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FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE:
WOMEN'S ROLE IN HITTITE MEDICINE AND MAGIC¹

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Cuneiform texts from the Hittite capital of Boğazköy/Ḫattuša discuss numerous occasions on which therapeutic intervention was called for in order to respond to physical or emotional problems or to restore soundness of body and mind. Notable among these were the devastating epidemics of uncertain disease or diseases addressed in the “Plague Prayer” of king Mursili II of the mid-fourteenth century² and the “aphasia” suffered by the same ruler.³ We also learn of the unspecified illnesses of prominent individuals including prince Kantuzili,⁴ princess Gaššuliyawiya,⁵ and king Ḫattušili III. This latter monarch was a sickly child,⁶ and was also often ill as an adult, as reflected in the vow made by his wife Puduḫepa to the goddess Lelwani seeking improvement in his health.⁷

It is striking that among the specialists in the healing arts appearing in the Hittite texts we find a large number of women,

¹I presented the substance of this paper as a lecture at Chicago's Oriental Institute in November 1990, as part of a symposium entitled “Magic and Medicine—Healing Arts in the Ancient Near East.” Abbreviations used here are those listed in H.G. Güterbock and H.A. Hoffner, Jr., eds., *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Volume L-N, Fascicle 4, Chicago, 1989, pp. xv-xxviii.

²CTH 378, edited by A. Götze, “Die Pestgebete des Mursilis” *KIF* 1, 1930, 161-251. For a partial English translation, see the same author, *ANET* 393-96.

³See CTH 486, edited by A. Götze and H. Pedersen, *MSpr*, and more recently by R. Lebrun, *Hethitica* 6, 1985, 103-37. Cf. also my comments on the latter, “Proverbs and Proverbial Allusions in Hittite” *JNES* 47, 1988, 142-43. I have recently prepared an English rendering of this composition for *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, New York: Scribners, forthcoming.

⁴As discussed in his prayer CTH 373, especially *KUB* XXX.10 rev. 14ff., edited by R. Lebrun, *Hymnes* 111-20. English translation by A. Götze, *ANET* 400-01.

⁵See her prayer CTH 380, edited by J. Tischler, *Das hethitische Gebet der Gassulijawija* (*IBS* 39), Innsbruck, 1982. Cf. the review by H.A. Hoffner, *JNES* 44, 1985, 156-59.

⁶*KBo* IV.12 obv. 5-8 (CTH 87), edited by A. Götze, *Ḫattušilis. Der Bericht über seine Thronbesteigung nebst den Paralleltexten* (MVAG 29.3), Leipzig, 1925, 40-44.

⁷CTH 585, edited by H. Otten and V. Souček, *StBoT* 1.

both individuals mentioned by name and anonymous practitioners of various therapeutic professions. But in order to discuss the role of women in Hittite medicine and magic, I must first present an overview of the entire question of healing in Hatti.

The modern student distinguishes between therapies employing purely physiological techniques such as the administration of drugs and the manipulation of injured limbs, on the one hand, and those of magical character, which invoke aid from para-human forces, on the other. While the Hittites made no absolute distinction between these approaches and often applied both types of intervention in a single regimen of treatment, we can nonetheless observe differences of emphasis in the various types of ancient therapeutic texts. By far the majority of our sources give greater attention to magic than to medicine.

But I will begin with the few exclusively medical texts.⁸ Several of these were among the scholarly compositions imported from Mesopotamia.⁹ One of the latter is an Akkadian-language text about the manufacture and application of poultices.¹⁰ The poor quality of this manuscript, as well as the presence of Hittite and Luwian glosses, shows that it is the product of an Anatolian student of an Assyrian master. In contrast, two copies of an ophthalmological treatise were apparently imported from the south, while a third may be a local copy.¹¹

However, a small number (15 or so) of Hittite-language medical texts and fragments are seemingly of indigenous origin.¹² Their generally poor state of preservation combines with our ignorance of the significance of many technical terms to make understanding difficult, but it is quite apparent that the approach to healing taken here is basically medical.

⁸For a more detailed presentation of Hittite medicine, see my "Medizin bei den Hethitern", *RLA*, Band VII, Lieferung 7/8, 1990, 629-31, as well as the bibliography at its conclusion.

⁹For the question of Mesopotamian influence on Hittite scribes, their script, and their curriculum, see my discussion in *JCS* 35, 1983, 97-114.

