CTh 767.7—THE BIRTH RITUAL OF PITTEI: ITS OCCASION AND THE USE OF LUWIANISMS

Mary R. Bachvarova

INTRODUCTION

I discuss here a Late New Hittite birth incantation attributed to a certain woman named Pittei, which was published as KUB 44.4 + KBo 13.241. The incantation, which abounds in Luwianisms and expressions found in other Luwian incantations, has received several important treatments that have shed light on its function, its relationship with other Luwian texts, and the interaction between the Hittite and Luwian languages. But, I think there is more to be said with regard to the writing down of the text and the occasion of its performance. I argue here that it was performed to counteract the evil omen of a red moon rising, not a lunar eclipse, as suggested by Giorgieri.1 In addition, Yakubovich2 has discussed the text as ‘a convincing case of code-switching practiced by a Luvian native speaker in the Empire Period.’ I argue that the reason for the code-switching is not Pittei’s poor mastery of Hittite, but the need to keep certain words that create assonance and alliteration, as shown by a study of the second part of her incantation, comparing it to other versions. The Luwianisms could not have been translated into Hittite without the incantation losing some of its efficacy.

I first present my edition and translation. Afterwards follows a discussion of the text. I then discuss the activity of the scribe, showing that the text is an unedited first draft dictated by Pittei. I compare this first draft with three other Luwian or Luwian-origin incantations that have close parallels with Pittei’s Ritual, to explain the use of the Luwianisms in the texts. I close with a comment on the spelling of Luwian words by Hittite scribes, and a suggestion concerning certain puzzling Luwian words ending in -ma.

1 Giorgieri 2004.
2 Yakubovich 2010: 403.
1. Edition and Translation

1  [UM-MA] Pit-te-i ma-a-an DUMU-an ar-ma-iz-zi


6  (erosure) nu-uš-ši-kán IGŁ-an-da mi-e-eš-ta za-am-ma-an-ti-iš DUMU-iš ŠA LİL ×■-İSTAR pu-w[a ]


8  IGŁ,HIA-wa KI.MIN 9 UZUÜR,HIA KI.MIN na-an-za-an SAG’.DU DÜ-at na-an UGU ši-ya-es-kī-iz-zi

9  AMA DUMU.NITA tâš-ku-pa-it nu-uš-ša-an GAM AN-za 4 U-aš u-uš-ta e-ni-ma-wa ku-it

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3 My edition and translation of the text are based on the editions, discussions, and translations of Beckman 1983: 176–199, Starke 1985: 233–236, Giorgieri 2004, Haas 2006: 240–241, and Dardano 2010. The notes and discussion that follow focus on what I consider to be my original contributions to the interpretation of the text, rather than reiterating its full bibliography, which was ably covered by Giorgieri.

4 Starke 1985: 233: du-wị-ịʃ; Giorgieri 2004: 411 and Dardano 2010: 76, 77–78 (with earlier refs.): du-wị-yạ, taking it as a n./a. neut. pl. of an i-stem adjective, only possible if the word is Hittite, not Luwian, despite the Glossenkeil.

5 The final two signs that are illegible may have been erased incompletely. The traces are consistent with ŠU-za. One wonders whether the scribe started to write the beginning of the next ‘verse’ of rhythmic prose, then reconsidered, thinking that verse end and line end should coincide. At first the scribe breaks up the text into lines so that line end corresponds to sentence end, sometimes writing into the edge (rev. 5, 12), sometimes stopping early (rev. 4, 10, 24). After rev. 24 he gives up doing this.


7 :muttiyanza: I take this as a Luwian stem with a Hitt. comm. nom. sing. ending attached, but other readings are possible.

8 DUMU-iš: note that the underlying word is probably Luwian, or the Hittite word with Luwian i-movement, as opposed to DUMU-an (rev. 1, 33).

9 Dardano 2010: 76s: pu-ut[ ]; as possible support for the reading pu-w[a ], compare the close of the process of birth in the MH Luwian birth ritual KBo 8.130 iii 4’–6’, spoken by a L[U]:ZU: [zaš=pa] unattīš pu[w[a kuwaṭi āšta]/ [nān]un=ḥa-āš apati ayaru. “As this woman formerly was, let her now be so again." The ritual’s ending is similar to the opening of Pîtte’s Ritual: kî šipat mān MUNUS-za arma[izzi] “This incantation (is used) when a woman gives birth” (iii 7’–8’), and there are other verbal parallels (translit. Starke 1985: 224; also see discussion of Beckman 1983: 228).