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## The *katra/i*-women in the Kizzuwatnean Rituals from Ḫattuša\*

### Introduction

The *katra/i*-women are cult functionaries well attested in the ritual and festival tablets from the cuneiform archives discovered in Ḫattuša, the capital of the Hittites. They fulfilled a wide range of functions in the official cult as well as ritual occasions privately sponsored by wealthy patrons. They often sing (KBo 21.34 ii 10, 26-27; KBo 24.5 obv.<sup>2</sup> 12'-13'; KBo 40.96 obv.<sup>2</sup> 11'; KBo 43.203 ii 4') or dance (KUB 47.65 ii 13'-14'), sometimes performing the whole night through (KBo 24.5 obv.<sup>2</sup> 13'), sometimes invoking a deity with a harp (KBo 5.1 iii 48-49); they may incant in Hurrian (KBo 27.132, 2'ff) or recite to the deity (KBo 23.111 rev.<sup>2</sup> 11'-13'); they often precede festival processions (KUB 10.91 ii 7-8; KUB 58.51 ii 4', 19') and are witnessed in various ritual temple activities, such as drawing pure water, breaking bread, libating wine and oil, and so forth (KBo 19.142 ii 8', KUB 10.63 vi 3'-4', KUB 39.71 i 22-24). They are witnessed in the corpus of birth rituals unravelling a garment, gathering the red wool from it, and making it into a fabric which serves as a headband on a lamb (KBo 5.1 iii 52-iv 2); the lamb is then placed in a *katra/i*-woman's lap, apparently symbolising the

child for which the ritual is performed (KBo 5.1 iv 11). They may be described as 'pure' women (KBo 23.1 i 39, iii 25-26), and may, along with a *sanga*-priest, purify the cult rhytons with natron down at the river (KBo 23.1 i 39-41, iii 25-29).

Naturally, they are also paid for their work, sometimes with food (KUB 9.22 ii 44-45, KBo 17.65 rev. 23-24) or presents (KUB 29.4 iii 9-10) from the various ritual patrons which make use of their services, sometimes with rations and gifts from the palace administration (KUB 5.10+KUB 16.33+KUB 16.83 obv. 38-43). One *katra/i*-woman is attested as a witness in a text fragment which records court proceedings dealing with Urḫi-Teššob (KBo 23.111), likely that king otherwise known as Muršili III, who was deposed by Ḫattušili II (III), husband of Queen Puduḫepa. Often, they seem to be the anonymous 'they' who perform various rites in the ritual complexes, and certainly constitute a part of the 'palace personnel' (LÚ<sup>MES</sup> É.DINGIR-*LIM*) which fulfil a multitude of tasks in the rituals and festivals, only occasionally being named specifically. Perhaps as important as what they are attested as doing, it may be noted that they are never witnessed, for example,

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Abbreviations follow the conventions of *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (1989- ).

offering an animal or evoking a deity, acts which their male colleagues do carry out (though, as shall be seen, one *katra/i*-woman is the co-author of a text in which a deity is evoked). Whether this is due to their femininity, their particular job description as *katra/i*-personnel, or simply the incomplete preservation of the textual material might be resolved by a more thorough study of the verbs associated with male vs. those associated with female cult personnel. In any case, they often function in tandem with the other common cult personnel, such as the *sanga*- and *patili*-priests the *azu*-medicine man and the *ḫal*-diviner, as well as with the ritual patron (EN/BE-EL SISKUR), but never seem to function alone, as do, for example, the ‘old women’ (M<sup>1</sup>N<sup>1</sup>SŠU.GI).

