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Introduction

Vladimir SAZONOV, Peeter ESPAK, Andreas JOHANDI

Several papers published in this volume were presented at the conference *Formative Tendencies in Near Eastern Religions and Ideologies* in Beirut, Lebanon, in April 2019. The conference was organized by the Centre for Oriental Studies of the University of Tartu and the Finnish Institute in the Middle East.

The aim of the conference was to examine some key perspectives in the development of different ancient Mesopotamian and East Mediterranean cultures in their multicultural frameworks. In earlier studies, changes in religion were often explained by the arrival of new people with new (often fresh and innovative) ideological and religious ideas, which had a huge impact on local people. This was thereafter followed by transformation of local cults under foreign influences, which resulted in the emergence of new syncretistic religions, myths, pantheons, cults, cultic calendars and beliefs (e.g., Sumero-Akkadian, Hurro-Hittite, etc.).

For example, henotheistic¹ and monotheistic² ideas and tendencies in the Ancient Near East were presented as a product of the arrival of Semitic peoples in the southern Mesopotamian region in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE. This explanation is still partly valid as foreign invaders bring their religious ideas and gods with them. However, it can be shown that Mesopotamian and Eastern Mediterranean cultures were multicultural by their nature from very early times already. It is not possible to postulate a pure Sumerian versus a pure Semitic religion and oppose them to each other. Exchange of gods, ideas, myths, beliefs and religious concepts already took place long before the first written texts were created.

The conference aimed to discuss some features of the forms and formative tendencies in the mythologies and panthea in their parallel development in ancient Mesopotamia and East Mediterranean in order to understand the genealogy of different ideas and how different religious or cultural concepts interact with each other and produce new ideas. One of our main questions is whether we can actually identify the drivers of religious change. Are these drivers separate “ethnic” cultures in the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean, or are we simply witnessing the developments in scribal culture and organized religion and ideology? Therefore, it was intended to understand local (city) and larger developments (kingdom, league, empire)

¹ The term “henotheism” (from Greek “heis theos” – “a god”) was introduced by the German Orientalist and philologist Max Müller (1823–1900).

² See more about monotheism in Parpola 2000.

and their interconnection and suggest studying changes in religion also as a response to altered social and political circumstances.³

While not all who participated in the conference were able to turn their presentations into papers, several other colleagues who did not attend the conference presented their articles in order to contribute to the topic of studying of formative tendencies in Near Eastern religions and ideologies.

Seven papers which are presented in the current issue are studying examples and ideas from the Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean region from ancient Sumer in the third millennium to the Aegean world in the early first millennium BCE. Therefore, this issue presents a wide range of contributions from different areas of the Eastern Mediterranean world and from different historical periods.

Acknowledgements

The editors wish to express their gratitude to Dr. Raija Mattila from the Finnish Institute in the Middle East for co-organizing the conference in Beirut, all the authors who contributed to this issue and reviewers for their valuable feedback, critical commentaries and suggestions, to Siim Mõttus (PhD student of Ancient History at the University of Tartu) for helping with formatting and editing the text and to Ilmar Anvelt for proofreading and improving the quality of texts presented in this issue.

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³ Finnish Institute in the Middle East 2019.

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The Question of ‘Elites’: Real People or Mysterious Agents? Elitism as a Convenient Recourse to Interpret Social Change in Prehistoric Southwestern Asia (From the Origins of Sedentism to the ‘Uruk Phenomenon’)

Cristina BARCINA¹

Abstract. *This article analyzes current theoretical discourses within the Neolithic and Chalcolithic research of Southwestern Asia, which is still dominated by interpretations that assume a progression of increased hierarchization. Whether explicitly or implicitly, social evolutionary thinking still pervades our scholarship, and prevents innovative theory-building. This entails an inability to break with heuristics of ‘origins’ inherited from the past (e.g. “from the origins of domestication to the origins of civilization”), even though old and new discoveries, when integrated, are already pointing towards alternative research pathways. Sedentism, domestication, and urbanism were all complex, protracted, non-linear processes. Yet, the visualization of an ‘Uruk phenomenon’ expanding over large areas of Mesopotamia during the 4th millennium BC, ridden with problematic inconsistencies, still heralds the triumphal rise of civilization. Instead of relying on obsolete political and economic theories, or fake economy/ritual dichotomies, the investigation of social intelligence and the articulation of the biosocial in the landscape and within the prehistoric community should be a priority. The ‘agency’ of ‘elites’ is merely an interpretive deus ex machina helping scholars deal with the many difficulties and uncertainties of their research.*

Rezumat. *Acest articol analizează discursul teoretic actual aferent cercetărilor asupra Neoliticului și Paleoliticului din Asia de Sud-Vest, el fiind încă dominat de interpretări bazate pe o progresie a unei ierarhizări considerabile. Fie explicit, fie implicit, gândirea social-evoluționistă încă afectează mediul academic și împiedică dezvoltarea de noi abordări teoretice. Aceasta conduce la neputința de a părași euristica „originilor”, moștenită din trecut („de la originile domesticirii la originile civilizației”), chiar și atunci când anumite descoperiri, deopotrivă vechi și noi, odată integrate, trimit deja către metode alternative de cercetare. Sedentarizarea, domesticirea și urbanizarea au fost procese complexe, prelungite și non-lineare. Totuși, vizualizarea unui „fenomen Uruk” extins peste zone întinse ale Mesopotamiei pe parcursul mileniului al IV-lea î. Hr., cuprins de numeroase inconsistențe, încă marchează apariția triumfală a civilizației. În loc să se bazeze pe teoretizări politice și economice sau pe false dihotomii între economie și ritual, investigarea inteligenței sociale și articularea biosocialului în acest peisaj și în interiorul comunităților preistorice ar trebui să fie o prioritate. „Agenția elitelor” este, cel mult, o interpretare deus ex machina ce sprijină specialiștii în depășirea dificultăților și nesiguranțelor cercetării lor.*

Keywords: *elitism - domestication - Uruk phenomenon - hierarchy - heterarchy.*

1. Introduction

The rise of urbanism in Mesopotamia is currently approached by two disciplines that give the illusion of meeting each other halfway. Archaeologists deal with the second-half of the 4th

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millennium BC, or the Late Uruk/Jemdet Nasr period, whereas a handful of Assyriologists tackle the transition between the 4th and the 3rd millennium, focusing on the study of early written material coming mostly from ancient Uruk, then, with unknown chronological gaps, from Ur and Shuruppak. Archaeologists are mostly interested in showing how ‘civilization’ came to be (the traditional view à la Gordon Childe co-exists with ‘archaic state’ and similar discourses), whereas cuneiformists are mostly interested in proving that scribal transmission operated along familiar lines from almost the inception of the writing system. Even though each discipline has different approaches and interests,² they have one thing in common: they both need to rely on variations of what I call ‘the paradigm of hierarchy’ to sustain their arguments.

Assyriologists need ‘elites’ to sustain an uncomplicated rise of city-states, visualized as palace and temples, and their concomitant ideology and economy, so that —assuming that this process was short and fast, almost as if predestined— they can rest assured that scribal transmission, within the bubbles of well-known institutions, was soon in place, and proceed with their research interests. A basic reconstruction of events in Mesopotamia at large, or in the alluvium for that matter, from approximately 3800 to 2600 BC —regardless of the nature of our sources— is currently impossible. The difficulties inherent in studying the archaic corpus —merely administrative tablets of frequently unknown direction (entries or exits) or uncertain institutional nature or purpose—³ have led, in my opinion, to several pitfalls, like relying on an unrealistic division into only two phases, and given moreover inappropriate names (following confusing and erroneous stratigraphy),⁴ or like relying on allegedly already standardized lexical lists —particularly as concerns *Lú A* (“ list of professions”), and *Namešda* (“list of officials”), somehow treated like ‘Rosetta stones’ that, if only rightly cracked, will help us decode accounts, receipts and allotments in terms of the overall hierarchy of a Uruk society ideal.⁵

Archaeologists need ‘elites’ to sustain a trade network model —the Uruk phenomenon— with no visible evidence of an overarching institution managing such a system, monopoly of any commodity whatsoever, or even a reason for such an ambitious and premature

² Sallaberger and Schrakamp (2015, 4, n. 3) stated that a separation between the historian, archaeologist, and art historian was necessary.

³ The initial work of Nissen, Damerow and Englund provided a basic understanding of tablet layout, measurement and numerical systems, and many commodities decipherment (e.g. NISSEN, DAMEROW and ENGLUND 1993; ENGLUND 1998).

⁴ GREEN and NISSEN 1987 (=ATU 2). Even though Nissen was perfectly aware of the risks of correlating stratigraphy, chronology and findspots, he still decided to link their perceived palaeographic development with a pre-3300 or post-3300 BC scenario (Uruk IV–Uruk III). A summary of the problems inherent to our current understanding of Uruk in the “Late Uruk” period, whenever that was, will be given below.

⁵ See, *inter alia*, JOHNSON 2015; WAGENSONNER 2012; for a slightly different perspective, VELDHUIS 2014.

undertaking. Or else they need ‘elites’ to act as agents of redistributive organizations, which in the transition from the *Middle* to the *Late Uruk* period switch from a religious to a secular character (whatever that means), and feed standardized rations of bread or porridge to oppressed workers (presumably keeping the lion’s share of the fruits of the workers’ labor). Archaeologists involved in current missions on sites or areas that have Late Chalcolithic occupation are keen on pushing the evidence available —“monumental” architecture, assemblages of *Uruk* ceramics or *Mesopotamian* clay cones, impersonal bowls, stamps or seal impressions, valuable commodities, and any iconographic depiction supporting the old “king-priest” discussion— so far into the heuristic ether that they have lost sight of the purpose of their investigations. The language of most works dealing with the 4th millennium BC (and after) is riddled with economic jargon and concepts that help to hide the uncertainties of this relatively short (more than one thousand years nonetheless) period of significant changes, which manifest following badly understood patterns and considerable geographical variation. Patchwork theories that take into account the long span of enchainned developments and the particular nature of those material changes in each relevant area —whether Anatolia or the Upper Tigris, the Zagros in general, or the Susiana in particular, the clusters far away on the Euphrates, and even the epicenter, regardless of whether the epicenter is visualized as “Uruk, the first city”, or as southern Mesopotamia—, are now superimposed to the two main theoretical packages coming from the past, which even if largely obsolete, are still somehow alive and kicking: Algaze’s Uruk system/emporium⁶ with a face lift, leaning now towards a process of gradual emulation or hybridization; or the emergence of secular institutions sprouting like Zeus out of Saturn from an earlier religious hierarchy until the unfortunate demise of these early proto-urban experiments due to climactic decline, conflict, or unknown events (see below).

Both models are ultimately based on stereotypes and assumptions derived from future historical developments (this I call ‘retroactive interpretation’, which allows scholars to create the illusion of a consensual *status quo*, since it apparently fulfills everybody’s expectations and prevents criticism).

Before dealing with the Uruk phenomenon, however, I will first give an overview of remnants of evolutionary thinking in the archaeological theory investigating the processes preceding it. The most striking observation I could make when I started delving deeper into the past during the course of the research for my dissertation⁷ was that four thousand years separate the semi-consolidation of sedentism in the 8th millennium BC from the first attempts at “proto-urbanism”, which I suspect often happened because of meta-communal aggregation (either *ex novo*, heterogeneous aggregation, or advantageous admixtures causing the rapid

⁶ ALGAZE 1993 (first of several publications).

⁷ My original aim was to investigate the social conditions that led to the choice of supreme rulership (sacred kingship) as a form of government.

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growth of a site, both presumably entailing the better maximization of its surroundings). I could not understand how four millennia of “failed” or very slow progression towards “complexity” could be overlooked or distorted, until I realized that all scholarship nowadays is hyper-specialized, and archaeology is not an exception. If the nomenclature of periods based on ceramics, packages or horizons survives despite awareness of their futility, connotations, and risks, it is because an evolutionary, step-by-step approach facilitates tackling some commonalities and overwhelming diversity, large territories, and apparent contradictions, while producing results and satisfying agendas. Nevertheless, efforts made during the last three decades have indeed contributed to a better understanding of the long processes that we call sedentism and domestication and offered a more nuanced view of technological advances or environmental determinisms.

What follows next can only be a succinct overview, and I will mostly focus on the salient points pertinent for my discussion here.

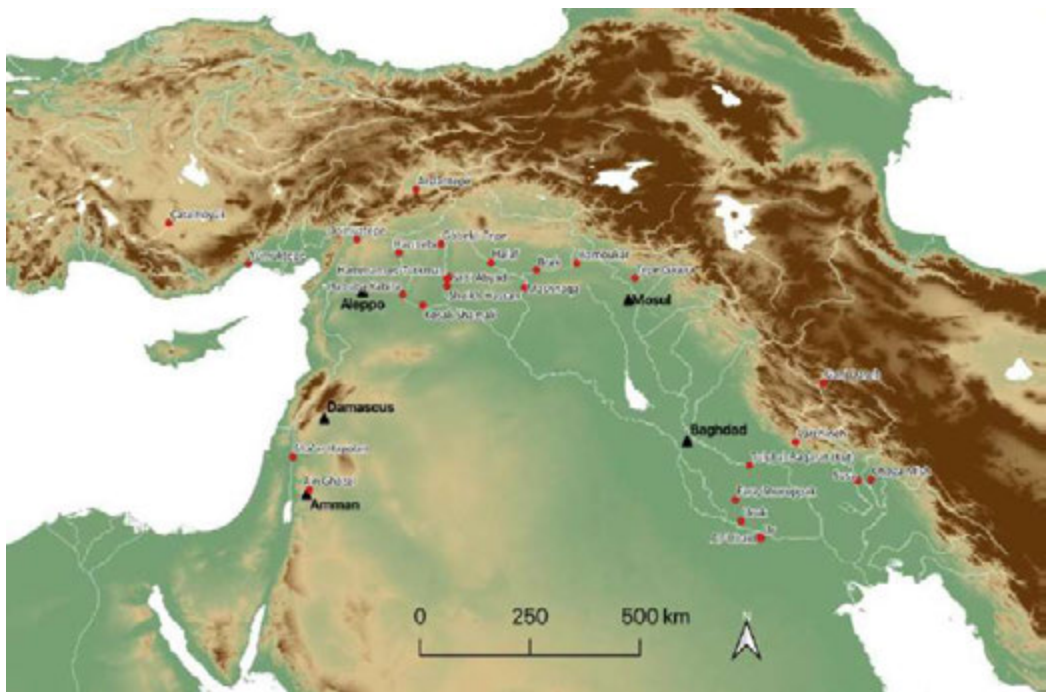


Fig. 1. Map of the main sites mentioned in the text.

2. The process of sedentism and domestication (10th-7th or 9th-7th millennium BC)

Conclusions extracted from recent research

- Connections to the land (homemaking) precede protracted building on a given location.

- The early strategies leading to morphological and genetic domestication of plants and animals are now described as cultivation and husbandry, understood to have non-linear developments, with regional variations depending on both ecological and cultural factors.
- Once more people adopt settling down in a given location, regional and even site variation as concerns construction techniques, mode of aggregation, material culture, and mortuary rituals occurs

Views that require further reflection

- The idea that these early sedentary communities were establishing large-scale networks of some sort, but believed to be mostly based on the obtention of obsidian and marine shells
 - The notion of ‘corporate groups’, a concept already discarded by anthropologists
 - Archaeologists of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic in general tend to assume that during the 7th millennium BC, with the consolidation of sedentism, domestication, and pottery, people started living in family households, and family property is inferred to have followed

Let us briefly review each of these points.

The nature of ‘sedentism’ itself is dealt with special sensitivity and acumen in collaboration by Maher and Conkey, the former a specialist in the southern Levantine Epipaleolithic, who was part of the Azraq archaeological project since 2008, and director of the excavations at Kharaneh IV (ca. 19,800–18,600 cal. BP) in Jordan, the latter a specialist in Western European Magdalenian sites, focusing here on Peyre Blanque, a site in the Central Pyrenees (ca. 19.000 cal. BP).⁸ Both sites have given evidence of protracted occupation. Maher posits Kharaneh as a site of regular aggregation for several groups. Conkey finds the proximity of the cave of Marsoulas to Peyre Blanque significant and insists that both caves and open sites were shared during the Upper Paleolithic by a group or groups inhabiting a particular landscape. Their article also challenges the view that hunter-gatherers were not interested in “home-making” strategies. They call attention to archaeologists’ frequent labels to characterize the sedentism of hunter-gatherers as somewhat inferior (i.e. ‘campsite’, ‘dwelling’, ‘hut’, even functionalistic ‘hearth’).

As concerns the “pathways” towards domestication, after decades of investigation, we have finally come to terms with several facts: since the improvement of climatic conditions with the Holocene, it certainly did not happen fast (more like 3,000 years); the theory of a

⁸ MAHER and CONKEY 2019.

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single origin preceding diffusion, for either most plant or animal species, is no longer standing,⁹ and to this day, the processes culminating in the phenotypic expression of domestication *proper* are still not fully understood.

The intentionality of plant domestication *sensu* cereal-based “crop package” has been certainly challenged. Asouti and Fuller have questioned the rationale of deliberate, methodical food-oriented behavior. They observed that there seems to be “a continuous gene flow between contiguous wild and cultivated populations” of cereal, indicative, for instance, of “harvesting before cereals reached full maturation, or in multiple passes in which an earlier pass was saved for procuring seed corn.”¹⁰ When looking at the bigger picture, they observe that: (...) by focusing almost exclusively on the domestication process, the vexing question of the historical development of PPN [Pre-Pottery Neolithic] plant management practices has been largely overlooked. (...) That developed crop “packages” seem to have been the exception rather than the rule before the LATE PRE-POTTERY NEOLITHIC also raises another important question: was plant domestication the enabler or the outcome of population aggregation manifested in the LATE PRE-POTTERY NEOLITHIC “megasites”?¹¹

Regarding animal domestication, Zeder’s differentiation of three different pathways towards domestication depending on animal behavior —i.e. the commensal (boars), the prey (easily-hunted herbivores), the directed (horses)—¹² can give an idea of how difficult it is to pinpoint these events in time when strategies to gain the trust of so many different species in several ecological niches was an ongoing process undertaken from around the 9th millennium BC by some communities spread over a vast territory, then selectively adopted, and adapted. Arbuckle has argued for animal domestication in Southwestern Asia to be seen as the “development of systems of animal husbandry” that took place over millennia and “followed markedly different trajectories in different regions”.¹³ Aurochs, for instance, seem to have been domesticated first in Northern Levantine and Southeastern Anatolian sites, whereas in central Anatolia morphological domestication is not confirmed until the 7th millennium (probably because of the meta-cultural value assigned to this powerful animal). “There are only five sites where it is fairly certain that the full suite of domestic livestock were managed together by 8000 cal BC” (ARBUCKLE 2014, 14). “For most of Southwest Asia, however, the barnyard complex did not come together until the Pottery Neolithic (seventh millennium cal

⁹ See the excellent overview by Zeder (2011).

¹⁰ ASOUTI and FULLER 2013, 308. The authors posit here that plant food may have been as much a component of “feasting” events as animals, like aurochs, are usually considered to be. This is still, in my opinion, a teleological understanding of domestication, even if the perspective leans towards ritual.

¹¹ ASOUTI and FULLER 2012, 157. LATE PRE-POTTERY NEOLITHIC stands for Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (second half of the 8th millennium BC).

¹² ZEDER 2012.

¹³ ARBUCKLE 2014.

BC) and in some regions it was not until the Chalcolithic that cattle and pigs were combined with caprine husbandry into fully integrated livestock economies”.

Further evidence against the futility of strict evolutionary views: we have confirmed that ceramics precede sedentism,¹⁴ pottery did not have initial storage or even cooking purposes,¹⁵ monumentality is already attested in the early Neolithic,¹⁶ and urban agglomerations spanning several centuries grew and disintegrated before the stereotypical “Neolithic village” became widespread. Therefore, even if eventually all the threads composing the warp and weft of the rosy-pictured Neolithic tapestry do reveal this ideal (at some point in the 6th millennium), the bottom-up approach, combined with comprehensive overviews, is yielding unexpected results that need to be adequately confronted.

There are several concepts that need to be reflected upon before new methods and approaches help us define the social experience better. Archaeological theory frequently turns people into unidimensional stereotypes (as farmers, pastoralists, potters, metallurgists, people using, re-using, or throwing away an object, rulers, elites, commoners, emulators, traders, etc.), so by extension, social interactions are fetishized, the material remains that are unearthed become symbols of those objectified, and social interactions become dualistic relationships (e.g. elites–commoners, rulers–the ruled, traders–clients, etc.). A potter makes an outstanding bowl or serving tray because he or she is emulating another potter, and the elites in the village are using those bowls because they are organizing lavish feasts hoping to gain prestige for whatever sociopolitical purpose. This kind of mechanistic understanding of the social experience is understandable, given archaeologists’ sole reliance on inert materiality, always affected by preservation conditions, not to mention tight budgets and other constraints.

I find that issues related to the adoption of domestication, the notion of ‘household’, and the idea of ‘corporate groups’ betrays a lack of a more holistic understanding of the social experience and could perhaps benefit from anthropologists’ theories and ethnographic accounts, not in order to extrapolate them, but in order to gain an understanding of what diversity implies, particularly as concerns non-productive-oriented societies.¹⁷

I will start with the last of these concepts, corporate groups or lineages. Based on his experience excavating the LATE PRE-POTTERY NEOLITHIC Jordan site of Basta, Gebel proposed a re-definition of sedentism based on ‘territoriality’, since “this mode of life is supported and secured by a set of measures and behavioral dispositions that originate in a

¹⁴ See JORDAN and ZVELEBIL (eds.) 2009 for the dispersal of pottery from East Asia among Eurasian hunter-gatherers; TSUNEKI, NIEUWENHUYSE and CAMPBELL (eds.) 2017 for West Asia.

¹⁵ See NIEUWENHUYSE 2018. Two contrasting views for early attestations in northern Greece are PERLÈS 2001 (elite goods), and VITELLI 1999 (public occasions and ritual).

¹⁶ Examples of monumentality are most striking in eastern Anatolia, e.g. Göbekli Tepe, Çayönü, Nevalı Çori.

¹⁷ WAGNER 1981.

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more aggressive territorial ethology and its related commodification frameworks for space and related cognitive spheres.”¹⁸ His proposal rests upon a classification of “physical” territories (perhaps suggesting, even if subconsciously, that there may be “metaphysical” territories?) that follows the hierarchy paradigm: primary, corporate and obtainable, based on increasing levels of dispute and competition. Negotiation rarely enters the semantics of his theory, nor does he bother to ponder responses to growth. Gebel is seeking to pigeonhole the end of the aceramic Neolithic as one of “corporate ownership”, and yet, there is no such thing as “obtainable physical territories” until the 3rd millennium BC. He is also a member of the archaeological team currently working at Ba’ja, near Basta, an intramontane village accessible only by a natural passage between rock walls. The team has recently published an article postulating that “early Neolithic hierarchization in southern Jordan was based on corporate pathways to power¹⁹ rather than self-interested aggrandizers”, but some aspects of a particular burial pointed to “network based leadership”. What they mean by this (if we leave the four-page long theoretical introduction aside and we focus on the evidence, namely the individual and collective sub-floor burials) is that, on the basis of one juvenile found with a broken macehead and a few personal belongings like arrowheads, a pestle or a bone spatula, “single individuals achieved prestige or status or both on the one hand by their access to exotic items, probably through ancient networks of equally influential persons in other communities of the southern Levant.”²⁰ This is a site where collective burials have yielded a wealth of objects, including beautifully crafted ornaments. Moreover, considering that the house had also other sub-floor burials, this young man or woman may have been chosen to have his/her own corner for any number of reasons, including lack of available space. As concerns the ‘exotic goods’, it is somehow ironic that the recent publication of epigenetic characteristics of teeth and skulls of Basta individuals has revealed that they were a highly endogamic community (based on strontium isotope analysis and the frequency of a particular dental trait).²¹ Yet, this site had been posited as part of an exchange network due to the find

¹⁸ GEBEL 2014, 28.

¹⁹ The “corporate group” approach, favoured by British anthropologists, was already criticized by Lévy-Strauss as a juridical bias (1987) and more recently, among others, by Carsten: “In the mid-century, British social anthropology was dominated by avowedly ahistorical studies of African “unilineal kinship systems.” (...) Lineages were described as “corporate” in the sense that they functioned as though they were a single property-owning and jural unit. (...) In retrospect, it is clear that the unproblematic boundedness of the units described was much more a product of a particular kind of analytic endeavour than a reflection of the much messier realities of the political and social context of colonial and postcolonial Africa (...). Nor did matters become any easier when descent group theory was transported outside Africa to societies in Southeast Asia or Papua New Guinea, where the notion of lineage as a corporate group was difficult to apply” (CARSTEN 2004, 11f).

²⁰ BENZ *et al.* 2019, 27.

²¹ ALT *et al.* 2013.

of greenstones and other raw materials, extracted or ultimately obtained from relatively distant locations (Red Sea, Central Jordan, Sinai).

This is the same dynamic that affects the study of obsidian, a material that is found all across the board from the beginning of sedentism until the historical periods. Every specialist of every period tries to understand how it was obtained, what the analysis of its percentage over the lithic totals can tell about possible routes and manner of exchange, or whether the people manipulating it constituted a highly-valued workshop in the region. For instance, in view of objects like mirrors, amulets and a vessel found at Domuztepe (and also influenced by finds at Arpachiyah), Healey tried to assign this material a cosmological and aesthetic dimension that was more than welcome, but nevertheless was still mired in notions of prestige and social rank for which there is no solid proof either at 6th millennium Domuztepe, nor anywhere else in the following periods.²² A recent article gives a total of 29 obsidian sources accounted for in Anatolia and the Caucasus in the “Ubaid”,²³ even though eastern Anatolian ones always remained the main suppliers. Even at the end of the 5th millennium BC, some scholars posit that obsidian had to have been either distributed by mobile groups or expeditions dispatched to the sources, which suggests that obsidian “monopolies” were in hands of people uninterested in dynamics of power, and that prestige was acquired through skill and maybe the secrecy surrounding it, like metallurgy or other symbolical knowledge in many traditional societies.²⁴

Related to the notion of ‘households’, or the ‘domus’, as Hodder calls it, it is generally assumed that domestication entailed a kind of conquest of man over nature and that the mentality radically changed and became hyper-rational and economy-oriented: buildings become family houses, working and storage facilities witness the emergence of property of the nuclear or extended family, and the decrease in elaborate mortuary arrangements seems to corroborate this scenario (even if explicit consideration of this and related issues is completely lacking, probably assumed to be self-evident or impossible to correlate to materiality). The “common sense approach” is one of the complaints made about a lack of definition of sedentism,²⁵ but I think just as urgent is a debate on social configurations at the local (village or cluster) scale. There may very well be factors which would be very difficult to assess in the spatial constitution of a village: flexible marriage arrangements, polygamy; initiation rituals or sodalities; taboos; whether unmarried men and women, menstruating women, or guests, were allocated fixed or tent-like/hut-like dwellings at the village; whether houses were allotted to families by the leadership; whether burial sites or ossuaries outside

²² HEALEY 2013.

²³ KHALIDI *et al.* 2016.

²⁴ KOPANIAS 2017, 32, with further references; see also IBÁÑEZ *et al.* 2016 for the conclusions derived from the fact that the know-how of how to manipulate this fragile material was as important as the material itself.

²⁵ See Whitecross’ dissertation (2016) on this difficult topic.

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village grounds, if they existed, were considered part of the home territory or were part of the landscape. Extended family could mean that we are including the grandparents, or it could mean that most of the village was related and had kinship or affinal ties. Admittedly, these factors will probably remain largely opaque, but the equation house=household needs to be approached with due caution.²⁶

In any event, having all these uncertainties in mind, other factors may be explored. In the case of resources like wood, reed and other useful plants, bitumen and clay, lacustrine or riverine fauna, were alliances made between communities sharing the land? As soon as animals enter the village space, issues about animal keeping, stabling and foddering, not to mention extensive processing of animal-related products become problematic. Were a number of animals assigned to families, or were they collectively raised and kept? The fact that houses and villages were given an end (by fire, burial or abandonment), does it not suggest that the collectivity was making decisions on what today we would consider ‘property’? How did growth and migration affect biosocial relationships and customs?

Hodder has associated “violence, danger, and sexual power, and the ability to intercede with the ancestors” as elements that were constantly expressed in the symbolic imagery of Çatalhöyük, and by extension, elsewhere. These values are seen as a demonstration of the “intercession with and control of wild animals and the use of their powers to protect and nurture”, which in turn “allowed the creation of trust and dependencies”, and therefore “created the conditions in which sedentary life and intensive delayed-return economies became possible (selected for)”.²⁷ “Delayed-return economies”, therefore, depended upon the integration of the biological and the social, group collaboration and division of labor. This remained true, in my opinion, even after domestication. The distinction between ‘wild’ and ‘domesticated’ animals is not always so clear-cut. The attachment that pastoralist societies experience towards the animals composing their herds, not so much encompassing as surpassing property notions, has been sufficiently documented by now²⁸ that the possibility that life-and-death forces embedding all creatures in a particular hunter-gatherer ontology might still have operated without losing coherence in a pastoralist one, or an agro-pastoralist one, needs to be considered. Several anthropologists have criticized Ingold’s strict view of domestication as domination.²⁹ This is, however, beyond the scope of this paper. In my dissertation, I study how an animist ontology may have existed and persisted until the end of

²⁶ As far as I know, they have only been partly debated for Çatalhöyük, see e.g. DÜRING 2006; HODDER 2014, but there is no reason why this debate cannot be chronologically extended. Other scholars have also raised doubts, of course, about some of these issues: see CROUCHER 2012, esp. 196 with further references.

²⁷ HODDER 2007, 115. And see his collaboration with Whitehouse, resulting in an evolutionary, Euro-centrist understanding of religion (WHITEHOUSE *et al.* 2014).

²⁸ For instance DRANSART 2002 (the Andes); VITEBSKY 2005 (the Eveny of Siberia).

²⁹ INGOLD 2000, ch. 4.

the 4th millennium through so-called symbolic material: life and death ambiguities, human-animal hybridity, human femaleness as a possible embodiment of multi-species renewal, possible early strategies towards divination, substitution and other ways of communicating and influencing other predators, visible and invisible. On this issue, however, I will only make some remarks in the last section of this paper.

Last but certainly not least, and connected to the sphere of what we understand by ‘property’, a term with economic and legal connotations (different from ‘ownership’ or ‘belongings’, concepts that belong to the sphere of personhood and identity), is the unjustified connection that is still made between stamps —emerging and becoming more abundant, like spindle whorls, gradually during the 7th millennium BC— and property devices.³⁰ The practice of sealing to enhance storage conditions should be separated from the less frequent practice of stamping the sealing.

A cursory examination of these objects and their findspots reveal a complex picture, one that does not fit these scenarios:³¹

1) Stamps come in a dizzying range of shapes, materials, sizes, and engravings, and differentiating them from amulets or ornaments is a futile exercise.

2) Impressing sealings with a single stamp or several is regionally restricted, as the evidence coming now from the Southern Levantine sites of Munbaqa and Sha’ar Hagolan is revealing, where sealing fragments with no stamp impression have been found. Stamps become increasingly attested in this region with time, yet there is almost no attestation of stamped sealing fragments. Even in the collective storage facilities at Sabi Abyad, Burnt Village, the site that to date has given the most numerous assemblage of stamped sealings until the 4th millennium, not all the sealed vessels or baskets bore impressions.

3) Individuals, regardless of their age or gender, may have used or worn several of these objects, as supported by the evidence coming from the Tell El Kerkh cemetery.

4) Despite the increase in figurative or naturalistic scenes in the iconography of amulets and stamps with time, and their geographical expansion —as the isolated cemeteries of Parchineh and Hakalan in the Zagros attest to— nothing in the design of these objects signals a tendency towards ambition and domination until the end of the 4th millennium BC.

In my opinion, sealings were stamped when in need of identifying the contents of vessels, containers or bundles stored in the same storage space and distinguishing them from others (via the people who had processed the food item or resource at a given moment during the

³⁰ There is no space here to treat the issue of tokens or calculi, which are posited as record-keeping objects at sites like Ganj Dareh (end of the 8th millennium BC) in the Zagros, or ‘Ain Ghazal, in Jordan. For an updated, thorough analysis of this material, focusing on the assemblage from Çatalhöyük, see BENNISON-CHAPMAN 2018.

³¹ Based on TÜRKCAN 2013; DUISTERMAAT 1996; 2010; AKKERMANS and DUISTERMAAT 2014; CARTER 2010; FREIKMAN and GARFINKEL 2017; TSUNEKI 2011; ALIZADEH 2008; VON WICKEDE 1990.

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year). Stamps must have had initially a decorative function (I favor the textile hypothesis)³²; then they became ornaments, or in other words, items of personhood, which implies that individuals cannot be segregated from their social sphere. In the words of Croucher: “Objects accumulate biographies. Such relationships may also be evident in the apparent ambiguity of ‘types’ of objects, where seals, beads or labrets [ear/lip studs] can become tokens, and *vice versa*. Multifunctional, such items become bound up with the identities of those giving and receiving during exchange.”³³

3. The process of dispersion and the development of flexible sedentism (6th–5th millennium BC)

Conclusions extracted from recent research

- Core-and-periphery models need to be applied with caution. Material culture packages or horizons co-exist with continued practices and regional variation.
- “Halaf” groups are both sedentary and mobile, and largely egalitarian. Communities during the 5th millennium show an increasing trend towards a lack of apparent individual differentiation.

Developments that require further reflection

- Migration and growth
- Opportunism and flexibility
- The body and portable materiality as a means of social adscription
- An exaggerated emphasis on a (relative) decrease of fine decorated wares
- The possibility of first attempts at meta-communal aggregation

On the basis of the ceramics found at Domuztepe, a settlement of prolonged occupation during the first half of the 6th millennium BC, where one would expect “Halaf” pottery but the excavators found sherds that could be classified as “Ubaid” (even earlier than ceramics from a proposed intermediate period, the HUT, applicable to the second half of the 6th millennium), Campbell made the following remark: “In this article, the emphasis is on periods where there was rapid change in ceramic assemblages. It could equally be on periods that saw stability in ceramics or changes in lithic technology or changes in architecture. Obviously, if the emphasis did change, the chronology might look rather different. In some ways, this may help liberate phase-based chronologies from the spiral of ever more complex inter-regional synchronizations.”³⁴ Campbell has not been the first one to complain about the tyranny of

³² See ÇIRINGIROĞLU 2009.

³³ CROUCHER 2013, 195.

³⁴ CAMPBELL 2007, 108.

periodizations based on (obsolete) material culture criteria. Both the contributions to a volume devoted to the Late Neolithic of Upper Mesopotamia and those similarly assembled in the *Beyond the Ubaid* volume emphasize the need to break with this view, as well as fruitless and inaccurate core-and-periphery perspectives, inherited from the past, giving a cultural primacy to Southern Mesopotamia.³⁵

In the first volume mentioned, Akkermans and other authors also observe that Halaf societies remained predominantly egalitarian. In contrast to the (exaggerated) phenomenon of mega-sites attested at some specific areas of Anatolia and the Southern Levant during the 8th and the 7th millennium BC, clusters of small sites become well-attested during the 7th and the 6th millennium BC, either reflecting villages co-existing simultaneously in close proximity, or the crab-like movement of villagers progressively expanding, and frequently abandoning previously occupied quarters. But a better investigation of growth, splits, and new foundations is still sorely missing.

In my opinion, this period is characterized by a flexible sedentism strategy, reflecting the opportunism that had characterized the Epipaleolithic and early Neolithic, as well as the consolidation of communal life in most of the Fertile Crescent during the 8th and the 7th millennium BC, which Hodder calls “history-making”,³⁶ expressed through the close connection between the dead and the living, the renewal of houses that remain on the same location, agglutinative modes of building, and a myriad of other practices that reflect the enjoyment of shared social experiences in the same space for centuries. Domestication did cause an impact on social and physical configurations, but it was one where changes in architecture and the maximization of the landscape resources, better suited to deal with the foddering requirements of kept animals, and the processing and storage of primary food items and plant or animal-based secondary products, allowed for a preservation of communal life in a more flexible way. Even though elaborate mortuary rituals disappear and practices diversify, portable symbolism, including painted ceramics, expands and also diversifies.

I will give two examples of flexible sedentism. The East Mound at Çatalhöyük in Central Anatolia gets gradually dissolved during the end of the 7th millennium BC and the West Mound emerges. The nearby site of Pinarbaşı, roughly 25 km away from Çatalhöyük in the Konya Plain is considered by Baird to be a seasonal camp for a mobile group who exchanged products with the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük East.³⁷ I think that the rather obvious interpretation is that expeditions from Çatalhöyük itself appointed this rock shelter at this advantageous location in order to exploit its resources (mostly hunting *cum* herding) whenever it was convenient.

³⁵ NIEUWENHUYSE *et al.* (eds.) 2013; PHILIPS and CARTER (eds.) 2010.

³⁶ See e.g. HODDER 2014; 2018.

³⁷ BAIRD *et al.* 2011.

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Likewise, the site of Fıstıklı Höyük was interpreted by Bernbeck as a focal point of aggregation for rotating mobile communities.³⁸ Instead, it is possible again that this site reflects the prolonged occupation of one or two groups that fissioned from a sedentary settlement on a seasonal basis, making the most of both the plant resources and grazing lands for cattle and ovicaprines. Apart from the hunting *cum* pastoralism way of life observed at the southern semi-arid steppes of Jordan,³⁹ it is unlikely that any other ecological niche saw a radical economic specialization, like nomadic pastoralism. Communities became increasingly sedentary and occupied areas hitherto unoccupied all over the Fertile Crescent including the Caucasus and the Zagros.

Migration in general is an issue that needs to be better investigated. The second-half of the 7th millennium and the first-half of the 6th millennium BC was a period of demographic dispersion. The focus has been, understandably, on the crossing over to Southeastern Europe. Southcentral Anatolia may have been the original area of migration towards Asia Minor, yet this scenario looks uncertain. Communities that adopt the Neolithic package appear in Western Anatolia and Northern Greece/Balkans during the second half of the 7th millennium BC. Yet, those who migrate do not cause a visible, discernible impact as pertains to material culture. Whereas Özdoğan sees a clear connection, pinpointing for instance original areas for ceramic wares,⁴⁰ Düring notes: “The situation in the Marmara region is an interesting hybrid. On the one hand, there is a range of distinctly local characteristics. These include the lithic industries, which descend from the Mesolithic Ağaçlı tradition. Likewise, the ceramics are distinctively local from the start, and cannot be linked convincingly with ceramic traditions from Central Anatolia.” He likewise argues for distinctive assemblages emerging in the Lake District and Aegean Anatolia.⁴¹

In any event, and taking into consideration that several groups from different provenances may have entered these areas gradually and mixed or not with previous mobile (“Mesolithic”) groups, Özdoğan refers thus to this process: “First, it was not an instantaneous event. On the contrary, it extended through a very long period of time, spanning a millennium, taking place in different waves of expansion, each one with its own trajectory and pace. Second, it is also evident that each wave had its own selection of the Neolithic package. Finally, and probably more significant, is the fact that different modes of Neolithisation such as endemic movement, colonization, acculturation, adaptation, and transfer of technologies and commodities, took place simultaneously”.⁴²

³⁸ BERNBECK 2013. Occupation dated to ca. 5900–5500 BC (four out of five phases).

³⁹ ROLLEFSON, ROWAN and WASSE 2014.

⁴⁰ ÖZDOĞAN 2013, 197. See this publication for further references.

⁴¹ DÜRING 2013, 88–90.

⁴² ÖZDOĞAN 2011, 666. Likewise, Düring is uncomfortable with a ‘chain migration’ scenario whereby a small number of pioneers settled in Asia Minor.

I find this remark illuminating, and paradoxically not only valid for other processes of serial, small-scale migration at this moment, but also potentially applicable to both ends of the 4th millennium BC.

What about the so-called Ubaid? Nothing particularly remarkable characterizes the 5th millennium BC, even as it progresses with some noticeable changes by comparison to the preceding millennia. There are tantalizing glimpses of an intensification of the economy here and there —kilns and pottery installations, the increasing presence of metal objects, the clever use of buttresses to reinforce walls and a clever distribution of space, with rooms branching out of a central hall—, but overall the most significant change is the growth of some sites in some areas, most visibly towards the last centuries of the 5th millennium (e.g. Değirmentepe in Anatolia, Hammam et-Turkman by the Balikh river, Tepe Gawra in the Jezireh, Choga Mish in the Susiana). The Ubaid package has been defined by black-on-buff pottery, labrets, clay nails, bent clay mullers, ophidian figurines, tripartite architecture, niched-and-buttressed buildings, communal cemeteries,⁴³ and circumferential headshaping, with the understanding that there is a significant degree of regional variation.⁴⁴ Yet, several of these elements show continuity, like the hybrid figurines, the labrets and cranial modification.

Phillips and Carter acknowledged the bewildering absence of elites, expected to show their behavior by now: “It is possible that stable elites existed or were emerging, at least in some areas, but that such groups chose either to mask their growing power or express it by means other than through conspicuous consumption and display.”⁴⁵ This view was adopted by Brereton in his analysis of mortuary rituals, arguing that wealth —like metal objects— remained in circulation.⁴⁶ The problem is that accumulation of prestige or luxury goods, the famous “conspicuous consumption”, as archaeologists call it, is entirely missing. Rothman and Peasnell, who reviewed the mortuary evidence from Tepe Gawra XIA/B-VIII,⁴⁷ saw no evidence of clear social stratification (two-tiers), much less in an evolutionary manner.⁴⁸

In my opinion, portable symbolism continues to be essential to express a negotiation of identity and social relations, and the perception that aesthetics no longer play a role in ceramics, from the mid-5th millennium onwards, has been somewhat overblown. Karsgaard observed that the most noticeable shift from Halaf wares to those characteristic of the last Ubaid phases is that “the individual appears to have been submerged into a larger shared identity” and that a bigger emphasis was placed on “mundane acts of commensality”,

⁴³ And infants jar burials. See BRERETON 2011, 270ff.

⁴⁴ CARTER and PHILIP 2010, 4.

⁴⁵ CARTER and PHILIP 2010, 13.

⁴⁶ BRERETON 2011, ch. 6.

⁴⁷ Excavated in the 30s.

⁴⁸ ROTHMAN 2002, 147; PEASNALL 2002.

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signaling the participants’ inclusion in a “community-based identity.”⁴⁹ As welcome as an approach going beyond social stratification might be, Karsgaard follows here Wengrow’s (2001) article on the equation of bowls with a redistributive economy anticipating the emergence of states. Many sites mentioned by Karsgaard as an example of this alleged trend have not been adequately excavated, like Tell Mashnaqa or Hammam et-Turkman. Tell al-‘Abr at this period revealed a pottery workshop in level 5 that may have fulfilled the needs of more than just its community. The excavators comment, however: “The late stages are characterized by an increase in plain pottery, represented by scraped bottom bowls and certain kinds of necked jars. These types are usually identified within the post-Ubaid assemblage at other sites. At Tell al-‘Abr, however, the intrusion of these types into the original assemblage was a gradual progression and (...), they had already appeared even in the early stage in which painted pottery was still predominant. Therefore it should be considered that there are some aspects which are not explained simply by the term “post-Ubaid”. Even during the latest stage, Ubaid painted decoration still persisted in no small numbers, though with rather simple motifs.”⁵⁰

The inclusion of the ceramics from Tell Abada in this trend, moreover, is absolutely puzzling.⁵¹ A cursory inspection of Jasim’s publication, figs. 98–225, including levels II–I ceramics, can leave no doubt in anyone’s mind as to the creativity of the potters at this site.⁵² And even though the cemetery at Susa I cannot be securely dated, it belongs in any case either to the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 4th millennium BC, and the beauty and range of ceramics and objects found in the graves is well-known.⁵³

There is also quite a bit of chronological uncertainty as concerns both this alleged diminution of painted wares as well as the emergence of bowls and jars of simple manufacture. The contributors to the volume titled *After the Ubaid* gave a good deal of attention to the subject of bowls.⁵⁴ The excavators of Yumuktepe observed, however, an earlier development of this trend, already happening by roughly the mid-5th millennium BC: “The qualitative, technical and aesthetic features of the containers for consumption are transformed. While food in Level XVI was preferentially consumed in black lustrous decorated bowls and in finely painted cups, in Level XV it was mainly served or consumed in the hastily made and roughly finished Coba bowls.”⁵⁵ The overall trend, culminating with the BRBs (beveled-rim bowls) of the “Uruk period”, seems to be then, quite simply, to facilitate

⁴⁹ KARSGAARD 2010, 56f.

⁵⁰ HAMMADE and YAMAZAKI 2006, 457.

⁵¹ KARSGAARD 2010, 56.

⁵² JASIM 1985.

⁵³ CARTER *et al.* 1992.

⁵⁴ MARRO (ed.) 2012.

⁵⁵ CANEVA, PALUMBI and PASQUINO 2012, 369.

fast-food serving, which in turn allowed for this object, like the stamps, to be re-purposed for more numerous commensal events or food-processing/storage needs, respectively, stemming from communal growth, increasing professionalization and better organized labour.

Finally, sites like Yumuktepe XVI-XV and Gawra XII-IX—the first emerging almost *ex novo*, the second experiencing a sudden growth and complexity spurt— suggest that perhaps we should be re-analyzing these and other sites as early precursors of meta-communal aggregation, that is, the fusion of disparate groups who decide to build or reorganize a space to maximize resources, including the most valuable one: people.⁵⁶ This trend, which I would characterize as one of heterogeneous growth —capitalizing on centuries of social intelligence, alliances and sharing of resources in the landscape—, may be more clearly visible at Arslantepe VII and the earliest levels excavated at Tell Brak at the beginning of the 4th millennium BC. The construction of public buildings of whatever nature or function, whether moats like at 6th millennium Tell es-Sawwan, fortresses and citadels, like at Yumuktepe, monumental multi-functional spaces, like the Round House of Gawra XII, or gathering places like the so-called Temple of Arslantepe VII, and even a good portion of the sequence of “temples” at Eridu (if not all) should be first assumed to be the conscious, deliberate effort of a community who expects to benefit from it. As a long tradition of different types of architecture and sedentism all across the board can attest to, starting in the early Neolithic, chiefs and elites are not necessary to coordinate these efforts or command their construction. The issue of public architecture must be preceded by a discussion on why our expectations fall into the two omnipresent categories of secular or religions architecture/elites when we still do not know if the ontology at this time had separated nature from culture, or whether there was already a need to establish permanent, specialized institutions separating decision-making from worship following exclusivist, hereditary dynamics (an example of retroactive interpretations).

4. The long process of proto-urbanism (or meta-communal aggregation)

The 4th millennium BC is an extremely complex period. It is therefore not surprising that old and new theoretical frameworks co-exist without much debate or clarification as to what is meant by certain concepts, like ‘colonies’, or ‘secular/religious’.

An excellent if now somewhat outdated overview of theories proposed for the “Uruk period” was given by Butterlin in 2003, where he revised, among others, proposals like Algaze’s ‘Uruk phenomenon’ model (based on Wallerstein’s world systems theory), or Stein’s 1994 proposal of a Ubaid “staple finance” / Uruk “wealth finance” dichotomy, reinterpreted

⁵⁶ I find Butterlin’s (2009) assessment of the “White Room” at Gawra XII as the house of a chief as problematic as the interpretation of this building as a temple.

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by Frangipane for a north / south Uruk-world scenario drawing on her experience as director of excavations at Arslantepe since the 1990s.⁵⁷

Before tackling this issue, however, a brief overview of what is considered “the golden standard” is of the essence. All models, past and present, rely on evidence that is acknowledged as coming from problematic excavations, and reports on stratigraphy and associated material culture that were and remain unreliable. This is valid for both Uruk and Susa. Its main consequence is “monumentality in a vacuum”. Some causes and consequences are summarized here:

- Unreliable ceramics sequences

Though this is mostly true for Uruk, it also affects comparisons with Susa, given the number of observed differences, and by extension, any *Uruk* site in Iran, Iraq and Syria. According to Nissen, Lenzen —who was director of the Berlin excavations at Warka between 1931 to 1939, and 1954 to 1967— was opposed to using pottery as a chronological tool, because he estimated that the architecture, tablets and seals would be enough to establish comparisons with other sites.⁵⁸

- Circular reasoning: attempts to build a chronology based on unstratified or undatable material

Again, this is particularly relevant in the case of Uruk. Disagreements between the excavators on chronological interpretations became more and more visible after the 1960s, and by then, art historians had joined the dating game.⁵⁹ As Eichmann pointed out, regarding these previous attempts to establish sequencing by correlations between the “Eanna-district” and the “White Temple” areas, there was a dangerous assumption that similar-looking artefacts from both belonged to the same period, without taking into consideration the difficulty of estimating the length of a given period in terms of building layers.⁶⁰ Radiocarbon dates are available, but the tree samples give ca. 3500–3250 cal. BC dates for Temple C, belonging to the last sequence of buildings of so-called Eanna district (Layer IVa); and ca. 3500–3300 cal. BC for the White Temple,⁶¹ which entails, on the one hand, that the “Uruk expansion” predated the most monumental of Uruk phases, and on the other, emphasizes the lack of connection to later developments. The section of the central area encompassing the “Eanna district” where all the Uruk-period monuments stood was razed ca. 3300 BC, and many objects, including most of all archaic text fragments, come from the leveling of this vast surface: “Excavations have shown that the Uruk III level buildings were erected over the grounds of razed Uruk IV

⁵⁷ See now FRANGIPANE 2016; 2018; MCMAHON 2019.

⁵⁸ NISSEN 2002, 4. For a comparative overview on Uruk and Susa’s ceramic sequences, drawing on Sürenhagen’s and Dietrich’s reassessments, see BUTTERLIN 2003, 36–59.

⁵⁹ E.g. HEINRICH 1982, 35–55.

⁶⁰ EICHMANN 1989, 180.

⁶¹ See VAN ESS 2019, ch. 63 for pertinent bibliography and details.

constructions, and that the leveling of the many pits formed in razing the old buildings resulted in substantial earth moving, including the transportation of fresh and already deposited debris from the prior administrative centers. Thus trash heaps of shards, bones and discarded tablets were mixed with ancient excavations of still older debris and used to fill in holes and pits”.⁶² Who, then, was writing the “Uruk III” texts? For the period spanning approx. 3300–2450 BC, finds in Levels III–I did not apparently yield much that would help with historical interpretation. To the remains of the so-called *Stampflehmgebäude* or the Red Temple, traces of walls, and some rooms and hearths indicate some architectural activity, but not much.⁶³

- A tendency to fit new evidence into old moulds

Despite the cautiousness exhibited by the new director of the Warka mission, M. van Ess, and her team, the need to boost and maintain the discourse of “Uruk, the first city” has led to some premature conclusions. For instance, the remains of burnt wood coming from the roof of Building C, which allowed for the first radiocarbon dating in 1991, were analyzed and identified as *Pinus spec. (P.brutia/halapensis)*, its provenance automatically assigned to Syria/Turkey and linked to a Uruk trade network scenario.⁶⁴ However a closely related species is also attested in the Zagros and other areas of Iran, known as *Pinus halapensis var. eldarica (Medw.)*, with a similar if not identical anatomy.⁶⁵ Of course, even if the wood had come from a far closer area, it ought to have been cut and transported — presumably by barge — until it reached its destination. Regular large-scale trade up and down the Euphrates, however, should still be regarded as unlikely.

- Assumptions based on data without a clear historical context: surveys and environmental studies.

Two surveys have contributed to give a primacy to Uruk as the single core area at this period: the site one conducted by Finkbeiner and his team,⁶⁶ and the area surveys, conducted by Adams.⁶⁷ The first has been used to argue for the city’s impressive size at this period, even though almost no residential quarters have been excavated of a 4th millennium date.⁶⁸ The

⁶² ENGLUND 1998, 34, and overall, 32–41.

⁶³ See now EICHMANN 2019, 104–107. Even if speculative, given that the new geoarchaeological, magnetometry and satellite imagery investigations have confirmed that canals criss-crossed the city from this period onwards (BECKER, VAN ESS and FASSBINDER 2019), it may be that part of this central area was partly flooded at some point, which would explain much in terms of random seal and tablet deposition.

⁶⁴ VAN ESS 2019, 342f; ENGEL and KÜRSCHNER 1993.

⁶⁵ I thank Naomi Miller for this information.

⁶⁶ FINKBEINER 1991.

⁶⁷ ADAMS 1981.

⁶⁸ Except for a small trench in O 11/12 (FINKBEINER 1991, 193). As Charvat (2002, 193) points out, the survey maps pertaining to the ED period seem to suggest that there were clusters of occupation. Given the highly irregular topography, which implies extensive re-planning of the city layout throughout time, sherd distribution should be taken with due caution.

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second established a peak of settlement density in the Warka region in the transition from the Middle Uruk to the Late Uruk period.

To this, the study made by Pournelle on the deltaic landscape of southern Iraq should be added.⁶⁹ She attempted to reconstruct “relict watercourses in their entirety across the full extent of areas where they might be associated to datable settlements”, for which she not only analyzed earlier scholarship’s material and research but also carried out her own mappings. I have selected a few of her observations that may be relevant here. The first is that the Tigris contributed more to the alluvial settlement during the third and second millennia than previously assumed, and “the twin rivers appear to have had anastomosing and significantly intermingled flows”. When focusing on the Warka area, she confirmed that “this basin was, indeed, where the twin rivers’ waters met the sea during the fourth millennium BCE”, but that “not all waterways across marshlands need be interpreted as watercourses in the sense of discrete distributaries”. At a larger scale, she concludes that “towns and cities clustered on ‘turtlebacks’ and levees generally beyond the reach of seasonal flooding, while smaller settlements pushed out onto prograding sediment fans.”⁷⁰

The challenge, now, is to gather fresh data from sites in southern Iraq with occupation belonging to the end of the 4th millennium BC in order to ascertain what the situation was like in the alluvium.⁷¹

5. Discussion

It seems, by now, possible to state that two separate developments take place at the beginning of the 4th millennium, ca. 3800–3600 BC. One is the emergence in Upper Mesopotamia of new settlements that are indeed remarkable. The reason why they are remarkable, however, is not the emergence of public or monumental (or relatively monumental) complexes, but the fact that this architecture is not accompanied by messy residential *cum* working spaces, or, in other words, the organic, spontaneous, and unceremonious aggregations that had characterized communal growth until then (including Gawra until levels IX–VIII).

The main sites are Arslantepe, Brak and Hamoukar in the north, and Uruk in the south. However, whereas Arslantepe VII has been thoroughly excavated and published,⁷² and is

⁶⁹ POURNELLE 2003.

⁷⁰ POURNELLE 2003, 100, 138.

⁷¹ The report by the Italian Archaeological Expedition to Tell Zurghul (ancient Nigin) has revealed that the site had mid-5th millennium BC occupation (Mound B), see NADALI and POLCARO 2020. Shark vertebrae, shells, and fish skins were actually found, together with fishing net clay weights, in sector B. Excavations to the south of Mound A have revealed occupation (“multi-functional” Building A) extending from the end of the 4th millennium BC to the Early Dynastic period, but the finds are still not substantial enough to assess the connection of this site to broader on-going processes. Unstamped sealings made of bitumen, and conical bowls are interpreted along the lines of the redistributive institution discourse currently prevalent.

known to have superseded a largely unremarkable village,⁷³ what the situation was exactly at Brak during the period of the earliest excavated levels (TW 20–17)⁷⁴ or at Hamoukar,⁷⁵ both in the Khabur, is largely unknown. The most interesting thing about these sites is that surveys in the region⁷⁶ suggest that occupation densities were high, which could mean that several groups had a main center of administration and gathering built for convenience, while small-sized facilities and residences were scattered over the land, devoted to agropastoral activities. Specialized workshops and extensive storage were transferred to these new proto-cities. The excavation of small trenches at Majnuna and T2, both at the edge of Brak, have revealed adult burials and rubbish, including sherds, lithic debitage and animal bones in the first case, and burials, pottery kilns, and possible leather or dyeing facilities in the other.⁷⁷

The situation in the Warka basin would have been similar and benefitted from what Pournelle calls “the biomass”. Actually, based on the Brak team’s observations about the extensive form visible at this site and a growth pattern that suggested noncentralized processes,⁷⁸ unlike the southern Mesopotamian model, Pournelle and Algaze remarked that the process in the south, too, may have been similar.⁷⁹

The second development may be related to the climatic fluctuations that appear as early as the mid-5th millennium, even though its worst effects would have taken place at the end of the 4th,⁸⁰ theoretically causing a complete reconfiguration of the map as concerns the process of urbanism during the first half of the 3rd millennium, where we see southern Mesopotamia including the Diyala, Ebla in Syria, and the Zagros and beyond as the new key areas.⁸¹ This long period of climatic fluctuations may have affected the Susiana, according to what is gleaned from some evidence of destruction at Choga Mish and Susa, ca. 4000 BC, even though these cities appear to have grown again by 3600 BC, a theoretical date marking the onset of

⁷² See now BALOSSI RESTELLI 2019.

⁷³ Little is still known about Arslantepe VIII, see BALOSSI RESTELLI 2012. Arslantepe VII had houses on the northeastern area of the mound, neatly separated from the public buildings in the main part of what would become the acropolis during the 4th millennium.

⁷⁴ MCMAHON *et al.* 2007; OATES *et al.* 2007.

⁷⁵ GIBSON *et al.* 2002; REICHEL 2011–12.

⁷⁶ UR, KARSGAARD and OATES 2011; AL QUNTAR, KHALIDI and UR 2011.

⁷⁷ MCMAHON 2013. A study on agricultural practices from (irregular) samples obtained from the different trenches and excavated sections at Brak, spanning the 4th millennium and the beginning of the 3rd millennium, has yielded many interesting results, among them the observation that TW, in the main mound, had a wider range of crops than Tell 2 (HALD 2008, 111).

⁷⁸ UR, KARSGAARD and OATES 2007.

⁷⁹ POURNELLE and ALGAZE 2014, 6.

⁸⁰ CLARKE *et al.* 2016.

⁸¹ Small-scale, serial migration of Caucasus people (Kura-Araxes) into other areas of Mesopotamia started taking place at the end of the 4th millennium BC, but falls outside the scope of this paper.

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the Uruk phenomenon.⁸² Glyptic specialist Pittman has integrated all evidence available to conclude that Susa shows clear signs of having undertaken slightly earlier administrative innovations than Uruk and that it has got a wider range of iconographic motifs.⁸³ Perhaps it is not so strange that the first areas to use stamps for an administrative purpose are Arslantepe and the two main cities in the Susiana, since Anatolia and Khuzestan have strong glyptic traditions since the 7th and 6th millennium BC.

A scenario of small-scale, serial migration stemming from the Susiana is therefore posited here, whereby early *ex-novo* settlements in the middle Euphrates like Sheikh Hassan, and sites around the Taqba Dam, notably Jebel Aruda and Habuba Kabira, were founded by migrating groups who kept in contact with their eastern provenance all along the 4th millennium BC. Small-group intrusions, integrating into the local community, took place at sites like Hacinebi.⁸⁴

The on-going excavations at Tūlūl al-Baqarat, where one of the mounds has remains belonging to the early 4th millennium BC, have revealed material assemblages that connect it to both the Susiana and southern Mesopotamia.⁸⁵ This is a warning against seeing a preeminence of Uruk, which went through its own processes of gradual growth, either in economic or colonizing terms.

I do not intend to replace a Uruk model with a Susa one, of course. And doubtlessly, long-distance exchange —both economic and cultural in nature— intensified with time. An inland east-west route may explain the exotic objects found at Brak,⁸⁶ and connections between Habuba Kabira and Egypt were posited by Sürenhagen.⁸⁷ Actually, according to our current evidence, Habuba/Tell Qannas might as well be considered “the first city,” since it is the only

⁸² KOUCHOUKOS 1998, 225–228; HOLE 1994; ALIZADEH 2010. Early signs of destruction or abandonment are also attested at Tepe Gawra, Mashnaqa, Hammam et-Turkman, or Kosak Shamali, but correlating this to any particular cause is not possible.

⁸³ Her main conclusion, though, is that Susa cannot continue to be seen as a secondary, subordinate cultural area: “Whatever the similarities between southern Mesopotamia and Susiana, they cannot be interpreted as simply a reflection of influence, or invasion or colonization by Uruk. By the Middle Uruk period in Susiana the earliest evidence for what becomes a highly complex administrative system is found in the form of sealings, clay cups, and the earliest cylinder seals with baggy-style images” (PITTMAN 2013, 329).

⁸⁴ Hacinebi revealed during its second phase the intrusion of southern cultural elements (ceramics, wall cones, knapping techniques, high presence of bitumen, cylinder-seal impressions), but the analysis of spindle whorls revealed that the manufacture of this object remained fully local, raising the question of who, exactly, settled here, at this small village (STEIN 1999; KEITH 1998).

⁸⁵ LIPPOLIS *et al.* 2019.

⁸⁶ MALLOWAN 1947, plates VII–XX showing animal figurines like monkeys, and numerous other objects retrieved from the “Eye Temple”. On the problems associated with Mallowan’s work at the (Grey) Eye Temple, to be dated to the mid-4th millennium, see EMBERLING 2002.

⁸⁷ SÜRENHAGEN 1986.

site that fulfills all criteria: enclosure wall, planned layout, monuments and residences, etc.,⁸⁸ and this despite the fact that it never developed a writing system.

Finally, a warning against seeing political developments leaning towards single-rulership needs to be made. The iconography seen in the glyptic does indeed suggest that there is a trend towards authoritarianism, more aggressively expressed at Uruk than elsewhere. In my opinion, this indicates that eventual supreme rulership came after a failed collective negotiation of power and the corruption of public institutions, whose purpose may have been hijacked by people knowing how to steer things to their advantage in times of crisis, but this remains, for now, highly speculative, although no more speculative than the premature postulations of palatial complexes and king-priests.

Starting from early Susiana motifs, the relationship between men and nature (animals) also started to change now (see Figs. 2 and 3 below). It would evolve towards a complete objectification of animals exemplified by the cows in pens and byres of the Early Dynastic period, and continue with motifs like the standardized monsters in procession, or the masters of animals and heroes, which started already early in the 4th millennium.⁸⁹

The 4th millennium as a whole must be seen as a period of transition. Instead of relying on 'the hierarchy paradigm', I propose to see heterarchy as a theoretical platform that may be molded in future to understand management and leadership at this time. Based on McCulloch's coining of this term,⁹⁰ archaeologist C. Crumley developed the possible applications of heterarchy to her central fields of research (Celtic polities and historical ecology) at a time when New Archaeology tenets and economic geography theories were prevalent. Crumley defined 'heterarchy' as an organizational structure "in which each element possesses the potential of being unranked (relative to other elements) or ranked in a number of different ways, depending on systemic requirements."⁹¹ She has argued that heterarchical societies adapted better to cultural and environmental changes, and that "an intricate net of power relations —counterpoised power— in which negotiating individuals operating in varying contexts play a critical role, can not only support state apparatus but give rise to supra-state confederacies as well."⁹²

⁸⁸ See VALLET 1997.

⁸⁹ See also the sealing from Majnuna (a hero spearing a lion), MCMAHON 2009, 117, Fig. 1.

⁹⁰ McCulloch was a neurologist and is considered the father of cybernetics. In 1945, he published *A Heterarchy of Values Determined by the Topology of Nervous Nets*, where he grappled with the difficulty of conceptualizing mental processes in terms of 'volition'. He was confronted with the paradox of understanding processes resulting in actions characterized by purpose, and apparently not affected by time in a measurable manner. Nervous nets' reasoning and deciding would not behave hierarchically when theoretically confronted with a range of possible actions where the values motivating them were different, and the information sustaining those values might be faulty, contradictory, or paradoxical. He called this "inconsistency of preference", and by inconsistency he meant unpredictability.

⁹¹ CRUMLEY 1979.

⁹² CRUMLEY 1995, 31.

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The on-going investigations at sites of the Ghaggar/Saraswati region in northern India (beyond the scope here) may end up offering an alternative profile of developments towards complexity that does not end up in single rulership (the Harappan civilization). In our role as historians, we should not take anything for granted.

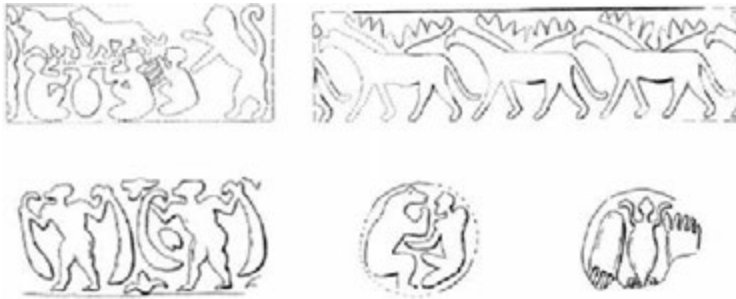


Fig. 2. Early examples of a change in a man-nature ontology. 1) Choga Mish. After DELOUGAZ and KANTOR 1996, pl. 147F. 2) Choga Mish. After DELOUGAZ and KANTOR 1996, pl. 136C. 3) Susa. After AMIET 1972, pl. 13, 598. 4) Susa, After AMIET 1972, pl.4, 457. 5) Susa. After AMIET 1972, pl. 4, 462.

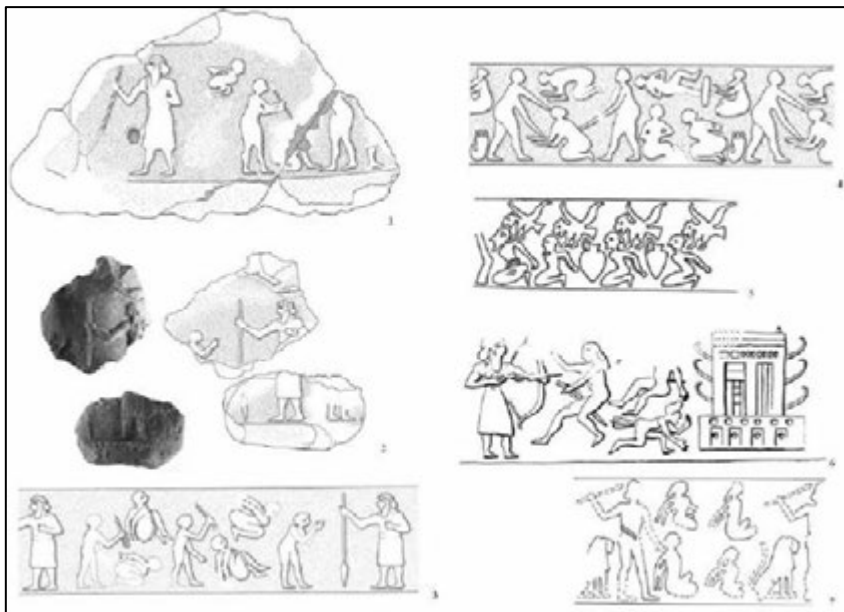


Fig.2. Authoritarianism. 1) –5) from Uruk. 6) from Susa. 7) from Habuba Kabira. 1) After BOEHMER 1999, Tf 9, Nr 3 A. 2) After BOEHMER 1999, Tf 13, Nr 4 A+B. 3) After BOEHMER 1999, Tf 17, Nr 4 A+L (reconstruction). 4) After BOEHMER 1999, Tf 26, Nr 9 A-H (reconstruction). 5) After BOEHMER 1999, Abb 64, A-D. 6) After AMIET 1972, Pl 18, 695. 7) After RITTIG 2014, Tf 193, 2 (reconstruction).

