

# BLOOD IN HITTITE RITUAL

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The generally anonymous authors of the texts that describe the rites of the Hittite state cult were practical men.<sup>1</sup> Laconically they set forth the procedures to be followed and wasted few words explicating or justifying either the ceremonies or the individual ritual actions of which they were composed. Thus in our consideration of the meaning and function of blood in Hittite religious practice,<sup>2</sup> we cannot avail ourselves of any clear statement of native belief analogous to that found for Israel in the Hebrew Bible: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement.”<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, Hittite compositions of various genres do contain passages revealing that in Ḫatti blood (*ešhar*<sup>4</sup>) was recognized as the carrier of life and strength. Conversely, its presence was taken as an index of mortality. In a legendary account of the campaigns conducted in Anatolia by the Sargonic king Narām-Sin, the ruler commands that a scout be dispatched to perform the following test on terrifying beings encountered by his forces:

When he proceeds to pierce(!) them with a spear and cut them with a blade(?)—if [blood] spurts forth from them, they are human, and I shall go against them (in battle). If blood does not spurt forth from them, they are deities, and I will not go against them.<sup>5</sup>

In the course of an “induction ceremony” into the Hittite army, wine is poured out on the ground before the soldiers concerned, and the officiant addresses them:

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Abbreviations employed here are those of *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (1980–).

1. Although women play an important role as participants in some festivals, we have no evidence for female scribes in Ḫatti. For a general discussion of the religious observance of the Hittite state, see V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 674–95.

2. Much of the relevant material has been collected by V. Haas, *Materia Magica et Medica Hethitica* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 511–16. See also B. Christiansen, *Die Ritualtradition der Ambazzi* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 153–54.

3. Lev. 17:11, as translated in the New Revised Standard Version. On the role of blood in the Hebrew Bible, see David Biale, *Blood and Belief* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), chapter 1.

4. See *HW*<sup>2</sup> 115–21 and *HED* 2, 305–13, as well as R. Stefanini, “Itt. *eshar* (= sanguis): problemi formali ed etimologici,” *AGI* 43 (1958): 18–41.

5. *KUB* 3.16+ ii 8’–11’ (*CTH* 311):

7’. *ma-a-an pa-iz-zi iš-pa-an-ni-it iš-kar-ḫi*

8’. <sup>URUDU</sup>*ta-pu-ul-li-an-ni-it-ta ku-e-er-zi ma-a-an-ša-ma-aš-t[a e-eš-ḫar]*

9’. *ši-ya-a-ri a-pé-e ta-an-du-ki-iš*

10’. *ta-aš-ma-aš pa-a-i-mi ma-a-an-ša-ma-aš-ta e-eš-ḫar Ū-UL ši-ya-ri*

11’. *a-pé-e DINGIR.MEŠ-iš ta-aš-ma-aš Ū-UL pa-a-i-mi*

*iš-kar-ḫi* in ii 7’ must be an error for 3rd person. See H. G. Güterbock, “Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babylonern und Hethitern bis 1200. Zweiter Teil: Hethiter,” *ZA* 44 (1938): 49–65.

[This] is not [wine]; it is your blood. And [as] the Earth has swallowed it, so may the Earth in the same way swallow [your blood] and [...] (if you betray your oath).<sup>6</sup>

It is not merely some of their blood, but the very life that it represents, that rebellious troops will forfeit.

Blood's connotation of "vigor" or "strength" is evident in the metaphorical expression "drink the blood" (*ešhar eku-*), which means "weaken (transitive)." In his bilingual "Political Testament," King Hattušili I justifies before his courtiers the harsh terms under which he had banished his daughter:

When [I] heard [that] she had put [the citizens] of Hattuša (the Hittite capital) to death, I sought tears (i.e., remorse) for them (from her). Had [I] not sought (them from her), you would have slandered me with (your) tongue(s) (saying): "[He has] expelled [his daughter]." I, the king, did [not do] anything (to her). (Whereupon she said: "[Why] have you given me so little?" (So, I, the king, replied): "[If I hadn't given (you)] only a little—[if] I had given you more cattle, (if) I had given [you more] sheep [...]—I would have been drinking the blood (of the land)."<sup>7</sup>

Metonymically, the noun "blood" can denote the act of "murder" or "bloodshed," and the phrase *ešhar iya-* (literally "do or make blood")<sup>8</sup> is best translated as "shed blood, commit murder."<sup>9</sup> Another excerpt from the text just quoted well illustrates the latter usage. Here the king discusses the odious behavior of his nephew and former adopted son and heir:

His mother is a snake. Henceforth he will always heed (first) the words of his mother, and of his brothers and sisters. And when he draws near, it will be to take vengeance that he approaches! [And concerning my troops], my dignitaries [and] my subjects who surround(?) the king, [he will vow]: "They will be massacred on account of the king!" So he will proceed [to destroy] them. He will begin to shed blood (*ešhar iya-*) and will have [no] fear!<sup>10</sup>

Another Old Hittite historical source, the "Proclamation" of King Telipinu, summarizes the events of this turbulent period as follows: "Previously blood(shed) became common in Hattuša."<sup>11</sup> Such a transgression was thought to

6. KUB 43.38 rev. 14–16 (CTH 493):

14. [ki-i-w]a Ū-U[L] G[EŠTIN] šu-me-en-za-an-wa e-eš-har nu-wa ki-i [ma-aḥ-ḥa-an]

15. [ta-g]a-an-zi-pa'-aš kat-[ta] pa-a-aš-ta [šu-me-en-z]a-an-n[a e-eš-har]

16. [o o ]-ya ta-ga-an-zi-pa-aš kat-[a QA-TA]M-<sup>1</sup>MA pa'<sup>1</sup>[-a-š]u

Edited by N. Oettinger, *Die militärischen Eide der Hethiter* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976), 20–21.

