

# Between Adoption and Assimilation: The Case of Ištar of Hattarina

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**Abstract:** In his investigation of the expansion of the cult of the “deity of the night” in Anatolia and her relationship with Ištar (*Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten* 46, 259-439), J. Miller exposed the complexity of a diachronical analysis of the religious phenomenon represented by the diffusion of local “forms” or “aspects” of Ištar during the late Hittite period. However, many relevant issues concerning the role of the goddess in the Hittite dynastic pantheon, heavily influenced by Hurrian beliefs, and her presence in local pantheons, are still to be dealt with. As a case study, the present contribution will focus in particular on the goddess Ištar of Hattarina, attested together with the “Kanešite gods” Pirwa and Aškašepa in Muwatalli II’s prayer CTH 381. This unusual association may be derived from the interpretation of a local female deity traditionally defined as MUNUS. LUGAL, “queen” in Hittite local pantheons, as a form of Ištar.

## 1. Introduction

As is known, the complex construction that we define as “Hittite pantheon” was organized into divine groups, whose individual members could have multiple aspects, with different attributes and manifestations emerging over time as a consequence of political, social and cultural influences<sup>1</sup>. Devotion to the goddess Ištar in Hittite Anatolia represents one of the best examples of a complex phenomenon of religious convergence by means of which an originally foreign cult was introduced and gradually adapted to Hittite religious thought<sup>2</sup>. In this respect Beckman (1998), in a paper on the cult of Ištar of Nineveh in Anatolia, commented on the diffusion of different “forms” or “aspects” of the Mesopotamian goddess in the Hittite system of belief as follows:

I believe that we are dealing with hypostases of a single divine archetype, a situation similar to that surrounding the various Zeus figures of classical antiquity [...] In some respects these Ištar-figures partake of a common essence, while in others they are distinct, as demonstrated by the individual offerings made on occasion to large numbers of such Ištars. (Beckman 1998, 4)

This contribution intends to reconsider the penetration and diffusion of the cult of different aspects of Ištar in the Hittite system of belief in a diachronic perspective, trying to determine if, and to what extent, some local manifestations of the goddess venerated in the Hittite pantheon develop their own characteristics based on the context in which they were located, and the relationships of these deities with the official cult of the Hittite court. As a case study, in this paper attention will be given in particular to Ištar of Hattarina.

<sup>1</sup> On the *ratio* behind the construction and organization of the Hittite official pantheon, see Schwemer 2006; Taracha 2005.

<sup>2</sup> On this process, see in particular Miller 2004, 259-439; Miller 2008, 67-71; Gilan 2019, 175-79.

## 2. A brief background

Ištar is well attested among the deities of the old Assyrian *karum* of Kaneš, as proved by both glyptic and onomastics<sup>3</sup>. The extent of the penetration of this cult in the Anatolian religious system at this time, however, is very hard to ascertain. Only from the early Empire period did the cult of the goddess take on a particular significance, following the Hittite expansion in northern Syria, and the final subjugation of the state of Kizzuwatna during the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC.

In Old Hittite times, indeed, a cult of Ištar as such is not attested. A certain tendency towards the assimilation with Ištar of some local deities perceived as functionally analogous to the Mesopotamian goddess, however, seems to present itself already in the Old Hittite tablets of the so called “invocations to the Hattian deities” CTH 733<sup>4</sup>, and in particular in KUB 8.41(+). The text is a *unicum* in many ways, and is difficult to assign to a particular genre. It is organized in several paragraphs, in which a series of gods and goddesses are evocated with the names they are called by among the mortals and with their heavenly title. Although quite obscure and difficult to understand, the document represents a fundamental source for our comprehension of particular dynamics of Hittite religious speculation. In the second column of the obverse, in particular, the text describes how the crown prince conjures the goddess Tašimmet, whose name “among the gods” is Ištar “the queen”:

KUB 8.41obv. II

- 7 *ma-a-an DUMU-aš A-NA* <sup>ᵀ</sup>IŠKUR-na-aš ša-ša-an-ti-iš-ši *hu-ik-zi* <sup>LU</sup>[NAR me-ma-i]  
 8 *da-an-du-ki-iš-ni ta-ši-im-me-ti-iš* DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup>-na-ša iš-tar-n[a]  
 9 <sup>ᵀ</sup>IŠTAR-iš MUNUS.LUGAL-aš zi-ik (...)

When the crown prince (?) conjures the Storm-god’s concubine the [singer says]:  
 “To mankind (you are) Tašimmet, but among the gods you (are) ‘Ištar the Queen’...

