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## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

# ELAMITE RELIGION AND RITUAL

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## INTRODUCTION

In treating the religion and ritual of "the Elamite world", one must bear in mind that Elam evolved throughout its three thousand or so years of existence under numerous rulers and dynasties who inhabited a common territory combining highland and lowland geographical environments. As a result, the character of Elamite religion was highly dynamic. The present general survey commences with the 3rd millennium BC, when textual documentation first becomes available with the records of the Akkadian kings and the Awanite king Puzur-Inshushinak, and is brought to a close with the emergence of the Achaemenid empire. Despite the scope of reigns and epochs covered here, and the corresponding diversity of "religions" and divinities, it is evident that on the whole Elamite religious beliefs and practices display an unexpected continuity throughout the millennia.

## DIVINITIES

It would seem that in Elam there was never a unified religious creed. Instead, with a territory constituted by various geopolitical and regional entities, a diverse set of divinities, each closely linked to its place of origin, is encountered. Some of these deities were represented in iconography on seals, stelae, rock reliefs and as statues and figurines. They can usually be identified by their headdress with horns, and are often found seated on a throne of coiled snakes with a human head.

From Sumerian, Akkadian and Elamite texts it can be established that in the Susiana alone, over 200 divinities were worshipped (Vallat 1998), including most notably Inshushinak, Ishnitarab, Lagamal and Manzar as well as the Mesopotamian Inanna, Ea, Sin and Adad. From Awan were the gods Pini-ir, Humban, Hurran and Nah-hunte and Kirmashir; from Anshan were Napirisha, Kiririsha, Simut, Kilah-shupir, Silingaturu and Upurkupak; from Shimashki was Ruhurater and Hishmitik, and perhaps Yabru; and from Ayabir near modern Izeh-Malamir was Mashit. This heterogeneous ensemble is partly mentioned in a royal inscription of the Middle Elamite king Shilhak-Inshushinak (EKI 54), who invokes "the gods of Elam, the gods of Anshan

and the gods of Susa” as separate, fundamentally distinct, pantheons of divinities. In the Neo-Elamite period “the gods of Ayapir” (EKI 75 §26) are also included. At the head of the pantheon may have been the god Yabru (Elamite Yabr or Yabar), not attested in Elamite sources but equated by the Mesopotamians to Sumner Anu, the supreme god (Šurpu C:53). This divinity appears in the royal name Yabar/Yabarar (later Ebarat, Eparri), not strictly Elamite, but of Shimashkian origin, (as Ebarat appears two times in the famous Susian list of Simashkian kings).

One god who remained consistently important throughout Elamite history was Inshushinak, the lord of Susa and supreme lord of the dead, responsible for justice and law. Otherwise, two main trends in the Elamite pantheon can be observed: the honouring in the Old Elamite period of Suso-Mesopotamian gods at Susa and, from the Middle Elamite period onwards, the predominance of gods from the highlands, most notably the divine couple of Napirisha, the great god, and his wife Kiririsha, the great goddess, also known by the epithets Lady of Liyan, Mother of the Gods, Guardian of the Kings and Lady of Death.

In addition to these major deities, groups of gods were allocated specific responsibilities. For example, the Bahahutep (benefactors or protectors) were creators of the world and life, while the Napiratep (constructors or designers) were responsible for organizing, protecting and acting upon the physical realm of the world. There were also gods or goddesses associated with celestial objects, specific physical elements and moral notions. Thus, Humban was Commander of Heaven, the god of the element air; Nahhunte was an astral divinity associated with the sun; and Napir with the Moon.

Divine couples are also known: Shimut, the messenger of the gods, and Manzat, his female companion; the god Ruhurater, creator of human beings, and Hishmitik, the goddess who assigns their names. This latter pair was present during childbirth. Ruhurater created the human form – the physical body – and Hishmitik conferred a name upon the newborn; for, as the Sumerians believed, human beings (and things) did not exist until they were named. This close relationship between the divine and the individual’s name was often expressed in personal names incorporating the name of a divinity; for instance: Urtrash-Napirisha, “Napirisha helped me”; Shilhak-Inshushinak, “strengthened by Inshushinak”, or Melir-Nahhunte (“female) servant of Nahhunte”.

