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ANATOMY OF A SPEECH: RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN THE HITTITE *INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRIESTS AND TEMPLE PERSONNEL* (CTH 264)

Silvia Alaura

Summary

The *Instructions for Priests and Temple Personnel* (CTH 264), a text of the later Middle Hittite period preserved in numerous New Hittite copies, has been frequently discussed because of the information its content provides on various aspects of the Hittite religious beliefs and practices. The article focuses on a much less investigated topic, that is, the use of rhetorical strategies displayed by this text. In particular, instances of interrogative phrases and rhetorical questions, of repetitions and reiterations generating a climax, and of anecdotes and proverbs as storytelling devices are analyzed. The trial-like structure and the sapiential flavour informing the § 7' of the text are put in evidence.

The *Instructions for Priests and Temple Personnel* (CTH 264), a text of the later Middle Hittite period preserved in numerous New Hittite copies, is among the best-known Hittite administrative and normative compositions. Published in hand copy by H. Ehelolf in 1925, it has since been the subject of numerous full editions, translations and insightful studies, including some recent ones.¹ The attention of scholars has primarily been focused on the administrative-juridical aspects, and more generally the text has been studied as a source of information on Hittite society, religious thought, practice and behaviour. However, an aspect of this text that has been much less examined, even though it is of great interest, is that of the rhetorical strategies – the patterns of argumentation – used by the authority issuing the text in order to persuade and motivate the priests and temple officials to behave correctly.

The text is divided into 19 paragraphs of varying length, devoted to four main general topics relating to priestly office: preparation and care of food and beverages for the gods; festival celebrations and offerings; corruption; and responsibility for guarding the temple. The same (or only slightly different) subject matter may also be dealt with in several paragraphs, which may not necessarily be contiguous (for instance, the issue of purity with regard to the preparation of the gods' food is dealt with in §§ 2' and 14').² The passage from one paragraph to the next occurs for the most part with a single transition word *anda-ma(-za)*, "moreover, furthermore" (§§ 4', 8', 9'-10', 12'-13', 14'-19'), showing that we are dealing with speech transitions between similar ideas or points.

Each paragraph includes an initial part containing a detailed enumeration of potential crimes against the gods, and a final part which states the rationale behind the negative consequences of possible transgressions. The initial series of eventualities is particularly detailed in § 2', ll. 14'-20', for example, which sets out the precise rules on the physical cleanliness and cultic purity (hygiene of the body and cleanliness of clothing) of the temple bakers and of the places used for food preparation; in § 4', ll. 39'-45', where we find a very lengthy enumeration of festivals (eighteen in total); and in § 7', which lists a whole series of possible fraudulent misappropriations by the priests of

1 The most recent edition of the text is in Miller 2013, 244-265. Before that, see Sturtevant 1934; Sturtevant, Bechtel 1935, 127-174; Süel 1985; Taggar-Cohen 2006, 37-139 (with review by Schwemer 2009). In addition, see the translations by Goetze 1950; Vieyra 1970, 511-512; Kühne 1975; McMahon 1997; Klinger 2001, 73-81. For the numerous studies on specific aspects of the text see the references in Miller 2013, 319-320.

2 For an outline of the content of the composition with a summary of the priestly duties see Taggar-Cohen 2006, 437-444 and Miller 2013, 246-247.

sacrificial animals – fattened oxen and sheep – intended for the gods, and their substitution with animals of poor quality. These potential offences of § 7' are reported as if they were items of case law.³

The second part of each paragraph, on the other hand, employs strongly emotional language based on the use of direct speech and the spoken word, so that the general tone of the whole text is indeed more one of advice than obligation.⁴ Sometimes, rather than coming to an end, this second part of the paragraph runs on into the following paragraph (as in § 2', 21'–§ 3', where the paragraph division does not correspond to the content).

The anonymous speaker of CTH 264, who is very probably to be identified as the king himself, addresses the subordinates in the 2nd person plural, *you*, for the most part, but also frequently resorts to the impersonal 3rd singular or plural for substantial passages.

