HITTITE FRAGMENTS ON THE ATRAḪASĪS MYTH

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The issue about the existence of a Hittite version of the Atraḫasīs poem (Atramḫašiš in Hittite), was put forward by J. Siegelová[1] who, on the basis of W. G. Lambert - A. R. Millard's work,[2] attributed the KUB XXXVI 74 fragment[3] to the epos of this hero wherein we read:

2' [   ] "we throw[4] (lit. saw) the weight!"
3' "Now however due to work the gods
4' opposed Enlil".
5' The god Nušku[5] lis[tened] to the words of the gods
6' and he then went back to his lord
7' and to his lord he [began] to say:
8' "My lord, after the assembly [of the gods] [you sent] me,
9' Well then I went, in front of the gods
10' and told them your words".
11' Not finished.

1 *ArOr* 38 (1970), p. 135 ss.
2 *Atra-ḫasīs. The Babylonian Story of Flood*, Oxford 1969.
3 The text was transliterated and translated by J. Siegelová, *op. cit.*, p. 136:
   2' [   ]x a-im-p[a-a]n ar-du-me-ni

   3' ki-nu-un-ma-wa KIN-ti ḫa-an-da-aš DINGIR^{meš}-i[š/-uš
   4' ^{d}EN.LÍL-ya IGI-an-da ti-e-ir

   5' ^{d}Nu-uš-qa-aš DINGIR^{meš}-aš ud-da-ar iš-t[a-ma-aš-ta
   6' na-aš EGIR-pa EN-aš-ši kat-ta-an pa-it
   7' nu EN-aš-ši EGIR-pa me-mi-iš-ki-u-wa-an [da-a-iš
   8' EN-mi DINGIR^{meš}-aš-mu ku-it tu-li-ya[
   9' nu-za pa-u-in DINGIR^{meš}-aš pi-ra-an du-[
   10' nu-uš-ma-aš tu-e-el me-mi-an me-m[a-aḫ-ḫu-un
   11'   U-UL QA-TI
4 J. Siegelová, *op. cit.*, p. 136 translates: "... wir werfen die Last ab!".
5 J. Siegelová points out that in Hittite the god's name ends in -*a*.

The fragment was attributed to the Atra-ḫašiš myth by Siegelová for two reasons: the presence of the god Nušku, who has the duties of vizir to the god Enlil in the paleo-Babylonian version; and for its content, which can be compared to the third column in the first tablet of the version cited (rr. 146-157).[6]

It concerns the beginning of the myth when Enlil, surrounded by the Igigi, minor gods in revolt, worn out from the work assigned them by the major gods, decides to send his vizir, Nušku, to deal with them. Nušku, after learning the reasons for the rebellion against Enlil, returned to his lord to relate what he knew. The Hittite fragment seems to pick up the story again at the point when Nušku comes back from the god Enlil, having reported the results of his mission to him.

Even if the contents of r. 2' do not exactly correspond to the paleo-Babylonian version, the use of the first person plural (*ardumeni*) shows, according to the scholar, that it is the discourse directed to Nušku by the Igigi gods in which they tell of their revolt. It is worth noting that this passage contains the verb *ard-* "lit. to saw", the same verb used in the Ullikummi myth when the god Ea, while speaking to the "ancient gods", incites them to draw the ancient saw by which the sky and earth were separated and to cut under the monster's feet to remove him from Upelluri's shoulders.[7]

Even though the hero's name has not been preserved on the fragment, Siegelová's analysis clearly demonstrated that it is a Hittite version of the paleo-Babylonian epic poem. Since the scholar's analysis is focused only on this fragment, I think it opportune to take a look at the other Hittite fragment, KUB VIII 63, which at the time had already been transliterated and translated by Güterbock[8] entitled "Kumarbi und der Sintflutheld(?)". In this, unlike KUB XXXVI 74, appears the hero's name, both in the Hittite form ending in -*i* (Atramḫašiš IV 10') and in the pure form after the Accadian *A-NA* (Atramḫašiš I 5').[9]

6 For a new edition of tablet I, see W. von Soden, *ZA* 68 (1978), pp. 50-94.
7 KUB XXXIII 106 III 54: ^{d}Ul-lu-ku-um-mi-in ^{nat}ŠU.U-zi-in GÌR^{meš} GAM-an ar-ḫa ar-du-[wa-an-du]
8 H. G. Güterbock, *Kumarbi. Mythen vom churritischen Kronos*, (*Istanbuler Schriften* 16) Zürich-New-York 1946, pp. 29-30; *29 -*30; 81, 93.
9 See H. G. Güterbock, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

The text is very fragmentary and difficult to interpret:[10]

I

1' [   ].....[

2' "....[   ] I do, the friend to me/me[

3' sprin[g[11]   ][12] you'll die .."