7. KUB 1.16 + KUB 40.65 iii 6–12a (CTH 6):

6. ma-a-an iš-ta-m[a-aš-šu-un nu-wa-kán DUMU.]MES<sup>URU</sup>Ḥa-at-ti UŠ-M[I-IT]

7. iš-ḥa-aḥ-ru-uš-m[i-it-ta-aš-ta ša-a]n-ḥu-un ták-ku-ma-na-<aš>ta

8. Ū-UL-ma ša-an-[ḥu-un GAM-an ša-ra-a-ma-]a-am-mu la-a-li-it

9. e-ep-te-en n[ú'-wa' DUMU.MUNUS-ŠU pa-ra-]a tar-na-aš LUGAL-ša

10. Ū-UL ku-it-[ki i-ya-nu-un o o ku-w]a-at-mu ki-i te-pu pa-it-ta

11. ták-ku-<ma-an>' te-p[u Ū-UL pí-iḥ-ḥu-un ma-a-an-]ta GU<sub>4</sub>.ḤI.A-ma me-ek-ki pí-iḥ-ḥu-un

12. UDU.ḤI.A-uš-[ma-an-ta o o o me-ek-ki pí-iḥ-ḥu-un e-eš-har-ma-an

12a. e'-ku'-un [ ... ]

Edited without join piece by F. Sommer and H. Ehelolf, *Die hethitisch-akkadische Bilingue des Hattušili I. (Labarna II.)* (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1938), 10. For the addition, see C. Kühne's review of KUB 40, ZA 62 (1972): 257–60, and for restorations in iii 6–8 see CHD L–N, 21. I have translated the entirety of this text in *The Context of Scripture*, Vol. 2: *Monumental Inscriptions*, ed. W. W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 79–81.

8. H. Kronasser, "Zu heth. *ešhar iya-* = akkad. *dāmi epēšu*," in *Festschrift Johannes Friedrich zum 65. Geburtstag am 27. August 1958 gewidmet*, ed. R. von Kienle et al. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1959), 273–89.

9. See H. A. Hoffner, "On Homicide in Hittite Law," in *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons. Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour*, ed. G. D. Young et al. (Bethesda: CDL, 1998), 296.

10. KUB 1.16 i–ii 20–25 (CTH 6). For transliteration, see Sommer and Ehelolf, *HAB* 4–5. The restoration *e-eš-har* in ii 24 of the Hittite text is guaranteed by *da-a-mi a-na e-pe-ši-im* in i 24 of the Akkadian.

11. *KBo* 3.1 ii 48 (CTH 19): *ka-ru-ú-wa e-eš-har*<sup>URU</sup>Ḥa-at-tu-ši *ma-ak-ke-eš-ta*. Cf. also *HFAC* 40, obv.<sup>?</sup> 7'–9' (CTH 655): *ták-na-aš*<sup>d</sup>UTU-i *kiš-an te-ez-zi iš-ḥar-wa ku-it ma-ak-kiš-ta iš-ḥa-aḥ-ru-šu-wa* 'pa-an-<sup>1</sup>ga-ri-ya-ta-ti ...; see my "Hantili I," in *Kulturgeschichte. Altorientalische Studien für Volkert Haas zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Th. Richter et al. (Saarbrücken: SDV, 2001), 51–58.

cry out for divine retribution, and we read that the gods indeed exacted revenge (*ešhar šanḫir*, lit. “sought blood”) from the murderer of Muršili I.<sup>12</sup> But it was not always the perpetrator alone who was punished by supernatural forces. More than two hundred years later another royal prince was physically eliminated, with the result “that this murder (lit. ‘blood’) further wiped out Ḫatti.”<sup>13</sup>

It was obviously imperative that this “blood”—perhaps best rendered in such contexts as “bloodguilt”—be removed from the offender, from Hittite society as a whole, and from the land itself. The “Ritual of Blood”<sup>14</sup> is the suggested remedy for the murder of a prince, but unfortunately we know this rite only by title. We do possess, however, the text of an elaborate ritual for ridding a household of “evil pollution, perjury, bloodguilt, curse, transgression, intimidation, tears, and sin.”<sup>15</sup> The practitioner of this ceremony addresses the chthonic deities: “May you take whatever evil bloodguilt is within and give it to the deity responsible for blood.”<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere in the same composition the Dark Earth, or underworld,<sup>17</sup> is implored to “swallow the bloodguilt,”<sup>18</sup> along with other negative influences.

