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Hittite Oracles¹

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In Hatti, as in Mesopotamia, there were various means by which people could communicate with the gods. Omens, whether solicited or unsolicited, were considered messages from the gods. The Mesopotamians made a careful science out of collecting such messages and the events which followed them in an attempt to decipher the gods' languages. Vast glossaries were created. These ancient dictionaries were then passed along to the Hittites by the Hurrians. The Hittite archives included glossaries of omens from signs of the sun, moon and stars, earthquakes, births, oil, animal behavior, as well as marks and configurations of the liver, gallbladder, intestines and other internal organs.² Once they had mastered these Mesopotamian sciences, the Hittites could then on their own read messages sent to them by the gods. Several such omens are mentioned in Hittite texts.³

Solicited omens = oracles

The Hittites could ask questions of the gods directly, requesting an answer in a particular divine language. Each question was phrased so that the answer would come either as a "yes" or as a "no." Series of such yes-or-no questions, usually generated by the initial question, constitute the oracular inquiries. Some 700 tablets and fragments of tablets preserve the data from these inquiries. Since, like letters, they were only of passing usefulness, they are usually preserved in only one copy. Although one inquiry dates

¹ This paper could not have been written without the files of the Hittite Dictionary Project, Harry Hoffner and Hans-Gustav Güterbock editors, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The abbreviations conform to those of the *Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (= CHD), ed. H. A. Hoffner and H. G. Güterbock (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1980-).

² E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971) nos. 531–560, ed. K.K. Riemschneider, *Die hethitischen und akkadischen Omentexte aus Boğazköy* (unpublished manuscript), idem, *Babylonische Geburtsomina in hethitischer Übersetzung*, StBoT 9 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970); H.G. Güterbock, Bilingual Moon Omens from Boğazköy," in *A Scientific Humanist. Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs*, OPSNKF 9 (ed. E. Leichty, et. al.; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1988) 161–174; for models of livers, see H.G. Güterbock, "Hittite Liver Models," *Language, Literature and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner*, AOS 67 (ed. F. Rochberg-Halton; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1987), and illustration in O. R. Gurney, in *Oracles and Divination*, facing p. 148, discussion on p. 150, where it is mentioned that some 36 liver models have been found at Boğazköy.

³ See for instance: "When I (sc. Muršili II) went to Azzi, the Sun gave a sign. The queen kept saying [. . .] why is it that the Sun has given a sign? It signified [. . .]. It did not signify the death of the king." KUB 14.4 iv 24–26.

"The victorious(?) Stormgod, My Lord, showed his divine power. He shot a lightning-bolt. My troops saw the lightning-bolt and Arzawa (i.e. the enemy) saw it. The lightning-bolt went and struck Arzawa. It struck Apāša, (capital-)city of Uḫḫaziti." KBo 3.4 ii 16–19 (Muršili II), ed. A. Götze, *Die Annalen des Muršiliš*, MVAG 38 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1933) 46f.

from the Old Hittite period,⁴ and four date from the middle phases of the kingdom,⁵ most date from the later phases of the Hittite kingdom.

Almost all of the oracular-inquiry tablets were found at Boğazköy (ancient Hattuša) either in building E on the citadel (Büyükkale) or in the tablet storerooms of the Great Temple in the Lower City.⁶ The newer excavations have turned up the occasional oracle text in good context such as in buildings D and K on the citadel, and buildings of unknown function on the slope and in the lower city, and bad contexts such as fill or within a casemate of the circuit wall. The texts are not confined to the capital but the odd oracle-inquiry text and/or letter relating to oracle-inquiries has also been found in the archives of provincial sites such as the northern frontier garrison town at Maşat Höyük (ancient Tapigga?),⁷ the Anatolian towns of Ortaköy (ancient Şapinuwa) and Kuşaklı (ancient Şarišša),⁸ and the Syrian cities of Tell Atchana (ancient Alalah)⁹ and Meskene (ancient Emar-Aštata).¹⁰

The vast majority of these texts consist of inquiries¹¹ intended to discover why something bad has happened. For instance, perhaps the king was sick. It was then necessary to discover whether this illness was due to divine anger. If so, it was necessary to determine which of the thousand gods of the Hittites was angry. When the cause was narrowed down to a particular deity or maybe to several, then it was necessary to find out why each deity was angry. All kinds of omissions, derelictions and problems were placed before the deity with this question “is this why you are angry?”

If the deity indicated that he/she was not angry at a particular infraction, then another infraction would be presented. When the deity indicated that he/she was indeed angry because of this particular infraction, the question would be followed up by “Is this all—there is nothing else?” A negative answer would mean that more testimony was called for. An affirmative answer would end this phase of the inquiry. Questions would then be posed to discover what sort of restitution, compensation, punitive damages, prayers, and so on were required to satisfy the deity and quiet his/her anger. Only when each answer

⁴ A. Ünal and A. Kammenhuber, “Das althethitische Losorakel KBo 18.151,” *KZ* 88 (1974–1975) 157–180.

⁵ KBo 16.97 and KBo 8.55, both edited and translated by M. Schuol, “Die Terminologie des hethitischen SU-Orakels,” *AoF* 21 (1994) 102–124. G. Wilhelm, “Zwei mittelhethitische Briefe aus dem Gebäude C in Kuşaklı,” *MDOG* 130 (1998) 175–187.

⁶ These are the two sites excavated before WW I by Winckler. Greater precision is not possible, since the records of the original findspots have been lost. According to H.G. Güterbock (oral communication), the early volumes of texts from these excavations, which were copied in Constantinople, recorded on their paper covers the building from which the tablets came. It would seem, then, that this information was once known. However, the tags on each tablet’s box seem to have been lost when the uncopied tablets (which included most of the oracle texts) were sent to Berlin for study.

⁷ S. Alp, *Hethitische Keilschrifttafeln aus Maşat-Höyük*, TTKY 6/34 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991) no. 115.

⁸ A. Süel, “Eine hethitische Stadt mit hethitischen und hurritischen Tontafelentdeckungen,” *Hittite and Other Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Sedat Alp*, *AMATVY* 1 (ed. H. Otten, et. al; Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), 490. G. Wilhelm, *Kuşaklı-Sarissa I/1: Keilschrifttexte aus Gebäude A* (Rahden: Marie Leindorf, 1997) nos. 14–26, 37, 40–42; *idem*, *MDOG* 130 (1998) 175–187.

⁹ Located in the modern Turkish province of Hatay. AT 454, partial ed. by O. R. Gurney in J. D. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets*, Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara 2, (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1953) 116–18.

¹⁰ Msk 74.92 + 102 + 110, a “flesh” oracle, published only in photograph and translation by E. Laroche, in “Documents hittites et hourrites” *Meskéné-Emar. Dix ans de travaux, 1972–82* (ed. D. Beyer; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1982) 54f.

¹¹ For the contents of oracle questions see the list by A. Ünal, *Ein Orakeltext über die Intrigen am hethitischen Hof* (KUB XXII 70 = Bo 2011), *THeth* 6 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitätsverlag, 1978) 14–19.

had been taken through the entire process was the inquiry finished. Usually, however, our tablets are too broken to show more than a small portion of the entire inquiry.

After stating the question, the oracular expert asked either that the oracle be “favorable” (*lazziyattaru*) if the question asked whether a good thing was true, or unfavorable (*kallaresdu*) if the inquirer wanted to know whether a bad thing was true. In this paper I examine the six different divine languages, or methods of taking oracles, that were practiced by the Hittites.

Extispicy/Flesh Oracles

The first type is extispicy, known to the Hittites as an “exta (*TE* = *TERĒTU*)” oracle or “flesh” (*KUŠ*) oracle.¹² A sheep was sacrificed; its exta were examined for tell-tale bumps, creases, etc. on the liver, gall-bladder and other internal organs, and the number of turns of the intestines was noted. Extispicy was performed by a diviner-exorcist—a person whose title is written with the Sumerograms ^{LÚ}HAL or ^{LÚ}AZU, both of which are equivalent to the Akkadian title “*barû*.” The Hittite reading is unknown. This was the same practitioner who performed many of the Hittite magic-rituals. Flesh oracles were a well known type of oracle in Babylonia. Long glossaries of this language are known from Mesopotamia and from Hatti in both Akkadian and Hittite, with entries such as “if a ‘mace’ approaches ‘the emplacement,’ the man will survive.”¹³ However, as happened in Babylonia as well, the apodoses were, in practice, reduced to simple “good” or “bad” answers. It appears that the Hittites borrowed this methodology from the Babylonians by way of Hurrian intermediaries. Many of the names for parts and features of the exta are not Akkadian or Hittite but rather Hurrian. With only a few exceptions, the description of the exta was written in an abbreviated style, a sort of scientific notation. For example *nî* = *nipašuri*-, *ši* = *šintaḫi*-, *ta* = *tanani*- and *ke* = *keldi*-.

The diviner checked different lobes/sectors of the liver in a particular order for unusual, and therefore significant, marks. The order reflects the order used in Mesopotamian extispicy, but there seem to have been some significant differences between Mesopotamian and Hittite extispicy, so that it has not been possible to make a one to one correspondence.¹⁴ The diviner first examined the *nipašuri*, then the *šintaḫi* (“emplacement”),¹⁵ These were followed by the *tanani* (“strength”)¹⁶ and then the *keldi* (“well-being”),¹⁷ or vice versa.

¹² The signs *TE* and *KUŠ* are only one wedge apart. *TERĒTU* (abbreviated *TE* by the Hittites) is certainly the correct Babylonian name for these, but many Hittite scribes seem to have thought that the *KUŠ* “flesh” sign was the proper word-sign. The Hittite word or words underlying these word-signs is unknown.

¹³ KUB 8.34 rev. 18–19 + KUB 43.13 iii 4–5, ed. K.K. Riemschneider, *Die akkadischen und hethitischen Omentexte aus Boğazköy* (unpublished manuscript at the Oriental Institute, Univ. of Chicago) 161.

¹⁴ For example, the first sector examined by the Hittite diviner, the *nipašuri*, has not been satisfactorily equated with an Akkadian term. See CHD L-N 448 s.v. and M. Schuol, “Die Terminologie des hethitischen SU-Orakels,” *AoF* 21 (1994) 248–51. The *kelti*- was examined third or fourth, not seventh as was its Mesopotamian equivalent the *šulmu* (Schuol, 254). See also Schuol 259 last paragraph.

¹⁵ This is a Hurrian term equivalent to the Akkadian *manzāzu*, E. Laroche, “Sur le vocabulaire de l’haruspicine hittite,” *RA* 64 (1970) 127. M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 251f.

¹⁶ This is a Hurrian word borrowed from the Akkadian term *danānu* (CAD D 81: “strength/a part of the liver,” see E. Laroche, “Éléments d’haruspicine hittite,” *RHA* XII/54 [1952] 28f.). For its location on a liver see M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 252f.

¹⁷ This is a Hurrian word which, like its Akkadian equivalent, *šulmu*, is both a frequently employed noun

The “road” (KASKAL)¹⁸ followed. Sectors could be multiple¹⁹ or missing (NU.GÁL or NU.TUKU, *UL āšzi*),²⁰ “beaten” (*walḥant-*, *MAḪIŠ*, RA), “thrown” (*peššiyat*), “wiped” (*anšant-*), loose (*lant-*), or firm (*ukturi-*, SAG.ÚS).

Efforts to understand the details of this divine language are just beginning, but a few preliminary observations can be made now. As one might guess, any sign of “beating” was bad, so that when it occurred on the right (i.e. the good side) it signified something unfavorable,²¹ but when it occurred on the left (i.e. the bad side) it was favorable. The *šintahi*, *tanani*, *keldi* and “road” and some other infrequently mentioned parts, when “beaten on the left,” appear only in answers where the final outcome was favorable.²² “Beaten on the right” was so definitionally “unfavorable” that the texts usually do not even bother to tell us what was “beaten on the right.”²³ Similarly, “wiped on the left” occurs only in questions where the final outcome was favorable²⁴ whereas “wiped on the right” was unfavorable.²⁵ Again, we are often not told what was “wiped on the right.”²⁶ “Threw to the left” was generally favorable.²⁷ However, when the *nipašuri* of the left “threw to the left,” it was unfavorable.²⁸ An *irkePELLi*, whether by itself, double, on the right, or “beaten on the right,” was unfavorable.²⁹ But an *irkePELLi* on the left occurs in

and a sector of the liver. E. Laroche, RA 64 (1970) 128, 132, idem, *Glossaire de la langue Hourrite*, = RHA XXXIV-XXXV (1976–77) (Paris: Klincksieck, 1978–79) 141f., M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 254 w. n. 275. Schuol suggests that what is actually being examined is the pancreas.

¹⁸ M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 258f.

¹⁹ E.g. for 2 and 3 *nipašuri*-s see CHD L-N s.v. and *ni-iš* ZAG-za GÜB-za [...], SAG.KUL=ma=šmaš UGU “there are *nipašuri*-s [...] on the right and left, above them is a SAG.KUL” KUB 5.3 i 36–37; cf. KBo 2.2 iv 30–31; KBo 22.264 i 10. Note also *ke^{HLA}-uš* KBo 2.6 i 17.

²⁰ Not NU.KIN as read by M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) passim, and even listed in HZL 11. NU occurs with verbs, not nouns. For *UL āšzi* see KUB 6.2 obv. 29.

