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Man's Fate: Divine Responsibility for Human Welfare in Ḫatti

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to the memory of Harry A. Hoffner Jr., 1934–2015

For the Hittites of Late Bronze Age Anatolia, it seems, no event in the natural world or in the life of human beings, individually or collectively, took place that was not determined by the gods. Divine interest and influence even encompassed the setting of the lifespan and fortunes of each individual man and woman. In this essay, I will discuss the bundle of ideas constituting Hittite conceptions of the para-human direction of the destinies of mortals. As is usual in the study of Hittite civilization, the bias of the available information toward the monarch and his extended family and court leaves us better informed about the rulers of Ḫatti than concerning ordinary members of society, but there is no reason to believe that basic conceptions regarding the life experiences and ultimate fate of ruler and commoner were dissimilar.

The Hittite words for 'fate' are *gulšuwar*,¹ an abstract noun derived from *gulš-*, 'to inscribe, engrave, mark', and the collective plural common gender result noun from the same verb, *gul(aš)ša*. The para-human beings responsible for inscribing or determining an individual's fate, an undifferentiated collegium of uncertain number, took their name from this latter word: ^d*Gulšeš*.² We may refer to them simply as the Fate-deities.³ Given the etymology of their name, it is reasonable to assume that they inscribed their findings on some kind of writing surface, but there is as yet no evidence for the presence in Hittite mythological thought of Tablets of Destiny, such as are attested for Mesopotamian culture⁴ and among the Hurrians.⁵

These Fate-deities attended the birth of every child, along with their colleagues the Birth-deities or Mother-goddesses, who are usually designated by

1. KBo 13.2 (CTH 309) rev. 2: [nam.tar] = *šimta šāmu = gul-ša-aš gul-šu-w[a-ar]*; KUB 3.110 (CTH 309): 16–17: [*ši-i*]m-tū = ^dNAM-aš = [. . .]. Note among the evil influences to be countered in a ritual: ^d*Gul-ša-aš i-da-a-lu gul-aš-šu-wa-ar*, "evil/negative determination of the Fate-deities," KUB 43.72 (CTH 470) ii 11. On fate in Ḫatti, see in general Schwemer 2009.

2. See Melchert forthcoming, where he refutes the argument of Waal (2014) that the words in this complex should be understood as Sumerographic, ^dGUL-šeš, etc. Melchert delivered this paper as a lecture at the AOS Annual Meeting in New Orleans, March 2015. *Archi* 2013: 18 also doubts Waal's conclusion. For the Palaic *Gulzanikkeš*, see Carruba 1970: 61.

3. For a detailed discussion, see *Archi* 2013.

4. In the *Anzu Epic* and the *Enūma eliš*. See Lambert 2013: 449–53.

5. *še-ḫur-ni-bi-ni tup-pi-ni*, "the tablet of fate," KUB 29.8 (CTH 777) iii 42.

the Sumerogram DINGIR.MAḪ.MEŠ/ḪIA, possibly to be read in Hittite as *Kunuštalleš*.⁶ By the time of the writing of our texts, the two groups of divinities had become so closely identified due to this shared activity that they had been largely conflated.⁷ A major complex of rituals is dedicated to the joint worship of these two divine collegia.⁸ In any event, there can be little doubt that the Fate-deities, like the Mother-goddesses, were conceived of as female. Their Hurrian counterparts were the *Ḫudena Ḫudellura*, likewise goddesses.⁹

A good illustration of the responsibilities of these deities around a birth is provided by an incantation in which both groups are addressed:

In regard to this matter we have just now summoned as witnesses the Mother-goddesses and the Fate-deities. [And], if a person is born at a certain time, [then] as the Fate-deities and [the Mother-goddesses] on that day designate well-being for him/her¹⁰—now this is that day! May you, O Fate-deities and [Mother-goddesses], today designate life, [joy], strength, long years (and numerous other boons) for the king (and) queen!¹¹

That is, just as these powers would ideally allot a positive destiny to the newborn, the practitioner asks that they now shower good things upon the royal couple.¹² From this passage we may deduce that for the Hittites fate was not irrevocable,¹³ but could be changed for the better if one had friends in high places. Furthermore, there is no indication that the Anatolian gods themselves were subject to the constraints of fate, or that the cosmos was expected to develop according to a pattern ordained at the beginning of time.

