

**THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY  
OF RELIGIONS IN THE  
ANCIENT WORLD**

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VOLUME I

**FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO THE  
HELLENISTIC AGE**

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## HITTITE RELIGION

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The term "religion" is employed here in reference to the complex of conceptions concerning the character of parahuman elements in the cosmos and the relationship of men and women to these beings and forces, as well as to the practices by which humans interact with them. Because the Hittites of second-millennium-BCE Anatolia, like all the peoples of the ancient Near East, perceived deities, demons, and the spirits of the dead to be involved in the most mundane aspects of existence, religion was for them an integral part of daily life.

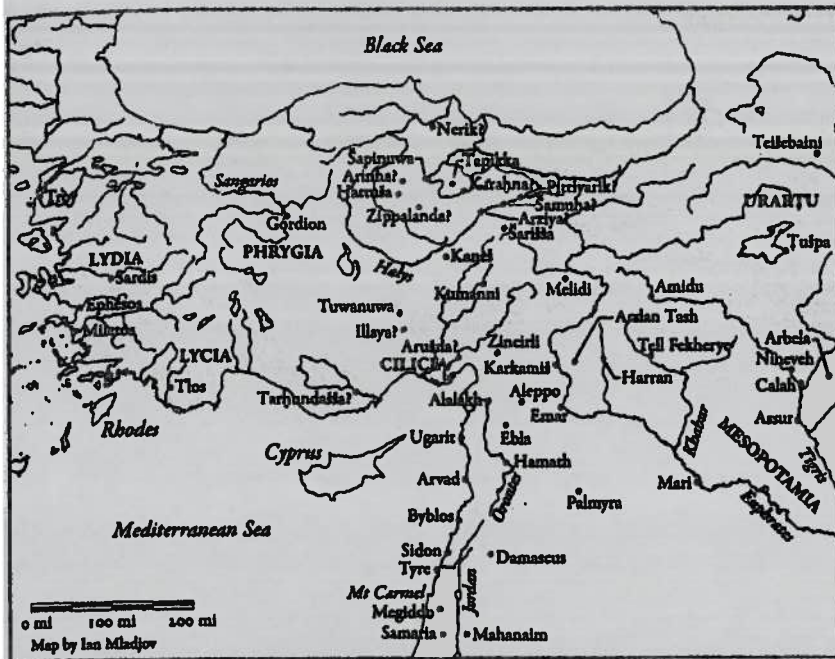
As something so imbricated in the quotidian and self-evident to societal contemporaries, religion was seldom the subject of self-conscious reflection or examination in Hatti (as the Hittites referred to their nation and its territory; see Map 2). Accordingly, the Hittites bequeathed to posterity no theological treatises or surveys of their beliefs, and it is therefore necessary for the modern student to reconstruct their religious life from scattered evidence of the most diverse nature.

## MATERIALS

First of all, cuneiform tablets from the Hittite metropolis Boğazköy/Hattuša<sup>1</sup> (located about a three hour's drive from Turkey's present capital, Ankara) and to a lesser extent from provincial centers such as Maşat Höyük/Tapikka and Kuşaklı/Şarišša elsewhere in central Anatolia include hymns and prayers,<sup>2</sup> detailed programs for ceremonies of the state cult,

<sup>1</sup> For a convenient introduction to the current state of the excavations, see Secher, *Hattuša Guide*.

<sup>2</sup> Singer, *Hittite Prayers*; Lebrun, *Hymnes et prières*; Güterbock, "Some Aspects of Hittite Prayers," 125-39.



Map 2. Anatolia and Syria.

magical rituals, mythological narratives,<sup>3</sup> records of divinatory procedures, and inventories of the contents of shrines.

The excavated remains of more than thirty temples (each called literally *šunuš per*, "house of the god[s]") in the capital<sup>4</sup> and several more in lesser cities, some with extensive office precincts and food-storage facilities, demonstrate the important role of religious institutions in Hittite society and administration as well as in the spiritual life of Hatti.<sup>5</sup> The temples were the proprietors of large estates, whose produce, along with additional taxation in kind extracted from other landholders, sustained a substantial redistributive component of the Hittite economy.<sup>6</sup>

Artistic evidence for Hittite religion<sup>7</sup> is provided by images of gods and goddesses in metal, ivory, and other valuable materials;<sup>8</sup> by cylinder and

<sup>3</sup> Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*; Beckman, "Mythologie," 564-72.

