Disability in Antiquity

Christian Laes

Disabilities from head to foot in Hittite civilization

Publication details
Richard H. Beal
Published online on: 30 Sep 2016

How to cite :- Richard H. Beal. 30 Sep 2016, Disabilities from head to foot in Hittite civilization from: Disability in Antiquity Routledge
Accessed on: 20 Oct 2021

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
I

The ancient (near) East
Disabilities from Head to Foot in Hittite Civilization

Richard H. Beal

Introduction

The Hittites flourished in central Anatolia (today Turkey) from about 1800 to 1177 BCE. At least three languages were widely spoken in the kingdom: Hittite and Luwian (both Indo-European) and Hurrian. In the north Syrian part of the empire Hurrian and Semitic Amorite languages dominated. Hittite culture was heavily influenced by the indigenous Hattians and the Assyro-Babylonian culture of Mesopotamia. Hittite civilization survived the destructions at the end of the Bronze Age in the form of Luwian- and West Semitic-speaking petty states in southern Anatolia and north Syria until these were gradually absorbed into the Neo-Assyrian Empire by the early seventh century.

Hittite terms are attested for ‘blind’ (dašuwant-), ‘deaf’ (dudumiyant-) and ‘lame’ (ikniyant-). The same three disabilities are the most frequently mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (Raphael 2008: 13 and Kellenberger in this volume).

A case of (temporary) inability to speak is described in a text. Young king Muršili II was driving across country in his chariot when a violent thunderstorm terrified him. As a result ‘the words in my mouth became small’. He soon recovered and forgot about it. Years passed. Then he had a series of terrifying nightmares and worried about what he had done to make the gods so angry. Finally in one nightmare a god touched his mouth and, as a result, he was unable to speak. This was a devastating blow for a king since, being himself illiterate like most other members of society, he would have had to rely on hand gestures to convey his orders and answers. Based on an oracular inquiry, a ritual was put together to cure him. This involved offerings, scapeoxen and sending all items worn and ridden in by the king on the day of the thunderstorm to the temple of the Stormgod of Manuzzi in the distant province of Kummanni (KBo 4.2 iii 40–2 and duplicates; ed. Lebrun 1983 and tr. Kümmel 1987: 289–92). This presumably worked since this king went on to have a long and successful reign, and so the ritual was filed away in the archives in case of future need.

Hittite texts do not mention the birth of any disabled person. An omen text, imported to the Hittite capital from Mesopotamia, predicts: ‘If a woman gives birth and (the baby) is blind, the head of the household will not do well’ (KBo 6.25 + KBo 13.35 ii 3–4; ed. Riemschneider 1970: 22–3). Eyesight is one of the things one asks the gods for along with ‘life, health, vigor and a long life’ (KBo 15.25 obv. 9–11, ed. Carruba 1966: 2–3).
Blindness

Intentional or accidental blinding is, however, referenced in our texts. In the Hittite law collection, dating to the early days of the kingdom, we learn that ‘If anyone blinds a free man … formerly he paid (him) forty shekels of silver, but now he shall pay (him) twenty shekels of silver’ (§7 = KBo 6.2 i 9–10, ed. Hoffner 1997: 21). A later modification of this law pronounces that: ‘If anyone blinds a free man as a result of a quarrel he shall pay forty shekels of silver (to him). If it is an accident, he shall pay (him) twenty shekels’ (§5 = KBo 6.4 i 14–15, ed. Hoffner 1997: 21). In both cases the penalty for blinding a slave or slave-girl is half of that. For comparison, forty shekels would buy a mule and twenty would buy a draft horse or twenty sheep. One shekel is the wage of a female harvester for three months’ work (ed. Hoffner 1997: 7–8). Interestingly, the penalty for knocking out someone’s teeth is identical to that for blinding (§7 = KBo 6.2 i 9–10, ed. Hoffner 1997: 21).

