



# Music, Dance, and Processions in Hittite Anatolia

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## MUSIC

Hittite documentation about music is extensive, even though, given the official character of the Hittite archives, it is limited to the ritual sphere. We know very little about the role of music in Hittite private life. However, because Hittite treatment of the gods basically reflects their own human relations, we can infer that music may have played an important part on many occasions of private life.

For a reconstruction of Hittite music, it is of fundamental importance to study the corpus of cuneiform tablets; figurative documentation, even if more scarce, is also of great interest, particularly the İnandık vase, housed at the Archaeological Museum in Ankara.

### *Instruments*

It is difficult to identify precisely the musical instruments mentioned in the Hittite texts. In fact, a great deal of testimony on the subject consists of generalized statements that say little about the musical instruments and even less about the type of music played. We lack documents of a technical character, and we do not know anything about the system of musical notation. For this reason, the typological classifica-

tion of the instruments proposed here should be regarded as somewhat hypothetical.

The instrument most often attested is the GIŠ<sup>d</sup>INANNA, which may be understood as "lyre." This Sumerogram corresponds to the Hattic term *zina/ir*, while we do not know the equivalent Hittite word. The interpretation of GIŠ<sup>d</sup>INANNA as a stringed instrument is rather certain, however, partly due to the context in which the term appears, partly because this instrument is always used in accompaniment to song. Other studies propose an alternative, translating GIŠ<sup>d</sup>INANNA as "harp." However, one should notice that while the lyre is amply documented in Anatolian iconography during the second and the first millennia BCE (on seals, vases, and reliefs), the harp is practically absent. If we were to accept the translation "harp," we would be contradicted by the documentation, since there are thousands of instances of this instrument (GIŠ<sup>d</sup>INANNA) in the texts, but no iconographic evidence of harps in the plastic arts.

The GIŠ<sup>d</sup>INANNA is illustrated earliest on the seals of the Assyrian colony period (circa 2000–1800) from Cappadocia, continuing to the end of the first millennium, for instance on the Karatepe reliefs. Particularly important for the Hittite period are the friezes on the previously men-

tioned vase from İnandık with depictions of six asymmetrical lyres, trapezoidal in shape, one of which is large, positioned on the ground and played by two musicians. On a ceramic fragment from Boğazköy (ancient Khattusha, later Pteria), there is a depiction of a symmetrical lyre with eight or more strings, played by one musician using both hands.

Taking all the data, both written and iconographic, into consideration, it is possible to get some idea of the typological variants of this instrument. The lyres can be of different dimensions, from small and portable to very large and probably stationary. Some of them are symmetrical, while others are asymmetrical; the number of strings varies from one example to the next. The structural elements are sometimes inlaid or covered with precious materials, while the arms and the yoke are sometimes decorated with animal figures.

It is not clear from the depictions whether a plectrum is used, but two different verbs are employed in connection with the <sup>GIS</sup>INANNA; the first is semantically linked to the action of "plucking/picking" (*hazziya-/hazzik(k)-*), while the second has the meaning of "strike/beat" (*walḥ-*, a verb generally used in connection with percussion instruments). This information suggests different techniques for producing sounds, sometimes by using the fingers of the hand and sometimes a plectrum.

The other stringed instrument attested in Hittite music is the <sup>GIS</sup>TIBULA, probably a "lute," an instrument which is depicted in the figurative documentation as a small, circular body with an elongated neck.

The percussion instruments are more numerous. Three of them are always mentioned together, as if they formed a small orchestra: <sup>(GIS)</sup>arkam(m)i-, *huhupal*, and <sup>(URUDU)</sup>galgalturi-. The first can be identified with certainty as a "drum." The drum is made entirely or partially of wood, as demonstrated by the presence (although inconsistent) of the determinative <sup>GIS</sup>, "wood," and it exists in different sizes. The *huhupal* is a "cymbal." An interpretation for this term is arrived at by elimination, since in one text the *huhupal* is used as a container for liquids. The cymbal is also well documented in iconography: we find it depicted on the İnandık vase and in the frieze of the Hittite stag rhyton

of the Schimmel Collection displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (it is reproduced in "Theology, Priests, and Worship in Hittite Anatolia" in Part 8, Vol. III). The cymbal depicted on the Schimmel rhyton has incised decoration.