¹⁰*CTH* 808, edited by F. Köcher, "Ein akkadischer medizinischer Schülertext aus Boğazköy" *Afo* 16, 1952, 48-56.

¹¹*CTH* 809. The copy seemingly produced locally is *KUB* IV.55.

¹²Most of these have been listed sub *CTH* *461 (*premier supplément*); all have been edited by C. Burde, *StBoT* 19, to which the reader is directed for details.

Paramount is the internal and topical administration of drugs. Wounds and flatulence(?), as well as disorders of the eyes, of the intestines, and of the neck or throat, are among the conditions treated.

To the extent that they were not simply exercises for advanced students of the scribal academy, these medical texts were probably manuals for the use of physicians, who are indicated in the Hittite documents by the Sumerogram $L\dot{U}A.ZU$, or alternatively by the Akkadogram $AS\dot{U}$.¹³ We do not yet know the Hittite word hidden behind these forms. Since we read of an “overseer of physicians” and a “chief of physicians”, as well as of a “head physician” and an “apprentice, junior-grade physician”, we may conclude that the Hittite medical profession was organized as a hierarchy. Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the education or the practical training of medical doctors in Hatti.

The contexts in which physicians “practice” in Hittite documents reflect the failure of the culture to make a clear distinction between the magical and the medical in healing. Thus, for example, the physician Zarpiya combats the plague with purely magical means, organizing a ceremonial meal and reciting incantations.¹⁴ Physicians also take part in cultic activities with no discernible relation to healing, such as a festival in the town of Nerik where a physician recites in the Hattic language,¹⁵ or a ritual for the god Telipinu in which a physician first sings while accompanying himself on a musical instrument, and then engages in a dance involving self-mutilation.¹⁶

Medical complaints for which the consultation of a physician is attested in the Boğazköy texts include diseases of the eyes and of the throat, fever, plague, and reproductive difficulties.¹⁷ The more general sources from Hattuša say little about the actual techniques of Hittite medicine and are of scant assistance in the interpretation of the medical “handbooks” mentioned earlier.

¹³See *CAD* A/II, 344-47. Attestations in the Boğazköy texts are listed in F. Pecchioli Daddi, *Mestieri* 119-20, to which should be added the material given in *RLA*, Band VII, Lieferung 7/8, 630.

¹⁴*CTH* 757, transliterated by F. Starke, *StBoT* 30, 50-55.

¹⁵*KUB* XXVIII.80 i 33ff. (*CTH* 737), which are poorly preserved.

¹⁶*KUB* LIII.15 + *KUB* XLI.15 i' 13'ff. (*CTH* 470). On the join see my review, *BiOr* 42, 1985, 143, where the better part of this passage is transliterated and translated.

¹⁷For references see *RLA*, Band VII, Lieferung 7/8, 631.

The physician is mentioned in texts from the earliest period of the Hittite archives (the Old Kingdom of the seventeenth century), in particular in the Hittite Laws, whose Paragraph 10 stipulates that an assailant must pay the doctor's fee on behalf of his victim.¹⁸ The Middle Hittite (fifteenth century) parallel text (Paragraph IX) sets this fee at 2 or 3 shekels of silver, depending upon the social status of the wounded.¹⁹

Eight physicians are known by name: Akiya, Ḫutubi, Lurma, Pariamahu, Piḫa-Tarḫunta, Raba-ša-Marduk, Tuwatta-ziti, and Zarpia.²⁰ Included in this list are Egyptian,²¹ Akkadian,²² and Luwian²³ names, as well as Hittite ones, and all of these individuals were men. Although we do encounter an occasional reference to a female physician,²⁴ the vast majority of the anonymous practitioners mentioned in our texts were also male. Thus it seems that in Ḫatti as in Mesopotamia,²⁵ the medical profession in the narrow sense was largely the preserve of males. When we turn to those documents emphasizing the magical approach to healing, however, we encounter a very strong female presence indeed.

I refer now to the large number of texts which the Hittite scribes labelled with the Sumerian term SISKUR(.SISKUR),²⁶ which in Mesopotamian sources has a rather broad range of meanings: "prayer, blessing, vow; offering".²⁷ The native Hittite equivalent of this word was *mugeššar*, "invocation", and perhaps

¹⁸Edited by J. Friedrich, *Die hethitischen Gesetze* (DMOA 7), Leiden 1971, 18-19.

