

DIVINE JUSTICE ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN:
HITTITE *ARKUWARS* AND THE TRIAL SCENE IN
AESCHYLUS' *EUMENIDES*

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Abstract

A survey of Bronze Age Akkadian prayers and Hittite *arkuwards*, and Iron Age Anatolian, Greek and Latin curses shows a wide-spread conflation of prayer and forensic speech. The evidence is sufficiently abundant to allow us to trace an evolution in the conventions of prayer which keeps pace with changes in judicial procedure. Furthermore, the Hittite prayers in particular, with their detailed descriptions of the imagined court scenario, provide context to the trial scene in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, allowing us to separate traditional elements from innovations.

Most scholars of the ancient Mediterranean world now acknowledge that there is a significant relationship between Greek and Near Eastern literature, ever since the large-scale works of Burkert (1992) and West (1997) were published detailing a large number of correspondences between Greek and Near Eastern religion and literature. But, the implications of the correspondences differ significantly depending on whether the Near Eastern texts in question are from North Syria, Mesopotamia or Anatolia. Specifically, Anatolian materials offer different opportunities than texts from Mesopotamia, because Anatolia and Greece can be shown to have been in nearly unbroken direct contact from the Middle Hittite period (approximately 1400 BCE) through the Dark Ages into the Classical Period, so we know how borrowing could have occurred, especially with regard to epic narrative.¹ Furthermore, the Hittite material provides

¹ The *Iliad* is set in Anatolia and Homer's legendary home is Smyrna. Puhvel (1983; 1988; 1991; 1992; 1993) and Watkins (1998; 1998 (1970); 1998 (1986)) have shown that expressions and formulae have been calqued out of Anatolian languages into Homeric Greek. See also Bachvarova (2005), arguing that large-scale plot elements have been transmitted from Mesopotamian epic to Greek epic via Anatolia. Latacz (2004) has presented the evidence for contact between Greek-speakers and Hittites, arguing that the *Iliad* is the end-point of a tradition dating back to the Mycenaean Age commemorating an actual event. However, the position he takes on certain key points does not allow for the possibility for bilingual