Already in Ḫatti’s earliest years we encounter the idea that the taint—or perhaps the threat—of bloodshed could be banished to beneath the earth’s surface. In an Old Hittite purificatory ritual the officiant recites: “I have just buried their sickness, bloodguilt, evil, and fear for the king, the queen, and their children in Ḫattuša.”<sup>19</sup>

The lexeme *ešhar* appears most frequently in Hittite ritual within just such groups of miscellaneous evils to be neutralized, but we have no evidence that physical human or animal blood was in fact manipulated in this connection. Similarly, no actual blood need be present for the recitation of the “Incantation of Blood” (*ešhanaš ŠIPAT*), which was invoked “when a woman is [giving birth] and her bleeding is inhibited.”<sup>20</sup> And when an animal substitute is magically identified with a patient through the matching of various constituents of their two bodies—including blood<sup>21</sup>—it is unlikely that any vital fluid was really spilt. In these latter two instances, of course, *ešhar* bears only its primary anatomical meaning.

We may now consider the functional role of blood and its manipulation in Hittite cult. Students of ancient religion have tended to downplay the importance of blood in Hittite worship and magic,<sup>22</sup> but such assessments have been based on an unfortunate, if understandable, limitation of the textual material adduced in their support.

12. *KBo* 3.1 i 42 (*CTH* 19): [*na-pa<sup>m</sup> Mur-ši-i-li-ya-aš*] *e-eš-ḫar* DINGIR.MEŠ *ša-an-ḫ[i-i-ir]*. Cf. *KUB* 3.57 obv. 10–11 (*CTH* 11): ... *nu-za ŠA A-BI-ŠU* [*e-eš-ḫar-ši-it EG*]IR-an *ša-an-aḫ-ta*.

13. *KUB* 14.14 + *KUB* 19.2 rev. 23' (*CTH* 378): *nu KUR<sup>URU</sup> Ḫa-at-ti-ya a-pa-a-aš iš-ḫa-na-an-za ar-ḫa nam-ma 'zi-'in-né-[eš-ta]*. I have translated this prayer in full in *Scripture in Context*, Vol. 1: *Canonical Compositions*, ed. W. W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 156–57.

14. *KUB* 14.14 + *KUB* 19.2 rev. 10' (*CTH* 378): *iš-ḫa-na-aš SISKUR*.

15. *KUB* 7.41 obv. 18–19 (*CTH* 446): 'i<sup>1</sup>-[d]a-a-lu pa-ap-ra-tar NI-İŠ DINGIR<sup>LIM</sup> *e-eš-ḫar ḫu-ur-ta-i[(n kur-ku-r)a-in]* *e-eš-ḫa-aḫ-ru wa-aš-ta-in*. Restoration from dupl. *KBo* 10.45 i 9'. This composition has been edited by H. Otten, “Eine Beschwörung der Unterirdischen aus Boğazköy,” *ZA* 54 (1961): 114–57. For the translation of *kurkurāi-* as “Verängstigung, Einschüchterung,” see H. G. Güterbock, “Hethitisch *kurkurāi-* und Verwandtes,” in *Documentum Asiae Minoris Antiquae. Festschrift für Heinrich Otten zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Neu and C. Rüster (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 115–19.

16. *KUB* 41.8 iii 9–10 (*CTH* 446): *nu-kán ku-it ḪUL-lu e-eš-šar an-da na-at šu-me-eš da-at-ten na-at e-eš-ḫa-na-aš DINGIR<sup>LIM</sup>-ni pé-eš-ten*. Dupl. *KBo* 10.45 iii 18 has the more usual spelling *e-eš-ḫar*, and in iii 19 names *iš-ḫa-na-aš* <sup>4</sup>U-ni, “the Storm-god of Blood,” as the recipient of the evils.

17. See N. Oettinger, “Die ‘dunkle Erde’ im Hethitischen und Griechischen,” *WO* 20–21 (1989–90): 83–98.

18. *KBo* 10.45 iv 1–4 (*CTH* 446): ... *nu GE<sub>6</sub>-iš KI-aš ar-ḫa e-ep pár-na-aš URU-aš e-eš-ḫar wa-aš-túl pa-ap-ra-tar NI-İŠ DINGIR-LIM ḪUL-lu-un GİR-an pa-an-ga-wa-aš EME-an GAM pa-a-šu*.

19. *KBo* 17.1 iii 10–12 (*CTH* 416): *ka-a-š[a LU]GAL-i MUNUS.LUGAL-ri DUMU.MEŠ-ma-aš-ša<sup>URU</sup> Ḫa-at-tu-ši e-er-ma-aš-mi-it e-eš-ḫ[ar-š]a-mi-it i-da-a-lu-uš-mi-it ḫa-tu-ka-aš-mi-it ḫa-re-[(e-nu-u)]n*. Restoration from dupl. *KBo* 17.3+++ iii 12. For the edition of this ritual, see H. Otten and V. Souček, *Ein althethitisches Ritual für das Königspaar* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1969).

