

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE WOMEN IN THE HITTITE TEXTS

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Hattuša, the capital of the Hittite Kingdom for many years, was endowed with a royal archive-library, with documents from several locations. The contents of the archive-library are indicated by archaeological findings recovered at various sites and provide us with certain clues. Cuneiform tablets recovered at different places relate to the palace dwellers, which include the royalty, palace officials and temple functionaries rather than the citizenry. The only documents that pertain to the people are the laws of the *Hatti* Land and several documents on land donations.

According to the Hittite laws, the community comprises two large classes: namely, free peoples and slaves. Therefore, it is pertinent to study the women within these two separate groups.¹

The best example of a free woman in the Hittite Kingdom is the queen. The role of the queen in the Hittite community is very important. One cuneiform text indicates that a queen reigns single-handedly.² The queen was omnipresent at religious ceremonies held at temples, at festivals and at official receptions at the court. The queen could accompany the king at certain ceremonies e.g. some ceremonies held in the palace; or, she could attend certain ceremonies without his presence, for example at some sacrificial ceremonies in the temples.

The status of a Hittite queen was quite different compared to her contemporaries in the Egyptian and the Mesopotamian Kingdoms. The Hittite queen enjoyed an equal status to the king, which gave her the authority to rule the country jointly. She could dictate foreign policy in certain instances in accordance with her authority in international law and her position as an independent woman representative.

In the event of the death of the king, her eldest son succeeded to the throne during whose reign, her authorities in various areas continued

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¹ F. Kinal, *Eski Anadolu'da Kadınlar Mevkii*, «Belleten» XX Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi Ankara (1956) 360

² (The Decree of Telepinu), KBo III+. . . obv. I. § 16, I. Hoffmann, *Der Erlass Telepinu*, THeth 11, 22-23

as “the Grand Queen” (MUNUS.LUGAL.GAL) or “Dominating Queen” (*Tawananna*).

Stamp seals and seal impressions engraved with the names of certain grand queens and their husband, the great kings, in Hittite-Luwian hieroglyphic characters have been discovered.

Puduhepa, who was the wife of *Hattušili* III. (c. 1275-1250 B.C.), was a queen with quite a striking personality, which is narrated in various documents, allowing us to understand her personality. Her interesting personality and strong character are vividly depicted in the texts of a great number of letters, prayers, texts of sacrifice and religious festivals which were written under her orders. In addition to the above, there are legal documents belonging to *Puduhepa* bearing the origins of Boğazköy and Ras Shamra-Ugarit in Syria. The name of the queen is cited in many official documents, which describe the affairs of her husband *Hattušili* III. Other kings of the Hittite Kingdom introduce their actions with the formula: “PN, the great king, king of the country of *Hatti* (speaks) thus!” etc. However, a copy of a short form of a document written by this couple begins with an unorthodox introduction mentioning Queen *Puduhepa*, also:³

“Thus (speaks)! The Majesty *Hattušili*, the Great King, king of the *Hatti* land, son of *Muršili*, the great king, king of the *Hatti* land, grandson of *Šuppiluliuma*, the great king, king of the *Hatti* land, descendants of *Hattušili*, king of *Kuššara* city, and (as follows) the words of *Puduhepa*, the Great Queen, the queen of the *Hatti* land”.

The power of *Puduhepa* is exemplified in a certain incident between her and the head-scribe *Walwa-ziti*, who was assigned to the capital city *Hattuša* (the duty of being a scribe was one of the more important professions of that era).⁴ This incident is inferred from information placed at the end of the tablets, the so called colophon, as library or archive data⁵ quoting the name of the Queen in a reproachful manner, contrary to the usual style for all scribes under his supervision. *Puduhepa* apparently give the assignment to the head-scribe to research for the

³ KBo VI 29+1380/u (ZA 61/II, 234; ZA 62/II, 230)+.... obs. I 1-5 (CTH 85) A. Götze, *Hattušiliš*, MVAeG 29/I Leipzig (1925) 44; M. Darga, *Eski Anadolu'da Kadın*, Istanbul (1976) 41.

⁴ C. Karasu, “Some Considerations on Hittite Scribes”, «Archivum Anatolicum» 1, Ankara (1995) 117-121.

⁵ C. Karasu, “Some Remarks on Archive-Library Systems of *Hattuša*-Boğazköy”, «Archivum Anatolicum» 2, Ankara 1996 (1997) 39-59.

Kizzuwatna tablets of the (*h*)*išuwa* festival⁶ with a statement the translation of which is as follows:

“When queen *Puduhepa* (having) assigned *Walwaziti*, the head of the scribes, to research the *Kizzuwatna* tablets at *Hattuša*. Later on, he had the copies of these tablets of the (*h*)*išuwa* festival made on the same day”.

