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UHHA-ZITI, KING OF ARZAWA: TANTALUS, KING OF LYDIA

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It has often been remarked that some homonyms in Hittite texts can be correlated with certain others that appear in Greek legends. This investigation considers links between the Late Bronze Age documents and the mythology, but by comparing narrative content, rather than personal names. It focuses on Tantalus, a legendary king of Lydia, and, to a lesser degree, his son, Pelops. Traditions associated with these two figures are examined alongside data dealing with Uhha-ziti, king of Arzawa during the latter part of the fourteenth century BC, and his son, Piyama-Kurunta. It is concluded that the Hittite-Arzawan conflict of ca. 1318 BC and its aftermath inspired the myth of Tantalus, particularly with regard to the punishments said to have been inflicted upon him.

Introduction[1]

Almost as soon as the initial finds of Bronze Age tablets from Hattusa had been deciphered, there were claims that the documents contained references to figures known from Greek legend[2]. Since then, the debate has continued, as additional discoveries have been made and understanding of the texts has deepened[3]. Controversy arose in recent years, surrounding a disputed reading of 'Cadmus' in a letter that, it is now thought, was sent by a Mycenaean king to a Hittite monarch[4]. Yet such associations have been viewed with scepticism. For instance, although Sherratt (2010) concluded that the Homeric epics probably embody memories from the second millennium BC, she doubted that the Bronze Age Greeks had had dealings with the Hittites. After all, Hittites are not explicitly

[1] The author wishes to state that she is unable to translate Hittite or other Bronze Age texts and is dependent upon the scholarship of others (e.g. *AT*, Hoffner (1998, 2009) and Beckman (1999)) for information from such sources. For abbreviations and dates see p. 101.

[2] Hall 1909, 19-20; Luckenbill 1911; Güterbock 1983, 133; 1984, 114; 1986, note 1.

[3] Huxley 1960, 29-48; Cline 1996, 148-150, note 66; 1997, 197-201; Mason 2008, 58-60.

[4] *CTH* 183; *AT* 134-137; Gurney 2002, 135; Latacz 2004, 243-244; Katz 2005, 423-424; Watkins 2008, 135-136; Hoffner 2009, 290-292; Cline 2013, 60-61; Melchert *forthcoming*. In 1997, the publication of the eighth-century BC Çineköy bilingual inscription substantiated the historical foundation of stories involving the legendary seer, Mopsus (Barnett 1953; Tekoğlu/Lemaire 2000; Oettinger 2008).

named in ancient Greek literature, nor are there any references to the power exercised by Hatti, particularly in the western coastal regions of Anatolia[5]. Nevertheless, consideration of the legendary Trojan War within the context of the archaeological and documentary record was regarded as a worthwhile exercise by Cline (2008, 16), who believed it could act as a bridge between the academic world and the general public.

Several factors indicate that Greek legend has its roots in the Bronze Age cultures of the Aegean. Nilsson (1972, 28; cf. Cline 2013, 44) observed that locations which feature prominently in the tales can be mapped surprisingly well onto the network of recognized Bronze Age sites. Moreover, he noted that some of the places mentioned, such as Mycenae, had little or no significance in subsequent epochs. He therefore argued that stories with a strong local context most probably originated when the settlements concerned had been important, a situation that can frequently be correlated with the latter part of the second millennium BC. The discovery that the script incised on Linear B tablets constitutes a vehicle for an archaic form of Greek gave further encouragement to the linkage of Greek myth with the Bronze Age, since some of the texts refer to deities whose names anticipate those of Olympian gods and goddesses (Ventris/Chadwick 1973, 125-127; Hiller 2011, 183-186). Linguistic analysis of the Homeric poems, particularly the *Iliad*, has also revealed ties with the Bronze Age. Formulaic phrases, which have been traced to the Mycenaean era, are embedded in the verses, with some passages reaching back to an earlier, pan-Indo-European stratum[6].

So, if there are grounds for believing that some source material for Greek legend comes from the second millennium BC, is it reasonable to look for corroborative evidence in Hittite documents? The Anatolian tablets contain many citations of a domain known first as Ahhiya and later as Ahhiyawa. While there is not universal agreement on the issue (Mountjoy 1998, 51; Sherratt 2010, 11), there is an increasingly held view that this term designated an area of mainland Greece, as well as other territories, and that the 'King of Ahhiyawa' was a Mycenaean monarch[7]. Furthermore, excavation of Bronze Age sites along the Aegean littoral of Asia Minor has yielded sufficient markers of Mycenaean activity to demonstrate a significant Greek presence in the area[8]. Some years ago, Ünal (1991) posed the question: did the Hittites and the Mycenaeans know each other? In the light of recent discoveries, the answer to this challenge is

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[5] Poisson 1925, 81; Huxley 1960, 36; Ünal 1991, 18.

[6] Janko 1992, 9-19; Jamison 1994; Wiener 2007, 6.

[7] *AT* 4, 6; Güterbock 1983, 138; 1984, 121; Bryce 1989, 3-5; 1999, 258; 2005, 57-60; Cline 1996, 145; 2013, 57; Hawkins 1998, 2, 30-31; Niemeier 1998, 20-25, 43-45; 1999, 143-144; 2003, 103-104; 2005, 16-19; Kelder 2004-05b, 151, 158-159; 2005, 159-162; 2010, 119-120; 2012, 43, 46, 50; Watkins 2008, 135-136; Melchert *forthcoming*.

[8] *AT* 272-274, 277-278; Niemeier 1998, 32-36, 40-41; 1999, 149-150, 153-54; 2003, 103, 106-107, fig. 4; 2005, 10-16. Excavations at Miletus have upheld the ancient tradition that the settlement was founded by Minoans (Niemeier 2005, 1, 4).

almost certainly affirmative and the enquiry should now be refined to ascertain how close were the links across the Aegean.

Surveying the latest research, Watkins (2008, 136) declared that information supplied by Hittite texts pointed to the operation of international correspondence and alliances, including intermarriage, among the ruling families of Late Bronze Asia Minor and Greece[9]. In turn, Bryce (1999, 259-260, 262-263) believed that considerable numbers of Anatolians had settled in Greece during the Mycenaean period and that some of the migrants had occupied influential positions in the palatial hierarchy. Such a state of affairs would have facilitated the exchange of news and ideas (cf. Niemeier 2005, 16). Following the collapse of Mycenaean civilization, therefore, a sufficient level of awareness about notable incidents in Anatolia could have survived in Greece to allow memories to be incorporated into local legend. Across the sea, in Asia Minor, records of current events were buried in the ruins of Hittite palaces, to be discovered by modern archaeologists. Careful examination of Greek mythology and Hittite data may thus produce vestiges of related accounts.

If the historical context is supplied by Hittite sources, it is clearly advantageous to consider Greek legends that possess an Anatolian dimension. This article will evaluate episodes dealing with Tantalus and, to a lesser extent, his son, Pelops; a subsequent paper will pursue the question of Pelops in more detail. This is not the first time that an investigation into traditions about Tantalus and Pelops has examined the contribution of Hittite material. Hall (1909, 19-20) put forward the idea that Pelops was a Hittite immigrant and associated the name 'Myrtilus', which occurs in the central myth about the hero, with those of Hittite kings called 'Mursili' and an early sixth-century BC tyrant, Myrsilus, of Lesbos. Poisson (1925), who made similar comments with respect to Myrtilus/Mursili, declared that Tantalus should be identified as a Hittite monarch. Several decades later, Huxley (1960, 46) equated Pelops with the Ahhiyawan ruler to whom the Tawagalawa Letter (*CTH* 181) was addressed. In two complementary articles, Cline (1996, note 66; 1997, 205-206) drew attention to Pelops' affiliation with Asia Minor and noted numerous allusions in Greek literature to the Anatolian background of the dynasty that was said to have governed Mycenae. More recently, Mason (2008, 60), in addition to re-iterating the Myrtilus/Mursili link, declared that Pelops was 'the figure in Greek myth most likely to have a Hittite connection.' He remarked upon Tantalus' strong ties with Mt. Sipylus (Sipil Dağı) in Asia Minor and the Hittite influence that could be perceived in Pelops' reputation as a charioteer (Hom. *Il.* 2.104).

