



Cuneiform Luwian =ku(wa): form and meaning

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Abstract: This paper provides a new attempt at defining the form and meaning of an unclear Luwian particle.

Keywords: Cuneiform Luwian, Luwian syntax, Luwian sentence initial particles

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Although the Cuneiform Luwian particle =ku(wa) is relatively well attested considering the size of the Cuneiform Luwian corpus, its precise meaning and its precise form remain elusive. This brief note provides a new proposal based on the re-examination of its attestations.

Practically all instances of this particle appear in the sequence spelled -ku-wa-¹ The only possible exception is in KUB 35.133 ii 3', where -ku- is followed by -ni- in ku-i-pa-ku-ni-ia-aš:² although the sequence preceding -ku- can regularly be analysed as kui=pa= (i.e. the first word of a sentence with the attached adversative particle), this does not apply to the sequence following -ku-, since the resulting “=ni=” is never attested.³ The same applies to the proposal of I. Yakubovich, who would view this “=ni=” as a prohibitive particle:⁴ such a particle is otherwise not attested in the extant Luwian corpus. Although Melchert claims that the “alternatives are also problematic”,⁵ this is not entirely the case: the context is fragmentary, the words preceding ku-i-pa-ku-ni-ia-aš are missing and it is followed only by ku-i a-[-...],⁶ in other words, one cannot exclude the possibility that it is not even the first word of a sentence with the particle chain. Moreover, even if it represents the first word, one cannot exclude an analysis kuipakuni(ya)=aš either, i.e. that only =aš is a particle.⁷ All in all, prudence dictates not to include this passage in the list of attestations of =ku(wa).

¹ For the more than two dozen attestations see [Melchert 1993, 105](#). Note that the photo of KBo 13.260 ii 6 clearly shows a KU and not a MA, *contra* [Starke 1985, 260](#); [Melchert 1993, 105](#); and [Torri – Barsacchi 2018, 293](#), which is also required by the context. Although Melchert includes KUB 35.103 ii 8' as a fragmentary form of this particle, the sign is no longer visible on the photo of the *Konkordanz der hethitischen Keilschrifttafeln* (hethiter.net/; PhotArch N09968) (even though the hand copy shows minor traces and its presence is probable in view of the parallel passages, cf. [Starke 1985, 222](#)). On KUB 35.133 ii 3' see the main text.

² [Melchert 1993, 105](#) includes this attestation with a double question mark.

³ Also [Melchert 1993, 157](#) emphasizes that this analysis is “very dubious”.

⁴ ACLT s.v. (last accessed: 22 February 2019).

⁵ [Melchert 1993, 157](#).

⁶ [Starke 1985, 279](#).

⁷ As I. Yakubovich (*per litt.*) informs me, he would now read this sign sequence as ku-i-pa-ku-i-ia-aš, which would eliminate the entire problem.

Accordingly, the first question is if the form of the particle is =*kuwa*⁸ or only =*ku* (and then =*wa* would be identical to the quotative particle).⁹ Kloekhorst claims that although it is tempting to analyse the word as =*kuwa*, this is “impossible” due to the parallel particle chains of *an-niš=ku=wa=ti ... tātiš=pa=wa=ti=* in KUB 35.102 ii 15-16.¹⁰ However, due to the possible and phonologically completely regular contraction from =*kuwa* into =*ku* neither the above discussed alleged form =*ku-ni-* nor Kloekhorst’s example is decisive (Carruba also entertains the possibility of haplology,¹¹ which, however, can be neither proven nor refuted). Thus there are only two ways to solve this issue: the first would be to find an attestation with the spelling =*ku-wa-wa-*. This is, however, lacking so far. The second would be to find a case in which =*wa-* in =*ku-wa-* cannot be interpreted as a quotative particle. Although Melchert claims that this =*wa-* is the quotative particle in all clear cases,¹² this is contradicted by KUB 35.103 rev. 1-5:¹³ this is a repetition of some acts in the same tablet (KUB 35.103 ii 13’-14’, iii 4-5, for the texts see below), but, unlike in these passages, there is no quotative particle (note that =*wa=* in line 5 is a restoration only). However, it starts with =*ku-wa-*: [*i-ia*]-*an-du-ku-wa* (line 1). Thus =*wa-* cannot be interpreted here as a quotative particle, which shows that the (full) form of this particle is =*kuwa*.

As far as the meaning is concerned, setting aside outdated views¹⁴ and those many scholars who do not provide any meaning¹⁵, the remaining proposals are generally similar, but differ in their details: Melchert saw in it a clause connecting particle with a meaning ‘also, furthermore’ *vel sim*.¹⁶ Kloekhorst agreed with this, but pointed out that its meaning is in fact unclear and a translation ‘and’ is “of course quite possible” (thus defining it as ‘and (?)’, furthermore (?)).¹⁷ Boley suggested that a meaning ‘on the other hand’ is not impossible,¹⁸ similarly already Carruba, who compared the particle combination ...*ku ...pa* with Greek μέν...δέ ‘on the one hand ..., on the other hand ...’.¹⁹ Finally, Yakubovich claimed that it (as “=*gwa*” or “=*gu=wa*” in his transcription, with question mark) “alternates” with the quotative particle =*wa*,²⁰ but this is excluded by KUB 35.103 rev. 1-5 discussed above, which shows that we are dealing with two different particles.