I agree with Güterbock (1961, 16; 17 note 9), according to whom Tašimmet should not be identified with the Hurrian Tašmišu<sup>5</sup>, since this divine figure is clearly Anatolian. It belongs to that category of minor female deities related to agriculture and vegetation, often found in the local Hittite pantheons, where they can be linked to the cult of a spring, or associated with a deity of higher rank<sup>6</sup>. What is important here is that a local Anatolian goddess is typologically assimilated with the divine figure of Ištar. In the third column of tablet KUB 8.41(+), on the reverse, in ll. 11-12, another obscure deity named *taḥakšaziyatiš* (hapax legomenon) is called among the deities by the name Ištar *arauwas*, perhaps Ištar “of the arising”:

rev. III

- 10 (...) *d[a<sup>3</sup>-an-du-ki-iš-ni]*  
 11 <sup>ᵀ</sup>ta-aḥ-ak-ša-zi-ia-ti-iš DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup>[-na-aš iš-tar-na]  
 12 *a-ra-u-wa-aš* <sup>ᵀ</sup>IŠTAR zi-ik (...)

For m[ankind] Taḥakšaziyati, [but among] the gods you (are) ‘Ištar *arauwas*’.

Unfortunately, these are so far the only attestations of Ištar in Old Hittite documentation. If a proper cult of this goddess continued to be practiced in Anatolia after the

<sup>3</sup> Hirsch 1961, 17-20; Wegner 1981, 13-4.

<sup>4</sup> First studied by Laroche 1947. See also Neu 1980, 183-203; Corti 2010, 139-51.

<sup>5</sup> *Contra* Laroche 1947, 210-12.

<sup>6</sup> See, on this category of deities, Haas 1994, 446-48.

period of old-Assyrian trade colonies, it must have pertained to the sphere of personal belief, and does not appear in official documents.

It is not until the early Empire period that Ištar appears once again in Hittite sources. By this time, the growing Hurrian influence on the Hittite religion has brought with it the spread of numerous local hypostases of the great Mesopotamian goddess. In particular, the city of Šamuḫa, whose importance in the Hittite political history of this time does not need to be underlined here<sup>7</sup>, begins to be attested as a fulcrum of the cult devoted to Ištar<sup>8</sup>. A very peculiar tablet, KUB 32.130, probably written during the reign of Tudḫaliya I/II, states that the king had a statue of the goddess brought to Ḫattuša. The relevant text passage, in the translation by Beckman, runs as follows:

§1 (1-5) Šaušga of the (Battle)field of the city of Šamuḫa was established by oracle to be angry, so I, My Majesty, performed an oracular inquiry as follows: I, My Majesty, will dispatch a person to Samuḫa.

§2 (6-9) He will perform an evocation ritual for Šaušga of the (Battle)field on the spot in Šamuḫa and carry out a festival for her, speaking words pleasantly before the deity.

§3 (10-14) But when the campaigns against the cities of Išḫupitta and Tasmanḫa have been taken care of, I, My Majesty, will send and have Šaušga of the (Battle)field brought to me. On the return journey (from Šamuḫa) they will perform offerings for her daily.

§4 (15-19) When they bring her before My Majesty, then for eight days they will invoke her here in the same manner as they customarily invoke her in Šamuḫa. Furthermore, I, My Majesty, will worship her.

(translation by Beckman, 2010, 4)

The dating of the text is still uncertain. It has often been dated to the time of Muršili II, but both ductus and sign shape seem to point towards an earlier composition. Indeed, in the online Konkordanz the tablet is labelled MH<sup>9</sup>. If the attribution to Tudḫaliya I/II is correct, it would represent the earliest mention of Ištar of the field of Šamuḫa, but the question is still far from ascertained. It is also at this time that we can date the instauration of the cult of Ištar of Tameninga in Šamuḫa, if we accept the attribution of the Middle Hittite ritual KUB 12.5 (CTH 713) to the time of Tudḫaliya III, convincingly proposed by Miller (2004, 384 note 600). The *incipit* of the text mentions how the rites for Ištar of Tameninga are celebrated by the queen in the “house of the grandfather” of the king<sup>10</sup>:

(obv. I 1-3) When in the course of the year the Queen celebrates Ištar of Tameninga in Šamuḫa in the House of the grandfather (of the ancestors?) of the Majesty in the upper building: this (is) her ritual.

In the lists of divine witnesses in the treaties of Šuppiluliuma I, the goddess appears in the “forms” of Ištar of Nineveh, Ištar of Ḫattarina and Ištar LÍL or Ištar *šēri*, the two epithets, Sumerian and Akkadian, by which “Ištar of the field” is indicated. At the latest from this time the name of the goddess, when attested in documents that can be seen as reflecting a state pantheon, such as the treaties, was most likely read with the corresponding Hurrian name Ša(w)ušga<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Suffice it to mention the excellent synthesis of the question provided in de Martino 2008, with further references.

