

Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie

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A. Zgoll

Religion. B. Bei den Hethitern.

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§ 1. General. By “religion” is meant here the complex of conceptions concerning the character of parahuman elements in the cosmos, the relationship of men and women to these beings and forces, and the

practices by which humans interact with them.

Pioneering studies of religion in Hatti are Furlani 1936 and Dussaud 1945, while Haas 1994 is exhaustive. Useful sketches include Beckman 1989; id. 2005; Güterbock 1950; Hoffner 1987; id. 1989; Otten 1964. Popko 1995 covers the beliefs and cult of later periods in Anatolia as well.

§ 2. Sources. Since the Hittites left to posterity no surveys of their religion or theological treatises, it is necessary to reconstruct their religious life from scattered evidence. Cuneiform texts from the Hittite capital Boğazköy/Hattuša* and to a lesser extent from provincial sites such as Mašathöyük*/Tapikka and Kuşaklı/Şarišša* include prayers (Gebet* and Hymne in Hatti), programs for ceremonies of the state cult (Fest* bei den Hettitern), magical rituals (Magie* und Zauberei B), mythological narratives (Mythologie* A. II), records of divinatory procedures (Orakel* B), inventories of the contents of shrines, etc.

The excavated remains of numerous temples, some with extensive office precincts and storage facilities, demonstrate the important place of religion in Hittite society and administration (Neve 1975; id. 1993; Güterbock 1975; Klengel 1975).

Artistic evidence for Hittite religion (Beckman 2004) is provided by images of deities in metal, ivory, and other valuable materials (Güterbock 1983), by seals and their impressions (Beran 1967; Herbordt 2005), by sculpture on rock faces (Kohlmeyer 1983; Alexander 1986; Ehringhaus 2005) and freestanding stones, and by ceramics featuring scenes of worship in relief (Boehmer 1983).

§ 3. Problems. Several difficulties confront the student of Hittite religion. First, it must be recognized that almost all of the available sources pertain to the state cult or to the spiritual needs of the royal family. We have very little information concerning the religious beliefs and activities of the majority of the population. Second, Hittite religion was an amalgam of elements drawn from a number of “Kultschichten”:

ancestral Indo-European (Watkins 1995, 247–251), indigenous Hattic (Klinger 1996), Luwian (Hutter 2003), Hurrian (Trémouille 1999), and Mesopotamian (Güterbock 1958; id. 1978), but it is hazardous to assume that particular spiritual features of these cultures documented only elsewhere were equally valid at Ḫattuša (cf. Haas 1994, *passim*). Finally, the continuous development of central Anatolian civilization makes it impossible to present a picture accurate in all details across the 500-year history of Ḫatti.

§ 4. Divinity (Gott* D).

§ 4.1. *Labeling*. In their cuneiform texts, Hittite scribes placed the divine determinative (DINGIR) not only before the names of proper gods and goddesses, but also before those of demons (e.g., ^dWišuriyant, Carruba 1966, 48 f.), topographical features such as springs (e.g., ^dIšhašhurija* *al-danniš*, KUB 38, 1 i 10) or mountains (e.g., ^dHulla, van Gessel 1998, 155–157; Lombardi 2000), even parts of temples (e.g., ^dHašša, “hearth”, Popko 1978, 51 f.). That is, this diacritic could be employed to mark any parahuman and immortal force with the power to intervene in the affairs of humankind.

§ 4.2. *Manifestation* (Hazenbos 2003). For the most part, Hittite deities were conceived as human in form, as evidenced by the gods and goddesses in the processions at the shrine of Yazılıkaya* (Alexander 1986), but some might also be depicted theriomorphically (e.g., Bittel 1976, Abb. 214). On occasion, an anthropomorphic divinity is accompanied by his or her animal as a means of transportation (e.g., Neve 1993, cover) or merely as a mascot (e.g., Bittel 1976, Abb. 239). For purposes of worship, a god might be held to inhabit an anthropomorphic image, a worked stele (e.g., Bittel 1976, Abb. 247) or a stone left in its natural state (both called *huwaši*, Hutter 1993), or a manufactured symbol such as a disk of gold (e.g., KUB 38, 37 iii 8–11), etc.

