

III. A Hittite Myth

TRANSLATOR: ALBRECHT GOETZE

The Telepinus Myth

ANET, 126-128

a. The God's Anger, His Disappearance and Its Consequences

(The upper third of the tablet, about 20 lines, is broken off. It probably told the reasons for the god's anger.)

(i) Telepinus [flew into a rage and shouted:] "There must be no inter[ference!]" In his agitation] he tried to put [his right shoe] on his left foot and his left [shoe on his right foot]. . . . [. . .].

(5) *Mist* seized the windows, *vapor* seized the house. In the fireplace the logs were stifled, at the altars the gods were stifled, in the fold the sheep were stifled, in the stable the cattle were stifled. The sheep neglected its lamb, the cow neglected its calf.

(10) Telepinus walked away and took grain, (fertile) breeze, . . . , . . . and satiation to the country, the meadow, the *steppes*. Telepinus went and lost himself in the *steppe*; *fatigue* overcame him. So grain (and) spelt thrive no longer. So cattle, sheep and man no longer (15) breed. And even those with young cannot bring them forth.

The *vegetation* dried up; the trees dried up and would bring forth no fresh shoots. The pastures dried up, the springs dried up. In the land famine arose so that man and gods perished from hunger. The great Sun-god arranged for a feast and invited the thousand gods. They ate, (20) but they did not satisfy their hunger; they drank, but they did not quench their thirst.

b. The Search for the Vanished God

The Storm-god became anxious about Telepinus, his son: "Telepinus, my son, (he said) is not here. He has flown into a rage and taken (with him) every good thing." The great gods and the lesser gods began to search for Telepinus. The Sun-god sent out the swift Eagle (saying): "Go! Search every high (25) mountain!"

"Search the deep valleys! Search the watery depth!" The Eagle went, but he could not find him. Back to the Sun-god he brought his message: "I could not find him,

him, Telepinus, the noble god." The Storm-god said to Hannahannas¹: "What shall we do? (30) We shall die of hunger." Hannahannas said to the Storm-god: "Do something, O Storm-god! Go! Search for Telepinus thyself!"

The Storm-god began to search for Telepinus. In his city he [knock]s at the gate, but he is not there and opens not. He broke open his bolt and his lock, [but he has no luck], the Storm-god. So he gave up and sat down to rest. Hannahannas (35) sent [out the Bee]: "Go! Search thou for Telepinus!"

[The Storm-god s]aid [to Hannahannas]: "The great gods (and) the lesser gods have searched for him, but [did not find] him. Shall then this [Bee] go out [and find him]? Its wings are small, it is small itself. Shall they admit that it is greater than they?"

Hannahannas said to the Storm-god: "Enough! It will go (and) find him." Hannahannas sent out the little Bee: "Go! Search thou for Telepinus! When thou find-est him, sting him on his hands (and) his feet! Bring him to his feet! Take wax and wipe his eyes and his feet, purify him and bring him before me!"

The Bee went away and searched . . . the streaming rivers, and searched the murmuring springs. The honey within it gave out, [the wax within it] gave out. Then [it found] him in a meadow in the grove at Lihzina. It stung him on his hands and his feet. It brought him to his feet, it took wax and wiped his eyes (and) his feet, [it purified him] and [. . .].

[Telepinus . . .] declares: "For my part I had flown into a rage [and walked away. How dare] ye a[rouse me] from my sleep? How dare ye force me to talk when enraged?" He grew [still more infu]riated. [He stopped] the murmuring springs, he diverted the flowing rivers and made them flow over their banks. He [blocked off] the clay pits, he shattered [the windo]ws, he shattered the houses.

He had men perish, he had sheep and cattle perish. [It came to] pass that the gods [*despire*]d (asking): "Wh[y has Te]lepinus become [so infu]riated? [Wh]at shall we do? [What] shall we do?"

[The great Sun-god(?)?) decl]ares: "[Fetch ye] man! Let him [t]ake the spring Hattara on mount Ammuna

¹ The name is ideographically written NIN.TU or MAE; mother of the gods.

[as . . .]! Let him (man) make him move! With the eagle's wing let him make him move! Let man make him move! With the eagle's wing [let man make him move]!¹

(A gap follows in which Kamrusepas, the goddess of magic and healing, is commissioned to pacify Telepinus and to bring him back.)

c. The Ritual

ENTREATY

(The beginning is mutilated.)

(ii) "O Telepinus! [Here lies] sweet and soothing [cedar essence. Just as it is . . .], [even so let] the stifled [be set right] again!

"Here [I have] *upthrusting sap* [with which to purify thee]. (10) Let it [invigorate] thy heart and thy soul, O Telepinus! Toward the king [turn] in favor!

"Here lies *chaff*. [Let his heart (and) soul] be *segregated* [like it]! Here lies an ear [of grain]. Let it attract his heart [(and) his soul]!

"(15) Here lies sesame. [Let his heart (and) his soul] be *comforted* by it. Here [lie] figs. Just as [figs] are sweet, even so let Te[lepinus' heart (and) soul] become sweet!

"Just as the olive [holds] oil within it, [as the grape] (20) holds wine within it, so hold thou, Telepinus, in (thy) heart (and thy) soul good feelings [toward the king]!