<sup>4</sup> See Neve, *Hattusa*.

<sup>5</sup> Neve, "Der Große Tempel," 73-79; Güterbock, "The Hittite Temple," 125-32.

<sup>6</sup> Klengel, "Zur ökonomischen Funktion," 181-200.

<sup>7</sup> See in general Bittel, *Die Hethiter*; van Loon, *Anatolia*; Beckman, "Visual Representation," 610-12.

<sup>8</sup> Güterbock, "Hethitische Götterbilder," 203-17.

stamp seals and their impressions on clay tablets, vessels, and *bullae*;<sup>9</sup> by sculpture in low relief on rock faces and free-standing stones;<sup>10</sup> and by ceramics featuring scenes of worship in relief.<sup>11</sup>

#### PROBLEMS OF RESEARCH

Several difficulties bedevil the student of Hittite religion: First, it must be recognized that almost all of the available written sources pertain to the state cult or to the spiritual needs of the royal family. We have very little information concerning the religious beliefs and activities of the ordinary Hittite man or woman in the street. Second, Hittite religion was an amalgam of elements drawn from various cultural strata: that of the indigenous Hattic people<sup>12</sup> as well as the cultures of the several groups speaking an Anatolian Indo-European language<sup>13</sup> (Hittite, Palaic, or Luwian).<sup>14</sup> To this mix were added influences from Mesopotamia (Babylonia and Assyria) and from the Semitic<sup>15</sup> and Hurrian<sup>16</sup> populations of northern Syria. But it is hazardous to assume, as some commentators have done,<sup>17</sup> that particular spiritual features of these donor cultures documented only elsewhere were equally valid at Hattuša. Finally, the continuous development of central Anatolian civilization throughout the Bronze Ages makes it impossible to present in a short essay a picture accurate in all details across the 500-year history of Hatti. Here I will utilize primarily material from the final century and a half of Hittite history, circa 1350–1180 BCE.

#### DEITIES

In their cuneiform texts, Hittite scribes placed the divine determinative (DINGIR) not only before the names of proper gods and goddesses, but also before those of demons,<sup>18</sup> topographical features such as springs or mountains,<sup>19</sup> and even parts of temples (for example, the hearth or the

<sup>9</sup> Beran, *Die hethitische Glyptik*; Herboldt, *Die Prinzen- und Beamtsiegel*.

<sup>10</sup> Kohlmeyer, "Felsbilder der hethitischen Großreichszeit," 7–154; Ehringhaus, *Göster, Herrscher, Inschriften*.

<sup>11</sup> Boehmer, *Die Reliefteramik*.

<sup>12</sup> Klingert, *Untersuchungen*.

<sup>13</sup> On the question of Indo-European relics in Hittite mythology, see Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*.

<sup>14</sup> Hurter, "Aspects of Luwian Religion," 211–80.

<sup>15</sup> Hoffner, "Syrian Cultural Influence," 89–106.

<sup>16</sup> Hoffner, "Hurrian Civilization," 167–200; Trémouille, "La religion des Hourrites," 277–91.

<sup>17</sup> As does Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*.

<sup>18</sup> Carruba, *Das Beschwörungsritual*.

<sup>19</sup> Lombardi, "Il culto delle montagne," 83–8.

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## RESEARCH

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*Am- und Beamteniegel. Die Hittitische Zeit.* 7–154; Ehringhaus, *Götter, Herrscher,*

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pillars).<sup>20</sup> That is, this diacritic could be employed to mark any parahuman and immortal force with the power and inclination to intervene in the affairs of humankind.