¹⁹Edited by J. Friedrich, *ibid.* 50-51.

²⁰For references see F. Pecchioli Daddi, *Mestieri* 120.

²¹Pariamahu: see E. Edel, *Ägyptische Ärzte und ägyptische Medizin am hethitischen Königshof*, Opladen, 1976, pp.47, 87-88.

²²Raba-ša-Marduk: see C. Burde, *StBoT* 19, 513, n. 13, contra H. Kümmel, *StBoT* 3, 98.

²³Piḫa-Tarḫunta: see C. Burde, *StBoT* 19, 3-5; and Tuwatta-ziti: see J. Siegelová, *Hethitische Verwaltungspraxis im Lichte der Wirtschafts- und Inventardokumente*, Prague, 1986, 325.

²⁴Two attestations, to be exact: *KUB* XXX.42 i 8 (*CTH* 276) and *KUB* XXXIX.31: 19 (*CTH* 450). See F. Pecchioli Daddi, *Mestieri* 144.

²⁵Sub *asû* the *CAD* (A/II, 347) lists but one occurrence of a female medical doctor outside of the Boğazköy texts: *MUNUS*A.ZU in the Old Babylonian *TCL* 10.107:27.

²⁶*CTH* 390-500.

²⁷C. Rüster and E. Neu, *Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon*, Wiesbaden, 1989, No. 156. See R. Borger, *AOAT* 33, No. 438, which gives the Akkadian equivalents *ikribu*, "prayer, blessing", and *niqû*, "offering".

also *malteššar*, “recitation”.²⁸ Hittitologists call such texts “rituals” after their formal characteristics judged from the viewpoint of the comparative study of religions.²⁹ Many Hittite rituals were *rites de passage*³⁰ performed at the appropriate and inevitable moment in the life of every individual when an important transition took place—for example at birth,³¹ puberty,³² or death.³³ Hittite birth rituals include much information about the practical steps which the midwife took to aid the mother in giving birth—the erection of the birthstool, the massaging of her body, the cleansing of the baby, etc. But the primary focus of these texts is rather upon the magical protection of the new-born from evil forces during the perilous entrance into the world and upon securing for him or her a happy fate.³⁴ Thus in a typical ritual the midwife recites the following incantation over the infant: “And come! [As] the wind and rain cannot [lift] the rock sanctuary [from] its place—because in this (house) he was born—likewise let [not] an evil thing lift [his life] from its place! And let it likewise [be] protected! And let it be alive for eternity!”³⁵

²⁸See *CHD* L-N, 137. As will be clear from what follows, I have more confidence that *malteššar* is actually a reading of SISKUR(.SISKUR) than do the editors of this lexicon.

²⁹Anthropologists delimit the parameters of what they understand as ritual behaviour in many ways. The most inclusive definitions include such conventional social signs as a handshake, while the most exclusive admit only ceremonies performed within a formal cultic setting. See W.A. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt, eds., *Reader in Comparative Religion*, 3rd ed., New York, 1972, pp. 323-24, and the essays by various scholars which follow. It is important to stress that Hittitologists have not imposed their own classificatory system upon the ancient material, but have simply chosen a modern translation for the Hittite’s own SISKUR(.SISKUR). For a concise statement of my interpretation of Hittite religion, see “The Religion of the Hittites”, *Biblical Archaeologist* 52/2-3, 1989, 98-108.

³⁰This term was coined by A. Van Gennep in *The Rites of Passage*, translated by M.B. Vizedom and G.L. Caffee, Chicago, 1960, first published in French in 1908. The concept has been further developed by V. Turner, especially in *The Ritual Process*, Chicago, 1969.

³¹See my *Hittite Birth Rituals*, *StBoT* 29.

³²*CTH* 633, discussed by H.G. Güterbock, *AOS Middle West Branch Semi-Centennial Volume*, Bloomington, IN, 1969, pp. 99-103.

³³Primarily *CTH* 450, edited by H. Otten, *Hethitische Totenrituale*, VIO 37, Berlin, 1958.

³⁴See *StBoT* 29, 249-55.

³⁵*KBo* XVII.62 + 63 iv 7'-12' (*CTH* 478), edited *StBoT* 29, 34-35.