The instrument *galgalturi-* may represent "castanets." In some texts we find the mention of "a pair of *galgalturi-*," which works well with the translation "castanets," or at least with an instrument composed of two elements. The *galgalturi-* were made of metal or sometimes wood.

Another percussion instrument may be designated by the Sumerogram <sup>GIS</sup>BALAG.DI, which we think may be a type of drum, possibly a smaller one, or a tambourine. We can also identify the word <sup>GIS</sup>mukar as "sistrum." This term never appears in connection with the verb "to play," but is used in loud accompaniment to magical recitals in order to "get the attention" of the deity. One ritual's text suggests that the *mukar* was made with sticks of wood. Metal sistra, however, are well known in pre-Hittite Anatolian culture, as is demonstrated by examples on view at the Archaeological Museum in Ankara.

In the case of wind instruments, there is textual evidence for the horn <sup>(SI)</sup>šawatar/šawitra- and the flute GI.DI. The musical function of the horn is limited because of its particular character and the narrow variation in sound it produces. It was mostly used to announce different rituals or to accompany songs or chants.

The flute is rarely attested in Hittite documentation, and when it is, it usually accompanies a song. The double flute is documented in Neo-Hittite reliefs from Carchemish (Karkamish), Karatepe (ancient Azatiwataya), and Zincirli (pronounced Zinjirli, ancient Sam'al).

### Song and Recital

Songs were always accompanied by the sound of musical instruments, usually the lyre, more rarely percussion or wind instruments. Singing was a fundamental component of religious ceremonies; sometimes complete songs are set forth in texts, while at other times we have only the opening line or the "title," often determined by the name of the deity to which it is addressed, or by the ritual action for which it is intended

(for example, "the song of the washing of the feet of the divinity").

In instances where the complete text or part of it is preserved, as in the case of a Hurrian song to Ishtar, we note the recurrent style of composition which uses alliteration and repetition of similar words. In another text, "the men of the city of Anunuwa" sing in the Hattic language accompanied not by the sound of musical instruments, but by the hitting or beating of swords. A similar rite presents a singer who begins his song to the sound of the lyre; then "the men of Anunuwa" sing while clashing their swords and, finally, the performers dance. One should mention here that two sword carriers also appear in the ritual procession depicted on the frieze of the İnandik vase. Furthermore, our interpretation of the two texts cited above may explain the images on the very fragmentary vase from Bitik, at the Archaeological Museum in Ankara, where two personages confront each other while holding short swords in their hands. This scene was earlier interpreted variously as a ritual duel or a sword dance.

Songs are integrated into the action of celebratory performances as in the case of a battle scene which we find enacted during the (*h*) *išuwa* festival (to which we will return later). It is noteworthy here that the songs are accompanied by percussion, that is to say, by instrumentation that simulates the sound of war and conflict.

Songs were not only part of religious ceremonies but were also performed on a number of other occasions. An Old Hittite text belonging to the genre of the literary story, "the Chronicle of Pukhanu" narrates that while the Hittites prepare to defend against an awaited Hurrian attack, they ask two warriors (<sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>*hulhuliyanteš*) their opinion and prognosis of the war. These warriors then interrupt their preparation for war and, with apotropaic intention, intone a song with the opening words, "The clothes of Nesha."

Another Old Hittite text tells the story of the siege by the Hittites of the city of Urshu, and in the middle of the description of the various stages of the war, a song is announced. The text is in Akkadian, but the lines detailing the song are in Hittite. It is entitled "Song to the War God Zababa," and it is inserted into a ritual that we do not fully understand, but which seems to

be related to the ongoing war and to the training of the troops.

