

The Hittites Serve Their Gods

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Abstract and Keywords

In the universe of the Hittites, humans had but a single duty—to serve their deities by providing them with sustenance, praise, and entertainment. This responsibility was organized by the king (T/Labarna), who functioned as both the overseer of his subjects and their representative before their divine masters. On the one hand, in return for their loyal support, the men and women of Hatti received from their gods the boons of agricultural and pastoral plenty, victory in battle, and long years and good health. On the other hand, negligence in regard to the pantheon could result in chastisement in the form of drought, plague, barrenness, military defeat, etc. The cuneiform archives recovered from the Hittite capital and increasingly from provincial cities were compiled precisely to facilitate the supervision by the monarch and his entourage of the performance of the duties of the human community. Most numerous among these texts are programs for the ceremonies of the regular state cult, whose contents provide a detailed picture of the attention required by and accorded to the gods and goddesses of the Hittites.

Keywords: religion, Hittite, worship, Hittite, myths, prayers, vows, divination

IN a prayer seeking the aid of their gods against external enemies, the Hittite royal couple, King Arnuwanda and Queen Ašmunikal (early 14th century BCE), boast that their community is exemplary in the attention it pays to the pantheon:

And for you, O gods, only (the land) of Hattusa is truly a pure land. Only in the land of Hattusa do we regularly provide pure, substantial, and first-class festivals for you. And only in the land of Hattusa do we keep treating you with reverence.

Indeed you, O gods, know in your divine consciousness (that) no one had formerly cared for your temples as we had.

And no [one] had thus treated your [temples] with reverence. Nor had anyone cared for your [divine] possessions, silver, gold, rhyta, and garments as we had.

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Furthermore, as for the gold and silver images of you, the gods—no one [had] renewed whatever had gotten old on any god's image and whatever utensils had become antiquated as we had.

Furthermore, no one had treated you with reverence in this way in regard to the matter of the purity of your festivals, and no one had thus established for you daily, monthly, and annual festivals and rituals.

(KUB 17.21 + KBo 51.16 [CTH 375.1.A] i 5'-27'; for transliteration, see von Schuler 1965: 152-154)

But such devotion was only to be expected, since in the Hittite worldview, the very purpose of human existence was to serve their divine masters.¹ The gods, organized in a hierarchical structure reflecting that of human society, were under the authority of a couple, the Storm-god of Heaven (or of Hatti) and the Sun-goddess of the town of Arinna, who delegated the management of the men and women who looked after their needs to the Great King of Hatti, a relationship expressed concisely as follows:

When the king prostrates himself to the gods, the "anointed priest" recites as follows: "May Tabarna, the king, be dear to the gods! The land belongs to the Storm-god alone. (p. 38) Heaven, earth, and the people belong to the Storm-god alone. He has made the Labarna, the king, his administrator and has given him the entire land of Hatti. And Labarna shall continue to administer in his hand the entire land for the Storm-god. The Storm-god shall destroy whoever should approach (in a hostile manner) the Labarna, [the king], and the borders (of Hatti)."

(IBoT 1.30 and dupl. [CTH 821] 1-8; for transliteration see Archi 1979a: 31-32)

The otherwise superior beings comprising the pantheon were thought to be literally dependent on the offerings provided by the people for their sustenance. King Mursili II (late 14th century BCE), in despair over the ravages of a long-raging plague, prays to the gods and reminds them of their own stake in the welfare of the Hittite people:²

If you, the gods, my lords, [do not send] the plague [away] from Hatti, the bakers of offering bread and the libation bearers [will die]. And if they die off, [the offering bread] and the libations will be cut off for the gods, [my lords]. Then you will come to me, O gods, [my lords], and hold this (to be) an offense [on my part] (saying): "Why [don't you give] us offering bread and libations?"