On a more particular mythological level, an individual's fate was allotted by a pair of goddesses of Hattic origin, *Ištuštaya* and *Papaya*.¹⁴ An excerpt from a building ritual reads:

When the king enters the building, the Throne summons the eagle, "Come, I am sending you to the sea. When you go, spy out the grove in the steppe. Who is present (there)?" (The eagle) replies, "I have observed (them). It is *Ištuštaya* and *Papaya*, the chthonic and primeval . . . -deities who are present there kneeling." (The Throne) says, "What are they doing?" (The eagle) replies to her, "(One) holds a distaff; (others) hold full spindles. They are spinning the years of the king. There is no limit or number to the years."¹⁵

6. See Haas 1994: 372 and Melchert 1993: 109.

7. See Beckman 1983: 238–48.

8. CTH 434. Note especially KUB 33.76: 20': ^d*Gul-ša-aš ŠA LUG[AL MUNUS.LUGAL . . .]* and cf. KUB 56.20 (CTH 590) i 17': DINGIR.MAḪ ŠA NÍ.TE MUNUS.LUGAL. The attention paid to the Birth-deity of an adult suggests that one of these goddesses continued to be responsible for an individual later in life.

9. From Hurrian *ḫud-*, 'exalt; establish' (Richter 2012: 175–76).

10. At least in mythology, this was also the moment when the father might bestow a programmatic name (such as *Ullikummi*, 'destroyer of [the city] *Kumme/iya*') on his offspring. Cf. Hoffner 1968.

11. KUB 43.55 (CTH 448) ii 11–21; for transliterations see Beckman 1983: 244–45, Haas 1988: 90–91, and Taracha 2000: 58–61.

12. Of course, the Fate-deities could also intervene for ill in one's later life. Note KUB 23.85 (CTH 180): 5–6: *ziqqa* ^m*Tattamaruš DUMU.MUNUS NIN-YA DAM-anni dān ḫarta [n]u=tta* ^d*Gulšaš ḪUL-aḫta n=aš=ta=kan* BA.ÚŠ, "You, *Tattamaru*, had married my niece, but Fate mistreated you and she died on you."

13. The birth hemerologies (CTH 545, ed. Fincke 2004: 218–19, 221; cf. Beckman 1983: 14–17) are translations of Akkadian originals and probably not for practical use.

14. Haas 1994: 372–73; for full details see Franz-Szabó 1976–1980 and 2003–2005.

15. KUB 29.1 (CTH 414) i 50–ii 10; for complete translation of the text see Beckman 2010: 72–75.

The idea that the fabric of a person's destiny is spun or woven by female deities is of course paralleled by the activity of the Greek Moirai (Fates), most prominent among whom is Klotho, "the Spinner." It is uncertain whether this similarity is due to the shared inheritance of a Proto-Indo-European conception,¹⁶ or rather just reflects an obvious metaphor developed by a pre-industrial society for the creation of a complex interlocking system of happenings or ideas. And if the web of one's life is conceived of as a textile, it will certainly be women or goddesses who create it.¹⁷ At any rate, the indigenous Anatolian background of Ištuštaya and Papaya speaks against their momentous handiwork having come down to them from Indo-European forerunners. Their precise relationship to the ^dGulšeš and DINGIR.MAḪ.MEŠ/ḪI.A cannot be recovered from our sources.