For the most part, Hittite deities were conceived as human in form, as evidenced by the gods and goddesses sculpted in the relief processions at the shrine of Yazılıkaya<sup>21</sup> (just outside the walls of the capital), but some might also on occasion be depicted theriomorphically. An anthropomorphic divinity is sometimes accompanied by his or her animal manifestation serving as a means of transportation or merely as a mascot. Thus the storm-god might ride in a chariot drawn by bulls, or the goddess of love and war Šaušga stand awkwardly upon the back of her lion-griffon.

For purposes of receiving worship, a god's ultimately ineffable essence could be located in an anthropomorphic or theriomorphic image, in a worked stele or a stone left in its natural state (both called *huwašši*),<sup>22</sup> or in a manufactured symbol such as a disk of gold, and so on. An idea of the sumptuous character of a full-sized cult-image, none of which have yet been physically recovered,<sup>23</sup> may be gleaned from the following introduction to a ritual for establishing the worship of a goddess in a new location:

Thus says the priest of the Deity of the Night: When a person for whom (the matter) of the temple of the Deity of the Night, that is, (the matter) of the Deity of the Night (herself), has become (Incumbent) – When it comes about that (s)he<sup>24</sup> builds another temple of the Deity of the Night from (the base of) this temple of the Deity of the Night, and then establishes the deity independently, while (s)he is completing the construction fully, the smiths fashion the deity in gold. They also set about decking her out with the accoutrements appropriate to her. Stuck on her back like beads are sun-disks of silver, gold, lapis-lazuli, carnelian, "Babylon stone," chalcedony (?), quartz, and alabaster, as well as life-symbol(s) and morning stars (?) of silver and gold. They set about fashioning them in that manner. (*KUB* 29.4 1 1–12)

Perhaps more typical was the smaller image included among the inventory of a shrine in an outlying village:<sup>25</sup>

The town Lapana, (chief deity the goddess) Iyaya: The divine image is a female statuette of wood, seated and veiled, one cubit (in height). Her head is plated with gold, but the body and throne are plated with tin. Two wooden mountain

<sup>20</sup> Popko, *Kultobjekte in der hethitischen Religion.*

<sup>21</sup> Bittel, *Das hethitische Felsheiligtum*; Alexander, *Sculpture and Sculptors.*

<sup>22</sup> Hurter, "Kultstelen und Baityloi," 87–108.

<sup>23</sup> Given the inherent value of the materials from which such statues were constructed, it is extremely unlikely that any will in fact have survived the ravages of conquest and time.

<sup>24</sup> The Hittite language does not differentiate between masculine and feminine gender.

<sup>25</sup> For a collection of such texts, see Hazenbos, *The Organization of the Anatolian Local Cults.*

sheep, plated with tin, sit beneath the deity to the right and left. One eagle plated with tin, two copper staves and two bronze goblets are on hand as the deity's cultic implements. She has a new temple. Her priest, a male, is a holdover. (*KUB* 38.1 iv 1-7)

The small metal figurines of deities, recognizable as such by their horned headgear, found throughout central Anatolia are probably examples of such local divinities.

In any event, the Hittites were well aware that the divine image, whatever its form, did not constitute or contain the god or goddess. As in Babylonia and Assyria, special ritual was necessary to render a man-made or -selected object a suitable focus for the divine presence. This presence had its true home in that aspect of the cosmos in which it was immanent. (See further below.)

#### THE PANTHEON

As polytheists,<sup>26</sup> the Hittites could comfortably honor an unlimited number of deities. Indeed, in the course of their imperial expansion, they availed themselves of this flexibility by accepting into their pantheon the gods and goddesses of many conquered areas. This process commenced as early as the Old Kingdom (sixteenth century BCE) with the welcoming of the Storm-god of the Syrian city of Aleppo into Hatti<sup>27</sup> and gained momentum in the fifteenth century with the incorporation of numerous Hurrian deities encountered in southern Anatolia and northern Syria (most importantly the storm-god Teššub and his spouse Hebat, the latter originally the eponymous deity of Aleppo). The community of deities worshiped among the Hittites ultimately grew so large that it came to be referred to as the "Thousand Gods of Hatti."<sup>28</sup>

Most prominent among this myriad of gods<sup>29</sup> were those immanent in the natural phenomena upon which human survival most closely depended: storm-gods, who delivered the rains crucial to the dry-farming economy of central Anatolia and in addition ensured the flow of rivers and springs; sun-deities, whose light was recognized as the basis of all life; and goddesses of the fertile earth. Other deities presided over warfare, sexuality, and reproduction, the world of the dead, particular towns or locations, and so forth. Individual human beings, as well as many

<sup>26</sup> For more detail, see Beckman, "Pantheon," 308-16.