The discussion that follows will assume the validity of relationships such as Apasa = Ephesus and Millawanda = Miletus, which pair toponyms in Hittite texts with those known from the first millennium BC (Hawkins 1998). With regard to homonyms, as noted at the beginning of the Introduction, certain char-

[9] *AT* 275; Bryce 1999, 258-261; Cline 2013, 61; Melchert *forthcoming*.

acters from Greek mythology possess names that resemble ones attested in Hittite documents. Eteocles/Tawagalawa and Alexander/Alakšandu are significant examples of this phenomenon, while 'Mopsus', through its Linear B form '*Mo-qo-so*', can be aligned with Hittite '*Muksus*' and Hieroglyphic-Luwian '*Muksa-*' (Oettinger 2008, 63-64; Cline 2013, 55, 63-64). Other proposed couplets, however, have more doubtful value. In the cases of Mopsus and Alexander, the coincidence between the spheres of activity of the legendary and historical figures lends weight to the linguistic association (Barnett 1953, 142; Oettinger 2008, 64-65). This discussion, though not ignoring similarities between the names of real and mythical individuals, will therefore focus on matching narrative elements. Information concerning Tantalus will be compared to what is known about Uhha-ziti, a late fourteenth-century BC king of Arzawa in western Asia Minor. It will also be proposed that legends dealing with Pelops indicate that one of his main role models was Piyama-Kurunta, a son of Uhha-ziti.

Uhha-ziti of Arzawa

(a) *The prelude to Mursili II's invasion of Arzawa*

Uhha-ziti was king of Arzawa for a period in the second half of the fourteenth century BC. The west Anatolian kingdom was a significant force in the political world of the day and its sovereign was a person of considerable importance. One of Uhha-ziti's predecessors, Tarhundaradu, had conducted negotiations with Amenhotep III of Egypt (*ca.* 1391-1353 BC) for a marriage alliance between an Arzawan princess and the pharaoh. During the decades leading up to Uhha-ziti's reign (and for several years of his rule), an Arzawan monarch could have legitimately aspired to the title of 'Great King', which would have ranked him alongside the leading potentates of the Middle East[10]. Resurgent Hittite power under the leadership of Suppiluliuma I (*ca.* 1350-1322 BC) put an end to such pretensions. Hittite campaigns in western Asia Minor are thought to have culminated in a peace treaty with Arzawa which constrained Uhha-ziti's influence. The prologue to a diplomatic protocol between Suppiluliuma's son, Mursili II (*ca.* 1321-1295 BC), and Manapa-Tarhunta, king of the Seha River Land, implies that a formal agreement had once been entered into by Uhha-ziti and the Hittite crown (*CTH* 69 §4' (A i 34'-62'); Beckman 1999, 83). Yet Uhha-ziti was not reduced to a mere cipher; Suppiluliuma ceded the strategic citadel of Puranda to him, and so Arzawa was by no means vanquished[11]. Indeed, when Mursili II succeeded his father, Uhha-ziti openly defied Hittite authority.

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[10] *AT* 46; Hawkins 1998, 10, 20, note 34; 2009, 74-75, 80; Berman 2001, 13, 20; Cline 2001, 226, 242; Kelder 2004-05a, 65; 2004-05b, 152-153; Bryce 2005, 52, 193; Hoffner 2009: 269-271, 273-277.

[11] Puranda has been identified as Bademgediği Tepe, about twenty-five kilometres north of Ephesus. *CTH* 61.II §10' (B iii 26'-27'); *AT* 38-39; Hawkins 1998, 14, note 38; 2009, 79; Greaves/Helwing 2001, 506; Easton/Hawkins/Sherratt/Sherratt 2002, 98; Meriç/Mountjoy 2002, 82; Meriç 2003, 79-81; Yildirim/Gates 2007, 290.

(b) *The Hittite-Arzawan war*

In the third year of Mursili II's reign (*ca.* 1318 BC), Uhha-ziti allied himself with the city state of Millawanda (Miletus) and the (unnamed) king of Ahhiyawa. Although Miletus was, at that time, a Hittite vassal, it was also a thriving Mycenaean enclave. Mursili, no doubt aware of Ahhiyawan ambitions in the region, regarded this initiative as an unfriendly act and promptly dispatched a Hittite force to attack and sack Miletus[12]. A second factor in the deterioration of Hittite-Arzawan relations was Uhha-ziti's refusal to hand over to Mursili several groups of fugitives. Hittite rulers attached the greatest importance to the return of dissidents and enemies[13]. If the Arzawan monarch had previously been party to a peace treaty with the Hittite crown, the repatriation of such individuals would almost certainly have been one of his consequential obligations. His failure to comply could have provided the motive for Mursili's subsequent charge that he had been guilty of breaking an oath. To compound the affront to the government in Hattusa, Uhha-ziti resorted to undiplomatic language in his reply to Mursili's communications, calling the young Hittite king 'a child', someone too puerile to run a country. Not surprisingly, Mursili was deeply angered by the insult[14].

Since this behaviour could not go unpunished, the Hittite ruler launched a large-scale punitive expedition against Arzawa. On the march towards Uhha-ziti's capital, Apasa (Ephesus), Mursili received what he interpreted as divine approval for his action: in the vicinity of the River Sehiriya (Sakarya Nehri/River Sangarius) and Mt. Lawasa (Eryiğit Dağı/Mt. Dindymus), a celestial object passed above the Hittite army, travelling from east to west. According to Hittite documents, the entity was visible over a wide territory: 'the land of Arzawa' and 'all Hatti' saw it. Mursili was later informed by King Mashuiluwa of Mira-Kuwaliya that the missile had landed in Ephesus and that, as a result, Uhha-ziti had suffered injuries to his knees[15].

The Arzawan king did not assume personal command of armed resistance to Mursili II's invasion, either because of his impaired physical state, or his age – he had at least two grown up sons (*AT* 47). One of these, Piyama Kurunta, who had already led a force that had sustained a decisive defeat at the hands of Mashuiluwa of Mira-Kuwaliya, was appointed to head the Arzawan army that confronted the Hittites. The Arzawan prince, however, was the victim of another military reverse, being comprehensively routed by Mursili at Walma (Holmi,

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[12] *CTH* 61.II §1' (A i 23'-26'); *AT* 28-29, 45-46; Güterbock 1983, 134-135; Hawkins 1998, 14; Niemeier 1999, 150; 2003, 105; 2005, 10-13, 19-20; Kelder 2004-05a, 51, 61; Bryce 2005, 193.

[13] *CTH* 61.I §12' (B ii 29'-41'); *AT* 10-11; Hawkins 1998, 14; Bryce 2005, 52, 193.

[14] *CTH* 61.I §16' (A ii 9'-14'); *CTH* 68 §22' (E iv 34'-45'); *AT* 14-15; Hoffner 1980, 313; 2009, 390 note 267; Beckman 1999, 80; Bryce 2005, 193-195.

[15] *CTH* 61.I §17' (A ii 15'-21'); *CTH* 61.II §5' (B ii 23'-24', A ii 2'-6', 11'-14'); *AT* 14-16, 32-33; Garstang 1943 40-41; Garstang/Gurney 1959, 76-77; Hawkins 1998, 14, 22; Bryce 2005, 194.

near Karramikkaracaören) on the River Astarpa (Akar Çay/inland River Cayster) and then pursued back to the coast as the Hittites advanced on Ephesus. In panic, the city's inhabitants fled: Uhha-ziti, together with his family, sought refuge on an offshore island, perhaps one located in the Ahhiyawan sphere of influence[16]. Considerable numbers of Arzawans climbed Mt. Arinnanda (Dilek Yarım Adası/Mt. Mycale), about thirty kilometres south of Ephesus. The mountain is a prominent landmark: "a colossal ridge of rock …. rising abruptly from sea level to over one thousand, two hundred metres and jutting out into the sea"[17]. At the time of the Arzawan war, the massif presented an even more isolated topographical feature than it does today. On the southern flank, for example, the ancient coastline ran along the base of the ridge far inland to Magnesia on the Meander (Mountjoy 1998, fig.8; Brückner 2003, 122, 135, fig.1). Mursili II, having secured all lines of access to the promontory, used hunger and thirst to force the fugitives to surrender. A third contingent of Arzawans escaped northwards to Puranda where, for a brief interval, they were safe from the Hittites: with the onset of cold weather, Mursili was obliged to retire to winter quarters and wait for spring[18].

