

# From an Antique Land

*AN INTRODUCTION  
TO ANCIENT NEAR  
EASTERN LITERATURE*

EDITED BY  
CARL S. EHRLICH

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.  
*Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK*

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.

Published in the United States of America  
by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.  
A wholly owned subsidiary of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.  
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706  
www.rowmanlittlefield.com

Estover Road  
Plymouth PL6 7PY  
United Kingdom

Copyright © 2009 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

*All rights reserved.* No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any  
means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,  
without the prior permission of the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:**

From an antique land : an introduction to ancient Near Eastern literature / edited  
by Carl S. Ehrlich.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7425-4334-8 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-7425-4334-X (cloth : alk. paper)

eISBN-13: 978-0-7425-6347-6

eISBN-10: 0-7425-6347-2


1. Middle Eastern literature—History and criticism. I. Ehrlich, Carl S.

PJ307.F76 2009

809.56—dc22

2008018559

Printed in the United States of America

 The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of  
American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for  
Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

# Chapter 5

---

## Hittite Literature

*Gary Beckman*

### THE HITTITES AND THEIR RECORDS

#### The Hittite Empire<sup>1</sup>

The Hittite people dominated what is now central Turkey politically and militarily for most of the second millennium BCE. The heartland of their realm lay within the bend of the Kızıl Irmak (the Classical Halys), which they called the Maraššantiya<sup>2</sup> River. By no later than the middle of the seventeenth century (see Table 5.1), their rulers had established a state, known as Ḫatti or as “the land of the city of Ḫattuša” after their capital. The imposing ruins of this city are located at the modern village of Boğazköy (now renamed Boğazkale),<sup>3</sup> about 150 km east of Ankara.

The fortunes of Ḫatti waxed and waned, but the Hittites usually controlled Asia Minor from the upper reaches of the Euphrates in the east to Classical Phrygia and the Konya plain in the west. Although they exercised influence over the small principalities of the Aegean coast, they never annexed this region politically. To the north, between Ḫattuša and the Black Sea coast, the Hittites were confronted with an unruly population they called the Kaška. Although these “swineherds and weavers of linen”—as a Hittite text describes them—lived at a pre-state level of social organization, they nonetheless posed a continual threat to overrun the homeland in times when Ḫatti was weak. In the southeast, the area that the Greeks would call Cilicia was conquered early in Hittite history, but then fell under the influence of the Syrian polity of Mittanni. Later it enjoyed a period of independence under the name of Kizzuwatna, only to be reabsorbed by Ḫatti in the mid-fourteenth century.

**Table 5.1**  
**Historical Chart**

Generation	Date			
0			c. 1650	
	(0) Huzziya			
I	(1) Labarna I <i>son of 0</i>			
II	(2) Labarna II = Hattušili I <i>nephew of 1</i>			
IV	(3) Muršili I <i>grandson of 2</i>	(4) Hantili I <i>brother-in-law of 3</i>	1595 <sup>a</sup>	
V	(5) Zidanta I <i>son-in-law of 4?</i>			
VI	(6) Ammuna <i>son of 5</i>			
VII	(7) Huzziya I <i>son of 6?</i>	(8) Telipinu <i>brother-in-law of 7</i>	(10) Taḫurwaili <i>unknown</i>	
VIII	(9) Alluwamna <i>son-in-law of 8?</i>		c. 1500	
IX	(11) Hantili II <i>son of 9</i>			
X	(12) Zidanta II <i>unknown</i>			
XI	(13) Huzziya II <i>son of 12?</i>	(14) Muwattalli I <i>unknown</i>	c. 1450	
XII	(15) Tudḫaliya I <i>son of Kantuzzili</i>			
XIII	(16) Arnuwanda I <i>son-in-law of 15</i>			
XIV	(17) Tudḫaliya II <i>tuḫukanti</i> = Tašmi-šarri <i>son of 16</i>			
XV	(17a) Tudḫaliya III, "the younger" <i>son of 17</i>	(18) Šuppiluliuma I <i>son of 17</i>	1338 <sup>b</sup> , 1323 <sup>c</sup>	
XVI	(19) Arnuwanda II <i>son of 18</i>	(20) Muršili II <i>son of 18</i>	c. 1321 <sup>d</sup> , 1312 <sup>e</sup>	
XVII	(21) Muwattalli II <i>son of 20</i>	(23) Hattušili III <i>son of 20</i>	1275 <sup>f</sup> , 1259 <sup>g</sup> , 1245 <sup>h</sup>	
XVIII	(22) Muršili III = Urḫi-Teššub <i>son of 21</i>	(24) Tudḫaliya IV <i>son of 23</i>	(25) Kurunta <i>son of 21?</i>	c. 1239 <sup>i</sup>
XIX	(26) Arnuwanda III <i>son of 24</i>	(27) Šuppiluliuma II <i>son of 24</i>		
	Fall of Hatti		c. 1180	

**Table 5.1**  
**Historical Chart**  
*(continued)*

---

**Datable Events**

- a. Hittite capture of Babylon (Muršili I)
- b. Correspondence with Smenkhkare (Šuppiluliuma I)
- c. Marriage request from widow of Tutankhamon (Šuppiluliuma I)
- d. Accession of Muršili II
- e. Solar eclipse (Muršili II)
- f. Battle of Qadesh (Muwattalli II)
- g. Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty (Ḫattušili III)
- h. Egyptian-Hittite dynastic marriage (Ḫattušili III)
- i. Battle of Nihriya (Tudḫaliya IV)

Whenever their grip on Anatolia was firm enough, the kings of Ḫatti extended their rule beyond the Taurus Mountains into the prosperous region of northern Syria, extracting tribute and adding to their military capacity through the exaction of levies of infantry and chariotry from vassal rulers. The initial forays in this direction came in the late seventeenth century, under the command of the first great Hittite ruler, Ḫattušili I, and then of his adopted son and successor Muršili I. The former led his armies into Syria, broke the power of the dominant local polity Yamhad (Aleppo), and put an end to the system of interdependent city-states that had existed there throughout the Old Babylonian period. The latter king captured the city of Aleppo itself and proceeded down the Euphrates to raid Babylon, an act that led to the extinction of the dynasty of Ḫammurapi.

But other groups than the Hittites would be the beneficiaries of these early campaigns: The Kassites, whose ethnic affinities remain obscure, moved into Mesopotamia from the northeast to take power in Babylonia, and the Hurrian people, who may have emerged from the Caucasus in the late third millennium, established their dominance in northern Syria in the form of the loosely organized federation of Mittanni. This Hurrian state flourished during the fifteenth century, first confronting the power of Egypt in Asia and later reaching a *modus vivendi* with the kingdom of the Nile. (On the history of Mittanni, see Wilhelm 1989: 16–41.)

Meanwhile, over the course of the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries, Ḫatti gradually shrank back into its core within the Kızıl Irmak, but for lack of relevant sources we can say little about the details of this process. It is clear, however, that the Hittite state suffered a profound military crisis in the early years of the fourteenth century. Enemies pressed upon Ḫatti from every direction, and even the capital was sacked.

A positive turn in Hittite fortunes came with the accession to the throne of Tudḫaliya II, who after early setbacks campaigned widely and successfully within Anatolia and perhaps beyond. He was succeeded by a son, Tudḫaliya III, but the latter was soon murdered in a military coup and replaced by his

brother Šuppiluliuma I, who had already proved himself an experienced and victorious general under the reign of Tudḫaliya II. Although this bloody change of ruler was by some in later years regarded as an offense against the gods, it ushered into power the greatest of all Hittite kings.

In a series of campaigns, Šuppiluliuma first secured his Anatolian territories and then subjugated Mittanni, taking over the lion's share of the latter kingdom's domain in Syria. Moving south, the Hittite conqueror reached the Egyptian-controlled territory of Amka (the Beqā' Valley). Prisoners taken from this region introduced a deadly plague into Ḫatti, which claimed Šuppiluliuma himself as well as his son and initial successor Arnuwanda I among its victims. This brought to the throne a younger son, Muršili II, apparently still a raw youth, as he relates in his *Annals*.

The new Hittite empire now faced a great challenge: Šuppiluliuma had not had the time to consolidate his conquests, and many newly subjugated regions seized the opportunity presented by an untested overlord to throw off the Hittite yoke. In his own account, Muršili explains how, with the help of Ḫatti's patron goddess, he was able to defeat all the rebels within ten years and how he put his realm on a firm footing through a series of administrative measures. Nonetheless, he still faced the depredations of the epidemic, which seems to have lasted far into his lengthy reign.

Under the following ruler, Muršili's son Muwattalli II, the Hittite Empire came into direct conflict with Egypt, which had been reasserting itself in Syro-Palestine under Seti I and Ramses II following a period of relative decline of its imperium under the "heretic" Pharaoh Akhenaten and his short-lived successors. At the head of a huge army made up of contingents from his vassal states as well as from Ḫatti itself, Muwattalli successfully confronted the forces of Pharaoh Ramses II at the Battle of Qadesh in 1279 (see Klengel 2002).

Another two decades of low-intensity conflict passed between the two ancient superpowers before a treaty was concluded in 1259 between Ramses and Muwattalli's brother and second successor Ḫattušili III. This peace was further secured when the Hittite king sent two daughters in succession to marry the pharaoh. Subsequently, Egypt and Ḫatti divided control over Syria-Palestine, with the former dominating the southern coastal region, while the latter held sway inland and along the northernmost coast approximately as far south as the Beqā'.

While the peace between the Egyptians and Hittites would last until Ḫatti itself disappeared amid the turmoil of destruction, political unrest, and displacement of peoples that marked the end of the Late Bronze Age around 1200–1150 BCE, within Ḫatti itself conflict prevailed. Ḫattušili had usurped the Hittite throne from Muwattalli's son and immediate successor Muršili III (Urḫi-Teššub), and the struggle between the line of Ḫattušili and that of Muršili dominated the final decades of Hittite history. This internal discord, along with military defeats at the hands of an expansionist Assyria, the pres-

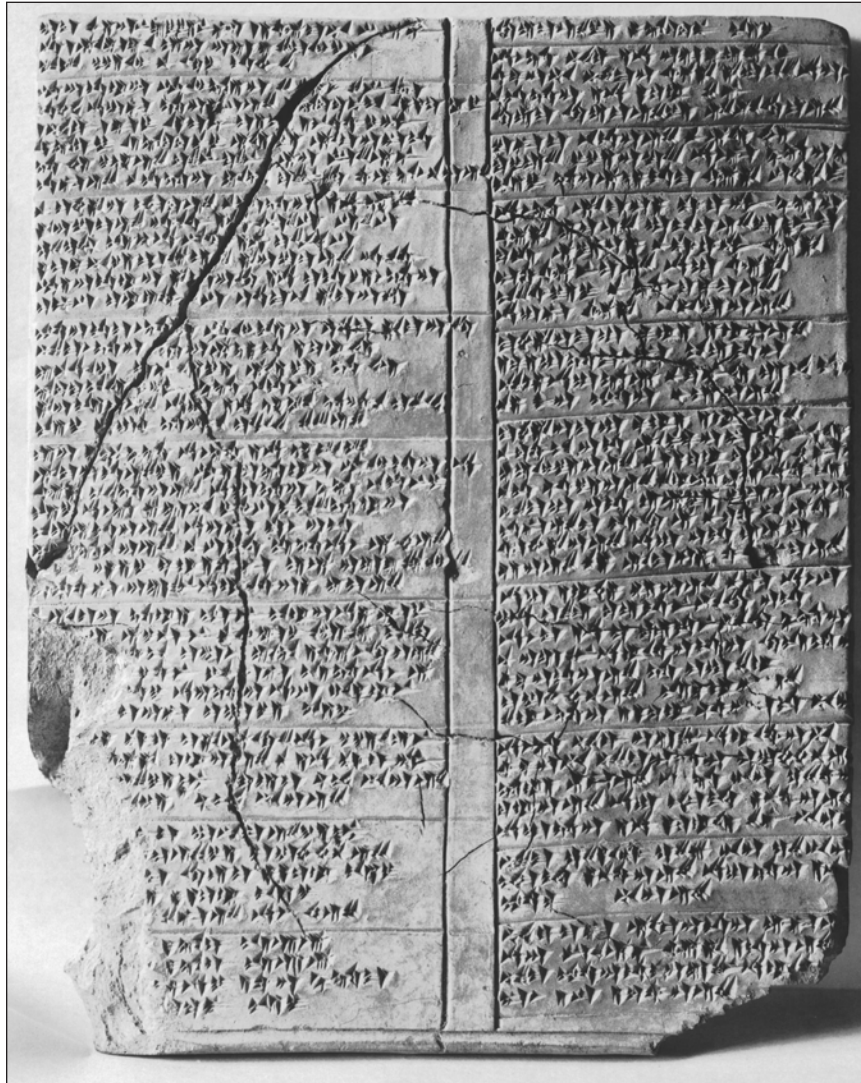


Figure 5.1 Large Hittite ritual text (NBC 2506, Obverse). Tablet with the text of a ritual authored by the magical practitioner Anniwiyanni. Directed to a pair of tutelary deities, the rite was intended to alleviate the failure of a man or a woman to engender or deliver healthy children.  
Source: Yale Babylonian Collection.

sure of large migrations in the eastern Mediterranean, the constant raiding of the Kaška, and possibly widespread famine, was undoubtedly one of the factors that contributed to the ultimate collapse of Ḫatti.