20. *KUB* 17.28 ii 1–2 (*CTH* 730): *ŠI-PÁT e-eš-ḫa-na-aš ma-a-an-za MUNUS-za ḫ[a-a-ši] nu e-eš-ḫa-ar-še-et a-ri-it-ta*. See G. Beckman, *Hittite Birth Rituals* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), 84–85. The charm itself is in the Hattic language.

21. See V. Haas, “Ein hethitisches Beschwörungsmotiv aus Kizzuwatna—seine Herkunft und Wanderung,” *Or* 40 (1971): 410–30.

22. For example, O. R. Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion*. The Schweich Lectures 1976 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 28: “Blood indeed plays very little part in Hittite sacrifice.” Cf. H. M. Kümmel, “Die Religion der Hethiter,” in *Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, ed. U. Mann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), 75.

If we restrict ourselves to those ritual contexts in which the word “blood” (*ešhar*) or its derivative “make bloody” (*ešharnumāi-*)<sup>23</sup> are employed, the relevant sources are indeed rather sparse. Symptomatic of this situation is the fact that in only one of the hundreds of attestations of the verb “libate; sacrifice; dedicate” (*išpant-/šipant-*) does *ešhar* appear as its object.<sup>24</sup>

But E. Laroche recognized that the Hurrian lexeme *zurki*, thus far attested only as a borrowed technical term in Hittite-language contexts, also means “blood.”<sup>25</sup> All of the relevant material belongs to the late strand of cult that the Hittites imported from Kizzuwatna (later Cilicia),<sup>26</sup> a region that in the middle of the second millennium was home to a culture displaying strong Hurrian and Luwian influences. Numerous passages mention a “*zurki*-Ritual”—(SISKUR) *zurkiyaš/zurkianza*—but neglect to describe the proceedings. We do, however, have a list of materials required for a performance of this ceremony, including “one lamb or one kid,”<sup>27</sup> a requirement that strongly suggests that an animal is slaughtered in the course of the event.

We also read that the *zurki* rite could be carried out with a bird,<sup>28</sup> a kid,<sup>29</sup> an ox, a sheep,<sup>30</sup> or “with broiled (meat).”<sup>31</sup> Finally,<sup>32</sup> we find the hybrid Hurrian/Hittite construction *uziya zurkiya šipant-*, “make a meat and a blood offering.”<sup>33</sup> This synecdochical designation of animal sacrifice as “blood offering” indicates that the vital liquid occupied a prominent role in the religious conceptions of those performing the operation.

To judge by the facts that no special precautions against defilement or contamination are called for in the handling of blood in sacrifice, and that its consumption by humans is never enjoined or even restricted, the Hittites seem to have attributed no particular numinous quality to this fluid in and of itself. Its role in ordinary animal offerings was apparently merely a natural feature of what A. L. Oppenheim called the “care and feeding of the gods.”<sup>34</sup> In general, the divine portion of a Hittite sacrifice included the victim’s heart, its liver, and a cut or two of its meat.<sup>35</sup> The repast of the deities might be augmented with various baked goods,<sup>36</sup> sweets,<sup>37</sup> and beverages.<sup>38</sup> I believe that

23. *HW*<sup>2</sup> 122; *HED* 1–2, 310–11.

24. *KUB* 10.11 vi 5–11 (*CTH* 660). The blood is that of sheep—see A. Goetze, “Hittite *šipant-*,” *JCS* 23 (1970): 85, no. 115.

25. E. Laroche, “Études de linguistique anatolienne,” *RHA* 31 (1973): 83–99, and *GLH* 309. See also H. Otten, *Materialien zum hethitischen Lexikon* (Wörter beginnend mit zu...) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 12–13; and V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*, 67–77.

26. See P. Desideri and A. M. Jasink, *Cilicia. Dall’età di Kizzuwatna alla conquista macedone* (Turin: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1990), 51–109. For the general characteristics of purificatory ceremonies imported from this region, see Rita Strauß, *Reinigungsrituale aus Kizzuwatna* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), chapter 2.

27. *KUB* 29.4 ii 8 (*CTH* 481): ... 1 SILA<sub>4</sub> na-aš-ma MAŠ.TUR ki-i A-NA SÍSKUR zu-ur-ki-ya-aš da-an-zi. This text has been edited by H. Kronasser, *Die Umsiedlung der Schwarzen Gottheit* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1963).

28. *KUB* 29.4 ii 32 (*CTH* 481): nu SÍSKUR zu-úr-ki-ya-aš IŠ-TU MUŠEN! ši-pa-an-da-an-zi. Despite the traces (E. Laroche, *RHA* 31 [1973]: 96, with n. 32), KU<sub>6</sub> is hardly in place here. Fish are not attested elsewhere in bloody rites in Hittite texts.

29. *KUB* 29.4 iii 56 (*CTH* 481): nu SISKUR zu-úr-ki-ya-aš IŠ-TU MÁŠ.TUR ši-pa-an-da-an-zi.