Blinding could also be inflicted by the state authorities, particularly in the Middle Hittite Period (for Persian and Byzantine parallels, see Coloru and Efthymiadis in this volume). An edict rules that ‘if a slave steals and (the injured party) holds him for theft, if he has been blinded, they shall not hand him over (to the injured party). If he has not been blinded, they shall hand him over.’ Presumably the thinking here is that if the master punishes his slave by blinding, thereby reducing his value to the master, the master has also punished himself for negligence in allowing the slave to steal. However, if the master does not punish the slave, that shows that the master is not simply negligent, but perhaps had ordered the slave to steal and so the master is punished by losing the slave. In contrast: ‘If some free person steals and [he has] p[aid] compensation for the theft, they do not blind him, and they [do not] ha[nd him over to him (the injured party)]’ (KUB 13.9 ii 11–19, ed. Miller 2013: 136–7 and 348). In a passage in a Middle Hittite instruction text for priests and temple officials showing that the gods will act just like humans: ‘If a slave angers his master, they (presumably, the master and his household) will either kill him (the slave), or they will maltreat his nose, his eyes or his ears’ (KUB 13.4 i 28–30, ed. Miller 2013: 248–9).

A Middle Hittite treaty stipulates that if the treaty partner receives a messenger who attempts to stir up trouble between the Hittite king and the treaty partner, the treaty partner must seize and blind the messenger and send him to the Hittite king (KUB 31.42 ii 10–14, w. dupls. KUB 31.44 ii 8–12 and KUB 26.24 ii 8–12, ed. Miller 2013: 200–1). It is not clear from the text whether the ‘messenger’ is a Hittite traitor or the emissary of a hostile king attempting to lure away a Hittite subordinate. This blinding clause occurs only in three treaties with small loosely organized polities. Additionally, three more fragments of such treaties mention ‘blind-men’, one in a line following two paragraphs discussing ‘hostages’ (KBo 8.35 i 2‘; KBo 17.48 obv. 3; KBo 16.27 + KBo 40.330 i 8–16). Internally, a Middle Hittite king uses the threat of blinding to hurry a subordinate, Kaššu, the military chief of the town of Tapigga, to carry out his orders: ‘As soon as this tablet reaches you, drive quickly to My Majesty’s presence and bring Maruwa of Gagadduwa. If you don’t, they will come and blind you where you are’ (HKM 14.10–14, ed. Hoffner 2009: 119–20, similarly HKM 16.11–15, ed. Hoffner 2009: 122–3).

An administrative text from Tapigga gives a list of captives and the amount of ransom that is being requested for them. Twenty-three of these high-value captives are said to be blind and two are said to be sighted (HKM 102, ed. del Monte 1995: 103–4). This is a rather high percentage of soldiers to have been accidentally blinded in battle, so presumably most, if not all, of the blinding occurred after these people were captured. It is not entirely clear whether these were people captured by the Hittites, blinded and being held until the enemy pays the demanded ransom or whether these are Hittites captured and blinded by the enemy, whose ransom demands are here enumerated. Letters from Tapigga mention Hittite capture of
Disabilities from head to foot in Hittite civilization

important enemies. These are said to be bound and sent to the king, but there is no mention of them being blinded (HKM 65, ed. Hoffner 2009: 217, see also Hoffner 2002: 67).

What became of these blind men? A letter from Šarpa in Šapinuwa to the governor in Tapigga records that ‘Blind men have fled from the mill house and come to you there. As soon as this tablet reaches you, [seize the blind men and conduct them] safely [back here]’ (HKM 59, ed. Hoffner 2009: 210). A letter from Tapigga back to Šapinuwa, perhaps in response, reads:

Concerning the matter of the blind men that you wrote to me about, they have conducted all of the blind men up to the city of Šapinuwa. They have left ten men here to work in the mill houses. There is no one here by the name you wrote to me. You should ask Šarpa in Šapinuwa. All the (other) blind men are there.

(HKM 58.1–14, ed. Hoffner 2009: 207)

So we learn that one important job of the blind was to mill grain, just as we see with the blinded captive Samson in the Hebrew Bible (Judges 16: 21). Among the Hittites this was done using a metate (and was usually women’s work). Since some of these blind men have fled from their employment, presumably they were not doing this milling voluntarily, and were probably war-captives. That they managed to flee some considerable distance would imply either that they were only blinded in one eye or, more likely, that they had a sighted conspirator.