6. Conclusion

This diachronic overview of three processes, sedentism, domestication, and proto-urbanism –forcibly brief– has hopefully contributed to illuminate why social evolutionary thinking and elitism are not really a useful approach to understand why and how changes take place, and even less when applied to many prehistoric societies. My current research indicates that a split between nature and culture did not take place after domestication, or after ceramics, or after metallurgy for that matter, and that when it finally happened, it was accompanied by dynamics of growth and movement that we still do not fully understand. Two main areas of research are of the essence in the future:

- Biosocial intelligence: the ability to negotiate relationships with what is perceived as alive and active in the landscape, within the village, and with neighboring villages. This includes patterns and choices of growth, clustering, and dispersion.
- Migration as a relatively short-time process, particularly visible in certain periods. Material culture needs to encompass a chosen lifestyle, architectonic adaptations to the landscape (or not), stylistic traits or types of objects, the body as an element of personhood, and mortuary preferences. Detecting how long-distance movements took place requires not only more complete DNA databases and isotope analysis, in combination with climatic and environmental regional studies, but also a flexible approach to migration as a complex process: who and why chooses to leave, and how to correlate materiality to this process with a three-pronged approach: relationships with the neighbors (unless there is actual fusion), the new landscape, and those left behind.

If archaeologists and Assyriologists are to confront the challenges of understanding why and how city-states emerged in Mesopotamia –one that adopts a bottom-up approach combined with integrative efforts instead of aspiring to define whole periods in terms of a paradigm, or to catch the moment where a single factor allows to herald the ushering of a new period– they need to accept that social dynamics are multi-causal and multi-focal. Moreover, if we want to go beyond the mirages of ‘orientalism’, we need to leave this kind of discourse in the dust of time (definitely subject to erosion).

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Genesis 11, 1–9 and its Sumerian Predecessors in Comparative Perspective: Early Views on “National Culture” and its Nature

Peeter ESPAK¹

Abstract. *The paper discusses some key texts from Ancient Mesopotamian and also Hebrew mythologies which may have had several indications and contained many ancient understandings about the early views on the modern notions of a nation, national culture and the role of language on these beliefs. The possible connection of the Sumerian epic tale Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta is discussed in context with the Enuma Eliš myth in context with Hebrew Genesis’ the Tower of Babel story and the character of these text and the nature of their evolution is analysed. Based on some Sumerian royal correspondence, hymns, and epic literature and the worldview presented in Sumerian literature it is concluded that that certainly and especially a sort of a language based cultural and also ethnical understanding about a “distinct nation” culturally separate from “other” nations already existed more than 4000 years ago; reflected in many ways similarly also in the stories of Hebrew Genesis.*

Rezumat. *Articolul de față discută o parte dintre textele esențiale din Mesopotamia antică și din mitologia ebraică ce ar fi putut include unele indicații și cuprinde numeroase înțelesuri cu privire la noțiunile moderne de națiune, cultură națională și rolul limbajului în perceperea acestor concepte. Posibila legătură dintre acestea și epopeea sumeriană Enmerkar și Stăpânul din Aratta este discutată în contextul mitului Enuma Eliš, al Genezei ebraice și a legendei Turnului Babel, fiind analizate totodată și caracterul textului și evoluția sa. Plecând de la surse ce cuprind corespunzătoare regale sumeriene, imnuri și epopei, precum și de la viziunea asupra lumii ce este prezentă în literatura sumeriaină, sunt trase concluzii cu privire la un anumit limbaj cultural și o înțelegere etnică a unei „națiuni distincte”, separată de „alte” națiuni. Aceste noțiuni existau, astfel, cu mai mult de 4000 de ani în urmă și au fost reflectate în numeroase moduri în Geneza ebraică.*

Keywords: *Sumerian mythology, Hebrew Genesis, Enuma eliš, Ancient Near Eastern religion, culture and ethnicity, Old Testament, comparative Mythology.*

The story of the tower of Babel in chapter 11 of the Hebrew *Genesis* is undoubtedly one of the best-known in the Bible’s entire Old Testament.² This is evidenced by the use of the figure of speech ‘Babel of nations’ across the whole Christian cultural space to characterize a city or a place where people of many different nationalities speaking different languages live side by side. However, few know that the tower of Babel has a prototype as early as in ancient Sumer,

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² See also ESPAK 2017.

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The story of the tower of Babel in chapter 11 of the Hebrew *Genesis* is undoubtedly one of the best-known in the Bible’s entire Old Testament.² This is evidenced by the use of the figure of speech ‘Babel of nations’ across the whole Christian cultural space to characterize a city or a place where people of many different nationalities speaking different languages live side by side. However, few know that the tower of Babel has a prototype as early as in ancient Sumer,

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² See also ESPAK 2017.

approximately more than 2000 years BC, in the Sumerian epic tale *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, which in turn may have predecessors in spoken tradition. The story, written nearly 4000 years ago in Ancient Sumer, has transformed and changed according to the mythological and ideological needs of the nations or cultural areas as it was transferred via written and oral tradition of different nations. The Babylonians used the Ancient Sumerian tale according to their understanding and needs in approximately 1000 BC to write down their myth *Enuma Eliš*, and the authors of the Old Testament did so considerably later. Different interpretations and receptions among the people have produced and continue to produce different conceptions and viewpoints to this day.

Old Testament’s story of the tower of Babel, nowadays indisputably the best-known expression of this mythological tale, begins with the description of the nations reaching Sumer (שנער) and settling there. Next, according to the local custom, they start molding clay bricks and then burn them to make them harden. Bitumen,³ which was found in abundance in local water bodies, was also used. The people who settled in Babel decided to build themselves a city and erect in its center a ziggurat which, in Genesis, probably refers to the Esagila temple of Marduk who gradually became one of the principal gods after the arrival of Amorites in the Mesopotamian territory. In Sumerian, Esagila (é-sag-il-la) means a temple with a raised/upwards-striving head.⁴ However, the god Yahweh is not pleased with the construction because people who can build a tower reaching high to the heavens together would be omnipotent while united. They would be able to transgress the rules and restrictions established by Yahweh himself. The authors of the text, presumably living during the time of exile and promoting the new monotheist ideology, probably also referred to the cult of a false god Marduk that is ended by Yahweh. Yahweh descends to Earth from his heavenly spheres, which the united people are attempting to reach, mixes up the languages of the people who used to understand one another, and disperses the people, who neglect their construction, across the world.

1	ויהי כלהארץ שפה אחת ודברים אחדים:	The whole earth had one language and the same words.
2	ויהי בנסעם מקדם וימצאו בקעה בארץ שנער וישבו שם:	And it came to be, as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in Sumer and they stayed there.
3	ויאמרו איש אל־רעהו הבה נלבנה לבנים ונשרפה	And they told each other: „So! Let us form bricks and burn them

³ See HEIMPEL 2009, 25ff.

⁴ See also ANTHONIOZ 2014.

	לשרפה ותהי להם הלבנה לאבן והחמר היה להם לחמר:	so they would be well-burned!“ And their building stones were bricks and bitumen was their mortar.
4	ויאמרו הבה נבנה־לנו עיר ומגדל וראשו בשמים ונעשה־לנו שם פן־ נפוץ על־פני כל־הארץ:	And they said: „Let us build a City for us and a tower, with a top (reaching) the heavens and let us make ourselves a name, so we would not be scattered all over the earth.“
5	וירד יהוה לראת את־העיר ואת־המגדל אשר בנו בני האדם:	And Yahweh descended to see the city and the tower the sons of man were building.
6	ויאמר יהוה הן עם אחד ושפה אחת לכלם וזה החלם לעשות ועתה לא־יבצר מהם כל אשר יזמו לעשות:	And Yahweh said: „Behold! The nation is one and their language is one. And this (building work) is (only) the beginning of their deeds. And now they have no limitations whatever they plan to do (in the future).“
7	הבה נרדה ונבלה שם שפתם אשר לא ישמעו איש שפת רעהו:	So! Let us go down and let us mix their languages, so they would not be able to understand one another’s language.“
8	ויפץ יהוה אתם משם על־פני כל־הארץ ויחדלו לבנות העיר:	And Jahweh scattered them from there upon the surface of the entire earth and they went away from building of the city.
9	על־כן קרא שמה בבל כי־שם בלל יהוה שפת כל־הארץ ומשם הפיצם יהוה על־פני כל־הארץ:	That is why (this city) is called by the name Babel, because there Jahweh mixed the languages of the entire earth and from there Jahweh scattered them upon the surface of the entire earth.

The explanations of this story usually mainly refer to the Babylonian myth *Enuma Eliš* which describes the erecting of temples for the gods after Marduk prevails in a mythological battle and becomes the chairman of the pantheon of gods. The myth describes how the bricks were made for the temple, and Marduk’s own temple Esagila, with the head or the tip of its tower reaching the heavens, was completed. Marduk himself gives the order to build the city and start molding the bricks to the gods (VI 57–58) who then start the construction work (VI 59–64):–

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^da-nun-na-ki it-ru-ku al-la
 šat-tu iš-ta-at li-bit-ta-šú il-tab-nu
 šá-ni-tu MU.AN.NA ina ka-šá-di
 šá é-sag-íl mi-ih-rit ZU.AB ul-lu-u re-ši-šú
 ib-nu-ú-ma ziq-qur-rat ZU.AB e-li-te
 a-na ^da-num ^den-líl ^dé-a u šá-a-šú ú-kin-nu šub-tú
 ina tar-ba-a-ti ma-har-šú-nu ú-ši-ba-am-ma
 šur-šiš é-šár-ra i-na-at-ta-lu qar-na-a-šú
 ul-tu é-sag-íl i-pu-šu ši-pir-šú
^da-nun-na-ki ka-li-šú-nu pa-rak-ki-šú-nu ib-taš-mu
 5 UŠ ^dí-gì-gì šá šá-ma-ma u 600 šá ZU.AB ka-li-šú-nu pah-ru
 be-lum ina BARAG MAH šá ib-nu-u šu-bat-su
 DIGIR.DIGIR AD.MEŠ-šú qé-re-ta-šú uš-te-šib
 an-nam ba-ab-ì-lí šu-bat na-ár-me-ku-un
 nu-ga-a áš-ru-uš-šu hi-du-ta-šu tíš-ba-a-ma

The Anunnaki gods worked with the hoes,⁵
 within one year formed its bricks.
 When the second year arrived
 raised the head of the Esagila temple, worthy of the Apsu temple.
 They built the temple tower of Apsu to be high
 To Anu, Enlil and Ea their dwelling place they made and secured.
 Majestically he sat in front of them
 The roots of Ešarra his horns were looking upon
 When they had finished the works of the Esagila temple
 all the Anunnaki gods built their own shrines.
 Three hundred Igigi gods of the heavens and six hundred of the Apsu gathered together.
 Bel in his great shrine they had built for him as his dwelling place
 his divine fathers he sat down to celebrate.
 „This is Babylon, your dwelling place!
 Rejoice about it, sit down in joy!“

While it is obvious that the authors of *Genesis* must have been familiar with the text of *Enuma Eliš*, the main “loan”, or rather “adaptation”, of the story of building the great temple tower in the Hebrew version mostly originates from the Sumerian epic *Enmerkar and the Lord of*

⁵ TALON 2005.

Aratta. Yet this Sumerian text is rarely analyzed as a source used by the authors of *Genesis*.⁶ It is possible that the researchers concentrating on more recent Middle Eastern cultures are not well acquainted with early Sumerian material, or the “loan” from 1500-year-old material into the Hebrew text is considered too unlikely due to the length of time separating the two works.

The Sumerian heroic tale about Enmerkar describes a conflict between the Sumerian state of Uruk and Aratta – a state of heretofore unidentified location, possibly an imaginary mythological state. When analyzing the text, it seems likely that the state of Uruk had sent a messenger to Aratta, demanding that the local government surrender to Uruk and pay tribute.

It is possible that the text describes Enmerkar’s – the Uruk king’s – desire to build a new sanctuary called “Mountain of holy/clean me-s (Sumerian holy principles)”. It also seems likely that the messenger was instructed to demand from Aratta workers or materials for this purpose. The following words were said to the Lord of Aratta by Uruk’s messenger (128–134):⁷

ge₂₆-e-šè-àm^d en-líl-bàn-da ki-en-gi-ra-ke₄
 en^d nu-dím-mud šà kù-ge pà-da
 kur me sikil-la-ke₄ ha-ma-dù-e
 geš⁸ taškarin-gen₇ hi-li ha-ma-ab-ak-e
^d utu agrun-ta è-a-gen₇ si-múš ha-ma-ab-gùn-gùn
 zà-du₈-zà-du₈-bi urin ha-ma-mul-e
 agrun-agrun-ba šir kù nam-šub du₁₂-a-ba

I am the one whom the junior Enlil of Sumer,
 Lord Nudimmud in his sacred heart has chosen.
 A mountain of pure me-s let them build for me!
 Like a boxwood tree luxuriant let it be for me!
 Like Utu rising from his chamber let its brilliance be shining for me!
 Let its door-posts in its guard radiate for me!
 In its chambers holy songs and incantations are performed!

The above message is followed by the part of the story titled the incantation (*nam-šub*) of the god Enki (here with his other name Nudimmud), and it seems that the messenger is supposed to present the incantation or song to the Lord of Aratta, as he was instructed to do so by the deities and the ruler of Sumer (lines 135–155):

nam-šub^d nu-dím-mud-da-kam e-ne-ra du₁₁-mu-na-ab
 u₄-ba muš nu-gál-àm gíri nu-gál-àm

⁶ FRAHM 2010, 16–17.

⁷ MITTERMAYER 2009, 76–77.

kir₄ nu-gál-àm ur-mah nu-gál-àm
 ur-gir₁₅ ur-bar-ra nu-gál-àm
 ní tèg-gá su zi-zi-i nu-gál-àm
 lú-ùlu^{lu} gaba šu gar nu-tuku
 u₄-ba kur šubur^{ki} ha-ma-zi^{ki}
 eme ha-mun ki-en-gi kur gal me nam-nun-na-ka
 ki uri kur me-te gál-la
 kur mar-tu ú-šal-la nú-a
 an ki nígin-na ùg sag sì-ga
^den-líl-ra eme 1-àm hé-en-na-da-ab-du₁₁
 u₄-ba a-da en a-da nun a-da lugal-la
^den-ki a-da en a-da nun a-da lugal-la
 a-da en-e a-da nun-e a-da lugal-la
^den-ki en hé-gál-la en du₁₁-ga zi-d[a]
 en géštu-ga igi-gál kalam-ma-ke₄
 maš-su digir-re-e-ne-ke₄
 géštu-ge pà-da en eridu^{ki}-ga-ke₄
 ka-ba eme ì-kúr en-na mi-ni-in-gar-ra
 eme nam-lú-ùlu 1 ì-me-àm

The incantation of Nudimmud recite to him!

When there was no snake and there was no scorpion;
 was no hyena and lion was not;
 no dog and no wolf were there;
 no terror approaching, no fear being there;
 so mankind had no rival.

At that time, the lands of Šubur and Hamazi
 in harmonious language; and Sumer, the great mountain of magnificent me-s;
 Akkad, mountain that is fitting;
 and the land of Martu, peacefully were lying down.

Sky and earth in its totality (the whole world), the well-protected people;
 to Enlil in one language they all may speak!

At that time, for the contesting lords, the contesting princes, the contesting kings;
 Enki for the contesting lords, the contesting princes, the contesting kings;
 for the contesting lords, the contesting princes, the contesting kings –
 Enki, the lord of abundance, the lord of just decisions,
 the lord of knowledge and wisdom of the land,

the leader of the gods,
 chosen in wisdom, the lord of Eridu:
 In their mouths the tongues were different all that he had put there.
 The tongues of mankind became one

However, Wilfred G. Lambert believes that it is not clear that this was the messenger's task and that the reading of the following incantation was the job of this particular messenger; thus, he finds that the interpretation remains uncertain.⁸ While different researchers have proposed different interpretations and nuances and are not in agreement about the details of the story,⁹ the idea, taking into account the wider context, seems clear enough. The fact that Enmerkar sent the messenger to the Lord of Aratta with exactly the purpose of demanding Aratta's surrender seems to be confirmed in the later parts of the story where the Lord of Aratta tries to explain that he will not surrender to Uruk since he himself is also a powerful lord. The incantation of Enki begins with the explanation that originally, or "in the perfect being of things", all human languages were the same. Mankind had no enemies, and all nations celebrated the main deity of kingship – Enlil – in union. The incantation goes on to talk about rivalling kings and rulers who probably ruined mankind's original harmonious existence. However, Enki's "language-political decision" can be explained in two different ways. Either Enki mixes the languages of different rulers to prevent them from paying tribute to the god Enlil in the same language – for instance, in order to confuse the enemy before the battle between the two states. Or Enki wants to turn all languages into a single one for the purpose of making all rulers of the known world worship Enlil in harmony and understanding. The aim of the text might be to claim that the conflict only occurred because different rulers were using different languages, making it obvious why they did not want to worship Enlil (i.e., the state of Uruk) in harmony (i.e., surrender) and using the same language (i.e., Sumerian). Thus, the text also refers to Enki's role in assigning languages and all norms of civilization for humankind (i.e., for the nations of the known Middle Eastern world of the time), as the myth *Enki and the World Order* also claims. In order to subject all nations to the power of Uruk (i.e., Sumer), Enki now demands that all these nations should speak the same language. In that case, the function of Enki's incantation would not differ considerably from the Middle Eastern medical incantations whose purpose was to cure some illness or ailment. Enki's incantation can be interpreted as a cure to an illness defined as "different opinions" and "different languages".

The text does not seem to refer to the rivalry between the major Sumerian deities Enki and Enlil (the alleged theological difference between Nippur and Eridu)¹⁰ which the title used for Enki – "junior Enlil of Sumer" – could be said to indicate. Rather, it refers to the fact that

⁸ LAMBERT 2008, 95.

⁹ MITTERMAYER 2009, 57ff. and 122–123; VANSTIPHOUT 1994, 135ff.; VANSTIPHOUT 2003, 64–65; ESPAK 2015, 195–198.

¹⁰ JACOBSEN 1992, 403–416 and HALLO 1990, 187–199.

Enki acts on behalf of Enlil and other major deities of the Sumero-Akkadian pantheon to reinforce the influence of Sumer (and, therefore, also of its deities) as the center of the civilized world. Bendt Alster also concludes that “The point is the opposite of the generally held opinion: Enki unified all mankind by making them address Enlil in one language, that is, in Sumerian. This is likely to reflect the aspirations of Šulgi’s empire, and does not represent a “Babel of tongues.””¹¹

Nudimmud’s incantation describes the imaginary ideal state of affairs where, due to the wisdom of Enki, the organizer of the whole Sumerian civilization, all states will recognize the Sumerian god Enlil as their lord and must therefore also accept the Sumerian language and civilization as supreme. Herman Vanstiphout comes to the same conclusion: “On the whole, and in a general sense, I think we must agree with Alster’s solution. The text means that mankind shall speak in one tongue, which is Sumerian, and that the Lord of Aratta has to submit to this.”¹² However, Wilfred G. Lambert does not agree with Alster, claiming that the incantation refers to the early epochs of mankind and describes how the god Enki, similarly to the story of Babel in *Genesis*, changed the original single language into several different languages. While he concedes that the Sumerian text lends itself to a completely opposite translation where the original diversity of languages was turned into one single language by Enki, he argues that “considering the diversity of languages existing in the known world of Sumerians and Babylonians the first alternative (as well as the opinion of the majority) is probably true.”¹³ Lambert also adds that, in either case, the ancient people believed that human language was instituted by gods, i.e. mankind’s knowledge of language was definitely of “divine” origin. In his analysis, Lambert does not refute the logic proposed by Alster but seems to rather rely on “personal preference” or his “vision” of what might be “right”. The language/languages of gods were undoubtedly considered to be the prototype of human languages, but Nudimmud’s incantation is not a philosophical discussion over the nature or even the birth of human language, it is an “adventure story” of a fixed scope about a simple message that the messenger was supposed to convey to the Lord of Aratta. It appears to be an order to “speak the same language”, which also means an order to follow Sumerian rules and requirements. It is very likely that the story was written during the era of the Neo-Sumerian Empire, possibly during the reign of Šulgi (ca 2094–2047 BC), when Ur was the uncontested capital of Sumer. This was a period when the linguistic diversity of the conquered nations and states was indeed a fact of life, and, especially during Šulgi’s reign, the problems of language were also discussed. On the one hand, having incorporated a multitude of nations into his

¹¹ ALSTER 2006, 31.

¹² VANSTIPHOUT 1994, 151.

¹³ LAMBERT 1999, 221–222.

empire, the ruler needed to show his respect or tolerance for other languages. This is indicated vividly by one of Šulgi's own hymns (Šulgi C, lines 121–126):¹⁴

[eme] [mar]-tu níg eme-gi-ra-gen₇ hé-[en-ga-zu-àm]
 [x x] x lú kur-ra hur-sag-ta du x
 [silim] ha-ma-né-éš eme mar-tu-a inim hu-mu-ne-ni-gi₄?
 eme elam níg eme-gi-ra-gen₇ hé-èn-ga-zu-àm
 x x elam^{ki}-ma nidba x x-bur₁₀-bur₁₀-re-éš
 silim ha-ma-né-éš eme elam-ma inim hu-mu-ne-ni-gi₄

I know Martu language as well as Sumerian!
 When the mountain-people walk in the mountains
 and they welcome me, I answer them in Martu!
 I know Elamite language as well as Sumerian!
 ... when they bring offerings from Elam ? ...
 And when they welcome me, I answer them in Elamite!

On the other hand, the Sumerian language as well as Sumerian seed (numun ki-en-gi-ra) were in the center of the Sumerian civilization and governmental thinking. Both were considered to stand above all other cultural phenomena. It is, for example, well stated in one of the letters of the last Ur III king Ibbi-Su'en to Puzur-Šulgi (line 19) where he describes the contestant to the throne Išbi-Erra in very sombre terms and describes him as unsuitable for kingship because of his non-Sumerian origins (^miš-bi-èr-ra numun ki-en-gi-ra nu-me-a)¹⁵ The best-known descriptions of a foreign nation in terms of hate and true despisement come in the from the mythological-historical text known under the title *The Curse of Akkade* (lines 155–158) where the nomadic Gutian tribes are described or demonized as half animals and half humans:¹⁶

gu-ti-um^{ki} ùg kéše-da nu-zu
 dí-m-ma lú-ùlu^{lu} galga/arhuš ur-ra úlutim ^ugu^ugu^u-bi
^den-líl-le kur-ta nam-ta-an-è
 ŠID-ŠID buru⁵^{mušen}-gen₇ ki àm-ú-ús

The Gutians, people who do not know permanent settlement
 With human feelings / way of thinking but with the instincts of a dog, body shape like that of
 a monkey

¹⁴ CASTELLINO 1972; ETCSL 2.4.2.03.

¹⁵ ETCSL 3.1.20.

¹⁶ COOPER 1983, 56–59.

Enlil sent them down from the mountains
Like locusts they are covering the entire land

The text probably reflects the ideology or sentiments of the times of the beginning of the Ur III dynasty or even earlier. Naturally, the hatred towards the Gutians is not something unusual, since this tribe or larger entity of peoples were indeed hostile intruders and occupiers of Sumero-Akkadian lands in Mesopotamia.¹⁷

According to the ideology of the Neo-Sumerian Empire, when the Gutians and all the other more or less important national or tribal groups were already defeated or incorporated into the Ur III state or its sphere of influence, kingship and the role of the center of civilization were first and foremost supposed to belong to the city of Ur. The epic *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* probably tries to show that this was the case in the known world already during the mythical kings of Uruk who lived more than half a millennium earlier and in the “ideal” politics of the state of Uruk that was Sumer’s nexus of power at the time.

While the context and peculiarities of the Sumerian text can be analyzed and also “deciphered” primarily in the ideological-religious context of the Sumerian and Akkadian sources of the 2nd millennium BC, the logic of the Sumerian source text can in no way explain the convoluted way that this “adaptation” or “modification” of the abovementioned Sumerian epic ended up among the holy scriptures of the Jews. It is obvious that the authors of *Genesis* must have had access to the Sumerian source text since a corresponding epic did not exist as an extension among the more recent Akkadian-Babylonian myths and stories. The possibility that the story of the tower of Babel found its way into the “epic” of *Genesis* via oral tradition seems negligible. Therefore, it is most likely that the Jewish scholars encountered the text in Babylonian libraries during exile. The reasons for inverting the punch line of the text also provide several possibilities for interpretation. It is possible that after the Persian conquest, when the return of the Jews to their homeland became possible, there was a need to create a story about the Babylonians becoming overly arrogant, losing their fear of god and building sanctuaries that reached the heavens. That is, they wanted to become too powerful and impose their language and culture on the rest of the world. This would partly be in accordance with the idea of the Sumerian story. However, such aspiration towards unified ruling of the world brought about the vengeance of the god Yahweh, manifested by the confusing of the languages, which in turn eliminated the possibility to claim the status of the main cultural or political power. Thus, the Jews might have ascribed a theological source and reasoning for the Babylonians’ defeat in the war. *Genesis* in its “original form” was most probably largely written or compiled during the periods when Babylon had been overthrown and the considerably more tolerant Persians had taken their place. This gave the Jews a chance to once again return to

¹⁷ See ESPAK 2016, 78ff. for a more detailed overview.

their homeland, and, in order to encourage them to do it in a situation where most of the Jews who had already settled in the city of Babylon, the center of the world's civilization, probably did not want to return anywhere, such stories could just as well have had a mostly political function which naturally cannot be easy for us to understand two and a half millennia later. *Genesis* – like Estonian *Kalevipoeg* – was undoubtedly a political program for the birth of a “nation” or restoring its “self-confidence”. It is possible that similar intentions and emotions are also expressed in the story of the tower of Babel.

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The Identity of Martu (^dMAR.TU) in the Ur III Period¹Andreas JOHANDI²

Abstract. *The main purpose of this article is to study the divine figure(s) who hid behind the writing ^dMAR.TU during the Ur III period. The question is posed whether this writing signified only Martu/Amurru, the Amorite deity, or is there any reason to believe that Martu was not the only divine concept that stood behind this writing. As we know, in some other cases in Mesopotamian religion, the names of several deities were written in the same way (with the same signs). Some earlier studies have assumed that there was a connection between the similarly named gods Martu and Marduk. In the second part of the article, this question is revisited and it is asked whether the "other" ^dMAR.TU could be identical with Marduk, the later king of the gods in Mesopotamia. Finally, the relationship of ^dMAR.TU to the divine figure named AN.AN.MAR.TU is also discussed.*

Rezumat. *Principalul obiectiv al acestui articol este acela de a studia figura sau figurile divine ce se ascundeau în spatele grafiei ^dMAR.TU, în timpul perioadei Ur III. Este urmărită obținerea unui răspuns care să confirme dacă această expresie semnifică strict Martu/Amurru, zeitatea amorită, sau sunt motive să bănuim că Martu nu era singura entitate ce se afla în spatele acestei scrieri. După cum știm, în unele cazuri din religia Mesopotamiei, numele anumitor zeități erau scrise în același mod (cu aceleași simboluri). Unele studii timurii au considerat că există o legătură între zeii cu nume asemănătoare Martu și Marduk. În a doua jumătate a articolului, această chestiune este iarăși abordată, pentru a afla dacă „celălalt” ^dMAR.TU ar putea fi identic cu Marduk, suveranul celest târziu în religia mesopotamiană. În încheiere, este discutată și legătura dintre ^dMAR.TU și zeitatea numită AN.AN.MAR.TU.*

Keywords: Martu, Amurru, Amorites, Marduk, Mesopotamian religion, Ur III pantheon.

In literary texts of the Old Babylonian period the god Martu/Amurru (^dMAR.TU) is depicted as a deity with savage characteristics whose father is An and mother either Uraš or Ninḫursaĝ.³ The position and genealogy of ^dMAR.TU in the Ur III administrative documents

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³ No monograph exists on the god Martu/Amurru; for briefer overviews with further references, see EDZARD 1987–1990; KLEIN 1997; BEAULIEU 2005; BURKE 2021, 254–256. Note that the interpretation of ^dMAR.TU as Martu is conventional and not proven beyond doubt. For the reading of the name, see, e.g., EDZARD 1987–1990, 433–434;

reflecting the offerings to deities in the town of Ku'ara near Eridu and Ur in South Mesopotamia seems to be different. The following discussion takes this observation as its starting point and asks whether there was one divine figure known by this writing, or were there several?

In the text TCL 2 5482 from Puzriš-Dagān, dating to Ibbi-Su'en 01-07-13 it is reported that Ninsun, Asalluḫi and Nindamana (in this order) are the temple-owning deities in Ku'ara (offerings take place “in the temple of DN”, šà é DN).⁴ In the temple of Nindamana, offerings are made to the deities Ḫaia, Nindamgalnuna and Martu.⁵ The peculiar name Nindamgalnuna (^dnin-dam-gal-nun-na) seems to be the only reference to this deity in the vast Ur III administrative corpus.⁶ However, as the offerings are given in the temple of Nindamana, one would expect to see the temple-owner among the receivers of offerings. Thus, the name Nindamgalnuna here probably refers to the goddess Nindamana by her byname. Already E. Ebeling observed in the first volume of *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* that Nindamana stands here for Damgalnuna, Ea's (= Enki's) wife.⁷

The sequence of the deities in Ku'ara is approximately similar in document TCL 2 5514 that also originates from Puzriš-Dagān and is dated to Ibbi-Su'en 02-10-03, although, differently from the temple of Ninsun (é ^dnin-sún), the temples of Asalluḫi and Nindamana are not explicitly mentioned in this text.⁸ The god Asalluḫi is – as in TCL 5482 – followed by the deified and deceased king Šulgi, but the next three deities listed are interesting to observe: Nindamana, Ensimaḫ and Ḫaia. W. Sallaberger has demonstrated that this trio of deities – in a different order – corresponds to Ḫaia, Nindamgalnuna and Martu who were placed to the temple of Nindamana according to TCL 5482.⁹ Thus, Martu = Ensimaḫ. This equation is confirmed in the first millennium *An=Anum* god-list (tablet II, line 293, see LITKE 1998, 102) in which the same identification is

ATTINGER 2011. For an exceptional case in which Enlil is mentioned as the father of Martu (AN.AN.MAR.TU), see RIME 4, 307–308, inscription no. 2006 (a votive inscription to Rīm-Su'en I of Larsa).

⁴ Cf. the text AUCT 2 308 from Ibbi-Su'en 02-07-07, which for Ku'ara lists only the offerings to Ninsun, Asar and Nindamana. Thus, only the temple-owning deities of Ku'ara are brought offerings in this text. AUCT 1 488 (Amar-Su'en 03-10-14) mentions Ninsun and Asalluḫi among the deities of Ku'ara but does not mention Nindamana.

⁵ Note that the offerings to Martu appear twice in this text. For the first time, he is offered a lamb in Ur (?), this time, he is immediately preceded by Enki who is also given a lamb as an offering.

⁶ Another occurrence of this name appears on an Old Babylonian seal immediately preceded by the god Enki (DELAPORTE 1923, 139, number A.489, cited by CAVIGNEAUX and KREBERNIK 1998–2001, 338), see also the manuscript of the Weidner god list from Tell Taban (Old Babylonian), column 1, line 8 (SHIBATA 2009, 34) that seems to have ^r^dnin-gal-nu-na and CUSAS 35 500 (Old Akkadian), column 2, line 1: ^dnin-dam-gal-nu.

⁷ EBELING 1928, 102.

⁸ Cf. table 77 in SALLABERGER 1993 II, 134. In TCL 2 5514 the sequence of deities of Ku'ara is slightly different as compared to TCL 2 5482.

⁹ See table 77 in SALLABERGER 1993 II, 134. In TCL 2 5482 the sequence of deities seems be “theological” in the sense of Mesopotamian god-lists: the pair of god and goddess is followed by their child(ren). The logic behind TCL 2 5514 is different: the deities are probably listed in the sequence of their local importance as Nindamana, the temple owner, is listed first.

made.¹⁰ In addition to this equation in the previous line (292) of *An=Anum*, a deity named Ensigalabzu is equated with AN.AN.MAR.TU.¹¹ In another manuscript of *An=Anum* (see CT 24 29), Ensigalabzu is seemingly (the second column is fragmentary here) equated with Martu and the deity Ensi-gal-maḥ with AN.AN.MAR.TU.

Sallaberger considered Nindamana in TCL 2 5482 as the only possible candidate among the deities appearing in the sources to be the wife of the god Asalluḫi, “[...] vorausgesetzt, sie werde (vergleichbar Ninlil in Nippur) in einem eigenen Tempel neben dem Asarluḫis verehrt.”¹² It seems to be a more probable option that the wife of Asar/Asalluḫi is not mentioned at all in these lists of deities, and Nindamana’s husband in these two texts is Ḫaia who is equated with both Ea and Enki. M. Civil has commented on the name Ḫaia: “Originally, the name may have been a variant spelling of é-a and therefore identical with Enki [...] Note that while offerings are made to Ḫaia, especially in Ur, in the Ur III period, at that time Ea appears only in personal names.”¹³ The *Grussformel* of an Old Babylonian letter (UET 5 71) has the god Ensimaḥ following Ea (obverse, line 4) that reflects the same familial relationship than exists between Ḫaia and Ensimaḥ in TCL 5482.¹⁴ On the basis of this evidence and the argument made by Civil, it seems safe to conclude that Ḫaia, who in the Ku’ara offering lists was brought offerings in the temple of Nindamana, was identified with Ea.

That both Ḫaia and Ea, however, are identified with Enki in the eyes of the scribe who wrote TCL 2 5482 can be argued on the basis of the peculiar name Nindamgalnuna which thus seems to be a version of the name of Ḫaia’s spouse Nindamana. In this context, it is also conspicuous that, in the offering lists dealing with Ku’ara, the name Enki is not mentioned at all. Considering the similarity of names Damgalnuna and Nindamgalnuna, the latter seems to be the local name for Enki’s wife. Note that the writing ^dnin-dam-[...] appears a few lines before Enki in an Ur III administrative text UET 9 320 from Ur. For our purpose, it makes no real difference here whether one restores Nindamana or Nindamgalnuna, as both restorations add weight to the argument that Ḫaia appearing in texts dealing with Ku’ara should be treated as Enki. The hypothesis that the name Ḫaia denotes the god Enki can be further supported by the evidence from several other Ur III documents in which Martu (i.e., Ensimaḥ) is listed

¹⁰ Cf. SALLABERGER 1993 I, 225, n. 1075.

¹¹ For Ensigalabzu, see my forthcoming brief article “Some notes on the god Ensigalabzu”.

¹² SALLABERGER 1993 I, 224, n. 1072. Cf. MICHALOWSKI 1989, 92: “Of these deities [mentioned in the Ur III administrative documents dealing with Ku’ara – A. J.] only Nindamgalnuna and Nindamana are possible candidates for the role of wife of Asaluḫi.”

¹³ CIVIL 1983, 44.

¹⁴ Additional Ur III evidence for Ensimaḥ is that, according to text UET 3 166 from Ur, two fattened grass-eating lambs are offered for the “lustration rites” (a-tu₅-a) of Ensimaḥ. The only personal name known to me constructed with the name of this deity, lú-^dénsi-maḥ, appears in an Old Babylonian Ur document UET 5 191. Perhaps unsurprisingly this person is a priest connected to the abzu (gudu₄-abzu).

immediately after Enki.¹⁵ The fact that 𒄩aia seems here to be identical with the god Enki/Ea could add weight to the hypothesis that both names – Ea (é-a, *ḥajja) and 𒄩aia (ḥa-ià) – are derived from the Semitic root *ḥyy, “to live”.¹⁶

What is then the identity of Martu/Ensimah, the son of Enki/Ea/𒄩aia in these archival documents? According to the different parentage of An and Uraš appearing for Martu/Amurru, the Amorite deity in the literary texts of the Old Babylonian period, one might consider a wholly different personality for this deity. One should add that there seems to be nothing that would suggest an “Amorite context” in the aforementioned texts in which Martu seems to appear as Enki’s son. Among the Ur III administrative corpus, one document that does suggest a connection between the god Martu and the Amorites is MVN 15 362 (= RA 09 040 SA 03 (pl.1)) which, directly after the god Martu, mentions the Jebel Bishri Mountain (ḥur-saḡ-ba-ša-ar) as the recipient of an offering of a lamb. This location is a well-known power base of the Amorites.¹⁷ In another text (PIOL 19 349), offerings to ^dMAR.TU ùr-ra, (perhaps “Martu on the roof(top)”, or “Martu of the roof(top)”) are attested, following offerings to du₆-ùr (perhaps “rooftop mound”),¹⁸ Ningišzida and Su’en ùr-ra (or Enki ùr-ra).¹⁹ This text possibly reflects some nightly rites involving celestial bodies by the cultic structure (artificial hill?) set up on the roof of the temple.²⁰ The notion that this ^dMAR.TU might be a god associated with the Amorites is corroborated a few lines later when an Amorite (mar-tu) named Naplanum and his (nameless) wife are mentioned. This Naplanum is marked as a recipient of different types of cattle in tens of Ur III documents.²¹

The question then arises whether the Ur III documents refer to one or two gods whose name was written as ^dMAR.TU. If there was only one Martu, then one must consider not An but Enki to be his father during the Ur III period, as An as the father of Martu only appears in the Old Babylonian sources. Another and more probable option seems to be that one and the same

¹⁵ Martu appears immediately after Enki in texts TCL 5482 (possibly reflecting offerings in Ur, see above), MVN 13 124 and AUCT 2 97 (all from Puzriš-Dagān). Note that, in text ITT 3 5280 from Ġirsu, he is preceded by ^ddam-gal-nun. The close connection between Martu and Enki in the Ur III period offerings has been stressed before by D. O. Edzard (1987–1990, 436).

¹⁶ Cf. SELZ 2019, 28: “Ḥajja as well as 𒄩ajja are probably Semitic loans (in different periods) from *ḥjj “to live”.” For details, see SELZ 2002, 663–671.

¹⁷ For Jebel Bishri, with references to further literature, see BEAULIEU 2005, 39; see also BURKE 2021, 59–61.

¹⁸ For du₆-ùr, see SALLABERGER 1993 I, 130–131; WAETZOLDT 2005, 334–338 (in *ibid.*, 337, note 32, du₆-ùr is translated as “Dach des Hügels” based on the analogy of forms such as an-ša, an-úr and kur-ša).

¹⁹ According to the copy by H. Sauren in PIOL 19, the second sign of the DN is clearly ZU; in OPPENHEIM 1948, 166 the sign is interpreted as KI. I cannot decide which reading is correct based on the photo in CDLI (<https://cdli.ucla.edu/dl/photo/P122887.jpg>).

²⁰ For some Ur III rites performed on the roof of the temple, see SALLABERGER 1993 I, 125.

²¹ For Naplanum, see, e.g., MICHALOWSKI 2011, 108, with references to previous literature. Michalowski thinks that Naplanum was the head of the foreign royal guard of the Ur III kings.

writing stood for two separate divine figures.²² One of the two deities was in all probability a Semitic god called Amurru, connected to Amorites and in all probability to An and Uraš as parents, although the documentation of this connection is documented only in the Old Babylonian texts.²³ There seems to be a consensus among scholars that the god Amurru is not an Amorite god *per se*, i.e. a god worshipped by the Amorites but a “*theos eponymos*, a construct of Sumerian religious tradition intended, perhaps, to integrate Amorites into Babylonian theology [...]”.²⁴ The second ^dMAR.TU was a son of Enki and Damgalnuna, at home in Ku’ara and probably in a wider region around Eridu and Ur. He presumably had nothing to do with the Amorites at first and was of Sumerian origin.²⁵ The name written with the divine determinative seems to appear first in an Old Akkadian letter (CUSAS 27 74) as a theophoric element in the personal name *i-hu-ur-^dMAR.TU*, probably to be interpreted as Semitic (“Martu chose”) and, thus, probably stands for Amurru.

The Ur III tradition of two Martus – or at least some confusion between the two traditions – probably survived in an Old-Babylonian manuscript of the Weidner god-list (VAT 7759).²⁶ In this list, one ^dMAR.TU appears in column vi, line 8, and is followed by AN.AN.MAR[.TU] and ^daš-ra-tum who are, deciding by other manuscripts of the Weidner list, followed by ^dnisaba (only the determinative has survived in VAT 7759) and ^dḫa-ia]. The other ^dMAR.TU is listed in the colophon seemingly as the first of the four divine scribes: ^dMAR.T[U], ^dna-bi-um, ^dnisaba, ^dḫa-ia.²⁷ ^dMAR.TU here possibly appears as a divine scribe through his association with his father Enki/Ea, the god of wisdom who is often related to scribal arts. The fact that, in the manuscript of the Weidner god-list, ^dMAR.TU is followed by Nabium, i.e. Nabû, makes it probable that it is not Martu the Amorite who is meant, but Marduk, the boss and later

²² For other occasions when one writing stands for several, clearly distinguishable deities, see e.g., ^den-ki that stood for both Enki, the so-called forefather of Enlil, and Enki(k), the god of Eridu. Note also the writing ^dTU that stood for the mother-goddess Nintu, the male deity ^dTU(-da), the god Dumuzi (KREBERNIK 2014–2016a, 152–154) and probably also for Martu in the Middle-Babylonian period lexical series Ea (CIVIL 2010, 12, line 216), and Uraš (for several deities hiding behind the writing ^duraš, see further below).

²³ An and Uraš as a couple occurs together in only two Ur III administrative documents: PDT 1 527 (from Puzriš-Dagān) and TCL 5 6053 (from Umma, the deity preceding Uraš is missing in a lacuna but should probably be restored as An). In TCL 5 6053, the pair is followed by ^dur-saĝ-an-na, “the hero of An” (is there a chance that this writing represents Martu/Amurru?). In PDT 1 527 *ki ur-saĝ-e-ne* (“the place of heroes”) follows the divine pair.

²⁴ BURKE 2021, 254.

²⁵ Note the reading ḡar₇-du₂ offered by P. Attinger (2011, 61). G. J. Selz has suggested the possible interpretation “the planting and producing one” for ḡar₇-du₂ (personal communication).

²⁶ That ^dMAR.TU appears twice in the Weidner list is mentioned but not discussed in detail in EDZARD 1987–1990, 434. For the copy of VAT 7759, see WEIDNER 1924–1925, 3.

²⁷ The surprise to find Martu/Amurru in this short list of divine scribes was expressed by J.-R. Kupper: “Il est normal que l’auteur de la tablette invoque ses doctes patrons à la fin de son travail, mais il est curieux autant qu’inattendu de voir figurer Amurru en leur compagnie; aucun des traits que nous avons relevés jusqu’ici ne nous préparait à l’accueillir parmi les maîtres du calame” (KUPPER 1961, 71).

father of Nabû.²⁸ For Ħaia appearing here, several traditions could be at play, featuring one associating him with Nisaba at the town of Ereš and the other with Enki/Ea in the Eridu/Ku'ara/Ur region.

Mixed traditions could also appear in the hymn *Martu A* in which An is the father and NinĦursaĝ the “original mother” (ama ugu-ni) of Martu. That NinĦursaĝ was the mother of Martu has been explained before by Edzard on the basis of Martu's/Amurru's relations to the mountains, as he is often characterised as the “man/one of the mountains” (lú-Ħur-saĝ-ĝá).²⁹ The other possible explanation is that, in *Martu A*, the two genealogies and traditions involving ^dMAR.TU were mixed up, and NinĦursaĝ appears as Martu's mother, as according to one tradition – represented most prominently in the myth *Enki and NinĦursaĝ* – she was Enki's wife. This could be interpreted as an implicit hint to the parentage of Martu/Marduk in *Martu A*, as in *Enki and NinĦursaĝ* and the hymn *Damĝalnuna A*, NinĦursaĝ was equated with Damĝalnuna/Damkina who is usually considered Enki's/Ea's wife and Marduk's mother. There are some other things that unite the god Martu as depicted in *Martu A* with Marduk. For example, both deities are dealing with seven winds in the Old Babylonian period. In *Martu A*, line 17, it is said that Martu “donned the seven winds” (tum, imin-na zag mu-ni-in-^rkéš').³⁰ In the Old Babylonian hymn to Marduk originating from Sippar, it is Marduk who is said to “cause the seven winds to unite into storms” (*mu-uš-ta-ar-Ħi me-Ħe-e 7 ša-ri*).³¹ If one adds post-Old Babylonian material for Marduk to the comparison, then the use of maces and bows and arrows (+quiver) can be added.³² Finally, in the Sippar hymn, Marduk is associated with the mountains. In the first line of the hymn, he is most probably called “the lord of the mountains”.³³ Exactly the same epithet (*be-lu šá-di-i*) is known for Martu/Amurru in a first millennium tablet of the canonical lamentation *The Honored One of Heaven*.³⁴

²⁸ T. Sharlach (2002, 98), based on the interpretation of AN.AN.MAR.TU as ^ddingir-mar-du-ak, “(divine name) The God of the Amorites” (cf. RICHTER 1998, 136–137) has suspected the influence of Martu on the divine figure of the god Marduk: “Current theories have been unable to account either for the etymology the name Marduk or the reason for his identification with AsarluĦi. Is it possible that Marduk and dingir-mardu-ak, the god of the Amorites, are different writings for one and the same god? This explanation would provide an etymology for the name Marduk. Moreover, Marduk's presence in Kuara in the circle of Enki could explain Marduk's syncretization with AsarluĦi and his identification as the son of Ea. Did a dynasty of Amorite rulers move “the Amorite god” to a prominent, even preeminent position in the pantheon?”

²⁹ EDZARD 1987–1990, 435; see also KLEIN 1997, 104. Klein (1997, 102) counted 15 occasions when the epithet lú/mu-lu Ħur-saĝ-ĝá was used for Martu.

³⁰ Transliteration: ETCSL 4.12.1.

³¹ Transliteration: AL-RAWI 1992, 79.

³² See *Martu A*, line 11, and *Enūma eliš*, tablet IV, lines 35–38 (LAMBERT 2013, 88–89).

³³ The interpretation of KUR.DU-*i* for *šadi* is not entirely certain, see AL-RAWI 1992, 82. The mountains (*ša-di-i*) are mentioned again in line 11 of the text in an unclear context.

³⁴ COHEN 1988, 212, line b+126

^dMAR.TU's connection to Enki and his circle are also present in other canonical lamentations. A first millennium version of the lamentation *The Bull in his Fold* includes the following listing of deities: Martu (with the epithet mu-lu-ḥur-saḡ-ḡá, "man of the mountains"), Amanki (= Enki), Damgalnuna, I(d)lurugu, Kiša, Asalluḥi, Panunanki, Muzebbasa (= Nabû).³⁵ One notices that this listing looks quite similar to the sequence of deities in the Weidner god-list (Enki, Ea, Damgalnuna, Damkina, I(d)lurugu, Kiša, Asalluḥi, Marduk, Šarpanitum, Nabium), and one can perhaps suspect the widely circulated Weidner god-list to be the basis for this listing. It is interesting to note, however, that according to one manuscript of this lamentation (VAT 246), Asalluḥi does not appear, and Kiša is followed directly by Panunanki. The logic behind the sequence of deities in VAT 246 without Asalluḥi could perhaps be interpreted in the following manner: by the first millennium, Asalluḥi and Marduk (here Martu) were considered to be one god, more important than Enki, and thus placed to the first position in the list. Ea and Damkina (Enki's and Damgalnuna's additional names in the Weidner list) are not mentioned, and the more archaic name of Asalluḥi's wife, Panunanki (perhaps thought to be more suitable for the genre of lamentations), is used for Marduk's wife Šarpanitum. These changes can be explained by the programme of ascendance of Marduk to the top of the pantheon by the first millennium. In this text, we could be dealing with the tradition of two Martus as well, as the line preceding the mention of Martu reads: ur-saḡ-gal umun-^duraš-a-ra, "great hero Uraš" although according to the epithet, here the male version of Uraš is mentioned and not the mother of Martu. The writings for both deities were, however, the same (for this, see further below).

A similar tradition probably also survived in the An=Anum god-list in which – similarly to the Weidner list – two Martus appear. The first ^dMAR.TU and AN.AN.MAR.TU – as was discussed above – are listed on the second tablet and are equated with Ensi(gal)maḥ and Ensialabzu and directly attached to Enki's circle of deities. The second ^dMAR.TU and AN.AN.MAR.TU appear only on the sixth tablet of the composition (lines 228 and 257 respectively) in the context that points to the Amorites and their gods (for example, the god of draught animals Saman (VI 230), "Mardu of the steppe of An/heaven" (^dmar-du₁₀-eden-an-na, VI 231),³⁶ the divine rat ḥumuṣir (VI 234), Martu's/Amurru's wives Ašratum (^daš-ra[-tum], VI 262) and Adḡarkidu (^dad-ḡar[-ki-du₁₀], VI 265).

The name AN.AN.MAR.TU itself – as far as I know, not attested earlier than the Old Babylonian period – raises some interesting questions. Firstly, one could ask whether this name is just another name for the god whose name was written as ^dMAR.TU. M. Stol has studied a group of Old Babylonian texts that mention both names and, from the use of these names in similar contexts (temple names, personal names and epithets of deities), has concluded that

³⁵ COHEN 1988, 157, lines 65–71.

³⁶ T. Oshima (2006, 78) interprets this name as "The Pleasant Spade of the Fields of the Heavens". Having the spade for a symbol is another thing that unites Martu and Marduk; for this, see *ibid.*, 77–79.

“gods ^dMAR.TU and AN.AN.MAR.TU are identical”.³⁷ At the same time, the writing AN.AN.MAR.TU looks suspiciously like an artificial creation that was possibly invented by ancient scholars in the course of some “theological” organizing of previously confusing data. This means that the sign AN was added to the earlier common writing ^dMAR.TU with at least the initial purpose of showing that the bearer of this name was considered different compared to ^dMAR.TU.

One should probably first ask whether the cause for this possible invention was to make a distinction between two aspects of one god named Martu or between two separate gods whose name was written in the same way.³⁸ J. J. A. van Dijk interpreted the names in line with the first option and considered ^dMAR.TU the chthonic and ^dAN.MAR.TU the astral aspect of the god.³⁹ Some pieces of evidence speak in favour of following van Dijk and taking ^dAN.MAR.TU to be the astral *Erscheinungsform* of ^dMAR.TU.

For example, one could refer to the aforementioned document PIOL 19 349 that mentions rites on the roof – a place suitable for the worship of astral deities, although, in this text, the writing ^dMAR.TU and not ^dAN.MAR.TU was used (if the scribe had indeed used the latter writing, the issue would have seemed solved!).⁴⁰ Van Dijk also interpreted divine names ending with -an-na as the astral epiphanies of the deities (see, e.g., examples such as ^dama-ušumgal-an-na and ^dgeštin-an-na).⁴¹ Based on this, one wonders – without complete certainty – whether the name ^dmar-du₁₀-eden-an-na was perhaps similarly an astral epiphany of AN.AN.MAR.TU.

Finally, when browsing through the Old Babylonian seal legends, one notices that in lines that reflect the personal devotion of the seal owners, the god AN.AN.MAR.TU is often connected to various astral deities such as the sun god Utu and his consort Aya, the moon god Su'en, goddess of the Venus star Ninsianna, storm-god Iškur (astral deity in the sense of bringing rain and lightning from above) and Nergal (god of death and the planet Mars). In contrast, the association of AN.AN.MAR.TU with Enki or Ea is very rare, and as far as I know, appears only in one document: in text HEO 12 59 from Kutalla, one Su'en-muballiṭ identifies

³⁷ STOL 1979, 178. Stol had the opinion that AN.AN.MAR.TU was written when the scribes unmistakably wanted to refer to the god Martu/Amurru and to differentiate it from the gentilic “Amorite” that was sometimes written as ^dMAR.TU. J.-R. Kupper (1961, 69–70) also thought that the name of Amurru had two forms.

³⁸ Cf. similar questions posed in EDZARD 1987–1990, 437.

³⁹ VAN DIJK 1973, 505, note 14. For AN.AN (or AN-^d) as the marker for astral deities, see also SELZ 2008, 22; 2016, 69. Note also that Edzard mentioned the possibility that AN.AN.MAR.TU could be a *diri*-writing with an unknown reading in the vein of AN.AN.NISABA = Nanibgal. (EDZARD 1987–1990, 437). Cf. MICHALOWSKI 2011, 105–107, who came to the conclusion that MAR.TU is a (*diri*-)writing for Amurru.

⁴⁰ H. Waetzoldt (2005, 337, note 32) is of the opinion that either the places for offerings to Su'en (or Enki? – see note 19 above) and Martu or their statues were situated on the roof of one of the buildings in the temple complex of the moon god.

⁴¹ VAN DIJK 1957–1971, 535–536. Note that, in an Old Babylonian seal legend (YOS 8, 009), a person defines himself as the devotee of ^dMAR.TU and Geštinanna. Are we dealing with the cult of two astral epiphanies here?

himself as the devotee of AN.AN.MAR.TU and Enki. In the document OLA 21 15, one Su'en-bāni declares himself to be a devotee of Nabium and Martu. In these two examples, it could be the god Marduk who is meant.

There is no place here for a thorough analysis of the data, but some doubts can be raised about the theory that the writing AN.AN always denoted astral epiphanies of deities. One could, for example, argue that if the additional AN was indeed for indicating astral deities, then why was this “method” not regularly used for Nanna/Su'en and Utu who no doubt had their own chthonic (or rather earthly) epiphanies.⁴² Should not these too have been kept separate from the astral one as was done in the case of AN.MAR.TU and AN.AN.MAR.TU?

The data discussed above points to the possibility that in the Ur III period there were two separate divine figures whose names were both initially written as ^dMAR.TU. If this is true, then the name AN.AN.MAR.TU could alternatively have been an attempt to differentiate between the two namesakes. In line with this theory, I propose that – although I am currently not able to offer a proper reading for the name – the writing AN.AN.MAR.TU – at least in some cases – reflects familial relations and shows that its bearer is related to the sky god An (in the case of Martu/Amurru as a son, although the exact relation is most probably not specified in the writing).⁴³ This name was probably first implemented to make it different from the other ^dmar-tu or ^dġar₇-du₂ (the son of Enki) appearing in the Ur III data.

The argument that the name AN.AN.MAR.TU reflects familial relations can be strengthened based on the parallel data that concerns the goddess Uraš, An's wife and Martu's mother. As Martu's name was at times written as AN.AN.MAR.TU, the writing AN.AN.uraš(IB) exists for the goddess Uraš. As this writing comes up in at least three different compositions in the Old Babylonian material and thrice in one of these, one can exclude the possibility that it was a mistake made by a scribe.⁴⁴ The purpose of this writing seems to be the same as for the writing AN.AN.MAR.TU – that is to make a distinction from another deity, in this case ^dUraš, the Ninurta-like city-god from Dilbat, who is well-documented for the Old Babylonian period.⁴⁵ An attempt to make a differentiation between the two Martus by inventing the name-form AN.AN.MAR.TU proved not to be successful in the long run, as in most cases, both writings seemed to be used in the same contexts and, thus, for the same deity (see Stol above). A more successful attempt was (later?) made by the Old Babylonian theologians who, as a result of some

⁴² I know of no occasion when the name of the sun god was written with AN.AN in the beginning; for the moon god Nanna, the practice seemed to have been known only in the Ur III period Ur (see documents UET 3 205, 263, 698, 702, 703, 1384; UET 9 408, 904, 905).

⁴³ In this respect, it also reflects the astral aspect of the god as was opined by van Dijk but from a somewhat different angle.

⁴⁴ The writing AN.AN.uraš comes up in an Old Babylonian incantation (OECT 5 19, line 38), in *The Cult Song of Damu* written in Emesal (TCL 15 8, lines 152, 164, 176) and in the *šir-gida* hymn to Ninisina (SRT 7, line 25 (= Ninisina A)). Note that, in the latter case, the other manuscript of the text (SRT 6, column iii, line 14) has the writing AN.uraš.

⁴⁵ For the female Uraš, see KREBERNIK 2014–2016b, 401–404; for the male Uraš, see KREBERNIK 2014–2016b, 404–406.

yet inexplicable theological reform, “divided” the writing ^dMAR.TU into ^dMAR.TU and ^dAMAR.UTU, Thus, the writing ^dMAR.TU (and also AN.AN.MAR.TU, as it was now used for the same concept)⁴⁶ was reserved for the god Amurru, i.e. the god of the Amorites related to mountains with An and Uraš as parents, while the other ^dMAR.TU, the son of Enki and Damgalnuna later became the patron deity of the Hammurapi dynasty under the name of Marduk.

Based on the similarity of the names and divine parentage, one could see the ^dMAR.TU appearing in the Ur III documents dealing with Ku’ara as an early writing for the god Marduk and the appearance of both Asalluḫi and Martu in Enki’s (= Ḫaia’s/Ea’s) circle an early association between Asalluḫi and Marduk. The name ^dAMAR.UTU is otherwise conspicuously lacking in the vast Ur III documentation, and, considering its popularity in the following Old Babylonian period, one could suspect this divine figure (or its predecessors) to appear somewhere in the data.

A lot of questions, however, remain. For example, one could ask whether Marduk – despite a different position in the Ur III pantheon under the name Martu – was *originally* the god of the Amorites (or *theos eponymos* of the Amorites) who, for some reason, gained a separate identity in the Ur III period, or was he a domestic Sumerian deity by origin? Was the god Martu not chosen as the protégé of the Amorite Old Babylonian dynasty because, as some sources communicate, he was described in terms too pejorative to be a pretender for the divine rule over Babylonia? At this point, I leave these intriguing questions for future studies.

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⁴⁶ Note that the name AN.AN.MAR.TU could be read as ^dam₆-mar-tu that is rather similar to ^damar-utu (writing am₆(AN) was mainly used as an early writing for the copula that later was written as am₃). This, however, would be a rather peculiar interpretation.

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The Identity of Martu (^dMAR.TU) in the Ur III Period

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The Long Path of Nanāia from Mesopotamia to Central and South Asia

Andrew SCHUMANN¹, Vladimir SAZONOV²

Abstract. *In this paper we show that the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia had some attributes (such as ‘warrior goddess’ and ‘sitting on a tiger/lion/standing with a lion/lions’) which were preserved in her worship from the period of Ur III (the second millennium BC) in Mesopotamia up to the period of the Kuṣāṇas and Kūšānšāhs (from the 1st century AD to the late 4th century AD), and even up to the period of later Nomadic dynasties of Northern India, such as the Kidarites and Hepthalites (from the 4th century AD to the 8th century AD) in Central and South Asia. In later stages we detect early Hindu images of Nanāia presented as Durgā as well as early Hindu images of the divine couple Oešo and Nanāia presented as Umāmaheśvara. So, the standard Indian iconographic motif of Durgā could be traced back to the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia.*

Rezumat. *În cadrul prezentului articol dorim să demonstrăm că zeița mesopotamiană Nanāia avea unele atribute (precum cea de „războinică” și „șezând pe un tigru/leu” sau „alături de un leu/lei”) ce au supraviețuit în cultul său din perioada Ur III (mileniul al II-lea î.Hr.) în Mesopotamia, până în perioada lui Kuṣāṇas și Kūšānšāhs (din primul secol d.Hr. până la finalul secolului al IV-lea d.Hr.), și chiar până spre dinastiile nomade târzii din nordul Indiei, precum cele ale Kidarites și a Hepthalites (din secolul al IV-lea d.Hr. până în cel de-al VIII-lea d.Hr.) în Asia Centrală și de Sud. În încheiere observăm unele imagini hinduse timpurii ale zeiței Nanāia ce sunt prezentate ca fiind ale lui Umāmaheśvara. Astfel, motivul iconografic standard al lui Durgā poate fi urmărit până la originile sale, în reprezentările zeiței Nanāia.*

Keywords. *world-system, Nanā, Nanāia, Oešo, Umā, Durgā, Maheśvara.*

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show how different Sumero-Akkadian beliefs revolving around the worship of ^dNA.NA.A (^dNanaya, Nanā, Nanāia) influenced the worship of the eponymous female deity in Central Asia – (i) *nn̄y* (Sogdian: Nanāia) in Sogdiana and Khorosmia (today’s Tajikistan and the South of Uzbekistan); (ii) *Ναναια* (Greco-Bactrian: Nanāia), *Ναννα* (Bactrian: Nanā) in Bactria (modern Afghanistan) and Gandhāra (present-day north-west Pakistan and north-east Afghanistan) – and through them even influenced some Hindu beliefs about Durgā in North India. On the one hand, the influence of Sumero-Akkadian

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Nanāia on Sogdian-Bactrian Nanāia is quite well-known.³ On the other hand, the claim about the possible impact of Sogdian-Bactrian Nanāia on the cult of Durgā needs special argumentation, which is presented in this paper.

Methodologically, there is a difference between reconstructing the cult of Nanāia in Mesopotamia⁴ and reconstructing the cult of Nanāia in Central Asia. In the first case, we have a lot of long textual fragments mentioning this goddess. So, we can extrapolate the dynamics of identification of the goddess by tracing her attributes in texts from Ur III (2112–2004 BC) to the Neo-Babylonian period in the late 7th and 6th centuries BC. In the second case, we deal with a few mentions of Nanāia in long texts, but there is a huge number of her images in paintings, sculptures, and coins with very short inscriptions. Therefore, we cannot analyse long texts but only visual attributes in her images and their dynamics.

Thus, in this paper we are going to trace and classify the identification of Nanāia/Nanā from the earliest mentions in Ur III (from the 22nd to 21st century BC according to the middle chronology) up to the possible influence of Nanā on Durgā in Northern India (from the 2nd century BC to the 7th century AD). In this tracing and classifying, we use the world-systems analysis introduced by Immanuel Wallerstein⁵, and, thereby, we completely agree with the statement later made by André Gunder Frank⁶ that various regions have been linked to each other by close economic, social and political relations since ca. 3000 BC, and, in this way, they have united into a kind of world-system. We show that Nanāia is a goddess whose worship has been a significant part of religious diffusion of this world-system since its inception. So, the world-systems analysis can be treated as an *eternalistic* approach to history, when each historical event is understood as unique, and there is only one history without repetitive processes with some historical laws holding for different societies or civilizations. For instance, the cult of Nanāia as mother goddess has an unbroken living tradition that goes back over 4,000 years and it is now preserved in the cult of Durgā in India.

Our research within the framework of the world-systems approach is based on different combined methods, such as critical study of texts from Mesopotamia (e.g., royal inscriptions, myths, offering lists etc) and texts of coin legends from Central and South Asia. We use comparative analysis of textual sources in Sumerian, Akkadian, Bactrian, Sogdian and some other languages, philological analysis, and diachronic and synchronic analysis. This combination of methods is useful for examining a wide variety of sources from different genres, epochs and geographic scopes for reconstructing one intercultural religious tradition within the world-system. In order to combine these methods into one piece of research, we

³ RTVELADZE 1993/4: 84; POTTS 2001; REINER 1974; AZARPAY 1976; WESTENHOLZ 1997; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008; PALEOTTI 2013.

⁴ HEIMPEL 1982, 65–67.

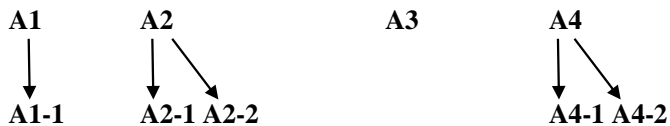
⁵ WALLERSTEIN 1976.

⁶ FRANK and GILLS 1992; FRANK and GILLS 1993.

apply a general methodology developed within the structuralist analysis of mythemes founded by C. Lévi-Strauss⁷ and V. Ya. Propp⁸. Let us recall that they proposed the methodology of analysing the mythological narratives of different languages, epochs and geographic locations. Following their approach, we distinguish between syntagmatic (horizontal) and paradigmatic (vertical) orders of mythemes. So, we distinguish between syntagmatic and paradigmatic orders of attributes of deity. According to the syntagmatic order of the first level, we obtain the following attributes of Nanāia in Mesopotamia⁹:

- ‘mother goddess’ (A1)¹⁰
- ‘love (fertility)’ (A2)¹¹
- ‘royal patron’ (A3)¹²
- ‘woman warrior’ (A4)¹³

The attribute ‘crescent moon’ (A1-1) is paradigmatically subordinated to A1, according to Old Babylonian texts¹⁴; the attribute ‘healing of epidemics’ (A2-1) is paradigmatically subordinated to A2 and ‘marriage (children)’ (A2-2) to the same A2, according to Old Babylonian texts, too (STRECK 2012; VS 10, 215: 11); ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1) to A4¹⁵. The attribute ‘four or many arms’ (A4-2) was not mentioned in the Mesopotamian sources, but it occurs first in Kuṣāṇa and Sogdian images of Nanāia. It is subordinated to A4, also. First of all, according to numismatics¹⁶ of the Kuṣāṇas, we can reconstruct all the Mesopotamian attributes of Nanāia in the Kuṣāṇa period in India and, additionally, A4-2. These attributes are as follows:



Later these attributes were ascribed to Durgā – one of the main goddesses in Hinduism – but with some new attributes. So, using this structuralist methodology, we show the

⁷ LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1955.

⁸ PROPP 1968.

⁹ STRECK 2012.

¹⁰ DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 33; WEIDNER 1924, 1–18.

¹¹ SIGRIST 1984, 147; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008.

¹² SIGRIST and WESTENHOLZ 2008, 667–704

¹³ KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201.

¹⁴ STRECK 2012; VS 10, 215: 3

¹⁵ See ETCSL translation: t.1.3.2 *Inanna and Ebih*, lines 7–9, ETCSL, <https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr132.htm> (accessed 18.11.2021)

¹⁶ JONGEWARD and CRIBB 2015.

dynamics of the main attributes of Nanāia from the Mesopotamian goddess ^dNanaya in the 2nd millennium BC to the Hindu goddess Durgā in the 7th century AD.

2. Nanāia in Mesopotamian Sources

^dNanaya (Nanāia) appears in Mesopotamian sources within different texts in different contexts and also in different periods at least since Ur III. As Joan G. Westenholz rightly remarked:

for ^dNanaya is a latecomer to the assembly of Sumerian gods; she appears from nowhere to become the greatest Mesopotamian goddess of all times – greater than the Sumerian Ninḫursaĝ, the highest lady of the Sumerian pantheon, more enduring than even the Semitic goddess par excellence, Iṣtar, who was worshipped from one end of the Near East to the other. ^dNanaya was a goddess whose name was never lost on the pages of time.¹⁷

Let us trace back some earliest mentions of this goddess.

There are some suggestions that Nanāia could originate from an Elamite word, e.g., the Elamite root *nan(n)* means “day, morning”¹⁸, but there is no direct proof of that¹⁹, although it is possible. We do not have any direct evidence in the early Mesopotamian sources from the Early Dynastic Period (2800–2335 BC) to the Old Akkadian Period (2334–2154 BC) that this goddess indeed existed at that time.

From Ur III, the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia was the goddess of erotic love.²⁰ We know that some offerings to Nanāia were performed during the reign of Šulgi (e.g., in the 33rd or 32nd regnal year); for example, we can find some information about this fact from the texts from Drehem.²¹ In Drehem, Nanāia was mentioned in different years of Šulgi²². Nevertheless, we know that offerings of lambs were performed in “various months, starting in the 44th regnal year of Šulgi (2094–2047) and continuing until the second year of the rule of Ibbi-Sîn (2028–2004)”.²³ There were some other types of offerings, too, e.g., kid offerings (they were mentioned for the first time in the 35th regnal year of Šulgi).²⁴ So, in other words, offerings continued until the end of Ur III.

¹⁷ WESTENHOLZ 1997, 57.

¹⁸ ZADOK 1984, 30.

¹⁹ DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 19.

²⁰ STOL 1998–2001, 147.

²¹ DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 33.

²² e.g., Šulgi’s 26th year – OZAKI and SAUREN 2020; Šulgi’s 35th year – BDTNS, AnOr 07 056, CDLI P101351.

²³ DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 33.

²⁴ MVN XVIII 56 = AnOr 7, 56, PDT 32, 998; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 34.