²¹ *ši(intahiš)* ZAG-za RA-IŠ KUB 5.6 iii 10.

ir(kePELLi)š ZAG-za RA-IŠ KUB 16.70:13.

²² *ši(intahi)* KUB 5.5 i 14, KUB 6.4 ii 12, KUB 57.42 i 11–12, Mesk 74.92+102+110:41; *ke(ldiš)* KBo 2.6 i 42–43, KBo 22.264 i 11–12, KUB 6.4 ii 9, KUB 6.17 ii 2, KUB 16.83 obv. 37, KUB 18.2 iii 14–15; *ta(naniš)* KUB 5.6 iii 16, AT 454 i 26; KASKAL “road” KBo 24.126 rev. 19–20, KUB 5.11 i 12–13, KUB 16.31 iv 15–16, KUB 18.2 ii 7–8, iii 19–20; *ŠUTI* ZAG-aš GÜB-(la)za RA-IŠ “The *ŠUTI* of the right is beaten on the left” KUB 5.6 i 14–15, KUB 18.2 ii 14–15; *šer-ma=šši adamtaḫiš* GÜB-laza RA-IŠ KUB 5.6 i 12–13 “but above it an *adamtaḫi* is beaten on the left;” *GIŠTUKUL* ZAG-^{GIŠ}“aš”^{GIŠ} GÜB-za RA-IŠ “The weapon of the right is beaten on the left” KBo 2.2 iv 31–33; *GIŠTUKUL* ZAG-aš ŠA ^dHepat GÜB-za RA-IŠ “The weapon of the right of Hepat is beaten on the left” KUB 5.10 obv. 17–18; *GIŠTUKUL* ŠA 10 ZAG-aš GÜB-za RA-IŠ KBo 2.6 i 18; *šelušḫitaššiš* KBo 16.98 ii 8; note [(*hantezi* ^{TE}“M”)E]^Š/ GÜB-laz MAḪIŠ “the first exta: beaten on the left” KUB 50.32 ii 5–iii 1, w. dupl. ABoT 14 iv 2–3. Unclear is *urnirniš* GÜB-laz *walḥanza* which occurs in a favorable answer in KBo 16.97 rev. 34–35 (MH/MS) and an unfavorable one in the same text obv. 32–33. Since this text antedates all the others by several centuries, perhaps ways of recording the observed phenomena changed.

²³ ZAG-za RA-IŠ KBo 2.2 ii 49, iv 38; KBo 2.6 iii 23; KBo 24.126 rev. 10; KUB 5.12 rev. 6; KUB 6.4 ii 14, iii 10; KUB 6.31 iv 11; KUB 16.3 rev. 9; KUB 16.16 obv. 16, 31, rev. 16; KUB 16.40 obv. 11; KUB 16.65 iv 8; KUB 16.66 obv. 11; KUB 16.76:15; KUB 22.20 obv. 3; KUB 22.36 rev. 10; KUB 22.69:6; KUB 34.48 l.c. 11; KUB 50.32 iii 1, w. dupl. ABoT 14 iv 4; KUB 50.35 obv. 17; KUB 52.16 obv. 18; KUB 52.72 obv. 10; VBoT 25 i 13; 166/o obv. 9 (StBoT 15:42).

See comments of M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 292.

²⁴ *šintahi* KUB 5.24 i 55, KUB 6.4 iii 5–6, KUB 52.72 obv. 6; *tanani* KUB 5.11 i 45–46; *keldi* KBo 2.6 iv 3–4, KBo 23.114 obv. 24, KUB 50.16 ii 6; KASKAL “road” KUB 5.24 iv 11–12 + KUB 16.31 iv 9–10.

²⁵ *šer-ma=šši adamtaḫiš* ZAG-za *anšan* KUB 5.6 iii 15; M. Schuol, *AoF* 21:291.

²⁶ KUB 6.34:8, KUB 49.71:3, KUB 52.72 obv. 17.

²⁷ *nipašuri*: KUB 5.24 iv 23–24 + KUB 16.31 iv 21–22, KUB 18.2 ii 13–15, KUB 49.74:12–13, sector unmentioned: KUB 6.2 rev. 1.

²⁸ KUB 22.52 obv. 12.

²⁹ *ir(kePELLi)š* KUB 6.6 i 11; KUB 16.16 obv. 12, rev. 9, 21; KUB 16.29 obv. 21; KUB 16.51 obv. 13; KUB

a “favorable” answer.³⁰ “Firm” occurs in favorable outcomes.³¹ It was a favorable sign when the road (KASKAL) was “beaten” or “wiped” on the left,³² or when “the road of the left turns,”³³ or “looks down to its back.”³⁴ The opposites of these do not occur among the unfavorable outcomes, although “*hirindugarri* roads” were clearly unfavorable.³⁵

Sometimes a particular mark was either favorable or unfavorable, in and of itself. The statement: “The thing(?) (NIG) took in itself” occurs only when the outcome is said to be favorable.³⁶ The SAG.ME was only unfavorable.³⁷ The *kešhi* “seat,” whether “left” or “of the right,” was always unfavorable,³⁸ whereas the *enti-*, which occurs only as “of the left” was favorable.³⁹ Also favorable was the “*mazeri* of the right.”⁴⁰ The heart

22.68:15!; KUB 49.90:12; KUB 50.71 rev. 10; KUB 52.72 obv. 7; IBoT 4.42 obv. 3.

ir(kePELLi)š 2-an KBo 9.150:5; KUB 6.22 iii 15; KUB 6.34:16; KUB 16.31 iv 16!; KUB 50.16 ii 12; KUB 50.35 obv. 6, rev. 9; KUB 50.38:3.

ir(kePELLi)š ZAG-za KBo 16.98 ii 9; KUB 16.8 rev. 3.

ir(kePELLi)š ZAG-za RA-IŠ KUB 16.70:13.

For an *irkePELLi* over a *ḫilipšiman* gall-bladder see below.

See M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 288.

KBo 8.55 obv. 12–13 (MH/MS).

³¹ *ni(pašureš)* ZAG-za GÜB-za *šer-ma=šmaš ukturiš* “There is a n. on the right and left. Over them it is firm” KBo 2.2 iv 30–33; KUB 18.2 ii 5–8, KBo 22.264 i 10–12; *ni(pašur)eš*. . . *ukturi-ma=šši šer* KUB 22.70 rev. 3, 47, cf. KBo 16.97 rev. (18–19). For an exception (KBo 16.97 obv. 31–33) see discussion below n. 57.

GIŠTUKUL SAG.ÚS KUB 5.24 ii 21–22

³² KASKAL GÜB-za RA-IŠ KBo 24.126 rev. 19–20, KUB 5.11 i 12–13, KUB 16.31 iv 15–16, KUB 18.2 ii 7–8, iii 19–20.

KASKAL GÜB-za *anšan*, KUB 5.24 iv 11–12 + KUB 16.31 iv 9–10.

³³ KBo 23.116 iii 6.

KASKAL-NU *iškiša* GAM IGI-zi KUB 18.11 rev. 6.

³⁴ KUB 22.70 obv. 66. Note also the unfavorable sign [...] *ta-na* ^h*hirendukarri* KUB 22.51 obv. 21.

³⁵ NIG-aš-za *anda(n)* ME-aš KBo 22.264 i 11–12, KUB 5.3 i 22–25, 52, KUB 5.11 i 12–13; KUB 5.24 iv (24) + KUB 16.31 iv (22), KUB 18.2 iii (7–8), KUB 18.11 rev. 15, KUB 22.39 iv 18–19, (27), KUB 49.74:13. Note also in the middle Hittite text: NIG ANA NIG *šer* “a thing(?) is on top of a thing(?)” KBo 16.97 rev. 45, which is also a favorable sign. One could also read the NIG sign as NINDA “bread(-loaf).”

³⁶ KBo 2.2 iii 12; KBo 18.143 rev. 5; KBo 24.118 i 9; KBo 24.126 rev. 5; KUB 5.3 i 37b; KUB 5.12 rev. 3; KUB 5.20 i 10, 16, iii 15; KUB 5.24 i 63, *ibid.* iv 4 + KUB 16.31 iv 3 + KUB 18.57 iv 12, *ibid.* iv 12 + KUB 16.31 iv 10, iv 31 + 29; KUB 6.22 iii 12; KUB 16.11:8; KUB 16.16 rev. 17; KUB 16.29 obv. 21; KUB 18.2 iii 8; KUB 18.3 l.c. 2; KUB 22.8 rev. 78; KUB 22.41 rev. 4; KUB 22.70 obv. 6, 28, 32, r.3; KUB 49.41 i 12; KUB 49.74:12; KUB 49.90:3; KUB 50.34 ii 5; KUB 50.56 iv 3; KUB 50.90 obv. 9; KUB 50.93 iv 16; KUB 50.112 i 17; KUB 52.72 obv. 15; ABoT 14 iii 7; IBoT 4.46:14.

³⁷ *kešhi* (= ^{GIŠ}SÚ.A-*hi*) GÜB-(*han* KBo 2.2 ii 14, iii 1, 23; KBo 8.58:(5)?; KBo 16.98 i 9, iii 17; KBo 23.112:6; KUB 6.17 ii 7; KUB 6.35 rev. 15; KUB 16.11:6; KUB 16.16 obv. 21; KUB 16.17 i 11; KUB 16.52 obv. 13, rev. 45; KUB 18.2 iii 15; KUB 18.62:2; KUB 22.36 rev. 16; KUB 22.45 obv. 38; KUB 22.69:18; KUB 22.70 obv. 10, 63, rev. 7; KUB 46.37 obv. 7 (GÜB); KUB 49.17 iv 13, 17; KUB 49.21 ii 16; KUB 50.35 obv. 11; KUB 50.50:(5); KUB 50.84 ii 14; GÜB-aš (or GÜB-an!) KUB 22.70 obv. 40; GÜB-la<-an?> *ibid.* rev. 18. ZAG-naš KUB 5.20 ii 9.

³⁸ KBo 2.2 iv 16–17; KUB 5.3 i 37; KUB 5.5 ii 21; KUB 5.9 obv. 24, l.e. 2; KUB 16.39 ii 9–10; KUB 22.31 obv. 9; KUB 22.39 iv 18–19.

One text (KUB 22.31 obv. 14) surprisingly lists an “*enti* of the left” in a long answer that is called “unfavorable.” However, a long negative answer is in itself suspect (see below). Two other parts of the entry occur otherwise only in favorable answers: *mazereš* ZAG-aš (exx. in next note) and the adjective *arḫayan*. Nothing clearly negative seems to appear in the rest of the entry. Elsewhere in the text, the scribe added an incorrect -*ru* at the end of line 9, drew the A of *a-ut-ti* at the end of line 11 in a curious way, in line 15 wrote a *ki* as a *di*, and at the end of line 15 either employed the curious spelling *te-zi* (for *te-ez-zi*) or wrote a misbegotten KAR!-*zi*. Since the scribe appears to have been having a bad day, it seems likely that he wrote NU.ŠE “unfavorable” in our line when he meant ŠE “favorable.”

⁴⁰ KUB 22.31 obv. 9; KUB 46.37 obv. 25; Msk 74.58:37–38; Msk 74. 92+102+110:24. For discussion of a seeming exception, KUB 22.31 obv. 14, see previous note. The presence of a *mazeri* is noted without further qualification in another favorable outcome (KUB 46.37 obv. 31) while an outcome that the scribe

(*ker/šā*) was examined, but it was only noted if it was “held” (*appan/DIB-an*), which was an unfavorable sign.⁴¹ This the only thing noted about the heart, and the heart is the only organ to which the participle “held” is applied. Similarly, the gall bladder (*ZÉ*) was examined, but again this organ apparently only became relevant in the New Hittite texts if it was *ḫilipšīman*,⁴² which was also unfavorable.⁴³ Interestingly, if an *irkepelliš*, which, as we have seen, was bad by itself, was found over the equally bad *ḫilipšīman* gall-bladder, together these formed a good sign.⁴⁴ Towards the end of the extispicy, the placement of a *zizaḫi*⁴⁵ was examined. Generally, it was simply noted that “the *zizaḫi* was placed,” which was a favorable sign.⁴⁶ When the *zizaḫi* “was placed behind”⁴⁷ or “was placed in *tulli*”⁴⁸ it was still favorable, but “in *gulkulupašša*” it was seen as unfavorable.⁴⁹ Finally, the number of turns of the intestines (*TĪRĀNU*, *ŠĀTIR.ŠĀDIR*.) were examined for something unusual, and the number of turns was counted. Eight was

did not label in KUB 6.2 obv. 26 records that *zulki[š m]aze(rin) ḫarzi* “a *zulki* holds a *mazeri*.” Judging by the other parts of the answer (*ZÉ ḫili(pšīman)*), see below; *ni(pašuriš)* . . . GÜB-aš KA×U-i), the scribe probably should have labeled the answer as “favorable.” CHD s.v. following E. Laroche, “Documents en langue hurrite provenant de Ras Shamra,” *Ugaritica* 5 (1968) 456, suggests that *mazeri* is the Hurrian word for “help” and is equivalent to the Akk. *rīšu* “help, a part of the exta.”

⁴¹ KBo 24.118 i (19); KBo 24.135:7; KUB 5.1 iv 43; KUB 5.24 ii 22 + KUB 16.31 ii 11; KUB 6.4 ii (7); KUB 16.16 obv. 15; KUB 18.61:8; KUB 22.70 obv. 30, rev. 53; KUB 46.37 rev. 31; KUB 49.94 ii 17; KUB 50.35 rev. 14; KUB 52.83 i 4.