## Etymology

The etymology of the word *katra/i*- remains unclear. It was first related to Greek καθαρός, ‘pure, clean,’ by Hrozný (1917: 32). Van Windekens (1989:339f) recently suggested a connection with Sanskrit *gāyati*, ‘to sing,’ and Avestan *gāθra*-, ‘song,’ Indic cognates which would have reached Kizzuwatna via the Indic element in the Mittanni empire. However, only a minute collection of divine and personal names and a few scattered words in the Mittanni-Hurrian vocabulary can reasonably be shown to be Indic. Moreover, the *katra/i*-women do not seem to be primarily musicians or singers, though they are indeed attested as singing or dancing along with those designated singers and musicians in cultic contexts. Since the word is attested, as we shall see, almost exclusively in the Kizzuwatnean rituals, strongly influenced by Hurrian and North Syrian elements, but not in the rest of the Hittite corpus, an etymology should probably be

Rather, they are clearly associated with the official cult apparatus, the various professions of which were subject to the administration in Hattuša. This fact is further demonstrated by a personnel list (KBo 19.28) which catalogues 205 persons of various professions, including *šakkuni*-priests, *katra/i*-women, scribes, scribes on wood, diviners and Hurrian singers. Finally, as this personnel list is a product of the latter half of the 13th century, as one may conclude from its palaeographic features, it shows that the profession of the *katra/i*-women, which is first attested in a number of Middle Hittite texts, i.e. of the latter 15th or first half of the 14th century, was extant right up toward the end of the Hittite empire as recorded in the archives of Hattuša.

sought first in Hurrian or Akkadian rather than in the Indo-European languages.

A number of Semitic etymologies have been suggested (HED 4, 137f), including Akkadian *qatāru*, ‘to fumigate’ (cf. Burkert 1992:64, 189f), and *kadrû*, ‘present, offering’ (cf. Klengel 1985:171, n. 21), and Ugaritic *kṛt* (a type of midwife). The Ugaritic connection has been shown by Beckman to be unlikely (1983:108, n. 273), as Ugaritic *t* generally corresponds to Hittite *š*, not *t*. Otherwise, the other possibilities can at this point be neither refuted nor substantiated. The fact that *katra/i*- is normally inflected as an a-stem in Hittite, but in a few cases as an i-stem, might suggest that the word is originally Hurrian, in which the great majority of nominals are i-stems, and that it acquired an a-stem as a result of its borrowing into Hittite, which favours a-stems. It may be mentioned in this context that a *katriš* does appear in what is apparently a Hurrian text (VS 17, 5, 12) from southern

Mesopotamia, perhaps from the area of Larsa (van Djik, VS 17, p. 8). The text records what seems to be a Hurrian incantation against snakebite, and has been characterised as early Old Babylonian (Haas and Thiel 1978:10ff). However, the text is largely unintelligible in the current state of Hurrian research, and even determining whether the *katriš* in this text functions as a noun, let alone whether it is a person involved in some ritual application, is not yet possible. Hence, a connection with the *katra/i*-women of the Boğazköy rituals and festivals must remain as conjectural as the etymology of the word itself.

Finally, it is of interest to note that the

word *katra* appears in one Boğazköy text (KBo 17.71+KBo 39.243 iv 6') as the name of a ritual, albeit in fragmentary context which disallows much further analysis. One might speculate that the women who often carried out the *katra/i*-ritual eventually came to be known themselves by that name. The converse, i.e. that a specific ritual carried out by the *katra/i*-women came to be known by the name of those who performed it, seems less likely, since the *katra/i*-women are attested fulfilling such a variety of tasks, and selecting one of them as the bearer of their name would surely be rather arbitrary.

### A Couple of Corrections

Before going further, perhaps a couple of things which the *katra/i*-women are not should be mentioned. First, there is no evidence to suggest that the *katra/i*-women lived in a special temple tract rather than with their families, as has been claimed (Wegner 1981:153; cf. Beckman 1983:108, n. 270). This assertion was based on a misreading of KUB 16.34 i 20, which should be read ŠĀ É <sup>MUNUS</sup>MES<sup>1</sup>*tap-ta-ra-aš i-ia-ta-ri* rather than \**kat-ta-ra-aš*. Indeed, *katra/i*- is never attested with a vowel between the second and third consonants or a geminated second consonant, and the *taptara*-women, generally understood as professional mourners or lamenters, are well attested in their own right (Pecchioli Daddi 1982:399). Moreover, one text passage explicitly records the *katra/i*-women going home after the fulfilment of their duties: “[And] ... in

that night, the impure priest and the *katra/i*-women who were called in to the ritual patron, they go to their homes” (KUB 32.133 iv 1'-4').<sup>1</sup>