One of the main roles of the gods was to give life. They possessed a numinous essence known as *kiden*, which they placed over humans for their protection. Another major responsibility of the gods was to confer and protect kingship, subduing the kings’ enemies and ensuring a prosperous and happy reign. Kings also had their own personal gods to protect their place on the throne from potential usurpers who might claim to have been elected by the gods. Activities such as law giving and trade regulation, amongst many others, came under the jurisdiction of various deities.

Sickness, poverty and other misfortunes to befall human beings were the domain of demons and ghosts, whose exorcism required the skills of an exorcist. That the Elamites believed in some kind of life after death can be deduced from rites of purification, the content of maledictions and the offerings placed in the burials. It has been argued that the death was a primary preoccupation of Elamites and that their zigurrats had a funerary character (Vallat 1997). A unique group of seven texts of funerary character found in a tomb at Susa dating to the end of the Sukkalmah period

offer an important, if difficult interpret, reference for afterlife beliefs in Elam. According to these tablets, after death an individual embarked on a journey accompanied by the gods Ishnikarab and Lagamal. At its conclusion they faced some kind of weighing and a judgement was handed down by Inshushinak. The texts indicate that the afterlife was a place of darkness, misery and adversity; a land of privation and thirst without food or water (Scheil 1916; Steve and Gasche 1996; Tavernier 2013).

## TEMPLES

The Elamite gods were worshipped in temples and open-air sanctuaries (see below). Our knowledge of early Elamite temples is derived from 3rd millennium cylinder seals on which they are represented as monumental rectangular buildings set on a terrace foundation with facades marked by recesses and false niches. In the Middle Elamite period, an important religious centre was built by the king Urtrash-Napirisha (ca. 1340–1300) at Chogha Zanbil. Some of its temples are mentioned in texts by name: *bunin*, *kinin*, *likrin*, *limin*, *silin*, *talin*, *mielki ilani*, but their meaning remains unknown.

Divinities in the form of sculptures resided inside sanctuaries and were nurtured by priests and priestesses. Statues of the king and members of the royal family were also placed in the sanctuary to worship the gods and receive their blessing and protection, as were stelae narrating the achievements of the king. Offerings were made at the temples by kings, potentates and the general populace, with figurines of worshippers perhaps placed in the sanctuary to pray before the god after a donation to the priests. Weapons such as swords, axes and arrows were dedicated to the divinities in order to ensure the kings’ military victories.

The grounds of the temples dedicated to the principal gods such as Inshushinak, Napirisha and Kiririsha included sacred groves, which are presumed to have possessed a funerary character. The groves were described in texts as secret places surrounded by a wall with an entrance door and it is believed that the Elamite kings and nobles were buried inside. Such a grove may be represented in a depiction of gardens from either Susa or Madaktu preserved in a Neo-Assyrian relief of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (Barnett 1976: Pls. XXV and XXVI, slab 9).

A question of interest for the history of religion is whether the Elamites had a divinity associated with fire and practised the cult of fire. In Middle Elamite Susa some kind of fire cult might be surmised from the imagery depicted on a group of seals (Amiet 1966, no. 275; MDP 1972, numbers 2076–7, 2081). A text from the Kidinud dynasty bears invocations to Gihli (MDP 18, 255), a Mesopotamian fire deity. At Chogha Zanbil a *siyan limin* (temple of the fire) was dedicated to Kilashupir (MDP 41, 29) and another to Nusku (MDP 41, 23–24); both fire deities. In the Neo-Elamite period a stand with fire is seen on the rock-relief of Hami from Kalle Farah (see below; open-air sanctuaries) and a certain Tallak-kuttur, priest of fire, is mentioned in texts (Vallat 2003). This evidence indicates the use of fire in cultic rituals and divinities associated with fire, perhaps suggesting the existence of a fire cult in Elam.