It is worth noting here that in the cities of Ur and Uruk, during the whole Ur III period, some texts describe that offerings were made for the following goddesses: Inanna, Nanāia, Bēlat-tirraban, Bēlat-suhnir, Ulmašitum and Annunītum, and others.²⁵ According to W.G. Lambert, Ulmašitum and Annunītum are Ištar of Akkad and Ištar of Babylon, respectively.²⁶ Hence, Nanāia was one of the highest deities mentioned together with Inanna and Ištar²⁷, and one of her earliest main attributes was to be a ‘*mother goddess*’ (A1). Nanāia’s name occurs in the Old Babylonian period as ^dna-na-a in Weidner’s God List²⁸, line 12:

[^dbi-zil]-[^lá^l [^d]na-na]-[^a]-a
 [^dka-ni-sur]-ra [^lDUMU^l.MUNUS ^dna-na-a-a] –
 “^dBizilla (is) ^dNanaya
 [^dKanisur]ra (is the) daughter of [^dNanaya]”.²⁹

‘*Love (fertility)*’ (A2) as one of her additional attributes is reconstructed from the analysis of the royal inscriptions since the early second millennium BC, i.e., since the Isin-Larsa period and Old Babylonian period (2000–1595 BC). This reconstruction is based on identifying Nanāia with Inanna. This identification took place at the time of Sîn-iqišam.³⁰ For example, Būr-Sîn, ruler of Isin, begins his inscription by mentioning Nanāia, to whom he dedicated this text as a whole:

1–7) ^dna-na-a nin-a-ni-ir nam-ti ^dbur-^dEN.zu lugal-ki-en-gi-ki-uri ki-ág-^din[anna] ù ^dna-na-a-^ršè^l – “For the goddess Nanāia, her lady, for the life of Būr-Sîn, king of the land Sumer and Akkad, beloved of the goddesses In[anna] and Nanāia.”³¹

It is also important to refer here to an inscription from Ur describing the construction of a temple devoted to the goddess Nanāia. This inscription belongs to Sūmû-El, the ruler of Larsa in the 19th century BC:

1–6) ^dna-na-a-a nin ħi-li-a šu-du, ^dsu-mu-èl nita-kala-ga lugal-uri, KI-ma lugal-ki-en-gi-ki-uri – “For the goddess Nanāia, the lady with perfect voluptuousness, Sūmû-El, mighty man, king of Ur, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad.”³²

²⁵ DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 34; COHEN 1993, 136–140.

²⁶ LAMBERT 1989, 324.

²⁷ STOL 1998–2001, 147; CHARPIN 1994, 37.

²⁸ WEIDNER 1924, 1–18.

²⁹ Weidner’s God List was most probably composed in the Old Babylonian period – see JOHANDI 2019, 15; POMPONIO 1998–2001, 21; VELDHUIS 2003, 628. This mention is as follows (ZAIA 2017; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 9

³⁰ see SIGRIST 1984, 147; DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 5.

³¹ RIME 4, Būr-Sîn E4.1.7.3, lines 1–7.

Innana and Nanāia are mentioned in one inscription of Rīm-Sîn I but separately.³³ Thus, we have another confirmation of the attribute ‘love (fertility)’ (A2).

The name of Nanāia also appeared in the “sacred marriage” of Rīm-Sîn I. This “sacred marriage” joined Rīm-Sîn I and Nanāia.³⁴ In this context, we can reconstruct the following new attribute of Nanāia: to be a ‘royal patron’ (A3) granting forces and powers to kings. Nanāia has been mentioned in many inscriptions of Rīm-Sîn I, such as some inscriptions which are known from one bronze foundation canephore and three stone foundation tablets. They are devoted to the building of the temple of Nanāia by Kudur-mabuk and his son Rīm-Sîn I:

^dna-na-a nin ħi-li še-er-ka-an-di nam-sa₆-ga-ni gal diri dumu-zi-le-an-gal-la nin-a-ne-ne-er - “For the goddess Nanāia, lady adorned with voluptuousness, whose beauty is excessively great, comely daughter of great Anu, their lady.”³⁵

Unfortunately, the beginning of *Hymn to Nanāia* by Sargon II is destroyed, but we can reconstruct an invocation and celebration of Nanāia's military prowess³⁶ and her battle with Sebēttu – the seven evil demons of one mother and one father:

2–6) [na]m-ša-ru pe-tu-ú x[x x x x] [q]ul^l-mu-ú zaq-tu si-mat ^d[se-bet-tu] im-na u šu-me-la su-ud-dur tam-ħa-ru a-šá-rit-ti ilānī(digir)^{mes} šá me-lul-šá qab-lum a-li-kàt maħ-ri šu-ut se-bet at-ħe-e - “The naked sword, [emblem of Nergal], the pointed axe, suited to the [Sebēttu] on (her) right and left battle is arrayed. The foremost of the gods, (she) whose play is battle, who goes ahead of the brotherhood of the Seven.”³⁷

Konstantopoulos accentuates that this reference echoes much earlier attestations of the Sebēttu as a group of brothers who form a context of battle within which Nanāia has been engaged. Hence, a clear connection between Nanāia, Ištar, and evil demons (Sebēttu) is visible here to trace the ‘woman warrior’ (A4) as a new attribute of Nanāia.³⁸ As we know from the Akkadian literary text entitled *Descent of Ištar to the Netherworld*³⁹, the goddess Ištar decides to visit the netherworld, but Ištar's sister, the goddess Ereškigal (the lady and queen of the netherworld), is jealous and she orders her gatekeepers (demons) to remove all of Ištar's

³² RIME 4, Sūmû-El E4.2.7.2, lines 1–6.

³³ RIME 4, Rīm-Sîn I E4.2.14.3.

³⁴ YOS 11 24 = YBC 4643; SIGRIST and WESTENHOLZ 2008, 667–704.

³⁵ RIME 4, Rīm-Sîn I E4.2.14.3, lines 1–5.

³⁶ KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201.

³⁷ KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201; SAA 3, nr. 4, 13.

³⁸ KONSTANTOPOULOS 2015, 201.

³⁹ FOSTER 1996, 402–409.

clothing as she enters the netherworld, whereupon Ereškigal sets disease demons upon her, and Ištar dies.⁴⁰

In Akkadian, the name of Nanāia was written syllabically in the following way: *Na-na-a(a)*.⁴¹ At the time of the early II millennium BC, Nanāia became very popular and was often mentioned in different texts, including some royal inscriptions of Mesopotamian rulers and hymns. For example, the king of Uruk Sîn-kāšid (the 18th century BC) organized the building of a temple devoted to the goddess Nanāia, where an inscription was found on a cone excavated at Uruk

1–9) ^d*na-na-a nin-hi-li-sù nin-a-ni-ir* ^dEN.zu-kà-šì-id *nita-kala-ga lugal-unu.Ki-ga ib é-[šà]-hú1-1a-ka-na mu-na-dù* – “For the goddess Nanāia, lady adorned with charm, his lady Sîn-kāšid, mighty man, king of Uruk, built for her an oval in her E[sa]hula [‘House of rejoicing’].”⁴²

Besides the royal inscriptions and other texts, Nanāia also often played an important role in cultic texts (hymns). For instance, there is the *Hymn to Nanāia*⁴³ which ends in a conclusion consisting of a blessing for the king. It is important to note that the structure, vocabulary and content are quite similar to the *Hymn to Ištar*. Thus, in this hymn we see the four attributes of Nanāia simultaneously: ‘mother goddess’ (A1), ‘love (fertility)’ (A2), ‘royal patron’ (A3), and ‘woman warrior’ (A4). These attributes occur in different Old Babylonian texts⁴⁴:

A1 (‘mother goddess’): Nanāia is the daughter of An (VS 10, 215: 17f.; UET 6/2, 404: 5); she is the most powerful goddess among the Igigi (VS 10 215); the mistress of the world (VS 10, 215: 23); the mighty in the world (UET 6/3 889 ii 14);

A1-1 (‘Sun and/or Moon’): Nanāia is luminous; she is the sun of the people (VS 10, 215: 1); like the moon to behold (VS 10, 215: 3); endowed with brilliance (VS 10, 215: 4); people look upon her light (VS 10, 215: 24; UET 6/2, 404: 1f);

A2 (‘love/fertility’): Nanāia is full of songs of love (VS 10, 215: 5–8; VS 10, 215: 16);

A2-1 (‘giving life / curing of epidemics’): Nanāia brings well-being and life (VS 10, 215: 11);

⁴⁰ FOSTER 1996, 402.

⁴¹ POTTS 2001, 24; RAINER 1974, 222, n. 8.

⁴² RIME 4, Sîn-kāšid E4.4.1.10, lines 1–9.

⁴³ FOSTER 1996, 72.

⁴⁴ STRECK 2012.

A2-2 (*‘helping in childbirth’*): Nanāia helps in childbirth (UET 6/3, 889 ii 3–10);

A3 (*‘royal patron’*): the stubborn king is seized by her (UET 6/2, 404: 8f); she is just (VS 10, 215: 9) and wise (VS 10, 215: 25); Samsuiluna (ca 1750-1712 BC), the king of Amorite dynasty of Babylon⁴⁵, presents her offerings (VS 10, 215: 33–36), he rejoices over her (VS 10, 215: 42), he is granted life and kingship by her (VS 10, 215: 37–40, 49–52), the king is named by the goddess (VS 10, 215: 46–48, 55), through her, he is made the champion of the world (VS 10, 215: 53f);

A4 (*‘woman warrior’*): Nanāia is a raging and furious goddess (VS 10, 215: 26; UET 6/2, 404: 3; UET 6/3, 889 ii 11f); she tramples the field of the people (UET 6/2, 404: 6).

Potts already tried to clarify the identification of Nanāia (Nanā) and the role of her place in the ancient Mesopotamian pantheon.⁴⁶ He accentuated that Inanna (Ištar) must be distinguished from Nanāia⁴⁷, and just the latter goddess became Nanāia (Nanā) in Soghd and Bactria without the attribute *‘love (fertility)’* (A2), see.⁴⁸ But, in contrast, this attribute (A2) of Nanāia became very important in Soghd and Bactria.

It is notable that Nanāia was also mentioned in the Neo-Assyrian list from Sultantepe (STT, 376–386), and that the name of Nanāia appears after the Dumuzi-Innana deity group.⁴⁹ There is also other evidence, but we mention only some to show the link between Nanāia and the Dumuzi-Ištar-(Innana) group. Hence, in the Neo-Assyrian (see also about warlike Ištar⁵⁰; Nanaya Hymn to Sargon II^{51,52}) and Neo-Babylonian periods we see the same attributes of Nanāia: *‘mother goddess’* (A1), *‘love (fertility)’* (A2), *‘royal patron’* (A3), and *‘woman warrior’* (A4).

3. Nanāia in Central and South Asia

The goddess Nanāia became extremely popular in Bactria and Gandhāra (today’s Afghanistan and Pakistan) from the 2nd century BC under the same name *my* (Sogdian), *Νᾰνᾰῖα* (Greco-Bactrian), and *Νᾰνᾰ* (Bactrian). Let us show that she also preserved her main attributes: *‘mother goddess’* (A1), *‘love (fertility)’* (A2), *‘royal patron’* (A3), and *‘woman warrior’* (A4). First, her images appeared within the classical Hellenistic iconography of Cybele (containing her main attribute – to be accompanied by a lion) in the Hellenistic Temple with

⁴⁵ First Babylonian Dynasty.

⁴⁶ POTTS 2001.

⁴⁷ POTTS 2001, 23; HOFFMAN 1880, 133; STRECK 1916, 757, EDZARD 1965, 108.

⁴⁸ POTTS 2001, 24.

⁴⁹ DREWNOWSKA-RYMARZ 2008, 24.

⁵⁰ STOL 1998–2001, 148.

⁵¹ SAA 3, nr. 4, 13–16.

⁵² Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II ruled 722–705 BC.

Indented Niches at Ai-Khanoum (Afghanistan) and in the semi-Hellenistic and semi-Mazdean Oxus Temple at Takht-i Sangin (Tajikistan), then on the coins of the Kuṣāṇa rulers with the same main attribute – to be accompanied by a lion – but her name *Ναναία* (Nanāia) was also mentioned explicitly in Greek legends, which connects Cybela to Nanāia. At that time, she was the main royal patron of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty – she was depicted on the coins as holding the royal diadem as a sign of Kuṣāṇa power. So, the ‘royal patron’ (A3) was her main attribute there. These Kuṣāṇa rulers used Bactrian (one of the Eastern Iranian languages) as one of the official languages (most probably, together with Gāndhārī) and reigned over the territory of modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and North India at least up to Varanasi at the height of their power. This dynasty existed from the early 1st century AD to the late 4th century AD. Initially, they used Greek as their official language, but the situation changed after the reform of the Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniška (Bactrian: *Κανησκι*), presumably in 127 AD, the main aim of which was changing the official language of the Kuṣāṇa Empire from Greek to Bactrian (called "Aryan"). The text of this reform is known as the Rabatak inscription⁵³, and after the reform all the legends on the Kuṣāṇa coins were written only in Bactrian, and the goddess was called *Νανα* (Nanā). So, after 127 AD, the spelling of the name of the goddess changed in Bactria and Gandhāra (it became Nanā) but remained the same in Soghd: *nny* (Nanāia).

In the Rabatak inscription, we see an identification of Nanā with Umā (Hārīti), the Buddhist goddess: “the lady Nanā and the lady Umā” (*ια αμσα Νανα οδο ια αμσα Ομμυα*). Since the 2nd century AD, Umā (Hārīti) had the following attributes in Buddhism:

- (i) ‘mother goddess’ (A1) as the mother of the *yakṣas* (e.g., the *Āryadānapāramitānāmamahāyānasūtra*, Degé Kangyur, vol. 61, fol.79.a; the *Mahāsāhasrapramardanināmasūtra*, Degé Kangyur, vol. 96, fol. 253.a – 254.a);
- (ii) ‘love (fertility)’ (A2) as the wife of Maheśvara and mother of children, then protecting families (e.g., the *Āryakāraṇḍavyūhanāmamahāyānasūtra* 2.96, Degé Kangyur vol. 51, folio 242.a–242.b; the *Āryatārākurukullākālpa* 5.3, Degé Kangyur vol. 81, folio 39b);
- (iii) ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1) and ‘helping in childbirth’ (A2-2) as the subject of different *dhāraṇīs* for protecting against demons (e.g., the *Hārītīsūtra*, 佛說鬼子母經, T. 1262; the *Samyuktaratnapīṭakasūtra*, 雜寶藏經, T. 203);
- (iv) Umā (Hārīti) was considered a wife of Maheśvara (e.g., the *Āryatārākurukullākālpa* 5.3, Degé Kangyur, vol. 81, fol.39b) who was named *Orḥo* in Bactrian and *wyšprkr* in Sogdian; he is the Buddhist-Zoroastrian deity of wind and exaltation.⁵⁴

In Hinduism (e.g., the *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Devīmāhātmyam*), Umā (Durgā) became a wife of Śiva, and she has the same attributes even at present: from (i) to (iv).

⁵³ MUKHERJEE 1995; SIMS-WILLIAMS 1998, 2008.

⁵⁴ SHENKAR 2014, 82.

According to the *Āryatārākurukullākālpa* and some other Mahāyāna texts, Hārītī was a child-eating demoness, but the Buddha made her a protectress of children, women, the *saṃgha*, and all beings. Archeologically, there were the following two main groups of attributes of Hārītī, detected in her statues: (i') the enthroned mother nimbate holding a lotus flower and cornucopia (e.g., Peshawar Museum PM_02338) – ‘mother goddess’ (A1); (ii') the enthroned mother with small children (e.g., British Museum 1886,0611.1) – ‘love (fertility)’ (A2), ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1), ‘helping in childbirth’ (A2-2). Let us note that these attributes (i') and (ii'), reconstructed archeologically, are consonant with the attributes from (i) to (iv) reconstructed textologically. This means that the Mahāyāna texts mentioning Umā (Hārītī) are well confirmed by archaeological evidence. Furthermore, both manifestations (i') and (ii') of Hārītī have been excavated in almost all Buddhist sites of Gandhāra dated to the Kuṣāṇa period (i.e., from the late 1st century A.D. to the late 4th century A.D.). Her statues were placed at the entrances to Buddhist monasteries.⁵⁵ The Hellenistic-style images of mothers (*mātṛkās*) became very popular in India from the Kuṣāṇa time.⁵⁶

We know from the early Mahāyāna texts that Hārītī protects children against epidemics (A2-1) and helps in childbirth (A2-2). In the early Chinese translations of Mahāyāna texts about Hārītī from Gāndhārī or Sanskrit, her name was “mother of demons” (*Guizimu* 鬼子母). She appears in the *Hārītīsūtra* (*Fo shuo Guizimu jing*, 佛說鬼子母經, T. 1262), translated during the Western Jin dynasty (265–316 AD), and in the *Samyuktaratnapitakasūtra* (*Zabaozang jing*, 雜寶藏經, T. 203), the section *Avadāna Story of How Hārītī Lost Her Child* (*Guizimu shizi yuan*, 鬼子母失子緣), translated in 472 AD during the Northern Wei dynasty.

We can add that the attributes of Hārītī/Nanāia such as ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1) were preserved in the folklore of different Caucasian peoples, e.g., in Georgian folklore in ritual songs against Batonebi (children’s infectious diseases such as measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, etc.). Nana (Georgian: ნანა) was regarded as the Great Mother of Georgians and their children (BARDAVELIDZE 1957, 81), and reciting her name protects against any illness. The rituals are performed during child sickness and include singing special songs and walking around the sick person carrying gifts and offering apologies (BARDAVELIDZE, 1957, 85).

The same attributes of Nanāia ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘giving life / curing of epidemics’ (A2-1) occur in Armenian mythology where Nane (Armenian: Նանն) is associated with Anahit (Armenian: Անահիտ), the goddess of fertility and healing. It is worth noting that Nanāia is associated with the Mazdean goddess Anāhitā by the Kūšānšāhs, too.

As we see, Nanāia with the same name was popular among different peoples in different territories controlled in former times by different Iranian tribes from the Persians to the Indo-Scythians and the Kuṣāṇas. We can assume that the name *nanā* started to mean

⁵⁵ BIVAR 1970, 19.

⁵⁶ JOSHI 1986.

“mother” in Sanskrit and later in Farsi (the word *ننه* in Farsi has the additional meaning of being an old lady) only after the Kuṣāṇas. It is worth noting that the meaning of *nanā* being a mother is missing in the Vedic or Avestan languages, but it corresponds to the main connotation of the name Nanāia/Nanā as divine mother. Hence, the Sanskrit *nanā* is a loanword from the Bactrian *Navā* (Nanā), and the latter, in turn, is a loanword from the Akkadian ^DNA.NA.A (Nanāia).

Hence, the dynamics of identification of Nanāia/Nanā and her attributes since the earliest mentions in Ur III allow us to understand which of her attributes were finally accepted in Central and South Asia and could have been continued as some attributes of Durgā as the Hindu goddess, such as ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘woman warrior’ (A4). Let us trace back these dynamics in more detail. The point is that all these goddesses bear the same name Nanāia/Nanā and possess the same or similar attributes.

The earliest archaeological evidence of Nanāia in Central and South Asia has been found in Bactria dated to the 2nd century BC, and then in Sogdiana dated to the 2nd century AD. Her main attribute of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1) can be identified as paradigmatically subordinated to the attribute ‘woman warrior’ (A4), and it may be treated as a diffusion of the cult of Cybele in the Hellenistic states of India (SHENKAR 2014, 118). It is worth noting that ‘sitting on a tiger’ (A4-1-1) meaning a ‘woman warrior’ (A4) is the main attribute in the iconography of Durgā now. This attribute denoted by A4-1-1 is paradigmatically subordinated to ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1). Some earliest pieces of evidence of Nanāia have been collected into Table 1.

Table 1

Description	Site	Date	Identification	Attributes	Museum ID or other reference
Silver plate depicting the goddess standing in a chariot drawn by lions	Temple with Indented Niches at Ai Khanum	2 nd -1 st century BC	Cybele associated to Nanāia	Lion as a sign of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1), chariot as a sign of ‘woman warrior’ (A4)	(FRANCFORT 1984; CARTER 2005, 15; CARTER 2008, 116, no. 76).
Silver plate depicting the goddess standing in a chariot drawn by lions	Oxus Temple at Takht-i Sangin	2 nd -1 st century BC	Cybele associated to Nanāia	Lion as a sign of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1), chariot as a sign of ‘woman warrior’ (A4)	(FRANCFORT 1984; CARTER 2005, 15; CARTER 2008, 116, no. 76).
Seal showing the goddess facing right and holding a bowl and a sceptre ending with a lion’s protome. She wears a diadem topped with a crescent. The seal carries a Sogdian inscription <i>mnyh-βntk</i> ‘wxsrō, “Nanai-vandak (the	India	2 nd century AD	Nanāia	Lion as a sign of ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1), diadem topped with a crescent as a sign of ‘crescent moon’ (A1-1)	(CALLIERI 1997, U 7.21); British Museum 1892,1103.186

son of) Aw-xsarth” or “Aw-xsarth (the son of) Nanai-vandak”.					
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The attribute ‘*sitting on a lion*’ (A4-1) was borrowed from western goddesses such as Cybele/Rhea or Ištar due to the spread of Hellenism in India, while her name and iconography were initially Mesopotamian (AZARAPAY 1981, 132–139). This attribute occurs differently in the Kuṣāṇa period: a lion on which the goddess sits, a lion without the goddess, a sceptre ending with a lion’s protome held by the goddess in her hand. Let us remind that the Mesopotamian Inanna/Ištar was also often represented by a lion in her iconography, and even compared with a lion:

¹⁻⁶ Goddess of the fearsome divine powers, clad in terror, riding on the great divine powers, Inanna, made complete by the strength of the holy *ankar* weapon, drenched in blood, rushing around in great battles, with shield resting on the ground (?), covered in storm and flood, great lady Inanna, knowing well how to plan conflicts, you destroy mighty lands with arrow and strength and overpower lands.

⁷⁻⁹ In heaven and on earth you *roar like a lion* and devastate the people. Like a huge wild bull you triumph over lands which are hostile. Like a fearsome lion you pacify the insubordinate and unsubmitive with your gall.⁵⁷

In the late period of Mesopotamian history, namely in the Neo-Babylonian period, it is well-known iconography of Ištar Gate (built in 575 BC by King Nebuchadnezzar II⁵⁸ of Babylon) where lions are also depicted.⁵⁹ Of course, many other examples of Ištar’s (Inanna’s) connection to lions can also be mentioned.

Nanāia as the ‘*mother goddess*’ (A1) was first very popular in Bactria and Gandhāra (from the 2nd century B.C. to the 8th century AD) and later in Sogdiana and Khorosmia (from the 2nd century AD to the 9th century AD).⁶⁰ Her attribute ‘*sitting on a lion*’ (A4-1) occurs in different forms. So, in the mural from Jartepa II Temple (Sogdiana) dated to the 4th or early 5th century AD, she is depicted as sitting on a throne with legs shaped like lion protomes.⁶¹ On Kuṣāṇa coins, she is depicted as a lion or a woman holding a lion protome, see Table 2. On these coins, her name is spelled as *Ναναια* (Nanāia), *Νανα* (Nanā), or *Ναναβαο* (Nanā-šah, “Nanā, the ruler”).

⁵⁷ ETCSL translation: t.1.3.2 *Inanna and Ebih*, lines 7–9, ETCSL, <https://etcsloxford.ac.uk/section1/tr132.htm> (accessed 18.11.2021).




⁵⁸ Ruled 605–562 BC.

⁵⁹ WATANABE 2015.

⁶⁰ TANABE 1995; DE JONG 1997, 268–284; POTTS 2001.

⁶¹ BERDIMURADOV and SAMIBAIEV 2001, 59.

Table 2.

Image	Description	Date	Identification	Attributes
 <p>15.0 mm; 1.3 g.</p>	<p>Indo-Scythian silver hemidrachm. <i>Obverse:</i> the helmeted bust of king at right, the Greek legend at left $\text{C}\alpha\pi\alpha\delta\beta\iota\zeta\eta\varsigma$. <i>Reverse:</i> the lion standing at right, tamgha above, the same Greek legend at left and at right $\text{N}\alpha\nu\alpha\iota\alpha$.</p>	<p>Late 1st century BC.</p>	<p>Nanāia</p>	<p>'Crescent moon' (A1-1), lion as a sign of 'sitting on a lion' (A4-1).</p>
 <p>11 mm; 2.04 g.</p>	<p>Huviška (Bactrian: $\text{O}\sigma\eta\beta\kappa\iota$), gold quarter drachm. <i>Obverse:</i> the half-length profile bust of king at left, above the clouds, holding a mace and <i>arikuśa</i> (elephant goad), the Bactrian legend around: $\text{P}\alpha\omicron\nu\alpha\nu\omicron\beta\alpha\omicron\ \text{O}\sigma\eta\beta\kappa\iota\ \text{K}\omicron\beta\alpha\nu\omicron$ ("King of Kings Huviška Kušāṇa"). <i>Reverse:</i> the goddess standing at right, nimbate, holding a protome of lion, a tiny crescent above, Greek legend at left: $\text{N}\alpha\nu\alpha$, a tamgha at right.</p>	<p>ca. 150–190 AD.</p>	<p>Nanāia</p>	<p>Lion protome as a sign of 'sitting on a lion' (A4-1).</p>
 <p>17 mm; 3.08 g.</p>	<p>Ardašīr I Kūšānšāh copper drachm. <i>Obverse:</i> the bust of the crowned, diademed king. <i>Reverse:</i> the goddess enthroned, facing, holding a sceptre and a diadem.</p>	<p>Before ca. 230–245 CE.</p>	<p>Nanāia/ Anāhitā</p>	<p>Enthroned as a sign of 'mother goddess' (A1) holding the royal diadem as a sign of 'royal patron' (A3).</p>

Sometimes Nanāia appears on the coins of the Kūšānšāhs too. The Kūšānšāhs are a branch of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, who become satraps of the Sasanian rulers. So, on the coins of Pērōz I (Bactrian: Πιρωσο κοβανο βασης), dated from ca. 245–275 AD, we can see Nanāia having a nimbus and a crescent on the top of her head, appearing in the form of a female bust surmounted on an altar. On both sides of the bust, there is the Bactrian inscription Bayo Nāvo “the goddess Nanā”. Her attribute here is presented by a ‘crescent moon’ (A1-1) on the top of her head.⁶² This attribute is paradigmatically subordinated to the attribute ‘mother goddess’ (A1). This image of a bust on an altar was borrowed on a Bukharan coin.⁶³

Nanāia was a patron goddess of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty (see Table 2) and later of the Kūšānšāhs. As we see, her attribute ‘royal patron’ (A3) was very significant at that time. The same attribute has been reconstructed in Sogdiana as well. So, in Panjikent city of Sogdiana, Nanāia was a patron goddess; she is also represented as the most significant deity in several private houses (III/7; VI/26; VI/41; XXI/2; XXIII/50; XXV/12).⁶⁴ Her image appears not only on the coins of the Kuṣāṇas and the Kūšānšāhs but also on the coins of Sogdiana – on the coins minted during the reign of Dhēwāshtīch (died in 722 AD) with the Sogdian legend *pncy mn(δ)-βηpn-wH* “Nanāia, the Lady of Panč”.⁶⁵

Worshipping Nanāia as the ‘mother goddess’ (A1) among the Iranian speaking peoples at least from the 2nd century BC is mentioned in the following two sources: (i) the Sasanian king Šāpūr II (reigned from 309 to 379 AD) ordered his general converted to Christianity to worship the Sun, the Moon, Fire, Zeus, Bel, Nebo and *Nanai* – “the great goddess of the world”⁶⁶; (ii) in the Syriac version of *The Alexander Romance*, we find a mention of a temple in Samarkand dedicated to “the goddess Rhea whom they call *Nani*”.⁶⁷ This reference is of particular interest, because it identifies Cybele/Rhea with Nanāia.

Hence, the Mesopotamian attributes of Nanāia (^dNanaya), ‘mother goddess’ (A1) and ‘royal patron’ (A3), were continued in Central and South Asia. An additional attribute was represented by ‘woman warrior’ (A4) with the subattribute ‘sitting on a lion’ (A4-1).

‘Love (fertility)’ (A2) as the Mesopotamian attribute of Nanāia (^dNanaya) was well expressed by her subattribute ‘marriage (children)’ (A2-1) in Central and South Asia. So, according to the Rabatak inscription⁶⁸, Nanāia can be associated with her manifestation Ομμα/Ομμο (Umā), the wife of the bodhisattva Maheśvara:

⁶² CRIBB 1990, no. 31.

⁶³ NAYMARK 1995, 43, 3.

⁶⁴ SHENKAR 2017, 198.

⁶⁵ LURJE 2004.

⁶⁶ SHAKED 1994, 91.

⁶⁷ GRENET 1995/1996, 2015–2016.

⁶⁸ MUKHERJEE 1995; SIMS-WILLIAMS 1998, 2008.

Ιυνδο αβο ι σινδο ωσταδο. ταδι βαι Κανηρικε αβο βαφαρο καταλαραγο φρομαδο αβεινα [...]ο βαγολααγο κιδι σιδι β {²vac.}² αβο ριζδι αβο μα κα {²vac.}² ραγα φαρειμοανο βαγανο κιδι μαρο κιδδανε ι μα ο[φ]αρρο Ομμα οσηλδι ια αμσα Νανα οδο ια αμσα Ομμα – “King Kaniška gave orders to šafar the Karalrang *at this ... to make the sanctuary which is called B ... ab, in the *plain of Ka ..., for these gods, (of) whom of Pharro, Umā leads the *service here, (namely:) the *lady Nanā and the lady Umā (translated by Nicholas Sims-Williams and Joe Cribb, but instead of “glorious” the word [φ]αρρο is read as the god Φαρρο).”⁶⁹

On some coins of Huviška (Bactrian: Οσηρικι), the son of Kaniška, we can see the couple of Ομμο/Οηβο (Umā/Oešo) as well as some inscriptions Οηβο/Ναν identifying Ομμο with Νανα.⁷⁰ This Oešo is the most important royal patron of the Kuṣāṇas together with Nanāia. He is very often depicted on their coins with the following main attributes of the Buddhist deity Maheśvara: bull, two- or four- or six-armed, single- or three-headed, trident-axe or simple trident, thunderbolt, water pot, lion skin, lotus flower, antelope, elephant goad, wheel, club, nimbus (sometimes flaming), diadem as the Kuṣāṇa royal crown.⁷¹ On the coins of the Kūšānšāhs, we quite often find a female bust surmounted on an altar. She is identified as Nanāia (or Anāhitā). And we also find a bearded male bust surmounted on an altar but very often without inscriptions.⁷² In the paintings of Panjikent in Sogdiana, Oešo (Οηβο) is represented under the Sogdian name *wyšprkr* (Wēšparkar). The latter name is treated as deriving from the following Avestan epithet of Vayu: *vaiiuš uparō.kairiō*, “Vayu, whose activity lies in the upper region.” Therefore, the Bactrian name Οηβο may represent *wēš*, delivered from the Avestan *vaiiuš*.⁷³

For the Kuṣāṇas, the wind god Wēšparkar/Oešo was considered an emblem of royal glory⁷⁴ to the same extent as Nanāia. No doubt, Wēšparkar/Oešo is associated with Maheśvara (treated as bodhisattva from Mahāyāna sūtras).

In Panjiken XXV/12, the figure of Nanāia is accompanied by an armed male identified as Tištrya who is depicted with a dragon crown and seated to the right of Nanāia.⁷⁵ She is also depicted with two warlike female personages (Temple II at Panjikent) or with two small archer figures (Sogdian palace of Kujruk-tobe).⁷⁶ All of these are to emphasize her two attributes – ‘woman warrior’ (A4) and ‘marriage (children)’ (A2-1) – simultaneously. In these paintings, we see a new attribute – ‘four or many arms’ (A4-2) – as paradigmatically

⁶⁹ MUKHERJEE 1995; SIMS-WILLIAMS 1998, 2008.

⁷⁰ ROSENFELD 1967, 94, c.166; CRIBB 1997, 35, pl. G8.

⁷¹ SHENKAR 2014, 154.

⁷² CRIBB 1990, no. 24–29.

⁷³ HUMBACH 1975.

⁷⁴ LO MUZIO 1995, 169.

⁷⁵ GRENET and MARSHAK 1998, 15.

⁷⁶ see SHENKAR 2014, 125 and Table 3.

subordinated to ‘*woman warrior*’ (A4). This attribute first appears in some rare images at the time of the Kuṣāṇas, such as their gold coins. The canonical image of Nanāia with four arms sitting on the lion is recognized in Khoresmia, too – among the Khoresmian bowls.⁷⁷

Table 3.

Name in Sogdian	Identification	Function	Attributes
Tyš	Tištrya	The rain or war god	wearing a dragon-like crown and holding a long object, most likely an arrow, in his hands
Nny	Nanāia	The war goddess	‘ <i>Four or many arms</i> ’ (A4-2) which are supporting the symbols of the sun and the moon above her shoulders – ‘ <i>Sun and/or Moon</i> ’ (A1-1), sometimes ‘ <i>sitting on a lion</i> ’ (A4-1).

Hence, for the Kuṣāṇas and Kūšānšāhs, Nanāia possesses the following attributes and subattributes: ‘*mother goddess*’ (A1), ‘*crescent moon*’ (A1-1), ‘*love (fertility)*’ (A2), ‘*marriage (children)*’ (A2-1), ‘*royal patron*’ (A3), ‘*woman warrior*’ (A4), ‘*sitting on a lion*’ (A4-1), ‘*four or many arms*’ (A4-2). Meanwhile, according to its iconography, the divine couple of Nanāia and Wēšparkar/Oešo, in paintings of Penjikent (the temple II) dated to the 7th century, can be treated as the Umāmaheśvaramūrti, i.e., a representation of Maheśvara along with his wife Umā, seated on a bull.⁷⁸ In Kyzyl, on the right-side wall of Gorge Cave⁷⁹, we can observe the Umāmaheśvara where Maheśvara is also:

black-skinned and wears a tiger-skin tied on the left shoulder, a scarf, leggings, a long garland, large circular earrings, a necklace and bracelets; he is ithyphallic (with penis concealed by the dress) and three-faced: central face dark, slightly bent towards the goddess; side faces fair skinned; above them animal heads. He has six arms.⁸⁰

So, we have a smooth transformation of Nanāia of the Kuṣāṇas into an image of Umā (Durgā) which became canonical for Hinduism as well as a smooth transformation of Oešo of the Kuṣāṇas into an image of Śiva which became canonical for Hinduism, too.

⁷⁷ AZARAPAY 1979; MARSHAK 1986, figs. 170–172.

⁷⁸ LO MUZIO 2002, fig. 2.

⁷⁹ LO MUZIO 2002, fig. 5.

⁸⁰ LO MUZIO 2002, 58.

Conclusion

To sum up, in Bactria, Gandhāra, Sogdiana, Khoresmia, and Northern India, we observe a smooth transformation of the main attributes of the mother goddess starting from the Hellenistic goddess Cybele/Rhea (associated with the Mesopotamian Nanāia/Nanaya) and finishing in the final stages fixed on the paintings of Sogdiana, where we see the early Hindu images of Nanāia presented as Durgā as well as the early Hindu images of Wēšparkar/Oešo and Nanāia/Ομμο presented as the divine couple of Umāmaheśvara. Meanwhile, their cult was a part of Gandhāran Buddhism at that time. In other words, we have the following strong sequence: (1) the earliest realistic images of mother goddess in Northern India since the 2nd century BC which belong to Cybele/Rhea → (2) the earliest occurrences of Cybele/Rhea's attributes with the inscription Ναναία (Nanāia) since the 1st century AD → (3) the new attribute 'four or many arms' (A4-2) of Nanāia since the 2nd century AD → (4) the smooth iconographic transformation of Nanāia into Umā (Durgā), first of all, in Bactria and Sogdiana. Thus, Durgā as a 'woman warrior' (A4), 'sitting on a tiger' (A4-1-1) with 'four or many arms' (A4-2) is well traced back to the Mesopotamian goddess Nanāia with the attributes of 'woman warrior' (A4) and 'sitting on a lion' (A4-1), although the Mesopotamian goddess did not have four arms, and the motive of four arms is not common in Ancient Near East.

So, we applied the world-systems analysis and structuralist methodology to show that some religious practices, such as the worship of Nanāia, developed along with the development of the world system as such through its diffusion. As a result of this expansion, Nanāia obtained some new attributes in addition to the old ones.

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Trial by Water through the Ages¹Joanna TÖYRÄÄNVUORI²

Abstract. *The concept of trial by water or water ordeal is best known to the wider public through European witch trials from the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, but the practice is first attested in near eastern texts from the Middle Bronze Age (2200–1550 BCE). The depiction of the medieval trials is largely folkloric, such trials were nonetheless known throughout the ancient world. The best evidence for ordeal by river is found in the letters from the clay tablet archives of Mari on the Upper Euphrates. A central site for divine arbitration among the Amorite kingdoms, the practice seems to have dwindled after the destruction of Mari and its cultic sites in 1759 BCE. Reviewing the ancient evidence for trial by water, this article demonstrates how the trials were used for a particular purpose: to verify the truth statements of compromised witnesses in legal cases that for lack of credible witnesses could only be solved by divine arbitration. The ancient background of the concept will help us better understand why the practice was later connected with witches in the European context.*

Rezumat. *Noțiunea de proba apei sau supliciu prin apă este cel mai bine adusă în evidență publicului larg grație proceselor vrăjitoarelor în Europa de la sfârșitul Evului Mediu și începutul Erei Moderne, deși această practică este atestată pentru prima dată în textele din Orientul Apropiat și datate din Epoca Mijlocie a Bronzului (2200–1550 BCE). Descrierea proceselor medievale este în mare măsură de natură folclorică, cu toate că ele erau cunoscute peste tot în lumea antică. Cea mai pertinentă mărturie a probei apei se găsește în scrisorile din arhivele de tăblițe din argilă din Mari, pe cursul superior al Eufratului. Sit central pentru intervenția divină în rândul regatelor amorite, această practică pare să fi căpătat o amploare redusă după distrugerea orașului-stat Mari și a siturilor sale de cult în 1759 î.Hr. Studiind mărturiile antice ale probei apei, articolul de față își propune să demonstreze modul în care aceste probe serveau un scop precis: verificarea depunerilor de jurământ ale martorilor compromiși în cazuri legale care, din cauza lipsei martorilor credibili, nu puteau fi rezolvate decât prin arbitraj divin. Fundalul antic al conceptului ne va ajuta să înțelegem de ce această practică a fost mai târziu asociată cu vrăjitoarele în contextul european.*

Keywords: *Trial by water, water ordeal, ancient arbitration, divine judgement, Mari letters, Mari kingdom, witch trials, Euphrates.*

Introduction

This article discusses the concept of trial by water or water ordeal, best known in the ancient world from texts from the Middle Bronze Age (2200–1550 BCE) but known to the wider public through European witch trials from the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. While the depiction of these medieval trials is largely folkloric, often greatly exaggerated and in many cases not based on verifiable evidence, such trials were known throughout the ancient world. Evidence of the concept of ordeal by river is found in several letters from the archives

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of the city of Mari on the Upper Euphrates, and these letters may help us better understand the function of such ordeals. How widely trial by water was practised in the ancient Near East is up for speculation. The practice seems to have dwindled after the destruction of Mari and its cultic sites in 1759 BCE, and it certainly changed in both focus and form during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, although it is difficult to know whether the gradual abandoning of the practice was caused by the downfall of the Mari kingdom. This article demonstrates how trials by water in the ancient world were not gendered, as it is often assumed, and were used for a particular purpose: to verify the truth statements of compromised witnesses in legal cases that could only be solved by divine arbitration. The ancient background of the concept will help us better understand why the practice was later connected with witches in the European context.

According to Tikva Frymer-Kensky, whose work on the Mesopotamian ordeal remains unsurpassed, the ordeal by river was the most important suprarational form of trial in the ancient Near East.³ Considered a form of divine arbitration, the Mesopotamian ordeal is believed to have functioned as a last-resort judgement, whereby legal cases that could not otherwise be decided were presented to the river, and, in some ways, it is an alternative form to arbitration by the divine weapon. Arbitration by the ordeal and arbitration by the divine weapon both seem to be rooted in the ancient Near Eastern myth of divine combat, and they are definitely tied into the judicial authority belonging to the king's duties.⁴

While the discovery of the Mari letters has greatly increased our knowledge of the practice, one could argue that in some ways it is even less understood now than it was prior to their discovery, when more was believed than strictly known. Before the Mari letters pertaining to the ordeal (ten in number) were discovered and published by J.-M. Durand in 1988 (ARM 26 I/1), the river ordeal was known mostly through Old Babylonian and Middle Assyrian laws, discussed for example by Jean Bottero in *L'Ordalie en Mesopotamie ancienne* (1981) and Frymer-Kensky in her 1977 PhD dissertation *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, in two volumes.⁵ The ancient Near Eastern river ordeal is most familiar from the Amorite law-code Codex Hammurapi (§ 2, 132). The laws of the Hammurapi code are contemporary with the Mari letters.⁶ It is further featured in several Babylonian and Assyrian laws (e.g., MAL §§ 17, 24, 25).

³ FRYMER-KENSKY 1981, 115.

⁴ The king's social prerogatives of rights and duties are discussed by Bourdieu 1982. On the use of divine weapons in arbitration, see TÖYRÄÄNVUORI 2012.

⁵ There is also another PhD thesis on the topic, A. Lieberman's *Studies in the Trial by River Ordeal in the Ancient Near East in the Second Millennium B.C.E.* (Brandeis: 1969), but this has not been available for my perusal.

⁶ The second law of the Hammurapi code is the only text to suggest double ordeal, in which both the accused and the accuser were meant to undergo the trial.

§ 2: *šumma awilum kišpi eli awilim iddima lā uktinšu ša elišu kišpu nadû ana d'ID illak d'ID išalliamma šumma d'ID iktašassu mubbiršu É-sú itabbal šumma awilam šuati d'ID utebbibaššuma išalmam ša elišu kišpi iddû iddak ša d'ID išliam É mubbiršu itabbal* / If a man has cast sorceries upon another man and he has not offered evidence (for it) he, upon whom the sorceries have been cast shall go to the river; he shall plunge into the river; if the river overpowers him, his accuser shall take

Kyle McCarter posited that the *primary function* of the divine river in Mesopotamian sources was to serve as a judge in certain legal cases.⁷ In addition to the laws mentioned previously, there exists a Sumerian law from Ur (U.7739 ii 3–12), which also dates to the Old Babylonian period.⁸ It must be stressed that older Sumerian legal codices, such as the Laws of Eshnunna, make no reference to the practice; its earliest mentions in legal contexts are thus dated to the Old Babylonian period.⁹ The laws pertaining to trial by river are prescriptive: they make mention of an offense and then prescribe the ordeal as a solution to correcting the offence. For two different reasons, they do not offer a lot of information on the workings and specifics of the ordeal. During the Old Babylonian period, trial by river was still very much a living practice, so it was likely assumed that judicial authorities, the people in charge of implementing the laws, knew exactly what was meant by the term used in the letters.

By the Middle Assyrian period, the vagueness of the language and some actual grammatical problems¹⁰ used to refer to the ordeal betray the fact that it was probably no longer practised, and that these references had simply been copied from earlier law codes. The vagueness of the Middle Assyrian texts¹¹ may also attest to the gradual disappearance of the practice. Furthermore, the vocabulary of the ordeal begins to change in the Middle Assyrian period, taking on more mythological aspects. In the Middle Assyrian texts, the river (Sumerian ID) is called *huršan* – which comes from the Sumerian *ĤUR.SAĜ*, ‘mountain’. The concept of the river ordeal changes into a judgement of the dead, suggesting that the actual judicial ordeal had taken on a more abstract meaning by this time.¹²

William F. Albright discussed a commentary text on the so-called Babylonian Job (*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, SAACT 7), which mentions the “border of the river where the judicial case of men is examined”. In this commentary, the border (*itē*) is explained as representing the *huršan*,

away his house; if that man is cleared by the river and returns, he who cast sorceries on him shall be killed; he who plunged into the river shall take away his accuser’s house.

⁷ MCCARTER 1973, 403.

⁸ GURNEY and KRAMER 1965, 13–19. The Elamite ordeal by river has also been studied by J. Klima, *Das Wasserordal in Elam* (ArOr 39: 1971); *L’ordalie par le fleuve en Elam* (RA 66: 1972), and by H. Hirsch, *Zum Fluß-Ordal in Elam* (RA 67: 1973). However, Frymer-Kensky (1981, 115) considered these forms of the drinking ordeal, not ordeal by river. Ordeal by river is also mentioned in laws § 13 and § 14 of the Laws of Ur-Nammu, the reasons being sorcery and adultery (the same reasons as those in the Code of Hammurapi), respectively. See ROTH 1995, 18.

⁹ Note, however, that in the Old Babylonian period, the Eshnunnaeans went to Id for the ordeal. Cf. TIM II 102, JCS 21. Also note Frymer-Kensky (1977a), who associates ⁴Ilurugu, featured in earlier Sumerian laws, with the ordeal, although the first mention of the divinity is probably in the Hymn of Nungal mythic text. Here the name is a temple epithet or a term for a ‘house of judgement’, and the god of the same name may be a later development. See also FRYMER-KENSKY 1983, 139, where she discussed the meaning of the Sumerian term as a netherworld river.

¹⁰ DRIVER & MILES 1975 [1935].

¹¹ DRIVER & MILES 1960, 308–311.

¹² Frymer-Kensky (1983) discussed a text referred to as the “Marduk Ordeal”, which seems to offer a thorough mythologization of the concept. According to Annus (2012, 25), the Marduk Ordeal refers to a historical situation when the boat carrying the statue of Bel was capsized during a procession of the Akitu festival.

which Albright interpreted as “the mountain in which men are judged after death, according to Babylonian conception”. He further described the belief, which I would assess as having represented Middle Assyrian conceptions specifically, writing that

the river in question is the River of Death [...] which was not unnaturally conflated at various times and in various ways with the terrestrial Euphrates. It is on the bank of the River of Death that men are judged after decease, according to Babylonian conceptions. The transfer of the notion of trial by a river to ordeal by plunging into a river is very natural, though it is by no means impossible that the trial by ordeal in this way came first, and that the conception of the River of Death was modified by it.¹³

In fact, the extant textual evidence would seem to support the notion that the trial by river came first, while the concept of judgement in the afterlife was only subsequently attached to the tradition. A connection between the river ordeal and an underworld or “infernal” river was already made by Marvin Pope in 1955. Following Driver & Miles, he suggested that the Akkadian word *huršan(u)* was used for the river ordeal in the 14th and 15th centuries BCE, three centuries after the destruction of Mari and its cultic sites where it is best known.¹⁴ But where did the practice originate?

The Origins of the Ordeal

According to Kyle McCarter,¹⁵ the earliest witnesses to ordeal by river were Sumerian. While the oldest texts referring to the ordeal appear to have been written in the Sumerian language, this does not yet betray their Sumerian origins, as this may well have represented Akkadian or Amorite “legalese”, namely the use of a more ancient and authoritative language in the writing of laws. Sumerian texts do not necessarily witness to Sumerian culture as the origin of the practice and use of the Sumerian language in the writing of laws does not mean that such laws were indigenously Sumerian.

References to trial by river are indeed found in Sumerian laws (e.g., U.7739 ii 3–12¹⁶), which Gurney and Kramer dated to the Ur III “Neo-Sumerian” period (c. 2112–2004 BCE, a period of Sumerian renaissance following the Akkadian empire period), roughly contemporary to the oldest inscriptions from Mari. The Sumerian law (§ 10), concerning what seems to be adultery, reads:

TUKUM-BI	if
DAM GURUŠ-a-da	with the wife of a male worker
ÚR-ra	in the lap

¹³ ALBRIGHT 1936, 19–20.

¹⁴ POPE 1955, 60. McCarter (1973, 407) remarked that the name of El’s mountain is referred to in some Ugaritic texts with the borrowed Akkadian term *hursan*, which does suggest a connection between mountains and rivers.

¹⁵ MCCARTER 1973.

¹⁶ Published by Gurney & Kramer (1965, 13–19).

NÁ-a	of lying
LÚ ì-da-lá	a man he has accused,
ÍD-dè	the river
ù-um-ZALAG.ZALAG	after/if it purified them,
LÚ ì-da-lá-[ra] ¹⁷	(to) the man he has accused
ŠUŠANA.ŠA [MA-NA-KÛ]	a third [of a mina of silver]
ì-[lá-e]	he [will pay]. ¹⁸

It is on the basis of this law that McCarter, with no knowledge yet of the Mariote material, claimed a Sumerian origin for the practice. It is interesting that the next law (§ 11), which is extremely fragmentary, seems to feature the word A-AB-[BA], ‘the sea’, on line 22, followed by a verbal form. The law seems to begin with TUKU[M-BI] NITAL[AM], possibly continuing with laws dealing with adultery. The appearance of NÍG- on line 21 may also point towards sorcery. The punishment or end result for whatever the infraction was seems to have featured something or someone being thrown into the sea. This cannot be a trial or ordeal here, as it appears at the end of the law, the normal place for the meting out of punishment. Note that in the law mentioning trial by river, the punishment at the end of the text is a payment of silver.

In the Sumerian text called *Enlil and Ninlil* (also known by the name *The Begetting of Nanna*),¹⁹ reference is also made to a “river of the netherworld, the man-devouring river”, an epithet which is repeated in the text several times. In the story, Enlil disguises himself as the river and copulates with Ninlil, and the act of their copulation is described with references to flowing waters. In the text, Enlil is referred to as the king whose decrees are unalterable. In another text, which Kramer called *Enki And Sumer: The Organization of The Earth and Its Cultural Processes*,²⁰ Enki is described as “king of the abyss, who decrees the fate”, showing that the connection between water and judgement was a Sumerian conception. A similar description of “king of the abyss” and “who well understands the decreeing of fates” is given of the god in the

¹⁷ Gurney & Kramer (1965, 14) reconstructed LÚ Ì-DA-LÁ-[A], “the man who was accused (of lying) with her”. It hardly makes sense for the accused man to have to pay the penalty after being cleared of charges. While the last sign is completely chipped off, a comparison to line 7 suggests that there is indeed an additional sign to line 10.

¹⁸ To parse the Sumerian in more comprehensible English, it would read something to the effect of: “if he has accused a man of lying in the lap of the wife of a *gurus*-man, should the river clear them, he will pay one third of a mina of silver to the man he (falsely) accused”.

¹⁹ BM 38600, CBS 8176, 8315, 10309, 10322, 10412, 13853, 29.13.574, 29.15.611, 8176 + 8315 + 13853, 10309 + 10412. Ni 2707. See KRAMER 1944, 114 for sources and BEHRENS 1978 for composite text, score transliteration, translation, photograph, and hand copy. The most recent (German) translation is by Römer (1993).

²⁰ CBS 29.15.38; Ni 4006; PBS X 2, 1; SRT 44; STVC 78–80, TRS 36. See KRAMER 1944, 116. Cf. also plate XIV for pictorial witnesses to the judging water-god Enki, seated on a chair or throne of judgement (KRAMER 1944, 60 described him as “sitting in judgement” and “seated in judgement”).

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texts *Enki and the World Order*²¹ and *Enki's Journey to Nibru*.²² The temple of Enki in Eridu was called the É.ABZU, the 'house of the abyss'. Neither the river nor the sea, which Enki decrees as the domain of the goddess Sirara in the story, are hostile entities in Sumerian mythology, nor do they have adversarial relations with the storm-god Ishkur.

There is also a mythic text from Nippur, which has been dated to Ur III, called the Hymn of Nungal (Nungal A) with the native title É U₄.HUS AN.KI, 'the house (of) the furious storm (of) the world', in which "the gods" oversee the ordeal held at the Ekur temple. Frymer-Kensky interpreted this text as a witness to the judicial ordeal in Sumer.²³ However, the hymnic text is not a witness to the historical practice,²⁴ nor is the ordeal its central topic. In the hymn, an unnamed god (DINGIR) stands witness to the ordeal.

Montgomery also drew attention to an Early Dynastic (EBA) statuette excavated from Mari and published in *Syria XVI*, inscribed with the Sumerian and Akkadian names for the river (Idi-^dNârum).²⁵ The statuette portrays a bearded and bald-headed man, likely a Mariote official, and it is broken at the waist. In its current form it is 20.4 cm in height but is missing the bottom half. The eye-sockets of the statuette are hollow and are likely to have been bejewelled. If the dating of the statuette to c. 3000 BCE is correct, then Mari's close connection to the river would predate Zimri-Lim's kingdom and the texts of the Mari letters by at least a thousand years, which is unsurprising considering the geographic location of the city. It would similarly push back by over a millennium the date of the first mention of the practice of the ordeal by river, if that is indeed what is referenced by the statue. While the dating of the inscription is not necessarily the same as the dating of the statuette, the combination of the inscription and the letters do suggest a Mariote (if not Amorite) origin for the ordeal.

The inscription is located on the figure's back, across its left shoulder-blade. It is unclear whether the inscription names the figure itself or whether it is a votive gift with a dedication to the river or to the river-god. The statuette does not appear to represent a divine figure, as it is devoid of any divine attributes. Bottero, for his part, seemed convinced that the city of Mari had housed a temple for the river-god.²⁶ He was undoubtedly influenced here by

²¹ For German translation, see FALKENSTEIN 1956, 57–231. See also the PhD dissertation by C. Benito, *Enki and Ninmah and Enki and the World Order* [Ann Arbor, MI: 1969].

²² ETCSL 1.01.04 ll. 4–5, 44–45a. See also CECCARELLI 2012, 89–118.

²³ FRYMER-KENSKY 1977b, 78.

²⁴ Frymer-Kensky (1977b, 78), however, argued that hymns and other religious texts can be used to "illuminate the social and juridical systems and institutions" of their given societies, and on p. 89 that there "does not seem to be any doubt that these hymns reflect an actual juridical situation." While they may 'illuminate', we must be careful in using them to reconstruct practice. On p. 85, she uses a rather obscure passage to suggest that, in the actual juridical ordeal, the ordalists were not allowed to drown, as "Nin-Dimgul, the divine mooring pole" snatched a man from the river and brought him to Nungal in the mythic text. According to her, "it is possible that this allusion may be literal: that people were rescued from the river by having them grasp a mooring pole in order to be pulled from the water."

²⁵ MONTGOMERY 1935, 269.

²⁶ BOTTERO 1981, 1029, 1052.

the statue of the proposed god, Idi-^dNarum.²⁷ Lambert, however, held that no temples of these numinous deities of Northern Mesopotamia are known to have existed – and, according to him, they would not have to, as the river and the god of the river were one and the same, and the river itself would have thus served the purpose of the temple.²⁸ He also pointed out that, in the official pantheon lists of Mari, the river has no temple.²⁹ However, this is only negative evidence for the absence of a temple in the city of Mari itself, not necessarily for the Amorite city of Hit that formed a part of the Mari kingdom and where one would expect such a temple to have been located.

The divinized river is also mentioned on a dedicatory bowl from Mari (M.2241, also E1.10.11.2001), where ^dĪD is followed by ^d(G)eš-dar-ra-at:

DUMU.NITA	Heir
be-bu.BAD	(of) Bebu-BAD
RAŠ.GA	merchant
^d ĪD	River
^d (G)eš-dar-ra-at	Ishtar
SAG.TUG	(to them) he dedicated it.

According to Lambert, the “obvious conclusion” to draw from these clues is that the river and Ashtarte were conceived of as husband and wife. While the conception of such a relationship between the gods is not unheard of, it is far from certain. Lambert connected the goddess to Ashtarte, *‘ttrt* of Ugarit.³⁰ The Amorite inscription, written mostly in Sumerian, has usually been translated as “heir of Bebu-BAD, the great merchant of the river, dedicated to Ishtar”,³¹ but it is quite possible to read it as “heir of Bebu-BAD, the great merchant, dedicated to the river (and) to Ishtar”. The existence of the former dedication corroborates this interpretation of the text. It is also likely that ^d(G)eš-dar-ra-at and aš-ta-ar-ra-at are variant

²⁷ Curtis (1988, 8) seems to suggest that the example represents a personal name in the form of *I-ti* ^dNarum, “the River knows” or “Naru knows”. This interpretation seems plausible, as DN-^dDN is not a usual format for ancient Semitic names, divine or otherwise (whereas noun-DINGIR-DN is an ordinary Sumerian personal name format, e.g., Ur-^dNammu, “(hairy) man of Nammu”). If the Mari name was an Akkadized form of the Sumerian format, one would expect a noun rather than a verb in the first position, and so the name could have a meaning to the effect of “Hand of Naru”, which would be interesting with regard to the concept of the hand symbolizing the divine weapon. On the other hand, Ebla personal names follow the Semitic verb-^dDN pattern, which would allow Curtis’ interpretation of the name. But if we are dealing with a bilingual designation or divine name, it may not follow expected patterns anyway. Roberts (1972, 46) also pointed out a Pre-Sargonic attestation of the name Iddi(n)-Nâru (*i-ti*-^dĪD), “The River gave”. The personal name from Mari was discussed by Parrot (1935, 27) and Thureau-Dangin (1934, 142). While the interpretation of the first element is a matter of importance, what is proved by the inscription with absolute certainty is the concept of the divinized river existing at this time.

²⁸ LAMBERT 1983, 84.

²⁹ LAMBERT 1985, 530.

³⁰ LAMBERT 1985, 535–356.

³¹ “Iku-Shamgan, King of Mari, Suwada the singer (?), son heir of Bebu-BAD the great merchant of the river to Eshdarat dedicated”. PARROT 1967, 239; BUDIN 2004, 106.

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spellings of the name of the same divinity.³² The inscription, on a stone vessel found in the temple of Ishtar, is dedicated to the king of Mari, Ikun-Šamagan.

Lambert also submitted that the river ordeal is mentioned in an Akkadian-Hurrian bilingual wisdom text from Ugarit (BWL 116:3 = RS 15.010).³³ On lines 3–4 we read:

tá-me-e a-na na-ri ka-li a-pí-il ZI Who swears to the river is withheld a true heir
du-ri-iš mar-ḥé-ta-šu DUMU *ú-ul i-šu* forever to his wife a son there will not be.

The meaning of the lines is not entirely clear, but it would seem that if the text is a reference to the ordeal, the cause of the ordeal seems to be somewhat different from the other instances examined. One possible interpretation suggests that it presents a warning: if one uses the ordeal to make false witness, the result will be infertility and lack of progeny. Swearing by the river could indicate a (discouraged or antiquated) legal practice, but the threat of having progeny withheld for using the river for arbitration seems ill-fitting considering the proposed potentially lethal nature of the actual practice. What is noteworthy is that in the Hurrian translation of the text, the river is not mentioned at all. Instead, mention is made of committing perjury against the moon-god, which causes an heir to be withheld from the perjurer and his wife. In any case, we are not dealing here with a legal text or a text written in the Ugaritic language. It is difficult to ascertain where and when the text originated, although it would seem that the Akkadian text is the base text and the Hurrian text the translation.³⁴ The text does not witness a native Ugaritic practice.

Roberts suggested that there was an Akkadian river-god called Naru, who was primarily conceived of as a judge through the social character of the role it played in the river ordeal.³⁵ Lambert also held that the variation between the forms *íd* and ^d*íd* in BM 45690 IV suggests the reading *nāru*.³⁶ He wrote, “Thus not even the normal grammatical gender of *nārum* in Akkadian prevents the deity of the river ordeal from being male.”³⁷ Undoubtedly the god was conceived of as male (and is explicitly mentioned as such in CT 4:50, which features the personal name ‘The-river-is-god’, *na-ru-um-íl*).³⁸

³² Budin (2004, 106–107) stated that the Eshdarat of the Mari inscriptions is the earliest occurrence of the goddess name Ashtar(a)t.

³³ LAMBERT 1965, 11; DIJKSTRA 1993; ARNAUD 2007, text 46; COHEN 2013, text 2.7. The editions contain slightly different readings. The text was found in the East-Archive along with other Hurrian religious texts.

³⁴ For the most part, it is a rather literal translation at that. DIJKSTRA 1993, 170.

³⁵ ROBERTS 1972, 46. All well and good, but this still does not settle the question of whether the god’s name was pronounced *Id* or *Naru*.

³⁶ LAMBERT 1965, 11.

³⁷ LAMBERT 1985, 535.

³⁸ BOTTERO 1981, 1036, lists the form ^d*i-id*. The gloss *i-id* is also found in the Middle Assyrian laws, which Lambert argued does not prove that every instance of ^d*íd* would have been read *íd*. Syllabic spellings for *nāru(m)* can also be found (e.g., CT 4:50 *na-ru-um-íl* and K 4721:2 ^d*na-rum*). LAMBERT 1965, 11.

While the origins of the ordeal may be (and, strictly according to textual witnesses, likely are) Sumerian, in the Old Babylonian period the practice of the ordeal seems to have been centred around the city of Hit, which was a part of the Amorite cultural ambit.³⁹ Thus, regardless of the putative origins of the concept, it was at least embraced, if not wholly appropriated, by the Amorites in this period. Whether or not the origins of water judgement were culturally Sumerian or simply connected with the pre-history of the Euphrates River, it seems that at some point the Amorites adopted the idea.

The Ordeal in the Mari Texts

Unlike the famous law of Hammurapi and other ancient legal texts, the Mari letters do not present laws suggesting an underlying practice, but instead demonstrate actual administrative reports and accounts of the practice being used in a variety of contexts.⁴⁰ The letters from the Mari archive are descriptive. Although contemporary to the laws of Hammurapi, they are not laws and make no references to laws. They are actual administrative reports and accounts from the scene of the ordeal. They are letters from people who witnessed an ordeal first-hand and were reporting back from it. This is why they present us with unique insight into the concept of the ordeal, allowing us to deduce some facts about its function: all ordeals of the Old Babylonian period seem to have taken place in one specific location: the city called Id.⁴¹ In the Old Babylonian period, the river ordeal was not in fact practised on all rivers but only on the Euphrates. Furthermore, it was not practised just anywhere along the Euphrates but in this one, very specific location. The city was located on the western bank of the Euphrates, roughly half-way between Mari and Babylon where we find the modern Iraqi city of Hit today.

The city was a major point of tension between Babylon and Mari (which can be seen, e.g., in the texts ARM 26:160 and 468), with ownership of the city being contested between them for over half a decade. This was not least because of its strategic location, but also because of its wealth of bitumen wells, which were used in the building of Babylon.⁴² Troops from both Mari and Babylon were situated there, but at least during Zimri-Lim's reign it seems to have been considered Mari territory. The importance of the city is witnessed not only by the fact that its ownership seems to have been the single biggest, ongoing point of contention between Hammurapi and Zimri-Lim (cf. ARM 26:40, 449, 468, 499), but that in the letters we have several mentions of foreign parties coming to this Mariote city to engage in this curious judicial

³⁹ What Frymer-Kensky (1977b, 89) seems to suggest is that at the time of the writing of the Nungal hymn, the practice was centred or centralized in Nippur, which not only served as the site of the ordeal but also provided prison facilities for those convicted by ordeals and other trials. However, the Old Babylonian evidence points to the city of Hit as the sole location of the ordeal.

⁴⁰ Frymer-Kensky (1977b, 78) held that legal texts were frequently too obscure, ambiguous, or laconic to answer questions on function.

⁴¹ HEIMPEL 1996.

⁴² HEIMPEL 1996, 8; SASSON 2001, 331.

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practice. Kings from outside of Mari could – and demonstrably did – send troops and officials to oversee their own people undertake the ordeal (ARM 26:253, 254, 255, 256).

The cuneiform for the name of the city and the word ‘river’ are the same. In fact, when it comes to the river ordeal, the terms ID (or A.ENGUR), ^dID, ID^{ki}, and ^dID^{ki} (e.g. in A.457:33) seem to be used interchangeably. According to Heimpel, the city of ID was one of the few cities along the Euphrates named after its principal god,⁴³ even suggesting that the city may have originated as an example of the ancient “temple city” (i.e., a city that grew up around a temple complex).⁴⁴ Such cities seem to be a northern Mesopotamian particularity, according to Lambert, who held that the numinous character of geographical features is commonly attested there. The most famous of such cities in the ancient world was Aššur, the cultic centre of its tutelary god Aššur. He states that unlike northern Mesopotamia, the southern Sumero-Babylonian culture had few cities bearing the name of the local god.⁴⁵ But the numinous character of geographical features was not limited to sites of later urban settlements, as several mountains and rivers in northern Mesopotamia were also thought to have divine characteristics. He additionally pointed out that the concept of a numinous mountain was also known in many Eastern Mediterranean cultures. These western numinous mountains were not considered gods in themselves, but rather served as the seats of gods.⁴⁶

It bears noting that there existed some variation in the writing of the name of the city of ID. The form ^dENGUR *ki* or ^di, *ki* has both the Sumerian determinative for ‘god’, the *dingir*-sign, as well as the determinative for a placename. Forms such as *i, ki* and *i, were* also used. It would seem that, in the text KAV 65 r, ii 2, the form ^dID^{ki}, while containing the determinative for a placename, actually designates the name of the god. There seems to have been no rule as to whether the *dingir*-sign should be attached to the name of the city or to the Euphrates River. Whenever the river ordeal is mentioned, forms such as ^di, ^dID are used, and it would be easy to contend that it did have something to do with a river-god or divinized river.

We ought to be careful reading too much into the determinatives, however. Perhaps it was done out of respect for the river, or the form may have been archaic even at the time of the writing of the Old Babylonian texts. In one letter (ARM 26:253), the river itself is also simply called “god”, *ilum/DINGIR*, with the river and god being explicitly associated. The text reads *ina ilim ipšum*, “he solved in the god”. The text does not feature a determinative and the word for ‘river’, merely the word for ‘god’ which is considered to be the river. Whatever the case, the Mari letters suggest that ^dID had a strong Mari connection. And according to Lambert, the term alluded more to the river ordeal than to any geographical river.⁴⁷ Speiser, on the other hand,

⁴³ Along with Yabliya and Hanat, a peripheral city of the Mari kingdom.

⁴⁴ On temple economies, see MAKKAS 1983.

⁴⁵ The city of Nippur (EN.LÍL^{ki}) forms a notable example to the contrary.

⁴⁶ LAMBERT 1983, 84.

⁴⁷ LAMBERT 1985, 535.

believed that the Akkadian *id* (“when so pronounced”) did contain a specific cultic bearing, especially in the Assyrian Laws.⁴⁸

The Mari letters mentioning the ordeal, ten in all, were sent to Zimri-Lim. Accordingly, they were found in the royal archive. The senders of the letters were:

Meptum 26:249, 251, 253, pasture-chief in Suhum, guard of crossing

Yaqqim-Addu 26:252, 254, governor of Saggaratum

Ibal-Pi-El 26:250, pasture-chief, military commander

Yasim-Dagan 26:251, military officer (?)

Ishi-Dagan 26:255, envoy

Zu-Hadnim 26:256, envoy

[PN] 26:257, 258

What we can observe in the letters is that none of them were sent by the regent of Id or by any judiciary official stationed at the city with a permanent position of overseeing ordeals. Most of the authors seem to be military correspondents of Zimri-Lim who were either passing through Mari or just happened to be there when ordeals took place. None were religious personnel, and in fact no religious functionaries are mentioned in the letters in connection with the ordeal.

As for the probands or “ordalists”, which is to say people who were either forced or voluntarily undertook the trial, the letters witness to the following numbers:

80 Emarites of high rank

9 individual women + 4 intended female probands

3 young boys

2 Elamites, n Hananeans

1 elder man

1 individual man (+ 1 possible individual man)

1 young girl

From the letters it is possible to infer that most of the reported ordalists were not local. Male ordalists outnumber female ordalists, but the number of females is still relatively high. Most of the female ordalists were not accused of anything but had to stand witness. The number of children and elderly is low, but statistically significant. Discounting foreigners, elders, and male children, there is only one person that can be interpreted as a free man (*awilum*) among the ordalists, and even he is for some reason unnamed (‘brother of Hammu-Kuna’). From these facts we can conclude that most ordalists came from groups whose capacity for making oaths was weakened or non-existent (with the exception of the elders of Emar, who have been interpreted as ‘high ranking’, but they were also foreigners and not locals).⁴⁹ If the

⁴⁸ SPEISER 1955, 10.

⁴⁹ DURAND 1990, 56.

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elders were to be interpreted as ‘old’, then this category would also display a compromised ability to make an oath.