Second, there is no reason to assume that the *katra/i*-women occupied a low rung on the hierarchy of temple personnel (Wegner 1981:152), an assumption which was perhaps partially based on the misreading which led to the conclusion that the *katra/i*-women lived in a special temple tract. Indeed it is known that one *katra/i*-woman, Arzakiti by name, was the co-author of an 8-tablet ritual of purification, which one would hardly expect of temple personnel on the low end of the hierarchy. Unfortunately, only some 30 partially preserved lines of the ritual itself survive, but a catalogue entry (KUB 8.71 obv. 10'-15') records that 8 tablets of the ritual existed, and the colo-

<sup>1</sup> KUB 32.133 iv 1'-4':

1' . . . [nu x x x x] x a-pé-e-da-ni GE<sub>6</sub>-an-ti  
 2' ša-ak-nu-wa-an-za LU ša-an-ku-un-<sup>1</sup>m-iš<sup>1</sup> ša ku-t-e-eš MUNUS<sup>1</sup>kat-ri-iš-ša  
 3' A-NA EN SISKUR an-da ú-e-ri-ia-an-te-eš e-šir nu-za a-pé-e-ur  
 4' I-NA ÉMESŠ-ŠU-NU ar-ḫa pa-a-an-zi

phons of the third (KBo 12.116 iv 2'-9') and the fifth tablet (KUB 56.55 iv 3'-13') are preserved and have been identified. The latter reads: "Fifth tablet of the word of Ili-ma-abī, the *sanga*-priest of deity X and Ar-zākīti, the *katra/i*-woman (entitled): 'When the deity for whatever reason is angry – whether someone has committed sacrilege before him/her, or some utensil of his/hers has been destroyed – how the servants (of the deity) invoke him/her back.' Not finished. The ritual of Pirinkir and the fifth day are not completed on this tablet, and the ritual for well-being is not carried out for them."<sup>2</sup> The deity for which the ritual was recorded is a matter of some speculation, as only a leading *Winkelhaken* in KBo 12.116 iv 2' is preserved, which could be read simply <sup>D</sup>U, the Storm-god (e.g. CTH, p. 187) or, theoretically, <sup>D</sup>U.[GUR, i.e. Nergal (Klengel 1985:171). However, considering the close relationship between the *katra/i*-women and Ištar, as we shall see presently, and the fact that a number of elements<sup>3</sup> in the preserved portion of the ritual recall the so-called Transfer of the Night Goddess rit-

uals (CTH 481 and 482), perhaps the most likely restoration would be <sup>D</sup>I[*štar* or <sup>D</sup>G[E<sub>6</sub>.

Whether the Storm-god, Nergal or, more likely, Ištar originally stood in the break, it is clear that the ritual is of no little import, as it involves the purification of the deity's temple after the occurrence of some abomination, and the attempt at evoking the deity back into his or her home. As the prosperity, indeed the survival, of the people and the land depended, according to the Hittite belief system, on the presence and contentment of its deities, that a ritual for the purification and evocation of such an important deity lay in the hands of a woman, albeit as co-author, indicates that women were by no means excluded from the most important religious functions. They could be responsible for fashioning and/or preserving the ritual tradition(s) of important cults, and they were by no means restricted to playing a menial role in the performance of those rituals. In short, there is no reason to assume that the *katra/i*-women in particular stood on the lower rungs of the temple hierarchy.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> KUB 56.55 iv 3'-13' (restored after KBo 12.116):

