

ANTAHŠUM^{SAR}
“ÇİĞDEM”

STUDIES IN HONOUR OF

**AHMET
ÜNAL
ARMAĞANI**



ARKEOLOJİ VE
SANAT YAYINLARI

Eski Anadolu
Arařtırmalarına ve
Hitilere Adanmıř Bir Hayat

Ahmet Ünal'a Armađan

Studies in Honour of Ahmet Ünal



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Sedat ERKUT – Özlem SİR GAVAZ



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AHMET ÜNAL ARMAĞANI

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İÇİNDEKİLER /CONTENTS

Editör Sunuşu	IX
Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ünal'ın Özgeçmişi.....	XI
Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ünal'ın Bilimsel Eserleri.....	XIII
1- <i>Rukiye AKDOĞAN</i> Bayram Ritüeline Ait Bir Hitit Tableti (Bo3542).....	1
2- <i>Atakan AKÇAY</i> Hartapu: Kimin Kralı?	9
3- <i>İrfan ALBAYRAK</i> <i>Uşur-ša-ištar</i> 'ın Arşivinden Bakır Ticareti İle İlgili Bir Mektup	25
4- <i>Alfonso ARCHI</i> Iritum(/Irrite) at the Time of the Archives of Ebla	35
5- <i>Melih ARSLAN</i> Ankara Roma Hamamı 2009 Yılı Kazısında Bulunmuş Bronz Attis Heykelciği	45
6- <i>Hatçe BALTACIOĞLU</i> É <i>halentiu-/halentu(wa)-</i> , Alaca Höyük 2. Hitit Yapı Katı Ve Boğazköy Büyükkale Sarayı	49
7- <i>Gary BECKMAN</i> Hattuşili III between Gods and Men	69
8- <i>Diren ÇAKMAK</i> Marshall Sahlins'in Büyük Adam Modeli: I.Hattuşili Örneği.....	75
9- <i>Murat ÇAYIR</i> Kültepe'den Bir Mektup ve Liste	97
10- <i>Paola DARDANO</i> Heth. <i>pe/iškattalla-</i> 'Geber' oder 'Lieferer'?.....	105
11- <i>Şevket DÖNMEZ</i> Kızılırmak Havzası Ve Yakın Çevresinin Öntarih Dönemi Etnik Yapısı.....	123
12- <i>Hamza EKMEK</i> Anadolu'da Bulunan Pişmiş Toprak Çingiraklar Üzerine Gözlemler.....	149
13- <i>F. Gülden EKMEK</i> Anadolu Metal Atölyeleri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme	177
14- <i>Atilla ENGİN</i> Yeni Bulgular Işığında Kilis/Oylum Höyük'ün Hitit Dünyasındaki Yeri.....	187
15- <i>Armağan ERKANAL</i> Panaztepe/Paniša (?): A Bronze Age Harbour Settlement in Western Anatolia.....	205