(KUB 14.12 [CTH 378.III] rev. 7'-11'; no adequate modern transliteration of this text has been published. See for the present Lebrun 1980: 217)

In the following pages we will examine the practices by which the Hittites sustained and even pampered their deities—that is, their system of worship.

The Hittite Archives

But first, we must consider the character of the textual sources on which we will base our discussion. The ancients have not left us any general overviews or systematic descriptions of this area of their lives and undertakings. Rather, our knowledge of their religious activities is drawn from hundreds of practical texts³ setting forth the programs of particular religious ceremonies recovered primarily from the ruins of the Hittite capital of Boğazköy/Hattusa (located about a three-hour's drive east of the modern Turkish capital, Ankara), but also from other sites in central Anatolia and even from Meskene/Emar (Prechel 2008 and Michel 2014) on the middle course of the Euphrates.

The Hittite culture represented by these records was a multicultural society, which in its earliest times melded the languages (in addition to Hittite, these include Palaic and Luwian; Melchert 1995) and traditions of Indo-European newcomers (Watkins 1995) with institutions and conceptions taken over from the indigenous Hattic people (Klinger 1996), whom they supplanted as the masters of central Anatolia. With the borrowing of the cuneiform writing system (van den Hout 2012 and 2017) from its southern neighbors, Hittite civilization was subjected to significant influence by the ideas and beliefs of Mesopotamia (Beckman 1993 and 2013a). A further major development took place in the late 15th century BCE, when numerous elements of the hybrid Luwian-Hurrian culture of Kizzuwatna/Cilicia (Archi 2002 and Strauß 2005) were imported into Hatti. For a prime example of a rite introduced from this region see Beckman 2013c.

(p. 39) Tracing the details of the chronological development of Hittite religion over its documented history of more than four hundred years is rendered problematic by a number of factors. The basic difficulty lies with the fact that the ancient scribes employed no system of dating in their cuneiform tablets, allowing us at best to attribute a document to the reign of a particular known individual—usually a monarch—named within it. This expedient is in turn complicated by the habit of these kings of ruling under a limited number of throne names, such as Mursili or Arnuwanda, which are not usually distinguished by epithet or ordinal number. Furthermore, the Hittite bureaucrats frequently recopied earlier tablets, possibly introducing substantive as well as grammatical and terminological innovations in the process. Finally, later Hittite religious texts reveal a conscious effort to harmonize older and newer elements into a coherent state cult (Archi 2004), a process particularly visible in sources from the reign of Tudhaliya IV (late 13th century BCE; Laroche 1975).

In this essay, I will draw upon textual material from all periods, but the reader should keep in mind that details of the ideal picture I am sketching may well have been somewhat different in at various times.

The Sources

The records of the rites making up the state cult are labelled with the Sumerogram EZEN, which is customarily translated as “*Festrituale*” or “festival.”⁴ Texts of this sort, by far the largest collection of religious ceremonial records from the ancient Near East before those of first-millennium Assyria, comprise a major portion of the recovered Hittite corpus. It has been estimated that more than 40 percent of the cuneiform material recovered at Boğazköy belongs in this category (see Schwemer 2016: 7; Rutherford 2016 compares these Anatolian performances with later Greek festivals.)

As is the case with most Hittite cuneiform tablets, the festivals have been excavated in fragmentary condition, necessitating their reconstruction from numerous scattered pieces. Since their texts are often quite similar (see an example later in the chapter), varying perhaps only in the deities addressed or the quantities and types of offerings presented, sorting out the scraps and rejoining them into complete tablets has proven to be a Herculean task. The analysis of the state cult is therefore one of the least developed areas within Hittite studies, but is accordingly attracting increasing attention among contemporary scholars.

Our knowledge of Hittite religion is largely limited to the operations at the governmental level described in these documents, since the cuneiform archives of Hatti were produced exclusively by and for the use of the royal bureaucracy. Wooden tablets—which of course have not survived—were also in use among the Hittites and it has often been suggested that economic records and other documents of the general population were inscribed in this medium (see Waal 2011). That is, we know next to nothing of the worship or spiritual lives of non-elite persons in Hatti.

