

Irene Tatišvili (Tbilisi)

AIETES – SON OF HELIOS
(FOR THE STUDY OF HITTITE-GEORGIAN RELIGIOUS PARALLELS)

According to Apollonius Rhodius, Aietes, Medea and the whole royal family of Colchis were the progeny of Helios, the sun-god. As far as I know, Aietes is the son of Helios in all the versions of the myth, which does not seem accidental. The Greeks could have adopted this tradition 'on the spot'. The sun was one of the supreme deities in Colchis and among the Kartvelian tribes in general. Apart from the ethnographic materials, this is testified by a Greek inscription found in Vani, ancient Colchis, which goes back almost to the times of Apollonius. According to the inscription, the major deities of Suryon (the name of Vani at that period) were hJ Gh' kai; oJ \$Hlio" kai; oJ Meiv" – 'the earth, and the sun and the moon'.¹

Remarkably, the sun is normally associated with a woman in Georgian world and exactly the female sun deity could have been among the central figures in the pantheon of Kartvelian tribes.² Ethnographic materials include as well a male solar character.³ It is difficult to argue whether the character is a male deity, or the son of the sun-goddess, a young god, a king or a hero.

Close connection of the king with the sun, the rank of the Georgian sun deity in the pantheon as well as its sex certainly reminds of the Hittite sun deity.

Kartvelian and Hittite religious worlds include quite a number of parallel elements, studied in many interesting works.⁴

¹ T. Kauchtschischwili, *Korpus der griechischen Inschriften in Georgien*, Tbilisi, 2004², #116, 149f.

² I. Javakishvili, *History of the Georgian Nation*, I (in Georgian), Tbilisi, 1951, 58f.; I. Kikvidze, *Agriculture and Agricultural Cult in the Ancient Georgia* (in Georgian), Tbilisi, 1976, 156 ff.; cf. I. Surguladze, *Symbolism of Georgian Folk Ornament* (in Georgian), Tbilisi, 1993, 169.

³ Н. Абакелия, *Миф и ритуал в Западной Грузии*, Тбилиси, 1991, 24 и сл.

⁴ See e.g. M. Tsereteli, *The Land of the Hittites, Its Peoples, Languages, History and Culture* (in Georgian), Constantinople, 1924, 77ff.; Н. Бендукидзе, *Хеттский миф о Телепину и его*

What kind are the parallels between Anatolian and Kartvelian religious beliefs? Are they the instances of typological similarity, or certain borrowings, or do they point to their belonging to the common ethno-cultural world? The materials are quite specific and difficult to compare with one another. More so that no methodology has yet been developed to compare the traces of the cosmologies reflected in the Hittite religious texts, composed with a particular intention, and in Georgian folklore, archeological material and written records. Therefore, there cannot be an ultimate and undisputable answer to the question. Anyway I still believe that the above-mentioned parallels cannot be altogether accidental and corresponding studies promise many interesting findings.

If we borrow a method of the most precise branch of the humanities, the linguistics, in my opinion, comparison of systems would be the most appropriate one to evaluate the significance of the parallels. This is the task of the future. Now I will only present my own version of reconstructing the Hattian-Hittite cosmological system⁵ and will find my objective achieved if the present paper will help my colleagues in the study and systematization of the mentioned parallels.

The religion referred to as ‘Hittite’ includes the elements adopted from various ethno-cultural environments, and therefore, the study of it invites various approaches. I share the viewpoint suggesting the existence of a certain system which, although influenced by strongly modified alien elements, still represented a certain core, the basis for the Hittite state religion. The core must have been the Hittite (or Hattian-Hittite) religious system, developed as a result of the fusion of Hattian and Nesite beliefs and ideas – the system mainly based on Hattian elements.