A blind man also plays a part in the ‘Festival of Kingly Rank(?).’, a festival performed for a prince. In this they strip a blind man and beat him before leading him to the charnel house (IBoT 1.29 rev. 39–41, ed. Mouton 2011: 10 and 16). He is not then killed and seems to play no further part in the ritual, at least as far as it is preserved. The reason for this is entirely unclear.

Blindness can be caused by the gods. In successive passages in an oath given to the army, the soldiers are given a demonstration of something and then told that if they break their oath the oath gods will do the same thing to them that they and the oath gods have just seen demonstrated.

[The officiant blinds a …] and says ‘Because this was living and used to find heaven above. Just now they have blinded him/it in the place of the oath(-taking). Whoever transgresses these oaths, … and sets his eyes on the land of Hatti as an enemy, let them blind his army, then let them deafen them. Let comrade not see comrade. Let this one not hear [that one.] May they give them an evil death. Below may they fetter their feet. Above may they bind their hands.’


Another section reads:

They bring before them a woman, a blind man and a deaf man. You say to them as follows: ‘Here are a woman, a blind man and a deaf man. Whoever plots harm against the king and queen, may the oath gods seize him. May they change him from a man into a woman, blind him like a blind man, deafen him like a deaf man and obliterate him, a mortal, together with his wives, and children and family.’


In this latter passage, it is clear that blindness and deafness, while they can be imposed on evildoers by the gods, are also disabilities, on the same level as being a woman. In the military oaths, blindness and deafness are among many bad fates that an oathbreaker will assuredly suffer.
However, there is no indication that all blindness was caused by the gods, or that all blindness was the result of misbehaviour/sin. In the ancient Near East, magic worked by saying and simultaneously showing the spirits what you wanted to happen, as in the above quoted military oaths. In one passage a blind person and a deaf person are presented as examples:

In a meadow there stands a šišiyamma-tree. Beneath it sits a blind person and a deaf person. Does the blind person see? Absolutely not! Does the deaf person hear? Absolutely not! Does the lame person run? Absolutely not! In the same way let the words of sorcery not see the person for whom the ritual is performed.

(KUB 12.62 + KBo 53.3 rev. 7–10)

Note that the people suffering these disabilities are not in anyway considered ‘guilty’ or ‘sinful’. They are simply ordinary people with a disability, whose disability is being used to make a positive point. However, should the gods punish your tormenter as you are requesting, he/she will find themselves blind and/or deaf as punishment.

One magical text asks the gods to cause blindness and deafness:

[Those who were continually terrifying [him], those who were continually frightening him, take (their) eyes from them, [(as blind people); take (their) ears from them (as) deaf people, (saying to them), ‘Will you hear with your ears? Certainly not! Will you see with (your) eyes? Certainly not!’

(KUB 60.157 iii 7–10, ed. Arıkan-Soysal 2000: 220–1)

Another magical text requests: ‘The person who bewitched me … May the apple take out his/her teeth. May the flint cut out his/her [tongue]. May the šehuwal-tool blind [his/her eyes]’


In a Hittite myth, when the Stormgod, king of the gods, loses his eyes and heart in a battle with a dragon, he is powerless, though still capable of engendering a son, until he underhandedly gets the dragon to return them (KBo 3.7 iii 10–12, 18–19, tr. Hoffner 1998: 13). In a Hurrian myth, a stone monster, born of the union of a god and a rock, is noted as being blind, deaf and without pity. There is no reason to believe these were in any way punishments for his being evil, or that they are anything but birth-defects, although perhaps the miscegenation at his engendering was thought to have had something to do with his disabilities. He is thus insensitive to the seductive allure and music of the goddess. However, he is stronger than all the gods combined (tr. Hoffner 1998: 55–65). It should be noted that none of the Hittite, Hurrian or Luwian gods or goddesses worshipped by the Hittites are described as disabled (unlike the Greek Hephaistos, for example). However, the Hurrian sky god Anu was emasculated by having his genitals bit off by his rival Kumarbi (tr. Hoffner 1998: 42–43).