A partial exception to this generalization is posed by texts prescribing approaches to a god or goddess seeking relief from a particular ailment or a problem such as depression or family strife. Designated by the Sumerian label SISKUR or SÍSKUR, “*magische Rituale*” or “ritual” (CTH 390–500), these rites are attributed to individual local healers at home in (p. 40) towns scattered throughout the Hittite realm. They had apparently been collected in the capital so as to be on hand should the king or any member of his entourage be afflicted with the troubles they address. These “rituals” present a narrow window on otherwise undocumented Anatolian folk religion. They will not be discussed further here (cf. Beckman 1999).

To return to the official program of worship, additional information can be drawn from requisition (*MELQĒTU*) lists, particularly those for the KI.LAM or “Gatehouse” Festival (CTH 523; Singer 1983: 141–170 and 1984: 102–119), which specify the material requirements for the celebration in question and designate the official or community responsible for their supply. The Instructions for Temple Personnel (CTH 264; Miller 2013: 244–265) prescribe proper etiquette within sacred precincts, and the records of a survey of local cults carried out under Tudhaliya IV include data on the divine images, furnishings, and ritual calendar in numerous outlying villages.⁵ Scattered passages in texts of other gen-

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res, such as myths, prayers, vows, and divination reports, also contribute to our knowledge of Hittite worship. Finally, a handful of Hieroglyphic Luwian texts mention offerings, particularly of sheep and bovines (Hawkins 2000: 147, 270).

Artistic depictions of offering scenes are found on rock reliefs (e.g., at Fraktın), orthostats (including at Alaca Höyük and Malatya), cultic vessels of precious metal (*BIBRÛ*; Güterbock 1989), large jars decorated in appliqué relief (Bitik, İnandık, and Hüseyindede vases; Yıldırım 2007), and occasionally in glyptic (for example, Beyer 2001: sealings A62, A70, A71). Examples of *Schnabelkannen*, “duck-billed jugs”—the Hittite libation vessel par excellence—and offering utensils of other shapes, as well as pieces of miniature votive pottery (Schoop 2011: 247–49), have been recovered at Boğazköy and other sites. On Hittite art see Willemaers (1973 and 1977) and the well-illustrated surveys of early Anatolian art by Bittel (1976) and Darga (1992).

The Beneficiaries

Those to whom sacrifice was made include gods and goddesses both prominent and obscure; indeed, many of the “Thousand Gods of Hatti” are known solely from their appearance in lists of offerings. Anthropomorphic deities were customarily present in the form of statues or stelae (Hutter 1993). Offerings to divinized mountains and springs and those to personified objects of majesty, such as the throne and locations in sacred buildings, including the four corners, pillars, wall(s), windows, and hearth (Popko 1978 and Haas 1994: 262–275), were mostly delivered directly to the recipient.

Deceased kings and their close relatives, having attained the status of minor deity, might be allotted modest offerings in the course of their funerary rites (Kassian et al. 2002; van den Hout 1994) and periodically afterwards.⁶

The Officiants

In principle, the king served as the chief priest of all of the Hittite gods (Taggar-Cohen 2006: 27–28), and he was accordingly most frequently the offerant (*Opferherr*) in (p. 41) ceremonies of the state cult. In somewhat later texts, the queen might assist the monarch, or even preside in her own right. A prince or even a symbolic hunter’s bag (Haas 1994: 454–456) could also be delegated to represent the royal house. The symbolic role of the monarch and his immediate family as the foremost servants of each and every deity was expressed by a royal progress held twice yearly through the towns of north-central Anatolia that constituted the original core of Hatti. These journeys lasted about a month in each instance. The spring event was called the “Festival of the Crocus,” the autumn version the “Festival of Haste” (see Güterbock 1960 and 1961, as well as Nakamura 2002).