"Here lies *ointment*. Let it anoint Telepin[us' heart (and) soul]! Just as malt (and) malt-loaves are harmoniously fused, even so let thy soul be in harmony with the affairs of mankind! [Just as spelt] (25) is clean, even so let Telepinus' soul become clean! [Just as] honey is sweet, as cream is smooth, even so let Telepinus' soul become sweet and even so let him become smooth!

"See, O Telepinus! I have now sprinkled thy ways with fine oil. So walk thou, Telepinus, over these ways that are sprinkled with fine oil! (30) Let *šahiš* wood and *happuriasaš* wood be at hand! Let us set thee right, O Telepinus, into whatever state of mind is the right one!"

Telepinus came in his fury. Lightning flashed, it thundered while the dark earth was in turmoil. (35) Kamrusepas saw him. The eagle's wing made him move

¹ A certain ritual.

out there. It took off him (iii) the rage, it took off him the anger, it took off him [the ire], it took off him the fury.

KAMRUSEPAS' RITUAL OF PURIFICATION

Kamrusepas tells the gods: "Come ye, O gods! See! Hapantallis is shepherding the Sun-god's sheep. (5) Select ye twelve rams! I want to fix long days for Telepinus. I have taken death, one thousand eyes. I have strewn about the selected sheep of Kamrusepas.

"Over Telepinus I have swung them this way and that. (10) From Telepinus' body I have taken the evil, I have taken the malice. I have taken the rage, I have taken the anger, I have taken the ire, I have taken the fury.

"When Telepinus was angry, his heart (and) his soul were stifled (like) firebrands. (15) Just as they burned these brands, even so let Telepinus' rage, anger, malice (and) fury burn themselves out! Just as [malt] is barren, (as) people do not bring it to the field to use it for seed, (as) people do not make it into bread (or) put it in the storehouse, even so let Telepinus' rage, [anger], (20) malice (and) fury become barren!

"When Telepinus was angry, [his heart (and) his soul] were a burning fire. Just as this fire [is quenched], even so let (his) rage, anger (and) fury [be quenched] too!

"O Telepinus, give up thy rage, [give up] thine anger, (25) give up thy fury! Just as (water in) a pipe flows not upward, even so let Telepinus' [rage, anger (and)] fury not [come] back!

"The gods [were gathered] in assembly under the *hatalkešnaš* tree. For the *hatalkešnaš* tree I have fixed long [years]. (30) All gods are now present, (including) the [*Is*]tustayas, the Good-women (and) the Mother-goddesses, the Grain-god, Miyatanzipas, Telepinus, the Patron-god, Hapantaliyas (and) the Patron of the field. For these gods I have fixed long years; I have purified him, [O Telepinus]!

(35) "[. . .] I have taken the evil [from] Telepinus' body, I have taken away his [rage], [I have taken away] his an[ger], I have taken away his [ire], [I have taken away] his fury, I have taken away his malice, [I have taken away his] ev[il]."

(small gap)

MAN'S RITUAL

(The beginning is lost, but Telepinus is addressed:)

" . . . (When) thou [departedst] from the *hatalkešnaš* tree on a summer day, the crop got *smutted*. (When) the ox departed [with thee], (iv) thou *wastedst* its *shape*. (When) the sheep departed with thee, thou *wastedst* its form. O Telepinus, stop rage, anger, malice (and) fury!

"(When) the Storm-god comes in his wrath, the Storm-god's priest (5) stops him. (When) a pot of food boils over, the (stirring) *spoon* stops it. Even so let the word of me, the mortal, stop Telepinus' rage, anger, and fury!

"Let Telepinus' rage, anger, malice, (and) fury depart! Let the house let them go, let the interior . . . let them go, (10) let the window let them go! In the . . . let the interior courtyard let them go, let the gate let them go, let the gateway let them go, let the road of the king let them go! Let it not go to the thriving field, garden (or) grove! Let it go the way of the Sun-god of the nether world!

"The doorkeeper has opened the seven doors, has unlocked the seven bolts. (15) Down in the dark earth there stand bronze cauldrons, their lids are of *abaru*-metal, their *handles* of iron. Whatever goes in there comes not out again; it perishes therein. Let them also receive Telepinus' rage, anger, malice (and) fury! Let them not come back!"

d. The God's Home-Coming

(20) Telepinus came home to his house and cared (again) for his land. The *mist* let go of the windows, the *vapor* let go of the house. The altars were set right for the gods, the hearth let go of the log. He let the sheep go to the fold, he let the cattle go to the pen. The mother tended her child, the ewe tended her lamb, (25) the cow tended her calf. Also Telepinus tended the king and the queen and provided them with enduring life and vigor.

Telepinus cared for the king. A pole was erected before Telepinus and from this pole the fleece of a sheep was suspended. It signifies fat of the sheep, it signifies grains of corn (and) (30) wine, it signifies cattle (and) sheep, it signifies long years and progeny.

It signifies the lamb's favorable message.¹ It signifies It signifies *fruitful* breeze. It signifies . . . satiation. . . . (end of the text lost)

¹ Favorable omens when intestines of the sacrificial lamb are inspected.