⁴² The word is applied only to the gall bladder. The reading of the word follows H. Berman, “Review of L. Jakob-Rost, *Hethitische Rituale und Festbeschreibungen* [KUB 46], *JCS* 30 (1978) 122f. Laroche, *RA* 64 (1970) 129, 138, read it all as one word, *zehilipšīman*, which he considered to be the Hurrian for “gall bladder.” Why in this case abbreviate *ze-ḫi-li*, when *ZÉ* would have been sufficient? Also, many texts record simply “*zehili*. Unfavorable.” It seems hardly likely that the presence of a gall bladder was an unfavorable sign. M. Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 260f. tries to read this as *zehi lipšīman*, with the former the word (> **zehit* > Sum. *ze* + Hurr. *-ḫi* + Luw. *-r*) meaning “gall bladder” and the latter as a Luwoid participle of a known Hittite verb *lipšai-*. However, were Schuol correct, one would expect the abbreviated form here to sometimes be *ze. li.* or the like, which never occurs. Berman notes that, when a scribe leaves a wordspace, it is between the *ZÉ* and the *ḫi-*.

⁴³ KBo 2.2 ii 27–28, iv 25–26; KBo 23.114 obv. 20; KBo 24.126 obv. 6; KUB 5.3 i 31; KUB 16.56 obv. 9; KUB 16.77 iii 15; KUB 18.11 rev. 17; KUB 34.48 left col. 23; KUB 49.17 iii 10; KUB 49.21 ii 4; KUB 49.75:3; KUB 50.38:7; KUB 50.87 obv. 4; KUB 50.112 iv 12; KUB 50.120 i 4; KUB 52.18 iii 6; KUB 52.54 iii 3, KUB 52.55 obv. 12; KUB 52.72 obv. 9; IBoT 4.44:3. An answer recorded without stating “favorable” or “unfavorable” includes: “A *ḫilipšīman* gall bladder looked upwards” (KUB 18.56 ii 20–21).

In Middle Hittite one finds the gall bladder (*UZU**ZÉ*) examined for other signs: an unfavorable answer contains the observation “the gall bladder moves (*nininkant-*) on the right” (KBo 16.97 rev. 5, cf. 16); other answers contain “the gall bladder is loose on the right” (ibid rev. 20); and “an *ataniti* is put on the gall bladder” (rev. 10).

⁴⁴ *ZÉ ḫili*. UGU *ir-liš* KUB 22.31 obv. 8–9, KUB 22.52 obv. 14. In *ZÉ ḫili. ir-liš* (KUB 46.37 obv. 50–51), either the UGU “over” is to be understood, or the simple proximity of the two unfavorable signs created a favorable sign.

⁴⁵ Schuol, *AoF* 21 (1994) 281–84, suggests that this is equivalent to Akk. *ziḫḫu* and translates it “Band-wurmfinne” (“undeveloped tapeworm larva”), with the best evidence for the equation being that the verbs usually used with the *ziḫḫu* are *nadū* “to cast down,” “place”; stative “to lie,” and *šakānu* “to place”, both close in meaning to the common usage of the verb *ki-* with *zizaḫi-*.

⁴⁶ KBo 2.2 iii 9, iv 16–17, iv 32–33; KBo 2.6 i 43; KBo 16.98 ii 8; KBo 24.118 i 8–9, ii 19–20; KBo 24.119 iii 7 w. dupl. KUB 22.27 i 29–30; KBo 22.264 i 12; KUB 5.3 i 25; KUB 5.6 i 37, ii 56, iii 16; KUB 5.10 obv. 18; KUB 5.11 i 45–46; KUB 5.24 iv 11–12 + KUB 16.31 iv 9–10, 15–16, 22; KUB 6.4 iii 6; KUB 16.83 obv. 37; KUB 18.2 ii 8, ii 14–15, iii 14–15, iii 20; KUB 18.11 rev. 15; KUB 18.56 ii 18, 22; KUB 22.70 rev. 37; KUB 46.37 obv. 50–51; KUB 49.11 ii 27; KUB 49.74:13; KUB 50.32 iii 1 dupl. ABoT 14 iv 3; KUB 52.72 obv. 12; 166/o (StBoT 15:42) obv. (13).

⁴⁷ KUB 5.9 obv. 24; Msk. 74.92+102+110:42(?).

⁴⁸ KUB 16.39 ii 10.

⁴⁹ KUB 5.24 i 54.

unfavorable;⁵⁰ ten,⁵¹ twelve⁵² and the rare fourteen⁵³ were favorable. After all this was finished, if the exta or specifically the *zizaḫi* was seen to be *šuri-*, then the result of all the other signs was reversed.⁵⁴

If there was nothing unusual about the *nipašuri*, for example, the scribe simply wrote *ni.* and proceeded to the *šintahi*. If there was nothing unusual there, he wrote *ši.* and proceeded to the *tanani*, making a checklist.⁵⁵ However, any individual item on the checklist was not necessarily listed in any particular answer. If there were meaningful deviations from the norm, these would be noted after the part/sector in question. In answers where the outcome was “favorable,” it was usual for all of the meaningful deviations to be things that only occurred in other “favorable” answers. In “unfavorable” answers, it was usual just to record the unfavorable anomaly, or the first few bare items on the checklist and then the unfavorable anomaly. Thus “unfavorable” answers are usually quite short in comparison to the average “favorable” answer. Since good anomalies and bad anomalies were not generally listed in the same answer,⁵⁶ it appears that the Hittite

⁵⁰ KBo 23.114 obv. 13; KBo 24.118 ii 18! (copy: “9,” dupl. KUB 22.27 i 14 correctly: “8”); KUB 5.6 i 15; KUB 16.39 ii 12; KUB 18.2 ii? 8, iii? 4; KUB 22.27 i 14; KUB 22.69:14; KUB 22.70 rev. 57; KUB 49.31 rev. 3; KUB 49.69:12; KUB 50.16 iii 2; KUB 50.112 iv 3; KUB 50.113 i 8; KUB 52.47 rev. 3; KUB 52.58 ii 8; KUB 52.62 ii 7.

⁵¹ KBo 2.6 iv 4; KBo 23.116 iii 7; KBo 24.118 ii 20; KBo 24.119 iii 8; KUB 5.3 i 20, 52; KUB 5.5 i 4, 14, 24, ii 11, 21, 31; KUB 5.6 i 13, 15, 37, ii 56, 64; KUB 5.9 obv. 24; KUB 5.11 i 46; KUB 6.4 ii 12; KUB 16.77 ii 30; KUB 18.11 rev. 6, 15; KUB 22.27 i 20; KUB 22.40 iii 26; KUB 22.70 obv. 40, rev. 3, 29, 47; KUB 49.11 ii 27; KUB 50.41:9; KUB 52.62 ii 8; AT 454 i 19, ii 26.

⁵² KBo 2.2 ii 53, iii 9, iv 17, 33; KBo 2.6 i 18; KBo 16.98 ii 8; KBo 22.264 i 12; KBo 23.114 obv. 10, 24; KBo 24.118 i 9; KBo 24.128 obv. 9; KUB 5.3 i 25; KUB 5.6 iii 11, 16; KUB 5.9 i.e. 2; KUB 5.10 obv. 18; KUB 5.11 i 13, 32, iv 26; KUB 5.20 ii (18); KUB 5.24 ii 22; KUB 6.4 iii 6; KUB 6.17 ii 2; KUB 16.31 iv 10, 16, 22; KUB 16.39 ii 10; KUB 16.62 rev. 14; KUB 16.66 obv. 7; KUB 16.77 ii 53; KUB 16.83 obv. 37; KUB 18.2 ii 8, 15, iii 8, 20; KUB 18.28:7; KUB 18.56 ii 23; KUB 22.27 i 25; KUB 22.39 iv 19; KUB 22.70 rev. 50; KUB 49.74:13; KUB 50.16 iii 5; KUB 50.32 iii 1; KUB 50.123 rev. 8; KUB 52.11 ii 8; KUB 52.33 iv 20; KUB 52.72 obv. 6, 12; KUB 57.42 i 12; IBoT 4.46 obv. 13; Msk 74.92+102+110:42; 166/o (StBoT 15:42) obv. 13.

⁵³ KBo 16.97 rev. 35 (MH/MS), KBo 24.126 rev. 20. The 18 in ABoT 14 iv 4 is shown to be a scribal mistake for 12 from the duplicate KUB 50.32 iii 1 (H. Berman, Rev. of A. Archi, *Hethitische Orakeltexte: KUB 49* and *Hethitische Orakeltexte: KUB 50*, *JCS* 34 [1982] 121 n 11). The highest attested number of turns of intestine is 16 in KUB 49.78 ii 6, but the outcome is not preserved.

⁵⁴ KUŠ.MEŠ SIG₅ EGIR-ŠU *šuriš* NU.SIG₅ KUB 5.3 i 52–53.

KUŠ.MEŠ SIG₅ *zi-ma šuriš* NU.SIG₅ KUB 22.70 obv. 2–3, 44, rev. (32).

KUŠ.MEŠ NU.SIG₅ *zi-ma šuriš* SIG₅ KUB 22.70 obv. 50, rev. 67–68.

TE.MEŠ NU.SIG₅ EGIR-mal-ŠU *šuriš* NU.SIG₅ KUB 5.24 i 20, 64.

[...]× NU.ŠE *šureš* (in an answer that doesn’t give a final ŠE/NU.ŠE) KUB 22.55 obv. 12.

ni-eš-kan ZAG-na peššiyat EGIR-ŠU *šuriš* SIG₅ KUB 5.24 i 62.

TE.MEŠ NU.SIG₅ EGIR-ŠU *šuriš* NU.SIG₅ (KUB 16.54:6) in light of the above examples is probably a mistake by the scribe or copyist.

⁵⁵ Eg. KUB 5.6 ii 64, iii 11 and in the Middle Hittite text with the words written out (KBo 16.97 obv. 36–37, 38–39, 40).

⁵⁶ It seems that occasionally, in one particular examination sector, something bad might be offset by mitigating circumstances. Eg. *ni-eš-kan ZAG-na peššiyat* GÜB-(la)za-ma-aš *arḫaya(n)*, *uktüri-ma-šši šer* “The *nipašuri* threw to the right, but is separate on the left and above it is firm.” KUB 22.70 rev. 2–3, 47. Since “The *nipašuri* threw to the left” is favorable (see above n. 27), it seems likely that “the *nipašuri* threw to the right” is unfavorable. This is supported by KUB 5.24 i 62 where “threw to the right” is followed by “after it is the *šuri*: favorable.” Since as we saw above (n. 54) the *šuri* reverses the polarity of rest of the answer “threw to the right” would appear to have marked an unfavorable outcome, which the *šuri* reversed to “favorable.” Thus in KUB 22.70 “the *nipašuri* threw to the right” is unfavorable, but is made favorable overall by the mitigating circumstances: “separate” and “firm on top” both of which only occur in favorable answers. Further study might yield other examples.

extispex was not simply adding up the good ones and the bad ones to get the final answer. Rather, a single bad was all that was needed to make the answer unfavorable,⁵⁷ whereas all the good anomalies needed to be listed to assure that it was indeed good.

For example: "If there is nothing further (wrong) let the first 'flesh' be favorable, let the second 'flesh' be unfavorable. (Answer:) the first 'flesh' has the 'chair' of the left-unfavorable. The second 'flesh': the *nipašuri*, *šintaḫi*, *keldi*, *tanani* and ten turns of the intestine-favorable."⁵⁸ Since the question was "if there is nothing wrong, let the first be favorable and the second unfavorable," and the answer came back "first unfavorable, second favorable," the answer was "no," and there was, therefore, a further problem to be explored.

Sheep Behavior Oracles/"Bed" Oracles

A second type of oracle has been called the "bed" (*šašta*-)oracle,⁵⁹ because the "bed" plays an important part in the oracles and because one text says "we thoroughly asked the bed by oracle."⁶⁰ This type of oracle is rather rare. In a "bed oracle" the behavior of a sheep at specific places or times on its way to slaughter for a "flesh" oracle was noted. The diviner asked that "the sheep" be "favorable" or "unfavorable." Thus this type of oracle should probably properly be called "sheep" (UDU) oracles. Like the flesh oracle, it was performed by the *barû*, and like the flesh oracle it appears to have been taken over from the Hurrians.