The fact that most of the copies had to be made on the same day can be construed as an indication of her power.

Reference is made above to free or slave women of the community only recognized in the “Hittite Laws”. Some examples of interest from the Hittite Laws which are related to sexual offences are as follows:⁷

-§ 193: ‘If a man possesses a woman (as his wife) and the man dies, his brother shall take his widow as wife. (If the brother dies,) his father shall take her. When afterwards his father dies, his (i.e. the father’s) brother shall take the woman whom he had. (There is) no offence (for this action)’.

-§ 195a: ‘If a man sleeps with his brother’s wife, but his brother is alive, it is an unpermitted sexual pairing. -§ 195b: If a (free) man possesses a free woman (as his wife), and if he has sexual intercourse with her (wife’s) daughter, it is an unpermitted sexual pairing. -§ 195c: If (a man) possesses her (a woman’s) daughter as his wife, and has sexual intercourse with her (wife’s) mother or her sister, it is an unpermitted sexual pairing’.

-§ 197: ‘If a man seizes / rapes a woman on the mountain, it is the man’s offence, and he shall be put to death, but if he seizes / rapes her in the (usual) habitat / house, it is woman’s offence, (and) the woman shall be put to death. If the man (i.e. husband of the woman) finds them, and he kills them. (There is) no offence (for) his (action)’.

The context goes on as follows:

-§ 198: ‘If he brings them to the palace gate (i.e. the royal court) and says (thus): “Let my wife not be put to death”, and he lets his wife live, also lets the man who commits adultery / lover⁸ live. Then he (may) veil(s) her (his wife).⁸ If he says (thus): “Let both of them be put to

⁶ C. Karasu, “(*h*)*išuwa* Bayramı Kolofonları Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler”, *Hittite and Other Anatolian and Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Sedat Alp*, Ankara (1992) 335-339.

⁷ Cf. J. Friedrich, *Die Hethitischen Gesetze*, Leiden (1959) 84-87; F. Imparati, *Le Leggi Ittite*, 174-181 Roma (1964); H. A. Hoffner Jr., *The Laws of The Hittites*, A Critical Edition, Leiden-New York-Köln (1997) 156-157.

⁸ See M. Tsevat, *The Husband Veils a Wife* (Hittite Laws, §§ 197-98), *JCS* 27 (1975) 235-240; H. A. Hoffner, Jr. Ibid. in commentary, 226.

death”, and let them agree / comply with the court / punishment of (the king). The king (either) kills them, or lets them live’.

The administration of the Hittite state was based on a kind of feudal establishment appropriate to its structure, in other words the Hittite state consisted of certain small feudal kingdoms. *Hayaša* was one of these small kingdoms. Although its location is not certain, it was probably somewhere in east Anatolia. The Hittite King *Šuppiluliuma* I. (c. 1344-1322 B.C.), in order to strengthen the treaty made between *Huqqana*, the king of *Hayaša*, gave his sister to the latter king as his wife. However, in the text of the treaty terms are put forward in such a way as to protect the rights of his sister as a spouse, since the traditions and customs of the two countries were separate. This text gives very important clues to wards understanding the communal structure of the Hittites and comparing it with other communities.

The Text is: (CTH 42) KBo V 3+.... rev. III lines: 25-66 and dupl. KBo XXIX 44+KUB XIX 24+KUB XIV 6+KBo XXII 40+....rev. lines: 14-50. (J. Friedrich, *Staatsverträge des Hatti-Reiches in hethitischer Sprache I, Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft* 34/1, Leipzig (1930) 124-9; H. Otten, *ZA* 62/1, 102-3; English translation: some lines, CHD Vol. L-N Fas. 4, 387a, 390b; G. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, (2nd ed.) Atlanta, Georgia (1999) 31 f.).⁹

The translation of the text is as follows:

‘Furthermore, this sister whom I, My Majesty, have given to you as your wife has many sisters from her own family as well as from her extended family. They belong to your extended family because you have

⁹ Cf. translations of the some sentences. Here, it is necessary to pay attention to lines: 61-65 of KBo V 3+....rev. III and dupl. KBo XXIX 44+KUB XIX 24+KUB XIV 6+KBo XXII 40+....rev. lines: 46-49. As it is known, in the context of this part of the treaty, *Šuppiluliuma* I. has given his sister to *Huqqana* as a wife. It is also understood that it is necessary to purify *Huqqana* from his earlier unpleasant sexual behaviour, which is not tolerated by the Hittites. Moreover, the rights of the sister of *Šupp.* I. as spouse are in question. Therefore, these should be considered in translating the text. The transliteration of this part of the text is as follows:

61' [(ke-e-e)]z-ma-kán I-NA É.GAL^{LM}-ya ša-ra-a i-ḫ[(a-at-ḫ)]i

62' [(nu) a-pa-a-a]t ut-tar Ú-UL a-a-ra ŠA KUR^{URU} Az<-zi>-ḫ[(a-az MUN)]US nam-ma A-NA DAM-UT-TIM

63' [ḫe-e da-at-ti a-pu-u-un-na-za a[(r-ha da-a-ḫ)]i ka-ru-ú-za

64' kú-in har-ši^{MUNUS} NAP-TIR₅<TI-KA>-ma-at-ta a-a-ra e-eš-kán-zi

65' DAM-an-ma-an-za le-e i-ya-ši.

Besides, it is also necessary to take into consideration in the reading of the verb on line 64: (i.e.) e-eš-kán-zi (It.-dur. Prs. Pl. 3) see H. Kronasser, *Etymologie der Hethitischen Sprache*, Bd. 1 Wiesbaden (1966) 553, and see for the form N. Oettinger, *Die Stammbildung des hethitischen Verbums*, Nürnberg (1979) 323.

taken their sister. But for *Hatti* it is a (very) important custom that a brother does not take his sister or female cousin (sexually). It (is) not (something) right / honest. In *Hatti* (in the text: *Hattuša*) whoever commits such an act does not remain alive but is put to death (here). Because your country is ignorant / barbaric, it is in conflict^(?) / contradiction^(?). (In your country) a brother quite regularly takes his sister or female cousin. But in *Hatti* (in the text: *Hattuša*) it (is) not (something) right / honest’.

The context is as follows with the other paragraphs:

‘And if anytime your wife’s sister or the wife of a brother (or) a female cousin comes to you, give her (something) to eat and drink. (Both of) you eat, drink (and) make merry! But you shall not desire to take her (sexually). It (is) not (something) right, and (people) are put to death as a result of that act. You shall not initiate it of your own accord, and if someone else leads you astray to such an act, you shall not listen to him (or her). You shall not do it. It (i.e. this problem) shall be placed under oath for you’.

And goes on:

‘Beware of a woman of the palace. Whatever sort of palace woman she might be, whether a free woman or a lady’s maid, you shall not approach her, and shall not go near her. You shall not speak a word to her. Your slave or your slave girl shall not go near her. Beware of her (i.e. slave girl). When you see a palace woman, jump far out of the way and leave her a broad path. Beware of the word of a (palace) woman very much’.

After these lines, an old and true story must have been narrated.

‘Who was *Mariya*, and for what reason did he die? Did not a lady’s maid walk by and (did) he (not) glance at her? But (at that moment) the father of My Majesty himself was looking away out of the window and caught him in his offence, (and saying thus:) “You! Why did you glance at her? So he died for that reason. The man perished just for glancing from afar. You also beware (of such a thing) very much’.

And the text goes on with other demands:

‘When you go to the country of *Hayaša*, you shall no longer take (sexually) the wives of your brother, (that is,) your sister(s). In *Hatti* (in the text: *Hattuša*) it (is) not (something) right / honest. As from this moment, (if) you come (in the text: go) up (here) to the palace, [suc]h (in the text: [tha]t) incident (is) not right / honest. You shall not hereafter take the woman from the country of *Azzi* as wife. Abandon her completely. Formerly, the woman whom you had (in the text: have), (the people who) are making (it a gossip that, she is) your concubine (are) right. (Because of it,) however, you shall not make her your spouse. And

take your daughter away from *Mariya* (this must have been another man of the same name mentioned above)¹⁰ give her to (another) man'.¹¹

Finally, the translation is given below of the intact parts of a note, which could be qualified as a private letter, unearthed at the Maşat-Höyük excavations. This letter is the text of HKM 81 (Mšt. 75/64) which was published by my tutor, Professor Alp in 1991.¹² The letter is sent by *Tarhunmiya* assigned as a clay tablet scribe probably in *Hattuša* or *Šapinuwa*,¹³ to *Pallanna* whom he addresses as father and also to mother who lives in *Tapigga* (the Maşat-Höyük). According to Alp to his wife named *Manni*¹⁴ and to his colleague *Uzzu*, assigned as an official scribe at the Maşat-Höyük, in order to read the letter to these people. The translation of intact parts of the letter is as follows:

- 1 To (my) lord, my dear father and to my lady, my dear mother,
2-3 tell! Your son *Tarhu[unm]*ya (says) thus:
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- 4 Let everything be goo[d] in the presence of my lord (my father)!
- 5 Let the thousand deities keep you in life!
- 6 And let them hold your hands (arms) by surrounding (firmly)
- 7 let them hold you well and
- 8 let them protect you (line 7).
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- 9 Let them bless you with life (and) health,
- 10 soundness, long life,
- 11 love of deiti[es],
- 12 sympathy of deities,
- 13 mirth to your he[a]rt (line 12)!
- 14-15 Let them bestow you whatever you wi[sh].
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- 16-17 My dear father, you always write to me your goodness/greetings.