Within the Hittite pantheon, this pair of spinners and weavers belonged to the circle of the underworld deity Lelwani and was worshiped in her temple,¹⁸ along with the divinized Day, ^dUD = ^dŠiwatt-, usually qualified in later texts as ^dUD.SIG₅, "Favorable Day," a euphemism for the day of one's death.¹⁹ Thus, as in many other cultures, in Hatti the life crises of birth and death were closely associated.

Between these signal events, over the course of his or her life, the Hittite was accompanied by a kind of "guardian angel," most often represented in texts by the Sumerogram ^dLAMMA. We cannot be certain that the Hittite reading of this term when it is used as a generic designation for this type of minor deity is Inara, later Kurunta, as it most certainly is when it indicates the important Protective Deity represented graphically as a stag or antlers.²⁰ Be that as it may, this tutelary figure is of male gender and had a less frequently attested female counterpart (wife or perhaps daughter), ^dAla.²¹ I believe that it is the LAMMA who is often depicted on the stamp seals of individuals of the Empire period as a horned figure shouldering a bow (Fig. 1).²² The horns, of course, are a sign of divinity²³ and their presence shows that the warrior or archer cannot be understood as a crude "portrait" of a seal's owner.

Those LAMMAS responsible for major figures in Hittite society might receive offerings in the state cult and in magical rites, as for instance, the LAMMA of the king or far less often that of the queen.²⁴ Even particular possessions, physical features, and characteristics of the monarch might have their own guardians. Among the dozens of LAMMAS worshipped in a single festival are those of the Labarna's emperor's horses, his spear, his shoulders, his (entire) body, his heroism, and his lordliness.²⁵

Befitting their status that was inestimably higher than that of the common man or woman, rulers in Hatti, at least during the Empire period, stood under the

16. So Bossert 1957: 352; contra Archi 2013: 15. On common Indo-European conceptions of fate and the Fates, see West 2007: 379–85.

17. On the predominant role of women cross-culturally in textile production, see Barber 1994.

18. Torri 1999: 11.

19. Torri 1999: 13.

20. Hawkins 2004.

21. Hawkins 2006: 56–57.

22. For example, the sealing of Mala-ziti, Herbordt 2005: 263, pl. 18, nos. 228–29.

23. See Beckman 2012.

24. For references, see van Gessel 1998: 697.

25. KUB 2.1 (CTH 682), ed. McMahon 1991: 96–115; horses (ii 13), spear (ii 14), shoulders (ii 18, iii 7–8), body (iii 6), heroism (ii 22), lordliness (ii 46).

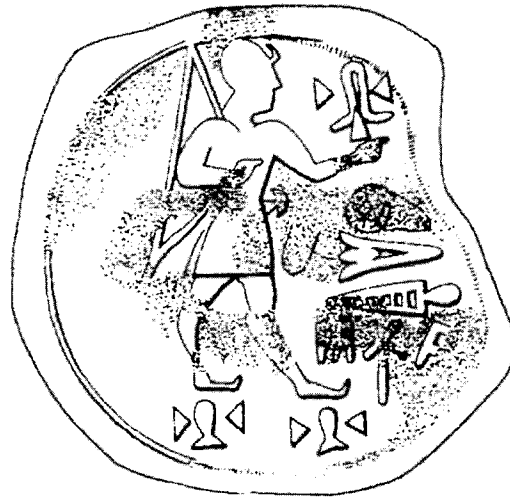


Fig. 1. Seal impression of Mala-ziti. After Herbordt 2005: 263, pl. 18, no. 229.

protection of major figures of the pantheon.²⁶ We may mention here the teams of Muršili II and the Mighty Storm-god, of Muwattalli II and the Storm-god of Lightning, of Hattušili III and Šaušga of the city of Šamuḫa—an Ištar-type, and of Tudḫaliya IV and Šarruma. This sheltering relationship is expressed verbally by the idiom “to take by the hand” and represented visually in the so-called *Umarmungsszene*,²⁷ (Fig. 2) in which a deity enfolds the ruler in a protective embrace.