3'. *DUB ŠKAM A-WA-AT mI-li-ma-a-bi LÚ[(ŠANGA D)Ištar<sup>9</sup>]*  
 4'. *Ú 'Ar-za-ki-ti' MUNUSkat-ra-aš ma-a-a[(n DINGIR)-LU'M]*  
 5'. *ud-da-na-až ku-<sup>1</sup>e<sup>1</sup>-ez-ka<sub>3</sub> kar-dim-mi-ia-[(u-wa-an-za)a]*  
 6'. *na-aš-ma-aš-ši mar-ša-aš-tar-ri-iš-ma ku-iš-k[i]*  
 7'. *pé-ra-an i-en-za na-aš-ma-aš-ši-kán Ú-NU-UT-m[a<sup>9</sup>]*  
 8'. *ku-it-ki ħar-kán-an na-an 'SAG<sup>1</sup>.GEME.ARAD<sup>MEŠ</sup>*  
 9'. *ma-aĥ-ĥa-an EGIR-pa mu-ga-a-iz-zi Ú-UL Q[A-TI]*  
 10'. *ke-e-da-ni-iš-ša-an TUP-<sub>1</sub>PI<sub>2</sub>-ia SISKUR*  
 11'. *DPi-ri-in-ki-ri-ia-aš UD ŠKAM-ia Ú-[U]L*  
 12'. *zi-in-na-an-za ke-<sup>1</sup>el<sup>1</sup>-di-ia-aš-ma-aš-ša*  
 13'. *SISKUR Ú-UL a-ni-ia-an*

<sup>3</sup> E.g. the offering of typical Hurrian sacrifices in the <sup>É</sup>A-BU-US-šī section of the temple (KUB 56.55 i 15-17 and KUB 29.4 ii 22-24); the appearance of a <sup>NINDA</sup>ĥu-ut-ĥu-u-ia-la (KUB 56.55 i 23, 30 and KUB 29.4 ii 60 and dupls.), which occurs only in these two texts, and apparently in one or two unpublished fragments (Hoffner 1974:163f); and rituals for Pirinkir, apparently as a form of Ištar (Kühne 1993:245ff).

<sup>4</sup> Three further notes are in order:

1) Carruba (1966:11 n. 5) suggested the 'Gleichsetzung' of <sup>MUNUS.MEŠ</sup>kat-re-eš-ša with <sup>MUNUS.MEŠ</sup>DINGIR-LIM-ia in what he called the 'weitgehend paral-

lel' Bo 554 (now KUB 44.52). However, though the texts show significant similarity, one is by no means a duplicate of or even parallel to the other, and I see no reason to propose an identification of the two terms in question, especially since the former is clearly a subset of the latter;

2) No *katra/i*-woman appears in KUB 30.39+KBo 24.112+KBo 23.80 obv. 23 of the AN.TAĤ.ŠUM-festival, a misreading which should be corrected to <sup>LÚ</sup>JA-BU-BI-DU ZAG-aš-š[a <sup>DUG</sup>ħar-ši ŠA <sup>DU</sup>URU Zi-i]p-pa-la-an-da [ħ]<sup>i</sup>-<sub>1</sub>ik<sub>2</sub>-z[i] (Houwink ten Cate 1986:104-105 and n. 26), rather than <sup>LÚ</sup>JA-BU-BI-DU \*DUMU.MUNUSka[*t*-ra-;

## The Cultural Milieu in Which the *katrai*-women are Found

As one might expect, a number of text fragments (17 to be precise) in which the *katrai*-women appear are administrative documents which do not reflect any particular cultural sphere or are too poorly preserved to provide sufficient clues concerning the cultural provenance of the rituals and festivals which they once recorded.<sup>5</sup> A few of the other fragments (3) in which the *katrai*-women appear can with varying degrees of probability be ascribed to the Kizzuwatnean corpus.<sup>6</sup> Significantly, all texts but one in which the *katrai*-women appear and which can be clearly ascribed to a particular cultural milieu (28, i.e. those in footnotes 7 and 8), can be assigned to what might be called the Hurrianised Kizzuwat-

nean ritual and festival corpus,<sup>7</sup> and among these, the *katrai*-women appear especially prominently in those recording the cult practice surrounding Ištar (18 of the 28).<sup>8</sup>