<sup>8</sup> See Wegner 1981, 159-61.

<sup>9</sup> <mh. Schrift, also vor Mursili II., Tafel in Querformat>, Košak, hethiter.net/: hetkonk (2.0).

<sup>10</sup> See Wegner 1995, 83-7. See also Cammarosano 2019, 99.

<sup>11</sup> On this problem, see Wegner 1981, 23-4.

That during the early empire period Ištar was the object of a growing cult is further confirmed by the temple probably dedicated to the local aspect of this goddess in Šarissa. It is the temple 1 on the northern terrace of the city, dating to the city's foundation phase (around 1500 BC) and, as proposed by Müller-Karpe (2013, 343; 2015, 85), very likely dedicated to the cult of Anzili, the Anatolian deity identified by Wilhelm (2002, 342-51; 2010) as the goddess whose name is attested in the sources with the logographic writing <sup>n</sup>IŠTAR-li.

### 3. The cult of Ištar of Ḫattarina

On this background, I would like to focus my attention on the particular figure of Ištar connected with the city of Ḫattarina, which still has to be geographically identified. A localisation in northern Syria, in the area of Kizzuwatna, has been proposed<sup>12</sup>, but is far from being certain. The importance of the local Ištar in the Hittite pantheon is confirmed by her constant presence in the divine lists of the treaties from an early time in the reign of Šuppiluliuma I until the reign of Tudḫaliya IV<sup>13</sup>.

In particular, she is attested in the treaty with Ḫuqqana of Ḫayaša (CTH 42), in a group of several “forms” of Ištar composed of: Ištar of the field, Ištar of Ḫattarina, Ištar “queen of Heaven”, together with her two divine hierodulae Ninatta and Kulitta. In the treaty with Tette of Nuḫašše (CTH 53), Ištar of Ḫattarina is attested as part of the same divine group:

Šuppiluliuma and Ḫuqqana of Ḫayaša (CTH 42)	Šuppiluliuma and Tette of Nuḫašše (CTH 53)
(§ 8)	(§ 19’)
Ištar	Ištar
Ištar of the field	Ištar of the field
Ištar of Nineveh	Ištar of Nineveh
[Ištar] of Ḫattarina	Ištar of Ḫattarina
Ištar Queen of Heaven	Ninatta
Ninatta	Kulitta
Kulitta	

With Muršili II and his successors, the two main hypostases of the goddess, Ištar of Ninive and Ištar of Ḫattarina, continue to play a primary role in the Hittite state pantheon and, as such, they are mentioned in the treaties with Manapa-Tarḫunta (CTH 69), with Niqmepa of Ugarit (CTH 66), in the treaty of Muwatalli with Alakšandu of Wiluša (CTH 76), as well as in the bronze tablet (CTH 106.1.A):

Muršili II and Manapa-Tarḫunta (CTH 69)	Muršili II and Niqmepa (CTH 66)	Muwatalli II and Alakšandu (CTH 76)	Tudḫaliya IV and Kurunta (CTH 106.1.A)
(§ 22’)	(§ 18)	(§ 22)	(§ 25)
Ištar	Ištar	Ištar	Ištar of Šamuḫa
Ištar of the field	Ištar of the field	Ištar of the field	Ištar of the field
Ištar of Nineveh	Ištar of Nineveh	Ištar of Nineveh	Ištar of Lawazantiya
Ištar of Ḫattarina	Ištar of Ḫattarina	Ištar of Ḫattarina	Ištar of Nineveh
Ninatta	Ninatta	Ninatta	Ištar of Ḫattarina
Kulitta	Kulitta	Kulitta	Ninatta
			Kulitta

<sup>12</sup> See Danmanville 1962, 56 note 2, referring to a personal communication by Cavaignac.

<sup>13</sup> On the “political theology” reflected in this type of sources, see in particular Schwemer 2008; Taracha 2005.

