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Charles W. STEITLER, *The Solar Deities of Bronze Age Anatolia. Studies
in Texts of the Early Hittite Kingdom* (G. BECKMAN)



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Charles W. STEITLER, *The Solar Deities of Bronze Age Anatolia. Studies in Texts of the Early Hittite Kingdom*. Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten, Vol. 62. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. xx-605 p. 17.3 × 24.5. €98.

The predominant use in Hittite cuneiform texts of Mesopotamian ideograms—rather than phonetic spellings—to designate many prominent deities has led to difficulties for scholars studying the religion of Hatti. For a single ideogram may refer to several gods or goddesses who are manifest in the same element of the cosmos or natural phenomenon, yet differ in their ethnic/cultural origins within the hybrid civilization of the Hittites and in some of their particular characteristics. Thus in a text from Hittite archives, the Sumerogram ⁴UTU could stand for Akkadian Šamaš, Hurrian Šimegi, Hattic Eštan (borrowed into Hittite as Ištanu), Luwian Tiwad, Palaic Tiyat, or indeed any of a number of other local Anatolian solar deities (pp. 173, 247).

In the work under review, the revision of a 2014 Würzburg dissertation directed by Gernot Wilhelm, Charles Steitler conducts a diachronic investigation with the goal of sorting out the confusion presented by the more than 3000 attestations of Sun-gods and -goddesses found in Hittite sources. Of course, he is only able to do this thanks to the progress made in the relative dating of Hittite cuneiform tablets during the past few decades, results that are reflected in the periodization employed in the modern dictionaries (*HW²*, *CHD*, and *HED*) and in the Mainz *Konkordanz der hethitischen Texte*, of which the author makes extensive use. Diachronic analysis of the material is crucial, because it allows the author to approach the state of the Hittite pantheon and theology prior to the influx of Hurrian and Mesopotamian religious influences into Hatti in the early empire period.

Therefore Steitler focuses his study on the Old and Middle Hittite (late 17th to mid-14th centuries BCE) sources composed in all of the languages in use at the Hittite capital (see p. 7). But he reasonably includes all texts of Hattic background—even those in later copies—since material of this milieu is unlikely to have undergone significant change in later times (pp. 10–11).

Steitler isolates three primary types of solar deity (p. 455): a Sun-goddess borrowed from the pre-Hittite Hattic culture and later closely associated with the holy city of Arinna, 2) a male Sun-god of Indo-European background featured in the cults of the Luwians and the Palaeans, and 3) a chthonic deity, the Sun-goddess of the Earth, seemingly of Luwian origin. Interestingly, no specifically Hittite (in the ethno-linguistic sense) solar figure is to be found (p. 195), and the author believes that the Sun-god featured in the state pantheon had been taken over from one of the other Indo-European speaking peoples of early Anatolia—the Palaeans, or more likely, the Luwians (pp. 203, 330).

Within mature Hittite culture, the Sun-goddess of Arinna, along with her partner, the Storm-god (of Hatti/Heaven), served as the protectors—or even parents—of the king and as patrons of the state. The male Sun-god, whose traits were certainly influenced by the model of Syro-Mesopotamian Šamaš, in myth summoned the other members of the pantheon to banquets and assembly and was responsible for enforcing oaths and guaranteeing justice for human society. He also functioned as the archetype of the monarch (pp. 425–53), who is often depicted after his image and bears the title ⁴UTUst, lit. “My Sun,” often rendered by scholars as “My/Your/His Majesty.” Thus, both the Sun-goddess and the Sun-god were intimately associated with the institution of monarchy in Hatti (p. 451).

Finally, the Sun-goddess of the Earth appears primarily in magical rituals, where she is called upon to receive and immobilize various evils that the magician seeks to banish to the Netherworld. Apparently, she plays no particular role among the other gods (p. 419) and there is no good evidence that she is nocturnal in nature (p. 420).

In the course of identifying these basic varieties of solar deity, Steitler includes a convincing demonstration that *Šiušummi*, “Our God,” of the Anitta Text (CTH 1) is not a solar divinity (pp. 190–92), although his character still remains unclear. There is also an illuminating discussion of the Prayers to the Sun-god (CTH 372–74), which the author evaluates as thoroughly Mesopotamian in essence and owing little to native ideas (pp. 371–76). He considers these works to be the product of a “desire to explicate the Hittite pantheon and religion in terms of Mesopotamian religious scholarship” (p. 375), and thus an artifact of the scribal school not directly illustrative of Anatolian concepts.

Scattered throughout his work, Steitler provides excellent editions of textual groupings of particular relevance to his arguments: CTH 736 (pp. 100–23), CTH 634.3 (pp. 284–89), CTH 820.5 (pp. 259–71), CTH 339.1–3 (pp. 345–64), and CTH 764.I.A (pp. 388–400). The volume concludes with a glossary of words from these edited texts, a generous bibliography, and indices of topics treated, proper names, lexemes discussed, and texts cited.

In sum, with this well organized and clearly written monograph, Steitler has made an impressive debut on the Hittitological stage. It will long remain a standard work on solar deities in early Anatolia and should be acquired by every library specializing in ancient Near Eastern studies.

(See also the review of this work by Manfred Hutter in *Bulletin of the School of African and Oriental Studies* 81 (2018): 329–31.)

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