Music not only accompanied song but also the recital of passages either in the Hittite language or in the other languages documented in the Anatolian written tradition of the second millennium: Luwian, Palaic, Hattic, Hurrian, and Babylonian. The musical accompaniment is usually with the lyre; sometimes, however, the texts specify that the recital begins only when the music stops. The speakers of the recited passages are therefore the "performers" (<sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>*ALAN.ZU*), together with the other musicians (<sup>LÚ</sup>*kita-* and <sup>LÚ</sup>*paluwatalla-*) who rhythmically pronounce their recitations with their voice and by clapping their hands.

During the rituals which took place during the funerals of kings, the passages recited by lyre-accompanied "performers" began on a loudly articulated ritual cry, "*aḫa*," before turning into a whisper as befitted a proper funeral rite.

### *The Musicians*

We clearly distinguish between two categories of musicians: those who were specialists and those who had other functions but who occasionally also performed musical pieces. Professional musicians and singers are described by various terms, both Sumerograms and Hittite words. It is, however, difficult to distinguish specific traits among them: <sup>LÚ</sup>*NAR*, <sup>LÚ</sup>*halli(ya)ri-*, <sup>LÚ</sup>*išḫamata-*, <sup>LÚ</sup>*šaḫtarili-*, <sup>MUNUS</sup>*sír* (less often in the masculine form <sup>LÚ</sup>*sír*), and so on. Many of these designations are attested both in the masculine and the feminine form but it is noteworthy that in the Hittite documentation concerning musical matters there is a definite masculine predominance. A specific terminology indicates the players of certain musical instruments, the specificity of which makes us believe that to play these instruments one would have to have a certain technical ability or talent (for example, <sup>LÚ/MUNUS</sup>*arkam(m)iyala-*, "male/female player of the drum"; <sup>LÚ</sup>*GI.GÍD*, "flutist").

The lyre is always mentioned in abbreviated expressions, of the type "there is singing (with the accompaniment of) the lyre," which does not indicate to us who the players of this instrument are. One text mentions <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>*GIŠ dINANNA<sup>HI.A</sup>* *Kaniš*, "the players of the lyre from the city of Kanesh" (Nesha, modern Kültepe).

The singers are distinguished according to the language in which they specialize: "singer of Hattic/Luwian/Hurrian," and so on. Sometimes the performers of songs or musical passages are called <sup>LC.MES</sup>ALAN.ZU<sub>9</sub>, a type of performer skilled in music, dance, and mime.

Musicians and singers were part of the personnel in temples and palaces. Probably every palatial or temple institution, whether in the capital of Khattusha or elsewhere, had a group of musicians at its disposal. It is possible to recover a hierarchical system among such personnel on the basis of titles such as "the master of singers" or "the superintendent of performers."

We know little about the system of recruitment for these performers. From administrative texts, we gather that the city or even a private individual could provide such specialized personnel to the palace or the temple. It is also possible that the musicians and singers circulated around Khatti or even moved in and out of nearby kingdoms. Perhaps the singers who sang or recited in a foreign language actually specialized in songs from their native traditions. Furthermore, our documents tell us of folkloristic groups, specializing in music and song. These are said to come from cities such as Anunuwa, Lallupiya, and Ishtanuwa, and this information may account for the local character of the cults they celebrated.

Alongside such specialized personnel, occasionally priests and other palace or temple functionaries are said to have played instruments, such as horns or tambourines, that were within the technical competence, apparently, of nonmusicians. Occasionally we read about instruments that were used less for their musical quality than for their perceived magical properties; their players apparently did not belong to orchestral groups.

### *Occasions for Music*

Music was a fundamental element of religious ceremony. In the midst of festive rituals, music and song accompanies and articulates the various ritual acts. Usually the king or a high official gives the musicians the order to play, an order which can be recognized, for instance, in the calling out of the Hattic term *zina/ir*, or lyre.