Unusually, the warning in § 7' l. 20" "Watch out for the man who before (lit: from) your eyes makes the food of your desire disappear!" (*nu-za UN-an-na a-ú ZI-aš-ták-kán ku-iš :zu-u-wa-an IGI^{HLA}-wa-az pa-ra-a pít-ti-nu-zì*)⁵ unequivocally addresses someone in the 2nd person singular, *thou*. It seems to me that it is difficult to attribute such a switch to redactional inconsistency, or to ascribe it to a shifting between the 2nd person plural and singular comparable to the shifts between 2nd and 3rd just observed in other passages of CTH 264 and also attested in other Hittite *Instructions* and in various genres of Hittite texts, but in contexts different from the one in question and due to different motivations.⁶ Therefore, I would suggest that the addressee of this warning is the god himself. If so, the speaker of CTH 264 interrupts the dialogue with his audience, i.e. the priests and temple officials, and – by means of the rhetorical figure of *aversio* (apostrophe directed by the orator towards a third subject who is usually not present) and by actually turning to the god – achieves an estrangement between issuer and recipient.⁷ The issuer's strategy consists in creating a *conventio ad excludendum* to the detriment of the recipient.⁸ In the case of § 7' of CTH 264, it is the deity himself who plays the role of the third party.

The authority issuing the text makes frequent use of interrogative phrases, many of them clearly rhetorical (§§ 2', 3', 16'). Although the widespread use of rhetorical questions is characteristic of other Hittite literary genres too – and particularly of correspondence – the *Instructions for Priests and Temple Personnel*, CTH 264, employs them in a particularly sophisticated way.⁹

Sometimes, the question provides an overt reply – see, for example: "Is the mind of man and (that) of the gods somehow different? No! (And) in regard to this very (matter)? No! The mind is indeed one and the same" (*UN-aš DINGIR^{MES}-aš-ša ZI-an-za ta-ma-a-iš ku-iš-ki UL ki-i-pát ku-it UL ZI-an-za-ma 1-aš-pát*) (§ 2', 21'–22'). The denial expected in response to the question is given explicit expression with a 'no' word and with a denying sentence.¹⁰ The same question is repeated just below after the narration of a didactic anecdote: "And is the mind of a deity somehow different?" (*ZI DINGIR-LÌ-ma ta-ma-a-iš ku-iš-ki*) (§ 2', 28') (see also below).

3 Cf. the *Hittite Laws*, I series, §§ 57–92, see Hoffner 1997, 68–91. Note that both in CTH 264 and in the *Hittite Laws* the paragraphs on rustling are followed by those on thefts in buildings (CTH 264 § 8; *Hittite Laws*, I series, §§ 93–97) and on fires in buildings (CTH 264 § 13; *Hittite Laws*, I series, §§ 98–100).

4 On this point see Pecchioli Daddi 2003, 25, Mora 2008, 297–298 and Miller 2013, 39.

5 See the observations relating to the warning in Furlani 1938, 107 and Taggar-Cohen 2006, 100.

6 See Miller 2013, 32–43 and *passim* and Miller 2011, 197–202 (especially in reference to the *Instructions of Arnuwanda I for the Frontier Post Governors*, CTH 261.I). Alternatively, accepting the transition from *you* (plural) to *thou* in addressing the interlocutors, the sentence might be interpreted as a sort of invitation to evaluate the situation with roles reversed ("look at the man who takes thy food!"), that is, to put oneself in the shoes of someone whose food is taken away, in consideration of the fact that god and man have the same sensibility (as affirmed in § 2' of CTH 264). The message would thus entail the (among others) biblical-evangelical principle "do not do to others what you would not want to be done to you". However, such an alternative seems to me less probable.

7 For examples of *aversio* in the *Testament of Ḫattušili I* (CTH 6), see de Roos 2001, 406.

8 See in general Alaura 2015a (in print).

9 For the rhetorical importance of the interrogations see in general Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca 1966, 167–169, 515–516 and also 115, 188.

10 For rhetorical yes-no questions see Hoffner, Melchert 2008, 348–350. See also Katz 1986, 92.

In some cases, a rhetorical yes-no question serves as the apodosis of a conditional clause, as in § 3', 34'-37'.¹¹ Here we find a positive rhetorical question followed immediately by another rhetorical question, this time in the negative, which forms the reply to the first question: "If however, someone angers the spirit of a deity, does the deity avenge it on just that person alone? Does he not avenge it on his wife, his sons, his descendants, his family, his male servants, his female servants, his cattle, his sheep, and his grain?" (*ma-a-an-ma-aš-ta* ZI-TU₄ DINGIR-LĪ-ma ku-iš TUKU.TUKU-ia-nu-zi na-at-kán DINGIR-LĪ a-pé-e-da-ni-pát 1-e-da-ni an-da ša-an-aḥ-zi UL-at-kán A-NA DAM-ŠÚ DUMU^{MES}-ŠÚ NUMUN-ŠÚ MÁŠ-ŠÚ ĪR^{MES}-ŠÚ GĒME^{MES}-ŠÚ GU₄^{HIA}-ŠÚ UDU^{MES}-ŠÚ ḥal-ki-it-ta). The latter question does not seek information, but rather presumes an affirmative answer.