(c) *The aftermath of the conflict*

By the time hostilities resumed, Uhha-ziti had died on his island sanctuary[19]. One of his sons, probably Piyama-Kurunta, stayed on the island, while another, Tapalazunawali, returned to the mainland and joined the garrison of Puranda. After a brief skirmish near the citadel and a short siege, Puranda was taken, but Tapalazunawali evaded capture[20]. Following these events, one of Uhha-ziti's sons, most likely Piyama-Kurunta, though it could have been Tapalazunawali, left the island where he had sheltered to seek asylum with the king of Ahhiyawa. The Arzawan prince may have found a haven in Ahhiyawan controlled territory in Anatolia, or on an Aegean island within that realm's sphere of influence, but it is possible that he went to Ahhiyawa itself, mainland Greece. The Hittite monarch wrote to his Mycenaean counterpart asking for the return of the fugitive; his request was successful in that Uhha-ziti's son and a group of

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[16] *CTH* 61.I §17' (A ii 21'-32'); *CTH* 61.II §2' (A i 27'-30'); Strabo 14.2.29; *AT* 14-16, 28-29; Calder/Bean 1958; Güterbock 1983, 135; Hawkins 1998, 14, 30; Niemeier 2003, 105; Bryce 2005, 194. At this period, the site of Ephesus (Apasa) was next to the sea (Kraft/ Brückner/ Kayan/Engelmann 2007, 128, 130, 146, figs. 1, 4, 6).

[17] *CTH* 61.I §18' (A ii 33'-40'); *CTH* 61.II §8' (A iii 27'-33'), §9' (A iii 34'-49'); *AT* 16-18, 34-36; Hawkins 1998, 14, 23, notes 130-131, fig. 10; Easton/Hawkins/Sherratt/Sherratt 2002, 97-98; Bryce 2005, 194-195.

[18] *CTH* 61.I §18' (A ii 33'-35'), §19' (A ii 46'-49'); *CTH* 61.II §8' (A iii 32'-33'), §10' (B iii 38'-39'); *AT* 16-19, 34-35, 38-39.

[19] *CTH* 61.I §20' (A ii 50'-52'); *CTH* 61.II §10' (B iii 40'-43'); *AT* 18-19, 38-39.

[20] *CTH* 61.I §20' (A ii 53'-56') - §24' (A ii 79'-82'); *AT* 18-23; Hawkins 1998, 14; Easton/Hawkins/Sherratt/Sherratt 2002, 98; Meriç/Mountjoy 2002, 82; Meriç 2003, 86; Bryce 2005, 195.

companions were transferred to Hittite custody. There is a possibility, however, that this outcome was achieved without the agreement or assistance of the king of Ahhiyawa[21]. In view of the fact that Mursili II had previously razed the Mycenaean settlement of Miletus to the ground, it would be understandable if the Ahhiyawan ruler had refused to cooperate.

After the defeat of Arzawa, Mursili II deported from sixty-five to one hundred thousand of the country's inhabitants to Hittite governed regions and incorporated the kingdom into the neighbouring state of Mira. Arzawa may have ceased to exist, but a postscript to the conflict remains visible to this day[22]. At Akpınar, near Manisa, on a north-facing slope of Mt. Sipylus, some seventy kilometres north of Ephesus, there is a sculptural edifice (Calder/Bean 1958). The monument, which was never finished, consists of a human figure in high relief, set within a carved niche, and is considered to be a product of local Bronze Age culture, rather than an example of Hittite art. Furthermore, its situation, above a spring on a hillside looking across the fertile valley of the Gedız Nehri (River Hermus), suggests that it formed part of a sacred complex. Two Hittite inscriptions are incised on the rock face beside the monument: the characters in one of them include the name 'Kuwatnamuwa', which is known to have been that of a son of Mursili I[23]. Texts record that the Hittite king, once he had subjugated Arzawa, led his army northwards, probably through the Karabel pass (Houwink ten Cate 1983/84, note 38; Hawkins 1998, 21, 24). During that advance, or as Prince Kuwatnamuwa took a detachment of troops in an ancillary move, the Hittites may have marked their victory over Arzawa by defacing the Akpınar shrine (Niemeier 1999, 151).

(d) *Divine intervention*

What exactly appeared in the sky above the Hittite army as it advanced on Arzawa? Opinion is divided between a thunderbolt and a meteorite[24]. Taking the regional aspect into account – the place where Mursili II witnessed the missile is over four hundred kilometres from Ephesus, where the object, or part of it, landed (Calder/Bean 1958) – the event should be identified as the transit of a meteorite.

A meteorite will be seen throughout hundreds of square kilometres of territory, though it may be visible for only a brief interval, lasting from a few seconds to almost a minute (McCall 1973, 44; Hutchison 1983, 10). For example, on the 9th

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[21] *CTH* 61.I §25' (A iii 1'-12'); *AT* 22-24, 48; Güterbock 1983, 135; Houwink ten Cate 1983-84, note 34; Del Monte 1993, 66; Hawkins 1998, 14, 30, note 202; Freu 2004, 291; Bryce 2005, 195, note 21.

[22] *CTH* 61.I §27' (A iii 26'-41'); *CTH* 61.II §9' (A iii 50'-52'); *AT* 24-27, 36-38; Singer 1983, 206; Hawkins 1998, 15; 2009, 75, 80; Bryce 2005, 197, 445 note 31.

[23] Güterbock 1956, 53-54; André-Salvini/Salvini 1996, 14, 16-20, figs. 2-10; Niemeier 1998, 42; 1999, 151; 2003, 105-106; Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 203.

[24] *AT* 15, 33, 47; Del Monte 1993, 63 note 21; Freu 2004, 290; Bryce 2005, 194, 444 note 13.

October, 1992, a meteorite was observed for about forty seconds as it travelled over seven hundred kilometres from Kentucky to Peekskill, New York State (Perron 2001, 7, 9). An impression of the phenomenon viewed by the people of western Asia Minor *ca.* 1318 BC can be gained by considering the meteorite strike that occurred near Chelyabinsk, Russia, on the 15th February, 2013[25]. A fireball, whose brightness outshone the morning sun, suddenly appeared in a clear sky. During the object's swift trajectory, several explosive episodes of fragmentation were distinguished, which generated powerful shock waves. On reaching ground level, these shattered windows, damaged buildings, and injured hundreds of people, some severely. The passage of the meteorite also caused a heat wave that was felt by individuals beneath the route, despite the low ambient temperature. The brilliant fireball and the explosions that accompanied it were seen and heard more than one hundred kilometres either side of the direct pathway of the meteorite.

If recovered, a meteorite, or portion of a meteorite, is found to be a stone covered in a black fusion crust, the result of its descent through the earth's atmosphere[26]. The Chelyabinsk meteorite produced a shower of tiny shards, but fragments can be much larger and their dispersal zone can cover an extensive area. Fragments of a meteorite that passed close to the town of Jilin, China, on the 8th March, 1976, were deposited as much as ninety kilometres apart; the largest piece weighed one thousand, seven hundred and seventy kilogrammes. Meteorite fragments are generally much smaller: the Peekskill stone was about twelve kilogrammes in weight (Hutchison 1983, 17, fig. 1.6; Perron 2001, 7, 9).

