

# The Hurro-Hittite Bilingual Recension of the Song of Release: The Fifth Tablet

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## ABSTRACT

*The relation between the Hurrian version and the Hittite recension of the Fifth Tablet of the Song of Release is the topic of this essay. We argue that the Hittite redaction is a translation of the original Hurrian composition. Said tablet is one of the most interesting of the Song and is documented from several manuscript. Hence, we can also check whether either peculiar features, or mistakes occur in all the preserved manuscripts. The main differences in the formulation of the Hittite version belong to several typologies, and they are, namely, added words, omitted sentences, simplified re-wording, Hurrian terms that are translated by means of paraphrasis, and deliberate variations of the translator.*

1. The Song of Release (SÌR *para tarnumas*)<sup>1</sup> is a literary composition that deals with the fall of the Syrian city of Ebla; bilingual tablets, which contain the Hurrian composition as well as a Hittite translation, preserve that composition.

The linguistic evidence suggests that the Hurrian text dates back to either the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Neu 1996: 5-6; Wilhelm 1992: 123; 2001: 82; von Dassow 2013: 129), and the content of the Song well fits the time when the Hittite kings Hattušili I and Muršili I led several military expeditions against the western Syrian polities.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the palaeographic features that are shared by all the preserved tablets,<sup>3</sup> as well as the language of the Hittite version, show that the Hittite translation and the bilingual edition

of the Song were written down in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>4</sup>

The Song of Release was almost certainly composed in Hurrian and then translated into Hittite (Wilhelm 1992: 122; von Dassow 2013; 2018). Alternatively, M. Bachvarova (2011: 304; 2014; 2016: 46-52) suggested that the Song reflects an oral tradition and that a single bilingual poet could have produced both the Hurrian and the Hittite versions.<sup>5</sup> Although it is indeed possible that the archetype of the Song was orally transmitted, it is far less likely that it was originally composed in separate Hurrian and Hittite versions.

If we indeed assume that the Song was originally composed at the time of the destruction of Ebla, a Hittite bard would have sung about this event only in his own language, since during the Old Hittite kingdom Hurrian

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1 The logographic expression “Song” (SÌR) designates a poetic composition, mostly of a foreign origin (HAAS 2006: 130-131; BACHVAROVA 2011; VON DASSOW 2013: 146). The Hurrian word for “release” is *kirenzi* (RICHTER 2012: 211).

2 See WILHELM 2001: 82; MATTHIAE 2006; 2018: 233; VON DASSOW 2013: 129.

3 Only fragment ABoT 2, 247 might date to the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

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4 See NEU 1996: 6-7; HOFFNER 1998: 65-66; MELCHERT 2015: 61.

5 V. HAAS and I. WEGNER (1993: 57; 1997: 438) assumed that the Song was originally composed in Akkadian, but there is little evidence for this.

had not yet diffused throughout northern and central Anatolia. Furthermore, a Hittite poet would surely have celebrated the role played by the Hittites who instead are never mentioned in any part of the Song. If, on the other hand, the Song was actually composed either in western Syria or in Kizzuwatna, I exclude that a Syrian or a Kizzuwatnean bard would have sung it also in Hittite, which was not a common language in those regions and at that time.<sup>6</sup>

The tablets of the bilingual edition of the Song are the product of several scribes (Neu 1996: 5; Archi 2007: 189) and, hence, they belong to different series. Unfortunately, no series has been preserved in its entirety; while some tablets, such as KBo 32.19 and 15, are documented in many duplicates, other parts of the song seem to have been of little interest (de Martino 2012, 2014). A similar pattern of the selective interest in Hurrian compositions is also documented in the case of the Song of Kumarbi (Haas 2006: 130).

J. Lorenz and E. Rieken (2010) argued that many mythological texts of foreign origin were copied and translated into Hittite with an educational purpose; mastering these literary works might have been part of the training of cultivated scribes.<sup>7</sup> Several clues support the assumption that the bilingual tablets of the Song were exercises written by scribes, although we assume that the Song was not only thought for a linguistic training, but also for the moral values which it communicated (Bachvarova 2016: 49 n. 123).

