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Source: *Numen*, Vol. 16, Fasc. 2 (Sep., 1969), pp. 81-98

Published by: BRILL

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HITTITE ROYAL PRAYERS

BY

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An important kind of texts among the many religious texts found at the German excavations in Bogazköy-Hattusas, the Hittite capital, are the royal prayers. In his "Catalogue des Textes Hittites" E. Laroche has given an enumeration of these compositions under the more general heading of "Hymnes et Prières." ¹⁾ The same author published an excellent study of the Hittite prayer in general called "La Prière hittite: vocabulaire et typologie." ²⁾ Nevertheless the royal prayers form an interesting subject for further study, because they constitute a special genre of great importance for the religious feeling and way of thinking of the Hittites and also because next to purely historical texts they are of great significance for the history of the Hittite New Empire (1450-1200 B.C.). This study aims only at a short evaluation of the contemporary achievements in this interesting field.

Many of these royal prayers have already been published in a philological edition. The prayers of Mursilis II devoted to the Plague which ravaged the country for no less than twenty years and also dealing with external difficulties are available in two large studies, "Die Pestgebete des Mursilis" by A. Götze ³⁾ and „Hittite Prayers of Mursili II" by O.R. Gurney. ⁴⁾ In "Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament" A. Götze presented a number of translation in the chapter "Hittite Prayers." ⁵⁾

1) E. Laroche, *Catalogue des Textes Hittites* II, *Revue Hittite et Asiatique* fasc. 59 (1956), pp. 114-116, nos. 272-291.

2) *École pratique des Hautes Études*, Ve Section, *Sciences Religieuses*; Annuaire tome LXXII (1964/5), pp. 3-29.

3) *Kleinasiatische Forschungen* I, Weimar, 1927-1930, pp. 161-251.

4) *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* XXVII (1940), pp. 3-163.

5) J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton, 1950, pp. 393-400 (translations of Cat. 275, 277, 279.2, 282, 283 A and C, 285 and 287). See, too, G. Furlani, *La Religione degli Hittiti*, Bologna, 1936, pp. 262-280.

The Hittites themselves called such a text an *arkuwar* after the most important section in which the king justifies himself in a plea directed to the Gods. This pleading forms the central part of a greater composition consisting generally of a number of independent parts: address — hymn of praise — transitional passage — prayer proper in several sections. The *arkuwar* belongs to the prayer proper. The climax of the argument precedes the end of the main part which is usually concluded with smaller components, prayers for blessing or intercession and once an afterthought.⁶⁾ This structural build-up is considered to be of Mesopotamian origin and is derived from the Accadian incantation.⁷⁾ This complex structure made it possible for the scribes to be inspired during their work by the corresponding replicas of older texts. The preceding remarks are meant to give the reader an added sensitivity to the rhetorical phrasing and the transparent construction of these prayers.

In a prominent section of his above-mentioned study Laroche has outlined the background and function of this type of prayer starting out from a penetrating analysis of the profane use of the term *arkuwar*.⁸⁾ As a servant approaches his master in order to justify himself, as a vassal-prince in conflict with a colleague argues his personal view of the case in the presence of the sovereign king, in such a way the Hittite king and with him often the queen addresses the Sun-goddess of Arinna or the Storm-god of Hatti, the most important Gods of the Pantheon, or the Gods in general. The concept of a political letter written by a Hittite king to Salmanassar I (1274-1245 B.C.) may be used to illustrate the meaning of this Hittite stem and also forms a good trait d'union to the religious uses of both the verb *arkuwai-* and the noun *arkuwar*.⁹⁾ The Hittite king writes in this concept meant to be sent in Accadian translation: "And since you will *plead your*

6) The structure of the royal prayers was first determined by Gurney, *l.c.*, pp. 11-12 with respect to the compositions of Cat. 282 and 283. See with respect to Cat. 274-276 H. G. Güterbock in his article "The Composition of the Hittite Prayers to the Sun," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* LXXVIII (1958), pp. 237-245.

7) Cf. Güterbock, *l.c.*, p. 242.

8) Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, section 3, p. 14 ff.

9) See H. Otten, *Archiv für Orientforschung* XXII (1968/9), pp. 112-113 referring to 679/z.

cause to the Gods, as soon as they bring you this tablet, read it aloud in the presence of the great Gods.”¹⁰⁾

Laroche who, in my opinion, rightly stresses the juridical background to both terms, is perhaps too specific in his translations, *arkuwai-* “s’excuser, plaider” and *arkuwar* “défense contre une accusation, excuse d’une faute, plaidoyer justificatif.”¹¹⁾ It is not to be excluded that the terms could also be used in a positive sense, “to argue”, “to plead” (*arkuwai-*) and “argument”, “proposition” (*arkuwar*). The verb *arkuwai-* is used not only when someone offers an apology but also in explaining one’s merits or complaining about injustice. But for these prayers in which often a feeling of guilt is expressed, if not with respect to the deeds of the king himself then in connection with those of his predecessor, Laroche’s translations make good sense.