People who successfully completed the ordeal were sometimes sent to the king of Mari for further questioning, perhaps due to the principle of “*din napištim ana šarrim*”, according to which litigation over life belonged to the king: the king *personally* had to decide all of the cases that would result in loss of life. The foreign kingdoms of Elam and Yamhad sent their own parties with their own probands. Something called the ‘tablet of the king’ was required to be read at the ordeal, and this was especially important for the foreign parties. The king’s officials, agents and secretaries were present at ordeals, and the king personally inquired about the resolutions of the ordeals. The direct royal involvement in these cases is interesting, as the state also needed these crimes with inadequate inquisitorial or evidentiary procedure to be resolved. But in these cases, it was the authority of the king that legitimized the divine judgement. As a form of divine arbitration, the river ordeal is believed to have functioned as a *last resort judgement*, whereby legal cases that could not otherwise be decided were presented to the river. While this may or may not have been the case, the ancient Mesopotamians also had other means of litigating such cases. Some of these featured the divine weapon.⁵⁰

As to the reasons for undertaking the ordeal, Durand originally categorized the ordeals into four types: accusations of adultery, sorcery, treason, and material concerns.⁵¹ In the actual letters, the reasons given for the undertaking of the ordeal are: three cases of confirming the truth of a statement, two cases of an oath (sorcery), a case of giving witness (adultery, murder, possibly paternity), a claim (land, territorial dispute), and a case concerning the silver of the goddess Ba’alta-Matim (26:256). It is difficult to ascertain from the letter what exactly had befallen the silver of the goddess. It is possible that a question of the truth of statements also underlay this case. What can be deduced from the letters is that one of the main functions of the ordeal was confirming the statements, witnesses and oaths of persons whose word was for one reason or another considered as holding less power than of the ‘*awilum*’ man, with whom other forms of arbitration could be used. This could be due to reasons of gender, age, social class, reputation, or prior infractions.⁵²

For example, one case includes a woman who was a murder witness, but because she was a woman, her witness statement had to be confirmed by undertaking the ordeal (26:254). In only one case (26:250) the ordeal *may* have been used for bilateral divine arbitration between two parties, but it is not certain that the two cases in the text are connected. Note, however, that in the code of Hammurapi, it is precisely the *awilum* man for whom this form of arbitration by river was prescribed. However, we must contend with the fact that the Babylonian laws are

⁵⁰ REDE 2003, 169–170; TÖYRÄÄNVUORI 2012.

⁵¹ DURAND 1989.

⁵² Frymer-Kensky (1981, 126) claims that it was at the discretion of the judges to determine how compelling a witness was.

a theoretical construct, and we have no witnesses of a single Babylonian having undertaken the ordeal during this period. Therefore, it is unknown how closely the law resembled actual practice. It seems that the practice kept being codified into law long after it was no longer a living tradition.

The Ordeal in Mesopotamian Legal Provisions

It seems that this very specific form of the Old Babylonian ordeal found in the Mari texts was no longer a living practice during the writing of these Middle Assyrian laws, although it is possible that the fact that the laws were still being codified may have meant that ordeals of a similar nature could ostensibly have re-surfaced from time to time. There existed legal precedent for the re-appropriation of the practice. For example, there are Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian letters in which the river ordeal is mentioned specifically in connection with land disputes (BBS I 14–17 iii 37–v 26; 66–7 iva 2–22, KB IV 168–169 2 6–9, ABL 965 r. 11–15),⁵³ and it seems to be used as a judicial *ritual* rather than a legal procedure employed to determine outcomes. While these letters are not prescriptive like the laws, at best they offer us vague information on its workings and details. From them, we can gather that a ‘tablet of the ordeal’ (*ṭuppa ana huršan*) was written by the king to settle matters of land ownership. This phrase is found in the older Mari texts in a seemingly different context.

As for the legal witnesses to the ordeal, the word *huršan* is used for the ordeal in the three Middle Assyrian laws mentioned earlier (MAL §§ 17,54 24,55 25,56),⁵⁷ and apparently it had become a technical term denoting “banks of the river as a place of trial for the dead”, and, subsequently, a method of “securing the acquittal (or conviction) of a person by the intervention of the holy river”.⁵⁸ The Babylonian laws preserved in *ana ittišu* (S. I 25–26) also contain a law (§ 5)⁵⁹ which may refer to the ordeal used in cases of adultery or marital discord.

⁵³ FRYMER-KENSKY 1977a, 378ff. Note also the Elamite tradition of “going to the waters” (*ana mē illakma*) to settle land ownership. FRYMER-KENSKY 1977a, 186ff; DRIVER & MILES 1975 [1935], 89–90.

⁵⁴ *šumma awīlum ana awīlam iqtibi mā DAM-ka ittinikku šebutu lassu riksate išakkunū ana* ^{1D}I.ID illukū. // If a man has said to a man: “like a harlot is your wife”, (and) witnesses there are not, an agreement they will make and go to the river.

⁵⁵ ...*ù ḥadīma DAM-su ilakkū ù šumma ENÉ ki DAM-at LÚ ina bissu ištu DAM-[su] usbutuni i-[di] 3a-te iddan ù šumma ittikīr la idīma iqabbi ana* ^{1D}I.ID illūku ù *šumma LÚ ša DAM-at LÚ ina bissu usbutuni ina* ^{1D}I.ID ittura 3a-te iddan *šumma LÚ ša DAM-su ina panišu ramanša talduduni ina* ^{1D}I.ID umalla... // And if the lord of the house knew that the wife of man was in his house with his wife, he shall pay thrice. And if he denies it and says “I did not know”, they will go to the river. And if the man in whose house the wife of a man was staying refused to go into the river, he shall pay thrice. ...If the man whose wife before his face has run away from him has refused the river, he will be released and has fulfilled the complete river.

⁵⁶ ...*ana riḥate* DINGIR.MEŠ-ni ušituqu ubarrū ilakkū ana ^{1D}I.ID ú mamite la iššabutu. ... // Before the gods they will put the remains and take a claim, by the river or oath they will not be seized.

⁵⁷ For a more recent edition of the laws, see ROTH 1995.

⁵⁸ DRIVER & MILES 1975 [1935], 86–87.

⁵⁹ *šumma aššata mussu izirma ul muti atta iqtibi ana nāri* (^{1D}(DA)-ŠĒ) inaddušu. // If a wife has hated his husband and she says, “you (are) not my husband”, they shall give her/him to the river.

In Babylonian texts from Arrapha (EN II 7:24–26), which contain several references to *huršan*, the expression for the ordeal is *ana nār huršan alāku/illaku* (perhaps also to be read *ana ʾĪD/nār huršan alāku/illaku*)⁶⁰, “to go to the river *huršan*”. This does seem to connect the concepts – at least in 15th century Arrapha. Pope also mentions a bilingual or interlinear text⁶¹ where the Sumerian ʾĪD KUG.GA (which Driver & Miles and Pope translate as “pure river goddess”)⁶² has the Akkadian equivalent of *amēlu ina huršan zukkū*, “to declare a man pure by the river ordeal”.⁶³

Peiser likewise referred to a goddess in his translation of a Babylonian syllabary, where he rendered *ina itê idī ašar dien nišē ibbirru* as “on the banks of the river-goddess where the judgement of men is decided”, identifying *huršan* with “*itê ilatidim*”, which Peiser translated as the “banks of the holy river”.⁶⁴ As the Sumerian *dingir*-sign denoting divinity is not actually gendered, the interpretation of *idum* as a goddess must revert back to the gender of the Sumerian loan-word in Akkadian, which possibly took its gender from the homophonous Akkadian word *idum*, hand (which could be construed both masculine and feminine), and had very little bearing on how the gender of the river or river deity was conceived.

The word *huršan* is sometimes found with the determinative for ‘river’, and sometimes with the determinative for ‘mountain’ (e.g., Gilg. 48 i II). According to Driver & Miles and Pope, it referred to the cosmic mountain of the netherworld connected to the world-encircling ocean or river where the dead were judged, based on the text Akītu 221–222.⁶⁵ In Akkadian, it came to denote the place(s) of the river ordeal or the ordeal itself. The *huršan* was used of the ordeal, especially in the texts from Nuzi dated to the 15th and 14th centuries BCE.⁶⁶ While this does not prove that such an ordeal took place on the banks of any “sacred” river, Driver & Miles suggest

The verbal form does not allow for conclusions as to which party is given to the river. Driver & Miles (1960, 308–311) held that there are errors in the grammatical forms due to the original Babylonian text having been converted by Assyrian copyists, and they interpret the law as saying, “If a wife has hated her(!) husband and says ‘Thou art not my husband’, they shall throw her(!) into the river”. Their interpretation does make sense in light of the next law (§ 6), decreeing what is to happen in the event that a husband says to his wife that she is not his wife.

⁶⁰ Driver & Miles (1975 [1935], 87) favour their interpretation as determinative ideograms.

⁶¹ From the Babylonian records in the library of J. P. Morgan, cf. IV 20:59.

⁶² While it is true that in certain contexts ʾĪD can be interpreted as a feminine entity (e.g. ʾĪD AMA URU *zī-ba-ge* in KL 11:31, translated as “River, mother of the good city”, in which it is the word AMA, “mother” that allows us to discern the gender of the river, and BM 74329 where the river is the daughter of the sea), it does not follow that this was always the case. There is nothing in the context to suggest the gender of the river. The seeming association of the *hursan* with the river ordeal does make one wonder whether the goddess Ninhursaĝ had any connection to it.

⁶³ POPE 1955, 70.

⁶⁴ PEISER 1890, 477–479.

⁶⁵ DRIVER & MILES 1975 [1935], 86; POPE 1955, 69.

⁶⁶ There are 11 texts in which ordeal by *huršan* is mentioned: AASOR 16:74, 75; HSS 9:7, 13:310, 422, 14:8; JEN 124, 125, 631; SMN 855, 3557. According to Frymer-Kensky (1981, 122–123), it was used for both personal and property disputes, like theft and burglary. In land disputes, litigants could opt for the *huršan* trial if the decision of the judges was unacceptable to them. Ordeal by oath seems to have been more common in Nuzi. On this ordeal, see DRIVER & MILES 1940 and FRYMER-KENSKY 1981, 122–125.

that various texts featuring the compound *nārḥuršān* and the simple term *ḥuršan/ḥursan* appear to make the meaning unmistakable.⁶⁷ According to Pope, there is also no doubt that it refers to the ordeal.⁶⁸ Smith suggested that *ḥuršān* was actually the divinized river ordeal, as opposed to the divinized river, ^dID.⁶⁹ Note, however, that the river is not mentioned as a god in the pantheon-lists of Mari.⁷⁰

According to Driver & Miles, the Middle Assyrian references to the ordeal present a number of difficulties due to the vagueness of their language, which assumes that the reader would be familiar with the practice. Driver & Miles also remarked on the paucity and obscurity of references to the ordeal outside of the Middle Assyrian documents.⁷¹ While they seem to be unaware of the Mari material, this new evidence seems to have done relatively little to shed light on the issue. It is also uncertain how familiar the Assyrian of the 15th century would have been with this 18th-century practice, which seems to have dwindled with the destruction of Mari, even if McCarter does claim that the practice was a “widespread phenomenon”.⁷² Exactly how widespread the phenomenon actually was, however, remains unclear. The vagueness of the Middle Assyrian texts may also attest to the gradual disappearance of the actual practice. The extra-Mariote witnesses create a context for the references to the ordeal found in the Mari texts, which have greatly increased the information available on the concept.

Trial by River may also be referenced in the Neo-Assyrian text KAR 143+219.⁷³ The text, often dubbed the “Marduk Ordeal”, contains both cultic and mythic portions. It has been interpreted as containing Assyrian propaganda toward the Babylonians during and after the fall of Babylon in 689.⁷⁴ Frymer-Kensky called the Marduk Ordeal “One of the best known, most discussed and least understood texts from Mesopotamia”.⁷⁵ She noted that the text has also been interpreted as an Assyrian anti-Marduk parody written at the time of Sennacherib.

Frymer-Kensky further suggested that the historical occasion for the writing of the text was the return of Marduk’s statue to Babylon in 668 by Esarhaddon’s son Šamaš-šum-ukin, and that it was written for the purpose of incorporating that historical event into the

⁶⁷ DRIVER & MILES 1975 [1935], 87.

⁶⁸ POPE 1955, 69.

⁶⁹ SMITH 1994, 236.

⁷⁰ LAMBERT 1985, 526–527, 532.

⁷¹ DRIVER & MILES 1975 [1935], 86. McCarter (1973, 407), on the other hand, boldly states that the “legal procedures in question are well known to students of Assyriology”. On p. 412, he also claims that the concept of judgement by river ordeal was something shared by Israel with Mesopotamia, which overstates the evidence.

⁷² MCCARTER 1973, 403.

⁷³ This text is from Assur, but there is another edition from Nineveh: BM 134503–4+S.1903 features the same text but in a slightly different sequence. FRYMER-KENSKY 1982, 132.

⁷⁴ Following VON SODEN 1955. Both VON SODEN 1955 and FRYMER-KENSKY 1983 contain editions and translations of the text, although the *edition princeps* was by W. Zimmern in *Zum babylonischen Neujahrfest* (BSGW 70/5: 1918). The text was also published by Livingstone (1989) (34 Assur and 35 Nineveh).

⁷⁵ FRYMER-KENSKY 1983, 131.

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religious framework celebrated in the Akītu festival. Accordingly, she saw the text as “manifestly political”.⁷⁶ The celebration of the festival had been foregone between 689–668, partially as a result of Babylon’s rebellion against Assyria during the reign of Sennacherib and its subsequent destruction.⁷⁷ In the Marduk Ordeal text, Marduk (called ^dEN throughout) is held captive and a goddess (possibly Tashmetu) pleads to Sin and Shamash on Marduk’s behalf, while his son, Nabu, searches for Marduk. On l. 6–7, unnamed persons are questioned at the *huršan*. Nabu goes to Borsippa; on l. 23, it is said that after “Marduk went to the *huršan*”,⁷⁸ the city revolted.

Frymer-Kensky argued that there is no ordeal in the text. It was traditionally read into the word *huršan* on l. 38, but she claimed that this is the only thing connecting the text to the concept of the ordeal. There are five uses of the word in the text, and only two of them may reference an ordeal. She argued that the *huršan* found in the text is the name of the place where (the statue of) Marduk was taken.⁷⁹ However, Frymer-Kensky does connect the text with the Babylonian New Year’s festival, recalling a period “before Marduk’s victory in which he was considered to be in the power of Tiamat”, and claimed that the text was related to events in the Akītu house.⁸⁰ The *huršan* where Marduk is held captive is a “cosmic location”.⁸¹

While I think that Frymer-Kensky is correct in her belief that the text does not reference the actual historical ordeal,⁸² even though some legal terminology is used in the text (cf. l. 18, where a case is opened before Aššur), *huršan* as a ‘cosmic location’ is on par with the abstraction of the concept of the river ordeal from the Middle Assyrian period onward. The fact that the term is found in connection with the mythology of *Enuma Elish*⁸³ in the Neo-Assyrian period only bespeaks the ordeal having become a thing of myth and legend by this time, but it does not follow that the concept of the ordeal was not consciously invoked in this text.

Annus revisited the text of the Marduk Ordeal in 2010 and 2012, suggesting on the basis of the parallels of Babylonian processional omen texts⁸⁴ that the Marduk Ordeal in fact

⁷⁶ FRYMER-KENSKY 1983, 140–141. The festival was re-instated two years later to celebrate Esarhaddon’s son’s ascension to the throne of Babylon. NIELSEN 2012, 7.

⁷⁷ NIELSEN 2012, 6, 8.

⁷⁸ L. 23: ^dEN *ina hur-sa-an il-lik-u-ni*.

⁷⁹ FRYMER-KENSKY 1983, 138.

⁸⁰ Mentioned on l. 38, 4, 66. In addition, l. 7 mentions the “house near the banks of the *huršan*” (*É šu-ú ina UGU šap-te ša hur-sa-an*), which could recall the proposed temple at Id. Frymer-Kensky (1982, 138), however, thinks that the mention of the house “clearly” indicates that the text is using the term as a name for a location rather than as a judicial term.

⁸¹ FRYMER-KENSKY 1983, 139.

⁸² Von Soden (1955, 161), however, seems to discuss an ordeal myth, a myth in which Marduk is beaten and forced to undergo the ordeal. Therefore, Frymer-Kensky’s argument is a little misplaced.

⁸³ *Enuma Elish* is mentioned twice in the text: l. 34, 54.

⁸⁴ These texts describe the condition and movement of the statue of Marduk during the Akītu festival. One of the omens states that if the boat (KI.MIN) used to transport the statue turns over in the river, there will be a revolt (*nabalkattu*). Based on this omen, Annus (2010, 102) deduced that the Marduk Ordeal refers to a historical event in which the statue

recounts the capsizing of the boat transporting the statue of Marduk when it was *en route* to the Akītu house. The statue was seen as undergoing the ordeal, which had “many consequences for how Marduk’s annual battle against Tiamat was interpreted”.⁸⁵ Among these changes was that Marduk’s victory was no longer seen as immediate but rather resulting from a prolonged battle following Marduk’s imprisonment. According to Annus, in the Mesopotamian legal and religious worldview, acquittal in the river ordeal demonstrated “moral and physical fitness and superiority over the adversary”.⁸⁶ Whether or not the capsizing of the boat was intentional, the performative discourse of the return of the statue and the re-institution of the festival during this time functioned to legitimize Esarhaddon’s rule over Babylon.⁸⁷ However, it seems clear from these later texts that the actual Mariote tradition of trial by river was not actively practiced in later times. But what actually happened during the trial when it still was a living tradition?

The Causes and Function of the Ordeal

Because of the specific case of the river ordeal mentioned in the Code of Hammurapi and its association with the *Iudicum Dei* of medieval Europe, the river ordeal has a strong association with sorcery, although to claim that the European so-called “ordeal of cold water” (as opposed to the “ordeal of hot water”) dealt solely with sorcery is a gross misrepresentation of the evidence.⁸⁸ According to recent research,⁸⁹ the medieval ordeal was a process that was intended to determine the guilt or innocence of the proband, not through divine intervention but by the observance of the clerics who administered it. Unlike the stereotypical image associated with medieval witch hunts, few women were actually forced to undergo the ordeal of submersion. This was because of the higher ratio of fat to water in female bodies (a lean male body was more likely to be submerged during the ordeal). It must also be emphasized that the ordeal itself was not meant to kill the proband. As many of the offences or situations it was prescribed for were not even capital crimes, more probands would have been found guilty, and it has been suggested that the ordeal was actually meant to find the innocent and acquit most people who chose to undertake it.

Rather than being a form of divine judgement, the ordeal was a process through which the examiner could discern from the behaviour of the proband whether he or she was guilty or

of Marduk fell into the river during the procession from the Ishtar gate to the Akītu house, leading to the divinity “involuntarily” undergoing the ordeal.

⁸⁵ ANNUS 2012, 25; 2010, 102–103. He suggests that the plunging of Marduk’s statue into the water “prematurely and unprepared” for his annual cosmic battle against Tiamat, representing both the sea and the netherworld river of Ḫubur, lead to an “unusually harsh” combat being imagined between the divinities at that time.

⁸⁶ Annus (2010, 102) calls it the “spiritual meaning” of the myths.

⁸⁷ NIELSEN 2012, 7.

⁸⁸ Discussed, e.g., by Bartlett (1983).

⁸⁹ LEESON 2012. See also bibliography.

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not, and then rig the resulting ordeal accordingly. This is why the ordeals of hot water and scalding iron were used more often with female probands. Acquitting them through these ordeals was easier. This practice, which ended in the 13th c. after being banned by the Lateran Council in 1215 CE, probably influenced the later Early Modern-era European superstition or folk belief that witches could not sink.⁹⁰ Sorcery is also mentioned in two Mari letters (26:249, 253), and adultery is alluded to in two (26:251, 252). In both cases, the accused are women. Yet it cannot be claimed that punishing sorcery was the main or even a major function of the ordeal, nor that sorcery was a particularly feminine enterprise. Furthermore, the ordeal had no sociological function to punish sorcery in these cases, but to *confirm truth statements*. Those found guilty of the malicious use of sorcery by means of the ordeal were most likely punished or executed by the usual methods of the time – which is also what took place later in Europe where it was actually possible to hire someone to take one’s place in the ordeal.⁹¹

El-Barghuti discussed a similar ordeal among the Bedouin of Palestine in the early 20th century. While temporally very distant from the ancient Mariotes, they may still closely resemble the Amorite tribes in terms of social organization. He explains that the judges “have full authority to increase or reduce a penalty, always taking into consideration the common welfare and the personal influence of both parties. [...] The Judge must know the social position of the offenders and their family exactly. [...] Sometimes a judge cannot decide a case because it is too complicated. In this event he sends somebody secretly to reconcile the parties. If he does not succeed, he postpones his decision until he discovers the right one with the help of some other judge who must proffer his advice.”⁹² He further described the conditions upon which an accused person may be appointed a lawyer: their inability to defend themselves, that either party is a woman, when plaintiff and defendant are of unequal social rank, and when both parties are “still in a very excited state”, when the accused is ashamed of appearing before the assembly due to the nature of the crime, and when “a party is composed of a number of persons, so that it is difficult to hear them all.” This list seems to cover all of the cases for the use of the ordeal for arbitration in the Mari letters. El-Barghuti described the proceedings of giving an oath of guiltlessness (“Generally none but the powerful have the right to take the oath”) and the payment of reparations in the case no reliable witnesses exist to decide the case, adding an interesting detail that if one of the persons of the family of the accused is absent, “a rifle, held by one of the *muzakkîn*, takes his place”, which may recall one of the functions of the divine weapon.⁹³

Also interesting are the ancient Semitic echoes found in the oath itself: “By the great God [...] who deprives children of their fathers and makes women widows, who vanquishes

⁹⁰ See ZGUTA 1977; BARTLETT 1986, 53.

⁹¹ BARTLETT 1986, 13ff.

⁹² EL-BARGHUTI 1922, 5–6.

⁹³ EL-BARGHUTI 1922, 15–16; 21–22.

kings, who subdues oppressors [...]”. El-Barghuti finally describes the ordeal by Fire, used in cases where arbitration has failed and taking an oath is not an option: “A piece of iron, or a coffee-roaster, is heated until it becomes red-hot, whereupon the suspects, one after the other, come forward to lick it with their tongues [...] Everyone who undergoes the ordeal must pay a fee of 500 piastres for the privilege [...] Originally this custom may have been introduced to frighten people, and force them to speak the truth. Many a man who feels his guilt tries secretly to find someone to arrange the matter with the accuser before being brought to the ordeal by fire.” One important thing to note about the Bedouin ordeals is that again they are not a means of punishment but indeed of arbitration; if the result of the ordeal is capital punishment, it was imposed by other means after the judgement is obtained. Furthermore, capital punishment is only one of the possible penalties, as the others include blood-money or weregild, banishment, or the payment of indemnity (like for like).⁹⁴ Likely all of this was also true of ancient forms of divine arbitration.

It seems that the river ordeal was at least partially used for political purposes in Mari, as evidenced by the fact that it was used to determine guilt regarding treason. It also seems that officials or “experts” of some kind often attended or watched over the process of the ordeal, as in A.457.⁹⁵ But the river of the ordeal was not conquered or defeated by a god (or a king); it served as an instrument of divine retribution. It seems that at least in Mari the river ordeal was connected to the king and his judicial power. The causes for the use of the ordeal not only included sorcery (A.457 37–39), which was the only reason given for the ordeal in the law of Hammurapi, but also murder (King of Justice) and adultery (A.457 40–41). In addition to these, in the Mari texts, we find the ordeal also being used for cases of treason (A.457 39–40) and the solving of territorial conflicts (A.457 1–30, A.1251).⁹⁶ The ordeal was also employed with prisoners of war. It may have served an important cultic function, being a public display of the king’s judicial power. The Mari texts even preserve a letter in which the king himself addressed the river (ARM 191:1), indicating a ritual.

As for the actual functioning and proceedings of the ordeal, they remain as murky as ever. What is known is that a tablet was recited, containing the witness statement of the ordalist (26:254). Some type of ritual involving pouring water on the hand of the ordalist was involved (26:254). And at least on one confirmed occasion, the ordeal took place at dawn (26:254). The terminology used to describe the ordeal consists of the verbs *alākum*, ‘to go to the river’, *pašārum*, ‘to resolve’, *ipšum*, ‘to solve’, *rehûm*, ‘to spit out’, *wašûm*, ‘to come out’, and *šalāmum*, ‘to come out safe’. What the verbs signified as technical terms is difficult to ascertain, although some suggestions have been made, the most popular of which claims that the ordalist

⁹⁴ EL-BARGHUTI 1922, 21–22.

⁹⁵ MICHEL 1990, 203–204.

⁹⁶ DURAND 1988, 532–533.

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had to swim to the other side of the river (or to traverse a set distance under water).⁹⁷ In only one letter (ARM 26:253), is it explicitly stated that the ordalist “fell into the god and died”.

While it is often assumed that the way the ordeal functioned was a simple case of ‘sink or swim’,⁹⁸ in actuality, death is only mentioned as an outcome in one letter. Such a special mention implies that it was not the usual outcome, while the fact that her death did not seem to not settle the case anyway suggests that this was something of an anomaly. In fact, in five out of the six confirmed cases the ordalist survives, which is on par with statistical analyses made of the later European ordeal.⁹⁹ In the end, however, it is not known exactly what took place during the actual implementation of the ordeal. Lambert, for his part, was convinced that the ordeal took place in a river, either in the Euphrates or in the Ḫubur. The Euphrates is explicitly mentioned as the place of the ordeal in King of Justice (BM 45690 III 21–IV 23), a text which Lambert described as the “most detailed and vivid account of a river ordeal from ancient Mesopotamia”.¹⁰⁰ According to him, the Ḫubur river, with its known nether-world associations may actually have served as the place of the ordeal at Mari.¹⁰¹ In the period of the King of Justice text, it seems that a specific place had to be used for the ordeal: the accuser and the accused were sent under guard along the Euphrates to a spot upstream from Sippar (BM 45690 III 22–23).¹⁰²

Based on the terminology and some possible later references to the ordeal,¹⁰³ the safest assumption would be to infer that going *into* the river was somehow involved. It is important to note, however, that “going into the water” does not necessarily refer to an ordeal by river. As Frymer-Kensky pointed out, non-royal grants, adoptions and divisions (but not sales or royal grants) could be contested, according to Elamite texts, by going to the water (*ana mē illakma*). This is a reflection of an accepted legal procedure whereby the plaintiff either initiates or substantiates a claim by going into the water, perhaps symbolically.¹⁰⁴ However, Heimpel¹⁰⁵ has offered some interesting alternative ideas of how the ordeal could have proceeded; according to him, even though the city of ÍD and its god were named after the concept of the river, the river ordeal was not located at the “wholesome waters of the Euphrates” but at the bitumen

⁹⁷ See MCCARTER 1973, 8 for withstanding the rushing waters; BOTTERO 1981 for staying afloat a measured distance; DURAND 1988 for swimming a set distance under water (based on A.457).

⁹⁸ “Witch dunking” is often recounted as the classic Catch-22 or ‘damned if you do, damned if you don’t’ situation. Cf. e.g., Clive Aslet, *Villages of Britain* [London: 2010], 281.

⁹⁹ LEESON 2012, 705ff.

¹⁰⁰ LAMBERT 1965, 4.

¹⁰¹ LAMBERT 1985, 535.

¹⁰² LAMBERT 1965, 4.

¹⁰³ FRYMER-KENSKY 1977a, 186ff.

¹⁰⁴ FRYMER-KENSKY 1981, 117.

¹⁰⁵ HEIMPEL 1996.

wells or springs near the city of Id (^dENGUR^{ki} in the Mari texts; e.g. A.457:33) where a cluster of such wells still remains.¹⁰⁶

These wells are circular ponds filled with naphtha, a volatile variety of benzene, making the warm saline water of the springs highly toxic.¹⁰⁷ Heimpel suggested that the people undergoing the ordeal plunged into these wells where, scalded, they had to “endure chest-gripping temperatures”. Upon inhaling the noxious gases or imbibing the toxic water, they would have “been overcome quickly, lost their consciousness, lapsed into a coma, and died.”¹⁰⁸ One of Heimpel’s arguments for the river ordeal taking place in the bitumen wells is their apparent power to sometimes push out the people submerged in them,¹⁰⁹ a display of the god’s divine power to absolve the accused. Or, according to Heimpel, “the god not just stated, he emphasized, the truthfulness of the statement of the ordalist”.¹¹⁰

McCarter seemed to take it for granted that trial by river featured the plunging of the accused into the river, where their success in withstanding the rushing waters determined their guilt or innocence.¹¹¹ He also claimed that the divine river served as a final litigant in the kind of legal cases where the normal adjudication between defendant and plaintiff was seen as having reached a stalemate.¹¹² There is little evidence to suggest that ordeal by river was ever a *common* feature of judicial arbitration in the ancient Near East. That the judicial function of the river was still known during the first millennium BCE, although likely no longer practised, is witnessed by a text known from several recensions that Lambert called “The River Incantation”,¹¹³ even though it seems more like a hymn addressed directly to the river. In

¹⁰⁶ HEIMPEL 1996, 8. Curiously, bitumen (*esir*) and ^dfD are associated in BM 6060, a tablet from the Kassite period in the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, which could at least tangentially support Heimpel’s theory. Tukulti-Ninurta II’s inscription records the king staying a night by the city of Id, “at the bitumen spring, where the stele of the great gods is erected” (A.O.100.5:60). The fact that they did not cross the river to stay in the city itself suggests that the crossing was no easy matter.

¹⁰⁷ Note also Strabo’s description of an undisclosed location near the Euphrates: “there is a fountain of this latter asphalt near the Euphrates river; and that when this river is at its flood at the time of the melting of the snows, the fountain of asphalt is also filled and overflows into the river; and that there large clods of asphalt are formed which are suitable for buildings constructed of baked bricks [...] The liquid kind, which they call naphtha, is of a singular nature; for if the naphtha is brought near fire it catches the fire; and if you smear a body with it and bring it near to the fire, the body bursts into flames; and it is impossible to quench these flames with water (for they burn more violently), unless a great amount is used, though they can be smothered and quenched with mud, vinegar, alum, and bird-lime.” *Geography* 16.1.15.

¹⁰⁸ HEIMPEL 2003, 9; 1996, 8–9.

¹⁰⁹ HEIMPEL 1996, 8.

¹¹⁰ HEIMPEL 1996, 10.

¹¹¹ MCCARTER 1973, 403.

¹¹² MCCARTER 1973, 407.

¹¹³ LAMBERT 2013, 396. “Quite rapidly, attention is drawn to the judicial functions of this river.” Lambert goes on to discuss the difficulty of the text being addressed to one river when “Babylonia” was located between two rivers, but I find this irrelevant with regard to the tradition. Babylon is not mentioned in the text, and it was Euphrates (and later, Ḥabur) which was connected to a judicial function, a function that the Tigris never bore. For all we know, the invocation

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K.2782 the river is addressed: “You judge the judgement of mankind” (*di-in te-né-š̄e-e-tum ta-din-ni*). A variant exemplar (CBS 344, pl. 70) reads in the same line: “You accomplish the judge<ments> of Ea, judgement takes place [b]efore you” (*ga-me-ra-te di-<in>^dE.A [m]a-har-ki di-ni*).

An important facet of this text is that it witnesses a survival of the ordeals and the judicial function of the river in poetic memory, long after they were no longer actively practised. There is one late non-mythological mention of the river ordeal in the Babylonian area: it is mentioned in a 6th-century letter from Uruk in the context of royal anger in a legal case (YOS XXI, 149): “the king is furious with all of Babylon, he has not listened to my statements, my witness has not proven (or testified) in my case and I have not yet undergone the river ordeal.” It is the only non-literary witness to the use of the ordeal in the time of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, although we do not know whether it refers to a symbolic ordeal or to the actual judicial practice.

Bottero, one of the first to remark on the concept of the river ordeal, believed that the ordeal did involve plunging into the river, but that different procedures were involved in different uses of the ordeal. If a defendant was ordered to stay afloat for a certain distance, he had to do that in order to show the god confirmed the truth of his statement. Durand published the text (A.457) Bottero referred to in ARM XXVI, interpreting it so that the accused had to travel the given distance (corresponding to c. 40 metres) underwater.¹¹⁴ Heimpel, however, may be right in suggesting that the measure of 80 *a-ša* or “fields” (which Durand likened unto cubits)¹¹⁵ mentioned in the text may actually have more to do with the particular statement of the accused (the case was one of land ownership) than the ordeal itself.¹¹⁶ The rest of the texts fail to mention any such measurements.

Heimpel doubted this procedure on the basis that the Mesopotamians might not have had an accurate method of measuring the distance of the accused from the shore, and he further pointed out the difficulty of determining whether one is afloat or not, with a drowning man sinking and emerging again and again in his struggle.¹¹⁷ One would imagine that the determining factor was simply whether one survived the plunge or not: survive, and one’s claims were validated; perish, and they were not. The King of Justice text specifically states that the guilty party in the ordeal would sink.¹¹⁸ Heimpel humorously asks whether the “ordalist” was rescued by an able lifeguard when he reached the given distance, and he suggests that

of “*at-ti ÍD*” at l. 1 may originally even have been addressed to the city of Id (“You, oh Id!”).

¹¹⁴ DURAND 1988, 519.

¹¹⁵ DURAND 1988, 519.

¹¹⁶ HEIMPEL 1996, 12.

¹¹⁷ HEIMPEL 1996, 7.

¹¹⁸ LAMBERT 1965, 4, in which he states that the text “does finally settle the controversy as to which judgement sinking or floating implied.”

anyone capable of swimming would have survived the ordeal as Bottero described it. As discussed previously, the death of litigants did not seem to be the purpose of the ordeal, but rather the confirmation of truth statements.

Heimpel also cast doubt on Durand's idea of traversing the distance underwater, referring to the instinct to come up for air when air is needed.¹¹⁹ But one has to wonder how common it was in ancient Mesopotamia for people to be able to swim, not to mention in a rushing river. Heimpel does admit that such an ordeal only makes sense among people who cannot swim, and he finds it difficult to believe that such a culture existed anywhere at any time – let alone along the Euphrates River, as shown by a document.¹²⁰ While I have failed to locate any study discussing how widespread the ability to swim was among ancient Mesopotamians, or whether the Euphrates was a swimmable river, I doubt it can be taken for granted that all people living along bodies of water are able to swim.¹²¹ Indeed, it must be pointed out that according to the Mari letter, most ordealists did not even live in the vicinity of the river, which Heimpel recognizes.¹²² Furthermore, the ability to swim may be lacking even in cultures inhabiting areas near bodies of water which are not suitable for swimming. One possible and simple explanation for the distance (*a-ša*) mentioned in the text A.457 would be that the accused had to make a 40-metre dive from a suitable spot along the river into the rushing stream, either to survive it or perish. Although I am inclined to the proposition that the measurement concerned 40 square metres of land, whose ownership was resolved by the ordeal in the case, one text is not enough to draw conclusions, but merely facilitates discussion.

Heimpel seemed to think that the god of the river ordeal was not *ÍD* at all, but rather *Ea*, “King of the Apsu”, the ruler of the subterranean waters, connected to the concept of springs and the river by the city of *Hit*.¹²³ In the Weidner god-list, *ÍD* is equated with *Ilurugu* who was closely associated with *Ea* in the Old Babylonian period. According to Johandi, *Id/Ilurugu* seems to be an independent deity in the god-list, mentioned between *Enki/Ea* and *Asalluhi*. In some other sources, *Ilurugu* is equated either with *Enki* (*Letterprayer of Šîn-iddinam to Ninisina*) or *Asalluhi* (hymn *Asalluhi A*).¹²⁴ The domains of these deities seem to have had enough overlap to allow them to blend into one another. *Ea* is mentioned as the god of the ordeal in *King of Justice III*, a literary text that may have been somewhat fashioned after

¹¹⁹ HEIMPEL 1996, 7.

¹²⁰ HEIMPEL 1996, 7.

¹²¹ There is iconographic evidence of at least assisted swimming among Assyrian military troops from the Neo-Assyrian period, but one can hardly interpolate from this that civilians who may have lived far from bodies of water suitable for swimming could have swum across a river (e.g. ANE 124538, a relief from the North-West palace of Aššurnasirpal II from Nimrud).

¹²² HEIMPEL 1996, 8: “Single ordealists and plunging parties [...] came from Mari, Karkemish, Aleppo, the Habur triangle, and Elam”.

¹²³ HEIMPEL 1996, 10.

¹²⁴ JOHANDI 2019, 116–117.

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Hammurapi's code, functioning perhaps as a fictional commentary on it.¹²⁵ There are three cases presented in the text, all of which all have a precedent in the Hammurapi code: corrupt judges and altering judgement correspond to § 5, an ordeal to § 2, and a case of false accusation parallels § 3. The cases probably comment on the most interesting laws and were not randomly chosen; the concern of the text is the judicial process itself.

The Neo-Babylonian text was a story of a miracle meant to impress the fear of law, king, and god upon its audience.¹²⁶ The text both contains narrative portions and references a code of laws,¹²⁷ which may indeed have had precedents in actual legal codices. It must be born in mind that this text is several centuries younger than the Mari records, and thus it would have limited bearing on how the ordeal was understood in the 18th century BCE. While in the King of Justice the cause of the ordeal is the same as in Hammurapi's code – that of sorcery – there are also some differences. In Hammurapi's second law, both the accuser and the accused are sent to the ordeal, while in the King of Justice only the accuser is put to the test.¹²⁸ The text also specifies dawn as the time for the ordeal, and that people spoke with fear of the event, suggesting that it was not commonplace.¹²⁹

Yet, had the bitumen wells discussed by Heimpel been meant by the authors of the letters, one would expect to find specific terminology relating to them in the texts. Heimpel also does not account for the fact that many texts specifically refer to diving into or emerging from the *river*, not from a spring or a well, for which there were perfectly suitable words in Akkadian. Even if one considers *ÍD a terminus technicus* for the ordeal,¹³⁰ texts where the accused person's body is said to have come up from the river where his head had been hit (such as the King of Justice), or where it is hypothesized that the accused who could not be found may have crossed over to the other side of the river, do seem to refer to an actual river. It must be acknowledged that the King of Justice is not a primary witness to the ordeal. But Heimpel does admit that the text can be used to level arguments against his proposal.¹³¹ There also exists a

¹²⁵ LAMBERT 1965, 3–4.

¹²⁶ According to LAMBERT 1965, 2, the language of the text is the standard literary language of late Babylonia and Assyria.

¹²⁷ LAMBERT 1965, 1.

¹²⁸ Note that in the Nuzi texts, both the plaintiff or accuser and the accused could be asked to undergo the ordeal (not necessarily both at once), and the refusal of either party to undergo the ordeal resolved the case for the benefit of the other party. DRIVER & MILES 1940, 134. On p. 136, they come to the conclusion that “there seems to be no rule laying down which party shall be submitted to the ordeal. This question must therefore have been left to the discretion of the judges, who will have settled it presumably on the merits of each particular case; either may be sent to it, either may be winner or loser.” This is in line with what we know of the medieval European ordeals. Of course, the fact that we cannot discern the logic between whether the accused or the accuser engaged in the ordeal does not mean that no logic existed.

¹²⁹ LAMBERT 1965, 3–4.

¹³⁰ FRYMER-KENSKY 1977a, 377.

¹³¹ HEIMPEL 1996, 10.

text from Mari (M.8142) where two men (a “boy of Alpan” and a “boy of Abi-Maṭar”) have to drag a millstone across the river, which makes little sense in the context of bitumen wells; thus not all of the texts that could be used to argue against Heimpel are diachronic or literary texts.

But Heimpel’s hypothesis, while certainly possible in light of these geographical studies – and through a bit of fantastic speculation – is not based on the evidence of the Mari letters, but on later accounts. Some of these witnesses are semi-mythological, such as the text called the “King of Justice” (BM 45690: III 21–IV 23). His proposition also seems unnecessarily complicated, compared to the scenario where the accused are urged *into the river*, which is the term used in all of the Old Babylonian accounts. On the other hand, his hypothesis could well accord with the medieval ‘ordeal of the Hot Water’ (*iudicium aquae fervantis*), in which the proband had to plunge his or her hand into scalding water, and it was only days later upon the examination of the healing of the resultant blisters that the outcome of the ordeal was decided.¹³² Strabo’s description of the ordeal is, however, not the only reference to the concept between the Old Babylonian texts and the medieval witnesses.

There is also an example of a judicial trial in the Hebrew Bible, in Num. 5:11–31, although not in reference to a river. On the surface, the passage would appear to describe a trial by drinking, which was connected to the crime of adultery. In this ‘ordeal of Bitter Water’, the ordalist was made to drink a poisoned liquid, which would either kill her or leave her unscathed.¹³³ A similar type of ordeal has been practised in certain African societies (e.g. Liberia and Nigeria) until recent times, and studies have been made on its function.¹³⁴ Apparently an innocent ordalist, convinced of his or her guiltlessness, will consume the poison more readily and quickly, increasing the likelihood of survival. The ordeal then works as a rather brutal lie detector – one that is not kind to the innocent sceptic.¹³⁵

El-Barghuti described a similar ordeal among the Bedouin of Palestine in the early 20th century. Called ‘the swallowing’, the ordeal consisted of swallowing “quickly and without hesitation either something hard, like dry bread, or something nauseating and disagreeable, like medicine.” The guilty party is the one that

hesitates, complains, or vomits [...]. Those who perform the act quickly and with nonchalance are declared innocent, even though they may be the real offenders. The

¹³² LEESON 2012, 694.

¹³³ BARTLETT 1986, 82, 84. FRYMER-KENSKY 1981, 118, also mentions a trial of “taking the waters” from Susa, mentioned in four texts, which she thinks cannot be a form of ordeal by river, as “you cannot throw someone in a river and not know whether he has floated or sunk.” She viewed the Susa texts, which incidentally contain the phrase “waters coming up”, as representing drinking trials. According to her, however, the trial by drinking is misunderstood, and it is actually a “classic solemn oath” rather than an ordeal.

¹³⁴ TONKIN 2000; ADEWOYE 1977. Adewoye mentions (p.8) that in cases of witchcraft, the accused person was made to swim across a creek full of crocodiles and determined innocent if he surfaced alive.

¹³⁵ LEESON 2012, 699ff. According to Leeson, these forms of the ordeal would not have been used on known non-believers and, e.g., Jews in Europe were exempt from them.

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sheikh frightens the accused by repeating some magic words and prayers over the articles to be swallowed, pretending that they thus attain a special potency, which has a different effect upon the guilty and the innocent.¹³⁶

Perhaps a similar inner working could have affected the outcome of the ordeal by river, but the practice is so poorly understood that such musings are mere idle speculation. The language of the Num. passage clearly borrows from Mesopotamian legal tradition, which does not necessitate a borrowing from any single source. It is likely that the entire legal tradition of the time of the writing of Num. owed much to Babylonian law.

Conclusions

The strongest evidence for the actual practice of the legal ordeal seems to exist in the Old Babylonian period, in the 18th century BCE, and the source of the tradition appears to have been the Amorite culture. While there is some indication that the ordeal was employed by peoples all over the ancient Near East,¹³⁷ the city of Id – where it took place – was in Mari territory. While it is mentioned in texts from a wide geographical area, the practice itself seems to have been both localized and tied to the cult of a specific city god. As an instrument of the king's judicial power in the Amorite Bronze Age, however, the source of the concept is ultimately rooted in kingship and the king's role as a judge on behalf of the monarchic divinity in which the executive power of the king was ultimately derived. But it is also possible that some of the texts discussed here could reference the river in allusion to the cultic functions of the king, emphasizing the king's role as judge in order to legitimize his dual role as an executive and a judiciary. The underlying mythology served to legitimize the judicial role of the king, representing a divine guarantee of the king's judgements. However, a comparison of the ancient trials with more modern ones can illuminate aspects of both of them that have not been considered previously.

Combining the evidence of Mesopotamian legal provisions, epistolary 'real world' evidence of the Mari letters and examples of trials from witnesses closer to the modern era together help explain what the actual function and purpose of the practice was. The main purpose of trial by water seems clearly to have been to confirm the truth statements of witnesses that were not legally independent subjects under Mesopotamian legal provisions (free, adult men). While the practice was not gendered as such, the legal witness of women was

¹³⁶ EL-BARGHUTI 1922, 22.

¹³⁷ While no suggestions have been made that the ordeal would have been practised in ancient Egypt, there is a curious mention in the "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant" (BI 59–61) of not "tasting the evils of the river" ("[...]the current shall not carry you off, you shall not taste the evils of the river, you shall not see the face of fear, the darting fish shall come to you"), which according to Faulkner, Wente & Simpson (1973, f35) was a "high-flown" metaphorical way of telling the magistrate of the story that should he do justice by the plaintiff, he would prosper. Even if the ordeal was alluded to in the text, it does not mean that it was ever practised in Egypt. It is possible that it references the Euphratean ordeal.

considered lacking just like that of children, the elderly, foreigners and otherwise compromised witnesses. Trial by water was not a means of execution in the ancient world, but as its use was tied to legal cases where arbitration was required for capital crimes, it often did result in the death of one of the parties involved in it. For lesser crimes, lesser forms of arbitration could be used. Similar forms of arbitration are known from elsewhere in the world, like early modern Europe and colonial-era Africa. Arbitration via suprarational trial seems to be required in cases where it is the word of one person against another, and no forensic evidence can settle the matter. Anthropologically, the ordeal is supposed to reveal whether the witness or accused is lying through the threat of supernatural punishment, functioning as a primitive lie-detector test. Its use in European witch trials likely also follows from this function, as accusations of witchcraft were often spread through social contagion. An important facet of the trials is that they seem to have been meant to acquit the accused innocent of the crime in most of the cases it was used.

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Gods in Wars: Divine Support and the Theological Justification of War in Ancient Anatolia and North Syria

Vladimir SAZONOV¹, Joanna TÖYRÄÄNVUORI²

Abstract. *In this article, the authors examine the divine support and religious justification of wars by Anatolian and North Syrian rulers in the Late Bronze Age, an epoch of international diplomacy. Notable is that many wars and conflicts in the region of Anatolia and North Syria took place in this period, which may have occasioned an increasing need to justify them by appeal to divinities.*

Rezumat. *În acest articol, autorii analizează contribuția divină și motivarea religioasă a războaielor de către conducători anatolieni și din nordul Syriei în Epoca Târzie a Bronzului, o perioadă favorabilă diplomației internaționale. Un aspect notabil este faptul că multe din războaiele și conflictele din regiunea Anatoliei și a Syriei de Nord au avut loc în acest moment, ceea ce e posibil să fi creat o nevoie tot mai mare de a le justifica prin apelul la divinități.*

Keywords: *gods in war, justification of war, divine support, Anatolia, North Syria, Hittites, Ugarit, Alalakh.*

Introduction

Divine support for a ruler by gods or supernatural forces and religious or theological justification of wars are found in all civilizations of the ancient world. In the ancient Near East, both phenomena – divine support and religious justification of war – were inextricably linked with royal power and religion. This is why the concept must be observed in the context of royal ideology and religion.³ Different aspects of warfare⁴, divine support, and the theological justification of war in the Ancient Near East have all been discussed by several scholars.⁵ As Peeter Espak correctly points out: “It can be stated that in Ancient Near Eastern, Old Testament and later Christian understanding, religious warfare or the theology of war was mostly in service to a desired political goal. When there was a political need to attack someone, theological reasoning was used to justify, explain or motivate the war.”⁶

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³ FRANKFORT 1948; ANNUS 2002; ESPAK 2015; BOTTÉRO 2001; JOHANDI 2019.

⁴ see e.g., HAMBLIN 2006; WINTER 1985, 11–32; WINTER 1986, 205–212; MANDER 2016; SAZONOV, LAHE 2021.

⁵ KANG 1989; ODED 1992; FALES 2000, 35–62; MAYER 2001, 123–133; BAHRANI 2008; SCHMITT 2011; ESPAK 2010, 52; 2011; SAZONOV 2016, 23–50; FINK 2011.

⁶ ESPAK 2011, 127.

The first evidence of theology of war in the Ancient Near East dates from the Early Dynastic Sumerian ruler E-anatum (ruler of Lagaš, 25th century BCE), who tried to justify his military campaigns using divine forces in the E-anatum Stele (Stele of the Vultures). A later Neo-Sumerian text from Utu-hegal (the Victory of Utu-hegal) presents a more detailed communication of a ruler with several gods in their temples, asking for divine help in the context of a military campaign. The text consists of a series of communications between the ruler and the gods in their temples.⁷

In this article, we examine the divine support for and religious justification of wars by Anatolian and North Syrian rulers (Land of Hatti, Ugarit, Mukiš-Alalah, Aleppo etc.) in the Late Bronze Age (c. 1500–1150 BCE), which was an era of international diplomacy but also of many devastating wars in the region. Through a review of ancient mythological and political texts from the ambit of the Hittite Empire, we hope to demonstrate developments in the shared vocabulary of religious aspects of war (such as divine support for or justification of war, which are both often closely connected or even integrated) that evolved with the changing political circumstances in the Anatolian-Syrian region. Gods were associated with war in many ways in the ancient world, and this usually meant that they participated in the military activities of states, often providing help or support to the ruler and his army. Sometimes, rulers also tried to justify their military actions (wars, campaigns) through these divine forces. In some cases, we find divine intervention in military conflicts and wars.

In our article we attempt to show the development of the phenomenon of divine support and religious justification throughout the Late Bronze Age—from the Old Hittite period to the period of the New Kingdom—and to examine the differences between the Hittite mainland (core land) in South and East Anatolia and its vassal kingdoms in the North Syrian region. What changes in the divine justification of war can be observed across time? Are there any differences in the use of divine support for war in the core area of the Hittite empire and kingdoms in the wider Hittite ambit?

The written (cuneiform) sources analysed in this article are different in nature, origin, and genre and were composed in different periods of the II millennium BCE. Among them, there are Hittite historiographic texts written in Hittite such as *The Text of King Anitta* and several Hittite royal annals, not to mention documents such as vassal-treaties and religious texts like Hittite myths and Hittite prayers. Additionally, we discuss texts that were written in the Akkadian and Ugaritic languages in Ugarit and in other Syrian city-states of the II millennium, such as the Amarna letters, the Idrimi inscription, and the Ugaritic myths (e.g., the *Baal-Cycle*), etc. Our article proceeds by first discussing the appearance of divine support in Hittite texts

⁷ SAZONOV 2016, 26; ESPAK 2013.

and its development over time, and then expands the discussion to include texts from the Hittite vassal states in the North Syrian area.

The texts in our article were examined using different combined methods of analysis, e.g., textual criticism, criticism of textual sources in Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic and other languages, philological analysis, historical critical analysis, diachronic and synchronic analysis. This combination of methods is useful for examining a wide variety of sources from different genres linked by a common theme, in this case that of divine support and the theological justification of war.

The Text of King Anitta

At the beginning of Hittite historiography stands *The Text of King Anitta* (CTH 1).⁸ *The Text of King Anitta* is a record of the conquests of king Anitta, the ruler of Neša.⁹ In the introductory part of his text, Anitta emphasizes his close relation with the storm-god of heaven (^dIM *šamê*) as did many subsequent Hittite kings (e.g., Ḫattušili I, Muršili II etc.). For example, in his annals, Hittite king Ḫattušili I emphasized his close relation not only to the sun-goddess of Arinna (^dUTU ^{URU} ARINNA)¹⁰, calling himself “Beloved of the sun-goddess of Arinna”¹¹ but also to the sun-god of heaven (^dUTU *šamê*) and to the storm-god.¹² Although one god (the storm god) is mentioned in the text of Anitta several times, we cannot find any real theological justification for Anitta’s actions, which consist of the conquest of Ḫattuša, Ullama, Ḫarkiuana, Wašḫaniya, Šalampa, Zalpuwa, Šalatiwara, and Purušḫanda. The only theological reference related to divine forces and divine support for Anitta is the note that Anitta “behaved in a manner pleasing to the storm god in heaven!”¹³, which must include the building of a temple for the storm-god of heaven (*ne-pi-is-za-as-ta* ^dIŠKUR-*un-ni*) by Anitta.¹⁴ This is similar to the texts of several later Assyrian kings who integrated their building activity into the descriptions of their military campaigns¹⁵, for example, in RIMA 2, Tiglath-pileser I A.0.87.1, p. 29, viii 1–10: “The ḫamru-temple of the god Adad, my lord – which Šamši-Adad (III), vice-regent of Aššur, son of

⁸ HOFFNER 1997; NEU 1974; WILHELM 2016; CARRUBA 2001; CARRUBA 2003; STARKE 1979; SAZONOV 2017.

⁹ Neša (modern Kültepe, called *kārum Kaneš* in Old Assyrian sources) was the capital of the Hittite kingdom of Anitta (18th century BCE). Anitta’s father, Pithana, ruled the kingdom from Kussara and conquered Neša, and Anitta later made Neša his capital. Later in the 17th century BCE, the capital of the Old Hittite kingdom was Ḫattuša. Neša is the reason why the Hittites were called Nesili in Hittite texts.

¹⁰ For more on the sun deities of the Hittites, see YOSHIDA 1996; STEITLER 2017.

¹¹ BECKMAN 2006b, 220, § 5 A i

¹² *Ibid.*, § 20, A iii 37’–42’.

¹³ BECKMAN 2006a, 217

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 218, §14 A 55–56.

¹⁵ HAAS 2006, 31

Išme-Dagan (II) (who was) also vice-regent of the god Aššur, had built – was dilapidated and in ruins. I delineated its site (and) rebuilt it from top to bottom with baked bricks. I adorned it and made it stronger than before. Inside, I offered pure sacrifices to the god Adad, my lord.” Both the building of palaces and the undertaking of military campaigns had to be sanctioned by the gods.¹⁶

The Role of Divine Forces and Theological Justification in the Annals of Ḫattušili I

The earliest Hittite annals are *The Annals of Ḫattušili I* (a Hittite-Akkadian bilingual text, CTH 4). This text is preserved very well in an Akkadian copy (KBo 10.1), on a relatively well-preserved tablet (KBo 10.2) and in fragmentary form in four further manuscripts written in the Hittite language (KBo 10.3; KUB 23.41 (+) IBoT 3.134 (+) KUB 57.48 + VBoT 13, IBoT 4.264; KBo 50.198; KUB 23.20 (+) KUB 23.33 (+) KUB 40.6).¹⁷ In this text, the sun-goddess of Arinna and some other gods are mentioned more often than in *the Text of King Anitta*. Ḫattušili I was the first among the Hittite kings to be called ‘Beloved of deity X’¹⁸, in this case the sun-goddess of Arinna. She held Ḫattušili I by the hand and ran before him in battle. This is a new motif for the Hittites, and it reappears in later Hittite annals (e.g., by Muršili II).¹⁹ In *The Annals of Ḫattušili I*, Ḫattušili I mentions capturing several cities, some of which were burned and destroyed but only with the permission or by order of the sun-goddess of Arinna. For example, in the 4th year of his annals, Ḫattušili declares: “[Then] I destroyed [it] in the sixth month. I, the Great King, was satisfied. The sun-god appeared in the midst of the lands. The manly deeds that [I] I took to the sun-goddess of Arinna”.²⁰

Ḫattušili I mentions several times that he took over the deities of conquered cities: “[I took] its deities: the storm-god, Lord of (Mt.) Amaruk, the storm-god, Lord of Aleppo, Allatum, (Mt.) Adalur, Lelluri, 2 oxen of gold, 13 (!) statues of silver and gold, 2 model shrines, and a rear wall. And I plated it with silver and gold; and I plated the door with silver and gold”.²¹

Other gods are mentioned at the end of the text. When Ḫattušili I proudly declared that he destroyed Ḫaššuwa and Ḫaḫḫa, he displayed these actions to the gods: “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”.²² Ḫattušili I had already mentioned two gods – the sun-god of heaven

¹⁶ Cf. TÖYRÄÄNVUORI 2018, 54.

¹⁷ BECKMAN 2009, 237.

¹⁸ SAZONOV 2010, 23, 202; see also TÖYRÄÄNVUORI 2015.

¹⁹ SAZONOV 2019, 76; BEAL 2003, 83.

²⁰ BECKMAN 2006b, 220, § 7; SAZONOV 2019, 68.

²¹ BECKMAN 2006b, 21, § 11; see also SAZONOV 2019, 68.

²² BECKMAN 2006b, 221, § 20.

and the storm-god – as supporting or helping his military campaigns and actions. In his annals, Ḫattušili I emphasizes his close relation not only to the sun-goddess of Arinna (^dUTU ^{URU}ARINNA), calling himself “Beloved of the son-goddess of Arinna”²³, but also to the sun-god of Heaven (^dUTU *šamê*) and the storm-god, which is significantly different from the Anitta text composed a century earlier.

Divine Forces and Theological Justification in Hittite Prayers

We have very few materials from prayers from the period of the Old Kingdom that represent elements of divine support and even less (if at all) that represent theological justification. There are a few prayers (CTH 371; CTH 389.2; CTH 385.10) that can be dated to the period of the Old Kingdom by their linguistic characteristics and thematic features, although they are preserved only in Middle or Late Hittite copies and versions.²⁴ Even these few prayers, which probably originated in the period of the Old Kingdom and are addressed to several gods, do not give us any further information about the theological justification of Hittite kings, but they definitely provide information about divine support to rulers. Hittite prayers are a good example, because they are a source that also displays the evolution of Hittite religion and royal ideology and reflects several changes that took place during the Middle Hittite period, as M. Popko remarks.²⁵

Earlier in the Old Hittite period, prayer was represented very modestly, and prayers were akin to spells recited during magical rituals that contained benedictions for the king. Later, benedictions were more developed, such as the invocation to the sun-goddess of Arinna. We do not have many texts from the Middle Hittite period, but a few of them contain evidence that is related to the theology of war. This evidence is found in a few preserved prayers (probably Middle Hittite in origin) that were written in Middle Hittite ductus.²⁶ For example, in the prayer *Invocation of the Sun-god and the Storm-god against Slander* (CTH 389.2) we read: “You alone, O gods, have put the kingship in my hand. Mine is the entire land and its [popula]tion, and I govern it. He who is not respectful of the gods or is not respectful [of the kingship (?)], I will smash him, and [...] him. [Whoever uses] their evil mouth against me [before] the gods, [and whoever] carries [evil] on their lips”.²⁷ However, this is not real evidence for theology of war but an interesting passage that shows a ruler’s close ties with his gods and his readiness “to smash enemies” for the sake of these gods.

²³ BECKMAN 2006b, 220, § 5 A i.

²⁴ SINGER 2002, 21.

²⁵ POPKO 1995, 102.

²⁶ SINGER 2002, 27.

²⁷ SINGER 2002, 24, § 3 obv. 11'–15'.

Another prayer, *Invocation of the Sun-goddess of Arinna for the Protection of the Royal Couple* (CTH 385.10), is more interesting and provides further relevant information on divine support in military conflict. It should be noted that this text is, in its style and form, typical of the cult of the Old Hittite period, and it “echoes the Old Hittite ideology of kingship”.²⁸ This text gives some information regarding the elements of an ideology of war that could even have originated in the Old Hittite period (although, there is no actual evidence of this), and in the part of this prayer that is a Hymn to the sun-goddess of Arinna, we find the following (§ 6 ii 4'-11'): “She [the sun-goddess of Arinna] gave them a battle-ready, valiant spear saying: ‘May the hostile foreign land perish by the hand of the labarna, and let them take goods, silver and gold to Ḫattusa and Arianna, the cities of the gods!’”²⁹

New Kingdom Period: From Tudḫaliya I to Šuppiluliuma I

During the New Kingdom Period, Tudḫaliya I (late 15th c. BCE) mentions divine support for his military actions, recording in his annals³⁰ that several gods (a group of gods) – the sun-goddess of Arinna, the storm-god of heaven (sky), Inar of Ḫattuša, Zababa, Ištar and others – helped him defeat the army of Asuwa.³¹ The next text, the *Manly Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I*³², is an annalistic text about the reign of Šuppiluliuma I (1344–1322 BCE) and his deeds (conquests, etc.) that was written by his son, Muršili II (1321–1295 BCE). Muršili II was interested in recording the history of his rule along with that of his father, and he allowed the recording of the deeds of his father Šuppiluliuma I. (*Manly Deeds...*). Muršili II mentions several times in the *Manly Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I*³³ that gods helped his father not only to win battles, but to deport prisoners of war and conquered civilians as well: “While he was fortifying Almina, he sent forth Urawanni and Kuwatna-ziti, the great ‘shepherd’, into the country of Kašula in order to attack. And the gods of my father helped them, (so that) they conquered all of the country of Kašula and brought its population, cattle and sheep before my father. The deportees whom they brought were one thousand”.³⁴

Like in all earlier Hittite annals, and like in the annals of Muršili II, the *Manly Deeds of Šuppiluliuma I* are full of divine support of royal deeds. In them, the military campaigns of Šuppiluliuma I are described in the following way: “And the gods helped my father: the Sun

²⁸ SINGER 2002, 24; HAAS 1994, 430

²⁹ SINGER 2002, 26.

³⁰ NEU 1986; TARACHA 1997.

³¹ DEL MONTE 1986, 59, KUB 23.11 obv. ii 21'-32' (3).

³² GÜTERBOCK 1956; DEL MONTE 1993, 40–45.

³³ HAZENBOS 2006, 235–239.

³⁴ GÜTERBOCK 1958, 91; KBo 5.6, A i 31'-37'

Goddess of Arinna, the Storm God of Ḫatti, the Storm God of the Army, and the Lady of the Battlefield, (so that) he slew the whole aforementioned tribe, and the enemy troops died in multitudes”.³⁵

The Role of Divine Forces and Theological Justification in the Annals of Muršili II

Muršili II had two versions of his annals written: the *Ten Year Annals* and the *Extensive Annals*.³⁶ The *Extensive Annals* of Muršili II are more fragmentary than the *Ten Year Annals*, especially at the beginning (CTH 61 II, 1 I, 2–10 ii, 1). The records of the first year (KUB 19.29 obv. i; AM 24 ff) and the fifth year (CTH 61 II, 3 I, 2'–8') are not preserved as well as in the *Ten Year Annals*, and the sixth year is totally missing. As the *Ten Year Annals* are better preserved and both annals were written by same king (Muršili II), we will focus on the *Ten Year Annals*. In the main text of the annals, the ten years of Muršili's reign are described in quite a detailed manner but in a rather laconic and dry style. The text ends with a short epilogue in which Muršili II summarizes his ten years of reign:

“I have already been king for 10 years since I sat on the throne of my father. I have conquered these enemy lands in 10 years by my own hand. The lands that the princes and lords conquered are not in this account. What the sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, extends to me I will accomplish, and I will set it down (i.e., in word of tablet)”.³⁷

Throughout his text, King Muršili II attributes all his military accomplishments to divine favour and protection.³⁸ This also makes both annals of Muršili II different from the *Annals of Ḫattušili I*. Muršili II repeats the name of the sun-goddess of Arinna, the patron of his dynasty, several times, nearly incessantly, but mentions other deities often as well. However, the sun-goddess of Arinna is the one who “ran before him in battle.” The *Annals of Ḫattušili I* had already described the sun-goddess of Arinna as a god who “ran before him in battle”.³⁹ Despite the same expression, there is a difference.

Muršili II does not only declare that the sun-goddess of Arinna ran before him in battle, as did Ḫattušili I, but also that “the mighty storm god, Mezulla, and all the gods ran before him”.⁴⁰ This means that there is an expansion of the old tradition. Theological explanations of war and references to divine support in military undertakings were used by Hittite kings since Anitta, but they became more elaborate and complex during the time of the

³⁵ GÜTERBOCK 1956, 75; 2BoTU 37 i 4'–7'.

³⁶ GÖTZE 1933; GRÉLOIS 1988; NEMIROVSKI 2005.

³⁷ MINECK 2006, 258, § 38.

³⁸ MINECK, 2006, 253.

³⁹ BECKMAN 2006b, 220, § 5.

⁴⁰ MINECK 2006, 256, § 21.

New Kingdom (since Tudḫaliya I).⁴¹ As noted above, Muršili II, like Tudḫaliya I a century earlier, tried to justify his wars and his reign with the support of the gods, and he emphasized that the gods made him victorious. Divine forces played a bigger role in the *Annals of Muršili II* than in the *Annals of Ḫattušili I*. Therefore, it can be said that divine support was particularly important to Muršili II.

Of course, there are other new elements as well. For example, just as there were changes in Hittite royal titulary after the Old Kingdom period, we see these changes reflected in Muršili's annals. Ḫattušili I began his texts with the formula: "I, the Great King, the Tabarna, Ḫattušili, king of the land of Ḫatti, ruler of the city of Kuššar", while Muršili II used a different titular formula at the beginning of his introduction to the annals: "Thus says My Sun (My Majesty) Muršili, King of Ḫatti-land, Hero, son of Šuppiluliuma, Great King, Hero". The royal titular formula of Muršili II differs from other royal titular formulas of the first annals of the new Kingdom – the *Annals of Tudḫaliya* and the *Annals of Arnuwanda* – because Muršili II, like Šuppiluliuma I, used the royal epithet "My Sun" (^dUTU^š)⁴², which was introduced by Hittites before Šuppiluliuma I (probably by Zidanta II)⁴³, but Muršili II was the first to use this epithet in royal annals.

In his annals, Muršili II also continued to use the royal epithet "Hero" (UR.SAĞ), which was used by several kings before him (Arnuwanda II). Muršili II mentions the deportation of people in the fifth year of the *Ten Year Annals*, and, of course, he does so in relation to the gods: the gods justified this act and ordered and even helped Muršili II to deport people. The annals say: "The sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, the mighty storm god, my lord, Mezzulla and all the gods ran before me and I conquered the entire land of Arawanna. There were 3,500 civilian captives that I conducted to the royal house".⁴⁴ We can also find information about the deportation of people in the *Extensive Annals* of Muršili II (in the second year).⁴⁵

Divine Forces and the Theological Justification of War in Hittite Narrative Texts

The motif of divine battles and fights can be found in many Hittite mythological texts – e.g., the myth *Illuyanka and Tešub* (CTH 321)⁴⁶, at the beginning of which the serpent Illuyanka was victorious over the storm god Tešub:

⁴¹ HOFFNER 1975, 49–62

⁴² See more in SAZONOV 2010, 229, 230; 2012; BECKMAN 2002, 37–43.

⁴³ BECKMAN 2002, 37.

⁴⁴ MINECK 2006, 257, § 28

⁴⁵ KUB 16.16 obv. i; AM 26 ff.

⁴⁶ BECKMAN 1982; SAZONOV 2009.

§ 3 (A i 9–11) “When the Storm God and the serpent fought each other in Kiskilussa, the serpent defeated the Storm God”.⁴⁷

Later, Tešub “takes revenge” with the help of other gods and a man called Hupasiya. With his help, Tešub was able to kill Illuyanka:

§ 10-12 (B i 9–18) “The serpent and [his offspring] came up, and they ate and drank. They drank up every vessel, so that they became drunk.”

“Now they do not want to go back down into their hole again. Hupasiya came and tied up the serpent with a rope.”

“The Storm God came and killed the serpent, and the gods were with him”.⁴⁸

In *the Song of Kumarbi* (CTH 344)⁴⁹, originally a Hurrian myth, the main motif is of two antagonistic storm gods, Kumarbi and Tešub, fighting against each other. The combatants are both from different and opposite worlds. As Hoffner argued, “Kumarbi is a netherworld god, whereas Tešub is a celestial god.” In *the Song of Kumarbi* (Text 14), Kumarbi’s father Alalu is driven from the throne by Anu and takes refuge from Anu in the netherworld (the “Dark Earth”). Later, when Anu flees from Kumarbi, he heads for the sky.⁵⁰ Already at the beginning of the text (which is only partially preserved), we can see divine battles or wars of the gods for the kingship of heaven⁵¹:

§ 3 (A i 12–17) “For a mere nine years, Alalu was king in heaven. In the ninth year, Anu gave battle against Alalu, and he defeated Alalu. He (Alalu) fled before him and went down to the Dark Earth. Down he went to the Dark Earth, and Anu took his seat on his throne. Anu was sitting on his throne, and weighty Kumarbi was giving him drink. (Kumarbi) was bowing down at his feet and placing in his hand the drinking cups.”