Besides being attested in the group of figures of Ištar in the lists of divine witnesses, Ištar of Ḫattarina is famously documented in Muwatalli II's prayer to the Assembly of the gods KUB 6.45+ (CTH 381, Singer 1996). Here, the deity is included in a divine group formed by Pirwa, Aškašepa and the mountain Puškurunuwa.

obv. I

54 <sup>D</sup>IŠTAR <sup>URU</sup>Ḫa-ad-da-ri-na <sup>D</sup>Pi-ir-wa-aš <sup>D</sup>Aš-ga-ši-pa-aš <sup>HUR.SAG</sup>Piš-ku-ru-nu-wa

55 DINGIR.LÚ<sup>MEŠ</sup> DINGIR.MUNUS<sup>MEŠ</sup> ḪUR.SAG<sup>MEŠ</sup> ÍD<sup>MEŠ</sup> ŠA <sup>URU</sup>ḪÀ.BABBAR-ti<sup>1</sup>

56 <sup>D</sup>Ḫa-pa-an-da-li-ia-aš <sup>HUR.SAG</sup>Ta-at-ta<sup>1</sup> <sup>HUR.SAG</sup>Šum-mi<sup>1</sup>-ia-ra

Ištar of Ḫattarina, Pirwa, Aškašepa, mount Puškurunuwa, male gods, female gods, mountains (and) rivers of Ḫatti, Karzi, Ḫapantaliya, mount Tatta, Mount Šummiyara.

The association of Ištar with this particular divine group is in my opinion particularly significant. Pirwa, long thought to be a double-gender deity, much like Ištar herself, is today identified with a warrior-god, with a close association with horses and horse-breeding. The cult of this deity is attested in Anatolia already from old-Assyrian time<sup>14</sup>. Pirwa, Aškašepa, a protective deity who is not attested in Old Assyrian sources<sup>15</sup>, and an obscure local goddess referred to by the sumerogram MUNUS.LUGAL, “the queen”<sup>16</sup>, make up a divine group which receives offerings in many ritual texts dating at least from the Middle Hittite period<sup>17</sup>. Among other deities, in particular, this divine group appears to be at the core of religious ceremonies during which it is celebrated by the “singers of Neša/Kaneš”<sup>18</sup>, as evident in the following examples:

- KBo 7.38+, r. col. 8-10 (CTH 670):

[<sup>D</sup>Aškašepa] <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LUGAL <sup>D</sup>Pirwa [...] <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>nešumeneš s[<sup>IR</sup><sup>RU</sup>]

- KBo 3.56, IV 20-22 (CTH 669):

<sup>D</sup>Aškašepa <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LU[GAL] <sup>D</sup>Pirwa <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>NAR <sup>URU</sup>Kaneš s[<sup>IR</sup><sup>RU</sup>]

- KUB 2.13, III 2-4 (CTH 591):

<sup>D</sup>Pirwa <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LUGAL <sup>D</sup>Aškašepa, <sup>D</sup>IMIN.IMIN.BI <sup>D</sup>Šuwaliyat <sup>D</sup>MUNUS<sup>MEŠ</sup>-ya, <sup>D</sup>Šiwat

<sup>D</sup>Ḫašammeli DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup> <sup>URU</sup>Kaneš <sup>D</sup>Ḫi-lašši <sup>D</sup>U.GUR <sup>D</sup>Zuliya

- KUB 4.13+, IV 9-12 (CTH 625):

<sup>D</sup>Pirwa <sup>D</sup>Aškašepa <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LUGAL <sup>D</sup>Maliya

As noted by Archi (2004, 18), Pirwa, Aškašepa and <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LUGAL represent a specific group within the larger category of the so called “gods of Kaneš”, as they are referred to in the texts<sup>19</sup>. The interpretation of this particular group of deities, and the *ratio* behind the association of the gods that form it, however, are not clear.

While Aškašepa and Pirwa are actual theonyms, the sumerographic writing <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LUGAL denotes a “type” of goddess at the head of local pantheons (Taracha 2017, 104). As such, as recently written by Cammarosano (2021, 82), this deity “may

<sup>14</sup> See Otten 1953; Haas 1994, 412-15 and, more recently Ünal 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Attested also with the determinative ḪUR.SAG. On this deity, see Warbinek 2022, 3; Mouton 2014, 23.

<sup>16</sup> The idea, proposed by Laroche (1945/46, 4), that MUNUS.LUGAL would represent an epithet of Aškašepa, is not accepted anymore. See Mouton 2014, 23 note 38.

<sup>17</sup> Or earlier, if we accept the dating *ah* currently proposed in the online Konkordanz for KBo 7.38+. See Košak, hethiter.net/: hetkonk (2.0), with further references.

<sup>18</sup> On this group of deities see Otten 1953; Archi 2004; Warbinek 2022, 12-3.

<sup>19</sup> See the attestations in Archi 2010, 32-3. On the problems concerning the exact nature and definition of this divine group, see now Warbinek 2022, 12-3.

denote any one of several goddesses who enjoyed a prominent status in local panthea of north-central Anatolia”. As this paper will try to demonstrate, this divine figure, much like Anzili, could have been assimilated in some cases with some particular aspects or local manifestations of Ištar.

