

**70) A GAM AG<sup>?</sup> NI in the Birth Ritual of Pittei (KBo 13.241+ rev. 22)\*** — In the birth ritual of Pittei (CTH 767.7; LNS), the following *historiola* can be found:

KUB 44.4 + KBo 13.241 rev. 22-24

22. EME<sup>HLA</sup> EME<sup>HLA</sup> *ku-wa-pí-wa pa-lit-te<sup>1</sup>[ni] r<sup>NA1</sup>pé-ru-ni :pal-ḫu-na pa-a-i-u-e-ni* A GAM rAG<sup>?</sup> NI

23. A-NA <sup>NA</sup>ZÚ :*du-wa-ar-nu-ma-a[n-zi p]a-a-i-u-e-ni* UR.MAḪ GIŠ-*ru-an-zi* KI.MIN

24. UR.BAR.RA :*pa-tal-ḫa-ú-na* KI.MIN :*z̄a-am-ma<sup>1</sup>-an-ti* DUMU.NITA *la-la-u-na<sup>1</sup>* KI.MIN

“O tongues, o tongues, where are you goin[g]?” – “We are going to the rock for stretching out?... To flint<sup>?</sup> for breakin[g] we are [g]oing; (to) the lion for pouncing likewise; (to) the wolf for fettering likewise; (to) the mortal for seizing<sup>?</sup> likewise”.<sup>1)</sup>

At the end of line 22, after the verb *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*, a puzzling sequence of four signs occurs (fig. 1), consisting of: (1) a small A sign written on the NI sign of the verb *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*; (2) seemingly, the sign GAM; (3) a damaged sign, possibly AG (based on Otten’s handcopy); (4) the sign NI written on the right edge.

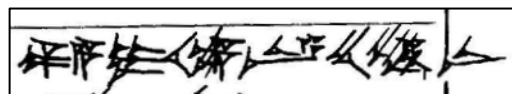


Fig. 1. Detail of KBo 13.241+ rev. 10' (= 22).

Such a sequence has been variously interpreted. The HW<sup>2</sup> A: 53 reads the line (without the join with KUB 44.4) as <sup>NA</sup>*pí-ru-ni :pal-ḫu-na pa-a-i-u-e-ni! :ak?-ni* (11) [X *p]a-a-i-u-e-ni*, “zum Felsen (zum) *p*. gehen wir; zum *a*... gehen wir”, not considering the sign A (seemingly taken as a part of a corrupt NI), interpreting GAM as a *Glossenkeil*, and explaining *akni* as a dative singular, perhaps denoting an “Örtlichkeit oder Gegenstand”. However, based on collation by Otten, the reading *ak* is regarded as very uncertain. Hoffner (1978: 245), in his review of the first *Lieferung* of the HW<sup>2</sup>, notes that the sequence is “something like GAM + ? + NI”, excluding that the first sign is a *Glossenkeil* and confirming that the reading *ak* is problematic.<sup>2)</sup> Beckman (1983: 178) reads A GAM AG NI, simply stating that “The four<sup>?</sup> signs at the end of this line are completely unintelligible” (p. 195), while Starke (1985: 235) opts for A GAM x NI, referring to Hoffner 1978 (fn. 111). Starke’s reading is replicated by Bachvarova (2013: 137),

without further comments, while Francia (2016: 4, with fn. 11) accepts the tentative reading *:ak<sup>2</sup>-ni* of the HW<sup>2</sup>. Finally, Torri and Barsacchi (2018: 270) transliterate A<sup>3</sup> GAM x NI.<sup>3)</sup>

Since Beckman's A GAM AG NI and Starke's A GAM x NI do not make any sense, the only reading that can be evaluated is *:ak<sup>2</sup>-ni*, suggested by the HW<sup>2</sup> and accepted by Francia. As mentioned, such a solution involves some problems: (1) the sign A is not considered; (2) the GAM sign is very different from the *Glossenkeile* frequently occurring in the text; (3) the meaning of the alleged *hapax akni* is unknown.

As a further counterargument, we should note that an alleged dative *akni* would be totally isolated in the context of the *historiola*, which shows a clear structure, including a noun in dative case in initial position, followed by an infinitive and the verb *pai-* 'to go' (replaced by KI.MIN 'ditto' after the second occurrence), as summarised in the following table:<sup>4)</sup>

DATIVE	INFINITIVE	VERB PAI-
<sup>NA</sup> <i>peruni</i>	<i>:palhuna</i>	<i>pāiweni</i>
ANA <sup>NA</sup> ZÚ	<i>:duwarnumanzi</i>	<i>pāiweni</i>
UR.MAḪ	GIŠ-ruanzi	KI.MIN
UR.BARRA	<i>:patalhuna</i>	KI.MIN
<i>:zammanti</i> DUMUNITA	<i>lalauna</i>	KI.MIN

The presence of an alleged dative *akni* after the first *pāiweni* would be consistent with this structure, but also an infinitive and the verb *pāiweni* would then be expected, which is not the case, as is clear after the join with KUB 44.4.

