

The Song of the Sea (ŠA A.AB.BA ŠÌR): Thoughts on KUB 45.63*

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I. Introduction and Texts

The Hurrian "Song of the Sea" is an important but neglected text, which sheds light not only on the religious significance of Mt. Ḫazzi in the 2nd millennium BC, but also on the earliest episodes of the Kumarbi-Cycle. I want to begin by introducing the principal texts. There are three main ones.

1. First, KUB 44.7 is a ritual text relating to Mt. Ḫazzi. Mt. Ḫazzi seems to be mentioned in a subscription at the end, on the reverse.¹ Participants are instructed to make various offerings. No deity is mentioned, as far as I can see, so maybe the dedicatee is the mountain itself.

Obv. 11]x x[š]A A.AB.BA ŠÌR ŠÌR^{RV}
12 t]ar-aḫ-ta² nu ku-it-ma-an
13 ¹]ú AZU-ma pé-ra-an
14 p]a-iz-zi

It is clear that the performers of the ritual are to sing the "Song of the Sea" (ŠA A.AB.BA ŠÌR).

2. Second, the only other unambiguous reference to this song is in a catalogue-tablet from Ḫattusa KUB 30.43³:

Rev. 2 [DUB 1¹[(+x)].KAM š]A A.AB.BA ša-ra-a-ma-at
3 Ú-UL ar-ta-ri

Ehelff's copy shows a trace of one vertical wedge before a break, which is not rendered in Laroche's transliteration. Unfortunately we cannot judge from this tablet whether the song covered several tablets or only one.

3. Third, Otten and Rüster, 1974: 7, plausibly connected this fragment with Bo 2364⁴, a Hurrian text published the following year as KUB 45.63. The colophon of this text reads:

Rev. iv 7' DUB I.KAM ŠA A.A[B.BA

A.AB[must be A.AB.BA, and this must say: "Tablet I of the ["Song] of the Se[a]".

* I wish to thank all those who contributed to the discussion after my paper, and particularly Prof. Wilhelm for his generous contributions.

¹ Otten / Rüster 1974: 48.

² Houwink ten Cate 1992: 116 f. interpretes l. 12 as a reference to Teššup's victory over the Sea-God.

³ E. Laroche, *CTH*, p. 176.

⁴ See also Laroche 1974: 181 f.

The "Song of the sea" is one of two songs known to have been performed in connection with the cult of Mt. Ḫazzi. There is another example in KBo VIII 88 || 86.⁵ On the obverse of the tablet are instructions for a sacrifice: the colophon on the reverse identifies the dedicatee (or place of performance?) as: ^{HUR-SAG}Ḫa-az-zi-ia. Again, there are detailed instructions for sacrifice. This time, the sacrifices are aimed at Tessub. On KBo 8.88 obv. 8 f., we read:

LÚ.MEŠ^{NAR} šar-ra-aš-ši-ia-aš [(ŠIR)] ŠIR^{RU}
 "the singers sing the song of kingship"

The word *šarrašše* is Hurrian, derived from Akkadian *šarru*. So presumably the song was Hurrian.

II. The Song of the Sea: Text and Commentary

KUB 45.63 is as follows:

- Obv. i 1 [šī]-i-ra ḫi-¹iš-ti-ú¹-ša ka-a[-
 2 ¹e¹-še ḫa-a-wu_u-u-ru-un-ni-i-ra [

 3 šī-i-ra-a-ti-le ki-i-ia-ši wu_u-u[-
 4 a-wi_i-i-in a-am-mi-i-ni-i-in nu[-
 5 ú-ru-ú-¹uk¹-ku pa-a-lu-uk-ku ḫa-[x]x[
 6 e-še ú-ru-uk-ku a-aš-ḫu-un e-ki-x[
 7 ú-e-ru-uḫ-ḫa-a-al DINGIR^{MEŠ}-na ḫu-u-ul-li[

 8 zi-i-it ku-ú-li DINGIR^{MEŠ}-na ta-am[-
 9 pa-a-ri tu-ú-ri-i-in a-ra-an-nu-ú[-
 10 bar-zi-i-ga pa-a-ri a-aš-ḫu-un ḫa-x[
 11 a-aš-ḫu pa-a-re-en-tu-ú-uš tu-ú-r[i

 12 a-ma-a-at-ti-i-na DINGIR^{MEŠ}-na i-ki-¹ia¹ x[
 13 ḫi-i-tu-ú-ri ú-ri-ia-ša-a[n
 14 x ¹ni¹ x x x x ¹DINGIR^{1M}¹ES-na