Medicines and spells to cure clouded eyes and other eye diseases short of blindness are occasionally mentioned (Hittite Dictionary s.v. šakui- 1 a 3’).

**Deafness**

We have seen the deaf mentioned alongside the blind in a number of the texts above. However, the deaf have another niche in Hittite society. A deaf person or persons, almost invariably male, play a role in a number of Hittite religious festivals. A festival from the early days of the Hittite kingdom reads: ‘When it is morning, the deaf man and I go in and we pick up the bread and beverage offerings’, that is, they remove the food left for the god to eat the night before (KBo 17.1
Disabilities from head to foot in Hittite civilization

iv 24–5//KBo 17.3 iv 21–2, ed. Otten and Souček 1969: 38–9). In a fragmentary festival text a deaf man gives something to the queen. A deaf man performs a number of actions in the festival of the month. ‘A deaf man carries a silver akugalli-vessel of water, and the king washes his hands’ (KUB 2.13 i 8–9). At the end of the festival he is given something (VAS 28.28 iv 2). In the Winter Festival of the Sun ‘the prince gives a bread-piece to the Chief of the Palace Servants. He carries it to the inner chamber and gives it to the deaf men’ (KUB 2.6 ii 6–9). Here the highest civilian officer of the state carries an offering into the innermost chamber of the temple, where a deaf man is in attendance. In the festival for Underworld Deities, a deaf man and a palace servant prepare an aromatic oil and later the deaf man carries the sacrificed ram outside for cooking (KBo 11.32 obv. 19–27). In a different festival again a palace servant and a deaf man work together, with the latter carrying a sacrificial pig. Again, this time multiple deaf men and multiple palace servants carry sacred implements to the palace gate (KUB 58.52 ii 4–7). ‘The deaf men sweep up’ (KBo 19.128 vi 7, ed. Otten 1971: 16–17). Finally, again in the Festival of the Month, ‘king goes outside to the hearths of the deaf men’ (KUB 56.45 + VAS 28.28 ii 14–15). These deaf men are apparently part of an organization since in some festivals a chief or an overseer of the deaf men appears, for example, giving the king a cup to drink (KUB 58.38 ii 2, 8, 15 and KUB 10.21 v 15–16). A listing of professional groups includes ‘deaf-men’ (IBoT 3.75:5). While it is far from clear, it would appear that deaf men acted as menial servants in a few Hittite temples. It is interesting to note that Hittite gods required absolute ritual purity for those who served them, and since the king and queen were chief priest and priestess, those serving them needed to be ritually pure. The above examples show that deafness was not a bar to ritual purity and close contact with the gods, but perhaps even an advantage. As they could not hear nor reveal ‘secrets’, they might have been considered as ideal safeguards (see Laes 2011: 470 on expensive deaf slaves in Roman Antiquity).

Another job performed by deaf men involved the closing of the palace gate for the night:

Then a palace servant goes up to the roof. A deaf man goes before him. The deaf man closes the window shutters and the palace servant throws the door-bolt closed. Then he comes down. The deaf man pulls closed (door at) the top of the ladder. The palace servant throws the bolt.

(KBo 5.11 iv 13–17, ed. Miller 2013: 96–7)

As in the festivals, the deaf man works with a palace servant, and so there may have been deaf men as menial servants in the palace as well. Miller speculates (2013: 88) that they are employed so as not to overhear anything the royal family may say in confidence. There is also a town known as ‘Deaf-man’s Tell’ (KUB 25.23 right edge).

Finally there is a curious mention of a deaf woman in an unfortunately broken text. ‘Concerning the aforementioned matter of the taboo which […] The waiter (and?) the deaf woman lay down on account of […] In the heart of that very temple […] them’ (KUB 18.40 rev. 9–12). The text is an oracular inquiry. It is not clear whether this involves checking the results of incubation in the temple or a sexual dalliance in the temple, which would be highly polluting, or something else entirely.