The occurrence in the late 13th-century text KUB 10.91 ii 7, in which *katrai*-women are attested running ahead of a procession, constitutes an exception to this unmistakable trend. A couple of other elements which are often, though not exclusively, found in the Kizzuwatnean ritual and festival corpus are present,<sup>9</sup> but the ritual procedures seem perhaps to be related to the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM-festival and/or the *pu-rulliya*-new year's festival,<sup>10</sup> parts of which centre around Ḫattuša and nearby Tawiniya, the latter of which occurs in the text.

## Thoughts on Archives and Religious Syncretism in Ḫattuša

That the term *katrai*-, and likely the referent itself, was apparently only rarely borrowed, with only one attestation at present, into what one might envision as a Hittite

state cult, not to mention into the other cults in the various regions under Hittite domination, may suggest something interesting about the nature of the Hittite state cult and

3) Though otherwise possible, there is no particular reason to restore <sup>MUNUS.MEŠ</sup>*kat-ri*|-e-e-eš in Bo 4171+KUB 46.46 i 5', as the *katrai*-women do not otherwise appear in these *taknaz da-* rituals, and it is essentially only the plural marker which is preserved (Otten and Rüster 1978:271).

<sup>5</sup> Administrative: KBo 19.28 (CTH 237), KUB 8.71 (CTH 276), KUB 30.60 (CTH 276); Fragmentary: KBo 9.120, KBo 23.111 (CTH 581), KBo 13.148, KBo 32.2, KBo 40.96, KBo 42.85, KBo 43.203; Fragments in which more attestations of *katrai*-women are reportedly to be found, but which were unavailable to me: Bo 4876, Bo 6265, Bo 7953, Bo 840, Bo 91/2394, 80/w, 791/z. It might be noted that KBo 9 120 was assigned by Laroche to the group of texts which preserve a number of festivals for the goddess Ḫuwaššanna of the city Ḫubešna (CTH 691-694), apparently due to the occurrence of the *al-huešra*-women, cult personnel who indeed appear often and primarily in the strongly Luwianised Ḫuwaššanna festivals. However, this small fragment also includes, besides the *katrai*-woman, reference to a *kišri*-textile, which is found with great regularity, though by no means exclusively, in the Kizzuwatnean ritual and festival cor-

pus. Hence, this fragment could as easily be ascribed to the Kizzuwatnean as the Ḫuwaššanna corpus. I have assigned it to my group which consists of those with insufficient clues for a confident ascription.

<sup>6</sup> KBo 32.222 (*ga-a*]n-*ga-ti*<sup>SAR</sup>-*ia*. l. 6'), KBo 40.125 (<sup>LU</sup>*pu-ra*-[*ap-ši*, rev. 4'), Bo 69/794 (*A-NA* <sup>D</sup>*Ḫé-pát*. obv. ii 8').

<sup>7</sup> KBo 23 1 (CTH 472), KBo 5.1 (CTH 476), KUB 9.22 (CTH 477), KBo 17.70 (CTH 488), KBo 17.65 (CTH 489), KBo 21.34 (CTH 699), KBo 17.71+KBo 39.243, KBo 23.70, KUB 58.51 and 933/u.

<sup>8</sup> KBo 12.116 (CTH 456.3), KUB 56.55 (CTH 456.7), KBo 24 5 (CTH 470), KUB 54.66 (CTH 470), KUB 29.4 (CTH 481), KUB 32.68 (CTH 481), KUB 32.133 (CTH 482), KUB 16.83 (CTH 567), KUB 10.63 (CTH 715), KUB 39.69 (CTH 718), KUB 39.71 (CTH 718), KBo 19.142 (CTH 721), KBo 22.49, KBo 27.132, KUB 47.65, KUB 56.53, Bo 69/436, 878/u.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. 3 <sup>TLG</sup>*ku-re-eš-šar* I BABBAR I SA<sub>3</sub> I ZA.GIN (ii 3); *a-na-ḫi* (iii 12').