In § 16', devoted to the issue of corruption regarding temple lands and granaries, the authority issuing the text poses the following rhetorical question to the temple ploughmen (ll. 21'-22') "Are you stealing it from just a man? Are you not stealing it from the deity?" (*na-an-kán* UN-ši im-ma ta-a-it-te-ni UL-an-kán DINGIR-LĪ-ni x ta-ia-at-te-ni).

A further prominent feature of the text is the frequent repetition of entire phrases – as seen above, rhetorical questions included – that express key concepts. **Repetition** is to be understood as a rhetorical figure that produces a succession of elements which are identical, or which vary only slightly in form, syntactic function, or meaning. The iteration of the same words or the same phrases serves not only to fix the concepts in the listeners' minds, but also to maintain the cohesion of the whole argument and to give an insistent rhythm to the speech. Some examples are given below.

Repetition of the same rhetorical question: this is seen in the example already mentioned, "Is the mind of man and (that) of the gods somehow different? No! (And) in regard to this very (matter)? No! The mind is indeed one and the same" (§ 2', 21'-22'); "And is the mind of a deity somehow different?" (§ 2', 28').

Repetition of the same warning: this appears in the following energetic warning which clearly attempts to prevent undesirable behaviours, "So be very reverent / careful / mindful of something", often strengthened with *mekki*. The call to fear the judgement of the god recurs in many passages of CTH 264: "So be extremely reverent with regard to matters of the deity!" (*nu-za A-NA INIM DINGIR-LĪ me-ek-ki mar-ri na-aḥ-ḥa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén*, § 3' i 38'), "So be extremely reverent with regard to the will of a deity!" (*nu-za DINGIR^{MES}-aš ZI-ni me-ek-ki na-aḥ-ḥa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén*, § 7', 24'), "Whatever (is there) belongs exclusively to the deity, so be extremely reverent!" (*ku-it ku-it DINGIR-LĪ-ni-ma-at e-eš-zi-pát nu-za me-ek-ki na-aḥ-ḥa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén*, § 8' ii 28'-29'), "You must be extremely reverent with regard to the will of the deities!" (*nu-uš-ma-aš DINGIR^{MES}-aš ZI-ni me-na-aḥ-ḥa-an-da me-ek-ki na-aḥ-ḥa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén*, § 14' iii 56-57). In some cases such warning is expressed in a more articulated way, by means of the opposition of the gods' will versus the men's wishes: "In no case shall you act according to the man's wishes! ... You should act exclusively for the will of the deities. ... In no case shall you do it according to a man's wishes!" (*na-aš-ta UN-aš ZI-ni le-e-pát i-ia-at-te-ni ... na-aš-ta DINGIR^{MES}-aš-pát ZI-ni i-ia-at-tén ... UN-aš-ma-at-kán ZI-ni le-e-pát i-ia-at-te-ni* § 9', 63"-64", 69"-70", 71"). Typical of the text is also the following admonition: "The deities should not be kept waiting" (*na-at DINGIR^{MES} me-na-aḥ-ḥa-an-da le-e uš-kán-zi* § 15' iv 6-7, § 18', 38-39). In some instances the general warning is replaced by a punctual advice: "Be very mindful in the matter of the watch" (*nu-za ḥa-li-ia-aš ud-da-ni me-ek-ki pa-aḥ-ḥa-aš-ša-nu-wa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén* § 10' ii 73"-74"), "So be very careful regarding a brawl" (*nu-za ḥal-lu-wa-ia-za me-ek-ki na-aḥ-ḥa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén*, § 12' iii 43), "So be very careful in the matter of the fire" (*an-da-ma-za pa-aḥ-ḥu-u-e-na-aš-ša ud-da-ni-i me-ek-ki na-aḥ-ḥa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén* § 13' iii 44 and 54 with *paḥṣanu-* instead of *naḥḥ-*).¹²

Repetition of phrases that refer to the death penalty as punishment for the infractions committed: "It is a capital offense (for him/them/you)" (*na-at-ši SAG.DU-aš ag-ga-tar*, § 5' i 58', § 6', ii 16; § 8', ii 45", 49"-50", § 14', iii 83; with *wastul* instead of *aggatar*, § 10', iii 16; 17' iv 33, § 18', iv 46, § 19', iv 66). The death sentence can be concluded (or abbreviated) with "let him (/them) die!" (*na-at ak-kán-tu*, § 5' i 59', § 6', 16', § 8', ii 50"; § 10', iii 20, § 14', iii 83) and "there will be no turning back for him/them" (*na-aš a-ku EGIR-pa*

11 For rhetorical yes-no questions used as the apodosis of a contrary to fact conditional clause see Hoffner, Melchert 2008, 349.