We should therefore conclude that the sequence of four signs at the end of line 22, regardless of its reading, cannot belong to the text of the *historiola*, but should be explained in a different way.

First of all, I would like to offer a new tentative reading for this sequence of signs. The first and the last signs are not particularly problematic: they appear to be A and NI, respectively. As for the second sign, although GAM seems to be the best match, I would like to suggest that it may actually be U, written over another U previously traced. Finally, based on the handcopy, I think that the traces of the damaged third sign (allegedly AG), although almost entirely illegible in the photo on the *Hethitologie Portal Mainz*,<sup>5)</sup> could be compatible with the sign E. Therefore, my tentative reading is *a-u<sup>1</sup>-r<sup>1</sup>e<sup>1</sup>-ni*.<sup>6)</sup>

Because, as previously mentioned, this *a-u<sup>1</sup>-r<sup>1</sup>e<sup>1</sup>-ni* cannot be part of the text and resembles a pres. I pl. ending, we may imagine that it could be somehow related to the preceding verb *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*. Particularly, I would like to suggest that possibly it represents a variant of the verbal form *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*, i.e. *pa-a-u-e-ni*, less common, but equally attested in Hittite.<sup>7)</sup> Therefore, in my view, the scribe may have initially had doubts about the "correct" verbal form, so he decided to write them both down (if the text was dictated, the doubt can also be ascribed to who dictated it). Starting from this hypothesis, different possible scenarios arise, which depend on the evaluation of what can actually be seen in the only available photo.

Looking at the photo, the sign NI of *pa-a-i-u-e-ni* seems to have been written invading the field of the following sign A. Since an erasure after the sign E of *pa-a-i-u-e-ni* is perhaps visible in the photo (although there is no indication of it in the handcopy), we may imagine that the scribe initially wrote the variant *pa-a-u-e-ni* immediately after the preceding *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*, then opting for the latter form (also recorded in the following sentence) by deleting both the original final NI of *pa-a-i-u-e-ni* (perhaps by mistake) and the initial PA of the variant *pa-a-u-e-ni*,<sup>8)</sup> and rewriting the final NI of *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*, longer than usual, thus also covering part of the sign A of *pa-a-u-e-ni*.<sup>9)</sup> The four signs at the end of the line would thus be the remnants of a discarded variant of the verbal form.<sup>10)</sup>

However, because the photo is not very clear and the presence of an erasure is not assured, it is also possible that the sign A was not partly covered by the final NI of *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*, but was rather written smaller above a previously drawn NI sign. Were this the case, the sequence *a-u<sup>1</sup>-r<sup>1</sup>e<sup>1</sup>-ni* could be equally explained as a gloss pointing to the variant *pa-a-u-e-ni*, added by starting in superscript above the last sign of the verbal form involved. To explain the absence of initial *pa* in this gloss, we may imagine that the scribe originally decided to only note the relevant variation in superscript, i.e. *a-u* (vs. *a-i-u* in *pa-a-i-u-e-*

ni), then added the other cuneiform signs to make it more clear (rewriting the U over the previous one, perhaps to move from the superscript to the line, in order to have more space for the sign E).<sup>11)</sup>

I admit that the explanation of this enigmatic sequence of signs as a gloss recording a variant is perhaps not entirely satisfactory, but it may well fit with the nature of the text under consideration. As a matter of fact, the birth ritual of Pittei is full of scribal mistakes and Luwianisms, mostly with Luwian endings and marked by the *Glossenkeil*, which point to a draft written by or under dictation of a Luwian native speaker with imperfect Hittite skills.<sup>12)</sup> Therefore, doubts on some Hittite forms may be not surprising, especially when a verb rich in allomorphic variations like *pai-* is involved,<sup>13)</sup> whether the scribe himself was a native Luwian speaker or was just transcribing words dictated in imperfect Hittite. Furthermore, the Hieroglyphic Luwian cognate verb seems to consistently show the stem *pa-*,<sup>14)</sup> so that, if this stem can be traced back to the Empire period, not only the existence of a variation in the Hittite paradigm, but also Luwian interference may explain the doubt between the two forms.