This religious system must have had its own cosmology. I believe that its traces can be discerned in the Hittite religious texts. The fragmental implications scattered in the Myth about Illuyanka (CTH 321) and some ritual

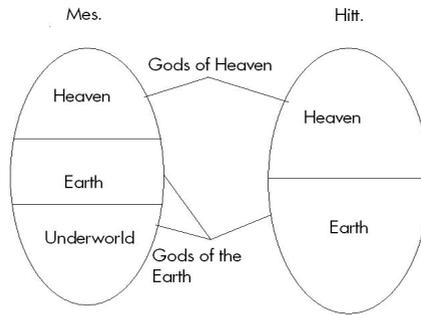
сванский параллели, ВДИ 4, 1973, 95 и сл.; С. Girbal, Weiterleben des Telepinu-Mythos bei einem kaukasischen Volk, SMEA 22, 1980, 69f.; V. Haas, Hethitische Berggötter und hurritische Steindämonen, Mainz am Rhein 1982, 210; M. Beriashvili, Z. Skhirtladze, For the Interpretation of the Scenes on the Silver Bowl from Trialeti (in Georgian), Proceedings of the Kakheti Archeological Expedition VI, Tbilisi, 1984, 133ff.; Н. Абакелия, 1991, 108 f.; G. Giorgadze, Hethitisch-hurritische und armasische ‘Triaden’, Archiv Orientalni 67/4, Praha, 1999, 547ff.; R. Schmidt-Brandt, Zur Etymologie von Mhvdeia, Phasis 7, 2004, 88ff.; N. Khazaradze, From the history of ethno-cultural relationships of Georgia with the world of Ancient Anatolia (in Georgian), The Southern Caucasus and the Near East, Tbilisi, 2005, 111ff.; N. Khazaradze, T. Tsagareishvili, The Cult of the Sacred Tree in Georgia (Mythological parallels), The Southern Caucasus and the Near East, Tbilisi, 2005, 221ff.

⁵ In detail see I. Tatišvili, Problems of Hittite Cosmology (in Georgian), Sprache und Kultur 3, 2002, 141ff.

texts may reflect Anatolian, Hattian cosmogony,⁶ more primitive and undoubtedly earlier than the Hurrian cosmogony, presented in the ‘Song on Ullikummi’ (CTH 345) and ‘Theogony’ (CTH 344).⁷ The texts also include bits of information about Hittite ideas on the world order. It is not easy to make up a single system of such beliefs as they were developed in different ethno-cultural environments.

According to the texts, the world is divided into three vertical zones: heaven, the earth and the underworld. Such a division has parallels in the religious beliefs of Indo-Europeans, relatives of the Hittites, as well as in the beliefs of Mesopotamians, their neighbors. The Mesopotamian cultural impact on the Hittites is doubtless, and the effect seems even stronger due to the use of cuneiform script by the Hittites.

In these circumstances, the majority of scholars is inclined to find parallels between the Mesopotamian and Hittite cosmogonies. It is believed that the Mesopotamian perception of the world underlies the division of the Hittite pantheon into the deities of heaven and the earth or the underworld,⁸ which admittedly corresponds to the two-fold division of the world in the Hittite cosmogony: heaven (and) earth.⁹



⁶ See about ‘Illuyanka’ as a cosmogonic myth M. Eliade, *Traité d’histoire des religions*, Paris, 1996, 336.

⁷ In my opinion, the Hurrian myths are not relevant to the studies of the Hittite cosmogony. See I. Tatišvili, *Quelques réflexions sur l’évolution de la pensée religieuse chez les Hittites*, Phasis 7, 2004, 93 sqq.

⁸ G. Steiner, *Gott. D. Nach hethitischen Texten*, RLA 3/7, 1969, 552; E. Laroche, *Recherches sur les noms des dieux hittites*, Paris, 1947, 18; E. von Schuler, *Die Mythologie der Hethiter und Hurriter*, *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* I, 1965, 161.

⁹ H. Otten und J. Siegelová, *Die hethitischen Götter-Gottheiten und die Erschaffung des Menschen*, *Archiv für Orientforschung* 23, 1970, 32 f.; N. Oettinger, *Die ‘Dunkle Erde’ im Hethitischen und Griechischen*, *Die Welt des Orients* 20/21, 1989-90, 86; V. Haas, *Death and the Afterlife in Hittite Thought*, *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Sasson), N.-Y., 1995, 2021 f.

I fully agree with I. Singer as he distinguishes between two cosmogonic concepts and finds the traces of both in the ‘prayer of Muwatalli’ (CTH 381). According to the scholar, the original version must reflect the division of the world into heaven (and) earth, while in the later copy of the same text the world is divided into three parts in compliance with the Mesopotamian cosmogony. They are: the dark netherworld, the (surface of the) earth, and heaven.¹⁰

Where can the elements of the Hattian-Hittite cosmology be traced?