In contrast to the royal prayers spoken in times of adversity or mental distress, the purely historical texts present an uninterrupted and well-balanced record of the past. Nevertheless there are strong indications that also the historical texts just as the treaties and other law-texts which needed a religious sanction were deposited before the Gods in the temple.¹²⁾ The royal prayers derive their historical importance from the obvious fact that the utterances are done in a spirit of repentance and honesty more so than in the historical texts. Both types reached their literary apex during the reign of Mursilis II (\pm 1340-1310 B.C.). Then the scribes for the first time achieved historical compositions dedicated to a central theme.¹³⁾ The Plague Prayers

10) Cf. Otten, *l.c.*

11) Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 15 and *passim*.

12) See with respect to the historical texts the colophon of KBo V 6 (manuscript A for fragment 28 of the “Deeds”) IV: 16-18, “Seventh tablet, (text) not complete. Not yet made into a bronze tablet” (cf. Güterbock, *JCS* X 1956), p. 97 and the added comments *ibidem*, p. 47). See also KBo III 4 IV: 47-48 in Gurney’s translation “Whatsoever the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my lady, further vouchsafes to me, I will record it and lay it before her,” *The Hittites*¹, Pelican A 259, p. 174 (Gurney chooses for Götze’s second alternative, see Götze, *Die Annalen des Mursilis*, *MVAeG* XXXVIII, Leipzig, 1933, p. 137). Hattusilis says “However, what countries of the enemy I conquered while I was a minor, that I shall make (into) a tablet separately; and I shall set it up before the Goddess” (Hattusilis’ “Apology” I: 73-74 = Sturtevant-Bechtel, *A Hittite Chrestomathy*, Philadelphia, 1935, pp. 68-69).

13) E.g. “The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II” edited by H. G. Güterbock, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* X (1956), pp. 41, 75 and 107 ff., and Mursilis’ own “Ten Years Annals” edited by Götze, *AM*, p. 14 ff. (cf. note 12).

from this period represent the pinnacle of Hittite literature in general.

Conclusive indications, the use of *arkuwai*- and *arkuwar* in either text or colophon, characterize all the Plague Prayers of Mursilis and also all compositions of Muwatallis, Hattusilis and Puduhepas treated below as a prayer of presentation or *arkuwar*.¹⁴⁾ In analogy other texts may be added: the prayer of Arnuwandas and Asmunikal about the disruption of the cults in the northern provinces, a prayer of an unnamed Hittite king to the Sun-god and also the prayer of Kantuzzilis, prince at the court, and the prayer to the Sun-god meant for an arbitrary individual. The three last prayers are closely connected and could be considered as parallel versions.¹⁵⁾ Witness the vocabulary and the religious ideas expressed therein, the introducing hymn to all three was clearly inspired by some Accadian hymn.¹⁶⁾ The following Chart may serve to indicate date and origin, deity to whom it is directed, and subject of the most important royal prayers.

<i>Cat. no.</i>	<i>King</i>	<i>Deity</i>	<i>Subject</i>
277/8 ¹⁷⁾	Arnuwandas and Asmunikal (± 1400 B.C.)	Sun-goddess of Arinna	Interruption of the cults in the northern provinces
276 ¹⁸⁾	Unnamed Hittite king	Male Sun-god	External difficulties
283 C ¹⁹⁾	Unnamed Hittite king	Sun-goddess of Arinna	Plague and external difficulties
283 E	Mursilis (± 1340-1310 B.C.)	Sun-goddess of Arinna	The relation between his wife and the ruling queen

14) Cf. *arkuwai*- in Cat. 279.1, 279.2, 279.4, 284.2, 285 and KBo XI 1 (see Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 16 notes 3 and 4) and *arkuwar* in Cat. 279.1, 279.2, 282 A, 283 D, 285, KBo XI 1, 286 and 287 (see Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 16 notes 1 and 2).

15) Cf. Güterbock's article quoted in note 6.

16) Cf. Güterbock, *l.c.*, pp. 241-242.

17) See E. von Schuler, *Die Kaskäer*, Berlin, 1965, pp. 152-165 and Goetze, *ANET*¹, pp. 399-400.

18) Cf. Güterbock's article quoted in note 6; for this early date see O. Carruba, *Das Beschwörungsritual für die Göttin Wisurijanşa*, Wiesbaden, 1966, p. 32.

19) Cf. Gurney's thesis as quoted in note 4; for this early date see O. Carruba, *Wisurijanşa*, p. 46. See also Goetze, *ANET*¹, p. 396.

<i>Cat. no.</i>	<i>King</i>	<i>Deity</i>	<i>Subject</i>
284 ²⁰⁾	Mursilis (tenth year or later)	In all probability the Sun-goddess of Arinna	Conflict with the ruling queen
283 A ²¹⁾	Mursilis alone	Sun-goddess of Arinna	Plague and external difficulties
282 ²²⁾	Mursilis and the queen (second wife and thus later)	Tutelary deity Telibinus	Plague and external difficulties
279.1 ²³⁾	Mursilis (seventeenth year)	All the Gods and Goddesses of the Oath	Plague
279.4 ²⁴⁾	Mursilis	Enumeration of Gods among which the Storm-god as well as the Gods of Hatti and Arinna	Plague
281 ²⁵⁾	Mursilis	Long enumeration of Gods	Plague
279.2 ²⁶⁾	Mursilis	Storm-god of Hatti, Gods of Hatti, my lords	Plague
279.3 ²⁷⁾	Mursilis (position in group undetermined)	Sun-goddess of Arinna, Gods, my lords	Plague
KBo XI 1 ²⁸⁾	Muwatallis (± 1310-1280 B.C.)	Storm-god of Kummanni, Hebat and other Gods	Interruption of the cults

20) Cf. Laroche, *Ugaritica* III, Paris, 1956, p. 101 ff.

