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Hittite *antaka*- “loins” and an Overlooked Myth about Fire

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One of the hallmarks of Harry Hoffner’s scholarship is the breadth of his interests and expertise, which encompass philology, language, history, and culture (including religion and myth). I hope that the following modest contribution to several of these areas will serve as a worthy token of friendship and esteem.

Hittite *antaka*- is attested scarcely half a dozen times, including the longer variant stem *antakitti*-.¹ The standard interpretation of the word is “room, chamber,” apparently first suggested in 1955 by Goetze, *ANET*, 349, for the example in the Ritual of Paskuwatti discussed below.² This seems to fit the occurrence in the myth of the disappearance of the Sun-god (KUB 36.44 i 12; OH/NS): [] ^dUTU-*uš aruni antaga-šša pait* . . . “The Sun God went to the

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1. We can say nothing about the example *antaki-šš[i]* in KUB 45.3 iv 17—see the note by Laroche, *RHA* XXXIII (1975): 65—except that the antecedent of the possessive is likely the deity of the preceding line. I follow others in giving the longer stem as *antakitti*-, an *i*-stem. However, since both occurrences are in the dat.-loc. singular, a stem in *-it-* or in *-ita-* is equally possible. The base stem is *antaka*-. Pace Friedrich-Kammenhuber, *HW*², 97, there is no reason to take the allative *antaga-šša* as a “false archaism,” and all dat.-loc. singulars in *-i* may be to *antaka*-. See for the same analysis already Hoffner, *BiOr* 37 (1980): 200. Friedrich, *RHA* VIII/47 (1947–48): 14, assumed *antaki*- because at that time he reasonably took the extended *antakitti* as a Hurrianism. We now know that stems in *-it-* (NB single *-t-*!) are in the first instance Luvianisms: see Starke, *StBoT* 31, 151ff. and 210ff. Our stem in *-itt(V)-* is probably something else. In any case, the word’s appearance in a clearly Hattic myth dating from Old Hittite makes a Hurrian source highly unlikely.

2. Accepted by Laroche, *OLZ* 51 (1956): 421, who found this meaning also appropriate for KUB 36.44 i 12, and subsequently by all others: Puhvel, *HED* 1/2, 77; Friedrich-Kammenhuber, *HW*², 97; Hoffner, *AuOr* 5 (1987): 227 and *Hittite Myths*, 27; Pecchioli Daddi and Polvani, *La mitologia*, 64. As happens all too frequently, the very tentative nature of Goetze’s original suggestion, indicated by his use of italics in his translation, has been forgotten in the further transmission of the idea.

Sea, to his *a*." However, there is no positive evidence in this very fragmentary text nor anywhere else to my knowledge that the Sea was conceived as having a palace, much less a chamber. Furthermore, since virtually all other examples of "partitive apposition" in Hittite involve body parts or at least personal attributes, it is questionable whether the syntax of this example is compatible with the meaning "room" for *antaka*-.

There was in fact an earlier alternative interpretation, now apparently totally forgotten. Friedrich, *HW*¹ (1952), 23, gives "Bauch, Taille (??)." He credits this very tentative idea to Sturtevant, *Lg.* 12 (1936): 182. However, what the latter actually said was that the word might mean "intestines," analyzing it as possibly a derivative of *anda+ki*-, thus "that which lies inside." The shift to an external referent "belly, waist" seems to have been a conscious or unconscious modification by Friedrich himself. Having arrived independently at essentially the same solution, I now wish to show that Friedrich's intuition was in fact correct.

Other examples of the word confirm that it must refer to a body part, and indeed in the region suggested by Sturtevant and Friedrich. The first is KUB 11.20 i 5–21 (with its duplicate 11.25 iii 2–14, both OH/NS): GAL DUMU. MEŠ.É.GAL ^{SIG}*kunzan dāi ta GIŠ-i ḥamanki § ta GAL LÚ.MEŠ ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR ^{GIŠ}BANŠUR-az ganki § GAL ^{LÚ.MEŠ}UŠ.BAR SÍG BABBAR SÍG SA₅ anda immiyazi ta išḥuzzin ANA GAL DUMU.MEŠ.É.GAL pāi n=an=za=an=kan antaki=šši dāi (dupl. antakitti!) § GAL ^{LÚ.MEŠ}UŠ.BAR=ašta parā [(p)]ēḥutezzi* "The chief of the palace officials takes a (wool) *kunza*- and ties it onto a (piece of) wood. The chief of the table-men hangs (it) from a table. The chief of the weavers mingles white and red wool and gives the belt to the chief of the palace officials. He puts it on/in his *antaka*. One escorts out the chief of the weavers."