First of all, the preserved texts do not vary significantly from one to the other, and such standardization would not be expected if they actually were the product of poets and bards. Furthermore, the Hittite translation is always very literal, whereas other Hittite translations of

Hurrian myths are free interpretations of the original compositions, as M. Giorgieri (2001) argued in the case of the Ullikummi narrative.

Moreover, the greatest number of the preserved tablets only contain the two parts of the Song which are the most intriguing and could better fit the interest of the “students”, as was already said. In certain cases, the scribe even limited himself to writing only a few select paragraphs, as tablet KBo 32.16 that bears only two excerpts documents, and the scribe of this tablet stopped writing without completing the tablet, as if “the bell [had] rung to announce the end of the examination period”, as E. von Dassow wrote (2013: 135, 142).

Lastly all the tablets found in Temples 15 and 16 were discarded texts, which were left in the cellars of the two sanctuary when they were abandoned,<sup>8</sup> and it is understandable that tablets written by students should not kept for future use.

Some essays that have appeared in the last years already dealt with the relation between the Hurrian text and the Hittite translation of the Song and also of the Parables (Wilhelm 1997; de Martino 1999; Rizza 2008; Francia 2012; von Dassow 2013), but an exhaustive study on this subject mostly concerning the Song of Release is still lacking.

R. Francia (2012), whose analysis dealt only with the Parables, argued that the scribes surely appreciated the poetic style of the Hurrian composition and tried to reproduce its musicality and rhythm also in the Hittite translation. Instead, E. von Dassow (2013: 148) wrote that “if instruction in Hurrian was the primary purpose of translating

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6 A Kizzuwatnean bard would presumably have composed the Song in Hurrian and Luwian, but very few Luwian expressions occur in this narrative, see NEU 1999: 299.

7 See also GORDIN 2015: 78.

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8 Temples 15 and 16 date to the early 14<sup>th</sup> century (SEEHER 2006: 203; SCHACHNER 2011: 90) and we assume that there was a connection between the deities which were worshipped in these two sanctuaries and the collection of tablets found inside the ruined walls of them. For example, the aforementioned temples might have been dedicated to Hurrian deities and they could also have hosted a scribe school interested in Hurrian texts and mythological narrative. These temples were presumably emptied and abandoned at the time of Muwatalli II (SCHACHNER 2011: 181).

this poem into Hittite, the translation need not have been intended to be a poetry”; in fact, the Hittite translation often is “verbose and awkward” and tended “to be grammatically over-explicit unbounding clusters of agglutinated Hurrian morphemes into whole Hittite clauses whose syntax can seem unnatural and overwrought”.

2. In the present essay, I will only examine the Fifth Tablet,<sup>9</sup> and I have chosen this tablet because the Hittite version shows interesting and peculiar features. Furthermore, this part of the Song is documented not only by tablet KBo 32.15, but also by five duplicates, though fragmentary, which are: KBo 32.16, 52, 55, 56, and 79.

The content of the Fifth Tablet preserves the oration delivered by Sazalla to the assembly of the elders of Ebla in order to convince them to refuse Teššob’s request, and hence it was presumably considered of a great interest for its arguments and rhetoric devices.

As E. von Dassow (2013) argued, Sazalla is introduced in tablets KBo 32.214 obv. i 8’-11’ (in Hurrian) and KBo 32.16 obv. ii 1-13 (in Hittite). He is said to be a great speaker, whose rhetorical ability no other member of the assembly could match. Sazalla says that he and his colleagues would have given to Teššob all he might have needed, if he had requested it for himself; instead, the Storm-god was asking the release of Purra and the other Igingalšnean war prisoners captured by the army of Ebla, and this request was unacceptable.

2.1. In the following part of his oration, Sazalla says:

KBo 32.15 i 4’-6’ (in Hurrian):

4’. [ ] (is) now Teššob oppressed (by debts)<sup>10</sup> and

<sup>9</sup> I follow the reconstruction of the Song as it was proposed by WILHELM (1997; 2001; 2012) and VON DASSOW (2013). For a different point of view see NEU 1996; HAAS 2006: 177-192.