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10 1' [   ]-pi ir-x-x-x-x[

2' x.x-x[   ]i-ya-mi a-ra-aš-wa-mu[

3' : wa-at-ta-[ru   ]-mi ak-ti-ma-wa   [

4' [nu] GIM-an ^{m}Ḫa-am-ša-aš ŠA ^{d}Ku-mar-pi INIM^{meš} iš-[ta-ma-aš-ta]

5' nu A-NA ^{m}At-ra-am-ḫa-ši DUMU-ŠU me-mi-iš-ki-u-wa-an [da-a-iš

6' ki-e A-WA-TE^{meš} me-mi-iš-ta nu-wa-ra-at iš-ta-ma-a[š-tu

7' [x-x-pi-ru-x- x] A-NA EZEN-ma-wa-at-ta ku-e-da-ni ḫal-z[i (!)-iš-ša-i

8' [-u]n a-aš-ši-an-za(!) ku-it a-ra-aš e-eš-[ta/ zi

9' [   ]da-an-du-kiš-wa GIM an ak-kiš-kat-ta-[ri

10' [   ] ar-nu-ši ALAM IZ-ZI i-ya x-[

11' [   ]kiš-an me-mi ^{m}Ḫa-am-ša-an-wa[

IV

1' [   ]x pi?-e-eš-ta(?)-[

2' [^{m}A]t-ra-am-ha-ši-iš ^{m}Ḫa-am-š[a

3' [x a-]pi-el A.ŠAG$_4^{meš}$ da-me-ta-[ni?

4' [x x x] ḫi.a da-me-e-ta-[ni?

5' [x a- p]i-el A.ŠAG$_4^{ḫi-a}$ ku-e-[da-ni?

6' [   ]x-ma-za ku-i-e-eš da-[me-ta-ni?

7' [I-NA(?) M]U.3.KAM-ma-kàn ^{d}Ku-mar-[bi

8' [-r]i-e-ša-an ú-e-ri-i[r

9' [ḫ]a-ri-an-za nu hu-u-ma-an iš-ta-[ma-aš-ta(?)

10' ^{m}Ḫa-am-ša-aš A-NA ^{m}At-ra-am-ḫa-ši x[

11' ^{d}Ku-mar-bi-iš ki-e-da-ni MU.KAM-ti at-[

12' la-la-ú-e-ša-aš ga-ra-pi nu ki-iš-š[a-an(?)

13': hu-ta-nu-en-zi da-a nu ma-a-an I[a-la-ú-e-ša-aš

14': ḫa-ar-ša-an-ta-an-ma-kàn : ḫu-u-ta-nu-[en-zi

15' nu-wa ^{giš}MAR.GÍD.DA^{meš} pi-en-ni nu-wa[

16' pi-en-ni nu-wa-za ḫal-ki-in d[a]-[m]e-[ta-ni(?)

17'   erasure

18' ^{m}At-ra-a[m-ḫa-ši]-iš ^{m}Ḫa-am-ša-aš

19' [a]-ra-aḫ-z[a ^{kuš}A(?)]-RI-TUM$^{ḫi-a}$[

20' [^{m}]At-r[a(?)-

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11 The integration presupposes that the gloss sign precedes a Hittite word, a rare phenomenon but possible (see O. Carruba, Linguistic Contacts in Anatolia, on Languages and Culture in Contact with the Ancient and High Medieval World, Papers of the VIII International Congress on Linguistics, Milan 10-12 September 1992, Brescia 1993, p. 258. Different letters cannot be excluded: "10 wa-at-ta-[ru"

4' When Ḫamša hea[rd] the words of Kumarbi

5' then [he began] to speak to his son Atramḫaši:

6' "These words (that)[13] (Kumarbi) said listen [to (them)!

7' ["   ] . to which feast(?) he calls you[14]

8' [   ] why is/wa[s] he a beloved friend[

9' [   ] how a man dies[15][

10' [   ] you will carry (away), make a wooden figure

11' [   ] . . . speak (imp.) thus: "Ḫamša (acc.) .[

IV

1' [   ] he gave (?)[

2' [[At]ramḫaši Ḫamš[a[16]

3' the fields of that [one] to anot[her](?)

4' they [   ] to anot[her (?)

5' [of th]at the fields to whom?[17]

6' [   ] but which ones to an[other?[18]

7' but [in the] third [ye]ar Kumar[bi

8' [the an]t(?) he fe[ars?[19]

9' [   ]](m/f)? buried(?)[20] and all lis[ten/ed

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or "u-wa-at-ta-[. However the integration of the syllable -ru is still uncertain. H. G. Guterbock, op. cit., p. *30 reads: wa-at-ta[(-).

12 Makes one think of the first person singular of a verb and therefore there is opposition between "I .." and the following phrase "you'll die".