First and foremost, the music accompanies a ritual action which seems to occur with great frequency: the king and queen, separately or together, occasionally also with priests or dignitaries, drink in honor of a deity. The texts give directions that specify not only at which point during the ritual the instruments must begin to sound, but also when they must stop or when their performance is optional. Musical accompaniment also occurs in processions when the king and queen, together with the court and priesthood, celebrate sacred ceremonies.

Moreover, specific instruments are likely to be more prominent in rituals belonging to one particular geographic or linguistic sphere than another. For example, the horn is used predominantly in Luwian and Hurrian rituals. At certain times during the festival the instruments are not played, but the musicians are expected to hold them in their hands. At other times instruments play incongruous roles. For example, the horn and the cymbal, which are obviously hollow in form, are turned into receptacles for libation.

Musical accompaniment is also required in rituals that are very different from what has so far been described here. A "physician," <sup>LC</sup>A.ZU, pierces himself with two needles while performing a dance to the sound of cymbals. The presence of the physician, the "beating" character of the music, and the whirl of the dance all lead us to believe that we are dealing with a magical, shamanistic action. It is even possible that magical powers were ascribed to the musical instruments themselves. In one ritual, for example, a physician recites an incantation while holding a sistrum in his hand.

## DANCE

Dance is closely connected to music. Again, the documentation available to us is limited to dance in the cultic sphere. We do not know anything about dance in people's daily lives.

Hittite dance is better documented in the written records than iconographically, depictions being limited to the friezes on the Inandik vase and to a few decorated pottery fragments from Khattusha. As a final comparison some Neo-

Hittite fragments from Zincirli, Carchemish, and Karatepe are also of a certain interest.

### *Movements in Dance*

In the tablets describing festivals, mention of dance is analogous to that of music, that is to say specific executed movements and steps of the dance are not always explained; instead, the texts say simply that at such and such a moment in the ceremony the dancers dance.

Nevertheless, a unique document that is possibly just an extract from a larger cultic text presents what we might call a "libretto of dance." It describes, in order, a series of dance steps, but unfortunately it does not recount the context in which the dance takes place. Some of the terms used remain incomprehensible to us, while others are sufficiently informative to allow a literal translation but not to form a visual image of what went on. For example, we read that "they danced in the style of the city of Lakhshan," or "in the style of the city of Khupishna [later Cybistra]."

Notwithstanding such difficulties, some movements of dance can be identified. In particular, it is possible to reconstruct a typology of dance steps based on the change between two series of movements, the first steps completed on the spot (*pedi*), while the second set of steps presupposes a leap from the original position to a distant point (*tûwaz*), sometimes a distance forward (*tûwaz para*). Thus, we are able to describe a dance, executed by a group of dancers who position themselves in parallel rows or concentric circles, and who first dance in place, then catch up with the row in front. Still today we find similar movements in folk dancing in many places around the Mediterranean.

Several kinds of dances are documented in the texts, and multiple verbs are used, not only *tarku(wai)*-, "to dance," but also *nai*-, "to turn"; *wahnu*-, "to turn around"; *weh*-, "to make a turn"; *iya*-, "to run"; and *hinganišk*-, "to dance and mime," which make us realize that dance movements and steps had many variations. Furthermore, there are dances prescribing the bending of the knees (*ganenant*-), and others which imitate animal movements (*paršanili*, "in the manner of a leopard"). There are folkloristic

dances, if we can interpret the meaning of dances named after cities and countries ("the style of the city of Lakhshan"). Still other tablets give indications of positions: standing on the head or on the hands.

Some Old Hittite texts about festivals form a rather compact group from the point of view of content as well as the mention of specific divinities. In these texts, a dance accompanies a particular ritual action. After some movements in place, turning to the left and to the right, a boy or a girl "lets the message of the goddess Inara pass." The significance of this expression may seem rather obscure at first, but it becomes comprehensible when combined with what we know about the mythological tradition surrounding Inara. Following her disappearance, a bee is asked to search for Inara and to transmit a message from the mother goddess. It is therefore possible that during this festival the disappearance of Inara is reenacted and that dance steps mimed the part in which an insect or a bird flies in search of the divinity.