While birth rituals confront a situation which we today would include under the general responsibility of the healing arts, other rites of passage, particularly those attendant upon puberty and upon death, serve functions to our way of thinking more social than medical. Numerous other Hittite rituals were carried out only when an individual or group was faced with a particular problem. Thus, among the preserved texts which deal with a wide variety of difficulties, we possess rituals to combat sorcery,³⁶ to cure impotence,³⁷ to forestall the evil portended in an omen,³⁸ to dispel the consequences of a quarrel within a household,³⁹ and to cure various diseases.⁴⁰ Since from the point of view of each individual Hittite, suffering from such causes was not inevitable, but was, as we shall see, contingent upon his or her own actions and upon those of other forces, both human and para-human, we may refer to such ceremonies designed to provide relief therefrom as "occasional rituals".

It may be observed that the Hittites grouped under the unitary category of SISKUR(.SISKUR) rites to counteract evils for which we would today postulate vastly different sorts of causes and hence employ correspondingly divergent types of remedies. Thus, in the judgement of the modern practitioner, medication might be appropriate for illness, and family therapy for domestic strife. But for the Hittites, sickness was not brought about by physical dysfunction or by viral or bacterial agents, and social tensions were not due solely to the conflict of egos desirous of incompatible ends. Most suffering was caused by the dislocation of an individual human or deity from his or her proper position in the cosmos. Such dislocation resulted in a corresponding inability to perform one's role within the universe, with proportional consequences for others within the social nexus. And in the Hittite conception, the social network encompassed not only human beings but also major gods,

³⁶For example, *CTH* 402, edited by L. Jakob-Rost, *THeth* 2; cf. H. Otten, *ZA* 63, 1973, 76-82.

³⁷*CTH* 406, edited by H.A. Hoffner, "Paskuwatti's Ritual against Sexual Impotence (*CTH* 406)", *AuOr* 5, 1987, 271-87.

³⁸For example, *CTH* 419, edited by H.M. Kümmel, *StBoT* 3, 7-37, a ceremony intended to deflect evil portended for the king onto a substitute.

³⁹*CTH* 404, edited by L. Jakob-Rost, *MIO* 1, 1953, 345-79.

⁴⁰For example, the *Sammel Tafel CTH* 390, edited by H. Kronasser, *Die Sprache* 7, 1961, 140-67; and 8, 1962, 108-13, which seems to be a manual of pediatric ritual practice.

minor deities, and the spirits of the dead. If an important deity was disaccommodated, the situation could be disastrous for all. Thus when the Storm-god Telipinu⁴¹ became angry and disappeared into the wilderness:

“Mist seized the windows. Smoke [seized] the house. In the fireplace the logs were stifled. [At the altars] the gods were stifled. In the sheep pen the sheep were stifled. In the cattle barn the cattle were stifled. The mother sheep rejected her lamb. The cow rejected her calf.

“Telipinu too went away and removed grain, animal fecundity, luxuriance, growth, and abundance to the steppe, to the meadow. Telipinu too went into the moor and blended with the moor. Over him the *halenzu*-plant grew. Therefore barley (and) wheat no longer ripen. Cattle, sheep, and humans no longer become pregnant. And those (already) pregnant cannot give birth.

“The mountains and the trees dried up, so that the shoots do not come (forth). The pastures and the springs dried up, so that famine broke out in the land. Humans and gods are dying of hunger.”⁴²

The consequences of the dislocation of a mere human being would naturally be less catastrophic than those following the disappearance of a deity, but they would nonetheless be significant for those around the individual. It was the purpose of Hittite magic to identify and remove the impediments to the smooth functioning of the person on whose behalf the rites were performed.⁴³ These impediments themselves were of many types and could manifest themselves in various dysfunctions. All of these conditions, however, were susceptible to treatment through magic, that is, by means of *SISKUR*(.SISKUR).

It is indeed often difficult to extract from a text just what the Hittites held to be the aetiology of a particular dysfunction. On the one hand, a ritual might be said to be intended for the relief of this or that complaint whose cause is not made

⁴¹See H.G. Güterbock, “Gedanken über das Wesen des Gottes Telipinu”, *FsFriedrich* 207-11.

⁴²*KUB XVII.10 i 5-18 and duplicates (CTH 324)*, transliterated by Laroche, *Textes mythologiques hittites en transcription (RHA XXIII/77, XXVI/82)*, Paris, 1968, 29-30; translation by H.A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, Atlanta, 1990, pp. 14-15.