<sup>27</sup> Klengel, "Der Wettergott von Halab," 87-93.

<sup>28</sup> Karasu, "Why Did the Hittites Have a Thousand Deities?" 221-35.

<sup>29</sup> For a full listing, see van Gessel, *Onomasticon*.

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significant places, objects, and social phenomena, were each watched over by a patron deity (<sup>d</sup>LAMMA).<sup>30</sup> Thus we meet with the Protective Deity of the King, the Protective Deity of (the town of) Karahna, the Protective Deity of the Army, the Protective Deity of the Quiver, the Protective Deity of the (Palace) Bedroom, the Protective Deity of the Countryside, and many more.

Divinities of similar type often shared a common generic designation; accordingly we find "the Storm-god (<sup>d</sup>IŠKUR / <sup>d</sup>U) of (the town of) Pittiyarik" and "the Storm-god of (the town of) Šapinuwa," or "the War-god (<sup>d</sup>ZABABA) of (the town of) Arziya" and "the War-god of (the town of) Illaya." The extent to which such gods were considered "avatars" of a single deity is uncertain: In some cultic texts we find offerings or invocations of, for example, "all the storm-gods of Hatti," whereas in others worship is directed to each individual member of the class.

The explicit identification of Anatolian with Hurrian deities is attested only in the Empire period (mid-fourteenth to early twelfth centuries).<sup>31</sup> The most striking example is provided by an excerpt from a prayer of Queen Puduhepa (mid-thirteenth century): "Sun-goddess of (the town of) Arinna, my lady, you are the queen of all lands! In the land of Hatti you have assumed the name Sun-goddess of Arinna, but in respect to the land that you have made (the land) of cedars (that is, Syria), you have assumed the name Hebat" (*KUB* 21.27 i 3-6). It is significant in this regard that the carved labels accompanying the figures of the gods in the temple of Yazulikaya present their names in the Hurrian language, not Hittite, thus confirming that this assimilation of pantheons was carried out at the highest level of the state cult.

In certain key respects, the divine world mirrored human societal structure. The pantheon was hierarchical and was ruled by a king, the Storm-god of Hatti (or of the Heavens) – later Teššub – alongside his queen, the Sun-goddess of Arinna – later Hebat. Along with their son (the Storm-god of [the town of] Zippalanda – later Šarrumma) and grandchildren (Mezzula and Zintuhi), these monarchs constituted a family, as did other groups of deities at home in various Hittite towns, for instance, the deities Zašhapuna, Zaliyanu, and Tazzuwašši in Tanipiya.

When warranted by common concerns, such as the witnessing of treaties or the rendering of judgment, all the gods of Hatti met in an assembly whose structure and deliberations undoubtedly mirrored those of the

titles?" 221-35.

<sup>29</sup> McMahon, *The Hittite State Cult*.

<sup>31</sup> Wilhelm, "Gleichsetzungstheologie," 53-70.

gathering of Hittite human dignitaries with which it shared the designation *tuliya*.<sup>32</sup> For example, when the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV (late thirteenth century) concluded an agreement with his vassal Kurunta of (the town of) Tarhuntašša, he invoked all the gods as follows: "And in regard to the fact that I have made this treaty for you, the Thousand Gods are now summoned to assembly in this matter. They shall observe and listen and be witnesses!" (An inclusive list of deities follows.)<sup>33</sup> Any violation of the provisions of a treaty thus concluded in the presence of the pantheon would be severely punished by the gods themselves, on occasion even with the death of the culprit.