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Despite his significance in the cult, the ruler himself was not a religious specialist (Klinger 2002: 110). While a focus of attention, his participation in a rite was usually limited to such token actions as momentarily holding an offering or sanctified object and then handing it on to a professional officiant (Wright 1986). That is, he was “walked through” the ceremony by the other participants and did not have to acquire and retain knowledge of the technical procedures. Of course, his other administrative, military, and judicial responsibilities (Beckman 1995) would have left little time for such arcana. When animals were sacrificed, the actual slaughter and butchery were commonly left to culinary experts.

In addition to priests, those persons whose working lives were exclusively dedicated to the care and feeding of the gods included members of numerous service professions (palace servant, cook, baker, waiter, janitor, etc.), who were also to be found in the palace (see Daddi 1982:144–203) and undoubtedly other elite households. The highest-ranking religious professionals were designated by the Sumerograms ^{LÚ}SANGA and ^{LÚ}GUDU₁₂, if male,⁷ and by NIN.DINGIR or ^{MUNUS}AMA.DINGIR^{LIM}, if female.⁸ These functionaries were assisted or accompanied in ceremonies by a multitude of minor officiants whose designations in many cases elude translation.⁹ Responsibility for the poorly documented routine sacrifices in provincial temples and village shrines fell to the district governor and local officials,¹⁰ who often had a priest or two at their disposition.

It is important to keep in mind that the priests and their assistants functioned solely as representatives of the crown. They had no corporate organization and do not seem to have exercised any political influence. Indeed, with the exception of a prince who bore the epithet ^{LÚ}SANGA (Bryce 1992) we do not know the personal name of a single “priest.” The term appears almost exclusively in festival texts, designating a generic practitioner.

The Ceremonies

From the viewpoint of the human community, the goal of worship was to assure the flourishing and goodwill of Hatti’s deities and to secure their cooperation in the smooth functioning of the universe.

We might imagine that the attention paid to a deity or deities in the course of a festival mirrored—*mutatus mutandis*—the quotidian experience of the king among his courtiers, for which we unfortunately have little direct evidence. Beyond the offerings of food and drink, which we will discuss in some detail later, Hittite cult ceremonies might feature entertainment in the form of song, dance (de Martino 1989, 1995), athletic competitions (Carter 1988 and Hutter-Braunsar 2014), circus performances,¹¹ and even historical (p. 42) reenactments. An amusing example of the latter is found in a festival of the Storm-god of the town of Gursamassa:

They divide up the young men and name them. They call half of them “Hittites” and the other half “the men of the town of Masa.” The Hittites have weapons of

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bronze, while the men of Masa have weapons of reed. Then they fight and the Hittites prevail. They take a prisoner and dedicate him to the deity.

(KUB 17.35 [CTH 525.2] iii 9–15; for transliteration see Kloekhorst 2004: 245)

Although there is no explicit mention in the texts of the venue in which the Hittite royal prayers (CTH 371–389; Singer 2002: 1–18) were spoken, it is probable that they were all delivered in the context of what we are calling festivals.¹² What better moment to make a request of your superior than immediately after you have provided him or her with a lavish meal and entertainment?

Through a sequence of physical acts, incantations, and offerings, festivals manipulated and cajoled the god(s) or demonic force(s) to accede to the needs and desires of the patient. The following excerpt from the “Festival of Haste” will provide an impression of the proceedings:

The king and the queen toast the deity Tuhasel while seated. The *halliyari*-men play the large lyres. The jesters speak. The declaimer shouts. The *kita*-man calls out. The cupbearer brings in a sour loaf from outside. He gives (it) to the king. The king breaks (it). The cupbearer holds the bread out to the king and carries it away. The pure priests bring in the *zahurti*-seats. The waiters take the *zippulani*-bread. The crouching (cupbearer) comes in.