The intervention of a god in human events on behalf of a protégé is known in Hittite as the exercise of *parā ḫandan(da)tar*.²⁸ The verb *ḫandāi-* means ‘to arrange; determine’; the preverb *parā* contributes the notion ‘im voraus, in advance’. Thus the shorter abstract form built directly to the verbal stem,²⁹ *parā ḫandatar*, means literally ‘prearrangement’ as a divine activity, while the longer version *parā ḫandandatar* is formed from the (passive) participle and strictly speaking would indicate the ‘(condition or result of) prearrangement’. In practice, however, these two “univerbierte”³⁰ phrases in which preverb and verb have become fused into a single lexical element³¹ are employed interchangeably and—always keeping in mind the very different theological underpinnings of the Christian religious system from which the term is drawn—might be translated as ‘providence’.

The earliest Hittite king to invoke the concept of *parā ḫandan(da)tar* is Muršili II, who in his *Annals* speaks of his patron, the Mighty Storm-god, manifesting his *parā ḫandandatar* by casting a lightning bolt upon the city of his enemy, Uḫḫa-ziti of Arzawa.³² He also attributes the demise of rebels against his dominion to the *parā ḫandatar* of the divine guarantors of an oath:

26. Thus far, major deities as protectors are attested only for kings of the late fourteenth and the thirteenth centuries. It is uncertain whether these figures replace the royal LAMMAs known from ceremonial texts, or whether they offered extra attention. See Taracha 2013.

27. See Klengel 2002.

28. CHD P: 130–33: ‘divine guidance’; HED ḫ: 105–6: ‘providence, blessedness’; EDHIL: 290: ‘providence’.

29. See Hoffner and Melchert 2008: 57 (§2.33).

30. For this grammatical phenomenon, see Kamenhuber 1974.

31. Note that the CHD has booked *parā ḫanda(nda)tar* under P.

32. KUB 14.15 (CTH 61) ii 2, ed. Götze 1933: 46: [nu=za ‘NIR.GÁ]L pa-ra-a ḫa-an-ta-an-da-tar tikkušnut.



Fig. 2. Tudḫaliya IV in the embrace of Šarruma, Yazılıkaya, Chamber B. After Bittel et al. 1975: pl. 62.

(The people of the city of Kalašma rose in revolt), [and] the Oath-gods manifested their *parā ḫandatar*. The [Oath]-gods seized them so that brother betrayed brother, friend betrayed friend, [and] they killed one another.³³

But it is Muršili's son, Ḫattušili III, who makes the greatest use of this notion as a *Leitmotiv* in his so-called "Apology."³⁴ Although styled as a dedication to his protective goddess Šaušga of Šamuḫa of goods confiscated from his defeated enemies, this document is in fact a justification of the actions of the usurper in deposing his nephew Urḫi-Teššup, who had reigned for a short time as Muršili III. According to Ḫattušili, his entire career had been guided by the *parā ḫandan(da)tar* of Šaušga.

Immediately following the heading of the text in which he introduces himself, he begins: "I shall speak of the *parā ḫandandatar* of Šaušga."³⁵ The deity had displayed this quality from Ḫattušili's earliest youth, informing his father Muršili through a dream that the boy was not long for this world—literally that he was "one whose years were short,"³⁶ and that he would thrive only if he were dedicated to her service.

33. KBo 2.5 (CTH 61) iv 14–18, ed. Götze 1933: 192–93: [nu kū]ruriḫḫir nu=šmaš DINGIR.MEŠ MĀMĪTI [pa-ra]-a ḫa-an-da-a-tar tikkušnuir n=aš DINGIR.ME[Š MĀMĪTI e]ppir nu=za ŠEŠ-aš ŠEŠ-an ḫattan peškil.

34. For thoughts on this composition, see Beckman forthcoming b.

35. CTH 81, cited according to the composite text in the edition by Otten 1981: 4, i 5: ŠA 'IŠTAR pa-ra-a ḫa-an-da-an-da-tar memaḫḫi.