21) Cf. Gurney's thesis as quoted in note 4; translation by Goetze in *ANET* ¹, p. 396.

22) Cf. Gurney's thesis as quoted in note 4; translation by Goetze in *ANET* ¹, pp. 396-397.

23) See Götze, *KIF* I, p. 164 ff. (cf. note 3).

24) See *KIF* I, p. 242 ff.

25) Cf. Güterbock, "Mursili's accounts of Suppiluliuma's dealings with Egypt," *Revue Hittite et Asiatique* fasc. 66-67 (1960), pp. 57-63.

26) See Götze, *KIF* I, p. 206 ff.; translation by Goetze in *ANET* ¹, pp. 394-396.

27) See Götze, *KIF* I, p. 236 ff.

28) Cf. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate and F. Josephson, "Muwatallis' Prayer to the Storm-god of Kummanni," *Revue Hittite et Asiatique* fasc. 81 (1967), pp. 101-140.

<i>Cat. no.</i>	<i>King</i>	<i>Deity</i>	<i>Subject</i>
285 ²⁹⁾	Muwatallis	Long enumeration of Gods	"In case of an emergency"
286 ³⁰⁾	Hattusilis and Pudehepas (\pm 1275-1250 B.C.)	Sun-goddess of Arinna	The royal succession
287 ³¹⁾	Pudehepas	Sun-goddess of Arinna	The health of Hattusilis, her husband

Sometimes important indications with respect to the use of these compositions are given in the text itself or in the colophon. It goes without saying that the king often refers to himself as the "priest". Especially Mursilis and Muwatallis do this often. In a number of passages the fact that the king functions as priest to the Sun-goddess of Arinna is used as a general designation for his royal position. ³²⁾ Although of little literary value, the general *arkuwar* of Muwatallis is of real interest for the understanding of the procedure. ³³⁾ In the two important manuscripts two formative stages of the composition have been preserved, the concept as probably dictated by the king and the later official version. ³⁴⁾ This text may be considered the standard type of this genre. "When things get too much for a man and he presents himself for the Gods in prayer, he sets up two offering-tables of wickerwork covered (with a cloth) on the roof in the presence of the Sun-god," the text runs. ³⁵⁾ Goetze expressed this general character in the added title "Prayer to be Spoken in an Emergency." A very long enumeration of local deities mentioned regionally while due attention is given to divine mountains and rivers of each district forms an essential part of the text after a short listing of the main Gods. All the offer-

29) Cf. F. M. Th. (de Liagre) Böhl, *Theologisch Tijdschrift* L (1916), p. 306 ff.; M. Witzel, *Heithitische Keilschrift-Urkunden* (= *Keilschriftliche Studien* IV (1924)), p. 86 ff.; translation by Goetze in *ANET* ¹, pp. 397-399.

30) For this composition see Güterbock, *Stiegel aus Bogazköy* I, *Archiv für Orientforschung*, Beiheft V, 1940, p. 12 ff.

31) Translation by Goetze in *ANET* ¹, pp. 393-394.

32) Cf. Cat. 279.1, 179.2, 279.3, 279.4 (Mursilis) and Cat. 285 (Muwatallis).

33) Cf. note 29 above.

34) Cf. Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, "Muwatallis' Prayer to be spoken in an Emergency," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* XXVII (1968), pp. 204-208.

35) In Goetze's translation (with slight changes). I am quoting the following passages: I: 2-5; IV: 45-50, 59-61.

ings are precisely specified. "When His Majesty finishes breaking the loaves, he makes into a plea the matters which are in his mind. But when the presentation of the plea is concluded, he breaks three loaves amongst which a red one for all the Gods of the land."³⁵) There follow more offerings and then, finally, "They make two furnaces of wood and in front of the offering-tables he burns the loaves which he breaks."³⁵)

There is no doubt that also were clear indications are absent the presentation of an *arkuwar* was embedded in a ritual of offering ceremonies (breaking of bread and libations). Quite characteristically the colophon of Cat. 283 A mentions the existence of a separate tablet in which the *mugawar* was described.³⁶) Laroche defines *mugawar* as the terminus technicus for a ritual used to evoke and attract a deity.³⁷) This "attracting" of the Gods is especially found in the rituals of the Evocatio type.³⁸) The magical imagery used herefore consisted in the propelling of the Gods, i.e. their statues, along tracks of coloured wool.³⁹) The wording of our type of text does indeed sometimes refer to the absence of a God who is to be attracted: "Now if, O honoured Telibinus, thou art up in heaven among the Gods; if thou art gone to the sea or to the mountains to wander about, or art gone into the enemy's country to battle, now let the exquisite refreshment (arising) from cedar (and) oil invite thee; and come back again into thy temple. Behold now, I am evoking thee with (offerings of) bread (and) drink; be thou fully nourished; and what I say unto thee — hold thine ear inclined to me and hear it."⁴⁰)

Prayers were sometimes repeatedly recited. According to the colophon of Cat. 283 A this text was used during seven days by Mursilis in Hattusas and thereafter for the same period of time in Arinna.⁴¹) A scribe even had to recite Cat. 282 each day for an unspecified period of time, referring in his first words *expressis verbis* to his royal

36) Cf. Gurney, *AAA XXVII* (1940), pp. 38-39 (note that Gurney C = Laroche Cat. 283A!) for Cat. 283 A IV: 7-8.