Assuming that the untoward incident noted in the Annals of Mursili II was the passing of a meteorite over Anatolia, local people would have experienced a startling sequence of visual and aural phenomena: the sudden appearance of a blazing fireball in the sky, explosions like loud thunderclaps, gusts of shock waves and, for those beneath the pathway of the missile, a surging heat wave. Finally, pieces of rock, most of them small, but some substantial, would have tumbled down from the heavens. One of the latter kind, it seems, fell on Ephesus. Without the benefit of modern science, how would the Hittites have regarded the fourteenth-century BC event? Ancient Middle Eastern societies were conversant with, and carefully categorized, manifestations of cosmic activity, such as meteorites and comets. These were seen as signals from the gods and an extensive body of omen literature was available to permit their interpretation (Bjorkman 1973, 92, 94-95). A collection of astrological texts compiled at Hattusa closely followed Akkadian documents (Leibovici 1956, 11; Hoffner 1980, 330), showing that the Hittites were familiar with the original data and held

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[25] The event is extremely well documented, having been filmed at the time on many closed circuit television and mobile phone cameras. It subsequently featured in a television programme, 'Meteor Strike: Fireball from Space,' broadcast on Channel 4 (United Kingdom) on 3rd March, 2013.

[26] McCall 1973, 61, 64-65; Sears 1978, 34-36; Hutchison 1983, 10; Zanda/Rotaru 2001, 8, 10.

similar opinions on the material[27]. Mursili II, commanding an army in the field, was not in a position to consult this archive, but his view of the celestial object would have been informed by the prevailing Hittite attitude to such matters. The annals of the king's reign record that he considered the meteorite to be an instance of *para ḫandandatar*, 'divine justice', the Storm-god's response to the misdeeds of Uhha-ziti[28]. Given the likely existence of a peace treaty between Uhha-ziti and Suppiluliuma I, the Arzawan king, through his ill-judged challenge to Hittite authority, had been guilty of disloyalty to his suzerain. He had broken the sworn allegiance of a vassal in the case of the fugitives and, with his insulting language, had displayed profound disrespect to Mursili. The Hittite monarch, reflecting on the apparent demonstration of the Storm-god's will, would have felt he had been justified in destroying both Uhha-ziti and his realm.

Tantalus of Lydia

(a) *The figure of Tantalus*

Tantalus was one of the three sinners (the other two being Tityus and Sisyphus) encountered by Odysseus in the Underworld (Hom. *Od.* 11.576-600). Tantalus stood in a pool of water that lapped his chin, with fruit-laden branches placed above his head. As soon as he tried to drink, the water receded and vanished; when he attempted to pick some fruit, a breeze blew the branches out of reach. This is the fate that inspired the concept 'to tantalize', with which the mythical figure is now usually associated.

Tantalus was portrayed as an old man and was, according to most sources, the son of Zeus and Plouto (Wealth)[29]. Anatolian by birth, he was reputed to have been the king of Lydia. Occasionally, his father was named as Tmolus, the personification of the mountain range that forms the northern boundary of the Cayster valley (Küçükmenderes Nehri)[30]. With his son, Pelops, he was linked to a long list of places in Asia Minor and the east Aegean: Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Lydia, and Lesbos being the most frequently cited[31]. While Pelops was said to have migrated to Greece, it was accepted that Tantalus, though expelled from

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[27] The Hittites monitored the sky for their own purposes too. The worship of the Goddess of Darkness involved rooftop ceremonies conducted at night, while the back of her cult statue was decorated with images of celestial objects (*KUB* 29.4 §1'-2'; Beal 2002, 197, 202-205). In the Aegean, untoward cosmic events appear in the visual record. For example, what seems to be a meteorite or comet is shown above the central, running figure on the 'Runner's Ring', found at Kato Syme, Crete, and dated to the Late Minoan IA period (Lebessi/Muhly/Papasavvas 2004, 11, 15, colour pl. I, pl. 2).

[28] *CTH* 61.I §17' (A ii 15'-17'); *CTH* 61.II §5' (A ii 2'-4'); *AT* 14-15, 32-33; Hoffner 1980, 314-315, 328.

[29] Hom. *Od.* 11.585, 591; E. *Or.* 5, 986; D.S. 4.74.1; Paus. 2.22.3; *Sch.* on *Od.* 11.582-592; Hylén 1896, 11-15.

[30] Str. 13.4.5; *Sch.* on E. *Or.* 5; Tz. *H.* 5.10. 444-456; Hylén 1896, 3-4, 13-14; Calder/Bean 1958.

[31] Pi. *O.* 1.24; 9.9; S. *Aj.* 1291-1292; A.R. 2.357-359, 790; D.S. 4.74.1, 4; Str. 12.8.2, 21; 14.5.28; Paus. 2.22.3, 5.1.6, 5.13.7; Hdn. 1.11.2; Hylén 1896, 3-10.

Paphlagonia by Ilus the Phrygian, had remained on the eastern side of the Aegean (Th. 1.9.2; D.S. 4.74.4). Tantalus and his family had strong connections with Mt. Sipylus[32]. His daughter Niobe, the wife of Amphion, king of Boeotian Thebes, was alleged to have been turned to stone on the mountain. The Bronze Age monument at Akpınar may have been known in Antiquity as the 'weeping Niobe' and may also be identified as the statue of the 'Mother of the Gods' made by Tantalus' other son, Broteas. Not far from this shrine, a stepped platform was popularly referred to as the 'throne of Pelops'[33].

(b) *The crimes of Tantalus*

The cause of Tantalus' downfall lay in a series of offences committed against Zeus and the other gods, of which the most notorious was the serving of a meal made from the dismembered body of Pelops to an assembly of deities on Mt. Sipylus[34]. Tantalus' motive for the crime was never fully explained, but some writers thought that he had been prompted by a misguided sense of hospitality, or a desire to test the divinity of his guests[35]. Although Pindar (*O.* 1.36-39, 46-53) denied that anything amiss had occurred, he nonetheless gave credence to Tantalus' appalling behaviour by supplying so many incidental details. Pelops, resurrected through divine intervention afterwards, lost a shoulder blade in the ordeal; the missing component of his skeleton was replaced with an ivory substitute. Following his revival, the youth was carried off by Poseidon to be his lover. An oblique reference by Euripides (*Hel.* 388-89) to Pelops' precise role in the banquet seems to cast him as a compliant participant in his father's scheme[36]. Tantalus was also implicated in the theft of a golden dog from Zeus' sanctuary on Crete. Pandareus of Miletus (according to Paus. 10.30.2, the town of that name on Crete, not the Anatolian port), who actually stole the animal, passed it to Tantalus to conceal from the gods. The latter disclaimed all knowledge of the dog when accused by Hermes, employing a false sworn oath to bolster his lies. Zeus, who naturally knew the truth, struck Tantalus with a thunderbolt and buried him beneath Mt. Sipylus as a punishment for perjury, while Pandareus

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[32] Pi. *O*. 1.36-38; Paus. 2.22.3, 5.13.7; Hylén 1896, 5; Bean 1972, 58-62.

[33] Hom. *Il*. 24.602-617; A. *fr*. 277 (Weir Smyth/Lloyd-Jones 1995, 556-562); S. *Ant*. 823-831; S. *fr*. 441aa (Lloyd-Jones 1996, 228-229); Pherecyd. *fr*. 38 (Jacoby 1923, 73); Paus. 1.21.3; 3.22.4; 5.13.7; 8.2.7; Pearson 1917, 3. 94-98; Bean 1972, 63, fig. 8; Gantz 1996, 536-537; Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 203-204. An alternative site on Mt. Sipylus, a free-standing rock on the outskirts of Manisa, has been officially recognized as the 'weeping Niobe'. In the author's opinion, this identification is incorrect, since resemblance to a female figure is only perceptible from a single, constrained viewpoint (Bean 1972, 54-55; André-Salvini/Salvini 1996, 7-12, fig.3).

[34] E. *IT* 386-388; Apollod. *Epit*. 2.3; Ov. *Met*. 6.403-411; Hyg. *Fab*. 83; Hylén 1896, 38-43; Sourvinou-Inwood 1986, 40, note 21.

[35] Pi. *O*. 1.39; *Sch*. on Pi. *O*. 1.40; Serv. on Verg. *G*. 3.7; Gantz 1996, 534.