Both the sacred city of Chogha Zanbil and the Acropolis mound of Susa can be considered to have hosted large religious compounds incorporating numerous temples surrounded by enclosure walls. In the centre dominating the sacred precinct was

the temple tower of several stories: the ziggurat (*zageratime* in Elamite), a stepped tower ornamented with enormous horns. At Chogha Zanbil, the corners of the ziggurat dedicated to Napirisha and Inshushinak are precisely oriented to the cardinal points. The façades of the temples were decorated with protective genies and mythical animals. Griffins, eagle-lion hybrids of Elamite origin, were placed at the base of the ziggurat to protect the entrance.

### OPEN-AIR SANCTUARIES

Dramatic natural outdoor spaces provided important locations for the worshipping of deities. The Elamite open-air sanctuaries discovered close to water courses at Kurangun, Kul-e-Farah and Shekaf-e-Salman in the Zagros valleys of southwest Iran, all incorporate rock-carved reliefs of religious significance enhancing the numerous dimensions of their natural landscape. These sanctuaries were places of pilgrimage where festivities, perhaps linked to seasonal movements of herding groups, may have been celebrated on an annual basis (e.g. the autumnal equinox) (Henkelman 2008: 59). During the festivities at these sites, prayers requesting the protection of the gods are likely to have been recited.

The Kurangun relief was carved on the side of a mountain overlooking the valley of the Fahliyan River, some 90 km northwest of Tall-e-Malyan (the ancient city of Anshan), between Susa and Persepolis. It depicts a divine couple, identified as deities by their horned crowns, perhaps the “Great God” Napirisha and the “Supreme Goddess” Kiririsha. Napirisha is seated on a coiled serpent throne and holds a two-headed snake in his left hand. Kiririsha sits on an animal-shaped throne. These deities are being worshipped by several male and female devotees. The divinities are faced by a couple standing behind a man with outstretched hands who catches streams flowing from the ring and staff held in Napirisha’s right hand. In a later period, a group of worshippers with long plaited hair descending a set of stairs were added the left of the central scene and another small group of worshippers to its right (Potts 2004; Alvarez-Mon 2014).

In the Izeh-Malamir valley, about 120 km southeast of Susa and 300 km northwest of Tall-e-Malyan, is situated the sanctuary of Kul-e-Farah, where six separate reliefs dating to the Neo-Elamite period were carved on the faces of cliffs and boulders. In the relief labelled Kul-e-Farah 1, an individual identified in the accompanying inscription (EKI 75) as Hanni, ruler Aiapir, is shown overseeing the sacrifice of animals with his court officials, officiators and musicians who are all named by captions. The long inscription is dedicated to Tirutur, the god of Shilhte, and mentions the names of Hanni, his wife, his children, his seneschal, his officiator and priests. In it, Hanni requests magical protection for his image followed by a set of curses against anyone who would vandalize it. The celebrations and rituals that took place at this site evidently involved a shared sacrificial meal, as shown in Kul-e-Farah IV (Alvarez-Mon 2013).

At Shekaf-e-Salman, on the other side of the Izeh valley, is a cave sanctuary with a spring and waterfall incorporating four carved-relief panels. One panel dating to the late Middle Elamite period shows three adults and one child oriented towards the cave, making gestures of prayer before a fire stand. Hanni later co-opted this ancestral royal imagery by adding his own inscription (EKI 76c-d). A second late

Middle Elamite panel shows the figures of a man, woman and child, likewise making gestures of prayer towards the cave. The latter two preserved captions (EKI 76g-1), added later by Hanni to identify them as members of his family. Hanni also added an inscription on a third relief (EKI 76 and 76a) depicting a single individual in prayer. In this inscription Hanni asks for the protection of the goddess Mashti of Tarrisha, the ancient name of Shekaf-e-Salman, and finishes with the habitual curses. An extremely damaged fourth panel depicting a praying individual also bears an inscription of Hanni mentioning the goddess Mashti (EKI 76f).

Finally, the sanctuary at Naqsh-e Rostam located 6km northeast of Persepolis, notably chosen as the burial site of several Achaemenid kings, includes the poorly preserved remains of an Elamite relief. The central panel features two gods seated on coiled-serpent thrones and two worshippers (one wearing a crown) framing the pair of enthroned deities were added at a later date.