To answer this question, it certainly seems relevant to consider one important aspect of the Hittite cosmology – the Hittite understanding of the deities of heaven and earth, their functions and interrelationships.

One of the Hittite expressions referring to pantheon¹¹ (‘all deities’- DINGIR^{MEŠ} humanteš/dapiyanteš; ‘thousand deities of the land of Hatti’ – LIM DINGIR^{MEŠ} KUR^{URU} Hatti; ‘great gods (and) minor gods’ – DINGIR^{MEŠ} GAL[.GAL^{TIM}] DINGIR^{MEŠ} TUR.TUR^{TIM}]; ‘male gods (and) goddesses’ – DINGIR^{MEŠ}.LÜ^{MEŠ} DINGIR^{MEŠ}.SAL^{MEŠ}) sounds as ‘celestial gods (and) earth gods’ (nepišaš DINGIR^{MEŠ} taknaš DINGIR^{MEŠ} / DINGIR^{MEŠ} ŠAMÊ DINGIR^{MEŠ} ERS^SETIM), the parallel expression of which is ‘upper deities (and) lower deities (DINGIR^{MEŠ} UGU DINGIR^{MEŠ} ŠAPLĪTI). Sometimes the members of these groupings are also mentioned separately: ‘celestial’ (nepišaš DINGIR^{MEŠ} = DINGIR^{MEŠ} ŠAMÊ/AN^E) or ‘upper’ deities (UGU-zeš = šarazzeš DINGIR^{MEŠ}) and ‘earth’ (taknaš DINGIR^{MEŠ} = DINGIR^{MEŠ} KI/ERS^SETIM) or ‘lower’ (kattereš DINGIR^{MEŠ} = DINGIR^{MEŠ} ŠAPLĪTI) deities. Who are they and what does their common name imply?

Earth deities are quite numerous. First of all, among the members of the group are:¹²

Deity Lelwani of the Hattian origin¹³ identified with the ‘sun of the earth’, which on its part is identified with Hurrian Allani, Akkadian Allatum, Sumerian Ereškigal;¹⁴ The Mesopotamian common name – Anunnaki unites

¹⁰ I. Singer, *Muwatalli's Prayer to the Assembly of Gods through the Storm-God of Lightning* (CTH 381), *American Schools of Oriental Research*, 1996, 62 f.

¹¹ B.H.L. van Gessel, *Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon* (Handbuch der Orientalistik), part II, Leiden 1998, 970 ff.

¹² For the list c.f.e.g., Steiner, 1969, 551 ff. For the deities of the underworld see e.g., V. Haas, *Die Unterwelts- und Jenseitsvorstellungen im hethitischen Kleinasien*, *Orientalia* 45/1-2, 1976, 205 ff.; H. Otten, *Eine Beschwörung der Unterirdischen aus Bogazköy*, *ZA* 20 (54), 1961, 114 ff.

¹³ H. Otten, *Die Gottheit Lelwani der Bogazköi-Texte*, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 4/2, 1950, 119 ff.; J. Klinger, *Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der hattischen Kultschicht* (STBoT 37), 1996, 167 ff.

¹⁴ E. Laroche, *Les dénominations des dieux ‘antiques’ dans les textes hittites*, *Anatolian Studies Presented to H. G. Güterbock*, Istanbul 1974, 184 sq.

the underworld deities. They are linked to the Mesopotamian-Hurrian tradition that had entered Asia Minor from Syria or Northern Mesopotamia.¹⁵ In the Hittite language they are referred to as ‘primeval’ (karuiliēš) and ‘lower’ (kattereš) deities.

The group of earth deities may also include: vegetation gods – Telipinu, Ziparwa, Kait/ Halki; Miyatanzipa, Šuwaliyat; War (^DZA.BA₄.BA₄) and Plague deities – Wurunkatte, Hašamili, Iyarri, Zapana, Nergal/ Šulinkatte; Destiny deities – Ištuštaya and Papaya, GUL-šeš (‘Scribes of the Fate’?) and DINGIR.MAH^{MES} (‘Mother Goddesses’), Hannahanna/ ^DNIN.TU / DINGIR.MAH.