### *Music for Dance Choreography*

The accompaniment to dance consists mainly of percussion and rhythmic music, but stringed instruments, like the lyre and the lute, may also play similar roles. Normally the dances have several dancers, all of whom perform the same movements. In one document, however, a single dancer separates himself from the group and performs an acrobatic solo. Acrobatic dancing is also documented in the pictorial evidence. On the upper register of the İnandık vase is depicted an orchestra with six instrumentalists playing the portable lyre, the lute, and four tambourines or cymbals. The musicians are followed by two dancers in movement, one of whom performs a kind of somersault while a woman is keeping rhythm by clapping her hands. The scene is an exact visual transposition of one of the many scenes described in the festival texts where, normally, a corps of dancers perform to entertain the gods or royalty. In one ceremony, six female dancers line up in front of the king, dance and perform steps, first to the left, then to the right; never—as is specified in the text—are they to turn their back to the king. Perhaps this dance

told a story and included movements of the face, the arms, or the hands that must be seen frontally by an audience; perhaps it was simply the custom in Khatti, as it was with us until just recently, never to turn one's back on royalty.

We have no information about the use of scenery or other theatrical props. Once, however, a dance is described as taking place on a wooden stage.

In dances of a mimic character, disguises or costumes were worn to indicate the roles of the performers (hunters, leopards, bears). We know that on other occasions the dancers were dressed in colorful clothes, or wore especially elaborate costumes. In one instance, however, the dancer is nude; this is the condition of the acrobatic dancer in the piece described above. It could be that cloth impeded the freedom of movement necessary for the act.

### *The Dancers*

As with musicians, dancers can be divided between professional performers and those who only dance occasionally during a ritual. The first group consists of <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>HÜB.BI/HÜB.BÍ, "dancers," joined by the <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>ALAN.ZU<sub>9</sub>, who are gifted performers with a certain versatility and who may alternate between being musicians, dancers, mimics, or actors. Also, mentioned are the <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>hapi (y) a-, who sing, and the <sup>MUNUS.MEŠ</sup>intu<sub>hi</sub>-, who often both sing and dance. Both these categories of performers presumably have their origin in the Hattic tradition. Also, when the texts specify that "some women or girls" are required for the dance, we assume that these would be professional female dancers, since their identity should otherwise have been more clearly defined.

It happens, also, that nonprofessionals belonging to the cultic personnel are given to dance: the cook, the cupbearer, and members of the priesthood (for example, NIN.DINGIR, "lady of the god"). In two cases, the queen herself dances. Once the queen dances, and after her the dignitaries dance; on another occasion, the queen dances in a ritual during which she offers a deity an ax and a cloak that she held over her shoulder as she danced. Although people of both genders are said to dance, we read most often of males; whether they are adult or young is not always possible to know.

## CULTIC PROCESSIONS

Music and dance play a fundamental role in the processions that initiate the celebration of festivals. An important example is the procession that takes place on the sixteenth day of the spring AN.TAH.ŠUM<sup>SAR</sup> festival. The king and queen leave the palace preceded by several officials and a bodyguard. Behind them come all the court dignitaries. This procession is surrounded by the <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>ALAN.ZU<sub>9</sub>, who announce the proceedings while playing drums, cymbals, and castanets. Next to the king, a group of performers dances to the accompaniment of a lute; other performers dressed in colorful clothes first dance near the king and then encircle him. Before the royal couple arrives at the temple, the performers and their assistants take their places in front of the temple, evidently to be ready to receive the royal couple. When the king and queen arrive at the entry, a solo dancer performs a pirouette to welcome them after which they enter the courtyard of the temple.