The king and the queen toast the deity Karmahili while seated. The *halliyari*-men play the large lyres. The declaimer shouts. The crouching (cupbearer) squats. Nothing is poured into the *isqaruh*-vessel. He sets about (libating) twice. The cupbearer brings in a sour loaf from outside. He gives (it) to the king. The king breaks (it).

The cupbearer holds (the bread) out to the king and carries it away. (The waiters) take the *saramma*-bread of the chief of the palace servants. The crouching (cupbearer) comes in.

(KUB 11.34 and dupls. [CTH 626] v 38'–vi 6; for transliteration see Nakamura 2002: 234–37)¹³

Occasion

The more prominent gods and goddesses of Hatti received daily bread and beverage offerings. Therefore temple employees were required to be at their posts “in the morning at the gods’ breakfast” (KUB 13.4 [CTH 264.A] iii 72–73, ed. Miller 2013: 260–261). Depending on local tradition, various periodic (monthly, yearly) and seasonal festivals featuring lavish sacrifices were also performed for these divinities. Some of these latter were tied to particular agricultural activities, such as the “Festival of the Sickle,” but most commonly documented are simply the “Autumn Festival” and the “Spring Festival.” These

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rites constituted a pair which centered respectively upon the filling of storage jars (p. 43) with the fruits of the harvest and the opening of the same vessels to retrieve the seed corn (Archi 1973). Certain festivals also had a “great” version (EZEN.GAL) that was performed only at long intervals, usually of five years (Schwemer 2016: 8 n. 23).

The cultic calendar of the capital was an elaborate one and included offerings for most if not all of the deities honored in Hittite territory, and as we have already seen, the king and his family each year made two long journeys through the heart of the land in order to take part in the religious ceremonies in provincial towns.

Time of Day

Often the texts specify the time of day at which an offering should be given. A rite might be scheduled for the early morning or at midday. Evening is frequently mentioned, picturesquely described as “when at night a star twinkles.” Nighttime and the predawn twilight also occur.

Location

Worship was most often performed in a place demarcated from the profane sphere (Gonnet 1992, Beckman 2013b, and Archi 2015). Monumental buildings or parts thereof—temple,¹⁴ chapel, enclosed courtyard, *Éarkiu-* (“cult-niche?,” “canopy?”), and palace/guest house (*Éhālentuwā-*)¹⁵—were frequent locations for sacrifice in the state cult. In such a setting, the divine image, the altar and/or offering-table provided the focus of activity. Some offerings to chthonic deities required the digging of an artificial offering pit in the earth.¹⁶

The Offering

We may understand an offering or sacrifice as the ceremonial transfer of a physical object from an individual human or a community of humans into the possession of a deity, demon, personified numinous entity, or any other para-human being for the sustenance of that being and/or for the purpose of securing goodwill and thereby influencing his/her/its actions (Beckman 2004).

Materials

Since sacrifice was held to nourish the gods, the preponderance of offerings were of food-stuffs. These included raw products like honey, oil, and fruit; processed foods such as flour, ghee, and cheese; and a wide array of baked goods, some in peculiar shapes.¹⁷

(p. 44) Potable liquids (wine, beer, milk, *tawal*, *walhi*, etc.; see Del Monte 1995) were employed in the frequent libations.

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Hittite deities enjoyed a diet far more extravagant than that of the ordinary Anatolian peasant, as evidenced most strikingly in their prodigious consumption of meat (Ünal 1985; and on the physical remains of animal victims, Popkin 2013), sometimes in astounding quantities, in one festival amounting to 1000 sheep and 50 oxen (Haas and Jakob-Rost 1984: 16–17). The usual sacrificial animals in Hatti were those domestic beasts whose meat humans also consumed most frequently—sheep, goats, and cattle. Wild animals, such as gazelle, stag, bear, boar, and leopard, were offered but seldom. Dogs, swine, and horses were killed only for special purposes, primarily in order to appease chthonic forces and the dead (Collins 2002: 320–326).