İÇİNDEKİLER / CONTENTS

16- <i>Sedat ERKUT</i> Hititçe ^{GIŠ} šarpa- Üzerine Bir Araştırma	221
17- <i>Hakan EROL</i> <i>ina aban</i> Ušša ve <i>ina aban</i> Karahna	225
18- <i>Rita Francia</i> The Ritual of Fire KUB 43.62 (CTH 457.8): A Mythologem Against Shingles?	235
19- <i>Ronald L. GORNY</i> Çaltepe- Daha and the IŠTAR <i>luliya</i>	245
20- <i>Levan GORDEZİANİ, Irene TATIŠVİLİ</i> Hittite Elements in the Iberian State Cult of Armaz	267
21- <i>Cahit GÜNBATTI</i> <i>ina šapat humātım kalā’um</i> “ <i>humātum</i> kenarında alıkoymak”	275
22- <i>Sevinç GÜNEL</i> Batı Anadolu Tarihi Coğrafyasında Çine-Tepecik Merkezi	281
23- <i>Manfred HUTTER, Sylvia HUTTER- BRAUN SAR</i> Kubaba im <i>hišuwa</i> -Fest	293
24- <i>Güngör KARAUĞUZ</i> Batılıların Arkeolojik Faaliyetlerinin Sevr Antlaşmasına Yansıması ve Etkileri: Kısa Bir Anadolu Arkeolojisi Tarihi.....	303
25- <i>Kurtuluş KIYMET</i> Bir Anadolu Tanrıçası: Maliya	317
26- <i>Paola COTTICELLİ- KURRAS</i> Die Rhetorik der Negation in der hethitischen Literatur	333
27- <i>Gülgüney MASALCI ŞAHİN</i> ^{GIŠ} BALAG.DI Çalgısı ve ^{LÚ} BALAG.DI Görevlisi Üzerine	347
28- <i>H. Craig MELCHERT</i> Formal and Semantic Aspects of Hittite <i>gul(aš)ša</i> - ‘Fate’	355
29- <i>Clelia MORA</i> The ‘Quellgrotte’ in Boğazköy: A Re-Examination	361
30- <i>Tuba ÖKSE</i> Continuity and Discontinuity in the Bronze Age Stratigraphical Sequences of the Upper Tigris Region: A Case Study on Salat Tepe	367
31- <i>Ali ÖZCAN</i> II. Şuppiluliuma’nın Dini Faaliyetleri Hakkında Notlar	389
32- <i>Süleyman ÖZKAN</i> Batı Anadolu Tarihî Coğrafyası Hakkında Bazı Öneriler	405

İÇİNDEKİLER / CONTENTS

33- <i>Fatma SEVİNÇ-ERBAŞI</i> Some Observations on the Relationship Between the Agricultural Economy and Hittite Rituals.....	419
34- <i>Jana SÍEGELOVÁ</i> Einige Überlegungen Zur Abgabenerhebung in Hatti	433
35- <i>Andrej V. SÍDELTSEV</i> Negation Markers in Hittite	439
36- <i>Zsolt SÍMON</i> Die Lokalisierung von Karkiša	455
37- <i>Özlem SİR GAVAZ</i> Hititçe Metinlerde Geçen <i>Tauriša</i> Kenti ve Ormanı.....	469
38- <i>Oğuz SOYSAL</i> Hititçe'de -(a)nni Soneki ve Bunun Bazı Bayram Tasvirlerinde -(i) ile Değişmesi Konusunda Görüşler	481
39- <i>Piotr TARACHA</i> Tudhaliya III's Queens, Šuppiliuma's Accession and Related Issues	489
40- <i>Ahmet A. TIRPAN, Aytekin BÜYÜKÖZER, Zeliha GİDER BÜYÜKÖZER</i> Arkaik Dönem'de Börükçü (Koliorga?)	499
41- <i>Ayşe ÜKE</i> Hititçe Belgeler ve Arkeolojik Veriler Işığında: ^{GIŠ/NA₄} <i>armizzi-</i>	517
42- <i>Turgut YiĞİT</i> Šanahuitta ve Hitit Krallığı'nın Erken Dönemine İlişkin Bazı Gözlemler.....	531
43- <i>Aslıhan YURTSEVER BEYAZIT</i> Oluz Höyük'te Bulunmuş Ünik Bir Kap	539
44- <i>Christian ZİNKO</i> Tawiniya/Tavium - ein Hethitisches Kultzentrum	545
45- <i>Michaela ZİNKO</i> Der Gebrauch von Logogrammen in hethitischen Texten -ein sprachwissenschaftlicher Exkurs.....	563
46- <i>Marina ZORMAN</i> Sprachtabu als Motiv der Verwendung von Glossenkeilen II. Wörter von K bis Z. Ideogramme. Akkadische Wörter	575

FORMAL AND SEMANTIC ASPECTS OF HITTITE *Gul(aš)ša*- ‘FATE’ *

H. CRAIG MELCHERT**

It has long been established that the Hittite *Gul(aš)ša*-deities are fate-goddesses, who along with the DINGIR.MAḪ.MEŠ, the goddesses of birth, are responsible for the fate of individual human beings. See the brief account of Otten (1971), the excellent extended discussion by Beckman (1983: 242-248) and the summary by Haas (1994: 372), the latter of whom both correctly stress the related but distinct roles of the two sets of goddesses. The following passage cited by Beckman (1983: 244) also makes clear that the *Gul(aš)ša*-deities take their name from the verb *gul(aš)š-* ‘to draw, sketch; engrave, inscribe’ which describes their key activity:

KUB 43.55 ii 13-15 (CTH 448, Ritual for the Sun-goddess of Earth; ?/NS)

[*nu m*]ān *antuḫšaš kuwapi miyāri* [*nu=š*]ši *apēdani UD-ti maḫhan* ^d*Gulšešš=a*
[DINGIR.MA]Ḫ.MEŠ-*išš=a aššul gulšanzi*

“[And i]f a person is born some time, as both the Fate-deities and the Mother-goddesses on that day engrave well-being for him...”