#### THE UNIVERSE

We know little concerning how the Hittites conceived the origins or the destiny of their cosmos. However, a ritual passage does relate that in primeval times the celestial and chthonic deities took possession of their respective realms, and that human beings were created by mother-goddesses, presumably from the clay of a riverbank.<sup>34</sup> If we may for once allow ourselves to extrapolate from Mesopotamian evidence, we may speculate that men and women were brought into existence precisely to perform the labor that sustained the leisurely lives of the gods.<sup>35</sup> Such an etiology would certainly be in harmony with the role actually played by humans in the world as illustrated immediately below.

The universe of the Hittites was an integrated system, with no clear-cut boundaries among its levels. Under the right circumstances, gods might mingle with humans, as reported in certain mythological stories.<sup>36</sup> And the euphemism employed for the death of a king or a member of the royal family, "to become a god" (*šiu-naš kiš*), shows that a man of sufficient social prominence might attain the status of a minor deity.

As in Mesopotamia, the role of humans was clearly to serve the gods, providing for their sustenance, pleasure, and entertainment.<sup>37</sup> That the gods were actually dependent upon this attention is evident from a passage in a prayer of Muršili II (late fourteenth century), who reminds them of the consequences of a severe outbreak of plague:

<sup>32</sup> Beckman, "The Hittite Assembly," 435-42.

<sup>33</sup> Otten, *Bronzetafel*, III 78-iv 15.

<sup>34</sup> Otten and Siegelová, "Die hethitischen *Gul*-Gottheiten," 32-8.

<sup>35</sup> See the discussion of Assyrian and Babylonian religion by Schneider in Chapter 2.

<sup>36</sup> Beckman, "The Anatolian Myth of Illuyanka," 11-25.

<sup>37</sup> Again, see the discussion of Assyrian and Babylonian religion by Schneider.



All of the land of Hatti is dying, so that no one prepares the sacrificial loaf and libation for you. The plowmen who used to work the fields of the gods have died, so that no one works or reaps the fields of the gods any longer. The miller-women who used to prepare the sacrificial loaves of the gods have died, so that they no longer make the sacrificial loaves. As for the corral and sheepfold from which one used to cull the offerings of sheep and cattle – the cowherds and shepherds have died, and the corral and sheepfold are empty. So it has come about that the sacrificial loaves, libations, and animal sacrifices are cut off. Yet you come to us, O gods, and hold us responsible in this matter! (*KUB 24.3 ii 4D-17D*)

In return for the necessary maintenance, the satisfied deities would cause crops to thrive, domestic animals to multiply, human society to prosper, and Hittite armies to prevail in battle. This conception is reflected in a prayer in which a god is enjoined:

Give life, health, strength, long years, and joy in the future to the king, queen, princes, and to (all) the land of Hatti! And give to them future thriving of grain, vines, fruit, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, mules (*sic!*), asses – together with wild animals – and of human beings! (*KUB 24.2 rev. 12D-16D*)

Conversely, a neglected or offended god or goddess could wreak havoc on an individual, a household, or all of Hatti. Attested manifestations of divine displeasure include epidemic, military defeat, and the illness of the king. When confronted with misfortune, it was necessary that the individual sufferer – or the royal establishment on behalf of the community as a whole – determine which deity was angry, the cause(s) of his or her rage, and the appropriate ameliorative measures.

The power of deities to determine human affairs was known as *parā hand(anda)atar*, literally “prior arrangement,” but often best rendered as “providence.” For example, in his “Apology,”<sup>18</sup> Hattušili III attributes the successful course of his career to the intervention of his patron goddess, Šaušga of (the town of) Šamuha. When he had risen in revolt against his nephew, King Urhi-Teššub, “Šaušga, my lady, supported me, and things turned out as she had promised me. Šaušga, my lady, on that very occasion revealed her divine providence (*parā handandatar*) in great measure (by bringing about the defeat of my rival)” (*CTH 81 iv 16-19*).