The association between Pirwa and Ištar can be traced back to the time of the *karum* of Kaneš, to the point that some scholars, like Gurney (1977, 13) and Güterbock (1964, 56) have gone as far as to postulate an equivalence between the two deities, an equivalence, based essentially on the supposed dual nature of Pirwa, that is not supported by the sources.

It is worthwhile to dwell in particular on the relationship between Ištar and Askašepa. Goetze, observing how in a “Kanešite lists” contained in the ritual text KBo 3.8 III 14-16<sup>20</sup>, the logogram IŠTAR is apparently used instead of Aškašepa, interpreted this deity as female and “an Ištar-like figure” (Goetze 1953, 264). Indeed, Aškašepa, sometimes together with Pirwa, is mentioned immediately before the group of deities “of the Ištar-type” in several treaties. In the Akkadian treaty between Šuppiluliuma and Šattiwaza CTH 51.I<sup>21</sup>, in particular, Aškašepa is mentioned immediately after Ištar “the proud” (akk. *multarrihu*):

KBo 1.1 rev.

45' <sup>D</sup>Te-li-pí-nu šA <sup>URU</sup>Ta-wi-š-ni-ya <sup>D</sup>Te-l[i-pí-nu šA] <sup>URU</sup>Dur<sup>1</sup>-mi-it-ta <sup>D</sup>Te-li-pí-nu šA <sup>URU</sup>Ha-an-ḥa-na <sup>D</sup>IŠTAR<sup>1</sup> MUL-TAR-RI-<sup>1</sup>HU<sup>1</sup>

46' <sup>D</sup>Aš-ga-ši-pa <sup>D</sup>NISABA <sup>D</sup>30 EN MA-MI-TI <sup>D</sup>Iš<sup>1</sup>-ḥ[a-ra MUNUS.L]UGAL MA-MI-TI <sup>D</sup>Hé-pat NIN šA-ME-E <sup>D</sup>Hé-bat <sup>URU</sup>Hal-pa <sup>D</sup>Hé-pat [<sup>URU</sup>U-da]

Telipinu of Tawiniya, Tel[ipinu of] Durmitta, Telipinu of Ḥanḥana, Ištar “the proud”, Askašepa, NISABA, Moon-god, lord of the oath, Išḥ[ara, queen]n of the oath, Ḥepat, lady of Heaven, Ḥepat of Ḥalpa, Ḥepat of [Uda].

The same association can be found, albeit in a very broken context, in the divine list at the end of the treaty between Tudḥaliya IV and Šaušgamuwa of Amurru CTH 105<sup>22</sup>. Here, in KUB 8.82+ rev. 13'-14', Aškašepa is mentioned before Ištar of Ḥattarina and probably other forms of Ištar, whose names, however, are lost in the break<sup>23</sup>. Given the fragmentary condition of this part of the tablet, not much more can be said about this particular section of the divine list.

The close relationship between the two deities is further confirmed by a particular series of cults performed during the AN.TAḤ.ŠUM festival. According to the outline tablet A, preserved in KBo 10.20, rites for Ištar of Hattarina are performed by the royal couple from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the festival, immediately after the ceremonies for the storm-god of Aleppo<sup>24</sup>. This section of the festival begins with rites performed by the king and the queen at Ḥattuša, in the temple of Aškašepa, where the cult functionaries defined as <sup>LÚ.MEŠ</sup>ḤAL conjure Ištar of Ḥattarina. Starting from the following day (the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the festival), the ceremony moves first to the temple of the goddess and then to the temple of Ninurta (on day 24), when a new invocation to Ištar of Ḥattarina is performed.

<sup>20</sup> See the text edition by Fuscagni (ed.), hethiter.net/: CTH 390 (TRde 20-03-2017).

<sup>21</sup> See the text edition by Wilhelm (ed.), hethiter.net/: CTH 51.I (INTR 2016-01-10).

<sup>22</sup> See Beckman, Bryce and Cline 2011, 50-68; Devecchi 2015, 225-32.

<sup>23</sup> See Beckman, Bryce and Cline 2011, 64.

<sup>24</sup> The complex textual tradition of these days of the AN.TAḤ.ŠUM festival has been extensively studied by Galmarini 2013, 21-118, on whose work I base my considerations. See also Galmarini 2015, 51-2.

rev. III

23' *lu-uk-kat-ti-ma* LUGAL MUNUS.LUGAL I-NA É<sup>1</sup> D Aš-ka-ši-pa

24' *pa-a-an-zi* LÚ.MEŠ<sup>HAL</sup>-ma D IŠTAR U<sup>[RU]</sup> H] a-at-ta-ri-na

25' [*mu-u-ga-an*]-zi UD.22.KAM

26' [*lu-uk-kat-ti-ma* LU] GAL MUNUS.LUGAL [I-NA É<sup>D</sup> IŠTAR U<sup>RU</sup> H] a-[at-ta-r]i-<sup>r</sup>na<sup>1</sup>

27' [*pa-a-an-zi*:LÚ.MEŠ<sup>HAL</sup>-ma] A<sup>1</sup>-NA D I[ŠTAR U<sup>RU</sup> H] a-at-t] a-ri-na

28' [*mu-u-ga-an-z*]i

The following day the king (and) the queen go to the temple of Aškašepa.

