

Preface

Federico Giusfredi

This collection of essays is the result of the workshop that was held at the University of Verona in the framework of the TeAI project *Teonimi e pantheon nell'Anatolia Ittita*, funded by the Italian Ministry of University's F.A.R.E. programme. The workshop, entitled *Theonyms, Panthea and Syncretisms in Hittite Anatolia and Northern Syria*, took place in Verona on 25th and 26th March 2022. Colleagues with different areas of expertise pertaining to the topic of Anatolian religions and theonomy contributed to an extremely successful event.

In this phase of the history of science which is strongly characterized by interdisciplinary approaches and team-based research, dealing with complex issues such as the description of the religions and panthea of pre-Classical Anatolia necessarily requires, we believe, the consideration of several different perspectives, methodologies, and traditional scientific disciplines.

If the analysis of the features of divine figures traditionally belongs to the historian of religions, it necessarily requires the combined study of archaeological records and textual materials. The latter, in turn, provide a wealth of contextual information which does not immediately pertain to the characterization of gods and goddesses, yet should not be neglected. Thus, historical geography comes into play when it comes to identifying the areas or regions in which a cult existed. Philology is involved when textual traditions mingled – a case not uncommon in Hittite Anatolia. Linguistics plays an important role for the identification of the original language in which divine names should be etymologized.

Nonetheless, if each of these disciplines acted with complete autonomy, the analytical results would be rich, but methodological issues would occur when the data were combined. The best example of these issues is probably represented by the tendency of fallaciously equating the concepts of linguistic identity, cultural identity and ethnicity, and the attempt to anchor them to specific geographical areas, which, in turn, tend to be defined differently depending on the prevailing approach. This type of mistake is quite common in the study of the ancient world, and not absent from the field of Anatolian religious history. Even though several decades have passed since the es-

establishment of the impossibility of defining culture and geography based on languages, when attempts are made to identify, for example, a “Luwian pantheon”, the selection of the divine figures that would belong to it is inevitably made by looking for Luwian morphemes in their names. The identification of a putative area of origin generally depends on the idea that the geographical term *Luwiya* of the Hittite Laws corresponded to a specific Luwian-speaking polity west of the Kızılırmak. Both associations would, however, be misleading, both for methodological reasons and because it only takes a glance at the textual materials to realize that Anatolia was actually a melting pot of different cultural and linguistic components, and had been so for centuries before the advent of written documents.

In light of these considerations, and trying to keep a balanced and methodologically-aware approach in our original research, we realized that a multi-authored work such as the present volume, with papers written by some of the major experts of Anatolian religious history, would represent an invaluable contribution to the advancement of a complex and vast field.

I will conclude this preface with some acknowledgments. We wish to thank all the members of the two research projects I currently coordinate, PALaC and TeAI, for the fantastic scientific synergy that is leading to several important results, and also for the help with the organization of the workshop from which this volume derives. We are also grateful to the editors of the *Studia Asiana* collection for including our title in their outstanding catalogue and to the peer-reviewers of the present volume for their precious feedback. Finally, our warmest thank goes to the authors of the articles collected here: without their expert contributions, this book would not exist.