#### THE KING

The human monarch<sup>19</sup> stood at the intersection of the divine sphere with that of humans, constituting the linchpin of the entire structure. He had

<sup>18</sup> Otten, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III.*

<sup>19</sup> Beckman, “Royal Ideology,” 529-43.

been allotted his paramount position in society by the leading deities themselves: "The gods, the Sun-goddess and the Storm-god, have entrusted to me, the king, my land and my household, so that I, the king, should protect my land and my household on my own behalf" (*KUB* 29.1 i 17-19). In this role he was responsible for ensuring that the people of Hatti properly performed their obligations to their divine masters. In principle, the king directed all communal religious activities, serving as the high priest of all the gods, most importantly that of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, from earliest days the protector and proprietor of the Hittite state.

Although it was necessary for the king to delegate most of his religious duties, twice yearly, in spring and autumn, he made a progress through the towns of the Hittite heartland, officiating in the sanctuaries of the local divinities. These onerous journeys allowed the monarch to "keep his hand in" the cult of each and every deity worshiped in Hatti. Furthermore, in times of crisis such as the plague addressed above by Muršili II, the ruler appeared in person before the gods to present Hatti's *arkuwar*, "plaidoyer." The parade example of such a brief delivered to a divine authority is that very prayer of Muršili.

#### COMMUNICATION

As mentioned earlier, it was of the greatest importance that the monarch and the gods maintain a regular exchange of information so that difficulties in the functioning of the cosmos might be rectified to their mutual benefit. The king reported directly to his divine lords through his prayers, but traffic in the other direction was necessarily more complex. Accordingly, Muršili II demanded of the gods concerning the cause of an epidemic: "Either let me see it in a dream, or let it be established through an oracle, or let a prophet (*šiu-naš antubšaš*, lit. 'man of god') speak of it. Or all the priests shall perform an incubation rite (lit. 'sleep purely') concerning that which I have instructed them" (*KUB* 14.10 iv 9-13 and dupls.). We may observe that the communication media employed by the gods were of two types: those of which the divinities availed themselves on their own initiative (omens), and those whose use was solicited by humans (oracles).

A god might contact a person directly by appearing in a dream,<sup>40</sup> cause a third party to utter a prophecy, or send a portent in the form of unusual human or animal behavior.<sup>41</sup> The sign might also be an astronomical

<sup>40</sup> Mouton, "L'importance des rêves," 9-16.

<sup>41</sup> Hoffner, "Akkadian *Iumma Imneru* Texts," 116-19.

occurrence (a solar or lunar eclipse, shooting star, and so forth), a meteorological phenomenon (for example, a lightning strike), or any abnormal terrestrial event.

Alternatively, through various procedures, a specialist serving in the Hittite religious bureaucracy could pose a question to a deity and receive a reply.<sup>42</sup> Divinatory techniques utilized included the examination of the entrails of a sacrificed animal (extispicy),<sup>43</sup> the observation of the flight and other behavior of birds (augury),<sup>44</sup> incubation,<sup>45</sup> and the still mysterious "lot" (KIN) oracle.<sup>46</sup> These various methods were often employed in series as checks upon the results obtained by one another. An excerpt from a lengthy series of such questions is the following:

In regard to the fact that you, O deity of Arušna, were ascertained to be angry with His Majesty (the King), is this because the Queen cursed (the palace woman) Ammattalla before the deity of Arušna? Because Ammattalla began to concern herself with the deity, yet did not go back and forth (in service to the deity)? Because the son of Ammattalla has dressed himself in garments entrusted to his mother and was summoned to the palace? If you, O god, are angry about this, let the extispicy be unfavorable. . . . (Here the technical details of the observation are reported.) (Result:) Unfavorable.<sup>47</sup> If you, O god, are angry *only* about this, let the duck oracle be favorable. . . . (Result:) Unfavorable. (*KUB 22.70 i 7-11*)

#### THE STATE CULT

The programs of the state cult, probably the most numerous type of text among the surviving Hittite records, prescribe the course of worship in great detail. These religious ceremonies were conducted at regular intervals – daily, monthly, yearly, or at some point in the agricultural cycle (harvest, trimming of the vines, opening of the grain-storage vessels, and so forth) – and are designated by the Sumerogram EZEN, "festival."<sup>48</sup> During these observances, gods and goddesses were lavished with attentions that were likely similar to those customarily enjoyed by the king and his courtiers. The divinities were praised through the recitation of

<sup>42</sup> Kammenhuber, *Orakelpraxis, Träume und Vorzeichenschau*.