Finally, as a possible alternative, the third damaged sign of the sequence, which I suggested read E, may also be UN, thus providing the reading *a-u<sup>1</sup>-un<sup>1</sup>-ni*, pointing to the Luwian expected pres.1pl. *pāūnni*, perhaps the form originally dictated and replaced by the scribe with Hitt. *pāiweni*. It should also be noted that, according to Carruba (1968: 18 fn. 10), the verbal form occurring in lines 22 and 23 is Luw. *pa-a-i-u-un-ni*, not Hitt. *pa-a-i-u-e-ni*, although it is not fully clear. Were this the case, the gloss *a-u<sup>1</sup>-un<sup>1</sup>-ni* could be explained as a correction, because, as previously mentioned, the Luwian expected form was probably *pāūnni*, not *pāiūnni*. However, in my view this is unlikely because, based on the photo, the sign visible in the verbs of lines 22 and 23 is quite different from the sign UN in line 16 (:zu-un-ni-mi-iš-ti), so that the Hittite reading *pa-a-i-u-e-ni* should be preferred.

In any case, collation of the original tablet would be needed in order to confirm the readings suggested here.

#### Notes

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1. Translation according to Beckman 1983: 179. See Giorgieri 2004, Bachvarova 2013, and Francia 2016 for other interpretations.

2. "The first two wedges are aligned differently than the *Glossenkeile* in lines 22, 31, 32, 33. Otten is right; the reading *ak* is problematic".

3. Further note that no transliteration is offered in Haas and Thiel 1978: 154 and Yakubovich 2010: 373 (but A GAM AG NI in Yakubovich 2010: 403).

4. The same structure is also found in the parallel *historiola* in KUB 12.62+ rev. 10' 'EME<sup>1</sup>-aš EN-aš ku-wa-pí pa-a-ši KASKAL-ši ka-ri-pu<sup>1</sup>-wa<sup>1</sup>-an-[zi pa-a-i-mi] (11') UR.MAḪ tar-wa-u-wa-an-zi pa-a-i-mi a-li-li wa-ar-šul-wa-an-zi pa<sup>1</sup>-a-i-mi<sup>1</sup> (12') DUMU.<LÚ.>U<sub>19</sub>.LU la-la-u-wa-an-zi pa-a-i-mi, "O lord of the tongue, where are you going?" – "To the road for devour[ing I am going], (to) the lion for pouncing<sup>2</sup> I am going. To the *alili*(-bird<sup>3</sup>) for plucking I am going. (to) the mortal for speaking I am going'" (transl. according to Beckman 1983: 193; for a different interpretation cf. Francia 2016: 3-4 with references).

5. Cf. hethiter.net/: fotarch B0206c.

6. I would exclude the possibility that the four signs represented an aborted attempt to write A-NA<sup>NA4</sup>ZÚ at the end of the line: A would be compatible with this solution, and NI on the right edge may be part of the sign NA<sub>4</sub> (= NI.UD), but the two *Winkelhaken* after A are not compatible with the sign NA (there is no space for the horizontal, and the vertical wedge is missing), and the third sign would remain unexplained.

7. Cf. CHD P: 20 for the occurrences.

8. The space between the sign E of *pa-a-i-u-e-ni* and the traces of A seems to be large enough to contain both NI and PA, but we cannot exclude the possibility that the scribe simply forgot to write the final NI of the first verbal form and then corrected the mistake.

9. Although no traces of the sign A are visible below the lower horizontal of the sign NI, a comparison with the sign A of the verb *pa-a-i-u-e-ni* shows that A may have been quite short.

10. A possible parallel for this kind of gloss can be found in KUB 6.7+ iv 14' (CTH 572; LNS), where the mistaken sequence :nu-pát-za-ma is immediately followed by the correct one :nu-mu-za (cf. Güterbock 1956: 119).

11. Perhaps, if the text was dictated, the poor and incomplete character of the gloss could also be easily explained by the haste of the scribe in writing under dictation.

12. Cf. Yakubovich 2010: 403-404. See especially Giorgieri 2004, Bachvarova 2013, and Francia 2016 for a thorough analysis of the text. Also note that the find spot of the tablet is the *Haus am Hang*, which is consistent with the hypothesis of a draft (on this building and its tablet collection, cf. e.g. Torri 2009).

13. See Oettinger 1979: 388-392.

14. Cf. (“PES<sub>2</sub>”) *pa-tu* (ASSUR letter e §24) vs. Hitt. *paiddu* and the imperfective stem (PES<sub>2</sub>) *pa-za-* vs. Hitt. *paiške-*.

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