The Nesite god of heaven must have been ^DŠiuš, which corresponds to Proto-Indo-European *Dyeu(s). The Hattian couple of supreme deities – the Sun and the Weather deities – replaced it as the ruler of the world and its name acquired the meaning of ‘god’ in the Hittite language. Presumably, the Hittite concept of royal power was based on close relationship of the king with the supreme deities. That is why this concept must have appealed to Indo-European tribal chiefs, aspired to obtain the status of the Great King.¹⁶

The most obvious sign to point to the celestial gods is the epithet ‘celestial/of heaven’. The epithet is normally used to refer to the supreme deities. The epithet ‘the Queen of heaven’ is also used with Hepat mainly in the contexts which accentuate her identity with the Sun-goddess of Arinna.¹⁷ The mentioning of the deity Pihaššašši as the ‘King of heaven’¹⁸ may presumably be attributed to an attempt of identifying him with the supreme deity of Weather.¹⁹ Apart from the supreme deities, the epithet ‘celestial’ goes with Ištar²⁰ and the deity of moon, which at the same time is referred to as the ‘Moon of the earth’: ‘The Moon of heaven and earth’.²¹ The Mesopotamian

¹⁵ O. Gurney, *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion*, Oxford, 1977, 15 f.; Archi, *The Names of the Primeval Gods*, *Orientalia. Nova Series* 59, 1990, 114 ff.; Haas, 1976, 208.

¹⁶ I. Tatišvili, *Hethitische Religion. Genese, Formierung, Struktur des Pantheons*, Tbilissi, 2004², 122.

¹⁷ See e.g., KUB 6.45 I 41 (= 6.46 II 8): SAL.LUGAL ŠAMĒ.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, III 51: nepišaš LUGAL.

¹⁹ For the identification of the Great Storm-god of heaven on Muwatalli’s and Urhi-Teshub’s seals with the Storm-god of Lightning (pihaššaššiš Tarhuntaš) see I. Singer, *From Hattuša to Tarhuntašša: Some Thoughts on Muwatalli’s Reign, Acts of the IIIrd International Congress of Hittitology* (Çorum 1996), Ankara, 1998, 538.

²⁰ Ishtar – ‘queen of heaven’ (KBo 5.3 + I 55).

²¹ KUB 7.41/ III 54, IV 9,23; cf. ‘the Moon – king of heaven’, ‘Moon of heaven’ (VAT 7497 rev. IV 3’ sqq.); Regarding the connection of the Moon deity with the Underworld, it is noteworthy that the Moon is sometimes mentioned together with the deity of ‘Night’ and ‘sun of the earth’ (See corresponding texts in: D. Yoshida, *Das AN.TAH. ŠUM^{SAR} – Fest im Tempel der Sonnengöttin, Cult and Ritual in the Ancient Near East*, Wiesbaden, 1992, 143 f.).

religion abounds in deities with both celestial and chthonic nature.²² However, the world of Hittite deities is different: it is very difficult to trace the deity of heaven proper, and in my opinion, G. Steiner's negative definition – the Hittite celestial gods are those that do not belong to the category of the 'earth deities'²³ – is truly of little help. Astral deities are closely connected with the underworld. The chthonic nature of the supreme deities is also obvious.²⁴

It is commonly known that in the Hittite texts the Weather deity is graphically represented as ^DU, ^DIM/ ^DIŠKUR. Both ideograms correspond to the Akkadian Adad and consequently, the deity is referred to as the Weather-god or the Storm-god in the Hittitological literature. The Hattian name for the deity is Taru, its Hurrian name is Tešub, while Luwian and Nesite names are derived from Tarhunt- stem.

The Anatolian deity, graphically rendered through Mesopotamian ideograms, is the ruler of rain as well as of chthonic waters. Evidently, the function of the deity as the lord of underground waters was more conspicuous in Anatolia. In this connection, the karstic nature of Anatolian waters must have been very important, as postulated by H. Deighton.²⁵ The unexpected outflow of a river or a rivulet from the earth and its likewise unexpected disappearance into the 'underworld' evidently shape the image of the lord of those waters, the weather deity, and had an impact on the specific perception of world. The impression produced by the Weather deity, which could effortlessly 'trespass' the boundaries (could easily move from heaven to the underworld and *vice versa*), must have been applied to other deities as well. All Hittite deities are capable of hiding away in the underworld and come back. However, it is not accidental that the character of the most popular myth about the disappeared deity is the Weather-god and the deities of his group.