To suppose that the palace official puts the belt (just produced with great ritual fanfare) in his own room is not remotely credible, given all that we know about Hittite ritual practice and the phraseology used to describe it. First of all, this is a state ritual, involving the king and queen. It would be quite unheard of and make no sense that suddenly in the midst of the ritual action the chief palace official takes an important ritual object and carries it off to his living quarters. Second, as is typical, the rest of this passage describes the comings and goings of the participants in the public ritual very explicitly. If by some remote chance the official *were* carrying off the belt to his room, his departure from the scene would surely be carefully noted with a motion verb, as it is for every other participant.

The context suggests rather that the official puts the belt on his body. Where does one put a belt?—usually around one's waist, middle. I therefore propose that *antaka*- (and *antakitti*-) is the equivalent of archaic English "loins"; i.e., the part of the body from the lowest ribs to the hips, including crucially the seat of the sexual organs.³ I will soon discuss the sexual sym-

bolism of this entire passage in detail elsewhere, but the relevance of intertwined white and red wool and *antaka-* to sexual potency is made clear by their appearance in the Ritual of Paskuwatti against impotence (KUB 9.27 + 7.5; MH/NS).

In this ritual (ably edited by Hoffner, *AuOr* 5 [1987]: 271–87), a man suffering from impotence undergoes a series of treatments to cure his problem. These include early on passing through a specially constructed gate *wrapped with red and white wool* while exchanging stereotypically feminine objects for masculine ones (KUB 9.27 i 18–19). We know that passage through a gate frequently is used in Hittite rituals to effect transition from a negative to a positive condition (see the references given by Hoffner, *AuOr* 5 [1987]: 283).

Somewhat later (KUB 9.27 + 7.5 i 31–37), Uliliyassi, the patron deity of the ritual, is addressed in a passage describing the patient’s problem in quite blunt language: *našma=wa=za DUMU.MUNUS šuppeššaraš [ki[?]]šat⁴ nu=wa=šši=kan andakitti=šši kattanta pait nu=wa kāš tantukešnaš DUMU-aš šaknaš šēḫunaš nu=ddu=ššan ŪL wemiyat* “Or [you beca]me² a virgin young woman. He went down to her *a*. (But) this mortal (was only) one of feces and urine. He did not find you there.” (cf. Hoffner, *AuOr* 5 [1987]: 277: “He went down to her bedchamber, but this mortal (was just) one of faeces and urine. He did not find you.”). Hoffner, following Goetze, tries to fit *antaka-* to the context by specifying it as “bed-chamber,” but given the other evidence for *antaka-* as a body part, and indeed in the area of the waist, I assert that the text is being far more explicit: the man descended to the young woman’s “loins,” but failed miserably to perform.

I believe that there is one more example of *antaka-*, previously overlooked, that confirms its meaning as a body part. The fragmentary text in which it occurs is of considerable interest for its contents, and its true nature does not seem to have been appreciated, so I cite here the passage in full (KUB 43.62 ii 1–11, iii 2’–12’; ?/NS): *n=an=[z]a=an=kan x[]x-na-an-za(-)x-it ne-y[a-zi[?]] / n=at=šī(e)=ššan a[nta]ki tameškezzi [--] / mahḫan=ma=šī=kan alpaš tepu paizzi [nu=šši[?]] / tuegganza mazzazi n=at=šī(e)=šša[n arḫa[?]] § ḫukkeškezzi=ma=an kišan paḫḫur šā[it] / ŠA^dTUTU DUMU=ŠU n=at wet GE₆-anti pait n[=at] / GE₆-anti uleštat MUŠⁱ iwar [--] / taruptat kunkuliyatiyaš i[war] § partaittat ŠA NIM.LĀL watkuta[t] / ŠA TI₈^{MUŠEN} iwar ANA TI₈^{MUŠEN}=ma ḫalu[gaš*

3. This new interpretation is still compatible with the popular derivation from *anda* “in(to).” A shift from “inner part” to “middle, center” to “middle part of the body” is quite in order. Cf. Latvian *vidus* “(the) inside” but also “middle” and “belly.”