<sup>10</sup> E.g. the *ḫuluzanni*-wagon (ii 2, 4, 6); DINGIR-LUM-kán KÁ.GAL-TIM I <sup>URU</sup>*Ta-wi<sub>3</sub>-ni-ia kat-ia* <sup>GIS</sup>-*ri-ni an-da pé-e-da-an-zı* (ii 11-12); the *tarnu*-structure (ii 13, 14, 15).

the archives at Hattuša. It is often assumed that the religion at Hattuša was a vast amalgam of numerous substrata, be they Hattian, Luwian, Hurrian, Palaic or Mesopotamian. While this is of course true to some degree, when one discovers important elements of a particular cult, such as the *katrai*-women from the Kizzuwatnean, which are not, or only rarely, found among the texts which describe the Hittite state cult, one might be forgiven for suggesting that the vast amalgam is more an archival phenomenon than a religious one. That is to say, that while the archives at Hattuša show a selection of religious systems from various reaches of its realm, many or most of the elements of those religious systems probably remained largely textual in Hattuša, while the various regional religious systems, probably including even the religious system of the

Hatti land proper, i.e. Hattuša, probably remained largely autonomous and homogenous. The vast amalgam, then, existed primarily in the archives and now in our modern academic treatments which regard the textual material of the Hattuša archives as the religion of the Hittites. Religious practice likely remained largely homogenous, along the lines of the regional patterns which had developed over centuries, and the relatively short-lived state formation witnessed at Hattuša probably affected this pattern only in a limited manner. It hardly need be stressed that such suggestions should be made not on the basis of a single element such as the *katrai*-women, but on a comparative study, far beyond the reach of this short paper, involving many such elements from all the various regional subsystems which are evidenced at Hattuša.

### A Temple Mutiny of Sorts

One of the most interesting little discoveries made while researching this topic for the *Rencontre* is a temple mutiny of sorts, apparently led by the *katrai*-women. It is recorded in an omen report in KUB 5.10+KUB 16.33+KUB 16.83 (CTH 567), labelled by Laroche *Sur le culte d'Ištar de Nineve*. The tablet is of a single column format, and only one side preserves legible text. Each of the four sections of the text, set off by double paragraph dividers, is structured in a parallel manner. The author of the text relates that he had been sum-

moned by the palace because an oracle had determined that some particular abomination had offended Ištar of Nineveh in her temple. His first step in the investigation is to question the temple personnel about what the causes of her anger might be, and he quotes their responses. He and his team then carry out a round of extispicy in order to determine if indeed it was the matter described by the temple personnel which angered the goddess, and he records the results. The second section (§4), for example, reads (ll. 19-23):<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> KUB 5.10+KUB 16.33+KUB 16.83 obv. 19-25. 36-43.

19. *IS-TU É.GAL-LIM-ma-mu ku-it INIM mar-ša-aš-tar-ra-aš ha-at-ra-a-ir*

20. *I-NA É.DINGIR-LIM DIŠtar URUNi-nu-wa-kán mar-ša-aš-tar-ri-iš SI\*SA-at*

21. *nu LU\*MEŠ É.DINGIR-LIM pu-nu-uš-šu-u-e-en UM-MA ŠU-NU-UM-MA UR.GI-wa-kán*

22. *Éhi-lam-ni UGU pa-it nu-wa-ra-as am-ba-aš-ši-ia-aš kat-ta-an a-ar-aš*

23. *na-an-kán ŠA Éhi-lam-ni-pát ku-e-en-ni-ir DINGIR-LU M-za a-pád-da-un še-er TI KU.TUKU-u-wa-(an-za)*

24. *nu MUSEN hur-ri NU.SIG<sub>6</sub>-du NU.SIG<sub>5</sub>*

25. *ma-a-an ki-i-pát \*KI\*.MIN nu MUŠEN hur-ri SIG<sub>6</sub>-ru <sub>1</sub>NU.SIG<sub>5</sub>*

But because they wrote me from the palace (regarding) the matter of an abomination, (saying): “An oracle has determined that an abomination (has occurred) in the temple of Ištar of Nineveh.” we questioned the temple personnel, and this is what they said: “A dog came up to the gatehouse, and reached the burnt-offerings. They killed him right in the gatehouse.”