As concerns the Sun, referred to as 'the sun of the earth' in the Hittite texts, it is so closely linked to the underworld that 'sun' as its designation seems even curious.²⁶

The Sun deity is mentioned in almost all Hittite texts and is normally rendered through the Sumerogram ^DUTU. According to the most recurrent epithets, the following Sun deities were distinguished: the Sun-goddess of

²² J. van Dijk, Gott. A. Nach sumerischen Texten, RLA 3/7, 1969, 535 ff.

²³ Steiner, 1969, 553.

²⁴ Cf. J. G. Macqueen, Hattian Mythology and Hittite Monarchy, Anatolian Studies 9, London, 1959, 171 ff.

²⁵ H. Deighton, The 'Weather-god' in Hittite Anatolia, BAR International Series 143, 1982, 2 ff.

²⁶ cf. M. Popko, Das hethitische Ritual CTH 447, Warszawa, 2003, 73.

Arinna (^DUTU ^{URU}Arinna), the deity of heaven (nepišaš ^DUTU) and the earth (taknaš ^DUTU). Remarkably, the epithet ‘of heaven’ seems to be mostly associated with a male Sun deity, while ‘of earth’ – with a goddess. At first sight, such relationships provide grounds for the idea popular in the Hittitological literature, which favours the existence of various Sun deities. In my opinion, the two principle designations of the Sun deity – nepišaš ‘of heaven’ and taknaš ‘of the earth’ refers not to two different Sun deities, but to two essential functions of the same deity, the two hypostases of the Sun.

‘The sun of heaven’ and ‘the sun of the earth’ of the Hittite cuneiform texts make up a single image of the cosmic sun, whose domain covers the whole world. It may be the ‘sun of gods’ (DINGIR^{MES}-nan ^DUTU), which embodies the unity of heaven and the underworld, the supreme ruler over all the deities in heaven as well as in the underworld. The prayer to the Sun-goddess of Arinna (CTH 376 A. I 40ff.) includes the following passage: ‘Also among the primeval gods you are favoured. You, O Sun-goddess of Arinna, allot the sacrifices to the gods, and the share of the primeval gods you allot as well. They open up the door of heaven for you, and you cross the gate of heaven, O favoured [Sun-goddess of Arinna]. The gods of heaven [and earth bow down to you] ...Whatever you say ... [the gods] fall down before you ...’²⁷

In the Hittite cosmology, the relationship of the Sun deity with the earth is based on the idea that the sun sets on the horizon in the evening in order to pass through the underworld and shine out again in heaven. This idea is not alien to other mythologies as well. However, unlike other peoples, the Hittites believed that the Sun was neither asleep at night, nor had a rest, or was captured or acted as a judge in the netherworld as it is in the Egyptian or the Mesopotamian theological systems, but ruled over the earth, the underworld. The initial earth-goddess, ‘Mother Earth’, could have become associated with the Sun in the process of astralization.²⁸ In this connection, I find noteworthy the following phrase from one text (KBo 3.38 Vo. 2 sqq.) – ^{MUNUS}Daganzipaš DUMU.MUNUS ^DUTU, which sounds as ‘the Earth – the daughter of the Sun’ or ‘the daughter of the Earth – the Sun.’²⁹

‘The sun of heaven’ and ‘the sun of the earth’ represent two earliest aspects of the Hittite Sun deity. Among the Hattian epithets of the Sun deity,

²⁷ I. Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, Atlanta, Georgia, 2002, 51.

²⁸ See e.g. KUB 43.30 rev. III 5’ff., where the companion of the Weather-god of heaven is ‘Mother Earth’ (annaš taganzipaš), which in the parallel text (Bo 3895 10’) is replaced with ‘the sun of the earth’ (taganzipaš ^DUTU-uš).