§ 4 (A i 18–24) “For a mere nine years, Anu remained king in heaven. In the ninth year, Anu gave battle against Kumarbi. Kumarbi, Alalu’s offspring, gave battle against Anu. Anu can no longer withstand Kumarbi’s eyes. Anu wriggled loose from his (Kumarbi’s) hands and fled. He set out for the sky. (But) Kumarbi rushed after him, seized Anu by the feet/legs, and dragged him down from the sky”.⁵²

After his struggle with Anu, the god Alalu, the supreme ruler of heaven, loses his power, and the god Anu is enthroned as a result of his later battle with the god Kumarbi. Gods seem to act without any justification for their actions, but this is because they are gods and do

⁴⁷ HOFFNER 1998, 11.

⁴⁸ HOFFNER 1998, 12.

⁴⁹ HOFFNER 1998, 42–45.

⁵⁰ HOFFNER 1998, 41.

⁵¹ VAN DONGEN 2011.

⁵² HOFFNER 1998, 42.

not need divine justification. There seems to be a clear difference between the actions of kings and gods in this regard. *The Song of Ullikummi* (CTH 345) is also a mythological text of Hurrian origin in which we find the motif of divine battle.⁵³ In it, a sentient rock monster by the name of Ullikummi is created by Kumarbi and becomes the enemy of the storm-god Tešub.

Theological Justification of War and the System of Hittite Vassalage

With regard to the evolving divine support and sometimes even theological justification of war in the Hittite Empire, it is also interesting to look at how war and military undertakings were justified theologically in the broader Hittite sphere of influence, especially among the North Syrian vassals and allies of the Hittite Empire. While the relationships that the Hittites had with the North Syrian kingdoms changed over time, at the height of the Empire, the Hittites ruled the North Syrian region from the city of Carchemiš, the seat of the Hittite viceroy.⁵⁴ There were several kingdoms in the former area of the Mitanni kingdom in North Syria that more or less firmly belonged to the Hittite Empire, but only two of them left an extensive number of texts that, therefore, form the focus of investigation in this article: Ugarit and Mukiš-Alalah.

Ugarit was the more independent one of the two kingdoms. As an important port-city and a trade emporium on the Levantine coast, Ugarit enjoyed more freedoms throughout its history than other North Syrian kingdoms. It only came under the strict vassalage of the Hittite kings under Muršili II in the 13th century BCE, during the reign of Niqmepa, the fifth of the last kings of Ugarit. For most of its history, and certainly during its golden age, the city had been independent of both the Hittites and the Egyptians, who were also vying for control of Northern Syria. In most of the major battles in its recorded history, Ugarit was a military ally of the Hittites, not a subjected auxiliary force.⁵⁵

Ugarit had a large standing army and was one of the military powerhouses of North Syria. The Ugaritic army was composed of chariots, archers, infantry and supply troops, and it seems to have been made up of both conscripts and professional soldiers.⁵⁶ Ugaritic armies participated not only in the Battle of Qadeš (KRI 2.14) but also in the Battle of Nihriya (RS 34.165, KBo 4.14) and several smaller skirmishes, including defensive wars, border conflicts, and internal conflicts with Siyannu, Mukiš, Nuhhasse, Niya, and the Umman-Manda.⁵⁷ Unlike the other North Syrian kingdoms, Ugarit had actually allied itself with the Hittites against the

⁵³ HOFFNER 1998, 55–65.

⁵⁴ ČECH 2020: 32.

⁵⁵ TÖYRÄÄNVUORI 2021.

⁵⁶ VIDAL 2006, 653.

⁵⁷ VIDAL 2014, 301; ČECH 2020, 32.

Egyptians in the battle of Qadeš, winning favours from the Hittite overlord. Hittite kings frequently requested both chariots and warships from the Ugaritic kings, especially once the contract of vassalage (RS 17.340) had been made between Muršili II and Niqmepa. However, Ugarit remained reluctant to give control over its military force to the Hittites, opting instead to pay heavier tributes and to maintain control of its own forces⁵⁸, and especially to keep its numerous chariots in a local position (KTU 2.33), at least until the final years of the city (RS 20.238).

The kingdom of Mukiš is another North Syrian kingdom that was in the political ambit of the Hittite empire from the mid-14th century BCE. It was Ugarit's closest neighbour, and the villages on their borderlines periodically changed ownership. Mukiš, whose capital was Alalaḥ (*Tell Atchana*), was probably the richest of the North Syrian kingdoms, partly due to its location in the once fertile Amuq Valley.⁵⁹ A corpus of texts was found at Alalaḥ, but unlike the Ugaritic texts, these are all written in the Akkadian language, and no evidence of the coastal regional script exists. The city had a long literary history, and the earliest texts from the city are found in the archives of Mari in the Upper Euphrates, written in the 18th century BCE.

In addition, Alalaḥ was also the seat of the king of Aleppo following the Mitanni conquest of Yamḥad, the Yamḥadian royal house continuing in the city. The king of Alalaḥ actually bore, for a time, the title of the King of Aleppo.⁶⁰ Due to the centrality of the Yamḥadian royal house among the North Syrian kingdoms in the Amorite Kingdom Period (2000–1595 BCE), it is only natural that subjecting Mukiš and making the king of Alalaḥ a Hittite vassal was necessary for securing the allegiance of the other North Syrian kingdoms. This is why Mukiš was under much stricter Hittite control than its southern neighbour for the latter part of the Late Bronze Age. If there is some uncertainty as to the status of Ugarit under the Hittite system of vassalage, there seems to be no doubt that Alalaḥ was under the control of the Hittite viceroy in Carchemiš at this time. Therefore, we may expect the theological justification of war to somewhat differ between the three examples discussed in this article, but also to depict some shared characteristics.

Divine Support for War in the Ugaritic Narrative Texts

No royal inscriptions have been found at Ugarit. The genre of the public royal monument or historical account chronicling the mighty deeds of the king is entirely missing⁶¹, and one can only speculate why this is so. The history of Ugarit is certainly filled with events

⁵⁸ ČECH 2020, 32.

⁵⁹ CASANA 2009, 10.

⁶⁰ OLIVA 2005, 1.

⁶¹ SANDERS 2008, 99.

that could well have been eulogized in monumental form, and the city has many examples of iconographic depictions of similar events – the foremost among them being the ivory reliefs found at the royal palace.⁶² The reasons might include the relatively secure location of the city, protected by both the sea and the Jebel al-Ansariyah range (if such inscriptions were meant to function as warnings to future conquerors), the secure and long-lasting dynastic line of the city (if such inscriptions were meant for the erudition of future kings), wide-spread literacy in the city (if such inscriptions were meant only for an elite to read), or the nearness of the city to the abode of the storm god on Mt. Saphon (if such inscriptions were meant to be read by the gods themselves).

Similarly, Ugaritic texts are silent regarding military standards, but military standards are found in iconographic depictions.⁶³ According to Vidal, one of the uses of these standards was to show the support of the deity to the soldiers at the start of a battle. Regardless of the absence of royal inscriptions detailing actual military campaigns by the Ugaritic kings, we must look to the Ugaritic narrative texts for information on divine support for war in the kingdom. According to Čech, Ugaritic texts contain descriptions of battles that never happened, battles that would happen in the future and battles without description, but they have no descriptions of actual battles.⁶⁴

The problem with using narrative texts to study the theological justification of war at Ugarit comes from the fact that it is not entirely certain whether the texts were composed at Ugarit or whether they were merely popular texts copied there. It is known that several tablets found at Ugarit had been written at Ḫattuša.⁶⁵ But whether the texts were composed or merely copied in the city, we can be fairly certain that they were read to the king and hence shared ideological aspects familiar to and accepted by the Ugaritic royal house. Čech even suggests that Baal functions as a personification or deification of the kingdom in the story and that the storm god's battle represents the battle of the nation.⁶⁶

The Baal-Cycle (KTU 1.1–1.6), which is the best-known text from Ugarit, is a text that contains religious content. Although it features combat as its central theme, it is not a text that concerns war or the theological justification of war, apart from one scene in which the goddess Anat is described as engaging in battle with human soldiers for fun:

“The gates of the house of Anat are closed, and she meets warriors at the foot of the mountain. Look! Anat fights in the valley, battles between two cities. She fights the people of

⁶² CAQUOT and SZNYCER 1980, pl. XXVIII, XXIX.

⁶³ VIDAL 2014, 297.

⁶⁴ ČECH 2020, 31.

⁶⁵ BACHVAROVA 2016, 31.

⁶⁶ ČECH 2020, 36

the seashore, strikes the men of the sunrise. Under her are heads like balls, above her hands like locusts, like grasshoppers are heaps of warrior-hands. She fastens heads on her back and fixes (severed) hands to her belt. She gleans knee-deep in the blood of warriors, neck-deep in the gore of soldiers. She drives off prisoners (of war) with a club, the enemy (before her) with her bow.⁶⁷

It is unclear who the people of the seashore and the men of the sunrise are in this passage, but a Levantine character may be ascribed to them. While the reference need not be to any historical war, the description would certainly not have been out of place as a portrayal of the aftermath of the Battle of Qadeš, given the heaps of warrior-hands that are actually depicted in the Abu Simbel reliefs of Ramesses II.⁶⁸

Anat seems to have been the primary deity at least for the common soldier. Her name is found not only in Ugaritic texts but also as a theophoric element in personal names of soldiers, inscribed on arrow heads from the Levantine area⁶⁹, and as a divine name in the Aramean-Judean military garrison in Elephantine, where the syncretistic deities Anat-Bethel (TAD C3.15) and Anat-Yahu (TAD B7.3) were worshiped by soldiers and their families at the local temple. Anat may not have been referred to for the theological justification of war on the national level, but she certainly seems to have been employed in forging a military cult and in mobilizing the common soldier. The belligerent goddess was not a protective figure for the soldier but was a protective figure for the king. The Ugaritic crown prince is seen in an iconographic depiction from the palace as sucking from the teat of the warrior goddess, possibly as an acknowledgment that the power of the monarchy flows from its standing army. In a way, the warrior goddess was the well-spring of the nation.

The goddess also features in one of the epic stories, the *Tale of Aqhat*.⁷⁰ There is no historical war in the tale in which a god helps Aqhat⁷¹, but the tale does concern a warrior. Aqhat is a warrior prince in possession of a bow that is coveted by the goddess. This is likely in reference to the composite bow that was a new military technology introduced in the Late Bronze Age.⁷² Anat offers the warrior prince gold and silver for the bow, and, upon his refusal, even immortality: “Ask for life, warrior Aqhat! Ask for life and I will give it to you, deathlessness I will bestow you. I will let you count your years with Baal, and with the sons of Ilu your

⁶⁷ KTU 1.3 II 3'–16'.

⁶⁸ HEALY 2000.

⁶⁹ SMITH 2014, 494.

⁷⁰ KTU 1.17–1.22.

⁷¹ KANG 1989, 74.

⁷² MARGALIT 2011, 484.

months” (1.17 VI 26’–29’). Aqhat refuses the goddess, insisting that women have no business possessing such weapons:

“Do not tempt me, maiden! To a hero your guile is phlegm. What does a man get in the end? What does a man take as his fate? Glaze is poured on the head, lye over my skull ... the death of everyone (else) I shall die, and I too shall be dead! And another word I will say: bows are [the weapons] of soldiers – are women now to go hunting?”⁷³

Aqhat’s refusal of the goddess is interesting because she was the patron goddess of soldiers. Anat has the warrior killed for this insult, but both mourn and eulogize him after his death. The warrior prince is not killed in battle but is murdered at the behest of the goddess, leading to a drought that lasts for several years. Anat also hires the help of Yatpan, the Sutean warrior, to attack the town of Abiluma. The end of the text is missing, but the final scenes take place in the military camp of Yatpan where the sister of Aqhat has come to avenge her brother, dressed like a warrior that is disguised as a woman. She clearly petitions the gods for success in her undertaking and mentions the rites performed by her father Danel before leaving for the military camp, but the gods are not individually named in the text:

“My father presented an offering for the gods, into the heavens he sent incense, to the stars the scent of the Harnemites. Therefore, bless me, I would go blessed! Empower me, I would go empowered! I will slay my brother’s slayer, make an end of the one that finished my brother.”⁷⁴

The ending of the story is unfortunately missing, so it is difficult to know what the moral of the story was. Still, it seems clear that, while the goddess Anat possessed many characteristics valorised by soldiers, as did Aqhat’s sister Paghit, the ideal soldier was not female, and war was not the business of women.

In the *Epic of Kirta* (KTU 1.14–1.16), war is theologically justified by the king’s desire for progeny. The *Epic of Kirta* is often interpreted as having a historical core.⁷⁵ King Kirta has lost all his wives and desires a legacy, a son to continue his house. He not only prays to Ilu but, at the behest of the god, performs rituals that are meant to guarantee success in his military undertakings. Ilu also instructs the king on the mustering of armies, the gathering of supplies and even on how to march. At the behest of Ilu, sacrifices are also made to the storm god Baal:

“Raise your hands to the sky. Sacrifice to Bull El, your father! Adore Baal with your sacrifice, the son of Dagan with your offering! Let Kirta descend from the rooftops! ... Let the army be supplied and go forth, the host of hosts be supplied. Let the escorting army go forth!

⁷³ KTU 1.17 VI 34’–41’.

⁷⁴ KTU 1.19 IV 29’.

⁷⁵ KANG 1989, 73.

Let your host be a very large force, as many as three hundred multitudes. Soldiers beyond number, archers beyond counting.”⁷⁶

At the request of the god, Kirta attacks a neighbouring kingdom to get himself a wife to marry. On his way, he stops at a shrine of the goddess Asherah, making a vow to bring a tribute of gold and silver to the goddess upon the success of his military undertaking.

“They march a day and a second. After sunrise on the third (day), he arrives at the shrine of the Tyrian Asherah, the goddess of the Sidonians. There he makes a vow, the Noble Kirta: ‘As the Tyrian Asherah lives, the goddess of the Sidonians – Should I take Huraya to my house, bring the young woman to my court? I will double (her weight) in silver and a third of her I will give in gold!’”⁷⁷

Kirta, however, reneges on his promise, which makes the goddess grow angry, and she strikes him with a deadly illness. However, while the king seeks favour from Asherah to win the war, it is the god Ilu that supports Kirta in his ambition.⁷⁸

The gods are rarely mentioned in the letters that concern actual military activities. Even the most famous of them, the so-called *General’s Letter* (RS 20.33) only makes one vague reference to ‘the heavens’. But there is one ritual text (KTU 1.119) that seems to concern a ritual of war:

“If a strong enemy attacks your gate, a warrior your walls, lift your eyes to Baal (and say): Oh Baal, drive away the strong enemy from our gate, the warrior from our walls! Baal will hear your prayer. He will drive away the strong enemy from your gate, the warrior from your walls.”

It seems that the favour of the gods, especially the gods upon whose territory military campaigns were made, was necessary for the successful undertaking of a campaign. Promises and oaths made to the gods were to be upheld, as oath-breaking was a major cause for misfortune in war. Broken oaths, even by one’s ancestors, could cause a sudden turn in one’s military fortunes, so upholding the proper ancestral rites and assuring one’s legacy depended on the favour of the gods – in Kirta’s case, the goddess Asherah. While many letters are known from this period, especially in the corpus of the *Amarna Letters*⁷⁹, the trend of not mentioning divinities seems to hold true.

This is somewhat surprising given the number of references to wars, battles, and skirmishes within the letters, many of which were written by the Syrian kings to the Egyptian pharaohs. The pharaohs to whom most of the letters are addressed (Amenhotep III and IV, father and son) are consistently called ^dUTU-si “My sun-god” by the Syrian kings, and they

⁷⁶ KTU 1.14 II 22’–40’.

⁷⁷ KTU 1.14 IV 34’–43’.

⁷⁸ KANG 1989, 73.

⁷⁹ RAINEY 2014.

clearly petition the Egyptian king to grant both permission and blessing upon their undertakings, so in a sense their wars do receive theological justification. In only one letter, EA 2 from the Babylonian king Kadašman-Enlil, is the pharaoh called the storm-god instead of the sun-god. But gods are explicitly mentioned in very few letters only.

Among these, there is the letter EA55 from the king of Qatna to Amenhotep III, which states:

“My lord knows it. My lord [...] the ancestors of [my lord...] and now the king of the land of Ḫa[tti] has burned them with fire. As for the gods and the elite of the c[ity of Qat]na, the king of the land of Ḫatti has taken them away [...]” (38'-43').

“My lord, a (statue of) the sun god, the god of my father, each of your ancestors made, and the name (of each one) was placed before him. But now, as for the sun god, the god of my father, the king of the land of Ḫatti has taken them. And my lord knows them, the manufacture of (those) gods, just as they are” (53'-59').

According to the letter, the Hittite king, possibly Šuppiluliuma I, had taken the gods of Qatna either as booty or as hostages after his military victory. The statues of these gods may have been purposefully conflated with the image of the pharaoh to rouse anger in the monarch and to whip him into some kind of a retaliation that seems not to have taken place.

Another letter that makes explicit reference to gods is EA 167 from Aziru, the Syrian king of Amurru:

“So thus, Tutu and the king, my lord, and the senior officials (must swear): ‘If we have imputed anything that is unseemly to Aziru.’ So thus you must swear by my deities and by Aten. And then I and Ḫatip the servant of the king are guiltless.”

It is noteworthy about the letter that not only are the anonymous but likely Syrian king and his officials requested to swear by the personal deities of Aziru of Amurru to prove their innocence in the matter that they are accused of, but they are also required to swear by the newly fashioned Egyptian deity Aten, the personal god of Akhenaten – the son of Amenhotep III.

While these texts do not allow us to access the self-presentation of Syrian kings regarding their military undertakings, there are certain ideological characteristics shared by the texts that can be used to draw some conclusions. The most important divinity at Ugarit was the storm god Baal, but while he is connected to combat in the texts, the god's connection to war itself seems almost entirely missing – apart from a very practical, ritual text. The god Ilu features in several texts in relation to war, which is probably due to the question of legacy and inheritance that seems central to the narrative texts. Ilu seems to facilitate war, especially in teaching the rites and rituals to be performed before undertaking a campaign.

The goddess Anat is likewise very much connected to war, but her connection may have come from her patronage of the troops and the common soldier. Anat was the warrior's warrior, but she did not justify war to the nation; she merely protected the warrior once he was already at war. It is surprising that it is Asherah, the mother goddess with no apparent connection to war or battle, that is mentioned as the divine force ensuring victory in the Ugaritic narrative texts. However, according to Sanders, there are indications in the ritual and political texts from the city that not only the king but also the people were considered agents of history and religion.⁸⁰ This may account for some of the differences in the use of divine forces in the theological justification of war at Ugarit.

Divine Forces and Theological Justification of War in Alalakh: The Idrimi Inscription

For the present inquiry, the most relevant text from Alalakh is the so-called *Idrimi Statue Inscription*⁸¹, which was written on the magnesite statue of Idrimi (BM 130738) in the 15th century BCE. Royal inscriptions are inherently biased, and they are motivated by the interests of kings for which reason they must be used with caution when it comes to the reconstruction of history.⁸² As vehicles for royal ideology, they are, however, useful for investigating ideological concerns such as the justification of war. Idrimi was a prince of the royal house of Yamhad (Aleppo) who fled the city after its capture by Mitanni. Idrimi tours around the Levant before settling in the city of Alalakh in the Syrian kingdom of Mukiš and achieves several military victories under the banner of Alalakh. He describes himself as “Idrimi, son of Ili-ilimma, servant of Tešub, Hebat and Shaushka, the lady of Alalakh, my lady.” It seems that his gods are not Amorite gods but Hurrian ones, and while he claims that they are the gods of Alalakh, they appear to be his personal deities. Idrimi describes his reason for settling in Alalakh:

“In Aleppo, my paternal home, an outrage had occurred, and we fled. The lords of Emar descended from the sisters of my mother, so we established ourselves in Emar. My brothers, who were older than I, lived with me also. But none considered things that I considered; I thought: ‘He who is in the house of his father is the noble son of a prince. He who is among the people of Emar, however, is a slave.’”

Idrimi looks especially to the storm god Tešub to sanction his military campaigns, and he will not undertake them until the god is favourable: “I stayed among the Hapiru-people for seven years. I let birds fly and sacrificed lambs. In the 7th year, Tešub turned to me. Thereupon, I built ships. I let the Nulla-soldiers board the ships. By sea, I approached the country Mukiš

⁸⁰ SANDERS 2008, 107.

⁸¹ UF 13, 201–268.

⁸² SURIANO 2014, 2.

and reached the mainland in front of the mountain Hazzi I climbed.” Hazzi, Mt Casius, was a sacred mountain of the storm god. It is interesting that the inscription uses the Hurrian name Tešub for the storm god since Hadad/Adad of Aleppo, the patron god of Yamḥad, would certainly have been known by his Semitic name to the inhabitants of Idrimi’s new kingdom, Mukiš.

Idrimi battled the Hurrian king Battarna for seven years, and Idrimi himself claims that the end of the hostilities was due to him reminding the Hurrian king of the oath sworn by their forefathers, i.e., that Battarna’s as an oath-breaker’s campaign was not blessed by the gods:

“The powerful king heard of the efforts of our ancestors and the mutual oath and was afraid of the contents of the oath. Because of the wording of the oath and because of our efforts, he sent a gift. In Kinumu, the following month, I made sacrifices liberally.”

Idrimi’s description (81’–91’) of what he did after his victory over and capture of seven Syrian cities (Passahe, Damarutla, Hulahhan, Zila, Ie, Uluzila and Zaruna) is reminiscent of the Ugaritic Baal-Cycle and Baal’s building projects following his victory over Yamm (the Sea):

“I built a palace. I made my throne like the throne of kings. I made my brothers like royal brothers, my sons like their sons and my relatives their relatives. The inhabitants who were in my land I made to dwell securely, and even those who did not have a dwelling I settled. Then, I organized my land and made my cities like our ancestors did. Just as our ancestors had established regular rites for the gods of Alalaḥ [Tešub, Hebat and Šauška], and just as our forefathers had performed sacrifices, I constantly performed them. These things I did, and I entrusted them to my son Tešub-nirari.”

Idrimi’s victories may have been due to his cunning, to his good advisors, to opportune conditions, or even to good luck. In the inscription, however, he both attributes his victories to the gods of his city and is also careful to make it known that he did not proceed without their approval, to the extent of waiting seven years for the storm god Tešub to sanction his undertaking. The seven years mentioned in the text may have had ideological significance and its mention in the inscription does not necessitate that such a period of waiting has a historical correspondence. He also presents his peace with the Mitanni king not only as a victory for himself but accords it to Battarna’s failure to honour promises made to the gods by his ancestors. Idrimi himself, naturally, not only upheld the promises that his ancestors had made to the gods, but also made sure to impart to his son and heir the same respect for ancestral deities.

Conclusion

As we can see, divine support, divine intervention, and an ideology of (divine) warfare developed in the Hittite world throughout the whole of Hittite history and became better formulated and more complex with the passing of time, reaching their apex during the New Kingdom Period. If we can observe barely any divine support for Anitta's deeds in the *Text of Anitta*, then Ḫattušili I, who ruled 100 years later, already elaborated this phenomenon more explicitly and referred to gods in support of his aggressive politics and military actions (*The Annals of Ḫattušili I*). The phenomenon of divine support for war can be found in an even more sophisticated and developed manner during the New Kingdom, in the *Annals of Tudḫaliya I*, in the *Mainly Deeds of Šuppiluliuma* and in the annals written by Muršili II, etc. In some cases, we even have outright theological justification of wars.

As we can see, ideology, religion, and theology played an insignificant role in conflict and warfare and especially in the divine support of war in Hittite Anatolia at the time of Anitta in the 18th c. BCE. This, however, changed dramatically across the time, and in the *Annals of Ḫattušili I*, the role of gods has increased considerably, and the king began to refer to the gods in justification for his actions (also in war). Later, in the epoch of the New Kingdom, since the time of Tudḫaliya I, and especially since Muršili II, the role of the gods became even more elaborate and sophisticated, and the kings mention several gods or a group of gods, instead of only two or three of them (as was done by Ḫattušili I) that helped them in wars and in military campaigns. We have several pieces of evidence from Hittite sources in which the ruler uses proper theological justification for his military campaign or for the invasion of another country, and the most elaborate of these are the annals of Muršili II.

Similar themes of divine support and the occasional theological justification of war are also found in the texts of the vassal kingdoms of the Hittite Empire, with the exception that, on the ideological level, the Hittite kings were the representatives of the gods for the Syrian kings. This is a clear difference between the texts from the core area of the Hittite Empire and the texts from the kingdoms of the Hittite ambit. Many of the wars fought by the major international players of the Late Bronze Age were fought on the battlefields of North Syria, which is why war is a common occurrence in the texts of the peoples based there. Unlike in the Hittite texts, the petitioning of the gods before military undertakings is a common trope in the texts from Ugarit and Alalakh. The same may have been true of the other Syrian vassals of the Hittite kings, but fewer texts have remained from them. These petitions were also accompanied by rituals meant to ascertain good fortunes in war. The petitioned deities changed depending on the place of origin of the petitioner and the place that was attacked. Both one's ancestral

gods and the gods of the enemy needed to be respected for a campaign to be successful, and peace could also be made on behalf of the gods of both parties only.

In the North Syrian kingdoms, proper conduct of war concerned not only the present but also the past and future generations. A victory or defeat could be decided by the conduct of one's ancestors, and teaching one's descendants the proper way to petition the gods for success in war was supremely important. While the storm god was likely the most important deity concerning the theological justification of war among the North Syrian kingdoms, this role of the god is not always clearly formulated in the texts. Goddesses were also petitioned for success in war, but there was a clear difference in how common soldiers and kings apprehended the gods, especially the widely popular warrior goddess Anat. While soldiers and warriors looked to the goddess for success in battle, she functioned as the nursemaid of the king. While the petitioning of divine support for military undertakings was likely shared by kings across the entire ancient Near East, Anatolia and North Syria formed a cultural ambit where influences were readily exchanged both from Anatolia to Syria and from Syria to Anatolia. In the texts from these areas, we can see details and motifs that are particular to either region but also themes that are shared by both areas. It is noticeable that the political relationship of overlord and vassal or subject kingdom can be seen not only in the political correspondence of the kingdoms but also on the ideological level, in the texts that the Hittites wrote for their own gods and the Syrians wrote for theirs. The hierarchical relationships of the kingdoms of Anatolia and North Syria are so ingrained that they influenced the very core of how the divine support of war was formulated in the texts.

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Greek Rulers and Imperial Powers in Western Anatolia (8th–6th Centuries BC¹)*Mait KÕIV²

Abstract. *The article explores the cultural and political interaction between the Anatolian kingdoms and the elites of the Greek poleis on the Anatolian coast, with special attention to Archaic Ephesos for which relatively good evidence for the relations with Lydia is available. It demonstrates how the neighbouring hegemonic monarchies provided imitable examples for the Greek elite leaders and offered real opportunities for claiming, legitimating and entrenching their power. This shows, on the one hand, how the elites on the fringes of an empire could profit from imperial power, how the mild influence of an empire shaped the internal order of the communities in its sphere of influence by promoting the position of the local leaders. On the other hand, this sheds light on the strategies used by empires for attaining control of strategically important points on their outskirts.*

Rezumat. *Acest articol explorează interacțiunile culturale și politice dintre regatele din Anatolia și elitele orașelor grecești de pe coasta anatoliană, în special cu cele din vechiul Ephes, deoarece există mărturii solide ale relațiilor sale cu Lydia. Astfel, este demonstrată modalitatea prin care monarhiile hegemonice învecinate au furnizat exemple imitabile pentru liderii elitelor grecești și au oferit oportunități reale pentru a-și asuma, legitima și întări puterea. Aceasta arată cum, pe de o parte, elitele de la marginea unui imperiu puteau profita de puterea centrală, iar pe de altă parte cum influența moderată a unui imperiu putea modela ordinea internă a unor comunități și le putea dirija către sfera sa de influență prin promovarea în rang a liderilor locali. De asemenea, aceasta clarifică unele chestiuni cu privire la strategia utilizată de regimurile monarhice pentru a aduce sub control anumite puncte strategice importante.*

Keywords: *Ancient history, Archaic Greece, ancient Anatolia, early state formation.*

Greek city-states on the western Anatolian coast, evolving from the small settlements founded in the Early Iron Age by the immigrant groups from mainland Greece, developed in the neighbourhood of the great powers in the Anatolian interior. The Hittite empire dominating Anatolia during the Late Bronze had collapsed in the 12th century upheavals, and its domination was replaced by the Phrygian and Lydian kingdoms, and by the Persian empire, after the mid-6th century, with the whole of Anatolia under its control. At least from the 7th century the Anatolian states presented an almost constant threat to the Greek poleis on the coast, which did not, however, deny a close peaceful interaction in religious, cultural and even

¹ All the following dates will be BC.

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political spheres. As the imperial kingdoms in Anatolia were enormously powerful and attractively rich in Greek terms, they served as enviable examples to be imitated for the ambitious elites in the Greek city-states, while the Anatolian rulers might have needed some support from the part of the ruling circles in the Greek poleis for achieving their hegemonic ends. The article explores the consequent political interaction between the Anatolian kingdoms and the elites of the Greek poleis, with special attention to Archaic Ephesos for which relatively good evidence for the relations with Lydia is available.

The kingdom of Phrygia arose as a major power in the central Anatolia during the 9th century. Its capital Gordion developed into a mighty fortified royal centre with big burial mounds – tumuli – the Phrygian elite erected around it. The biggest among these – Tumulus MM – rising 52 m from ground level and containing a wooden burial chamber of a ca 65 years old man dates from around the middle of the 8th century or slightly after that.³ A Phrygian king Mita from the latter part of the 8th century is known from the documents of Sargon II of Assyria, appearing as a troublesome opponent of the Assyrian king, who eventually declared at least nominal loyalty to Sargon.⁴ The Greek tradition remembered this Mita, and probably other Phrygian kings of the same name, as King Midas – a legendary figure who was conceived either as a completely mythological person from the distant past, or a semi-historical ruler from the early Archaic era.⁵ According to the Greek tradition, Midas committed suicide when the Kimmerians, reputedly a nomadic people from the east-European steppes, invaded Anatolia and, we can presume, attacked the Phrygian kingdom.⁶ The Assyrian sources date the Kimmerians' invasion to the Anatolia's central and western parts to around the middle of the 7th century.⁷

³ See especially VOIGT 2013, 186–199 and RÄTHEL 2019, 124–151; but also VOIGT, HENRICKSON 2000, 48, 51–52; VOIGT 2011; DE VRIES 2008, 30–33; VOIGT, DE VRIES 2011.

⁴ The sources discussed in BERNDT-ERSÖZ 2008. See also HAWKINS 1997; FUCHS 2001; SAMS 2011, 611–612; RÄTHEL 2019, 197–206, 223–246.

⁵ For the legendary Midas supposedly living during a distant Heroic Age see ROLLER 1983 who regards the mythological and the quasi-historical king as identical (roughly similar to DE VRIES 2011, 51–53). Some of the ancients surely identified them as such (Byzantine chroniclers: Kedrenos, 1.195; Symeon Logothete, 36; Georg. Hamart. Chron. Breve: 110.292 ascribed the ass ears to the 'historical' king), but in general, the mythological Midas reputedly lived in a very distant past, and was often located in Thrace in the Balkans (as for example Hdt. VIII 138.2–3 assuming that Midas lived in Thrace at some unspecified time before the foundation of the Macedonian dynasty) instead of Phrygia.

⁶ See Strab. I 3.21; Eustath. Od. XI 14; Plut. Flamin. 20.20 and De superst. 8 (Mor. 168f) mention that the suicide was caused by some bad dreams. There could have been, in the reality, a number of Phrygian kings called Mita, but the Greek tradition lumped them into the figure of a single half-legendary king (see KÖIV 2021). For the summary and the discussion of the Greek and Roman evidence see especially RÄTHEL 2019, 112–123, 206–214; but also LEHMANN-HAUPT 1921, 412–419; IVANTCHIK 1993, 69–73, 105–114; SAUTER 2000, 82–93, 166–173; BERNDT-ERSÖZ 2008, 19–21, 25–27.

⁷ In the Assyrian contemporary sources the first indications of the Kimmerians (Gimirrai) attacks against western Anatolia date from the time of Ashurbanipal (668–627) – see note 9.

During the second quarter of the 7th century, before the Kimmerians' intrusion, the kingdom of Lydia arose in the western part of Anatolia. Its capital Sardeis, protected by monumental walls, was situated less than 100 km from the Greek city of Smyrna on the Anatolian coast, thus much closer to the Greek settlements than the previously dominant Phrygia. Like the Phrygians, the Lydian elite buried its dead in massive tumuli built in the capital's neighbourhood. During the later 7th and the early 6th century the Lydian kings subjected the whole western and a good part of central Anatolia.⁸ Like the Phrygians, the Lydians suffered from the Kimmerian attack, and the Assyrian sources report that their king Gyges (Gugu) – the founder of the hegemony according to the Greek tradition – perished in the course of this invasion. The Lydian kingdom however survived these upheavals and continued to flourish. The Greek tradition states that their king Alyattes (a great grandson of Gyges) expelled the Kimmerians from Asia.⁹

According to the Greek accounts given by Herodotos and Nikolaos of Damascus – the latter probably following the Lydian historian Xanthos, a contemporary of Herodotos – the Lydians were for a long period of time ruled by a dynasty descending from Herakles.¹⁰ Hardly anything can be said about the historicity of this Herakleid dynasty. The more or less reliable history of Lydia begins with Gyges who, according to the Greek accounts, killed the last Herakleid king, married his wife and became the new ruler.¹¹ The Mermnad dynasty founded by him ca 680 governed until the 540s when the last Lydian king, the proverbially wealthy and powerful Kroisos, was overthrown by Kyros of Persia, and Lydia was included into the Persian empire.¹²

There is no indication in the sources that the Phrygians would have attempted to conquer the Greek poleis, or in any way attempted to subject them to their direct political control. The Mermnad kings of Lydia, however, became, from the very beginning of their rule, aggressive against the Greek poleis (see the map). Gyges allegedly conquered Magnesia,

⁸ The main literary accounts, albeit of half-legendary character, are given by the Greek authors: Herodotos (I 6–94) and Nikolaos of Damascus (FGrH 90 F 44, 62–65) probably following the 5th century historian Xanthos of Lydia. For the archaeological evidence see RUSSIN, HANFMANN 1983; ROOSEVELT 2009; CAHILL 2010a; RATTÉ 2011.

⁹ According to the Greek sources the Kimmerians attacked Lydia at the time when it was ruled by King Ardys the son of Gyges. They ravaged the Lydian capital Sardeis except the acropolis, attacked the Greek cities on the Anatolian western coast and burned down the famous sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesos (Hdt. I 15; Kallisthenes, FGrHist 124 F 29 (= Strab. XIII 4.8); Strab. I 3.21; XIV 1.40; Eustath. Od. XI 14; Kallim. Hymn. Artem. 251–258; Athen. XII 525c). Their expulsion by Alyattes is mentioned in Hdt. I 16.2; Polyæn. VII 2.1. For the Assyrian evidence see LEHMANN-HAUPT 1921, 416–419; COGAN, TADMOR 1977, 80–81; KUHRT 1987–90, 187; SAUTER 2000, 235–237; RÄTHEL 2019, 288–301, 304–311.

¹⁰ Hdt. I 7.4; Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 44–46. For this tradition see RÄTHEL 2019, 273–277.

¹¹ Hdt. I 8–13; Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 47. See RÄTHEL 2019, 278–283.

¹² The principal account in Hdt. I 46–91; for the date see e.g. RÄTHEL 2015.

probably the Magnesia situated on the northern slope of the Sipylus mountain.¹³ We are moreover informed that he attacked Smyrna, took the town (*asty*) of Kolophon (does it mean that the acropolis was left un-conquered?),¹⁴ and even attacked Miletos fairly far southward of Lydia.¹⁵ His successor Ardys conquered Priene and attacked Miletos again.¹⁶ The next king Sadyattes began a new war against Miletos, which was continued by his son Alyattes. Miletos defended its independence and its ruler Thrasybulos concluded a treaty of friendship and alliance with Alyattes.¹⁷ A war that Alyattes waged against Priene allegedly ended with a peace treaty negotiated by the famous Prienian sage Bias.¹⁸ Alyattes however conquered and almost destroyed Smyrna, and although he apparently suffered a serious setback against Klazomenai,¹⁹ he reputedly succeeded to beguile the knights of Kolophon to come as mercenaries to Sardeis where he treacherously had them killed, thus getting rid of the famously dangerous Kolophonian cavalry.²⁰ Kroisos the son of Alyattes started his career with an attack against Ephesos and conquered thereafter all the Greek poleis on the Anatolian mainland, subjecting them to the payment of tribute.²¹ An exception was made for Miletos with whom Kroisos concluded (or rather renewed) the treaty of peace and alliance.²²

When the Persians subjected the Lydian kingdom, they launched attacks against the Greek poleis, which were subsequently conquered one by one, all except Miletos with whom Kyros concluded a treaty of alliance as it had been between Miletos and the Lydian kings.²³

This aggressiveness of the Anatolian rulers did not exclude close relations and intermarriages between the Greek and Anatolian elites (discussed below) and mutual cultural exchange.²⁴ The Anatolian elites were indeed very wealthy in Greek terms and therefore likely

¹³ Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 62. Nikolaos does not state if this was the Magnesia on Sipylus or Magnesia on Maiandros further south. However, the attacks of Gyges were allegedly caused by an outrage of the Magnesians against a Smyrnaean favourite of his, which suggests a closeness of this Magnesia to Smyrna and thus its identification as the Sipylus polis. On the other hand, when Gyges invaded Miletos he must have passed Magnesia on Maiandros, and perhaps controlled this as well.

¹⁴ Suggested by HUXLEY 1966, 53.

¹⁵ Hdt. I 14.4.

¹⁶ Hdt. I 15.

¹⁷ Hdt. I 18–22: the Lydians ravaging the Milesian land accidentally burnt down the temple of Athena at Assesos, which caused the illness of Alyattes as divine revenge and forced the king to conclude peace and to build two temples dedicated to Athena instead of the previous one.

¹⁸ Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 65.1; Diog. Laert. I 83 noting the peace concluded by Bias; the historicity of this incident may be doubted because the guile that Bias allegedly used for achieving the peace looks suspiciously similar to that used by the Milesian tyrant Thrasybulos in his war against Alyattes, as told by Herodotos (I 21–22).

¹⁹ Hdt. I 16.2: the conquest of Smyrna mentioned also in Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 64.

²⁰ Polyainos VII 2.

²¹ Hdt. I 26.

²² Hdt. I 141.4.

²³ Hdt. I 141, 162–170.

²⁴ See now especially RÄTHEL 2019, 312–330.

to be exemplar for the Greek aristocrats. The influence of the Lydian elite lifestyle is confirmed by the Archaic poets – Sappho and Xenophanes – who clearly regarded the luxurious lifestyle as ‘Lydian’.²⁵ The Greeks quickly adopted the use of coinage invented by the Lydians, as demonstrated by the fact that the earliest attested examples have been found from the Artemision in Ephesos, and that the Greek poleis soon started to mint their own.²⁶ The Greek elites seem to have adopted elements of Anatolian funerary customs. The burial mounds (*tumuli*) at Kolophon, Smyrna and Klazomenai could have been inspired by the huge burial mounds of the Phrygian and Lydian elite,²⁷ and from Phokaia we know a rock-cut Lydian style tomb and a monolithic Persian-style tomb carved out of the bedrock.²⁸ The influence, however, was mutual. The Asian rulers made precious dedications to Greek sanctuaries, not only on the Anatolian coast but also on the Greek mainland. The Phrygian Midas was reputedly the first barbarian (non-Greek) potentate whose dedication – a throne from which the king had given his sentences – was shown in Delphi.²⁹ The power of the Lydian king Gyges was allegedly legitimated by the Delphic oracle, to which Gyges responded with precious dedications.³⁰ Alyattes consulted the Delphic oracle because of his illness during the war against Miletos, and built thereafter two temples dedicated to Athena in Assessos on Milesian land.³¹ Kroisos was especially famous for his precious dedications to a number of Greek sanctuaries. These included the principal cult-places in Asia Minor, like the oracle of Apollo at Didyma controlled by Miletos and the Artemision of Ephesos where he erected a number of pillars, as stated by Herodotos and confirmed by an inscription preserved from his time.³² Kroisos had indeed especially close relations with Delphi, and is reported to have made dedications also to the temple of Apollo Ismenios at Thebes and the sanctuary of Amphiaraos in northern Attika.³³

In the terms of the power relations, however, the Anatolian kingdoms were clearly superior to the Greek city-states, and the fact that the Lydian kings attacked the Greek poleis and eventually reduced them into subjection must have affected the internal development of the Greek states. We can expect that the Greeks had much to learn from their eastern neighbours in the military and perhaps also political field; the effectively functioning

²⁵ Sappho fr. 16.20 (Lydian chariotry), 98a.10–11 (*mitra* fashionable among the ladies of Sardeis); Xenophanes fr. 3. West.

²⁶ See CARRADICE, PRICE 1988, 29–35; KROLL 2010; GREAVES 2010, 86–89; KONUK 2012.

²⁷ AKURGAL 1983, 58–59 (Smyrna); HURMÜZLÜ 2004, 78 (Klazomenai); MARIAUD 2011 and GASSNER *et al.* 2017, 54–76 (Kolophon on the comparative background).

²⁸ GREAVES 2010, 97, 198.

²⁹ Hdt. I 14.2–3.

³⁰ Hdt. I 13–14; see also Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 47.10.

³¹ Hdt. I 19–22.

³² Hdt. I 92.1. For the inscription on a pillar basis from the Ephesian Artemision, stating that ‘king Kroisos dedicated’ them, see KERSCHNER 2010, 257.

³³ Hdt. I 92; 52. The dedications to Delphi described in Hdt. I 50–51.

aggressive kingdoms could have served as examples which had to be imitated for the sake of their own survival.

In the field of military tactics and fortifications this influence seems obvious. When the Greek poleis on the Anatolian coast constructed the defensive walls around their cities during the Archaic period, of which the well-preserved walls of Smyrna provide a magnificent example (archaic city walls are recorded also from Miletos, Ephesos, Teos, Klazomenai and Phokaia), this was surely caused to a great extent by the Lydian threat.³⁴ Moreover, the massive fortification of the Lydian capital Sardeis provided an easily followable example.³⁵

The rather widespread reliance on cavalry by the Greek Anatolian poleis is another possible example. The Lydians were indeed famous for their effective cavalry fighting,³⁶ and the Kolophonians also had a superior cavalry.³⁷ In Kyme a law was passed requiring every citizen to breed a war-horse,³⁸ and according to Aristotle the cavalry-based oligarchies had ruled 'in many other places in Asia'.³⁹ We can therefore suppose that this widespread use of cavalry by the Anatolian Greeks was at least partly caused by the need to face the attacks of the Lydian horsemen. This surely could not have been the only reason for the development of the cavalry tactics, because the possibilities for this depend on natural conditions – the existence of good pasture lands necessary for breeding horses. The board plain controlled by Kolophon indeed formed an ideal environment for this. The existence of cavalry was also connected to the social structure, since the maintaining of war-horses, expensive as it was, required a wealthy elite possessing big landholdings with the necessary pastureland. In Kolophon such an elite surely existed. According to Aristotle in this polis the rich formed, exceptionally, the majority of the citizen population.⁴⁰ According to the 6th century poet Xenophanes the wealthy Kolophonians numbered 'no less than a thousand'.⁴¹ In all likelihood these citizens were wealthy enough to maintain horses, and there is hardly any doubt that Aristotle viewed the numerous rich forming the broad ruling class in Kolophon as the horse breeders fighting in the cavalry. In Kyme the cavalry was surely also connected with the ruling class which at some point in time was confined to a thousand, but the exact connection between the thousand wealthy citizens and the cavalry cannot be established.⁴² However, as Aristotle noted the

³⁴ GREAVES 2010, 156–163.

³⁵ See CAHILL 2010b, 77–81; KERSCHNER 2010, 256–257.

³⁶ Note especially the story in Hdt. I 27, where Kroisos laughed at the alleged plan of the Greeks to prepare an adequate cavalry against the Lydians.

³⁷ Arist. Pol. 1289 b 35–41; Strabon XIV 1.28.

³⁸ Arist. fr. 611.39 Rose, quoted in note 42 below.

³⁹ Arist. Pol. 1289b35–41.

⁴⁰ Arist. Pol. 1290b15–18.

⁴¹ Arist. Pol. 1290 b 8(15)–18; 1289b35–41; Xenophanes fr. 3 West.

⁴² Arist. fr. 611.39 Rose states that a certain Pheidon first gave citizenship to 'a multitude' and legislated that everybody must breed a horse, while afterwards a certain Prometheus gave citizenship to a thousand (Φείδων ἀνὴρ δόκιμος

cavalry-based oligarchies in many places in Asia, we can be confident that Kolophon and Kyme were no exceptions in this respect. However, although the development of these cavalries is likely to have followed the Lydian, and perhaps Kimmerian, example, and caused by the Lydian threat, the social structure on which the cavalries were based, and the political systems they sustained, were different in the Greek poleis and Lydia. Kolophon, Kyme and the other poleis to which Aristotle referred were known as broad oligarchies, different from the monarchies of the Anatolian kingdoms.

The Anatolian monarchies, however, could have been exemplary models for power building by the Greek elites. The Lydian monarchy clearly impressed the Greeks and probably called for imitation. Gyges was, according to our evidence, the first ruler whose power was called *tyrannis*, thus introducing the term which soon became the usual signifier for the Greek monarchs. The *tyrannis* of Gyges was clearly connected to the wealth of the Lydian king, which was enviable for the Greek elite.⁴³ It is therefore clear that the eastern monarchies, not least the Anatolian kingdoms, provided an attractive example to be followed by the ambitious Greek leaders, but it can be debatable if, or in which way, this example, or the hegemony exercised by the Lydian kings, influenced the internal development of the neighbouring Greek poleis in practice, or how it shaped their political order.

From the period of the Persian hegemony in the second half of the 6th century a clear impact of the dominating power is obvious, as the Persians appointed tyrants from among the local elite to rule the cities as Persian vassals.⁴⁴ Tyranny had been of course fairly usual in Archaic Greek poleis, not least in the city-states on the Anatolian coast, which means that when choosing this form of domination the Persian monarchy relied on a traditional form of government among its new subjects. However, these tyrannies established by the Persians, directly forced upon the poleis, cannot illuminate a more subtle influence of the imperial power to the power relations in the Greek states.

Less direct influence can be perhaps observed in Kyme during the heydays of the Phrygian kingdom. A king Midas, perhaps the one who dedicated his throne at Delphi and/or perished in the Kimmerians' attack,⁴⁵ allegedly married a daughter of a king (*basileus*)

πλείοσι μετέδωκε τῆς πολιτείας, νόμον θεῖς ἕκαστον ἐπάναγκες τρέφειν ἵππον. Προμηθεὺς δέ τις ἀνὴρ δραστήριος καὶ ἱκανὸς εἰπεῖν χιλίους παρέδωκε τὴν πολιτείαν).

⁴³ Archilochos fr. 19 West.

⁴⁴ Hdt. IV 137–138. See DE LIBERO 1996, 414–417.

⁴⁵ If the Kimmerian invasion against central and western Anatolia took place around the middle of the 7th century, as the Assyrian sources indicate (see the literature quoted in note 8), the Midas who perished during this attack can neither be identical with the contemporary of Sargon II, nor of course with the anonymous king buried in the Tumulus MM at Gordion. We cannot however exclude the possibility of the reign of several kings called Midas or named so in the Greek tradition (see the detailed discussion of the evidence, with somewhat different conclusions, in RÄTHEL 2019, 222–267). In that case there would be no way of specifying the identity of the Midas the son-in-law of Agamemnon.

Agamemnon of Kyme,⁴⁶ probably before the cavalry-based collective government was established in the polis. When Midas died, his sons, or the relatives of his Greek wife, reputedly commissioned from Homer the tomb epigram for the Phrygian king.⁴⁷ The involvement of Homer in this story is hardly credible, but the existence of a Greek epigram on the tomb of Midas may be accepted. This tradition, if based on historical truth, indicates close ties between the Phrygian royal house and the Greek elite, and implies the importance of familial relations with the eastern potentates for legitimating the power of the Greek rulers.

Firmer evidence for this way of power legitimation is available in connection to the relations with Lydia. As noted above, the Lydian kings attempted to conquer the Greek poleis since the foundation of the Mermnad dynasty. However, the way how they ruled their Greek subjects is never specified by the sources and calls for consideration. Only in the case of Miletos have we some specific evidence, as we are informed by Herodotos that after the unsuccessful attempts to subject the polis the king Alyattes concluded a treaty of friendship with the Milesian tyrant Thrasybulos.⁴⁸ We can indeed suppose that this friendship helped to secure the power of Thrasybulos. A similar treaty might have been concluded with Priene,⁴⁹ but this must have remained ephemeral since Priene was, according to Herodotos, soon reduced into the status of taxpayers. Herodotos states that Kroisos made all the Greek poleis in Asia, except Miletos, pay tribute, but did not give any information about how, or by whom exactly, this was exacted.⁵⁰ Concerning Kroisos' predecessors we have no information whatsoever on what the Lydian domination might have meant. The statements that Gyges repeatedly invaded the land of the Magnetes and eventually 'subjected the polis' (χειροῦται τὴν πόλιν),⁵¹ that he 'took the town of Kolophon' (Κολοφῶνος τὸ ἄστυ εἴλε), that Ardys 'took Priene' (Πριηνέας τε εἴλε) and Alyattes 'took Smyrna' (Σμύρνην τε ... εἴλε),⁵² are sadly uninformative on this point. We even cannot say if this 'taking' always meant an establishment of a permanent subjection. A permanent subjection was probably forced upon Smyrna by Alyattes, the people of which were after the conquest settled into separate villages⁵³ which, we can suppose, stood under direct

⁴⁶ Pollux Onom. IX 83. Aristotle in his *Kymean politeia* (fr. 611 Rose = Epit. Heracl. 37) mentioned a wise and beautiful Kymean woman called Hermodike who married Midas and was the first to mint coins for the Kymean. She must be obviously identified with the Demodike the daughter of Agamemnon in Pollux, but the excerpt of Herakleides transmitting the fragment does not say anything about her father.

⁴⁷ According to Cert. Hom. Hes. 260–270 it was commissioned by Midas' sons, according to Ps-Hdt. Vit. Hom. 11 by his 'relatives by marriage' (δεηθέντων πενθερῶν αὐτοῦ). On this tradition see KIVILO 2011, 91; RÄTHEL 2019, 207–208, 322–326.

⁴⁸ See note 17.

⁴⁹ See note 18.

⁵⁰ Hdt. I 26.3–27.1.

⁵¹ Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 62.

⁵² Hdt. I 15–16.

⁵³ Strab. XIV 1.37. When Alexander the Great later 're-founded' the city, the 'New Smyrna' was situated several kilometres southward of the previous polis.

Lydian control. If a verse of Theognis, stating that ‘hybris destroyed the Magnetans and Kolophon and Smyrna’,⁵⁴ refer to the conquests by the Lydian kings, this may suggest that Magnesia and Kolophon were, like Smyrna, subjected to direct Lydian rule. However, we do not know if Theognis referred to the Magnesia at Sipylos conquered by Gyges, or to Magnesia on Maiandros which was sacked by a people called Treres attacking western Anatolia more or less contemporarily to the raids of the Kimmerians, after which its territory was allegedly annexed by either Miletos or Ephesos, not by the Lydians.⁵⁵ About Kolophon we know that it was still a mighty polis in the late 7th and early 6th century, thus after it was ‘taken’ by Gyges. As noted above, Alyattes allegedly beguiled and killed the Kolophonian knights diminishing their power, and even after that, in the late 6th century, Xenophanes noted the luxury of the ‘no less than a thousand’ Kolophonians ‘before the hateful tyranny’, probably referring to the Kolophonians’ life-style before the establishment of the Persian power.⁵⁶ As Kolophon continued to bloom after the conquest by Gyges, and Alyattes had to neutralise the Kolophonian knights by beguiling them with the promise of extra pay, we can legitimately ask to what extent was Kolophon subjected to the Lydian power at all during this period.

Some insight into the relations between the Lydian dynasty and the rulers of a Greek polis may be offered in the case of Ephesos. Ephesos was situated very close to Sardeis and was easily accessible. A fairly direct and easy road through the Karabel pass connected Ephesos with the Lydian capital. It is therefore notable that we have no information about any attack against Ephesos before the last Lydian king Kroisos. Magnesia, Smyrna and Kolophon were indeed attacked by Gyges, who even harassed Miletos much further to the south. Miletos was again attacked by his son Ardys who also attacked its northern neighbour Priene, and Sadyattes the son of Ardys launched a long though eventually unsuccessful war against Miletos. Ephesos, however, is never mentioned as a target for Lydian aggression. This impunity of Ephesos before Kroisos can imply special relations between its elite and the Lydian royal house.

There is some evidence indicating a special relationship. We know of a certain Melas who was related by marriage to Gyges, and whose ‘descendant’ (son?) called Miletos was married to a sister of Sadyattes (Gyges’ grandson) whom the Lydian king, her brother, afterwards seduced and took as one of his own wives. She became the mother of the next king Alyattes.⁵⁷ Nothing is stated about either the home polis of this Melas, or of Miletos. But there is evidence about another Melas who was a tyrant of Ephesos and was married to a daughter of Alyattes, thus living two or three generations after the first. This Melas the Ephesian tyrant

⁵⁴ Theogn. 1103–1104.

⁵⁵ Strab. 14.1.40 quoting Archilochos fr. 20 West, apparently referred to this event. The manuscript of Strabon has that Magnesia was after the destruction annexed by the Milesians (Μιλησίου), which has been often emended to Ἐφεσίου, since immediately afterwards Strabon mentions an earlier war between Ephesos and Magnesia. See also Eustath. Od. XI 14.

⁵⁶ Xenophanes fr. 3 West.

⁵⁷ Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 63.

bequeathed the power to his son Pindaros during whose reign the next Lydian king Kroisos, the son of Alyattes and a maternal uncle of Pindaros (Kroisos and the mother of Pindaros were both children of Alyattes, thus [half?] brother and sister), attacked Ephesos and deposed Pindaros.⁵⁸ When Pindaros thus abdicated and went into exile he left his property and son at Ephesos under a guardian Pasikles,⁵⁹ who was, however, apparently killed by still another Melas, probably Pindaros' son.⁶⁰ Thus, the evidence suggests that a dynasty where the name Melas was recurrent ruled Ephesos during the late 7th and the first half of 6th century. During the rule of the Melas contemporary to Alyattes there were certainly marriage ties established between this ruling family and the Mermnad dynasty of Lydia, which allows us to suggest that the earlier Melas, related by marriage to Gyges, was also an Ephesian, probably a member of the same family, which could well have already held the power in the polis. This would suggest a long rule for the Ephesian dynasty, and a longstanding relationship between the ruling house of Ephesos and the Lydian royal family.

Moreover, some evidence suggest that Kroisos had close personal relations with Ephesos, and its famous sanctuary of Artemis, before he ascended the throne. According to Nikolaos of Damascus (thus probably Xanthos of Lydia) Kroisos was, before becoming the king, in shortage of money for providing an army on his father's request, and when a rich Lydian refused to give him a loan he was helped by an Ephesian, a friend of his, and that when he became the king he dedicated the property of the unhelpful Lydian to the sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesos.⁶¹ When Kroisos eventually attacked Ephesos, the Ephesians allegedly tried to save their city by connecting the town with a rope to the Artemision, thus symbolically putting themselves under direct protection of the goddess.⁶² This implies their hope for a special respect from Kroisos towards the sanctuary and may thus indicate special relations between the sanctuary and the Lydian king. Either before or after the conquest, Kroisos dedicated a number of pillars to the sanctuary, testified by Herodotos and an Archaic inscription.⁶³

The longstanding marriage relations between the Lydian kings and the Ephesian tyrants, if reliable, can explain why the polis was never directly attacked by the Lydians before Kroisos. No aggression towards the polis was apparently necessary because the Lydian kings

⁵⁸ Aelianos VH III 26; the attack of Kroisos is mentioned also in Hdt. I 26.1–2 (without mentioning Pindaros) and Polyainos VI 50. The accounts are however different so far as the subsequent status of Ephesos is concerned: Herodotos clearly implies that Ephesos was henceforth subjected to the Lydian power (he said that Kroisos first attacked Ephesos and thereafter all the other Greeks, reducing them to the status of tribute payers), while according to Aelianos and Polyainos Kroisos granted 'liberty' to the Ephesians when Pindaros left the city.

⁵⁹ Aelianos VH III 26.

⁶⁰ Kallimachos fr. 102 Pfeiffer with diegesis and the conjecture of STROUX 1934, 310–313, accepted by BERVE 1967, 99 and HUXLEY 1966, 109–110.

⁶¹ Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 65.

⁶² Hdt. I 26.1–2.

⁶³ See note 32.

were able to achieve their ends through the friendly relations with the ruling family who functioned, at least indirectly, as agents for the Lydian interests. We cannot tell why Kroisos reversed this policy, but the attack on and the subjection of Ephesos was clearly connected with some falling out with Pindaros, because the expulsion of the tyrant was allegedly the main demand of Kroisos when the polis submitted, after which the king was prepared to grant autonomy to it.⁶⁴

From the point of view of the Ephesian rulers, we can suppose that the friendship with the Lydian dynasty was an important aspect for safeguarding the fairly long duration of their power. If the first Melas related to Gyges was indeed the member of the same family, as we have reason to believe, and if he was already the ruler of the polis, then this family with the heads called Melas and Pindaros must have governed Ephesos for at least four generations: the first Melas was apparently a contemporary of Gyges the great-great-grandfather of Kroisos who ended the rule of his descendant Pindaros. This first Melas might have been the grandfather of the second and the great-great-grandfather of the third who, however, might have not confirmed the power. This would give us the following line of the Ephesian rulers: Melas – xxx (= Miletos?) – Melas – Pindaros – Melas.

It may be that this was the family of the Basilids (the Kingly Ones) who claimed descent from the founders of the polis and had reputedly ruled Ephesos since the time of the foundation.⁶⁵ Similar families allegedly ruled in a number of poleis on the Anatolian coast and nearby islands. We know of the Penthilids of Mytilene on Lesbos, the Neleids of Miletos and the Basilids of Erythrai.⁶⁶ The reliability of the supposed extraordinary long rules by single families throughout the Early Iron Age can be doubted,⁶⁷ but we can trust that the families claiming descent from the legendary founders had established their power in the early Archaic period, thus probably at the time of the formation of the organised poleis. The name of Agamemnon, the *basileus* of Kyme and father-in-law of the Phrygian Midas, also suggests that he claimed descent from the founders, who were believed to be the descendants of the great Agamemnon of the legendary past,⁶⁸ which implies that a comparable dynasty ruled Kyme during the early

⁶⁴ As stated in Aelianos VH III 26.

⁶⁵ Basilids were reputedly the descendants of Androkles the founder of the Greek city. In the historical period the clan had the hereditary priesthood of Demeter Eleusinia with some prerogatives in the public competitions (Pherekydes FGrH 3 F 155 ap. Strab. XIV 1.3).

⁶⁶ See below, with notes 70–72.

⁶⁷ See KÕIV 2016, 25–27.

⁶⁸ According to Strab. XIII 1.3 Kyme was founded by two descendants of Agamemnon called Kleues and Malaos. LENZ 1993, 278–284 thinks that the two founders indicate a double kingship in Kyme, for which there is, however, no evidence.

7th century. Its rule must have been soon overthrown, as indicated by the broad horse-breeding elite ruling Kyme soon afterwards.⁶⁹

It would be unwarranted to connect the dynasties ruling at the time of the polis formation necessarily with the eastern rulers. We know nothing about the Basilids of Erythrai, except the statement of Aristotle that their oligarchy was at some unspecified time replaced by a sort of democracy.⁷⁰ Of the Penthilids of Mytilene we know that they were violently overthrown, probably around the middle of the 7th century, but there is nothing which would suggest their special relations with the Anatolian rulers.⁷¹ Nor is any indication for this available in the case of the Neleids of Miletos, whose rule also ended violently according to the tradition, as a result of the conflicts between its own members, which probably took place during the late 8th or early 7th century.⁷² Tyrannies however continued in both Mytilene and Miletos, and at least in Mytilene the contestants for power sought Lydian support.⁷³ In the case of Agamemnon of Kyme we can indeed suppose that the intermarriage with the Phrygian royal house helped to legitimise his power, and can only guess if the end of the rule was connected to the fall of Midas depriving the dynasty of the legitimating friendship with the great Phrygian king.

The Basilids of Ephesos were, like the Penthilids and the Neleids, overthrown according to the tradition. This was allegedly done by a certain Pythagoras who established his own tyranny and proved to be a terrible ruler, violating both human and divine laws (he eventually caused a suicide of a maiden in a sanctuary) and thus surely deserved a violent punishment as divine retribution. But we do not know when exactly this took place – our source

⁶⁹ See above, with note 42. In the *Kymeian Politiea* Aristotle mentioned something about *tyrannoi* and *aisymnetai*, allegedly stating that *tyrannoi* were earlier called *aisymnetai*, or that the rulers (*archontes*) were called *aisymnetai* by the Kymeans (Arist. fr. 524 Rose ap. Argum. Soph. Oid. Tyr. and Schol. Eurip. Med. 19). This could hardly refer to the tyrant Aristagoras installed by the Persians (Hdt. IV 138, 2; V 37–38; Arist. fr. 611 Rose = Epit. Herakl. 38) as suggested by RUBINSTEIN 2004, 1044, because the use of plural indicates that Aristotle meant many rulers. If this refers to the dynasty of Agamemnon or to the subsequent *politeia* cannot be stated.

⁷⁰ Arist. Pol. 1305b 18–22.

⁷¹ According to Aristotle (Pol. 1311b26–30) the Penthilids ruled violently, striking people with their staves, and were consequently overthrown by a certain Megakles, which was followed by a series of internal conflicts and short-term tyrannies until the early 6th century – see PAGE 1955, 149–243; RÖSLER 1980, 115–285; PIPPIN BURNETT 1983, 107–181; KURKE 1994; DE LIBERO 1996, 315–328; LIBERMAN 2003, XIV–XXIII and comments; FORDSDYKE 2005, 36–48; GAGNÉ 2009; KÖIV 2016, 28–33.

⁷² Konon 44 and Nic. Dam. FGrH 90 F 52, 53 reports the conflicts between two members of the clan – Leodamas and Amphitres – for the position of the ruler, which resulted in the abolition of the Neleid rule and the appointment of a certain Epimenes as *aisymnetes* for stabilizing the polis – see HUXLEY 1966, 50–51; BERVE 1967, 100–101; JEFFERY 1978, 210; DE LIBERO 1996, 355–356; PARKER 1997, 125–127; GORMAN 2001, 88–101; KÖIV 2016, 37–41. Soon afterwards, however, the tyranny of Thrasylbulos was established, for which see above, with notes 17 and 48.

⁷³ Alkaios states (fr. 69) that Lydians gave him and his faction money for enabling them to return to the 'holy city', presumably Mytilene – see LIBERMAN 2002, 48.

states only that it was ‘before Kyros the Persian’.⁷⁴ It has been assumed that this Pythagoras overthrew the Basilids during a relatively early period, no later than the 7th century, and that the tyrants Melas and Pindaros, the contemporaries of Alyattes and Kroisos, thus ruled after him and were consequently not Basilids.⁷⁵ Alternatively, it has been supposed that the Basilids’ reign was temporarily broken by the tyrant Pythagoras and restored after his fall, and that Melas and Pindaros were the restored Basilids ruling after Pythagoras’ fall.⁷⁶ However, ‘before Kyros the Persian’ is perhaps not likely to indicate a 7th century dating. It seems more probable that it refers to the period immediately before the establishment of the Persian rule, thus to the events very soon after the expulsion of Pindaros by Kroisos. This expulsion was allegedly followed by internal troubles. As noted above, Pindaros left his property and son in charge of his friend Pasikles, who was however murdered, possibly by the very son of Pindaros called Melas like his grandfather. We are also informed that a certain Aristarchos was called from Athens to rule Ephesos for 5 years, in every likelihood to stabilise the polis after the previous troubles, and that this took place ‘at the time when Harpagos incited Kyros the son of Kambyses to rise against the Medians’,⁷⁷ thus exactly at the time when Kyros established his power.⁷⁸ The statement that Pythagoras ruled ‘before Kyros’ can indeed refer to the period immediately before this event, thus to the events in Ephesos before Aristarchos was called from Athens to settle the affairs. The cruel tyranny of Pythagoras would be, in this case, a relatively short episode in the troubles following the expulsion of Pindaros: we could suppose that he acquired power in the course of the conflicts between the members of the family of Pindaros, that their rule was thus overthrown by him, but his power was in turn soon overthrown by the Ephesians, not surprisingly given his alleged crimes, and that the Ephesians consequently called Aristarchos from Athens to calm the situation and reorganise the polis. All this must have taken place during a decade from 560 (the ascendance of Kroisos) to ca 550 (the establishment of the power of Kyros over Media).⁷⁹

There are thus good grounds for assuming that the rulers called Melas and Pindaros were the Basilids, and that the family maintained power in Ephesos from an unspecified date until the middle of the 6th century when their rule was replaced by the violent but short

⁷⁴ Baton of Sinope FGrH 268 F3 (Suda s.v. *Pythagoras*).

⁷⁵ HUXLEY 1966, 33, 78; KNIBBE 1998, 80–81.

⁷⁶ BERVE 1967, 99; CARLIER 1984, 443; DE LIBERO 1996, 370. The suggestion of JEFFERY 1978, 223 that Pythagoras also was a member of the Basilids contradicts the evidence of Baton explicitly stating that Pythagoras overthrew the Basilid power.

⁷⁷ Suda. s.v. *Aristarchos*.

⁷⁸ The Nabunaidus chronicle dates the war between Kyros and Astyages the king of Media to the year 550/49 (KUHRT 2010, 50; see also the Nabonaidus’ vision of Kyros’ war against the Medes in KUHRT 2010, 56).

⁷⁹ Kroisos was given by Herodotos (I 86.1) and other Greek sources 14 (or 15) years of rule, which would mean that if we would accept the year 547/6 as the date of his downfall, he must have ascended to the throne ca 560. The narrative of Herodotos (I 26.1) implies that the attack on Ephesos was his first beg enterprise, after which he subjected the other Greek poleis. The revolt of Kyros against Astyages should be dated to 550/49 – see the previous note.

tyranny of Pythagoras. This would indicate that in Ephesos the dynasty claiming descent from the legendary founders of the polis was able to hold its power for a considerably longer period than the comparable ruling families elsewhere. The close relations with the Lydian house, and presumably some support from its part, is likely to have been an important factor in securing this lineage.

The relative chronology proposed here cannot be taken for granted. The evidence, fragmentary and deriving ultimately from inevitably debatable oral tradition, can hardly allow a reliable reconstruction of the events. The tyranny of Pythagoras inevitably remains a 'floating' event which could be placed at almost any point of time before the establishment of the Persian power. However, even if Pythagoras removed the Basilids at an early date, and the family of Melas and Pindaros represented a new dynasty in power, this would not remove the likelihood that a single family was able to control Ephesos from the time of Gyges to Kroisos, thus during almost the whole period of the Lydian empire. As this family had close marriage relations with the Mermnads of Sardeis, we have every reason to accept that these special relations did indeed contribute to the longevity of its reign.

We cannot say if or to what extent the Lydian kings used, or tried to use, similar methods for controlling the other poleis, or did Ephesos present a singular example. However, the method of indirect control of Ephesos to some extent foreshadows the later policy of the Persians establishing the local aristocrats to rule their poleis as the vassals of the Great King. The Persians could well have relied on the Lydian experience. Seen from the Greek side, this would be a clear example of how the neighbouring hegemonic monarchies not only provided imitable examples for the local elite leaders, but also offered real opportunities for claiming, legitimating and entrenching their power. Finally, this demonstrates how the elite on the fringes of an empire could profit from imperial power; how the mild influence of an empire effectively shaped the internal order of the communities in its sphere of influence by promoting the position of the local leaders, and how this strategy enabled empires to attain control of strategically important points on their outskirts.