A question demanding a yes-no answer is then formulated, and the extispicy is carried out and analysed (ll. 23-25): “Is the deity angry about that? Let the *hurri*-bird omen be unfavourable! (Result) Unfavourable. If it is only these, ditto (i.e. but nothing else), let the *hurri*-bird omen be favourable! Unfavourable.” Hence, in this case the first extispicy determined that indeed the goddess was angry about the matter of the dog, while the second round determined that this was not the only matter about which Ištar

was angry. Since this was not the only matter which angered the goddess, the inquisitor questioned the temple personnel further, a passage which will not be presented here. At two points in the text, the exta reveal that indeed Ištar is angry over the matter about which was inquired, and that there was nothing else that she was angry about, at which point one might expect the end of the text. However, in this case, we read (ll. 36-37):

[As a countercheck] we inquired by means of exta. Is the deity angry only about these failings? [Ditto]. Let the exta be favourable! The *nipašuri*-, *šintaḫi*-, *tanani*- (and) *keldi* were striped on the left; the *zizahi* was there; the 12 intestines were favourable.

In each case in which it is carried out, the countercheck reveals that the previous attempt yielded a false result or, perhaps more likely, was misinterpreted, and hence,

the inquiry continues.

In this manner, the paragraph which directly concerns the *katrai*-women reads as follows (ll. 38-43):

But because they wrote me from the palace (regarding) the matter of blasphemy, (saying): “An oracle has determined that blasphemy (has occurred) in the temple of [Ištar of Nineveh],” [we questioned] the temple personnel. [and they said]: “The *katrai*-women and the temple personnel are always saying, ‘They used to give [us] valuable gifts, a[nd they used to give us] flour provisions, but now they are not giving (them) to us.’” Is the deity angry about [that]? Let the *hurri*-bird omen be unfavourable! Unfavourable.

This passage was treated only once before (Wegner 1981:151f), as far as I know, and was misinterpreted. In Wegner’s treatment, it is assumed that it is the *katrai*-women and the temple personnel who speak

in response to the inquisitor, saying that they used to receive gifts and rations, but do not any longer, and hence, that it is this failure in the delivery system which caused the anger of the goddess. However, two

36. [nu IGI-an-da<sup>(1)</sup>] IŠ-TU SU MÉS IR-u-en ma-a-an<sub>3</sub>-za DINGIR-LUM ki-i-da-aš-pát wa-aš-ku-wa-aš še-er  
TUKU.TUKU-u-wa-an-za

37. [KI.MIN<sup>1</sup>] nu SU MÉS SIG<sub>5</sub>-ru ni ši<sub>1</sub> ta<sub>3</sub> ki GUB-za RA-IŠ zi GAR-[ri] 12 ŠĀ<sub>3</sub>-DIR SIG<sub>5</sub>

38. [IŠ]-TU É.GAL-LIM-ma-mu ku-ir INIM ÉME<sub>3</sub> ḫa-at-ra-a-ir<sup>D</sup> [Ištar URUNi-nu-w] a<sup>1</sup>-kán<sub>3</sub>

39. [ŠĀ] É.DINGIR-LIM A-NA EME še-er SI×ŠĀ-at nu<sup>1</sup> LÚ<sup>1</sup>IMÉS É.DINGIR-LIM p[u-nu-uš-šu-u-e-en nu me-mi-ir]