The LÚ.MEŠ<sup>HAL</sup> functionaries [conju]re Ištar of Ḫattarina. Day 22.

[The following day the ki]ng (and) the queen [go to the temple of Ištar] of Ḫattarina.

[The LÚ.MEŠ<sup>HAL</sup> functionaries conjur]e Iš[tar of Ḫatt]arina.

The outline version G, preserved in tablet VSNF 12.1, datable to the time of Tudḫaliya IV (Galmarini 2013, 31), presents a much shorter version of the ceremony, which seems to last for one day only. During the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival, according to this version, the king celebrates Ištar of Nineveh in the “large building”, while the following day rites are performed in a peculiar place, described as a “garden of secrecy”, in honor of the gods. Here a festival for Ištar of Ḫattarina is celebrated, and the text mentions the deities KAL of Tauriša, Ea and another god whose name is lost in a break.

rev.

2' [*lu-uk-kat-ti-ma* LUGAL]-uš I-NA É<sup>TM</sup> GAL EZEN<sub>4</sub> [AN.TAḪ.ŠUM<sup>SAR</sup> A-NA D ...]

3' [Û A-NA D IŠTAR U<sup>R</sup>] U Ne-nu-wa EZEN<sub>4</sub> AN.TAḪ.ŠUM<sup>SAR</sup> X[ ]

4' [SISKUR ku-lu-mur]-ši-ya x [... UD.24.KAM]

5' [*lu-uk*]-kat-ti-ma A-NA D KAL U<sup>RU</sup> Ta-a-u-ri-iš-ša [D ...]

6' A-NA D É.A-ya I-NA G<sup>IS</sup> KIRI<sub>6</sub> ḫar-wa-ši-ya-aš EZ[EN<sub>4</sub> AN.TAḪ.ŠUM<sup>SAR</sup> ŠA<sup>2</sup>]

7' D IŠTAR U<sup>RU</sup> H] a-at-ta-ri-na i-ya-zi UD.25<sup>2</sup>[.KAM]

[The following day the king...] in the large building the [AN.TAḪ.ŠUM] festival [for... and] the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival [for Ištar of] Ninive [... *kulumur*]šiya [offerings... Day 24].

[The fol]lowing day for the god KAL of Tauriša, for [...] and for EA in the garden of secrecy he celebrates the [AN.TAḪ.ŠUM fest]ival [of?] Ištar of Ḫattarina. Day 25.

Aškašepa is not attested here, but the performance of the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival in the garden of Aškašepa is mentioned in outline G among the rites of the 31<sup>st</sup> day<sup>25</sup>. On account of the close relationship between Ištar of Ḫattarina and Aškašepa that emerges both from outline version A and the prayer of Muwatalli II, I think that the “garden of secrecy” mentioned in outline G should be identified with the garden of Askašepa<sup>26</sup>.

The rites performed during the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival in honor of Ištar of Ḫattarina are described also in several daily tablets, the oldest of which are datable to the Middle Hittite period, until the time of Šuppiluliuma I (Galmarini 2015, 51-2). It is at this time that Ištar of Šamuḫa, Ištar of Tameninga and several other hypostases of the goddess,

<sup>25</sup> I have found only one other attestation of the “garden of Aškašepa”, in another fragment belonging to the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival, KUB 34.69+, currently attributed to the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the ceremony (CTH 609). The text, in l. obv. 22', runs as follows: “The horses and the couriers come, [they (?). . . in] the garden of Ašgašepa”.

<sup>26</sup> Galmarini (2015, 52) suggests to identify it with the ‘forest of Tauriša’ attested in KUB 45.34+ and in some LNS daily tablets classified under CTH 617 (AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival for KAL of Tauriša).

such as the much debated “deity of the night”<sup>27</sup>, begin to appear in Hittite documentation, reflecting the growing Hurrian influence on Hittite official religion.