### CLERGY

Priests, priestesses and acolytes are well attested in the Elamite world, although their specific functions remain basically unknown. The content of certain Neo-Elamite royal texts of the king Tepti-Huban-Inshushinak (EKI 85) and of the so-called Orutu bronze plaque allows us to assume that there was equality between priestesses and priests, as both administer temples, divine estates and the gods’ assets; in addition, it is particularly stated that they got married and bore children (“flour and sheep handed over to the chief priestess and her children”; author’s own translation). In the other mentioned text (EKI 85) appears an unnamed chief priestess for the temple of Humban, a main god.

Some clergy are known by name in the Neo-Elamite period. For example, a chief priest of all temples (Shuturu) who accompanied the ruler on his travels and war campaigns (EKI 74). In glyptic imagery and the *Sit samši* bronze model (described below) male priests perform divine rites fully naked (Tallon in Harper et al. 1992: 137–140, no. 87). They are instead sometimes represented with long hair or wearing a wig.

### MAKING APPEALS TO THE GODS

Invocations to the gods are well known through three different categories of evidence: royal inscriptions, legal documentation and curses.

#### Royal inscriptions

The Middle Elamite kings Untash-Napirisha and Shilhak-Inshushinak I (ca. 1150–1120) were particularly active in seeking the favour of the gods in their royal inscriptions. The god is invoked by their name, usually followed by his or her epithets and powers, and the king’s name is mentioned together with his filiation and titles. Shilhak-Inshushinak I, for example, cites certain family members with explanatory adjectives such as “beloved brother” (*igi banik*), “older brother” (*igi banit*), or “genuine mother” (*amma haštak*). This same king makes his invocations before the destruction of the cities he ravages in his raids (e.g. EKI 48 and 54). Such invocations

are followed by sacrifices and offerings. The king Urtrash-Napirisha built temples to the gods in exchange for their divine favour and protection. The renovation of buildings, ritual offerings or the recovering and keeping of royal steles were accomplished under the god's orders (e.g. EKI 21).

In the Middle Elamite period, a list of appeals for divine benevolence can be established as follows: "for the king's life", "for his life and the life of his family", "to obtain divine favour", "for his life and reign", "for his life, health and reign", "for his life, reign, and seed", "for a long life and reign", "for a long life", "for the reign", "for the accomplishment of divine commands in order to recuperate ancient rites", "in favour, honour or recognition of the king", "for his life, family, and the Elamite people", "for his life, the life of his wife, and the Elamite people" and "for the life of the Elamite people" (Malbran-Labat 1995: 62–78, 88–116). It is noteworthy that the Elamite king included his subjects or citizens, the Elamite people or more precisely the inhabitants of Anshan and Susa, in the invocations (EKI 48, 53, 54).

A later inscription of the Neo-Elamite king Hallutash-Inshushinak addresses his god (IRS 58): "O! Inshushinak my god, do not bring me a difficult destiny, bring life, the one who is faithful, do not bring him the status of impiety!"

### Legal documentation

Legal texts from Susa dating to the early 2nd millennium reveal that civil law and religion were intimately connected. The god Nahhunte, for example, appears in contracts as a partner of merchants, who in turn dedicated part of their profits to him. Such contracts were formalized in the presence of the city gods in their sanctuary. At Susa, they concluded with the oath involving the *sukkalmah*, the *sukkal* and the city god Inshushinak. Penal clauses for infringement of a sworn oath included torture (mutilation) of the treaty-breaker, payments for reparation, and loss of property. Explicit religious malediction was also threatened, with a divine curse ("may he disappear!") and the revocation of divine protection, which would result in the loss of peace and life. A practice of trial by water ordeal is attested in connection with adoptions and inheritances, with contract clauses indicating that whoever breaks the agreement should go into the water and the god Shazi will shatter his skull in the whirlpool. In the so-called texts of Huhhur a reference is found suggesting a verdict was reached by ordeal through water (Klima 1971).