⁴³On Hittite magic see D. Engelhard, *Hittite Magical Practices: An Analysis*, dissertation Brandeis University, 1970.

explicit.⁴⁴ On the other, a rite might be recommended to placate some para-human force⁴⁵ without any elaboration upon the specific negative manifestations of that agent for the patient.

Only occasionally is it possible to determine that, for the Hittites, a particular evil brought about a particular suffering. But we can say that divine displeasure,⁴⁶ *papratar* ("pollution"),⁴⁷ and *alwanzatar* ("sorcery")⁴⁸ are among the most frequently-treated causes of human dysfunction and woe in the corpus of Hittite rituals. It is important to note that these causes are not mutually exclusive, and that the distinctions between them tend to become blurred upon closer examination. This situation is probably due to the similar effects which these evils wrought upon sufferers, and to the fact that Hittite magic was not a coherent philosophical system but a collection of folk beliefs tolerant of internal contradiction.

A person might have been responsible for his or her own suffering because he or she had angered a god—by committing murder, by swearing falsely, by acting deceitfully in dealings with others, by stealing from temple stores, by breaking a dietary taboo, and so on. The possibilities were indeed endless, and it was only through the use of oracles that the Hittites were able to ascertain just what transgression might have occasioned punishment in any particular instance. But once aroused, divine anger demanded placation.

⁴⁴For example, *KUB IX.27 + KUB VII.5 + KUB VII.8 i 2f. (CTH 406)*: "If some man has no reproductive power, or if he is not a *mar* in relation to a woman"—as edited by H.A. Hoffner, *AuOr* 5, 1987, 271, 277.

⁴⁵For example, *CTH 391*, performed for the deities Zarniza and Tarpatassi. For a partial translation, see A. Götze, *ANET* 348-49.

⁴⁶This problem is particularly addressed in the "Vanishing God" texts, on which see below. The purpose of many of the oracle tablets (*CTH 561-82*) in the Hittite archives was to ascertain for just what reason a deity had become angry (*TUKU.TUKU-ant-*). See A. Ünal, "Ein Orakeltext über die Intrigen am hethitischen Hof (*KUB XXII 70 = Bo 2011*)", *THeth* 6, 1978, 14-19, for a list of subjects of oracles including many postulated offences against the gods.

⁴⁷On this word and related terms see J. Moyer, *The Concept of Ritual Purity among the Hittites*, dissertation Brandeis University, 1969, pp. 38-42, where passages from rituals are quoted.

⁴⁸See J. Friedrich and A. Kammenhuber, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, 1975 I, 63-66 for a discussion of the family of this word and citations of representative ritual passages.

Treatment of divine displeasure was the purpose of the so-called “Vanishing God Myths”,⁴⁹ which are actually rituals with embedded mythological narratives. These compositions employ the combined efforts of humans and gods to calm an angry deity and return him or her to the proper sphere of responsibility for the cosmos on one level, and for an individual sufferer on another. In one version of this composition *Kamrušepa*,⁵⁰ the Goddess of magic, who is mystically identified with the female ritual practitioner actually carrying out the rite, treats and speaks to the god *Telipinu*:

“And I have made a burning back and forth over *Telipinu*, on one side and on the other. And I have taken from *Telipinu*, from his body, his evil; I have taken his sin; I have taken his anger; I have taken his wrath; I have taken his pique(?); I have taken his sullenness.

“*Telipinu* is angry. His soul and essence were stifled (like burning) brushwood. Just as they burned these sticks of brushwood, may the anger, wrath, sin and sullenness of *Telipinu* likewise burn up. [And] just as [malt] is ineffective, so that they do not carry it to the field and use it as seed, (as) they do not make it into bread and deposit it in the Seal House, so may the anger, wrath, sin and sullenness of *Telipinu* likewise become ineffective!”⁵¹

Here as in the following examples I have cited only a short excerpt from a long programme of ritual manipulation and recitation of incantations. For the Hittite magician, if one remedy was good, then two or more were better!

Suffering might also be due to *papratar*, “pollution, impurity”, acquired through illicit behaviour, through the curse of another, or simply through the unwitting stumbling upon the miasma of which someone else had previously rid themselves.⁵² Thus the female practitioner *Tunnawiya* acts on

⁴⁹On the best preserved example of this group see H. Otten, *Die Überlieferungen des Telipinu-Mythus*, (MVAeG 46.1), Leipzig, 1942, and G. Kellerman, “The *Telipinu* Myth Reconsidered”, *FsGüterbock*² 115-23.