§ 4.3. *Assimilation and cooptation*. As polytheists, the Hittites could comfortably

honor an unlimited number of deities. In the course of their political expansion, they made use of this flexibility by accepting into their pantheon (Pantheon* A. II) the gods and goddesses of conquered areas. This process began as early as the Old Kingdom with the welcoming of the Storm-god of Aleppo into Ḫatti (Klengel 1965) and gained momentum in the fifteenth century with the incorporation of numerous Hurrian deities (Hoffner 1998, 184–189). The community of deities worshiped grew so large that it was referred to as the “Thousand Gods of Ḫatti” (Karasu 2003).

Divinities of similar type often share a generic designation; thus we find “the Storm-god (^dIŠKUR/U) of Pittiyarik” and “the Storm-god of Šapinuwa”, or “the War-god (^dZABABA) of Arziya”, and “the War-god of Illaya.” The extent to which such gods were considered “avatars” of a single deity is uncertain, but it should be noted that in cultic texts offerings are devoted to each individual member of the class (cf. Beckman 1998, 4 f.).

Explicit syncretism, particularly of Hurrian and Anatolian deities, is attested only in the Empire period (Wilhelm 2002).

§ 4.4. *Organization*. In certain respects, the divine world mirrored human societal structure. The pantheon was hierarchical and was ruled by a king, the Storm-god of Ḫatti – later Tešsub* (e.g., KUB 21, 1 iv 3), and a queen, the Sun-goddess of Arinna – later Ḫepat (e.g., KUB 6, 45 i 10 f.). With their children and grandchildren, these monarchs constituted a family, as did other groups of deities in various Hittite towns, for instance Zašhapuna, Zaliyanu, and Tazzuwašši of Tanipiya (Beckman 1982a, 20). When warranted by common concerns, such as the witnessing of treaties or the rendering of judgment, the gods met in assembly (*panku*, *tuliya*, Beckman 1982b, 436 f.).

§ 5. The universe.

§ 5.1. *Cosmology*. We know next to nothing about Hittite conceptions of the origins of the cosmos. However, a ritual passage relates that in primeval times the

celestial and chthonic deities took possession of their respective realms, and that human beings were created by Mother-goddesses (Muttergöttin* A. II), presumably from the clay of a riverbank (Otten/Siegelová 1970).

§ 5.2. *Interdependence.* The universe of the Hittites was an integrated system, with no clearcut boundaries between its levels. Under the right circumstances, gods might mingle with humans (cf. the cult legends of the *purulli*-festival, Beckman 1982a; Neujahrsfest* C; Ritual* B), and a man might become a minor deity (see § 8). As in Mesopotamia, the role of humans was to serve the gods, providing for their sustenance, pleasure, and entertainment (s. Libation*). That the gods were actually dependent upon this attention is evident from a passage in a prayer of Muršili II, who reminds them of the consequences of an outbreak of plague: "All of the land of Ḫatti is dying, so that no one prepares the sacrificial loaf and libation for you. The plowmen who used to work the fields of the gods have died, so that no one any longer works or reaps the fields of the gods. The millerwomen who used to prepare the sacrificial loaves of the gods have died, so that they no longer make the sacrificial loaves. As for the corral and sheepfold from which one used to cull the offerings of sheep and cattle – the cowherds and shepherds have died, and the corral and sheepfold are empty. So it has come about that the sacrificial loaves, libations, and animal sacrifices are cut off. Yet you come to us, o gods, and hold us responsible in this matter!" (KUB 24, 3 ii 4'-7').

In return for the necessary maintenance, satisfied deities would cause crops to thrive, domestic animals to multiply, human society to prosper, and Hittite armies to prevail in battle. Conversely, neglected or offended gods and goddesses could wreak havoc on an individual, a household, or all of Ḫatti. Attested manifestations of divine displeasure include epidemic, military defeat, and the illness of the king (s. Seuche*). When confronted with misfortune, it was necessary that the indi-

vidual sufferer – or the royal establishment on behalf of the community as a whole – determine which deity was angry, the cause(s) of his or her rage, and the appropriate ameliorative measures (Hoffner 2003).