<sup>43</sup> Schul, "Die Terminologie des hethitischen SU-Orakels," 73-124.

<sup>44</sup> Archi, "L'ornitomanzia ittita," 119-80.

<sup>45</sup> Mouton, "Use of Private Incubations," 293-300.

<sup>46</sup> Orlamünde, "Überlegungen zum hethitischen KIN-Orakel," 295-311; Beal, "Hittite Oracles," 57-81.

<sup>47</sup> Since the diviner had stipulated that an "unfavorable" response would constitute a "yes" to his query, his supposition as to the cause of the deity's displeasure is thus confirmed. But is there anything else on the god's mind?

<sup>48</sup> Güterbock, "Some Aspects of Hittite Festivals," 175-80.

hymns and provided with much food and drink.<sup>49</sup> They were entertained by singers and dancers<sup>50</sup> and amused by jesters,<sup>51</sup> and they observed the best efforts of athletes in various competitions,<sup>52</sup> including foot races, the shot put, and even mock battles. Strict standards of purity were enforced for officiants,<sup>53</sup> and foreigners were customarily barred from the temple precincts. Celebrations might also include a communal meal<sup>54</sup> for a wider circle of human participants, undoubtedly made up of individuals from the higher ranks of society.

We may gain an idea of the character of regular divine service from the following passage:

The king and queen, while seated, toast the War-god. The *halliyari*-men (play) the large stringed instruments and sing. The clapper-priest claps. The cupbearer brings one snack loaf from outside and gives (it) to the king. The king breaks (it) and takes a bite. The palace functionaries take the napkins from the king and queen. The crouching (cupbearer) enters. The king and queen, while standing, toast the (divinized) Day. The jester speaks; the clapper claps; the *kita*-man cries "aha!" (KUB 25.6 iv 5-24)

Note that in the rite described in this passage, which is quite typical for the festivals, the duties of the royal couple are rather simple. The more technical aspects of worship were the preserve of religious professionals.

#### MAGICAL RITUALS

The Hittite scribes employed the Sumerogram SISKUR/SISKUR, "ritual," as a label for *rites de passage*, including those concerned with birth,<sup>55</sup> puberty,<sup>56</sup> and death,<sup>57</sup> as well as for ceremonies that were performed only as the need arose – for exigencies such as illness, impotence, miscarriage, or familial strife. These lamentable conditions were held to result from the influence of sorcery or black magic (*alwanzatar*) and/or from infection with *papratar*, "impurity." The immediate goal of treatment was to remove

<sup>49</sup> Beckman, "Opfer nach schriftlichen Quellen," 106-11; idem, "Sacrifice, Offerings, and Votives," 336-9.

<sup>50</sup> de Martino, "Music, Dance, and Processions," 2661-9.

<sup>51</sup> de Martino, "Il LÜ.ALAN.ZÜ," 131-48.

<sup>52</sup> Carter, "Athletic Contests," 185-7.

<sup>53</sup> Moyer, "The Concept of Ritual Purity"; de Martino, "Purità dei sacerdoti," 348-61.

<sup>54</sup> Archi, "Das Kultmahl bei den Hethitern," 197-213; Collins, "Ritual Meals," 77-92.

<sup>55</sup> Beckman, *Hittite Birth Rituals*.

<sup>56</sup> Güterbock, "An Initiation Rite," 99-103.

<sup>57</sup> Otten, *Hethitische Totenrituale*; Kassian et al., *Hittite Funerary Ritual*.

these malign influences, a task to be accomplished largely through the use of analogic magic, which almost always featured a spoken incantation.<sup>58</sup>

Typical in structure, if unusually colorful in its imagery, is this magical speech from a ritual addressed to deities of the underworld: "As a ram mounts a ewe and she becomes pregnant, so let this city and house become a ram, and let it mount the Dark Earth in the steppe! And let the Dark Earth become pregnant with the blood, impurity (*papratar*), and sin!" (*KUB* 41.8 iv 29-32).