Although the politically fragmented “Neo-Hittite” city-states that flourished in Syria during the Early Iron Age (up until the end of the eighth century BCE) carried on many cultural traditions of the earlier Hittite civilization, they have left us little in the way of written records beyond a number of monumental inscriptions and will not concern us here.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hittite Records**

For scholars studying the history and culture of Western Asia during the Late Bronze Age, one of the most important sources of textual material is the body of cuneiform tablets retrieved from the ruins of the Hittite capital (van den Hout 2005). Excavated by German expeditions from 1906 to the present,<sup>5</sup> the site has yielded some 30,000–35,000 texts and fragments, representing perhaps some 3000–3500 original tablets (van den Hout 2002). Smaller groups of tablets and sealings have also been found at Tapikka (modern Maşat Höyük), Šarišša (Kuşaklı), and Šapinuwa (Ortaköy)—all in central Anatolia—and at Tarsus in Cilicia, as well as at Ugarit (Ras Shamra), Alalah (Tell Atchana), and Emar (Meskene) in Syria, at Akhetaten (Tell el-Amarna) in Egypt, where the Eighteenth-Dynasty pharaoh Akhenaten established his short-lived capital, and at the Kassite capital of Dūr-Kurigalzu (Aqar Quf) in Babylonia.

### **The Languages of Ḫatti**

As recognized already in the earliest days of Hittitology, eight different languages make an appearance in documents from Ḫattuša: The bulk of the texts were composed in Hittite (Hoffner and Melchert 2007), called by the ancients themselves “Nesite” after the town of Kaneš/Neša, which was an early center of Hittite settlement in Anatolia. The state administrative language throughout Hittite history, Hittite has been assigned by linguists to the Anatolian sub-family of Indo-European (Beckman 1996).

Next in prominence at Ḫattuša is the Semitic Akkadian, whose West Peripheral variety—basically a simplified form of the language of contemporary Babylonia—was employed by the Hittite chancellery for international correspondence and many diplomatic instruments (such as treaties and their codicils), as well as for certain prestige purposes (including land grants and royal edicts), even within the Hittite realm itself.

Upon their arrival in Anatolia, the Indo-European newcomers encountered an indigenous population whose language supplied many loan words to Hittite and was also used in a number of rituals of the state cult (Soysal 2004). Within an overall Hittite context, these compositions addressed to members of the traditional local pantheon contain passages to be spoken in the ancient language of the land. Being both polytheistic and practical,



the Hittites believed that it was more productive to adopt the deities of conquered areas than to expel them, and furthermore that divinities of foreign origin were most effectively worshipped in their native tongue. For this reason, samples of the pre-Hittite language of central Anatolia have been preserved. Early Hittitologists sometimes referred to this idiom as “Proto-Hittite,” but it is more properly called “Hattic,” as by its speakers themselves.

Similarly, a few rituals contain short portions in Palaic (Carruba 1970; Melchert 2004), an Indo-European language that flourished along the Black Sea coast in north-central Anatolia during the time of the Hittite Old Kingdom (seventeenth/sixteenth centuries). Since Palaic seems to have died out by the beginning of the fifteenth century, it enjoys the dubious distinction of being the earliest known Indo-European tongue to become extinct.

More long-lived was a third language of this group, Luwian (Melchert 2003; Payne 2004). At home in southern Anatolia, from the Aegean to the Taurus Mountains, Luwian exercised a significant influence on Hittite from the earliest recorded era, and even seems to have replaced it as the spoken language of the majority of the population of the land of Ḫattuša by the thirteenth century (van den Hout 2006). Luwian survived the extinction suffered by Hittite with the fall of Ḫatti, being employed in the royal inscriptions of the small northern Syrian successor states during the Early Iron Age. Its close relative Lycian was spoken in western and southern Anatolia well into the Hellenistic period.

At Ḫattuša, Luwian is represented in two different writing systems, the usual cuneiform script and the so-called Hittite hieroglyphs.<sup>6</sup> The cuneiform material once again includes passages within ceremonies of the state cult, as well as incantations embedded in magical rituals. Many Luwian lexemes were borrowed into Hittite, while others even appear in Hittite context as undigested foreign words, albeit usually marked as intrusive with gloss wedges. The “hieroglyphic” system, so called because its constituent signs are still recognizable images of human body parts, animals, buildings, common objects, etc., was employed on royal and personal seals from as early as the fifteenth century, and in the thirteenth century was adopted for the display inscriptions of the Hittite kings (Hawkins 1986). It is very likely that under the Empire the hieroglyphs were also used on wooden tablets, on which see more below.

Ḫattuša has provided the single greatest accumulation of material in Hurrian from any site. This language (Wegner 2000; Wilhelm 2004), a distant cousin of the later Urartian and possibly related to tongues spoken today in the Caucasus, is attested throughout Syria and eastern Anatolia over the entire span of the second millennium. Although Hurrians are mentioned in Hittite texts from as early as the seventeenth century, the impact of their language and culture on Hittite civilization is first in evidence during the

Middle Hittite period of the fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup> At the Hittite capital, in addition to Hurrian inclusions in Hittite-language ceremonies, we encounter unilingual Hurrian myths and tales, as well as a bilingual Hurrian-Hittite wisdom text (*The Song of Release*), whose evidence has facilitated the recent rapid advances in our understanding of this language. Hurrian loan words in Hittite are very common in rituals composed under the Empire (mid-fourteenth–early twelfth centuries).

The study of the Sumerian language, in which many texts belonging to the Mesopotamian religious and scholarly canon were written, was a component of advanced instruction in the cuneiform script at Ḫattuša, just as in its homeland of Syria, Babylonia, and Assyria (Beckman 1983). However, the frequent errors on display in Sumerian texts inscribed at the Hittite capital indicate that the Anatolian scribes were not particularly adept students of this idiom of erudition.

The last of the eight languages attested at Ḫattuša is once again Indo-European, albeit not a member of the Anatolian subfamily. A handful of technical terms in an Indic dialect (e.g., *tri-wartanna*, “three laps,” *sattawartanna*, “seven laps”) appear in the well-known manual for the training of chariot horses attributed to the Mittannian expert Kikkuli (Kammenhuber 1961).<sup>8</sup> Of course, despite the significance that these linguistic traces have for the reconstruction of the early movements of speakers of Indo-European, it cannot be maintained that any form of Indic was a language actually in use at the Hittite capital, any more than the presence there of Egyptian is indicated by the garbled titulary applied to Ramses II in the heading of Akkadian letters addressed to him by the Hittite chancellery.

### The Hittite Archives

In date, the bulk of the Boğazköy tablets must be assigned to the reigns of Ḫattušili III and of his son and successor Tudḫaliya IV, that is, to the final third of the thirteenth century. Of course, many ancient records, some going back to as early as the seventeenth century, were also retained and often recopied when they began to deteriorate. On the other hand, very little material from the time of Tudḫaliya’s sons, Arnuwanda III and Šuppiluliyama II, has come to light, but this is undoubtedly due to the gradual abandonment of the capital early in the twelfth century (Seeher 2001). The tablets of the final rulers of Ḫatti, if indeed they ever existed in any quantity, are to be sought elsewhere.

In the discussion that follows, I will use the term “Hittite” (Güterbock 1959) to refer to all documents produced by the scribes of Ḫatti, regardless of the language in which they were composed.

The German excavators have uncovered pieces of cuneiform documents throughout the precincts of Ḫattuša (Pedersén 1998), sometimes as stray

finds or as fill in later Hittite or Phrygian construction. However, significant collections of tablets still in or near their ancient contexts have been found in two buildings on the royal acropolis of Büyükkale, in a magazine at the main temple (Temple I) in the Lower City, and in the “Haus am Hang” (“House on the Slope”)—possibly a scribal school—nearby. In addition, several smaller groups of texts have turned up in recent years in the ruins of the more modest temples of the Upper City.

Attested genres (Laroche 1971) of Hittite texts include treaties and diplomatic correspondence, instructions to guide officials in the performance of their duties, inventories of the contents of royal storehouses, land donations, court records and other administrative documents, letters exchanged by the king with his officials and with subordinate kings, historical narratives, literary texts, and lexical compilations (bi- or trilingual “dictionaries”).

But by far the majority of Hittite texts are religious in character, at least to our manner of thinking. Thus we possess literally hundreds of texts detailing the proper performance of the ceremonies of the state cult. Hittitologists customarily refer to these as “festivals.” There are also a great many rituals intended to counter such misfortunes as illness, impotence or barrenness, depression, domestic strife, etc. To these must be added prayers and hymns in praise of deities, records of divination by which the wishes of the gods were queried, manuals for such practice, and documents employed in cultic administration: descriptions of divine images, lists of goods due to the temples, donations to religious institutions, etc.

### **Elite vs. Commoners; Cuneiform vs. Hieroglyphics**

Significantly, in contrast to the situation for most periods in ancient Mesopotamia, we have practically no records produced by or for nonelite residents of Hatti. Surely such documentation once existed, for it is inconceivable that a complex society like that of the Hittites could have functioned without documentation of the duties owed by its members to one another and to the state, or of their fulfillment. Indeed, we read in several texts of the use—and abuse—of receipts, although none have been recovered.

The answer to this puzzle must be that the records of ordinary persons, as well as the more ephemeral documentation of the state, such as the aforementioned receipts for deliveries and disbursements, had been written on perishable material. Note that a set of instructions for the commander of the border guard (*CTH*<sup>9</sup> 261) provides for his adjudication of cases brought to his attention by means of “a sealed wooden or clay tablet.” A list of the numbers of various classes of personnel required for the staffing of a temple office calls for 23 scribes of wooden tablets and only 19 specialists in inscribing clay tablets. Not only does this demonstrate the important role that this perishable class of documentation must have played in Hittite

administration (Marazzi 1994)<sup>10</sup>—at least in the later years of Ḫatti—but the fact that the two classes of literate specialists are distinguished suggests that their qualifications differed by more just than the surface upon which they wrote. Could it be that those who inscribed the wooden tablets did so in a script other than cuneiform, that is, in the hieroglyphic system? If both types of scrivener wrote in cuneiform, why would it have been necessary to recognize a separate profession for the wood scribes?

Be that as it may, two major deposits of clay bullae bearing impressions of the seals of both kings and of lesser authorities have been found at Boğazköy (Herbordt 2006). While some of these tags may of course have been attached to cords attesting to the integrity of shipping containers, it is just as reasonable to assume that others were instruments of authentication for now-vanished wooden records. It is significant that a group of land donations inscribed on clay tablets was recovered along with the bullae in one cache. Of course, all this ultimately tells us about record keeping in Ḫatti is that much of the relevant evidence has been lost.