²⁹ See J. Klingler, 1996, 146f. In the opinion of the scholar, the Hattian equivalent of this expression can be the epithet of Eštan – Wurun-šemu ‘Mother (/ Daughter?) of the earth.’

there are brightness/light (Hatt. *kašbaruyah*, Hitt. *lalukkima-*) on the one hand and *Wurušemu* ‘Mother of the earth’ on the other. The ‘sun’ is used with the epithets ‘of heaven’ and ‘of earth’ in old Hittite ritual texts. Corresponding archeological material is also noteworthy: E. Masson identifies the anthropomorphic figures with the disc of the sun on their heads, symmetrically arranged on the blades (on both sides) of the spear discovered in the Middle Bronze Age tomb of *Ikiz Tepe* as the earliest images of the Sun deities of ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’ known from the texts.³⁰

So, the integrity of the Hittite Sun deity does not seem to be the result of theological speculation. Traces of theology can be detected in the opposition of ‘the sun of heaven’ and ‘the sun of the earth.’³¹ This opposition reflects the increasing independence of those hypostases from the original essence most likely to be explained by the Mesopotamian, Hurrian impact or the remote repercussion of the Indo-European *Siu-*. However, the double image of the Sun – ‘the sun of heaven’ and ‘the sun of the earth’ – represents an opposition only at the terminological level and is limited to the sphere of theology. It is not likely that an average Hittite perceived the double nature of the Sun as two different Sun deities.³²

In the Hittite cosmology, unlike many other mythologies, each zone of cosmos does not appear to be the domain and image of a particular deity or a group of deities. The Hittite texts do not suggest anything that would point to the distribution of the world among the divine rulers in the way as it is in the Mesopotamian or Greek cosmogony. Undoubtedly, the moving of a deity from one sphere into another is a threat to the cosmic order.³³ The Hattian gods’ hiding away in the underworld may be motivated by their rage and may even lead to a disastrous outcome. It is necessary to smooth and to mollify the deities so as to restore the cosmic order; but this can be achieved merely by a spell and a ritual. Remarkably, the descent of the deities into the underworld does not result in their destruction or alteration of their inherent nature.³⁴ The distinction of the domain of *Ereškigal*, the queen of the underworld, is not only attributed to a different spatial dimension; it is different from the domains of *Anu*, *Enlil* and *Ea* in quality as well. Neither the deities of heaven can freely descend to her place, nor can she herself go up the ladder leading to

³⁰ cf. E. Masson, *Le double soleil dans les hiéroglyphes anatoliens*, Acts of the IIIrd International Congress of Hittitology (Çorum, 1996), Ankara, 1998, 401 sqq.

³¹ Cf. E. Laroche, 1974, 185.

³² See corresponding material in: I. Tatišvili, 2004, 123ff.

³³ CTH 323-36; cf.: CTH 671, 727.

³⁴ E. Cassin, *Souveraineté divine et division des pouvoirs*, *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, Paris, 1981, 464.

the celestial deities. If a celestial deity trespassed the boundaries of her realm and ate the food of the underworld deities, it would lose its celestial nature. Let us recall the myth about Ishtar descending into the underworld or the story about Nergal and Ereškigal, relating how Nergal, once a celestial deity, became the lord of the underworld. In the Mesopotamian myths, the deities do their best to avoid the underworld, while the Hittite deities of the Hattian origin freely descend into the netherworld and feel themselves almost at home there, when enraged or frightened they find a shelter in the underworld. The way in and out of the netherworld is always open to them. This may account for the fact that in the myths of the Hattian origin corresponding to other peoples' myths about the death and resurrection of a deity, the latter does not die, but hides away, and any other deity may appear as the central character of the myth about the vanished deity.³⁵

So, according to the Hittite religious beliefs, deities can move around in the single world, various sections of which does not seem strictly delimited from one another. In my opinion, this is one of the peculiarities of the Hattian-Hittite cosmology.