The text then proceeds to ask that the Fate-deities and Mother-goddesses “engrave” (*gulašten*) life, long years and other blessings for the Hittite queen.

Nevertheless, the precise formal and semantic relationship of the name of the Fate-goddesses to the verb *gul(aš)š-* has never been fully elucidated, and recently Waal (2014) has challenged the recent consensus that the noun and verb are to be read phonetically and argued again for the old partially logographic readings GUL-š- and ^dGUL-*šeš* and for the phonetic reading of the latter as *Kuwanšeš*. The main point of the present contribution is to bring to the discussion the only occurrences of the noun *gul(a)šša-* as an appellative, which have been entirely ignored because they have been misunderstood and wrongly emended out of existence. I cited these in passing in another context in a place where no Hittitologist would be likely to see the mention (Melchert, 2000: 63), unaware that no one else understood them in the same fashion.

Both examples of *gul(aš)ša-* ‘fate’ in its standard sense occur in the Hittite translation of the “Hymn to Adad”, in expressions that calque well-known Akkadian collocations:

KBo 3.21 ii 3-4 (CTH 321, Hymn to Adad; OH/NS)

* I thank several colleagues who heard an oral presentation of this paper at the 225th meeting of the American Oriental Society in New Orleans, March 13, 2015, for invaluable references. I am above all indebted to Ilya Yakubovich for timely sharing of his recent studies on this and related topics and especially for his insight that illiterate peoples upon their first encounter with writing may attribute to it not only magical but also ominous qualities. The usual disclaimer applies, and I am solely responsible for all views expressed here that are not explicitly attributed.

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n=ašta ANA DINGIR.MEŠ GAL-TIM tuliya anda tuel=pat gulašša tarranut
 “He (Enlil) made powerful *your* fate in the assembly of the great gods.”

ibid. iii 18-20

^{URU}KÁ.DINGIR.RA=*ma=ššan kuedani URU-ri* ^dAnuš *lāman daiš* ^dEN.LÍL=*aš=ma=šši=kan gulašta*
dušgarawanda gulašša ^dAMAR.UTU=*aš aššiyanti*

“But Enlil engraved a joyous fate for Babylon, the city on which Anu bestowed the name, beloved of Marduk.”

Archi in his edition of the text (Archi 1983: 21) analyzed *gulašša* in ii 4 as the plural of a verbal noun †*gulaššar* (thus also Puhvel, 1997: 242), but the verbal noun of the stem *gul(aš)š-* could only have been *gul(aš)š(u)war* (as attested at KUB 3.110:17 and 43.72 ii 11) or **gul(aš)šeššar*. In iii 20 Archi wrongly emended the correct attested *gulašša* to *gulašta* and accepted the quite unbelievable interpretation ‘looked at’ of Goetze (1938: 58-59). He was followed in the emendation by Puhvel (1997: 240), with a different but likewise false translation.

What is attested in both passages is the perfectly regular *collective* plural of the animate result noun *gul(aš)ša-* to the verb *gul(aš)š-* ‘engrave, inscribe’.¹ One’s ‘fate’ is what the Fate-deities engrave or inscribe, and the ^d*Gulšeš* are merely ‘the Fates’ personified, like Latin *Fāta*. The Hittite *tuel gulašša tarranut* of KBo 3.21 ii 4 is a calque of Akkadian ^dEN.LÍL *šimāti-ka ušarbi* ‘Enlil exalted your fate’ (Samsuiluna C, 73), while the *figura etymologica* in *gulašša gulašta* is a calque on Akkadian *šimta/šimāti šāmu* ‘decree a fate’. The very unusual Hittite word order in the second passage betrays that we are dealing with a translation.