13 According to H. G. Güterbock, op. cit., p. 81 "Ed. ki-e, man erwartet eher ku-e; dies nach Koll. möglich", but to me the letter ki-e seems clear.

14 In reality the sign instead seems to be -hu, mistaken for -zi.

15 V. J. Puhvel, HED, p. 20 sub ak(k)-,ek-.

16 H. G. Güterbock, op. cit., p. 30 : "zu (?oder :den?) Ḫamša". In reality, the first hypothesis might be excluded, because the Accadian A-NA preposition is missing; it is more likely to be a nominative form.

17 Otherwise, H. G. Güterbock, op. cit., p. *30, prefers not to integrate.

18 H. G. Güterbock, op. cit., p. 30 translates "aber welche ne[hm-" and hence thinks of the verb form dâ-.

19 Thus B. J. Collins reads and translates, The representation of wild animals in Hittite texts, Ann Arbor 1989, p. 245. Otherwise H. G. Güterbock, op. cit., p. 30 translates "riefen sie".

20 The translation is based on the hypothesis of a]ḫariyanza and not a]-ḫariyanza reading as sustained by H. G. Güterebock, op. cit., p. *30.

10' Ḫamša to Atramḫaši his son [speaks:
11' Kumarbi this year.[21]
12' an ant devours/will devour and s[o
13' :ḫutanuenzi you take and if the a[nt
14' :ḫaršanta and :ḫutanu[enzi
15' and guides /you push the carts and[
16' and guides/you push and the harvest.[
17'   erasure   [
18' Atra[mḫaši, Ḫamša[
19' [ar]ound [the shi]elds of hide(?)
20' [A]tr[amḫaši ??

The content of the fragment does not seem directly comparable to any passage in the Babylonian tale, however, some points may be considered: 1) the text shows a series of dialogues between Atramḫaši and his father Ḫamša, according to the literary model typical of these mythological texts; 2) the phrase "an ant devours/will devour" led both Collins[22] and Hoffner[23] to think of an allusion to a type of plague or famine. If this interpretation is correct, we understand from Ḫamša's words to his son that there would be a pestilence that year which would hit the harvest (lit. = wheat) and that Atramḫaši would have to prepare a cart and push it, and perhaps take it to safety. The episode may recall one of the three previous attempts by the god Enlil to destroy humanity through an epidemic, a famine and lastly a flood; 3) there is a phrase in r. 10 of column I that is difficult to interpret: "to make a wooden figure". At the point, in the paleo-Babylonian myth, when the hero asked the god Ea, who urged him to build a ship to rescue himself from the flood, to design one on earth as he did not know how to shape it, we wonder if this expression might not refer to a similar episode. Equally, the phrase (r. 16) "you take the harvest" recalls the episode in which Atramḫaši was requested to carry to safety not only his family and animals, but also the harvest. In this case the cart might be either a kind of poetic, literary definition to indicate the ship or to construct a real variant of the tale;

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21 In the text we read la-[. Perhaps lalauešaš is to be integrated, as in line 12.

22 Op. cit., p. 245.

23 CHD 3 (1980), p. 27.

4) the figure of the father, Ḫamša, unknown to the Babylon myth, seems here to play the role of the god Ea, protector of humanity.[24]

However, the text also shows phrases, albeit in a fragmentary and obscure context, that refer to different mythological contexts, such as the reference to a feast (?) (I 7'), a motif typical of the original Anatolian myths on the disappearing god, or the mention of a "dear/beloved friend" that recalls the theme of friendship between Gilgameš and Enkidu. One significant fact is that there are two Luwian glosses inserted in the text that seem to indicate specific parts of the cart; in particular, ḫaršanta is to be compared with the giš ḫaršandanaḫit[25] form shown in a text belonging to the Ullikummi[26] myth. It is an indication that gives strength to the hypothesis of the formation of, if not a real and proper poetic literary language, at least a lexical formulary peculiar to mythological texts.[27]

In addition to these two fragments, an Accadian version of the myth also existed in the Ḫattusa archives, as the fragment found in 1976 by H. Otten shows (819/z now published in KBo XXXVI 26): a text of 13 damaged lines in which it is not possible to deduce the exact point of the narration they refer to. Nevertheless, from a religious and historic point of view, the most interesting information is constituted by the figure of the god Kumarbi, who seems to have Enlil's role in this fragment, thereby confirming an identification between the two divinities, which can also be found in the fragment KUB VIII 62, a text belonging to the Hittite version of the Gilgameš myth.[28]

This assimilation process of the two divine figures also poses the problem about the role carried out by the Hurrian culture, not only in the transmission of the myth, but also in its reproduction in the Hittite language.

