

“The Great Sun God Made a Feast” A Mythical *topos* in Hittite Ritual Literature*

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In the myths of the “vanishing god,” the feast organized by the Sun God represents a key moment of the story¹.

In every myth about the disappearance of a god, the episode of the feast, when preserved, is referred to with words analogous to those found in the first version of Telepinu myth:

“The great Sun God made a feast and invited the thousand Gods. They ate but couldn’t get enough. They drank but couldn’t quench their thirst. The Storm God thought about his son Telepinu. ‘My son Telepinu is not there. He became enraged and removed everything good’. The great and the small gods began to search for Telepinu ”².

Just in this moment, when famine and aridity are already spreading throughout the human and divine worlds, the gods understand the cause: Telepinu disappeared and took away with him the wellbeing of the cosmos.

After the description of the god’s wrath and its consequences, the banquet represents the real beginning of the narrative. The gods are not able to enjoy the food, and after understanding that one of them is missing, they discuss possible solutions; and the small and great gods begin to search for the god who disappeared.

These myths are built through a schema of motifs that recurs in every composition³. The chain of happenings is linked by finding and appeasing the vanished god,

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¹ About this motif see Haas – Wilhelm 1974, p. 29. For a general view about these myths see Pecchioli Daddi – Polvani 1990, pp. 57-108.

² CTH 324: § 4-5, 18-24 in the translation of Hoffner Jr. 1990, p. 15.

³ See Pecchioli Daddi – Polvani 1990, p. 58. They enumerate: “ira, allontanamento, rovina, ricerca, magia, placamento, ritorno benessere”.

- 6' [tap-pa-aš-ša¹⁴ te-]ra¹-a-im-ma-an-za a-ú-i-ti pa-t[a ku-iš a-ri-it-ti]¹⁵
 7' *the line is erased*
-
- 8' [du-ú-wa-az-za-aš ti-ya-am-me-iš a-ú-i-ti pa-an[-
 9' [a-ú-i-ti pa-an ku-iš a-ri-i-it-ti]
-
- 10' [ŠA DUMU.LÚ.U₁₉.L]U-kán SAG.DU-SÚ a-ú-i-ti pa-ra¹ [ku-iš a-ri-it-ti]
-
- 11' [A.AB.BA-in a-li-i]n kur-ša-ú-na-an-ti-in-zi¹⁶ a-ri-i[n-ta
 12' []x a-ap-pu-wa-ni-in-zi a-a-ri-in-t[a]
-
- 13' [tap-pa-aš-š]a *erasure* te-ra-a-im-ma-an-za dIŠKUR-za d¹[
 14' [a-a-ri-]in- ta [
-
- 15' [du-ú-]wa-az-za-an ti-ya-am-me-in DINGIR^{LUM}RA-BU-Ú[dU.GUR (?)¹⁷
 16' [ti-y]a-am-ma-aš-ši-iš-ḥa dUTU-wa-za a-ri-in[-ta]
-
- 17' []GIŠar-ta-an-na-al-li-iš a-ri-i[t-ta
 18' []ḥar-ma-ḥi-in ḥu-pa-al[-li-i]š[
 19' [(-)]al-ma-at-ta-an pa-an [

The [deep] se[a]¹⁸ comes, and who will take care of it? [.....] comes, and who will take care of it? / The t. [sky] comes, and [who will take care of i]t? The wide earth comes, and who will take care of it? / [.....] comes, and who will take care of it? / The head of the mortal comes, and [who] will take care of it? / The islands took care of the [deep se]a, a. took care of the [.....]. / The Storm God and the [Sun (?)] god took care of the [t. sky]. The Great god [Nergal (?)] and the Sun Goddess of the Earth took care of the wide earth¹⁹, / a. took care of the [.....], the skin of the head (?) took care of the head of the [mortal].

The third column of the reverse preserves instead the episode of the gods' feast and of the neglected deity:

Rev. III²⁰

- 4' []x-ša *erasure* a-an-na-an pa-a-ḥu-u-ur¹ [
 5' []x pa-al-pa-ti-it-ta-ri a-na-a-it-¹ta¹-r[i]
-
- 6' [pa-]a ta-ap-pa-aš-ša wa-an-da-ni-ya-an-za ta-pi-
 7' DINGIRMEŠ-in-zi pu-u-na-ti-in-za²¹ *erasure* 3-ŠU tar-ši-y[a-an-ta]
-
- 8' dUTU-wa-az dKam-ru-še-pa-i da-u-e-ya-an ma-am-ma[-an-na-at-ta]
 9' za-a-ni-wa ku-wa-ti dKam-ru-še-pa a-wa ku-wa-ti na-a[wa]
-
- 10' URU¹Ta-¹ú-ri¹-ši-iz-za-aš wa-aš-ḥa-az-<za-aš> dLAMMA-aš *erasure*²²
 dUTU-ti-i da-a-ti-i tar-kum-mi-i[-ta]
-
- 11' dUTU-wa-ti *erasure* EZEN-in a-a-ta²³ a-wa-ti za-ri-e[-ya-an-za]
 12' ¹a¹-wa-ti a-li-in-za *erasure* ḤUR.SAGḪLA-ti-in-za *erasure* KIMIN *erasure*
-
- 13' [a-w]a-ti a-li-in a-la-aš-ša-am-me-in KIMIN a-wa-t[i]
 14' [-g]a-ta-ga-na-an KIMIN a-wa-ti KASKALḪLA-wa-an-za
 ḥa-r[u-wa-an-ni-in-za KIMIN]
-
- 15' [a-wa-ti]i IDḪLA-in-za *erasure* ḥa-pi-in-ni-in-za KIMIN a-wa-t[i]
 16' [SAG.D]U-aš-ša-an-za IGḪLA-wa-aš-ša-an-za GIG-an-za na-a-wa
 [KIMIN]

"Under [...] the fire [...] burns and *consumes*²⁴ / And the shining sky t. [...]. All the gods vomited three times / The Sun God looked towards Kamrušepa: "Why is this? Kamrušepa, why is it not (that)?²⁵" / The holy Tutelary Deity of Tauriša reported to the Sun God, the father: "<The Storm God> made a feast <<for the Sun God>>(?)²⁶. He invited the z. [...]²⁷, he invited the high mountains / he invited the deep sea (?), he invited the [...], he invited the paths and the roads, he invited the rivers and the creeks, the illness of the head and of the eyes he did not invite.

¹⁴ In the gap should be probably emended the sky. See also Melchert 1993, 227.

¹⁵ According to Melchert 1993, 161.

¹⁶ Starke, *StBoT* 31, pp. 535-536.

¹⁷ I suggest Nergal for its connection with the underworld also in this cultural tradition. See Starke 1985, pp. 210-211. Houwink ten Cate 1994, cl. 257.

¹⁸ But see Starke 1990, p. 374 with footnote 1346, according to whom *ala-* means "sea". Compare Melchert 1993, p. 6 with reference to Watkins 1986, p. 59 (with footnote 29). The sea is quite possible as mentioned element, since in l. 11' it is said that this element (again the word is lost in the gap) will be cured by the islands. See also footnote 13.

¹⁹ Here is clearly represented the motif of the division of earth and sky among the deities. See Otten – Siegelová 1970, pp. 32-38.

²⁰ See Otten 1953, pp. 97-98, Starke 1985, pp. 236-239. See also the comment of Meriggi 1957, pp. 213-218.

²¹ Starke 1985, p. 238 takes this form as scribal mistake for *pu-u-na-ti-in-zi* in accordance to the preceding term DINGIRMEŠ-in-zi. Here I follow his suggestion but see also Yacubovich 2008, p. 34 with footnote 16. He suggests that DINGIRMEŠ-in-zi could be a scribal modification for DINGIRMEŠ-in-za. He observes however that the context is too fragmentary for a stating of his hypothesis.

²² These last two words are written over the paragraph divider.

²³ Laroche 1954, c. 124.

²⁴ About the verb *ana-i-* see Starke 1990, p. 158.

²⁵ Compare this sentence with the Hittite parallel in I 19'.

²⁶ It is possible that the scribe made a mistake and forgot to insert the mention of the Storm God, who is the organizer of the feast (obv. I 21'). It seems not possible that the Lamma of Tauriša would report to the Sun God a feast organized for him. For this reason I suggest that this form is a scribal mistake. See Meriggi 1957, p. 213. See also Laroche 1959, p. 160.

²⁷ See Melchert 1993, p. 279.

KUB 58.94 Vs. I // KUB 57.79³⁹

- 7' ...UM-MA dUTU ki-i-wa ku-ir' [...] [...]
 8' nu-wa-za da-pí-an-du-uš DINGIRMEŠ-uš ḫal-zi-iḫ-ḫu-un
 9' nu-wa-za da-pí-an-du-uš DUMUMEŠ.LÚ.U₁₉.LU [ḫal-zi-iḫ-ḫu-un
 EN.SISKUR-ma⁴⁰]
 10' me-cr-ta-at...

“Thus (spoke) the Sun God: “Why is this [...] ? I invited all the gods and I invited all the mortals, but [the ritual client] disappeared...”

Meetings between gods and humans in Hittite mythology are quite rare⁴¹. The most well known Hittite episode concerns the alliance of Inara with the mortal Hupašiya and has a tragic end. The hero misses the human world and for that is punished to death by the goddess⁴².