It is interesting to observe that women were particularly prominent among magicians,<sup>59</sup> despite their subordinate role among the college of cultic experts in the temples. This is probably because of the special occult knowledge that, as in many other cultures, from classical Greece to early modern France, females were thought to acquire in the process of giving and assisting at birth. Note that one of the most common titles borne by these female practitioners was "the one of birth" (*hašauwaš*), often represented by the Sumerogram <sup>MUNUS</sup>ŠU.GI, "old woman."

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

#### THE INDIVIDUAL

The birth of each person was overseen by a group of mother-goddesses (DINGIR.MAH<sup>MES/HIA</sup>) and fate deities (*Gulšeš*), one of whom seemingly accompanied the individual throughout life as a kind of "guardian angel." The relationship of this protector to a man or woman's Protective Deity (<sup>d</sup>LAMMA) is obscure.

The existence of a son of Hatti did not end with death. Rather, he or she passed to an underworld, about which we are regrettably very poorly informed. We do learn, however, that in this Anatolian Sheol even close relatives failed to recognize one another, and that their daily fare was mud and dirty water.<sup>60</sup> Despite their pitiful lot, the spirits of the dead (*akkant-*,

<sup>58</sup> Beckman, "The Tongue Is a Bridge," 519-34.

<sup>59</sup> Beckman, "From Cradle to Grave," 25-39.

<sup>60</sup> Hoffner, "A Scene in the Realm of the Dead," 191-9.

GIDIM; sometimes personalized as the deity Zawalli)<sup>61</sup> could nonetheless intervene for good – but more frequently for ill – in the business of their living descendants.

However, as indicated by the euphemism “to become a god,” the king and his closest relatives were thought to enjoy a more pleasant afterlife. A passage from a royal funerary ritual in fact indicates that the deceased monarch became the owner of a herd of livestock grazing in a kind of Elysian Fields, perhaps a fond reminiscence of a simpler lifestyle practiced by his forebears prior to the entrance of the Indo-European groups into the orbit of the civilizations of the ancient Near East. Furthermore, it appears that a change in the ideology of kingship occurred during the final decades of the existence of the Hittite state, and that the ruler came to enjoy a certain divine status even during his lifetime.<sup>62</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

This survey has revealed that Hittite religious ideology was primarily concerned with the lives of people. Able with their limited technology to intervene only marginally in the basic processes on which their lives depended, the Hittites attributed to their gods power over – and responsibility for – their own survival as individuals and as a group. Positive or negative events were due not to impersonal forces and conditions following their natural development, but were rather the direct expression of divine displeasure with an individual man or woman, or with the king as the embodiment of Hatti.<sup>63</sup> It *was* all about them, and in practice the gods received attention only because of their putative potential influence upon the human level of the cosmos.

With its emphasis on hierarchy, according to which every personage in the universe ideally remained in his or her proper place and fulfilled an allotted role,<sup>64</sup> Hittite religion was also a force for the maintenance of stability within society. In all documented societies of ancient western Asia and northeast Africa the king stood atop both the social and cultic pyramids. The primary distinction between the role of the monarch in Egypt, on the one hand, and in Mesopotamia (Assyria and Babylonia) and Hatti, on the other, is that in the former culture the ruler was himself one

<sup>61</sup> Archi, “Il dio Zawalli,” 81–94.

<sup>62</sup> van den Hout, “Tuthaliya IV,” 545–73.

<sup>63</sup> Compare Hoffner, “Theodicy in Hittite Texts,” 90–107.

<sup>64</sup> Note the “moral of the stories” comprising the cult myths of the *purulli*-festival; see Beckman, “The Anatolian Myth,” 11–25.

of the gods, whereas in the latter civilizations he was (merely) first among humans. In either instance resisting his will was ideologically illegitimate. The king had been selected by the gods to be their vicar among humans. Any challenge to the king's paramountcy from below was illegitimate from the outset.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> It is surely significant that all of the many usurpers of the throne who arose over the course of Hittite history emerged from within the ranks of the royal family itself. See Beckman, "Inheritance and Royal Succession," 13–31.

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