Among the Hittites, writing in the cuneiform system seems to have been a royal prerogative. Note that only the seals of the Great King and of the immediate members of his family might bear an inscription in the Mesopotamian script (van den Hout 2006: 222), either alone or in association with hieroglyphs.<sup>11</sup> All other persons were restricted to the use of the latter type of writing. In general, cuneiform was employed solely in the service of the royal establishment in order to facilitate the carrying out of its various tasks.

### **In the Service of the King and the Gods**

Here it will be useful to introduce a few remarks about the paramount position of the monarch in Hittite society and government (Beckman 1995a). The Hittite ruler was the intermediary between his people and the deities who, in Hittite belief, were the actual proprietors of Ḫatti. As such, he both represented the Hittite populace before their divine masters and was responsible for the actions of humans on behalf of the pantheon, “the Thousand Gods of Ḫatti.”<sup>12</sup> The burdens of the Hittite ruler were tripartite, and were reflected in the triple nature of his office: He served as the Chief Priest of each and every god and goddess, as Commander-in-Chief of the military forces, and as the highest authority in administrative and judicial matters. Of course, the king was obliged to delegate most of his day-to-day duties to subordinates, but he remained personally responsible for the successes and failures of his deputies as well as for his own.

Not surprisingly, as an extension of the royal person, the Hittite administration was patrimonial rather than bureaucratic, to employ Weberian terms. In addition to other designations, most high officials bore the title “prince,” a qualification that probably indicates descent from any occupant

of the Hittite throne and not only from the current ruler. That is, the Hittite ruling class was in principle<sup>13</sup> coterminous with the extended family of the monarch. This group is referred to as “the Great Family/Clan.”

All of the types of cuneiform records mentioned earlier can be interpreted as supporting the efforts of the king and his kinsmen in the service of the gods. For religious texts this purpose is obvious. Administrative and diplomatic material regulated the operation of the state whose surplus production and booty ultimately sustained the divine world. The royal annals and *res gestae* functioned as reports by the ruler of his activities on behalf of his para-human superiors. Even the literary material may have been utilized in training the scribes necessary for the functioning of the entire system. Or perhaps such texts provided entertainment and instruction for the ruler and his court, strengthening their will and capacities for fulfilling their duties. And so on. But the kinds of record we have not recovered from Hatti—personal letters, house deeds, wills, etc.—were irrelevant to the business of the state and were therefore not written in cuneiform.

### What is Hittite Literature?

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that the concept of *belles lettres*, or “art for art’s sake” in written form, was foreign to the Hittites. What texts, then, should be treated here in a discussion of Hittite “literature”?<sup>14</sup> The approach I have adopted is to consider all forms of narrative, whether fictional or ostensibly factual, as part of the literature of Hatti. Therefore our corpus will include not only mythological accounts, histories, and wisdom compositions, but sections in texts such as treaties, instructions for bureaucrats, and prayers to the gods in which a presentation of past events is employed to bolster an argument.

For practical reasons I have not considered prescriptive texts such as law codes, technical manuals, or programs for religious ceremonies. Correspondence and monolingual foreign-language texts likely employed for purposes of scribal education have also been omitted.

### Poetry

In contrast to the writings of many other ancient peoples, Hittite literature seems to be almost entirely in prose (Beckman 2005: 256–57). Only one or two short passages have been identified as displaying metrical or stress patterns. But this impression may be misleading because of the technical characteristics of the Hittite texts themselves. First of all, cuneiform is not well suited for the precise rendering of the phonology of an Indo-European language such as Hittite, since the ability of any syllabic writing system to express consonant clusters is limited. Furthermore, the Hittite scribes routinely employed

**Table 5.2**  
**Genres and Major Works**

---

**Mythology**

- Anatolian Mythology
  - The Moon that Fell from Heaven*
  - Illuyanka*
  - The Vanishing God*
  - Telipinu and the Daughter of the Sea*
- Foreign Mythology
  - Mesopotamian Mythology
    - The Epic of Gilgamesh*
    - Atraḫasīs*
  - Hurrian "Songs"
    - The Song of Kumarbi*
    - The Song of Ḫedammu*
    - The Song of Ullikummi*
    - The Song of ḏLAMMA*
    - The Song of the Sea*
  - Syrian Mythology
    - The Myth of Elkuniršu*

**Epics and Tales**

- Hurrian Tales
  - The Story of Appu*
  - The Sun-god, the Cow, the Fisherman, and His Wife*
  - The Tale of Kešše*
- Mesopotamian Epics
  - The Saga of Gurparanzaḫ*
- Narratives concerning Sargonic Kings
  - King of Battle*
  - The Travails of Naram-Sin*

**Historiography**

- Fantastic Narratives of Early History
  - The Zalpa Text*
  - Anum-Ḫirbi*
  - The Cannibal Text*
  - The Crossing of the Taurus*
  - The Siege of Uršu*
- Royal Annals
  - The Annals of Ḫattušili I*
  - The Ten-Year Annals of Muršili II*
  - The Extensive Annals of Muršili II*
- Res Gestae
  - The Deeds of Ḫattušili I*
  - The Deeds of Muršili I*
- The Chronicle of Ammuna
  - The Deeds of Tudḫaliya I*
  - The Deeds of Arnuwanda I*
  - The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I*

**Table 5.2**  
**Genres and Major Works (*continued*)**

---

	<i>The Deeds of Ḫattušili III</i>
Royal Inscriptions	<i>The Anitta Text</i> <i>The Conquest of Cyprus</i>
Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions	<i>The Nişantaş Inscription</i> <i>The Yalburt Inscription</i> <i>The Südburg Inscription</i> <i>The Emirgazi Altars</i>
<b>Historical Narrative in Other Genres</b>	
Royal Edicts	<i>The Succession Edict of Ḫattušili I</i> <i>The Proclamation of Telipinu</i> <i>The Apology of Ḫattušili III</i>
Treaties	
<b>Royal Prayers and Hymns</b>	
Mesopotamian Hymns	<i>Hymns to the Storm-god</i> <i>Hymn to Ištar</i>
From the Mesopotamian Tradition	<i>Hymns to the Sun-god</i> <i>Prayer of Kantuzzili</i> <i>Prayer of a King</i> <i>Prayer of a Mortal</i>
Hittite "Pleas"	<i>Prayer of Arnuwanda I and Ašmunikal</i> <i>Plague Prayers of Mušili II</i> <i>Prayer of Mušili II on behalf of Gaššuliyawiya</i> <i>Prayers of Ḫattušili III and Puduḫepa to the Sun-goddess of Arinna</i>
Miscellaneous Prayers	<i>Prayer to the Sun-goddess of the Earth</i> <i>Prayer of Muwattalli II to the Divine Assembly</i>
<b>Wisdom Literature</b>	
Native Wisdom	Proverbs <i>The Palace Chronicle</i>
Imported Wisdom	<i>The Song of Release</i> <i>Praise of a Mother</i> Dialogue between Šupē-amēli and His 'Father'

---

ideograms, or “word-signs,”<sup>15</sup> for many common words, thus hiding their phonological shape from the uninitiated reader. Finally, those scholars who inscribed the tablets did not indicate breaks between lines of poetry—if such there were—by means of punctuation or line division.

But it is indeed likely that those compositions known as “songs”—see below—were fundamentally poetic, since the singing of a relatively fixed text to rhythmic and/or musical accompaniment implies an underlying metrical and/or stress pattern. However, given that the “songs” are without exception renderings of Hurrian or Akkadian works, it is possible that only the foreign originals were in verse, while their Hittite reworkings have been reduced to prose.

## MYTHOLOGY<sup>16</sup>

The definition of *myth* is extremely contested (Doty 2000), but most commentators agree that a myth is narrative in form. For our purposes, a myth will be understood as a tale set in the distant past that somehow explains aspects of the reigning cosmic order. Myths are to be differentiated from epics, stories that also often have an etiological function, in that the protagonists of myths are primarily deities, while the central characters of epics are humans, albeit often those enjoying special characteristics.

### Anatolian Mythology

Little if anything in Hittite mythology can be recognized as deriving from Indo-European sources (Puhvel 1987: 139–40).<sup>17</sup> Rather, by “native” Anatolian myths I mean those taken over by the Hittites from their Hattic predecessors in the region. These tales are easily identifiable by the presence of deities associated with this ethnic group. All Anatolian myths are embedded in ritual contexts; that is, they were recited as part of a religious ceremony.

#### *Extensive Mythological Narratives*

The cultural affinities of The Moon that Fell from Heaven<sup>18</sup> (CTH 727; ANET, p. 120; Hoffner 1998a, hereafter noted as *Hittite Myths*, No. 12) are obvious, since the text is a Hattic-Hittite bilingual. Unfortunately, the available manuscripts are all fragmentary, and our weak command of Hattic prevents us from making much use of the narrative in that language. The tale is part of a ritual, to be performed “when the Storm-god thunders frightfully.” The Hittite-language version begins: “[The Moon]-god fell from [Heaven].<sup>19</sup> He fell [upon] the gate-building, [but] no one saw [him]. The



Storm-god [sent] rain after him. He sent the rains after him. Fear seized [him; anxiety] seized him."

Illuyanka or The Combat of the Storm-god with the Dragon (*CTH* 321; *ANET*, pp. 125–26; *COS* 1.56; *Hittite Myths*, no. 1; edition: Beckman 1982) is explicitly identified as the cult-myth of the *purulli*-festival held each spring in the sacred city of Nerik. The text presents two alternate narratives in which the Storm-god overcomes an initial defeat at the hands of Illuyanka ("Serpent"). His reliance upon the assistance of a human helper in each story underlines the joint responsibility of deities and humankind for the maintenance of the cosmos. On the other hand, the demise of the mortal partner illustrates the danger of too intimate contact with the divine sphere.

The second version:

The serpent defeated [the Storm-god] and took his [heart and eyes] . . . (The Storm-god) took the daughter of a poor man as his wife, and he sired a son. When he grew up, (the son) took the daughter of the serpent as his wife. The Storm-god instructed his son: "When you go to the house of your wife, then demand from them (my) heart and eyes!" When he went, he demanded from them the heart, and they gave it to him. Afterwards he demanded from them the eyes, and they gave these to him. He carried them to the Storm-god, his father, and the Storm-god thereby took back his heart and eyes. When he was once more sound in body as of old, he went once more to the sea for battle. When he gave battle to him and was beginning to get the better of the serpent, the son of the Storm-god was with the serpent and shouted up to Heaven, to his father, "Include me—do not show me any mercy!" Then the Storm-god killed the serpent and his (own) son.

The Vanishing God (*CTH* 323–36; *ANET*, pp. 126–28; *COS* 1.57; *Hittite Myths*, no. 5) is often called The Telipinu Myth after its best-known protagonist. But in fact, any deity—including mother-goddesses and the tutelary deities of prominent individuals—who was perceived as disgruntled might be inserted as the central figure of the narrative, with minor modifications to accord with his or her personal characteristics, in particular gender.

The rendition featuring the Storm-god Telipinu begins:

Telipinu [became angry and said]: "Do not engage in intimidation!" He slipped(?) his right [shoe] on his left (foot). [He slipped(?)] his left [shoe] on his right.

Mist seized the windows. Smoke seized the house. On the hearth the logs were stifled. [On the altars] the gods were stifled. In the fold the sheep were stifled. In the corral the cows were stifled. The sheep refused her lamb. The cow refused her calf.

Telipinu went off and took away grain, the fertility of the herds, growth(?), plenty(?), and satiety into the wilderness, to the meadow and the moor. Telipinu proceeded to disappear into the moor. The *halenzu*-plant spread over

him. Barley and wheat no longer grow. Cows, sheep, and humans no longer conceive, and those who are (already) pregnant do not give birth in this time.