[36] Pi. *O*. 1.24-27, 40-42; Apollod. *Epit*. 2.3; Lyc. 152-159; Ov. *Met*. 6.403-407; *Sch*. on Pi. *O*. 1.40; Gantz 1996, 534; Kovacs 2002, 52 note 14.

was turned to stone for his part in the felony. Although literary references to the myth are comparatively late, Pandareus' daughters are mentioned in the *Odyssey* (20.66-78) and a scene painted on a sixth-century BC cup illustrates the story[37]. A further charge levelled at Tantalus was that he had stolen nectar and ambrosia from Olympus, thus abusing the trust and friendship of the gods[38]. A much more serious allegation related to his abduction of Ganymedes, son of Tros, a crime usually ascribed to Zeus. The seizure of the boy was named as one of the factors behind a battle fought between Tantalus and Ganymedes' uncle, Ilus, at Pessinus in central Asia Minor[39]. The fault most often ascribed to Tantalus, however, related to the spoken word (Ov. *Am.* 2.2. 43-44; Hylén 1896, 32-35). Electra, one of his descendants, claimed he had displayed 'an unbridled tongue, a most disgraceful malady', though she did not specify what he had said (E. *Or.* 10; Kovacs 2002, 413). Perhaps Tantalus had been discourteous to the Olympian gods, or had divulged confidential conversations with them to his fellow men[40]. Moreover, there was the duplicitous use of an oath in his denial of possession of the golden dog[41].

(c) *The punishments of Tantalus*

Cannibalism, rape, theft, and lying – Tantalus' scandalous activities were certainly grave enough to consign him to the depths of Hades. Alternative punishments, though, to those described in the *Odyssey*, were believed to have been imposed on him for these crimes. As noted above, the affair of the golden dog caused Zeus to strike Tantalus with a thunderbolt and bury him under Mt. Sipylus. Another penalty, again inflicted by Zeus, saw the reprobate bound hand and foot, and suspended from a high mountain (*Sch*. on Hom. *Od.* 11.582-592). A further sanction, given equal prominence in ancient Greek literature to the torments recounted by Homer, centred upon an ominous stone, which hovered in mid-air above Tantalus' head, threatening to crush him instantly if it fell (Hylén 1896, 56-59, 60-63; Frazer 1898, 5. 392).

The stone is first mentioned by the seventh-century BC author Archilochus: "let the stone of Tantalus not hang over this island" (Archil. *fr*. 91, lines 14-15 (Gerber 1999, 132-133)). Other early references occur in the works of Alcaeus and Alcman, both of whom lived during the second half of the seventh, and the first decades of the sixth century BC[42]. Pherecydes of Leros, who was active around the middle of the fifth century BC, also alluded to the stone, claiming that

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[37] Ant. Lib. 36; Paus. 5.22.3; 10.30.2; *Sch*. on Pi. *O*. 1.91; *Sch*. on Hom. *Od*. 19.518; Eust. on Hom. *Od*. 19.518; Hylén 1896, 44-47; Barnett 1898, 638-640; Beazley 1931, 282 (side B); Brijder 1991, 447-448, pl.116c (side A); Gantz 1996, 535.

[38] Pi. *O*. 1.60-64; Apollod. *Epit*. 2.1; Hylén 1896, 35.

[39] D.S. 4.74.4; Hdn. 1.11.2; *Sch.* on Lyc. 355; Hylén 1896, 47-49, 49 note 2; Gantz 1996, 536.

[40] Ath. 281b; Apollod. *Epit*. 2.1; D.S. 4.74.1-2; Hyg. *Fab*. 82; Gantz 1996, 533-534.

[41] Ant. Lib. 36.3; Paus. 10.30.2; Gantz 1996, 535.

[42] Alc. *fr*. 365 (Campbell 1982, xiv, 394-397); Alcm. *fr*. 79 (Campbell 1988, 268, 448-449).

it had come from Zeus (Pherecyd. *fr*. 38 (Jacoby 1923, 73)). Pausanias (10.31.12), describing a fifth-century BC painting of Hades by the artist Polygnotus, remarked that Tantalus was shown enduring the pangs of hunger and thirst recorded by Homer, with the addition of the stone above his head. The travel writer wondered if the painter had been influenced by Archilochus and thought that the latter was responsible for introducing the ominous stone to the legend. This is possible, but Archilochus' phraseology suggests he was reiterating an established saying, whose origin lay well before his lifetime (Gantz 1996, 533). Indeed, Plutarch (*Moralia* 803A) cited the lines as an example of a maxim derived from mythology. Furthermore, no less an authority than Pindar referred to the stone twice, once in a proverbial manner, comparable to that of Archilochus: 'since a god has turned away from over our heads the very rock of Tantalus' (Pi. *I.* 8.9-10; *O.* 1.55-58; Race 1997, 205).
As Pausanias' description of Polygnotus' painting reveals, the two punishments involving food and drink deprivation, and the ominous stone were not mutually exclusive. It is difficult, despite this association, to imagine a setting in which both punishments could have been inflicted at the same time, since the respective contexts are completely different. Homer stated that Tantalus endured hunger and thirst in the Underworld, but Euripides (*Or*. 5-7) pictured him suspended in mid-air beneath the ominous stone (Hylén 1896, 50-54, 77-83). Nevertheless, however the representation of the twin penalties was achieved, they appear to have been connected with each other.

(d) *The origin of the ominous stone*
Although the stone was positioned over Tantalus' head, it was not invariably regarded as a static object. The idea that it was capable of falling, perhaps quite suddenly, was the reason for Tantalus' fear, so it was potentially active. In addition, a passage in Euripides' *Orestes* (982-984) creates the impression that the stone could be assigned a dynamic character. Electra, musing over her family's violent and tragic past, speaks of the stone as a βῶλος[43], attached in some way to golden chains, and suspended between heaven and earth, but even so carried by whirlwind or vortex down from Olympus. The image conveyed by the lines, though hard to define, is clearly predicated on cosmic turmoil. Indeed, a celestial aspect is implicit in all references to the stone that nominate Zeus, who ruled the heavens, as the responsible agent.
Throughout the ancient world, tales must have circulated about the rare occurrence of stones plummeting out of the sky. As in early modern societies, lack of scientific knowledge and vocabulary ensured that such events were regarded and described as the work of supernatural powers (McCall 1973, 17-19; Zanda/Rotaru 2001, 17-19). One of the first analytical treatments of meteorites was given by Anaxagoras, a fifth-century BC philosopher. His writings have not

[43] βῶλος (*bolos*, 'a clad of nugget'; *LSJ* 334, *s.v*. βῶλος).

been preserved, but it is known from other authors that he viewed the sun as a fiery stone, with the stars and planets as other stones, detached from the Earth and ignited by their own movement. Should the system be disturbed in any way, there was a chance that one of the celestial stones would descend to the Earth (D.L. 2.10.9-12; West 1960, 368-369). Scodel (1984) linked Tantalus' stone to the teachings of Anaxagoras, arguing that the passage from *Orestes* mentioned above was influenced by the philosopher's astronomical ideas. While it is possible that was the case, Tantalus' stone occurs in literature before the time of Anaxagoras, for example in the seventh-century BC fragment of Archilochus quoted earlier. In that passage, the stone is portrayed as a rock manifested above to threaten the land below. This and similar traditions could have prompted Anaxagoras to develop his theories, instead of being derived from them.

The firm impression is that Tantalus' stone was viewed as an exceptional event, a rock that appeared from heaven on high. If the legend has any foundation in fact, it was probably based upon the fall of a meteorite. Certainly, from wherever it was that Euripides gained inspiration for the verses in *Orestes*, the lines are evocative of the transit of a meteorite. The mythical stone is described as an indeterminate mass, hurtling downwards through the sky, with the golden chains suggesting the glittering fragmentation episodes that often attend the brief trajectory of one of those cosmic missiles.