12 The warning *mekki naḥḥante ešten* also appears in other Hittite *Instructions*, see Miller 2013, 30 and Taggar-Cohen 2006, 124-125.

wa-aḥ-nu-mar-ši le-e e-eš-zi, § 5' i 59', § 8, 51'), "he shall not escape", lit. "he shall not turn/spin" (*le-e-ia-aš-kán ú-e-eḥ-ta-ri*, § 10', 20).¹³

Repetition of the same curse formulae for those who commit infractions and for their families: in some cases, the curse makes reference to destruction, "whoever caused the disaster will be completely destroyed along with his descendants" (*nu wa-aš-túl ku-iš i-ia-zi na-aš QA-DUNUMUN-ŠU ḥar-ak-zi-pát* § 13', iii 51-52) and similarly, "not one of them will remain alive. Along with his descendants they will be completely destroyed" (*nu 1-aš-ša TI-nu-ma-aš UL e-eš-zi QA-DU NUMUN-ŠU-at ḥar-kán-zi-pát* § 13', iii 52-53); "you will be destroyed along with your wife and your sons" (*na-aš-ta QA-DU DAM^{MES}-KU-NU DUMU^{MES}-KU-NU ḥar-ak-te-ni* § 18', iv 54-55); in other cases, however, the curse relates to torment: "you, my god, my lord, shall [torment] him! May he seize his household below (and) above" (*nu wa-ra-an^{kán} DINGIR-LI EN-ia EGIR-an ki-ia-aḥ-ḥu-ut nu-wa-za-kán a-pé-e-el É-er GAM-an ša-ra-a e-ep-du* § 6', i 65'-66'); "then may you, o deity, continually haunt us, along with our wives and our sons" (*nu-wa-an-na-aš zi-ik DINGIR-LU₄ tu-el ZI-aš :zu-u-wa še-er QA-DU DAM^{MES}-NI DUMU^{MES}-NI par-ḥi-iš-ke* § 19', iv 76-77). It is interesting to note that in this last case the imprecation is put in the mouths of the addressees of the text themselves, almost as if it were an oath.¹⁴ We find the same concept of torment expressed by a proverb too: "The will of the gods is strong! It does not hasten to seize, but once it does seize, it does not let go again" (*DINGIR^{MES}-aš-ma ZI-an-za da-aš-šu-uš nu e-ep-pu-u-wa-an-zi UL nu-un-tar-nu-zi e-ep-zi-ma ku-e-da-ni me-e-ḥu-ni nu nam-ma ar-ḥa UL tar-na-a-i*) (§ 7', 22"-24", discussed at greater length below). In a concise manner, then, such a proverb, together with the other speech techniques and rhetorical devices, aim to persuade and elicit the agreement of those to whom they are addressed. Evidently, proverbs were considered by the Hittites to be rhetorical tools, anticipating what we already know in relation to the great theorists of Classical rhetoric, Aristotle above all.¹⁵

These examples clearly show, therefore, that in some cases we have repetitions in the true sense of the word, while in others we are presented with **reiterations**, through which the same concept is put forward again using different words or even using proverbs. It is evident that this rhetorical strategy intends to fix certain concepts in the listeners' minds using forms that can be easily memorised, proverbs included. Repetitions and reiterations generate the **climax**, which consists in arranging phrases, nouns and adjectives in an order based on the growing intensity of their meaning (ascending climax) to create an effect of progression that heightens the expressiveness of the discourse.¹⁶ The individual key concepts are expressed and later recalled. For instance, the concept of divine torment is expressed at §§ 6', 7', is accentuated with the crescendo of destruction (§§ 13', 18'), and culminates in the self imprecation pronounced by the addressees of the text themselves (§ 19').

Another rhetorical device characteristic of this text is the recourse to the narration of situations that are illustrative, exemplary or anecdotal, which we might broadly describe as **storytelling**. These are found in §§ 2' and 7' of CTH 264.