In refuting the claims of Waal (2014) that the verb and noun are not to be read phonetically as /kulss-/ and /kulssa-/, but as GUL-š- and GUL-ša- standing for /kwans-/ and /kwansa-/, I may be relatively brief, since Yakubovich (2014) has already made most of the necessary counterarguments, and I need not repeat them in detail here. In addition to the personal theophoric names spelled with *Ku-ul-ša-* and *Ku-ul-zi-* cited by Yakubovich (2014: 289-290), also fatal to Waal’s analysis is the Palaic form of the Fate-deities, ^d*Gulzannikeš*. Her assertion (Waal 2014: 1025, note 24) that this word may be read ^dGUL-zannikeš is not remotely credible. The very few logographic spellings in Palaic are of the usual sort showing only a single sign as a phonetic complement marking the case ending (e.g., LUGAL-*i*). A mixed spelling ^dGUL-*za-an-ni-ke-eš* with a logogram followed by five syllabic signs spelling out three syllables of the word would be unparalleled in Hittite cuneiform. As argued by Yakubovich (2014: 292-295), the only compelling evidence for logographic spellings, the few examples such as ^dGUL-*aš*, ^dGUL-*an*, ^dGUL.ḪI.A-*uš* (all only in New Script!), may be interpreted as an *interpretatio luvica* by scribes who were Luvian native speakers. They would have been well aware of the association of fate deities with engraving/ inscribing, and for them a folk etymology in terms of GUL ‘strike’ made sense. Engraving on stone involved striking, and their own word for ‘engrave’, /k^wanza-/, while etymologically cognate with Hittite *gulšš-*, as convincingly shown by Yakubovich, would have been analyzable to speakers as an iterative of the root *k^wan- ‘strike’ (with Yakubovich, 2014: 294)².

1 For more examples of this type see Melchert, 2000: 62-65, following Eichner, 1985, and others.

2 I am more skeptical than Yakubovich of the alleged examples of logographic writings for the Hittite verb



Also not credible is Waal’s claim that the extremely frequent spelling *gulaš-ša-* is to be read as GUL-*aš-ša-* with a phonetic complement spelling the variant *Kuwašša-* for *Kuwanša-* (Waal, 2014: 1025)³. The standard form for the divine name is *Ku-wa-an-ša/še-*. Given the frequency of the spelling *gul-aš-ša-*, the complete absence of *any* examples of †GUL-*an-ša/še-* entirely excludes the reading of the Fate-deities as *Kuwanšeš*. Furthermore, as pointed out by Yakubovich (2014: 291), nothing in the contexts of their occurrence supports the equation of *Gulšeš* and *Kuwanšeš/Kuwaššeš*. The former are, as emphasized by Beckman, Haas, and all others, closely associated with the Birth-goddesses, the DINGIR.MAḪ.MEŠ. The *Kuwanšeš* deities show no such association, another telling argument against their equation with the *Gulšeš* goddesses.

Despite the protests of Waal (2014: 1021) there is nothing problematic about the etymology of *gulšš-* and *gulšša-*. The correct derivation from PIE **k^wels-* ‘draw a furrow’ (Oettinger, 1979: 204; Kloekhorst 2008: 492-493) is impeccable semantically and formally.⁴ As Nichols Sims Williams has kindly brought to my attention, further support for this derivation comes from similar use of the Sogdian reflex *qrwš* of the same root. It is attested in a Manichean text meaning ‘draw (a magic circle)’ (Sims Williams-Durkin-Meisternst 2012: 99b) and several times in a Christian Sogdian manuscript meaning ‘draw (a picture), illustrate, describe’, translating Syriac *šwr* ‘draw, paint’ and *ršm* ‘engrave, draw, indicate’ (Sims Williams 1985: 213b).