⁵⁰See G. Kellerman, *Hethitica* 8, 1987, 229-231, n. 1.

⁵¹*KUB XVII.10 iii 8-20* and duplicates (*CTH 324*), transliterated by Laroche, *Myth* 34-35; translation by H.A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, Atlanta, 1990, p.16.

⁵²See Hittite Laws (*CTH 291*), Paragraph 44 (edited by J. Friedrich, *HG* 30-31), where the improper disposal of the remains of a purification rite in someone’s field or house is declared to constitute sorcery.

behalf of a man or woman whose reproductive capacities have been hampered by pollution.

(While the patient is bathed and combed, she recites:) "I am now scrubbing thoroughly all the limbs. Let evil pollution, sorcery, hexing(?),⁵³ anger of the gods, and terror of the dead be combed out of him/her! I am now holding a strigel/scraper(?). Whoever disabled (his/her) twelve [body parts] with evil pollution—now I am separating from your twelve body parts the evil pollution, witchcraft, hexing(?), anger of the gods, and terror of the dead. Let them be completely separated from him/her!"⁵⁴ The cleansing instruments and the patient's garments were immediately cast into a river, thereby removing the pollution from the vicinity of both the patient and of other humans who might accidentally become contaminated through contact with it.

In the case of a victim of sorcery, an enemy brought about his or her distress through the invocation of para-human beings or forces. This "black magic" was usually countered by a rite in which the presumed aggressive action was reversed and undone. For example:

"[Next] she (the Old Woman) likewise fashions a strand out of green wool and [says] as follows: '[whoever] has used sorcery against this person (the patient), and whoever has rendered (him or her) green—I am [now] removing the sorcery (and) the green from him/her and will give it back to its [originator].' Then she wraps the strand around the (magic) figures."⁵⁵

A similar action and recitation are repeated five times, once for each of the colours red, black, blue, and white, in addition to green. The details of the complex system of colour symbolism in Hittite magic have not yet been entirely explained, but each hue probably referred to a particular type of suffering.⁵⁶ Eventually the figures are buried in the earth to

⁵³For *aštayarattar* as a magical activity, see F. Starke, *StBoT* 31, 522-23.

⁵⁴*KUB* XII.58 iii 2-11 (*CTH* 409), edited by A. Götze, *The Hittite Ritual of Tunnawi*, (*AOS* 14), New Haven, 1938, 16-17.

⁵⁵*KUB* XXIV.9 i 39-42 (*CTH* 402), edited by L. Jakob-Rost, "Das Ritual der Malli aus Arzawa gegen Behexung (*KUB* 24.9 +)", *THeth* 2, 1972, 26-27 as lines 45-48 by the cumulative line count. The numbering should, however, be corrected to lines 41-44—see H. Otten, *ZA* 63, 1973, 77-78.

⁵⁶See K. Riemschneider, "Hethitisch 'gelb/grün'", *MIO* 5, 1957, 144-47.

the recitation of the following incantation: "Whoever practiced sorcery against this (patient)—I have now taken his/her sorcery back and have set it down in the earth and have fastened it down. Let the sorcery and evil dreams be fastened down and let them not come up again! Let the Dark Earth (the Underworld) hold them!"⁵⁷

As we can observe from the ritual excerpts thus far presented, the most important concepts underlying Hittite magical healing were those of reification and of analogy. By the first principle, an evil was conceived of as a quasi-substance which could be removed from the patient much like ordinary soiling through bathing and scraping, or transferred to a magic figure. It could also physically contaminate another person. Its proper disposal was thus a matter of weighty social responsibility. By the second principle, evil could be identified with a material or an object employed in ritual, and the destruction of the object would bring about the removal of the evil.⁵⁸

I believe that this idea of analogic magic is the key concept within the entire system of Hittite ritual, and will illustrate this point through another quotation, this time from a ceremony to secure the aid of benevolent spirits: "Thus says (the woman) Ambazzi: When I worship (the protective deities) Zarniza and Tarpatašši, I scatter pine cones upon a red platter and thereupon I also scatter barley and wheat. And they roast these. Then I quench the pine cones with water, and I say: 'As I have quenched these things, may evils (likewise) be quenched in relation to the patients!'"⁵⁹

It is important to recognize that human speech was an almost indispensable component of Hittite magical rites,⁶⁰ regardless of the particular evil which these ceremonies were designed to counteract. That is, it was necessary to inform the gods or other para-human forces explicitly through words of just what the magical expert intended to accomplish by means of the ceremony. Indeed, it may even be said that the gods were led by force of combined manipulation and oral argument to bring about exactly what the practitioner requested on behalf of the patient. For example, once the para-human audience to a

⁵⁷*KUB XXIV.9 ii 21'-25'* (*CTH 402*), edited by L. Jakob-Rost, *THeth 2*, 34-35.