In §§ 2'-3' ll. 22'-38' the relationship between servant and master is used as a metaphor for the relationship between man and god.¹⁷ However, that metaphor takes the form of the narration of what can really be called a brief story, which contrasts two different ways in which a servant behaves towards a master (pure and obedient servant, and disobedient servant) and tells of their different fates (good and bad): "When a servant stands up before his master, he is washed and he wears pure (clothes), and he gives him (something) to eat or he gives him (something) to drink. And since he, his master, eats (and) drinks, he is of a tranquil mind, and he is therefore attached

13 For the death sentences in the Hittite instructions and related administrative texts see Miller 2013, 29-30 and more general Christiansen 2012 *passim* and de Martino, Devecchi 2012. In particular, as for "he shall not escape" see Miller 2013, 394 n. 547.

14 For the most commonly recurring curse formulae and self imprecations in the Hittite instructions and oath impositions see Miller 2013, 27-29, 69.

15 For proverbs as rhetorical tools see Falkowitz 1980. Proverbs are explicitly included among the oratorical tools in Aristotle, *Ars rhetorica*, particularly Book II, 18-26 and III 11.14.

16 For the different forms of rhetorical repetitions and the climax see in general Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca 1966, 184-186, 500, 527.

17 For this anecdote and the statement that the mind of man and the mind of gods are essentially alike see Miller 2013, 48-49.

to him. If, however, he is ever neglected², is he not perturbed?³” (*ku-wa-pí A-NA EN-šu pé-ra-an ša-ra-a ar-ta-ri na-aš wa-ar-pa-an-za nu pár-ku-wa-ia wa-aš-ša-an har-zi nu-uš-ši na-aš-šu a-da-an-na pé-eš-ke-ez-zi na-aš-ma-aš-ši a-ku-wa-an-na pé-eš-ke-ez-zi nu-za a-pa-a-aš EN-ŠU az-zi-ik-ke-ez-zi ak-ku-uš-ke-ez-zi ku-it na-aš ZI-an ar-ḫa la-a-an-za na-at-ši-kán an-da da-me-en-kiš-ke-et-ta ma-a-na-aš an-da-ma ku-wa-pí IGI-wa-an-na-an-za na-aš-kán UL :ḫa-an-ḫa-ni-ia-i*, § 2', ll. 22'-27').

Here, too, it is interesting to note how the speech transitions take place. The story is introduced by the rhetorical question already seen, “Is the mind of man and (that) of the gods somehow different? No! (And) in regard to this very (matter)? No! The mind is one and the same” (§ 2', ll. 21'f.). Not only does this form the transition to the supporting example, but it is also grounds for reflection, a kind of refrain which both introduces and concludes: “And is the mind of a deity somehow different?” (§ 2', l. 28').

The question is also answered by telling the exemplary story, which is introduced by the temporal adverb “when” (*kuwapi*), which is here equivalent to “for instance, for example, as an example”. The story is followed by an explanation of the metaphor that introduces the real and specific situation: As the master punishes the servant who disobeys him and does not indulge him in his desires, so the gods punish him who does not follow their will and their orders (§ 2', ll. 28'ff.). The rhetorical question refrain not only comments on the tale, but also generates the ethical maxim to be put into practice – the moral of the story – summarised in the warning that calls for compliance with the commands of the gods: “So be extremely reverent with regard to matter(s) of the deity!” (§ 3', l. 38').

We thus observe a tripartite structure, which is typical of wisdom teachings.¹⁸

Anecdotes are also found in other instructions, such as the *Instructions and Oath Imposition for Royal Servants Concerning the Purity of the King* (CTH 265), §§ 13'-15'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the anecdote of CTH 265 is in many respects more like those of the *Palace Chronicle* and of other Ancient Hittite compositions.²⁰ Indeed, it refers to a particular episode that probably actually took place. Here the sentence is introduced by a transition to a supporting didactic anecdote of a precise temporal and geographical kind: “One time I, the king, in the city of Sanaḫuita, found a hair in the washbasin”.²¹