The mountains dried up. The trees dried up, so that buds do not come forth. The pastures dried up. The springs dried up. Famine appeared in the land. Humans and gods perish from hunger. The great Sun-god prepared a feast and invited the Thousand Gods. They ate but were not sated; they drank but were not satisfied.

The Storm-god concerned himself for his son Telipinu: "My son Telipinu is not here. He became angry and took away for himself everything good." The great gods and the lesser gods began to search for Telipinu. The Sun-god dispatched the swift eagle: "Go search the high mountains! Search the deep valleys! Search the blue sea!" The eagle went, but he did not find him. He brought back a report to the Sun-god: "I didn't find him, the honored god Telipinu." The Storm-god said to the Mother-goddess: "What will we do? We will perish from hunger!" The Mother-goddess said to the Storm-god: "Do something, Storm-god! *You* go search for Telipinu!"

The Storm-god set out and began to search for Telipinu. He [comes] to his city, to the city gate, but he is not able to open (it). He broke his mallet and wedge. The Storm-god [ . . . ], covered himself (with his garment), and sat down. The Mother-goddess [dispatched a bee]: "You go search for Telipinu!"

[The Storm-god] spoke [to the Mother-goddess]: "The great gods and the lesser gods repeatedly searched for him, but [they did not find] him. Now [will] this [bee] go [find] him? His wingspan is small; he himself is small . . ."

Of course, the unprepossessing bee does succeed in locating the absconded deity, who has been sleeping in a distant meadow. The bee stings the god, whose resultant anger is subsequently pacified by the performance of rites by the goddess of magic Kamrušepa and by the human practitioner conducting the ritual within which the myth is embedded. The ceremonies are integrated so skillfully that it is impossible to determine precisely where the divine action ends and where that on the human level begins. The shared responsibility of human and god for the cosmos is thereby demonstrated once more.

Following the successful appeasement of the deity, the universe returns to its normal functioning:

Telipinu came back home and concerned himself for his land. The mist released the window. The smoke released the house. The altars were reconciled with the gods. The hearth released the log. In the fold (Telipinu) released the sheep. In the corral he released the cows. Then the mother tended her child. The sheep tended her lamb. The cow tended her calf. And Telipinu <tended><sup>20</sup> the king and queen. He concerned himself for them in regard to life, vigor, and future (existence).

Thematically, Telipinu and the Daughter of Sea (CTH 322; *Hittite Myths*, no. 6) resembles the Vanishing God myths in that it treats the travails of the

cosmos during the absence of a deity. In this instance, the Sun-god has been abducted by the Sea, but is recovered by Telipinu as a wedding gift when he marries the latter's daughter.

#### *Historiolae or mythologemes*

These are shorter mythological narratives or allusions to myths contained in religious texts of various sorts, most often as incantations. Although they are frequently frustratingly laconic, since those gods and humans to whom they were directed could be trusted to be familiar with the story in question, mythologemes sometimes present information on Hittite beliefs not mentioned elsewhere. For instance, an incantation in the festival program CTH 671 tells us about the topography of the Anatolian netherworld. The *historiolae* in the texts from Ḫattuša have not yet been systematically collected (Beckman 1997: 568).

#### **Foreign Mythology**

Mythology of foreign origin appears most often in the form of independent compositions whose function remains uncertain: Were they read aloud to elite audiences or employed solely in the schooling of scribes?

#### *Mesopotamian Mythology*

Two recensions of *The Epic of Gilgameš* (CTH 341) in the original Akkadian language—one borrowed directly from Mesopotamia and the second received via Syrian intermediaries—are known from the Hittite capital. Also recovered there were Hurrian and Hittite translations of the story complex. I have translated the latter in my contribution to B. R. Foster, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Beckman 2001a). Perhaps the most interesting feature of the Hittite-language rendering is that details of the story have been altered to suit Hittite conceptions and interests. For example, its focus has shifted from the distant Sumerian city of Uruk to the Cedar Forest, which in the second millennium was thought to be located in nearby Syria.<sup>21</sup>

The well-known Flood Story, *Atraḫasis* ("the Most-Wise") (CTH 347; edition: Polvani 2003), is found at Ḫattuša in very fragmentary Akkadian- and Hittite-language versions.

#### *Hurrian "Songs"*

From Hurrian sources, probably once again those in northern Syria, the Hittites adopted the tales comprising the Kumarbi Cycle, which as a whole recounts the struggle between two lines of gods for rule over Heaven and

the cosmos.<sup>22</sup> Each narrative, treated by the scribes as an independent composition, is labeled as a “song” (Sumerian ŠÌR; Hittite *išhamai-*), indicating that at least the Hurrian-language originals were of poetic character. Their literary nature is underscored by the employment of self-conscious epithets and the frequent use of set pieces such as scenes in which a visiting deity is wined and dined by his host, a child is born, or a messenger is dispatched or received.

The sequence of the songs within the cycle is to some extent speculative, but the series seemingly opens with Kingship in Heaven or The Song of Kumarbi (*CTH* 344; *ANET*, pp. 120–21; *Hittite Myths*, no. 14). After an introduction in which the primeval deities are summoned to hear the tale, it begins:

Formerly, in ancient days, Alalu was king in Heaven. Alalu was seated upon the throne, while mighty Anu, first among the gods, stood before him. He bowed down at his feet and kept placing the drinking cups in his hand.

For precisely nine years, Alalu was king in Heaven, but in the ninth year Anu gave battle to Alalu. He defeated Alalu, and he fled before him. He went down to the Dark Earth. (Alalu) went down to the Dark Earth, while Anu sat upon the throne. Anu was seated upon his throne, while mighty Kumarbi gave him drink. He bowed down at his feet and kept placing the drinking cups in his hand.

For precisely nine years, Anu was king in Heaven. In the ninth year Anu gave battle to Kumarbi. Kumarbi, the descendant of Alalu, gave battle to Anu. Anu could no longer endure the eyes of Kumarbi. He slipped out of Kumarbi’s hands and fled. Anu went to Heaven like a bird. Kumarbi reached after him, grabbed him by the feet, and dragged him down from Heaven.

He bit off his loins, and his manhood alloyed with Kumarbi’s insides like bronze. When Kumarbi had gulped down Anu’s manhood, he rejoiced and laughed. Anu turned back to him and said to Kumarbi, “Are you rejoicing about your insides, because you have swallowed my manhood?”

“Don’t keep rejoicing about your insides! I have placed a burden in your insides: First of all, I have impregnated you with the powerful Storm-god (Hurrian *Teššub*). Second, I have impregnated you with the River Tigris, not to be borne. Third, I have impregnated you with *Tašmišu*. I have placed three frightful deities as a burden in your insides. You will end up banging your head against the rocks of Mount *Tašša!*”

Although the remainder of The Song of Kumarbi is very fragmentary, it is clear that the leader of the younger generation of gods, the Storm-god (*Teššub*), eventually succeeds in emerging from within Kumarbi, who is thus in a sense his mother. In some manner not described in the existing compositions, the Storm-god assumes the paramount position in the pantheon, and the remainder of the songs deal with the efforts of Kumarbi to wrest kingship in Heaven back from him.

In The Song of Hedammu (CTH 348; *Hittite Myths*, no. 17; edition: Siegelová 1971: 35–88), Kumarbi marries the daughter of the Sea and with her produces the monstrous Hedammu. Apparently a sort of sea serpent, Hedammu poses a mortal threat to Teššub and his colleagues until the goddess Šaušga, the Hurrian counterpart of Ištar, goes to the shore, beguiles him with her singing and beauty, seduces him, and renders him impotent with drink.

After the defeat of his first would-be avenger, in The Song of Ullikummi (CTH 345; *ANET*, pp. 121–25; *Hittite Myths*, no. 18; edition: Güterbock 1951–1952) Kumarbi once more sires a terrifying son, this time on an enormous rock. The offspring is a gigantic stone who is blind and deaf and thus immune to the charms of Šaušga. Upon his birth,

Kumarbi began to say to himself, “What name [shall I bestow] on the son whom the Fate-deities and the Birth-goddesses have given to me? He sprang out of (his mother’s) body like a javelin. Henceforth Ullikummi (Hurrian: “Subdue Kummi!”<sup>23</sup>) shall be his name! He shall go up to Heaven to [king]ship, and he shall oppress Kummiya, illustrious town (of Teššub). He shall smite Teššub and shall chop [him] up like chaff. He shall crush him underfoot [like] an ant. He shall break off Tašmišu like a brittle reed. He shall cast down all the gods from [Heaven] like birds, and he shall smash them [like] empty vessels!”

Ullikummi indeed proceeds to attack the gods, winning an initial skirmish and, as planned, resists the advances of Šaušga. The prospects of Teššub and his company appear quite dim until the god of wisdom Ea brings out of storage the tool that had been used to separate Heaven from Earth in primeval times. Once more our text is damaged, but it seems that with this implement Ullikummi is severed from the source of his mighty strength, the shoulder of the World Giant Ubelluri, and thereby rendered vulnerable to a renewed onslaught by the gods.

The title character of The Song of Silver (CTH 364; *Hittite Myths*, no. 16; edition: Hoffner 1988) is also a son of Kumarbi, but apparently lacks the frightening physical attributes of his “half-brothers” Hedammu and Ullikummi. Somehow Silver achieves the position of king of the gods, although no struggle with Teššub is mentioned in the preserved text. He does, however, threaten the Sun and the Moon. How this tale fits into the cycle as a whole is unclear due to its fragmentary state.

The Song of the Protective Deity (<sup>d</sup>LAMMA<sup>24</sup>) (CTH 343; *Hittite Myths*, no. 15) is also difficult to situate within the overarching narrative. Ea and the other primeval deities have installed LAMMA in kingship in Heaven, but the latter has failed in the performance of his duties. In particular, LAMMA has not assured the gods of the continued service of their human worshippers. In the text available to us, Ea and the ancient gods are joined by Kumarbi in planning to remove LAMMA from office. It is possible that

the action of this song occurs before that of those narratives featuring the offspring of Kumarbi.<sup>25</sup>

### *Syrian Mythology*

The Myth of Elkuniršu (CTH 342; ANET, p. 519; COS 1.55; *Hittite Myths*, no. 23; edition: Hoffner 1965) belongs in a Syrian milieu, although not necessarily a Canaanite one, as was once thought (Singer 2007). Exceptionally for a myth of foreign origin, this tale is part of a larger ritual composition. Elkuniršu, whose name is the Hittite rendering of the Semitic phrase “El, Creator of the Earth,” is betrayed by his wife Ašertu, who unsuccessfully propositions the Storm-god Baal. When the latter humiliates her, Ašertu plots revenge with her reconciled husband. However, Baal is warned by his sister Anat, who has overheard the scheming pair. Unfortunately, the outcome of this fraught situation has been lost.

### **Epics and Tales**

#### *Hurrian Tales*<sup>26</sup>

In their simple narrative style and use of folkloric motifs, several compositions are reminiscent of early modern *Märchen* or “fairy tales.”

The Story of Appu or “Good” and “Evil” (CTH 360; COS 1.58; *Hittite Myths*, no. 20; edition: Siegelová 1971: 1–34) is concerned with the question of the continuity of a family and its property across the generations. After the short invocation of a just deity, we are introduced to the frustrated would-be patriarch:

(There was once) a city named Šudul. It was situated at the edge of the sea in the land of Lulluwa. Up there (lived) a man by the name of Appu. He was the richest person in the land; he had many cattle and sheep. As for his silver, gold, and [lapis lazuli], it was heaped up like an entire pile of grain. He lacked for nothing. He lacked only one thing: He had no son or daughter. The elders of Šudul sat before him to eat. One gave bread and meat to his son, while [another] gave his son something to drink. But Appu could give bread to no one.

With the aid of the Sun-god, Appu ultimately succeeds in impregnating his wife, who gives birth to a son whom he names “Good.” A second pregnancy soon follows, yielding a second son named “Evil.” What is still preserved of the text deals with the dispute of the two brothers over Appu’s legacy and the apparently foiled attempt of Evil to cheat Good out of his portion.