⁵⁸Cf. A. Götze, *KI² 156-58*.

⁵⁹*KUB XXVII.67 + KUB IX.25 i 1-7* (*CTH 391*). See note 45 above.

⁶⁰This was recognized already by A. Götze, *KI² 157*.

rite of analogic magic had granted that the agent of affliction was indeed identical to, say, a pine cone, then the destruction of this agent was all but accomplished with the incineration of the object to which it had been equated. The establishment of this equation, however, could be announced and brought about only through oral means, that is, by the incantation. As a Hittite proverb puts it, "the tongue is a bridge".⁶¹ This is why in the Hittite language the ritual as a whole may be called a "recitation". The Hittites thus referred to the entire sequence of actions by that element which seemed to them the most important.⁶²

Now it is striking how many of the practitioners in Hittite ritual texts are women. Indeed, the chief expert in all of the texts from which I have quoted has been female. Of 71 individuals attested by name as authors of rituals in E. Laroche's *Catalogue des textes hittites*, 38, or 53.5% are female.⁶³ This is in harmony with the preponderance of goddesses among deities of magic: Ḫannaḫanna,⁶⁴ Išḫara,⁶⁵ Šawušga,⁶⁶ and Kamrušepa⁶⁷ are the most important divine healers in Hittite religion.⁶⁸ This rough equality with the

⁶¹*KBo* XI.10 iii 17 (CTH 447). See my discussion of this interesting piece of bound speech in *JNES* 45, 1986, 25 with n. 39 for transliteration and translation of its full context.

⁶²This is parallel to the designation of treaty documents as tablets of *išīul* and *lingaiš* (Akkadian *rikiltu/rikšu u mamitu*, literally "binding" (i.e., obligation) and "oath"—see V. Korošec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge*, Leipzig, 1931, pp. 22-35.

⁶³In order to have as large a sample as possible, I have also included here those rituals listed by Laroche in Chapter XI of his *Catalogue*, "Langues étrangères", and persons named as authors of texts recorded in the catalogue tablets transliterated in Chapter XIV, "Débris de fichier".

⁶⁴See *StBoT* 29, 239-41, and G. Kellerman, *Hethitica* 7, 1987, 109-47.

⁶⁵See V. Haas, "Substratgottheiten des westhurratischen Pantheos", *RHA* 36, 1978, 62-64, and *Hethitische Berggötter und hurrische Steindämonen*, Mainz, 1982, pp. 99-102.

⁶⁶See I. Wegner, *Gestalt und Kult der Ištar-Šawuška in Kleinasien*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1981.

⁶⁷See n. 50 above.

⁶⁸It might well be objected that the role of goddesses on the religious plane is no index of the relative position of females within a human society as a whole, or indeed within any particular sphere of activity encompassed by that society. Nonetheless, given the frequent identification of human magical practitioner with divine healer in Hittite magic—see my remarks above concerning Kamrušepa in the "Vanishing God Myths"—I feel that this correlation is of significance.

male magical expert hardly corresponds to the relative position of women in Hittite society. Despite some modern scholarly claims to the contrary,⁶⁹ there is no evidence for the existence of matriarchy or even of matrilineality in Hittite society.⁷⁰ In most spheres of life reflected in the available texts from Ḫattuša, women occupy a place distinctly inferior to that of men. Illustrative of this is the attitude expressed by a character in a Hittite folk tale: “A(n ideal) woman’s mind is clever. She has cut (herself) off from command(ing others). She is dependent on the authority(?) of the god. She stands in woman’s subordination(?), and she does not disobey (her) husband’s word(?)”⁷¹ In another story a man angrily chides his wife: “You are a woman and think like one. You know nothing at all.”⁷²

To return to ritual texts, the most commonly-attested term for a female practitioner is the Sumerogram *MUNUSŠU.GI*, “Old Woman”, which appears in at least 36 of the ritual compositions listed by Laroche.⁷³ The Hittite reading of *MUNUSŠU.GI* is *ḫašauwa-*, which literally means not “old woman”, but rather “(she) of birth”. If the sense of this word were “pregnant woman”, it could hardly have served as a professional title, therefore it probably originally referred to the midwife. By the time when the majority of our Hittite texts were inscribed, however, it had become a general designation for female ritual expert, sometimes applied to a woman additionally called by another title, such as “wet-nurse”.⁷⁴ The linguistic and sociological association of the midwife with wider healing competences is also known from many other pre-modern cultures. Compare the French use of the expression *sage femme* for “midwife” alongside *accoucheuse*.