Lameness and mutilation

We have seen lame people mentioned above in passing. The laws order: ‘If anyone breaks a free man’s arm or leg, if he becomes disabled, he shall pay him twenty shekels of silver. If he does not become disabled, he shall pay him ten shekels of silver’ (§10 = KBo 6.4 i 27–9, ed. Hoffner 1997: 25). The compensation is half these amounts for a slave (§11 = KBo 6.5 i 30–2,
ed. Hoffner 1997: 26). The amount for permanently disabling a person’s arm or leg is half the compensation for blinding. Another law requires:

If someone injures a (free) person and temporarily incapacitates him, he shall provide medical care for him. In his place he shall provide a person to work on his estate until he recovers. When he recovers, (his assailant) shall pay him six shekels of silver and shall pay the medical bill.

(§10 = KBo 6.2 i 16–19, ed. Hoffner 1997: 23–4)

Assaults affecting other senses also required compensation. ‘If someone bites off the nose of a free person, he shall pay forty shekels of silver’ (§13 = KBo 6.2 i 24, ed. Hoffner 1997: 26). Unbelievably, this is the same compensation that, as we saw, was originally paid for blinding. While society did have a use for the blind, one must believe that the high compensation for the loss of one’s nose did not simply involve the impairment of smell, but also involved, shall we say, loss of face. The payment for someone whose ear was torn off, a far less disfiguring loss, was twelve shekels (§15 = KBo 6.3 i 37–8, ed. Hoffner 1997: 27) – only three if the victim was a slave (§16 = KBo 6.3 i 30, ed. Hoffner 1997: 28).

State-sanctioned punishments also included harming hearing and smelling.

If a slave burglarizes a house, he (the slave or the master) must give (the stolen goods) back in full and give six shekels more for the theft. He (the victim?/the slave owner?) shall mutilate the slave’s nose and ear, and they shall give him back to his master.

(§95 = KBo 6.2 iv 44–6//KBo 6.3 iv 42–3, ed. Hoffner 1997: 93–4)

A slave arsonist was similarly treated (§99 = KBo 6.2 iv 56–7//KBo 19.4 iv 2–4, ed. Hoffner 1997: 96).

Sexual disability

A different sort of disability is impotence. Paškuwatti, a woman of the western Anatolian country of Arzawa, wrote up a treatment for ‘If some man has no procreative power or is not a man vis-à-vis a woman’. The patient makes offerings to Uliliyašši, a goddess probably new to him, and probably a goddess of Paškuwatti’s homeland. The goddess’s name would indicate that she is a goddess of greenery. The patient removes his clothes and bathes and is then led to an uncultivated place in the steppe. He is handed a spindle and distaff (symbols of femininity) and walks through gates of reeds. Once on the other side of the gate the officiant takes away the spindle and distaff and gives him a bow and arrow and explains that she has taken away from him femininity and given him masculinity, taken away the behaviour of a woman and given him that of a man. She explains to the goddess that when this man went to the bedchamber, all he could produce was urine and faeces. She explains to the goddess that if he is able to produce sons and daughters with his wife he will honour and reward the goddess. She summons the goddess to the offerings and tells the patient to sleep beside the offering table. He is to report if he sees the goddess bodily in a dream, and if she looks at him and has sexual intercourse with him (perhaps a reference to a wet-dream). If so, he is cured. If not after three days, the ritual is to be repeated (KUB 9.27 + KUB 7.8 + KUB 7.5, ed. Harry Hoffner 1987).³

Obviously barrenness was also a problem. King Hattušili III wrote to his new friend Ramses II asking the Pharoah to send a pharmacist to cure his now elderly sister Matanazi of her barrenness, presumably on the assumption that exotic foreign medicine can cure things that
domestic medicine has failed to cure. The Pharaoh informs Hattušili that Egyptian medicine cannot help a woman in her sixties give birth (ed. Beckman 1983: 253–4).