30. *IBoT* 3, 148 i 47–48 (*CTH* 485): 1 GU<sub>4</sub> 1 UDU ‘zu-úr-ki’ ki-ya dHé-bát; ii 57–58: 1 GU<sub>4</sub> 1 UDU ‘zu-ur-ki-’ya ki-ya DINGIR.MEŠ LÚ.MEŠ. This text has been edited by V. Haas and G. Wilhelm, *AOATS* 3, 212–31.

31. *KUB* 29.7 + *KBo* 21.41 rev. 72 (*CTH* 480): EGIR-an-da-ma zu-úr-ki-ya-aš UZU zé-e-ya-an-ti-it ši-pa-an-ti. For an edition, see R. Lebrun, *Samuha: foyer religieux de l’empire hittite* (Louvain: Institute orientaliste, 1976), 117–38.

32. It is not clear whether the Luwian derivative *zurkitāi-*, lit. “(to) bloody,” simply means “perform a blood offering” (see V. Haas and G. Wilhelm, *AOATS* 3, 64) or “smear with blood” (E. Laroche, *GLH* 309: “ensanglanter”), on which see below. *KBo* 17.65 rev. 32 (*CTH* 489): [ ... a-pé-]e-da-aš pá-r-na-aš a[n-da] zu-úr-ki-ta-a-iz-zi, ed. *Hittite Birth Rituals*, 142–43.

33. E.g., *KBo* 23.1 i 56 (*CTH* 472): I-NA UD.2.KAM-ma u-zi-ya zu-ur-ki-ya ši-pa-an-d[(a-an-zi)], ed. R. Lebrun, “Les rituels d’Ammihatna, Tulbi et Mati contre une impurité,” *Hethitica* 3 (1979): 143.

34. *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 183–98; see especially p. 192 for Oppenheim’s assessment the special role of bloody rites in the religious practice of the West Semites.

35. See V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*, 654–58.

36. See H. A. Hoffner, *Alimenta Hethaeorum* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1974). Most of the dozens of breads and cakes listed in chapter five appear in the texts as components of offerings. See now also A. Hagenbuchner-Dresel, *Massangaben bei hethitischen Backwaren* (Dresden: Technische Universität, 2002).

37. Note especially the cultic use of NINDA.Ī.E.DĒ.A, “honey cake” (*Alimenta Hethaeorum*, 196–97), and *milit-*, “honey” (*CHD* L–M, 250–51).

38. See A. Archi, “Das Kultmahl bei den Hethitern,” *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1979), 200–201; and H. C. Melchert, “‘God-Drinking’: A Syntactic Transformation in Hittite,” *JIES* 9 (1981): 245–54.

the blood of the slaughtered beast in most ritual contexts should simply be considered as the most prominent among the potables offered to the gods. Its function as a foodstuff is readily apparent in the following procedure:

Then they drive out the pig and cut it up. They dip a thin loaf of bread into the blood and set it down before the deity. But they (the ritual participants) eat the pig. They butcher it(s) trunk), removing the entrails. ...<sup>39</sup>

Because it was inevitably present when an animal was killed in the Hittite manner—on which I will say more below—blood came to stand *pars pro toto* for the sacrifice itself.

Hittite anatomical terminology is complex and not all of the relevant vocabulary has yet been satisfactorily explained.<sup>40</sup> One lexeme that over the years has posed considerable difficulties for Hittitologists is *auli-*, whose apparent meanings seemed rather difficult to reconcile. However, in a brilliant study, the late C. Kühne elucidated the semantic development of *auli-*: From an original meaning “neck (arteries)” there arose through metonymy the sense “spurt of blood.” Synecdoche then led to the sense “sacrificial animal,” and further to “(animal) offering.”<sup>41</sup> Beginning with the second element of the sequence, this evolution in meaning harmonizes well with that which I have just sketched for Hurroid *zurki*. An excerpt from a festival performed by the monarch is instructive in this regard:

The king steps up and sacrifices: one ox and three sheep for (the goddess) Mezzulla, one sheep for (the deity’s) bird ornament and fibula, one sheep for the Storm-god of the Grove and (the god) Ḫulla. They (the ritual experts) lift the *auli*.

Thereafter, behind<sup>42</sup> the blood he makes the rounds of the sacred places (of the temple) with (libations of) beer, wine, *tawal*, and *wall̥i*.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that blood is not mentioned here until after the “lifting of the *auli*” suggests that it is this action that introduces the liquid into the rite—and into the ritual theater.<sup>44</sup> Since the primary meaning of *auli-*, once more, is “neck

39. KUB 43.56 iii 11’–15’ (CTH 330’):

11’. *na-aš-ta ŠAḪ pa-ra-a pé-e-da-an-zi*

12’. *na-an-kán ku-na-an-zi nu e-eš-ḫa-ni kat-ta-an*

13’. NINDA.SIG *kat-ta-an ap-pa-an-zi na-at-ša-an*

14’. PA-NI DINGIR<sup>UM</sup> EGIR-pa ti-an-zi ŠAḪ-ma e-eš-ša-an-zi

15’. [*na-a*]n-kán pít-tal-wa-an mar-kán-zi na-aš-ta<sup>UZU</sup>ge-en-zu pa-ri-an-zi

See CHD L–M, 188 for *pittalwan* mark-.