As in the case of the other hypostases of the goddess, the cult devoted to Ištar of Ḫattarina does not seem to have an autonomous and original dimension. It is not possible to trace the origins of the goddess’s veneration, nor does this cult seem to be particularly widespread at the level of local cults, considering that only one clear occurrence of Ištar of Ḫattarina can be found in the cult inventories, in KBo 49.206<sup>28</sup>, where she is treated together with Ištar of Nineveh<sup>29</sup>. The veneration for this particular figure of Ištar appears, in other words, already as a part of the official state cult, as a direct result of the Hurrian influence on the Hittite religion (Galmarini 2013, 116-18). If we consider this, the close association between a “foreign” deity like Ištar of Ḫattarina and Anatolian deities of older tradition like Pirwa and Aškašepa, mentioned as parts of the same divine group in the prayer of Muwatalli II, is striking.

It is my belief that the relationship between Pirwa, Aškašepa and Ištar, and in particular with Ištar of Ḫattarina, could be explained by the gradual identification of the local female deity defined with the logogram MUNUS.LUGAL, celebrated by the singer of Kaneš on many occasions together with Pirwa and Aškašepa, with a goddess of the “Ištar type”. That would explain, for instance, the very unusual presence of Aškašepa and Pirwa in the long *kaluti* list of deities attested in KUB 10.92 (CTH 706), a festival for Teššub and Ḫepat, where these gods are mentioned, together with other Anatolian deities like Telipinu, in an otherwise clearly Hurrian religious context<sup>30</sup>.

Already from the Old Hittite ritual CTH 733, as we have seen, Ištar is associated with the goddess Tešimi and defined as MUNUS.LUGAL among the gods. While in the lists of divine witnesses of the state treaties only one occurrence of Ištar “queen of Heaven” can be found, in the treaty between Šuppiluliuma and Ḫuqqana of Ḫayaša, it is noteworthy that in the Hurrian religious tradition reflected in mythological compositions, Ištar of Nineveh often takes the appellative “queen”<sup>31</sup>. Also, in the Mesopotamian cult tradition introduced in Anatolia by the mediation of Kizzuwatna and reflected in the Babilili rituals, Ištar Pirinkir is often attested with the Sumero-Akkadian epithet MUNUS.LUGAL *šamē*<sup>32</sup>.

As Ištar is called “queen” in Hurrian religious tradition, then, so she tends to assume this role also in the local pantheons of central Anatolia. Starting from the early Empire period, at a time of increasing devotion tributed to this goddess, in many different forms, the Hittites could have re-interpreted some local female deities at the head of local pantheons defined as MUNUS.LUGAL, as local forms of Ištar.

A similar phenomenon of assimilation of a local MUNUS.LUGAL deity with Ištar has been postulated with regard to the main female deity of the city of Katapa. A cult

<sup>27</sup> On which see in particular Miller 2004, 259-439; 2008, 67-71.

<sup>28</sup> See the very useful online database provided by M. Cammarosano: <https://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/HLC/tags/taglist.php>, last visited 02/08/2023.

<sup>29</sup> The close association among these two deities emerges also from the liver omen report KBo 16.97, rev. 12-32 (CTH 572). In this text passage, as rightly observed by Beckman (1998, 5 note 50), the epithet Ištar of Nineveh seems to be used as a cover term for a variety of different Ištars, such as: the “deity of the night” of Šamuḫa, the “deity of the night” of Laḫurra, Ištar of Šamuḫa, Ištar of Ḫattarina, Ištar “of his mother”, Ištar “of his father” and “some other Ištar” (*tamaiš=ma kuiški* <sup>30</sup>IŠTAR). See also Beckman, Bryce and Cline 2011, 220-29.

<sup>30</sup> See Wegner 2002, 228-31.

<sup>31</sup> Beckman 1998, 4 with note 43.

<sup>32</sup> See the attestations in Beckman 2014, 97. See also van Gessel 1998, 937.



of the “queen” of Katapa is well attested from the Old Hittite period<sup>33</sup>. The deity is attested for instance in the Old Hittite ritual for the royal couple CTH 416<sup>34</sup>, and a deity defined “queen” is well documented both in the divine lists of the state treaties and in the prayer of Muwatalli II. This goddess has been tentatively identified with the goddess Ištar of Katapa mentioned in the inventory text KBo 16.83+ III 4 (CTH 242)<sup>35</sup>:

rev. III

- 1 <sup>D</sup>IŠTAR <sup>URU</sup>La-wa-za-an-ti-ya <sup>D</sup>IŠTAR É <sup>m</sup>Pi-ḫa-<sup>D</sup>U EN U-NU-TI[
- 2 1 GÍR <sup>LÚ</sup>MUḪALDIM TUR <sup>m</sup>Du-un-wa-LUGAL-ma-kán ku-wa-pí <sup>D</sup>IŠTAR É<sup>7</sup>
- 3 [a]n-da DÜ-ir 1 GÍR <sup>LÚ</sup>MUḪALDIM <sup>m</sup>Ši-ip-pa-LÚ SISKUR <sup>LÚ</sup>šak-ku-ni-an-za-az
- 4 [ku-w]a-pí BAL<sup>1</sup>-aš 1 GAL KÙ.BABBAR <sup>m</sup>Ku-ra-ku-ra-aš A-NA <sup>D</sup>IŠTAR <sup>URU</sup>Ka-ta-pa
- 5 [ḫi]-in-ik-ta (...)