<sup>10</sup> The Hurrian word *henzadu* is morphologically unclear; it may be connected to the expression *henzi=(i)=da*, which occurs in l. 18’ (see FISCHER 2018: 49 n. 198).

5’. does he [re]quest (his) release?<sup>11</sup> (If) Teššob should owe (?) silver,

6’. we would give a silver shekel (to him); §

The Hittite text is documented by KBo 32.15 ii 4’-6’a, and KBo 32.16 ii 19-20, and the former manuscript documents the following passage:

4’. (Is) [now the St]orm-god oppressed by debt

5’. (and) does he re[quest] (his) [release?]. If the Storm-god

6’ is [in]debted [.....], then everyone to the Storm-god §

The phrase is interrupted after the mention of the Storm-god and no verbal form is expressed; instead, the duplicate tablet KBo 32.16 ii 19-20 preserves also the part which is omitted in KBo 32.15:

(19) *nu ku-iš-ša* (20) [PIM-un-ni 1 GÍN KÙ].  
BABBAR p[a-a]’-i’

“everyone will g[iv]e a s[ilver] shekel to the Storm-god”.

The scribe who wrote the manuscript KBo 32.15 omitted the second part of this phrase presumably because he had already filled all the available space on the surface of the tablet, including the right edge, where he wrote the name of the Storm-god. Nevertheless, the passage was understandable, if one connected the aforementioned interrupted phrase with that documented in the following paragraph (ll. 7’-8’): “(7’) [ea]ch will give him half a shekel [of gold], [a] silver (8’) [shekel we will giv]e.” Hence, the scribe might have thought that the omission of part of the Hurrian text would have not affected the comprehension of the whole passage.

This example and the fact that the scribe was not able to distribute the text on the surface of the tablet support the assumption that at least some of the tablets of the Song actually were exercises written by scribes trained in both

<sup>11</sup> So WILHELM 1997: 280.

the Hurrian and the Hittite language, as was already said. Furthermore, the aforementioned passage demonstrates that manuscript KBo 32.16 preserves the text better than tablet KBo 32.15, which might derive from the former document.

2.2. In another case the scribe, who was the author of tablet KBo 32.15, expanded the Hurrian text, as the passage KBo 32.15 i 8'-9', ii 8'-9' shows:

i 8'-9' (in Hurrian):  
“(If) Teššob is hungry, we would fill one measure of barley [ ]”<sup>12</sup>

ii 8'-9' (in Hittite):  
“If the Storm-god is hungry, each of us will each give one measure of barley [to the g]od”.

The scribe added “to the god” here, and also in the duplicate passage KBo 32.16 ii 22, presumably aiming at better explicating what the Hurrian text said. This is not an isolated case, but the Hittite version over-explicates the Hurrian wording also in other passages (see von Dassow 2013: 139).

2.3. The following lines document another passage, where the scribe manipulated the Hurrian text, by adding an explicative note in the Hittite version:

KBo 32.15 i 11'-12' (in Hurrian):  
“(11') .... (If) [Teššob] is naked, we would cover (him) (12') with an *alāli*-garment, the god! [ ]”

KBo 32.15 ii 11'-13' (in Hittite):  
“(11') .... If the [Storm-go]d (12') is naked, each of us will cover him with a *kušiši*-garment,<sup>13</sup> (13') the god (is like) a human”.

12 We assume that the sentence ended here and no other words were written in the gap, see WILHELM 2001: 89.

13 It might be a tunic made of fabric normally used for gowns (PUHVEL 1997: 295-6).

Three signs, namely AN, UŠ, and UN, occur in the Hittite text here and in l. 17'. I share Wilhelm's assumption (1997: 280) that the Hurrian version had only the word *ene* (“god”) in the absolutive case here, and that no other word was written after it in the right part of the line, which is not fully preserved (see also the editors of the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary (CHD)*, P, 1: 62).<sup>14</sup>

No satisfactory interpretation of these rebus expression has been proposed; nevertheless, E. Neu (1996: 290; 314-316) read the three signs AN, UŠ, and UN as DINGIR-*uš* UN (= *šiuš antuḫšaš*) “the god (is) a human being”, and this is the most convincing interpretation, although the oldest Hittite attestation of the logogram UN for *antuḫša*-dates from the time of Muršili II (Weeden 2011: 634) and the tablets of the Song are older.