The *historiola* of the feast in CTH 395 could explain the illness of the patient and the consequent ritual performance: although invited to the gathering, the client doesn't appear, thus provoking the anger of the Sun God. The story is inserted at the beginning of the ritual, after the preparation of offerings on the roof of the house for the Sun God (here surely the Luwian god Tiwad)⁴³, and it represents its *aition*. In the second column of KBo 11.14 different seeds and precious materials are offered to the deity in exchange for the recovery of the ritual client (KBo 11.14 II 6 ff.)⁴⁴.

Jared Miller rightly argues that this ritual preserves several themes common to this old Hittite-Luwian tradition⁴⁵. Another motif is the invocation of the deity Kamrušepa: “They are not my [words]. They are the words of the Sun God and of Kamrušepa”⁴⁶. It is clear that this cultural tradition had as its most typical feature the inclusion of mythologems connected with these two gods acting as husband and wife⁴⁷, often

³⁹ For a transliteration of KUB 58.94 see García Trabazo – Groddek 2005, p. 240-241.

⁴⁰ Emended on the basis of KUB 57.79 rev. 12.

⁴¹ For an analysis of this pattern in Hittite, Mesopotamian and Syrian mythology see Brison 2007, pp. 67-74. See also Bachvarova 2005, pp. 45-58.

⁴² Pecchioli – Polvani 1990, 50 ff. Another significant contact between humans and gods (in a different cultural milieu than the one here considered) is represented in the Hurro-Hittite bilingual text, in which the Storm god instructs Megi, king of Ebla, to release the people of Ikinkališ (KBo 32.19, Neu 1996, pp. 378-395. See also Beckman 2005, pp. 255-263).

⁴³ About Tiwad see Hutter 2003, pp. 224-230.

⁴⁴ A further possibility is that the man does not participate in the feast because he is ill. As in the case of the disappearance of Telepinu, it is during the gathering that the Sun God notices his absence and understands that something is wrong in the world. In this case we would have a stricter parallelism with the myths of the vanishing gods. However I prefer the first suggested possibility because of the offer presented in the following part of the ritual to the Sun God in exchange for the patient's life: for ex.: KBo 11.14 II 8: “Take the gold, but give me back the patient!...”. See Člal 1995, p. 19 ff.

⁴⁵ Miller 2006, pp. 447-452.

⁴⁶ KBo 11.14 II 24-25. See also Starke 1985, p. 207. It seems that this couple in Hittite magical rituals plays a very similar role to the couple Marduk and Ea (or better Ašarluḫi and Enki; see about this Sanders 2001, p. 429 with footnote 1).

⁴⁷ Archi 1993, pp. 404-409.

accompanied by the deity Ḫapantali⁴⁸. A difference exists, however, between the myths of the vanishing god and rituals analyzed above: the feast is not only the moment when the gods understand the danger – it represents the place of the accident itself.

All the collected examples pertain to the Hittite Luwian substrate in which the central northern area is probably the original core of this tradition⁴⁹. The deity Kamrušepa is part of the pantheon of Kaneš⁵⁰. The city of Tauriša, place of the Tutelary Deity (son of the goddess and of the Sun God Tiwad) has to be located in the vicinity of Zippalanda⁵¹.

The story of the feast is developed in every composition – both in myths of vanishing gods and in rituals – in a formally similar way: dUTU-uš=(wa)=za / dIM=za EZEN₄-an iyat; X ḫalzaiš.... Y ḫalzaiš... (var. *kallešta*) „The Sun God / the Storm God made a feast: X he invited.... Y he invited“. The most significant discrepancies involve who is invited and which entity disappears or is neglected. In this cultural milieu the transmission and the use of the magical practices was essentially based on the oral system, in which the different spells were memorized, repeated and adapted to different situations. Surely the written version of these stories is the last stage of a system of transmission in which the same motif, with all its variations and changes, was a part of the Anatolian collective memory⁵². Only later in the Hittite archives was this tradition canonized by the scribes. They then used these *historiolae* to enrich different compositions⁵³.

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⁴⁸ Haas 2002, pp. 143-146.

⁴⁹ See I. Yacubovich 2008, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁰ See Klinger 1996, p. 157.

⁵¹ Haas 1994, p. 816.

⁵² See Francia 2004, 390-408, especially pp. 391-392. See recently Archi 2007, pp. 185-203, about the relationship between oral and written tradition among Hittites. Oettinger suggests the existence of an original “Basisstruktur” from which rituals and myths would have developed. Oettinger 2004, pp. 347-356. About the relationship between orality and scripture and the strategies of the human memory see Goody 1981, pp. 105-107.

⁵³ This can be the case, for example, of the Ḫantitaššu ritual. Here the image of the gods' feast is embedded in a complex ritual which also preserves incantations and spells present in other rituals and prayers. See Torri 2003, pp. 216-222.

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