40. See H. A. Hoffner, “From Head to Toe in Hittite. The Language of the Human Body,” in “Go to the Land I Will Show You”: *Studies in Honor of Dwight Young*, ed. J. Coleson and V. Matthews (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 247–60. Many of the terms discussed in this article are common to both human and animal anatomy.

41. C. Kühne, “Hethitisch *auli-* und einige Aspekte altanatolischer Opferpraxis,” ZA 76 (1986): 85–117.

42. Or perhaps “after the (shedding of) blood”?

43. KUB 11.26 ii 6’–13’ (CTH 669’):

6’. LUGAL-uš ti-ya-zi ták-kán ši-pa-an-ti

7’. 1 GU<sub>4</sub> 3 UDU-ya<sup>d</sup>Me-ez-zu-la

8’. 1 UDU<sup>d</sup>a-li-li TU-DI-IT-TI

9’. 1 UDU<sup>d</sup>U<sup>GIS</sup>TIR<sup>d</sup>Ḫu-ul-la

10’. a-ú-li-in kar-ap-pa-an-zi

11’. EGIR-ŠU iš-ḫa-ni-i EGIR-an-da

12’. KAŠ-it GEŠTIN-it ta-wa-li-it

13’. wa-al-ḫi-it AŠ-RI.ḪI.A ir-ḫa-a-iz-zi

*tawal* and *wall̥i* are alcoholic beverages.

44. Compare KBo 15.33 iii 31’–33’ (CTH 330’): “But when he completes the slaughtering, then the ‘householder’ libates three times with a libation vessel for the Storm-god behind the blood (*iš-ḫa-ni-i*) and before the offering table.” For a transliteration see J. Glocker, *Das Ritual für den Wettergott von Kuliwišna* (Florence: LoGisma, 1997), 72.

(arteries),” and its lifting results in spilt blood, the syntagm *aulin karp-* must indicate the positioning of the victim’s throat to receive the fatal slashing. After the blow had been struck, the officiant could control the direction taken by the resultant eruption of blood, sending it upward or downward. It is this distinction that is expressed by the pair of technical terms “slaughter up” versus “slaughter down” (*šarā / katta h̄uek-*).<sup>45</sup>

In this regard the Hittites seem to have observed a practice similar to that of the ancient Greeks by which animals offered to celestial and earthly gods were generally killed with their throats upward, while those intended for chthonic deities met their end with throats turned earthward.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, in Ḫatti the blood of victims for the powers of the underworld was often directed<sup>47</sup> or poured into a specially prepared pit.<sup>48</sup> For example, an officiant sacrifices a sheep to an avatar of the Storm-god:

Then he allows the blood to collect in a beaker and sets it on the ground before the *marapši* Storm-god. Then the “seer” cuts off a little of the raw liver and heart and takes a little of the blood and sets it (all) down in the pit.

Then he stops up the pit with a loaf of ordinary bread while the (carcass of) the sheep is carried away. The temple employees butcher it.<sup>49</sup>

Since the divinities of the Dark Earth, who were of course closely associated with death,<sup>50</sup> had a special affinity for blood, I would not deny that when the liquid is offered to *them* it does not merely constitute food but also carries the symbolic value of lost life. But this is a special case.

The usual general term in Hittite for “sacrifice; dedicate,” *išpant-* / *šipant-*,<sup>51</sup> is cognate to Greek σπένδω, “libate.” But in light of the preceding argument, I believe that the semantic development by which this word derived its wider field of meaning in Hittite involved not only the pouring out of potable liquids, but also the manipulation of the spurting life’s blood of the ritual victim.<sup>52</sup> In one instance, as mentioned earlier, *ešhar* is actually governed by this verb:

The chief of the cooks cuts up ten sheep and two fattened bulls beside the hearth for the Storm-god. The chief of the cooks also brings a golden beaker.

Then he repeatedly dips it (the beaker) in the blood of the sheep, and repeatedly libates the blood before the offering stand.<sup>53</sup>

45. See O. R. Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion*, 30; and C. Kühne, *ZA* 76 (1986): 94–95.

46. H. A. Hoffner, “Second Millennium Antecedents to the Hebrew ‘obh,’” *JBL* 86 (1967): 399.

47. The technical term for this act was (*katta[nda]*) *tarna-*.

48. Note the “invention” of this method of dealing with blood by the Sumerian culture hero Lugalbanda, as discussed by W. W. Hallo, “The Origins of the Sacrificial Cult: New Evidence from Mesopotamia and Israel,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion. Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. P. D. Miller, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 9.