An example is: "From the diviner the question is the same as before. Let the first sheep be favorable and the second unfavorable. (Answer:) The first sheep is in the first pen and the first 'bed' is of the left-side. (The sheep) pushed (lit. made run) the right-hand one behind itself. In/at the *kamzuruti* and *pakkuriti* it did nothing." (A flesh oracle follows.) The first flesh: *nipašuri*, *šintaḫi* and *tanani*. The 'mace' of the right. The 'road' of the 'breast' looks down on its back, ten turns of the intestine.-Favorable. The second sheep is in the first pen. The first 'bed' is of the left-side. (The sheep) brought the right-hand one behind itself. In/at the *kamzuriti* it brought forth its tongue on the

⁵⁷ A text, KBo 16.97, a century and a half older than virtually all other oracle texts, may bear this out. The first observation of the answer obv. 31-33 appears to be the equivalent of what later texts write *ni*. ZAG-za GÜB-za *šer-ma-šmaš ukuriš* (KBo 2.2 iv 30-31, KUB 18.2 ii 5-6) and so should probably be restored: *nipašuriš* ZAG-az GÜB-laz *uk-tu-u-ri-iš-š[a-ma-aš še-er]* (similarly but without the pronoun in KBo 16.97 rev. 18-19). In the later texts, this occurs in favorable outcomes. KBo 16.97's answer continues with the checklist: "*šintaḫiš keltiš*." Then it has "*GIŠŠÚ.A-ḫi GÜB-lan*." In later texts, this occurs only in unfavorable outcomes (see above n. 38). Finally KBo 16.97 obv. 31-33 has *umirniš* GÜB-laz *walḫanza*, which occurs in a favorable outcome later in the same text rev. 33-35. The final outcome is "unfavorable." It thus appears that a single unfavorable, despite two favorable observations, makes the whole answer unfavorable. This would explain why later scribes, writing in a more abbreviated style, usually did not bother to write out the favorable observations when an unfavorable one was present.

Note the recording of two unfavorable signs together in one "unfavorable" answer: *ir(kepel)liš* SAG.ME KUB 16.29 obv. 21. See above notes 29 and 37.

⁵⁸ KUB 22.70 obv. 39-40.

⁵⁹ E. Laroche, CTH 576 "Clinomancie." A good discussion of these is to be found in H.A. Hoffner, "Akkadian *šumma immeru* Texts and Their Hurro-Hittite Counterparts," *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo*, ed. M. Cohen, D. Snell and D. Weisberg (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993), pp. 116-119.

⁶⁰ *šaštan-kan ištarna arḫa ariue[n]* KUB 16.40 obv. 12, see H. Berman, JCS 34 (1982) 125.

right side and bit it. But it did not subsequently bring it back (in). In/at the *pakkuriti* it did nothing. (A flesh oracle follows.) The second flesh: A *temmi*-holds the place of the pit.-Unfavorable."⁶¹

Augury/Bird Oracles

A third type of oracle is the "bird" oracle.⁶² This was performed by a bird watcher (*LÚ* MUŠEN.DÜ or *LÚ* IGL.MUŠEN).⁶³ Bird oracles appear to be an indigenous Hittite science. The flights and other movements of various types of birds were followed and recorded starting from the time the bird, pair of birds, or trio of birds flew into the field of vision. A recently published oracle text preserves at the bottom the right half of a roughly sketched plan. This shows a rectangle divided diagonally by two sets of double lines intersecting in the middle. The rectangle is further divided in half horizontally by a single line. A vertical line may have divided the rectangle into eighths, but if so it is no longer preserved.⁶⁴ It should theoretically be possible to plot out the description of each bird's flight given in the bird oracle texts using this plan.

The texts often record where the bird first was or was first seen (*aumen*). Whether or not this notation is present, the bird's flight into the oracular field is described using the verb "come" (*uwa-*). Further flights within the field are also described using this verb. The flight of the bird out of the field is described with the verb "go" (*pai-*). Often, the bird simply flew in and then flew out. Sometimes, after flying in, it flew in a different direction within the field, and maybe a different direction after that, each flight of which is also described by the verb "come" (*uwa-*).⁶⁵ The verb "go" is used only when a bird is leaving the field of vision. Aside from the bird "going across" the river and then "going off," there are few (if any) other references to the bird "going" in two consecutive sentences.⁶⁶ Sometimes, however, after recording the bird's departure, it is noted that it hid (i.e. disappeared) (*munnaittar*)⁶⁷ or perched (lit. "sat" *ešat*)⁶⁸ and/or turned its head about. Sometimes, only the bird's arrival is noted and not its departure.⁶⁹

Three texts describe a field of viewing through which a river runs longitudinally.⁷⁰ Perhaps this is the horizontal line seen in the plan discussed above.⁷¹ While other texts do not mention the river, many mention a road which also seems to divide the field

⁶¹ KUB 18.11 rev. 3-11.

⁶² These are thoroughly discussed by A. Archi, "L'ornitomanzia ittita," *SMEA* 16 (1975) 119-180 and by A. Ünal, "Zum status der 'Augures' bei den Hethitern," *RHA XXXI* (1973, appeared 1976) 27-56.

⁶³ Or occasionally a combination of the two: *LÚ* IGL.DÜ. Compare KUB 7.54 i 1, 11 with ii 5.

⁶⁴ KUB 49.60 iv, mentioned as unpublished Bo 9071 by A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1976) 150 n. 87.

⁶⁵ See for instance KUB 18.5 ii 36-39, or ii 44-47, ii 48-50.

⁶⁶ KBo 24.131 obv. 18 and KUB 5.22:57 may be exceptions, but in both cases the second verb is broken away. In the text in which the field is bisected by a river (KUB 18.5), it is possible for the bird to "go across the river" and then "go out" of the field of vision (e.g. i 33-34), or even "go across the river" then turn and "come behind the river" (ii 39-41).

⁶⁷ E.g. KUB 18.5 + KUB 49.13 i 26-27, 38, ii 47 and see CHD s.v. *munnai-*.

⁶⁸ E.g. KUB 22.3 i 8.

⁶⁹ For example KBo 2.6 iv 15-16.

⁷⁰ KUB 18.5, 158/w and 173/w.

⁷¹ KUB 49.60, the text preserving the plan, is so badly broken that one cannot know whether its observations did or did not mention "the river." For our reconstruction of this plan see the illustration.

longitudinally. While no text simultaneously mentions a river and a road, they do not appear to be treated as equivalent features on different fields.⁷² The river is an integral part of the field. The movements of the birds can be described in relationship to the river. Their movements can begin on one side; they can cross it and perform other flights having crossed. However, no bird is ever described as beginning its flight on one side of the road and continuing it on the other, although several times a bird seems to fly right up to or along the road before sitting down and turning its head toward the road.⁷³ “Behind the road” is usually set off as an independent sentence. Furthermore, the following sentence always begins the flight of a new bird.⁷⁴ Thus, while the river was a topographic feature within one field of augury, the indication “behind the road” appears to signify a change from one field to a different field of viewing. Perhaps the augers stood on the road recording events in the field before themselves, before turning around to record events in the field “behind the road.”

Strings of preverbs or adverbs give additional information about the birds’ flight. The verb “came” is modified by one of four preverbs: “in front” (*peran*), “behind” (*āppan*), “across” (*pariyan*), and *zilawan*, the latter a word unique to these bird oracles.⁷⁵ “Behind” (*āppan*) is further qualified as “behind upwards” (*āppan šarā*) and “behind downwards” (*āppan katta*). The flight in can be also described as either “in a good manner/on the good side” (*aššuwaz/SIG5-za*) or “in a *kuštai* manner/on the *kuštai* side” (*kuštayaz/kuštayati*).⁷⁶ It is conceivable that these two terms refer to the sectors to the right and left, respectively, of the vertical axis that bisects the field, although if this is the case, one wonders why these sectors were not simply called “left (GÜB-la-)” and “right” (*kunna*-). The terms *aššuwaz* and *kuštayaz* occur in conjunction with the preverbs *peran*, and *zilawan*. However, the preverb *āppan šarā* only occurs with *aššuwaz* and *āppan katta* only occurs with *kuštayaz*.

⁷² Contra A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 151. This also rules out V. Haas’s “Die Orakelprotokolle aus Kuşaklı—Ein Überblick,” *MDOG* 128 (1996) 109 attempt to understand the two diagonals on the KUB 49.60 plan as a road and a river.

⁷³ “We saw a *harranni*-bird *tarwiyallian*” *n-aš* INA KASKAL-NI *tarnanza* UL [o o o] × *n-aš-za* TUŠ-at KA × U=ma=za-kan INA KASKAL-NI [nāiš] “It was allowed on the road. It sat down and turned its head toward the road,” KUB 18.12 i 18. Also KUB 16.55 i 10–12. For references see A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 177 (“ed esso lasciò nella strada”). One wonders if “it was allowed on the road” means the bird flew toward the road which forms one of the boundaries, but it was ruled by the augers not to have flown out.

⁷⁴ For the “road” in bird oracles see CHD P 72 s.v. *palša*—1 f. KASKAL-ši EGIR-an *arḥa* in the middle of a paragraph is a Middle Hittite bird oracle from Kuşaklı (KuT 49:19) is probably not an exception, cf. the same expression (ibid. 30) following a paragraph line. In both cases a new bird follows. Probably this expression is a variant of the KASKAL-ši EGIR-an of another MH Kuşaklı text (KuT 50:21) which begins a new paragraph and is a complete sentence, and the familiar EGIR KASKAL of NH texts. For KuT 49 and 50 see G. Wilhelm, *MDOG* 130 (1998) 178–186.

⁷⁵ Unlike *pariyan*, *zilawan* occurs only in bird oracles, which makes translation more uncertain. J. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitätsverlag, 1952) 261 (with previous literature), followed by A. Goetze, *Kleinasiens*, *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft* 3.1.3.3.1 (Munich, C.H. Beck, 1957) 149f. and A. Ünal, *RHA XXXI* (1973 [1976]) 41f., A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 128, translated *zilawan* as “diesseitig,” and *pariyan* as “jenseitig.”

⁷⁶ The Luwian ablative form *kuštayati* of the word is sometimes used rather than the Hittite. This was read as a Sumerogram KU.UŠ by scholars until a tablet containing a syllabic writing, KUB 50.1 ii 18, iii 14, 23, proved *ku-uš* to be an abbreviation, see A. Archi, *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi* [= KUB] 50: *Hethitische Orakeltexte* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1979) p.v. The Hittite form *kuštayaz* has not yet been found written out. Its existence is proved by the use of the abbreviations *ku-uš-za* IBoT 1. 32 obv. 8, KUB 49.64:8, AT 454 ii 31, 33, 35, 36; and *ku-za* KUB 18.12 i 7–8, 19, 20, 21, 28, KUB 52.75 rev. 21, 27, 29, 31. A Middle Hittite bird oracle from Kuşaklı (ancient Šarišša) uses the previously unattested adverb *maštayati*, apparently instead of *kuštayati* KuT 50:13, 15, 19, 22, ed. G. Wilhelm, *MDOG* 30 (1998) 181–186.

The verb “went = flew away” is also modified by one of four preverbs, three of which are essentially the same as those we saw used with “comes”—“away in front” (*peran* + *arḥa*), “across” (*pariyan*), and *zilawan*. However, instead of “behind” (*āppan*) one finds “away in the middle” (*takšan arḥa*). The preverbs *aššuwaz* and *kuštayaz* are only used with the verb “went” when the preverb *zilawan* is also present.

The birds are also described by two other words of unknown meaning (*tarwiyallian*)⁷⁷ and its opposite (*GUN-liyan*). These terms occur as adjectives modifying the birds in the sentence describing the bird or birds’ initial position. They modify the verb *uwa*- only when the preverb *pariyan* or occasionally *zilawan* is present. They also occasionally modify the verb “went” in conjunction with the preverbs *peran arḥa*, *takšan arḥa* and *pariyan*. *GUN-liyan* and *tarwiyallian* occur only in bird oracles.⁷⁸ The mutually exclusive pair of *tarwiyallian* and *GUN-liyan* never appear in the same sentence with either of the other mutually exclusive pair “in a good manner/on the good side” (*aššuwaz/SIG5-za*) or “in a *kuštai* manner/on the *kuštai* side” (*kuštayaz/kuštayati*). The word *tarwiyallian* is written in the plan into the lower half of the right quadrant, between the horizontal line and the diagonal. It could thus designate either the diagonal or this particular octant. That *tarwiyallian* and *GUN-liyan* designate alternating octants or quadrants around the field⁷⁹ seems the less likely possibility since, as we noted above, these two terms do not occur in the same sentence with *aššuwaz* and *kuštayaz*, a combination that would seem to be necessary to properly define each octant.

How then does all this fit together? If *tarwiyallian* does not indicate an octant, and the horizontal line above the word on the plan is the river, then perhaps *tarwiyallian* marks the diagonal line which runs from lower left to upper right, and which occurs below the word on the plan. This would mean that the diagonal running from upper right to lower left would be *GUN-liyan*. The initial sighting of a *tarwiyalli*-bird at the beginning would then be a bird located in the far left corner of the field, while a *GUN-li*-bird would be one located in the far right corner. *Peran* is known to mean “in front” and so probably designates the front of the field of view, perhaps the *triangle* between the two diagonals at the bottom of the plan. *Āppan* means “behind, at the back” and is known from other types of texts to be the opposite of *peran*. Therefore, perhaps *āppan* is the triangle at the top of the plan. We have already suggested that *aššuwaz* and *kuštayaz* designated the right and left halves of the field respectively. Perhaps there was a hill in the upper right octant of the viewing field and a depression on the left, so that one would always get *āppan šarā aššuwaz* “upwards in the back right(?)” and *āppan katta kuštayaz* “downwards in the back left(?)” Of the remaining preverbs, only *zilawan* occurs with *aššuwaz* and *kuštayaz* and so by default appears to refer to the two triangles on the left and right sides, respectively. We have already noted that, with the verb “went,” the adverb *takšan arḥa* “away in the middle(?)” appears to replace *āppan šarā* and *āppan katta*. With *āppan* referring to the triangle on the far side of the field, it would be easy to see how sightlines following a departing bird would simply say “flew off down the middle (*takšan arḥa pai*-).”