Instead, the editors of the *CHD* (loc. cit.) read the three aforementioned signs as <sup>D</sup>UŠ-*un*, although the sign UŠ is not documented as a logographic writing for the name of the Storm-god. Lastly, E. von Dassow (2013: 153) proposed to read the aforementioned three signs as DINGIR-*uš-un*, but the accusative of the Hittite word *šiu-* is *šiunan* and not *\*šiunun*.

If one follows Neu's assumption, the scribe(s) who wrote the Hittite version of this text would have added the sentence “the god (is) a human being” with the aim of explaining the unusual condition of the god. M. R. Bachvarova (2016: 136 and n.7) observed that the trope of a god who behaves like a human being also occurs in the opening line of the Atrahasis narrative, and A. Rizza (2008: 70-71) argued that the Hittite scribe might actually have quoted the Atrahasis poem. Hence, the sentence added in the Hittite version might also be an erudite quotation, which a young student did, presumably after having read several mythological texts.<sup>15</sup>

14 E. NEU (1996: 290, 314-316), however, proposed to restore the Hurrian words *ma-a-an-ni taršu-wa-a-ni* in the gap.

15 Other literary texts were found in Temples 15 and 16, where the tablets of the Song and those of the Parables

Lastly, we cannot exclude that the scribe who wrote the tablet KBo 32.15 might have been influenced by the phrase documented in the Parables “it is not a...., it is a man” (*nu antuwahḫaš apāš LÚ-aš*), as Bachvarova (2016: 136) argued; in fact, also the tablets of Parables (KBo 32.12 and 14) have been found in the two aforementioned temples and presumably were part of the training of the scribes. We wonder why the scribe chose to write this phrase -either an explanation, or erudite quotation- in such a puzzling way, unless we assume that he wanted to demonstrate his own inventive thought.

It is worth noting that the three aforementioned signs occur, though in fragmentary form, also in two duplicate tablets, namely KBo 32.16 ii 27, 31 (UJN) and KBo 32.52, 1' (UJŠ UN). This supports the assumption that KBo 32.16 might have been the master text from which the other scribes copied. I argue that the scribe who wrote text KBo 32.15 copied from KBo 32.16 because the former tablet omitted a phrase that instead occurs in the latter document, as was already said (see § 2.1).

2.4. Concerning the aforementioned passage, the Hittite translation of the Hurrian word *alāli* (Richter 2012: 15) also deserves some attention. Said word is translated in Hittite as *kušiši-*, which is documented in several Hittite texts and might be a loan word from the Akkadian (Puhvel 1997: 295-296, Old Assyrian *kušītu*). We wonder why the scribe preferred the word *kušiši-*, instead of using the Hurrian loan word <sup>GAD</sup>*alalu(ša)*. The latter word was familiar at least to those scribes who wrote cult texts, and occurs in Hittite and Hurro-Hittite rituals mostly referring to the mantel worn by the statues of Ḫebat (Trémouille 1994: 94-95 n. 30).

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(KBo 32. 12 and 14) were found, such as fragments belonging to the poem of Gilgamesh, and a tablet that contained a version of the myth of the disappearance of Telipinu.

2.5. In the following part of the narrative Sazalla states that he and the elders of Ebla would not release Purra and the Igingalisnian slaves, and adds:

KBo 32.15 i 20'-24' (in Hurrian):

“(20') ..... Oh Megi, your heart (21') will not rejoice! (22') On the one hand your (heart) will not rejoice, and on the other hand (23') (the heart) of Purra will not rejoice, but we will not release wholeheartedly the Igingalisnian (24') sons.”.

KBo 32.15 ii 20'-25' (in Hittite):

“(20') ..... and inside you, Megi, (21') your soul will rejoice. (22') First of all, inside you, Megi, your soul (23') will not rejoice, secondly, (24') inside Purra, the one to be given back, his soul (25') will rejoice”.

