HITITTE DAMMÅŞÅRA 'DOMESTIC' / 'DAMNASÅREŞ "HOUSEHOLD DEITIES"

H. CRAIG MEICHERT

Hittite dammasara is attested several dozen times, usually in the plural and marked by the determinative indicating a divine name. Forrer, PEQ (1957) 109f., concluded from the presence of the suffix -es that the word refers to female deities, probably Hurrian in view of their association with the god Suwaliyan. He noted, however, that the hunter Kesli met with šu's (NB without determinative) in the company of an alaspa, which he took to mean 'dragon'. He thus interpreted dammasara to mean some kind of frightful creature that became divinized only by Egyptian tutelary snake gods. He was followed in this line of reasoning by Gaster, who rendered the word as "harpies" or "gorgons".

Gaster, Lg 29 (1953) 269, suggested (divine) 'gate attendants', based on a supposed connection of Suwaliyan with the door. Gitterbok combined these two previous lines of thought, RHA fasc. 68 (1961) 15 with note 21: 'I suspect that these goddesses are sphinxes, although I cannot prove it... In Kesli's seventh dream (Friedrich, ZA 49, 1938, lines 11-13) the dammasara are different from both lions and serpents (dib-MQ-pall), cf. HW's . Enk., p. 7: It is this circumstance, combined with the feminine suffix -esa and the woman-like appearance of the Hittite sphinxes, that makes me think of this meaning, although the sources are inconclusive (suggestive but by no means clear) vs KUE II 3325-32, according to which the D. can be so turned that they always look at the king, and portable sphinxes (KUE XVI 54 s 198, seem strange.'

This self-described tentative interpretation has received widespread qualification acceptance. A few scholars have expressed doubt: van den Hout

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* Bibliographic abbreviations are those of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD) and the Chicago Hittite Dictionary (CHD).


‡ Hanswijk ten Geve, ZA 82 (1992) 93f. with note 2, even tentatively on the find-spot of the Bronze tablet 55 meters from the Sphinx Gate to the appearance

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the gate he met ed-makes (and?)damnalaye. But if one infers a special association of the d’s with gates based on this passage, then by the same reasoning one must conclude the same for the eleralsa/billyganda... The overall attestation of the latter word shows that this is false: see Pulvel, HED 1/2 (1984) 324ff., and especially Katz.1

In the ila2 ritual KUB 29.8 i 3 the UD damnalaye are mentioned in the context of a gate. However, the preceding context (see lines i 44-45) shows that this is not an ordinary gate, but one specially constructed for purposes of the ritual. On such gates see Hoffner, AuOr 5 (1987) 283. As it typical, the entire surrounding ritual action takes place in and around the ritual gate. The mention of the damnalaye men near the gate is thus merely a function of their participation in this portion of the ritual—they could hardly appear anywhere else and are no more specially associated with it than any of the other persons and objects in the ritual.

Finally, in KUB 7.21.15-17 (Ritual of Popamanni) we find: EGIR-Sili ‘UTU ‘LAMMA ‘Galar’ [‘Damnalaye/sanallue SI M toni neal KA-ad anurac’ [GUB] ‘ak-sarri toni] ‘Afterwards they make the Storm-god, Sun-god, Tutelary Deity, Fate Goddess and [e]-deities of clay and put them inside the gate on the left door.’ No one would claim that any of the other deities mentioned belong especially to gates. The passage gives no basis for inferring any such relationship for the d-deities either.

The real spatial associations of the damnalaye-deities were already demonstrated by Goetz, Lg 29 (1953), although for some reason he drew the wrong conclusion from his own evidence. The d-deities are among the ‘holy places’ in temples or houses where worship takes place. These various locations in the room are all worshipped prior to any other ritual activity. The purpose clearly seems to be analogous to that of sterilizing a modern operating room by sanctifying all the key elements of the inner space, one assures that no evil force can penetrate the area in which the main ritual is to take place. Contrary to Goetz and others, the order of mention of these key elements does not argue for any association of the damnalaye-deities (or of Swalaye) with the door or gate (nor even with the other peripheral element, the window). I cite below five reasonably complete

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we do know not what precedes, but again they are followed by the hearth and the throne; in the fourth, we find the cult-stone, hearth, d-deities, and the wall; and in the fifth, the d-deities followed by the libation vessels. The dammattana-deities are now cited next to the doorbell or even the window. The last two places mentioned last in these series, as one would expect, given their peripheral location. The dammattana's, on the other hand, are clearly deities of internal space, closely associated with the altar, hearth, and throne.

As to their role, these deities clearly have a monitoring function, as shown by the famous passage of KUB 2.3 in 25-32 (= KBo 25.66 i 6-10). They are closely associated with the dammattana's, and are now called the dammattana-deities. The latter two are continuously discussed in connection with the gods and goddesses of the state.

As noted earlier, the dammattana's at least once have the role of witnesses or guarantors of a treaty oath, in the company of the Storm-god of Haiti (KUB 14.8.35, 36; Place Names, p. 354, line 12). The Storm-god of Haiti was called LUMES UKKU HATTURA ISTUKISKUR UKKU HDMI INAMU, and the Storm-god of Haiti was called LUMES UKKU HATTURA ISTUKISKUR UKKU HDMI INAMU.

In the passage that follows, it is clear that the Storm-god of Haiti was the god of Haiti, and the Storm-god of the gods was the god of the gods. The Storm-god of Haiti was called LUMES UKKU HATTURA ISTUKISKUR UKKU HDMI INAMU, and the Storm-god of Haiti was called LUMES UKKU HATTURA ISTUKISKUR UKKU HDMI INAMU.