 Rev. iv 1' []x x[
 2' [t/š]a-a-al x x[
 3' ni-¹i-ḫi-ri¹-ia-ši-i-il₅ AN[
 4' a-da-a-al-le-e-el-la k[i-

 5' ⁴Ku-mar-wi_i-ni-i-il₅ ti-i-wi_i-[na
 6' DINGIR^{MEŠ}-na-aš-ta-al a-lu-ma-a-i-i[n ka-ti-ia]

 7' DUB I.KAM ŠA A.A[B.BA

⁵ Edited by Haas / Wilhelm 1974: 260-263.

In line 3 *širadile* means "I sing"; as it happens, it is the first word of the Hurrian "Epic of Liberation":

šir=ad=i=l=e ^d*Teššob* ^{URU}*Kummi=ne=vi t[alav=oži] ebri*
talm=ašt=i=l=e ši[duri] negri eže=ne=vi Alla[ni]

I will sing of Teššup, the g[reat] king of Kummi, I will praise the youn[g woman] Allani, the bolt of the netherworld.

It corresponds to the Hittite *išhamiḫhi* near the opening of the Song of Silver, which is presumably a translation of a Hurrian original. The same Hittite verb occurs in line 3 of the Song of Ullikummi. The word *kiyaže* means "sea"; its meaning was established by Na'aman 1980: 109, on the basis of the tablet Al.T. 91 from Alalakh where the name *Akap-A.AB.BA* (ll. 5, 14) corresponds to *A-kap-gi-a-še* (ll. 17, 24).⁶ The opening two words thus mean "I sing the sea", an entirely appropriate beginning for the Song of the Sea.

If this is the beginning, the previous two lines are presumably some sort of preamble. The only point of clarity is ¹*e*-še *ḫa-a-wu_u-u-ru-un-ni-i-ra* in line 2 which can be translated as "earth/netherworld (abs.) with heaven (comit.)."⁷

As for what follows, in line 6 *ú-ru-ú-uk-ku pa-a-lu-uk-ku* seems to represent the negative form of the verbs *ur-* ("be") and the negative intransitive form of the verb *pal-* ("know").⁸ The meaning is thus "it does not exist, it is not known". In line 7 we find the *ur=o=kko* preceded by *eže* which means "earth". A few lines later, we find the words "high" (*ašḫu*) and "low" (*turi*).

Then in line 12, we find reference to *a-ma-a-at-ti-i-na* DINGIR^{MEŠ}-*na* who are "the ancient gods". As Laroche, 1974, pointed out, these sound like the "primeval deities" of the Kumarbi Cycle. The following word *eg(i)=i=a* means "in the middle"⁹, and that may refer to the position of the gods.

Finally, on the reverse side of KUB 44.7, very near the end of the tablet (line 5) the name of Kumarbi (^d*Ku-mar-wi_i-ni-i-il₅*) is combined with a form of the word for "speech" or "word" (*ti-i-wi_i-[na]*, restored *ti-i-wi_i-[na]*, in the

⁶ I am grateful to Prof. Wilhelm for this information.

⁷ For the correct meaning of *eže* "earth/netherworld" and *ḫavurni* "heaven" (previously translated *vice versa*) see Neu 1988a: 114 n. 12; Neu 1988b: 15, n. 32; 26 f.; Wilhelm 1993: 111 f.

⁸ For *ur-* see Speiser 1939: 300 f. ("take place, occur, be present"); for *ur-* as a verb of state see Wilhelm 1992: 660 f.; for *pal-* see Laroche 1955: 322 ("savoir").

⁹ Cf. Laroche, *GLH*, 94.

editio princeps)¹⁰ so presumably Kumarbi speaks.

III. The Song of the Sea. The Theme

Since our knowledge of Hurrian is not great, it is difficult to be sure of the theme of the Song. Among the possibilities that suggest themselves are these:

- (1) It was a poem in praise of the deified Sea, perhaps describing the god's origins.
- (2) Perhaps it described a primordial flood (cf. lines 6-7 of the recto), in which case the poem may have recounted the theme of the creation of the world. The reference on the front to "primeval deities" (*amatti-na enna*) is suggestive in this context. The objection to this is that Kumarbi is already in existence; we would not expect him to be in existence before Anu and Alalu had been described.
- (3) It narrated a conflict between the gods, e.g. Teššup, and the Sea, culminating in divine victory over the Sea.