The Sun-god, the Cow, the Fisherman, and His Wife (CTH 363; COS 1.59; *Hittite Myths*, no. 21; edition: Hoffner 1981) opens with the ravishing

of a cow by the Sun-god. When as a result she gives birth to a human (or perhaps merely anthropomorphic) child, the cow threatens the baby. The Sun-god rescues the infant and arranges for it to be found by a childless fisherman. The latter takes the baby home, and in order that his neighbors will believe that it is indeed his offspring, instructs his wife: "Take this child, go into the bedroom, and lie down as if to sleep on the bed. Then cry out so that the entire city will hear. Then it will be said, 'The wife of the fisherman has given birth to a son.' Then one will bring us bread, another will bring beer, and another will bring meat." The continuation of the story has been lost. Since the theme of the acquisition of a child by a barren couple is common to this tale and *The Story of Appu*, perhaps they are both part of a single larger complex.

The Tale of Kešše (*CTH 361; Hittite Myths*, no. 22), once again poorly preserved, relates how the protagonist, a hunter, having married a beautiful woman, has eyes only for her and neglects his duties to his family and the gods. When he goes out to hunt, the gods retaliate by causing all game animals to disappear. Reluctant to return empty-handed, Kešše remains in the field until he falls ill. In his fever he sees a number of dream visions. Then the text breaks off.

#### *Mesopotamian Epic*

Although not yet attested from any Sumerian or Akkadian source, *The Saga of Gurparanzaḫ* (*CTH 362*) is definitely of Mesopotamian origin, since its central character bears a Hurrian name containing the designation of the River Tigris (Aranzaḫ) and the action is set in the city of Akkad. The badly-broken text tells how Gurparanzaḫ weds a princess and bests "60 kings, 70 young men" in an archery competition.

#### *Narratives concerning Sargonic Kings*<sup>27</sup>

The deeds and travails of the two most prominent kings of the Sargonic empire (twenty-fourth–twenty-third centuries BCE), its founder Sargon of Akkad and his grandson Naram-Sin, elicited continuing interest throughout the ancient Near East until the end of cuneiform civilization. At Ḫattuša, too, the Sargonic tradition was cultivated, and the early Hittite ruler Ḫattušili I even compares his own martial accomplishments—favorably—to those of his Mesopotamian model Sargon (see below).

A Hittite-language translation of šar tamḫāri, "King of Battle" (*CTH 310*), has been recovered at Boğazköy. This composition, better known in versions in its original Akkadian from Assyria and Babylonia, as well as from a copy found at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt, describes a campaign undertaken by Sargon to the heart of Anatolia in order to rescue a group of Mesopotamian

merchants. While most modern scholars are skeptical about the historical reliability of the tale,<sup>28</sup> its concern with events allegedly taking place in their own neighborhood would obviously have appealed to Hittite scribes or perhaps even a wider audience in Ḫatti.

The Travails of Naram-Sin (*CTH* 311) is a fragmentary Hittite-language text reporting this king's efforts at suppressing a general revolt of his vassals, including a certain "Pamba, King of Ḫatti." The Hittite archives also contained two badly damaged clay prisms (*CTH* 819) that present a version of the so-called Akkadian Cuthean Legend, in which Naram-Sin battles a horde of monstrous and terrifying invaders of Mesopotamia.

## HISTORIOGRAPHY

### Fantastic Narratives of Early History

A number of compositions treat events of early Hittite history in a style unknown in later epochs. These texts feature folkloric motifs and humorous elements. Rather than recording information for posterity, their purpose seems to be to illustrate a moral or political lesson.

The Zalpa Text (*CTH* 3; *COS* 1.71; *Hittite Myths*, no. 19 [excerpt]; edition: Otten 1973) presents episodes in the rivalry between the Hittites, centered first on the city of Kaneš/Neša and later established in Ḫattuša, and the town of Zalpa, which was located on or near the Black Sea coast. The first incident reveals fairy-tale elements:

The queen of Kaneš gave birth to thirty sons in a single year. She said: "What is this—I have produced a horde!" She caulked containers with grease, placed her sons therein, and launched them on the river. The river carried them to the sea, at the land of Zalpa. But the gods took the sons from the sea and raised them.

When years had passed, the queen once more gave birth—to thirty daughters. She raised them herself. The sons were making their way back to Kaneš . . .

In the following section, the brothers in ignorance apparently disregard the warning of their youngest and marry their sisters. But this remains uncertain because the text breaks off here. The remaining portions of the text discuss Zalpa's treacherous dealings with Ḫattuša under the reigns of the earliest Hittite kings and the consequent well-deserved destruction of this city.

The king Anum-Ḫirbi (*CTH* 2), who bears a Hurrian personal name, is the protagonist of a fragmentary story which, like the Zalpa text and the biblical story of Moses (Ünal 1986), features infant abandonment and rescue.

The Cannibal Text (*CTH* 17) is concerned with the earliest Hittite campaigns in Syria. Its depiction of the world that the Anatolians encounter



there is a curious mixture of details congruent with what we otherwise know of this region and folkloric motifs, in particular that of cannibalism. Of one group of native Syrians, we read: "If they spot a fat man, they kill him and eat him up!"

The Crossing of the Taurus or The Puḫanu Text (*CTH* 12; *COS* 1.73; edition: Soysal 1987) describes how the Storm-god in the form of a bull enables the Hittites to reach Syria by creating a pass through the Taurus mountains with his horns, which become bent in the process.

A rare example of humor in cuneiform literature (Foster 1995) is provided by The Siege of Uršu (*CTH* 7; edition: Beckman 1995b). Here humor, or rather mockery, serves an ideological function. Throughout this Akkadian-language composition, the Hittite monarch's military subordinates fail in their efforts to carry out his instructions and capture an important Syrian city. The buffoonish incompetence of the commanders serves to underline the gap that separates them from the king in regard to leadership qualities. An example:

(The officer) Šanda brought a report. The king said, "Why haven't you given battle? Do you stand on chariots of water, or have you yourself perhaps turned to water? Have you taken revenge? If you had fallen on your knees before (the enemy), you would certainly have killed him, or at least have frightened him! (But) you have now engaged (only) in hesitation! . . . They brought a fine ox of the threshing-floor, (but) they carried off (something that was) not a shield(?); they brought a spindle, (but) they carried off (mere) reeds; they brought a hair-clasp, (but) they carried off a wooden(?) club!<sup>29</sup> Last year (the commander) Tudḫaliya engaged in hesitation. Now you have engaged in hesitation!"

### Royal Annals

Annals, a term borrowed from Roman historical writing, are a genre of historical text in which an account of events is presented year by year. In Ḫatti such compositions are known for the reigns of only two kings. The earliest text is The Annals of Ḫattušili I (*CTH* 4; Chavalas 2006, hereafter noted as *The Ancient Near East*, no. 105; edition: Imparati and Saporetti 1965), which is available in a bilingual Hittite-Akkadian edition. The highlight of the work is the favorable comparison of Ḫattušili's accomplishments in Syria with those of Sargon of Akkad:

Then I went to city of Ḫaḫḫa, and at Ḫaḫḫa I gave battle three times in the city gate. I destroyed Ḫaḫḫa. I took its goods and brought them to my city Ḫattuša . . . (There follows a description of the booty seized.)

No one had crossed the Euphrates River, but I, the Great King, the Tabarna (emperor), crossed it on foot, and my army crossed it on foot behind me. Sargon (of Akkad had also) crossed it. [He] fought the troops of Ḫaḫḫa, but [he]

did not do anything to Ḫaḫḫa. He did not burn it down; smoke was not visible to the Storm-god of Heaven.

But I, the Great King, the Tabarna, destroyed Ḫaššuwa and Ḫaḫḫa, and [burned] them down with fire. I showed smoke to the Sun-god of Heaven and the Storm-god. I hitched the king of Ḫaššuwa and the king of Ḫaḫḫa to a wagon.

A considerable chronological gap separates this text from the other attested Hittite royal annals, those of the late-fourteenth-century ruler Muršili II. These have been prepared in two editions, one covering only the first decade of the monarch's reign and a second that deals with almost its entirety. An excerpt from The Ten-Year Annals of Muršili II (*CTH 61; COS 2.16; The Ancient Near East*, no. 112 [excerpts]; edition: Grélois 1988):

The next year (Year 7) I went against the city of Tipiya. While my father had been (on campaign) in the land of Mittanni, Piḫḫuniya, ruler of Tipiya, marched and attacked the Upper Land. He advanced as far as the city of Zazziša and plundered the Upper Land, carrying (the booty) down to the territory of the Kaška. He took the entire territory of the city of Ištitina and made it into pasture land for himself.

Furthermore, Piḫḫuniya did not rule in the (traditional) Kaška manner: While the territory of the Kaška had not seen rule by a single individual, Piḫḫuniya abruptly began to rule like a king. I, My Majesty, went against him and sent a messenger to him. I wrote to him, "Deliver up to me my subjects whom you captured and led down to Kaškean territory." But Piḫḫuniya wrote back to me, "I won't give you anything. If you come against me in battle, by no means will I enter into battle with you on my own territory. I will come against you in your land and will enter into battle with you in your territory!" When Piḫḫuniya sent this back to me and did not return my subjects to me, I went against him in battle and attacked his land. The Sun-goddess of the city of Arinna, My Lady, the Powerful Storm-god, My Lord, Mezzulla, and all the gods ran before me (i.e., aided me) so that I conquered the entire land of Tipiya and burned it down. I captured Piḫḫuniya and brought him back to Ḫattuša. Afterwards I came back from the land of Tipiya. Because Piḫḫuniya had taken the territory of Ištitina, I rebuilt it and made it a province of the land of Ḫatti once more.

### *Res Gestae* or Deeds

Historical accounts of this sort, which I will designate as "deeds," are to be distinguished from annals by their method of organization. Instead of being grouped by years of a king's reign, events are assembled according to their geographic location, their character, or some other principle (de Martino 2005). This is by far the most common type of stand-alone historical narrative known from the Hittite archives. *Deeds* are attested for Ḫattušili I

(*CTH* 14–15), Muršili I (*CTH* 12–13), and Ammuna (*CTH* 18)<sup>30</sup> of the Old Kingdom, Tudḫaliya II (*CTH* 142) and Arnuwanda I (*CTH* 143)<sup>31</sup> of the “Middle Kingdom,” and Šuppiluliuma I (*CTH* 40) and Ḫattušili III (*CTH* 82; edition: Gurney 1997) of the Empire period.

Most of these compositions are fragmentary and, at least in the form currently available, fairly short. The best preserved work is *The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I* (*CTH* 40; *ANET*, p. 319 [excerpt]; *COS* 1.74; *The Ancient Near East*, no. 108 [excerpts]; edition: Güterbock 1956), which was actually prepared under the reign of his son, Muršili II.<sup>32</sup> From this text comes what is perhaps the single most famous account in a Hittite historical source, namely that concerning the embassy sent to the great conqueror by an Egyptian queen:

While my father was down in the land of Carchemish, he sent out (the military commanders) Lupakki and Tarḫunta-zalma to (the Egyptian territory of) Amqa. They went and attacked Amqa and brought back civilian captives, cattle, and sheep to my father. When the Egyptians heard of the attack on Amqa they became afraid. And because on top of that their lord Pipḫururiya<sup>33</sup> had died, their queen, who was Daḫamunzu, sent a messenger to my father. She sent to him as follows: “My husband has died and I have no son. It is said that you have many sons. If you give me a son, he would become my husband. I do not wish to take one of my subjects and make him my husband. . . . I am afraid.” And when my father heard this, he summoned the noblemen for discussion, (saying) “Such a thing has never happened to me before!” Then my father proceeded to send the chamberlain Ḫattuša-ziti to Egypt: “You go and bring back to me an accurate report. Perhaps they are deceiving me and do have a son of their (deceased) lord. Bring me back an accurate report.”