As per both Oettinger and Kloekhorst, an original root present **k^wéls-ti*, **k^wšs-énti* would have led to **kwalsszi*, *kulssanzi*, a paradigm unsurprisingly leveled to attested /kulsstsi/, /kulssantsi/. As per Yakubovich (2014: 287), Empire and Iron Age Luvian generalized rather its regular outcome of the strong stem, /k^wanz-/ via **k^walz-*⁵. Contra Oettinger (1979: 204), however, the evidence from the examples in the Hymn to Adad shows that *gulšša-* was not an agent noun ‘engraver’, but a result noun ‘engraving, fate’, formed from the verb by a pattern that remained productive in Hittite: compare *ħarga-* ‘destruction’ < *ħark-* ‘perish’, *karša-* ‘shearing’ < *karš-* ‘cut, shear’ and other examples. Therefore, in spite of Waal’s ringing conclusion (2014: 1031) that “the name of the Deities of Fate, who wrote the destiny of men, is in need of a change”, we may reaffirm that the Hittite Fate-goddesses are indeed the ^d*Gulššeš*, the Fates, the personification of *gulšša-*, the fate engraved for humans.

There is, however, one issue that to my knowledge has never been raised regarding this entire account—perhaps because for us in literate societies the metaphor of one’s fate being “written” seems extremely natural. However, the existence of ^d*Gulššeš* in Hittite, ^d*Gulzannikeš* in Palaic, and ^d*Kuwanza* in Luvian (attested widely in western Anatolia in theophoric names into the Hellenistic and Roman periods) argues that the notion of fate as something written, or at

gulšš-. The example GUL-*wa-ar* in KBo 51.116 Ro 8 cited by Oettinger (1979: 203) definitely belongs to *walḫ-* ‘strike’ and GUL-*u-ar* at KBo 55.79 Ro 2 in a fragmentary context may as well. As for the *gul-an-ti* ^{DU}GKA.GAG in KUB 39.17 Vo 12, the interpretation as ‘inscribed beer mug’ (Puhvel, 1997: 242) is pure conjecture. A defective spelling for *gul-<la>-an-ti* ‘hollow(ed)’ seems rather more likely.

- 3 The frequency of the spelling *gul-aš-ša-* expresses the geminate in /kulss-/. On this regular gemination of *s in Hittite in clusters, particularly sonorants, see Melchert, 1994: 150, with reference to Bernabé Pajares, 1973.
- 4 The alternative derivation from **g^wel-* ‘prick’ (Puhvel, 1997: 244) is no better semantically and is formally inferior, since the -s- must be taken as a present suffix or enlargement not otherwise attested for that root. It is also questionable whether an initial **g^w* would be preserved in Luvian before a syllabic *l, and it certainly would not have been in Hieroglyphic Luvian /k^wanz-/ ‘inscribe’ < **g^wéls-*.
- 5 We may leave open the question of whether graphic <z> in Luvian after sonorant represents [ts] with epenthesis (Melchert, 1994: 172) or rather [z] with voicing. Both would be natural phonetic developments.

least engraved, was already current for the speakers of Indo-European-derived "Proto-Anatolian". Since it is hard to believe that literacy was already an integral part of these speakers' culture, I have long worried that we face a serious problem of relative chronology. The contention of Waal (2012: 23) that the fate goddesses were already at that early date conceived as drawing fate specifically in hieroglyphs is not credible.

Yakubovich (forthcoming) has independently concluded for similar reasons that the notion of "engraving" fate must have already been Proto-Anatolian and has in my view compellingly solved the problem of relative chronology. I will again not repeat his eloquent arguments, which I heartily recommend to all interested readers, but merely summarize his conclusions. He presents parallels from several Indo-European traditions that show how illiterate communities who are introduced to the use of writing by others, but do not themselves control it or understand its workings, tend to ascribe to it magical but at the same time often ominous or "dark" powers, including the ability to divine or even determine fate by means of the manipulation of engraved signs. It is thus quite in order that the Indo-European speakers intrusive in Anatolia at an early date ascribed such powers to incised signs (which they named with their inherited verb **k^wels-*) and created the requisite divine figures who were thought to wield them⁶.

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⁶ In view of the Sogdian use for 'draw a magic circle' cited above and the widespread idea of lines in the palm as indicating fate, the early Indo-Europeans of Anatolia may have already associated **k^wels-* 'draw' with magic and fate, but I agree with Yakubovich that confrontation with genuine writing practiced by others was the catalyst for the development of its attested use for 'fate'.

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