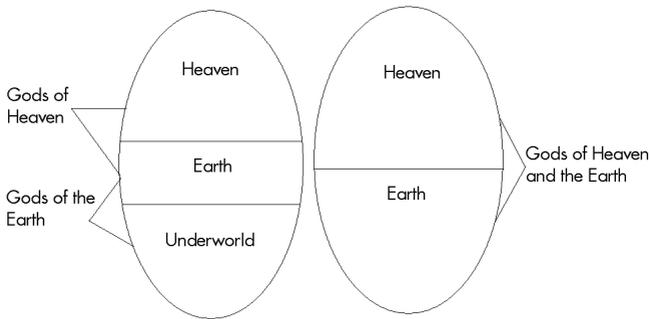
The Hittite texts have the following groupings of deities: 'the sun of heaven, celestial deities' and the 'sun of the earth, earth deities.'³⁶ I believe that such groupings imply the same degree of opposition as 'the sun of heaven' and 'the sun of the earth.' We should regard the designations 'celestial deities' and 'earth deities' as temporal functional manifestations of deities and not as their intrinsic nature, as in the case of the hypostases of the Sun. It should also be mentioned that the expression 'the deities of heaven (and) the deities of the earth' belongs to a later period, and may be related to the imperial attempts of bringing the pantheon in order, and at the same time may reflect the impact of Mesopotamian-Hurrian cosmology or theology. Anyway, bearing in mind the above-mentioned peculiarities of the Hattian-Hittite cosmology, the group should be interpreted not as the unity of the deities of heaven and the deities of the earth, but as the unity of the deities each being the deity of heaven as well of the earth.

I believe that the above-considered properties of the Hittite cosmology are closely linked to the two-fold division of the world. According to Levan Gordeziani, bipartition and tripartition of the world belong to two

³⁵ The Sun (CTH 323), Telipinu (CTH 324), Storm-god (CTH 325-32, 671), Hannahanna (CTH 334), Fate-goddesses and Mother-goddesses (CTH 335), Inara (CTH 336), Moon-god (CTH 727).

³⁶ ^DUTU AN^E DINGIR^{MEŠ} A[N^E (KBo 15.12 10'); taknaš ^DUTU-uš taknašša DINGIR^{MEŠ} (KUB 17.18 II 26', 28'). See also H. M. Kümmel, *Ersatzrituale für den hethitischen König* (StBoT 3), 1967, 82.

fundamentally different cosmological concepts. The unity or opposition of heaven and earth in the two-zone world did not imply the correspondance of a particular zone, a particular world, to either a good or an evil power and the hierarchy between them. The three-zone world, on the contrary, has a delimited domains of good and evil and even gods find difficult to cross the boundaries between them. Consequently, although the Hittite texts offer two- as well as three-fold division of the world and an attempt to unite these concepts, the principle difference between them is obvious. One of them can be defined as local, Anatolian, Hattian-Hittite, while the other may be regarded as Mesopotamian.



In this respect, Georgian ethnographical material seems far more problematic as it includes earliest Caucasian or Kartvelian elements, Greek and Mesopotamian influences adopted either directly or through the Bible, also the paganized versions of Christian, Islamic or even communist rituals. These elements are sometimes very difficult to distinguish from one another and likewise difficult to assign to a definite cultural or chronological layer.

Nevertheless, I believe it is possible to reconstruct the earliest Georgian cosmological system through a complex study of the entire material. In this regard, I find relevant and helpful to reconsider the Georgian material in the light of the above-discussed issues. The vertical division of the world, the migration of deities and heroes, or the distribution of good and evil powers among these zones may appear essential to the reconstruction of the system as well as to the detection of cultural parallels and differences between Anatolian and Caucasian worlds.

At first sight, these worlds seem to have much in common. Of course, I can not be certain about the actual amount of parallel elements, but, admittedly, deities can move around freely according the Georgian material

as well,³⁷ there are perhaps signs of two-fold division of the world.³⁸ Most of the parallel elements are found with the Sun deities of Anatolian and Kartvelian worlds, which in fact became the motivation for my presentation at this conference.

³⁷ I. Surguladze, 1993, 206.

³⁸ Cf. Z. Aleksidze, Skneli, myth or reality? (in Georgian), *Linguistic Issues*, Tbilisi, 2002/1, 64 ff.; I. Surguladze, The term 'skneli' (in Georgian), *Analebi*, The Issue of I. Javakishvili Institute of History and Ethnology, Tbilisi, 2004/1, 74ff.; See also N. Abakelia, 1991, 114 ff.; G. Charachidzé, *Géorgie. La religion et les mythes des géorgiens de la montagne*. *Dictionnaire des mythologies* (sous la direction de Yves Bonnefoy) 1, Paris, 1999, 865 sqq.; M. Khidasheli, *The World Image in Archaic Georgia*, Tbilisi, 2001, 87 ff.