Sacrificial victims had to be pure (*suppi-*), that is, healthy and unblemished. Severe sanctions applied to any temple worker found to have substituted his own inferior animal for a prize specimen intended for a deity. On occasion it was necessary that a female animal be virgin, and sometimes the victim had to be of the same gender as the offerant. As a general rule, black animals were offered to chthonic gods, white or light-colored ones to all other divinities. Although raptors (eagle, falcon) appear infrequently already in Old Kingdom rites (16th to 15th centuries BCE), the sacrifice of fowl, usually through incineration, was introduced rather late, as part of the Hurro-Luwian “Kizzuwatnaean” cult. Non-food gifts to the gods, including silver, precious objects, landed estates, and persons, are mentioned in vows (De Roos 2007) and were doubtlessly assigned to temples and their associated economic establishments (Klengel 1975 discusses the role of temples in the Hittite redistributive economy). In any event, such donations do not really constitute sacrifices in the sense understood here.

Types

The bewildering variety of Hittite sacrifices can be reduced to five ideal types: (1) attraction offerings, in which paths of fruit, sweets, and colored cloth intended to draw in the honored deities were laid out converging on the ritual site (esp. CTH 483–485); (2) non-blood offerings consisting primarily of baked goods and libations of beer, wine, etc.; (3) animal sacrifice followed by a communal meal; (4) burnt offerings (restricted to ceremonies adopted from Syrian or Cilician sources, i.e., the “Kizzuwatnaean” cult); and (5) “god drinking.”

It must be recognized that these ideal types do not reflect any native Hittite terminological distinctions. Only in the Empire Period was an elaborate vocabulary borrowed from Hurrian and Luwian to designate types of offering (Haas and Wilhelm 1974: 59–126), and then it was employed primarily in texts of the “Kizzuwatnaean” milieu. Some of these numerous terms designate the procedure to be followed (e.g., *ambašši*, “burnt offering”), others the material employed (*zurgi*, “blood”), the purpose of the rite (e.g., *itkalzi*, “purification”), or the problem to be eradicated (e.g., *arni*, “sin”).

The general principle informing Hittite offering technique was that the material given had to be destroyed, in whole or in part, in order to pass over to its recipient in the divine

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(p. 45) world. Thus liquids were poured out (on the ground, offering table, or altar), breads were broken or crumbled, vessels were smashed, and animals were killed.

Bearing in mind that any particular rite might show considerable variation, and that the scribes frequently omitted mention of one or more features, we may summarize Hittite sacrificial procedure: The priest or officiant, cultic implements, and the offering itself were ritually purified (*suppiiahh-*), after which the offerant washed his hands in water (*ŠU.MEŠ wetenit ans-*). In the state cult, either of these acts might involve the use of *tuh-huessar* or some other aromatic substance (Alp 1983a, de Martino 1998, and Zeilfelder 2000). If the offering was small in size it was handed to the offerant; if it was large, he set his hand upon it, thereby establishing his patronage of the ceremony. The offering was made (through breaking, scattering, libation, etc.) by either the officiant or the offerant him- or herself. The sacrifice concluded with the obeisance of the offerant before the deity (*aruwai-*, *hink-*).

Animal sacrifice was somewhat more complicated (Kühne 1986). After the initial ritual cleansing, the victim, which might have been gaily decorated with ribbons or objects of precious metal, was driven into (*anda unna-*) the temple or sacrificial location and dedicated (*sipant-*) to the recipient. A “sample” (*anahi-*) of the animal—probably a lock of hair—was conveyed to the deity, after which the beast was driven out (*parā penna-*) once more. The victim was then killed (*huek-*, “to slaughter”; *kuer-* “to cut”; *hattai-* “to pierce”) and butchered (*ark-*, *mark-*) or dismembered (*arha happesnai-*), usually away from the immediate offering site. The animal’s death might be accompanied by a joyous shout from the participants (Collins 1995a).