While his envoy is engaged on this mission, Šuppiluliuma succeeds in capturing the besieged city of Carchemish. Then,

when spring arrived, Ḫattuša-ziti [returned] from Egypt, and the Egyptian messenger, the nobleman Ḫani, came with him. Because when my father had sent Ḫattuša-ziti to Egypt, he had instructed him as follows: “Perhaps they do have a son of their lord and are deceiving me, and are not really asking for my son for kingship,” the queen of Egypt wrote back to my father on a tablet thus: “Why did you thus say, ‘They are deceiving me’? If I had a son, would I have written to the shame of myself and my land to a foreign country? You didn’t trust me and have even spoken like this to me! The one who was my husband has died and I have no son. I do not wish to take one of my subjects and make him my husband. I have written to no other country, but have written only to you. It is said that you have many sons. Give me a son of yours and he will be my husband and king in Egypt.” Because my father was compassionate, he acceded to the request of the woman and concerned himself with the matter of a son.

### Royal Inscriptions

Remarkably, monumental inscriptions extolling the accomplishments of a monarch, a genre well represented throughout the cultures of the ancient Near East and Egypt, are exceptional in Ḫatti. From the Old Kingdom comes The Anitta Text (*CTH* 1; *COS* 1.58; *The Ancient Near East*, no. 104; edition: Neu 1974), which is actually a collection of three short inscriptions of princes who ruled in the towns of Kuššara and later Neša during the late Assyrian colony period, more than a century before the rise of the Hittite state. Presumably, the Hittites preserved this material because they felt some sort of kinship with Piṭḫana and Anitta, although the ethnicity of these men remains uncertain. Also unclear is the original language of the inscriptions. While the text as we have it is in Hittite, it is just possible that it was first composed in the Old Assyrian dialect of Akkadian. The first inscription begins:

Anitta, son of Piṭḫana, became king of the city of Kuššara. He behaved in a manner pleasing to the Storm-god in Heaven. And when he was in turn favored by the Storm-god, the king of (the city of) Neša was [hostile(?)] to the king of Kuššara.

The king of Kuššara [came] down from the city with massed forces [and took] Neša by storm at night. He captured the king of Neša but in no way mistreated the inhabitants of Neša. He treated [them] as if they were (his) parents.

[And] after (the death of) my father Piṭḫana, in the same year, I defeated a revolt: Whatever land under the sun rose up—I defeated every last one of them.

The Conquest of Cyprus (*CTH* 121; *COS* 1.75; edition: Güterbock 1967) is also a composite record, this time from the reign of the last attested Hittite Great King, Šuppiluliyama (= Šuppiluliuma) II. It presents the texts of two monumental inscriptions treating battles fought on Cyprus—first by Tudḫaliya IV and then by his son Šuppiluliyama. Both were composed by the latter ruler, as stated explicitly in the conclusion to the first inscription:

[My father] Tudḫaliya [did not make] this image for himself. I, Šuppiluliyama, [Great King], King of Ḫatti, son of Tudḫaliya, Great King, grandson of Ḫattušili, Great King, and great grandson of Muršili, Great King, made it. As my father Tudḫaliya was a true king, I have accordingly inscribed his true manly deeds thereupon. I did not omit anything. I did not suppress (anything). I constructed a mausoleum, made (this) image, transported it to the mausoleum, and installed it.

These texts are available to us in cuneiform, but it is probable that the actual monuments were inscribed in Luwian hieroglyphs. In fact, we have no evidence that cuneiform was ever employed for monumental purposes in Ḫatti. Hieroglyphic Luwian monuments are relatively common in the

Neo-Hittite city-states of the Iron Age and a few dating to the Hittite Empire period have now been recovered: The Niḫantaḫ Inscription (see Laroche 1953) on an exposed rock surface in the Upper City of Boğazköy is badly weathered and largely illegible, but its initial line seems to be quite similar in content to the beginning of the second inscription dealing with The Conquest of Cyprus discussed just above. Was the latter a rendering of the text of the monument into Hittite and into cuneiform?

Not far from Niḫantaḫ in the Upper City, The Südburg Inscription (edition: Hawkins 1995b) was discovered in 1988. Built into a shrine commemorating Tudḫaliya IV, it records the military activities of his son Šuppiluliyama II in southern Anatolia. Campaigns in the southwest, in this case those undertaken by Tudḫaliya himself, are the theme of the The Yalburt Inscription (edition: Poetto 1993),<sup>34</sup> which may have been mounted on a dam. Finally, The Emirgazi Altars (edition: Masson 1979),<sup>35</sup> known since before the First World War, present a classic series of curses against anyone who should damage a monument erected by Tudḫaliya.

### Historical Narrative in Other Genres<sup>36</sup>

#### *Edicts*

The Bilingual Succession Edict of Ḫattušili I (*CTH 5; COS 2.15; The Ancient Near East*, no. 106; edition: Sommer and Falkenstein 1938) was issued by this ruler “when the Great King, Tabarna, took ill in the city of Kuššar and instructed the young Muršili for kingship.” Before dispensing his Polonian advice<sup>37</sup> to his grandson, whom he has chosen as his successor, Ḫattušili first justifies his elimination of a number of other candidates for the position, in particular his nephew Labarna:

[The Great King] Tabarna spoke to the ranks of the army and to the dignitaries: I am now ill. I designated the young Labarna to you: “He shall sit securely (upon the throne)!” I, the king, had named him as my son. I continually instructed him and looked after him constantly. But he showed himself a youth not fit to be seen. He didn’t shed tears. He didn’t show mercy. He was cold. He was heartless.

I, the king, apprehended him and had him brought to my couch: “What (is this)? No one will ever again raise his sister’s child (as his own foster son)!” But he didn’t accept the word of the king. He always took the advice of his mother—that snake! His brothers and sisters continually sent cool words to him, and he consistently listened to their words. I, the king, heard (of this), and I indeed quarreled with him.

“But enough!” (I said). “He is no longer my son!” Whereupon his mother bellowed like an ox: “They have torn my bull-calf [from] my living womb, (as if I were) a cow, and they have deposed him. (Now) you will kill [him]!” But have I, the king, done him any evil? [Haven’t I elevated him] to the priesthood?

I have always singled him out for goodness and kindness. [Yet] he showed no sympathy when commanded by the king. How can he then show sympathy on his [own] toward Ḫattuša? . . .

[He] shall now in no way go down freely (in exile from Ḫattuša). I have now given my son Labarna a house. I have given him [arable land] in plenty. I have given him cattle in plenty. I have given [him sheep in plenty]. He shall continue to eat and drink (his fill). [As long as he is on his best behavior], he shall come up from time to time (to Ḫattuša to visit). But if he begins [to cause trouble(?)], or (if he spreads) any slander, [or] and [ . . . ], he will not be permitted to come up (any more), but [shall remain on his own estate].

The Proclamation of Telipinu (*CTH 19*; *COS 1.194*; *The Ancient Near East*, no. 107; edition: Hoffmann 1984) codifies the rules of succession to the Hittite throne.<sup>38</sup> In order to motivate future generations to adhere to the stated principles, King Telipinu prefaces his decree with a sketch of Hittite history from its beginnings to his own day. This history had been marked by a series of bloody struggles for the throne. When the ruling class was united, Ḫatti had prospered, as in the reign of the first monarch, Labarna:

Formerly Labarna was Great King, and his sons, his brothers, his relatives by marriage, the men of his clan, and his soldiers were united. The land (of Ḫatti) was small, but wherever he went on campaign, he kept the lands of the enemy in subjugation by force. He devastated the lands and rendered them powerless. He extended his territory to the seacoast. When he returned from campaign, each of his sons went to some land (for rule).

In contrast, under rulers such as Ḫantili I and Ammuna, who had ascended to the throne after the violent elimination of rivals, the fortunes of the state had declined. For example, “wherever the troops went on campaign, they did not return safely.” The lesson is clear: Succession to rule must be orderly and killing within the royal clan must cease. The assembly of noblemen is henceforth charged with enforcing this ban. Since Telipinu had himself displaced his brother-in-law Ḫuzziya I, claiming that the latter had had designs on his own life, the functions of this text may be seen to include the self-justification of its promulgator.

Another veiled defense of usurpation is the text conventionally known as The Apology of Ḫattušili III (*CTH 81*; *COS 2.15*; *The Ancient Near East*, no. 115; edition: Otten 1981). Formally an edict conferring property seized by the king from a political rival upon the temple of his patron goddess Šaušga of the city of Šamuḫa, its more significant purpose is to justify Ḫattušili’s removal of his nephew Urḫi-Teššub (Muršili III) from the Hittite throne. In this document, Ḫattušili outlines his entire career, beginning with his sickly childhood and progressing through various military and governmental offices under his brother Muwattalli II. During the reign of the latter’s son, whose succession he claims to have assured, Ḫattušili had reigned as

a junior king in the city of Ḫakpiš. On his own initiative he had recovered lost Hittite lands in north-central Anatolia. But his nephew, according to Ḫattušili motivated by jealousy, soon began to strip him of territories, thereby driving him to revolt. Ḫattušili explains both his rebellion and its divinely-sanctioned success:

At the instigation of god and man, (Urḫi-Teššub) sought to destroy me. He took the cities of Ḫakpiš and Nerik away from me. I held my tongue no longer, but became hostile to him. But when I became hostile to him, I didn't do that in an improper fashion by rising in revolt against him in his chariot or in the palace. I informed him in a manly way, "You have picked a fight with me. You are a Great King, while I am king of the single fortified town that you have left me. Come—Šaušga of Šamuḫa and the Storm-god of Nerik will judge our legal case." And when I wrote thus to Urḫi-Teššub—if someone were to ask me, "Why did you earlier install him in kingship? Why do you now write to him in hostility?" (I would reply) "If he hadn't somehow picked a fight with me, would a Great King really have been bested by a minor king?"

#### *Treaties*

One of the constituent parts of a Hittite treaty is the historical prologue (Altman 2004), in which are set forth previous relations between Ḫatti and the vassal. The purpose of this introduction is to display the magnanimity of the Hittites to the underling and to encourage him in his loyalty to the Great King. For example, in the Treaty Between Muršili II of Ḫatti and Kupanta-Kurunta of Mira-Kuwaliya (CTH 68; Beckman 1999, hereafter referred to as *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, no. 11), the vassal is shown why he should be grateful to his Hittite master:

Then I, My Majesty, sent a man to the other men of the land of Maša to whom (Kupanta-Kurunta's adopted father) Mašḫuiliuwa had gone over. I wrote to them as follows: "Mašḫuiliuwa was my sworn ally, but he quarreled with me, stirred up my subjects against me, and would have begun war against me. Now he has fled before me and has just come to you. Seize him and turn him over to me! If you do not seize him and turn him over to me, I will come and destroy you, together with your land." And when the men of Maša heard this, they became frightened and seized Mašḫuiliuwa, and turned him over to me. I took him by the hand, and [because] he had offended [against me, My Majesty], I took him to Ḫattuša.

Because Mašḫuiliuwa formerly had no son, and took you, Kupanta-Kurunta, the son of his brother, as his son—are you, Kupanta-Kurunta, not aware that if in Ḫatti someone commits the offense of revolt, the son of whatever father commits the offense is an offender too? And that they take the house of his father away from him, and either give it to someone else or take it for the palace? Now, because your father, Mašḫuiliuwa, committed an offense, and

because you, Kupanta-Kurunta, were Mašḫuiliuwa's son, even if you were in no way an offender, could they not have taken the house of your father and your land away from you and given it to someone else? I could have made someone else lord in the land.

Now I, My Majesty, have not mistreated you, Kupanta-Kurunta, in any way. I have not turned you out. I have not taken the house of your father or the land away from you. I have given the house of your father and your land back to *you*, and I have installed you in lordship for the land. I have given you the land of Mira and the land of Kuwaliya.