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Preliminary considerations on the decoration of the anthropomorphic plastic from the Cucuteni A-B settlement of Băiceni – *Dâmbul Morii* (com. Cucuteni, Iași county).

Radu-Ștefan BALAUR¹

Abstract. *Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic plastics are often associated with complex manifestations of the spiritual life of Cucuteni communities. Therefore, knowledge and interpretation of anthropomorphic representations are necessary to have a better picture of the role played in the daily and spiritual life of prehistoric communities. The Cucuteni A-B settlement from Dâmbul Morii provides an important number of such pieces that will complete the data known so far. In this study, attention will be paid to plastic representations with painted, incised, and plastic decorations. Therefore, a batch of 27 anthropomorphic figurines was analyzed, some in a fragmentary state. Based on the decor analysis, a clear separation of figurines by gender was possible.*

Rezumat. *Plastica antropomorfă și zoomorfă este asociată de cele mai multe ori cu manifestările complexe ale vieții spirituale a comunităților cucuteniene. Prin urmare, cunoașterea și interpretarea reprezentărilor antropomorfe este necesară pentru a avea o imagine mai bună asupra rolului jucat în viața cotidiană și spirituală a comunităților preistorice. Așezarea Cucuteni A-B de la Dâmbul Morii furnizează un număr important de asemenea piese ce vin să completeze datele cunoscute până în prezent. În demersul de față atenția va fi acordată reprezentărilor plastice cu decor pictat, incizat și plastic. Prin urmare, a fost analizat un lot de 27 figurine antropomorfe, unele în stare fragmentară. Pe baza analizei decorului s-a putut face o separare clară a pieselor pe gen.*

Keywords: Cucuteni culture, phase A-B, Dâmbul Morii, anthropomorphic figurines, painted decoration.

Introduction

Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic plastics are often associated with complex manifestations of the spiritual life of Cucuteni communities. Therefore, knowledge and interpretation of anthropomorphic representations is necessary to have a better picture of the role played in the daily and spiritual life of prehistoric communities. The Cucuteni A-B settlement from *Dâmbul Morii* provides an important number of such pieces that will complete the data known so far.

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The impressive number of figures found in the area of Cucute-Tripolie settlements allowed to obtain information on these plastic representations, which were included in a series of monographic works or specialized studies dedicated to this field².

In this article, we will discuss the decoration of the anthropomorphic plastic discovered at *Dâmbul Morii*. The pieces analyzed have been partly introduced into the scientific circuit and others are presented for the first time. The batch of the anthropomorphic representations analyzed from this settlement comprises a number of 185 pieces, many of them in a fragmented state, located in the scientific funds of the Archeology Seminar within the Faculty of History and the Museum of Cucuteni Civilization, both of them from the University of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Iasi.

Geographical and archaeological background

The settlement from *Dâmbul Morii* is located in north-eastern Romania (Fig. 1/A) in Iași county (Fig. 1/B) and within the boundaries of the Cucuteni commune, inside the village of Băiceni, between the Recea and Morii streams to the west and east, presenting a steeper slope to the southeast, and more gentle slopes on the other sides (Fig. 1/C)³.

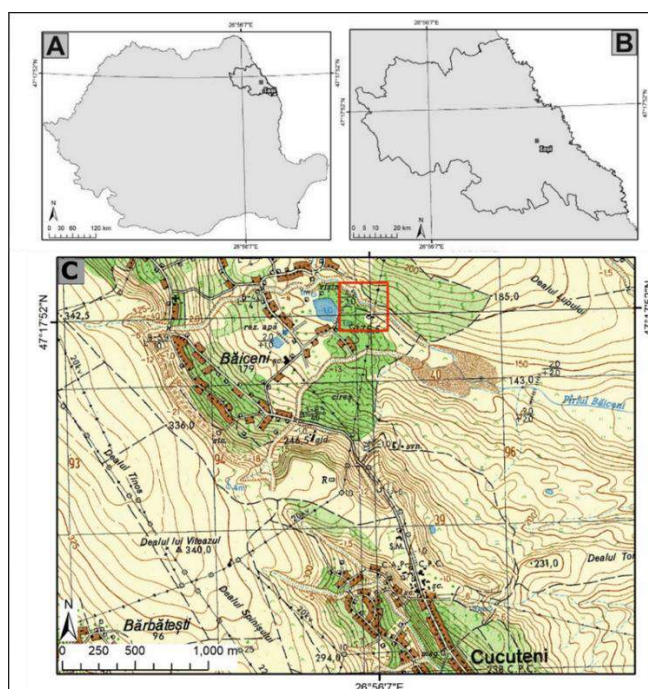


Figure 1. The location of Cucuteni–*Dâmbul Morii* : A. in Romania; B. Iași county; C. on the topographic map, scale 1:25000 ((adapted after Asăndulesei et alii, 2020, p. 321).

² MARIN 1948; BERLESCU 1964; COMȘA 1995; MONAH 1997, 2012, 2016.

³ DINU 2006, 31; 2009, 106; ASĂNDULESEI et alii. 2020, 320; BALAU 2020, 170.

The first researches at *Dâmbul Morii*, were carried out by Hubert Schmidt, in 1909 or 1910. The German archaeologist undertook a small test trench, of about 31 x 2 m, in the west-northwest part of the settlement, named by him "*The settlement in the valley-Talsiedlung*", in which ceramic remains were discovered, as well as parts of a dwelling. He also unveiled two surfaces of about 3 x 6 m, without making significant discoveries⁴.

In 1961, under the leadership of Prof. Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, the researches in the eponymous resort from *Ceățuia* were resumed. At the same time, attention is paid to the settlement in the valley, where, under the leadership of Prof. Marin Dinu research has been carried out in several stages (1961-1966, 1977-1978, and 1989)⁵.

The excavations (**Fig. 2**) were carried out within three sectors: sector A, in the S-SE part of the promontory, located behind the defensive ditch; sector B, about 150 m NV from the south-eastern edge of the promontory, where the defensive ditch was identified; sector C, in the N-NV part of the promontory, outside the defensive ditch of the settlement, where the settlement supposedly extended over the entire surface of the promontory⁶.

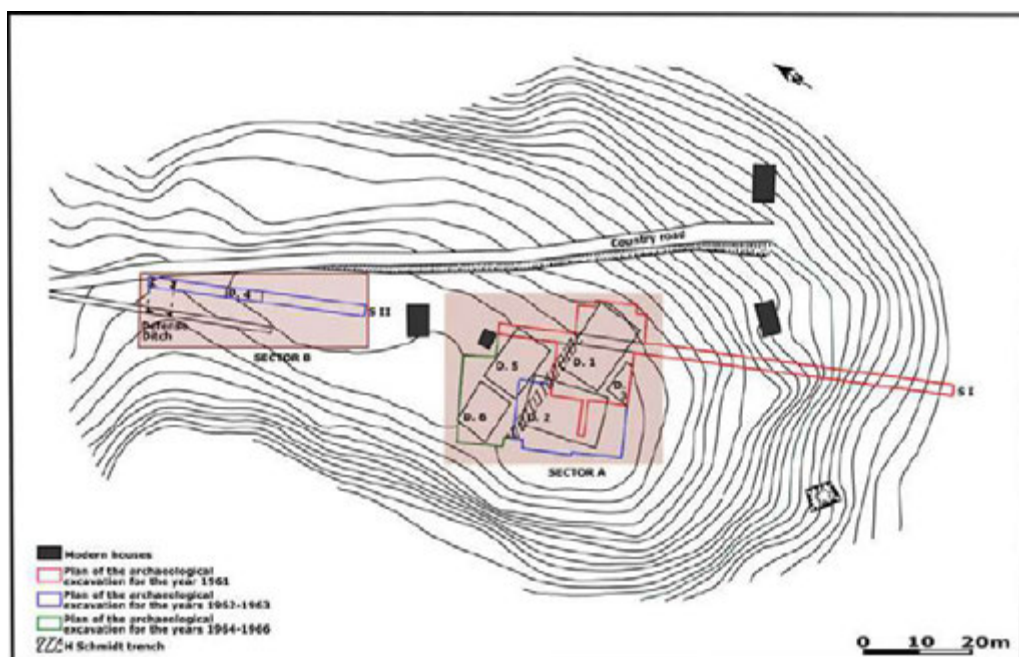


Fig. 2. Cucuteni – Băiceni – *Dâmbul Morii*. Excavations plan for the years 1961-1966 (adapted after Dinu 2006, p. 43).

⁴ SCHMIDT 1932, 12-13; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA, 1966, 32.

⁵ DINU 2006, 33.

⁶ DINU 2006, 33-35, 43 (fig. 3); BALAUR 2020, 172.

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The settlement was inhabited during at least three stages. The oldest belongs to the sub-phase Cucuteni A₂, identified in sector A, where the remains of a dwelling were discovered, having a burnt clay floor, applied on a layer of thin wood branches⁷.

The next habitation stage was assigned to the sub-phase Cucuteni A-B₁, also identified in sector A, where seven surface dwellings (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10 and 11), of medium and large sizes, were investigated (**Fig. 2**).

The last stage of habitation, assigned to the sub-phase Cucuteni A-B₂, was identified in sector C, outside the defensive ditch, where the excavations carried as sections and test trenches led to the discovery and investigation of three surface dwellings (7, 8 and 9)⁸.

Raw material and shaping

Regarding anthropomorphic plastic, an important issue is related to materiality, methods, and manufacturing techniques⁹. Clay was mostly used as a raw material. Three categories of clay from which these pieces were made were established: coarse, porous paste, with vegetable residue, surfaced finished, with uneven combustion, clay paste with impurities (sand, pebbles), unevenly burned at low temperatures and of different colors, especially reddish-brown and a very fine paste, with natural degreasers mixed, homogeneously burned, to red brick¹⁰. A series of interdisciplinary researches showed that in the paste of female anthropomorphic statuettes, with a porous appearance and poor burning, there were mixtures of chaff, cereal caryopsis, and flour¹¹.

The anthropomorphic plastic from the Cucuteni A-B phase inherits a series of features and manufacturing canons specific to the Cucuteni A₃ and A₄ stages, however, they differ from those in the previous stage by lengthening the body and legs, both in the case of female representations (**Fig. 4/1, 2**) as well as in the case of the male ones (**Fig. 3/3**), the lower part is sometimes shaped in the form of a single leg, undifferentiated or separated by a groove, and finished with a disc or a sole. Also, the dimensions of the hips and thighs are reduced, doubled by a dorso-ventral flattening of the pieces¹². Specific to this intermediate phase is the statuette with discoidal head, slender waist, and united legs. Other characteristic features of the anthropomorphic plastics from the Cucuteni A-B phase are the representation of the apron (**Fig. 4/1**), usually integrated in the decoration, as well as a slight flexion of the legs¹³.

⁷ DINU 2006, 34; DINU 2009, 107.

⁸ IBIDEM; IBIDEM.

⁹ BOGHIAN 2004, 140.

¹⁰ MONAH 1997, 52.

¹¹ BOGHIAN 2004, 140; MONAH 1997, p. 52-54

¹² DUMITRESCU, 1979, 84-85; MONAH, 1997, 97; BOGHIAN 2004, 148.

¹³ MONAH 1997, 97-98; 2012, 119-121; 2016, 126.

Decoration

Regarding the decoration of the anthropomorphic figurines of *Dâmbul Morii*, judging by their appearance at the moment they were discovered, it can be categorized as: decorated by painting and plastic application, with incisions, and undecorated. Most of the pieces discovered are undecorated. However, it is possible that some of them had a thin layer of red paint¹⁴.

The decoration with plastic elements is largely associated with male representations. It consists of the plastic modeling of the sex, as well as the relief modeling of a belt that tightens the waist, associated with a diagonal, modeled in the same way, starting from the shoulder to the hip. There are also cases in which this belt-diagonal assembly is made of incised lines and points¹⁵. Among the specimens identified at the *Dâmbul Morii*, two have a modeled sex (**Fig. 3/1, 6**). The belt modeled in relief was captured on a single figurine (**Fig. 3/1**), but taking into account the fact that the upper part is missing, we do not exclude the possibility that it had a diagonal shaped in the same way. In the case of three figurines, the diagonal belt assembly is represented by incised lines and dots, made in different ways. The belt seems to be marked either in the form of two incised lines, with a series of incisions dots between them (**Fig. 3/4**), or in the form of an incised line framed by two rows of incised dots (**Fig. 3/3**). Modeling differences also exist in the case of the diagonal. In this case, the modeling is done either in the form of two incised lines, with a row of points between them (**Fig. 3/3, 5**), or in the form of a simpler variant, with two incised lines (**Fig. 3/4**). On the latter, a necklace is represented by incised dots.

On a single fragment of a figurine, a belt made by two rows of punctiform incisions was most likely identified (**Fig. 5/7**), unfortunately, the fragmentary state did not allow its association with a female or a male figurine. In two other cases, on the leg, it seems to have been modeled with incised dots, probably a scarf, most likely associated with the belt (**Fig. 3/7, 8**).

¹⁴ MONAH 1997, 101; 2012, 124.

¹⁵ MONAH 1997, 102; 2012, 124.

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Fig. 3. Cucuteni – Băiceni – *Dâmbul Morii*. Decorated anthropomorphic figurines with plastics elements and incisions

The incised decoration, used in the Cucuteni A-B subphase, was made for geometric motifs, arranged on the hips and thighs, usually the belly marked with a rhombus, sometimes with the abdomen decorated with spiral loops and semioval, going right under the breasts, delimited by horizontal lines. Characteristic of phase A-B seems to be the representation of the apron, triangular (Fig. 4/2, 3, 4, 5, 6) or with a sectioned tip associated with fringes (Fig. 4/1), sometimes filled with circular or triangular prints. However, there is a risk of confusing this decoration with the pubic triangle¹⁶ (Fig. 4/5).

From the settlement of *Dâmbul Morii*, the pieces that have an incised decoration are mostly in a fragmentary state (Fig. 5 / 1-9). The motif of the apron is attested to six figurines (Fig. 4 / 1-6). In only one case can we speak of modeling of the apron with fringes and with a sectioned tip¹⁷ (Fig. 4/1). In two cases the apron is represented by a simple triangle (Fig. 4/2, 5), and in the other three cases the triangle is filled with incised lines (Fig. 4/6), incised lines

¹⁶ MONAH 2012, 124-127.

¹⁷ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1966, fig. 34, DINU 2006, fig. 12/1; MONAH 2012, 1216, fig. 101/1; BOGHIAN 2004, 149.

completed by dots (fig. 4/3), or only with incised points (Fig. 4/4). In the case of the last two pieces, the fringes are rendered by incised dots.



Fig. 4. Anthropomorphic plastic decorated with incisions from Cucuteni – Băiceni – Dâmbul Morii. Representation of the apron

From the first observations, it seems that the incised decoration on the plastic was made of geometric reasons, arranged on the hips and thighs (Fig. 5/3) or buttocks (Fig. 5/1), usually, the belly marked with a rhombus (Fig. 5 / 9), sometimes on the buttocks being present also spiral loops and semioval motifs (Fig. 5/6). On a fragment of a figurine kept from the knees to just above the abdomen (Fig. 5/1), we can see that on the thighs that the incised lines are arranged horizontally, the legs being separated by a deep vertical incision, on the buttocks the oblique lines form a rhombus, and above the hips, the abdomen is separated by two horizontal lines. The abdomen area is decorated with oblique lines arranged at an upward angle. On another figurine, probably the thigh area (Fig. 5/3), we can discern an inclined arrangement of the incised lines on the sides, up to the knee area. The same inclined arrangement of the

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incised lines can be seen in the front, but it stops in the knee area. Another figurine fragment, represented by a torso, the decoration is presented in the form of striations arranged on the sides (Fig. 5/4). We do not rule out the possibility that this decoration may be associated with a very rare theme in anthropomorphic plastic, namely the association woman-plant, as is the case of a figurine discovered in Caracușani, which has a fir tree incised on its belly¹⁸ (Fig. 5/10). Among the discovered figurines, there is a fragment decorated with deeply incised points (Fig. 5/5), on the basis of which we can not make other statements about the decoration. We also mention here a fragment of a statuette (Fig. 5/2), discovered in pit no. 1 under dwelling no. 2 in sector A, pit assigned to Cucuteni A habitation level. The decoration of this piece seems rather sketchy, and we do not rule out the possibility that this figurine may have been in the early stages of execution, taking into account the fact that it does not appear to have been burned.

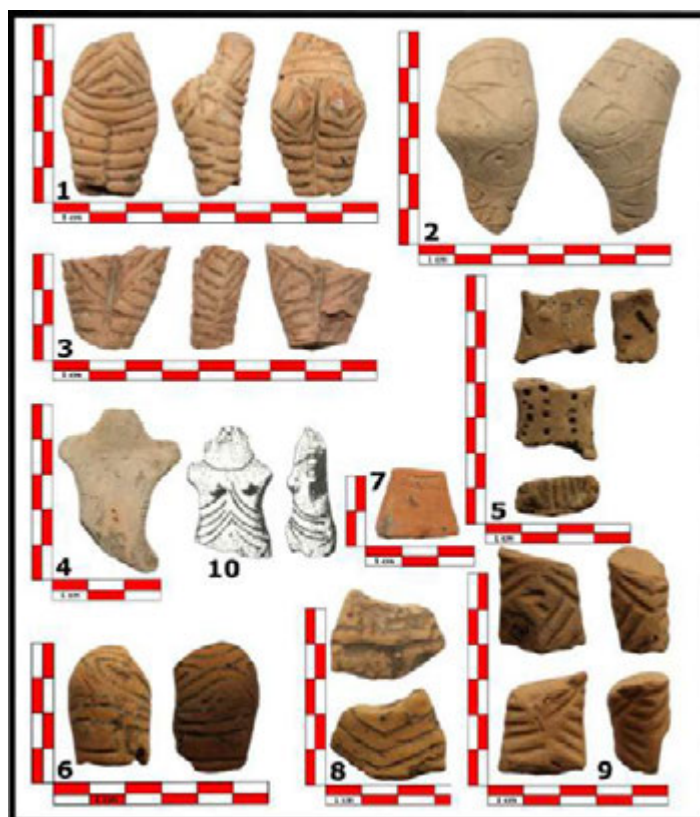


Fig. 5. Anthropomorphic plastic decorated with incisions: 1-9, Cucuteni – Băiceni – *Dâmbul Morii*; 10. Caracușanii Vechi.

¹⁸ MONAH 1997, 101, fig. 124; 2012, 123, fig. 124.

In the category of pieces decorated with incisions we also include an *en violin* idol. The decoration of this type of object differs from piece to piece, ranging from simple incised dots arranged around the head and body, in a single string, or two strings. For the most part, the pieces discovered in the area bear some resemblance to those from Hăbsești¹⁹ (Fig. 6/3-5), Trușești²⁰ (Fig. 6/2) or Scânteia²¹.

The piece discovered at *Dâmbul Morii* (Fig. 6/1), in the 1963 campaign, presents a series of small incised dots around the body and head, most likely with two unfinished perforations in the head area, representing the eyes. In the body area, the decoration consists of a circle of incised points, the center of the circle being marked by another incised dot. On the other side, this piece has no decoration.



Fig. 6. *En violon* idols: 1. Cucuteni-Băiceni *Dâmbul Morii*; 2. Trușești; 3-5. Hăbșești.

The painted decoration attributed to the Cucuteni A-B phase is largely inspired by the incised decoration from the previous stage. It was most often made of light red or brown stripes on certain parts of the body. Representative seems to be the decoration made of horizontal stripes of color, drawn on the body of the statuettes, in some cases forming angular motifs on the torso or back²².

So far, from the settlement of *Dâmbul Morii*, we have identified only three fragments of figurines that have a painted decoration. The first figurine is decorated with is angular motifs on one side, and by vertical bands, slightly arched on the other side (Fig. 7/1). These stripes

¹⁹ DUMITRESCU 1954, fig. 36/1; MONAH 1997, fig. 258/2, 4, 10; BOGHIAN 2004, fig. 146/1-2, 12.

²⁰ PETRESCU DÎMBOVITA et alii 1999, 521-523, fig. 370/1; MONAH 1997, fig. 258/7.

²¹ MANTU, ȚURCANU, 1999, 142, fig. 355.

²² MONAH 1997, 104; 2012, 127.

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were brown on the whitish background of the engobe. Specimens with a similar painting were also discovered in the settlements of Traian²³ (Fig. 7/3) and Ripiceni-Holm²⁴ (Fig. 7/2).

The second fragment, also a torso coming from a female figurine, with breasts marked by two clay pills, and with raised arms, has a decoration with red or brown stripes, probably on a whitish background of the engobe. We can't say if the decor was extended on the back on the figurine. (Fig. 7/4).

The third fragment is represented by a leg, probably from a male figurine. The decoration seems to have been made of horizontal stripes, brown in color, applied on the whitish background of the engobe (Fig. 7/5). A similar decoration seems to have been applied on a figurine attributed to the Cucuteni A phase discovered at Scânteia²⁵ (Fig. 7/6).



Fig. 7. Painted decoration on anthropomorphic plastic:
1,4, 5 Cucuteni-Băiceni- *Dâmbul Morii*; 2. Ripiceni-Holm; 3. Traian; 6. Scânteia.

Discussions

Although for the settlement from *Dâmbul Morii* we have a relatively large number of anthropomorphic representations, many of them are in a fragmentary state, therefore we considered it necessary, for a start, to present the pieces with plastic, incised, and painted decoration. After a first analysis, we can say with certainty that male representations, few in

²³ BEM 2007, 185, fig. 410/2; MONAH, 1997, 104, fig. 110/7; MONAH 2012, 127, fig. 110/7.

²⁴ MELNICIUC 2011, 283, fig. 112/7; DUMITRESCU 1954, fig. 36/1; MONAH 1997, fig. 258/2, 4, 10; BOGHIAN 2004, fig. 146/1-2, 12.

²⁵ MANTU, ȚURCANU, 1999, 149, fig. 393; ENEA 364, fig. 3/9.

number, are characterized by the presence of the belt-diagonal assembly, either in the form of incisions or embossed, while female representations are indicated by the presence of the pubic triangle or apron. In an extensive study dedicated to the representation of the apron, both on anthropomorphic plastic and ceramic, it was hypothesized that its representation was made not to mask or cover the pubic area, but rather to highlight the characteristics of femininity, and probably the fecundity of the those pieces ²⁶. Another hypothesis is related to the association with a certain status or affiliation to a certain clan, group or family. ²⁷

Regarding the interpretation of the representations associated with the diagonal, it was hypothesized that these would be associated with the posture of the *hero / young fighter*, or that these figurines would have been used in certain rituals of passage to adult life²⁸. As it has been observed, most of the pieces are in a fragmentary state, since antiquity. Although the idea that this fragmentation was intentional, in some cult practices is accepted ²⁹, it is difficult to prove this hypothesis.

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²⁶ MELNICIUC, KOVÁKS, 2019, 188.

²⁷ IBIDEM.

²⁸ ENEA, 2016, 361.

²⁹ MONAH, 1997, 63; DIACONESCU 2016, 118.

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Understanding technological innovations through experiment. Construction and testing of Chalcolithic pottery kilns

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Abstract. Besides its contribution to understanding the formation process of large settlements and complex social organization in the late period of Cucuteni-Trypillia, the site of Stolniceni (Republic of Moldova) provided new data on the construction and spatial distribution within the site of pottery kilns. The extensive magnetic surveys revealed a large settlement, with more than 350 burnt dwellings, hundreds of pits, ditches, paths, and 19 kilns. Of the latter, four were excavated during the 2016-2018 campaigns. Three kilns were more or less similar in terms of sizes and construction, belonging to the “simple”, dual chambered, updraught type. The best-preserved of them already served as model for a published experiment conducted in 2017 near the Stolniceni archaeological base. The fourth provided several surprising building features, like six additional holes arranged around the fire channels and communicating with them, and two small clay arches above the channels’ ends. A plausible hypothesis of the researchers is that these elements were meant to improve the draught, by increasing and uniformizing the circulation of hot air throughout the upper chamber. Thus, in order to test how this technological innovation acts on the firing efficiency, we conducted a new experiment (August-September 2020, Băiceni-Romania). The firing process and temperatures reached in this type of kiln proved the concern of prehistoric potters for continuous improvement of their craft, raising questions about the emergence and socio-economic implications of such innovations.

Rezumat. Pe lângă contribuția sa la înțelegerea procesului de formare a marilor așezări și a organizării sociale complexe în perioada târzie a Cucuteni-Trypillia, situl Stolniceni (Republica Moldova) a oferit noi date privind construcția și distribuția spațială în cadrul șantierului cuptoarelor de ceramică. Studiile magnetometrice au scos la iveală o așezare mare, cu peste 350 de locuințe arse, sute de gropi, șanțuri, poteci și 19 cuptoare. Dintre acestea din urmă, patru au fost excavate în campaniile 2016-2018. Trei cuptoare erau mai mult sau mai puțin asemănătoare din punct de vedere al dimensiunilor și al construcției, aparținând tipului „simple”, cu două camere, cu tiraj ascendent. Cele mai bine conservate dintre ele au servit deja drept model pentru un experiment publicat, realizat în 2017 în apropierea bazei arheologice Stolniceni. Al patrulea a oferit câteva caracteristici surprinzătoare care țin de construcția sa, cum ar fi șase găuri suplimentare aranjate în jurul canalelor de foc și care comunicau cu acestea și două arcade mici de lut deasupra capetelor canalelor. O ipoteză plauzibilă a cercetătorilor este că aceste elemente au fost menite să îmbunătățească tirajul, prin creșterea și uniformizarea circulației aerului cald în toată camera superioară. Astfel, pentru a testa modul în care această inovație tehnologică acționează asupra eficienței arderii, am realizat un nou experiment (august-septembrie 2020, Băiceni-România). Procesul de ardere și temperaturile atinse în

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acest tip de cuptor au dovedit preocuparea omlorilor preistorici pentru mbunătăăirea continuă a meșteșugului lor, ridicând semne de întrebare cu privire la apariăia și implicaăile socio-economice ale unor astfel de inovaăii.

Keywords: *Experimental archaeology, Cucuteni-Trypillia culture, Chalcolithic pottery kiln, technological innovation.*

Introduction

The experiment is the foundation of modern science. Testing hypothesis through a trial-and-error procedure until confirmation is a powerful method to create valid premises within the hypothetic-deductive inferential process that the archaeological interpretation of material culture should be⁴. To be scientifically correct and to have a scientific output, an experiment (in archaeology or elsewhere) must follow specific scientific standards⁵. In the case of archaeology, this implies, among others, a clear hypothesis to be tested (of course, based on real archaeological finds), a proper design of the experiment, use of adequate raw materials and techniques/technologies, decent skills, flawless documentation and proper dissemination. Once here, we must denounce a series of approaches - experiences, replications, re-enactments - that self-proclaim as experimental archeology, bringing no service to archaeological science. These activities, honorable and praiseworthy, in fact, are among the hobbies or museum pedagogy, having nothing in common with the rigor and specificity of archaeological experiments.

The article describes the process of constructing and firing a kiln inspired by a recent archaeological discovery, experiment that is part of a long-term project to test different hypothesis concerning prehistoric pottery firing⁶.

The archaeological evidence

Our experiment had as a starting point a kiln discovered and investigated in the late Chalcolithic (Cucuteni B1/Trypillia C1) settlement of Stolniceni (R. of Moldova). The magnetic surveys from 2015 and 2017 (Fig. 1) provided detailed data on the structure and dimensions of the settlement. Thus, the Cucuteni site covers over 30 ha, comprising approximately 370 burned structures, three ditches, hundreds of pits and 19 ceramic kilns⁷. Of the latter, four were investigated by excavations in three successive campaigns (2016-2018). All are updraft kilns, with two chambers: a fire box, buried, composed of two fire channels, separated by a middle wall of yellow soil, and the ware chamber, covered by a dome built of clay on a skeleton of twigs above the ancient walking surface, of which only fragments have been preserved. The two chambers were separated by quasi-oval clay plates, placed above the fire channels to sustain

⁴ REYNOLDS, 1994; 1999; REYNOLDS, OUTRAM, 2008.

⁵ ASCHER, 1961; KELTERBORN, 2005.

⁶ TENCARIU, 2015; TENCARIU ET ALII 2018.

⁷ ȚERNA et alii 2019.

the pottery and to protect it from the direct action of the fire below. Corresponding to the two channels, the kilns have two openings in front of which, on a hearth, the wood fuel burned. The access to the hearth and to the fire box was made through a pit next to the kiln.

The surprise came with the unveiling of the fourth kiln, in 2018⁸ (Fig. 2). The archaeologists identified six additional holes, placed around the fire channels, to which they were connected by funnel-like openings. Two of them, were located at the ends of the channels, towards the back of the kiln, and the other four, on the sides, two on the outside of each channel. Another innovation, this time not very clear, due to the bad preservation of the kiln, is represented by the technique used for building these additional elements. After the main channels and the lateral corridors were dug, the holes were formed by building small arches on a structure of twigs covered with clay. The interpretation is that the additional holes were meant to improve the draft of the kiln, by increasing and normalizing the circulation of hot air throughout the ware chamber. Likewise, the small arches of the fire channels probably had the role of reflecting the flow of hot air (which tends to move rapidly upwards) and of "turning" it (a kind of reverberation) towards the inside of the kiln.

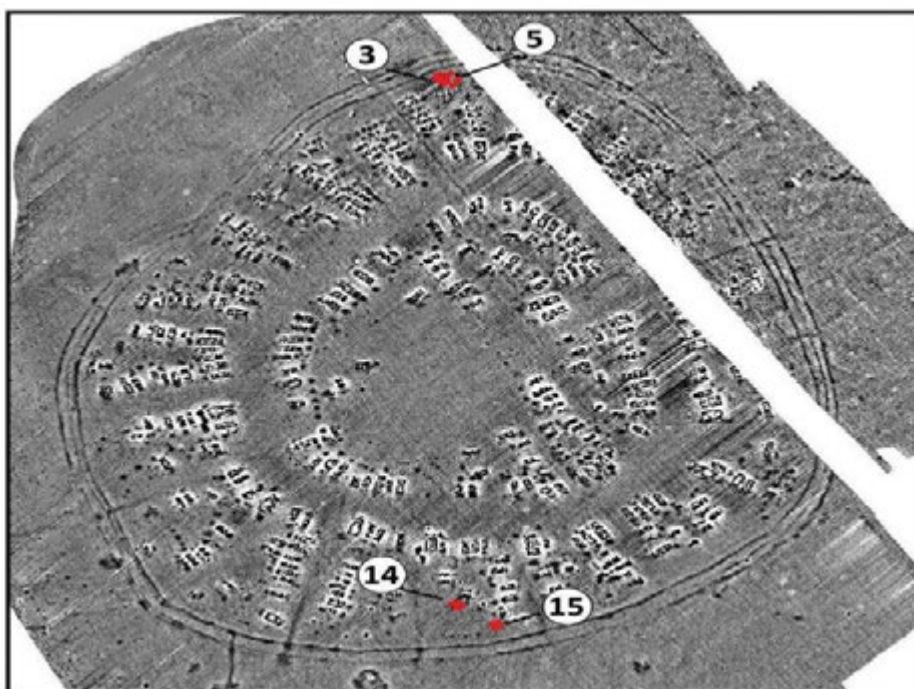


Fig.1. The magnetometric map of the Stolniceni settlement, with indication of the pottery kilns excavated so far (Țerna *et alii* 2019).

⁸ ȚERNA *et alii* 2019.

The experiment

The unique discovery led to the idea of a new experiment to test the hypotheses related to technological innovations and how they have an effect on the efficiency of such a kiln. Thus, as previously stated, in August-September 2020, a team of archaeologists and students participated in various activities that had as final goal the firing of pottery using a kiln built according to the information obtained by the archaeological research. Activities took place on two main coordinates: 1. The making of pots and other clay objects; 2. The construction of the experimental kiln.



Fig.2. The kiln that served as model for our experiment (Țerna *et alii* 2019).

As regards the modeling and decoration of the pots, the participants in the experiment applied/used the technique of overlapping clay coils. In addition, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic pots and figurines inspired by prehistoric Chalcolithic and Bronze Age pottery were made.

Most of the efforts were focused on the construction inspired by the kiln discovered in Stolniceni (Fig. 3). First of all, a clarification is necessary: the construction of the kiln was not an experiment *per se*, but only a stage of it – our goal being to achieve the installation necessary for the experiment itself. Therefore, modern tools and containers were used to dig and construct the elevated elements of the kiln. These, however, did not alter the development and the final result of the experiment, because the following principles were strictly followed:

- The characteristics and dimensions recorded in the excavation of the archaeological discovery;
- No compromises were made regarding the raw materials used for construction: the kiln was made only of clay, water, straw and twigs);
- The quantities of raw materials used have been rigorously monitored and recorded.



Fig.3. The experimental kiln – various stages of the construction

The construction of the kiln began by arranging an area of 3 x 5 m, on which, by mechanical means (excavator), the deepening was achieved up to -1.10 m (to the yellow, sterile soil). The buried elements of the original kiln were also made on a surface deepened from the ancient walking level. The explanation, most likely, lies in the fact that the yellow soil has much more stability, eliminating the possibility of collapse of the spared elements after digging the channels, additional pits and the fire box. After leveling the area, the buried elements were drawn to the surface, and the stokers pit was dug (from which the furnace was to be refueled).

After completing the excavation of the buried elements, we continued with the application of a layer of clay 2-3 cm in thickness, on the entire surface of the fire box; previously, for better adhesion, the surfaces were coated with a semi-liquid solution of water and clay. The construction of the lower part of the kiln was completed by building the two small arches above the ends of the channels, on a twig structure. For this stage, a quantity of 85 kg of solution was needed to "coat" the surfaces and 308 kg of wet clay for the plaster. Unlike the archaeological features, the lateral holes were not furnished with arches.

The next step was to install the plates above the channels. We built the two plates directly above the channels, using a few twigs as support.

Another important moment was the placement of the pyroscopic rings inside the kiln, so we could record the temperature in as many points as possible, depending on the constructed elements involved in improving the flow of hot air: 20 of units on the surface of the kiln, 2 in the fire channels and then another 4 in the pots.

The next step of the construction was to raise the domed structure of the kiln, using, as raw materials, twigs for the skeleton and clay for the actual construction. In the case of the dome, the degree of uncertainty was higher, because, for all the kilns from Stolniceni, and not only, very few fragments of this structure were discovered (possibly because they were dismantled after each firing). At Stolniceni, several fragments of clay considered to come from the dome were discovered on the step surface near the kiln. These are fragments with a thickness of 5-6 cm, smoothed at the top, with unidirectional imprints of twigs on the back. For our construction, a circular frame of twigs was made, supported by a post, one meter height, stuck in the middle of the kiln; about 60 twigs were propped on this circular frame, fixed at the bottom with a lump of clay, in the slightly deepened edge of the kiln. Thus, a truncated cone was created, on the edge of which we started building the wall of the dome, by placing around it successive rows of clay blocks. In order to maintain the access inside the oven, we stopped the construction at the level of the initially fixed circular frame. Over the next two days, despite a prolonged autumn rain that somewhat tangled our plans, we attempted a forced drying of the oven, by light fires in the stoker's pit and around the dome.

During the morning of September 6, we took out, in the sun, the batch of vessels to be fired. It is important to mention that, for an additional relevance in terms of efficiency, we

intended to load the kiln to its maximum capacity. The 25 medium and small vessels, and 13 other small objects made during the stay at the base were far from the necessary amount, so we had to improvise. The solution found was to purchase a number of 50 unfired vessels of medium size, from a local potter (Fig. 4).



Fig.4. The experimental kiln after the initial drying

The vessels were carefully arranged inside the kiln, approximately in concentric circles, so as not to waste space, but also not to obstruct the holes communicating with the fire channels. A happy coincidence made the available vessels occupy almost the entire volume of the kiln ($\sim 1.55 \text{ m}^3$). After filling the oven, the dome was raised by about another 30 cm. Thus, the flue of the kiln narrowed to a diameter of 25 cm. We mention that for the complete construction of the domed structure a quantity of $\sim 1220 \text{ kg}$ of wet clay mixed with straw was required, raising the total amount of clay used for the kiln to over 1600 kg. The clay for construction came mostly from a quarry near the base.

The firing (Fig. 5) started in the afternoon, after 5 pm, the kiln being gradually heated, by igniting a fire of light fuel (straw and dry twigs), about one meter in front of the fire box. Gradually, the burning fuel was pushed towards the kiln, so that, around 6 pm, the combustion was already taking place in front of the fire box. The draft was already very strong, the flames being drawn inside the kiln, through the channels. However, the humidity of the beech wood, corroborated to the length of the fire box created the impression that the firing was not strong enough (respectively, the flames were not long enough) to raise the temperature in the entire kiln to the desired level. To make up for these shortcomings, we decided to push the fire inside the fire box (7 pm). This solution seemed to work initially, because the temperature rose visibly in the ware chamber, and even a few incandescent vessels could be seen towards the base. In the long run, however, the embers and incompletely burned beech wood occupied much of the volume of the fire box, making it difficult, and later impossible to continue the supply of wood fuel, which eventually led to a drop in temperature. Thus, around 10 pm, all the wood and embers were removed from the fire box, and the fire was restarted right in front of it. This time, however, its intensity was stronger, by increasing the amount of wood burned at once. The temperature inside the oven increased rapidly. The firing continued at maximum intensity for more than two hours, and around 1.30 am, the next day, we stopped the fuel supply, pushing the embers into the channels until they refused. We also covered the flue to prevent sudden cooling of the incandescent pottery. For the actual firing, 0.7 m^3 of beech wood was consumed, to which is added the wood used for the initial drying and heating of the oven, so a total that exceeded 1 m^3 .



Fig.5. The firing process.

Later, after 9 am, we found that the embers in the fire box and in front of the kiln were still active, making it impossible to extract the vessels. After removing the upper part of the dome, we extract all the vessels in the afternoon, after 4 pm (Fig. 7). Almost all the vessels looked well fired, in an oxidizing atmosphere, except for one, located in the lower back of the kiln, which was partially black (probably, it blocked the additional hole next to it, thus lacking oxygen). At the end of the firing, three vessels were cracked: one, located in the front of the oven, "benefited" from the thermal shock of the first part of combustion, while two others were damaged during extraction from the kiln. Summing up, that means a percentage of under 5% of scrap due to firing. The temperature rings were also extracted, unfortunately only 11 being

sufficiently intact to be measured, the rest being crushed to the touch. Only three of them, from the front bottom of the kiln, indicated temperatures exceeding 850°C, being closer to the place of fuel combustion.



Fig.7. The burned vessels after dismantling the top of the kiln

Due to incomplete information obtained from the temperature rings, we wanted to perform physicochemical investigations, such as SEM-EDX and μ FTIR analyses, for 13 samples from several areas of the kiln (Fig. 8), in order to identify the firing temperatures reached throughout the entire kiln.

SEM micrographs were used to estimate the degree of vitrification of the clay⁹, and in the studied samples were not visible such traces, indicating firing temperatures below 700-750°C¹⁰. EDX data shows the presence of carbon in all samples, coming from carbonates and calcite, suggesting temperatures with the same values indicated by the scanning microscopy.

⁹ KARAPUKAITYTĖ et al., 2006, 386; AMICONE et al., 2020, 16.

¹⁰ PALANIVEL, MEYVEL, 2011, 340.

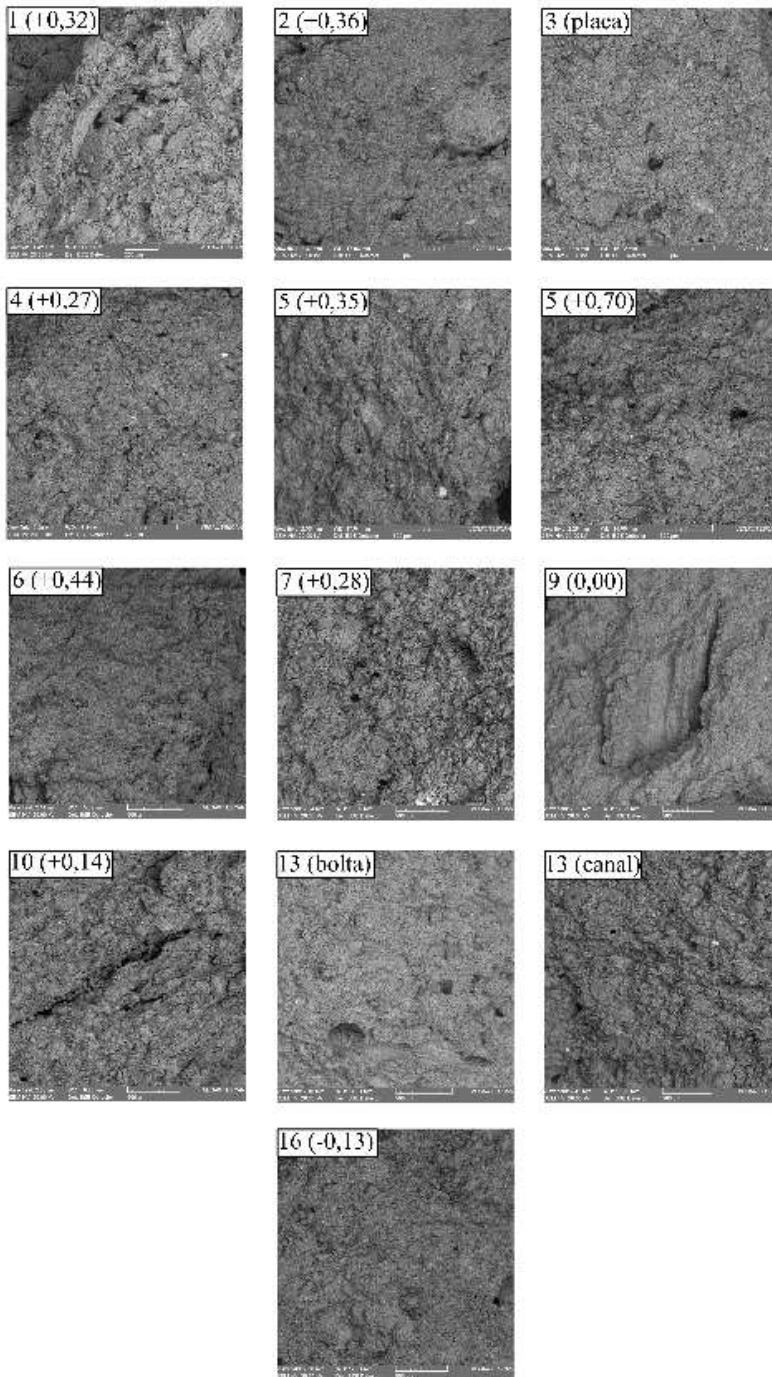


Fig.8. SEM Micrographs of the analysed clay samples.

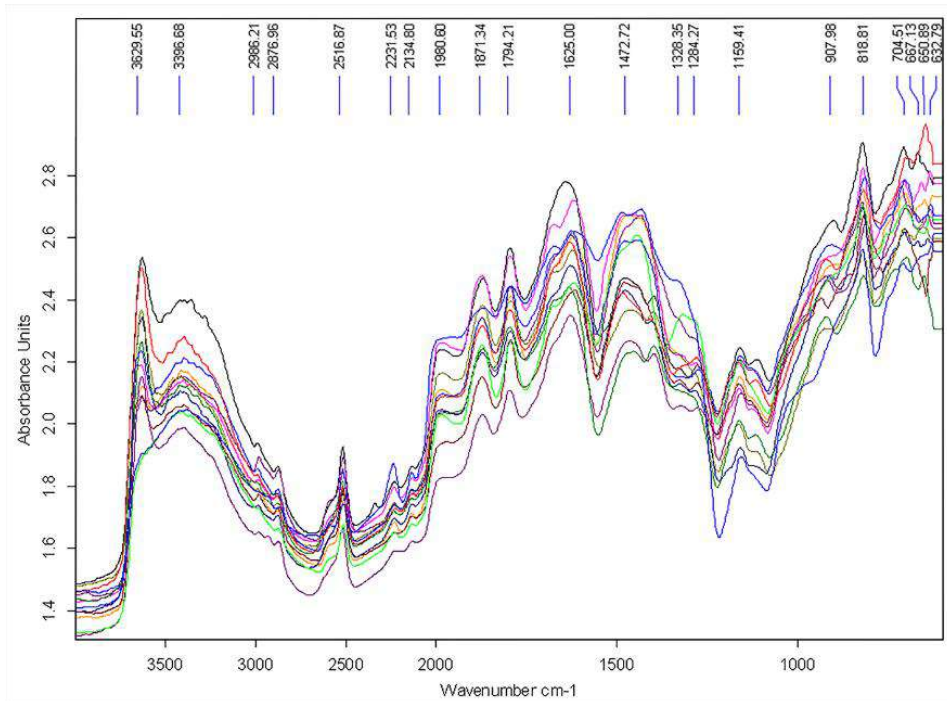


Fig.9. FTIR spectra of the the analysed clay samples

The FTIR results (Fig. 9) obtained showed, in addition to the presence of minerals specific to the used clay, a series of defining data in establishing temperature ranges. Thus, for six samples from the front area of the dome, it was established that the maximum temperature reached did not exceed 520°C ¹¹, as determined by the presence of peaks at $\sim 915\text{-}935\text{ cm}^{-1}$ specific for kaolinite. The samples from the bottom area of the kiln and also from some areas of the dome reached higher values, but the presence of calcite and carbonates¹² ($\sim 2986\text{ cm}^{-1}$, 2876 cm^{-1} , 2516 cm^{-1} , $1300\text{-}1500\text{ cm}^{-1}$, $\sim 704\text{ cm}^{-1}$) indicates that the firing temperatures in the entire kiln did not exceed $700\text{-}750^{\circ}\text{C}$ ¹³.

Conclusions

In the case of the field experiment (either the construction of an object, the use of a technology or the simulation of a behaviour in conditions) the control over the variables is

¹¹ VELRAJ et al., 2009, 730-731; RAVISANKAR et al., 2010, 187.

¹² NODARI et al., 2007, 4669; BERZINA-CIMDINA, BORODAJENKO, 2012, 127.

¹³ RAVISANKAR et al., 2010, 189.

lower, but the conclusions can have a character less abstract, being convertible into valid premises within the inferential process about the past.

Regarding the experimental kiln from Băiceni, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. All its constructive details, including the innovations (additional holes and vaults above the canals) are arguments of an advanced technology, most likely locally developed achieved after hundreds of years of experience in the pottery craft. The initial hypothesis regarding the innovations was confirmed, meaning that the elements of amplification and uniformity of the hot air worked. Although the kiln was almost completely filled with ceramic objects, until the upper opening, the whole batch heated quickly and evenly, reaching incandescence (translated by a temperature of around 600°C), in less than an hour and a half of strong fire.

The SEM-EDX and μ FT-IR analyzes performed on 13 samples, taken from the kiln's vault and from the two plates, established two intervals for the firing temperatures obtained during the experiment. The first range reaches up to 520 ° C for some areas of the dome, the other being between 520 ° C and 700-750 ° C for the bottom of the kiln. Therefore, although the firing of the vessels succeeded and the hypothesis of the functionality of the innovations was confirmed, the experiment still failed to reach the known performances of Cucuteni ceramics (over 900 °C). An obvious, concrete cause of this result would be the excessive humidity of the wood fuel, which burned slowly, without great temperature release. Therefore, the wood fuel must be perfectly dry and probably mixed, hardwood and softwood.

On a more general level, if we think about the reasons that led to this technological efficiency of ceramic kilns, the simplest explanation would be the larger than average dimensions, which means a larger volume of the vessel chamber and implicitly a much larger number of ceramic vessels to be heated, hence the need for a wider and faster circulation of flue gases. Following this thread, and if we go back to the archaeological context of the discovery (Stolniceni is a mega-settlement, with hundreds of dwellings, so thousands of inhabitants), then we can imagine, with little chance of error, that the demand for pottery was permanently growing, hence the need to increase efficiency by increasing the capacity of ovens. In the same context, we can think of a possible difficulty in providing the necessary amount of fuel for combustion, which could occur at some point. Obviously, wood was the essential raw material both for the construction of houses and other elements of interior architecture, and for the many domestic and craft activities, as fuel. Its intensive exploitation could have led to a relatively rapid disappearance from the catchment area of the settlement, hence the need to save it. The experiment showed that these kiln innovations could mean savings in fuel consumption - better air flow equals less wood to be burned.

Also, in the archaeological context from which we started, the magnetic map suggests an organization of "neighbourhoods" in the settlement, almost each served by pottery kilns.

Thus, we cannot rule out the possibility of a “competition” between specialized potters from the settlement (or even from different settlements), competition which is a factor of dynamism and technological efficiency.

Acknowledgements

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Foreword

Last, we would like to pay our gratitude and our respects to our dear friend and colleague, Stanislav Țerna, who tragically and prematurely passed away in December 2020. We also wish to dedicate all of our present and future experimental work to its memory. Rest in peace, Stas!

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The iconographical and mythological contexts of serpent(s)-fighting scene on the Old Assyrian seal impression from Kültepe (the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts I 2 b 1591)

ANASTASIA YASENOVSKAYA¹, VLADIMIR SHELESTIN², ALEXANDRE NEMIROVSKY³

Abstract. *An impression of an Old Assyrian seal from Kültepe from collection of Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow carries an image that was not recognized but by present authors and is of great interest as it depicts a scene of a hero's battle with a serpent-like demonic character (most likely, this is a double or two-headed monster). Rarity of serpent-fighting scenes in the Ancient Near Eastern art makes it important to study the composition and plot of the impression in its traceable iconographical and mythological contexts, in order to establish its cultural connotations (Anatolian, Syrian, Mesopotamian), considering that Kültepe was the center of interaction and synthesis of several cultural traditions. It turns out that the closest iconographical and mythological parallels to the image in study can be found in Eastern Anatolia and its main routs can be assigned to local (Hattian-Hittite-Hurrian) cultural symbiosis.*

Rezumat. *Pe replica unui sigiliu provenit din Vechiul Regat Asirian și aparținând colecției Muzeului de arte frumoase Pușkin, din Moscova, figurează o imagine care nu a fost recunoscută decât de către autorii articolului și care deține un interes major întrucât reprezintă scena unei bătălii dintre un erou și un personaj demonic, asemănător unui șarpe (cel mai probabil, este vorba de un monstru cu două capete). Raritatea scenelor care descriu lupte cu șerpi în arta Vechiului Orient Îndepărtat conferă o importanță sporită studiului structurii și evoluției replicii în contextele ei iconografice și mitologice reperabile, astfel încât să se poată stabili conotațiile sale culturale (anatoliene, siriene, mesopotamiene), având în vedere că Kültepe a fost centrul de interferență și sinteză a numeroase tradiții culturale. Se pare că paralele iconografice și mitologice cele mai apropiate de imaginea studiată pot fi găsite în Estul Anatoliei, iar rădăcinile sale pot fi atribuite unor simbioze culturale locale (Hatti-Hitite-Hurrite).*

Keywords: *two-headed serpent, hydra, Kültepe, Malatia, Illuyanka, Hedammu.*

Introduction and methods

A fragment of a seal impression on a little clay envelope fragment from Old Assyrian Kültepe (kept in Moscow at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, inv. No. I 2 b 1591) contains a scene recently recognized by the authors of present work and presenting a significant

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interest: it is a scene of the hero's battle with a serpent-like monster (apparently, double or two-headed one), see below in details. The rarity of serpent-fighting scenes in the extant Ancient Near Eastern material makes this artifact worth of detailed study, especially since it is one of not numerous seals from Kültepe which bear rather original motifs not repeated on other seals of the region. The fragment was acquired by the Museum in 1911, but due to its small size (1.77x2.62x0.62 cm) and a number of damages the depiction could not be recognised for decades; it was studied only recently by the present authors and is only now being introduced by them into the international scientific activities⁴. Here we present the most representative photographs of the whole artifact and its main part, including the photo with contrasting (Fig. 1, 3), and the impression's drawing (Fig. 2). The solid lines represent clearly recognizable outlines, the dashed lines represent outlines distinguishable without full confidence, the shaded lines represent lines of chips).

⁴ An only previous attempt to present its drawing (YANKOVSKAYA 1968, 306, № 119) remained inutile because only a few lines from among those actually present on the sealing were reflected in the drawing (sometimes with errors) and the result did not allow to understand either the general plot of the scene, or the sense of separate outlines. Only the possibilities of high-resolution digital photography with magnification, shooting at different angles with different lighting, further computer processing of the obtained images (contrasting etc.) and collating the results with a detailed study of the original under high magnification provide us an opportunity to recognize the main part of the details and the scene for the first time (though some of them remain obscure). The photographs were made due to the joint project of the Pushkin Museum and CJSC "EPOS Group" on the digital archive of the Museum's cuneiform collection.

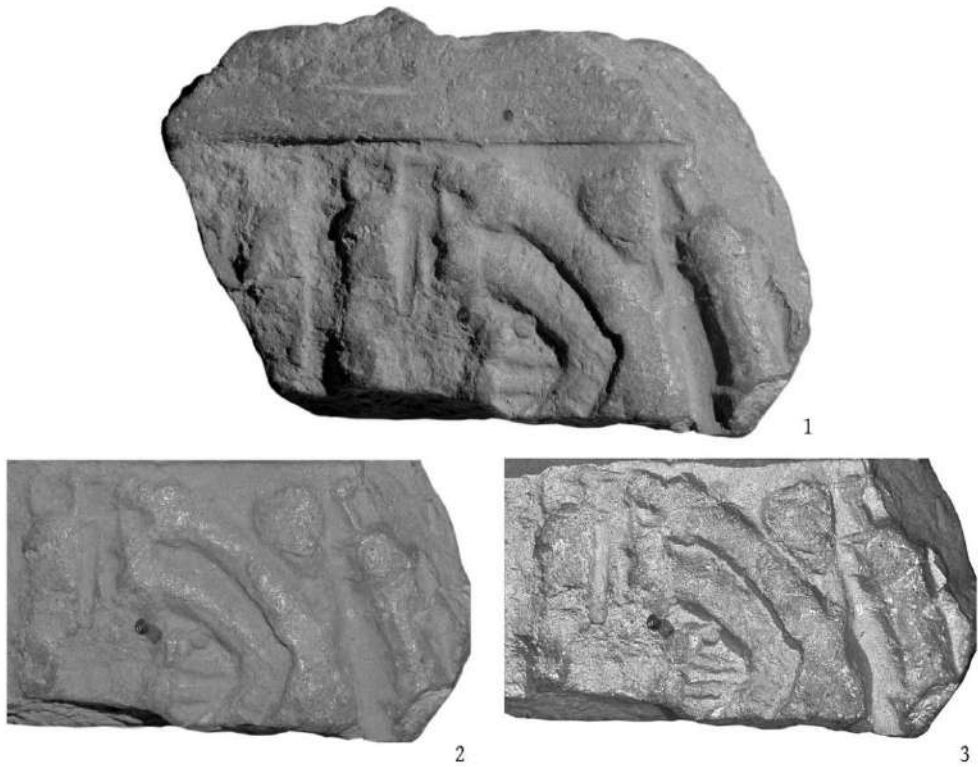


Fig. 1, 1-3. Photographs of fragment in study (the Pushkin Museum, I 2 b 1591): 1 – the entire surface of the envelope; 2, 3 – its main part (3 – with contrasting).

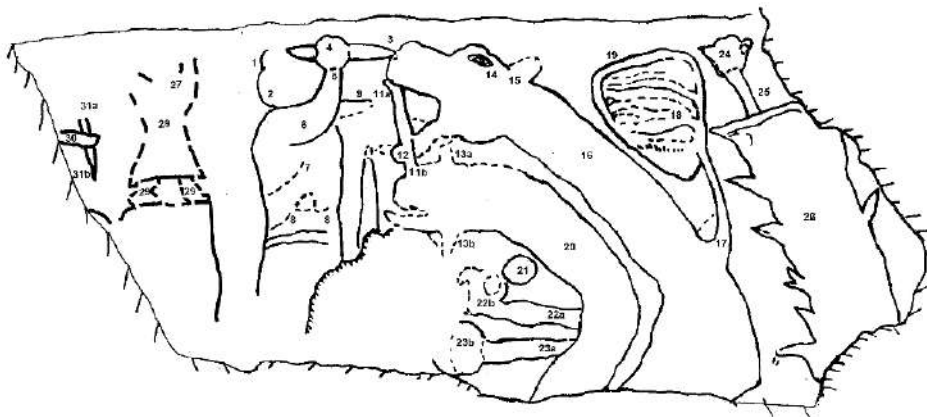


Fig. 2. Drawing of fragment in study (the Pushkin Museum, I 2 b 1591).

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What appears to be recognizable quite clear is a scene of fighting with a serpent-like monster: an anthropomorphic hero (left) stabs it. This hero (1 – head or accidental chipping, 2 – back of the head, 4 – fist squeezing a dagger, 5 – wrist (?), 6 – body and raised hand with a dagger, 7 – lines on clothes (?), 8 – lines on clothes or legs (?), 9 – clearly prominent element, perhaps an outline fragment of the hero's other arm extended forward which strikes a serpent-like monster (16) in its muzzle with a dagger (3) – the monster has a head with a muzzle, neck / torso (16), eye (?) (14), a horn, protrusion or ear on the back of the head (15), 12 is possibly the edge of its lower jaw. There are no extremities at the neck / torso (16). From the back of this neck / torso, a tree-like outgrowth (17) extends, crowned with a large rounded element resembling the crown of a tree and encircled with a rim (19). Without certainty, outlines (18) resembling branches are distinguishable. Cf: the very shape of the monster's body (16) resembles a trunk. The tree-like element growing from the monster's body can seem strange but in fact has parallels in relevant traditions (see below).

Below and to the left of the neck / body of the monster (16) we see an object (20) quite similar and parallel to the object (16) in shape, location and bending one along another. From this object (20) two similar sets of elements (22a+22b and 23a+23b) protrude forward. Given the position of object (20), its similarity in shape with the monster's torso / neck and the head (16) and their parallel and close bending, it seems that either the figure (2) represents one more serpent (similar to 16) or it is the second head and neck of a two-headed snake (16+20); the damaged left extremity of element 20 will be then the head, and elements 16 and 20 should have been connected somewhere below the chip edge. Elements 22 and 23 are most likely the forward paws of the serpent-like creature to which element 20 belongs: just similar protruded paws of a serpent / dragon without hind legs constitute a common feature of one of the types of the Ancient Near Eastern (and specifically Mesopotamian) dragon iconography (e.g., Mesopotamian serpent *bašmu*). Such dragons are also characterized by a protrusion on the back of the head, similar to our element 15 (see below for details). The same extended paws, apparently, are shown in the serpent (also without hind legs) fought by a hero on the famous Neo-Hittite relief from Malatya (see below). It seems that our sealing shows rather a two-headed / two-necked monster to which, on the one hand, paws 22+23, and, on the other hand, an outgrowth 18 belong, than two monsters, one of which has the paws 22+23, but no outgrowth 17, while the other has this outgrowth, but no paws. The great serpent from Malatya is also regarded by many authors as two-headed, and different two-headed creatures were generally a fairly common motif in Ancient Near East and, in particular, in Syro-Anatolian art (see below).

To the right of the monster(s), there is a large object 24+25+26 with a trunk-like element (26), stem-like element (25) protruding from it and a petal-like element 24 seeming to crown this “stem”. The monster is placed between the hero and this object in a way that might presume that the hero fights monster(s) in order to pave his way to this object 24+25+26. The

latter, both in its elements and general structure, resembles to a certain extent the sacred tree, which has a very variable iconography in the Ancient Near Eastern art (including very rare specimens), see Fig. 3 and Note 2. However, this interpretation is somehow hindered by the fact that the "trunk" of the "tree" (26) is much wider than its "flower-shaped crown" (24), while no images of a tree with such a ratio of the trunk and the top have been found by us among many hundreds of checked examples. In the leftmost, heavily damaged part of the image, the traces of two more anthropomorphic figures can be supposed without certainty (27 – 31). Some other elements of the image are clearly visible but obscure in meaning for us.

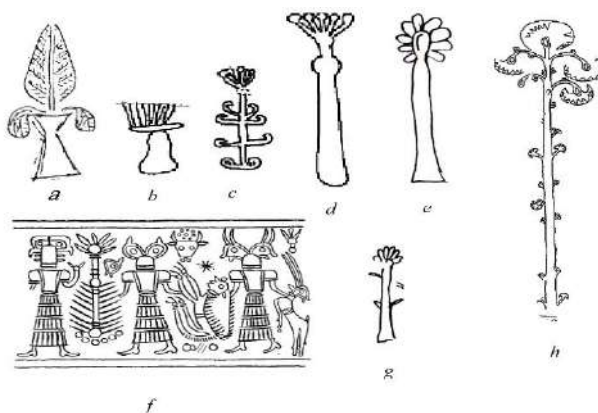


Fig. 3. Some Ancient Near Eastern images of trees⁵.

The serpent-fighting plot of the scene gives the composition under study a special value, since such scenes (especially involving not snakes but serpents/dragons without hind legs) repeat in the Mesopotamian and Syro-Anatolian traditions in course of ages, but only a few of such examples preserved for us, and the images with two- or multi-headed monsters of the kind ("hydras" in widespread terminology), with or without hind legs, are even more rare⁶. In any case, our artifact belongs to a not large group of seals from Kültepe bearing highly original plots and elements (the overwhelming majority of Kültepe seals contain, on the contrary, elements which are massively repeated on other seals from the same Kültepe and

⁵ a – Ur-Nammu stele (YORK 1975, Fig.9); b, c, d – seals from Alalakh IV (15–14th centuries BC), (COLLON 1982, No. 71, No. 108, No. 112); e, g – Neo-Babylonian seals (EISEN 1940, No.98, No. 99), f – "Syro-Hittite" seal of the Cypriot style (OSTEN 1934, No. 359), z – fresco from Mari (18th century BC) (after BLACK, GREEN 1998, 23, Fig. 16). Cf. with our object 24+25+26: a flower-like or leaf-like top and a trunk clearly separated from it: a, b, c, f; massive trunk with boughs or short branches: c, f, g, z; just massive trunk – a, b, d; stem-like element connecting the top and the trunk – d; top of the tree as a multi-petal corolla – e, cf. c, d.

⁶ On the Ancient Near Eastern hydras see FRANKFORT 1934, 8–11, 22–24; LEVY 1934, 49–50; FRANKFORT 1935, 105–108; FRANKFORT 1939, 71–72, 121–122; VAN BUREN 1946, 18–20; BISI 1964–1965; ORTHMANN 1975; PARAYRE 2003, 276, 294–295; AMIET 2006.

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other centers in different combinations)⁷; snakes and similar creatures rarely are presented at Kültepe seals and when this takes place nonetheless, we see just snakes⁸, not serpent-like monsters as at our sealing.

Results and discussion

All the aforesaid incites us to trace the iconographic and mythological parallels and possible context for our image, in order to evaluate, as much as possible, which of Mesopotamian and / or Syro-Anatolian serpent-fighting plots and iconographic traditions could be reflected in composition in study (though one's ability to answer this questions is limited by the fact that many sources are lost for us). Taking into account that Kültepe was the center of interaction and synthesis of the traditions of Anatolia, Lower Mesopotamia and the Syrian-Upper Mesopotamian region, it would be reasonable to suggest to what extent our image is the fruit of Mesopotamian or of Syro-Anatolian traditions, and or their synthesis. Thus we have to compare it with relevant artifacts of a wide chronological range, not limiting ourselves to the region and time of the Old Assyrian colonies in Anatolia⁹.

Indeed, important analogies can be found for a number of motives of our image in relevant material (see Figs. below):

(1) The struggle with a (hind)-legless and / or two-headed / multi-headed serpent-like creature: see Fig. 4 (the hero strikes a snake in its muzzle with a dart, the snake is placed near a tree – an analogy to our image in several aspects at once); Fig. 5 (the hero with a spear attacks the snake); Fig. 6 (the hero shoots from a bow at a horned, legless serpent, and a small “sacred tree” is between them);

(2) cf. Figs. 7, 8, 9: the heroes fight with multi-headed hydras, including the legless one (Fig. 8; the hero hits this hydra in the muzzle of one of the heads, similarly to our image).

⁷ Cf. main publications of seals and seal impressions from Kültepe: CONTENAU 1922; ÖZGÜÇ 1965, 1968, 2006; ÖZGÜÇ, TUNCA 2001; TEISSIER 1994.

⁸ ÖZGÜÇ 1965: pl. XI, no. 31; pl. XVIII, no. 54; pl. XXI, no. 64; pl. XXV, no. 76; pl. XXVI, no. 77.

⁹ Publications of seals used for comparison include primarily: COLLON 1986; DELAPORTE 1910, 1920, 1923; EISEN 1940; FRANKFORT 1939; KEEL-LEU, TEISSIER 2004; PORADA 1947; PORADA, BUCHANAN 1948; VON DER OSTEN 1934; WARD 1909; WARD 1910, as well as regional corporuses of seals of selected regions: ALP 1968; AMIET 1992; COLLON 1982; ERKANAL 1993; FRANKFORT 1955; MARCHETTI 2011; OTTO 2000; TUNCA 1979; the role of serpents in mythologies and relevant images of snakes and serpents were highlighted, in particular, in: AFANASYEVA 2007; BELLUCCI 2008; BUCHHOLZ 2000; IVANOV, TOPOROV 1974, 142–144; LAMBERT 1985; STEVENS 1989; SVYATOPOLK-CHETVERTYNSKY 2005; VAN BUREN 1946, 1947; WILLIAMS-FORTE 1983. Attraction of artifacts of several epochs for comparison is justified by the fact that here is so little data on serpent iconography in Ancient Near East that it does not allow to determine certain stages in its development, presuming the possibility of admitting the same, continuously reproducible motifs in objects that have come down from the same regions, but dated to a different time, including the previous and next millennia; in very deed, in a number of iconographic topics, the Syro-Anatolian and Mesopotamian glyptics reproduce the same motifs (with all their variations) for millennia.

Noteworthy is the similarity in the depiction of curved parallel necks of the hydras in Fig. 7 and 8 with the parallel curved necks / bodies 16 and 20 on our image, which fact reinforces the possibility of seeing elements 16+20 as a two-headed monster;

(3) cf. Fig. 10 a, b – in the famous relief H from Malatya AMM 12250, a god/hero fights with a serpent (without hind legs), which was often, but without concrete grounds, identified as *illuyanka*¹⁰ or a similar mythological creature¹¹ (now this scene is more often understood as the battle of the Storm god with the serpent¹²). A number of authors believe that this snake has two or many heads¹³. Unfortunately, just that part of the relief that would show if it is really so is extremely damaged by a fissure. Nevertheless, upon a detailed examination of the relief based on the best photographs, primarily according to the publication of L. Delaporte (Delaporte 1940: Pl, XXII), it seems that the serpent is really two-headed (both necks are shown to the right of the fissure) and protrudes forward paws with weapons (shown to the left of the fissure and touching the kilt of the hero), cf. our drawing in Fig. 10, b. An alternative understanding would be that the protrusion(s) to the left of the fissure represents one neck and head, and the visible lines to the right of it represent the second (as suggested in van Loon 1997: 589) or even the second and third heads, but the best old photographs (cf. Fig. 10, a) seem to make the previous option preferable.

In both cases, the presumably double-headed serpent on this relief provides additional evidence for seeing the two-headed serpent-like monster in our image, especially since two "offshoots" of Malatya serpent more or less visible to the right of the fissure and the element (or elements) of the same serpent extended forward to the left of the fissure (Fig. 10, b) constitute a very close visual analogy to the two neck-like elements 16 and 20 and the elements 22-23 set forward from element 16 in our image. Thus we anew tend to see in elements 22-23 and in the protruding element of Malatya serpent seen to the left of the crack on AMM 12250 as well, the paws of two-headed serpents with necks shown bent parallel to each other (similar

¹⁰ GARSTANG 1929, 207; GÜTERBOCK 1957, 64 (doubtful due to the paucity of our knowledge of other similar subjects); AKURGAL 1961, 116.