There often followed the consumption of the slaughtered beast by the god(s) and worshippers (Archi 1979b and Collins 1995b).¹⁸ Divine taste favored fat and those internal organs thought to be the site of life and the emotions—liver and heart above all, but also the gall bladder and kidneys. These entrails were roasted over the open flame (*happinit zanu-*), chopped, and served to the recipient on bread, as a kind of open-faced sandwich. The remainder of the carcass was dismembered, cooked as a stew, and shared by the humans present. The skin or hide of the victim could fall to the offerant, the officiant, or the butcher.

Certain rites attributed particular importance to the victim’s blood (Haas 1993 and Beckman 2011). In these instances the throat of the animal was slit in the presence of the deity and the stream of blood directed from the neck arteries (*auli-*) upward (*sarā huek-*) or downward (*katta huek-*) toward the divine statue or symbol, or into a bowl or a pit. If purification was the purpose of the ceremony, the person or object to be cleansed might be smeared with the blood.

The later Hurro-Luwian burnt offerings were holocausts, with little or nothing remaining for the human participants. The victims—most often birds but sometimes also a sheep or goat—were incinerated in a portable brazier, optionally accompanied by condiments such as bread crumbs, honey, fruit, flour, salt, etc. (Haas 1994: 558–565).

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A practice peculiar to the Hittites was “god-drinking,” which was performed only by the king or by the royal couple, often for a long series of divinities in succession. This act is expressed by the syntagma divine name/DINGIR^{LAM} *eku-*, “to drink DN/the deity.” Grammatically, the divinity is the direct object here, and some scholars (Kammenhuber 1971 and Güterbock 1998) believe that we must understand this construction literally as denoting some sort of mystical partaking of the essence of the god or goddess by the royal person(s). Others, correctly in my opinion (Puhvel 1957, Melchert 1981, and Goedegebuure 2008), interpret this as a shorthand expression for “drinking to the honor of” or “toasting” a deity.

(p. 46) Vocabulary

General terms in Hittite for sacrifice are simple *pai-*, “to give” and BAL = *sipant-*, literally “to libate” a liquid, which acquired the extended meaning “to dedicate, devote” an offering of any sort, including animals (Goetze 1970). Baked goods were customarily “crumbled” (*parsnai-*), flour “strewn” (*ishuwai-*, *suhha-*), and liquids “poured out” (*lahuwai-*). See previous section for technical terms for butchery. The Hieroglyphic Luwian verb for “sacrifice” is ^{LIBARE}*sarli-*, *sasarla-*.

Substitute or “Scapegoat” Rituals

These procedures (Janowski and Wilhelm 1993: 109–69) do not belong in the category of offerings, because their purpose was not the bestowal of a gift on a deity, but rather the disposal of impurity, sin, blood-guilt, or other unwanted quality. Nonetheless, they must be mentioned here because in many cases they were performed not for an individual, but on behalf of a societal collectivity, such as the Hittite army. Their goal was accomplished through the transferal of the moral or literal pollution (*papratar*) from the patient onto a living carrier, who was then either driven off into the wilderness or killed. In the latter instance the victim, along with the associated evil, was indeed definitively removed from the human realm, but this practice is really a magical one. The few attestations of “human sacrifice” in Hittite texts are to be interpreted in this manner (Kümmel 1967: 150–168).

Abbreviations

CTH

= Laroche 1971

IBoT

—*Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Bulunan Boğazköy Tabletleri*

KBo

—*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*

KUB

—*Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*

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Notes:

(1.) A similar notion prevailed in Mesopotamia, perhaps best expressed in the Old Babylonian Poem of Atrahasis; for a translation, see Foster 2005: 227–253.

(2.) For a fuller discussion of the relationship of the people of Hatti to their gods, see Beckman forthcoming. The standard reference work on Hittite religion is Haas 1994. English-language surveys include Gurney 1977, Popko 1995, Beckman 2005, and Taracha 2009. McMahon 1995 provides a handy sketch.