There are three points in favor of (3):

- a) The Song was performed in connection with the cult of Mt. Ḫazzi, and Mt. Ḫazzi is linked to the theme of divine conflict in Ugaritic poetry (see below 4).
- b) As Laroche pointed out,¹¹ in the line after the reference to the performance of the Song of the Sea, we find the verb: *tar-aḫ-ta* = *tarḫta* at the end of a sentence. This is a verb with a special link to divine vanquishing, as Calvert Watkins has shown in chapter 34 of his wonderful book, "How to Kill a Dragon".¹²
- c) In KUB 45.63, the reference on the reverse to Kumarbi speaking strongly suggests that the poem comes from the Kumarbi Cycle. The reference on the obverse to "primeval deities" who figure in the Kumarbi Cycle is consistent with the poem coming from the Kumarbi Cycle, but would allow other hypotheses also.

So it seems a reasonable conclusion that KUB 45.63 came from the Kumarbi Cycle and dealt with divine conflict.

IV. Mt. Ḫazzi in Hittite Texts

A similar theme exists in Ugaritic mythological poetry, the so-called myth of Baal and Yamm. The parallel is particularly apposite because

¹⁰ See M. Salvini, KUB 45, p. VI.

¹¹ Laroche 1975.

¹² Watkins 1995: 343-346.

Baal's holy mountain in Ugaritic tradition was Mt. Sapan, and Sapan, by general consent, was the Ugaritic name for Mt. Kasion, the Hittite ẖazzi. This was a widely disseminated myth. It seems to be established at Mari in the 17th century BCE¹³. It has been suggested that it has had an influence as far as Egypt, where the cult of Baal-Sapan was established from the 2nd millennium BCE. In particular, there is a version of the myth attested in an Egyptian text where the Sea seems to have demanded tribute from the gods, which was taken to him by Astarte who seduced the Sea in some way or other (many parts of the text are unclear).¹⁴

Evidence for a conflict between the gods and the sea is attested in Hittite sources also. For one thing, the sea is the ally of Kumarbi in the Kumarbi Cycle: in the Song of Ullikummi, the Sea is an ally of Kumarbi at the time that he gives birth to Ullikummi. And Ullikummi comes from the Sea. And Hedammu is the progeny of Kumarbi and the daughter of the Sea. In view of this, it is surprising that in the extant reconstruction of the Kumarbi Cycle, there is no single episode entirely devoted to the Sea.

For further evidence we can turn to two further texts.

1. Ištar and Pišaiša: KUB 33.108

More explicit evidence comes from the so-called myth of Ištar and Pišaiša. KUB 33.108 is a mythological text describing the rape of Ištar by the mountain god Pišaiša.¹⁵ Pišaiša goes to bed with Ištar, but she wakes up and gets angry. She seems to say that Pišaiša is now an enemy of Teššup. Pišaiša falls at the feet of Ištar "like an apple" (^{GIŠ}HAŠHUR GIM-an).¹⁶ He promises that he will tell Ištar the story of how the Weather God defeated the Sea-God, and how the mountains then rebelled against the Weather-God. In Friedrich's reconstruction, the mountains defeat Teššup with the same weapon with which he defeated the sea. Did they steal it from him? Just before the tablet breaks off, Mt. ẖazzi and Mt. Nanni are mentioned:

19 ... nu ka-ru-ú ^DNa[m-ni-iš

20 ^[D]Ha-az-zi-iš-ša HUR.SAG^H[^LA

21 [x-]x e-šir ...

This reference to Mt. ẖazzi is fascinating in view of the link between "The Song of the Sea" and Mt. ẖazzi (KUB 44.7). Unfortunately, it is not quite clear what role Mt. ẖazzi and Nanni played in the Pišaiša-story.

¹³ See Durand 1993. On the myth in general, cf. Koch 1993; Haas 1982: 115-125.

¹⁴ See Redford 1990; also Helck 1983.

¹⁵ Edited by Friedrich 1952/3: 147-150, and discussed by Wegner 1981: 68 ff.

¹⁶ Haas, 1993: 261 ff. argues that this phrase "like an apple" might be Hurrian in origin.