37) See Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, pp. 20-24.

38) See especially Cat. 416 as edited by L. Zuntz, "Un testo ittita di scongiuri," *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti XCVI* (1937), pp. 477-546; translation by Goetze in *ANET* ¹, pp. 351-353.

39) Cf. Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 22 and Goetze, *Kleinasien* ², p. 160.

40) Cf. Gurney, *AAA XXVII* (1940), pp. 16-17 for Cat. 282 B I: 7-14.

41) Cf. Gurney, *AAA XXVII* (1940), pp. 36-37 for Cat. 282 A IV: 19-21.

masters: "The scribe re[ads this] tablet to the deity every day, [and ?] praises the deity: O Telibinus, a mighty (and) honoured God art thou.

Mursilis, the king, thy servant, has sent me, and the queen, thy hand-maid, they have sent (saying): "Go! Telibinus, our lord, our personal God, evoke!" " 42)

The colophon belonging to Cat. 283 A mentions how Mursilis incorporated the phrases of another tablet in his own prayer.⁴³⁾ It is possible now, thanks to the progress of knowledge with respect to the Hittite historical grammar, to confirm Gurney's conjecture⁴⁴⁾ based at that time on the evidence of the contents alone — that this tablet might be identified with Cat. 283 C.⁴⁵⁾ This then refers to the *arku-war* proper as central part of the prayer.⁴⁶⁾ But also the continuation of the invocation is not very original. It is clearly inspired on the invocation of the prayer of Arnuwandas and Asmunikal in which also the deep religiosity of the Hittites, their extreme care for temples, statues, ceremonies and cultus, has been extensively treated.⁴⁷⁾ The hymn of praise in this prayer may best be characterized as a transposition on the Sun-goddess of Arinna of a hymn meant for the male Sun-god as given in Cat. 274-276.⁴⁸⁾ The three most important parts of Cat. 283 A are therefore and adaptation (the central part), a transposition (hymn of praise for the Goddess) and a recreation (the continuation of the invocation) respectively. They all depend upon earlier compositions.

A typical Hittite trait missing so far in Mesopotamian examples is the idea of intervention.⁴⁹⁾ Frequently the Sun-god or a tutelary deity is called upon to act as an intermediary and to transmit the words

42) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 16-17 for Cat. 282 B I: 1-6.

43) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 38-39 for Cat. 283 A IV: 2-3.

44) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 12-14, 108-109 and 119.

45) On a number of points — the spelling, the use of certain particles, the medio-passive in "dynamic function" — Cat. 283 C (= Gurney D!) sides with Middle Hittite, while Cat. 283 A clearly shows the modernizations typical for the period of Mursilis II.

46) See also KBo XII 132 which has been compared to Cat. 277 by Laroche, *Orientalistische Literatur* LIX (1964), c. 565. In my opinion this text closely resembles Cat. 283 C and A.

47) Cf. note 17 above.

48) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 10-11 and the article by Güterbock quoted in note 6, p. 237.

49) Cf. Güterbock, *JAOS* LXXVIII (1958), p. 242.

of the king to the God for whom they are intended. This can already be observed in the prayers to the Sun-god (Cat. 274-276)⁵⁰) and it turns up again in Cat. 285 of Muwatallis⁵¹) and in an even stronger measure in Cat. 287 where Puduhepas pleads for the health of her husband stipulating his achievements with regard to the northern districts lost during the reign of Arnuwandas or perhaps even earlier, but regained by him.⁵²) One of the many deities whose mediation she requests is Zintuhis: "Zintuhis, my mistress, beloved grandchild of the Storm-god and the Sun-goddess of Arinna! For the Storm-god and the Sun-goddess of Arinna (you are their) pectoral and from hour to hour they continually look down upon you. And now Z[in]tuhis, my mistress, [show] your divine power [in this matter] and convey life and long years for Hattusilis, your servant, to the Storm-god, your grandfather, and to the Sun-goddess of Arinna, your grandmother, and may these come forth for them from their mouth!"⁵³)

At the recitation of a royal prayer an audience obviously could be present, for both Cat. 282 B and 283 A include the following passage — after a prayer for blessing: "And the congregation cries "Let it be so!" "⁵⁴) With respect to Cat. 282 A it is worth mentioning that the scribe who reads this tablet in doing so represents the king, for the colophon states: "Single tablet, finished; when the scribe daily pleads on behalf of the king before Telibinus."⁵⁵)

Next to these concise remarks concerning nature, structure and use of these royal prayers, the Gods to whom they were directed and the subjects dealt with in them should also be examined. Whenever the prayer is not directed to all the Gods (without further distinction) or to a long list of deities, it concerns as a rule the Sun-goddess of Arinna or the Storm-god of Hatti, the principal figures of the Pantheon, who according to recent archaeological research shared a double temple in Hattusas.⁵⁶) Both Gods are also portrayed in the main chamber of the

50) These texts formed the starting-point for Güterbock's remark.