(3.) Whether these texts are "prescriptive" or "descriptive" in character in the sense discussed by Levine 1983 is not always clear, but the fact that alternatives are sometimes as presented—for example, the cost of an offering in a "ritual" might vary according to the

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economic status of an offerant—suggests that the former label is closer to the mark. See Miller 2013: 24–25.

(4.) These compositions are gathered as nos. 591–720 in Laroche 1971 (CTH), to be supplemented by additions listed on the website of the Hethitologie-Portal Mainz: http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/hetkonk_abfrageF.php. The classic survey of this genre is by Güterbock 1970.

(5.) These texts (CTH 501–530) are usually referred to as *Bildbeschreibungen* or “cult inventories.” For editions of portions of this corpus see Jakob-Rost 1961, 1963 and Hazenbos 2003.

(6.) These are described in the so-called “royal lists” (CTH 661), studied most recently by Carruba 2008; see Gilan 2014 for their value as historical sources. The cult of the royal ancestors was likely a glorified version of that offered by the living to their progenitors by any Hittite family, but supported and carried out by the state on behalf of its leader (see Görke 2004).

(7.) The first term, which indicates a kind of temple accountant in its original Sumerian context, seems to have had several Hittite readings. The Hittite lexeme behind the second, whose Akkadian equivalent is *pašīšu*, “anointed priest,” is unknown. For a thorough study of the Hittite priesthood, see Taggar-Cohen 2006 and cf. Klinger 2002.

(8.) NIN.DINGIR is read *entu*, “high priestess,” in Akkadian; its Hittite translation is not known. ^{MUNUS}AMA.DINGIR ^{LIM} is a pseudo-heterogram invented by Hittite scribes to express the native *siwanzanna-*, lit. “deity’s mother.” On this writing see Weeden 2011: 146–148.

(9.) Attestations of these occupations, including those of musicians and other entertainers performing before the gods, have been gathered in Daddi 1982: 204–435.

(10.) See §§31’–36’ of the Instructions for the Frontier Post Governors (CTH 261.I), edited by Miller 2013: 226–229.

(11.) Relief slabs at the site of Alaca Höyük depict such activities, including a sword-swallower and acrobats climbing an unsupported ladder. See Fig. 1 and Gurney 1994.

(12.) The tablet presenting the prayer of Mursili II to the god Telipinu is headed: “The scribe reads out [this] tablet daily, [and] thereby praises the god” (KUB 24.2 and dupl. [CTH 377.B] obv. 1–2); for transliteration see Kassian and Yakubovich 2007: 428. I believe that this recitation took place in the course of the daily service to this deity.

(13.) Rieken 2011 describes the technical language of the festival texts, which is characterized not only by special vocabulary and idioms, but by ellipsis of grammatical elements, reflected in this translation by material in parentheses.

(14.) On the physical layout of Hittite sacred buildings, see Zimmer-Vorhaus 2011; on the rites associated with their construction, see Beckman 2010.

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(15.) Wilhelm (2015: 94) has recently shown that this term can refer to a structure in a provincial city in which the travelling monarch spends the night as well as to the royal residence in the capital.

(16.) Such rites, which usually involved the slaughter of a piglet, or sometimes a puppy, are most often found in the magical rituals. See Collins 1990, 2006 and Hoffner 1967.

(17.) See Hoffner 1974 and 2001 on the Hittite diet and particularly the myriad of different baked goods offered to the gods. Albayrak et al. 2008 is an exercise in “experimental archaeology,” attempting to create some of the culinary items mentioned in Hittite festivals. Interestingly, most of our knowledge of Hittite comestibles—limited as it is—is drawn from these festivals.

(18.) Some occasions featured a communal meal, called the “great assembly [lit. seating]” (*salli assessar*); see Alp 1983b: 68–86. Unfortunately, we do not know which members of the community were entitled to attend this banquet, although we do learn that privileged foreigners might on occasion be invited.

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