Uhha-ziti and Tantalus

(a) *The name 'Tantalus'*

As noted in the Introduction, this discussion is focused on similarities between factual and mythological narratives, rather than on those connecting the names of real and fictional people, but it is useful to consider the background of 'Tantalus.' It is generally understood as a corruption of ταλαντεία, 'a balancing or suspended motion'[44], a reference to the suspended or balancing stone, or ταλάντατος, most wretched[45], an allusion to the sufferings of the unfortunate monarch (Pl. *Cra.* 395D-E; Scodel 1984, 22)[46]. In Chantraine's opinion, however, these are false etymologies and he related 'Tantalus' to *ta-ta-ro*, which occurs as a homonym on Linear B tablets from Pylos and Knossos. He postulated an initial **tal-tal-os*, essentially a duplicated form of 'Atlas,' to which a provisional meaning 'the one who carries (the sky)' could be assigned (Ventris/Chadwick 1973, 584; Chantraine 1984-90, vol. 2, 1091). From this premise, it follows that

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[44] *LSJ* 1753, *s.v.* ταλαντεια.

[45] From ταλαός (talaos, 'much suffering'; *LSJ s.v.* ταλαος).

[46] Graves (1990, 2. 30), believing the connection with *ταλαντεία* to be valid, argued that 'Tantalus' signalled the stumbling walk of the legendary figure, whom he identified as a ritually lamed, sacred king. While this interpretation is a product of Graves' particular analysis of Greek myth and should be evaluated accordingly, it curiously resonates with Hittite texts. These stated that Uhha-ziti had suffered leg injuries as a consequence of the fall of the celestial object on Ephesus.

'Tantalus' has a Late Bronze Age pedigree and should be associated with the heavens – from where the ominous stone materialized. If 'Tantalus' is interpreted as an epithet, then its lack of resemblance to 'Uhha-ziti' is not a significant issue.

(b) *Tantalus and Croesus*

Before embarking upon a detailed examination of a relationship between Tantalus and Uhha-ziti, it should be mentioned that there are grounds for linking the former with Croesus, king of Lydia. Geographically, Lydia can be regarded as the Iron Age successor of either Arzawa or the Seha River Land (Hawkins 1998, 24; Freu 2004, 292). Politically, however, Arzawa, as the most influential regional power during the middle decades of the fourteenth century BC, was equivalent to the dominant Lydian realm of the seventh and sixth centuries. The Lydian monarchs, from their inland capital at Sardis, controlled extensive stretches of the Aegean coast, including cities such as Ephesus, and several offshore islands. Croesus, like Tantalus (whose mother was wealth personified), was fabulously rich. Both rulers witnessed the destruction of their kingdoms – the Persians defeated Croesus and annexed his lands into their empire – as a consequence of their own arrogance and folly[47]. The disappearance, with the passing of the Bronze Age, of the toponym 'Arzawa' and familiarity with Croesus' life story may have brought about the affiliation of Lydia with the domain governed by the legendary Tantalus. Yet, although cognisance of Croesus' career and fate may have helped to shape Tantalus' character, social position, and activities, several aspects of the mythical figure are attested in ancient Greek literature prior to the epoch of the last Lydian king. Tantalus and the punishment of hunger and thirst are described in the *Odyssey*; Niobe and her association with Mt. Sipylus recorded in the *Iliad*, and the ominous stone first appears in the writing of Archilochus. These texts can be assigned to the eighth and seventh centuries BC, while Croesus' reign occupied the middle decades of the sixth[48]. If, therefore, a real-life individual supplied those elements of the Tantalus' tradition, the model must be sought further back in time.

(c) *The crimes of Uhha-ziti and Tantalus*

Just as Uhha-ziti operated on the periphery of the exclusive club of 'Great Kings', so Tantalus enjoyed limited social intercourse with the gods. He was invited to banquets on Olympus and was privy to the deities' private conversations[49]. Both monarchs were mature in age: Tantalus was generally conceived as an old man and Uhha-ziti, at the time of the conflict with Mursili II, had at least two adult sons. Nonetheless, though Tantalus and Uhha-ziti were dignified in years and standing, they were ruined through their own misguided actions.

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[47] Hdt. 1; Pl. *Cra*. 395D-E; Str. 14.5.28; Boardman 1999, 94-102.
[48] Janko 1982, 231; Boardman/Griffin/Murray 1993, 834; Gerber 1999, 5.
[49] E. *Or*. 8-9; Ath. 281b; D.S. 4.74.1-2; Hylén 1896, 22-26.

The most infamous of Tantalus' crimes, the meal at which the dismembered body of Pelops was set before the gods, can be understood as an allegory for the battle fought between the Arzawans and Hittites at Walma. Tantalus served Pelops, who may have dutifully submitted to his fate, to the Olympians, while Uhha-ziti promoted his son, Piyama-Kurunta, to command the army that opposed Mursili II. It is likely that the prince readily accepted the commission. Unfortunately, the Arzawan forces were cut to pieces in the engagement and, as subsequent resistance was led by another son of Uhha-ziti, Tapalazunawali, it is possible that Piyama-Kurunta was wounded at Walma. However, just as Pelops, though he lost a shoulder bone in the macabre feast, was resurrected, so the Arzawan prince, even if hurt, survived the carnage of the battlefield to join the flight from Ephesus. Tantalus' son, following his revival, was spirited away by Poseidon to be the Sea-god's lover. The sea was also the means of Piyama-Kurunta's salvation since, with the rest of the Arzawan royal family, he escaped across the waves to an Aegean island.

Piyama-Kurunta was probably the son of Uhha-ziti who sought sanctuary with the king of Ahhiyawa, perhaps on mainland Greece. Pelops' emigration from Asia parallels the journey of the Arzawan prince. 'Asia' is considered to have evolved from *Aššuwa/A-si-wi-ja*, which appears in texts from Late Bronze Age Egypt, Hittite Anatolia, and Mycenaean Greece. During the latter part of the second millennium BC, the term 'Assuwa' referred to territory of uncertain extent in western Anatolia. The first occurrence of 'Asia' in ancient Greek literature, though, is in the context of marshland fringing the River Cayster (Küçükmenderes Nehri) where it flows into the Aegean Sea[50]. In the fourteenth century BC, the shoreline of the same estuary ran beneath the walls of Ephesus, the capital of Arzawa and the departure point for Uhha-ziti, Piyama-Kurunta, and the rest of their entourage (Kraft/Brückner/Kayan/Engelmann 2007, fig. 1).

Additional links between Piyama-Kurunta and Pelops cannot be sustained, however, since a Hittite document states that Uhha-ziti's son was returned to the custody of Mursili II. This information conflicts with Greek legend, which maintained that Pelops remained in the Peloponnese, where he died and was buried (Pi. *O.* 10.24-25; Paus. 6.22.1). The author is currently preparing an article that will address this issue and explore the origins of Tantalus' son through further consideration of Hittite texts.

The theft of the golden dog by Pandareus and Tantalus may be a reflection of one of the episodes that precipitated the war between Hatti and Arzawa. While the underlying cause of the conflict was Uhha-ziti's rebellious stance, the situation was exacerbated by the dispute over the return of groups of fugitives to Hatti. The Arzawan king refused to hand them over to Mursili II. Though it is difficult to understand why a golden dog would symbolize bands of fugitives,

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[50] Hom. *Il*. 2.460-461; Th. 1.9.2; Paus. 5.1.6; Cline 1996, 140-144; 1997, 192-194; 2013, 58-60; Watkins 1998, 202-204.

the scenarios in myth and history are not dissimilar. Tantalus kept the animal, which he declined to give back to its rightful owner, Zeus, and Uhha-ziti retained the fugitives, whom Mursili considered should have been transferred to his jurisdiction. Furthermore, the identity of Pandareus' home town may have changed, under the influence of the golden dog's place of origin, from Anatolian to Cretan Miletus. The initial version of the story could have included a reference to the port in Asia Minor whose alliance with Uhha-ziti helped to unleash the Hittite invasion of Arzawa.

Uhha-ziti's greatest crime in the eyes of Mursili II, though, was the violation of an oath, probably his promise as a vassal king to obey his overlord, which would have been contained in a formal treaty with the Hittites. For this, the Hittite ruler believed that the Arzawan monarch had suffered divine punishment (*CTH* 69 §4' (A i 34'-62'); Beckman 1999, 83). Tantalus' most reprehensible deed in the affair of the golden dog was not the acceptance of stolen property, but the deception he practised on Zeus by means of an oath. The Lord of Olympus blasted the mortal king with a thunderbolt in response. Therefore both Uhha-ziti and Tantalus broke their solemn word over the possession of something (a group of fugitives and a valuable statue, respectively) that did not belong to them and suffered dire consequences as a result. Tantalus' form of speech caused him trouble on other occasions too: it was claimed that he was rude and indiscreet in his language. This failing was also displayed by Uhha-ziti, when he used an 'unbridled tongue' to insult Mursili II and call him a child.