40. [MU]NUS.MÉSka-at-ru-uš-wa<sup>1</sup> L MÉS É.DINGIR-LIM-ia me-mi-iš-kán-zi [i nu-wa-an-na-aš]

41. NIG.BA<sup>H</sup> A SIG<sub>5</sub>-an-da pé-eš-ki<sup>1</sup>-ir ZID.DA SI-DI-TUM-i[u-wa-an-na-aš<sup>1</sup>] pé-eš-ki-ir<sup>(2)</sup>

42. ki-nu-un-ma-wa-an-na-aš<sup>1</sup> U<sup>1</sup>-UL pé-eš-kán-zi DINGIR-LUM-za<sup>1</sup> [a-pád-da-an]

43. še-er TUKU TUKU-u-wa-an-za nu MUŠEN ḫui-ri NU.SIG<sub>5</sub>-du NU.SIG<sub>5</sub>



indices show clearly that it is the temple personnel who are here accusing the *katra/i*-women and other members of the temple personnel of blasphemy. First, the direct speech particle *-wa* in line 40, which shows without a doubt that the phrase is already set in the mouth of the temple personnel; and second, the four parallel passages (ll. 2, 21, 26, 48) in which, without exception, “and we questioned the temple personnel” (*nu LU<sup>MEŠ</sup> É.DINGIR-LIM pu-nu-uš-šu-u-e-en*) is followed by “and they said” (Hitt.: *nu me-mi-ir* or Akk.: *UM-MA ŠU-NU-UM-MA*). Hence, *nu me-mi-ir* or *UM-MA ŠU-NU-UM-MA* must be restored at the end of line 39, for which there is ample space in the break. Again, this places the accusation against the *katra/i*-women and at least some part of the temple personnel in the mouth of the temple personnel who were being questioned.

The implications of this corrected reading are of interest. It is not the fact that gifts and food rations are not now being delivered as they previously were that is the cause of Ištar’s anger. No, here, it is the blasphemy of the *katra/i*-women, who are singled out in particular amongst the palace personnel, which is suspect of being an affront to Ištar. Further, I would suggest that something more than mere feminine griping and grumbling must be involved. The fact that various cult items were not being de-

livered as the palace personnel would have expected is the subject of several inquiries recorded in the text, and there is no hint that merely pointing out such a fact was blasphemous. Rather, the failure of the deliveries are determined to be affairs that indeed angered the deity. Here, it is apparent that what the *katra/i*-women and other unspecified members of the temple personnel were doing in response to the slow moving deliveries from the palace was in some way blasphemous or seditious, or at least had become loud enough to warrant the attention of the palace administration.

Unfortunately, it seems that hardly more can be learned from the text, as no further details or the outcome of this minor insurrection are recorded. There is no indication that this mutiny of sorts was begun in the name of women’s rights, i.e. no hint of a consciousness of women banding together as women for interests particular to women. Rather, the resistance is directed against the failure to properly supply the cult of Ištar, and by extension, their persons as adherents to and dependants of that cult. However, it is indeed of interest that the opposition seems to have been centred among the *katra/i*-women, who are singled out and listed first, showing that organised opposition to state and religious administration by a group of women was not unknown in the Hittite realm.

## Summary and Conclusion

It seems that one can conclude that *katra/i* is likely a Hurrian word, and that it may have originally designated a ritual and came later to be applied to the cult personnel who carried it out. The *katra/i*-ritual and/or profession of *katra/i*-woman originated perhaps in northern Mesopotamia, in an environment which held Ištar as the or a main

goddess, and which was heavily influenced by Hurrian ethnic and/or linguistic elements. In the texts found in Hattuša, the *katra/i*-women perform a multitude of functions, and seem to have headed up a temple mutiny of sorts, directed against the palace administration. The *katra/i*-women’s distribution in the archives of Hattuša is not

uniform, but is restricted almost exclusively to the corpus of Hurrianised Kizzuwatnean rituals and festivals, hinting that the vast amalgam of Hittite religion was primarily an archival rather than an actual phenomenon.

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