51) Cf. Cat. 285 — for which see note 29 above — III: 20-24 (the Sun-god) and III: 35-37 (the Storm-god Pihassassis), cf. Güterbock, *JAOS* LXXVIII (1958), p. 245.

52) Cf. Cat. 287 — for which see note 31 — III: 31 ff.

53) Cf. Cat. 287 III: 43 — IV: 7.

54) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 34-35 with respect to Cat. 282 B II: 18-19 and pp. 36-37 for Cat. 283 A III: 43-44.

55) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 36-37 for Cat. 282 A IV: 19-21.

56) See K. Bittel, *Archiv für Orientforschung* XXII (1968/9), p. 110 with

rock-sanctuary in Yazilikaya.⁵⁷⁾ The deities addressed to generally belong to the indigenous Anatolian pantheon. This is specifically valid for the last example of my Chart, Cat. 287 spoken by queen Puduhepas.⁵⁸⁾ A passage from the invocation of this latter prayer is of special significance, since it presents clear evidence for the identification of the Sun-goddess of Arinna with the Hurrian Goddess Hebat: "To the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, mistress of the Hittite lands, queen of heaven and earth. O Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, queen of all the countries, in Hatti-land you gave yourself the name "Sun-goddess of Arinna," but furthermore in the land which you made into the cedar's land, you gave yourself the name "Hebat." " 59)

A passage from Cat. 286 attests to the close connection between the Hittite king and queen on the one hand and the Sun-goddess of Arinna on the other: "To the Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, mistress of the countries, queen of heaven and earth, mistress of the kings and queens of Hatti land, torch of the Hittite country, it is you who [invest] the kings and queens of Hatti land. Upon which king or queen of Hatti land you, O Sun-goddess of Arinna, gaze down, he flourishes on your account, through the Sun-goddess of Arinna. You who are accustomed to elevate (the one), you who are accustomed to throw down (the other), in the presence of the Gods you took as your portion (?) the Hittite lands because of your esteem for the Storm-god of Nerik, the Storm-god of Zippalanda, your son!"⁶⁰⁾

respect to Temple I which used to be called the temple for the Storm-god of Hatti: "...Es lag da eine zweite, selbständige Raumgruppe mit Lichthöfen und einem sehr grossem Gelass (.....), dass in seinen Ausmassen dem bisher schon bekannt gewesenen Allerheiligsten nahezu gleichkommt und das höchstwahrscheinlich als zweites Adyton aufzufassen ist, so dass man es wohl mit einem Doppeltempel zu tun hat, der für den Wettergott und für die Sonnengöttin von Arinna bestimmt gewesen sein dürfte."

57) See no. 43 (Hebat who is here identified with the Sun-goddess of Arinna) leading the procession of Goddesses, and — confronting her — nos 42 (Storm-god, here Tessub?) and 41 (Storm-god of Hatti) leading the group of male Gods: see Laroche, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* VII (1952), p. 116 and the often reproduced main scene e.g. in E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst der Hethiter*, no. 76.

58) See Goetze, *Kleinasien*², München, 1957, p. 135 together with notes 3 and 4 referring to both Cat. 286 and 287.

59) Literally "you put to yourself the name ...", cf. Goetze, *Kleinasien*², p. 137 for this example of official syncretism and see also note 57. All this refers to Cat. 287 I: 1-6.

60) Cat. 286 I: 1-13 as also translated by Goetze, *Kleinasien*², p. 137.

A text which has often been quoted in discussions about the character of Hittite kingship is IBoT I 30: "When the king pays homage to the Gods, a priest declares: "Let the labarnas-king be pleasing to the Gods! The land belongs to the Storm-god, heaven and earth with the people belong to the Storm-god and he made the labarnas-king governor and gave him whole Hatti land. The labarnas shall govern the whole land with his hands. Whoever touches the person of the labarnas-king and (his) domain, let the Storm-god destroy him!" 61) This passage characterizes the king as a kind of administrator ruling on behalf of the Storm-god. From a remarkable festival text 62) scholars have concluded that the queens of the Hittites were identified in some respects at the time of their death with the Sun-goddess of Arinna. Possibly the Goddess also had chthonic characteristics 63) and on the strength of this Güterbock adds this closing remark: "Ja, eben weil sie eine Unterweltsgöttin war und die Königinnen nach dem Tode ihr ähnlich wurden (wie der Pharao dem Osiris!)" 64)

Exceptional iconographic representations admit of a similar explanation. On the rock-relief of Firaktin Hattusilis III and Puduhepas wear the same garments as the deities to which they pour a libation, the Storm-god of Hatti and the Sun-goddess of Arinna respectively. 65) A seal impression found in the excavations of Ugarit 66) depicts Tudhaliyas IV in the embrace of the Storm-god Muwatallis. 67) He also

61) For this text see Goetze, *JCS* I (1947), pp. 90-91; Güterbock, "Authority and Law in the Hittite Kingdom," *JAOS* Suppl. XVII (1954), p. 16; Gurney in Hooke (editor), *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, pp. 113-114; Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 10.

62) KUB XXV 14 I: 23 ff. as translated by Gurney in his article referred to in the preceding note, pp. 120-121.