49. *KUB* 10.63 i 21–28 (*CTH* 715):

21. *nu-kán e-eš-har A-NA GAL kat-ta tar-na-i na-at ták-ni-i*

22. *A-NA PA-NI<sup>4</sup>U ma-ra-ap-ši da-a-i nu-kán<sup>LU</sup> AZU*

23. *A-NA<sup>UZU</sup> NIG.GIG<sup>UZU</sup> ŠĀ<sup>LU</sup> hu-u-i-šu nu te-pu ku-er-zi*

24. *e-eš-har-ra te-pu da-a-i na-at-kán<sup>4</sup> a-a-pí*

25. *kat-ta-an-da da-a-i*

26. *na-aš-ta<sup>4</sup> a-a-pí-in še-er IŠ-TU NINDA.GUR<sub>4</sub>.RA iš-ta<sup>1</sup>-a-pí*

27. *UDU-ma-kán pa-ra-a pé-e-da-an-zi*

28. *[n]a-an-kán<sup>LU.MES</sup> EN.DINGIR.MEŠ mar-kán-zi*

50. For a summary of Hittite ideas concerning the underworld and its inhabitants, see V. Haas, “Death and the Afterlife in Hittite Thought,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. J. Sasson et al. (New York: Scribner’s, 1995), 3:2021–30.

51. Goetze, *JCS* 23 (1970): 77–94.

52. Cf. Kühne, *ZA* 76 (1986): 115 n. 120; and see already A. Goetze, *KP*<sup>2</sup>, 164.

53. *KUB* 10.11 vi 1–7 (*CTH* 660):

1. *UGULA<sup>LU.MES</sup> MUḪALDIM 10 UDU.ḪI.A 2 GU<sub>4</sub>.MAḪ NIGA*

2. *<sup>4</sup>IŠKUR-ni ha-aš-ša-aš ta-pu-uš-za*

The use of blood as food and its function as a symbol of life and vigor, such as I have discussed for Hatti, are commonplaces among the world's cultures.<sup>54</sup> The employment of blood as a purificatory substance as by the Hittites is a much rarer phenomenon,<sup>55</sup> but a practice well known in Israelite religion.<sup>56</sup> In Hittite texts this activity is expressed by the verb *ešharnumāi-*, “to bloody.”

For instance, in a birth ritual of Kizzuwatnaean origin the birth apparatus breaks shortly before the baby's delivery—surely an ominous sign. Of simple construction, the birth stool can easily be repaired, but the evil influences revealed by its collapse must also be removed. Thus the practitioner “smears the birth stool and the pegs with the blood of two birds, each separately. And he twice makes meat offerings of two sheep and four birds before the birth stool.”<sup>57</sup> Later in the rite, “they set up a washbasin and smear it with the blood of a bird.”<sup>58</sup>

A further example may be drawn from a ritual for the erection of a new temple for a goddess and the installation therein of a newly constructed image of the deity. After several days of activities, “they smear the golden divine image, the wall (of the temple), and all of the implements of the new [deity] with blood so that the [new] deity and the temple will be pure.”<sup>59</sup> In addition, this manner of cleansing is attested for sacred places,<sup>60</sup> cultic furniture,<sup>61</sup> and ritual pits.<sup>62</sup>

What aspect of Hittite thought concerning blood might have led to its employment in this fashion?<sup>63</sup> On the basis of what we have already rehearsed here about the Hittite conception of blood, I tentatively suggest that the ancient Anatolians felt they were imparting a vivifying quality to the objects and locations that they daubed with this liquid. But it must be recalled that without exception, the texts featuring the verb *ešharnumāi-* are late and Hurrian-influenced. That is, they belong to the Kizzuwatnaean stratum of Hittite cult, which introduced such

3. *ku-er-zi* UGULA LUMES<sup>5</sup>MUḪALDIM GAL KÜ.BABBAR

4. *ú-da-i*

5. *nu* UDU.ḪI.A-*aš e-eš-ḫa-ni kat-ta-an*

6. *ap-pí-iš-ki-iz-zi nu* ZAG.GAR.R[A-ni]

7. *e-eš-ḫar pí-ra-an ši-pa-an-za-ki-iz-z[i]*

54. For early modern Europe, see P. Camporesi, *Juice of Life: The Symbolic and Magic Significance of Blood*, tr. R. Barr (New York: Continuum, 1995), esp. pp. 51–52.

55. None of the passages cited in CAD D, 76–79, sub *dāmu*, “blood,” feature this material as a detergent.

56. See D. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 147–59.

57. *KBo* 5.1 i 25–27 (CTH 476):

25. *nam-ma* IŠ-TU 2 MUŠEN *ḫar-na-a-ú-i* G<sup>18</sup>GAG.ḪI.A-*ya ku-i-uš-ša*

26. *ar-ḫa-ya-an iš-ḫar-nu-ma-iz-zi u-uz-zi-ya-ya ḫar-na-a-ú*

27. *pí-ra-an* 2-ŠU IŠ-TU 2 UDU 4 MUŠEN-*ya ši-pa-an-ti*

This text has been edited by F. Sommer and H. Ehelolf, *Pap*.

58. *KBo* 5.1 iii 41 (CTH 476): *nu* DUG<sup>6</sup>ĀBxA *ti-an-zi na-an* IŠ-TU MUŠEN *iš-ḫar-nu-ma-an-zi*.