2. KBo 26.105

Finally, Houwink ten Cate, 1992: 117-118, has made the extraordinary suggestion that the myth of a conflict between Tessub and the Sea might be present in KBo 26.105. He believes that this text is parallel with the Egyptian myth of Astarte and the Sea, which I mentioned earlier. Many details of the text are obscure, but we can make out the rough outline. The sea is doing something (l. 7': *kuit essai arunas*); there is a flood (l. 9': *karittis*), which seems to reach the heaven (ll. 10'-12'):

lelḫuwarti[ma-as] utn[e anda karier (§) [ara]er lelḫurtimas
the flood climbs up to earth, the flood rises.

It reaches the sun, the moon and the stars (ll. 12'-13'). Kumarbi speaks, as in the Song of the Sea (l. 14'). And someone (Kumarbi?) orders that tribute is paid to the Sea (l. 17'):

ṽ¹-ta-at-te-en a-ru-ni ar-kam-ma-an
... hand over to the sea tribute ...

The tribute consists of lapis lazuli, ivory, silver and gold.¹⁷ The sea does something involving the tribute in l. 19. After that, Ištar is somehow involved in the story (l. 21: *eḫu^D IŠTAR-li* ...). So this text seems to give us another perspective on the Hittite version of the myth of the conflict between the gods and the sea.

3. Other Texts

Before returning to KUB 45.63, I will mention two other Hurrian texts that link *kiyaže* with Mt. Ḫazzi.

The first is a Hymn to Teššup, KUB 47.78, studied by Thiel and Wegner 1984. The obverse of this text contains a hymnic invocation to Teššup of Ḫalab-Aleppo; in obv. i 3'-6' Teššup is invoked with a number of deities:

<i>Namni=ra=m</i>	You with Namni
<i>Ḫaz(z)i=ra=m</i>	you with Ḫazzi
<i>[...]illamili=m</i>	you ...
<i>kiyaže=ne=ra=mma</i>	you with the sea
<i>[...]r=ōl=ud=a=m Teššob</i>	you ... Teššup
<i>šiy(e)=a papan=n(a)=a</i>	in water in mountains
<i>ež(e)=a ḫavur=n(i)=a</i>	on earth, in the heaven ...

The identification of *Kiyaže* with the sea does not seem to have been

¹⁷ Incidentally, the Luwian and Hittite word for tribute, *argamman-*, *argama-*, is identical to the Ugaritic word *argmn* used in the song of Baal and Yamm: see Tischler, *HEG* I, p. 59 f.; Kammenhuber, *HW²* A, 303 f.; Puhvel, *HED* I, 143-146; Starke 1990: 260-263.

known to Thiel and Wegner in 1984. Hurrian texts like to include all deities.¹⁸ So here we have not conflict between Teššup and the sea, but rather they are aligned in some way.¹⁹

The second text is KUB 27.38, a ritual text relating to the ^{MUNUS}ŠU.-GI.²⁰ Here ^DKiyaže=ne=ve=n(a)=āž=e means "of those of the Sea-God" (genetive with *Suffixaufnahme*), agreeing with the preceding ^Dšarri=n(a)=āž=e ("of the divine kings"). ^DKiyaže(-nāže) appears in a column with ^Dimmar-wa-ḫi(-nāže) (who are mysterious), *paban*=n(a)=āž=e "of the mountains" and *šīye*=n(a)=āž=e "of the rivers"; so the forms related to ^Dšarri=n(a)=āž=e are all divinities related to natural powers of some sort. Later on in KUB 27.38 (obv. i 11'-12') Ḫazzi and Namni are mentioned; perhaps the names of these mountains had some sort of ritual function (cf. Haas 1994).

V. Relation to the Kingship in Heaven Cycle

It seems likely that the Song of the Sea belongs to a Kumarbi Cycle. But where are we to place it in the surviving sequence of parts? The accepted order of parts is:

- a) The Song of Kumarbi;
- b) The Song of the God LAMMA;
- c) The Song of Silver;
- d) The Song of Ḫedammu;
- e) The Song of Ullikummi

The Song of the Sea must follow the Song of Kumarbi, if it described Teššup's victory over the Sea, because the Song of Kumarbi described Teššup's creation. It is likely to belong before the Song of Ullikummi, if

¹⁸ Cf. the *kaluti* offering lists and the mentioning of "named and unnamed" deities (Wegner 1995).