### Curses

Various curses against those who would denigrate the king's accomplishments were added at the end of royal inscriptions. In the late 3rd millennium, king Pazur-Inshushinak's curses follow a typical pattern: if someone dismisses his texts, disregards his decisions in matters of justice, or carries away his dedicated objects, may all the gods a) tear out his roots and remove his seeds; b) let him not have an heir and not have a progeny (FAOS 7: 321–338). In the 2nd millennium during the Ighalkid and Shutrukid dynasties curses are addressed against "the enemy forces", "whoever shall attack in bad faith the buildings erected", and "whoever destroys, pulls out, steals or carries away the dedicated object". The list of desired punishments include: "may the wrath, punishment or terror of the god or gods fall upon the evil doer", "may his

offspring or seed not be prosperous or not be preserved", "may his name disappear", "may the god's powers overcome him", "may the gods disregard his labours", "he shall not enjoy what he should obtain", "he shall be separated from his acolytes", "his people shall be disobedient to him", "his fortune shall not be prosperous" and "he shall not be pleased in his wants" (e.g. EKI 9 III a-c, 13 A, 16, 44 a-b, 45, 48 b, 54 a, 54 b, 61 B-C, 73)). On some occasions the king pleads for another later king to restore the work and reinstate his name (e.g. EKI 9 III b).

In the 1st millennium, texts explicitly describe curses made against evil doers. Three examples in particular offer insights into the nature of such maledictions.

First is the inscription on the Oruru bronze plaque (translated by the author; for discussion of this plaque see Basello 2013): "The one who tramples this text. . . who takes away its bronze. . . who takes control of an acolyte and, when he shall be grown, alienates him or his him. . . who steals the provisions, who mistreats his prisoners. . . who makes off with the food and goods, who withdraws the grain from the granary, who takes away the stocks from the housekeeping. . . who lets rot the seed stored in the granary. . . who destroys the bronze tablet that I have made hung on my god, who carries away, damages, ruins, erases, breaks, misuses or wrecks the written tablet, who smash it or seize it, may the punishment of Napirisha. . . and Siashum fall over him, evil doer, like a mace. . . may his progeny be cut off. . . may his name not be preserved in the world".

Second is a text of Hanni, prince of Ayapir preserved at Shekatfe-Salman (EKI 76, §§32–38): "The one who damages my image, who erases my name and puts his own name over it, the one who steals the gifts of the minister, who removes his sacred offerings, that one will pursued to the furthest region by the curse of Humban, Kiririsha and the benevolent lord that created water and earth. The salvation of Mashiti will be removed from him! May his life be cut off under the Moon and the Sun! (He will be without) descendants!"

Third is an inscription of a priest named Shuturu (EKI 74, §§17–18): "As for the one who will interchange an acolyte or take him away from the temple in order to hand him over to another one, may the punishment of Napirisha fall upon him, may Nahhunte wipe out his name."

### RITUAL CEREMONIES

Most informative on the characteristics of religious rituals are the royal inscriptions dating to the Middle Elamite period. One text by the king Tepti-ahar from Haft-Tepe (IRS 20; see also Reiner 1973) indicates the existence of a ritual taking place in the evening and states that "the four wives of the building guards should not perform the *zillahiti* ceremony, should not remove the gold of the statues, their clothes should be tied with ribbons, after entering they must embrace the feet of the protective and intermediary divinities, they must ignite torches and watch. The *hāša*, the *kiparu*, the chief priest, the guards of the house, and the priest of the house should seal the house in front of the women; at dawn after they have checked (the statue of the) king, the protective and intermediary divinities, they can exit and go".

To the reign of the king Shilnak-Inshushinak I belongs the *Sit samsi* (rising sun), a three-dimensional bronze model hidden in a tile incorporated into the masonry of a tomb situated in the area of the Ninhursag temple in Susa. The model bears a

three-dimensional representation of a ritual offering by two naked priests surrounded by an offering table, a stele, an altar, a ziggurat-like model, trees (a grove?) and two basins. One priest stretches the palms of his hands out towards the other, who is about to pour some kind of liquid from a vessel. It is generally agreed that the scene may be depicting a ritual cleansing taking place at the sunrise. The object has an inscription on the base (EKI 56) belonging to the king Shilhak-Inshushinak I, which states: I am Shilhak-Inshushinak, son of Shurruk-Nahunte, beloved servant of Inshushinak, king of Anshan and Susa, enlarger of the realm, sovereign of Elam, ruler of Elam, a “rising of the sun” in bronze I made, *s/he* . . . in/of Susa, as a gift may it come to you.