59. *KUB* 29.4 iv 38–40 (CTH 481):

38. ... *nu* DINGIR<sup>LUM</sup> KÜ.SIG<sub>17</sub> *ku-ut-ta-an Ū-NU-TE.MEŠ*

39. Š[A DINGIR<sup>LUM</sup>] GIBIL *ḫu-u-ma-an e-eš-ḫar-nu-ma-an-zi*

40. *nu* DINGIR<sup>LUM</sup> GIBI]L Ē.DINGIR<sup>LUM</sup>-*ya šu-up-pé-eš-zi* ...

This text has been newly edited by J. Miller, *Studies in the Origins, Development and Interpretation of the Kizzuwatna Rituals* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 259–311.

60. *AŠRU*: *KBo* 13.101 i 28' (CTH 435); the *ayakki*-structure: *KBo* 13.114 iii 3 (CTH 415); *papanni šinapši*: *KBo* 33.169+ rt. col. 10' (CTH 705); and *tali* (“forest, grove”) *dulpuri šinapšenwena* *KBo* 33.161+ rt. col. 8' (CTH 705). The appearance of the corpse in this list shows that “bloodying” was not limited to buildings, as stated by V. Haas, “Ein hurritischer Blutritus und die Deponierung der Ritualrückstände nach hethitischen Quellen,” in *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament*, ed. B. Janowski et al. (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1993), 70. He is correct, however, that a person is never cleansed in this manner.

61. G<sup>18</sup>BANŠÜR: *KBo* 14.127 iv' 7' (CTH 500), *KBo* 33.169+ rt. col. 8' (CTH 705); *ahrušhi* and *ḫuprušhi*: *KBo* 14.127 iv' 8'–9' (CTH 500); bronze images and bull: *KBo* 13.114 iii 2–3 (CTH 415).

62. *KUB* 15.31 ii 23 (CTH 484), *KBo* 24.45 rev. 11.

63. Other cultic uses of blood that do not fit the pattern determined here include depositing it upon an offering table (*KBo* 9.121 ii 7—CTH 670) and wiping it off the same piece of cultic furniture (*KBo* 24.110 (+<sup>3</sup>) *KBo* 23.49 iv 11'–12'—see HW<sup>2</sup> 2, 26). Cf. also EZEN *e-eš-ḫar šar-ta-u-wa-aš* (*KUB* 46.32 rev. 5'), translated by H. A. Hoffner, review of *KUB* 46, *BiOr* 34 (1977): 74 as “festival of wiping off of blood.”

other novelties as burnt offerings and the widespread use of bird sacrifice into Hatti.<sup>64</sup> It is not at all certain that Hittites of the pre-imperial period would have employed, approved of, or even understood the use of blood as a ritual detergent.

In any event, the Hittite scribes exercised their customary reticence and failed to explain just what their priestly colleagues were thinking when they painted blood on something. Perhaps the answer to this question will emerge only through the study of newly intelligible Hurrian sources,<sup>65</sup> although as I pointed out earlier, the word *zurki* has not yet appeared in those we have at our disposal. On the other hand, it may be that Hittitologists have something to learn here from students of Israelite worship,<sup>66</sup> if I am correct in my suspicion that the use of ritual pits and purification by means of blood, as well as the incineration of birds and other creatures in the cult of both Hatti and Israel derive from a common Syro-Hurrian source.

In conclusion, I present an excerpt from the account of Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński of his sojourn in Iran during the Islamic revolution. One day he notices a commotion outside his Teheran hotel:

I am trying to understand them [that is, the local people], but over and over again I stumble into a dark region and lose my way. They have a different attitude to life and death. They react differently to the sight of blood. At the sight of blood they become tense, fascinated, they fall into some sort of mystical trance; I can see their animated gestures and hear their cries. The owner of a nearby restaurant pulled up in front of my hotel in his new car. It was a brand-new Pontiac, gold, straight from the dealer. There was some commotion and I could hear chickens being slaughtered in the courtyard. First the people sprinkled the chicken blood over themselves, and then they smeared it on the body of the car. In a moment the automobile was red and dripping blood. This was the baptism of the Pontiac. Wherever there is blood, they crowd around to dip their hands in it. They could not explain to me why this is necessary.<sup>67</sup>

I hope that I have demonstrated that blood was of greater importance in Hittite cult than has hitherto been acknowledged, that it served to nourish gods and humans alike, and that to the Hittites it represented life and vitality. As for its use as a cleansing and apotropaic agent in later sources, I'm afraid that I have not succeeded in fully explaining just why this practice—like the daubing of the Pontiac—was necessary.

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64. See already E. Laroche, *RHA* 31 (1973): 99. The common Hurrian origin of these features in Israelite and Hittite ritual praxis remains to be investigated thoroughly.

65. Much progress in this area has already followed E. Neu's edition of the Hurro-Hittite bilingual: *Das hurritische Epos der Freilassung*. I (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996). For a survey, see I. Wegner, *Hurritisch, eine Einführung*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007).

66. The reverse is also true, judging from the statement by Biale, *Blood and Belief*, 10, that the Israelites "were the only Near Easterners to make blood a central element in their religious rituals."

67. R. Kapuściński, *Shah of Shahs*, tr. W. R. Brand and K. Mroczkowska-Brand (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 147.