . It follows that $\mathbf{T}_{A''}(t)$ and ABC are perspective at A' . Since $A''A' = tr$, A'' lies on the hyperbola $\mathcal{H}(t)$. \square

We conclude this paper with a remark on the triangle $A'_a(-t)B'_b(-t)C'_c(-t)$ (which is not a Kariya triangle). It is clearly orthologic to \mathbf{T} , with orthology center I . The other orthology center is the point

$$\left(\frac{a(b + c - a)}{2a + t(b + c - a)} : \frac{b(c + a - b)}{2b + t(c + a - b)} : \frac{c(a + b - c)}{2c + t(a + b - c)} \right)$$

on the Feuerbach hyperbola. This is the isogonal conjugate of the point dividing OI in the ratio $2R + rt : -2r$. On the other hand, this triangle is perspective with \mathbf{T} only if $t = -\frac{2R}{r}$. In this case, the triangle is oppositely congruent to \mathbf{T} at the midpoint M of IH . The orthology centers are I and H . The conic (rectangular hyperbola) through H , I , and its three vertices is the hyperbola $\mathcal{H}\left(-\frac{2R}{r}\right)$. For each point Q on this hyperbola, the Kariya circle has radius $-2R$. The perspector of the Kariya triangle Q is the intersection of the line IQ with the Feuerbach hyperbola, as we have established in Theorem 2.

Appendix A. Verification of Sondat-Thébault's theorem

If triangles ABC and XYZ are perspective at $P = (x : y : z)$ and the perpendiculars from X , Y , Z to the sidelines BC , CA , AB are concurrent at $Q = (u : v : w)$, the vertices X , Y , Z have homogeneous barycentric coordinates

$$\begin{aligned} X &= ((S_Bu + a^2w)y - (S_Cu + a^2v)z : (S_Bv - S_Cw)y : (S_Bv - S_Cw)z), \\ Y &= ((S_Cw - S_Au)x : (S_Cv + b^2u)z - (S_Av + b^2w)x : (S_Cw - S_Au)z), \\ Z &= ((S_Au - S_Bv)x : (S_Au - S_Bv)y : (S_Aw - c^2v)x - (S_Bu - c^2w)y). \end{aligned}$$

The perpendiculars from A to YZ , B to ZX , and C to XY are concurrent at the point

$$Q' = \left(\frac{S_By - S_Cz}{wy - vz} : \frac{S_Cz - S_Ax}{uz - wx} : \frac{S_Ax - S_By}{vx - uy} \right).$$

From these we deduce

(a) Sondat's theorem: P , Q , Q' are collinear; the line containing them is

$$(wy - vz)\mathbb{X} + (uz - wx)\mathbb{Y} + (vx - uy)\mathbb{Z} = 0;$$

(b) Thébault's theorem: the points P and Q' are on the circumconic

$$\frac{x(S_{By} - S_Cz)}{\mathbb{X}} + \frac{y(S_Cz - S_Ax)}{\mathbb{Y}} + \frac{z(S_Ax - S_By)}{\mathbb{Z}} = 0,$$

which is a rectangular hyperbola since it contains the orthocenter $\left(\frac{1}{S_A} : \frac{1}{S_B} : \frac{1}{S_C}\right)$.

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