The inclusion of water in rituals must have been important, since at Chogha Zanbil two massive basins situated at the edge of the holy city’s compound may have been built in order to collect water for the performance of ablutions. The water may have been internally supplied by means of a network of drain pipes and canals linked to the ziggurat (see Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2007).

In the Neo-Elamite period the previously mentioned Oruru plaque conveys a ritual to the four winds performed with wine, flour and sheep.

### SACRIFICES, OFFERINGS AND FESTIVALS

The oldest record of sacrifices and offerings is found in a document dating to the reign of king Puzur-Inshushinak. This text indicates that at the gate of the Inshushinak temple at Susa the daily sacrifice of two sheep took place; one at dawn and another in the evening. Singers were stationed day and night at this gate, which was greased with oil (20 sila = 20 litres). In addition, the king dedicated to Inshushinak an emblem of gold and silver, a dagger and an axe (Potts 2016: 113, table 4.12). In the 2nd millennium Shilhak-Inshushinak mentions that he made sacrifices and offerings after his reconstruction and repair of buildings and objects, but does not further describe or provide the name of these ritual offerings (EKI 46–53).

In the Neo-Elamite period it is recorded that the priest Shururu made a gift of 12 sheep and 120 kg of flour as an offering for the goddess Lakamar (EKI 74 §58). The king Tepti-Huban-Inshushinak also donated to various temples for a festival a total of 31 bulls and 186 sheep, to be consumed by priests and clergymen at a rate of one bull and six sheep per temple (EKI 85). Imagery depicted in Neo-Elamite rock-reliefs reveals that sacrifices and offerings were made in open-air sanctuaries during religious ceremonies, perhaps centered on an image of the god, involving banqueting and music (Álvarez-Mon 2013).

In Achaemenid Persia, sacrificial rituals and offerings are attested in Elamite documents from the Persepolis archive. The *lan* ceremony, a regular sacrifice with Elamite precedents frequently cited in texts, included the provision of flour – for sacrificial bread – beer or wine, fruits and sheep. The *kusiškinu*, another sacrificial ritual, involved a sheep, large quantities of wine (10 litres), beer (10 litres) and cereal (100 kilograms). The *bašur* and *šumar*, both funerary offerings, also involved large amounts of foodstuffs (see Henkelman 2003).

Very little is known about the religious holidays of Elam, but royal involvement is consistently alluded to in the documentation. In the late 3rd millennium festivals are known to have taken place at Susa. One of these, referred to as *gūšim*, was dedicated

to “the Lady of the Acropolis”, perhaps Nihursag or Inanna. According to Hinz (1971: 672; 1972: 60) it was celebrated annually on the occasion of the new moon of the autumnal equinox, or in the new year (spring equinox) on “the day of the flowing offerings” when sheep were sacrificed inside the sacred temple grove. Another holiday known as *tuga* was devoted to Shimut. It took place in May during spring, and was accompanied by the sacrifice of a bull (Hinz 1971: 672, 1972: 60). During the Middle Elamite period a celebration in honour of the god Kirwasir was held during the new moon, as mentioned by the king Tepti-ahar’s stele from Haft Tepe (Reiner 1973).

Another festival mentioned in Middle and Neo-Elamite sources is the *šip*, the details of which can be expanded upon through evidence from Achaemenid times. It was dedicated to the god Zizkurra and commodities (flour, wine), livestock (sheep, calf), and poultry were consumed by perhaps up to 520 attendees in the open air. This holiday was held during November and December in the king’s presence and always in royal cities. On this occasion gifts were given and royal privileges granted by the king. Another holiday called *anši* was held between December and January and involved the distribution of a large amount of fruit, a commodity which may have had a special status (for both festivals, see Henkelman 2011).