The power of deities to determine human affairs was known as *parā hand(anda)atar*, literally "prior arrangement" (HED 3, 105 f.), but often best rendered as "providence." For example, in his "Apology" (CTH 81, Otten 1981), Hattušili III attributes his successful career to the *parā handatar* of his patron goddess, Šaušga* of Šamuḫa.

§ 5.3. *The role of the king* (Beckman 1995). The human monarch stood at the intersection of the divine sphere with that of humans, constituting the linchpin of the entire structure. He was responsible for ensuring that the people of Ḫatti properly performed their obligations to their divine masters. In principle, the king directed all societal religious activities, serving as the high priest of every god (KUB 14, 10 i 10 f.), most importantly that of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, protector and proprietor of the Hittite state.

While it was necessary for the king to delegate most of his religious duties, he appeared before the gods in person to present Ḫatti's *arkuwar*, "plaidoyer" (Sürenhagen 1981, 138–140), when they visited punishment upon Ḫatti, as documented in the "Plague Prayers of Muršili II" (Lebrun 1980, 192–239; Gebet* und Hymne in Ḫatti).

§ 5.4. *Communication.* It was of crucial importance that the monarch and the gods maintain a regular exchange of information so that difficulties in the functioning of the cosmos might be rectified to their mutual benefit. The king reported to his divine lords through his prayers (Gebet* und Hymne in Ḫatti), but traffic in the other direction was more complex. As Muršili II demanded of the gods concerning the cause of an epidemic, "Either let me see it in a dream, or let it be established through an oracle, or let a prophet (lit. 'man of god') speak of it. Or all the priests shall perform

an incubation rite (lit. 'sleep purely') concerning that which I have instructed them" (KUB 14, 10 iv 9–13 and dupls.). Thus the communications media employed by the gods were of two types: those of which the gods availed themselves on their own initiative (omens), and those whose use was solicited by humans (oracles).

§ 5.4.1. Omens (Omina* B). A god might contact a person directly through a dream (Mouton 2006) (Traum* B), cause someone to utter a prophecy (Hoffner 1992, 103), or send a sign in the form of unusual human or animal behavior (Hoffner 1993). The sign might also be an astronomical occurrence (a solar or lunar eclipse, shooting star, etc.), a meteorological phenomenon (e.g., a lightning strike), or any abnormal terrestrial event.

§ 5.4.2. Oracles and divination (Orakel* B). Alternatively, a specialist serving in the Hittite religious bureaucracy could pose a question to a deity and receive a reply through various procedures (Kammenhuber 1976; Beal 2002). Divinatory techniques utilized included extispicy (Schuol 1994), augury (Archi 1975), incubation* (Mouton 2004), and the still mysterious "lot" (KIN) oracle (Orlamünde 2001). The various methods were often employed in series as checks upon one another.

§ 6. State cult. The religious ceremonies conducted at regular intervals – daily, monthly, yearly, or at some point in the agricultural cycle – are designated by the Sumerogram EZEN, "festival" (Güterbock 1970). During these observances, gods and goddesses were lavished with attentions that were likely similar to those customarily enjoyed by the king and his courtiers. The divinities were praised and provided with food and drink (Opfer* A. II). They were entertained by singers and dancers (de Martino 1995), amused by jesters (de Martino 1984), and they observed the best efforts of athletes in various competitions (Carter 1988). Strict standards of purity were enforced for officiants (Moyer 1969; de Martino 2004). Celebrations might also include a communal meal for a wider circle

of human participants (Mahlzeit* B; Archi 1979a; Collins 1995).