⁷⁷ The term is usually abbreviated *tar-li* or *taru*. Scholars considered this to be a Sumerogram TAR until a tablet containing a syllabic spelling KUB 50.1 ii 5, iii 17, proved it to be an abbreviation. See A. Archi, KUB 50 p. v.

⁷⁸ See A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 155–157, who reads GUN.LIŠ and TAR.LIŠ.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 157 n. 90.

This leaves the preverb *pariyan*, which should mean “across.” Since, as we saw above, this is not used with *aššuwaz* and *kuštayaz*, but only with *tarwiyallian* and *GUN-lian*, perhaps *pariyan* with these two adverbs means travelled on one or the other of the diagonals “across” the sector lines. A further complication is that *pariyan* in those rare texts where a river bisects the field is used with an accusative form of the word “river” with the meaning “crossed the river,” a usage well attested outside of bird oracle texts. It is interesting that, in these texts, the preverb *pariawan* takes over the usage of *pariyan* with *tarwiyallian* and *GUN-lian* and no accusative object seen in the texts where no river is present.⁸⁰ *Pariawan* is unknown outside of those bird oracles containing the river and, when it appears, it is clearly differentiated from *pariyan*. It would appear that the preverb *pariawan* was specifically created to differentiate what would have been two entirely different usages of *pariyan* in these particular bird oracles.

When the bird was departing the field of view, it was usually not necessary to indicate whether it was departing *aššuwaz* or *kuštayaz*, since it could be assumed that, unless it was already noted going diagonally, it must have remained on the same side of the field in which it had previously been recorded. However, since there was a right and left *zilawan*, departing flights across the right or left boundary of the field could be described as *zilawan aššuwaz* or *zilawan kuštayaz*. This reconstruction is all highly speculative. Others may be able to suggest minor rearrangements or radically different solutions to the meanings of the terms, so it should be used with care and caveats.

Also noted is when the bird “sat and turned its head.” Here the verb “turned” is modified by the same set of preverbs that were used with “went”: *peran arḫa*, *takšan arḫa*, *pariyan*, and *zilawan* with the additional possibility of “turned toward the road.” Among other unusual things, it is recorded that a particular bird “calls,” “urinates” or “fights” another bird. At least 25 types of birds are mentioned in the texts,⁸¹ although males and females are not differentiated.

After posing the question, the birdwatcher did not ask for a favorable or unfavorable response, but rather that the birds “ascertain/confirm” (*ḫandandu*) or “throw away/exclude” (*arḫa peššiyandu*). Previous scholarship has asserted that “confirm” is equivalent to “favorable” (SIG₅) in the other types of oracles and “throw away” to “unfavorable” (NU.SIG₅).⁸² Indeed, in some questions, “confirm” is used to ascertain the truth of a good thing just like “favorable” (SIG₅) and “throw away” the truth of a bad thing just like “unfavorable” (NU.SIG₅), and in some series of identical questions “confirm” directly corresponds to “favorable” and “throw away” directly corresponds to “unfavorable” as would be predicted.⁸³ However, even more frequently “throw away” seems to correspond to “favorable” in that it is used to ascertain the truth of a good thing while

“confirm” corresponds to “unfavorable” in that it is used to ascertain the truth of a bad thing. Not only does “throw away” correspond to “favorable” in many a series of identical questions,⁸⁴ but in many cases the birds are asked in the initial question to “throw away” to ascertain the truth of a good thing.⁸⁵ One regularity is that when the question involves “do you, O god(s) approve (this course of action)” to which the other types of oracles are asked to give a “favorable” response, the birds are asked to “confirm.”⁸⁶ Interestingly, when the question is: “do you, O god disapprove . . .,” where the other types of oracles ask for an “unfavorable” response, the birds are also asked to “confirm.”⁸⁷ On the other hand, when the question is: “is only this a problem and nothing else?,” or “do we have nothing to fear?,” to both of which other types of oracles are asked to give a favorable response, the birds are asked to “throw away.”⁸⁸ It appears that if the question contained a negative grammatical particle, then the birds were usually asked to “throw away/exclude,” while if the question was phrased in a grammatically positive fashion

⁸⁴ A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 144–147 explained this as counterchecking using a reverse question, however note that in the sequence AT 454 ii 24–37 which Archi himself gives (pp. 146f.), the question that is specifically labeled by the Hittite scribe as a counter check is the second question in line, a “flesh” oracle, not the bird oracle, which is fourth in line, and there is no change in polarity of the question for the “flesh” oracle. The sequences given by Archi from KUB 5.20 iii 1–24 + KUB 18.56 iii 11–(40) makes more sense if “confirm” is somehow equivalent to “unfavorable” and “throw away” to “favorable,” particularly if the last two in the sequence namely KIN.MEŠ SIG₅-ru and SU.MEŠ SIG₅-ru, omitted by Archi (p. 146), are included. The same can be said for KUB 5.11 i 8–14, 31–37, 44–49, iv 24–31 (p. 147).

⁸⁵ Using “let the birds throw away” to check the truth of a good thing: compare “They will go and give sworn instructions concerning a matter of fire. If the evil will disappear because of this, let the symbol-oracle (KIN) be favorable (SIG₅-ru)” KUB 5.4 ii 14–15 with “They will go and give sworn instructions concerning a matter of fire. If the aforementioned matter of fire will disappear because of this, let the birds throw away (*arḫa peššiyandu*)” KUB 5.11 iv 55–56. Note the identical questions of KUB 18.12 i 29–31 + KUB 22.15:3–5 and KUB 5.4 i 26–31, the former asking: “If we have nothing to fear from revolt for him, let the birds throw away,” and the latter: “If we have nothing to fear from revolt for His Majesty, let the symbol oracle be favorable.” Note “If it signifies only this, and does not signify anything evil for the head of His Majesty, let the birds throw away” KUB 18.2 ii 16–18; and KUB 49.19 iii 28–29.

Using “let the birds confirm” to check the truth of a bad thing: cf. in similar questions KUB 16.46 i 10–11 with “let the birds confirm” and KUB 5.3 ii 19–21, 40–42 etc. with “let the symbols be unfavorable.”

In a series of identical questions to be answered by different types of oracles, the others request “unfavorable” while the birds are asked to “confirm”: KUB 5.11 i 7–14, iii 22–25; KUB 5.17 ii 18–21, iii 38–43; KUB 16.65 i 6–8; KUB 18.9 iii 11–16, iv 10–13; KUB 49.21 iii 17–20; KUB 49.41 i 2–5.

In a series of identical questions to be answered by different types of oracles, the others request “favorable” while the birds are asked to “throw away”: KBo 2.6 + KUB 18.51 iii 7–16; KUB 5.11 i 31–37, iv 24–31; KUB 16.49:2–5; KUB 16.62 rev. 7–16; KUB 18.9 ii 3–12, KUB 18.26 iii 2–6; KUB 49.30 rev.? 15–18; AT 454 ii 24–30.

Note also the series of requesting for “confirm/unfavorable/unfavorable/throw away/favorable/favorable” KUB 18.56 iii 11–36 + KUB 5.20 iii 1–24.

See subsequent discussion and footnotes.

⁸⁶ With birds answering the initial question: KBo 16.98 ii 17–18, KUB 16.47:11–12, KUB 18.12 i 7 (note that the same question in a symbol oracle requests a “favorable” [SIG₅-r]: KUB 5.4 i 6–7), KUB 49.49 ii 16. With the birds answering the same question as the previous one, in which a “favorable” response had been asked for: KUB 16.52 obv. 9–14, KUB 49.14 iii 7–12, KUB 49.47:3–11 and probably KBo 2.6 iii 46–54, iii 63–iv 10.

⁸⁷ KUB 16.65 i 3–8.

⁸⁸ “Have we nothing to fear . . .” where the birds are the initial or only method used: KUB 18.12 i 24–25, 30–31 (note the same question is asked with a request for a “favorable” outcome in KUB 5.4 i 26–31), 37–38; KUB 49.18 i 1–2. With the birds answering the same question as the previous one, in which a “favorable” response had been asked for: KUB 5.11 iv 15–31, KUB 16.62 rev. 6–16.

“Only this and nothing else?” where the birds are the initial or only method used: KUB 18.2 ii 16–18, KUB 22.65 iii 20–21. With the birds answering the same question as the previous one, in which a “favorable” response had been asked for: KBo 2.6 iii 7–16; KUB 5.11 i 30–37; KUB 49.21 ii (3–8); AT 454 ii 24–30.

⁸⁰ For references see CHD s.v.

⁸¹ See the list in A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 141–43.

⁸² A. Ünal, *RHA XXXI* (1973, app. 1976) 33, A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 144f.

⁸³ Using “let the birds confirm” to ascertain the truth of a good thing: KBo 16.98 ii 17–18, KUB 16.47 ii: 11–12, KUB 18.12 i 7, KUB 49.49 ii 16, IBoT 1.32 obv. 29.

A request that the birds “confirm” is followed by a request that “the extra-oracle be favorable” (actually 1-favorable-2-unfavorable) and “the symbol-oracle be favorable” KUB 5.20 i 3–12.

In a series of identical questions to be answered by different types of oracles, the others request “favorable” while the birds are asked to “confirm”: KBo 2.6 iii 46–54, 63–iv 10; KUB 5.24 + KUB 18.57 i 58–66; *ibid.* ii 19–25 + KUB 16.31 ii 8–11; KUB 16.52 obv. 11–14; KUB 16.53 rev.? 5–12; KUB 16.58 obv. 1–11; KUB 16.77 ii 3–9, ii 64–71, iii 23–29, iii 41–54 (symbol, bird, flesh); KUB 22.38 iv 16–20; KUB 22.51 obv. 1–4; KUB 49.14 iii 7–12; IBoT 1.32 obv. 2–4, 20–23.

the birds were usually asked to “confirm.”⁸⁹ Since the verbs are transitive, with the birds the subject, the unexpressed object is presumably the problem about which the question was asked. Thus, if the question was, for example, “Have you, O gods, approved?” the auspex asked “let the birds confirm (the approval).”⁹⁰ If the question was, for example, “Have we nothing concerning him to fear from rebellion?” the auspex asked “let the birds exclude (fear of rebellion).”⁹¹

Since the oracular answer to a single question usually involves several different birds, often of different species, each of which performs several fairly complicated motions, little headway has been made by modern scholars in deciphering why a particular answer “confirmed” or “excluded.” It is noteworthy that in bird oracles, where at the end of the descriptions of the bird’s actions the bird watcher gives the result *arḥa peššir* “they exclude (the problem)” or *ḥandaittat* “it is confirmed,” a bird watcher’s name is given, presumably the senior auspex of those watching,⁹² and the result indicated in the Hittite equivalent of quotation marks. Bird oracles are the only⁹³ oracles in which it is usual for the diviner’s name⁹⁴ to be given along with the result, which may indicate that bird oracles were considered particularly difficult to interpret.

A typical example reads: “From the auspex the question is the same as before. Let the birds confirm (success). Three *šulupi*-birds [came] in front on the go[od side]. They went off down the middle. An *alliya*-bird came in in front on the good side and it [went off] down the middle. A *ḥašdapiu*-bird, however, came up behind on the good side. It went off in front. Behind the road: three eagles came up behind on the good side. One came in front on the good side and it went off down the middle. However, the other two eagles came down behind on the *kuštaya*-side (i.e., they flew from the right rear section to the left rear section?). They met an *alliya*-bird below GUN-lian (= moving diagonally upper right/lower left?). The *alliya*-bird came up behind on the good side

⁸⁹ Suggestion posited in a discussion by H.A. Hoffner. This still fails to explain KBo 2.6 i 14–25, where “match up” is requested of a negatively phrased question, identical to *ibid.* iii 7–16 where the birds are asked to “throw away,” as the theory would predict. See further n. 91, below.

⁹⁰ KBo 16.98 ii 17–18, KUB 49.49 ii 15–16.

⁹¹ KUB 18.12 i 31. Although there are a few exceptions to this rule, it is easy to see how a scribe could have created a request to the birds that does not fit. In KUB 5.11 iv 55–56, for example, the question is: “Since a matter of fire has been ascertained, they will go and give sworn instructions concerning the matter of fire. If the aforementioned matter of fire will disappear on that account . . .” The scribe should have continued “let the birds confirm (the disappearance),” but, instead, he wrote: “let the birds exclude (a matter of fire).” The difference is insignificant. Note also: “Are you, O ghost, not angry on account of any other matter . . . let the birds exclude (other sources of anger)” (KBo 2.6 iii 7–8, 16) which fits the pattern, whereas *ibid.* i 15–16, 25 asks an identical question but anomalously ends “let the birds confirm (there is nothing else?).”

⁹² The use of “we saw (*amen/NIMUR/ušgawen*) a . . . bird” at the beginning of many sightings indicates that more than one person was watching. See A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 161 for references.