4. My restoration and interpretation here are tentative, but they do fit the traces and the presence of *-za*. My idea is that the goddess herself is said to have turned herself into a desirable young woman in an attempt to cure the man, but even this failed to arouse him, requiring further and more elaborate treatment. Such direct intervention by the goddess is at least consistent with the later mention (iv 2ff.) of the goddess appearing to the patient in a dream and sleeping with him.

pait] / KASKAL-*ši ikunimaš* NU.GÁL § [. . . (rest of column two and most of column three lost) . . .] *n=an x x-x-x x-zi* [. . .] / ^{GIŠ}*kapanu=ma=za=kan* MUŠ *ḫarzi* [--] / *ištarna pedi=ma=at=za=kan* NIM.LĀL *ḫarzi* § ^{GIŠ}*lahḫurnuzias=šan* *šer* TI₈^{MUŠEN} *tiya*[t] / *katta=ma=an=za=an* ^{GIŠ}*gapanu=šši(t)* MUŠ / *neyat ištarna pedi=ma=kan* NIM.LĀL *ney*[at] § *nu=ššan* ^d*Gulzanzipaš* ŠA ^{dU} x [] / *ḫuittiyannai nu=šši* EGIR-*anda* [--] / IM-*an paddanzi dankuiš taga*[nzipaš] / x []-*at n=ašta šarā tarpiš*(-)[] / [^d*Gu*]zazipan GUL-*tat* DUMU.NAM.LÚ [] / (free space to end of column). “He wraps² him with a []. He presses it on his *a*. But when the weakness/faintness passes from him a little, and his body can resist, he [removes²] it from him. § (Meanwhile) he is reciting over him as follows: ‘Fire became enraged, (did) the son of the Sun-god. He proceeded to go (in)to the night and blended with the night like a snake. He gathered himself like a *k*. He . . . ed like a bee. He sprang up like an eagle, and to the eagle he [went as] messenger. On the way there was no cold.’ (long lacuna) It (acc.) [. . .]. The snake holds (its) base, while the bee holds it in the middle. § (Above) on its branches the eagle has perched, while below the snake has *encircled* its base,⁵ and in the middle the bee has turned (around it²). § *Gulzanzipa* pulls the [] of the Storm-god. And behind him/her they dig up clay. The Dark Earth has (been) . . . ed. The *tarpi* [] has struck upward at⁷ *Gulzanzipa*. Human [. . .].”

Riemschneider, KUB 43, vii, labels the text “episch;” but *CHD* P, 198, correctly calls it an incantation (so also Ardzinba—see note 11 below). I contend that this text is specifically a “medical” ritual, part of whose treatment is being described in lines 1–4 of column ii. I infer that the symptoms of the illness include a burning sensation, leading to inclusion of a mythical narrative concerning Fire. A mixture of practical treatment and verbal magic (including contextually relevant mythical passages) is a well-known characteristic of Hittite rituals against illness.⁶

I cannot fully restore the first line of column ii. My restoration and interpretation of *ne-y[a-zi]* are based on a possible parallel with this expression in the myth in column iii—something is being wrapped around the trunk of the patient in the same way that the snake and bee encircle the trunk of the tree—but this is far from certain.⁷ I am confident that we should read *a[n-ta]-ki* in

5. ^{GIŠ}*gapanu-* may instead mean “trunk.” See *CHD* L–N, 16. Compare Weitenberg, *U-Stämme*, 256f. with copious references.

6. Compare among others the “Ritual for the Infernal Deities,” as edited by Otten, *ZA* 54 (1961): 114–57 (see especially lines ii 22ff. on pp. 122ff.). Support for this interpretation of our text comes from the fragmentary ends of lines from column i, which crucially represent the beginning of the text: we find [*a*]ntuḫša[n] “person” (acc. sg.) in line 1 (also line 6), and *daruš=ša=ma* “figure, body; statue” in line 3. These terms fit well the typical opening of such medical texts: “When/if such-and-such happens to a person . . . , and his body is. . . .” Or *daruš* could refer to a figurine used in the course of treatment.

7. For *neya-* as “wind around, wrap,” see *CHD* L–N, 359ff.

line 2. The broken horizontal before the break can hardly belong to any sign except HAL or AN, and there is barely space for one more sign in the break.⁸ I know of no suitable Hittite words of a shape *hal[]ki* that would fit the context. The verb *tameškezzi* “presses” argues that we are dealing with some kind of compress. The reference to Fire in the following mythical passage and the likelihood that a burning sensation is a symptom lead me to suppose a cold compress, but I would not insist on this. Note that the word *alpaš* in the following sentence can hardly be “cloud,” but must rather represent the missing base noun *alpa-* “faintness, weakness” to the adjective *alpānt-* “faint, weak, ill” (for which see Puhvel, *HED* 1/2, 38–39).