§ 7. Magical rituals (Magie* und Zauberei B). The Hittite scribes employed the Sumerogram SISKUR/SÍSKUR, "ritual", as a label for *rites de passage*, including those concerned with birth (Beckman 1983), puberty (Güterbock 1969), and death (Otten 1958; Kassian et al. 2002), as well as for ceremonies that were performed only as the need arose – for exigencies such as illness, impotence, familial strife, etc. These lamentable conditions were held to result from the influence of sorcery or black magic (*alwanzatar*) (Hoffner 1997, 309 f.), and/or from infection with *papratar*, "impurity" (Moyer 1969, 38 f.) The immediate goal of treatment was to remove these malign influences, a task largely accomplished through the use of analogic magic (Beckman 1999), which almost always featured a spoken incantation. Women were particularly prominent among magicians (Beckman 1993).

Many of the descriptions of magical rituals found at Hattuša had been collected from practitioners resident in various towns throughout the Hittite imperium, seemingly in order to make knowledge of their recommended procedures available to magical specialists attending the royal family, should one of its members suffer from any of the relevant problems (Beckman 1983, 249). This body of folk remedies gathered from all over Hatti affords a rare window onto the beliefs and practices of the common people of Anatolia.

§ 8. The individual's lot. The birth of each person was overseen by a group of Mother-goddesses (DINGIR.MAH^{meš/hi.a}) and Fate Deities (Gulšeš; Gulš*-Gottheiten) (Beckman 1983, 243–246), one of whom seemingly accompanied the individual throughout life as a kind of "guardian angel." The relationship of this protector to a man or woman's Tutelary Deity (^dLAMMA) is obscure (McMahon 1991).

The existence of a son of Hatti did not end with death (Tod* C). Rather, he or she passed to an underworld, about which we

are regrettably very poorly informed. We do learn, however, that in this Anatolian Sheol even close relatives failed to recognize one another, and that their daily fare was mud and dirty water (Hoffner 1988). Despite their pitiful lot, the spirits of the dead (*akkant*, GIDIM; sometimes personalized as the deity Zawalli) could nonetheless intervene for good – but usually ill – in the business of their living descendants (Archi 1979b).

As indicated by the euphemism for the death of a member of the royal family, “to become a god” (DINGIR^{lim} *kiš-*), the king and his closest relatives were thought to enjoy a more pleasant afterlife. Indeed, a passage from a royal funerary ritual indicates that the deceased monarch became the owner of a herd of livestock grazing in a kind of Elysian Fields (Otten 1958, 139 f.), perhaps a fond reminiscence of a simpler lifestyle practiced by his forebears prior to entering the orbit of the civilizations of the ancient Near East.

It appears that there was a change in the ideology of kingship during the final decades of the existence of the Hittite state, and that the ruler came to embrace divine status even during his lifetime (van den Hout 1995).

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G. Beckman

Reptilien s. Schlange(nkult).

Rēši/u s. Rāši/u (Arašū).

Rettick s. Obst und Gemüse A. I. § 4.3.

Reuther, Oscar. * 20. Oktober 1880 in Hemer (Westfalen), † 5. August 1954 in Heidelberg. Deutscher Bauforscher, Architekt und Ausgräber.

Wie mehrere der deutschen Mitarbeiter bei Koldeweys Grabung in Babylon studierte R. an der TH Dresden Bauforschung unter C. Gurlitt. In Babylon arbeitete R. 1905–1912 im wesentlichen an der besonders gelungenen Schichtengrabung der Wohnhäuser und des Ištar-Tempels im Merkes-Gebiet. Während der ersten Grabungsjahre nahm R. auch traditionelle Wohnhäuser in Bagdad und anderen Städten Iraks für seine 1909 an der TH Dresden eingereichte Dissertation auf. Von Babylon aus unternahm R. eine Expedition zum frühislamischen Schloß Uḫaidir. Weitere Grabungstätigkeiten folgten auf Samos 1913 und 1925–1930. In Ktesiphon war R. 1928–1929 Leiter der ersten Grabungskampagne.

R. stand im Dienst der Berliner Museen 1905–1914, 1918–1919; Professor für Geschichte der Baukunst an der TH Dresden 1920–1945 und Rektor an der TH Dresden 1932–1933. Nach dem Luftangriff auf