⁹³ A. Archi (*SMEA* 16 (1975) 132 n. 29) claims that there are a number of exceptions. One possible exception is in extispicy: [2] TAPAL SU.MEŠ NU.SIG₅ ^mKili-^d10-upaš IDI” [Two? pair of flesh oracles are unfavorable. Kili-Tessub knows” (KBo 16.99 i 9). Four other supposed exceptions in one text (KUB 5.24 + KUB 16.31), where a name occurs after the outcome of a flesh oracle are not, in fact, exceptions. Two of the lines say ^{m,d}10-SUM-aš IR-ta “Mr. ^d10-SUM-aš asked” (iv [19] + 17, 25 + 23), but the other two say ^dUTU-ŠI apāšila IR-ta “His Majesty himself asked” (iv 13 + 11, 32 + 30). While the former might have been seen as the extispex, it is most unlikely that the Great King personally performed and analyzed the two extispicies. The text is presumably simply noting who placed the question, not, as in the bird oracles, who is responsible for the answer. In a somewhat different context, the question section of a snake oracle checks the predictions of a certain “Mizzulla and the Old Women” (IBoT 1.33:83). Since the “Old Woman,” as we will see below, was the operator of a symbol oracle, perhaps this text is giving us the name of such a professional along with her reading.

⁹⁴ A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 132–4 lists the names of some 48 bird watchers.

(i.e. flew from the left rear section to the right rear section?) and went off in front. The two eagles came diagonally GUN-lian (= upper right, lower left?). Nunu said as follows: ‘They confirm.’”⁹⁵

Here is an example of sightings on a field divided by a river taken from the middle of a very long series of sightings: “Behind the river, [we saw] an eagle below GUN-lian (= in the far right corner, below the hill). The eagle went off *zilawan* on the good side (= exited via the distant part of the right side?). We also saw a *maršannašši*-bird. While we were watching, we saw another *maršannašši* behind the river *tarwiyallian* (= in the far left corner?). It came across the river *tarwiyallian* (= diagonally left to right?). Then it went off diagonally(?) *tarwiyallian* (= on the same diagonal?) § The *maršannašši*, which we (originally) saw, went off *zilawan* on the good side (= from the distant part of the right side?) and hid itself (i.e. disappeared from view). § We saw an eagle and a *ḥarranī*-bird GUN-lian (= in the upper right corner?) behind the river. The *ḥarranī*-bird went off *zilawan* on the good side (i.e., along the far right side of the field?). The eagle, however, behind the river came up at the back on the good side. It came diagonally(?), but it did not go completely across the river. It went off down the middle. § . . . § A *pattarpalḫi* (= ‘broadwing’) came up from the river in front on the good side. It passed (lit. came) behind the river. Then behind the river it came up behind on the good side. It came across the river. Then it really flew off *tarwiyallian* (= on the upper right/lower left diagonal?).”⁹⁶

HURRI-bird oracles

A fourth type of oracle is the *HURRI*-bird oracle. Although a bird is involved, this is an entirely different type of oracle from the bird oracles, properly speaking. *HURRI*-bird oracles were performed by a diviner/exorcist (^{LÚ}HAL/^{LÚ}AZU = *barû*), not a bird-watcher (^{LÚ}MUŠEN.DÙ/^{LÚ}IGI.MUŠEN). The *HURRI*-bird never appears in regular bird oracles. The *HURRI*-bird was asked to be “favorable” (*lazziyattaru*) or “unfavorable” (*kallarešdu*), not to “confirm” (*handandu*) or “exclude” (*peššiyandu*) as in regular bird oracles. There is no description of the flight paths of the *HURRI*-birds. In fact, generally, there is no description at all in *HURRI*-bird oracles. The oracle is simply stated to be favorable or unfavorable with no description of the phenomena. Perhaps not too much should be made of this, since on rare occasions “flesh” oracles also omit the observations. And there is a fragmentary text that reads: “Let the *HURRI*-bird be unfavorable. The *erai*-is seized. Unfavorable.”⁹⁷ At the end of the following paragraph, one finds “Let the *HURRI*-bird be unfavorable. The *zizzipki*- is of the right.– Unfavorable.”⁹⁸ Something being “of the right” reminds one of flesh-oracles, as does something “being seized.”⁹⁹ Since the oracle was performed by the same professional as the exta-oracle, namely the diviner, it has been argued that the *HURRI*-bird’s exta were examined like those

⁹⁵ IBoT 1.32 obv. 4–10.

⁹⁶ KUB 18.5 + KUB 49.13 i 20–32, ii 24–28.

⁹⁷ KUB 18.14 iii 12.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* iii 14–15.

⁹⁹ For this comparison see F. Sommer, *Die hethitisch-akkadische Bilingue des Hattušili I. (Labarna II.)*, ABAW NF 16 (Munich, Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1938) 96.

of a sheep.¹⁰⁰ If so, it seems odd that a description is so rarely given in *HURRI*-bird oracles, whereas a description is usual in sheep exta-oracles. Also the only two words ever attested describing a *HURRI*-bird, *erai*- and *zizzipki*, never occur in sheep exta-oracles.¹⁰¹

A second possibility I mention only partially in jest. The *HURRI*-bird also occurs in Akkadian texts of Neo-Assyrian date. Although the bird is not attested any earlier in Mesopotamia, the word *HURRI* is presumably Akkadian. Such a word is well known with a meaning “(rodent) hole” or “mine.” Therefore, it is usually assumed that the *HURRI*-bird was a bird that nested in a burrow. Could it be that for a *HURRI*-bird oracle the diviner reached into the hole and, if he grabbed tails, it was favorable and if he grabbed heads (and got bit) it was unfavorable, or vice versa? What then of the *erai*- and *zizzipki*? Perhaps these were rare marks or disfigurements of the birds,¹⁰² which somehow modified or overrode the outcome. It is, in any case, odd that the *zizzipki*- on the right should have been unfavorable, since this goes against one of the usual generalizations made by the writers of ancient omenological lexicons—that is, that something on the right should be favorable and the same thing on the left unfavorable. One could simply say that this is an exception. On the other hand, since there is only one mention of the finding of a *zizzipki*- in the many preserved *HURRI*-bird oracles, it may have been a rare phenomenon. Then, one could invoke another of the generalizations: rare phenomena are generally bad. So perhaps finding a *zizzipki*- at all was bad, and finding it on the good side doubly so. Similarly, perhaps it was due to the rarity of finding a *erai*- seized that this, too, was a bad omen.

A third alternative is that a *HURRI*-bird oracle was a poison oracle, of the sort performed on chickens by the Azande of Sudan.¹⁰³ Usually the bird either lives or dies. But, as we suggested above, perhaps on very rare occasions the Hittite diviner would have afterward discovered some unusual marks on the bird, the *erai*- and *zizzipki*, which in some way modified the result.¹⁰⁴

In summary, perhaps *HURRI*-bird oracles were bird-extispicy, with the details usually omitted by the scribes, or perhaps poison oracles, or perhaps *HURRI*-birds simply gave a heads or tails response, either literally or figuratively.

¹⁰⁰ A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975) 140 and O. R. Gurney, in *Oracles and Divination* 151; A. Kammenhuber, *Orakelpraxis, Träume und Vorzeichenschau bei den Hethitern*, THeth 7 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitätsverlag, 1976) 11 left the question open, but subsequently, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*² (= *HW*²) 2 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitätsverlag, 1988) 89, followed Archi. A. Boissier, *Mantique Babylonienne et Mantique Hittite* (Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1935) 30 n. 1 had previously suggested that the *erai*- was part of the liver.

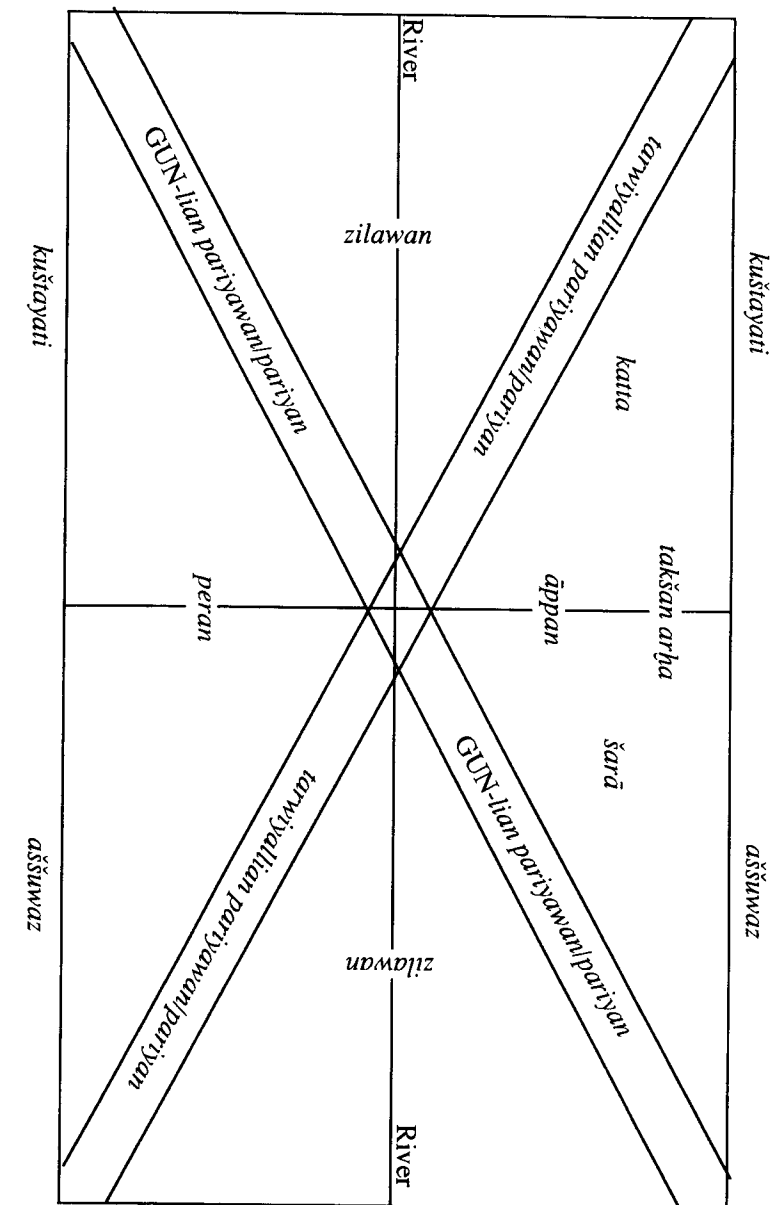
¹⁰¹ The only other attestation of the word *erai*- is in a paragraph of oracle text that is too fragmentary to know the type of oracle, KUB 52.73 obv. 4. Cf. A. Kammenhuber, *HW*² 2:89b. A. Archi's *SMEA* 16 (1975) 140 restoration of [MUŠEN *HURRI*] SIG₅-ru *ḫaṭhiš* NU.SIG₅ in KUB 18.27 obv. 7 10, where a *ḫaṭhiš* is a known term in sheep exta-oracles, does not prove that the *HURRI*-bird is being dissected. Since there is hardly room for a question in this one line paragraph, one should probably restore instead [IGI-*anda* SU.MEŠ *ER*-wen SU.MEŠ] SIG₅-ru *ḫaṭhiš* NU.SIG₅, which would make this a standard “flesh” oracle checking the outcome given in the preceding paragraph by a *HURRI*-bird. The same situation is found in *ibid.* 21.

¹⁰² For the examination of birds for such marks in Mesopotamia, see O. R. Gurney, in *Oracles and Divination* 153.

¹⁰³ E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937) 258–351.

¹⁰⁴ The Mesopotamians' external examination of birds mentioned in footnote 102, above, was apparently performed on dead birds.

A suggested plan for the viewing field of Hittite bird oracles



Snake Oracles

The fifth type of oracle is the snake oracle.¹⁰⁵ These are referred to in one text as basin oracles¹⁰⁶ and in another as “thing” oracles.¹⁰⁷ Snake oracles appear to be natively Hittite. It is not clear what the title of the practitioner of these was. Snake oracles are quite rare; only seven fragments of them have been published. After the question in which the answer was requested to be “favorable” (SIG₅) or “unfavorable” (NU.SIG₅), a watersnake in a basin was given a symbolic name.¹⁰⁸ For example, in a text asking whether a disaster would befall the king’s head, the snake was named “the snake of His Majesty’s head.”¹⁰⁹ When in the same series the question was “Will the land of Hatti perish?” the snake was called curiously “The snake of the head of the Land of Hatti.”¹¹⁰ In another series of questions that appear to be asking divine approval for the selection of a crown prince, the snake was called “The snake of the name of the king.”¹¹¹ In third text in which the question concerned “the hand of a man,” the snake was called “the snake of the hand of a man.”¹¹² In a fourth text concerning the celebration of festivals by the king many different names were given to snakes.¹¹³ The snake with the name we have seen before, “the snake of the head,” was the first snake whose actions were reported in the oracle inquiry. Subsequent snakes were named in no clear order for concepts such as “the snake of life,” “the snake of the year,” the snake of the 8th month,” or for holy cities: “the snake of Nerik,” “the snake of Zippalanda,” “the snake of Kummani” or for deities “the snake of Hepat” or the “snake of the deity of Arušna” or for religious rites “the snake of the *purulli*-festival,” “the snake of the *ANDAḤŠUM*-garlic(?)¹¹⁴-festival,” “the snake of the festival of release.” Finally, in a fifth text one finds swimming around at the same time in the basin the “snake of the name of the king” along with the prosaically named “snake of the oracle-question” and another snake simply called “another snake.”¹¹⁵ Some of these snake names are reflected in the questions,¹¹⁶ and perhaps more of them would be if the texts were better preserved.

Each snake was then assigned (literally: named) to another symbol. Since many

¹⁰⁵ Several are translated and discussed by E. Laroche, “Lécanomancie hittite,” *RA* 52 (1958) 150–162. To these should be added KBo 23.117, KUB 49.1 and KUB 49.2.