63) For the possibly original character of the Goddess as a chthonic deity see J. G. Macqueen, *Anatolian Studies* IX (1959), pp. 171-188.

64) Güterbock in his chapter "Religion und Kultus der Hethiter" in G. Walser (editor), *Neuere Hethiterforschung, Historia Einzels.* Heft VII, Wiesbaden, 1964, p. 59 note 25.

65) See K. Bittel in his contribution to the book mentioned in the preceding note, p. 127 note 6: cf. the reproductions in H. Th. Bossert, *Altanatolien*, Berlin, 1942, nos 550-552 and E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst der Hethiter*, no. 101.

66) Cf. *Ugaritica* III, Paris, 1954, fig. 24, 26 and Pl. III-IV (already adduced by Bittel as quoted in note 65).

67) This type of representation is found more often, but elsewhere the king wears a priestly robe in this situation, cf. Güterbock, *SBo* I fig. 38 a (see note 30) for Muwatallis and Tudhaliyas IV in Chamber B of Yazilikaya (e.g. E. Akurgal, *Die Kunst der Hethiter*, nos 84-85).

wears the same costume as the deity. The Sun-goddess of Arinna on this same impression is an exact replica of Puduhepas as represented in Firaktin.⁶⁸⁾ Although Hittite kings "become Gods" at their death, as the expression goes, Hattusilis as well as Tudhaliyas wear the characteristic attribute of the Gods, one or more horns sidelong of the pointed hat. Bittel rightly stresses the problematical background of this portrayal: we encounter a representation which essentially differs from the conventional usage.⁶⁹⁾ Perhaps it could be formulated in this way. There are iconographic indications for an excessive identification in thirteenth century art of king and queen with those deities which they represent in their political function. One should not conclude this to be a complete identification however, since the above-mentioned expression prevents them "to be God" during their lifetime.⁷⁰⁾

The thoughts which are expressed in the hymns and in the prayers proper are typical for the strongly rationalistic and somewhat formalistic approach of Hittite thinking in general. Feelings of responsibility and guilt often come to the fore. Rhetorically the kings try to absolve themselves from supposed accusations that have crossed their minds: "Hattusilis, your servant, and Puduhepas, your handmaid, did make their plea as follows: "As long as my father Mursilis was still alive, when my father dealt highhandedly with the Gods, my lords, in any affair whatsoever, I was not involved in that business of my father in any way. I was still young. When within the palace the process of Tawannannas, your handmaid, took place, when my father humiliated Tawannannas, the queen, because she was indeed a handmaid of the God(dess), you, my mistress, were the one who knew in [your] divine soul, [whether the humil]iation [of the queen] was in accordance with your intentions [or whether it] was [not in accordance with your in]tentions." " 71)

Laroche phrased these eloquent words to describe their basic relationship with the divine powers: "Le Hittite exprime les rapports de l'homme à son dieu non en termes de grâce ou de sentiments, mais en

68) This was already remarked by Laroche, *Ugaritica* III, pp. 114-115.

69) Cf. Bittel as referred to in note 65: "Hier liegt also ein Problem, das sich mit den verfügbaren Texten und Monumenten nicht lösen lässt."

70) Cf. the closing remark by Gurney in Hooke (ed.), *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, p. 121.

71) Cat. 286 I: 14-26 (see Güterbock's translation in *SBo* I, p. 12, cf. note 30).

termes de droit et de jugement.” 72) So e.g. in a prayer of Mursilis II “the place of judgement [to] wh[ich] the Gods come” — or with another text restoration — “the Gods wh[o] come to the place of judgement.” 73) In a prayer of Muwatallis this expression recurs, 74) while Hattusilis and Puduhepas speak as follows on behalf of their country: “[And if] those sins are also still present to some extent before the Gods and some God has been invoked on account of that evil thing and he attends to it and if, as soon as the Storm-god and the Gods come to the assembly, someone mentions that evil thing in the assembly, then the Sun-goddess of Arinna and the Storm-god of Hatti should take to their heart the matter of the *dahanga* belonging to the Storm-god of Nerik and therefore, O Sun-goddess of Arinna, my mistress, O Gods, cast away that evil thing from Hatti land! Hattusas, the place of assembly for the Gods, Arinna, your beloved city, Nerik and Zippalanda, towns of your son, may appear before your eyes!” 75)

In a highly emotional tone Mursilis tries to exculpate himself with respect to his dealings with the ruling queen and wife of his predecessor Tawannannas whom he dethroned and relegated to a place of exile in the country: “[... wheth]er she died and [w]as [...] or whether she did not die. I made an inquiry about the af[air of Tawannannas] and it was established for me (by the oracle) not to kill her, but it was established to confine her. And at that time therefore I did not kill her, but I ousted her and made her Siwanzanna-priestess. And because it was established to confine, I did confine her and I gave her an estate. Nothing lacks her in her soul. Bread, water and everything are being served to her. Nothing is lacking her: she lives and sees the Sun of heaven with her own eyes, always, and she always eats the bread of life, but just this was my single ruling and only in this respect I punished her that I sent her down from the palace, that I ousted her and made her Siwanzanna-priestess! And this was my single ruling. O Gods, set this case down for hearing and arrange a formal inquiry!” 76)

72) Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 17.

73) Cf. Güterbock's article referred to in note 25, p. 59.