I do not have space to discuss fully the very interesting but difficult mythical passage, but a few remarks are in order. One thing that is clear (and new to my knowledge) is the statement that Fire (*paḥhur*) is a son of the Sun-god (contra Haas, *GHR*, 297, who erroneously cites this passage as saying that Fire is a son of the Fire-god!).⁹ Whether one restores a preterite *ša-a-[it]* or some other form of *šā(i)-*, the unmistakable parallels to the opening of the myth of Telipinu (especially the verb *ulešta*) make it certain that we have yet another variant on the myth of the deity who retires in anger, with disastrous consequences.

The description of those consequences is obscured by the terms *kunkuliyati-* and *partāi-*, but it is at least clear that Fire went as a messenger to the eagle and that on his journey he brought heat everywhere he went, presumably an unnatural, unbearable heat.¹⁰ This condition furnishes the tie-in with our medical ritual: the burning sensation of the patient is to be treated with, among other things, the same steps that were taken against the unnatural heat that spread due to Fire’s wrath. When the narrative resumes after a very long lacuna, we find the snake, bee, and eagle occupying respectively the bottom, middle, and top of what must be some kind of tree. Given the mention of the fate-goddess Gulzanzipa in the next paragraph, I am tempted to think that the tree in question is the “tree of life” or “world-tree” that is nearly universal

8. One could conceivably read *p[al-]ki*, but I know of no appropriate Hittite word that would yield a dat.-loc. singular of this form.

9. The filiation is given correctly in Oettinger, *Stammbildung*, 363 n. 214, but neither this nor the rest of the myth seems to have attracted further notice.

10. For various attempts to interpret *partāi-* see *CHD* P, 198. Oettinger (pers. comm.) now suggests that *partaitat* is a reflexive middle meaning “disengaged itself.” There seems to be a clear contrast between the first two actions of Fire that involve entanglement and the last two that express separation. Against the editors (and with Oettinger) I prefer the alternative analysis of our passage whereby the phrases with *iwar* go respectively with the verbs that precede them. My main reason for doing so is *ANA TI₈^{MUSEN}=ma*, where the position of *=ma* argues that “to the eagle” begins a new clause. I take *-ma* as an enclitic despite the space that precedes it, because I find the restoration and reading *ḥa-lu-[ga-aš (pa-it)]* virtually certain in the context.

in cosmologies of various peoples around the world.¹¹ I can make no coherent sense, however, of the following action and must leave further interpretation of this fascinating mythical episode to others. The mention of a human at the very end of column iii does suggest that we are near the end of the mythical narrative/incantation and about to return to the ritual treatment.

Returning to our main topic, the word *antaka-*, I close with a brief account of its use in the first passage cited, the myth of the disappearance of the Sun-god. I believe I have made a convincing case for *antaka-* referring to a body part, specifically the loins, including as the seat of sexuality. As noted earlier, the partitive apposition *aruni antaga=šša* also supports such an interpretation. But what are we to make of the idea that the Sun-god went to the Sea's "loins"? Let us reexamine the context. In lines i 7–8 of the text we find *nu=za arunaš* DUGHAB.HAB-x [] *ħalħaldāni=šši daiš* "The sea placed a vessel/vessels [] on his (own) ħ."¹² A few lines later (i 12–13), the Sun-god goes to the Sea's *antaga*, and then: *n=aš* DUGHAB.[HAB . . . IŠTU?] GAB.LĀL *gariēt* "and he covered them?, the vessels [. . . with] wax."¹³

Puhvel, *HED* 3, 22, reasonably takes *ħalħaldāni* as a variant of the better attested *ħalħalzāna/i-* that appears in lists of the vital attributes of a (strong) man in both Hittite and Cuneiform Luvian contexts. For Hittite note KUB 24.12 ii 31–32: *ŠA* LUGURUŠ *ħaštariyatar ħaštāi* [ħalħ] *anzanan innaren laplappipan* "bravery, bones, ħ., eyebrow and eyelash of a man" (sim. iii 5–6).¹⁴ The most complete version of the much longer list of CLuvian is found in KUB 35.45 ii 22–24: *ALAM=ša mišan=za ħaš=ša ħalħalzanin uwarrannaħi=*