¹⁰⁶ *nu* TUL *aldanneš* SIG₅-*ru* KUB 22.38 i 5.

¹⁰⁷ NÍG SIG₅-*ru* KBo 23.117 rev. 5, 7, 9, 15, 17, 19.

¹⁰⁸ IBoT 1.33 first writes “let the snake of the head of His Majesty make (it) favorable” which combines the question with giving the snake its symbolic name. Thereafter, the text simply states: “let it be unfavorable.”

¹⁰⁹ IBoT 1.33 esp. lines 4, 102–103, 107–108, 112, ed. E. Laroche, *RA* 52 (1958) 152–159.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* 95–96.

¹¹¹ KUB 18.6 (+?) KUB 49.2.

¹¹² KUB 22.19:7–8, 14–15.

¹¹³ KUB 49.1.

¹¹⁴ It is written SUM.TUR (lit. “little onion”) in Sumerian and used prominently for coughs or phlegm in Mesopotamian medicine; garlic is good for both coughs and phlegm (L. Boulos, *Medicinal Plants of North Africa* [Algonac: Reference Publications, 1983] pp. 23–25) (references courtesy of J.A. Scurlock). Cf. M. Stol, “Garlic, onion, leek,” *BSag* 3 (1987) 62 (a type of onion) and see CAD s.v. Differently, W. Farber, “Altassyrisch *addašū* und *ḥazuannū*, oder von Safran, Fenchel, Zwiebeln und Salat,” *ZA* 81 (1991) 234–42 (“fennel”), and F. Cornelius, “Die Antahschum-Pflanze,” *JKF* 4! (=AA 2) (1965) 175–77, followed by H. A. Hoffner, *Alimenta Hethaeorum*, AOS 55 (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1974) 109f. (crocus/saffron).

¹¹⁵ KUB 18.6 iv 9, 5, 11 (MUŠ *ariyašešnaš*), 5.

¹¹⁶ E.g. Nerik in the question KUB 49.1 i 14, “the snake of Nerik” in the answer (i 17), “the year” in the question (iv 5) and “the snake of the year” in the answer (iv 11).

of the symbols to which snakes were initially assigned reappear as symbols the snake passed or hid in, presumably this “assigning” meant deciding where the snake would start. The symbols where the snake started could be high ranking deities, such as “the Stormgod (of Hatti),” “the Stormgod of Aleppo” or the “Sungoddess of Arinna,” “the Great Sungod.” Alternatively, they could be positive concepts, “life,” “longevity,” “future,” “joy,” and “thriving(?)”,¹¹⁷ or places, “the king’s home,” “the king’s gate,” “the house,” “the hearth,” “the column,” “the beam,”¹¹⁸ and “the emplacement(?) of the gods.”¹¹⁹ Others include “the king,” “the god’s festival” and an unusual deity “the Stormgod of the Head.”¹²⁰ This step appears to have been skipped in one text.¹²¹ All the places to which the snake was initially assigned appear to have represented positive things even when the answer requested was “let (the result) be unfavorable.”

After being assigned to a place, the snake moved from one symbolically named spot in the basin to another. It seems to have been important when it held itself up.¹²² Sometimes it is noted that the snake swam round the basin. Sometimes it seized a fish. Where this happened is noted as well as where it subsequently ate the fish. One text notes “[...] bit its neck.”¹²³ One text ends each snake’s activities with the note that it hid in a particular symbol.¹²⁴ Places visited were only rarely gods; “the Great Stormgod,” “the Favorable Moongod,” the “Favorable deity,” “the Fates,” and “the Stormgod of Tamaliya” are among those visited. “The Ghosts” were also visited. Concepts passed by include all the positive ones seen above at which the snake began its swim: “life,” “longevity,” “future,” “joy,” “thriving(?)”, and “the emplacement(?) (of the gods),” to which was added “the year.”¹²⁵ There were, in addition, a number of negative ones such as “ruin and death,” “misdeed,” “sickness,” “agitation,” “rebellion,” “blood,” “the oath,” “the taboo” and “the giving back.” The familiar places are again seen, “the king’s home,” “the king’s gate,” “the house,” “the hearth,” “the beam,” with the addition of “the dry place” and “the pillar,” “the guard-house” and “the bone house,” “the god Šarruma’s bedroom,” and most curiously “the bethel (*ḥuwaši*) of the oath of blood” and the otherwise unknown Mt. Darkittena.

The snake’s hiding place shows a great deal of overlap with the other two categories: the good concepts “life,” “long-life,” “future,” “joy,” “thriving(?)”, “the year”

¹¹⁷ *lulu(t)*-, see CHD s.v.

¹¹⁸ GIŠ.MAḤ = Akk. *gišmaḥḥu* “beam, pillar.”

¹¹⁹ *išgaratar*, from *išgarai*- “to pierce, affix.” The noun is only attested in snake oracles. For the verb *išgarai*- with gods note: “We brought the statues to the same [...] and they stuck them down into/affixed them to (*kattan išgarer*) another rock” KUB 15.10 ii 1–2, ed. G. Szabó, *Ein hethitisches Entsühnungsritual für das Königspaar Tuḫaliya und Nikalmati*, THeth 1 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter-Universitätsverlag, 1971) 20f. Note how some Hittite god’s statues are made to be “stuck” into things; see, for example, K. Bittel, *Die Hethiter*, *Universum der Kunst* 24 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1976) 101 figs. 92–93, 147 fig. 148, 148 fig. 149, 227 figs. 262–263. Differently, E. Laroche, *RA* 52 (1958) 161: “pointe, percée,” who thinks that the *išgaratar* of the gods refers to the spear or javelin carried by gods and therefore means “the threat of punishment.” Compare also J. Puhvel, *HED* E-I 418 “sting” > “wrath, vengeance.” However, other starting places in the snake oracles seem to represent positive things. Cf. J. Friedrich, *HW 2.Erg.* (1961) 14 “Durchbohrung, Schlupfloch” (=“hiding place”).

¹²⁰ There is also the AMA.UZU.E.KISIM₅ × Ū.MAŠ, which is still incomprehensible, see *HLK* no. 57.

¹²¹ KUB 18.6 (+?) KUB 49.2.

¹²² A strange intransitive use of *šarā ep*-, see A. Kammenhuber, *HW 2* 2:84.

¹²³ KUB 49.1 iv 24.

¹²⁴ IBoT 1.33, ed. E. Laroche, *RA* 52 (1958) 152–59, see CHD s.v. *munnai*- c.

¹²⁵ Also the unclear *pal-la* TI-ni.

and the three most common places “the king’s home,” “the king’s gate,” “the beam” also appear.¹²⁶ A new place is “the gods’ festivals.” Many gods also appear, some of whom we have seen above and some of whom are new. In addition to the The Great Stormgod, the Sungoddess of Arinna, Hapat and Šarruma, the Stormgod of Aleppo, *IŠTAR*, the Moongod, the Favorable Moongod, the Protective Deity, and the Fates, less well known deities are attested such as the “Stormgod of the Head,” and “^dGAZ.BA.A.A.” Found only as hiding places are locations labeled “importance” and “the importance of so-and so,” i.e. “the importance of the year,” “the importance of a long life,” “the importance of the king’s home,” “the importance of the king’s gate,” “the importance of the Sungoddess of Arinna,” “the importance of the Stormgod of Aleppo,” “the importance of the Stormgod of Kumma,” and “the importance of the Fates,” “the importance of the Favorable Moongod,” and “the importance of the Horsegod.” However, the snake is never attested hiding in “the attachment of the gods,” “the house,” “the hearth,” “the pillar,” or “the dry place,” although this may simply be a due to such a small number of texts. And just as the snake was never initially put down in any place named for one of the bad concepts or ghosts, so it never hid in any of these. While we can presume that passing a place named for something bad negatively affected the outcome, unfortunately not enough of the remaining snake oracles preserve the summarizing outcome “favorable” or “unfavorable” to allow us even to guess at the way in which the results were interpreted.

Here is an example: “If (it signified disaster for the head of the king) in the third year, let it be unfavorable. We named the snake of the head for the Stormgod of the Head. It seized a fish at ‘the king’s gate.’ It ate it at ‘the year.’ Secondly: It came from EGIR.SUM and hid in ‘joy.’ <...> If (it signified disaster for the head of the king) in the fourth year, let it be unfavorable. We named the snake of the head for the king’s house. Holding itself up it hid at ‘the Stormgod of Aleppo.’ Secondly: It came from ‘sickness’ and hid at ‘the festivals of the gods.’ Thirdly: It came from ‘the emplacement(?) of the gods’ and ditto (= hid) at ^dGAZ.BA.A.A.’ Favorable.”¹²⁷

Symbol Oracles

The sixth and last type are the “symbol” oracles.¹²⁸ These were performed by a female practitioner called a *hāšawa*, a title usually written with a word-sign meaning “Old Woman.” Like the male ^{LÚ}HAL/BARŪ, the *hāšawa* or “Old Woman” performed both oracles and magical rites. Like the snake and bird oracles, the symbol oracles appear to be an Anatolian invention.

¹²⁶ Also the unclear *pal-la TI-ni* and AMA.UZU.Ú.MAŠ; see above.

¹²⁷ IBoT 1.33:17–24, ed. E. Laroche, RA 52 (1958) 152, 156.

¹²⁸ These are thoroughly discussed by A. Archi, “Il sistema KIN della divinazione ittita,” *Oriens Antiquus* 13 (1974) 114–144. The Hittites used the Sumerogram KIN to describe these oracles. In Mesopotamian Akkadian, the sign KIN is used for *šipru* “work, message” and *še’u* “to seek” as well as for *amutu* “liver(-oracle)” and *tērtu* “instructions, orders, oracle” (R. Labat, *Manuel d’Épigraphie Akkadienne* [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1952] no. 538). However, the Hittites knew the term *tērtu* and used it to refer exclusively to “flesh”-oracles, for which they never used the term KIN. Outside of oracles, the Hittites used the Sumerogram KIN for the verb *aniya-* “to work, perform, make, treat, etc.” It is also used for the derived nouns *aniyatt-* “work, task, ritual gear” and *aniur* “ritual-performance/treatment.” O. R. Gurney, in *Oracles and Divination* 155, suggests calling them “performance” oracles. There is no justification for the old translation, A. Götze, *Kleinasien* (1933) 140, idem, *Kleinasien*² (1957) 150, A. Kammenhuber, THeth 7:202, “lot oracle.”

The symbol oracle appears to be a cousin of the snake oracles. One symbolically named object was supposed to “take” one to four other symbolically named objects and to “give” them to yet another object. I will refer to these three types of symbols, respectively, as the active symbol, the passive symbol(s), and the receptacle-symbol. Sometimes the active symbol was not recorded, just that the passive symbols “were taken.” On rare occasions, the active symbol took one or more passive symbols, crossed the wall, and then took a few more. The mechanism of these symbol oracles is not at all clear. The most likely suggestion is that the active symbol was some sort of animal. However, since there are many different possible active symbols that seem to randomly perform, how is it that only one active-symbol animal acted at a time while the others sat still until it was their turn, and how is it that the passive symbol picked up and the receptacle selected by any one active symbol are not generally the same? Archi¹²⁹ has plausibly solved these problems with the suggestion that a single animal was released into an enclosure. The animal assumed the name of a particular symbol according to a point crossed or doorway entered as it penetrated into the interior of the enclosure. Having reached the interior, the animal metaphysically “took” the various passive symbols by brushing against them or walking across them. The receptacle symbol would then have been the door through which or the symbol over which the animal exited. If this reconstruction is correct, the Hittites would seem to have invented the rat in the maze experiment.

Certain symbols seem common to all symbol-oracle inquiries. Active tokens found commonly in all types of symbol oracles include deities: ‘the Sungod of Heaven,’ ‘the Stormgod,’ the Grandmother goddess Hannahanna (= ^dMAḪ), “the gods,” “the deity,” concepts: “entirety” and “good” and three less common concepts “evil,” “the big sickness” and “the small sickness,” plus “the dais” and “the king.”

The common receptacle symbols include the same list of deities seen as active symbols: “the Sungod of Heaven,” “the Stormgod,” “Hannahanna,” and “the gods,” but along with “the deity” one also finds “the deity who is angry.” Also the same concepts are seen: “good,” “evil,” “entirety” the “big sickness” and, less commonly, “the small sickness.” “Emptiness,” which occurs in rare instances as an active symbol was a particularly common receptacle. Unknown as an active symbol but very common as a receptacle was “the entire will.” Sometimes for some reason two symbols were treated as one receptacle: “the gods the entire will,” “the deity the entire will,” and “the Fates the entire will.”

“The dais” and “the king,” common as active lots, appear less frequently as receptacles by themselves. However, often the passive symbols are said to be deposited to the right, left or behind a particular receptacle symbol. Of these the common combinations are: “behind the dais,” or “to the left of the king” or “to the right of the king.”

