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## New Light on Hittite Verse and Meter?

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This essay elaborates on and confirms the analysis of Francia (2004) that some passages in the Hittite Ritual of Iriya reflect a popular tradition of oral composition in both form and content. More tentatively, I suggest that some lines may be in verse, with the same stress-based metrical pattern seen in Hurro-Hittite translation literature. The putative appearance of this pattern in a popular tradition raises the possibility that it is part of a native tradition and not the result of borrowing.

The Hittite ritual attributed to Iriya is attested in multiple copies, all quite fragmentary. The *incipit* indicates that its purpose is to remove various evils from a city: *UMMA* <sup>m</sup>*Iriy*[(a <sup>LÚ</sup>HAL nu)] *mān URU-an išhanaš / linkiyaš pangauwaš lalaš aniyami* “Thus says Iriya, the seer: ‘When I treat a city for blood (crime), (false) oath, and slander...’ ” (KUB 30.35 i 1-2 with duplicate KUB 39.102 Ro 1-2). The list of evils varies throughout the ritual within typical limits, as illustrated in the citations below. Some of the passages of this ritual also are attested in what appear to be other distinct compositions. In one of these, the king appears as the officiant (KUB 33 i 8.12 and iv 5), while the ritual attributed to Banippi is for the occasion “when a person turns up his robe at his companion” (KUB 30.36 i 1-3).<sup>1</sup>

Some of the later portions of the ritual as preserved show the typical “sympathetic magic” of many Luvo-Hittite rituals: manipulation of ritual

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<sup>1</sup> Francia (2004:394) concludes that KUB 30.36 is a *Sammeltable* and that the ritual of Banippi has nothing to do with that of Iriya, but given the other discrepancies in various versions of the text, I retain the possibility of multiple use of the same material. For the latest provisional organization of the texts under CTH 400 and 401 see Groddek (2005:307) and the online concordance of Silvin Košak at <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/>.

objects and corresponding incantations of the form *maḥḥan...* *QATAMMA* “as (this is/happens), so (let this be/happen).” For example, KUB 30.34 iv 14-18 describes the pouring of water back into a container and then into a sewer, followed by: *kī wātar GIM-an arḥa ḥarakzi kī inan ēšḥar NIŠ DINGIR-LIM pangauwaš EME-aš ḥūrkiḥ arḥa QATAMMA ḥarakdu* “As this water perishes, so let this illness, blood (crime), (false) oath, slander (and) perversion perish.”

Earlier in the ritual, however, we find a series of visits by the officiant to various landscape features to whom he appeals for help with his task of eliminating the evils. They respond with assurances that include apparent proverbial truths involving relevant natural phenomena of the respective landscapes. Attested are a riverbank, mountains, and marshes and springs. Francia (2004) has offered an insightful new analysis of these passages, arguing that the formulaic diction of these recitations reflects a popular oral tradition in both content and form. I believe that her interpretation is not only correct, but may also be elaborated and supported by further arguments as adduced below.

I will focus on the appeal made to the mountains and their response, since it is the best preserved, but a similar analysis can be made of the dialogue with the marshes and springs (for the text of which see Francia 2004:396-98). For reasons that will become apparent, I cite the passage in full in two versions, giving a running translation of the first:

A. KUB 30.36 ii

- 1 *nu=za namma* <sup>LÚ</sup>ḪAL Ì-an *milit* NINDA.GUR<sub>4</sub>.RA  
*išpant[u]zi*
- 2 *dāi n=aš* ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ *paizzi nu kišan tezzi*
- 3 ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ GAL-TIM *pangawēš* TUR.MEŠ-TIM
- 4 «*ḥāriyaš nakkīyaš*» *kuit uwanun*
- 5 *kuit tāriyanun* DUMU.LÚ.U<sub>19</sub>.LU-UT-TI GU<sub>4</sub>-un
- 6 *mān ḥappuwi* EGIR-an *piššiēr*
- 7 *nu=mu=ššan šumešš=a* ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ *ḥarapten*
- 8 UMMA ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ *lē=ta nāḥi wiēš=ta*
- 9 *ḥarappuweni* GIŠ-ru *apel* <sup>GIŠ</sup>KAPARU *arḥa*
- 10 *iškallau waršīmaš=at apēl=pat*
- 11 *mīyaš išḥāi aliyanan=kan*
- 12 *aliyanzinaš apēl=pat mīyaš kuenzi*

13 [a]p[ū]n<sup>?</sup> = kan wēš = pat kuennummēni (contra Francia who reads *aliya = kan*)<sup>2</sup>

14 [iyauwa]n ēšhar pangauwaš EME-an

15 [(a)nda išhiy]aweni<sup>?</sup> n = at it karuiliyaš (contra Francia who restores *šarā tiyaweni*)<sup>3</sup>

16 [(DINGIR.MEŠ-aš) pāi<sup>?</sup> n] = at = kan GAM-anda GE<sub>6</sub>-i KI-i pēdandu

Then the seer takes for himself oil, honey, leavened bread (and) libations. He goes to the mountains and says as follows: “All mountains, great and small, why have I come «to the deep valleys»? Why have I exhausted myself? They have cast mankind behind the *h.* like a steer. Rally to me, you mountains!” The mountains say: “Fear not! We will rally to you. Its own crown tears apart the tree. Firewood, its own outgrowth, binds it. The *aliyanzina-*, its own offspring, kills the deer. *We* (will) kill [that o]ne<sup>?</sup>. We will [bi]nd<sup>?</sup> the *i.*, the blood (crime) (var. ‘tears’), and the slander (lit. tongue of the community). Go [and give<sup>?</sup>] them to the ancient gods. Let them carry them down into the dark earth.”<sup>4</sup>

B. KUB 30.33 i (major variants vs. A in bold)

12 LUGAL-uš ANA ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ kišan

tezzi ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ GAL-TI[M pangawēš TUR.MEŠ-TIM]

13 kuit uwanun kuwat tariyanun DUMU.NAM.L[Ú.U<sub>19</sub>.LU-UT-TI GU<sub>4</sub>-un mān ḫappuwi]

14 EGIR-an piš«eš»yat nu = mu = kan šumešš = a ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ [ḫarapten]

15 [U]MMA ḪUR.SAG.MEŠ lē = ta nāḫi wēš = ta ḫarpiya[ueni GIŠ-ru apel]

<sup>2</sup> The traces in the published autograph are compatible with either Francia’s restoration or mine, but her reading requires an emendation to *a-li-ya-<an>*. I also see no reason why the mountains would promise to kill the deer. I tentatively assume that *apūn* refers to the instigator of the evils.

<sup>3</sup> In her restoration Francia (2004:395) ignores the clear *a[n-* of B i 18, which argues for *anda*, frequent with *išhi-* ‘to bind’. Restoration of the latter is further supported by the parallel with the earlier *išhāi*: compare *kuenzi...kuennummēni*.

<sup>4</sup> I assume, based on the variants cited below, that the correct original form of the last two sentences was rather: “We will give them to the ancient gods, and they will carry them down into the dark earth.”