Still more interesting is the storytelling in § 7' ll. 18"-24" of CTH 264. The final part of the paragraph is structured in the form of dialogue, in which are compared the contending theses supported respectively by the two parties involved – the priests and the issuing authority: “You argue thus: “Since he is a god, ‘He will not say anything and he will not do anything to us.’” Watch (out for) the man who before (literally: from) your eyes makes the food of your desire disappear! Subsequently, as soon as it occurs, “The will of the gods is strong! It does not hasten to seize, but once it does seize, it does not let go again.” So be very fearful of the will of the gods!” (*nu ki-iš-[(ša-an) an-da pé-e-(da-at-te-ni)] DINGIR-Lİ-wa-ra-aš ku-it nu-wa UL* ^(19")*ku-it-ki [(me-ma-i nu-wa-an-n)a-a(š)] UL ku-it-ki i-ya, -zi* ^(20")*nu-za UN-an-[(na a-ú ZI-aš-ták-ká)] n ku-iš :zu-u-[(wa-an I)] GI^{HI.A}-wa-az* ^(21")*pa-ra-a pít-t[(i-nu-zi) EG(IR-a)] n-da ma-aḫ-ḫa-an e, -[(eš-š)] a-a-i* ^(22")*DINGIR^{MEŠ}-aš-ma Z[(I-an-za da-aš-šu)] -uš nu e-ep-pu-u-wa-'an'-zi UL nu-un-tar-nu-'zi* ^(23")*e-ep-zi-[(ma ku-e-d)] a-ni me-e-ḫu-ni nu nam-ma ar-ḫa* ^(24")*UL tar-na-a-'i* ^(24")*[(nu-za)] DIN-GIR^{MEŠ}-aš ZI-ni me-ek-ki na-aḫ-ḫa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén*).²²

The presence of a proverb (“The will of the gods is strong! It does not hasten to seize, but once it does seize, it does not let go again”) is one of the features of § 7' already identified by scholars.²³ In a previous article, I attempted

18 See Alaura 2015b, in print, with further literature.

19 The most recent edition of the text is in Miller 2013, 78-87.

20 Miller 2013, 17 and note 21.

21 We also find an anecdote in the *Instructions and Oath Imposition for Princes, Lords, and Military Officers* (CTH 251), § 8', where reference is also made to an event that took place, see Miller 2013, 170-171.

22 For a detailed treatment of this paragraph see Alaura 2015a.

23 See Beckman 1986, 21 [4] and 1997, 215 [7] (“The will of the gods is severe! It does not hasten to seize, but when it does seize, it does not let go again!”); Haas 2006, 310 (“Der Wille der Götter ist stark. Er hat es nicht eilig zuzupacken, dann aber lässt er nicht mehr los”); Hutter 2009, 64 (“der Wille der Götter mächtig ist. Er beeilt sich nicht zuzugreifen, wenn er aber zupackt, dann lässt er nicht mehr los!”).

to show that the expression that precedes it (“Since he is a god, ‘He will not say anything and he will not do anything to us’”) can also be interpreted as a proverb²⁴. The passage is thus structured as a “debate situation” and can be seen to employ sophisticated rhetorical and stylistic devices.

The proverb “He will not say anything and he will not do anything to us” is a simple one with a binary structure like the type of proverbs used in judicial proceedings, such as “Something is on hand, (but) something (else) is not on hand” and “This one disappears, and that one’s still here!”, attested respectively in the *Trial of Kuniyapiya* (CTH 294)²⁵ and the *Case against Uratarhunta and his father Ukkura* (CTH 293).²⁶ These proverbs are the kind of fatalistic expressions that exist in all cultures to indicate those situations in life that cannot be avoided or changed, like for example the English “Now you see it, now you don’t”, “Here today and gone tomorrow”,²⁷ and the Italian “Oggi ci siamo, domani non ci siamo”, “Così va il mondo” and “È andata come è andata”. Such pithy generalisations or commonplaces are used either to lend credibility to one’s argument or to ‘get by’ in any given circumstance.

The second proverb, “It does not hasten to seize, but once it does seize, it does not let go again”, also shows the use of legal terminology. Indeed, both the verbs *ep(p)-*, ‘to take’ – which here is used in the specific sense of ‘to seize, to capture’ someone for committing an infraction, as can also be the case with its Akkadian equivalent *šabātu*²⁸ – and *arḥa tarna-*, ‘to free, dismiss, release’, can have legal significance.²⁹ This second proverb, unlike the first, implies a conception of a god who is present and near, as shown by the choice of the antonyms *ep(p)-* and *arḥa tarna-*, which express the physicality of divine intervention in human affairs.³⁰ The position of parity of the two proverbs – and consequently of the two parties involved – nevertheless is revealed to be merely apparent if we observe the way in which the two proverbs are introduced. Indeed, it shows that the presentation of the debate actually has a clear imbalance in favour of the second proverb.