Another example is the procession during the festival called KILAM. The king and queen walk together with officials and bodyguards. To musical accompaniment, <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>ALAN.ZU<sub>9</sub> perform dances imitating the movements of leopards. The king takes his place at the entrance of the palace from which he watches a parade of oxen-pulled wagons carrying precious cultic ornaments. There follows a troop of ten dancers, among which a nude soloist performs an acrobatic dance. Next comes the priesthood of the deity LAMMA, and ritual objects, such as the sword and the hunting bags (<sup>KUŠ</sup>kurša-), are carried forward. The sacred animals are presented one after the other. They are images, made of precious materials, representing the leopard, the wolf, the lion, the wild boar, and the bear. More music and songs follow, and then the presentation of the gold and silver images of four stags, one of which is without antlers. These animals belong to the cultural and iconographic tradition of Anatolia as demonstrated by the metal standards with figures of stags from Alaca (pronounced Alaja) Hüyük, now in the Ankara Museum. The involvement of the god LAMMA, the presentation of the images of wild animals, and the very character of the KILAM festival, are connected to the hunt. Thus, although hunting had

lost the primary function it had held in an earlier subsistence economy, it remained alive in the religious sphere of Hittite culture and in its literary lore as well (The Saga of Keshi).

We can identify a visual parallel to the KILAM festival text among the bas-reliefs at the sphinx gate, on the south side of Alaca Hüyük, a building that dates to the Empire period (circa 1400–1200). (The sphinx gate is pictured in “Anatolian Architectural Decorations, Statuary, and Stelae” above.) The friezes are arranged in two registers. (The orthostats were not found in their original place, and the arrangement of the stones is conjectural.) The lower register presents a procession of musicians and acrobats facing the altar and the image of a bull set on a pedestal. At the extreme opposite side, there is another image of a bull that is set on a wheeled base. The upper register, meanwhile, displays a hunting scene, with two archers and animals, including a wild boar and stags. These elements clearly indicate a connection between the cultic scene and the hunt, between processions and the wild animals—whether or not they were actual animals, actors in disguise, or statues.

## DANCE AND MIME

There are some dances that are distinctly mimic in character and that recreate scenes from the hunt. In particular, two ceremonies should be mentioned that have to do with the cult of the Hattic deity Teteshkhapi. In the first, we find a hunter (<sup>L</sup>*meneya*–) armed with a bow and another “actor” disguised as a leopard; in the second case, after a musician (<sup>L</sup>*LUL-šiya*–) has performed a dance with bending of the knees, the hunter (<sup>L</sup>*meneya*–) dances with a bow in his hand pretending to shoot an arrow. Then another actor among the cultic personnel, dressed as a bear (<sup>L</sup>*hartak(k)a*–), first bathes the feet of the performers with a liquid (*šerha*–, “animal urine”[?], real or imagined) and then performs a dance. Elsewhere we find a description of a similar scene, but with a female archer (MUNUS <sup>G</sup>*šPAN*) who readies to strike (the actor representing) the bear with an arrow. Since Teteshkhapi was a deity protective of wild nature, the frieze with the hunt becomes comprehensi-

ble, connecting such cultic representations to Hattic tradition. We may note that mural paintings at Çatal (pronounced Chatal) Hüyük about four thousand years before the Hittite period, depicting groups of men in movement—mainly without weapons and surrounded by wild animals—could also be interpreted as dancers in a hunt-related function or ritual.

Other mime performances display scenes of wrestling and battle. In the tenth tablet of the (*h*)*išuwa* festival, some musicians (<sup>L</sup>*MEŠ BALAG.DI*) dance while mimicking (*hinganiš-kanzi*) a battle and intone battle songs to the accompaniment of percussion instruments. In a different ritual we are presented with a true historical battle. The “actors” are divided into two groups, one representing “the men of Khatti” and the other representing “the men of Masha.” The former carry arms of bronze, while the latter have weapons of reeds. The two groups fight, and naturally the men of Khatti are the winners. They take one of their adversaries prisoner and consecrate him to the storm-god.