74) Cf. Cat. 285 — for which see note 29 above — III: 11-12.

75) Cf. Cat. 286 IV: 14-28 (the passage has not been studied so far).

76) Cf. Cat. 284.2 II: 1-17, cf. Houwink ten Cate, “Mursilis II, de bronnen voor een karakterschets,” p. 27 together with the notes 43 and 44. The verbs *piran katta tai-* and *punuss-* belong to the profane process terminology.

I do not believe that these examples which could easily be multiplied, should be classified as mere metaphorical in a stylistic sense. According to Hittite ideas a process before the court of divine powers underlies every conflict situation in history.⁷⁷⁾ This is clearly manifest in the words used to convey a declaration of war: "To Uhha-zitis I sent a messenger and I wrote to him: "My subjects who came to you, because you did not return them to me, (when) I repeatedly requested their return, and (because) you were in the habit to call me a small boy and (because) you always belittled me, come now! Let us fight together and the Storm-god, my lord, may decide the lawsuit for us!" "⁷⁸⁾ This declaration meant war between two independent powers. On purpose Hattusilis III uses the same expression in starting his rebellion against his nephew Urhi-Tesub, the legitimate king on the Hittite throne: "And, firm in (my) respect for my brother, I did not do anything. And for seven years I submitted. But he (Urhi-Tesub) at the command of a God and the suggestion of man tried to destroy me. And he took Hakis and Nerik away from me. And I did not submit any longer. And I made war upon him. But when I made war upon him, I did not do it (as) a "defilement." Did I rebel against him in the chariot or rebel against him within the palace? I sent him a declaration (of war) as an (open) enemy: "You started hostilities with me. Now (are) a great king; but as for me, the one fortress that you left me — of (that) one (I) am king. Come now! Istar of Samuha and the Storm-god of Nerik shall decide the lawsuit for us!" "⁷⁹⁾

These examples from two different historical texts give proof that the idea of divine judgement also permeates the Hittite historical texts. Since every prayer of presentation — whether inspired by a Plague, by a military attack from outside, or, by inner doubts about personal responsibilities with respect to the cult of the Gods or the relation to the queen — always originated from a situation of crisis, they all fall back upon this same basic idea.

The prayers give evidence of a proud feeling about the providence and care devoted to the maintenance of temples, statues and cult uten-

77) See in this respect Goetze, *Kleinasien*², p. 127 together with note 10 and Laroche, *La Prière hittite*, p. 17.

78) A passage from Mursilis' "Ten Years Annals," *KBo* III 4 II: 9 ff. = Götze, *AM*, pp. 46-47 (cf. note 12).

79) Hattusilis' Apology III: 61 ff. as translated in Sturtevant-Bechtel, *Hittite Chrestomathy*, p. 77 (cf. note 12).

sils and also to the strict observance of festivals and other ceremonies. Sometimes there is a direct and outspoken appeal to divine self-interest which appears to be closely interwoven with the good fortune of the Hittites themselves, when, in the central part of the prayer the king ardently pleads for deliverance from the scourges of Plague and War.⁸⁰⁾ A second subject treated with equal fervor is the relation to Tawannannas, the former ruling queen, who had been banished from the court. In view of the close relationship between the Hittite queen and the Sun-goddess of Arinna this must have been a matter for deep concern.⁸¹⁾ In two texts the inability to secure the correct continuation of religious rites and usages constitutes the central theme, the prayer of Arnuwandas and Asmunikal (Cat. 277) and a much later prayer from the time of Muwatallis (KBo XI 1). Here follows a passage chosen from the latter: "If some God of the country is offended and has pl[eaded] with the Storm-god, now I, my majesty Muwa[tallis, lord of the countrie]s, make [this] (the subject of) my plea, and may the Storm-god, my lord, listen to it: the country was great and it [has become of] litt[le importance and . . .] have [. . .]. But as I, my majesty, bid the Gods enter the country of Kummanni; [because negligence oc]curs, [offerings] do not correspond to the usage of the Gods. What population there is now and was [(contemporary) wi]th my father (and) [my] grand[father, those I will consult], and whatever I, my majesty, now find from hieroglyphic records, this I shall carry out, and [what] I have [not] brought into correspondence with the [u]sages o[f the Gods], you, O Storm-god, my lord, know [i]t. And whenever I shall consult a venerable old man, [as] they remember [one (certain)] rite, and tell it, I shall also carry it out."⁸²⁾

In his arguing with the Gods "the fearless rationalism of Hittite religion," as Gurney coined the phrase,⁸³⁾ is fully apparent. The Gods are told that the Plague clearly is against their own interests: "[What is] this, O Gods, [(that) you have d]one? [You have let in . . .] a Plague, and the land of Hat[ti — al]l of it — is dying, so n[o-one] prepares the (offerings of) food and drink. The [farme]rs who used to sow the

80) Cf. Gurney, *AAA XXVII* (1940), pp. 26-27 for Cat. 283 C and A (= D and C respectively in Gurney's notation). I quote a passage below.

81) Cf. Cat. 284; a passage from Cat. 284.2 has been quoted above.

82) Cf. KBo XI 1 — for which see note 28 — par. 4, Obv.: 18-24.