In the Treaty Between Šuppiluliuma I of Ḫatti and Ḫuqqana of Ḫayaša (CTH 42; *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, no. 3), the Hittite king employs a monitory anecdote to reinforce a prohibition against improper sexual dalliance:

And if on occasion a sister of your wife, or the wife of a brother, or a female cousin comes to you, give her something to eat and drink. Both of you eat, drink, and make merry! But you shall not desire to take her (sexually). It is not permitted, and people are put to death as a result of that act. You shall not initiate it of your own accord, and if someone else leads you astray to such an act, you shall not listen to him or her. You shall not do it. It shall be placed under oath for you.

Beware of a woman of the palace. Whatever sort of palace woman she might be, whether a free woman or a lady's maid, you shall not approach her, and you shall not go near her. Your slave or your slave girl shall not go near her. Beware of her. When you see a palace woman, jump far out of the way and leave her a broad path. Beware of this matter of a palace woman.

Who was Mariya, and for what reason did he die? Didn't a lady's maid walk by and he look at her? But the father of My Majesty himself looked out the window and caught him in his offense, saying "You—why did you look at her?" So he died for that reason. The man perished just for looking from afar. So you beware.

### The Hittite View of History

From these manifold native presentations of Hittite history, we may make some observations concerning the Hittite view of the past and its written representation: First of all, the course of human events is determined by the gods, largely in accordance with the principles of justice. Thus the bid for the throne by Ḫattušili III discussed in his Apology meets with success because the gods have judged his position the stronger in his cosmic legal dispute with his nephew. Similarly, in The First Plague Prayer of Muršili II (see below) we learn that a devastating epidemic visited upon Ḫatti must be considered punishment for a murder committed on behalf of Šuppiluliuma I.

Hittite historiography is much more sober and analytical than contemporary historical writing in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Miracles are seldom if



ever mentioned. The thoughts and calculations of both the Hittite monarch and of foreign adversaries and friends may be presented, as in the passage from The Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I quoted earlier. The acts of subordinates as well as those of the Great King himself are suitable topics, and although many accounts are indeed tendentious, Hittite set-backs and moral errors are not always suppressed. Indeed, on occasion such lapses are adduced as primary causal factors.

### ROYAL PRAYERS AND HYMNS<sup>39</sup>

#### Mesopotamian Hymns

Hymns are simply the introductory sections of prayers in which the deity to be approached for a favor is summoned and put into a receptive mood through the recitation of lavish praise. Among the Hittites, this genre stands under strong Mesopotamian influence. In particular, those compositions in which the hymnic component takes up the bulk of the text are generally<sup>40</sup> direct importations from Syria or Mesopotamia. These include hymns for the Storm-god (*CTH* 313, a Hittite translation; edition: Archi 1983; *CTH* 314, trilingual [Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite]; edition: Schwemer 2001: 191–94) and for Ištar (*CTH* 312, Akkadian and Hittite versions; edition: Reiner and Güterbock 1967).

#### From the Mesopotamian Tradition

The situation is more complicated in regard to texts addressing the Sun-god (Güterbock 1958 and 1978b). These are attested at Hattuša only in the Hittite language, but they clearly go back to Mesopotamian forerunners.<sup>41</sup> Here appeal is made to the Sun-god in his well-known Babylonian capacity as patron of justice.<sup>42</sup> In keeping with the omniscience and omnipresence deriving from his daily journey across the sky, he is implored to seek out the particular god or goddess from whom the supplicant is estranged and to restore good relations between that deity and the worshipper.

Because it is arguably the single most moving piece of surviving Hittite literature, I translate here the better part of The Prayer of Kantuzzili<sup>43</sup> to the Sun-god, with augmentation of missing or badly damaged portions from the parallel prayers styled as those of “the King” and of “a mortal” (*CTH* 372–74, *ANET*, pp. 400–401; Singer 2002, hereafter referred to as *Hittite Prayers*, nos. 4a–c):

O Sun-god, my lord, just lord of judgment; o king of heaven and earth. It is you who rule the lands, you alone who bestow mastery. You alone are just; you alone have mercy. Only you respond to evocations. You are the merciful



**Figure 5.2** Gold figurine of a god. This tiny (3.94 x 1.25 cm) gold figure is shown by the horns on its cap to depict one of the “Thousand Gods of Ḫatti.” Unfortunately, the particular identity of the deity remains unknown.  
Source: The Trustees of the British Museum.

Sun-god, and you (indeed) have mercy. O Sun-god, fully grown son of Ningal, your beard is of lapis-lazuli. So-and-so, your servant, has now prostrated himself before you and is speaking to you.

Within the circumference of heaven and earth you alone, o Sun-god, are the source of illumination. O Sun-god, mighty king, son of Ningal, it is you who establish custom and regulation for the people. Ultimate authority has been granted to you alone. You are the just lord of rule. You are the father and mother of every land.

O Sun-god, great king, your father Enlil has placed the lands and the four corners (of the universe) in your hand alone. You are the lord of judgment, tireless in the place of judgment. Among the ancient gods you are the mighty Sun-god. It is you who prepare the offerings of the gods. It is you who allot the portions of the ancient gods. The door of heaven is opened only for you, o Sun-god, and only you, venerated Sun-god, pass through Heaven's gate.

The gods of Heaven are bowed down to you alone; the gods of Earth are bowed down to you alone. Whatever you say, o Sun-god, in return the gods prostrate themselves only to you. O Sun-god, you are the father and mother of the oppressed and orphaned person. You alone, o Sun-god, exact retribution for the orphaned and oppressed person.

When at dawn the sun rises in the heavens, it is your illumination, o Sun-god, that reaches all the upper and lower lands. You judge the case of the dog and the pig. And the case of the wild beasts who cannot speak with their mouth—that too you judge. You alone judge the case of the evil and malicious person. The person with whom the gods are angry and whom they neglect—you care for him and have mercy on him. O Sun-god, sustain this mortal, your servant, so that he might begin to offer bread and beer to the Sun-god regularly. O Sun-god, take him, your just servant, by the hand.

And the mortal has hereby poured out barley to the team of four that you, o Sun-god, have harnessed. May your Four eat! And while the Four eat the barley, I bless you, o Sun-god! So-and-so, your servant, is now speaking about a matter with you, and he is listening to your words. O Sun-god, mighty king, you go out among the four corners (of the universe). At your right run the Fears, at your left run the Terrors.

[*Three unintelligible lines.*] Your vizier Bunene walks on your right. Your vizier [Mēšaru] walks on your left. And you go across the sky, o Sun-god.

And above, [you make an allotment] to the gods of Heaven; below, on the Dark Earth, you make an allotment to the ancient gods. But below, [you make an allotment] to the ancient gods of the [Dark] Earth. Up from the earth(?) . . . [So-and-so, your servant, has] now [prostrated himself] before you. O Sun-god, [ . . . ] him. [Whichever] frightful god [ . . . ], that deity has turned his gaze aside and does not allow the mortal to act. Whether that deity is in Heaven or on the Earth, you, o Sun-god, accompany him. Now go and speak to that deity and convey to him the words of the mortal:

O my god, since my mother gave birth to me, you, my [god], have raised me. Only you, my god, have continued to watch over my name and [my] authority among humans. Only you, (my) god, have set [me] aside among good <men>. Only you, my god, have directed my actions in hard times and harrowing situa-

tions. O my god, you have designated me, so-and-so, the servant of your body and your soul. Do I [not] acknowledge the [guidance] of my god that I have experienced since childhood? Ever since [I have grown up, I have experienced] the wisdom [and guidance of] my god in regard to everything.

I have never sworn by my god and then violated the oath. That which is holy to my god and therefore not permissible for me to eat I have never eaten and thereby polluted my body.

I have never removed an ox from (my god's) corral; I have never removed a sheep from (my god's) fold. When I found bread, by no means did I eat it alone. When I found water, by no means did I drink it alone. If I were now to recover, would I not have recovered thanks to your word, (my) god? If I were to regain my strength, would I not have regained my strength thanks to your word, (my) god?

Life is bound up with death; death is bound up with life. A mortal does not live forever; his days of life are numbered. Were a mortal to live forever, if an evil illness were to afflict the person, would it not be a chastisement for him?

May my god [now] open his innermost soul to me with all his heart, and [tell] me my offences, so that I might acknowledge them. Or may my god speak to me in a dream and open his mind to me, [and] tell [me] my offences, so that I might acknowledge them. Or let a female dream interpreter speak to me, [or] let a extispicy priest of the Sun-god speak to me on the basis of a liver oracle, so that my god might open [his mind] to me with all his heart and tell me my offences, so that I might acknowledge them.

O my god, may you give me back [frightfulness] and [strength. O Sun-god], you [are the shepherd of all], and your message is pleasant to each. May [my god], who has become angry [with me] and has neglected me, [himself take care] of me [once more] and save my life. May my god, who has inflicted illness on me, [have] mercy on me [once more]. In the face of [that illness] I have toiled and labored(?), but I am no longer able. [And] when you have scraped [the evil from me, o my god], you have sent [some (further) evil] to me.

May [ . . . now] be settled once more, and may it [ . . . ] back. Set [ . . . ] aside once more. [ . . . O Sun-god], fully grown [son of *Sîn*] and *Ningal*, [ . . . ] I, Kantuzzili, your servant, have now called on you, and . . . [And] I [hereby] speak to you.

O Sun-god, my lord, I, Kantuzzili, hereby keep inquiring into my god. May my [god] listen to me! I, Kantuzzili, have not done anything to my god, or [sinned] in any way, have I? O my god! You made me; you formed me. Now [what] have I, Kantuzzili, done to you? The merchant holds the scales before the Sun-god and falsifies the scales. [But] what have I done to my god?

In the face of illness my house has become for me a house of anguish. In the face of anguish my soul is seeping away from me to another place. I have become just like someone who is ill throughout the entire year. Now the illness and the anguish have become too much for me, so that I keep telling you, my god, about it.

At night in my bed sweet sleep does not overcome me, and well-being is not manifest on my account. May my [god] now join (his) strength to (that of my) protective deity. I have never even inquired from a female dream interpreter whether you decreed this illness for me from my mother's womb.

Now I am crying out before my god, "mercy!" Hear me, my god! May you, my god, not make me a person unwelcome at the royal gate. Do not vitiate my privileges before humankind. None of those whom I have treated well will save [me]. . . .

### Hittite "Pleas"

Another type of prayer, unique to Ḫatti, is the "plea" or "justification" (Hittite *arkuwar*). Given the Hittite view that calamities are the result of divine displeasure with human misdeeds, it follows that amelioration might be sought in part through an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the suspect activity. This is certainly the case with The Plague Prayers of Muršili II (*CTH 378*;<sup>44</sup> *ANET*, pp. 394–96; *COS* 1.60; *Hittite Prayers*, no. 12; *The Ancient Near East*, no. 113), where we read:

And because Ḫattuša [had been burned down(?)] by the enemy, and the enemy had taken [borderlands] of Ḫatti, [my father (Šuppiluliuma I) repeatedly attacked the enemy lands] and repeatedly defeated them. He took back the borderlands of Ḫatti which [the enemy had taken]. He [settled] them anew (with Hittites). Furthermore, [he conquered] additional foreign lands [during] his reign. He sustained Ḫatti and [secured] its frontiers on every side. All of Ḫatti prospered in his time. [Humans], cows, and sheep became numerous in his time. The civilian captives who [were carried off] from the land of the enemy survived; none died. But later you came, o gods, [my lords], and have now taken vengeance on my father for this affair of Tudḫaliya the Younger.<sup>45</sup> My father [died] because of the blood of Tudḫaliya. And the princes, the noblemen, the commanders of the thousands, and the officers who went over [to my father] also died because of [this] affair. This same affair also affected the (entire) land of Ḫatti, and [Ḫatti] began to perish because of [this] affair. And Ḫatti [wasted(?)] away. Now the plague [has become] yet [worse]. Ḫatti has been [very much] oppressed by the plague and has become diminished. I, Muršili, [your servant], cannot [master] the turmoil [of my heart]. I cannot [master] the anguish of my body.