¹⁹ The problem here is that the Sea accompanies Teššup, it is an attribute of him. On the face of it, this suggests a different way of interpreting the "Song of the Sea". Perhaps conflict with the Sea was not its theme at all, and in fact the point was to praise the Sea as an attribute of Teššup. Well, that's the alternative way of looking at it. But overall, I tend to think that conflict between Teššup and the Sea was after all the theme. But in KUB 47.58 we glimpse a later stage, where conflict has been overcome, and the Sea is linked to Teššup in cult. I would argue that this text illustrates a principle familiar to students of Greek religion Antagonism on level of myth corresponds to cooperation on level of cult. One issue is whether the same applies to the mountains Ḫazzi and Nanni: were they always loyal to Teššup, or is there a stage of the myth where they rebel?

²⁰ Edited in Haas / Wegner 1984 as ChS I/5 no. 87. For commentaries see Kammenhuber 1976, 90; de Martino 1993.

Ullikummi's inhuman construction was designed to thwart Šauška's power of seduction. It could be a sort of "prequel" to the Song of Hedammu in which the sea's defeat at the hands of Teššup motivates the sea giving Kumarbi his daughter in marriage. I would even venture the suggestion that the Song of the Sea and the Song of Hedammu might have been two parts of the same narrative. The statements "it does not exist, is not known" and "the earth does not exist" in lines 6-7 could be fitted into this hypothesis, if they perhaps refer to a flood, which threatens the existence of the world, (cf. KBo 26.105) discussed above.

This is one position that has been suggested by Houwink ten Cate for the story represented by KBo 26.105 (which seems to be one and the same as the Song of the Sea). The other possibility he suggests is that it belongs between the Song of Kumarbi and the Song of Lamma²¹ In the second case, we can think of it as a second stage in the growth of Teššup's power.

VI. Performance

Before concluding, I would like to offer a few speculations on performance. Well, one performance of it anyway took place in connection with a rite in honour of Mount Ḫazzi, as we have seen. The natural place for the performance of that would have been Mount Ḫazzi itself. There may have been an Ugaritic ritual there.²² And the Greeks performed rituals on there: Seleukos I Nikator visited it from nearby Antioch when he founded the port of Seleukeia Pieria (JMalalas 198. 22ff.).²³ It is interesting to speculate that there might have been rituals there in the 2nd millennium also.

Equally, rituals in honour of Mt. Ḫazzi might have been celebrated in other places, for example in Ḫattusa itself, and the song of the Sea might have been part of these. Such a ritual might well have had some sort of role in the royal cult, and it is also possible that the song was performed

²¹ Houwink ten Cate 1992: 109-120.

²² De Moor (1970), 306 (in the month of Ḫiari).

²³ Seleukos Nikator, immediately after the victory of Antigonos Poliorketes, wanting to found different cities, began to found them first on the shore of Syria. Coming to the sea, he saw a small city lying on the mountain, which Syros the son of Agenor had founded. On the 23rd of Xanthikos he came to Mount Kasion to sacrifice to Zeus Kasios. Completing the sacrifice and cutting the meat, he prayed asking where he should found the city. Suddenly an eagle seized something from the sacrifice and brought it down to the ancient city. Seleukos followed behind, accompanied by bird-watchers, and he found the meat scattered along the sea below the ancient city in the port named Pieria. Fortifying the walls, he at once laid foundations, calling it Seleukeia city after his own name.

independently of any ritual in honour of Mt. Ḫazzi. Its being included in the library-catalogue at Ḫattusa would tend to suggest that it had an independent history.

A royal connection is, incidentally, supported by the parallel with the "Song of Kingship" performed in association with the cult of Mt. Ḫazzi mentioned earlier. The Hurrian word for "kingship" – *šarrašše* – is rare in texts from Ḫattusa. But one place it *is* found is in certain rituals of substitution performed on behalf of the Hittite royal family, discussed by Kümmel 1967, 48-49 (KUB 11.31, Rs. 6).

VII. To sum up, I would suggest the following:

– first, that there was a Hurrian and Hittite myth corresponding roughly to the Semitic myth of Baal-Yamm, where the king of the gods fights the sea, and at some early point the sea receives tribute from the gods. Of course, the hittite version need not have been exactly the same as the semitic, and in fact the Pišaiša-story contains details that have no parallel in the Semitic material

– second, that this myth is the most likely subject for the Hurrian "Song of the Sea;

– third, the reason that the "Song of the Sea" is linked to Mt. Ḫazzi is likely to be that Mt. Ḫazzi is the seat of Teššup, and the place of his victory over the sea. The Pišaiša text also suggests that Mt. Ḫazzi might have had an active role in the myth, but that is unclear.

– fourth that this myth and the song probably has a place in the Kumarbi-Cycle, most likely early on.

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