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Van Gessel, Ben H. L.

Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon, part 3

Handbuch der Orientalistik 1.33-3

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To walk through the narrow passageways and jagged cliffs of the outdoor shrine at Yazilikaya is a remarkable experience. Just 2 kilometers northeast of the royal palace at Boghazköy/Hattusas, this open-air chapel still bears silent witness to the complexity, variety, and diversity of the Hittite pantheon. Fifty or so deities are carved into the walls of Yazilikaya (“Inscribed Rock”), but these are but a small remnant of “The Thousand Gods of Ḫatti” so often boasted on the priestly tablets from ancient Anatolia. The present volume is the third of a three-part series designed to chart the complexity and character of this pantheon. Volumes 1 and 2 (published in 1998) are a thorough listing of the theonyms, ideograms, and Hurrian epithets attesting to and describing these deities and their festivals. The present volume consists of several glossaries designed to explain the meanings of the terms in volumes 1–2.

The glossaries are subdivided into phonetic Hittite, Sumerian, Akkadian, Hattic, Hurrian, Palaic, Luwian, and terms of “unknown” origin. The editor painstakingly lists each term and explains its meaning, giving attention on occasion to both its form and its function in the primary texts. This book is not intended to replace the *Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute* or von Soden’s *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, but it is intended to replace E. Laroche’s *Recherches sur les noms des dieux hittites* (Paris, 1947). It

admirably achieves its stated goal of connecting specific terms to specific deities within a single reference tool.

Volume 3 lists personal and geographical names along with the names of several festivals. In addition, it includes over one hundred pages of corrigenda and addenda to volumes 1–2, the latter drawn largely from material published within the past several years, including *KBo XXXI*, XL, XLI; *Kuşakli-Sarissa* (G. Wilhelm, *Kuşakli-Sarissa*, vol. 1.1 [Rahden, 1997]); and new texts published by A. Ünal (*Hittite and Hurrian Cuneiform Tablets from Ortakoy [Çorum], Central Turkey* [Istanbul, 1998]). To cite some examples, the deity U (the weather god) has eleven more pages of information complementing and correcting the references in volumes 1–2. The deity UTU (the sun god) receives six more critically edited pages. The deity MAḪ (mother goddess) has two more pages. Some of the new attestations in the more recently published literature include AYA (*KBo* XL 87), ANU (*KBo* XL 102.3), API (five times in *KBo* XXXI 143), and ḪEPAT (*KBo* XXXI 82, 144, 157, 182; XL 84.8; XLI 107). There are many, many more.

Finding one's way through the Hittite pantheon is no easy task, and this welcome volume makes it much easier than it otherwise would be. Van Gessel is to be commended for his quiet devotion to this project and heartily thanked for his many years of painstaking work. The reference tool he has produced will be of enormous help to Hittitologists, semitists, comparativists, and biblical scholars for many years to come.