(d) *The punishments of Tantalus and the consequences of the Arzawan war*

The closest analogies between Tantalus and Uhha-ziti relate to the punishments inflicted upon the mythical figure and the situation that unfolded after the fall of Ephesus. First and foremost is the penalty of the ominous stone, a likely allusion to the fall of a meteorite. According to Greek legend, the stone was dispatched from Olympus by Zeus to reduce Tantalus to a state of abject fear in retribution for his various crimes. The Hittites placed a similar construction on the meteorite that appears to have landed on Ephesus *ca.* 1318 BC, believing that it had been sent by the Storm-god to demonstrate his condemnation of Uhha-ziti's behaviour.

Another strong connection exists between the trials of hunger and thirst endured by Tantalus and the fate of Uhha-ziti and many of his subjects. After the defeat at Walma and the descent of the meteorite on Ephesus, the Arzawan king escaped to an island in the Aegean Sea, where he remained, evidently in poor health, until his death not long afterwards. At the same time, large numbers of Arzawans were besieged by Mursili on the barren heights of Mt. Arinnanda. As observed above, the mountainous promontory was even more encircled by the waves during the Late Bronze Age than it is now. In his official annals, Mursili II placed special emphasis on the tactics he had employed to force the Arzawans to come down from the mountain: he stated, with grim satisfaction, that he had used hunger and thirst to compel them to surrender (*CTH* 61. II § 9' (A iii 45' - 49'); *AT* 36-37). A conflation of Uhha-ziti's sojourn on the Aegean island and

the Arzawans' desperate plight on Mt. Arinnanda appears to have produced Tantalus' torment in Hades where, engulfed by water, the king was tortured by hunger and thirst. Like Tantalus, Uhha-ziti suffered in the midst of water. Just as Tantalus was starved, thirsty and surrounded by water, so the Arzawan fugitives, with the sea virtually all around, were deprived of food and drink. Earlier it was remarked that the coupling of the ominous stone with food and drink deprivation suggested that the twin punishments of Tantalus stemmed from a common background. This perhaps lies in the series of events that comprised the meteorite impact and the sufferings of Uhha-ziti and the Arzawans. A further doom assigned to Tantalus, that of being bound hand and foot and suspended from a high mountain, also accords with the confinement of the Arzawans on the isolated ridge of Mt. Arinnanda.

In the affair of the golden dog, Zeus's reprisal against Tantalus was to hurl a thunderbolt at the king and then bury him beneath Mt. Sipylus. If the theft of the fantastic animal is a metaphor for Uhha-ziti's alliance with Miletus and his withholding of fugitives from the Hittites, then the thunderbolt constitutes another reference to the presumed meteorite. Similarly, the second part of the penalty, being buried underneath Mt. Sipylus, would refer to the explosive effects of the meteorite impact. As was the case with casualties of the recent Chelyabinsk meteorite, Uhha-ziti's reported injuries could have been caused by collateral damage to buildings. The episode also highlights Tantalus' association with Mt. Sipylus, which is worth exploring in the context of Mursili II's Arzawan campaign. The Akpınar monument indicates that, when the edifice was created during the Late Bronze Age, the mountain possessed a religious significance. Since the Hittites carved an intrusive inscription beside the relief, the image and the message it projected evidently existed at the time of Uhha-ziti's conflict with Mursili. If Mt. Sipylus was viewed as a sacred landscape when Uhha-ziti was king of Arzawa, then Tantalus' special connection with the same mountain can be regarded as another factor that aligns the mythical king with the real life monarch.

Survival of knowledge

(a) General points

The question of the survival of historical knowledge from the second to the first millennium BC is crucial to the viability of the pairing of Tantalus and Uhha-ziti. During the latter decades of the fourteenth century BC, groups of Mycenaean Greeks residing throughout the Aegean would have been affected by current affairs in western Anatolia. The destruction of Miletus, then a Mycenaean settlement, by the Hittites *ca.* 1318 BC must have been a critical incident in their lives. In addition to the port's unfortunate inhabitants, it undoubtedly impinged upon their families, friends, and business associates living elsewhere in the region, including mainland Greece. Similarly, the retreat of the Arzawan fugitives to Mt. Arinnanda would have struck a chord in Greece, as the headland marked the boundary of an area of concentrated Mycenaean influence (Niemeier 2005, 16). There is also ceramic evidence for Mycenaean contact with Ephesus and, to a

lesser extent, Puranda, where the Arzawan-Hittite conflict was played out[51]. Although it is almost certain that Uhha-ziti's son, probably Piyama-Kurunta, and his retainers who fled, perhaps as far as mainland Greece, were sent back to Anatolia, less exalted refugees from Mursili's campaign, both Arzawan and Greek, could have stayed. They would have been in a position to spread the alarming tale of the meteorite fall on Ephesus and other developments in western Asia Minor[52]. Dissemination of news of these events was thus neither restricted to the upper echelons of society, nor to individuals with access to written forms of communication.

(b) *Mursili/Myrsilus*

Although 'Arzawa' and 'Uhha-ziti' disappeared from public consciousness, the name of their implacable foe remained in common parlance to a surprising degree. Not only did 'Mursili', like the names of other notable rulers of Hatti, 'Suppiluliuma' and 'Hattusili', surface in the dynasties of Neo-Hittite kingdoms, it enjoyed a broader distribution and deeper significance than comparable examples. The extensive campaigns conducted by Mursili II in western Asia Minor propelled his name into folk history on both sides of the Aegean. 'Mursili' evolved from being a regnal name of the ruling family of Hatti to constituting a generic title, 'Myrsilus', in Greek vocabulary. It denoted authority, derived from the memory of Hittite influence in general and the deeds of the fourteenth-century BC monarch in particular. One instance of 'Myrsilus' relates to sixth-century BC Lesbos, an island with which Tantalus was associated (Hylén 1896, 3, 7) and on which excavation has uncovered a marked level of continuity from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age. Variants of 'Myrsilus' also occur as place names in the east Aegean littoral and, importantly for this study, as the name of a character in Greek mythology. Myrtilus is the pivotal figure in the foremost legend dealing with Tantalus' son, Pelops[53]. Against a backdrop that suggests a pervasive memory of the name and activities of Mursili II, it can be argued that other reminiscences of the period endured. The singular fate of Uhha-ziti, through its transposition into the tragedy of Tantalus, presents a further example of this phenomenon.

(c) *Memories of the meteorite*

Another reason for the survival of 'Mursili/Myrsilus' is the Hittite king's involvement with the *ca.* 1318 BC meteorite, which no doubt conferred an aura

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[51] *AT* 272-274, 277-278; Niemeier 1998, 40-41; 2005, 14; Gates 1996, 319; Greaves/Helwing 2001, 506; Yildirim/Gates 2007, 290; Kelder 2010, 52, 55-56.

[52] Evidence of continued exchanges between Greece and Anatolia is provided by two tablets from the final phase (*ca.* 1190/1185 BC) of the Late Bronze Age port of Ugarit on the Syrian coast. They show that Mycenaean Greeks based in Lycia had contact with the government in Hattusa until the last years of the Hittite kingdom (*RS* 94.2523; *RS* 94.2530; *AT* 253-262; Mountjoy 2004, 190; Singer 2006, 250-252; Bryce 2010, 47, 51).