### The absence of miracle stories

It is interesting to note that, in contrast to the Bible and later Christian literature, there are no miracle stories of the blind, deaf or lame being cured by divine intervention. The closest Hittites come to this (aside from the ritual for impotence cited above) is when the young prince Hattušili is judged too infirm to survive, and so in an effort to save his life, his father dedicates him to the service of the goddess Šaušga. He not only survives, but thrives in both temple service and in the military and government, eventually usurping the throne, for all of which he thanks Šaušga (KUB 1.1 ++ and duplicates, ed. Otten 1981, tr. van den Hout 1997). In his old age, Hattušili again suffered disabilities of the eyes and legs and feet and the queen asked the gods to cure him, but these requests (e.g. KBo 8.61: 5–7, ed. de Roos 2007: 130–1 and cf. 26–9) fit into the category of deities curing illnesses rather than performing miracles. It should also be noted that, in contrast to Judahite priests (Raphael 2008: 35) there is no indication that Hattušili’s infirmities or Muršili’s temporary disabilities (see above) in any way made them unfit to act as high priest to all the gods of the Hittite Empire.

### Exclusion and social disability

Thus some blind/deaf people were simply blind/deaf – the fate assigned to them at birth – while others were blinded/deafened as punishment. In no case were they considered impure or outcasts. In either case there were niches that the society found for them to support themselves.

Taggar-Cohen, in a recent article, states: ‘The disabled represent the impure. They are not to enter the temple nor participate in festivals. If they do enter a temple, it is referred to as a sin against the gods’ (Taggar-Cohen 2010: 119). As we have seen, the blind do not appear to have been particularly impure and those disabled by deafness hand things to the king and queen, whose ritual purity must be particularly guarded and sometimes serve in the holiest parts of temples during religious festivals. So what is Taggar-Cohen’s evidence? An oracular inquiry that asks the god if this or that cultic infraction is the cause of the god’s anger⁴ reads:

We further asked the temple personnel and they said: ‘A dog went into the midst of the temple and knocked over the (offering) table. The thick-breads were thrown down. And they caused much of the daily thick-bread (offering) to be cut off (from the gods)’. Are you, O god, angry on this account? (Answer:) Unfavorable (i.e., Yes.). If you, O god, are angry only on account of those things, which we already know about, let the extispicy be favorable. (Answer:) Unfavorable. We asked the temple personnel and they said: ‘two kukuršant-men went into the midst of the temple.’ (Answer:) unfavorable. If this is all, ditto? Hurri-bird oracle: (answer:) unfavorable. We further asked them and they said: ‘iškallant-people went into the midst of the temple’. Hurri-bird oracle: (answer:) unfavorable.

(KUB 5.7 obv. 24–29, tr: Goetze 1969: 497)

In another oracular inquiry:

Because it was established that the god was angry because of defilement, we asked the temple personnel: Tīla said: ‘One doesn’t look at the Stormgod, but a woman
looked in the window. A child went into the midst of the temple. I was iškalliyant and we went into the temple.’

(AT 454 obv. 7-11, ed. Gurney 1953: 116–17)

Clearly since kukuršant and iškallant people entering the temple is of the same order of misdeed as a dog entering the temple and scattering the offerings, and a woman, of all things, breaking a taboo, kukuršant- and iškallant-people are somehow unclean and/or otherwise forbidden from entering the temple.

But are they disabled people as Taggar-Cohen states? The nominalized participal kukuršant appears to be a reduplicated form of the verb kuer(s)- ‘to cut’. This would therefore appear to mean ‘cut multiple times’. In the Old Hittite Laws, one reads:

If a slave burglarizes a house, he shall give back precisely in full value (what he has stolen). And he shall pay six shekels of silvers for the theft. He (the victim?) shall repeatedly kukurš- (the slave’s) nose and ears. If he stole much, much shall they impose on him. If he stole little, then little shall they impose on him.