83) Cf. Gurney, *AAA XXVII* (1940), p. 9.

sacred fields are dead, and so the [sacred] field[s] no[-one] sows (or) reaps. The women of the mill who [used to make] the bread of the Gods are dead and so [they] do not [make] the bread. From whatever corral (or) sheepfold [they used to] select (?) the sacrificial animals (?) oxen and sheep, [now the cowherds] (and) shepherds are dead, and the corral [(and) sheepfold ...]. Now it is coming to pass (that) the foo[d and drink offerings] to the Gods and the sacrificial animals (?) [are] negl[ected]. [And] you come to us, O Gods, [and for] thi[s matter] you hold (us?) guilty; and from mankind your wisdom [has] departed, and there is nothing that we do aright (in your eyes).”⁸⁴)

A similar reasoning repeatedly occurs in Mursilis' Plague Prayers stemming from the seventeenth year of his reign: “Suffer not to die the few who are still left to offer loaves and libations.”⁸⁵)

A final digression on Mursilis' Plague Prayers in general forms a fitting conclusion to this descriptive account of the Hittite royal prayers. I have explained above how the Plague Prayers of his early years are dependent on older compositions. But it should be emphatically stressed that with his later similar prayers this is not the case. After a short address the king immediately turns to the main subject, the history of the Plague and his continuous search for its causes. The structure of these prayers is markedly different from earlier (and later!) compositions of this genre, while their wording and contents resemble the historical texts more than commonly occurs in this type of text. Since a few years historical fragments pertaining to Mursilis' seventeenth year of government do attest to a renewal of royal activities after a complete cessation of warfare on his part in the preceding winter on account of the Plague. At the end of the sixteenth year the king had retired to an isolated place, while the Gasgaeans had tried to profit from the occasion for an important counterattack: “[And there was a Plague in Hatti land] and many died and [(I retreated) before] the Plag[ue and] I, the [ki]ng, [went] to the country of Harziuna [(and (as a result) I did not set out (against) enemy countries and (I did)]

⁸⁴) Cf. Gurney, *AAA* XXVII (1940), pp. 26-27 for Cat. 283 A II: 3-19 (C in Gurney's notation).

⁸⁵) Cf. Cat. 279.2 — for which see note 26 — par. 9 on pp. 214-215 of Götzke's text edition; see also par. 11 (pp. 218-219) and in Cat. 279.1 (cf. note 23) par. 8 (pp. 174-175) and 9 (pp. 176-177).

not [...]. [...] the Gasgaeen enemy, [whom (I had beaten in that year)], [went] through [Hittite territory. Thu(s the king: "This Gasgaeen) goes through Hittite territory and ma]kes war [against me again]." But the Gasgaeen enemy [spoke in this manner: "In H]atti land a Plague broke out!" [And] he began to [des]troy [the towns of Hittite territory] in great number." 86)

Already some time ago Güterbock has written how these Plague Prayers might be ordered in a logical sequence. 87) In Güterbock's opinion Mursilis gradually reached the conclusion that his father bore a personal responsibility in this matter. 88) In his description of his father's career, "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II," he still adheres to his father's point of view. When the Plague culminated to a new and unexpected height, Mursilis apparently realised that there must have been a special cause for the divine wrath. After oracular consultation he began a special inquiry in the royal archives in the course of which at least two tablets were taken out, because they were considered to be relevant to this question. 89) In the first Plague Prayer his thoughts had already turned to his father as the cause for this disaster: he thinks the way in which Suppiluliumas had grasped power had angered the Gods. In the fourth Plague Prayer he has found out that the Plague arose in the wake of Suppiluliumas' war against Egypt. At the moment on which Cat. 281 was composed he had concluded the Plague to be a divine punishment for the violation of a long-standing treaty with Egypt broken by his father when he first sent troops into Amka. In this text we find mentioning of a "tablet about Egypt." 89) Mursilis still tries to exempt himself from his responsibility and points to his own youth at that time. Finally, in the second Plague Prayer he accepts his father's guilt as a personal liability: "O Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, O Gods, my lords, it so happens: man is sinful. And also my father sinned and transgressed

86) Cf. Houwink ten Cate, *JNES* XXV (1966), pp. 169 and 177-178.

87) See Güterbock in his article referred to in note 25, pp. 61-62.

88) On this point it may be added that Mursilis II apparently was a highly emotional type of man. I have tried elsewhere to enumerate some of the texts which might be used in the future for a more personal portrayal of this interesting king, cf. note 76.

89) In the first Plague Prayer mention is made of two ancient tablets, the first dealing with the offerings to the river Mala (the Euphrates) and the second concerning Kurustama. The latter may be identical with the "tablet about Egypt" mentioned in Cat. 281, see Güterbock's article mentioned in note 25, *passim*.

against the word of the Storm-god of Hatti, my lord. But I have not sinned in any respect. But it so happens: the father's sin falls upon the son. Now upon me also my father's sin has fallen. But lo, I have confessed it before the Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, and before the Gods, my lords (saying): "It is true, we have done it." And because I have confessed my father's sin, let the soul of the Storm-god of Hatti, my lord, and (those) of the Gods, my lords, be again pacified! Suffer not do die the few who are still left to offer loaves and libations!" ⁹⁰⁾

⁹⁰⁾ Cf. Cat. 279.2 — for which see note 26 — par. 9 on pp. 214-215 of Götze's text edition.