Indeed, in the first proverb’s introductory expression, ‘to argue thus’ (*kiššan anda peda*)³¹ is used instead of the commoner stock expressions ‘to say thus’ (*kiššan mema-*) and ‘to say a saying thus’ (*kiššan memi(y)an memiške-*) that introduce proverbs in other Hittite texts, making reference to their widespread diffusion and tradition, guarantees of veracity.³² This actually characterises the proverb of the priests as a subjective opinion. The verb *anda peda-*, literally ‘to carry in’, to be interpreted contextually as ‘to put forward, argue’, also used to introduce depositions during legal proceedings (‘to bring (testimony), to adduce evidence’),³³ rules out any guarantee of factual objectivity. The proverb of the priests in CTH 264 is therefore presented as a potentially misleading discourse. It thus takes on a connotation of tendentiousness and guile.

24 See Alaura 2015a.

25 KUB 40.88 iii 9: ([*ku-it-ki*] Ì.GÁL *ku-it-ki-pát* NU.Ì.GÁL), see Werner 1967, 22-23, 26; Beckman 1986, 22 [6] and 1997, 215. The context is unclear.

26 KUB 13.35+ iv 45-46: *mar-ta-ri-wa-ra-at-kán nu-wa-ra-at-kán a-aš-zi*, see Güterbock 1955, 67; Werner 1967, 14-15, 19 and 78 for the proverbial expression; Beckman 1986, 22 [5]; CHD L/N, 295; Tani 1999, 180; Hoffner 2002, 60; Puhvel, HED M, 198-199. The proverb is mentioned in the course of the defence testimony issued by Ukkura, “overseer of the 10 (men)” (^{LU}UGULA X), accused of illicit appropriation of livestock belonging to the Palace. In my opinion, the proverb is not used by Ukkura to exonerate himself, but is cited by Ukkura as an ambiguous and underhand expression typical of someone who, though guilty, is seeking to justify himself (see Alaura 2015b, in print).

27 See Beckman 1986, 22; see also Puhvel, HED M, 198-199 (“win some lose some”).

28 See Puhvel, HED E,I, 273-282, and HW2 E, 44-88 (esp. 61) for attestations.

29 See Goetze 1966, 50 and Neu 1996, 322.

30 On the contrary notions of divine distance and closeness, see Lambert 1960, 16, 22, 64, 75, 87, 309; Lemke 1981, 544-545; Denning-Bolle 1992, 144-158.

31 See CHD P, 297, 351, and Puhvel, HED Pe,Pi,Pu, 45-56, esp. 49 and 51.

32 As for sayings, proverbs, maxims or parables preceded by such introductory expressions see Fontaine 1987, 108 and 2002, 163-164; Hoffner, Melchert 2008, 307, 321, and Alaura 2015b (in print). For the various nuances of the term *memiya(n)-* see CHD L-N, 268-274, Tischler, HEG L/M, 192-193, and Puhvel, HED M, 141-145.

33 In the *Case against Uratarhunta and his father Ukkura*, CTH 293 (KUB 13.35+ iv 20-21). It also occurs in § 18’ of CTH 264.A (KUB 13.4 iv 48), in the instructions to cowherds and shepherds of the deity on bringing livestock punctually and in full, see Miller 2013, 262-263 and 396 n. 574.

On the other hand, the second proverb is introduced by an entirely different expression, “Subsequently, as soon as it occurs” (EGIR-*an-da ma-aḥ-ḥa-an e-eš-ša-a-i*), which links the proverb in a consequential way to an event – divine punishment – in a cause-and-effect relationship which thus confers on it the value of an objective statement of fact. The priests’ defence argument expressed by the first proverb is thus contradicted by experiencing god’s intervention. Structurally and conceptually, this mode of argument is similar to that found in a passage from *Mursili’s “Second” Plague Prayer to the Storm-god of Hatti* (CTH 378.II), in which a proverb is also preceded by an introductory expression, “And it happens thus (*nu kikkištari QATAMMA*): ‘the father’s sin comes upon his son’”.³⁴ The functionally analogous use of the verbs ‘to occur’ (*ešša-*, *išša-*) in CTH 264 and ‘to happen’ (*kikkiš-*) in CTH 378 II serves to confer an air of veracity, objectivity and impersonality on the proverb.³⁵

The way in which the two proverbs are introduced in CTH 264 therefore highlights the distinction between what can be only said and what can be shown, i.e. how things seem versus their reality.