(§95 = KBo 6.2 iv 44-47∥KBo 6.3 iv 42-45, ed. Hoffner 1997: 93–4)\

Presumably it is kukurš-ing that is being imposed on the slave’s nose and ears. In an Old Hittite anecdote a miscreant is kukurš-ed for abandoning his post in the fear of the enemy (KBo 3.34 i 24–5, ed. Dardano 1997: 37 and cf. Beal 1992: 454 w.n. 1688). Finally, someone or something has his eyes blinded and his ears kurkurš-ed, but the context is unfortunately still unpublished (Bo 3640 iii 7–8, see Ehelolf 1930: 397, and Hittite Dictionary s.v. šakui- 1 d 2’ s’). Of suggested translations, since it can be done a little or much, ‘mutilate’ seems to fit best. Although once paired with the seriously debilitating ‘blind’, kukurš- seems more intended to mark out a criminal as a criminal (see Millburn in this volume).

Iškallant is the nominalized participle of the verb iškallai-. This verb too occurs in the laws: ‘If anyone iškallai-s the ear of a free person, he shall pay six shekels of silver … if anyone iškallai-s the ear of a slave he shall pay three shekels of silver’ (KBo 6.3 i 37–9, ed. Hoffner 1997: 27–8). Other objects that one can iškallai- include garments, boxes, cheese. The translation ‘tear-up’, ‘tear-off’ seems to fit the occurrences. Thus the kukuršant- are those who have been mutilated, perhaps as a mark of criminality. Are iškallant-people those who have been ‘torn-up’, perhaps missing a body-part? It is curious, however, that in the second oracular inquiry the person committing a misdeed by being iškallant- when entering the temple was in fact a member of the temple staff, so was his iškallant-status temporary? In his testimony, he uses a past tense verb: ‘I was iškallant-’. Could *iškallatar be removed, like normal impurity (papratar) by washing and magic? Or does it imply someone with an open wound that could heal and so a person could resume his temple duties?

So it would appear that those mutilated, perhaps as a sign of criminality and those who are somehow ‘torn’ could not enter a temple, perhaps due to impurity. However, it does not appear that all those who were disabled were impure. The deaf certainly do not fit into this category; it is far from clear that the blind or the lame are included in those forbidden from entering a temple; and the impotent spend time sleeping beside an offering table awaiting a visit from the goddess.

Notes

1 Cf. Miller 2013: 369 n. 275 where Miller thinks the word ‘blind’ must mean ‘blind-fold’.
2 For both magical texts, see also The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago s.v. lē e.
Disabilities from head to foot in Hittite civilization

3 On the contrary, Jared Miller argues that the purpose of the ritual is ‘to cure the patient of his proclivity for passive sexual acquiescence and to replace it with an inclination toward normative male, i.e., penetrative power’: see Miller 2010.
4 On oracle questions see Beal 2002.
5 Hoffner’s translation has to be corrected. See similarly for a slave committing arson: Law §99 = KBo 6.2 iv 56–7//KBo 6.3 iv 55–6.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Classicists and ancient historians who have plentiful text editions at their disposal should be aware of the totally different situation of the Hittite records. Large and numerous volumes present the Hittite writings on tablets. The following abbreviations refer to volumes of pen and ink copies of the original cuneiform tablets:

IBoT Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Bulunan Boğazköy Tabletleri
KBo Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi
KUB Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi
VAS Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin

However, these volumes do not present transliterations, let alone commentaries or translations. In the present contribution, ‘ed.’ means ‘edited by’, i.e. ‘transliterated and translated by’. The list of the consulted edited or simply translated texts follows here:

Beckman, Gary, Hittite Birth Rituals (Wiesbaden, 1983).
Carruba, Onofrio, Das Beschwörungsritual für die Göttin Wišurijanza (Wiesbaden, 1966).
Dardano, Paola, L’aneddoto e il racconto in eta’ antico-Hittita: La cosiddetta ‘cronaca di Palazzo’ (Rome, 1997).
de Roos, Johan, Hittite Votive Texts (Leiden, 2007).
Hoffner, Harry, Hittite Myths (Atlanta, GA, 1998).
Hoffner, Harry, Letters from the Hittite Kingdom (Atlanta, GA, 2009).
Miller, Jared, Royal Hittite Instructions and Related Administrative Texts (Atlanta, GA, 2013).
Otten, Heinrich, Ein hethitische Festritual (Wiesbaden, 1971).

Secondary sources