Unfortunately, most of the attestations originate from fragmentary contexts (which also implies that some of the attestations may not even belong here), but some of them can be helpful,

⁸ As per Laroche 1959, 58; Tischler 1977-1983, 599 (but cf. below); Puhvel 1997, 204; Ünal 2016, 92.

⁹ As per Melchert 1993, 105; Tischler 2008, 97; 2016, 183; Hajnal – Zipser 2017, 312; cf. already Carruba 1969, 72 with question mark.

¹⁰ Kloekhorst 2008, 484.

¹¹ Carruba 1969, 72.

¹² Melchert 1993, 205.

¹³ For the text see Starke 1985, 223.

¹⁴ For references see Laroche 1959, 58 and Carruba 1969, 72.

¹⁵ Laroche 1959, 58; Tischler 1977-1983, 599; 2008, 97; 2016, 183; Puhvel 1997, 204 (“problematic”); Ünal 2016, 962; and although treated as a separate particle, it was left untranslated also in Kloekhorst 2008, 936 (but cf. the main text); Francia 2014, 11; and Giusfredi 2014, 309.

¹⁶ Melchert 1993, 105.

¹⁷ Kloekhorst 2008, 483–484.

¹⁸ Boley 2004, 100–101.

¹⁹ Carruba 1969, 72–73. He added that the assumption of a derivative of Proto-Indo-European *=*k^we* ‘and’ (the alleged etymon of =*ku(wa)*) is more economic than the assumption of a new particle of unknown function. Needless to say, etymological considerations shall play no role in the synchronic identification of the grammatical function of a particle.

²⁰ Yakubovich 2015, §6.6. Also in his ACLT s.v. (last accessed 22 February 2019) he gives the translation ‘quotative particle’. As he informed me (*per litt.*), he has since given up this description.

especially the following passage (KUB 35.103 ii 11'–16',²¹ own translation):

⁽¹¹⁾[i-ú-u]n-ni-wa (...) ⁽¹²⁾(...) a-a-pa-an ħi-iz-za-ú-un-[ni] §

'We proceed and hand over that (...).'²²

⁽¹³⁾r i-ia¹-an-du-ku-wa za-aš-ši-in DUMU-an-na-aš-ši-i[n] ⁽¹⁴⁾r a¹-an-ni-in wa-ra-al-li-in ú-wa-ta-a[n-du]

'In turn, they shall proceed and bring this child's own mother.'

⁽¹⁵⁾[a]n-ni-iš-ku-wa-ti pá-r-na-an-za ma-ad-du-ú-w[a-ti] ⁽¹⁶⁾[p]a-ap-pár-ku-wa-at-ti ta-a-ti-iš-pa-wa-ti-ia-[ta]

'The mother, in turn, will clean the house with wine, but the father [...]'

There are three consecutive acts (11'–12'), (13'–14'), and (15'–16'), but the subjects are different in all cases: we do something, they should do something, and finally the mother will do something. Accordingly, the conjunction should refer not only to the additionality of the acts, but also to their slightly adversative nature, i.e. that the new subjects will do something different. The proposed meanings 'and, also, furthermore' refer to the additionality of the new information, but they do not refer to its adversative nature. The suggestion 'on the other hand' reflects this adversativity, but not the additionality. The most precise reading of this passage can be reached by the combination of these two nuances, i.e. an adversative-successive particle as 'in turn'.

The situation is similar in the following passage from the same text (KUB 35.103 iii 1-623):

⁽¹⁾[p]a-wa i-ia-an-du (...) ⁽³⁾r a¹-pa-an ħi-iz-za-in-du §

'They shall proceed and hand over that (...).'

⁽⁴⁾za-am-pa-ku-wa DUMU-ni-in wa-al-li-in-du ⁽⁵⁾ša-an-na-i-in-du pa-wa-an-tar a-an-ni ⁽⁶⁾[t]i-i-ta-ni du-ú-wa-an-du

'This child, in turn, they shall lift, turn down, and they shall put him on the breast of the mother.'

Here again we are dealing with two consecutive acts, but in this case the subjects are identical. What is not identical is the object of their activity. Thus, the above described meaning 'in turn' fits very well here too, as it can refer to the different objects of these acts ("that" and "this child").

From all this follows also that =kuwa is not a clause linking particle, which is clearly supported by its attestations in combination with =pa 'but' (i.e. x=pa=kuwa(=)), e.g. KUB 35.79 iv 10.12; KUB 35.103 iii 4; KBo 29.25 iii 14.²⁴

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²¹ Starke 1985, 222 with refs.

²² Here and in the following sentences the verb *i-* 'to go' is translated as the auxiliary verb of the so-called serial or phrasal construction. Three features of the characteristics of this construction can be cross-checked in these sentences: full agreement of *i-* with the main verb of the same clause, clause-initial position, omission of the clitic subject of *i-* with a transitive main verb (cf. the overview in Hoffner – Melchert 2008: 324–325 with refs.). All of them apply here, thus these phrases can be characterized as real serial / phrasal constructions, *contra* van den Hout 2010, 202.

²³ Starke 1985, 222 with refs.

²⁴ Note that this combination demonstrates that the description of Hajnal – Zipser 2017, 312, who assigned =ku to the second slot of the Luwian sentence initial particle chain together with =ħa and =pa, is false.

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