One of the Storm-god's roles is to protect the gods and goddesses of the state. He is also associated with the gods and goddesses of the state. He is also associated with the gods and goddesses of the state. He is also associated with the gods and goddesses of the state.

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The Storm-god of Haiti was called LUMES UKKU HATTURA ISTUKISKUR UKKU HDMI INAMU, and the Storm-goda deities of the state in the house, we submit that the dammattana's are fundamentally an adjective meaning 'domestic, of the household'. The deities are merely a substantivization of the adjective in the plural 'those of the household'. The dammattana's are likewise 'men of the household', probably not servants, but dependents comparable to Lykian evdekmecles (Greek oikodei).

The evidence of the passage above suggests a similar solution for KUB 30.63 iii 23-24, which had puzzled Laroche, CHT (1971) 181ff.: [w...][DUMUN.TA S4 UDU.ŠIR DAMMATTAN[...]/] [MU-tl-mejr-ami-pun-z] [When they treat a boy [with ...] of a.dram in the course [of the year]]. Just as we have two household he-goats, we may also have a household ram. That is, in both cases we have animals that are not merely domesticated, but are in fact kept around the household rather than allowed to graze the open range.

Since dammattana- is an adjective that can serve as an epithet of male animals, the word clearly does not contain the suffix of baddattana- 'queen' and so forth. We are facing rather the apparennc
suffice of Hitite damnamira- 'whole, integral and the productive set of Livian substantival stems represented by *N*dammarai-/*orthostatis* < katt- 'wall'. The root etymology for our stem is transparently that of PIE *ghemh%- 'house'. Hitite *damnav- 'house/held' could represent *ghemhar-/*ghemmar-/*ghemmar- which recall but do not exactly match the similar Avestan damna-/*namana- 'dwelling' or Old Irish domna- 'material'. The details of the derivation need not detain us here.

We have not yet accounted for one example of damnamira-, that in the dream of Kellī. The other evidence for our word as an adjective, specifically an epithet of animals, when it is not marked by the determinative for divinities, strongly suggests that it is likewise an epithet here ells/andal damnamisa/rī. The assumption of an asyndetic pair of nouns was based entirely on the false idea of 'sphinxes' or 'gorgons'. I find it plausible that the Hititites had snakes around their dwellings, and a meaning 'house snakes' is not impossible. However, the context makes clear that the sight of the snakes is an evil omen. Furthermore, Katz has made a strong case that ells/andal (and its stem variants) refers specifically to 'cell-snakes' that typically live in (water) pits. Would Kellī have been frightened by the appearance at his gate of ordinary household snakes? It seems more likely that he would have been disturbed to meet with cell-snakes that should not normally be found there.

There is one more passage containing our adjective that has not been previously discussed to my knowledge (KUB 32.121 ii 28f; Ritual of (Salit[u]r) [ ...] <- [ ...] as ells/andal damnamisa-rī / [...]-[ ...] as zēlilin lajan(l)mak n[et] / [...]-al na tāginchip arzu / [...]-muhon parautum andamaniš / [...].)

"If ayasvī damnamira- [*1] / [...] / **na-**damnamira- / [...]-[ ...] nēratak ÉSÀ-NA/mi' unde / [...]-[ ...] tāzēz nemartum ÉSÀ-nu / [...]-lin(m) ajarci [or ajarci] / [...]-[ ...] sa-DMGHER MES-3 UR SAG-zi / [...]. You [ ], oh Waters! In sleep/'dream ['] you take fright. S/he it has come up, [the] jar, and broken open the earth like a [. [. Int]o [. [. 3] *springs*. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [. [10]

For obvious reasons I am reluctant to posit a second distinct adjective 'of the deep' or the like based on just two passages, one of which remains quite obscure. However, I also did not wish to minimize the difficulties they present for a meaning 'domestic' of the house-likely. I am convinced that the latter meaning does account well for damnamira- as an epithet of animals and as the name of deities whose true natures is that of subterranean deities of internal space, comparable to the Roman Penates. [11]


[11] See the work cited in footnote 2, p. 717. The later occurrence of the verb 'pour out' confirms that some kind of waters are present. There is also some kind of frightful event (perhaps a nightmare), which probably involves someone or something slipping open the earth (on the sense of *as* parautum see the CHD, Volume P [1994-97] 187). Under these circumstances I think the restoration and reading ["grāt/āt"] 'springs' is at least plausible. If this is true, then damnamirāt in its first occurrence is an epithet of springs. 'Household springs' makes little sense, especially in this context (though one may note the possible presence of É.SA as 'in the inner chamber'). Given the evidence for springs, water, and a violent upheaval of the earth, I wonder whether we must assume the existence of a second hornphonic adjective damnamira- 'of pertaining to an abyss/chasm'. That is, the reference here would be to subterranean springs violently brought to the surface and pouring through a dwelling (in Nineveh[7]). Likewise, then, the ells/andal damnamira- would be 'subterranean cell-snakes', a most suitable epithet in view of their nature as explicated by Katz. [10]

The sense of this unfortunately very fragmentary passage obviously is less than certain. What does seem tolerably clear is that some set of waters is addressed (intornēt = ergative, here vocative plural).

8 This formal analysis of *damnamira- is independent of the question of whether the base noun really is *damna- 'eye, sight', as very tentatively suggested by Mcl- 
9 See the work cited in footnote 2, p. 717.