¹¹ DELAPORTE 1940, 35; ÖZYAR 1991, 156; BROWN 2008, 159.

¹² AMIET 2001, 7; BUNNENS, HAWKINS, LEIRENS 2006, 129; POLI 2007, 306. The main argument against identifying this serpent with *illuyanka* is the connection of the *illuyanka* myth with the North Anatolia in the Hittite tradition (BACHVAROVA 2016, 257, n. 171), which forms a large spatial gap with East Anatolian Malatya (the time gap between the time of the fixation of the myth of *illuyanka*, i.e. 14th century BC, and the time of the construction of the "Lion Gate" of Malatya, however, is not as great as it was previously thought: stylistically, the reliefs continue the traditions of the Neo-Hittite kingdom and are now dated usually to the 11th century BC, (GLIBERT 2015, 144). This allows us to choose for the interpretation of the relief other plots of Hittite mythology, first of all, relating to the Hurrian cycle "Song of the Hedammu" and "Song of the Sea" with its Ugaritic-Egyptian parallels (van Loon 1997, 589), although in the fragments of these texts that have come down to us many-headed monsters are not mentioned.

¹³ DHORME, DUSSAUD 1945, 345; ÖZYAR 1991, 154; VAN LOON 1997, 589 (possibly two-headed, with the second head supposed to be seen in the protruding element touching the kilt of the hero to the left from the fissure); BOARDMAN 1998, 32 (two-headed); BELLUCCI 2008, 149 (possibly two-headed).

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to the necks of the Mesopotamian hydras in Figs. 7 and 9). The parallelism between our image from Kültepe and the relief from Malatya is all the more revealing since they belong to the same region (Southeast of Asia Minor).

(4) The duality of the serpent-like enemy / character, including its two-headedness / doubled body: cf. Fig. 10 a, b; Fig. 11 (the hero appears before the deity with two intertwined snakes captured by him); Fig. 12 (a two-headed serpent next to a vertical element representing the "sacred tree" or a standard, see van Buren 1946: 7, 13)¹⁴. The two-headedness of various creatures was generally a fairly widespread motif in Near Eastern, in particular Mesopotamian and Syro-Anatolian art (Collon 1982: 41), including the seals from Kültepe.

(5) Presumable growth of a plant/tree-like element 17+18+19 from the body of the monster (16) finds analogies in a visual "fusion" of a tree and a legless monstrous serpent (with a dragon's head, similar to the head of our monster 16) on one seal (Fig. 13) and, however in a more distant way, in the standard iconographic motif of plants growing from the shoulders and backs of Mesopotamian fertility deities (see, e.g. Frankfort 1939: 106, 107, 114, 115, 124).

(6) The front paw-like elements 22+23 extended forward by a serpent without hind legs. One of the common iconographic types of Mesopotamian dragons and serpents, namely the *bašmu* (Figs. 14-15) and, possibly, a feature of the Malatya serpent, Fig. 10, see above.

(7) The shape of the head and muzzle of our monster (16) and the horn-like protrusion at the back of its head – cf. the same usual iconographic types of the Mesopotamian dragon (Figs. 14-15).

Thus, all the features of the serpent-like antagonist(s) of the hero in our image (in the light of the above parallels, this is rather a two-headed serpent than two different monsters) find, both separately and in some combinations, more or less close analogies within the relevant Near Eastern imagery. Only the specific combination of all these features offered in our image turns out to be unique (and not repeated fully on the objects known to us), but the same can be said about the majority of other (rare in themselves) images of serpent-like legless monsters.

As for the hero on the left, it should be noted that on the seals of Mesopotamia and Syro-Anatolia, a character attacking the enemy with a dagger is a very rare figure, although in Kültepe it is more often found on the seals of the "local" or Old Anatolian style¹⁵. On the whole, according to a number of features, our sealing should also be attributed to this style. It turns out that the closest iconographical parallel to the serpent on our seal is presented by Malatya

¹⁴ On the closely related image of double snakes (from which the image of a two-headed and two-body snake may have developed), see VAN BUREN 1935-1936. Cf. also the fight with the three-headed snake on the Early Dynastic Mesopotamian seal BM 123279 (VAN BUREN 1946, 6-7), our Fig. 8 a.

¹⁵ E.g., Kültepe seal Kt. b / k 134 (ÖZGÜÇ 1965, Pl. XVII, Fig. 51): the hero to the right of the Storm god kills the defeated enemy with a dagger.

serpent, and the alleged interpretation of some details of the scene on the seal also finds similarities with Syro-Anatolian motifs.

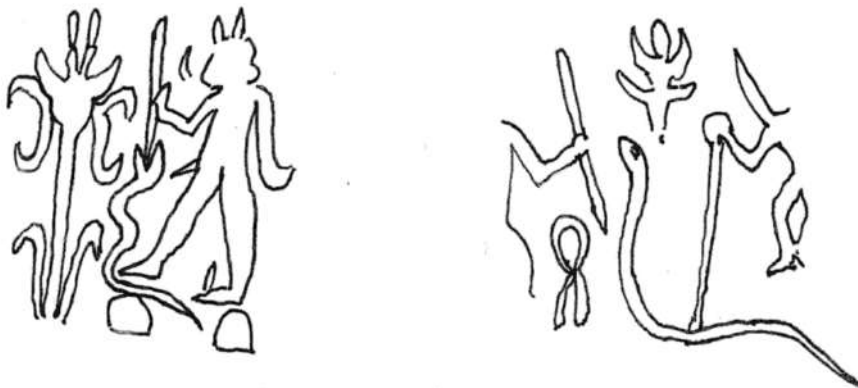


Fig. 4 (after EISEN 1940, No. 158), Fig. 5 (after EISEN 1940, No. 159). The Storm god kills the snake in serpent-fighting scenes on the seals of the so-called "the second Syrian group" (Syro-Anatolian seals of the middle 2nd millennium BC, EISEN 1940, 37).

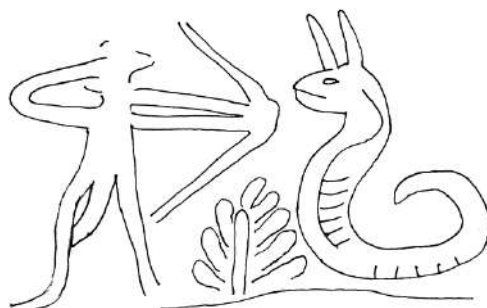


Fig. 6 (after FRANKFORT 1939, Pl. XXIV, g). Serpent-fighting scene on the Neo-Assyrian seal of the 10-7th centuries BC. The horned serpent is probably *bašmu*.

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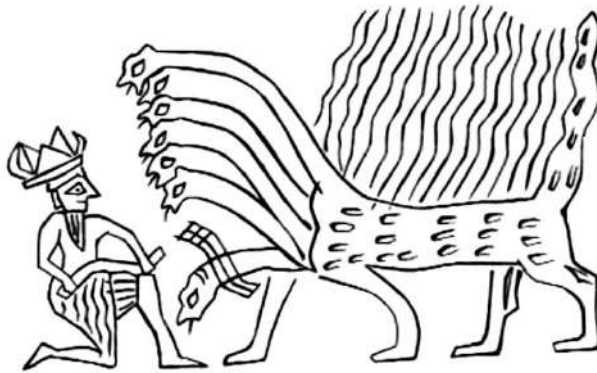


Fig. 7. God (Ninurta?) struggles with the seven-headed hydra: Sumerian plaque from the Early Dynastic period (after GREEN 1997, 155, Fig. 13). Cf. hydra in Fig. 7a.



Fig. 7a. The image of the seven-headed hydra on the top of the mace. Sumer, Early Dynastic Period (FRANKFORT 1935, Fig. 4).



Fig. 8. The hero struggles with a hydra without hind legs, a seal fragment dated to the Early Dynastic period from Tell Asmar (Eshnunna) (FRANKFORT 1939, 72, Ill. 27 = VAN BUREN 1946, Fig. 16 = FRANKFORT 1955, No. 497, cf. Pl. 45, preface).

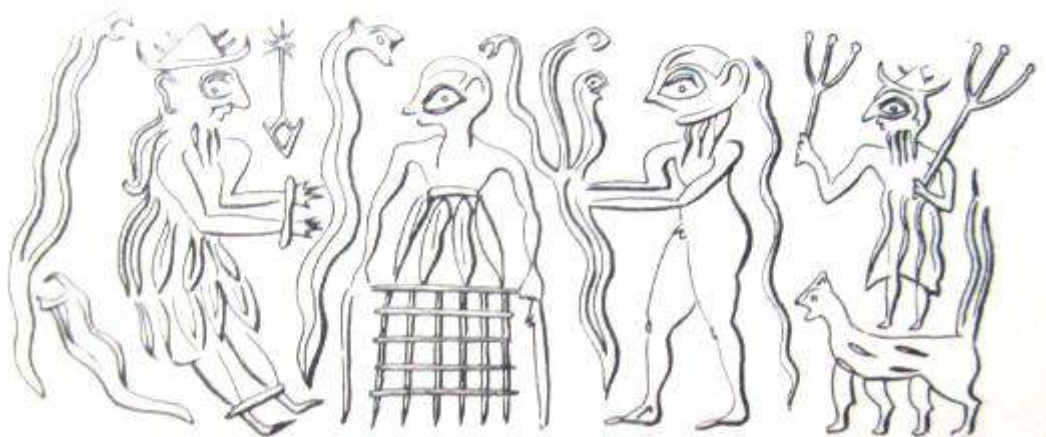


Fig. 8. Three-headed legless hydra / snake on the Early Dynastic seal BM 123279 (AMIET 1961, Pl. 105, Fig. 1389).

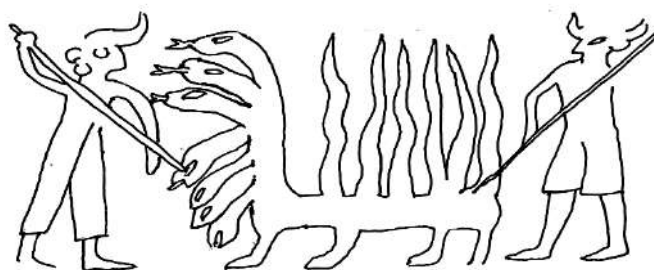


Fig. 9. Heroes slay the seven-headed hydra, schematic representation of a scene on a seal fragment dated to the early Old Akkadian period from Tell Asmar (Eshnunna) (after FRANKFORT 1939, Pl. XXIII j = VAN BUREN 1946, Fig. 17 = FRANKFORT 1955, No. 478).

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Fig. 10a. Detail of the Neo-Hittite relief with a snake-fighting scene from Malatya, detail (DELAPORTE 1940, Pl. XXII, Relief H).

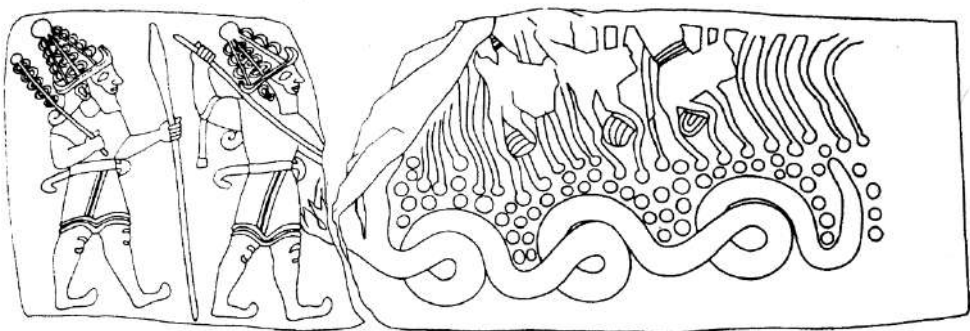


Fig. 10 b. Drawing of the Neo-Hittite relief from Malatya (DELAPORTE 1940, Pl. XXII, Relief H).



Fig. 11. "Syro-Hittite" seal of the 2nd millennium BC (WARD 1910, no. 823).



Fig. 12. Two-headed snake on the Old Akkadian seal VA 3303 (= VAN BUREN 1946, Fig. 5).

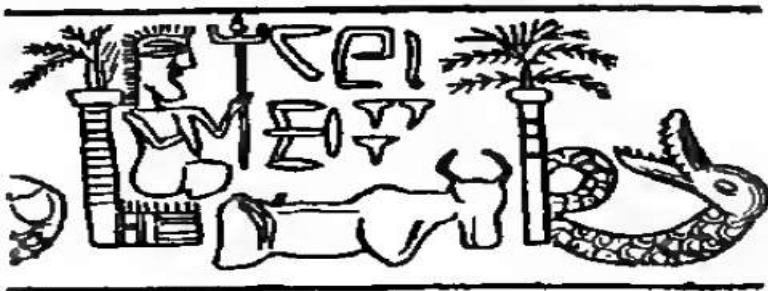


Fig. 13. The serpent is depicted as if "growing" from the tree (Neo-Assyrian seal, WARD 1910, No. 710).

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Fig. 14. Neo-Assyrian seal BM 89589 (WARD 1910, No 579 = COLLON 2005, Fig. 850). God (probably Ninurta) and the serpent *bašmu*.



Fig. 15. Neo-Assyrian seal AO 30255, Louvre 33¹⁶. God (probably Ninurta) and the serpent *bašmu*.

¹⁶ Online publication of the Louvre Museum:

The next question is about which of Mesopotamian or Syro-Anatolian mythical and literary motifs could be reflected by our image. Thus, it seems useful to review the serpent-fighting plots known in the Near Eastern mythological tradition¹⁷. The most important serpent-fighting character in Mesopotamia was undoubtedly the god Ninurta. The story of his struggle with serpentine monsters is given in Sumerian texts, in particular, about the battle of Ninurta with Asag ("Lord in great radiance") and about his return to his hometown of Nippur ("Created alike Anu"). The concepts of these battles continued to exist in Mesopotamia for millenia and were vividly reflected in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian glyptics. (E.g., in the 1st millennium BC the plot of Ninurta's struggle with Asag was extremely common, as well as the confrontation between a god, most like the same Ninurta and the serpent *bašmu* (with horns and front paws).

The question of identification of the *bašmu* (muš-ša-tur) with Sumerian terms and pictorial material is rather vague. It is believed that this term denoted a horned viper and that it was reflected in the iconography of this creature. The Akkadian word *bašmu* was also used to denote the Sumerian *ušum*; the dragon *ušumgal* (*ušumgallu*) should also be close to this creature. The myth of Ninurta's return to Nippur mentions eleven monsters that Ninurta defeated. Among them is the "valiant serpent" (*ušum ur-saĝ*), probably corresponding to *bašmu* from *Enuma eliš*. In the Babylonian poem of creation, Tiamat also created eleven monsters, one of which was *bašmu*. However, the image of this monster by this time was undergoing significant changes, as if combining the features of *ušum ur-saĝ* and *muš-saĝ-7* from the myth of Ninurta – it has now six mouths, seven tongues and seven [...] on his belly¹⁸.

Muš-saĝ-7 is a seven-headed serpent living in the mountains and also mentioned in the list of Ninurta's trophies. Ninurta struck him down and hung him on the lapis lazuli rail (*tum*) of his chariot. Apparently, the images of "hydras" discussed above (on the Sumerian plaque of the Early Dynastic period, on the Early Dynastic seal from Tell Asmar (Eshnunna) and on the early Old Akkadian seal from Tell Asmar (Eshnunna)) reflect this plot.

http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=obj_view_obj&objet=cartel_26740_68486_SH037151_001.jpg_obj.html&flag=true

¹⁷ The role of serpent-like characters in mythologies and imagery of these regions was highlighted, in particular, in: AFANASYEVA 2007; BELLUCCI 2008; BUCHHOLZ 2000; IVANOV, TOPOROV 1974, 142–144; LAMBERT 1985; STEVENS 1989; Svyatopolk-Chetvertynsky 2005; van Buren 1947; WILLIAMS-FORTE 1983.

¹⁸ Although the Sumerian text on Ninurta's return to Nippur does not provide a detailed description of the creature's appearance, it can be assumed that, unlike the seven-headed serpent mentioned in the same text, it had only one head. The hymn contains the following lines about the snake *ušum*: [*ušum ur*]-*saĝ* *bàd gal kur-ra-ta* *nam-ta*²-*an-è* – "He brought forth the Warrior dragon from the great fortress of the mountains" (line 33); *ušum ur-saĝ saĝ dūr-ra-ka bí-in-lá* – "He hung the Warrior dragon on the seat (of the chariot)" (line 56).

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The text about the return of Ninurta also mentions the seven-headed serpent *mušmaḥḥu* (muš-maḥ) which, most likely, should be identical to the seven-headed serpent *muš-saḡ-7*. Ninurta's weapon is compared with the seven-mouthed serpent (the defeated creature becomes an attribute of its winner). Later, according to *Enuma eliš*, Tiamat gave birth to the *mušmaḥḥu* serpents, which had sharp teeth and venom instead of blood. These seven-headed beasts also participated in the battle of the gods. Ninurta's other weapon, the battle-ax, has been compared to the serpent *ušumgallu* (ušumgal) (line 133). Ninurta himself is also called the serpent (ušum) in "The Deeds of Ninurta".

The main feat of Ninurta is the victory over the dragon-like monster Asag, but it is presented in the form of a winged lion-griffin, which does not at all correspond to the appearance of the monster from our image.

Another famous dragon in Mesopotamia is the *mušhuššu*, best known through the images on the Gates of Ishtar in Babylon. In the IIInd-Ist millennium BC *mušhuššu* became an attribute of the Babylonian deities Marduk and Nabû, but in the IIIrd-IIInd millennium BC in the territories of northern Mesopotamia (in particular, in Eshnunna), *mušhuššu* was considered an animal of the Eshnunna patron deities Ninazu and, subsequently, Tishpak, as well as of Ningishzida, Ninazu's son venerated in Lagash¹⁹. There is an Old Akkadian myth about the struggle of the god Tishpak with the sea serpent and the establishment of world order [CT 13, 33-34]. According to this text, Tishpak fights with a serpent called *bašmu* (^{MUŠ}*bašmu*) and *labbu* (lion / the raging one²⁰) in order to restore order in the country and reign over it. T. Lewis notes that this creature should have had the features of both a serpent and a lion²¹. Since ancient times, dragons have combined the nature of these two animals, which is reflected in many Near Eastern artifacts (for example, images of lions with snake necks²²). By the way, Tiamat and her army were also described with usage of the term *labbu* in *Enuma eliš* (which fact once again indicates the proximity of the images of Tishpak and Marduk and their opponents in Mesopotamian mythology). However, it should not be forgotten that the serpent fought by Tishpak is called "sea-born", which casts doubt on its interpretation as a half-lion-half-serpent.

Tishpak was the Storm god, and some scholars believe that he was identified with the Hurrian Teshub²³. Teshub himself was also a serpent-fighting deity in both the Hittite and Hurrian traditions. We know an Anatolian myth of Illuyanka, a snake-like monster who firstly overcame the Storm god in battle, but later was defeated by him) and the Hurrian myth of

¹⁹ Tishpak succeeded Ninazu as the city deity of Eshnunna during the Old Akkadian period or the early Old Babylonian period (BLACK, GREEN 1998, 166). Cf. more on the connection between Tishpak and *mušhuššu* in LEWIS 1996, 29–30.

²⁰ According to WIGGERMANN 1989, cf. with *labābu*.

²¹ LEWIS 1996, 34–35.

²² FRANKFORT 1939, Pl. IV d, h.

²³ JACOBSEN 1932, 52; BLACK, GREEN 1998, 178.

Hedammu, an insatiable sea serpent, pacified by the beauty of Ishtar (CTH 348); the variant of the latter myth may be told in the “Song of the Sea” (KBo 26.105). It is believed that the Anatolian *purulliya*-festival, during which the myth of Illuyanka was recited, had been borrowed by the Hittites from the Hattians, the preceding ethnic group of Central Anatolia assimilated by them²⁴. Thus, in the Old Assyrian time (the time of the creation of our image), this mythological concept had to be well known in the region.

The above discussed scene of the Storm god’s battle with the serpent on the Malatya relief was often defined as the battle of Teshub with Illuyanka²⁵ or a mythological creature similar to it²⁶. Of course, the interpretation of the serpent as Illuyanka seems to be the most acceptable, since Malatya (along with other Neo-Hittite kingdoms but clearly standing out among them) was the successor of the Hittite traditions of the Empire period, and it was myth of Teshub and Illuyanka that played a major role in the ritual life of the Hittite rulers (i.e. in *purulliya*-festival). The other known Anatolian myth of struggle with serpent, i.e. of Hedammu, was of Hurrian origin and not Teshub but his sister Ishtar played a decisive role in the victory over it. The struggle of the Storm god with the sea serpent was also reflected in Ugaritic mythology (the myth of the battle of Hadad-Baal with Lotan (Temtum), the servant of the Sea god Yamm).

Conclusions

Thus, we can distinguish two clusters of serpent-fighting motifs known in Eastern Asia Minor in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC: the Sumero-Akkadian tradition of the struggle of the hero-god Ninurta with the dragon and with the seven-headed hydra and the North Mesopotamian and Anatolian traditions about the fight of the Storm god with a serpent (usually associated with sea), which later became especially widespread in the Eastern Mediterranean and Anatolian regions. It should be noted that in none of the known texts explicit mention of the two-headed serpent or dragon appears (though it seems that just such a serpent is seen on the Malatya relief).

Taking into account all of the above, we can conclude that at present moment the precise identification of the mythological plot on the sealing from the Pushkin Museum seems difficult, as no detail of the image directly indicate this or that mythological plot. However some more general conclusions can be made: as the interpretation of the serpent at our sealing as a seven-headed hydra should be ruled out, it can hardly deal with reflections of the Mesopotamian concept of Ninurta's struggle with the seven-headed serpent; despite of some

²⁴ HOFFNER 1998, 9.

²⁵ GARSTANG 1929, 207; GÜTERBOCK 1957, 64 (with doubt due to the scarcity of our knowledge about other similar subjects); AKURGAL 1961, 116.

²⁶ DELAPORTE 1940, 35; ÖZYAR 1991, 156; BROWN 2008, 159.

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iconographical features of the monster(s) on our sealing common with some *bašmu* representations, the general appearance of these monster(s) is far from that of *bašmu*. Thus, the Syro-Anatolian origin of the composition's plot is still more likely (and confirmed by parallels with the Malatya serpent). It seems that the sealing from the Pushkin Museum contains an image of the struggle of a hero with doubled or two-headed serpent, and such a scene could well relate to the circle of plots belonging to the second of aforementioned mythological clusters, tied to the concept of fight between the Storm god and the serpent (usually the monster from the sea).

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Apuntes para una ideología de la guerra y la paz en época Antonina: ¿tradición o cambio?¹

Andrés Sáez GEOFFROY²

Resumen. *El presente artículo pretende explorar la concepción de la ideología de la guerra y la paz en época Antonina (96-192) en base a criterios comparativos, esto es, como una etapa en que perviven continuidades del siglo I pero que a la que se añaden nuevos elementos propios del siglo II. Para lo anterior el análisis se ha realizado en dos niveles, por un lado, la construcción narrativa de los ideales de la guerra y la paz, y por otra, la presencia numismática de algunos valores como pax y victoria que reflejaron los intereses e ideales de los emperadores y del Imperio Romano. Se sostendrá que en el siglo II hubo una diversificación ideológica de los tópicos de la guerra y la paz, pero manteniendo ciertos símbolos e ideales de épocas anteriores, cuestiones que se fundieron en una renovación del sentido de la pax romana.*

Abstract. *The aim of this article is to analyse the conception of war ideology and peace during the Antonine dynasty (96-192) by using comparative criteria. To the elements which survived from the 1st century are added new aspects specific to the 2nd century. The analysis was built on two levels, first, the narrative construction of war ideals and peace, and second, the numismatic presence of some values such as peace and victory, reflected by the interests and ideals of Roman Emperors. We are going to show that during the 2nd century there was an ideological diversification of topics related to war and peace, keeping nevertheless certain symbols and ideals from previous times, all issues which led to a renewal of the idea of pax romana.*

Rezumat. *Prezentul articol pretinde să exploreze viziunea ideologiei războiului și a păcii în perioada dinastiei antonine (96-192), pe baza unor criterii comparative. Elementelor de continuitate din secolul I se adaugă astfel aspecte noi specifice secolului II. Analiza a fost realizată pe două nivele: în primul rând, pe construcția narativă a idealurilor de război și pace, iar în al doilea, pe reprezentarea numismatică a unor valori precum pacea și victoria reflectând interesele și idealurile împăraților romani. Vom susține că în secolul II a avut loc o diversificare ideologică a problematicii războiului și păcii, care a menținut totuși anumite simboluri și idealuri din epocile anterioare, contribuind astfel la o reînnoire a noțiunii de pax romana.*

Palabras claves: *Ideología, pax romana, victoria romana, Antoninos.*

¹ Este artículo es parte el Proyecto Fondecyt de Iniciación N° 11180219, titulado: "La Pax Antonina: ideología militar, política exterior y gran estrategia del Imperio Romano en el siglo de los antoninos."

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Introducción

Este artículo pretende identificar algunos elementos de la ideología militar en época Antonina tomando en consideración los elementos que sustentaron la política exterior romana en el siglo II. Se ha elegido estudiar la época Antonina por considerar que en este período se produce un punto de inflexión en el devenir romano, por cuanto se cruzan procesos de cambio y continuidad en la estructura imperial y el ejército romano³.

Respecto a la época de los principados de Trajano y Adriano, cabría evaluar si los conceptos y axiomas centrales del Imperio Romano en torno a la guerra y la paz se mantuvieron inalterables en el tiempo, y analizar cómo incidió la ideología militar romana en esa antinomia de guerra-paz. No se trata de una cuestión menor, pues los grandes lineamientos políticos impulsados a inicios del siglo II por Trajano y consolidados por Adriano cambiaron el cariz de la ideología política del Imperio Romano, impactando todos los mecanismos estatales, entre ellos el ejército⁴.

En el panorama historiográfico son recientes los estudios que se han referido a la ideología del Imperio Romano y muy escasos aquellos que describen específicamente una ideología militar romana en un periodo particular del Imperio Romano, lo que se debió a que durante gran parte del siglo XX tendieron a primar aquellos estudios en los que no se hacían interpretaciones ideológicas sino centradas en aspectos concretos del ejército romano⁵. Solo en estudios de los últimos años se han incorporado definiciones de ideología para interpretar el concepto de *imperium* y el ejercicio del poder en el mundo clásico.

Producto de lo anterior, este artículo busca explorar algunos de los elementos ideológicos del Imperio Romano en el siglo II referidos a la naturaleza de la guerra y su contrapunto, la paz. Para tal fin, se analizan los valores y actitudes particulares sobre la guerra y la paz en narraciones, discursos escritos y fuentes monetales de la época de estudio. Como método de estudio hemos adoptado una lógica deductiva e histórica, esto es, tomar como base una noción instrumental de ideología y examinar en las fuentes históricas la presencia de aquellos elementos que podamos considerar ideológicos en dos niveles: en primer lugar, a través de las fuentes escritas; y, en segundo lugar, el uso de fuentes de orden

³ CORTÉS COPETE 2004, 75-79

⁴ BENOIST 2018, 105-128. GALIMBERTI 2007, 13.

⁵ Sobre estudios que se refieren en general a la época Antonina, un balance de dicha disputa historiográfica lo podemos encontrar en HAMMOND 1975, 339-440. Para nuestro periodo de estudio es necesario recalcar el trabajo de Pilar González-Conde, La Paz y la Guerra durante Trajano y Adriano. GONZALEZ-CONDE 1991.

numismático. Hemos circunscrito nuestro análisis a ese tipo de fuentes por disponibilidad y porque creemos que las fuentes epigráficas requerirían un estudio por sí solas.

En consecuencia, en un primer apartado se definirá instrumentalmente el concepto de ideología en el mundo romano; en el segundo, su aplicación en el mundo romano para el siglo II; en el tercero se estudiará la presencia de elementos de la ideología de la paz y la guerra en la narrativa imperial: y, por último, se analizarán las leyendas de las acuñaciones relativas a la paz y la guerra en época Antonina.

Finalmente, cabe destacar que con esta investigación pretendemos retomar y redefinir algunos elementos de la discusión de la visión geopolítica imperial, al incorporar el concepto de ideología militar en el estudio del mundo romano, no olvidando que nuestra contribución es una aproximación que no tiene pretensiones de descubrir resultados totalmente acabados, sino que permitan desarrollar nuevas líneas de estudio sobre la ideología imperial del siglo II. Los resultados obtenidos pueden servir para establecer en trabajos posteriores marcos comparativos que permitan determinar semejanzas y diferencias entre los distintos períodos históricos del Imperio Romano.

Ideología e Imperio Romano.

Existe un consenso de que el concepto de ideología fue impulsado por Marx para comprender una parte del proceso de supremacía de las clases dominantes por sobre las subalternas⁶. Por ello, desde finales del siglo XIX el concepto de ideología ha estado rodeado de una aureola de negatividad. Será a partir de mediados del siglo XX cuando se comenzó a estudiar este concepto desde múltiples perspectivas y a proponer nuevas formas de abordaje. De acuerdo a Eagleton podemos encontrar unas 16 definiciones y sentidos diferentes de ideología a finales del siglo XX, cada una cargada con un sustento valórico particular⁷. No es objetivo de este trabajo realizar un estudio pormenorizado del arduo debate sostenido en las ciencias sociales durante todo el siglo XX para definir el concepto de ideología⁸; por ello nos centraremos solamente en dos conceptualizaciones, las cuales nos sirven para generar una noción instrumental para explorar cuáles fueron las características de la ideología militar sobre la paz y la guerra en el Imperio Romano y sus manifestaciones en el siglo II.

⁶ VAN DIJK 2005, 16.

⁷ EAGLETON 1995, 20-21.

⁸ Una síntesis del debate en EAGLETON 1995.

Apuntes para una ideología de la guerra y la paz en época Antonina: ¿tradicción o cambio?

Según Eagleton la ideología en su evolución temporal ha sido un concepto polisémico y polivalente de difícil conceptualización. No obstante, si tuviéramos que elaborar una síntesis podríamos definirlo como “ideas que permiten legitimar un poder dominante” pero que también conforman “un conjunto de creencias orientadas a la acción”⁹. Esto reafirmaría la idea de que la ideología comprendida simplemente como un sistema de creencias es algo que no basta como fenómeno explicativo, puesto que habría que añadir los conceptos de legitimidad, creencias y poder, así como la praxis derivada de esas formas mentales.

La visión de Van Dijk sobre la ideología es un poco más compleja, pues, para él, la ideología constituiría “creencias específicas, fundamentales de grupos de personas”. Así mismo resalta la dimensión social implícita al considerarla como “el fundamento de las representaciones sociales compartidas por un grupo social”¹⁰. A partir de esta concepción la ideología se constituye en la base sobre la cual se pueden asentar otros axiomas, como las creencias sobre la guerra y la paz en nuestro caso. De este modo se conforma un espacio común en el que las representaciones generales dan paso a aspectos particulares implícitos en la ideología sobre la paz y la guerra, tales como actitudes y valores específicos, en torno a los cuales se configura, además, un discurso que se reproduce y difunde por múltiples mecanismos.

Por todo lo anterior y de modo sintético entenderemos la ideología como las creencias y axiomas contruidos por la élite romana, que se manifestaron en el mundo romano del siglo II en forma de pensamientos, valores, actitudes y mecanismos que fueron representativos del discurso e ideología de la *pax romana* en el siglo II. Cabe destacar que en esta definición se pueden distinguir una dimensión mental, constituida por las creencias y axiomas, y una dimensión física, conformada por los hechos evidenciados en narraciones, discursos y monedas, entre otras fuentes. En el caso de los estudios de la antigüedad estas dos dimensiones no siempre han ido de la mano. Si tuviéramos que destacar una declaración, podríamos tomar la de Fergus Millar, quien, en 1977, en su “Emperor and the Roman World”, al explicar su método, expresaba que “the emperor ‘was’ what emperor did”¹¹. Este credo al que muchos historiadores se adhirieron posteriormente deja sin embargo varias interrogantes: ¿Qué es lo que pensaba el emperador y daba dirección a esa acción? ¿se podría estudiar esos medios de pensamiento? Se trata, en definitiva, de una materia de estudio que

⁹ EAGLETON 1995, 19-20.

¹⁰ VAN DIJK 2005, 17.

¹¹ MILLAR 1992, 6.

se ha ido desentrañado poco a poco en la medida que se ha admitido en algunos estudios que las acciones concretas no están disociadas de las ideas que las sustentan.

A inicios del siglo XXI el trabajo de C.Ando “Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire”¹² fue pionero al incorporar una definición más compleja de lo que se entenderá por ideología en la historiografía romana, basándose en ideas de Habermas y Bourdieu. El trabajo del historiador estadounidense se centró en determinar el proceso de romanización desde planos netamente ideológicos, que permitieran comprender el dominio romano no solamente como una cuestión coercitiva (la represión) sino también de voluntad, conformada por la presencia de ideas unificadoras y evocativas de un discurso común, siendo la más destacable dentro de ese panorama el valor del *consensus*¹³.

La tesis de Ando es que la obediencia y lealtad prestada por los provinciales (en definitiva, los conquistados) a Roma fue una construcción ideológica basada en el consenso de la acción comunicativa: “that provincial obedience to Roman domination was an ideological construct, its realization dependen on many people’s sharing complex of beliefs sanctioned a peculiarly Roman notion of social order”¹⁴. Esto fue posible porque el Imperio Romano fue capaz de producir una revolución ideológica que llevó a que los habitantes del imperio compartieran un complejo entramado de creencias comunes sancionadas con las peculiaridades del orden social romano, mediante lo que el autor señala como aparatos ideológicos del estado¹⁵. Esos dispositivos de poder romano funcionaron masivamente conformando una ideología unificada que permitió el control de los habitantes del Imperio Romano.

Con esos planteamientos Ando se centró en investigar los medios por los cuales se comunicó la ideología imperial, y en específico, los mecanismos o dispositivos por los cuales las élites difundieron el discurso de la romanización y de la unidad del mundo romano, y como estos interactuaron en las sociedades provinciales. El autor llega a la conclusión de que la implantación de la ideología se logró mediante el establecimiento del *consensus romanus*, que puede ser definido como “a unanimous intersubjective agreement about social, religious, and political norms, so under the empire the Roman government encouraged its subjects to play an active role in empowering their rulers”¹⁶. Entre los medios que permitieron la

¹² ANDO 2000.

¹³ ANDO 2000, 175-206.

¹⁴ ANDO 2000, 5.

¹⁵ ANDO 2000, 20-21

¹⁶ ANDO 2000, 6-7

construcción de esa aceptación intersubjetiva se encuentran los documentos epigráficos y las acuñaciones de moneda que difundieron los valores comunes de ese consenso.

La propuesta de Ando estimuló el desarrollo de otras investigaciones, por lo que algunos historiadores emprendieron nuevos enfoques de la ideología en el Imperio Romano. Dentro de ellos se podría destacar el libro de Lobur, “Consensus, Concordia, and the Formation of Roman Imperial Ideology”. Utilizando una definición de ideología similar a la de Ando postula que el éxito del modelo del principado se basó en la difusión de una ideología asentada en el consenso y la concordia, exitosa de mano de los emperadores debido a que “he promoted and guaranteed values encapsulated by these very powerful concepts. Embracing a set of powerful symbols, activities, ceremonies and speech acts, they shaped and structured set of shared ideas that were influential and very attractive”¹⁷. En dicho proceso de promoción del nuevo orden, jugó un papel fundamental la comunicación y la propaganda imperial, por medio de la construcción de una narrativa de los nuevos valores difundida masivamente que consolidó representaciones del nuevo orden político existente.

En resumen, como ya lo dijera M.I Finley a finales de la década de los 80 al problematizar la investigación en la historia antigua: “La cuestión es más bien que la experiencia subsiguiente hace posible y estimula una nueva apreciación de instituciones antiguas en cuanto a su tiempo y su contexto”¹⁸. Por todo lo anterior concebiremos la ideología como el conjunto de ideas y valores que se comunicaron por dispositivos del poder romano y se instalaron de manera consensuada en la estructura imperial, estableciendo las bases de un sentido histórico y de un discurso político-militar en manos de emperadores y de intelectuales de la élite.

El siglo II y la ideología sobre la guerra y la paz

V.W Harris planteó en su estudio sobre la guerra e imperialismo en época republicana, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome: 327-70 B.C*, la importancia de reflexionar sobre las actitudes romanas hacia la guerra, al afirmar que “El comportamiento romano requiere una explicación”¹⁹ y proponer que la comprensión del fenómeno fuera más allá de la praxis tan aludida a los romanos. El estudio de Harris, uno de los más relevantes al respecto, se orientó principalmente a examinar las ideas y lógicas expansionistas en la República; a

¹⁷ LOBUR 2008, 208.

¹⁸ FINLEY 1986, 14

¹⁹ HARRIS 1989, 1. traducción al castellano. La versión original del inglés es de 1979.

pesar de ello los estudios emprendidos sobre el principado son escasos, más aún si nos alejamos temporalmente de Augusto. Por mencionar dos ejemplos de lo anterior, en el siglo XIX Delbrück termina su historia de la guerra en el mundo antiguo con César²⁰, en tanto que un libro reciente de Barry Strauss²¹, referido al liderazgo militar del mundo antiguo, no considera ninguna figura histórica relevante de época Imperial. Pareciera que la guerra en época imperial no sufrió cambios y desapareció en las tinieblas historiográficas.

La percepción de falta de cambios en la guerra de la época imperial y la consiguiente ausencia de estudios se ha visto reforzada por la creencia de que durante el principado se mantuvieron inalterables los valores, ideas y principios de la configuración imperial de la República Romana, creando un marco latente de detención del proceso expansionista. Adrian Goldsworthy, reconocido historiador militar del mundo romano, declara que “Después de la muerte de Augusto, el Imperio Romano apenas adquirió nuevos territorios”²². Por su parte, Paul Petit en su estudio sobre el principado en el siglo II afirmó que “L’ideologie imperiale, née sous Cèsar et Auguste, ne se modifie guère”²³. Ante estas afirmaciones, cabría evaluar y valorar si la cuestión es así y se mantuvo esa inalterabilidad sobre la visión de la guerra. Conviene recordar que, en el presente estudio, la referencia a la ideología militar se hace en relación al discurso militar que se enarbó en Roma en el siglo II, es decir, en una coyuntura histórica particular con sus propios hitos. Por ello, ante la percepción de que el Imperio Romano reprodujo las concepciones de época republicana, se hace preciso examinar si hubo o no continuidades en el periodo de estudio. Más que bien, un siglo de evolución imperial no debió haber pasado en vano en la estructuración del pensamiento de lo bélico.

Interesa adentrarnos en los aspectos militares de inicios del siglo II para comenzar a develar el discurso de la época Antonina. Dos hechos son esenciales e involucran poderosamente a Trajano y Adriano. El primero son las campañas militares emprendidas por Trajano con éxito relativo²⁴; el segundo es la pausa forzada de las campañas de Trajano por la muerte del *optimus princeps* que implicó que Adriano reorganizase las fronteras del Imperio Romano. Además, es necesario mencionar las guerras que tuvo que afrontar Marco Aurelio en oriente contra los partos y los germanos en el frente septentrional, cuyas consecuencias se

²⁰ DELBRÜCK 1902.

²¹ STRAUSS 2012.

²² GOLDSWORTHY 2012, 369.

²³ PETIT 1975, 356.

²⁴ LEPPER 1948.

percibieron en el reinado de Cómodo²⁵. Tanto la política militar de Trajano como la de Adriano afectaron la concepción del Imperio Romano. Roma se autoconció como un *orbis terrarum* cerrado y rodeado por murallas, siendo Adriano el autor intelectual del *vallum* de Germania y el *murus* de Britania, obras ejemplares de este nuevo modo de comprensión de la geografía Imperial, con lo cual se le ha dado el epíteto de pacifista, tema sobre el que volveremos posteriormente²⁶. Lo anterior se condijo con la política fronteriza a la que se abocaron las legiones y las tropas auxiliares que quedaron fijadas a la frontera y cuyos movimientos se redujeron, produciéndose un fuerte proceso de provincialización del reclutamiento militar²⁷.

Resulta relevante en este momento la visión de Domingo Plácido sobre la estabilidad de este período y lo que hay más allá de su apariencia: “La definición del siglo II como Edad de Oro depende en parte de la historiografía moderna y en parte de la propaganda de los intelectuales orgánicos de la época. El modelo de la estabilidad, atractivo desde la perspectiva de las clases dominantes, sirve sin embargo como máscara de una época de gran vitalidad, donde los cambios transcurren en las profundidades de la historia al tiempo que se manifiesta una gran capacidad para presentar una imagen estática.”²⁸. Se podría añadir a esto que Adriano tuvo una gran habilidad para utilizar los símbolos tradicionales del poder imperial, al igual que Trajano siguió reforzándolos, pero con un nuevo impulso centralizador, creando así un nuevo equilibrio²⁹.

Estamos de acuerdo con el señalamiento de Juan Manuel Cortés Copete de que Adriano propugnó una nueva base social, política e ideológica para el Imperio Romano, que se revistió muchas veces de un tradicionalismo que terminó por reforzar el centralismo y la figura del emperador en tres niveles: el ejército, la estructura política y la ciudadanía: “El emperador Adriano actuó en estos tres grandes frentes, sistematizándolos. Este esfuerzo consciente, aunque fraguado a lo largo de sus años de gobierno, podría definirse como un ejercicio de introspección imperial”³⁰. Adriano concluyó así un ciclo de guerras y enmarcó

²⁵ SAEZ 2019.

²⁶ PETIT 1975, 357.

²⁷ FORNI, 1992.

²⁸ PLÁCIDO 2004, 19.

²⁹ PETIT 1975, 359.

³⁰ CORTES COPETE 2004, 77.

todo esto en un nuevo sentido de la *pax romana*, mucho más profundo que la mera ausencia de conflictos bélicos.

La historiografía sobre Roma centrada en los tópicos sobre la configuración de su Imperio se ha basado en desentrañar la naturaleza del proceso imperialista, lo que también ha permitido una comprensión de la guerra como proceso de producción de conquistas y anexión de territorios y personas a Roma. Estas disquisiciones se han asentado sobre todo en la fase republicana debido a diferentes formas de interpretar históricamente el fenómeno. Se puede encontrar un amplio espectro de posibilidades interpretativas que van desde las del Imperialismo defensivo por Mommsen y Kagan, pasando por las estructuralistas de Heurgon y Nicolet hasta la marxista de Kovaliov o la más reciente de Eckstein, entre otros autores, cada uno de los cuales interpretó desde su enfoque la naturaleza del imperialismo romano³¹.

En ese panorama historiográfico nuevamente será W. Harris quien da una idea sobre la continuidad o cambio del fenómeno de la guerra al decir que “Remitiéndonos a ejemplos de la historia antigua, es evidente el contraste entre la Roma del siglo II a.C y la Roma posterior a Augusto”³². A pesar de ello ha predominado la visión de que la República representó una idea épica de la guerra debido a cuestiones de táctica y liderazgo, mientras que en el Imperio lo bélico perdió su hálito transformador, interpretándose en consecuencia este período como una fase militarmente defensiva y por ello estática.

Algunos que se han adentrado en este proceso, como B. Campbell, señalan que lo que efectivamente hubo no fue una resignificación de la guerra y paz sino un cambio en el rol del ejército romano. Este cambio se vinculó al hecho de que el senado ya no lideraba la política militar. Pero a nuestro juicio esto es relativo ya que, desde la creación de las clientelas militares por parte de Mario, el Estado fue cooptado por los generales que se transformaron en los ejecutores (incluso con desobediencia hacia el senado de por medio) de la política exterior romana dándole una fuerte connotación personalista (App. B Civ. 1.99)³³. Campbell concretiza que los principales cambios son de tipo relacional entre ejército-emperador, y que estos estuvieron marcados por una conexión personal del *imperator* con las tropas, mediante un sistema político-legal en el que es posible destacar la celebración de *triumphus*, los pagos en forma de *donativa* y las *adlocutiones* de los emperadores ante las tropas³⁴. Respecto a ese nuevo

³¹ MOMMSEN 1861; KAGAN 2003 [1995]; HEURGON 1982 [1969]; NICOLET 1982 [1978]; KOVALIOV 2011 [1946]; ECKSTEIN 2009. Para una síntesis historiográfica del debate DUPLÁ 2004.

³² HARRIS 1989, 2.

³³ GOLDSWORTHY 2013, 207-229.

³⁴ CAMPBELL 1996, 177-156.

marco el historiador británico sostiene que el rol del ejército “was not just to fight spectacular battles”³⁵, orientándose más bien a atender la seguridad fronteriza y sobre todo mantener el orden público. En esa misma línea se encuentra la tesis de Goldsworthy sobre el ejército romano en época de Trajano, época en la que “el papel fundamental de los ejércitos consistía en controlar las provincias”³⁶.

Una vez realizada la revisión bibliográfica, presentado el debate sobre la forma de concebir el pensamiento militar romano y explicada la relevancia del siglo II en la reconfiguración de la estructura del Imperio Romano, buscaremos explorar ahora algunas dimensiones que a nuestro juicio permitirán identificar la ideología sobre la guerra de la *nobilitas* romana. Podría plantarse primeramente si en esa época hubo un cambio en el Imperio Romano con respecto a la paz y a la guerra. Para resolver esta interrogante resulta importante tener en cuenta que, si bien en el Imperio el mecanismo de estado que solía resolver los conflictos era el ejército, este no actuaba por sí solo, sino que ejecutaba una política basada en una ideología.

Si el sentido general de la palabra guerra permite que se comprenda como un instrumento político, cabe acotar que la sociedad romana considera la guerra un instrumento a partir de dos ejes: como un poder resolutorio dentro de la política militar de los emperadores y como táctica ofensiva u defensiva fuertemente ligada a la naturaleza del imperialismo y su poderío. Entender esta dicotomía paz-guerra se vuelve fundamental para comprender la ideología del Imperio Romano una vez concluido el ciclo expansivo de la época republicana.

Algunas nociones de la paz y la guerra hacia el siglo II

Conviene vislumbrar a través de diferentes autores qué se entendía en el siglo II por guerra y paz y cómo se relacionaban ambos conceptos. En el siglo I a.C., Cicerón plantea que la guerra es fundamental para el Estado ya que el fin último de ambos es “*pace vivatur*” (Cic. *Off.* 1.35). Sin guerra no hay paz porque la primera es una condición necesaria para la segunda, “*mea quidem sententia paci*” (Cic. *Off.* 1.35). La guerra en este sentido tenía una importancia ético-valórica, pues no se refería solo al mero conflicto en sí, sino también se consideraba que tenía una finalidad sacra, “*Ac belli quidem aequitas sanctissime fetiali populi Romani iure perscripta est*” (Cic. *Off.* 1.36). Algunas de estas ideas probablemente se mantuvieron vigentes en el siglo

³⁵ CAMPBELL 1996, 5.

³⁶ GOLDSWORTHY 2012, 371.

siguiente, pero como sostiene Harris el derecho fecial estaba casi en desuso prácticamente desde el siglo II a.C. Con todo, la noción de guerra más bien como un conjunto de pretextos, permitió a Roma desarrollar campañas alejadas de Italia y también intervenir en una serie de asuntos sin parecer la potencia agresora. En definitiva, fueron los romanos quienes contaron la historia de sus guerras, las cuales nunca figuraron en la opinión pública, según sabemos, como injustas.

Este ideal permite explicar que en el Imperio Romano después de Augusto se considerara cada una de las guerras emprendidas por Roma, ya que siempre se hizo “*post defensum*” (Eutr. 8.2). El conflicto suponía una amenaza a la *pax* y con ello al consenso sociopolítico del principado. El ideal de guerra justa se materializó con el sentirse atacado y se convirtió muchas veces en un pretexto, como el que permitió la campaña pártica de Trajano originada por una supuesta violación del tratado sobre el *limes* oriental de época de Nerón, o bien las campañas de Marco Aurelio en oriente y el septentrión.

Séneca, a mediados del siglo I, tendió a sistematizar las ideas del buen gobierno romano. Por ello abordó algunas cuestiones relativas al mantenimiento de la paz como una de las ocupaciones del gobernante ideal. Para Séneca el *princeps* poseía un poder mucho mayor que en cualquiera de épocas anteriores, y ese poder le otorgaba el arbitrio sobre la vida o la muerte³⁷. Esa fuerza es sobre todo de tipo militar, pero las tropas no solo están para la ofensiva militar, sino que también tienen la capacidad de afectar personalmente “*pax mea comprimere*” (Sen. Clem. 1.8). Es decir, la institución que tiene la capacidad de hacer la guerra mantiene a la energía coercitiva contenida para el florecimiento de la *laetitia*, de la alegría (Sen. Clem. 1.8). Un emperador clemente, esto es, que controla la fuerza, o que la emite para castigar la injusticia, produce *iustitia*, *pax*, *pudicitia*, *securitas* (Sen. Clem. 2.8), elementos fundamentales de un contexto ideal del desarrollo de la *pax romana*. Por ello la *pax romana*, ese consenso que Augusto habían fundado, después de medio siglo añadía un nuevo cariz al Imperio Romano en época de Nerón, con la contención de la guerra y de la violencia interna. Este ideal, como se comprobaría años después de la muerte de Séneca, se diluyó con la crisis del año 69, cuando la fuerza se liberó en un sentido negativo al declararse una guerra civil que desarticuló y destruyó la *pax romana* construida el 27 a.C. Esta visión trágica del destino romano siguió pesando en el discurso, siendo combatida por el valor de la concordia³⁸.

³⁷ CIZEK 1983, 109

³⁸ GONZÁLEZ-CONDE 1991, 60-61; NOREÑA 2003, 34.

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La visión en el siglo II de la *pax romana* reforzará el sentido dado por Séneca, sobre todo porque la guerra civil del año 69 dejó secuelas enormes, y también porque los Flavios desarrollaron un principado que utilizó bastante represión para el aseguramiento del *imperium*. De allí que a la muerte de Domiciano se celebrara la recuperación de la *libertas publica*³⁹. Tácito en un conocido excursus de sus *Anales* (Tac. *Ann.* 4.32.1-2) declara que lo que le ha tocado relatar es un comidillo palaciego, lamentándose que no pudiera historiar grandes gestas épicas; de ahí que la narrativa romana, siempre adepta a los dualismos binarios, explote dos antinomias. Por un lado, la *pax romana* es estabilidad; por otro, la guerra es la gesta heroica del pueblo romano. La primera es un estado ideal deseable; la segunda, una necesidad ya que “*longa pax emollierit*” (Tac. *Agr.* 11.4). Con todo ambas fueron dos caras de la misma moneda. Pero este juicio no es necesariamente positivo, pues para alcanzar la *pax* se cedió libertad a cambio de tranquilidad y seguridad. La *libertas* desde este momento fue una virtud asociada al buen salvaje, virtud que ya no es la preferente en la raza togada, sino que Tácito la visualiza con nostalgia en las *externas gentes*: los germanos y britanos.

Pero para Tácito la *pax* no era una situación que proviniera solo de la victoria militar, sino que también tenía que ver con el sentido político que la administración romana le daba al conjunto del Imperio, por eso “*noscere provinciam, nosci exercitui*” (Tac. *Agr.* 5.1), conocer la provincia, conocer las tropas, fue la primera misión de Agrícola en Britania⁴⁰. La imposición por las armas de la paz no era garantía de nada, al menos en el caso de Britannia donde Agrícola “*Ceterum animorum provinciae prudens, simulque doctus per aliena experimenta parum profici armis, si iniuriae sequerentur, causas bellorum statuit excidere*” (Tac. *Agr.* 19.1). Es decir, la victoria triunfal acompañada de una mala instalación del poder romano podía producir la rebelión, pero también situaciones peores que la guerra. Nuevamente es Tácito relatando las acciones de gobierno de su suegro quien nos da luces al respecto: “*Haec primo statim anno comprimendo egregiam famam paci circumdedit, quae vel incuria vel intolerantia priorum haud minus quam bellum timebatur*” (Tac. *Agr.* 20.1). Aun así, un mal gobierno podía hundir los intereses romanos, como precisa otra vez Tácito al poner en boca de Calgaco que “*quos non Oriens, non Occidens satiaverit: soli omnium opes atque inopiam pari adfectu concupiscunt. Auferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.*” (Tac. *Agr.* 30.4).

³⁹ BELLONI 1975, 1089-1090.

⁴⁰ CIZEK 1983, 184-185.

Sabemos que Tácito en sus discursos expresó lo que pensaba una parte de la clase senatorial⁴¹. En su visión la guerra y la *pax* podían ser nefastas por sí solas. Consideraba que el desdén a la paz no era por la ausencia de conflicto, sino que se daba por la inacción posterior debida al abuso explotador, que solo podía producir rebelión y levantamientos. Es decir, la *pax* no es solo la ausencia de conflicto, sino también el desarrollo de una positiva administración imperial, lo que no siempre encontramos en la época Julio-Claudia ni tampoco en la tiranía de Domiciano (Tac. *Ann.* 13.2, 15.1).

En el caso de Dión de Prusa, la visión de comprender ambas cuestiones como fenómenos complementarios-divergentes, fue refrendada en el marco de un mensaje en clave panegirista del buen gobernante que levanta el orador frente a Trajano. Los emperadores deben ser buenos guerreros, pero a la vez pacíficos; el buen gobernante siempre debe estar listo para la guerra, para lograr con ello la *εἰρήνη*, (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 1.27), la paz. Una mirada similar plantea Plinio el joven en un panegírico desde su horizonte senatorial y latino, donde reconocerá en Trajano cuestiones aplicables idealmente también a Adriano: “*quod innutritus bellicis laudibus pacem amas*” (Plin. *Pan.* 16.1). El *optimus princeps*, el mejor de los gobernantes, será aquel que ha guiado su actuar por el principio de la *moderatio*, que podemos encontrar incluso en época republicana⁴². En un plano militar, el *princeps* debe preparar al ejército para transmitir tranquilidad y paz a los habitantes del imperio alejando los conflictos del Mediterráneo, lo que se refleja en la metáfora del Imperio Romano rodeado por murallas y campamentos (Aristid. *Or. Roma* 80, App. *B.Civ. Praef* 7). El gobernante debe tener a vista la previsión política de la actuación romana, lo cual no se trata de un acto irracional, sino más bien de un panorama de posibles campos de actuación, como el entrenamiento de tropas, la vida militar en tiempos de paz, la defensa de los intereses militares, así como la ofensiva militar directa, pues la cuestión central es tomar la mejor decisión para la administración de los asuntos públicos. Por ello la *fortitudo*, la fuerza del gobernante, que Cizek comprende como los fundamentos de la política exterior basada en la vocación guerrera de Trajano, tuvo un parangón en la imagen del buen soldado que comparte con la tropa sus aventuras y desventuras, y que las utiliza para asegurar los destinos del Imperio⁴³.

El sentido de la dualidad de la paz y la guerra alcanzó un punto importante con Lucio Floro. Para él la evolución de la historia del Imperio Romano fue la constante seguidilla de

⁴¹ GONZÁLEZ-CONDE 1991, 108-111.

⁴² RODRIGUEZ 1997, 67.

⁴³ CIZEK 1983, 227.

épocas de guerras y de momentos de paz⁴⁴. La paz fue un estado de disfrute, pero la guerra fue igual de necesaria pues permitió remover y tensionar las energías del Imperio, tal como Trajano lo había hecho con Dacia, ya que el imperio adormecido “*reviserit*” gracias a esa actividad militar (Flor. *Praef.* 6). Tácito, contemporáneo de Floro, se había manifestado en términos similares en su *Diálogos de los oradores* al considerar la paz como el disfrute de la vida cívica y asociar la guerra con la creación de líderes (Tac. *Dial.* 6). La guerra permitió los periodos de paz, como el de Adriano, a pesar de que, como recordara Plutarco a inicios del siglo II, el templo de Jano, que marcaba la transición de épocas de paz a las de conflictos, en la práctica no había estado cerrada nunca, salvo por un pequeño lapso en época de Augusto (Plut. *Num.* 20). Pareciera ser que ambas cuestiones no eran disociables, sino más bien complementarias.

En el orador Frontón se encuentran algunas referencias en su introducción a la historia de las guerras orientales luchadas por Lucio Vero. La idea de guerra justa contra los partos estaba vinculada al hecho de que fueron los peores enemigos del pueblo romano “*parthi adversus populum romanum hostile nomen*” (Fro. *Ep.* 197.7). Cualquiera campaña contra ellos estaba plenamente justificada con un sentido histórico, pues los partos habían derrotado a Craso, Marco Antonio e incluso a parte del ejército de Trajano. La detención de las guerras por Adriano, habilidoso en instrumentos de la guerra pero que poco podía hacer por sostener los costos de mantenimiento de las nuevas provincias, estimuló que Antonino Pío adoptara una política pacífica que le permitió ser comparado con Numa (Fro. *Ep.* 197.11, SHA. *Ant. Pius* 2.2, Eutr. 8.8.1). En consecuencia, el ejército oriental se relajó en la disciplina, lo que se transformó en una severa derrota de las tropas imperiales en 161. En Frontón de este modo volvemos a encontrar la repetición de las virtudes de la guerra y de la paz, las cuales sirven para mantener el estado romano, pero prefiriendo la administración civil por sobre la militar, ejemplificada nada menos que en Trajano, pues decía que en la guerra muchos pueden destacar, pero no así en la paz, siendo Trajano el *optimus princeps*, la más destacada figura gobernante hacia donde Vero debería mirar (Fro. *Ep.* 197.17).

Estas cuestiones permiten hablar de una serie de ideas legitimantes que configuraron un panorama ideológico y un discurso sobre la guerra y la paz relativamente claro en el que esta dicotomía fue vista como algo connatural a la evolución del sistema político. En síntesis, al inicio el principado se impuso un consenso que tuvo una variante interna, la de las ausencias de guerras civiles, pero también de ciertas garantías que limitarían, por lo menos,

⁴⁴ GONZÁLEZ-CONDE 1991, 128.

aquellos conflictos que pudieran amenazar el interior y exterior del Imperio Romano. Esto último no fue un aspecto tan claro en el plan original, pues el mismo Tácito recordaba que para la crisis del 69 toda guerra que se desarrollara fuera de los límites de Italia podía ser considerada externa “*Secura tum urbe et provinciali bello, quod inter legiones Galliasque velut externum fuit.*” (Tac. *Hist.* 1.89). Augusto y los Julio-Claudios habían diseñado esencialmente su consenso en la protección del marco geopolítico itálico. Si notamos la distribución de las tropas en un discurso atribuido por Tácito a Tiberio ante el senado, las legiones estaban dispuestas para proteger Italia y al emperador (Tac. *Ann.* 4.5). Tácito, Plinio, Dión, Floro y Elio Aristides reforzaron esos valores sobre la guerra y la paz ya existentes, conculcando la *clementia* de tiempos Julio-Claudios por otra relativa a la humanidad del gobierno, en la que el emperador debía ser capaz de mantener un equilibrio correcto entre lo civil y lo militar⁴⁵, algo que también se podía clamar a la clase dirigente. Marcial decía que Fronto, un senador no identificado claramente, reflejaba un estereotipo del buen senador, ya que “*clarum militiae, Fronto, togaeque decus*” (Marc. *Ep.* 1.55).

La guerra y la paz así entendidas sostuvieron el régimen sociopolítico basado en los principios augustales, pero con una notable ampliación de su base geográfica con Trajano y Adriano, tanto territorial como simbólica. A partir de entonces la *pax* ya no fue solamente para y del ciudadano romano, sino también de todos los habitantes del Imperio, ciudadanos o no, itálicos o provinciales. Se trata de un mundo en que la romanización había tenido un fuerte impacto, de allí que la *pax* propugnada no solo fuera la del *orbis romanus*, sino que también aumentó su escala convirtiéndose en la *pax* del *orbis terrarum*⁴⁶. Todo este discurso se difundió por el relato, las obras públicas, la epigrafía, la numismática y se expresó en la redefinición de ciertos valores tradicionales⁴⁷. Los conflictos y la estabilidad se confinaron en un marco limitado de tiempo y espacio, lo que rompió totalmente con la idea de Virgilio de que el Imperio Romano no tenía un límite temporal y físico, “*imperium sine fine*” (Verg. *Aen.* 1.279). Después de cien años se desgarraba la forma metafórica y simbólica que había adquirido el Imperio Romano en su origen y su concretización se hizo en términos geográficos.

⁴⁵ CIZEK 1983, 224.

⁴⁶ BANCALARI 2007, 51-55; GRANT 1994, 41; WOOLF 2003, 68-69; PETIT 1975, 363; ANDO 2000, 278.

⁴⁷ PLÁCIDO 33.

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Con ese bagaje se conformó un discurso sobre la guerra y la paz que se vislumbró en la élite imperial, constituyendo la guerra y la paz, tal cual el templo de Jano, una misma realidad. Por ello no se puede validar la idea de un Imperio defensivo o bien ofensivo según cada emperador. En ese sentido hay que tener precaución en el modo de centrarse en la construcción de un relato marcadamente personalista, debido que a nuestro juicio las referencias, sobre todo de orden biográfico como las de la Historia Augusta, provienen del siglo IV donde predomina un relato historiográfico expresado en términos moralizantes, en el que las figuras históricas tienen una aureola pedagógica antes que histórica⁴⁸. Un ejemplo de lo anterior es Eutropio, quien enuncia que las motivaciones de Adriano para retirarse de las conquistas de Trajano fue la *invidens* (Eutr. 8.6). ¿Acaso eso significaría que en los pensamientos de Adriano no existieron consideraciones estratégicas, militares, políticas y económicas? En nuestra opinión claramente la respuesta que dio el emperador viajero se basó en una ponderación de todos los elementos que tuvo en su poder. Por todo ello la *pax romana* no fue solo la inexistencia de combates ya que también incluyó aspectos de una administración cada vez más benevolente, mientras la política militar se encaminó a contener la entrada de los enemigos a lo que Gibbon llamó “the fairest part of the earth and the most civilised portion of mankind”⁴⁹.

Desde esa perspectiva se puede decir que, entre Trajano, que luchó en varios frentes, y Adriano, que viajó infatigablemente e inspeccionó las posiciones militares en todo el Imperio, encontramos un equilibrio más que diferencias, si bien para Pilar González-Conde “Las diferencias en la política exterior de ambos reinados no se deben exclusivamente a necesidades coyunturales, sino también a la confrontación ideológica de dos posturas en su visión de gobierno del Imperio”⁵⁰. La dualidad entre paz-guerra, detención-movimiento, más que como una confrontación ideológica debe verse como conceptos que los romanos asociaban a actitudes que, correctamente equilibradas, producían los mejores gobernantes; y también deben entenderse como aspectos complementarios del devenir político, pues el estado no puede vivir en permanente guerra, pero tampoco puede hacerlo en una *pax eterna*.

En nuestra mirada, el gran problema, que se manifestó en forma de desequilibrio, provino de la actuación de los emperadores posteriores a Adriano. Antonino Pío basó su

⁴⁸ SYME 1972, 123.

⁴⁹ GIBBON 1998, 3.

⁵⁰ GONZÁLEZ-CONDE 1991, 168.

propaganda en un cese de las guerras⁵¹. De él Pausanias rememora que “no envolvió voluntariamente en ninguna guerra a los romanos” (Paus. 8.43.3), a pesar de verse enfrentado a los brigantes y los mauritanos. El desequilibrio provino más bien del fracaso por asegurar los aspectos de la herencia del poder, y coyunturalmente del plan de Adriano por su sucesión. Se observa en el hecho de que Antonino Pío no tuvo la formación militar de sus antecesores ni tampoco la vitalidad de Adriano, un desequilibrio que a nuestro juicio sería fatal pues Marco Aurelio y Lucio Vero también carecieron de formación castrense. Además, Antonino Pío llevó a uno de los extremos el dualismo de paz-guerra (Fro. *Ep.*157, 9; SHA. *Avid. Cass.* 14). La ausencia de formación militar se tradujo a partir de la segunda mitad del siglo II en un desajuste militar, al punto de que el principado se desdibujó con Marco Aurelio y Cómodo, sobre todo con el primero, emperador filósofo que guerreó contra los enemigos del Danubio “para castigarlos, contra los germanos, los bárbaros más belicosos y numerosos de Europa, y contra el pueblo de los sármatas, que habían iniciado una guerra y agravios” (Paus. 8.43.6). El castigo definitivo nunca llegó y las guerras no terminaron, desafiando nuevamente el dualismo, lo que aumentó la presión sobre el fisco y el imperio, entre otras cosas ⁵².

En ese sentido, la *fortitudo* se manifestó en un emperador como Trajano, vigoroso desde el desarrollo sostenido de una política de anexión territorial más que por el mero traslado de riquezas a Roma y de pompa triunfal. Pero también lo fue un Adriano, que recorrió cada puesto de soldados y fuertes, y participó de la vida militar como soldado y emperador, tal como queda reflejado en la famosa *exercitatio*⁵³ y el periplo del Ponto Euxino (Arr. *Perip*), procurando una política exterior acorde a las fuerzas que disponía el Imperio. No se puede decir lo mismo de Antonino Pío, Marco Aurelio, Lucio Vero y Cómodo, quienes por más que hayan conseguido victorias militares, su búsqueda de la función militar se dio por necesidad coyuntural y no por una elección de vida. Resulta paradójico el caso de Marco Aurelio, quien fue aconsejado por Frontón de que leyera a Cicerón como un modo de adentrarse en la ciencia militar (Fro. *Ep.* 157.10).

Valores y actitudes sobre la guerra y la paz.

El conjunto de ideas anteriores se expresó en un discurso que a su vez se transformó en valores que, en el plano de la guerra y la paz, orientaron actitudes y la actuación de la política del Imperio Romano y la élite romana.

⁵¹ ROWAN 2013; GRANT 1994.

⁵² FRASCHETTI 2014, 233-247.

⁵³ ILS 2487.

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Para adentrarse en la óptica de los valores, seguidamente realizamos un análisis cuantitativo de los términos plasmados en acuñaciones de monedas relacionados con la paz y la guerra, y otros valores asociados. Esta técnica ya ha sido utilizada por Noreña para analizar algunos rasgos particulares del principado de Vespasiano, e igualmente por Rowan para Antonino Pío⁵⁴. En nuestro estudio se registraron y contabilizaron las leyendas inscritas en el reverso de monedas que forman parte del *Roman Imperial Coinage*⁵⁵. Entre los tipos iconográficos y leyendas que resultan relevantes de enumerar encontramos: *Pax*, *Iupiter*, *Disciplina*, *Marte* y *Hércules securitas* y *tranquilitas*, así como ciertos mecanismos de la política exterior como el nombramiento de reyes. En esta revisión y con fines comparativos hemos incluido la época de los Flavios. En el caso de Trajano y Adriano, Pilar Gonzalez-Conde estudió algunos tipos de emisiones, concluyendo que el fenómeno se puede interpretar de dos modos. Por una parte, como una victoria en la guerra para Trajano y por otra como una victoria en la paz para Adriano, siendo hasta el momento el único estudio existente en comparar el binomio pax-guerra entre ambos emperadores⁵⁶.

El análisis cuantitativo que realizamos en el presente estudio consiste en determinar los valores absolutos y relativos de cada una de las leyendas acuñadas bajo cada emperador, con el fin de poder hacer comparaciones y llegar a algunas conclusiones. Los valores absolutos corresponden al número total contabilizado de cada leyenda en la época de cada emperador y los valores relativos representan el porcentaje obtenido por cada leyenda con respecto al total de acuñaciones bajo cada emperador. En la tabla 1 se muestran el total de los resultados obtenidos del inventario y conteo de las leyendas numismáticas alusivas a la guerra y la paz, por un lado, por otro los resultados se encuentran disgregados por emperador y a su vez en números y porcentajes, se ha añadido una última columna que indica el total de acuñaciones del emperador en el *Roman Imperial Coinage* y el porcentaje que las leyendas inventariadas representan dentro de ese total:

⁵⁴ ROWAN 2013; NOREÑA, 2001, 2003.