Other "pleas" include those of Ḫattušili III and his wife Puduḫepa in response to the poor health of the ruler (*CTH 383–84*; *ANET*, pp. 393–94; edition: Sürenhagen 1981)<sup>46</sup> and that of King Arnuwanda I and Queen Ašmunikal regarding the neglected cults of northern Anatolia (*CTH 375*).<sup>47</sup> In The Prayer of Muwattalli II to Teššub of the City of Kummanni (*CTH 382*), the monarch professes ignorance of the source of the god's anger, but promises to make inquiries about this among the population of the deity's town.

### Miscellaneous Prayers

The Prayer to the Sun-goddess of the Earth (*CTH 371*), an early composition, beseeches the members of the deity's entourage to deflect any slander of the worshipper's client that may be directed to the goddesses' attention. The Prayer of Muwattalli II to the Divine Assembly through the *piḫaššašši* Storm-God (*CTH 381*; edition: Singer 1996) is merely an elaborate generic invocation of the entire pantheon, to be supplemented with a plea appropriate to an emergent situation.

## WISDOM LITERATURE

### Native Wisdom

#### *Proverbs*

Like most peoples, the Hittites expressed commonsensical notions in pithy sayings. The following proverbs have been gathered from texts of various genres (*COS 1.80*; Beckman 1986b):

The sin of the father devolves upon his son.  
 Since humanity is depraved, rumors constantly circulate.  
 The will of the gods is severe! It does not hasten to seize, but when it does  
 seize, it does not let go again!  
 (When) a bird takes refuge in its nest, the nest preserves its life.

#### *Anecdotes*

The Palace Chronicle (*CTH 8*; edition: Dardano 1997) is a collection of anecdotes dealing with personalities active at the royal court during the reign of one of the first Hittite kings. These stories were probably gathered for the edification of future officials, who could be expected to draw the appropriate conclusions from monitory tales of wrongs requited. Although this text is often difficult to understand due to its laconic style, the lesson of the following excerpt is unmistakable:

In the land of Arzawa, Nunnu was the representative of the city of Ḫurma. He did not bring (to the palace) the silver and gold (of the royal taxes); whatever he collected, he took home for himself. The representative of the city of Ḫuntara informed on him. The father of the king commanded and he was brought up (to Ḫattuša), while (the father of the king) dispatched Šarmaššu to (Nunnu's) post. But when (Šarmaššu) had not yet gone, the father of the king sent (the official called) the Man of the Golden Spear. Šarmaššu and Nunnu were brought to Mount Taḫaya and yoked like oxen. A relative of Nunnu was seized and (the Man of the Golden Spear) slaughtered him before the eyes of Šarmaššu

and Nunnu. The next morning the father of the king shouted, "Who led them away? Why aren't their garments and their belts soaked with blood?" The men of the royal guard said, "Their cloaks are inside out." Then they reversed their garments so that (the father of) the king saw the blood. Šarmaššu said, "My Majesty, I haven't yet gone (to my post). I haven't yet seen (anything)!" (The father of) the king said, "Go, (now that) you have taken this to heart!"

### Imported Wisdom

#### *A Hurrian Congeries*

The Song of Release (COS 1.82; *Hittite Myths*, no. 18a; edition: Neu 1996)<sup>48</sup> is a most peculiar composition. A Hurrian text provided with a Hittite translation, it consists of three loosely related sections: Following the proemium is a group of seven parables, each characterized as a piece of "wisdom" (Hittite *ḫattatar*). An example, rendered from the Hittite version:

A smith cast a cup in a praiseworthy fashion. He cast and molded it. He inlaid it with ornaments and engraved it. He put a shine on it with a woolen cloth. But the foolish piece of copper began to curse the one who had cast it: "If only the hand of the one who cast me were broken! If only his right forearm were palsied!" When the smith heard, he became sick at heart.

He began to say to himself: "Why has this piece of copper which I cast cursed me in return?" The smith uttered a curse against the cup: "Let the Storm-god smash the cup and rip off its ornaments! Let the cup fall into an irrigation ditch and the ornaments fall into a river!"

It is not a cup, but a human. A certain son who was hostile to his father became an adult and he moved to (a better) circle. He no longer looks after his father. The gods of his father have cursed him.

After the parables comes the description of an elaborate feast prepared by the goddess of the Underworld for Teššub. The third and final portion is the "Song of Release" itself, an allegory in which the pains suffered by Teššub as a debt-slave are compared to the sufferings of the slaves held by the citizens of the Syrian city of Ebla. The conclusion of the narrative has been lost, but apparently the refusal of the Eblaite town council to accede to Teššub's demand for the release of the bondsmen leads to the destruction of the city. It is difficult to discern a common thread through this complex work, but perhaps it is simply the virtue of adhering to shared values such as filial piety, hospitality, and compassion.

#### *International Scribal Curriculum*

As demonstrated by their appearance elsewhere among the tablets of the Syrian trading center of Ugarit, two compositions found among the Hittite

archives belong to the common cuneiform scholarly curriculum of the Late Bronze Age:

The trilingual (Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite) Praise of a Mother or *Signalement lyrique* (CTH 315; edition: Kämmerer 1998: 164–69)<sup>49</sup> allows the author of the Mesopotamian original—ostensibly Ludingirra, “Man of the God”—to display his erudition by providing more than fifty lines of flowery description to enable a messenger to recognize his mother (Šāt-Ištar, “She of Ištar”). For example: “My mother is like a bright light on the horizon, a doe in the mountains, A morning star (shining even) at noon, A precious carnelian-stone, a topaz from Marḥaši. . . .”<sup>50</sup> The entirety of the message to be delivered to Šāt-Ištar in the Babylonian city of Nippur: “Your beloved son Ludingirra says ‘Hello!’”

The Dialogue Between Šūpē-amēli and His ‘Father’ (CTH 316; edition: Dietrich and Keydana 1991)<sup>51</sup> is a bilingual (Hittite-Akkadian) collection of sententious sayings styled as the advice of one Enlil-banda to his “son,” Šūpē-amēli. An amusing excerpt: “Don’t buy a cow in springtime; don’t take an old maid at a festival. Particularly in springtime a meretricious cow looks good, and an ugly old maid dresses up for a festival. She wears a becoming garment and anoints herself with borrowed oil.”

## NOTES

1. For a recent survey of Hittite history, see Beckman 2007, and, at greater length, Bryce 2005.
2. There exists some uncertainty as to how the Hittites pronounced the phoneme represented by the *shin*-series of signs in cuneiform. Therefore some scholars transcribe this sound with š (or *sh*), while others simply use *s*. Thus, Maraššantiya = Marashshantiya = Marassantiya, or Muršili = **Murshili** = **Mursili**.
3. For accessible descriptions of the site and its excavations, see Bittel 1970 and, more recently, Seeher 1999.
4. For an historical outline see Hawkins 1995a, and for the texts, Hawkins 2000.
5. On the history of these excavations, see Güterbock 1995 and Seeher 1995.
6. Actually, the cuneiform and hieroglyphic records were composed in two distinct, if closely related, dialects of Luwian; on the latter, see Payne 2004.
7. On the history of the Hurrians, see Wilhelm 1989. On the influence of Hurrian culture on the Hittites, see Hoffner 1998b.
8. For an English-language discussion of the regimen, see Nyland 2006.
9. CTH refers to entries in Laroche 1971.
10. For the use of such writing materials in contemporary Assyria and later Babylonia, see Postgate 1993 and MacGinnis 2002.
11. An exception to this rule is posed by the metal ring-seals of certain bureaucrats on which the owner’s name might be written in both systems; see Herboldt 2005: 51–55.



12. On the complex topic of the relations of the Hittites with their gods, see the comprehensive treatments of Haas 1994 and Popko 1995. For a sketch, see Beckman 1989.

13. In practice, talented outsiders could marry a female member of the royal family and thereby be adopted into the ruling group.

14. Cf. the thoughts of Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 67–90 on Mesopotamian literature.

15. Compare our use of the Arabic numerals or of the ampersand (&) for the words “and,” “und,” “y,” “ve,” etc.

16. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations presented below are my own.

17. For a contrary view, see the remarks on Hittite material in Watkins 1995.

18. Like most titles of Hittite works, this designation has been coined by modern scholars. The ancient librarians referred to the compositions either by incipits, that is, (a portion of) the initial line, or by short labels such as “the first tablet of the Song of Gilgamesh.”

19. It is the practice in cuneiform studies, which most often deal with worn and broken manuscripts, to employ square brackets to set off restored material in translations.

20. Angle brackets indicate words erroneously omitted by the ancient scribe.

21. For a fuller discussion, see Beckman 2003.

22. The similarities of this narrative complex to Hesiod’s *Theogony* have often been noted. See, for example, Güterbock 1948.

23. See Giorgieri 2001: 149.

24. The identity and phonetic reading of the name behind the Sumerographic writing <sup>d</sup>LAMMA here is uncertain.

25. Also uncertain is the placement of The Song of the Sea, on which see Rutherford 2001.

26. Hurrian provenience is assured for The Tale of Kešše by the discovery of a Hurrian-language version at Ḫattuša and is likely for the other two stories because they share a number of narrative topoi with the Hurrian songs discussed above.

27. For editions of these texts, see Westenholz 1997: 102–39, 280–93. I discuss them at some length in Beckman 2001b.

28. On this material, see also van de Mieroop 2000.

29. These lines present a parody of a ritual intended to confer martial qualities.

30. Commonly referred to as The Ammuna Chronicle.

31. For an edition of the Deeds of Tudḫaliya II and The Deeds of Arnuwanda I, see Carruba 1977.

32. Note that throughout this text Šuppiluliuma is referred to throughout as “my father.”

33. Probably Tutankhamon; see Bryce 1990.

34. For an English translation, see Hawkins 1995b: 69–71.

35. For an English translation, see Hawkins 1995b: 88–89.

36. For the historical sections of prayers, see below.

37. For example: “Until now no one [in my family] has heeded my command. [But you, my son], Muršili, **you must heed it. Keep [(your) father’s word]. If you keep your father’s word, you [must eat (only) bread] and drink (only) water.** When the prime of young adulthood is [within] you, then eat two or three times a day,

and treat yourself. [But when] old age is within you, drink your fill, setting aside [(your) father's] word."

38. On this problem, see Beckman 1986a.

39. The most complete edition of the prayers is Lebrun 1980; see also Wilhelm 1994.

40. The Prayer of Muršili II to Telipinu (*CTH 377*) is similar to those of this group in that it consists of a hymn of praise and only a general request for assistance.

41. Note the filiation of the deity to the Sumerian Moon-goddess Ningal and his beard of lapis-lazuli, both concepts foreign to the Hittites.

42. In this connection we recall the depiction of the Sun-god Šamaš upon the stele bearing The Code of Ḫammurapi.

43. A Hittite nobleman, probably the father of King Tudḫaliya I.

44. There are actually four prayers of Muršili subsumed under this entry. The selection is from The First Plague Prayer. Cf. also *CTH 376* (*ANET*, pp. 396–97) and *CTH 379*.

45. Šuppiluliuma I was a younger son of Tudḫaliya II and not destined to rule. He came to the throne only after a military coup in which his brother Tudḫaliya III, "the Younger," was murdered.

46. Cf. also The Prayer of Muršili II on behalf of the Woman Gaššuliyawiya (*CTH 380*) in her illness; edition: Tischler 1981.

47. Here the blame for the lack of attention is not assumed by the petitioners or assigned to any other Hittite, but is laid at the feet of the barbaric Kaška people who have occupied what had long been Hittite territory and cut off the gods from their servants in Ḫatti.

48. See also Bachvarova 2005.

49. See also Civil 1964.

50. Translation of Sumerian lines 22–24 from Civil 1964: 3.

51. See also Kämmerer 1998: 176–207.