In the Hittite texts of the classical period, the midwife *per se* is called *MUNUSḫaš(ša)nupalla-*, literally “bringer to birth”, often

⁶⁹For a review of the evidence see G. Wilhelm, “Matrilinearität bei den Hethitern”, *RLA*, Band VII, Lieferung 7/8, 588-90.

⁷⁰See my discussion in *FsGüterbock*², “Inheritance and Royal Succession among the Hittites”, 13-31.

⁷¹*KUB XXIV.7* iv 49-52 (*CTH 363*), edited by J. Friedrich, “Churritische Märchen und Sagen in hethitischer Sprache”, *ZA* 49, 1950, 232-33; translation by H.A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, Atlanta, 1990, p. 67.

⁷²*KUB XXIV.8* i 36-37 (*CTH 360*), edited by J. Siegelová, *StBoT* 14, 6-7; translated by H.A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, Atlanta, 1990, p. 63.

⁷³*CTH 390*, 397, 402, 404, 409, 412, 423, 433-35, 439-41, 448-50, 458, 470, 474, 481, 489-91, 500, 754, 759-63, 767, 770, 780-81, 788, 790.

⁷⁴For a detailed discussion of all of these terms see *StBoT* 29, 232-35.

written with the Sumerogram *MUNUSŠA.ZU*. Yet another expression meaning “midwife” is *MUNUS_harnauwaš*, which may be rendered literally as “woman of the birth-stool”. In a passage from one of her prayers, Queen Puduḥepa tells a goddess: “Among men it is said: ‘To a “woman of the birth-stool” a deity is favourable.’ I, Puduḥepa, am a ‘woman of the birth-stool’, (and since) I have devoted myself to your son (the Storm-god of Nerik), yield to me, Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady! Grant to me what [I ask of you]! Grant life to [Ḫattušili], your servant! Through [the Fate-deities] and the Mother-goddesses let long years and days be given to him.”⁷⁵

When we examine the activities of actual midwives in the birth rituals, we find that, as already mentioned above, their duties fall into two categories. First there are the actual physical tasks involved in any birth. The midwife prepares the equipment necessary for parturition and thereafter delivers the child. Secondly the midwife recites incantations on behalf of the new-born, beseeching the gods to remove evil influences and to grant a desirable fate to the child. I translated one of these incantations earlier. Another reads, in part: “Sun-goddess of the Earth, [(various evils)] may you seize! And further [...] you shall not let them loose (again)! But for the child continually give life, fitness, and long years!”⁷⁶

The similarity of this speech to the request made by Puduḥepa on behalf of Ḫattušili in her prayer is striking: in each instance it is life and long years which are sought from the divine addressee. The significance of the queen’s reference to herself as a midwife is thus apparent. The Hittites believed that the gods turned a favourable ear to the midwife when she sought a good fate for the new-born, and through her metaphor Puduḥepa strengthens her own request for vitality for the king.

If the midwife displayed a special talent in securing divine favour for the new-born, then other individuals might also on occasion seek out her services. That is, it was not only the practical expertise of the “Old Women” in connection with birth and other medical/magical problems that accounts for the prominent role of women in the healing arts in Ḫatti, but also the particular favour with which the utterance of a

⁷⁵*KUB XXI.27 ii 15-23 (CTH 384)*, edited by D. Sørenhagen, “Zwei Gebete Ḫattušilis und der Puduḥepa”, *AuOF* 8, 1981, 112-13, with somewhat different interpretation. Cf. *StBoT* 29, 233 with n. 13.

⁷⁶*KBo XVII.60 rev. 8'-11' (CTH 430)*, edited *StBoT* 29, 60-61.

midwife was held to be received by the gods. Given the great importance of “recitations” in Hittite magic, and the preponderance of magic in Hittite healing, the prominence of the eloquent woman in such endeavours is hardly surprising.