Ištar of Lawazantiya. Ištar ‘of the house’. Piḫa-Tarḫunta, ‘lord of the inventory’ [...]: A small kitchen knife. Dunwa-LUGAL, when ‘Ištar of the house’ was installed: a kitchen knife. Šippaziti, [wh]en the ša(n)kunni-priest brought the offer. Kurakura has [dona]ted a silver cup to Ištar of Katapa.

The text, very fragmentarily preserved, records expenditures of metallic objects or implements from the central administration for the cult of Ištar. The assumption that Ištar of Katapa should be identified with the widely attested <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LUGAL of the same city, however, is based on this text passage only and remains therefore hypothetical at best<sup>36</sup>.

In conclusion, the assimilation between Ištar of Ḫattarina and <sup>D</sup>MUNUS.LUGAL that seems to emerge from Muwatalli’s prayer reflects in my opinion a late Hittite theological concept according to which the female deity traditionally associated with Pirwa and Aškašepa at least from the Middle Hittite Period, in the divine group of the “singer of Kaneš, is interpreted as a local form of Ištar. In particular, as the form of the divine figure connected with the city of Ḫattarina, that starts to be revered from the early empire period along with other hypostases of the goddess and becomes particularly relevant in the official cult of the state as reflected in the divine lists of the treaties. At what level such a phenomenon took place and whether it reflects a real cult or just a theological speculation with no real implication on the actual cult practice, currently remains an open question.

It is probably the tradition of the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival and the close relationship between Ištar of Ḫattarina and Aškašepa that have influenced the theological construction that lies behind the redaction of this particular section of Muwatalli’s prayer. Ištar of Ḫattarina is at the center of the imperial reworking of the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM festival, and it is at this stage that its association with Anatolian deities such as Aškašepa is given, probably due to the reinterpretation of the deity MUNUS.LUGAL, traditionally associated with Pirwa and Aškašepa, as a figure of Ištar.

#### 4. Conclusions

There is a dual current that feeds the cult of Ištar during the Empire period. One, the one that appears most significantly in the documentation at our disposal, is the ever-increasing emergence of rites of Hurrian derivation imported from Kizzuwatna

<sup>33</sup> See Haas 1994, 594; Taracha 2017, 104.

<sup>34</sup> See, for a recent text edition, Montuori (ed.), hethiter.net/: CTH 416 (INTR. 2015-03-03).

<sup>35</sup> See Otten and Souček 1969, 105.

<sup>36</sup> An equation of the divine “queen” of Katapa with the local manifestation of Ḫepat, attested in KUB 11.27, obv. I 20 (CTH 620), is equally possible, as suggested also by Otten and Souček 1969, 105.

and promoted by Hittite official religious politics. This is the reason for the success of the cult of Ištar of Šamuḫa and of divine figures assimilated with her, which radiates in the Hittite cult starting from this religious center and becomes with Ḫattušili III a central element of the state religion. Parallel to this, in my opinion, traces of a second, more underground current remain in the documentation, which respond to the fundamentally assimilatory nature of Hittite religiosity and are present already in the Old Hittite ritual CTH 733, the tendency to assimilate divine figures evidently perceived as typologically similar. In a phase in which the official cult of Ištar becomes predominant, female deities of ancient Anatolian tradition are more and more easily assimilated with this figure, as Wilhelm convincingly demonstrated with regard to the goddess Anzili of Šarišša and as the present contribution has tried to do with regard to the relationship between Ištar of Ḫattarina and the gods Pirwa, Aškašepa and MUNUS.LUGAL.

The path towards a full understanding of the mechanisms of diffusion of the cult of Ištar in imperial age is still long. As rightly underlined by Beckman, this research can only be conducted through a detailed analysis of the devotion accorded to individual manifestations of Ištar through time:

While I am inclined to follow the common opinion that the other Ištar types of the later Boğazköy texts, and in particular Ištar of Šamuḫa, are basically “avatars” or hypostases of the Ninivite goddess, any special features of the varieties will become apparent only if each is initially studied in isolation. (Beckman 1998, 4-5).

The present contribution aims to represent a small step in this direction.

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