[53] Gantz 1996, 541-543; Dale 2011, 18-19, 22, notes 18, 23, 24.

of divine approbation upon him. Given the practical effects of the event and the interpretations placed upon it, the fall of a meteorite on Ephesus at such a decisive moment in international affairs must have created a deep and lasting impression on contemporary populations of the southeast Aegean (del Monte 1993, 64 note 22). The memory of the incident evidently survived in Ephesus until at least the first century AD. According to the New Testament, St. Paul's visit there provoked civil unrest, which a local official sought to placate by reminding the angry crowd of the city's status as the guardian of the icon of the goddess Artemis (Diana), and of the sacred stone that had fallen out of the sky. Since two similar incidents are extremely unlikely to have happened at the same place, even during an interval covering more than a millennium, the cult image in question was almost certainly derived from the fourteenth-century BC meteorite. Moreover, there is evidence that the most probable location for the impact spot of the meteorite, or a portion of it, became sacred ground soon after the incident itself. Fragments of Mycenaean pottery and ceramic figurines of animals found in strata beneath the Artemision at Ephesus prompted Bammer (1990, 141-142, fig. 12) to date the inception of cultic activity there to the latter phases of the Late Bronze Age[54].

Traditions inspired by the Late Bronze Age meteorite persisted elsewhere in Asia Minor. The late second-to early third-century AD writer Herodian (1.11.1-2; Whittaker 1969, ix) recorded that, in 204 BC, a statue of the *Magna Mater* was brought to Rome from Pessinus. It was alleged to have been thrown down from the sky by Zeus at some point in the past and to have landed near the Anatolian town. No one knew from what kind of material the icon was made: it was said that no human being had created it. The object was, in fact, a stone,

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[54] *Act.Ap.* 19:35; Phythian-Adams 1946, 119-120; Garstang/Gurney 1959, 88; Morris 2001, 138, figs. 1, 2. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider in detail the cult statue of Artemis *Ephesus*, but some thoughts on the subject are relevant. The sculpture constitutes a more elaborate working of elements present in the icon of Artemis *Pergaea* (Artemis of Perge), which has been viewed as a meteoritic stone. Indeed, since Perge has a Late Bronze Age foundation, being mentioned in Hittite texts, and lies close to the southern coast of Anatolia, the image of its patron goddess could have been created around another fragment of the *ca.* 1318 BC meteorite (Mansel/Akarca 1949, 64, pl. XVIII, nos. 76, 77; Mellink 1998, 39). Furthermore, certain features (including the enigmatic chest appendages) of statues of Artemis *Ephesia* also occur in representations of Zeus *Labrandeus*. The god's sanctuary at Labranda, in southwest Asia Minor, is dominated by a cleft dome of rock, the focal point of an ancient sacred landscape. Although this natural feature was formed by gradual erosion, its appearance suggests the stone was shattered by a cataclysmic event. It is understandable that prehistoric people apparently identified this as a blow from the Sky-god's sacred double axe (Morris 2001, 141, fig. 4; Karlsson 2013, 180-188, figs. 6, 7). The similarity of form demonstrated by images of Artemis *Ephesia* and Zeus *Labrandeus* is thus attributable to a common heritage derived from cosmic events (and perceived incidents of that nature). While the exact significance of the decorative components of the cult statue of Artemis *Ephesia* remains elusive, it can therefore be concluded, from comparison with images of Artemis *Pergaea* and Zeus *Labrandeus*, that they referred in some way to untoward celestial phenomena.

light enough in weight to be carried by Roman matrons[55]. Pessinus (Sıvrıhisar) has been identified as Hittite Sallapa, which Mursili II reached soon after observing the transit of the cosmic missile overhead (Garstang 1943, 40-41; Garstang/Gurney 1959, 76-77). In view of the town's position, close to the apparent trajectory path of the *ca.* 1318 BC meteorite, it is conceivable that the so-called statue of the *Magna Mater* was a fragment of that celestial object. Herodian follows his reference to the image of the Great Goddess with an account of a battle near Pessinus between Tantalus the Lydian and Ilus the Phrygian (*cf*. D.S. 4.74.4). Mursili II fought the Arzawans at Walma, about eighty kilometres south of Pessinus/Sallapa, shortly after leaving the town and witnessing the extraordinary manifestation in the sky. If the Pessinus stone was a fragment of the Late Bronze Age meteorite, Herodian unwittingly relayed a summary of the incidents (meteorite then battle) that took place in the vicinity of the town towards the end of the fourteenth century BC. Intriguingly, he connected Tantalus with the military engagement.

Conclusion

Two main findings result from the investigation of Greek myths and Hittite texts carried out in this article. Firstly, it has been possible to demonstrate that a passage in the Annals of Mursili II almost certainly describes the transit of a meteorite across Asia Minor *ca.* 1318 BC. At least two fragments of the meteorite may have been recovered (at Ephesus and Pessinus) and venerated as holy objects for over a millennium[56]. The late fourteenth-century BC event may well have reinforced contemporary belief in celestial deities and could therefore be significant for the development of religious thought in prehistoric Anatolia. At Ephesus, it possibly inspired a cult that evolved into the worship of Artemis Ephesia, whose temple became one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. The extraordinary, even momentous, nature of the cosmic incident probably left a political legacy as well, playing a large part in the creation of a folk memory of Mursili II throughout the east Aegean.

Secondly, there is a strong likelihood that the legendary Tantalus, king of Lydia, was based upon the real life Uhha-ziti, king of Arzawa. Acknowledgement of this association sets an important precedent, as it allows that certain narratives in Greek myth were derived from historical circumstance. Although such a conclusion has far reaching implications, in many ways the pairing of these two characters constitutes a special case. On this occasion, the curious nature of the legends involved and the detail supplied by the Hittite texts facilitated comparisons. Generally, when a particular myth displays similar features to an attested historical episode, the relevant sources contain insufficient data to enable a rigorous analysis to take

[55] Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 199. The stone was eventually housed in the Temple of Cybele (whose pediment is depicted on the *Ara Pietatis* altar) on the Palatine Hill (Liv. 29.10, 11, 14; Ov. *Fast*. 4.247-248).

[56] A third fragment may have been worshipped as the icon of Artemis *Pergaea* until the Roman Imperial era (see note 51).

place. The Trojan War is the prime example of this impasse: though a factual basis is often assumed, no suitable situation has yet been determined.
Overall, mythology remains an ephemeral field of study; even the connection of Tantalus with Uhha-ziti, for which so much support has been marshalled here, cannot be proved conclusively. Yet, while no archaeologist of the twenty-first century is likely to follow the approach of Heinrich Schliemann who, relying on Homer and Pausanias, found the walls of Troy – if, indeed, he did find those: also see Kolb elsewhere in this issue – and the gold of Mycenae, there may be a continuing role for tradition in exploration of the past. Awareness of context obtained from legend may still inform today's more scientific excavators. Certainly, the Late Bronze Age structures on Ayasülük Hill, Ephesus, which have been identified as the remains of Uhha-ziti's citadel, may be regarded as the palace of Tantalus[57].

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Abbreviations and Dates

AT = Beckman, G.M./T.R. Bryce/E.H. Cline (eds.) 2011: *The Ahhiyawa Text* (series: Writings from the Ancient World 28), Atlanta, GA,
CTH = Laroche, E. 1971: *Catalogue des Textes Hittites*, Paris.
KUB = Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi, various editors and authors, (Heft 1, 1921→), Berlin.
LSJ = Liddell, H.G./R. Scott/H. Stuart Jones/R. McKenzie (eds.) 1956 (9th edition): *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxoford.
RS = Ras Shamra text, cited by inventory number (Güterbock, H.G./H.A. Hoffner 1957: *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago, Chicago*, IL; see <https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/CHDP.pdf>).
StoBotT = Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten. Herausgegeben von der Kommission für den Alten Orient der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1965→, Mainz/Wiesbaden.
Dates of Hittite kings are taken from Bryce (2005, xv) and absolute chronology of Late Helladic ceramic periods and their relationship with Hittite history from Mountjoy (1998, 46). The identification of Hittite place names with locations in Asia Minor follows the scheme for Hittite geography proposed by Hawkins (1998). Classical Greek toponyms from Anatolia are taken from Calder/Bean (1958). Abbreviations of classical authors and their works are taken from Liddell, H.G./R. Scott/H. Stuart Jones/R. Mckenzie (eds.) 1996 (9th edition): *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, and Glare, P.G.W. 2000: *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford.

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[57] *AT* 46; Büyükkolancı 2000, 39; Bryce 2005, 444 note 9.

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