The passive symbols came in an even wider range of possibilities. Some have already been seen as both active and receptacle symbols: “good,” “evil.” The common receptacle-symbol “the entire will” was also a common passive symbol. Many others are only found as passive symbols: “life,” “light,” “fire,” “blood,” “evocation ritual,” “gentleness of the gods,” “protection,” “wellbeing,” “wellbeing of the house,” “wellbeing of the

¹²⁹ OA 13 (1974), 130–131; differently V. Haas, *MDOG*, 128 (1996) 107.

land," "rightness," "sinisterness," "the great misdeed," "secret(?)¹³⁰ misdeed," "secret(?) anger," "the year(s)," "thick-bread and libation vessel." "The dais," so common as an active token, was particularly rare as a passive token. Other common symbols also do not appear, e.g. "entirety" and "emptiness." The various gods seen as both active tokens and receptacle tokens never appear as passive tokens.

The symbols mentioned above are found in inquiries questioning military affairs, wintering, divine anger and cultic problems. There are other symbols, however, that were more or less specific to one type of question.

When ghosts were the subject of the inquiry, "the ghosts" symbol is sometimes to be found among the other active symbols. Active symbols found only in oracles dealing with the military include "Hittite men," "the enemy," "troops," "the country," and "emptiness."

Some receptacle symbols are only found when certain subjects are under scrutiny. Military oracles include "the army," "the Hittite men," "the enemy," "the enemy in the land," "the friend," the "friend in battle," "battle," "the country," "destruction of the enemy," "the left of the Hittites," "the right of the Hittites," "the left of the troops," "the right of the troops," "the left of the king," "the left of the friend," "peace-treaty," "peace treaty for the enemy," "misdeed for the enemy," and "sickness."

Passive symbols found only in cultic texts include: "anger," "anger of the gods," "the good of the land," "the good of the house." "Dreams" and "days" appear as a symbol when the meanings of dreams were being questioned. Oracles dealing with wintering and with the military have only a few symbols in common with each other: "the word" and "long life," "the future." Passive symbols specific to military oracles include: "the army," "campaign," "battle," "destruction," "destruction of battle," "chasing across," "the weapon," "the weapon of the Hittites," "the weapon of the enemy," "fist and bone," "courage(?),"¹³¹ "fire of the Hittites," "fire of the enemy," "friend's campaign," "a friend's rightness," "release," "peace," "gentleness," "gentleness of the Grim Reaper," (^dNAM=Akk. *namtaru*) "gentleness of the troops," "the king's battle," "the king's blood," "the king's campaign," "the king's courage(?)," "the king's rightness," "the king's entire desire," "the king's whole soul," "the seeing eye," "the king's seeing eye," and "all misdeeds." The only god who appears as a passive symbol in any symbol oracle is the war god ZABABA, who appears only in military oracles.

Oracles dealing with divine anger and cultic problems generally have few symbols which are not found in other types of texts. At the other extreme are the military oracles which have active, passive, and receptacle symbols which are not found in other oracle types. Moreover, military oracles have a greater variety of symbols than other oracles; one well preserved text¹³² contains no less than 58 different passive symbols.

In addition to subject-specific symbols, some of which are fairly common within texts dealing with that subject, there were, in all types of symbol oracles, symbols

¹³⁰ *āppan arḫa waštul* consists of two preverbs still clinging to a deverbal noun. It is literally "behind away misdeed" (A. Archi, *OA* 13:128 "indietro/all'indietro via"), which makes little sense. Perhaps "behind away" means "secret."

¹³¹ *muwa-*, following the recent suggestion of F. Starke, "Review of *The Hittite Dictionary* 3/3," *BiOr* 46 (1989) 667–669 ("Mut, Beherztheit, Unerschrockenheit, Wehrhaftigkeit"). It is, in any case, a quality possessed by gods, goddesses, lions, lands, cities, and borders, but not by infants. For references see CHD s.v.

¹³² KUB 5.1 + KUB 52.65, ed. A. Ünal, *THeth* 4 (1974) 32–93, tr. R. Beal, *Ktèma* 24 (1999) 41–54.

reflecting an individual question. The symbol must have been specially inserted into the field for this question or series of questions. For example: in the answers to the question "Will you gods give me the king of Assyria and will I defeat him," "the King of Assyria" was one of the active lots.¹³³ In another text involving Hittite, Babylonian and Assyrian campaigns, "Hannahanna" arose, took 'good' and placed it to the left of 'the King of Assyria.'¹³⁴ In two answers to questions involving Babylonia (Karduniyaš) the "king of Babylonia" appears as the active symbol.¹³⁵ Following one of a series of questions involving a proposed campaign toward the city of Nerik, Nerik appears as the active symbol.¹³⁶ In a series of questions involving a general named Temeti, Temeti appears in one response as the active symbol. In a question involving fighting the people of Mt. Haharwa, "Haharwa-Land" appears as a passive symbol.¹³⁷ In two questions about whether or not someone called "the child" should go on campaign, "the child" appears in one response as the active symbol while in the other one of the passive symbols was "the blood of the child."¹³⁸ "The city" was the active lot in one of several of the introductory questions about wintering in a particular city,¹³⁹ while it was a passive lot in two others.¹⁴⁰ In the answer to one of a series of questions concerning whether a dream truly indicated that a particular city would burn down it is not surprising to find two passive symbols called "the city" and "fire."¹⁴¹ Following the question, If I do so and so, "will the boy get well?", "the boy" appears as one of the passive symbols.¹⁴² In a question concerning "the illness of the daughter of Karduniyaš" (probably Tudḫaliya IV's Kassite-Babylonian wife), "the blood of the daughter of Karduniyaš" occurs as a passive symbol, while "the daughter of Karduniyaš" appears as an active and as a passive symbol.^{142a} Finally, in the questions concerning plants to cure His Majesty's eyes, "the plant" appears several times as the passive symbol.¹⁴³

It can be readily seen that some of the symbols represented positive personages (e.g. the king, the Stormgod) or attributes ("rightness," "good," "release,") while others represented negative personages ("the enemy") or attributes ("sinisterness," "evil"). The oracular answer consisted of an active symbol taking one to six¹⁴⁴ passive ones and giving them to the receptacle symbol. If the active, passive and receptacle tokens were all positive, clearly the oracular result was positive. If a negative symbol took positive symbols and gave them to a positive, the result was still positive. However, a negative result ensued if a positive took negative symbols and gave them to a positive, or a positive

¹³³ KUB 5.17 ii 9–12.

¹³⁴ KUB 22.28 rev. 1–9.

¹³⁵ KUB 18.69:1–5.

¹³⁶ KUB 5.1 iii 84–86, ed. A. Ünal, *THeth* 4 (1974) 78f.

¹³⁷ KUB 5.1 i 1–4.

¹³⁸ KUB 5.1 iv 86–92. That the receptacle symbol in a third response to the "child" question was the unique "King of Tarḫuntašša," may indicate that the "child" in question was Kurunta/Ulmi-Tešub, appanage king of Tarḫuntašša, and nephew and adopted son of Ḫattušili III.

¹³⁹ KUB 5.3 iv 10–12, tr. R. Beal, in *COS* 1 (1997) 211.

¹⁴⁰ KUB 5.4 iii 3–12, 13–14, tr. R. Beal, in *COS* 1 (1997) 211.

¹⁴¹ KUB 5.11 i 44, 47–48.

¹⁴² KUB 22.59 rev.

^{142a} KBo 41.159 + KUB 6.5 rev. 27–34, 40–49.

¹⁴³ KUB 22.61 i 1–13, iv 16–20. A. Archi, *OA* 13 (1974) 116–117 gives a full list of symbols representing elements mentioned in the question.

¹⁴⁴ For an example where six passive symbols are taken, see KUB 22.37 obv. 6–10.

took positive symbols and gave them to a negative or a negative took negative symbols and gave them to a positive. A positive and a negative passive symbol together totaled a negative. The receptacle “emptiness” seems to have reversed any positive or negative given to it: when either a positive or a negative took a negative and put it in emptiness the result was positive, while a positive put into emptiness was negative.¹⁴⁵

Sometimes for a given question, only one active symbol took and gave to a receptacle, but often three, or in rare cases four active symbols in sequence took and gave. The text gave the answer “favorable” or “unfavorable” only for the entire series. The favorableness or unfavorableness of each of the actions appears to have been totaled for the final result. Three favorables or two favorables and an unfavorable meant that the overall result for the question was favorable,¹⁴⁶ and vice versa.

Here is an example: “If you, O god, ditto (approve the campaign we just laid out), let the symbol oracle be favorable. The ‘assembly’ took for itself ‘rightness’ and ‘vigor.’ They are given to ‘the king.’ On the second ‘day’ ‘Hannahanna’ arose and took ‘good’ and ‘ZABABA.’ They are given to ‘the men of Hatti.’ On the third ‘day’ ‘the gods’ arose and took ‘battle’ and ‘the road/campaign.’ (They are placed) behind ‘the dais.’ Favorable. § . . . If you, O god, ditto (approve this campaign we have just laid out), let the symbol oracle be favorable. ‘The king’ took ‘secret misdeed’ and ‘destruction’ and gave them(!) to ‘the men of Hatti.’ Unfavorable.”¹⁴⁷

Use of Different Techniques

As illustrated in the examples cited above, the results of an individual question were checked, usually by using a different type of oracle. Is there any pattern which determined which type of oracles were used to check which other types of oracles? Was any type of oracle preferred for any type of question? The fully preserved tablet detailing suggested military campaigns contains only symbol oracles, until the end where the individual parts of the accepted campaign were checked by flesh-oracles, double checked with a second flesh oracle when the answer of the first flesh oracle seemed at variance with the answer of the symbol oracles, and then checked again with a symbol oracle. Three more fragmentary texts dealing with the military also contain symbol oracles, with frequent checks by first flesh and then by bird oracles. One military inquiry consists of a flesh oracle with checks by bird and symbol oracles. Others seem to be a mixture of symbol and flesh oracles. In one where flesh oracles were used to check the symbol oracles, the flesh oracles on several occasions included a rare sheep-behavior oracle.¹⁴⁸ Several tablets preserve only flesh or only symbol oracles. Finally, there are several military inquiries that appear, as far as preserved, to be bird oracles. Texts on choosing a leader, international politics, and wintering follow the same pattern as the more overtly military inquiries. *HURRI*-bird oracles are notable for their absence.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ For these, see Archi, *OA 13* (1974) 121f.

¹⁴⁶ g-g-g = f, g-g-b = u, g-g-g = f, total f(avorable) (KUB 5.1 iii 37–39).

g-g-0 = u, g-g-g = f, g-g-g = f, total f(avorable) (ibid. iii 61–64).

¹⁴⁷ KUB 22.25 + KUB 50.55 obv. 22–24, 34–35.

¹⁴⁸ KUB 16.29 + KUB 16.81.

¹⁴⁹ Out of some 281 questions answered by *HURRI*-bird oracles, only two may be political or military. In

A similar pattern is seen with texts checking the significance of dreams. In one moderately well preserved text, the initial questions were sometimes answered by flesh and sometimes by symbol oracles. Each was then checked by the other type of oracle and then by a bird oracle.¹⁵⁰

In a well preserved text which asks whether any of eight deities was angry about anything in his temple, the initial question about the anger of each deity was answered by a flesh oracle. Some of the details about specifics were also handled by flesh oracles. However, most of the details and all of the negotiations over rectifying the situation and paying compensation were handled by *HURRI*-bird oracles.¹⁵¹ Similarly, the well-preserved text concerning the anger of the Deity of Arusna sought answers to the important questions concerning divine anger through flesh oracles checked by *HURRI*-bird oracles, while the lesser questions and the negotiations were handled exclusively by the *HURRI*-bird.¹⁵² Another fragment appears to have nothing but *HURRI*-bird oracles except for a final check at the end by flesh and symbol oracles.¹⁵³ Many other texts and fragments containing questions about cultic offenses sought answers via extispicy or by symbols checked by *HURRI*-bird or by exta, symbol, and bird-oracles. One text concerning festivals mixes symbol, bird, and combined exta and sheep-behavior omens.¹⁵⁴ Still, the one most noticeable characteristic of questions of cultic importance is the prevalence of *HURRI*-bird oracle-answers in these matters, and their virtual absence from the other texts cited above.

The questions answered by snake oracles include the checking of a bad unsolicited omen concerning the safety of the king, straightening out the king’s festival schedule, a problem of divine anger and, perhaps, the approval of a new crown prince. Most of the tablets containing snake oracles preserve only snake oracles, although one snake oracle tablet does have the final result at the end of the tablet checked by a symbol oracle and then by a bird oracle.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

A careful study of the numerous records of Hittite oracular inquiries reveals much about divinatory practices. Consideration of the questions and answers increases our understanding of how the oracles were performed and reveals many otherwise unrecorded aspects of Hittite society and cult. Oracles are one of the means the Hittites used to question their gods and so to gain some sense of control over their environment and destiny.

KUB 52.67, “the Land of Egypt” is mentioned in ii 1, 6, but in these paragraphs the oracular method is broken away. Lines 10–11, where the question is broken away preserve a *HURRI*-bird oracle and lines 4–5, where the question is again broken away preserve the remains of a symbol oracle. The other possible exception is ABoT 16, where the lands of Išūwa and Alzi are mentioned in the question answered by a *HURRI*-bird oracle.

¹⁵⁰ KUB 5.11.

¹⁵¹ KUB 5.7, translated by A. Goetze, in *ANET* 497.

¹⁵² KUB 22.70, ed. A. Ünal, *THeth* 6 (1978). The fragmentary KUB 18.25 seems to follow the same pattern.

¹⁵³ KUB 18.63 + KUB 6.29.

¹⁵⁴ KUB 18.11.

¹⁵⁵ KUB 22.38.