The second proverb should be attributed to the same priests, who – once the god’s power is revealed – will have recourse to a different proverb quite contrary to the initial one. Indeed, it is evident that the second proverb is shared by the authority who issues the instruction, who presents it as if it were introduced by an expression such as “so you, priests, will have to admit thus: ‘...’”. In a way that is rhetorically highly effective, the view of the authority is voiced by the opposing party (*sermocinatio*).

By means of the two proverbs in § 7’ of CTH 264, therefore, two theological and anthropological conceptions are emphatically contrasted. The confrontation between the priests and the authority issuing the text is conceived as a dispute in which the adversaries, by debating among themselves, put forward their reciprocal demands and objections following forms and expressions typical of the dialectics of a trial. The juxtaposition of the two proverbs forms the load-bearing component in the architecture of the discourse, which also exploits other rhetorical devices as it unfolds.³⁶ The contrast of these two conceptions in dialogue form is difficult to categorise precisely. Broadly, one can observe that it seems to share aspects of a legal debate and at the same time has the tenor of a sapiential dispute. There is also a sapiential flavour to the warnings that follow both the proverbs of CTH 264, again following a strictly symmetrical structure.

Paragraph 7’ of CTH 264 ends with the energetic warning already seen, “So be very fearful of the will of the gods!” (*nu-za DINGIR^{MES}-aš ZI-ni me-ek-ki na-aḥ-ḥa-an-te-eš e-eš-tén*). Expressed in the imperative form, it appears to be a wise piece of advice, since from the certainty of divine punishment comes the benefit of leading a virtuous life.³⁷ The Hittite proverbs aimed at persuading the recipient to do or not do something are often followed by curse formulae or the pronouncement of the sanction for transgressors.³⁸ In CTH 264 the warning occupies the same position and fulfils the same deterrent function as such formulae and pronouncements. In this case, the fear of divine punishment acts as a cornerstone of political authority.

34 KUB 14.8 rev. 12’-15’: *nu ki-ik-ki-i[(š-ta)]-a-ri QA-TAM-MA ŠA A-BU-ŠU-kán wa-aš-túl A-NA DUMU-ŠÚ a-ri*, see Singer 2002, 59. For the proverb see Beckman 1997, 215 [5]. For the verb *kikkiš-*, ‘to befall, occur, happen’, see Tischler, HEG Lief. 3, 585-586, and Puhvel, HED K, 197-198.

35 Cf. the Latin expression *sic res se habet* “thus it stands, so it is”.

36 As for rhetorical elements in other Hittite texts see de Roos 2001; Haas 2006, 91, 133, 183, 261, 288, 361-362 and *passim*, and Hoffner 2013. For a rhetorical approach to cuneiform literature see the general surveys in Katz 1986 and Hallo 2004, devoted to the Sumerian and Akkadian texts.

37 Often Hittite proverbs are intended to address virtuous conduct, to achieve moral habits and a wise way of life. The presence of proverbs and sapiential asides that point towards honest conduct also characterises other Hittite politico-administrative documents. Sapiential asides appear recurrently in documents of the Ancient Hittite period, such as royal edicts, and other related literary genres of the ethical-legal kind, such as collections of anecdotes and charitable-educational instructions, see, among others, Dardano 1997, Cammarosano 2006, 12, 35-38, Marazzi 2013, 68 and *passim*, and Alaura 2015b (in print).

38 See for instance the *Edict of Hattušili I* (CTH 5), in which the sovereign urges his subjects to stay as united as a pack of wolves, symbol of family unity: “May your stock, my servants, be as united as that of the wolf” ([*šú*]-*mi-in-za-na* ÌR^{MES}-*am-ma-an* UR.BAR.RA-*aš ma-a-an pa-an-k[u-ur-še-me-et]* 1-^{EN} *e-eš-tu*, KBo 3.27 obv. 15-16), see de Martino 1991. The text continues with a warning to be obedient to royal instruction and a threat of capital punishment for transgressors (on the death penalty in this text see de Martino, Devecchi 2012, 192). For further examples see Alaura 2015b (in print).

The passage in § 7', then, in contrast to a full symmetry of form, sets up a strong imbalance of content in favour of the authority issuing the text. In conclusion, one cannot help but be struck by the similarity between the compositional techniques of the Hittite *Instructions for Priests and Temple Personnel* (CTH 264) and those which will become the fundamental principles of epideictic (exhortatory) and judicial rhetoric, systematised many centuries later in the Classical era.

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