By entitling the fragment KUB VIII 63 "Kumarbi und der Sintfludheld?"[29] H.G. Güterbock thought, albeit dubitatively, that the episode was part of the original Hurrian mythological cycle centered on Kumarbi. At the present time, we do not know if a version of the Atramḫaši myth even existed in the Hurrian language, even

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24 According to H. G. Güterbock, op. cit., p. 81 the name can be linked to the Accadian ḫamšu "fünfter".

25 Cf. Starke, StBoT 21 (1990), p. 174; H. C. Melchert, op. cit., p. 60.

26 Cf. H. G. Güterbock, JCS 6 (1952), p. 14.

27 See how it is observed with regard to the verb ard-.

28 See G. Del Monte in G. Pettinato, La saga di Gilgamesh, Milano 1992, p. 384.

29 Op. cit., p. 29.

though it is very likely because versions of other famous myths, like those of Gilgameš and "Kešši the Hunter", exist in said language. However, from an overall evaluation of this text, it can seemingly be affirmed that it is a compilation that acknowledged and integrated themes and characters from different myths in a story that may be an episode from the Kumarbi cycle, as Güterbock thought, but that may also be, instead, a reproduction of the Atramḫaši myth written by the Hittite scribes.

The KUB XXXVI 74 fragment is particularly important because it preserves signs of the episode on the oppressed gods and their revolt over too much work, an episode in the paleo-Babylonian version already analysed by Burkert,[30] who prudently compared it with Book I of the Iliad.[31] If the scholar's statement were true, that this passage of the Atramḫaši poem had a possible influence on Homer's poem, the Hittite testimony would have particular value, as it would constitute a more direct connection between Homer and the Near Eastern culture, both in chronological and geographical terms.

The question of when the Hittites knew about the Atramḫaši myth remains. KUB VIII 63 is a later copy (13th century B.C.),[32] however, the analysis of the *ductus* in KUB XXXVI 74 clearly demonstrates that it is a copy of a more ancient text, probably of the Middle Hittite age,[33] a period to which the older version of the Accadian fragments on the Gilgameš myth found in Ḫattusa[34] also belongs.

We know that the principal, and the most complete, version of the Atramḫasi myth was copied by the Ku-Aya scribe during the reign of Ammisaduqua, the fourth successor of Hammurapi; and we also know that under Sansuditana, the last sovereign of the dynasty, the incursion of Babylon by Muršili I took place. Therefore, the myth might have been known and "imported" directly on this occasion, hence, in an age not so distant from the paleo-Babylonian version.

This thesis, which modifies the usual evaluation of the "go-between" role carried out by the Hurrians already put forward by both the writer and F. Pecchioli Daddi,[35]

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[30] W. Burkert, *The Orientalizin Revolution. Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, Cambridge, Mass. 1992, pp. 104-106; *id., Da Omero ai Magi*, Venezia, p. 31 ss.; M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, Oxford 1997, p. 57.

[31] Iliad I 396-406.

[32] Cf. HW² p. 347 *sub* v. *ard(a)-*.

[33] All the cuneiform signs with the exception of the sign for *e* seem to belong to the *ductus* OH/MS.

[34] Cf. G. Wilhelm, *ZA* 78 (1988), pp. 99-121; G. Del Monte, *op. cit.*, p. 388, n. 6.

[35] See. F. Pecchioli Daddi - A. M. Polvani, *La mitologia ittita*, Brescia 1990, p. 11.

finds, in my opinion, further confirmation in this case. Indeed, this does not mean to deny the undeniable cultural contribution of the Hurrian civilisation in its production of the mythological patrimony handed down by the Hittites, but to reconsider the history of contacts between these two cultures and their relationship with Mesopotamia in a different historical perspective. If a direct contact with the myths of the Mesopotamic tradition is hypothesised, it does not exclude either successive or coeval reproductions, but modifies the usual pattern that sees Hittite mythological literature of "foreign origin" exclusively as the fruit of Hurrian mediation.[36]

At the present time of documentation, we may therefore draw some significant conclusions:

1) The Hittites kept a written version of the Atramḫaši myth in Accadian, but we do not know how faithful it is to the paleo-Babylonian model.

2) KUB VIII 63 attests the existence of a version of the myth in the Hittite language that seems to be the closest to the paleo-Babylonian version, not only in content, but also for the likely dating of the tablets.

3) Instead, the KUB XXXVI 74 fragment shows elements of a later stage coming from myths of different traditions that were recreated in a tale which, we cannot presently say with any certainty, might not belong to the Kumarbi cycle, neither might it be a new version of the Atramḫaši myth.

No solution remains for the question posed by H. Otten,[37] who had observed the strange position of the colophon in KUB XXXVI 74 (displaced on the left side of the tablet), if in reality it might not be an Accadian-Hittite bilingual text.

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[36] Cf. G. Beckman, *JCS* 35 (1983), pp. 101-103.

[37] Inahlt. KUB XXXVI, p. 3.