36. Otten 1981: 4, i 14: ANA "Ḫattušili MUKAM.ḪI.A maninkuwanteš.

This advice was of course duly followed, and as a consequence, Ḫattušili informs us, “Whenever I became ill, as a sick man I regularly experienced the *ḫandandatar* of the deity.”³⁷ By the way, we know from various other sources that Ḫattušili never enjoyed robust health, suffering in particular from some sort of ocular disorder.³⁸

Following an accusation by his enemies of disloyalty to his brother, the king, Ḫattušili was cleared through a legal proceeding, because “On that occasion My Lady Šaušga manifested her *parā ḫandandatar*.”³⁹ When years later the break came between Ḫattušili and his nephew, the former issued the challenge: “Come, Šaušga of Šamuḫa and the Storm-god of Nerik will decide our legal case!”⁴⁰ Just as in Mesopotamia, political and military conflicts in Ḫatti were thought to be a type of lawsuit, Hittite *ḫanneššar*, with the gods serving as adjudicators. We might even consider portions of the “Apology” we have been discussing here to be Ḫattušili’s *arkuwar*, or ‘legal pleading’, before the divine tribunal.

In this composition, the course of the civil war in Ḫatti, or if one prefers, of the trial between Urḫi-Teššup and Ḫattušili, is described in but a few lines. The author reports that “My Lady Šaušga then manifested her *parā ḫandan(da)tar* in great measure”⁴¹ by appearing in a dream to Hittite noblemen, informing them that she had directed all the lands of Ḫatti to join the camp of her devotee. With such divine backing, the outcome of the struggle was literally preordained. Ḫattušili continues: “At that time I experienced the *parā ḫandan(da)tar* of My Lady Šaušga in great measure,”⁴² and he therefore succeeded in shutting up his adversary in a certain town “like a pig in a poke.” Instead of putting Urḫi-Teššup to death, however, an action for which there was ample precedent in connection with internecine strife within the Hittite royal clan, out of respect for his late brother Ḫattušili merely sent him into exile. Summing up his career, our protagonist states that “My Lady Šaušga kept installing me (in office), step by step,”⁴³ from equerry to the highest position in the land.

What observations can we draw from this review of Šaušga’s guiding hand behind the career of Ḫattušili?⁴⁴ As stated at the outset of this presentation, the Hittites held their gods to be all-powerful. The voluminous Hittite archives show us that humans could be severely punished for angering the deities through such of-

37. Otten 1981: 6, i 44–45: *mān=mu ištarakzi kuwapi nu=za=kan ṣ irmalaš=pat ŠA DINGIR^{UM} ḫa-an-da-an-da-tar uškinun*. What is the significance of the absence of *parā* here? Perhaps this lends a nuance of immediacy.

38. See the text edited in Otten and Souček 1965 (CTH 585) and Edell 1994/2: 270. In CTH 384 (tr. Singer 2002: 101–5) Puduḫepa requests that the Sun-goddess of Arinna correct Ḫattušili’s failing health in return for the service he had rendered her in recovering the city of Nerik, home of her son.

39. Otten 1981: 18, iii 15–16: *nu=za ṠIŠTAR GAŠAN-YA pa-ra-a ḫa-an-da-an-da-tar apēdani=ya meḫuni tikkušanut*.

40. Otten 1981: 22, iii 70–71: *eḫu nu=wa=naš ṠIŠTAR URUŠamuḫa ṠU URUNeriqqa=ya ḫanneššar ḫannanzi*.

41. Otten 1981: 24, iv 18: *nu=za ṠIŠTAR GAŠAN-YA pa-ra-a ḫa-an-da-an-da-tar apiya=ya mekki tekkušanut*.

42. Otten 1981: 24, iv 23–24: *nu=za ŠA ṠIŠTAR GAŠAN-YA pa-ra-a ḫa-an-da-an-da-tar apiya=ya mekki uḫḫun*.

43. Otten 1981: 26, iv 39–40: *ṠIŠTAR=ma=mu=kan GAŠAN-YA ilani ilani namma tiškit*.

44. It must be said that Ḫattušili was not always truthful in his account of events on the human level. For instance, we now know that it was not, as he claims on several occasions, at his own initiative that Urḫi-Teššup was placed upon the Hittite throne in succession to his father. Rather, the younger man had already been designated as crown prince in the lifetime of Muwattalli II. See Hawkins 2001.