### MAGIC

Since it is generally difficult to separate magic and religion in ancient civilizations, the two must be conceived together in a very wide sense. Elamite manifestations of magic can be interrogated through a limited number of incantation, exorcism and astrological texts.

An incantation text partially written in Elamite and partially in Sumerian begins with an introductory “invocation” formula and closes with a Sumerian “*én-é-nu-ru*” (meaning unknown) formula, which is sometimes also placed as the text heading. Other texts are intended for the woman in the cradle (two texts); against the Lamashu demon (two texts); for soothing a child; against the worm; against the ghosts; against the scorpion (BBVO I 1–7 and van Dijk 1957: 93).

Ritual incantations were formalized in Sumer with stereotyped formulas. Specific invocations to demons or evil-spirits were written in Elamite, because those demons were considered inhabitants of Elam; according to some Mesopotamian texts the witch-like and demoniac land (Hinz 1971: 662). An exorcism text (BBVO I 7, translated by the author) offers an example of this kind of magic: “*Enemurra*: may it purify, by the gods Enlil, Enki, Nergal, the heaven – repeated 7 times –, the earth – 7 times –, the hill – 7 times –, the sanctuary – 7 times –, I made an offering to Zinzzi, I made an offering to Zihzi, I made an offering to Huh, Huh the one who lives, I made an offering to Huhme. The *Dimme*-demon, may he be conjured by the heaven’s life, by the earth’s life, until the spawn of his god be handed back to his place, may he not eat food with him, may he not drink water with him, in the feast, may Enlil your father not speak with your body.”

Elam was evidently considered by the Assyrians as a land where students learned and practiced astrology, as we can surmise from Neo-Assyrian letters to the Assyrian king (e. g. SAA X 160). A unique astrological document dating to the Neo-Elamite period contains predictions of monthly events related to phenomena such as lunar eclipses and concludes with a curse. Both sides of the tablet are divided into sections,

each of which provides predictions for a complete year, though it cannot be determined whether each section refers to the same year or deals with a different year. A singularity of the text is that on its reverse it bears the signature of its author, a man called Atekitin. As an example of the nature of these predictions, a passage of the third month reads: "(when the darkness shall cover the Moon, from the night coming) although the people have been enrolled, they will not protect the king from the tragedy". The document in its final part reads as follows: "Tablet of Atekitin, son of Zuirru; he who shall damage it; he who shall write his name in the 70 omens that I have made, may he not be recognized under the sun" (Scheil 1917, subscription).

Later, in the Seleucid epoch, an incantation priest called Kidin-anu states that he found in Elam two astrological tablets that he copied and brought to Uruk in Mesopotamia (AO 6451; see Wiseman 1956).

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- BBVO 1 Incantation texts published in van Dijk, J.J. 1982. *Fremdsprachliche Beschwörungstexte in der südmesopotamischen literarischen Überlieferung*. In: Niessen, H.J. & Renger, J. (eds.) *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* 25. Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 1. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 97–110.
- EKI Elamite royal inscriptions published in König, F.W. 1965. *Die Elamischen Königsinschriften*, Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 16). Graz (reprint Osnabrück, 1977).
- FAOS 7 Freiburger Altorientalische Studien published in Gelb, I.J.-Kienast, B. 1990. *Die Altkakaischen Königsinschriften des Dritten Jahrtausends v. Chr.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- IRS Royal inscriptions on bricks from Susa (and Chogha Zanbil) published in Malbran-Labat 1995.
- MDP 18 Sumerian and Akkadian texts published in Dossin, G. 1927. *Autres textes sumériens et accadiens*, Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique de Perse 18. Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- MDP 41 Royal inscriptions in Elamite and Akkadian from Chogha Zanbil published in Steve, M.-J. 1967. *Tchoga Zanbil (Dur-Untash), vol. III, Textes élamites et accadiens de Tchoga Zanbil*, Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran 41. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.
- MDP 43 Cachets, Sceaux-cylindres et Empreintes antiques in Amiet, P. 1972. *Glyptique Susienne, vol. I, Textes, vol. II, Planches*, Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran 43. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.
- SAA X State Archives of Assyria volume X published in Parpola, S. 1993. *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

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