11. This comparison was already made independently by V. G. Ardzinba, *Vestnik Drevnej Istoriji* (1977): 119–20, and *Ritualy i mifi drevnej Anatoliji* (Moscow, 1982), 92, cited by Émilie Masson, *Le combat pour l'immortalité* (Paris, 1991), 202f. with notes, and by Billie Collins, *Diss.*, 118. In addition to the references cited by Collins, see V. Ivanov and V. Toporov, "Le mythe indo-européen du dieu de l'orage poursuivant le serpent: réconstruction du schéma," in *Échanges et communications. Mélanges C. Lévi-Strauss*, ed. J. Pouillon and P. Maranda (The Hague/Paris, 1970), vol. II, 1180–1206. See especially pp. 1184ff. and 1189f. for citations of parallels from Baltic and Slavic myth for the eagle in the top of the cosmic tree and the snake at its base. For Slavic parallels for the bee as the middle figure, see Ardzinba and Masson. On the mythic role of the bee and its healing powers see Haas, *GHR*, 435f. and 712ff. with references, and Masson, *Le combat*, 253–57 and *passim*.

12. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, 27, gives "on his/its . . .," but the reflexive particle *=za* argues that the reference is to the Sea's own ħ., as per Puhvel.

13. As intimated by Hoffner, the enclitic *=aš* is problematic. It cannot be the subject, since we have a transitive verb with direct object. I follow him in very tentatively taking it as acc. pl. animate, proleptic with the direct object "vessels." One wonders if the transmitted text is in order at this point.

14. As stressed by Puhvel, *ħaštāi* in this context may convey "steadfastness, sturdiness" as much as "bone." Likewise in this context "eyebrow" and "eyelash" surely refer to the strong, withering gaze of a deity or king. Note in fact the copyist's alteration of *inira-* "eyebrow" to *innari-*, which is a word for "strength."

ša iunaḫi=ša lalpin kuwannanin maššanallin KASKAL-an “(his) body, flesh, bone, ḫ., w., the ability to walk, eyelash, eyebrow, divine path.” For the meaning of *mīšan=za* and an excellent discussion of the entire list see Poetto, *HS* 108 (1995): 30–38.¹⁵

For *ḫalḫaltāna*- and variants Puhvel suggests a meaning “shoulder,”¹⁶ another body part that certainly is often used to stand for strength (cf. Hittite *kuttar*, as discussed by Puhvel, *HED* 4, 313f.). Obviously, a shoulder would also be an appropriate place to put a vessel. Puhvel is also surely right in seeing a connection with *ḫalḫaldāmar(i)*- “corner” and ultimately with the root of *ḫaliye*- “genuflect” < * “bend oneself.” However, a bewildering variety of body parts may be named for the fact that they bend or visually appear as a bend or curve. Note that the cognates of Latin *coxa* “hip” mean “armpit,” “foot, leg” and “back of the knee.”¹⁷ The names for body parts also notoriously shift their referents: in late Latin *coxa* comes to be used for “thigh,” whence French *cuisse*.¹⁸

I therefore do not believe we can exclude that *ḫalḫaltana*- etc. refers to “thigh,” “hip,” or some other part of the body in the same general region as *antaka*-, symbolizing physical strength and/or virility. Sexual power was also central to the Hittites’ notion of being a man. The Sea may have put the vessel(s) in question in his lap. I certainly do not insist on this idea. A definitive answer to the meaning of *ḫalḫaltana*- depends on our figuring out why the Sea put the vessel(s) on himself in the first place, and what the intended effect was of the Sun-god’s covering the vessel(s) with wax. Given what we know of other ancient Anatolian myths, a power struggle with sexual overtones does not seem to me out of the question.

Be that as it may, even if *ḫalḫaltana*- does mean “shoulder,” the Sun-god could easily have reached the vessel(s) and covered it/them with wax from a position at/on the Sea’s loins. The fact that *ḫalḫaltana*- clearly is a body part supports my claim that *antaka*- is as well, and the other instances of the latter argue that it refers to the middle of the body, especially as the seat of sexuality, a range covered by the now obsolete English “loins.”

15. The “divine path” may well be the path that the soul travels through life, thus life-force itself. See C. Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon* (New York, 1995), 288, and J. D. Hawkins, *FsTÖzgüç*, 190.

16. Pecchioli Daddi and Polvani, *La mitologia*, 64, offer “testa” or “spalla,” citing Carruba. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, 27, prudently leaves ḫ. untranslated.

17. Sanskrit *kākṣā*, Old Irish *coss*, and OHG *hāhsina* respectively.

18. Sanskrit *kākṣā* must also in some cases mean “groin, crotch,” not “armpit”: see Stephanie Jamison, “Linguistic and Philological Remarks on Some Vedic Body Parts,” in *Studies in Memory of Warren Cowgill*, ed. Calvert Watkins (Berlin, 1987), 66–91 (esp. 81–91).