After these come the broken parts of the tablet. Following the 24th line the scribe goes on to the second part of the letter. More exactly, he placed a note to his colleague.

¹⁰ For further information about the two Mariyas see O. Carruba, "Die Hajasa-Verträge Hattis", *FsOtten*² 67 ff.

¹¹ Here the sign "ŠEŠ¹-ni", might have been read as "LÚ-ni". See also SV I, 128 f. note 12 and cf. 129 f. note 9 and H. Otten-C. Rüster, *ZA* 62/1, 103.

¹² S. Alp, *Hethitische Briefe aus Maşat-Höyük*, Ankara (1991) 272-274; also cf. F. Imparati, "Observations on a Letter from Maşat-Höyük", (*Gs Emin Bilgiç*) «Archivum Anatolicum» 3, Ankara 1997 (1998) 203²⁶.

¹³ See for details S. Alp, *Ibid.* 96-98 and F. Imparati, *Ibid.* 204-205.

¹⁴ S. Alp, *Ibid.* 78, 83.

PROLEGOMENA ZU EINER HETHITISCHEN WIRTSCHAFTSGESCHICHTE

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In mehreren Arbeiten hat Fiorella Imparati, deren ehrendem Andenken dieser Beitrag gewidmet sei, Themen aus dem Bereich der hethitischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialstruktur behandelt.¹ In diesem Zusammenhang hat sie mit Recht darauf hingewiesen, dass für das hethitische Herrschaftssystem eine Bezeichnung als "feudal" nicht zutreffend sein kann.² Wenn es dennoch einige äußere Übereinstimmungen gibt, so nicht aufgrund einer entsprechend definierenden Grundstruktur der Gesellschaft, sondern aus einigen Ähnlichkeiten im Bereich der Herrschaftsausübung durch die hethitischen Großkönige. Diese äußerten sich u.a. in der Form, in der die Zentralgewalt versuchte, weiter entfernte Territorien direkt in das System staatlicher Organisation einzubeziehen. Daraus ergab sich ein spezifisches Verhältnis von Herrschaft und Unterwerfung, das sich von anderen Organisationsformen staatlicher Macht im Alten Orient, etwa denen Ägyptens und Babyloniens, unterschied und eher an die des Mitanni-Staates angenähert werden könnte.³ Ein Grund dafür darf wohl in der Struktur der hethitischen Wirtschaft gesucht werden, die bislang in der Forschung zwar in einem halben Hundert von Veröffentlichungen in

¹ Vgl. etwa "Una concessione di terre da parte di Tudhaliya IV": *RHA* 32 (1974) 1-210; "Aspects de l'organisation de l'état hittite dans les documents juridiques et administratifs": *JESHO* 25 (1982) 225-267; "Interventi di politica economica dei sovrani ittiti e stabilità del potere", in: *Stato, Economia, Lavoro nel Vicino Oriente antico*, Milano 1988, 225-239; "Miete (bei den Hethitern)": *RIA* VIII (1993-97) 184-187, etc.

² F. Imparati, "Lebenswesen", in: *RIA* VI/7-8 (1983) 543-547 sowie schon in *JESHO* 25 (1982) 225-267. Vgl. dazu auch H.A. Hoffner, in: M.T. Roth (ed.), *Law collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*. Writings from the Ancient World. Society and Biblical Literature, 6 (1959) 213 ff., der darauf verwies, dass das Modell des mittelalterlichen Europa auf die hethitische Gesellschaft nicht übertragbar sei, sowie A. Archi, *SMEA* 18 (1977) 1-18 und zuletzt dazu R. Haase, *ZAR* 2 (1996) 135-139, der statt "Lehen" die Bezeichnung "Dienstleihe" oder "bäuerliche Dienstleihe" vorschlägt. I.M. Diakonoff, in: *Stato Economia Lavoro nel Vicino Oriente antico*, Milano 1988, 7 f. rechnete die hethitische Gesellschaft dem "dritten Weg" der sozialen Entwicklung in Alten Orient zu.

³ Dazu, wie sich bei der Einbeziehung Syriens in das mitannische, hethitische und ägyptische Herrschaftsgebiet diese spezifischen Herrschaftsformen artikulierten, vgl. demnächst H. Klengel, *Internationaler Kongress für Hethitologie*, Würzburg 1999.