The two aforementioned passages show significant differences. The Hurrian verb forms *an=ašt=i=kk=i* (l. 21') and *an=i=kk=i* (ll. 22' and 23') “he/she/it will not rejoice” are translated in Hittite in two different ways. The expressions *an=ašt=i=kk=i* (i 21') and *an=i=kk=i* (i 23') are translated by means of the Hittite verb form *anda tuškizzi* “he/she rejoices”, respectively, in l. ii 21' and 24'; instead the same verb *an=i=kk=i*, which occurs in l. 22', is correctly translated in Hittite as *anda Ú-UL tuškizzi* “he/she does not rejoice” (ii 22'-23'). Hence, the scribe twice translated the Hurrian negative verb forms with an affirmative Hittite expression, and only once with a negative form.

E. Neu (1996: 333-335) argued that the translator might have misunderstood the negative verb expressions, but in that case, why was one passage correctly translated and the two others misunderstood? Instead, M.R. Bachvarova (2016: 141) assumed that the Hittite text changed the Hurrian negative phrase into a rhetorical question “Does your mind rejoice inside you?”. Hence, the scribe would have correctly interpreted the meaning of the Hurrian passage, but he would have preferred to freely reword it in Hittite.



Furthermore, the Hittite text adds the expression *appa piyanti* “the one to be given back” to the mention of Purra in l. 24’. No corresponding word occurs in the Hurrian passage preserved in l. 23’; besides this same expression is documented in KBo 32.19 ii 2-3, where it freely translates the Hurrian word *assiri* “war prisoner” (Neu 1996: 399-400), which is considered an Akkadian loan word (Richter 2012: 54). We argue that the scribe might have considered the expression *appa piyanti* as an epithet, which should constantly be used by mentioning Purra, and thus added it in the Hittite text.

2.6. Another example of a wording, which diverges in the Hittite text, can be seen in the following passage:

KBo 32.15 iv 2-3 (in Hurrian):

“(2) (but) if you (indeed) wish a releasing, may your male servant be released,<sup>16</sup> (3) (and) may your female servant be released!”.

The Hittite passage shows a more trivial wording: “(iii 4) may your male (and) female servants be r[eleased].<sup>17</sup>” E. Neu (1996: 345-346) argued that the repetition of the verb form in the Hurrian narrative aimed to stress the provocative phrase pronounced by Sazalla, which is deprived from any emphasis in the Hittite translation.

2.7. Besides, the aforementioned Hurrian passage shows the peculiar writing *ki-i-ru-nu-ul-mi-ib* (iv 3), which can be analysed as *kir=u=n(na) ulmi=v* “release your female servant”. This same writing also occurs in the fragment KBo 32.55 l. col. 3’ (Neu 1996: 294 n. 8). As E. Neu (1996: 346) and D. Campbell (2015: 55) argued, this unusual form

is an example of “sandhi writing”, and this might support the assumption that the scribe of one of the two aforementioned manuscripts wrote it from dictation, whereas the scribe, who wrote the other tablet, copied from the master text, without realizing that the spelling of the word *ki-i-ru-nu-ul-mi-ib* was wrong.

2.8. Another interesting example in which the Hittite text does not match the Hurrian one is documented in KBo 32.15 i 26’-28’ and ii 26’-29’. Sazalla explains here, why the slaves cannot be released, and he states (Hurrian version):

“Would we release these ones (= Purra and the other slaves)? Who will take care of our meals? They are cupbearers, waiters, cooks (and) dishwashers”.

The last sentence (“they are cupbearers, waiters, cooks (and) dishwashers”) is expressed in a Hurrian synthetic formulation: *taps=ahḫ(i)=a kur=ahḫ(i)=a fand=ar=i=nn(i)=a fud=ar=i=n(ni)=a=lla*. The verb “to be” is unexpressed and all the aforementioned words bear the essive ending *-a*.<sup>18</sup>

The corresponding Hittite passage does not open with two rhetoric questions, as we see in the Hurrian version, but with a dependent clause marked by the subordinating conjunction *kuit*: “(ii 26’) Concerning the fact that we would release them .... (*apūš arḫa kuit tanummeni...*)”. Hence, the Hittite phrase loses the communicative force that, instead, the Hurrian passage has.