⁵⁵ ROMAN IMPERIAL COINAGE, 1926.

⁵⁶ GONZÁLEZ-CONDE 1991, 68

Tabla 1.
Términos asociados a valores militares.

Emperador		Pax	Iupiter Cons.	Disciplina	Securitas, Tranquilidad	Victoria	Hércules	Marte	Nº Total acuñaciones de tipo paz/guerra por emperador	Todas las acuñaciones del periodo/% acuñaciones militares dentro del total
VESPASIANO	Nº	76	3	0	5	79	0	7	170	818
	%	9,3%	0,4%	0,0%	0,6%	9,7%	0,0%	0,9%		20,8%
TITO	Nº	11	0	0	6	20	0	0	37	249
	%	4,4%	0,0%	0,0%	2,4%	8,0%	0,0%	0,0%		14,9%
DOMICIANO	Nº	8	13	0	0	22	0	0	43	464
	%	1,7%	2,8%	0,0%	0,0%	4,7%	0,0%	0,0%		9,3%
NERVA	Nº	6	0	0	0	4	0	0	10	163
	%	3,7%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	2,5%	0,0%	0,0%		6,1%
TRAJANO	Nº	44	7	0	2	123	7	28	211	836
	%	5,3%	0,8%	0,0%	0,2%	14,7%	0,8%	3,3%		26,4%
ADRIANO	Nº	11	9	5	11	27	11	5	79	1095
	%	1,0%	0,8%	0,5%	1,0%	2,5%	1,0%	0,5%		7,2%
PÍO	Nº	27	8	2	12	35	0	11	95	1200
	%	2,3%	0,7%	0,2%	1,0%	2,9%	0,0%	0,9%		8,3%
MARCO AURELIO	Nº	16	11	0	8	151	4	36	226	1495
	%	1,1%	0,7%	0,0%	0,5%	10,1%	0,3%	2,40%		15,3%
CÓMODO	Nº	9	10	0	5	29	6	13	72	686
	%	1,3%	1,5%	0,0%	0,7%	4,2%	0,9%	1,9%		1050,0%
TOTALES PROMEDIO	Nº	208	61	7	49	490	28	100	943	7600
	%	3,3%	0,9%	0,1%	0,7%	6,6%	0,3%	1,1%		13,2%

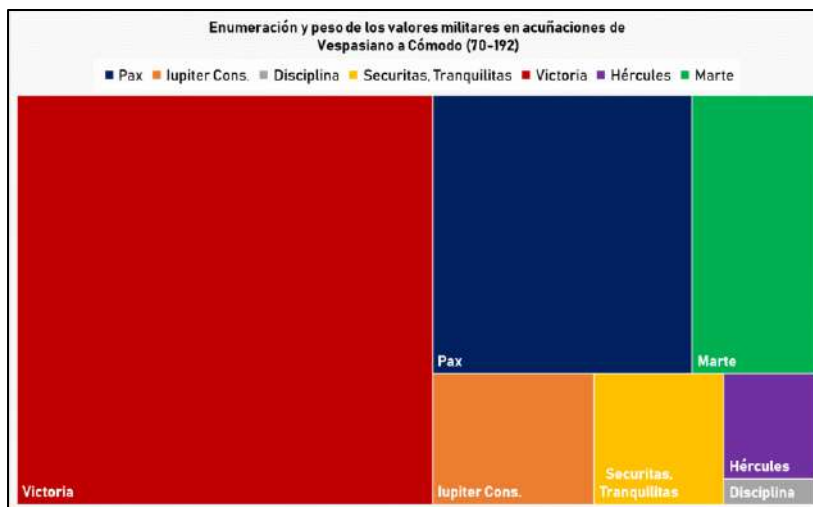
De los resultados se desprenden las siguientes cuestiones a modo general:

1. Lo primero es que del total de acuñaciones del periodo que suman un total de 7600 acuñaciones, Trajano es, en términos porcentuales, el emperador donde más se concentró el uso de acuñaciones con sentido militar con un 26,4% del total de las acuñaciones emitidas entre el año 98 y el 117, con un total de 211 monedas dentro de las 836 emitidas durante su periodo. Le siguen Vespasiano (20,8%), Marco Aurelio (15,3%) y Tito (14,9%). No debería sorprendernos a primera vista estos números teniendo a la vista que Vespasiano y Trajano afrontaron una serie de conflictos militares, lo mismo que Marco Aurelio, que si bien está en tercer lugar en términos porcentuales, si tomamos el valor absoluto, con 226 acuñaciones representa el más alto valor dentro de las acuñaciones del periodo de estudio.
2. Quienes presentan menciones menores son Domiciano (9,3%), Antonino Pío (8,3%), Adriano (7,2%). Sabemos que en parte Adriano y Antonino Pío, sobre todo este último, diseñaron una propaganda más heterogénea sobre las bases sociales del principado, cobrando más protagonismo nuevos valores asociados a la vida imperial (*liberalitas, abundantia, fortuna, etc.*)⁵⁷. De Domiciano cabría buscar una explicación plausible en futuros estudios ya que escapa de nuestro marco temporal de análisis. Se podría aventurar el hecho de que presumiblemente su propagnada estimuló la idea de proyectarse como pacificador de las fronteras del Imperio Romano, pero también a los efectos de la *damnatio memoriae*.
3. De las menciones a valores militares, que se analizarán profusamente en páginas siguientes, hay dos conceptos que pudieran vincularse de manera directa en calidad y cantidad al eje de la guerra y la paz, la *pax* y la victoria. Ambos casos fueron los valores con mayor presencia en la enumeración con un 73% del total de las acuñaciones como puede observarse en el gráfico número 1 donde prevalece de mayor grado las de tipo victoria y paz dentro del total de acuñaciones del periodo de estudio. Como señala Noreña la leyenda victoria fue un valor que remarcaba el triunfo militar y el imperialismo romano, en tanto la paz la ausencia de conflictos⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ ROWAN 2013; GRANT 1994.

⁵⁸ NOREÑA 2003, 34.

Gráfico 1
Aparición de valores militares. Representación gráfica.



Pasemos a analizar la presencia de cada uno de los valores y como estos se asociaron al discurso sobre la paz y la guerra que hemos estudiado en el acápite anterior. Iniciaremos analizando los valores más presentes en las acuñaciones: *victoria* y *pax*. Al ser las leyendas y temas más presentes en las monedas cabría establecer posibles relaciones entre ambos elementos, lo que se puede observar en el gráfico número 2 desde el punto de vista de las emisiones en cada mandato:

Gráfico 2



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En el gráfico anterior es posible constatar una relación relevante entre la *pax* y las condiciones de seguridad interna vinculadas a la ausencia de guerra civiles. Del mismo modo, ambos valores, crecen o decrecen de la visión general de la política exterior que tuvo cada prínceps, lo que demuestra una relación proporcional al interior de cada mandato, salvo el caso de Marco Aurelio que analizaremos en páginas siguientes. Desde el aporte general de cada tipo de acuñaciones la *pax*, el valor que todos podríamos asociar a la ausencia de conflictos baja en términos porcentuales en todos los prínceps posteriores a Vespasiano con un leve repunte en Trajano. Para entender estas diferencias hay que analizar caso a caso.

El valor más alto en tiempos de Vespasiano de la leyenda *pax*, remite necesariamente a la estabilización del Imperio Romano posterior a la guerra civil y la elevación de la *pax* en el culto cívico de las *urbs*, con la construcción del *templum pacis*⁵⁹ y el consecuente uso de la *pax* como referencia propagandística de la llegada de la nueva dinastía Flavia. En el caso de Trajano, quien a su vez posee el mayor porcentaje de las acuñaciones con la leyenda victoria, el mayor uso de *pax* se dio en el periodo posterior a la primera guerra dácica, esto es cuando se creyó neutralizado el peligro del reino de Dacia sobre las fronteras romanas⁶⁰. El número de emisiones aumentó con la anexión definitiva de Dacia y Arabia y contempló los años que Trajano pasó en Roma, previos a la campaña oriental. En este caso la *pax* se usó como un fenómeno indistinto para referirse a situaciones de política interna o externa, nuevamente desde un plano en que ambas situaciones se mostraban profundamente entrelazadas como requisitos una de la otra.

La victoria de Trajano en Dacia permitió una estabilización del Imperio Romano, así como la posible neutralización de cualquier oposición política al proceso de centralización estatal. La optimización de Trajano no se puede abstraer de ese proceso, de forma que la *pax* sirvió como una representación tradicional referida al proceso de estabilidad interna como consecuencia de la gran y necesaria victoria militar contra un enemigo contra el cual Domiciano había fracasado⁶¹. Finalmente, la victoria sirvió para reafirmar el poder del *optimus princeps* en comparación directa con su antecesor. La fama de Trajano como emperador civil no se puede comprender sino en base a las riquezas obtenidas del oro dacio, sin cuyos ingresos cualquier política social y edilicia hubiera sido fútil e imposible⁶².

⁵⁹ NOREÑA 2003.

⁶⁰ GONZÁLEZ-CONDE 1991, 37-44, 50-51.

⁶¹ BLÁZQUEZ 2003, 77-78

⁶² CARCOPINO 1924; CARCOPINO 1968, 110; SYME 1930; SUTHERLAND 1935.

Todo lo anterior nos permite identificar varias actitudes relevantes de Trajano, siempre vinculadas a el sentido del *optimus princeps*. La idea de levantar un triunfo, como actitud militar gloriosa no está tan presente en las narraciones sobre Trajano. Según Dión Casio (Cass. Dio. 68.10.2), Trajano celebró un gran triunfo sobre la derrota en Dacia, pero no se quedó allí, pues también emprendió un célebre programa de obras públicas que concretizaría ediliciamente sus victorias militares. Por eso la victoria no estuvo sola sino acompañada por las inscripciones y acuñaciones que anunciaban las nuevas construcciones en la *urbs* y el *orbis*⁶³. Con Trajano retomamos el ideal de guerra justa invocada para castigar a quienes constituyeron una amenaza flagrante al Imperio Romano, sea Dacia, Armenia o Partia. Las tres potencias desafiaron directamente a Roma, quien respondió guiada por los preceptos ideales de la guerra, y principalmente por la idea de que el Imperio estaba verdaderamente siendo amenazado. La elaboración de esos motivos bélicos realzó la idea de la *fortitudo* y del levantamiento de fuerzas imperiales sostenidas por Floro, contemporáneo de Trajano y Adriano, para quien el emperador logró revivir una anquilosada maquinaria imperial, imagen que se mantendría aun en el siglo IV, Eutropio comunicó que esto se había hecho con “*inusitatae civilitatis et fortitudinis*” (Eutr. 8.2). De esta forma la victoria como ideal político no solo representaba un triunfo sobre pueblos enemigos sino también la reelaboración del estado romano.

En el caso de los emperadores posteriores a Trajano el uso de la paz fue relativamente bajo como queda de manifiesto en los resultados porcentuales. Esta es una cuestión que llama poderosamente la atención, debido a que tradicionalmente se ha considerado al siglo II como la época en que la *pax romana* alcanzó su punto culminante, pero también porque la emisión cae en los gobiernos considerados por la historiografía paradigmáticamente como pacíficos. En el siglo IV el relato de la historia augusta señala que Adriano “*Orbem terrarum paci operam intendit*” (SHA. Hadr. 5.1) y que Antonino Pío “*semper amareuit pacem*” (SHA Ant. Pius. 9.10). Algunos historiadores modernos han replicado esa creencia, Petit incluso llamando a Adriano pacifista⁶⁴.

A pesar de lo anterior, Adriano y Antonino Pío no desarrollaron una mayor imaginaria e importancia en el discurso de las acuñaciones del constructo *pax*, lo que nos permite afirmar la búsqueda por parte del Estado romano de nuevos conceptos en el discurso,

⁶³ BEARD 2018, 121.

⁶⁴ DURUY 1885, 147; LACOURT-GAYET 1888, 100; VILLALOBOS 2006; GOLDSWORTHY 2012, 289; GONZÁLEZ-CONDE 1991, 168, 176; GONZALEZ-CONDE 2002, 397; THORNTON 1975, 435-436; PETIT 1975, 357.

atingentes con la centralización de poder político y la estabilidad política del mundo romano. Pilar González-Conde observa una fuerte contradicción en el entendimiento de la *pax* entre Trajano y Adriano, según hemos visto. Pero a nuestro juicio, la historiadora no considera que con Adriano la alusión a la paz se diversificó por medio de una nueva valoración geográfica del Imperio Romano, que se expresó en el número más alto de acuñaciones monetales con iconografía y leyendas geográficas. Estas presentaron una gran variedad, encontrándose una serie meramente provincial, pero también otras de tipo *restitutoris*, *adventus* y *exercitus*⁶⁵. En este último tipo las referencias a los ejércitos de provincias, compuestos en muchos casos solamente por tropas auxiliares de origen no ciudadano, pero también algunas iconografías como las de Germania, Britania y Mauritania en las que la imagen evoca la defensa del territorio imperial resulta esencial para darle cabida a este nuevo entendimiento de la victoria y la *pax*. No se trata solo de una victoria en la paz, sino de la comprensión de una nueva victoria y de una nueva paz. En el mapa 1 se puede observar la presencia de las provincias en las diferentes series geográficas del emperador Adriano, en las diferentes combinaciones posibles que existieron, cada provincia de acuerdo a su peso geopolítico dentro del concierto imperial aparece representada de una o varias formas, asociadas también a sus propias características. Con esa nueva actitud frente a la geografía imperial Adriano emergió como el genio creador de nuevos usos simbólicos y discursivos relativos a una nueva concepción global de la *pax romana*, pero que también anclada a un espacio geográfico particular, no era ni vaga ni de la *urbs*, sino de Roma en cuanto consideración de un Imperio-mundo (Aristid. *Or. Roma*. 7-10).

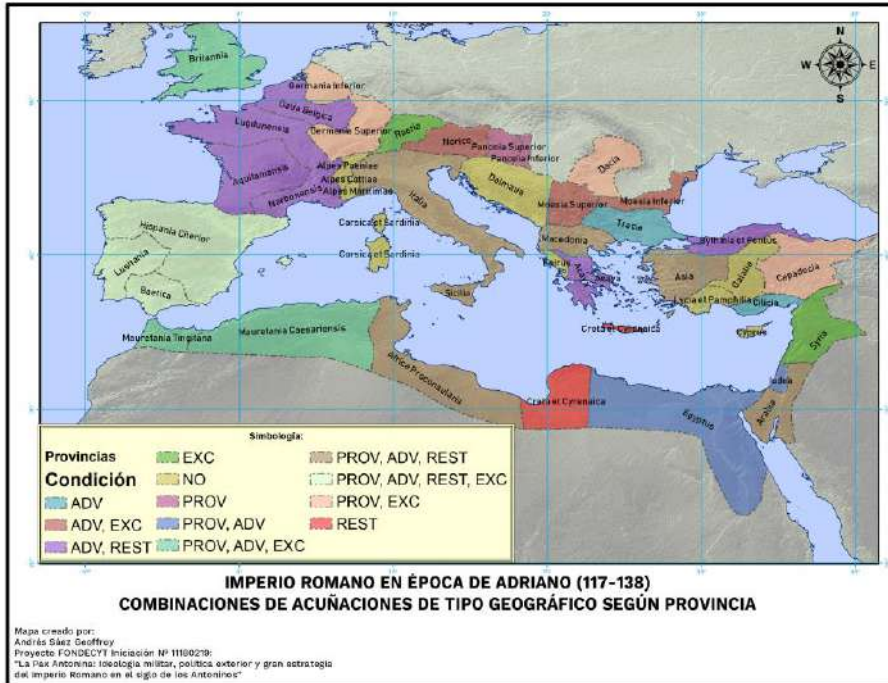
En todo ese contexto es relevante el sentido que la política de Adriano le dio a la territorialidad romana cuyos fundamentos fueron una unidad cultural, política e ideológica a niveles que el Imperio no había conocido⁶⁶. Por ello la nueva significación de la *pax* se manifestó en una nueva comprensión de la escala geográfica en la que se configuró el Imperio Romano, la que prosiguió vigente, al menos, durante toda la dinastía Antonina⁶⁷. Estamos de acuerdo con Clifford Ando en que este fenómeno se expresó en la forma de una revolución ideológica y geográfica, que se manifestó en que los habitantes desde Siria a Britania, del Rin y el Danubio al Sáhara, se percibieran como parte de una patria común⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ Sáez 2019, 1-31.

⁶⁶ LANE FOX 2008, 710; ANDO 2000, 278; CORTÉS COPETE 2004, 78.

⁶⁷ SAEZ 2019, 27.

⁶⁸ ANDO 2000, 319.



Mapa 1: Imperio Romano en época de Adriano. Acuñaciones provinciales.

Afirmamos por ello que existió un cambio en la concepción de la *pax romana*, por cuanto el nuevo discurso añadió una condición geográfica consolidada para su consecución. En dicho contexto no solo las provincias estaban presentes en el nuevo paradigma, ya que Adriano además estimuló la utilización de Roma como imagen divinizada construyéndole un templo junto a Venus en la entrada del foro⁶⁹. Las ideas sostenidas por Adriano valorizaron la configuración territorial imperial, de modo que las provincias se visualizaron restituidas, visitadas y conocidas por el emperador, además de que se les otorgó un rol fundamental en la defensa de los intereses imperiales. El nuevo sentido se dio en las fauces más oscuras del principado de Adriano, cuando en plena guerra contra los judíos el emperador acuñó monedas con otros tópicos como el de *securitas* y *tranquilitas*. Es verdad que *securitas* se había acuñado anteriormente, pero asociada a la seguridad del emperador, no como invocación para el Imperio Romano como lo hizo ver Adriano. Antonino Pío durante sus primeros años de gobierno mantuvo este tipo de acuñaciones, pero a partir del 151 predominaron las de tipo victoria y con ello el discurso de Adriano elaborado 30 años antes comenzó a desdibujarse.

⁶⁹ BOATWRIGHT 1987, 99.

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La *fortitudo*, típicamente atribuida a Trajano, en nuestra visión también se presentó en Adriano. Utilizando elementos religiosos cívicos presentes en Trajano, las tomará de Marte cuyo culto y ceremonias preceden las grandes guerras para dársela a Hércules, cuyas cualidades de fuerza estaban fuera de discusión, pero cuyo *exempla* se adaptó a la práctica viajera inaugurada por Adriano, el emperador que llegaba a los bordes del mundo (RIB 1051). No es azaroso que las acuñaciones rememoraran al Hércules gaditano de la Bética natal del emperador en vez de a un Hércules a secas, pues las columnas de Hércules en Hispania marcaban simbólicamente ese fin del mundo⁷⁰, del mismo modo que el muro de Britania era capaz de separar simbólicamente lo civilizado de la barbarie (SHA. *Hadr.* 11.2).

Los sucesores de Adriano rompieron el equilibrio configurado y con ello adelantaron la crisis del Imperio Romano, que se había restaurado con un nuevo discurso geopolítico de orden más inclusivo. La propaganda sobre la *pax* se redujo en valores relativos al punto más bajo de todo el periodo, pero no con la tendencia de Adriano de incorporar nuevos conceptos, sino que la situación se retrotrajo a inicios del siglo II, pero sin tener el Imperio las fuerzas financieras para atender un marco de guerras constantes. Mientras en Adriano la geografía se esbozó con fines de integración cultural, económica y social, con Marco Aurelio las representaciones geográficas volvieron a mostrar territorios vencidos⁷¹, representados con el cautiverio y esclavitud, cuya iconografía se mostró como en época Flavia e inicios de Trajano. Las guerras constantes retornaron con Marco Aurelio, pero el emperador filósofo no replicó los patrones de Vespasiano y Trajano.

El uso de la victoria para cuestiones relativas a la resolución positiva de conflictos bélicos se vincula fácilmente a las cuestiones de orden bélico. No extraña la mayor presencia en los principados de Vespasiano, Trajano y Marco Aurelio que afrontaron guerras suficientes para usarla como parte de las representaciones básicas del poder romano. Como hemos dicho y reafirmamos, que Trajano presente la mayor cantidad en términos relativos no es una cuestión azarosa, ya que el *optimus princeps* debía ser un buen guerrero, demostrable, de ser necesario, en el campo de batalla según el discurso construido por la élite latina o griega según hemos visto. Lo mismo ocurrió con Marco Aurelio, que más que un emperador filósofo fue un digno imitador de la propaganda de Trajano, con la salvedad de que la persistencia de las guerras y conflictos internos a pesar de sus victorias no le permitió transformarlas en un

⁷⁰ MARCO SIMÓN 2018, 209.

⁷¹ RIC 280, 289, 290, 291 y 292.

clima de paz⁷². Así entendida, la victoria se asoció indiscutiblemente a la *fortitudo* de los emperadores, pero también a la preparación y previsión militar a la que alude la *moderatio* como ideal del buen *princeps*.

Por todo lo anterior, Marco Aurelio desde el punto de vista de la propaganda imperial y del discurso sobre la guerra y la paz no fue el emperador filósofo, sino el emperador guerrero, que denotó las complejidades del momento histórico que le tocó vivir, algo en línea con lo planteado por Frascetti en la biografía revisionista de Marco Aurelio⁷³. Desde la religiosidad cívica reflotó la imagen de Marte emulando a Trajano en los mejores momentos militares del Imperio Romano. Sin ninguna duda Marco Aurelio y Lucio Vero debieron reforzar el mensaje militar en las vísperas de las campañas de oriente, debido a la ausencia formativa del aspecto castrense en su *cursus honorum*, lo que explicaría el alto número de dicho tipo de imágenes según hemos visto, pero que también demuestran la fragilidad real y sentida por parte de la élite. No podemos obviar que Avidio Casio se rebeló el 175 invocando, entre otras cosas, la incapacidad militar de Marco Aurelio⁷⁴, cuestión que si hacemos caso a la propaganda monetaria no debería ser así.

En ese orden de cosas, la titulación de *imperator*, a la cual se le ha dado mucho peso no es tan importante en sí misma durante el siglo II. Se da por descontado que los emperadores eran líderes militares, de ahí que en todos los casos la primera aclamación sea con la llegada al poder, salvo Trajano y Cómodo asociados al trono antes de su asunción. Con el paso del tiempo asistimos a una reducción de los títulos de *imperator* y consulados otorgados que no se condice con el reforzamiento propagandístico de las series de *pax* y victoria entre otras, que ganaron mucho más peso simbólico como difusión del poder político romano, pero que acrecentaban la imagen idea del *princeps* gobernando mediante la *moderatio*. En el gráfico 3 podemos observar esta disminución general de las aclamaciones y consulados por emperador, las que si relacionamos con las informaciones entregadas anteriormente permite comprender parte del aumento de los nuevos valores sobre la guerra y la paz, que se emitían en una clave imperial, como parte del contexto de la situación exterior e interna de Roma más que en una lógica personalista atribuida a las aclamaciones que pudiera recibir tal o cual emperador. Trajano el mejor de los emperadores es sobrepasado

⁷² FRASCETTI 2014, 233-247.

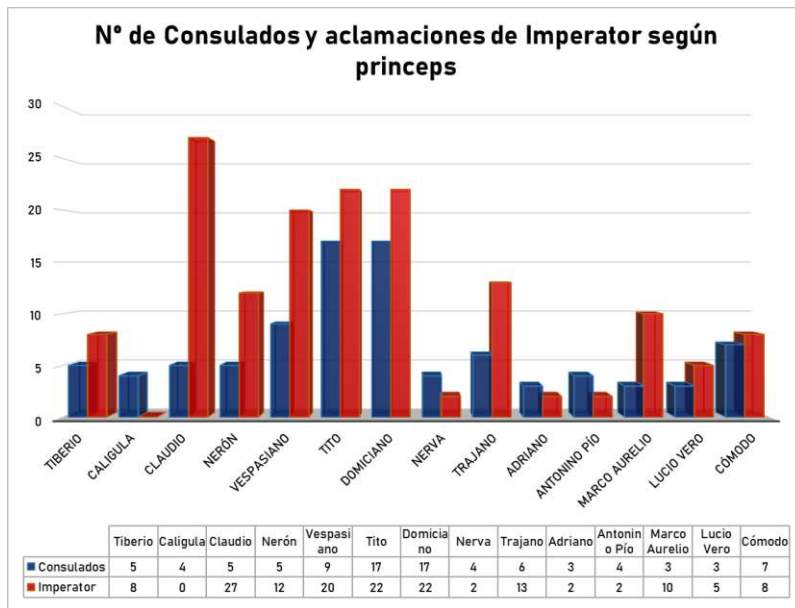
⁷³ FRASCETTI 2014.

⁷⁴ ASTARITA 1983.

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por casi todos los emperadores de la dinastía Julia-Claudia, no obstante, sus logros militares fueron mayores.

Gráfico 3.



De este modo, cabría señalar que la invención de triunfos militares, que provinieron de la exageración de victorias, como la de Claudio en Britannia, o bien la conversión de pequeñas escaramuzas en grandes victorias, como pareciera ser lo hizo Domiciano para producir un imponente número de *acclamations*, no se consideró una estrategia tan válida en época Antonina producto de la *moderatio*. Las victorias también pasaron a tener una nueva connotación de orden geográfico, ya que, si las mejores tierras del universo estaban en manos de Roma después de las campañas de Trajano, cualquier expedición ulterior se realizaría sobre tierras cuyo valor era escaso para el Imperio Romano (App. *Praef.* 7). Esta nueva realidad geopolítica del Imperio Romano llevó a que los emperadores resignificarán ciertos valores tornándolos como partes de la *pax romana*, labor que en nuestra opinión tuvo que afrontar Adriano cuando se vio enfrentado a un desastre táctico en oriente y a problemas en todas las fronteras septentrionales al momento de su ascensión al principado.

Conclusiones.

Hemos establecido en primer lugar una conceptualización operacional de ideología en el marco del estudio del Imperio Romano que nos permitiera abordar la situación de la guerra y la paz en el siglo II. En este sentido podemos señalar que dentro de ese marco de creencias y representaciones nos hemos centrado particularmente en la observación e identificación de cuestiones relativas a la paz y la guerra, y como la ideología se manifestó en un plano narrativo y un plano asociado a la propaganda imperial.

La base de todo el entramado de ideas romanas para el siglo II lo hemos logrado sintetizar, considerando la bibliografía existente, y de acuerdo con ella, que la *pax romana* fue el sustento mental que nutrió todas las estructuras del Imperio Romano. La diferencia que se ha sostenido en el presente artículo tiene relación con considerar a la *pax romana* no como una cuestión estática sino de manera dinámica; esto significa que creemos poco verosímil que se haya mantenido estable durante un lapso de doscientos años y que la conceptualización romana sobre la guerra y la paz haya permanecido sin cambios. El quiebre dentro de ese sistema se visualizó a partir de la segunda mitad del siglo I y se consolidó con Adriano, la *pax romana* se reorientó desde un Imperio abocado a la seguridad interna a una lógica fronteriza concreta en la que la tranquilidad y la paz venían de la mano ya no solo de la ausencia de guerras civiles, sino de una benevolente administración imperial.

Esto último a nuestro juicio implicó repensar el sentido de la guerra y la paz, para que se adaptaran al nuevo marco ideológico. Para nosotros las diferencias respondieron más bien a coyunturas, las que por la naturaleza propia del devenir humano no pueden presentarse dos veces en el tiempo. La guerra y la paz figuraron en la narrativa imperial como dos contrapuntos de una misma idea de fondo, ambas eran cuestiones necesarias y nocivas al mismo tiempo, la guerra en exceso sin duda traía problemas a las arcas imperiales, Adriano y Cómodo tuvieron que lidiar con eso, además impedían una correcta administración política del Imperio Romano. La paz en cambio junto con ser un marco donde la sociedad imperial podía vivir de manera armónica producía letargia y anquilosamiento en un Imperio fundado *manu militari*. El entendimiento de ambos fenómenos terminó por fundirse en el valor de la *moderatio*, el buen gobernante debía saber de la milicia, entrenar a las tropas, pero laudarse la guerra no implicaba disociarse de la correcta administración civil y pacífica del Imperio que le tocaba gobernar.

Estos cambios se reflejaron en las acuñaciones numismáticas. En líneas generales la titulación *imperator*, asentada como parte de la ideología dominante sobre el triunfador

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militar, dejó de ser utilizada con profusión, mientras en los gobernantes de la dinastía Julio-Claudia alcanzaban grandes números, para la dinastía Antonina estos números era bajos. El Imperio había cambiado su política exterior, pero también la simbología de guerra y la paz. La expresión de lo anterior en las leyendas de *pax* y *victoria* fue variable. La *pax*, simbolismo concreto de la ausencia de conflicto armado se redujo desde tiempos de la guerra civil del 69 para no estar tan en uso en el siglo II, el valor emergió con fuerza ante los conflictos externos del Imperio Romano con Trajano y Marco Aurelio. Por otro lado, la leyenda *victoria* apareció principalmente como reconocimiento del éxito en los conflictos militares. Creemos, tal Como mencionase Pilar González-Conde la existencia de un cambio ideológico en la guerra y la paz, pero no atribuible a una diferencia o quiebre profundo entre Trajano y Adriano, sino en que la utilización de nuevos símbolos ideológicos y el agotamiento de la antinomia *pax* y *victoria* dieron paso a la emergencia de nuevos íconos como la liberalitas, *la securitas*, *tranquilitas*, Hércules, entre otros.

De todos modos, en la historiografía ha pervivido una especie de memoria reconstruida en la que la *pax* y la pacificación el mundo fueron conceptos sumamente utilizados en la propaganda imperial, sobre todo Adriano y Antonino Pío, no obstante, desde una perspectiva numérica solo representaron cerca del 10% del total de las acuñaciones que conocemos a día de hoy.

En síntesis, podemos presenciar en el siglo II, una gran continuidad, a saber, que la guerra y la paz siguieron siendo un elemento ideológico legitimador de los emperadores y del sistema político en su conjunto. Pero los cambios son relevantes, la ideología del gobernante ideal, *Optimus Princeps*, lo convertía en un estereotipo de administración civil benevolente (*pax*) pero también un líder militar (*victoria*), un buen gobernante debía dialogar con ambas creencias por medio de la *moderatio* para gobernar de manera correcta el *orbis terrarum*. En esa moderación de la administración del *Imperium* Trajano y Adriano son dos caras de una misma moneda, militares natos, y administradores excelentes. De ahí el acrecentamiento de diversas y nuevas formas de expresar la ideología de principado, el Imperio ya no se manifestaba en un sentido binario de orden-desorden, centro-periferia y guerra-paz como en el siglo I. La administración civil y la romanización mantenían el orden interno, Roma integró a las periferias como parte del Imperio, y las guerras se libraron cuando fueron estrictamente necesarias. El gran problema es que estas innovaciones no duraron lo suficiente para evitar la debacle de finales del siglo II, Antonino Pío, Marco Aurelio y Cómodo no fueron formados como militares, por lo que la idea de la *moderatio* y del buen gobernante que mantuviera en

equilibrio ambos aspectos permaneció con claroscuros hasta el arribo de Septimio Severo, que como sabemos inclinó la balanza de la *moderatio* desde lo civil a lo militar.

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Divine and Human Interactions. Talking to Gods at Dodona

Iulian MOGA¹

Abstract. *Our main goal here is not to peruse the development of the sanctuary or its relation to the political setting as this would be a topic for further analyses. We intend to present in this article some preliminary observations on the mantic techniques, their use, evolution and the credibility of some sources.*

Rezumat. *Intentia noastra nu a fost aceea de a examina evolutia sanctuarului si relatia sa cu puterea politica, intrucat aceasta reprezinta o tema pe care o vom aborda ulterior. In acest articol intentionam sa prezentam doar cateva observatii preliminare privitoare la tehnicile mantice, utilizarea, evolutia lor si gradul de credibilitate al anumitor surse.*

Keywords: Dodona, oracle, mantic techniques, selloi, peleiades.

Surrounded by a landscape dominated by Mount Tomaros and the long and the narrow valley of the Thyamis, Dodona was situated in Thesprotia, the westernmost and remotest area of Epirus, one of the least touched initially by what we call Greek civilization². It was a mysterious region inhabited by peoples with strange customs even for the Greek themselves³. Its name could come from Apeiros, meaning both mainland and endless land. Two important rivers are located in some proximity in the region: the Acheron river or ‘the River of the Souls’, linked to the Netherworld, where visitors could encounter and establish contacts with their relatives’ souls, and another one, perceived as a fluvial deity, Achelous. The latter is the longest river in Greece, flowing from Epirus and then delimiting the boundary between Akarnania and Aitolia. Despite the fact that he was the only panhellenic god of this kind, he never had a temple of his own dedicated, perhaps because it was considered he inhabited the river⁴. Yet, enquirers were often recommended when consulting the oracle at Dodona to make sacrifices to Achelous.

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² BOSMAN 2018, 67-68: ‘In terms of natural setting, the site impresses by its rural tranquility, in contrast to the drama at Delphi’; NICOL 1958, 128-130; STONEMAN 2011, 55; LONGO et al. 2019, 8; CASTIGLIONI 2016, 113. The latter considers the region as being at the limit of the maritime trade.

³ Some ancient authors like Thukydidies and Strabo perceived them as barbarians. Of the fourteen Epirote tribes, the most prominent were the Chanones, the Molossians and the Thesprotians. The latter were the oldest Greek tribe in the region and the sanctuary was initially under their rule, but from the 5th century on the Molossians took control over the sanctuary. In northern part of the region, Illyrian was the current language, while Greek was spoken mostly in its southern area. For an interesting analysis of their ethnicity see KITTELĂ 2013, 29-35.

⁴ CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 111; LONGO et al. 2019, 9.

This could also underline not only the fact that the sanctuary was at the limit between Molossia and Thesprotia, but also that 'Epirus too was considered a liminal region, between Greeks and barbarians. A sacrifice to Achelous, the most important river in the Hellenic world, would remind pilgrims of the Hellenicity of the population and the territory'⁵.

Most of the testimonies related to Dodona and its mantic sessions have indeed an intriguingly puzzling character, as numerous researchers underlined. Besides, archaeology proved that one of the methods of consultation never mentioned in the literary sources in Antiquity is actually very well attested at Dodona, i.e. enquiries by the use of lead lamellae⁶.

Ancient texts and inscriptions indicate that the tutelary deity at Dodona was Zeus, a divinity whose cult was very popular in Epirus and is therefore well attested in the region. His common name here is Zeus Naios, an epithet that could be interpreted and translated very differently according to different etymologies and could mean either 'god of ships' or 'god of the temple' or more precisely 'the god who dwells'⁷. Only once the form Zeus Pronaios occurs together with Diona on a lamella datable either at the end of the rule of Artaxerxes II Mnemon or at the time of the revolt against Artaxerxes III in 355-354 BC, where Porinos, son of Evandros, from Kyme asks the gods whether it would be good to put himself in the service of the satrap and governor⁸.

Scholars have pinpointed not only the fact that Dione, considered wife of Zeus in Dodona, was the second most important deity of the sanctuary, but also the fact that this chthonic goddess might have been the original inhabitant of the place⁹. She appears on a remarkable number of oracular consultations was given, together with her daughter Aphrodite, most of the dove objects dedicated to the sanctuary, as a sort of 'dove goddess'. It is worth noticing that several myths here most probably connected Dione, the doves, and the peleiades¹⁰. The approximately 4,000 texts preserved indicate that Zeus Naios and Dione were most often consulted, but other divinities preserving oracular functions, such as Apollo and Themis, were also enquired¹¹.

⁵ CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 111-112.

⁶ There are also some very interesting stories related to the beginnings of archaeological research here in 1875/6 and the disputes between Karapanos and Mineyko. See KATSIKOUDIS 2013, 307-309; MANOULOPOULOS 2015, 597-613 and GREIFENHAGEN 1981, 5-10.

⁷ KATSADIMA (2019, 131) shows that the adjectives *phagonaios* and *naios* connects the sacred tree with Zeus as it was this deity who dwelt at the roots of the sacred oak. *Dodonaios*, was also currently in use. RACHET 1962, 90; LHÔTE 2006, 8-15; VECCHIO 2019, 41 and 45-46; QUANTIN 2008, 29-33; CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 105.

⁸ DVC 35A+37B; LHÔTE 2017, 43-44 (dated here cca 360-358 BC). This form is considered by Lhôte and the previous publishers an error due to the fact that Porinos wrote the question himself on the tablet made the confusion with Athena Pronaia from Delphi. https://dodonaonline.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/ciod_dvc_35a37b.

⁹ BOSMAN 2018, 68 and 70-71; QUANTIN (2008, 41) curiously believed that this divine couple was not formed in Dodona and that their cult must have been introduced there at the beginning of the 5th century BC.

¹⁰ CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 107-109.

¹¹ TSELIKAS 2017, 34-35; CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 109-111. As Tselikas notes, only 10% of them are completely preserved.

The foundation myths indicate that Deukalion and Pyrrha, the only people that survived the Great Flood came here first, even if Delphi claimed that their boat halted on the ground on Mount Parnassus. Despite that, Herodotos (2, 52) was convinced that Dodona was the oldest oracle of its kind in Greece¹². Dodona was perceived sometimes as the greatest competitor of Delphi¹³. Yet, the truly panhellenic character of the sanctuary is contested for the time before the period of reconstruction and enhancement of architectural features during Pyrrhos' time¹⁴. Indeed, even if rhetorically and mythically Dodona and Delphi were placed at the same level, the archaeological and epigraphic data indicate there were very few official enquiries at Dodona and that it was frequented most often by the neighbours, i.e. people from the surrounding areas of northern Greece, Corcyra and Magna Graecia¹⁵. There is a strong presence of various dialects in these inscriptions which date from the 6th century BC to the Roman conquest of Epirus in 167 BC. The greatest concentration of epigraphs are situated in the 5th and 4th centuries¹⁶.

The sources indicate the presence of two colleges or groups among the sacred personnel of the shrine: the selloi or helloi (also called tomouroi¹⁷) and the peleïades (or 'doves'). The earliest mentioned interpreters are the selloi, whose existence, at least in the later phases of the sanctuary' existence is sometimes contested¹⁸. In the Iliad (16, 233-5), their habits seem rather odd: 'Zeus, lord, Dodonaean, Pelasgian, who dwell afar, ruling over wintry Dodona – and about you live the Selli, your interpreters, men with unwashed feet who sleep on the ground'. Subsequently, Hesiod calls the neighbouring area Hellopia, i.e. the land of the Helloi¹⁹. Van Windekens suggested that the term employed by Herodotos, ἀνιπτόποδες, meaning in reality not only 'with unwashed feet' but 'barefooted' should be closely connected to the idea of their sleeping on the ground (χαμαιεῦναι) and Δωδώνη, all belonging to the same semantic field that underline the connection with the ground and earth, and that 'For the Dodonean priests the physical contact with the earth was not a pollution but a holy necessity'²⁰.

Later on, sources mention the presence of a second group of priestesses called the peleïades or 'the doves'. Some ancient authors describe the tasks of each group, reminding them altogether. Chapinal-Heras suggests that 'the absence of the peleïades in the Homeric poems, where only the selloi appear, does not by itself mean that there were no priestesses at all in the Archaic period' and then that 'both groups coexisted for centuries, until the selloi lost

¹² Also Strabo, 7, 7, 10.

¹³ JOHNSTON 2008, 60; PARKE, 1967, 3.

¹⁴ DILLON 2017, 324; CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 113.

¹⁵ DILLON 2017, 327.

¹⁶ CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 117.

¹⁷ RACHET 1962, 91-92; VECCHIO 2019, 46-49.

¹⁸ JOHNSTON 2008, 63.

¹⁹ See also JOHNSTON 2008, 63.

²⁰ VAN WINDEKENS 1961, 91-92.

prominence due to the decrease in Dodona's importance"²¹. Herodotos (2, 55-57) might have tried to rationalize the two stories concerning the black doves at Dodona and the oracle of Zeus Ammon in Lybia²². First, he recalls the two Egyptian priestesses kidnapped by the Phoenicians, one taken to Lybia and the other to Dodona. Then, he reaches to a different version told by a priestess of Dodona. She said that there had been be two black doves that flew from Egypt to Dodona and she called them 'black' because the Egyptians were dark-skinned. The dove that settled in Dodona set her residence in a sacred oak tree and began to prophesize in human voice, the first delivered message being that an oracular site should be established there²³. Thus, the many voiced ancestral oak tree in Dodona is connected both to the activity of the selloi and the peleiades for many generations and resisted until the AD 391, when it was cut down by an Illyrian bandit who wished to put an end to the temple activity²⁴.

In his *Phaidros* (244b), Plato provides an impressive picture over the nature of prophetic state of these human doves while involved in the mantic sessions: 'The prophetess of Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona are out of their minds (i.e. *manesai*) when they perform that fine work of theirs for all of Greece, either for an individual person or for a whole city, but they accomplish little or nothing when they are in control of themselves' and then continues his exposition 'But here's some evidence worth adding to our case: The people who designed our language in the old days never thought of madness as something to be ashamed of or worthy of blame; otherwise they would not have used the word "manic" for the finest experts of all – the ones who tell the future – thereby weaving insanity into prophecy. They thought it was wonderful when it came as a gift of the god, and that's why they gave its name to prophecy; but nowadays people don't know the fine points, so they stick in a "t" and call it "mantic"'. This passage clearly indicates the fact that the priestesses at Dodona, just like the Pythiai at Delphi acquired a certain state of enthousiasmos or a trance before ever prophesy and that this state of divine possession of their body was certainly different from their normal condition.

Therefore, two different methods of divination could have been in use simultaneously in a separate way by different 'specialized' groups. In other words, the sacred oak tree could have been used both by the selloi and by the peleiades by employing a certain peculiar type of dendromancy and the interpretation of movements and 'chattering of the birds', i.e. the doves.

Besides, archaeological evidence shows that inside the area of the *temenos* a series of cauldrons were set on tripods, like a circle of cauldrons around the sacred oak. Chapinal-Heras states that it is possible to distinguish different phases in the use of the oracle: initially it was

²¹ CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 104.

²² NESSELRATH 1999, 3.

²³ JOHNSTON 2008, 63-64; PÖTSCHER 1966, 116-121.

²⁴ DILLON 2017, 326; CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 120. Previously, the sacred tree risked twice to be cut, first by the woodcutter Hellos and then by the young shepherd Mardylas. Yet the troops of the Aitolian general Dorimachos, who took an active part during the Social War, even if plundered and set fire to the sanctuary, they did not do so with the temple. See KATSADIMA 2019, 132-133 for the interpretation of sources.

the tree itself that was used in the mantic sessions, even if he insists on the probability ‘that the sacred tree was merely symbolic’. Then the cauldrons began to appear in the 8th and 7th centuries, followed a century later by the lead lamellae. He also implies that as soon as the temenos wall was build, the circle of cauldrons ‘was no longer necessary’, being replaced by a ‘mechanism’, i.e. the Kerkyrean present²⁵. The mechanism or automaton that was supposed in his opinion to replace the use of the cauldrons was in fact a bronze statue offered as a gift (*anathema*), representing a young man or a boy, holding a whip, probably with bones at the end of its three chains (or leather thongs, according to Dillon), a fragment of Zenobius (6, 5) providing a description of this statue of the boy and the cauldron as standing atop two columns. When the wind blew, these bones struck the cauldron and produced sounds and noises now and then to be later interpreted as god’s speech²⁶. Dillon even underlines the fact that the lasting sound was so prolong that ‘one could count to 400’²⁷.

Of course, there are indications in later sources about the use of water and hallucinogenic vapours inside the sacred precinct at Dodona that are to be treated very cautiously. Servius, in his comments on Aeneid (3, 466) stated that a spring used to flow under the roots of the sacred oak and that the water produced a sound like a murmur to be interpreted by a woman named Pelias. Both him and Pliny in his *Natural History* (2, 228) also affirmed that this source of water used for the torches to be extinguished and then reignited. As for Prudentius, he records the presence of some hallucinogenic vapours at Dodona, but his testimony is so exceptional that he probably mistook Dodona for Delphi²⁸.

As for the presence of the lead or bronze tablets, it is surprising that none of the ancient literary sources mention their existence. A small fraction of 150 lamellae were published by Éric Lhôte in 2006, followed in 2013 by the comprising publication, in two volumes, of the oracular tablets from the excavations of Evangelidis²⁹. One of the mantic procedures involved here perhaps the use of binary system with yes or no answers, just like a usual lot system. There are indications that at least some of these tablets were melted down and then reused³⁰. The cleromantic procedure in this case was supposed to be simple: on one face of the tablet the question addressed by the enquirer was written down, stating the type of problem and whether it was suitable to perform one sort of action or another, then the tablet was folded and was given to the interpreter who draw a lot from a jar (that could be a bean or a pebble with a different colour) and who stated the answer to be noted on the back of the tablet³¹. Yet, there

²⁵ CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 119; CHAPINAL 2015, 29-30.

²⁶ JOHNSTON 2008, 66; CHAPINAL 2015, 26; CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 116.

²⁷ DILLON 2017, 330.

²⁸ JOHNSTON 2008, 65-66; CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 116. SCOTT LITTLETON (1986, 84-85) was convinced of this possibility at Dodona.

²⁹ TSELIKAS 2017, 34-5. See also SOUEREF 2017, 21.

³⁰ CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, 117-118.

³¹ DILLON 2017, 330; JOHNSTON 2008, 68-71.

are instances when a potential discouraged enquirer might have asked the divinity for a second time, not being satisfied with the first answer given by the oracle³². Some other tablets lead to serious problems of interpretation regarding the procedure involved to answer to two or multiple questions addressed at the same time by a specific enquirer³³. But this is a very peculiar topic that needs to be addressed separately.

Is it possible to fit all these elements together? In our opinion, the situation is to be compared to other oracular centres as well. It is very likely that at first a certain mantic technique to be in use and as the time went on, other procedures to be added without thoroughly replacing the previous ones (for example at Delphi the use of hallucinogenic vapours as well as lot oracles or at Claros the employment of similar trance technique, but also the astragals). These elements (chattering of doves, twitter of leaves, sounds of cauldrons or murmur of the spring) could just represent only what Johnston defines as trigger³⁴ external factor that only induced the state of divine possession. There is therefore no reason to believe that at a certain point a certain mantic technique just replaced another one fallen into disuse. The sources do not indicate a successive replacement in mantic activities, so we can conclude that at certain period some of these techniques would acquire more prominence than others, which were not totally neglected.

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³² DVC 279B; TSELIKAS 2017, 38.

³³ DVC 194A and DVC 195B; DVC 2367; TSELIKAS 2017, 36-38.

Also https://dodonaonline.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/ciod_dvc_2367 with the following translation: 'Dieu. Bonne fortune. Épilytos demande à Zeus Naios et à Diona ce qu'il pourrait faire et à quel dieu il pourrait sacrifier pour être heureux; s'il doit exercer le métier qu'il a appris, ou s'il doit se lancer dans une autre affaire; s'il gagnera de l'argent dans cette entreprise; si c'est Phainoména qu'il doit prendre pour femme, ou une autre; enfin, s'il doit se marier tout de suite ou attendre'.

³⁴ JOHNSTON 2008, 71-72.

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Les militaires provenant du milieu rural de la Mésie Inférieure dont l'origine est certaine: les cas des cohortes prétoriennes

Lucrețiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA¹

Abstract. *The author analyzes the militaries coming from the rural milieu of Moesia Inferior who were enlisted in the pretorian cohorts. He takes into account only the cases in which their origin is certain. He studied the case of each soldier mentioned in the sources, trying to set the moment of their enlistment. The rural zones from the militaries are coming from are also discussed.*

Résumé. *L'auteur analyse les militaires provenant du milieu rural de la Mésie Inférieure recrutés dans les cohortes prétoriennes. Il prend en considération seulement les cas où leur origine est certaine. Il étudie tous les cas des soldats mentionnés par les sources, en essayant d'établir le moment de leur recrutement. Les zones rurales d'origines sont également mises en discussion.*

Rezumat. *Autorul realizează un studiu asupra militarilor originari din mediul rural al Moesiei Inferior care au fost recrutați în cohortele pretoriene. El ia în considerare doar cazurile în care această origine este sigură. Sunt studiate cazurile în parte, autorul încercând să stabilească momentele de recrutare. Sunt analizate și zonele rurale de origine ale acestor soldați.*

Keywords: *Moesia Inferior, pretorian cohorts, rural milieu, Roman army.*

1. Introduction

J'ai abordé le problème des militaires recrutés du milieu rural de Mésie Inférieure à deux autres occasions, une fois lorsque j'ai mentionné quatre militaires originaires des villages situés dans les territoires de Nicopolis ad Istrum et de Novae qui rentraient chez eux après la fin de leur service et l'autre fois lorsque j'ai réalisé une étude préliminaire sur ce problème, sans entrer toutefois en détails et sans discuter toutes les sources disponibles.² Les soldats sont certainement plus nombreux ; j'ai expliqué qu'une des raisons pour laquelle je n'ai discuté ce problème en parlant seulement de vétérans c'est l'incertitude concernant le lieu de provenance des diplômes militaires, les sources principales de cette question. Bien que ces diplômes aient été trouvés, fort probablement, sur le territoire des anciennes provinces de Mésie Inférieure et de Thrace, il est encore difficile de faire une distinction nette. Les bénéficiaires sont des Thraces et des Daces. Si, en ce qui concerne les Daces, on peut être plus sûr qu'ils ont habité la

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² MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA, RĂILEANU 2014, 193-205; MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2019, 19-30.

Les militaires provenant du milieu rural de la Mésie Inférieure dont l'origine est certaine: les cas des cohortes prétoriennes

Mésie Inférieure (même si, après 102, la Dacie ne peut pas être exclue), pour les Thraces on n'a pas encore de certitude sur leur maison, sauf les cas où ils le mentionnent. Même la dénomination des *Bessi*, qui ont habité surtout la Mésie Inférieure à partir de la fin du I^{er} siècle, ne peut pas constituer un indicateur pour la province, car une partie des *Bessi* a continué d'habiter en Thrace. Pourtant, la liste de soldats d'origine thrace et dace est immense. Les Daces du sud du Danube ont constitué une source importante de recrutement, même après les guerres daciennes, comme l'ont montré d. Dana et F. Matei-Popescu³. Bien que dans la plupart des diplômes le lieu d'origine n'est pas mentionné, on peut bien supposer qu'il s'agit du territoire rural, car c'est là que sont mentionnés les indigènes. Je vais aborder dans cette contribution les soldats recrutés dans les cohortes prétoriennes. Je considère comme certaine l'origine villageoise des soldats les cas où les mentions dans les inscriptions sont précises (s'il s'agit d'un *vicus*, d'un *pagus* ou d'une *regio*) et les situations où l'inscription a été trouvée sur le territoire de la Mésie Inférieure.

2. Evidence des sources

À Rome, il y a quelques inscriptions qui attestent des militaires originaires du milieu rural de Mésie Inférieure, attachés aux cohortes prétoriennes. Ainsi, Aurelius Mucco, militaire dans la X^e cohorte, est commémoré par sa femme Gratilla⁴. Mucco est *ciuis Meletinus* (de Melta), originaire du *uicus Pereprus*. Dans le milieu rural de la même cité, un autre soldat est mentionné au III^e siècle: Aurelius Pirurus, qui voue un autel pour le Cavalier Thrace⁵.

Toujours à Rome, Flavius Proclianus, soldat de la III^e cohorte, Claudius Mucianus, Aurelius Valerianus, Valerius Maximus, soldats de la V^e cohorte, font ériger un monument à Heros Brigantius (un autre épithète pour le Cavalier Thrace, peut-être un appellatif toponymique) (**Fig. 1**)⁶. Ils sont *cives Usdicensis*, originaires du *uicus Agatopara*. D. Noy pense que ce pourrait être un village dans le territoire d'Hadrianopolis, appelé en thrace *Uscudama*⁷. Pourtant, il semble plus probable qu'il s'agit de la *ciuitas Ausdecensium*. On ne dispose que d'un seul document sur cette *ciuitas*, qui fut sans doute, au début, une communauté pérégrine élevée au rang de *ciuitas* par les Romains. Le texte représente un document de délimitation des frontières d'après un *iussu* du gouverneur Helvius Pertinax⁸. En même temps, il s'agit aussi d'un conflit de frontière avec les Daces qui, apparemment, ne respectaient pas les

³ DANA, MATEI-POPESCU 2009, 238.

⁴ CIL VI 2736. Voir aussi RICCI 1993, 192, no 9.

⁵ ILB 259.

⁶ CIL VI 2807. Voir aussi DANA, RICCI 2014, 523.

⁷ NOY 2017, 133.

⁸ ISM IV, 82.

délimitations. Le texte a été largement discuté et je ne vais pas reprendre tous les détails⁹. Les *Ausdecenses*, tribu thrace qui habitait le territoire situé au nord du Haemus, ont émigré au nord du Danube probablement avec les *Bessi*¹⁰. En outre, la population de la *ciuitas Ausdecensium* est une population majoritaire de Thraces ; il semble que c'était quand même une population assez nombreuse, à en croire le rang de *ciuitas peregrina* acquis par la localité. C'est pourquoi je pense que les soldats, qui vouent le texte au Héros Cavalier, proviennent probablement de la *ciuitas Ausdecensium*¹¹.

Aurelius Valerius, soldat de la III^e cohorte prétorienne, voue un monument pour Jupiter¹². Le nom de son village n'est pas conservé, mais il mentionne son lieu de provenance (*natione Mesacus*). D'ailleurs, le texte contient beaucoup d'erreurs de rédaction.

Enfin, plusieurs soldats appartenant à des cohortes diverses, tous originaires de la région de Dimum en Mésie Inférieure (*Mysia inferiore regione Dimesi*), font ériger en 241 un monument honorifique pour Gordien III¹³. Les fouilles de Dimum ont mis en évidence un *castellum* de l'époque romaine du Haut-Empire¹⁴, occupé par des vexillations de la I^{ère} légion Italica¹⁵. La chorothésie de Laberius Maximus (de l'an 100) mentionne également les *canabae Dimensium*¹⁶. Les *canabae* se sont développées autour du camp. L'attestation d'une *regio* supposait l'existence d'une *ciuitas*, qui a émergé à proximité des *canabae*. À voir la position géographique (entre Novae et Oescus) de Dimum, il ne faut pas s'imaginer une cité très grande : l'importance du lieu tenait à l'aménagement d'un port¹⁷ et par l'existence d'un bureau douanier¹⁸. De toute façon, le milieu rural de Dimum a fourni au III^e siècle des soldats pour les cohortes prétoriennes.

Il faut soupçonner aussi que les *cives ex regione Marcianopolitanorum* (donc du milieu rural de Marcianopolis), qui font ériger une inscription votive pour Junon, sont également des soldats, fort probablement des cohortes prétoriennes¹⁹.

Il y a aussi des textes trouvés en Mésie Inférieure qui mentionnent des vétérans provenant du milieu rural de la provinces qui ont été enrolés dans les cohortes prétoriennes. À Callatis, une inscription atteste l'ancien prétorien Aurelius Dalenis, qui a comme lieu

⁹ Voir le commentaire le plus récent, avec la bibliographie, chez E. Popescu (ISM IV, 92, *sub numero*).

¹⁰ Voir la discussion chez E. Popescu (ISM IV, 92, *sub numero*).

¹¹ Voir aussi BALTAC 2011, 86; PARISSAKI 2013, 81-83; CENATI 2018, 145 et note 44.

¹² CIL VI 2818.

¹³ CIL VI 2391.

¹⁴ Voir surtout MITOVA-DŽONOVA 1994, 47-65; KABAKCHIEVA, LAZAROVA 2015, 195-195.

¹⁵ Par exemple, AE 2005, 1327b et c.

¹⁶ ISM I, 68.

¹⁷ Voir MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 246 ; BREEZE 2012, 102 ; KABAKCHIEVA, LAZAROVA 2015, 195.

¹⁸ ILB 27.

¹⁹ CIL VI 32583. Voir aussi CENATI 2018, 145.

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d'origine le *uicus Amlaidina*²⁰, dont la localisation ne peut pas être réalisée (**Fig. 2**). Le texte représente son épitaphe, érigée par sa femme, qui porte un nom thrace (Aurelia Cuthis, comme le propose D. Dana²¹, et non Uthis, selon les éditeurs de l'inscription). Le nom du prétorien a été traduit d'une manière presque unanime comme Aurelius, fils de Dalenus²². La dédicace est au datif, *Aur(elio) Daleni*. Dans ce cas, il faut se demander si l'ancien prétorien n'est pas un citoyen. Il est vrai que, même après l'édit de Caracalla, la forme « pérégrine » de transcription du nom persiste²³. On remarque cela même dans le territoire d'Istros, dans le cas des *magistri uici Secundini* Valerius Cosenis (220)²⁴, Bonosus Bonunis et Iustus Iustini (238)²⁵. Cependant, il ne faut pas oublier non plus que beaucoup d'anciens prétoriens utilisent leurs noms de citoyens. Dans ce cas, *Daleni* peut être un datif du nom *Dalenis*, qui représente aussi un nom thrace. D. Dana n'exclut pas que la forme ait été également un datif du nom *Dales*²⁶. Le prétorien a acquis de toute façon la citoyenneté sous Caracalla, comme beaucoup d'autres, et il a pris le gentilice d'Aurelius. Normalement, son ancien nom de pérégrin devient son surnom. Si le patronyme persiste dans l'onomastique après 212, il n'est pas associé, d'habitude, avec le gentilice d'Aurelius. Pour citer seulement quelques exemples provenant de Mésie Inférieure où les ex-prétoriens utilisent leurs anciens noms pérégrins comme surnoms, il faut mentionner M. Aurelius Artemidorus²⁷, Aurelius Diophanes²⁸, M. Aurelius Bithus²⁹, ou M. Aurelius Aulutralus³⁰. D'autres vétérans, qui ont acquis leur droit de cité sous Caracalla, utilisent le système de *tria nomina* mais gardent leur ancien nom pérégrin en tant qu'*agnomen*. Ce sont les cas de M. Aurelius Victor, aussi-dit Drubius³¹, et de M. Aurelius Stianus, dit aussi Apta³². Une autre possibilité d'interprétation du texte est celle selon laquelle, après la formule *Dis Manibus*, suit un génitif (aux Dieux Mânes de...) et, dans ce cas, le nom du personnage est Aurelius Dalenus. S. Ferjančić, par exemple, propose directement la variante Aurelius Dalenus³³. En tout cas, la

²⁰ ISM III, 237.

²¹ DANA 2014, 100 ET 109.

²² ISM II, 266 ; ISM III, 237 ; BÂLTĂC 2011, 238 ; BĂRBULESCU, BUZOIANU 2013, 201.

²³ Pour la situation en général, voir HASSALL 2002, 697 ; HAYNES 2013, 101.

²⁴ ISM I, 345.

²⁵ ISM I, 347.

²⁶ DANA 2014, 109.

²⁷ SHARANKOV 2009, 58-61.

²⁸ ILB 438.

²⁹ RMD V, 469.

³⁰ RGZM 61.

³¹ Weiß 1999, 246-248 + RMD V, 463. Voir aussi MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA, RĂILEANU 2014, 194.

³² RMD IV 311. Voir aussi, ROXAN, STYLOW 1999, 183-192; WEISS 2000, 279; TOMAS, SARNOWSKI 2006, 5-8 ; MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA, RĂILEANU 2014, 195.

³³ FERJANCIC 2009, 110-11.

traduction du nom de la manière Aurelius, fils de Dalenus, ne me semble pas vraisemblable. Le vétéran a un nom thrace, ce qui correspond aussi au toponyme d'où il est originaire³⁴.

Dans le milieu rural de Iatrus, un diplôme militaire datant de 203-207 atteste un anonyme appartenant à une cohorte prétorienne; le soldat est certainement rentré chez lui³⁵. La datation montre qu'il a entré dans les cohortes prétoriennes environ 190. C'est un de peu nombreux soldats de Mésie Inférieure recrutés dans les cohortes prétoriennes avant Septime Sévère.

M. Aurelius Marcus, soldat de la X^e cohorte, est libéré le 7 janvier 226³⁶. Il provient de Nicopolis. Le lieu de découverte est près de Nicopolis ad Istrum, ce qui indique que le soldat est rentré chez lui. M. Aurelius Marcus a été recruté dans la cohorte en 210. Trois autres diplômes date du même jour, mais le lieu de découverte n'est pas connu. Pourtant, on peut supposer qu'ils ont été trouvés dans la Péninsule Balkanique, ce qui renforcent l'hypothèse que les militaires sont rentrés chez leurs maisons. Il s'agit ainsi de M. Aurelius Valens de Marcianopolis, soldat de la II^e cohorte³⁷, de M. Aurelius Celsus, militaire dans la III^e cohorte, originaire de Nicopolis ad Istrum³⁸ et de C. Valerius [---], soldat de la VII^e cohorte, originaire de la même cité ou du même territoire³⁹.

Dans une inscription consacrée par les *Bacchi vernaculi* à Butovo, dans le milieu rural de Nicopolis ad Istrum (en 227), on retrouve parmi les membres de ce collège un ancien prétorien, Aurelius Diophanes⁴⁰. Après son service, il est rentré chez lui. Probablement il a eu une propriété dans le milieu rural de la cité.

Toujours de Nicopolis provient M. Aurelius Secundus, militaire dans la I^{ère} cohorte, libéré le 7 janvier 228⁴¹. Le texte mentionne seulement le nom de la cité, mais en tenant compte que le diplôme militaire a été trouvé à Butovo, dans le milieu rural de Nicopolis ad Istrum, il semble que l'ancien prétorien est rentré chez lui et il a été recruté du milieu rural de la cité. D'ailleurs, c'est un bon exemple pour croire que la simple mention de la cité dans le cas des militaires appartenant aux cohortes prétoriennes n'indique pas l'origine de ces soldats forcément de la cité, mais aussi de son milieu rural. Son recrutement dans la cohorte a eu lieu en 212.

Dans le milieu rural situé entre Sacidava et Axiopolis, un autre vétéran, Aurelius Marcus, ancien prétorien, est commémoré par sa femme, Aurelia Sispiris, et par sa fille, Aurelia

³⁴ Voir aussi MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA 2018, 431-434.

³⁵ RMD IV, 305.

³⁶ CIL XVI 143.

³⁷ RMD III, 195b; RMD V, 466.

³⁸ RGZM 58.

³⁹ ECK, PANGERL 2019, 194-196. Sur le surnom de cohortes prétoriennes, voir aussi ECK 2019, 251-269.

⁴⁰ CIL III 6150; ILB 438.

⁴¹ RMD II, 132.

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Marcia (**Fig. 3**)⁴². Le surnom de sa femme⁴³ et la forme de son surnom (Marcus, utilisé normalement comme prénom) me font croire qu'il s'agit d'un indigène. Cela est confirmé par le fort recrutement des Thraces dans les cohortes prétoriennes⁴⁴. En plus, la découverte du texte en Mésie Inférieure indique l'origine de l'ancien soldat de cette province.

À Čomakovci, dans le milieu rural de Nicopolis ad Istrum, Aurelius Longinus, militaire encore actif, fait ériger une épitaphe à ses parents, dont les noms trahissent une origine indigène (Scaris Busillae et Sura Pyrulae)⁴⁵. L'inscription date certainement du III^e siècle et l'ancien militaire a eu certainement son origine dans la région. Il est un Thrace qui a pris un surnom latin après avoir acquis la citoyenneté.

3. Conclusion

La période la mieux documentée est, comme attendu, l'époque des Sévères. Les changements d'effectifs dans les composantes des cohortes prétoriennes, des flottes et du corps d'*equites singulares Augusti* ont comme résultat des recrutements massifs dans les provinces balkano-danubiennes, et la Mésie Inférieure n'en fait pas exception. Ainsi, à partir du règne de Septime Sévère et continuant avec ses descendants, il y a des recrutements du milieu rural de la provinces dans tous ces unités ci-dessus mentionnés. Les noms de *uici* sont attestés surtout dans les documents les prétoriens.

En ce qui concerne les lieux d'origine de ces soldats, on se rend compte que le milieu rural le mieux documenté est celui de Nicopolis ad Istrum, mais à partir de l'époque des Sévères, lorsque la cité a fait partir de Mésie Inférieure.

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⁴² ISM IV, 188.

⁴³ Voir DANA 2014, 407. Voir aussi une autre forme du nom chez DANA, MATEI-POPESCU 2009, 231.

⁴⁴ Voir FERJANCIC. 2009, 107-121 ; TOPALILOV 2013, 287-299 ; HAYNES 2013, 376 ; BINGHAM 2013, 44-50.

⁴⁵ ILB 171.

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Fig. 1. Inscription votive de Rome, érigée par des militaires des cohortes prétoriennes, *ciues Usdecenses*, originaires du *uicus Agatapara*
 (http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=121298)

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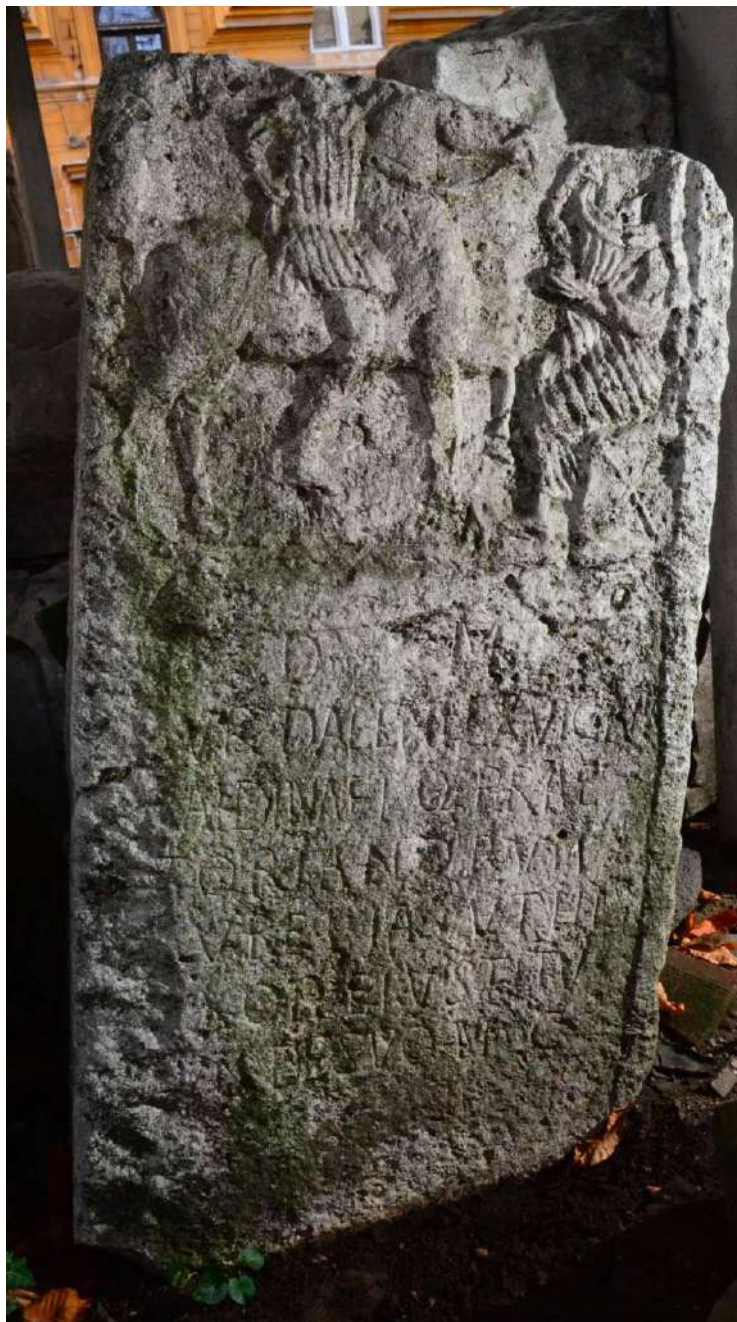


Fig. 2. Monument funéraire de l'ancien prétorien Aurelius Dalenis (milieu rural de Callatis).
Crédit photographique: Florian Matei-Popescu



Fig. 3. Épitaphe d'Aurelius Marcus, ex-prætorien (Sacidava-Axiopolis)
(<http://lupa.at/21007>)