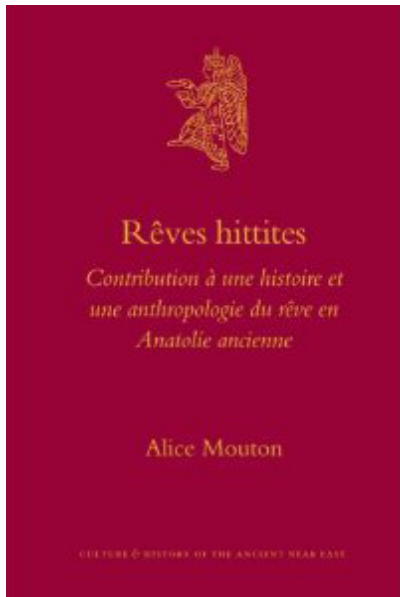


RBL 12/2010



Mouton, Alice

Rêves hittites: Contribution à une histoire et une anthropologie du rêve en Anatolie ancienne

Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 28

Leiden: Brill, 2007. Pp. xxx + 344. Hardcover. \$112.00.
ISBN 9789004160248.

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Directed by Prof. K. Veenhof in consultation with other specialists (A. Archi, T. van de Hout), this dissertation seeks to contribute to the study of Anatolian dream interpretation by focusing on two important questions: How possible is it to retrieve the essential “reality” of Hittite dreams and their interpretation from the cuneiform texts presently at our disposal? How is this “reality” to be interpreted from a comparative anthropological perspective? Reentering a field most thoroughly plowed in the previous century by Leo Oppenheim (*The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* [Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956]), this study engages many of the same concerns by (1) (re)defining some of the major concepts “intrinsically associated” with Hittite dreams and dream interpretation; (2) (re)investigating some of the primary sources from which and by which the “average Hittite” imagines the dream-world; and (3) (re)examining the dreams to which these texts allude within categories more in line with indigenous concerns. Distancing herself from populist approaches to dream analysis based on Freudian psychoanalysis (an approach she calls “the product of contemporary occidental societies” anachronistically dependent upon a foreign “model,” xxiv), Mouton meticulously analyzes the “Hittite oneirological corpus” (1) within categories shaped by historical, literary, mythological, votive, ritualistic, divinatory, and related concerns. Readers may not agree with all of her methods or conclusions, but it is impossible to be

ungrateful for the work so obviously expended to gather so many inaccessible primary texts together into one place (87–313).

Deferring to the lexical equation incised onto *KBo* 1.42 v 14 (Sum. MĀŠ = Akk. *šu-ut-tù* = Hittite *Û-aš* [=tešhaš]), part 1 begins with a technical comparison of the Hittite roots *tešha-* and *zašhai-*, noting that, whereas the first denotes “dream” as well as “sleep,” the second denotes only “dream” (7). Shifting attention to the literary phenomenon of dream *narratives*, Mouton then observes that these narratives are shaped by the expectations generated by different genres and that to fail to appreciate this diversity is to guarantee that they will be misinterpreted. In the *historical* texts, for example (e.g., the Apology of Hattušili, *KUB* 1.1), political leaders often manipulate the rhetorical language coloring theirs and others’ dreams because their primary intention is to use “the words of the gods” to produce the kind of “propaganda” (14) necessary (in Lenzi’s words) “to undergird royal authority” (A. Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods* [Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008], 378). In the *mythological* texts, however, much more attention is given to the interior state of the dreamer than any problems he or she might be facing in the political economy (16), and while the *divination* texts feature various specialists employing various techniques (extispicy, lecanomancy, ornithomancy) to (in)validate various kinds of dreams—sometimes in the most convoluted way imaginable—references to dreams in the *votive* texts are uniquely Anatolian (24).

Modifying Oppenheim’s partition of dreams into two categories (“message dreams” and “symbolic dreams”), part 2 proposes that all future discussion of Hittite dream texts be reoriented to categories indigenous to Anatolian culture itself: “message dreams” and “bad dreams.” The “message dream” includes Oppenheim’s two categories as well as a few others (e.g., “collective dreams”: dreams received by multiple dreamers simultaneously; cf. C. Nolan’s recent film, *Inception*), even though Mouton can find only one example of it in the cuneiform Hittite texts (*KUB* 1.1 iv 19–23—the Apology of Hattušili). Like other diviners, Hittite diviners can and do confirm the (in)validity of the omens they receive by subjecting them to complementary divinational activity (see, e.g., the Prayer of Kantuzzili, *KUB* 30.10) as well as prophetic oracle (see, e.g., the Second Prayer of Muršili, *KUB* 14.8), but, as Mouton points out, multiple confirmation seems much more common in Anatolia than it does Mesopotamia (53). Twenty years ago I came to a similar conclusion (*The Balaam Traditions* [SBLDS 113; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988] 21–32, not cited in the book under review).

In contrast to message dreams, whose “different functions are relatively easy to determine according to context,” the “components” of “bad dreams/nightmares” are much more “difficult to define with precision” (54). As “proof,” the author argues that “bad dreams/nightmares,” so often associated with sorcery (e.g., the Ritual of Alli, *KUB* 24.9 ii 20’–25’),

are best understood as “the result of sorcery itself,” that is, as “evidence” that Hittite sorcerers can and do “create bad dreams” in the minds of the “mortals” they target for spiritual attack (55). This conclusion, however, goes well beyond the data at hand, basing itself not so much upon an *argumentum ab testimonio* as an *argumentum ab silentio*. Is Mouton arguing that no Anatolian nightmare can have its origin in a mundane psychological source?

In spite of one or two points such as the preceding, this is a fascinating book on a difficult subject. While it is sure to be critiqued, it is also sure to be welcomed warmly and deeply appreciated.