Furthermore, the four expressions which indicate cup-bearers, cooks and waiters are translated in Hittite in different ways; in fact, two logograms, <sup>LÚ</sup>SAGI and <sup>LÚ</sup>MUḪALDIM, match the Hurrian words, respectively, *taps=ahḫi* and *fand=ar=i=nni*. Instead, the other terms, namely *kur=ahḫi* and *fud=ar=i=nni*, are translated by means of two periphrasis. The latter term corresponds to the Hittite expression *araškanzi=ya=aš=naš* “they wash (dishes) for us”, whereas the former one is translated

16 The Hurrian expression *kir=u* is a medio-passive imperative verb form, see WILHELM 1992: 139; CAMPBELL 2015: 55-56.

17 Differently from Neu’s restoration *p[a-ra-a tar-na]* (1996: 295), we might restore the broken passage as *p[a-ra-a tar-na-at-ta-ru]*, in which case we would have a medio-passive verb form in the Hittite text as well as in the corresponding Hurrian passage (see WILHELM 1992: 139; 1997: 285 n. 41; CAMPBELL 2015: 55-56).

18 See WILHELM 1997: 283-284; CAMPBELL 2015: 48-49; FISCHER 2018: 111-112.

*para=ya=aš=naš piškiwani* “we give them to us”, and this translation makes no sense.

We wonder why the scribe has not chosen the logogram LÚ<sup>GIŠ</sup>BANŠUR that would have better matched the Hurrian term *kur=aḥḥi*, instead of re-wording the latter term by means of a periphrasis. Besides, as was said, the verb form *piškiwani* “we give” is a mistake, and we would have expected \**piškanzi* here (Neu 1996: 328);<sup>19</sup> in fact the meaning of the passage is: “they (= the salves) serve us (as waiters)”.

G. Wilhelm (1997: 283-284 and n. 36) assumed that the scribe switched the logical agent “they” with the patient “us”, and only a scribe of Hurrian mother tongue could have done this mistake.<sup>20</sup> Wilhelm’s assumption deserves attention, but the patient is not expressed in the Hurrian phrase, which only states “they are waiters”.

Furthermore, the Hittite enclitic pronoun *-at* occurs in connection with the two logograms, namely LÚ<sup>SAGI</sup> and LÚ<sup>MUḪALDIM</sup>, and instead the pronoun *-aš* is used in both phrases *para=ya=aš=naš piškiwani* and *araškanzi=ya=aš=naš*. E. Neu (1996: 338 and n. 69) argued that the scribe used the enclitic pronoun *-aš* in the two aforementioned passages because it was more appropriate as subject of a transitive verb. Nevertheless, since the scribe wrote *piškuwani* (“we give”), we could assume that he intended the pronoun *-aš* was the direct object (“them”) of that verb. If this was the case, to which unexpressed term said pronoun logically referred? If it referred to dishes, the correct pronoun would have been *-at*.

Lastly, also the chain of the sentential clitics is peculiar (Neu 1996: 339; Campbell 2015: 49); in fact, the pronoun *-naš* should occupy the first slot, and the enclitic *-aš* would follow it (Hoffner – Melchert 2008: 410), although E. Neu (1996: 339) mentions another case (KUB 12.63 + obv. 24) where the clitics *-at-naš* occur.