Yet another text describes a wrestling match between the men of the city of Khallapiya and a group of “performers.” They fight until, at a sign from the king, they are interrupted by one of the bodyguards. The men from Khallapiya are prevented from leaving and while the “performers” climb toward the city, the others stay where they are. We find an even more complete fighting match described elsewhere. A wrestling match, or perhaps a duel, takes place between an “enemy” and a Hittite, designated simply as “one of ours.” Of course the fight is resolved in a manner unfavorable to the enemy and the audience shows its enthusiasm with either applause or yelling. At a sign from the king, a priest intervenes between the two combatants, doing something that is not entirely comprehensible to us. Thereupon, animals enter the stage, or rather, as usually happens, actors dressed up and masked as animals: two leopards and two bears. A wrestling match takes place (KITPALU *tiyanzi*). Two athletes represent champions of the enemy and of the Hittites; of course, the latter wins. A boxing match (<sup>L</sup>*MEŠ GÉŠPU tiyanzi*) follows.

The mention of weapons, even if only “stage weapons” are intended, recurs in another cult representation. Here the king comes out of his

tent and positions himself near a fire by a bathing or washing installation. Two nude performers are hidden in the tub. Other cultic functionaries—the priestess of the deity Titiutti and the superintendent of the sacred prostitutes—run three times around the tub. The superintendent of the prostitutes has a wooden knife, and in front of him a priest of the god Titiutti stands with a stick. With the stick and perhaps with the knife (unfortunately the text does not say), they hit or threaten the two performers. Then a liquid, maybe a kind of beer, is poured on the performers' backs; finally they stand up, play the horn three times and leave the scene. Needless to say, we cannot confidently interpret what goes on.

## SPORTS AND ATHLETIC PERFORMANCES

A horse race seems to signal the program of the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival, while another text mentions a prize to be given to the winner of a horse race. We have already caught a glimpse of wrestling and boxing matches in mime performances. Boxing matches (LÚ<sup>MES</sup>GEŠPU *tiyanzi*, GEŠPU *hulḫuliya tiya-*) and free wrestling (*hulḫuliya tiya-*, or else KITPALU) are mentioned in several festival texts. Furthermore, running games and weight throwing are documented. In one rite, cult members sing and dance, while women hold on to a rope and rhythmic music is tapped on a drum. This may possibly indicate a gymnastic contest or perhaps a version of "tug-of-war."

In some festivals the wrestling contests occur during a banquet and for the entertainment of the god, "they eat (and) drink; they fill the goblets; in front of the deity they wrestle; they entertain (the deity)." That all those in attendance, including the king, the queen, and the officials who take part in the ceremony, derived pleasure from the theatrical performances offered to the gods goes without saying.

Two athletic activities merit attention. In an Old Hittite text, the "Palace Chronicle," there is a description of a team contest with archers performing for the king. The king is to judge the skill of the participants and thus select the best

among them for his personal service. The archers who hit the target receive wine as a prize, while those who miss are humiliated by having to fetch water naked.

In a ritual for erecting a building, the master builder (LÚ<sup>C</sup>NAGAR) is asked to perform an acrobatic test. When the building is finished, the master builder uses a rope to climb up on the roof twice, while singers run around the hearth below. The third time that the master builder climbs the roof, he uncovers a silver ax and a silver knife, hidden under some material and tied to the roof of the building. The master builder gets to keep the ax and the knife as a reward, since this test of his courage was the final condition of receiving compensation for the completed building.

Music, dance, mime, and athletic performances played an important role in Hittite religion and in the celebration of festivals. It is obviously not possible to apply our term "theater" to the spectacle described, but it is certain that an elaborate choreography governed the performance of music and dance so that the gods would receive a rite with gratitude and the participants would be happy and involved in the activity. The different types of musical instruments, the songs, and the situations recreated by the mimes have their roots in ancient traditions and are mixed with Hattic, Hurrian, and Luwian elements, in keeping with the composite, yet original, character of Hittite culture.

*Translated from the Italian by Ulla Kasten*

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