fences as the breaking of oaths,⁴⁵ the misappropriation of temple property,⁴⁶ the neglect of cultic duties,⁴⁷ and so on. Consider this negative confession by Prince Kantuzzili to the Sun-god:

I have acknowledged all the superior power (*duddumar*) and wisdom of my god. I never swore to my god and then broke the oath afterwards. I never ate food that was sacrosanct to my god and hence not proper for me to eat. I have not brought impurity on my body. I never withheld an ox from (your) stable. I never withheld a sheep from (your) fold. Whenever I came upon food, I never ate it privately. Whenever I came upon water, I never drank it privately.⁴⁸

However, there is no indication in the texts that the gods themselves were bound by codes analogous to those of human morality or were conceived of as inherently just.⁴⁹ Rather, they were immortal and supremely influential beings whose actions were governed by self-interest.⁵⁰ The relationship of the individual man or woman to any deity was analogous to that of slave to master.⁵¹ To the extent that a worshipper's success reflected positively on his or her tutelary god or goddess, the deity could be expected to support that person, although admittedly we never read of conflict within the pantheon regarding the comparative fortunes of their human protégés.

The argument that whatever transpires in the world of human beings corresponds to the will of the gods, which must of course be respected, and that good fortune is a sign of divine favor and furthermore of the virtue of the recipient in the eyes of the gods, boils down to little more than "Might makes right!" One wonders how this crude doctrine might have developed had Hittite civilization survived into the more philosophically rigorous "Axial Age"⁵² of the mid-first millennium B.C.E.

45. On oaths and their enforcement by divine punishment, see Oettinger 1976: 71–76.

46. On corruption in Hittite administration, see Beckman forthcoming a.

47. As in this instance: "[I sought (the cause of) the anger] of the gods, [and I found] two old tablets. One tablet [dealt with the ritual of the Euphrates (Mala) River . . .] Earlier kings [had performed] the ritual of the Euphrates [. . .], but since the time of my father (Šuppiluliuma I) [people have been dying] in Hatti, [and] we have never performed [the ritual] of the Euphrates," KUB 14.8 (CTH 378.II.A) obv. 8'–12'. For full translations of the Plague Prayers, see Beckman 1997.

48. KUB 30.10 (CTH 373) obv. 11–17, translation from Hoffner 2003: 91.

49. Cf. Hoffner 2003.

50. For example, in attempting to persuade the gods to bring a halt to the plague, Muršili II appeals not to their compassion or their sense of justice, but to their self-interest: "Meanwhile, the aforementioned plague does not simply take it (Hatti) away, but people continue to die. These few bakers of offering bread and libation bearers who [are still here]—if they perish, no one will any longer give you offering bread or libation," KUB 14.14 + KBo 54.6 + KUB 19.1 (CTH 378.I.A) rev. 37'–40'.

51. This relationship is expressed in a passage from another of the Plague Prayers: "Listen to me, O Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, and save me! [I say] to you [as follows]: The bird takes refuge in the nest, and the nest [saves] it. Or if anything has become troublesome to some servant, and he pleads his case to his lord, his lord will listen to him and correct for him whatever had become troublesome [to him]. Or if a sin (hangs over) some servant, and he confesses the sin before his lord, then his lord may treat him however he wishes. But since he confesses his sin before his lord, the soul of his lord is appeased, and his [lord] does not call that servant to account," KUB 14.8 (CTH 378.II.A) rev. 20'–28'.

52. For a Mesopotamianist's engagement with this concept, see Machinist 1986.

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