2.9. The last passage we examine here is KBo 32.15 iii 13, iv 13. The Hurrian expression *ḥa-ša-ši-la-ab* (KBo 32.15 ii 13) is difficult to analyse, and E. Neu (1996: 360) assumed that it was an imperative marked by the ending *-a=b*, instead than the usual ending *-a*. The Hittite translation that shows the imperative *ištamaš=mu* “listen to me” seemed to support Neu’s assumption. Another interpretation was offered by V. Haas and I. Wegner (1997: 453), who analysed that expression as *ḥaž=až=il=aw* “I listen”, but as M. Giorgieri (2010: 146-148) argued, this ergative verb form requires an expressed patient, which instead does not occur in that passage. Hence, Giorgieri proposed to read the aforementioned verb expression not *ḥa-ša-ši-la-ab*, but *ḥa-ša-ši-la-um = ḥaž=až=il=aw=m(ma)* “I hear you”, and the sign shape actually supports that assumption. We are unable to say whether the Hittite translation “listen to me!”, instead of the Hurrian phrase “I listen to you” is a conscious free translation, or a misunderstanding due to the difficulty in interpreting the Hurrian verb form; however, I would exclude that it was due to the switching of actors, as D. Campbell (2015: 49) argued, as a consequence of the fact that the scribe was Hurrian and sometimes confused the agent with the patient.

Summing up, the differences in the formulation of the Hittite version belong to several typologies: a) omitted parts, as in the case of example 2.1.; b) words and phrases that are added presumably with the aim of explaining the Hurrian text, see examples 2.2., 2.3. and 2.5. ; c) simplified rewording in the Hittite text, see example 2.6, and also 2.8.; d) Hurrian terms that are translated by means of paraphrasis, as if the scribe was unable to find the corresponding Hittite word, see example 2.8.; e) mistakes in the Hittite text, probably because the Hurrian wording was difficult to be literally translated, see example 2.8; f) divergences between the original text and the Hittite translation, which might be deliberate choices of the translator, or instead the result of a not perfect knowledge of one of the two

<sup>19</sup> See also FISCHER 2018: 112 n. 574.

<sup>20</sup> See also CAMPBELL 2015: 49.

languages, as in the case of example 2.9.

As was already said, E. von Dassow (2013: 147-148) argued that the bilingual tablets of the Song and the Parables had an instructional purpose and were used for teaching the Hurrian language to “Hittite-speaking scribe who already knew to write”. Hence, some of the tablets of the Song would actually have been produced by Hittite students. A different point of view was expressed by G. Wilhelm (1997: 283-284) and D. Campbell (2015: 49) who argued that the two passages mentioned respectively in example 2.8 and 2.9 might document a language transfer from Hurrian to Hittite, as was already said; thus the authors of at least some of the bilingual tablets could be Hurrian scribes.

Furthermore, we are unable to distinguish between exercises in writing and in translating; in fact, there are clues in support of the assumption that some tablets of the Song were written from dictation. We have already mentioned the possible *sandhi* writing *ki-i-ru-nu-ul-mi-ib* (KBo 32.15 iv 3, example 2.7), and we can also recall the wrong writing *a-ru-li-ib* (KBo 32.15 iv 5), instead of *a-ru-li-im* (= *ar=ol=i=m(ma)*).<sup>21</sup> Hence, these errors might indeed be the result of writing from dictation.

Thus, we should assume the tablets of the Song were used for different activities in the training of scribes, such as learning the Hurrian language, writing from dictation, but also copying from a master text. In fact the peculiar expression DINGIR-uš UN, which was added in the Hittite translation and occurs in three manuscripts, namely KBo 32.15, 16 and 52, cannot be the invention of three different scribes, who wrote the same bizarre expression one independently from the other. We have already said that KBo 32.16 might be the original tablet, from which KBo 32.15 was copied.

The mistakes in the Hittite translation of the Fifth Tablet actually are very few (see § 2.8 and 2.5),<sup>22</sup> and we are unable to say whether they are the product of the translator of the text, who got confused when translating difficult Hurrian phrases, or else they are due to an error made by the scribe who either copied the tablet, or wrote from dictation.

In conclusion, we are far from comprehending the relations among the different tablets of the Song, the linguistic competences of the scribes who wrote the bilingual recension, and the translation strategies. As was already said, only an exhaustive analysis of all the bilingual tablets of the Song and the Parables might possibly give further and more complete information.

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<sup>21</sup> See HAAS – WEGNER 1997: 452; CAMPBELL 2015: 61-62; FISCHER 2018: 118-119.

<sup>22</sup> If we do not share the interpretation of the Hittite phrases as rhetorical questions in example 2.5.



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